The English Concert
Handel’s *Semele*
Harry Bicket, Director

With Clarion Choir, Steven Fox ’00, Artistic Director

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Program

Semele, HWV 58

The edition of Semele used in these performances is published by Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel. By arrangement with Faber Music Ltd, London.

The English Concert
Harry Bicket, director/harpsichord
Brenda Rae, Semele
Elizabeth DeShong, Juno/Ino
Benjamin Hulett, Jupiter
Soloman Howard, Cadmus/Somnus
Ailish Tynan, Iris
Christopher Lowrey, Athamas
Brian Geibler, Apollo
Joseph Butel, Priest
Clarion Choir
  Steven Fox ’00, artistic director

Orchestra

Violin 1
Nadja Zwiener (leader)
Alice Evans
Julia Kuhn
Thérèse Timoney
Silvia Schweinberger

Violin 2
Tuomo Suni
Kinga Ujszászi
Jacek Kurzydło
Diana Lee

Viola
Alfonso Leal del Ojo
Oliver Wilson

Violoncello
Joseph Crouch
Jonathan Byers

Double bass
Christine Sticher

Theorbo
William Carter

Oboe
Marta Bławat
Hilary Stock

Bassoon
Alberto Grazzi
Zoe Shevlin

Horn
Ursula Paludan Monberg
Martin Lawrence

Trumpet
Mark Bennett
Stian Aareskjold

Timpani
Stephen Burke

Soprano
Jessica Beebe
Madeline Healey
Linda Jones
Molly Netter*
Nacole Palmer
Molly Quinn
Nola Richardson*
Melanie Russell

Alto
Luthien Brackett*
Roger Isaacs*
Tim Keeler
Marguerite Krull
Timothy Parsons
Mikki Sodergren

Bass
Joseph Beutel
Kelvin Chan
Scott Dispensa
Tim Krol
Neil Netherly
Jonathan Woody*

Tenor
Steven Fox
Andrew Fuchs
Brian Geibler*
Timothy Hodges
Lawrence Jones
Jonathan Ramseyer

*indicates understudy

Approximate duration: 3 hours with two 20-minute intermissions
Program Notes

**Semele, HWV 58**
*Music by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)*


It was Gay and Pepusch’s satirical romp of 1729, *The Beggar’s Opera*, that first soured the fashionable London taste for what Samuel Johnson described in his 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language* as “an exotic and irrational entertainment”—Italian opera. As both composer and impresario, Handel was London’s most important producer of opera, and he toiled doggedly for the entire decade of the 1730s to keep his theatrical ventures solvent, but the tide of fashion (and the virulent cabals of his competitors) brought him to the edge of bankruptcy by 1739. As early as 1732, with the oratorio *Esther*, he had begun to cast about for a musical genre that would appeal to the changing fancy of the English public. Neither that work nor the oratorio *Alexander’s Feast* of 1736 had the success he had hoped for, however, and the strain of his situation contributed to the collapse of his health in 1737, reported variously as a stroke or as acute rheumatism and depression. Much to the surprise and chagrin of his enemies, he recovered and resumed work. The oratorios *Israel in Egypt* and *Saul* appeared in 1739, but created little public stir. Determined to have one last try at saving Italian opera in London, he spent the summer of 1740 arranging production details and searching for singers on the continent for his upcoming winter season. After returning to England in early autumn, he completed what proved to be his last two operas, both of which failed ignominiously on the stage. *Imeneo*, premiered on November 22, closed after only two performances; *Deidamia* (January 10, 1741), after three. Handel largely withdrew from public life and seldom left his house on Brook Street, near Grosvenor Square. Rumors began to circulate that his health had given way for good, that he had died, that he planned to return to the continent. His competitors rejoiced.

It was not until summer 1741 that Handel was jolted into renewed creativity by a small book of Biblical texts compiled by his admirer Charles Jennens about the birth, death, resurrection and worship of Christ—*Messiah*. He composed that score in 24 days and then abandoned London for nine months to give its premiere, to great acclaim, in Dublin on April 13, 1742. He returned to London in August and first performed *Messiah* in the city in March 1743, but with only limited success; he gave it a few times thereafter, but the oratorio was not fully accepted in England until April 1750, when he donated the proceeds of its performance to the London Foundling Hospital. His annual *Messiah* concerts thereafter (all benefits for the Foundling Hospital) became highly anticipated events; *Messiah* was the last work he directed, just eight days before his death on April 14, 1759.

During the 1740s, when he had given up composing Italian opera, Handel continued to revitalize his career with Bible-based, English-language oratorios. He premiered *Samson* to great acclaim at Covent Garden Theatre on February 18, 1743, but then suffered a “paralytic disorder” that affected his speech, perhaps a mild stroke. He recovered quickly and, apparently, fully (he was often lucky with his health—a metal frock button deflected a sword point in a duel when he was young, sparing him serious injury), and in June tried composing something different. This was an unprecedented stylistic hybrid—a mythological story set to an oratorio’s worth of choral numbers, *Semele*. He composed the three-act score in a single month
(June 3–July 4) and by the end of the summer had completed the Dettingen Te Deum and Dettingen Anthem as well as the oratorio Joseph and His Brethren. Handel was again becoming London’s favorite composer.

Handel based Semele on a libretto after Ovid’s Metamorphoses written by William Congreve around 1705–1706 and originally set by John Eccles in 1707, though it was not performed until its premiere in London in 1722; some texts by Alexander Pope and other works of Congreve were added for Handel’s libretto. Though the story was secular and not sacred, mythological and not Biblical, and adulterous in content (Semele is Jupiter’s mistress; Bacchus, the god of wine, was their child), Handel chose to premiere Semele during his annual Lenten oratorio season at Covent Garden, when the church forbade the performance of opera. He billed the piece as “in the manner of an oratorio” at its premiere, on February 10, 1744, and reaction to the work was, predictably, mixed—the opera crowd did not like its oratorio pretensions; the oratorio audience was put off by the salacious plot they had to witness during the solemn Lenten season. Mary Delany, one of Handel’s most ardent supporters, called it “a delightful piece of music,” but added, “Semele has a strong party against it, viz. the fine ladies, petit maîtres, and ignoramuses. All the opera people are enraged at Handel.” In his highly respected study of Handel’s oratorios, Winton Dean wrote, “Where they [i.e., the oratorio regulars] expected wholesome Lenten bread, they received a glittering stone dug from the ruins of Greek mythology.” Mrs. Delany attended all four performances of the first run: “The more I hear it, the better I like it.... But it being a profane story, my husband [the Rev. Patrick Delany, Doctor of Divinity] does not think it proper for him to go.” In December, Handel revived Semele at the King’s Theatre with a few inserted Italian arias borrowed from his Arminio (1736) and Giustino (1737) and some of its more suggestive passages deleted, but it fared no better. It was not staged again for almost two centuries, until a revival in Cambridge in 1925. Semele was performed in London in 1954 and recorded the following year on L’Oiseau-Lyre, and it has since become part of both the international opera and concert repertories. Its American stage premiere took place in 1959 at the Ravinia Festival, near Chicago; it was performed in Washington, DC at Kennedy Center in 1979 and in New York at Carnegie Hall in 1985, but still awaits its Metropolitan Opera premiere.

Semele is one of Handel’s most masterful and ceaselessly melodic creations. The preeminent scholar Paul Henry Lang recognized it as “the first great full-length English opera,” and in 1959, the decade of Britten’s Peter Grimes, Billy Budd and Gloriana, of Tippett’s The Midsummer Marriage, of Floyd’s Susannah, Barber’s Vanessa, Moore’s The Ballad of Baby Doe and Menotti’s Amahl and the Night Visitors, Winton Dean concluded, “Semele is the most beautiful opera ever written to English words.”

SYNOPSIS
Act I: Temple of Juno
Priests prepare for the wedding of Semele and Prince Athamas of Boeotia by offering a sacrifice to Juno, goddess of marriage and childbirth. Semele, however, is secretly in love with Juno’s husband Jupiter (Jove in the libretto, Greek god of the sky and thunder) and he with her, so she tries to delay the ceremony. Her father, Cadmus, King of Thebes, and Athamas urge her to hesitate no longer, but she calls on Jupiter to come to her aid. Athamas mistakes her agitation as passion for him. Ino, Semele’s sister and secretly in love with Athamas, takes his excitement to indicate that he is eager
to consummate his marriage to Semele. Ino cries out at losing her beloved. Cadmus, Semele and Athamus ask Ino the source of her grief, but before she can reveal her feelings, Jupiter hurls down thunderbolts and the flame on Juno’s altar. The Priests abandon the wedding ceremony and all leave except Athamus and Ino. Athamus despairs that his happiness has fled, and he is astonished when Ino confesses her love for him. “Love alone hath both undone,” they sing. Cadmus rushes in to report that he has seen Semele snatched up by a mighty eagle. The Priests and Augurs (diviners of natural signs, especially the behavior of birds, as indications of divine approval or dissatisfaction) assemble to declare that the eagle was Jupiter in altered form, and that the avian intervention shows his pleasure at his abduction of Semele. Act I ends as Jupiter’s new mistress sings, “Endless pleasure, endless love, Semele enjoys above.” The Priests and Augurs echo her delight.

Act II, Scene 1: A pleasant landscape. Juno arrives in a chariot drawn by peacocks. Iris, messenger of the Olympian gods, descends from a rainbow. Juno, enraged that her husband has taken Semele as a lover, has sent Iris to discover her whereabouts. Iris relates the place where Semele “resides in sweet retreat.” Juno vows vengeance on Semele, but Iris warns her that will be difficult because she is guarded by fearsome dragons that never sleep. Juno sets off with Iris to the cave of Somnus, god of sleep, to ask his help in subduing the monsters. Act II, Scene 2: Semele’s palace. Semele, alone in her apartment, sings that she misses her often-absent lover and is unable to sleep. Jupiter returns and tells her that she, unlike him, is mortal and needs to rest from their love-making. He assures her of his fidelity and they sing of their love. A chorus of Loves and Zephyrs comments on their joy. Semele, however, is dissatisfied with her mortal state and longs to become immortal so she and Jupiter never have to part. He says that such a desire has fateful consequences and decides to “with speed amuse her.” The chorus of Loves and Zephyrs is heard once more. Jupiter commands that the Zephyrs bring Ino to Semele. The sisters delight in their reunion. In the noble aria Where’er you walk, one of Handel’s most beloved melodies, Jupiter says he will create a paradise for them. Ino describes to Semele her magical journey—“air we fled”—and the sisters hear an “ecstasy of sound” as an Arcadian chorus of Nymphs and Swains intones “heav’ly lays.”

Act III, Scene 1: Cave of the sleeping Somnus. Juno and Iris arrive at Somnus’s cave and try to rouse him. He remains drowsy until Juno promises him the company of the beautiful nymph Pasithea if he will assist them. Thereupon, Somnus declares, “With pleasure repose I’ll forsake” to do Juno’s bidding—subdue the dragons and make her appear to Semele in the form of Ino.

Act III, Scene 2: Semele’s apartment. Semele, alone, is racked with “thoughts by no kind slumbers freed.” Juno, in the form of Ino, appears. She remarks on Semele’s “divine perfection” and gives her a magic mirror that shows her a countenance, Semele feels, “I shall adore.” “Ino” urges the girl to extract a vow from Jupiter promising her immortality by denying him her bed until he complies, knowing Semele will be destroyed by the transformation. She leaves. Jupiter enters and Semele presses him to fulfill her request without revealing its nature. Jupiter agrees, and, when he learns that the desire is to make her immortal, says that to do so he must reveal himself to her in his form as a god. “I shall harm you,” he warns, but she insists he keep his
sworn oath. Jupiter, alone, laments his mistress’s inevitable destruction and departs. Juno gloats in her. When Jupiter as god of the sky and thunder comes to Semele, she realizes the gravity of the situation she has created—“too late I now repent.” She dies and her palace disappears.

Ino describes her sister’s fate and reveals that Jupiter has declared she shall marry Athamus. Athamus affirms his love for her. Apollo descends to proclaim “from Semele’s ashes a phoenix shall arise,” whom the chorus names as Bacchus, god of wine and fertility.

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About the Artists

**Harry Bicket** is internationally renowned as an opera and concert conductor of distinction, especially for his interpretation of baroque and classical repertoire. In 2007 he became Artistic Director of the English Concert, one of the UK’s finest period orchestras. He became Chief Conductor of Santa Fe Opera in 2013 and opened the 2014 season with a critically-acclaimed *Fidelio*. Born in Liverpool, he studied at the Royal College of Music and Oxford University and is an accomplished harpsichordist.

Plans for the 2018/19 season include return visits to Metropolitan Opera (*The Magic Flute*), Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Orphée et Eurydice*, *Carmen*, *Rinaldo*), Santa Fe Opera (*Bernstein’s Candide*, *Alcina*, *Fidelio*), Houston Grand Opera (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Rusalka*), Canadian Opera Company (*Maometto II*, *Hercules*), Metropolitan Opera (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Rodelinda*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *Giulio Cesare*), guest conducting with Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (including Cincinnati May Festival), Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Houston Symphony, Seattle Symphony, St Paul Chamber Orchestra, NACO Ottawa, Indianapolis Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra and Messiah with the New York Philharmonic. He has also led masterclasses with the Juilliard School.

Within Europe he has conducted performances at the Liceu Barcelona (*Agrippina*, *Lucio Silla*), Bordeaux Opera (*Alcina*) and Theater an der Wien (*Iphigenie en Tauride*) and appeared with Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic (*St Matthew Passion*), Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.
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de Monte Carlo, Bayerische Rundfunk, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Work with The English Concert includes extensive touring including to Europe, America and the Far East, alongside appearances at the BBC Proms (Samson, B Minor Mass, “Being Both” with Alice Coote) and regular Wigmore Hall and Barbican projects (including with Iestyn Davies and Joyce DiDonato). Recent work outside of Europe includes his Japanese debut with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra / Ian Bostridge and a visit to Israel Philharmonic.

Staged opera has also included Minnesota Opera (Croesus), Opera Australia (Giulio Cesare), Scottish Opera (Orfeo), New York City Opera (Le Nozze di Figaro, Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Clemenza di Tito, Rinaldo), Royal Danish Opera (Orfeo), Glimmerglass Festival (Partenope, Agrippina), New Israeli Opera (L’incoronazione di Poppea), Aldeburgh Festival (Faerie Queen), Edinburgh Festival (La clemenza di Tito), Spoleto Festival (Giasone, Tamerlano, L’île de Merlin), English National Opera (Orfeo, Ariodante, Semele, Xerxes, Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda), Bayerische Staatsoper (Rinaldo, Ariodante, Serse, Orlando, Orfeo ed Euridice, Il barbiere di Siviglia, Die Entführung aus dem Serail and Die Zauberflöte), Welsh National Opera (La clemenza di Tito), and Opera North (Radamisto, Return of Ulysses, The Magic Flute, Croesus), Los Angeles Opera (Giulio Cesare, L’incoronazione di Poppea).

He made his Glyndebourne Festival debut in 1996 with Peter Sellars’s landmark production of Theodora and returned in 1999 and 2003. In 2004 his first Metropolitan Opera production (an acclaimed new production of Rodelinda with Renée Fleming and David Daniels) was quickly followed by Cesare (2006/7) and La clemenza di Tito (2008) and he is now a regular guest. He made his debut with the Bayerische Staatsoper in 2000 (Rinaldo, new production) and over the following seven years conducted many performances including Ariodante, Serse, Orlando, Orfeo, Barbieri, Entführung and Zauberflöte.

In 2001 his first Barcelona production, Giulio Cesare, earned him the Opera Critics’ Prize for best conductor. He has since returned for Midsummer Night’s Dream (2005), Ariodante (2006), L’Arbore di Diana (2009) and Agrippina (2013). In 2003 his debut production for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (Handel’s Orlando) received an Olivier Award nomination for Best New Opera Production. In the same year he conducted Lyric Opera of Chicago for the first time and has since returned regularly.

Recordings to date with The English Concert include releases for Virgin Classics, Chandos and Harmonia Mundi featuring Elizabeth Watts, David Daniels, Lucy Crowe, Sarah Connolly and Rosemary Joshua and, most recently, a concerto disc released in September 2018 on Signum. Bicket’s discography also includes five recordings with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, including a collection of Handel opera arias with Renée Fleming (Decca) and Ian Bostridge (EMI), as well as selections from Handel’s Theodora, Serse, and the cantata La Lucrezia with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson (Avie), which was nominated for a Grammy award. His Gramophone Award-nominated CDs also include Sento Amor with David Daniels featuring arias by Gluck, Handel and Mozart (Virgin Veritas) and il tenero momento with Susan Graham featuring arias by Mozart and Gluck (Erato).
About the Artists continued

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

Under the artistic direction of Harry Bicket and principal guest Kristian Bezuidenhout, The English Concert has earned a reputation for combining urgency, passion and fire with precision, delicacy and beauty.

The artistic partners we collaborate with reflect and enhance our pursuit for new ways to bring our music to life. Joyce DiDonato, Dame Sarah Connolly, Iestyn Davies, Alison Balsom, Trevor Pinnock, Dominic Dromgoole, Tom Morris and many more have not only brought their extraordinary skills to individual projects but continue to help us to shape the way we perform.

One cornerstone of the orchestra’s annual cycle is its international Handel Opera tour. Blossoming from an ongoing relationship with Carnegie Hall, the itinerary now regularly takes in the Theater an der Wien, Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, the Elbphilharmonie and Barbican Hall, and the roster of great halls continues to grow. Meanwhile, our regular London series allows us to explore a radically different path, presenting programs to our home audience that challenge, inspire and fire us. We launch our partnership with Garsington Opera this year with performances of Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610 and look forward to future seasons of stunning opera productions.

The Clarion Choir (New York) has performed on some of the great stages of North America and Europe. The group was featured on PBS’s NYC-Arts program in 2014, and their debut recording, released in August 2016, received a Grammy nomination for Best Choral Performance, a nomination for the BBC Music Magazine Choral Award, and “5 Diapasons” in Diapason magazine in France. The choir’s Lincoln Center debut, performing Bach chorales at the 2011 White Light Festival, was described by The Wall Street Journal as “superb...the choristers sang with purity of tone and ensemble precision.” In 2014, the choir gave the New York premiere of Passion Week by Maximilian Steinberg, praised as “a stunning performance” by The New York Times. In October 2016, the Choir premiered this same work in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where it was written in 1923, and in London. The Russian premiere, made possible by the United States Department of State, took place at the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Hall. The UK premiere was given at the Royal Academy of Music and was called “a beautiful UK premiere... expertly paced by the conductor Steven Fox, the singing was fluid and full of light and shade” by The Times. The Clarion Choir performs regularly as part of the Met Live Arts program in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On May 7, 2018, the choir also performed Gregorian chant with Madonna at the Met Gala in a three-song set that included the world premiere of her new song Beautiful Game. This season, the Clarion Choir performs on tour with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s and Leonard Slatkin in the fall, and with The English Concert and Harry Bicket in the spring. The choir has recently released their second recording, Memory Eternal, which was awarded Editor’s Choice in Gramophone and five stars in BBC Music Magazine.

Steven Fox is Artistic Director of The Clarion Choir and The Clarion Orchestra, and is in his first season as Music Director of the Cathedral Choral Society at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. At the age of 21, he founded Musica Antiqua
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St. Petersburg as Russia’s first period-instrument orchestra, and from 2008 to 2013 was an Associate Conductor at New York City Opera. He served as Assistant Conductor for the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artists Program’s and Juilliard Opera’s production of Gluck’s *Armide* in 2012. Since then he has appeared as a guest conductor with renowned orchestras and opera companies such as Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in San Francisco, Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, Juilliard415 at Lincoln Center, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, the Quebec Symphony Orchestra, l’Opéra de Québec, Music of the Baroque in Chicago and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra. His performances have also taken him to some of the most prestigious halls internationally, such as the Grand Philharmonic Hall and Hermitage Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Rachmaninoff Hall in Moscow, the Duke’s Hall of London, and the Vatican. In 2017, Fox conducted Clarion’s first fully staged opera production, Mozart’s *Magic Flute*. Staged by Alain Gauthier, the production was called “a deft reach across two centuries” by *The New York Times* and “a delight, on all fronts” by *Opera* magazine (UK). Fox was named an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, in 2010 and received a Grammy nomination for his debut recording with The Clarion Choir in 2016. He has given master classes and clinics at Dartmouth College, The Juilliard School and Yale University, where he served for two years as preparatory conductor of the Yale Schola Cantorum.

This season, Rae returns to Bayerische Staatsoper in a number of roles: as Aminta (*Die schweigsame Frau*) under Stefan Soltesz in Barrie Kosky’s production, the Queen of the Night (*Die Zauberflöte*) under Asher Fisch on tour to Japan, and Zerbinetta (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) under Lothar Koenigs in Robert Carsen’s production, a role she brings to Staatsoper Berlin this season under Eun Sun Kim. After adding the role in Hendrik Müller’s new production at Oper Frankfurt last season, Rae reprises Gilda (*Rigoletto*) and unites with Kim again as Amina (*La sonnambula*). In the US, she returns to Santa Fe Opera as Cunegonde (*Candide*) in Laurent Pelly’s production conducted by Harry Bicket, following her star turn there as Lucia di Lammermoor last season. Future projects include debuts with the Metropolitan Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Opernhaus Zürich.

Rae made her US operatic stage debut at the 2013 Santa Fe Opera Festival as Violetta (*La traviata*) and has since returned as Norina (*Don Pasquale*) as well as both Mme Vladimirescu and Mme Herz (*The Impresario*). She went on to make her house and role debut as Handel’s Semele at Seattle Opera, and last season added Amenaide in Rossini’s *Tancredi* to her repertoire at Opera Philadelphia.

As a former member of the ensemble of Oper Frankfurt, Rae amassed an impressive repertoire there including Violetta, Lucia, Konstanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Aminta, Giulietta (*Les Contes d’Hoffmann*) and Zdenka (*Arabella*) which she added last season. Following a debut as Zerbinetta, this became one of her most celebrated roles, leading to house debuts at the Staatsoper in Berlin and Hamburg, and further performances in Munich. Elsewhere, Rae debuted

**Brenda Rae**, acclaimed for her “tireless, golden soprano” (*The Times*), and “dazzling, pinpoint coloratura” (*Opera News*), is a regular guest at the world’s leading opera houses in a portfolio of demanding principle roles.
At English National Opera as Berg’s Lulu in William Kentridge’s production, Opéra national de Paris as Anne Trulove (The Rake’s Progress), the Wiener Staatsoper as Lucia, and the 2011 Glyndebourne Festival as Armida (Rinaldo), which was part of the BBC Proms and released on DVD by Opus Arte.

On the concert platform, Rae sang the role of Polissena (Radamisto) with the English Concert and Harry Bicket on tour to the London Barbican, Paris’ Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and New York’s Carnegie Hall. Her recital appearances include the celebrated Schubertiade in both Hohenems and Schwarzenberg, and her debut at Weill Hall in a program of Strauss, Liszt, Debussy and Schubert. This season, she makes her debut at Teatro alla Scala in their Christmas concerts, singing Mozart’s Mass in C minor and Exsultate jubilate under Giovanni Antonini and broadcast live on RAI, and joins the Australian Academy of Music and Benjamin Bayl for a program of Rameau arias. She appears on several recordings including both Wagner’s Die Feen and Ariadne auf Naxos (Oehms Classics), Milhaud’s The Oresteia of Aeschylus (Naxos; nominated for a Grammy award), Lowell Liebermann’s Little Heaven (Albany Records) and Offenbach’s Fantasio released by Opera Rara.

Elizabeth DeShong performance in the role of Calbo in Rossini’s rarely-performed Maometto II at the Canadian Opera Company prompted the National Post to write: “Even more impressive was Elizabeth DeShong as Calbo, a bellicose Venetian general with a human side...there could be no better demonstration of the viability of a woman in a heroic male role. Vibrant tone, pyrotechnic technique, intense stage presence, spot-on-diction: this American mezzo-soprano has it all.”

This season, DeShong returns to Washington National Opera to sing Ruggiero in Alcina, followed by Arsace in Semiramide at the Metropolitan Opera. In concert she will perform Mendelssohn’s Elijah with Music of the Baroque, and make her debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Schubert’s Mass No. 6, and the world premiere of Three Lisel Mueller Settings by Maxwell Raimi, both conducted by Riccardo Muti. On the European platform, DeShong returns to Glyndebourne to perform Suzuki in Madama Butterfly, and makes her debut with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Bernstein’s Symphony No. 1 “Jeremiah,” under Antonio Pappano.

Last season, DeShong returned to the Lyric Opera of Chicago to sing Adalgisa in Bellini’s Norma, and made her Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and Bayerische Staatsoper debuts as Suzuki in Madama Butterfly. In concert she performed Beethoven’s Symphony No.9 with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Verdi’s Messa da Requiem with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and Mahler’s Symphony No.2 with the Oregon Symphony.

She has performed extensively throughout the world with such companies as The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, Canadian Opera Company, English National Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, Opéra National de Bordeaux, at Glyndebourne Festival and Festival d’Aix-en-Provence.

The list of symphony orchestras with whom DeShong has performed includes The Cleveland Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Cincinnati...
Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Flemish Philharmonic.

Her extensive operatic repertory includes Angelina (La Cenerentola), Calbo (Maometto II), Arsace (Semiramide), Rosina (Il Barbiere di Siviglia), Hermia (A Midsummer Night’s Dream and The Enchanted Island), Hänsel (Hänsel und Gretel), Maffio Orsini (Lucrezia Borgia), Fenena (Nabucco) and the Dresser, Schoolboy, and Page (Lulu).

DeShong is the recipient of the Washington National Opera’s Artist of the Year award in 2010, as the Composer in Richard Strauss’ Ariadne auf Naxos. On DVD, she can be seen as Hermia in The Metropolitan Opera’s pastiche opera The Enchanted Island, on Virgin, and as Maffio Orsini in the San Francisco Opera’s production of Lucrezia Borgia on EuroArts Music and Naxos of America. Her recording of Handel’s Messiah with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Sir Andrew Davis was recently released on Chandos.

Benjamin Hulett trained as a choral scholar at New College, Oxford, and studied with David Pollard at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has a growing reputation as an opera and concert singer, recitalist and recording artist. A member of the Hamburgische Staatsoper from 2005 to 2009, Hulett’s successes have included Tamino (Die Zauberflöte), Ferrando (Cosi fan tutte), Novice (Billy Budd) and Steuermann (Der fliegende Holländer), and he returned as a guest Tamino and Narraboth (Salome). He made his debuts at the Bayerische Staatsoper, in Handel’s Alcina, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin in Henze’s Phaedra, Theater an der Wien in the world premiere of Kalitzke’s Die Besessenen, for the Salzburger Festspiele in Strauss’s Elektra, for the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden in Strauss’s Salome, returning for Die Zauberflöte, and for the Opera di Roma as Madwoman Curlew River, returning for Gonzalve L’heure Espagnole. In the UK Hulett made his role debut as Peter Quint (The Turn of the Screw) for Opera North, Ferrando for Grange Park Opera, Fenton (Falstaff) for Opera Holland Park, and Luzio (Das Liebesverbot) for the Opera du Rhin, Strasbourg, and he appeared in Sir Jonathan Miller’s staging of St Matthew Passion at the National Theatre. He made his debut with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Edmondo (Manon Lescaut), returning as Beppe (Pagliacci). For the Glyndebourne Festival Opera he performed Lysander (A Midsummer Night’s Dream), Handel’s Saul and Cavalli’s Hipermetra (William Christie). He sang his first Tom Rakewell (The Rake’s Progress) in Caen, Limoges, Reims, Rouen and Luxembourg.

Concert highlights include the BBC Proms under Norrington, Gardiner, Davies and Mena, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with John Wilson, Maderna’s Venetian Journal with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Arbace in Idomeneo with Fabio Biondi, Britten’s Serenade for tenor, horn and strings with Norrington, Hogwood and the Trondheim Solisten, Die Schöpfung with Haim and Pinnock, Die Frau Ohne Schatten under Jurowski, Missa Solemnis under Bolton and Herreweghe, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 under Herreweghe and Brüggen, Mozart Requiem on tour in the Far East under Herreweghe, Das Paradies und die Peri under Norrington at the Edinburgh Festival, the title role in J.C.Bach’s Lucio Silla under Bolton at the Salzburg Mozartwoche, Bernstein’s A Quiet Place with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under Nagano, L’heure Espagnole with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Dutoit, and Tamino with the Berliner Philharmoniker under Rattle.
Increasingly in demand as an interpreter of song, he has performed at Wigmore Hall, Aldeburgh Festival, Buxton Festival, Oxford Lieder, Leeds Lieder, National Portrait Gallery, Henley Festival, Freie Akademie des Kunstes in Hamburg, Hamburgische Staatsoper and Maastricht, collaborating with pianists Andras Schiff, Graham Johnson, Malcolm Martineau, Christopher Glynn, Joseph Middleton, Simone Young and Alexander Soddy. Hulett’s recordings range from the early baroque to new commissions and have received nominations and awards from the BBC Music Magazine, Gramophone, Grammy, L’Orfeo d’Or and Diapason.

This season Hulett returns to the Welsh National Opera as Don Ottavio (Don Giovanni) and to the Garsington Opera as Tamino, and will make his debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra (Charles Dutoit). Future engagements also include his debut appearances with the Opera de Lille, (Rodelinda) and Teatro Real Madrid (Idomeneo), and his return to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Tamino.

**Soloman Howard** is a recent graduate of Washington National Opera’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and has garnered high praise from the press for his vivid performances on the great opera and concert stages of the world. Howard’s voice was described as “sonorous” by *The New York Times*, “superhuman” by *The Denver Post*, and “a triumph” by *The Guardian*.

Howard’s 2018-19 season features returns to the Metropolitan Opera as the King in *Aida* conducted by Nicola Luisotti; to Los Angeles Opera as the Frate in *Don Carlo* under the baton of James Conlon; Santa Fe Opera as Colline in *La bohème* conducted by Jader Bignamini; and to Washington National Opera to reprise the title role he created for the company in *The Lion, The Unicorn, and Me* by Jeanine Tesori and J.D. McClatchy. He makes a Canadian operatic debut on the stage of Opéra de Montréal as Fafner in *Das Rheingold* under the baton of Michael Christie. Howard brings the roles of Somnus and Cadmus into his repertoire in an international tour of *Semele* with Harry Bicket leading The English Concert and makes a debut with the Handel & Haydn Society in performances of Mozart’s Requiem conducted by Music Director Harry Christophers.

Last season international opera house debuts were celebrated on three continents: at San Francisco Opera in *Turandot* conducted by Music Director Nicola Luisotti; at the Teatro Real in *Aida*; and at the Teatro Municipal de Santiago, Chile in *Don Giovanni*. Other notable opera performances included *Aida* at the Washington National Opera, *Rigoletto* at North Carolina Opera, and *Madama Butterfly* at Santa Fe Opera. In concert, Howard gave his first performances of Hunding in *Die Walküre* at the Miami Music Festival; he also sang Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony both with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic on a European tour and with Christian Arming and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra on tour in Asia.

Highlights of the recent past include performances of *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera; the role of Jacopo Fiesco in a new production of *Simon Boccanegra* at the Opéra national de Bordeaux conducted by Paul Daniel; *Don Giovanni* at Santa Fe Opera conducted by John Nelson; *La traviata* at the Los Angeles Opera under the baton of Music Director James Conlon; *The Magic Flute* and *Macbeth* at
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the Glimmerglass Festival; and the title role of Approaching Ali at North Carolina Opera and the Washington National Opera. For the Washington National Opera, Howard bowed as Fafner in Der Ring des Nibelungen directed by Artistic Director Francesca Zambello and conducted by Music Director Philippe Auguin; as well as in leading roles in The Magic Flute, Show Boat, Don Giovanni and Nabucco. He was heralded for the roles of Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the world premiere of the revised edition of Appomattox composed by Philip Glass in a production by Tazwell Thompson.

The Anti-Defamation League presented Howard with their “Making a Difference Award” in the summer of 2016 for raising awareness of voting rights though his performances of Appomattox at the Kennedy Center; and for bringing opera into the larger community. Howard is a proud graduate of the Manhattan School of Music and of Morgan State University.

Ailish Tynan trained at Trinity College, the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. She was a Vilar Young Artist at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and a BBC New Generation Artist. In 2003, representing Ireland, she won the Rosenblatt Recital Prize at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World. Recent highlights include Madame Podtotshina’s Daughter in Shostakovich’s The Nose for the Royal Opera, Gretel (Hansel & Gretel) for Welsh National Opera, Anna (Intermezzo) in her debut for Garsington Opera and the world premiere of Judith Weir’s Nuit d’Afrique at Wigmore Hall. Additionally, Tynan was on the Jury for the Song Prize at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, 2017. Operatic engagements include Gretel and Madame Cortese (Il viaggio a Reims); Marzelline (Fidelio, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden); Gretel (Scottish Opera); Tigrane (Radamisto, English National Opera); Papagena (Die Zauberflöte, Teatro alla Scala); Despina (Così fan tutte, Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse); Héro (Béatrice et Bénédict, Houston Grand Opera, Opéra Comique and the Grand Théâtre de la Ville de Luxembourg). Other operatic highlights include Sophie (Der Rosenkavalier), Nannetta (Falstaff) and Atalanta (Xerxes), all for the Royal Swedish Opera; Miss Wordsworth (Albert Herring, Opéra Comique and Opéra de Rouen) and Vixen (The Cunning Little Vixen, Grange Park Opera).

Among her notable concert appearances are Mahler Symphony No.8 (Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra under Paavo Järvi, Philharmonia under Lorin Maazel and Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Sir Antonio Pappano); Mahler Symphony No.4 (Prague Symphony Orchestra under Jac van Steen and the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder) and Mahler Symphony No. 2 (Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Myung-whun Chung); Verdi Requiem (Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele under Michael Hofstetter); Haydn The Creation (CBSO under Andris Nelsons); Handel Messiah (Academy of Ancient Music under Richard Egarr) and Vaughan Williams Hodie at the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. She performs regularly at the BBC Proms where she has performed Bella in Tippett’s A Midsummer Marriage (BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sir Andrew Davis) and Glière’s Concerto for Coloratura Soprano (Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under Kirill Karabits).

Her discography includes Fauré Mélodies (Opus Arte), Nacht und Träume (Delphian), From a City Window, Hubert Parry Songs (Delphian) and An Irish
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**Songbook** (Signum Classics) all with pianist Iain Burnside, *Il re pastore* for Classical Opera (Signum Classics), Michael Head’s *Songs* (Hyperion) with Christopher Glynn, Messiah with the Academy of Ancient Music (EMI), Mahler Symphony No. 8 under Valery Gergiev (LSO Live) and with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Lorin Maazel (Signum Classics).

In the current season Tynan makes her debut with the Dresdner Philharmonie for Mahler Symphony No. 8, performs Glière’s *Concerto for Coloratura Soprano* with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy, Vaughan Williams’s *Dona nobis pacem* with the Britten Sinfonia and her recital debut in Stockholm with Magnus Svensson.

**Christopher Lowrey** is now emerging at the front rank of young countertenors on both the opera stage and concert platform. He sings with a wide range of distinguished companies around the world, including Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne Festival, BBC Proms, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, English Concert, Early Opera Company, La Nuova Musica, London Handel Festival, Aix-en-Provence Festival, Opéra Royal de Versailles, Ambronay Festival, La Fenice, Cappella Mediterranea, Göttinngen Handel Festival, Bach Collegium Japan, Boston Baroque, Pinchgut Opera, Adelaide Festival, Grand Théâtre de Geneve, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Voices of Music. He has worked with a variety of conductors including William Christie, Vladimir Jurowski, Christophe Rousset, Laurence Cummings, Richard Egarr, Christian Curnyn, Stephen Layton, Masaaki Suzuki, Erin Helyard, David Bates, Roberto Abbado, Leonardo García-Alarcón and Martin Pearlman.

Upcoming engagements include Lowrey’s English National Opera debut in both Handel’s *Rodelinda* (Unulfo) and Nico Muhly’s *Marnie* (Terry, cover), Handel’s Messiah with Clare College Choir at Union Chapel London, Bach Cantatas at the Philharmonie de Paris with Ensemble Pygmalion, Handel’s *Orlando* (Medoro) with La Nuova Musica at St John’s Smith Square London, Brett Dean’s *Hamlet* (Guildenstern) for the Adelaide Festival, Bach’s B Minor Mass at Winchester College, Handel’s *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* (Disinganno) for the London Handel Festival, Handel’s *Arminio* (title role) for the Göttingen Handel Festival, Handel’s *Rinaldo* (Argante) with Les Talens Lyriques at Theater Basel, and a concert tour of Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* with soprano Sandrine Piau and Les Talens Lyriques.

His recent roles include Brett Dean’s *Hamlet* (Guildenstern) for Glyndebourne Festival, Handel’s *Saul* (David) for the Adelaide Festival and *Theodora* (Didymus) with Pinchgut Opera, Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Oberon) at both the Grand Théâtre de Genève and the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia, the title roles in Handel’s *The Choice of Hercules* and *Solomon* with The English Concert at the Britten Theatre in London, Handel’s *Saul* (David, cover) for the Glyndebourne Festival, Vivaldi’s *Bajazet* (Tamerlano) with Pinchgut Opera in Sydney, Handel’s *Faramondo* (Gernando) at the Brisbane Baroque Festival and the Göttingen Handel Festival, Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* (Pastore/Speranza) at the Royal Opera House and *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria* (L’humana fragilità) with Boston Baroque, and the modern premiere of *Cavalli Elena* (Discordia/Euripilo/Polluce) at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.
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Recent concert appearances include Handel’s *Israel in Egypt* at the BBC Proms with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment conducted by William Christie and *Tamerlano* (title role) with Les Talens Lyriques for Ambronay Festival; Bach’s B Minor Mass with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and *St Matthew Passion* for the London Handel Festival; Handel’s Messiah with both the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; Falvetti *Il Diluvio Universale* (*La giustizia divina*) and *Nabucco* (*Arioco*) with Cappella Mediterranea; Handel’s *Susanna* (*Joacim*) for the Göttingen Handel Festival; solo recitals with Voices of Music in San Francisco and Sarasa Chamber Music Ensemble in Boston; Handel Messiah with Bach Collegium Japan and *Saul* (*David*) for the Enescu Festival in Bucharest with the Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment; Bach’s *St John Passion* with Boston Baroque, B Minor Mass with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and *St John Passion* with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra; and Handel’s *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* with La Nuova Musica.

His recordings include *Les Péchés Capitaux* on Ricercar records, Vivaldi’s *Bajazet* (*Tamerlano*) on ABC Classics, Handel’s *Faramondo* (*Gernando*) on the Accent label, Monteverdi’s *Il ritorna d’Ulisse in Patria* (*L’humana fragilità*) on Linn Records, Handel and Vivaldi’s *Dixit Dominus* on the Harmonia Mundi label, the Bernstein *Missa Brevis* on Hyperion, and an album of Handel arias for the EMI Emerging Artists Series.

Originally from the United States, Lowrey holds degrees with distinction from Brown University, the University of Cambridge, where he sang with the choir of Trinity College, and the Royal College of Music International Opera School.

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*While at Dartmouth, Clarion Choir Director Steven Fox ’00 visited Prof. John Kopper’s class on literature and music and participated in a coffee & conversation with students. The English Concert’s lead violist Alfonso Leal del Ojo also provided coaching for string players in the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra. For more information about Hop Outreach and Arts Education programs, call 603.646.2158 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach.*
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Mitsuko Uchida, piano
Thu • Apr 25 • 7 pm
A great Schubert interpreter performs three of his piano sonatas, revealing their unforced lyricism, emotional depth and technical brilliance.

Handel Society of Dartmouth College
Robert Duff, conductor
Sat • May 18 • 8 pm & Sun • May 19 • 2 pm
100-voice chorus performs its signature work, Handel’s Messiah, with guest soloists and a full orchestra.

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