



# ST. LUKE IN THE FIELDS

487 HUDSON ST. NYC 10014

**The Choir of St. Luke in the Fields**  
**David Shuler, *Director of Music***

Thursday, April 3, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.  
*Pre-Concert Lecture in Laughlin Hall by Dr. David Schulenberg at 6:30 p.m.*

## **Handel in Italy**

*Please silence cell phones and other electronic devices.*  
*The concert will be performed without intermission.*

### **Laudate pueri Dominum, HWV 237**

George Frideric Handel (1685-1750)

Laudate pueri (*Aria & Chorus*)  
Sit nomen Domini (*Aria*)  
A solis ortu (*Chorus*)  
Excelsus super omnes (*Aria*)  
Quis sicut Dominus (*Chorus*)  
Suscitans a terra inopem (*Aria*)  
Qui habitare facit (*Aria*)  
Gloria Patri (*Solo & Chorus*)

Adrienne Lotto, *soprano*

### **Concerto in D Major, Op. 6, No. 7**

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

Vivace - Allegro - Adagio  
Allegro  
Andante largo  
Allegro - Vivace

### **Dixit Dominus, HWV 232**

Handel

Dixit Dominus (*Chorus*)  
Virgam virtutis (*Aria*)  
Tecum principium (*Aria*)

Juravit Dominus (*Chorus*)  
Tu es sacerdos in aeternum (*Chorus*)  
Dominus a dextris tuis (*Chorus*)  
Judicabit in nationibus (*Chorus*)  
De torrente in via bibet (*Chorus*)  
Gloria Patri (*Chorus*)

Melissa Fogarty, *soprano*  
Elizabeth Merrill, *mezzo-soprano*

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### THE CHOIR OF ST. LUKE IN THE FIELDS

<b>Soprano</b>	<b>Alto</b>	<b>Tenor</b>	<b>Bass</b>
Aani Bourassa	Catherine Hedberg	Chris Carter	Will Berman
Amber Evans	Elizabeth Merrill	Christopher Preston Thompson	Phillip Cheah
Melissa Fogarty			
Adrienne Lotto			

“One of the city’s finest classical choirs.” (*Time Out NY*), the Choir of St. Luke in the Fields is the professional vocal ensemble in residence at the Episcopal Church of St. Luke in the Fields in New York City. As part of the liturgy at St. Luke’s Church, the Choir regularly performs masses and motets that date from the fifteenth century to the present. The Choir has presented numerous NYC premieres, both of new works (Arvo Pärt’s *Berliner Messe* and *Missa Sillabica* and Dan Locklair’s *Brief Mass*) and older works (the North American premiere of Georg Philipp Telemann’s *St. Matthew Passion* of 1746 and the New York premiere of C.P.E. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* of 1769). The Choir is known for its historically informed performances of early music. *The New York Times* said in 2011, “Both as an ensemble and as individual soloists, the members of the Choir of St. Luke in the Fields were consistently admirable.” *Early Music America* wrote that the Choir “maintains a full schedule of early music services ... as well as concert performances known for their adventuresome programming and intimate scale.”

### BAROQUE IN THE FIELDS

<b>Violin I</b>	<b>Viola I</b>	<b>Bass</b>
Leah Gale Nelson, <i>concertmaster</i>	Rachel Evans	Dara Bloom
Mark Rike	<b>Viola II</b>	<b>Oboe</b>
Mark Zaki	Margrét Hjaltested	Gonzolo X. Ruiz, <i>principal</i>
<b>Violin II</b>	<b>Cello</b>	Sookhyun Lee
Dongmyung Ahn, <i>principal</i>	Sarah Stone, <i>principal</i>	<b>Organ</b>
Peter Kupfer	Caroline Nicolas	Kevin Devine
Nelva Lagerwey TeBrake		

## THE LECTURER

**David Schulenberg** is author of books on the music of J.S Bach and of his sons Friedemann and Emanuel; his textbook and anthology *Music of the Baroque* is now in its third edition. Forthcoming is a new book on the historical performance of Baroque music. A player of harpsichord, clavichord, and fortepiano, he has recorded chamber music by Quantz, Graun, C.P.E. Bach, and King Frederick the Great. He teaches at Wagner College (Staten Island) and at Boston University; selections from his writings, recordings, and editions of music are online at [schulenbergmusic.org](http://schulenbergmusic.org).

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Handel's early years

Not much is known with certainty about Handel's formative years. His father, a respected barber-surgeon, was 63 years old when George was born. (He was baptized under the name Georg Friedrich Händel, but he later adopted an anglicized version of his name, George Frideric Handel, which is generally used today in English speaking lands.) The father decided that the son should study law and therefore did not encourage Handel's early inclinations toward music. Handel nonetheless smuggled a small clavichord into the family's attic and developed privately into an accomplished keyboard player. Once his talent became publicly known, the duke of Saxe-Weissenfels urged Handel Sr. to allow the gifted son to study music properly. Handel refined his abilities under the tutelage of a church organist in his native city, acquiring skill not only as a keyboard player but also as a violinist and in such disciplines as harmony, counterpoint, and composition.

When Handel entered Halle University in 1702, he apparently did so as a law student. Within a month he was back in the organ loft, this time at the local Calvinist Cathedral, though he was a baptized Lutheran. A year later, in 1703, he left for the musical capital of Hamburg, where he befriended Georg Phillip Telemann (then still a student) and gained a position in the municipal opera house, initially as a second violinist, later as a harpsichordist. He visited the aging Dieterich Buxtehude in nearby Lübeck but somehow managed to miss meeting Johann Sebastian Bach, his exact contemporary, not only in those early years but, indeed, at any point in his life.

By 1706, at the age of 21, he was off to Italy, a magnet for any composer at the turn of the 18th century. It was his base of operations from late 1706 through early 1710, during which span he spent time in Florence, Rome, Venice, and Naples. He arrived in Rome at the beginning of 1707, and that is where we encounter him in this concert. It was an exciting place to be, a city of some 125,000 residents encompassing, on one hand, desperate poverty and rampant crime and, on the other, fantastic wealth that extended to a plethora of aristocratic palaces and the unbelievable splendor of the Vatican. Handel (or "Endel," as Italian sources sometimes identified him, doing their best phonetically) was welcomed into the cultural circles of four highly placed personages in particular: Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (whose *maestro di concerto* was Arcangelo Corelli), Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj (or Pamphilii, or Panfili), Cardinal Carlo Colonna, and the Marchese (Marquis) Francesco Maria Ruspoli. He became acquainted with such musical eminences as Corelli, Alessandro Scarlatti, and Domenico Scarlatti (visiting from Madrid), and was thoroughly exposed to the latest trends in church composition as well as the new concerto grosso techniques of Corelli, Torelli, and Vivaldi. Handel left Italy in February 1710, worked for

a while in Hanover, and in August 1710 traveled for the first time to England, where he would soon settle for the remainder of his illustrious career

### **Handel's Latin church music**

Nearly all of Handel's Latin church music dates from 1707, when he was living in Rome surrounded by ecclesiastical personages. His motets *Nisi Dominus* (HWV 238) and *Laudate pueri Dominum* (HWV 237) were almost certainly written for the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Madonna del Carmine) at the Church of Santa Maria di Monte Santo in Rome, which was celebrated through a Vespers service on July 15, 1707, a Mass on July 16, and another Vespers later on July 16. Cardinal Colonna and Marchese Ruspoli were major patrons of the Carmelite order, and the former was especially active underwriting special music for the order's festivities.

The motet *Dixit Dominus* (HWV 232) probably relates to the same ceremonies, but its association is less certain. Handel composed it in April 1707, perhaps for a separate occasion; but even in that case, it seems likely that it may have also been performed, if not premiered, at the Carmelite celebration. Each of the Vespers services required the singing of five psalms; lavish settings (such as the 1707 feast) would include polyphonic psalm settings, while more modest venues might realize them at least mostly through chant. Handel's extant psalm settings line up remarkably well with the musical exigencies of the 1707 Carmelite services, where they likely would have been intermingled with settings by other composers.

James Keller

### **Laudate pueri Dominum, HWV 237**

Handel's 1707 setting of the Vespers psalm *Laudate pueri Dominum* represents (perhaps intentionally?) a veritable catalogue of Italian musical forms, all masterfully employed by Handel. Each movement has a different texture including ritornello form (first movement), trio sonata texture ("Sit nomen Domini" and "Qui habitare facit"), typical imitative polyphony ("A solis ortu usque"), concerto grosso style ("Excelsus super omnes"), homophony ("Quis sicut Dominus"), continuo aria ("Suscitans a terra"), and the hybrid style of the final movement with its predictable return to the music of the first movement at the words "Sicut erat in principio" ("as it was in the beginning").

Jeffrey Thomas

### **Corelli - Concerto Grosso in D Major**

Italian composer and violinist Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) studied in Bologna and by 1675 was working as a violinist in Rome. He quickly rose through the ranks becoming orchestra leader for Rome's most prestigious entertainments and celebrations, enjoying the great patronage of two cardinals, (Pamphili and Ottoboni), and a queen, (Christina of Sweden). He gained international fame with his name and reputation spreading throughout Europe as his music was widely published and wildly popular. Publishing four sets of trio sonatas, (Op. 1-4), a collection of violin sonatas, (Op. 5), and his 12 *concerti grossi*, (Op. 6), his music is considered the perfect model of the Italian style in instrumental writing. Corelli stepped away from public life in 1708 and passed away in 1713. A testament to his fame, he was buried in the Pantheon.

Corelli's writing represents a link between the contrapuntal polyphony of the 17th-century, and the harmonic sonorities and sense of melodic freedom in instrumental writing that was to flourish into the next century. Corelli began leading his *concerti grossi* in performance in the 1680s, although they were not published until after his death. The Italian *concerto grosso* form, as perfected by Corelli, gives us a *concertino* of solo players, (two violins and cello), juxtaposed in conversation not only with each other but also with the *ripieno*, the full ensemble, embracing light and shade, filled with dynamic and textural changes. The form was taken up by Handel later in his life, in 1739, with his own set of 12 *concerti grossi*, as his own Opus 6, (a numbering coincidence?).

This evening's *concerto grosso* (Corelli's Concerto Grosso in D Major, Op. 6, No. 7) was selected for its bright and celebratory nature. It opens with a typical Italianate instrumental Allegro, set between a fanfare, and a moment of repose. This *Vivace/Allegro/Adagio* opening is followed by and *Allegro* with the cello taking on the predominant solo role. The *Andante Largo* then creates a reflective mood, followed by another *Allegro*, this time featuring each section of the ensemble in counterpoint. The final, *Vivace*, in a quick triple-time, hints at a secular mood with a dance-like figuration, and fanciful violin play between soloists and the full band.

### **Dixit Dominus, HWV 232**

For Handel, an adventurous traveler and a true European, the three and a half years that he spent in Italy in his early twenties had a decisive influence on his creative development. Indeed, so it was also for many of his northern compatriots - one thinks of Heinrich Schütz, the painter Albrecht Dürer, and later Goethe. Each of these German-born artists responded quite differently to this experience of Italy, but in every case it was her vitality and vivid colors, her landscape, art, music and architecture which made their mark.

Color is immediately striking in this Latin psalm setting, which was completed by Handel in Rome in April 1707. The score is laid out for five solo voices, a five-part chorus and a string orchestra also in five parts. In essence, it is a grand concerto for all these forces, vocal and instrumental, and Handel is pitiless in the demands he makes of his musicians in the course of the eight movements: he requires energy and breadth, phenomenal agility and precision, declamatory vigor and lyrical expressiveness. This gives the psalm setting its feelings of ebullience and breathless exhilaration, almost as though this young composer, newly arrived in the land of virtuoso singers and players, was daring his hosts to greater and greater feats of virtuosity. The work is masterful for all its bold, naive assumptions that voices function like violins, and violins like the manuals of the organ, and it must have made a material contribution to the astonishing success Handel gained in Italy.

Handel's psalm setting opens with a spacious orchestra introduction in G minor, with downward arpeggios in the first violins more characteristic of organ figuration than of string writing. The chorus enters weightily to underline the gravity of the Lord's utterance. The soloists break out of the tutti with the injunction 'Sede a dextris meis' (sit thou at my right hand). Here we can see at work the *concerto grosso* principle which Handel was quick to learn from Corelli, then the leading exponent of instrumental music in Italy. Out of this simple but effective exchange of solo and tutti, and still more from the insistent rhetorical repetitions of chorus and orchestra, Handel constructs a movement of imposing grandeur. By reserving the big *cantus firmus* tune for the

solemn pronouncement of the fate of the enemy, he compels us to sense the full weight and wrath of the Old Testament God.

Two solo arias follow, one with only continuo, the other with orchestral accompaniment. The first, for mezzo-soprano, evokes the way the God of the Old Testament works furtively behind enemy lines through his secret agents. The second, for soprano, is a more florid and genial piece that reveals the influence of Alessandro Scarlatti, master of the solo cantata, in its elaboration and use of decorative coloratura. Blood and thunder return in the choral recitative 'Juravit Dominus', which breaks into an *allegro* movement with the choral shouts of 'Non! Non!' before sinking to a soft close. Then the double pattern of harsh, chromatic harmonies and swift moving fugato is repeated with ever-increasing power, before the music finally dies away in a succession of bars marked *piano, piano piano, piu piano, pianiss., pianississ ...*

For the almost unsetting sentence 'Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech' (Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedech) Handel displays his easy mastery of counterpoint, a technique fully acquired before he set foot in Italy. It must surely have made a deep impression upon his Roman friends

The sixth movement ('Dominus a dextris tuis') is the most boldly experimental, revealing Handel's excited response to the rich possibilities offered by virtuoso singing (and playing) in several parts for building a choral drama. At the movement's culmination - it is in three distinct segments - he gives drastic, pictorial expression to the destruction alluded to in the text by staccato reiterations of the word 'con-quas-sa-a-a-bit'. Whether conscious or not, this is a throwback to *stile concitato* invented a century before by Monteverdi for conveying excitement, anguish and martial vigor. Managing to sound both naive and extravagant, it vividly conjures up the Lord's legions moving into battle with the enemy. Handel was quick to absorb the current (and past) styles and to identify with local idioms without ever ceasing to sound exactly like himself. It is passages such as this and similar ones in the contemporary works- psalms, cantatas and above all in *Agrippina*, the opera he wrote for Venice in 1709 - that reveal the colossal impact of Italian music upon him in his early twenties: not just the music of the composers he encountered at first hand (Corelli, Pasquini, the Scarlattis), but that of more distant figures like Stradella, Legrenzi, Carissimi and even Monteverdi.

The penultimate movement ('De torrente') is gentle and soothing, Vivaldi-like in its use of grinding harmony clashes, while the two soprano soloists appear to hover effortlessly above the quietly chanting men's choir.

The final Gloria is a *tour de force*, as large as anything in Bach's B minor mass. It begins as a loosely constructed fugue on three subjects, one of which is the Easter plainsong theme heard in the first movement. The final section, 'Et in saecula', is built on a single theme with repeated notes and a conventional sequence, which eventually stretches the compass of the outer voices to almost two octaves: unrelenting, and not exactly vocal, but utterly brilliant. Despite the glorious music he would go on to compose in England it is baffling - and much to be regretted - that Handel never pursued this particular vein: nothing subsequently measures up in terms of choral daring and sheer chutzpah.

John Eliot Gardiner

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

**Laudate, pueri, Dominum;** laudate nomen Domini.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum.

A solis ortu usque ad occasum laudabile nomen Domini.

Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus, et super caelos gloria ejus.

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster, qui in altis habitat,  
et humilia respicit in  
caelo et in terra?

Suscitans a terra inopem, et de stercore erigens pauperem:  
ut collocet eum cum principibus,  
cum principibus populi sui.

Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo, matrem filiorum laetantem.

Gloria Patri, gloria Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.  
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

**Dixit Dominus** Domino meo:

Sede a dextris meis,  
donec ponam inimicos tuos  
scabellum pedum tuorum.

Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus ex Sion:  
dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae in splendoribus sanctorum:  
ex utero, ante luciferum, genui te.

Juravit Dominus et non poenitebit eum:

Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

Dominus a dextris tuis;  
confregit in die irae suae reges.

Judicabit in nationibus,

*Praise the Lord, ye servants; O praise the name of the Lord.*

*Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth for evermore.*

*The Lord's name is praised from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same.*

*The Lord is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens.*

*Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath his dwelling so high,  
and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?*

*He taketh up the simple out of the dust, and lifteth the poor out of the mire;  
That he may set him with the princes, even with the princes of his people.*

*He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.*

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be; world without end. Amen.*

*The Lord said unto my Lord:  
Sit thou at my right hand,  
until I make thine enemies  
thy footstool.*

*The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion:  
rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*

*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power in the beauties of holiness:  
the dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning.*

*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent:*

*Thou art a priest for ever after  
the order of Melchizedech.*

*The Lord at thy right hand:  
shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.*

*He shall judge the heathen;*

implebit ruinas;  
conquassabit capita in terra multorum.

De torrente in via bibet;  
propterea exaltabit caput.

Gloria Patri, et Filio,  
et Spiritui Sancto:  
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,  
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

*he shall fill the places with ruins:  
he shall wound the heads over many countries.*

*He shall drink of the brook in the way:  
therefore shall he lift up his head.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:  
and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.*

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