

The First Congregational Church of Greenwich and  
The First Music & Arts Series  
present the 57th annual

# Messiah

by

Georg Frideric Handel

Hanna Golodinskii, soprano  
Elizabeth Russo, mezzo soprano  
Blake Friedman, tenor  
Kevin Douglas Jasaitis, bass

First Church Festival Chorus and Chamber Orchestra  
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, conductor

Saturday, December 16, 2023  
4:00 p.m.



# Messiah

## Part One

*This performance of Messiah is dedicated to the memory of Eric Larry Phinney, timpanist for Messiah and many First Church events, who passed away July 3, 2023. His obituary can be found at the end of this program*

### *Sinfonia (Overture)*

#### *Tenor Recitative – Isaiah 40:1-3*

*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

#### *Tenor Air – Isaiah 40:4*

*Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.*

#### *Chorus – Isaiah 40:5*

*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

#### *Bass Recitative – Haggai 2:6,7; Malachi 3:1*

*Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Yet once, a little while and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

#### *Bass Air – Malachi 3:2*

*But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.*

#### *Chorus – Malachi 3:3*

*And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.*

#### *Alto Recitative – Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23*

*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.*

#### *Alto Air and Chorus – Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 60:1*

*O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain;  
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength;  
lift it up, and be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!  
Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*

#### *Bass Recitative – Isaiah 60:2,3*

*For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people;  
but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.  
And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.*

#### *Bass Air – Isaiah 9:2*

*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light:  
and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*

*Chorus – Isaiah 9:6*

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*

*Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)*

*Soprano Recitative – Luke 2:8,9*

*There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

*Soprano Recitative – Luke 2:10,11*

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

*Soprano Recitative – Luke 2:13*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,*

*Chorus – Luke 2:14*

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men.*

*Soprano Air – Zechariah 9:9,10*

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Savior. And he shall speak peace unto the heathen.*

*Alto Recitative – Isaiah 35:5,6*

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.  
Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.*

*Alto and Soprano Air – Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28, 29*

*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; and he shall gather the lambs with His arm,  
and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.  
Come unto Him, all ye that labour, that are heavy laden, and He shall give you rest.  
Take his yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for he is meek and lowly of heart:  
and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

*Chorus – Matthew 11:30*

*His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.*

*Chorus – Revelation 19:6, 11:15, 19:16*

*Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.*

*The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ:  
and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of kings, Lord of lords. Hallelujah!*

*We are delighted that you experienced our Messiah performance.  
Through the generosity of so many patrons like yourself, this concert is offered at no charge.  
Please support as you can so this holiday tradition continues for years to come.  
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## First Church Chamber Orchestra

### Violin 1

Edita Orlinyte  
Emanouil Manolov  
Shan Jiang  
Joseph Dermody

### Violin 2

Anna Brathwaite  
Brian Thompson  
Paul Ghaffari  
Benjamin Lee

### Viola

Annie Garlid  
Anthony Parce

### Cello

Alex Lavine  
Susie Lee

### Bass

Tod Hedrick

### Oboe

Libby Van Cleve  
John Hanulik

### Bassoon

Rosemary Dellinger

### Trumpet

Joseph Sabia  
Jim Cifelli

### Timpani

Barbara Freedman

### Harpsichord

Vance Briceland

### Organ

David Johnson



Tenor **Blake Friedman** has been cited by the *New York Times* for the “plummy fullness and dusky hue” of his voice and by the *New York Classical Review* for his voice’s “buttery top.”

Blake has performed leading roles and soloist engagements for multiple performing arts organizations across the United States. Notable performances include featured sextet soloist in the world premiere of *A Nation of Others* by Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell at Carnegie Hall, Marc in the world Premiere of Dan Shore’s *Freedom Ride* at Chicago Opera Theater, and critically acclaimed performances of Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Chautauqua Opera where he was praised by *OperaNews* for his “romantic and funny” portrayal which “proved a highlight”.

On the concert stage, he has appeared as soloist with New York Choral Society, New York City Ballet, New York Oratorio Society, Ensemble for the Romantic Century, Choral Artists of Sarasota, Key Chorale, and York Symphony in repertoire ranging from baroque masterpieces to world premieres.

Blake holds both a Master of Music and Professional Studies Degree from the Manhattan School of Music, where he was the recipient of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Scholarship Award/Richard Rodgers Scholar, and received his Bachelor of Music degree from The Eastman School of Music where he was the recipient of a Howard Hanson Scholarship.





A recent fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center, **Kevin Douglas Jasaitis** is a versatile young baritone performing opera, oratorio, and musical theatre. Recent credits include *Fidelio* (Rocco) with Concerts in the Valley, *La Traviata* (Germont) with City Lyric Opera, the Festival Internazionale di Mezza Estate in Tagliacozzo, Italy, Mannes Opera's concert of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with Florilegium Chamber Choir, and Raphaël Lucas' *Confession* and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* with Purchase Opera.

Kevin is an alum of the Purchase Conservatory of Music and the Mannes School of Music, as well as the Classic Lyric Arts and Si Parla, Si Canta! programs.

**Elizabeth Russo**, mezzo-soprano is well known for her powerful voice and strong stage presence. In April 2024 she will perform as a soloist in Beethoven's Choral Fantasy with The American Chamber Orchestra. Ms. Russo made her UK debut in London with Fulham Opera as Fricka in *Das Rheingold*, returned in for the same role in *Die Walkure* and for Wagner's complete Ring Cycle.

*"Major contributions from Elizabeth Russo, a dramatic mezzo-soprano of vocal substance created a personable Fricka well able to deal with a recalcitrant husband."* Margaret Davies - Opera Magazine London. This production was given a five star rating by the press. *"...has brought us a Ring of eyewatering clarity, raw beauty and visceral power..."* *"Elizabeth Russo was a deliciously petulant, wifely and stropky Fricka."*

**Bachtrak, London.** Elizabeth had the great pleasure of performing Mahler's master piece *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Chatham Camarata Orchestra and conductor Tom Bo. Most recently she performed Beethoven's masterpieces the Ninth Symphony and the Choral Fantasy as the mezzo soprano soloist with Worcester Chorus. Also with Worcester Chorus in Massachusetts, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* after being featured in their Handel's *Messiah*. *"Of the four, (soloists) Ms. Russo and Mr. Lauterbach were the standouts, displaying rich tone and evenness throughout their range."* **Telegram & Gazette.**



Elizabeth debuted as soloist with The Dessoff Choirs of New York City in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, and was soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* and Beethoven's *Mass in C*, both with Greenwich High School Super Choir and professional orchestra. With Garden State Philharmonic, she was featured in Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*.

As well as specializing in operatic roles for dramatic mezzo-soprano, Ms. Russo has performed song cycles by the great composers Elgar, Berlioz, Brahms, Ives and Mahler. *"It was in Elgar's "Sabbath Morning at Sea" that we were first treated to the full power of Russo's impressive voice."* *"From Berlioz's very beautiful "summer Nights",...she maintained control of that commanding voice by concentrating on the long melodic lines. The emotion she evidenced through tone and diction, particularly in "On the Lagoons" fit the summer mood very well."* **Danbury News Times.**

Operatic performances include the Countess in *The Queen of Spades*, Mama Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Herodias in *Salome* and Amneris in *Aida* with One World Symphony of New York City. With the Garden State Philharmonic, she was featured in Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* and in Mozart's *Requiem* with Greenwich High School super choirs and professional orchestra. Ms. Russo performed with OPERAMICI as Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia*, The Witch in *Hansel & Gretel* and The Old Prioress in *Dialogue of the Carmelites*. She was also seen as Mama Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Chelsea Opera and Waltraute in *Die Walkure* with Opera Dramatica all of NYC. With the Albany Symphony Elizabeth sang Waltraute, and the Rheinmaiden Wellgunde in *Götterdämmerung*, and Princepessa in *Suor Angelica*. With Sorg Opera of Middletown Ohio, Ms. Russo was Lady Jane in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* and Azucena in *Il Trovatore* with the Richmond County Orchestra. Other companies include The Danbury Symphony and The Society of the Classical Arts of West Palm Beach Florida, and in New York City, The Doctor's Orchestral Symphony (Town Hall) and New York Opera Productions, (Weill, Merkin and Cami Halls).

Elizabeth is Cantor and soloist at Saint Paul Roman Catholic Church in Greenwich CT, and has an active voice studio in Brookfield and Greenwich CT, and New York City where she works with students of all ages and levels. Please contact her at [Elizab\\_Russo@yahoo.com](mailto:Elizab_Russo@yahoo.com).



### Hanna Golodinskii, soprano

A native of Ukraine, she received her Master's Degree of Music as an Opera Solo and Chamber Performer from the National Music Academy of Ukraine, State Conservatory of Tchaikovsky in Kyiv, Ukraine, where she was a student of Ukrainian opera star, People's Artist of Ukraine, professor Diana Petrynenko. Ms. Golodinskii's operatic roles include Margarita in Gounod's *Faust*, Tatiana in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Natalka in Lysenko's *Natalka Poltavka*, Odarka in Vakhnyanyn's *Kupalo*, Rusalka in Dvorak's *Rusalka*, Elisabetha in Verdi's *Don Carlo* and many other roles.

Ms. Golodinskii performed as a soloist with Ukrainian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, National Opera and Ballet Theatre for Youth in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Ms. Golodinskii completed seven tours throughout the United States of America as a soloist with Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. Hanna made her solo Carnegie Hall debut in 2008 and had numerous solo returns to the venue in 2011, 2018; solo recitals and opera productions, venues including Opera America, Jazz Lincoln Center Frederick P. Rose Hall and many other distinguished venues worldwide.

Ms. Golodinskii has been a regular soloist with the Chamber Chorus of New York, Conductor and Music Director, Maestro Nikolai Kachanov. With RCCNY, Hanna Golodinskii performed on the stages of Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Riverside Church in New York City and many other prestigious venues, performing under the batons of the legendary conductors Lorin Maazel, Yury Temirkanov, Zubin Mehta.

In August of 2015, she was named a Golden Key Artist, a title accorded only to honored guests and laureates of the Festival and Mrs. Golodinskii is one of two Artists in Residence with The Drozdoff Society. Recent performances include leading roles in opera productions of G. Handel's *Solomon*, C. Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice* with the Metamorphosis Symphony Orchestra Of New York, led by Artistic Director and Conductor Eugene Sirotkine. She is the soprano section leader at First Congregational Church of Greenwich.

Ms. Golodinskii's recent appearances include concert performances of Ukrainian Classical Music programs accompanied by Ukrainian renowned concert pianist Pavlo Gintov, at such distinguished venues as Stamford Palace Theatre, Connecticut. Review by Jon Sobel: "Ms. Golodinskii's high notes pealed like a tremendous church bell, then folded into head voice and seemed to sail like high clouds. Stunning fortes, sweet expressivity, natural and exquisite. I hope to hear more of Golodinskii's stunning vocal artistry very soon; she had moments that left me literally gaping with wonder."

This performance of *Messiah* is dedicated to the memory of Eric Larry Phinney, timpanist for *Messiah* and many First Church events, who passed away July 3, 2023.

After graduating from Voorheesville High School, Eric attended the Manhattan School of Music, where he earned his bachelor's degree and master's degree in music. He went on to study under several music masters, which led him to perform around the world. In 1991, while working on his master's degree, Eric played at a music festival abroad in Moscow with a group from the Manhattan School of Music, and they also performed in Tokyo.

He was one of the founding members of the ETHOS Percussion Group and was active with them for over 25 years. The ETHOS Percussion Group has performed at such venues as The Library of Congress, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, London's Wigmore Hall, Sun Valley Center for the Arts, and the Bermuda Festival and has done numerous residencies, master classes, and clinics around the country.

His musical interests led him to study tabla under two major artists of Hindustani classical music. He studied under Pandit Sharda Saha of the Benares tradition and Pandit Samir Chatterjee under the Farrukhabad tradition. He was initiated as a disciple by both masters, thus continuing the traditional teacher/student lineage, which dates back to the 18th century.

Eric also found interest in the music of Ghana, West Africa, studying with master percussionist Bernard Woma, teachers Robert Levin and Emmanuel Agbeli, and at the Dagbe Center in Kopeyia, Ghana and took up traditional Gyil (xylophone) studies. He performed as a tabla soloist for the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony, and Cleveland Orchestra. He was a faculty member at Bloomingdale School of Music, a teaching artist with BAM and Young Audiences in New York (YANY).

Eric performed with YoYo Ma and most recently with the Yumi Kurosawa Trio at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. ETHOS Percussion Group was currently working on an opera called: "The Sailmaker's Wife" with composer Kristin Norderval for the National Opera America Center. They had planned to travel to Norway to perform at the Vox LAB Music Theater Festival this past fall.







**Craig Scott Symons** has been Minister of Music/Organist at First Congregational Church of Greenwich since 2010. Craig is a native of Michigan, where he served as Director of Music for over 15 years at First United Methodist Church in Royal Oak, a suburb north of Detroit.

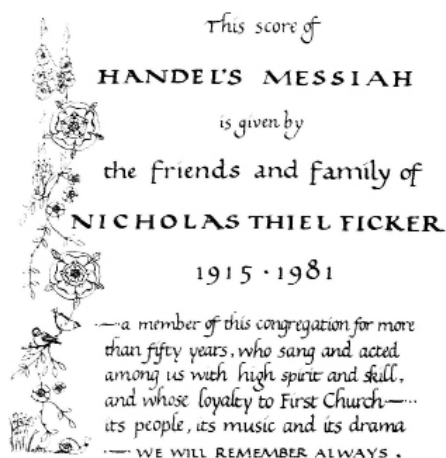
Craig attended the prestigious Interlochen Arts Academy for four years and graduated in 1980. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from Wayne State University as a student of Ray Ferguson and went on to receive a Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from University of Michigan, where he studied with Robert Glasgow and James Kibbie.

From 1990-2007, Craig was the founder and conductor of Ars Nova, an auditioned group of 24 singers which presented concerts of music ranging from chant to vocal jazz and everything in between. He also sang for 9 seasons with *sounding light*, a professional chamber choir in Detroit. He was also Pianist/Director for the Blue Notes, a women's

vocal ensemble based in Darien.

Craig has served on the board of the Connecticut chapter of the American Choral Director's Association as Repertoire and Standards Chair for Music in Worship. Prior to his move to Connecticut, he served on the boards for Michigan Chapter ACDA as Music in Worship chair, and the Detroit chapters of Chorister's Guild, Presbyterian Association of Musicians, Fellowship of United Methodist Musicians, and as Dean for the Detroit Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

The scores used in our performance today are a gift from the family and friends of Thiel Ficker.



First Church is proud to showcase the Helen Binney Kitchel Harpsichord. It was made possible by the late Mrs. Kitchel's generous establishment and funding of the Kitchel Organ Recital Fund in 1963. First Church is grateful for the assistance of Mrs. Kitchel's grandson, the late Reynolds (Tad) Girdler, Jr., in enabling this acquisition.

The instrument was built in 1980 by Edward Brewer of Baroque Keyboards in Leonia, NJ. The design is based upon 17th-century Flemish prototypes. It has two stops at 8 foot pitch, and is especially suited both as an ensemble and solo instrument.



Photo by Vance Briceland

If you find yourself without a church home during this holiday season,  
we invite you to join us for one of our Christmas celebrations.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24**

**10 a.m.**

Children's Service for younger children and their families and music by The Cherub Choir.

**3 p.m.**

Family Service with "Once in Royal David's City" pageant and music by The Celebration Singers.

**5 p.m.**

Community Candlelight Carol Sing on the front lawn of the church.

**6 p.m.**

Festival Carol Service with candlelight and music by a brass quintet and The Chancel Choir.

**9 p.m.**

Candlelight Service with Communion and music by The Genesis/Alumni Choir and harp.

**UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE FIRST MUSIC & ARTS SERIES**

**The Yale Alley Cats Sunday, January 28, 2024 - 4 p.m.**

Since 1943, as Yale's classiest a cappella group, the Cats have created over 400 original arrangements from jazz standards to Motown, from timeless oldies to contemporary chart-toppers.

**2024 Lenten Organ Recitals – Wednesdays at 12:15 p.m.**

February 21 – Marnus Lively-Greyling  
St. Barnabas Episcopal, Greenwich

February 28– Nathan Lively-Greyling  
St. John's Lutheran, Stamford

March 6 – Victoria Shields  
Christ and Holy Trinity Episcopal, Westport

March 13 – Terence Flanagan  
First Presbyterian Church, New Canaan

March 20 – Jamie Hitel  
Christ Church, Greenwich

**Ensemble BREVE Sunday, April 7, 2024 - 4 p.m.**

The Magic of the German Baroque – Telemann, Bach, & Handel

Deborah Booth, recorder  
Jeremy Rhizor, violin  
Lisa Terry – viola da gamba/baroque cello  
Stephen Rapp, harpsichord

**Pavel Gintov, piano Sunday, May 5, 2024 - 4 p.m.**

Ukrainian-born pianist Pavel Gintov brings his fiery energy to the Steinway piano in the First Church Auditorium.

Savannah Morning News states  
"Pavel Gintov is a world-class pianist, phenomenal in his own right".

