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Tafelmusik
Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir
MEDIA RELEASE



Toronto's Hallelujah Event! Tafelmusik's *Messiah* and Sing-Along *Messiah*

Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir

Directed by **Ivars Taurins**

Joanne Lunn, soprano | **Mary-Ellen Nesi**, mezzo-soprano

Rufus Müller, tenor | **Nathaniel Watson**, baritone

“Tafelmusik owns this town when it comes to Handel's seasonal classic.” — *The Globe & Mail*

Toronto, Canada, November 16, 2015 ... Toronto's “Hallelujah Event” returns to Koerner Hall! On **December 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2015, at 7:30 PM**, [Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir](#) performs Handel's baroque masterpiece, *Messiah*, under the direction of **Ivars Taurins**. Tafelmusik's popular *Sing-Along Messiah* takes place on **Sunday, December 20, 2015, at 2 PM** at **Massey Hall**. The stellar cast of international vocal soloists includes English soprano **Joanne Lunn**, Greek-Canadian mezzo-soprano **Mary-Ellen Nesi**, English-German tenor **Rufus Müller**, and American baritone **Nathaniel Watson**.

Tafelmusik's *Messiah* is a profoundly moving experience in the style and spirit of Handel's own productions. Performed by the orchestra on period instruments, and sung by a choir of 23 singers specializing in 17th- and 18th-century music, Tafelmusik's *Messiah* has become a cherished tradition for Toronto audiences since 1981.

No other Canadian conductor has led as many consecutive performances of *Messiah* as Ivars Taurins, who has conducted Handel's masterpiece annually for 34 years with Tafelmusik and other orchestras and choirs across Canada. **CBC Radio's Ideas** has invited Taurins to explore *Messiah* with writer and broadcaster **Robert Harris** in an hour-long documentary scheduled for national broadcast on **Tuesday, December 8**.

This season's cast of *Messiah* soloists — four renowned singers with a particular affinity for Handel's expressive, virtuoso arias — include soprano **Joanne Lunn**, who “laid her luminous, clear voice on ‘I

Know That My Redeemer Liveth' with a gossamer touch" (*Toronto Star*) in her 2012 Tafelmusik appearance. Making her Tafelmusik debut is mezzo-soprano **Mary-Ellen Nesi**, "equal to all the technical and musical demands of numbers written for Handel's most outstanding virtuosos" (*International Record Review*). The tenor and baritone soloists are well known to Tafelmusik audiences: Rufus Müller, "... easily the best tenor I have heard in a live *Messiah*" (*New York Times*), and baritone **Nathaniel Watson**, whose "lively voice has a commanding presence and a beguiling drama about it" (*Washington Post*).

On Sunday December 20, Tafelmusik hosts its **29th annual Sing-Along *Messiah*** at Massey Hall — a unique Toronto audience-participation phenomenon led by **George Frideric Handel** himself (aka Ivars Taurins — in character and dressed in full baroque costume). Each year, 2,700 audience members fill Massey Hall, and with scores in hand, raise their voices together with those of the choir and soloists. Seating is General Admission, by voice part.

A live-performance film of *Sing-Along Messiah* was released commercially on the Tafelmusik Media label in 2012 and has been broadcast on the Bravo!, CTV and WNED television networks. Taurins received a 2011 Gemini Award nomination for his portrayal of Handel in *Sing-Along Messiah*.

Tafelmusik's *Messiah* has been heard around the world, thanks to a live recording of the complete *Messiah* made in Koerner Hall, "a finely played and sensitively directed performance ... one of the best-played recordings of *Messiah*" (*Gramophone*), released on the Tafelmusik Media label in 2012. A **Best of *Messiah*** album featuring highlights from Handel's baroque masterpiece was released in 2014.

Listing information:

Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir presents

Handel's *Messiah*: **Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, 273 Bloor Street W.**
Wed Dec 16, Thu Dec 17, Fri Dec 18, Sat Dec 19 at 7:30 PM
Regular: From \$50
65+: From \$43
Ages 35 & Under: From \$30
Weston Family Box Office: 416.408.0208

Sing-Along *Messiah*: **Massey Hall, 78 Victoria Street**
Sun Dec 20 at 2 PM
From \$30
Massey Hall Box Office: 416.872.4255

Photos: High-resolution photos of Tafelmusik and Ivars Taurins are available for download in the Media Room at www.tafelmusik.org

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Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, founded in 1979, is one of the world's leading period performance ensembles. The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, under the direction of Ivars Taurins, was formed in 1981 to complement the Orchestra. The orchestra performs more than 50 concerts each year at home in Toronto, and travels extensively around the world. The choir and orchestra's multi-platform recording label Tafelmusik Media was launched in January 2012, along with the Watch and Listen site. Tafelmusik's discography of 80-plus CDs has been recorded on the Sony Classical, CBC Records, Analekta and Tafelmusik Media labels. Since 1991, Tafelmusik has received ten JUNO Awards and a Grammy Award nomination. Tafelmusik is the Baroque Orchestra-in-Residence at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto and operates annual artist training programmes, Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute and Tafelmusik Winter Institute. Tafelmusik has been led by Jeanne Lamon since 1981. In June 2014, Ms. Lamon stepped down as Music Director, and is continuing as Tafelmusik's Chief Artistic Advisor until her successor is appointed.

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