

HANDEL EDITION

Liner notes & sung texts (p. 40 – p. 97)

LINER NOTES

CD1

WATER MUSIC

A king does not amuse himself alone

On the evening of July 17, 1717, King George I of England boarded the royal barge at Whitehall in the company of a select group of ladies and was rowed up the Thames as far as Chelsea, where Lady Catherine Jones was expecting him for supper. The river teemed with boats and barges, as the *Daily Courant* announced two days later, for everybody who was anybody in London wanted to accompany the king on this pleasure trip. A special attraction was provided by a barge of the City Company, on which some fifty musicians performed music composed especially for the occasion; the king liked it so much that he had it repeated twice.

The most informative account of the event is the detailed report the Prussian ambassador Friedrich Bonet sent to his king, Friedrich Wilhelm I, the son-in-law of the Hanoverian Elector who had ascended the throne of England as King George I in 1714. In going on to remark that the crown prince and his wife did not participate in the celebrations, Bonet was certainly aware of the political significance of what he said. Not only did the new (Protestant) king have to grapple with the adherents of James Stuart, the (Catholic) pretender to the throne who had plotted a rebellion in 1715, but he had also had to look on as his own son's house turned into a meeting place of the parliamentary opposition. Georg of Hanover, now inevitably called "George", did not particularly like England, and the English did not like him either, so that William Makepeace Thackeray was probably right when he later wrote that, given the choice, the king would have liked to leave England to, its own devices as far as possible and live elsewhere as much as possible; his heart remained in Hanover. However, in view of political developments, he renounced his annual holiday at home in the summer of 1717 and used the time, to make himself more likeable to his new subjects. On July 15, before shutting down for the summer, Parliament approved an amnesty for most of the imprisoned Jacobite insurgents not yet executed, while the summer was brightened up by a series of festivities; among them, splendid receptions at Hampton Court Palace. The cruise on the Thames was accordingly anything but a private amusement. Bonet's report also reveals that the king was not thinking of paying for the events from his private purse. He began by trying to engage Heidegger; who had made a good deal of money with his masques on a subscription basis, to organize the event on the Thames. However, the Swiss impresario would have nothing to do with the idea, so it fell to George's Master of Horse and close friend Baron Kielmansegge to organize the event, in which the musicians alone cost him 150 pounds. It was Kielmansegge who had arranged for the young Handel, then enjoying success in Italy, to become Kapellmeister in "Hanover (where he did not spend much time, having already extended his feelers in the direction of England), and who now gave Handel the commission which resulted in one of the most irrepressible classics of light music. For the *Water Music* is indeed light music of the very finest kind. All it has to do with water is the fact that it was first performed on the Thames. In a sparkingly elegant mixture of styles, Handel combined the best from France and Italy, spiced with English local colour - as in the hornpipe musically ennobled by Purcell

and in the fashionable country dance – and added splendid highlights to the whole with horns ("French horns", a novelty in England) and trumpets. Not only King George was enthusiastic about it. Striking proof of the popularity of the *Water Music* is the fact that pieces from it very soon found their way to the concert platforms and into London's theatres; some were even under laid with texts, two were used in Polly, the sequel to the legendary *Beggar's Opera* by John Gay and John Christopher Pepusch and one was included in *The English Dancing Master* by John Playford, a famous; often republished collection of popular dances. The "Minuet for the French Horn" and the "Trumpet Minuet" enjoyed particular popularity. They were also the first pieces from the "*Water Music*" that appeared in print (in the harpsichord anthology *The Ladies Banquet* of 1720), followed in 1725 by the overture in the French style. In 1733 Handel's publisher John Walsh published *The Celebrated Water Musick*, a version for seven orchestral parts which reduced the work to eleven movements; he published the rest ten years later (at the time Handel's *Messiah* had its London premiere) as *Handel's Celebrated Water Musick Compleat*, but only as an arrangement for harpsichord (or as we would say today, a "piano score"). It was not until 1788 that Samuel Arnold published a complete orchestral edition.

Conscientious editors have had to face the fact that Handel's autograph has not survived, that various manuscript versions exist and that there are divergences between the various printed sources. Three different suites can be extracted from the surviving scores: one in F major (with horns), one in D major (with horns and trumpets) and a "more tender" one in G major (with transverse flutes and recorders) that might well have served as "Tafelmusik" (banqueting music) at Lady Catherine's supper, Friedrich Bonet, who is known for his precise reporting, states that the music lasted an hour in all, which might indicate that all three suites, in whichever order, sounded on the Thames. Friedrich Chrysander, who is much chided by his modern colleagues but was in fact in infinitely commendable editor who realized the first monumental complete Handel edition practically singlehanded, essentially decided to adopt the sequence of movements given by Samuel Arnold, in which the Suites II and III are arranged as a single suite. A sensational find in the archive of the Royal Society of Musicians in London seems to indicate that both views are right. A complete manuscript score discovered there in 2004 is the earliest of all the sources so far known. It offers a possible alternative, to the usual - and musically just as meaningful - division into three suites. But whether it truly represents the "original form" of 1717 will probably have to remain an open question - at least until the event of Handel's autograph appearing in some or other archive...

© Babette Hesse

Translation: J & M Berridge

CD2

MUSIC FOR THE ROYAL FIREWORKS

The creation of Music of the Royal Fireworks we also owe to a royal feast. In 1748, the Austrian war of succession was ended by the Peace of Aachen. The English King ordered a large fireworks display for the peace celebrations in Green Park. Back then, this meant, that for this show a unique, huge "machine" was to be built out of wood, with a triumphal arch, with doric columns and everything else that goes with it. At the climax of the festivities, a mechanical rocket would shoot burning wheels and other fireworks into the sky. Naturally, bombastic music was needed to accompany this spectacle. "Military music" was what the king wished to have. Handel reluctantly fulfilled this wish and arranged the score for 9 trumpets, 9 horns, 24 oboes, 12 bassoons; and three kettle drums; in a note he demanded a strengthening of the oboes and bassoons by the strings. What it finally sounded like is not reported. But we do know that "the illumination was poor and that the firing took so long that hardly anyone had the patience to remain until the end." These annoyances belong to the remote past. What remains is the magnificent, indestructible "Music of the Royal Fireworks"

© Ingeborg Allihn

Translation: Danny Antonelli

SINFONIAS

The fact that Handel's charming Sinfonia in B flat HWV339 has been preserved for posterity is thanks to two copies made by someone other than Handel himself. One of them was made by the composer Christoph Graupner, who came to the Hamburg opera house on Gänsemarkt just at the time when the twenty-one-year-old Handel, who had earned his spurs in that city as a composer of operas, was about to leave for Italy. This fact and the clear quotations from the instrumental introduction to an aria from Handel's very first opera *Almira* in the first movement are strong evidence for the Sinfonia to be attributed to his years in Hamburg. Thanks to his friend and rival Johann Mattheson, Handel made the acquaintance of the "English Resident" (ambassador) in Hamburg, whose son he taught. This gave the young man from Halle a feel for the wider world and he discovered England as a possible option in his future career. Some charming ideas from Handel's younger years can be found in his later works; indeed, recycling and adaptation of existing material became characteristic of his compositional oeuvre and it was by no means just his own work that he re-used. In his 1747 Sinfonia in B flat HWV347 for example, there are elements borrowed from Georg Philipp Telemann and Georg Muffat. It is not known at which occasion this work was performed. What we do know is that Handel used sections of it for the introductory movement of his oratorio *Joshua* and for one of the organ concertos with which he often used to expand his oratorio performances, where he played the solo organ himself to an adoring audience. By that time, Handel had already been a naturalized British citizen for 20 years, having made himself immortal at the latest when he composed *Messiah*. Indeed, one grateful Englishman, Jonathan Tyers, even had a memorial erected to Handel, in London's Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens in 1738!

© Babette Hesse

Translation: J & M Berridge

CD3

CONCERTI GROSSI OP.3

Poised between three cultures, Handel excelled at the styles of Italian Opera, German absolute music and English style of Oratorio, creating something of a new national style in his adopted city of London. He was born however in 1685 in the Eastern German city of Halle, son of a local surgeon who had plans that his son should join the legal profession, but by 1702 it was clear that things would work out somewhat differently and the young Handel had fallen under the influence of the

composer Telemann and become cathedral organist in his home town.

By 1705, Handel was in Hamburg writing operas with some varied success. Inexperience led him to visit Italy where he met the Scarlatti's in Florence and the Prince of Hanover in Venice, who at the time was looking for a new Kapellmeister. But opportunities were to lead the composer to England where the success of his opera "Rinaldo" established his name overnight.

Handel soon became into the service of the Hanoverian monarch in London and began to write not only operas for the London stage, but also occasional pieces for the Royal family including his anthems and the famous Water Music and Fireworks Music. But London was also fired by rivalries in the musical world and Handel's operas were soon to be marked by the contests of rival prima donnas. Restrictions on performances of stage works led Handel to inaugurate a new style of unstaged, music theatre in his Oratorios, the most famous of which include "Samson", "Judas Maccabeus" and "Messiah" and it was during a performance of the later work in 1759 that Handel was taken ill and died short after. He was buried, as he himself wished, in Westminster Abbey where his memorial stands to this day.

The earlier of the two sets of Concerti Grossi by Handel bears the opus number 3 but it is uncertain when they were actually composed although it is known they were first published in London in 1734. It has been suggested that they date from Handel's period at the Court of Hanover but there is no certainty in this; what is certain is that the six short pieces are based on borrowings and influences from Italian, French and German sources and that much of the material to be found in these charming works is made up of a series of short, often extremely short, movements, often with an accent on the oboe as a solo instrument.

© Dr. David Doughty

CD4-6

CONCERTI GROSSI OP.6

We tend to associate German baroque music chiefly with two towering figures: Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel. Yet even though they were exact contemporaries, they had little in common. It would be difficult to think of composers providing a more striking contrast than Bach, the austere, devout Protestant, and Handel, a lusty man fond of wine and good cheer and with an explosive temperament. Whereas Bach's works blossomed in the provincial atmosphere of a life spent mainly in Leipzig, Handel was a cosmopolitan figure, the wealthy owner of a big art collection, a man who made and lost fortunes in his musical enterprises. Most important, Handel won everlasting fame during his own lifetime, his operas and oratorios reaching a wide audience inside and outside England. Having moved to England in 1712, he remained there for the rest of his life. As a composer and impresario he was a public figure and an object of gossip in London, that bustling metropolis, where he not only met with adulation and acclaim, but also encountered scorn and intrigues.

It was in London that Handel, born in the same year as Bach (1685), wrote the bulk of his instrumental music, taking advantage of its vast popularity to use a great deal of the material more than once. Numerous movements of his concerti grossi made their way into his stage works in the form of instrumental interludes. Like his coeval, Johann Sebastian Bach, he focussed on the two principal genres of baroque music, the concerto and the suite. In his concerti grossi Op.6, which Handel composed in 1739 and published the following year under the title "Grands concertos", he achieved a synthesis of the two forms. Handel gave due emphasis to the alternation of tutti and solo passages that is characteristic of the concerto. The tutti statements are entrusted to the string orchestra, the solo episodes to a small group comprising two solo violins and a cello. In sum, the movements also represent a succession of baroque dances (e.g. gavotte, gigue and minuet) and hence a

suite, which may open with an overture. Handel employed this basic scheme for his most famous concerti grossi, the Water Music and the Music for the Royal Fireworks.

Both Bach and Handel displayed an absolute mastery of the formal resources of baroque music without adhering closely to historical models. Even so their instrumental compositions are worlds apart. Especially the concerti grossi Op.6, make it clear that Handel was less concerned with elaborate polyphonic textures than with memorable tunes and opulent sonorities. Even his fugal movements are founded on concise, arresting themes. In marked contrast to Bach, the spiritual dimension in Handel's instrumental music is occasionally de-emphasized in favour of a sumptuous, brilliant fabric of sound. So the different character traits of the two great baroque composers may well be said to find expression in their music.

© Christiane Krautscheid

Translation: Bernd Zölner

CD7

CONCERTI A DUE CORI

The occasions for which George Frideric Handel intended his impressive concertos for two wind sections, strings and basso continuo HWV332-334 remained an open question for a long time. By virtue of the fairly large forces called for in each of the, wind choirs-two oboes, a- bassoon and, in the case of the HWV334 concerto, also two horns-they were assumed to have originated in the same way as the Music for the Royal Fireworks and the Water Music -for performance as popular open-air entertainment, notably at pleasure gardens, like Ranelagh or Vauxhall Gardens. While usage of this kind cannot be quite excluded, the discovery of a hitherto unknown copy of the score of the F major concerto HWV334 and of related sources has shown that at least this group of concertos was not written specifically for occasions of this nature.

The three works are to be regarded far more in the context of Handel's work in the field of the oratorio, which had been the main focus of his work increasingly since the 1730s, when he had finally given up trying to win back London audiences for his Italian operas. Since Handel's oratorios largely did without the virtuosic skills of famous operatic prima donnas and castrati, and called for English singers considerably less versed in vocal acrobatics, the composer sought to make good this disadvantage in competing for the favour of a sensation-crazed audience by inserting instrumental concertos between the acts-a practice which he is known to have taken up at the latest for the performances of the oratorios Saul and Israel in Egypt during Lent, 1739. To the traditional list of works which functioned thus as intermezzos, including at least ten of the twelve Grand Concertos Op.6 and the majority of the Organ Concertos of Op.4 and Op.7 -in which Handel put his own famed improvising abilities on display- must now be added the three concertos HWV332-334.

In the rediscovered manuscripts mentioned above, the Concerto in F major HWV334 is entitled "Concerto / in the Oratorio of / Judas Maccabaeus", and may thus be identified as the work mentioned in the London General Advertiser of April 1, 1747 in a notice referring to the premiere of Judas Maccabaeus (HWV63): "At the Theatre Royal ... this Day ... will be perform'd a New Oratorio, call'd JUDAS MACCABAEUS. With a New CONCERTO...". It is probable that the concerto was performed, in the version recorded here, between the second and third acts; the later arrangement of the piece as an organ concerto may well have been used similarly. The extensive borrowing from his own compositions that Handel makes in all three concertos -often from works written only shortly before seems to justify the assumption that the other two concertos 'were written at roughly the same time as the concerto HWV334. The Concerto in B flat major HWV332 probably formed part of the first performance of the oratorio Joshua on March 9, 1748-here, too, mention is made of a

"New Concerto"-and the Concerto in F major HWV333 is likely to have followed closely upon it, on March 23, 1748, during the premiere of Alexander Balus, the overture to which happens to be an arrangement of the opening movement of the HWV332 concerto.

"Concerti a due cori", the established designation for these three works, did not originate with Handel and is in fact misleading, insofar as all three compositions are better regarded as being trichoral -one choir formed by the strings and the other two by the wind instruments. Its seven-movement structure distinguishes the B flat major concerto from the pair of F major concertos, which have six movements a piece; its final movement is moreover headed "Minuet", making it the only one of the three with a movement named as a dance. The degree to which Handel incorporated other compositions here also differs greatly: whereas the parody technique is not used at all in the Judas Maccabaeus concerto (except for echoes of the aria "io seguio sol Fiero" from the opera Partenope in the final movement), the title probably selected by Handel himself for the B flat major concerto is explicit -"Concerto made from Choruses" -and refers to borrowings from choral movements from the Messiah ("And the glory of the Lord" in the Allegro ma non troppo), Belshazzar ("See from his post Euphrates flies", in the Allegro) and Semele ("Lucky omens", in movements 5 and 6). The Largo and the Minuet use arias from the operas Ottone and Lotario, the overture alone appearing to have no forebears. Finally, the Concerto in F major HWV333 had four of its movements based upon the various versions of the oratorio Esther; the third movement, A tempo giusto, on the other hand, is an arrangement of the chorus "Lift up your hand" from the Messiah, while the last movement, A tempo Ordinario, is based on the chorus "God found them guilty" from the Occasional Oratorio. Handel never fails to impress in the skill with which he adapted vocal pieces to the rich palette of colours available to a large instrumental ensemble, creating by this means sophisticated orchestral works that are among the best in his instrumental oeuvre.

© Joachim Steinheuer

Translation: J & M Berridge

CD8-12

ORGAN CONCERTOS

George Frideric Handel received his first musical training from the highly-regarded composer and organist, Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow, in his home town of Halle. Following the wishes of his dead father, he enrolled at the university there in 1702 after completing his studies at the grammar school, although he left after only a few weeks in favour of accepting the post of organist at the Reformierte Schloss- und Domkirche (reformed castle and cathedral church). When his probationary year came to an end, he moved to Hamburg where he played first the violin and later the harpsichord in the orchestra of the Goose Market opera house. It was here that his first opera "Almira, Queen of Castile" (HWV1, 1704) became a huge success whereas his second was not very well received. Handel then decided to study the art of opera in its country of origin and in the spring of 1706 he travelled to Italy, visited the most important musical cities and mastered the Italian style of opera.

Following subsequent employment as Kapellmeister (director of music) in Hanover (1710-1712), he settled in London where he was hugely successful with operas in the Italian style - until the English audience increasingly began to lose interest in this spectacular genre during the early 1730s. This intensified the rivalry amongst London's music promoters who, searching for audience favour, were investing ever-increasing amounts of money in famous singers and taking very high financial risks. When the "Opera of Nobility" competing with Handel engaged the world-famous castrato, Farinelli, for the 1734/35 season, many a contemporary observer was already forecasting the decline of Handel's musical enterprises. In response to this he engaged two extremely distinguished

artists - the French dancer, Marie Sallé, and the English tenor, John Beard - for the performances of his operas and also his oratories. In the intervals between the oratories he offered the audience an additional musical attraction: Handel, who was considered in England as the greatest organist of his time, played music in the style of the very popular Italian concerto and performed the solo part on the organ. These works were the first organ concertos in musical history and sent the audience into raptures.

London music publisher, John Walsh Jr., brought out three collections of Handel's organ concertos in 1738, 1740 and 1761 of which, however, only 14 are authentic. Samuel Arnold, the publisher of the first complete edition of all Handel's works, presented two further organ concertos in 1797. Today the acknowledged total of Handel's organ concertos includes these 16 works.

Organ Concerto No.1 (in G minor HWV289) was first played on 19 February 1736 during the first performance of the ode "Alexander's Feast or The Power of Musick". Handel had already presented Concertos No.2 (in B flat major HWV290) and No.3 (in G minor HWV291) a year earlier on 5 March 1735 during a performance of the oratorio "Esther" (HWV50b, 1732). Handel used not only new musical material but also some material from his own earlier compositions in these organ concertos along with some material borrowed from other composers which he reworked. As a result, parts of Concerto No.2 originate from his motet "Silente venti" (HWV242, 1724) and the Trio Sonata in B flat major (HWV388, 1717-1718). In Concerto No.3 he used material from his Trio Sonata in G minor (HWV390, 1717-1722) and his Flute Sonata in G minor (HWV360, 1725-1726) and also from a sonata by Georg Muffat dated 1682.

Reworking of musical material from his own works or those of others is also found in other compositions by Handel. The equivalent method, derived from classical rhetoric, is known as "borrowing" and at that time was considered an expression of great creative musical ability. In this case it was not so much what was taken over that was significant but rather how artfully this material was reworked. However, this method of composition had already been rejected by many a musical composer during Handel's lifetime and had been replaced in the Enlightenment by the aesthetics still valid today that give preference to original thought.

In March 1735 Handel also presented Organ Concertos No.4 (in F major HWV292) and No.5 (in F major HWV293). Concerto No.4 was played at a revival of the oratorio "Athalia" (HWV52) that had been composed in 1733 as a replacement for its final movement. In this concerto Handel used material from choruses that he had devised for his opera "Alcina" (HWV34, 1735), although he did not write the organ solo out in full but merely annotated it in places with the recital comment "ad libitum". He improvised the related music ad lib. The solo part of Concerto No.5 consists essentially of Recorder Sonata in F major (HWV369, 1725-1726) which Handel supplemented with orchestral ritornellos and the accompaniment of the organ solo.

The first collection of Handel's organ concertos (Op.4) which appeared in 1738 concluded with Concerto No.6 (in B flat major HWV294), which, like Concerto No.1, was first played with "Alexander's Feast". Handel had originally composed the work as a harp concerto for Walter Powell Jr. who was a famous harpist at that time and only transferred the solo part to the organ when the collection was being printed.

Concertos Nos. 7-12 from the period 1740-51 appeared in the third collection in 1761. As Handel had already died, printing of this collection was looked after by John Christopher Smith Jr. He had been one of Handel's pupils and had served his tutor who in his later years went blind, as assistant conductor at performances of the oratorios and concertos. Concertos Nos. 7-12 stand out from the earlier concertos due to their obviously broader scope, greater demands on playing technique and a larger arrangement of movements. They also contain

increasingly extensive "ad libitum" passages, periodically expanded to the length of a movement, the content of which Handel improvised afresh on every performance. These were transposed for the present recordings in line with the suggestions of Ton Koopman, the publisher of the Breitkopf edition used.

Organ Concerto No.7 (in B flat major HWV306) was composed in February 1740 and was played for the first time on 27 February during the first performance of the ode "L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato" (HWV55). For this concerto Handel demanded a bigger organ than in earlier works: an instrument with two keyboards and pedal which he makes full use of in the first movement. The fourth movement is kept "ad libitum" in Handel's original and for the present recording Ton Koopman's suggestion for its realisation is played in imitation of the fourth movement of the Oboe Sonata HWV365.

In February 1743 Handel also composed Concerto No.8 (in A major HWV307), which was first played on 18 February with the first performance of the oratorio "Samson" (HWV57). For the fugal section of the first movement Handel used material from an unpublished suite by Gottlieb Muffat; the third movement is "ad libitum" and was realised as a small movement in F sharp minor. In the concluding fourth movement Handel reworked material from an overture that he had written for "Samson" but in the end had not used.

The remaining organ concertos from the third collection, Concertos Nos. 9-12, originate from later periods. Concerto No.9 (in B flat major HWV308) was composed in January 1751 and was actually Handel's last orchestral music as he went blind a short time later. It was played for the first time in March as intermission music at a revival of "Alexander's Feast" and is also periodically referred to as the "Hallelujah Concerto" because the opening bars resemble the motif of the chorus by the same name from Handel's "Messiah" (HWV56 1742). The second movement is kept "ad libitum". According to the suggestion made in the Breitkopf edition, material from the fourth movement of Handel's Suite No.7 (HWV432) was recorded for this movement. For Concerto No.9 Handel used, as he also did in the oratorio "Jephtha" (HWV70), material from a more recent work by the Bohemian composer, Franz Johann Habermann (1706-83), who as a result of this was also nicknamed the "Bohemian Handel".

According to contemporary reports, Handel repeatedly brought his organ concertos to performance over many years; however, nothing is known about performances of Organ Concerto No.10 (in D minor HWV309). The individual movements by Handel, who used not only material from earlier works but also from the "musique de table" of his old friend Georg Philipp Telemann, were probably assembled for the collection by Smith Jr. Following the first movement an eight beat adagio, an annotated improvisation by Ton Koopman, forms a transition to the third movement in the recording.

In January 1750 Handel finished the work on Organ Concerto No.11 (in G minor HWV310) and presented it on 16 March with the oratorio "Theodora" (HWV68). Although he wrote his last will and testament barely three weeks later, witnesses reported on his exceptionally agreeable disposition during the performance of this work for which he reworked material from the Recorder Sonata in G minor (HWV360) as he had already done in Concerto No.3. The version published by Walsh also contained music by Handel that the composer had not, however, incorporated himself. The final movement is an early version of Organ Concerto No.3. The "ad libitum" movements between the first and third movements as well as between this and the fifth movement are played according to the Breitkopf edition.

The third collection of Handel's Organ Concertos, Op.7 concludes with Concerto No.12 (in B flat major HWV311) composed in 1749. In this concerto Handel referred back to material from his Sinfonia HWV347 (approx. 1747) and once again in the first movement to music by Telemann. The initial

version of the Air for Keyboard Instruments (in B flat major HWV 469) from the year 1738/39 was recorded for the “ad libitum” movement.

Organ Concertos No.13 (in F major HWV295) and No.14 (in A major HWV296a) had appeared in 1740 as part of the second collection published by Walsh. He had advertised a total of six organ concertos to the audience. Handel, however, who at this time was plagued by serious health and business worries, was only able to deliver two concertos. These are known today as concertos Nos. 13 and 14. The remaining four concertos from the second collection do not count as Handel’s authentic organ concertos since the publisher, Walsh, had them arranged by third parties from Handel’s concertante orchestral work that appeared in 1739 as “Concerti Grossi” (Op.6).

Concerto No.13 is one of Handel’s best-loved organ concertos to date. It was completed on 2 April 1739 and presented two days later during the premiere of the oratorio “Israel in Egypt” (HWV54). The first and last movements contain material from the Trio Sonata HWV401 (1739), whilst in the second movement Handel makes the organ imitate the songs of the very birds to which the concerto owes its nickname “The Cuckoo and the Nightingale”. At the suggestion of Ton Koopman, Handel’s Fugue for Keyboard Instruments in A minor (HWV609, 1711-1718) is played in the “ad libitum” (third movement).

Only a few weeks prior to the first performance of Concerto No.13, Handel had presented Organ Concerto No.14 for the first time during a performance of “Alexander’s Feast” for the benefit of families of deceased musicians. This concerto exhibits borrowings from a sonata for keyboard instruments by Johann Kuhnau and also from the overture to “Rodrigo” (HWV5, 1707), the first opera that Handel performed during his stay in Italy. A short Air (in A major) is played between the first two movements for the “ad libitum” that is possible according to the edition used.

There is only sparse information available regarding the history of Concertos No.15 (in D minor HWV304) and No.16 (in F major HWV305). They appeared singly not within the collections referred to by Walsh and were published for the first time by Samuel Arnold in 1797. No.15 probably originates from 1746. Handel again reworked musical material from Telemann’s “Musique de Table” in the key movements whilst an “Adagio” and an extended ad lib fugue are played between them. The publisher’s suggestion recorded refers to “A dead March” from Handel’s oratorio “Samson” and Fugue HWV606 (in G major 1711-1718).

Organ Concerto No.16 was composed in 1747 or 1748. For this Handel drew widely from his “Concerto a due cori” (in F major HWV334) which is clearly echoed in the demanding horn passages. The finale of Organ Concerto No.16 is based on the march in F from the oratorio “Judas Maccabeus” (HWV63, 1746).

The Fugues HWV605-610

Fugues HWV606 and HWV609 inserted in Organ Concertos No.13 and No.15 appeared in 1735 in the collection “Six Fugues or Voluntaries for the Organ or Harpsichord” (HWV605-610). They had been composed between 1711 and 1718 although it is likely that Handel’s publisher, Walsh, was only encouraged to publish an edition of these smaller works due to the success of the organ concertos. By recording them as an accompaniment to the organ concertos, the present listener gains an insight into the diversity of George Frideric Handel’s organ music at the time of his first organ concertos.

Further information about the instrumental music of George Frideric Handel and its place in his work as a whole may be found in numerous publications. The excellent all-round article about Handel in German found in the music encyclopaedia “Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart” (MGG2) is highly recommended as is the extremely informative book in English by Alfred Mann “Handel: The orchestral music” (Schirmer Books

1996). Handel’s organ concertos were recorded for these CDs according to the edition by Ton Koopman published by “Breitkopf & Härtel”.

© Mathieu Kuttler

CD13

OBOE CONCERTOS · SUITE IN G MINOR · OVERTURE TO *OTHO*

George Frideric Handel was born in Halle, the son of a well-established barber surgeon by his second wife. After matriculation in 1702 at Halle University and a brief period as organist at the Calvinist Church in the city, he moved to Hamburg in order to further a career in music, on which he was now decided. Employment at the opera, at first as a violinist and then as harpsichordist and composer was followed, in 1706, by travel to Italy, the source of the form his music had taken. Here, in Florence, Venice and Rome he made a name for himself, writing music in a number of genres, church music, opera, Italian oratorio, cantatas and instrumental works, while, in a keyboard contest with his contemporary Domenico Scarlatti, he was declared the better organist, with Scarlatti allowed to be a better harpsichordist.

A meeting in Venice with members of the court of the Elector of Hanover led to Handel’s appointment in 1710 as Kapellmeister to the Elector, while contact with the English ambassador was presumably instrumental in an immediate invitation to London for the newly established Italian opera. His return to Hanover the following year, after a short stay in Düsseldorf at the court of the Elector Palatine, lasted for some fifteen months, before a definitive return to London, where he now settled, occupied very largely with the Italian opera. It was when the commercial success of the opera began to decline, particularly with the establishment of two rival houses, that Handel turned his attention to a new form, English oratorio. This had an obvious appeal to a Protestant audience, avoiding, as it did, the problems of performance in a foreign language and the incongruities of plot that had become an inevitable concomitant of Italian opera seria. His last opera, *Deidamia*, was staged in London in 1741 and his last English oratorio, *The Triumph of Time and Truth*, an adaptation of a work he had written in Rome fifty years before, was given at Covent Garden in 1757 and 1758. Handel died in 1759, but his musical influence continued to dominate popular taste, doing much to eclipse the work of native composers.

As a practical musician, Handel borrowed extensively from his own earlier compositions and, as need arose, from the work of others, following the standard practice of the time. His three *Oboe Concerti* have been variously designated. The third of the series, the *Concerto in G minor* was first published, it seems, in Leipzig in 1863, when it was attributed to Handel and described as a work of 1703, although no other source is now known. In four movements, the concerto opens with a slow movement of characteristically dotted rhythm, a touch of that French style that the aging Corelli, working with Handel in Rome, had claimed to be beyond his comprehension. The second movement *Allegro* is followed by a *Sarabande* and a final dance movement thematically derived from the first movement.

Concerto No. 2 in B flat major was published with the first in London in 1740 by Walsh in the fourth volume of his *Select Harmony*. Whatever the original date of composition, the concerto certainly borrows extensively from overtures to two of the *Chandos Anthems*, written in 1717 and 1718 for James Brydges, created Duke of Chandos in the following year. The material from *O come let us sing unto the Lord* and *I will magnify thee, O God* is transposed and re-arranged to make what is, to all intents and purposes, a *sonata da chiesa*, following the established form of such church concertos with an emphatic opening slow movement, a second fugal *Allegro*, a third slower movement leading directly to a final *Allegro* in triple time. It has been suggested that the concerto was arranged by Handel for the Dutch oboist Jean Christian Kytch, who was employed by the Duke of Chandos in 1719 and 1720. It

was the sight of Kytch's children begging, after the death of their father that in 1738 inspired the establishment of the Fund for the Support of Decayed Musicians and their Families, a charity to which Handel contributed generously.

Concerto No. 1 in B flat major is similar in form to the third and is generally thought to belong to the earlier period of Handel's life, written either in Hamburg or in Italy. It opens with an *Adagio*, leading to an *Allegro*, followed by a *Siciliana* and a final short *Vivace*, in the rhythm of a minuet, suggesting immediate kinship with the *Concerto in G minor*.

The *Air* and *Rondo* are arranged for oboe by the English oboist Evelyn Rothwell, and orchestrated by Anthony Camden. The *Air* uses the descending arpeggio figure, common, in one form or another, in Handel's instrumental music. It is followed by a lively *Rondo*, in which the principal theme frames contrasting episodes.

The *Suite in G minor*, attributed to Handel, has no certain source in its present form, derived, as it is, from an anonymous manuscript in the library of the Fürstenberg family and here adapted by Anthony Camden. A solemn and very Handelian French *Overture*, framing the traditional livelier dance section, leads to a *Gavotte* and a pair of *Bourrees* played in alternation. A slow *Sarabande* offers the chance of a fine solo oboe aria and this is followed by a contrasting *Rigaudon*. The *Passacaille* follows the traditional Baroque dance-variation form and the *Suite* ends with a rapid *Passepied*.

The opera *Ottone, Re di Gennalzia* (Otho, King of Germany) was first staged at the King's Theatre, Haymarket, London, in 1723 and underwent various revisions and changes during the next ten years. There is some doubt as to the original form of the overture to the opera and it seems that the present three-movement work, with its opening French overture, fugal *Allegro* with the interplay of two oboes and final *Gavotte* may have had an earlier, independent existence. The *Gavotte* in particular enjoyed considerable contemporary popularity, described by Dr Burney as 'the delight of all who could play, or hear it played, on every kind of instrument, from the organ to the salt-box'.

© Teresa Pieschacóm Raphael

CD14-18

CHAMBER MUSIC

Born on February 23rd 1685 in the Eastern German city of Halle in Saxony, Georg Friedrich Handel was the son of a local surgeon. Father Georg had lost his first wife in 1682 and was already sixty when he remarried the daughter of a local pastor. Their first child was to die at birth and Georg Friedrich was the oldest surviving child of three - he was to have two younger sisters (Dorothea Sophia and Johanna Christiana). Father had plans that his son should join the respectable legal profession but his son's organ playing was noticed at the Ducal Court and Handel's fate was sealed. Handel subsequently, on his return to Halle, took up lessons with Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow, organist at the city's Liebfrauenkirche.

Handel's father died in 1697 and responsibility for his future now was left in the hands of his mother. The composer soon found his way to Berlin where he received the patronage of the court and took up tuition in the organ, harpsichord and violin as well as composition lessons. By 1702, it was clear that things would work out somewhat differently and the young Handel had already enrolled in the local Halle University where it seems he was set for a career in the Law. By now he had fallen under the influence of the composer Telemann and would become probationary cathedral organist in his home town when the previous incumbent, Johann Christoph Leporin, was sacked. The cathedral also had its own oboe consort and it may be at this time that Handel was to compose the six oboe trio sonatas that are generally considered to be Handel's earliest compositions - there is however some doubt as to the authenticity of these pieces although it is clear that at this time, the oboe was Handel's favourite instrument.

The small provincial city of Halle, however, was soon proving to be too constrictive an environment for the young Georg Friedrich and the influence of Telemann and the opera set his sights on a move to the north German metropolis of Hamburg with its public opera house on the Gaensemarkt controlled by the now little known Reinhard Keiser, himself an opera composer in his own right. Just how Handel decided to go to Hamburg is unknown but he had arrived in the city by the summer of 1703 where he gained a post as violinist in the opera house orchestra; there was even talk of a move to nearby Luebeck to take up the position of successor to Buxtehude as church organist at the Marienkirche. In Hamburg Handel was to meet with the music loving Englishman John Wyche who was to offer him an introduction to a more international scene and perhaps give him his first ideas of a move to the England where he would find later fame.

By 1705, Handel was writing his own operas in Hamburg with some varied success and had even managed to fight a duel with his erstwhile colleague and competitor, the English composer John Matheson. The same year saw the first performances of two of his own operas at the Gaensemarkt Theatre - "Almira" and "Nero". Inexperience led him to visit Italy, firstly to Florence at the invitation of Count Ferdinand de Medici before moving on to Rome. He met the Scarlatti's in Florence and the Prince of Hanover in Venice, who at the time was looking for a new Kapellmeister. Handel's journeys in Italy took him backwards and forwards between Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice and new works of the period included "Il Trionfo del Tempo e Disinganno", some church settings and his first Italian opera "Rodrigo" (premiered in Florence in October 1707).

By 1710, Handel had decided to leave Italy and to return to his native Germany but not before the successful premiere of his opera "Agrippina" in the carnival season of that year. The opera had been seen by diplomats from Hanover and from England and the now feted composer was to be invited by both countries to join their respective Courts. Before accepting their invitations however, Handel moved to the Tyrolean capital of Innsbruck for a short stay - he was on his way again by March 1710. Handel was soon in Hanover where he was offered a salary of 1500 Crowns but he was wary of settling anywhere that might have stopped him travelling freely and thus at the age of only twenty five, he left the city for the Rhineland and Dusseldorf.

Ever eager to be on the move, Handel was attracted by the offers from England and by the end of 1710 he found himself in London where the success of his opera "Rinaldo" premiered on February 24th 1711, and revived the following year, established his name in the English capital overnight.

In 1712, Handel returned to Hanover for a brief stay but soon came into the service of the Hanoverian monarch in London and began to write not only operas for the London stage, but also occasional pieces for the Royal family including his anthems and the famous Water Music and Fireworks Music. In 1714, Queen Anne was to die and she was succeeded by the Hanoverian monarch King George the First. But London was also fired by rivalries in the musical world and Handel's operas were soon to be marked by the contests of rival prima donnas. Restrictions on performances of stage works began in June 1717 and there was to be no further opera season there until 1720. This led Handel to inaugurate a new style of un-staged music theatre in his Oratorios, the first of which would be "Esther" written sometime in 1718. By 1719, Handel was involved with the newly formed Royal Academy of Music which was to appoint him as master of its orchestra - a paid commission. By 1720, after various visits to Germany he was back in London, bringing with him one of the most famous singers of the time - Senesino - and ready to embark on a new opera season.

The next few years saw a return to the successful list of operas composed and presented by Handel, notably "Giulio Cesare" (1724), "Tamerlano" (1724), and "Rodelinda" (1725). By

1729, Handel's successes allowed him to negotiate a new contract to provide operas at the Kings theatre for five years. This prompted him to travel again to Germany and Italy for the purpose of engaging new stars for his opera seasons - amongst the new operas to be premiered would be "Sosarme" (1732) and "Orlando" (1733). At the same time, Handel was composing oratorios such as "Deborah" (1733) and "Athalia" (1733).

A new opera season began in 1734 with performances at Covent Garden which were to include "Ariodante" (1735) - also occasioning a royal bounty for the operas of £1000 - and which would conclude with the premiere of one of the most successful of Handel's works, "Alcina" (1735). It was a period where Handel was to become the most significant of all English composers - a journey from Germany through Italy that had finally put Georgian and Hanoverian London firmly on the map as the great capital of opera and oratorio.

Handel's future in London was now assured but by March 1736 he was reported to be suffering from a very bad attack of rheumatism affecting his right hand, truly a manifestation of a paralysis which took him to Aix les Bains in search of a cure. Despite this, his works continued apace and 1739 saw the completion of his Op.5 trio sonatas as well as a series of concertos, to continue in 1740. By 1742, perhaps his best known work "Messiah" was ready for performance but again in 1743, he was reported to be dangerously ill. In 1745, the country was in political disarray climaxing the following year in the defeat of the rebels at the Battle of Culloden - to be commemorated in his new oratorio "Judas Maccabeus". Handel's final years were marked by illness but nevertheless a continuing of composition of some of his finest oratorios, works which show a depth of feeling such as "Jephtha" and "Theodora". In August 1752, Handel suffered a seizure which left him blind and although he was to live for another seven years, his health was now seriously compromised and he was to die at his London home on 14th April 1759.

Clearly, Handel's position in musical history as we see it today, rests mainly on his contributions to the fields of opera and oratorio, although this was not always so. It was only in the final decades of the twentieth century that many of his operas and oratorios saw stage revivals often perhaps to the detriment of his orchestral and instrumental works. The present collection groups his chamber works or sonatas together to show that other "non-vocal" side of the composer in works that despite their brevity show a very fresh side to the composer not always so apparent in the longer works.

The works on these discs are all sonatas of one kind or another, ranging from the simple sonatas for a wind or string instrument to the more complex trio sonatas. The term "sonata" had been used in the sixteenth century for virtually any sort of chamber work but came into its own in the Baroque period and is based on the sonata principle of exposition, development and recapitulation in musical form. These works were often composed for a solo instrument (usually a violin or woodwind instrument) with continuo (harpsichord, clavicord etc.).

The opus numbers of Handel's chamber works are confusing and do not necessarily refer to composition dates rather than dates of publication of Handel's sonatas. Thus the Opus One group consists of a series of works published in England in the 1730s under the imprint of the publisher Thomas Walsh, all of which were written at an earlier date. Some of these were written for specific instruments such as the treble recorder or the oboe, but usually the choice of solo instrument was left open. These are simple and short works with an accent on melody and typical ornamentation of the Baroque style.

The Opus Two collection was published a year later by Witvogel in Amsterdam and contains trio sonatas for recorder and violin in the French and Italian styles current at the time - these are works in free style consisting of maybe four or even five movements and which range from the simplicity of song like adagios to complex three part faster movements. Six of the

sonatas date from the period of 1700 to 1720 but were not published in a definitive edition until 1732 when John Walsh again took over the editing. Walsh then produced a second set of seven trio sonatas in 1739 numbering these as Opus Five - although five of these are pastiches from orchestral works from 1717-1735. Many of these sonatas come under the term "dubious" and their original autographs have been lost, dating too is almost impossible in many cases - one sonata almost certainly comes from Handel's fourteenth year (Op.2 No.2). Despite these confusions, there is little in the historical facts to deter the listener today from still enjoying these thoroughly enjoyable outpourings of the earlier years of the "English" maestro who was almost single-handedly to create the glories of the Hanoverian Baroque.

© Dr. David Doughty

CD19

RECORDER SONATAS

Georg Friedrich Händel had already travelled widely when in 1710 he first arrived in London, where he was to live a few years later. The German composer, born in Halle, worked in Italy from 1706 to 1709 and composed several works there; including Sonata HWV358 [tracks 28-30]. He mastered the Italian style and competed with famous composers such as Arcangelo Corelli and Domenico Scarlatti. In 1710 he was appointed Kapellmeister to Georg, Elector of Hanover, who saw less of his subject than he wished to. The composer was celebrating his triumphs in London, where the opera *Rinaldo* led to a sensational breakthrough for him in 1711. He returned to Hanover in early summer of that year, but was back in London towards the end of 1712. He had promised to return to Germany within a 'reasonable' time, which he didn't. Instead, Georg ascended the English throne.

In the previous period, England had been ruled by the last Stuart, Queen Anne, who by the Act of Settlement of 1701 was to be succeeded by a Protestant monarch. Her closest Protestant kin in 1701 was Sophia, Electress of Hanover, daughter of the 'Winter Queen' Elizabeth of Bohemia and thus a grand-daughter of James I. The Electress Sophia predeceasing Queen Anne, who died on August 1st 1714, her son Georg ascended the throne as George I. In due course, Georg Friedrich Handel also became George Frideric Handel.

The young composer's operas were soon very successful in London. The London opera houses were important meeting places for the leading members of the bourgeoisie. Instrumental works including concertos and sonatas were performed between the acts. Musicians of the opera orchestras also played in concert halls or in taverns like The Crown and Anchor in the Strand. The German traveller Johann Armand Von Offenbach has left us a vivid account of musical events in London. He describes attending a concert in 1709, at which he heard a recorder player perform: 'There was one man in particular, playing on the recorder ... a most delightful concert. [He] is a Frenchman, called Paisible, who is unequalled.'

The instrumentalists will have tried to convey some of the drama of the opera to the public. The kind of drama the English public enjoyed may be deduced from the irritation of the Italian librettist Paolo Rolli, whose job it was to adapt Italian opera libretti to the Londoners' taste. He was often forced to remove all the recitatives - some two thirds of the text! The popularity of the Italian singers including Nicolini, Cuzzoni and Bordoni sometimes angered English musicians to such an extent that one of them sighed after a concert: 'A name that flows with an *ini*, an *ani*, or a *gobioni*, can hardly ever fail of making a fortune.'

Handel's opera tunes were popularized by adaptations for the solo recorder, printed by Walsh & Hare. Thus the opera lover in an age before CD or mp3 could enjoy the music again by playing the melodies at home. In an advertisement for Walsh & Hare in *The Daily Post* of November 26th 1728, we find:

'Ptolomy for a Flute ... Where this is sold, may be had, a compleat Sett of all Mr. Handel's Opera's curiously transposed for a single Flute.' Transcriptions like these can be seen as forerunners of opera transcriptions and paraphrases such as those made for piano or guitar, for example, during the Romantic period.

These adaptations indicate the unparalleled popularity of the recorder, which had risen to new heights by the end of the 17th century. Thanks to the presence of instrument makers who produced the new three joint recorders developed in France, the interested private citizen in London could make excellent music. Instruments by woodwind makers such as Peter Bressan (Pierre Jaillard Bressan) and the Stanesby family were eagerly sought after. Amateurs learned to play from instruction booklets with colourful titles like *The Genteel Companion* ('being exact Directions for the Recorder') and *The Compleat Flute-Master*.

It should therefore come as no surprise that Handel also composed original sonatas for the recorder. They were all written for the *common flute*, that is, the (alto) recorder with lowest note f 1. Even the name *common flute* or simply *flute* shows how popular the instrument was at the beginning of the 18th century. When a transverse flute was designated, it was called a *German flute*. It wasn't until later that the transverse instrument took over both the name *flute* and its popularity from the recorder.

Performance Practice

Copies of recorders from Handel's time have been used on this recording. The interesting thing about these instruments is that they are not pitched at a1 = about 415 Hz, as is usual nowadays for early music, but a little lower, namely at about a1 = 406 Hz. This was approximately opera pitch at the Haymarket Theatre when Handel arrived in England, which we can deduce from a letter written by the French oboist Louis Rousselet in 1712 to the Paris woodwind maker Jean-Jacques Rippert. Rousselet wanted to order two bassoons for friends working in London at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket. According to him it was 'necessary that the bassoons and the oboes be the same pitch we play here, almost ¼ tone higher than the pitch of the Opéra in Paris.' We know precisely what Paris opera pitch was: a whole tone lower than our modern a1 = 440 Hz.

The lower the pitch of a recorder, the nobler the sound. Michael Praetorius already knew that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when he remarked in his *Syntagma musicum* of 1619 that wind instruments in England and the Low Countries were pitched as much as a minor third lower than in Germany, adding that 'recorders and other instruments ... sound much more beautiful in this lower tuning than at the usual one; they sound almost like different instruments, as they are not so shrill.' Many original instruments were built with a purer tuning than is now customary. Present-day equal temperament levels out unequal distances between notes and is therefore unnecessarily lacking in contrast, in music with few modulations. Pure tuning remained particularly popular in England, where mean-tone organs were still in use throughout the 19th century.

Although the alto recorder is the instrument for which Handel wrote his sonatas, it is historically not incorrect to use other types of recorders as well, which we have done on this recording. There are, for instance, two versions of Sonata HWV367: the original for recorder (HWV367a) in D minor and a later one for flauto traverso (HWV367b), in B minor. A so-called voice flute has been used for this sonata, a tenor recorder with d1 as its lowest note, like the traverso. This instrument makes it possible to play sonatas for flauto traverso in the original key. Some beautiful English voice flutes by Bressan, among others, have survived until the present day.

There is no transposed version of Sonata HWV369 for flauto traverso, but of course the piece can be played a minor third lower on the voice flute. We have transposed the early

Sonata HWV358 from G major to F major for reasons explained below.

Nowadays the keyboard instrument in the accompanying basso continuo is usually joined by a low stringed instrument (bass viol or violoncello). We have decided against this for a variety of reasons. A number of sonatas in the autograph are emphatically headed 'Flauto e Cembalo' (HWV360, 362 and 369); HWV365 has no title page. Walsh's first edition instructs us: 'Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord or Bass violin [=violoncello]'. The composition of the Sonatas HWV360, 362, 365 and 369 is also connected with Handel's work as a music teacher to two of George II's daughters, the princesses Anne and Caroline. Some exercises for composing fugues and the realization of a basso continuo are written on the same type of paper. The continuo is also extensively written out by the standards of the day. Keyboard accompanists had only a bass line, to be played with the left hand. They filled in the harmony with the right hand, little numerals and other signs above or below the staves indicating which chords to play ('figured bass'). Composers usually wrote down only the most necessary signs. Handel's sonatas are an exception to this rule, which is a good reason for assuming that Handel used them as exercises.

The virtuosity of the bass in fast movements seems to match Handel's qualities as a keyboard player. Therefore adding a bowed instrument could easily act as a restraint.

Performing the Unwritten: Ornamentation and Basso Continuo

We use several approaches to ornamentation on this recording. Aside from small fixed ornaments such as trills, mordents and *tierces coulées* we have taken our inspiration from the vocal nature of the slow movements. It is important to use graces that enhance the affect and foreground the notes. There were various approaches to ornamentation in Handel's day. The music critic Charles Burney gave the following opinion on William Babel: 'He acquired great celebrity by wire-drawing the favourite songs of the opera *Rinaldo*, and others of the same period, into showy and brilliant lessons, which by mere rapidity of fingers in playing single sounds, without the assistance of taste, expression, harmony or modulation, enabled the performer to astonish ignorance, and acquire the reputation of a great player at a small expense.... Mr. Babel ... at once gratifies idleness and vanity.'

Vocalists chose their graces according to their personal taste and vocal capacity. Feelings ran high regarding the strongly diverging manner in which Handel's divas sang. Burney described that of the Italian soprano Francesca Cuzzoni: 'In a cantabile air, though the notes she added were few, she never lost a favourable opportunity of enriching the cantilena with all the refinements and embellishments of the time.' In Johann Joachim Quantz's opinion of her colleague Faustina Bordoni: 'Her execution was articulate and brilliant. She had a fluent tongue for pronouncing words rapidly and distinctly and a flexible throat for divisions, with so beautiful and quick a shake, that she could put it in motion at short notice, just when she would. The passages might be smooth, or by leaps, or consist of iterations of the same tone, their execution was equally easy to her.... She sung *adagios* with great passion and expression, but not equally well, if such deep sorrow were to be impressed on the hearer, as might require dragging, sliding, or notes of syncopation and *tempo rubato*.' So there was certainly more than one way of ornamenting.

The continuo style on this recording is, like Handel's music itself, a mixture of Italian and German style. The style of realization of the right hand in the Alla Siciliana from HWV369 [track 26] is based on that of some slow movements from sonatas with obbligato harpsichord by Bach. Burney writes that Italian harpsichordists are so noisy that you can only hear the sound of the wood. That is the temperament sought after in the first allegro in Sonata HWV362 [track 21]. An example of style *luthé* accompaniment (arpeggiated lute style), as given by

Monsieur de Saint Lambert around 1700, can be heard in the realization of the second larghetto in Sonata HWV365 [track 3].

About the Sonatas

The six sonatas Handel definitely composed for the recorder were all written around 1724–1726. The contrasts between them regarding form and atmosphere are remarkable. In Handel's day, sonatas were composed according to standardized formal principles. They normally had either three movements (fast–slow–fast) or four (slow–fast–slow–fast). Two of the recorder sonatas (HWV365 and 367a) ostentatiously disregard this format. Even where Handel seems to conform to the conventions, his intentions as to affect and relative tempo are open to more than one interpretation. This is greatly at variance with the sonatas of his compatriots Georg Philipp Telemann and Johann Sebastian Bach, for instance.

Handel's sonatas must first be mastered, as it were, which can be in part accounted for by the simple observation that the repertoire is full of the dramatic gestures inextricably bound up with his music for opera. In addition, his tempo indications are often ambiguous. The fourth movement of Sonata HWV360, based on an instrumental 'aria' from Muffat's *Armonico tributo* (1682), provides a good example. Handel used it many times: in a cantata, operas, a flute sonata and two organ concertos employing indications varying from *Presto* to *Allegro* to *Gavotte*.

Sonata in C (HWV365). The form, five movements, is striking. The lyrical first movement is a larghetto, an indication not yet general at the time but nevertheless often to be found in Handel.

'LARGETTO, signifies a movement something slow, yet a little quicker than *largo*', according to *A musical Dictionary* (London, 1740) by James Grassineau. 'Ombra mai fù' from *Serse* and 'Comfort ye' from *Messiah* are well-known examples of larghetts from Handel's vocal works. The first allegro [track 2], which is also the second part of the overture of the opera *Scipione*, is strongly contrapuntal. The long notes for the recorder over a spirited bass are distinctive. In the third movement, in A minor, Handel is at his most tender. At first the bass appears to be an *ostinato*, but it gradually goes its own way. Handel borrowed this movement from his Oboe Sonata in F major (HWV363a). The two final movements are graceful dances: a gavotte and a passepied (Grassineau: 'PASSEPIED, an air in all respects very like a minuet, except that 'tis more brisk and lively').

Sonata HWV367a. The suite-like succession of seven movements makes this sonata one of the most capricious works in Handel's chamber music. The opening movement is characterized by long, melancholy lines, emphasized by the use of a voice flute. One can imagine this *largo* as an opera aria. The vivace is a hornpipe, a typically British dance associated with life at sea. The best-known examples in Handel's oeuvre are the two hornpipes from his *Water Music* (HWV348–350). Syncopation lends the hornpipe its characteristic rhythm. Handel, a born composer of opera, wrote 'furioso' over the third movement. We have tried here to follow the promptings of Grassineau, who writes: 'FURIA ... signifies with *fury* or *violence*; but not so much in respect to the loudness of the sound, as the quickness of the time and movement.' The fourth movement contains a breath-taking accumulation of intervals, five thirds in a row, causing a feeling of weightlessness. It is as though a theatre curtain were slowly rising. The *alla breve* is strictly contrapuntal. The sonata ends with a sweet *andante* and a minuet full of contrary rhythms.

Sonata in G minor (HWV360). After the stately larghetto the listener would expect an easy-flowing Italianate movement but Handel surprises us with a recalcitrant *andante* in three-quarters time. The following adagio consists of a framework which, according to Italian conventions, invites the player to add ornaments.

Sonata in B-flat (HWV377). This sonata was conceived in three movements and may therefore be labelled a *sonata da*

camera. Unusually, the composition opens with a dance movement, a graceful courante found as the third part of the overture in the opera *Scipione*. In the second movement, a stately adagio, Handel requires dynamic contrasts (*forte* and *piano*). This is a typically dramatic, slow movement, demanding a so-called *stentato*: '... but that you take pains in singing and playing, and force the voice in some part of a song, or some particular sound, to express some extraordinary emotion, whether joy, grief, or passion, so as to seem actually moved in the performance' (Grassineau). The composition ends like many Italian sonatas: with a lively gigue.

Sonata in A minor (HWV362). The bass line in the opening movement is based on a rhythmic pattern identical to that in the arias 'Pur ritorno a rimiravi' from the opera *Agrippina* and 'Se non giunge quel momento' from the cantata *Filli adorata e cara*. Note the points at which the accompaniment is suspended to allow for a melisma by the recorder. The second movement, with its short motifs by the recorder and virtuoso continuo, seems to embody a character from an opera, stamping with rage. The almost naïve adagio in the pastoral key of F major is like the calm after a storm. The final movement sounds like a gigue squeezed into four-four time.

Sonata in D (HWV369). Handel arranged this sonata as an organ concerto (Op.4, No.5) in 1735. The grave (originally called larghetto by the composer) begins quietly and soulfully, in the low register of the recorder. Handel's weapon here is the combination of simplicity and sonority. The second movement is brisk and the Siciliana in D minor is a tranquil pastoral dance in 12/8. The eleven measures make this a miniature. The sonata ends with an airy gigue.

Sonata in F (HWV358). This sonata, composed in Italy around 1707, gives no indication of which instrument Handel meant it for. The *perpetuum mobile* of the first movement seems an indication for the violin, as does the key of G major. Stylistically this movement reminds one of Arcangelo Corelli (the fourth movement of his Violin Sonata in C major, Op.5, No.3, for example). But if Handel meant his sonata to be for violin, the high register is odd. The instrument's lowest octave is not used at all. Was it perhaps composed for the recorder? In that case, on the basis of the key, one might think of a slightly smaller brother to the French alto recorder, an instrument with lowest note g1 known as a *flauto italiano* (mentioned in the 1677 *Compendio musicale* by Bartolomeo Bismantova). To facilitate performance on an F-instrument, we have transposed the sonata from G major to F major. The most noteworthy passage can be found in the penultimate measure of the final movement, a gigue. Handel wrote four inordinately high notes here, almost unplayable on either a violin or a recorder and presumably to be taken as a joke.

There is a short Adagio between the two fast movements which is like an instrumental recitative; the solo instrument makes dramatic leaps over a simple harmonic accompaniment. A comparable style can be found in the adagio from Handel's Sonata in D major (HWV378) for flute. In order to emphasize the unaffected nature of this sonata, I play it on one of the smallest members of the recorder family, the soprano, sounding an octave higher than the alto recorder.

© Erik Bosgraaf

(Translation: Julia Muller)

CD20-23

SUITES DE PIÈCES POUR LE CLAVECIN

Sometime in 1719, while on an extended European tour, Handel must have heard about plans for a pirated edition of his harpsichord music. Deciding that attack was the best form of defence, he immediately began preparing his own print of these pieces, which appeared – probably well before the pirated version – on 14 November 1720. Handel's preface contains a few crisp sentences that refer to the circumstances surrounding the publication of the volume:

I have been obliged to publish some of the following lessons because surreptitious and incorrect copies of them had got abroad. I have added several new ones to make the Work more useful which if it meets with a favourable reception: I will still proceed to publish more reckoning it my duty with my Small talent to Serve a Nation from which I have receiv'd so Generous a Protection.'

Indeed, Handel's own edition clearly differentiates itself from those 'Surreptitious and incorrect copies' on which Walsh's publication was based (why Walsh didn't simply work together with Handel is hard to fathom: the men knew each other, Walsh had already published various editions of *Rinaldo*, and their working relationship would survive the episode of the pirated edition unscathed). Many of the original movements were re-worked by the composer; a few of them were exchanged or removed entirely and replaced by newly composed pieces. Some rather old-fashioned, arpeggiated preludes were replaced by new ones, and five of his eleven fugues around 1716–17 now found their way into the suites. Handel seems to have taken his revision work seriously: numerous corrections, even those made on the plates themselves, can be traced back to the composer himself.

We cannot know whence this sudden zeal concerning the publication of his harpsichord suites arose. Publishing music was a costly affair; it certainly wasn't possible to earn a fortune with the publication of a book of keyboard music, nor could the profits from his *Suites de Pièces pour le Clavecin* cover the salaries of Handel's private secretary, his footman or his cook. Perhaps his sense of honour alone, his concern for his reputation, is the more convincing explanation for the careful re-working of a collection of pieces, some of which were more the products of youthful enthusiasm than mature artistry, into publishable Suites?

First Volume (1720) [CD20-21]

Sketches and original versions of the pieces which make up the first volume of the *Suites de Pièces pour le Clavecin* (known collectively as the *Eight Great Suites*) can be dated to Handel's Hamburg period (1703–06). Indeed, some date to even earlier, to his time in his home-town of Halle. It is probable that Handel supported himself during the Hamburg period by giving harpsichord lessons, and that he needed to supply his pupils with appropriate study material. Christopher Hogwood suspects that the sudden re-awakening of Handel's interest in the harpsichord around 1717 also reflects a probable increase in teaching activity, for Handel, then in service to the Earl of Carnarvon, would have been obliged to teach harpsichord as well as compose music for his students. By the time of the publication of the *Eight Great Suites*, in November, 1720, Handel had all but given up composing for the instrument. In spite of this, the edition was a great success: in the 18th century alone there were more than 15 further editions published on the continent and numerous manuscript copies went into circulation.

The 1720 Suites form a microcosm of the musical influences which Handel had undergone in his 35 years. They are based on the dances of the French suite: allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue. In his youth Handel had encountered them in their German forms, in the works of masters like Pachelbel, Reincken, and Krieger (whom he highly respected) and of course his first and only music master, Zachow. But, of

the *Eight Great Suites*, only the fourth contains all of these dance movements which are associated with the classical harpsichord suite. Three of the Suites (HWV427, 431, 432) exclude the customary allemande-courante pair, and only two contain sarabandes. On the other hand, they do rather remarkably include sets of variations (HWV428/5 and 430/3) and even an unusual *Passacaille* in common time (HWV432/6). So too, in spite of their French title, the *Suites de Pièces pour le Clavecin* do not contain any examples of the popular French dance forms of menuet, bourrée, rigaudon or gavotte. Nor are Handel's courantes notated in the usual French 3/2 time, but more closely resemble the running style of a 3/4 Italian corrente. The Italian influence is easily felt elsewhere as well: the second Suite (HWV427) much resembles an Italian *sonata da chiesa* (it is therefore not surprising that an earlier version of this Suite was entitled *Sonata*). A free prelude in arpeggio-style (HWV426/1) finds itself rubbing shoulders with a French overture (HWV432/1), a whirlwind of a toccata and fugue (HWV428/1–2) and arias of enchanting beauty (HWV427/1 and 428/6), which reveal Handel to have been an opera composer of genius, even when seated at the harpsichord.

The E major Suite (HWV430) ends with the best known of Handel's harpsichord pieces, an Air with variations which, under the name *The Harmonious Blacksmith*, has become greatly beloved and been arranged for everything from recorder quartet to mechanical glockenspiel. These variations probably owe their name to a blacksmith turned music-dealer in Bath, who, in the early 19th century, was wont to whistle the tune. More spectacular is the legend that Handel first heard the tune while sheltering inside a smithy during a sudden thunderstorm: in spite of it being patently untrue, the name of Harmonious Blacksmith clings to this jolly piece even today.

Second Volume (1733) [CD22-23]

After his time at Cannons, Handel seems to have done little teaching: there is evidence for very few harpsichord students after 1720, with the exception of the daughters of George II. This could explain the limited amount of new harpsichord repertoire that is dated after the publication of the first volume. In any case, the promise made in the first volume, 'I will still proceed to publish more' remained unfulfilled, so that when John Walsh brought out a pirated second volume in 1727, he had no choice but to re-use old material. This edition, therefore, is by no means the promised continuation. In 1733, Walsh revised and reissued this unauthorised second volume; it is this final version that I have recorded here. It contains almost all of those pieces which had been published in Walsh's first pirated edition, but which had been suppressed by Handel himself in the authorised version of 1720. Many of these pieces are datable to before 1706; their style imitates that of the composers Handel knew in his youth, and they lack the command and stylistic independence of the composer's maturity.

The 1733 volume is full of printing errors. Although Handel may have been involved in this edition just far enough to re-order the pieces, it is probable that he let the whole affair pass by in silence. He could not have been involved in the proof-reading, for he would never have allowed such a faulty edition come to press. Perhaps the by now established composer simply had better things to do than rework long-forgotten pieces composed in his youth? In spite of all this, one ought not to speak too disdainfully of the second volume. It contains much wonderful music, like the Suite in D minor (HWV436), which dates from the 1720s, and the famous *Aria con Variazioni* in B flat major (HWV434/3), to which Johannes Brahms would later turn in choosing the theme for his *Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von Händel*. And the surely extraordinary virtuosity of the Jigg from the Suite in G minor (HWV439/3) or the Chaconne in G major (HWV435) demonstrates how the young Handel's playing whipped his audience into a state of breathless excitement.

One work from this collection, however, the second Chacone in G major (HWV422) with its 62 Variations, is so monotonously simple that I felt not even the desire for completeness could justify my including it here. Since the second volume is itself an arbitrary collection, it seemed legitimate to replace such an obvious sin of Handel's youth with a work whose about 270 bars contain at least as many G major chords as the endless Variations of the crudely composed Chacone: the piece in question, *Vo' Far Guerra*, is a transcription of a battle aria from Handel's opera *Rinaldo*, published in William Babell's *Suits of the Most Celebrated Lessons*. Charles Burney had few good words to say about Babell, and found his arrangements lacking in, taste, expression, harmony or modulation' yet Graham Pont has convincingly argued that this particular harpsichord transcription might be, for the most part, a notation of a harpsichord solo improvised by Handel himself during an opera performance. Even if the third edition of the score of *Rinaldo* published by Walsh in June, 1711 already contained a harpsichord part marked 'Harpsichord Peice *Perform'd by Mr Handel*', it seems unlikely that Handel would have written out, in all its finesse, his improvisation in order to transmit it to Walsh. It is, however, probable that Babell's transcription of *Vo' Far Guerra* bears witness to his teacher's famed art of improvisation, making the piece highly relevant to the performance practice of Handel's harpsichord music in general.

Handel as Performer

The extent of Handel's fame among his contemporaries as a keyboard virtuoso stands in stark contrast to the amount of (original) keyboard works he has left us. There are many contemporary witnesses to Handel's impressive talent as a virtuoso and improviser. The composer Thomas Arne declared, after hearing a performance by Handel, that he 'never before heard such extempore, or such premeditated playing, on that or any other instrument.' Indeed, Handel's playing was so impressive that during his stay in Italy the audience suspected the Lutheran composer to be in league with Satan! Even his famous colleague Domenico Scarlatti shared in this superstitious awe. According to Handel's first biographer, John Mainwaring, when Scarlatti heard Handel perform at a masked ball, he cried out in astonishment that it could only be the 'famous Saxon' or the Devil himself. Mainwaring, in his biography which was published in 1760, gives us yet another description of Handel at the harpsichord: 'Handel had an uncommon brilliancy and command of finger, but what distinguished him from all other players who possessed these same qualities was that amazing fullness, force and energy which he joined with them. And this observation may be applied with as much justness to his compositions, as to his playing.' After all of these testimonies to raw power mixed with unbridled energy, it is comforting to hear Charles Burney praise Handel's sensitive touch as 'so much cherished that his fingers seemed to grow to the keys'. One can well imagine how this latter style would have sounded in the melancholy allemandes, while an example of Handel's fiery temperament boiling over can be found in the fugue of the F minor Suite (HWV433/2) where the bass takes the theme in full chords, breaking through the polyphonic structure like rolling thunder, with an explosive energy that nearly tears the listener from his seat. Handel could do it all, and it was probably his mastery of strong contrasts that gave his improvisations their 'devilish' charm.

Improper Comparisons

The attentive reader may have noticed that a certain composer's name, containing four letters, has not appeared in this text: Handel's illustrious colleague from Leipzig, the Thomaskantor, who has taken his place among the great names in the history of music. In modern discussions of Handel's harpsichord works, Bach always appears, and seldom to Handel's advantage: the allemandes are condemned as 'less

deep', the fugues as 'less well wrought' and the entire oeuvre as 'unabashedly secular' in comparison to the canonised colleague from Leipzig. Even those who mean well by Handel, and who judge him more generously, will propose that one or another of the *Suites* is not actually worse than those of his contemporary. But while such an attitude seeks to ennoble Handel by the comparison, it retains an unpleasant aftertaste of astonished condescension: such a 'compliment' is pregnant with unspoken censure.

The performances on this recording

In addition to the many sources on which the *Hallesche Händel Ausgabe* is based, I consulted a manuscript copy dating to 1736 from the hand of the composer Gottlieb Muffat (1690–1770). Muffat's manuscript is, to a certain extent, an interpretation of the *Eight Great Suites*. Not only does he add numerous ornaments and trills (I have been inspired by his version, for example, in the Prelude of the third Suite HWV428), he sometimes even specifies the articulation of the left hand. Putting these indications into practice often leads to highly *cantabile* interpretations, which still allow the polyphonic voices to be clearly heard. The art of Baroque ornamentation places the recording artist in an unresolvable dilemma: the spontaneous addition of ornaments stands in stark opposition to the idea of a CD as an attempt to preserve the musical moment. Still, I have chosen to present as richly ornamented a version as possible, and even, in some places, to add octaves and fill out harmonies with Baroque generosity – all in the hope of preserving something of an improvisatory feeling in the performances.

The instruments on this recording

This recording uses two different instruments: one Franco-Flemish (after Ioaness Ruckers, grand ravalement), for the Eight Great Suites of 1720, and the other German (after Michael Mietke), for the 1733 second volume. This latter instrument shows marked similarities to the work of harpsichord makers like Johann Heinrich Harras and Christian Zell of Hamburg, both representatives of a tradition that Handel would have known well. In 1717, when a large portion of the first volume was composed, Handel probably had access to a two-manual Ruckers harpsichord while working at Cannons for the Duke of Chandos. He may even have owned a similar instrument himself; at that time the Ruckers was considered the Rolls-Royce of harpsichords. Beyond this, one must assume that the cosmopolitan Handel categorised harpsichords not so much by their place of origin as by their intrinsic quality, and that he sat himself down at the best instruments he could get his hands on. As he is said to have 'performed wonders' on the spinet which belonged to Mary Granville, Handel apparently had no inhibitions about playing so humble an instrument.

At least as important as the choice of harpsichord is that of the temperament. For the second volume I have chosen one of the many beautifully tempered tunings by Johann Georg Neidhardt. For the *Eight Great Suites* I decided to be a bit more daring. The tonalities united in this volume are so remote one from the other that no single historical temperament could result in optimal performances for all of the suites; the intonational strife between F sharp minor and F minor is nigh-impossible to reconcile. An interesting tip about Handel's own tuning habits can be found in a treatise by an 18th-century organist of the Domkerk in Utrecht, in the Netherlands. Johann Albrecht Fischer, in his 1738 *Kort en grondig onderwijs van de Transpositie*, declares that he saw and heard both Handel's own instrument and the instrument used in the opera house, and that they both were tuned in equal temperament. And so I chose an equal temperament here, though not one that is lifelessly equal: it is tuned by ear and not with a machine, just as it would have been in the 18th century. It is at any rate beyond doubt that this temperament was known and used in Handel's day (and even before), and I therefore find its use just as

historically legitimate and more musically satisfying as the (to name but one widely used example) supposedly more authentic organ tuning Werckmeister III.

© Michael Borgstede

CD24-27

HARPSICHORD MUSIC

Handel was, like his exact contemporaries Domenico Scarlatti and Johann Sebastian Bach, a formidable keyboard performer, displaying what his first biographer John Mainwaring described as "an uncommon brilliancy and command of finger". When Scarlatti encountered a masked player giving a virtuoso performance at a Venetian masquerade, he speculated that it could only be either the "caro Sassone" ("the dear Saxon" – Handel's Italian nickname) or the devil – fortunately it was the former; and when on a later occasion in Rome, the two musicians were matched against each other in a keyboard competition it was Handel who was judged victorious at the organ (with an honorable draw being declared for the harpsichord) To Sophia, Dowager Electress of Hanover (and mother of George I), Handel "surpassed everyone one has ever heard at the harpsichord". But such proficiency had not been easily achieved: his elderly father, disapproving of the interest the young son of his second marriage took in music, would not allow any instrument in the house or permit young Georg to visit establishments where harpsichords were kept, since "nothing but the cutting off his fingers could prevent him playing". So the enterprising boy arranged for a clavichord to be "privately conveyed" into upper part of the house on which he practiced when the family was asleep. This story, although suspect on many levels, was probably based on Handel's fanciful reminiscence of the obstacles he encountered in his youth and certainly accords with his view that to become a good player a beginner must start on the clavichord. It was his keyboard abilities that propelled him into a life in music rather than the law as his father intended: on a visit to the ducal court at Weissenfels he was overheard playing the chapel organ by Duke Johann Adolf who persuaded Georg Händel senior that his son's talent should be fostered, paving the way for Handel to begin formal study of keyboard and composition with the Halle master Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow.

Unlike Bach and Scarlatti, Handel did not create an extensive body of original work specifically for harpsichord (although there were many arrangements of excerpts from his operas, oratorios and orchestral works) and he took no great care that what he did produce was systematically published. Had it not been for the appearance, around 1719-20, of a pirate edition of various harpsichord pieces derived from manuscript copies (for which there was a flourishing production industry) he might never have been galvanized into taking action in this direction. The offending volume although issued under the Amsterdam imprint of Jeanne Roger was almost certainly the work of the London publisher John Walsh. Handel successfully applied for a Royal Privilege granting him sole right to publish his own works (valid for 14 years) and then created eight suites from a selection of the pieces which had appeared in the Roger edition, with revisions and additional new movements, including five fugues. The "Eight Great Suites" as they became known, were published by John Cluer in 1720 and are considered the pinnacle of his keyboard oeuvre. As well as referring in the preface to the existence of certain "Surreptitious and Incorrect Copies" as the *raison d'être* for this authoritative edition, he indicated that were it to meet with approval, he would produce another volume. However despite its success and Handel's general popularity, this was not forthcoming for some time. Thirteen years passed before the appearance of another volume of suites in 1733 (also produced by Walsh) which comprised those works from the Roger edition which had not been "re-issued" in the 1720 volume, and dating mostly from before 1706. This was presumably issued with Handel's knowledge and approval, since the Royal Privilege was

still in operation, but if so he seems to have taken little or no interest in its production since the many errors, omissions and misprints that disfigured the Roger edition remained uncorrected. The second volume ended with a *Prelude* and *Chaconne* with sixty-two variations HWV442 (included in this selection) with the *Prelude* dating from c1703 and the *Chaconne* c1705. In 1735 Walsh issued a third volume comprising six fugues (HWV605-10) also included here, which had been composed for possible inclusion in the *Eight Great Suites* but had been found surplus to requirements. The first and fifth of these were to provide subjects for choruses in *Israel in Egypt* and Handel, according to his usual practice, was to recycle many themes from his harpsichord works in later operas and oratorios.

Apart from the *Prelude/Chaconne* and *Six Fugues*, this selection comprises works which were not published in Handel's lifetime (with HWV468 476-7 492 560 and 570 only achieving first publication in the 20th century). Many survive only in contemporary manuscript copies, with either an attribution to Handel or the context in which they appear putting their provenance beyond reasonable doubt: questions remain however over the authenticity of a few e.g. HWV458, 459, 584, 611. Handel was active in the production of harpsichord works in two periods of his life – before 1706 and between 1710 and 1720 (but mainly before 1717), after which he more or less ceased writing for the instrument: of the few pieces composed after 1720, HWV447, 452 492, 468 and 489 are included here. The absence of autographs prior to 1712 makes it extremely difficult to date the earlier works with any precision. Handel's reference to HWV481, 496, 574 and 577 as works of his "early youth" makes it probable that these were written in Halle and HWV433 and 450 are also considered on stylistic grounds to be juvenile productions. Certain stylistic features point to an earlier date: the close relationship between an *Allemande* and *Courante* e.g. in HWV449 and 450 and the use of a distinctive cadence which appears frequently in *Almira* (HWV1) of 1704 but not in later works, from which it has been plausibly inferred that works which display this feature were contemporaneous with the opera and therefore written in Hamburg. Technical considerations of handwriting, the ruling of staves and the provenance of manuscript paper also permit informed speculation on dating – for example, HWV477 written on Italian paper and called *Allemanda* is one of the very few works which can be attributed to Handel's sojourn in Italian between 1706 and 1710.

It thought that Handel wrote many of his harpsichord works for instructional purposes (they are often referred to in contemporary sources as "Lessons") and so it is no coincidence that most date from the periods when he is known to have been active as a teacher: his time in Hamburg (1703-6) and the first years in London, particularly during his residency as house composer for James Brydges Earl of Carnarvon, later duke of Chandos, at Cannons in Middlesex. He may also have taught Elizabeth Legh of Adlington Hall, Cheshire whose comprehensive personal anthology of his works is dated 1717 thus providing a reliable *terminus ante quem* for the origination of its contents. However although Handel became music tutor to the children of the Prince of Wales (later George II) in the early 1720s, he does not seem to have composed any significant new harpsichord works as teaching aids for them, apart from the two charming suites (HWV447, 452) written for Princess Louisa in 1739. He once remarked that after leaving Hamburg "nothing on earth would induce me to teach music", making an exception however for Louisa's sister, Ann "the flower of princesses" who seems to have been a genuinely accomplished musician. Perhaps had he been more temperamentally suited to pedagogy there would have been more harpsichord pieces for us to enjoy.

© Roberto Lorregian

CD28

ROMANTIC ORGAN TRANSCRIPTIONS

The art of transcription has been a part of the history of keyboard instruments since Renaissance times, when sacred and secular vocal compositions, and particularly madrigals, were published for the first time. Gabrieli and then Frescobaldi allowed for the possibility of transcription when notating their music 'per strumenti da tasto', the so-called 'madrigali passaggiati'. Further innovation in the form can be heard in the work of Johann Walther and J.S. Bach, who left various transcriptions of Italian composers in particular.

The 19th century, however, is the golden age of transcription, thanks principally to the industry and indeed genius of Franz Liszt and W.T. Best in adapting a huge range of music for the piano and organ respectively, satisfying as they did the appetite of the bourgeoisie across Europe for domestic music-making and at the same time 'canonic' great works composed originally for the opera house or the concert hall.

Technological advances in that period permitted even the organ to undergo improvements, to expand in size and improve mechanically; even the 18th-century symphony orchestra got larger with the addition of new instruments which reinforced the brass and string sections, directly influencing organ techniques.

The organ builders Aristide Cavaillé-Coll and 'Father' Henry Willis led a transformation in organ manufacture which allowed the organ to become a 'concert' instrument: larger swell boxes together with the new combinations (the 'Appels' and the 'Pistons') helped the organ to compete with the orchestra. It became easier to handle and vary timbres and stop combinations, and consequently to undertake ever more adventurous repertoire. In England above all, thanks to the huge instruments built for various public temples of culture such as the Royal Albert Hall in London, Birmingham Town Hall and St George's Hall in Liverpool, the organ gained its status as 'king of instruments'.

It is this context; therefore, that Handel's music naturally thrived.

W.T. Best was one of the leading English organ virtuosos of the time. As organist at St George's Hall in Liverpool he gave about 100 recitals a year for 40 years, playing 'everything that is worth playing that was written for the organ', including his own transcriptions of famous and popular symphonic works. His masterpieces of transcription are represented by two great collections: the *Arrangements from the Scores of the Great Masters, for Organ*, published by Novello and *Handel's Choruses, selected and arranged for the Organ*, edited by R. Cooks (from which the present recording is taken).

Besides these, and of equal importance, are those of George C. Martin, organist at St Paul's Cathedral; of F.C. Woods; Théodore Dubois, teacher, composer and organist at the Madeleine in Paris; and Alexandre Guilmant, another teacher, composer, organist of Saint-Trinité in Paris and noted concert performer.

Occasional Oratorio (1746) – Overture

Best's transcription of the overture's first three movements allows the use initially of the antiphonal and then the concert form using the typical Tuba 8' register, thus enhancing the original effects obtained with the aid of the brass in the original orchestration.

Suite No.1 in B flat HWV434 (1733)

In his transcription of the suite's first three movements, Best uses the organ like an orchestra, with continuous variations and contrasts of sonority. He omitted the final minuet, perhaps to create a grand 'concert' ending.

Serse (1737–8) – Largo 'Ombra mai fu'

This transcription is traditionally used as a wedding anthem. On this recording, the solo voice is played on the beautiful double

Flute 8' of the Great and in the second part on the Oboe of the Swell.

Saul (1738) – Symphony (Act 1)

Divided into four movements and full of dramatic effects, the overture anticipates the triumphant song of the Israelites after the victory over the Philistines. The third movement was originally written as a concertante for solo organ.

Saul – Symphony (Act 2)

The first section of this French overture is replete with dotted rhythms reminiscent of a stately royal procession. The second is a vibrant Allegro, in the original version of which the organ duets with the orchestra.

Messiah (1741) – I know that my Redeemer liveth

In this abridged transcription of the opening Aria from Part 3, the soprano soloist is represented by the Harmonic Trumpet (Swell).

Messiah – Hallelujah

As Handel's most famous work, this has received countless transcriptions, of which a few are dedicated to the organ. Dubois made his specifically for the 19th-century symphonic organ, and in particular for Cavaillé-Coll's 'concert' instruments, and its sober complexity exploits the chorus's colourful potential to the full. Dubois cut two bars prior to the closing cadence as its repetition, in the absence of text, would have been monotonous on the organ.

Prelude and Fugue in F minor (1720)

This transcription is faithful to the original context of the Eighth Suite from the *Pièces de Clavecin* of 1720. The severe Prelude (Adagio) is characterised by dotted rhythms like the French overture in *Saul*. The Fugue (Allegro) is constructed on a simple ascending diatonic subject that contrasts with the Prelude's arpeggio design.

Zadok the Priest (1727)

The opening section of this, the first and most popular of the four anthems Handel wrote for the Coronation of George II, is one of the most refined and inspired of all Handel's sacred works. On the organ, 'God Save the King' becomes a glorious triumphal march with an overwhelming rhythm culminating in a huge and solemn tutti.

Paraphrase on 'See the conqu'ring hero comes' and Marche religieuse on 'Lift up your heads'

Guilmant, as an admirer of Baroque music and no mean contrapuntalist himself, was inspired by Handel to create these written 'improvisations' on two well-known melodies as famous today as they were then, being often sung during Christmas liturgical celebrations.

© Massimo Gabba

Translation: John Leslie Amos

CD29

NINE GERMAN ARIAS

The art of subtle shading

One of the great singers of this country, the soprano Arleen Auger, died in Amsterdam on 10 June 1993 at the age of 53. Although world-famous, she was not a prima donna and not even a star because she was just too modest, too earnest in her musical endeavours and too independent in her artistic decisions. She strictly refused to take part in the chase for a niche in the pantheon of the music industry. Her appearance at the Royal Wedding of Prince Andrew and Miss Sarah Ferguson in 1986 was one of those rare occasions when she allowed herself to be exposed to the full glare of publicity.

Born in Los Angeles in 1939, Arleen Auger studied violin, voice and piano in Long Beach. She went on to win several vocal competitions, subsequently appearing in concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. Having been offered a scholarship, she left the United States to take up residence in Vienna and ultimately made Europe her artistic home. Following her brilliant debut at the Vienna State Opera as the Queen of the Night in 1967, she was given a long term contract. She made her bow at the Salzburg Festival in 1969, at Milan's La Scala in 1975 and at the New York Metropolitan Opera in 1978. An operatic career seemed to lie ahead, but she chose a different path. Regarding a career as nothing but the *architecture of a person's ambitions*, she admitted: *Sometimes the architecture does not fit those ambitions. It has always been my desire to enjoy music and to sing for as long as possible.* She left the Vienna State Opera in 1974, her strength sapped by intrigues and rivalries, envy and selfishness. However, she did not turn her back on opera altogether. As an expert performer of the coloratura roles in Mozart's early operas and as a specialist in baroque opera, she as a frequent guest in the recording studio and on the stage. But even so the main emphasis of her activities shilled to the concert platform. From Vienna to Atlanta, from Paris to New York, she appeared with the most distinguished conductors: Claudio Abbado, Rafael Kubelik, Bernard Haitink, Klaus Tennstedt, Seiji Ozawa, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, and Helmuth Rilling. Most important, she discovered her affinity for the lied. Ever since the Viennese accompanist Erik Werba invited her in 1970 to perform Hugo Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch* during a series of song recitals he was organizing in the composer's summer house, she began to develop into a highly accomplished lieder singer. Her mastery of tonal shading was second to none. She was able to change her voice, chameleon-like, from one moment to another, endowing it with a mellifluous quality or with a black hued, earthy tone as the situation required.

With her recordings, Arleen Auger reached a mass audience. Her discography encompasses more than 200 releases. The arias featured on this CD were produced in Leipzig in 1980.

© Christian Carlstedt

Nine German Arias

Handel selected the verses for his "Nine German Arias" from a famous collection of poems, *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*, by the Hamburg Senator and poet, Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1680-1747), and set them to music between 1724 and 1727. He used the second (revised) edition of the collection, published in 1724. In the second volume of the 1727 edition, Brockes himself assembled the poems set by Handel into "Spring Cantatas", adding recitatives for this purpose. But apparently, Handel evinced no interest in the later version.

Even though the "Nine German Arias" were well known in Hamburg and performed there, no copy of the music has survived nor was the work printed at the time. Friedrich Chrysander's Handel Edition does not include the arias. Edited by Herman Roth, they were first published in 1921 as part of the *Musikalische Stundenbücher* series by the Drei-Masken-Verlag. Before long, they made their way into domestic music-making

and into the chamber music repertory. After all, these pieces are among the finest lyrical inspirations of a composer admired chiefly for his dramatic and epic qualities. The present recording is based on the new Halle Handel Edition (where Roth's version of the arias was subjected to corrections). These arias, which Handel presumably composed as the fancy took him rather than in the generally accepted order, are settings of verses which, in an early Enlightenment spirit, praise the divinely ordered universe and its Creator, extolling the beauties of the earth and of human life in a vivid and graphic idiom. The perfect harmony between Creator and Man, the "serene calmness", the rapturous enjoyment of nature, and the "earthly rejoicing in God" are depicted in a musical language that is both naïve and sophisticated.

Brockes' verses, which were also set by other composers of his day, prompted Handel to produce small masterpieces by combining declamatory cogency with imagery and melodic beauty without avoiding graceful ornamental features, which provide the basis for the singers' own embroidery. Some melodic phrases were borrowed from operas composed by Handel at the time. Handel assigned the vocal part to a soprano while the instrumental part may be taken by a violin or, in some cases, by a flute or oboe, as practised on this recording. The "Nine German Arias" owe part of their irresistible charm to their *concertante* dialogue style. Handel's extended melodies, which are perfectly suited to the singer's breathing requirements, unfold gracefully, and often with imaginative touches of colour, while maintaining a vigorous onward flow. Except for one item, all arias are of the *da capo* type. The middle sections, which for the most part draw on motivic material of the main section, are crafted with fastidious care, providing both contrast and enrichment. As a result, the beauty of the melodic shapes appears yet further enhanced in the *da capo* section. The eighth aria ("In den angenehmen Büschen") is of the "through-composed" type, the F major "middle section" leading back to the D minor of the opening. The "Nine German Arias", Handel's last vocal composition in German language, date from a period of intensive preoccupation with Italian opera.

The following lines from Vol. 7 of the *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* will illustrate the way in which Brockes responded to Handel's settings and Handel himself:

The balmy serenity of the air, the evening, suffused as it was with light and shadow in all their finery, together with my children's urging, prompted me to relent and grant their request for a cruise on the calm waters. We entered the boat together and set sail in fair weather. The mood of tranquillity was so son, so pleasant and sweet that it gently established itself in our minds.

And when my son began to play the flute I was unable to refrain from singing the text of that well known aria *Süsse Stille* (Sweet Quietness), etc.

My little Marie and, besides all the others, even my little Miecke joined in, singing different parts, the bright sound echoing across the waters.

And he went on:

Meanwhile, with their clear voices, two of our children, to the gentle strains of a clavier and accompanied by a flute, intoned a fine duct, presenting a delightful concert made up of pieces by the great Handel.

Under the impact of Handel's music, Brockes went on to discuss the ultimate purpose of human life and arrived at the following conclusion:

The only true life is one in which we extol the beauties of the world that God has adorned. What He wishes to show with His love. We can only absorb with our minds. If it pleases us, He will be pleased.

© Walther Siegmund-Schultze

Translation: Bernd Zölner

CD30-34

CANTATAS FOR SOPRANO SOLO

Introduction

Handel's cantatas represent an important musical repertoire that until recently has been little known. Consisting of about a hundred separate works, most were written over a period of a few years for private performance in Italy. They range from musical miniatures containing only two arias connected by recitative and accompanied by continuo (a bass line typically realized by cello and harpsichord) to larger works with named characters, a dramatic story, and rich instrumental forces. Telling more often than not about the pangs of love, these are intimate works, with texts frequently written by (and sometimes about) members of the privileged audience for which they were composed. A number of Handel's cantatas have texts by one of his important Italian patrons, Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj.

The project of Marco Vitale and Brilliant Classics to record all of Handel's cantatas is thrilling. The continuo cantatas have never been recorded in full and many have never been recorded at all. Thus, this project will bring to life largely unknown music by one of the world's greatest composers. Further, performance of all the continuo cantatas will place the larger, instrumental cantatas in the perspective of their musical context.

Vitale's experience and musicianship are well-matched to this ambitious project, as can be heard in his recent recording for Brilliant Classics of Handel's *La Resurrezione*, from the same period as the cantatas. In particular, his decision to use low Roman pitch and transposing winds gives the music a warm, confidential quality – so appropriate to the intimate settings in which the works were written – without sacrificing its brilliance (as one can hear in the performance of *Delirio amoroso* on this CD).

© Ellen T. Harris, Professor of Music, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Author of *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas*

Context and concerns

From the early 17th century to the late 18th the cantata was the principal form of Italian vocal chamber music. During this period it grew from a comparatively short piece, accompanied only by continuo, to an extended, orchestrally accompanied complex of movements reflecting contemporary operatic music. The cantatas were composed and performed for the private enjoyment of aristocratic patrons. The texts were often based on Greek mythology with reference to love.

Contrasto Armonico's project is to record the complete cantatas composed by Handel. Our plan is to group them by city of composition/performance, to record them in a pitch as close as possible to the original one and, if present, taking into account the oboe transposition, which was a common practice in 18th-century Roman music, as the wind players were coming from Venice, having a performing pitch of about a whole tone higher. About one third of the cantatas are with instrumental accompaniment, and the other two thirds are accompanied only by basso continuo, commonly harpsichord and cello. The interest in these compositions has grown during recent years but they have never been recorded in the low Roman pitch with winds transposition, and indeed many of them (such as *Ditemi, o piante*) have remained unrecorded until now.

This first release presents four cantatas composed in Rome, presumably in the years 1707–8. The large-scale cantata *Delirio amoroso* was composed under the patronage of Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj, who is also the author of the text. The other three continuo cantatas appear in account books of Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli, the main patron of Handel during his years in Rome.

Because of the intimate and private character of the pieces, I think the continuo cantatas were performed by a small

ensemble consisting of harpsichord and cello, or in some cantatas just by the harpsichord alone, like *Allor ch'io dissì addio*, where the accompanying bass contains the clear attributes of harpsichord-writing, with broken chords and arpeggiato style. I decided to preserve the chamber-music character for the instrumental cantatas too, trying to respect, when possible, the original instrumental set-up of the first performances.

The cantata *Delirio amoroso* presents few difficulties of scoring. The editions available are the old HG (German Handel Society) edited by Friedrich W. Chrysander and the relatively new HHA (Halle Handel Edition) edited by Hans Joachim Marx. I preferred to use Chrysander's edition as a base, making a few changes by comparing it with the available manuscripts. A critical edition is by definition not an oracle or a sacred book; editors can make errors and in the process of 'translation' from the manuscript to the printed music they must make difficult choices and sometimes an inevitable degree of personal interpretation. At the same time, musicians should approach such 'critical editions' with their own open and critical mind-set.

Although Chrysander's editions were made more than a century ago, I think that his edition of the cantatas, although not complete, is far more accurate than that of the HHA, chiefly because Chrysander left unmodified the nomenclature of Handel's instruments and stayed closer to the indications of the manuscripts than HHA. HHA's policy of modernizing the score and symbols has led to misunderstanding, in (for example) the aria 'Per te lasciai la luce' (*Delirio amoroso*). Marx's edition disposes it for 'Soprano, violoncello, contrabbasso e cembalo'. This is incorrect, for two reasons: first because the sources used by HHA never refer to a double bass (we even find 'Aria senza violini, violoncello, cembalo' in one source!), and secondly because it is very strange to hear a soprano in duet with a solo cello, accompanied by a double bass together with a harpsichord.

Considerations of pitch are crucial to these new recordings of Handel's Roman music. Relatively recent research has determined that early 18th-century Roman pitch was around A=386 Hz (with Venetian pitch in about A=430 Hz). It should be remembered, however, that until the beginning of the 20th century there was no equipment's or scale to measure the Hertz value of a sound, and it is known that there were small fluctuations of the pitch even in the same place at different times of the year. That's why it is more appropriate to define diverse 'pitch-regions' with differences of about half tones (for continental Europe), and use the nomenclature of A+0, A+1, A-1, A-2 etc. For this recording I decided to set the low pitch of A-2 in A=392 Hz and A+0 in A=440 Hz; although this is a bit higher than the measured pitch of A=386 Hz we have chosen A=392 for practical reasons, staying anyway in the 'pitch-region' of A-2.

Wind instruments in Rome were banned from the church in the early 18th century. For this reason there were no oboe players (and makers) in Rome, and noble patrons were engaging great oboists from Venice, who played at a pitch of about a whole tone higher than in Rome. Therefore composers active in Rome, when writing music for oboe, had to keep this in mind. In Handel's Roman music sometimes the oboe is apparently forced to play in such odd and uncomfortable keys as F sharp minor. Taking the original Roman set-up in mind, however, with the strings in the low Roman pitch (A-2) and the oboe in the *Corista Veneto* (A+0) we find that the oboe plays in a more natural E minor while the strings are in F sharp minor. The long sustained F sharp for the oboe in the *introduzione* to *Delirio amoroso* is not a particularly powerful note on the Baroque oboe, and without flexibility for the intonation. But at the *Corista Veneto* pitch, we find that Handel intended the oboist to play an E, which is a more powerful, open and flexible note for the instrument.

The performance of this repertoire in a single pitch (commonly A-1, so 415 Hz) without taking into account the historical/geographical pitch and oboe transposition may be

considered both a serious fault and a missed opportunity, not to say a modern compromise. I believe that the pitch of the music is a significant influence on its character, but in any case we, as music has, have the responsibility to be transparent and to inform our public about the choices and the compromises we make. It is interesting to see how good modern symphony-orchestra musicians react when the chosen pitch is (for example) A=440 Hz rather than A=442 Hz. Both strings and wind players would say that A=440 Hz is really low! Many of them rightly think that the small difference of two Hz greatly alters the performance. Yet this is still a topic unaddressed by many 'historically informed' performers, musicologists and critics. There is still propounded the common fallacy that A=415 Hz is the only 'Baroque' pitch. A=415 Hz was one among many other chosen pitches in the 17th and 18th century. To apply it to all music composed in the 17th and 18th centuries is like applying equal temperament across the board without caring or knowing about other tuning systems such as Meantone or Werckmeister – which have long been embraced by historically informed musicians.

The lowering of the pitch and the use of oboe transposition has opened a new way to perform Handel's music. Everything from the singer's breathing to the richer sound and resonance of the strings is affected: and the winds can play the notes that the composer had in mind, using natural fingerings which influence all the dynamics and the ornamentation. The fruit of this work contains new elements and innovations which brings forward the process of understanding and discovery of the Handel 'Roman sound'.

© Marco Vitale

Italian Cantatas

The late Italian Baroque cantata, whether in its diminutive form for one voice with continuo accompaniment (cello and harpsichord, or perhaps only one of these instruments) or a multi-voiced dramatic composition with increased instrumental accompaniment, is an intimate work meant to be heard in a chamber setting by a private audience. Many can be associated with meetings of the Arcadian Academy, established in Rome in the late 17th century with the purpose of recreating the 'Golden Age' of Italian literary pre-eminence. Acting out the image of living in Arcadia, members of the Academy adopted pastoral names and wrote poetry to be set to music. Cantatas written to be performed in the palaces of individual patrons for their weekly gatherings, called *conversazione*, reflected a similar practice. Most of Handel's cantatas originate in this environment of aristocratic assemblies for the princes of church and state and their guests. Prince Anton Ulrich of Meiningen describes one of these gatherings in his journal: 'On 1 May [1707] we went to [the palazzo of] Marchese Ruspoli ... where we heard beautiful music composed by the German Handel from Halle sung by a cantatrice [Margarita Durastante] and [the castrato] Checchino ...; in attendance were Cardinal Ottoboni and Cardinal de la Trémoille with other princesses and ladies and many gentlemen.'¹

The Arcadian pastoral ambience pervaded the cantatas, whose texts deal mostly with the subjects of love and longing. The authors are today mostly unknown, but frequently they were themselves part of the aristocratic gathering, and their poetry, describing cross-currents of desire, both homoerotic and heterosexual, often referred directly to the author himself, the composer, the host or a member of the audience behind a pastoral façade. A few cantata collections from the period illustrate this practice with small engravings for each work, showing Arcadian shepherds not in some idyllic landscape but in a clearly delineated Rome. It is these 'urban shepherds' for whom and about whom the cantatas were written.

Handel's cantata texts are only beginning to be viewed in this light (as opposed to being considered an undifferentiated mass of pastoral poetry). Most were composed in Italy in 1707 and 1708, but a few were composed during his first dozen years

in London, between 1711 and 1723. All of the cantatas are thus related to the period of his life when he was most engaged with private patronage. After turning definitively to opera with the opening of the Royal Academy of Music in 1720 and moving into his own house in London in 1723, Handel left the cantata behind. The cantatas on this CD were probably written in Rome, the centre of Handel's activity in 1707 and 1708, for either the Cardinal Pamphilj or the Marchese (later Prince) Ruspoli.

The cantatas known to be associated with the patronage of Pamphilj all have texts written by the Cardinal. In one of these texts, he specifically names Handel, saying that the composer's skill has awakened his muse from retirement in a way that is also suggestive of the reawakening of desire, and it may be that the Cardinal was homoerotically attracted to the younger Handel. In *Tra le fiamme*, included on this CD, Pamphilj has a different message. Using both the image of moths attracted to a flame and the story of Daedalus, who fashioned wings from wax and feathers for himself and his son Icarus, he presents a warning (the actual title of the cantata is *Il consiglio*, or 'The advice'): although the phoenix can rise from the flames, the moths will be killed, and although the older Daedalus can moderate his ambition/desire, Icarus flies too near the sun, melting the wax and plunging him to his death. This, of course, could be a general warning to any auditor, but one possibility is that Pamphilj was directing his message specifically to Handel. The image of the phoenix makes Pamphilj's voice clear, as his pastoral Arcadian name was Fenicio (phoenix) Larisseo, and perhaps he can be seen as well in the paternal figure of Daedalus (Pamphilj was 54; Handel, 22). That the advice may have been directed to Handel can be suspected, not just because the cardinal handed the text to Handel to set, but also because rumours were circulating about a relationship between the composer and the singer Vittoria Tarquini, the mistress of Prince Ferdinand de' Medici of Florence. The way William Coxe describes this in his *Anecdotes of George Frederick Handel* (1799) makes it sound as if Handel adhered to Pamphilj's advice. He writes that Handel's 'youth and comeliness, joined to his musical fame, had made an impression on [Vittoria's] heart; but Handel was too prudent to encourage an attachment, which might have occasioned the ruin of both.'

Tra le fiamme, whatever its personal meaning, is an extraordinary musical work. It is distinguished by the inclusion of a virtuoso solo part for the viola da gamba, in addition to two recorders, oboe and strings. Although Handel rarely indicated in his scores which instruments should play the bass line, in this cantata he calls specifically for a 'violone grosso'. The question then becomes whether Handel wanted this instrument to play the bass line at the written pitch or to double it an octave lower (as would be the case with a 16-foot instrument, such as a double bass). Although *Tra le fiamme* is often heard with double bass, the omission of any 16-foot instrument in this recording beautifully magnifies and clarifies the sound of the solo gamba. In the opening aria, 'Tra le fiamme', the gamba and voice interact, echo and mirror one another, surely illustrating the singer's heart playing like the moths among the flames. In the second aria, 'Pien di nuovo e bel diletto', the gamba generally takes a more sustaining role, seeming to depict the flight of the more cautious Daedalus (who, like the phoenix, survives), while the plunging line in the violins illustrates the consequence of Icarus's bravado. In the third aria, 'Voli per l'aria', whose text advises that man should restrict flying to his thoughts, the gamba and voice join together in flights of fancy. Unusually, the cantata then returns to the opening aria, reiterating the dilemma of the singer's heart that flies among the flames.

The account books of Pamphilj include a payment on 6 July 1707 for copying a large cantata, probably *Tra le fiamme*. *Un'alma innamorata* was written around the same time for Ruspoli (the bill for its copying is dated 30 June 1707) for performance at his country estate in Vignanello not far from Rome. Ursula Kirkendale proposes that it too relates to the rumoured relationship between Handel and the singer Vittoria.

Her research has revealed that a 'Vittoria', whom she associates with the singer, was among the guests at Vignanello for a time during this period. She suggests that the text may have been written by Abbé Francesco Mazziotti, tutor of Ruspoli's eldest son, as a 'prank' on Ruspoli's part 'to see how the "Sassone" would react'. If Vittoria Tarquini was indeed present, the possibility exists that she, rather than Ruspoli's regular cantatrice, Margarita Durastante, was asked to sing the cantata. Was the voice in the cantata meant to be Vittoria's or Handel's? The poet allows for either possibility by referring only to 'the heart' or 'the soul' and therefore avoiding a sexual identification of the singing voice or the beloved. The singer states that a heart wounded by love becomes angry if it stays faithful and claims to be happy because 'I love more than one heart' and 'spurn the harsh laws and rigours of love'.

Handel's setting, with only violin and continuo accompaniment, sustains its intimacy across the three recitative-aria pairs. The first aria, 'Quel povero core', is a beautiful lament. Its long lines with repeatedly deflected cadences speak poignantly to the longing of the poor heart. The second aria, 'Io godo, rido e spero', dances and spins with the singer who 'laughs and hopes'. 'Ben impari', the jaunty final aria with its syncopated rhythms and lack of any instrumental ritornellos, depicts the independence of the singer from Cupid (and probably from any outside influence).

Handel's manuscript of *O lucenti, o sereni occhi* does not survive, nor is the cantata mentioned in the Ruspoli documents. However, the manuscripts copied for Ruspoli are largely preserved in the collection of Fortunato Santini (now housed at the Episcopal Seminary, Münster), and the survival of a copy of *O lucenti, o sereni occhi* within that collection suggests that it originated under Ruspoli's patronage. As in *Un' alma innamorata*, the text veils any reference to the sex of the singer or the beloved, using the eyes as a referent for the person and allowing for either a same-sex or heterosexual reading (or both). As Handel reused aspects of the first aria in his opera *Rodrigo*, which premiered in Florence in November of 1707, the cantata can safely be dated to spring or summer 1707.

The first aria, 'Per voi languisco e moro', tells how beautiful eyes cause the singer to languish and die. Handel depicts the pain with a stabbing dotted-rhythm accompaniment. This rhythmic motif is one that Handel would later use to powerful effect in *Messiah*, where he sets Christ's Passion at the beginning of Part II in a succession of movements with sharp, dotted rhythms. The second aria, 'In voi, pupille ardenti', tells how the blazing eyes cause the singer both pleasure and pain. Handel has the wonderful idea of setting the word 'pleasure' ('piacer') with dissonance, as if to depict the spark of delight, first with a descending diminished fifth and finally with a rising major seventh. In contrast, he paints the pain ('pena') as extended, setting the word with lengthy melisma's, sustained notes, and augmented intervals. Handel's use of silence in this cantata is also sophisticated. Listen in the opening recitative to the way he breaks the word 'tre-mo-li' after each syllable to depict quivering, and in the second aria, how he breaks through the musical fabric with silence following the phrase telling of the singer's heart being bound in chains ('stringe in catena'), making it seem that all the musicians have been rendered incapable of continuing.

A copying bill for *Aure soavi e liete* appears in the Ruspoli account books on 16 May 1707. The text blends lovely nature images with the longing the singer has for his beloved Clori. Unusually, neither aria in this cantata is a standard *da capo*, the staple of cantata and opera arias where the first section returns after a somewhat contrasting middle section; nor are there any instrumental ritornellos. The first aria is through-composed without sectional repetitions. The second begins as if it will be a small binary dance movement, but the aria continues with a harmonically contrasting section leading to a repetition of the binary dance, creating an unusual form that seems more like an atypical minuet and trio than a *da capo*.

In the opening recitative, the singer describes how the 'soft and delightful breezes' ('Aure soavi e liete') bring relief from the summer heat, but that there is no relief for his heart. The first aria tells how Clori's dear eyes ('care luci') bring the dawn when they appear to him. Handel sets the opening words, 'Care luci', with a beautifully arched melody that seems to embody consolation. Handel found this musical phrase useful in his opera *Rodrigo* when the queen offers to give up her son to save her husband and bring peace, 'Egli è tua' ('He is yours'). As with the dotted figure in *O lucenti, o sereni occhi*, it too found its culmination in *Messiah*, in the very opening words: 'Comfort ye my people'.

The bill for copying *Del bell'idolo mio* only appears in the Ruspoli account books on 31 August 1709. However, there is no evidence that Handel was still in Rome at this time, and some aspects of his manuscript connect the cantata with others written in spring 1707. It is amazing that this cantata that tells of an Orphic quest to the Underworld to rescue the beloved Nice is not better known. It is full of exquisite music.

The cantata opens with the lover's decision to face death and seek his beloved in the Underworld. The first aria, 'Formidabil gondoliero', then depicts his bravado as he sallies forth, calling on Charon in a vocal gesture that depicts his resolve with a long-sustained note and his pride in a final aristocratic flourish. When he demands the ferryman's presence, his impatience is clear in the rhythmic iteration of the phrase. The second aria is a lament, 'Piangerò', here expressing the fear that he will not succeed. Its fragmentation and plangent chromaticism movingly express his despair. In the final aria, 'Su rendetemi colei', having spent both his arrogance and his despair, he is reduced to a simple plea that escapes from his lips as a long sigh: 'Give her back to me, console an unhappy soul'.

The last lines of this final aria refer to the lover rising like a phoenix ('fenice') from the flames of the inferno. Given that the phoenix was Pamphilj's Arcadian name, is this reference a 'signature', indicating the cardinal's authorship? Or is it an allusion to Pamphilj? We will probably never know. But whether or not we can identify, or in all cases should even try to identify, members of Handel's aristocratic audience in his cantatas, the music maintains its deep emotional content, resonating with our passions as much as it must have resonated with the original listeners.

© Ellen T. Harris

Ellen T. Harris is Professor of Music at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author of Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas (Harvard University Press, 2002)

The violone in Handel

The cantatas on this second volume were composed in Rome, so I have chosen to perform them at the Roman pitch of A-2 (392 Hz) – a whole tone lower than modern piano pitch (see the booklet notes of Contrasto Armonico's releases on Brilliant Classics of *La Resurrezione* (93805) and *Complete Cantatas Vol. 1* (93999).

Tra le fiamme is recorded with a violone in G, an instrument tuned G'–C–F–A–d–g which plays at the cello's written pitch. Handel clearly asks for a violone (literally 'violono grosso') in his autograph. Exactly in the place where the solo of the viola da gamba begins (and the string/recorders ensemble stops), the composer writes 'violono grosso'. Friedrich Chrysander rightly transliterates the name of this instrument in his edition but unfortunately the HHA (Handel Halle Edition) translated it into a double bass.

If we ignore for a moment all we know about musicology and organology (the science of musical instruments and their classification) the first idea that comes out, after seeing 'violone' written in the score, is that Handel wanted to accompany the viola da gamba with an instrument from the same family (viols). We can find many examples where Handel

combined instruments from the same family or with compatible sonority: a pair of oboes in trio with a bassoon, a transverse flute accompanied by theorbo and viola da gamba ('Così la tortorella', in *La Resurrezione*), two recorders with a gamba, a gamba consort, trumpets with timpani, and many others.

With the specialized eye of the musicologist and the organologist the problem, however, becomes more complex. Italian and German sources and treatises from the 17th and 18th century cite many different tunings for the violone. Half the sources (both Italians and Germans) even describe the 'violone grosso' as a 16' instrument, with a tuning similar to that of the double bass. But the other half differ radically. They describe the instrument as a large viol, often with five strings tuned G–C–F–A–d–g. This instrument plays at the 8' (the cello's written pitch) with the possibility of playing down to a fourth lower than the cello.

Handel's music composed in Italy offers more help. In *La Resurrezione* (Rome, 1708) we find 'violoni senza cembalo' in Maddalena's aria 'Ferma l'ali'. Four arias later, in the same oratorio, we find 'violoncelli senza cembalo e contrabassi' (Cleofe's aria 'Naufragando va per l'onde'). Any confusion over the historical nomenclature of violone and 'contrabasso' in this music is thus resolved: for Handel they are clearly two different instruments, because he gives them different names!

All the music where the violone is involved has similar instrumentation: *Tra le fiamme* (Rome, 1707) has recorders, violins, gamba, continuo and violone (to accompany the solo gamba), 'Ferma l'ali' (*La Resurrezione*, Rome 1708) has recorders, muted violins, gamba and violone *senza cembalo*; 'Fra l'ombre e gl'orrori' (*Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, Naples 1708) has recorder, violins, viola and violone *senza cembalo*. There is also a common element to these pieces: the idea of flying. *Tra le fiamme* concerns Icarus, who flew too close to the sun; in 'Ferma l'ali' Maddalena asks ungrateful sleep to stop its wings; 'Fra l'ombre e gl'orrori' describes a confused butterfly who is wandering in shades and darkness. And in all these pieces, when the violone is active, there is no harpsichord.

Handel writes in a quite distinct style when composing for a violone. In *Tra le fiamme* the violone plays in parallel thirds with the viola da gamba, and in the middle of the first aria the violone plays in its highest register while the gamba plays an octave lower: Handel often uses such crossing of voices, and to memorable effect. With a 16' double bass we would lose such colour and ingenuity. This instrument was used only in large ensembles, as a 'ripieno' instrument, doubling the bass line and often not playing (leaving the cello and the harpsichord alone) while the singer was performing. In such pieces the violone has a largely functional role in support of other solo voices. The double bass gained a 'solo' identity only in the second half of the 18th century, thanks to composers such as Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Domenico Dragonetti and Giovanni Bottesini.

In combining the historical sources, an analysis of Handel's music and a modicum of common sense, I have come to the firm conclusion that the instrument Handel had in mind was not a 16' double bass but a large viola da gamba playing at the cello's written pitch: a lightweight bass with a large body but a delicate sound.

Why then do many 'historically informed' performers end up playing the 'violone pieces' with a standard 16' double bass instead of a proper violone in recordings and performances? This is probably one of the potential consequences of the dogmatic approach that some musicians give to critical editions. With such an approach a simple mistake, omission or not documented modernization of the editor can be fatal to the music: without criticism the errors multiply and become, over a decade, an established performance tradition. The only way to prevent this scenario is not to let historically informed performance become a fashion and a consolidated tradition.

(c) Marco Vitale

¹ Rashid-S. Pegah, 'anno 1707': Neue Forschungsergebnisse zur Tätigkeit von G.F. Händel in Rom und Florenz,'

Die Musikforschung 62 (2009): 2–13.

Aminta e Fillide HWV83

The dramatic cantata *Arresta il passo*, also known as 'Aminta e Fillide', is probably one of the earliest works¹ Handel composed in Rome for his patron Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli. Written for two soprano soloists, it presents the story of a shepherd who eventually wins the love of a reluctant nymph.

Various versions of the cantata have survived. Handel's original setting does not include the two arias 'Chi ben ama non paventa' and 'Non si può dar' or the recitatives following each of these arias. Instead, the cantata moved directly from the recitative 'Gloria bella di Aminta' to the final duo 'Per abbatter il rigor', and it is this form of the work that has survived in autograph (used by Friedrich Chrysander for his edition in 1888). This version was probably performed in Rome in 1707, or as early as the end of 1706, as Ursula Kirkendale suggests (see note ¹).

At some later point the two arias, which have survived in a separate manuscript (also autograph, published by Chrysander in an appendix), were added. This may have occurred for a performance in 1708 at the Arcadian Academy, as is suggested in the Ruspoli account books by a reference to the aria 'Fiamma bella' ('2 violini che sonarono nella Cantata Fiamma bella di Monsù Hendel' – 19 September 1708). This longer version has survived in a period copy which was made by Handel's principal Roman copyist Antonio Giuseppe Angelini and is now held in the Santini Collection in Münster. Angelini indicated the exact place where the two extra arias should be inserted, following the recitative 'Gloria bella di Aminta'.

Chrysander printed the two additional arias as a stand-alone fragment, in which the extra aria 'Non si può dar' appears, as in the autograph, in G major. In the Münster score the aria 'Non si può dar' is transposed into B flat major, and the last three measures of the previous recitative, originally cadencing in B minor, is adjusted by Handel to cadence in G minor.

The HHA edition (Bärenreiter) and all the commercial recordings available are based on the Münster copy. In my opinion, however, this later version is problematic. The cantata in its original form requires three violins and continuo. The two extra arias demand more instruments: a viola (not present in the original version) and at least two more violins (given that in the aria 'Chi ben ama' both first and second violins have a divisi part). The transition from the D minor cadence at the end of the recitative 'Gloria bella di Aminta' to 'Chi ben ama non paventa' in C minor is less than perfect (the D minor cadence originally led to the duet in B flat major, which feels more natural). Furthermore, the transposition of 'Non si può dar' to B flat major places two consecutive movements in the same key (with the final duet), which is unusual in Handel's practice. And from a poetic point of view, after the recitative for both voices 'Ed io fedele amante / Ed io sempre costante' (And I am your faithful lover! / And I am ever true!), we would expect to hear the final duet as the story has come to an end.

We see here, as is also the case with the operas, that Handel's second version is not as strong as his original conception. Therefore I have chosen to perform and record *Arresta il passo* in the original version (as is standard practice with the operas).

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ellen T. Harris (Professor of Music, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author of *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas*) for her invaluable support and her useful advice throughout the research and preparation of this cantata for performance.

© Marco Vitale

¹ Ursula Kirkendale suggests that *Arresta il passo* was the first work Handel wrote in Rome, associating it with a bill in the Ruspoli documents submitted on 29 December 1706 for an untitled new cantata for singers and concertino violinists.

Clori, mia bella Clori HWV92 · Sans y penser HWV155 · Clori, vezzosa Clori HWV95 · Pensieri notturni di Filli HWV134 · Lungi n'andò Fileno HWV128

As a young and aspiring composer, George Frideric Handel spent about four years in Italy, absorbing its performances, compositions and musical culture. During this time he wrote two operas, two oratorios and more than one hundred secular cantatas that tell of love and longing. The most clearly documented parts of this Italian sojourn are two extended periods that he spent in Rome in 1707 and 1708. Although his Roman patrons included the Cardinals Pamphili, Ottoboni and Colonna, it is from the archives of the rising Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli (named Prince of Cerveteri in 1709) that most of our information derives. Some years later, the status of Ruspoli as the most important Roman patron of music was made evident in a letter from 1717 to Sir John Percival in London from George Berkeley, who, although no music lover, was nevertheless a reliable witness: 'Cardinal Ottoboni has let off his entertainments, and Prince Ruspoli is the man who now gives musick every week to Strangers [that is, foreigners], where I am sure to fall a Sleep as constantly as I go.' All five of the cantatas on this disc are associated with Rome, and all have at least a tentative association with Ruspoli.

Two of the cantatas date from 1707. The exact composition date of *Pensieri notturni di Filli (Nel dolce dell'oblio)*, for soprano, recorder and basso continuo, is not known, but the paper and layout of Handel's score match other works from his first year in Rome. In the text the singer watches Phyllis, whom he loves, dreaming of her own beloved. There is a chain of unreciprocated love: the narrator loves Phyllis, who loves another, who seems, alas, to love still another. The singer concludes that being deceived in a dream can have its delights, but when one awakens delight turns to sorrow.

As is typical, the cantata's two arias use *da capo* form, in which the first section (or A section) returns in an ornamented version following a contrasting middle section (or B section). In the first aria, Handel's setting of the text 'Giacché il sonno a lei dipinge la sembianze del suo bene' ('Since sleep presents to her the image of her beloved') floats dreamily in rolling triplet motion. In the middle section, 'nella quiete ne pur finge d'abbracciar le sue catene' ('she does not have to imagine the chains that hold her'), Handel uses dissonant and overlapping imitative phrases to depict the chains of love, but the floating dream returns, of course, to end the movement. In the second aria, 'Ha l'inganno il suo diletto' ('Being deceived has its delights'), the fast tempo, insistent repeated notes and oscillating melodic phrases seem to brush away the dreamy mists. This leaves painful reality in the middle section, which Handel paints by omitting the recorder and setting the vocal line in short, hesitant phrases full of striking dissonance, after which the strands of deceit are once again vigorously brushed away.

Sans y penser is Handel's only cantata in French. The occasion of its composition in Rome is uncertain, but a bill for copying it appears in the Ruspoli account books in September 1707, so it must have been written before then. Unlike the texts of Handel's Italian cantatas, which for the most part were newly written for the composer to set, the words of this French cantata appear to have been compiled from existing sources. The text of the first and second arias can be found in earlier printed collections of French songs, and that of the third aria appears in a later collection, but was probably known before Handel's cantata was put together. The texts of the recitatives, and perhaps the fourth and final aria as well, may have been newly written to create a connection between the borrowed sections.

One of Handel's comic cantatas, *Sans y penser* depicts the ill-fated love of Silvie and Tirsis. The shepherdess Silvie describes the situation: she has made Tirsis fall in love with her without thinking about it ('Sans y penser'), but he has also

claimed her heart. Tirsis decries the infidelity of women and wishes that he could be a flower on Silvie's breast ('Petite fleur brunette'). Silvie declares that pleasures are fleeting and should be taken where they can ('Nos plaisirs seront'). However, in the recitative that follows she falls into despair when she learns that Tirsis is leaving, having apparently decided that a brief fling is not what he wants. Tirsis ends the cantata with an air, in which he names drink a better companion than a faithless shepherdess ('Non, non je ne puis plus souffrir').

Handel's setting of this cantata for voice and continuo illustrates his extraordinary sensitivity to national styles. A true French cantata, rather than simply a cantata in the Italian style but with a French text, it captures the flow of the French chanson and the heightened speech-song of French recitative, both of which contrast considerably with rapid Italian declamation. Handel particularly seems to enjoy painting the scene of Tirsis's final air. It opens with a repeated section in common (4/4) time with the bass moving in time with the voice, suggesting that it will follow the AABB binary dance pattern that has already been heard in the first and third aria. However, instead of following this opening with an equally simple conclusion to provide melodic and harmonic balance, Handel takes a more unexpected route. The second section begins with a bar of imitation between the bass and voice, followed by a transitional bar of 2/4, before sliding neatly into triple time for the remainder of the air. Both the imitative lag between bass and voice and the interruption of triple time at the words 'ma bouteille' ('my bottle') paint the picture of an already tipsy Tirsis celebrating his decision.

In contrast to both of the cantatas previously discussed, *Lungi n'andò Fileno* for voice and continuo, written for Ruspoli in 1708, is characterised by despair and dissonance. The first aria, 'Si piangete, o mie pupille', depicts endless weeping, using a Largo (very slow) tempo and a complex combination of triple and duple time. Here the flowing tears offer no release; rather, the rhythmic disjunctions create a sense of the suffering and sorrow discussed in the text, while the constantly shifting harmonies suggest that the heartbroken lover has lost his bearings and has no secure resting place. The second aria, 'Dunque se il tanto piangere', expresses a wish for death to end the cruel pain experienced by the singer. Its bass and melody unwind inexorably, as if this ultimate destination is inescapable, and the wide ascending leaps in the voice depict the ever-present ache of longing for the absent loved one. Handel must have prized the extreme pathos that he achieved in this aria, as he used it more than 40 years later as the basis for an aria in the oratorio *Susanna*, where Susanna, under threat of death as a result of false accusations, sings that she is ready to die: 'If guiltless blood be your intent, I here resign it all'.

Clori, vezzosa Clori, another continuo cantata written for Ruspoli in 1708, is as 'charming' ('vezzosa') as Clori herself is depicted to be. In the first aria, 'Il bosco, il prato, il rio', the distant lover declares that all of nature carries him back to Clori's image. Handel depicts this at first by establishing a rhythmic interaction between the voice and bass, almost as if one is a reflection of the other, with powerful chromaticism introduced on the repetition of this text to indicate the pain of separation. In the middle section of the aria, when the lover almost feels as if Clori is standing in front of him, the voice and bass are more rhythmically linked and the chromaticism briefly falls away, although reality reappears with the opening section's return. In the final aria, 'Non è possibile', a simple but delightful minuet, the lover declares that it is impossible to forget Clori.

Clori, mia bella Clori, an accompanied cantata for soprano, violins and basso continuo, was also composed in Rome, probably for Ruspoli. A bill for copying a 'Cantata à voce sola con VV' appears in the Ruspoli account books on 28 August 1708, which might refer to this work. In the anonymous text, covering four recitative-aria pairs, a lover at first bemoans his separation from Clori, then declares he will see her in all nature, loses his fortitude and dissolves into tears, before ending the

cantata in a burst of jealousy. The overlap in subject between this cantata and 'Clori, vezzosa Clori' suggests the possibility that both works refer to a specific couple known to the contemporary Roman audience. If so, this couple's identity has been lost in time.

What is remarkable about Handel's setting of *Clori, mia bella Clori* is the variety of accompaniments that he is able to create out of just violins and bass. In the first aria, 'Chiari lumi', which describes the lover's despondency, the moderate tempo, unison violins and intruding silences depict a world filled with grief. By contrast, the second aria, 'Ne' gigli e nelle rose', dances lightly using a circling triplet motion and just continuo accompaniment, the violins holding back until the closing ritornello of the A section where they provide intensification. The third aria, 'Mie pupille', depicts the lover weeping; Handel extends the word 'lacrimar' ('to weep') to illustrate the depth of the lover's despair, while the violins join together to play in thirds with the voice. In the final aria Handel creates a rich four-part texture (violin I, violin II, voice and bass) that has been reserved until this moment and is combined with a fast tempo to evoke the passionate energy of the singer's jealousy.

In these five cantatas, the listener can enjoy the richness of Handel's compositional palette, which is particularly impressive for a young composer just setting out on his career. From the depths of despair portrayed in *Lungi n'andò Fileno* to the wry humour of *Sans y penser*, the charming simplicity of *Clori, vezzosa Clori*, the passionate outbursts of *Clori, mia bella Clori*, and the startling shift from dream to reality in *Nel dolce dell'oblio*, Handel's music paints emotions so that we do not simply hear about them but feel them. It is a remarkable achievement.

© Ellen T. Harris

CD34

ITALIAN CANTATAS

On this recording are two different versions of two cantatas. The cantata *Mira Lilla gentile* exists in two versions, one where the soprano solo alternates with the violin, the other with the cello; the manuscripts are held in the Pisani collection kept in the library of the Vincenzo Bellini Conservatoire in Palermo. The attribution of this cantata 'by Signor Federico Hendel' to George Frederic Handel may seem obvious enough, not least on account of the presence of various Handel cantatas in a collection largely made up of pieces by composers of the Neapolitan school. The Pisani collection comprises the cantatas *Un'alma innamorata* HWV173, *Sarei troppo felice* HWV157, *Ninfe e pastori* HWV139a, *Se pari è la tua fe'* HWV158a and *O Numi eterni* (Lucrezia) HWV145. Palermo-born Baron Pietro Pisani (1761–1837), who compiled the collection, was an intellectual and philanthropist who, in his assiduous enthusiasm for early 18th-century Neapolitan music, anticipated by many decades the modern renaissance in Baroque music.

When Pisani travelled to Naples he often purchased manuscripts, partly to provide his son, who enjoyed singing, with scores to study. Following his son's premature death, Pisani, who had been appointed superintendent of the Real Conservatorio di Musica, decided to donate his collection of cantatas and arias to the Conservatoire library. The collection remains there to this day, and our heartfelt thanks go to Dario Lo Cicero, the present-day librarian of what is now Palermo's Conservatorio 'V. Bellini', whose learning, professional skill and discretion were of great help to MVSICA PERDVTA in the identification and study of this music.

The cantata itself is catalogued correctly, and given the musical level of the piece it is curious that it should have been neglected until now. Before MVSICA PERDVTA began to perform it in 2008, the cantata had only received one modern performance, under Fabio Biondi in 1985 in a private mansion.

Mira Lilla gentile has three pairs of recitative and aria. In terms of structure and embellishments, the Palermo manuscript

resembles that of *Un'alma innamorata* HWV173: a reflective opening, a nimble aria in a major key, and lastly an aria in a dance tempo. On account of these analogies with HWV173, which includes a violin obbligato, it is probable that the version with the violin is the original, or at least the earlier version, and that the version with the cello is a later transcription or an adaptation by the composer himself. While the cello may better suit the languid mood of the first aria, it is also worth noting that the part is somewhat longer than was normal for a cello obbligato in the early 18th century. For this reason, we opted to use a five-string cello for the present recording. It was very common at the time, and it is likely that the obbligato was actually composed for this instrument.

The cantata tells the tale in the first person of unrequited love for a certain Lilla, for whom the young man wishes to die despite the fact that he has been abandoned. It was probably written during Handel's brief stay in Naples, although he may have taken the manuscript with him there. The Neapolitan origin tallies with Baron Pisani's acquisitive habits described earlier. Indeed, it is probable that he found and purchased both manuscript versions of *Mira Lilla gentile* in Naples. With this recording we hope to bring attention to a cantata that should certainly be added to Handel's work catalogue.

The second pair of cantatas is the anonymous *La caduta di Icaro*, the manuscript of which is kept in the Biblioteca Corsiniana in Rome, and *Tra le fiamme*, also known as *Il consiglio*, HWV170, probably composed in Rome in 1707. Both cantatas share the same libretto by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili, who drew a moral precept from the myth of Daedalus and Icarus: man is born to rise to heaven, but he cannot do so on his own, just as Icarus cannot reach the sun with the waxen wings his father had put together in order to flee from the Cretan labyrinth. The cantata thus decries the sin of pride denounced by Christianity, akin to the hubris of earlier pagan cultures, as personified by the boy Icarus, whose personal Tower of Babel cannot ensure his passage heavenwards because he relies on his own strength alone, without putting his trust in divine grace.

The structure of the two cantatas is naturally identical: three arias followed by three recitatives, with a repetition of the first aria as a conclusion. The first aria in both versions has a ternary rhythm, while the second, which describes the flight of Icarus, differs from one version to the other: that of the *La caduta di Icaro* is more of a virtuoso piece, whereas the second aria in *Tra le fiamme* is lighter and in triplets. The third aria, which contains the moral lesson to be learnt, is highly virtuosic in HWV170 and more melancholy and melodious in the anonymous cantata, where it is accompanied by a glorious violin solo. The fine Sinfonia that opens *La caduta di Icaro* does not feature in *Tra le fiamme*. From an instrumental point of view, while *La caduta di Icaro* calls for a solo soprano, two violins and basso continuo (with obbligato cello and archlute parts in the second aria and an obbligato violin part in the third aria), *Tra le fiamme* requires the addition of two recorders in the first and third arias, an oboe in the second aria, and the viola da gamba concertante. This latter part requires great virtuosic skill, to the extent that it becomes the foremost soloist of the whole cantata.

Concerning the authorship of *La caduta di Icaro* and its relation to *Tra le fiamme*: it seems unlikely that Handel himself wrote an alternative version of one of his own compositions, not least because the style itself, despite certain similarities, suggests an Italian composer. That said, however, it is also true that in the early years of the 18th century it was not easy to find a viola da gamba player in Italy who could have handled such a demanding part. So perhaps Handel decided to provide an alternative version of the cantata based on instruments that were more readily available south of the Alps. The viola da gamba part in *Tra le fiamme* would thus have been shared between the cello, the archlute and the violin obbligato in *La caduta di Icaro*, with the recorder and oboe parts eliminated to

achieve further simplification. However, it is more likely that *La caduta di Icaro* is the work of an Italian composer, possibly active in the same circles frequented by Handel, and at all events familiar with HWV170. In the past the cantata was attributed to the Neapolitan composer Francesco Mancini (1672–1737), who is still the most convincing candidate for authorship. Here again, it is our hope that this recording may spur the study of what is indeed a very fine composition.

© Renato Criscuolo

Translation: Kate Singleton

CD35

ITALIAN DUETS

During the different stages of his lifetime as a composer, George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) wrote chamber duets with considerable continuity, largely at the behest of the nobility and court circles in Italy, Hannover and London. For the most part we know when and where these works were composed, either on account of signed and dated manuscripts, or thanks to an analysis of the paper and ink used. The pieces recorded here represent the entire range of his output as a composer of duets. An article by Konstanze Musketa (Handel-Jahrbuch 2008) and the ‘Duette und Terzette’ entry by Colin Timms in the recent Handel-Lexikon Laaber (2011) provide the details for a more detailed musicological appraisal of these works.

As a genre the chamber duet might appear to resemble the duo cantata. In conception and shape, however, these duets are actually much closer to the madrigal than they are to the cantata. In this latter form, the increase in vocal content is often accompanied by the introduction of instruments and a greater degree of dramatization, with the second voice corresponding to a second character that contributes to greater theatrical impact. In the duet, on the other hand, the text expresses individual feelings and the use of different voices, as in the madrigal, represents a musical amplification whose essence is lyrical rather than dialogical. The form does not comprise an alternation of recitatives and arias, but rather a succession of pieces that correspond to the different sections of the text: usually a central slow movement preceded and followed by two more lively pieces. The two voices are generally handled in fairly strict counterpoint, with abundant imitation. Unlike the opera or cantata arias, in the duets Handel tended to avoid the *da capo*, and on the rare occasions he did use a refrain, he never repeated precisely the earlier exposition.

In itself the chamber duet was more than just a piece written for the entertainment of a particular patron. It also provided the composer with an opportunity for trying out solutions in counterpoint, and for exercising his skill in adhering to a verbal text that could be divided into different sections and thus variously portrayed. In this sense the chamber duet played a role similar to that of the madrigal that preceded it and from which it to some extent derived.

The supreme master of this genre at the end of the 1600s was Agostino Steffani, and it is no coincidence that Handel had a manuscript copy of Steffani’s famous duets with him at the beginning of his stay in Rome. The Italian composer’s work was a model for the young musician from Saxony, an inspiration that left tangible traces in those very duets. There is a distinct network of connections between Handel’s duets, his other compositions and those of several of his contemporaries that bears witness to consistent borrowing. The duets are a case in point, revealing a criss-crossing of musical loans from one composition to another. Apart from Steffani, Handel also borrowed musical ideas from colleagues such as Giovanni Maria Clari and Pietro Torri, Dietrich Buxtehude and Antonio Caldara.

Quel fior che all'alba ride (HWV192) has come down to us in the form of a manuscript dated ‘A Londra, a’ 1 di luglio 1741). Clearly it is closely related to the Cantata HWV 154 (London 1738/1740) based on the same text. However, the Cantata seems to be almost a preparatory study for the duet, which in

its turn provided a great deal of material for the Messiah (‘His yoke is easy’, No.18, and ‘He shall purify’, No.7).

Although both John Hawkins and John Mainwaring mention a collection of 12 duets written for Caroline von Ansbach, Princess Elect of Hanover, it is now difficult to identify a collection of this size that was definitely compiled for the German court. If, on the other hand, we add two trios and agree to include in the anthology a few compositions actually written in Italy, then the collection becomes more feasible. For example, *Va’, speme infida, pur* (HWV199) and *Amore gioie mi porge* (HWV180) were certainly written in Italy. The former, for which the original signed manuscript is missing, was copied for inclusion in an anthology put together by the same Venetian copyist who worked for Handel on Agrippina, which dates it towards the end of 1709 in Venice. As for the latter, it has come down to us in a manuscript that is unsigned, but bears clear evidence of having been composed in Italy between 1709 and 1710. In both cases Handel uses material borrowed from his copy of Steffani’s collected duets, and both pieces ended up in the collection put together for the Princess Elect, along with others composed ex novo for Hanover.

Caro autor di mia doglia (HWV183) is a case of false attribution, which is a fairly common occurrence in chamber music of the period, especially when different composers made use of the same texts. Today we know that this version of the duet can be traced back to Reinhard Keiser, who published it in his *Divertimenti serenissimi* (Hamburg 1713). Handel put the same words to music in a completely different way in the duet HWV182 for soprano and tenor. Although this piece dates from the composer’s first stay in Italy, he returned to the same text in the 1740s in London (HWV182b) in the duet for two contraltos. It is thus interesting to compare this work composed by Keiser, from whom Handel borrowed overtly on other occasions, with the duets composed by Handel himself.

Ahi, nelle sorti umane (HWV179) bears a distinct date in Handel’s own hand. The duet was completed in London on 31 August 1745, and would thus appear to be the composer’s last work in this genre. *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi* (HWV189) was also written in London, but somewhat earlier, as the composer’s handwritten note reveals: ‘a Londra, a’ 3 Luglio 1741’. Over a year later, in November 1742, the composer set the same text to music in an entirely different manner (HWV190), in what was to become one of his best known duets. This work is related to many other compositions by Handel: at least four cantatas (HWV 102, 107, 118, 145) and the *Brookes-Passion* provided material for the composition of *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi*, while the duet inspired parts of *The Triumph of Time and Truth* and, as every Handel lover immediately recognizes, two famous parts of *Messiah*: ‘For unto us a child is born’ (No.56) and ‘All we like sheep’ (No.23).

The duets continued to charm the world of music and the spheres of European nobility even after Handel’s death, when, with the exception of the grand oratorios, the rest of his output faded somewhat into the background. Collections of the duets continued to be copied, and in manuscript form became the property of aristocratic families and learned collectors such as Father Giovanni Battista Martini, whence they found their way into the various libraries where they are now kept. Each duet in this collection is preceded by a compatible instrumental piece, which acts as a sort of prelude. Although these latter compositions were originally written for the keyboard, they were also transcribed for various basso continuo instruments, which is how they are performed here. The practice of alternating instrumental and vocal pieces was typical of court and academy performance during the 1700s, and is well suited to Handel’s duets.

© Angela Romagnoli

Translation: Kate Singleton

CD36

THE ALCHEMIST AND APOLLO E DAFNE

La terra è liberata (HWV122), also known as *Apollo e Dafne*, is an early work of Handel's, completed at the latest by 1710 when he was 25 years old. It was, however, not the young composer's first attempt at setting the myth to music. Before the trip to Italy which produced *Apollo e Dafne*, Handel had already written a massive double opera on the theme of the fatal attraction of the God of the Sun for a nymph-turned-laurel-tree, known as *Der beglückte Florindo* (*Happy Florindo*) and *Die verwandelte Daphne* (*Daphne transformed*). Only fragments of the music for this Hamburg operatic mega-production survive, denying us the possibility of comparing the pre- and post-Italy settings of the myth, but it is clear that the influence which the Southern musical taste had on such youthful talent was immense and irrevocable. Handel's style matured during his Italian sojourn, and the melodic glories of the Southern composers, as well as the superb quality of Italian singers with whom he came into contact while there, brought to flower the rich and varied blooms of his own genius.

The autograph score of *La terra è liberata* is complex, being an amalgamation of different types of paper (some associated with the composer's stay in Italy, others with Germany), and scored in various layouts. This makes dating the piece particularly difficult. However, Handel scholars suggest that the cantata was begun in Italy, and finished or revised in Hanover, for which city Handel departed in 1710 after his highly successful opera *Agrippina* closed in Venice. The rich use of winds (solo bassoon and flauto traverso especially) in *Apollo e Dafne* lead some scholars to believe that it must have been written for Germany, where performers on the newly improved French wind instruments had established themselves at an early date. Recent research, however, has shown that wind instruments were not as rare in Italy as was once believed, and that virtuosi were playing them there much earlier than had been previously thought. All in all, it seems safe to say that *Apollo e Daphne* was a piece soaked through with the flavours of the South, and carried by the composer up to Germany, on his way to the city which would become his home: London.

Handel first arrived in London in the autumn of 1710. By February 1711 he had taken the city by storm with his newly-composed magical opera *Rinaldo*. But London had had intimations of the composer's talents even before his arrival. Indeed, recent scholarship has questioned the old story of Handel's truancy from his obligations to Hanover, rejecting the notion that the composer dallied in London against the wishes of the soon-to-be King George. Instead, the idea has arisen that Handel came to London as a propagandist for the Hannoverian succession, and may even have had political duties to attend to in secret, while carrying on a spectacularly successful musical charm-offensive in favour of George and Germany. If this is the case, then we could see the dance suite *Music in the Alchemist* (HWV43) as advanced publicity, carefully planned to prepare Handel's arrival. This suite, preceded by a grand and noble overture, is taken from the first opera Handel wrote on Italian soil, *Vincer se stesso è la maggior vittoria*, now better known as *Rodrigo*, which had premiered in Florence in 1707. The London version of this material was used as incidental music to a popular play by Ben Jonson called *The Alchemist* in a revival during January of 1710, half a year before Handel's arrival in England. Whether this was indeed by design, or simply an accidental felicity, it at any rate must have helped establish an association between the London public, Handel and the theatre, which would maintain a tricky and fickle relationship for many years to come.

Both of the pieces on this recording represent a youthful and exuberant outpouring of genius. Conceived in theatrical Catholic Italy, only to achieve their final form in the Protestant North, they seem to have lost none of their vigour and warmth in this transformation process; and today they charm us just as

they must have charmed when new, like a whiff from distant lemon groves in the London fog and rain.

© Jed Wentz

CD37-38

ACI, GALATEA E POLIFEMO

Acì, Galatea e Polifemo (HWV72) is the only serenata Handel composed in Italy, yet it is by no means isolated in his output. Il Parnasso in festa, performed in London 13 March 1734 for the wedding of Princess Anne with William of Orange, is classifiable as a serenata, and there are several other similar works, including the secular oratorio *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* (Rome, 1707) and of course the well-known English *Acis and Galatea* (Cannons, 1718), a "masque" or "pastoral entertainment". Serenatas were a frequent form of musical entertainment in noble households in Italy and soon also in Germany and England; the performers were usually accomplished vocal soloists, supported by an often substantial orchestra. Performances took place at night and often outdoors, in private gardens, or in a theatre, but without stage action; the characters might wear costume and there might be lavish decorations such as painted backdrops. The poetic texts were often allegorical or mythological, and the most usual function of the genre was to congratulate a patron on a happy occasion. Handel's Neapolitan *Acì, Galatea e Polifemo*, for three soloists, is unusually dramatic for a serenata. The characters are strongly delineated in both text and music; there are dialogues (for example in the very first two lines), trialogues, monologues and asides, just as in a dramatic libretto. The action is itself a compelling drama: there is a mounting tension between the loving couple (*Acì* and *Galatea*) and the jealous monster (*Polifemo*), who finally kills *Acì*. A happy end is, however, imposed artificially, when all three soloists unite to sing a final chorus in praise of faithful love: the occasion for the performance was a wedding.

Handel's music is as rich and vivid as that of his cantatas, early operas and chamber duets: it paints the emotions and the background with both the vocal and the chosen instrumental forces. The extraordinary compass of *Polifemo's* bass part is in itself an allegory of the mythical monster's body, and *Acì* and *Galatea* present themselves in their soprano arias as graceful, passionate, young and genteel. Among the instruments, the oboe has many characterful solos, and the two trumpets add physical force and an outdoors feeling – as was proper for a serenata. The melodic invention is remarkable; the most intriguing motifs are falling or downward pointing. Although the composition was commissioned and written at short notice, Handel, fully familiar with the type of musical imagery expected here, could muster his best musical ideas. The work holds its own in comparison with the English *Acis and Galatea*, as it represents not only a drama, but also celebrates the beauty of Italian nature and culture.

© Reinhard Strohm

During Handel's travels in Italy in 1708, he spent some ten weeks in Naples, from about the beginning of May to the second week of July. He composed *Acì, Galatea e Polifemo* during his stay in the city. He was 23 years old. On completing the work Handel noted on the last page of the autograph: Napoli li 16 di Giugno.1708. d'Alvito. Although there is no firm evidence, it is likely that he composed the work for the wedding festivities of the fifth Duke of Alvito, Tolomeo Saverio Gallo, and Beatrice Tocco di Montemiletto, Princess of Acaja. The wedding was celebrated on 19 July 1708, one month after the completion of the work. John Mainwaring, Handel's first biographer, wrote that the work was composed "at the request of Donna Laura". Recent studies suggest that the mysterious "Donna Laura" was most probably Donna Aurora Sanseverino, Duchess of Laurenzano, and Beatrice Tocco's aunt. The opening duet "Sorge il dì, spunta l'aurora" seems to be a confirmation that Aurora Sanseverino herself commissioned the

work. Handel himself performed the work only once, in July 1708. *Acis, Galatea e Polifemo* was performed again for the wedding of Pascale Gaetani d'Aragona, Aurora Sanseverino's eldest son, with Maria Maddalena di Croy. The wedding took place on 6 December 1711, and according to Luigi Michele Mutio's *Lettera diretta a Vienna d'Austria* al Sig. Silvio Stampiglia the performance took place on 9 December. Aurora Sanseverino's letters about the preparations for the festivities give information about the musical performance, and reveal the name of the author of the libretto: his name is Nicola Giuvo, private secretary and literature adviser to the Duchess Aurora Sanseverino. A third performance took place in Palazzo Reale in Naples on 26 July 1713, for the name day of the daughter of the fourth Austrian Viceroy of Naples, Graf Wirich Philipp Lorenz von Daun. The orchestration of the work is very varied, with a different affect for every aria, and the text is perfectly rendered. It is a very demanding work for the singers and the orchestra. The range of Polifemo (Bass) is remarkable: a compass from D to a', with extraordinary leaps of two and a half octave. An outstanding singer must have been available in Naples and the young Handel took full advantage of his abilities. Some researchers have concluded that the role of Polifemo was composed for Don Antonio Manna, a bass singer who served in the Royal Chapel of Naples and the Hofkapelle in Vienna.

The libretto is based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XIII, 738-897). The Sicilian legend tells of the love between Acis, son of Faunus and the nymph Symaethis (a river in Sicily), and the sea nymph Galatea, daughter of Nereus and Doris. Their love was destroyed by the Cyclops Polyphemus, an ugly giant with one eye in the middle of his forehead. Polyphemus, son of Neptune, the God of the sea, was also in love with Galatea, who remained faithful to her beloved Acis. The Cyclops, in a jealous rage, crushed the young shepherd Acis with a rock. The gods, feeling pity for Galatea's torment, changed Acis' blood into a limpid river that flows eternally, allowing Acis to find eternal peace in Galatea's arms.

The two lovers are joined in an infinite and immortal embrace. Today the river Acis flows underground near Acireale (Sicily) and surfaces in the "Miuccio", a spring called by locals "u sangu di Jaci" (Acis' blood). Nine towns and villages in that area bear the name of Acis (Acis in Italian), including Acireale, Acicastello, Aci Catena and Aci Trezza. On the coast of Aci Trezza are three tall, column-shaped islands. According to local legend, these great stones are the very same ones thrown at Ulysses by Polyphemus in Homer's *Odyssey*.

Handel rarely prescribes the specific instrumentation of the basso continuo, but when he does give indications, he is always clear and precise. For Polifemo's aria "Fra l'ombre e gli orrori" Handel asks for a Violone Grosso. This term has often been understood to mean the double bass. This reading does not apply to Handel's music composed in Italy. In his early Italian music Handel clearly shows that he knows the difference between Violoncello, Contrabasso and Violone Grosso, as he uses the three different names in his autographs, even within the same composition. For example, in the oratorio "La Resurrezione" (Rome, 1708), he writes *Violoni senza Cembalo* for the aria "Ferma l'ali, sui miei lumi". Four arias later, in "Naufragando va per l'onde", we find *Violoncelli senza Cembalo e Contrabassi*. Handel also asks for Violone Grosso in the opening aria of the cantata "Tra le fiamme" HWV170 (Rome, 1707).

After comparing these compositions (written in 1707 and 1708) and carefully studying the original sources, I noticed that Handel asks specifically for violone when he wants to obtain a particular colour. He combines this instrument with flutes, viola da gamba and muted violins to create an exceptional affect related to the text.

The instrument used for Polifemo's aria is a 12' violone tuned G'-C-F-A-d-g, which is not transposing at the lower octave, like the double bass 16'. Playing the bass line at the written octave makes Polifemo the lowest voice of the ensemble at times,

holding his low E-flat as a sustained pedal, while the violone plays its line above Polifemo's note. Handel did not specify any particular instrumentation for the arias "Benché tuoni e l'etra avvampi" (B-section), "Dell'aquila l'artigli" and "Impara, ingrata, impara". I decided to accompany these arias with harpsichord solo: this choice is supported by the presence of Handel's typical virtuoso keyboard writing (broken chords, fast repeated notes and big arpeggios), which we often find in his harpsichord solo music.

Most probably Handel himself played these arias, in duet with the singers, delighting the fortunate audience with his exceptional ability at the harpsichord.

© Marco Vitale

CD39-40

ALEXANDER'S FEAST · ODE FOR THE BIRTHDAY OF QUEEN ANNE

Alexander's Feast, or *The Power of Music*, a setting of a poem by John Dryden, was completed by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) on January 17, 1736, and produced at Covent Garden in London on February 19. The London Daily Post reported: Never was upon like Occasion so numerous and splendid an Audience at any Theatre in London, there being at least 1300 Persons present; and it is judged that the receipt of the House could not amount to less than 450£. It met with general Applause.

The work became one of Handel's most admired. It was produced four more times that year; later Handel revived it whenever he needed a sure-fire attraction. Altogether it was performed eighteen times between 1737 and 1743, and eight times in the following decade. It was published in full in Handel's lifetime; a notable distinction accorded to only one other of his choral works, *Acis and Galatea*. Testimony to its continued appeal is the fact that it was one of Handel's four choral works that the Viennese Baron van Swieten commissioned Mozart to re-orchestrate to fit Viennese tastes. (The present performance follows Handel's original scoring.)

Handel's work followed in a long tradition of odes to the patron saint of music, St. Cecilia. In 16th-century France, odes were written for performances on her birthday, November 22. In 1683, London's Musical Society began a series of annual celebrations of St. Cecilia's day; Purcell composed four odes for these occasions. Dryden's poem for *Alexander's Feast* was set to music by Jeremiah Clarke in 1697 and Thomas Clayton in 1711, both for St. Cecilia's Day. The version Handel used in 1736 was slightly rearranged by his librettist Newburgh Hamilton.

Handel more than fulfilled the London public's expectations with a work of broadly varied emotions, exalted beauty, and grandeur. It was also his most splendid setting up to that time of an English text, and exhibited the profound choral writing that was to be a distinctive aspect of his later English oratorios. (*Alexander's Feast* is not to be confused with a much lesser composition by Handel composed in 1739, called *Ode to St. Cecilia's Day*, also on a Dryden poem.)

Handel, born in Halle, Germany, and musically educated in Germany and Italy, had taken up permanent residence in England in 1712. It was customary in England for the composer to organize his own company of singers and produce his own works. No shrinking violet in either temperament or physique, Handel enjoyed this hectic life dependent on box-office, in which a composer could hear the merry jingle of coins one year and go bankrupt the next.

Handel's greatest early successes in England had been with operas on pseudo-classical themes and given in Italian. The form had its severe limitations. The most important musical unit was the aria, usually in the *da capo* style (the opening repeated at the close), thus enabling the *prima-donna* singer to add showy vocal embellishments. The ensemble and chorus played a minor role. And while Handel's lovely melodies were much appreciated, the attention of the audience was on the spectacular stage effects and even more on the singers'

virtuosity, many of them castrati with astounding if (judging from contemporary descriptions) often mechanical technical powers.

By the 1730s, Handel, politically centrist, found himself under attack from two sides. His Tory-minded antagonists were sponsoring a rival operatic theatre. And Whig journalists like Addison were criticising the low intellectual level and sensationalism of operas and the senselessness of performing in a foreign language. But even if Handel turned to writing works in English, the Puritans and Calvinists would still have been unhappy, as they viewed any kind of theatre and music itself except hymns and liturgy - as suspicious and even morally dangerous.

Thus, opera in England was vanishing. A letter written in 1735 reports: "Handel, whose excellent compositions have often pleased our ears, and touched our Hearts, has this Winter sometimes performed to an almost empty Pitt."

In this context, the success of *Alexander's Feast*, in 1736, was historic. Handel had written works to English texts, such as the *Chandos Anthems* (1717-20), the splendid *Coronation Anthems for George II* (1727) and various wedding, birthday and funeral odes and anthems for the royal family, and he had made tentative moves in the direction of English oratorio, or Biblical music-drama, with *Esther* (1732) and *Deborah* (1733). But the public approbation of *Alexander's Feast*, as well as the more profound quality of Handel's musical expression, made it the first great work in a series of successes: *Saul* (1739), *Israel in Egypt* (1739), *Messiah* (1742), *Samson* (1743) and *Belshazzar* (1744).

Alexander's Feast has never been considered an oratorio (a form some viewed as disguised theatrical music). But aesthetically it belongs with his great oratorios. While it does not call for scenery or stage action, it is dramatic and pictorial. And, more important, Handel's new and grander style is fully formed. Although fine solo voices are required, there is less emphasis on sheer virtuosity, with fewer *da capo* arias.

Its premiere introduced Handel's "find," the English tenor John Beard, who would be an important performer in the later oratorios. The chorus now plays a big role, and its music has a rich contrapuntal texture. Replacing the chain of arias, great blocks of musical form take shape, integrating recitative, aria and chorus. Balancing the arias, there are powerful accompanied recitatives, quite different from a *secco* (unaccompanied) recitative. These new recitatives, accompanied by the full orchestra, attain the melodic beauty and strength of arias, and at the same time their comparative rhythmic freedom enables the composer to musically explore reflective moods. The orchestration, perhaps inspired by the theme of the "power of music," is unusually rich and colourful. Basically it employs the standard Handel orchestra, with violins, violas, and oboes, as well as continuo harpsichord, cellos and basses. But in various sections, Handel adds flutes, bassoons, trumpets, and horns, calls for *obbligatos* by solo instruments including the cello, divides the violas, and indicates where he wants and doesn't want organ and bassoons to be added to the continuo.

In form, *Alexander's Feast* can be said to combine the spaciousness and heroic-tragic drama of an oratorio with the musical concentration of an ode. It is an almost symphonic conception that consists basically of five "movements," each combining recitative, aria and chorus. The first expatiates on the mood of a happy celebration. The second is tragic. The third is sensuously lyrical. The fourth is in a mood of dramatic unrest. The fifth is a grand, joyous resolution.

The three-part orchestral overture is followed by what can be called, in a Handel work, a "vocal overture": a tenor recitative and a brightly florid tenor aria, taken up by chorus. The *secco* tenor recitative then introduces the musician Timotheus and the theme of music. The accompanied recitative for soprano, with strings, expands on the power of music, and in "The list'ning crowd" there is a mighty depiction of the shouts

of the crowd echoing in the vaulted hall. The chorus here is divided into seven parts (two soprano, alto, two tenor, two bass), with striking opposition of male and female voices, until all coalesce. The high notes of the following soprano aria, "With ravish'd ears," attain an ethereal quality, enhanced by the subtle instrumentation of a tutti, strings and oboes, alternating with four solo violins playing in unison. The *secco* tenor recitative then introduces the rollicking aria and chorus celebrating Bacchus, adorned with oboes, horns and bassoon. This ends what might be called the "first movement."

The touching mood now set by the *secco* tenor recitative, "Sooth'd with the sound," is developed by the beautiful soprano recitative, "He chose a mournful Muse," accompanied by violins and violas. This leads to the great tragic aria, "He sung Darius, great and good," in an instrumental frame of haunting rising and falling figures played by the violins in thirds, with the violas later adding their voice. The soprano recitative over sustained string chords continues the mood. This reaches a climax with the splendid *Larghetto*, a contrapuntal chorus, "Behold Darius great and good," in which the rising and falling figure of the preceding aria reappears but set for a richer orchestral sound of oboes added to strings.

The tenor recitative, "The mighty master smiled to see," is a short transition to a "third movement," celebrating love in sensuously lyrical music. Notable is the lovely cello *obbligato* to the tender soprano aria, "Softly sweet in Lydian measures," and this is followed by the sparkling tenor aria, "War, he sung, is toil and trouble," with a skipping and leaping accompaniment by the violins in unison. The chorus enters, "The many rend the skies," with noble, sustained lines over excited strings, and then a blaze of counterpoint. The happy soprano aria, "The prince, unable to conceal his pain," is again accompanied by leaping unison violins. There is a change to a more tender mood in "At length with wine and love oppressed," and then the chorus returns with "The many rend the skies" to end the "third movement" and Part One of Handel's ode.

With a Beethoven-like sense of drama, Handel constructs Part Two with two sharply contrasting movements. Agitated, ominous unrest is followed by a mighty outburst of jubilation. The first of these movements is eloquently analysed by Winton Dean in *Handel's Dramatic Oratorio's and Mosques* (London, 1959).

"The first recitative is remarkable for the gradual accumulation of the orchestra, the four-part strings joined in turn by double basses, oboes, bassoons, trumpets, and finally drums - the last two, for the first time in the work before plunging into the thunderous chorus 'Break his bands of sleep asunder.' Here the trumpets and drums keep up a dramatic rhythm that is scarcely ever repeated in two consecutive bars. When the voices cease, violins, violas, basses and drums carry on the pattern for four bars in octave unison, and we are already in a second recitative, based on music from the first. The magnificent bass air, 'Revenge, Timotheus cries,' follows at once. The first half is concerned with the furies, the second half with the 'ghastly band' of ghosts, 'each a torch in his hand'; and Handel drops from a D major *Andante allegro* scored for strings, oboes, and trumpet *obbligato* into a G minor *Largo* for three bassoons, divided violas, and cellos, double basses, to an organ solo.

Handel may now be accused of treating the sense of Dryden's text rather freely, in order to build up his glorious finale. The accompanied tenor recitative, "Give the vengeance due," is a transition to a more peaceful mood, although the orchestra illustrates "how they toss their torches on high." The ensuing lively tenor aria expresses a heartfelt "joy," but not the "furious joy" of the text.

Even more tranquil and lovely is the soprano aria and grand chorus, hardly evoking the "firing" of "another Troy," but rather, in the beautiful orchestral figure, subtly evoking a memory of the rhythm of "none but the brave" from the very opening of the ode. All this of course is no oversight on Handel's part, but a

matter of his own feeling for the kind of emotions he wants to arouse in concluding this tribute to the power of music.

Text and music join hands again in the tenor recitative, "Thus long ago." The flutes whimsically illustrate the "heaving bellows" and "breathing flute"; the following chorus, "At last divine Cecilia came," could well serve as a great finale, with its splendid prelude and then its fugue on "with nature's mother wit and unknown arts before." (Certainly in Handel's mind must have been the thought that fugal counterpoint was not known in ancient times.)

But splendour follows, with the short tenor and bass recitatives introducing a truly mighty closing double fugue, begun by the soloists and taken up by the chorus, "Let old Timotheus yield the prize."

Handel composed the *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne* in London in January, 1713, two decades before *Alexander's Feast*. He was then 28 years old, a composer of ripe powers, *Kapellmeister* to the Elector Georg of Hanover, Germany, but keenly attracted to life in England. He was overstaying his second visit to London – his first having been a six-month stay in 1710 – taxing the patience of his employer, the Elector Georg.

The *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne* was well received at court, and after another celebration piece of the same year, the *Utrecht Te Deum*, the Queen settled on him a yearly pension of two hundred pounds, prompting Handel to stay in England on an extended "vacation" from his position in Germany. In 1714, however, Queen Anne died. By the odd politics and interrelationships of European royalty, the Elector Georg of Hanover became the next ruler of England, King George I. The monarch's annoyance at his *Kapellmeister's* abandonment of his German duties soon wore off (although probably not, despite the colourful story, because of the magnificence of the *Water Music*, composed for a royal river party).

Handel sank deep roots in England. For audiences who found the heritage of Purcell (who had died twenty years before Handel arrived) too reserved, the young Handel offered operas full of lovely musical invention, set to Italian librettos, with spectacular scenery, sung by brilliant imported virtuosi; and Handel became the reigning composer in England.

The ode for Queen Anne is notably a major setting of an English text, composed when most of Handel's vocal music was being written to Italian words. It shows an important element of Handel's development as an English composer, not simply the matter of the text, for while it shows the Italian influences on Handel, it also aptly takes up and expands the form and style of the Purcell festival odes, particularly in the close marriage between solo lines and chorus. While the florid solo vocal lines suggest Handel's operatic style, and the choral writing is simple, yet there is a definite link to Purcell.

The overall message of the *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne*, expressed in its bubbling joyousness, is of the queen as the creator of "a lasting peace on earth." The mood captures the great relief in England over the end of the twelve-year "War of the Spanish Succession," which had involved all the nations of middle and Western Europe and even the American colonies (although the official signing of the Peace of Utrecht would take place some months later). Handel preserves throughout an intense feeling of happiness, and interest never flags.

The work is beautifully conceived in terms of seven movements, each of which starts with one or more solo voices, and closes with chorus. The repeated lines, "The day that gave great Anna birth," occurring in each movement, are each time given a different musical setting. The melodic fund is lavish. There are beautiful instrumental touches, as in the solo trumpet obbligato in the opening movement, and lilting dance rhythms, as in the *siciliana* in "Kind Health descends." In the last section, "United Nations shall combine," the chorus divides for fourteen bars into two antiphonal groups.

© Sidney Finkelstein

CD41

CORONATION ANTHEMS

Georg Frederic Handel, born in Halle in 1684, gained his musical education in Germany and Italy before taking up an appointment as *Kapellmeister* to the Elector of Hanover. Spending long periods of absence from this post in London, he eventually took permanent residence there, though after the death in 1714 of Queen Anne, the last of the Stuart dynasty, his patron from Hanover became King George I of England, a happy coincidence that was to provide support through his life and was to lead indirectly to the genesis of these four Coronation anthems.

Handel's principal work, by output, during the four decades spent in London was related to the Opera, but his interest in choral music was to find fruit in a number of sacred Oratorios, including *Messiah* and works such as the *Jubilate* and *Te Deum* written to celebrate the Treaty of Utrecht and a group of exceptional but little performed Anthems written for the Duke of Chandos.

Shortly before the sudden death of George I in 1747, Maurice Greene had been appointed Director of Music to the Chapels Royal, and it would have been reasonable to expect that he would have been fully responsible for the music at the Coronation. The young King George II had other ideas and insisted that Handel be commissioned, with "words supplied by the Bishops". Although Handel almost certainly took mild offence at not being trusted to choose his own texts, the choices made were traditional, being drawn mainly from the ancient Latin Rite for Coronation.

The ordering of the anthems when performed during a coronation is slightly different from the concert order presented here. *Zadok the Priest* would normally be performed second, after *Let thy hand be strengthened* which, with its strident start, announces its rightful place with conviction. The text is taken from Psalm 89, though in a literal translation from the pre-Reformation Latin service for coronation. It is the only one of the four anthems which is not constrained by the presence of trumpets to be in the key of D major. In three movements, the second section, establishing justice and judgement as the basis of the monarch's authority, is remarkably melancholic in style and in certain respects contradicts the words, though musically it serves very well, acting as a quiet and contemplative interlude before the final, stately Alleluia.

Zadok the Priest, undoubtedly the best known of the four anthems, is also based on the old Latin rite. The long *ritornello* opening counterpoints an expectation and anticipation that no amount of repeated hearings can dull. The tension, produced by the repeated chords of oboes and bassoons and rising arpeggios of the strings as the key gradually shifts away from the home key, is resolved magnificently at the climax as chorus and trumpets enter with the chorus in seven parts loudly proclaiming the anointment of Solomon. Handel gives no instructions in respect of tempo or dynamic aside from marking the beginning soft and the climax loud. The music is however so skilfully written that the rising arpeggios beat like a clock and the gradual crescendo from start to finish emerges as naturally as a flower emerging into bloom. The final two sections follow naturally with the words that have been sung in one form or another at every English Coronation since that of Edgar in 973 AD – *and all the people rejoiced and said "God Save the King! Long live the King!"*.

The third anthem *The King shall Rejoice* consists of four movements and a final Allelujah. It starts with another lengthy *ritornello*, this time clearly conveying the festivity and occasion with full orchestra and fanfares. The second movement in triple time provides a contrast in orchestration without trumpets and drums. The strings playfully contrast high and low melodies leading to a rising triplet phrase played in thirds. The chorus enters, simply phrased and in just four parts, but then Handel heightens the tension with chains of suspensions on the words "of thy salvation". The brief third movement is a joyful outburst

that initially seems to suggest it will be more protracted. But, after a shift of harmonics, it leads directly into the fourth movement, which introduces a fugue with three distinct choral voices accompanied initially by violins but then joined in steps by oboes, trumpets and drums. The final, *Allelujah*, this time a double fugue with two tunes worked together from the outset, reaches a magnificent climax, celebrating the point in the service when the King is crowned.

The last of the four anthems, *My Heart is Inditing* is gentler and verse-like, with each voice of the chorus written initially for reduced solo-like performance. Following a text from Psalm 45 and Isaiah 49 it was sung late in the service at the crowning of Queen Caroline. Jaunty and light rhythms dominate both the second and third movements, highlighting reference to *King's daughters* and, more light-heartedly *The King shall have pleasure in thy beauty*. The final movement, a jovial allegro, follows the now well established model of a virtuoso *ritornello* building to the entry of choir in a display of ceremonial pomp and driving pace. Finally, and triumphantly, the trumpets and drums enter, bringing us to a fitting climax.

© Martin Medforth

Organ Concerto No.7 in B flat HWV306 was composed in February 1740 and was played for the first time on 27 February during the first performance of the ode *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* (HWV 55). For this concerto Handel demanded a bigger organ than in earlier works: an instrument with two keyboards and pedal which he makes full use of in the first movement. The fourth movement is kept "ad libitum" in Handel's original and for the present recording Ton Koopman's suggestion for its realisation is played in imitation of the fourth movement of the Oboe Sonata HWV365.

© Matthieu Kuttler

CD42

Dettingen Te Deum

Led by King George II in person, the English army beat the French at the battle of Dettingen on June 27, 1743, one of numerous military confrontations in the course of the War of Succession between Prussia and Austria, which left its mark on all Europe. Whereas the Prussian King Frederick the Great had won France as an ally, England fought on the side of the house of Habsburg, supporting Maria Theresa's claims to succeed to the throne. However, the victory at Dettingen was less due to masterly strategy on the part of the English than to the fact that the French army was in a desolate state and under the command of amateurs. Nor did it end the War of the Austrian Succession. That would drag on for another five years; but for the time being King George II had done his duty as an ally and was able to return to London unscathed. Twenty days later, on July 17, 1743, Handel began composing the "Dettingen Te Deum". Also known as the "Ambrosian hymn", the Te Deum was traditionally held to be the only musical form appropriate to celebrating a ruler's recovery or return from battle. Did Handel write the work on his own account? Was it a commissioned work? The original sources supply no information on this subject. At any rate, an official victory celebration accompanied by all the concomitant pomp and ceremony, at which Handel's music might have been performed (as his "Utrecht Te Deum" had been in 1713) did not take place at St Paul's, and it is probable that no such event was ever planned. Instead, the work was first performed in comparatively modest circumstances (but with the whole court in attendance nonetheless) on September 26, 1743 in the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace. The enthusiasm with which the composition was received was almost unanimous. Only music scholar Charles Burney, who was otherwise very devoted to Handel, contemptuously called the dignified and ceremonial gesture of the music "the maestro's great bow-wow style". Nonetheless, just as Handel's "Utrecht Te Deum" had replaced the traditional

"Te Deum for St Cecilia's Day" by Purcell as the official festival music thirty years previously, the "Dettingen Te Deum" (together with the anthem "The King shall rejoice") now established itself as the English court's major ceremonial work. And Handel was in need of this artistic success, for after his various excursions into the field of composing operas had finally failed and even his two oratorios "Samson" and the "Messiah" had not been received particularly well by London audiences, he had now once again drawn attention to himself. (In view of the succession conflicts in Europe since 1740 and other chaotic political circumstances, even the English aristocrats obviously had more important matters to discuss than Handel's latest musical innovations.)

Handel's operas, oratorios and concertante instrumental music undoubtedly make up the larger and more important part of his work. In terms of both number and size, his compositions for the church occupy a comparatively subordinate position. Apart from the anthems (non-liturgical compositions to a biblical text, in the form of motets or cantatas), the group formed by the five Te Deum settings is of particular excellence and significance. The "Utrecht Te Deum" of 1713 was Handel's first composition in the English language, having been written on the occasion of the Peace of Utrecht, which ended the War of the Spanish Succession. In the ensuing years it was followed by three smaller works, and finally by the "Dettingen Te Deum". This work is grander, more extensive and of greater musical diversity than its predecessors. Its extroverted conception stresses the high status and official quality of state affairs. Fanfares with kettle-drums and trumpets open the work; in keeping with the character of the event, festively jubilant choruses afterwards alternate with solo parts in elevated religious mood. The similarities to the "Messiah"-chiefly in the choruses-can hardly be missed. Moreover, as the Handel researcher Friedrich Chrysander already noted at the end of the nineteenth century, the composer made very free use of an earlier Te Deum setting by Francesco Antonio Urio- just as his own "Dettingen Te Deum" would in turn later serve as the musical quarry that yielded the material for his oratorio "Joseph and his Brethren".

© Wolfgang Lempfrid

Translation: J & M Berridge

CD43

FRIEDENSODE · UTRECHTER TE DEUM

When George Frideric Handel settled in London in 1712 at the age of 27, his reputation as a composer of operas and solo cantatas was already firmly established in musical circles. With the death of Henry Purcell in 1695, England had lost her only musical personality of real pre-eminence, so that it was little wonder that the successful German composer soon found himself a protégé of the English court and burdened with the obligation to uphold the English musical tradition. The way in which Handel promptly fulfilled this expectation by composing his first extensive settings of English texts for ceremonial occasions shows tactical genius: he wrote the "Utrecht Te Deum" and the so-called "Peace Ode", which is properly called "Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne". Both these works show the now only 18-year-old composer's sovereign mastery over the formal and stylistic inventory of German and Italian sacred music. At the same time he succeeded in taking up the English tradition of psalm and anthem compositions and developing them further - the achievement from which his fame in England largely derives.

Altogether, Handel composed five Te Deums. In Handel's day compositions of this kind were as a rule commissioned to form part of special church service, and demonstrated the might of Great Britain. Thematically based upon a Gregorian melody, they were grandly enhanced with triumphal fanfares and artillery salutes. In the famous *Utrecht Te Deum*, as in his other Te Deum compositions, Handel eschewed such pompous embellishments. Written at the beginning of 1713, the work

was occasioned by the Treaty of Utrecht, which concluded the Spanish War of Succession and proved highly advantageous for England. Handel received the commission to write the *Te Deum* before the negotiations had even been finalized.

Following the declaration of peace on May 5, 1713, the work was performed during a celebratory service held in St Paul's Cathedral. Having played a part in this state occasion, Handel gained access to influential circles in the kingdom. The opulently-conceived work, calling for a five-voice choir, five solo singers and an orchestra augmented with timpani and trumpets, came to be performed in annual alternation with Purcell's *Te Deum*. In the public estimation, Handel had thereby visibly been placed on a par with his great English predecessor.

Although the *Te Deum* was composed for an official court event, its words exalt the might and glory of God. In Handel's *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne*, set to the words of an anonymous English poet, the case is different. Here, God's praise is explicitly coupled with thanks to the Queen for the welcome peace - although the unpopular monarch had in fact had no hand in the matter. The choral refrain "The day that gave great Anna birth, who fix'd a lasting peace on earth" is repeated seven times in the course of the work. The *Ode* was first performed on February 6, 1714 shortly before Queen Anne died - for the occasion of her fifty-ninth birthday.

© Christiane Krautscheid

Translation: Janet & Michael Berridge

CD44

ODE FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

George Friedrich Handel composed his *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* in the astonishingly short time span of just nine days in September 1739, setting a text written in 1687 by the English poet John Dryden. Following *Alexander's Feast* from 1736, it represents another contribution by the composer to the very English tradition of celebrating St. Cecilia's day with extravagant musical entertainments. St. Cecilia has been honoured as the patron saint of music since the 15th century-her feast day falling on 22 November in the liturgical calendar. Thus Handel's St. Cecilia Ode was first performed on this date in 1739, along with *Alexander's Feast*, as part of the extensive program of London's "Society of Music", which every year celebrated St. Cecilia's day with a church service, an anthem, and a dinner. Since 1683 the society had regularly commissioned new compositions in honour of the saint, resulting in a continuous English baroque tradition of St. Cecilia compositions, including, besides Handel's contributions, significant works by Henry Purcell and John Blow.

Handel's St. Cecilia Ode, unlike *Alexander's Feast*, does without a dramatic plot; instead Dryden's text juxtaposes dynamic human "affects", which are each assigned to individual instruments. Between verses describing the beginning of creation and the last judgement, the ode thematically encompasses the entire course of the world. In the overture to his setting, Handel reuses material from the fifth of his *Concerti Grossi*, Op.6, combining it with ideas borrowed from the contemporary *componimenti Musicali per il Cembalo* by the Viennese composer Theophil Muffat, to whom he is indebted in many other movements as well (e.g., in the final chorus).

The tenor arioso that follows the overture leads to a mighty Handelian chorus; God's ordering of the original chaos is vividly reflected in the musical progression from discord to euphony; the harmony of the music triumphs over the confusion of the original condition.

Accompanying the solo tenor and soprano in a kind of "song with obligate instruments", violoncello, trumpet and timpani, flute, and violin now enter one after the other, finally climaxing in praise of the "holy organ", the queen of instruments, which functions as a symbol for St. Cecilia herself and whose power surpasses even that of Orpheus' lyre.

Music's ability to stir and tame the passions-expressly emphasized here in the text is impressively developed in Handel's music. The "sweet", "heavenly" sound of the cellos alternates with the battle call of the trumpets; timpani accompany a martial chorus; the lament of the flute gives way to jealousy and desperation, whose expression is given to the violins.

A splendid chorus, full of contrasts concludes the work. It conjures up the image of the music of the spheres in praise of God and envisions the end of time accompanied by music, and thereby no longer to be feared.

The St. Cecilia Ode was performed often and with much success during Handel's lifetime. A careful arrangement of it by Mozart (1790) adapted it to the taste of the waning 18th century-an indication of the high regard for this work from later generations. High praise comes down to us also from Frederic Chopin, who confessed that this work by Handel "comes closest to that ideal enclosed in the depth of my soul of sublime music."

© Armin Krämer

Translation: Mark Knoll

CD45-46

MESSIAH

Messiah, an Oratorio, also called A New Sacred Oratorio (HWV56), is an Oratorio by George Frideric Handel, who composed it in 1741. The first performance took place in 1742 in Dublin. The work, which usually lasts a little less than two and a half hours, is mostly performed around Christmas, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, but also around Easter. The work has been repeatedly changed by the composer, in the course of his lifetime.

The Composer, the Oratorio and the way to Messiah

George Frideric Handel, considered one of the greatest composers of the baroque period, was born in Halle, Germany, on 23 February 1685. He died in London on 14 April 1759, and was buried with full ceremonial honours in Westminster Abbey. In his later years he preferred the Anglicised form of his name rather than the original form, Georg Friedrich Händel. In England, he was the most renowned musical figure of his day. Handel composed music at an unbelievable rate, often borrowing from himself (and others) merely to earn a living, yet he sustained an extraordinary level of inspiration. Handel produced works in every genre, including organ concertos, keyboard suites, concerti grossi for strings, accompanied sonatas, countless vocal works and no less than 45 Italian operas. However, he is principally celebrated for his Water

Music, Royal Fireworks Music, coronation anthems and oratorios.

Although nowadays the general public knows Handel as an Oratorio composer – especially due to *Messiah* – he only started composing Oratorios when he was fifty years old. Opera was the main thing in his life. From the time when he was eighteen years old, at the start of his career at the Hamburg Opera, until around 1740, he had occupied himself with this musical form. Writing for choirs, an essential part of Handel's Oratorios, was something that he still needed to develop. In 1740, Johann Mattheson wrote about his first encounter with Handel in Hamburg: 'He was strong at the organ, in fugue and other counterpoints, particularly extempore; but he knew precious little about melody before he came to Hamburg.' However, Handel developed these skills in Italy, where he wrote his first oratorios: *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (HWV46) and *La Rissurrezione* (HWV47).

'Handel says he will do nothing next Winter, but I hope I shall persuade him to set another Scripture collection I have made for him, & perform it for his own Benefit in Passion week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius and Skill upon it that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subject excells every other Subject. The Subject is *Messiah*...' (Charles Jennens to Edward Holdsworth, 10 July 1741; correspondence in the Gerald Coke Collection) Jennens' remark about 'another Scripture collection' refers to Handel's preceding Oratorio *Israel in Egypt*, which Handel wrote in 1738, immediately after he produced the musical setting of Jennens' first libretto *Saul*. The libretto of *Israel in Egypt* was a selection of Biblical texts; the music was largely derived from the Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline (*The Ways of Zion Do Mourn*, HWV264). Jennens' next compilation was *L'Allegro and Il Penseroso*, to which he, at Handel's request, added a new poem, *Il Moderato* (HWV55); the work was premiered in 1740. The next season Handel did not issue an English-language work but two new Italian operas: *Imeneo* (HWV 41) and *Deidamia* (HWV42). Both works were failures commercially speaking, and Handel considered going back to Germany.

Against this background, Jennens came up with the plan to write an Oratorio, to be performed during the Holy Week, when the theatres would be closed. A full-house performance, and thus an income for Handel, would then be guaranteed. The idea of a Biblical compilation came from *Israel in Egypt*, but there would be less emphasis on the (not so popular) choral pieces. There would have to be a balance between soli and choirs, like in *L'Allegro*. So Handel did not give up on opera until he was forced to: the public had had enough of Italian operas. His first Oratorios (*Esther*, *Deborah* and *Athaliah*) received more attention than Handel's operas. After the first major Oratorios (*Saul* and *Israel in Egypt*), Handel turned his back on opera in 1740.

Handel wrote Biblical as well as non-Biblical Oratorios: The non-Biblical ones can be divided into Concert or Cantata Oratorios (such as *Alexander's Feast* [HWV65] or *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso ed Il Moderato*) and mythological ones (like *Hercules* [HWV60] and *Semele* [HWV58]). The Biblical Oratorios can be divided into heroic ones (in which a Biblical hero(in) forms the subject matter of the libretto, like *Esther* [HWV50] or *Judas Maccabaeus* [HWV63]), narrative ones (a Biblical story forms the theme, like that of *Joseph and His Brethren* or the dilemma of *Jephtha* [HWV70]), and the so-called anthem oratorios (*Israel in Egypt* and the Occasional Oratorio). *Messiah* is an Anthem Oratorio. The content of an Anthem is, as a rule, an Old Testament text, usually from the Psalms, without action.

A big difference between Handel's Oratorios and his operas was the language used: the Oratorios were in English. Although this brought the works closer to the audience, it was problematic for Handel's Italian singers because they could not express themselves well in English. This also applied to Handel: although he had become a naturalised British citizen, he did not have a thorough command of the language, and the way he put

English words to music was, even in his later works, at times remarkably flawed. Although Handel was influenced by the Anthems and Odes of Henry Purcell (e.g. the *St. Cecilia Odes*) it was above all the German Church Cantata which had great effect on his work. Between 1716 and 1718, in Germany, he got acquainted with Barthold Heinrich Brockes' *Passion*, as well as the Cantatas on texts by Erdmann Neumeister (which had already been issued in print). In his Anthem Oratorios,

Handel strictly followed the text based on the Psalms, but in musical respect there is a clearer relation with the Northern German Cantatas than with Purcell: The structure of connected musical themes that constantly vary with Purcell, were replaced by separate, independent choirs and arias by Handel – often with an instrumental introduction.

The texts for *Messiah* were provided by Charles Jennens: a number of short texts from the Old and New Testament. Thus the work differs from the standard Oratorio – a complete Biblical story put to music, like the other more than 25 dramatic Oratorios Handel wrote. The subject matter of *Messiah* is the Biblical *Messiah*. The work consists of three parts: The prophecies of the Old Testament, with the Proclamation of the *Messiah*; His Death, the Resurrection and the Ascension; His Return and Reign.

Handel needed no more than 24 days to compose the work: from 22 August to 14 September 1741. In November of that year he travelled to Dublin. The first performance, however, did not take place until 13 April 1742, as a benefit concert, after an extremely harsh winter. It was a great success; ladies were requested not to come in hoop skirts, so that more tickets could be sold. The revenue was divided equally between a number of charities. One year later, *Messiah* was performed in Covent Garden, London. Before the concert, there was a discussion whether the work should be performed in a theatre.

Apart from the first version from 1742, there are adaptations from the years 1743, 1745, 1749, 1750 and 1754. There is no definitive version of *Messiah*; a fairly large number of segments, especially the arias, has been handed down in different versions, which go back to Handel's time. The reason why Handel wrote so many versions lies in Handel's method of working: he often made changes during rehearsals and after performances. Also, the different soloists – and their varying skills – caused him to make changes.

The last version is therefore not necessarily the version that Handel considered to be definitive – it could well be that previous versions were preferred and that later alterations were required due to circumstances. There are five versions, including the autograph score in the Royal Collection in the British Library. At least eight other copies from the 18th century have survived.

The Music

Handel never composed a work without having a future performance in mind. The libretto could have been lying about just as long as the one for his Oratorio *Saul* if an offer from Ireland had not arrived unexpectedly. William Cavendish, third Duke of Devonshire and Lord Lieutenant (the British monarch's personal representative) of Ireland, invited Handel to contribute to a number of charity concerts during the winter season in Dublin. A new audience and a series of concerts inspired Handel to plan a sequence of 'entertainments', including his most recent worldly successes: *L'Allegro, Il penseroso ed Il Moderato*, *Acis and Galatea*, the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, *Esther* and *Alexander's Feast*. For the Sacred part, Handel would use Jennens' libretto. As mentioned before, Handel started working on *Messiah* on 22 August 1741 – on 28 August, Part I was completed, on 6 September Part II followed, and on the next Saturday, 12 September, Part III was finished. Two days were used to work out fragments (Handel often filled in recitatives and details at the end) – which makes a total of 24 days for the entire composition. For Handel it was an uncertain experiment, with an uncertain fee, which would probably not be repeated. A

number of days after he finished *Messiah*, Handel simply started working on a new Oratorio: *Samson*, of which the first act was completed on 29 September.

On 18 November 1741 Handel arrived in Dublin. The city's cultural life was similar to that of London. On 10 December, in a charity concert for the Mercer's Hospital, the Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate, as well as a 'Coronation Anthem' by Handel, together with a specially written Anthem by William Boyce, were performed in St. Andrew's Church; according to reports, Handel was invited to play the organ. On 12 November the sale of subscriptions for the Six Musical Entertainments commenced; with great success, since all six concerts were sold out, so that Handel 'needed not sell one single Ticket at the Door', as he wrote to Jennens on 29 December. A second subscription series started on 17 February 1742, which included Alexander's Feast, with new alto parts for the contralto Susannah Maria Arne, who had joined Handel's company. The opera *Imeneo* also was performed once more – as a concertante 'serenata' – and the series was concluded with Esther. Public rehearsals of *Messiah* took place on Friday 9 April 1742, and on 13 April the work was performed for the first time. After one month, Handel gave two more performances, preceded by public rehearsals. The London premiere of *Messiah* took place on 23 March 1743, as part of a second subscription series; the first series was completely devoted to *Samson*. In the newspapers, *Messiah* was not announced under its actual name, but as 'A New Sacred Oratorio'. One of the papers was wondering if such a work could be performed in the theatre, and by musicians from the theatre world.

Messiah is Handel's only 'Sacred' Oratorio, and the only one that he performed in a sacred building (all of his other oratorios were meant for the theatre). Handel did not put too much emphasis on the choir, as he did in *Israel in Egypt*, but decided on a more equal proportion of choir to soli, as in *L'Allegro*. But in Handel's oeuvre, *Messiah* still contains the most choirs (with the exception of *Israel in Egypt*). The libretto is equally divided between the Old and New Testament, and the Bible texts have been 'condensed'. The 'story-line' goes from the Proclamation, Birth, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension to the Salvation (Part III is primarily based on the Anglican service for the dead). Thus, *Messiah* covers all important Christian holidays. Handel associated the work mainly with Easter, but nowadays, people connect the work to Christmas – especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Handel limited his orchestration to strings, timpani, and the occasional instrumental solo (the trumpet). Oboes and bassoons were added for the London performance, where the strings for the choirs were doubled.

The possibilities for vocal fireworks are limited – Handel composed four Da Capo arias, and reduced them to two later (He Was Despised and The Trumpet Shall Sound). Despite the fact that the work was written within such a short period of time, little material has been taken from other works. The main 'borrowed' fragments originated from Handel's own compositions: e.g. he transformed Italian duets into choirs, sometimes resulting in flawed accentuations (For unto Us a Child Is Born, after *Nò, di voi non vo fidarmi*, in which the emphasis on *Nò* sounds natural) or not very fitting coloratura (the semiquavers in And He Shall Purify and His Yoke Is Easy, derived from *Quel fior che all'alba ride*, in which they fit completely). Also, And He Shall Purify contains fragments from the *Harmonischer Gottesdienst* by Telemann, and the Prelude in G, BuxWV163, by Dietrich Buxtehude.

As mentioned before, Handel has revised *Messiah* many times, for artistic reasons and to adapt the work to new soloists or other performance circumstances. Consequently, the work had never been exactly performed as it was first written in 1741:

- For the premiere in Dublin, in 1742, new music was added, in particular an arrangement for duet and choir of How Beautiful;

- For the first performance in London, in 1743, arioso arrangements of And lo! the Angel of the Lord and Their Sound Is Gone Out were added;
- For the repeat performance in 1745, there was a 4/4 arrangement of Rejoice Greatly as well as the choir version of Their Sound;
- The participation of the castrato singer Gaetano Guadagni urged Handel to write new arrangements of But Who May Abide and Thou Art Gone Up On High. In addition, transpositions of the soli and a few alterations of voice types (soprano for tenor and vice versa) were put in. The choirs remained unaltered. Each performance of *Messiah* requires a selection of alternatives or the aim to present a specific version. The Hallelujah choir, at the end of Part II, is the most famous piece from the Oratorio.

The Orchestration

The cast for *Messiah* varies, dependent on the version; for the version of 1754 (which was used for the charity performance for the Foundling Hospital), the following line-up exists:

- 5 soloists: 2 sopranos, alto, tenor and bass
- choir: 4 (or 6) boy sopranos and 13 male voices (altos, tenors and basses)
- orchestra consisting of:
 - strings (14 violins, 6 violas, 3 cellos and 2 double basses)
 - 4 oboes, 4 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets and timpani
 - organ and harpsichord

Messiah in the course of time

Around 1750, a *Messiah* tradition arose in England. From then on, Handel concluded his annual season before Lent with *Messiah* (so towards Easter, not Christmas), and one month later he would repeat the performance in the Foundling Hospital.

In the United States, in 1857, the Haydn and Handel Society organised a complete *Messiah* with 600 to 700 voices. Its success led to a performance of the Hallelujah choir at the Grand National Celebration of Peace, with 10,000 voices and an orchestra of 500 members. Towards the end of the 19th century, however, there was a growing body of opinion that wished to return to line-ups that remained closer to Handel's original music. The aim was to approach the scale, idiom and style of Handel's own performances – based on the thought that the closer a concert came to Handel, the more the music would appeal to the public.

The present-day professional performances of *Messiah* are primarily built on this principle. However it was not until 1980 that the first commercial recording of *Messiah* was issued in a line-up that corresponded with the way in which Handel himself conducted the work, and played on authentic instruments of Handel's time – or copies of them.

Transcription / Arrangements

Besides Handel's own adaptations and alterations, many more variations and rearrangements were added in subsequent centuries. In 1789, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart made an arrangement of *Messiah*. He was requested to do so by Gottfried van Swieten, who wished to perform the work in his *Musicalische Cavalirs-Gesellschaft*. Mozart made 'added accompaniments', i. e. new orchestrations. By then, the basso continuo had passed out of use, and Handel's instrumentation was considered meagre and unsatisfying. Mozart added more wind instruments to the orchestra: 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 horns and 3 trombones; the trumpet part was revised. In Mozart's version, the wind players support or enhance the strings, but occasionally play a more independent melodic role as well. The English text was replaced by a German translation. The first performance took place at the residence of Count Johann Esterhazy; it was conducted by Mozart himself. Until halfway

the 19th century, Mozart's version was highly valued; his instrumentations were even partly included in the scores that were used for British performances up to the beginning of the 20th century. With the advent of historically informed performances of Baroque music, Mozart's arrangement faded into the background; however – also from the angle of the historically informed performances – concerts have taken place, and recordings have been made with Mozart's arrangement.

CD47-48

LA RESURREZIONE

La Resurrezione

La Resurrezione HWV47 is a sacred oratorio by George Frideric Handel, set to a libretto by Carlo Sigismondo Capece (1652–1728). It was first performed on Easter Sunday of 1708 in Rome, under the patronage of the Marchese Francesco Maria Ruspoli (1672–1731), the most important of Handel's Italian patrons. Ruspoli was one of the leading lights of the Arcadia, the literary society founded in 1690.

The work details the events between – and during – Good Friday and Easter Sunday, with the action carried forward in recitative, and the exploration of character and delineation of mood taking place in the arias. The characters of the liturgical drama that appear in the oratorio are Lucifer, an Angel, Mary Magdalene, St John the Evangelist and St Mary Cleophas.

A large orchestra was employed for the occasion, consisting of a string orchestra plus one viola da gamba, two trumpets, one trombone, four oboes, a theorbo/archlute as well as recorders and transverse flutes. The role of Mary Magdalene was sung at the first performance by the female soprano Margherita Durastanti. However, the participation of female singers was prohibited by Papal edict, and the Pope went to the length of admonishing Ruspoli for permitting Durastanti to take part. In the second performance her role was sung by a castrato. The only details given concerning this individual are that he was called 'Pippo', and was in the service to the former Queen Casimira of Poland. Durastanti later sang in Handel's *Agrippina* (Venice) and spent almost all of her career in singing Handel's music. The violins at the first performance of *La Resurrezione* were led by the composer and violinist Arcangelo Corelli.

This set presents the first recording of *La Resurrezione* in the low Roman pitch, with transposing winds; *Contrasto Armonico* is, indeed, the first orchestra in modern times to explore this field and apply it to a well-known work by Handel. In the early 18th century, the pitch commonly used in Rome was very low compared to other European cities. The high number of castrati that were singing there may be one reason, but so too may be the appreciation of the city's cognoscenti for the low pitch. Michael Praetorius reported in 1618 that: 'The lower pitch of which we have spoken (a minor third down) is used a great deal in different Catholic chapels in Germany, and in Italy. Some Italians quite rightly take no pleasure in high-pitched singing: they maintain that it is devoid of any beauty, that the text cannot be clearly understood, and that the singers have to chirp, squawk and warble at the tops of their voices, for all the world like hedge-sparrows.' Since Praetorius's reference was at A+1 (about A = 465 Hz), the low level would have been A-2 (about A = 392Hz). He was thus referring to the Roman pitch. *La Resurrezione* was composed almost a century later, but Praetorius's report shows that the Roman taste for low pitch remained unchanged over time.

Due to a Papal ban, the performance of double reed instruments in church was forbidden. The nobility, however, found a way around this lack of 'native' oboists by inviting virtuosi from Venice and Milan. One of the most prestigious oboists was Ignazio Rion, who possibly took part in *La Resurrezione* in 1708 (the *Sig. Ignazio* stated in the payment list of the 1708 performance could also be Ignazio Sieber, another Venetian virtuoso who was in Rome at that time).

The pitch difference between Rome (A = c.385Hz) and Venice (A = c.430Hz) was considerable, amounting to a whole tone. In a 1752 essay Quantz states: 'In Rome at one time wind instruments were banned from the church. Whether the unpleasant high pitch or the manner of playing the instruments was the reason for this, I must leave undecided. For although the Roman pitch was low, and advantageous for the oboe, the oboists then played on instruments that were a whole tone higher, so that they were obliged to transpose. And these high instruments produced an effect like that of German shawms against the others that were tuned low.'

Thus, almost all music composed around this time in Rome was performed with oboes playing a whole tone higher (in the Venetian pitch) than the violins. For example, if a piece was written in D major for the strings, the oboes were playing it in C major. This is also confirmed by the orchestral material of *Carmelite Vespers* by Handel (1707) and other music by Caldara and Alessandro Scarlatti (the oratorio *Il Giardino di Rose*, performed at Ruspoli palace in 1707) where the oboes were notated a whole tone lower ('un ton più basso'). Although the original parts of *La Resurrezione* are lost, its exceptionally high range and implausible keys for the oboe suggest that their parts were notated a tone lower.

When we look at the keys of the arias where the oboes are involved, we find unnatural keys for this instrument (such as in 'Naufragando va per l'onde', where the B part goes to F sharp minor). Here the oboist, if playing at the same pitch as the strings, has to deal with complex fingerings. When we perform this aria as it was intended (with transposition), the oboist can play it in E minor (while the strings play in F sharp minor): a very beautiful and open key for the oboe, without the need for odd fingerings. However, the lower pitch has its biggest influence in the singer's part and in the choice of tempi. Soloists sing in a lower tessitura which lends a completely different range of colours and dynamics.

The use of transposition in the Baroque time was more common than in today's historically informed performances of early music. We are too fixated on the single standard of 415Hz, mainly for practical reasons. Many modern Baroque musicians view such pitch differences and relative transpositions as obstacles instead of seeing the challenging potential of enrichment in the scores before them.

This recording is based on a source held in the Santini Collection in Münster (Germany). Various details show that it must have been written before the first performance on 8 April 1708. The writers are well known from other works of Handel's Roman period and include his most reliable copyist, who undertook the principal part of the present work. In addition, there are a number of corrections and additions in Handel's own hand, which show that the copy was made directly from the autograph. Some of the alterations are significant enough to lead to the conclusion that this was the score used for the first performance at the Palazzo Bonelli.

There are substantial differences between the Münster manuscript and Chrysander's edition, based on the autograph score in the library of the Royal College of Music in London. These differences are most evident at the beginning, where Handel changed the order of the pieces aiming for a more dramatic and tense opening.

Take the aria 'Così la tortorella': the scales played by *bassi e violini all'ottava* are strongly and precisely erased with a pen, so I elected to omit them. We performed this very emotional, intimate and delicate aria with just transverse flute, viola da gamba and theorbo, with the violins joining in at the ritornello in the B section.

I decided to perform the arias 'D'amor fù consiglio', 'Ferma l'ali' and 'Piangete, sì, piangete' with a violone in 12'. Although Handel expressly asked for this instrument only in 'Ferma l'ali', I found it equally appropriate elsewhere in place of a double bass which is playing the ripieno part in the rest of the arias. The booklet note to *Contrasto Armonico*'s recording of *Aci, Galatea*

e Polifemo explains how Handel's distinguishing between violone and double bass has been obscured by both the ambiguities of some early sources and modern misunderstandings. In 'Ferma l'ali' he writes *violoni senza cembalo* but in 'Naufragando v'è per l'onde' he writes *violoncelli, senza cembalo e contrabassi*. My research leads me to believe that when Handel marked *violone* or *violone grosso* (as in the cantata *Tra le fiamme*), he was asking for a large viola da gamba, which is not a double bass but a large viol with a big body. This can play at the cello's written pitch but also down to a low G, a fourth lower than the cello. The result is a lightweight bass with a large body but a delicate sound.

Handel's Italian period clearly made him very aware of the different possibilities offered by cellos, violones and double basses. The nomenclature of the instruments in his scores is never misleading (if read with the right key in mind). The young Handel had a perfect image of the sound he wanted to obtain; he used the violone only in special settings, for example in combinations with muted violins, recorders and viola da gamba. Perhaps most frustrating are the occasions when a violone is promised in a CD booklet or concert programme, only for our ears to tell us we are listening to a double bass.

In the payment list of the first performance (Ruspoli documents, Kirkendale) we find a *trombone* player, but there is no evidence of a trombone in the score or a separate part for it. This is a mystery to scholars and performers. Some scholars attribute the *trombone* to a bassoon, (which plays in the Angel's aria 'Risorga il mondo'). Others propose a more spectacular solution, by letting the trombonist play alongside the recitatives of Lucifer.

Neither solution convinced me. As there is no specific part for this instrument in the oratorio, I believe the *trombone* player was a member of the continuo group, not a soloist. In Rome there was a custom of doubling the bass part with the *trombone*, using it as a bass trumpet. Angelo Berardi described the trombone as a kind of tromba 'che suona il basso, ne concerti e sinfonie fa bonissimo effetto'. Stradella also required the trombonist doubling the bass line to play the notes staccato using as little breath as possible ('tutti bassi con un trombone solo, ma deve il trombone sonare staccato assai e con poco fiato'). In many of the oratorios and cantatas performed by Corelli, the orchestra included a trumpet ensemble consisting of two trumpets (*clarini*) and a trombone (Walther calls this a 'bass or octave trombone'). These parts were not written into the scores. On this basis, I decided to let the *trombone* play the bass part while the trumpets are playing, creating a brass section in the orchestra.

Such innovative work with *La Resurrezione* was possible thanks to the high professionalism and great flexibility of all the musicians involved in this recording, but I would like to pay special tribute to the work of Bruce Haynes. His inspiring book *The Story of A* gave me a lot of ideas and encouraged me in my pursuit of innovation and rediscovery. I hope that the result may show a hitherto unseen face to this significant and remarkable oratorio, allowing us to appreciate the kind of instrumental sonorities and balances which one can only hear when the appropriate pitch and instruments for this music are used.

© Marco Vitale

CD49-51

JEPHTHA

The will to sacrifice, forgo love and trust in God: aspects of Handel's *Jephtha*

The 11th Chapter of the Book of Judges tells the story of Jephtha the Gileadite. The son of a harlot, he was disinherited and forced to flee from Israel, but when the Ammonites made war on Israel, the elders went to bring Jephtha back and promised they would make him their leader once victory was secure: 'And Jephtha made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If thou

wilt give the Ammonites into my hand, then whoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord's, and I will offer him up for a burnt offering.'" Jephtha gained victory over the Ammonites: 'Then Jephtha came to his home at Mizpah; and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; she was his only child... And when he saw her, he rent his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! you have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me; for I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow." And she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me; leave me alone two months, that I may go and wander in the mountains, and bewail my virginity..." And at the end of two months she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had made. She had never known a man. And it became a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephtha...'

The tragic potential in the story of Jephtha received a new twist in the Renaissance period. In 1554 the Scottish humanist George Buchanan wrote his Latin tragedy *Jephtas sive votum* (*Jephtha or the Vow*), a version which was to be considered the model for many years hence. Even Handel's librettist Thomas Morell had recourse to some of its details. More than anything else, the 17th-century oratorio took up the theme of the lament which provides such an impressive conclusion to the proceedings. In the 18th century, the belief that man was inherently good and history followed the path of progress made tragedy and lamentation an unacceptable ending for a drama. The sacrifice of Jephtha's daughter was too morbid an outcome for the humanists, prompting them to adapt the story along the lines of Abraham. In Handel's work, an angel – an *angelus ex machina* – saves Jephtha's daughter from being slayed and decrees that she shall serve God as a virgin in his temple: 'Thy daughter, Jephtha, thou must dedicate to God, in pure and virgin-state for ever, as not an object meet for sacrifice.' In order to allow this reinterpretation of the Bible story, the words of the vow had to be changed so that now they read '(If, Lord, I) safe return a glorious conqueror; – what or whoever shall first salute mine eyes, shall be for ever thine, or fall a sacrifice.' This ambiguity is, to judge by the words of the angel, inspired by the Holy Spirit: 'The Holy Spirit, that dictated thy vow, bade thus explain it and approves thy faith'; the modification of the biblical account draws its legitimacy from the Holy Spirit who had inspired the Evangelists to write the New Testament. The revised version of the story of Jephtha reflects the Christian departure from the harsh image of God presented by the Old Testament, so that Handel is fully justified in concluding his oratorio with 'Hallelujah. Amen.', in the Easter spirit.

The subject of biblical war heroes was a favourite in 18th-century England. They offered suitable figures with whom the English could identify their own escapades on the battlefield – against the Irish and, particularly in the 1740s, against the Scots in their quest for independence. Handel had paid tribute to this trend with *Joshua* and – more notably – *Judas Maccabaeus*, the latter a patriotic celebration of the Duke of Cumberland and his famous victory over the Scots. But after 1747 the intellectual climate changed. With the United Kingdom's status as a great power having been secured beyond its borders in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle of 1748, the urge to glorify heroes subsided. The cult of the noble gave way to greater emotionality, the Age of Reason to the Age of Sentiment. Public figures withdrew to the bosom of the family, and the triumphant mannerisms of the Baroque period now took second place to human warmth and introspection. Handel and his librettist were aware of this change. It is not the tragic war hero alone who is protagonist of the oratorio, for his daughter – now called Iphis, after Buchanan – ranks easily on a par. The figure of the mother – who only played a minor role in Buchanan's account – and the introduction of Hamor the fiancé transpose the conflict from the public arena to the family. The mother who, at Jephtha's

very first appearance, stands by his side bemoaning their separation through the war, is then filled with dark forebodings and finally urges her husband to rescind his vow – the betrothed longing for the consent of both father and daughter to the marriage, offering to sacrifice himself in place of Iphis and ultimately yielding to heaven's judgement, not without sorrow at the loss of his beloved. The 'family' conclusion, widely considered weak in dramatic terms, accords with the general societal shift from an outward to an inward-looking perspective. On a linguistic level, this is reflected in Thomas Gray's graveyard poetry. He captured the spirit of the time with his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, published in 1761. That famous line, 'far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife', perfectly sums up the conclusion of *Jephtha*.

Handel was beset with poor health and the sight in his left eye was rapidly waning when he wrote his last oratorio. He had lost it altogether by the time he began composing Act III on 18 May 1761. The premiere of *Jephtha* was held at the start of the new oratorio season the following Lent, with the composer himself wielding the baton at the Royal Covent Garden Theatre on 26 February 1762.

Handel drew on compositions of his own and others alike for his work, which he normally adapted to suit the occasion. In other words, he made particularly extensive use of the technique of parody that formed a typical element of 18th-century music. Of the 44 pieces in *Jephtha*, nine are from another pen and ten are taken from his own earlier works. Seven of the nine choruses borrow extensively from six masses by the Bohemian composer Franz Johann Habermann, first published in 1747 – Handel may have received them from Georg Philipp Telemann with whom he maintained correspondence. He took his cue not only from the musical themes, also incorporating entire sections into his new version (the fugue theme and counterpoint, for example) though without following developments in the original material any further – Habermann's fugues being for the most part highly conventional and brief. In the concertante movements, however, he often adheres very closely to the original. Handel's technique of using existing pieces has traditionally been linked with his skills at improvisation. An improviser needs not only a pre-specified theme, but also set pieces which can be integrated into a formal pattern. But Handel's flexibility was such that he could borrow just the theme, an entire section or even the formal pattern itself: one, two or all three aspects from the material chosen.

The overture to *Jephtha* is not an original creation either: Handel took it from the stage music he wrote for Tobias Smollet's *Alceste* in 1749–60. The grand, emotive beginning and the earnest Allegro are well suited as an introduction to a biblical drama, and Handel also deleted the minuet (which was in a much lighter vein), replacing it with a new one which anticipates the more sensitive aspects that form a major element of the oratorio as a whole and are particularly characteristic of the young couple, Iphis and Hamor. *Jephtha* is initially portrayed as a noble warrior oblivious to the implications of his vow, while his wife Storgè sees the woeful consequences approaching. The choruses, on the other hand, are used to depict the children of Israel turning to God, while the battles are treated most graphically in scenes laid out on a grand scale. The work reaches its climax in the final chorus of Act II; here Handel changed the original words 'What God ordains is right' into 'Whatever is, is right' – a sign, perhaps, that the blind composer had submitted to his fate (the change of key from major to minor and back to major, ending in minor, would seem to suggest this). Act III is concerned with the fate of Iphis. Here the angel announces God's judgement that she shall become a virgin in the Temple, thus being lost to the world and living for the greater glory of the Lord. This turn of fate is a source of joy for all around, from the chorus to Iphis and Hamor themselves, and the final chorus is an expression of undiluted optimism. This is what enables Handel to end the work, like so many of his other oratorios, with the words 'Hallelujah. Amen.'

The worry that Jephtha has caused with his ill-considered, presumptuous vow is dispelled by the unshakable trust of the faithful in God. But the price of victory – renunciation of love – is happily glossed over in the musical jubilation. Iphis is condemned to remain a virgin, but she has become fully reconciled with her position as the victim and is prepared to give her life for victory. She aspires to be a 'grateful victim', and on hearing the news that not death, but deprivation of love, is to be her fate, she consents to the 'highest will' in joyfully agitated tones. In 1911 Arnold Schering described this oratorio as 'Handel's third apotheosis of the eternal feminine'. Of the feminine robbed of its erotic power, we must add, the victim of a puritanical (and patriarchal) society. Handel presented a most penetrating picture of Iphis and Hamor, laden with infectious traits of sensitivity. The young man's aria telling of his love is rendered in the modern, sentimental vein, while the girl articulates her feelings in the blissfully 'naïve' siciliano tradition. And both sing of their joy in a duet betraying a hint of the galant style. As the final chorus reminds us – 'blessed by they who fear the Lord' – it is their ingenuous love which carves their destiny as victims of this world.

© Volker Mertens

CD52-53

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

George Frideric Handel was born in Halle, in the central part of what recently was East Germany. He was almost exactly contemporaneous with Johann Sebastian Bach, born at Eisenach, Thuringia, about 120 miles southwest. Both men were deposited into a fragmented, economically depressed and depopulated region: With the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire in 1648, Europe dissolved into hundreds of princely states, divided between the Empire's Catholicism and Martin Luther's Protestant initiative. Incredibly, music flourished in this tumultuous environment.

Unlike Bach, who was born into a musical family, Handel became a musician against his parents' wishes. At 17, he became a church organist, and at 18, he went to Hamburg to play violin and harpsichord in the opera house. Opera fascinated him from the beginning, and within three years Hamburg was presenting his operas. The Italians were preeminent in opera, so he soon found the way to Italy, where he spent three years churning out additional operas, and at least one oratorio. In 1710 he returned to Germany, but almost immediately left for England to produce an opera; he returned to Germany briefly but went back to England, where he lived until his death in 1759, save for brief visits to the Continent.

Like Bach, Handel was one of the pillars of the Late Baroque musical period. The Baroque musical style emerged about 1600, with composers such as Gabrielli and Monteverdi, and ended, practically, at Handel's death. His output was prodigious: Over 40 operas, two dozen oratorios, hundreds of anthems, cantatas, solos and songs; a hundred or more pieces of chamber and orchestral music, including the familiar Water Music and Royal Fireworks music; and several books of keyboard works. He never married, and was an eccentric figure – one account has him, an old man, wandering along London streets, jabbering loudly to himself in a curious mixture of German and English. But his legacy, in particular to the English oratorio, remains. Groves, commenting on Handel's successors in England, says, "...over [the next century of effort] brooded from first to last the elephantine shadow of Handel..." (quoted in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Apel, 1960). *Israel in Egypt*: History. Handel's oratorio was written in 1738, three years before the better known *Messiah*. The ecclesiastical authorities would not allow stage productions of Biblical works, or any stage productions during Lent; the concert-style oratorio presentation solved both problems.

The story of Israel in Egypt is familiar Judeo-Christian history: The Hebrew tribes of Israel entered Egypt voluntarily,

probably about 1600 B.c., at the invitation of Joseph, the kidnapped son of Jacob, then a high official in the Pharaonic administration. Under Egyptian rule, the Israelites initially prospered, and their numbers multiplied, over three centuries, to perhaps 600,000, as much as 40% of the Egyptian populace. With a change in ethnic succession of the Pharaohs, however, Hebrews were disenfranchised and enslaved. Moses, Hebrew by birth, the adopted son of a Pharaonic queen (possibly Hatshepsut, queen to Thutmose II, or, alternatively, the daughter of Rameses II; the date of the Exodus is uncertain over a period of about two hundred years) as a young man was a loyal Egyptian subject and may have been a military leader. He fled Egypt-- possibly at Hatshepsut's death, when her half-brother and arch-enemy, Thutmose III, assumed the throne-- and spent 40 years in the wilderness. He returned, reluctantly, aged 80, to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt, and confronted Pharaoh. Attempts at negotiation caused a backlash, and Moses initiated a series of ten plagues, targeting particularly sacred aspects of the Egyptian culture. The Nile itself, the sacred river, was first: its waters turned to blood and became unpalatable. Then came frogs, lice, flies, locusts, cattle pestilence, boils, hail, a 'great darkness', and, the crushing blow, the death of Egypt's first-born sons. Pharaoh's magicians tried to demonstrate that these plagues were tricks-- they succeeded in replicating the bloody river and invoking frogs-- but the continuing curses broke Pharaoh's will, and, in a moment of weakness, he approved the departure. (In fact, the Egyptians ceded "silver and gold" to the Hebrews to ensure their exit.) Pharaoh subsequently changed his mind and dispatched an army to overtake them, but Moses' charges escaped across the Red Sea on sand laid bare by a strong east wind; the army and its chariots, attempting to follow, bogged down in the sand and were wiped out when the waters returned. Modern explanations can be found for the plagues, and even for the sea crossing; however, the concurrence of these events, and Moses' foreknowledge of them, certainly rank as miracles, whatever the explanation.

Israel in Egypt: Music. Some authorities believe Handel intended to utilize a previously composed anthem as the first movement of his Biblical drama. As presented here, however, this oratorio consists of only the two parts that Handel composed in two weeks during October, 1738. The first tells the story of the oppression and the escape. Much of the story comes from the Biblical account in *Exodus*, but Handel (probably acting as his own librettist) interspersed references to the story from Psalms in lieu of relying totally on one book. The second part-- which Handel in fact wrote first-- consists of *Exodus* Chapter 15, v. 1-21, in order, known as the Song of Moses, rejoicing over the triumph. Only the final lines of that text, attributed in the scripture to Miriam the prophetess, sister of Aaron, appear to actually date from that early time; a later poet expanded on the same theme. Parts of verse 18, praising the Lord, recur in the last five pieces of the oratorio.

Like *Messiah*, *Israel in Egypt* is somewhat atypical of Handel oratorios. It contains relatively little solo material; also unusual is the extensive use of double choruses, with the themes alternately echoed and reinforced. The work nonetheless exhibits Handel's opera-honed dramatic sense, not only in choral climaxes but in orchestral textures which paint the scenery for the story. The hailstorm begins with a few small missiles, and rises to a roar as the chorus enters; the frog hop through the king's chambers before being announced; and, as the chorus tells of the locusts without number, they can be heard buzzing furiously in the orchestra. And, in the second part of the oratorio, the exultant themes convey the essence of songs of victory of every age and culture.

© James Fancher

CD54-55

JUDAS MACCABAEUS

Since his arrival in England in 1710 George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) had been a dominant figure in the musical life of his adopted country. His operas had been hugely popular in London up to c1728, before the onstage antics of rival prima donnas Cuzzoni and Bordoni, his own rivalry with fellow-composer Bononcini, and the huge success of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* together conspired to cause his operas to fall out of favour. His works for state occasions however such as the coronation anthem *Zadok the Priest* (1727) and the suitably grave *The Ways of Zion do Mourn* (following the death of Queen Caroline in 1737) were justly famous.

During the 1730s he found a ready audience for his oratorios that were admired as much their theatricality as for their sentiment. By 1745 however there was a tailing off of interest in these works and audiences were diminishing. In addition to these travails Handel's health was suffering and he left London to recuperate. That summer he began work on a new piece *Judas Maccabeus* but shelved it temporarily in order to complete an *Occasional Oratorio*, a piece of largely recycled music designed to spur on the loyalists in their fight against the Jacobite invader Bonnie Prince Charlie, whose forces had advanced as far south as Derby. The bloody battle of Culloden in April 1746 ensured victory against the Pretender and Handel felt able to recommence work on *Judas Maccabeus*, completing it in August 1746. The topicality of its subject was not lost on the English and the piece was a storming success (Lord Shaftesbury wrote that it 'went off with very great Applause') with numerous further performances given, many of them conducted by the composer himself. The use of special drums brought in from the Tower of London for the chorus *Sound an alarm* excited comment at the first performance on 1 April 1747.

For the libretti of both *Judas* and *Occasional Oratorio* Handel turned to Rev Thomas Morrell, the amiable curate of Kew and Rector of Buckland in Hertfordshire. Morrell had a wide circle of acquaintances including Hogarth and Garrick and he was on good terms with Handel (the composer even left £200 in his will to Morrell). However they did have their spats; Morrell had the effrontery to criticise one section of *Judas* and received the following withering reply: 'You teach me musick, sir! Mine musick is good musick. It is your words that is bad. Hear the passage again. Now go and make words to that musick!' Musicologists tend to agree with Handel's opinion of Morrell's libretto, but have also suggested that Handel 'dumbed down' in this piece to appeal to the masses, perhaps forgetting the circumstances under which this oratorio was composed. *Judas Maccabeus* was composed not for subscribers but for a nation and its people recovering from crisis. Its success with the general public ensured that Handel netted a considerable sum from the multiple performances.

The work as heard today has changed somewhat over the years. In fact *Judas*, although an instant success, underwent some immediate changes as Handel was encouraged to add to his already large-scale oratorio with extracts from other works, including 'See the conqu'ring hero' from *Joshua* (1750) and *Wise men, flattering* from *Belshazzar* (1758). Handel's works have remained popular due to their effective scoring and mixture of styles, for he was able to incorporate German profundity, Italian melody and English intensity into his music as and when the occasion demanded.

To follow the scenario it is necessary to know something of the events in Jerusalem in 169BC when the invading Syrian army under Antiochus Epiphanes sacked the temple and suppressed the Jewish religion. Under their leader Mattathias the Jews embarked on a fiery resistance and by the time of Mattathias' death they had succeeded in partially driving back the Syrians. Judas Maccabeus, son of Mattathias, then played a leading role in defeating the Syrians in a number of battles between 166 and 164BC. In that time Maccabeus purified the

Temple in Jerusalem, an event subsequently celebrated by the festival of Hanukkah, and obtained religious freedom for the Jews. Judas Maccabeus was eventually killed at the battle of Elasa.

The oratorio begins with the funeral procession of the late leader Matthatias *Mourn, ye afflicted children ... For Zion, lamentation make ... Pious Orgies ... O Father, whose mighty power.* Matthatias' son Simon attempts to rouse the Israelites out of their grief suggesting that they choose his warlike brother Judas as Matthatias' successor *Arm, arm ye brave.* Judas wastes no time in dramatically inspiring the Israelites in his bravura aria *Call forth thy powers, my soul.* Following prayers for liberty from the Syrian yoke *Come, ever-smiling liberty,* the warlike theme returns to close the first act *Disdainful of danger... No unhallowed desire ... Hear us, O Lord.*

Act Two opens with a dramatic celebration of victory for the Jews *Fall 'n is the foe,* but in the midst of their partying and acclamation of Judas, a messenger brings word of renewed threat of war as the Syrian king Antiochus has sent his '*valiant Gorgias, and commands his proud, victorious bands to root out Israel's strength, and to erase ev'ry memorial of the sacred place*'. Once again the hopes of the chorus led by an Israelite woman descend to new depths *Ah! Wretched Israel!* but in his famous aria *The Lord worketh wonders his glory to raise* Simon again revives their spirits and the Israelites reaffirm their faith in God's power.

One of Handel's greatest gems opens Act Three: the priest's aria *Father of heaven* as he prays for the decisive Jewish victory. As if in answer to his prayers a messenger announces a huge defeat for the Syrians at Capharsalama and the triumphant Judas returns to the strains of *See the conqu'ring hero comes.* Judas introduces the Roman ambassador who brings a promise of protection for Jerusalem against further attack *With honour let desert be crown'd... Peace to my countrymen.* With this peaceful prospect before them the Israelite woman sings the famous air '*O lovely peace, with plenty crown'd*' before Simon and the chorus bring the piece to a joyous conclusion *Rejoice, O Judah...Hallelujah.*

© James Murray

CD56-57

SAMSON

The oratorio *Samson* was composed by Handel in the latter part of 1741, revised and expanded a year later, and first performed on February 18, 1743, at Covent Garden in London. Its reception was one of Handel's greatest triumphs. A correspondent to the Dublin Journal wrote, 'That Gentleman is more esteemed now than ever. The new Oratorio (called *Samson*) which he composed since he left Ireland, has been performed four Times to more crowded Audiences than ever were seen; more People being turned away for Want of Room each Night than hath been at the Italian Opera.' It was presented for nine successive seasons. Today it stands as one of Handel's greatest works. George Bernard Shaw wrote of *Samson*, "it shows him in his highest, most heroic vein, at the height of his strength, decision, audacity, and mastery. The first four bars of Fix'd in his everlasting seat are alone worth getting up a performance on the festival scale for."

Handel, aged fifty-eight in 1743, had grown immeasurably from the young German who had visited England in 1710, fresh from a successful sojourn of learning and composing in Italy. He made England his permanent home from 1717, providing London with fashionable operas composed in Italian style to Italian librettos. As his roots sank deep in English life, he slowly developed and forged the new form of the English oratorio. A definition of the form is provided by Handel's librettist, the hard-headed practical-minded Newburgh Hamilton, in his preface to the word-book of *Samson*: "A musical Drama, whose subject must be Scriptural, and in which the Solemnity of Church-Musick is agreeably united with the most pleasing Airs

of the Stage." But the suggestion this gives of a compromise, with its appeal to both "church music" and "theatre" camps among English audiences, should not be taken literally. The form was an organic one rising out of the unspoken needs of English life. It signified the change from the concept of musical theatre as an imported luxury, an entertainment in the course of which people could chatter about how well the music suited their favourite virtuosi instead of how well the singers served the music, to a kind of music drama which captured and expressed in the deepest way the hopes, feelings and moralities in terms of which the nation saw its communal life. To what extent Handel planned the oratorio form this way, in his first experiments, is an open question. But the concept deepened from work to work. The oratorios aroused puzzled questions and even hostility. Was the theatre a place to make people think? Did England, proud of its trade and prosperity, need an English music? Was it proper for the words of the Scriptures to be heard in the theatre? And from the showmanship point of view, in oratorio there was a loss of scenic spectacle and of emphasis on vocal glitter, not compensated for by the grandly majestic and movingly dramatic role that the chorus was assuming in the new form. But an art form that corresponds spiritually to its times makes its way, causing the inherited fashions to seem shallow. Handel changed the tastes of his audiences, and won others to the music theatre who previously had never been near it. His victory was signalled by the reception of *Samson*.

A sign of Handel's mastery at this period is the way in which each big work is a unique formal, emotional and dramatic concept. Thus *Saul*, produced in 1739, is the supreme Biblical opera, with its sharply delineated characters, historical sweep, changes of scene and vivid action. *Israel in Egypt*, produced the same year, is a grand choral pageant. *Messiah*, produced in Dublin in 1742, draws upon the Nativity Play and Passion Play giving them an apotheosis in a splendid anthem framework. And *Samson*, based on John Milton's drama, "Samson Agonistes" (written in 1671) is music drama cast in the Greek model, with unity of time and place and with one ascending line; the rise of the tragic hero Samson out of despair at his own captivity and weakness, to triumph over the enemies of his people, while sacrificing his own life.

Winton Dean, in *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques*, praises Newburgh Hamilton, the librettist, for skill in reducing Milton's drama - "composed for the study" - to less than half its original length, and drawing upon other Milton poems for some arias and choruses he found it necessary to add. We must regretfully agree with Winton Dean; regretfully, because of the kind of verse changes that Hamilton made in order to give Handel a text that would fit the symmetries and rhythms of his musical style. It is a pity, for example, that Milton's great lines, with their blank verse splendour, have often to be turned into jingles. Thus Milton's,

*O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day! becomes
Total eclipse! No sun, no moon,
All dark amidst the blaze of noon!*

But this became the text for one of the great arias in the oratorio, and if the words taken by themselves are weaker than Milton's, the music is truly in keeping with Milton's depth of feeling. In other words, the changes were practical and skilfully functional. If in the adaptation much of Milton's mighty word music is weakened, yet the poem was meant to be complete in itself, not set to music. And in the adaptation, a new art form was made possible in which Milton's theme was illuminated by Handel's own apt and mighty music.

In using Old Testament themes for his oratorios, to give expression to and exalt English spiritual life, Handel was following in the path of Milton, whose *Paradise Lost*, written to "justify the ways of God to Men," was also a justification of the great upheaval in which England had done away with the

absolutism of kings. Milton's *Samson Agonistes* also relates deeply to Milton's own land and condition. Dean Jack H. Adamson of the University of Utah's College of Letters and Science, a leading authority on Milton, writes as follows about the character of Milton's Samson, and thus also throws light upon Handel's hero: "Milton's Samson is not the Samson of the Old Testament, a folk-hero who is good at riddles, a conventional strong man, primitive in intellect and emotions. Rather Milton touched Samson with the grandeur of a Greek tragic hero. Samson Agonistes literally means 'Samson, the Wrestler' and Milton means, by this name, to designate the moment of Samson's greatest feat of strength when he wrestles the pillars of Dagon's temple to the ground. But Milton also means much more. His Samson suffers physically but he suffers even more spiritually. Milton's Samson Agonistes is a man wrestling with himself, in agony from his own inward turmoil."

"Finally, Milton's play may be a symbolic commentary on the meaning of blindness. What is it, he asks, to see clearly? What does it mean to be blind? Milton's answer is clear. Samson's enemies are blind, for they do not see that arrogance and pride make men mad; they do not see that violent men call for their own destruction. And in their blindness the Philistine tyrants, in sport call for Samson who at last sees clearly what his divine calling had always been: to die for the freedom of his people."

About the Oratorio

The oratorio *Samson* is in one continuous unbroken dramatic movement and the act divisions - not found in Milton - are merely for theatre convention. Act One starts, after the *Sinfonia*, with a short recitative by Samson, who is blind and in chains, and then presents one of those splendid Handel "blocks" of music, choral and solo, here depicting the pagan festival of the Philistines, praising their god Dagon. In striking contrast comes the misery of Samson, expressed in the touching aria, "Torments, alas," then the recitative with Micah, and rising in intensity with Samson's great aria Total eclipse!". It is answered by a note of hope in the magnificent chorus, "O first created beam, with its radiant music on "Let there be light!"

Manoah, Samson's father, enters, seeking his son, and has a brilliant aria, "Thy glorious deeds," which combines lament with memories of Samson's past exploits. Samson's third aria, 'Why does the God of Israel sleep?' with its strong, protesting character, gives still new musical breadth to his musical portrayal. After another chorus of the Israelites, comes Samson's deeply moving accompanied recitative, "My genial spirits droop." It is worth notice that, as Winton Dean points out, a heroic role like thus given to tenor voice was an innovation on Handel's part, and created a new kind of dimension for the voice. The serenely beautiful chorus, "Then round the starry throne," closes the act.

If in Act One male voices have predominated, Act Two restores the balance, first with ,One of Handel's most beautiful arias, Micah's "Return, return, Oh God of hosts!" The long dramatic scene follows between Samson and Delilah, with Handel's artful writing for soprano voice effectively depicting Delilah's renewed sensuous temptation of Samson. The climax is the great duet, "Traitor to love!" as the rejected Delilah turns against Samson. Then another dramatic conflict arises - a conflict of giants, musically and conceptually - as Samson is scornfully challenged by and defies Harapha, the Philistine strong man. Again a powerful duet climaxes the battle of minds, "Go, baffled coward, go," and the act closes with choral splendour. There are choruses of the Israelites praying to Jehovah, of the Philistines joyfully expecting the renewed festivities to Dagon, and a magnificent finale, the conflictful chorus with soloists, "Fixed in his everlasting seat."

Act Three consummates the reversal of fortunes that is the heart of Handel's tragic drama; the Israelites triumphing, although with the heroic self-sacrifice of Samson, and the pagan Philistines cast in despair with the destruction of their temple.

Again Harapha is pitted against Samson, and Harapha has a fine air; "Presuming slave." Samson's "Thus when the sun," after Harapha leaves, very effectively reveals the change of mood in him, as he begins to see, with joy and confidence, the path before him. Winton Dean perceptively notes that Handel here sets the last line of the text, "Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave," four times, to quite different music, "and with each repetition draws out new shades of meaning." There is a fine aria for Micah, and again a chorus with solo, of Philistine revelry, Samson has entered the temple, presumably, to obey the demands of the priests of Dagon. Manoah sings an aria of exalted beauty expressing love for his son Samson, "How willing my paternal love," He and Micah are alone. Their short recitative is suddenly broken into by the noise of the destruction of the temple, a vivid *sinfonia* followed by the despairing chorus of the Philistines. A messenger tells what has happened, and a long, grand and sublime elegy, funeral march and requiem follow; aria, recitative, and chorus with solo voices lamenting the death of Samson. In the original version of the oratorio, written in 1741, this had ended the work. But in the revision a year later, Handel added the brilliant and since then, famous, soprano aria with trumpet obbligato, "Let the bright Seraphim," and the following chorus. One thinks of the "happy finale" Mozart added to Don Giovanni, after what was spiritually the end of the work. The Handel addition, like Mozart's, can be dispensed with dramatically, but in both cases we are given music that we would not like to do without.

© S. W. Bennett

CD58-59

THEODORA

Handel's first English oratorios *Acis and Galathea* and *Esther* date from 1718 and were both revised in 1732. Around this time the popularity of his Italian operas began to fade and instead he put his energy towards composing oratorios to be performed at the theatre (his final opera *Deidamia* dates from 1740/1). From 1743 (*Samson*) it became something of a tradition for new oratorios to be aired in London during Lent. *Semele*, *Joseph and his Brethren*, *Hercules*, *Belshazzar*; *An Occasional Oratorio*, *Judas Maccabaeus*. *Joshua*, *Alexander Balus*, *Susanna* and *Solomon* all received their first performances between 1743 and 1749.

Handel was accustomed to working at great speed, but even by his exacting standards *Theodora* was composed quickly, having been started on 28 June 1749 and completed just over one month later on 31 July. Handel, at the suggestion of the Price of Wales, first used Rev Thomas Morrell as librettist for *Judas Maccabaeus*, which was written in celebration of the Duke of Cumberland's victory over the Jacobites at Culloden in 1746. Morrell also wrote the text for *Alexander Balus* but is not thought to have been Handel's collaborator for his next two projects *Solomon* and *Susanna*. For *Theodora* Morrell turned to the novel *The Martyrdom of Theodora and of Didymus* by the scientist the Hon Robert Boyle (1627-91). Boyle's novel is partly based upon the Corneille tragedy *Theodore, vierge et martyre* (1646). Morrell chose to ignore much of both Boyle and Corneille: Part One is his own invention and the first two scenes of Part Two are based upon a section of Boyle's novel that was subsequently lost. Like other fine operatic composers, Handel was a severe and astute critic of libretti and he discarded parts of Morrell's work that he considered to be ineffective including the conversion of Septimius as Theodora dies at the stake. Otherwise he rated Morrell's work as a model of its kind.

That Handel was able to complete this masterly work in such a short time is partly explained by the fact that some of the music was not entirely original: for the overture and elsewhere he made use of themes by Giovanni Clari (1677-1754) and keyboard suites by Gottlieb Muffat (1690-1770). Other 'borrowings' were from Lotti's *Missa sapientiae* and Steffani's opera *La lotta d'Ercole con Acheloo*. Despite this, it

has been said that *Theodora* (and Part Two in particular) represents Handel's inspiration at its finest. Handel thought highly of the work and told Morrell he rated the chorus *He saw the lovely youth* far beyond the Hallelujah Chorus.

Following three performances at Covent Garden in March 1750 and a cut revival in 1755, *Theodora* lay virtually ignored for over a century. Handel, on being told that a gentleman had bought up all the boxes for the third performance, exclaimed: 'He is a fool then, for the Jews will not come to it...because it is a Christian story and the ladies will not because it is a virtuous one'. His only consolation was that with the theatre half empty the music 'would sound well'.

Hiller performed it in Koln in 1860 and Sterndale Bennett conducted a private London performance five years later. This was followed by a notable revival at a Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1868. Novello published a bowdlerised version in 1874, the original version not being reprinted until 1985, several years after the recording on this CD.

The action is set in Antioch, part of Roman occupied Syria, during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, in AD 304. On the Emperor's birthday, Valens, the Roman President, orders the death penalty for those who refuse to worship the Roman god Jove. An officer, Septimius, is told to carry out the punishment *Go, my faithful soldier, go*. Didymus, a Roman soldier, asks for tolerance towards other religions *Vouchsafe, dread Sir, a gracious ear*, arguing that this would bring friends to Rome. However Valens, seeing this tolerance as a sign of weakness, announces the tortures that await those who refuse to bow to the Roman way *Racks, gibbets, sword and fire*. His soldiers echo these bloodthirsty sentiments *For ever thus stands fixed the doom of rebels to the Gods and Rome*.

Whilst Didymus rails against such inhumanity *Most cruel edict... The raptured soul defies the sword*, Septimius privately has some sympathy with the view expressed by his junior officer *I know thy virtues, and ask not thy faith* but sees no alternative to carrying out the orders of Valens, whatever they may be *Descend kind pity, heav'nly guest*.

At a secret prayer meeting the Christians are joined by Princess Theodora who renounces all her worldly goods *Tho' hard, my friends ...Fond, flatt'ring world, adieu*. This is commended by one of the Christian women, Irene, who condemns inherited wealth *Oh bright example of all goodness ...Bane of virtue, nurse of passions*. Whilst the Christians pray for inspiration *Come, mighty Father*, news arrives of Valens' decree *Fly, fly, my brethren*. Irene urges all to remain calm *Whither should we fly? Or fly from whom? ...As with rosy steps the morn advancing*.

Septimius enters and is unable to understand why the Christians are so set upon their own destruction *Mistaken wretches! ...Dread the fruits of Christian folly*. Theodora tells him that she takes her orders from God even though it may lead to death *Deluded mortal*. However Septimius informs her that her fate will be worse than death: she is condemned to serve as a prostitute in a brothel frequented by Valens' soldiers *Death is not yet thy doom*. Appalled, Theodora prays to the angels to end her life before she can be defiled *O worse than death indeed! ...Angels, ever bright and fair*.

Didymus has arrived too late to save Theodora *Unhappy, happy crew!* Irene advises him of Theodora's fate *Alas! She's gone*. Didymus, admitting his Christian beliefs, determines to rescue Theodora *Kind Heav'n, if virtue be thy care with courage fire me, or art inspire me, to free the captive fair. On the wings of the wind will I fly, with this princess to live, or this Christian to die*. Irene and the Christians wish him well in their prayers *O love, how great thy pow'r ...Go, gen'rous, pious youth*.

The Roman celebrations are at their height as Valens and the heathens praise not only love, but also Flora and Venus *Ye men of Antioch, with solemn pomp*. After lauding Diocletian *Wide spread his name*, Valens dispatches Septimius to ask if Theodora has decided to worship at love's altar *Return Septimius, to the stubborn maid*. If not, then she

will become the plaything of the soldiers, an event viewed with happy anticipation by the crowd *Venus, laughing from the skies*. Alone and naked in her cell, Theodora prays for blessed release *O thou bright sun ...With darkness deep ...But why art thou disquieted, my soul? ...Oh, that I on wings could rise*.

Didymus chooses the moment to confess his Christian beliefs to Septimius *Long have I known thy friendly social soul*. Since it was Theodora who converted him he announces his plan to rescue her; Septimius agrees to order his soldiers to turn a blind eye as he enters Theodora's cell *No more ...Tho' the honours that Flora and Venus receive*. Didymus thanks his old friend *Deeds of kindness to display*. At night-time elsewhere Irene prays that Theodora will remain pure *The clouds begin to veil the hemisphere ...Defend her, Heav'n. Let angels spread their viewless tents around her bed; keep her from vile assaults secure, still ever calm, and ever pure*.

Didymus, his visor lowered, has entered Theodora's cell *Or lulled with grief ...Sweet rose and lily, flow'ry form*. As he approaches Theodora, she awakes in alarm. He announces himself as Theodora's deliverer, suggesting that she put on his clothes. At first she is reluctant to be rescued by him *Excellent youth! I know thy courage, virtue and thy love* and instead begs him to kill her *The pilgrim's home, the sick man's health*. He refuses and insists that she escapes in his clothing *Forbid it, Heav'n! Shall I destroy the life I came to save?* Theodora suspects that Didymus will pay with his life but agrees. They sing a blissful farewell duet *To thee, thou glorious son of worth ...I hope to meet on Earth, but sure shall meet in Heav'n*. Part II closes as Irene and the Christians, in praying for Theodora, evoke the miracle of the Widow of Nain *'Tis night, but night's sweet blessing is denied ...He saw the lovely youth, Death's early prey*.

As Irene prays *Lord, to thee, each night and day* a stranger approaches. Irene recognises Didymus but it is revealed to be Theodora, who explains how the faithful Roman saved her *When sunk in anguish and despair...Blest be the hand*. A messenger tells of Didymus' unrepentant attitude in court and of Valens' fury: Theodora is to be executed as soon as she is recaptured. Theodora is overjoyed at this: better to die a virgin than face dishonour at the hands of the soldiers. She rushes away to attempt the rescue of Didymus.

In the courtroom, where Didymus explains his actions in freeing Theodora from a dreadful illegal punishment. As Valens condemns him to death, Theodora rushes in to argue that *she* and not Didymus should be condemned. Septimius is amazed at the couple's bravery *Dwells there such virtuous, courage ...From Virtue springs each gen'rous deed* as are the heathens in the courtroom *How strange their ends*. Valens has had enough: if both plead guilty then both will die. That being settled Theodora and Didymus face death with fortitude; Didymus assures Septimius that they will achieve bliss in Heaven *And must such beauty suffer ...Streams of pleasure ever flowing ...Thither let our hearts aspire*. Irene and the Christians pray that their faith be equal to that of Theodora and Didymus *Ere this their doom is past ...O love divine*.

© James Murray

CD62-63

SOLOMON

George Frideric Handel's usual custom was to prepare for the following oratorio season during the previous spring and summer. He began composing *Solomon* on May 5, 1748 and finished it on June 13, 1748. *Solomon* was heard for the first time on March 17th, 1749, with repeat performances on March 20th and 22nd. The work was not heard again until March, 1759, six weeks before Handel's death, when it was presented in a version fatally marred by cuts, changes, and interpolations.

The author of the libretto is unknown. Some writers have ascribed it to Thomas Morell, but this seems doubtful when the rest of his work for Handel is considered.

All three acts of the oratorio deal with a different side of *Solomon*. Act I emphasizes his piety and marital bliss, the librettist tactfully making no mention of the Biblical 700 wives and 300 concubines. Rather *Solomon* is portrayed in love scenes with his one beloved wife and queen, who has no name except that she is Pharaoh's daughter.

Act II portrays the wisdom of *Solomon* in the famous tale of the two women who each claim to be the mother of the same baby.

Act III presents a musical masque for the visiting Queen of Sheba. The passions of fury, tortured soul, and calm are so vividly portrayed by the chorus and *Solomon* that the Queen is overwhelmed by the power of the representation. The view of the newly finished temple completes her awe, and she presents her treasure to the great *Solomon*. Both end by pledging peace and glory to their respective realms.

The overture has the usual introductory and dotted Maestoso or Grave section leading to a fugal Allegro, which, in this case, is the highlight of the overture.

Act I begins with a powerful double chorus, the initial words announced by basses alone. The double choruses (i.e. eight parts) herein mostly have a massive orchestral accompaniment of brass, winds, and strings. Often the orchestra itself is divided into two groups to give further solidity to the structure. The next double chorus sings in block chords with some extraordinary modulations, a passage giving way to imitative writing.

Solomon appears in a moving arioso with an accompaniment of solo strings (minus cello) and bassoon. The orchestra both accompanies the voice and punctuates it. For some unexplainable reason, Handel originally wrote the part of *Solomon* for a female mezzo-soprano, although he had tenors and basses to draw on. Ingenious reasons (e.g. a holdover from the high voice syndrome of Italian opera) have been set forth but none are convincing. At any rate, the part is taken here by a baritone who sings the music an octave lower than written.

Praise and rejoicing continue. Zadok's air is lively and interesting. *Solomon*'s reply to this adulation is sufficiently humble to make us believe he is human and his modesty is real. Then *Solomon* and his queen converse directly, preceding one of Handel's most inspired melodies and simple love songs, the queen's aria "With thee the unsheltered moor I'd tread." Handel's unparalleled melodic gift particularly endeared him to his audiences. The tune is not only genuinely affecting, but possesses some unexpected phrase lengths that give it a piquant turn.

The final number in the act, an equally famous and even more charming piece, the so-called Nightingale Chorus, bids the lovers go their ways without disturbance, and "nightingales lull them to sleep with their song." Flutes, strings, and a five part chorus enchant with lullaby figures, bird calls, pedal points, and a simple G major mood.

Act II opens with a splendid choral and orchestral outburst, a prelude to *Solomon*'s duties as king and judge, portrayed dramatically.

Act III opens with a sinfonia of oboe and strings, a miniature concerto movement which has long been popular. The music proceeds as the Queen of Sheba is entertained with

music, *Solomon* providing commentary. The Queen departs with an unforgettable aria, accompanied by oboe, flutes, violins, and bass. The principals depart in a triple time duet, a fitting conclusion to a splendid oratorio.

© Prof. J. Merrill Knapp, Princeton University

CD64-65

SEMELE

Semele is really an English opera and perhaps the finest of its kind written between the death of Henry Purcell in 1695 and the twentieth century. Because it was presented in London in February 1744 "After the Manner of an Oratorio" (i.e. not staged), it has always been labelled as an oratorio. Yet Handel was thinking in operatic terms when he divided his score into acts and scenes (including stage directions) and chose a secular subject which his librettist called "*The Story of Semele*." If the composer had still been producing opera (he gave it up in 1741), the work might very well have been staged. But for London audiences of that time staged serious opera was Italian, and English was the language of ballad operas (e.g. *The Beggar's Opera*, 1728) and lighter trifles. Even when *Semele* had its only Handelian revival in December, 1744, five Italian arias, which were added to the score for some new Italian singers unused to singing in English, did not seem out of place. In modern times, *Semele* has been successfully staged, particularly during the 1950's and 1960's in England, and its aptness for this treatment is no longer in doubt.

The story, classical Greek legend, has come down to us largely through Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book 11), where the Greek names became Roman. Many of these myths relate the love adventures of the gods with mortal maidens. This particular one tells of Jupiter's love for *Semele*, beautiful daughter of Cadmus, King of Thebes, and what happens when a mortal tries to assume the status of a god.

William Congreve, renowned comic dramatist, put the legend (slightly altered) into the shape of a libretto in 1706 for a composer named John Eccles. For obscure reasons, the opera was never performed then, but the text was included in the printed 1710 edition of Congreve's works. Here it was probably seen later by Handel and his anonymous collaborator, who were looking for new material to set to music. In 1744, the unknown but skilful librettist took Congreve's setting pretty much as it was, but instituted a number of cuts and further minor changes. He also added verses which were purloined from Pope, Dryden, and other worthies for the second half of Act II (the famous "Where'er you walk" stanzas are by Pope, not Congreve). Most of the new text was for the purpose of giving the chorus a more generous role than it had previously.

THE STORY

(Directions and lines in quotations are from the original 1710 Congreve edition and the *Semele* printed libretto of 1762.)

ACT I *Semele* is betrothed to Athamas, prince of Boetia, but has delayed her nuptial rites. *Scene 1* opens in Juno's temple (Jupiter's wife and the guardian of marriage vows) where priests offer a sacrifice. Cadmus and Athamas urge *Semele* to "il1v.~nt no new Delay" to the prospective union. But *Semele*, in an aside, admits to Jupiter's love and calls on him to resolve her dilemma. Ino, *Semele*'s sister, is in love with Athamas, but he will not notice her. "Thunder is heard at a distance, then a Noise of Rain; the Fire is suddenly extinguish'd on the Altar." The priests and people interpret this as an omen that Jupiter (Jove, to give him his colloquial name) is angry. After the fire rises up and dies down again, Cadmus reads the signs to mean that "Juno assents [to the union], but angry Jove denies." The priests call upon Athamas and *Semele* to cease their vows: "'tis impious to proceed." *Scene 2* shows Ino trying to comfort Athamas at this unexpected and shattering blow to his hopes; she openly declares her love for him. (The scene is omitted in the recording.) In *Scene 3* Cadmus interrupts the two and describes

in despair how after he and Semele fled Juno's temple, Semele was suddenly surrounded by flame and then snatched away by a huge eagle who bore her away into the sky. Cadmus in *Scene 4* asks Jove's holy priests what has happened to Semele. They hail his good fortune by saying she has been taken by Jupiter and "Endless Pleasure, endless Love, Semele enjoys above." This famous air and chorus should rightfully be sung by an anonymous goddess or priest, but Handel gave it to Semele because he probably needed a good singer to present the music and the character change made no difference in an oratorio performance.

ACT II *Scene 1* Juno has sent the goddess, Iris, to find where Jupiter has taken Semele. Iris describes the inaccessible palace Jupiter has built, guarded by "two fierce Dragons." Juno determines to enlist the help of Somnus, God of Sleep, to seal "the wakeful Dragon's Eyes" and give her access to the palace. *Scene 2* "An Apartment in the palace of Semele; she is sleeping. Loves and Zephyrs waiting.... Semele awakes and rises." *Scene 3* Jupiter enters and they both declare their love, helped by the chorus of Loves and Zephyrs. But Semele also sighs and speaks of her loneliness when Jupiter leaves her. Jupiter senses her reaching for immortality and determines to distract her. He sends two Zephyrs to fetch Ino to Olympus to give Semele companionship. *Scene 4* "Semele and Ino meet and embrace... [they] sit and observe the Rural Sports, which end the Second Act."

ACT III *Scene 1* "The Cave of Sleep. The God of Sleep lying on his bed. A soft Symphony is heard. Then the Music changes to a different Movement." Juno and Iris appear. Juno calls on Somnus to awake and obey her command. In a humorous dialogue, Somnus refuses to budge until Juno promises to grant him his lady friend, the nymph Pasithea. He then agrees to cast sleep upon Jupiter and that Semele will appear to Jupiter in an alluring dream so that Jove "may wake impetuous, / Furious in Desire; / Unable to refuse whatever Boon / Her Coyness shall require." Moreover, Juno commands Somnus to lend her his magic rod, so she can charm the ferocious sentinels. He is also to put Ino to sleep, so that Juno can appear to Semele in Ino's form. *Scene 2* Semele in her apartment has had troubled thoughts in her sleep. (The scene is omitted in the recording.) *Scene 3* "Enter Juno as Ino, with a Mirror in her Hand." She plays upon Semele's vanity and tells her that her appearance is becoming more godlike. Juno suggests that when Jupiter appears that Semele "Refuse his proffer'd Flame" until he grants her wish: "Conjure him by his Oath/Not to approach your Bed/In Likeness of a Mortal/But like himself, the mighty Thunderer." As Juno leaves, her remark made aside shows her venom "And sure Destruction will ensue/Vain wretched Fool - [to her] Adieu." *Scene 4* "Jupiter enters, offers to embrace Semele; she looks kindly on him, but retires a little from him." Semele leads Jupiter on and finally makes him "swear by the Stygian Lake" to grant her request. When Jupiter hears what it is, he tries desperately to make her retract. She refuses and withdraws. *Scene 5* Jupiter, alone, is in despair at her wish and his rash oath to carry it out. "... when I appear ... /Arm'd with inevitable Fire/She needs must instantly expire." *Scene 6* Juno appears and rejoices in her coming revenge. *Scene 7* "... Semele lying under a Canopy ... she looks up and sees Jupiter descending in a black Cloud.... As the Cloud which contains Jupiter is arrived ... a sudden and great Flash of Lightning breaks forth, and a Clap of loud Thunder is heard; when at one instant Semele with the Palace and the whole present Scene disappears...." *Scene 8* Cadmus, Athamas, Ino, and Chorus of Priests express terror at what has happened, but Ino and Athamas now say it is the will of Jove that they be wed (all but the chorus of this scene is omitted in the recording). *Scene 9* Apollo appears in a cloud and foretells that "From Semele's Ashes a Phoenix shall rise/The Joy of this Earth and Delight of the Skies." He will be Bacchus, the god of wine, "more mighty than Love/And Sighing and Sorrow for ever prevent."

THE MUSIC

Handel's music is masterly - a splendid compilation of recitative (particularly the accompanied variety), aria, ensemble, and chorus. The choral parts, because of the oratorio tradition, have an important role in the drama, acting as both participant in the action (priests, Zephyrs etc.) and commentator on it in the Greek fashion. It mirrors local reactions (acclamation, terror and joy) as the story unfolds, and is a unifying factor throughout. One of Handel's greatest achievements is his portrayal of character. Juno, Semele, and Jupiter are human beings caught in different dilemmas; yet they come alive in their music. Athamas, Ino, Iris, and Cadmus are more shadowy, although Cadmus shows Handel's sympathy for the grieving father. Somnus provides the light touch; Congreve's genius for the comic being heightened by his musical collaborator.

Juno, the vengeful wife and woman, is a superb characterization. Although she does not appear until Act II, she is a strong presence in the last two acts. Her initial accompanied recitative in Act II ("*Awake, Saturnia, from thy Lethargy; Allegro concitato ma pomposo*"), when she learns from Iris what Jupiter has done and vows revenge, is a vivid piece of tone painting. Handel mirrors every phrase from repetition of the descending octave discords on "... down to the Flood of Acheron let her fall" to the trembling of the universe (shivering strings) and the "forky Stings" of the two fierce dragons (rapid triadic movement). Her dispatch of Iris and herself to fetch Somnus ("Hence, Iris, hence away") is a colourful *da capo* aria in two contrasted parts: the first, a lively classical travelogue with a repeated note bass ostinato; the second, a drowsy description of Somnus gradually reverting back to the necessity for haste in reaching him. In Act III, 1, she is first the militant goddess trying to arouse Somnus and failing; then the clever tactician, knowing the key to his possible quick response. Her scene with Semele (III, 3) has another climactic accompanied recitative when she bids Semele ask Jupiter to appear as "the mighty Thunderer." Here again, Handel brings out the formidable pomp of majesty and the means to inspire love by a judicious mixture of single and rapid chord figuration.

Semele is the incarnation of female love, with all its moods and emotions. The captivating "Endless Pleasure, endless Love" has a foot-tapping gavotte rhythm and Purcellian harmony which has endeared it to all who have ever heard it; and the chorus which echoes Semele's delight gives an added dimension to the charming melody. "O Sleep, why dost thou leave me" with only continuo accompaniment of rocking lullaby bass notes is an enchanting picture of the beautiful Semele just awakening from her dreams of love. The melisma on "wand'ring" stretches out to eternity. But there is drama also in her Act I invocation to Jove to help her when Athamas and Cadmus press her to decide. The elongated melodic delineation of "Oh Jove, assist me" in the recitative and the contrasted cross accents and dynamics of the following *Larghetto*, "O Jove! in pity teach me which to choose" (note the skip of a ninth on "*Jove*") are moving testimony to her distress. In Act III when Jove approaches Semele in his godlike raiment, she realizes her folly too late, and her poignant repentance and regret is recreated by Handel in a remarkable F minor arioso of broken chords, gasping phrases, and calls for pity that come to a climax in orchestra silence as she expires.

Jupiter is hardly a forbidding figure. He is mostly a man in love who tries to humour the whims and fancies of his wayward mortal. "I must with Speed amuse her" shows the lover who cannot let his lady complain; it is good, straightforward Handel. But "Where'er you walk" is the aria everyone knows. Its matchless melody and accompaniment have long made it a favourite of every tenor in the concert hall. Somehow the music evokes, as few other arias can, the bliss of Arcadian fields. Interestingly enough, Handel directed that it be sung *Largo e pianissimo per tutto*.

Somnus and his two arias, along with the opening Act III Sinfonia of strings and two cello parts doubled by bassoons to

represent his sleep at the beginning, represent one of the high points of the score. The very even movement of the strings up and down again and again in a harmonic progression that seems to go nowhere in "Leave me, loathsome Light" is a perfect sketch of the god who is too tired to move. His more animated reaction to the mention of Pasithea in "More sweet is that name than a soft, purling Stream" reminds one of a ponderous bear just aroused from his winter's nap and not quite awake yet. '

There is an unusual quartet in Act I for *Semele*. Ino, Athamas, and Cadmus where Handel manages to portray the four people with differing emotions (mostly sympathy for Ino who seems undone) in a remarkable manner. The composer who, at least in his operas, seldom wrote for more than two people in an ensemble, captures the essence of the moment in this quartet and anticipates the technique of Mozart and Verdi by many years.

The choruses range from the chordal blocks of the priests in "Cease your Vows" and "Hail Cadmus hail" (Act I); to the lilting, playful rhythms of Loves and Zephyrs in "How engaging, how endearing" and "Now Love that everlasting Boy" - a hornpipe (Act II); to the more extended double fugue of "Bless the glad Earth with heav'nly Lays" and "Oh Terror and Astonishment." Handel's feeling for the apt musical phrase in either homophonic or contrapuntal setting is one of his finest gifts. All in all, *Semele* is one of his most satisfying achievements.

© J. Merrill Knapp, Professor of Music, Princeton University

SUNGTEXTS

CD29

NINE GERMAN ARIAS

1. Künft'ger Zeiten eitler Kummer

Künft'ger Zeiten eitler Kummer
stört nicht unsern sanften Schlummer,
Ehrgeiz hat uns nie besiegt.
Mit dem unbesorgten Leben,
das der Schöpfer uns gegeben,
sind wir ruhig und vergnügt.

2. Das zitternde Glänzen

Das zitternde Glänzen der spielenden
Wellen
versilbert das Ufer, beperlet den
Strand,
die rauschenden Flüsse, die
sprudelnden Quellen
bereichern, befruchten, erfrischen das
Land,
und machen in tausend vergnügenden
Fällen
die Güte des herrlichen Schöpfers
bekannt.

3. Süßer Blumen Ambralflocken

Süßer Blumen Ambralflocken
euer Silber soll mich locken,
dem zum Ruhm, der euch gemacht.
Da ihr fallt, will ich mich schwingen
himmelwärts und den besingen,
der die Welt hervorgebracht.

4. Süße Stille, sanfte Quelle

Süße Stille, sanfte Quelle
ruhiger Gelassenheit,
selbst die Seele wird erfreut,
wenn ich mir nach dieser Zeit
arbeitsamer Eitelkeit
jene Ruh' vor Augen stelle,
die uns ewig ist bereit.

5. Singe, Seele, Gott zum Preise

Singe, Seele, Gott zum Preise,
der auf solche weise Weise
alle Welt so herrlich schmückt.
Der uns durchs Gehör erquicket,
der uns durchs Gesicht entzückt,
wenn er Bäum' und Feld beblümet.
sei gepreiset, sei gerühmet.

6. Meine Seele hört im Sehen

Meine Seele hört im Sehen
wie, den Schöpfer zu erhöhen,
alles jauchzet, alles lacht.
Höret nur
des erbüh'nden Frühlings Pracht
ist die Sprache der Natur,
die sie deutlich durchs Gesicht
allenthalben mit uns spricht.

7. Die ihr aus dunkeln Grüften

Die ihr aus dunkeln Grüften
den eiteln Mammon grabt,
seht, was ihr hier in Lüften
für reiche Schätze habt.
Sprecht nicht: es ist nur Farb' und
Schein,

man zählt und schließt es nicht im
Kasten ein.

8. In den angenehmen Büschen

In den angenehmen Büschen,
wo sich Licht und Schatten mischen,
suchet sich in stiller Lust
Aug' und Herze zu erfrischen.

Dann erhebt sich in der Brust
mein zufriedenes Gemüte
und lobsingt des Schöpfers Güte.

9. Flammende Rose, Zierde der Erden

Flammende Rose, Zierde der Erden,
glänzender Gärten bezaubernde
Pracht;
Augen, die deine Vortrefflichkeit
sehen,
müssen vor Anmut erstaunend
gestehen,
daß dich ein göttlicher Finger gemacht.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1. Vain Cares of the Future

Vain cares of the future
Do not disturb our gentle slumber,
Ambition has never conquered us,
With the untroubled life,
That the Creator gave us,
We are at peace and content.

2. The Flickering Shimmer

The flickering shimmer of playful
waves
Silters the shore, pearls the beach,
The rushing rivers, the bubbling
springs
Enrich, nourish, and refresh the land,
And make known in a thousand
delightful examples
The goodness of the magnificent
Creator.

3. Perfumed Petals of Sweet Flowers

Perfumed petals of sweet flowers
Your silver colour entices me
To praise him who made you,
Because you fall, I wish to soar
Heavenward and sing of him,
Who created the world.

4. Sweet Stillness, Gentle Source

Sweet stillness, gentle source
Of peaceful composure,
Even the soul is gladdened,
When, after these times
Of laborious futility,
I imagine that peace,
Which is prepared for us in eternity.

5. Sing, O Soul, Praising God

Sing, O soul, praising God,
Who, in such a wise manner,
So gloriously adorned the whole world.
Who refreshes us through hearing,
Who delights us through sight,

When He makes the trees and fields to
bloom.

Be praised, be glorified.

6. My Soul Hears in Seeing

My soul hears in seeing
When, to glorify the Creator,
Everything rejoices, everything laughs,
Just listen
To the splendor of the blooming
spring.
It is the language of nature,
That clearly through our eyes
Speaks to us everywhere.,

7. You, Who From Dark Vaults

You, who from dark vaults
Dig up your vain mammon,
Look what rich treasures
You have here in the air.
Do not say: it is only colour and light,
It cannot be counted or locked in a
chest.

8. In The Pleasant Bushes

In the pleasant bushes,
Where light and shadows mix,
There one tries in quiet joy
To refresh the eyes and heart.

Then my contented spirit
Rises in my breast
And sings the praises of the Creator's
goodness.

9. Flaming Rose, Ornament of the Earth

Flaming rose, ornament of the earth,
Magical splendor of glittery gardens;
Eyes, who have seen your excellence,
Must, before such beauty, admit with
awe,
That a heavenly finger has made you.

CD30

CANTATAS FOR SOPRANO SOLO

Da quel giorno fatale (Delirio amoroso)

1. Introduzione (strumentale)

2. Recitativo

Da quel giorno fatale,
che tolse morte il crudo Tirsi a Clori,
ella per duolo immenso,
sciolto il crin, torvo il guardo,
incerto il piede, par ch'abbia in sè
due volontà due cori.
E del chiaro intelletto,
per gran fiamma d'amor, turbato il
raggio,
ora s'adorna, ora del crin negletto
fa dispettoso oltraggio;
e varia nel pensier, ma sempre bella,
agitata, così sempre favella:

3. Aria

Un pensiero voli in ciel,
se in cielo è quell'alma bella,
che la pace m'involò.
Se in Averno è condannato
per avermi disprezzato,
io dal regno delle pene
il mio bene rapirò.

4. Recitativo

Ma fermati, pensier, pur troppo è vero
che fra l'ombre d'Averno
è condannato per giusta pena,
e per crudel mio fato.
Sì, sì, rapida io scendo
a rapir il mio bene
dell'arso Dite alle infocate arene.
Ma che veggio?
Rimira il mio sembiante dispettoso,
poi fugge, un'ombra errante.
Tirsi, ah, Tirsi, ah! crudele!

5. Aria

Per te lasciai la luce,
ed or che mi conduce
amor per rivederti,
tu vuoi partir da me.
Deh! ferma i passi incerti,
o pur se vuoi fuggir,
dimmi, perché?

6. Recitativo

Non ti bastava ingrato,
d'avermi in vita lacerato il core?
Dopo l'ultimo fato,
siegui ad esser per me
furia d'amore;
anzi ti prendi a scherno ch'io venga
teco
ad abitar l'inferno.
Ma pietà per rigore ti renderò.
Su, vieni al dolce oblio di Lete;
indi daranno pace gli Elisi
al già sofferto affanno.

7. Aria

Lascia omai le brune vele,
negro pin di Flegetonte.
Io farò che un zeffiretto,
per diletto,

spiri intorno a te fedele,
e che mova i bianchi lini
pellegrini in Acheronte.

8. Recitativo

Ma siamo giunti in Lete;
odi il suono soave degli Elisi beati.

9. Entrée

10. Minuet e Arietta

In queste amene
piagge serene,
da sè ridente
nasce ogni fior.
Tra suoni e canti,
sempre clemente,
spiran gli amanti aura d'amor.

11. Recitativo

Sì, disse Clori,
e se d'un sole estinto
più non vide il bel lume,
lo vide almen per fantasia dipinto.

12. Minuet

Dite mie piante

13. Recitativo

Ditemi, o piante,
o fiori voi,
che da Eurilla mia
beltà prendete?
Dite, vedeste mai
più risplendenti rai,
ninfa di lei più vaga
o più gentile?
Ah, no, no, no,
ch'altra simile a lei darsi non puote,
se tutto il vago, e il bello,
che si mira in altrui sparso e diviso,
tutto raccolse amor nel suo bel viso.

14 Aria

Il candore tolse al giglio,
alla rosa il bel vermiglio,
quando amore la formò.
Al suo petto diè il candore,
della rosa il bel cinabro,
e alle sue pupille ardenti
tutti i rai del sol donò.

15. Recitativo

Ma la beltà del volto
non è il pregio maggiore
ch'in lei si celi,
se nel suo nobil core
tutto lo stuol delle virtù è accolto,
e con tal lume in seno
tanti sparge d'intorno
raggi dal viso adorno ch'abbagliato
riman,
chi la rimira come rimaner suole
chi le pupille sue fissa nel sole.

16. Aria

Per formar sì vaga e bella pastorella
con virtude amore s'unì.
Tutto il bel che appar di fuore

dielle amore e virtù l'alma abbellì.

Care selve, aure grate

17. Recitativo

Care selve, aure grate, erbetto e fiori,
che l'aspre mie querele,
compagni a dolor mio, sì spesso udite,
tutti a Clori ridite,
se d'altro, che di lei parlo e ragiono
e quanto all'amor suo fedel io sono.

18 Aria

Ridite a Clori, erbetto e fiori,
s'altro mai sento foco al mio cor.
Se lei non miro, piango e sospiro,
e'l mio lamento figlio è d'amor.

19. Recitativo

Se cangiarsi potesse
l'antica forma usata
oh quante volte, oh quante,
in fronda, in sasso, in fior mi cangerei,
almen bacciar potrei
calpestato talor sue vaghe piante;
e nelle belle mani,
cangiato in fronda o fiore
mi porterebbe amore.

20. Aria

Non ha forza nel mio petto
altro affetto, altra beltà.
Non conosce l'alma amante
l'incostante infedeltà.

Allor ch'io dissi addio

21. Recitativo

Allor ch'io dissi addio
e ch'io lasciai quel memorabil loco,
dove nacque il mio foco,
pensò folle il cor mio
tutti gli ardori suoi render di gelo,
e fortuna cangiar per cangiar cielo.
Ahi lassa! che mi segue
in ogni tempo, in ogni parte amore.
E di notte e di giorno, a tutte l'ore,
all'occhio della mente,
rende l'amato oggetto ognor presente.

22. Aria

Son qual cerva ferita che fugge
dalla man che l'ancide e l'impia.
Ma se meco è lo stral che mi strugge,
lontananza non salda la piaga.

23. Recitativo

Anzi se nacque il mio
amoroso desio
d'una bella virtù figlio innocente,
sia lontano o presente,
sempre fisso è nel cor l'amato oggetto,
né a così giusto affetto,
resiste di ragion l'alto consiglio,
ch'anzi a seguir m'esorta
un bell'amor che di virtude è figlio.

24. Aria

Il dolce foco mio,
ch'accende un bel desio,
amor lusinga.
Ma nasce un rio timor,
onde languisce il cor,
ch'egli non finga.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

From the fateful day (Love's fury)

1. Introduction (instrumental)

2. Recitative

From the fateful day
when death took Thyriss away from
Cloris,
she, overwhelmed with grief,
with hair dishevelled, troubled
countenance
and faltering gait, seemed torn
by contradictory desires.
In her the bright rays of reason
were troubled by Love's strong flames,
so that she appeared well groomed
one moment,
and in another unkempt, in a hideous
rage;
and wandering in her thoughts, but
still beautiful,
and distraught, thus she spoke:

3. Aria

May my thoughts fly to heaven,
if the noble soul who stole my peace
is there.
But if he has been condemned to
Avernus
for having scorned me,
I will snatch my love
from the realm of pain.

4. Recitative

But cease, thoughts, for, alas,
he has indeed been condemned
to the shades of Avernus, deservedly,
and to my cruel misfortune.
Yes, I descend in haste
to snatch my love
from thirsty Pluto on the scorching
sands.
But what do I see?
Look at my hideous appearance,
then flee, like a wandering shadow.
Thyriss, ah cruel Thyriss!

5. Aria

For you I left the light,
and now that Love leads me here
to see you again,
you want to leave me.
Ah, do not steal away,
or, if you want to flee,
tell me, why?

6. Recitative

Was it not enough, ungrateful one,
that when you were alive you tore my
heart out?
Even after the last blow of fate,
you continue to be for me

one of Love's Furies;
thus you scorn me for coming
to live in hell with you.
But I will repay your callousness with
pity.
Arise, come to the sweet oblivion of
Lethe;
then the Elysian Fields will grant peace
in place of the torment you have
suffered.

7. Aria

Leave your brown sails,
dark timbers of Phlegethon.
I will make
a delightful breeze
waft faithfully around you,
so that your white sail
roams towards Acheronte.

8. Recitative

But we have arrived in Lethe;
hear the sweet sound of the blessed
Elysian Fields.

9. Entrée

10. Minuet and Arietta

In these pleasant
bright plains
every flower
is born smiling.
Amid music and singing,
lovers breathe love
from the clement air.

11. Recitative

Yes, said Cloris,
and if the sun were to be extinguished
and I could not see the light any more,
I would see it depicted in imagination.

12. Minuet

Tell me, beloved plants

13. Recitative

Tell me, O plants,
you flowers,
does your beauty
come from Eurilla?
Tell me, did you ever see
more resplendent eyes,
or a lovelier,
more gentle nymph?
Ah, no, no, no,
there can be none similar to her,
since Love has gathered in her
beautiful face
all that is fine and beautiful
that can be seen scattered and divided
among others' faces.

14. Aria

The white he took from the lily,
the rose from vermilion,
when Love fashioned her.
To her breast he gave the white,
the rose's fine cinnabar,
and to her glowing eyes
all the rays of the sun.

15. Recitative

But the beauty of her face
is not the greatest marvel
concealed in her,
for in her noble heart
the whole flock of virtues is gathered,
and with such inner light
such bright rays emanate
from her splendid face that
whoever looks at her is dazzled in the
same way
as if he were gazing at the sun.

16. Aria

To fashion such a lovely shepherdess,
Love united with Virtue.
Love gave her all the beauty of her
appearance
and Virtue adorned her soul.

Dear woods, sweet breezes

17. Recitative

Dear woods, sweet breezes, plants and
flowers,
constant witnesses to the bitter groans
that accompany my suffering,
go, tell Cloris
if I speak and think of anyone but her,
and how faithful I am to her in love.

18. Aria

Go, tell Cloris, plants and flowers,
if I feel enflamed in my heart for
anyone else,
if I do not see her, weep and sigh for
her,
and if my lamenting is born of my love
for her.

19. Recitative

If the old, accustomed forms
could change,
O how many times, how many,
I would change myself into a branch, a
stone or a flower;
then, trampled, at least I could kiss
her dainty feet;
then, changed into a branch or flower,
I would be placed by Love
in her lovely hands.

20. Aria

No other feeling, no other beauty
reigns in my heart.
The soul that loves
knows neither inconstancy nor
infidelity.

When I said goodbye

21. Recitative

When I said goodbye
and left that unforgettable place
where my love was born,
I fancied, in a fit of madness,
I could turn all my fire into ice,
and follow a new fortune under a new
sky.
Alas, Love follows me
at all times, everywhere.

And night and day, at every hour,
it keeps my beloved constantly present
in my mind's eye.

22. Aria

Like a wounded deer I flee
from the hand that kills and wounds
me.
But if I carry the arrow that torments
me,
distance will not heal the wound.

23. Recitativo

Thus if my amorous desire
was born the innocent child
of a noble virtue,
the object of my love, whether near or
far,
is for ever lodged in my heart,
nor can high counsel
reasonably resist such a just affection,
but exhorts me to follow
a noble love born of virtue.

24. Aria

My sweet flame,
fanned by a noble desire,
is flattered by Love.
But a base fear is born in me,
and my heart languishes,
in case he is feigning.
Translation: James Chater

CD31

Un'alma innamorata

1. Recitativo

Un'alma innamorata,
prigioniera d'amore,
vive troppo infelice.
Divien sempre maggiore
il mal, che non intende,
allor che nell'amar schiava si rende.

2. Aria

Quel povero core,
ferito d'amore
sospira se adira,
se vive fedel.
Sia il solo dolore
geloso timore,
le pene e catene,
martire crudel.

3. Recitativo

E pur benché egli veda
morta del suo servir,
la speme istessa
vuole col suo languir,
viver con essa.

4. Aria

Io godo, rido e spero,
ed amo più d'un core,
e so ridir perché.
Se segue il mio pensiero
un vagabondo amore
cercate voi dov'è.

5. Recitativo

In quanto a me ritrovo

del riso ogni diletto,
Se sprezzo dell'amore
le sue severe leggi, ed il rigore.

6. Aria

Ben impari come s'ama
in amor chi vuol goder.
Non ha pari alla mia brama
il rigor, del nume arcier.

O lucenti, o sereni occhi

7. Recitativo

O lucenti, o sereni occhi,
luci fatali,
ben vi scorgo
quai tremoli baleni;
che fulmini d'amore
presagite crudeli
a questo core?

8. Aria

Per voi languisco e moro,
luci belle e pur godete.
Voi, negandomi ristoro,
dispettose m'uccidete.

9. Recitativo

Messaggero verace,
or la guerra bramate,
or la tregua vi piace,
e per tormento all'alma innamorata
siete qua' acri demoni d'averno
e nel ciel di beltà lampi, d'inferno.

10. Aria

In voi, pupille ardenti,
ritrovo il mio piacer,
torvo la pena.
Per voi, luci splendenti,
quel faretrato amor,
il mio dolente cor,
stringe in catena.

Del bell'idolo mio

11. Recitativo

Del bell'idolo mio
quest'è la fragil sua terrena salma.
Per rintracciar quell'alma
scenderò d'Acheronte
al tenebroso lago;
quell' adorato imago
mi sarà cinsura in fra gl'abissi.
Corri, corri a morir, misero amante,
che la mortal sentenza
io già la fluminai, e già la scrissi.

12. Aria

Formidabil gondoliero,
io ti bramo, approda alla riva.
Nel varcare il temuto sentiero
Un certo diletto
mi nasce nel petto,
che l'alma ravviva.

13. Recitativo

Ma se non la rinvento
là nello stigio regno,
misero, oh! che farò?

14. Aria

Piangerò, ma le mie lacrime
saran simboli di fe.
Quando piange un'alma forte,
sol nel regno della morte,
si lusinga aver mercè.

15. Recitativo

Fra quell'orride soglie,
tutto festante,
si raggira il piede
olocausto d'amor, e della fede.

16. Aria

Su rendetemi colei,
consolata un infelice,
cari numi, amati dei,
voglio Nice.
Date tregua al duol interno!
Dalle fiamme dell'inferno
sorgerò nova fenice.
Voglio Nice.

Aure soavi e liete

17. Recitativo

Aure soavi e liete,
ombre notturne e chete,
voi dall'estivo ardore
dolci ne difendete.
Ma non trova il mio core,
nel suo cocente ognor loco amoroso,
chi lo difenda o chi gli dia riposo.
Onde fra voi solingo,
di parlar a colei
che pur non m'ode,
aure soavi, ombre notturene io fingo.

18. Aria

Care luci, che l'alba rendete
quand'a me così belle apparite
voi nel cor mille fiamme accendete,
ma pietà dell'ardor non sentite.

19. Recitativo

Pietà, Clori, pietà
se quell che pietà sia
dentro al tuo cor si sa.
Deh! Fa che l'alma mia
veda e conosca a prova,
che la pietà nel tuo bel cor si trova.

20. Aria

Un'aura flebile,
un'ombra mobile,
sperar mi fa
che Clori amabile,
nell'alma nobile
senta pietà.

Tra le fiamme (Il consiglio)

21. Aria

Tra le fiamme tu scherzi per gioco,
O mio core, per farti felice,
e t'inganna una vaga beltà.
Cadon mille farfalle nel foco,
e si trova una sola fenice,
che risorge se a morte sen va.

22. Recitativo

Dedalo già le fortunate penne
tessea con mano ardita
e con tenera cera piuma a piuma
aggiungea.
Icaro, il fanciulletto
sovente confondea l'ingegnoso lavoro;
Ah, così mai trattato non avesse e cera
e piume:
Per chi non nacque augello il volare è
portento,
il cader è costume.

23. Aria

Pien di nuovo e bel diletto,
sciolsse l'ali il giovinetto,
e con l'aure già scherzando.
Ma del volo sì gradito
troppo arditò
l'onda ancor va mormorando.

24. Recitativo

Sì, sì, purtroppo è vero:
nel temerario volo molti gl'Icari son,
Dedalo un solo.

25. Aria

Voli per l'aria chi può volare
scorra veloce la terra il mare
parta, ritorni né fermi il piè.
Voli ancor l'uomo ma coi pensieri
che delle piume ben più leggeri
e più sublimi il ciel gli diè.

26. Recitativo

L'uomo che nacque per salire al cielo,
ferma il pensier nel suolo,
e poi dispone il volo con ali che si
finge,
e in sé non ha.

27. Aria

Tra le fiamme...

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A soul enamoured

1. Recitative

A soul enamoured,
imprisoned by love,
lives in a wretched state.
The evil always becomes greater
than the soul realizes,
when by loving she turns into a slave.

2. Aria

The poor heart
wounded by love
sighs if it becomes enraged,
if it remains faithful.
May the only hurt be
jealous fear,
pains and chains,
cruel torment.

3. Recitative

And yet, although it sees
hope itself die
when it serves her,
it desires to live in hope
by languishing.

4. Aria

I rejoice, laugh and hope,
and love more than one heart,
and I can tell you why.
If my mind pursues
an idle love,
you will be hard put to see it.

5. Recitative

For I am bursting
with laughter and joy,
if I spurn the harsh laws
and rigours of love.

6. Aria

May he who wishes to be happy in
love
learn how to love.
My desire cannot be compared with
the rigour of the archer God.

O shining, o serene eyes

7. Recitative

O shining, o serene eyes,
fatal lights,
I see you
as quivering lightning flashes;
what cruel
thunderbolts of love
do you presage to this heart?

8. Aria

For you I languish and die,
beautiful lights, and yet you rejoice.
You, denying me relief,
scornful, kill me.

9. Recitative

True messengers,
now you desire war,
now a truce pleases you,
and to the torment of a loving soul
you are like savage demons of Hades,
and in a heaven of beauty, flashes of
hell.

10. Aria

In you, burning eyes,
I rediscover my pleasure,
[and] I find pain.
Because of you, splendid lights,
love, with his arrows,
my sad heart
binds in chains.

Of my beautiful idol

11. Recitative

This is the fragile, earthly corpse
of my beautiful idol.
In order to track down her soul
I will descend
to the gloomy lake of Acheronte;
that beloved image
will be my guiding light among the
abysses.
Run, run to die, miserable lover,
since the deadly decision I have
already
made, and already written.

12. Aria

Formidable gondolier,
I want you, approach the shore.
While crossing the fearful border,
a certain delight
is born in my breast,
that revives my spirit.

13. Recitative

But if I do not find her again
there in the Stygian kingdom
miserable one, oh! what will I do?

14. Aria

I will weep, but my tears
will be symbols of faith.
When a strong soul cries,
even in the kingdom of death,
it hopes to find mercy.

15. Recitative

Over those horrid thresholds,
completely jubilant,
one wanders into
a conflagration of love and of faith.

16. Aria

Give her back to me,
console an unhappy soul.
dear spirits, beloved gods,
I want Nice.
Give peace to my inward grief!
From the flames of the inferno
I will rise a new phoenix.
I want Nice.

Soft and delightful breezes

17. Recitative

Soft and delightful breezes,
hushed evening shadows,
from summer heat
you give us sweet relief.
But my heart cannot find,
in its ever-burning, loving core,
the one who will defend it or give it
rest;
wherefore alone among you,
I imagine speaking to her,
who does not hear me,
soft breezes, evening shadows.

18. Aria

Dear eyes, that bring the dawn
when so beautiful you appear to me,
you light a thousand flames in my
heart,
but you do not feel pity for the
burning.

19. Recitative

Pity, Clori, pity,
if that which pity
is known inside your heart.
Pray! Make my soul
see and experience the proof
that pity exists in your beautiful heart.

20. Aria

A gentle breeze,
a passing shadow,
makes me hope
that lovely Clori
in [her] noble soul
feels pity.

Among the flames (The advice)

21. Aria

You playfully dart among the flames,
O my heart, to make yourself happy,
and are deluded by a fine-looking
beauty.
Thousands of butterflies fall into the
fire,
but there is only one phoenix
who can rise from the dead.

22. Recitative

Daedalus once, with crafty hands,
wove
fortunate wings
and with soft wax added feather to
feather.
Icarus, the boy,
often bungled this cunning work;
ah, he should never have treated wax
or wing in
this way:
for one not born a bird, flying is
ominous,
and usually ends in a fall.

23. Aria

Full of renewed joyfulness,
the young boy unfurled his wings,
darting about in the wind.
But the flight,
so enjoyed but too bold,
is still being talked about by the
murmuring waves.

24. Recitative

Yes, yes, alas it is true:
there are many like Icarus, flying
rashly,
but there is only one Daedalus.

25. Aria

Fly through the air, whoever wishes to
do so,
scurrying through earth and sea,
coming and going without stopping.
May man fly, but with thoughts
far lighter and more sublime than
wings,
such as heaven gave him.

26. Recitative

The man born to ascend to heaven
rests his thought upon the ground,
and then furnishes his flight with wings
that are
contrived,
that he was not born with.

27. Aria

You playfully dart...

Translation of cantatas *Un'alma
innamorata and Tra le fiamme* by
James Chater

Translations of continuo cantatas are
reprinted by permission of the
publisher from *HANDEL AS ORPHEUS:
VOICE AND DESIRE IN THE CHAMBER
CANTATAS* by Ellen T. Harris,
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University
Press, Copyright © 2001 by the
President and Fellows of Harvard
College.

CD32

Aminta e Fillide HWV83

1. Ouverture / Recitativo

Aminta

Arresta il passo, ninfa,
di questo cor, empia tiranna!
e se il duol che m'affanna,
come figlio d'amor, udir non vuoi,
soffri almen, spietata,
come effetto crudel
de' scherni tuoi.

2. Aria

Aminta

Fermati, non fuggir!
lasciami pria morir,
Fillide ingrata!
Scorgi la mia costanza,
poi, se rigor t'avanza,
scacciami del tuo sen,
bella ostinata.

3. Recitativo

Aminta

Questa sol volta almeno,
odi le mie querele
ascolta i miei sospiri!

Fillide

Tu mi chiami crudele,
Senz'avvederti ancora,
quanto lontan del giusto erri e deliri.

Aminta

Dunque l'amarti e l'adorati, o cara,
stimmi una follia?

Fillide

Seguir chi fugge,
e chi l'amor disprezza,
è proprio d'alma
a delirare avvezza.

4. Aria

Fillide

Fiamma bella che al ciel s'invia
s'Euro infido gli neghi affetto
cangia a forza l'usato sentier.
Così ancora se cruda, se ria,
te discaccio da questo mio petto,

volgi altrove l'amante pensier.

5. Recitativo

Fillide

Credi a miei detti, Aminta,
e lascia in pace me, che per genio
e per costume antico
ho troppo in odio l'amorosa face.

Aminta

Come in odio aver puoi
Quella face d'amor, che ogni momento
si vede sfavillar ne' lumi tuoi.

6. Aria

Aminta

Forse che un giorno
il Dio d'amore
potrebbe al core
piaga formarti,
che sia mortal.
Che bel mirarti
allor languire
penar, soffrire,
l'aspre punture,
d'acuto stral.

7. Recitativo

Fillide

In vano, in van presumi,
scuotere il mio pensier,
chè di Cupido l'arco schernisco
e dello stral mi rido.

Aminta

Deh! per pietà
rispondi ninfa bella e crudele,
se ti specchiasti mai nel rio, nel fonte,
come amor non ascondi
di tua rare beltade?
E se ami, e se conosci
del tuo volto gentil, tutti i tesori,
perchè non brami ancor
che altri l'adori?

Fillide

Perchè non vuoi pastor,
che il fonte e il rio,
s'accrescan coll'umor del pianto mio.

8. Aria

Fillide

Fu scherzo, fu gioco
chi disse che il foco
del nume di Gnido
contento ci dà;
Quel cor che non pena
nell'aspra catena
così per diletto
cantando sen vò.

9. Recitativo

Fillide

Libero piè fugga dal laccio,
e i giorni coll'aura sol
di libertà respiri.

Aminta

Quei che sembran martiri,
che han faccia di tormenti
d'ogni amator nel seno,
Fillide, in un baleno,
si cangiano in piaceri ed in contenti:
Dunque se ciò t'affrena,
vieni pur lieta, o cara,
incontro alla dolcissima catena.

Fillide

Taci, pastor, non più!

Aminta

Come dunque crudele,
più ascoltarmi non vuoi?

Fillide

No perché han troppo forza i detti
tuoi.

Aminta

Ah! Barbara, inumana,
se la giusta cagione dell'amor mio
nel mio parlar comprendi,
come di pari ardor tu non t'accendi?

10. Aria

Aminta

Se vago rio
fra sassi frange
l'amato argento,
al fin contento
posa nel mare.
Il ciglio mio,
che sempre piange,
non trova seno,
che ponga freno
al suo penare.

11. Recitativo

Fillide

D'un incognito foco,
già sento a poco a poco,
le vampe entro del seno.
Mia cara pace, addio!
vuol di me vendicarsi il cieco Dio.

12. Aria

Fillide

Sento che il Dio bambin
col strale suo divin,
m'ha il sen piagato.
E già questo mio cor
più non ricusa amor,
ed è cangiato.

13. Recitativo

Aminta

Felicissimo punto,
in cui nel seno
la mia fiamma ti giunge,
e l'amoroso dardo il cor ti punge.

14. Aria

Aminta

Al dispetto di sorte crudele,

costante e fedele

quest'alma sarà.

Che se Filli ad amarmi si muove,
son chiare le prove
di sua fedeltà.

15 Recitativo

Fillide

Vincesti, Aminta, e l'amoroso affanno,
per dichiararmi affatto
di libertade priva,
già dell'anima mia si fa tiranno;
ma con tanta dolcezza
usa i rigori, che il rio martoro,
quando mi giunge in seno,
vesta manto di gioia e di tesoro.

16. Aria

Fillide

È un foco, quel d'amore,
che penetra nel core,
ma come? Non si sa.
S'accende a poco a poco,
ma poi non trova loco,
e consumar ti fa.

17. Recitativo

Aminta

Gloria bella di Aminta
mirar, Fillide vaga,
dalla sua fedeltà
costretta e vinta.

Fillide

Si, si, vincesti

Aminta e Fillide

Ed io fedele amante!
Ed io sempre costante!

Fillide

Dirò che non fu mai vana speranza,
vincer l'altrui rigor con la costanza.

Aminta

Ridir potrò che, spargere querele,
non fu mai vista indarno alma fedele.

18. Duo

Aminta e Fillide

Per abbatter il rigore
d'un crudel spietato core,
forte scudo è la costanza
e il valor di fedeltà.
Volga al cielo i sguardi, ai Numi
chi, al fulgor di quei bei lumi,
vuol nutrire la speranza
di trovar un di pietà.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1. Overture / Recitative

Aminta

Halt your steps, nymph,
merciless tyrant of my heart,
and if you will not hear
the grief that afflicts me

as the progeny of love
at least, unfeeling girl, consider it
as the cruel effect of your scorn.

2. Aria

Aminta

Stay, do not fly;
rather let me die,
hard-hearted Phyllis.
Observe my constancy,
then, if your severity persists,
drive me from your heart,
stubborn, beautiful girl.

3. Recitative

Aminta

This once, at least,
hear my laments;
listen to my sighs.

Fillide

You call me cruel
without yet perceiving how much
you rave and stray far from good
sense.

Aminta

Then you think it folly, beloved,
to love you and adore you?

Fillide

Following one who flees
and who despises love
befits a soul
disposed to madness.

4. Aria

Fillide

The lovely flame which rises to heaven
should the wayward east wind
deny it achievement must change its
usual path.
So also, if harshly and cruelly
I drive you from my heart,
your loving thoughts should turn
elsewhere.

5. Recitative

Fillide

Believe my words, Amyntas,
and leave me in peace, for by
inclination and long-accustomed habit
I hold love's torch too much in hate.

Aminta

How can you hate that torch of love
which at every moment
is seen sparkling in your eyes?

6. Aria

Aminta

Perhaps one day
the god of love
may give your heart
a wound
which will be fatal;

How lovely then
to gaze upon you
languishing and grieving,
suffering the stinging wounds
of a sharp arrow.

7. Recitative

Fillide

Vainly, vainly you attempt
to trouble my thoughts
when I scorn Cupid's bow
and laugh at his arrow.

Aminta

Ah! in pity answer me, fair and cruel
nymph,
if you have ever seen
from your reflection in brook or spring
how love does not hide
from your rare beauty:
and if you love, and if you know
all the delights of your delicate face,
why do you not also desire
others to adore?

Fillide

Because, shepherd, I would not
have the spring and brook
swollen with water of my tears.

8. Aria

Fillide

He spoke in jest, in mockery,
who said that the fire
of the god of Gnidus
brings happiness:
that heart which does not suffer
in harsh chains
thus goes its way
singing in delight.

9. Recitative

Fillide

With unfettered steps let me fly from
the snare
and all my days let me breathe only
the air of liberty.

Aminta

These seeming tortures
which have the appearance of
torments
in the breast of every lover,
Phyllis, in one lightning flash
change to pleasures and delights.
Therefore, if that is what holds you
back,
come then, beloved, happily into the
compass
of the sweetest of chains!

Fillide

Be silent, shepherd. Say no more!

Aminta

Why so, cruel girl?
Will you no longer hear me?

Fillide

No, for your words have too much
power.

Aminta

Ah, unfeeling, inhuman girl,
if the true cause of my love
you understand from my words
why do you not burn with an equal
flame?

10. Aria

Aminta

Though a pretty stream
may break up its lovely silver
among rocks,
at last it happily
comes to rest in the sea;
but my eyes,
ever weeping,
find no heart
that offers respite
to their suffering.

11. Recitative

Fillide

Now little by little
I feel the flames
of an unknown fire within my breast.
Farewell, my dear peace!
The blind god will have his revenge
upon me.

12. Aria

Fillide

I feel that the baby god
has wounded my breast
with his divine arrows;
and already my heart
is changed
and no longer refuses love.

13. Recitative

Aminta

Most happy that moment
when my flame
reaches your breast
and love's dart pierces your heart.

14. Aria

Aminta

Despite cruel fate,
my soul shall be constant
and faithful;
for if Phyllis is moved to love me
the vindication
of its fidelity is clear.

15. Recitative

Fillide

You have won, Amyntas, and love's
torment by declaring me
utterly deprived of liberty
now becomes the ruler of my spirit;
but it uses its severity

with such gentleness that the cruel
pain,
when it reaches my heart,
puts on a cloak of joy and delight.

16. Aria

Fillide

Love's fire is a fire
which penetrates the heart –
but how? No one knows.
It grows by degrees
but then finds no place to go
and burns you away.

17. Recitative

Aminta

It is Amyntas' wondrous glory
to see fair Phyllis
chained and conquered
by his fidelity.

Fillide

Yes, yes, you have won

Aminta and Fillide

And I am your faithful lover!
And I am ever true!

Fillide

I shall say that never vain was the hope
of overcoming with constancy
another's
coldness.

Aminta

I can repeat that never was a faithful
soul
seen to utter laments in vain.

18. Duo

Aminta and Fillide

In attacking the coldness
of a cruel, pitiless heart,
constancy is a strong shield
and so is the valour of fidelity.
Let him turn his heaven to the gods,
who in the splendour of those fair eyes
would nourish hope
of one day finding compassion.

*Translation by Anthony Hicks
Reproduced by permission of his
Executors*

CD33

Clori, mia bella Clori HWV92

1. Recitativo

Clori, mia bella Clori
lungi da te, che sei
dolce d'ogni mio ben cagione amata
quest'alma sventurata,
come viver potrò?
Se sol da quelle
luci del volto tuo
serene e belle
prende il misero cor grato alimento,
come lungi starò,
senza che mi dia morte
il mio tormento?

2. Aria

Chiari lumi, voi che siete
il mio fato, rispondete,
senza voi viver potrò?
Voi ch'il duol mio non gradite
già pietose un sì mi dite
ma il mio cor teme di nò.

3. Recitativo

Temo, ma pure io spero,
bella, di non morir,
che quello stesso pensier che mi
tormenta,
mi dice ancor:
se il bel sembiente impresso
porti della tua Clori in mezzo al petto,
L'alta virtù del tuo costante affetto
ovunque il piè s'aggiri
farà che quella in ogni oggetto miri.

4. Aria

Ne gigli e nelle rose
cara le tue vezzose
sembianze io mirerò.
Nel sole e nelle stelle
delle tue luci belle
l'immagine adorerò.

5. Recitativo

Non è però che non molesta e grave
lontananza si dura
abbia l'alma a soffire
che quel piacer soave
di cui parte si perde
perdere no si può senza martire.

6. Aria

Mie pupille
se tranquille
foste un giorno
or v'invito a lacrimar.
Ne sarete
mai più liete
se non torno
Clori vaga a rimirar.

7. Recitativo

Tu nobil alma intanto
se hai pietà del mio pianto,
figlio insieme d'amore, e gelosia,
quella parte che mia,
è nel tuo sen, poichè tuo servo io fui,
serba tutta per me, negala altrui.

8. Aria

Di gelosia il timore
dice all'amante core
che non sarai fedel.
Ond'io, tra gelo e foco,
mi struggo a poco a poco
per mio destin crudel.

Sans y penser (Cantate française)

HWV155

9. Chanson

Silvie

Sans y penser
À Tirsis j'ay su plaire
Sans y penser
Aussi Tirsis m'a su charmer.
Amour prend soin,
Prend soin de cette affaire.
Il pourrait bien se
Dégager sans y penser.

10. Récitatif

Tirsis

Si'l ne falloit que bien aimer
Pour attendre ma bergère,
Tous mes rivaux
Ne sçauroient
M'alarmer.
Mais, hélas! ce n'est point l'amant
Le plus fidèle qui doit espérer
D'être heureux.
C'est toujours celui
Qui sait plaire
Et que l'on croit
Le plus amoureux.

11. Air

Tirsis

Petite fleur brunette,
Aimable violette,
Que ne puis je avec
Vous changer mon triste sort!
Vous languissez dans
Le sein de Silvie.
Je trouverais
La vie où vous trouvez la mort.

12. Récitatif

Tirsis

Vous, qui m'aviez procuré
Une amour éternelle
Vous, qui j'amaïs si tendrement,
Pouvez vous bien être infidèle
À votre plus fidèle amant?
Je devrois vous rendre la change,
je devrois vous haïr ou changer.
Mais si c'est par là qu'on se venge,
Je ne veux jamais me venger.

13. Air

Silvie

Nos plaisirs seront
Peu durables,
Le destin a comté nos jours.
Ne songeons

Qu'à les rendre aimables,
Puis qu'il les a rendus si courts.
Aimons nous, l'amour nous convie
Livrons nous à tous nos désirs,
Sans compter les jours de la vie.
Cherchons à goûter ses plaisirs.
Aimons nous.

14. Récitatif

Silvie

Vous ne sauriez flatter ma peine,
Doux ruisseaux, paisible fontaine.
Mon Tirsis va quitter ce lieu.
Hélas! Hélas! Ma douleur est extrême
Quand je pense qu'il faut
Recevoir adieux
De ce charmant berger que j'aime.

15. Air

Tirsis

Non, non je ne puis plus souffrir
Les infidélités
D'une ingrate bergère
Ma bouteille sera
Désormais mon plaisir.
Si quelquefois elle devient légère
J'en suis quitte pour la remplir.

Clori, vezzosa Clori HWV95

16. Recitativo

Clori, vezzosa Clori,
Lontan dal tuo sembiente
Fra i taciturni orrori
Di boscareccie piante,
Fra le pompe del prato,
E il mormorar del rio,
Ho sempre dinanzi
Il tuo bel volto amato.

17. Aria

Il bosco, il prato, il rio,
Di te, caro ben mio
L'immagine adorata
Riportano al pensier.
E se zampilla il fonte
Mi par di star à fronte
De lumi tuoi vivaci
E del tuo guardo arcier.

18. Recitativo

Se l'usignol canoro,
Dolcemente si lagna
Dell'infida compagna,
Mi richiama nel seno
Quel geloso veleno
Che lontano date
M'opprime il core:
In somma a tutte l'ore,
Et ovunque rivolgo il piede errante
Sempre fido e costante
Mi si fa scorta amore,
Quel caro amor che servo tuo mi rese,
E di fiamma si bella il cor m'accese.

19. Aria

Non è possibile,
O Clori amabile
Che di te scordesi
L'amante cor.
Non e Credibile
Quanto durabile
Sarà nell'anima
L'acceso ardor.

Pensieri notturni di Filli (Nel dolce dell'oblio) HWV134

20. Recitativo

Nel dolce dell'oblio
benché riposi
la mia Filli adorata veglia
coi pensier suoi
e in quella quiete
Amor non cessa mai
con varie forme
la sua pace turbar
mentr'ella dorme.

21. Aria

Giacché il sonno a lei dipinge
la sembianza del suo bene,
nella quiete ne pur finge
d'abbracciar le sue catene.

22. Recitativo

Così fida ella vive
al cuor che adora
e nell'ombre respira
la luce di quel sol
per cui sospira.

23. Aria

Ha l'inganno il suo diletto
se i pensier mossi d'affetto
stimano ver ciò che non sanno.
Ma se poi si risveglia un tal errore
il pensier ridice a noi
ha l'inganno il suo dolore.

Lungi n'andò Fileno HWV128

24. Recitativo

Lungi, lungi n'andò Fileno,
Filen, del viver mio parte migliore,
Alma dell'alma mia,
Cor del mio core!
O Dio! sapessi almeno,
Dov'ei lasciandomi rivolse il piede,
Che, in segno di mia fede,
Al caro ben volar vorrei d'appresso,
Ma giacché tanto a me non è
concesso,
Ah! disfatemi intanto
Mie dolenti pupille in mesto pianto.

25. Aria

Sì, piangete, O mie pupille,
Ed al suon di vostre stille
Coi sospir risponda il cor.
E risuoni in flebil eco,
In ogn'antro, in ogni speco,
La mia pena, il mio dolor.

26. Recitativo

Ahi! m'inganno, infelice,

Se in così rio tormento,
Spero trovar pietà del mio martire!
No, non basta il soffrire,
Se sperar non mi lice
In così fiera sorte,
Se non la tirannia di cruda morte.
Ne giova il pianger sempre
A franger del destin le dure tempre.

27. Aria

Dunque se il tanto piangere
Non basta il fato a frangere,
Vivere io più non vuo',
Ch'il misero mio cor,
A così rio dolor,
(Al fiero suo dolor,)
Resistere non può.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Clori, mia bella Clori HWV92

1. Recitative

Clori, my lovely Clori,
how can this ill-fated soul of mine
live far from you,
the beloved source
of all my happiness?
If my wretched heart
finds welcome sustenance
only from your face,
lit up by those bright and beautiful
eyes,
how can I remain far from you
without dying
of torment?

2. Aria

Bright eyes, you who are
my destiny, reply:
without you can I live?
You, who do not want me to suffer,
tell me a compassionate 'yes',
but my heart fears you mean 'no'.

3. Recitative

I fear, and yet I hope,
o fair one, not to die,
for that same thought that torments
me still tells me:
'If you bear the lovely resemblance
of Clori imprinted on your heart,
the noble virtue of your undying love
will cause you to see it reflected in
every object,
wherever you may roam.'

4. Aria

In lilies and roses
I will see your
lovely appearance reflected.
In the sun and the stars
I will see reflected
the image of your lovely eyes.

5. Recitative

Not that my soul does not suffer
from such a troublesome, severe,
cruel separation,
for that sweet pleasure
of which one loses a part
cannot be lost without suffering.

6. Aria

My eyes,
once so tranquil,
I now invite
to shed tears.
And you will never
be happy again
if I do not return
to see my lovely Clori.

7. Recitative

Meanwhile you noble soul,
if you feel pity for my tears,
born of both love and jealousy,
that part which is mine
in your heart, since I was your slave,
keep it all for me, refuse it to others.

8. Aria

Fear of jealousy
tells the lover's heart
you will not be faithful.
So, caught between frost and fire,
I gradually pine away:
such is my cruel destiny.
Translation: James Chater

Sana y penser (Cantate française) HWV155

9. Chanson

Silvie

Without thinking about it
I made Tirsis fall in love with me.
Without thinking about it
Thyrsis also claimed my heart.
Love has taken charge
Of this affair.
He [also] might withdraw from it
Without thinking about it.

10. Recitative

Tirsis

If loving well were all that were
required
To soften the heart of my shepherdess,
All my rivals
Could not
Excite my fears.
But, alas! it is not the lover
Who is most constant who can hope to
be
Rewarded with joy.
It is always the one
Who knows how to charm
And who is thought to be
The most loving.

11. Air

Tirsis

O tiny, dark flower,
O violet so winsome,
Why cannot I exchange my
Sad fate with you!
Your petals wilt
On Sylvia's bosom.
I would find life where
You find death.

12. Recitative

Tirsis

You, who aroused in me a love
That could last forever
You, whom I loved so tenderly,
Can it be so that you are unfaithful
To your most faithful lover?
I ought to pay you back in your own
coin,
I ought to hate you or change
But if that is how one gets revenge,
I never want to do so.

13. Air

Silvie

Our pleasures will
Only be fleeting,
For Fate has counted our days.
Let us not think
Only of how to make them happy,
Since it has made them so short.
Let us love, for love invites us,
And give way to all our desires,
Without counting the days of our life.
Let us seek to enjoy its pleasures.
Let us love.

14. Recitative

Silvie

You cannot assuage my sorrow,
Soft waters, peaceful fountain.
My Thyrus is about to go from here.
Alas! Alas! My distress knows no limits,
When I think that it is necessary
To receive farewells
From this charmin shepherd whom I
cherished.

15. Air

Tirsis

No, no, I can longer bear
The faithlessness
Of an ungrateful shepherdess.
Now this bottle will
Henceforth be my pleasure.
And if perchance it gets light,
All I need to do is refill it.
Translation: Terence Best

Clori, vezzosa Clori HWV95

16. Recitative

Clori, charming Clori,
Far from your countenance,
Among the silent terrors
Of the [dark] woods,
Among the splendour of the fields,
And the murmur of the river,
I always have before me
Your beautiful, loved image.

17. Aria

The wood, the field, the river
My dear beloved,
Carry back the adored image
Of you to my thoughts.
And if the fountain gushes forth,

I seem to stand in front of
Your sparkling eyes
And your dart-like glance.

18. Recitative

If the singing nightingale,
Sweetly complaining
Of his unfaithful companion,
Calls up in my breast
That jealous poison
That, far from you,
Oppresses my heart:
[Then] in sum, at all hours,
And wherever I wander,
Always faithful and constant,
Love escorts me,
That dear love that made me your
servant,
And with a beautiful flame fires my
heart.

19. Aria

It is not possible,
O lovely Clori,
For the loving heart
To forget you.
It is not believable
That burning ardour
Will be so lasting
In the soul.
Translation: Ellen T. Harris

Pensieri notturni di Filli (Nel dolce dell'oblio) HWV134

20. Recitative

Although she sleeps
in the sweetness of oblivion,
my beloved Phyllis'
thoughts are awake,
and in the stillness
Love never ceases
to disturb her peace
in various ways
while she sleeps.

21. Aria

Since sleep conjures up
the resemblance of her beloved,
she imagines, in the stillness,
that she is embracing his chains.

22. Recitative

Thus she remains faithful
to the beloved heart
and in the shade she breathes in
the light from that sun
for which she longs.

23. Aria

Deception is joy,
if thoughts, moved by love,
take as true what they do not know.
But if on waking
our thoughts reveal the error,
deception is pain.
Translation: James Chater

Lungi n'andò Fileno HWV128

24. Recitative

Far, far Fileno has gone.
Fileno, the better part of my life,
Soul of my soul,
Heart of my heart!
O God! if at least I knew
Where, leaving me, he directed his
steps,
For, as a sign of my faith,
I would fly close to my dear beloved,
But since that much is not granted to
me,
Ah! dissolve meanwhile
My grieving eyes in bitter tears.

25. Aria

Yes, weep, O my eyes,
And at the sound of your tears
Let my heart respond with sighs.
And let resound in plaintive echo,
In every cave, in eury cavern,
My suffering and my sorrow.

26. Recitative

Ah! I deceive myself, unhappy me,
If in such crud torment
I hope to find pity for my torture!
No, the suffering is not enough,
If it is not permitted for me to hope
In such a cruel fate,
Except for the tyranny of a cruel death.
Nor does the endless weeping help
To break the harsh grip of destiny.

27. Aria

Thus, if so much weeping
Is not enough to crush fate,
I wish to live no longer,
Since my miserable heart,
Such cruel pain,
(Its own fierce pain,)
Can no longer withstand.
Translation: Ellen T. Harris

CD34
ITALIAN CANTATAS
Mira Lilla gentile

Text: anonymous

Recitativo

Mira Lilla gentile,
mira quel verde prato
Che con ridenti fiori
fanno vaga corona all'amen colle
Ed innaffiato da cristallini fonti
che baccian mormorando il seno a
Flora.
Ed armoniosi augelli
Che soavi accenti
Tutti brillan di gioia
Ed io tra catene d'amor
E tra tormenti!

Aria

Non dar più pena o cara
A un cor che tanto t'ama
E per te more
Gemendo ogn'or sospira
Ch'altro da te non brama
Che darti il core

Recitativo

Ferma deh ferma o bella
Dove giri le piante?
Ferma per pietà!
Ascolta almeno un cor
Che tutto fedeltà langue e sospira!
O Dio! Già la bella spari, spari l'infida
Né vi è chi dà soccorso
Al dolor mio

Aria

Consòlati mio core
Discaccia quel dolore
Che l'alma ti piagò
E spero che Amore
Vendicarà quel core
Che infido m'oltraggiò

Recitativo

Sogno o son desto?
Già mi lasciò l'infida dispietata!
Già più non la rimiro!
Saettatela o dei, se giusti siete!
Ma no! Fermate!
Il mio cor trafiggete ed impiagate!
Viva la bella! Io sol morir dovrò,
Ma non già quella!

Aria

Benché infida tu mi fuggi
Benché ingrata mi disprezzi
Pur per te morir dovrò
E se poi dirai pentita:
'Idol mio, son la tua vita!'
Ancor io morir vorrò.

Tra le fiamme HWV170/La caduta di Icaro

Libretto: Cardinale Benedetto Pamphili

Aria

Tra le fiamme tu scherzi per gioco,
O mio core, per farti felice,
e t'inganna una vaga beltà.

Cadon mille farfalle nel foco,
e si trova una sola fenice,
che risorge se a morte sen va.

Recitativo

Dedalo già le fortunate penne
tessea con mano ardita
e con tenera cera
piuma a piuma aggiungea.
Icaro, il fanciulletto
sovente confondea
l'ingegnoso lavoro;
Ah, così mai trattato non avesse
e cera e piume:
Per chi non nacque augello
il volare è portento
il cader è costume

Aria

Pien di nuovo e bel diletto,
sciolse l'ali il giovinetto,
e con l'aure già scherzando.
Ma del volo si gradito
troppo ardito
l'onda ancor va mormorando

Recitativo

Si, si purtroppo è vero:
nel temerario volo
molti gl'Icari son, Dedalo un solo!

Aria

Voli per l'aria chi può volare
(impenni l'ali chi può volare in
La caduta di Icaro)
scorra veloce la terra il mare
parta, ritorni né fermi il piè.
Voli ancor l'uomo ma coi pensieri
che delle piume ben più leggeri
e più sublimi il ciel gli dié.

Recitativo

L'uomo che nacque per salire al cielo,
ferma il pensier nel suolo,
e poi dispone il volo
con ali che si finge, e in sé non ha

CD35
Italian Duets
2. Quel fior che all'alba ride

Quel fior che all'alba ride
il sole poi l'uccide,
e tomba ha nella sera.
E' un fior la vita ancora,
l'ocaso ha nell'aurora,
e perde in un sol dì la primavera

4. Và, và speme infida pur

Và, và speme infida pur,
và, non ti credo!
Tu baldanzosa mi vai dicendo al core:
presto in dolce pietà vedrai cangiarsi
quel che teco usa Filli aspro rigore.
Ma se mendace e vana fosti ognor,
ch'in tal guisa a me dicesti,
fede or vuoi che ti presti,
quando di lei nel volto
sdegno e dispetto accolto
più che mai contro me misero io vedo?
Và, và speme infida pur,

và, non ti credo!

6. Amor, gioie mi porge

Amor, gioie mi porge,
e tu, sempre più rìa,
le trasformi in tormenti, o gelosia!
Onde al bendato nume rinunzio ogni
diletto,
poiché dentro il mio petto col tuo
crudel veleno,
fai le dolcezze sue cotanto amare,
ch'io non bramo a gioir per non
penare.

8. Caro autor di mia doglia

Caro autor di mia doglia,
dolce pena del core,
mio respiro, mia pace!
No, no, Che d'altri che di te mai non
sarò.
O volto, o lumi, o labbra!
Dag'amori flagellata la discordia
fuggirà,
bella gioia innamorata lampi eterni
spargerà.
Dag'amori flagellata la discordia
fuggirà.

10. Ahi, nelle sorti umane

Ahi, nelle sorti umane
quella saria d'un cor felicità maggior
ch'è senza affanno!
Ma le speranze vane ingannano i
pensier,
che il duolo ed il piacer compagni
vanno.
Nò, di voi non vo' fidarmi
Nò, di voi non vo' fidarmi, cieco amor,
crudel beltà!
Tropo siete menzognere, lusinghiere
deità.
Altra volta incatenarmi già poteste il
fido cor!
So per prova i vostri inganni: due
tiranne siete ogn'or.

CD36

APOLLO E DAFNE (La terra è liberata)
HWV122

10. Recitative

APOLLO

La terra è liberata!
La Grecia è vendicata! Apollo ha vinto!
Dopo tanti terrori e tante stragi
Che desolano e spopolano i regni
Giace Piton, per la mia mano estinto.
Apollo ha trionfato. Apollo ha vinto!

11. Aria

APOLLO

Pende il ben dell'universo
Da quest'arco salutar.
Di mie lodi il suol rimbombe
Ed appresti l'ecatombe
Al mio braccio tutelar.

12. Recitative

APOLLO

Ch'il superbetto Amore
Delle saette mie ceda a la forza;
Ch'omai più non si vanti
Della punta fata! d'aurato strale.
Un sol Piton più vale
Che mille accesi e saettati amanti

13. Aria

APOLLO

Spezza l'arco e getta l'armi,
Dio dell'ozio e del piacer.
Come mai puoi tu piagarmi,
Nume ignudo e cieco arcier?

14. Aria

DAFNE

Felicissima quest'alma
Ch'ama sol la libertà.
Non v'è pace, non v'è calma
Per chi sciolto il cor non ha.

15. Recitative

APOLLO

Che voce. Che beltà!
Questo suon, questa vista il cor
trapassa.
Ninfa!

DAFNE

Che veggio, ahi lassa?
E che sarà costui, chi mi sorprese?

APOLLO

Io son un Dio, ch'il tuo
Bel volto accese.

DAFNE

Non conosco altro Dei tra queste selve
Che la sola Diana:
Non t'accostar divinità profana.

APOLLO

Di Cintia io son fratello;
S'ami la suora,
Abbia, o bella, pietà di chi t'adora.

16. Aria

DAFNE

Ardi, adori, e preghi in vano:

Solo a Cintia io son fedel.
Alle fiamme del germano
Cintia vuoi ch'io sia crudel.

17. Recitative

APOLLO

Che crudel!

DAFNE

Ch'importuno!

APOLLO

Cerco il fin de' miei mali.

DAFNE

Ed io lo scampo.

APOLLO

Io mi struggo d'amor.

DAFNE

Io d'ira avvampo.

18. Duet

APOLLO AND DAFNE

Una guerra ho dentro il seno
Che soffrir più non si può.

APOLLO

Ardo, gelo.

DAFNE

Temo, peno;

APOLLO AND DAFNE

All'ardor non metti freno
Pace aver mai non potrò.

19. Recitative

APOLLO

Placati ai fin, o cara.
La beltà che m'infiamma
Sempre non fiorirà; ciò che natura
Di più vago formò passa, e non dura.

20. Aria

APOLLO

Come rosa in su la spina
Presto viene e presto va:
Tal con fuga repentina,
Passa il fior della beltà.

21. Recitative

DAFNE

Ah, ch'un Dio non dovrebbe
Altro amore seguir ch'oggetti eterni:
Perirà, finirà caduca polve
Che grala a te mi rende,
Ma non già la virtù che mi difende.

22. Aria

DAFNE

Come in Ciel benigna stella
Di Nettun placa il furor,
Tal in alma onesta e bella
La ragion frena t'amor.
Come in Ciel, etc.

23. Recitative

APOLLO

Odi la mia ragion!

DAFNE

Sorda son O?

APOLLO

Orsa e tigre tu sei!

DAFNE

Tu non sei Dio!

APOLLO

Cedi all'amor, o proverai la forza.

DAFNE

Nel sangue mio questa tua fiamma
amorza.

24. Duet

APOLLO

Deh, lascia addolcire quell'aspro rigor.

DAFNE

Più tosto morire che perder l'onor.

APOLLO

Deh, cessino l'ire, o dolce mio cor.

DAFNE

Più tosto morire che perder l'onor.

25. Recitative

APOLLO

Sempre t'adorerò!

DAFNE

Sempre t'abborrirò!

APOLLO

Tu non mi fuggirai!

DAFNE

Sì, che ti fuggirò'.

APOLLO

Ti seguirò, correrò,
Volerò sui passi tuoi:
Più veloce del sole esser non puoi.

26. Aria

APOLLO

Mie piante correte;
Mie braccia stringete
L'ingrata beltà.
tocco, la cingo,
La prendo, la stringo
Ma, qua novità?
Che vidi? Che mirai?
Cieli! Destino! che sarai mai!
Dafne, dove sei tu? Che non ti trovo.
Qual miracolo nuovo
Ti rapisce, ti cangia e ti nasconde?
Che non t'offenda mai del 'verno il
gelo
Ne il folgore dal cielo
Tocchi la sacra e gloriosa fronde.

27. Aria

APOLLO

Cara pianta, co' miei pianti
li tuo verde irrigherò;
De' tuoi rami trionfanti

Sommi eroi coronerò.
Se non posso averti in seno,
Dafne, almeno
Sovra il crin ti porterò.

CD37-38

ACI, GALATEO & POLIFEMO

1 Duetto

ACI

Sorge il dì, e tranquillo
par che brilli ancor il ciel.

GALATEA

Spunta l'aurora, e più sereno
par che brilli ancor il ciel.

ACI

Scherza l'aura in braccio a Flora,
e sol pena il cor fedel.

GALATEA

Ride il fiore al prato in seno,
e sol pena il cor fedel.

2. ACI

Vanti, o cara, il ruscello
di fremer gorgogliando,
rotto fra sterpi e sassi,
finché poi mormorando
con gl'argentei suoi passi
arrivi a ribaciar del mar l'arene,
ché sol da te, mio bene,
quando lontan son io,
misero al par di quello,
provo nel fido sen duolo più rio.

GALATEA

Se di perle un tesoro
vedi, bell'idol mio,
sparso di Flora ad arricchire il manto,
tu rugiada lo credi, ed è mio pianto.

3. Aria

GALATEA

Sforzano a piangere
con più dolor
l'astri ch'arrisero
al tuo martir;
e in petto frangere
mi sento il cor,
perché più misero
dovrai languir.

4. ACI

E qual nuova sventura
con violenza ria
ti sforza a lagrimar?

GALATEA

Anima mia, di Polifemo irato
mi costringe a penar l'empio furore;
armato di rigore
serba meco sdegnato
d'atro velen l'immonde labbra infette;
meditando vendette
vibra da' lumi suoi lampi di foco,
tuona la voce orrenda,
e tende in ogni loco,
con empietà tremenda,
insidie a fulminar la mia costanza.

ACI

Ahi, questo è duol
che ogn'altro duolo avanza.

5. Aria

ACI

Che non può la gelosia
quando un core
arde d'amore,
e per gioco amar non sa.
Lo può dir l'anima mia,
ché un momento
di contento
non sa quando aver potrà.

6. Accompagnato

GALATEA

Ma qual orrido suono
mi ferisce udito?

ACI

Spaventevol muggito
mi circonda di orrore,
anzi parmi che intorno
faccia tremar de' monti
tutte le spaziose atre caverne.

7. GALATEA

Ahi, che dall'ombre eterne
quasi uscisse alla luce,
sarà l'empio gigante.
Già il mostruoso amante,
punto da gelosia,
dell'antro oscuro
fa che il cardine strida,
e mentre acceso sgrida,
il mio cor, mal sicuro
all'incontro crudel di due pupille,
par che senta latrar voraci Scille.

ACI

Già viene.

GALATEA

Oh Dio! t'invola
al suo barbaro sdegno, e ti consola.

8. Aria

POLIFEMO

Sibilar l'angui d'Aletto
e latrar voraci Scille
parmi udir dintorno a me.
Rio velen mi serpe in petto,
perché a' rai di due pupille
arde il cor senza mercé.

9. GALATEA

Deh lascia, o Polifemo,
di languir sospirando,
miserabil trofeo del cieco Dio.

POLIFEMO

Se schernito son io,
mentre di sdegno fremo,
della viperea sferza
prive render saprò le furie ultrici,
e a rendere infelici
l'ore di vita al mio crudel rivale,
luttuosa e feroce
la scuoterò dintorno,
e forse in questo giorno

chiamerò a vendicarmi
arpie, sfingi, chimere e gerioni,
e spargerà sdegnato
il cielo ancor fulmini, lampi e tuoni.

10. Aria

GALATEA

Benché tuoni e l'etra avvampi,
pur di folgori e lampi
non paventa il sacro alloro.
Come quello anch'io pur sono,
ché non credo e m'abbandono
a timor di rio martoro.

11. POLIFEMO

Cadrai depressa e vinta
al mio temuto piede;
anzi quella mercede che mi nieghi,
superba,
crudel, con pena acerba,
piangendo e sospirando,
pentita chiederai.

GALATEA

Ma dimmi il quando?

POLIFEMO

Quando già disperata,
lacerando le chiome,
col rival non godrai.

GALATEA

Ma dimmi il come?

12. Aria

POLIFEMO

Non sempre, no, crudele,
mi parlerai così.
Tiranna, un cor fedele
si prende a scherzo, a gioco;
pentita a poco a poco
spero di vederti un dì.

13. GALATEA

Folle, quanto mi rido
di tua vana speranza.

POLIFEMO

Con orrida sembianza
dunque vuoi che ruotando irato il
ciglio,
rende maggior la tema
del tuo grave periglio?
Inerme e tu non sei?
E non son io che posso usar la forza,
e non trattar preghiere?
O chi mai dalle fiere
furie del cor geloso difenderti potrà?

ACI

Io, che non posso,
io, che stimo assai poco
per l'amato mio bene
tutto il sangue versar dalle mie vene.

14. Aria

ACI

Dell'aquila l'artiglier
se non paventa un angue,
de' miseri suoi figli
può il nido insanguinar.

Ma se ritorna poi,
prova gli sdegni suoi,
e della prole il sangue
attende a vendicar.

15. POLIFEMO
Meglio spiega i tuoi sensi.

ACI
Invan, invan pretendi
vincer la sua costanza,
che generosa e franca,
fa languida mancar la tua speranza;
ché se mai, lassa e stanca,
per me fia che vacilli un sol momento,
io sol, che non pavento,
come l'aquila invito
difenderò quel core,
quel fido cor ch'è mio,
dell'aspe rio del tuo lascivo amore.

16. Aria
POLIFEMO
Precipitoso
nel mar che freme
più corre il fiume
che stretto fu.
Ho per costume,
privo di speme,
anch'io sdegnoso
rendermi più.

17. GALATEA
Sì, t'intendo, inumano,
pensi macchiar, crudele,
dell'innocenza mia l'alto candore.
A tue meste querele,
quanto più divien sordo il fido core;
ma tal pensiero invano
sveglia nella tua mente
mal fondate speranze,
ché d'altro amore accesa,
più coraggiosa e forte,
prima d'amarti incontrerò la morte.

18. Aria
GALATEA
S'agita in mezzo all'onde,
lontano dalle sponde,
nel tempestoso mar
la navicella.
Scherzo di vento infido
corre da lido in lido,
né la fa naufragar
forza di stella.

19. POLIFEMO
So che le cinsure
che ti chiamano in porto
de' lumi del tuo ben son le due stelle;
ma non so qual conforto
in mezzo alle procelle
sperar potrai dal tuo gradito amante,
quando destarle sa fiero gigante.

ACI
Senti, quando adempire
brami le tue vendette,
fa che del ciel saette
vibri contro di me Giove Tonante;
fa che lacero, esangue,

cada il mio sen costante;
esca di augel rapace
rendi pur se ti piace,
le viscere infelici;
e biancheggiar disciolte
per quest'erme pendici
fa che miri il pastor l'ossa insepoltte;
prendi di me la palma;
ma non turbar dell'idol mio la calma.

20. Terzetto
POLIFEMO
Proverà lo sdegno mio
chi da me non chiede amor.

GALATEA
Perché fiero? Perché, oh Dio,
contro di me tanto rigor?

ACI
Idol mio, deh, non temer.

POLIFEMO
Se disprezzi un cor fedele,
gioir voglio al tuo martir.

GALATEA
Empio, barbaro, crudele,
ti saprò sempre schernir.

ACI
Soffri e spera di goder,
idol mio, non temer.

1. POLIFEMO
Ingrata, se mi nieghi
ciò che sperar potrei come tuo dono,
io che schernito sono
ottenere lo saprò come rapina.

GALATEA
Poiché il ciel già destina
che ti lasci, o mio bene,
corro in braccio a Nereo.

POLIFEMO
Dolci catene
ti faran queste braccia.

ACI
Empio, t'arresta.

GALATEA
Tormentosa e funesta
pria m'accolga la Parca.

POLIFEMO
Ecco al mio seno ti stringo.

GALATEA
Ah, genitore, col tuo duro tridente
corri e svena il tiranno, il traditore.

ACI
Non ti smarrir, mia vita.

GALATEA
In libertà gradita
ecco alfin che già sono.

POLIFEMO
Ah, crudo fato! Tu pur fuggi, oh crude!

ACI
Respiro.

GALATEA
Addio;
precipito nell'onde, idolo mio!

2. Aria
POLIFEMO
Fra l'ombre e gl'orrori
farfalla confusa,
già spenta la face,
non sa mai goder.
Così fra timori
quest'alma delusa
non trova mai pace
né spera piacer.

3. POLIFEMO
Ma che? non andrà inulta
la schernita mia fiamma. Io vilipeso,
io d'empio sdegno acceso,
saprò ben vendicarmi,
e del rivale in petto svenar saprò di
Galatea
l'affetto.

ACI
Purché l'amato benesol per me non
soggiaccia a rio tormento,
squarciami ancor il sen, ch'io son
contento.
Ma già parte l'ingrato,
e solo e disperato
io qui rimango. Ah stelle!
meco troppo rubelle,
se il mio cor tanto adora,
fate, che un'altra volta
miri l'idolo mio, e poi ch'io mora.

4. Aria
ACI
Qui l'augel da pianta in pianta
lieto vola, dolce canta
cor che langue a lusingar.
Ma si fa cagion di duolo
sol per me che, afflitto e solo,
pace, oh Dio, non so trovar.

5. GALATEA
Giunsi al fin, mio tesoro,
nelle cupe, e profonde
procellose voragini del mare:
pensai, caro mio bene,
render, per non penare,
e l'orche e le balene
vendicatrici del mio grave affanno,
ma vuol destin tiranno
che non sperì pietà del mio languire.

ACI
Ahi, che rende più atroce
la tua barbara pena il mio martire.

6. Aria

GALATEA

Se m'ami, o caro,
se mi sei fido,
lasciami sola
a sospirar.
Nel duolo amaro
così consola
chi fa Cupido
per te penar.

7. POLIFEMO

Qui, sull'alto del monte
attenderò l'empio rivale al varco.

ACI

Cara, poiché dall'arco
disciolse Amore alla saetta il volo:
poiché, ferito, io solo,
son degl'affetti tuoi l'unico erede;
come, oh Dio, come mai
con esempio di fede,
vagheggiando i tuoi rai,
lieto posso gioire,
quando solo per me dei tu languire?

POLIFEMO

Stelle! Numi! Che ascolto?

GALATEA

Dove più spesso e folt
oil numero sarà de' miei tormenti,
mi sembrerà pur poco
passar, mio ben, per te.

ACI

Sì molli accenti
di costanza, e d'amor pegni veraci,
lascia, bocca gradita,
che riscuotano omai premio di baci.

POLIFEMO

Ah! prima il fil reciderò di vita.

8. Terzetto

ACI

Dolce amico amplesso
al mio seno
tu dai vita
e fai goder.
Tuo mi rendo, idol mio,
fedel ti sono,
teco voglio e vita e morte,
spera, o bella, e non temer.

GALATEA

Caro amico amplesso, a
l core oppresso
tu dai vitae fai goder.
A te mi dono,
son per te costante e forte,
spera, o caro, e non temer.

POLIFEMO

In seno dell'infida
e chi un fulmine m'offre
acciò l'uccida?
Né a far le mie vendette
tuona Giove immortal?
Né dal profondo
si sconvolge l'abisso?

Né da cardini suoi
si scuote il mondo?
Né di Cocito l'onda
velenosa e funesta
toglie all'empio il respiro?
Dal gorgone insassito
e ancor non resta?

9. POLIFEMO

Or poiché sordi sono
del cielo e dell'abisso
i paventati Numi,
perché non mi consumi,
precipiti e ruini
sopra il capo del reo sasso sì grave.
Dal tenero e soave amplesso,
che il mio cor colmò di sdegno,
sia pena così ria premio condegno.
Già va di balza in balza,
già la gravizza aggiunge l'ali al corso,
già, già l'atterra.

ACI

Oh Dio, mio ben, soccorso!

10. Aria

ACI

Verso già l'anima col sangue,
lento palpita il mio cor.
Già la vita manca e langue
per trofeo d'empio rigor.

11. GALATEA

Misera, e dove sono?
In successo sì rio
la ragion m'abbandona,
non ha lume la mente:
e quel sangue innocente,
sangue dell'idol mio
mentre beve la terra,
torpida e semiviva
io spargo intanto
caldi rivi di pianto;
soffogano i sospiri
la tremante mia voce,
e in tormento sì atroce
con fievoli respi
rimanca la lena,
e l'anima, quasi giuntas
ui labbri, afflitta esclama:
così misero more
cuor che fedel
non sa cangiar mai brama.

12. Aria

POLIFEMO

Impara, ingrata, impara,
che fa l'esser tiranna
con chi ti chiede amor.
Il tuo rigor condanna,
e in pena così amara
lagnati del tuo cor.

13. GALATEA

Ah, tiranno inumano!
Da quel sangue adorato
apprendi almen rossore
del cieco tuo rigore,
ch'io con barbare tempre,
del mio bene in vendetta
ti abborrirò, ti fuggirò per sempre.

E tu, mio genitore,
quell'infelice salma,
trofeo di cruda morte,
deh, fa che si converta in fresco rio;
che quando al mar che fremito,
con tenero d'amor dolce desio,
fia che giunga in tributo,
poiché per mio dolore
sopra le nude arene estinto giacque,
lo goderò, lo stringerò fra l'acque.

POLIFEMO

Né fia che a tuoi pensieri
passi a regnar la pace.

GALATEA

Invan lo spero.

14. Aria

GALATEA

Del mar fra l'onde
per non mirarti,
fiero tiranno,
mi spinge il duol.
Ma in queste sponde
torno all'affanno
nel vagheggiarti,
spento mio sol.

15. POLIFEMO

Ferma, ma già nel mare
con l'algose sue braccia
Nettun l'accoglie,
e nel suo sen l'allaccia.
Stupido, ma che veggio?
Aci, disciolto in fiume,
siegue l'amato bene,
e mormorando
così si va lagnando:

16. Accompagnato POLIFEMO

"Vissi fedel mia vita,
e morto ancor t'adoro,
e de' miei chiari argenti
col mormorio sonoro
non lascio di spiegare
i miei tormenti.
Or, dolce mio tesoro,
con labbro inargentato,
forse più fortunato,
ti bacerò del tuo Nereo fra l'onde:
e l'arenose sponde,
che imporporai col sangue,
mentre d'empio destin solo mi lagno,
co' miei puri cristalli e lavo e bagno".

17. POLIFEMO

Ed io, che tanto ascolto,
cieli, come non moro?
Ah, la costanza
di chi ben ama un giorno
non sa né può
mai variar sembianza.

18. Terzetto

ACI, GALATEA, POLIFEMO

Chi ben ama ha per gli oggetti
fido cor, pura costanza.
Ché se mancano i diletti
poi non manca la speranza.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1. Duet

ACIS

Day is breaking, and the bright sky
looks calmer than ever.

GALATEA

Dawn is here, and the bright sky
looks more tranquil than ever.

ACIS

The breezes blow playfully in the arms
of Flora,
and only the faithful heart grieves.

GALATEA

The flowers smile on the meadow's
brow,
and only the faithful heart feels pain.

2. ACIS

Admire, my dear, this stream,
how it sputters and gurgles,
impeded by branches and rocks,
until, murmuring,
with silvery gait
it embraces at last the sandy seashore;
for I too, my love,
when I am far from you,
am sad, and my faithful heart
feels a pain that is more bitter.

GALATEA

My darling, you may think that
the treasure of pearls
Flora sheds to adorn her mantle
is dew; but it is my tears.

3. Aria

GALATEA

I am compelled to weep
in great sorrow
by the stars that smiled
on your suffering;
and I feel my heart breaking
within me,
because you will be forced
to languish in great misery.

4. ACIS

And what new misfortune
forces you to weep
with such bitter intensity?

GALATEA

My love, angry Polyphemus
forces me to put up with his cruel fury;
aggressive, relentless,
scorned, he saves up for me
his foul, venom-infected lips;
and, bent on revenge,
his eyes flicker like lightning bolts,
his fearful voice thunders,
and everywhere
with utter pitilessness
she lays traps to undermine my virtue.

ACIS

Ah, this blow
is more grievous than all the others.

5. Aria

ACIS

Of what is jealousy incapable,
when a heart
burns with love,
and takes his love too seriously!
This I feel in my heart,
which does not know
when it will be able to enjoy
a moment of happiness.

6. Accompagnato

GALATEA

What fearful sound
pierces my ears?

ACIS

A fearful growling
surrounds me with dread,
and I hear all around me
the trembling
of the dark, huge mountain caves.

7. GALATEA

Ah, see him emerging as if from
eternal shades
into the daylight,
the cruel giant!
Already the monstrous suitor,
stung with jealousy,
noisily shakes the dark cave
to its very foundations,
and, listening to his fearful cries,
my heart, already shaken
by the cruel encounter with two fair
eyes,
seems to hear Scilla's hungry howls.

ACIS

Look, here he comes.

GALATEA

Ye Gods! Flee
from his cruel wrath, and take
comfort.

8. Aria

POLYPHEMUS

Alecto's hissing snakes
and Scilla's hungry howls
surround me on every side.
Cruel poison writhes in my breast,
because my heart burns pitilessly
at the sight of two fair eyes.

9. GALATEA

Ah, Polyphemus, cease
this languid sighing,
you wretched trophy of the blind God.

POLYPHEMUS

If I am scorned
while I tremble with rage,
I will be able to deprive the avenging
furies
of their vicious scourge,
and make
my cruel rival's life wretched,
and I will give that fateful, deadly girl
a good shaking,

and maybe today
I will call on the harpies, sphinxes,
chimeras and titans
to avenge me,
and the angry heavens will rain down
lightning and thunder.

10. Aria

GALATEA

Thunder and fulminate as you wish,
but don't disturb the sacred laurel
grove
with your lightning rages.
And do not think I am the kind of
person
who would yield
to the fear of cruel suffering.

11. POLYPHEMUS

Cast down, vanquished,
you will fall down at my dreaded feet;
and the mercy you deny me,
cruel and proud one,
in great sorrow, weeping and sighing,
penitent,
you will be begging from me.

GALATEA

Just when do you think this will
happen?

POLYPHEMUS

When in despair,
pulling your hair,
you will no longer be able to enjoy my
rival.

GALATEA

Just how do you think this will
happen?

12. Aria

POLYPHEMUS

Cruel one,
you will not always be able to talk to
me like this.
Tyrant, you are mocking, ridiculing
my faithful heart;
I hope one day to find
that you have gradually repented.

13. GALATEA

Madman, how I laugh
at your vain hope.
Polyphemus
So, shall I
roll my eye in anger
to make you even more terrified
of your grave danger?
Don't you realise you are defenceless?
That I can use force,
ignoring your entreaties?
O who is there to defend you
from the rabid ravings of a jealous
heart?

ACIS

I, though powerless,
I, who consider it no great thing
for the sake of my love
to shed all the blood in my veins.

14. Aria

ACIS

If a snake is not affrighted
by the eagle's talons,
the eagle will make a bloodbath
of his wretched offspring's nest.
But if he returns,
he will feel his anger,
and will seek vengeance
for the blood of his offspring.

15. POLYPHEMUS

Explain yourself more clearly.

ACIS

In vain, in vain you think
you can vanquish her faithfulness,
which, generous and free,
withers and weakens your hope;
for if, tired and worn down,
she were to vacillate in her feelings for
me for one
moment, I alone, unafraid,
like the unvanquished eagle,
will defend that heart,
that faithful heart which is mine,
from the vile asp of your lascivious
love.

16. Aria

POLYPHEMUS

The narrower the river,
the more it
rushes head
long into the foaming sea.
The more I am
deprived of hope,
the more I am in the habit
of becoming enraged.

17. GALATEA

Yes, I understand you, inhuman
and cruel one, you intend to stain
the sublime candour of my innocence.
To your pitiable groaning
the faithful heart grows deaf;
but in vain this thought
arouses in your mind
baseless hopes,
for I blaze with love for another
and, stronger and braver,
I would rather meet my death than
love you.

18. Aria

GALATEA

Amid the waves,
far from shore,
my ship is tossed about
in the stormy sea.
The treacherous winds
blow capriciously hither and thither,
but my ship is not wrecked
thanks to a star.

19. POLYPHEMUS

I know that the guiding stars
that beckon you into port
are the two eyes of your beloved;
but I do not know what comfort

from your charming lover
you can hope to have in the midst of
the storm,
when a cruel giant can steer a course
through it.

ACIS

Listen! If you desire
to take revenge,
make Jove the Thunderer
hurl his bolts down at me from
heaven,
cause my faithful breast
to fall torn and bloodied;
turn my wretched entrails
into bait for the birds,
if you wish;
and then show the shepherd
my unburied bones
strewn upon these solitary slopes;
take my hand;
but do not trouble the peace of my
beloved.

20. Terzetto

POLYPHEMUS

My anger will befall
whoever does not seek my love.

GALATEA

Cruel one, why, ye gods,
are you so harsh with me?

ACIS

My love, do not be afraid.

POLYPHEMUS

If you despise my faithful heart,
I will rejoice in your suffering.

GALATEA

Pitiless, barbaric, cruel,
I will always laugh you to scorn.

ACIS

Be patient, hope for happiness,
my love, and do not be afraid.

1. POLYPHEMUS

Ungrateful one, if you refuse me,
I who am scorned
will obtain through violence
what I would like to receive from you
as a gift.

GALATEA

Since heaven has decreed that
I must leave you, my love,
I will rush into the arms of Nereus.

POLYPHEMUS

To you these arms will be
like sweet chains.

ACIS

Cruel one, desist!

GALATEA

I'd rather be carried off
by the tormented and hideous Parca!

POLYPHEMUS

Let me clutch you to my breast.

GALATEA

Ah, Nereus, my father, with your
fearful trident
come quickly to smite this tyrant, this
traitor.

ACIS

Don't be dismayed, my love.

GALATEA

At last,
I am free!

POLYPHEMUS

Ah, cruel fate! Cruel one, you fly from
me!

ACIS

I breathe again.

GALATEA

Goodbye;
I will plunge into the sea, my love!

2. Aria

POLYPHEMUS

When the torch is extinguished
the confused butterfly,
wandering in shades and darkness
is no longer happy.
Thus, wandering dismayed,
my disappointed soul
will never find peace
nor can it hope to find love.

3. POLYPHEMUS

But wait! My scorned ardour
will not go unavenged. Reviled,
incensed with cruel anger,
I will avenge myself,
and bleed the affection
that Galatea has for the rival she holds
in her arms.

ACIS

If my beloved were not delivered to
cruel torment
for my sake,
I would be happy if a knife was
plunged into my heart.
But the graceless monster departs,
and I remain here,
alone and in despair. Ah, stars
who treat me so cruelly,
since my heart loves so much,
grant that I may see my love
one more time, then let me die.

4. Aria

ACIS

Here the bird flies happily
from plant to plant, happily singing
to the languishing heart.
But he grieves
only for me, who am alone and grief-
struck,
and peace, ye gods, I cannot find.

5. GALATEA

My love, I descended to the depths
of the dark, deep
stormy vortex of the sea:
I thought, my sweet one,
to end my suffering
by delivering myself up
to the orcs and the whales,
avengers of my grave affliction;
but harsh destiny
does not allow me to hope for mercy.

ACIS

Ah, how your cruel pain
makes my suffering even more
dreadful.

6. Aria

GALATEA

I you love me, my dear,
if you are faithful to me,
leave me alone
to sigh.
In my bitter pain
this is the only way I can be comforted
for the pain that Cupid causes me
to feel for you.

7. POLYPHEMUS

Here, on the top of the mountain,
I will lie in wait for my cruel rival.

ACIS

My dear, since Cupid
loosed from his bow his flying bolt,
since, wounded, I alone
am the recipient of your affections,
ye gods, how can I possibly
be happy,
looking fondly into your fair eyes
with the utmost faithfulness,
when you alone must suffer for my
sake?

POLYPHEMUS

Ye stars! Ye fates! What do I hear?

GALATEA

I will think nothing, my love,
of suffering torments t
hick and fast,
if it is for your sake.

ACIS

Such soft accents
of faith and pledges of true love
your sweet mouth utters,
that they earn kisses as a reward.

POLYPHEMUS

Ah! I would rather cut the thread of
my life.

8. Terzetto

ACIS

Sweet intimate embrace,
you give life
to my breast
and make me happy.
I give myself to you, my beloved,
I am faithful to you,

with you I wish to live, to die;
hope, my fair one, and do not fear.

GALATEA

Dear intimate embrace,
you give life
to my oppressed heart and make me
happy.
I give myself to you,
for you I am strong, unwavering;
hope, my love, and do not fear.

POLYPHEMUS

Who will offer me a thunderbolt,
that I might strike the breast of the
faithless one
and kill her?
And why does Jove not come with his
thunder
to avenge me?
Why does the abyss
not heave in its very depths?
Why does the world not
shake to its foundations?
Why does the poisonous and gloomy
river Cocytus,
choke the faithless wretch?
Why has he not been turned to stone
by the Gordon?

9. POLYPHEMUS

The fearful gods
of the abyss and the sky
are deaf.
Therefore, so that I may not be
consumed,
let the heavy rock come crashing down
on the head of that vile wretch!
And let that cruel blow
be the well-deserved prize of that
tender sweet embrace
that chokes my heart with rage.
Now it goes bouncing down,
now its weight lends wings to its
motion,
now, now it knocks him down.

ACIS

O god, help me, my love!

10. Aria

ACIS

With my blood I shed my soul,
my heart beats slowly.
Now my life slowly ebbs away,
the fruit of cruel anger.

11. GALATEA

Wretched one, where am I?
After this cruel blow
my reason has left me,
my mind's light is extinguished:
and, while the earth drinks
that innocent blood,
the blood of my darling one,
I, torpid and half alive,
shed hot streams
of tears;
my sighs drown
my trembling voice,
and in bitter torment,

with feverous sighing,
my energy ebbs away,
and my soul, as if
joined to my lips, cries:
Thus my heart,
which stays faithful to what it longs
for,
perishes miserably.

12. Aria

POLYPHEMUS

That'll teach you a lesson, ungrateful
one,
that'll teach you to play the tyrant
with the one who seeks your love.
Your rigour condemns you,
and in bitter pain
you weep for your loved one.

13. GALATEA

Ah, inhuman tyrant!
May the blood of him whom I love
teach you at least to blush
in shame at your blind rage,
for, to avenge my loved one,
with ferocious cruelty,
I will loathe you, shun you for ever.
And you, my father,
turn this unhappy body,
the fruit of cruel death,
into a fresh stream;
so that, when it merges with the sea,
which trembles with the sweet desire
of tender love,
since, grieving, I beheld him
lying extinguished on the desolate
shore,
I will joyfully embrace him in the
water.

POLYPHEMUS

Don't ever think peace
will reign in your

GALATEA

You hope in vain.

14. Aria

GALATEA

Grief forces me
to go among the waves of the sea,
so that I don't have to look at you,
cruel tyrant.
But on this shore,
when I behold you,
my extinguished sun,
I grieve anew.

15. POLYPHEMUS

Stop! But already Neptune
welcomes her into the sea
with his algoid arms,
and clutches her to his breast.
What a fool I am! What a sight!
Acis, dissolved into a river,
follows his beloved,
and murmuring
utters this lament:

16. Accompagnato

POLYPHEMUS

"Alive I was faithful, my love,
and dead I still adore you,
and with the murmuring sounds
of my bright ripples
I do not cease to express
my torments.
Now, sweet treasure,
with lips turned to silver,
perhaps I will be more fortunate,
and kiss you amid the waves of your
Nereus:
and the sandy shores,
which I stained with my purple blood,
though I lament the cruelty of our
destiny,
I will wash and bathe with my pure
crystals."

17. POLYPHEMUS

And I, who have to listen to all this,
ye heavens, why can't I die?
Ah, the constancy
of one who loves well
is unable and unwilling
to change its object.

18. Terzetto

ACIS, GALATEA, POLYPHEMUS

The one who loves well has as goal
a faithful heart and pure constancy.
Then, even if pleasure is lacking,
hope will not be lacking as well.
Translation: James Chater

CD39-40

ALEXANDER'S FEAST

1. OVERTURE

2. RECITATIVE - Tenor

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son;
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne;
His valiant Peers were plac'd around,
Their brows with roses and with
myrtles bound:
So should desert in arms be crown'd.
The lovely Thais, by his side
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride,
In flow'r of youth and beauty's pride.

**3. AIR AND CHORUS - Tenor, followed
by Chorus and Soloists**
Happy, happy, happy pair
None but the brave deserves the fair.

4. RECITATIVE - Tenor

Timotheus, plac'd on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heav'nly joys inspire.

**5. ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE -
Soprano**

The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above

(Such is the pow'r of mighty Love).
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
While he to fair Olympia press'd;
And while he sought her snowy breast,
Then round her slender waist he curl'd,
And stamp'd an image of himself,
a Sov'reign of the world.

6. CHORUS

The list'ning crowd admire the lofty
sound:

"A present Deity!" they shout around:
"A present Deity!" the vaulted roofs
rebound.

7. AIR - Soprano

With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the God,
Affects the nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

8. RECITATIVE - Tenor

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet
musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young.
The jolly God in triumph comes:
Sound the Trumpets, beat the Drums!
Flush'd with a purple grace,
He shows his honest face;
Now give the Hautboys breath! he
comes,
he comes!

**9. AIR AND CHORUS - Bass, followed
by Chorus**

Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain.
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

10. RECITATIVE - Tenor

Sooth'd with the sound, the king grew
vain,
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes,
And thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes:
And while he heav'n and earth defy'd,
Chang'd his hand, and check'd his
pride.

**11. ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE -
Soprano**

He chose a mournful Muse,
Soft pity to infuse.

12. AIR - Soprano

He sung Darius, great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fall'n, fall'n, fall'n, fall'n,
Fall'n from his high estate,
And welt'ring in his blood.
Deserted at his utmost need
By those his former bounty fed,
On the bare earth expos'd he lies,

With not a friend to close his eyes.

**13. ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE -
Soprano**

With downcast looks the joyless victor
sate,
Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below,
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

14. CHORUS

Behold Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fall'n from his high estate,
And welt'ring in his blood;
On the bare earth expos'd he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.

15. RECITATIVE - Tenor

The mighty master smil'd to see,
That love was in the next degree:
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to Love.

16. AIR - Soprano

Softly sweet in Lydian measures
Soon he sooth'd the soul to pleasures.

17. AIR - Tenor

War, he sung, is toil and trouble,
Honour but an empty bubble,
Never ending, still beginning
Fighting still, and still destroying.
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, oh think it worth enjoying.
Lovely Thais sits beside thee;
Take the good the gods provide thee!
War, he sung ... (Da capo)

18. CHORUS

The many rend the skies with loud
applause:
So love was crown'd, but Music won
the cause!

19. AIR - Soprano and CHORUS

The Prince, unable to conceal his pain
Gaz'd on the Fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and
look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again.
At length, with wine and love at once
oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her
breast.

CHORUS

The many rend the skies with loud
applause:
So love was crown'd, but Music won
the cause!

**1. 20. ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE -
Tenor and CHORUS**

Now strike the golden Lyre again!
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!
Break his bands of sleep asunder
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of
thunder.

CHORUS

Break his bands of sleep asunder,
Rouze him, like a peal of thunder.

RECITATIVE

Hark, Hark the horrid sound
Has rais'd up his head:
As awak'd from the dead,
And amaz'd he stares around.

2. 21. AIR - Bass

Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries:
See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold, a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in
battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Revenge, revenge: (Da capo)

3. 22. ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE –

Tenor
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!

4. 23. AIR - Tenor

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

5. 24. AIR - Soprano

Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, she fir'd
another Troy.

CHORUS

The princes applaud with a furious joy,
And the king seiz'd a flambeau with
zeal to destroy.
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, she fir'd
another Troy.

6. 25. ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE –

Tenor and CHORUS
Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving Bellows learn'd to blow,
While Organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle
soft desire.

CHORUS

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred
store,

Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit,
and arts unknown before.

7. 26. RECITATIVE - Tenor and Bass

Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown:
He rais'd a mortal to the skies
She drew an Angel down.

8. 27. CHORUS and SOLOISTS -

Countertenor
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown:
He rais'd a mortal to the skies,
She drew an Angel down.

Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne

9. 1. COUNTERTENOR

Eternal source of light divine!
With double warmth thy beams
display,
And with distinguish'd glory shine
To add a lustre to this day.

COUNTERTENOR AND CHORUS

The day that gave great Anna birth,
Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

10. 2. SOPRANO

Let all the winged race with joy
Their wonted homage sweetly pay
Whils't tow'ring in the azure sky
They celebrate this happy day.

CHORUS

The day that gave great Anna birth,
Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

11. 3. COUNTERTENOR

Let flocks and herds their fear forget,
Lions and wolves refuse their prey,
And all in friendly consort meet,
Made glad by this propitious day.

**COUNTERTENOR AND SOPRANO, WITH
CHORUS**

The day that gave great Anna birth,
Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

12. 4. COUNTERTENOR AND BASS

Let rolling streams their gladness
show,
With gentle murmur whils't they play,
And in their wild meanders flow
Rejoicing in this blessed day.

CHORUS

The day that gave great Anna birth,
Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

13. 5. SOPRANOS

Kind health descends on downy wings,
Angels conduct her on the way;
To our glorious Queen new life she
brings,
And swells our joys upon this day.

**SOPRANO AND COUNTERTENOR,
WITH CHORUS**

The day that gave great Anna birth,
Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

14. 6. BASS

Let envy then conceal her head
And blasted faction glide away.
No more her hissing tongues we'll
dread,
Secure in this auspicious day.

CHORUS

The day that gave great Anna birth,
Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

**15. 7. COUNTERTENOR AND DOUBLE
CHORUS**

United nations shall combine,
To distant climes the sound convey,
That Anna's actions are divine,
And this the most important day!
The day that gave great Anna birth,
Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth.

CD41

CORONATION ANTHEMS

Zadok the Priest

1. Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet,
anointed Solomon King.
And all people the rejoic'd, and said:
God save the King, long live the King,
may the
King live forever! Amen, Alleluia!
(after Kings 1:39-40)

My heart is inditing HWV261

2. My heart is inditing of a good matter; I speak
of the things which I have made unto the King.
3. Kings' daughters were among the honourable women.
4. Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in vesture of gold, and the King shall
have pleasure in thy beauty.
5. Kings shall be thy nursing fathers and Queens thy nursing mothers.
(after Psalm 45:1, 10, 12; Isaiah 49:23)

Let thy hand be strengthened HWV259

6. Let thy hand be strengthened and thy right hand be exalted.
7. Let justice and judgement be the preparation of thy seat! Let mercy and truth go before thy face.
8. Alleluia!
(Psalm 89: 14-15)

The King shall rejoice HWV260

9. The King shall rejoice in thy strength, oh Lord!
10. Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.
11. Glory and worship hast thou laid upon him.

Thou hast prevented him with the blessing of goodness, and hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.
Alleluia!
(Psalm 21: 1, 5 & 3)

CD42

Dettingen Te Deum

1. CHORUS

Herr, Gott! Dir sei Lob!
O Gott, wir
Wir preisen dich, Gott;
wir bekennen dich, du bist der Herr!

2. CHORUS

Alle Welt verehret dich,
den Vater ewig allgewaltig,
den Vater ewig und allmächtig.

3. CHORUS

Dir singt der Engel reiner Chor,
der Himmel und sein mächtig Heer.

4. CHORUS

Vor dir Cherubim und Seraphim,
von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit lobsingen sie vor dir,
heilig, heilig, heilig, Herr Gott Zebaoth.
Himmel und Erde sind voll deiner Majestät
deiner Ehre und deiner ewigen Majestät.

5. CHORUS

Der hochgelobte Chor der Apostel preiset dich,
die hochgepriesene Schar der Propheten preiset dich.
Die heil 'ge Kirche durch die ganze Welt,
sie bekennet dich, den Vater unermesslicher Herrlichkeit,
und deinen hehren, wahren, einz'gen Sohn,
wie auch den heil 'gen Geist, den Tröster.

6. BASS SOLO AND CHORUS

Du bist der Ehren König, O Christ,
du bist der ew'ge Sohn des Gottes im Himmel.

7. ARIA (BASS)

Als du auf dich genommen
die Erlösung der Welt,
hast du nicht verschmäht
der Menschheit Los.

8. CHORUS

Als du siegreich zerbrachst den Stachel des Todes,
tat'st du auf das Himmelreich für alle Frommen.

9. CHORUS (TRIO)

Du sitzt zu Hechten des Herrn
in der Herrlichkeit des Vaters.

Dann kommst du, so glauben wir,

herab zum Gericht!

Und darum fleh'n wir:
hilf den Deinen, hilf,
hilf den Deinen, die du hast erlöst
durch dein teuer Blut.

10. CHORUS

Nimm uns auf in deiner Heil'gen Zahl
zur Herrlichkeit auf ewig.
O Herr, tue wohl, Herr,
und hilf den Deinen.
Leite uns, leite uns,
heb' uns empor zur Ewigkeit.

11. CHORUS

Tag für Tag sei Dank und Lob dir,
und wir preisen deinen Namen
auf ewig ohn' End.

12. ARIOSO (BASS)

Bewahr, O Herr, du treuer Gott,
uns heut vor Schmach und aller Sünd.
O Herr, erbarm dich, erbarm dich, sei gnädig,
O Herr, sei uns gnädig,
laß, Herr, deine Gnade leuchten auf uns,
wie unsre Hoffnung zu dir steht.

13. CHORUS

O Herr, auf dich steht mein Hoffen,
laß mich nicht zu Schanden werden.

CD44

ODE FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

1. OVERTURE

2. ACCOMPAGNATO (TENOR)

From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony,
This universal frame began.
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head:
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
"Arise! ye more than dead":
Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's now'r obey.

3. CHORUS

From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony,
This universal frame began:
From Harmony to Harmony,
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

4. AIR (SOPRANO)

What passion cannot Music raise and quell! -
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His list'ning brethren stood around,
And, wond'ring, on their faces fell,
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a God they thought there could nor
Within the hollow of that shell [dwell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell!

5. AIR AND CHORUS (TENOR)

The Trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat
Of the thund'ring Drum
Cries, hark! the foes come
Charge, charge! 'tis too late to retreat.

6. MARCH

7. AIR (SOPRANO)

The soft complaining Flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling Lute.

8. AIR (TENOR)

Sharp Violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair disdainful dame.

9. AIR (SOPRANO)

But oh! What art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred Organs praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heav'nly ways
To join the choirs above.

10. AIR (SOPRANO)

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the Lyre.

11. ACCOMPAGNATO (SOPRANO)

But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder high'r:
When to her Organ vocal breath was giv'n,
An Angel heard, and straight appear'd,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

12. CHORUS WITH SOPRANO SOLO

And from the pow'r of scared lays
The spheres began to move;
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the Bless'd above;
So when the last and dreadful hour,
This crumbling pageant shall devour;
The Trumpet shall be heard on high, -
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

CD45-46

MESSIAH HWV56

A Sacred Oratorio

Text: Charles Jennens

PART 1

1. SINFONIA (OUVERTURE)

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED – TENOR)

2. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,
saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,
and cry unto her, that her warfare is
accomplished, that her iniquity is
pardoned.

The voice of him that crieth in the
wilderness;
prepare ye the way of the Lord; make
straight
in the desert a highway for our God.
(Isaiah 40: 1-3)

AIR (TENOR)

3. Ev'ry valley shall be exalted,
and ev'ry mountain and hill made low;
the crooked straight and the rough
places plain.
(Isaiah 40: 4)

CHORUS

4. And the glory of the Lord shall be
revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together:
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken
it.
(Isaiah 40: 5)

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED – BASS)

5. Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of
hosts:

Yet once a little while and I will shake
the heavens and the earth,
the sea and the dry land.
And I will shake all nations;
and the desire of all nations shall
come.
(Haggai 2: 6-7)

The Lord, whom ye seek,
shall suddenly come to His temple,
even the messenger of the Covenant,
whom you delight in; behold,
He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

(Malachi 3: 1)

AIR (ALTO)

6. But who may abide the day of His
coming,
and who shall stand when He
appeareth?
For He is like a refiner's fire.
(Malachi 3: 2)

Chorus

7. And He shall purify the sons of Levi,
that they may offer unto the Lord
an offering in righteousness.
(Malachi 3: 3)

RECITATIVE (ALTO)

8. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and
bear a son,
and shall call His name Emmanuel,
God with us.
(Isaiah 7: 14; Matthew 1: 23)

AIR (ALTO & CHORUS)

9. O thou that tellest good tidings to
Zion,
get thee up into the high mountain.
O thou that tellest good tidings to
Jerusalem,
lift up thy voice with strength;
lift it up, be not afraid;
say unto the cities of Judah, behold
your God!
(Isaiah 40: 9)

Arise, shine, for thy light is come,
and the glory of the Lord is risen upon
thee.

(Isaiah 60: 1)

CHORUS

O thou that tellest . . . etc.

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED – BASS)

10. For behold, darkness shall cover
the earth,
and gross darkness the people;
but the Lord shall arise upon thee,
and His glory shall be seen upon thee.
And the Gentiles shall come to thy
light,
and kings to the brightness of thy
rising.
(Isaiah 60: 2-3)

AIR (BASS)

11. The people that walked in darkness
have seen a great light; and they that
dwell
in the land of the shadow of death,
upon them hath the light shined.
(Isaiah 9: 2)

CHORUS

12. For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given, and the
government shall be upon His
shoulder;
and His name shall be called
Wonderful,
Counsellor, the mighty God,
the Everlasting Father,
the Prince of Peace.
(Isaiah 9: 6)

13. Pifa ('Pastoral Symphony')

RECITATIVE (SOPRANO)

14. There were shepherds abiding in
the field,
keeping watch over their flocks by
night.
(Luke 2: 8)

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED –
SOPRANO)

And lo, the angel of the Lord came
upon them,
and the glory of the Lord shone round
about them,
and they were sore afraid.
(Luke 2: 9)

RECITATIVE (SOPRANO)

15. And the angel said unto them:
"Fear not,
for behold, I bring you good tidings of
great joy,
which shall be to all people.
For unto you is born this day in the city
of David
a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."
(Luke 2: 10-11)

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED –
SOPRANO)

16. And suddenly there was with the
angel,
a multitude of the heavenly host,
praising God, and saying:
(Luke 2: 13)

CHORUS

17. "Glory to God in the highest,
and peace on earth, good will towards
men."
(Luke 2: 14)

AIR (SOPRANO)

18. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion,
shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee;
He is the righteous Saviour,
and He shall speak peace unto the
heathen.
Rejoice greatly. . . da capo
(Zechariah 9: 9-10)

RECITATIVE (ALTO)

19. Then shall the eyes of the blind be
opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
Then shall the lame man leap as an
hart,
and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.
(Isaiah 35: 5-6)

DUET (ALTO & SOPRANO)

20. He shall feed His flock like a
shepherd,
and He shall gather the lambs with His
arm,
and carry them in His bosom,
and gently lead those that are with
young.
(Isaiah 40: 11)

AIR (ALTO)

Come unto Him, all ye that labour,
come unto Him that are heavy laden,
and He will give you rest.
Take his yoke upon you, and learn of
Him,
for He is meek and lowly of heart,
and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
(*Matthew 11: 28-29*)

CHORUS

21. His yoke is easy, and His burden is
light.
(*Matthew 11: 30*)

PART 2

CHORUS

22. Behold the Lamb of God,
that taketh away the sin of the world.
(*John 1: 29*)

AIR (TENOR)

23. He was despised and rejected of
men;
a man of sorrows and acquainted with
grief.
(*Isaiah 53: 3*)

He gave His back to the smiters,
and His cheeks to them that plucked
off His hair:
He hid not His face from shame and
spitting.
He was despised. . . da capo
(*Isaiah 53: 6*)

CHORUS

1. Surely He hath borne our griefs,
and carried our sorrows!
He was wounded for our
transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
the chastisement of our peace was
upon Him.
(*Isaiah 53: 4-5*)

CHORUS

2. And with His stripes we are healed.
(*Isaiah 53: 5*)

CHORUS

3. All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned everyone to his own
way.
And the Lord hath laid on
Him the iniquity of us all.
(*Isaiah 53: 6*)

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED – TENOR)

4. All they that see Him laugh Him to
scorn;
they shoot out their lips,
and shake their heads, saying:
(*Psalms 22: 7*)

CHORUS

5. "He trusted in God that He would
deliver Him:
let Him deliver Him, if He delight in
Him."
(*Psalms 22: 8*)

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED – TENOR)

6. 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.
(*Psalms 69: 20*)

AIR (TENOR)

7. Behold, and see if there be any
sorrow
like unto His sorrow.
(*Lamentations 1: 12*)

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED – TENOR)

8. He was cut off out of the land of the
living:
for the transgressions of Thy people
was
He stricken.
(*Isaiah 53: 8*)

AIR (SOPRANO)

9. But Thou didst not leave His soul in
hell,
nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One
to see corruption.
(*Psalms 16: 10*)

CHORUS

10. Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,
and the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,
and the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory.
(*Psalms 24: 7-10*)

RECITATIVE (TENOR)

11. Unto which of the angels said
He at any time:
"Thou art My Son, this day have I
begotten Thee?"
(*Hebrews 1: 5*)

CHORUS

12. Let all the angels of God worship
Him.
(*Hebrews 1: 6*)

AIR (BASS)

13. Thou art gone up on high,
Thou hast led captivity captive,
and received gifts for men
yea, even from Thine enemies,
that the Lord God might dwell
among them.
(*Psalms 68: 18*)

CHORUS

14. The Lord gave the word,
great was the company of the
preachers.
(*Psalms 68: 11*)

AIR (SOPRANO)

15. How beautiful are the feet
of them that preach the gospel of
peace,
and bring glad tidings of good things.
(*Isaiah 52: 7; Romans 10: 15*)

CHORUS

16. Their sound is gone out into all
lands,
and their words unto
the ends of the world.
(*Romans 10: 18; Psalms 19: 4*)

AIR (BASS)

17. Why do the nations so furiously
rage together,
and why do the people imagine
a vain thing?
The kings of the earth rise up,
and the rulers take counsel together
against the Lord,
and against His anointed.
(*Psalms 2: 1-2*)

CHORUS

18. Let us break their bonds asunder,
and cast away their yokes from us.
(*Psalms 2: 3*)

RECITATIVE (TENOR)

19. He that dwelleth in Heav'n shall
laugh
them to scorn,
The Lord shall have them in derision.
(*Psalms 2: 4*)

AIR (TENOR)

20. Thou shalt break them with a rod
of iron,
thou shalt dash them in pieces
like a potter's vessel.
(*Psalms 2: 9*)

Chorus

21. Hallelujah: for the Lord God
Omnipotent reigneth.
(*Revelation 19: 6*)

The kingdom of this world is become
the kingdom of our Lord,
and of His Christ;
and He shall reign for ever and ever.
(*Revelation 11: 15*)

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
(*Revelation 19: 16*)
Hallelujah!

PART 3

AIR (SOPRANO)

22. I know that my Redeemer liveth,
and that He shall stand at the latter
day
upon the earth.
And though worms destroy this body,
yet in my flesh shall I see God.
(Job 19: 25-26)
For now is Christ risen from the dead,
the first fruits of them that sleep.
(I Corinthians 15: 20)

CHORUS

23. Since by man came death,
by man came also the resurrection
of the dead.
For as in Adam all die,
even so in Christ shall all be made
alive.
(I Corinthians 15: 21-22)

RECITATIVE (ACCOMPANIED – BASS)

24. Behold, I tell you a mystery,
we shall not all sleep,
but we shall all be changed in a
moment,
in the twinkling of an eye, at the last
trumpet.
(I Corinthians 15: 51-52)

AIR (BASS)

25. The trumpet shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised
incorruptible,
and we shall be changed.
For this corruptible must put on
incorruption,
and this mortal must put on
immortality.
The trumpet. . . da capo
(I Corinthians 15: 52-53)

RECITATIVE (ALTO)

26. Then shall be brought to pass the
saying
that is written:
"Death is swallowed up in victory."
(I Corinthians 15: 54)

DUET (ALTO & TENOR)

27. O death, where is thy sting?
O grave! where is thy victory?
The sting of death is sin,
and the strength of sin is the law.
(I Corinthians 15: 55-56)

CHORUS

28. But thanks be to God,
who giveth us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(I Corinthians 15: 57)

AIR (SOPRANO)

29. If God be for us, who can be
against us?
(Romans 8: 31)

Who shall lay anything to the charge
of God's elect? It is God that justifieth,

who is he that condemneth?
It is Christ that died, yea rather,
that is risen again,
who is at the right hand of God,
who makes intercession for us.
(Romans 8: 33-34)

CHORUS

30. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,
and hath redeemed us to God by His
blood,
to receive power, and riches, and
wisdom,
and strength, and honour, and glory,
and blessing.
Blessing and honour, glory and power,
be unto Him that sitteth upon the
throne,
and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.
Amen.
(Revelation 5: 12-14)

CD47-48

LA RESURREZIONE HWV47

PART 1

1. Sonata

2. Aria

ANGELO

Disserratevi, oh porte d'Averno!
e al bel lume d'un lume ch'è eterno
tutto in lampi si sciogla l'orror.
Cedete, horride porte,
cedete al Re di gloria,
che della sua vittoria
Voi siete il primo onor.

3. Accompagnato

LUCIFERO

Qual'insolita luce
squarcia le bende alla tartarea notte?
Qual eco non più udita
con armonia gradita
fa intorno risonar le stigie grotte?
Se son del mio valore
gli applausi giusti sono!
Hoggi che vincitore,
cittadini d'abisso, a voi ritorno;
e già mi vendicai con fiero sdegno
chi perder già mi fè de' cieli il Regno.

4. Aria

LUCIFERO

Caddi, è ver, ma nel cadere
non perdei forza nè ardire.
Per scacciarmi dalle sfere
se più forte allor fù Dio,
or fatt'huomo, al furor mio
pur ceduto ha con morire.

5. Accompagnato

LUCIFERO

Mà, che veggio? Di spirti a me nemici
come in sì folto stuolo
per quest'aure annegrite
da' miei respiri, osa portare il volo?

ANGELO

De' tenebrosi chiostri
tacete horridi mostri!
dileguatevi, o' larve, ombre, sparite

e dell'eterno Re le leggi udite.

6. Recitativo

LUCIFERO

Chi sei? Chi è questo Re
che dov'io regno a penetrar s'avvanza?

ANGELO

È Re di gloria, è Re possente e forte,
cui resister non può la tua possanza.

LUCIFERO

Se parli di chi penso,
pur oggi a morte spinto
negar non può, ch'il mio poter l'ha
vinto.

ANGELO

Come cieco t'inganni, e non t'avedi
che, se morì chi è della vita autore,
non fù per opra tua, mà sol d'amore.

7. Aria

ANGELO

D'amor fù consiglio
che al Padre nel Figlio
l'offesa pagò;
per render all'huomo
la vita che un pomo
gustato involò.

8. Recitativo

LUCIFERO

E ben, questo tuo Nume
dell'huomo innamorato
e che per lui svenato
oggi volle morir, che più presume?
L'omaggio a me dovuto
se a rendermi quà giù move le piante,
venga; mà se pretende...

ANGELO

Taci, che or lo vedrai, mostro
arrogante,
vedrai come delusa
da lui fugge la morte,
vedrai come confusa
lo rimira la colpa,
vedrai come atterrito
si nasconde la pena,
vedrai come tu stesso
tremerai genuflesso
al suo gran nome.

LUCIFERO

Io tremante! Io sì vile! E quando? E
come?
Sconvolgerò gli abissi,
dal suo centro commossa
dissiperò la terra,
all'aria coi respiri,
al fuoco coi sospiri,
con gli aneliti al ciel muoverò guerra.

9. Aria

LUCIFERO

O voi dell'Erebo
potenze orribili,
sù, meco armatevi
d'ira e valor!
E dell'Eumenidi

gli angui terribili
con fieri sibili
ai cieli mostrano,
ch' hanno i suoi fulmini
gli abissi ancor.

10. Accompagnato

MADDALENA

Notte, notte funesta,
che del divino sole
con tenebre a duol piangi l'ocaso,
lascia che pianga anch'io,
e con sopor tiranno
al giusto dolor mio
deh non turbar l'affanno!

11. Aria

MADDALENA

Ferma l'ali, e su' miei lumi
non volar, o sonno ingrato!
Se presumi
asciugarne il mesto pianto,
lascia pria che piangan tanto
quanto sangue ha sparso in fiumi
il mio Dio per me svenato.

12. Recitativo

CLEOFE

Concedi, o Maddalena,
qualche tregua al martire,
che un continuo languire
può con la vita anche scemar la pena,
e per un Dio ch' è morto
così giusto è'l dolore,
che non convien di renderlo più corto.

MADDALENA

Cleofe, in vano al riposo
tu mi consigli, ed al mio core amante
sarebbe più penoso ogni momento.
Che potesse restar senza tormento.

CLEOFE

Se il tuo giusto cordoglio
sol di pene ha desio,
trattenerlo non voglio
mà sol unire al tuo l'affanno mio.

13. Aria

CLEOFE

Piangete, sì, piangete,
dolenti mie pupille,
e con amare stille
al morto mio Signor
tributo di dolor
meste rendete!
Che mentre egli spargea
tutt' il suo sangue in croce,
morendo sol dicea
di pianto: hò sete.

14. Recitativo

MADDALENA

Ahi dolce mio Signore,
le tue vene già vuote
chiedan di poco umore
momentaneo ristoro,
e il barbaro Israele
bevanda sol di fiele
ti porse: io lo rammento, e pur non
moro?

CLEOFE

Ahi popolo crudel, popolo ingrato!
Chi per te già disciolse
duri macigni in liquidi torrenti
di purissimi argenti,
poche stille ti chiede;
tu gli dai mercede
un sì amaro liquore:
e in rammentarlo non si sprezza il
core?

MADDALENA

Oh crude rimembranze!

CLEOFE

Oh funeste memorie!

MADDALENA

Tormentatemi pur,

CLEOFE

Sì, sì, seguite
ad accrescermi il duol,

MADDALENA

Che nel tormento

CLEOFE

Che nell'angoscia ria

MADDALENA

lo godo ancor,

CLEOFE

Sollievo ancor io sento.

MADDALENA

Se col pensiero afflitto
và lusingando almeno
il mio desire, e parmi aver nel seno
qualche martir del mio Giesù trafitto.

CLEOFE

Se nell'afflitta mente
hò il mio Giesù presente,
e benchè esangue ed impiagato, parmi
che basti il volto suo per consolarmi.

15. Duetto

MADDALENA

Dolci chiodi, amate spine,
da quei piedi e da quel crine
deh, passate nel mio sen!

CLEOFE

Cara effigie addolorata,
benchè pallida e piagata,
sei mia vita, sei mio ben.

16. Recitativo

S. GIOVANNI

O Cleofe, o Maddalena,
del mio divin maestro amanti amate,
o quant' invidia, quanto,
quelle che hora versate
stille di puro amor più che di pianto.
Spero presto vederle,
per coronar il mio Signor risorto,
da rugiade di duol cangiarsi in perle.

MADDALENA

Giovanni, tu che fosti
del mio Giesù discepolo diletto,
e degli arcani suoi
secretario fedel, solo tu puoi
di speme più tranquilla
ravivar nel mio sen qualche scintilla.

S. GIOVANNI

Già la seconda notte,
da ch'egli estinto giacque,
col carro suo di tenebroso gelo
tutta varcò la sommità del cielo,
e del Gange su l'acque
attende già la risvegliata aurora
del nuovo sole il lucido ritorno:
mà il nostro Sole ancora
a noi tornar promise il terzo giorno.
Consoli dunque il vostro cor, che
geme,
una sì bella e si vicina speme.

17. Aria

S. GIOVANNI

Quando è parto dell'affetto,
il dolor in nobil petto
non estingue la costanza;
quando è figlia della fede,
mai non cede
al timore la speranza.

18. Recitativo

CLEOFE

Ma dinne, e sarà vero
che risorga Giesù?

S. GIOVANNI

S'egli l'ha detto,
chi mai di menzognero
oserà d'arguire labbro divino!

MADDALENA

Sù! dunque andiamo, e pria ch'il
matutino
raggio dell'orizzonte il lembo indori,
andiam ad osservare al sacro avello,
che almen potremmo in quello
con balsami ed odori
unger la fredda esanimata salma
di chi fù già di noi la vita e l'anima.

CLEOFE

Pronta a seguirti io sono,
mà speranza miglior mi rende ardita,
e di Giovanni ai detti
spero viva trovar la nostra vita.

19. Aria

CLEOFE

Naufragando vò per l'onde
debol legno, e si confonde
nel periglio anch'il nocchier.
Mà se vede poi le sponde,
lo conforta nuova speme,
e del vento più non teme
nè del mar l'impeto fier.

20. Recitativo

S. GIOVANNI

Itene pure, oh fide amiche donne,
al destinato loco,

ch'ivi forse potrete
del vostro bel desio trovar le mete,
mentre io torno a colei, che già per
madre
mi diè nell'ultim'hore
del suo penoso agone il mio Signore.

MADDALENA

A lei ben opportuno
il tuo soccorso fia,
che in così duro scempio
qual sia la pena sua, sò per la mia.

S. GIOVANNI

Ben d'ogn' altro più grande
fù il dolor di tal madre
di tal figlio alla morte,
mà d'ogn' altro più forte
ebbe in soffrirlo il petto, ed hor
costante
che ferma più d'ogn' altra ha la
speranza
di vederlo risorto, e se l'ottiene
la gioia allor compenserà le pene.

21. Aria

S. GIOVANNI

Così la tortorella
talor piange e si lagna,
perchè la sua compagna
vede ch'augel feroce
dal nido gli rubò.
Mà poi, libera e bella
se ritornarla sente,
compensa in lieta voce
quel gemito dolente
che mesta già formò.

22. Recitativo

MADDALENA

Se Maria dunque spera,
e spera ancor Giovanni,
anch'io dar voglio con sì giusta speme
qualche tregua agli affanni;
ma pure chi ben ama sempre teme,
e nell'amante mio misero core
benché speranza regni,
bandir non può il timore.
Or degli opposti affetti
a chi debba dar fede,
vedrò volgendo il piede
all'adorato speco,
tomba del mio Giesù. Vada Giovanni
a consolar Maria; Cleofe sia meco.

23. Aria

MADDALENA

Hò un non sò che nel cor,
che in vece di dolor
gioia mi chiede.
Mà il core, uso a temer,
le voci del piacer
o non intende ancor,
o innganno del pensier
forse le crede.

24. Recitativo

ANGELO

Uscite pur, uscite
dall'oscura prigionia,
ove si lunga ed horrida stagione

questo giorno attendeste, anime belle!
Uscite pur, uscite,
a vagheggiare, a posseder le stelle!
Di quel Signor, che ha vinto
per voi la morte e'l contumace averno,
il trionfo seguite:
e voi primi venite,
o primi padri delle humane genti;
nè s'odan più lamenti
del vostro antico errore,
or ch'ebbe insorto un tanto redentore;
seguano gli altri poi,
e per l'orme di luce,
che del divino duce
il glorioso piè stampa nell'ombre,
da questo centro squallido e profondo
sorgan con lui sovra l'aperto mondo.
Mà con eco festiva
replichi prima il lor devoto labro:

25. Choro

Il Nume vincitor
trionfi, regni e viva.
Viva e trionfi il Dio così grande
che i cieli spande,
che al sol da splendor.
Per cui Cocito
geme atterrito,
da qui fu vinta
la morte ancor.
Viva e trionfi il Dio così grande
che da luce al sol.

PART 2

1. Sinfonia

2. Recitativo

S. GIOVANNI

Di quai nuovi portenti
ha la terra oggi ancora il sen fecondo?
Piansero gli elementi
del lor fabbro immortal la morte fiera,
e d'un giorno che spera
di vederlo risorto
con gl'istessi tremori
par che il suolo paventi i primi albori.
Mà forse dell'inferno,
che dal Dio vincitor l'ha percossa,
gli ultimi sforzi son, l'ultime scosse.

3. Aria

S. GIOVANNI

Ecco il sol ch'esce dal mare
e più chiaro che non suole
smalta i prati, i colli indora.
Mà chi sa, che di quel Sole
ch'oggi in vita ha da tornare
questo sol non sia l'aurora.

4. Recitativo

S. GIOVANNI

Mà dove Maria dimora
se ho già vicino il piede,
spero veder ben presto
cangiata la speranza in certa fede,
e senz'alcun periglio
lieta la madre e glorioso il figlio.

5. Aria

ANGELO

Risorga il mondo

lieto e giocondo,
col suo Signor.
Il ciel festeggi,
il suol verdeggi,
scherzino, ridano
l'aure con l'onde,
l'erbe coi fior.

6. Accompagnato

ANGELO

Di rabbia indarno freme
coi mostri suoi l'incatenato averno;
l'odio che oppresso geme,
la crudeltà che piange,
l'invidia che sospira,
l'empietà che delira,
l'iniquità tremante,
il furor vacillante,
sbigottita la frode,
deriso il tradimento,
vilipeso l'orgoglio:
del mio Signor risorto
saran carro al trionfo e base al soglio.

7. Recitativo

LUCIFERO

Misero! hò pure udito?
E in van per vendicarmi
contro forza maggior impugno l'armi?

ANGELO

Sì, sì, contrasti in van; torna a Cocito!

LUCIFERO

Perchè al ciel pria non torna
il tuo risorto Nume?

ANGELO

Perchè pria vuole in terra
far delle glorie sue noto il mistero.

LUCIFERO

Noti gli oltraggi miei? Nò, non fia vero!

8. Aria

LUCIFERO

Per celare il nuovo scorno
le tue faci ancor al giorno
con un soffio io smorzerò;
e con tenebre nocenti
delle infirme humane menti
ogni idea confonderò.

9. Recitativo

ANGELO

Oh come cieco il tuo furor delira!
Mira, folle, deh mira
le donne pie che all'incauto sasso,
sepolcro già delle divine membra,
movon veloce il passo!
A loro il Ciel comanda
ch'io l'arcano riveli,
ond'esse in publicarlo
agli altri poi ne sian trombe fedeli.

10. Duetto

LUCIFERO

Impedirlo saprò.

ANGELO

Duro è il cimento.

LUCIFERO

Hò ardir che basta.

ANGELO

Lo dirà l'evento!

11. Recitativo

MADDALENA

Amica, troppo tardo
fù il nostro piè; già il sol sull' etra
ascende.

CLEOFÉ

Fù il cor troppo codardo,
che della terra a gl'improvvisi moti
fè i nostri passi rimanere immoti.

MADDALENA

Or chi sa se potremo
ricercar in tomba il mio tesoro.

CLEOFÉ

Se son desti i custodi, io ben ne temo.

MADDALENA

Io temo ancor, ma più il mio Nume
adoro.

12. Aria

MADDALENA

Per me già di morire
non paventò Giesù.
Egli mi dà l'ardire;
per lui nulla pavento,
nè morte, nè tormento;
quando ho Giesù nel cor non temo più.

13. Recitativo

LUCIFERO

Ahi, abborrito nome,
ahi, come rendi, come,
ogni mio sforzo imbelle!
Ahi, che vinto e confuso,
atterrito e deluso
fuggo il ciel, fuggo il suolo, fuggo il
mondo,
e del più cupo abisso
torno a precipitar nel sen profondo.

14. Aria

CLEOFÉ

Vedo il ciel, che più sereno
si fa intorno e più risplende.
E di speme nel mio seno
più bel raggio ancor s'accende.

15. Recitativo

MADDALENA

Cleofe, siam giunte al luogo,
ove ombra funesta
dell'amato Signor coprì la salma.

CLEOFÉ

Parmi veder, sì, sì, vedo ben certo
ch'è già l'avello aperto,
e su la destra sponda
siede con bianca stuola
un giovane vestito.

MADDALENA

Oh, quale spira
grazia dal' volto suo, che mi consola!
Appressiamoci a lui, che già ne mira.

ANGELO

Donne, voi ricercate
di Giesù Nazareno,
ove giacque già morto;
ora non è più qui, mà è già risorto.
Al vostro puro affetto
giusto è che diano i cieli
così bella mercede,
e un tal mistero a voi prima si sveli,
per far araldi poi della sua fede.
Itene dunque a publicarlo, e sia
premio del vostro pianto
della gioia comune il primo vanto.

16. Aria

ANGELO

Se per colpa di donna infelice
all' huomo nel seno la morte
il crudo veleno sgorgò,
dian le donne la nuova felice,
che chi vinse la morte già morto
poi risorto la vita avvivò.

17. Recitativo

MADDALENA

Mio Giesù, mio Signore,
già che risorto sei,
perchè, perchè ti ascondi a gli occhi
miei?
Può ben la fede, è vero,
far che l'amore adori il gran mistero:
mà come può l'amore
esser contento a pieno,
se non manda il suo ben per gli occhi al
core?
Vo' cercarti per tutto;
nè sarà forse in vano,
che da chi ben ti cerca,
mai, dolce mio tesor, tu sei lontano.

18. Aria

MADDALENA

Del cielo dolente
l'ondosa procella
in Iride bella
cangiando sen vò.
E il cor che già sente
vicino il suo Sole
da mesto a languente
sereno si fa.

19. Recitativo

CLEOFÉ

Sì, sì, cerchiamo pure
l'orme del nostro amor; che fortunata
sarà ben chi lo trovi!
Verso il bosco io me vado,
mentre tu verso gli orti i passi movi.

20. Aria

CLEOFÉ

Augelletti,
ruscelletti
che cantando, mormorando
date lodi al mio Signore,

insegnatemi dov'è!

Fiori ed herbe,
già superbe
di lambir le sacre piante,
deh mostrate a un cor amante
le bell'orme del suo piè!

21. Recitativo

S. GIOVANNI

Dove si frettolosi,
Cleofe, rivolgi i passi?

CLEOFÉ

In traccia di Giesù ch'è già risorto,
Come ancor Maddalena.

S. GIOVANNI

Onde il sapeste?

CLEOFÉ

Sovra l'aperto avello
così a noi rivelò labro celeste.

S. GIOVANNI

Così la madre a me poc'anzi ha detto,
a cui prima d'ogni altra
del figlio apparve il glorioso aspetto.

CLEOFÉ

Oh, come lieta avrà quel figlio accolto!

S. GIOVANNI

Parve ch'il suo bel volto,
di stille lacrimose humido ancora,
del sol divino all'improvviso raggio
fosse traviso e pinto, un'altra aurora.
Poi la gioia veloce
corse dal seno al labro in questa voce:

22. Aria

S. GIOVANNI

Caro figlio, amato Dio,
già il cor mio
nel vederti esce dal petto!
E se lento
fù in rapirmelo il tormento,
me lo toglie ora il diletto.

23. Recitativo

MADDALENA

Cleofe, Giovanni, udite,
udite la mia nuova alta ventura!
Hò veduto il quell'horto il mio Signore,
che havea d'un suo guardian preso
figura
Mà dalle rozze spoglie
uscita luce sì pura e così ardente,
che pria degl'occhi il ravvisò la mente.
Poi conobbi quel viso,
in cui, per farsi bello,
si specchi il paradiso;
vidi le mani ancor, vidi le piante,
ed in esse mirai, lucide e vaghe,
sfavillar come stelle
quelle che furon pria funeste piaghe.
A baciarle il labro allor s'accinse,
mà Giesù mi respinse, e dirmi parve:
"Tu non mi puoi toccar! Poscia
disparve."

S. GIOVANNI

Non si dubiti più!

CLEOFE

Cessi ogni rio timore!

MADDALENA

è risorto Gesù.

S. GIOVANNI

Viva e la nostra vita.

CLEOFE

Il nostro amore.

24. Aria

MADDALENA

Se impassibile, immortale
sei risorto, oh Sole amato,
deh fà ancor ch'ogni mortale
teco sorga dal peccato!

25. Recitativo

S. GIOVANNI

Sì, sì, col Redentore
sorga il mondo redento!

CLEOFE

Sorga dalle sue colpe il peccatore!

MADDALENA

Ed al suo fabro eterno
ogni creatura dia lodi ed onore.

26. Choro

Diasi lode in cielo, in terra
a chi regna in terra, in ciel!
Che risorto hoggi alla terra
per portar la terra al ciel.

FINE

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

PART 1

1. Sonata

2. Aria

ANGEL

Be open, oh gates of Avernus,
and in the radiant light of the eternal
let all the horror be dispelled.
Yield, dreadful gates,
yield to the King of glory,
for you shall be the first honour
of his victory.

3. Accompagnato

LUCIFER

What unusual light
sunders the bonds of Tartarean night?
What long-forgotten echo
with pleasant harmonies
makes the Stygian caves resonate?
If it is applause for my valour,
it is most fitting!
Today as victor,
citizens of the abyss, I return to you;
and now I am avenged, with proud
disdain,
on him who made me lose Heaven's
kingdom.

4. Aria

LUCIFER

I fell, it's true, but in falling
I lost neither strength nor boldness.
Though God was then stronger
to chase me away from the spheres,
now, as a man, in dying
he has yielded to my fury.

5. Accompagnato

LUCIFER

But what do I see? How does so thick a
crowd
of spirits, hostile to me,
Dare wring its way
through these black vapours of my
exhalations?

ANGEL

Be silent, grim monsters
of the dark caverns!
vanish, you spectres, disappear, you
shades,
and hear the laws of the eternal King.

6. Recitative

Lucifer

Who are you? Who is this King
who advances and penetrates where I
reign?

Angel

He is a King of glory, a King of power
and might,
against whom your power cannot
resist.

Lucifer

If you speak of whom I am thinking,
put to death this very day,
he cannot deny that my power has
prevailed against
him.

Angel

How blindly you deceive yourself! Do
you not see
that if he died, he who is the source of
love,
it was not by act of yours, but only for
love.

7. Aria

ANGEL

It was the advice of love
in the Son that paid the Father
the price of sin;
to give back to man
that life which the tasting
of an apple took away.

8. Recitative

LUCIFER

And so, this God of yours,
enamoured with man,
and who today wanted to die
for him, what more would he
presume?
If to pay me due homage
he makes his way down to these
depths,

let him come. But if he claims...

ANGEL

Be silent, for now you will see him,
arrogant monster!
You will see how disappointed death,
flies away from him;
you will see how confounded guilt,
stares terrified at him;
you will see how pain
hides in terror;
you will see how you yourself
will tremble,
kneeling at his great name.

LUCIFER

Me trembling! Me so cowardly!
When? How?
I will upturn the abyss,
from its very centre
I will dissipate the earth;
to the air with my breath,
to the fire with my sighs,
with ambition for heaven I'll wage war.

9. Aria

LUCIFER

O you dread powers
of Erebus,
rise, be armed with me
with anger and courage.
And let the fearful snakes
of the Eumenides,
with their fierce hissings,
show to the heaven
that hell still has
its thunderbolts.

10. Accompagnato

MARY MAGDALENE

Night, sorrowful night,
you that mourn with grief-filled
darkness
the setting of the divine Sun;
let me weep also,
do not with tyrant drowsiness
disturb the trouble
of my justified grief.

11. Aria

MARY MAGDALENE

Stop your wings, and over my eyes
do not fly, ungrateful sleep.
if you presume
to dry my sad tears,
first let them cry
as much as the rivers of blood
shed by my God in dying for me.

12. Recitative

MARY CLEOPHAS

Allow, oh Magdalene,
some respite to your suffering,
for to languish without ceasing
can shorten both your life and your
pain;
but so justified is sorrow
for a God who has died,
that it is not proper to shorten it.

MARY MAGDALENE

Cleophas, in vain you advise rest,
when in my loving heart
the greater agony lies in every
moment
that could be free of torment.

MARY CLEOPHAS

If your true grief
desires only pain,
I would not restrain it
but would only unite my sorrow with
yours.

13. Aria

MARY CLEOPHAS

Weep, yes, weep,
my doleful eyes,
and with bitter drops
sadly offer
a tribute of grief
to my dead Lord.
For as he shed
all his blood on the cross,
in dying his only words
of complaint were: I thirst.

14. Recitative

MARY MAGDALENE

Ah, my sweet Lord,
your emptied veins
asked sadly
for a brief refreshment
and cruel Israel
offered you only a drink of gall:
I remember it, and yet I do not die?

MARY CLEOPHAS

Ah, cruel and ungrateful people!
He who for you once dissolved
hard rocks into running torrents
of purest silver,
asks but a few drops from you;
you give him in recompense
such a bitter liquid;
and in remembering it does not
disdain the heart?

MARY MAGDALENE

Oh, cruel remembrance!

MARY CLEOPHAS

Oh saddest memories!

MARY MAGDALENE

Torture me still

MARY CLEOPHAS

Yes, yes, go on
increasing my grief

MARY MAGDALENE

So that in torment

MARY CLEOPHAS

So that in bigger agony

MARY MAGDALENE

I yet find delight.

MARY CLEOPHAS

I yet find relief.

MARY MAGDALENE

As I with anguished thoughts
seek at least to calm
my desire, I seem to feel in my heart
some of the suffering of my pierced
Jesus.

MARY CLEOPHAS

As in my afflicted mind
I keep my Jesus present,
his face, though deathly pale and
wounded,
Seems enough to comfort me.

15. Duet

MARY MAGDALENE

Sweet nails, beloved thorns,
ah! Come from those feet and that
hair,
and penetrate my heart.

MARY CLEOPHAS

Dear image of sorrow,
though pale and wounded,
you are my life and my beloved.

16. Recitative

ST JOHN

Oh Cleophas, oh Magdalene,
lovers and beloved of my divine
master,
oh how much I envy
those drops you now shed,
drops of pure love rather than tears;
I hope to see them very soon,
to crown my risen Lord,
changing from the dew of anguish into
pearls.

MARY MAGDALENE

John, you who were
the favourite disciple of my Jesus,
and faithful recorder
of his mysteries, you alone
can revive in my heart
some spark of calmer hope.

ST JOHN

Already, the second night,
since he laid down his life
has in its chariot of chill darkness
now fully crossed heaven's height,
and above the waters of the Ganges
the reawakening dawn now awaits
the radiant return of the new sun:
but our Sun also
promised to return to us on the third
day.
Let your grieving heart be consoled
by such a beautiful and imminent
hope.

17. Aria

ST JOHN

When it is born of love
grief in a noble heart
does not extinguish constancy.
When it is the child of faith

hope never yields
to fear.

18. Recitative

MARY CLEOPHAS

But tell us, is it true
that Jesus will rise again?

ST JOHN

He said so himself;
who will dare accuse
divine lips of uttering lies?

MARY MAGDALENE

Come then, let us go: and before the
rays
of morning gild the rim of the horizon,
let us go to watch the holy tomb,
for there we can at least
anoint with balms and perfumes
the cold and lifeless body
of him who was once our life and soul.

MARY CLEOPHAS

I am ready to follow you;
but a greater hope gives me courage,
and hearing the words of John
I hope to find alive he who is our life.

19. Aria

MARY CLEOPHAS

The weak wood ploughs the waves
and the steersman
is also confused by the danger.
But if he then sees the shore
new hope comforts him,
and he no longer fears the wind
nor the fierce raging of the sea.

20. Recitative

ST JOHN

Go forth, then, faithful
and devoted women, to the appointed
place,
for there you may find
the goal of your noble desire;
meanwhile I shall return to her whom
my Lord
entrusted as a mother to me
in the last hours of his painful agony.

MARY MAGDALENE

Most favourable to her
will be your support,
for I know from my own sufferings
what will be her pain in so harsh
destruction.

ST. JOHN

Far greater than any other's
was the grief of such a mother
at the death of such a son;
but she had a heart stronger than any
other's
to endure it; and now more constant
and firm than any other's is her hope
of seeing him risen; if it is obtained,
her joy will then compensate for her
grief.

21. Aria

ST JOHN

So the turtle dove
sometimes cries and laments
because she believes that
a ferocious bird had torn
her mate from the nest.
But when, free and graceful,
she hears him returning,
with joyful voice,
compensates her painful moan
she once uttered in her sadness.

22. Recitative

MARY MAGDALENE

If Mary then hopes,
and John still hopes, I too,
with such well-founded hope, would
allow
some respite to my distress;
but those who truly love always fear,
and from my poor but loving heart,
though hope now rules,
fear cannot be banned.
Now which of these opposing feelings
I should trust
I shall discover as I turn my steps
to the beloved cave,
the tomb of my Jesus; let John go
to comfort Mary; Cleophas, stay with
me.

23. Aria

MARY MAGDALENE

I have something in my heart,
that instead of pain,
asks me for joy.
But my heart, so used to fear,
either cannot understand
the voices of pleasure
or perhaps believes them to be
an illusion of thought.

24. Recitative

ANGEL

Come forth, indeed come forth
from the dark prison,
where for so long and dreadful a time
you have awaited this day, blessed
souls;
come forth, indeed come forth
to gaze upon, to gain the stars!
Follow the triumph of that Lord
who for you has conquered death
and unruly hell.
And be you the first to come,
oh first fathers of the human race;
let lamentation for your ancient sin
no more be heard, now that
such a Redeemer is arisen.
then let the others follow,
and in the footprints of light
that the glorious foot of the divine
Leader
marks in the shadows,
from this deep and desolate place
let them rise with him to the open
world above.
But with sounds of joy
first let your devout lips repeat:

25. Chorus

Let the victorious God
triumph, live and reign!
May so great a God live and triumph,
who spreads forth the heavens,
who gives the sun its splendour.
Because of him Cocytus
moans in terror,
by him death too
is conquered.
May so great a God live and triumph,
who gives the light to the sun.

PART 2

1. Sinfonia

2. Recitative

ST JOHN

What new marvels does the earth
bear today within its fertile womb?
The elements have wept
at the cruel death of their smith,
and a day that hopes
to see him risen
with the same tremors
it seems the earth fears the first
dawns.
But perhaps these are the final
struggles,
the final convulsions of hell,
shattered by the spear of the
victorious God.

3. Aria

ST JOHN

Here is the sun that rises from the sea
and shining with unwonted brightness
enamels the fields, and gilds the hills.
But who knows if this sun,
who today returns to life,
may be the dawn of that Sun.

4. Recitative

ST JOHN

But as my steps now draw near
to where Mary dwells,
I hope very soon to see
her hope transformed to sure faith,
and, without any peril,
the mother joyful and the Son in glory.

5. Aria

ANGEL

Let the world rise again,
happy and joyful
with its Lord.
The heavens be jubilant,
the earth be verdant,
play and laugh
the breezes with the waves,
and the grass with the flowers.

6. Accompagnato

ANGEL

In vain does hell rage in its chains
with all its monsters:
hatred, who moans in defeat,
cruelty, who sobs,
envy, who sighs,
impiety, who raves;

trembling iniquity,
hesitant anger,
astonished fraud,
derided treachery,
despised pride:
to my risen Lord those will be
triumphal chariot and base for his
throne.

7. Recitative

LUCIFER

Woe is me! Have I heard aright?
Do I take up arms against superior
power
and attempt revenge in vain?

ANGEL

Yes, yes, you strive in vain; go back to
Cocytus!

LUCIFER

Why does your risen God
Not first return to Heaven?

ANGEL

Because he wants to make known on
earth
the mystery of his glory.

LUCIFER

Do you see my outrage? No, it shall
not be!

8. Aria

LUCIFER

To hide this new insult
I shall this very day
blow out his torches with one breath.
And with poisonous darkness
I shall confuse every notion
in weak human minds.

9. Recitative

ANGEL

Oh how blindly your fury raves!
Look, fool, look
at the pious women who hasten
to the hollowed rock, once the tomb
of the divine body.
Heaven commands that I
reveal to them the mystery;
so that in proclaiming it to others
they shall be trumpeters of the truth.

10. Duet

LUCIFER

I know how to prevent that!

ANGEL

It is a hard trial!

LUCIFER

I have courage enough!

ANGEL

The outcome will prove it!

11. Recitative

MARY MAGDALENE

My friend, our steps were too slow:

already the sun ascends into the heavens.

MARY CLEOPHAS

The heart was too cowardly,
for the unexpected tremors of the earth
rooted our feet to the ground.

MARY MAGDALENE

Now who knows if we shall be able
to look in the tomb for my beloved?

MARY CLEOPHAS

If the guards are awake, I fear we may
not.

MARY MAGDALENE

I fear too, but more greatly I love my
God.

12. Aria

MARY MAGDALENE

Jesus did not fear
to die for me.
He gives me courage;
because of him I fear nothing,
neither death not torment;
when Jesus is in my heart I am no
longer afraid.

13. Recitative

LUCIFER

Ah, abhorred name!
Ah, how you weaken,
all my strength!
Ah, conquered and confounded,
terrified and outwitted,
I escape from Heaven, from earth and
the world;
and into the lowest depths
I fall once more in the deep abyss.

14. Aria

MARY CLEOPHAS

I see the sky, becoming
serene and more radiant.
And ever brighter in my heart
burn hope's lovely rays.

15. Recitative

MARY MAGDALENE

Cleophas, we have reached the place
where the dark shadow
Enclosed the body of our dear Lord.

MARY CLEOPHAS

I think I see, yes, truly I do see
that tomb is already open,
and on the right-hand side
there sits a young man
wearing a white robe.

MARY MAGDALENE

Oh what grace shines
from his face and brings me comfort!
Let us approach him, for already he is
looking at us.

ANGEL

You women seek

Jesus of Nazareth
where he once lay in death;
he is no longer here, but already he
has risen!

It is in justice to your pure love
that Heaven grants
so rich a reward,
and so great a miracle is first revealed
to you,
so that you may become heralds of his
truth.
Therefore go forth and make it known,
and let
the reward for your tears
be the first proclamation of universal
glory.

16. Aria

ANGEL

As it was by the sin of sad woman
that death seeped its cruel poison
into the heart of man:
so women are given the happy news
that he who conquered death, once
dead
and now risen, has revived life itself.

17. Recitative

MARY MAGDALENE

My Jesus, my Lord,
now that you are risen,
why, oh why are you hiding from my
eyes?
It is indeed true that faith can
bring the heart to revere great
mystery;
but how can love
be fully satisfied if it does not send
its beloved from the eyes to the heart?
I will seek you everywhere,
and perhaps not in vain;
for from one who truly seeks you,
never, my sweet beloved, are you far.

18. Aria

MARY MAGDALENE

From a mournful sky
the wavy tempest
changes
into a lovely rainbow.
And the heart which already
feels its Sun to be near
becomes serene
after sad languishing.

19. Recitative

MARY CLEOPHAS

Yes, yes, indeed let us seek
the footprints of our Beloved;
how happy will be she who finds him!
I shall go towards the wood,
while you make your way to the
gardens.

20. Aria

MARY CLEOPHAS

Little birds,
and placid streams
who in singing and murmuring
give praise to my Lord,
show me where he is.

Flowers and grasses,
now proud
to caress the holy feet,
ah! show my loving heart
the beautiful imprints of his steps.

21. Recitative

ST JOHN

Where are you going,
Cleophas, in such haste?

MARY CLEOPHAS

In search of Jesus, who is risen;
As Magdalene is searching too.

ST JOHN

How do you know this?

MARY CLEOPHAS

Upon the open tomb
the heavenly lip revealed it to us.

ST JOHN

So too his mother has just told me,
to whom, before all others,
the glorious sight of her Son appeared.

MARY CLEOPHAS

Oh, how happy the welcome that Son
must have had!

ST JOHN

It seemed that her lovely face,
still wet with tears,
displayed at the unexpected rays of
the divine Sun
a second dawn between smiling and
weeping.
Then joy ran rapidly
from her heart to her lips in these
words:

22. Aria

ST JOHN

Dear son, beloved God,
already my heart leaps
from my breast at seeing you.
And though torment
was slow to rob me of that heart
delight now takes it from me.

23. Recitative

MARY MAGDALENE

Cleophas, John, listen,
listen to my marvellous news!
I have seen in that garden my Lord,
who had taken the appearance of one
of the guardians.
But from his rough garments
there shone a light so pure and radiant
that my mind recognized him before
my eyes did.
Then I recognized that face,
the mirror into which Paradise gazes
to beautify itself.
I also saw the hands and the feet,
and in them I noticed, shining and
beautiful,
sparkling little stars,
that once were deadly wounds.
Then my lips made ready to kiss him,

but Jesus forbade me, and seemed to say: 'You may not touch me; I may vanish.'

ST JOHN

We can doubt no longer!

MARY CLEOPHAS

All tormenting fears are ended!

MARY MAGDALENE

Jesus is risen!

ST JOHN

He lives, who is our life.

GERMAN TRANSLATION

ERSTER TEIL

Sonata

Arie

Engel

Öffnet weit euch, ihr Pforten der Hölle!
Vor dem Leuchten des göttlichen
Strahles
wird zum Glanze die schreckliche
Nacht.
Empfangt, ihr grausigen Thore,
empfangt den Herrn der Herrlichkeit,
der König ist von Ewigkeit
in unbesiegter Macht.

Accompagnato

Lucifer

Doch welch ein heller Lichtschein
bricht in die Nacht der Unterwelt
hernieder?
Welch prächtiges Getöse
mit ungewohnten Klängen
erweckt das Echo hier in diesen
Höhlen?
Wenn er meiner Tüchtigkeit gilt,
ist der Applaus berechtigt!
Als Sieger kehre ich heute,
Bürger der Unterwelt, zu euch zurück;
ich habe mich gerächt mit stolzer
Verachtung
an jenem, der mich das Himmelreich
verlieren ließ.

Arie

Lucifer

Fiel ich auch, so hab' im Falle
kühne Kraft ich nicht verloren.
Nach dem Kampf, der mich gestürzt,
fühlte Gott sich übermächtig;
jetzt als Mensch muss er erliegen
meinem Grimme und dem Tode.

Accompagnato

Lucifer

Was seh' ich? Es sind beschwingte
Feinde,
sie wagen mir zu nahen,
sie scheu'n nicht diese Lüfte, nicht
Höllenqualm; keck
regt die Schar die Flügel.
Engel
Der finsternen Höhlen
grausige Monster, schweigt!

MARY CLEOPHAS

And our love!

24. Aria

MARY MAGDALENE

If immovable and immortal
you are risen, oh beloved Sun,
ah, let all mortals rise with you
out of their sinful state.

25. Recitative

ST JOHN

Yes, yes, with the Redeemer,
let the redeemed world rise!

Weicht, o Trugbilder, Schatten,
verschwindet
und gehorcht der Anordnung des
ewigen Königs.

Rezitativ

Lucifer

Wer bist du? Und wer ist
dein Herr, den hier sich einzudrängen
lüstet?

Engel

Der Herr der Herrlichkeit, ein
mächt'ger König,
dem nie du widerstehst mit deinen
Waffen.

Lucifer

Ich glaub' ihn zu erraten;
doch heut, geführt zum Tode,
Weiß Jener wohl, wie meine Macht ihn
beugte.

Engel

In Blindheit irrst du dich. So magst du
wissen:
Gieng er zum Tod, er, der des Lebens
Quelle, -
Nicht du hast ihn gebeugt; er starb aus
Liebe.

Arie

Engel

Die Liebe in Gnaden
hat auf sich geladen
die Sünde der Welt,
damit neues Leben,
nachdem Gott vergeben,
die Menschheit erhält.

Rezitativ

Lucifer

Nun wohl, mag denn dein König
die Menschen zärtlich lieben,
hat er, für sie verblutend,
erlitten heut den Tod, - was sucht er
mehr noch?

Gedenkt er mir zu huld'gen,
will darum er herab, wie's ihm
geziemet,
er komme! Doch verlangt er...

MARY CLEOPHAS

Let each sinner rise from his sins!

MARY MAGDALENE

And to its eternal Creator
let all creation give praise and honour!

26. Choir

Praise is said in Heaven and Earth
to him who reigns in Earth and
Heaven!
For he has risen on Earth today
to lift Earth to Heaven.

Engel

Schweige! bald wirst du's schau'n,
hoffäth'ger Wüthrich,
Wirst schau'n, wie mit Beschämung
Vor ihm der Tod sich flüchtet,
Wirst schau'n, wie in Verwirrung
Die Sünde zu ihm aufblickt,
Wirst schauen, wie voll Schrecken
Die Rächer sich verbergen;
Dich selbst wirst du noch schauen
Erzitternd auf den Knien
Vor seinem Namen.

Lucifer

Ich zittern! Ich im Staube! Wann und
wie denn?
Im Aufruhr sprengt die Hölle
den Erdenball in Trümmer,
die sie den Himmel schleudert;
die Luft beherrscht mein Odem,
mein Hauch gebeut dem Feuer;
aus aller Welt beruf' ich meine
Streiter.

Arie

Lucifer

Auf, ihr gewaltigen
Mächte der Unterwelt,
furchtbar im Waffenglanz
stürmet hervor!
Schreckliche Furien
reizt eure Schlangen auf!
Lasset dem Himmel sie
zischend verkündigen,
dass unser Flammenblitz
bald zuckt empor.

Accompagnato

Magdalena

Trauer, o Nacht, bedeutet
dein tiefes Dunkel, — Trauer,
da nun des Himmels Licht
untergegangen.
Vergönn' auch mir die Trauer!
Entsende nicht den Schlummer,
der grausam stillt das Weinen;
ach, störe nicht den Kummer!

Arie

Magdalena

Schweb', o Schlaf, an mir vorüber,
nicht herab auf meine Augen!
Musst du endlich

einmal trocknen meine Zähren,
lass' zuvor soviel mich weinen
als des Blutes schon in Strömen
er, mein Gott, für mich vergossen.

Rezitativ

Kleophe

Nicht immer, Magdalena,
gib hin dich solchem Schmerze!
Unausgesetztes Grämen
nagt an dem Leben, kürzt mit ihm sich
selber;
und doch soll unser Trauern
um ihn, der uns zum Heile
als Gottmensch starb, zu kurze Zeit
nicht dauern.

Magdalena

Vergebens ist dein Mahnen,
mein Leid kennt keine Ruh', ich kann
nicht anders.
nur bitt'rer noch und schwerer wär'
die Stunde,
wo ich nicht fühlte in der Brust die
Wunde.

Kleophe

Kannst einzig du nach Wehmuth
Und nach dem Schmerz dich sehnen,
So will ich nimmer mahnen;
Es fließen im Verein auch meine
Thränen.

Arie

Kleophe

So weinet denn, o weinet,
ihr meine Augensterne!
Ihr brächtet ja so gerne
dem Herrn, der Pein und Not
erlitten bis zum Tod.
Den Zoll des Dankes!
Ihr sah't am Kreutz ihn hangen,
von Sterbensqual verzehret,
in lechzendem Verlangen
des Labetranks.

Rezitativ

Magdalena

Ach Jesus, teurer Jesus!
Die Lippen, im Verschmachten,
begehren nach Erquickung
und rufen aus: mich dürstet!
Doch Israels Barbaren
entbieten dir zu trinken
nur Galle. Schauernd seh' ich's, und
kann leben?

Kleophe

O grausames Geschlecht, o Volk voll
Undank!
Dein Gott, der in der Wüste
aus Felsen einst dir rauschen ließ die
Bäche
des silberklaren Wassers,
verlangt nur wenige Tropfen;
du reichest ihm zum Lohne
so bitteres Getränk! Und bei dem
Anblick
ist nicht mein Herz gebrochen?

Magdalena

O schmerzliches Erinnern!

Kleophe

Entsetzliches Gedenken!

Magdalena

Doch ich vermeid' es nicht;

Kleophe

Nein, nein, ich heg' es,
den Gram noch zu vertiefen;

Magdalena

Denn der Kummer

Kleophe

Denn diese herbe Trauer

Magdalena

Ist Wonne mir;

Kleophe

Ist mir zugleich ein Labsal.

Magdalena

Mit meinem Herrn zu leiden
war ja mein einzig Wünschen und
Verlangen;
Mir ist, als hätt' ich selber
Teil an der Pein, die er am Kreutz
erduldet.

Kleophe

Wenn ich, gebeugten Herzens,
sein Bild vor Augen habe,
den wunden Leib, die schlaffen
Glieder, ist mir
als ob sein Angesicht mir tröstend
lächle.

Duett

Magdalena

Süsse Dornen seiner Krone.
Tief in meine Seele bohre
euer Stachel nun sich ein!

Kleophe

Jesu Bild, das schmerzenreiche,
blutgefärbte, todesbleiche,
soll mein Gut und Leben sein.

Rezitativ

Johannes

O Kleophe, o Magdalena,
ihr, die der Meister selbst so wert
gehalten, –
wie rühren mich die Tränen,
Tautropfen süßer Schmerzen,
die ihr geweint um ihn aus treuer
Liebe!
Doch schon seh' ich sie glänzen
im Diadem des Wiederauferstand'nen,
verwandelt seh' ich sie in reine Perlen.

Magdalena

Johannes, du warst immer
dem Herren lieb, der liebste seiner
Jünger,
und du hast stets erfahren

was er geheim gedacht; nur du
vermagst
den Funken stiller Hoffnung
mir in der bangen Brust neu zu
beleben.

Johannes

Schon kam zum zweiten Male,
seit er im Tod erstarrte,
die Nacht heran, und seht, ihr
schwarzer Wagen
hat schon erreicht den Höhepunkt des
Himmels,
lenkt abwärts schon; es harret
das Morgenrot am Horizont des Tages;
bald kehrt zurück die Sonn' in vollem
Glanze.
Auch Jesus, uns're Sonne,
verhieß, zurück zu sein am dritten
Tage.
So sei von euch, die schwer der
Schmerz getroffen,
als Trost erfasst dies nahe schöne
Hoffen.

Arie

Johannes

Ist ein Kummer Frucht der Liebe,
so vermag die starke Seele
festen Mut sich zu erhalten.
Treue Liebe lässt den Glauben
sich nicht rauben,
lässt statt Sorge Hoffnung walten.

Rezitativ

Kleophe

Doch sage, ist's Gewissheit,
dass Jesus aufersteht?

Johannes

Er hat's verkündet;
wer dürfte sich vermessen
zu zweifeln an dem Wort, das er
gesprochen?

Magdalena

So lass' uns eilen! Und bevor die
Strahlen
des neuen Tags den Himmel goldig
säumen,
sind wir zur Stelle schon, am heil'gen
Grabe,
dass wir, eh' er's verlassen,
die noch entseelten Glieder
mit Balsam salben und mit duft'gem
Öle
dem Herren, der uns Leben war und
Seele!

Kleophe

Gern werd' ich dich begleiten,
doch will mein Hoffen schon sich
höher heben;
des Freundes Wort lässt ahnen
es sei bereits lebendig unser Leben.

Arie

Kleophe

Wellen toben um den Nachen,
seine schwachen Planken krachen,
und der Schiffer zag in Not.

Doch der Anblick nahen Landes
lässt die Hoffnung neu erwachen;
mutig trotz er den Gefahren,
denkt nicht mehr was ihm gedroht.

Rezitativ

Johannes

Ja, geht zum Grab, ihr Frau'n, ihr
treuen Herzen,
ja, tut wie ihr beschlossen!
Ihr könnt am heil'gen Orte
vielleicht das fromme Liebeswerk noch
üben,
indess ich mich zu ihr zurück begeben,
die in der Todesstunde
er mir als meine Mutter anbefohlen.

Magdalena

Ach ja, sei du die Stütze,
der sie bedarf vor Allen!
Den wie der Schmerz beschaffen,
der ihr das Herz durchbohrt, sagt mir
der meine.

Johannes

Ein Schmerz war's ohne gleichen,
als solche Mutter schaute
das Sterben solchen Sohnes;
doch war auch ihre Seele
die größte im Ertragen. Bald erfüllt sich
die Hoffnung, die in ihr nichts kann
erschüttern,
dass der Gestorb'ne wieder
auferstehe;
dann ist ihr Glück so groß wie jetzt ihr
Wehe.

Arie

Johannes

Die Turteltaube härm't sich
und klagt um den Gefährten,
da ihn, den unbewehrten,
grausam des Geiers Fänge
hinweggeraubt vom Nest.
Doch horch, – das ist sein Rufen!
Befreit kehrt er zurücke.
Nun jubelt sie im Glücke;
verwandelt sind die Klänge
die ihr der Gram erpresst.

Rezitativ

Magdalena

Wenn fest sie beide hoffen,
Maria und Johannes,
darf wohl ich selber mit so froher
Hoffnung
die Leiden mir erleichtern.
Doch muss ja wer da liebet immer
fürchten;
und will ich auch nunmehr zu hoffen
wagen,
kann doch mein Herz voll Liebe
die Furcht noch nicht verbannen.
Ach, dieses bange Schwanken,
dies Streiten der Gefühle
kann sich allein entscheiden
dort bei der teuren Grotte,
an meines Jesu Gruft. Mag denn

Johannes

die Mutter trösten; wir geh'n nach
dem Grabe.

Arie

Magdalena

Ein Etwas in der Brust
ermuntert mich zur Lust
nach langem Klagen.
Gar süß die Stimme tönt;
doch ich, an Furcht gewöhnt,
verstehe kaum sie noch;
vielleicht will sie mir doch
von Lust nicht sagen.

Rezitativ

Engel

Vernehmt im Schoß der Erde
die Kunde der Befreiung,
die ihr so lang in schauerlichem Dunkel
geharret dieses Tags, ihr frommen
Seelen!

Erhebet euch zum Lichte,
blickt auf zum Himmel, der für euch
sich öffnet!

Ihr alle sollt den Herren,
der für euch überwunden Tod und
Hölle,
geleiten im Triumph;
und ihr zieht an der Spitze
ehrwürd'ge Eltern aller Erdenvölker!
Verstummen darf die Klage
und jene erste Sünde,
denn euch erstand der Heiland als
Erlöser.

Dann folgt ihr Andern nach
und steigt auf lichten Spuren,
die der erhab'ne Führer
mit siegbewusstem Tritt prägt in die
Schatten,
aus diesen engen, nachtumhüllten
Tiefen
empor in Freuden auf die off'ne Erde.
Doch soll zuvor ertönen
Lob, Preis und Dank in festlich hohem
Chore.

Chor

Der göttlich starke Held
er herrsche nun für immer!
Es lebe und siege der Gott, der so groß
ist,
dass er die Himmel ausweitet,
dass er der Sonne Glanz verleiht.
Durch ihn stöhnt Kokytos
vor Entsetzen,
er besiegte
sogar den Tod.
Es lebe und siege der Gott, der so groß
ist,
dass er der Sonne Licht verleiht.

ZWEITER TEIL

Sinfonia

Rezitativ

Johannes

Will heut' die bebende Erde
gebären neue Wunder, neue
Schrecken?
Klagt nur, ihr Elemente,

da der Unsterbliche, der euch
geschaffen, starb!
Schon aber dürft ihr hoffen
erstanden ihn zu sehen.
Den Morgen der Entscheidung
erharret das Erdreich bang mit solchem
Zittern.
Doch ist's vielleicht die Hölle,
die zuckend ringt in ihrem letzten
Krampfe,
denn des Besiegers Speer traf sie
vernichtend.

Arie

Johannes

Aus dem Meer hebt sich die Sonne.
Klarer Goldschein ihrer Strahlen
glänzt im Tal und auf den Höhen.
Diese Sonne kommt als Bote,
uns den Aufgang zu verkünden
jener andern, größern Sonne.

Rezitativ

Johannes

Dort, wo Maria weilet
und sicher mich erwartet,
werd' ich alsbald erfahren
wie Hoffnung sich verwandelt in
Gewissheit;
die Mutter schau' ich dort in sel'ger
Freude,
den Sohn in Siegesprangen.

Arie

Engel

Erde, erwache!
Jauchze in Wonne:
er ist erwacht!
Himmelszelt, leuchte!
Wiesenthal, grüne!
Blume und Schmetterling,
Lufthauch und Welle
scherzet und lacht!

Accompagnato

Engel

Vor Wut und Scham erzittern
gefesselt nun der Hölle Ungeheuer.
Der Hass sich stöhnend windet,
der wilde Blutdurst weinet,
die Missgunst seufzet leise,
die Gottesläst' rung raset;
die Bosheit sieht man beben,
den Zorn wie taumelnd wanken
und den Betrug in Ängsten;
Gelächter höhnt den Hochmut,
den Treubruch straft Verachtung;
sie alle liegen knirschend
zu Füßen meines Herrn an seinem
Throne.

Rezitativ

Lucifer

Weh' mir! Was musst' ich hören!
Umsonst hätt' ich gerüstet?
Die Hoffnung, mich zu rächen, müsste
schwinden?

Engel

Ja, ja, es war umsonst; hinab zur Hölle!

Lucifer

Warum kehrt der Erstand'ne
noch nicht zurück zum Himmel?

Engel

Weil er zuvor der Erde
will Kunde geben von des Siegs
Bedeutung.

Lucifer

Kunde von meiner Schmach? Nein,
nimmer, nimmer!

Arie

Lucifer

Nie an's Licht darf meine Schande;
heut' noch wird vor meinem Hauche
deine Leuchte erloschen sein.
In den schwachen Menschenseelen
alles Denken zu verwirren,
breche Finsternis herein!

Rezitativ

Engel

O wie dein Wüten dir den Sinn
verblendet!
Blick' auf, du Thor, und sieh' dort
die frommen Frau'n, die zu der
Felsengrotte,
zum leeren Grab, von dem die
Wächter flohen,
die eil'gen Schritte lenken!
Ihnem – so will's der Himmel –
verkünd' ich das Geheimnis;
und schnell es zu verbreiten
sind sie gewiss die allerbesten Boten.

Duett

Lucifer

Ich hind're sie.

Engel

Das wird dir nicht gelingen.

Lucifer

Es ist mein Wille!

Engel

Bald wirst du es sehen.

Rezitativ

Magdalena

O Freundin, viel zu langsam
war unser Schritt; schon steht die
Sonn' am Himmel.

Kleophe

Der Schreck hat es verschuldet,
der unsern Fuß so unversehens
lähmte,
als unter ihm die Erde plötzlich bebte.

Magdalena

Doch ist's vielleicht noch möglich,
zu kommen in das Grab und dort zu
suchen.

Kleophe

Sind schon die Hüter munter, würd' ich
fürchten.

Magdalena

Mir selber bangt, doch stärker ist die
Liebe.

Arie

Magdalena

Für mich ist er gestorben,
kein Zagen kannte er.
Das hat mir Mut erworben,
für ihn mich ohne Zagen
in Tod und Qual zu wagen;
hab' ich im Herzen ihn, nichts fürcht'
ich mehr.

Rezitativ

Lucifer

Ach, dieser tief Gehasste!
Ach, hör' ich nur ihn nennen,
will schon die Kraft mir schwinden.
Vergeblich war mein Ringen,
nichts soll mir mehr gelingen,
verspottet und voll Scham muss ich
entfliehen;
zurück muss ich zum Abgrund, –
so stürz' ich mich hinab wo er am
tiefsten!

Arie

Kleophe

Rein und klar vor meinem Augen
wölbt der Himmel sich im Glanze;
und so leuchten auch im Herzen
mir der Hoffnung hellste Strahlen.

Rezitativ

Magdalena

Nunmehr sind wir zur Stelle,
allwo des Grabes Dunkel
den heil'gen Leichnam uns'res Herrn
bedeckte.

Kleophe

Ist denn nicht schon –, ja, ja, nun seh'
ich deutlich:
Das Grab ist schon geöffnet,
und an der rechten Seite
sitzt dort im weißen Kleide
ein wunderbarer Jüngling.

Magdalena

Welche Anmut
in seinem holden Blick, so sanft und
tröstend!
Er hat uns schon geseh'n; so geh'n wir
näher!

Engel

Kommt nur, ihr guten Frauen!
Ihr sucht Jesum von Nazareth,
der hier ruht in Tode?
Jesus ist nicht mehr hier, er ist
erstanden.
Für eure treue Liebe,
für gläubiges Vertrauen,
will euch der Himmel lohnen:
Zu erst erfahret ihr ein solches
Wunder,
auf dass ihr aller Welt könnt Zeugnis
geben.
So gehet denn nun hin, es zu
verkünden!

Dem Schmerze folgt die Freude,
die ihr genießen sollt vor allen Andern.

Aria

Engel

Wenn in Eden durch Schuld eines
Weibes
der Tod das unselige Giftkorn
dem Menschen ins Herz gestreut,
bringen Frauen die selige Botschaft,
dass, der sterbend den Tod
überwunden,
nun erstanden das Leben erneut.

Rezitativ

Magdalena

O Jesus, o mein Teurer!
Da schon du auferstanden,
warum verbirgst du dich vor meinen
Blicken?
Zwar weiß die Lieb' in Demut
das große Wunder gläubig anzubeten;
doch kann das Herz voll Liebe
wohl ganz beglückt sich fühlen,
wenn nicht die Augen schau'n den
Heißeersehten?
Zu suchen will ich gehen
und hoffe auch zu finden;
denn wer dich treulich sucht,
dem wirst du, teurer Herr, dich nicht
entziehen.

Arie

Magdalena

Die Wolke, der kaum noch
entströmten die Wogen,
in farbigen Bogen
verwandelt sie sich.
Sagt Ahnung dem Herzen,
dass nah' seine Sonne,
vergisst es der Schmerzen
und pocht wonniglich.

Rezitativ

Kleophe

Ja, ja, wir wollen suchen
nach uns'res Herren Spur; o wie so
glücklich
wird die sein, die ihn findet!
Ich spähe im Gehölze,
du wendest dorthin dich nach jenem
Garten.

Arie

Kleophe

Munt're Vöglein,
klare Bäche,
die ihr singend, die ihr rieselnd
euren Herrn und Schöpfer lobet,
sagt mir doch, wo weilet er?
Und ihr Blumen,
sehnlich wünschend
nur die Sohlen ihm zu küssen,
ach verrätet meiner Liebe
wo zuletzt er schritt einher!

Rezitativ

Johannes

Siehe, da kommt die Freundin!
Kleophe, wohin so eilig?

Kleophe

Ich suche unsern Herrn, er ist
erstanden!
Ihn sucht auch Magdalena.

Johannes

Woher wisst ihr's?

Kleophe

Dort an dem off 'nen Grabe
hat es uns kund getan ein
Himmelsbote.

Johannes

Und ich erfuhr es vorhin durch Maria,
der Jesus sich am ersten
als treuer Sohn in seiner Glorie zeigte.

Kleophe

O welche Lust empfand wohl da die
Mutter!

Johannes

Im Anfang schien ihr Antlitz,
auf dem die Tränen noch nicht ganz
getrocknet,
im jäh'n Strahl der hohen
Gottessonne
verwandelt ganz, wie Morgenröte
glühend;
dann strömte rasch die Freude
vom Herzen auf die Lippen in den
Worten:

Teurer Sohn, geliebter Heiland!
Wie das Herz mir
in der Brust will schier vergehen!
Wenn zuvor es
fast gebrochen war im Schmerze,

so zerfließt es jetzt vor Wonne.

Rezitativ

Magdalena

Kleophe, Johannes! Höret,
hört, welches Glück soeben ich
erlebte!
Im Garten drüben sah' ich unsern
Herrn,
in niedriger Gestalt, gleich einem
Wärter;
doch von dem schlichten Kleide
gingaus ein Glanz und Schimmer, solch
ein Leuchten,
dass schon von fern das Herz ihn
konnt' erraten.
Die Züge dann erkannt' ich,
in denen sich die Schönheit
des Paradieses spiegelt;
auch sah' ich seine Hand, sah' seine
Füße,
an denen sich noch frisch die Male
zeigten
von jenen Schmerzenswunden,
nur in verklärtem Schein, wie reine
Sterne.
zu küssen sie, bracht' ich die Lippen
nahe;
doch er wies mich zurück, als wollt' er
sagen:
„O rühre mich nicht an! Ich mag
verschwinden.“

Johannes

Nun seid ihr überzeugt.

Kleophe

Fort ist nun jeder Zweifel.

Magdalena

Erstanden ist der Herr!

Johannes

Er lebt und atmet neu.
Kleophe
Ist wieder unser!

Arie

Magdalena

Bist du nun zum ew'gen Leben,
o mein Heiland, auferstanden,
so erlösest du uns Alle
von der Sünde schweren Banden.

Rezitativ

Johannes

Ja, ja, mit dem Erlöser
soll neu die Welt erwachen.

Kleophe

Für seine Schuld empfängt der Sünder
Gnade.

Magdalena

Drum soll dem ew'gen Schöpfer
alles Erschaff 'ne danken und
lobsingen.

Chor

Preis im Himmel, Preis auf Erden,
ihm, der Erd' und Himmel lenkt,
dessen Wandel auf der Erde
ihr den Himmel hat geschenkt!
ENDE

CD49-51

JEPHTHA

1. Ouverture

2. Menuet

ACT ONE

Scene 1: Zebul with his brethren.

3. 1. Accompagnato

ZEBUL

It must be so - or these vile
Ammonites,
our lordly tyrants, now these eighteen
years,
will crush the race of Israel.-
Since Heaven vouchsafes not,
with immediate choice,
to point us out a leader, as before,
ourselves must choose
and who so fit a man,
us Gilead's son, our brother, valiant
Jephtha?
—
True, we have slighted, scorn'd,
expell'd him
hence,
as of a stranger born:
but well I know him;
his gen'rous soul disdains a mean
revenge,
when his distressful country calls his
aid.
And, perhaps, Heaven may favour our
request,
if with repentant hearts we sue for
mercy.

4. 2. Air

ZEBUL

Pour forth no more unheeded pray'rs
to Idols deaf and vain.
No more with vile unhallow'd airs
the sacred rites profane.

5. 3. Chorus

No more to Ammon's god and king,
fierce Moloch, shall our cymbals ring,
in dismal dance around the furnace
blue.
Chemosh no more
will we adore
with timbrell'd anthems to Jehovah
due.

Scene 2: Enter Jephtha and Storgè.

6. Recitative

ZEBUL

But Jephtha comes. -
Kind Heaven, assist our plea. -
O Jephtha, with an eye of pity look
on thy repentant brethren in distress.
Forgetful of thy wrongs, redress thy
sire,
thy friends, thy country, in extreme
despair.

JEPHTHA

I will: so please it Heav'n;

and these the terms:

If I command in war, the like command
(should Heaven vouchsafe us a
victorious
peace)
shall still be mine.

ZEBUL

Agreed; be witness, Heaven.

7. 4. Air

JEPHTHA

Virtue my soul shall still embrace,
goodness shall make me great.
Who builds upon this steady base,
dreads no event of fate.
Virtue my Soul... da capo
8. Recitative
STORGÈ
"Twill be a painful separation. Jephtha,
to see thee harness'd for the bloody
field.
But ah! how trivial arc a wife's
concerns,
when a whole nation bleeds,
and groveling lies,
panting for liberty and life.

9. 5. Air

STORGÈ

In gentle murmurs will I mourn,
as mourns the mate-forsaken dove:
And sighing wish thy dear return
to liberty and lasting love.
Exeunt.

Scene 3: Enter Hamor and Iphis

10. Recitative

HAMOR

Happy this embassy, my charming
Iphis,
which once more gives thee to my
longing
eyes.
As Cynthia, breaking from th'involving
clouds
on the benighted traveller;
the sight of thee, my love,
drives darkness and despair.
Again I live; in thy sweet smiles I live,
as in thy father's ever-watchful care
our wretched nation feels new life,
new joy.
O haste, and make my happiness
complete!

11. 6. Air

HAMOR

Dull delay, in piercing anguish,
bids thy faithful lover languish.
While he pants for bliss in vain.
Oh! With gentle smiles relieve me;
let no more false hope deceive me,
nor vain fears inflict a pain.

12. Recitative

IPHIS

Ill suits the voice of love
when glory calls,
and bids thee follow Jephtha to the
field.

There act the hero, and let rival deeds
proclaim thee worthy to be call'd his
son:
And Hamor shall not want his due
reward.

13. 7. Air

IPHIS

Take the heart you fondly gave,
lodg'd in your breast with mine.
Thus with double ardour brave,
sure conquest shall be thine.
Take the heart you fondly gave,
lodg'd in your breast with mine.

14. Recitative

HAMOR

I go; - my soul, inspir'd by thy
command,
thirsts for the battle. - I'm already
crown'd
with the victorious wreath; and thou,
fair
prize,
more worth than fame or conquest,
thou art mine.

15. 8. Duet

IPHIS, HAMOR

These labours past, how happy we!
How glorious will they prove!
When gath'ring fruit from conquest's
tree,
we deck the feast of love.
These labours... da capo
Exeunt
Scene 4: Jephtha alone.

16. Recitative

JEPHTHA

What menu these doubtful fancies of
the
brain?
Visions of joy rise in my raptur'd soul,
there play a while, and set in darksome
night.
Strange ardour fires my breast;
my arms seem strung
with tenfold vigour, and my crested
helm
to reach the skies. - Be humble still, my
soul.
It is the Spirit of God, in whose great
name
I offer up my vow.

17. 9. Accompagnato

JEPHTHA

If, Lord, sustain'd by thy almighty
pow'r,
Ammon I drive, and his insulting
bands,
from these our long-uncultivated
lands,
and safe return a glorious conqueror; -
what, or who ever shall first salute
mine eyes,
shall be for ever thine, or fall a
sacrifice.
Enter Israelites.
Recitative

JEPHTHA

'Tis said.-

Attend, ye Chiefs, and with united
voice
invoke the holy name of Israel's God.

18.10. Chorus

O God, behold our sore distress,
omnipotent to plague, or bless!
But turn thy wrath, and bless once
more
thy servants, who thy name adore.
Exeunt.

Scene 5: Storgè alone.

19. Recitative

STORGÈ

Some dire event hangs o'er our heads,
some woeful song we have to sing
in misery extreme. - O, never, never
was my foreboding mind disturb'd
before
with such incessant pangs.

20.11. Air

STORGÈ

Scenes of horror, scenes of woe,
rising from the shades below,
add new terror to the night.
While in never-ceasing pain,
that attends the senile chain,
joyless flow the hours of light.
Scenes of horror... da capo
Scene 6: Enter Iphis.

21. Recitative

IPHIS

Say, my dear mother,
whence these piercing cries
that force me, like a frighted bird,
to fly my place of rest? -

STORGÈ

For thee I fear, my child;
such ghastly dreams last night
surpris'd my soul.

IPHIS

Heed not these black illusions of the
night,
the mocking of unquiet slumbers, heed
them
'not.

My father, touch'd with a diviner fire,
already seems to triumph in success, -
nor doubt I but Jehovah hears our
pray'rs.

22.12. Air

IPHIS

The smiling dawn of happy days
presents a prospect clear,
and pleasing hope's all-bright'ning rays
dispel each gloomy fear.

While ev'ry charm that peace displays
makes spring-time all the year.

The smiling dawn... da capo
Exeunt.

Scene 7: Enter Zebul and Jephtha.

23. Recitative

ZEBUL

Such, Jephtha, was the haughty king's
reply:

No terms, but ruin, slavery, and death.

JEPHTHA

Sound then the last alarm;
and to the field,
ye sons of Israel, with intrepid hearts;
dependent on the might of Israel's
God.

24.13. Chorus

When his loud voice in thunder spoke,
with conscious fear the billows broke,
observant of his dread command.
In vain they roll their foaming tide;
confin'd by that great pow'r.
that gave them strength to roar,
they now contract their boist'rous
pride,
and lash with idle rage the laughing
strand.

ACT TWO

Scene 1: Enter Hamor and Iphis.

1. Recitative

HAMOR

Glad tidings of great joy to thee, dear
Iphis,
and to the house of Israel I bring.

Thus then, in brief. -

Both armies in array of battle rang'd,
our general stept forth,
and offer'd haughty Ammon terms of
peace,

most just and righteous;
these with scorn refus'd,
he bade the trumpet sound:

but scarce a sword
was ting'd in hostile blood, ere all
around

the thund'ring heavens open'd, and
pour'd
forth

thousands of armed Cherubim: when
straight

our general cried: »This is thy signal,
Lord,

I follow thee, and thy bright heav'nly
host.«

Then rushing on proud Ammon, all
aghast,
he made a bloody slaughter, and
pursued
the flying foe, till night bade sheathe
the

sword,

and taste the joys of victory and peace.

94668 Handel: Jephtha

2. 14. Chorus

Cherub and Seraphim, unbodied
forms,
the messengers of fate,
his dread command await:
of swifter flight, and subtler frame,
than lightning's winged flame,

they ride on whirlwinds, directing the
storms.

3. 15. Air

HAMOR

Up the dreadful steep ascending.
While for fame and love contending,
sought I thee, my glorious prize.
And now happy in the blessing,
Thee, my sweetest joy, possessing,
other honours I despise.

Up the dreadful... da capo

4. Recitative

IPHIS

'Tis well. Haste, haste, ye maidens,
and in richest robes
adorn me, like a stately bride,
to meet my father in triumphant
pomp.
And while around the dancing banners
play, -

5. 16. Air

IPHIS

Tune the soft melodious lute,
pleasant harp and warbling flute,
to sounds of rapt'rous joy.

Such as on our solemn days,
singing great Jehovah's praise,
the holy choir employ.

Tune the soft... da capo

Exeunt.

Scene 2: Enter Jephtha, Hamor and Zebul.

6. Recitative

JEPHTHA

Heav'n smiles once more
on his repentant people,
and Victory spreads wide her silver
wings,
to soothe our sorrows with a peaceful
calm.

Zebul, thy deeds were valiant;
nor less thine, my Hamor;
but the glory is the Lord's.

7. 18. Air

JEPHTHA

His mighty arm, with sudden blow,
dispers'd and quell'd the haughty foe.
They fell before him, as when through
the sky,

he bids the sweeping wind in
vengeance fly.

His mighty arm... da capo

8. 19. Chorus

In glory high, in might serene,
he sees, moves all, unmov'd, unseen.
His mighty arm, with sudden blow,
dispers'd and quell'd the haughty foe.

Scene 3

9. **20. Symphony**
Enter Iphis and Storgè.

10. Recitative

IPHIS
Hail, glorious conqueror!
Much-lov'd father, hail!
Behold, thy daughter, and her virgin
train,
come to salute thee with all duteous
love.

11.21. Air and Chorus

IPHIS
Welcome, as the cheerful light,
driving darkest shades of night:
welcome, as the spring that rains
peace and plenty o'er the plains!
Not cheerful day,
nor spring so gay,
such mighty blessings brings,
as peace on her triumphant wings.
(Chorus)
Welcome thou, whose deeds conspire
to provoke the warbling lyre;
welcome thou, whom God ordain'd
guardian angel of our land!
Thou wert born, his glorious name
and great wonders to proclaim.

12. Recitative

JEPHTHA
Horror! confusion! Harsh this music
grates
upon my tasteless ears. - Begone, my
child,
thou hast undone thy father. Fly,
begone,
and leave me to the rack of wild
despair.
Exit Iphis.

13.22. Air

JEPHTHA
Open thy marble jaws, O tomb,
and hide me, earth, in thy dark womb!
Ere I the name of father stain,
and deepest woe from conquest gain.
Open thy marble jaws... da capo

14. Recitative

ZEBUL
Why is my brother thus afflicted?
Say, why didst thou spurn
thy daughter's congratulations,
and fling her from thee with unkind
disdain?
JEPHTHA
O Zebul. Hamor, and my dearest wife,
behold a wretched mall;
thrown from the summit of
presumptuous joy,
down to the lowest depth of misery. -
Know then, - I vow'd,
the first I saw should fall
a victim to the living God - my
daughter,
alas! it was my daughter, and she dies.

15.23. Accomagnato and Arioso

STORGÈ
First perish thou; and perish all the
world!
Hath Heaven then bless'd us
with this only pledge
of all our love, this one dear child, for
thee
to be her murderer? No, cruel man.
Let other creatures die;
or heav'n, earth, seas, and sky
in one confusion lie,
ere in a daughter's blood,
so fair, so chaste, so good,
a father's hand's embred.

16. Recitative

HAMOR
If such thy cruel purpose; lo! Your
friend
offers himself a willing sacrifice,
to save the innocent and beauteous
maid.

17.24. Air

HAMOR
On me let blind mistaken zeal
her utmost rage employ!
"Twill be a mercy there to Kill,
"where life can taste no joy.

18.25. Quartet

ZEBUL
O spare your daughter!
STORGÈ
Spare my child!
HAMOR
My love!
JEPHTHA
Recorded stands my vow in Heav'n
above.
STORGÈ
Recall the impious vow, ere 'tis too
late.
JEPHTHA
I'll hear no more;
her doom is fix'd as fate.
HAMOR, ZEBUL, STORGÈ
And think not Heav'n delights
in Moloch's horrid rites.
Scene 4: Enter Iphis.
19. Recitative
IPHIS
Such news flies swift; -
I've heard the mournful cause
of all your sorrows.
Of my father's vow,
Heaven spoke its approbation by
success:
Jephtha hath triumph'd.
Israel is free.

20.26. Accompagnato

IPHIS
For joys so vast
too little is the price of one poor life -
but oh! Accept it, Heav'n,
a grateful victim, and thy blessings still
pour on my country,
friends, and dearest rather!

21.27. Air

IPHIS
Happy they! this vital breath
with content I shall resign,
and not murmur or repine,
sinking in the arms or death.
Happy they... da capo

22.28. Accompagnato

JEPHTHA
Deeper and deeper still, thy goodness,
child,
pierceth a father's bleeding heart, and
checks
the cruel sentence on my falt'ring
tongue.
Oh! let me whisper it to the raging
winds,
or howling deserts; for the ears of men
it is too shocking. - Yet - have I not
vow'd?
And can I think the great Jehovah
sleeps,
like Chemosh, and such fabled deities?
Ah no; Heav'n heard my thoughts,
and wrote them down.
It must be so. 'Tis this that racks my
brain,
and pours into my breast n thousand
pangs,
that lash me into madness. Horrid
thought!
My only daughter! - So dear a child,
doomb'd by a father! - Yes, the vow is
past,
and Gilead hath triumph'd o'er his
foes.
Therefore, tomorrow's dawn,
tomorrow's dawn ... I can no more.

23.29. Chorus

How dark, O Lord, are thy decrees!
All hid from mortal sight!
All our joys to sorrow turning,
and our triumphs into mourning,
as the night succeeds the day;
no certain bliss, no solid peace,
we mortals know on earth below.
Yet on this maxim still obey:
whatever is, is right.

ACT THREE

Scene 1: Jephtha, Iphis and Priests.

1. 30. Arioso

JEPHTHA

Hide thou thy hated beams, O sun,
in clouds and darkness,
deep as is a father's woe:

2. 31. Accompagnato

JEPHTHA

A father, off'ring up his only child
In vow'd return for victory and peace.

3. 32. Air

JEPHTHA

Waft her, angels, through the skies,
far above yon azure plain -
glorious there, like you, to rise,
there, like you, for ever reign.
Waft her, angels... da capo

4. 35. Accompagnato

IPHIS

Ye sacred priests, whose hands ne'er
yet
were stain'd with human blood,
why are ye thus afraid
to execute my father's will?
The call of Haev'n
with humble resignation I obey.

5. 34. Air

IPHIS

Farewell, ye limpid springs and floods,
ye flow'ry meads and leafy woods;
farewell, thou busy world, where reign
short hours or joy, and years of pain.
Brighter scenes I seek above,
in the realms or peace and love.

6. 35. Chorus of priests

Doubtful fear and reverend awe
strike us, Lord, while here we bow:
Check'd by thy all-sacred law,
yet commanded by the vow.
Hear our pray'r in this distress,
and thy determin'd will declare.

7. 36. Symphony

8. Recitative

ANGEL

Rise, Jephtha. And ye reverend priests,
withhold
the slaughterous hand. No vow can
disannul
the law of God; nor such was its intent,
when rightly scann'd: yet still shall be
fulfill'd.
Thy daughter, Jephtha, thou must
dedicate
to God, in pure and virgin-state for
ever,
as not an object meet for sacrifice,
else had she fall'n an holocaust to God.
—
The Holy Spirit, that dictated thy vow,
bade thus explain it, and approves thy
faith.

9. 37. Air

ANGEL

Happy, Iphis, shalt thou live,
while to thee the virgin choir
tune their harps of golden wire,
and their yearly tribute give.
Happy, Iphis, all thy days,
pure, angelic, virgin-state.
Shall thou live: and ages late
crown thee with immortal praise.

10.38. Arioso

JEPHTHA

For ever blessed be thy holy name,
Lord God of Israel!

11.39. Chorus

Theme sublime of endless praise,
just and righteous are thy ways;
and thy mercies still endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

Scene 2: Enter Zebul, Storgè and Hamor.

12. Recitative

ZEBUL

Let me congratulate this happy turn,
my honour'd brother, judge of Israel!
Thy faith, thy courage, constancy and
truth,
nations shall sing;
and in their just applause,
all join to celebrate thy daughter's
name.

13.40. Air

ZEBUL

Laud her, all ye virgin train,
in glad songs of choicest strain!
Ye blest angels all around,
laud her in melodious sound:
Virtues that to you belong,
love and truth demand the song.

14. Recitative

STORGÈ

O let me fold thee in a mother's arms,
and with submissive joy, my child,
receive
Thy designation to the life of Heaven.

15.41. Air

STORGÈ

Sweet as sight to the blind,
or freedom to the slave,
such joy in thee I find,
safe from the grave.
Still I'm of thee possess'd,
such is kind Heaven's decree,
that hath thy parents bless'd,
in blessing thee.

16. Recitative

HAMOR

With transport, Iphis,
I behold thy safely,
but must for ever mourn
so dear a loss:
Dear! though great Jephtha
were to honour me

still with the name of son.

17. Recitative

IPHIS

My faithful Hamor, may that
Providence
which gently claims or forces our
submission,
direct thee to some happier choice.

18.45. Quintet

IPHIS, HAMOR

All that is in Hamor (Iphis) mine,
freely I to Heaven resign.

IPHIS

Duteous to the Will Supreme,
still my Hamor I'll esteem.

HAMOR

Duteous to Almighty Pow'r,
still my Iphis I'll adore.

IPHIS, HAMOR, STORGÈ, JEPHTHA,
ZEBUL

Joys triumphant crown thy days,
and thy name eternal praise.

19.44. Chorus

Ye house of Gilead, with one voice,
in blessings manifold rejoice!
Freed from war's destructive sword,
peace her plenty round shall spread,
while in virtue's path you tread.
So are they blest who fear the Lord.
Hallelujah. Amen

CD52-53

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

PART 1

The Lamentation of the Israelites for the Death of Joseph

1. Symphony

2. Chorus

The sons of Israel do mourn,
And they are in bitterness;
All the people sigh
And hang down their heads to the ground.

3. Chorus

How is the mighty fall'n!
He that was great among the princes,
And ruler of the provinces!

4. Chorus

He put on righteousness,
And it clothed him;
His judgement was a robe and a diadem.

5. Chorus Solo

When the ear heard him,
Then it blessed him,
And when the eye saw him,
It gave witness to him.

6. Chorus

How is the mighty fall'n!
He that was great among the princes,
And ruler of the provinces!

Chorus

He deliver'd the poor that cried,
And him that had none to help him.
Kindness, meekness, and comfort were in
his tongue;
If there was any virtue,
And if there was any praise,
He thought on those things.

Chorus

How is the mighty fall'n!
He that was great among the princes,
And ruler of the provinces!

7. Chorus

The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance,
And the wise will shine as the brightness of the firmament.

8. Chorus

Their bodies are buried in peace,
But their name liveth evermore.

9. Chorus

The people will tell of their wisdom,
And the congregation will shew forth their praise;
Their reward also is with the Lord,
And the care of them is with the Most High.

10. Chorus Solo

They shall receive a glorious kingdom
And a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand.

11. Chorus

The merciful goodness of the Lord
Endureth for ever on them that fear him,
And his righteousness on children's children.

PART 2

Exodus

12. Solo and Chorus

Now there arose a new King over Egypt,
Which knew not Joseph;
And he set over Israel task-masters
To afflict them with burdens;
And they made them serve with rigour.

Chorus

And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage:
And their cry came up unto God.
They oppress'd them with burdens,
And made them serve with rigour.

13. Chorus

Then sent He Moses, His servant,
And Aaron, whom He had chosen:
These shew'd His signs among them,
And wonders in the land of Ham.
He turned their waters into blood.

Chorus

They loathed to drink of the river:
He turned their waters into blood.

14. Air

Their land brought forth frogs,
Yea, even in the King's chambers.
He gave their cattle over to the pestilence;
blotches and blains broke forth on man
and beast.

15. Chorus

He spoke the word:
And there came all manner of flies and lice
In all their quarters.
He spoke:
And the locusts came without number
And devour'd the fruits of the land.

16. Chorus

He gave them hailstones for rain;
Fire, mingled with the hail, ran along upon
the ground.

17. Chorus

He sent a thick darkness over all the land,
Even darkness, which might be felt.

18. Chorus

He smote all the first-born of Egypt,
The chief of all their strength.

19. Chorus

But as for His people, He led them forth like sheep.
He brought them out with silver and gold:
There was not one feeble person among their tribes.

20. Chorus

He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up.
He led them through the deep as through a wilderness.
But the waters overwhelmed their enemies,
There was not one of them left.

21. Chorus

And Israel saw that great work
That the Lord did upon th'Egyptians;
And the people feared the Lord.
And believed the Lord and His servant Moses.

PART 3

Moses' Song

1. Chorus

Moses and the children of Israel
Sung this song unto the Lord, and spoke,
saying:
I will sing unto the Lord,
for the hath triumphed gloriously,
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

2. Duet

The Lord is my strength and my song.
He is become my salvation.

3. Chorus

He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation:
My father's God.
And I will exalt Him.

4. Duet

The Lord is a man of war,
Lord is His name;
Pharaoh's chariots, and his host, hath he cast into the sea.
His chosen captains also
Are drowned in the Red Sea.

5. Chorus

The depths have covered them,
They sank into the bottom as a stone.

6. Chorus

Thy right hand, oh Lord,
Is become glorious in power:
Thy right hand, oh Lord,
hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

7. Chorus

And with the blast of Thy nostrils
The waters were gathered together,
The floods stood upright as an heap,
The depths were congealed in the
heart
of the sea.

8. Air

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.

9. Air

Thou didst blow with the wind:
the sea cover'd them,
They sank as lead the mighty waters.

10 Chorus

Who is like unto Thee, oh Lord,
among the Gods?
Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearfull in praises, doing wonders!

11. Duet

Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy
people
Which Thou hast redeemed.
Thou hast guided them in Thy strength
Unto Thy holy habitation.

12. Chorus

The people shall hear and be afraid:
Sorrow shall take hold on them;
All th'inhabitants of Canaan shall melt
away
By the greatness of Thy arm.
They shall be as still as a stone,
Till Thy people pass over, oh Lord,
Till Thy people pass over, which
Thou hast purchased.

13. Air

Thou shalt bring them in,
And plant them in the mountain of
Thine
inheritance,
In the place, oh Lord,
Which Thou hast made for thee to
dwell in,
In the sanctuary, oh Lord,
which Thy hands have established.

14. Chorus

The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

Tenor recitative

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister
of Aaron,
Took a timbre! in her hand,
And all the women went out after her
With timbrels and with dances,
And Miriam answered them:

15. Solo and chorus

Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath
triumphed gloriously!
The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

The horse and his rider hath He throw
into the sea.

The Lord shall reign for ever and ever:
I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath
triumphed gloriously,
The horse and his rider hath He
thrown
into the sea.

CD54-55

JUDAS MACCABAEUS

1. Overture

ACT 1

Israelites mourn Mattathias, father of
Simon and Judas Maccabeus

2. Chorus

ISRAELITES

Mourn, ye afflicted children, the
remains
Of captive Judah, mourn in solemn
strains,
Your sanguine hopes of liberty give
o'er;
Your hero, friend and father is no
more.

3. Recitative

ISRAELITE MAN

Well may your sorrows, brethren, flow
In all th' expressive signs of woe:
Your softer garments tear
And squalid sackcloth wear,
Your drooping head with ashes strew,
And with the flowing tear your checks
bedew

ISRAELITE WOMAN

Daughters, let your distressful cries
And loud lament ascend the skies;
Your tender bosoms beat, and tear
With hands remorseless your
dishevelled hair;
For pale and breathless Mattathias
lies,
Sad emblem of his country's miseries!

4. Chorus

ISRAELITES

For Zion lamentation make
With words that weep, and tears that
speak.

5. Recitative

ISRAELITE MAN

Not in vain is all this storm of grief,
To vent our sorrows gives relief.
Wretched indeed; but let not Judah's
race
Their ruin, with desponding arms,
embrace;
Distractful doubt and desperation
Ill become the Chosen Nation.

6. Aria

ISRAELITE WOMAN

Pious orgies, pious airs,
Decent sorrows, decent prayers
Will to the Lord ascend and move
His pity, and regain his love.

7. Chorus

ISRAELITES

O Father, whose almighty power
The heavens and earth and seas adore,
The hearts of Judah, thy delight,
In one defensive band unite.
And grant a leader, bold and brave,
If not to conquer, born to save.

8. Recitative

SIMON

I feel, I feel the Deity within
Who, the bright Cherubim between,
His radiant glory erst displayed;
To Israel's distressful prayer
He has vouchsafed a gracious ear,
And points out Maccabeus to their aid.
Judas shall set the captive free,
And lead us on to victory.

9. Aria

SIMON

Arm, arm, ye brave! a noble cause,
The cause of Heaven your zeal
demands.
In defence of your nation, religion and
laws,
The almighty Jehovah will
strengthen your hands.

10. Chorus

ISRAELITES

We come, we come, in bright array,
Judah, thy sceptre to obey.

11. Recitative

JUDAS

'Tis well, my friends; with transport I
behold
The spirit of our fathers, famed of old
For their exploits in war. Oh, may their
fire
With active courage you, their sons
inspire
As when the mighty Joshua fought,
And those amazing wonders wrought;
Stood still, obedient to his voice, the
sun,
Till kings he had destroyed, and
kingdoms won.

12. Aria

JUDAS

Call forth thy powers, my soul, and
dare
The conflict of unequal war.
Great is the glory of the conquering
sword
That triumphs in sweet liberty
restored.

13. Duet

ISRAELITE WOMAN and MAN

Come, ever smiling liberty
And with thee bring thy jocund train,
For thee we pant and sigh, for thee
With whom eternal pleasures reign.

14. Chorus

ISRAELITES

Lead on, lead on! Judah disdains
The galling load of hostile chains.

15. Recitative

JUDAS

So willed my father, now at rest
In the eternal mansions of the blest.
'Can ye behold,» said he, «the miseries
In which the long insulted Judah lies?
Can ye behold their dire distress
And not, at least, attempt redress?»
Then faintly, with expiring breath,
«Resolve, my sons, on liberty, or
death!»
We come! oh see, thy sons prepare
The rough habiliments of war.
With hearts intrepid, and revengeful
hands
To execute, oh sire, thy dread
commands.

16. Chorus

ISRAELITE MEN

Disdainful of danger, we'll rush on the
foe
That Thy power, oh Jehovah,
All nations may know.

17. Recitative

JUDAS

Ambition! If e'er honour was thine
aim,
challenge it here.
The glorious cause gives sanction to
thy claim

18. Aria

JUDAS

No unhallowed desire
Our breasts shall inspire.
Nor lust of unbounded power!
But peace to obtain,
Free peace let us gain,
And conquest shall ask no more.

19. Recitative

ISRAELITE MAN

Haste we, my brethren, haste we to
the field,
Dependent on the Lord, our strength
and shield.

20. Chorus

ISRAELITES

Hear us, oh Lord, on Thee we call,
Resolved on conquest, or a glorious
fall.

ACT 2

Israelites celebrate Judas's victories

21. Chorus

ISRAELITES

Fallen is the foe; so fall Thy foes, oh
Lord!
Where warlike Judas wields his
righteous sword.

22. Duet and Chorus

**ISRAELITE WOMAN, SOPRANO H,
CHORUS OF ISRAELITES**

Zion now her head shall raise
Tune your harps to songs of praise.

23. Recitative

ISRAELITE WOMAN

Oh let eternal honours crown his
name;
Judas! first worthy in the rolls of fame.
Say, «He put on the breast plate as a
giant,
and girt his warlike harness about him;
in
his acts he was like a lion, and like a
lion's
whelp roaring for his prey.»

24. Aria

ISRAELITE WOMAN

From mighty kings he took the spoil,
And with his acts made Judah smile.
Judas rejoiceth in his name,
And triumphs in her hero's fame.

25. Duet and Chorus

**ISRAELITE WOMAN and MAN,
CHORUS**

Hail, hail, Judea, happy land!
Salvation prospers in his hand.

26. Recitative

JUDAS

Thanks to my brethren; but look up to
Heaven;
To Heaven let glory and all praise be
given;
To Heaven give your applause,
Nor add the second cause,
As once your fathers did in Midian
Saying, «The sword of God and
Gideon.»
It was the Lord that for his Israel
fought,
And this our wonderful salvation
wrought.»

27 Aria

JUDAS

How vain is man, who boasts in fight
The valor of gigantic might!
And dreams not that a hand unseen
Directs and guides the weak machine

1. Recitative

ISRAELITE MESSENGER

Oh Judas, oh my brethren!
New scenes of bloody war
In all their horrors rise.
Prepare, prepare,
Or soon we fall a sacrifice
To great Antiochus from the Egyptian
coast,
Where Ptolemy hath Memphis and
Pelusium lost,
He sends the valiant Gorgias and
commands
His proud, victorious bands
To root out Israel's strength, and to
erase

Every memorial of the sacred place.

2. Aria and Chorus

ISRAELITE WOMAN and CHORUS

Ah! wretched, wretched Israel! fallen,
how low,
From joyous transport to desponding
woe.

3. Recitative

SIMON

Be comforted, nor think these plagues
are sent
For your destruction, but for
chastisement.
Heaven oft in mercy punisheth that sin
May feel its own demerits from within,
And urge not utter ruin.
Turn to God,
And draw a blessing from
His iron rod.

4. Aria

SIMON

The Lord worketh wonders
His glory to raise;
And still, as he thunders
Is fearful in praise.

5. Recitative

JUDAS

My arms! against this Gorgias will I go.
The Idumean governor shall know
How vain, how ineffective his design,
While rage his leader, and Jehaovah
mine.

6. Aria

JUDAS

Sound an alarm! Your silver trumpets
sound,
And call the brave, and only
brave;af9J.lnd.
Who listeth follow: to the field again!""
Justice with courage is a thousand
men.

7. Chorus

ISRAELITES

We hear, we hear the pleasing
dreadful call,
And follow thee to conquest; if to fall,
For laws, religion, liberty, we fall.

8. Recitative

SIMON

Enough! To Heaven we leave the rest.
Such generous ardour firing every
breast,
We may divide our cares;
The field be thine, Oh Judas,
And the Sanctuary mine;
For Zion, holy Zion, seat of God,
In ruinous heaps, is by the heathen
trod;
Such profanation calls for swift
redress,
If e'er in battle Israel hopes success.

9. Aria

SIMON

With pious hearts, and brave as pious,
o Zion, we thy call attend,
Nor dread the nations that defy us,
God our defender, God our friend.

10. Recitative

ISRAELITE MAN

Ye worshippers of God,
Down, down with the polluted altars,
down;
Hurl Jupiter Olympus from his throne,
Nor reverence Bacchus, with his ivy
crown
And ivy wreathed rod.
Our fathers never knew him, or his
beastly crew,
Or knowing, scorned such idle vanities.

ISRAELITE WOMAN

No more in Zion let the virgin throng,
Wild with delusion, pay their nightly
song
To Ashtoreth, ycleped the Queen of
Heaven.
Hence to Phoenicia be the goddess
driven,
Or be she, with her priests and
pageants, hurled
To the remotest corner of the world,
Ne'er to delude us more with pious
lies.

11. Aria

ISRAELITE WOMAN

Wise men, flattering, may deceive us
With their vain, mysterious art;
Magic charms can ne'er relieve us,
Nor can heal the wounded heart.
But true wisdom can relieve us,
Godlike wisdom from above;
This alone can never deceive us,
This alone all pains remove.

12. Duet

ISRAELITE WOMAN, MAN

Oh! never, never bow we down
To the rude stock or sculptured stone,
But ever worship Israel's God,
Ever obedient to his awful nod.

13. CHORUS

We never, never will bow down
To the rude stock or sculptured stone.
We worship God, and God alone.

ACT 3

Israelites reconsecrate the Sanctuary

14. Aria

ISRAELITE MAN

Father of Heaven! from Thy eternal
throne,
Look with an eye of blessing down,
While we prepare with holy rites
To solemnize the Feast of Lights.
And thus our grateful hearts employ:
And in Thy praise
This altar raise,
With carols of triumphant joy.

15. Recitative

ISRAELITE MAN

See, see yon flames that from the altar
broke
In spiry streams pursue the trailing
smoke
The fragrant incense mounts the
yielding air,
Sure presage that the Lord hath heard
our prayer.

16. Recitative ISRAELITE WOMAN

Oh grant it, Heaven, that our long
woes may cease,
And Judah's daughters taste the calm
of peace;
Sons, brothers, husbands to bewail no
more,
Tortured at home, or havocked in the
war.

17. Aria

ISRAELITE WOMAN

So shall the lute and harp awake,
And sprightly voice sweet descant run,
Seraphic melody to make
In the pure strains of Jesse's son.
Enter Messenger

18. Recitative

ISRAELITE MESSENGER

From Capharsalama on eagle wings I
fly
With tidings of impetuous joy!
Came Lysias with his host arrayed
In coats of mail; their massy shields
Of gold and brass, flashed lightning
o'er the fields,
While the huge tower backed
elephants displayed
A horrid front; but Judas undismayed
Met, fought and vanquished all the
rageful train!
Yet more, Nicanor lies with thousands
slain,
The blasphemous Nicanor, who defied
The living God, and in his wanton pride
A public monument ordained
Of victories yet ungained.
But Lo! the conqueror comes; and on
his spear,
To dissipate all fear
He bears the vaunter's head and hand,
That threatened desolation to the
land.
Israelites greet returning Judas

19. Chorus

YOUTHS

See the conquering hero comes!
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
Songs of triumph to him sing.

VIRGINS

See the godlike youth advaiice!
Breathe the flutes, and lead the dance;
Myrtle wreaths, and roses twine,
To deck the hero's brow divine.

FULL CHORUS

See, the conquering hero comes, etc.

20. March

21. Duet and Chorus

Sing unto God, and high affections
raist
To crown this conquest with
unmeasured praise.

22. Recitative

JUDAS

Sweet flow the strains that strike my
feasted ear;
Angels might stoop from Heaven to
hear
The comely song we sing
To Israel's Lord and King.
But pause awhile; due obsequies
prepare
To those who bravely fell in war.
To Eleazar special tribute pay;
Through slaughtered troops he cut his
way
To the distinguished elephant, and,
'whelmed beneath
The stabbed monster,
Triumphed in a glorious death.

23. Aria

JUDAS

With honour let desert be crowned,
The trumpet never in vain shall sound;
But all attentive to alarms,
The willing nations fly to arms,
And, conquering or conquered, claim
the prize
Of happy earth, or far more happy
skies.
Enter Eupolemus, the Jewish
Ambassador to Rome

24. Recitative

EUPOLEMUS

Peace to my countrymen, peace and
liberty.
From the great Senate of Imperial
Rome,
With a firm league of amity, I come.
Rome, whatever nation dare insult us
more,
Will rouse in our defence her veteran
power,
And stretch her vengeful arm, by land
or sea,
To curb the proud and set the injured
free.

25. Chorus

To our great God be all the honor
given
That grateful hearts can send from
earth to
Heaven.

26. Recitative

ISRAELITE WOMAN

Again to Earth let gratitude descend,
Praiseworthy is our hero and our
friend:

Come my fair daughters, choicest art
bestow,
To weave a chaplet for the victor's
brow;
And in your songs forever be
confessed
The valour that preserved, the power
that bless'd.
Blessed you with hours, that scatter as
they fly
Soft, quiet, gentle love, and boundless
joy.

27. Duet

ISRAELITE WOMAN, MAN

Oh lovely peace, with plenty crowned,
Come, spread thy blessings all around.
Let fleecy flocks the hills adorn,
And valleys smile with wavy corn.
Let the shrill trumpet cease, nor other
sound
But nature's songsters wake the
cheerful mom.

28. Aria

SIMON

Rejoice, oh Judah! and, in songs divine,
With Cherubim and Seraphim
harmonious join.

29. Chorus

Hallelujah! Amen.
O Judah, rejoice, and in songs divine,
With Cherubim and Seraphim
harmonious join.

CD56-57

SAMSON

ACT 1

1. Sinfonia

2. Recitative

SAMSON

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

CHORUS OF PHILISTINES

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

3. Aria

A PHILISTINE WOMAN

Ye men of Gaza, hither bring
The merry pipe and pleasing string,
In solemn hymn and cheerful song,
Be Dagon prais'd by every tongue!

4. Chorus

CHORUS OF PHILISTINES

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

5. Aria

A PHILISTINE MAN

Loud as the thunder's awful voice
In notes of triumph, notes of praise
So high great Dagon's name we'll raise,
That heaven and earth may hear how
we rejoice.

6. Recitative and Aria

SAMSON

Why by an angel was my birth foretold
If I must die,
betrayed and captivated thus
The scorn and gaze of foes?
Oh cruel thought!
My griefs find no redress,
they inward prey,
Like gangrened wounds,
immedicable grown.

SAMSON

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

7. Recitative

MICAH

O change beyond report, thought,
or belief!
See how he lies with languished head,
unpropped,
Abandoned, past all hope!
Can this be he?
Heroic Samson!
Whom no strength of man
Nor fury of the fiercest beast could
quell! Who tore
The lion as the lion tears the kid?
Ran weaponless on armies clad in iron,
Useless the tempered steel,
or coat of mail!

SAMSON

Whom have I to complain of but
myself
Who heaven's great trust could not in
silence keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it!

MICAH

Matchless in might!
Once Israel's glory, now her grief
We come, thy friends well know,
to visit thee!

SAMSON

Welcome, my friends!

MICAH

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

SAMSON

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

8. Aria

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?

9. Chorus

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

Oh first created beam!
and Thou great word:
Let there be light!
and light was over all.
One heav'nly blaze shone round this
earthly ball.
To thy dark servant, life,
by light afford!

10. Recitative

MANOAH

Brethren and men of 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!

MANOAH

o miserable change!
Is this the man,
Renowned afar,
the dread of Israel's foes.
Who with an angel's strength their
armies duelled,
Himself an army! Now unequal match
To guard his breast against the
coward's spear!

11. Aria

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.

12. Recitative and Aria

SAMSON

Justly these evils have befallen thy son.
My griefs for this forbid mine eyes
to close,
Or thoughts of rest.
But now the strife shall end:
Me overthrown,
Dagon presumes to enter lists
With God, who, thus provoked,
will not connive
But rouse his fury soon,
and his great name assert;
Dagon shall stoop,
ere long be quite despoiled
Of all those boasted trophies won
on me.

SAMSON

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!

13. Recitative and Chorus

MICAH

There lies our hope!
true prophet may'st thou be
That God may vindicate his
glorious name;
Nor let us doubt whether God is Lord,
or Dagon

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

Then shall they know that
He whose name
Jehovah is alone,
o'er all the earth but one,
Was ever the Most High
and still the same.

14. 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.

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.

15. Chorus

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

Then round about the starry throne
Of Him who ever rules alone,
Your heav'nly guided soul shall climb,
Of all this earthly grossness quit,
With glory crown'd, forever sit,
And triumph over Death, and thee,
oh Time!

ACT 2

16. Recitative and Aria

SAMSON

My evils hopeless are!
One prayer remains:
A speedy death, to close my miseries.

MICAH

Relieve they champion,
image of Thy strength,
And turn his labors to a peaceful end!

17. Chorus and Aria

MICAH AND CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

Return, return, Oh God, of hosts!
Behold, thy servant in his distress,
His mighty griefs redress
Nor by the heathen be it told.
To dust his glory they would tread,
And number him amongst the dead.

18. Recitative

MICAH

But who is this that so
bedecked and gay
Comes this way sailing like
a stately ship?
'Tis Delilah, thy wife.

SAMSON

My wife? My traitress!
let her not come near me!

MICAH

She stands and eyes thee fixed, with
head declined,
Like a fair flower,
surcharged with dew, she weeps;
Her words addressed to thee seem
tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil.

DELILAH

With doubtful feet,
and wavering resolution,
I come, Oh Samson,
dreading thy displeasure,
But conjugal affection led me on
Prevailing over fear and timorous
doubt.

SAMSON

Out! thou hyena!
'twas malice brought thee here!
These are the arts of women false like
thee,
To break all vows, repent,
deceive, submit,
Then with instructed skill again
transgress.

DELILAH

I would not lessen my offense
Yet beg to weigh it by itself.
A mutual weakness mutual pardon
claims.

SAMSON

How cunningly
the sorceress displays
Her own transgressions
to upbraid me mine!
I to myself was false ere thou to me;
Bitter reproach! But true.
The pardon, then,
I to my folly give, take thou to thine!

19. Aria

DELILAH

With plaintive notes and
amorous moan
Thus coos the turtle left alone.
Like me, averse to each delight,
She wears the tedious widowed night:
But when her absent mate returns.
With doubled raptures then she burns.

20. Recitative

SAMSON

Did love constrain thee?
no! 'twas raging lust!
Love seeks for love;
thy treason sought my hate.
In vain you strive to cover shame
with shame:
Once joined to me,
though judged your country's foe,
Parents and all,
were in the husband lost.

DELILAH

Forgive what's done,
nor think of what's past cure;
From forth this prison house come
home to me,
Where with redoubled love
and nursing care
(To me glad office!) my virgins
and myself
Shall tend about thee to extremest
age.

21. Duet

DELILAH

My faith and truth,
Oh Samson, prove,
But hear me, hear the voice of love.
With love no mortal can be cloyed,
All happiness is love enjoyed.

MAIDEN

Her faith and truth,
Oh Samson, prove,
Hear her, hear the voice of love.

CHORUS

Her faith and truth,
Oh Samson, prove
Hear her, hear the voice of love.

1. Aria

DELILAH

To fleeting pleasures make your court,
No moment lose, for life is short!
The present now's our only time,
The missing that our only crime.

2. Recitative, Duet and Recitative

SAMSON

Ne'er think of that!
I know thy warbling charms,
Thy trains, thy wiles,
and fair enchanted cup:
Their force is nulled;
where once I have been caught,
I shun the snare, these chains,
this prison house,
I count the house of liberty to thine.

DELILAH

Let me approach at least,
and touch thy hand.

SAMSON

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

DELILAH

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?

DELILAH

Traitor to love!
I'll sue no more
For pardons scorned,
your threats give o'er!

SAMSON

Traitor to love!
I'll hear no more
The charmer's voice.
Your arts give o'er!

MICAH

She's gone!
a serpent manifest; her sting
Discovered in the end.

3. Recitative and Chorus

SAMSON

So let her go!
God sent her here to aggravate my
folly.
Favoured of heaven is he,
who finds one true,
How rarely found!
his way to peace is smooth.

CHORUS

To man God's universal law
Gave power to keep the wife in awe.
Thus shall his life be ne'er dismayed
By female usurpation swayed.

4. Recitative

MICAH

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

HARAPHA

I come not, Samson,
to condole thy chance;
I am of Gath, men call me Harapha:
Thou know'st me now.
Of thy prodigious might

Much have I heard, incredible to me!
No less displeased 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 tamed thee.
Had fortune brought me
to that field of death
Where thou wrought'st wonders
with an asses jaw,
I'd left thy carcass
where the ass lay thrown.

SAMSON

Boast not of what thou would'st 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.

5. Aria

HARAPHA

Honour and arms scorn such a foe,
Though I could end thee at a blow,
Poor victory to conquer thee,
Or glory in thine overthrow!
Vanquish a slave that is half slain:
So mean a triumph I disdain.

6. Recitative

SAMSON

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

HARAPHA

Oh Dagon!
can I hear this insolence
To me unused,
not rendering instant death?

SAMSON

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

HARAPHA

Presume not an thy God,
Who under foot has trod,
Thy strength and thee,
At greatest need.

7. Recitative and Chorus

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 sons adore.

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

Hear, Jacob's God, Jehovah,
Hear, Jehovah, Hear!
Oh save us, prostrate at thy throne!
Israel depends on thee alone,
Save us, and show that thou art near

8. Recitative and Chorus

HARAPHA

Dragon arise! attend thy sacred feast!
Thy honour calls,
this day admits no rest.

CHORUS OF PHILISTINES

To song and dance, we give the day,
Which shows thy universal sway
Protect us by thy mighty hand,
And sweep this race from out the land.

9. CHORUS

ALL

Fixed in his everlasting seat

ISRAELITES

Jehovah rules the world
in state

PHILISTINES

Great Dagon rules the world in state

ALL

His thunder roars, heaven shakes, and
earth's aghast;
The stars with deep amaze
Remain in steadfast gaze:

ISRAELITES

Jehovah is of Gods
the first and last,

PHILISTINES

Great Dagon is of Gods
the first and last.

ACT 3

10. Recitative and Aria

MICAH

More trouble is behind;
for Harapha
Comes on amain,
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 an 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, given with speed, brooks
no delay.

HARAPHA

Presuming slave, to move their wrath!
For mercy sue, or vengeance due
Dooms in one fatal word thy death
Presuming slave,
consider ere it be too late,
To ward th' unerring shaft of fate.

11. Recitative and Chorus

MICAH

Reflect then, Samson,
matters now are strained
Up to the height,
whether to hold or break.
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 honour to their God
And prostituting holy things to idols?

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

With thunder arm'd great God, Arise!
Help Lord, or Israel's champion dies!
To thy protection this thy servant take,
And save us for thy servant's sake!

12. Recitative and Aria

SAMSON

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

MICAH

In time thou hast resolved: 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,
Not through your streets
be like a wild beast trailed.

HARAPHA

You thus may win the lords to set you free.

SAMSON

In nothing I'll comply
that's scandalous
Or sinful by our law.
Brethren, farewell!
Your kind attendance
now I pray forbear.

MICAH

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

SAMSON

Let but that spirit
which first rushed at me
In the camp of Dan,
inspire me at my need:
Then shall I make
Jehovah's glory known!
Their idol gods
shall from his presence fly,
Scattered like sheep
before the God of Hosts.

SAMSON

Thus when the sun
from his watery 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.

13. Recitative, Aria and Chorus

MICAH

With might endued
above the sons of men,
Swift as the lightning's glance
His errand execute,
and spread his name
Amongst the heathen round!

MICAH AND CHORUS

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

The Holy One of Israel is thy guide.

14. Recitative, Aria and Chorus

MICAH

Old Manoaah
with youthful steps makes haste
To find his son,
or bring us some glad news.

MANOAH AND MICAH

I come, my brethren,
not to seek my son,
Who at the feast
does play before the lords;
But give you part with me,
what hopes I have
To work his liberty.

PHILISTINE WOMAN AND CHORUS

Great Dagon has subdued our foe,
And brought their boasted hero low,
Sound out his pow'r in notes divine,
Praise him with mirth,
high cheer and wine.

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!

MANOAH

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

15. Recitative and Aria

MICAH

Your hopes of his delivery
seem not vain,
In which all Israel's friends participate.

MANOAH

I know your friendly minds, and -

SINFONIA

The noise of the destruction of the
temple is heard.

MANOAH

Heaven! what noise! horribly loud,
unlike the former shout,

CHORUS OF PHILISTINES

Hear us, our God! Oh, hear our cry!
Death! Ruin! Fallen! No help is nigh,
Oh mercy, Heaven, we sink, we die!

17. Recitative

MICAH

Noise call you this?
An universal groan,
As if the world's inhabitation perished.
Blood, death and ruin,
at their utmost point!

MANOAH

Ruin indeed!
Oh! they have slain my son

MICAH

Thy son is rather slaying them; that
cry,
From slaughter of one foe
could not ascend.
But see, my friends, one hither speeds,
an Hebrew of our tribe.

MESSENGER

Where shall I run,
or which way fly the thoughts
Of this most horrid sight?
Oh countrymen,
You're in this sad event
too much concerned.

MICAH

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

MESSENGER

Let me recover breath;
it will burst forth.

MANOAH

Suspense in news is torture: speak
them out!

MESSENGER

Then take the worst in brief - Samson
is dead.

MANOAH

The worst indeed!

MESSENGER

Unwounded of his enemies he fell,
At once he did destroy,
and was destroyed.
The edifice, where all were met to see,
upon their heads
And on his own, he pulled.

MANOAH

Oh lastly overstrong
against thyself!
A dreadful way
thou took'st to thy revenge:
Glorious, yet dearly bought.

18. Aria and Chorus

MICAH

Ye sons, of Israel, now lament;

Your spear is broke,
your bows unbent,
Your glory fled!
Amongst the dead great Samson lies,
Forever, forever, ever dos'd his eyes!

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

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

19. Funeral March

20. Recitative and Chorus
MICAH

The body comes;
we'll meet it on the way
With laurels, evergreen,
and branching palm;
Then lay it in his monument,
hung round
With all his trophies,
and great acts enrolled
In verse heroic, or sweetly lyric song.

MANOAH

There shall all Israel's valiant youth
resort,
And from his memory
inflame their breasts
To matchless valour,
whilst they sing his praise.

ISRAELITES, MANOAH ISRAELITE
WOMAN AND MAIDENS

Glorious hero, may thy grave
Peace and honour ever have;
After all thy pains and woes,
Rest eternal, sweet repose!
The virgins too shall
on their feastful days
Visit his tomb with flow'rs,
and there bewail
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice.
Bring the laurels, bring the bays,
Strew his hearse, and strew the ways!
May ev'ry hero fall like thee,
Through sorrow to felicity.
Bring the laurels, bring the bays,
Strew the hearse, and strew the ways!
Glorious hero, may thy grave
Peace and honour ever have;
After all thy pains and woes,
Rest eternal, sweet repose.

21. Recitative and Aria

MANOAH

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

ISRAELITE WOMAN

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.

22. Chorus

CHORUS OF ISRAELITES

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

CD58-59

THEODORA

ACT 1

1. Overture

Scene 1: The Roman Court in Antioch

2. Recitative, Aria and Chorus

VALENS

'Tis Dioclesian's natal day:
Proclaim throughout the bounds of
Antioch,
A feast, and solemn sacrifice to Jove;
Who so disdains to join the sacred
rites.
Shall feel our wrath in chastisement or
death,
And this, Septimius, take you in
charge.
Go, my faithful soldier, go:
Let the fragrant incense rise
To Jove, great ruler of the skies.

CHORUS OF HEATHENS

And draw a blessing down,
On his imperial crown,
Who rules the world below.

3. Recitative and Aria

DIDIMUS

Vouchsafe, dread lord, a gracious ear
To my request. Let not thy sentence
doom,
-To racks and flames all whose
scrupulous minds
Will not permit them to bend the
knee,
To gods they know not, or, in wanton
mood,
To celebrate the day with Roman rites.

VALENS

Art thou a Roman, and yet dar'st
defend
A sect rebellious to the gods and
Rome?

DIDIMUS

Many there are in Antioch who disdain
An idol offering, yet are friends to
Caesar.

VALENS

It cannot be: they are not Caesar's
friends
Who own not Caesar's gods: I'll hear
no more.
Racks, gibbets, sword, and fire,
Shall speak my vengeful ire
Against the stubborn knee.

4. CHORUS

For ever thus stands fixed the doom,
Of rebels to the gods and Rome;
While sweeter than the trumpet's
sound,
Their groans and cries are heard
around.

5. Recitative and Aria

DIDIMUS

Most cruel decree; sure thy noble soul,
Septimius, abhors the dreadful task
Of persecution. Ought we not to leave
The free-born mind of man still ever
free?
Since vain is the attempt to force belief
With the severest instrument of death.
The raptured soul defies the sword,
Secure of virtue's claim;
And trusting Heaven's unerring word,
Enjoys the circling flame.

6. Recitative and Aria

SEPTIMIUS

I know thy virtues, and ask not thy
faith:
Enjoy it as you will. my Didimus.
Though not a Christian, yet I own
Something within declares for acts of
mercy
But Antioch's President must be
obeyed;
Such is the Roman discipline, while we
Can only pity whom we dare not spare.
Descend, kind pity, heavenly guest,
Descend and fill each human breast
With sympathising woe.

Scene 2: The Christians

7. Recitative and Aria

THEODORA

Though hard, my friends,
yet wholesome are the truths
Taught in affliction's school,
whence the pure soul
Rises refined and soars above the
world.
Fond, flattering world, adieu!
Thy gaily smiling power,
Empty treasures, fleeting pleasures,
Ne'er shall tempt or charm me more.
Faith inviting, hope delighting,
Nobler joys we now pursue.

8. Recitative

IRENE

Oh bright example of all goodness,
How easy seems affliction's heavy
load,
While thus instructed and
companions thus,
As 'twere with Heaven conversing, we
look down
On the vain pomp of proud prosperity.

9. CHORUS OF CHRISTIANS

Come, mighty Father, mighty Lord,
With love our souls inspire;
While grace and truth flow from Thy
Word,

And feed the holy fire.

10. Recitative and Aria

MESSENGER

Fly, fly, my brethren,
heathen rage pursues us swift,
Armed with the terrors of insulting
death.

IRENE

Ah! Whither should we fly,
Or fly from whom?
The Lord is still the same, today, for
ever;
And His protection here, and
everywhere.
Though gathering round our destin'd
heads,
The storm now thickens, and looks big
with fate:
Still shall Thy servants wait on Thee, oh
Lord,
And in Thy saving mercy put their
trust.
As with rosy steps the mom,
Advancing drives the shades of night;
So from virtuous toil well-borne,
Raise Thou our hopes of endless light.

11. CHORUS OF CHRISTIANS

All pow'r in Heaven above, or earth
beneath
Belongs to thee alone, Thou
everlasting One,
Mighty to save in peril, storm, and
death.

12. Recitative

SEPTIMIUS

Entering.
Oh mistaken wretches, why thus blind
to fate,
Do ye in private oratories dare
Rebel against the President's decree,
and scorn
With native rites to celebrate the day
Sacred to Caesar and protecting Jove?

THEODORA

Deluded mortal, call it not rebellion
To worship God: it is His dread
command,
His whom we cannot, dare not,
disobey,
Though death be our reward.

SEPTIMIUS

Death is not yet thy doom,
But worse than death to such a
virtuous mind;
Lady, these guards are ordered
to convey you to the vile place,
As a prostitute to devote your charms.

13. Recitative and Aria

THEODORA

Oh worse than death indeed!
Lead me, ye guards, lead me or to the
rack,
or to the flames; I'll thank your
gracious mercy.

Angels, ever bright and fair,
Take, oh take me to your care!
Speed to your own courts my flight
Clad in robes of virgin white!
Septimius leaves, taking Theodora.

14. Recitative

DIDIMUS

entering
Unhappy, happy crew! - Why stand you
thus,
Wild with amazement? Say, where is
my love,
My life, my Theodora?

IRENE

Alas! She's gone;
Too late thou mean'st to save
The fairest, noblest, best of women.
A Roman soldier led her trembling
hence
To the vile place where Venus keeps
her court.

15. Aria

DIDIMUS

Kind Heaven, if virtue be Thy care;
With courage fire me,
Or art inspire me.
To free the captive fair!

16. Recitative and Chorus

IRENE

Oh Love, how great thy power! but
greater still
When virtue prompts the steady mind,
to prove
Its native strength in deeds of highest
honour.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIANS

Go, gen'rous, pious youth!
May all the powers above
Reward thy virtuous love,
Thy constancy and truth
With Theodora's charms,
Free from these dire alarms;
Or crown you with the blest
In glory, peace and rest!

ACT 2

Scene 1: The Romans

17. Recitative and Chorus

VALENS

Ye men of Antioch, with solemn pomp
Renew the grateful sacrifice to Jove!
And while your songs ascend the
vaulted skies,
Pour on the smoking altar floods of
wine,
in honour of the smiling deities,
Fair Flora, and the Cyprian Queen.

CHORUS OF HEATHENS

Queen of Summer, Queen of Love,
And thou cloud-compelling love:
Grant a long and happy reign
To great Caesar, king of men!

18. Aria

VALENS

Wide spread his name,
And make his glory
Of endless fame, The lasting Story!

19. Recitative and Chorus

VALENS

Return, Septimius, to the stubborn
maid,
And learn her final resolution.
If, ere the sun with prone career has
reached
The western isles, she makes an
offering
To the great gods, she shall be free; if
not,
The meanest of my guards
Shall triumph o'er her boasted
chastity.

CHORUS OF HEATHENS

Venus, laughing from the skies,
Will applaud her votaries,
While seizing the treasure,
We revel in pleasure,
Revenge sweet love supplies!

Scene 2. A Prison Cell

20. Symphony

21. Recitative and Aria

THEODORA

Oh thou bright Sun! how sweet thy
rays
To health and liberty! but here, alas!
They swell the agonising thought of
shame,
And pierce my soul with sorrows yet
unknown.
With darkness deep, as is my woe
Hide me, ye shades of night!
Your thickest veil around me throw,
Concealed from human sight!
Or come, thou death, thy victim save,
Kindly embosomed in the grave.

22. Symphony

23. Recitative and Aria

THEODORA

But why art thou disquieted, my soul?
Hark! heaven invites thee
in sweet rapturous strains,
To join the ever-singing, ever-loving
choir
Of saints and angels in the courts
above.
Oh that I on wings could rise,
Swiftly sailing, through the skies,
As skims the silver dove!
That I might rest forever blest,
With harmony and love.

Scene 3: The Romans

1. Recitative and Aria

DIDIMUS

Long have I known thy friendly social
soul,

Septimius, oft experienced in the camp
And perilous scenes of war when side
by side
We fought, and braved the dangers of
the field,
Dependent on each other's arm.
With freedom then I'll disclose my
mind,
-I am a Christian
And she, who by Heaven's influential
grace,
With pure religious sentiments
inspired
My soul, with virtuous love inflamed
my heart
Even she, who, shame to all humanity!
Is now condemned to public lust.

SEPTIMIUS

No more! The shame reflects
too much upon thy Fiend,
The mean though duteous instrument
of power;
Knowing her virtues only not thy love.
Though the honours that Flora and
Venus receive
From the Romans, this Christian
refuses to give,
Yet nor Venus nor Flora delight in the
Woe,
That disfigures their fairest
resemblance below.

2. Recitative

DIDIMUS

O save her, then, or give me power to
save
By free admission to the imprisoned
maid.

SEPTIMIUS

My guards not less ashamed of their
sad office,
Will second your intent and pleasure
me.

DIDIMUS

I will reward them with a bounteous
heart,
And you, my Friend, with all that
heaven can give
To the sincerity of prayer.

Scene 4: The Christians

3. Recitative and Aria

IRENE

The clouds begin to veil the
hemisphere
And heavily bring on the night; the last
Perhaps to us. Oh that it were the last
To Theodora, ere she fall a prey
To unexampled lust and cruelty.
Defend her, Heaven, let angels spread
Their viewless tents around her bed!
Keep her from rude assaults secure,
Still ever calm and ever pure.

Scene 5 : Prison Cell

Theodora is asleep, Didimus entering

4. Recitative and Aria

Or lulled with grief or rapt her soul to
heaven,
In innocence of thought, entranced
she lies.
Sweet rose and lily, flow'ry form,
Take me your faithful guard,
To shield you from bleak wind and
storm
A smile be my reward.

5. Recitative

THEODORA

waking
O save me, Heaven, in this my perilous
hour.

DIDIMUS

Start not, much injured princess. I
come not
As one this place might give you cause
to dread,
But your deliverer,
And that dear ornament to Theodora,
Her angel purity. If you vouchsafe
But to change habit with your Didimus.

THEODORA

Excellent youth!
I know thy courage, virtue, and thy
love!
This becomes not Theodora,
But the blind enemies of truth -Oh no,
It must not be! yet Didimus can give
A boon will make me happy!

DIDIMUS

How? or what? my soul with transport
Listens to the request.

6. Air

THEODORA

The pilgrim's home,
the sick man's health,
The captive's ransom, poor man's
wealth,
From thee I would receive!
These, and a thousand treasures more,
That gentle death has now in store,
Thy hand and sword can give.

7. Accompagnato

DIDIMUS

Forbid it, Heaven!
Shall I destroy the live I came to save?
Shall I in Theodora's blood embrue
My guilty hand, and give her death,
who taught me first to live.

THEODORA

Ah! what is liberty or life to me,
That Didimus must purchase with his
own!

DIDIMUS

Fear not for me.
The power that led me hither
Will guard me hence, if not, His will be
done.
They exchange clothes.

THEODORA

Yes, kind deliverer, I will trust that
power
Farewell, thou generous youth.

DIDIMUS

Farewell, thou mirror of the virgin
state.

8. Duet

THEODORA

To thee, thou glorious son of worth,
Be life and safety given.

DIDIMUS

To thee whose virtues suit thy birth
Be every blessing given.

BOTH

I hope again to meet on earth,
But sure shall meet in heaven.

Scene 6: The Christians

9. Recitative

IRENE

'Tis night; but night's sweet blessing
is denied To grief like ours.
Be prayer our refuge, prayer to Him
who raised
And still can raise the dead to life and
joy.

10. CHORUS OF CHRISTIANS

He saw the lovely youth, death's early
prey,
Alas! too early snatched away;
He heard his mother's funeral cries:
Rise, youth, he said; the youth begins
to rise
Lowly the matron bowed, and bore
away the
prize.

ACT 3

Scene 1: The Christians

11. Aria

IRENE

Lord, to Thee, each night and day,
Strong in hope we sing and pray,
Though convulsive rocks the ground,
And thy thunders roll around,
Still to Thee we sing and pray.
Theodora enters, dressed in Didimus's
clothes.

12. Recitative

IRENE

But see, the good, the virtuous
Didimus,
He comes to join with us in prayer for
Theodora.

THEODORA

No, Heaven has heard
your prayers for Theodora.
Behold her safe- Oh that as free and
safe
Were Didimus, my kind deliverer,

But let this habit speak the rest.

13. CHORUS OF CHRISTIANS

Blest be the hand, and blest the
power,
That in this dark and dangerous hour
Saved thee from cruel strife.
Lord, favour still the kind intent,
And bless Thy gracious instrument
With liberty and life.

14. Recitative

MESSENGER

entering
Undaunted in the court stands
Didimus,
Virtuously proud of rescued
innocence.
But vain to save the generous hero's
life
Are all entreaties, even from Romans
vain;
And high in rage the President
protests,
Should he regain the fugitive, no more
To try her with the fear of infamy,
But with the terrors of a cruel death.

IRENE

Ah, Theodora! whence this sudden
change
From griefs pale looks to looks of
reddening joy.

THEODORA

Oh my Irene, Heaven is kind,
And Valens, too, is kind to give me
power
To execute in turn my gratitude, dear
Fiend,
Only assist me with a proper dress,
That I may ransom the generous
youth.

15. Duet

IRENE

Whither, Princess, do you fly?
Sure to suffer, sure to die.

THEODORA

No, no, Irene, no, To life and joy I go.

IRENE

Vain attempt, o stay, o stay!

THEODORA

Duty calls, I must obey.

16. Recitative

She's gone, disdaining liberty and life,
And every honour this frail life can
give.
Devotion bids aspire to nobler things,
To boundless love and joys ineffable:
And such her expectation from kind
heaven.

Scene 2: The Roman Court

17. Recitative

VALENS

It is a Christian virtue then,
To rescue from Justice one
condemned?

DIDIMUS

Had your sentence doomed her but to
death
I then might have deplored your
cruelty,
And should not have opposed it.

VALENS

Take him hence,
And lead him to repentance or to
death.

THEODORA

entering
Be that my doom. You may inflict it
here
With legal justice: there 'tis cruelty.

SEPTIMUS

Dwells there such virtuous courage in
the sex?
Preserve them, O ye gods, preserve
them both.
From virtue springs each generous
deed,
That claims our grateful prayer
Let justice for the hero plead,
And pity save the fair.

18. Aria

VALENS

Cease, ye slaves, your fruitless prayer,
The powers below, No pity know,
For the brave, or for the fair.

19. Recitative

DIDIMUS

Tis kind, my friends, but kinder still
If for this daughter of Antiochus,
In mind as noble as her birth, your
prayers
Prevail that Didimus alone shall die.
Turns to Theodora
Had I as many lives as virtues thou,
Freely for thee I would resign them all.

THEODORA

Oppose not, Didimus, my just desires;
For know that 'twas dishonour I
declined,
Not death; most welcome now, if
Didimus
Were safe, whose only crime was my
escape.

20. CHORUS OF HEATHENS

How strange their ends
And yet how glorious,
Where each contends, To fall
victorious.
Where virtue its own innocence
denies,

And for the vanquish'd the glad victor dies.

21. Recitative
DIDIMUS

On me your frowns your utmost rage exert,
On me, your prisoner in chains.

THEODORA

Those chains
Are due to me, and death to me alone.

VALENS

Are ye then judges for yourselves?
Not so our laws are to be trifled with
If both plead guilty, 'tis but equity
That both should suffer.
Ye ministers of justice, lead them hence,
I cannot, will not bear such insolence.

DIDIMUS

And must such beauty suffer?

THEODORA

Such useful valour be destroyed?

SEPTIMUS

Destroyed Alas! by an unhappy constancy!

DIDIMUS

Yet deem us not unhappy, gentle friend,
Nor rash; for life we neither hate nor scorn:
But think it a cheap purchase for the prize
Reserv'd in heaven for purity and faith.

22. Duet

DIDIMUS

Streams of pleasure ever flowing,
Fruits ambrosial ever growing: Golden thrones,
Starry crowns, Are the triumphs of the blest:
When from life's dull labour free,
Clad with immortality, They enjoy a lasting rest.

THEODORA

Thither let our hearts aspire!

BOTH

Objects pure of pure desire:
Still increasing, Ever pleasing,
Wake the song and tune the lyre
Of the blissful holy choir!

Scene 3: The Christians

23. Recitative

IRENE

Ere this their doom is past,
and they are gone,
To prove, that love is stronger far than death.

24. CHORUS OF CHRISTIANS

Oh love divine, thou source of fame,
Of glory and all joy!
Let equal fire our souls inflame,
And equal zeal employ:
That we the glorious spring may know,
Whose streams appear'd so bright below!

CD64-65

SEMELE

ACT I

Scene 1

The scene is the temple of Juno.
Near the altar is a golden image of the Goddess. Priest are in their solemnities,
as after a sacrifice newly offer'd;
flames arise from the altar; and the statue
of Juno is seen to bow.

1. Overture

2. Recitative

PRIEST

Behold! Suspicious flashes rise,
Juno accepts our sacrifice;
The grateful odour swift ascends,
And see, the golden image bends!

3. CHORUS OF PRIESTS

Lucky omens bless our rites,
And sure success shall crown your loves;
Peaceful days and fruitful nights
Attent the pair that she approves.

4. Recitative and Duet

CADMUS

Daughter, obey,
Hear and obey!
With kind consenting
Ease a parent's care;
Invent no new delay!

ATHAMAS

O hear a faithful lover's prayer!
On this auspicious day
Invent no new delay!
O hear-

CADMUS

And obey -.

BOTH

Invent no new delay
On this suspicious day!

5. Recitative and Aria

SEMELE (apart)

Ah me!
What refuge now is left me?
How various, how tormenting
Are my miseries!
Oh Jove, assist me!
Can Semele forget thy love,
And to a mortal's passion yield?
Thy vengeance will o'ertake such perfidy.

If I deny, my father's wrath I fear.
o Jove! in pity teach me which to choose,
Incline me to comply, or help me to refuse!
Teach me which to choose,
Or help me to refuse!

6. Recitative and Quartet

INO

Alas! she yields,
And has undone me!
I cannot longer hide my passion;
It must have vent,
Or inward burning
Will consume me.
Oh Athamas-
I cannot utter it!

ATHAMAS

On me fair Ino calls
With mournful accent,
Her colour fading,
And her eyes o'erflowing!

INO

Oh Semele!

SEMELE

On me she calls,
Yet seems to shun me!
What would my sister?
Speak!

INO

Thou hast undone me!

Quartet

Scene 2

CADMUS

Why dost thou thus untimely grieve,
And all our solemn rites profane
Can he, or she thy woes relieve?
Or I? - of whom dost thou complain?

INO

Of all; but all, I fear, in vain!

ATHAMAS

Can I thy woes relieve?

SEMELE

Can I assuage thy pain?

CADMUS, ATHAMAS, SEMELE

Of whom dost thou complain?

INO

Of all; but all, I fear, in vain!
Thunder is heard at a distance, and
the fire is extinguished on the altar

7. CHORUS OF PRIESTS

Avert these omens, all ye pow'rs!
Somegodd averse our holy rites
controls;
O'erwhelm'd with sudden night the
day expires;
Ill-boding thunder on the right hand
rolls;

And Jove himself descends in show'rs,
To quench our late propitious fires.
Avert these omens, all ye pow'rs!
Flames are rekindled on the altar

8. Recitative

CADMUS

Again auspicious flashes rise,
Juno accepts our sacrifice.
The fire is again extinguished
Again the sickly flame decaying dies:
Juno assents, but angry Jove denies.

ATHAMAS

Thy aid, pronubial Juno, Athamas
implores!

SEMELE (apart)

Thee, Jove, and thee alone, Thy
Semele
adores!
A loud clap of thunder; the altar sinks

CHORUS OF PRIESTS

Cease, cease your vow's, 'tis impious
to proceed;
Begone, and fly this holy place with
speed!
This dreadful conflict is of dire
presage;
Begone, and fly from Jove's impending
rage!
Begone, and fly!
Exeunt

Scene 3

To them enter Cadmus, attended.

9. Recitative and Aria

CADMUS

Ah, wretched prince, doom'd to
disastrous love!
Ah me, of parents most forlorn!
Prepare, oh Athamas! to prove
The sharpest pangs that e'er were
borne;
Prepare with me our common loss to
mourn!

ATHAMAS

Can fate, or Semele, invent
Another, yet another punishment?

CADMUS

Wing'd with our fears and pious haste,
From Juno's fane we fled.
Scarce we the brazen gates had pass'd,
When Semele around her head
With azure flames was grac'd,
Whose lambent glories in her tresses
play'd.
While this we saw with dread surprize,
Swifter than lightning downward
tending,
An eagle stoop'd, of mighty size,
On purple wings descending;
Like gold his beak, like stars shone
forth his eyes,
His silver plumy breast with snow
contending:

Sudden he snatch'd the trembling
maid,
And soaring from our sight convey'd,
Diffusing ever as he less'ning flew
Celestial odour and ambrosial dew.

ATHAMAS

O prodigy, to me of dire portent!

INO

To me, I hope, of fortunate event!

Scene 4

**Enter to them Chorus of Priests and
Augurs.**

10. Recitative

CADMUS

See, see! Jove's Priests and holy
Augurs come.
Speak, speak of Semele, and me
declare
the doom!

CHORUS OF PRIESTS AND AUGURS

Hail Cadmus, hail!
Jove salutes the Theban king!
Cease your mourning, hail!
Joys returning!
Songs of mirth and triumph sing!
Hail Cadmus, hail!

11. Aria

SEMELE

Endless pleasure, endless love
Semele enjoys above!
On her bosom Jove reclining,
Useless now his thunder lies;
To her arms his bolts resigning,
And his lightning to her eyes.
Endless pleasure, endless love
Semele enjoys above!

CHORUS

Endless pleasure, endless love
Semele enjoys above!

ACT II

Scene 1

A pleasant country

12. Sinfonia

13. Recitative and Aria

JUNO

No more! I'll hear no more!
Awake, Saturnia, from thy lethargy!
Seize, destroy the curs'd Semele!
Scale proud Cithaeron's top:
Snatch her, tear her in thy fury,
And down to the flood of Acheron
Let her fall, let her fall! fall! fall!
Rolling down the depths of night!
Never-more to behold the light!
If I th'imperial scepter sway, I swear
By hell-
Tremble, thou universe, this oath to
hear!
Not one of curst Agenor's race to
spare!

IRIS

Hear, mighty queen, while I recount
What obstacles you must surmount.
With adamant the gates are barr'd,
Whose entrance two fierce dragons
guard
At each approach they lash their forky
strings
And clap their brazen wings;
And as their scaly horrors rise,
They all at once disclose
A thousand fiery eyes
Which never know repose.

JUNO

Hence, Iris, hence away!
Far from the realms of day,
O'er Scythian hills to the Maeotian lake
A speedy flight we'll take!
There Somnus I'll compel
His downy bed to leave, and silent cell;
With noise and light I will his peace
molest,
Nor shall he sink again to pleasing rest,
Till to my vow'd revenge he grants
supplies,
And seals with sleep the wakeful
dragons eyes.
Hence: Da Capo.
Exeunt

Scene 2

An apartment in the palace of Semele;
she is sleeping, Loves and Zephyrs
waiting. Semele awakes and rises.

14. Recitative

SEMELE

Oh sleep, why dost thou leave me?
Why thy visionary joys remove?
Oh sleep, again deceive me,
To my arms restore my wand'ring love!

Scene 3

To them enter Jupiter.

15. Aria

SEMELE

Let me not another moment
Bear the pangs of absence;
Since you have form'd my soul for
loving,
No more afflict me
With doubts and fears and cruel
jealousy!

JUPITER

Lay your doubts and fears aside,
And for joys alone provide!
Though this human form I wear,
Think not I man's falsehood bear.
Lay your doubts. Da Capo.

16. Recitative and Aria

JUPITER

You are mortal and require
Time to rest and to repose.
I was not absent;
While Love was with thee,
I was present:
Love and I are one.

SEMELE

With fond desiring,
With bliss expiring,
Panting,
Fainting:
If this be Love, not you alone,
But Love and I are one.

CHORUS OF LOVES AND ZEPHYRS

How engaging, how endearing
Is a lover's pain and care!
And what joy the nymph's appearing
After absence or despair!
How engaging: Da Capo.

SEMELE

Ahme!

17. Recitative and Aria

JUPITER

Why sighs my Semele!
What gentle sorrow
Swells thy soft bosom?
Why tremble those fair eyes
With interrupted light?
Where hov'ring for a vent,
Amidst their humid fires,
Some new-form'd wish appears:
Speak, and obtain!

SEMELE

At my own happiness
I sigh and tremble;
For I am mortal,
Still a woman;
And ever when you leave me,
Though compass'd round with deities
Of Loves and Graces,
A fear invades me;
And conscious of a nature
Far inferior,
I seek for solitude,
And shun society.

JUPITER (apart)

Too well I read her meaning,
But must not understand her:
Aiming at immortality
With dangerous ambition.
I must with speed amuse her,
Lest she too much explain.

18. CHORUS OF LOVES AND ZEPHYRS

Now Love that everlasting boy invites,
To revel while you may in soft delights.

19. Recitative and Aria

JUPITER

By my command
Now at this instant
Two winged Zephyrs
From her downy bed
Thy much lov'd Ino bear,
And both together
Waft her hither,
Through the balmy air.

SEMELE

Shall I my sister see!
The dear companion

Of my tender years!

JUPITER

See, she appears,
But sees not me;
For I am visible
Alone to thee.
While I retire, rise and meet her,
And with welcomes greet her.
Now all this scene shall to Arcadia
turn,
The seat of happy nymphs and swains;
There without the rage of jealousy
they burn,
And taste the sweets of love without
its pains.
Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan
the glade;
Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a
shade.
Where'er you tread, the blushing
flow'rs shall rise,
And all things flourish where'er you
turn your eyes.
Where'er: Da Capo.
Exit

Scene 4

Semele and Ino meet and embrace

20. Recitative and Aria

SEMELE

Dear sister, how was your journey
hither?

INO

O'er many states and peopled towns
we pass'd,
O'er hills and valleys, and o'er deserts
waste;
O'er barren moors, and o'er
unwholesome fens,
And woods where beasts inhabit
dreadful dens:
Through all which pathless way our
speed was such,
We stopp'd not once the face of earth
to touch.
Mean-time they told me, while
through air we fled,
That Jove did thus ordain.
But hark! the heav'nly sphere turns
round,
And silence now is drown'd
In ecstasy of sound!
How on a sudden the still air is
chann'd,
As if all harmony were just alarm'd!
And ev'ry soul with transport fill'd,
Alternately is thaw'd and chill'd.

1. Duet

SEMELE AND INO

Prepare then, ye immortal choir!
Each sacred minstrel tune his lyre,
And all in chorus join!

2. CHORUS

Bless the glad earth with heav'nly lays!
And to that pitch th'eternal accents
raise,

That all appear divine!

ACT III

3. Sinfonia

Scene 1

Scene, the cave of sleep; the god of
Sleep lying on his bed.
A soft Symphony is heard afterwards.
Juno and Iris appear.

4. Recitative and Aria

Somnus, awake!
Raise thy reclining head!

IRIS

Thyself forsake,
And lift up thy heavy lids of lead!

SOMNUS

waking
Leave me, loathsome light!
Receive me, silent night!
Lethe, why does thy lingring current
cease?
Oh murmur, murmur me again to
peace!
Sleeps again

5. Recitative and Aria

IRIS

Dull God, canst thou attend the
water's fall,
And not hear Saturnia call?

JUNO

Peace, Iris, peace! I know how to
charm him:
Pasithea's name alone can warm him.
to Somnus
Somnus, arise!
Disclose thy tender eyes;
For Pasithea's sight
Endure the light.
Somnus, arise!

6. Aria

SOMNUS

More sweet is that name
Than a soft purling stream.
With pleasure repose I'll forsake,
If you'll grant me but her to soothe me
awake.
More sweet: Do Capo.

JUNO

My will obey,
She shall be thine.
Thou, with thy softer pow'rs,
First Jove shalt captivate;
To Morpheus then give order,
Thy various minister,
That with a dream in shape of Semele,
But far more beautiful,
And more alluring,
He may invade the sleeping deity;
And more to agitate his kindling fire,
Still let the phantom seem to fly before
him,

That he may wake impetuous, furious
in desire,
Unable to refuse whatever boon
Her coyness shall require.

SOMNUS

I tremble to comply.

JUNO

To me thy leaden rod resign,
To charm the sentinels
On mount Cithaeron;
Then cast a sleep on mortal Ino,
That I may seem her form to wear,
When I to Semele appear.

Scene 3

To her enter Juno as Ino, with a mirror
in her hand.

JUNO (apart)

Thus shap'd like Ino,
With ease I shall deceive her;
And in this mirror she shall see
Herself as much transform'd as me.
to Semele
Do I some goddess see!
Or is it Semele?

SEMELE

Dear sister, speak,
Whence this astonishment?

JUNO

Your charms improving
To divine perfection,
Shew you were late admitted.
Amongst celestial beauties.
has Jove consented,
And are you made immortal?

SEMELE

Ah no! I still am mortal;
Nor am I sensible
Of any change or new perfection.

JUNO

giving her the glass
Behold in this mirror,
Whence comes my surprise;
Such lustre and terror
Unite in your eyes,
That mine cannot fix
On a radiance so bright,
Tis unsafe for the sense
And too slipp'ry for sight.

7. Aria

SEMELE

O ecstasy of happiness!
Celestial graces
I discover in each feature!
Myself I shall adore,
If I persist in gazing.
No object sure before
Was ever half so pleasing.
Myself: Do Capo.

8. Recitative and Aria

JUNO

Be wise, as you are beautiful,

Nor lose this opportunity:
When Jove appears, all ardent with
desire,
Refuse his proter'd flame
Till you obtain a boon without a name.

SEMELE

Can that avail me? but how shall I
attain
To immortality?

JUNO

Conjure him by his oath
Not to approach your bed
In likeness of a mortal,
But like himself, the mighty thunderer,
In pomp of majesty
And heav'nly attire;
As when he proud Saturnia charms,
And with ineffable delights
Fills her encircling arms
And pays the nuptial rites.
You shall partake then of immortality,
And thenceforth leave this mortal
state,
To reign above.
Ador'd by Jove,
In spite of jealous Juno's hate.

SEMELE

Thus let my thanks be pay'd,
Thus let my arms embrace thee!
And when I'm a goddess made,
With charms like mine I'll grace thee.

9. Recitative and Aria

JUNO

Rich odeurs fill the fragrant air
And Jove's approach declare.
I must retire -

SEMELE

Adieu - your counsel I'll pursue.

JUNO (apart)

And sure destruction will ensue,
Vain wretched fool- adieu!
Exit

Scene 4

Jupiter enters, offers to embrace
Semele;
she looks kindly on him, but retires a
little from him.

10. Aria

JUPITER

Come to my arms,
My lovely fair,
Soothe my uneasy care!
In my dream late I woo'd thee,
And in vain I pursued thee,
For you fled from my prayer,
And bid me despair.
Come to my arms,
My lovely fair!
Oh Semele!
Why art thou this insensible?

SEMELE

I ever am granting,

You always complain;
I always am wanting,
Yet never obtain.
I ever am granting,
You always complain!

11. Recitativo and Aria

JUPITER

Speak, speak your desire;
Say what you require:
I'll grant it!

SEMELE

Swear by the Stygian lake!

JUPITER

By that tremendous flood, I swear;
Ye Stygian waters, hear!
And thou, Olympus, shake,
In witness to the oath I take!
Thunder is heard at a distance, and
underneath.

SEMELE

You'll grant what I require?

JUPITER

I'll grant what you require.

SEMELE

Then cast off this human shape which
you wear,
And Jove since you are, like Jove too
appear!

JUPITER

Ah, take heed what you press!
For, beyond all redress,
Should I grant your request, I shall
harm you.

12. Aria

SEMELE

No, no, I'll take no less,
than all in full excess!
Your oath it may alarm you.
Yet haste and prepare,
For I'll know what you are,
With all your powers arm you.
No, no: Da Capo.

Scene 5

13. Aria

JUPITER

pensive and dejected
 Ah, whither is she gone! unhappy fair!
 Why did she wish! - why did I rashly
 swear! -
 'Tis past, 'tis past recall,
 She must a victim fall!
 Anon when I appear,
 the mighty thunderer,
 Arm'd with inevitable fire,
 She needs must instantly expire.
 'Tis past, 'tis past recall,
 She must a victim fall!
 My softest lightning yet I'll try,
 And mildest melting bolt apply;
 In vain! for she was fram'd to prove
 None but the lambent flames of love.
 'Tis past, 'tis past recall,
 She must a victim fall!

Scene 6

14. Aria

JUNO

alone
 Above measure
 Is the pleasure,
 Which my revenge supplies!
 Love's a bubble,
 Gain'd with trouble,
 And in possessing dies.
 With what joy shall I mount to my
 heav'n again,
 At once from my rival and jealousy
 freed!
 The sweets of revenge make it
 worthwhile to reign,
 And heav'n will hereafter be heav'n
 indeed.
 Above measure: Da Capo.

Scene 7

The scene discovers Semele lying
 under a
 canopy, leaning pensively, while a
 mournful
 Symphony is playing. She looks up
 and sees Jupiter descending in a cloud;
 flashes of lightning issue from either
 side,
 and thunder is heard grumbling in the
 air.

15. Aria

SEMELE

Ah me! too late I now repent
 My pride and impious vanity.
 He comes! far off his lightning scorch
 me,
 Ah! I feel my life consuming:
 I burn, I burn, I faint, for pity I implore,
 -
 Oh help, o help! I can no more! -
 Dies. The cloud bursts, and Semele
 with the palace instantly disappear.

Scene 8

16. Recitative

INO

Of my ill-boding dream
 Behold the dire event!

CHORUS

Oh terror and astonishment!
 Nature to each allots his proper
 sphere,
 But that forsaken we like meteors err:
 Toss'd through the void, by some rude
 shock we're broke,
 And all our boasted fire is lost in
 smoke.

Final Scene

A bright cloud descends and rests
 upon
 mount Cithaeron, which opening,
 discovers
 Apollo seated in it as the God of
 Prophecy.

17. Sinfonia

18. Recitative and Aria

APOLLO

Apollo comes, to relieve your care,
 And future happiness declare.
 From Semele's ashes a phoenix shall
 rise,
 The joy of this earth, and delight of the
 skies:
 A God he shall prove
 More mighty than Love,
 And sighing and sorrow for ever
 prevent.

CHORUS

Happy, happy shall we be,
 Free, from care, from sorrow free;
 Guiltless pleasures we'll enjoy,
 Virtuous love will never cloy;
 All that's good and just we'll prove,
 And Bacchus crown the joys of love!