

CHANDOS early music

CHACONNE

MAURICE GREENE

JEPHTHA



EARLY OPERA COMPANY
CHRISTIAN CURNYN



Painting by Francis Hayman (c. 1707 – 1776) © National Portrait Gallery, London

Maurice Greene and John Hoadly, 1747

Maurice Greene (1696 – 1755)

première recording

JEPHTHA (1737)

An Oratorio in Two Parts

Libretto by John Hoadly (1711 – 1776)

Transcribed and edited 1996 by Peter Lynan

Scene before Jephtha's House in the Land of Tob

Jephtha Andrew Staples *tenor*

Jephtha's Daughter Mary Bevan *soprano*

First Elder of Gilead Michael Mofidian *bass*

Second Elder of Gilead Jeremy Budd *tenor*

Soloist in duet 'Awake each joyful Strain' Jessica Cale *soprano*

Chorus of Elders, Soldiers, Virgins, &c.

The members of the cast of *Jephtha* are generously supported by Maren Brandes, Robert Miall, Andrew Peck, Geraldine and Richard Pinch, and Tom Weisselberg.

Early Opera Company

Catherine Martin leader

Christian Curnyn



Andrew Staples

		Time	Page
COMPACT DISC ONE			
[1]	1 Overture. Grave – Allegro	3:37	32
	Part I	[36:56]	
	Scene I	4:26	
[2]	2 Chorus: 'Ye Sons of Gilead, seek the Lord'. Largo	3:13	32
[3]	3 Recitative. First Elder: 'Jair, great Judge of Israel, is no more' with Second Elder	1:12	32
	Scene II	32:30	
[4]	4 Accompanied Recitative. First Elder: 'O mighty Leader, see, beneath thy Feet'. Largo – Presto – Largo	1:53	32
[5]	5 Air. Jephtha: 'Where are your Gods, your Idol-Train'. [Vivace]	5:12	32
[6]	6 Recitative. First Elder: 'Shameful Remembrance! with repentant Tears'	0:50	32
[7]	7 Duet. First and Second Elders: 'O think what Joy to him is giv'n'. Vivace	2:20	33
[8]	8 Recitative. Jephtha: 'Ill doth my native Land such Grace deserve' with Second Elder	1:02	33
[9]	9 Air. Second Elder: 'Against these new Alarms'. Vivace e Piano	3:38	33
[10]	10 Recitative. Jephtha: 'Hence, shameless Men! Compassion would be Guilt' with Second Elder and All Elders	0:38	33

		Time	Page
[11]	11 Air. Jephtha: 'Pity soothing melts the Soul'. Affettuoso e Piano	4:28	33
[12]	12 Recitative. First Elder: 'Cherish that Pity, 'tis a Godlike Guest'	0:36	34
[13]	13 Chorus. Elders: 'Our Prayers with God Acceptance find'. [Alla breve]	1:24	34
[14]	14 Recitative. Jephtha: 'Thought I your vow'd Repentance were sincere' with First Elder	0:40	34
[15]	15 Chorus: 'Thou, universal Lord'. Allegro	3:22	34
[16]	16 Recitative. Jephtha: 'No more, with Joy I undertake your Cause'	0:37	34
[17]	17 Air. Jephtha: 'God of Hosts, whom we adore'. Allegro	2:01	34
[18]	18 Accompanied Recitative. Jephtha: 'There, what first shall meet my Eye'. Largo e Staccato e Piano	1:40	34
[19]	19 Chorus: 'God of Hosts, whom we adore'. Allegro – Adagio – Allegro	2:02	35
		TT 40:33	

COMPACT DISC TWO

Part II

Scene I

[1]	20 [Symphony.] [Maestoso]	9:21	35
[2]	21 Grand Chorus: 'The Foes of Gilead are no more'. Allegro	2:12	35



Tamara Dahlhammer

Mary Bevan

		Time	Page
[3]	22 Air. Jephtha: 'O God, we own Thy mighty Hand'. Vivace	2:09	35
[4]	23 Chorus: 'Be all the Fame'. Tempo Ordinario	0:22	35
[5]	24 Air [Jephtha's Daughter], Duet, and Chorus: 'Awake, awake each joyful Strain'. [Andante]	3:33	35
	Scene II	48:58	
[6]	25 Accompanied Recitative. Jephtha: 'What do I see, O Heav'n?'. Presto – Adagio – with Jephtha's Daughter	1:19	35
[7]	26 Air. Jephtha's Daughter: 'Ah! my foreboding Fears'. Andante Vivace – Andante e Piano	7:55	36
[8]	27 Recitative. Jephtha: 'O Heav'n! with Pity view a Father's Fondness' –	0:43	36
[9]	28 Air. Jephtha: 'Thou sweetest Joy by Heav'n bestow'd'. Affettuoso e Piano	3:37	36
[10]	29 Recitative. Jephtha's Daughter: 'O speak, disclose my Doom, I stand prepar'd' with Jephtha	1:00	36
[11]	30 Air. Jephtha's Daughter: 'If I thy Grief'. Largo Andante	7:29	36
[12]	31 Recitative. Jephtha's Daughter: 'O blot me from thy Mind' with Jephtha	0:41	37
[13]	32 Air. Jephtha: 'O Thou most Dear'. Moderato	4:36	37

		Time	Page
14	33 Accompanied Recitative. Jephtha: 'I vow'd, before I fought the War'. Andante e Piano – Adagio – Andante – Andante	1:21	37
15	34 Chorus. Elders of Gilead: 'O God of Might! what Means this Stroke?'. Vivace	1:29	37
16	35 Air. First Elder: 'But oh! behold the princely Pair'. Largo e Staccato	3:27	37
17	36 Chorus. Elders of Gilead: 'But see! the dreadful Conflict's o'er'. Allegro	1:36	38
18	37 Accompanied recitative. Jephtha: 'Can Heav'n delight in Guiltless Blood?'. [] – Presto – [] – with Jephtha's Daughter and All	3:05	38
19	38 Air. Jephtha's Daughter: 'Let me awhile defer my Fate'. Largo e Piano	2:03	38
20	39 Accompanied Recitative. Jephtha: 'Go, and with humble Tears, and ceaseless Prayers'. [] – Andante – Presto – Largo e Piano –	1:03	38
21	40 Duet and Chorus. Jephtha: 'Here let me hold Thee to my Heart'. Largo Andante with Jephtha's Daughter and Chorus	2:16	39
22	41 Grand Chorus: 'Israel's Daughters, a fair Virgin Train'. Vivace	5:09	39
		TT 58:19	



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Chorus of Early Opera Company

soprano

Miriam Allan
Jessica Cale
Sarah Keating
Elsbeth Piggott

alto

David Clegg
David Gould
Martha McLorinan
Jennifer Statham

tenor

John Bowen
Jack Granby
Samuel Jenkins
Tom Kelly

bass

Malachy Frame
Daniel Gilchrist
Ben McKee
Christopher Webb

Orchestra of Early Opera Company

violin I
Catherine Martin
Ellen Bundy
Ellen O'Dell
Nia Lewis

violin II
Oliver Webber
Holly Harman
Abel Balazs

viola
Emilia Benjamin
Louise Hogan
Joanna Patrick

cello
Andrew Skidmore
Lucia Capellaro

bass
Carina Cosgrave

oboe/recorder
Nicola Barbagli
Sarah Humphrys

bassoon
Zoe Shevlin

trumpet
Dave Hendry
Robert Vanryne

timpani
Scott Bywater

theorbo
Sergio Bucheli

harpsichord
Tom Foster

chamber organ
Oliver John Ruthven

The string players use historically accurate equal tension stringing
and the majority use no metal wound strings.

Single manual Italian harpsichord, 1991,
by Mark Ransom and Claire Hammett,
after Carolus Grimaldi

Instrument provided by Oliver Sandig

Three-stop chamber organ
by Peter Collins

Instrument provided by Tom Cochrane

Temperament: Vallotti, Young
Pitch: A = 415 Hz



Michael Mofidian

THANK YOU

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MAURICE GREENE: JEPHTHA

The English oratorio was conceived in the early 1730s as essentially unstaged opera, more often than not setting scriptural themes from the Old Testament, and principally (though not exclusively) intended to occupy the London theatre-going public during Lent, when the regular opera season was suspended. It was a novel kind of entertainment, largely fostered by Handel, with whom it had some initial success. However, his continuing commitment to Italian *opera seria* was such that, after first presenting *Esther*, at the King's Theatre, in 1732, and then, in 1733, *Deborah*, followed by *Athalia*, at Oxford, in the summer of that year, he did not return to this distinctive kind of 'sacred drama' until almost the end of the decade.

The first years of the 1730s were something of an experimental period. The nature and conventions of oratorio were not yet definitive and its general direction, too, still remained uncertain. One composer who was able to see its potential, however, was Maurice Greene (1696 – 1755). By 1730 Greene was one of the most senior musicians in England: organist of St Paul's Cathedral, and Organist and

Composer to the Chapel Royal, he was also, from that year, nominal Professor of Music at the University of Cambridge and, from 1735, Master of the King's Music, at which point he held all the major musical appointments in the land. Much involved in London's concert life, too, he had been a founder and remained a member of the Academy of Ancient Music until his unfortunate implication in the notorious Bononcini affair, which saw him unwittingly support his friend's deceitful claim to be the composer of a madrigal actually written by the Venetian master Antonio Lotti. After the truth was exposed, in 1731, Greene walked out in high dudgeon, taking with him the boys of St Paul's and several friends who were also members of the Academy. He went on to set up the rival Apollo Academy, which met in the great room at the Devil Tavern, near Temple Bar, in Fleet Street ('Dr Greene is gone to the Devil!', Handel supposedly quipped). This venue had cultural associations stretching back to the Elizabethan age, since when it had been the home of the so-called Apollo Club, said to have been attended by the great literary figures

of the day. It was there that, perhaps sensing a developing appetite for oratorio – and perhaps also keen to steal a march on Handel, their earlier friendship having soured – Greene took the opportunity to try his hand at it.

Unlike Handel, who by then had been writing operas for the London theatres for more than twenty years, Greene was not an experienced composer of theatrical works. He had, for St Paul's and for the Chapel Royal, written a number of festal anthems and Te Deum settings involving choir, soloists, and orchestra, and so was adept at handling extended, multi-movement works scored for large forces. But as a composer of music drama of any kind he had yet to make his mark. His first, short oratorio, *The Song of Deborah and Barak* (1732), is a retrospective narrative rather than a true drama played out through first-person interaction, and for this reason is not typical of later oratorios. Nevertheless, it reveals something of the composer's dramatic instinct as Greene started to experiment with some of the features which would come to define the fully fledged Handelian form.

Although Greene was to some extent feeling his way forward, it was in only his second oratorio, *Jephtha* (1737), that he decisively embraced the dramatic possibilities of the genre, the first native English composer

to do so. *Jephtha* is thus of some historical significance. Brimming with attractively varied airs and choruses, powerfully emotive accompanied recitatives, and spirited orchestral movements, it is also an engaging work. For the libretto, Greene turned to John Hoadly (1711 – 1776), clergyman and dramatist, the youngest son of Benjamin Hoadly, bishop of Winchester, with whom he had earlier collaborated on the 'dramatic pastoral' *Florimel*, first performed at the episcopal residence in Farnham in 1734. Hoadly would also supply Greene with the text for their second Arcadian entertainment, *Phoebe* (1747), and another oratorio, *The Force of Truth* (1744, lost), as well as the words for a number of songs. It was through the patronage of Bishop Hoadly, a prominent liberal polemicist, that his son had in 1735 been appointed to the royal household as chaplain to Frederick, Prince of Wales. The prince's association with political figures who opposed alleged corruption in Walpole's administration gave focus to their strongly held views on patriotic leadership, a theme that may have influenced Hoadly's choice of *Jephtha* as the subject of the oratorio.

Taken from the Book of Judges, chapter 11, the account of *Jephtha* tells the story of a fearless Israelite warrior recalled from exile to

fight for his people, a man not only of great valour but, as it transpires – thanks to an impulsive and fateful pledge – of profound honour, too, destined to assume his place as their worthy ruler. It was a tale with obvious political resonance. However, it was a problematic episode theologically, dealing as it does with the idea of human sacrifice, a practice clearly abhorred by God elsewhere in the Bible but apparently condoned here. Interpretation of the story of Jephtha, and in particular of the meaning of the hero's sacrificial promise, was a regular though ultimately unresolved topic of biblical commentary at the time, some writers favouring a more palatable alternative reading that saw Jephtha's daughter ordained to the service of God not through death but through life, obligated thereafter to pursue a path of sexual abstinence and solitary devotion.

Relatively little is known about the original performances of *Jephtha*. Like *Deborah and Barak*, it was performed not in the public glare of the theatres, as Handel's oratorios generally were, but at meetings of the Apollo Academy, which was an essentially private society. The claim made in the 1950s that it was put on at the Haymarket Theatre in Lent 1737 has long since been doubted; no evidence for a public performance of *Jephtha*

before its modern revival, in 1997, has yet come to light. A copy of the libretto as printed in 1737 is annotated by Hoadly with the names of the singers, presumably those of the first performance, which took place in that year. The three parts for male soloists were sung by John Abbot (Jephtha), Samuel Weely (First Elder), and David Cheriton (Second Elder). All were members of the choirs of St Paul's and the Chapel Royal, the latter of which also supplied the boys and men of the chorus. The part of Jephtha's Daughter was sung by Isabella Lampe, the wife of the composer John Frederick Lampe, in whose hugely popular burlesque *The Dragon of Wantley* she had first sung earlier in the same year; she was also the younger sister of the celebrated soprano Cecilia Young, who, during the 1730s, sang in the first performances of some of Handel's operas and oratorios. The relatively recent discovery of Isabella Lampe's involvement was unexpected, as the concerts of the Apollo Academy were otherwise the preserve of male performers only, and it thus overturned the earlier assumption that the role would most likely have been taken by a Chapel Royal chorister.

The oratorio was at some point revised, as is apparent from changes made in the only surviving source of the music, a manuscript

now bound in two volumes and located in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS Mus.d.54 – 55). This is a copy of a presumed lost autograph, made by Martin Smith, a pupil of Greene, who, in 1740, became organist of Gloucester Cathedral, but with annotations in the hand of the composer himself. Adjustments made to those movements involving Jephtha's Daughter, in Part II, point to a later performance of the work, with a countertenor rather than a soprano soloist. Though this might appear dramatically implausible, it was not an unlikely substitution given the constitution of the Academy and evidence that male singers took female roles in other works performed there. The Daughter's revised part is not without interest, but it is difficult to make a strong case for it overall. Its dramatic integrity is weakened by its downward transposition to occupy a lower tessitura, which undermines the portrayal of the girl's youthful naivety.

For Hoadly, like Greene, oratorio was a new enterprise. His often slow-paced, occasionally even static text might seem strange for a work in which very little actually appears to happen. But the drama is psychologically charged rather than physically dynamic, stressing reaction rather than action. It was surely this aspect of the story

that attracted both librettist and composer, for it offered great potential for conveying a wide range of emotional responses. It promised an expressive depth far exceeding that of their earlier pastoral opera, *Florimel*, a work which proved Greene a gifted melodist but was dramatic in only the flimsiest sense, presenting little challenge beyond the depiction of bucolic pleasures.

That the tragic tale of Jephtha was eminently suitable for literary treatment as an oratorio would, by the time of Greene's setting, already have been appreciated at least by those who moved in London's antiquarian circles. Giacomo Carissimi's Latin oratorio *Jephthé* (c. 1648) featured in a concert of the Academy of Ancient Music in 1735, and in due course the subject would attract further attention, most notably in the much later setting (1751) by Handel, which marked the culmination of his oratorio career. Another oratorio on the same story was composed in the 1750s by John Stanley, organist of the Temple Church.

It is tempting, if not entirely fair, to compare Greene's oratorio, composed without the insight gained from a long and successful theatre career and before the creative apparatus of oratorio was well established, with Handel's mature setting. To make

Jephtha – one of his great masterpieces – fit for theatre performance, Handel fleshed it out with a supporting cast of named characters who create dramatic incident in the manner of contemporary *opera seria*. Spread over three acts, the oratorio makes modern-day staging not only possible but rather effective, too. By contrast, Greene's *Jephtha*, more concisely organised in only two acts (or Parts, as they are actually called), would be a poor candidate for staged performance. Having just one named character – not even his daughter is given a name – and only a couple of supporting figures (the two Elders), the drama is linear rather than multi-dimensional, more plainly set moral tale ('Be careful what you wish for...') than full-blown operatic entertainment. That is not to say that it lacks either a strong dramatic impulse or effective characterisation: far from it. But it is a bleaker, more simply rendered tragedy, bringing into sharp focus the grim emotional entanglement into which the two principal characters are inexorably drawn.

The two Parts strikingly contrast the selfless commitment of Jephtha to the Israelite cause with the ensuing torment that he needlessly brings upon himself, themes linked by his moral steadfastness. With the moment of crisis occurring shortly after the

beginning of Part II, much of the second half of the oratorio concerns the revelation of his rash promise to his beloved child and their grappling with its consequences, before, at last, their dutiful resignation to her destiny. The protracted treatment of this woeful situation might easily, in other hands, have become a dramatic flop. But Greene demonstrates assured handling of structure and masterly control of expression, which generate and sustain tension, skilfully exposing the full impact of the pair's predicament: from innocence and shock to bewilderment, denial, fear, and acceptance. Unsurprisingly, it is here that much of Greene's most effective music is to be found. Among the most notable sequences are the beautiful lament of Jephtha's Daughter, and the several orchestral recitatives which, through intensification of the harmonic language, deftly underpin the heightened emotional states of the characters as they inch hopelessly towards the inevitable. The sorrowful tone is sensitively extended into the final chorus, which concludes not in jubilation for the Daughter's miraculous, last-minute liberation – a contrivance of Handel's libretto but not of Greene's – but in quiet expression of grief.

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Synopsis

Part I

Scene I

In the years following the death of Jair, leader of Israel, the people of Gilead have forsaken the Lord and taken up idolatrous worship. They now face imminent invasion by their long-time oppressors, the neighbouring people of Ammon. Jephtha, one of their own, whom they had earlier banished on account of his illegitimate birth, has since become famed for his great courage. The Elders, desperate and filled with remorse, humbly seek God's protection and approach the exiled Jephtha in the hope of persuading him to lead their fight.

Scene II

The Elders plead with Jephtha, who at first rejects their proposition and suggests that they appeal instead to their false gods. Consumed with guilt, they attempt to flatter him, eliciting only a harsh reminder of their past conduct. But, recognising their sincerity, and convinced of their renewed allegiance to God, Jephtha finds his anger soothed, and he is at last moved to grant them their request. Now united, their spirits lifted and confidence restored, Jephtha and the Elders together toast the prospect of victory in the battle that lies ahead. Meanwhile Jephtha

makes a sacred vow: that, should he return home triumphant, he will offer in sacrificial devotion to God whatever creature of virgin blood he first sees.

Part II

Scene I

The bloody battle is over, the Ammonites have been defeated, and the people of Gilead celebrate the victorious homecoming of Jephtha. Indoors, his daughter and her companions echo the joyful news of his return.

Scene II

On seeing his daughter running open-armed to greet him, Jephtha immediately remembers his vow; he averts his gaze, but it is too late. The mood suddenly changes, unsettling his daughter, who is alarmed by the horror etched on his tearful face. Overcome by a dreadful foreboding, she urges her father to explain. Jephtha can barely put into words what he has promised God, and initially manages only to confirm that she herself is the cause of his fear. Lamenting her involvement, she considers fleeing to distant lands in order to spare her father's torment. Though Jephtha seems almost paralysed by anguish, she is eventually successful in prising the truth from him.

The Elders, angered by this twisted turn of events, rail against the Almighty; watching the tragic pair as they silently try to come to terms with their misfortune, the Elders admire their moral integrity. Jephtha vacillates, unable to reconcile God's acceptance of his vow with the strongly condemned practices of the cult of Moloch (child sacrifice), and proposes that he take his daughter's place. She, virtuous to the end,

calmly dissuades him, requesting only to be allowed to spend time alone in the mountains to grieve her virginity before returning to die. Resolved to her fate, father and daughter say their farewells, and the people declare four days of mourning to be observed by the daughters of Israel each year thereafter in her honour.

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Jeremy Budd

An outstandingly versatile artist of our era, **Andrew Staples** combines a busy schedule as an opera and concert singer with a career as a film and stage director and photographer. As a distinguished tenor, he has collaborated with Elim Chan, Gustavo Dudamel, Emmanuelle Haïm, Daniel Harding, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Simon Rattle, and Esa-Pekka Salonen, and with orchestras such as the Berliner Philharmoniker, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Orchestre de Paris, Les Siècles, London Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and San Francisco Symphony. He made his début at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden singing Jaquino (*Fidelio*), and returned for roles in *Capriccio*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Kát'a Kabanová*, and *Salome*. In 2022, he made his débuts at Teatro La Fenice, in the title role of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, and Berliner Staatsoper, in the title role of Mozart's *Idomeneo*. In the 2023 / 24 season, he sang Florestan (*Fidelio*) with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, and Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Iván Fischer. The 2024 / 25 season features a European tour with three major orchestras. He has sung Bacchus once more

with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and Iván Fischer, performed Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, and will return to the work with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, both conducted by Daniel Harding. Following his collaboration with the Orchestre de chambre de Paris he will also work with the Sinfonieorchester Basel and Wiener Symphoniker. His work as a film and stage director and photographer includes directing music films and documentaries. He directed Stravinsky's *L'Oiseau de feu* for Air France in collaboration with Arte, Daniel Harding, and the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France, as well as Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* for DG Stage+ with Alice Sara Ott. Andrew Staples is also collaborating with Daniel Harding on a documentary series in Guangzhou, China, covering the Youth Music Culture The Greater Bay Area (YMCG) project over five years.

During the 2024 / 25 season, the soprano **Mary Bevan** MBE returned to English National Opera as Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*), and will appear at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma as Morgana (*Alcina*) and make her début with Semperoper Dresden as Michal,

in a new production by Claus Guth of *Saul*. Last season, she performed Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) in Rome and debuted at Opernhaus Zürich as La Folie (Rameau's *Platée*). She has sung Morgana (in a new production by Richard Jones of Handel's opera) and Lila (David Bruce's *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*) at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, the title roles of Luigi Rossi's *Orpheus* at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Coraline* at the Barbican, and made her Globe main stage début as Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*). Elsewhere, highlights have included appearances at Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Teatro Real, Madrid, Royal Danish Opera, Bolshoi Theatre, and Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, and she made her début with Bayerische Staatsoper in the title role of Francesco Cavalli's *Calisto*.

On the concert stage she recently made her début at Carnegie Hall as Dalinda (*Ariodante*) with The English Concert under Harry Bicket, and has sung *Die Schöpfung* at the Barbican with the Academy of Ancient Music, *The Judas Passion* by Sally Beamish with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and orchestrations of Schubert songs with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Edward Gardner, and made appearances

with the Handel and Haydn Society, Boston, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Francisco, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Barokksolistene, and London Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as at the BBC Proms. She has toured extensively across Europe, Australia, Asia, and the US with Kammerorchester Basel, Australian Chamber Orchestra, and The English Concert. Her many recitals include regular appearances at Wigmore Hall and she has recorded extensively. Mary Bevan has received the Young Artist award of the Royal Philharmonic Society and the UK Critics' Circle Award for Young Talent in music, and was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2019.

'The singers were impressive too, especially **Michael Mofidian**, a young Scottish-Iranian bass whose big, suave voice should take him far.' So wrote Richard Morrison in *The Times* about an artist now increasingly in demand as a performer in opera, concert, and recital. In the 2024 / 2025 season, he has performed operatic roles such as Selim (*Il turco in Italia*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at Welsh National Opera, and Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) in a new production at Bayerische Staatsoper conducted

by Vladimir Jurowski. His concert activity has featured performances of works such as Bach's Christmas Oratorio, Handel's *Messiah*, and Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle*. In future seasons he is scheduled to sing Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Osmin (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), and Créon (*Oedipus rex*). Previous seasons saw his celebrated début at Teatro Real, Madrid, as Créon (Cherubini's *Médée*) and notable returns to The Royal Opera, Covent Garden for performances as Masetto, Colline (*La bohème*), and Der Pfleger des Orest (*Elektra*). Elsewhere he has sung Polyphemus (*Acis and Galatea*), at the Potsdamer Winteroper, Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), at Scottish Opera, and Masetto, at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, as well as Lord Sidney (*Il viaggio a Reims*), at the Rossini Opera Festival, and Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*), at the Grange Festival. He has also performed roles at the Salzburger Festspiele, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Opéra Royal de Versailles, and Opéra de Rouen. From 2018 to 2020, he was a Jette Parker Young Artist at The Royal Opera. In concert, he has twice been a soloist at the BBC Proms and collaborated with esteemed conductors in diverse repertoires, including the requiems by Mozart and Verdi. Michael Mofidian has given recitals at venues including Wigmore

Hall and the festival Oxford Lieder, performing with the pianists Keval Shah, Jâms Coleman, Sholto Kynoch, Julia Lynch, Anna Tilbrook, Julius Drake, and Malcolm Martineau.

Born in Hertfordshire, the tenor **Jeremy Budd** started out as a Chorister at St Paul's Cathedral, London, before going on to study at the Royal Academy of Music of which, in 2020, he was appointed an Associate. Since finishing his studies, he has been much in demand as a soloist on the concert platform, particularly in baroque repertoire. He has worked with many of the foremost conductors in this field, including Christian Curnyn, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Harry Christophers CBE, Masaaki Suzuki, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Charles Mackerras, Paul McCreesh, John Butt OBE, Bernard Labadie, and Jeffrey Skidmore OBE. He has given notable performances of, among others, Handel's *Semele*, in the role of Jupiter, with Harry Christophers and the Handel and Haydn Society, Boston, Bach's St Matthew Passion in collaboration with Streetwise Opera and The Sixteen, and as the Evangelist in the same work with Paul McCreesh and the Gabrieli Consort and Players and with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Operatic

engagements have included appearances in a fully staged St John Passion in Paris and *Orfeo* in Lille, both under Emmanuelle Haïm, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with English Country Garden Opera Company and Chabrier's *L'Étoile* at Théâtre national de l'Opéra-Comique, Paris, both under Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and the role of Pilade (Handel's *Oreste*) at the Linbury Studio Theatre. Jeremy Budd has amassed a discography which includes a decade of recordings with The Sixteen, many of which feature him as a soloist: Monteverdi's *Vespers*, of 1610, *Acis and Galatea*, as *Acis*, and *Saul*, as the Witch of Endor. He may also be heard on the award-winning disc of *King Arthur* with Paul McCreesh and the Gabrieli Consort and Players. Notably, with Christian Curnyn and Early Opera Company, he sings the role of Coridon in their recording of *Acis and Galatea*.

Founded in 1995 by its music director, Christian Curnyn, with the vision to celebrate baroque music in ways that delight and inspire audiences, **Early Opera Company** is now firmly established as one of Britain's leading early music ensembles. The Company collaborates with world-class partners, impresses audiences with outstanding productions, recordings,

and broadcasts of baroque opera and early music, and invests in the professional development of the next generation of musicians specialising in the baroque. It has cemented its reputation in the last few years through its highly successful collaborations with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* at the Roundhouse, Cavalli's *Ormindo* and Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo* at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse – the latter nominated for an Olivier Award – and Handel's *Solomon* at The Royal Opera main stage.

The Company has a strong reputation for its performances of works by Handel, Purcell, and others, having made notable appearances at Wigmore Hall, Smith Square Hall, and Temple Music, London, Buxton International Festival, Koninklijk Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, and Concertgebouw Brugge. Frequently broadcast on BBC, it featured on #OperaPassion Day on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* from the Victoria and Albert Museum, BBC4's TV series *Rule Britannia: Music, Mischief and Morals in the 18th Century*, BBC Radio 3's *Opera on 3* (Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), and at the BBC Proms. The recordings of Early Opera Company on the Chandos Chaconne label have received wide critical

acclaim. Accolades include Classical Album of the Week in *The Sunday Times* and *The Guardian*, Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*, and twice winning the Opera category at the *BBC Music Magazine Awards*. The Company marks its thirtieth anniversary in 2025.

With the Early Opera Company, which he founded in 1995, **Christian Curnyn** has given notable performances throughout the UK and abroad and made multiple award-winning recordings for Chandos Records. He is a regular guest at English National Opera, where he has conducted Handel's *Partenope*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Rodelinda*, Rameau's *Castor and Pollux*, Charpentier's *Médée*, and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. At The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, he has conducted Cavalli's *Ormindo*, Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo*, Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, and Handel's *Alcina* as well as concert or semi-staged performances of *Apollo e Dafne*, *Ariodante*, and *Solomon*, and he will return during the 2024 / 25 season for a new production of *Semele*. Elsewhere in the UK he has conducted productions at Opera North, Scottish Opera, and Garsington Opera. Abroad, he has led acclaimed productions at Komische Oper Berlin, Oper Frankfurt,

Salzburger Landestheater, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, in Lisbon, Händel-Festspiele Halle, Opera Australia, New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, and Chicago Opera Theater.

On the concert platform, Christian Curnyn has performed with the Academy of Ancient Music, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Aalborg Symfoniorkester, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, The English Concert, Essener Philharmoniker, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Hallé, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and Ulster Orchestra, as well as, further afield, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Most recent highlights in Christian Curnyn's conducting schedule have included Handel's *La resurrezione* with the Haymarket Opera Company, in Chicago, a double bill of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Blow's *Venus and Adonis* with members of the Opera Collective Ireland and Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, and, with the Early Opera Company, performances of Maurice Greene's *Jephtha*, and an acclaimed production of Handel's *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* at the Buxton International Festival.



Early Opera Company

JEPHTHA

COMPACT DISC ONE

1. Overture

Part I

Scene before Jephtha's house

Scene I

Elders of Gilead entering

2. Chorus

Ye Sons of Gilead, seek the Lord,
Your saddest, humblest Strain prepare.
Thou God provok'd, O sheath the Sword,
And thy returning People spare.

3. Recitative

First Elder

Jair, great Judge of Israel, is no more.
Offended Heav'n corrects its rebel Sons,
And sells us to our Foes. From Misphe's Plains,
Humbling before the Lord our Heads to Earth,
Hither our wearied March we've led, to seek
Another Leader 'gainst th' invasive Force
Of hostile Arms colleague'd; Jephtha, the fam'd,
The mighty Man of Valour, great in Arms.

Second Elder

O how shall we behold his injur'd Face,
From Gilead's Plains, his native Seats, expell'd,
To seek another Dwelling in another Land!

Scene II

Jephtha, Elders of Gilead

4. Accompanied Recitative

First Elder

O mighty Leader, see, beneath thy Feet,
Thy native Country, prostrate Gilead, sues.
Behold her ravaged Borders, view her Fields
With hostile Arms o'erspread, and Jordan
swell'd
Above his Banks, with passing Hosts surcharg'd.
Jair, our Leader, sleeps; in Camon sleeps;
And Israel now, on Misphe's Plains encamp'd,
Sees all around the Ammonitish Tents
Whiten her Fields; and ev'ry Moment waits
His Ruin imminent; unless his God,
Indulgent some belov'd Deliv'rer raise.

5. Air

Jephtha

Where are your Gods, your Idol-Train,
Where all their boasted Power?
Do they your Cries, your Tears disdain,
In this distressful Hour?

Go, to your chosen Idols bow;
Let them deliver Israel now.

Da Capo

6. Recitative

First Elder

Shameful Remembrance! with repentant Tears,
Ne'er to be wash'd away, yet shall they flow,

In humblest Hope of Pardon. O be thou,
O great in Arms, in peaceful Wisdom fam'd,
Jephtha, be thou the Instrument of Heav'n.
Shew Israel's God again is Israel's Friend,
And owns our Cause by Conquest. Go, chastise
These lawless Sons of Ammon.

7. Duet

Second Elder

O think what Joy to him is giv'n,
Who saves his native Land from Woes!

First Elder

O think thou art the Hand of Heav'n
To thunder Vengeance on its Foes!

8. Recitative

Jephtha

Ill doth my native Land such Grace deserve;
Nor well beseems it you, her Sons, to ask,
Or us to grant. Did ye not cast me out
An Exile, tho' a Brother? Did you not
With hostile Treatment chase me from those
Seats,
Those pleasing, native Seats, to seek new
Brethren,
New Friends, new Lands, new Dwellings to
inherit?
And come you now, cover'd with Guilt and
Shame,
With Fears dispirited, to ask my Aid
'Gainst Ammonitish arms? Necessity,
It seems, hath taught you Justice.

Second Elder

Thou'rt our Hope,
Be thou our Head and Leader.

9. Air

Second Elder

Against these new Alarms,
Rais'd by this hostile Band,
Lead thou our conqu'ring Arms,
And purge thy native Land;

As thou'rt our only Hope, be thou our Guide,
To swell with Ammon's Blood our Jordan's
Tide.

Da Capo

10. Recitative

Jephtha

Hence, shameless Men! Compassion would be
Guilt.

Second Elder

Resent not now, but pity Gilead's Crimes,
That call the vengeful Hand of Heav'n
t'unsheathe
The bloody Sword, and fill her Fields with
Sorrow.
Drive but these Sons of Ammon from our Land,
Be Judge of Israel.

All Elders

Be Judge of Israel.

11. Air
Jephtha
Pity soothing melts the Soul,
And does each angry Thought control:

But Thou bear Witness, Israel's God,
'Tis not Ambition's lofty Charms,
Nor empty Fame my Rage disarms,
But Pity to the Gen'ral Good.

Da Capo

12. Recitative
First Elder
Cherish that Pity, 'tis a Godlike Guest.
Repentance, like a Cherub wing'd, hath reach'd
Th'Almighty Throne; and our Obeisance vow'd
Our God accepts. Resemble Israel's Lord.

13. Chorus
Elders
Our Prayers with God Acceptance find,
Like Him be good, like Him be kind.

14. Recitative
Jephtha
Thought I your vow'd Repentance were sincere,
Not hungry Eagles shou'd with swifter Wing
Dart on their Morning Prey, than on these Sons
Of lawless Rapine Jephtha's deadly Vengeance.

First Elder
Behold, before our God with Shame we bend.
And to His great Commands Obedience swear,
Willing Obedience, Adoration due.

15. Chorus
Thou, universal Lord,
For ever be ador'd!

Our Idol-Shrines in Dust are laid,
Our helpless Gods to Earth cast low;
Part of that Earth of which they're made,
To which they all their Godhead owe:
Henceforth to Thee, and only Thee,
Israel shall bow the Knee.

Da Capo

16. Recitative
Jephtha
No more, with Joy I undertake your Cause,
To Heav'n reconcil'd; and to the Lord,
The Merciful, the Just, be Jephtha's Thanks
For ever paid, who Jephtha's Arm hath rais'd
In Israel's Behalf, to Great Jehovah's Glory.

17. Air
Jephtha
God of Hosts, whom we adore,
For thy People strike once more!
May Jephtha to his Home return,
With joyful Sound
Of Conquest crown'd,
And Ammon's Sons his Fury mourn.

18. **Accompanied Recitative**
Jephtha
There, what first shall meet my Eye,
Of purest Virgin Blood,
A Victim worthy God,
Shall to Him devoted die.
Here with lifted Hands I bow,
To confirm this sacred Vow.

19. **Chorus** (*with warlike instruments*)
God of Hosts, whom we adore,
For thy People strike once more!
May Jephtha to his Home return,
With joyful Sound
Of Conquest crown'd,
And Ammon's Sons his Fury mourn.

COMPACT DISC TWO

Part II
The scene continues.

Scene I
Jephtha returning in Triumph, Soldiers, Elders of Gilead, &c.

1. 20. [Symphony]

2. 21. **Grand Chorus**
The Foes of Gilead are no more,
Ammon our Fury mourns.
Jephtha, with Conquest crown'd, returns,
And Slaughter's Work is o'er.

3. 22. **Air**
Jephtha
O God, we own Thy mighty Hand;
To Thee the Praise be giv'n:
Who call'd Us from a stranger Land,
To act the Will of Heav'n.

4. 23. **Chorus**
Be all the Fame
Of Jephtha's Name,
To act the Will of Heav'n.

*Jephtha's Daughter, and Chorus of Virgins,
within the house*

5. 24. **Air [Jephtha's Daughter], Duet, and Chorus**
Awake, awake each joyful Strain,
And strike the trembling Strings:
Jephtha returns, with Conquest crown'd,
Let ev'ry Voice his Triumph sound;
Sweet Peace he brings
On downy Wings;
And ev'ry Joy in his victorious Train.

Scene II
Jephtha, Soldiers, Elders of Gilead, Jephtha's Daughter, Virgins, &c.

6. 25. **Accompanied Recitative**
Jephtha
What do I see, O Heav'n?

Daughter
O my Father,
With Joy I hail thy wish'd Return.

Jephtha
My Child!
Oh! my ill-fated Vow, curst be the Day
That gave me Life, yet, let me not blaspheme,
But bow submit to Great Jehovah's Pleasure.

Daughter
O whence this dreadful Change!
What means thy Head,
With Horror turn'd away? th' averted Eye,
Fill'd with sad Tears, fix'd motionless on Earth?
Is this my Welcome? this a Daughter's Joy,
That flies with open Arms, and cheerful Smiles,
To meet a dear-belov'd, victorious Father?

7 **26. Air**
Daughter
Ah!
Ah! my foreboding Fears,
What mean those flowing Tears,
Those Sorrows that weigh down thy Head;
Those Sighs suppress,
That tear thy Breast,
And o'er thy Frame such Horror spread!

Why all this Shew
Of silent Woe,
Our promis'd Joy to Sorrow turning,
Our Songs of Triumph into Mourning?

Da Capo

8 **27. Recitative**
Jephtha
O Heav'n! with Pity view a Father's Fondness,
That would expostulate with Justice Infinite,
And tax Eternal Mercy! No, 'tis I,
'Tis I alone have call'd this Ruin down,
And in my own involv'd a Daughter's Fate.

9 **28. Air**
Jephtha
Thou sweetest Joy by Heav'n bestow'd,
The Spring, whence all my Comforts flow'd,
Art now my only Cause of Woe.

My Child; my fond, my only Dear,
Must thou to me this Doom severe,
Ah! must thou to a Father owe!

Da Capo

10 **29. Recitative**
Daughter
O speak, disclose my Doom, I stand prepar'd,
To meet the worst a Father can inflict,
A Father on his duteous Child, belov'd,
And by long Love endear'd. Ah! why that
Groan?

Jephtha
'Tis thou, my Child, 'tis thou alone hast
Power,
To force a Groan from Jephtha.

Daughter
O my Lord,
Am I, am I the Cause? O let me fly
Far from thy Sight, ne'er to behold thee more.

11 30. Air
Daughter
If I thy Grief,
Thy Tears employ,
Once thy Relief,
So late thy Joy;
To silent Floods,
To lonesome Woods,
Far from thine Eye
O let me fly,
Where never human Foot did trace.

In Shades conceal'd I'll lie;
There retiring,
There expiring,
Willing die,
To buy a Father's Peace.

Da Capo

12 31. Recitative
Daughter
O blot me from thy Mind.

Jephtha
O that I could!

Daughter
Now speak thy worst, unfold the fatal Tale;
Tho' instant Death be there, I'll stand the
Stroke,
For Jephtha wou'd forget me.

Jephtha
Heav'n's Will be done!

13 32. Air
Jephtha
O Thou most Dear,
Thy Soul prepare,
To meet the Doom I've sworn.

See, at thy Feet I bow;
Forgive my fatal Vow,
That from my Breast my Child has torn.

Da Capo

14 33. Accompanied Recitative
Jephtha
I vow'd, before I fought the War,
If Heav'n with Conquest paid my Care,
I vow'd (yet oh! how wilt thou bear
Death from a Father's Tongue to hear?)
What Virgin from my House first met my Eye,
(Oh! how can I relate
A Daughter's Fate!)
What Virgin from my House first met my Eye,
Shou'd to Heav'n devoted die.

15 34. Chorus
Elders of Gilead
O God of Might! what Means this Stroke?
The Cup of Joy with Triumph crown'd,
How hast thou dash'd it to the Ground,
And all in Pieces broke!

16 35. Air
First Elder
But oh! behold the princely Pair,
Sunk beneath this Weight of Care!
In Grief too great for Words,
They cast their war'ry Orbs below,
In dumb, unutterable Woe.
Now He expands
His lifted Hands;
She casts on Heav'n a tearful Eye,
As each would challenge Succour from the Sky:
Nor Heav'n, nor Earth a Remedy affords.

17 36. Chorus
Elders of Gilead
But see! the dreadful Conflict's o'er;
Their unexpressive Grief
Finds in their Innocence Relief
And vanquish'd Death hath lost his Pow'r.

18 37. Accompanied recitative
Jephtha
Can Heav'n delight in Guiltless Blood?
Shall Jephtha,
The Judge of Israel, like the Nations round,
Offer his Child, and Israel's God blaspheme
With Moluch's horrid rites? Ah! No.

Daughter
No more,
Hast thou not Sworn? Is not thy Vow receiv'd
By Israel's God, and Thou return'd with
Conquest?

Jephtha
At such a Deed my very Nature starts,
And Reason stands irresolute. Away,
I will defeat my Vow; and rather fall
My Self the Sacrifice.

Daughter
Ah! No,
Never shall Jephtha's Race to Israel's Sons
Be fatal deem'd, nor will I be the Cause
Of that sure Vengeance, that must needs await
Thy broken Vow, sworn in the Face of Heav'n.

Jephtha
O matchless Virtue! Here, ye Sons of Israel,
Behold your Victim.

All
Unexampl'd Maid!

Jephtha
O might I die for Thee! how should I fall,
A willing Sacrifice!

Daughter

That must not be.
Well dost thou teach me, that the Pangs of
Death
Are naught, when Israel and a Father asks 'em.
Yet, e'er I fall, grant this my last Request.

19 38. Air

Daughter

Let me awhile defer my Fate,
And to the Mountains fly:
There to bewail my Virgin State,
And then return, and die.

20 39. Accompanied Recitative

Jephtha

Go, and with humble Tears, and ceaseless
Prayers,
Invoke our God. O may He grant thee
Strength
T' encounter Death as bold, as in the Field
I've sought him in the Front of Israel's Host,
Begirt with all his Terrors! Oh! Farewell.

21 40. Duet and Chorus

Jephtha

Here let me hold Thee to my Heart,
And must we then for ever part!

Daughter

Cease, cease to mourn:
Again I shall return.

Jephtha

Again return, to die!

Chorus

A Victim worthy Israel's Lord!

Jephtha

Once more, my Child; one last Embrace,
E'er thou in Death our Name deface! –

Daughter

It is decreed,
And I must bleed.

Jephtha, Daughter

Obey the Lord on high.

22 41. Grand Chorus

Israel's Daughters, a fair Virgin Train,
Shall each returning Year
In Mourning Weeds appear,
And weep thy Virgin State,
In Honour of thy Fate.
Two rolling Suns twice told,
Shall these their Rites behold,
And Jephtha's Daughter live in their bewailing
Strain.

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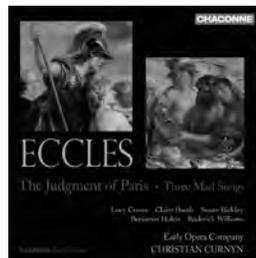
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MAURICE GREENE (1696 – 1755)

première recording

JEPHTHA

(1737)

An Oratorio in Two Parts

Libretto by John Hoadly (1711 – 1776)

Transcribed and edited 1996 by Peter Lynan

Scene before Jephtha's House in the Land of Tob

COMPACT DISC ONE

Part I

TT 40:33

COMPACT DISC TWO

Part II

TT 58:19

Soloists / Early Opera Company / Curnyn

GREENE: JEPHTHA

Jephtha Andrew Staples *tenor*
 Jephtha's Daughter... Mary Bevan *soprano*
 First Elder of Gilead..... Michael Mofidian *bass*
 Second Elder of Gilead..... Jeremy Budd *tenor*
 Soloist in duet 'Awake each joyful Strain' Jessica Cale *soprano*
 Chorus of Elders, Soldiers, Virgins, &c.

Early Opera Company

Catherine Martin leader

Christian Curnyn

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