

G.F. HANDEL

MESSIAH



A BOLDLY REIMAGINED
CHAMBER VERSION

OF THE
TIMELESS
CLASSIC



SAT 3 DEC

7:00 PM

St. Martin's Episcopal Church
Providence

ENSEMBLE
ALTERA

CHRISTOPHER LOWREY
director

CHLOE FEDOR
concertmaster

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS




SECOND ANNUAL
Music & Merriment
FUNDRAISING EVENT

Join Ensemble Altera for a festive evening of drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and carols at the historic Providence Art Club.

6 DECEMBER 2022 | 7PM
TICKETS \$125

[ENSEMBLEALTERA.COM/TICKETS](https://ensemblealtera.com/tickets)

Join Ensemble Altera for a festive fundraising event in the gorgeous surroundings of the historic Providence Art Club, featuring all your favorite and familiar Christmas carols, delicious drinks and hearty hors d'oeuvres, and an exclusive chance to mix and mingle with some of Ensemble Altera's core artists! Beer and wine will be served, and a credit card bar will be available for additional beverages all evening. Guests will have the unique chance to sing along with Altera on some of the classics.

Scan QR Code for Music & Merriment Tickets



www.EnsembleAltera.com/TICKETS

Bring a bit of Christmas magic into your home or business this year, courtesy of Ensemble Altera. Elevate your holiday party and charm your guests with a live performance of Christmas carols, sung by our professional carolers. Singers will perform a delicious selection of traditional favorites, though requests can be made in advance. Performances last approximately 30 minutes.

With a donation of \$1000 or more, a portion of which is tax-deductible, Ensemble Altera will bring the gift of music into your home this holiday season!


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World Class Music

H O M E T O W N P R I D E

The last couple of years have been a whirlwind for Ensemble Altera. From recordings in an abandoned parking garage at the height of the pandemic to a return to live performances with world-class talent, we're rapidly growing into an arts organization that you can count on for the best in choral music. Altera has many exciting plans for 2023: building on our artistic successes, investing in arts access and education, and growing our organization for the future. With *The Lamb's Journey* recording in the pipeline for release, we are planning a follow-up album, *Dazzling Light*. This will be a luminous collection of the familiar and novel, including several new commissions. We are proud to offer free access to select events for low-income communities. We also provide unfettered use of our entire recording library for music therapy applications in continuing care.

This coming February, we launch our brand-new *Sing Out In Schools!* initiative at several Title I schools throughout the region. Through this program, Altera core artists will engage with students from historically underserved institutions. Our interactive demonstrations aim to inspire and engage the next generation of music lovers with hands-on learning. Finally, and critically important, we hope to build organizational capacity so that we can dare to dream even bigger for next year. Long-term plans include a major concert series, tours around the country and abroad, and even an apprenticeship program for recent graduates and young professional singers. All of this would simply be impossible without your generous support. So, as the holidays are upon us and our exciting new season approaches, I cannot thank our loyal and engaged community enough for all that they do.

Myriad acts of courage, generosity, and faith bear Altera's wings aloft despite many headwinds, including: our peerless donors (listed in full below); our intrepid Board of Directors, led by Simon Holt and Jennifer Ritvo Hughes; the volunteer efforts of our wonderful corps of ushers; the dedication and perseverance of our Treasurer Charlie Oliver, the quiet service of our Secretary Donna Lowrey, marketing support from Trevor Neal, and our Production Manager Tim Harbold; the multivariable equations solved by Accommodations Officer Camilla de Rochambeau; the manifold ministrations of our Board Liaison and all-around wonderwoman Olivia Kleyla; the administrative assistance of Janet Stone; Michael Garrepy's expertise and friendship; the venues that open their doors to us and the hosts who open their homes to our artists; and most of all to you, our loyal audience.

For anyone curious about how they can become involved with Ensemble Altera, in ways large or small, please speak to a volunteer today, or visit our website (ensemblealtera.com). With your energy, and the engagement of the wider community, we continue in our mission to raise consciousness about this glorious music, and its essential importance in our lives.

Yours in music,
Christopher Lowrey
Founder & Artistic Director



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The Founders' Circle is a group of dedicated donors of \$1,000+ who have made possible the special successes of this season. Members of the Founders' Circle are also this year's event sponsors. To join the Founders' Circle and receive exclusive access to personal updates and other benefits, please email us at ensemblealtera@gmail.com.

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MESSIAH

AN ORATORIO

MUSIC BY GEORG FRIDERIC HANDEL

LIBRETTO BY CHARLES JENNENS

ENSEMBLE ALTERA

CHRISTOPHER LOWREY

director

CHLOE FEDOR

concertmaster

SOPRANO

RACHEL GARREPY
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KEIRAN CAMPBELL, cello
ANNE TROUT, double bass
JAMES KENNERLEY, organ
IAN WATSON, harpsichord
PERRY SUTTON, trumpet 1
BRANDON BERGERON, trumpet 2
JOSEPH DEMARCO, timpani



PART
THE FIRST

SINFONY

COMFORT YE, *tenor recit*

EV'RY VALLEY, *tenor air*

Dann Coakwell, tenor

AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD, *chorus*

THUS SAITH THE LORD, *bass recit*

Craig Juricka, baritone

BUT WHO MAY ABIDE, *alto air*

Kim Leeds, alto

AND HE SHALL PURIFY, *chorus*

BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, *alto recit*

O THOU THAT TELLEST, *alto air & chorus*

Kristen Dubenion-Smith, alto

FOR BEHOLD, DARKNESS, *bass accompagnato*

THE PEOPLE THAT WALKED IN DARKNESS, *bass air*

Edmund Milly, bass-baritone

FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, *chorus*

PIFA

THERE WERE SHEPHERDS, *soprano recit*

Rachel Garrepy, soprano

AND LO, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, *soprano accompagnato*

AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO THEM, *soprano recit*

Jolle Greenleaf, soprano

AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS WITH THE ANGEL, *soprano accompagnato*

Rebecca Myers, soprano

GLORY TO GOD, *chorus*

REJOICE GREATLY, *soprano air*

Elijah McCormack, soprano

THEN SHALL THE EYES OF THE BLIND, *alto recit*

HE SHALL FEED HIS FLOCK, *alto and soprano air*

Sylvia Leith, alto; Jolle Greenleaf, soprano

HIS YOKE IS EASY, *chorus*



- INTERVAL -

PART
THE SECOND

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, *chorus*

HE WAS DESPISED, *alto air*

Christopher Lowrey, countertenor

SURELY HE HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS, *chorus*

AND WITH HIS STRIPES, *chorus*

ALL WE, LIKE SHEEP, *chorus*

ALL THEY THAT SEE HIM, *tenor accompagnato*

Dann Coakwell, tenor

HE TRUSTED IN GOD, *chorus*

THY REBUKE HATH BROKEN HIS HEART, *tenor accompagnato*

Dann Coakwell, tenor

BEHOLD AND SEE, *tenor air*

HE WAS CUT OFF, *tenor accompagnato*

UNTO WHICH OF THE ANGELS, *tenor recit*

Brad Kleyla, tenor

LET ALL THE ANGELS, *chorus*

HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET, *soprano air*

Rebecca Myers, soprano

WHY DO THE NATIONS, *bass air*

Michael Garrepy, baritone

LET US BREAK THEIR BONDS, *chorus*

HE THAT DWELLETH IN HEAVEN, *tenor recit*

THOU SHALT BREAK THEM, *tenor aria*

Andrew Bearden Brown, tenor

HALLELUJAH, *chorus*



PART
THE THIRD

I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH, *soprano air*

Sarah Yanovitch Vitale, soprano

SINCE BY MAN CAME DEATH, *chorus*

BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY, *bass accompagnato*

THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, *bass air*

Craig Juricka, baritone

WORTHY IS THE LAMB, *chorus*

AMEN, *chorus*

PROGRAM

NOTES

Few works have held such enduring sway over our collective imagination, especially in the English-speaking world, as George Frideric Handel's *The Messiah*. Since its Dublin premiere in 1742, a huge success, it has been performed and enjoyed thousands of times the world over. *Messiah* is an oratorio, that is, a dramatic work for orchestra, chorus, and soloists depicting a religious story (in our case, the narrative of the Christian redeemer). Handel composed some 29 oratorios, from *Theodora* to *Israel in Egypt*, *Solomon* to *Saul*, but *Messiah* has resonated down the centuries in a unique way. The libretto, curated by Handel's long-time collaborator and patron Charles Jennens (also responsible for the libretti of the oratorios *Belshazzar* and *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*), is drawn entirely from biblical scripture, beginning with the prophecies of the Old Testament, then depicting Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. Handel's score is sublime in its architecture, abundant in imagination, and crackling with energy. Realizing the effect it had on the public, the shrewdly commercial Handel closed practically every concert season with the work. Having become something of a Christmas tradition over the centuries, today's arts organizations continue to attract wide audiences year after year with this staple. This weekend alone in Providence one could (theoretically) enjoy at least three high-profile performances.

One of the most enduring and exciting challenges facing us is choosing "which" version of *Messiah* to perform. Over the course of his life, Handel created no fewer than nine different iterations of the work, amounting to 43 permutations of the 15 solo movements. And they are all wonderful. Moreover, there are multiple arrangements of the piece, such as Mozart's German version *Der Messias*, which calls for clarinets and trombones to flesh out the choruses. Discussion of all this variety is before we get into the question of how to perform it. Many will be familiar with hearing it played by a full 20th-century orchestra and sung by a massive choir. In our version we have not endeavored to slavishly recreate a particular historical performance of *Messiah* (though those who are interested in this enterprise may discover such re-creations in a huge library of extant recordings), but our overriding aesthetic principles probably hew closest to the very first performance in 18th-century Dublin, where it is believed that Handel employed a small chamber orchestra, and a choir of about 20. Not only are our forces similar in size, but we benefit from being able to present the work on original instruments, either passed down from two centuries ago, or recreated by master craftspeople to closely emulate the distinct sounds of the instruments from Handel's own time. These instruments, and the vocal techniques that the choir and soloists use to complement them, exploit the possibilities of a more transparent and flexible sound palette than many of us might be accustomed to hearing.

Almost every professional musician will have participated in many performances of *Messiah* across their working lives. This can be a hindrance, if we have become intransigent in our ways or dogmatic in our views, but it can also be an asset if we allow our familiarity with the piece to set our fancy free from the "way it goes". That said, *Messiah*, perhaps more than any other work, must be treated with care. For me, that means respecting its eminent history and the affectionate "ownership" many of us feel over it, while also summoning the courage to forge something fresh and vital each and every time we dust it off. That doesn't mean toying with things for their own sake. The musico-dramatic luster of the work must shine through for those hearing it for the first time, or for those who have forgotten mostly everything besides its famous *Hallelujah* chorus. In that spirit, the many performing decisions we've made to revitalize the work should reward the listener. When done well, *Messiah* speaks directly to everyone from the amateur to the anorak, and it is my hope that upon hearing it "we shall be changed".

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

PART THE FIRST

1.
Sinfony

2.
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.
(Isaiah 40: 1-3)

3.
Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry
mountain and hill made low; the crooked
straight and the rough places plain.
(Isaiah 40: 4)

4.
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 40: 5)

5.
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.
(Haggai 2: 6-7)

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.
(Malachi 3: 1)

6.
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 3: 2)

7.
And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they
may offer unto the Lord an offering in
righteousness.
(Malachi 3: 3)

8.
Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and shall call His name Emmanuel, God with
us.
(Isaiah 7: 14; Matthew 1: 23)

9.
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!
(Isaiah 40: 9)

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the
glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.
(Isaiah 60: 1)

10.
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 60: 2-3)

11.

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 9: 2)

12.

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 9: 6)

13. Pifa

14.

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

(Luke 2: 8)

15.

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 2: 9)

16.

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 2: 10-11)

17.

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

(Luke 2: 13)

18.

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

(Luke 2: 14)

19.

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 9: 9-10)

20.

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 35: 5-6)

21.

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.

(Isaiah 40: 11)

Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him 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.

(Matthew 11: 28-29)

22.

His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

(Matthew 11: 30)

PART
THE SECOND

23.
Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away
the sin of the world.
(John 1: 29)

24.
He was despised and rejected of men, a
man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
(Isaiah 53: 3)

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.
(Isaiah 50: 6)

25.
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 53: 4-5)

26.
And with His stripes we are healed.
(Isaiah 53: 5)

27.
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 53: 6)

28.
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn;
they shoot out their lips, and shake their
heads, saying:
(Psalm 22: 7)

29.
"He trusted in God that He would deliver Him;
let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him."
(Psalm 22: 8)

30.
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 69: 20)

31.
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like
unto His sorrow.
(Lamentations 1: 12)

32.
He was cut off out of the land of the living: for
the transgressions of Thy people was He
stricken.
(Isaiah 53: 8)

33.
Unto which of the angels said He at any time:
"Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten
Thee?"
(Hebrews 1: 5)

34.
Let all the angels of God worship Him.
(Hebrews 1: 6)

35.
How beautiful are the feet of them that
preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad
tidings of good things.
(Isaiah 52: 7; Romans 10: 15)

Their sound is gone out into all lands,
and their words unto the ends of the world.
(Romans 10: 18; Psalm 19: 4)

36.
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 2: 1-2)

37.
Let us break their bonds asunder, and
cast away their yokes from us.
(Psalm 2: 3)

38.
He that dwelleth in Heav'n shall laugh
them to scorn; The Lord shall have them
in derision.
(Psalm 2: 4)

39.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a
potter's vessel.
(Psalm 2: 9)

40.
Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent
reigneth.
(Revelation 19: 6)

The kingdom of this world is become the
kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ;
and He shall reign for ever and ever.
(Revelation 11: 15)

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
(Revelation 19: 16)

PART THE THIRD

41.
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.
(Job 19: 25-26)

For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first
fruits of them that sleep.
(I Corinthians 15: 20)

42.
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 15: 21-22)

43.
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 15: 51-52)

44.
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 15: 52-53)

45.
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 5: 12-14)

46.
Amen.

ensemble
/ALTE·RA/



Fast-rising **ENSEMBLE ALTERA** was founded to be the beating heart of professional choral music in the United States. Led by internationally celebrated countertenor Christopher Lowrey, the group is dedicated to bringing thoughtful, engaging, and relevant programs to in-person and digital audiences at home and around the world. The group is versatile, working on multiple scales, in a wide range of idioms, across the full range of medieval to modern to music being written today.

Over the past few years, Ensemble Altera has presented concerts both in person in New England and virtually to audiences around the world. Recent programs include *The Lamb's Journey*, drawing on many periods and styles to depict the Christ narrative, *We Watch & Welcome: Feminine Voices at Christmas*, featuring works by seven female composers for treble voices arrayed around Britten's Ceremony of Carols, and *We Remember*, a musical journey of healing and reflection in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout its short history, Altera has received universally rave reviews, creating "some of the best choral singing by an American choir". Upcoming projects include a boldly reimagined chamber version of Handel's *Messiah*, co-presented with Newport Classical, as well as *Dazzling Light*, a meditation on illumination in the natural and metaphysical worlds. Deeply committed to championing new works and lifting up new voices, over the past few seasons Altera has commissioned pieces by Joanna Marsh, Daniel Gledhill, Zuzanna Koziej, and Michael Garrepy.

In addition to performing, Ensemble Altera undertakes an extensive education and outreach program. Such activities include interactive presentations with school students in a variety of settings, with a particular focus on opening musical horizons to those from underserved backgrounds. Additionally, Altera has a profound faith in the healing power of music both in and out of the concert hall, and is proud to offer its complete recorded music library free of charge in collaboration with select partners in music therapy.

More at www.EnsembleAltera.com.



Director **Christopher Lowrey** was born and raised in Johnston, RI, and trained at Brown University, the University of Cambridge, where he sang under Stephen Layton with Trinity College Choir, and the Royal College of Music. In addition to conducting, he enjoys a dynamic international solo career as a countertenor, working at some of the world's leading opera houses and concert platforms, including the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, the Philharmonie de Paris, The London Symphony Orchestra, and this season he will be making his debuts with Oper Frankfurt and the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. More at www.christopherlowrey.com.

Violinist **Chloe Fedor** is known for her “lovely, plush, seductive tone” (New York Times), “soulful, virtuosic” playing and “impeccable technical control” (Opera News). She is a member of the Grammy award-winning group Apollo’s Fire, co-concertmaster of Lyra Baroque Orchestra, and concertmaster and artistic advisor of Baroque programming at Lakes Area Music Festival. Chloe will also appear several times this season with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Seraphic Fire, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, and as soloist and chamber musician with Four Nations Ensemble. She is a graduate of The Eastman School of Music and a double graduate of The Juilliard School, winning concerto competitions at both conservatories as well as the Juilliard Career Advancement Fellowship in 2015.



A NOTE OF THANKS

Deepest thanks to Rev. Mark Sutherland, Susan Esposito, David and Patricia Whitman and the entire staff and community of St Martin’s Church, Providence. It is an honor and privilege to be servants of this music in such welcoming surroundings. Heartfelt thanks also to Peter Sykes for the gracious loan of his harpsichord and chamber organ, Brad Kleyla for his peerless audio engineering, and to David Brookhart and Ian Tulungen for their assistance in filming tonight's performance.

DON'T MISS A NOTE

To learn more about all our exciting artistic activities, both in-person and digital, be sure to sign up for our newsletter at:

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