

WILD ARTS PRESENTS

# MESSIAH

G. F. HANDEL

Jorge Cocco Santángelo 2014

WILD  
ARTS

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### Images:

Front, 'Jesus el Cristo' by Jorge Cocco Santángelo.  
p11 (side), Extract from Handel's score of *Messiah*, 1741, R.M.20.f.2  
(reproduced by kind permission of the British Library).  
Back, 'The Magic Flute' by Emily Perkins (commissioned for the  
2024 Wild Arts tour).

We would like to thank the Vicar of St Michael and All Angels, the  
Dean and Chapter of Chichester Cathedral, The Art Workers' Guild,  
and Nick and Sheila Charrington at Layer Marney Tower for their  
welcome and support.

Programme by Max Parfitt, December 2023.

## WELCOME

Welcome to Wild Arts.

Following the success of our second Summer Opera Tour and the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Roman River Festival in the Autumn, we are delighted to present our first winter offering – this chamber version of Handel's *Messiah*, performed in London, Essex, and Chichester Cathedral.

We are very proud of what we achieved in the summer. Our tour of *The Elixir of Love* and our *Opera Evening* kicked off at the Essex Summer Opera Festival at Layer Marney Tower, and took us to over 45 venues in 17 counties (from Cornwall to Lincolnshire), welcoming over 6,000 audience members and garnering a string of 5-star reviews along the way.

Our schools and outreach programme continued with a series of workshops, lessons, and masterclasses, and gave over 300 primary school students the opportunity to attend our dress rehearsal of *The Elixir of Love*. We also worked with our first generation of Wild Arts Young Artists, two of whom – Sofia Kirwan-Baez and Harry Jacques – will be performing for you tonight, before they move on to contracts with Longborough and Glyndebourne Festivals next summer.

We will be continuing to build on all these projects over the coming years. Our outreach programme will extend across our UK tour venues from spring 2024, a new group of Young Artists is already in place, a new *Opera Evening* programme is currently being created, and our production of *The Magic Flute*, directed by James Hurley, is being prepared for next summer.

If you know of a venue who might like to host a Wild Arts production, please let us know – or tell them about us. We are a young company with ambitious plans to take opera and music everywhere and to everyone.

Finally, I would like to thank the many people who make our work possible – the performers, our wonderful supporters and friends, the behind-the-scenes team, and of course our audience. I hope that you are as excited for the next few years as we are.

Thank you, and enjoy the performance.



Orlando Jopling, Artistic Director



# MESSIAH

AN ORATORIO

Music **George Frideric Handel**  
Text **Carl Jennens** compiled from  
the King James Bible and the Coverdale Psalter

Soprano  
**Joanna Songi**  
**Sofia Kirwan-Baez**

Tenor  
**Richard Dowling**  
**Harry Jacques**

Mezzo  
**Martha Jones**  
**Kate Symonds-Joy**  
12 | 14 | 17 DEC  
**Catherine Backhouse**  
9 DEC

Bass  
**Timothy Nelson**  
**Edward Hawkins**

Violin **Sijie Chen** and **Will McGahon**  
Viola **Kay Stephen** | Cello **Reinoud Ford** | Double Bass **Dawn Baker** 12 DEC  
**Carina Cosgrave** 9 | 14 | 17 DEC

Oboe **Nicola Barbagli** and **Bethan White** 12 | 14 | 17 DEC  
**Joel Raymond** and **Oonagh Lee** 9 DEC | Bassoon **Chris Rawley** 9 | 12 | 17 DEC  
**Rebecca Hammond** 14 DEC

Trumpet **Sam Lewis** and **Brendan Musk** 12 | 14 DEC  
**Ruth Ross** 9 DEC **Chris Parsons** 17 DEC | Timpani **Tom Lee**

Chamber Organ **Orlando Jopling**

Staging Advice **Tom Morris** | Crib and Cross **Ruth Paton**  
Assistant Director / Stage Manager **Tobias Millard**

9 | 12 | 14 | 17 DEC 2023

Please switch off your mobile phones and alarms and share this performance with us in real life – no filming or photographs!



## MESSIAH: AN ORATORIO

Tonight's performance contains elements of staging devised by the company in a workshop with theatre director Tom Morris.

In our telling, the story is happening now, and the performers and audience are part of the same community. We start at the end of a period of conflict with a surprising message – 'Comfort ye.' As the well-known story unfolds, the lightness and optimism of the miraculous birth is contrasted by the Passion and by an exploration of the tragic paradox of the ritual of the sacrificial lamb.

The music is so universal and well known that sometimes we forget to take in the meaning of the text that is the starting point. For instance, the cries of 'Hallelujah,' reinforced by war-like trumpets and drums, are an enthusiastic response to the tenor's suggestion to 'break the angry nations with rods of iron' and 'dash them to pieces like vessels.'

This is both religious text and operatic drama – a distant story brought close and interwoven with the personal expressions of a composer who is at once at the height of his fame, and at his most troubled.

### PART I

Scene One: *Isaiah prophecies salvation*  
*Sinfony*  
Comfort ye / Ev'ry valley (*Tenor*)  
And the glory of the Lord (*Chorus*)

Scene Two: *The coming judgement*  
Thus saith the Lord (*Bass*)  
But who may abide (*Alto*)  
He shall purify (*Chorus*)

Scene Three: *The prophecy of Christ's birth*  
Behold, a virgin shall conceive (*Alto*)  
O thou that tellest (*Alto & Chorus*)  
For behold, darkness (*Bass*)  
The people that walked in darkness (*Bass*)  
For unto us a child is born (*Chorus*)

Scene Four: *The annunciation to the shepherds*  
*Pifa* ("Pastoral Symphony")  
There were shepherds (*Soprano*)  
And lo, the angel of the Lord (*Soprano*)

And the angel said unto them (*Soprano*)  
And suddenly there was with the angel (*Soprano*)  
Glory to God (*Chorus*)

Scene Five: *Christ's healing and redemption*  
Rejoice greatly (*Soprano*)  
Then shall the eyes of the blind (*Alto*)  
He shall feed his flock (*Alto & Soprano*)  
His yoke is easy (*Chorus*)

*Interval*

### PARTS II & III

Scene One: *Christ's Passion*  
Behold the Lamb of God (*Chorus*)  
He was despised (*Alto*)  
Surely He hath borne our griefs (*Chorus*)  
And with His stripes (*Chorus*)  
All we, like sheep (*Chorus*)  
All they that see Him (*Tenor*)  
He trusted in God (*Chorus*)  
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart (*Tenor*)  
Behold and see (*Tenor*)  
He was cut off (*Tenor*)

Scene Two: *The beginnings of Gospel preaching and its rejection*  
How beautiful are the feet (*Soprano*)  
Why do the nations (*Bass*)  
Let us break their bonds (*Chorus*)  
He that dwelleth in heaven (*Tenor*)

Scene Three: *God's ultimate victory*  
Thou shalt break them (*Tenor*)  
Hallelujah (*Chorus*)

Scene Four: *The promise of eternal life*  
I know that my Redeemer liveth (*Soprano*)  
Since by man came death (*Chorus*)

Scene Five: *The Day of Judgement and the conquest of sin*  
Behold, I tell you a mystery (*Bass*)  
The trumpet shall sound (*Bass*)

Scene Six: *The acclamation of the Messiah*  
Worthy is the Lamb (*Chorus*)  
Amen (*Chorus*)

# AN IDEA OF HEAVEN: THE FIRST NIGHT OF HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*

Dominic Dromgoole

Georg Frideric Handel arrived in London in 1710 with a splash, befitting both his outsized talent and his considerable frame. His first act was to premiere his opera *Rinaldo*, performed with a spectacular firework display of overpaid *castrati*, exorbitant costuming, fire-breathing dragons, trundling mountains and flitting birds. It set new standards for theatrical excess and kickstarted a turbulent forty-year love affair between the British public and this outsized German showman. Over three decades, Handel and his audience taught each other how to listen to music and how to grow the form.

But London has always taken a pleasure in kicking out the heels from under anyone who might consider themselves safe. Fashion turned against Italian opera, and musical society split into factions, thinning out the money available to both sides (to everyone's detriment). Handel slowly slipped from his perch. His last opera, *Deidamia*, opened in the spring of 1741, and played for a miserable three performances.

One response from Handel was to midwife a new form, the English oratorio – a full-length musical setting of a sacred text. The origins for this can be traced back to the medieval mystery plays and the playing of sacred stories in dramatic form. Many enjoyed this new form, but it had an elemental strength that disturbed its critics. One Puritan critic wrote that the music had 'the force of gunpowder,

and should be as carefully looked after, that no unhallow'd Fire give it the power of destroying.' The Bishop of London forced the halt of a performance of Handel's *Esther*, stating that a biblical story should not be played in 'houses which entertained sodomitical clubs.'

With his opera career forestalled, his oratorios only fitfully successful, a clique of the aristocracy trying to wreck his career, and money draining out of his account, this was a dark-clouded hour for Handel. His health was far from strong and, in 1740, he suffered a minor stroke and went off to recuperate in a German spa. Soon after, at a dinner, he had a further stroke. At this low ebb, out of the blue came a formal invitation from an Irish musical society to come to Dublin (to the Music Hall on Fishamble Street) and present his work. There was a world elsewhere.



Jacob Houbraken's Frontispiece for Handel's *Israel in Egypt* (1739). Reproduced by kind permission of the British Library.

On Saturday 22 August 1741, at the age of 56, Handel sat down to write the *Messiah*. He had it finished – solos, recitative, massed choruses, complex orchestration and all – on 14 September. The whole thing had taken just twenty-four days. Almost a quarter of a million notes, or around thirty notes a minute. On finishing, he wrote on his autograph score, *SDG – Solo Die Gloria* (To God Alone the Glory).

#### MidDay, 13 April 1742

Fishamble Street was a tight and crooked street, and the Music Hall was tucked in a corner. A coach and horses could not be manoeuvred up the street, so for the many who arrived in sedan chairs – a box carried by porters fore and aft – it proved impossible for these cumbersome vehicles to share space. Foul-mouthed Dublin porters and steerers flung commands, demands and insults, jockeying to pass without scratching their buffed surfaces. Flouncey chaps stared grumpily from their elevated chairs. All were uncertainly afloat in an angry squall of vanity and fashion.

The advertisement had gone out a week before, in suitably marbled prose, inviting any who wished to pay half a guinea to attend Fishamble Street Music Hall to hear the premiere of the *Messiah*. Tickets flew out and more had to be made. A further advertisement requested 'that the Ladies who honour this performance with their presence... come without hoops' to make more room, and that the chaps should 'come without their swords.'

The spectators could buy at the door a printed wordbook for sixpence, which contained the text, and, once sat, they would have seen Handel installed at his keyboard, from where he would direct the orchestra. Handel liked to sport an enormous white wig on these occasions, and when the playing went well, as Burney describes, 'it had a certain nod, or vibration which manifested his pleasure.' Burney continues:

*His hand was so fat, that the knuckles, which usually appear*

*convex, were like those of a child, dinted or dimpled in, so as to be rendered concave; however his touch was so smooth, that his fingers seemed to grow to the keys. When he played, no motion and scarcely the fingers themselves could be discovered ... Handel's general look was somewhat heavy and sour; but when he did smile, it was his sire the sun, burst out of a black cloud.*

He had every reason to smile as the playing progressed, though most artists live in the flood plain between the twin rivers of self-congratulation and self-pity and Handel was no different. Alongside a full-hearted capacity for emphatic and commanding joy – *Rejoice! Rejoice!* instructed with Teutonic bombast – was its counter, a tremulous and gentle vulnerability, Charles Jennens's chosen words allowing the composer to express his soul.

The old Hebrew word *Hallelujah* ('Praise You, God'), repeated over sixty times within its one chorus, served as a mantra for Handel to entrance himself, an inspiration to service and a vehicle to express his heart. The four big open vowels allowed his force and energy to flow through them. Meanwhile, the text of the aria 'He was despised and rejected' saw the composer's vulnerability rise to a pitch of sacred self-pity:

*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 His hair:  
He hid not His face from shame and spitting.*

Each phrase or half phrase is wrung out as a gentle sob, before halting nervously as it is responded to with a flutter of strings, which seem to float on the thermals of emotion released by the voice. It is heart-hurting, as though the singer has to break off after each

thought, since she doesn't have the strength to go on, and needs to calm her palpitations.

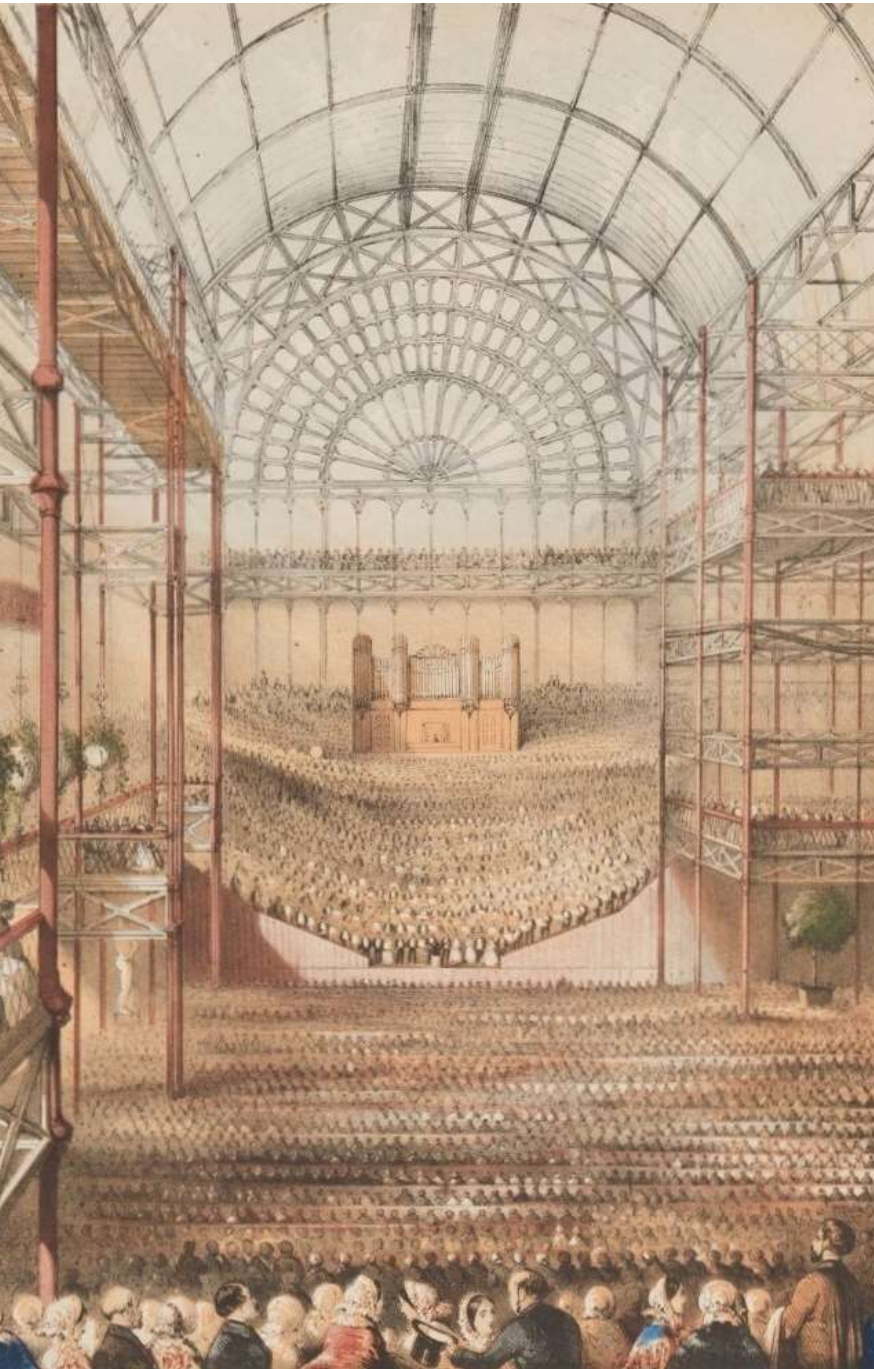
These words – whether bold declarative statements, tender expressions of weakness, or joyous affirmations of the sublime – are the personification of the ecstasies and pains of Christ and of man, but in Fishamble Street, other currents crisscrossed the performance and maximalised its charge. Handel's music, challenged by the aristocracy and by the shifting fashions of the world, was making manifest the isolation of genius and restoring its creator his acclaim.

In a good performance of *Messiah* – one with no pomp, no decoration, and no excess of honeyed beauty; where there is urgency and drive and passion – one air towards the end emerges with force: 'The trumpet shall sound... and we shall be changed.' Repeated over and over, this single phrase hammers the consciousness, and seems to sum up the heart and desires of its creator – *we shall be changed*.

— Dominic Dromgoole, writer, director, and former Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe. From *Astonish Me! First Nights that Changed the World* (Profile Books). The extract above was included by kind permission of the author and abridged for Wild Arts by Max Parfitt.

*Dominic will direct Wild Arts' Eugene Onegin for their Summer Opera Tour 2025.*





'The Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace,' by John Brandard, printed by M. & N. Hanhart, published by Chappell & Co. (chromolithograph, 1859). Reproduced by kind permission of the National Portrait Gallery.

## THE LEGACY OF *MESSIAH* AND 'THE GREAT HANDEL CHORUS'

Léo Charlier

In an 1859 letter to a friend, George Eliot wrote of Handel, 'there are few things that I care for more in the way of music than his choruses performed by a grand orchestra.' His music is referenced in both her novels and correspondence in terms of veneration, with the 'great Handel chorus' in particular appearing as a metaphor for all humanity, embodying an ideal of unity.

In the century since his death, Handel's oratorios had become an essential part of the fabric of Victorian music-making. The emergence of choral societies provided a means for vast numbers of people, often members of the working classes, to take active part in performance of his oratorios, with annual 'Handel Festivals' in which hundreds of people took part. It is at one of these concerts in 1840 in Birmingham that Eliot first heard *Messiah*. By the time of the 'Great Handel Festival,' marking 100 years since the composer's death and held [in] the same year Eliot wrote her letter, there were 2765 vocal and 460 instrumental performers. The exponential rise in scale continued well into the 20th century, culminating in numbers of around 4000 by the 1920s. In light of such numbers, a comment made by Eliot in 1871 on 'the sublime effect of the Handel choruses and the total futility of the solos,' seems unsurprising. Handel's music had come to be seen as the embodiment of a maximalist aesthetic.

From the 1960s onwards, however, scholarship began to offer an alternative conception of how the works should be performed. The gargantuan scale of massed performances (what musicologist Carl Dahlhaus described as Handel's 'monumentality'), was deemed 'inauthentic,' or even a perversion of the music itself. These renditions were bogged down by slow tempi and a bloated orchestra of modern instruments. Indeed, such large performances required significant adaptation and relied on arrangements, for example by Mozart, who filled out the orchestration and added new parts.

Increasingly ensembles were keen to recreate a sound closer to Handel's original practice. They started performing on period instruments, with reduced numbers of musicians, adopted faster tempi, and returned to improvised ornamentation. But how were such vastly different interpretations of the same piece able to emerge?

*Messiah* occupies a space between the sacred and secular, the dramatic and restrained, the popular and personal. The libretto by Charles Jennens thematically groups texts from scripture and places them within a dramatic context: Part 1 features the prophecy of Jesus' birth, Part 2 his sacrifice and death, and Part 3 his resurrection. It draws together the theatrical – associated with extravagance and iniquity – and the sacred.

To some critics at the time this was borderline sacrilegious, and the complaints continued as, after Handel's death, the work was increasingly brought from the theatre to consecrated churches. If the pious were disorientated, so too were the proponents of drama. In a departure from the usual practices of the oratorio, the work is low on narrative content and directly represented action, the movements forming something closer to a series of reflective vignettes or a meditative fresco.

Handel's foregrounding of the chorus typifies this unique structure; it is not merely a 'crowd' but takes on a central role in the expression of personal devotion. Texts such as "For unto us a child is born," "Surely He hath borne our griefs," or God "hath redeemed us," use personal pronouns to suggest a strong sense of belonging – a chorus directly involving themselves in the story. The central character, by comparison, is entirely absent; at no point does Jesus appear or speak, yet he is everywhere in the impact of his story on the people. Rather than relating narrative events, which in any case would be known to all, the work dwells on Jesus as a concept and an ideal – the final Hallelujah chorus enacting the jubilation of divine inspiration through the dissolution of language into a series of exclamations of joy. A work such as this is neither wholly dramatic nor wholly religious: it revels in the in between.

Initially reception was divided – following the immensely successful premiere in Dublin, the first London run would close after only three shows – and yet by Eliot's time, society had found a place for

*Messiah* within a movement for social improvement. Rather than corrupting religion with populism and entertainment, the work became a means of moral edification for the masses. The grand festivals offered a ritual enactment of social and spiritual unity, a simultaneously personal and collective demonstration and affirmation of faith, at a scale well beyond what Handel (with a chorus of around twenty) could ever have imagined.

#### ***Messiah* Today**

Divergent approaches, throughout history and today, mean that there is no "right" way to perform the *Messiah*. Even in Handel's own lifetime, there was significant variation depending on the performers available and other constraints, and a certain flexibility in cuts and arrangements such that it would be impossible to enshrine a definitive version. Equally, the grand Victorian version cannot and should not be forgotten. *Messiah's* legacy as a large-scale participatory work is perpetuated with singalong events and flashmobs every December, and, originally performed around Easter, even its association with Christmas originates from the period after Handel's death. The evolving history of *Messiah* is now an integral part of it as a shared cultural touchstone. It is a testament to Handel's skilled and sensitive vocal writing that it can be as powerful sung by one as by 1000.

Wild Arts presents *Messiah* at its most pared back and intimate, allowing the timbre of gut strings and period winds to shine in Handel's original arrangements. The singers are given centre stage to express the immediacy of the personal meditations on the mystery of the Christ; some subtle staging brings Handel's theatrical heritage back to the story; and in doubling as both chorus and soli, the singers dissolve any sense of hierarchy. They come to embody the humanist values which have been so important throughout the centuries in the reception of this great work.

— Léo Charlier, University of Oxford



# WILD ARTS PRESENTS W. A. MOZART THE MAGIC FLUTE

SUMMER 2024

## SINGERS

**CATHERINE BACKHOUSE** Mezzo

Catherine Backhouse studied at the University of Durham and was a founder member of the a cappella group Voces8, before further training at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Highlights include Preziosilla (*La Forza del Destino*) for Regent's Opera, Concepción (*L'heure Espagnole*) for Grange Park Opera (film) and Mid-Wales Opera, Isabella (*L'Italiana in Algeri*) with Diva Opera, Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) with West Green House Opera, Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) with Merry Opera, and Kate Julian (*Owen Wingrave*) at the Aldeburgh and Edinburgh International Festivals. She also performs programmes for voice, viola, and piano with her group The Amalie Trio.

**RICHARD DOWLING** Tenor

Richard Dowling is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music's Opera Course and supported by Opera Prelude. As well as live performances with English Touring Opera (including Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Bach's *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*), he appeared in a number of their online broadcasts. He has sung for Garsington Opera (in their 2013 and 2015 seasons), Birmingham Opera Company, and Buxton International Festival, and performed Pedrillo (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*) in Tokyo with Diva Opera, and Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) for Wild Arts. He revives his Ferrando for Wild Arts in 2024, alongside singing Tamino in their new production of *The Magic Flute*.

**EDWARD HAWKINS** Baritone

Edward Hawkins read music at King's College, London. Having begun singing in his late twenties, he studied privately and in 2015 became a member of the Glyndebourne Chorus, working for four years on various critically acclaimed productions, including performances at the BBC Proms and worldwide cinema broadcasts. He has since worked extensively with English Touring Opera, performing the role of Achilla in *Giulio Cesare*, Doctor/Banquo in *Macbeth*, Neptune in *Idomeneo*, and filming two staged song cycles by Shostakovich. He had also been due to sing in their staged performances of Bach's *St. John Passion* and in their *Così fan tutte* (as Don Alfonso) prior to Covid-19.

**HARRY JACQUES** Tenor

After receiving a music degree from Bristol and teaching at Oakham School, Harry Jacques became a Voces8 choral scholar, and studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He first came to opera in a staged version of Britten's *Abraham and Isaac* for Waterperry Opera Festival, and in the chorus of their production of *The Magic Flute*. Since then, he has performed the role of Evangelist in Bach's *St John Passion*, the *Mass in B minor* with the Seville Baroque Orchestra, and Beach's *Canticle to the Sun* with The Bach Choir at The Royal Festival. He sang Claudio for Wild Arts in their 2023 production of *The Elixir of Love*.

**MARTHA JONES** Mezzo

Martha Jones studied at the Royal College of Music International Opera School, where she was awarded the Susan Chilcott Scholarship by the Royal Philharmonic Society. Having participated in Young Artist programmes for the Ravinia Festival, Carnegie Hall, Britten Pears, and Samling, she sang Dorabella for Wild Arts' *Così Fan Tutte* in 2022, and has performed the same role for English Touring Opera and Classical Opera/The Mozartists. She has worked regularly with English National Opera, the Grange Festival, Scottish Opera, Opera de Limoges, Opera Vlaanderen, Glyndebourne, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Her recordings include *The Call* with Malcolm Martineau.

**SOFIA KIRWAN-BAEZ** Soprano

Sofia Kirwan-Baez studied music at Oxford University and vocal performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Her operatic roles have included Elle (*La Voix Humaine*), Adina (*Elisir d'Amore*), and Papagena (*The Magic Flute*). She sang Giannetta as a Wild Arts Young Artist in their 2023 production of *The Elixir of Love*, and is making her English National Opera debut covering Karolka (*Jenůfa*) in March, and her Longborough debut as Musetta (*La Bohème*) next summer. She is currently taking part in the National Opera Studio's Global Talent Programme (run in collaboration with English National Opera, Glyndebourne, Opera North, the Royal Opera House, Scottish Opera, and Welsh National Opera).

**TIMOTHY NELSON** Baritone

Timothy Nelson studied at the Royal College of Music International Opera School. Alongside solo performances at venues including the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, and Cadogan Hall, he has sung with Opera North (as Marcello in *La Bohème*), the Royal Opera House, English Touring Opera, Diva Opera, Opera Holland Park, and the Grange Festival. He was a Jerwood Young Artist at the Glyndebourne Festival; a winner of the Bruce Millar Gulliver Prize, the Royal College of Music Joan Chissell Schumann Competition, and the Gerald Moore Award Singers Prize; and a recipient of the Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells Postgraduate Voice Fellowship.

**JOANNA SONGI** Soprano

Joanna Songi studied at Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music and was awarded first place in the Dean and Chadlington Competition, and the Brooks-Van der Pump English Song Competition. As well as performing with companies including Glyndebourne, Garsington Opera, West Green Opera, Opera de Tenerife, the Dunedin Consort, and The English Concert, her recent roles have included Despina for Wild Arts' *Così fan tutte* (2022), and a variety of parts in *Henry V* at the Donmar Warehouse (2022), with a subsequent National Theatre Live Broadcast. She was an Opera Prelude Young Artist, a Philip and Dorothy Green Young Concert Artist Award winner, and a Britten-Pears Young Artist.

**KATE SYMONDS-JOY** Mezzo

Kate Symonds-Joy studied music at Cambridge University and with the Royal Academy Opera Course. Her concert highlights include Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in Sydney Opera House, Mahler's *Symphony no.2* at Cadogan Hall, Elgar's *Sea Pictures* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Christopher Robinson, Handel's *Messiah* at Birmingham Symphony Hall, Mozart's *Requiem* with Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and Verdi's *Requiem* at the Royal Albert Hall. She is a member of Baroque music collective Solomon's Knot, performing with them at events including the Aldeburgh Festival, Leipzig Bachfest, and BBC Proms, to name but a few.

## CREATIVE

**TOM MORRIS** Staging Advice

Tom Morris was Artistic Director of Battersea Arts Centre from 1995-2004, Artistic Director of Bristol Old Vic from 2009-2022 and has been Associate Director of the National Theatre since 2004. Work as a director includes *War Horse* and *Every Good Boy* (National Theatre), *Touching the Void*, *The Grinning Man*, *Dr Semmelweis* (Bristol Old Vic/West End), Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (Vienna Staatsoper), *The Death of Kinghoffer* (English National Opera/Metropolitan Opera) and Handel's *Messiah* (Bristol Proms).



## PLAYERS

### DAWN BAKER Double Bass

Dawn Baker is the principal bass player for The Hanover Band. As well as playing for groups such as the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, she is a regular of The Academy of Ancient Music, featuring on albums including Sir Stephen Cleobury's recording of Mozart's *Requiem*, and Stephen Layton's recording of Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*.

### NICOLA BARBAGLI Oboe

Nicola Barbagli studied modern oboe at Scuola di Musica di Fiesole and the Scala Theatre Academy in Italy, and Geneva Haute Ecole de Musique. Having moved to the UK to play in the Southbank Sinfonia, he specialised in historical oboes at the Royal Academy of Music. He has since worked with (among others) the Orchestra of Age of Enlightenment, the Gabrieli Consort, Le Cercle de L'Harmonie, and the International Baroque Players.

### SIJIE CHEN Violin

Sijie Chen is co-leader of the London Mozart Players and tours with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. She leads the Bloomsbury Players, Ostara Chamber Players, and Wild Arts ensembles, and is the Founder/Director of Vermeer Chamber Concerts. On period instruments, she plays with The Academy of Ancient Music, The English Concert, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

### CARINA COSGRAVE Double Bass

Carina Cosgrave studied at the Royal College of Music and the Koninklijk Conservatorium. She has collaborated with artists including Lemar and Massive Attack, performed in several productions at Shakespeare's Globe, and toured with ensembles including the Dunedin Consort, The English Concert, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Florilegium, and the London Handel Orchestra.

### REINOUF FORD Cello

Reinoud Ford studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He is a member of the Brodowski Quartet, Cellophony, and has been a temporary member of the Cavaleri and Benyounes Quartets. Recent highlights include recitals in the Villa Borghese and for the diplomatic community in Doha, as well as the Elgar and Dvorak cello concertos in London.

### REBECCA HAMMOND Bassoon

Having studied internationally, Rebecca Hammond played for many years with Les Siecles, and now performs with The Academy of Ancient Music, The English Baroque Soloists, The English Concert, The Hanover Band, The London Handel Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and The Orchestre Romantique et Revolutionnaire.

### ORLANDO JOPLING Artistic/Musical Director, Keyboard

Orlando Jopling works as music staff and conductor for the Royal Opera House, English National Ballet, the Royal Ballet, Independent Opera, and many other leading companies. He co-founded Tête à Tête, Stanley Hall Opera, and the Roman River Festival, before founding Wild Arts in 2022. His music-making as a cellist has ranged from solo and chamber performance to touring as a guest tutti cellist, most regularly with the Philharmonia and London Symphony Orchestra.

### OONAGH LEE Oboe

Oonagh Lee studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the Koninklijk Conservatorium. She performs, records, and broadcasts with period orchestras and ensembles including The Hanover Band and the Dunedin Consort, and at the BBC Proms. Forthcoming concerts include performances with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and The Academy of Ancient Music.

### TOM LEE Timpani

Tom Lee is the timpanist of the Flanders Symphony Orchestra, alongside which he enjoys a varied freelance career across the UK and Europe. Recent highlights include touring with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, performing at the BBC Proms with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and performing with Harry Connick Jr and Diana Ross in the Residency Festival in Orlando, Florida.

### SAM LEWIS Trumpet

Sam Lewis studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and has since worked alongside conductors including Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and the late Sir Colin Davis, as well as with orchestras such as the Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic. Recent solo performances have included the London Handel Festival and Festival de la Musique Sacrée.

### WILL MCGAHON Violin

Will McGahon plays regularly with some of the UK's leading historical orchestras, including Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Solomon's Knot, and The Hanover Band. He is a member of the Bloomsbury Players and the Wild Arts Ensemble, and freelances for groups including the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Manchester Collective.

### BRENDAN MUSK Trumpet

Brendan Musk is a historical trumpet player, pianist, composer and arranger. As a trumpeter, he has performed at venues ranging from the Wigmore Hall to Pizza Express Live. As a pianist his key output is with the Lantivet Duo, arranging and performing music inspired by global folk and classical traditions.

### CHRIS PARSONS Trumpet

Chris Parsons studied music at the University of York before completing a masters in Historical Performance Practice at the Royal College of Music in 2014. As a historical trumpet player, he has performed with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, International Baroque Players, Les Violons du Roy, and Manchester Baroque.

### CHRIS RAWLEY Bassoon

Chris Rawley studied at Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has since performed as guest principal bassoon with ensembles including the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, BBC Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, the Philharmonia Orchestra, Florilegium, and The Hanover Band, as well as with the English Baroque Soloists and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

### JOEL RAYMOND Oboe

Joel Raymond studied at the Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Music, before becoming joint principal oboist for the European Union Baroque Orchestra, acting as a cultural ambassador. In 2014, he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to travel Europe in search of the instruments used in Bach's orchestra. He has since led the Hanover Band and performed with groups including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Gabrieli Consort.

### RUTH ROSS Trumpet

Ruth Ross studied at the Royal College of Music and the Hochschule der Kunste. She has since performed with ensembles including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Opera House Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and as co-principal trumpet for English Touring Opera. She held the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's Jerwood Scholarship.

### KAY STEPHEN Viola

Kay Stephen is a member of the Jacquin Trio, and was previously violist with the Gildas Quartet, recoding and performing internationally. She has performed with ensembles such as the Consone, Elias, Navarra, and Edinburgh Quartets, and was co-principal viola with the Manchester Camerata. In 2020 she recorded a series of works for piano quintet and sextet by Thomas Adès and Tullis Rennie with the Vonnegut Collective.

### BETHAN WHITE Oboe

Bethan White is a historical oboe player. She has performed regularly with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and The English Concert, alongside many other groups, and works with the Royal Academy of Music's Historical Performance department under Margaret Faultless.

## A BOLD NEW APPROACH TO OPERA

Founded in 2022, Wild Arts aim to make music fresh, enjoyable, and available to everyone, while spearheading positive environmental change. We produce a UK Summer Opera Tour between May and September, the Roman River Festival in coastal Essex in the Autumn, a festive concert tour each Christmas, and various projects year-round – including a CD recording of Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde* and a *St John Passion* with James Gilchrist in 2025.

## OUR ARTISTIC MISSION

**We innovate, re-inventing opera in fresh, vibrant productions with quality at their core.**

Building on the success of the Roman River Festival and its 23-year history, Wild Arts now runs the largest opera festival in East Anglia alongside a year-round touring programme. Quality is at the centre of every Wild Arts performance, with rave reviews for both *Così fan tutte* in 2022 and *The Elixir of Love* in 2023, and return invitations from every festival venue.

**We introduce opera to younger audiences.**

Wild Arts worked with over 300 primary school students in Essex in 2023, offering a diverse programme of workshops and performances related to its summer opera, *The Elixir of Love*. We are broadening our engagement from next year, providing masterclass and performance opportunities for young talents all around the country.

**We give precious performance opportunities and mentoring to emerging artists.**

Wild Arts' Young Artists Programme gives four to six musicians each year the opportunity to hone their craft in a professional production setting, gaining confidence through vocal, language, and acting coaching, and through rehearsals and performances with an experienced ensemble of established artists.

## OUR ENVIRONMENT

**World-class opera is nothing without the world around it.**

We aim to create top-quality music without putting pressure on our planet to clean up after us. It is easy to say; much harder to do. We are developing our strategy through travel, production design, food, energy use, and the way we manage our office and team, as well as through our choice of partners.

**Our long-term dream** is to create and run a new opera house, performance space, and arts education centre, set in a regenerative and bio-diverse environment, built from sustainable materials, and operating within planetary boundaries.

*For more information about Wild Arts, please visit [wildarts.org.uk](http://wildarts.org.uk), and to offer feedback from today's performance (or just to get in touch), please contact [info@wildarts.org.uk](mailto:info@wildarts.org.uk)*

# BECOME A FRIEND



Richard Dowling in Wild Arts' *Opera Evening* at Falconhurst, 2023 (Photo by Karolina Krasuska)



Our tiers of support start from a £75 friendship, and build to our generous Ocean Patrons, offering an annual donation of £5,000 or more. All our supporters receive early-bird tickets and offers, our monthly newsletter, and invitations to special masterclasses and Friends' receptions throughout the year.

**[wildarts.org.uk/support-us](http://wildarts.org.uk/support-us)**

## SUPPORT US

From a one-off donation or a £75 friendship, all the way to our £5,000 Ocean Patrons, our friends, sponsors, and patrons are central to the success of Wild Arts, underpinning our future. In appreciation, they are offered exclusive access to early-bird tickets, Friends' receptions, and other behind-the-scenes experiences, as well as receiving personal notes from the Artistic Director.

One-off contributions can be made via cheque to the charity's registered address, South Green Farmhouse, Fingringhoe, Colchester CO5 7DP or you can contact us by email at [info@wildarts.org.uk](mailto:info@wildarts.org.uk) to arrange payment online.

Gift Aid forms will be provided to increase the value of the donation.

**We hope you will join us for this exciting journey.**

For more information on what we do and how you can support our work, please visit [wildarts.org.uk](http://wildarts.org.uk)

Priority Booking:

*The Magic Flute* at Layer Marney Tower (18-23 JUN)

Patrons: 1 December 2023

Friends: 1 January 2024

General: 1 February 2024

Spring Concerts at The Old Library, Colchester (20 MAR | 18 APR | 16 MAY)

Patrons and Friends: 8 December 2023

General: 1 January 2024

## HOST US

If you would be interested in hosting a performance, please do get in touch. We offer solo recitals and chamber performances (from Byrd to Bartok) all year round, as well as, from summer 2024, a brand-new Opera Evening programme and a production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Looking ahead to 2025, our Summer Opera will be *Eugene Onegin*, directed by Dominic Dromgoole.

We would love to bring all of this music to you at a local venue. Whether that would be a theatre, concert hall, home, or garden, we have a performance for every scale and occasion.

Please contact [info@wildarts.org.uk](mailto:info@wildarts.org.uk) for more details, or visit [wildarts.org.uk/shows](http://wildarts.org.uk/shows)

Wild Arts, registered charity no. 1158366  
Wild Arts, account no. 75869192 sort code 09-01-28

## WILD ARTS

Artistic Director  
**Orlando Jopling**

Lead Producer  
**Aki Packe-Drury-Lowe**

Assistant Producer  
**Max Parfitt**

Education Manager  
**Rebecca Milford**

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All our anonymous patrons

Thank you to all our other friends and supporters.

## 2023 WINTER SEASON

MESSIAH  
St Michael & All Angels, Chiswick, London 9 DEC  
Chichester Cathedral, Sussex 12 DEC  
The Art Workers' Guild, London 14 DEC  
Layer Marney Tower, Essex 17 DEC

## FUTURE DATES

2024 OPERA EVENINGS TOUR  
Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk 8 FEB  
Iscoyd Park, Shropshire 24 FEB  
30 venues across the UK MAY-SEP

SPRING CONCERT SERIES  
Colchester, Essex 20 MAR | 18 APR | 16 MAY

COSÌ FAN TUTTE (REVIVAL)  
DIR. P BURTON-MORGAN  
Treago Castle, Herefordshire 7 JUN  
Forde Abbey, Somerset 25 JUL  
Hever Festival, Kent 3 AUG  
Further dates to be confirmed

THE MAGIC FLUTE  
DIR. JAMES HURLEY  
Layer Marney Tower, Essex 18 | 20 | 22 | 23 JUN  
The Apex, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk 27 JUN  
Thaxted Festival, Essex 30 JUN  
Owlpen Manor, Gloucestershire 4 JUL  
Malvern Theatres, Worcestershire 5 JUL  
Bletchingdon Park, Oxfordshire 6 JUL  
Deal Festival, Kent 11 JUL  
Childerley Hall, Cambridgeshire 14 JUL  
Norwich Theatre, Norfolk 19 | 20 JUL  
Woodoaks Farm, Buckinghamshire 21 JUL  
Further dates to be confirmed

THE ROMAN RIVER FESTIVAL  
Coastal Essex 24-29 SEP

MESSIAH  
Dates including Layer Marney Tower, Essex 15 DEC

EUGENE ONEGIN  
DIR. DOMINIC DROMGOOLE  
Layer Marney Tower, Essex 15-22 JUN 2025  
Touring dates JUN 2025 - JAN 2026