

THE
ATLANTA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Lyle Nordstrom, Artistic Director

Presents

MESSIAH



With

Judith Overcash-Rubin, soprano
Steven Rickards, countertenor
Kim Childs, tenor
Jeffrey Snider, bass

And

EMORY CONCERT CHOIR

Eric Nelson, Director and Conductor

Saturday, November 23, 2002 at 8:15 p.m.
Peachtree Road United Methodist Church
Atlanta, Georgia

Sunday, November 24, 2002 at 3:00 pm
Conyers Arts Center – The Rockdale Auditorium
Conyers, Georgia

MESSIAH

George Frideric Handel

Part the first

Symphony

Accompagnato: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people (Tenor)

Air: Ev'ry valley shall be exalted (Tenor)

Chorus: And the glory of the Lord

Accompagnato: Thus saith the Lord (Bass)

Air: But who may abide the day of his coming (Alto)

Recitative: Behold, a virgin shall conceive (Alto)

Air and Chorus: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion (Alto)

Accompagnato: For Behold, Darkness shall cover the Earth (Bass)

Air: The people that walked in darkness (Bass)

Chorus: For unto Us a child is Born

Pifa

Recitative: There were shepherds abiding in the field (Soprano)

Accompagnato: And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them (Soprano)

Recitative: And the angel said unto them (Soprano)

Accompagnato: And suddenly there was with the angel (Soprano)

Chorus: Glory to God

Air: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion (Soprano)

Recitative: Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd (Alto)

Duet: He shall feed his flock (Alto and Soprano)

Chorus: His yoke is easy

Intermission

Part the second

Chorus: Behold the Lamb of God

Air: He was despised (Alto)

Chorus: Surely He hath borne our griefs

Chorus: And with His stripes

Chorus: All we like sheep

Accompagnato: All they that see Him (Tenor)

Chorus: He trusted in God

Accompagnato: Thy rebuke hat broken his heart (Tenor)

Air: Behold, and see (Tenor)

Accompagnato: He was cut off (Soprano)

Air: But thou didst not leave his soul in hell (Soprano)

Chorus: Lift up your heads

Air: Why do the nations so furiously rage? (Bass)

Recitative: He that dwelleth in heaven (Tenor)

Air: Thou shalt break them (Tenor)

Chorus: Hallelujah

brief pause

Part the third

Air: I know that my redeemer liveth (Soprano)

Chorus: Since by man came death

Accompagnato: Behold, I tell you a mystery (Bass)

Air: The trumpet shall sound (Bass)

Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

Chorus: Amen

Finis

Baroque Violin

Karen Clarke, *Concertmaster*
 Shawn Pagliarini
 Gesa Kordes
 Emi Tanabe
 Valerie Arsenault, *Principal*
 Ute Marks
 Brandi Berry

Baroque Viola

Melissa Brewer
 Martha Perry

Baroque Violoncello

Christine Gummere
 Martha Bishop

Baroque Double Bass

Melanie Punter

Baroque Oboe

George Riordan
 Joyce Alper

Baroque Bassoon

Keith Collins

Baroque Trumpet

Barry Baugess
 Caroline Sanders

Baroque Timpani

Scott Douglass

Theorbo

Lyle Nordstrom

Harpsichord/Organ

Daniel Pyle

**About the Performers**

The Atlanta Baroque Orchestra was founded by a group of musicians who felt the need for a permanent professional historical-instrument orchestra in the Southeast. The unique, transparent sheen of “early” instruments, coupled with their capability of a delightful variety of articulations, allows voices and instruments to blend into a unified, yet clear, sound that is very difficult to achieve with “modern” instruments. Since its founding in 1997, the ABO has been applauded for its freshness and verve, and for its delightful, convincing performances of a wide range of earlier works. As the leading orchestra of its type below the Mason-Dixon line, the ABO is now in demand not only in Georgia, but also all of the neighboring states.

The Orchestra received initial generous support from the Atlanta Early Music Alliance and a variety of individuals, and has also depended on donations of time and money from the musicians themselves. The ABO has received its own independent 501(c)3 status, and can now accept direct tax-deductible donations. Contributions such these are not only greatly appreciated, they are central to the survival of a venture such as this. If you would like to support the ABO and its future programming, please send checks made out to “The Atlanta Baroque Orchestra,” 303 Augusta, Atlanta, GA 30315. There is also a great opportunity for friends of the arts in the community to serve on the new Atlanta Baroque Orchestra board. **If you are interested in serving on the board or otherwise helping further, please contact Janice Joyce (770.537.0744), or Catherine Bull (404.627.9077) after the concert**



Judith Overcash, soprano, was recently awarded a doctoral degree in Early Music Performance Practices from Case Western Reserve University. She has appeared as a featured soloist during the 2000-2001 season with a number of period ensembles and orchestras, including the Seattle Baroque, the Baroque Orchestra *Apollo's Fire*, the Columbus Bach Ensemble, and the Dayton Bach Society. She has also appeared as a guest artist with the Texas Early Music Project, on the Cleveland Museum of Art Musart Series, and on the Toledo Museum concert series. She was a finalist in the recent Bodky Competition for early music performers.

Steven Rickards is one of America's finest countertenors. He recently premiered John Adams's oratorio *El Nino* at the Chatelet opera in Paris. He appears frequently with Joshua Rifkin and the Bach Ensemble throughout the United States, Europe, and Australia. He has also performed with The American Bach Soloists, Chanticleer, Ensemble Oubache, the Gabrieli Consort, Chicago's Music of the Baroque, the New London Consort, The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, the Opera Company of Philadelphia, The Santa Fe Opera, and the symphony orchestras of Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and St. Louis. He sang at Carnegie Hall with the Oratorio Society of New York, and in France as a soloist with The Festival Singers under the direction of Robert Shaw. Rickards was the soloist in the American premiere performance of Michael Nyman's *Self-Laudatory Hymn of Inanna and Her Omnipotence* with the Netherlands Wind Ensemble at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. He has recorded for Chanticleer, Decca, Dorian, Four Winds, Gothic, Harmonia Mundi, Koch, Newport Classics, Smithsonian, Naxos, and Teldec labels.

Kim Childs, tenor, is a frequent soloist on the concert stage. An early music specialist, he has performed Monteverdi's *Combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, and *Israel in Egypt*, all with Ft. Worth Early Music. With the Dallas Bach Society he has performed as Evangelist in J. S. Bach's *St. John Passion*, Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and numerous J. S. Bach works, including the *B Minor Mass*, *St. Matthew's Passion*, among others. His performances with the American Bach Soloists under the direction of Jeffrey Thomas have included Bach's *B Minor Mass*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, and Handel's *Messiah*. With the University of Texas at Dallas, he has sung under noted composer Robert Rodriguez in performances of Stravinsky's *Mass*, concert suites from the Monteverdi operas *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and *L'Orfeo*, and Mozart's *Credo Mass*. He is the Director of Music at Unity Church of Dallas and teaches early music voice students at the University of North Texas.

Jeffrey Snider is a native of Buffalo, New York, and received both bachelor's and master's degrees from Indiana University. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Texas in 1996. In 1998 he returned to the University of North Texas as an Associate Professor in the College of Music and now serves as chair of the Division of Vocal Studies. In 1997 he performed the title role in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Bel Canto Chorus of Milwaukee as winner of its "Regional Artists Competition." In 1991 he placed second in the Marguerite McCammon Competition in Fort Worth. In 1990 he was a recipient of a Dallas Opera "Career Development Grant." He has placed third in the Southwest regional finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and been named "Singer of the Year" by the Dallas/Fort Worth chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Eric Nelson is Director of Choral Studies at Emory University, where he conducts Emory's Concert Choir, the University Chorus and the Atlanta Sacred Chorale, a chamber choir specializing in sacred a capella repertoire. Dr. Nelson holds a bachelor of music degree in vocal performance from Houghton College, a master's degree in choral conducting from Westminster Choir College, and a doctor of music degree in choral conducting from Indiana University. Dr. Nelson has conducted choirs throughout North America and Europe where his ensembles have been praised for their consistently high level of technical excellence and for their warmth of musical expression. Highly regarded as a clinician, adjudicator, lecturer, and guest conductor, Dr. Nelson has conducted and presented workshops for the American Choral Director's Association, the Music Educator's National Conference, the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, the American Guild of Organists, the Gnnessins School of Music in Moscow, Russia, the Piccolo Spoleto Festival, and for numerous colleges and universities. This year, the Emory University Concert Choir will be performing for the American Choral Directors Association at its national conference in New York City, NY.

Lyle Nordstrom, the Artistic Director and theorbo player for the ABO is former Music Department head of Clayton College & State University and currently Director of Early Music Activities at the University of North Texas. He is founder and co-director, with Paul O'Dette, of "The Musicians of Swanee Alley," the well-known Elizabethan music ensemble that toured the world for twenty years with recordings on Harmonia Mundi, Virgin Classics and Focus labels. His arrangements of music for that ensemble were used in the MGM movie *Rob Roy*. A multifaceted performer, he has performed recorder concerti with several orchestras and has taught lute at the Indiana University Early Music Institute and Oberlin Conservatory as well as Oakland University & Clayton College and State University. He also has many years of experience as a choral and opera conductor. He was named the year 2000 recipient of the Thomas Binkley award, a national award given each year by Early Music America for outstanding work in early music at the Collegiate level.

The Emory University Concert Choir is a forty-five-voice select chamber ensemble that performs both *a cappella* and accompanied works from the Middle Ages to the present day. This year, the choir will be performing at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall and at the Riverside Church in New York City for the National Convention of the American Choral Director's Association, an honor reserved for only a few of the finest college choirs in the nation. Last year, the choir appeared at the Southern Division ACDA Convention in Charlotte, NC and performed two weeks of concerts in Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic. Other recent performances include Handel's *Messiah* and the Bach *St. John Passion* with the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, the Mozart *C-Minor Mass* and the Bach *Magnificat* with the Gwinnett Philharmonic, and the Poulenc *Gloria* with the Atlanta Ballet. Along with the University Chorus, the Concert Choir performs each year for more than 3,000 people in Emory's Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, a sixty-eight year old tradition that is a highlight of the Atlanta holiday season. This year's festival will be held in Glenn Memorial Auditorium on the Emory campus December 4th at 8:00 pm and 5th at 5:00 and 8:00 pm.

Program note

Handel's oratorio *Messiah*, unlike almost every other piece of music from the Baroque era, has an unbroken history of performance, from its premier in 1741 in Dublin up to the 21st century. Why, then, do we bother to apply the knowledge and tastes of the Historically-Informed Performance movement? It is because the style of performance has undergone steady change during the 261 years since Handel penned this masterwork — and not only the style, but even the very orchestration of the piece.

During Handel's lifetime (he died in 1759), *Messiah* became the most frequently-performed of all his works, all under his direction (he owned the only copies). After his death, performance style evolved according to the changing tastes of the times. A landmark in the performance-history was the production in Westminster Abbey in 1784, celebrating the 25th anniversary of Handel's death: on that occasion more there were more than 300 singers and players (Handel's productions used about 63 musicians in total). This trend continued through the 19th century, exemplified in the 1859 production in London's Crystal Palace involving over 700 musicians. Interestingly, a recording of a performance from the Crystal Palace exists — not from 1859, of course, but from before the First World War — on which one can here the performance-practice of a bygone time. In large part this expansion was linked to the adoption of Handel's music (and also oratorios by Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Elgar) by the large amateur choral societies which were such an important part of music-making through the Victorian era and up to the Second World War.

At the same time, Handel's orchestration — very much in the style of the late Baroque period — also was subject to change. In 1789 Mozart was commissioned by Baron van Swieten, who was a tireless promoter of the music of Bach and Handel in Classical-period Vienna, to provide a new orchestration for a German-language performance in Vienna. Mozart added clarinets, flutes, horns, and trombones to Handel's forces, very much in his own style. Other, lesser composers made their own modifications during the 19th century, basing their work on what Mozart had done. One edition, by English theorist Ebenezer Prout, published in 1902, became the standard throughout the first half of the 20th century. Even now the unwary choral director purchasing instrumental parts is likely to get the Prout edition without knowing it. And the most flamboyant of all was prepared by Sir Eugene Goossens for a recording in 1959 conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham: Beecham reputedly instructed Goossens to put everything in, "including the kitchen sink." There is no actual plumbing in it, but it does include a full symphonice percussion section, with triangles and snare-drums and climactic cymbal-crashes!

It was only in the 1960's that conductors began to return to Handel's orchestration; the first recording of it came in 1967, albeit with members of a modern symphony orchestra. By that time the pioneers in the original-instrument movement were making themselves known, but their attention was given mostly to Bach rather than Handel. Not until the late 1970's did musicians decide to return to Handel's instruments as well as Handel's instrumentation. They did so because they considered that the characteristic sounds of the instruments in their 18th-century forms made it easier to convey Handel's musical conception. The differences which are most immediately noticeable to the eye are in the wind and brass instruments, but there are also significant changes in the sound. The oboes and bassoon, which had no keys, produce a color which is better suited to blending with the strings, as opposed to the modern symphonic oboe which is designed to create a solo color. And in fact, throughout *Messiah* the oboes are not used in a solo capacity, but to color the string sound and to reinforce the vocal parts. The difference in the trumpets is even more striking: they have no valves, and (even more significantly) the tube is twice as long as the modern valve-trumpet. The sound it creates has more gravity and just as much brilliance, but at a volume-level that is more suited to smaller forces. The stringed instruments use strings of gut rather than steel and nylon, which gives them a sweeter and more transparent tone. However, the biggest difference is in the bow: rather than being designed for creating long, sustained *legato* melodies, the Baroque bow creates a sound that is more speech-like, with a wider variety of "consonants" in the musical "words," and a greater ability to make the kind of small-scale inflections in volume that characterize speech. All these characteristics contribute to making Handel's music livelier, more colorful, and more expressive.

Daniel Pyle

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The Atlanta Baroque Orchestra would like to thank the following persons and establishments for contributing their time, talents and energy in regard to the details of ABO concerts:

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Janice Joyce & Chris Robinson
Eva Kelly
Ute & Bill Marks
Shawn Pagliarini & Russell Williams
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Eckhart & Rosemary Richter
Williams-Gengakki Violins
Dan & Joy Sears

The ABO would also like to acknowledge the several thousand dollars worth of rehearsal time that has been graciously given to the orchestra by its members. These concerts could not be given without their enthusiasm and support.

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