



December 1, 2009:
For Immediate Release

"...an almost superhuman achievement...one of the best Messiahs I have ever heard."

~ The Globe and Mail

Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra present

Handel's *Messiah* + Sing-Along *Messiah*

Directed by **Ivars Taurins**

Featuring

Ann Monoyios, soprano

Meg Bragle, mezzo-soprano

Benjamin Hulett, tenor

Sumner Thompson, baritone

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- Date + Times:** Handel's *Messiah* at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre
Wednesday December 16th – Saturday December 19th at 7:30PM
Sing-Along *Messiah* at Massey Hall
Sunday December 20th at 2PM
- Ticket Prices:** Trinity-St. Paul's Centre: \$39 - \$89
Face the Musik for ages 30 and under: from \$20 / PWYC Friday December 18th
Massey Hall: \$39 (\$29 for ages 65+)
Face the Musik for ages 30 and under: \$25
Groups of 6 or more save \$10 per ticket off the regular adult ticket price for
Sing- Along *Messiah*
- Venue:** Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor Street West
Massey Hall, 178 Victoria Street
- Box Office:** Trinity-St. Paul's Centre: 416.964.6337 / www.tafelmusik.org
Massey Hall / Roy Thompson Hall: 416.872.4255 / www.masseyhall.com
- Website:** www.tafelmusik.org / www.myspace.com/mytafelmusik
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"Superhuman", "spot-on", "crisp" and "inspired" are just a few of the words critics have used to describe Tafelmusik's annual presentation of Handel's great oratorio, *Messiah*. For the 29th consecutive year, Tafelmusik rings in the festive season December 16th to 19th with performances of *Messiah* on period instruments, a cherished tradition that includes a Sing-Along *Messiah* at Massey Hall on December 20th. Joining Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra is an internationally acclaimed quartet of soloists, soprano **Anne Monoyios**, mezzo-soprano **Meg Bragle**, tenor **Benjamin Hulett**, and baritone **Sumner Thompson**.

Chamber Choir Director **Ivars Taurins** conducts the December 16th to 19th concerts in the intimate and enchanting setting of Trinity-St. Paul's Centre. On Sunday December 20th at Toronto's historic Massey Hall, Tafelmusik presents the 23rd Annual **Sing-Along Messiah**. With a feisty **Maestro Handel** at the podium, 2,700 voices join the Chamber Choir, Orchestra and guest soloists as they bring Handel's beloved oratorio to life.

A perennial favourite with audiences and critics alike, Tafelmusik's *Messiah* prompted one critic to write, "I cannot remember a *Messiah* presentation as uniformly 'spot-on' as this year's by Ivars Taurins' Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra ... As for the choir, they, if anything, outdid the soloists in the crispness and brilliance of their coloratura." (*The Globe and Mail*)

This season, Tafelmusik also opens the doors to a virtual sing-along *Messiah* through its inaugural YouTube contest. Inspired by the fierce loyalty its audiences have for Handel's famous oratorio, Tafelmusik invites *Messiah* fans to show the world their finest Sing-Along voices by recording their best rendition of a favourite *Messiah* excerpt in a 90-second video that will be viewable worldwide. Link to Sing-Along *Messiah* video contest details on Tafelmusik's homepage at www.tafelmusik.org

Tafelmusik continues its popular PWYC Fridays for **Face the Musik** patrons aged 30 and under, including PWYC tickets to Handel's *Messiah* on Friday December 18th. Tickets must be picked up in-person between 5PM and 7PM at the box office (while quantities last).

In celebration of Tafelmusik's 30th anniversary season in 2008, CBC Records re-released its JUNO-nominated *The Complete Choruses from Handel's Messiah* recording as part of a three-CD box set. *Celebration – 30 Years* is available for purchase at all major retail and online outlets.

Ivars Taurins founded the highly acclaimed Tafelmusik Chamber Choir in 1981, and has been credited with developing a sound and style appropriate to the repertoire they perform. Mr. Taurins has conducted *Messiah* performances with this ensemble for 29 consecutive years, "*building, shaping and honing this masterpiece oratorio for more than two decades.*" (*Toronto Star*). The ensemble is now recognized as one as a contender for "*the best period-performance choir anywhere in the world,*" (*The Globe and Mail*), and was awarded the Canada Council's Healey Willan Prize in 1991.

Mr. Taurins conducts symphonic and choral repertoire with equal expertise, and is active as a guest conductor with orchestras and choirs across Canada. As Principal Baroque Conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra since 2001, he has directed that orchestra's annual *Messiah* performances for the past nine years.

Soprano **Ann Monoyios** is well-known to Tafelmusik audiences for the "*purity and refinement*" (*The Globe and Mail*) of her voice. She performs extensively throughout Europe and North America in a wide variety of repertoire including opera, oratorio, chamber music and recitals extending from the baroque to the contemporary. In addition to her regular appearances with Tafelmusik at home and on tour, Ms. Monoyios has collaborated with John Eliot Gardiner, Gustav Leonhardt, Christopher Hogwood, Frans Brueggen, Trevor Pinnock, William Christie, René Jacobs and Reinhard Goebel.

Mezzo-soprano **Meg Bragle's** local debut in Tafelmusik's 2006 *Messiah* made an impact on Toronto audiences, and she was noted for her "*memorable, raw-silk voice.*" (*Toronto Star*). She has sung with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, as well as several Canadian ensembles including the Calgary Philharmonic, Vancouver Chamber Choir, and Symphony Nova Scotia.

Making his Tafelmusik debut is British tenor **Benjamin Hulett**, whose "warm, supple sound was a revelation," (*The Independent*), and who was singled out by BBC Radio 3 as, "*the star of the solo quartet*"

in the recent recording of *Messiah* with Stuttgart Barock under Frieder Bernius. He has appeared with Sir Andrew Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante, Philippe Herreweghe and the Orchestre des Champs Elysee in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the Academy of Ancient Music under Christopher Hogwood.

Praised for his “elegant style” (*Boston Globe*), **Sumner Thompson** is one of today’s most sought-after young baritones. His appearances on the operatic stage include roles in productions from Boston to Copenhagen, including the Boston Early Music Festival’s productions of Conradi’s *Ariadne* and Lully’s *Psyché*, and several European tours with Contemporary Opera Denmark in the title role of Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*. He joins Tafelmusik again later in the season for performances of another glorious Handel oratorio, *Israel in Egypt*.

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Messiah concert series sponsor:



Tafelmusik’s *Messiah* concerts are also supported by Agincourt Autohaus.
Tafelmusik would like to thank Scott and Ellen Hand for their support.

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Tafelmusik’s *Face the Musik* programme is supported by

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Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, led by Music Director Jeanne Lamon and founded in 1979, is one of the world’s leading period performance ensembles. All members of the Orchestra are specialists in historical performance practice, and their collaboration results in a delightful transparency, vitality and richness of sound. Tafelmusik performs over 50 concerts a year at home in Toronto, tours

extensively around the world, has released over 75 CDs and has received nine JUNO Awards. In 2005, Tafelmusik received a Grammy Award nomination. Tafelmusik is the Baroque Orchestra-in-Residence at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto and operates its annual Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute which attracts pre-professional and professional musicians from around the world. The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, specializing in baroque performance practice and vocal technique, was formed in 1981 to complement the Orchestra. Tafelmusik made its sold-out Carnegie Hall debut in February, 2009. This season, Tafelmusik embarks on five major tours to Europe, Mexico and the U.S.

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