

Sunday, March 5, 2023, 3pm
Zellerbach Hall

The English Concert

Harry Bicket, *artistic director, conductor, and harpsichord*

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
Solomon, HWV 67, an oratorio in three acts

Ann Hallenberg (Solomon), *mezzo-soprano*
Miah Persson (Solomon's Queen and First Harlot), *soprano*
Elena Villalón (Nicaule, Queen of Sheba), *soprano*
Brandon Cedel (Levite), *bass-baritone*
James Way (Zadok), *tenor*
Niamh O'Sullivan (Second Harlot), *mezzo-soprano*

The Clarion Choir
Steven Fox, *artistic director*

Lily Arbisser Shorr, *supertitles*

*This performance will include two 20-minute intermissions,
the first following Act I
and the second following Act II.*

*The performance will last approximately
three hours and 10 minutes, including the two intermissions.*

*This performance is made possible, in part, by Bernice Greene,
The Estate of Ross E. Armstrong, and an anonymous Patron Sponsor.*

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Despite his advancing years, 1749 was one of the greatest periods of George Frideric Handel's career. Though he was now turning 64, his physical and creative vigor remained extraordinary even for a much younger man. He still maintained a relentless schedule each year of creating a pair of oratorios for the next Lenten concert season, as well as numerous other works, often commissioned by members of the royal family. As well as his new creative work, he revived earlier oratorios—in 1749 they were *Samson*, *Hercules*, and *Messiah*—which often required extensive revisions to accommodate new singers. He oversaw these productions, new and old, while also enriching them with his organ virtuosity.

Written during the spring and summer of 1748, Handel's new oratorios for 1749 were a contrasting pair. Drawn from the Biblical apocrypha, *Susanna* was an intimate drama about a beautiful woman falsely accused by lecherous elders of the community. Premiered on March 17, 1749 at London's Covent Garden Theatre, *Solomon* was its opposite: a spectacular, pageant-like oratorio about Israel's greatest king based on the Old Testament Books of First Kings and Second Chronicles. As conductor John Eliot Gardiner wrote: "To my mind, *Solomon* is probably the most magnificent, certainly the most lavish of all the Handel oratorios. He demanded a grander, more sumptuous orchestra for *Solomon* than any earlier oratorio, and it contains a high proportion of choral music written in his most imposing ceremonial style."

Why did Handel choose this subject at this particular time? Renowned for his wisdom, Solomon had built the great temple at Jerusalem and then presided over Israel's longest period of peace and prosperity. But Handel was not musing solely about Solomon in 1748–49, he was also thinking about his own king and patron, George II. For many years, Europe had been roiled by the

War of the Austrian Succession, which was now about to be concluded in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. It was a time for celebration, culminating on April 27, 1749—a month after *Solomon*'s debut—with an elaborate outdoor performance of Handel's new *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. Both *Solomon* and the *Royal Fireworks* shared a common emphasis on musical splendor as well as a mood of optimism for the future.

So ancient Israel's Solomon is here regarded as a model for George II, who was also leading England through a period of wealth and security. "What gives the oratorio its strength is Handel's vision of Solomon's court as an ideal society," writes Handel scholar Winton Dean. *Solomon*'s librettist is unknown, but he was most careful to show Israel's king as being without flaw—there's no hint of Solomon's harem of hundreds of concubines, for example. Writes Paul Henry Lang, the librettist "omitted all adverse nuances, making the King of the Israelites not only a paragon of monogamy but an irreproachable figure that could not have displeased the King of the English, who knew well that he and his subjects were beholding their own portrait."

MUSICAL BOUNTY

An enlarged chorus—big enough for Handel to frequently divide into double choruses—is the undisputed star of *Solomon*. Dean: "The choruses of *Solomon* are among the greatest Handel ever wrote, and they illustrate the remarkable range and flexibility of his technique." There are choruses, like the antiphonal double chorus "Your Harps and Cymbals Sound" opening Part I and the oratorio's closing number "Praise the Lord with Harp and Tongue," that epitomize Baroque ceremonial splendor. But there are also more intimate moments like the beautiful "May no rash intruder" (also known as the "Nightingale Chorus") that accompanies Solomon and his Queen to bed at the end of Act I.

A large chorus requires the support of a large orchestra. And Handel was able to assemble his most lavish instrumental ensemble for this oratorio, including flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, trumpets, strings, and continuo. The expanded string section allowed him to divide both violins and violas into two parts, providing richer, weightier harmonies.

With the prominence of the chorus, Handel reduced his customary emphasis on solo singers displaying their virtuosity in elaborate *da capo* arias. Though there are some lovely arias scattered throughout the score, they are often simpler in style and omit *da capo* repeats. More striking are Handel's vocal ensembles, including the love duet of Solomon and his Queen and a trio for Solomon's famous judgment of the two women claiming the same child in Act II.

Interestingly, Handel chose to give the role of Solomon to a female mezzo soprano, Caterina Galli. Gardiner suggests why: "In this particular work Handel wanted to achieve a neutrality for the central character. To have had Solomon sung by a castrato wouldn't have been quite right as castratos were generally associated with fictitious operatic heroes, often tyrants or thwarted lovers. George II wouldn't perhaps have thanked him for that." Thus the soloists skew toward female voices, with the tenor and bass consigned to lesser roles.

THE SCENARIO

Solomon is not conceived as a continuous dramatic plot but instead as a series of tableaux, each illustrating a particular aspect of Solomon's greatness. In Part I, Solomon's religious devotion is shown as he celebrates the consecration of the Temple in Jerusalem. The second half of this section demonstrates his fidelity in marriage to his young queen; Handel fills it with some of his most unabashedly sensuous music, including an ardent love duet and the gorgeous "Nightingale Chorus." The most dramatic of the

acts is Part II, which shows Solomon's wisdom as he skillfully judges the case of the two competing women. Part III displays Solomon's wealth and international stature as he hosts the Queen of Sheba visiting from the Arabian peninsula.

LISTENING TO THE MUSIC

Part I: *Solomon* opens with an overture in the French style, combining a slower ceremonial opening section with a quick-tempo Fugue of exceptional brilliance. The scene then opens on a crowd of Israelite citizens and priests assembled to consecrate Solomon's Temple. The magnificent first double chorus "**Ye harps and cymbals sound**" is an extraordinary display of antiphonal counterpoint built from the basses' unison singing of a majestically ascending phrase followed by a slower descending one. This forms a *cantus firmus* theme that keeps returning to anchor the dazzling back-and-forth calls of the two choruses.

After a pro forma aria for the basso Levite, an equally remarkable second chorus of the priests, "**With pious heart and holy tongue**," opens with hushed homophonic singing in C minor over the orchestra's solemn pulsing. This expression of awe and humility before God then explodes into a joyous antiphonal *fugato*. The many overlapping entries of the eight vocal parts thrillingly capture the feeling of an infinite number of voices and nations joining the song of praise.

Rather than a triumphant *da capo* aria, Solomon's first utterance is a quiet prayer of thanksgiving to God, voiced in a subdued *recitativo accompagnato* over a beautifully expressive orchestral part. And when a little later, he finally sings his *da capo* "**What though I trace each herb and flow'r**," it is equally modest, staying within the compass of an octave and foregoing any florid display. With its violins imitating sighing breezes, this aria is the first of many numbers that extoll Nature's beauty and

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PROGRAM NOTES

power. Such poetic imagery always inspired Handel's best.

The subject now changes from corporate worship of God to the intimate pleasures of a happy marriage. This second scene shows Solomon as devoted husband, besotted by the beauty of his Egyptian queen, and Handel explores this with music of exquisitely sensuous beauty for the two lovers. (In fact, public disapproval of such frank sexuality being introduced into an oratorio caused Handel to bowdlerize his score for later revivals!) The Queen introduces herself with "Bless'd the day," a dancing *da capo* sparkling with youthfulness and joyous coloratura. This leads to an entrancing love duet, "Welcome as the dawn of day," in which the orchestra's double violin parts intertwine around each other in a graceful imitation of the loving pair's closeness.

Part I closes with one of the greatest, though quietest, of the oratorio's choruses, "May no rash intruder" (the "Nightingale Chorus") scored for five voices and a superbly colorful orchestra. Again the sounds of Nature are invoked as divided violins and violas mimic the "soft-breathing zephyrs" and a pair of flutes conjure the song of the nightingales. Animated by syncopation, the choral parts are beautifully and subtly crafted. And thus an act that began with resounding splendor closes with a softly enchanting choral benediction.

PART II

Part II contains *Solomon's* only scene of theatrical drama as the King adjudicates the case of the infant claimed by two harlots (Handel objected to calling them that). We hear the full orchestra for the first time as blazing trumpets and drums join the eight-voice double chorus in one of the oratorio's mightiest numbers, "From the censor curling rise." In this D-major hymn of praise to Solomon, Handel divides his chorus into two, singing antiphonally to each other in block chords. To differentiate the two

groups, Handel chose trumpets, timpani, and strings to accompany Chorus I and woodwinds and horns for Chorus II. The opening and closing antiphonal sections enclose a full-dress fugue, “Live, live forever, pious David’s son.”

The two women are ushered in to plead their cause. A remarkable trio in the troubled key of F-sharp minor, “**Words are weak to paint my fears,**” is launched by the first woman. Bolstered by the orchestra and its wailing high violins, her anxious phrases are halting, riddled with pauses. Eventually, the second woman grows impatient and leaps in, harshly declaring the other is false. Beneath them, Solomon’s lines remain measured and calm. Such ensembles featuring multiple characters, each individually drawn, were a rarity in Handel’s aria-dominated time. Solomon dispassionately commands the baby be cleaved in two and half given to each woman. In a pompous aria, the second woman praises the King’s wisdom and happily accepts his decree. The first woman’s response, however, is voiced in a heartbreaking aria in F minor, “**Can I see my infant god’d,**” intensified by the orchestra’s biting dissonances. She cannot bear to see her child killed and therefore begs the other to “take him all.” Solomon has flushed out the real mother.

Recalling Part’s II’s opening chorus, trumpets and timpani return for the resplendent “**Swell, swell, the full chorus,**” which closes and frames the act. Here singing in four parts to a strongly accented triple meter, the Israelites praise Solomon’s wisdom and his worthiness to be their king. Between their mighty homophonic utterances, the texture becomes open and contrapuntal with choral melismas adding to the joy.

PART III

From intimate drama we now return to pageantry. The final act opens with *Solomon’s* most famous excerpt, the sparkling orchestral sinfonia that announces “**The Ar-**

rival of the Queen of Sheba,” who has traveled from distant Arabia to behold the wonders of Solomon’s kingdom. Here Handel exploits the contrasting colors of his well-stocked ensemble with racing strings juxtaposed against pungent oboes.

The musical highlight of Part III is a Purcell-influenced masque of four choruses demonstrating how effectively music can portray drastically different scenes and emotions. This is an entertainment conceived by Solomon to delight the Queen of Sheba, and he acts as master of ceremonies briefly introducing each piece. The hushed first chorus in G major gracefully illustrates its words, “**Music, spread thy voice around/ Sweetly flow the lulling sound,**” with floating lines caressed by delicate ornaments. Next, galloping dotted rhythms carry us onto a D-major battlefield, as the chorus divides into two four-voice groups hurling their weapons against each other (“**Shake the Dome**”); martial trumpets urge them on.

Solomon interrupts this stunning number before it finishes to summon up the spirit of melancholy and love’s torments with the impressive “**Draw the tear from hopeless love.**” In this dark G-minor chorus in *Largo* tempo, Handel uses dissonance skillfully to paint his text. The textural shifts from lovely, open counterpoint among the five voices to homophonic cries of despair are wonderfully chosen. Moving to warm E-flat major and partnered by a cello, Solomon then launches the final chorus, “**Thus rolling surges rise,**” and restores calm to the troubled emotional seas. With flowing melismas mimicking the rolling waves, Handel shows that music with clear diatonic harmonies and no disturbances need not be boring.

Among the arias that follow this great sequence, one stands out: the Queen of Sheba’s beautiful farewell aria “**Will the sun forget to streak**” as she prepares to leave Solomon. Rather than being in a conventionally happy tempo and a bright major key, this is a valedictory song in E minor

and *Largo* tempo that encompasses both wonder and regret at having to leave Solomon's blessed realm. Keening oboes are ideal accompanying soloists.

The final chorus that closes *Solomon* is somewhat in dispute. While most editions place the rather pedestrian "The name of the wicked shall quickly be past" at the end, many conductors are choosing instead to replace it with the penultimate—and much greater—eight-voice double chorus in D major "Praise the Lord with harp and tongue." Paired with a spectacular full-orchestra part, this chorus begins quite mod-

estly with a single choir, then grows in splendor as the second choir is introduced and the two hurl their exclamations of praise back and forth. The orchestra, too, progressively becomes more sumptuous as various instruments—and most of all the trumpets and timpani—are brought into the foreground. Another of Handel's choral masterpieces, "Praise the Lord" rises to the majesty of the two choruses with which *Solomon* began three hours earlier.

—Janet E. Bedell

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The **English Concert** is an outstanding orchestra: exceptional, in the world-renowned quality, ambition, and variety of its live and recorded output; unique, in the zeal of its players for working and performing together; unwavering, in its desire to connect with its audience throughout the world.

Under the artistic direction of Harry Bicket and principal guest director Kristian Bezuidenhout, the English Concert has earned a reputation for combining urgency, passion, and fire with precision, delicacy, and beauty. The group's artistic partners reflect and enhance the members' pursuit of new ways to bring their music to life.

Joyce DiDonato, Dame Sarah Connolly, Iestyn Davies, Alison Balsom, Trevor Pinnock, Dominic Dromgoole, Tom Morris, and many others have not only brought their extraordinary skills to individual projects, but continue to help shape the way the group performs.

One cornerstone of the orchestra's annual schedule is its international Handel opera tour. Blossoming from an ongoing relationship with Carnegie Hall, the itinerary now regularly takes in the Theater an der Wien, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Elbphilharmonie, and Barbican Hall—a

roster of great halls that continues to grow. Meanwhile, its regular London series allows the musicians to explore a radically different path, presenting programs to its home audience that continue to challenge and inspire.

The English Concert is the orchestra-in-residence at Garsington Opera.



Internationally renowned as an opera and concert conductor of distinction, **Harry Bicket** (*artistic director and conductor*) is especially noted for his interpretation of Baroque

and Classical repertoire and since 2007 has been the artistic director of the English Concert, one of Europe's finest period orchestras. In 2013, following regular guest appearances with Santa Fe Opera, he became that company's Chief Conductor; in 2018, he assumed the music directorship. In Santa Fe, he has led productions of *Carmen*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Fidelio*, *La finta giardiniera*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Alcina*, *Candide*, and *Così fan tutte*. During the 2019 season, he also performed Strauss'

Four Last Songs with Renée Fleming. Born in Liverpool, he studied at the Royal College of Music and Oxford University.

Projects with the English Concert this season, in addition to their London season and recording projects, include tours to Europe and the United States with Handel's *Solomon* and performances of *Ariodante* at the Palais Garnier. Bicket will also return to Chicago Symphony (for a special collaboration with the Joffrey Ballet), Orchestra of St Luke's, the Canadian Opera Company, and Santa Fe Opera.

Following the success in earlier seasons of *Rinaldo* and *Ariodante* featuring Joyce DiDonato, last spring, the English Concert continued its Handel opera series with critically acclaimed performances of *Serse* in the UK, Europe, and the United States, including at St Martin-in-the-Fields and Carnegie Hall. Other highlights with the English Concert have included Bicket's own arrangements of Mozart works for mechanical clockwork organ, Bach's *Cantatas for Advent*, and Wayne Eagling's *Remembrance* ballet, set to Handel's *Ode to St Cecilia's Day*, for English National Ballet Theatre.

In addition to his regular Santa Fe productions, recent North American seasons have included the Metropolitan Opera (most recently *Rodelinda*, *The Magic Flute*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Agrippina*, and *Così fan tutte*); Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Ariodante*, *Orphée et Eurydice*, *Carmen*, *Rinaldo*); Houston Grand Opera (*Le nozze di Figaro*, *Rusalka*); and Canadian Opera Company (*Maometto II*, *Hercules*). Symphonic guest conducting has included the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Houston Symphony, Seattle Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, and Boston Symphony Orchestra. He

has also led master classes at the Juilliard School.

European conducting has ranged from opera for the Liceu in Barcelona (including *Agrippina*, *Lucio Silla*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Opéra de Bordeaux (*Alcina*), and Theater an der Wien (*Iphigenie en Tauride*, *Mitridate*), to concert projects with Prague Philharmonia, RTE National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Bayerische Rundfunk, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Earlier work outside of Europe included his Japanese debut with Ian Bostridge and the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and Israel Philharmonic.

Opera has also included various productions at the Royal Opera House, Minnesota Opera, Scottish Opera, New York City Opera, Royal Danish Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Edinburgh Festival, Spoleto Festival, English National Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, and Los Angeles Opera.

Bicket made his Glyndebourne Festival debut in 1996 with Peter Sellars' landmark production of Handel's *Theodora* and returned in 1999 and 2003. In 2004, his first Metropolitan Opera production (an acclaimed new production of *Rodelinda* with Renée Fleming and David Daniels) was quickly followed by *Giulio Cesare* (2006–07) and *La clemenza di Tito* (2008) and he is now a regular guest with the company. In 2003, Bicket's debut production for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (Handel's *Orlando*) received an Olivier Award nomination for Best New Opera Production. That same year, he conducted at the Lyric Opera of Chicago for the first time; he has since returned regularly.

Recordings to date with the English Concert include releases for Virgin Classics, Chandos, and Harmonia Mundi featuring Elizabeth Watts, David Daniels, Lucy Crowe, Sarah Connolly, and Rosemary Joshua. Bicket's discography also includes five recordings with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, among them Handel opera arias with Renée Fleming (Decca) and Ian Bostridge (EMI), as well as selections from Handel's *Theodora*, *Seise*, and the cantata *La Lucrezia* with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson (Avie, nominated for a Grammy Award). His *Gramophone* Award-nominated CDs include *Sento Amor* with David Daniels featuring arias by Gluck, Handel, and Mozart (Virgin Veritas) and *Il tenero momento* with Susan Graham featuring arias by Mozart and Gluck (Erato).



The Swedish mezzo-soprano **Ann Hallenberg** regularly appears at major opera houses and festivals, including at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, Venice's Teatro la Fenice, Madrid's Teatro

Real, Theater an der Wien, Opernhaus Zürich, Opéra National Paris, Théâtre de La Monnaie Brussels, Netherlands Opera Amsterdam, Bayerische Staatsoper München, Staatsoper Berlin, the Salzburg Festival, and the Edinburgh Festival.

Her operatic repertoire includes a large number of roles in operas by Rossini, Mozart, Gluck, Handel, Vivaldi, Monteverdi, Purcell, Bizet, and Massenet. Having built an unusually vast concert repertoire that spans music from the early-17th to 20th centuries, Hallenberg is also highly sought after as a concert singer and she frequently appears in concert halls throughout Europe and North America.

Hallenberg has performed with many of the world's great orchestras and enjoys a special and close collaboration with the ensembles Les Talens Lyriques, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, and Europa Galante. She regularly works with conductors including Fabio Biondi, Gianluca Capuano, William Christie, Teodor Currentzis, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and Emmanuelle Haïm.

She has recorded more than 40 CDs and DVDs. At the 2016 International Opera Awards in London, her solo CD *Agrippina* won the award for Best Operatic Recital. This was her second win in the category, following her victory in 2014.

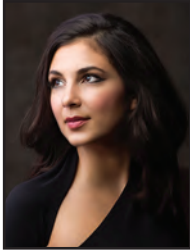


Internationally renowned Swedish soprano **Miah Persson** has worked all over the world as a recitalist and concert artist, as well as on the operatic stage. She has sung roles in operas

by composers ranging from Mozart to Britten to Michel van der Aa, whose *Blank Out*, starring Persson, will be seen here at Zellerbach Hall in its West Coast premiere on April 28–29. She has also appeared at the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House – Covent Garden, Milan's Teatro alla Scala, the Vienna Staatsoper, and the Glyndebourne Festival, among others.

Her concert appearances have included J.S. Bach's Mass in B minor at Teatro La Fenice and *St. Matthew Passion* with the Rotterdam Philharmonic; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms; Brahms' *Requiem* with the State Symphony Orchestra of Russia and the London Philharmonic; Grieg's *Peer Gynt* with the Vienna Symphony; Mahler's Symphony No. 2, *Resurrection*, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and with the London Symphony, Teatro alla

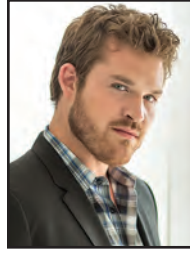
Scala, and the Philharmonie Luxembourg. Persson has sung in recital at London's Wigmore Hall, the Wiener Konzerthaus, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and New York's Carnegie Hall.



Cuban-American soprano **Elena Villalón** recently completed her tenure with the Houston Grand Opera Studio. Described as having “a voice with considerable warmth and mellifluous legato tone, but also weight and breadth” by *Washington Classical Review*, she is a 2019 Grand Finals winner at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and most recently took home several prizes at the Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition. This season, she joins the ensemble of Oper Frankfurt, debuting as Iole in *Hercules* in a new production by Barrie Kosky and as Atalanta in *Xerxes*. She returns to Houston Grand Opera as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and the Dallas Opera as Gretel in *Hansel und Gretel*.

Passionate about art song and concert repertoire, Villalón has spent summers at the Tanglewood Music Center and at Songfest as a Colburn Fellow. At Tanglewood, performance highlights have included the soprano solo in Mahler's Symphony No. 4 with conductor Giancarlo Guerrero, Max in Oliver Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are*, the world premiere of Michael Gandolfi's *In America*, concerts of Bach cantatas conducted by John Harbison, and concerts and recitals curated by Dawn Upshaw, Stephanie Blythe, Margo Garrett, and Sanford Sylvan.

Villalón lives in Houston, Texas, where she enjoys (besides singing) sailing, sewing, cooking, causing mischief, and spending time with her dogs, Scooter and Spaghetti.



American bass-baritone **Brandon Cedel** is a recent graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, and was an ensemble member of Oper

Frankfurt from 2016–19.

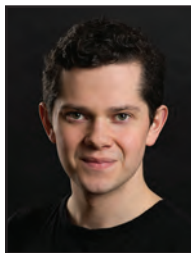
Recent highlights include the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro* for the Glyndebourne Festival; the title role in *Hercules* for the Karlsruhe Handel Festival; Dan Brown in the world premiere of Kevin Puts' *The Hours* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Zuniga/*Carmen* for the Chicago Opera Theater.

Elsewhere he has sung Masetto/*Don Giovanni* for the Metropolitan Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Leporello/*Don Giovanni* and Argante/*Rinaldo* for the Glyndebourne Festival; Collatinus/*The Rape of Lucretia* for the Boston Lyric Opera; the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro* for Opera Philadelphia and Colline/*La bohème* and Basilio/*Il barbiere di Siviglia* for the Canadian Opera Company.

His many roles for Oper Frankfurt include Masetto, Sprecher/*Die Zauberflöte*, Lieutenant Ratcliffe/*Billy Budd*, Argante, Ariodate/*Xerxes*, Cesare Angelotti/*Tosca*, Brander/*La damnation de Faust*, and Achior in Mozart's *La Betulia Liberata*.

Future engagements include a return to the Metropolitan Opera House and the Glyndebourne Festival.

Tenor **James Way** is fast gaining international recognition for the versatility of his voice and his commanding stage presence. A former Britten Pears Young Artist, he is also a laureate of William Christie's Les Arts Florissants Jardin des Voix and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's Rising Stars young artist programs and was awarded an Independent Opera Voice Fellowship. Way also won Second Prize at the



62nd Kathleen Ferrier Awards at Wigmore Hall.

On the concert platform, Way has performed with a wide selection of UK and European orchestras. His regular appearances with the BBC Symphony Orchestra have included the European premiere of Ross Harris' *FACE*, Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été*, and Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* at the Last Night of the Proms.

Way has worked with conductors such as René Jacobs, Jakub Hrusa, Thibault Noally, Mark Wigglesworth, Harry Bicket, and Robin Ticciati. Since being selected for the inaugural Equilibrium Young Artists Programme, he has worked closely with Barbara Hannigan.

Highlights of upcoming seasons include Flute in *Midsummer Nights Dream* at the Glyndebourne Festival, Lurcanio in *Ariodante* with IL Pomo d'Oro conducted by George Petrou, and concerts including Bach *St. Matthew Passion* with Les Talens Lyriques under Christophe Rousset.



Irish mezzo-soprano Niamh O'Sullivan, praised by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* for her "bewitchingly beautiful, dark vibrant voice," studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin under Veronica Dunne. She followed her studies by joining the Opera Studio at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich from 2016–18.

For the 2022–23 season, O'Sullivan returns to London to make her company debut with the English National Opera as Mercédès and cover the title role in *Carmen*. She returns to Irish National Opera for

further performances of *The First Child* before making her role debut as Charlotte in *Werther* with the company. She also makes an eagerly awaited return to Wexford Festival Opera for her role debut as Mirza in *Lalla-Rouhk*.

Her numerous operatic engagements in Munich include Hänsel in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, the Secretary in Menotti's *The Consul*, Flora in *La Traviata*, and Barena in *Jenîfa*. She also travelled with the company of the Bayerische Staatsoper for a concert performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* at Carnegie Hall, conducted by Kirill Petrenko. Other operatic highlights include her 2018 Irish National Opera debut as Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, appearing later with the company as Mercédès in *Carmen*, Alva in *The First Child*, and in a co-production between the Royal Opera House and INO as Asteria in *Bajazet*. In 2022, O'Sullivan made her debut at the Zurich Opera as Wellgunde in Andreas Homoki's new production of *Das Rheingold*, later returning to the house to make her role debut as Meg Page in *Falstaff* opposite Sir Bryn Terfel.

In concert, O'Sullivan has performed Elgar's *Sea Pictures* at the Prinzregententheater as part of the 2019 Munich Festspiele and has sang both Mozart's *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah* with the Müncher Hofkantorei. She also performed the role of Cain in Scarlatti's oratorio *Il Primo Omicidio* with the Jakobsplatz Orchester conducted by Daniel Grossmann.

One of the country's leading professional vocal ensembles, the Clarion Choir has performed on some of the great stages of North America and Europe. This season, the choir will perform twice at Carnegie Hall and make its debut at the Auditorio Nacional de Música in Madrid and LA Opera with the English Concert and Harry Bicket. The group's recent recording of Alexander Kastalsky's *Requiem* reached No. 1 on the *Bill-*

board Traditional Classical charts, and was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance.

The Clarion Choir made its Lincoln Center debut in 2011, performing Bach Chorales as part of the White Light Festival with organist Paul Jacobs. In 2014, the choir gave the New York premiere of *Passion Week* by Maximilian Steinberg, and, in October of 2016, it premiered the work in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and London. The performance was featured on PBS, and the recording of it, the choir's debut recording, received a Grammy nomination, as well as a nomination for *BBC Music Magazine's* Choral Award. The choir's second recording, the world premiere recording of Kastalsky's *Memory Eternal to the Fallen Heroes* also was nominated for a Grammy for Best Choral Performance and was selected as an Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*.

The choir has performed regularly in recent years as part of the MetLiveArts series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; including performances of large-scale Renaissance works by Victoria, Palestrina, Tavener, and Guerrero in the Medieval Sculpture Hall and at the Met Cloisters. The choir, and artistic director Steven Fox, have collaborated in recent years with renowned artists such as Harry Bicket and the English Concert at Carnegie Hall, Eric Jacobsen and the Knights, Susan Graham, Leonard Slatkin and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and Madonna at the 2018 Met Gala.

Steven Fox is the artistic director of the Clarion Choir and the Clarion Orchestra in New York, and the music director of the Cathedral Choral Society at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. The 2022–23 season sees his conducting debuts with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Atlanta Ballet, and as the cover conductor for Jaap van Zweden at the New York Philharmonic. In previous

seasons, he has conducted the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, Opéra de Québec, Chicago's Music of the Baroque, San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Boston's Handel and Haydn Society, Juilliard415, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Portland's Cappella Romana, and Toronto's Theatre of Early Music. Fox's performances have taken him to some of the world's most prestigious halls, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, and David H. Koch Theatre, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, London's Barbican Centre and Duke's Hall, St. Petersburg's Grand Philharmonic Hall and Hermitage Theater, Moscow's Rachmaninoff Hall, Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and the Vatican.

Fox was named an associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, in 2010 "for significant contributions to his field in music," and has received Grammy nominations for his first three recordings: Steinberg's *Passion Week* (2016), Kastalsky's *Memory Eternal* (2018), and Kastalsky's *Requiem* (2020).

He has a distinguished background in liturgical music, having served as Acting Director of Music for the renowned music program of Trinity Church, Wall Street in 2009–10, and, since 2004, as Cantorial Soloist for the High Holy Days at Temple Emanu-El in New York City.

Steven graduated as a Senior Fellow with High Honors in Music and Russian from Dartmouth College, and with Distinction from the Royal Academy of Music. He founded Musica Antiqua St. Petersburg as Russia's first period-instrument orchestra at the age of 21, and premiered several important Russian 18th-century symphonic and operatic works with the orchestra. He has given master classes and clinics at The Royal Academy of Music, Dartmouth College, The Juilliard School, and Yale University.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

THE ENGLISH CONCERT

Violin I

Nadja Zwiener, *leader*
Jacek Kurzydło
Chloe Kim
Silvia Schweinberger
Alice Evans
Oliver Cave

Violin II

Tuomo Suni
Elizabeth MacCarthy
Annie Gard
Simone Pirri
Ruiqi Ren
Jeffrey Girton

Viola I

Alfonso Leal del Ojo
Louise Hogan

Viola II

Jordan Bowron
Stephen Goist

Violoncello

Joseph Crouch
Jonathan Byers
Alexander Rolton
Lucy Scotchmer

Double bass

Hugo Abraham
Hannah Turnbull

Flute

Lisa Beznosiuk
Anna Kondrashina

Oboe

Shai Kribus
Bethan White

Bassoon

Katrin Lazar
Sally Holman

Horn

Ursula Paludan Monberg
Martin Lawrence

Trumpet

Mark Bennett
Stian Aareskjold

Timpani

Pedro Segundo

Organ

Tom Foster

CLARION CHOIR

Steven Fox *artistic director*

Soprano

Jessica Beebe
Christine Buras
Olivia Greene
Aine Hakamatsuka
Madeline Healey
Linda Jones
MaryRuth Miller
Raha Mirzadegan
Molly Quinn
Nola Richardson

Alto

Hannah Baslee
Luthien Brackett
Kristen Dubenion-Smith
Wendy Gilles
Roger Isaacs
Clifton Massey
Tim Parsons

Tenor

Steven Fox
Andrew Fuchs
Tim Hodges
Nate Hodgson
Oliver Mercer, *attendant*
John Ramseyer
Gregório Taniguchi

Bass

Kelvin Chan
Michael Hawes
Joseph Hubbard
Tim Krol
Enrico Lagasca
Julian Morris
Neil Netherly
Jonathan Woody