



A Italia

HWV 52

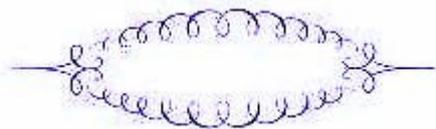
Oratorio in tre atti

Musica di

George F riederic H andel

Libretto di Samuel Humphreys, da Athalie di J. Racine

Prima esecuzione: 10 Luglio 1733, Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford



Personaggi

Athalia, Baalite Queen of Judah and Daughter of Jezebel (soprano)

Josabeth, Wife of Joad (soprano)

Joas, King of Judah (boy soprano)

Joad, High Priest (contralto)

Mathan, Priest of Baal, formerly a Jewish Priest (tenore)

Abner, Captain of the Jewish Forces (basso)

Chorus of Young Virgins

Chorus of Israelites

Chorus of Priests and Levites

Chorus of Attendants

Chorus of Sidonian Priests

Atto primo

1. Sinfonia (Allegro – Grave – Allegro)

Scene the First

Josabeth, Priests and Chorus of Young Virgins and Israelites

2. Aria

Josabeth

Blooming virgins, spotless train,
tune to transport all your lays!
Hail Jehovah's wond'rous reign,
wake the dayspring with his praise!

3. Chorus

Young Virgins

The rising world Jehovah crown'd
with bright magnificence around!
He hung the radiant orbs on high,
and pour'd the sunbeams through the sky;
he lent the flow'rs their lovely glow,
and breath'd the fragrance they bestow;
the plains with verdant charms array'd,
and beautify'd with green the glade.

Israelites

O mortals, if around us here
so wond'rous all his works appear,
ah think with awe, ye sons of men,

how wond'rous is their author then!

4. Aria and Chorus

Josabeth

Tyrants would in impious throngs
silence His adorers' songs;
but shall Salem's lyre and lute
at their proud command be mute?

Israelites

Tyrants! Tyrants! Ye in vain conspire!
Wake the lute and strike the lyre!

5. Recitativo

Abner

When He is in his wrath reveal'd,
where will the haughty lie conceal'd?

6. Aria and Chorus

Abner

When storms the proud to terrors doom,
He forms the dark majestic scene,
He rolls the thunder through the gloom,
and on the whirlwind rides serene.

Israelites

Oh Judah, boast his matchless law,
pronounc'd with such tremendous awe!
When tempests his approach proclaim'd,
and Sinah's trembling mountain flam'd,
all Judah then his terrors saw.

Scene the Second

Enter Joad

7. Recitativo

Joad

Your sacred songs awhile forbear,
our festival demands your care;
and now no longer let your stay
the due solemnities delay.

8. Accompagnato

Joad

O Judah, Judah, chosen seed!

To what distress art thou decreed!
How are thy sacred feasts profan'd,
thy rites with vile pollution strain'd!

Proud Athalia's impious hand
sheds desolation through the land,
bids strange, unhallow'd altars flame,
and proudly braves Jehovah's name.

9. Aria and Chorus

Joad

O Lord, whom we adore,
shall Judah rise no more?
Can this be thy decree.
O Lord, can this be thy decree.
Hear from thy mercy seat
the groans thy tribes repeat,
the sighs they breathe to thee,
the groans, the sighs!

Israelites

Hear from thy mercy seat,
the groans thy tribes repeat,
the sighs they breathe to thee,
the groans, the sighs!

Scene the Third

Athalia, Chorus of Attendants and Sidonian Priests

10. Arioso

Athalia

What scenes of horror round me rise!
I shake, I faint, with dire surprise!
Is sleep, that frees the wretch from woe,
to majesty alone a foe?

Enter Abner and Mathan

11. Recitativo

Athalia

O Mathan, aid me to control
the wild confusion of my soul!

Mathan

Why shrinks that mighty soul with fear?
What cares, what danger can be near?

Athalia

Ev'n now, as I was sunk in deep repose,
my mother's awful form before me rose;
but ah! She chill'd my soul with fear,
for thus she thunder'd in my ear:

12. Arioso

Athalia

"O Athalia, tremble at thy fate!
For Judah's God pursues thee with his hate,
and will with unrelenting wrath this day
set all his terrors round thee in array."

13. Chorus of Attendants and Sidonian Priests

The gods, who chosen blessings shed
on majesty's anointed head,
for thee their care will still employ,
and brighten all thy fears to joy.

14. Recitativo

Athalia

Her form at this began to fade,
and seem'd dissolving into shade.
In waking starts I vainly press'd
to clasp her to my panting breast:
She, pale, from my embrace withdrew,
and bleeding limbs lay mangled in my view;
the horrid carnage dogs contending tore,
and drank with dreadful thirst the floating gore.

15. Chorus of Attendants and Sidonian Priests

Cheer her, O Baal, with a soft serene,
and in thy votary protect the queen!

16. Recitativo

Athalia

Amidst these horrors that my soul dismay'd,
a youth I saw in shining robes array'd,
such as the priests of Judah wear,
when they for solemn pomp prepare.
His lovely form and winning smile
suspended all my fears awhile.

But as the young barbarian I caress'd,
he plung'd a dagger deep within my breast.
No efforts could the blow repel,

I shriek'd, I fainted, and I fell.

Mathan

Great queen, be calm!
These fears I deem
the birth of a delusive dream.
Let harmony breathe soft around,
for sadness ceases at the sound.

17. Aria

Mathan

Gentle airs, melodious strains!
Call for raptures out of woe,
lull the regal mourners' pains,
sweetly soothe her as you flow.

18. Aria

Athalia

Softest sounds no more can ease me,
heav'n a weight of woe decrees me,
horrors all my hopes destroy.
Whilst such rising torments grieve me,
tuneful strains can ne'er relieve me,
vain is the voice of joy.

19. Recitativo

Mathan

Swift to the temple let us fly, to know
what mansion hides this youthful foe.

Abner

I'll haste the pontiff to prepare
for this black storm of wild despair.

20. Chorus of Attendants

The traitor, if you there descry,
oh, let him by the altar die.

Scene the Fourth

Joad, Josabeth, Chorus, and to them Abner

21. Recitativo

Joad

My Josabeth, the grateful time appears
to bid dejected Judah end her fears.

Josabeth

Oh tell the people, as I oft have craved,
how I from death the royal infant sav'd.

Enter Abner

Abner

Priest of the living God!
With anxious heart
proud Athalia's purpose I impart.
With vengeful haste she marches here,
to brave the God whom we revere.
She says this pile conceals a youthful foe,
whose fall, she means, shall end her jealous woe.

Josabeth

Oh, killing shock of unexpected pain!
Oh, innocence, my tender care in vain!
Must I at last my cherish'd joys forgo,
and drink, alas, this bitter cup of woe!

22. Aria

Josabeth

Faithful cares in vain extended,
lovely hopes for ever ended,
beamy dawn of joy, farewell!
Gentle death, at last reveal me,
for the cruel woes that grieve me,
thou alone canst now repel!

23. Recitativo

Abner

O cease, fair princess, to indulge your woe;
no mortal to your son can prove a foe.

Joad

This grief, oh Josabeth, degrades your soul;
can God no longer Judah's foe control?
I trust he will his gracious care employ,
to make us close this festival with joy.

24. Aria and Chorus

Joad

Gloomy tyrants, we disdain
all the terrors you intend,
all your fury will be vain,
and in low confusion end!

Israelites
Allelujah!

Atto secondo

Scene the First

The Temple: Joas, Joad, Josabeth, Abner, Priests, Levites and Israelites and Chorus

25. Aria and Chorus

Priests, Levites and Israelites

The mighty pow'r in whom we trust,
is ever to his promise just.
He makes this sacred day appear
the pledge of a propitious year.

Joad

He bids the circling season shine,
recalls the olive and the wine,
with blooming plenty loads the plain,
and crowns the fields with golden grain.

Priests, Levites and Israelites

Give glory to His awful name,
let ev'ry voice His praise proclaim!

26. Aria

Josabeth

Through the land so lovely blooming,
nature all her charms assuming,
wakes the soul to cheerful praise.
Verdant scenes around us rising,
each delighted sense surprising,
softly crown the circling days.

27. Recitativo

Abner

Ah, were this land from proud oppression freed,
Judea would be bless'd indeed!

Joad

Oh Abner, wert thou certain that the sword

had not destroy'd the race by thee deplor'd,
did one dear branch of that great stem remain:
Wouldst thou, oh Abner, then his cause maintain?

28. Aria

Abner

Ah, canst thou but prove me!
To vengeance I spring,
no terrors shall move me,
I'll fall for my king.
But whilst you relieve me
awhile from my pain,
I fear you deceive me
with joys that are vain.

29. Recitativo

Joad

Thou dost the ardour that I wish display;
revisit me before the close of day.
See, see, the proud imperious queen
approaches with a glaring mien!

Scene the Second

Enter Athalia

Athalia

Confusion to my thoughts!
My eyes have view'd
my dreadful vision in this place renew'd!
Through all my veins the chilling horrors run.
(*to Josabeth*)
Say, Josabeth, is this fair youth thy son?

Josabeth

Though much he merits my fond love,
yet he is not indebted for his birth to me.

Athalia

Who is thy father? Let his name be known!

Josabeth

He has no father but kind heav'n alone.

Athalia (to Josabeth)

Why so officious does thy zeal appear?
I mean the answer from his lips to hear.
How art thou call'd?

Joas

Eliakim.

Athalia

Unfold thy father's name!

Joas

In me, alas, behold an orphan,
cast by providence, and ne'er
as yet acquainted who his parents were.

Athalia

Give me to understand whose tender cares
sustain'd and rear'd thee in thy infant years?

30. Aria

Joas

Will God, whose mercies ever flow,
expose his children's youth to woe?
The little birds his bounty taste,
all nature with his gifts are grac'd.
Each day his care I implore,
He feeds me from his altar's store.

31. Recitativo

Athalia

'Tis my intention, lovely youth, that you
a scene more suited to your worth shall view;
you to the palace shall this day repair,
and live consigned to Athalia's care.

Joas

Shall I behold the God by whom I'm bless'd
profan'd by you with rites that I detest?

Athalia (to Josabeth)

Princess, in discipline you much excel;
whate'er you dictate he remembers well.
But be assured that one revolving hour
shall snatch your learned pupil from your pow'r.

32. Aria

Athalia

My vengeance awakes me,
compassion forsakes me,
all softness and mercy away!
My foes with confusion

shall find their illusion
and tremble before me today.

Exit Athalia

33. Duet

Josabeth

My spirits fail, I faint, I die!

Joas

Ah, why?

Josabeth

The grave shall hide my head!

Joas

Is hope for ever fled?

Josabeth

My grief's too great to bear,
for thee sorrows rend me.

Joas

Kind Heav'n will defend me.

Josabeth

Thy ardours affect me.

Joas

He sure will protect me.

(Andante)

Josabeth

Whate'er this tyrant may decree,
oh God, I place my trust in thee!

34. Aria

Joas

In Jehovah's awful sight,
haughty tyrants are but dust.
Those, who glory in their might,
place in vanity their trust.

Scene the Third

*Re-enter to them Joas, Chorus of Young Virgins,
and Chorus of Priests and Levites.*

35. Recitativo

Joad

Dear Josabeth, I trembled whilst my woe
did in its first emotions wildly flow;
but when at last thou didst the pang control,
my fading joy re-kindled in my soul.

36. Duet

Joad

Cease thy anguish, smile once more,
let thy tears no longer flow!
Judah's God, whom we adore,
soon to joy will change thy woe.

Josabeth

All his mercies I review,
gladly with a grateful heart,
and I trust he will renew
blessings he did once impart.

Both

Whate'er this tyrant may decree,
returning joys we soon shall see.

37. Recitativo

Abner

Joad, ere day has ended half his race,
again expect me in this sacred place.

38. Chorus

Young Virgins

The clouded scene begins to clear,
and joys in single trains appear.

Priests and Levites

When crimes aloud for vengeance call,
the guilty will be doomed to fall.

Israelites

Rejoice, oh Judah, in thy God,
The proud alone shall feel his rod!
whilst blessings, with a mild decree,
His mercy now prepares for thee.

Atto terzo

Scene the First

Joad, Joas, Josabeth, Chorus of Young Virgins, Chorus of Priests and Levites

39. Arioso

Joad

What sacred horrors shake my breast!
Ah, 'tis the pow'r divine confess'd!
Who can his energy control?
He comes, he comes, and fires my soul!

40. Chorus of Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

Unfold, great seer, what Heav'n imparts,
and speak glad tidings to our hearts!

41. Accompagnato

Joad

Let harmony breathe soft around,
and aid my raptures with the sound!

42. Aria and Chorus

Joad

Jerusalem, thou shalt no more a
tyrant's guilty reign deplore;
no longer with dejected brow
shall solitary sit as now.
Her fury soon shall cease to grieve thee,
destin'd vengeance swiftly flies!

Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

O shining mercy!

Joad

Heav'n itself will now relieve me!

Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

Oh shining mercy!

Joad

See, she falls...

Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

Gracious pow'r...

Joad

... she bleeds...

Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

... gracious pow'r...

Joad, Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

... oh shining mercy, gracious pow'r,
that aids us in the needful hour!

43. Recitativo

Joad

Eliakim!

Joas

My father!

Joad

Let me know:

Should heav'n on thee a diadem bestow,
what reign of Judah's kings wouldst thou that day
choose for the model of thy future sway?

Joas

Should God such glory for my lot ordain,
like righteous David I would wish to reign.

Joad

Oh, Joas, Oh, my king! Thus low to thee
I pay the homage of my bended knee!

Joas

Is this reality, or kind deceit?

Ah, can I see my father at my feet?

Josabeth

Ye sacred bands, who serve the God of truth,
revere your sov'reign in that royal youth!

44. Chorus of Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

With firm united hearts, we all
will conquer in his cause, or fall!

Scene the Second

Enter Mathan

45. Recitativo

Mathan

Oh princess, I approach thee to declare
how much thy welfare is my care.

Josabeth

What means, proud Mathan, thy intrusion here?
Has Heav'n no vengeance for thy crimes to fear?

Mathan

Fair Josabeth, though you insult me so,
trust me, in Mathan you behold no foe!

46. Aria

Josabeth

Soothing tyrant, falsely smiling,
Virtue's foes I ne'er shall fear;
flatt'ring sounds and looks beguiling
lose their artful meaning here!
Go, thou vain deceiver, go!
Alike to me a friend or foe!

Scene the Third

Re-enter Joad

47. Recitativo

Joad

Apostate priest! How canst thou dare
to violate this house of pray'r?

Mathan

Joad, I scorn thy proud insulting mien;
prepare to answer thy offended queen!

Scene the Fourth

Enter Athalia, Abner and Chorus of Sidonian Priests

Athalia

Oh bold seducer, art thou there?
Where is the youth, inform me, where?

Joad

Ye priests, the youth before her bring!
Proud woman, there, behold our king!

48. Aria and Chorus

Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

Around let acclamations ring:

Hail, royal youth! Long live the king!

Joad

Reviving Judah shall no more

detested images adore;

we'll purge with a reforming hand

idolatry from out the land.

May God, from whom all mercies spring,

bless the true church, and save the king!

Young Virgins, Priests and Levites

Bless the true church, and save the king!

49. Recitativo

Athalia

Oh, treason, treason, impious scene!

Abner, avenge thy injur'd queen!

Joad

Great chief, behold thy royal Joas there,

preserv'd by Josabeth's successful care!

Thy dauntless loyalty of soul I know,

thou canst not be to David's race a foe.

Abner

Does Heav'n this blessing then at last accord?

Oh royal Joas, Oh my honour'd Lord!

50. Aria

Abner

Oppression, no longer I dread thee,

thy terrors, proud queen, I despise!

Thy crimes to confusion have led thee,

and Judah triumphant shall rise!

51. Recitativo

Athalia

Where I am? Furies, wild desp Aria!

Where are my guards, my vassals, where?

Mathan, invoke thy God to shed

his vengeance on each rebel's head!

Mathan

He hears no more, our hopes are past,

the Hebrews' God prevails at last!

Alas, alas, my broken vow!
His dreadful hand is on me now!

52. Aria

Mathan

Hark! Hark! Hark! His thunders round me roll,
His angry, awful frowns I see,
His arrows wound my trembling soul:
Is no more mercy left for me?
Ah no! He now denies to save.
Open, oh earth, and be my grave!

53. Recitativo

Joad

Yes, proud apostate, thou shalt fall,
thy crimes aloud for vengeance call!

Athalia

I see all hopes, all succours fail,
and Judah's God will now prevail;
I see my death this day decreed,
but, traitors, I can dare to bleed.
Let Jezebel's great soul my bosom fill,
and ev'n in death, proud priest, I'll triumph still.

54. Aria

Athalia

To darkness eternal
and horrors infernal
undaunted I'll hasten away.
Oh tyrants, your treason
shall in the due season
weep blood for this barbarous day.

Scene the Last

Joas, Joad, Josabeth, Abner and Chorus

55. Recitativo

Joad

Now, Josabeth, thy fears are o'er.

Josabeth

Bless'd be his name, whom we adore.

56. Duet

Joad

Joys, in gentle trains appearing,
Heav'n does to my fair impart;
and, to make them more endearing,
I shall share them with my heart!

Josabeth

Softest joys would but deceive me,
hadst thou not thy happy part;
oh my dearest lord, believe me,
thou shalt share them with my heart.

Both

I / You shall / shalt share them with my / thy heart.

57. Recitativo

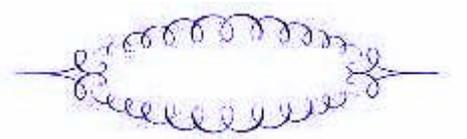
Abner

Rejoice, oh Judah, this triumphant day!
Let all the goodness of our God display,
whose mercies to the wond'ring world declare
His chosen people are his chosen care.

58. Chorus of Young Virgins, Priests, Levites, Israelites

Give the glory to His awful name,
Let ev'ry voice His praise proclaim!

Fine dell'oratorio



A cura di

<http://www.haendel.it>

http://it.groups.yahoo.com/group/Handel_forever

Giugno 2004