

HANDEL

ISRAELI IN EGYPT



a new
variant

Sat 28 May 2022 @ 6pm Sun 29 May 2022 @ 3pm
Hunter Baillie Church, Johnston Street, Annandale

PROGRAM



Frogs, fleas, flies, lies and RATs: a word from the Artistic Director

Singing in public - something we once took totally for granted - almost became a culturally subversive act of radical connection in this pandemic. And yet, somehow, despite the bad press, this most primal and emotionally visceral of artforms has held on, patiently awaiting the moment to emerge from its COVID chrysalis. With this 'new variant' of Handel's masterwork *Israel in Egypt*, we also emerge 'triumphant gloriously'!

In the spirit of Inner West pragmatism, humour and caffeinated choral rehearsals, we have trimmed our *Israel in Egypt* to reflect the times we live in and present a 'modern variant', showcasing the tenacity and capacity of the LEC choristers. In our reclaimed recitatives, you will hear stories of lockdown, home schooling, toilet paper shortages, La Niña, mud and mayhem, all with a wry twist! For our modern variant, we have just added lies to the flies, and RAT tests to the frogs and fleas, while the horse and its rider bound through the turbulent seas. As we find humour and joy in all the poetry, and of course the magnificent music, from all of us on stage we warmly welcome you back to singing in public and choirs. Enjoy!

Lyrics: Richard Goodman



In his own words: "With Covid, life seemed to have become ground hog day, with little novelty in conversation as time passed by. This led me to trying poetastory, using whimsy to satisfy my imagination. Whether or not it is appreciated by others seemed of little consequence, although it would be satisfying to know that it did generate the odd wry smile from its reader." Richard has been a campanologist, a wine buff, and a LEC bass chorister for the best years of his life. His wit and whimsy is infamous in the Inner West.



Soloist: Mark Donnelly



An exceptionally versatile vocalist, Mark was a permanent member of the Song Company from 1997 to 2019 and is currently a Lay Clerk at St Mary's Cathedral Choir in Sydney. Mark is in great demand for the performance and recording of contemporary works, film scores, radio dramas and commercials. Mark has been fortunate to work with many leading organizations including; Pinchgut Opera, Ensemble Offspring, Opera Queensland, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Cantillation, Moorambilla Voices, Halcyon, Australian String Quartet, Ironwood, Sydney Symphony, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Thoroughbass, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Sydney Chamber Choir, Leichhardt Espresso Chorus, Sydney University Musical Society and the Newcastle University Choir.



Artistic Director: Michelle Leonard OAM



Michelle Leonard OAM is the founding Artistic Director and Conductor of Leichhardt Espresso Chorus and its chamber choir, Ristretto. She is widely sought after as a choral clinician on Australian repertoire and appears regularly as a guest speaker, adjudicator and workshop facilitator. Michelle was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for Services to the Community and Performing Arts in 2017. Michelle is also the founder, Artistic Director and Conductor of Moorambilla Voices. This nationally awarded program seeks at its core to give country kids a rare opportunity to sing, dance and create incredible performances with artists of the highest calibre. The friendships, performances and opportunities the children make are life-changing. Under Michelle's direction, the program has flourished, receiving numerous national and state awards. For more information: moorambilla.com

PROLOGUE 1

We bring to you from Handel's pen,
A scriptural history lesson, when
In Egypt, plagues and storms contrived.
(Amazing, anyone survived).

First, we'll introduce the plight
Of the ground-down, homesick Israelite;
And maybe, further on, discuss,
Some aspects of their Exodus.

But spare a thought for the Egyptians,
Prime victims of Divine conniptions.
With all those bugs and rain and hail,
Then death - surely beyond the pale?

And yet, as we reflect and ponder,
Looking out, to the wide blue yonder,
Has what's happening now, been here before,
Three thousand years ago, or more?

'Tis tempting a likeness for us to draw
'tween Egypt's plague, and our Covid war;
Hailstones and rain, versus our La Niña,
(Didn't-think-I'd-find-a-rhyme - well, Diña?)

PROLOGUE 2

Many Egyptians were prepared to pay
To send the Israelites on their way;
Believing their serfs had brought the curse,
Were petrified of something worse,

And so they paid them, the whole lot of 'em,
Anything, to be entirely shot of 'em.
But Moses' demand "Let My People Go",
Was thwarted by Pharaoh's one word "NO!".



cont...

Then the Great Almighty, hugely riled
Slew each firstborn Egyptian child.
Defeated Pharaoh offered a reprieve
And the Israelites were allowed to leave.

And so they did, hearts filled with glee
Made their way to the distant sea.
But Pharaoh then, with due dispatch,
Sent forth his chariots them to catch

Israelites, 'tween hard place and rock
Had little option but take stock.
They chided Moses, "Where now from here?"
To which he retorted - "Never fear!"

To show them that he wasn't kidding
Raised his staff at the Almighty's bidding
The Red Sea waters were split in two;
Israelites gestured, "After You."

And so it was Moses led his band
To the road leading to the Promised Land.
The Israelites thanked their Almighty Saviour,
While apologising for their misbehaviour.

Moses waved his staff once more;
The Sea returned to where it was before;
Charioteers found they couldn't hack it,
(Their kit failing to include life jacket.)

And so it was that Pharaoh's forces,
The men, the chariots and faithful horses,
Were drowned, while obeying Pharaoh's orders
At a spot well clear of Egypt's borders.

CHOIR - PART 1

And their cry
They loathed to drink
He spake the word
He gave them hailstones
He sent a thick darkness
He smote all the first born
But as for his people
He rebuked the Red Sea
He led them through the deep
But the waters overwhelmed their
enemies



CHOIR - PART 2

Moses and the children of Israel
I will sing unto the Lord
He is my God
And I will exalt him
Thy right hand, O Lord
And in the greatness
The Lord shall reign
The Lord shall reign
Sing ye to the Lord

Chamber Orchestra



Lead **Madelaine Easton**
Violin 2 **Monique Irik**
Violin 2 **Julia Russoniello**
Viola **Nicole Forsyth**
Viola **Meagan Turner**

Cello **Eleanor Betts**
Cello **Thomas Rann**
Double Bass **Kirsty McCahon**
Percussion **Kerryn Joyce**
Harpicord **Ben Burton**

Soprano Saxophone 1 **Christina Leonard**
Soprano Saxophone 2 **James Nightingale**
Tenor Saxophone **Nick Russoniello**
Trombone 1 **Dale Vail**
Trombone 2 **Jarrod Callaghan**

The Leichhardt Espresso Chorus

The Leichhardt Espresso Chorus is a community choir of over 80 singers. Founded in 1998 by Artistic Director Michelle Leonard, the Chorus includes a chamber choir, Ristretto, and is accompanied by Benjamin Burton. The LEC actively celebrates new Australian choral music by an extensive annual program of commissions, partnerships and collaborations with composers, ensembles and musicians. We have commissioned and performed world premieres and arrangements of well over 100 new choral works and choral classics, including *Messiah Reimagined* at City Recital Hall in 2019.



Soprano: Catherine De Lorenzo, Elisabeth Burke, Gwyn Jones, Jan Redman, Janet Coppin, Jeanne Kinninmont, Kathy Green, Liane Clarke, Louise Cantrill, Josie Gibson, Meg Callander, Michelle Perini, Pat Veenendaal, Polly Bernard, Suzanne Berkeley, Suzanne Pierce, Trish Pearse, Wilhelmina Brown. **Alto:** Alison Jaworski, Bronwyn Neal, Bronwyn Vost, Caroline Pugh, Chloe Hardwick-Jones, Christine Walters, Corinne Mesana, Debby Cramer, Diane Paul, Georgie Cropper, Glenda Stone, Jane Robinson, Janet Wills, Jenny Hislop, Linda Wills, Lisa Maffina, Magali Wardle, Meredith Cohen, Pepe Newton, Rebecca Nash, Sophie Fickler, Stephanie Razel, Suzanne Avis, Therese Berrigan. **Tenor:** Chris Magocki, Damien Kuan, David Allen, Geordie Marsh, Malcolm Day, Richard Lane. **Bass:** Adam Smith, Alan Morrison, Bob Cunningham, Jim Fleming, Jock Baird, Mike Dunkley, Paul Heath, Pedro Molina, Phil Cohen, Richard Goodman, Stu Annels.

COMING UP! Join the choir!

Mass of Deliverance, Dan Walker

We will be presenting Dan Walker's major work with two new Movements, commissioned during COVID. Hear the choir in full flight, accompanied by magnificent brass, percussion, strings and piano. The LEC will also be taking part in the 50th Birthday celebration of the Sydney Opera House in the concert series 'At the steps' in October 2022.



All choristers welcome to join, with no audition required and discounts for under 25s. Tenors and basses particularly welcome. Contact admin@espressochorus.com.au for more information or see ESPRESSOCHORUS.COM.AU for details. First rehearsal Wednesday 1 June, Leichhardt Public School Hall, 7pm.

MASSIVE THANK YOU!

The LEC would like to extend our thanks to Paul Heppell (birdsinsuits.com) for his wonderful Frog illustration; to the community of the Hunter Baillie Church in Annandale for their support; and to Leichhardt Public School for the use of their hall and the loan of their timpani. Thank you to Gerard and Partners for their very generous support of the beautiful Harpsichord on loan from Nathan Cox. Thank you to the LEC Committee for their hard work in presenting this concert: President, Lisa Maffina, Vice President & Artistic Director: Michelle Leonard, Treasurer: Therese Berrigan, Secretary: Adam Smith, General members: Bronwyn Neal, Georgie Cropper, Gwyn Jones, Stu Annels, Suzanne Pierce.



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