

94668 Handel: Jephtha

SUNG TEXTS

1. **Overture**
2. **Menuet**

ACT ONE

Scene 1: Zebul with his brethren.

3. **1. Accompagnato**

ZEBUL

It must be so - or these vile Ammonites,
our lordly tyrants, now these eighteen years,
will crush the race of Israel.-
Since Heaven vouchsafes not,
with immediate choice,
to point us out a leader, as before,
ourselves must choose
and who so fit a man,
us 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, Heaven may favour our request,
if with repentant hearts we sue for mercy.

4. **2. 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.

5. **3. Chorus**

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.

6. **Recitative**

ZEBUL

But Jephtha comes. -
Kind Heaven, 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 Heaven vouchsafe us a victorious
peace)
shall still be mine.

ZEBUL

Agreed; be witness, Heaven.

7. **4. Air**

JEPHTHA

Virtue my soul shall still embrace,
goodness shall make me great.
Who builds upon this steady base,
dreads no event of fate.
Virtue my Soul... *da capo*

8. **Recitative**

STORGÈ

"Twill be a painful separation. Jephtha,
to see thee harness'd for the bloody field.
But ah! how trivial arc a wife's concerns,
when a whole nation bleeds,
and groveling lies,
panting for liberty and life.

9. **5. 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

10. 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.
O haste, and make my happiness complete!

11.6. Air

HAMOR

Dull delay, in piercing anguish,
bids thy faithful lover languish.
While he pants for bliss in vain.
Oh! With gentle smiles relieve me;
let no more false hope deceive me,
nor vain fears inflict a pain.

12. 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.

13.7. 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.
Take the heart you fondly gave,
lodg'd in your breast with mine.

14. 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.

15.8. Duet

IPHIS, 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.
These labours... *da capo*

Exeunt

Scene 4: Jephtha alone.

16. Recitative

JEPHTHA

What menu these doubtful fancies of the
brain?
Visions of joy rise in my raptur'd soul,
there play a while, and set in darksome night.
Strange ardour fires my breast;
my arms seem strung
with tenfold vigour, and my crested helm
to reach the skies. - Be humble still, my soul.
It is the Spirit of God, in whose great name
I offer up my vow.

17.9. Accompagnato

JEPHTHA

If, Lord, sustain'd by thy almighty pow'r,
Ammon I drive, and his insulting bands,
from these our long-uncultivated lands,
and safe return a glorious conqueror; -
what, or who ever shall first salute mine eyes,
shall be for ever thine, or fall a sacrifice.

Enter Israelites.

Recitative

JEPHTHA

'Tis said.-
Attend, ye Chiefs, and with united voice
invoke the holy name of Israel's God.

18.10. Chorus

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 disturb'd before
 with such incessant pangs.

20.11. 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 senile chain,
 joyless flow the hours of light.
 Scenes of horror... *da capo*

Scene 6: Enter Iphis.

21. Recitative

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

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

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

22.12. Air

IPHIS
 The smiling dawn of happy days
 presents a prospect clear,
 and pleasing hope's all-bright'ning rays
 dispel each gloomy fear.
 While ev'ry charm that peace displays
 makes spring-time all the year.
 The smiling dawn... *da capo*

Exeunt.

Scene 7: Enter Zebul and Jephtha.

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.

24.13. Chorus

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 and Iphis.

1. Recitative

HAMOR
 Glad tidings of great joy to thee, dear Iphis,
 and to the house of Israel I bring.
 Thus then, in brief. -
 Both armies in array of battle rang'd,
 our general stept forth,
 and offer'd haughty Ammon terms of peace,
 most just and righteous;
 these with scorn refus'd,
 he bade the trumpet sound:
 but scarce a sword
 was ting'd in hostile blood, ere all around
 the thund'ring heavens open'd, and pour'd
 forth
 thousands of armed Cherubim: when straight
 our general cried: »This is thy signal, Lord,
 I follow thee, and thy bright heav'nly host.«
 Then rushing on proud Ammon, all aghast,
 he made a bloody slaughter, and pursued
 the flying foe, till night bade sheathe the
 sword,
 and taste the joys of victory and peace.

2. **14. Chorus**

Cherub and Seraphim, unbodied forms,
the messengers of fate,
his dread command await:
of swifter flight, and subtler frame,
than lightning's winged flame,
they ride on whirlwinds, directing the storms.

3. **15. Air**

HAMOR
Up the dreadful steep ascending.
While for fame and love contending,
sought I thee, my glorious prize.
And now happy in the blessing,
Thee, my sweetest joy, possessing,
other honours I despise.
Up the dreadful... *da capo*

4. **Recitative**

IPHIS
'Tis well. Haste, haste, ye maidens,
and in richest robes
adorn me, like a stately bride,
to meet my father in triumphant pomp.
And while around the dancing banners play, -

5. **16. 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.
Tune the soft... *da capo*

Exeunt.

Scene 2: Enter Jephtha, Hamor and Zebul.

6. **Recitative**

JEPHTHA
Heav'n smiles once more
on his repentant people,
and Victory spreads wide her silver wings,
to soothe our sorrows with a peaceful calm.
Zebul, thy deeds were valiant;
nor less thine, my Hamor;
but the glory is the Lord's.

7. **18. 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 wind in vengeance fly.
His mighty arm... *da capo*

8. **19. 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.

Scene 3

9. **20. Symphony**

Enter Iphis and Storgè.

10. **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.

11. **21. Air and Chorus**

IPHIS
Welcome, as the cheerful light,
driving darkest shades of night:
welcome, as the spring that rains
peace and plenty o'er the plains!
Not cheerful day,
nor spring so gay,
such mighty blessings brings,
as peace on her triumphant wings.

(Chorus)

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.

12. 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.

13. 22. 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.
Open thy marble jaws... *da capo*

14. 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 mall;
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.

15. 23. Accomagnato and Arioso

STORGÈ

First perish thou; and perish all the world!
Hath Heaven then bless'd us
with this only pledge
of all our love, this one dear child, for thee
to be her murderer? No, cruel man.

Let other creatures die;
or heav'n, earth, seas, and sky
in one confusion lie,
ere in a daughter's blood,
so fair, so chaste, so good,
a father's hand's embrued.

16. Recitative

HAMOR

If such thy cruel purpose; lo! Your friend
offers himself a willing sacrifice,
to save the innocent and beauteous maid.

17. 24. Air

HAMOR

On me let blind mistaken zeal
her utmost rage employ!
"Twill be a mercy there to Kill,
"where life can taste no joy.

18. 25. Quartet

ZEBUL

O spare your daughter!

STORGÈ

Spare my child!

HAMOR

My love!

JEPHTHA

Recorded stands my vow in Heav'n above.

STORGÈ

Recall the impious vow, ere 'tis too late.

JEPHTHA

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

HAMOR, ZEBUL, STORGÈ

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

Scene 4: Enter Iphis.

19. Recitative

IPHIS

Such news flies swift; -
I've heard the mournful cause
of all your sorrows.
Of my father's vow,
Heaven spoke its approbation by success:
Jephtha hath triumph'd.
Israel is free.

20.26. 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 blessings still
 pour on my country,
 friends, and dearest rather!

21.27. Air

IPHIS

Happy they! this vital breath
 with content I shall resign,
 and not murmur or repine,
 sinking in the arms or death.
 Happy they... *da capo*

22.28. 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 n thousand pangs,
 that lash me into madness. Horrid thought!
 My only daughter! - So dear a child,
 doomb'd by a father! - Yes, the vow is past,
 and Gilead hath triumph'd o'er his foes.
 Therefore, tomorrow's dawn,
 tomorrow's dawn ... I can no more.

23.29. 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 and Priests.

1. 30. Arioso

JEPHTHA

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

2. 31. Accompagnato

JEPHTHA

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

3. 32. 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.
 Waft her, angels... *da capo*

4. 35. Accompagnato

IPHIS

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

5. 34. 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.

6. 35. Chorus of priests

Doubtful fear and reverend awe
 strike us, Lord, while here we bow:
 Check'd by thy all-sacred law,
 yet commanded by the vow.
 Hear our pray'r in this distress,
 and thy determin'd will declare.

7. 36. Symphony

8. Recitative

ANGEL

Rise, Jephtha. And ye reverend 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 for ever,
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.

9. 37. 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.
Shall thou live: and ages late
crown thee with immortal praise.

10.38. Arioso

JEPHTHA

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

11.39. Chorus

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

Scene 2: Enter Zebul, Storgè and Hamor.

12. 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.

13.40. 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.

14. Recitative

STORGÈ

O let me fold thee in a mother's arms,
and with submissive joy, my child, receive
Thy designation to the life of Heaven.

15.41. Air

STORGÈ

Sweet as sight to the blind,
or freedom to the slave,
such joy in thee I find,
safe from the grave.
Still I'm of thee possess'd,
such is kind Heaven's decree,
that hath thy parents bless'd,
in blessing thee.

16. Recitative

HAMOR

With transport, Iphis,
I behold thy safely,
but must for ever mourn
so dear a loss:
Dear! though great Jephtha
were to honour me
still with the name of son.

17. Recitative

IPHIS

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

18.45. Quintet

IPHIS, HAMOR

All that is in Hamor (Iphis) mine,
freely I to Heaven 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.

19.44. Chorus

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.
Hallelujah. Amen.