



For Immediate Release

Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square Present Handel's *Messiah* at Easter Concert

The triumphant and angelic sounds of George Frideric Handel's masterpiece *Messiah* will resound in the Tabernacle on Temple Square this Easter. For the first time in 10 years the full Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square will present the Easter concert, and perhaps for the first time ever the Choir will publicly perform *Messiah* in its entirety. The concerts will coincide with Good Friday on Friday, April 18, and Saturday, April 19, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. in the Tabernacle with Mack Wilberg, music director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, conducting the event. These performances are also in anticipation of a recording of the entire oratorio to be made by the Choir and Orchestra during 2014. Visit motab.org/messiah for additional details on the Easter concerts.

"We are pleased to present Handel's masterwork, especially on the Easter weekend," Wilberg said.

The concert will also feature outstanding soloists such as soprano Kiera Duffy, a prolific concert artist who made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 2013 and sang Mozart's *Requiem* with the Temple Square Chorale in 2007; Tamara Mumford, a mezzo-soprano with numerous Metropolitan appearances and several Deutsche Grammophon recordings to her credit, including a duet with Bryn Terfel on the Choir's *Homeward Bound* album released last year; Brian Stucki, tenor soloist, who has sung with orchestras and opera companies nationally and internationally, including the Choir and Utah Symphony at the Deer Valley® Music Festival; and Kyle Ketelsen, a bass-baritone with multiple seasons at the Met, Lyric Opera Company of Chicago, and Zurich Opera who is making his first appearance with the Choir.

Handel's brilliant oratorio had a humble beginning. In 1741, swimming in debt and out of favor as a composer, Handel accepted a commission for a benefit concert in Dublin, Ireland. On August 22 the 56-year-old sequestered himself in his London home and began to compose music to biblical texts heralding the life of Jesus Christ. In just 23 days he completed a 260-page oratorio he named *Messiah*.

Messiah is most often associated with Christmas, but it was originally an Easter offering when it debuted in the Musick Hall in Dublin on April 13, 1742. Choir President Ron Jarrett hopes the

Choir's Easter concert will familiarize listeners with the entire oratorio, which tells the story of Christ's life in three sections, from His birth to His death and eventual redemption.

"We are thrilled to be a part of this legacy," said Ron Jarrett. "The mission of the Choir and Orchestra, to share music that brings joy and uplifts the human spirit, is in perfect harmony with Handel's work that has touched millions of people worldwide."

The Choir is no stranger to Handel's work. Over the years it has performed selections from and the entire *Messiah* multiple times. In fact, a 1959 recording of *Messiah* by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra and Richard Condie and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was placed in the National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress in 2005 because of its historical significance. It was a best-selling album and one of the most successful classical recordings of its time, setting a benchmark for classical musical recordings that remains unparalleled.

Nearly 200 recordings have showcased the Choir from the early days of long-playing records to modern digital compact discs and DVDs. The latest release by the Choir and Orchestra, *He Is Risen*, a six-track mini-collection of music celebrating the Easter season, is currently available for digital download and will be available in store in early April. The concluding track of this recording, "Worthy Is the Lamb That Was Slain," is the last chorus from *Messiah* and foreshadows a complete recording of the oratorio to be made later this year and released in 2015.

Composed of 360 volunteer voices, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir serves as a musical ambassador for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Orchestra at Temple Square is a 150-member, all-volunteer symphony orchestra organized in 1999 to perform and accompany the musical ensembles of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir organization. The Choir and Orchestra are heard by millions worldwide through radio, TV, satellite and Internet broadcasts, tours, and recordings.

Mack Wilberg was appointed music director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square in March 2008. He had served as the associate music director since 1999. A former professor of choral music at Brigham Young University, he is one of the preeminent composers and arrangers of choral music in America. Ryan Murphy became associate music director in 2009. His background includes work at the New England Conservatory of Music, Tanglewood Summer Festival, and the Tuacahn Theatre and Sundance Institute in Utah.

Registration for complimentary tickets for the Easter concert begins March 11, 2014. Visit lds.org/events or call 801-570-0080.

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