



# Messiah: Love, Music and Malice at a Time of Handel

Sheena Vernon

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Harry Walsh has two ambitions: to achieve fame in the playhouses of Georgian London and to have his morals thoroughly corrupted. The Reverend Walsh, his father, would like him to find a wife and to be both loyal and virtuous. In the rugged and flavoursome terrain of George Frederick Handel's opera house, and the theatrical world of John Gay, David Garrick and Thomas Arne, Harry becomes a successful singer. His voice, he finds, has the power to seduce and many offers of diversion come to the stage door, from both men and women. His father's wishes notwithstanding, Harry's first love is for the shy, obsessive-compulsive Peter, Handel's assistant. When this relationship unravels he finds himself excluded from Handel's circle and in particular from the momentous debut of the Maestro's latest oratorio, the Messiah. Artists, thinks Harry, their experience of rejection is so intense. Certainly, his reaction is drastic and consequential.

Savour vivid characterisations of a wide cast of characters, from Handel's scheming castrato, Senesino, to the smooth-talking and libertine diplomat, Lord M. Relax into a light- hearted tale of historical romance. Read or listened to, at home, on holiday or when travelling to work, you will find yourself absorbed into the world of eighteenth century London.



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