

# LITTLE-HEARD WORK SUNG AT BUNGAY

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## *Thrilling Soprano Soloist*

**H**ANDEL'S oratorio "Samson" has never achieved great popularity as a work. First performed in London one year after "Messiah," in 1743, it ran for eight successful performances and then fell flat. Individual arias—as in so many Handel operas—have survived as solo items, but it is rare nowadays to hear a complete performance.

This work displays, more than in any other Handel oratorio, the operatic background of the composer, and at last night's performance by the Bungay Choral Society in St. Mary's Church this characteristic was obviously in the conductor's mind, though the chorus

and in the recitative passages the dramatic nature of "Samson" was brought fully to light. Perhaps a little more freedom of style might have been permissible on the arias "Total Eclipse" and "Honour and arms," though both were pleasing. The contralto was Elizabeth Wright.

A slight unsteadiness among the parts improved during the performance, and the full power of the chorus was felt in the thrilling passage "With thunder armed"—reminiscent of a similar chorus in Bach's St. Matthew Passion—and the gay and mocking "Great Dagon has subdued our foe."

Certain passages in Part Two were omitted, though this in no way de-