

BYRD ENSEMBLE

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HANDEL DIXIT DOMINUS

*This program was made possible by the generosity of
Craig Miller & Rebecca Norton.*

Saturday, May 2, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.
Town Hall, Seattle, WA

Sunday, May 3, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.
Holy Rosary Church, Seattle, WA

Program

CHANT Deus in adjutorium meum intende
CHANT Antiphon I: Pulchra es et decora
HANDEL Dixit Dominus, HWV 232
CHANT Antiphon I: Pulchra es et decora
CHANT Antiphon II: Sicut myrrha electa
HANDEL Laudate pueri, HWV 237
Arwen Myers, *soloist*
CHANT Antiphon II: Sicut myrrha electa
Intermission
CHANT Antiphon IV: Benedicta filia tua Domino
HANDEL Nisi Dominus, HWV 238
CHANT Antiphon IV: Benedicta filia tua Domino
CHANT Magnificat Antiphon: Alma Redemptoris Mater
FALSIBORDONI Magnificat
HANDEL Saeviat tellus inter rigores, HWV 240
Ruth Schauble, *soloist*
CHANT Dominus vobiscum
CHANT Benedicamus Domino

In order to fully experience the integration of Handel's compositions with the Carmelite chant, kindly withhold any applause until the end of each half of the program.

BYRD ENSEMBLE

Markdavin Obenza
Artistic Director

Augusta McKay Lodge
Concertmaster

Doug Fullington
Chant Choir conductor

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Violin I</i>
Natalie Ingrisano	Augusta McKay Lodge
Maria Mannisto	Anna Okada
Arwen Myers*	Ethan Lin
Sophia Nash	
Margaret Obenza*	<i>Violin II</i>
Ruth Schauble*	Courtney Kuroda
	Mary Manning

<i>Alto</i>	<i>Viola I</i>
Sarra S. Doyle*	Stef Creswell
Erica Dunkle	
Joshua Haberman	

<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Viola II</i>
Orrin Doyle	Laurie Wells
Elliott Encarnacion*	<i>Oboe I</i>
David Hendrix*	Matthew Hudgens

<i>Bass</i>	<i>Oboe II</i>
Willimark Obenza	Andrew Blanke
Craig Phillips	
Matthew Peterson*	<i>Cello</i>
	Adaiha MacAdam-Somer

<i>Chant Choir</i>	<i>Bass</i>
Kelvin Boateng	Ross Gilliland
Dustin Kaspar	
Jacob Malpocker	<i>Organ</i>
Robin Wyatt-Stone	Sheila Bristow

**Soloists*

This program was developed by
Doug Fullington.



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BYRD ENSEMBLE



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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Born in Halle in 1685, George Frideric Handel was trained in music from childhood. By his early twenties, he was a skilled keyboardist, violinist, and composer, active in Hamburg. His first opera, *Almira*, premiered in 1705.

During the years 1706–1710, Handel traveled in Italy, with a consequential stay in Rome. There he was immediately received by elite patrons who helped him gain a foothold in the competitive Italian musical scene. Handel flourished in the limelight, composing prolifically and earning himself the nickname “il caro Sassone” (the dear Saxon).

Although opera was banned in Rome by Pope Clement XI during the early years of the 18th-century, Handel nevertheless incorporated the dramatic and flamboyant style of Italian opera in his new cantatas and oratorios—the latter were essentially concert versions of operas, often with Biblical themes—both mastering and further developing the style as he progressed. As would be expected when in Rome, Handel also wrote a handful of liturgical pieces. What may be unexpected, however, is that these arguably include some of the composer’s most

thrilling and electrifying creations. The story behind them is interesting, too.

Commentary and research spanning nearly two centuries have shown that seven of Handel’s sacred works composed in Rome have a likely connection to Vespers of the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the principal feast day of the Carmelite Order, celebrated annually on July 16. The office of Vespers features a series of psalms that culminates in the centerpiece of the liturgy, the Magnificat, the canticle (song) of Mary. Handel’s works that can be linked to the Carmelite Vespers include the psalm settings *Dixit Dominus*, *Laudate pueri*, and *Nisi Dominus*; the antiphons (short texts sung before and after each psalm) *Haec est regina* and *Te decus virginum*; the Marian antiphon *Salve regina*; and the motet *Saeviat tellus*, whose score bears the inscription “per la Madonna Santissima del Carmine” and whose text repeatedly references the Carmelite Order. All are scored for various combinations of voices, both solo and choral, and an orchestra of strings and continuo. Two of the works include a pair of oboes, one of Handel’s favored instruments.

Various features of these settings come together to form a picture of a grand Vespers service that may have been celebrated in Rome on July 16, 1707. The two antiphons are proper to the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and two of the psalms, *Laudate pueri* and *Nisi Dominus*, can be linked to it based on their dates of composition: Handel's autograph score (that is, the score written in his hand) for *Laudate pueri* is dated by him July 8, 1707. His autograph score for *Nisi Dominus* no longer exists, but reliable evidence suggests that he completed the first five movements on July 13, 1707, and composed the sixth movement, a *Gloria Patri* for double choir, on the same day. Sources also suggest that these two psalms were commissioned by Handel's patron Cardinal Carlo Colonna, a crucial champion of the young composer as well as a major supporter of the Carmelite Order in Rome. The three remaining works have less direct connections to the July 16 feast but all were composed while Handel was in Rome, making them likely candidates for inclusion.

The British musicologist Graham Dixon has combined Handel's music with Carmelite chant to re-create the Vespers service celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The Byrd Ensemble's performance includes the four most substantial settings by Handel and enough of the surrounding chant to provide listeners with the unique experience of hearing the juxtaposition of simple liturgical chant with the ornate detail of the High Baroque.

Following the opening call-and-response chants and antiphon *Pulchra es*, Handel's *Dixit Dominus* takes pride of place as the first Vespers psalm. At forty minutes, *Dixit* is the largest work on the program and starts things off with a bang, featuring athletic and virtuosic writing that demonstrates the high level of skill the Roman choral singers possessed. The second psalm, *Laudate pueri*, introduces a lighter texture and features solo soprano throughout, accompanied by strings and oboes and occasionally backed by the choir. The third psalm, *Nisi Dominus*, opens the program's second half. As a balance to *Laudate pueri*, *Nisi* features alto, tenor, and bass soloists and concludes in a grand manner with divided choir.

No Roman setting of the Magnificat by Handel is known to exist, but this loss offers the opportunity to include a setting in the *falsibordoni* style—harmonized chant—that was common in early 18th-century Rome. Here, the

chant choir alternates verses with four soloists—think a barbershop quartet with the melody in the third lowest voice.

As a substitute for the chanted antiphon that follows the Magnificat, *Saeviat tellus* is the final setting by Handel on the program. For solo soprano with strings and oboes, this motet contains all the elements of a wide-ranging operatic role, only in this context each aria is sung in succession. The fireworks of the opening are balanced in later movements by a beautiful lyricism, and the motet concludes with a rollicking *Alleluia*.

Handel never again composed for the Catholic liturgy, although a number of his musical ideas from his Roman compositions re-appeared in later works. He surely never forgot the unique experiences of this formative youthful sojourn in Italy.

-Doug Fullington

ABOUT THE BYRD ENSEMBLE

Described as “pure and radiant” (Gramophone), “immensely impressive” (Early Music Review), and “rich, full-voiced, and perfectly blended” (Early Music America), the Byrd Ensemble has been internationally acclaimed for its performances and recordings of chamber vocal music, particularly Renaissance polyphony. John Rutter describes the ensemble as “a fine group that has achieved an enviable standard of tuning, blend, and ensemble.” Founded in 2004, the Byrd Ensemble, directed by Markdavin Obenza, is a professional ensemble made up of 10 to 12 singers. The ensemble presents a subscription series in Seattle, and it tours across the United States and internationally.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MARKDAVIN OBENZA is a choral director, recording producer, singer, and composer. He is also the director of Seattle-based Radiance, specializing in American choral music, and Director of Choral Activities at Trinity Parish Church in Seattle. As a producer for Scribe Records, Markdavin has produced recordings for over 40 choirs and soloists, several of which have been reviewed in *Gramophone*, *Early Music America*, *Early Music Review*, and *Fanfare*. He has also produced and directed videos including Caroline Shaw's *and the swallow*, which was featured on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and Shaker Spirituals in Maine (2021) for the Library of Congress American Folklife Center.

AUGUSTA MCKAY LODGE

Augusta McKay Lodge is an internationally acclaimed violinist known for her vibrant presence in the field of historical performance. She appears regularly as soloist, chamber musician, concertmaster and director throughout Europe and North America, most notably with Les Arts Florissants and Voices of Music. Her performances have been heard at major venues and festivals including Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, London's Royal Albert Hall (BBC Proms), the Edinburgh Festival, and the Berkeley Early Music Festival. Augusta's solo discs *Beyond Bach and Vivaldi* (Naxos) and *Corelli's Band* (Naxos) have garnered great acclaim and rave reviews. A special LP edition of Vivaldi's "Grosso Mogul" is available through Voices of Music. Her 2026 season includes directing a program at the Oregon Bach Festival as conductor and violinist, and a three-city tour of Australia performing Vivaldi concertos with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. Augusta serves on the faculty of the Berwick Academy (Oregon), and as director of the Emerging Artists Program with Voices of Music (California). A native of Oberlin, Ohio, she resides in Paris.



DOUG FULLINGTON

Doug Fullington is a musicologist and dance historian. He founded the Tudor Choir in 1993 and has sung with the Compline Choir of St. Mark's Cathedral, the Tallis Scholars, and Byrd Ensemble. Recent music projects include conducting the Tudor Choir and Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra in performances of choreographer Rena Butler's ballet *Cracks* and the publication by Bärenreiter-Verlag of a critical edition of the score of Adolphe Adam's ballet *Giselle* (1841), which Doug co-edited with Marian Smith. Doug's work in dance primarily focuses on 19th-century French and Russian ballet. Earlier this year, *Pointe Magazine* noted, "Seattle native Doug Fullington has built an international reputation for resurrecting and restaging classical ballets from the 19th century." Doug is co-author, with Marian Smith, of *Five Ballets from Paris and St. Petersburg* (Oxford, 2024). Recent dance projects include staging *The Sleeping Beauty* with Peter Boal for Pacific Northwest Ballet, a production featuring costumes by Paul Tazewell (*Hamilton*, *Wicked*), and staging *Star on the Rise*, a reimagination of the 19th-century ballet classic *La Bayadère*, with Phil Chan at Indiana University. Visit dougfullington.com for more.



TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

CHANT: Deus in adiutorium meum intende

Deus in adiutorium meum intende.
Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc,
et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.
Alleluia.

*O God, come to my assistance.
O Lord, make haste to help me.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Alleluia.*

CHANT: Antiphon I: Pulchra es et decora

Pulchra es et decora, filia Jerusalem, terribilis ut castrorum
acies ordinata.

*You are beautiful and graceful, O daughter of Jerusalem,
awesome as an army set in array.*

HANDEL: Dixit Dominus, HWV 232

I (Chorus): Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis,
donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.

II (Aria, Alto): Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus ex Sion:
dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.

III (Aria, Soprano): Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae in
splendoribus sanctorum, ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

IV (Chorus): Juravit Dominus, et non poenitebit eum: Tu es
sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

V (Chorus): Dominus a dextris tuis, confregit in die irae suae
reges.

VI (Chorus): Judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas:
conquassabit capita in terra multorum.

VII (Aria, Soprano & Alto): De torrente in via bibet: propterea
exaltabit caput.

VIII (Chorus): Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

IX (Chorus): Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in
saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*I. The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou on my right hand, until I
make thine enemies thy footstool.*

*II. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Sion: be
thou ruler, even in the midst among thine enemies.*

*III. In the day of thy power shall the offerings be free-will
offerings with an holy worship: I have begotten thee of the
womb before the morning star.*

*IV. The Lord sware, and will not repent: Thou art a Priest for
ever after the order of Melchisedech.*

*V. The Lord upon thy right hand shall wound even kings in the
day of his wrath.*

*VI. He shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places
with the dead bodies: and smite in sunder the heads over
diverse countries.*

*VII. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift
up his head.*

*VIII. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Ghost.*

*IX. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.*

Repeat CHANT: Antiphon I: Pulchra es et decora

CHANT: Antiphon II: Sicut myrrha electa

Sicut myrrha electa odorem dedisti suavitatis, sancta Dei
Genitrix.

*As chosen myrrh you have given a sweet fragrance, O holy
Mother of God.*

HANDEL: Laudate pueri, HWV 237

I (Chorus): Laudate pueri Dominum, laudate nomen Domini.

II (Aria, Soprano): Sit nomen Domini benedictum ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum.

III (Aria, Soprano): A solis ortu usque ad occasum laudabile nomen Domini.

IV (Chorus): Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus, et super caelos gloria eius.

V (Aria, Soprano): Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster, qui in altis habitat et humilia respicit in caelo et in terra?

VI (Aria, Soprano): Suscitans a terra inopem et de stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eum cum principibus populi sui.

VII (Aria, Soprano): Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo, matrem filiorum laetantem.

VIII (Chorus): Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

I. Praise the Lord, O ye servants of the Lord: praise the name of the Lord.

II. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore.

III. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised.

IV. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

V. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth?

VI. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.

VII. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.

VIII. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Repeat CHANT: Antiphon II: Sicut myrrha electa

Intermission

CHANT: Antiphon IV: Benedicta filia tua Domino

Benedicta filia tu a Domino, quia per te fructum vitae communicavimus.

Blessed are you, daughter, by the Lord, for through you we have partaken of the fruit of life.

HANDEL: Nisi Dominus, HWV 238

I (Chorus): Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam. Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.

II (Aria, Tenor): Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere, surgite postquam sederitis, qui manducatis panem doloris.

III (Aria, Alto): Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum. Ecce haereditas Domini filii, merces fructus ventris.

IV (Aria, Bass): Sicut sagittae in manu potentis, ita filii excussorum.

V (Aria, Tenor): Beatus vir qui implevit desiderium suum ex ipsis: non confundetur cum loquetur inimicis suis in porta.

VI (Double Chorus): Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

I. Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

II. It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness.

III. For so he giveth his beloved sleep. Lo, children and the fruit of the womb: are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.

IV. Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant: even so are the young children.

V. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

VI. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Repeat CHANT: Antiphon IV: Benedicta filia tua Domino

CHANT: Magnificat Antiphon: Alma Redemptoris Mater

Alma Redemptoris Mater, quae pervia caeli porta manes, et stella maris, succurre cadenti, surgere qui curat, populo: Tu quae genuisti, natura mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem: Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.

Loving Mother of the Redeemer, who remains the open gate of heaven and star of the sea, help your falling people who strive to rise: You who bore, while nature marveled, your holy Creator: Virgin before and after, receiving that Ave from the mouth of Gabriel, have mercy on sinners.

FALSIBORDONI: Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea Dominum, et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum nomen ejus. Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies: timentibus eum. Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui. Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles. Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes. Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in saecula. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations. He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

HANDEL: Saeviat tellus inter rigores, HWV 240

I (Aria, Soprano): Saeviat tellus inter rigores: impetu, turbine, Carmelitae, ne pavete. Fremat Lucifer inter ardores, artibus, astibus ditis minas irridete.
II (Recitative, Soprano): Carmelitarum ut confirmet ordinem, Virgo sacra descendit de Olympo.
III (Aria, Soprano): O nox dulcis, quies serena, in qua Virgo caelitem Regina nostros visitat agros.
IV (Aria, Soprano): Stellae fidae, vobis sit cura lucere Carmelitis in mundo.
V (Recitative, Soprano): Sub tantae Virginis tutela, triumphat Carmelitarum familia.
VI (Aria, Soprano): Alleluia.

*I. Let the earth rage with harshness: amid assault and storm, Carmelites, do not be afraid. Though Lucifer roars among the flames, with his tricks and wiles, laugh at the threats of hell.
II. To confirm the order of the Carmelites, the holy Virgin descended from on high.
III. O sweet night, serene repose, in which the Virgin Queen of heaven visits our fields.
IV. Faithful stars, let it be your care to shine upon the Carmelites in the world.
V. Under the protection of so great a Virgin, the family of the Carmelites triumphs.
VI. Alleluia.*

CHANT: Dominus vobiscum

Dominus vobiscum. Et cum spiritu tuo.

The Lord be with you. And with thy spirit.

CHANT: Benedicamus Domino

Benedicamus Domino. Deo gratias.

Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen.

May the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

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As we wrap up our 2025–2026 season, I want to thank you for your support of our work. Special programs like today's are only possible because of you. If you'd like to contribute toward future special projects, please email Markdavin Obenza at markdavin@byrdensemble.com.

Next up is our annual Byrd International Course 2026 in France, where 40 singers from around the world will gather at a 15th-century Renaissance chateau nestled in the rolling countryside of the Périgord Vert in Dordogne, southwestern France —full immersion in Franco-Flemish Renaissance music.

We are currently planning our 2026–2027 season and look forward to sharing our plans in the coming months.

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Markdavin Obenza, Artistic Director

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