



George Frideric Handel's
ATHALIA

WELCOME to the Memorial Church at Harvard University, and to this evening's ARTS FIRST presentation of George Frideric Handel's *Athalia*. Handel's third essay in the oratorio form, *Athalia* uses a libretto by Samuel Humphreys, derived from the play by Jean Racine, and received its premiere in Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre on July 10, 1733.

Handel's score contains a rich variety of musical styles: thrilling choruses, which both forward the plot and comment upon it; inventive orchestration and novel instrumental effects; and vivid characterizations. The whole work is tautly constructed into a fast-flowing narrative that is dramatic to the core. Indeed *Athalia* paves the way for the operatic masterpieces *Ariodante* and *Alcina*, which were soon to follow, particularly in the stark dramatization of the leading character. The twin muses of Nature and Music once again fired the composer's imagination to produce moments of heart-melting beauty.

It has been a great thrill to prepare this rarely-performed work with such an enthusiastic group of young singers and instrumentalists, and a truly outstanding roster of soloists. As always, it is a pleasure to work with Phoebe Carrai and Sarah Darling, the directors of the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra, whose guidance and wisdom I value as much as their exquisite playing. In addition, my thanks go to Nicholas McGegan and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra; Richard Webster and the choirs of Trinity Church, Copley Square; Mark Risinger, for his talents as both performer and scholar; and Peter Sykes.

It continues to be my very great privilege to serve in this church, and to lead a choir of students whose love of singing brings so much joy to the community. Our work would not be possible without the support of so many benefactors, and I would like to thank all of our patrons for their ongoing generosity. This is indeed an exciting time for music and ministry in the Memorial Church, and I encourage you to join our e-mail list by visiting our website, memorialchurch.harvard.edu, where you can also make a contribution to our free concert series.

My sincere thanks go to my colleagues in the church, and in particular to Professor Jonathan Walton, Dr. Lucy Forster-Smith, Thomas Sheehan, and Carson P. Cooman, for their support and encouragement. To the Harvard University Choir secretaries, Emma Dowd and Joy Wang, I give my endless gratitude for all they do to ensure the group's smooth running. Finally, I thank you, our audience, for your support of this evening's concert, and for your enthusiasm for the music program here in the Memorial Church.

Edward E. Jones
Gund University Organist and Choirmaster
The Memorial Church

Please silence all electronic devices.

Athalia (1733)

An Oratorio; or Sacred Drama

Music by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
Libretto by Samuel Humphreys after Jean Racine

Act I

Intermission (15 minutes)

Act II

Act III

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Athalia, Baalite Queen of Judah and Daughter of Jezebel

Dominique Labelle, soprano

Josabeth, Wife of Joad

Amanda Forsythe, soprano

Joas, King of Judah

Gabriel Haddad, boy soprano

Joad, High Priest

Eric Jurenas, countertenor

Mathan, Priest of Baal, formerly a Jewish Priest

William Hite, tenor

Abner, Captain of the Jewish Forces

Mark Risinger, bass

Chorus of Young Virgins

Chorus of Israelites

Chorus of Priests and Levites

Chorus of Attendants

Chorus of Sidonian Priests

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Harvard University Choir
Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra
Edward Elwyn Jones, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES

MARK RISINGER

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The late 1720s and early 1730s were not an altogether happy time for Handel. After almost 20 years of producing Italian operas on the London stage, he was facing dwindling box office receipts due to the rising popularity of “ballad operas,” typified by John Gay’s “The Beggar’s Opera,” (1728). These works featured short, catchy tunes sung in English and a cast of underworld characters who possessed far greater popular appeal than the gods and heroes of Italian *opera seria*. Another frustration, in 1732, was a pirated production of one of his early masques, *Acis and Galatea*, produced by his rival Thomas Arne at a different theater; lacking legal grounds to prohibit it, Handel promptly revised the work and mounted his own new production instead. And as if these were not difficulties enough, in the following year he had to contend with the establishment of a rival opera company, funded by the Prince of Wales and his aristocratic confederates; in a venture that would itself go bankrupt within four years, this group set out to achieve Handel’s ruin by poaching most of his star singers and importing Farinelli, the most famous castrato in Europe at the time.

It may come as no surprise, therefore, that during this same period, Handel began his first provisional attempts at a new sort of composition, one that involved setting Biblical stories as musical dramas in English for concert performance. Some of the initial critical reactions were humorous and predictably satirical, just as they had been when Handel had begun his career as an opera composer in London 20 years earlier. The author of a pamphlet entitled “See and Seem Blind” had this to say of his experience:

This being a new Thing set the whole World a Madding; Han’t you been at the *Oratorio*, says one? Oh! If you don’t see the *Oratorio* you see nothing, says t’other; so away goes I to the *Oratorio*, where I saw indeed the finest Assembly of People I ever beheld in my Life, but, to my great Surprize, found this Sacred *Drama* a mere Consort [concert], no Scenary, Dress or Action, so necessary to a *Drama*...

These early oratorios of 1732–33—*Esther*, *Deborah*, and *Athalia*—are easy to interpret with the benefit of hindsight as the new musical direction that would ensure Handel’s future success throughout the 1740s and to the end of his life. But at the time of their creation, Handel was responding to the needs of a given moment and occasion, rather than mapping out a new aesthetic or compositional program.

Generally acknowledged by scholars as “the first great English oratorio,” *Athalia* was an immediate success when Handel first presented it, along with *Esther* and *Deborah*, in July 1733 as part of the festivities surrounding the ‘Publick Act’ of Oxford University.

Each summer, the university held a Commemoration of Benefactors with additional events that augmented the ordinary ceremonies for conferring degrees, and Handel conducted five performances of his music between 5–12 July in the Sheldonian Theater. Other composers had conducted similar concerts of their own work in order to receive honorary degrees, and there is conflicting documentary evidence as to whether Handel had been offered such an honor. In any event, he did not receive a degree, but he achieved popular success and considerable profit.

Handel's collaborator and librettist, Samuel Humphreys, based his libretto on Jean Racine's final play, *Athalie* (1691). The story itself comes from II Kings, chapter 11: Athaliah is the daughter of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, an apostate queen who has rejected the worship of Jehovah and turned to Baal. Furthermore, in order to secure her position as queen, she has had all the royal princes of Israel—her own grandsons—put to death, except one: Joash (Joas) has been hidden away by his aunt Jehosheba (Josabeth) for six years, and his existence is unknown to Athaliah. In due course, Jehoiada (Joad), the priest of the temple, calls together the elders of the tribes and reveals the boy-king's survival, at which point Joash is anointed king before the people. When Athaliah enters the temple and witnesses this scene, she knows all is lost, and once she has departed the house of the Lord, soldiers acting on Jehoiada's instructions hunt her down and slay her.

In addition to adjusting the spelling of character names, Humphreys softens the drama at the end by focusing on the worship and celebration of the faithful and leaving Athalia's ultimate fate to the imagination. After a tumultuous 17th century involving regicide and restoration of the monarchy amid continuing Catholic and Protestant tensions, any story involving the legitimacy of one ruler or ruling family over another had the potential to raise eyebrows (if not worse). Only in 1714 had the last of the Stuart monarchs died and been succeeded by those of Hanover. Ruth Smith has pointed out that Humphreys had professed himself completely devoted to Queen Caroline, consort of King George II, making his decision to write this libretto somewhat surprising: "This [story of Athaliah] dramatizes a part of the Old Testament which was a crucial debating point in the discussion of the validity of the 1688 Revolution and a favourite Nonjuror and Jacobite parallel: the story of the restoration of the true heir to the throne and the dispatch of the usurping queen." Smith also notes that Oxford was "the English stronghold of Toryism and Jacobitism," remarking that "one could hardly find a more challenging part of the Bible to reclaim [from a Hanoverian perspective] or a more hostile venue for the first performance." Despite the potential political overtones, Handel's new work was received with tremendous enthusiasm.

There are musical surprises in this story as well. Listeners familiar with Handel's operas expect most solo arias to follow the *Da Capo* format of two contrasting sections, followed by a repeat of the first. It is striking, therefore, that Handel includes only five such arias in *Athalie*. Another surprising compositional strategy involves the frequent combination of solo aria and chorus, with one leading directly into the other. As is often the case in Handel's oratorios, the chorus is called upon to portray a variety of roles, depending on the setting of the scene. They are most commonly the voice of the faithful Israelites, particularly at the beginning, but at other times (Act I, sc. iii) they are the priests of Baal, seeking comfort for their queen in her terror. Each of the other characters receives music that reflects Handel's operatic and theatrical mindset and makes them spring to life as individuals, yet the overall scope of the work is compact and the pacing brisk. Though it would be another five years before Handel produced another full-length oratorio in English, *Athalie* undoubtedly represents a turning point in Handel's work and points the way to the grandeur for which audiences still know him best.

ACT I

1. Overture

SCENE 1

Josabeth, Priests and Chorus of Young Virgins and Israelites.

2. Air

Josabeth

Blooming virgins, spotless train,
Tune to transport all your lays!
Hail Jehovah's wond'rous reign,
Wake the dayspring with his praise!
Blooming virgins. . . *da capo*

3. Chorus

Young Virgins

The rising world Jehovah crown'd
With bright magnificence around!
He hung the radiant orbs on high,
And pour'd the sunbeams through the sky;
He lent the flow'rs their lovely glow,
And breath'd the fragrance they bestow;
The plains with verdant charms array'd,
And beautify'd with green the glade.

Israelites

O mortals, if around us here
So wond'rous all his works appear,
Ah think with awe, ye sons of men,
How wond'rous is their author then!

4. Solo and Chorus

Josabeth

Tyrants would in impious throngs
Silence His adorers' songs;
But shall Salem's lyre and lute
At their proud commands be mute?

Israelites

Tyrants, ye in vain conspire!
Wake the lute and strike the lyre!
Why should Salem's lyre and lute
At their proud commands be mute?

5. Recitative

Abner

When he is in his wrath reveal'd,
Where will the haughty lie conceal'd?

6. Air & Chorus

Abner

When storms the proud to terrors doom,
He forms the dark majestic scene,
He rolls the thunder through the gloom,
And on the whirlwind rides serene.

Israelites

O Judah, boast his matchless law,
Pronounc'd with such tremendous awe!
When tempests his approach proclaim'd,
And Sinah's trembling mountain flam'd,
All Judah then his terrors saw.

SCENE 2

Enter Joad.

7. Recitative

Joad

Your sacred songs awhile forbear,
Our festival demands your care;
And now no longer let your stay
The due solemnities delay.

8. Accompagnato

Joad

O Judah, Judah, chosen seed,
To what distress art thou decreed!
How are thy sacred feasts profan'd,
Thy rites with vile pollution stain'd!
Proud Athalia's impious hand
Sheds desolation through the land,
Bids strange, unhallow'd altars flame,
And proudly braves Jehovah's name.

9. Solo and Chorus

Joad

O Lord, whom we adore,
Shall Judah rise no more?
Can this be thy decree.
Hear from thy mercy seat
The groans thy tribes repeat,
The sighs they breathe to thee.

Israelites

Hear from thy mercy seat,
The groans thy tribes repeat,
The sighs they breathe to thee.

SCENE 3

Athalia and Chorus of Attendants.

10. Accompagnato

Athalia (starting out of a slumber)

What scenes of horror round me rise!
I shake, I faint, with dire surprise!
Is sleep, that frees the wretch from woe,
To majesty alone a foe?

Enter Abner and Mathan.

11. Recitative

Athalia

O Mathan, aid me to control
The wild confusion of my soul!

Mathan

Why shrinks that mighty soul with fear?
What cares, what danger can be near?

Athalia

E'en now, as I was sunk in deep repose,
My mother's awful form before me rose;
But ah! she chill'd my soul with fear,
For thus she thunder'd in my ear:

12. Accompagnato

Athalia

"O Athalia, tremble at thy fate!
For Judah's God pursues thee with His hate,

And will with unrelenting wrath this day
Set all His terrors round thee in array."

13. Chorus of Attendants and Sidonian Priests

The gods, who chosen blessings shed
On majesty's anointed head,
For thee their care will still employ,
And brighten all thy fears to joy.

14. Recitative

Athalia

Her form at this began to fade,
And seem'd dissolving into shade.
In waking starts I vainly press'd
To clasp her to my panting breast:
She, pale, from my embrace withdrew,
And bleeding limbs lay mangled in my view;
The horrid carnage dogs contending tore,
And drank with dreadful thirst the floating gore.

15. Chorus of Attendants and Sidonian Priests

Cheer her, O Baal, with a soft serene,
Protect thy votary, protect our noble queen!

16. Recitative

Athalia

Amidst these horrors that my soul dismay'd,
A youth I saw in shining robes array'd,
Such as the priests of Judah wear,
When they for solemn pomp prepare.
His lovely form and winning smile
Suspended all my fears awhile.
But as the young barbarian I caress'd,
He plung'd a dagger deep within my breast.
No efforts could the blow repel,
I shriek'd, I fainted, and I fell.

Mathan

Great queen, be calm! These fears I deem
The birth of a delusive dream.
Let harmony breathe soft around,
For sadness ceases at the sound.

17. Air

Mathan

Gentle airs, melodious strains!

Call for raptures out of woe,
Lull the regal mourner's pains,
Sweetly soothe her as you flow.
Gentle airs. . . *da capo*

18. Air

Athalia

Softest sounds no more can ease me,
Heav'n a weight of woe decrees me,
Horrors all my hopes destroy.
Whilst such rising torments grieve me,
Tuneful strains can ne'er relieve me,
Vain is the voice of joy.

19. Recitative

Mathan

Swift to the temple let us fly, to know
What mansion hides this youthful foe.

Abner

I'll haste the pontiff to prepare
For this black storm of wild despair.

20. Chorus of Attendants

The traitor, if you there descry,
Oh, let him by the altar die.

SCENE 4

Joad, Josabeth, Chorus, and to them Abner.

21. Recitative

Joad

My Josabeth, the grateful time appears
To bid dejected Judah end her fears.

Josabeth

O tell the people, as I oft have craved,
How I from death the royal infant sav'd.

Enter Abner.

Abner

Priest of the living God, with anxious heart
Proud Athalia's purpose I impart.
With vengeful haste she marches here,
To brave the God whom we revere.

She says this pile conceals a youthful foe,
Whose fall, she means, shall end her jealous woe.

Josabeth

Oh, killing shock of unexpected pain!
Oh, innocence, my tender care in vain!
Must I at last my cherish'd joys forgo,
And drink, alas, this bitter cup of woe!

22. Air

Josabeth

Faithful cares in vain extended,
Lovely hopes for ever ended,
Beamy dawn of joy, farewell!
Gentle death, at last reveal me,
For the cruel woes that grieve me,
Thou alone canst now repel!
Faithful cares. . . *da capo*

23. Recitative

Abner

Oh cease, fair princess, to indulge your woe;
No mortal to your son can prove a foe.

Joad

This grief, O Josabeth, degrades your soul;
Can God no longer Judah's foe control?
I trust he will his gracious care employ,
To make us close this festival with joy.

24. Air & Chorus

Joad

Gloomy tyrants, we disdain
All the terrors you intend.
All your fury will be vain,
And in low confusion end!

Israelites

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

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ACT II

SCENE 1

The Temple. Joas, Joad, Josabeth, Abner, Priests and Levites.

25. Solo and Chorus

Priests, Levites and Israelites

The mighty pow'r in whom we trust,
Is ever to his promise just;
He makes this sacred day appear
The pledge of a propitious year.

Joad

He bids the circling season shine,
Recalls the olive and the wine,
With blooming plenty loads the plain,
And crowns the fields with golden grain.

Priests, Levites and Israelites

Give glory to His awful name,
Let ev'ry voice His praise proclaim!

26. Air

Josabeth

Through the land so lovely blooming,
Nature all her charms assuming,
Wakes the soul to cheerful praise.
Verdant scenes around us rising,
Each delighted sense surprising,
Softly crown the circling days.
Through the land. . . *da capo*

27. Recitative

Abner

Ah, were this land from proud oppression freed,
Judea would be bless'd indeed!

Joad

O Abner, wert thou certain that the sword
Had not destroy'd the race by thee deplor'd,
Did one dear branch of that great stem remain:
Wouldst thou, O Abner, then his cause maintain?

28. Air

Abner

Ah, canst thou but prove me!
To vengeance I spring,
No terrors shall move me,
I'll fall for my king.
But whilst you relieve me
Awhile from my pain,
I fear you deceive me
With joys that are vain.
Ah, canst thou. . . *da capo*

29. Recitative

Joad

Thou dost the ardour that I wish display;
Revisit me before the close of day.
See, see, the proud imperious queen
Approaches with a glaring mien!

SCENE 2

Enter Athalia.

Athalia

Confusion to my thoughts, my eyes have view'd
My dreadful vision in this place renew'd!
Through all my veins the chilling horrors run.
Say, Josabeth, is this fair youth thy son?

Josabeth

Though much he merits my fond love, yet he
Is not indebted for his birth to me.

Athalia

Who is thy father? Let his name be known!

Josabeth

He has no father but kind Heav'n alone.

Athalia

Why so officious does thy zeal appear?
I mean the answer from his lips to hear.
How art thou call'd?

Joas

Eliakim.

Athalia
Unfold
Thy father's name!

Joas
In me, alas, behold
An orphan, cast by providence, and ne'er
As yet acquainted who his parents were.

Athalia
Give me to understand whose tender cares
Sustain'd and rear'd thee in thy infant years?

30. Air

Joas
Will God, whose mercies ever flow,
Expose his children's youth to woe?
The little birds his bounty taste,
All nature with his gifts are grac'd.
Each day his care I implore,
He feeds me from his altar's store.

31. Recitative

Athalia
'Tis my intention, lovely youth, that you
A scene more suited to your worth shall view;
You to the palace shall this day repair,
And live consigned to Athalia's care.

Joas
Shall I behold the God by whom I'm bless'd
Profan'd by you with rites that I detest?

Athalia
Princess, in discipline you much excel;
Whate'er you dictate he remembers well.
But be assured that one revolving hour
Shall snatch your learned pupil from your pow'r.

32. Air

Athalia
My vengeance awakes me,
Compassion forsakes me,
All softness and mercy away!
My foes with confusion
Shall find their illusion

And tremble before me today.
My vengeance awakes me. . . *da capo*
Exit Athalia.

33. Duet

Josabeth
My spirits fail, I faint, I die!

Joas
Ah, why?

Josabeth
The grave shall hide my head!

Joas
Is hope for ever fled?

Josabeth
My grief's too great to bear,
For thee sorrows rend me.

Joas
Kind Heav'n will defend me.

Josabeth
Thy ardours affect me.

Joas
He sure will protect me.

Josabeth
Whate'er this tyrant may decree,
O God, I place my trust in thee!

SCENE 3

*Re-enter to them Joad, Chorus of Young Virgins, and
Chorus of Priests and Levites.*

34. Recitative

Joad
Dear Josabeth, I trembled whilst my woe
Did in its first emotions wildly flow;
But when at last thou didst the pang control,
My fading joy re-kindled in my soul.

35. Duet

Joad

Cease thy anguish, smile once more,
Let thy tears no longer flow!
Judah's God, whom we adore,
Soon to joy will change thy woe.

Josabeth

All his mercies I review,
Gladly with a grateful heart,
And I trust he will renew
Blessings he did once impart.

Both

Whate'er this tyrant may decree,
Returning joys we soon shall see.

36. Recitative

Abner

Joad, ere day has ended half his race,
Again expect me in this sacred place.

37. Chorus

Young Virgins

The clouded scene begins to clear,
And joys before our eyes appear.

Priests and Levites

When crimes aloud for vengeance call,
The guilty will be doomed to fall.

Tutti

Rejoice, O Judah, in thy God,
The proud alone shall feel his rod!
While blessings, by his mild decree,
His mercy now prepares for thee.

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ACT III

SCENE 1

Joad, Joas, Josabeth, Chorus of Young Virgins, Chorus of Priests and Levites.

38. Accompagnato

Joad

What sacred horrors shake my breast!
Ah, 'tis the pow'r divine confess'd!
Who can his energy control?
He comes, he comes, and fires my soul!

39. Chorus of Virgins, Priests and Levites

Unfold, great seer, what Heav'n imparts,
And speak glad tidings to our hearts!

40. Accompagnato

Joad

Let harmony breathe soft around,
And aid my raptures with the sound!

41. Solo and Chorus

Joad

Jerusalem, thou shalt no more a tyrant's guilty reign deplore;
No longer with dejected brow shall solitary sit as now.
Her fury soon shall cease to grieve thee,
Destin'd vengeance swiftly flies!
Heav'n itself will now relieve me!
See, she falls, she bleeds, she dies!

Virgins, Priests and Levites

O shining mercy, gracious pow'r
That aids us in the needful hour!

42. Recitative

Joad

Eliakim

Joas

My father!

Joad

Let me know:
Should Heav'n on thee a diadem bestow,
What reign of Judah's kings wouldst thou that day
Choose for the model of thy future sway?

Joas

Should God such glory for my lot ordain,
Like righteous David I would wish to reign.

Joad

O Joas, O my king, thus low to thee
I pay the homage of my bended knee!

Joas

Is this reality, or kind deceit?
Ah, can I see my father at my feet?

Josabeth

Ye sacred bands, who serve the God of truth,
Revere your sov'reign in that royal youth!

43. Chorus of Virgins, Priests and Levites

With firm united hearts, we all
Will conquer in his cause, or fall!

SCENE 2

Enter Mathan.

44. Recitative

Mathan

O princess, I approach thee to declare
How much thy welfare is my care.

Josabeth

What means, proud Mathan, thy intrusion here?
Has Heav'n no vengeance for thy crimes to fear?

Mathan

Fair Josabeth, though you insult me so,
Trust me, in Mathan you behold no foe!

45. Air

Josabeth

Soothing tyrant, falsely smiling,
Virtue's foes I ne'er shall fear;
Flatt'ring sounds and looks beguiling
Lose their artful meaning here.
Go, thou vain deceiver, go,
Alike to me a friend or foe!

SCENE 3

Re-enter Joad.

46. Recitative

Joad

Apostate priest! How canst thou dare
To violate this house of pray'r?

Mathan

Joad, I scorn thy proud insulting mien;
Prepare to answer thy offended queen!

SCENE 4

Enter Athalia, Abner and Chorus of Sidonian Priests.

Athalia

O bold seducer, art thou there?
Where is the youth, inform me, where?

Joad

Ye priests, the youth before her bring!
Proud woman, there, behold our king!

47. Solo and Chorus

Virgins, Priests and Levites

Around let acclamations ring:
Hail, royal youth, hail royal youth,
Long live the king!

Joad

Reviving Judah shall no more
Detested images adore;
We'll purge with a reforming hand
Idolatry from out the land.
May God, from whom all mercies spring,
Bless the true church, and save the king!

Virgins, Priests and Levites

Bless the true church, and save the king!

48. Recitative

Athalia

Oh, treason, treason, impious scene!
Abner, avenge thy injur'd queen!

Joad

Great chief, behold thy royal Joas there,

Preserv'd by Josabeth's successful care!
Thy dauntless loyalty of soul I know,
Thou canst not be to David's race a foe.

Abner

Does Heav'n this blessing then at last accord?
O royal Joas, O my honour'd Lord!

49. Air

Abner

Oppression, no longer I dread thee,
Thy terrors, proud queen, I despise!
Thy crimes to confusion have led thee,
And Judah triumphant shall rise!

50. Recitative

Athalia

Where I am? Furies, wild despair!
Where are my guards, my vassals, where?
Mathan, invoke thy God to shed
His vengeance on each rebel's head!

Mathan

He hears no more, our hopes are past,
The Hebrews' God prevails at last!
Alas, alas, my broken vow,
His dreadful hand is on me now!

51. Air

Mathan

Hark! His thunders round me roll,
His angry, awful frowns I see,
His arrows wound my trembling soul:
Is no more mercy left for me?
Ah no, he now denies to save.
Open, O earth, and be my grave!

52. Recitative

Joad

Yes, proud apostate, thou shalt fall,
Thy crimes aloud for vengeance call!

Athalia

I see all hopes, all succours fail,
And Judah's God will now prevail;
I see my death this day decreed,
But, traitors, I can dare to bleed.

Let Jezebel's great soul my bosom fill,
And ev'n in death, proud priest, I'll triumph still.

53. Air

Athalia

To darkness eternal and horrors infernal
Undaunted I'll hasten away. O tyrants, your treason
Shall in the due season weep blood for this barbarous day.

SCENE THE LAST

Joas, Joad, Josabeth, Abner and Chorus.

54. Recitative

Joad

Now, Josabeth, thy fears are o'er.

Josabeth

Bless'd be his name, whom we adore.

55. Duet

Joad

Joys, in gentle trains appearing,
Heav'n does to my fair impart;
And, to make them more endearing,
I shall share them with my heart!

Josabeth

Softest joys would but deceive me,
Hadst thou not thy happy part;
O my dearest lord, believe me,
Thou shalt share them with my heart.

56. Recitative

Abner

Rejoice, O Judah, this triumphant day!
Let all the goodness of our God display,
Whose mercies to the wond'ring world declare
His chosen people are his chosen care.

57. Chorus

Virgins, Priests, Levites, and Israelites

Give glory to His awful name,
Let ev'ry voice His praise proclaim!

HARVARD UNIVERSITY CHOIR

Edward Elwyn Jones, Gund University Organist and Choirmaster

Thomas Sheehan, Assistant University Organist and Choirmaster

Carson Cooman, Research Associate in Music and Composer in Residence

Emma Dowd and Joy Wang, Choir Secretaries

Sopranos

Emily Bishai

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Cara Jacobson

Racha Kirakosian

Charlotte McKechnie

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Danielle Solomon

Maggie Vo

Joy Wang

Sara Wiant

Altos

Alexandra Amati-

Camperi

Annie Bishai

Erin Dahlstrom

Emma Dowd

Samantha Heinle

David Hughes

Tamsin Jones

Randa Melhem

Laura Peterson

Emma Woo

Tenors

Ariel Camperi

Joey Goodknight

William Jameson

Steve Klosterman

Michael Lesley

Sydney Mukasa

Arvind Narayanan

Harrison Phelps

Andrew Sanchez

Andy Troska

Basses

Josh Bean

Sam Brinton

Zachary Fletcher

Rahul Kulka

Tanmoy Laskar

Max Masuda-Farkas

Larkin McCann

Fred Metzger

Michael Paladino

Maxime Rischard

Peter Wu

Italics denote members of the Choral Fellows.

HARVARD BAROQUE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Phoebe Carrai, Director

Sarah Darling, Assistant Director

Violin

Farkhad Abdikadirov

Albano Berberi

Danilo Bonina

Yi-Li Chang

Sarah Darling

Sonia Deng

Michael Genecin

Marji Gere

Lisa Goddard

David Roberts

Eunjeong Song

Jessica Yamada

Sarah Zeiser

Viola

Ken Allen

Hayley Murks

Lauren Nelson

Chris McClain

Cello

Phoebe Carrai

Christopher Chen

Emily Davidson

Saskia Keller

Beatrice Masters

Oliver Weston

Bass

Benjamin Rechel

Flute

Sarah Paysnick

Na'ama Lion

Oboe

Lani Spahr

Cameron Kirkpatrick

Bassoon

Sally Merriman

Horn

Elisabeth Axtell

Yoni Kahn

Trumpet

Christopher Belluscio

Robinson Pyle

Timpani

Jonathan Hess

Archlute

Douglas Freundlich

Organ & Harpsichord

Thomas Sheehan

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

For over 175 years the **Harvard University Choir** has provided a unique opportunity for student singers to perform choral literature at the highest level, both in concert and during the services of the Memorial Church. Its program of daily choral services, broadcasts, tours, commissions, and recordings make it one of the premiere college chapel ensembles in the United States. Highlights of recent seasons include concert performances of C.P.E. Bach's *Die Israeliten in der Wüste*, Bach's *St. John Passion* and *Mass in B Minor*, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Handel's *Saul and Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Mass in C Minor* (in completions by Harvard Professor Robert Levin), Roxanna Panufnik's *Westminster Mass*, Alice Parker's *Melodious Accord*, Stephen Paulus's *The Three Hermits*, Benjamin Britten's *St. Nicolas*, and the world premiere of composer-in-residence Carson Cooman's *The Acts of the Apostles*. Committed to the presentation of new works, the group has premiered works by today's most prominent composers, including David Conte, Tarik O'Regan, Alice Parker, Daniel Pinkham, Craig Phillips, and John Rutter. The choir's many recordings have received critical acclaim and its newest album, *Spring Bursts Today: A Celebration of Eastertide*—is available as a free digital download from www.memorialchurch.harvard.edu.

Edward Elwyn Jones is the Gund University Organist and Choirmaster at Harvard University, where he directs the music program in the Memorial Church. He conducts the Harvard University Choir in its daily choral services, broadcasts, tours, commissions, and recordings, as well as playing the organ for university services and events. During his time at Harvard he has overseen the publication of a new university hymnal, and the installation of two new pipe organs in the Memorial Church; in addition, he has commissioned works from some of America's most prominent contemporary composers. He studied music at Cambridge University, where he was the Organ Scholar of Emmanuel College, and the conductor of three university orchestras. He pursued graduate studies in orchestral conducting at the Mannes College of Music in New York City, where he was the recipient of the Felix Salzer Memorial Award; during this time, he was the Assistant Organist of Christ Church United Methodist, New York. He has focused particularly on conducting opera, which he has practiced with the Harvard Early Music Society, Mannes Opera, Lowell House Opera, the Reykjavic Summer Opera Festival in Iceland, Opera Boston, and New England's Intermezzo Opera. He is the Music Director of the Harvard Radcliffe Chorus, and a frequent collaborator with Yale's Schola Cantorum.

The **Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra** (HBCO) is a small chamber orchestra dedicated to bringing back to life the vivid rhetoric and dancing rhythms of baroque music. It was founded by Murray Forbes Somerville (Gund University Organist and Choirmaster, 1990–2003) and baroque violinist Robert Mealy '85, now director of Juilliard's Historical Performance program. The orchestra rehearses each week in the sanctuary of the Memorial Church, using the church's set of baroque bows and instruments from the Early Instrument Collection of the music department. HBCO's Harvard members are joined by students and recent graduates of New England Conservatory, Boston Conservatory, Boston University, and the Longy School of Music. Guest directors have included Christopher Hogwood, William Christie, Joel Cohen, Andrew Parrott, and Ton Koopman; the orchestra also improvised with Bobby McFerrin before a packed Sanders Theater in 2002. In 2009, the orchestra was awarded the Erwin Bodky Prize from the Cambridge Society for Early Music.

Phoebe Carrai, a native Bostonian, started playing the cello at the age of 10. She fell in love with the baroque cello and the early music movement while a student of Lawrence Lesser at New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where she earned both her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees. In 1979, Ms. Carrai won a Beebe Foundation Grant to undertake post-graduate studies in historical performance practice with

Nikolaus Harnoncourt at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. In 1983, Ms. Carrai joined the chamber music ensemble Musica Antiqua Köln and worked exclusively with them for the next ten years, touring and teaching in the United States, Scandinavia, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and South America. During those years, she taught at the Hilversum Conservatory in Holland. Now living in the United States again, Phoebe Carrai appears both in chamber music and as an international soloist. Her recording of the J.S. Bach six solo cello suites was released in 2004 and the duos of Friederich August Kummer in 2006, both on the Avie label. She performs regularly with the Arcadian Academy, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and the Festpiel Orchester Goettingen. She is a member of the faculties of the University of the Arts in Berlin, Germany, the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. Ms. Carrai is also a founding member and co-director of the International Baroque Institute at Longy and the Director of the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra. Phoebe Carrai performs on an anonymous Italian cello from c. 1690, and has recorded for Aetma, Deutsche Grammophon, Harmonia Mundi, Telarc, Decca, and BMG.

Dominique Labelle has fearlessly plumbed the technical and emotional depths of music, turning in performances possessed of “conviction without exhibitionism” (De Telegraf), that have “the audience hanging on every note” (Boston Globe). Recent and upcoming engagements include Bach’s *B-minor Mass* with New York City’s Voices of Ascension and Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* with Carmel Bach Festival; performances of Handel’s *Teseo* with Nicholas McGegan and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and Handel’s *Messiah* with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. Another favorite collaborator is Hungarian conductor Iván Fischer, under whose baton she will be performing Bach’s *Magnificat* with the Budapest Festival Orchestra. Contemporary music credits include Shostakovich’s *Seven Romances on Poetry of Alexander Blok*; Britten’s *Les Illuminations*, and John Harbison’s *The Rewaking* (recorded for Musica Omnia). Her most recent recording is Monsigny’s *Le Déserteur* (Naxos). In 2014, Dominique became Professor of Voice at the Schulich School of Music at her alma mater, McGill University.

The American soprano **Amanda Forsythe** has been praised by Opera News for her “light and luster,” “wonderful agility and silvery top notes.” Ms. Forsythe made her European operatic debut as Corinna (*Il viaggio a Reims*) at the Rossini Opera Festival, Pesaro, followed by her debut at the Grand Theatre, Geneva as Dalinda (*Ariodante*) where she was proclaimed “the discovery of the evening” (*Financial Times*). Further debuts followed at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich as Dalinda and as Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Theatre des Champs-Élysées, Paris. She returned to Covent Garden to sing Manto in Steffani’s *Niobe, regina di Tebe* under Thomas Hengelbrock and Nannetta (*Falstaff*) under Daniele Gatti, described by Gramophone Magazine as “meltingly beautiful.” Upcoming performances include L’Amour in Gluck’s *Orphée* (Covent Garden), *Agrippina* (Boston Baroque), Mozart *Requiem* and *Mass in C minor* with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra under Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Mendelssohn’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with the Boston Symphony under Andris Nelsons and Marzelline (*Fidelio*) with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Sir Antonio Pappano. Ms. Forsythe recently made her debuts at Tanglewood and the Mostly Mozart Festivals with the Philharmonia Baroque under Nicholas McGegan and with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome under Sir Antonio Pappano. She is a regular performer with Apollo’s Fire, Boston Baroque, Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF), the Charlotte Symphony and Vancouver Early Music. She sings Euridice on Charpentier’s *La Descente d’Orphée* with BEMF, which won the 2015 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. Her debut solo album of Handel arias will be released in fall 2015 on the Avie label.

Declared by the New York Times as an artist with “beautiful, well-supported tone and compelling expression,” and defined as having a “rich, mature voice,” (Third Coast Digest) with “incredible power,” (Opus Colorado) American countertenor **Eric Jurenas** is quickly making a name for himself in both the opera and concert scene. After a brief stint as a baritone in his first year of university studies, he made the daunting switch to the

opposite side of the vocal spectrum. Eric has performed as featured soloist with several groups, including The Santa Fe Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Philadelphia, Wolf Trap Opera, the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, and the Colorado Bach Ensemble. This season's highlights include performances with The Glimmerglass Opera Festival, American Bach Soloists, Juilliard 415, Juilliard Songfest, AXIOM, New Juilliard Ensemble, Burlington Choral Society, The Juilliard Honors Recital, and Artist-in-Residence at the Baldwin Wallace Bach Festival, the oldest American collegiate festival. His upcoming season includes starring role debuts at the Wiener Staatsoper and the Berlin Komische Oper. He is currently pursuing a Masters at The Juilliard School. He received his Bachelors from the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) at the University of Cincinnati. He is a student of Dr. Robert White Jr., William McGraw, and George Gibson. Please visit his website for updates and more information: www.ericjurenas.com.

William Hite's reputation as an engaging and expressive artist has led to appearances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, Dresdner Philharmonie, American Symphony Orchestra, Washington Bach Consort, New York City Ballet, Mark Morris Dance Group, New York Collegium, National Arts Center Orchestra (Ottawa), Charlotte Symphony, Boston Baroque, Toronto Consort. Emmanuel Music, Tafelmusik under the direction of Bernard Haitink, Seiji Ozawa, James Levine, Rafael Frübeck de Burgos, Nicholas McGegan, Christopher Hogwood, Jane Glover, Grant Llewellyn, Leon Botstein, Donald Teeters, John Harbison, and Peter Schreier. Mr. Hite's upcoming engagements include Schubert's *Winterreise* with pianist Gilles Vonsattel at New York City's Bargemusic, Britten's *War Requiem* at Symphony Hall in Boston, the role of the Evangelist in the *St. John Passion* at Trinity Church Wall Street and with the Bach Society of Minnesota, *Messiah* at Duke University and the title roles in both *Jephtha* and *Judas Maccabaeus* with the New Haven Chorale. Mr. Hite's extensive discography now contains over 40 recordings spanning a wide spectrum of musical idioms. He may be heard on recently released recordings in *Messiah* with Chicago's Apollo Chorus on the Clarion label, *Acis and Galatea* on NCA and *The Construction of Boston* by Scott Wheeler on Naxos. He is Senior Lecturer in Voice and coordinator of the voice area at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Please visit www.williamhitetenor.com.

Mark Risinger, bass, has performed opera and oratorio throughout the United States, Europe, and Mexico. He has made numerous appearances with New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Baltimore Opera, Arizona Opera, Utah Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Connecticut Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Lyrique-en-Mer Festival, in repertoire that includes Leporello, Figaro, Sarastro, Raimondo, Frere Laurent, the *Hoffmann* villains, and several roles in Strauss's *Salome*. He has performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, New York Choral Society, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Opera Orchestra of New York, Boston Baroque, and Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia, in repertoire ranging from the cantatas and Passions of J.S. Bach to Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and the *Requiem* masses of Mozart and Verdi. In addition to degrees in English literature, Mr. Risinger holds a Ph.D. in Musicology from Harvard University, where he completed a dissertation on the compositional process of G.F. Handel and where he was Lecturer on Music for five years. In addition to singing, he is a frequent guest lecturer and is a volume editor for the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe.

Gabriel Haddad is a member of the choristers of Trinity Church, Boston.

UPCOMING MUSIC EVENTS AT TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON

Rachmaninoff: All-Night Vigil (Vespers), Trinity Choirs, Friday, May 8, 7:30 p.m.

Trio Speranza, Friday, June 12, 12:15 p.m.

Fridays at Trinity Organ Recital Series, 12:15 p.m. — May 8: Geoff Wieting; May 15: John Robinson; May 22: Amanda Mole; May 29: Jerome Faucheur; June 5: Stephen Kalnoske.

Visit <http://trinitychurchboston.org> for more information.



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*Cover Image: James Heath, Apotheosis of Händel, 1787
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