

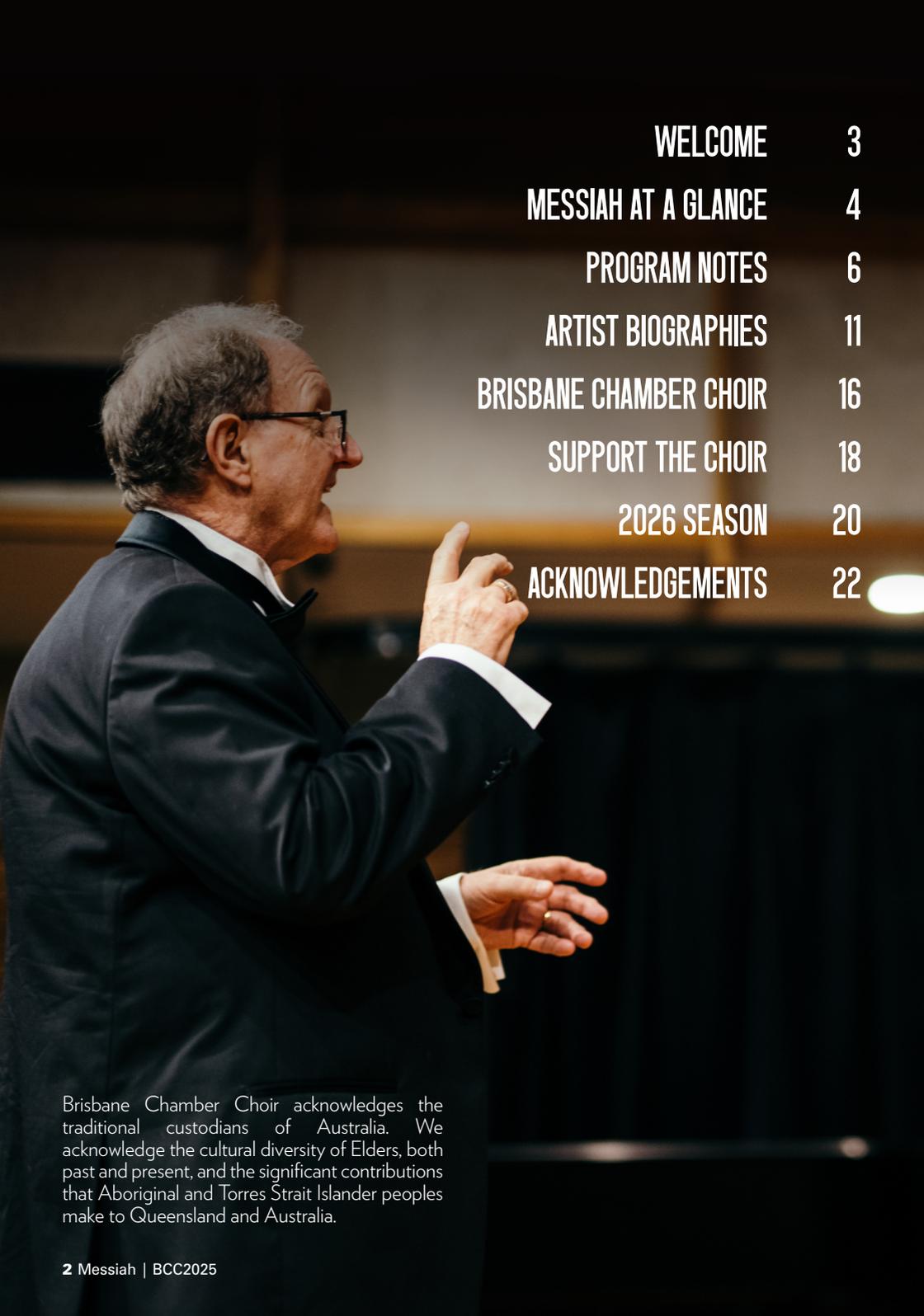
MESSIAH



TUES
2 DEC 2025
7.00PM

QPAC
CONCERT
HALL

BRISBANE
CHAMBER
CHOIR



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Brisbane Chamber Choir acknowledges the traditional custodians of Australia. We acknowledge the cultural diversity of Elders, both past and present, and the significant contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to Queensland and Australia.

WELCOME

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this evening's performance of Handel's Messiah with the Brisbane Chamber Choir. For nearly three centuries, this remarkable work has inspired performers and audiences alike with its blend of grandeur, intimacy, and timeless hope. Its familiar choruses and radiant arias continue to move us with the same freshness they held at their first performance.

This evening is made even more special by the participation of student singers from schools across South East Queensland. Their energy and enthusiasm bring new life to this masterpiece and remind us of the importance of music education in our community. I extend heartfelt thanks to the principals, conductors, and accompanists who have guided and encouraged their students in preparing for this event. Your support helps nurture a lifelong love of singing in these young musicians.

To our distinguished soloists, orchestral colleagues and choir, my great appreciation for the artistry and insight you bring to this stage. Messiah demands both technical mastery and deep

emotional connection, and it is a privilege to share this performance with such fine musicians.

I would also like to acknowledge our sponsors and supporters, whose generosity helps make performances like this possible. Their belief in the value of live choral music enables us to present ambitious works and foster the next generation of singers. If you would like to support the ongoing growth of the Brisbane Chamber Choir or help bring future projects to life, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Finally, to you, our audience, thank you for being here. Your presence sustains the living tradition of choral performance and affirms its place at the heart of our cultural life. May this evening's Messiah bring you a sense of joy, reflection, and renewal as we enter the festive season.

Graeme Morton AM
Artistic Director and Conductor
Brisbane Chamber Choir



MESSIAH AT A GLANCE

At its core, Handel's *Messiah* is the life story of Jesus Christ, however we would like to acknowledge the different world in which performance takes place compared to the one for which it was composed. Charles Jennens' text is sacred in nature, and heavily influences Handel's musical brushstrokes, but it does not define the work, whereas many of us find the beauty in its other aspects. Whether this is your first *Messiah*, or your fifty-first, we encourage you to look beyond your preconceived notions and let the performance delight you.

If you are new, we note a few things that will allow you an easy introduction in this world. Firstly, this Baroque masterpiece comes with its own quirky history. As the *Hallelujah Chorus* starts, many of your fellow patrons will stand, acknowledging a long tradition of the work. It is debated from where this first came, but a widely held story is that during an early performance King George II of England was so enamoured by the music he stood, and in accordance with the etiquette of time everyone else rose alongside him.

Handel's setting, with the exception of two orchestra only movements, oscillates between the majesty of Choruses, sung by the choir, to the more intimate Recitatives for single voice and continuo, and finally the Arias where our soloists show off their virtuosity. Each movement holds a different affect that is forged by the performers, but it is also important to remember that line and flow play an important role in the storytelling. As such we ask that acknowledgment of the performers in the form of applause is held to the end of each part.

As Jennens' text is such an integral part of the composition a digital copy of the libretto has been provided (available by scanning the QR code on the back of the program) as a point of reference; however patrons are encouraged to enjoy the grandeur of the occasion and refer to it sparingly.

Lastly, we are grateful that tonight's performance of Handel's *Messiah* is being recorded by ABC Classic. We strongly ask that all mobile phones are turned off and that you take care to be mindful of minimising any additional noise.

This evening's performance will run for approximately two hours with a 20-minute interval at the conclusion of the first part.

Part the First

1. Overture
Sinfonia
2. Comfort ye my people
Tenor Recitative
3. Ev'ry valley shall be exalted
Tenor Aria
4. And the glory of the Lord
Chorus
5. Thus saith the Lord
Bass Recitative
6. But who may abide the day of His coming
Alto Aria
7. And He shall purify the sons of Levi
Chorus
8. Behold, a virgin shall conceive
Alto Recitative
9. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
Alto Aria & Chorus
10. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth
Bass Recitative
11. The people that walked in darkness
Bass Aria
12. For unto us a Child is born
Chorus
13. Pifa
Pastoral Symphony
14. There were shepherds abiding in the field
Soprano Recitative
15. And lo, the angel of the Lord
Soprano Recitative
16. And the angel said unto them
Soprano Recitative

17. And suddenly there was with the angel
Soprano Recitative

18. Glory to God in the highest
Chorus

19. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
Soprano Aria

20. Then shall the eyes of the blind
Soprano Recitative

21. He shall feed His flock
Alto & Soprano Aria

22. His yoke is easy
Chorus

Part the Second

23. Behold the Lamb of God
Chorus

24. He was despised
Alto Aria

25. Surely He hath borne our griefs
Chorus

26. And with His stripes we are healed
Chorus

27. All we like sheep have gone astray
Chorus

28. All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn
Tenor Recitative

29. He trusted in God
Chorus

30. Thy rebuke hath broken His heart
Tenor Recitative

31. Behold, and see if there be any sorrow
Tenor Aria

32. He was cut off out of the land of the living
Tenor Recitative

33. But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell
Tenor Aria

34. The Lord gave the word
Chorus

35. How beautiful are the feet
Soprano Aria

36. Their sound is gone out
Chorus

37. Why do the nations so furiously rage together
Bass Aria

38. Let us break their bonds asunder
Chorus

39. He that dwelleth in heaven
Tenor Recitative

40. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron
Tenor Aria

41. Hallelujah
Chorus

Part the Third

42. I know that my Redeemer liveth
Soprano Aria

43. Since by man came death
Chorus

44. Behold, I tell you a mystery
Bass Recitative

45. The trumpet shall sound
Bass Aria

46. Worthy is the Lamb
Chorus

47. Amen
Chorus



Much more than a masterwork, *Messiah* is a cultural phenomenon. Lauded at its premiere, it has been anticipated, celebrated, discussed and debated by audiences for the better part of three centuries. Performances have taken place in humble parish churches and open-air spaces, in solid municipal buildings and venues as ornate as the Chapel Royal of the Palace of Versailles. Even Beijing's Forbidden City Concert Hall has played host to the world's most famous oratorio. For some listeners, *Messiah* is their first experience of choral music, while for others it has become a beloved annual ritual – a joyous Christmas treat, or a sacred Lenten pilgrimage.

An unexpected prodigy

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) was born in the same year as both Domenico Scarlatti and Johann Sebastian Bach. Other aspects of his origin were less auspicious: his early life was spent in Halle, a once-prosperous German city

made impoverished by thirty years of religiopolitical conflict, and his aging father, a successful member of the now obsolete profession of 'barber-surgeon', was firmly of the opinion that his son should study law.

Stories and legends explaining how Handel's natural and irrepressible musical genius was able to overcome the more straitlaced ambitions of his stern father abound. But, in the absence of direct evidence for these tales, it is reasonable to surmise that Handel's mother, the much younger partner in her marriage, was both sympathetic and influential in this regard. She was from a family of Lutheran theologians, and this alone would have ensured that her eldest child was steeped in the sung chorales and instrumental voluntaries which accompanied church services in Halle. Martin Luther himself, who wrote extensively on the subject, was strongly in favour of music education for the young, and, indeed, regarded music as such a divine gift as to be a foretaste of heaven.

From his pre-teen years, Handel's music lessons were with Halle's finest church musician, Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow, who trained his young protégé in organ, harpsichord, violin, oboe, counterpoint and composition. It was the 18-year-old Handel's skill as a violinist which enabled him to turn his back on his first appointment as a cathedral Kapellmeister in Halle. Instead, in an early demonstration of the ambitious independence that would mark his whole career, he set out for Hamburg, where he worked as an orchestral musician and where his first operas were performed.

Having established himself as an emerging composer of note, he spent four years in Italy. Opera had been banned in Rome, so Handel's output from his time there consisted of sacred works. Among them was his first oratorio, *La Resurrezione*, which dealt with the biblical account of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection.

The remarkable Mr Handel

On his return from Italy in 1710, Handel took up the position of Kapellmeister to Georg, Elector of Hanover. He was granted leave for 'a reasonable period' to travel to London, but overstayed his allotted time, and was still there when his employer ascended to the British throne in 1714. Any consequent lingering tensions between musician and monarch were apparently smoothed over by 1717, when Handel presented King George I with a suite of instrumental pieces, now known as Water Music, to accompany a royal cruise on the River Thames.

In his adopted country, Handel found an aristocratic audience for his Italian operas, and rode a wave of success as a theatrical entrepreneur until fashions changed and business slumped. Financial and physical breakdown followed. But out of this crisis emerged an entirely new period of creativity, in which Handel would eclipse his own fame as an operatic composer and provide the foundations for a musical institution, the English oratorio.

Oratorio had practical advantages over opera, not the least of which was its more modest budget. Costly sets and costumes were dispensed with, and purpose-built theatres were not required. The use of English texts meant that expensive imported Italian soloists could be replaced with local singers, including men from the choir of the Chapel Royal, with which Handel was closely associated, and female sopranos and contraltos from the London stage.

To appeal to a broader audience of mostly middle-class patrons, who were not familiar with classical mythology, Handel began to set texts based on widely known Bible stories. His first offerings in this vein, both from 1739, were Saul and Israel in Egypt. These were so well-received that Handel decided to lease a theatre specifically for the performance of oratorios during Lent, the solemn church season which precedes Easter. The first seeds of an enduring tradition were sown.

Whose Messiah?

References to 'Handel's Messiah', tend to give the impression that the oratorio was conceived, developed and executed in its entirety by the composer alone. In reality, the project was the brainchild of Charles Jennens (1700–1773), an influential scholar, literary editor and patron of the arts, who was Handel's most significant collaborator. Having supplied Handel with heroic narrative libretti for two earlier biblical oratorios, he began developing a 'Scripture Collection' on the subject of Jesus Christ himself, who is known in Christian theology as the 'Anointed One' or 'Messiah'.

Jennens was somewhat of an outsider in English society. Financially independent due to his immense inherited wealth, his social standing and political influence were limited by his principles. His mother's family had been for generations staunch supporters of the Stuart monarchs, and he was unwilling to swear allegiance to the incumbent Hanoverian kings. In spite of this, he remained a devoutly protestant member of the Church of England, and was never involved in any active attempts at rebellion.

In his personal life, Jennens was beset by tragedy and grief. His mother died when he was only seven years old, and by the time of his association with Handel, death had also robbed him of a beloved younger brother and the niece who was to have been heir to his considerable fortune. Reserved by nature, he suffered periods of debilitating depression and sought solace in work, study and generous philanthropy.

Jennens conceived Messiah as a response to the rise of the Enlightenment, and specifically the concept of Deism, in which God functions as a distant Creator, unwilling or unable to respond to human suffering. By gathering and assembling verses, primarily from the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, both of which were in regular use at the time, Jennens sought to offer a more comforting and

hopeful expression of religious faith to a wide audience. This vision was enthusiastically embraced by his friend Handel, who was also a lifelong practising Christian.

Handel received the new libretto, which was offered to him without any expectation of payment, in July 1741. He began composing in August and completed the orchestrated version in less than a month. Jennens, a meticulous scholar as well as a passable amateur musician, was taken aback by Handel's furious working pace, interpreting it as carelessness rather than the product of divine intervention. When revising structure and word-setting, the two clashed regularly, but mutual respect and admiration always overcame any temporary irritation. Handel never sought to downplay his librettist's contribution, and when he wrote to Jennens before the Dublin premiere, he referred to their latest collaboration as 'your oratorio, Messiah'.

Behold, I tell you a mystery

Jennens's impeccably crafted libretto shapes Messiah as a tripartite meditation on the divinity of Jesus Christ, rather a traditional heroic tale. In the first two sections, prophetic Old Testament verses, which point to the coming of God's anointed saviour, are intertwined with gospel accounts of Christ's incarnation, sacrificial death and resurrection, and interspersed with the personal perspectives offered by Miles Coverdale's English translations of selected psalms. The oratorio concludes with New Testament revelations predicting that this world's suffering will pass away with the Messiah's joyous and awe-inspiring return.

Thus grounded in the authority and mystery of the Bible, Handel's music illuminates the texts in gloriously varied style. Drawing on his appreciation for the rich English choral tradition, Handel conjures choruses filled with clear chordal homophony, intricate polyphony and delightfully decorative word painting. He exploits the contrasting timbres of his soloists, allocating, for

example, heraldic prophecy to the tenor, an assured statement of faith to the soprano, the foretelling of the birth of a holy child to the contralto, and the apocalyptic rumbling of the heavens and the earth to the bass. He adds a commanding orchestral overture to preface the opening solo, and inserts a pastoral instrumental interlude to set the scene for the gospel account of the nativity, in which shepherds are the first to hear the good news of Christ's birth.

The venue which housed the first performance of Messiah in 1742 was Neale's Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Dublin. Handel was already popular in the Irish capital, and his new oratorio played to a packed house, raising £400 to free debtors from prison and to support local hospitals. A second showing, for Handel's own financial benefit, was swiftly advertised and similarly well-received.

By contrast, the English premiere at Covent Garden in 1743 was met with opposition from those who questioned its suitability as a public activity during the solemn church season of Lent, and it received only a lukewarm response from critics. After some revision, Messiah was programmed for a 1750 concert in support of London's Foundling Hospital. This time, it was met with enthusiastic approval, and the charitable performances became an annual event. Handel left manuscripts of Messiah to the Foundling Hospital in his will, enabling the tradition to continue after his death, and cementing Messiah's place in the hearts and minds of London's concertgoing public.

Their sound is gone out into all lands

The earliest Messiah performances employed modestly sized instrumental ensembles and choirs of between 30 and 40 men and boys from local cathedrals. As orchestras expanded and developed, augmented versions of Messiah's instrumental parts were commissioned, including arrangements by Mozart, which helped to bring Handel's music to the attention of audiences in

Europe. The rise of large amateur choral societies in 19th-century Britain led to the tradition of staging Messiah as a massed choral event. Legendary Handel Festival performances from this era, staged at London's Crystal Palace, ballooned to include around 500 instrumentalists and over 3000 singers.

Brisbane audiences' first taste of Messiah in its entirety came in April 1873. The previous year, musician Richard Thomas Jeffries, recently arrived from England, had formed the Brisbane Musical Union, a choir made up of 'more than a hundred ladies and gentlemen' from church choirs on both sides of the river. For the Messiah performance they were accompanied by between 20 and 30 instrumental players, including well-known recitalist Madame Henrietta Mallalieu at the piano.

Messiah caused a stir in colonial Brisbane. The organisers were forced to insert a notice in local newspapers prohibiting curious residents from gaining access to practice sessions, with exception made only for those escorting singers to and from the venue. A Presbyterian minister condemned the project entirely, publicly rebuking his own choristers for taking part. On the night of the premiere, the 'gentleman tenor' soloist, a brave amateur, was suffering from a cold, and his even more courageous replacement was reportedly unable to do full justice to the opening strains of 'Comfort ye'.

Nevertheless, the efforts of Jeffries and his talented local musicians exceeded expectations, and the event sold out, leaving both critics and music-loving patrons eager for more. Repeat performances were organised in the same year, the first at St John's Pro-Cathedral in August, to celebrate the installation of a new pipe organ, and the second, a Christmas concert at the School of Arts, on the 23rd of December.

By the mid-20th century, scholars had begun peeling back the extra layers which had been applied to Handel's original scores and

performances, to discover anew the energy and freshness of Baroque musical practice and to pursue historical authenticity. From the 1980s, smaller Brisbane choirs accompanied by period instruments attracted new audiences to Messiah, while traditional choral societies continued to cater to those who enjoyed the pomp and circumstance of a symphonic event.

The opening of the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in 1985 provided Brisbane with a state-of-the-art, modern Concert Hall. Excerpts from Messiah were programmed for the centre's Spirit of Christmas concert that same year, and tonight marks the 34th performance of the complete work in QPAC's 40-year history.

Glad tidings of good things

Handel was the first composer in Western music history whose works continued to be performed widely after his death, and Messiah is at the heart of that sustained popularity. Its musical expression of hope and reassurance has resonated with generation upon generation. The Hallelujah Chorus, in particular, is so widely recognised as to be considered hackneyed, and yet, when heard in context, it dazzles as brightly and moves as deeply as it ever did.

After all, in spite of innumerable gains brought by three centuries of academic and scientific endeavour, our world is no less troubled today, and its inhabitants no less in need of inspiration and consolation than in Jennens and Handel's time. Rather than seeking to analyse Messiah's enduring appeal, then, it is perhaps wisest for us to simply and graciously receive it as a gift, to bask in its heavenly glories, and to rejoice in all the comfort it brings.

Programme notes prepared by Tricia Elgar for the Brisbane Chamber Choir, 2025.



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Graeme Morton AM (b. 1952) is widely acknowledged as one of Australia's most versatile and influential figures in choral, church and academic music. His career spans performance, education, composition, and advocacy, underpinned by a passionate dedication to both sacred and secular choral art.

Graeme's formal musical education began at the University of Queensland, where he studied organ under Robert Boughen, earning his Masters' degree. Early in his career he was engaged in Methodist (later Uniting) church music contexts, before being appointed the first Sub-Organist of St John's Cathedral, Brisbane. He later served nearly three decades as Director of Music at Christ Church, St Lucia, establishing a reputation for liturgical and concert excellence. In 2011 he returned to St John's as Director of Music, reinforcing his lifelong commitment to church-based musical life. His contributions to church music have been recognised by his award as a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music (FRSCM) a distinction held by luminaries such as Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten.

Perhaps best known to the wider public as a choral conductor, Graeme is the founding Director of the Brisbane Chamber Choir. Under his leadership, the ensemble has grown in reputation and breadth, performing repertoire extending from Renaissance polyphony to world premieres of Australian composition. The choir has commissioned works by Paul-Antoni Bonetti, Carl Crossin, Andrew Ford, Ross Edwards, Stephen Leek, Matthew Orlovich, Andrew Schultz, Paul Stanhope, Keren Terpstra, Joseph Twist and others.

In addition to the Brisbane Chamber Choir, Graeme was the founding Director of the St Peters Chorale (an award-winning high school choir)

during his time at St Peters Lutheran College, and co-founded The Australian Voices, serving as its inaugural director and conductor.

His international profile includes time as a Visiting Professor at St Olaf College, Minnesota, and invitations to prepare choirs for elite conductors such as Stephen Layton with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. He has represented Australia at the International Society for Music Education in Florida, Greece and Finland as well as at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Sydney. His doctoral research compared the development of leading high school choirs across three countries in the northern hemisphere. He also completed a Churchill Fellowship, investigating choral practices in the U.S.A. and Canada.

In the educational sphere, Graeme has held key positions in school music at Somerville House and St Peters Lutheran College, before assuming his present role in 2005 as Senior Lecturer and Choral Conducting Fellow at the University of Queensland.

As a composer, Graeme primarily writes for choir yet was commissioned to write a work for handbells. His works are published through Augsburg Fortress, Kjos Music and his own Morton Music imprint, which champions many Australian composers.

Graeme's service to the arts and education has been widely honoured. Among his recognitions include Order of Australia Medal (AM) for service to the arts; Prime Minister's Medal (2003) for contribution to music; Lord Mayor's Australia Day Cultural Award (Brisbane, 2011); Fellowship of the Royal School of Church Music (FRSCM); ACEL (Qld) Inspiring Educator Award (2020) and numerous other civic and peer awards.



Bonnie de la Hunty is a West Australian soprano specialising in Baroque and Classical repertoire, art song, and traditional folk song. She is the co-director of Perth-based Early Music ensemble, HIP Company.

Bonnie completed her Masters in Singing at the Royal Academy of Music, London; and Artist Diploma in Early Music at the Koninklijk Conservatorium, The Hague, Netherlands. Prior to this, she completed a Bachelor and Graduate Diploma of Music at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA, Edith Cowan University), where she was awarded as the university's top faculty graduate.

She has been a concert and operatic soloist with companies including the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Pinchgut Opera, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Bach Akademie Australia, Perth Symphony Orchestra, Freeze Frame Opera, Lost and Found Opera, Adelaide Baroque, Australian Baroque, Denmark Baroque, WASO Chorus, the UWA Choral Society, and Perth Symphonic Chorus. Bonnie sang with Brisbane Chamber Choir for the first time earlier this year in *Transcendence*.

Bonnie has recorded for HIP Company's debut album, *Pastorales* (2021), and recently released *Bedlam* (2025) and for ABC radio with *Australian Baroque* (2019).

Bonnie has given song recitals in the Netherlands, France, United Kingdom and Australia. She is a member of the St George's Cathedral Consort, and has also sung with ensembles The Song Company, Giovanni Consort, and Polyphony (UK).



Stephanie Dillon is an Australian Mezzo Soprano recognised for her “distinctively edged sound” (Sydney Morning Herald) and “rich and creamy tone” (Australian Arts Review). With a diverse repertoire that spans from Baroque to contemporary works, she thrives both as a soloist and an ensemble singer.

Stephanie enjoys regular appearances with many of the country's leading ensembles, including Bach Akademie Australia, the Song Company, Pinchgut Opera, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and Musica Viva Australia. As a soloist, Stephanie has performed with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Stephanie has been based in UK/Europe since 2024 and has worked with ensembles such as the Academy of Ancient Music, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Polyphony, Collegium Vocale Gent, The Tallis Scholars, Ora Singers, Voces8, plus many more. She has performed in many prestigious concert halls including Wigmore Hall in London, the Barbican Centre London, Royal Albert Hall, AMUZ Antwerp, Musicgebouw Amsterdam and the Philharmonie Berlin.

Stephanie is generously supported by the Ian Potter Cultural Foundation and the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust Overseas Music Scholarship.



Tenor **Andrew Goodwin** has appeared with opera companies in Europe, the UK, Asia and Australia, including the Bolshoi Opera, Gran Theatre Liceu Barcelona, Teatro Real Madrid, La Scala Milan, Classical Opera Company, Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera and Sydney Chamber Opera.

On the concert platform he has appeared with the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow Chamber Orchestra and all the major Australian symphony orchestras. A passionate song and Lieder advocate, Andrew has given recitals at Wigmore Hall, at Oxford Lieder and at major festivals throughout Australia.

Andrew's performances this year include returns to Adelaide Festival for Saariaho's *Innocence*, Victorian Opera for *Katya Kabanova* (Boris), West Australian Symphony for *Alfred* (Die Fledermaus) and the world premiere of Stanhope's *Mahāsāgar*, Adelaide Symphony (Mozart's Requiem), Sydney Chamber Choir (Bach Mass in B minor), Sydney Philharmonia Choir's presentation of the Mendelssohn version of *St Matthew Passion*, 4 Winds Festival recitals, and Melbourne Symphony (*Messiah*).

Andrew's recordings include Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise* and *When yesterday we met* (songs of Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky) with Daniel de Borah (ABC Classics), and *Artaxerxes* (Hasse), *Giasone* (Cavalli), *L'Amant jaloux* (Gretry) and *L'anima del filosofo* (Haydn) with Pinchgut Opera.

The recipient of many awards and scholarships Andrew studied voice at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and in the UK and has also received support from the Australian Music Foundation and ARS Musica Australis.



Australian baritone **Shaun Brown** has performed and studied in England, Germany, France, Italy and the US, where he completed a Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of North Texas.

A former Opera Queensland (OQ) Young Artist, Shaun's engagements with the company span more than three decades, appearing in over sixty productions, in addition to numerous concerts, festival events, workshops and masterclasses. He is known to Queensland audiences for his roles in *Don Giovanni*, *The Merry Widow*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Così fan tutte*, *Carmen*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Ruddigore*, or *The Witch's Curse!*. In 2021, he performed *A Poet's Love*, a recital with Sarah Crane and Alex Raineri as part of OQ's Studio Series in partnership with Brisbane Music Festival. Most recently, he performed in OQ's new productions of *La Cenerentola* and *La bohème* and *Così fan tutte*, as well as appearances in the inaugural Bel Canto Festival, *Opera at Jimbour* and the 2024 Festival of Outback Opera.

Internationally, Shaun has sung for *Opéra de Lyon*, *New Zealand International Arts Festival*, *Freiburg Opera*, *L'Atelier du Rhin*, and in New York at the Center for Contemporary Opera. He has performed to critical acclaim as a concert soloist in repertoire including Britten's *War Requiem*, Faure and Duruflé's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

Recently he was the bass soloist in Queensland Symphony Orchestra's much lauded performance of Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium*. Shaun also holds the position of Director of Performance at The University of Queensland, School of Music.



Brisbane Chamber Players

Brisbane Chamber Players bring together some of Brisbane's finest professional musicians, united by a shared passion for collaboration and musical excellence. Formed to support the performances of the Brisbane Chamber Choir, the ensemble embodies the artistry, precision, and warmth that define Brisbane's vibrant musical community. The Players share a deep commitment to both the timeless beauty of well-known choral masterworks and the excitement of discovering new contemporary and Australian compositions, enriching every performance with depth and vitality.

All members are experienced ensemble musicians, many of whom hold principal or full-time positions with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. We are especially thankful to Nicholas Tomkin, who brings together his network of talented friends and colleagues to make this orchestra truly special, and to Alan Smith, Concertmaster, whose outstanding musicianship and leadership forge an inspiring partnership between players and choir, creating performances that are both seamless and dynamic.

Violin 1

Alan Smith (Concertmaster)
Johnny van Gend
Rebecca Seymour
Camille Barry

Violin 2

Jane Burroughs
Nicholas Penfold
Delia Kinmont

Viola

Nicholas Tomkin
Sophie Ellis

Cello

Matthew Kinmont
MinJin Sung

Bass

Justin Bullock

Oboe

Vivienne Brooke
Ruby Cooper

Bassoon

David Mitchell

Trumpet

Alfie Carslake
Sophie Kukulies

Timpani

Jacob Enoka

Organ

Andrej Kouznetsov



St Peters
Lutheran
College



TOOWOOMBA
ANGLICAN SCHOOL
Est. 1911



Student Chorus

This evening's performance of Messiah is made even more special by the inclusion of student choirs from schools across South East Queensland, joining the Brisbane Chamber Choir for the rousing "Hallelujah Chorus" and the radiant final "Amen."

In the lead-up to tonight's concert, each school prepared its singers independently under the guidance of their own conductors and accompanists. These teachers devoted considerable time and skill to introducing their students to Handel's music, building confidence, musicianship, and ensemble awareness along the way.

The student choirs then came together in the Queensland Symphony Orchestra studio for a combined rehearsal under the direction of Graeme Morton AM. In that single, powerful rehearsal, the many voices united into one cohesive sound, creating the thrilling choral impact you will hear tonight.

We extend heartfelt thanks to the participating schools and their conductors for their commitment and artistry. Their dedication helps nurture the next generation of singers and ensures the continuing vitality of choral music in our community.

A full list of all students on stage tonight is available by scanning the QR code on the back of the program.

Brisbane State High Chorale

Principal: Greg Pierce

Conductors: Naomi Thurlow & Jane Iszlaub

Principal: Paul Robertson

Conductor: Imogen Bye

Morningside State School

Principal: Sheryl Kennedy

Conductor: David Allen

St John's Cathedral Boy and Girl Choristers

Dean: The Very Reverend Peter Catt

Conductors: Graeme Morton & Andrej Kouznetsov

St Peter's Lutheran College Chorale

Principal: Tim Kotzu

Conductor: Kathryn Morton

Tingalpa State School

Principal: Donna O'Keefe

Conductor: David Allen

Toowoomba Anglican School:

Secondary and Primary Chapel Choirs

Principal: Nick Johnstone

Conductor: Nerida Eckert

TSAC Chorale and Vocal Collective

Principal: Steven Morris

Conductor: Carly Wild

Windsor State School Chamber Choir

Principal: Shona Arneil

Conductor: Lindy-Jo Free

BRISBANE CHAMBER CHOIR

Under the inspired leadership of its founding director, Graeme Morton AM, Brisbane Chamber Choir has cemented its place as one of Australia's leading chamber ensembles. Described as 'a revelation of musical purity' and 'a composer's dream', the choir has an enduring commitment to exceptional choral artistry.

Since its formation in 1997, Brisbane Chamber Choir has enchanted audiences with glorious music of every era, from the Renaissance to the present day. Equally at home in intimate performance spaces, ornate cathedrals or grand concert halls, the choir comprises dedicated singers of the highest calibre from all walks of life. Each year, its programs include masterworks by the great composers of history, as well as the best of contemporary choral repertoire.

In addition, the ensemble maintains a particular focus on commissioning and performing new choral pieces by Australian composers. Commissions include works by Paul-Antoni Bonetti, Carl Crossin, Andrew Ford, Ross Edwards, Stephen Leek, Matthew Orlovich, Andrew Schultz, Paul Stanhope, Keren Terpstra and Joseph Twist.

Brisbane Chamber Choir has been privileged to collaborate with other outstanding musical artists and organisations, including the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Musica Viva, Ensemble Q, Southern Cross Soloists, the Adina String Quartet, the Badinerie Players, Flowers of Peace, the Australian War Memorial, Adelaide Chamber Singers, and Jonathon Rathbone, former director of the Swingle Singers.

Currently the resident chamber choir of St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane Chamber Choir is also an affiliate ensemble of the University of Queensland School of Music. Lumens Chamber Choir, an initiative designed to foster the talents of young adult choristers, was launched as an associate ensemble of Brisbane Chamber Choir in 2021.

Recently, the organisation introduced an internship program for emerging conductors, which provides opportunities to work closely with established professionals and to develop hands-on experience with the ensemble.

Critical acclaim for Brisbane Chamber Choir's 2025 season so far:

Vivaldi Vespers

John Andrew, Weekend Notes

Morton's direction was masterful, maintaining a delicate balance between the choir, soloists, and orchestra while also drawing out the emotional depth of the music ... The precision with which the choir navigated Vivaldi's intricate melismas – especially given the demands of his Baroque style – was nothing short of stunning.

Reincarnations

Brian Adamson, Stage Whispers

What I found inspiring about this concert was the ease with which the choir performed what are some of the most musically complex choral works I've ever heard in one sitting ... as if touched by magic, evoking a spiritual experience, not only from the composer's source material but also with the subtle use of phrasing, dynamics, elocution and general exposition.

Transcendence

Gillian Wills, Limelight

Immensely dedicated, the choir's unity and enthusiasm enthral the audience ... the choir and instrumental forces are impressively balanced ... intense, vibrant and sharply contrasted.

Verdi Requiem

Kitty Goodall, On the House

Their sound was rich, radiant, and unified, enveloping the hall like a wave of light. At times, they were a whispering cloud of spirits; at others, a celestial army. Morton ensured the choir's phrasing carried the same theatrical intelligence Verdi himself intended: the grandeur of opera, the reverence of ritual, the intensity of prayer. Their harmonies were so glorious they bordered on overwhelming ... the kind of beauty that presses tears from your eyes ...



SOPRANO

Elodie Geertsema
Charlotte Johnson
Naomi Jowett
Rebecca Le Cornu
Libby Lynch
Sandra Nissen
Corrin Prince
Brianna Rankine



ALTO

Alex Bartetzko
Emma Hutchings
John Nolan
Fiona Palmer
Angela Pascoe
Emma Steel



TENOR

Alexander Bowly
Clint Fox
Peter Garrett
Jonathan Hargreaves
Andrew Jefferies
Alexander Mason
Jeffrey Mitchell
Tam Ngyuen
Pieter Van der Have
Andrew Yang



BASS

Jacob Fowler
Christian Gante
Fr Duncan Gorwood
Elliot Rentoul
Toby Saltwell
Jason Schoutrop
Michael Strasser

SUPPORT THE CHOIR

The Brisbane Chamber Choir unites passionate, accomplished musicians devoted to creating performances that inspire, challenge, and uplift audiences through excellence in choral artistry. Your presence tonight helps sustain this artistic vision.

Each performance, commission, and collaboration is made possible through the generosity of people who believe in the power of live music to inspire and connect. With your generosity, we can continue to commission new works, nurture emerging talent,



and bring extraordinary music to life. If you would like to support the ongoing work of the choir, please consider making a tax-deductible donation or becoming a sponsor for future performances, a recording, or commissioning of new Australian

works. We would love to discuss options with you or you can simply scan the QR code or visit www.brisbanechamberchoir.com to learn more. Your gift helps choral music flourish and ensures its legacy for the future.



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2026 SEASON

BRISBANE
CHAMBER
CHOIR

20 Messiah | BCC2025



Where voices, vision, and place converge.

2026 invites you to journey with us, from whispered a cappella harmonies to the thunder of full orchestra. Each concert reveals a different face of choral beauty: spiritual, romantic, and boldly contemporary.

SING ME TO HEAVEN

February

Graeme's personal tribute to his brother Dr Ralph Morton, a church musician whose directorship of music at St Stephens Cathedral was cut short by his untimely death.

SWEET AND SACRED FEAST

April

Where light fades, voices are raised, and beauty lingers in every echo within the wonderful St John's Cathedral.

FOAM - Festival of Australian Music

July

Joins us for two inspiring days celebrating Australian composers and creativity. Sharing the voices that define our nation's sound.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

November

Returning after this year's sold-out success, a grand finale for a remarkable season.

FAURÉ'S REQUIEM

March

A timeless work of serenity and hope, performed with QSO in the beautiful auditorium of the Queensland Conservatorium Theatre Griffith University.

MENDELSSOHN'S ELIJAH

May

A majestic collaboration with Lumens Chamber Choir and orchestra. Music of passion, faith, and triumph in the Queensland Conservatorium Theatre Griffith University.

TIDES OF OCEAN

October - November

A new touring concert series inspired by water and movement from Redlands to the Gold Coast, up the range to Toowoomba and back to Brisbane.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



BRISBANE CHAMBER CHOIR INC

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In memory of Bishop John Parkes

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Dr. Graeme Morton AM

Lumens Chamber Choir Artistic Director

Kathryn Morton

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Rehearsal Pianist

Christian Gante

2025 Photography

Morgan Roberts Photography
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Thank you to The Very Reverend Peter Catt and those at St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane for the provision of a rehearsal space.

Thank you to the University of Queensland, School of Music for the provision of a rehearsal space.

Affiliations

St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane
University of Queensland, School of Music
Lumens Chamber Choir



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA



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Sharon Schimming, Director-General, Department of Education

QPAC rests on the lands of the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this country and recognise their rich cultural heritage and enduring connection to the land, waters and skies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are this country's original storytellers, and it is our privilege to continue to share stories and be a place of gathering on this land that has been a meeting place for millennia.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

QPAC warmly thanks our key donors who help us engage broadly across the state and continue enriching lives through performing arts.

Tim Fairfax AC and Gina Fairfax AC, Dr Lee and Professor Peter Coaldrake AO, Leigh Tabrett PSM, Susan Rix AM, Julian Myers, Dr Sally Pitkin AO, Dare Power, Dr Cathryn Mittelheuser AM, Sandi Hoskins, Ningana Trust, Leigh Wheeler, Alida Rae Mayze and John Mayze, Lance and Suzanne Hockridge, Judith Musgrave Family Foundation, Queensland Community Foundation, de Groot's Charitable Fund, Joachim and Paula Erpf, Dr Colin and Mrs Noela Kratzing, Barbara Snelling, Frank and Karen Alpert, Dr Ailbhe and Dr Frank Cunningham, Ann Sherry AO, Jacqueline Walters, Terri Butler, Jenny Morton, Klaus Beckmann and several donors who wish to remain anonymous.

We give heartfelt thanks to QPAC's Principal Partners Hyundai and MinterEllison.



FAURÉ REQUIEM

13-14 MAR

LOSE YOURSELF IN FAURÉ'S
MOST ENDURING AND BELOVED WORK.

Featuring **Brisbane Chamber Choir Collective**
QSO Chief Conductor **Umberto Clerici**
Soprano **Stacey Alleaume**
Baritone **Christopher Richardson**

Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University

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BRISBANE
CHAMBER
CHOIR

