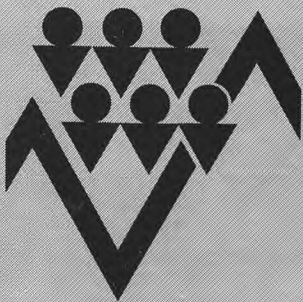


2005 - 2006 Season



Shenandoah Valley Choral Society

among others. Her concert experience includes performances with the Oakland Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and Minnesota Orchestra. She appears regularly with summer festivals including the Richmond Chamber Music Festival, Staunton Music Festival, Shenandoah Valley Bach, Western Slopes, Kalamazoo Bach, Oregon and Austin Bach Societies, and has been a Fellowship recipient at the Stonybrook Bach Aria Festival. A 1992 winner of the Upper Midwest District Metropolitan Opera Auditions, her operatic experience includes the title roles of Purcell's *Dido* and Handel's *Xerxes*, as well as Lychas in Handel's *Hercules* and Idamante in Mozart's *Idomeneo*, the mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Ma Moss in Copland's *The Tender Land*, and Elmire in Kirke Mechem's *Tartuffe*. Carrie has a particular interest in contemporary music and has been involved in many premieres including works by Kirke Mechem, Ofer Ben-Amots, John Baboukis, and Russell Burnham. She holds a Doctorate of Music from the University of Minnesota, Master of Music from Boston University, and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is currently Assistant Professor of Voice and Vocal Area Coordinator for the School of Music at James Madison University, Virginia.

BRENDA K. WITMER, soprano, has been described as singing "with deep emotional involvement and an upper register of pure silver," (Washington Post). She holds degrees from Goshen College, IN, and James Madison University, VA. After teaching and performing for two years in Paris, France, she currently serves on the faculties of JMU's School of Music, and Operafestival di Roma (Italy).

Most recently, Ms. Witmer performed V. Williams' Three Vocalises for Soprano and Clarinet in Rome, Italy; the Brahms *Requiem*, conducted by Webster Rogers (D.C.); a lecture-recital for the College Music Society's National Convention in San Francisco; and Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* for the Richmond Festival of Music. Her 2004 season included recitals in France and Belgium for the International Roussel Festival; concerts for the Shenandoah Valley Handel Fest; and Haydn's *Creation*, opposite John Aler (D.C.). Ms. Witmer has also performed in Puerto Rico, Prague and other townships of the Czech Republic. U.S. premieres include Vranicky's *Mass in Eb*, as well as Ruzicka's *Jazz Mass*, presented at the Washington National Cathedral.

Opera and Oratorio credits also include Mozart's *Così fan tutte*; Donizetti's *Rita*; Lehar's *The Merry Widow*; Stephen Paulus' *Village Singer*; Bach's *Magificat in D*; Handel's *Messiah*; Haydn's *Creation*; Mozart's *Requiem*; Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*; Dvorak's *Te Deum*; Faure's *Requiem*; Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* and MacMillan's *Busqueda*.

Ms. Witmer has studied privately with Elly Ameling, Linda Mabbs and Marianna Busching. Vocal coaches have included Kenneth Smith (Bel Canto Opera, Da Corneto Opera) and Stephen Crout (Washington Concert Opera).

The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society

Presents

G.F. Handel's Oratorio

The Messiah

with soloists:

Brenda Witmer, Soprano

Carrie Stevens, Mezzo Soprano

Sam Johnson, Tenor

Shannon Kiser, Bass

accompanied by

The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society Chamber Orchestra

John Barr, Organist

Amy Robertson, Harpsichordist

Curtis Nolley, Director

Friday December 16, 2005

Bridgewater Church of the Brethren

Bridgewater, Virginia

Messiah

Messiah is without doubt the best known and most often performed of George Frederic Handel's numerous compositions. It has become a Christmas tradition in many countries, but in Handel's day it was usually sung during the Lenten season. Composed in 1741 in only 24 days, the work was originally performed by a choir of just 20 men and boys, with an orchestra of 30 to 35 players. The text was selected by Charles Jennens from the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. The work aroused controversy at first because some thought it irreverent to sing religious text in the concert hall. King George II, however, was so impressed at the London premiere that he stood up during the "Hallelujah Chorus." The rest of the audience was obliged to stand in deference to the king, thus originating the custom that is still followed to this day.

As many times as *Messiah* is performed, Handel's music retains its strengths: a keen sensitivity to the text, an affinity for the natural gifts of each voice, and a satisfying balance among solo, choral and orchestral sections. The expressive beauty of the music, however, is not the only reason for *Messiah's* enduring popularity. Like all great art, the work can be appreciated on many levels. Taken literally, it is a dramatic and touching portrayal of the life of Christ. We feel the thrill of suspense as if we did not know the outcome until the end of the story. In a larger sense, it is a journey of the soul, from joyous awakening through anguished suffering to ultimate victory. Only by enduring pain and rejection can we fully experience the glory of redemption. It is this universality that makes performers and listeners of all faiths respond time and again to the message of *Messiah*.

The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society
is a member of



The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society acknowledges
the support of these members for this event:

Oasis Gallery • Court Square Theater
First Night Harrisonburg



Thomas House Restaurant

222 Main Street, Dayton

879-2181

Part One

Sinfonia (Orchestra)

Arioso (Tenor)

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*)

Air (Tenor)

Every valley shall be exalted, and every 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 (Bass)

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once, a little while, and I shall 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. (*Haggai 2:6,7; Malachi 3:1*)

Air (Bass)

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 (Mezzo)

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

Air (Mezzo) and Chorus

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. (*Isaiah 40:9; 60:1*)

Arioso (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 9:2,3*)

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*)

Pifa "Pastoral Symphony" (Orchestra)

Recitative (Soprano)

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (*Luke 2:8*)

Air (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 2:9*)

Recitative (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 2:10,11*)

Arioso (Soprano)

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: (*Luke 2:13*)

Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men. (*Luke 2:14*)

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 9:9,10*)

Recitative (Mezzo)

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*)

Air (Mezzo 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 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 will find rest unto your souls. (*Matthew 11:28,29*)

Chorus

His yoke is easy and His burthen is light. (*Matthew 11:30*)

Part Two

Chorus

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

Air (Mezzo)

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 53:3; 50:6*)

Chorus

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrow; He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. (*Isaiah 53:4,5*)

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

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*)

INTERMISSION

Recitative (Tenor)

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

Air (Tenor)

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer the Holy One to see corruption. (*Psalms 16:10*)

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, strong and 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. He is the King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts. (*Psalms 24:7-10*)

Air (Soprano)

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things. (*Romans 10:15*)

Chorus

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

Recitative (Tenor)

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision. (*Psalms 2:4*)

Air (Tenor)

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like

a potter's vessel. (*Psalm 2:9*)

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. (*Revelation 19:6; 11:15; 19:16*)

Part Three

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 19:25,26; 1 Corinthians 15:20*)

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. (*1 Corinthians 15:21,22*)

Recitative (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. (*1 Corinthians 15:51,52*)

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. (*1 Corinthians 15:52,53*)

Recitative (Mezzo)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory! (*1 Corinthians 15:54*)

Duet (Mezzo and 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. (*1 Corinthians 15:55,56*)

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 for ever and ever. Amen. (*Revelation 5:12,13*)

Shenandoah Valley Choral Society Singers

Sopranos

Dorothy Anderson
Karen Barnes
Doris K. Boyer
Linda Martin Burkholder
Judy Buskirk
Suzanne Cockley
Kari Culver
Rachel Dillard
Lisa Dunlap
Karen Early-Williams
Linda J. Finks
Nancy Hanna
Cindi Harkins
Ann Healy
Doris Heatwole
Kathy Hensley
Dolores H. Hoak
Pat Hughes
Betsy Hulvey
Susan Kiser
Julia Kraus
Bethany Landis
Esther L. Landis
Rosie Landis
Betty Leidal
Lisa Mast
Shelby May
Nancy Metcalfe
Kathleen M. Molinari
Grace N. Mumaw
Leona Myers
Betty Myers
Marliese Poskitt
Edie Pritt
Maria Prytula
Barbara Riddleberger
Barbara Roberts
Sallie Rohrer
Becky Ruckman
Dorothy Shenk
Joan B. Smith
Lorraine Strickler
Mazie K. Wampler
Betty Karol Wilson
Phyllis Wine

Altos

Nanne Barnes
Barbara Bowman
Margaret Byler
Sue W. Captain
Karen Carpenter
Christine Carpenter
Patricia Costie
Hilary Davies
Robin Davis
Doreen DeVore
Kerry Ensley
Bethany Freesen
Patsy Froelich
Katie Getz
Mary Green
Lauren Grinstaff
Zanette Hahn
Wendy Pierce Haines
Chloe C. Heatwole
Maretta Heatwole
Evie Hertzler
Sue Hodges
Betty Hoskins
Sui Sui Kinoshita
Carol LaSpina
Joyce Leake
Carolyn Lewis
Lois Martin
Nancy Martz
Debbie McGuire
Barbara S. Miller
Fern Miller
Deborah Proctor
Diane Rhodes
Coleen Rohrer
Sharon Ryder
Audrey Shenk
Jan Showalter
Heather Snow
Virginia Spicher
Mary Jo Swartzendruber
Mickey Tolton
Betty Torkelson
Jo Artz Umberger
Cara Walton
Dorothy Jean Weaver
Brenda Wilkinson

Kay S. Woolf
Margaret Wurst

Tenors

Richard Boyer
Philip Buskirk
David Cockley
Dwayne Hartman
John Held
Ray E. Horst
Joe Jennings
Robert F. Jochen
John Kauffman
James D. Kiser
Phillip J. Markert
Ronald Matthews
Mitsunari Nakadhima
Sam Showalter
Daniel Van Pelt
David A. Van Pelt
Charlie Wilson

Bass

Jerry Bass
Adam Blagg
Douglas Byler
Tom DeVore
Phil Easley
Richard Forbes
Ray Haas
Jared Hodges
Jim Kiser
Eugene Lantz
Knut Leidal
Dwight E. Miller
Clarence M. Moyers
Wilson Myers
Steve Proctor
Bill Reed
Justin Rexrode
Francis P. Smith
David Solomon
William H. Voige
Richard S. Wilson
Richard Wurst
Richard L. Yoder