Handel's *Solomon*: Why We're Doing It for Our 10th Anniversary

It was with great anticipation that the City Choir of Washington made its debut in November 2007, with Handel's *Solomon* at Schlesinger Hall in Alexandria. Would Robert Shafer, already famous among choral directors, be able to pull this brand-new chorus together?

"The concert was nearly sold out, and we had many, many supporters from across the metropolitan area," recalls singer James Hutchinson. "It was a sight to behold and very emotional for nearly all involved."

Who would have thought this fledgling chorus would still be going 10 years later? But it is stronger than ever, and it seemed fitting to perform this magnificent work again to conclude the anniversary season.

Says Shafer: "I think it is probably Handel's greatest oratorio, even surpassing *Messiah*. It is much more exciting with its phenomenal double choruses bouncing around the hall, and some of the arias for the soloists are the most ravishingly beautiful pieces that he ever composed."

At the National Presbyterian Church on May 7 2017, the audience will hear the music highlighting three major events in the life of Solomon: the consecration of his temple, his judgment of the dispute between two women over the ownership of a baby, and the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon's court.

The work's concluding section conveys Handel's ability to make us aware of life's beauty. Like Handel's whole life, it is an assertion of the glory of life and of art.

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