

# MESSIAH

G.F. HANDEL

HARMONIA CHOIR OF OTTAWA  
OTTAWA CHORAL WORKSHOPS CHOIR  
ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE CHOIR

KATIE GRATTON, SOPRANO  
GABRIELLA COMEAU GORT, MEZZO-SOPRANO  
HAROLD SWAFFIELD, TENOR  
JEAN-SÉBASTIEN KENNEDY, BASS  
WITH ORCHESTRA, ROLAND GRAHAM, HARPSICHORD  
KURT ALA-KANTTI, DIRECTOR

SUNDAY 24 MAY 2026  
4.00PM

ST THOMAS  
THE APOSTLE  
2345 ALTA VISTA  
OTTAWA



TICKETS



\$25 ADVANCE  
\$30 DOOR

# Programme

Handel's Messiah  
May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Harmonia Choir of Ottawa  
Ottawa Choral Workshops Choir  
Choir of St Thomas the Apostle  
Katie Gratton, soprano  
Gabriella Comeau Gort, mezzo-soprano  
Harold Swaffield, tenor  
Jean-Sébastien Kennedy, bass  
with orchestra, Roland Graham, harpsichord  
Kurt Ala-Kantti, director

Full programme:



# Messiah HWV 56 G. F. Handel

## PART I

- 1 Sinfony: Overture
- 2 Recitative (Tenor): Comfort ye, comfort ye my people
- 3 Aria (Tenor): Ev'ry valley shall be exalted
- 4 Chorus: And the glory of the Lord
- 5 Recitative (Bass): Thus saith the Lord
- 6 Aria (Alto): But who may abide the day of His coming
- 7 Chorus: And He shall purify
- 9 Aria (Alto) and Chorus: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
- 10 Recitative (Bass): For behold, darkness shall cover the earth
- 11 Aria (Bass): The people that walked in darkness
- 12 Chorus: For unto us a Child is born
- 18 Aria (Soprano): Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
- 19 Recitative (Alto): Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd
- 20 Aria (Alto and Soprano): He shall feed His flock like a shepherd
- 21 Chorus: His yoke is easy, and His burden is light

## INTERMISSION

## PART II & PART III

- 22 Chorus: Behold the Lamb of God
- 33 Chorus: Lift up your heads
- 34 Recitative (Tenor): Unto which of the angels said He at any time
- 35 Chorus: Let all the angels of God worship Him
- 36 Aria (Alto): Thou art gone up on high
- 38 How Beautiful Are the Feet Duet and Chorus
- 44 Chorus: Hallelujah
- 45 Aria (Soprano): I know that my Redeemer liveth
- 46 Chorus: Since by man came death
- 47 Recitative (Bass): Behold, I tell you a mystery
- 48 Aria (Bass): The trumpet shall sound
- 49 Recitative (Alto): Then shall be brought to pass
- 50 Duet (Alto and Tenor): O Death, where is thy sting?
- 51 Chorus: But thanks be to God
- 52 Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb

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Honoured to collaborate for the second time with Harmonia Choir of Ottawa and director Kurt Ala-Kantti, Ottawa Choral Workshops (OCW) began a decade ago as a summer training programme for novice singers. Since then, it has grown into a celebrated community initiative offering an inclusive and

transformative approach to choral music-making. OCW welcomes singers of all levels, offering varied workshop formats that challenge and inspire each participant at their own pace. Singers engage deeply with great choral repertoire in a supportive environment focused on learning, growth, and collective artistry—culminating in public performances that celebrate their shared achievements. More than rehearsals and concerts, OCW builds community, confidence, and a profound connection to music. Upcoming offerings include a summer Evensong workshop with performances here at St. Thomas Alta Vista (July 27) and Holy Trinity Lascelles (Wakefield) this August, fall workshops featuring major choral works, and a choral retreat in Nicaragua in February 2026. Founded on the belief that singing is a human birthright, OCW continues to awaken and empower voices across the National Capital Region and beyond. Discover a community where singers grow, connect, and refine their most vital instrument: their voice.

**[www.OttawaChoralWorkshops.ca](http://www.OttawaChoralWorkshops.ca)**



Roland Graham, Conductor and Organist. Hailed as “an excellent conductor and inspiring educator,” Roland Graham combines his rare gift for teaching with natural ease at the podium to draw remarkable performances from the singers he leads. Beginning his musical journey in childhood, he builds on exceptional

mentorship to shape a teaching style that is both original and refreshing, grounded in the conviction that amateur singers are capable of more than they know. By framing music-making as an organic process built on simple, accessible foundations, Roland has empowered countless individuals to experience choral music in transformative ways—both during rehearsals and in performances that bring joy to participants and the community. He founded Ottawa Choral Workshops in 2015 as a summer singing program, which has since grown into a vibrant teaching movement that has presented concerts

and retreats in Ottawa, Europe, and Central America. Roland holds degrees in music from the Universities of Ottawa and Montréal. From 2010 to 2012, he served as Director of Music at Southminster United Church, where he founded the Doors Open for Music at Southminster (DOMS) concert series, the Master Piano Recital Series, and Rideau Chorale. In 2020, he also led a successful campaign to secure a permanent home for the 9' Steinway D606 — now Ottawa's premier, most accessible world-class concert piano

## Ottawa Choral Workshops Choir

Roland Graham, Conductor

***Soprano***

***Alto***

***Tenor***

***Bass***



[www.OttawaChoralWorkshops.com](http://www.OttawaChoralWorkshops.com)



Harmonia Choir of Ottawa was formed in 2003 to provide an opportunity to perform choral music from Canada and around the world. While the choir has performed music from the choral canon, they also perform a broad range of repertoire with a focus on promoting local, and Canadian composers and com-

positions. The choir has performed in concert with various musicians over the years, including Julie Nesrallah, Kenny Rogers, the Maple Leaf Brass, Divertimento Orchestra, Ottawa Chamber Orchestra, Regimental Band of the Governor General's Foot Guards, the Ottawa Wind Ensemble, and this past December were invited to sing with "The Tenors" (AKA "The Canadian Tenors") at the National Arts Centre They were invited to sing Brahms's German Requiem in Carnegie Hall with John Rutter directing, the Lincoln Centre with composer Ola Gjeilo and earlier this year they performed under the invitation of Alberta conductor Laurier Fagnan, to join his and other choirs in a performance of the Levin edition of the Mozart Requiem. In addition to regularly premiering new works, and arrangements, including commissions from Canadian composers Mark Sirett, Stephen Hatfield and Matthew Emery, the choir has taken on various projects including Harmonia's MosaiK Choral Festival, bringing top-notch Canadian choral conductors and composers together with local choirs to celebrate Canada's mosaic through music.

**[www.HarmoniaChoir.com](http://www.HarmoniaChoir.com)**



Kurt Ala-Kantti, Artistic Director and founder of Harmonia Choir of Ottawa and the new Ottawa Boys Choir has been directing community adult and children's choirs for over twenty years. He is presently also Director of Music for St. Thomas the Apostle Anglican Church, Music Director for the Cumberland Community Singers, as well as conductor of the Ottawa Children's Choir "Viva Choir" Orleans, having served as Concert Choir and Boys Choir director there previously. Kurt served as Artistic Director

for the national choral festival "Unison Festival Unison" in 2014. With a keen interest in choral performance and excellence, Kurt is a frequent paid chorister in local choirs, and has been a member of several local choirs, including being a founding member of the Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, singing professionally with the Juno Award winning Ottawa Bach Choir, the Dicken's Carollers of Ottawa, and currently singing with the Ewashko Singers.



Tom Sear, Collaborative Accompanist, is also the Accompanist for Musica Viva Singers, Cumberland Community Singers, Choir of St Thomas the Apostle, the Ottawa Boys Choir and the Orleans Viva Choir of the Ottawa Children's Choir. In addition to working with choirs, he

also accompanies instrumental and vocal soloists and students, and enjoys teaching piano and music theory privately from his studio in Orleans. He studied at the University of Ottawa under Andrew Tunis and Jean Paul Sevilla. In 2007 he completed his studies and earned a Masters degree in music with a focus in piano performance. He also has some background as a percussionist (and indeed is a member of the orchestra today, playing timpani).

## Harmonia Choir of Ottawa

Kurt Ala-Kantti, Director, Tom Sear, Collaborative Accompanist

### **Soprano**

Aly Ahrens	Marian Bakker	Jimena Bordes
Allison Cassie	Chloe Davies	Janet Davies
Alexa de Grandmont	Robin Dunbar	Carol Fairbrother
Maureen Favretto		
Sarah Gauld	Katie Gratton	Allison Hamilton
Beverley Heard	Adel Jacob	Megan Jesmer
Jean Jordan	Linda Last	Rita Lemgruber
Isabelle Morin	Aurelia Overtveld	Joy Overtveld
Cristella Pari	Danielle Presentey	

### **Alto**

Ilona Bain	Petra Creede	Joanna Crilly
Alison Harding-Hlady	Alison Kennedy	Teresa MacArthur
Kate McCarthy	Aven McMaster	Elizabeth Moore
Elizabeth Neusy	Molly Olshefsky	Helen Pace
Jeanette Rive	Ursula Scott	

### **Tenor**

David Lafranchise	Christopher Lyon	Gary Seymour
Peter Simonyi	Marcie Sundaram	Harold Swaffield

### **Bass**

Sandy Beeman	Alexandre Charest	Seán Kelly
Jean-Sébastien Kennedy	Michael Parkes	David Salisbury



**Katie Gratton**



**Gabriela Comeau Gort** is a mezzo-soprano from Ottawa whose upcoming and past performances have taken her to Spain, New York, Chile, England, and Italy. She will pursue her MMus in Opera and Vocal Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music (UK) September 2024. An enthusiastic performer, highlights of her 2023/2024 season include performances of Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*, Humperdinck); alto soloist for Mozart *Requiem* and *Coronation Mass*;

alto soloist for Vivaldi *Gloria*; and a solo recital for the Embassy of Germany to Chile. Gabriela is the proud co-founder of Voices Unheard, a music collective that promotes student compositions and lesser-known vocal music through local emerging talent. Gabriela holds a BMus in Voice Performance from the University of Ottawa, where she studied under John Avey.



**Harold Swaffield** is a seasoned tenor whose lifelong passion for singing has been shaped by decades of choral and solo performance within Ottawa's vibrant musical community. He began his musical journey at the age of 7 as a member of St. Matthew's Boys Choir under the direction of Brian Law, where he developed a strong foundation in vocal technique and ensemble performance. This formative

experience continued until 1980 and left a lasting impression on his musical path. After a period away from formal choral singing, Harold rekindled his love of performance in 2006 when he joined the Dickens Carolers of Ottawa. He remains an active member, delighting audiences with traditional seasonal

repertoire. Over the years, Harold has lent his voice to numerous churches and musical theatre productions across Ottawa, becoming a respected and familiar presence in sacred music circles. As a soloist, he has performed John Stainer's *The Crucifixion* at Westminster Presbyterian Church, demonstrating both vocal strength and interpretive depth. More recently, he appeared as tenor soloist with Harmonia Choir in Mozart's *Requiem*, further showcasing his expressive range and musical maturity. Committed to continual growth, Harold undertook three years of operatic vocal study at Shawne Elizabeth Studios, refining his technique and expanding his repertoire. He currently sings tenor with 17 Voyces Ottawa, where he continues to develop as an artist while contributing to the city's rich choral landscape.



**Jean-Sébastien Kennedy** singing has been reviewed as "stylish" by Steve Smith in the *New York Times*, after he made his Carnegie Hall debut at Weill Recital Hall with the Ottawa Bach Choir, in 2011. A sought-after artist for his distinctly rich tone, his expressiveness and his versatility, he participates into numerous productions ranging from opera to recitals, in Canada

and abroad. On stage, he has performed the roles of Marcello in *La Bohème*, Peter in Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Guglielmo in W.A. Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Papageno in W.A. Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Urbain in *La Vie parisienne* and the Wolf in Barab's *Little Red Riding Hood*, among others. His main oratorio credits include Johannes Brahms' and W.A. Mozart's *Requiem*, George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation* and Dietrich Buxtehude's *Jesu Membra Nostri*. Jean-Sébastien Kennedy regularly performs with Canadian premier ensembles such as the Ottawa Bach Choir, the Opéra de Montréal, the NAC Orchestra, the OSM and Opera Lyra Ottawa, both as a guest chorister and soloist, and has taken part in several national radio broadcasts, CD recordings and international tours. He is a featured soloist on *Cantate Domino*, the Ottawa Bach Choir's latest CD released in 2012.

# Messiah Orchestra

Violin 1  
Brigitte Amyot -

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Oboe  
Celina Hawkins

Timpani  
Tom Sear  
Continuo  
Roland Graham

Harmonia  
Choir  
of  
Ottawa

## Join us next season

Alta Vista Carol Sing  
with Divertimento Orchestra  
November

Christmas Winds  
with Ottawa Wind Ensemble  
December

MosaiK Choral Festival  
with Guest Director Tracy Wong  
February 20<sup>th</sup>

Spring Concert  
May  
TBC

Keep informed: <https://mailchi.mp/3bf29f68040a/harmonia-choir-mosaik>



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