

# LES NOUVEAUX CARACTÈRES



Les Nouveaux Caractères invite you to discover Messiah in a version full of colors and nuances, as close as possible to the original work.

## MESSIAH H56

Georg Friedrich Haendel 1685-1759

### A monumental work

A great oratorio for choirs, orchestras and soloists, Messiah or The Messiah is probably Handel's most popular work. It is considered to be a jewel among the most beautiful existing oratorios.

On a libretto by Charles Jennen, Handel's faithful collaborator and ally in the face of the British's weariness for the Italian style that Handel then represented, the text compiles fine extracts from the Old and New Testaments and reaffirms the essence of the anglican belief. The life of Christ is presented from the prophecies to their fulfilment. Thus it summons the mysteries of the Incarnation, the Nativity, the Passion and the Resurrection, the Psalms and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in order to invite the listener to meditate on the Redemption.

Like the Scriptures, the music is dramatic and theatrical, so it visualizes that which is not staged. Handel devoted all of his genius to this work and one can only be shocked when finding out that he composed it between August and September of 1741.

During those three weeks, he threw himself headlong into the composition of what would become an overwhelming creation, between a living fresco and a mystical contemplation, which inscribed him into the pantheon of the greatest composers.

### Win their hearts

Handel created Messiah in Dublin, where the work was received as a resounding success during his first performance on April 13, 1742. Two years later, the work was only given a mixed reception in London. The libretto was deemed to be too pompous by devotees who reproached him for not granting the source material the respect that it demanded according to them.

It was only in 1750, in the presence of the sovereign George II, that the work found success again. It would be replayed until the death of the King during Eastertide. Handel never ceased to revise and adapt it to the personnel that was available, so Messiah is still represented in many different versions.

**Composition** between August 22 and September 14, 1741

**Libretto** by Charles Jennens (1700-1773) on extracts from the Bible

**Creation** in Dublin, New Music-Hall Fishamble Street  
On April 13, 1742 during a charity evening

**Musical direction** Sébastien d'Hérin  
4 soloists

**Orchestra** 27 instrumentalists  
Male choir

**The student choir of The Chartreux**  
Pitch 415 Hz

# Three formations

Led by Sébastien d'Hérin

## Sébastien d'Hérin and Les Nouveaux Caractères



Sébastien d'Hérin is an exceptional harpsichordist and pianofortist, appreciated for his inventiveness and his freedom of sound. Passionate about the history of music, he is active in organological and restorative work.

It is on stage as a conductor that his talent is fully affirmed. With a finely composed orchestra, he travels through the scores with freedom and dazzle, but also with sensitivity and contrast. His quality of interpretation and his artistic personality create a widely recognizable musical signature.

In 2006, he founded the ensemble Les Nouveaux Caractères alongside Caroline Mutel. The ensemble specializes in opera and music from the Grand Siècle. Their rich and demanding programs make them a key player in baroque music in France.

## Male choir



Messiah proudly displays the choirs with their presence on twenty out of fifty-two numbers. Handel composed it with the presence of a choir of men in mind, eighteen to be more precise.

With the intention of offering a representation of Messiah that is as close as possible to historical reality, Sébastien d'Hérin chooses to direct it with the same number of men in the choir that Handel intended it to be.

Thus, this choir, chosen for every show, will join the student choir of the Chartreux for twenty out of fifty-two numbers.

## The student choir of Les Chartreux

Robert Hillebrand



Created and directed by Robert Hillebrand, internationally renowned lyrical vocalist and choirmaster, the student choir of the Chartreux shines thanks to its excellence and consistency.

The choir from the Chartreux institution (Lyon) is made up of boys with a passion for song from fifth grade to year nine.

National and international tours are part of the life of this choir. The student choir of the Chartreux is a member of the Pueri Cantores Federation.