Princeton University Glee Club PRESENTS

Esther
by Georg Friedrich Händel

Walter M. Nollner Memorial Concert
Saturday April 17 2010, 8 pm
Richardson Auditorium, Princeton University
Our cover art is taken from a series of Esther-related works by the contemporary Canadian mosaic artist Lilian Broca: *Esther Holding the Evidence of Haman’s Guilt* (completed August, 2002; used by gracious permission of the artist). 48” x 32”, Venetian glass, smalti, gold tesserae, gems, gold leaf on wood panel. In Broca’s words, “This panel depicts a frightened Queen Esther who is carefully making her way to her quarters hoping no one is following her. In her hands she holds the edict shown to her by her cousin Mordecai a few minutes earlier. The Persian court has many spies and she hopes to get to her quarters safely.” Further mosaics from this series can be seen at www.lilianbroca.com.
OVERTURE

SCENE 1

Recitative: 'Tis greater far
Air: Pluck root and branch
Recitative: Our souls with ardour glow
Chorus: Shall we the God of Israel fear?

SCENE 2

Recitative: Now persecution shall lay by her iron rod
Air: Tune your harps
Recitative: O God, who from the suckling's mouth
Air: Praise the Lord
Chorus: Shall we of servitude complain?
Air: Sing songs of praise
Chorus: Shall we of servitude complain? (reprise)

SCENE 3

Recitative: How have our sins provok'd the Lord!
Accompagnato: Methinks I hear the mother's groans
Chorus: Ye sons of Israel mourn
Air: O Jordan, Jordan
Chorus: Ye sons of Israel mourn (reprise)

SCENE 4

Recitative: Why sits that sorrow on thy brow?
Air: Dread not, righteous queen
Recitative: I go before the king
Air: Tears assist me, pity moving
Chorus: Save us, O Lord!

A FIFTEEN MINUTE INTERMISSION

SCENE 5

Recitative: Who dares intrude?
Air: O beauteous queen
Duet: Who calls my parting soul?
Recitative: If I find favour
Air: How can I stay?
Recitative: With inward joy
Chorus: Virtue, truth, and innocence
Accompagnato: Jehovah crown'd
Chorus: He comes, he comes!

SCENE 6

Recitative: Now, O queen
Air: Turn not, O queen, thy face away
Air: Flatt'ring tongue
Recitative: Guards, seize the traitor!
Air: How art thou fall'n
Chorus: The Lord our enemy has slain

A reception in the Rockefeller Common Room will follow the performance.
A note on the order of movements

Performance order of the movements in Esther typically follows that of librettos from later in the 18th century. The most recent scholarly edition, that of the Halliche Händel Ausgabe, also adheres to this traditional order. Yet modern paper studies of the sole autograph score suggest that its pages may have been inadvertently rearranged at some point. A realignment can be proposed that perhaps comes closer to Händel's original intention, and certainly improves dramatic coherence and key relationships in two of the six scenes.

In modern printed scores, for example, Scene II unfolds as follows:

1. Recitative (tenor): Now persecution shall lay by her iron rod
2. Air (tenor): Tune your harps
3. Chorus: Shall we of servitude complain?
4. Air (soprano): Praise the Lord
5. Recitative (soprano): O God, who from the sucking's mouth
6. Air (tenor): Sing songs of praise
7. Chorus: Shall we of servitude complain? (reprise)

The soprano recitative incongruously sits after the soprano aria it would logically precede, and the chorus's reprise after two arias seems arbitrary. Our version tonight swaps the soprano aria with the first statement of the chorus:

1. Recitative (tenor): Now persecution shall lay by her iron rod
2. Air (tenor): Tune your harps
3. Recitative (soprano): O God, who from the sucking's mouth
4. Air (soprano): Praise the Lord
5. Chorus: Shall we of servitude complain?
6. Air (tenor): Sing songs of praise
7. Chorus: Shall we of servitude complain? (reprise)

Now soprano recitative precedes soprano aria, and the chorus/air/chorus creates a typical da capo form which wraps up the scene on a dramatic high point. In addition, the tenor's first aria, in which he suggests turning the harp, is followed immediately by the soprano aria which refers to a lyre and (in Händel's original scoring) is accompanied by a harp! The progression of keys that result from this reordering is also far more logical.

Scene V opens with a recitative in which Esther faints in the presence of Assuerus. The traditional order of movements requires her to immediately awake and sing, in a duet with the king, "Who calls my parting soul from death?" Only after that movement concludes does Assuerus sing his aria which begins: "O beauteous Queen, unclose those eyes." (He then goes on to perform, most unusually, a second aria on the heels of his first.) How much more likely that Händel intended recitative/aria/duet/aria!

--Judith Griffin & Robert Isaac

A note from Professor Wendy Heller

On April 19, 1732 the following announcement appeared in the Daily Journal in London.

At the King's Theatre in the Hay-Market on Tuesday the 2nd day of May, will be performed, The Sacred Story of Esther: an Oratorio in English. Formerly composed by Mr. Handel, and now revised him, with several additions, and to be performed by a great Number of the best voices. N.B. There will be no Action on the Stage, but the House will be fitted up in a decent Manner for the Audience. The Music shall be dispensed after the Manner of the Coronation Service.

The announcement in the Daily Journal provides us with some important clues about the various performance history of Handel's Esther and its role in the popularization of Handel's English oratorios in London. Handel composed his first version of Esther for James Brydges, the Earl of Carnavon and future Duke of Chandos, who maintained a literary and artistic salon at his mansion near Cannons, where Handel served as a sort of composer-in-residence from 1717-1718. The libretto, which has been credited variously to Alexander Pope and Handel's friend John Arbuthnot, was based on the play by Thomas Betterton entitled Esther; or Faith Triumphant (1715), a translation of Racine's Esther (1689), which had been written for the young ladies at Madame de Maintenon's college at Saint-Cyr.

The play and the libretto focus on the tale of the Jewish Queen Esther and her rescue of the Jewish people, celebrated during the Jewish festival of Purim. Drawn from the Bible and the Aprocrpha, the events took place during the reign of King Assuerus of Persia. When the King's wife Vashti refused to accompany him to a feast, the King divorced Vashti and chooses a new wife. Esther, the daughter of Mordecai was selected and although she became Queen, she kept her Jewish faith and origins of birth a secret. The fact that Mordecai had once saved the King's life is also of relevance.

The action represented in the oratorio focuses on Haman, Assuerus' second-in-command, who is angered when Mordecai does not show him appropriate reverence. Haman then tricks the King into decreeing that all Jews must be executed. Mordecai urges Esther to plead the case for the Jews. To do so, however, she must break the law and risk incurring the death penalty by entering the King's inner court without his permission. In a moving scene, the King expresses his love for Esther and spares her life. Esther then asks the King to organize a banquet with Haman, and she uses that opportunity to expose Haman's deceit. Mordecai is honored, Haman is hung on his gallows (in the Biblical version 75,000 Persians are also executed), and the Jews celebrate their victory.

What inspired Handel at this time to create what was to become the first English oratorio—that is, a theatrical work on a sacred subject presented with arias, recitatives, and choruses, particularly when he was eager to follow up his success with Rinaldo (1711) with more opera? Notably, around 1716 Handel had just completed his setting of the Brockes Passion, a popular oratorio version of the Passion text penned by the
German poet Berthold Heinrich Brockes (1680-1747). While a German setting of the Passion would not have been appropriate in England, it may well be that Handel and his colleagues and Cannon were intrigued by the possibility of transferring some kind of musical techniques—in particular the use of the chorus in the unfolding of a musical drama—to a musical entertainment based on Breteron's play. In fact, nine of the twenty-one numbers in the original Esther (not including recitatives) were adapted from Brockes' Brockes Passion.

After the performance of Esther at Cannons, the work would not resurface until February of 1732, when it would be revived for a series of private performances honor of Handel's forty-seventh birthday at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in London. Presented by his friend and colleague Bernard Gates, Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, this version of Esther—unlike Handel's subsequent oratorios—would be staged "after the manner of the Ancients." Esther must have attracted some attention, since a public performance at the Great Room in the York Buildings, one of London's main concert halls, was presented on 20 April 1732 without the composer's consent. Indeed, this act of piracy seems to have provided the stimulus for Handel to reconsider the fate of Esther and the dramatic (and economic) possibilities in this as yet untapped genre of English oratorio. The result was the performance announced in the advertisement cited above.

In preparing the work for performance at the King's Theatre, Handel expanded the earlier version into three full acts with additional texts by Samuel Humphreys (c.1698-1738), adapting music (as was his habit) from earlier compositions. His mention of the Coronation Anthems in the advertisement referred to the fact that the new Esther included excerpts (with new text) from music written for King George and Queen Caroline's coronation in 1722 and the Birthday Ode for Queen Anne. Notably, this was not only a way to make the work more lavish and provide a vivid dramatic representation of the splendor of Ahasuerus's court; Handel may also have wanted to attract the attention of the royal family for the new undertaking. Indeed, it appears to have had the desired effect. Apparently, George II and Queen Caroline attended all six performances at the King's Theatre, providing the King was a much needed public appearance just prior to a sojourn to Hannover, it has also been suggested that Queen Caroline, who would be acting as regent during her husband's absence, not only benefited from being seen in public at a time when their frequent rumors about her ill health, but might well have profited from an allegorical reading of the libretto that posited Queen Caroline as a peacemaker. Handel also brought the best Italian singers to the project. The castrato Senameo sang the role of Ahasuerus, Esther was sung by Maria Stradella del Pâ, Haman by the bass Antonio Montagnana, and Mordecai by the contralto Francesc Bertoli.

We can only speculate as to why the tale of Queen Esther and the rescue of the Jewish people, celebrated during the Jewish festival of Purim, would have been so appealing to both to Handel's colleagues at Cannons and to the royal family some years later. Indeed, like all of Handel's oratorios dealing with Old Testament subjects, the struggles of the Jewish people, as Ruth Smith has simply demonstrated, could take on a variety of meanings in eighteenth-century England. For the Cannons crowd, it may have been that Esther's championship of the Jewish minority might have been understood as a criticism of anti-Catholic legislation. The appeal of the story for the royal family is less clear—and it may well be, as Smith has suggested, that the addition of the new music and text in 1732, with its strong praise of monarchy suggests a "hasty attempt at allegorical takeover."

Regardless, it is not surprising that this extraordinary new style of musical theater would have captured the imagination of English audiences, creating a model—and ultimately a market—for Handel's subsequent oratorios. The marriage of the aria and recitative best known from Italian opera with the familiar style of sacred choral music made for a dynamic and compelling form of entertainment, in which personal drama could be juxtaposed with the kind of stirring collective reflection that is so much a part of the English church tradition. Handel's theatrical instincts, honed through so many decades of composing and producing opera, did not go to waste with the oratorio. Rather, his genius in making the drama audible came to the fore, as grandeur and pathos of the choruses and the personal intimacy expressed by the individual characters in the arias and duets created a theater best enjoyed by the ear rather than the eye. His ability to use the choral movements to express not only emotion but depict action is apparent in movement such as "Shall we the God of Israel fear?" in which the violent "plucking" of "root and branch" of the Israelites suggests an underlying aggression, while pathos is beautifully expressed in the laments of the Jewish people, "Ye sons of Israel." Communal violence, joy, and sorrow is matched by moments of personal intimacy, such as the stirring duet between Ahasuerus and Esther "Who calls my parting soul from death?" as the throbbing strings leave the listener in breathless suspense, sharing Esther's fear of death, ultimately comforted by Ahasuerus' reassurance. The result is a complete entertainment, in which the lack of sets, costumes, and machines are more than compensated by musical riches.

Esther was followed by a performance of Debucrat (1733) and Athalia (1734), and although he would continue to focus on Italian opera until 1738, Handel would compose an oratorio nearly annually, until suffering a stroke midway through the composition of the Jephtha in 1752. The oratorio, with its vivid musical imagery and unmatched was thus transformed by the German-born Handel into the most quintessential English genre of music theater—a process begun with the first performance of Esther.

--- Professor Wendy Heller
LIBRETTO

OVERTURE

SCENE 1

Recitative

Habdonah: 'Tis greater far to spare than to destroy.
Haman: I'll hear no more; it is decreed,
All the Jewish race shall bleed.
Hear and obey, what Haman’s voice commands.
Hath not the lord of all the east
Giv’n all his power into my hands?
Hear ye, all ye nations far and wide,
Which own our monarch’s sway.
Hear and obey.

Air

Haman: Pluck root and branch from out the land:
Shall I the God of Israel fear?
Let Jewish blood dye ev’ry hand,
Nor age, nor sex I spare.
Raze, raze their temples to the ground,
And let their place no more be found.

Recitative

Persian Officer: Our souls with ardour glow
To execute the blow.

Chorus

Persian Soldiers: Shall we the God of Israel fear?
Nor age, nor sex we’ll spare.
Pluck root and branch from out the land:
Nor age, nor sex we’ll spare.

SCENE 2

Recitative

First Israelite: Now persecution shall lay by her iron rod;
Esther is queen, and Esther serves the living God.

Air

First Israelite: Tune your harps to cheerful strains,
Moulder idols into dust!
Great Jehovah lives and reigns,
We in great Jehovah trust.
Tune your harps to cheerful strains,
Moulder idols into dust!

Recitative

Israelite Woman: O God, who from the suckling’s mouth
Ordains early praise:
Of such as worship thee in truth,
Accept the humble lays.

Air

Israelite Woman: Praise the Lord with cheerful noise,
Wake my glory, wake my lyre!
Praise the Lord each mortal voice,
Praise the Lord, ye heav’nly choir!
Zion now her head shall raise:
Tune your harps to songs of praise.
Praise the Lord with cheerful noise,
Wake my glory, wake my lyre!
Praise the Lord each mortal voice,
Praise the Lord, ye heav’nly choir!

Chorus

Israelites: Shall we of servitude complain,
The heavy yoke and galling chain?

Air

Second Israelite: Sing songs of praise, bow down the knee;
Our chains we slight,
Our yoke is light,
The worship of our God is free.
Zion again her head shall raise,
Tune all your harps to songs of praise.
Sing songs of praise, bow down the knee;
Our chains we slight,
Our yoke is light,
The worship of our God is free.

Chorus (reprise)
Israelites: Shall we of servitude complain,
The heavy yoke and galling chain?

SCENE 3
Recitative
Priest: How have our sins provok'd the Lord!
Wild persecution has unsheath'd the sword.
Haman hath sent forth his decree:
The sons of Israel all Shall in one ruin fall.

Accompagnato
Priest: Methinks I hear the mother's groans,
While babes are dashed against the stones!
I hear the infant's shriller screams,
Stabb'd at the mother's breast!
Blood stains the murderer's vest,
And through the city flows in streams.

Chorus
Israelites: Ye sons of Israel mourn,
Ye never to your country shall return!

Air
Priest: O Jordan, Jordan, sacred tide,
Shall we no more behold thee glide
The fertile vales along?
As in our great fathers' days,
Recitative

Esther: I go before the king to stand.
    Stretch forth, O king, thy scepter’d hand!

Air

Esther: Tears assist me, pity moving,
    Justice cruel fraud reproving.
    Hear, O God, thy servant’s prayer!
    Is it blood that must atone,
    Take, oh take my life alone,
    And thy chosen people spare.

Chorus

Israelites: Save us, O Lord,
    And blunt the wrathful sword!

INTERMISSION

SCENE 5

Recitative

Assuerus: Who dares intrude into our presence without our leave?
    It is decreed,
    He dies for this audacious deed.
    Ah! Esther there!
    The law condemns, but love will spare.

Esther: My spirits sink, alas I faint.

Assuerus: Ye powers, what paleness spreads her beauteous face!
    Esther, awake, thou fairest of thy race.
    Esther, awake and live, ’tis my command!
    Behold the golden sceptre in my hand,
    Sure sign of grace. The bloody stern decree
    Was never meant, my queen, to strike at thee.

Assuerus: O beauteous queen, unclove those eyes!
    My fairest shall not bleed;
    Hear love’s soft voice that bids thee rise
    And bids thy suit succeed.
    Ask, and ’tis granted from this hour,
    Who shares our heart shall share our pow’r.
    O beauteous queen, unclove those eyes!
    My fairest shall not bleed;
    Hear love’s soft voice that bids thee rise
    And bids thy suit succeed.

Duet

Esther: Who calls my parting soul from death?
    My fairest shall not bleed;
    Hear love’s soft voice that bids thee rise
    And bids thy suit succeed.

Assuerus: Ask, my queen, can I deny?

Assuerus: If I find favour in thy sight,
    I come, my queen, to chaste delights.
    With joy, with pleasure, I obey,
    To thee I give the day.
    How can I stay when love invites?
    I come, my queen, to chaste delights.

Recitative

Assuerus: How can I stay when love invites?
    I come, my queen, to chaste delights.
    With joy, with pleasure, I obey,
    To thee I give the day.
    How can I stay when love invites?
    I come, my queen, to chaste delights.

Recitative

First Israelite: With inward joy his visage glows,
    He to the queen’s apartment goes.
    Beauty has his fury charm’d,
    And all his wrath disarm’d.
Chorus
Israelites: Virtue, truth and innocence
Shall ever be her true defence.
She is Heaven's peculiar care,
Propitious Heaven will hear her pray'r.

Accompagnato
Priest: Jehovah crown'd with glory bright,
Surrounded with eternal light,
Whose ministers are flames of fire:
Arise, and execute thine ire!

Chorus
Israelites: He comes, He comes to end our woes,
And pour His vengeance on our foes.
Earth trembles, lofty mountains nod!
He comes, He comes to end our woes,
And pour His vengeance on our foes.

Recitative
Assuerus: Now, O queen, thy suit declare.
Ask half my empire, and 'tis thine.

Esther: O gracious king, my people spare,
For in their lives, you strike at mine.
Reverse the dire decree!
The blow is aimed at Mordecai and me.
And is the fate of Mordecai decreed,
Who, when the ruffian's sword
Sought to destroy my royal Lord,
Brought forth to light the desperate deed?

Assuerus: Yes, yes, I own,
To him alone
I owe my life and throne.
Say then, my queen, who dares pursue
The life to which reward is due?

Esther: 'Tis Haman's hate
That signed his fate.

Assuerus: I swear by yon great globe of light
Which rules the day,
That Haman's sight
Shall never more behold the golden ray.

Air
Haman: Turn not, O queen, thy face away.
Behold me prostrate on the ground!
Oh speak, his growing fury stay,
Let mercy in thy sight be found.

Recitative
Assuerus: Guards, seize the traitor, bear him hence!
Death shall reward the dire offence.
To Mordecai be honour paid:
The royal garment bring,
My diadem shall grace his head,
Let him in triumph through the streets be led,
Who saved the king.

Air
Haman: How art thou fall'n from thy height!
Tremble, ambition, at the sight!
In power let mercy sway,
When adverse fortune is thy lot,
Lest thou by mercy be forgot,
And perish in that day.
Chorus

Israelites: The Lord our enemy has slain,
Ye sons of Jacob, sing a cheerful strain!
Sing songs of praise, bow down the knee.
The worship of our God is free!
The Lord our enemy has slain,
Ye sons of Jacob, sing a cheerful strain!
For ever blessed be thy holy name,
Let Heav’n and earth his praise proclaim.

Priest: Let Israel songs of joy repeat,
Sound all the tongues Jehovah’s praise.
He plucks the mighty from his seat,
And cuts off half his days.

Israelites: Forever blessed be thy holy name,
Let Heav’n and earth his praise proclaim.

Esther, Mordecai: The Lord his people shall restore,
And we in Salem shall adore.

Israelites: Forever blessed be thy holy name,
Let Heav’n and earth his praise proclaim.

Bass duet: Mount Lebanon his fir resists,
Descend, ye Cedars, haste ye Pines
To build the temple of the Lord,
For God his people has restor’d.

Israelites: Forever blessed be thy holy name,
Let Heav’n and earth his praise proclaim.

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Oboe
Andrew Schwartz
Rachel Biegley
Guest Biographies

Barritone Scott Dispensa draws from a wide range of professional experience. A graduate of Westminster Choir College and The Juilliard School, he made his Alice Tully Hall debut in 2004 as part of the Juilliard Vocal Arts Honors Recital, and his Weill Recital Hall debut in 2005 as part of a benefit concert honoring Hal Prince sponsored by the New York Festival of Song. Most recently, Mr. Dispensa was an Adams Fellow at the Carmel Bach Festival. He is currently appearing at Washington National Cathedral as the bass soloist in the premiere American performance of Bach’s St. Mark Passion. This summer, he will debut two recitals at the Monadnock Music Festival in New Hampshire. He is a founding member of New York Polyphony, a male a cappella quartet, whose debut CD I Sing the Birth garnered international praise and whose second offering, Tudor City, was released this month on the Avie (London) Records label. In recent seasons, Mr. Dispensa has been seen as a part of many ensembles, including the Green Mountain Project’s Monteverdi Vespers. He has toured with Glimmerglass Opera and performed with the Clarion Music Society, Early Music New York, and the Vox Vocal Ensemble. Mr. Dispensa is a member of the St. Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, and was very recently appointed to a full-time position with the Metropolitan Opera Chorus.

Tenor Timothy Hodge, whose singing has been described in the New York Daily News as having “both purity and depth”, has an active career performing as a soloist and ensemble singer throughout the United States. He has performed in many early music ensembles, including the Vox Vocal Ensemble, Funa Sacra, and the Antioch Chamber Ensemble. Tim is currently a member of the Trinity Choir at Trinity Wall Street Church in New York City, where for three years he has performed as both ensemble member and soloist for some of the world’s leading conductors. For the last three summers, Timothy has traveled to Carmel, California to participate in the Carmel Bach Festival as a member of the Festival Chorale. Timothy’s other festival appearances include the Connecticut Early Music Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, and the Golden Mask Festival in Moscow, Russia. As a soloist, Timothy has performed with the Rebel Baroque Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Carmel Bach Festival Orchestra, Garden State Philharmonic, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, and the Mark Morris Dance Group, as well as numerous appearances as a soloist in Handel’s Messiah in New York, New Jersey, and Florida. While at Westminster Choir College, Timothy was a member of the Westminster Choir, Westminster Kantorei and was Jephth in Carissimi’s Jeptha.

Most recently hailed as “beautiful, haunting and deranged” (New Haven Register, commenting on her portrayal of Britney Spears in Jacob Cooper’s electronic opera TimbreHel), soprano Melissa Hughes enjoys a busy career in both contemporary and early music. Miss Hughes was recently acclaimed on NPR’s All Things Considered for her “smoky vocals.” Performances this season include concerts in Moscow with the Mark Morris Dance Group, a solo appearance with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, a recording with Cantaloupe, concerts with Alarm Will Sound, and Louis Andriessen’s De Staat under the baton of John Adams. A dedicated interpreter of living composers, Miss Hughes has worked closely with Julia Wolfe, Michael Gordon, David Lang, Steve Reich, Neil Roderick, and has premiered works by Caleb Burhans, Missy Mazzoli, Ted Hearne, Jacob Cooper, Matt Marks, and Frederick Rzewski. Miss Hughes is equally at home in front of a rockband: as lead vocalist with Newspeak, an amplified alt-classical band, the Brooklyn Vegan wrote: “Hughes possesses the pipes and the energy reminiscent of the high priestess of alt-music, Diamanda Galas.” In the classical concert hall she has performed Mozart’s Vespers and Requiem under the baton of Sir Neville Marriner; Handel’s Dixit Dominus with Sir David Willcocks, and the role of Dido under the direction of Andrew Lawrence King. Future engagements include Reich’s Music for 18, Proverbs, and Tehillim with Signal, and Shelter, a video opera by Bang on a Can composers Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe, and Pulitzer Prize winner David Lang. Miss Hughes also stars in The Little Death, an electronic Christian nihilist rock-opera by Matt Marks, to be released by New Amsterdam Records. Miss Hughes has recorded for Nonesuch, Cantaloupe, and Naxos Records, and performs regularly with the ensembles Alarm Will Sound, The Wordless Music Series, Clarion Music Society, Newspeak, Vox Vocal Ensemble, Signal, The Long Count, Trinity Wall Street and Ensemble de Sade. Miss Hughes holds degrees from Westminster Choir College and Yale University.

“The marvelous mezze-soprano Silvie Jensen,” according to the New York Times, “sings beautifully.” Critics have called her voice “exquisite, floating and expressive, a joy to hear.” A vocalist of great versatility, Ms. Jensen enjoys a wide-ranging career, which includes early and contemporary music, opera and musical theater, and ethnic, improvised, and experimental music. As a soloist, she has appeared with Ornette Coleman at London’s Barbican Centre, with Meredith Monk at Zankel Hall and Teatro Comunale Ferrara, in Handel’s Messiah at Trinity Wall Street, in classical and contemporary works at Brooklyn Academy of Music with Sir Jonathan Miller and Paul Goodwin, with the Broadway Bach Ensemble singing Mahler’s 4th Symphony, and at Ash Lawn Opera, Stonington Opera House, Riverside Opera, American Chamber Opera, New Amsterdam Opera, Miller Theater, and the One World Symphony. Her performance in Hildegard von Bingen’s chant opera Oudo Vitaanim, under the
direction of Drew Minter, was critically acclaimed by the New York Times. Ms. Jensen is a frequent collaborator with composers and artists in other genres; she has commissioned and premiered works created specifically for her, and has presented solo recitals and chamber music at Weil Hall, Steinway Hall, Symphony Space, Americas Society, Liederkrantz Club, and Nicholas Roerich Museum. She has appeared as a vocal soloist with the Christopher Caines Dance Company for several seasons, and has performed with the Philip Glass Ensemble at Carnegie Hall, San Francisco Symphony Chorus under Herbert Blomstedt at Davies Hall, San Francisco Opera Chorus under Christoph von Dohnanyi, Berkeley and Oakland Symphonies under Kent Nagano, American Symphony Orchestra under Leon Botstein, the Vox Vocal Ensemble, Voices of Ascension, Early Music New York, Sacred Music in a Sacred Space with Kent Tritle, Pomerium, Russian Chamber Chorus of New York, Foundation for Universal Sacred Music, and at Merkin Concert Hall, New York City Ballet, Hammerstein Ballroom, the Bang on a Can Marathon, Sound Res, the Bard Festival, and Tanglewood. She has made recordings on the ECM, London, Koch, Helicon, and Soundbrush Records labels. Ms. Jensen is a graduate of Columbia University.

David Kellett made his operatic debut as Count Belfiore in Mozart's La Finta Giardiniera with the Opera Shop at the Vineyard Theatre in New York City. He has appeared at the Lake George Opera Festival, the June Opera Festival, the Opera Festival of New Jersey, the Banff Centre for the Arts and The Princeton Festival. He has performed over 45 principal and secondary roles in opera and operetta, including several roles in some of the obscure Donizetti operas: Daniele in Belfi, Ernesto in Il Giovedi Grasso, and Eutroipo in Belisario. David also has the distinction of having performed Count Almaviva in both the Rossini and Piazzolla versions of Il Barbiere di Siviglia. An active concert soloist, David has appeared at the Charles Ives Center for the Arts, with the Long Island Jewish Arts Festival, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the National Dance Institute under the baton of composer/conductor David Amram. As Mr. Amram's tenor of choice, David has sung in the composer's opera, Twelfth Night and performed his songs in concert on numerous occasions. He appeared at Lincoln Center in 2007 on a program celebrating the 50th anniversary of Joseph Papp's Shakespeare Festival, singing selections that were composed for productions directed by Papp during the first 11 years of its existence. As an oratorio soloist, he has appeared with the Mendelssohn Choir of Connecticut, the Oratorio Society of New Jersey, the Richmond Choral Society, Commonwealth Opera, Concordia Chorale, the Glee Club and Chapel Choir at Princeton University and numerous other organizations in the New York area.

Judson Griffin (conductor and orchestral conductor), a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and holder of Master's and Doctorate degrees from The Juilliard School, has played period instruments since 1979. He was a founding member of the Smithsonian Quartet, in residence at and using instruments from the collections of the Smithsonian Institution, making ground-breaking recordings of quartets of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven; and was Music Director of the Connecticut Early Music Festival from 2000 to 2007, conducting music from Gabrieli through operas of Vivaldi and Mozart, researching and creating new editions, writing program notes, and providing translations from Latin, Italian, French, and German. He has appeared in Europe and the US as concertmaster, soloist, and conductor, appearing with groups like Amor Artis, the American Classical Orchestra, Concert Royal, Florida Pro Musica, and Baltimore Pro Musica Rara.

Since 1995, David has taught private voice at Princeton University. He made his directing debut with the university's production of Mozart's Magic Flute in 2002. Since that time he has directed Gilbert & Sullivan's Patience and Mozart's Marriage of Figaro. He has appeared regularly with the Richardson Chamber Players, the resident chamber music ensemble of the university, and will be heard next on their May 3rd concert here in Richardson singing the Brahms' Liebeslieder Waltzes. In 2015, David began his association with the Princeton Festival, appearing as Pirelli in their debut performance of Sondheim's Sweeney Todd. Since that time, he has directed their young artist productions of Mozart's Old Maid and the Thief, Men of La Mancha, and The Fantasticks, while also presenting audition master classes and serving as vocal consultant. He returns this year to direct Three Penny Opera.
Robert Isaacs, Acting Conductor

With this concert, Robert Isaacs completes his year as interim conductor of the Princeton University Glee Club. Previously he spent almost a decade at the Manhattan School of Music, where he founded several choirs, directed the tutoring program, and taught courses in conducting and ensembling. Guest conducting appearances this year include the acclaimed chamber choir CredoToriion, the newly formed professional ensemble Teret, and the National Youth Choir of Great Britain (with whom he served as associate conductor for several years). Robert made his conducting debut at Carnegie Hall with the Argento New Music Project.

A countertenor, Robert runs his own voice studio and has also served on the voice faculty of the City University of New York and the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music. As a solo singer, he has made appearances with Saint Thomas Fifth Avenue, Pomerium, Harmonia, Bachworks, Piffaro, Musica Sacra, the Gotham City Baroque Orchestra, the Stamford Symphony, the Vox Vocal Ensemble, the Parthenia Viola Consort, the Pro Arte Singers, the Metropolitan Greek Chorale, the Greenwich Village Singers, the Westchester Oratorio Society, the St. Endellion Festival Chorus and the Wells Oratorio Society. In addition to his solo work, Robert is a passionate advocate for ensemble music, and has enjoyed singing and recording with the New York Collegium, the Virgin Consort, Early Music New York, Voices of Ascension, the St. Ignatius Choir, the Clarion Music Society, the American Radio Choir, the Woodley Ensemble, Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, and the Church of the Advent in Boston. He has collaborated at Carnegie Hall with the conductorless Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, accompanied the Mark Morris Dance Group on tour in Russia, and explored extended vocal techniques with Toby Towner Music. Robert was a founding member of the Alba Quintet, the Tiffany Consort, Angelus, and Equal Voices. He has performed twice in Jonathan Miller’s fully staged St. Matthew Passion at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2006.

Robert graduated with high honors from Harvard University, where he designed his own major in choral music. He supported himself for a while as a juggler and unicyclist on the streets of San Francisco, and then spent a year as a Benjamin Trustman Fellow, researching choral rehearsal psychology throughout England and Scandinavia. In 2002, Robert earned an MFA in creative writing from Columbia University; he has published articles on travel, politics, and music in the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, the Baltimore Sun, and Church Music Quarterly. His musical compositions and arrangements are published by the Royal School of Church Music.

The Princeton University Glee Club

The Princeton University Glee Club is the oldest singing group in existence at Princeton. It was founded in 1874 by Andrew Fleming West ’74, who was later appointed the first Dean of the Graduate College. In 1907, Charles E. Burnham became the first professional musician to lead the Glee Club. He was succeeded in 1918 by Alexander Russell, who served until 1934 when the Glee Club became a responsibility of the music faculty. James Giddings became director in 1934, Timothy Cheney in 1940, J. Merrill Knapp in 1941, Russell Ames Cook in 1943, J. Merrill Knapp again in 1946, Elliot Forbes in 1952, Carl Weirich in 1953, Walter L. Nollner in 1958, William Trego in 1992, and Richard Tang Yik in 1994. Robert Isaacs is serving as acting conductor this year. The Glee Club is currently celebrating its 137th season of concerts.

On the eve of the college football games in 1913, the Glee Club held its first concerts with the Glee Clubs of Harvard and Yale Universities, beginning a tradition of joint concerts that have continued to this day. The Princeton University Glee Club was also involved in some remarkable projects in the 1930’s. They gave the American Premiere of Stravinsky’s Oedipus Rex with Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1931; performances of Schoenberg’s Gurrelieder and Wagner’s Parsifal in 1932 and 1933; Bach’s Mass in B Minor at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1935; and, with the Vassar College Choir, the first United States performance of Jean Philippe Rameau’s Castor et Pollux in 1937.

From 1958 to 1992 Walter L. Nollner led the Glee Club, giving him the honor of the longest tenure of any conductor. Under his direction the choir traveled outside the United States for the first time, establishing a pattern of international concert tours to Europe, Asia, South America and the South Pacific, including two around-the-world tours. In honour of Professor Nollner’s service to the Glee Club, an endowment fund has been established in his name to assist the Glee Club with its yearly operations. The Nollner Endowment Fund was officially launched in February 1999, and has enabled the performance of a major oratorio each spring with professional soloists and orchestra. Recent masterworks performed include Orff’s Carmina Burana, Mendelssohn’s Elijah, Bach’s St. Matthew Passion and Mass in B minor, Mozart’s Requiem, and Honegger’s Le Roiv David, all in the spectacular acoustics of Alexander Hall on the Princeton campus.
Princeton University Department of Music

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Ernest Clark, concert coordinator
Bryan Fitzwater, technical support specialist
Marilyn Ham, department manager
Cynthia Masterson, office assistant
Gregory Smith, academic programs manager
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Gina Madore, assistant director
Christopher Gorzelink, production supervisor
John Burton, production technician
Liz Lammer, production technician
Bill Pierce, production technician
James Allington, audio engineer
Mary Kemler, assistant director of University Ticketing
Sharon Maselli, ticket manager

Upcoming Performances In The Princeton University Music Department:

Princeton University Orchestra
Stuart B Mindlin Memorial Concert
April 23 & 24, 8 pm
Richardson Auditorium

Sinfonia Spring Concert
May 7, 8 pm
Richardson Auditorium

Glee Club On the Web!
For the Latest News about Performances, CD’s, Tours, and More,
Check Out the Glee Club Online:

www.princeton.edu/gleeclub