



# HANDEL

## Total Eclipse: Music for Handel's Tenor

Excerpts from  
Alexander's Feast,  
Israel in Egypt, Saul,  
Messiah and Samson

Aaron Sheehan, Tenor

Stephen Stubbs,  
Conductor, Lute  
and Guitar

Pacific MusicWorks  
Orchestra



<b>Alexander's Feast, HWV 75</b> (excerpts) (texts: Newburgh Hamilton, 1691–1761; John Dryden, 1631–1700)	<b>3:30</b>
<sup>1</sup> Part II – Recitative: Give the vengeance due	1:22
<sup>2</sup> Part II – Aria: The princes applaud with a furious joy	2:08
<b>Israel in Egypt, HWV 54</b> (excerpt) (text: Bible – Old Testament)	<b>2:04</b>
<sup>3</sup> Part III: Moses' Song – Air: The enemy said, I will pursue	2:04
<b>Ode for St Cecilia's Day, HWV 76</b> (excerpt) (text: John Dryden, 1631–1700)	<b>4:23</b>
<sup>4</sup> Aria: Sharp violins proclaim their jealous pangs	4:23
<b>Saul, HWV 53</b> (excerpts) (text: Charles Jennens, 1700–1773)	<b>6:07</b>
<sup>5</sup> Act I – Accomagnato: O filial piety!	1:21
<sup>6</sup> Act I – Air: No, cruel father, no!	1:25
<sup>7</sup> Act II – Recitative: Ah, dearest friend	0:36
<sup>8</sup> Act II – Air: But sooner Jordan's stream	2:55
<b>Concerto Grosso in B flat major, Op. 3, No. 2, HWV 313</b>	<b>10:41</b>
<sup>9</sup> I. Vivace	1:48
<sup>10</sup> II. Largo	2:28
<sup>11</sup> III. Allegro	1:52
<sup>12</sup> IV. Minuet	1:26
<sup>13</sup> V. Gavotte	3:07
<b>Messiah, HWV 56</b> (excerpts) (text: Bible – New Testament)	<b>7:21</b>
<sup>14</sup> Part II – Recitative: Thy rebuke	1:35
<sup>15</sup> Part II – Arioso: Behold and see	1:31
<sup>16</sup> Part II – Aria: But thou didst not leave his soul in hell	2:15
<sup>17</sup> Part II – Aria: Thou shalt break them	2:00
<b>Concerto Grosso in B flat major, Op. 6, No. 7, HWV 325</b>	<b>12:36</b>
<sup>18</sup> I. Largo	1:06
<sup>19</sup> II. Allegro	2:32
<sup>20</sup> III. Largo e piano	1:59
<sup>21</sup> IV. Andante	3:54
<sup>22</sup> V. Hornpipe	3:05
<b>Samson, HWV 57</b> (excerpts) (text: Newburgh Hamilton, 1691–1761)	<b>21:00</b>
<sup>23</sup> Act I – Air: Torments, alas, are not confin'd	4:05
<sup>24</sup> Act I – Air: Total eclipse!	3:14
<sup>25</sup> Act I – Recitative: My griefs for this	0:59
<sup>26</sup> Act I – Air: Why does the God of Israel sleep?	4:48
<sup>27</sup> Act II – Air: Your charms to ruin led the way	3:01
<sup>28</sup> Act III – Recitative: Let but that spirit	0:41
<sup>29</sup> Act III – Air: Thus when the sun from's wat'ry bed	4:12

## George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

### Total Eclipse: Music for Handel's Tenor

#### A Note from the Artistic Director

In February 2015, my wife Maxine and I went to LA for the GRAMMY® Awards, as did Aaron Sheehan and his partner Adam Pearl. It's true, Aaron and I had a recording which was nominated in the Best Opera Recording category, but I told Maxine, that though I thought we had little chance of winning, I wanted to attend because it is such an amazing experience and party! I don't know for sure, but I think Aaron and Adam might have gone in much the same spirit. The reason I thought we were a long shot was that it was the smallest production in contention – the Chamber Opera *La Descente d'Orphée aux enfers*, by the relatively little-known Baroque composer Charpentier. No Baroque opera had ever won in the category before, never mind the fact that the other productions were two or three times the size of ours and sporting some household names of cast and conductors. Despite those odds – our names were called out and we had to think fast about what to say upon accepting the awards as we walked up the aisle.

After recovering from that exhilarating and terrifying experience, we began to think about what sort of project we might imagine to create as the first solo album for Aaron and simultaneously the first album of any kind for Pacific MusicWorks. I had worked with Aaron singing many different roles and styles, but when he came here in May of 2014 to sing the role of Jupiter in the Pacific MusicWorks production of Handel's *Semele*, I recognised (especially in his sensuous rendition of *Where e're you wak*) that Aaron was a born Handelian. Reading up on Handel's tenor, John Beard, got us both excited about the prospect of making a profile of that artistic collaboration both as a concert and as a recording concept. This is the result!

Stephen Stubbs

#### Handel's Tenor, John Beard (c. 1716–1791)

John Beard first came to Handel's attention at a performance in 1732 of his oratorio *Esther* in a performance to celebrate Handel's 47th birthday. At that point Beard was a chorister in the Chapel Royal, just 16 years old, and was given a cameo solo part of the Israelite Priest. Two years later he left royal service and shortly afterwards assumed the role of Silvio in Handel's *Il pastor fido* at the Covent Garden Theatre. The young tenor impressed Handel sufficiently that he soon wrote a part specifically for him in *Alexander's Feast* which premiered in February 1736, selections from which begin our concert here. This role also gave Beard his first success with the public, and he would remain in demand, by the public as well as by Handel and other composers, for the remainder of Handel's long life.

Handel's interest in Beard's talents caused him to give a new focus on the tenor voice within his works, particularly the English oratorio which had begun to replace Italian opera in the centre of Handel's prodigious output. Instead of the dueling divas and castrati of the Italian genre, English oratorio gave first priority to the clear articulation of the text, and Beard's tenor became his ideal. As the contemporary music historian, Sir John Hawkins, put it:

'He [Handel] hoped to please by songs, the beauties whereof were within the comprehension of less fastidious hearers than frequent the opera, namely such as were adapted to a tenor voice, with an articulate utterance of the words and a just expression of the melody; and he was happy in the assistance of a singer possessed of these and many other valuable qualities.'

Over the following years Beard appeared in each of Handel's oratorio seasons in roles created for him, most of which are represented in our programme. Throughout this time Beard was also under contract to the Drury Lane Theatre where he was required to perform in comic pieces almost every evening. One day in 1739 was particularly eventful for him, during which he rehearsed the new

oratorio by Handel (the role of Jonathan in *Saul*) in the morning, got married to Lady Henrietta Herbert of Howis in the afternoon, and still appeared as The Spaniard in *The Columbine Courtesan* at Drury Lane in the evening.

The collaboration of Beard with Handel was to continue until Handel's death, but we end our survey with the first great apex of that work together in which Handel created for Beard the first truly great tenor part as the hero in *Samson*. In this role Handel gave Beard the challenge of singing both florid music (*Why does the God of Israel sleep*) and lyrical airs (*Thus when the sun and Total eclipse!*), and most importantly gave Beard the responsibility of carrying the drama in the title role – the first role of this kind for a tenor outside of France. Handel spent his career fitting vocal music to the exact abilities of the singers he worked with and wrote for, but this work with Beard was a unique opportunity to observe and cultivate the growth of a great

artist over many years of constant collaboration. It is breathtaking to consider that all of the music on this programme was created in less than a decade.

The most substantial instrumental pendant to the opera and oratorio in Handel's English years was the genre of the concerto grosso. The *Op. 3* publication, printed by Walsh in 1734, was a rather haphazard collection of Handel's recent concertos, and Walsh may have pursued this publication with little or no input from Handel. But five years later, in 1739, when Walsh implored Handel to publish a new collection (based on the enormous popularity of the earlier set), Handel took it as an occasion to make a grand statement of his artistic vision. Concertos were often used as entr'acte music at the performance of Handel's oratorios as they serve here as well.

Stephen Stubbs

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#### We are grateful to the following for their support of this recording:

Ed Andereck, Marjorie Anderson, Kelly Barry, Daniel Bensky, Robin Bier, Jesse Blumberg, James Busby, Stephen Campbell, Jane Cardell, Bernie Clark, Joan and Frank Conlon, Robert Corona, David Cronin, Gerda and John Cunningham, Tekla Cunningham and David Sawyer, Rebecca Cypess, Kent Devereaux, Heath Dill, Alice Dubiel and James Hopfenbeck, Lauren Dudley, Joel Durand, Maxine Eilander and Stephen Stubbs, Becky Forland, Curtis Foster, Marsha Gladhart, Jolle Greenleaf, Mary Ann Hagan, Nancy K. Holcomb, Ann B. Howells, Maureen Hughes, Monica Jolley, Bruce E.H. Johnson, Kurt Kruckeberg and Dave Morgan, Dominique Labelle, Sara Lackie, Shaunna Siver Lucas, Rick and Ann Matsen, Donna McCampbell, Bill McJohn, James Meehan, John Mueller, Katie Sheehan Nagel, Eunice Nakao and Roy Tribelhorn, Dave Oskamp, Robert Palmer, Sarah Paysnick, Nicholas Phan, Lynn Phillips and Warren Bakken, Kathy Pohlen, Emilio Pons, Angela Quast, Tiia-Mai Redditt, Jennifer Rice, Eric Rose, Roy Rosenthal, Rachel Roulet, Patricia Isacson Sabee, Dr James Savage, Kathryn Sharpe, Naomi Shiff, Marguerite Smith, Douglas Smith and Stephanie Ellis-Smith, Stephen Sprenger, Laura Swartley, Amaranta Viera, Robert Wieltzen, Zachary Wilder, April Williamson, David A. Wood, Penelope Yonge, and Nancy Zylstra.

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#### Alexander's Feast (1736)

##### ① Give the vengeance due

Give the vengeance due  
To the valiant crew:  
Behold how they toss their torches on high,  
How they point to the Persian abodes,  
And glitt'ring temples of their hostile gods!

##### ① The princes applaud with a furious joy

The princes applaud with a furious joy;  
And the king seiz'd a flambeau, with zeal to destroy.

#### Israel in Egypt (1738)

##### ③ The enemy said, I will pursue

*Exodus xv: 9*  
The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake,  
I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them;  
I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

#### Ode for St Cecilia's Day (1739)

##### ④ Sharp violins proclaim their jealous pangs

Sharp violins proclaim  
Their jealous pangs, and desperation,  
Fury, frantic indignation,  
Depths of pain, and height of passion,  
For the fair disdainful dame.

#### Saul (1738–39)

##### ⑤ O filial piety!

O filial piety! O sacred friendship!  
How shall I reconcile you? Cruel father!  
Your just commands I always have obeyed:

But to destroy my friend, the brave, the virtuous,  
The godlike David, Israel's defender,  
And terror of her foes! To disobey you —  
What shall I call it? 'Tis an act of duty  
To God, to David — nay, indeed, to you.

##### ⑥ No, cruel father, no!

No, cruel father, no!  
Your hard commands I can't obey.  
Shall I with sacrilegious blow  
Take pious David's life away?  
No, cruel father, no!  
No, with my life I must defend  
Against the world my best, my dearest friend.

##### ⑦ Ah, dearest friend

Ah, dearest friend, undone by too much virtue!  
Think you, an evil spirit was the cause  
Of all my father's rage? It was, indeed,  
A spirit of envy, and of mortal hate.  
He has resolv'd your death; and sternly charg'd  
His whole retinue, me especially,  
To execute his vengeance.

##### ⑧ But sooner Jordan's stream

But sooner Jordan's stream, I swear,  
Back to his spring shall swiftly roll,  
Than I consent to hurt a hair  
Of thee, thou darling of my soul.

#### Messiah (1741)

##### ⑭ Thy rebuke

*Psalms 69:20*  
Thy rebuke hath broken his heart; he is full of heaviness.  
He looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man,  
neither found he any to comfort him.

##### ⑮ Behold and see

*Lamentations 1:12*  
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow.

##### ⑯ But thou didst not leave his soul in hell

*Psalms 16:10*  
But thou didst not leave his soul in hell, nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.



**17 Thou shalt break them**

*Psalm 2:9*

Thou shalt break them with a rod iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

**Samson (1742)**

**23 Torments, alas, are not confin'd**

Torments, alas, are not confin'd  
To heart, or head, or breast!  
But will a secret passage find  
Into the very inmost mind,  
With pains intense oppress,  
That rob the soul itself of rest.

**24 Total eclipse!**

Total eclipse! No sun, no moon!  
All dark amidst the blaze of noon!  
Oh, glorious light! No cheering ray  
To glad my eyes with welcome day!  
Why thus depriv'd Thy prime decree?  
Sun, moon, and stars are dark to me!

**25 My griefs for this**

My griefs for this  
Forbid mine eyes to close, or thoughts to rest.  
But now the strife shall end: me overthrown,  
Dagon presumes to enter lists with God,  
Who, thus provok'd, will not connive, but rouse  
His fury soon, and his great name assert;  
Dagon shall stoop, ere long be quite despoil'd  
Of all those boasted trophies won on me.

**26 Why does the God of Israel sleep?**

Why does the God of Israel sleep?

Arise with dreadful sound,  
And clouds encompass'd round!

Then shall the heathen hear thy thunder deep.  
The tempest of thy wrath now raise,  
In whirlwinds them pursue,  
Full fraught with vengeance due,  
Till shame and trouble all thy foes shall seize!

**27 Your charms to ruin led the way**

Your charms to ruin led the way,  
My sense depriv'd,  
My strength enslav'd,  
As I did love, you did betray.  
How great the curse, how hard my fate  
To pass life's sea with such a mate!

**28 Let but that spirit**

Let but that spirit (which first rush'd on me  
In the camp of Dan) inspire me at my need.

**29 Thus when the sun from's wat'ry bed**

Thus when the sun from's wat'ry bed  
All curtain'd with a cloudy red,  
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave;  
The wand'ring shadows ghastly pale,  
All troop to their infernal jail  
Each fetter'd ghost slips to his sev'ral grave.

**Aaron Sheehan**



Photo: Kevin Day

Sheehan also works extensively in chamber music, and has sung with Theatre of Voices, Blue Heron and TENET among others. He sang the title role in BEMF's recording of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux enfers*, which won Best Opera Recording at the 2015 GRAMMY® Awards.

[www.aaronsheehantenor.com](http://www.aaronsheehantenor.com)

**Stephen Stubbs**



Photo: Miranda Loud

which have received international acclaim and awards. Stubbs is the Boston Early Music Festival's (BEMF) artistic co-director and musical director alongside Paul O'Dette. As well as GRAMMY® Award recognition, BEMF recordings have won two Echo Klassik awards and the Diapason d'Or de l'Année. In 2013 Stubbs was appointed senior artist-in-residence at the University of Washington School of Music.

GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor Stephen Stubbs (Best Opera Recording, 2015) returned to his native Seattle in 2006 as one of the world's most respected lutenists, conductors, and Baroque opera specialists, having spent 30 years in Europe, and in 2014 was awarded the Mayor's Arts Award for 'Raising the Bar' in his home city. Prior to his return, he was a professor at the Hochschule für Künste, Bremen. In 2007 he established production company Pacific MusicWorks (PMW), reflecting his interest in both early music and contemporary performance. He has recently conducted Handel's *Messiah* with the Seattle, Edmonton and Birmingham Symphony orchestras. His extensive discography includes well over 100 albums, many of which have received international acclaim and awards. Stubbs is the Boston Early Music Festival's (BEMF) artistic co-director and musical director alongside Paul O'Dette. As well as GRAMMY® Award recognition, BEMF recordings have won two Echo Klassik awards and the Diapason d'Or de l'Année. In 2013 Stubbs was appointed senior artist-in-residence at the University of Washington School of Music.

[www.stephenstubbs.com](http://www.stephenstubbs.com)

**Pacific MusicWorks Orchestra**  
**Tekla Cunningham, Orchestra Director**



Critically acclaimed violinist Tekla Cunningham enjoys a multi-faceted career as a chamber musician, concertmaster, soloist and educator devoted to music of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras. She is concertmaster and orchestra director of the Pacific MusicWorks Orchestra, an ensemble of specialists from across the US that presents historically informed Baroque performances. Cunningham is also an artist-in-residence at the University of Washington. She is the founder and director of the Whidbey Island Music Festival, now entering its 14th season, producing and presenting vibrant period-instrument performances of music from the 17th through to the 19th centuries, and plays regularly as concertmaster and principal player with the American Bach Soloists in California. Cunningham received

her undergraduate degree in History and German Literature at Johns Hopkins University while attending Peabody Conservatory. She also studied at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien in Austria and earned a Master's degree in violin performance at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She plays on a Sanctus Seraphin violin made in Venice in 1746.  
[www.pacificmusicworks.org](http://www.pacificmusicworks.org)

**Conductor, Lute, and Guitar**  
Stephen Stubbs

**Violin 1**  
Tekla Cunningham  
(orchestra director)  
Chloe Meyers  
Christine Wilkinson

**Violin 2**  
Adam Lamotte  
Brandon Vance  
Corentin Pokorny

**Viola**  
Laurie Wells  
Romaric Pokorny

**Cello**  
Elisabeth Reed  
Meg Brennand

**Violone**  
Moriah Neils Caruso

**Bassoon**  
Nate Helgeson

**Oboe**  
Debra Nagy  
Curtis Foster

**Harpsichord/Organ**  
Adam Pearl

John Beard (c. 1716–1791) was a young tenor who came to George Frideric Handel's attention when still a teenager. He inspired the great composer to give new focus to the tenor voice within his English oratorios. Beard was Handel's ideal in his demands for 'articulate utterance of the words and a just expression of the melody' – a collaboration that climaxed in Handel's creation of the first truly great tenor part as the hero in *Samson*. GRAMMY® Award-winning tenor Aaron Sheehan steps into John Beard's shoes equipped with a voice of 'shining quality and deep sensitivity' (*The New York Times*).

George Frideric  
**HANDEL**

(1685–1759)

<b>1–2</b>	<b>Alexander's Feast, HWV 75 (excerpts)</b>	<b>3:30</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Israel in Egypt, HWV 54: The enemy said, I will pursue</b>	<b>2:04</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Ode for St Cecilia's Day, HWV 76:</b>	
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<b>23–29</b>	<b>Samson, HWV 57 (excerpts)</b>	<b>21:00</b>

**Aaron Sheehan, Tenor** **1–8 14–17 23–29**

**Stephen Stubbs, Conductor, Lute and Guitar**

**Pacific MusicWorks Orchestra**

**(Tekla Cunningham, Orchestra Director)**

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Producer: David Sabee • Engineers: Alexander Lipay, Dmitriy Lipay, Kory Kruckenberg (DXD)

Mastering engineers: Dmitriy Lipay, David Sabee • Booklet notes: Stephen Stubbs

Editions: Peter Jones **1–8 14–17 23–29** • A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet.

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