# Handel's *Messiah*

## Saturday 19 December, 2.00pm

## The Old Museum Concert Hall
## 480 Gregory Terrace, Bowen Hills

We again find ourselves at that time of year when the shops are taking on a decidedly-Christmassy tinge, and the countdown to the end of the year is on. It is also the time of year when we see performances of Handel's *Messiah* appearing on stages, part of one of the most quintessential musical traditions of this time of year.

If you have been keeping abreast of Brisbane's choral scene and concert schedule and have found yourself thinking that there seem to be an awful lot of *Messiah*s on this year, you're not alone! The fact that in a period of five weeks there are at least five productions of this beloved work on in Brisbane is an incredible testament to enduring popularity of the piece.

However, this was not always the case.

Despite garnering much acclaim at its premiere performance in Dublin in 1742, the political and social landscape in which the work received its first London performance the following year was very different. Add to this that in 1743, *Messiah* was musically still evolving, featuring earlier versions of some movements than those so familiar to audiences today, and it is perhaps against the odds that the work survived at all, let alone developing the tradition of annual performances from 1750 onwards, a tradition that now spans the globe.

In the direct lead-up to this Christmas, the Bach Society of Queensland's annual performance of *Messiah* is turning back the clock to explore the work as it was first heard by London audiences in 1743. While this version still promises the familiar music that so many of us know and love, it will include a few surprises here and there, differing from the "standard" version of the work best known today.

This performance will be at **2.00pm on Saturday 19 December**, in **The Old Museum Concert Hall**, 480 Gregory Tce, Bowen Hills. Tickets (at the pre-booking prices of Adults $58, Concessions $53, Groups 6+ $48, Secondary Students $28, Children free) can be purchased online via The Old Museum or by phone (call 07 3257 4089). Tickets will also be available at the door on the day, but as seating is allocated at the time of booking and bookings at the door will attract a small surcharge, I do recommend pre-booking!

Whether it is the only performance of *Messiah* that you see this year, or a second (or subsequent) outing to compare the diferences and explore the history of the work, we hope you can join us for our performance!

David Webster