

ENSEMBLE CAPRICE 30^{ans} years

with

Ensemble vocal Arts-Québec

Maison symphonique, Montreal

G.Fr. Handel

Messiah

Jaap Hamburger
Georg Friedrich Handel
Matthias Maute

Hope and Belief (2020)
Messiah, HWV 56 Selection of choruses
O magnum mysterium (2021)

Ensemble Caprice
Ensemble vocal Arts Québec

Karina Gauvin soprano
Matthias Maute conductor



ENSEMBLE CAPRICE 30

“Ensemble Caprice has established itself as immensely thoughtful and progressive force on the musical scene” *The New York Times*

PROGRAMME

Jaap Hamburger

Hope and Belief (Montreal, 2020)

George Frederic Handel

The Messiah HWV56 – Selection of choruses

Part I (excerpts)

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed

And He shall purify the sons of Levi

For unto a child is born

Pifa

Recitative: There were shepherds abiding in the field - Karina Gauvin, soprano

Glory to God in the highest

His yoke is easy, His burthen is light

Part II (excerpts)

Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows

All we like sheep have gone astray

He trusted in God

The Lord gave the word

Let us break their bonds asunder

Hallelujah!

Part III (excerpts)

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

Amen

Matthias Maute

O magnum mysterium (Montreal, 2021)



ENSEMBLE CAPRICE

Matthias Maute Artistic Director

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ENSEMBLE CAPRICE 30 ans years

Matthias Maute conductor
Karina Gauvin soprano

Ensemble vocal Arts Québec

Soprano Janelle Lucyk, Ariadne Lih, Dorothéa Ventura
Alto Kristin Hoff, Claudine Ledoux, Meagan Zantingh
Tenor Kerry Bursey, Jean-Sébastien Allaire, Arthur Tanguay-Labrosse
Bass John Giffen, Clayton Kennedy, William Kraushaar

Ensemble Caprice

Violin 1 Olivier Brault, Tanya LaPerrière, Julie Triquet
Violin 2 Lucie Ringuette, Natalie Cadotte, Emily Redhead
Viola Pemi Paull, Valérie Arsenault
Cello Susie Napper, Jean-Christophe Lizotte
Double bass Reuven Rothman
Flute Sophie Larivière
Oboe Matthew Jennejohn, Karim Nasr
Bassoon François Viault
Trumpet Alexis Basque, Francis Pigeon
Timpani Phil Hornsey
Harpichord Ilya Poletaev

Ensemble Caprice and Ensemble vocal Arts-Québec



Programme notes

George Friderich Handel: *Messiah*

This is certainly not the first concert recording of Handel's *Messiah*. However, during the live recording in an empty hall it felt like we all were hearing this famous oratorio for the very first time. After the long drought brought on by the pandemic, this first reunion of choir and orchestra in a wonderful concert hall felt like the rebirth of the spirit of music!

Due to sanitary restrictions, our choral forces would be considered rather lightweight compared to the bombastic Handel tradition that has flourished since the late 18th century. The famous performance of *Messiah* at the Crystal Palace in London in 1857 as part of the "Great Handel Festival" featured no fewer than 2000 singers and 500 musicians!

Our choir of 12 would have been neither heard nor seen in such a sea of singers.

Interestingly enough, it turns out that Handel had a choir of only 16 singers at his disposal when he travelled from London to lead the first performance of his oratorio on April 13, 1742 in Dublin. And when in 1789 Mozart was commissioned to adapt the instrumentation of *Messiah*, his new version, with an additional extended wind section, was premiered with a choir of 12 voices.

Obviously, there is no right or wrong as far as performance size is concerned. The fact that our vocal forces resemble those of the first performances that Handel himself conducted does not make our version more authentic. However, compared to the heavy lifting of a choir of 2000, the flexibility and lightness of a twelve-voice choir reveals fascinating layers of the work. Handel showed remarkable mastery in his ability to explore the profound connection between words and music. His music bursts with dramatic rhetoric that seems to place both performers and listeners on the stage of the *theatrum mundi*. When in "*We all like sheep*" human beings are ironically compared to sheep, the music seems to reflect a cosmic laughter that is light years away from the relentlessly pounding accusation of the preceding chorus "*Surely he has borne our griefs*".

We added the flute part of Mozart's arrangement to our version of *Messiah*, honouring in the same performance two giants of classical music.

We also added a short dialogue between Handel and two living composers, the two Mécénat Musica composers in residence: Jaap Nico Hamburger and Matthias Maute. In the summer of 2020, during our project *Mini-Concerts Santé*, Jaap's beautiful "*Hope and Belief*" became the title song for the singers and musicians of Ensemble vocal Arts-Québec and Ensemble Caprice who delivered 4,900 *Mini-Concerts Santé* to 36,000 people during the lockdown. Music is a magical force that helped all of us get through the crisis! My piece, "*O magnum mysterium*", attempts to grasp something of the elusive mystery of music.

Matthias Maute

