

Messiah Press Release 2017

Merry Opera revives its staged production of Handel's Messiah for a ninth tour.

Merry Opera – a professional touring opera company - is reviving its staged production of Handel's Messiah to churches in London, East Anglia and the south in November and December 2017.

This production, which has been touring to churches since 2011 and has been seen by over 7,000 people, is being revived for its ninth tour this November and December. It is created and directed by John Ramster, whose recent contracts include work at the Guildhall and Royal Northern College in the UK and in Finland, Serbia, Portugal, France and Norway.

Although the Messiah is a religious piece, you don't have to be religious to see this production. It is staged as a meditation on the nature of the human spirit and its need for faith – perhaps in God or perhaps in oneself.

Rather than stage the oratorio with a large choir and orchestra, we allow just 12 singers and the church organ to portray characters you'll find instantly recognizable. They explain through the original words of the oratorio what has brought them to a spiritual place, both figuratively and literally, where they need help and comfort.

Turning to a building that bears witness to the collective memory, rituals and traditions of the generations who came before us, these characters are not alone, for the way in which they get to know each other through the music and the words of the oratorio gives each one of them a sense of belonging and the strength to go forward.

As you take your seat for the performance, you'll find that the church looks pretty much as it does every day. There's no special lighting, no lines of chairs for a choir, no music stands for an orchestra. The person sitting next to you may turn out to be one of the professional opera singers.

The conductor is Mark Austin, who is artistic director of the Faust Chamber Orchestra, and whose contracts include work with the BBC & Bournemouth Symphony Orchestras and the Hangzhou Philharmonic in China.

The organist for is Richard Leach, whose work includes performances in the Wigmore Hall, Charlton House, and live on Radio 3 and with the English Baroque Choir. He is also the organist at Ealing Abbey.

Merry Opera has been touring the UK and occasionally abroad since 2009. Its shows have been seen by about 50,000 people in theatres, churches, the open air, among ruins, in public streets and in a Wetherspoon pub.

Tour: Handel's Messiah:

Deptford (open dress rehearsal), Fordcombe, Letchworth, Cambridge, Lindfield, Dorking and Great Yarmouth

Dorking – Saturday 9th December

St Paul's Church

St Paul's Road West

Dorking

Surrey

RH4 2HT

Tickets: £10.00

More info: www.stpaulsdorking.org.uk

Box Office: reception@stpaulsdorking.org.uk