

George Frideric Handel 1685-1759 Italian Cantatas

Carlotta Colombo soprano

Dia	nna Cacciatrice HWV79	Tu fedel? Tu costante? HWV171		
cantata for soprano, soprano in echo,			cantata for soprano, two violins and b.c.	
trumpet, two violins and b.c.			11. Sonata	2'16
1.	La Marche	1'51	12. Recitativo - Tu fedel?	
2.	Recitativo - Alla caccia,		Tu costante? Ah, non è vero!	1'03
	alla caccia	0'30	13. Aria (Un poco allegro) -	
3.	Aria - Foriera la tromba	3'49	Cento belle ami, Fileno	5'06
4.	Coro - Alla caccia, alla caccia	0'29	14. Recitativo - L'occhio nero,	
5.	Arietta - Di questa selva,		vivace	0,50
	tra dubbie vie	1'18	15. Aria - Se Licori, Filli ed io	1'41
6.	Coro - Alla caccia, alla caccia	0'37	16. Recitativo - Ma se non hai	
Carlotta Colombo soprano		più d'un sol cuore in petto	0'33	
		1	17. Aria - Se non ti piace amarmi	3'01
Maria Dalia Albertini soprano in echo			18. Recitativo - Ma il tuo genio	
A1			incostante	0'49
Alpestre Monte HWV81			19. Aria - Sì, crudel, ti lascerò	1'02
	ntata for soprano, two violins an			
/.	Accompagnato - Alpestre mon		Carlotta Colombo soprano	
0	e solitaria selva	0'49		
8.	Aria (Largo e staccato) -	514.0		
0	Io so ben ch'il vostro orrore	5'12		
9.	Recitativo - Quindi me n'vengo			
	a voi per cercar morte	0'57		
10.	Aria (Adagio) - Almen dopo			
	il fato mio	4'38		

Olinto pastore arcade alle glorie del Tebro HWV143

Serenade for two sopranos, alto, tu	vo	30. Recitativo, Olinto - Tebro,	
solo violins, violins di ripieno and l	b.c.	tu non rispondi?	0'33
20. Sonata	1'20	31. Aria, Olinto - Al suon che	
21. Aria (Andante), Olinto -		destano belliche squille	1'52
Oh! Come chiare e belle	3'01	32. Recitativo, Tebro & Gloria -	
22. Recitativo, Olinto & Tebro -		Di stupor, di diletto	1'03
Ma quel che più d'ogn'altro	1'01	33. Aria (Allegro), Tebro -	
23. Aria (Largo), Tebro - Chi mi		Io torno a sperare	2'55
chiama, or che non sono	3'29	34. Recitativo, Gloria -	
24. Recitativo, Olinto & Tebro -		Di sì giuste speranze	0'38
Dell'arcadi foreste	1'01	35. Aria, Gloria - Astro clemente	2'30
25. Aria (Allegro), Tebro - Più non	!	36. Recitativo, Olinto & Tebro -	
spero di lauro guerriero	3'15	Tebro, ti dissi il vero	1'09
26. Recitativo, Olinto & Tebro -		37. Aria, Olinto - Alle voci del	
Per te non più rubella	1'21	bronzo guerriero	2'57
27. Aria (Adagio), Gloria -		38. Coro, Olinto, Gloria & Tebro -	
Caro Tebro, amico fiume	4'16	Viva un astro sì bello	0'24
28. Recitativo, Gloria -			
Sì, la Gloria son io	0'45	Olinto by Carlotta Colombo sopr	ano
29. Aria, Gloria - Tornami a		Gloria by Maria Dalia Albertini soț	brano
vagheggiar	2'38	Tebro by Marta Fumagalli contra	ılto

 $FANTAZYAS \ on \ authentic \ instruments$

Gabriele Cassone *baroque trumpet*Gabriele Pro (leader, and *solo HWV171*, *HWV143*),

Giacomo Coletti, Archimede De Martini first violins

Diego Castelli (solo HWV171, HWV143), Jody Livo, Beatrice Scaldini second violins Emanuele Rigamonti cello · Paolo Bogno double bass Francesco Motta theorbo · Daniele Rocchi harpsichord

Roberto Balconi harpsichord (recitatives) and conductor

Georg Frideric Handel had probably encountered Gian Gastone de' Medici, son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in Hamburg at some point before heading south to Italy, where he arrived in August 1706, staying in Florence as a guest of Ferdinando de' Medici, Gian Gastone's brother. Keen to acquire new creative inspiration, the following year the composer decided to visit Rome, where a number of powerful patrons chose to support him, including Cardinals Benedetto Pamphilj, Pietro Ottoboni, Carlo Colonna and Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli. It was in Rome that Handel first composed oratorios, with a performance in the palace of Cardinal Ottoboni of Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno, his debut in this genre on a libretto by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj. In the summer of 1707, he returned briefly to Florence to stage his first Italian opera, Rodrigo. He was soon back in Rome, however, finding the atmosphere there particularly stimulating for the production of his secular cantatas, in particular on account of the patronage of Marquis Francesco Ruspoli. Although we do not know whether the nobleman provided the composer with a regular salary, it is certain that from time to time Handel composed secular cantatas at his behest.

The term 'cantata' first appears as an appellative for a vocal composition in 1620, in the collection of works by Alessandro Grandi *Cantade et Arie a voce sola con basso continuo*. In the course of time the genre took on a structure of its own, with alternation of recitative and arias. Intrinsically versatile as regards length and ensemble, the cantata could be shaped to suit different occasions.

Once the earlier influence of the madrigal for solo voice had begun to wane, from the mid-1700s the cantata flourished and developed as a genre in the cultural and musical spheres of Papal Rome. Of the many composers who tried their hand at it, Bernardo Pasquini was one of the most prolific. Greatly admired in Roman musical circles, he composed around seventy cantatas, establishing the structure and form that prevailed in the years Handel was in Rome. Although Handel did not return to the genre once he left Italy, there can be no doubt that it influenced his later works for the theatre.

Handel's numerous cantatas on Italian librettos largely envisage one, two or three voices with basso continuo and instrumental accompaniment. Many of them embody elements relating to dramatic structure that were to characterize the arias and scenes of the grand operas he staged during his career in England. The subjects of the Rome cantatas tend to be pastoral, Arcadian, amorous or on occasions celebrative, such as the serenade *Olinto Pastore*.

It was Marquis Ruspoli who commissioned Handel to write the cantata HWV79 *Diana cacciatrice* for soprano, soprano in echo, trumpet, two violins and basso continuo, composed in Rome, probably at the end of February 1707, to celebrate the opening of the annual deer hunting season at the Cerveteri estate. The extant score, which is incomplete, comprises a short opening march in which the composer conjures up the sounds of the hunt. Following a short recitative comes the da capo aria *Foriera la tromba*, featuring a picturesque pursuit played out by the soprano and the trumpet. The cantata then continues with what is described in the score as a 'coro', effectively a very short passage in which a second soprano and the wind instrument respond as an echo to the solo soprano. Next comes the *Di questa selva* arietta, which we have completed with a replica of the chorus.

Composed in 1707 for Ruspoli, cantata HWV171 *Tu fedel? Tu costante?* Was probably first performed by the soprano Margherita Durastanti, accompanied by two violins and basso continuo. The anonymous text, which is unusually mordant and ironic, describes how the protagonist avenges herself of philandering Fileno, the 'empio, infido mentitor' who was supposed to be her swain. Betrayed by his dalliance with 'a hundred beauties', she voices her disgust at such disloyalty and decides that she will not weep or sigh for him, but rather love others or not love at all, as she declares in the final aria *Sì crudel ti lascerò*.

Alpestre Monte HWV81 is a cantata for soprano, two violins and basso continuo that also dates back to 1707. It features sweeping melodies that reveal great mastery in the use of musical themes, with eloquent expression of mood and affetti. Clearly Handel had absorbed everything possible of the Italian style, at the same time

rendering the different emotional states of mind of his characters with consummate skill. The affliction and deep melancholy of the unrequited lover who is prepared to contemplate death in his efforts to win over his beloved are beautifully expressed in Handel's touching and dramatic handling of melody.

One of the last chamber works Handel wrote during his stay in Italy, Olinto pastore arcade alle glorie del Tebro HWV143 is a composition for three voices that was first performed in Rome on 9 September 1708 at Palazzo Bonelli. Because the term cantata features in the title of the handwritten score, it is usually described as such, although the title page of the printed edition of the libretto refers to it it as a 'Serenata à trè Voci'. In actual fact in Handel's day the two terms were practically interchangeable, even though in period literature the serenade was considered more lavish and celebrative than the traditional cantata. The first performance of Olinto Pastore called for an ensemble made up of two sopranos, a contralto, five first and second violins (divided into soli and ripieni), one cello, one double bass, a trumpet and the harpsichord. Eulogistic and allegorical in character, it was performed to celebrate Ruspoli's recruitment of a regiment of 550 soldiers placed at the disposal of Pope Clement XI for border defence around the Legation of Ferrara, then under threat from the imperial troops. The anonymous libretto – possibly written by Ruspoli himself - involves three characters: the shepherd Olinto, who represented the Marquis himself (Olinto was his Arcadian name), the river Tebro (Tiber), which stands for Rome, and the allegorical figure of Gloria. Olinto urges the Tiber, and hence Rome, governed by a variously mentioned 'clement star' (a clear allusion to Clement XI), to take up arms once more. Thanks to the involvement of Gloria (whose arias include Tornami a vagheggiar, which was famously used again in Alcina), who recalls the splendour and victories of ancient Rome, the Tiber is persuaded to seek military success again. The three characters come together in the final chorus to sing the praises of Pope Clement XI.

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Fantazyas is a vocal and instrumental baroque ensemble founded in 2000 by singer and conductor Roberto Balconi. The ensemble collaborates with musicians and singers specialising in early music and baroque repertoire, with the aim of presenting well-known pieces and celebrating forgotten works. The group approaches music with typical Italian zest and sensitivity, and thanks to its versatility and appearance in different formations is able to cover a wide-ranging repertoire, including opera, oratorio, sacred and secular cantata, madrigal and medieval music. The ensemble has performed at baroque festivals in Europe, Japan and Israel, and released on Brilliant Classics, Giovanni Ghizzolo's *Il Secondo Libro de Madrigali* (94834) and Caccini's *Amarilli, Le Nuove Musiche* 1601 (96254).



Roberto Balconi is a Milanese singer and conductor. While his vocal repertoire ranges from early to contemporary music, he has focused particularly on the style and technique of baroque music, establishing himself internationally as one of its most accomplished performers. He has sung at major venues and early music festivals all over the world and made a large number of recordings. He has for many years also been active as conductor, notably with the instrumental and vocal ensemble Fantazyas, and devotes his time to musical research and the rediscovery of forgotten repertoire. In addition to Caccini and Ghizzolo, he has also recorded Egidio Romualdo Duni's Les Deux Chasseurs et La Laitière for Brilliant Classics (95422).



Thanks to: Arianna Lodi, Pietro Mitta, Nicholas Negrini, Sarah Sternjakob, Alma Zeccara

Recording: 13-15 April 2021, Chiesa di San Donnino, Como, Italy
Recording direction: Maria Dalia Albertini, Carlotta Colombo
Recording, editing & mastering: Edoardo Lambertenghi
Photos: Edoardo Lambertenghi, Enrico Gazziero (Roberto Balconi)
Cover: Diana disarming Cupid (1769): Elizabeth Dashwood, Duchess of Manchester (1741-1832)
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