

2023-2024 Season
Dreams of Peace & Liberty
Concert 3: Judas Maccabaeus
Program Concert Listing



JUDAS MACCABAEUS

1747 Version

Music by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Libretto by Thomas Morell (1703-84)

Saturday, March 2, 7:30 pm
Northern Arizona University Ardrey Auditorium

Dramatis Personae

Israelitish Woman	Christine Graham, soprano
Israelitish Man & Priest	Kimberly Gratland James, mezzo soprano
Judas Maccabaeus	Ricardo Pereira, tenor
Simon, Judas's Brother	Robert Allen Saunders, bass
Chorus of Israelites	Master Chorale of Flagstaff

PROGRAM

PART I

The people mourn the death of their leader Mattathias, but his son Simon tries to restore their faith and calls them to arms. Simon's brother, Judas Maccabaeus, assumes the role of leader and inspires the people with thoughts of liberty and victory.

Intermission

PART II

The people have been victorious, but Judas worries that vanity will cause the people to claim victory for themselves. When news arrives that the Seleucid commander Gorgias is preparing to enact revenge, the people's joyous mood gives way to wailing and dejection. Judas again rallies the people to resist false religions.

PART III

Victory has finally been achieved for the Jewish people. News arrives that Rome is willing to form an alliance with Judas against the Seleucid empire. The people rejoice that peace and liberty has at last come.

Baroque Orchestra

Flute

Jeannette Hirosawa Moore
Rebecca Romo

Oboe

Rebecca Scarnati
Ruth Solin

Bassoon

Bradley Johnson

Trumpet

Kevin Tague
Cindy Gould
Dean Garner

Timpani

Abby Fisher

Harpichord, Organ

Aimee Fincher

Violin I

Steven Moeckel, concertmaster
Dominic Campos
Allison O'Bryant
Loralyn Staples

Violin II

Carla Ecker, principal
Vanessa Miller
Branan Harrison
Loralyn Staples

Viola

X
Cindy Binkley
David Koerner

Cello

Eric Lenz
Karlos Rodriguez

Contrabass

Christopher Finet

Soloists

Israelitish Woman	Christine Graham, soprano
Israelitish Man & Priest	Kimberly Gratland James, mezzo soprano
Judas Maccabaeus	Ricardo Pereira, tenor
Simon, Judas's Brother	Robert Allen Saunders, bass

Incidental solos from Chorus TBD

Program Notes

Excerpted from notes by Bruce Lamott

Political Background

Eight of Handel's previous dramatic oratorios composed in London had been based on the history of the Old Testament Israelites, but the heroic exploits of Judas Maccabaeus were particularly relevant to the contemporary circumstances of his audience. Leader of the eponymous Maccabean Revolt in 160-167 BCE against the Greek Seleucid Empire, Judas recovered the Second Temple of Jerusalem and preserved the Jewish religion against the encroachment of Hellenistic culture. Similarly, the Duke of Cumberland – to whom Handel dedicated *Judas Maccabaeus* – had recently quashed the Jacobite Rising of 1745 at the Battle of Culloden, thereby protecting the monarchy from James Francis Edward Stuart and his French allies. Handel's audience could readily identify with the anxieties and triumphs of a "chosen people" under the threat of rebellion at home and invasion from abroad, as did audiences for the next two centuries who made it—second only to Messiah – Handel's most popular oratorio.

IN BRIEF:

JUDAS MACCABAEUS

G. F. HANDEL (1685-1759)

Composed: July 8 – August 11, 1746

Premiere Performance

April 1, 1747, Royal Opera House, London

Text

1 Maccabees & *Antiquitatum Judaicum* by
1st century Jewish historian Josephus
Libretto by Thomas Morell (1703-84)

Forces

SATB Chorus and Youth Chorus
S, A, T, B soloists
2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 horns, 3 trumpets,
timpani and side drum
Violins I and II, viola
Basso continuo: cello, bass, bassoon,
harpsichord, organ

Duration (1 hour, 48 minutes)

First Part: ca. 42 minutes

Second Part: ca. 38 minutes

Part the Third: ca. 28 minutes

Synopsis

The story is taken from the First Book of Maccabees in the Apocrypha and the *Antiquities* of the Roman-Jewish historian Josephus. In **Part I**, the Israelites lament the death of Mattathias, father of Judas Maccabaeus and previous leader of the Jewish resistance to persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, King of Syria. Accepting the role of leader, Judas incites a rebellion, resolving to face liberty or death.

In **Part II** the Jews celebrate their victory over Apollonius and all of Samaria but are interrupted by the news that the troops of Antiochus are on the march from Egypt to "root out Israel's strength, and to erase /Ev'ry memorial of the sacred place," i.e., the Second Temple in Jerusalem, sacred center of Judaism for centuries. Judas summons the

people to arms while Simon, Judas's younger brother and later high priest of Jerusalem, and the representative Israelitish Woman and Israelitish Man, invoke God to drive out the profane worship.

Part III begins in Jerusalem with the celebration of the Feast of Lights in the reconsecrated sanctuary of the Temple. A messenger arrives "with tidings of impetuous joy" that Judas has vanquished enemies of Israel's peace and liberty. The people greet the conquering hero, and Judas pauses to prepare "obsequies for those who bravely fell in war." The Jewish Ambassador to Rome (Eupolemus) enters with a treaty from the Roman Senate, guaranteeing the freedom and independence of Judaea, and the grateful people welcome the arrival of "lovely peace."

The Libretto

Judas Maccabaeus marks a departure from Handel's previous London oratorios, both in its tone and construction. It is the first libretto written by Rev. Thomas Morell, D.D. (1703-84), who would continue to write the books for four to six more of Handel's final oratorios. Though less sophisticated in his poetry than Handel's previous librettists, Morrell was a good fit with the new and less sophisticated audience. Handel had recently opened ticket sales to the general public, making his performances more accessible to a greater cross-section of Londoners than his previous aristocratic subscribers, and Morrell responded with less subtlety, more pageantry, and closer connection with current events. The dedication to *Judas* makes this clear:

"The plan was designed as a compliment to the Duke of Cumberland upon his returning victorious from Scotland... Had not the Duke carried his point triumphantly, this Oratorio could not have been brought on."

The Music

A singular feature of *Judas* is its generic characterization, and the majority of the work is given to an allegorical duo, Israelitish Woman (soprano), Israelitish Man (mezzo-soprano) who give voice to the personal feelings of their people, and to the Chorus of Israelites, without the multiple roles of friends and foes that they portray in other oratorio. Recitatives introduce the solo airs, but there is no dialogue as is found Handel's more operatic oratorios, further supporting the observation that *Judas* is more pageant than drama.

The Overture (instrumental introduction) begins with solemnity befitting the opening obsequies for Judas's father, a French overture with dotted rhythm in G minor. Its fugal Allegro with its rapidly reiterated sixteenth-notes introduces an element that will be heard throughout the work: a style called *concitato* (agitated). Handel employs it frequently in the orchestral accompaniments to the martial music that lies ahead.

Part One begins with two mournful lamentations by the "afflicted children" of Zion, mourning the death of Mattathias, who had led the resistance against the suppression of Jewish religion and the imposition of pagan rites in the Temple. The choruses vacillate between expressions of misery, oppression, piety, and triumph. Following a hymn-like invocation ("Hear us, oh Lord") the chorus rallies around Judas "resolv'd on conquest or a glorious fall" with optimistically rising scales of hope. The churning arpeggios suggesting a "battle symphony" that opens Part Two abruptly halt when the singers, in a downward arpeggio, proclaim in unison, "Fall'n is the foe." Twice Handel interrupts their mounting jubilation with a startlingly sympathetic reflection the defeated: "fall'n" sung *sotto voce* over string pulsations. The most famous tune in *Judas Maccabaeus* is actually a chorus in Part Three he wrote for his oratorio, *Joshua*. It proved so popular that he added it to *Judas* in 1751, but Beethoven's title for twelve variations for cello and piano on "'See the Conqu'ring Hero Comes' from *Judas Maccabaeus* permanently fixed its identification with the later work. (Although Master Chorale's performance is primarily the earlier 1747 version, we've including this spectacular chorus of jubilation as well.)

Afterword

Judas Maccabaeus was performed at least 54 times in Handel's lifetime, undergoing a variety of modifications, transpositions, and adjustments in roles. It earned the composer net profits of nearly £3,000, and, according to Dean, "For once the whole royal family and all classes of opinion except the Jacobites were found in the same camp." Long after the Duke of Cumberland was buried, Handel's oratorio not only transcended current events but

even its central topic. Its themes of liberty, courage, triumph over oppression, and peace found resonance with revolutionaries well into the twentieth century. Even Nazi Germany could not resist Handel's musical appeal, but had to disguise one of the greatest Jewish heroes as *Wilhelm von Nassau*. Master Chorale of Flagstaff offers this performance of *Judas Maccabaeus* in solidarity with all those across history who have striven for liberty and freedom, resonating with the common desire for peace.

Libretto

FIRST PART

1. Overture

Chorus of Israelites, lamenting the death of Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabaeus.

2. Chorus of Israelites

Mourn, ye afflicted children, the remains
of captive Judah, mourn in solemn strains;
Your sanguine hopes of liberty give o'er,
Your hero, friend and father is no more.

3. Recitative

Israelitish Man

Well may your sorrows, brethren, flow
In all th'expressive signs of woe:
your softer garments tear,
and squalid sackcloth wear;
your drooping heads with ashes strew,
and with the flowing tear your cheeks bedew.

Israelitish Woman

Daughters, let your distressful cries
and loud lament ascend the skies;
your tender bosoms beat, and tear,
with hands remorseless, your dishevell'd hair.
For pale and breathless Mattathias lies,
sad emblem of his country's miseries!

4. Duet (*Israelitish Woman and Man*)

From this dread scene, these adverse pow'rs,
ah, whither shall we fly?
O Solyma! thy boasted tow'rs
in smoky ruins lie.

5. Chorus of Israelites

For Sion lamentation make,
with words that weep, and tears that speak.

6. Recitative (*Simon*)

Not vain is all this storm of grief,
to vent our sorrows, gives relief.
Wretched indeed! But let not Judah's race
their ruin with desponding arms embrace.
Distractful doubt and desperation
ill become the chosen nation,
chosen by the great I AM,
the Lord of hosts, who, still the same,

we trust, will give attentive ear
to the sincerity of pray'r.

7. Air (*Israelitish Woman*)

Pious orgies, pious airs,
decent sorrow, decent pray'rs,
will to the Lord ascend, and move
his pity, and regain his love.

8. Chorus of Israelites

O Father, whose almighty pow'r
the Heav'ns, and earth, and seas adore!
The hearts of Judah, thy delight,
in one defensive band unite.
And grant a leader bold, and brave,
if not to conquer, born to save.

9. Accompagnato (*Simon*)

I feel, I feel the Deity within,
who (the bright cherubim between)
his radiant glory erst display'd;
to Israel's distressful pray'r
he hath vouchsafe'd a gracious ear,
and points out Maccabaeus to their aid:
Judas shall set the captive free,
and lead us all to victory.

10. Air (*Simon*)

Arm, arm, ye brave! A noble cause,
the cause of heav'n your zeal demands.
In defence of your nation, religion, and laws,
the almighty Jehovah will strengthen your hands.

Chorus of Israelites

We come, we come, in bright array,
Judah, thy sceptre to obey.

11. Recitative (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

'Tis well, my friends; with transport I behold
the spirit of our fathers, fam'd of old
for their exploits in war. Oh, may they fire
with active courage you, their sons, inspire:
as when the mighty Joshua fought,
and those amazing wonders wrought,
stood still, obedient to his voice, the sun,
till kings he had destroy'd, and kingdoms won.

12. Air (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

Call forth thy pow'rs, my soul, and dare
the conflict of unequal war.

Great is the glory of the conqu'ring sword,
that triumphs in sweet liberty restor'd.

13. Recitative (*Israelitish Woman*)

To heav'n's immortal King we kneel,
for blessings on this exemplary zeal.
Bless him, Jehovah, bless him, and once more
To thy own Israel liberty restore.

14. Air (*Israelitish Woman*)

O liberty, thou choicest treasure,
seat of virtue, source of pleasure;
life, without thee, knows no blessing,
no endearment worth caressing.

17. Duet (*Israelitish Woman and Man*)

Come, ever-smiling liberty,
and with thee bring thy jocund train.
For thee we pant, and sigh for thee,
with whom eternal pleasures reign.

18. Chorus of Israelites

Lead on, lead on! Judah disdains
the galling load of hostile chains.

19. Recitative (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

So will'd my father, now at rest
in the eternal mansions of the blest:
"Can ye behold," said he, "the miseries,
in which the long-insulted Judah lies?
Can ye behold their sore distress,
and not, at least, attempt redress?"
Then, faintly, with expiring breath,
"Resolve, my sons, on liberty, or death."
We come! O see, thy sons prepare
the rough habiliments of war;
with hearts intrepid, and revengeful hands,
to execute, O sire, thy dread commands.

20. Semi-chorus of Israelitish Men

Disdainful of danger, we'll rush on the foe,
that thy pow'r, O Jehovah, all nations may know.

21. Recitative (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

Ambition! If e'er honor was thine aim,
challenge it here:
the glorious cause gives sanction to thy claim.

22. Air (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

No unhallow'd desire
our breasts shall inspire,

Nor lust of unbounded pow'r.
But peace to obtain:
free peace let us gain,
and conquest shall ask no more.

26. Chorus of Israelites

Hear us, O Lord, on thee we call,
resolv'd on conquest, or a glorious fall.

SECOND PART

27. Chorus of Israelites

Fall'n is the foe. So fall thy foes, O Lord,
where warlike Judas wields his righteous sword.

28. Recitative (*Israelitish Man*)

Victorious hero! Fame shall tell,
with her last breath, how Apollonius fell,
and all Samaria fled, by thee pursued
through hills of carnage and a sea of blood.
While thy resistless prowess dealt around,
With their own leader's sword, the deathful wound.
Thus, too, the haughty Seron, Syria's boast,
before thee fell with his unnumber'd host.

29. Air (*Israelitish Man*)

So rapid thy course is,
not numberless forces
withstand thy all-conquering sword.
Though nations surround thee,
no pow'r shall confound thee,
'till freedom again be restor'd.

33. Recitative (*Israelitish Woman*)

Oh, let eternal honors crown his name:
Judas! first worthy in the rolls of fame.
Say, "He put on the breast-plate as a giant,
and girt his warlike harness about him;
In his acts he was like a lion,
and like a lion's whelp roaring for his prey."

34. Air (*Israelitish Woman*)

From mighty kings he took the spoil,
and with his acts made Judah smile.
Judah rejoiceth in his name,
and triumphs in her hero's fame.

35. Duet & Chorus of Israelites

Hail, hail, Judea, happy land!
Salvation prospers in his hand.

36. Recitative (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

Thanks to my brethren; but look up to heav'n;
to heav'n let glory and all praise be giv'n;
to heav'n give your applause,
nor add the second cause,
as once your fathers did in Midian,
saying, "the sword of God and Gideon."
It was the Lord that for his Israel fought,
and this our wonderful salvation wrought.

37. Air (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

How vain is man, who boasts in fight
the valor of gigantic might!
And dreams not that a hand unseen
directs and guides this weak machine.

40. Recitative (*Israelitish Messenger*)

O Judas, O my brethren!
New scenes of bloody war
In all their horrors rise.
Prepare, prepare,
Or soon we fall a sacrifice
To great Antiochus; from th'Egyptian coast,
(where Ptolemy hath Memphis and Pelusium lost)
he sends the valiant Gorgias, and commands
his proud, victorious bands
to root out Israel's strength, and to erase
ev'ry memorial of the sacred place.

41. Air (*Israelitish Woman*) **& Chorus**

Ah! wretched, wretched Israel! fall'n, how low,
from joyous transport to desponding woe.

42. Recitative (*Simon*)

Be comforted, nor think these plagues are sent
for your destruction, but for chastisement.
Heav'n oft in mercy punisheth, that sin
May feel its own demerits from within,
and urge not utter ruin. Turn to God,
and draw a blessing from his iron rod.

43. Air (*Simon*)

The Lord worketh wonders
his glory to raise;
and still, as he thunders,
is fearful in praise.

44. Recitative (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

My arms! Against this Gorgias will I go.
The Idumean governor shall know
how vain, how ineffective his design,
while rage his leader, and Jehovah mine.

45. Air (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

Sound an alarm! Your silver trumpets sound,
and call the brave, and only brave, around.
Who listeth, follow: to the field again.
Justice with courage is a thousand men.

Chorus

We hear, we hear the pleasing dreadful call:
and follow thee to conquest; if to fall,
for laws, religion, liberty, we fall.

46. Recitative (*Simon*)

Enough! To heav'n we leave the rest.
Such gen'rous ardor firing ev'ry breast,
we may divide our cares. The field be thine,
O Judas, and the sanctuary mine;
For Sion, holy Sion, seat of God,
in ruinous heaps, is by the heathen trod;
such profanation calls for swift redress,
if e'er in battle Israel hopes success.

47. Air (*Simon*)

With pious hearts, and brave as pious,
O Sion, we thy call attend.
Nor dread the nations that defy us,
God our defender, God our friend.

48. Recitative

Israelitish Man

Ye worshippers of God,
Down, down with the polluted altars, down.
Hurl Jupiter Olympius from his throne,
Nor reverence Bacchus with his ivy crown
and ivy-wreathed rod.
Our fathers never knew
him, or his beastly crew,
or, knowing, scorn'd such idol vanities.

Israelitish Woman

No more in Sion let the virgin throng,
wild with delusion, pay their nightly song
to Ashtoreth, yclep't the Queen of Heav'n.
Hence to Phoenicia be the goddess driv'n,

or be she, with her priests and pageants, hurl'd
to the remotest corner of the world,
ne'er to delude us more with pious lies.

50. Duet

Israelitish Woman and Man

O! never, never bow we down
to the rude stock or sculptur'd stone.
But ever worship Israel's God,
ever obedient to his awful nod.

Chorus of Israelites

We never, never will bow down
To the rude stock or sculptur'd stone.
We worship God, and God alone.

THIRD PART

51. Air (*Israelitish Priest*)

Father of Heav'n! from thy eternal throne,
look with an eye of blessing down;
while we prepare with holy rites,
to solemnize the feasts of lights.
And thus our grateful hearts employ;
and in Thy praise
this altar raise,
with carols of triumphant joy.

52. Accompagnato (*Simon*)

See, see yon flames, that from the altar broke,
in spiry streams pursue the trailing smoke.
The fragrant incense mounts the yielding air;
sure presage that the Lord hath heard our pray'r.

53. Recitative (*Israelitish Woman*)

Oh, grant it, Heav'n, that our long woes may cease,
and Judah's daughters taste the calm of peace;
sons, brothers, husbands to bewail no more,
tortur'd at home, or havock'd in the war.

54. Air (*Israelitish Woman*)

So shall the lute and harp awake,
and sprightly voice sweet descant run,
seraphic melody to make,
in the pure strains of Jesse's son.

55. Recitative (*Israelitish Messenger*)

From Capharsalama, on eagle wings I fly,
With tidings of impetuous joy.

Came Lysias, with his host, array'd
in coat of mail; their massy shields
of gold and brass, flash'd lightning o'er the fields,
while the huge tow'r-back'd elephants display'd
a horrid front; but Judas, undismay'd,
met, fought, and vanquish'd all the rageful train.
Yet more, Nicanor lies with thousands slain;
the blasphemous Nicanor, who defied
the living God, and, in his wanton pride,
a public monument ordain'd
of victories yet ungain'd.
But lo! the conqueror comes; and on his spear,
to dissipate all fear,
he bears the vaunter's head and hand,
that threaten'd desolation to the land.

56. Chorus of Youths

See, the conqu'ring hero comes,
sound the trumpet, beat the drums.
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
songs of triumph to him sing.

Maidens

See the godlike youth advance,
breathe the flutes, and lead the dance.
Myrtle wreaths, and roses twine,
to deck the hero's brow divine.

Israelites

See, the conqu'ring hero comes,
sound the trumpets, beat the drums.
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
songs of triumph to him sing.

57. March

58. Soli (*alto, tenor*) & Chorus of Israelites

Sing unto God, and high affections raise,
to crown this conquest with unmeasur'd praise.

59. Recitative (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

Sweet flow the strains, that strike my feasted ear.
Angels might stoop from heav'n to hear
the comely song we sing,
to Judah's Lord and King.
But pause awhile: due obsequies prepare
to those who bravely fell in war.
to Eleazar special tribute pay.
Through slaughter'd troops he cut his way

to the distinguish'd elephant, and, whelm'd beneath
the stabbed monster, triumph'd in a glorious death.

62. Air (*Judas Maccabaeus*)

With honor let desert be crown'd,
the trumpet ne'er in vain shall sound;
but, all attentive to alarms,
the willing nations fly to arms,
and, conquering or conquer'd, claim the prize
of happy earth, or far more happy skies.

61. Recitative (*Eupolemus, Jewish Ambassador to Rome*)

Peace to my countrymen; peace and liberty.
From the great senate of imperial Rome,
with a firm league of amity, I come.
Rome, whate'er nation dare insult us more,
will rouse, in our defence, her vet'ran pow'r,
and stretch her vengeful arm, by land or sea,
"to curb the proud, and set the injur'd free."

62. Chorus of Israelites

To our great God be all the honor giv'n,
that grateful hearts can send from earth to heav'n.

63. Recitative (*Israelitish Woman*)

Again to earth let gratitude descend.
Praiseworthy is our hero and our friend.
Come then, my daughters, choicest art bestow,
to weave a chaplet for the victor's brow;
and in your songs for ever be confess'd
the valor that preserv'd, the pow'r that bless'd,
bless'd you with hours, that scatter, as they fly,
soft quiet, gentle love, and boundless joy.

64. Duet (*Israelitish Woman and Man*)

O lovely peace, with plenty crown'd,
come, spread thy blessings all around.
Let fleecy flocks the hills adorn,
and valleys smile with wavy corn.
Let the shrill trumpet cease, nor other sound
but nature's songsters wake the cheerful morn.

65. Air (*Simon*)

Rejoice, O Judah, and, in songs divine,
with cherubim and seraphim harmonious join!

Chorus of Israelites

Hallelujah! Amen.