

5 Oct 1975

**Oldham  
Musical  
Society**



**91st  
Season**

75-76

SUNDAY, 5th OCTOBER, 1975

8-00 p.m.

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Oratorio      JUDAS    MACCABAEUS      Handel      (1685-1759)

Israelitish Woman	soprano	* Alison Jack
Israelitish Man	counter-tenor	Richard Hill
Judas Maccabaeus	tenor	* Langford Roberts
Simon (Judas' brother)	bass	John Rath
Priest	counter-tenor	Richard Hill
Eupolemus (Jewish Ambassador)	bass	Frank Wills
Messengers	tenor	Michael Waller
	counter-tenor	Richard Hill
	bass	John Rath
Israelites	The Oldham Musical Society Chorus	
harpsichord	James Dickenson	
piano	Norman Shimmells	
conductor	John Bethell	

\* appears by permission of the Principal of the Royal Northern College of Music.

Judas Maccadaeus has always been the next most frequently performed oratorio after the Messiah, and its extraordinary popularity can be explained by the heroic character of the work. Handel wrote Judas Maccabaeus in 1746. The libretto, by Thomas Morell, suggested by the Duke of Cumberland's victory at the Battle of Culloden that year. It deals with the revolt of the Jews, led by Judas Maccabaeus, against the Syrians who were imposing an alien religion on them. There is no plot in the strict sense, nor is Handel concerned with characterisation.... Judas represents heroic resolution, the Israelites register fear, dismay or relief.

The oratorio is in three acts. The opening chorus tells us that the captive Jews have lost their leader Mattathias, and with him their hopes of liberty. Judas' brother Simon, prophesies victories to come. Judas appears and calling on his father's name, promises to lead his people to battle.

The second act begins with a celebration of the fall of the enemy. The Israelites praise Judas who attributes his success to Divine Aid. Their rejoicings are interrupted by the news that Antiochus has sent 'the valiant Gorgias' with his army to destroy the Temple and enslave the Jews. Again