

Saturday 16 November 2024, 7.30pm

All Saints Church

Market Place

Kingston upon Thames KT1 1JP



HANDEL

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Georgie Malcolm & Harriet Cameron Soprano

Alexander Hutton Countertenor

Dominic Lee Tenor

Alaric Green & Jacob Harrison Bass

The Purcell Orchestra

Andrew Griffiths Conductor





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~ ~ PROGRAMME ~ ~

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

PART I

Prelude

Recitative: *'Now there arose'*

Solo and Chorus: *'And the children of Israel sighed'*

Recitative: *'Then sent he Moses'*

Chorus: *'They loathed to drink of the river'*

Aria: *'Their land brought forth frogs'*

Chorus: *'He spake the word'*

Chorus: *'He gave them hailstones for rain'*

Chorus: *'He sent a thick darkness'*

Chorus: *'He smote all the first-born of Egypt'*

Chorus: *'But for his people'*

Chorus: *'Egypt was glad when they departed'*

Chorus: *'He rebuked the Red Sea'*

Chorus: *'And Israel saw that great work'*

~ ~ INTERVAL ~ ~

PART II

Chorus: *'Moses and the children of Israel'*

Duet: *'The Lord is my strength'*

Chorus: *'He is my God'*

Duet: *'The Lord is a man of war'*

Chorus: *'The depths have covered them'*

Chorus: *'Thy right hand, O Lord'*

Chorus: *'And with the blast of Thy nostrils'*

Aria: *'The enemy said'*

Aria: *'Thou didst blow'*

Chorus: *'Who is like unto Thee'*

Duet: *'Thou in Thy mercy'*

Chorus: *'The people shall hear'*

Aria: *'Thou shalt bring them in'*

Chorus: *'The Lord shall reign'*

HANDEL (1685-1759)

George Frideric, the way he spelled his name in England, was born in the city of Halle, between Berlin and Weimar. His father, Georg Haendel, was a barber-surgeon in the service of the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels. As such, he moved in royal circles and was a leading figure in the city. He had married the daughter of the surgeon to whom he had been apprenticed. Twelve years his senior, she had died in 1682. Not long after, aged 60, he remarried. His new wife, Dorothea, 29 years younger and the daughter of a Lutheran pastor, gave birth to George Frideric and, later, his two sisters, Dorothea Sophia and Johanna Christiana.

Biographers of the composer suggest that his father discouraged his early musical interests, wanting him to become a lawyer. Perhaps, therefore, it was his mother's influence that enabled George to acquire the rudiments of music and learn the keyboard. The story goes that, having accompanied his father to the Duke's court, the young George, aged eight or nine years old, played the organ in front of the Duke and his Kapellmeister. Astounded by what he heard, the Duke urged his surgeon to provide the boy with a musical education. In the event, George was enrolled in the municipal school but his father had relented sufficiently to arrange harpsichord lessons for him from FW Zachow (1663-1712), an accomplished musician and composer.

Under Zachow's tutelage, George learned to play the violin and oboe, as well as developing his keyboard proficiency. He also obtained a good grounding in composition, especially counterpoint and instrumentation. Sadly, in 1697 George's father died. Five years on, aged 17 and beginning his university career in Halle, Handel honoured his father's memory by attending law lectures. However, he did not graduate in law. He was already composing and performing on keyboard, violin and oboe. Still only 17 and a Lutheran, he was appointed temporary organist in Halle's Calvinist Cathedral.

During this period, he met and became good friends with Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767), and heard from him about the music-making opportunities to be found in Berlin and Hamburg. Visits to these cities duly followed, with Handel deciding to move to Hamburg in 1703. Unlike other German cities, its regular opera company operated outside the jurisdiction of a Royal Court. The associated musical freedom that such an arrangement offered was probably part of the city's attractiveness to the young composer.

Handel found work there, initially as a second violinist in the Hamburg Opera House, quickly gaining promotion to play continuo harpsichord. The House's resident composer having left without notice, the resulting vacancy afforded Handel the chance to stage his first opera, *Almira* (1705). Written in the Hamburg style, it was sung in a mix of German and Italian, included ballet and comprised many arias but no choruses. This work was enthusiastically received; more operas rapidly ensued but are now lost.

Despite his successes in Hamburg, Handel went to Rome the following year, in 1706. Most likely he travelled by land and via Venice and Florence, but he does not appear to have been enticed to Italy by rich patrons. Given the times and religious enmities, however, it is surprising that as a Lutheran from Saxony he was made so welcome there. Evidence of the latter is that in 1707, he is reported to have played the organ at the Pontifical Cathedral in Rome.

At that time, since there was a Papal ban on the performance of operas in Rome, Handel turned to composing secular cantatas and serenatas. In the pay of the wealthy Marquis Ruspoli and the Colonna family, a torrent of exciting music exploded from him.

This was much more passionate and energetic than that produced previously, also displaying greater finesse. His ever-popular *Dixit Dominus*, for five vocal soloists, five-part choir, strings and continuo, is a setting of psalms composed that year. It is a good example of the composer's growing musical maturity.

Also, in 1707, Handel composed 17 cantatas, 12 with continuo and five with orchestral accompaniment. These closely resembled core aspects of the operatic form: recitative and arias. However, as it was only away from Rome that operas could be performed, he returned to Florence, possibly backed by the Medici family. There, he staged *Rodrigo*, a formal and dignified work, quite different from the serious-comic combination that characterised his Hamburg operas. The piece showcased his ability to develop and sustain a work's dramatic tension over long periods.

In 1708, back in Rome, Handel penned more secular cantatas and, as part of the Easter Day celebrations, produced his second Italian oratorio, *La Resurrezione* (The Resurrection). He re-used extracts from his earlier works in this moving piece for five soloists and large orchestra, the principal violinist being no lesser person than the famous composer Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713). Handel next moved on to Naples, where he composed a serenata and opera for a royal wedding, before decamping to Florence and then to Venice. Little is known of his movements in 1709. However, in that year, *Agrippina*, arguably his first operatic masterpiece, received a rapturous reception from its Venetian audience.

In 1710, still in Venice, Handel met up with the brother of the Elector, Prince Ernst of Hanover, and the English Ambassador to Venice, Charles Montagu, Earl of Manchester. Having been appointed Kapellmeister to the Elector, Prince George, it is likely that Handel took advantage of the meeting to network. The Elector granted him permission to leave his new post, just a few months into its tenure. This was to visit England and work in London, where Italian opera had taken a hold on the wealthy theatre-going classes.

Recently unearthed correspondence suggests that the Elector, through Handel and his association with the Earl of Manchester and other English nobles, intended to receive intelligence regarding the health of the monarch, Queen Anne, as she was known to be in poor health. The Hanoverians were waiting in the wings to succeed to the English throne, albeit Prince George was not, himself, next in line.

In 1711, Handel moved to London, living with the opera impresario, John James Heidegger, in the Borough of Richmond upon Thames. With his recent Italian experiences still ringing in his ears, he composed an opera, *Rinaldo*. Set in the time of the First Crusade, its extravagant staging depicted themes of love, war and redemption. As the first Italian opera to be written for the London stage, it was an immediate success with the theatre-going public. Handel, who had made a brief return to Hanover, was granted a further paid leave of absence from his Kapellmeister post to return to London.

In 1712, back in London, Handel was busy composing and produced several large-scale works: the opera *Il pastor fido* (The Faithful Shepherd); the *Utrecht Te Deum*, celebrating the Peace of Utrecht; and a *Birthday Ode for Queen Anne*. Two years later, following Queen Anne's death and also the death of Prince George's mother, Handel was reunited with his erstwhile employer. The Elector of Hanover had succeeded to the English throne, as King George.

It was assumed by early biographers that the relationship between the King and Handel was somewhat frosty, due to the composer's extended absence from the Hanoverian Court.

With the benefit of recent documentary evidence, however, it is clear there had been no rift, hence no required reconciliation. The story that relations between King and composer were only restored by a performance on the royal barge of Handel's *Water Music*, is thereby sunk. Evidently, the monarch had enjoyed the music, the *Daily Courant*, 19 July 1717, reporting that he 'caus'd it [the 'Water Music'] to be plaid over three times in going and returning.'

By 1717, Handel had for many years been in receipt of the King's generous royal pension for life and used his affluent status to establish strong business links with prominent members of the English nobility, notably the Duke of Chandos and Lord Burlington. For the former, he composed the famous *Chandos Anthems* (1717-1718). Immersed in both the commercial side of the operas and their composition, Handel's large works were mainly underwritten by members of the ruling class. This convenient working arrangement also provided him with opportunities to travel Europe-wide to hire soloists to perform his operatic works.

A stream of operas flowed: *Teseo* (1712); *Silla* (1713); *Radamisto* (1720); *Floridante* (1721); *Ottone* (1723); *Giulio Cesare* (1724); *Tamerlano* (1724). Handel produced over 40 Italian operas in all. They reflected his capacity to blend a range of musical influences. The overtures, almost without exception, were based on those of the French Court under Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687). However, via Zachow, he also incorporated the polyphony of his native Germany, as well as the harmonic intensity and melodic line of Italian composers, from his years spent there.



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The libretti of Handel's operas were based on classical or mythological themes in the style of Italy's *opera seria*. Focusing on serious subjects, they often ended in tragedy. To sustain the attention of the many in the audience who attended as much to be seen as to listen to the music, it was necessary to enlist singers of the highest calibre and celebrity, hence, Handel's European recruitment trips.

Among the most prized soloists were males known as *castrati*. Two notable exponents were 'Senesino' (Francesco Bernardi, 1686-1758) and Giovanni Carestini (1704-1760). The former took the leading role in 17 of Handel's *opera seria*. The *castrato* voice displayed an extraordinary range and power. These performers were in huge demand both on and off the stage, the equivalent of today's pop or film stars. Their professional careers could span decades, some extending into their eighth decade. The elite *castrati* were able to negotiate and master Handel's long and complex phrases via supreme breath control, in addition to reaching the highest notes with ease.

The opera-going public's opinions, however, were fickle. In due course, notice was served on the Italian vogue. Even Handel, with all his powerful aristocratic connections, suffered considerable financial losses. From 1737 he was not only in a much-reduced financial position but in poor health. He needed a new creative outlet and money-making venture and turned again to the genre of Oratorio. Some biographers suggest this was due to his having a stroke that rendered him more religious in outlook. Indeed, his chosen subject matter for genre was often sacred, most libretti being based on stories from the Bible's Old Testament. Others believe the pragmatic businessman-composer was simply compelled to turn to something that might prove profitable.

Despite Handel's ongoing ill-health, he produced a string of oratorios. Of the 24, most use the Bible's Old Testament as source, the finest considered to be: *Saul* (1738); *Israel in Egypt* (1739); *Messiah* (1741) and *Jephtha* (1752). However, he continued to compose much music outside the genres of opera and oratorio. Overall, his output includes more than 120 cantatas, 18 concerti grossi and 12 organ concertos. As well as these, there were trios and duets, arias, odes, anthems, serenatas, solo and trio sonatas - too many to enumerate. Many known compositions have been lost.

The extravagantly talented Handel enjoyed immense success in his lifetime, with most of his significant works being published while he was alive. His many successful commercial enterprises bolstered his income. To continue earning and to boost audience numbers, even in later life, he still performed at the organ. This could involve playing one of his dozen organ concerti between the two acts of an oratorio, notwithstanding his failing eyesight! By all accounts, Handel was a larger-than-life character, a brilliant performer and an inspiring composer.

By 1751, Handel's sight had seriously deteriorated to the point of near blindness. Recent assessments of his ill-health suggest a retrospective diagnosis of binge-eating disorder with an associated high alcohol consumption, which had exposed him to high levels of lead. This element was present as a preservative in certain alcoholic products of his day, but in large amounts it was also a poison. Such poisoning could have been mitigated by the attempted cures he undertook. Some of these incorporated a profound change of diet, as in his restorative visits to the spa-town of Aix-la-Chapelle, modern-day Aachen.

The mountain of detail available about Handel's public life and even his physical health is not matched by what is known of the private man. Handel left few letters that might convey or reveal inner convictions or amorous encounters. He does not appear to have had extensive contact with his family back in Saxony, although was said to have been devoted to his mother, who died in 1730.

He was also very close to one of his sisters, Dorothea Sophia, having returned to Halle to attend her wedding. Sadly, she had predeceased her mother and her brother. Afterwards, having been precluded from attending his sister's funeral due to professional engagements, Handel had written to his brother-in-law, thanking him for his tenderness towards her.

Handel had been generous to the widow of his first teacher Zachow. He financially supported her and her children for many years. Also, he is said to have convinced and enabled a friend from his university years, Johann Christoph Schmidt (1683-1763), to move to England to pursue a musical career that had not been possible in Ansbach. In London, Schmidt worked as a viola player but also became Handel's copyist and treasurer. After four years, presumably being paid well enough, Schmidt's wife and three children joined him to live and work with Handel. The two men remained close friends, barring a brief rift in older age, which was swiftly healed via the mediation of Schmidt's son. By then, the latter was himself Handel's secretary and amanuensis, as the ageing composer was almost completely blind.

Handel never married but, according to some biographers, probably had at least some romantic encounters, most likely with singers who performed his works. Unlike his composing contemporary, JS Bach (1685-1750), he was not part of a musical dynasty. In terms of his musical legacy, however, Handel's oratorios have proved vastly more popular than his operas, although several of the latter have been revived in recent years. Little of his instrumental work is regularly performed, his *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* being notable exceptions.

Handel's influence on the musical establishment and generations of British composers, however, was enormous. Most had to demonstrate prowess in the domain of choral writing to gain their spurs. None until Edward Elgar (1857-1934) managed to gain international renown. If only posthumously, Handel also received wonderful accolades from other great composers. Joseph Haydn, hearing a performance of *Messiah* on a London visit, exclaimed "*He is master of us all!*" and Ludwig van Beethoven believed "*Handel [to be] the greatest composer that ever lived.*"

Five days before Handel died, he had been led to and played the harpsichord in a performance of *Messiah* at the Foundling Hospital, of which he was benefactor and a governor.

He is buried in the South Transept of Westminster Abbey. His state funeral was attended by 3,000 people. The Abbey choir, along with those of St Paul's Cathedral and the Chapel Royal sang at the service. Handel's coat of arms on the black marble gravestone, which is now very worn, displays the top half of a man's figure. The left arm is bent at the elbow and the right holds up a bottle. A crest above it depicts the same arms but set between two elephant trunks. The reason Handel chose such emblems via which to be remembered remains a mystery.

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ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Israel in Egypt is one of Handel's best-known oratorios, the musical term deriving from the oratory of a church. In mid-16th century Rome, a Catholic priest, Philip Neri (1515-1595), instituted moral musical entertainments to his religious services. His aim was to support and comfort some of Rome's poorest and most needy inhabitants and visiting pilgrims. To achieve this objective he needed to adapt his services, which took place in one of the church's chapels, the oratory.

To attract and sustain his target congregation, Neri arranged for additional music to be performed before and after his sermon. These were settings of relevant religious texts, Bible stories or stories of a Saint. The music rendered the religious message more palatable and digestible. This creative enterprise also incorporated fine musicianship, the famous composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594) being one of Neri's collaborators. Those regularly attending his services became known as the *Congregation of the Oratory*. (In 1622, in recognition of his work and personal piety, Philip Neri was canonised).

As a form of musical composition, the oratorio also has early roots in Germany, developing from the traditional Holy Week dramatic renditions of the Passion of Christ. In France the 'sacred histories' of Charpentier (1643-1704) were forerunners of a similar religious and musical form. In England Handel is credited with synthesising various traditions and musical styles in creating oratorios on secular, as well as religious themes. Originally only performed during Lent, when the theatres were closed by law, in his hands the oratorio soon became much more than a substitute for opera. For more than a century after Handel's death, it dominated the British musical landscape.

Handel's oratorios mirror the pattern of Italian opera, using prominent recitative and arias, against a dramatic mood-setting instrumental backdrop. However, he made much greater use of the chorus, enlarging the orchestral contribution, and also reformed the *da capo* aria. He largely replaces the repetition of an aria's musical material, from the beginning (*da capo*), with shorter versions that are more simply ornamented. Importantly, his oratorios represented the transition from Italian to the English language, thereby attracting a wider social spectrum of audience. Nevertheless, this period was not plain sailing for Handel. Thus, he carried on composing operas as well as oratorios in response to the commercial opportunities that presented themselves.

In spite of his deteriorating health, works of great energy resulted and *Israel in Egypt* was composed in a four-week period during the autumn of 1738. Its initial reception, however, was extremely poor. One witness reported that it "*did not have twenty people in the pit.*" Its next performance, just one week later, after Handel's hasty revision, was received by "*a polite and attentive audience... not large enough to encourage [Handel]... in any future attempt.*" Supporters rallied behind the composer notwithstanding and encouraged him to persevere.

Consequently, its third performance, two weeks after its first outing, was reported by the London correspondent to The Scots Magazine, much to his surprise, as having been performed in front of "*a very numerous audience*".

Israel in Egypt had originally been conceived as a work in three parts. Following Handel's revision, it was reduced to two. He cut out all of the first part, a long, slow but beautiful '*Lamentations of the Israelites for the death of Joseph.*' Handel's operatic pattern of recitatives, arias and dramatic musical depictions is still evident.

However, the grandeur of *Israel in Egypt* is most emphatically conveyed via its succession of thrilling choruses and double choruses, in four and eight parts, respectively. In all, it contains 26 choruses, of which 18 are for double chorus, where each of the four sections of the choir (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) is divided into two. There are only five arias, four recitatives and three duets.

Most of the libretti for Handel's oratorios utilised texts, secular or religious, adapted to suit the composition, *Israel in Egypt* being an exception in its exclusive use of *unaltered* Biblical texts. These were taken mainly from the book of Exodus but with some additional passages from Psalms. The libretto tells the story of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt, the rise and influence of Moses who liberated his people, and the plagues visited upon the enslaving Egyptians.

Some of the choral passages evoke powerful mental images, such as, hopping frogs or fruit-devouring locusts. The lovely musical setting of the chorus "*He led them forth like sheep*" however, derives from music, albeit significantly modified, composed by Alessandro Stradella (1643-1682). The same composer is also the source of Handel's music for another chorus "*He gave them hailstones.*" In 18th century Europe, it was not unusual for composers to 'borrow' from one another or re-use some of their own previously published works.

For *Israel in Egypt* Handel uses music from his Six Fugues (HWV 605-610) but, for reasons that are not clear, he also 'borrows' extensively from other composers. Musicologists suggest that it was not laziness on Handel's part but, more likely, his recognition of the unworked potential of the 'borrowed' musical ideas or fragments. It was rare for him to take and use another's work note-for-note. In *Israel in Egypt*, however, perhaps because it captured the austere atmosphere that Handel sought, music from an *Organ Canzona* by Johann Caspar Kerll (1627-1693) is used in its entirety. This work of a fellow Saxon, albeit of an earlier generation, may have had a personal significance for Handel that rendered it a good fit for his text, '*Egypt was glad when they departed*'. Another exception is the 'extensive chunk' of an early Baroque instrumental work of Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612), which Handel used for the chorus '*And I will exalt him*'.

A further major, but unwitting, contributor to the music of *Israel in Egypt* is Don Dionigi Erba, who was composing in Milan during the latter part of the 17th century. His *Magnificat for Three Choirs*, probably dating from the 1690s, features no fewer than nine times in Part II of the Oratorio. Despite the overall huge contribution of 'borrowed' music, evidence of unevenness of style is not present. This testifies to Handel's genius in fusing such disparate musical ideas and styles. Seemingly, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), who edited *Israel in Egypt* for the Handel Society in London, was satisfied with the work as an integrated whole.

From the second half of the 20th century Handel's oratorios, operas as well as other genres have all gained greatly in popularity, being regularly performed and recorded. His music is recognisable for its vitality and accessibility. Often conveyed via simple musical means, its impact is powerfully direct and emotionally engaging, as *Israel in Egypt* amply exemplifies.

Programme notes courtesy of Kingsley Norton

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ISRAEL IN EGYPT

PART I

Recitative (tenor)

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph; and he set over Israel task-masters to afflict them with burthens, and they made them serve with rigour.

(Exodus 1: 8, 11, 13)

Alto Solo and Chorus

And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and their cry came unto God. They oppressed them with burthens, and made them serve with rigour; and their cry came up unto God.

(Exodus 2: 23)

Recitative (tenor)

Then sent He Moses, His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen; these shewed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He turned their waters into blood.

(Psalm 105: 26, 27, 29)

Chorus

They loathed to drink of the river. He turned their waters into blood.

(Exodus 7: 18, 19)

Air (alto)

Their land brought forth frogs, yea, even in their king's chambers.

He gave their cattle over to the pestilence; blotches and blains broke forth on man and beast.

(Psalm 105: 30; Exodus 11: 9, 10)

Chorus

He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies and lice in all their quarters.

He spake; and the locusts came without number, and devoured the fruits of the ground.

(Psalm 105: 31, 34, 35)

Chorus

He gave them hailstones for rain; fire mingled with the hail ran along upon the ground.

(Psalm 105: 32; Exodus 9: 23, 24)

Chorus

He sent a thick darkness over the land, even darkness which might be felt.

(Exodus 10: 21)

Chorus

He smote all the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength.

(Psalm 105: 36, 37)

Chorus

But as for His people, He led them forth like sheep: He brought them out with silver and gold; there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

(Psalm 78 53; 105: 37)

Chorus

Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them fell upon them.

Chorus

He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up. He led them through the deep as through a wilderness. But the waters overwhelmed their enemies, there was not one of them left.

(Psalm 106: 9; 106: 11)

Chorus

And Israel saw that great work that the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.

(Exodus 14: 31)

PART II

Chorus

Moses and the children of Israel sung this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying: I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

(Exodus 15: 1)

Duet (soprano 1 & 2)

The Lord is my strength and my song; He is become my salvation.

(Exodus 15: 2)

Chorus

He is my god, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him.

(Exodus 15: 2)

Duet (bass 1 & 2)

The Lord is a man of war: Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.
(Exodus 15: 3, 4)

Chorus

The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

(Exodus 15: 5)

Chorus

Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.
And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee.
Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.

(Exodus 15: 6; 15: 7)

Chorus

And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

(Exodus 15: 8)

Air (tenor)

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

(Exodus 15: 9)

Air (soprano)

Thou didst blow with the wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

(Exodus 15: 10)

Chorus

Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.

(Exodus 15: 11, 12)

Duet (alto and tenor)

Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.

(Exodus 15: 13)

Chorus

The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away: by the greatness of Thy arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, which Thou hast purchased.

(Exodus 15: 14, 15, 16)

Air (alto)

Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established.

(Exodus 15: 17)

Chorus

The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

(Exodus 15: 18)

Recitative (tenor)

For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

(Exodus 15: 19)

Double Chorus

The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

(Exodus 15: 18)

Recitative (tenor)

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them:-

(Exodus 15: 20, 21)

Soprano Solo and Chorus

Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

(Exodus 15: 21, 18)

ANDREW GRIFFITHS – Musical Director



A musician of rare versatility, Andrew Griffiths combines his role as Head Coach at the National Opera Studio with a busy freelance career in the worlds of opera and choral music.

A graduate of the Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artist Programme, he has conducted productions for The Royal Opera (Linbury Theatre), The Royal Ballet, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Opera Theatre Company, Opera Collective Ireland, Early Opera Company, Mid Wales Opera, Bampton Classical Opera and Iford Festival Opera. He has appeared in concert with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Swan, Southbank Sinfonia and Orpheus Sinfonia, and he is regularly engaged to broadcast and record with the BBC Singers.

Andrew has worked at Glyndebourne, ENO, Scottish Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, and with the BBC Symphony and Scottish Symphony Orchestras, and regularly joins the music staff at The Royal Opera, working alongside such conductors as Pappano, Bychkov, Gardiner and Mackerras. He is often engaged for projects outside the standard operatic canon, and is particularly experienced in Baroque repertoire and the music of the last 50 years. He is much in demand as a vocal coach, and works frequently with the Young Artists at The Royal Opera, as well as overseeing the training of the Young Artists at the National Opera Studio.

In constant demand as a choral conductor, Andrew appears regularly with the BBC Singers, for whom his engagements have included the world première of John Pickard's *Mass in Troubled Times*, recordings of Brahms, Hassler, Barber, Ives and Giles Swayne, and broadcasts of Howells, MacMillan and Martinů, as well as a Barbican debut directing music from the Flemish Renaissance. He is Musical Director of Kingston Choral Society and chamber choir Londinium, whose recordings have received wide critical acclaim. He regularly conducts for Dartington International Summer School, and has appeared as a guest conductor with the BBC Symphony Chorus, New London Chamber Choir, and Hong Kong's Tallis Vocalis.

A pianist, viola player and singer by training, Andrew began his musical education as a Quirister and Scholar at Winchester College, and read music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he held a Choral Exhibition. He studied conducting under Martyn Brabbins in Glasgow, and trained as a répétiteur at the National Opera Studio and at Scottish Opera. He is a former principal viola of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, and a founder member of vocal consort Stile Antico.

Recent highlights include conducting *Semele* for Opera Collective Ireland, a Sondheim portrait for the National Opera Studio, Monteverdi's *Vespers* at Dartington, and works by Paul Patterson for Orchestra of the Swan, and working as assistant conductor/continuo for *Theodora* and *Alcina* at The Royal Opera. Forthcoming engagements include conducting Baroque and contemporary scenes for the National Opera Studio, directed by Keith Warner.

HARRIET CAMERON - Soprano



Harriet studied Musical Theatre at Bridgwater and Taunton College before studying at the Royal Academy of Music where she studied with Catherine Wyn-Rogers and graduated with First Class Honours. In September she began her Master's degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama studying with Marie Vassiliou and Marcus Van Den Akker.

Harriet recently worked with Bampton Classical Opera on their production of *At the Venice Fair* by Salieri which she thoroughly enjoyed. Harriet sang as a soloist in Vivaldi's *Beatus Vir and Dixit Dominus* with the Brandenburg Sinfonia in Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square. In 2021 Harriet played the role of 'Mum' in the world première of Louise Drewett's new opera *Daylighting* at the Susie Sainsbury Theatre. Last summer she won the 'Most Promising Young Singer' award at the Somerset Song Prize. Harriet is also an Ashburnham English song finalist this year.

In December 2023 Harriet performed as a soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Mayfield Festival. She had the opportunity to sing a song recital at the Wigmore Hall as part of their Music for the Moment series in December 2022. In February this year Harriet was a soloist for London Fashion week with Patrick McDowells collection.

Harriet is also a member of the Philharmonia Chorus student scheme where she has had the opportunity to perform under the direction of conductors such as Semyon Bychkov and Santtu Matias Rouvali.

Harriet is very kindly supported by Help Musicians, the Kathleen Trust, Guildhall and the Josephine Baker Trust. Alongside Harriet's singing she is also a passionate actor and is a member of the National Youth Theatre.

GEORGIE MALCOLM - Soprano



Soprano Georgie Malcolm currently studies on the Guildhall's Opera Course with Yvonne Kenny, having completed her postgraduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, gaining both her MMus and PGDip with distinction.

Her operatic appearances include the title role in Handel's *Alcina* at the Guildhall, La Contessa in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the RNCM, Venus in Blow's *Venus and Adonis* in a touring production in Italy with L'Offerta Musicale di Venezia, and Monica in Menotti's *The Medium* (RNCM). She has worked with Buxton International Festival, for whom she covered the role of Cleopatra in Hasse's *Antonio e Cleopatra*, and with Opera North as an extra-chorister in numerous productions including *La Traviata* and *La*

Rondine.

Georgie performs frequently across the UK as an oratorio soloist; highlights include Handel's *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall with the Really Big Chorus, Haydn's *Creation* at Buxton Festival, and Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* with the BBC Philharmonic at the Bridgewater Hall, later broadcast on Radio 3.

Georgie received second prize at the National Mozart Singing Competition 2022, also winning their Schubert prize, was a Leeds Lieder Young Artist 2023, and was member of the Wigmore Hall's French Song Exchange 2023, culminating in performances at Wigmore Hall and Paris' Salle Cortot.

ALEXANDER HUTTON - Countertenor



Alex Hutton, a countertenor hailing from Somerset, is currently taking a break from study but will return to finish his Masters degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London next September. Alex's musical journey began as a chorister at Sherborne Abbey, where he discovered his passion for singing. He further honed his skills by becoming a member of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain and the Rodolfus Choir. Additionally, he worked as a choral scholar for Gloucester Cathedral for two years and participated in Harry Christopher's Genesis Sixteen programme for one year. Alex's primary areas of interest lie in performing Baroque Opera, Contemporary Opera and Romantic Song. However, he also aims to expand his repertoire to include

Mezzo-soprano "trouser roles". Alex's most recent project involved singing as part of the semi-chorus for Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the LSO conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano in the Barbican, London. Alex is extremely grateful for his financial support from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the generous support of the Countess of Munster Trust.

DOMINIC LEE - Tenor



Worcestershire born Tenor, Dominic Lee has been singing since the age of eight. Dominic started as a Chorister at Worcester Cathedral in 2004, where over the years he rose through the ranks to become a Lay Clerk there. It was through this and a number of school shows that Dominic found his love for performance. He went on to study for his undergraduate degree in Music at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. In 2022 he completed a Master's degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he is now studying at their Opera School under the tutelage of John Evans.

Dominic has a strong passion for operatic performance. Previous engagements include chorus in *Carmen* with Opera Holland Park, Chorus in *L'elisir d'amore* with West Green House Opera and solo ensemble in *The Boatswain's Mate* with Spectra Ensemble. Dominic was most recently part of the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus in their highly acclaimed production of *Dialogues des Carmelites*. Upcoming roles include Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* and Mr. Rushworth in *Mansfield Park*, both at the Guildhall.

Boasting a wide range of oratorio and concert work, Dominic's concert repertoire has seen him perform well-known works all around the country. From notable pieces such as Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *Creation*, to new commissions in the Three Choirs Festival.



**KCS gratefully acknowledges the financial support
of the Josephine Baker Trust for the
soloists in this concert.**

JACOB HARRISON - Bass



Jacob Harrison is a bass-baritone from Norfolk, England currently based in Düsseldorf, Germany. He trained at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London from 2020-2024, where he studied with Robert Dean. There Jacob completed his Masters (2020-2022) followed by the Opera Course (2022-2024). During these years, Jacob was awarded the Wyburd Prize for German Lieder (2021), the Keith Bonnington Prize (2022), and the Weston Award at the Chris Treglown Competition (2022). Along with this, Jacob was involved in masterclasses with the likes of Lise Davidsen, Adrian Kelly, and Ann Murray. During these studies, Jacob received generous support from The Behrens Foundation and Help Musicians, from which he was a recipient of the Van Allan Opera Award 2023/24, as well as being an Opera Europa Eva Kleinitz Scholar 2023.

Prior to Guildhall, Jacob studied with Cristiano Manzoni and Anna Aurigi at the Academia Europea di Firenze in Italy (2016), before completing his BA History and International Relations with Spanish at the University of Exeter (2016-2019). Along with Opera, Jacob is also a keen recitalist and concert -singer, having performed an array of song and oratorio repertoire in England, Italy and Spain. Jacob's performance highlights include Figaro in the University of Exeter Opera Society's 2019 production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Don Quijote in Encuentro de Santander's 2023 performance of *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*; Lord Fortune in *Miss Fortune*, Der Begleiter des Zaren in *Der Zar läßt sich photographieren*; Prison Guard 2 in *Dead Man Walking*; Pedro Paramo in *A Star Next to the Moon* (Guildhall Opera Productions 2022-2024). Concert highlights include bass soloist in performances of Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Bach *B Minor Mass*, Handel *Messiah*, Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Haydn *Creation*, Puccini *Messa di Gloria* (across UK, 2016-2024). Jacob was part of the Glyndebourne Chorus 2024, where along with Chorus he also covered the roles of Sprecher (*Die Zauberflöte*), Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*), and Steuermann (*Tristan und Isolde*) throughout the Glyndebourne Festival 2024.

Jacob is currently based in Düsseldorf where he is a member of the Opernstudio at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein. Upcoming performances include Marchese d'Obigny in *La traviata* and Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*.

ALARIC GREEN - Bass



In 2011, when he was 17, Alaric Green was the youngest ever person accepted to the London School of Musical Theatre. He toured Europe with the 12 Tenors in 2012 and in 2013 was cast in a BBC Three musical reality TV show called *South Side Story*. In 2016 he appeared on *The Voice UK*, moving through to the third televised knock out round.

He discovered a love for carpentry and worked in various theatres across the West End, helping to build scenery, before becoming the Deputy Master Carpenter at the Criterion Theatre at the age of 24, whilst also pursuing a career with his Blues-Rock band, eventually deciding to

explore his classical singing voice at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he currently studies with Robert Dean and Stephan Loges.

During his time at Guildhall, he has been in the Chorus for Jonathan Dove's *Venus and Adonis*, the world première of Liam Patterson's *Angel Esmeralda* and Judith Weir's *Miss Fortune*. He also played the role of Marcello from *La Bohème*, King Alfonso from *La Favorita*, The Count from *Le Nozze di Figaro*, as well as more in Guildhall Opera Scenes and the role of Frank in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* and George Benton from Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, also Il Pellegrino/Zosimo in *Maria Egiziaca* and Pedro Paramo in the world première of *A Star Next to the Moon*. He won first prize in the Chartered Surveyors Vocal Prize and progressed to the semi-final of the Kathleen Ferrier Awards and is an Alvarez Young Artist with Garsington Opera.

THE PURCELL ORCHESTRA

The Purcell Orchestra was founded in 1982 to give one of the very first performances of Purcell's *King Arthur* on period instruments in a project created by Robin Page and Richard Wistreich at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. The orchestra is a flexible ensemble performing baroque and classical chamber music, comprising musicians who are all regular London period-instrument players, working with such orchestras and ensembles as the Hanover Band, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Academy of Ancient Music and the London Handel Orchestra.

As well as devising appealing and innovative programmes, frequently tailor-made for specific venues or events, the orchestra regularly collaborates with choirs to perform major works of the baroque and classical repertoire. In addition to works such as JS Bach's *B Minor Mass*, *St Matthew* and *St John Passion*, *Magnificat* and *Christmas Oratorio*, Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem*, the orchestra has played a wealth of less familiar repertoire including Telemann's *Tageszeiten*, CPE Bach's *Magnificat* and Locke's *Audi, Domine*.

In its chamber format, members of the orchestra perform as the Purcell Players, with this year's performances including Kingston Choral Society's Purcell programme, and a specially devised afternoon of music for the *Earl of Derby's Fête Champêtre of 1774*. In December they will give their annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the Church of St Mary Abbot, Kensington.

First Violin

Diane Moore (Leader)

Fiona Duncan
Susan Carpenter-Jacobs
Eleanor Gilchrist
Benjamin Sansom

Second Violin

Bill Thorp
Hazel Brooks
Polly Smith
Felicity Broome-Skelton

Viola

David Brooker
Wendi Kelly
Niek Idema

Cello

Katherine Sharman
Elizabeth Andrews

Violone

Jan Spencer

Oboe

Mark Radcliffe
Belinda Paul

Bassoon

Damian Brassington
William Gough

Trumpet

Robert Vanryne
Eloise Yates

Trombone

Peter Thornton
William Brown
Andrew Lester

Timpani

Benedict Hoffnung

Orchestra Manager

Natasha Hale

KINGSTON CHORAL SOCIETY

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Laura Bent
Hannah Boyer
Catherine Carrère
Cathy Chandler
Kate Cockle
Pippa Cox
Anna Cronin
Shirley Davenport
Nicky Dickens
Jane Dickenson
Sue Edwards
Gill Evers
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Judith Pelham
Rebecca Phelps
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Ruth Rees
Elizabeth Salzman
Bernadette Sheehan
Julia Siberry
Ellen Smith
Magdalen Spooner

Sarah Stokes
Marion Thorpe
Penny Tweedie
Keiko Walker
Rachel Ward
Alison Whitcher

ALTOS

Kath Adamson
Lois Aiken
Deborah Albon
Karen Au-Yeung
Claudia Bandini
Elizabeth Bawdon
Chrissie Bestley
Ruth Bolton
Sue Brodie
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Janet Evans
Kathy Goodman
Christine Hogh
Jeanette Hull
Alison Jennings
Coe Kong
Meg Lewis
Anne Miller
Sarah Moreton
Susi Neale
June Pearson
Emma Powell
Fiona Ryder
Veronica Skates
Gill Stock
Lorna Syrus
Lucy Thomas
Amy Thompson
Elizabeth Tofts
Margaret Turner

TENORS

René Barclay
David Chan
Elizabeth Chan
Michael Cox
Tim Holmes
Kingsley Norton
Rod Pearson
Richard Siberry
Gabriel Steer
Neil Varey
Cynthia Wakefield

BASSES

Jeremy Antrich
John Bassett
Rod Bellamy-Wood
Alan Brough
Edmund Hosker
Chris Johns
Alistair Jones
Alex O'Regan
Marcus Petrat
Jim Sleightholme
David Syrus
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We are proud to support and sponsor
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A man with a beard and a bun, wearing a white t-shirt and tan trousers, is crouching on a wooden floor. He is holding a small white paint palette in his right hand. A young child with long brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and brown corduroy pants, is standing on a small wooden stool. The child is using a paintbrush to apply white paint to a large cardboard box that has been shaped into a house. The house has a gabled roof and a chimney. The man is looking at the child as they paint. The background is a plain white wall.

Hamptons
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