



Handel's *Semele*

George Frideric Handel / *Composer*

The English Concert

Harry Bicket / *Director and Harpsichord*

Brenda Rae / *Soprano (Semele)*

Elizabeth DeShong / *Mezzo-soprano (Juno/Ino)*

Benjamin Hulett / *Tenor (Jupiter)*

Soloman Howard / *Bass (Cadmus/Somnus)*

Ailish Tynan / *Soprano (Iris)*

Christopher Lowrey / *Countertenor (Athamas)*

The Clarion Choir

Steven Fox / *Artistic Director*

Brian Giebler / *Tenor (Apollo)*

Joseph Beutel / *Bass-baritone (Priest)*

Friday Evening, April 12, 2019 at 7:30

Hill Auditorium

Ann Arbor

This evening's performance is supported by the William R. Kinney Endowment Fund and Jim Toy.

Media partnership provided by WGTE 91.3 FM, WRCJ 90.9 FM, and *Between the Lines*.

Special thanks to Tom Thompson of Tom Thompson Flowers, Ann Arbor, for his generous contribution of lobby floral art for this evening's concert.

The edition of *Semele* used in tonight's performance is published by Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel. By arrangement with Faber Music Ltd, London.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

George Frideric Handel
Semele

Act I

Intermission

Act II

Intermission

Act III

This evening's performance is approximately three and a half hours in duration, including two intermissions.

SEMELE (1743)

George Frideric Handel

Born February 23, 1685 in Halle, Germany

Died April 14, 1759 in London

UMS premiere: This opera has never been performed under UMS auspices.

Snapshots of History...In 1743:

- Thomas Jefferson is born
- Coordinated scientific observations of the transit of the planet Mercury are organized by Joseph-Nicolas Delisle
- Henry Pelham becomes Prime Minister of Great Britain

It was no small surprise for the audience when Handel presented his newest work, *The Story of Semele*, at Covent Garden on February 10, 1744. After the end of his career as a composer of Italian operas, Handel turned to sacred oratorios in English, producing *Messiah* (1741) and *Samson* (1742). London musical circles expected him to continue working in that genre, especially since he had adamantly refused to collaborate with an opera company that had been actively courting him. Handel's new work was presented as an oratorio, without staging, but few people were fooled as to its operatic nature. The mythological (as opposed to Biblical) subject and the virtuoso singing style immediately gave *The Story of Semele* away. The frank sensuality of William Congreve's libretto and of Handel's music only added fuel to the fire. *Semele* was given just six times: there were four performances in February and two more in December 1744. The work was never revived during Handel's lifetime.

The libretto was not written for Handel; Congreve (1670–1729) had

originally penned it in back in 1706 for composer John Eccles (1668–1735), whose setting was never performed. The text was revised for Handel, with some additional numbers added by contemporary poets, including Alexander Pope (1688–1744).

The plot, which drew on Book III of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, revolves around the hubris of a mortal woman who must pay for her boundless ambition with her life. Semele, the daughter of King Cadmus of Thebes, is in love with Jupiter (Zeus). Spurning her official fiancé, Athamas (with whom her sister Ino is in love), she lets herself be whisked away by the king of the gods to a heavenly abode where she enjoys "endless pleasure," as she sings in one of her celebrated arias. Yet it is not long before Juno (Hera), Jupiter's long-suffering wife, learns of the affair and vows terrible revenge. It takes an elaborate ruse to disrupt the great love between these two unequal partners, but Juno immediately finds Semele's weak point: the mortal woman's sense of inferiority, which she compensates for by being extremely demanding of her divine lover. Juno

wins Semele's confidence by taking on Ino's shape and, as her false sister, gives her fatal advice: Semele should first make Jupiter swear that he would grant her wish, whatever it may be, and then tell him to show himself in his true form as the god of thunder. Juno and Jupiter both know that Semele will be struck dead by his splendor that no mortal can withstand, but bound by his oath, Jupiter must grant Semele's wish, causing Semele's immediate demise. At the time of her death, she was pregnant with Jupiter's child, whom the god managed to save. That child is none other than Dionysus (Bacchus), the god of wine — making Semele the only mortal woman in Greek mythology to have a god for an offspring.

Supreme musical dramatist that he was, Handel portrayed the *dramatis personae* in a highly nuanced way, with profound psychological insight. Every character is multidimensional: even Athamas, whose part is relatively minor, can, in one second, plunge “from love, from hope...in deep despair.” Semele's sister Ino is a forsaken lover in Act I and, in Act II, a wide-eyed traveler between worlds as an unwitting yet happy tool of Juno's revenge. Jupiter, the fearsome thunder god, is at the same time a lover who is put on the defensive by the highly assertive Semele, and even reaches the limits of his own omnipotence when he realizes that he is bound by his oath and cannot avoid the tragic outcome. Hera is able to place an impressive emotional range, from fury to feigned kindness to exuberant joy, in the service of her obsession with revenge. The title character, the most complex of all, is despondent, exultant, menacing, seductive, and her on-

stage death is one of the most heart-wrenching death scenes in all opera.

Handel employed a whole gamut of musical devices to render such diverse emotions. Some of these devices form part of the general vocabulary of *opera seria*, which Handel had practiced for over 30 years before writing *Semele*. The “da capo” aria form, in which the opening music returns after a contrasting middle section, has the built-in capacity to express two complementary states of mind. The many dance forms we encounter in the score (*gavotte*, hornpipe, *siciliana*, etc.) all come with their own connotations (happy or sad) with which the audience was familiar; they served as important orientation points indicating what was happening in the plot at any given moment. But in *Semele*, Handel went far beyond these standard elements. He was particularly attentive to dynamics, using the marking *pianissimo*, not very often found in scores of the period, on more than one occasion. He used many astonishing “special effects” to depict the forces of nature or supernatural events of many kinds. And last but not least, he introduced ensembles — vocal numbers for more than one singer — which are rather untypical in *opera seria*. There are three duets in *Semele*: the first (Act I) between Ino and Athamas, in which the young man tries in vain to assuage the heartbroken girl; the second (Act II) between Semele and Ino, where the sisters marvel at the wonders of Zeus's heavenly abode; and the third (Act III) between Juno and the slumber-god Somnus, aroused much against his will to be pressed into service for Juno's revenge. And most

unusually, there is a *quartet* in Act I, where an unexpected situation — Ino's confession that she is in love with her sister's fiancé — elicits four simultaneous reactions from the four people present (King Cadmus, Semele, Ino, and Athamas), almost as in later operatic practice.

Several excerpts from *Semele* (such as Juno's "Hence, Iris, hence away" or Jupiter's "Where'er you walk") have become popular recital items, but they only take their full meaning if they are left in their original context. It is only then that we realize how carefully Handel planned the dramatic function of every single detail in this fascinating score.

Program notes by Peter Laki.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Scene 1. King Cadmus and the people of Thebes are getting ready to celebrate the wedding of Cadmus's daughter Semele to the young Prince Athamas. Juno has already accepted the ritual sacrifice, but a scandal breaks out: Semele refuses to go through with the wedding, and her sister Ino announces that she is in love with the groom. The sacrificial fire is extinguished, signaling that Jupiter, for his part, has rejected the sacrifice.

Scene 2. Ino voices her distress at being spurned by Athamas, who is helpless to assuage her sorrow.

Scene 3. Cadmus relates how Semele has been snatched away by an eagle "of mighty size, on purple wings descending..." While Athamas's hopes to wed Semele are dashed, Ino sees a glimmer of hope for herself.

Scene 4. While a chorus of priests pays homage to King Cadmus, Semele sings of the "endless pleasures" she enjoys at Jupiter's side. (This aria was originally intended for a nameless soloist. Handel assigned it to the protagonist, which causes no problems in a concert performance.)

ACT II

Scene 1. Juno has dispatched her attendant Iris to find Jupiter and Semele's love nest. Upon hearing that it is guarded by "two fierce dragons" with "a thousand fiery eyes that never know repose," they take off to find Somnus, the god of slumber, whom

Juno will order to put the dragons to sleep.

Scene 2. Semele, surrounded by gentle "Loves and Zephyrs" in the palace that Jupiter has given her, wakes up to find that her lover is not there.

Scene 3. Jupiter enters. Semele reproaches him for being absent. Jupiter defends himself by saying that he was there even if Semele didn't see him: "While Love was with thee, I was present; Love and I are one." Semele immediately retorts that "not you alone but Love and I are one" — thus claiming to be the god's equal. Or not entirely, since "I am mortal, still a woman." Anticipating his lover's request to be made immortal — a request that cannot be granted — Jupiter distracts Semele by announcing that he is bringing her sister Ino to visit the heavenly palace.

Scene 4. Ino appears, and the two sisters admire the mysterious beauty of this magical place, surrounded by a chorus of "Nymphs and Swains."

ACT III

Scene 1. Juno awakens the slumber god Somnus and promises him the favors of a beautiful nymph named Pasithea if he helps her with her plan.

Scene 2. Semele, once again alone, awakens from a bad dream.

Scene 3. Juno enters, having taken on Ino's shape. Semele believes she is talking to her sister. Juno gives her a mirror, in which Semele admires her own beauty. Juno urges her to demand that Jupiter appear before her in his divine form. Juno exits.

Scene 4. Jupiter enters, and Semele does as she was told. The god warns his lover not to make this demand, but Semele won't take no for an answer and flies into a rage.

Scene 5. Jupiter, "pensive and dejected," laments the doom that Semele has brought upon herself.

Scene 6. Meanwhile, Juno rejoices in her victory.

Scene 7. Semele sees "Jupiter descending in a cloud" and immediately collapses. Her last words are: "Oh help, oh help, I can no more..."

Scene 8. We are back in Thebes, where the opera began. Cadmus, Athamas, Ino, and the chorus mourn the death of Semele, but the mourning turns into celebration as Athamas and Ino are now united in marriage.

Final scene. The god Apollo descends from heaven and announces that "from Semele's ashes a phoenix will rise," and the chorus solemnly proclaims that the newborn god Bacchus will "crown the joys of love."

ARTISTS

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; and 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 they collaborate with reflect and enhance their pursuit for new ways to bring their music to life. Joyce DiDonato, Dame Sarah Connolly, Iestyn Davies, Alison Balsom, Trevor Pinnock, Dominic Dromgoole, Tom Morris, and many others have not only brought their extraordinary skills to individual projects, but continue to help The English Concert to shape the way the orchestra performs.

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-Élysées, the Elbphilharmonie, and Barbican Centre, and the roster of great halls continues to grow. Meanwhile, the orchestra's regular London series allows them to explore a radically different path, presenting programs to their home audience that challenge, inspire, and fire them. The English Concert launches its partnership with Garsington Opera this year with performances of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, and looks forward to future seasons of stunning opera productions.

Internationally renowned as an opera and concert conductor of distinction, **Harry Bicket** (*director and harpsichord*) is especially noted for his interpretation of baroque and classical repertoire and in 2007 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 assumed the music directorship in 2018. Productions at Santa Fe in recent seasons have included *Fidelio*, *La Finta Giardiniera*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Alcina*, and *Candide*. Born in Liverpool, he studied at the Royal College of Music and Oxford University.

The current season includes return visits to the Metropolitan Opera (*The Magic Flute*), Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Ariondante*), Cleveland Orchestra, Santa Fe Opera (*Così fan tutte* and Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with Renée Fleming), and Prague Philharmonia featuring Beethoven's *The Creatures of Prometheus*, and while in Chicago, he also conducts Music of the Baroque. Plans with The English Concert include his own arrangements of Mozart works for mechanical clockwork organ, Bach Cantatas for Advent, and Wayne Eagling's *Remembrance* ballet, set to Handel's *Ode to St Cecilia's Day* at the English National Ballet Theatre. The orchestra continues its Handel opera series with performances of *Semele* in Europe and the US, including Théâtre des Champs Élysées, Barbican Centre, and Carnegie Hall.

Highlights of recent seasons include acclaimed productions in the US and Canada for 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*), and Metropolitan Opera (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Rodelinda*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *Giulio Cesare*); and guest conducting with the 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 master classes with The Juilliard School.

American soprano **Brenda Rae**'s (*soprano/Semele*) outstanding qualities in the lyric coloratura repertoire have been acclaimed on both sides of the Atlantic. This season includes her debut at Opernhaus Zürich as Konstanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) under Riccardo Minasi, her first operatic appearance at Teatro alla Scala as Zerbinetta (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), her first return as a guest to Oper Frankfurt as Elvira (*I puritani*), and a return to Opera Philadelphia as Lucia di Lammermoor, following her star turn in the role for Santa Fe Opera. She also gives her debut recital at Wigmore Hall in a program of Strauss, Liszt, Debussy, Schubert, and Fanny Mendelssohn.

Recent notable debuts include Lucia at the Wiener Staatsoper, Zerbinetta in both Hamburg and Berlin, Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*) at Opéra national de Paris, and, in new repertoire, Berg's *Lulu* for English National Opera. Ms. Rae appears as Armida in Handel's *Rinaldo* on Opus Arte DVD from the Glyndebourne Festival, and sings Zerbinetta (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) on the Oehms label CD release, recorded live from Oper Frankfurt. Future projects include debuts with the Metropolitan Opera and Teatro Real Madrid.

This season, **Elizabeth DeShong** (*mezzo-soprano/Juno/Ino*) performed Adalgisa in *Norma* with the North Carolina Opera, gave a recital for Vocal Arts DC, sang John Adams's *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Adams, and joined the San Francisco and Houston symphonies for Handel's *Messiah*, conducted by Jane Glover.

Ms. DeShong made her debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Rossini's *Stabat Mater* conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and portrayed Sesto in a new production of *La Clemenza di Tito* with the Los Angeles Opera. Later this season she will sing the Verdi *Requiem* with the Minnesota Orchestra, and returns to the Glyndebourne Festival in the title role in Handel's *Rinaldo*. Engagements next season include Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera, and Hansel in a concert performance of *Hansel and Gretel* with the Melbourne Symphony conducted by Andrew Davis.

Last season, Ms. DeShong returned to Washington National Opera to sing Ruggiero in *Alcina*, and to the Metropolitan Opera as Arsace in *Semiramide*. She made her debut with 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. She also sang Suzuki in a new production of *Madama Butterfly* at the Glyndebourne Festival, made her debuts with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and at the Proms in Bernstein's Symphony No. 1 ("Jeremiah") under the direction of Antonio Pappano. She also sang Hansel in a concert version of *Hansel and Gretel* conducted by Andrew Davis at the Edinburgh International Festival.

Benjamin Hulett (*tenor/Jupiter*) graduated from New College Oxford and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and studies

with David Pollard. He has appeared in concert with Jeffrey Tate, Sir Andrew Davis, Peter Oundjian, Frans Brüggen, Thomas Zehetmair, Christopher Hogwood, and Harry Bicket; at the Vienna Musikverein and Salzburg Mozartwoche with Ivor Bolton; at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh Festival with Sir Roger Norrington; and on tour with Emmanuelle Haim. He sang Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Simon Rattle. His recordings have received *BBC Music* magazine, *Gramophone*, Grammy, L'Orfee d'Or, and Diapason nominations and awards. His many roles for the Hamburg Opera included Tamino, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, and Narraboth in *Salome*. He sang his first Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress* in Caen, Limoges, Reims, Rouen, and Luxembourg. He has also performed with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Bayerische Staatsoper, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Opera North, Theater an der Wien, and Welsh National Opera, and for the Salzburg, Edinburgh, Glyndebourne, and Baden-Baden festivals. Recent highlights include his debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in *L'heure Espagnole* (with Charles Dutoit), Andres in *Wozzeck* for the Theater an der Wien, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* for the Welsh National Opera, and a return to the 2018 BBC Proms as Septimius in *Theodora* (with Jonathan Cohen). Engagements for the current season and beyond include Jupiter in *Semele* at Carnegie Hall, *Rodelinda* for the Opera de Lille (with Emmanuelle Haim), Arbace in *Idomeneo* at Teatro Real Madrid, Jonathan in *Saul* at the Théâtre du Châtelet Paris, David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in Rome (with Antonio Pappano), and a return to Covent Garden as Tamino.

Soloman Howard's (bass/*Cadmus/Somnus*) voice is described as "sonorous" by the *New*

York Times, "superhuman" by *The Denver Post*, and "a triumph" by *The Guardian*.

His current season features performances at the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opéra de Montréal, Santa Fe Opera, and Washington National Opera, and on the concert stage, he appears with Harry Christophers and the Handel & Haydn Society as well as on an international tour with Harry Bicket leading The English Concert.

Mr. Howard frequently appears with such heralded conductors as James Conlon, Christoph Eschenbach, Gustavo Dudamel, Nicola Luisotti, and Gianandrea Noseda. He is the recipient of the 2019 Marian Anderson Vocal Award, which is given by Washington National Opera in recognition of a young American singer in opera, oratorio, or recital repertoire with outstanding promise for a significant career. The Anti-Defamation League presented Mr. Howard with its "Making a Difference Award" in summer 2016 for raising awareness of voting rights through his performances of *Appomattox* at the Kennedy Center, and for bringing opera into the larger community. Mr. Howard is a proud graduate of the Manhattan School of Music and of Morgan State University.

Irish soprano **Ailish Tynan** (*soprano/Iris*) won the 2003 Rosenblatt Recital Song Prize at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition. She was a member of the prestigious Vilar Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House-Covent Garden and a BBC New Generation Artist.

Ms. Tynan established herself with operatic roles including Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* (The Royal Opera, Welsh National Opera, and Scottish Opera); Madame Cortese in *Il viaggio a Reims*, Marzelline in *Fidelio*, and Madame Podtotschina's Daughter in *The Nose* (The Royal Opera);

Vixen in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Grange Park Opera); Tigrane in *Radamisto* (English National Opera); Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* (Teatro alla Scala and The Royal Opera); Despina in *Così fan tutte* (Théâtre du Capitole); Héro in *Béatrice et Bénédicte* (Houston Grand Opera and Opéra Comique); Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Nannetta in *Falstaff*, and Atalanta in *Xerxes* (Royal Swedish Opera); and Miss Wordsworth in *Albert Herring* (Opéra Comique and Opéra de Rouen).

Notable concert appearances include Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* (Dresdner Philharmonie, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, and Philharmonia Orchestra); Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* (Prague Symphony Orchestra and the Hallé); Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* (Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra); Britten's *War Requiem* (RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra); Handel's *Messiah* (Academy of Ancient Music); and Haydn's *The Creation* (City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra). She has also appeared regularly at the BBC Proms.

Ms. Tynan is a passionate recitalist performing internationally with pianists including Iain Burnside, James Baillieu, Graham Johnson, and Simon Lepper. Her numerous recordings include *Fauré Melodies* (Opus Arte), *Nacht und Träume* (Delphian), *An Irish Songbook* (Signum), and Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* (LSO Live).

Christopher Lowrey (*countertenor/Athamas*) is now emerging at the front rank of young countertenors on both the opera stage and the concert platform. Originally from the US, he is a winner of the Helpmann Awards, the Sullivan Foundation Award, the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the Michael Oliver Prize

at the London Handel Singing Competition, and the Keasbey Award.

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.

Roles in the current season include Didymus in *Theodora* at Kammerakademie Potsdam, Marte in a new production of *La divisione del mondo* with Opéra national du Rhin and Opéra national de Lorraine, and Ruggiero in *Orlando Generoso* at the Boston Early Music Festival 2019. He will also sing a program of Bach and Vivaldi in concert on tour with Arcangelo in Hong Kong and with Les Talens Lyriques in Essen, with Sandrine Piau performing Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*.

Recent operatic roles include Handel's *Arminio* (title role) for the Göttingen Handel Festival, Handel's *Rinaldo* (Argante) with Kammerorchester Basel, Handel's *Orlando* (Medoro) with La Nuova Musica at St. John's Smith Square London, his English National Opera debut in Handel's *Rodelinda* (Unulfo), Handel's *Tamerlano* (title role) with Les Talens Lyriques for Ambronay Festival, and Dean in *Hamlet* (Guildenstern) at the Glyndebourne and Adelaide festivals.

The Clarion Choir of 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 US Department of State, took place at the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Hall. 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 (*artistic director, Clarion Choir*) 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. He founded Musica Antiqua St. Petersburg as Russia’s first period-instrument orchestra at the age of 21, and from 2008–2013 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, he 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). Mr. Fox was named an associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, in 2010 and received a Grammy Award 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.

THE ENGLISH CONCERT

Harry Bicket / *Director and Harpsichord*

Violin I

Nadja Zwiener / *Leader*
Alice Evans
Julia Kuhn
Thérèse Timoney
Silvia Schweinberger

Violin II

Tuomo Suni
Kinga Ujszászi
Jacek Kurzydło
Diana Lee

Viola

Alfonso Leal del Ojo
Oliver Wilson

Cello

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

Harpsichord/Organ

Tom Foster

THE CLARION CHOIR

Steven Fox / *Artistic Director*

Soprano

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

Alto

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

Tenor

Steven Fox
Andrew Fuchs
Brian Giebler*
Tim Hodges
Lawrence Jones
Jonathan Ramseyer

Bass

Joseph Beutel
Kelvin Chan
Michael Hawes
Tim Krol
Neil Netherly
Jonathan Woody*

* *indicates understudy*

UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's performance marks **The English Concert**'s fifth appearance under UMS auspices following its UMS debut in January 1986 in Rackham Auditorium with Trevor Pinnock conducting and on harpsichord. **Harry Bicket** makes his third UMS appearance and soprano **Brenda Rae** her fifth UMS appearance this evening following their UMS debuts in February 2013 at Hill Auditorium in a concert performance of Handel's *Radamisto* with The English Concert. Mr. Bicket and The English Concert most recently appeared under UMS auspices in April 2017 in a performance of Handel's *Ariodante* in Hill Auditorium. Ms. Rae most recently appeared at UMS in performances of Handel's *Messiah* in December 2017 in Hill Auditorium. This evening's performance marks mezzo-soprano **Elizabeth DeShong**'s third performance under UMS auspices, following her UMS debut in December 2015 in performances of Handel's *Messiah* in Hill Auditorium. UMS welcomes **Benjamin Hulett, Soloman Howard, Ailish Tynan, Christopher Lowrey, the Clarion Choir,** and **Steven Fox** as they make their UMS debuts this evening.

TONIGHT'S VICTORS FOR UMS:



William R. Kinney Endowment Fund

—
Jim Toy

Supporters of this evening's performance of Handel's Semele.

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 4/14 Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour featuring Cécile McLorin Salvant & Christian Sands
4/26–27 Martha Graham Dance Company

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 4/26 Post-Performance Q&A: Martha Graham Dance Company (Power Center)
Must have a ticket to that evening's performance by the Martha Graham Dance Company to attend.
- 4/27 You Can Dance: Martha Graham Dance Company (Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 1:30 pm)

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

Explore the 2019–20 UMS season online at www.ums.org.