

Messiah

6, 7 & 8 December
Adelaide Town Hall



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Messiah

Ivars Taurins
Conductor

Andrew Goodwin
Tenor

Samantha Clarke
Soprano

Andrew O'Connor
Bass-Baritone

Fiona Campbell
Mezzo Soprano

Adelaide Chamber
Singers

—

Duration
2 hr 45 min (incl. interval)

Fri 6, Sat 7 & Sun 8 December
Adelaide Town Hall

George Frideric Handel
Messiah HWV 56

Part the First [53']

Interval

Part the Second [52']

Part the Third [30']

Listen Later ABC Classic is recording this concert for later broadcast. You can hear it again on Sunday 22 December at 1pm.

The ASO acknowledges that the land we make music on is the traditional country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains. We pay respect to Elders past and present and recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that this is of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are with us for this performance today.

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Welcome



Simon Lord
Director, Artistic Planning

'The trumpet shall sound!' With much fanfare, this performance of Handel's *Messiah* heralds the coming of Christmas whilst marking the end of our concert-giving year.

To conduct Handel's much-loved oratorio, we welcome Ivars Taurins, making his début with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Ivars is a Baroque music specialist, and the founding director of the world-renowned Tafelmusik Chamber Choir based in Toronto. Joining him on stage for what will be an historically informed and stylish performance, is a cast of soloists celebrating the best of Australia's vocal talent alongside our very own excellent Adelaide Chamber Singers.

I hope that you enjoy Handel's timeless and universal masterpiece.

If you haven't yet explored the ASO's 2025 concert season, then please do grab a brochure or jump online at aso.com.au. There is a rich variety of music on offer from Johannes Brahms to Elena Kats-Chernin to Billy Joel – all making for a perfect Christmas present. And if you're drawn to things choral, a highlight next year promises to be Mozart's Requiem in St Peter's Cathedral, again featuring the Adelaide Chamber Singers and conducted by our new Chief Conductor, Mark Wigglesworth.

Thank you for being with us for this concert and for supporting the ASO. From all of us, both onstage and off, we wish you a peaceful and happy festive season and look forward to making more music for you in 2025.



Ivars Taurins
Conductor

Equally at home conducting symphonic and choral repertoire, Ivars Taurins is the founding director of the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, now celebrating its 43rd season. He was also founding member and violist of the Tafelmusik Orchestra for its first 23 years.

Principal Baroque Conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra from 2001-2011, Ivars Taurins also appears as guest director with orchestras and choirs across Canada, including the Edmonton, Victoria, Kitchener-Waterloo and Winnipeg Symphonies, Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra London, Symphony Nova Scotia, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, Canadian Chamber Ensemble, Vancouver Chamber Choir, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Pro Coro Canada, Winnipeg Singers, and Elora Festival Orchestra & Singers. Besides his regular appearances with Tafelmusik, other engagements include a return to Symphony Nova Scotia, and an invitation from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Australia, to direct their *Messiah* performances in December 2024.

He was director of the 2012 National Youth Choir, and has directed the Ontario and Nova Scotia Youth Choirs, and London, Calgary and Nova Scotia Youth Orchestras. A passionate lecturer and teacher, Ivars Taurins teaches orchestral conducting and directs the baroque string ensemble at the University of Toronto, and has been a guest teacher/conductor at universities across Canada.



Samantha Clarke
Soprano

Australian/British soprano Samantha Clarke is the winner of the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal and prize winner in the 2019 Grange International Festival Singing Competition. Samantha studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, as a Sir John Fisher Foundation and Independent Opera Scholar, under the tutelage of Mary Plazas.

In addition to the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal, Samantha is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Leverhulme Royal Northern College of Music Award, the Dame Eva Turner Award and the Michael and Joyce Kennedy Award for the singing of Strauss.

Her operatic roles include: Violetta *La traviata*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Helena *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Donna Elvira *Don Giovanni*, Countess *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Anne Trulove *The Rake's Progress*, and Theodora.

Recent and future engagements include Countess *Le nozze di Figaro* at Garsington, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte* with the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy in Japan, Grange Festival and Opera Queensland, Cleopatra *Giulio Cesare* and Theodora for Pinchgut Opera, Woglinde *Das Rheingold*, Marzelline *Fidelio* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Simone Young, Violetta *La traviata* with Opera Australia and West Australian Opera, *Messiah* and *War Requiem* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Beethoven *Symphony No. 9* in Tasmania.

Samantha features on the Resonus' *Samuel Barber: The Complete Songs* recording with accompanist Dylan Perez.



Fiona Campbell
Mezzo Soprano

Fiona Campbell is one of Australia's most versatile and beloved classical singers - the national Limelight Award for Best Solo Performance 2011 among her many accolades.

Fiona sings regularly as a principal artist with all the major ensembles and orchestras in Australia and with Opera Australia, Opera Queensland and West Australian Opera. Her international collaborators have included the Brodsky Quartet, Tokyo Philharmonic, Manchester Camerata, Prague Chamber Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic and Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

She has toured with José Carreras in Japan, Korea and Australia and with Barbara Bonney in Tokyo and London.

In recent seasons, she sang Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for The Adelaide Festival and was soloist with the Australian String Quartet, Perth Symphonic Chorus and the Queensland, Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras. She appeared as Laura (*Iolanta*) and Flora (*La traviata*) for West Australian Opera.

Fiona has recorded many recitals and national broadcasts including her solo album *Love & Loss, Baroque Duets*, which features a world premiere recording of Handel (*Vexations 840*).

Recently, Fiona became an inaugural member of Katie Noonan's vocal quartet AVÉ – Australian Vocal Ensemble - and the Creative Director of the Perth Symphony Orchestra.



Andrew Goodwin
Tenor

Andrew Goodwin has appeared with opera companies in Europe, the UK, Asia and Australia, including the Bolshoi Opera, Gran Theatre Liceu Barcelona, Teatro Real Madrid, La Scala Milan, Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera and Sydney Chamber Opera.

He has performed with the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow and Melbourne Chamber Orchestras, all the Australian Symphony orchestras, and has given recitals at Wigmore Hall, and Oxford Lieder, and music festivals across Australia.

Andrew's performances this year include returns to Adelaide Festival in Stravinsky's *The Nightingale and other fables*, Sydney Symphony for *Gurrelieder*, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs for *Elijah*, and each of the Australian Symphony orchestras in repertoire ranging from Handel and Mozart to Beethoven and Orff.

His most recent engagements include Mozart's *Requiem* (MSO, TSO and QSO); Beethoven's 9th Symphony (QSO and in Germany); *Messiah* (Canberra, Melbourne, Queensland, New Zealand Symphony Orchestras); and *Nativity*, (Mills) with the ASO. Recent opera roles include Janik in *Diary of one who disappeared* (Janacek) with Sydney Chamber Opera and Lysander in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Adelaide Festival.

Andrew studied voice in the UK and at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and is the winner of many awards and scholarships including the Tait Memorial, Martin Bequest, Sir Robert Askin Scholarship, and the Joan Sutherland Richard Bonyngne Scholarship.



Andrew O'Connor
Bass-Baritone

For more than a decade Perth-born Andrew O'Connor has maintained a busy freelance career encompassing opera, the concert platform, vocal chamber music, and the classroom. Praised for his 'remarkable musicianship' (Limelight Magazine) and 'textured, fine-wine bass baritone' (Arts Hub) he appears regularly with many of Australia's leading music organisations.

Formerly a permanent member of The Song Company from 2015-2019, he is a Lay Clerk at St Mary's Cathedral, was an Associate Artist with Pacific Opera in 2019, and winner of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Prize in 2020. In 2022 he made his international debut with the VOCES8 Foundation and in 2023 joined the American Bach Soloists Academy in San Francisco.

In 2024 Andrew makes important solo debuts with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra singing Handel's *Messiah* and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra singing the world premiere of Katy Abbott's *Hidden Thoughts III: Stories of Awe*. Other projects include the entirety of Pinchgut Opera's 2024 Season including the role of Achilla in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, three projects with The Song Company as part of their 40th Anniversary Season, further touring, recording, and creative development with AVÉ – Australian Vocal Ensemble, and numerous projects with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Bach Akademie Australia, Salut! Baroque, Moorambilla Voices and more.



Adelaide Chamber Singers
Choir

Adelaide Chamber Singers (ACS) is widely respected as Australia's finest chamber choir – the embodiment of the art of choral chamber singing. Founded in 1985 by Dr Carl Crossin OAM, ACS has been a passionate and innovative contributor to music-making for almost 40 years. Current Artistic Director and Conductor is long-time ACS singer and Associate Conductor, Christie Anderson. The ensemble's membership and its high-level training ensemble Rising Voices are drawn from amongst Adelaide's best and most experienced ensemble singers, many of whom are also conductors, soloists, teachers and independent artists.

Since the beginning, ACS has existed to showcase the highest order of musical interpretation, to transport our audiences to new heights, and to challenge the very boundaries of what choral music can be. Our combined voices echo the majesty of the great cathedrals and concert halls of the world, but our sound and our soul is proudly grounded in the intimacy and warmth of our home city of Adelaide.

ACS is frequently invited to support and collaborate with a wide range of artists including the ASO, State Opera SA, The Rolling Stones, VOCES8, The Gesualdo Six, The Tallis Scholars, Kronos Quartet, Hilltop Hoods, Greta Bradman, and Katie Noonan. A strong and consistent advocate for Australian music, ACS has proudly commissioned over 30 new works from established and emerging composers.



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About the Program

Handel (1685–1759)

Messiah HWV 56

What are you wearing to the concert hall? Had you attended the premiere of Handel's *Messiah* in Dublin, 1742, you would have been instructed to leave your accessories at home. The Charitable Musical Society requested 'the favour of the ladies not to come with hoops this day to the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street. The gentlemen are desired to come without their swords, as it will greatly increase the charity by making room for more company'.

The society had correctly anticipated a full house: 700 people were crammed into the venue – far beyond its intended capacity. Everyone wanted to be the first to hear Handel's *Messiah*. While the dress code may have changed over the centuries – though you still won't see dress hoops in the concert hall – the popularity of *Messiah* has not diminished. The oratorio has evolved into an annual tradition for orchestras across the world, and for regular concertgoers Christmas would not be the same without it.

For conductors and musicians, *Messiah* is a work to return to. Australian conductor Graham Abbott has led orchestras through the *Messiah* more than 75 times; choral specialist Brett Weymark has performed it around 50. Toronto-born conductor Ivars Taurins has conducted *Messiah* more than 200 times – even dressing up as Handel on the podium! Such artists continue the composer's legacy – he had conducted over 30 performances of his *Messiah* throughout the 18th Century. But for Handel, it was an Easter tradition, and this is where we venture back to the work's conception.

George Frideric Handel was born in Germany, 1685. He did not stay there for long. As a child, he learnt keyboard and composition, then played organ in a cathedral and violin for an opera orchestra – a combination of skills that later informed *Messiah*. Even at a young age, Handel mingled with the upper echelons of society. At 21 years old, he was encouraged – by the Medici family, no less – to explore the fine music of Italy. He spent more than three years in the sunny country, meeting the biggest names in Baroque composition from Corelli to Scarlatti. He started to build a name for himself in vocal music, composing for religious leaders and nobility alike. Then came two big career breaks: his appointment as Kapellmeister to George, Elector of Hanover – England's future king – followed by relocation to England, and a royal pension from Queen Anne.

In England, Handel continued to make the music that had led to his meteoric rise: Italian-style operas, now presented to elite English audiences. He also spent time composing coronation and funeral anthems for the royal family, and wrote his famous *Water Music* for King George I – an entertaining suite to be performed on the River Thames. The young composer was exceedingly popular among regal and aristocratic audiences – but he could not dedicate himself to those listeners alone. Musical tastes were changing, and the composer needed to keep up.

By the 1730s, Handel was not doing well. He was ill from a stroke, and suffered the financial strain of two bankrupted opera companies. His listeners



Adoration of the Shepherds,
Bartolomé Esteban Murillo
c.1650

were tired of hearing these Italian-style works. So the composer prioritised their needs, writing music for English singers in their own language. He started focusing on an artistic medium that would combine the drama of the opera with the budget of a smaller-scale event. This was known as **the oratorio**.

The oratorio is imbued with religious themes. Its narrative is traditionally drawn from the Bible and the text is communicated through a plethora of voices – solo singers and booming chorus performed alongside orchestral instruments. Handel quickly became known as the innovator of the English oratorio, and it started with *Esther*. Back in 1718, he had composed a masque based on the Book of Esther from the Old Testament – and now it was time to revisit the work for English audiences, rejuvenating his career in the process. Handel revised *Esther* for performance at the King's Theatre in 1732, turning it into an English oratorio that laid the groundwork for his history-making pieces to come. He went on to create *Israel in Egypt* and *Saul* (1739) – new oratorios that honoured the demand for vocal music without the elaborate sets and costumes of an Italian opera. Then came the greatest of them all: Handel's *Messiah*.

In Handel's day, concert venues were often closed during Lent – a sacred period of prayer and fasting, which also included abstaining from theatrical entertainment. This was a quiet time for working artists, perhaps especially difficult for Handel whose finances had already come under considerable strain. He worked on a creative solution that would allow concertgoers to participate in arts and culture during the off-season – live entertainment in the

form of sacred music. And he produced it rapidly. It took Handel about three weeks to compose his *Messiah*. He skipped meals – and bedtimes – as he laboured through the piece. The speed can also be attributed to his reuse of old material. Several songs that appear in *Messiah* – including *And He shall purify* and *His yoke is easy* – stem from works he had already composed. They received new life in the context of his oratorio.

The composer also had the help of a librettist – a man who had written the text for Handel to set to music. The deeply religious Charles Jennens had already crafted the English libretto for Handel's oratorio *Saul*, and later *Belshazzar* (1744). He wrote of his desire for Handel to set his newest text to music: 'I hope I shall persuade him to set another scripture collection I have made for him, and perform it for his own Benefit for Passion Week. I hope he will lay out his whole genius and skill upon it, that the composition may excel all his former compositions, as the subject excels every other subject. The subject is Messiah.'

Although his hopes had materialised, Jennens did not believe that Handel had indeed surpassed the calibre of his previous compositions. A while after, the librettist remarked: 'He has made a fine entertainment of it, though not near so good as he might and ought to have done. I have with great difficulty made him correct some of the grossest faults in the composition, but he retained his Overture obstinately, in which there are some passages far unworthy of Handel, but much more unworthy of the Messiah.'

Jennens' was not the only controversial opinion. Initially, people in England had a difficult time accepting that a sacred work such as *Messiah* could be performed by local singers in a secular venue. But as history shows us, such criticism was inconsequential. When Handel conducted the Dublin premiere for charity during Lent, 13 April 1742, it was a great success boasting 'the sublime, the grand, and the tender, adapted to the most elevated and moving words', as reported in the *Dublin Journal*. Its first London performance took place the following March at Covent Garden, and the city's Foundling Hospital would later become the venue of its yearly charity performances. In Australia, the work premiered in 1842 and over the next few decades, professional and amateur performers joined together for large-scale events that helped raise funds for hospitals, libraries, and charities across the country. *The Brisbane Courier* printed in 1873 that 'no work of sacred music has since been composed that would equal it'.

Messiah is a musical contemplation of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The oratorio is neatly structured in three parts, each featuring the types of music you would typically find in an opera. Part I begins with an **overture** – a short instrumental piece introducing the work. It then goes on to celebrate the circumstances surrounding Christ's birth. *Behold, a virgin shall conceive* takes the dramatic form of a **recitative** in which the soloist delivers their libretto in a speech-like manner. Handel uses a **chorus** to illustrate the joy of Christ's birth in *For unto us a child is born*; a group of singers also proclaims peace in *Glory to God*. The other form of solo song to appear in the first part of *Messiah* is the **aria**, as heard in *He shall feed His flock*. You will hear these stylistic mediums return over the course of the oratorio, as Handel allocates them according to their ability to express the sentiments of the text.

In Part II of *Messiah*, the songs traverse the suffering of Christ and the events that led to his crucifixion. It then details his resurrection, and culminates in the most famous chorus of all – *Hallelujah*. When you attend a live performance of *Hallelujah*, you become part of an unusual tradition believed to date back to its London premiere. As the story goes, King George II was so impressed by this chorus that he burst out of his seat, and the rest of the audience stood along with him. Today, you may remain seated or participate in this long-held custom. After, the third and final part of the *Messiah* focuses on themes of judgment and ultimate victory. It concludes with a chorus in which a single word is given: *Amen*.

While Handel composed his oratorio with great speed, and to career-boosting effect, it was nevertheless a spiritual experience. As Handel stated during the composition process, 'I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself seated on His throne, with His company of angels'. After conducting the Dublin premiere, Handel remained intimately connected to his *Messiah* and continued to present his work for years to come. It took on a life of its own as English choral societies emerged and continued the tradition of its performance. The next generation of composers would continue to look up to the *Messiah* as a highly influential work: in 1789, Mozart reorchestrated *Messiah*. But he also believed Handel was a 'genius', so he clarified that his own contributions 'should not be interpreted as an effort to improve the music'. Beethoven felt the same way, stating that Handel was 'the greatest composer who ever lived'. And when Haydn attended a *Messiah* performance at Westminster Abbey in 1791, he said of its composer: 'He is the master of us all.'

Stephanie Eslake

The perfect bloom is
like the perfect note



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Holly Piccoli*
Acting Associate
Concertmaster
Janet Anderson*
Acting Principal 1st Violin
Alison Heike**
Principal 2nd Violin
Ambra Nesa ~
Acting Associate Principal
2nd Violin
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Belinda Gehlert
Alexis Milton
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David Wicks~
Guest Associate Principal
Linda Garrett
Michael Robertson

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Gemma Phillips~
Acting Associate Principal
Andrew Leask
David Sharp

Double Basses

Belinda Kendall-Smith**
Acting Section Principal
Harley Gray~
Acting Associate Principal

Oboes

Joshua Oates**
Rena Stavelly~

Bassoon

Jackie Newcomb*

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Emma Gregan

Trumpets

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Georgie Simmons
Imogen Tonkin
Ruby Washington
Brooke Window

Altos

Rachel Bruerville
Riana Chakravarti
Courtney Day
Stephanie Eaton
Alison Hansen
Isobel Martin
Sophie Schumacher
Genevieve Spalding
Emma Woehle

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Martin Penhale
Joel Ramirez
Sean Tanner
Kit Tonkin
Charlie Wells
Rhys Williams
Graham Yuile

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Carolyn ♪



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Double Basses



David Schilling
Section Principal
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Jacky Chang
Dr Melanie Turner ♪



Harley Gray
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Ballaj & Dr Georgette
Straznicky ♪



Kim Falconer
Section Principal



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In memory of Father
Kevin McLennan &
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Piccolo

Bassoons

Contra Bassoon

Horns



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Section Principal
Pamela Yule ♪



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Timpani

Percussion



Stanley McDonald
Principal
Thomas Kimber
& Katrina Bochner ♪



Andrew Penrose
Principal
Andrew & Denise
Daniels ♪



Steven Peterka
Section Principal
FASO in memory
of Bev McMahon ♪



Sami Butler
Associate Principal
Percussion/Timpani
Annabel Barrett ♪



Alison Heike
Principal 2nd Violin
FASO in memory of
Ann Belmont OAM ♪



Lachlan Bramble
Associate Principal
2nd Violin
In memory of
Deborah Pontifex ♪



Janet Anderson
In memory of
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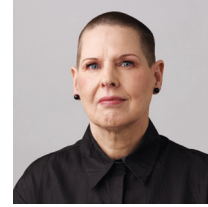
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