



CORO

Handel  
**JEPHTHA**

James Gilchrist  
Susan Bickley  
Sophie Bevan  
Robin Blaze  
Matthew Brook  
Grace Davidson

The Sixteen  
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

*Jephtha* was the last oratorio Handel wrote and it was a stop-start affair. It took him six months to complete the score, during which he was in a lot of pain, his eyesight was weakening and indeed by the end he had lost the sight in his left eye.

I am sure we all know the story of *Jephtha* but let me just refresh your memory: *Jephtha*, leader of the Israelites, strikes a bargain with God; in return for victory against the Ammonites, he vows to sacrifice whoever comes out

of his house to greet him after the battle; victory jubilation turns to horror when he must execute his only child, his daughter Iphis. This sequence of events actually only takes one chapter in the Bible and there Iphis is sacrificed. Thankfully with Handel and his librettist Morrell, and a bit of divine intervention, Iphis is spared but consigned to live out her days in a nunnery.

*Jephtha* turned out to be the last oratorio Handel composed and in many ways it is his most profound. It is more than just a religious drama; as always, Handel's genius shines through in his portrayal of and insight into the characters. What



*Harry Christophers in Handel's House in Brook Street, London*

concerns Handel here is not Jephtha's sins but his suffering. It is the human dilemma, the torment of "a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot" (as the Bible reminds us), who unthinkingly destroys the emotional dimension of his life in the interests of a victory which will cleanse him of his unworthy origins. Right from the outset it is about total subservience to our destiny – the first words uttered are "It must be so". The simplicity of that utterance is tantamount to Handel's skill as a dramatist.

We recorded *Jephtha* in January 2014, just after we had done two performances, at the Barbican Hall in London and Bath Abbey. These concerts were notable for an exceptional cast for whom text is all important. Handel gives us great insight into the characters but it is the likes of James Gilchrist, Sophie Bevan, Susan Bickley, Robin Blaze, Matthew Brook and Grace Davidson who then have to invest the moments of joy, fateful realization and martyred resignation with dramatic truth. And this they do.

Harry  
Christophers.

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<i>Jephtha</i>	James Gilchrist <i>tenor</i>
<i>Storgè</i>	Susan Bickley <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
<i>Iphis</i>	Sophie Bevan <i>countertenor</i>
<i>Hamor</i>	Robin Blaze <i>countertenor</i>
<i>Zebul</i>	Matthew Brook <i>bass-baritone</i>
<i>Angel</i>	Grace Davidson <i>soprano</i>



SOPRANO	ALTO	TENOR	BASS
Julie Cooper	Ian Aitkenhead	Simon Berridge	Ben Davies
Grace Davidson	David Clegg	Jeremy Budd	Eamonn Dougan
Katy Hill	Daniel Collins	Mark Dobell	Tim Jones
Kirsty Hopkins	Christopher Royall	Tom Raskin	Stuart Young
Alexandra Kidgell			
Charlotte Mobbs			
VIOLIN I	VIOLIN II	VIOLA	VIOLONE
Sarah Sexton ( <i>leader</i> )	Daniel Edgar	Martin Kelly	Jan Spencer
Huw Daniel	Jane Gordon	Stefanie Heichelheim	
Graham Cracknell	Theresa Caudle	VIOLONCELLO	
Ellen O'Dell	Henrietta Wayne	Andrew Skidmore	
Jean Paterson	Rebecca Miles	Imogen Seth-Smith	
Nia Lewis			
FLUTE	HORN	HARPSICHORD	
Christine Garratt	Anneke Scott	Alastair Ross	
OBOE	JOSEPH WALTERS	THEORBO	
Hannah McLaughlin	TRUMPET	David Miller	
Catherine Latham	Robert Farley	HARP	
Lars Henriksson	Christopher Pigram	Frances Kelly	
BASSOON		ORGAN	
Jeremy Ward		Julian Perkins	
Zoë Shevlin			

# JEPHTHA

An oratorio in three parts

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)  
Libretto by Thomas Morell (1703-1784)

## CD1: ACT ONE

1	Overture		7.31
SCENE 1			
2	Accompagnato <i>Zebul</i> Air <i>Zebul</i>	It must be so, or these vile Ammonites Pour forth no more unheeded pray'rs	4.18
3	Chorus of Israelites	No more to Ammon's god and king	2.44
SCENE 2			
4	Recitative <i>Zebul, Jephtha</i> Air <i>Jephtha</i>	But Jephtha comes. Kind Heav'n, assist our plea Virtue my soul shall still embrace	4.45
5	Recitative <i>Storgè</i> Air <i>Storgè</i>	'Twill be a painful separation, Jephtha In gentle murmurs will I mourn	5.01
SCENE 3			
6	Recitative <i>Hamor</i> Air <i>Hamor</i>	Happy this embassy, my charming Iphis Dull delay, in piercing anguish	3.44
7	Recitative <i>Iphis</i> Air <i>Iphis</i>	Ill suits the voice of love when glory calls Take the heart you fondly gave	3.37
8	Recitative <i>Hamor</i> Duet <i>Iphis, Hamor</i>	I go; my soul, inspir'd by thy command These labours past, how happy we!	6.40

#### SCENE 4

- |    |   |  |      |
|----|---|--|------|
| 9  | Recitative <i>Jephtha</i><br>Accompagnato <i>Jephtha</i><br>Recitative <i>Jephtha</i> | What mean these doubtful fancies of the brain?<br>If, Lord, sustain'd by Thy almighty pow'r<br>'Tis said | 2.00 |
| 10 | Chorus of Israelites  | O God, behold our sore distress  | 4.17 |

#### SCENE 5

- |    |   |   |      |
|----|---|---|------|
| 11 | Recitative <i>Storgè</i><br>Air <i>Storgè</i> | Some dire event hangs o'er our heads<br>Scenes of horror, scenes of woe | 4.57 |
|----|---|---|------|

#### SCENE 6

- |    |   |  |      |
|----|---|--|------|
| 12 | Recitative <i>Iphis, Storgè</i><br>Air <i>Iphis</i> | Say, my dear mother, whence these piercing cries<br>The smiling dawn of happy days | 3.43 |
|----|---|--|------|

#### SCENE 7

- |    |  |   |      |
|----|--|---|------|
| 13 | Recitative <i>Zebul, Jephtha</i><br>Chorus of Israelites | Such, Jephtha, was the haughty king's reply<br>When his loud voice in thunder spoke | 5.14 |
|----|--|---|------|

### CD2: ACT TWO

#### SCENE 1

- |   |   |   |      |
|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | Recitative <i>Hamor</i>                     | Glad tidings of great joy to thee, dear Iphis | 1.19 |
| 2 | Chorus of Israelites                        | Cherub and seraphim, unbodied forms           | 3.17 |
| 3 | Air <i>Hamor</i>                            | Up the dreadful steep ascending               | 4.08 |
| 4 | Recitative <i>Iphis</i><br>Air <i>Iphis</i> | 'Tis well<br>Tune the soft melodious lute     | 5.13 |

#### SCENE 2

- |   |   |   |      |
|---|---|---|------|
| 5 | Recitative <i>Jephtha</i><br>Air <i>Jephtha</i> | Heav'n smiles once more on His repentant people<br>His mighty arm, with sudden blow | 5.56 |
| 6 | Chorus of Israelites                            | In glory high, in might serene  | 2.31 |

### SCENE 3

7	Symphony		1.08
8	Recitative <i>Iphis</i>	Hail, glorious conqueror! Much lov'd father, hail!	4.19
	Air <i>Iphis</i>	Welcome as the cheerful light	
	Chorus of Virgins	Welcome thou, whose deeds conspire	
9	Recitative <i>Jephtha</i>	Horror! Confusion! Harsh this music grates	4.52
	Air <i>Jephtha</i>	Open thy marble jaws, O tomb	
10	Recitative <i>Zebul, Jephtha</i>	Why is my brother thus afflicted?	1.08
11	Accompagnato & Air	First perish thou, and perish all the world!	2.19
	<i>Storgè</i>		
12	Recitative <i>Hamor</i>	If such thy cruel purpose, lo, your friend	2.10
	Air <i>Hamor</i>	On me let blind mistaken zeal	
13	Quartet <i>Storgè, Hamor, Jephtha, Zebul</i>	O spare your daughter	3.12

### SCENE 4

14	Recitative <i>Iphis</i>	Such news flies swift. I've heard the mournful cause	1.16
	Accompagnato <i>Iphis</i>	For joys so vast too little is the price	
15	Air <i>Iphis</i>	Happy they; This vital breath	3.51
16	Accompagnato <i>Jephtha</i>	Deeper and deeper still, thy goodness, child	3.17
17	Chorus of Israelites	How dark, O Lord, are Thy decrees	7.27

## CD3: ACT THREE

### SCENE 1

1	Air <i>Jephtha</i>	Hide thou thy hated beams, O sun, in clouds	2.43
2	Accompagnato <i>Jephtha</i>	A father, off'ring up his only child	5.18
	Air <i>Jephtha</i>	Waft her, angels, through the skies	

3	Accompagnato <i>Iphis</i> Air <i>Iphis</i>	Ye sacred priests, whose hands ne'er yet were stain'd Farewell, ye limpid springs and floods	5.33
4	Chorus of Priests	Doubtful fear and rev'rent awe	3.56
5	Sinfonia		2.40
6	Recitative <i>Angel</i> Air <i>Angel</i>	Rise, Jephtha, and ye rev'rend priests, withhold Happy, Iphis, shalt thou live	5.15
7	Air <i>Jephtha</i>	For ever blessed be Thy holy name	1.01
8	Chorus of Priests	Theme sublime of endless praise	3.16

## SCENE 2

9	Recitative <i>Zebul</i> Air <i>Zebul</i>	Let me congratulate this happy turn Laud her, all ye virgin train	2.39
10	Recitative <i>Storgè</i> Air <i>Storgè</i>	Oh, let me fold thee in a mother's arms Sweet as sight to the blind	2.47
11	Recitative <i>Hamor</i> Air <i>Hamor</i>	With transport, Iphis, I behold thy safety 'Tis Heav'n's all-ruling pow'r	5.26
12	Recitative <i>Iphis</i> Quintet <i>Iphis, Hamor,</i> <i>Storgè, Jephtha, Zebul</i>	My faithful Hamor, may that Providence All that is in Hamor is mine	3.51
13	Chorus of Israelites	Ye house of Gilead, with one voice	3.50

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Appendix: see note on page 17

14	Recitative <i>Zebul</i> Air <i>Zebul</i>	Again Heav'n smiles Freedom now	4.01
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# JEPHTHA

## Notes

### **Justifying the ways of God to man**

It has been reckoned that Handel put more notes on paper than any other composer before or since. When he undertook *Jephtha*, the last new oratorio he was to write, he had composed over forty operas, over thirty odes, oratorios and serenatas, over a hundred cantatas, over forty pieces of church music, and over a hundred instrumental works. *Jephtha* is the harvest of his decades of penetration and expression of individual character, the human condition, the natural world and the nature of God, and for many listeners it is the masterpiece among his oratorios.

### **Writing Jephtha**

Handel customarily composed major new works during the long daylight hours of summer. But for his 1751 season he started *Jephtha* only on 21 January, having spent the summer abroad. In the past he

would still have been ready to launch the new work, as usual, mid-season (after all, he wrote *Messiah* in three weeks). But on 13 February, part-way through the concluding chorus of Act 2, he broke off, writing on the score (in German, an indication of his disturbance), ‘unable to continue because the sight of my left eye is so weakened’. Poignantly, he was in the middle of setting the words ‘all hid from mortal sight’. He resumed work (‘a little better’) on 23 February, his 66th birthday, but his writing was shaky and he only reached the end of the chorus. By now his season had opened and *Jephtha* was not ready. Fortunately for Handel his public did not discover this, because the season was curtailed when the Prince of Wales died on 20 March.

Handel’s way of dealing with ill health was to visit a spa. According to modern science, his symptoms were often those

of lead-poisoning (probably derived from imported wine), which a spa detox regime could reverse. During summer 1751 he visited Bath and Cheltenham, and he was able to complete *Jephtha*, but with an effort, as his writing shows, for he had now lost the sight of his left eye. The composition had taken him fourteen weeks spread over seven months, and he premiered *Jephtha* in his 1752 season. The great actor-singer John Beard created the title role; Giulia Frasi, who had created Theodora, sang his daughter; and Caterina Galli, who had created Irene, sang Jephtha's wife.

By 1753 Handel was completely blind, but he continued to supervise his oratorio performances, reviving *Jephtha* several times, with amendments by himself and by his assistant J.C. Smith.

### **The Biblical challenge**

For Handel's immediately preceding oratorios the Rev. Thomas Morell (1703-84), classical and biblical scholar, had provided the librettos: *Judas Maccabaeus*

and *Alexander Balus* (both from the Apocrypha) and *Theodora* (about an early Christian martyr). Of these only *Judas* had been successful at the box office, and with *Jephtha* Morell returned to the Bible for another story about a heroic Jewish leader. Handel's biblical oratorios offered his listeners moral and religious guidance, political comment, and patriotic encouragement, conveyed with psychological depth and stirring emotion. Using Old Testament stories to do all this would have seemed entirely natural to his audiences.

Like many nations before and since, the British people of Handel's time identified with the ancient Israelites, claiming that they themselves were God's chosen people now, as the Israelites had been then. Sermons – the main public address system – repeatedly took messages for their congregations from Old Testament history, especially in time of war (and Handel's oratorio-writing years were mainly times of war and rebellion). The Bible was central to British political life;

a copy was ceremoniously presented to British monarchs at their coronation, with exhortations to obey its precepts.

But Enlightenment scepticism and new standards of textual criticism challenged the Bible's validity as the revealed word of God. Freethinkers widened the breach to attack the accepted bases of Christianity, in particular the history, laws and often ethically abhorrent customs of the Israelites. And if the Old Testament was not beyond question, then Christianity itself – the national religion, the national identifier – was questionable. Ministers of religion fought back, generating an enormous volume of published debate, both scholarly and journalistic. The concern and contention aroused was at a level comparable in our own time to the anxiety generated by global warming or fanatic fundamentalism.

In choosing the Old Testament story of *Jephtha*, well known in Handel's day, Morell was grasping one of the controversy's prickliest nettles. Jephtha vows that if God

gives him success in battle he will sacrifice to God the first thing he meets on his return; it is his daughter; and 'he did with her according to his vow'. This was perfect material for the sceptics, and they made full use of it. Horrific by any standards, it implicated God as a sadist, showed God and man fully accepting human sacrifice as the seal of a religious vow, and proved that Christianity was contaminated at its source, in that the Jews adopted barbarous rites such as child sacrifice.

Morell was not the first to address so glaring a challenge to mainstream belief. Previous settings of the Jephtha story included the oratorio by Carissimi (which Handel knew: he drew on it for his *Samson*), and Pellegrin's and Montéclair's opera (1732 and often revived), which anticipates incidents in several of Handel's oratorios. Verbal parallels indicate that Morell knew John Hoadly's oratorio libretto (1737, set by Maurice Greene). Another of his sources, George Buchanan's Latin play *Jephtes, sive Votum* (1554), provided the character and name

of Jephtha's wife, and the name of his daughter. Buchanan also used a chorus, and Morell took over several details of his dramatisation. Behind Buchanan's play, and prominent in the mind of Morell the classicist, was the story of another father who sacrificed his daughter in the cause of military success and in requital of a vow to a deity: Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks, who sacrificed his daughter, Iphigenia, to achieve military success at Troy.

Morell knew Euripides' plays, and two of them on Iphigenia's story, *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, contributed as much as the Old Testament to his libretto. Mirroring *Iphigenia in Aulis*, he helpfully enlarged the two-hander of the Bible to a cast which would enable Handel to deploy each voice type he had at his disposal: Iphigenia = Iphis, soprano; Clytemnestra = Storgè (Greek for the love between parents and children), mezzo; Achilles = Hamor, counter-tenor; Agamemnon = Jephtha, tenor; Menelaus = Zebul, bass; plus a chorus. But his treatment criticises Euripides too. Just as he gives an ethically

preferable version of the bible story, so he 'improves' the characters of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, making both Jephtha and Iphis far more glowing examples of patriotism and faith than their Euripidean counterparts.

### **It must be so?**

Morell, a committed priest, justifies God's ways to man by adopting an interpretation of Jephtha's vow which had been current since medieval times (and which survives in modern biblical apologetics.) The Hebrew of the vow can be read to allow for the dedication, rather than the sacrifice, of Jephtha's daughter to God. In Morell's libretto the father who is seemingly required by God to kill his child is restrained at the last moment by an angel, who points out the alternative.

We are reminded of Abraham and Isaac. Morell probably intended the connection. Abraham heads the list in the New Testament's Epistle to the Hebrews of the exemplary faithful characters of the Old

Testament, and that list, as defenders of Christianity often pointed out, includes Jephtha. Morell has to accommodate this New Testament approval of Jephtha, and so the angel's message to Jephtha ends with assurance that God approves his faith in making the vow and trying to keep to it.

But we may ask: having phrased his vow to allow for a humane interpretation, why does Jephtha apparently forget or fail to understand his own words and insist on his daughter's destruction?

This may be exactly what Morell wants us to ask. At no point in his despair does Jephtha (or anyone else in the oratorio) turn to God for help, until the chorus of priests prays for guidance – and then, immediately, the angel answers them with a message of salvation. Jephtha is a hero, but he needs to learn, like all of us, that he is not self-sufficient and need not try to be entirely self-reliant. In his first aria he declares that, secure in his own virtue, he 'dreads no event of fate'. Handel's play with an unstable pedal note shows that

he appreciates this pronouncement to be misplaced self-confidence, and dreadful dramatic irony, since we know the story and we know what is in store for Jephtha.

When disaster appears to strike, Jephtha interprets it as an 'event of fate' and, echoing the opening words of the oratorio, insists 'it must be so'. The great chorus 'How dark, O lord, are thy decrees' which follows his collapse, one of Handel's finest creations, similarly subscribes to belief in implacable fate: Handel changed Morell's 'what God ordains is right' to 'Whatever is, is right' (from Alexander Pope's rationalist *Essay on Man*). Jephtha and his fellow Israelites are living in the Old Testament, pre-Christian, dispensation, and, accustomed to the Old Testament Jehovah, they do not understand the true extent of God's mercy – which they learn, and which we learn alongside them.

Morell's libretto exonerates God from crimes against humanity. But the whole family which Morell has created has been made to experience the anguish

of bereavement before being reprieved, and then their loss is not minimised: the pain of adjustment to their new lives is evident in their words, if not in Handel's music. We may ask why God did not intervene sooner and spare the innocent such suffering. One answer is that Morell is providing for his audience's love of Handel's power to evoke human emotion. By making his characters and audience expect Iphis' death, he enables Handel to arouse and explore all the pain of tragic loss.

Iphis' terrible situation gives Handel scope to create again (as in *Theodora*) a heart-rendingly tender, self-denying and brave heroine – one of the favourite character types of the eighteenth-century stage. In moving from radiant, dancing girlhood to inspired nobility Iphis is the culmination of Handel's lifelong portrayals of blameless women whose predicament brings out their heroism (a line begun in English oratorio with the very first, Esther). Her mother Storgè is the last of Handel's long line of passionate wronged women, begun

45 years before in his Italian cantatas. Jephtha's rise from blinkered confidence through inexpressible torment to true courage and faith is unerringly explored in the progress from his pat 'Virtue my soul', through his heart-stopping 'Open thy marble jaws, O tomb' (a heroic effort to keep a grip on sanity by means of the formal conventions of a da capo air) and his agonised 'Deeper and deeper still', to his soaring apprehension of Iphis' afterlife in heaven, 'Waft her, angels'.

Handel's score is marked by fertility and concision; by formal innovation (for example the quartet, exceptional in his output); by mastery of structure – notably the tonal organisation of the central section of the work, which constitutes one of Handel's most original compositional spans; by range, intensity and inwardness of emotion. There are seven accompanied recitatives, Handel's most intimately impassioned vocal form. Jephtha's 'Deeper and deeper still' passes through 15 keys in 44 bars before staggering into silence. Handel harvests his whole repertory

of choral expressiveness – chromatic anxiety, hymnal ardour, ‘devout’ orthodox counterpoint, word-painting of sublime effects of untrammelled nature and the supernatural – and he extends it for ‘How dark, O Lord’, developing five distinct ideas within 183 bars as the chorus casts around for a way to make sense of the

world. Morell was perhaps more successful than he intended in providing Handel with a text that would elicit his emotive power; it is this moment of profound disturbance which remains most vividly in the listener’s mind.

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# JEPHTHA

## Synopsis

### ACT ONE

After the Exodus from Egypt the Israelites are establishing themselves in the Promised Land. Harried for eighteen years by the hostile Ammonite tribe, they are at their last gasp. Zebul, one of their leaders, suggests that they recall from exile his half-brother Jephtha, outstanding warrior and patriot (‘It must be so’ / ‘Pour forth no more’). Recognising that their parlous state results from their faithlessness to God and adoption of hideous Ammonite

rituals – including child sacrifice – the Israelites forswear idolatry (‘Nor more to Ammon’s god and king’).

Jephtha accepts their invitation to return and lead them, confident in his virtue and goodness (‘Virtue my soul shall still embrace’). Jephtha’s wife, Storgè, confides that she will sorely miss him, but will subdue her feelings to the national cause (‘In gentle murmurs will I mourn’).

Iphis, daughter and only child of Jephtha and Storgè, enjoys an encounter with her suitor Hamor, but when he asks her to name the day ('Dull delay, in piercing anguish') she requires him first to join up and help save their people ('Take the heart you fondly gave'). They look forward to mutual happiness ('These labours past').

Jephtha feels inspired by God and vows that, if granted victory, he will sacrifice or devote to God whatever or whomever he first sees on returning home ('If, Lord, sustain'd by Thy almighty pow'r'). The nation implores God's aid ('O God, behold our sore distress').

Storgè is frightened by nightmares of danger threatening Iphis ('Scenes of horror'), who reassures her mother, anticipating a happy future ('The smiling dawn of happy days').

An embassy to the Ammonites having been rebuffed, Jephtha encourages the Israelites, who declare their trust in God prior to battle ('When his loud voice in thunder spoke').

## ACT TWO

Hamor and his companions bring joyful news of a divinely assisted Israelite victory ('Cherub and seraphim', 'Up the dreadful steep ascending'). Iphis prepares a hero's greeting for her father ('Tune the soft melodious lute').

Jephtha congratulates his comrades, acknowledging that the victory was God's ('His mighty arm'). The Israelites hymn God's immanent power ('In glory high').

On his return, the first being Jephtha meets is Iphis, welcoming him with a festive procession ('Welcome as the cheerful light'). Distraught, he sends her away ('Horror! Confusion!' / 'Open thy marble jaws, O tomb'), and, to his dumbfounded brother, wife, and prospective son in law, explains that this beloved only child must die because of his vow, which God has sealed by giving them victory. Storgè invokes universal chaos ('First perish thou' / 'Let other creatures die'); Hamor offers to die instead ('On me'); all join in an anguished quartet, Jephtha refusing to

break his pledge to God ('Oh, spare your daughter'). Iphis returns, having learned her fate. She accepts it, content that the vow resulted in her country's salvation ('For joys so vast' / 'Happy they'). Jephtha is overcome by her goodness and his terrible predicament ('Deeper and deeper still'). In one of Handel's most deeply felt and disturbing choruses ('How dark, O Lord'), the Israelites attempt to come to terms with God's apparent will.

### ACT THREE

The sacrifice is prepared. Jephtha prays that angels will waft Iphis to heaven ('Hide thou thy hated beams' / 'Waft, her, angels, through the skies'). Iphis encourages the hesitant priests to carry out the vow and prepares to die, looking toward a brighter world ('Farewell'). The priests ask God to direct them ('Doubtful fear').

An angel appears and explains that the vow did not require Iphis' death, which God would abhor ('Rise, Jephtha'). She is to be devoted to God, as a perpetual virgin, and will be eternally honoured ('Happy, Iphis').

Jephtha was not wrong to hold to his sense of his vow: the Holy Spirit dictated it, and approves his faith. Jephtha expresses his gratitude ('For ever blessed be Thy holy name'). The community hymns God's justice and mercy ('Theme sublime').

Zebul, Storgè and Hamor in turn voice their gratitude for Iphis' reprieve, and, for Storgè and Hamor, their loss ('Laud her', 'Sweet as sight', 'Tis Heav'n's all-ruling pow'r'). Iphis again sets a pattern of acceptance, as she and Hamor face their future apart ('All that is in Hamor mine'). Their duet of love and resignation becomes a quintet celebrating Iphis' courage and faith ('Joys triumphant'). The final chorus ('Ye house of Gildead') rejoices in God's preservation of His people.

### APPENDIX: additional air for Zebul

In his 1753 revival Handel inserted an additional air for Zebul at the beginning of Act II scene 2 ('Freedom now once more possessing'), making over to Zebul the first part of Jephtha's Recitative.

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# JEPHTHA

An oratorio in three parts

## CD1 ACT ONE

### 1 Overture

#### SCENE 1

*Zebul, with his brethren and Chorus.*

### 2 Accompagnato

*Zebul*

It must be so, or these vile Ammonites,  
Our lordly tyrants now these eighteen years,  
Will crush the race of Israel.  
Since Heav'n vouchsafes not, with immediate choice,  
To point us out a leader, as before,  
Ourselves must choose. And who so fit a man  
As Gilead's son, our brother, valiant Jephtha?  
True, we have slighted, scorn'd, expell'd him hence,  
As of a stranger born, but well I know him:  
His gen'rous soul disdains a mean revenge  
When his distressful country calls his aid.  
And perhaps Heav'n may favour our request  
If with repentant hearts we sue for mercy.

### Air

*Zebul*

Pour forth no more unheeded pray'rs  
To idols deaf and vain.  
No more with vile unhallow'd airs  
The sacred rites profane.

### 3 Chorus of Israelites

No more to Ammon's god and king,  
Fierce Moloch, shall our cymbals ring,  
In dismal dance around the furnace blue.  
Chemosh no more will we adore  
With timbrell'd anthems to Jehovah due.

#### SCENE 2

*Enter Jephtha and Storgè.*

### 4 Recitativo

*Zebul*

But Jephtha comes. Kind Heav'n, assist our plea.  
O Jephtha, with an eye of pity look  
On thy repentant brethren in distress.  
Forgetful of thy wrongs, redress thy sire,  
Thy friends, thy country, in extreme despair.

*Jephtha*

I will: so please it Heav'n; and these the terms.  
If I command in war, the like command  
(Should Heav'n vouchsafe us a victorious peace)  
Shall still be mine.

*Zebul*

Agreed; be witness, Heav'n.

**Air**

*Jephtha*

Virtue my soul shall still embrace,  
And goodness shall make me great.  
Who builds upon this steady base  
Dreads no event of fate.

**[5] Recitative**

*Storgè*

'Twill be a painful separation, Jephtha,  
To see thee harness'd for the bloody field.  
But ah! how trivial are a wife's concerns  
When a whole nation bleeds, and grov'ling lies,  
Panting for liberty and life.

**Air**

*Storgè*

In gentle murmurs will I mourn,  
As mourns the mate-forsaken dove,  
And sighing wish thy dear return  
To liberty and lasting love.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 3**

*Enter Hamor and Iphis.*

**[6] Recitative**

*Hamor*

Happy this embassy, my charming Iphis,  
Which once more gives thee to my longing eyes,  
As Cynthia, breaking from th'involving clouds  
On the benighted traveller. The sight  
Of thee, my love, drives darkness and despair.  
Again I live, in thy sweet smiles I live,  
As in thy father's ever-watchful care  
Our wretched nation feels new life, new joy.  
Oh haste, and make my happiness complete!

**Air**

*Hamor*

Dull delay, in piercing anguish,  
Bids thy faithful lover languish,  
While he pants for bliss in vain.  
Oh! with gentle smiles relieve me.  
Let no more false hopes deceive me,  
Nor vain fears inflict a pain.

**[7] Recitative**

*Iphis*

Ill suits the voice of love when glory calls,  
And bids thee follow Jephtha to the field.  
There act the hero, and let rival deeds  
Proclaim thee worthy to be call'd his son,  
And Hamor shall not want his due reward.

**Air***Iphis*

Take the heart you fondly gave,  
Lodg'd in your breast with mine.  
Thus with double ardour brave,  
Sure conquest shall be thine.

**[8] Recitative***Hamor*

I go; my soul, inspir'd by thy command,  
Thirsts for the battle. I'm already crown'd  
With the victorious wreath, and thou, fair prize,  
More worth than fame or conquest, thou art mine.

**Duet***Iphis and Hamor*

These labours past, how happy we!  
How glorious will they prove.  
When gath'ring fruit from conquest's tree,  
We deck the feast of love.

*Exeunt***SCENE 4***Jephtha, alone.***[9] Recitative***Jephtha*

What mean these doubtful fancies of the brain?  
Visions of joy rise in my raptur'd soul,  
There play awhile, and set in darksome night.

Strange ardour fires my breast;  
my arms seem strung  
With tenfold vigour, and my crested helm  
To reach the skies. Be humble still, my soul!  
It is the Spirit of God, in whose great name  
I offer up my vow.

**Accompagnato***Jephtha*

If, Lord, sustain'd by Thy almighty pow'r,  
Ammon I drive, and his insulting bands,  
From these our long-uncultivated lands,  
And safe return the glorious conqueror,  
What, or whoe'er shall first salute mine eyes,  
Shall be forever Thine, or fall a sacrifice.

**Recitative***Jephtha*

'Tis said.

*Enter Israelites.*

Attend, ye chiefs, and with united voice  
Invoke the holy name of Israel's God.

**[10] Chorus of Israelites**

O God, behold our sore distress,  
Omnipotent to plague or bless!  
But turn thy wrath, and bless once more  
Thy servants, who thy name adore.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 5** 

---

*Storgè, alone.*

**[11] Recitative**

*Storgè*

Some dire event hangs o'er our heads,  
Some woeful song we have to sing  
In misery extreme. Oh never, never  
Was my foreboding mind disturb'd before  
With such incessant pangs.

**Air**

*Storgè*

Scenes of horror, scenes of woe,  
Rising from the shades below,  
Add new terror to the night;  
While in never-ceasing pain,  
That attends the servile chain,  
Joyless flow the hours of light.

**SCENE 6** 

---

*Enter Iphis.*

**[12] Recitative**

*Iphis*

Say, my dear mother,  
whence these piercing cries  
That force me, like a frighted bird, to fly  
My place of rest?

*Storgè*

For thee I fear, my child;  
Such ghastly dreams last night surpris'd my soul.

*Iphis*

Heed not these black illusions of the night,  
The mocking of unquiet slumbers, heed them not.  
My father, touch'd with a diviner fire,  
Already seems to triumph in success,  
Nor doubt I but Jehovah hears our pray'rs.

**Air**

*Iphis*

The smiling dawn of happy days  
Presents a prospect clear,  
And pleasing hope's all-bright'ning rays  
Dispel each gloomy fear;  
While ev'ry charm that peace displays  
Makes spring-time all the year.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 7** 

---

*Enter Zebul, Jephtha and Chorus of Israelites.*

**[13] Recitative**

*Zebul*

Such, Jephtha, was the haughty king's reply:  
No terms, but ruin, slavery and death.

*Jephtha*

Sound, then, the last alarm; and to the field,  
Ye sons of Israel, with intrepid hearts,  
Dependent on the might of Israel's God.

**Chorus of Israelites**

When his loud voice in thunder spoke,  
With conscious fear the billows broke,

Observant of his dread command.  
In vain they roll their foaming tide,  
Confin'd by that great pow'r  
That gave them strength to roar.  
They now contract their boist'rous pride,  
And lash with idle rage the laughing strand.

**CD2 ACT TWO**

**SCENE I**

*Enter Hamor, Iphis and Chorus of Israelites.*

**1 Recitative**

*Hamor*

Glad tidings of great joy to thee, dear Iphis,  
And to the house of Israel I bring.  
Thus then, in brief. Both armies in array  
Of battle rang'd, our general stept forth  
And offer'd haughty Ammon terms of peace,  
Most just and righteous; these with scorn refus'd,  
He bade the trumpet sound. But scarce a sword  
Was ting'd in hostile blood, ere all around  
The thund'ring heavens open'd and pour'd forth  
Thousands of armed cherubim, when straight  
Our general cried: "This is thy signal, Lord,  
I follow Thee, and Thy bright heav'nly host."  
Then rushing on proud Ammon, all aghast,  
He made a bloody slaughter, and pursu'd  
The flying foe, till night bade sheathe the sword,  
And taste the joys of victory and peace.

**2 Chorus of Israelites**

Cherub and seraphim, unbodied forms,  
The messengers of fate,  
His dread command await;  
Of swifter flight, and subtler frame  
Than lightning's winged flame,  
They ride on whirlwinds, directing the storms.

**3 Air**

*Hamor*

Up the dreadful steep ascending,  
While for fame and love contending,  
Sought I thee, my glorious prize.  
And now happy in the blessing,  
Thee, my sweetest joy, possessing,  
Other honours I despise.

**4 Recitative**

*Iphis*

'Tis well.

Haste, haste, ye maidens, and in richest robes  
Adorn me, like a stately bride,  
To meet my father in triumphant pomp.  
And while around the dancing banners play.

**Air**

*Iphis*

Tune the soft melodious lute,  
Pleasant harp and warbling flute,  
To sounds of rapt'rous joy;  
Such as on our solemn days,  
Singing great Jehovah's praise,  
The holy choir employ.

*Exeunt*

**SCENE 2** —————

*Enter Zebul, Jephtha, Hamor and Chorus.*

**5 Recitative**

*Jephtha*

Heav'n smiles once more on  
His repentant people,  
And victory spreads wide her silver wings  
To soothe our sorrows with a peaceful calm.  
Zebul, thy deeds were valiant,  
Nor less thine, my Hamor;  
But the glory is the Lord's.

**Air**

*Jephtha*

His mighty arm, with sudden blow,  
Dispers'd and quell'd the haughty foe.  
They fell before him, as when through the sky  
He bids the sweeping winds in vengeance fly.

**6 Chorus of Israelites**

In glory high, in might serene,  
He sees, moves all, unmov'd, unseen.  
His mighty arm, with sudden blow,  
Dispers'd and quell'd the haughty foe.

**SCENE 3** —————

**7 Symphony**

*Enter Iphis, Storgè and Chorus of Virgins.*

**8 Recitative**

*Iphis*

Hail, glorious conqueror!  
Much lov'd father, hail!  
Behold thy daughter, and her virgin train,  
Come to salute thee with all duteous love.

**Air**

*Iphis*

Welcome as the cheerful light,  
Driving darkest shades of night;  
Welcome as the spring that rains

Peace and plenty o'er the plains.  
Not cheerful day,  
Nor spring so gay,  
Such mighty blessings brings  
As peace on her triumphant wings.

### **Chorus of Virgins**

Welcome thou, whose deeds conspire  
To provoke the warbling lyre,  
Welcome thou, whom God ordain'd  
Guardian angel of our land!  
Thou wert born His glorious name  
And great wonders to proclaim.

### **9 Recitative**

*Jephtha*

Horror! Confusion! Harsh this music grates  
Upon my tasteless ears – be gone, my child,  
Thou hast undone thy father! Fly, be gone,  
And leave me to the rack of wild despair.

*Exit Iphis.*

### **Air**

*Jephtha*

Open thy marble jaws, O tomb,  
And hide me, earth, in thy dark womb,  
Ere I the name of father stain,  
And deepest woe from conquest gain.

### **10 Recitative**

*Zebul*

Why is my brother thus afflicted? Say,  
Why didst thou spurn thy daughter's gratulations,  
And fling her from thee with unkind disdain?

*Jephtha*

O Zebul, Hamor, and my dearest wife,  
Behold a wretched man,  
Thrown from the summit of presumptuous joy,  
Down to the lowest depth of misery.  
Know, then, I vow'd the first I saw should fall  
A victim to the living God. My daughter,  
Alas, it was my daughter, and she dies.

### **11 Accompagnato and Air**

*Storgè*

First perish thou, and perish all the world!  
Hath Heav'n then bless'd us with this only pledge  
Of all our love, this one dear child, for thee  
To be her murderer? No, cruel man;  
Let other creatures die;  
Or Heav'n, earth, seas and sky  
In one confusion lie,  
Ere in a daughter's blood,  
So fair, so chaste, so good,  
A father's hand's embued.

**12 Recitative**

*Hamor*

If such thy cruel purpose, lo, your friend  
Offers himself a willing sacrifice,  
To save the innocent and beauteous maid.

**Air**

*Hamor*

On me let blind mistaken zeal  
Her utmost rage employ.  
'Twill be a mercy there to kill  
Where life can taste no joy.

**13 Quartet**

*Zebul*

Oh, spare your daughter –

*Storgè*

Spare my child,

*Hamor*

My love.

*Jephtha*

Recorded stands my vow in Heav'n above.

*Storgè*

Recall the impious vow, ere 'tis too late.

*Hamor, Zebul, Storgè*

And think not Heav'n delights  
In Moloch's horrid rites.

*Jephtha*

I'll hear no more; her doom is fix'd as fate.

**SCENE 4**

*Enter Iphis.*

**14 Recitative**

*Iphis*

Such news flies swift. I've heard the mournful cause  
Of all your sorrows. Of my father's vow  
Heav'n spoke its approbation by success:  
Jephtha has triumph'd. Israel is free.

**Accompagnato**

*Iphis*

For joys so vast too little is the price  
Of one poor life; but oh! accept it, Heav'n,  
A grateful victim, and thy blessing still  
Pour on my country, friends, and dearest father!

**15 Air**

*Iphis*

Happy they; this vital breath  
With content I shall resign;  
And not murmur or repine,  
Sinking in the arms of death.

**16 Accompagnato**

*Jephtha*

Deeper and deeper still, thy goodness, child,  
Pierceth a father's bleeding heart, and checks  
The cruel sentence on my falt'ring tongue.  
Oh, let me whisper it to the raging winds,  
Or howling deserts; for the ears of men  
It is too shocking. Yet – have I not vow'd?

And can I think the great Jehovah sleeps,  
Like Chemosh and such fabled deities?  
Ah no;  
Heav'n heard my thoughts, and wrote them down.  
It must be so.  
'Tis this that racks my brain,  
And pours into my breast a thousand pangs  
That lash me into madness. Horrid thought!  
My only daughter! So dear a child,  
Doom'd by a father! Yes, the vow is past,  
And Gilead hath triumph'd o'er his foes.  
Therefore, tomorrow's dawn – I can no more.

**[17] Chorus of Israelites**  
How dark, O Lord, are Thy decrees,  
All hid from mortal sight!  
All our joys to sorrow turning,  
And our triumphs into mourning,  
As the night succeeds the day.  
No certain bliss,  
No solid peace,  
We mortals know  
On earth below:  
Yet on this maxim still obey:  
“Whatever is, is right.”

### CD3 ACT THREE

#### SCENE 1

*Jephtha, Iphis, Priests and Israelites.*

#### **[1] Air**

*Jephtha*

Hide thou thy hated beams, O sun, in clouds  
And darkness, deep as is a father's woe;

#### **[2] Accompagnato**

*Jephtha*

A father, off'ring up his only child  
In vow'd return for victory and peace.

#### **Air**

*Jephtha*

Waft her, angels, through the skies,  
Far above yon azure plain;  
Glorious there, like you, to rise,  
There, like you, for ever reign.

#### **[3] Accompagnato**

*Iphis*

Ye sacred priests, whose hands ne'er yet were stain'd  
With human blood, why are ye thus afraid  
To execute my father's will? The call of Heav'n  
With humble resignation I obey.

**Air***Iphis*

Farewell, ye limpid springs and floods,  
 Ye flow'ry meads and mazy woods;  
 Farewell, thou busy world, where reign  
 Short hours of joy and years of pain.  
 Brighter scenes I seek above,  
 In the realms of peace and love.

**[4] Chorus of Priests**

Doubtful fear and rev'rent awe  
 Strike us, Lord, while here we bow,  
 Check'd by Thy all-sacred law,  
 Yet commanded by the vow.  
 Hear our pray'r in this distress,  
 And Thy determin'd will declare.

**[5] Sinfonia****[6] Recitative***Angel*

Rise, Jephtha, and ye rev'rend priests, withhold  
 The slaught'rous hand. No vow can disannul  
 The law of God. Nor such was its intent  
 When rightly scann'd; yet still shall be fulfill'd.  
 Thy daughter, Jephtha, thou must dedicate  
 To God, in pure and virgin state forever,  
 As not an object meet for sacrifice,  
 Else had she fall'n an holocaust to God.  
 The Holy Sp'rit, that dictated thy vow,  
 Bade thus explain it, and approves thy faith.

**Air***Angel*

Happy, Iphis, shalt thou live,  
 While to thee the virgin choir  
 Tune their harps of golden wire,  
 And their yearly tribute give.  
 Happy, Iphis, all thy days,  
 Pure, angelic, virgin-state,  
 Shalt thou live, and ages late  
 Crown thee with immortal praise.

**[7] Air***Jephtha*

For ever blessed be Thy holy name,  
 Lord God of Israel!

**[8] Chorus of Israelites**

Theme sublime of endless praise,  
 Just and righteous are thy ways;  
 And thy mercies still endure,  
 Ever faithful, ever sure.

**SCENE 2**

*Enter Zebul, Storgè, Hamor and  
 Chorus of Israelites.*

**[9] Recitative***Zebul*

Let me congratulate this happy turn,  
 My honour'd brother, judge of Israel!

Thy faith, thy courage, constancy and truth  
Nations shall sing, and in their just applause,  
All join to celebrate thy daughter's name.

**Air**

*Zebul*

Laud her, all ye virgin train  
In glad songs of choicest strain.  
Ye blest angels all around,  
Laud her in melodious sound.  
Virtues that to you belong,  
Love and truth demand the song.

**10 Recitative**

*Storgè*

Oh, let me fold thee in a mother's arms,  
And with submissive joy, my child,  
Receive thy designation to the life of Heav'n.

**Air**

*Storgè*

Sweet as sight to the blind,  
Or freedom to the slave,  
Such joy in thee I find,  
Safe from the grave.  
Still I'm of thee possess'd,  
Such is kind Heav'n's decree  
That hath thy parents bless'd  
In blessing thee.

**11 Recitative**

*Hamor*

With transport, Iphis, I behold thy safety,  
But must forever mourn so dear a loss,  
Dear, though great Jephtha were to honour me  
Still with the name of son.

**Air**

*Hamor*

'Tis Heav'n's all-ruling pow'r  
That checks the rising sigh;  
Yet let me still adore  
And think an angel by,  
While thus each charm and beauteous line  
With more than human lustre shine.

**12 Recitative**

*Iphis*

My faithful Hamor, may that Providence  
Which gently claims, or forces, our submission,  
Direct thee to some happier choice.

**Quintet**

*Iphis*

All that is in Hamor is mine  
Freely I to Heav'n resign.

*Hamor*

All that is in Iphis mine  
Freely I to Heav'n resign.

*Iphis*

Duteous to the Will Supreme,  
Still my Hamor I'll esteem.

*Hamor*

Duteous to Almighty Pow'r,  
Still my Iphis I'll adore.

*Storgè, Jephtha, Zebul*

Joys triumphant crown thy days,  
And thy name eternal praise.

*Iphis, Hamor, Storgè, Jephtha, Zebul*

Joys triumphant crown thy days,  
And thy name eternal praise.

**13 Chorus of Israelites**

Ye house of Gilead, with one voice,  
In blessings manifold rejoice,  
Freed from war's destructive sword:  
Peace her plenty round shall spread,  
While in virtue's path you tread;  
So are they blest who fear the Lord.  
Amen.  
Hallelujah.  
Amen.

---

**Appendix:** see note on page 17

**14 Recitative**

*Zebul*

Again Heav'n smiles on His repentant people,  
And victory spreads wide her silver wings  
To soothe our sorrows with a peaceful calm.

**Air**

*Zebul*

Freedom now once more possessing,  
Peace shall spread with ev'ry blessing  
Triumphant joy around.  
Sion now no more complaining,  
Shall, in blissful plenty reigning,  
Thy glorious praise resound.



Harry Christophers is known internationally as founder and conductor of The Sixteen as well as a regular guest conductor for many of the major symphony orchestras and opera companies worldwide. He has directed The Sixteen choir and orchestra throughout Europe, America and Asia Pacific gaining a distinguished reputation for his work in Renaissance, Baroque and 20th- and 21st-century music. In 2000 he instituted The Choral Pilgrimage, a national tour of English cathedrals from York to Canterbury in music from the pre-Reformation, as The Sixteen's contribution to the millennium celebrations. The Pilgrimage in the UK is now central to The Sixteen's annual artistic programme.



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

In 2008 Harry Christophers was appointed Artistic Director of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society; he is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Granada Symphony Orchestra. As well as enjoying a partnership with the BBC Philharmonic, with whom he won a Diapason d'Or, he is a regular guest conductor with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. With The Sixteen he is an Associate Artist at The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and features in the highly successful BBC television series, *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

Harry has conducted numerous productions for Lisbon Opera and English National Opera as well as conducting the UK premiere of Messenger's opera *Fortunio* for Grange Park Opera. He is a regular conductor at Buxton Opera where he initiated a very successful cycle of Handel's operas and oratorios including *Semele*, *Samson*, *Saul* and *Jephtha*.

Harry Christophers is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and has been awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Leicester. He was awarded a CBE in the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours.

# § The Sixteen

After three decades of world-wide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised as one of the world's greatest ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance, Baroque and early

Classical periods, and a diversity of 20th- and 21st-century music, all stems from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers.

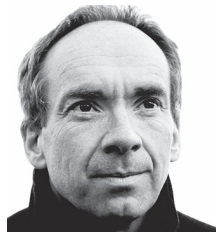
The Sixteen tours internationally giving regular performances at the major concert halls and festivals. At home in the UK, The Sixteen are 'The Voices of Classic FM' as well as Associate Artists of The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. The group also promotes The Choral Pilgrimage, an annual tour of the UK's finest cathedrals.

The Sixteen's period-instrument orchestra has taken part in acclaimed semi-staged performances of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv and London, a fully-staged production of Purcell's *King Arthur* in Lisbon's Belem Centre, and new productions of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* at Lisbon Opera House and *The Coronation of Poppea* at English National Opera.

Over 100 recordings reflect The Sixteen's quality in a range of work spanning the music of 500 years. In 2009 they won the coveted Classic FM Gramophone Artist of the Year Award and the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel's *Coronation Anthems*. The Sixteen also features in the highly successful BBC television series, *Sacred Music*, presented by Simon Russell Beale.

In 2011 the group launched a new training programme for young singers called Genesis Sixteen. Aimed at 18 to 23 year-olds, this is the UK's first fully-funded choral programme for young singers designed specifically to bridge the gap from student to professional practitioner.

James Gilchrist began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time music career in 1996. James' numerous concert appearances include Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* (Manchester Camerata, Amsterdam Sinfonietta), Haydn's *The Seasons* (BBC Proms, St Louis Symphony), Tippett's *The Knot Garden* (BBC SO, Sir Andrew Davis), Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* (Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich), Handel's *Messiah* (San Francisco, Detroit and St Louis, Washington, Handel and Haydn Society in Boston), Britten's *Les Illuminations* (Aldeburgh Festival) and *War Requiem* (Dresden Philharmonie), Handel's *Belshazzar* (Philharmonia Baroque, Nicholas McGegan), Stravinsky's *La Pulcinella* (Orchestre National de Paris, Thierry Fischer), Handel's *Athalia* (Concerto Köln, Ivor Bolton) and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *St John Passion* (Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra).



Photograph: Opera Omnia

As a recitalist, he has appeared at many venues throughout the UK, in New York and at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. His partnership with the pianist Anna Tilbrook includes many broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, performing Schumann cycles and Schubert songs, as well as demonstrating a special interest in English song, with performances of Finzi, Vaughan Williams, Tippett and Britten. James is also partnered regularly by the pianist Julius Drake and the harpist Alison Nicholls.

James' many recordings include songs by Gerald Finzi *Oh Fair To See*; Kenneth Leighton and Benjamin Britten *Earth Sweet Earth and Winter Words*; and Vaughan Williams, Warlock, Bliss and Gurney *On Wenlock Edge* (with the Fitzwilliam String Quartet), all with Anna Tilbrook for Linn records. He has also recorded *Songs of Muriel Herbert* accompanied by David Owen for Linn records. For Orchid Classics, James and Anna Tilbrook have recorded their critically acclaimed Schubert song cycles *Die schöne Müllerin*, *Schwanengesang* and *Winterreise*.

Susan Bickley is firmly established as one of the most accomplished mezzo-sopranos of her generation, with a wide repertoire encompassing the Baroque, the great 19th- and 20th-century dramatic roles as well as contemporary repertoire. In May 2011 she received the prestigious Singer Award at the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards, the highest recognition for live classical music in the UK.

Bickley has performed for many of the world's major opera houses, orchestras and festivals including Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne, Oper Frankfurt, Salzburg Festival, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Berlin Staatsoper, Opéra de Paris, San Francisco Opera, Hallé Orchestra, BBC Proms, BBC Symphony Orchestra and English National Opera; with such conductors as Sir Mark Elder, Ingo Metzmacher, Trevor Pinnock, Sir Andrew Davis, Christian Curnyn, Sir Antonio Pappano, Daniel Barenboim and Mark Wigglesworth. She has created roles for several world premieres, including *Virgie Anna Nicole* at ROH, *Detective Two Boys* at ENO and in Andriessen's *Writing to Vermeer* at Netherlands Opera, and has recorded for leading labels including EMI, DG and Hyperion.



Photograph: Julie Kim

Sophie Bevan graduated from the Benjamin Britten International Opera School where she was awarded the Queen Mother Rose Bowl Award.

Conductors she works with include Sir Antonio Pappano, Daniel Harding, Andris Nelsons, Edward Gardner, Laurence Cummings, Sir Mark Elder, Sir Neville Marriner and Sir Charles Mackerras. She is a noted recitalist and has performed at the Concertgebouw Kleine Zaal with Malcom Martineau and made her Wigmore Hall recital debut with Sebastian Wybrew to critical acclaim. Sophie has also appeared at the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh and Aldeburgh Festivals.



Photograph: Susie Ahlburg

Her operatic roles for English National Opera include Despina *Così fan tutte*, soprano solos *Messiah*, Polissena *Radamisto*, Yum Yum *Mikado*, Telair in Rameau's *Castor and Pollux* and her first Sophie *Der Rosenkavalier*. For Garsington Opera she has performed Pamina and her first Susanna and for Welsh National Opera she has sung the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen*. For the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, she has appeared as Waldvogel *Siegfried* and Pamina.

Sophie was the recipient of the 2010 Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent. She was nominated for the 2012 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards and was the recipient of The Times Breakthrough Award at the 2012 South Bank Sky Arts Awards and the Young Singer Award at the 2013 inaugural International Opera Awards.

Robin Blaze works with some of the most distinguished conductors in the early music field including Christophers, Gardiner, Haïm, Herreweghe, Hogwood, Koopman, Goodwin, King, Kraemer, Pinnock, McGegan and Suzuki.

He regularly appears with The Academy of Ancient Music, Bach Collegium Japan, Collegium Vocale, The English Concert, The Gabrieli Consort, The King's Consort, Florilegium, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and The Sixteen. Other engagements have included the Berlin Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington, Royal Flanders Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Robin Blaze's opera engagements have included *Athamas Semele* at Covent Garden and English National Opera; *Didymus Theodora* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; *Arsamenes Xerxes*, *Oberon A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamor Jephtha* for ENO; and *Bertarido Rodelinda* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera and at the Göttingen Handel Festival where he has also appeared as *Arcane Teseo*.

Robin's many recordings include the complete Bach Cantata Cycle with Bach Collegium Japan, Handel Oratorio Duets (OAE/Kraemer), several recital discs of lute songs with Elizabeth Kenny, *Didymus Theodora* (The Gabrieli Consort/McCreesh), Vivaldi, Kuhnau and Knüpfer (The King's Consort), Purcell *Odes* (Collegium Vocale Gent/Herreweghe), and Thomas Adès' song cycle *The Lover in Winter*.



Photograph: Dorothea Heise

Matthew Brook has appeared as a soloist throughout Europe, Australia, North and South America and the Far East, working extensively as a recitalist and concert artist with Gardiner, Christophers, Rousset, McCreech, Nelson and Elder, and many orchestras and ensembles including the Philharmonia, London Symphony and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, St Petersburg Philharmonic, Freiburger Barockorchester, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Hallé Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, English Baroque Soloists, Collegium Vocale Gent, The Gabrieli Consort, The Sixteen, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Dresden Staatskapelle, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Salzburg Mozarteum Orchester, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and Orchestra National de Lille.



Photograph: Richard Shymansky

Matthew's recordings include Counsel *Trial By Jury* and Friar Tuck in Sullivan's *Ivanhoe* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Chandos Records); Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and Rameau's *Anacreon* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; a Gramophone Award-winning recording of Handel's original Dublin score of *Messiah*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *B Minor Mass*, Polyphemus in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and Haman *Esther*, all with the Dunedin Consort (Linn Records); and Il Re di Scozia in Handel's *Ariodante* with Il Complesso Barocco and Joyce DiDonato in the title role (EMI/Virgin).

Grace Davidson began her musical studies with a scholarship at The Royal Academy of Music where she won the Early Music prize.

Grace has recorded the 'Pie Jesu' from Fauré's *Requiem* with the LSO, Tenebrae and conductor Nigel Short, Paul Mealor's *Stabat Mater* with the RPO for Decca Records, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for Ex Cathedra/ Jeffrey Skidmore, Monteverdi's *Vespers* with Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, *Dixit Dominus* for Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, as well as her debut solo album released back in 2007.

Recent releases include Monteverdi's *Pianto Della Madonna* as part of a disc of Monteverdi on the Coro label for Harry Christophers and The Sixteen.

Recent concert performances include Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for Philippe Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale in Europe and America, Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas* for The King's Consort and the Monteverdi *Vespers* with Emanuelle Haïm and Le Concert d'Astrée.



Photograph: David Fernandez





Photograph © MolinaVisuals

RECORDING PRODUCER: Mark Brown

RECORDING ENGINEER: Mike Hatch (Floating Earth)

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS: Robin Hawkins and Hugo Long (Floating Earth)

RECORDED AT: St Augustine's Church, Kilburn, London, January 2014

COVER IMAGE: *Jephtha* (detail) Sir John Everett Millais (1829-96);  
National Museum Wales/Bridgeman Images

DESIGN: Andrew Giles: [discoyd@aegidius.org.uk](mailto:discoyd@aegidius.org.uk)



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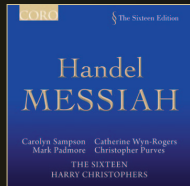
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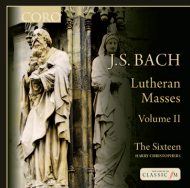


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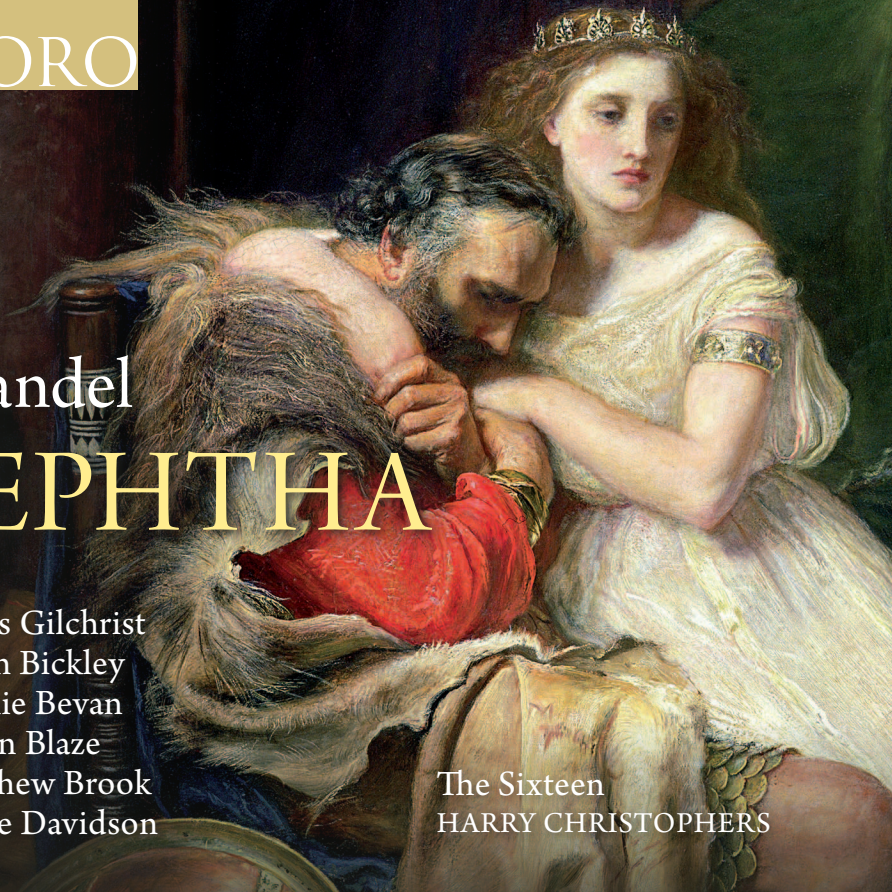
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