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Images of The English Concert are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS  
A FEATURED PERFORMANCE OF THIS SEASON'S  
*ILLUMINATIONS: "FRACTURED HISTORY" SERIES***

**THE ENGLISH CONCERT  
HARRY BICKET, *CONDUCTOR*;  
HANDEL'S *GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO*  
SUNDAY, APRIL 27 AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**Berkeley, February 25, 2025**— Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes back **The English Concert** for the orchestra's annual engagement on Sunday, April 27 at 3pm at Zellerbach Hall. Under director **Harry Bicket**, the ensemble performs a concert of Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, one of the composer's most celebrated operas. Set in ancient Egypt, the opera follows Julius Caesar's arrival after his victory over Pompey, and Caesar and Cleopatra's resulting romantic and political alliance as they struggle against her treacherous brother, Tolomeo. The narrative weaves together historical events with romanticised storytelling to explore themes of politics, love, seduction, betrayal, and loyalty. Under the direction of Bicket, soprano **Louise Alder** takes the role of Cleopatra; with countertenor **Christophe Dumaux** as Cesare; mezzo soprano **Beth Taylor** as Cornelia; and countertenors **John Holiday** as Tolomeo, and **Meili Li** as Nireno, all of whom make their Cal Performances debuts in this performance. Mezzo-soprano **Paula Murrhly** returns to

Berkeley performing the role of Sesto. In The English Concert's 2021 performance of Handel's *Alcina* she sang the role of Ruggiero.

### ***Illuminations***

*Giulio Cesare in Egitto* is one of eight distinct *Illuminations* performances this season that connect with additional public events and academic encounters. Through this "Fractured History" series, Cal Performances investigates collective memory and the complex evolution of historical narratives to consider what role the performing arts might play in restoring nuance to our understanding of the past, and how that understanding shapes our present and future. As part of *Illuminations*, the historical references in the *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* story are described in an article on Cal Performances' *Beyond the Stage* [blog](#). Visit [calperformances.org/illuminations-2024-25](https://calperformances.org/illuminations-2024-25) to learn more about *Illuminations* this season.

### **The English Concert**

The English Concert, under the artistic direction of Harry Bicket, has cultivated an intimate and evolving relationship with Handel's music for almost 50 years, celebrating and sharing the work of one of England's most renowned composers and making it relevant to contemporary audiences. Handel's output includes more than 600 works that range from full-scale operas to introductory works for children. He wrote nearly 70 operas and oratorios, including *Messiah* and *Giulio Cesare*; more than 150 additional vocal works, including *Dixit Dominus* and *Acis and Galatea*; more than 40 instrumental works, including *Water Music*, *Royal Fireworks Music*, and organ concertos; and over 120 chamber music pieces. The group's [Handel for All](#) project, launched in February 2023, is The English Concert's ambitious undertaking to film performances of every piece of Handel's music, creating an online resource that is free and accessible to the public. The English Concert's annual visits to Berkeley go a step beyond, providing direct interaction with the iconic master's works, delivered by the leading interpreters of our time.

### **The Performers**

The musicians are all adorned vocalists, coming from international backgrounds. Says Artistic Director and Conductor Harry Bicket, "It is wonderful to be returning with The English Concert and a stellar cast of singers for Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. It is always a joy to bring such internationally revered talent to the curious and engaged audiences in Berkeley, and we are excited to

present this performance led by Christophe Dumaux and Louise Alder as Giulio Cesare and Cleopatra respectively.”

Countertenor Christophe Dumaux (Giulio Cesare) studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris and has received outstanding praise from his title role as Giulio Cesare at the Château de Versailles. Meanwhile, Louise Alder (Cleopatra) is a British soprano that has performed across the world including in Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 with the London Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Tokyo Philharmonic. Additionally, Irish mezzo-soprano Paula Murrihy (Sesto) was previously a member of Oper Frankfurt and performed several roles such as Medoro from *Orlando Furioso*; she also released a solo album that features folk inspired songs and myths, including a traditional Irish folk song. Contralto Beth Taylor (Cornelia) has performed at several festival platforms including the Berlin Festival, BBC Proms, and the Berlioz Festival and is the grand finalist of the 2023 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition. Countertenor John Holiday (Tolomeo) has performed at several of the world’s most prestigious concert halls, such as Carnegie Hall and the Philharmonie de Paris, and has toured with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Baritone Morgan Pearse (Achilla) is an active recording artist, appearing on records such as Dussek *Messe Sollemnelle* and Händel’s *Brockes Passion* and has performed at some of the finest concert halls in the world including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Sydney Opera House. Originally from Beijing, countertenor Meili Li (Nireno) is active internationally, performing at major opera houses and festivals and is the winner of the Farinelli Prize at the 2016 London Handel Festival Singing Competition. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London, Thomas Chenhall (Curio) made his debut at the Royal Opera House, performing in both their lunchtime recital series in 2023 and in a livestreamed performance as Papageno in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**Sunday, April 27, 3pm**

**Zellerbach Hall  
Bancroft Way at Dana Street, UC Berkeley campus**

*Early Music*

**[The English Concert](#)**

**Handel’s *Giulio Cesare in Egitto***

**Harry Bicket, *conductor***

**Christophe Dumaux**, *countertenor* (Giulio Cesare)

**Louise Alder**, *soprano* (Cleopatra)

**Paula Murrin**, *mezzo-soprano* (Sesto)

**Beth Taylor**, *contralto* (Cornelia)

**John Holiday**, *countertenor* (Polonio)

**Morgan Pearce**, *baritone* (Achilla)

**Meili Li**, *countertenor* (Nireno)

**Thomas Chenhall**, *baritone* (Curio)

**Program:**

Love, betrayal, family drama, and political intrigue—this concert performance of Handel’s heroic opera recounts the historic meeting of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, through a series of arias and orchestration. British soprano Louise Alder sings the seductive central role of Cleopatra, opposite French countertenor Christophe Dumaux as her Caesar.

This performance will be sung in Italian, accompanied by English subtitles.

An *Illuminations*: “Fractured History” event. Visit [calperformances.org/illuminations-2024-25](https://calperformances.org/illuminations-2024-25) to learn more.

**Tickets:** \$44–\$132 (prices subject to change). Tickets for all performances are available at [calperformances.org](https://calperformances.org), by phone at (510) 642-9988, or in person at the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, Tuesday–Friday, 12–5:30pm and Saturday–Sunday, 1–5pm. There is a \$15 per order service charge on ticket purchases made by phone or online that are not part of a subscription package. There is no fee for tickets purchased in person at the Zellerbach Hall Ticket Office unless they are part of a subscription. There is a \$20 service charge on all subscription orders.

UC Berkeley students can access exclusive discounts, including half-price tickets in all sections of the theater. Information about UC Berkeley student tickets and discounts is available at [calperformances.org/ucb-students](https://calperformances.org/ucb-students); information about other discounts can be found at [calperformances.org/discounts](https://calperformances.org/discounts).

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