



**MASTERVOICES AND DOUG VARONE DANCERS PERFORM NEW YORK CITY PREMIERE OF  
TO MY ARMS / RESTORE, A TWO-PART WORK SET TO ARIAS AND REMIXED MUSIC FROM HANDEL  
AT NYU SKIRBALL, ON MARCH 22-23**

**Conceived and Choreographed by Doug Varone, the Work Features Longtime Collaborators  
Ted Sperling and MasterVoices, accompanied by New York Baroque Incorporated**



**New York, NY, February 12, 2024** — **MasterVoices** continues its 2023-24 season on **March 22-23** at **NYU Skirball** and reunites with its frequent artistic collaborator, choreographer **Doug Varone**, and his company, **Doug Varone and Dancers**, for the **New York City Premiere** of Varone's ***To My Arms / Restore***. This intimate and explosive two-part work is presented by NYU Skirball and is set to a suite of exquisite operatic arias by Handel and his breathtaking choral masterwork *Dixit Dominus*.

Part 1: *To My Arms* features eight dancers and a score of Handel arias sung by five soloists accompanied by musicians from the period-instrument orchestra **New York Baroque Incorporated**, conducted by MasterVoices artistic director **Ted Sperling**. In Part 2: *Restore*, the **MasterVoices Chorus** will join the dancers, orchestra, and soloists in performing *Handel Remixed*, the Baroque piece *Dixit Dominus* layered with electronic beats by Festival Voices and **Nico Bentley** to create a sound world more commonly heard in clubs around the globe.

**[To My Arms / Restore \(New York City Premiere\)](#)**

**Friday, March 22, 2024, 7:30 pm**

**Saturday, March 23, 2024, 7:30 pm**

NYU Skirball, 566 LaGuardia Place

**Conceived and choreographed by Doug Varone**

**G.F. Handel:** arias from *Alexander Balus*, *Atalanta*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Orlando*, *Samson*, *Scipione*, *Semele*, *Serse*, *Teseo*, and his choral work *Dixit Dominus*.

**Festival Voices and Nico Bentley:** *Handel Remixed*

**MasterVoices Chorus**

**Ted Sperling**, conductor

**[Doug Varone and Dancers](#)**

## New York Baroque Incorporated

### More about *To My Arms / Restore*

*To My Arms / Restore* embodies **Doug Varone**'s decades-long choreographic fascination with the deeply emotional and the immensely physical, two aspects that are on full display and resonate in the rich dances crafted by Varone for this two-part work. Set to excerpts of operatic arias and duets by Handel and featuring five vocal soloists and a chamber ensemble, *To My Arms* (Part 1) builds a rich and distinct landscape of love and loss within a suite of eleven dances, evoking a strange otherworld of intimacy. In stark contrast, *Restore* (Part 2) is a visceral, tactile, and unsparing movement that explodes across the stage, revealing a new and wide-open terrain of physicality. It is driven by the 21<sup>st</sup> century sound of Festival Voices and composer **Nico Bentley's *Handel Remixed***, a score that fuses the fundamentals of Handel's 18<sup>th</sup> century choral work *Dixit Dominus*, his earliest surviving autograph, with beats more commonly heard in clubs around the globe; the result of which is a marriage between a score and a dance that is unabashedly glorious.

Award-winning choreographer and director **Doug Varone** works in all genres of the performing arts, including film, as well as in fashion. His New York City-based Doug Varone and Dancers company has been commissioned and presented to critical acclaim by leading national and international venues for three decades, and his dances have been staged for more than 75 college and university programs in the U.S.A. For MasterVoices, Varone has created choreographies for its stagings of Kurt Weill; Ira Gershwin and Moss Hart's *Lady in the Dark*; and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, which he also directed. His Metropolitan Opera credits are *Salome*, with its Dance of the Seven Veils for singer Karita Mattila; the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*; Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*, designed by David Hockney; and Berlioz's *Les Troyens*. He directed multiple premieres for American opera companies and his numerous theatre credits include choreography for Broadway, Off-Broadway, and theaters across the country.

In 1707 **George Frideric Handel** was a young man of 22 when he wrote his masterpiece *Dixit Dominus*. He had already earned recognition as an opera composer in his native Hamburg. He traveled to Rome, where, in spite of being a Lutheran, he gave a spectacular organ recital at the Arch Basilica of St. John Lateran and soon secured the patronage of three cardinals. *Dixit Dominus*, a psalm setting using the Latin text of Psalm 110, was most likely composed under the patronage of Cardinal Carlo Colonna, as one of a large set of probably eight pieces for Vespers celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in April 1707 at the Church of St. Maria di Monte Santo, one of the "twin churches" in Rome's Piazza del Popolo. Later in his composing life, Handel re-used music from *Dixit Dominus* in several of his well-known operas and oratorios.

Innovative electronic music producer, DJ, and performer **Nico Bentley** is based in London. Along with choral conductor Gregory Batsleer and the Pencil Collective, he premiered his new version of *Dixit Dominus* at London's Handel Festival 2019, shedding new light on Handel's choral masterwork.

**Tickets** priced at \$45 are on sale online at [nyuskirball.org](http://nyuskirball.org), at the NYU Skirball box office, 566 LaGuardia Place, New York, or by calling (212) 998-4941.

### About MasterVoices

MasterVoices (formerly The Collegiate Chorale) was founded in 1941 by legendary American choral conductor Robert Shaw. Under the artistic direction of Tony Award winner Ted Sperling since 2013, the group is known for its versatility and a repertoire that ranges from choral masterpieces and operas in concert to operettas and musical theater. Season concerts feature a volunteer chorus of 100+ members from all walks

of life alongside a diverse roster of world-class soloists from across the musical spectrum, including Julia Bullock, Dove Cameron, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Renée Fleming, John Holiday, Jennifer Holliday, Norm Lewis, Victoria Clark, and Kelli O'Hara. Under Sperling's direction the group has created cross-disciplinary collaborations with such diverse creative minds as legendary lyricist Sheldon Harnick, *Vogue* Editor-at-Large Hamish Bowles, fashion designer Zac Posen, Silk Road visual artist Kevork Mourad, illustrator Manik Choksi, stage designer Doug Fitch, and choreographers Doug Varone and Andrew Palermo. Roger Rees was the group's Artistic Associate from 2003–2015, and in 2021 the group received a New York Emmy Award nomination and a Drama League Award nomination for its multi-genre digital concert production of Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns*.

Known for its presentation of lesser-known artistic treasures, the group has received recent accolades for productions of rarely-heard works such as this season's acclaimed revival of Sondheim and Sheelove's *The Frogs*, last season's New York City premiere of Sheldon Harnick's full English translation of Bizet's *Carmen*, *Lady in the Dark* by Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin, Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, the Gershwins' *Let 'Em Eat Cake*, Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents's *Anyone Can Whistle*, and Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. They also commission and premiere new works; recent examples include choral works by Ricky Ian Gordon, Marisa Michelson, Tariq Al-Sabir, and Randall Eng.

As one of the country's first interracial and interfaith choruses, MasterVoices (as The Collegiate Chorale) performed at the opening of the United Nations and has sung and recorded under the batons of esteemed conductors including Serge Koussevitzky, Arturo Toscanini, and Leonard Bernstein, among others. It has been engaged by top-tier orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic and the Israel Philharmonic, and has appeared at the Verbier and Salzburg Festivals.

For more information, visit [mastervoices.org](http://mastervoices.org). Connect with MasterVoices on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (@mastervoicesny).

### **About Ted Sperling**

One of today's leading musical artists, Tony Award-winning Maestro Ted Sperling is a classically trained musician whose career has spanned from the concert hall and the opera house to the Broadway stage. Presently Artistic Director of MasterVoices, he has led such symphony orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Boston Pops, San Diego Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, the Iceland Symphony, Czech National Symphony, and BBC Concert Orchestra, as well as New York City Opera and Houston Grand Opera. Formerly Principal Conductor of the Westchester Philharmonic, Mr. Sperling is a multi-faceted artist also known for his work as orchestrator, singer, pianist, violinist, violist, director, and music director.

With MasterVoices, Maestro Sperling has led acclaimed productions of rarely-heard gems as both director and conductor. These include Kurt Weill's *The Firebrand of Florence*, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *The Road of Promise* (based on *The Eternal Road* and subsequently recorded on Navona Records), and the sold-out three-performance run of *Lady in the Dark* at New York City Center. Other notable productions with the group include Carnegie Hall performances of Stephen Sondheim's *Anyone Can Whistle*, George and Ira Gershwin's satirical musicals *Of Thee I Sing* and *Let 'Em Eat Cake*, a reconstruction of Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, and *Song of Norway*; the New York City premieres of David Lang's *battle hymns* at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum; and Ricky Ian Gordon's operas *The Grapes of Wrath* at Carnegie Hall and 27 at New York City Center.

During the 2020-2021 season, Maestro Sperling spearheaded a filmed production of Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns* for MasterVoices, producing and music directing 24 short musical films and directing roughly half of them. This project was nominated for a Drama League Award, and featured over 100 artists collaborating remotely, including Renée Fleming, Take 6, Jennifer Holliday and Julia Bullock. Now that live performances are back, Maestro Sperling is supervising national and international productions of *My Fair Lady*, *The King and I*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. He has symphonic engagements in the U.S. and Europe and continues to teach at NYU, conducting three different orchestras and training the next generation of Broadway musicians and conductors.

Sperling has conducted multiple concerts for PBS's *Live From Lincoln Center*, the American Songbook Series at Lincoln Center, and the *Lyrics and Lyricists* series at the 92nd Street Y. He conducted Audra McDonald in a double bill of *La Voix Humaine* and the world premiere of *Send: Who Are You? I Love You?* at the Houston Grand Opera. He won the 2005 Tony and Drama Desk Awards for his orchestrations of Adam Guettel's *The Light in the Piazza*, for which he was also Music Director.

In addition to his directing work with MasterVoices, Mr. Sperling's work as a stage director includes the world premieres of four critically acclaimed original musicals Off-Broadway—including *The Other Josh Cohen* and *See What I Wanna See*—and a noted production of *Lady in the Dark* at the Prince Theater in Philadelphia, starring Andrea Marcovicci. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale University, and received the Faculty Prize at The Juilliard School. He made his Broadway stage debut as Wallace Hartley in *Titanic* and appeared as Steve Allen in the finale of Season Two of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

Image: Artwork created by Owen Gent for MasterVoices

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