

Handel MESSIAH

Carolyn Sampson Catherine Wyn-Rogers
Mark Padmore Christopher Purves

THE SIXTEEN
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

CORO
COR16062

3CD set

MESSIAH

George Frideric Handel

Carolyn Sampson
Catherine Wyn-Rogers
Mark Padmore
Christopher Purves

THE SIXTEEN
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

CD1	total time	70.27
CD2	total time	74.16
CD3 (Bonus CD)	total time	55.30

SPECIAL EDITION
Bonus CD of Handel
includes
*ARRIVAL OF THE
QUEEN OF SHEBA*

Arguably the most famous oratorio ever written and certainly Handel's best known work, *Messiah* needs little introduction. Composed in a staggering twenty-four days *Messiah* was first performed in Dublin in 1742 where it received a rapturous welcome. Not so the following year when it premiered in London to a distinctly hostile reception. It wasn't until *Messiah* began to be presented in charity performances at the Foundling Hospital in London that the public started to embrace the work we now regard as Handel's greatest composition.

On this disc The Sixteen and Harry Christophers are joined by four soloists, all revered Handelianes who have had a long association with The Sixteen.

"What a winning combination: Handel's Messiah, the most popular oratorio ever written, sung by The Sixteen, the most richly sonorous of the early music choirs"

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH (LONDON)

© The Sixteen Productions 2008
© The Sixteen Productions 2008

Made in Great Britain
Booklet enclosed

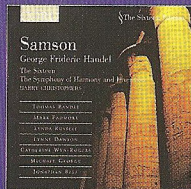


CORO

§ The Sixteen Edition

SAMSON
Handel

3 CD set



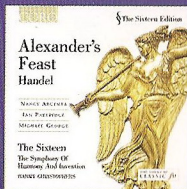
"Powerful choral singing from The Sixteen and alert playing by the period instrument band make this the most pleasurable Samson yet recorded."

THE SUNDAY TIMES

COR16008

ALEXANDER'S FEAST
Handel

2 CD set



"The music is superb, and it's given a superb performance here... superbly stylish Handel singing."

THE GRAMOPHONE

COR16028

RECORDING PRODUCER: Mark Brown RECORDING ENGINEER: Mike Hatch (Floating Earth)
RECORDED AT St Paul's Church, Deptford, London, in November 2007
HARPSICHORD supplied and tuned by Malcolm Greenhalgh
ORGAN supplied and tuned by N P Mander Ltd

PHOTOGRAPHS: of THE SIXTEEN - Graham Midgley; of HARRY CHRISTOPHERS - Nick White;
of CATHERINE WYN-ROGERS - Maura McGroarty; of MARK PADMORE - Marco Borggreve

DESIGN: Andrew Giles - agd@aegidius.org.uk

For further information about recordings on CORO or live performances and tours by
The Sixteen, call +44 (0) 20 7488 2629 or email coro@thesixteen.org.uk



© 2008 The Sixteen Productions Ltd.
© 2008 The Sixteen Productions Ltd.



CORO

§ The Sixteen Edition

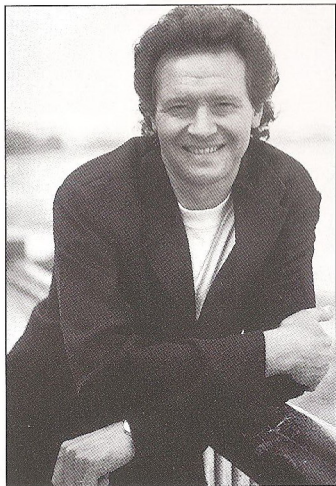
Handel
MESSIAH

Carolyn Sampson Catherine Wyn-Rogers
Mark Padmore Christopher Purves

THE SIXTEEN
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

To find out more about The Sixteen, concert tours, and to buy CDs, visit
www.thesixteen.com

COR16062



I am often asked: "Don't you get bored with conducting *Messiah*?" The answer is a resounding "No!" Can I ever say that I really know it and fully understand what it is capable of? No! As with all great works of art, you never quite gauge its measure.

Messiah has of course become synonymous with Christmas; in many ways this is a great pity, since Charles Jennens's libretto spans Christ's birth, death and resurrection. It was first performed just after Easter in 1742 and the real drama resides in the work's second part, which tells the Easter story. So there is a danger that the tradition of performing it at Christmas, almost as a ritual, can turn it into a warhorse, something you do by rote. The work deserves better than that.

I have conducted *Messiah* well over 150 times and I can say with total honesty that I never tire of it - there is always something new and unexpected to find. Performances change according to venue, audience, mood and singers.

The luxury and personal delight of this recording are that it benefits not only from years of performing *Messiah* as a group but also the sensitivity of all the soloists to that very 'Sixteen' rendition. Carolyn, Mark and Christopher were all, in the formative years of their careers, regular members of the choir. It was apparent from those early days that they would blossom into wonderful soloists; that they have all been highly successful is a constant delight to me. Each of them possesses an unique

delivery, full of interest and character. Catherine I have known for years; back in the early 1980s we sang together in the BBC Singers. Her singing is truly passionate and her delivery of the English language is second to none. There could be no other quartet of soloists for this *Messiah*; in fact it would be true to say that there is a family feeling about the whole enterprise.

As with all Handel oratorios, text is paramount. We are here to tell a very special and unique story, and it is not only important that soloists and choir convey that message, but also that the players respond constantly to the inflections of the text, be it in stylish phrasing or continuo invention.

This recording is the culmination of years of performance by a very special group of musicians. However, it would not have been possible without the whole body of The Sixteen, performers, staff, Board of Trustees and especially our Development Board which masterminded a *Messiah* Partnership, enabling us to bring this project to fruition.

My sincere thanks go to everyone involved.

Harry
Christie

Supported by an investment from The Sixteen *Messiah* Recording Partnership with thanks to Anthony Fry, Robert Gray, Simon Haslam, Mark Loveday, Debbie McMenamin, Damaris Sanderson, and Mark Stadler.

George Frideric Handel
(1685 - 1759)

MESSIAH

Disc 1

PART 1

[1] Symphony	3.09
[2] <i>Accompagnato</i> (tenor): Comfort ye, my people	3.11
[3] <i>Air</i> (tenor): Ev'ry valley shall be exalted	3.33
[4] <i>Chorus</i> : And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed	3.00
[5] <i>Accompagnato</i> (bass): Thus saith the Lord of Hosts	1.23
[6] <i>Air</i> (alto): But who may abide?	4.24
[7] <i>Chorus</i> : And He shall purify	2.29
[8] <i>Recit</i> (alto): Behold a virgin shall conceive	0.30
[9] <i>Air</i> (alto) and <i>Chorus</i> : O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion	5.08
[10] <i>Accompagnato</i> (bass): For behold, darkness shall cover the earth	2.35
[11] <i>Air</i> (bass): The people that walked in darkness	3.15
[12] <i>Chorus</i> : For unto us a child is born	4.01
[13] Pastoral Symphony (<i>Pifa</i>)	2.51
[14] <i>Recit</i> (soprano): There were shepherds abiding in the field	0.19
[15] <i>Accompagnato</i> (soprano): And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them	0.22
[16] <i>Recit</i> (soprano): And the angel said unto them: Fear not	0.31
[17] <i>Accompagnato</i> (soprano): And suddenly there was with the angel	0.16

[18] <i>Chorus</i> : Glory to God in the highest	1.56
[19] <i>Air</i> (soprano): Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion	4.10
[20] <i>Recit</i> (alto): Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened	0.32
[21] <i>Air</i> (alto and soprano): He shall feed His flock like a shepherd	5.38
[22] <i>Chorus</i> : His yoke is easy and His burthen is light	2.19

PART 2

[23] <i>Chorus</i> : Behold the Lamb of God	3.08
[24] <i>Air</i> (alto): He was despised and rejected of men	11.34
Total running time	70.27

Disc 2

[1] <i>Chorus</i> : Surely He hath borne our griefs	1.58
[2] <i>Chorus</i> : And with His stripes we are healed	1.51
[3] <i>Chorus</i> : All we like sheep have gone astray	4.10
[4] <i>Accompagnato</i> (tenor): All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn	0.49
[5] <i>Chorus</i> : He trusted in God that He would deliver Him	2.19
[6] <i>Accompagnato</i> (tenor): Thy rebuke hath broken His heart	2.04
[7] <i>Arioso</i> (tenor): Behold and see if there be any sorrow	3.31
[8] <i>Accompagnato</i> (tenor): He was cut off out of the land of the living	0.16
[9] <i>Air</i> (tenor): But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell	2.20
[10] <i>Chorus</i> : Lift up your heads, O ye gates	2.56
[11] <i>Recit</i> (tenor): Unto which of the angels said He at any time	0.15

12	<i>Chorus</i> : Let all the angels of God worship Him	1.26
13	<i>Air</i> (alto): Thou art gone up on high	3.06
14	<i>Chorus</i> : The Lord gave the word	1.08
15	<i>Air</i> (soprano): How beautiful are the feet of them	2.06
16	<i>Chorus</i> : Their sound is gone out into all lands	1.22
17	<i>Air</i> (bass): Why do the nations so furiously rage together?	2.44
18	<i>Chorus</i> : Let us break their bonds asunder	1.51
19	<i>Recit</i> (tenor): He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn	0.13
20	<i>Air</i> (tenor): Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron	2.13
21	<i>Chorus</i> : Hallelujah!	3.55

PART 3

22	<i>Air</i> (soprano): I know that my redeemer liveth	6.18
23	<i>Chorus</i> : Since by man came death	2.29
24	<i>Accompagnato</i> (bass): Behold, I tell you a mystery	0.38
25	<i>Air</i> (bass): The trumpet shall sound	8.31
26	<i>Recit</i> (alto): Then shall be brought to pass	0.15
27	<i>Duet</i> (alto and tenor): O Death, where is thy sting?	1.02
28	<i>Chorus</i> : But thanks be to God	2.09
29	<i>Air</i> (soprano): If God be for us, who can be against us?	4.51
30	<i>Chorus</i> : Worthy is the Lamb that was slain	3.29
31	<i>Chorus</i> : Amen	3.45
	Total running time	74.16

Special Edition Bonus CD of Handel – The Sixteen – Harry Christophers

All tracks are available on CORO – see www.thesixteen.com for further details

1	Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (<i>Solomon</i>)	3.09
	From <i>Heroes and Heroines</i> (COR16025)	
2	The Lord our enemy has slain - (soli and chorus)	11.04
	Lynda Russell (soprano), Michael Chance (alto), Mark Padmore (tenor), Robert Evans and Simon Birchall (bass). From <i>Esther</i> (COR16019)	
3	Nel dolce dell'obblío	7.27
	Elin Manahan Thomas (soprano), Katie Bircher (flute) From <i>Fedel e Costante</i> (COR16045)	
4 - 6	Harp Concerto Op.4, No.6 in B flat	
	Andrew Lawrence-King (triple harp), Stephen Stubbs (archlute), Erin Headley (lirone). From <i>Alexander's Feast</i> (COR16028)	
	Allegro	6.23
	Larghetto	4.15
	Allegro moderato	2.50
7	Sinfonia to Act 2 (<i>Ariodante</i>)	1.29
	From <i>Heroes and Heroines</i> (COR16025)	
8	Scherza infida (<i>Ariodante</i>) - (recitative and aria)	12.21
	Sarah Connolly (mezzo-soprano). From <i>Heroes and Heroines</i> (COR16025)	
9	Let the bright seraphim - (air and chorus)	6.26
	Lynne Dawson (soprano), Crispian Steele-Perkins (trumpet) From <i>Samson</i> (COR16008)	
	Total running time	55.30

DOING THE *MESSIAH* A Choral Tradition

As familiar as the work appears today, Handel's *Messiah* once enjoyed an almost common place in popular culture. Richard Hoggart wrote about the oratorio's blindness to class barriers, famously describing boyhood days when chapel choirs and choral societies throughout Yorkshire's West Riding performed the work on high days and holidays. "For weeks before Christmas," he recalled in the late 1950s, "we used to be drafted out of Sunday school in my Primitive Methodist chapel to swell the chorus for the greatest of favourites, the *Messiah*. As we walked through the streets ... we noted that the bald brick front of the Wesleyans, three streets off, announced that they, too, were doing the *Messiah* again, and that the plain Methodists on the other side of the 'Moor' were trying *Judas Maccabeus* for a change."

The tradition of 'doing the *Messiah*' remained in good health when those sentences were written, despite threats from punchier secular entertainments. Hoggart guessed that "any moderate-sized working-class crowd in Hunslet" could still supply at least fifty people "who could

take up the 'Hallelujah Chorus'". Here was a composition elevated by the ubiquitous addition of the definite article, its music often passed down the family line from one generation of choral singers to the next. Those who aspired to join a first-rate choral society would be expected to know *Messiah*, and might be asked to sing one or other of its choruses before a selection panel. In short, Handel's masterpiece was ingrained in the collective consciousness of amateur choristers and their audiences.

Societal shifts and changes charted in Hoggart's influential study, *The Uses of Literacy*, gathered pace in subsequent decades. The rise of the so-called Early Music Movement and its powerful influence during the last century's closing decades contributed to the list of threats recorded against the choral society tradition. Massed choral performances of *Messiah*, once commonplace, have become rare events. How many Hunsletites, working class or otherwise, would be able to pass the Hoggart 'Hallelujah Chorus' test today? Fifteen, perhaps, or maybe a solid dozen, but surely not fifty.

I make the point not to belittle the often excellent work of our amateur choirs or the eclectic, innovative repertoire that so many have to offer. *Messiah*, however, has dropped low on the radar screen of their

activity, despite the sterling work of small-scale ensembles and youthful chamber choirs. Those who tackle it for the first time expecting an easy Handelian ride discover that the composer's part-writing requires technical skill, stamina and a surprising level of virtuosity. 'His yoke is easy', as the chorus runs: Handel's contrapuntal setting of the text here is anything but easy. Neither is the vocal finesse demanded by the rapid-fire 'we have turned' figures in 'All we like sheep have gone astray' or the boisterous roudades that decorate 'And he shall purify'. *Messiah* tests the vocal fitness and musical expertise of choristers and soloists alike.

The Sixteen is populated with singers fully armed to deal with Handel's tricks and turns; moreover, its members bring a corporate distinction to *Messiah* in performance that far exceeds its technical challenges. The foundations clearly rest on an abundance of good things. In choral terms, rock-steady intonation; incisive yet unforced diction; unanimous ensemble and articulation, and the dependably lyrical unfolding of melodic lines underpin The Sixteen's work here, is comparable to the superior nuts and bolts of a winning Formula One car. Their accomplished expertise, fully captured in this studio recording, has been honed by 150 or so

performances, a statistic that would have amazed even the serial *Messiah* singers of Richard Hoggart's Yorkshire youth.

Vocal efficiency and excellence, however, do not alone a Sixteen *Messiah* make. Surface detail and deeper structural relationships, successively shaped by Harry Christophers and his colleagues, carry the weight of the argument here to catch the ear and hold it with a register of compelling interpretative ideas. It is worth recalling one contemporary reaction to Handel's composition, in which the work was judged to be closer to a succession of hymns or anthems than an oratorio conceived for performance in theatres and secular spaces. That view sharply conflicts with the presentation in this recording of distinct groups of related movements, strategically placed moments of rest, and an interpretation shaped by an overriding dramatic vision.

For example, the sequence of choruses dealing with the Messiah's intercession for the sins of mankind, beginning with 'Surely he hath born our griefs', drives forward with great urgency towards Handel's theatrical and theological masterstroke, a stripped-down setting of Isaiah's prophesy: 'And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all'. The solo tenor's subsequent accompanied recitative, with its fearful 'smiting' figure

in the violins, erupts out of a silence made the more telling by the unbridled energy of what has gone before.

On the matter of surface detail, listen to the pointed articulation of the words 'that was slain' in 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain', a simple effect that gains from its quieter retelling. The eloquent phrasing given to the work's closing 'Amen' complements the noble simplicity of Handel's inventive counterpoint. Those final eighty-eight bars, among the most sublime in *Messiah*, can all too often sound like a sepia tonal wash applied to the tail-end of a taxing performance. Earlier in the piece, from the sighing viola figures in the Overture's fugue in fact, we meet unexpected nuance, idiomatic contrasts and insightful expressive gestures. Prophetic words are consequently revealed as if uttered for the first time: the 'refiner's fire' burns white hot, casting flames back in the direction of the alto soloist's question, 'But who may abide the day of his coming?'

Although truncated cadences help propel the music forward at the end of recitatives, Harry Christophers takes his tempo lead from the sense of the words. The sequence telling of the shepherds, the angel messenger, the arrival of the heavenly host, and their spontaneous glorification of 'God in the highest', evolves from pastoral

scene to celestial panoply without haste, all to the good of the narrative's dramatic transformation. In Part the Second, as Handel's librettist styled it, the sopranos in unison with the first violins, evoke the redemptive purity of the Lamb of God, 'that taketh away the sins of the world'. Their restraint prepares the way for Catherine Wyn-Rogers' heartbreaking engagement with the all-too-human emotions, whether contemplative or active, of 'He was despised'.

Emotional contrasts hallmark the oratorio's set-piece bass and tenor arias, deeply etched when needed and more delicately shaded when not by Christopher Purves and Mark Padmore. And Carolyn Sampson's artistry establishes beyond doubt *Messiah's* central message of Christian redemption, one of comfort and hope, crowned with a transcendent account of 'I know that my redeemer liveth'. The communicative power of The Sixteen's *Messiah*, fuelled by the oratorio's expressive variety, connects words and music directly to listeners in a secular age, believers and unbelievers alike. The "enormous-bosomed women and fierce old men" of Richard Hoggart's chapel choir *Messiah* performances would surely have sung Amen to that.

© Andrew Stewart

THE ORPHEUS OF OUR AGE

M*essiah* marks the most important turning point in Handel's professional career. Some months before embarking on its composition in the summer of 1741, he had wound up an unsuccessful season of Italian opera, destined to be the last of those he had presented in London over the preceding twenty years. The new work consolidated on recent experiments with English oratorio, including such varied and inventive achievements as *Saul*, *Israel in Egypt* and *Alexander's Feast*. Though his journey to Ireland was originally undertaken as a purely commercial enterprise, the fact that he chose Dublin rather than London for *Messiah's* première is not without its own artistic significance. Trying out its first version on an appreciative Irish audience, he could make plans for a triumphant return to the English capital and a fresh engagement with that metropolitan public he had courted with such consummate shrewdness since arriving from Hanover as a young man in 1710.

Contemporary writers often referred to London's smarter social echelons as 'the town' and it was this constituency Handel always took care to cultivate. In no sense

was he a snob, but upward mobility was in his blood. Georg Handel, his father, was a blacksmith's son who married a Lutheran pastor's daughter, became a distinguished physician and acquired a coat-of-arms. Featuring two boys holding medical flasks (Dr Handel was official inspector of urine samples for his native city of Halle) this honourable escutcheon can be seen on the memorial tablet beneath his son's monument in Westminster Abbey.

Bearing arms made George Frideric Handel officially a gentleman. No wonder that in establishing a permanent London base for himself, he should have sought a certain distance from the world of ordinary working musicians, many of whom lived in areas such as Soho or Covent Garden, not always in very comfortable circumstances. After some years spent lodging in the town house of a rich merchant and later as the guest of the music-loving Lord Burlington, Handel rented a newly-built property in Mayfair, recently developed as a residential quarter and favoured by 'the town' for its closeness to the semi-rural Hyde Park and the fields and market gardens beyond. While this house in Brook Street – now the Handel House Museum – was in one sense a business premises, where scores and orchestral parts were prepared and copied, rehearsals took place and tickets were issued,

it was also a handsome private dwelling, in which Handel could display his collection of paintings and prints and indulge his passion for good food and fine wine.

Sociable, though not necessarily companionable – the distinction is worth making – he began to make friends, during the 1730s, among a circle of aristocrats and gentry for whom his music represented one of their age's most remarkable achievements. Among them, a near neighbour in Brook Street, was Mary Pendarves, young widow of a Cornish squire, at whose evening parties Handel enchanted the company with his performance at the harpsichord. Another ardent enthusiast was Lord Shaftesbury, who kept up a lively Handelian correspondence with his friends Thomas and James Harris, all of them eagerly reporting on Handel's latest works or on his state of health, a genuine cause for concern in the months leading up to *Messiah*'s composition.

'When ye Fate of Harmony depends upon a Single Life, the Lovers of Harmony may well be allowed to be Sollicitous', observed Shaftesbury anxiously. For another nobleman, Lord Egmont, Handel was 'the Orpheus of our age'. It was in the guise of Apollo, the god of music himself, that the composer's increasing celebrity status was clinched by a unique tribute paid to him in 1738 by Jonathan Tyers, owner

of the newly-opened Vauxhall pleasure gardens. From the sculptor Louis-François Roubiliac he commissioned a full-length statue of Handel, the first such monument to a living musician, installed as a decorative feature amid Vauxhall's groves. The work is a startlingly effective combination of classical fantasy and penetrating realism, presenting the composer in elegant 'undress' – loose gown, one slipper off and a turban replacing his wig – but holding a lyre as any musical deity should.

It was this double image of Handel, divine yet all too fallibly human, which alternately fascinated and exasperated Shaftesbury's friend Charles Jennens, himself something of a self-made gentleman as the well-to-do son of a Midland industrialist. "Everything that has been united with Handel's music," he once declared, "becomes sacred by such a union in my eyes," and their working collaboration began in 1738 with the dramatic oratorio *Saul*, for which Jennens provided a libretto of epic grandeur. Handel's genteel politeness oiled the wheels of their professional relationship, though Jennens, anxious as he was for the political or religious subtext of a libretto to be understood, was sometimes unhappy with the composer's treatment of his words. In selecting biblical passages for *Messiah*, Jennens chose to emphasize the mystery

of the Resurrection, Christ as the suffering Saviour and the prophecies surrounding the Nativity. Handel surely grasped the significance of these themes, but Jennens dismissed him as lazy or obstinate in his approach to setting the 'Scripture Collection' and his nagging threatened to bring on another attack of the 'Paraetick Disorder' from which the composer had recently suffered. How much did this creative tension between the gentleman amateur and the god of music contribute to the ultimate success of *Messiah*? 'He has made a fine Entertainment of it, tho' not near so good as he might & ought to have done', was Jennens's grudging conclusion, one he saw no reason to alter. Handel, understandably, saw his oratorio as something rather more weighty than a mere 'entertainment'. Praised for its pleasing reception by 'the town', he remarked: 'I should be sorry if I only entertained them, I wish to make them better'.

© Jonathan Keates

THE GENESIS OF *MESSIAH*

Despite the dwindling popularity of his Italian operas during the late 1730s, Handel stubbornly continued

to compose and promote new works for the stage. Rival opera companies, offering good salaries and attracting the best singers, and the desire for works in English helped curtail Handel's commercial success as an opera composer, a position he'd enjoyed almost unchallenged for thirty-five years. The composer's early attempts at producing English oratorios had met with a mixed reception; in 1739, however, he began a fruitful collaboration with Charles Jennens, a cultivated and gifted writer. Jennens provided the libretto for the dramatic oratorio *Saul*, the biblical epic *Israel in Egypt* and the moralising pastoral tale *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso ed Il Moderato*, a joint compilation of Milton's and Jennens's work. Although the latter proved a hit with London audiences, for the 1740-41 season Handel returned to the composition of Italian opera, producing two new works which proved disastrous flops. According to a rumour circulated in the *London Daily Post*, Handel was on the verge of returning to Germany in the spring of 1741.

In a letter to the classical scholar Edward Holdsworth, dated 10 July 1741, Jennens first referred to a new libretto which was to leave a significant mark on Handel's future. "Handel says he will do nothing next Winter, but I hope I shall persuade him to set another Scripture Collection I

have made for him, & perform it for his own Benefit in Passion week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius & Skill upon it, that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subjects excells every other Subject. The Subject is Messiah....” Unlike Jennens’s libretto for *Saul*, which Handel had ignored for three years until the opportunity for a suitable performance materialised, the new text coincided with an ideal commission, renewing Handel’s popular appeal and focusing his attention on oratorio composition.

During the summer of 1741, Handel received an invitation from William Cavendish, the Lord Lieutenant of Dublin, to compose a new sacred oratorio. It was expected that the commission would stand at the head of a series of performances of *Alexander’s Feast*, *Acis and Galatea*, the *Ode for St Cecilia’s Day* and *L’Allegro*, to be given in Dublin’s New Music Hall in Fishamble Street the following year. Handel began work on *Messiah* on 22 August, completing the score by 14 September. Even by Handel’s own demanding standards this was a remarkable achievement, made even more so by the sheer quality and inventiveness of his writing.

In view of Handel’s habitual practice of recycling material from his or others’ works and the frenetic pace at which he

composed the new work, there are notably few examples of borrowings in *Messiah*. Where such transformations do occur, the majority are of original Handel: for example, the Italian duet cantata *Nò, di voi non vo’fidarmi* becomes the basis of ‘For unto us a child is born’, which explains the false stress on the first English word. Elsewhere, ‘His yoke is easy’ and ‘And He shall purify’ are reworkings of material from Handel’s Italian duet *Quel fior che all’alba ride*. Ironically, Handel sets the word ‘easy’ from ‘His yoke is easy’ to a florid passage originally composed to carry the word ride (‘smiles’); as any singer will testify, this chorus is anything but easy. *Messiah* conforms to a tonal scheme which gives the work an overall sense of unity and forward momentum, reflecting the carefully judged progress of the text.

Jennens selected the bulk of the text for *Messiah* from the Authorised Version of 1611, with occasional reference to the Great Bible of 1539 for the Psalms. He sensitively adapted a number of lines, telescoping and refining scriptural passages to suit musical treatment. The central issue of doctrine conveyed by Jennens – that Jesus as Messiah represents the foundation of Christianity – is illustrated by the words of Old Testament prophets and corroborated by New Testament authors. As such, the text

remains contemplative, largely avoiding a narrative of the events of Christ’s life. No doubt Jennens wished to avoid direct personification of the Messiah and his disciples in a work which would receive performance in a secular context. The Messianic tradition is outlined clearly in the libretto’s journey from Old Testament prophecy, through the Nativity (in Part 1), Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ (in Part 2) to the final assurance of Redemption (in Part 3).

Immediately before embarking for Dublin, Handel stayed briefly in Chester, where the young Charles Burney noted his impression of the composer’s irascible nature: “I was at the Public-School in that city, and very well remember seeing him smoke a pipe, over a dish of coffee, at the Exchange-Coffee-house; for being extremely curious to see so extraordinary a man, I watched him narrowly as long as he remained in Chester; which, on account of the wind being unfavourable for his embarking at Parkgate, was several days. During this time, he applied to Mr. Baker, the Organist, my first music-master, to know whether there were any choirmen in the cathedral who could sing at sight; as he wished to prove some books that had been hastily transcribed, by trying the choruses which he intended to perform in Ireland.

Mr. Baker mentioned some of the most likely singers then in Chester, and, among the rest, a printer of the name of Janson, who had a good bass voice, and was one of the best musicians in the choir... A time was fixed for this private rehearsal at the Golden Falcon, where HANDEL was quartered; but, alas! on trial of the chorus in the *Messiah*, ‘And with his stripes we are healed,’ – Poor Janson, after repeated attempts, failed so egregiously, that HANDEL let lose his great bear upon him; and after swearing in four languages, cried out in broken English: ‘You schautrel! tit not you dell me dat you could sing at soite?’ – ‘Yes, sir,’ says the printer, ‘and so I can; but not at first sight.’” Although there seems good reason to doubt the veracity of the last part of Burney’s account, the story helps to confirm that *Messiah* was unperformed before Handel left for Ireland.

As the second city in the British Isles, Dublin boasted a formidable musical establishment: Handel’s friend Matthew Dubourg had been Master of the State Music since 1728 and was to lead the orchestra assembled to perform the composer’s ‘Musical Entertainments’. The soloists for the first performance of *Messiah* were also of a good standard; indeed Susannah Cibber, on singing ‘He was despised’, reportedly prompted one

member of the audience, the Reverend Dr Delany, to rise from his seat and exclaim, 'Woman, for this, be all thy sins forgiven!'

On 27 March 1742 Faulkner's Dublin Journal ran the following advertisement: 'For Relief of the Prisoners in several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Mr Handel's new Grand Oratorio call'd the MESSIAH, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertoes on Organ, by Mr Handel.' So sure were the organisers of audience interest that a request was made through the columns of the same paper for ladies to attend the first night 'without hoops' in their dresses and for gentlemen to leave their swords at home, so that the capacity of the hall might be extended from 600 to 700. The first performance was delayed until 13 April, 'At the Desire of several Persons of distinction', but the success of the public rehearsal and glowing notices in the Dublin Journal ensured the entire Who's Who of Dublin society paid one guinea to pack the New Music Hall. Around £400 was raised and divided between the named charities, with Handel setting the precedent followed by his fellow performers of waiving his fee.

The work was given a repeat performance on 3 June as Handel's final Dublin concert.

In his absence from London little had outwardly changed to suggest that the public would be any more interested in Handel the opera composer than they were before his Dublin sojourn. News of *Messiah's* success soon reached the capital, but the prevailing climate of religious reform inspired by the Wesleys and others attracted a cool, even hostile, response to the announcement that the sacred oratorio was to be performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, a place traditionally associated with the profane. In addition, Jennens began to express openly his disapproval that *Messiah* was first performed in Dublin and, to emphasise his chagrin, rather churlishly stated that the work contained a number of 'weak parts', that it was set 'in great haste' and that Handel was a plagiarist. On 2 December 1741 Jennens again wrote to Holdsworth: "I heard with great pleasure at my arrival in Town, that Handel had set the oratorio of *Messiah*; but it was some mortification to me that instead of performing it here he was gone to Ireland with it." Notwithstanding the disapproval of the Methodists, Jennens's barbed attacks, and the temporary recurrence of Handel's 'paralytic disorder' (he had his

second stroke in April 1743) brought about by their criticisms, *Messiah* was revived in 1745 and again in 1749.

The following year Handel himself began a tradition of annual *Messiah* performances, presented as the last oratorio of his Lent season at Covent Garden (just before Holy Week, almost in accordance with Jennens's original intentions) and repeated the following month at the newly built chapel of the Foundling Hospital, a London charitable institution for abandoned children supported by Handel both as benefactor and a governor. Details of the performing forces employed on these occasions are well documented, recorded in the Foundling Hospital minute books. These show that Handel took full advantage of the forces offered to him by the Hospital's orchestra, an increase on those available to him in Dublin but by no means unusual for the time. The accounts show that four or possibly six boy trebles and thirteen men (altos, tenors and basses) would have taken part, joined in their choruses by five soloists.

It can be fairly said that there is no definitive score of Handel's *Messiah*. For each performance of *Messiah* between 1750 and his death in 1759 Handel made revisions, additions and alterations, some substantive, others only cosmetic: for

example, the aria 'But who may abide the day of his coming?' exists in no fewer than six different versions, including a short form for bass, unchanged in tempo at 'for He is like a refiner's fire', the same transposed for the tenor Thomas Lowe, and three separate versions for the castrato Gaetano Gudanigi.

The universal appeal of *Messiah* was greatly enhanced during the nineteenth century, when the work stood as the totem of Victorian religious zeal. Massed performances employing vast numbers of singers and players became the norm, until the more recent trend for small-scale treatment was established. The work's essence has survived changes in performance practice and seismic shifts in the place of religion within British society. *Messiah's* essential spirit was eloquently expressed by the Bishop of Elphin immediately following its first performance: "The whole is beyond any thing I had a notion of till I Read and heard it. It seems to be a Species of Musick different from any other, and this is particularly remarkable of it. That tho' the Composition is very Masterly & artificial, yet the Harmony is So great and open, as to please all who have Ears & will hear, learned & unlearn'd."

© Andrew Stewart

MESSIAH

Disc 1

PART 1

1 Symphony

2 Comfort ye, my people *accompagnato* (tenor)

Comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

(Isaiah XL 1 - 3)

3 Ev'ry valley shall be exalted *air* (tenor)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low: the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

(Isaiah XL 4)

4 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed *chorus*

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(Isaiah XL 5)

5 Thus saith the Lord of Hosts *accompagnato* (bass)

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while, and I will shake the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.

The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

(Haggai II 6 - 7: Malachi III 1)

6 But who may abide? *air* (alto)

But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

(Malachi III 2)

7 And He shall purify *chorus*

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

(Malachi III 3)

8 Behold a virgin shall conceive *recit* (alto)

Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, God with us.

(Isaiah VII 14; Matthew I 23)

9 O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion *air* (alto)

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion *chorus*

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, say unto the cities of Judah,
Behold your God! Behold! the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (Isaiah XL9; LX1)

10 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth *accompagnato* (bass)

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people:
but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.
And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.
(Isaiah IX 2 - 3)

11 The people that walked in darkness *air* (bass)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the
land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.
(Isaiah IX 2)

12 For unto us a child is born *chorus*

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon
His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God,
the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.
(Isaiah IX 6)

13 Pastoral Symphony (Pifa)

14 There were shepherds abiding in the field *recit* (soprano)

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
(Luke II 8)

15 And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them

accompagnato (soprano)

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round
about them, and they were sore afraid.
(Luke II 9)

16 And the angel said unto them: Fear not *recit* (soprano)

And the angel said unto them: Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great
joy, which shall be to all people:
for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.
(Luke II 1 - 10)

17 And suddenly there was with the angel *accompagnato* (soprano)

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God,
and saying:
(Luke II 13)

18 Glory to God in the highest *chorus*

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men. (Luke II 14)

19 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion *air* (soprano)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem,
behold, thy King cometh unto thee.
He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.
(Zechariah IX 9 - 10)

20 Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened *recit* (alto)

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

(Isaiah XXXV 5 - 6)

21 He shall feed His flock like a shepherd *air* (alto & soprano)

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and He shall gather the lambs with His arm,
and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Come unto Him, all ye that labour, that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest.

Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart,

and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

(Isaiah XL 11; Matthew XI 28 - 29)

22 His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light *chorus*

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

(Matthew XI 30)

PART 2



23 Behold the Lamb of God *chorus*

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

(John I 29)

24 He was despised and rejected of men *air* (alto)

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair;

He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

(Isaiah LIII 3; LIII 6)

PART 2 (continued)

1 Surely He hath borne our griefs *chorus*

Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities,
the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

(Isaiah LIII 4 - 5)

2 And with His stripes we are healed *chorus*

And with His stripes we are healed.

(Isaiah LIII 5)

3 All we like sheep have gone astray *chorus*

All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.

And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

(Isaiah LIII 6)

4 All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn *accompagnato* (tenor)

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn:

they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:

(Psalm XXII 8)

5 He trusted in God that He would deliver Him *chorus*

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him:

let Him deliver Him if He delight in Him.

(Psalm XXII 9)

Ⓔ Thy rebuke hath broken His heart *accompagnato* (tenor)

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness: He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any, to comfort Him.

(Psalm LXIX 21)

Ⓙ Behold and see if there be any sorrow *arioso* (tenor)

Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

(Lamentations I 12)

Ⓜ He was cut off out of the land of the living *accompagnato* (tenor)

He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken.

(Isaiah LIII 8)

Ⓢ But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell *air* (tenor)

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell, nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

(Psalm XVI 10)

Ⓣ Lift up your heads, O ye gates *chorus*

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is the King of Glory?

The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

The Lord of Hosts: He is the King of Glory.

(Psalm XXIV 7 - 10)

Ⓤ Unto which of the angels said He at any time *recit* (tenor)

Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee?

(Hebrews I 5)

Ⓦ Let all the angels of God worship Him *chorus*

Let all the angels of God worship Him.

(Hebrews I. 6)

Ⓧ Thou art gone up on high *air* (alto)

Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

(Psalm LXVIII 18)

Ⓨ The Lord gave the word *chorus*

The Lord gave the word, great was the company of the preachers.

(Psalm LXVIII 12)

Ⓩ How beautiful are the feet of them *air* (soprano)

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.

(Romans X 15)

ⓐ Their sound is gone out into all lands *chorus*

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

(Romans X 18)

17 Why do the nations so furiously rage together? *air* (bass)

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against His Anointed.

(Psalm II 3)

18 Let us break their bonds asunder *chorus*

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

(Psalm II 3)

19 He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn *recit* (tenor)

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them
in derision.

(Psalm II 4)

20 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron *air* (tenor)

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a
potter's vessel.

(Psalm II 9)

21 Hallelujah! *chorus*

Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ:
and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Hallelujah!

(Revelation XIX 6; XI 15; XIX 16)



PART 3

22 I know that my redeemer liveth *air* (soprano)

I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:
and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.

(Job XIX 25 - 26; Corinthians XV 20)

23 Since by man came death *chorus*

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (I Corinthians XV 51 - 52)

24 Behold, I tell you a mystery *accompagnato* (bass)

Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a
moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

(I Corinthians XV 51 - 52)

25 The trumpet shall sound *air* (bass)

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,
and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

(I Corinthians XV 52 - 53)

26 Then shall be brought to pass *recit* (alto)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,
Death is swallowed up in victory.

(I Corinthians XV 54)

27 O Death, where is thy sting? *duet* (alto & tenor)

O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. (I Corinthians XV 55 - 56)

28 But thanks be to God *chorus*

But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(I Corinthians XV 57)

29 If God be for us, who can be against us? *air* (soprano)

If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.

(Romans VIII 31, 33 - 34)

30 Worthy is the Lamb that was slain *chorus*

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Blessing and honour, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

(Revelation V 12 - 13)

31 Amen *chorus*

Amen.



SOLOISTS

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Carolyn Sampson

Catherine Wyn-Rogers

Mark Padmore

Christopher Purves

THE SIXTEEN

SOPRANO

Julie Cooper

Grace Davidson

Alison Hill

Kirsty Hopkins

Charlotte Mobbs

Rebecca Outram

ALTO

Ian Aitkenhead

David Clegg

William Missin

Christopher Royall

TENOR

Simon Berridge

Jeremy Budd

Mark Dobell

David Roy

BASS

Jonathan Arnold

Ben Davies

Eamonn Dougan

Jimmy Holliday

Timothy Jones

VIOLIN I

Walter Reiter (leader)

Jean Paterson

Andrea Morris

Iwona Muszynska

Ellen O'Dell

Henrietta Wayne

Peter Fender

VIOLIN II

Miles Golding (principal)

Theresa Caudle

Stephen Jones

Claire Nelson

Rebecca Miles

VIOLA

Martin Kelly (principal)

Stefanie Heichelheim

VIOLONCELLO

Joseph Crouch (principal)

Imogen Seth-Smith

DOUBLE BASS

Jan Spencer

OBOE

Anthony Robson (principal)

Catherine Latham

BASSOON

Sally Jackson

TRUMPET

Robert Farley (solo)

Christopher Pigram

TIMPANI

Charles Fullbrook

THEORBO

David Miller

HARPSICHORD

Gary Cooper

ORGAN

Alastair Ross

Carolyn Sampson has established a reputation as one of the most exciting sopranos to emerge in recent years. Born in Bedford in England, she read music at the University of Birmingham. Equally at home on the concert and opera stages, she has enjoyed notable successes both in the UK as well as throughout Europe and the US.

Carolyn Sampson's many roles for English National Opera have included the title role in *Semele* and Pamina (*The Magic Flute*) as well as roles in *The Coronation of Poppea*, *The Fairy Queen* and *Le nozze di Figaro*. Concert engagements in the UK have included *Messiah* with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the BBC Proms with The English Concert and Trevor Pinnock and Bach's *St John Passion* with the Hallé Orchestra and Mark Elder. In Europe her many appearances have included Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Philippe Herreweghe and *St John Passion* with The Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and Gustav Leonhardt. Carolyn has toured the US with The King's Consort as featured soloist, has sung the title role in Lully's *Psyché* for the Boston Early Music Festival and performed with the St Paul Chamber Orchestra. She has appeared in the BBC Proms Chamber



Music Series, given recitals for BBC Radio 3 and appeared at the Wigmore Hall in a joint recital with Robin Blaze.

Carolyn has made many recordings including a highly acclaimed CD of Sacred Music selected as BBC Music Magazine's 'Record of the Month'. Her releases include Handel's *Solomon* with the Rias Kammerchor for Harmonia Mundi and Handel duets with Robin Blaze for BIS. Carolyn enjoys collaborating regularly with The Sixteen and has performed with them in many concerts as well as this recording.

Catherine Wyn-Rogers was a Foundation Scholar at the Royal College of Music, studying with Meriel St Clair and gaining several prizes including the Dame Clara Butt award. She continued her studies with Ellis Keeler and now works with Diane Forlano.

Catherine works extensively in recital and oratorio, appearing with the major British orchestras and choral societies and at the Three Choirs, Edinburgh and Aldeburgh Festivals and at the BBC Proms. She is equally renowned for her performances with the period instrument orchestras. Her engagements have included appearances with the Philharmonia under Slatkin, the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Haitink and Andrew Davis, the Netherlands Radio Orchestra under Rozhdestvensky, the European Union Youth Orchestra under Haitink and her debut with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Norrington.

Catherine's numerous recordings include Handel's *Samson* with The Sixteen under Harry Christophers, Mozart's *Vespers* with Trevor Pinnock for DG, Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* with Roger Norrington for Decca, and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* for EMI. She has joined Graham Johnson's Complete Schubert Edition for



Hyperion, recorded Mozart's *Requiem* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Sir Charles Mackerras and Mrs Sedley (*Peter Grimes*) with the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Colin Davis.

She appears regularly on the opera stage and has worked with Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, the Semperoper Dresden, the Teatro Real Madrid, the Netherlands Opera and the Salzburg Festival. She is a regular guest artist with English National Opera and made her debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in Tippet's *The Midsummer Marriage*. Having performed *Messiah* with them many times, Catherine is delighted to be part of this recording with Harry Christophers and the Sixteen.

Mark Padmore was born in London and grew up in Canterbury. He gained a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, and graduated with an honours degree in music. He has established a flourishing career in opera, concert and recital. His performances in Bach's Passions have gained particular notice throughout the world.

In the opera house he has worked with such theatrically-minded directors as Peter Brook, Katie Mitchell, Mark Morris and Deborah Warner. Work includes Handel's Jephtha at WNO and ENO and he also played Peter Quint in an acclaimed BBC TV production of *Turn of the Screw*. He recorded the title role in *La clemenza di Tito* with René Jacobs for Harmonia Mundi.

In concert he has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras including the Berlin, Vienna and New York Philharmonics, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the LSO. He makes regular appearances with the OAE with whom he conceived a project exploring Bach's St John Passion.

He has given recitals in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Milan, Moscow, New York and Paris and he appears frequently at the Wigmore Hall in London. As well as his regular collaborators Julius Drake, Roger



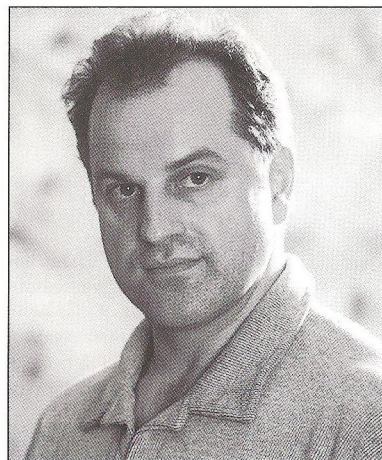
Vignoles and Andrew West he works with many internationally renowned chamber musicians including Imogen Cooper, Till Fellner and Paul Lewis.

He has made many recordings including the Bach Passions with Herreweghe and McCreesh, Bach Cantatas with Eliot Gardiner and Herreweghe and Haydn Masses with Hickox. His disc of Handel arias ('As Steals the Morn') recorded with The English Concert and Andrew Manze won the BBC Music Magazine Vocal Award in April 2008. Mark has wonderful memories of singing *Messiah* as a member of The Sixteen and is delighted to be singing the tenor solos on this new recording.

Christopher Purves studied English at King's College, Cambridge, before performing and recording with the rock and roll group Harvey and the Wallbangers.

His operatic engagements include *Alcina* (Bayerische Staatsoper), Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Scottish Opera), the title roles in *Wozzeck* and *Don Giovanni* and The General in James MacMillan's opera *The Sacrifice* (Welsh National Opera), Cecil Maria Stuarda (Edinburgh Festival), Sharpless in Minghella's *Madam Butterfly* (English National Opera), his debut at Covent Garden in Richard Jones's new production of *Gianni Schicchi* and Balstrode in Opera North's critically acclaimed *Peter Grimes*.

In concert Christopher has appeared with the Gabrieli Consort in Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* in Nuremberg and *Saul* (Covent Garden and La Chaise Dieu Festivals), in Mozart's *Mass in C* (The Sixteen), Handel's *Messiah* (Academy of Ancient Music, Handel and Haydn Society and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment), *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* (Orquestra Nacional d'Espana), Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (English Chamber Orchestra) and Britten's *War Requiem* and Haydn's *Creation* (Ulster Orchestra). Recordings include the title role *Le nozze di Figaro* (Chandos – Mackerras).



Christopher has also appeared as Ford *Falstaff* (Welsh National Opera), Haydn's *Nelson Mass* (Scottish Chamber Orchestra), Nick Shadow *The Rake's Progress* (Garsington Opera), Tonio *Pagliacci* (ENO), Beckmesser *Die Meistersinger* (WNO), title role *Falstaff* (Glyndebourne Festival), Balstrode *Peter Grimes* (Houston Grand Opera) and The Traveller *Death in Venice* (New York City Opera). Christopher has a close association with The Sixteen and has performed Handel's *Messiah* with them on several occasions.

Harry Christophers is known internationally as founder and conductor of The Sixteen as well as a regular guest conductor for many of the major symphony orchestras and opera companies worldwide. He has conducted The Sixteen throughout Europe, America and the Far East gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque and twentieth century music. In 2000 he instituted The Choral Pilgrimage as The Sixteen's contribution to the millennium celebrations, which raised awareness of this historic repertoire so successfully that the Choral Pilgrimage in the UK is now central to the annual artistic programme.



As a guest conductor, Harry Christophers has enjoyed a special partnership with the BBC Philharmonic, including a disc of American-inspired works which won a Diapason d'Or. He is guest conductor with the Deutsches Kammerphilharmonie, City of London Sinfonia, Boston's Handel and Haydn Society, the Granada Symphony Orchestra and the Orquesta de la Comunidad de Madrid. He has also worked with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields (releasing a disc on CORO with The Sixteen of Fauré's *Requiem*), the Hallé, the London Symphony Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony.

Increasingly busy in opera, Harry Christophers has conducted Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse*, Gluck's *Orfeo*, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Purcell's *King Arthur* and Rameau's *Platée* for Lisbon Opera. After an acclaimed English National Opera debut with *The Coronation of Poppea* he has since returned for Gluck's *Orfeo* and Handel's *Ariodante*, as well as conducting the UK premiere of Messager's opera *Fortunio* for Grange Park Opera. He also conducts regularly at Buxton Opera.



§ The Sixteen

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

After three decades of world-wide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised as one of the world's greatest ensembles. Comprising both choir and period instrument orchestra, the group's special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance, Baroque and early Classical, and a diversity of twentieth century music, all stems from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers.

The Sixteen tours throughout Europe, Japan, Australia and the Americas and has given regular performances worldwide at the major concert halls and festivals. At home in the UK, The Sixteen are "The Voices of Classic FM" as well as Associate Artists of Southbank Centre, London. The group also promotes The Choral Pilgrimage, an annual tour of the UK's finest cathedrals, bringing music back to the buildings for which it was written.

The Orchestra of The Sixteen has taken part in acclaimed semi-staged performances of Purcell's *Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv and London, a fully-staged production of Purcell's *King Arthur* in Lisbon's Belem Centre, and new productions of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* at Lisbon Opera House and *The Coronation of Poppea* at English National Opera.

Over one hundred recordings reflect The Sixteen's quality in a range of work spanning the music of five hundred years, winning many awards. In 2008, The Sixteen featured in the highly successful BBC Four television series, *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

ALL RIGHTS OF THE PRODUCER AND OF THE OWNER OF THE WORKS REPRODUCED RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED COPYING, HIRING, LENDING, PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND BROADCASTING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED

CORO

§ The Sixteen

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

Made in Great Britain



COR16062
DIGITAL
STEREO

DDD
MCPs

CD 1

MESSIAH

George Frideric Handel

The Sixteen

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

© THE SIXTEEN PRODUCTIONS LTD 2008. © THE SIXTEEN PRODUCTIONS LTD 2008.

ALL RIGHTS OF THE PRODUCER AND OF THE OWNER OF THE WORKS REPRODUCED RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED COPYING, HIRING, LENDING, PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND BROADCASTING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED

CORO

§ The Sixteen

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
Made in Great Britain

mcps

COR16062
DIGITAL
STEREO

DDD
MCPS

CD 2

MESSIAH

George Frideric Handel

The Sixteen

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

© THE SIXTEEN PRODUCTIONS LTD 2008. © THE SIXTEEN PRODUCTIONS LTD 2008.

ALL RIGHTS OF THE PRODUCER AND OF THE OWNER OF THE WORKS REPRODUCED RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED COPYING, HIRING, LENDING, PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND BROADCASTING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED

CORO

§ The Sixteen

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

Made in Great Britain

mcps

COR16062
DIGITAL
STEREO

DDD
MCPS

CD 3

MESSIAH

Handel - Special Edition Bonus CD

The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

© THE SIXTEEN PRODUCTIONS LTD 2008. © THE SIXTEEN PRODUCTIONS LTD 2008.