

# Minnesota Orchestra

**David Hill**, conductor

**Sarah Fox**, soprano • **Iestyn Davies**, countertenor

**Daniel Norman**, tenor • **Kevin Deas**, bass-baritone

**Minnesota Chorale**, Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

## *Messiah*

### Holiday Concerts

Thursday, December 10, 2009, 7:30 pm

Friday, December 11, 2009, 8 pm

Sunday, December 13, 2009, 2 pm

Cathedral of Saint Paul

Central Lutheran Church

Orchestra Hall

**George Frideric Handel**

*Messiah*

ca. 120'

Sinfonia

Part I

Part II

Part III

There will be one intermission, approximately halfway through Part II, following the chorus, "Lift up your heads." This is indicated in the text, which is found on page 28.

Please hold applause until the end of: Part I; the chorus referenced above; Part II; and Part III.





Photo: Paul Troughton

**David Hill**, conductor

English-born David Hill, now making his Minnesota Orchestra debut, is widely respected for both choral and orchestral conducting. In addition to holding chief conductor or music director posts with the BBC Singers, Bach Choir, Southern Sinfonia and Leeds Philharmonic Society, he is in his first season as associate guest conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony.

**Guest conductor:** Hill has appeared with such ensembles as the London Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra.

**Discography:** He has contributed to more than 70 albums and is currently recording works of major English choral composers with the Bournemouth Symphony and Bach Chorale. With the latter ensemble he has recorded music for several film soundtracks, including the *Chronicles of Narnia* movies, *Shrek the Third* and *Kingdom of Heaven*.

**Of interest:** Hill is active as an organist and gives recitals throughout the world.

**More:** [caroline-phillips.co.uk](http://caroline-phillips.co.uk).



**Sarah Fox**, soprano

English soprano Sarah Fox has made powerful impressions in performances with Europe's major opera presenters, including the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Glyndebourne Festival, Salzburg Festival, Bavarian State Opera, De Vlaamse Opera and English National Opera. She is now welcomed for her Minnesota Orchestra debut.

**Recent, upcoming:** Last month Fox sang Mozart's Requiem with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Leeds Philharmonic Chorus. Her current season also includes performances of *Messiah* in Manchester and *La Bohème* in Norway and Britain, concerts with the Hallé Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony, and a BBC Proms concert under conductor John Wilson. In 2011 she will sing Asteria in Handel's *Tamerlano* opposite Plácido Domingo at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu.

**Honors:** She has won two prestigious prizes, the Kathleen Ferrier Award and the John Christie Award.

**More:** [pinnaclearts.com](http://pinnaclearts.com).



**Iestyn Davies**, countertenor

Iestyn Davies has earned a reputation as one of today's leading countertenors, drawing praise for his interpretations of Baroque repertoire with major opera companies and orchestras throughout his native Britain and beyond. In the U.S. he has appeared with Houston Grand Opera and is scheduled to debut with Boston's Handel and Haydn Society as well as the Metropolitan Opera.

**Recent engagements:** Davies made two appearances at the 2009 BBC Proms, giving a solo recital and singing Micah in a performance of Handel's *Samson* with the English Concert. He has recently drawn applause for his debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and for performances at the Edinburgh International Festival and Hereford Three Choirs Festival.

**Discography:** His recording of Vivaldi's *Griselda* with Ensemble Matheus was named Opera Recording of the Year by *BBC Music Magazine*.

**More:** [iestyndavies.com](http://iestyndavies.com).

one-minute note

**Handel's *Messiah***

In the month of December, we often associate gracious acts of charity with the joyful holiday season. Thus it seems appropriate that Handel's great oratorio, *Messiah*, has become an integral part of Christmas celebrations, because it was written for inclusion in a series of Dublin concerts benefiting public causes. Handel was by far the most philanthropic composer of his time, and the first performance of *Messiah* in 1742 raised an impressive £400 for charity. Beginning in 1750, he led popular annual performances of the work for the benefit of London's Foundling Hospital Chapel, to which he donated a pipe organ in addition to bequeathing a copy of the score and parts to *Messiah*.

The German composer had spent most of his later years in London and was well known for his operatic and courtly compositions. Handel may not have considered himself a composer of sacred music, but it is reported that *Messiah* so moved him that after completing the "Hallelujah Chorus"—with tears streaming down his face—he declared: "I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the great God himself." Over the next 250 years *Messiah* secured a place as one of the most beloved compositions in the entire orchestral and choral repertoire, and one of Handel's most enduring, and endearing, works.



**Daniel Norman**, tenor

English tenor Daniel Norman's repertoire ranges from centuries-old Handel operas to freshly-minted scores by John Adams. He regularly appears in concert, opera and recital settings at prominent venues throughout Europe. In his 2006 Minnesota Orchestra debut, he was a soloist in the Orchestra's acclaimed performance and recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

**Recent, upcoming:** Norman's schedule includes his debut at Covent Garden as Borsa in *Rigoletto*, a recital at London's Kings Place, and performances with the BBC Philharmonic, London Sinfonietta, English National Opera and Glyndebourne Festival, among many other engagements.

**Recordings:** His discography includes four volumes of Schubert works, a DVD of Thomas Adès' *Powder Her Face* and, most recently, his debut solo album of Britten works for BIS.

**Of interest:** He performed the first official staging of all five Britten *Canticles* at Westminster Abbey.

**More:** [hazardchase.co.uk](http://hazardchase.co.uk).



**Kevin Deas**, bass-baritone

American bass-baritone Kevin Deas is equally at home with opera, classical concert, jazz and pops repertoire, and has performed in locations ranging from America's music capitals to Italy, Japan and Ghana. These are his first concerts with the Minnesota Orchestra.

**Recently:** Last season, in addition to premiering Derek Bermel's *The Good Life* with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Deas performed with the New York Philharmonic, National Philharmonic and Atlanta Symphony, among other ensembles.

**Signature role:** He has sung Porgy in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with more than a dozen ensembles, including the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

**Collaboration:** Deas' 20-year association with pianist Dave Brubeck has taken him on performance tours to Salzburg, Vienna and Moscow, and he recorded the composer's work *To Hope!* with the Cathedral Choral Society.

**More:** [dispeker.com](http://dispeker.com).



### Minnesota Chorale

**Kathy Saltzman Romey**, artistic director

**Barbara Brooks**, accompanist/artistic advisor

The Minnesota Chorale, the Minnesota Orchestra's principal chorus since 2004, is now in its 15th season under the leadership of Kathy Saltzman Romey. Founded in 1972, the Chorale is the state's preeminent symphonic chorus, performing regularly with both this Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

**Programs:** Among the Chorale's initiatives are the Bridges program, a national model for community outreach; the Minneapolis Youth Chorus; and InChoir for adults.

**Upcoming engagement:** Later this month the Chorale will join the Orchestra for Jingle Bell Doc performances led by Doc Severinsen.

**More:** [mnchorale.org](http://mnchorale.org)

### Minnesota Chorale

#### soprano

Kristi Bergland\*  
Siri Caldvedt  
Deborah Carbaugh\*  
Laurel E. Drevlow  
Debra Gilroy\*  
Michelle Stenzel Hayes\*  
Heather Hood\*  
Barbara Lundervold  
Sally Messner\*  
Elizabeth Pauly\*  
Karen R. Wasiluk  
Jan Wenndt

#### alto

Deydra Dennis-Weiss\*  
Carol Diethelm\*  
Susan Sacquitne Druck\*  
Leanne Kampfe  
Suzanne Kennedy\*  
Louise M. Miner  
Erica Perl  
Barbara Prince\*  
Sue Tuthill Schiess  
Marcia VanLaningham\*  
Kathryn Wareham

#### tenor

James Ball\*  
Chris Crosby-Schmidt  
Jerry J. Hinks\*  
Rich Maier  
David Mennicke  
David Nordli\*  
Jeffrey J. Raehl\*  
Stanley E. Romanstein\*  
Patrick Romey\*  
R. Craig Shulstad

#### bass

Peder Bolstad  
David Goudzwaard  
Steven Hodulik\*  
Steven W. Landby\*  
Nicholas R. Mroczek  
Nathan Oppedahl  
Bob Peskin\*  
Nathan Petersen-Kindem\*  
Michael P. Schmidt\*  
Chad Shultis\*  
Jonathan M. Ten Brink\*  
Rick Wagner\*  
Joseph Walton

\* section leader





## George Frideric Handel

**Born:** February 23, 1685, Halle

**Died:** April 14, 1759, London

### *Messiah*

By the spring of 1741 Handel's 30-year effort to make a success of Italian opera in London had come to a shuddering conclusion. He finally had to admit failure, and rumors circulated in London that he was about to leave England and return to Germany.

Relief came from an unlikely source. The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, invited Handel to Dublin to put on a series of concerts in support of various local charities. For Handel, Ireland was literally new territory, and he was glad to accept the invitation, get away from London for a while and seek new audiences. In addition to gathering earlier works for performance there, that summer he began work on a new oratorio that would have its premiere in Dublin.

### with unbelievable speed

This oratorio represented a new direction for Handel, who by no means considered himself a composer of sacred music. It was on a text assembled from the Bible and the Prayer Book Psalter by his longtime friend Charles Jennens. Handel worked with unbelievable speed: from the time he sat down in front of a blank sheet of paper until the completion of the full orchestral score of

*Messiah*, just 24 days had elapsed—from August 22 to September 14. He then pressed on with his oratorio *Samson*, completing it by late October, and left almost immediately, taking one of the packet boats that ran regularly from Chester to Ireland.

Handel's arrival in Dublin—on November 18, 1741—was very much like Haydn's would be in London precisely 50 years later. Both composers journeyed to a foreign land and discovered that they were famous. Both were feted, delighted by the quality of the performers and acclaimed by enthusiastic crowds in jammed halls. Just as Haydn would later do in London, Handel began his Dublin residency by performing earlier works, including *L'Allegro, Acis and Galatea*, *Esther* and *Alexander's Feast*. Not until he had been in Dublin for five months did Handel present his new oratorio: he led an open rehearsal of *Messiah* on April 9, 1742, and the official premiere followed four days later, on April 13.

### an extraordinary success

It was a stunning success, and Dubliners struggled to get tickets. Neal's Musick Hall, where the premiere took place, had room for only 600, and so management came up with a shrewd solution. The day of the performance, *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* carried this admonition: "The Stewards of the Charitable Musical Society request 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." Thus slimmed down, 700 listeners were crammed into the hall, and the performance turned the handsome profit of 400 pounds for Mercer's Hospital, the Charitable Infirmary and the Charitable Music Society (for the relief of those imprisoned for debt). A second performance of *Messiah*, on June 13, was equally successful, and Handel left Ireland in August, eager to repeat that success in London.

It must have come as the worst possible surprise to the composer when the oratorio failed at its London premiere on March 23, 1743. Perhaps he should have seen it coming. That performance was preceded by a furor in the newspapers about his decision to present an oratorio on Biblical texts in a public theater, and Handel's performance was attacked as "blasphemous." A few subsequent performances had scarcely more success, and it was not until May 1, 1750, when Handel led *Messiah* as a benefit for the opening of the Hospital Chapel of the Foundling Hospital, his favorite charity, that the oratorio finally won favor.

### at the same time...

#### In 1742, when *Messiah* premieres in Dublin:

- Britain's Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, resigns amid an election fraud scandal
- Benjamin Franklin invents the Franklin Stove, enabling American colonists to heat their homes with less wood
- London's first indoor swimming pool opens—for "Gentlemen" only
- Card-game pioneer Edmond Hoyle publishes *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist*



“Handel is the greatest and ablest of all composers; from him I can still learn.”

— Ludwig van Beethoven  
in 1827, at the end of his life

By the time Handel died nine years later, in April 1759, *Messiah* had been performed 56 times in London and was on its way to achieving the status it enjoys today, that of a beloved icon.

### nativity, crucifixion, resurrection

*Messiah* was originally composed for the Easter season, yet for two and a half centuries it has been a perennial event in Christmas celebrations.

Jennens structured his work around the three central events of Christianity: Part I is about the birth of Christ, Part II is about the crucifixion, and the final part is about the resurrection and the spreading of the gospel. Thus *Messiah* focuses essentially on Christianity's three primary holy days: Christmas, Good Friday and Easter.

His arrangement of texts for *Messiah* was brilliant. Basic to his plan was his decision not to cast *Messiah* as drama—there is no narrative line here, no rising action, no climax. He began with the assumption that his audience already knew the story and required no telling; he then chose texts about specific incidents in the life of Christ, and these become a sequence of moments-along-the-way in one of the most famous and familiar of all stories, rather than an attempt to tell that story.

### magnificent music

But Jennens' text would have been long forgotten were it not for the magnificence of Handel's music. Handel composed *Messiah* from many different kinds of music. From opera he retained the recitative and dramatic aria, though he shrewdly avoids making the arias too brilliant. In place of florid lines that might seem operatic and out of context for this subject, he blesses the soloists with some of the most appealing, straightforward melodies ever written—though these also can be brilliant.

The famous *Pastoral Symphony*, or *Pifa*, is derived from the *pifferari*, the music of the Italian shepherds who would make an annual Christmas pilgrimage to Rome to play wind instruments in imitation of the shepherds who watched over the Nativity. Handel is quite willing to paint pictures with his orchestra, as in the resounding brass of “The trumpet shall sound,” and in the stunning progress from the ominous B-minor murmurings of “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth” to the radiant G-major sunlight of “For unto us a Child is born.”

Yet the real glory of *Messiah* lies in its choruses, and Handel demands great versatility from his singers: their music ranges from the lyric to the brilliant (“And he shall purify”) to the dramatic (“Glory to God in the highest”) and—most impressively—to the great fugues (“And with his stripes,” “He trusted in God” and the concluding “Amen”).

Even its creator could be overpowered by this music. As he completed the “Hallelujah Chorus,” Handel, tears streaming down his face, is reported to have told his manservant: “I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the great God himself.”

#### Instrumentation:

vocal soloists and mixed chorus with orchestra comprising 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 trumpets, timpani, harpsichord, organ and strings

Program note by *Eric Bromberger*.



Handel's memorial in Westminster Abbey, London.

part I

Sinfonia (Overture)

Tenor Arioso and Aria

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."

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 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 ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Countertenor Aria

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.

Countertenor Recitative and Aria

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

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.

Bass Arioso and Aria

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 the kings to the brightness of thy rising.

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, Councillor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)

Soprano Recitatives and Ariosos

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

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.

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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

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 Arias and Recitative

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Savior, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

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.

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 labor and 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.

Chorus

His yoke is easy and His burthen is light.

part II

Chorus

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

Countertenor Aria

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

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.

And with His stripes we are healed.

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 Arioso

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 Recitatives, Arioso and Aria

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.

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

He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken.

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

The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory.

intermission

Chorus

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

Soprano Aria

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 Aria

Why do the nations so furiously rage together: why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth do 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 and Aria

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

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

Chorus

Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Hallelujah!

part III

Soprano Aria

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 and Aria

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.

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

Soprano Aria

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.

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 honor, and glory, and blessing.

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

Amen.

Text compiled by Charles Jennens from Biblical texts.