



BILLINGSHURST CHORAL SOCIETY

On behalf of the members of BCS, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our concert this evening. Also, I would like to welcome members of Ensemble OrQuesta Baroque and our soloists Rachel Allen, Laura Fleur, Kieran White and James Berry. We have been working very hard with Márcio for our performance of *Messiah*, and we sincerely hope you have a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Keith Paul, Chairman, BCS

MÁRCIO DA SILVA MUSIC DIRECTOR



Márcio was born in Brazil in 1983 and began his music studies at the age of 9 with piano lessons and choral singing. He travelled to the United States where he studied in Arizona for six months, graduating from the renowned Phoenix Boys Choir in 1998. In 2006 Márcio received his Diplôme d'études Musicales in voice from the Conservatoire de Toulouse, France. He moved to Germany in April 2008 to join the Musikhochschule, Freiburg, where he studied choral and orchestral conducting under Professor Scott Sandmeier. He obtained his Bachelor of Music in July 2011.

Subsequently Márcio moved to London to undertake an MA at the Royal College of Music, specialising in orchestral and choral conducting, studying under Professors Peter Stark and Robin O'Neill. In 2012 he was one of the three conductors to take part in the London Symphony Orchestra Conducting Master Class with Sir Colin Davis. In July 2013 he secured his Master's degree, and in November 2014 he was one of the three finalists at the Princess Astrid International Conducting Competition in Trondheim, Norway, with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra.

Márcio is the founder and artistic director of the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra, and Ensemble OrQuesta. He took up the baton for BCS in 2021 and also conducts the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra Singers, the Hastings Philharmonic Choir and the Grange Choral Society. He works extensively as a vocal coach and continues to enjoy performing both as baritone and countertenor.

RACHEL ALLEN SOPRANO

www.rachelallensoprano.com



LAURA FLEUR MEZZO - SOPRANO

www.laurahockingmezzo.co.uk

KIERAN WHITE TENOR

www.kieranwhitetenor.com



JAMES BERRY BARITONE

www.jamesberrybaritone.com

ENSEMBLE ORQUESTA BAROQUE

LUTE Cédric Meyer	BASS Manuel dell'Oglio
HARPSICHORD Petra Hajduchová	OBOE Kate Bingham
VIOLIN Ed Taylor Kate Agostino	TRUMPET Brant Tilds
VIOLA Ana Torbica	TIMPANI John Rockcliffe
CELLO Nathan Giorgetti	

TONIGHT'S CONCERT

HANDEL - *Messiah*

PART I

NOS 1 - 20 & 37

... INTERVAL ...

PART II

NOS 22 - 44 (OMITTING NOS 34 - 37 & 39)

Please stand if you are able for the *Hallelujah* Chorus

PART III

NOS 45 - 53 (OMITTING NOS 49 - 52)

For more information, please scan this QR code.



GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL 1685 - 1759

On hearing the name 'Handel' the word 'Messiah' springs automatically to mind. The two are inseparable when thinking of choral music. *Messiah* must be the most well-known of all Handel's oratorios and yet in some important respects it is not typical of the form. The usual pattern was that of a drama, with the soloists representing various named characters in the story, but in *Messiah* the soloists are commenting upon the story rather than actually participating in it. In addition, in all Handel's other oratorios except *Theodora* the subject matter is from the Old Testament, whereas *Messiah* combines Old Testament prophecy concerning the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ with text from the New Testament on this same theme, showing the New Testament as the fulfilment of the Old.



The idea for *Messiah* was that of the distinguished librettist Charles Jennens, with whom Handel had previously worked, notably on *Saul* (1739). In a letter dated 10th July 1741 Jennens mentions that he hopes to persuade Handel to set a scripture collection, the subject of which is *Messiah*.

It was customary for Handel to spend his summer writing music for the forthcoming concert season and in two months of the summer of 1741 he composed both *Messiah* and *Samson*. *Messiah* was completed in the space of twenty-four days, Handel being so inspired that "I did think that I did see all Heaven before me and the Great God Himself".

The process of composition was speeded up by Handel's use of some of his own previous compositions, a common practice of the time.

The first performance of *Messiah* was given in Dublin in April 1742 to great acclaim, although it seems that this view was not entirely shared by Jennens who urged Handel to revise the work, particularly the overture. In fact, Handel made frequent changes to the score of *Messiah* to suit different singers and circumstances. Performances became more standardised after 1749, when the first of what would become annual benefit performances at the Foundling Hospital was given. These performances, in aid of Handel's favourite charity, and given at the end of Lent, did much to establish the enduring popularity of this splendid oratorio and confirm Jennens' original vision of it as an Easter work.

We would like to adhere to one of the traditions of performances of *Messiah*, and invite you to stand, if you are able, during the Hallelujah Chorus in the second half of this concert. This tradition is said to have arisen after King George II stood up at the start of the chorus, during the first performance in London in 1743, which meant that everyone else present was obliged to stand also. There are many appealing theories as to why he did this, ranging from enthusiasm or respect for the music to sudden discomfort, but none has been convincingly proven. Regardless, it can be hard not to rise to one's feet at such an exciting chorus, so do feel free to react in a similar manner! As one person is known to have remarked, "Why not, it's such a long piece it's good to stretch the legs!"

LOOKING AHEAD

With Heart and Voice

A selection of patriotic music

Dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
in celebration of her Platinum Jubilee
1952-2022

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BILLINGSHURST
SATURDAY 2 JULY 2022 2:30pm

Please join us for celebratory refreshments
after the concert



Further information is available from
our website:

www.billingshurstchoralsociety.org.uk

SUPPORTING CHESTNUT TREE HOUSE

Chestnut Tree House is a children's charity providing hospice care services and community support for children and young people with progressive life-shortening conditions in East and West Sussex and South East Hampshire.

There are hundreds of children and young people in our local community who are unlikely to reach adulthood. There are even more parents and family members who need care, help and support on their journey, as they do not know how long they will have together.

Chestnut Tree House offers support for the whole family including psychological and bereavement support, end of life and short break care and sibling support. At Chestnut Tree House the goal is to provide the best quality of life for children, young people and their families, and to offer a total package of practical, social and spiritual support throughout each child's life, however short it may be.

There will be a collection as you leave.
Please give as generously as you can.
Cash or card is most welcome.

www.chestnut-tree-house.org.uk

