



## Canadian countertenor Nicholas Burns in conversation with the Festival's artistic director, Elizabeth Blumenstock:

Photo: Tam Lan Photography

Nicholas Burns joins the Festival Orchestra led by Blumenstock, and soprano soloist Josefien Stoppelenburg, for the 2022 Festival Finale: A Handel Gala on Sunday, June 26 in Newport Beach. For more information and to buy tickets visit the Festival's website: [bmf-cdm.org](http://bmf-cdm.org)

**EB:** I am often asked what my favorite piece of music is. This is impossible to answer! I am also asked which composer is my favorite—impossible to answer as well! The impossibility is mostly the fault of that word, “favorite.” So, instead I shall ask: which three Baroque composers consistently delight and move you, and why?

“Handel’s music seems to appeal directly to the soul and his gift for melodic writing remains unmatched.”



George Frideric Handel  
(1685-1759) painted by  
Balthasar Denner.

**NB:** If I was *forced* to pick three, they would be Bach, Handel and Purcell (with Monteverdi regrettably left out). The music of Bach is so many different things: comforting, challenging, uplifting, fulfilling... the list is truly endless! Handel's music seems to appeal directly to the soul and his gift for melodic writing remains unmatched (apologies to Mozart). Henry Purcell's life was quite tumultuous, and so is his music. Sometimes it's lush, beautiful, and melodious, and other times it's jagged, dissonant, and at times irreverent. Purcell's music never lacks drama, to be sure!

---

**EB:** As we have all been painfully aware, live performances came to an abrupt halt in the spring of 2020 and have been more or less down for the count until quite recently. But some other things became more possible during this time. For me, one of these things was working on taming a bit of the wilderness that is my "back yard" in rural, mountainous New Mexico. What was the most interesting of these "newly-possible" things for you?

**"After singing and music-making, my biggest passion in life is skiing."**

**NB:** I was fortunate to be a ski racing coach throughout the pandemic, and spent many days (100 to be exact!) exploring the beautiful Canadian Coast Mountain range on skis with some awesome friends. Once the snow melted, I spent a lot of time rock climbing, hiking, and canoeing.

---

**EB:** I have gradually been doing more and more teaching, along with concertizing, and, of course, teaching calls for quite different skills. As performers, of course, we wish to be memorable, but this is equally important to teachers! What is the most powerful thing a teacher ever did or said to you?

**NB:** I've been so fortunate to have many wonderful teachers, without whom I would definitely not be singing today. While picking a single powerful thing a teacher has said or done would be near impossible, I can definitely say that the unwavering support of all my teachers has been paramount. In addition to their support, the amount of passion they bring to singing and teaching has always been a source of great inspiration.

---

**EB:** And last, where would you choose to go if you were given an all expenses paid, three week trip to anywhere in the world, and what attracts you about that place?

**NB:** This may be the most difficult question of the bunch... I've always dreamed of escaping summer in the northern hemisphere and going on a ski vacation in Portillo, Chile, staying in the iconic bright yellow Hotel Portillo in the heart of the Chilean Andes. But, I would also love to spend three weeks in Paris, eating croissants, going to concerts and museums, and visiting every possible café!

