



Eibhear Walshe was born in Waterford, studied in Dublin, and now lives in Cork, where he lectures in the School of English at University College Cork and is Director of Creative Writing. He has published in the area of memoir, literary criticism and biography, and his books include *Kate O'Brien: A Writing Life*, (2006), *Oscar's Shadow: Wilde and Ireland*, (2012), and *A Different Story: the Writings of Colm Tóibín*, (2013). His childhood memoir, *Cissie's Abbatoir*, (2009) was broadcast on RTÉ's 'Book on One'. His novel, *The Diary of Mary Travers*, (2014), was shortlisted for the Kerry Group Novel of the Year Award in 2015 and longlisted for the 2016 International Dublin Literary Award. He was associate editor, with Catherine Marshall, of *Modern Ireland in 100 Artworks*, (2016), edited by Fintan O'Toole and shortlisted for the Bord Gais Energy Irish Book Awards.

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'A plausible, sensuous coming-of-age story.'

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It is 1742 and the celebrated composer Georg Handel is in Dublin for the first performance of his new work *Messiah*. Once the most successful composer of opera in London, and fêted by aristocracy and royalty alike, Handel is now nearly penniless, recovering from a debilitating illness and out of favour and his exile in Dublin a sign of his fall from grace. With him and due to sing in his *Messiah* is the celebrated young actress, Susannah Cibber, the subject of scandal and public disgrace, on the run from an abusive husband and considered with suspicion by the musical elite of Dublin. In this exciting new historical novel, Eibhear Walshe recount's Handel's time in Dublin, retracing his golden youth in Rome, his sometimes shady role as emissary and spy for the Elector of Hanover, who in 1714 would become George 1 of Great Britain and Ireland, and his doomed first love affair. With energy and insight, this novel leads up to the first performance of the most celebrated work of sacred music, with failure and loss transformed in a moment by the genius of Handel's musical imagination.

COVER ILLUSTRATION: *Portrait Georg Handel, ca. 1710, reconstruction by Luzie Schneider of the miniature portrait by Christoph Platzer.*