



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 29, 2010**

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### Media Alert:

## Handel and Haydn Society Presents the 157<sup>TH</sup> Annual Performances of Handel's *Messiah* conducted by Artistic Director Harry Christophers

*Acclaimed Handelian alto Catherine Wyn-Rogers returns; and soprano Sophie Bevan, tenor Allan Clayton, and bass Sumner Thompson debut with the Handel and Haydn Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus.  
To be broadcast locally on WGBH All Classical Radio 99.5 FM on December 19.*

**WHEN:** Friday, December 3, 2010 at 7:30pm  
Saturday, December 4, 2010 at 3:00pm  
Sunday, December 5, 2010 at 3:00pm

**WHERE:** Symphony Hall, 301 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA

**REPERTOIRE:** [Handel's Messiah](#)

Harry Christophers, conductor  
Sophie Bevan, soprano  
Catherine Wyn-Rogers, alto  
Allan Clayton, tenor  
Sumner Thompson, bass  
Handel and Haydn Society Chorus

**TICKETS:** Subscriptions and single tickets may be purchased through the Handel and Haydn Box Office by phone at 617 266 3605, online at [www.handelandhaydn.org](http://www.handelandhaydn.org), or in person at the Handel and Haydn office, Horticultural Hall, 300 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston (M-F 10:00am – 6:00pm). Single tickets range from \$25 to \$87. Student rush available: starting one hour before curtain, \$10 cash only with valid ID, best available seats subject to availability. Groups of 10 or more receive a 20% discount.

**DETAILS:**

Artistic Director Harry Christophers returns to the Symphony Hall to lead the Handel and Haydn Society's Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus in the 157<sup>th</sup> annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*. Returning this year is compelling alto Catherine Wyn-Rogers, who will be joined by young stars making their Society debuts: soprano Sophie Bevin, tenor Allan Clayton, and bass Sumner Thompson. Christophers received high praise for his interpretations of *Messiah* performances given by the Society in 2007 and 2009, demonstrating his commitment to Handel's vision. "*Messiah* is much more than a collection of exquisite arias and brilliantly vivid choruses," said Christophers. "It exemplifies Handel's eternal love of opera, and his vision of continuity, from advent through the passion of our Lord bursting into a jubilant finale of resurrection, ascension and the promise of final redemption." [See Harry Christophers discuss \*Messiah\*.](#)

The Handel and Haydn Society first performed *Messiah* selections on December 25, 1815. In 1818, the Society gave the first complete performance of *Messiah* in the United States, and since 1854 has performed the work in its entirety every year, creating an annual Boston tradition. Handel and Haydn will celebrate its Bicentennial in 2015, which will coincide with its 162<sup>nd</sup> annual performances of *Messiah*. As of December 2014, when the Society plans to begin its Bicentennial celebrations, it will have given 400 performances of *Messiah*.

In celebration of the [25<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#) of the Society's educational programs, prior to each *Messiah* performance members of the Vocal Apprenticeship Program (a component of The Karen S. and George D. Levy Educational Outreach Program) will be caroling throughout the Symphony Hall corridors.

On Sunday, December 19 at 2pm WGBH All Classical 99.5FM will broadcast the Society's 2010 performance of *Messiah*.

**BIOS****Harry Christophers**

Harry Christophers was appointed Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society in 2008 and began his tenure with the 2009–2010 Season. He has conducted Handel and Haydn each season since September 2006, when he led a sold-out performance in the Esterházy Palace at the Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria. Christophers and the Society have since embarked on an ambitious artistic journey that begins with the 2010–2011 Season with a showcase of works premiered in the United States by the Society over the last 195 years, and the release of the first of a series of recordings on CORO leading to the Society's Bicentennial.

Christophers is known internationally as founder and conductor of the UK-based choir and period instrument ensemble The Sixteen. He has directed The Sixteen throughout Europe, America, and the Far East, gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque, and 20<sup>th</sup> century music. In 2000, he instituted the "Choral Pilgrimage," a tour of British cathedrals from York to Canterbury. He has recorded close to 100 titles for which he has won numerous awards, including a Grand Prix du Disque for Handel *Messiah*, numerous Preise der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik (German Record Critics Awards), the coveted Gramophone Award for Early Music, and the prestigious Classical Brit Award (2005) for his disc entitled *Renaissance*. In 2009 he received one of classical music's highest accolades, the Classic FM Gramophone Awards Artist of the Year Award; The Sixteen also won the Baroque

Vocal Award for Handel *Coronation Anthems*, a CD that also received a 2010 Grammy Award nomination. Harry Christophers is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Granada Symphony Orchestra and a regular guest conductor with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields and the Orquesta de la Comunidad de Madrid.

In October 2008, Christophers was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Leicester. Most recently, he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford and also of the Royal Welsh Academy for Music and Drama.

### **Sophie Bevan (Debut)**

Sophie Bevan recently graduated from the Benjamin Britten International Opera School where she studied as a Karaviotis Scholar with Lillian Watson. During her time there she performed the title role in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and Susanna in Mozart's *Le Nozze Di Figaro*. She was also awarded the Queen Mother Rose Bowl for excelling in music.

Her concert repertoire ranges from Handel's *Samson* to James Macmillan's *Parthenogenesis* and she has worked with conductors including Nicholas Cleobury, Martin Andre and Sir Charles Mackerras. Already highly accomplished on the operatic stage, her recent engagements include *Boris Godonov* and *Così fan Tutte* for English National Opera, *Il Nozze di Figaro* for Welsh National Opera, Alinda in Vivaldi's *L'Incoronazione di Dario* for Garsington Opera, the first London performance of Royer's *Zaide, Reine De Grenade* at St John's Smith Square, Costanza (Handel's *Riccardo I*) and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) for Opera de Baug in France and Amor in English National's new production of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. She is an Associate Artist of the Classical Opera Company, for whom she has sung Publio in the UK premiere of Gluck's *La clemenza di Tito* and Worldly Spirit in Mozart's *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots*. Future engagements include her first Susanna in Garsington Opera's *Il Nozze di Figaro*.

### **Catherine Wyn-Rogers (Messiah, 2007)**

Catherine Wyn-Rogers appears with the major British orchestras and at the Three Choirs, Edinburgh and Aldeburgh Festivals and at the BBC Proms. She appears regularly on the opera stage and has worked with Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, English National Opera, the Salzburg Festival, Bavarian State Opera, Netherlands Opera and is a regular guest with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Her opera engagements include both First Norn and Erda under Pappano for the Royal Opera, Erda and Waltraute (*Goetterdämmerung*) under Mehta in Valencia and Florence, Filipyevna (*Eugene Onegin*) for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Hexe (*Königskinder*) in Munich and Britten's Phaedra in *Bordeaux*.

### **Allan Clayton (Debut)**

Allan Clayton was a chorister at Worcester Cathedral before going up to St John's College, Cambridge on a choral scholarship, and then postgraduate studies on the opera course at the Royal Academy of Music where he was awarded an inaugural Sir Elton John Scholarship and a John Lewis Award. He was also awarded a Maidment Scholarship, administered by the Musicians Benevolent Fund; a Star Award from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, and 'The Queen's Commendation for Excellence 2007'.

Allan was a member of the BBC New Generation Artists scheme between 2007-2009, was awarded a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship in 2008, and the John Christie Award after his highly successful debut in the title role of Albert Herring at the 2008 Glyndebourne Festival. He was also nominated for both the 2009 RPS Young Artist award and the 2009 South Bank Show Breakthrough Award.

#### **Sumner Thompson (Debut)**

Hailed as “the real thing” (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*) and praised for his “elegant style” (*Boston Globe*), baritone Sumner Thompson continues to be lauded by audiences and music cognoscenti alike. His impeccable technique, beautiful sound and elegant musicianship are quickly making him one of the most sought after young baritones in this country and abroad.

His appearances on the operatic stage include the role of Orfeo in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* with Contemporary Opera Denmark in Copenhagen, Uberto in *La Serva Padrona* with Apollo's Fire, The Traveller in Britten's *Curlew River* with the Britten-Pears School in Nagaoka, Japan, and at the Aldeburgh Festival in the UK, Schaunard in *La Bohème* with Granite State Opera, and The Count in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Commonwealth Opera. His appearances in Chicago Opera Theatre's productions of Britten's *Death in Venice* and Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims* were universally praised. He also appeared in recital at the Goethe Institut in Boston and at the Star Island Artists Retreat in New Hampshire, and made his third European tour as Orfeo in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* with Contemporary Opera Denmark. [Read the full bio](#) (click on artist name).

#### **ASSOCIATED EVENTS:**

##### **Harry Christophers Talk and CD Signing at Borders**

November 29, 2010 at 11:30am – 12:30pm  
Borders (Downtown Crossing), 10 School Street #24, Boston  
617 557 7188

Artistic Director Harry Christophers will discuss Handel's *Messiah* and the Handel and Haydn Society's new recording of Mozart's Mass in C Minor. Christophers will meet patrons and sign CDs. Mass in C Minor will be available for sale at Borders before and during the event and is also available online at the [Society Shop](#).

##### **WGBH Boston Radio Local Broadcast, 99.5 FM**

Sunday, December 19, 2010 at 2:00pm

WGBH Radio will locally broadcast the Handel and Haydn Society's 157<sup>th</sup> performance of *Messiah*. WGBH is PBS's single largest producer of content for television (prime-time and children's programs) and the Web, and is also a major supplier of programs heard nationally on public radio, including *The World*.

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#### **ABOUT HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY**

The Handel and Haydn Society is a professional chorus and period instrument orchestra that is

internationally recognized as a leader in the field of Historically Informed Performance, a revelatory style that uses the instruments and techniques of the time in which the music was composed. Founded in Boston in 1815, the Society is the oldest continuously performing arts organization in the United States and has a longstanding commitment to excellence and innovation: it gave the American premieres of Handel's *Messiah* (1818), Haydn's *The Creation* (1819), Verdi's *Requiem* (1878) and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1879). The Society today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Harry Christophers, is committed to its mission "to perform Baroque and Classical music at the highest levels of artistic excellence and to share that music with as large and diverse an audience as possible." The Society is widely known through its local subscription concerts, tours, concert broadcasts on National Public Radio, and recordings. The Society's *Lamentations and Praises* won a 2002 Grammy Award and two of its most recent CDs, *All is Bright* and *Peace*, appeared simultaneously in the top ten on Billboard Magazine's classical music chart. The 2010-2011 Season marks the 25th Anniversary of Handel and Haydn's educational programming. The award-winning Karen S. & George D. Levy Educational Outreach Program fosters the knowledge and performance of classical music among young people including in underserved schools and communities. Annually, the program brings music education and vocal training to more than 10,000 students in the Greater Boston area.

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