

HANDEL CHOIR  
OF BALTIMORE

ARIAN KHAEFI  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
& CONDUCTOR

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**DR. ARIAN KHAEFI TO STEP DOWN AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
AND CONDUCTOR OF HANDEL CHOIR OF BALTIMORE**

Brian Bartoldus to serve as interim artistic director and conductor in 2017–2018 season

(Baltimore, MD) Handel Choir Artistic Director and Conductor Arian Khaefi is stepping down from his post, effective August 1. Dr. Khaefi has accepted a position at Fullerton College in Orange County, California, and will return to Baltimore to conduct farewell performances of Handel's *Messiah* December 9 and 10, 2017.

"It will be hard, one of the hardest days of my life, to have to leave this city, but I do so knowing that I will have made the right choice for myself and my family," said Dr. Khaefi, who was appointed in the spring of 2013 as successor to Dr. Melinda O'Neal.

"We're so sorry to be losing him," said Board President Cindy Levering, "but we understand and support Arian's need to do the right thing for himself and his family."

Handel Choir will present its 2017–2018 subscription concert season as previously announced, including performances of Handel's *Messiah* on December 9 and 10; a performance of Frank Martin's Mass for Double Choir and other works on March 3, 2018; and a performance of both the Fauré and Duruflé Requiems on April 21, 2018. Season details and subscription tickets are available at [www.handelchoir.org](http://www.handelchoir.org)

Dr. Brian Bartoldus will serve as interim artistic director and conductor and will conduct the second and third subscription concerts in the 2017–2018 season. Dr. Bartoldus is the Artistic Director of the chamber vocal ensemble Third Practice and also serves as the director of music ministry at Mount St. Mary's University and Frederick Presbyterian Church. He has been a pre-concert lecturer

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for Handel Choir on several occasions. Dr. Bartoldus will also conduct other concerts and events in the community in the coming year, while the board performs a search for Dr. Khaefi's successor. "We're so pleased that Brian has agreed to step into this role. We are also grateful to the generous professionals in Baltimore's choral community who stepped forward to express their support and willingness to help out while we make this transition," said Levering.

*Baltimore Sun* critic Tim Smith praised several Handel Choir performances during Dr. Khaefi's tenure, including the Choir's March 2016 Baltimore premiere of Joby Talbot's *Path of Miracles*, a 2005 work inspired by the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage:

"[*Path of Miracles* is] not the sort of challenge I would have expected from the Handel Choir of Baltimore years ago. But since Khaefi's arrival in 2013, the repertoire has expanded steadily and imaginatively, and so has the group's abilities. ... Khaefi had the singers burrowing into the notes, from the out-of-the-depths rumblings in the first movement on through exquisitely harmonized passages in the third..." ("Handel Choir excels in Baltimore premiere of *Path of Miracles*," March 8, 2016).

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