

Handel and the Hanoverians

London Handel Festival celebrates Handel's work with the reigning Hanoverian monarchy



London Handel Competition finalists 2019 with Laurence Cummings © Chris Christodoulou

Festival highlights

- New staging of **Handel's *Susanna*** at the **Royal Opera House's Linbury Theatre**, a co-production between the LHF and the ROH [5 – 14 March]
- Annual **Handel Singing Competition** final held at St George's, Hanover Square [26 March]
- **Festival Voices** return with their Handel Remixed programme, presented at Peckham's Bussey Building [27 March]
- Venues include **Royal Opera House, Wigmore Hall, Foundling Museum, St George's Hanover Square, Milton Court, St John's Smith Square and Peckham's Bussey Building**
- Ensembles such as the **London Handel Orchestra, London Handel Players, Academy of Ancient Music, Early Opera Company, Opera Settecento, Brook Street Band, Choir of St George's** with a host of top soloists and conductors such as **Katie Bray, Sophie Junker, Anna Stéphany and Mary Bevan**

The **London Handel Festival** returns for its 42nd year presenting five weeks of concerts and performances across venues across London, from the Royal Opera House to Peckham's Bussey Building. The 2020 Festival takes the theme of 'Handel and the Hanoverians', exploring the links between Handel and the reigning Hanoverian monarchy at the time, to whom Handel dedicated much of his music, and whose patronage he enjoyed. Alongside performances of Handelian masterpieces, the Festival also puts on chamber music recitals, lunchtime concerts, guided walks, insight talks and its popular 'come and sing' event. Full programming will be announced in early 2020.

Samir Savant, Festival Director of the London Handel Festival, said: *"I am delighted to present our 2020 Season 'Handel and the Hanoverians'. This will explore the rich variety of compositional output Handel dedicated to his royal patrons, and furthermore his adept diplomacy in maintaining good relations with the feuding generations of the royal family at the time."*

A highlight of this year's festival is the new staging of ***Susanna*** at the Royal Opera House's newly refurbished Linbury Theatre [5-14 March], a co-production between the London Handel Festival and the Royal Opera House, following the success of the collaboration for ***Berenice*** in 2019. The production is directed by **Isabelle Kettle**, 2019/20 Jette Parker Young Artist (JPYA) and is conducted by 2018/29 JPYA **Patrick Milne** who makes his Linbury Theatre conducting debut. The production stars members and Link Artists from the **Jette Parker Young Artists Programme: Masabene Cecilia Rangwanasha** in the title role alongside **Patrick Terry** (2nd Prize winner of the 2019 Handel Singing Competition), **Yaritz Véliz, April Koyejo-Audiger, Michael Mofidian, Andrés Presno and Blaise Malaba**. Handel's ***Susanna*** sees its first performance at Covent Garden since its premiere there in 1749.

In keeping with the 'Handel and the Hanoverians' theme, LHF Associate Director **Adrian Butterfield** conducts Handel's ***Parnasso***

in Festa, a work written in celebration of the marriage of Anne, Princess Royal and Prince William of Orange. **Katie Bray** leads the cast which includes **Eszter Balogh** and **Charlotte Bowden**, accompanied by the **London Handel Orchestra** at **Wigmore Hall** [10 March]. Butterfield also conducts an evening of Handel chamber music with the **London Handel Players** at the **Foundling Museum** which – in its days as a hospital – was supported by Handel through donations and performances [13 March]. The programme includes music by both Handel and Jean-Marie Leclair who were both favoured teachers of Anne, Princess Royal, as a child.

In addition to performing popular masterpieces by Handel, the London Handel Festival also presents his lesser known works. The 2020 Festival includes a performance of Handel's rarely-heard oratorio *The Triumph of Time and Truth*, a piece he re-worked several times across fifty years. LHF Musical Director **Laurence Cummings** conducts the work at Handel's own church St George's, Hanover Square, with the London Handel Orchestra and a star cast of previous Handel Singing Competition finalists **Sophie Junker, William Wallace, Helen Charlston** and **Tim Nelson** [17 March].

Performing at the London Handel Festival for the first time is the Academy of Ancient Music who present a programme of 'Handel's Heroines' with **Mary Bevan** and **Jennifer France**, conducted by **Laurence Cummings**. The concert, which features arias from some of Handel's best-loved operas and oratorios including *Serse, Ariodante, Rinaldo* and *Semele*, takes place at Milton Court, a new venue for the Festival [19 March].

Handel's *Serse* is one of his lesser-known operas, having disappeared from the stage for nearly 200 years. **Christian Curnyn** returns to the Festival with the **Early Opera Company** to perform this work at **St John's Smith Square** with soloists **Anna Stéphany, Edward Grint, Hilary Summers** and 2019 HSC finalist **Patrick Terry** [25 March].

Following the success of their Dixit Dominus performance in the 2019 Festival, **Gregory Batsleer** and **Festival Voices** return to the LHF with their Handel Remixed programme at **Peckham's Bussey Building** [27 March]. The Festival presents its annual 'come and sing' event the following day with **Laurence Cummings** and **Belsize Baroque**, performing Handel's Coronation Anthems [28 March].

Other highlights include performances by visiting ensembles. The Festival welcomes back **John Andrews** and the **Brook Street Band**, one of the UK's foremost interpreters of Handel's music (and named after the street in Mayfair where Handel lived and composed for most of his working life) with a programme including Thomas Arne's *Alfred*, written originally to commemorate the accession of George I [2 April]. **Opera Settecento** will also continue their exploration of Handel *pasticcio* works with *Fernando* conducted by Leo Duarte with soloists Owen Willetts, Raphaela Papadakis, Jorge Navarro Colorado, Helen Charlston, Jess Dandy, David Greco and Hamish McLaren [1 April].

The Handel Singing Competition – now in its 19th year – continues Handel's tradition of nurturing young talent [HSC final 26 March]. Many of the young singers Handel encouraged went on to become his star soloists and were known as "Mr Handel's Scholars". Building on Handel's work, the Festival helps to develop young singers by working with HSC alumni by presenting a series of lunchtime recitals with finalists from the previous year. The Festival also presents its popular "Mr Handel's Scholars" concert again with HSC alumni with **Laurence Cummings** and the **London Handel Orchestra** at St George's, Hanover Square [20 March].

The 2020 Festival culminates in a performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion at St George's, Hanover Square, a work the Festival has performed annually for many years. The sacred oratorio is sung in German as part of the Good Friday Vespers service, providing a rare opportunity for audiences to experience the work in its original liturgical context. The **London Handel Orchestra** and **Laurence Cummings** are joined by soloists **Alexandra Gibson, Nathan Vale** and **George Humphreys** in addition to the **Choir of St George's** [10 April].

These performances sit alongside the usual packed calendar of intimate chamber music recitals, lunchtime concerts, guided walks and insight talks. More details will be announced nearer the time.

www.london-handel-festival.com

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For more information and press tickets please contact
Rebecca Johns at Premier – Rebecca.johns@premiercomms.com | 020 7292 7336

Notes to Editors

About London Handel Festival

Founded by Denys Darlow in 1978 the London Handel Festival has contributed to a Handel revival in the UK. The Festival runs for around a month each year, with many events held at Handel's parish church – St. George's, Hanover Square. Laurence Cummings took over as Musical Director in 2002.

The London Handel Orchestra, which is made up of some of London's finest professional baroque players led by Adrian Butterfield, now has an excellent reputation for historically informed performance. The annual Handel Singing Competition was inaugurated in 2002 to give young singers the opportunity to concentrate on the wealth of Handel repertoire.

Laurence Cummings, Musical Director

Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as a conductor and a harpsichord player. In 2012 he became Artistic Director of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen. He is also a regular guest at Casa da Musica in Porto where he is Music Director of the Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música.

Cummings makes regular appearances at English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Gothenburg Opera, Opernhaus Zurich, Opera de Lyon, Garsington Opera and English Touring Opera. He made his US debut conducting Orfeo with the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston.

His numerous recordings include the first recording of Handel's newly discovered Gloria with Emma Kirkby and the Royal Academy of Music and recital discs of solo harpsichord music.

Samir Savant, Festival Director

Samir Savant has 20 years' experience as a senior manager in the arts, including at Shakespeare's Globe, English National Opera, Handel House and Royal College of Music. He started his role with the London Handel Festival in 2016 and has presented two highly successful festivals in 2017 and 2018, already attracting critical acclaim: "Under the direction of Samir Savant, London Handel Festival has expanded exponentially" (Sunday Times, April 2018). He is committed to developing new audiences and partnerships for Handel, as is demonstrated by the Festival's collaboration with The Royal Opera on *Berenice* in 2019.

He is an experienced mentor and public speaker and has chaired the Institute of Fundraising's Cultural Sector Network national conference on several occasions. He sings with Pegasus, the chamber choir he co-founded, and is a trustee of Shobana Jeyasingh Dance.

Full listings

Main Festival

5 – 14 March - Susanna – Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre

Director **Isabelle Kettle**

Conductor **Patrick Milne**

Susanna **Masabene Cecilia Rangwanasha**

Joachim **Patrick Terry**

Daniel **Yaritza Véliz**

Attendant **April Koyejo-Audiger**

Chelsias and Judge **Michael Mofidian**

First Elder **Andrés Presno**

Second Elder **Blaise Malaba**

London Handel Orchestra

10 March – Parnasso in Festa – Wigmore Hall

Katie Bray *mezzo-soprano*

Eszter Balogh *mezzo-soprano*

Charlotte Bowden *soprano*

Adrian Butterfield *conductor*

London Handel Orchestra

13 March – Handel chamber music – Foundling Museum

Adrian Butterfield *conductor*

London Handel Players

17 March – The Triumph of Time and Truth – St George's, Hanover Square

Sophie Junker *soprano*

William Wallace *tenor*

Helen Charlston *mezzo-soprano*

Tim Nelson *baritone*

Laurence Cummings *conductor*

London Handel Orchestra

19 March – Handel's Heroines – Milton Court

Mary Bevan *soprano*

Jennifer France *soprano*

Laurence Cummings *conductor*

Academy of Ancient Music

20 March – Mr Handel's Scholars – St George's, Hanover Square

Laurence Cummings *conductor*

London Handel Orchestra

Alumni from Handel Singing Competition, names tbc.

25 March – Serse – St John's Smith Square

Anna Stéphany *Serse*

Edward Grint *Elviro*

Hilary Summers *Amastre*

Patrick Terry *Arsamene*

Christian Curnyn *director*

Early Opera Company

27 March – Handel Re-mixed – Bussey Building, Peckham
Gregory Batsleer

28 March – Come and Sing: Coronation Anthems – St George's, Hanover Square

Laurence Cummings *conductor*

Belsize Baroque

'Come and sing' chorus

1 April – Fernando – St George's, Hanover Square

Owen Willetts *Fernando*

Raphaella Papadakis *Elvida*

Jorge Navarro Colorado *Dionisio*

Helen Charlston *Isabella*

Jess Dandy *Sancio*

David Greco *Altomaro*

Hamish McLaren *Alfonso*

Leo Duarte *director*

Opera Settecento

2 April – Alfred (Arne) & Ode for Saint Cecilia's Day – St George's, Hanover Square

Mark Wilde *tenor*

Lucy Hall *soprano*

Emma Stannard *mezzo-soprano*

John Andrews *director*

Brook Street Band

Pegasus

10 April – St. Matthew Passion – St George's, Hanover Square

Alexandra Gibson *mezzo-soprano*

Nathan Vale *tenor*

George Humphreys *baritone*

Laurence Cummings *conductor*

London Handel Orchestra

Choir of St George's