

8.557574-75 HANDEL: SOLOMON, HWV 67

George Frideric Handel
SOLOMON
(1749)

Words attributed to Newburgh Hamilton

CD 1

PART ONE

1. Overture

2. Allegro

Scene 1

3. Chorus of Priests

Your harps and cymbals sound
To great Jehovah's praise;
Unto the Lord of hosts
Your willing voices raise.

4. Air

LEVITE

Praise ye the Lord for all his mercies past,
Whose truth, whose justice will for ever last.

5. Chorus of Priests

With pious heart, and holy tongue,
Resound your Maker's name,
Till distant nations catch the song,
And glow with holy flame.

6. **Accompagnato**

SOLOMON

Almighty pow'r, who rul'st the earth and skies,
And bade gay order from confusion rise;
Whose gracious hand reliev'd Thy slave distress'd,
With splendour cloath'd me, and with knowledge bless'd;
Thy finish'd temple with Thy presence grace,
And shed Thy heav'nly glories o'er the place.

7. **Recitative**

ZADOK

Imperial SOLOMON, thy pray'rs are heard.
See, from the op'ning skies
Descending flames involve the sacrifice;
And lo! within the sacred dome
That gleamy light,
Profusely bright,
Declares the Lord of hosts is come.

8. **Air**

ZADOK

Sacred raptures cheer my breast,
Rushing tides of hallow'd zeal,
Joys too fierce to be express'd,
In this swelling heart I feel.
Warm enthusiastic fires
In my panting bosom roll,
Hope of bliss, that ne'er expires,
Dawns upon my ravish'd soul.
Sacred raptures. . . *da capo*

9. **Chorus of Israelites**

Throughout the land Jehovah's praise record,
For full of pow'r and mercy is the Lord.

10. **Recitative**

SOLOMON

Bless'd be the Lord, who look'd with gracious eyes
Upon His vassals' humble sacrifice,
And has with an approving smile
My work o'erpaid, and grac'd the pile.

11. **Air**

SOLOMON

What though I trace each herb and flow'r,
That drink the morning dew,
Did I not own Jehovah's pow'r,
How vain were all I knew.
Say what's the rest but empty boast,
The pedant's idle claim,
Who having all the substance lost
Attempts to grasp a name.
What though. . . *da capo*

Scene 2

12. **Recitative**

SOLOMON

And see my queen, my wedded love,
You soon my tenderness shall prove;
A palace shall erect its head,
Of cedar built, with gold bespread;
Methinks the work is now begun,
The axe resounds on Lebanon,
And see, bedeck'd with canvas wings,
The dancing vessel lightly springs,
While Ophir's mines, well pleas'd, disclose
The wealth that in their entrails glows.

13. **Air**

QUEEN

Bless'd the day when first my eyes
Saw the wisest of the wise!
Bless'd the day when I was led
To ascend the nuptial bed!
But completely bless'd the day,
On my bosom as he lay,
When he call'd my charms divine,
Vowing to be only mine.
Bless'd the day. . . *da capo*

14. **Recitative**

SOLOMON

Thou fair inhabitant of Nile,
Rejoice thy lover with a smile!

QUEEN

O monarch, with each virtue bless'd,
The brightest star that gilds the east:
No joy I know beneath the sun,
But what's compris'd in SOLOMON.
With thee, how quickly fled the winter's night,
And short is summer's length of light.

15. **Duet**

QUEEN

Welcome as the dawn of day
To the pilgrim on his way,
Whom the darkness caus'd to stray,
Is my lovely king to me.

SOLOMON

Myrtle grove, or rosy shade,
Breathing odours through the glade
To refresh the village maid,
Yields in sweets, my queen, to thee.

16. **Recitative**

ZADOK

Vain are the transient beauties of the face,
Where virtue fails to animate each grace;
Bright and more bright her radiant face appears,
Nor dreads the canker'd tooth of rolling years:
O'er such a partner comfort spreads her wing,
And all our life is one perpetual spring.

17. **Air**

ZADOK

Indulge thy faith and wedded truth
With the fair partner of thy youth;
She's ever constant, ever kind,
Like the young roe, or loving hind.

18. **Recitative**

SOLOMON

My blooming fair, come, come away,
My love admits of no delay.

19. **Air**

SOLOMON

Haste, haste to the cedar grove,
Where fragrant spices bloom,
And am'rous turtles love,
Beneath the pleasing gloom.
While thinking down the hill,
Avoiding hateful day,
The little murm'ring rill
In whispers glides away.
Haste, haste. . . *da capo*

20. **Recitative**

QUEEN

When thou art absent from my sight,
The court I shun, and loathe the light.

21. **Air**

QUEEN

With thee th'unshelter'd moor I'd tread,
Nor once of fate complain,
Though burning suns flash'd round my head,
And cleav'd the barren plain.
Thy lovely form alone I prize,
'Tis thou that canst impart
Continual pleasure to my eyes,
And gladness to my heart.

22. **Recitative**

ZADOK

Search round the world, there never yet was seen
So wise a Monarch, or so chaste a Queen.

23. **Chorus**

May no rash intruder disturb their soft hours;
To form fragrant pillows, arise, oh ye flow'rs!
Ye zephirs, soft-breathing, their slumbers prolong,
While nightingales lull them to sleep with their song.

PART TWO

Scene 1

24. **Chorus of Israelites**

From the censer curling rise
Grateful incense to the skies;
Heaven blesses David's throne,
Happy, happy Solomon!
Live, live for ever, pious David's son;
Live, live for ever, mighty Solomon.

25. **Recitative**

SOLOMON

Prais'd be the Lord, from Him my wisdom springs;
I bow in-raptur'd to the King of kings.
He led me, abject, to th'imperial state,
When weak, and trembling for my future fate;
Strengthen'd by Him, each foe with horror fled,
Then impious Joab at the altar bled;
The death he oft deserv'd stern Schimei found,
And Adonijah sunk beneath the wound;
Forc'd by his crimes, I spoke a brother's doom.
Ah, may his vices perish in his tomb!

26. **Air**

SOLOMON

When the sun o'er yonder hills
Pours in tides the golden day,
Or, when quiv'ring o'er the rills,
In the west he dies away;
He shall ever hear me sing
Praises to th'eternal King.

27. **Recitative**

LEVITE

Great prince, thy resolution's just;
He never fails, in Heav'n who puts his trust,
True worth consists not in the pride of state,
'Tis virtue only makes a monarch great.

28. **Air**

LEVITE

Thrice bless'd that wise discerning king,
Who can each passion tame,
And mount on virtue's eagle wing
To everlasting fame:
Such shall as mighty patterns stand
To princes yet unborn,
To honour prompt each distant land,
And future times adorn.
Thrice bless'd. . . da dapo

Scene 2

29. **Recitative**

ATTENDANT

My sovereign liege, two women stand,
And both beseech the king's command
To enter here. Dissolv'd in tears
The one a new-born infant bears;
The other, fierce, and threat'ning loud,
Declares her story to the crowd;
And thus she clamours to the throng,
"Seek we the king, he shall redress our wrong."

SOLOMON

Admit them straight; for when we mount the throne,
Our hours are all the people's, not our own.

Scene 3

FIRST WOMAN

Thou son of David, hear a mother's grief;
And let the voice of justice bring relief.
This little babe my womb conceiv'd,
The smiling infant I with joy receiv'd.
That woman also bore a son,
Whose vital thread was quickly spun:
One house we together kept;
But once, unhappy, as I slept,
She stole at midnight where I lay,
Bore my soft darling from my arms away,
And left her child behind, a lump of lifeless clay:
And now — oh impious! — dares to claim
My right alone, a mother's name.

30. Trio

FIRST WOMAN

Words are weak to paint my fears;
Heart-felt anguish, starting tears,
Best shall plead a mother's cause.
To thy throne, O king, I bend,
My cause is just, be thou my friend.

SECOND WOMAN

False is all her melting tale.

SOLOMON

Justice holds the lifted scale.

SECOND WOMAN

Then be just, and fear the laws.

1. **Recitative**

SOLOMON

What says the other to th'imputed charge?
Speak in thy turn, and tell thy wrongs at large.

SECOND WOMAN

I cannot varnish o'er my tongue.
And colour fair the face of wrong.
This babe is mine, the womb of earth
Intomb'd, conceals her little birth.
Give me my child, my smiling boy,
To cheer my breast with new-born joy.

SOLOMON

Hear me, women, and the king regard,
Who from his throne thus reads the just award:
Each claims alike, let both their portions share;
Divide the babe, thus each her part shall bear.
Quick, bring the faulchion, and the infant smite,
Nor further clamour for disputed right.

2. **Air**

SECOND WOMAN

Thy sentence, great king,
Is prudent and wise,
And my hopes on the wing
Quick bound for the prize.
Contented I hear,
And approve the decree;
For at least I shall tear
The lov'd infant from thee.

3. **Recitative**

FIRST WOMAN

Withhold, withhold the executing hand!
Reverse, O king, thy stern command.

4. **Air**

FIRST WOMAN

Can I see my infant gor'd
With the fierce relentless sword?
Can I see him yield his breath,
Smiling at the hand of death?
And behold the purple tides
Gushing down his tender sides?
Rather be my hopes beguil'd,
Take him all, but spare my child.

5. **Accompagnato**

SOLOMON

Israel, attend to what your king shall say:
Think not I meant the innocent to slay.
The stern decision was to trace with art,
The secret dictates of the human heart.
She who could bear the fierce decree to hear,
Nor send one sigh, nor shed one pious tear,
Must be a stranger to a mother's name —
Hence from my sight, nor urge a further claim!
But you, whose fears a parent's love attest,
Receive, and bind him to your beating breast:
To you, in justice, I the babe restore,
And may you lose him from your arms no more.

6. **Duet**

FIRST WOMAN

Thrice bless'd the king, for he's good and he's wise.
My gratitude calls streaming tears from my eyes.

SOLOMON

The Lord all these virtues has giv'n,
Thy thanks be return'd all to Heav'n.
'Tis God that rewards, and will lift from the dust
Whom to crush proud oppressors endeavour...

FIRST WOMAN

How happy are those who in God put their trust!

SOLOMON

For His mercy endureth for ever.

7. **Chorus of Israelites**

From the east unto the west,
Who so wise as SOLOMON?
Who like Israel's king is bless'd,
Who so worthy of a throne.

8. **Recitative**

ZADOK

From morn to eve I could enraptur'd sing
The various virtues of our happy king;
In whom, with wonder, we behold combin'd
The grace of feature with the worth of mind.

9. **Air**

ZADOK

See the tall palm that lifts the head
On Jordan's sedgy side,
His tow'ring branches curling spread,
And bloom in graceful pride.
Each meaner tree regardless springs,
Nor claims our scornful eyes;
Thus thou art first of mortal kings,
And wisest of the wise.
See the tall palm. . . *da capo*

10. **Recitative**

FIRST WOMAN

No more shall armed bands our hopes destroy,
Peace waves her wing, and pours forth ev'ry joy.

11. **Air**

FIRST WOMAN

Beneath the vine, or fig-tree's shade,
Ev'ry shepherd sings the maid
Who his simple heart betray'd,
In a rustic measure.
While of torments he complains,
All around the village swains
Catch the song, and feel his pains,
Mingling sighs with pleasure.
Beneath the vine. . . *da capo*

12. **Chorus of Priests**

Swell, swell the FULL CHORUS to SOLOMON's praise,
Record him, ye bards, as the pride of our days.
Flow sweetly the numbers that dwell on his name,
And rouse the whole nation in songs to his fame.
Swell, swell. . . *da capo*

PART THREE

13. **Symphony: Arrival of QUEEN OF SHEBA**

14. **Recitative**

QUEEN OF SHEBA

From Arabia's spicy shores,
Bounded by the boary main,
Sheba's queen these seats explores,
To be taught thy heav'nly strain.

SOLOMON

Thrice welcome queen, with open arms
Our court receives thee, and thy charms.
The temple of the Lord first meets your eyes,
Rich with the well-accepted sacrifice.
Here all our treasures free behold,
Where cedars lie, o'erwrought with gold;
Next, view a mansion fit for kings to own,
The forest call'd of tow'ring Lebanon,
Where art her utmost skill displays,
And ev'ry object claims your praise.

15. **Air**

QUEEN OF SHEBA

Ev'ry sight these eyes behold
Does a different charm unfold;
Flashing gems and sculptur'd gold,
Still attract my ravish'd sight.
But to hear fair truth distilling,
In expressions choice and thrilling,
From that tongue so soft and killing,
That my soul does most delight.

16. **Recitative**

SOLOMON

Sweep, sweep the string, to soothe the royal fair,
And rouse each passion with th'alternate air.

17. Air and Chorus

SOLOMON & Israelites

Music, spread thy voice around,
Sweetly flow the lulling sound.

18. Air and Chorus

SOLOMON & ISRAELITES

Now a diff'rent measure try,
Shake the dome, and pierce the sky.
Rouse us next to martial deeds;
Clanking arms, and neighing steeds,
Seem in fury to oppose —
Now the hard-fought battle glows.

19. Recitative

SOLOMON

Then at once from rage remove;
Draw the tear from hopeless love;
Lengthen out the solemn air,
Full of death and wild despair.

20. Chorus of Israelites

Draw the tear from hopeless love,
Lengthen out the solemn air,
Full of death and wild despair.

21. Recitative

SOLOMON

Next the tortur'd soul release,
And the mind restore to peace.

22. **Air and Chorus**

SOLOMON & Israelites

Thus rolling surges rise,
And plough the troubled main;
But soon the tempest dies,
And all is calm again.

23. **Recitative**

QUEEN OF SHEBA

Thy harmony's divine, great king,
All, all obey the artist's string.
And now, illustrious prince, receive
Such tribute as my realm can give.
Here, purest gold, from earth's dark entrails torn;
And gems resplendent, that outshine the morn;
There balsam breathes a grateful smell,
With thee the fragrant strangers wish to dwell.
Yet of ev'ry object I behold,
Amid the glare of gems and gold,
The temple most attracts my eye,
Where, with unwearied zeal, you serve the Lord on high.

24. **Air**

LEVITE

Pious king, and virtuous queen,
May your name resound in story;
In time's latest annals seen,
Crown'd with honour, crown'd with glory.

25. Recitative

ZADOK

Thrice happy king, to have achiev'd,
What scarce will henceforth be believ'd;
When seven times around the sphere
The sun had led the new-born year,
The temple rose, to mark thy days
With endless themes for future praise.
Our pious David wish'd in vain,
By this great act to bless his reign;
But Heav'n the monarch's hopes withstood,
For ah! his hands were stain'd with blood.

26. Air

ZADOK

Golden columns, fair and bright,
Catch the mortals' ravish'd sight;
Round their sides ambitious twine
Tendrils of the clasping vine;
Cherubims stand there display'd,
O'er the ark their wings are laid:
Ev'ry object swells with state,
All is pious, all is great.

27. Double Chorus

CHORUS 1

Praise the Lord with harp and tongue!
Praise Him all ye old and young,
He's in mercy ever strong.

CHORUS 2

Praise the Lord through ev'ry state,
Praise Him early, praise Him late,
God alone is good and great.

FULL CHORUS

Let the loud Hosannahs rise,
Widely spreading through the skies,

God alone is just and wise.

28. Recitative

SOLOMON

Gold now is common on our happy shore,
And cedars frequent are as sycamore.
All, all conspires to bless my days;
Fair plenty does her treasures raise,
And o'er the fruitful plains her countless gifts displays.

29. Air

SOLOMON

How green our fertile pastures look!
How fair our olive groves!
How limpid is the gliding brook,
That through the meadows roves.
A hundred diff'rent balmy flow'rs
Salute the passing gale,
When ev'ning breezes fan the bow'rs,
And sweep th'enamell'd vale.

30. Recitative

QUEEN OF SHEBA

May peace in Salem ever dwell!
Illustrious SOLOMON, farewell!
Thy wise instructions be my future care,
Soft as the show'rs that cheer the vernal air,
Whose warmth bids ev'ry plant her sweets disclose;
The lily wakes, and paints the op'ning rose.

31. **Air**

QUEEN OF SHEBA

Will the sun forget to streak
Eastern skies with amber ray,
When the dusky shades to break
He unbars the gates of day?
Then demand if Sheba's queen
E'er can banish from her thought
All the splendour she has seen,
All the knowledge thou hast taught.

32. **Recitative**

SOLOMON

Adieu, fair queen, and in thy breast
May peace and virtue ever rest!

33. **Duet**

QUEEN OF SHEBA

Ev'ry joy that wisdom knows,
May'st thou, pious monarch, share!

SOLOMON

Ev'ry blessing Heav'n bestows,
Be thy portion, virtuous fair!

QUEEN OF SHEBA

Gently flow thy rolling days.

SOLOMON

Sorrow be a stranger here.

BOTH

May thy people sound thy praise,
Praise unbought by price of fear.

34. **Chorus of Israelites**

The name of the wicked shall quickly be past;
But the fame of the just shall eternally last.