

## ACT ONE

### 1. OVERTURE

### 2. RECITATIVE - *Samson*

This day, a solemn feast to Dagon held, relieves me from my task of servile toil;  
Unwillingly their superstition yields this rest, to breathe heavn's air, fresh blowing, pure and sweet.

### 3A. CHORUS OF PHILISTINES:

Awake the trumpet's lofty sound.  
The joyful sacred festival comes round,  
When Dagon king of all the earth is crown'd

### 4. AIR – *Achisha*

Ye men of Gaza, hither bring..  
the merry pipe and pleasing string,  
the solemn hymn, and cheerful song; be Dagon prais'd by ev'ry tongue!

### 5. CHORUS OF PHILISTINES:

Awake the trumpet's lofty sound. The joyful sacred festival comes round,  
when Dagon king of all the earth is crown'd

### 9. RECITATIVE – *Samson*

Why by an angel was my birth foretold, if I must die, betray'd, and captiv'd thus,  
the scorn and gaze of foes? Oh, cruel thought!  
My griefs find no redress! They inward prey, like gangren'd wounds immedicable grown.

### 13. RECITATIVE

*Micah*

Matchless in might! Once Israel's glory, now her grief!  
We come (Thy friends well known) to visit thee!

*Samson*

Welcome, my friends!

*Micah*

Which shall we first bewail, thy bondage, or lost sight?

*Samson*

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!  
Oh, worse than beggary, old age, or chains! My very soul in real darkness dwells!

14. AIR - *Samson*:

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!

17. RECITATIVE

*Manoah*

Brethren and men of Dan, say, where is my son, Samson, fond Israel Dan, say, where is my son  
Samson, fond Israel's boast? Inform my age!

*Micah*

As signal now in low dejected state, as in the height of pow'r— See, where he lies!

20. ACCOMPAGNATO – *Manoah*

The good we wish for, often proves our bane.

I pray'd for children, and gained a son, And such a son, as all men hail'ed me happy;  
But who'd be now a father in my stead? The blessing drew a scorpion's tail behind: This plant, select  
and sacred, for a while the miracle of men, was in an hour ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,  
his foes' derision, captive, poor and blind.

21. AIR – *Manoah*

Thy glorious deeds inspir'd my tongue, whilst airs of joy from thence did flow.  
To sorrows now I tune my song, and set my harp to notes of woe.

22. RECITATIVE – *Samson*

Justly these evils have befall'n to Samson. Sole author I, sole cause.

23. ACCOMPAGNATO – *Samson*

My grief 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.

24. AIR – *Samson*

Why does the God of Israel sleep?  
Arise with dreadful sound, fraught with vengeance due,  
till shame and trouble all thy foes shall seize!

27. RECITATIVE

*Manoah*

For thee, my dearest son, must thou meanwhile lie, thus neglected, in this loathsome plight?

*Samson*

It should be so, Why should I live? Soon shall these orbs to double darkness yield.

28. ACCOMPAGNATO – *Samson*

My genial spirits droop, my hopes are fled; Nature in me seems weary of herself;  
My race of glory run, and race of shame: Death, invocated oft, shall end my pains,  
And lay me gently down with them that rest.

31. CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

Then round about the starry throne of Him who ever rules alone,  
Your heavn'ly guided soul shall climb: Of all this earthly grossness quit,  
With glory crown'd grossness quit

QUARTET - *Nashyan, Micah, Bedan, Manoah*

And triumph over death, and thee, O Time!

With glory crowned, forever sit.

**ACT TWO**

34. RECITATIVE

*Samson*

My evils hopeless are, one pray'r remains, a speedy death to close my miseries.

*Micah*

Relieve Thy champion, image of Thy strength, and turn his labors to a peaceful end.

36. QUINTET – *Micah, Nashyan, Abiyah, Bedan, Manoah*

To dust his glory they would tread, and number him amongst the dead.  
Return, return, O God of Haste! behold, behold Thy servant in distress  
to glory they would tread and number him amongst the dead.

37. RECITATIVE

*Micah*

But who is this, that so bedeck'd and gay Comes this way sailing like a stately ship?

*Samson*

My wife, my traitress? Let her not come near me!

*Dalila*

With doubtful feet, and wav'ring resolution, I come, O Samson, dreading thy displeasure;  
But conjugal affection led me on,  
Prevailing over fear and time on, doubt,  
Glad if in aught my help or love could serve,  
To expiate my rash, unthought misdeed.

38. AIR – *Aphra*.

With plaintive notes and am'rous moan, thus coos the turtle left alone.

43. AIR - *Dalila*

My faith and truth, O Samson, prove, but hear me, hear the voice of love!  
With love no mortal can be cloy'd all happiness is love enjoy'd,  
My faith and truth, O Samson, prove, but hear me, hear the voice of love!

44. DUET - *Dalila & Aphra*

Her faith and truth, O Samson, prove but hear her, hear the voice of love!

50. RECITATIVE – *Samson*

Ne'er think of that I know thy warbling charms, thy trains, thy wiles, and fair enchanted cup.  
Their force is null'd. Where once I have been caught, I shun the snare. These chains, this prison-  
house, I count the house of liberty to thine.

50a. RECITATIVE

*Dalila*

Let me approach, at least, and touch thy hand.

*Samson*

Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake my rage to tear thee limb from limb.  
At distance I forgive: depart with that triumph in thy falsehood; so farewell!

*Dalila*

Thou art more deaf to prayers than winds or seas;  
Thy anger rages an eternal tempest. Why should I humbly sue for peace, thus scorned with infamy  
upon my name denounced?  
When in this land I ever shall be held the first of womankind, living or dead: my praises shall be sung  
at solemn feasts, who saved my country from a fierce destroyer.

51. DUET – *Dalila and Samson*

*Dalila*

Traitor to love! I'll sue now more for pardon'd scorned,  
your threats give o'er.

*Samson*

Traitress to love! I'll hear no more the charmer's voice, your arts give o'er.

54. RECITATIVE – *Samson*

Favor'ed of heav'n is he who finds one true;  
How rarely found! — His way to peace is smooth.

56. RECITATIVE

*Micah*

No words of peace, no voice enchanting fear,  
A rougher tongue expect. Here's Harapha, I know him by this stride and haughty look.

*Harapha*

I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance; I am of Gath, men call me Harapha;  
Thou knowst me now; of thy prodigious might much have I heard, incredible to me!  
In this displeas'ed, that never in the field we met, to try each other's deeds of strength:  
I'd see if thy appearance answers loud report.

*Samson*

The way to know were not to see, but taste.

*Harapha*

Ha! Dost thou then already single me? I thought that labour and thy chains had tam'd thee.  
Had fortune brought me to that field of death, where thou wroughtst wonders with an ass's jaw, I'd  
left thy carcass where the ass lay dead.

*Samson*

Boast not of what thou wouldst have done, but do.

*Harapha*

The honour certain to have won from thee I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out;  
To combat with a blind man, I disdain.

60. RECITATIVE

*Samson*

Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster? Yet take heed! My heels are fetter'd, but my hands are free.  
Thou bulk of spirit void! I once again, blind and in chains, provoke thee to the fight!

*Harapha*

O Dagon! Can I hear this insolence to me unus'd  
not rend'ring instant death!

61. DUET – *Samson & Harapha*

*Samson*

Go, baffled coward, go, lest vengeance lay thee low, in safety fly my wrath with speed!

*Harapha*

Presume not on thy God, who under foot has trod thy strength and thee, at greatest need.

62. RECITATIVE – *Micah*

Here lies the proof: — if Dagon be thy God, with high devotion invoke his aid,  
His glory is concern'd; let him dissolve those magic spells that gave our hero strength;  
Then know whose God is God, Dagon, of mortal make,  
or that Great One whom Abram's son adore.

64. RECITATIVE – *Harapha*

Dagon, arise, attend thy sacred feast! Thy honor calls, this day admits no rest.

67. CHORUS

Fix'd in His everlasting seat, Jehovah / Great Dagon rules the world in state.  
His thunder roars, Heav'n shakes, and earth's aghast,  
The stars with deep amaze, Remain in steadfast gaze.  
Jehovah / Great Dagon is of Gods the first and last.

### **ACT THREE**

68. RECITATIVE

*Micah*

More trouble is behind, for Harapha comes on again, speed in his steps and look.

*Samson*

I fear him not, nor all his giant brood.

*Harapha*

Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say: This day to Dagon we do sacrifice  
With triumph, pomp, and games; we know, thy strength surpasses human race; come then, and show  
some public proof to grace this solemn feast.

*Samson*

I am a Hebrew, and our law forbids my presence at their vain religious rites.

*Harapha*

This answer will offend; regard thyself.

*Samson*

Myself, my conscience and internal peace!

Am I so broke with servitude, to yield To such absurd commands, to be their fool,  
And play before their God? — I will not come.

*Harapha*

My message, giv'n with speed, brooks no delay.

## 70. RECITATIVE

*Micah*

Consider, Samson, matters now are strain'd up to the height, whether to hold, or break.  
*gesture*...He's gone, whose malice may inflame the lords.

*Samson*

Shall I abuse this consecrated gift of strength, again returning with my hair,  
By vaunting it in honor to their god and prostituting holy things to idols?

*Micah*

How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach;  
'Tis Heav'n alone can save both us and thee.

## 72. RECITATIVE

*Samson*

Be of good courage, I begin to feel some inward motions, which do bid me go.

*Micah*

In time thou hast resolv'd, again he comes.

*Harapha*

Samson, this second summons send our lords:

Haste thee at once; or we shall engines find to move thee, though thou wert a solid rock.

*Samson*

Vain were their art if tried, I yield to go.

*Micah*

So may'st thou act as serves His glory best.

*Samson*

Let but that spirit (which first rush'd on me in the camp of Dan) inspire me at my need:  
Then shall I make Jehovah me at my need: Their idol gods shall from his presence fly,  
Scatter'd like sheep before the God of Hosts.

73. AIR - *Samson*

Thus when the sun in's wat'ry bed, all curtain'ed 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.

74. ACCOMPAGNATO – *Micah*

With might endued above the sons of men, swift as the lightning glance His errand execute, And spread His name amongst the heathen round.

75. AIR – *Micah*

The Holy One of Israel be thy guide, the Angel of thy birth stand by thy side!  
To fame immortal go, Heav'n bids thee strike the blow. The Holy One of Israel is thy guide.

76. QUARTET: *Nashyan, Micah, Bedan, Manoah*

To fame immortal go Heav'n bids thee strike the blow, go. The Holy One of Israel is thy guide.

78. AIR – *Dalila*

Great Dagon has subdued our foe, and brought their boasted hero low:  
Sound out his power, praise him with mirth, high cheer and wine.

79. CHORUS OF PHILISTINES

Great Dagon has subdu'd our foe and brought their boasted hero low:  
Sound out his power, praise him with mirth, high cheer and wine.

80. RECITATIVE

*Manoah*

What noise of joy was that? It tore the sky.

*Micah*

They shout and sing, to see their dreaded foe now captive, blind, delighting with his strength.

*Manoah*

Could my inheritance but ransom him, without my patrimony, having him, the richest of my tribe.

*Micah*

Sons care to nurse their parents in old age; but you, — your son!

81. AIR – *Manoah*

How willing my paternal love the weight to share of filial care,  
And part of sorrow's burden prove!  
Though wandr'ring in the shades of night, whilst I have eyes he wants no light.

82. RECITATIVE

*Micah*

Your hopes of his deliv'ry in which all Israel's friends participate.

*Manoah*

I know your friendly minds, and . . .

83 SINFONIA

84. RECITATIVE - *Manoah*

Heav'n! What noise? Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

85. CHORUS OF PHILISTINES

Hear us, our God! Oh, hear our cry! Death, ruin, fall'n. Oh, hear our cry! No help is nigh, O mercy, heav'n, we sink, we die!

86. RECITATIVE

*Abiyah*

Where shall I run, or which way fly the thoughts of this most horrid sight?

O countrymen, you're in this sad event too much concern'd.

*Micah*

The accident was loud, we long to know from whence.

*Abiyah*

Let me recover breath; it will burst forth.

*Manoah*

Suspense in news is torture; speak it out.

*Abiyah*

Then take the worst in brief. Samson is dead.

*Manoah*

the worst indeed!

*Abiyah*

Unwounded of his enemies he fell at once he did destroy, and was destroy'd.

The edifice (where all were me to see) upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

*Manoah*

O lastly overstrong against thyself!

A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge, glorious, yet dearly bought.

87. AIR - *Micah*

Ye sons of Israel, now lament, your spear is broke, your bow unbent: Your glory's fled, amongst the dead Great Samson lies, for ever, ever, clos'd his eyes.

88. QUARTET – Nashyan, Abiyah, Micah, Manoah

Weep, Israel, weep a louder strain; Samson, your strength, your hero, is slain!

93. AIR AND CHORUS

*Manoah*

Glorious hero, may thy grave peace and honor ever have;

After all thy pain and woes rest eternal, sweet repose!

Glorious hero, may thy grave peace and honor ever have!

*Nashayn*

The virgins too shall on their fastful days visit his tomb with flow'rs,  
and there bewail his lot, unfortunate in nuptial choice.

*Chorus of Virgins*

Bring the laurels, bring the bays, strew his hearse, and strew the ways!

*Nashayn*

May ev'ry hero fall like thee, through sorrow to felicity, through sorrow to felicity!

*Chorus of Virgins*

Bring the laurels, bring the bays strew his hearse and strew the ways!

*Chorus of Israelites*

Glorious hero, may thy grave peace and honor ever have,

After all thy pains and woes, rest eternal, sweet repose!

94. RECITATIVE - *Manoah*

Come, come! No time for lamentation now, no cause for grief; Samson like Samson fell,  
Both life and death heroic. To his foes ruin is left; to him eternal fame.

95. AIR - *Nashyan*

Let the bright seraphim in burning row, their loud, uplifted angel trumpets blow.

Let the cherubic host, in tuneful choirs, touch their immortal harps with golden wires.

96. CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

Let their celestial concerts all unite, ever to sound his praise in endless blaze of light.