

MESSIAH

G.F. HANDEL

HARMONIA CHOIR OF OTTAWA
OTTAWA CHORAL WORKSHOPS CHOIR
ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE CHOIR

KATIE GRATTON, SOPRANO
GABRIELLA COMEAU GORT, MEZZO-SOPRANO
HAROLD SWAFFIELD, TENOR
JEAN-SÉBASTIEN KENNEDY, BASS
WITH ORCHESTRA, ROLAND GRAHAM, HARPSICHORD
KURT ALA-KANTTI, DIRECTOR

SUNDAY 24 MAY 2026
4.00PM

ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE
2345 ALTA VISTA
OTTAWA

MESSIAH HWV 56

G. F. HANDEL

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WITH ORCHESTRA
BRIGITTE AMYOT, CONCERTMASTER
ROLAND GRAHAM, HARPSICHORD CONTINUO
KURT ALA-KANTTI, DIRECTOR

St Thomas the Apostle holds the Service of Evensong on the
4th Sunday of the month at 4pm, with the St Thomas Choir or guest
choirs. This month we are presenting Messiah in its place.

Next month's service will feature as guests
the Choir of St Bartholomew's with organist Timothy Piper.

Messiah, HWV 56—G.F. Handel

PART I

- 1 Sinfony
- 2 Recitative (Tenor): Comfort ye
- 3 Aria (Tenor): Ev'ry valley shall be exalted
- 4 Chorus: And the glory of the Lord
- 5 Recitative (Bass): Thus saith the Lord
- 6 Aria (Alto): But who may abide the day of His coming?
- 7 Chorus: And He shall purify
- 9 Aria (Alto) and Chorus: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
- 10 Recitative (Bass): For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth
- 11 Aria (Bass): The people that walked in darkness
- 12 Chorus: For unto us a Child is born
- 18 Aria (Soprano): Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
- 19 Recitative (Alto): Then shall the eyes of the blind
- 20 Aria (Alto and Soprano): He shall feed His flock like a shepherd
- 21 Chorus: His yoke is easy

INTERMISSION (15 minutes)

PART II

- 22 Chorus: Behold the Lamb of God
- 33 Chorus: Lift up your heads, O ye gates
- 34 Recitative (Tenor): Unto which of the angels said He at any time
- 35 Chorus: Let all the angels of God worship Him
- 36 Aria (Alto): Thou art gone up on high
- 38 Duet and Chorus: How beautiful are the feet/Break forth into joy
- 44 Chorus: Hallelujah

PART III

- 45 Aria (Soprano): I know that my Redeemer liveth
- 46 Chorus: Since by man came death
- 47 Recitative (Bass): Behold, I tell you a mystery
- 48 Aria (Bass): The trumpet shall sound
- 49 Recitative (Alto): Then shall be brought to pass
- 50 Duet (Alto and Tenor): O Death, where is thy sting?
- 51 Chorus: But thanks be to God
- 52 Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain/Amen

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Honoured to collaborate for the second time with Harmonia Choir of Ottawa and director Kurt Ala-Kantti, OTTAWA CHORAL WORKSHOPS (OCW) began a decade ago as a summer training programme for novice singers. Since then, it has grown into a celebrated community initiative offering an inclusive and

transformative approach to choral music-making. OCW welcomes singers of all levels, offering varied workshop formats that challenge and inspire each participant at their own pace. Singers engage deeply with great choral repertoire in a supportive environment focused on learning, growth, and collective artistry—culminating in public performances that celebrate their shared achievements. More than rehearsals and concerts, OCW builds community, confidence, and a profound connection to music. Upcoming offerings include a summer Evensong workshop with performances here at St Thomas Alta Vista (Aug 30), Holy Trinity Lascelles (Wakefield) on Aug. 23, and a performance of Mozart “Requiem” on Sat. June 13 7:30 pm. Founded on the belief that singing is a human birthright, OCW continues to awaken and empower voices across the National Capital Region and beyond. Discover a community where singers grow, connect, and refine their most vital instrument: their voice.

www.ottawachoralworkshops.ca



Roland Graham, *Director of OCW and Continuo player for this concert.* Hailed as “an excellent conductor and inspiring educator,” Roland Graham combines his rare gift for teaching with natural ease at the podium to draw remarkable performances from the singers he leads. Beginning his musical journey in childhood, he

builds on exceptional mentorship to shape a teaching style that is both original and refreshing, grounded in the conviction that amateur singers are capable of more than they know. By framing music-making as an organic process built on simple, accessible foundations, Roland has empowered countless individuals to experience choral music in transformative ways—both during rehearsals and in performances that bring joy to participants and the community. He founded Ottawa Choral Workshops in 2015 as a summer singing program, which has since grown into a vibrant teaching movement that has presented concerts and retreats in Ottawa, Europe, and Central

America. Roland holds degrees in music from the Universities of Ottawa and Montréal. From 2010 to 2012, he served as Director of Music at Southminster United Church, where he founded the Doors Open for Music at Southminster (DOMS) concert series, the Master Piano Recital Series, and Rideau Chorale. In 2020, he also led a successful campaign to secure a permanent home for the 9' Steinway D606—now Ottawa's premier, most accessible world-class concert piano.

OTTAWA CHORAL WORKSHOPS CHOIR

Roland Graham, Director

Soprano

Alexa de Grandmont	Annick Morin
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Alto

Jenny Jones	Frida Kolster-Berry
LeeFang Hsiao	Lucie Sawczenko

Tenor

Kevin Bowie	Michael Norman
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Bass

Mike Newman	Simon Stewart
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www.OttawaChoralWorkshops.ca



HARMONIA CHOIR OF OTTAWA was formed in 2003 to provide an opportunity to perform choral music from Canada and around the world. While the choir has performed music from the choral canon, they also perform a broad range of repertoire with a focus on promoting local, and Canadian composers and compositions. The choir has performed in

concert with various musicians over the years, including Julie Nesrallah, Kenny Rogers, the Maple Leaf Brass, Divertimento Orchestra, Ottawa Chamber Orchestra, the Regimental Band of the Governor General's Foot Guards, the Ottawa Wind Ensemble, and this past December were invited to sing with "The Tenors" (formerly "The Canadian Tenors") at the National Arts Centre. They were invited to sing Brahms' *A German Requiem* at Carnegie Hall with John Rutter directing, and to sing with composer Ola Gjeilo at the Lincoln Centre. Last summer they performed at Carnegie Hall again at the invitation of Alberta conductor Laurier Fagnan, joining his and other choirs in a performance of the Levin edition of Mozart's *Requiem*. In addition to regularly premiering new works and arrangements, including commissions from Canadian composers Mark Sirett, Stephen Hatfield and Matthew Emery, the choir has taken on projects including Harmonia's Mosaik Choral Festival, bringing top-notch Canadian choral conductors and composers together with local choirs to celebrate Canada's mosaic through music.

www.HarmoniaChoir.com



Kurt Ala-Kantti, *Artistic Director* and founder of Harmonia Choir of Ottawa and the new Ottawa Boys Choir, has been directing community adult and children's choirs for over twenty years. He is presently also Director of Music for St Thomas the Apostle Anglican Church, Music Director for the Cumberland Community Singers, as well as conductor of the Ottawa Children's Choir "Viva Choir" Orleans, having served as Concert Choir and Boys Choir director there previously. Kurt served as Artistic

Director for the national choral festival "Unison Festival Unisson" in 2014. With a keen interest in choral performance and excellence, Kurt is a frequent paid chorister in local choirs, and has been a member of several local choirs, including being a founding member of the Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, singing professionally with the Juno Award-winning Ottawa Bach Choir, the Dickens Carollers of Ottawa, and currently singing with the Ewashko Singers.



Tom Sear, *Collaborative Accompanist*, is also the Accompanist for Musica Viva Singers, the Cumberland Community Singers, the Choir of St Thomas the Apostle, the Ottawa Boys Choir and the Orleans Viva Choir of the Ottawa Children's Choir. In addition to working with choirs, he also accompanies instrumental and

vocal soloists and students, and enjoys teaching piano and music theory privately from his studio in Orleans. He studied at the University of Ottawa under Andrew Tunis and Jean Paul Sevilla. In 2007 earned a a master's degree in music with a focus in piano performance. He also has some background as a percussionist (and indeed is a member of the orchestra today, playing timpani).

HARMONIA CHOIR OF OTTAWA

Kurt Ala-Kantti, Director; Tom Sear, Collaborative Accompanist

Soprano

Aly Ahrens	Marian Bakker	Jimena Bordes
Allison Cassie	Chloe Davies	Janet Davies
Alexa de Grandmont	Robin Dunbar	Carol Fairbrother
Maureen Favretto	Sarah Gauld	Katie Gratton
Allison Hamilton	Beverley Heard	Adel Jacob
Meagan Jesmer	Jean Jordan	Linda Last
Isabelle Morin	Aurelia Overtveld	Joy Overtveld
Cristella Pari	Danielle Presentey	Eunice Racicot

Alto

Iлона Bain	Gabriela Comeau Gort	Petra Creede
Joanna Crilly	Alison Kennedy	Teresa MacArthur
Kate McCarthy	Aven McMaster	Elizabeth Moore
Elisabeth Neusy	Molly Olshefsky	Helen Pace
Jeanette Rive	Ursula Scott	

Tenor

Christopher Lyon	Gary Seymour	Peter Simonyi
Marcie Sundaram	Harold Swaffield	

Bass

Sandy Beeman	Alexandre Charest	Wren Ferguson
Seán Kelly	Jean-Sébastien Kennedy	David Salisbury



Katie Gratton completed a Graduate Diploma in Vocal Performance in 2022 at the University of Ottawa, where she studied with Allyson McHardy; there, she also completed an Honours B.A. in Music in 2019 and an M.A. in Music Theory in 2021. At the University of Ottawa, she appeared in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Ana Sokolovic's *Love Songs*, and Offenbach's *Daphnis et Chloé*. With OperOttawa she has appeared as a chorus member and a featured artist in various Opera Galas, chorus in Handel's *Alcina*, First Cook in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, and chorus in Jack Hui Litster's *Gates of Heaven: Requiem for a Life of Peace* and Handel's *Giulio Cesare*. Recently, she performed as the alto soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* with Harmonia Choir of Ottawa, and as the mezzo-soprano soloist in Duruflé's *Requiem* with Ottawa Choral Workshops. She is a graduate of Cross Town Youth Chorus under director Kurt Ala-Kantti.



Gabriela Comeau Gort is a Canadian mezzo-soprano based in Manchester whose performances span Canada, the US, England, Ireland, Spain, Italy, and Chile. Gabriela is a member of British Youth Opera's Serena Fenwick Programme (2026), the National Opera Studio Academy (2025/26), and Pegasus Opera Company (2026/27). She was the mezzo-soprano Young Artist at Waterperry Opera Festival (2025). Gabriela's notable opera productions / scenes include *Hänsel* (Humperdinck), *Orphée* (Gluck), *Ruggiero* (Handel), and *Rosina* (Rossini). Equally comfortable in oratorio repertoire, Gabriela's concert highlights include the alto soloist in Shaw's *The Listeners*, Jenkins' *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Mozart's *Requiem*. Gabriela completed an intensive MMus in Opera and Vocal Performance at the RNCM as a scholar, under the tutelage of Mary Plazas. She holds a BMus in Vocal Performance from the University of Ottawa, studying with John Avey. She is also a graduate of Cross Town Youth Chorus under director Kurt Ala-Kantti.



Harold Swaffield is a seasoned tenor whose lifelong passion for singing has been shaped by decades of choral and solo performance within Ottawa's vibrant musical community. He began his musical journey at the age of 7 as a member of St Matthew's Boys' Choir under the direction of Brian Law, where he developed a strong foundation in vocal technique and ensemble performance. This formative experi-

ence continued until 1980 and left a lasting impression on his musical path. After a period away from formal choral singing, Harold rekindled his love of performance in 2006 when he joined the Dickens Carolers of Ottawa. He remains an active member, delighting audiences with traditional seasonal repertoire. Over the years, Harold has lent his voice to numerous churches and musical theatre productions across Ottawa, becoming a respected and familiar presence in sacred music circles. As a soloist, he has performed John Stainer's *The Crucifixion* at Westminster Presbyterian Church, demonstrating both vocal strength and interpretive depth. More recently, he appeared as tenor soloist with Harmonia Choir in Mozart's *Requiem*, further showcasing his expressive range and musical maturity. Committed to continual growth, Harold undertook three years of operatic vocal study at Shawne Elizabeth Studios, refining his technique and expanding his repertoire. He currently sings tenor with Seventeen Voyces Ottawa, where he continues to develop as an artist while contributing to the city's rich choral landscape.



Jean-Sébastien Kennedy's singing has been reviewed as "stylish" by Steve Smith in the New York Times, after he made his Carnegie Hall debut at Weill Recital Hall with the Ottawa Bach Choir in 2011. A sought-after artist for his distinctly rich tone, his expressiveness and his versatility, he participates into numerous productions

ranging from opera to recitals, in Canada and abroad. On stage, he has performed the roles of Marcello in *La Bohème*, Peter in Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Guglielmo in W.A. Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Papageno in W.A. Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Urbain in *La Vie parisienne* and the Wolf in Barab's *Little Red Riding Hood*, among others. His main oratorio credits

include Johannes Brahms' and W.A. Mozart's *Requiems*, George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's Creation and Dietrich Buxtehude's *Jesu Membra Nostri*. Jean-Sébastien Kennedy regularly performs with premier Canadian ensembles such as the Ottawa Bach Choir, the Opéra de Montréal, the NAC Orchestra, the OSM and Opera Lyra Ottawa, both as a guest chorister and soloist, and has taken part in several national radio broadcasts, CD recordings and international tours. He is a featured soloist on *Cantate Domino*, the Ottawa Bach Choir's latest CD, released in 2012.



For the past thirty years, *Concertmaster* **Brigitte Amyot** has been very active in the musical scene of Ottawa-Gatineau. She teaches violin and string classes in her private studio, conducts the Intermediate Strings ensemble at the Ottawa Youth Orchestra Academy and she continues her various workshops and groups such as “Brigitte’s artistic camp”, “The More Strings the Merrier” and “The Big Strings Group”. She is happy to be the conductor for Strings of St John’s. As a freelance musician, she works regularly with different choirs and organizations of Ottawa-Gatineau. Brigitte enjoys performing with her family in their group Musicalement Fleet for various engagements. She is a member of Thirteen Strings Chamber Orchestra as well as their Ensemble Manager and is principal second violin in l’Orchestre symphonique de Gatineau as well as their Ensemble Manager. As the proud mother of Emma, Jessie and Aidan, and grandmother of Noah, Arthur and Magalie, Brigitte is very happy with her musical way of life and grateful for the musical community.

MESSIAH ORCHESTRA

First violins

Brigitte Amyot
Alla Perevalova

Violas

Olivier Philippe-Auguste
Gunnar Foerstel

Bass

Vicente García

Second violins

Adam Nelson
Alireza Tarviji

Cello

Jean-François Marquis

Oboe

Celina Hawkins

Trumpet

Alastair Chaplin

Timpani

Tom Sear

Continuo

Roland Graham

**Harmonia
Choir
of
Ottawa**

Join us next season!

December: Christmas Winds
with Ottawa Wind Ensemble

February 20th 7:30: MosaiK Choral Festival
with Guest Director Tracy Wong

May: John Rutter's Magnificat
with orchestra

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THE CANADIAN
CENTENNIAL CHOIR



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CENTENAIRE CANADIEN

To Life! Vive la vie!

May 29 • 7:30 p.m.

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The Canadian Centennial Choir presents *To Life!*, a season finale celebrating life, resilience, and renewal. The programme features the premiere of a newly commissioned work by Canadian composer Christine Donkin, poetry by Wendy Jean McLean, and *Requiem for the Living* by Dan Forrest, performed with soloists and full orchestra.

Tickets: General Admission \$35–\$45 available at
<https://ccc-ccc.ca/individual-concerts/#may>

PSALM
BOKEN
med tillägg

PSALM
BOKEN
med tillägg

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med tillägg

PSALM
BOKEN
med tillägg

CHORAL WORKSHOP

with Kurt Ala-Kantti

SUNDAY 31 MAY 2026, 2-4.30PM

ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE
2345 ALTA VISTA DR, OTTAWA

PSALM
BOKEN
med tillägg

PSALM
BOKEN
med tillägg

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PSALM
BOKEN
med tillägg

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SEPT. 27TH: CHOIR OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

OCT. 25TH: CHOIR OF ST MARK'S



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