

HANDEL SINGING COMPETITION

12TH YEAR
FINAL

Thursday 11 April 2013 7pm
St George's, Hanover Square
London, W1S 1FX

ADJUDICATORS

Ian Partridge *Chairman*
Edward Blakeman *(Semi-Final and Final)*
Catherine Denley *(all rounds)*
Michael George *(all rounds)*
Rosemary Joshua *(Final)*
Laurence Cummings *director*
(Adjudicator for First Round and Semi-Final)
LONDON HANDEL ORCHESTRA
Oliver Webber *leader*

FINALISTS:

Stephen Chambers *tenor*
Rupert Charlesworth *tenor*
Natalie Montakhab *soprano*
Heimi Lee *soprano*
Frederick Long *bass-baritone*
Hagar Sharvit *mezzo-soprano*

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London Handel Society
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THURSDAY 11 APRIL 7pm

St George's, Hanover Square, London, W1S 1FX



PROGRAMME

GF Handel

NATALIE MONTAKHAB *soprano*

Aria: Tornami a vagheggiar from *Alcina* HWV34

Aria: Furie terribili from *Rinaldo* HWV7

Recitative & Aria: E pur così...Piangerò from *Giulio Cesare* HWV17

Aria: Endless pleasure from *Semele* HWV58

STEPHEN CHAMBERS *tenor*

Recitative & Aria: All'offesa il disprezzo...E un folle, è un vile affetto from *Alcina* HWV34

Aria: Love sounds th'alarm from *Acis and Galatea* HWV49

Recitative & Aria: Fatto inferno... Pastorello d'un povero armento from *Rodelinda* HWV19

FREDERICK LONG *bass-baritone*

Aria: Tirannia gli diede il regno from *Rodelinda* HWV19

Aria: With pious hearts from *Judas Maccabaeus* HWV63

Recitative & Aria: O voi del mio poter...Sorge infausta from *Orlando* HWV31

Aria: Leave me loathsome light from *Semele* HWV58

Aria: More sweet is that name from *Semele*

Short Interval of 10 minutes

HAGAR SHARVIT *mezzo-soprano*

Recitative & Aria: She's gone...New scenes of joy from *Theodora* HWV68

Recitative & Aria: Vani sono i lamenti...Sveliatevi nel core from *Giulio Cesare* HWV17

Recitative & Arioso: A voi, a voi, padre...Gia nel seno comincia from *La Lucrezia* HWV145

Aria: Begone, my fears, fly, hence away from *Hercules* HWV60

HEIMI LEE *soprano*

Aria: V'adoro, pupille, saette d'amore from *Giulio Cesare* HWV17

Aria: Volate amori from *Ariodante* HWV33

Recitative & Aria: O thou bright sun! how sweet thy rays...With darkness deep, as is my woe from *Theodora* HWV68

Aria: No, no, I'll take no less from *Semele* HWV58

RUPERT CHARLESWORTH *tenor*

Aria: Tra sospetti from *Rodelinda* HWV19

Recitative & Aria: I know thy virtues...Descend kind pity from *Theodora* HWV68

Aria: Let festal joy triumphant reign from *Belshazzar* HWV61

Laurence Cummings *director/harpsichord*

LONDON HANDEL ORCHESTRA

1st Violins

Oliver Webber *leader*

Theresa Caudle

William Thorp

Diane Moore

2nd Violins

Huw Daniel

Ellen O'Dell

Stephen Bull

Pauline Smith

Violas

Peter Collyer

Louise Hogan

Cellos

Kath Sharman

Melanie Woodcock

Bass

Cecelia Bruggemeyer

Oboes

James Eastaway

Hilary Stock

Bassoon

Nathaniel Harrison

NATALIE MONTAKHAB *soprano*



**Aria: Tornami a vagheggiar
from *Alcina* HWV34**

Tornami a vagheggiar,
te solo vuol' amar
quest' anima fedel,
caro mio bene!

Già ti donai il mio cor:
fido sarà il mio amor;
mai ti sarò crudel,
mia spene.

**Aria: Furie terribili
from *Rinaldo* HWV7**

Furie terribili!
Circondatemi,
Sequidatemi
Con faci orribili!

**Recitative & Aria: E pur così...Piangerò
from *Giulio Cesare* HWV17**

E pur così in un giorno
perdo fasti e grandezze? Ahi fato rio!
Cesare, il mio bel nume, è forse estinto;
Cornelia e Sesto inermi son, né sanno
darmi soccorso. O dio!
Non resta alcuna speme al viver mio.

Piangerò la sorte mia,
si crudele e tanto ria,
finché vita in petto avrò.
Ma poi morta d'ogn'intorno
il tiranno e notte e giorno
fatta spettro agiterò.

**Aria: Endless pleasure
from *Semele* HWV58**

Endless pleasure, endless love,
Semele enjoys above!
On her bosom Jove reclining,
Useless now his thunder lies;
To her arms his bolts resigning,
And his lightning to her eyes.

Return to me to languish,
Only you it wants to love,
This faithful heart,
My dear, my best one!

Already I gave you my heart:
I trust you will be my love;
But you will be too cruel,
My dear hope.

Fearful furies,
encircle me,
trailing flames of terror
behind me.

Thus, in a single day,
Must I lose ceremonial and importance ? Alas,
wicked fate!
Caesar, my godlike beloved, is probably dead,
Cornelia and Sextus are defenceless
And cannot come to my aid. O gods!
There is no hope left to my life.

I shall lament my fate,
So cruel and so pitiless,
As long as I have breath in my breast.
But when I am dead
My ghost will, wherever he may be,
Torment the tyrant by night and by day.

STEPHEN CHAMBERS *tenor*



**Recitative & Aria: All'offesa il disprezzo...
E un folle, è un vile affetto**

from *Alcina* HWV34

All'offesa il disprezzo giunge l'ingrata?

Su: coraggio, Oronte,
scaccia costei dell'alma;
e se mai torna pentita a riamarti,
deludi l'arti sue con l'istess'arti

È un folle, è un vil affetto,
non è la sua beltà,
che trionfar la fa
superba del mio cor.

Vieni, sul labbro e al ciglio,
Sdegno, che nutro in petto,
Figlio d'offeso Amor.

**Aria: Love sounds th'alarm
from *Acis and Galatea* HWV49**

Love sounds th'alarm,
And fear is a-flying!
When beauty's the prize,
What mortal fears dying?
In defence of my treasure,
I'd bleed at each vein;
Without her no pleasure,
For life is a pain.

**Recitative & Aria: Fatto inferno... Pastorello
d'un povero armento**
from *Rodelinda* HWV19

Fatto inferno è il mio petto; di più flagelli
armate
ho dentro il core tre furie: gelosia, sdegno,
ed amore;
e da più gole io sento, quasi mastin crudele,
il rimorso latrar per mio tormento,
chiamandomi infedele,
spergiuro, usurpator, empio, e tiranno.
Mà pur voi lusingate le stanche mie pupille
ad un breve riposo, aure tranquille!

Would the ingrate add insult to injury?
Come, be resolute, Oronte,
cast her out of your heart.
And if she ever repents and loves you again,
frustrate her wiles with wiles of the same kind.

It is a senseless, abject passion,
not her beauty,
that lets her hold arrogant sway
over my heart.

Come, to my lips and eyes,
the anger, that I feed in my breast,
son of affronted love.

My breast has become a hell;
I've three furies armed with many whips
in my heart: jealousy, disdain and love.
And from the depths I hear,
like a cruel hound,
remorse howling to torment me,
calling me faithless,
perjurer, usurper, villain and tyrant.
But yet, console
my tired eyes

Sì, dormi, Grimoaldo, e se ritrovi pace trà
i fonti e l'erbe,
delle regie superbe le mal sicure soglie in
abbandono lascia;
che prezioso è dell' alma riposo al par del
trono.

Pastorello d'un povero armento
pur dorme contento,
sotto l'ombra d'un faggio o d'alloro.
Io, d'un regno monarca fastoso,
non trovo riposo
sotto l'ombra di porpora e d'oro.

with a brief repose, O gentle breezes!
Yes, sleep, Grimoaldo, and if you find again
peace among the streams and meadows,
leave the unsteady throne
of proud kingdoms,
for a peaceful heart
is as precious as the throne.

The shepherd of a poor flock
may sleep content
beneath the shade of a beech or laurel.
I, king of a magnificent realm,
can find no peace
under the shade of purple and gold.

FREDERICK LONG *bass-baritone*



Aria: Tirannia gli diede il regno
from *Rodelinda* HWV19

Tirannia gli diede il regno,
gliel conservi crudeltà!
Del regnar base e sostegno
è il rigor, non la pietà.

Tyranny brought him the throne,
let him keep it with cruelty.
The basis and support of power
is harshness, not pity.

Aria: With pious hearts
from *Judas Maccabaeus* HWV63

Enough! To Heav'n we leave the rest.
Such gen'rous ardour 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.

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.

Recitative & Aria: O voi del mio
poter...Sorge infausta
from *Orlando* HWV31

O voi, del mio poter ministri eletti,
or la vostra virtute unite meco
si cangi'l bosco in speco!
Là al furor dell'eroe siatene attenti;
che fra pochi momenti avrò vittoria, e l'eroe
renderò sano
alla Gloria.

You heavenly beings, the wellspring of my
power,
now unite with me.
Change this forest into a cave!
Be attentive to the approaching fury of
Orlando;
And soon we will have victory, restoring the
hero to glory.

Sorge infausta una procella,
che oscurar fa il cielo e il mare,
splende fausta poi la stella,
ch'ogni cor ne fa goder.
Può talor il forte errare,
ma risorto dall' errore,
quel che pria gli diè dolore,
causa immenso il suo piacer.

Rough tempests arise which obscure heaven
and seas.
A brighter star does then impart its rays
and gladdens every heart.
The strong may often err, but when they see
their error,
What was once a source of woe, then turns to
joy

**Aria: Leave me loathsome light
from *Semele***

Leave me, loathsome light,
Receive me, silent night!
Lethe, why does thy ling'ring current cease?
Oh, murmur, murmur me again to peace!

**Aria: More sweet is that name
from *Semele***

More sweet is that name
Than a soft purling stream.
With pleasure repose I'll forsake,
If you'll grant me but her to soothe me awake.

HAGAR SHARVIT *mezzo-soprano*



Recitative & Aria: She's gone...New scenes of joy from *Theodora* HWV68

She's gone, disdainful liberty and life,
and ev'ry honour this frail life can give.
Devotion bids aspire to nobler things,
to boundless love, and joys ineffable:
and such her expectation from kind Heav'n.

New scenes of joy come crowding on
while sorrow fleets away;
like mists before the rising sun
that gives a glorious day.

**Recitative & Aria: Vani sono i lamenti...
Sveliatevi nel core from *Giulio Cesare* HWV17**

Vani sono i lamenti
è tempo, o Sesto, ormai
di vendicar il padre
si svegli alla vendetta
l'anima neghittosa
che offesa da un tiranno invan riposa

Svegliatevi nel core
furie d'un alma offesa
a far d'un traditor
aspra vendetta!
L'ombra del genitore
accorre a mia difesa
e dice: a te il rigor
Figlio si aspetta.

Lamenting serves no purpose;
the time has come, o Sextus,
to avenge your father;
let your indolent spirit
bestir itself to vengeance,
for - wronged by a tyrant - it cannot rest.

Rally within my heart,
furies of a wounded spirit,
to wreak bitter vengeance on a traitor!
My father's shade
hastens to my defence,
and says: my son, you must be ruthless.

Recitative & Arioso: A voi, a voi, padre...Gia nel seno comincia from *La Lucrezia* HWV145

A voi, a voi, padre, consorte, a Roma, al mondo p
resento il mio morir;
mi si perdoni il delitto essecrando
ond'io macchiai involontaria il nostro onor,
un'altra più detestabil colpa
di non m'aver uccisa
pria del misfatto mi si perdoni.

To you, to you, father, husband, to Rome, to the world
I offer my death.
May my execrable sin be forgiven,
as unwillingly I blotted our honour;
may I be pardoned for an even more detestable guilt,
that of not having sought my death before sinning

Già nel seno comincia,
comincia a compir questo ferro
i duri uffizii;
sento ch'il cor si scuote
più dal dolor di questa caduta invendicata,
che dal furor della vicina morte.
Ma se qui non m'è dato castigar il tiranno,
opprimer l'empio
con più barabro essemplio,
per ch'ei sen cada estinto
stringero a danni suoi mortal saetta,
e furibonda e cruda
nell'inferno faro, faro la mia vendetta.

**Aria: Begone, my fears, fly, hence away
from *Hercules* HWV60**

Begone, my fears, fly hence, away,
Like clouds before the morning ray!
My hero found,
With laurels crown'd,
Heav'n relenting,
Fate consenting,
Springing joys my griefs control,
And rising transports swell my soul.

Already in my bosom
this sword begins its deathly task. I
feel my heart tremble more
with the grief of this unavenged fall
than with the fury of approaching death.
But if here on earth I was not granted the
punishment of the tyrant,
or that he may be crushed with a more
barbarous example, from hell
I shall seek his ruin with mortal arrows
and with savage and implacable fury,
from there I shall achieve my vengeance.

HEIMI LEE *soprano*



Aria: V'adamo, pupille, saette d'amore
from *Giulio Cesare* HWV17

V'adamo, pupille, saette d'amore,
le vostre faville son grate nel sen.
Pietose vi brama il mesto mio core
ch'ognora vi chiama l'amato suo ben.

I adore you, eyes, lightning bolts of love,
your sparks are welcome in my breast.
My sad heart desires that you are
compassionate,
and at which at every hour calls you
its dearest beloved.

Aria: Volate amori
from *Ariodante* HWV33

Volate, amori,
di due bei cori
la gioia immensa a celebrar!
Il gaudio è tanto,
che come è quanto
dir non saprei debba esultar.

Fly, little Cupids,
and celebrate the great joy
of two beautiful hearts.
The joy is so great
that I can't express
how much to rejoice.

Recitative & Aria: O thou bright sun! how
sweet thy rays...With darkness deep, as is
my woe from *Theodora* HWV68

O thou bright sun! how sweet thy rays
to health and liberty! But here, alas!
they swell the agonizing thought of shame,
and pierce my soul with sorrows yet
unknown.

With darkness deep, as is my woe,
hide me ye shades of night,
your thickest veil around me throw,
conceal'd from human sight!
Or come, thou Death, thy victim save,
kindly embosom'd in the grave!

Aria: No, no, I'll take no less
from *Semele* HWV58

No, no, I'll take no less,
Than all in full excess!
Your oath it may alarm you.
Yet haste and prepare,
For I'll know what you are,
With all your powers arm you.

RUPERT CHARLESWORTH *tenor*



Aria: Tra sospetti

from *Rodelinda* HWV19

Trà sospetti, affetti, e timori
sento il seno ripieno d'affanni.
Or mi rendo, or m'accendo in furori,
or mi pento, or pavento d'inganni.

Between suspicion, love and fear
I feel my heart full of cares.
Now I submit, now I burn with anger,
now I repent, now I fear deceit

Recitative & Aria: I know thy virtues...

Descend kind pity

from *Theodora* HWV68

I know thy virtues, and ask not thy faith;
enjoy it as you will, my Didymus.
Though not a Christian, (for I worship still
the gods my fathers worship'd) yet I own,
something within declares for acts of mercy.
But Antioch's President must be obey'd;
such is the Roman discipline, while we
can only pity, whom we dare not spare.

Descend, kind pity, heav'nly guest,
descend, and fill each human breast
with sympathizing woe.
That liberty and peace of mind
may sweetly harmonize mankind,
and bless the world below.

Aria: Let festal joy triumphant reign

from *Belshazzar* HWV61

Let festal joy triumphant reign,
Glad ev'ry heart, in ev'ry face appear!
Free flow the wine, nor flow in vain;
Far fly corroding care.
Each hand the chime melodious raise,
Each voice exult in Sesach's praise;
Let order vanish! Liberty alone,
Unbounded liberty the night shall crown.

Programme notes

The earliest composition in tonight's programme is *La Lucrezia*, the dramatic cantata from which the recitative and aria 'A voi, a voi, padre... Gia nel seno comincia' are drawn. The cantata dates from the young Handel's time in Italy, where he threw himself into mastering the genre which was a substitute for opera – prohibited by papal decree in Rome. A genre which flourished in these circumstances was the dramatic solo cantata for solo voice and continuo or orchestra which set pastoral or mythological libretti. The intimate solo cantata had been evolving as a special art-form in the seventeenth century, and when Handel arrived in Rome early in 1707 he quickly became familiar with the nuances of the style. *La Lucrezia* brings to life the humiliation and despair of Lucretia – an honourable Roman matron – who had the misfortune to be raped by Tarquinius. Rather than bringing shame upon her husband Collinatus and family, she chooses to kill herself. In 'A voi, a voi, padre... Gia nel seno comincia' Lucretia vows that her ghost or shade will hound Tarquinius, and avenge the disgrace he has caused.

The ability to capture complex human emotion in the intense brevity of the dramatic cantata would prove useful to Handel in his operas and oratorios, where the larger structure permitted him to develop his characters' psychology even further; Handel could show that anti-heroes still had an honourable side, and sorceresses could experience the agony of unrequited love. In part, this work was done by his librettists, but it is the music of the arias and the harmonic intricacies of the recitatives which bring the personalities of these men and women to life. In the cavatine 'Furie terribili' from *Rinaldo* – Handel's first 'Italian' opera for the London stage – Armida, Queen of Damascus, demonstrates her ire with an incandescent virtuosity that evokes her supernatural powers, making it impossible not to love the character for her regal pride. Pride is also a dominant theme in *Giulio Cesare*: the recitative and aria 'Vani sono i lamenti... Sveliatevi nel core' shows us Sesto steeling himself to avenge the assassination of his father, Pompey. Handel created the role of Sesto for Margherita Durastanti, a soprano he had first encountered in Italy, and for whose dramatic talents he wrote several cantatas. Durastanti was

one of the singers whom Handel brought to London in 1720, and although some were not enthused about her singing or appearance, Charles Burney wrote – after hearing Durastanti in *Floridante* – that 'additional airs were composed to display her peculiar powers; and we find by these that her abilities as a singer and musician were greatly superior to those of her predecessor'. Cleopatra is in her most seductive mode for 'V'adoro pupille', in which she appears before Ceasar, but disguised as Lidia. Meanwhile, the exquisite scena for Cleopatra, 'E pur così... Piangerò la sorte mia' from Act III scene iii of the opera shows the beautiful Egyptian in a vulnerable state and resigning herself to death, although again not without the promise of vengeance.

The 'undoing of women' – often through their own misguided and irrational folly, but also through political machination and supernatural meddling – is a common theme throughout the history of opera; whether this can be attributed to a historical narrative of patriarchal oppression is open to debate. In Handel's operas and oratorios – as well as in the cantatas – this trope is prevalent, but with many causes. However, no heroine is quite as comprehensively undone as Semele, in Handel's 1744 oratorio. This harmless ingénue is eventually immolated by the fiery magnificence of Jupiter when he appears to her in his divine form – at her request. However, she is a sympathetic character, caught up in extraordinary circumstances, like so many of Jupiter's conquests, and a victim of jealous Juno's plotting. Before this, the beguiling air 'Endless pleasure, endless love' finds Semele filled with joy at her amorous success with Jupiter, and his complete helplessness in her embrace. 'No, no, 'I'll take no less' fills us with trepidation: here Semele is bent upon Jupiter appearing before her as a god, but she feels invincible. 'Leave me, loathsome light' provides some comic relief as we enter the realm of Somnus, god of sleep. Awakened by Juno and Iris, the lethargic divinity laments their disturbance in a majestic, lyrical air with a particularly atmospheric accompaniment. A few moments later, Juno persuades Somnus to get up, by mentioning the name of Pasithea, to which Somnus's response is 'More sweet is that name'.

Virtue plays little part in *Semele*, but is a prominent idea in Handel's penultimate

oratorio *Theodora* (1749/1750), which is a story of conflict between the Christians and Pagans of Antioch. The princess Theodora, a devout Christian has converted the Roman officer Didymus, who is in love with her. Theodora is persecuted and narrowly escapes being violated during Pagan festivities. At the end, both she and Didymus are condemned to death by the Roman Valens. From her place of confinement Theodora sings the agonised 'From darkness deep'. Theodora's faithful companion Irene has some of the most radiant airs in the oratorio, and her scena 'She's gone ... New scenes of joy' comes from near the end of the piece, describing how Theodora's faith means that she has gone to her certain death with confidence of eternal life in heaven. Closer to the beginning of this story, the Roman Septimius (a good friend to Didymus, but a Pagan) sings the lustrous air 'Descend, kind pity' and reflects hopefully that Pagans and Christians may be united in some sympathy.

Piety and religious difference are decisive factors in *Judas Maccabeus* (1746/47), an oratorio with extra-musical significance. In 1746 the Duke of Cumberland had successfully routed the Scottish army of the 'Young Pretender' to the throne, Charles Edward Stewart. Laying waste to a Jacobite invasion was a significant victory for the Hanoverian monarchy, but politically difficult to justify, as King George II's army, led by the Duke, had slaughtered people who were the King's subjects. Therefore, 'victory celebrations' were low-key: the Dean of the Chapel Royal was simply required to procure a new anthem 'upon the Account of the Duke of Cumberland's Success against the Rebels' which Maurice Greene produced. Handel's oratorio was not a direct result of Cumberland's victory, but the subject (Judas Maccabeus rescues the people of Judea from the pagan rule of the Seleucid Empire, and forms an alliance with Rome that will continue to protect the Judeans) could easily be interpreted as a metaphor for a Protestant Hanovarian triumph over Catholic usurpers. Thomas Morrell who produced the libretto of *Judas Maccabeus* recalled that it was 'a compliment to the Duke of Cumberland upon his returning victorious from Scotland.' The air 'With pious hearts', sung by Simon, the brother of the eponymous hero, demonstrates his confidence that the Almighty will look with favour upon their Judean campaign. The role

of Simon was first sung by Henry Reinhold, a Dresden-born singer who became a prominent dramatic singer in London, and took part in the first London performance of *Messiah*.

Far less pious is Zoroastro, the meddling magician of Orlando. Handel took just three weeks to compose this 'magical' opera in November 1732, and the first performance took place on 27 January 1733 in the King's Theatre. The plot revolves around the machinating magician Zoroastro and his genii, who decide that Orlando should not waste time with love, but must redeem his glory with war. In Act III scene ii, Zoroastro sings the metaphor-laden aria 'Sorge infausta una procella': Handel's string writing brings real sturm und drang to Zoroastro's examination of the tribulations of heroism.

Tribulations, but this time those of true love, recur in Handel's pastoral drama *Acis and Galatea*. The first version of the piece dates from 1718 when Handel was working for the Earl of Carnarvon at Chandos near Edgware. Just as he had been quick to write Italian dramatic cantatas during his time in Italy with an energy and imagination that outdid the works of the Italians themselves, Handel decided to write an exceptional pastoral. He was familiar with the music of Pepusch in this genre, but with *Acis and Galatea* he produced a work that remains unique, utterly different in style and affect than any of his Italian pastoral works, his early operas for London, and the oratorio *Esther* which is contemporary with *Acis and Galatea*. 'Pastoral' does not equal insipid for Handel, and the element of human emotion is strong. 'Love sounds the alarm' is from Act II of the drama: Acis is in danger of violence from the giant Polyphemus, who also loves Galatea and is filled with jealous fury. Acis is oblivious to the threat posed by the giant, as he is blinded by his adoration of Galatea. Nonetheless, saying that the giant's 'hideous love provokes my rage', and confident of the god of love's support, Acis will fight. 'Love sounds th'alarm' is his rallying aria, and a moment of heroic bravado for the tenor.

Unlike Acis, who has energy to spare, Rodelinda's Grimoaldo is at low ebb. Having seized the throne of Bertradio, King of Lombardy, Grimoaldo realises that the head that wears the crown lies very uneasy indeed. The accompagnato and aria 'Fatto

inferno ... Pastorello d'un povero armento' find Grimaldo unable to rest: his heart is filled with jealousy, love, and anger, and his conscience troubles him. He realises that the purple and gold trappings of kingship bring him no peace. As ever for Handel, the orchestral role is crucial to characterisation as an illustration of each character's psychology, beyond their mere words; the jagged, fragmented style of the string writing in 'Tirannia gli diede il regno' emphasises that Garibaldo (Duke of Torino and advisor of Grimoaldo) is not at ease with his situation. Grimoaldo returns, in a similar state of immoderate countenance, towards the end of the opera with 'Tra sospetti, affetti, e timori'. As ever, Grimoaldo is troubled by his conscience; the tension in the violins' chromatic, tumultuous figurations combined with the wild contours of Grimoaldo's lines show that this is a man in a state of anxiety, guilt and anger, torn by his longing for lovely Eudige and his lust for power. Some of Handel's most imaginative and challenging writing for a tenor makes *Rodelinda* (1725) one of the first operas in which the unique emotive qualities of the tenor voice were brought to the attention of his London audience, thanks to the abilities of Francesco Borosini, who created the role.

Along with Borosini, another of Handel's star singers was Francesca Cuzzoni, who took the role of Teofane in *Ottone* for its first performance on 12 January 1723. Teofane's aria 'Falsa imagine' is a tender, poignant expression of Teofane's tormented heart. The aria, over which Cuzzoni and Handel disagreed artistically, was also the source of a famous story about Handel's relationship with his singers. Handel's biographer John Mainwaring recorded that, 'Having one day some words with Cuzzoni on her refusing to sing 'Falsa imagine' in *Ottone*; "Oh! " (said he) "I know well that you are a veritable devil: but you should know that I am Beelzebub, the ruler of the devils." With this he took her up by the waist, and, if she made any more words, swore that he would fling her out of the window.'

Many of Handel's operas are set in exotic climes: Ancient Rome, Constantinople, Aetolia, or Persia, and involve enchanted islands or mythological figures. *Ariodante* is set in Scotland. However, the anonymous libretto is based upon Antonio Salvi's *Ginerva*, principessa di Scozia, which was

derived from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, and perhaps for the Florence-based Salvi Scotland seemed to be a faraway and exotic location for a story of intrigue and tortured passions. From the beginning, its atmosphere of mystery is entirely appropriate to the eeriness of its setting in Edinburgh. However, 'Volate amori', a brilliant aria for Ginevra, daughter of the King of Scotland, is far from shadowy. Ginevra is supported by a radiant-sounding string section, which propels her to greater and greater feats of virtuosity.

A similar spirit of bravado, albeit in a very different context, pervades 'Begone, my fears'. This rapturous aria, sung by Hercules' wife Dejanira, is an outstanding moment in Handel's secular oratorio *Hercules* (1744/45). Dejanira is found at the beginning of the drama feeling distraught because she believes her beloved Hercules to be lost or dead. Members of her retinue try to comfort her, and eventually hear news that Hercules has been triumphant in leveling the Greek city of Oechalia. 'Begone, my fears' is Dejanira's joyful reaction to these tidings.

The productive Handel worked on *Hercules* and the oratorio *Belshazzar* at the same time in 1744, and the latter piece was first heard in March 1745. 'Let festal joy triumphant reign' is Belshazzar's mighty song from Act I, in which the arrogant king of Babylon proposes lavish feasting and festivities for his court, complete with wives, and concubines, while his Hebrew slaves suffer captivity and deprivation.

The suffering of characters in *Alcina* is mainly spiritual and emotional, rather than physical, and their situations make *Alcina* a particularly satisfying opera from a dramatic, as well as musical perspective. After its first performances, *Alcina* was lauded as a supremely moral piece; a review in the *Universal Spectator* called the opera "a beautiful and instructive allegory" in which the wanton paganism of Alcina and her sister Morgana is avenged by 'Christian' virtue. 'Tornami a vagheggiar' is Morgana's aria from the end of Act I. Here, Morgana is in raptures, believing that the handsome 'Ricciardo' (actually Bradamante, Ruggerio's betrothed, in disguise) is in love with her. Then, in Act II, Morgana's own lover, Oronte, sings 'All'offesa il disprezzo giunge l'ingrata? ... E un folle, è un vile'. This scene - in which

Oronte tries to convince himself to renounce Morgana – combines resolve with pomposity, as the audience knows (which he doesn't) that 'Ricciardo' is no serious rival and that later on, Morgana will receive her comeuppance. Still, Oronte achieves a state of musical eloquence, and Handel grants to him a measure of dignity which redeems his confusion.

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Acknowledgements:

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Peter Jones *music preparation*
Corrina Connor & Peter Jones *text translations*
Corrina Connor *programme notes*
Claire Hammett *manager of keyboards*
Kensington Flowers *Bouquets*

BIOGRAPHIES

FINALISTS

Natalie Montakhab *soprano*

Natalie Montakhab studied at the Royal Academy of Music and RSAMD Opera School. She studies with Lillian Watson. Natalie is currently covering the role of Zenna Briggs in English National Opera's *Sunken Garden* by Michel Van der Aa. She recently covered the roles of Papagena *Die Zauberflöte* and Zerlina *Don Giovanni* for ENO, also singing Papagena on ENO's 'Opera Squad' tour.

Natalie sang Vixen *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Scottish Opera in collaboration with RSAMD. Other roles include Susanna *Le nozze di Figaro*, Gretel *Hänsel und Gretel*, Pamina (cover) *Die Zauberflöte*.

Recent performances include *Serenade to Music* at Royal Albert Hall Proms with BBC-SSO/ Donald Runnicles, First Witch *Dido and Aeneas* Edinburgh International Festival with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra/ Nicholas McGegan and 'Let the Bright Seraphim' *Samson* for BBC TV Scotland Channel 1 with trumpeter John Wallace. Independent Opera, Dewar Arts Awards, Bob Boas and The Karaviotis' have generously supported Natalie's studies and she has been a Britten-Pears Young Artist since 2007.

Stephen Chambers *tenor*

New Zealand tenor Stephen Chambers studied at the RCS on the Opera course before undertaking a year as their Young Artist in Residence. A keen concert recitalist, Stephen has collaborated with Scottish Guitarist Ian Watt and worked as a soloist for a number of choral societies in the UK and New Zealand. A highlight of Stephen's concert career to date was singing the Evangelist and tenor solos in Bach's *St John Passion* with the Dunedin Consort players directed by John Butt last year. He also sang as a soloist in the 2010 Proms in Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music* (BBC SSO/ Runnicles). Stephen is a Samling Scholar and received the ABRSM International Scholarship while studying at the RCS. Stephen is currently studying with Dennis O'Neill.

Frederick Long *bass-baritone*

Frederick Long received a first-class degree in music from the University of Bristol and a DipRAM from the Royal Academy of Music where he studied as a bass-baritone with Mark Wildman. Last year he joined the Glyndebourne chorus, understudying Sleep/ Winter/ Hymen in *The Fairy Queen*, and performed the role of Medeiros in Julian Philips' *The Yellow Sofa* for Glyndebourne on Tour. This season he will make his full festival debut as the Lackey in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. For Royal Academy Opera he performed Somnus, Superintendent Budd, Don Alfonso and Sarastro, working with Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Colin Davis, David Pountney and John Copley, and created the role of Willi Graf in the world premiere of Peter Maxwell Davies' *Kommilitonen!*. A versatile musician, Frederick regularly appeared in the Academy's flagship Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata series, and as a member of the acclaimed 'Song Circle', with whom he gave a Schubert recital at the Wigmore Hall. A major award-winner at the Academy, he also holds an Allcard award from the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Frederick's substantial concert repertory sees him in frequent performance across the country and abroad, with recent highlights including the Verdi Requiem with the Royal Orchestral Society, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with the Brandenburg Sinfonia and *Messiah* with the London Festival Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall.

Hagar Sharvit *mezzo-soprano*

Hagar was in the Plácido Domingo Centre de Perfeccionament of Valencia Opera (2011-12) where she sang the L'Amica in *Amelia al Ballo*, conducted by Plácido Domingo, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, directed by Ruggero Raimondi, the Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas* and the Ancella in Cherubini's *Medea*, conducted by Zubin Mehta. In the summer of 2012 she was part of the Young Singers Project of the Salzburg Summer Festival. Recently, Hagar sang the role of Smeton in a concert version of the Donizetti opera *Anna Bolena* with soprano Edita Gruberova in the title role.

She was selected to participate in the Heidelberger Frühling Lied Akademie, under the direction of Thomas Hampson. Hagar won First Prize in the Brahms Lied

competition, Third Prize in the Hugo Wolf competition and was a finalist in the Cesti competition for baroque opera.

Heimi Lee *soprano*

Heimi, born in South Korea, studied singing at Sun Hwa School of Arts and then at the Ewha Woman's University in Seoul where she gained her Masters degree in Vocal Studies. Whilst at Ewha she sang the role of Papagena in a production of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Seoul National Theatre. In 2006 she came to London to continue her vocal studies as a postgraduate student at the Royal Academy of Music. She joined Royal Academy Opera in September 2007. As well as performing in a number of opera scenes, Heimi has taken part in master-classes with illustrious singers such as Robert Tear, Anne Howells, Jose Cura, Yvonne Kenny, Ann Murray, Patricia Bardon and Barbara Bonney. She also played the role of Premiere Songe in the Royal Academy Opera production of *Dardanus*. Recent performances include *Il duello amoroso* and *King Arthur*; Song Circle concerts at Wigmore Hall and in the RAM's Duke's Hall; the role of First Neighbour in the RAO production of Shostakovich's *Paradise Moscow*, Calisto in *La Calisto*, Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* and Berenice in *L'occasione fa il Ladro*.

Rupert Charlesworth *tenor*

Rupert's career has taken him throughout Europe, performing in such prestigious operatic stages as La Fenice, Venice and The Festival d'Aix en Provence. Previous roles include Damon (*Acis and Galatea* - Aix en Provence), Tamino (*Die Zäuberflöte* - Royal Academy Opera) and Mr Rushworth (*Mansfield Park* - RAO), Angel 3/ John (*Written on Skin*, cover - Aix en Provence), Soldier (*Der Kaiser von Atlantis* - ETO) and Count Errico (*La Vera Costanza* - RAO).

Rupert is also in demand as oratorio soloist, regularly performing masses by Mozart and the Bach Passions. He is also a soloist for the Royal Academy of Music, Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata series.

In 2013 Rupert will cover the role of Angel 3/ John (*Written on Skin*) at the Royal Opera House, and at the 2013 Maggio Musicale, Fiorentino. He will also sing with the Glyndebourne Chorus and cover Lysander with Opera North. Future engagements include *Messiah* in

Kristiansand with Nicholas Kraemer.

Rupert currently studies with Philip Dohan and Iain Ledingham and is generously supported by the Karaviotis Scholarship and the John Kenneth Adams Scholarship. He was a 2011 Academy Laureate of the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. He is also grateful to be supported by the Josephine Baker Trust, the Countess of Munster Trust and Mr and Mrs Sommerville.

ADJUDICATORS

Ian Partridge

Chairman of Adjudicators

Ian Partridge has an international reputation as a concert singer and recitalist. His tenor voice, with its most distinctive timbre, and his unfailing sensitivity to words have earned him a devoted following through his hundreds of broadcasts and recordings. His wide repertoire encompassed the music of Monteverdi, Bach and Handel, Elizabethan lute songs, German, French and English songs and first performances of new works.

Ian's phenomenal list of recordings includes Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* (first choice in BBC Radio 3's Building a Library), *Dichterliebe*, and *Liederkreis Opus 39*, and Britten's *Serenade*, Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge* and Warlock's *The Curew*.

Ian Partridge sang the Evangelist in Bach's St John Passion and was the tenor soloist in the complete set of Handel's *Chandos Anthems* recorded with The Sixteen, conducted by Harry Christophers.

Ian has also enjoyed taking masterclasses on Lieder, English Song and Early Music at venues as diverse as Aldeburgh, Dartington, Trondheim, Versailles and Helsinki. He retired from public performance in 2008 but remains a professor at the Royal Academy of Music. Ian was awarded the CBE in 1992 for services to music.

Edward Blakeman

Edward Blakeman is a commissioning and programme Editor at BBC Radio 3, where his responsibilities include the planning and administration of the BBC Proms. He previously co-ordinated the prize-winning *Sounding the Century* project for Radio 3 and produced a wide range of music

features, documentaries, live relays and recordings of orchestral concerts and operas.

Before joining the BBC, he was a freelance flute player, writer and presenter. He studied at Lancaster and Birmingham Universities and in Paris on scholarships from the British Council and the CNRS. He held a research fellowship at the Royal Northern College of Music and was Head of the Wind Department at the London College of Music. He is a trustee of the Royal Philharmonic Society and the Britten-Pears Foundation, editor of various music editions, and author of two recent books: *Taffanel - Genius of the Flute* (OUP) and *The Faber Pocket Guide to Handel*.

Laurence Cummings *Musical Director*

Laurence is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as conductor and harpsichord player. Music Director of the London Handel Festival since 1999, he took up the same role at the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen in 2012, as well as acting as Music Director for Orquestra Barocca Casa da Musica Porto and as trustee of Handel House London.

He has conducted productions for English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Gothenburg Opera, Opernhaus Zurich, Garsington Opera, English Touring Opera and at the Linbury Theatre Covent Garden. He regularly conducts the English Concert and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and has worked with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Ulster Orchestra, Handel and Haydn Society (Boston), St Paul Chamber Orchestra (Minnesota), Wiener Akademie, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Hallé, Britten Sinfonia, Northern Sinfonia, Jerusalem Symphony and Basel Chamber Orchestra.

He has made numerous recordings including the first recording of Handel's newly discovered Gloria with Emma Kirkby, and recital discs with Angelika Kirschlager, Lawrence Zazzo and Maurice Steger.

Current plans include productions for Zurich and Gothenburg operas alongside his commitments in Porto and at the London and Göttingen Handel Festivals.

Catherine Denley

Born in Northamptonshire, contralto Catherine Denley studied at Trinity College of Music. After two years with the BBC Singers she embarked on a solo career which has taken her all over the world. She has worked with all the major British orchestras and many eminent conductors.

A brief cross-section of concerts includes Handel's Messiah with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony; Britten's Spring Symphony for Dutch and Polish Radio; Beethoven's 9th Symphony with Sir John Eliot Gardiner in Japan; Mahler's Resurrection Symphony in Odessa and Kiev and his Symphony of a Thousand for TV in Dublin; Bach's St Matthew Passion in the Gewandhaus, Leipzig; Mozart's Requiem in the Salzburg Mozartwoche and at the BBC Proms, and Handel's Hercules and La Resurrezione with Marc Minkowski in Paris and Lyon. She has toured with Harry Christophers, Ton Koopman, Trevor Pinnock and Paul McCreech and has sung Bach's Easter Oratorio and Vivaldi Solo Cantatas with the Israel Camerata - and more recently, Bach's Christmas Oratorio in the Cadogan Hall.

Catherine has over sixty recordings to her credit: these cover a wide range of music, but she is particularly renowned for her many Handel discs.

Michael George

Michael began his musical life as a chorister at King's College, Cambridge. Later he studied at the Royal College of Music where he was a major prize winner. His career has included performances with all the leading orchestras in Britain and in many international festivals. Conductors he has worked with include Marriner, Eliot Gardiner, Norrington, Mackerras, Christophers, Pinnock, Handley, Sanderling, Zinman, Muti, Elder and Nagano.

His recordings include most of Handel's oratorios, *Gerontius*, *Creation*, Bach's Passions, Cantatas, Missa Solemnis, Ninth Symphony, the complete songs, odes and church anthems of Purcell, contributions to six volumes of Graham Johnson's Schubert Series, Gurney's songs, Finzi's *Let Us Garlands Bring* and Zelenka's *Lamentations*.

He has worked at ENO, Scottish Opera and

Buxton Opera, and toured various baroque opera projects with Philip Pickett and Jonathan Miller in Europe, Mexico and China. In 2013 he will be involved in productions of Purcell's *Faerie Queen* and *King Arthur*.

Rosemary Joshua

Rosemary's operatic appearances have included the Vixen and Tytania at La Scala; Anne Trulove and Despina at Covent Garden; Adèle at the Metropolitan Opera; Oscar and the Vixen for the Netherlands Opera and Susanna at Glyndebourne and in Munich.

Particularly regarded internationally for her Handel roles she has sung Angelica in Munich, at Covent Garden and in Aix-en-Provence; Poppea in Cologne, Brussels and Paris; Cleopatra in Amsterdam Paris and Florida; Ginevra in Moscow and San Diego and the title-role in *Semele* in Aix-en-Provence, Innsbruck, Flanders, Cologne, at the BBC Proms and at ENO. More recently she has sung the title-role in *Partenope* at the ENO and Nitocris in Berlin, Toulouse, Aix-en-Provence, Innsbruck and on tour with Les Arts Florissants/ Christie. Plans include the title role in *Theodora* on tour with The English Concert/ Bicket.

Her many recordings include the title roles in *Partenope* and *Semele* and Emilia in *Flavio* with the Early Opera Company/ Curnyn; the title role in *Esther* with the London Handel Festival Orchestra/ Cummings; Angelica in *Orlando* with Les Arts Florissants/ Christie, Michal in *Saul* with Concerto Köln/ Jacobs and a disc of Handel's Duets with Sarah Connolly and The English Concert/ Bicket.

Corrina Connor

Corrina studied at Victoria University of Wellington, before completing an MPhil in musicology and performance cello at Oxford University where she received college and university music awards. She has studied with Katrin Eickhorst-Squire, Jonathan Manson, Alison McGillivray and Angela East. Corrina has been a frequent participant in the Baroque Orchestra course at Dartington International Summer School, and in summer 2012 she was a Chamber Music Associate at Dartington, as well as performing in the sell-out show *Austentatious* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. She has performed with Trinity Laban Baroque Orchestra, and Solomon's Knot, and is

frequently continuo cellist for Linden Baroque Orchestra and Belsize Baroque. As a musicologist, Corrina wrote her Master's thesis on the performance of anthems of Pelham Humfrey. In the past year she has presented papers at the OBERTO Operatic Masculinities conference, and the Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain conference at the Foundling Museum. In September Corrina plans to begin a PhD in the OBERTO Research Unit at Oxford Brookes University on the topic of nationality and gender identity in Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*.

Peter Jones

Peter Jones was born in Pontlottyn, South Wales. After leaving university he studied singing privately with Ivor Evans. His singing repertoire concentrated on Handel, Bach, Haydn and Mozart. He was encouraged to develop his interest in score editing and engraving by Denys Darlow. He has prepared editions of Handel's operas and other works for the London Handel Festival, English Touring Opera, the Buxton Festival, The Sixteen, The Early Opera Company, Garsington Opera and the London Mozart Players, among others. He collaborated with the late Anthony Hicks on several editions, notably *Saul*, which was performed at last year's Festival, at the Barbican, and has recently been recorded. For the past few years Peter has prepared the performing material for the Handel Singing Competition Final, for which he has five days to complete and print the music! He has entered into an agreement with ChesterNovello to market his Handel editions.

London Handel Orchestra

The London Handel Orchestra, which is made up of some of London's finest professional baroque players and is directed by Adrian Butterfield and Laurence Cummings, was formed in 1981 by Denys Darlow to perform at the annual London Handel Festival. It has gained an excellent reputation for historically-informed performance and contributed greatly to the revival of interest in Handel's music over that period. The Orchestra performs throughout the Festival at venues including Handel's church, St George's, Hanover Square, the Royal College of Music and the Wigmore Hall.



PREVIOUS WINNERS

- 2002 **Andrew Kennedy** *tenor*
- 2003 **Elizabeth Atherton** *soprano*
- 2004 **Angharad Gruffydd Jones** *soprano*
- 2005 **Fflur Wyn** *soprano*
- 2006 **Nathan Vale** *tenor*
- 2007 **Derek Welton** *baritone*
- 2008 **Erica Eloff** *soprano*
- 2009 **Ruby Hughes** *soprano*
- 2010 **Sophie Junker** *soprano*
- 2011 **Stefanie True** *soprano*
- 2012 **Anna Starushkevych** *mezzo-soprano*

FIRST ROUND

20, 21, 22 February
Craxton Studios, 14 Kidderpore Avenue, NW3 7SU

SEMI-FINAL

19 March
St George's Church, Hanover Square, London, W1S 1FX

Photo: Anna Starushkevych - Winner in 2012