



CHRISTCHURCH
CITY CHOIR



HANDEL'S

Messiah

SATURDAY 7 DECEMBER, 7.30PM
CHRISTCHURCH TOWN HALL

Dr John Linker **Music Director**



Christchurch
Symphony
Orchestra



Sarah-Jane
Rennie
Soprano



Catrin
Johnsson
Mezzo Soprano



Patrick
Power ONZM
Tenor



Samuel
McKeever
Bass

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MESSAGE FROM JOHN LINKER



Welcome to Christchurch City Choir's performance of G F Handel's *Messiah*, a timeless favourite oratorio skilfully presented to you by Christchurch City Choir and the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. The annual performance of oratorio with music by Handel and texts compiled by Charles Jennens is sure to provide audience and performers alike a sense of comfort and serenity.

The singers of Christchurch City Choir look forward to this annual performance with great anticipation, as it is an opportunity to refine this work further and produce even greater artistic expression. Together, this cast of exceptional soloists, choral singers who have a deep appreciation for communicating this music, and the phenomenal Christchurch Symphony Orchestra are sure to deliver a musical and theatrical performance of world class standard.

Christchurch City Choir has an exciting year ahead in 2025. On 12 April Christchurch City Choir will present "*The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*" right here on stage in Town Hall. Rangiora RSA Brass and Organist Martin Setchell will feature on brass and organ items, with all joining together with Christchurch City Choir for a moving performance of Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* in the second half of the programme.

On 21 June Christchurch City Choir will present Bob Chilcott's *Requiem* and selections from the motets of J S Bach. Performed in the intimate space and lively acoustic of Knox Church, this is sure to be an oasis of artistic nourishment in the cold of winter.

We return to The Piano on 23 August for *A Night at the Opera*, a concert featuring favourite arias and choruses from the operatic genre.

Rounding out the year, Christchurch City Choir looks forward to singing in the *Last Night of the Proms* in November, and a return to Town Hall for our annual December concert (Handel or Bach – the jury is out!). Please consult

Christchurch City Choir's website (citychoir.co.nz) for venue confirmation and ticket information.

Thank you for being with us this evening. I wish you a splendid holiday season and look forward to your continued support in the 2025 season of the Christchurch City Choir.

John Linker

JOHN LINKER MUSIC DIRECTOR



Dr John Linker emigrated to New Zealand from the US in 2015 to take up the post Director of Music at Christchurch Transitional Cathedral. John manages a demanding schedule for the Cathedral Choir, which includes six choral services each week during term time and singing for civic services. In 2018 the Choristers undertook a successful tour of Australia and Japan, and in 2019 the Cathedral Choir sang in the presence of HRH The Prince of Wales (now King Charles III). Recently the Choristers appeared in concert with the world-renowned vocal ensemble The King's Singers.

John has been Music Director of Christchurch City Choir, Canterbury's premiere symphonic choral ensemble, since 2016, conducting several major concerts annually. The City Choir has enjoyed singing a wide range of repertoire in recent years, including Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem*, popular opera choruses, the annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*, and annually joins Christchurch Symphony Orchestra for *Last Night of the Proms*.

John holds music degrees from Northern Illinois University (Bachelor of Music, 1997), Chicago Musical College at Roosevelt University (Master of Music, 2003), and the College-Conservatory of Music at University of Cincinnati (Doctor of Musical Arts, 2017).

www.johnlinker.com

SARAH-JANE RENNIE

SOPRANO



Sarah-Jane Rennie is an accomplished soprano with a Bachelor of Music Performance from the Victorian College of the Arts and a Diploma in Opera from Auckland University. As a 2002 Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artist and a Freemasons Resident Artist with NZ Opera (2014-2020), she has performed in roles such as Lakmé (*Lakmé*), Elettra (*Idomeneo*), Micaela (*Carmen*), Pamina (*The Magic Flute*), Dorabella (*Così Fan Tutte*), Suor Angelica (*Suor Angelica*), and Rosalinda (*Die Fledermaus*).

Her concert highlights feature *Kiri and Friends* with the APO, *Cantata Memoria* with the Nelson Civic Choir, and *A Night at the Opera* with Christchurch City Choir. Internationally, Sarah-Jane toured as Carlotta's alternate in *The Phantom of the Opera* (2008-2016) across Australasia and Asia. She also regularly performs sacred works and Mozart, Bach, and Haydn masses with CBS. Sarah-Jane works with mentors Sharolyn Kimmorley and Glenn Winslade.

CATRIN JOHNSON

MEZZO SOPRANO



Catrin Johnson ARAM, Dip.RAM., is an opera singer, recitalist, voice teacher, stage director, language and vocal coach, and conductor. She was born in Sweden and trained at the Royal College of Music, Stockholm and at the Royal Academy of Music, London. She has received a number of awards including the prestigious Christina Nilsson Award.

Catrin has worked as a principal artist for companies such as English National Opera, Opera Holland Park and English Touring Opera. Roles have included the title role in *The Duchess of Malfi* for English National Opera and Medoro in Handel's *Orlando* for the Åmot Opera Festival in Norway.

She made her debut for NZ Opera in 2016 in their production of the *The Magic Flute*. Since then, she has performed in their art song project *Call of the Huia* and recently sang the roles of Mum/Granny in Lucy Mulgan's *RED!* and played several characters in the world premiere of *The Unruly Tourists*.

Catrin has performed in concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and St John's Smith Square in London, and she is a regular soloist for oratorio and orchestral concerts in New Zealand, working with organisations such as Bach Musica, Auckland Choral, St Matthew's Chamber Orchestra and the Auckland Philharmonia.

PATRICK POWER ONZM TENOR



Patrick grew up on a farm in Dannevirke, in a family that had already three generations of professional singers. [His grandmother was taught by Sister Mary Leo's teacher, Sister Mary Agnes]

He was educated at Ruahine Primary, St. Patrick's, Silverstream, the Universities of Otago, Auckland, Perugia, Waikato and the Epsom Teachers' College. Choirs were a very major influence in his education.

He has had a distinguished international career, singing some 60 principal tenor roles in nine different languages for the leading opera houses and festivals in 17 different countries. He also sang a great number of oratorio and symphonic works with a bevy of great conductors, from Abbado to Zagrosek. He has recorded for Decca, Phillips and CBS Masterworks. He was appointed Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2003 for his services to opera both in New Zealand and internationally. Returning to NZ in 2000 he has been Senior Lecturer in Vocal Studies at EIT, Visiting Artist Tutor at Victoria University, Senior Lecturer Voice at Vision College in Contemporary Voice, and from 2009 to 2016 was full time Vocal Studies Lecturer and Head of Vocal Pedagogy at the Elder Conservatory, University of Adelaide.

Some of his earliest professional work was appearing several times as a soloist with the Royal Christchurch Musical Society under the baton of Sir Robert Field Dodgson. His last appearance in Christchurch was as a soloist with the Christchurch Liedertafel.

He is the enthusiastic Patron of Toi Toi Opera Company.



SAMUEL MCKEEVER

BASS

Hastings-born baritone Samuel McKeever completed his Bachelor's Degree in Classical Performance with First Class Honours at Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music in 2021. He is a Project Prima Volta graduate, a New Zealand Opera School alumnus, and in 2023 was the winner of the Wellington Aria Competition. Samuel is currently a member of the 2024–25 cohort at Te Pae Kōkako – The Aotearoa New Zealand Opera Studio (TANZOS).

Samuel's recent stage history includes the roles of Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* (Festival Opera, 2024), Papageno in *The Magic Flute in Concert* (Festival Opera/ NZSO, 2023), understudy for Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Wellington Opera, 2023), Forester in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (FO, 2022), and the Marchese in *La Traviata* (WO, 2022).

Concert highlights include Verdi's *Requiem* (Napier Civic Choir, 2023), *St. John Passion* (Bach Musica NZ, 2023), Handel's *Samson* (BMNZ, 2022), *Messiah* (Thames, 2022; NCC, 2021), and the NZSO's 'Broadway Matinee' concert in collaboration with Project Prima Volta (2021).

ABOUT HANDEL'S MESSIAH



Handel's Messiah recounts the story of mankind's redemption through the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. In doing so, the composer, together with his librettist Jennens, drew on diverse elements of the musical and cultural life of eighteenth-century Britain, using these to make commentary on the debates of the day. Yet the oratorio also has a resonance far beyond its own time; its popularity with audiences has only continued to grow in the centuries after its composition.

The first performance, in 1742, took place in a newly-built concert room in Dublin, the Great Music Room in Fishamble Street. The Dublin Journal reviewed the performance, saying:

On Tuesday last Mr Handel's Sacred Grand Oratorio, The Messiah, was performed at the New Musick-Hall in Fishamble-street, the best Judges allowed it to be the most finished piece of Musick. Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crouded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestick and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear.

By all accounts the venue could only accommodate a modest audience of a few hundred. Since then, the oratorio has frequently been performed in vast concert halls and grand cathedrals. However, it is noteworthy that tonight's performance in the Christchurch Town Hall brings us perhaps closer to the world of Handel's own performances in mid-eighteenth century London—for it was in London's theatres that Messiah first came to England's attention.

Here in the intimate auditorium, the dramatic nature of the work is heightened. The English oratorio, after all, is essentially opera unstaged, combined with the majesty of the English choral tradition. And it is in Messiah, more so than in any of Handel's other oratorios, that the chorus comes to the fore in depicting the drama. Messiah is also unique in that it narrates events found in the New Testament, rather than the Old. The Messiah libretto, by Charles Jennens, in fact masterfully draws together Old Testament prophesies, using them to tell the story of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. In doing so, Jennens and Handel

make a strong refutation of the eighteenth-century Deistic movement, a sub-plot which would certainly not have been lost on the audiences of eighteenth-century London.

Modern-day audiences may come to Messiah from a variety of perspectives. Not long after Handel's death, the work had assumed iconic status in England's musical life. Performances on a truly epic scale soon became a highlight of England's musical calendar. Meanwhile on the continent, German audiences of the nineteenth century experienced the work filtered through Mozart's re-orchestration. Closer to home, some will recall that an even larger-scale performance of the Hallelujah chorus by a vast Tongan choir ushered in the new millennium. More recently, the trend has been towards ensembles of a smaller scale, emulating those of Handel's own time. But whatever the forces used, or the venue—church, concert hall, or theatre—Handel's Messiah is guaranteed to captivate audiences with its drama, intensity, and power.

Dr Francis Yapp, School of Music, University of Canterbury

MESSIAH LIBRETTO

PART THE FIRST

SINFONIA (OVERTURE)

Tenor Recitative

Comfort ye, 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'.

Tenor Air

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

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.

Bass Recitative

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts:
Yet once a little while and I will shake the heavens and 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 you delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

Bass Air

But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?
For he is like a refiner's fire.

Chorus

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

Alto Recitative

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

Alto Air

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.

Chorus

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, say unto the cities of Judah, behold your god! Behold the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Bass Recitative

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.

Bass Air

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.

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.

PIFA ('PASTORAL SYMPHONY')

Soprano Recitative

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

Soprano Recitative

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.

Soprano Recitative

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.'

Soprano Recitative

And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

Chorus

'Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men.'

Soprano Air

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.

Alto Recitative

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.

Alto and Soprano Air

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, come unto him that are heavy laden, and he will give you rest. Takes up his yoke upon you, and learn of him, for he is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Chorus

His yoke is easy, and his burthen is light.

INTERVAL OF 20 MINUTES

PART THE SECOND

Chorus

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

Alto Air

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 his hair: he hid not his face from shame and spitting.

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.

Chorus

And with his stripes we are healed.

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.

Tenor Recitative

All they that see him laugh him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:

Chorus

'He trusted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, if he delight in him.'

Tenor Recitative

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.

Tenor Air

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow.

Tenor Recitative

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of thy people was he stricken.

Tenor Recitative

But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

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 this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle.

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 this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Tenor Recitative

Unto which of the angels said he at any time: thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?

Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship him

Soprano Air

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

Chorus

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

Bass Air

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.

Chorus

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

Tenor Recitative

He that dwelleth in Heaven shall laugh them to scorn; The Lord shall have them in derision.

Tenor Air

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

Chorus

Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

Hallelujah! 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!

PART THE THIRD

Soprano Air

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.

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.

Bass Recitative

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.

Bass Air

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must be put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

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.

Amen.



**One of New Zealand's leading symphonic choirs, the
Christchurch City Choir continues a proud 125 year history
of contributing to the musical fabric of the city.**

Sopranos

Elinor Bain
Maureen Bain
Elizabeth Christensen
Wendy Cox
Nelly Daudova
Catherine Gerslov-Wright
Lizzie Gilks
Amy Hill
Mihaela Hnat *
Silke Kellig
Roslyn Kerr
Jenny Jamieson *
Heather Johns Young
Caitlin Jones *
Julie McGeorge
Lisa McGonigle
Lynne McKenzie
Tanja Mitrovic
Nicole Moffat
Rebecca Porton-Whitworth
Victoria Rosin
Lia Silea *
Kathy Stone
Lyn Wain
Kit Walker
Suzie Watt
Aija Zandberga

Altos

Rosemary Allison
Claire Arnold
Vaklina Atanassova
Bernice Baker
Melanie Betts
Noeline Blackburn
Pamela Butler
Maria Carter
Lois Chick
Margaret Cornwall
Johan Dalkie
Nichola Densem
Joanna Dodgshun
Stephanie Gilks
Margaret Hawkes
Deborah Howell
Diane Hopkins
Paula Jameson
Karina Leepik
Rosemary McBryde
Rosie McCormick
Kerry McDougall
Libby Newcombe
Susan Penfold
Sarah Polson
Rebecca Radford
Tamzin Roe *
Robin Ryburn
Eli Soothill *
Karen Swanson
Kathryn Taylor
Catharina Treeby
Emma Watkins
Jan Zajac

Tenors

Tim Andrews *
Stephen Belkin
Stephen Coulthard
Jacob Craw
Graham Densem
Matthew Langdon
Mike MacLeod *
Mark Ogilvie
Philip Richards *
Gustavo Stein
David Whitehead

Basses

Maurice Barnes
Philip Brazier
Douglas Bridges
Kahu Gray
Ray Hsu
Oscar Kersey
Barry Mackenzie
Graham Marr *
Nicholas McBryde
Richard McCubbin
Richard Milne
Paddy Newton
Dave Nicholl
Craig Paterson
Sebastian Wilberforce
Gareth Young

NB: * denotes guest singer

CHRISTCHURCH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Christchurch
Symphony
Orchestra

CSO, based in Ōtautahi Christchurch, is the resident orchestra at the renowned Christchurch Town Hall, and a leading performing arts organisation of Te Wai Pounamu South Island, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Established in 1958, CSO typically presents over 40 performances a year with more than more than 30% of our output being New Zealand-created. In addition to CSO-produced events, we proudly partner with New Zealand Opera, Royal New Zealand Ballet, the National Concerto Competition and other prominent performance partners.

CSO is known both nationally and internationally for its community engagement activity, with its employee musicians providing participatory music experiences across 30+ *Ki te Hapori In the Community* programs annually; in prisons, schools, health facilities, seniors' centres, libraries, resettled migrant communities and beyond.

A registered charitable trust, CSO is a proud recipient of ongoing funding through our core funders - Creative New Zealand, CSO Foundation Trust, Christchurch City Council and Rātā Foundation; and multiple corporate and individual partners.



LIST OF PLAYERS

CONCERTMASTER

Sarah McCracken

ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER

Jonathan Tanner

FIRST VIOLIN

Amandine Combes-Guerin

Laura Barton

Andrew Maddick

Jiwon Lee

SECOND VIOLIN

Arna Morton **Principal**

Milana Kornienko **Associate Principal**

Iryna Ionenko **Principal Emeritus**

Grace Stainthorpe

VIOLA

Serenity Thurlow **Principal**

Sharon Baylis **Associate Principal**

Philippa Lodge

Kerrin Brizzell

CELLO

Heather Lewis **Principal**

Sophie Tanner **Associate Principal**

Sylvia Nissen

DOUBLE BASS

Annabella Zilber **Principal**

Ross Radford **Associate Principal**

OBOE

Jenny Clapp **Principal**

Ashleigh Mowbray **Associate Principal**

BASSOON

Selena Prior **Principal**

TRUMPET

Thomas Eves **Principal**

Barrett Hocking **Associate Principal**

TIMPANI

Mark La Roche **Principal**

HARPSICHORD

Grant Bartley

ORGAN

Nicholas Sutcliffe

CHOIR PERSONNEL



Music Director Dr John Linker

Assistant Director of Music Jeremy Woodside

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

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Treasurer Jocelyne Hill

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CONTACT DETAILS

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For membership enquiries please email Heather at newmembers@citychoir.co.nz

PERSONNEL

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Finance Administrator Murray Baty

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Choir Registrar Jennifer Sutherland

Concert Steward Rosemary Allison

Dress Steward Pam Butler

Choir Administrator Charlotte Ensor

Many tasks necessary for the success of this concert are carried out on a voluntary basis by Choir members. The Board of Christchurch City Choir gratefully acknowledges their contributions.

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Mr A W Standing

Mrs J Sutherland

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**CHRISTCHURCH
CITY CHOIR**

2025 SEASON

12 APRIL 2025

THE ARMED MAN: A MASS FOR PEACE - Christchurch Town Hall

21 JUNE 2025

CHILCOTT'S REQUIEM - Knox Church

23 AUGUST 2025

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA - The Piano

6 DECEMBER 2025

A CHRISTMAS CONCERT - Christchurch Town Hall

YOU HELP DECIDE NEXT YEAR'S CONCERT!

As we celebrate the majesty of *Messiah*, we invite you to help shape next year's Christmas concert! Let us know your preference: should we bring back Handel's *Messiah*, or present Bach's radiant *Christmas Oratorio*? Your voice counts – cast your vote in the foyer and help us plan a festive season to remember!

Handel's
Messiah

OR

BACH'S
***Christmas
Oratorio***

