



The Shenandoah Valley  
Choral Society  
presents

# THE CHRISTMAS CONCERT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1995, 8 P.M.  
LEHMAN AUDITORIUM  
EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

## Program

April 13, 1742: Dublin bustled with excitement. Sedan chairs and carriages thronged around the new music hall in Fishamble Street as patrons arrived to hear George Frideric Handel's new sacred oratorio.

More than one woman in the crowd commiserated with her neighbor about the inconvenience of leaving her dress hoops at home, as a newspaper notice had requested. Men had left off their swords, too - all in the interest of seating more people in the hall for this performance, which was to benefit several charities.

The two performances of *Messiah* that day, a dress rehearsal and an evening concert, were sung by a choir of 14 men and 6 boys, plus half a dozen male and female soloists, accompanied by a 30-piece orchestra. At the harpsichord, commanding singers and instrumentalists, sat the composer.

Fashionable Dublin loved *Messiah*. Its approval was echoed in the newspaper review: "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."

And because 700 people had been able to squeeze into the hall, a sum of 400 pounds sterling was raised and 142 debtors were released from prison. This set a pattern: during Handel's lifetime his greatest oratorio would be performed to benefit a charity more often than the composer. A contemporary English writer said: "It fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan."

*Messiah* became a favorite in London, Dublin and other parts of the British Isles. It crossed the ocean to the New World before the colonies became the United States.

Through the years strange things have been done to *Messiah*. Mozart arranged the work according to his own style, adding additional instrumental parts. In Victorian times it was often sung by massive choirs of a thousand or more voices, accompanied by huge orchestras. *Messiah* survived it all. And through its many versions its magic has continued to shine. The perennial appeal of *Messiah* is as fresh today as when it was first heard, more than 250 years ago.

# MESSIAH, Part I

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Brenda Witmer, soprano  
Beth Harter, alto  
Les Helmuth, tenor  
William Cale, bass

## Overture

### Recitative and Air for Tenor

Comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardon'd. 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*

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*

### 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 40:5*

### Recitative and Air for Bass

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts: Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns 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; ev'n the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

*Malachi 3:1*

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*

### Chorus

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

*Malachi 3:3*

### Recitative and Air for Alto

Behold! A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel: GOD WITH US.

*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23*

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! O thou  
that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the  
glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

*Isaiah 40:9; 60:1*

### **Chorus**

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

*Isaiah 60:1*

### **Recitative and Air for 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 60:2-3*

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*

### **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 9:6*

### **Pastoral Symphony**

#### **Recitatives for Soprano**

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

*Luke 2:8*

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*

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*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heav'nly Host  
praising God, and saying:

*Luke 2:13*

### **Chorus**

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill toward men!

*Luke 2:14*

### **Air for 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 9:9-10*

### **Recitative for Alto**

Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, 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*

### **Air for Alto and 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.

*Isaiah 40:11*

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.

*Matthew 11:28-29*

### **Chorus**

His yoke is easy, his burden is light.

*Matthew 11:30*

### **Chorus**

Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, Hallelujah!

*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*

**Intermission**

## MEDITATIONS ON THE ROSE

*A spotless Rose is blowing, sprung from a tender root,  
Of ancient seers' foreshowing, of Jesse promis'd fruit;  
Its fairest bud unfolds to light amid the cold, cold winter,  
And in the dark midnight.*

*The Rose which I am singing, whereof Isaiah said,  
Is from its sweet root springing in Mary, purest Maid;  
For through our God's great love and might,  
The Blessed Babe she bare us in a cold, cold winter's night.*

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming	<i>Traditional</i> , arr. Spevacek-D. Lambert
There Is No Rose	Lloyd Pfautsch
Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming	Melchior Vulpus (1560-1615)
This Flow'r Whose Fragrance Tender	Michael Praetorius (1572-1621)

## SEVEN CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS

Arranged by Alice Parker

Good Christian Men, Rejoice	<i>Traditional English</i>
O Come, Emmanuel	<i>Traditional</i>
Fum, Fum, Fum!	<i>Catalonian</i>
Away in a Manger	<i>Traditional</i>
God Rest You Merry	<i>Traditional English</i>
So Blest a Sight	<i>Traditional English</i>
	Deborah Mongold, soloist
Masters in This Hall	<i>Traditional English</i>

**We wish you a joyous holiday season!**