



For Immediate Release

Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square Present Handel's *Messiah* in Concert Live Stream Welcomes Worldwide Audience

SALT LAKE CITY — Reprising the enormous success of their 2014 concert, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square will once again join forces to present Handel's beloved oratorio *Messiah* in its entirety this Easter. The concerts will be held on Thursday, March 24, and Good Friday, March 25, at 7:30 p.m. in the Tabernacle. The concert will be conducted by Mack Wilberg, music director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, who has prepared a completely new edition of *Messiah* for the Choir and Orchestra.

Wilberg said as he worked on the score, in the back of his mind was the question “What would Handel have done if he had had ensembles as large as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square?”

This required Wilberg to examine every note of the vocal and instrumental parts and make decisions as to what would accommodate a 360-voice choir and large orchestra and still reflect present-day knowledge of Baroque performance practices.

The result is an edition of *Messiah* that honors the extraordinary history of this brilliant masterpiece as only the Choir and the Orchestra can. In 1741, swimming in debt and out of favor as a composer, George Frideric 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*. This

magnum opus has inspired listeners, crossing generational and cultural boundaries from Handel's time to our own.

The Choir and Orchestra will be joined by four New York Metropolitan Opera soloists with extensive musical backgrounds. Performing the soprano solo will be Erin Morley, an acclaimed artist who has sung at opera houses around the world and with leading orchestras in the United States. Sasha Cooke, a performer described by the *New York Times* as "a luminous standout," will sing the mezzo-soprano role. In addition to her Met performances, she has appeared at opera houses from Vienna to Singapore and regularly performs with the world's major symphonies. Paul Appleby, tenor soloist, will appear this year for return engagements at the New York Metropolitan Opera and have his San Francisco Opera debut. With a voice described as "vocally robust," Joseph Barron, a bass-baritone, has appeared in multiple seasons at the Met, the Pittsburgh Opera and the Opera of Philadelphia. Barron will also appear with the Choir and Orchestra on the Sunday, March 27, *Music and the Spoken Word* broadcast.

To provide the most opportunities for concert seating, the performances will be heard in three locations: **the live concert** in the Tabernacle, **a premium simulcast** in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building Legacy Theater, and **a closed-circuit simulcast** in the Conference Center Theater. There will be no random selection for the 2016 *Messiah* concerts. Tickets will be distributed for all three locations on a first-come, first-served basis on Tuesday evening, February 23, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. MST exclusively through lds.org/events. (Information will be posted on lds.org/events later this week.) For those unable to get tickets, the concert will be shown on a live stream at mormontabernaclechoir.org/messiah on Friday, March 25, at 7:30 p.m. MDT.

Using the live stream, various community, music, and churches will join their voices with the Choir, singing *Messiah* at various locations throughout the world. Ron Jarrett, the Choir's president, says, "We have heard from people in several countries who are organizing events. This is a wonderful way to celebrate the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ with all Christians of the world." The live stream will be available from the Choir's website for 10 days to accommodate times zones and schedules.

To assist participants with the *Messiah* sing experience, the Choir is providing resources, such as connection instructions, a downloadable PDF file of the concert program with lyrics, and historical information about *Messiah*, at www.mormontabernaclechoir.org/messiah. Participants are asked to post their experiences on social media with the hashtag #MessiahLive.

As announced last week, the Choir and Orchestra are also asking fans to sing Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus in the world's largest virtual Hallelujah choir by uploading their recordings on YouTube. The performances will be featured in a video that will be released on March 13, 2016 [on the website FollowHim.mormon.org](http://www.followhim.mormon.org). Instructions, sheet music, a music video, and the submission form are all posted at virtualchoir.mormon.org.

In addition, on March 4, 2016, the Choir and Orchestra will release a new recording of Handel's *Messiah* in two versions: the complete oratorio version on 2 CDs with a bonus DVD and a 60-minute highlights version.

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. Nearly 200 recordings have showcased the Choir from the early days of long-playing records to modern digital compact discs and DVDs.

Soloist Links

Erin Morley: erinmorley.com

Sasha Cooke: sashacooke.instantencore.com

Paul Appleby: paulapplebytenor.com

Joseph Barron: josephrbarron.com

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Contact for news media only. Please do not publish.

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