

YALE SCHOLA CANTORUM
JUILLIARD⁴¹⁵
NICHOLAS MCGEGAN, GUEST CONDUCTOR

November 9, 2025

4:00 PM

Woolsey Hall, New Haven

JEPHTHA

George Frideric Handel

Sam Denler *Jephtha*

Isabel Barbato *Iphis*

Scottie Rogers *Storgè*

Gwendolyn Delaney *Hamor*

Matthew Dexter *Zebul*

Eden Bartholomew *Angel*

Please silence all mobile devices.

The use of photographic, recording, or electronic equipment during the performance is prohibited.

Your courtesy is appreciated.

Words by Thomas Morell (1703–1784)

1. Overture

ACT ONE

Scene 1 *Zebul, with his brethren and Chorus.*

2. *Accompagnato & Recitative (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.

3. *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.

4. *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.*

5. *Recitative*

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, Heaven.

6. *Air (Jephtha)*

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

7. *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.

8. *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.*

9. *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!

10. *Air (Hamor)*

Dull delay, in piercing anguish,
Bids the 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.

11. *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.

12. *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.

13. *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.

14. *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.*

15. 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 Sp'rit of God,
In whose great name I offer up my vow.

16. *Accompagnato*

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 a glorious conqueror,
What, or whoe'er shall first salute mine eyes,
Shall be forever Thine, or fall a sacrifice.

17. Recitative (*Jephtha*)

'Tis said.

Enter Israelites.

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

18. 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.*

19. Recitative (*Storgè*)

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

20. 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.*

21. Recitative

Iphis

Say, my dear mother, whence these piercing cries
That force me, like a frightened 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.

22. Air (*Iphis*)

The smiling dawn of happy days
Presents a prospect clear,
And pleasing hope's all-bright'ning rays
Dispel each gloomy fear.
Exeunt.

Scene 7 *Enter Zebul, Jephtha and Chorus.*

23. 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.

24. 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.

ACT TWO

Scene 1 *Enter Hamor, Iphis and Chorus.*

25. 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 pursued
The flying foe, till night bade sheathe the sword,
And taste the joys of victory and peace.

26. 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.

27. Air (Hamor)

Up the dreadful steep ascending,
While for fame and love contending,
Sought I thee, my glorious prize.

28. 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...

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. Recitative (Jephtha)

Zebul, thy deeds were valiant,
Nor less thine, my Hamor;
But the glory is the Lord's.

33. 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.

34. Chorus

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.

INTERMISSION

Scene 3

35. Symphony Enter Iphis, Storgè and Chorus of Virgins.

36. 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.

37. 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.

38. 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.

39. Recitative (Jephtha)

Horror, confusion! Harsh this music grates
Upon my tasteless ears. Begone, my child,
Thou hast undone thy father! Fly, begone,
And leave me to the rack of wild despair!
Exit Iphis.

40. 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.

41. 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.

42. Accompagnato (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!

42a. Air (Storgè)

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 embrued.

43. Recitative (Hamor)

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

44. Air (Hamor)

On me let blind mistaken zeal
Her utmost rage employ.

45. Quartet

Zebul

Oh, spare your daughter,

Storgè

Spare my child,

Hamor

My love!

Jephtha

Recorded stands my vow in Heav'n above.

Storgè, Hamor, Zebul

Recall the impious vow, ere 'tis too late.

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.

46. 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.

47. 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!

48. Air (Iphis)

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

49. 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.

50. Chorus

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."

ACT THREE

Scene 1 Jephtha, Iphis, Priests and Chorus.

51. Accompagnato (Jephtha)

Hide thou thy hated beams, O sun,

In clouds and darkness, deep as is a father's woe;

52. Accompagnato (Jephtha)

A father, off'ring up his only child

In vow'd return for victory and peace.

53. 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.

54. Recitative (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.

55. Air (Iphis)

Farewell, ye limpid springs and floods,

Ye flow'ry meads and leafy 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.

57. Symphony

58. 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 Spirit, that dictated thy vow,
Bade thus explain it, and approves thy faith.

59. 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.

60. Arioso (Jephtha)

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

**Scene 2 Enter Zebul, Storgè, Hamor, and
Chorus of Israelites.**

62. 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.

63. 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.

64. 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.

68. Recitative (Iphis)

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

70. Duet and Quintet

Iphis

All that is in Hamor 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.

Iphis, Hamor, Storgè, Jephtha, Zebul
Joys triumphant crown thy days,
And thy name eternal praise.

71. 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.

YALE SCHOLA CANTORUM

Nicholas McGegan *Guest Conductor*

Stefan Parkman *Conductor*

Matthew Cramer *Chorus Preparer*

Jeff Hazewinkel *Manager of Music Programs and Concert Production*

Sullivan Hart, Anthony Washington *Ensemble Managers*

Anne Maria Lim *Accompanist*

Soprano

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Izzy Barbato* | M.M. '26, Early Music Voice |
| Eden Bartholomew* | M.M.A. '27, Early Music Voice |
| Grace Currie | M.M. '27, Choral Conducting |
| Carolyn Lai | M.Div. '28, Religion |
| Susanna Mackay | Ph.D. '30, English |
| Claire Spence | B.A. '27, English and African American Studies |
| Katie Tiemeyer | M.D./Ph.D. '31, Immunobiology |
| Hyunju Yang | M.M. '26, Choral Conducting |

Alto

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Gwendolyn DeLaney* | M.M.A. '27, Early Music Voice |
| Charlotte Maskelony | D.M.A. '28, Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism |
| Nadira Novruzov | M.M. '26, Flute Performance |
| Scottie Rogers* | M.M.A. '26, Early Music Voice |
| Kit Thickett | Ph.D. '31, Music |

Tenor

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sam Denler* | M.M. '26, Early Music Voice |
| Sullivan Hart | M.Div./M.S.W. '26, Practical Theology |
| John Richardson* | M.M. '27, Early Music Voice |
| Jamie Shepherd | Ph.D. '31, Asian History |
| Reid Simmons | M.M. '27, Choral Conducting |
| Angus C.B. Warren | Ph.D. '28, Medieval Studies |
| Caspar Wein | M.M.A. '26, Choral Conducting |

Bass

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Brian De Stefano | M.M. '27, Choral Conducting |
| Matthew Dexter* | M.M. '26, Early Music Voice |
| Eshaan Giri | B.A. '27, Music/Statistics & Data Science |
| Samuel Laposky | M.A. '27, Religion |
| Georg Schneider | Ph.D. '26, Economics |
| Jasper Schoff | Ph.D. '30, Music History |
| Kristian Svane | Ph.D. '30, German Literature |
| Anthony Washington | M.M. '27, Choral Conducting |
| Lucas Zuehl* | M.M. '27, Early Music Voice |

*Members of the Voxtet

JUILLIARD415

Robert Mealy *Artistic Director*

Karin Brookes *Associate Director*

Alexa Dumont *Assistant Director of Performance Operations*

Culley Hamstra *Program Manager*

Seymour Apreiglio *Historical Keyboards Coordinator*

Sam Brinkley *Administrative Apprentice*

Violin I

Ian Jones

Emma Milian

Gracie Carney

Epongue Wei-Dikaki Ekille

Grace McKenzie

Violin II

Constance Wu

Kiyoun Jang

Kaya Can Gür

Viola

Josh Liu

Shania Watts

Wesley O'Brien

Cello

Jackie Hager

Sarah Ghandour

Cordelia Mutter

Bass

Zoe Czarnecki

Oboe

Remy Libbrecht

Pablo O'Connell

Flute

Evan Fraser

Bassoon

Ashley Mania

Austin Wegener

Horn

Michael Nunes

Brooks Wisniewski

Trumpet

John Thiessen

Aidan Peterson

Harpsichord

Shuntaro Sugie

Organ

Ziwei Zhou

Theorbo

Alex Vourtsanis

Timpani

DY Kim

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Jephtha

George Frideric Handel

Born: February 23, 1685, in Halle (Saale), Germany

Died: April 14, 1759, in London

When Handel premiered his last new oratorio, *Jephtha*, 273 years ago, he had recently entered into the final phase of his career, with several major successes along the way. In 1747, following the suppression of the Jacobite Rebellion, Handel gave performances of his oratorio *Judas Maccabeus* to packed houses of British patriots. In 1749, his *Musick for the Royal Fireworks* was given a spectacular performance in London's Green Park, celebrating the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle and the end of the War of Austrian Succession, before an audience numbering in the thousands. It must have been a noisy affair because Handel employed a huge band of winds, brasses and percussion, and ten real canons for the half-cadence in the middle of the overture! After the music finished, the fireworks pavilion caught fire and went up in a blaze of flame, smoke, and explosions.

On the other side of town, in May that same year, the new, yet still unfinished Foundling Hospital Chapel was opened with a charitable performance of Handel's music that would forever define his artistic status in British culture. For the occasion, Handel composed a new *Foundling Hospital Anthem* (ending with the "Hallelujah" chorus!) and also encored his *Musick for the Royal Fireworks* (this time with strings), the *Dettingen Te Deum*, and selections from *Solomon*. From this point on, his music would play an integral role in the charitable work of the Foundling Hospital. In 1750, Handel gave what was to become the first of his annual performances of *Messiah* in the Foundling Hospital. The demand for tickets was so great that a second

performance had to be given. At last, *Messiah* had found its audience, and its social purpose as a charitable work.

Lasting success required continuous effort on Handel's part, and he would still need new English works for his annual Lenten oratorio seasons in Covent Garden. The year 1750 also saw the premiere of *Theodora*, but the following season included no "new" works. Handel's life was about to change. From August through early December 1750, Handel traveled to Europe for the last time. Reports on his time spent there are sketchy, but we know that he was hurt in a coach accident traveling between The Hague and Haarlem. None of the details of his injuries are known, but his time away from home meant that his normal cycle of composing new works for the following season during the summer months had been broken.

The 1751 oratorio season was scheduled to begin at the end of February, and Handel did have a new libretto ready to set: Thomas Morell's *Jephtha*. Working within his own compositional processes and his typically lightning-fast drafting speed, Handel was usually able to produce a full-length work in less than a month. The autograph composing score of *Jephtha* reveals that Handel started writing down the work on January 21. However, once regular rehearsals for the upcoming season began, it became apparent that he would not be able to finish the work in time for a premiere. Handel managed to finish Part I on February 2, and he made it all the way to the final chorus of Part II on February 13. At that crucial point he had to put down his pen; the reason was that he was beginning to lose sight in his left eye. Within the next two years, Handel would become blind.

Handel's later autograph scores are messy affairs, filled with last minute edits and musical passages often running right off the margins. The last few pages written into his *Jephtha* score on February 13 reveal a marked decline in the accurate placement of notes on staves. Poignantly, the final words Handel set that day are the stuff of legend: "How dark, O Lord are thy decrees, all kept from human sight." Ten days later, on his 66th birthday, Handel's vision had improved enough that he felt ready to continue. Four days later, Part II was complete. Part III would have to wait. After the Lenten season, Handel went to take the "cure" at the spa in Bath, where he spent the first part of June. On June 18, he began Part III and continued to work through mid-July. After another break, Handel finally finished the work on August 30. *Jephtha* was premiered at Covent Garden on February 26, 1752, amid revivals of *Joshua*, *Hercules*, *Samson*, and the highly successful *Judas Maccabeus*.

The story of Jephtha comes from the book of Judges in Hebrew scriptures, or the Old Testament of the Bible as Handel's audiences would have called them. Jephtha has been exiled by the Israelites, who have been living under the oppressive rule of the savage and idolatrous Ammonites. Having reached the point of despair, the Israelites call upon Jephtha to lead them in rebellion against their captors. Jephtha agrees, then vows to God that he will sacrifice the first thing or person he meets when he arrives home from battle, if God guarantees their victory. Following the defeat of the Ammonites and his victorious homecoming, the first person Jephtha encounters happens to be his own daughter. In the book of Judges, Jephtha does in fact sacrifice her and the story ends there. However, the idea that God would be cruel enough to force Jephtha to kill his own daughter presented a moral dilemma for which some sort of solution had to be found. That solution came in the form of an Angel bearing joyful news from on high: Jephtha need not actually sacrifice Iphis in order to fulfill his vow. Instead, she could satisfy the Almighty's demands by pledging to remain a virgin and by dedicating her life to serving God. Perfect!

Handel knew of several settings of the story of Jephtha, one by Giacomo Carissimi (1648) and one by his contemporary, Maurice Greene, set in 1737. Carissimi's setting adheres to the story from the book of Judges; Greene's oratorio (on a text by John Hoadly) ends with the arrival of the angelic messenger. Handel's librettist, the Rev. Thomas Morell (1703–84), also knew Greene's work, and of a 16th-century play on the subject by George Buchanan. According to Ruth Smith, Buchanan drew connections between the sacrifice of Jephtha's daughter and that of the ancient Greek story of Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia. Morell drew upon Buchanan's play and fleshed out his own version of the story, supplying it with the names of the other characters: Jephtha's wife, Storgè; his daughter, Iphis; Hamor (in love with Iphis); and his brother, Zebul.

Morell, a classical and biblical scholar, had already supplied Handel with the librettos for *Judas Maccabeus*, *Alexander Balus*, and *Theodora*. He was in tune with British religious and political culture to the extent that

he could supply Handel with texts that could be mined for moments of great emotional depth of expression. According to Smith, Handel's audiences identified with the ancient Israelites, seeing themselves as God's "chosen people" in the present. Handel's oratorios informed them morally and patriotically through emotional means.

For us, exploring a work like *Jephtha*, the product of a different age, can be challenging at times, particularly when we search for meaning in Handel's modes of musical expression. Whatever might be said about the story of *Jephtha*, Handel's setting of Morell's libretto is masterly. His musical language throughout the work is daring and emotionally intense. Imbued with a wide range of affective states, ranging from joy to the deepest levels of despair, *Jephtha* presents us with a kaleidoscopic palette of styles, from spritely gavottes to densely dark accompanied recitatives. That said, a significant portion of the music in the oratorio originated in the mind of someone else: Czech composer František Václav Habermann (1706–83). In 1747, Habermann published a cycle of Roman Catholic Mass settings. These pieces somehow found their way into Handel's music collection, and then into the music of *Jephtha*. No less than ten of the choruses and two of the airs (sung by *Jephtha*!) contain material borrowed from them. The challenge for the listener, though, is to discern what sounds "Handelian" and what does not. Handel's powers of transformation were unmatched in his day, and he left us a musical landscape that is nothing less than a grand space filled with profound sounds and silences. We come away from our experiences of *Jephtha* with the impression that it is, in every sense, a great work of art.

A work worth listening to again.*

*As with all such program notes, much of this information relies on the research and ideas of others. The author wishes to thank Donald Burrows, Ellen T. Harris, Kenneth Nott, and Ruth Smith for their invaluable contributions to our understanding of Handel's life and works, and encourages interested readers to consult their published writings.

Fred Fehleisen has been on the Juilliard faculty since 1996 and was previously on the faculty of Mannes College of Music. He performs regularly with period-instrument ensembles in New York and is a member of the American Handel Society.

In his sixth decade on the podium, **Nicholas McGegan**—long hailed as "one of the finest baroque conductors of his generation" (*The Independent*) and "an expert in 18th-century style" (*The New Yorker*)—is recognized for his probing and revelatory explorations of music of all periods. He is Music Director Emeritus of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale and Principal Guest Conductor of Hungary's Capella Savaria.

Best known as a Baroque and Classical specialist, McGegan's approach—intelligent, infused with joy, and never dogmatic—has led to engagements with major orchestras, opera houses, and international festivals across the U.S., U.K., and Europe.

Highlights from McGegan's 2025–26 guest appearances include a return to Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale featuring Rameau's *La Guirlande* alongside Handel's *Dixit Dominus*; a *Messiah* tour with the Milwaukee, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Tucson symphony orchestras; a major all-Mendelssohn program with the Seattle Symphony; Opera Lafayette's *Queen of Hearts* Valentine's Day Revel in Washington, D.C., and New York; and appearances at leading conservatories including Yale, Juilliard, Colburn, and Indiana University, underscoring his ongoing commitment to education and mentorship.

McGegan's prolific discography includes more than 100 releases spanning five decades. Having recorded over 50 albums of Handel—two of which received the U.K.'s prestigious Gramophone Award—McGegan has explored the depths of the composer's output with a dozen oratorios and close to 20 of his operas. Since the 1980s, more than 20 of his recordings have been with Hungary's Capella Savaria on the Hungaroton label, including groundbreaking recordings of repertoire by Handel, Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Telemann, and Vivaldi. McGegan has also released three albums with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra under the BIS label: Josef Mysliveček's complete music for keyboard with soloist Clare Hammond, and two recordings with horn player Alec Frank-Gemmill featuring early horn concertos and the complete Mozart horn concertos. His

extensive discography with Philharmonia Baroque includes two GRAMMY nominations for Handel's *Susana* and Haydn's Symphonies 104, 88, and 101. Recent releases include an album of Mozart violin concertos with violinist Gil Shaham and the SWR Symphonie Orchester, and a recording of Mozart's double concertos with violinist Zsolt Kalló and Capella Savaria.

With Cantata Collective, McGegan leads an ambitious multi-year recording initiative with AVIE Records that has recently produced the *St. John Passion*, *Mass in B Minor*, *Easter Oratorio*, and *Magnificat*. The *St. Matthew Passion* is scheduled for release in spring 2026.

McGegan is committed to the next generation of musicians, frequently conducting and coaching students in residencies and engagements at Yale University, the Juilliard School, Harvard University, the Colburn School, Aspen Music Festival and School, Sarasota Music Festival, and the Music Academy of the West.

English-born, McGegan was educated at Cambridge and Oxford. He was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) "for services to music overseas." Other awards include the Halle Handel Prize; the Order of Merit of the State of Lower Saxony (Germany); the Medal of Honour of the City of Göttingen; and a declaration of Nicholas McGegan Day by the Mayor of San Francisco, in recognition of his work with Philharmonia Baroque.

For more information, visit nicholasmcgegan.com, or visit his Facebook and Instagram pages: @nicholasmcgegan.

One of the world's most highly respected choral conductors, **Stefan Parkman** has held the positions of chief conductor of the WDR Radio Choir Cologne, the Danish National Radio Choir, the Swedish Radio Choir, the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Choir, and the Uppsala Cathedral Boys' Choir. He was artistic director of the Academy Chamber Choir of Uppsala from 1983–2023 and is a frequent and sought-after collaborator with major choirs and orchestras across Europe. He has also conducted ensembles in Japan, Australia, and the United States. His extensive discography includes recordings for Chandos, Dacapo Records, Footprint and Coviello Classics.

Parkman held the Eric Ericson professorship in choral conducting at Uppsala University from 1999–2021. After his retirement, he was visiting professor of choral conducting at Universitat der Kunste in Berlin and the Hochschule für Musik in Dresden. Parkman also served as the conductor of the Dresdner Kammerchor in four programs for their 2023–2024 touring season. He is currently serving as a visiting professor of choral conducting at Yale University.

Parkman was vice president of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music from 2016–2021 and he frequently teaches in masterclasses, seminars, and workshops in Sweden and abroad. In 1997, he was made Knight of the Dannebrog Order by Queen Margrethe II of Denmark and received the Litteris et Artibus Medal from His Majesty the King Carl XVI Gustaf in 2012.

Yale Schola Cantorum is a chamber choir that performs sacred music from the sixteenth century to the present day in concert settings and choral services around the world. It is sponsored by Yale Institute of Sacred Music and is under the direction of Stefan Parkman. Masaaki Suzuki is the ensemble's principal guest conductor. Open by audition to students from all departments and professional schools across Yale University, the choir has a special interest in historically informed performance practice, often in collaboration with instrumentalists from Juilliard⁴¹⁵.

Schola was founded in 2003 by Simon Carrington. In recent years, the choir has also sung under the direction of internationally renowned conductors Matthew Halls, Simon Halsey, Paul Hillier, Stephen Layton, Sir Neville Marriner, Nicholas McGegan, James O'Donnell, Krzysztof Penderecki, Helmuth Rilling, Dale Warland, Craig Hella Johnson, and David Hill.

In addition to performing regularly in New Haven and New York, the ensemble records and tours nationally and internationally. Schola's 2018 recording on the Hyperion label featuring Palestrina's *Missa Confitebor tibi Domine* has garnered enthusiastic reviews. A live recording of Heinrich Biber's 1693 *Vesperae longiores ac breviores* with Robert Mealy and Yale Collegium Musicum received international acclaim from the

early music press, as have subsequent CDs of J.S. Bach's rarely heard 1725 version of the *St. John Passion* and Antonio Bertali's *Missa resurrectionis*. Naxos released a recording of Mendelssohn and Bach Magnificats, and two collections of Renaissance, Baroque, and modern selections were issued by Delos Records. More recent recordings of Schola Cantorum on Hyperion include *New England Choirworks*, Schutz's *The Christmas Story*, and a chamber version of the Brahms Requiem.

On tour, Schola Cantorum has given performances in the United Kingdom, Hungary, France, China, South Korea, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Japan, Singapore, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, India, Spain, Scandinavia, and Germany.

Since its founding in 2009, **Juilliard415**—Juilliard's principal period-instrument ensemble—has made significant contributions to musical life in New York and beyond, bringing major figures in the field of early music to lead performances of both rare and canonical works by composers of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Now in its 17th season, Juilliard415, which takes its name from the pitch commonly associated with the performance of baroque music (A=415), has presented concerts directed by such notable musicians as Harry Bicket, William Christie, Ton Koopman, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Rachel Podger, Jordi Savall, and the late Christopher Hogwood.

With its frequent musical collaborator, the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, the ensemble has undertaken successful concert tours to Scandinavia, Italy, Japan, Southeast Asia, the UK, India, and Germany, and annual concerts in NYC and New Haven. Juilliard415 made its South American debut at the Chiquitos International Festival of Renaissance and Baroque Music in Bolivia, on a tour sponsored by the U.S. Department of State in 2018 and returned in 2022 and 2024. The ensemble has twice toured in New Zealand, and, conducted by Masaaki Suzuki, Juilliard415 played a historic period-instrument performance with Bach Collegium Japan of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in Germany. Other significant appearances have been at the Boston Early Music Festival, Leipzig Bachfest, MA Festival (Bruges), and Utrecht Early Music Festival, where Juilliard was the first-ever conservatory in residence. Previous seasons have included side-by-side collaborations with Les Arts Florissants at the Philharmonie de Paris, and with Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco and New York.

The 25–26 season sees the first side-by-side collaboration with Toronto-based Tafelmusik, and the return of directors Nicholas McGegan, and Leila Shayegh, who directs Juilliard415's first concert at Carnegie Hall. Julian Perkins and Juilliard pre-college alumnus Shunsuke Sato make their Juilliard415 directing debuts, as does Grete Pedersen, principal conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum. Juilliard415 will once again partner with Juilliard Dance to produce new choreography for works by Rebel and Handel, and the season closes with performances of Haydn's *Creation* on tour in Italy with Grete Pedersen and Yale Schola Cantorum.

Juilliard415 has also performed major oratorios and baroque operas every year with colleagues from Juilliard's Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts, including a fully staged production of Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* and Handel's *Atalanta*, and a much-praised production of Luigi Rossi's rarely performed opera *L'Orfeo*, named by the *NY Times* as one of the top 10 classical music performances of 2021. In 2019, Juilliard415 and the Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts presented Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at Opera Holland Park in London and the Royal Opera House of Versailles, and Lionel Meunier directed a dazzling concert presentation of Purcell's *King Arthur* in 2023.

The ensemble has also had the distinction of premiering new works for period instruments, most recently *MAP: A New World* by Francisco Nuñez which it performed with the chorus of Juilliard's Music Advancement Program at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and *The Seven Last Words Project*, a Holy Week concert also at the Cathedral for which the ensemble commissioned seven leading composers including Nico Muhly, Caroline Shaw, and Tania León.

Isabel (Izzy) Barbato is pursuing a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music (Class of 2026) and is a soprano in the Yale Voxtet ensemble. A native Floridian, Barbato recently graduated summa cum laude from Stetson University, where she studied a diverse repertoire of music,

including classical opera, baroque concert repertoire, musical theater, and new music composed by her peers. She recently held lead roles in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, and worked as an apprentice artist with Opera Orlando. She has won numerous awards for her academic and musical success, including the prestigious Presser Undergraduate Scholar Award. Barbato also holds a passion for leadership and education in the arts. She is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society, and she has been teaching voice since she was in high school and co-directed numerous junior musicals. She spends her summers as an activity director at the Oregon Bach Festival, where she finds new musical inspiration each year.

Eden Bartholomew has always been transported by stories and initially wanted to be an English professor, studying literature and music at Vassar College. They decided to pursue voice while missing music-making during the spring of 2020, recently earning a Master of Music degree from the Peabody Institute in May of 2025. They love to interpret art song, fusing their passion for poetry and music, and have placed in the Sylvia Green Competition in 2024 and the Art Song Competition in 2023 and 2024 at Peabody. During the summer of 2025, Eden was a vocal fellow at Tanglewood Music Center, performing the role of Le feu in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, as well as contemporary chamber music, art songs, and Bach's *Lutheran Mass in G Major* as a soprano soloist. Past oratorio includes Mozart's *Vespers*, Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, and Saint-Saëns' *Oratorio de Noël*. Eden has also performed in Mozart operas (*Le nozze di Figaro*, *Susanna*), and as Mozart himself, in *The Classical Style* by Steven Stucky. Eden is delighted to further their studies as the first-year soprano in the Voxtet, earning a Master of Musical Arts degree through the Yale School of Music and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music (Class of 2027).

Gwendolyn DeLaney is a mezzo-soprano originally from Boise, Idaho, who is pursuing a Master of Musical Arts degree in Early Music, Chamber Music, and Oratorio at Yale. She also holds degrees from The Cleveland Institute of Music and The University of Missouri-Kansas City, where she studied with Dr. Aidan Soder. On the operatic stage, DeLaney has recently been seen as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* with Heartland Opera Theater, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* with UMKC Opera Theater, and The Manager in the world premiere of *Working Hard & Hardly Working* with No Divide KC and The Lyric Opera of Kansas City. As a professional chorister, she has sung with Cardinalis, KC VITAs, The Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Opera Idaho. Gwendolyn is an avid performer and advocate for new music, and this summer she premiered the song cycle *What Pain Calls to Witness* by Gracie Caggiano at Kansas City's first Disability Pride Month celebration.

Sam Denler is a tenor based in New Haven, Connecticut. He sings in the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir and regularly performs with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin and was a 2023–2024 Voces8 Scholar. He is the tenor soloist for Ryan Brandau in *Amor Artis*, recently performed for the second time with elite early music ensemble Res Facta, which was featured on WWFM Sounds Choral, and filmed a scene with Bradley Cooper for Netflix's Leonard Bernstein biopic *Maestro*. Denler has been featured in numerous music festivals, most recently with the Bachakademie in Stuttgart, Germany, and in his sixth fellowship with the Spoleto Festival USA Chorus in Charleston, SC. This year is his third year as a singer, audio engineer, and cofounder of Convoco.

In the Fall of 2025, Denler began his second year of studies for his Master of Music degree in Voice. He sings in the Voxtet ensemble at Yale University. Denler earned his bachelor's degree in music education at Westminster Choir College in 2019, where he sang with the Westminster Choir for three years, touring the United States, Spain, and China. He was also a member of early music ensemble Kantorei and the Westminster Symphonic Choir, which performed in premier venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia.

Matthew Dexter, bass-baritone from McKinney, Texas, is earning his Master of Music degree in Early Music Voice at Yale University and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music (Class of 2026). As an undergraduate performing with the University of North Texas Opera, Dexter played the roles of Micha in *The Bartered Bride*, Bartolo in

Le nozze di Figaro, Zuniga in *Carmen*, and The Conductor in Lisa DeSpain's *That Hellbound Train*. As a vocal fellow at Spoleto Festival USA, he has sung in multiple choral concerts, appeared in the 2022 world premiere of Rhiannon Giddens's and Michael Abels's Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *Omar*, and in 2023 played the role of the Old Doctor in Samuel Barber's *Vanessa*. Dexter also participated in a vocal fellowship with the Grant Park Music Festival in the summer of 2025. In addition to receiving the audience favorite award, Dexter placed third in the James Toland Vocal Arts Competition and recently participated in Houston Grand Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy. Dexter was also the 2022–2023 winner of the UNT Presser Undergraduate Scholar Award. In the winter of 2025, Dexter will tour as a soloist with Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra. Following his final year at Yale, Dexter will join the 2026–2027 Ryan Opera Center ensemble at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Scottie Rogers is a female countertenor, arranger, and composer. A native Texan, Rogers received undergraduate degrees in vocal performance and music education from the University of Houston and a Master of Sacred Music degree in vocal performance from the University of Notre Dame. She is now earning her Master of Musical Arts degree in Early Music Voice (Class of 2026) at the Yale School of Music and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. Rogers is also a decorated performer, having won numerous international competitions and awards as both a soloist and as part of ensembles. Upon completing her education, Rogers hopes to find a career performing up and down the East Coast, as well as composing for herself and others.