

GEORG FRIEDRICH HÄNDEL ~ SAMSON

Publishing culture in its authentic form entails for us capturing and recording for posterity outstanding performances and concerts. The performers, audience, opus and room enter into an intimate dialogue that in its form and expression, its atmosphere, is unique and unrepeatable. It is our aim, the philosophy of our house, to enable the listener to acutely experience every facet of this symbiosis, the intensity of the performance. The results are unparalleled interpretations of musical and literary works, simply - audiophile snapshots of permanent value recorded in direct 2-Track Stereo digital.

The concerts in Maulbronn monastery, which we document with this edition, supply, the ideal conditions for our aspirations. It is, above all, the atmosphere of the romantic, candle-lit arches, the magic of the monastery in its unadulterated sublime presence and tranquillity that impresses itself upon the performers and audience of these concerts. Renowned soloists and ensembles from the international arena repeatedly welcome the opportunity to appear here - enjoying the unparalleled acoustic and architectural beauty of this World Heritage Site (monastery church, cloister gardens, lay refectory, etc.), providing exquisite performances of secular and sacred music.

Under the patronage of the Evangelical Seminar, the Maulbronn Monastery Cloister Concerts were instigated in 1968 with an abundance of musical enthusiasm and voluntary leadership. Within the hallowed walls of the classical grammar and boarding school, existent for more than 450 years, some of society's great thinkers, poets and humanists, such as Kepler, Hölderlin, Herwegh and Hesse received their first impressions.

The youthful elan, the constructive participation of the pupils, continuing the tradition of their great predecessors, constructs an enlightened climate in which artistic ambitions can especially thrive. Twenty-five concerts take place between May and September. Their success can be largely attributed to the many voluntary helpers from near and far.

Flourishing culture in a living monument, created for the delight of the live audience and, last but not least, you the listener, are the ideals we document with this series.

Andreas Otto Grimminger & Josef-Stefan Kindler



This recording is part of a cycle of old testament oratorios by George Frideric Handel and is one of the many concerts performed at Maulbronn monastery over the past years. The series combines authentically performed baroque oratorios with the optimal acoustics and atmosphere of this unique monastic church. This ideal location demands the transparency of playing and the interpretive unveiling of the rhetoric intimations of the composition, which is especially aided by the historically informed performance. The music is exclusively performed on reconstructed historical instruments, which are tuned to the pitch customary in the composers lifetime (a = 415 Hz).



Immediately after the „Messias“, which was created within the 24 days between august, 22. and september, 14. 1741, Händel started to compose „Samson.“ At october, 29. 1741 he finished the last act, which means that those two biggest oratorios, the „Messias“ and „Samson,“ came into being within ten successive weeks only. Samson's dramaturgical fundament comes from the book „judges“ of the bible. John Milton, England's most important baroque poet, has formed his epos „Samson Agonistes“ by following freely the outlines of the bible. Newburgh Hamilton transformed it for Händel's oratory. It describes the betrayal, the remorse and the victory of Samson, the israellean army commander, whose power grew with his hair, as the legend tells us. The work starts one year after the capture and blinding of Samson, when the priests of the pagan god Dagon are celebrating their greatest triumph. In his last struggle Samson, accompanied by his father Manoah and his friend Micah, has to stand the temptations of the seductress Dalila and the giant Harapha, which are both followers of god Dagon and his priests. When his strengths returns, Samson smashes the pillars of Dragon's temple and buries the enemies and himself under the rubble.

Come, come and liter your moaning now, for our hero, Samson, died as Samson.
In death and life winner, he gave ruin to our enemies, never ending glory to himself...

SINÉAD PRATSCHKE ~ SOPRANO

Sinéad Pratschke studied at the University of Western Ontario (B.Mus.), the Royal College of Music (M.Mus.) and the National Opera Studio of Great Britain. Summer courses have taken her to Tanglewood, USA, Banff, Canada, and the Britten-Pears School at Aldeburgh where she has worked with Graham Johnson, Elly Ameling, Suzanne Danco and Hugues Cuénod as well as Sergei Leiferkus, Martin Isepp and Phyllis Curtin among others.

Operatic roles include Zélinde La Guirlande for Musikfestspiele Sanssouci, Berlin, Musetta La Boheme for Scottish Opera, creating the title role in Gwyneth and the Green Knight for Music Theatre Wales at the Royal Opera House, Tytania A Midsummer Night's Dream on tour in The Netherlands, Susanna in Le nozze di Figaro and Thérèse in Les Mamelles de Tirésias for Pimlico Opera, The Dragon of Wantley (Margery) with Opera Restor'd at the Palau de la Musica, Barce-

Iona, The Magic Flute (Pamina) for Central Festival Opera and in concert at the Barbican Centre, London, Barbarina in Le Nozze di Figaro at the Snape Maltings Proms and Opera Ontario, Canada, Orfeo ed Euridice (Euridice) for Opera Spezzata, Acis and Galatea (Galatea) for European Chamber Opera, Dorinda in Handel's Orlando for New Chamber Opera as well as Bastienne Bastien et Bastienne in a double bill alongside Haydn's L'Isola dishabitata for English Pocket Opera Company.

Concert engagements have included Apollo e Dafne (Dafne) with Trevor Pinnock and The English Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, J. S. Bach's Magnificat at the National Concert Hall, Dublin, Judas Maccabaeus and Samson at the Maulbronn Handel Festival, Germany, Messiah with Le Parlement de Musique in Rennes, France, the Mozart Mass in C Minor at the Arlesheim Mozart Festival, Switzerland and the opening of the Guelph Civic Center in Canada. Recital appearances have included the Aldeburgh Festival and the Songmakers Almanac with Graham Johnson at St. John's, Smith Square. Her recordings include Judas Maccabaeus, Samson and Rodrigo's Ausencias de Dulcinea with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for EMI. Her numerous awards include grants from the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. She is also teaches for the University of Guelph.

MICHAEL CHANCE - COUNTERTENOR

Michael Chance's carrier began, as did so many of his colleagues, in King's College, Cambridge, as countertenor in England's conceivably most famous choir. Today he is one of the worlds most sought after countertenors, not only for opera - he sang, for example, the military governor in the world première of Judith Weir's „A Night at the Chinese Opera” - but also for oratorios and songs. He is a visiting professor at the Royal College of Music, London. He performs often in Paris, Amsterdam, Stuttgart and Berlin and has also been in America, Japan and Australia many times. Frieder Bernius, Frans Brüggen, John Eliot Gardiner and Trevor Pinnock are just some of the conductors that he works with regularly. A specialty of Michael Chance's is the song evenings he gives with the Gamben-Consort Fretwork, Nigel North and, more recently, Roger Vignoles, in which he sings pieces for voice and lute from the English Renaissance and also, frequently, works from contemporary, mostly English composers.

MARK LE BROcq ~ TENOR

Mark Le Brocq held a choral scholarship at St Catherine's College, Cambridge where he read English. He won several prizes and awards at the Royal Academy of Music including the Blyth Buesset Opera Prize, the Royal Academy of Music Club Prize and the Worshipful Company of Musicians' Medal. He was formerly a company principal with the English National Opera. Over the years, the tenor has worked together with many important directors, including David Alden, David Poutney, Jonathan Miller, Niklaus Lehnhoff, Graham Vick and David Freeman. He performed regularly with the Gabrieli Consort under Paul McCreesh. He sang with Monserat Caballé and Dennis O'Neill in Verdi Opera Galas in Bath, the Mozart and the Verdi Requiems in the Barbican Centre, London and the Mozart Requiem with The English Concert under Trevor Pinnock in Salzburg.

RAIMUND NOLTE ~ BARITON

The vocal art of baritone Raimund Nolte was furthered especially during his studies with Prof. Josef Metternich as well as in various master classes. At present he is being coached by Prof. Irmgard Hartmann. Yet his musical career began as an instrumentalist after completing studies in mathematics, the pedagogics of music and viola. But soon he was being invited as a singer on stages all over Europe, Israel, the United States and Japan.

He has sung under conductors such as Jacov Kreizberg, Vlademir Jurowski, Helmut Müller-Brühl, Howard Arman, David Stern, Andreas Spering, Enoch zu Guttenberg, Hans-Martin Scheidt, Wolfgang Gönnenwein, Bruno Weil, Frieder Bernius and Reinhard Goebel. Under the direction of Nikolaus Harnoncourt he sang at the Graz Styriarte in Schubert's Lazarus, to great acclaim. He performed the role of Christus in Bach's St.Matthew Passion under the direction of Trevor Pinnock in Spain, Germany, Japan and at the Salzburg Festival. Under René Jacob's direction he sang in Johann Gottlieb Naumann's rediscovered opera Cora und Alonzo at the Dresden Musikfestspiele.

Raimund Nolte gave his successful stage début in 1994 during the Innsbruck festival season. After two years at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf and Duisburg he became a regular ensemble member of the Komische Oper in Berlin, where he is now a regular guest singer. His roles in Berlin have included Schaunard in La Boheme, Don Fernando in Fidelio, Prince Jeletzki

in Pique Dame, Harlequin in Ariadne and Ping in Turandot. He has built an excellent reputation singing G.F.Handel (Ezio and Radamisto at the Händelfestspielen and the Opera house in Halle, Rodelinda at the State Theatre Karlsruhe, Xerxes at the Royal Copenhagen Theatre, the leading role in Saul at the Komische Oper in Berlin, Rinaldo at the Theatre Bielefeld) and as a singer of Mozart (Papageno in Düsseldorf and at the Komische Oper Berlin in Harry Kupfer's production of The Magic Flute, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* in Potsdam and Bielefeld, Conte Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Opéra de Rouen in France and in Potsdam). In the season 2004 he sang Sharpless in *Madame Butterfly*, Father in *Hänsel und Gretel* and Germont in *La Traviata* at the Opera house in Bielefeld. This season he will play the lead role in the new production of *Don Giovanni* in the Schloßtheater Potsdam.

Nolte's repertoire is wide and includes all the main oratorio roles and a large repertoire of lieder. Numerous radio and CD-recordings round off his wide range of activities.

DAVID THOMAS ~ BASS

The English bass, David Thomas (Lionel Mercer), began singing as a boy chorister in the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Later he was educated in King's School, Canterbury, and as a teenager won a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge. David Thomas first gained recognition as a soloist with Rooley's Consort of Musicke, Christopher Hogwood's Academy of Ancient Music, and other early music groups in England. Subsequently he appeared throughout Europe. In 1982 he made his USA debut at the Hollywood Bowl. In later years, he pursued an international career.

David Thomas won particular distinction for his performances of works by Monteverdi, Purcell, Bach, Händel, and Mozart. His repertoire ranges from the Baroque and Classical, in which he has largely specialised, to Walton, Tippett, Britten, Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Schnittke. His career has taken him to Europe, USA and Japan and he has appeared at many prestigious festivals including Tanglewood, Salzburg, Edingburgh, Luzerne, Stuttgart, Aldeburgh and the BBC Promenade concerts. David Thomas has appeared with many of the major symphony orchestras and ensembles in the UK, including the City of Birmingham Symphony, the London Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic, the Philharmonia, the Hallé, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the London classical Players, the Scottish Chamber, the Manchester Camerata,

the Northern Sinfonia, the Taverner Consort, the Academy of Ancient Music and London Baroque, and he has worked regularly with conductors such as Simon Rattle, John Eliot Gardiner, Nicholas McGegan and Christopher Hogwood. Notable engagements in the UK include a television recording of Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the London Classical Players conducted by Roger Norrington, Händel's *Orlando* at the Proms conducted by Christopher Hogwood and *Die Schöpfung* with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Frans Brüggen. He gives regular concerts with soprano Emma Kirkby and lutenist Anthony Rooley. He sang Sarasto in the Covent Garden Festival's production of *Die Zauberflöte* and the *Commendatore* in *Don Giovanni* and General Spork in *Cornet* Christoph Rilke's *Song of Love and Death* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera.

David Thomas appears frequently in Europe, especially with the Academy of Ancient Music. Other engagements have included Christmas Oratorio (BWV 248) performances in Leipzig and Berlin, a series of Messiahs in Italy and concerts with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Fundação de Sao Carlos in Lisbon, the Wiener Akademie, with the Kammerchor Stuttgart in concerts in Göttingen, and Händel's *Serse* and *Resurrezione* in Brighton and Göttingen.

Performances last season included concerts in Switzerland, France and Germany with the Academy of Ancient Music, concerts in Sweden and Boston (USA). His engagements in the USA have included Messiahs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in the Hollywood Bowl, *The Creation* with Boston Symphony Orchestra and Simon Rattle, *Messiah* at the Lincoln Center with the Academy of Ancient Music, *Schubert's Winterreise* at Cornell at University and *Händel's Judas Maccabaeus*, *Susanna* and *Theodora* with the Philharmonia Baroque and Nicholas McGegan.

David Thomas's many recordings include Händel's *Serse* (Hanover Band/Nicholas McGegan), Händel's *Susanna*, *Apollo and Daphne* and *Judas Maccabeus* (Philharmonia Baroque/Nicholas McGegan), Händel's *Semele*, Purcell's *Fairy Queen* and Bach's *Magnificat* (BWV 243) (Monteverdi Choir/English Baroque Soloists/ John Eliot Gardiner), Händel's *Acis, Galatea e Polifemo* (London Baroque/ Charles Medlam), Händel's *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, Bach's *B Minor Mass* (BWV 232) and *St. John Passion* (BWV 245) (Taverner Consort & Players/Andrew Parrot), *Coffee Cantata* (BWV 211) with Emma Kirkby, Mozart's *Requiem* (Hannover Band/ Roy Goodman), Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* (City of London Sinfonia/Richard Hickox) and *Die Schöpfung* (City of Birmingham Orchestra/ Simon Rattle). 'Gramophone' said of his solo disc of Händel Arias with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, „Thomas has a formidable range, a dazzling technique and a tone that is full and dark, yet always clearly defined.“

MAULBRONN CHAMBER CHOIR

The Maulbronn Chamber Choir was founded by its director, Jürgen Budday, in 1983 and is one of the top choirs in Germany today. In addition to learning a baroque oratorio, the ensemble compiles a sacred and secular a-cappella programme every year, its focal point being 19th and 20th century literature. First prize at the Baden Württemberg Choir Competition in 1989 and 1997, second prize at the Third German Choir Competition in Stuttgart in 1990, and a victory at the Fifth German Choir Competition in Regensburg in 1998 document the chamber choir's extraordinary musical standard. The Maulbronn Chamber Choir has received, among others, invitations to the Ettlingen Palace Festival, the chamber music series of the Dresden Philharmonic, the cloister concerts at the Walkenried convent, the First International Festival of Sacred Music in Rottenburg, and the European Music Festival in Passau. The choir has also made a name for itself internationally. The 1983 debut tour through the USA with concerts in, among others, New York and Indianapolis, and the participation in the Festival of Music in New Harmony, Indiana, as well as concert tours through numerous European countries, Israel, Argentina (1993 and 1997), South Africa, and Namibia (2001) were all greeted with similar enthusiasm by the public and critics alike. The third tour through South America followed in autumn 2003 with concerts in Argentina and Uruguay.

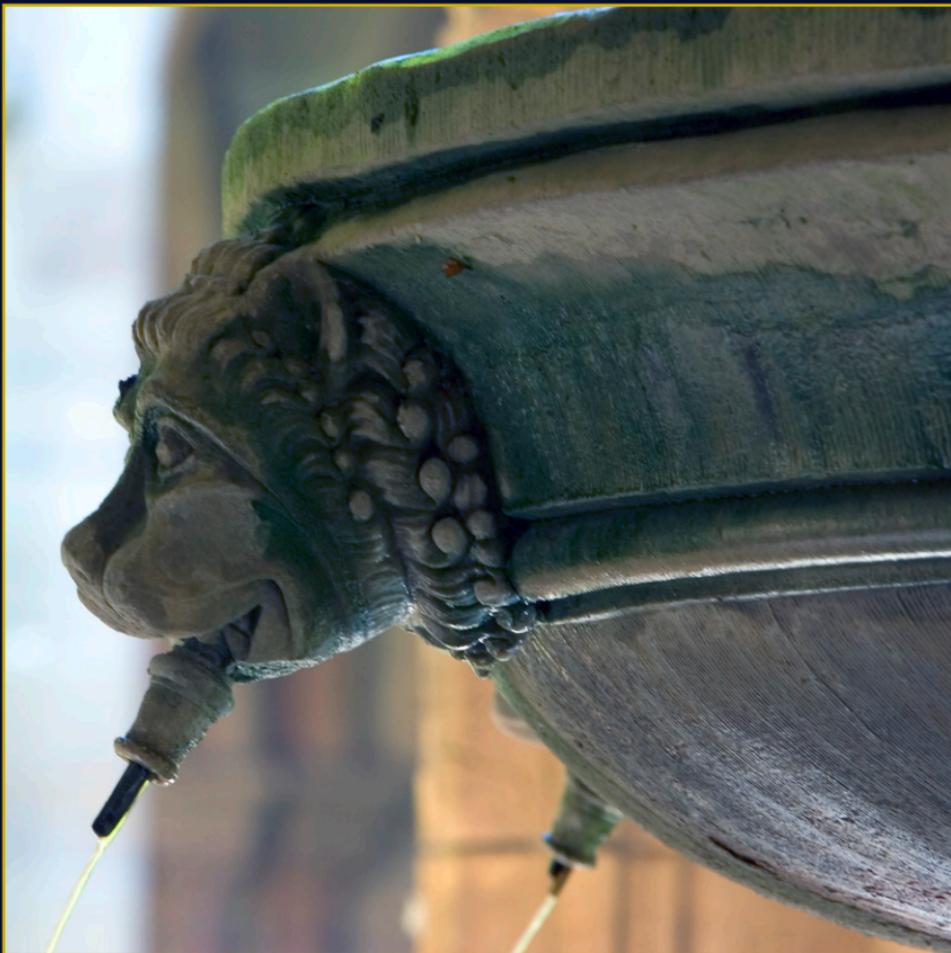
JÜRGEN BUDDAY

is director of church music and artistic director of the concert series at the monastery of Maulbronn, of the cantor choir and of the Maulbronn Chamber Choir. He studied music education, church music and musicology at the Academy of Music in Stuttgart and, since 1979, has taught at the Evangelic Theology Seminar in Maulbronn.

For his teaching and artistic activity, he has received many awards, including the Bundesverdienstkreuz am Bande (German Cross of Merit) and the Bruno-Frey Prize from the State Academy, Ochsenhausen. Since 2002, Jürgen Budday has also held the chair of the choral committee of the German Music Council.

Several concert recordings have been made under his artistic direction. They have often received international recognition and high praise from critics. These have included the Handel oratorios Samson, Judas Maccabaeus, Saul, Solomon and Belshazzar with Emma Kirkby, Michael Chance, Nancy Argenta and Stephen Varcoe.





DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

SINÉAD PRATSCHKE (SOPRANO):

Dalila, Wife of Samson
Philistine Woman, Attendant to Dalila
Israelitish Woman

MICHAEL CHANCE (COUNTERTENOR):

Micah, Friend to Samson

MARK LE BROcq (TENOR):

Samson

RAIMUND NOLTE (BARITONE):

Manoah, Father to Samson

DAVID THOMAS (BASS):

Harapha, a Giant
Messenger

MAULBRONN CHAMBER CHOIR:

Israelites (Chorus)
Philistines (Chorus)
Virgins (Chorus Soprano)

CD I

1. OVERTURE (4:20)

ACT THE FIRST

SCENE 1

BEFORE THE PRISON IN GAZA.

SAMSON, BLIND AND IN CHAINS.

**CHORUS OF THE PRIESTS OF DAGON,
CELEBRATING HIS FESTIVAL.**

2. RECITATIVE & CHORUS (2:27)

Samson

This day, a solemn feast to Dagon held,
Relieves me from my task of servile toil;
Unwillingly their superstition yields
This rest, to breathe heav'n's air,
Fresh blowing, pure and sweet.

Philistines

Awake the trumpet's lofty sound!
The joyful sacred festival comes round,
When Dagon king of all the earth is crown'd.

3. AIR & CHORUS (4:31)

Philistine Woman

Ye men of Gaza, hither bring

The merry pipe and pleasing string,
The solemn hymn, and cheerful song;
Be Dagon prais'd by ev'ry tongue!

Philistines

Awake the trumpet's lofty sound!
The joyful sacred festival comes round,
When Dagon king of all the earth is crown'd.

4. RECITATIVE & AIR (6:07)

Samson

Why by an angel was my birth foretold,
If I must die, betray'd and captiv'd thus,
The scorn and gaze of foes? Oh, cruel thought!
My griefs find no redress! They inward prey,
Like gangren'd wounds, immedicable grown.

SCENE 2

**ENTER MICAH AND ISRAELITES,
OBSERVING SAMSON.**

Micah

(To Samson): Matchless in might!
Once Israel ,s glory, now her grief!
Welcome, thy friends well known,
To visit thee!

Samson

Welcome, my friends!

Micah

Which shall we first bewail,
Thy bondage, or lost sight?

Samson

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!

Oh, worse than beggary, old age, or chains!
My very soul in real darkness dwells!

Air: Samson

Total eclipse! No sun, no moon!
All dark amidst the blaze of noon!
Oh, glorious light! No cheering ray
To glad my eyes with welcome day!
Why thus depriv'd Thy prime decree?
Sun, moon, and stars are dark to me!

5. CHORUS (3:32)

Israelites

O first created beam! And thou great word!
„Let there be light!“ - And light was over all,
One heav'nly blaze
Shone round this earthly ball.
To thy dark servant, life, by light afford!

SCENE 3

ENTER MANOAH.

6. RECITATIVE & ACCOMPAGNATO (1:46)

Manoah

Brethren and men of Dan,
Say, where is my son,
Samson, fond Israel's boast?
Inform my age!

Micah

As signal now in low dejected state,
As in the height of pow'r. - See, where he lies!

Accompagnato: Manoah

The good we wish for, often proves our bane.

I pray'd for children, and I gain'd a son,
And such a son, as all men hail'd me happy.
But who'd be now a father in my stead?
The blessing drew a scorpion's tail behind;
This plant - select and sacred for awhile,
The miracle of all! - was in one hour
Ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
His foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind!

7. AIR (4:22)

Manoah

Thy glorious deeds inspir'd my tongue,
Whilst airs of joy from thence did flow.
To sorrows now I tune my song,
And set my harp to notes of woe.

8. RECITATIVE, ACCOMPAGNATO & AIR (6:20)

Samson

Justly these evils have befall'n thy son;
Sole author I, sole cause.

Accompagnato: Samson

My griefs for this
Forbid mine eyes to close, or thoughts to rest.
But now the strife shall end: me overthrown,
Dagon presumes to enter lists with God,
Who, thus provok'd, will not convive, but rouse
His fury soon, and his great name assert;
Dagon shall stoop, ere long be quite despoil'd
Of all those boasted trophies won on me.

Air: Samson

Why does the God of Israel sleep?
Arise with dreadful sound,
And clouds encompass'd round!
Then shall the heathen hear thy thunder deep.

The tempest of thy wrath now raise,
In whirlwinds them pursue,
Full fraught with vengeance due,
Till shame and trouble all thy foes shall seize!

9. CHORUS (2:21)

Israelites

Then shall they know, that He whose name
Jehovah is alone,
O'er all the earth but One,
Was ever the Most High, and still the same.

10. RECITATIVE & ACCOMPAGNATO (2:10)

Manoah

For thee, my dearest son, must thou meanwhile
Lie, thus neglected, in this loathsome plight?

Samson

It should be so. Why should I live?
Soon shall these orbs to double darkness yield.

Accompagnato: Samson

My genial spirits droop, my hopes are fled;
Nature in me seems weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame:
Death, invocated oft, shall end my pains,
And lay me gently down with them that rest.

11. RECITATIVE & AIR (6:04)

Micah

Then long eternity shall greet your bliss;
No more of earthly joys, so false and vain!

Air: Micah

Joys that are pure, sincerely good,
Shall then o'ertake you as a flood:

Where truth and peace do ever shine,
With love that's perfectly divine.

12. CHORUS (2:24)

Israelites

Then round about the starry throne
Of Him who ever rules alone,
Your heav'nly-guided soul shall climb:
Of all this earthly grossness quit,
With glory crown'd, for ever sit,
And triumph over death, and thee, o Time!

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE 1

SAMSON, MANOAH, MICAH, AND ISRAELITES.

13. AIR & RECITATIVE (3:53)

Air: Manoah

Just are the ways of God to man,
Let none his secret actions scan;
For all is best, though oft we doubt,
Of what his wisdom brings about.
Still his unsearchable dispose
Blesses the righteous in the close.

Samson

My evils hopeless are! One pray'r remains,
A speedy death, to close my miseries.

Micah

Relieve Thy champion, image of Thy strength,
And turn his labours to a peaceful end!

14. AIR & CHORUS (13:36)

Micah

Return, O God of hosts! Behold
Thy servant in distress,
His mighty griefs redress,
Nor by the heathen be it told.

Israelites & Micah

To dust his glory they would tread,
And number him amongst the dead.
Return, O God of hosts! Behold
Thy servant in distress.

SCENE 2

SAMSON AND MICAH.

ENTER DALILA, ATTENDED BY HER VIRGINS.

15. RECITATIVE (1:01)

Micah

But who is this, that so bedeck'd and gay,
Comes this way sailing like a stately ship?
- 'Tis Dalila, thy wife.

Samson

My wife, my traitress?
Let her not come near me!

Dalila

With doubtful feet, and wav'ring resolution,
I come, O Samson, dreading thy displeasure;
But conjugal affection led me on,
Prevailing over fear and tim'rous doubt,
Glad if in aught my help or love could serve,
To expiate my rash, unthought misdeed.

16. AIR (4:32)

Dalila

With plaintive notes and am'rous moan,
Thus coos the turtle left alone.

17. AIR & CHORUS (5:16)

Dalila

My faith and truth, O Samson, prove,
But hear me, hear the voice of love!
With love no mortal can be cloy'd,
All happiness is love enjoy'd.

Virgins

Her faith and truth, O Samson, prove
But hear her, hear the voice of love!

18. AIR (3:18)

Dalila

To fleeting pleasures make your court,
No moment lose, for life is short!
The present now's our only time
The missing that our only crime.
How charming is domestic ease!
A thousand ways I'll strive to please.
Life is not lost, though lost your sight;
Let other senses taste delight.

CD II

1. RECITATIVE & DUETT (2:33)

Samson

Ne'er think of that! I know thy warbling charms,
Thy trains, thy wiles, and fair enchanted cup.
Their force is null'd; where once I have been
caught,
I shun the snare. These chains, this prison-house,
I count the house of liberty to thine.

Dalila

Traitor to love! I'll sue no more
For pardon scorn'd, your threats give o'er!

Samson

Traitress to love! I'll hear no more
The charmer's voice, your arts give o'er!

EXEUNT DALILA AND VIRGINS.

SCENE 3

Samson

Favour'd of heaven is he, who finds one true.
How rarely found! - His way to peace is smooth.

2. CHORUS (2:30)

Israelites

To man God's universal law
Gave pow'r to keep the wife in awe.
Thus shall his life be ne'er dismay'd,
By female usurpation sway'd.

SCENE 4

3. RECITATIVE (1:49)

Micah

No words of peace, no voice enchanting fear,
A rougher tongue expect. Here's Harapha,
I know him by this stride and haughty look.

ENTER HARAPHA AND PHILISTINES.

Harapha

I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance;
I am of Gath, men call me Harapha;
Thou know'st me now. Of thy prodigious might
Much have I heard, incredible to me!
In this displeas'd, that never in the field
We met, to try each other's deeds of strength.
I'd see if thy appearance answers loud report.

Samson

The way to know were not to see, but taste.

Harapha

Ha! Dost thou then already single me?
I thought that labour and thy chains had tam'd
thee.
Had fortune brought me to that field of death,
Where thou wrought'st wonder with an ass's jaw,
I'd left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown.

Samson

Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but do.

Harapha

The honour certain to have won from thee
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out;

To combat with a blind man, I disdain.

4. AIR & RECITATIVE (7:30)

Air: Harapha

Honour and arms scorn such a foe,
Though I could end thee at a blow;
Poor victory, to conquer thee,
Or glory in thy overthrow!
Vanquish a slave that is half slain:
So mean a triumph I disdain.

Samson

Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster? Yet take heed!
My heels are fetter'd, but my hands are free.
Thou bulk of spirit void! I once again,
Blind and in chains, provoke thee to the fight!

Harapha

O Dagon! Can I hear this insolence
To me unus'd, not rend'ring instant death?

5. DUET (2:33)

Samson

Go, baffled coward, go,
Lest vengeance lay thee low,
In safety fly my wrath with speed!

Harapha

Presume not on thy God,
Who under foot has trod
Thy strength and thee, at greatest need.

6. RECITATIVE & CHORUS (4:36)

Micah

Here lies the proof: if Dagon be thy God,
With high devotion invoke his aid,

His glory is concern'd. Let him dissolve
Those magic spells that gave our hero strength;
Then know whose God is God,
Dagon, of mortal make,
Or that Great One whom Abra'm's sons adore.

Israelites

Hear, Jacob's God, Jehovah, hear!
Oh, save us, prostrate at thy throne!
Israel depends on thee alone,
Save us, and show that thou art near!

7. RECITATIVE & CHORUS (2:10)

Harapha

Dagon, arise, attend thy sacred feast!
Thy honour calls, this day admits no rest.

Philistines

To song and dance we give the day,
Which shows thy universal sway.
Protect us by thy mighty hand.
And sweep this race from out the land!

8. CHORUS (3:12)

Israelites & Philistines

Fix'd in his everlasting seat,
Jehovah / Great Dagon rules the world in state.
His thunder roars, Heav'n shakes,
And earth's aghast,
The stars with deep amaze,
Remain in stedfast gaze.
Jehovah / Great Dagon is of Gods the first and
last.

ACT THE THIRD

SCENE 1

SAMSON, MICAH, HARAPHA AND CHORUS OF ISRAELITES.

9. RECITATIVE (1:21)

Micah

More trouble is behind, for Harapha
Comes on amain, speed in his steps and look.

Samson

I fear him not, nor all his giant brood.

ENTER HARAPHA.

Harapha

Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say:
This day to Dagon we do sacrifice
With triumph, pomp, and games;
We know, thy strength surpasses human race;
Come then, and show some public proof
To grace this solemn feast.

Samson

I am an Hebrew, and our law forbids
My presence at their vain religious rites.

Harapha

This answer will offend; regard thyself.

Samson

Myself, my conscience and intemal peace!
Am I so broke with servitude, to yield
To such absurd commands, to be their fool,

And play before their God? - I will not come.

Harapha

This message, giv'n with speed, brooks no delay.

10. AIR (3:45)

Harapha

Presuming slave, to move their wrath!
For mercy sue, or vengeance due
Dooms in one fatal word thy death!
Consider, ere it be too late,
To ward th'unerring shaft of fate.

11. RECITATIVE (0:53)

Micah

Reflect then, Samson, matters now are strain'd
Up to the height, whether to hold, or break.
He's gone, whose malice may inflame the lords.

Samson

Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair,
By vaunting it in honour to their god
And prostituting holy things to idols?

Micah

How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach;
,Tis Heav'n alone can save, both us and thee.

12. CHORUS (2:58)

Israelites

With thunder arm'd, great God, arise!
Help, Lord, or Israel's champion dies!
To thy protection this thy servant take,
And save, oh, save us for thy servant's sake!

13. RECITATIVE (1:34)

Samson

Be of good courage; I begin to feel
Some secret impulse, which doth bid me go.

Micah

In time thou hast resolved, again he comes.

ENTER HARAPHA.

Harapha

Samson, this second message send our lords:
„Haste thee at once, or we shall engines find
To move thee, though thou wert a solid rock.“

Samson

Vain were their art if tried; I yield to go.

Micah

So may'st thou act as serves His glory best.

Samson

Let but that spirit, which first rushed on me
In the camp of Dan, inspire me at my need:
Then shall I make Jehovah's glory known:
Their idol gods shall from His presence fly,
Scattered like sheep before the God of Hosts.

14. AIR (3:57)

Samson

Thus when the sun from's wat'ry bed
All curtain'd with a cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave;
The wand'ring shadows ghastly pale,
All troop to their infemal jail
Each fetter'd ghost slips to his sev'ral grave.

15. ACCOMPAGNATO, AIR & CHORUS (2:54)

Accompagnato: Micah

With might endued above the sons of men,
Swift as the lightning's glance His errand execute,
And spread His name amongst the heathen round.

Air: Micah

The Holy One of Israel be thy guide,
The Angel of thy birth stand by thy side!
To fame immortal go,
Heav'n bids thee strike the blow:
The Holy One of Israel is thy guide.

Israelites

To fame immortal go
Heav'n bids thee strike the blow
The Holy One of Israel is thy guide.

SCENE 2

MICAH, MANOAH AND THE ISRAELITES.

16. RECITATIVE (0:28)

Micah

Old Manoah, with youthful steps, makes haste
To find his son, or bring us some glad news.

Manoah

I come, my brethren, not to seek my son,
Who at the feast does play before the lords;
But give you part with me, what hopes I have
To work his liberty.

17. Chorus & Recitative (2:45)

Philistines

Great Dagon has subdu'd our foe.
And brought their boasted hero low:
Sound out his pow'r in notes divine

Praise him with mirth, high cheer and wine.

Manoah

What noise of joy was that? It tore the sky.

Micah

They shout and sing, to see their dreaded foe
Now captive, blind, delighting with his strength.

Manoah

Could my inheritance but ransom him,
Without my patrimony, having him
The richest of my tribe.

Micah

Sons care to nurse their parents in old age;
But you, - your son!

18. AIR (3:19)

Manoah

How willing my paternal love
The weight to share of filial care,
And part of sorrow's burden prove!
Though wand'ring in the shades of night,
Whilst I have eyes he wants no light.

19. RECITATIVE, A SYMPHONY OF HORROR AND CONFUSION & CHORUS (2:01)

Micah

Your hopes of his deliv'ry seem not vain,
In which all Israel's friends participate.

Manoah

I know your friendly minds, and...

A SYMPHONY OF HORROR AND CONFUSION

Heav'n! What noise!

Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

Philistines

Hear us, our God! Oh, hear our cry!
 Death, ruin, fall'n, no help is nigh,
 Oh mercy, Heav'n, we sink, we die!

SCENE 3

ENTER A MESSENGER.

20. RECITATIVE (1:16)**Messenger**

Where shall I run, or which way fly the thoughts
 Of this most horrid sight? O countrymen,
 You're in this sad event too much concern'd!

Micah

The accident was loud, we long to know from
 whence.

Messenger

Let me recover breath; it will burst forth.

Manoah

Suspense in news is torture, speak them out!

Messenger

Then take the worst in brief - Samson is dead.

Manoah

The worst indeed!

Messenger

Unwounded of his enemies he fell,
 At once he did destroy, and was destroy'd;
 The edifice, where all were met to see,
 Upon their heads, and on his own he pull'd!

Manoah

Oh, lastly overstrong against thyself!
 A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge:

Glorious, yet dearly bought!

21. AIR & CHORUS (4:34)**Micah**

Ye sons of Israel, now lament,
 Your spear is broke, your bow's unbent.
 Your glory's fled,
 Amongst the dead great Samson lies,
 For ever, ever, clos'd his eyes!

Israelites

Weep, Israel, weep a louder strain;
 Samson, your strength, your hero, is slain!

22. RECITATIVE & A DEAD MARCH (4:49)**Manoah**

Proceed we hence to find his body
 Soak'd in vile Philistine blood; with the pure
 stream,
 And cleansing herbs wash off his clodded gore;
 Then solemnly attend him to my tomb
 With silent obsequies, and fun'ral train.

A DEAD MARCH (SYMPHONY)**Micah**

The body comes; we'll meet it on the way
 With laurels ever green, and branching palm;
 Then lay it in his monument, hung round
 With all his trophies, and great acts enroll'd
 In verse heroic, or sweet lyric song.

Manoah

There shall all Israel's valiant youth resort,
 And from his memory inflame their breasts
 To matchless valour, whilst they sing his praise.

ENTER ISRAELITES WITH THE BODY OF SAMSON.

23. AIR, SOLI, CHORUS & RECITATIVE (5:56)**Manoah**

Glorious hero, may thy grave
 Peace and honour ever have;
 After all thy pain and woes
 Rest eternal, sweet repose!

Israelites

Glorious hero, may thy grave
 Peace and honour ever have!

Israelite Woman

The virgins too shall on their feastful days
 Visit his tomb with flow'rs, and there bewail
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice.

Virgins

Bring the laurels, bring the bays,
 Strew his hearse, and strew the ways!

Israelite Woman

May ev'ry hero fall like thee,
 Through sorrow to felicity!

Virgins

Bring the laurels, bring the bays
 Strew his hearse and strew the ways!

Israelites

Glorious hero, may thy grave
 Peace and honour ever have,
 After all thy pains and woes,
 Rest eternal, sweet repose!

Manoah

Come, come! No time for lamentation now,

No cause for grief; Samson like Samson fell,
 Both life and death heroic. To his foes
 Ruin is left; to him eternal fame.

24. AIR (2:58)**Israelite Woman**

Let the bright seraphim in burning row,
 Their loud, uplifted angel trumpets blow.
 Let the cherubic host, in tuneful choirs,
 Touch their immortal harps with golden wires.

25. CHORUS (3:43)**Israelites**

Let their celestial concerts all unite,
 Ever to sound his praise in endless blaze of light.

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