



BAROQUE DUETS



Fiona Campbell | David Walker

Ironwood

Neal Peres Da Costa

FRANCESCO CAVALLI

(1602–1676)

L'Ormindo:

1	“De'nostri abeti...Amo Erisbe, amo Ormindo”	(Act II)	2:55
Prison Scene from Act III			14:04
2	“Di te me pesa... sola, sola poss'io morir”		3:39
3	“Ah, questo è l'imenco...Sì, che questa note”		4:51
4	“Ormindo, io sento”		2:34
5	“Piangete, amori”		3:00

AGOSTINO STEFFANI

(1654–1728)

La libertà contenta:

6	“Volate, momenti”	(Act II)*	2:21
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GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

(1685–1759)

Alcina:

7	“Verdi prati”	(Act II)	3:39
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CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567–1643) / BENEDETTO FERRARI (c.1603–1681)

L'incoronazione di Poppea:

8	“Pur ti miro”	(Act III)	4:14
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HANDEL

Giulio Cesare in Egitto:

9	"Son nata a lagrimar"	(Act I)	7:40
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Susanna:

10	"When thou art nigh, my pulse beats high"	(Act I)	3:04
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Theodora:

11	"To thee, thou glorious son of worth"	(Act II)	5:03
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Alexander Balus:

12	"Calm thou my soul... Convey me to some peaceful shore"	(Act III)	3:08
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CAVALLI

La Calisto:

13	"Vivo per te pietosa...Dolcissimi baci"	(Act III)	4:31
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HANDEL

	"Caro autor di mia doglia" – Duet, HWV 182b*		6:37
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14	"Caro autor di mia doglia"		2:35
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15	"Nò, che d'altui che di te"		2:00
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16	"Dagli amori flagellata"		2:02
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* World premiere recording

CAVALLI

L'Ormino

Finale to Act II

1 **ERISBE & ORMINDO**

De' nostri abeti amor sia Tifi accorto,
egli ci guidi fortunati in porto.

ORMINDO

Amo Erisbe.

ERISBE

Amo Ormino.

ORMINDO & ERISBE

Amo ancor tu; seguace d'Amor
distempra il rigor.
Amo su, amoroso che sei,
amo ch'amano dei.

My love, may Tiphys, helmsman of the Argo,
journey with our ships and guide us safely to harbour.

I love Erisbe.

I love Ormino.

I love you! For the disciples of Love,
all hardship melts away.
You are so loving,
I love you with the passion of the gods.

Prison Scene from Act III

2 **ORMINDO**

Di te mi pesa, Erisbe cara,
mi turbano i tuoi casi, e non i miei,
per tua sciagura a' tuoi begl'occhi ardei
e le mie fiamme t'apprestar la bara.

ERISBE

Di te mi duole, Ormino amato,
deploro il tuo destino e'l mio non curo,
atri cipressi i mirti miei ti furo
e l'eccidio il mio ardor ti ha preparato.

Erisbe my darling, it's you I fear for:
it's your fate that scares me, not mine.
Seeing this disaster befall you,
it burns me to look in your eyes,
and those flames prepare your funeral pyre.

Ormino my beloved, it's you I grieve for:
it's your destiny I weep for, not mine.
My love garlands of myrtle have become gloomy
cypresses of death,
and my passion has prepared your slaughter.

ORMINDO

Cada l'ira del Re sopra il mio capo,
la macchia del suo onor lavi il mio sangue.
Pure che viva, bella mia, tu resti
mi saran cari i roghi e non molesti.

ERISBE

Sola poss'io morir.

ORMINDO

Morir cosa sì bella?
Levi gl'auguri il Cielo.

ORMINDO & ERISBE

Scocchi in me sol la morte il negro telo.

Let the King's anger fall on my head,
let my blood wash away the stain on his honour.
As long as you are alive, my love,
as long as you remain,
the flames shall do me kindness, not cruelty.

I alone must die.

One so fair, die?
Heaven forbid.

Let Death cast his black cloth over me alone.

ERISBE

Ah questo è l'imeneo che ci promise
d'Amatunta il dio? Son questi le sue
faci ch'arder doveano intorno a'
nostri letti, ch'arder doveano per
infiamarci maggiormente i petti?
Oh di superbo e dispietato nume
traditrice natura, empio costume.

ORMINDO

Non ti doler d'Amore,
non l'oltraggiar, mio core,
querelati del Cielo contro
di noi d'ostilità ripieno.
Sua mercede godrem gioia
infinita, ne' felici giardini di beati
riposi unichi nidi, spiriti uniti
eternamente e fidi.

Ah, is this the wedding that
Venus promised us?
Are these the torches that
should burn around our bed,
the more to inflame our breasts?
Ah, the proud, pitiless goddess
uses us cruelly in her treachery.

Ah, dear heart, do not complain
about Love, do not offend him;
bring your suit against Heaven, so
full of hatred against us. Through
Love's mercy we shall taste infinite
Joy, nestled together in those happy
gardens of blessed rest, two souls
joined forever, forever faithful.

ERISBE

Si, sì, che questa notte
in virtude d'Amore alle nostre alme
aprirà un dì lucente
perpetuo e permanente.

ORMINDO

Si non ti doler d'Amore,
non l'oltraggiar, mio core.

ERISBE

L'ombra ch'or vela il mondo
se terrore produce a noi partorirà
stato giocondo contro il costume
suo madre di luce.

4 ERISBE

Ormino?

ORMINDO

Erisbe?

ERISBE

Io sento di mortifero sonno
gravidi gl'occhi.

ORMINDO

Opprime a poco a poco ancor
i miei la morte.

ERISBE & ORMINDO

Ralleghiamci che corte le vigilie
saranno del nostro crudo
e tormentosa affanno.

ERISBE

Io moro, della Parca l'acciaro
trattener più non poss'io,
negl'Elisi t'attendo.
Ormino, a dio.

Yes, let this night, through the power
of Love, be for our souls
the gate to a shining day,
endless and for ever.

Yes, dear heart, do not complain
about Love, do not offend him.

The world grows dark, but these
shadows which bring terror for
others are for us a new birth into a
state of joy: against their very nature,
they have begotten light.

Ormino?

Erisbe?

My eyes are heavy
with a deadly sleep.

Mine too feel the weight of death
pressing on them.

Let us rejoice together, for soon
the mourning rites will begin,
and our cruel, agonising ordeal be over.

I am dying; I can no longer hold off Fate
who comes to cut the thread of my life.
I shall await you in Elysium.
Ormino, farewell.

ORMINDO

Erisbe, aspetta, io vengo,
di già prende lo mio spirito amante
le licenze dal corpo angonizante.
Ahi spirò la mia vita,
ecclüssato e'l mio sol di bellezza
vera in cui menda non era.

Erisbe, wait, I am coming!
Already my loving soul takes
leave of my body's agony.
Ah, my beloved is dead!
My sun has been blotted out,
my flawless sun of true beauty.

5 ORMINDO

Piangete, amori, Venere ch'è morta,
e per formarle l'adorata pira
spennacchiatevi l'ali, spezzate
gl'archi, accumulate i strali.

Venus is dead; Cupids, weep for her,
and to make a precious pyre for her,
pluck your wings bare, break your
bows, pile up your arrows.

STEFFANI

La libertà contenta

6 ASPASIA & ALCIBIADES

Volate, momenti, affrettati, o sol,
Piaceri contenti dian termine, al duol.

Fly, time, hasten, o earth
Pleasures put a happy end to grief.

HANDEL

Alcina

7 RUGGIERO

Verdi prati, selve amene,
Perderete la beltà.
Vaghi fior, correnti rivi,
La vaghezza, la bellezza,
Presto in voi si cangerà.
Verdi prati, selve amene,
Perderete la beltà.
E cangiato il vago oggetto,
All'orror del primo aspetto
Tutto in voi ritornerà.

Verdant pastures, leafy woods,
You will lose your beauty.
Pretty flowers, purling brooks,
Your charm, your loveliness
Is about to be transformed.
Verdant pastures, leafy woods,
You will lose your beauty.
And, changed, each fair object
Will resume the horror
Of its former shape.

MONTEVERDI/FERRARI L

L'incoronazione di Poppea

8 POPPEA & NERONE

Pur ti miro, pur ti godo,
pur ti stringo, pur t'annodo,
più non peno, più non moro,
o mia vita, o mio tesoro.
Io son tua, tuo son io,
speme mia, dillo di,
tu sei pur l'idol mio,
Sì mio ben, sì mio cor, sì mia vita.

I gaze on you, I delight in you,
I embrace you, I enchain you.
no longer do I suffer, no longer do I die,
O my life, O my treasure.
I am yours, yours I am,
my hope: say it,
you are my true idol,
You are my beloved, my heart, my life!

HANDEL

Giulio Cesare in Egitto

9 CORNELIA & SESTO

Son nata a lagrimar
Son nato a sospirar,

e il dolce mio conforto,
ah, sempre piangerò.
Se il fato ci tradi,
sereno e lieto di
mai più sperar potrò.
Son nata...

I was born to weep
I was born to sigh,

And I shall mourn forever
My sweet consolation.
If fate has betrayed us,
I shall never again hope for
A serene or happy day.
I was born...

HANDEL

Susanna

10 JOACIM

When thou art nigh,
My pulse beats high,
And raptures swell my breast.

SUSANNA

Search, search my mind,
And there you'll find
Your lovely form impress'd.

SUSANNA & JOACIM

With joy in their wings the young moments shall fly,
And chase ev'ry cloud that would darken the sky.
If thou art but present my cares to beguile,
Oppression is soften'd, and bondage will smile.

HANDEL

Theodora

11 THEODORA

To thee, thou glorious son of worth,
Be life and safety giv'n.

DIDYMUS

To thee, whose virtues suit thy birth,
Be every blessing giv'n.

THEODORA & DIDYMUS

I hope again to meet on earth,
But sure shall meet in Heav'n.

HANDEL

Alexander Balus

12 CLEOPATRA

Calm thou my soul,
Kind Isis, with a noble scorn of life,
Ideal joys, and momentary pains,
That flatter or disturb this waking dream.
Convey me to some peaceful shore,
no tumultuous billows roar,
Where life, though joyless, still is calm,
And sweet content is sorrow's balm.
There free from pomp and care, to wait,
Forgetting and forgot, the will of fate.

CAVALLI

La Calisto

13 **ENDIMIONE**

Vivo per te, pietosa,
Spiro per te, clemente,
Gioia mia luminosa,
Pena mia risplendente.
Pria, che te rinnegare
Morir, morir volea
Martirizzato, ò Dea.

DIANA

Tanto dunque tu m'ami?
Chi me l'attesterà?

ENDIMIONE

Il cor, che teco sta.

DIANA

Ma vo, che tu abbandoni
Questi boschi Pelasgi, e questi monti
Per fuggire i rigori
De' numi delle selve, e de' pastori.
Gelosà del tuo bene,
Conduirti voglio sulle Ionie arene.
Là del Latimio eccelso
Segretarie le cime
De' nostri ardor faremo;
Tu modesto, ed io casta,
Lassù ci baceremo.

ENDIMIONE

Il bacio, il bacio basta
Ad amatore onesto;
Il bacio sol desio, non chiedo il resto:
Son del senso signore,
Né foco vil m'incenerisce il core.

I live for you, O compassionate one,
I breathe for you, O clement one,
my luminous joy,
my resplendent pain.
Rather than deny you,
I wanted to die, to die
a martyr, O Goddess.

So do you love me that much?
Who will prove it to me?

My heart, which remains with you.

But I want you to abandon
these Pelasgian woods, and these mountains,
to flee the cruelty
of the gods of the woods and of the shepherds.
Protective of your well-being,
I want to lead you to the Ionian sands.
There, we will make the peaks
of lofty Mt. Latmus record
our loves;
you modest, and I chaste;
up there we will kiss each other.

A kiss, a kiss is enough
for an honest lover;
I only desire a kiss, I do not ask for the rest:
I am lord of my senses,
nor does a lowly passion ignite my heart.

DIANA & ENDIMIONE

Dolcissimi baci,
Un nettare siete,
Che sempre le faci
D'amor accrescete.
Il bacio, che more
Al bacio da vita;
La gioia è infinita.
Ch'indugi, e dimore?
Il labbro
Ch'è fabbro
Di tanta dolcezza
Sen vada a baciare,
mio ben, mio cor, mia bellezza.

Sweetest kisses,
you are like nectar
since you always rekindle
the torches of love.
The kiss that dies
gives life to another;
the joy is infinite.
Why do you hesitate, and delay?
Let the lips
that create
such sweetness
depart to kiss,
my beloved, my heart, my beauty.

HANDEL

'Caro autor di mia doglia'

Duet, HWV182b

- 14 Caro autor di mia doglia
dolce pena del core
mio respiro, mia pace!
- 15 Nò, nò che d'altrui che di te mai non sarò.
O volto, o lumi, o luci, o labbra!
Nò, nò che d'altrui che di te mai non sarò.
- 16 Dagli amori flagellata
la discordia fuggirà,
[bella gloria innamorata
lampi eterni spargerà.]

Dear author of my grief
sweet pain of my heart,
my breath, my peace!
No, I will never be for anyone other than you.
O face, o eyes, o lights, o lips!
No, I will never be for anyone other than you.
Scourged by love
discord flees,
[and the joy of loving hearts
contribute to eternal flames.]



BAROQUE DUETS

Fiona Campbell and David Walker first collaborated in Pinchgut Opera's production of Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans* in 2007. After their second collaboration in Cavalli's *Ormindo*, again for Pinchgut, the pair decided to make a duet recording, capitalising on their friendship as well as the unusually well-matched qualities of their voices. The sumptuous duets from *L'Ormindo*, including the opera's gripping prison scene, provided the starting point for the repertoire. To these was added other music of the early Baroque period, such as the famous 'Pur ti miro' from *L'incoronazione di Poppea* by Monteverdi and an unjustly neglected gem from *La Calisto* by Cavalli.

In any recording of Baroque duets, the music of Handel must feature prominently – this recording not only represents arias and duets from his greatest operas and oratorios, but proudly offers the world-premiere recording of a spectacular chamber duet for two altos, '*Caro autor di mia doglia*', HWV 182b. Fittingly, the other world premiere on this recording is by Agostino Steffani, the composer whose masterful chamber duets provided Handel with his model.

CAVALLI AND MONTEVERDI

In 1616, Claudio Monteverdi, maestro di cappella at the illustrious St Mark's Basilica in Venice, hired a promising choirboy named Pietro Francesco Caletti. Over the years Caletti would become the assistant then chief organist, eventually succeeding Monteverdi as maestro some 52 years later. The boy showed such musical talent that he received the patronage of the governor of Crema, Federico Cavalli. Later, at the age of about 30, he adopted his patron's name in gratitude. Francesco Cavalli was then on the brink of becoming the leading composer of the century's most important new genre – opera. Cavalli wrote 41 operas, 27 of which are extant. In fact, Cavalli's form the bulk of surviving 17th-century operas, as very few others still exist, even counting those of Monteverdi and Cesti.

Cavalli found his calling as soon as the first Venetian opera houses opened in 1637. He had all the necessary gifts for a popular operatic composer – a talent for memorable tunes as well as compelling and touching recitative, and a fine sense of dramatic pacing. Most of his works premiered in Venice, some achieving performances in Paris and possibly Vienna. By 1660, he was opera's most influential composer and received an invitation to compose for the royal wedding in Paris of Louis IX and Maria Theresa of Spain.

La Calisto is drawn from a story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of a nymph, Callisto, who is ultimately transformed into a bear and lives amongst the stars as the constellation we call Ursa Major. Cavalli's opera was designed to be an impressive spectacle, using the sophisticated stage machinery available at the San Appollinare theatre. But the show was blighted by two deaths not long after opening night: those of the castrato singing Endimione (Bonifatio Ceretti) and the theatre manager, who also happened to be the librettist. For all its

musical inventiveness, *La Calisto* failed to attract an audience in 1651, and probably wasn't heard again until its modern revival in the 1970s.

In 'Vivo per te pietosa...Dolcissimi baci' [13], occurring near the end of the opera, the goddess Diana has rescued her human lover Endimione from the harm threatened by the god Pan. But Diana, goddess of chastity, is unable to consummate her relationship with a mortal, so she and Endimione affirm their love for each other with kisses alone.

L'Ormindo – by popular and expert consensus one of Cavalli's most attractive operas – dates from 1644. Its climax is the dramatic and complex prison scene in Act III. [2]–[5] Ormindo, the prince of Tunis, has fallen in love with Erisbe, the wife of his ally Hariadeno, King of Mauretania.

As the two attempt to elope, they are foiled and captured. The king orders their death by poison. At this point, however, the lovers are unaware that a counterplot to save them is in play, and a sleeping potion has been substituted for the poison.

Cavalli himself was so taken by this prison scene that he reused about a third of it some 11 years later, when his opera *Erismena* also called for a prison scene. This is the only known instance of self-borrowing in Cavalli's output.

Also recorded here is a beautiful duet for the lovers from the end of Act II, the crucial moment when Erisbe decides to leave her husband. [1] This is a version prepared by Peter Foster to solve a problem that haunts anyone interested in performing *L'Ormindo*. The opera exists in only one 17th-century copy, and that copy has gaps in it. The most serious of these is at the end of Act II, where the enticing duet for Ormindo and Erisbe mysteriously breaks off. Peter Foster has postulated that what's in the manuscript is an incomplete first (slow) half to a

full duet, so he composed an ending to this first half, and as a second half inserted a passionate duet from Cavalli's opera *Le virtù de' strali d'Amore* (The Power of Love's Arrows), composed two years earlier in 1642.

One of Cavalli's influences was, naturally, Monteverdi, his master at St Mark's and a composer of operas since his *Orfeo* in 1607. Monteverdi's last opera, **L'incoronazione di Poppea** (The Coronation of Poppea), was written in the year of his death, 1643, and it's generally agreed by scholars that not all of it was actually composed by Monteverdi. It likely contains music written by younger composers, including Cavalli, working under Monteverdi's supervision, much as Rubens and other contemporaneous artists put their signature on works painted by assistants under their close eye.

The authorship of one section in particular has been hotly debated, largely because the passage is so beautiful that many scholars are reluctant to say it is not Monteverdi's. This is the extraordinary closing duet, [8] 'Pur ti miro', where the two vocal lines brush and press against each other in what's considered a perfect example of eroticism in opera. The librettist Busenello wrote the words for the rest of the opera, but the words of 'Pur ti miro' are indisputably by the composer Benedetto Ferrari and some scholars believe he wrote this music as well. Regardless, the duet is one of the greatest in all of operatic history, and is a powerful reminder that art should be appreciated on its own merit, regardless of who we believe is the artist.

HANDEL: OPERAS AND ORATORIOS

In the early 1700s, a combination of social forces brought Handel from his native Germany to England, where he would achieve great fame and live the rest of his life. An appetite for all things fashionably foreign meant that English audiences

preferred to listen to European performers, and even to opera in Italian rather than the vernacular. A London performance of *Rinaldo* in 1710 brought Handel renown and whetted his appetite for operatic success. By the end of 1712 he was again drawn to England, assuring his employer, the prince-elect of Hanover, he'd 'return within a reasonable time'. He was still in London when the British queen Anne died in 1714. The law prohibited a Catholic from inheriting the throne, so, bypassing some fifty closer blood relations, the Protestant elector became king of England as George I. An embarrassed Handel was there to meet him.

By 1719, Handel was musical director of the Royal Academy of Music, essentially an opera company, and he grew to become London's most important composer and producer of Italian opera in a career (at times fraught with competition from rival opera composers) that lasted until about 1741.

Alcina was successfully premiered at the newly built Covent Garden theatre in 1735, with revivals during the next three years. The aria 'Verdi, prati' [7] was, according to historian Charles Burney, constantly encoired throughout that first season. It is sung by the knight Ruggiero as he farewells the beautiful island he realises is an artificial creation by the sorceress Alcina: its trees, rocks, streams and animals are Alcina's transformed former lovers. Burney recounts that the famed castrato Carestini initially rejected the aria as unfit to sing (on account of its lack of virtuosity, no doubt), causing Handel to go into one of his famous rages.

Giulio Cesare in Egitto was designed to make an impression – it premiered in 1724 as an opera of heroic scale, requiring a large orchestra (including four horns) and written for a very famous cast of singers. Even the relatively minor roles of Cornelia and Sextus, the widow and son of Caesar's victim Pompey, were created by two revered singers of the day,

Anastasia Robinson and Margherita Durastanti. This accounts for the extraordinary amount of music Handel accorded to the minor characters, evident in beautiful, lengthy pieces, full of pathos, such as [9] 'Son nata lagrima'. Mother and son, captured by the Romans, lament that they are born to weep. Such was the faith Handel had in this music and its singers that he ended Act I in this subdued but intense way, rather than with the conventional flourish.

Handel began writing oratorios while still producing opera, but it was the 1741–42 season that convinced him where the future lay. Oratorio is always defined by how it differs from opera, which only reveals that the two genres share more similarities than differences. The English oratorio, as shaped by Handel, had opera-like recitatives and arias but usually a religious story; it featured a substantial choral component, and was performed in concert, that is, without stage scenery or costumes. And it was sung in English, which allowed a greater number of Handel's public to appreciate the drama. In that 1741–42 season, Handel gave a series of oratorio concerts in Dublin, including *Messiah*, and these were so popular that Handel was confident oratorio would allow him to leave behind the complications, expenses and risks of operatic stage production.

The three oratorios featured on this recording are among Handel's last works in the genre. The story of **Alexander Balus** (first performed 1748) is drawn from the Old Testament first book of Maccabees, and deals with the timeless theme of love crossing the divide of enemy lines – the Egyptian queen Cleopatra harbouring an illicit, doomed love for the Syrian king Alexander. In her final aria, [12] 'Calm my soul... Convey me to some peaceful shore', she is beyond rage and grief and can barely speak, evoking from Handel one of his most moving arias.

Handel's oratorio **Susanna** premiered in 1749. The history of Susanna and the Elders comes from those chapters of the book of Daniel which appear only in the Apocrypha, and yet this powerful tale was one of the most widely read stories from the Biblical tradition, inspiring numerous works of music and art. Daniel calls Susanna 'a very fair woman, and one that feared the Lord', but lecherous village elders falsely accuse her of infidelity to her husband. In a joyous duet for Susanna and her husband Joacim, [10] 'When thou art night, my pulse beats high', Handel makes evident her sweetness and innocence. In Susanna's other arias, Handel displays her spiritual strength in the face of horrendous allegations.

The story of **Theodora** is not biblical but concerns two early Christian martyrs, and once again we encounter love across warring nations – Theodora's Roman lover Didymus converts to Christianity and dies with her, persecuted by the Romans. The duet 'To thee, thou glorious son of worth' [11] occurs at the end of Act II, when Didymus gives the imprisoned Theodora his soldier's uniform so she can escape disguised as him, while he remains in her cell. Perhaps because of its tragic ending, *Theodora* was unsuccessful at its premiere, and Handel was deeply disappointed; according to his librettist Thomas Morell, Handel considered *Theodora* a personal favourite and believed the restrained Act II resurrection chorus, 'He saw the lovely youth', to be greater than the 'Hallelujah' chorus.

HANDEL: 'Caro autor di mia doglia' – Duet, HWV182b

It's almost unthinkable that there's any music of Handel's still to receive a world-premiere recording. But Handel's cantatas are bizarrely neglected, given that Handel himself held them in high regard. As Ellen T. Harris puts it in her book *Handel as Orpheus*: 'Although the cantatas remain the least known of Handel's compositions, Handel himself never forgot them,

and they remained throughout his life a personal treasure trove of invention.' Handel would reuse music from the cantatas decades later in his operas and oratorios – *Rinaldo*, *Tamerlano*, *Susanna*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Belshazzar* and *Messiah* all contain music from the cantatas.

In addition to the cantatas proper, Handel scholars differentiate a group of cantata-like works, which they simply call 'duets' and 'trios'. Strictly speaking, the singers in the cantatas are characters in a story, much like an opera or oratorio, and sing recitatives between their arias; the singers in the duets and trios sing poetic texts, and have no recitatives (dialogue, in other words) because they are not dramatic characters. Textually, the duets and trios are closer to the madrigal or the art song, but musically, they are indistinguishable from cantatas except for there being no recitative.

We know of 21 duets by Handel, most of which are for either two sopranos or soprano and alto. A couple of these have become extremely famous in retrospect for having been recycled in *Messiah*. However, there is only one duet for soprano and tenor, and only one for two altos – these two deserve special mention. The first, 'Caro autor di mia doglia', HWV 182a, was composed around 1707. It's one of the earliest duets that Handel wrote. The reason for the slightly unusual scoring of soprano and tenor is unknown, but Handel was then a young man who had just left Germany for the first time and was living as a guest in the homes of Italian aristocrats; all the cantatas were written for some courtly use, so there was probably a tenor at court.

Some 35 years later, in the early 1740s, Handel returned to this composition and rescored it for two altos. His motivation is unknown, but Handel apparently wanted or needed to produce six new duets for soprano and alto and

one for two altos, and for the latter it must have occurred to him to investigate the early duet. His revision for two altos is the version recorded here, catalogued as 'Caro autor di mia doglia', HWV 182b. [14]–[16]

At first glance, it appears that Handel simply transposed the vocal ranges and left the music unchanged. But while that's true of the first two sections or movements, the finale will come as a big surprise for anyone who knows the original. This revised finale is technically incomplete in that Handel composed only the outer 'A' sections of a ternary form, and so the finale is missing two lines of the poem. Why Handel made this omission is unknown; nonetheless, the music can be satisfactorily performed in its revised state.

Handel subjected the finale to massive recomposition, retaining only the general outline of the melodies. Some of the less effective (dare one say, meandering) coloratura passages were pared, and the melodies made more attractive, the harmonic progressions recast to have more shape and clarity. Overall, the revised version is tauter, more arresting and more melodically appealing.

It's obvious that Handel, revisiting a work he had written more than three decades earlier, took the opportunity to improve on a youthful essay. It's similar to his transformation of 'Lascia la spina' from his early Italian cantata *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* into the immortal showstopper 'Lascia chi'o pianga' for his opera *Rinaldo* – he 'weeded' the middle section, throwing out slabs of music he considered superfluous. The result gives the impression that the earlier version is a little uneconomical; it's the same impression to be gained from comparing the two versions of the 'Caro autor...' finale. This revised finale is the true value of the addition of HWV 182b at long last to the discography.

STEFFANI: LA LIBERTÀ CONTENTA

'Volate, momenti' [6] is taken from Steffani's opera *La libertà contenta*, which was first performed in February 1693 at Hanover (where he had been Kapellmeister since summer 1688). The libretto, by his close friend and Hanoverian collaborator, Abbate Ortensio Mauro, is concerned with the amorous adventures of the dissolute Athenian commander Alcibiades, a virtuoso role that was sung by the distinguished soprano castrato Clementin Hader. The duet is the climax of Act II, Scene 3, in which Alcibiades declares his passionate love – 'rampant desire' might be more accurate! – for the Athenian princess Aspasia (in disguise) and she for him. Desiring privacy, they agree to meet at dusk in the garden, there to consummate their love.

Looking forward eagerly to the tryst, they urge time to fly fast ('Volate, momenti'). In its rapid quaver movement and almost competitive imitation between the voices, Steffani's setting conveys a vivid impression of flight and of the singers' excitement. In the garden, however, things go wrong, because other characters, too, some in disguise, gather there at the same time. The resulting mistaken identities amuse the audience but not those involved, especially the queen of Sparta, who finishes the act with a blistering call for vengeance.

The opera gave a warning about the dangers of infidelity and promiscuity to the court of Hanover, where the wife of the heir apparent was having a passionate affair with a Swedish count. The warning was ignored: in 1694 the count was murdered and his mistress exiled for life; 20 years later her husband became King George I of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

VEXATIONS840

Vexations840 is a music production and recording enterprise based in Sydney Australia. We plan to assist and encourage the making and recording of music that would otherwise not happen. We will use the developing resources of the internet to increase the awareness, experience and understanding of this music. Baroque Duets is our first project.

NEAL PERES DA COSTA

DIRECTOR

Dr Neal Peres Da Costa is a Senior Lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (University of Sydney), where he is Chair of Early Music, teaches early keyboards, directs the Conservatorium Early Music Ensemble and lectures on historical performance.

As a performing scholar, he has given concerts around the world with many distinguished soloists and ensembles. He was co-founder of Florilegium, with which he toured extensively and made many award-winning recordings.

He performs and records regularly with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Pinchgut Opera, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Ironwood, and many other ensembles both national and international. In 2010 he directed Orchestra Victoria in music by Rameau and J.S. Bach.

Neal's recording of Bach's Sonatas for violin and harpsichord with Richard Tognetti and Daniel Yeadon won a Fine Arts ARIA for Best Classical Recording in 2008, and recent recordings include Bach's complete Sonatas for viola da gamba and obbligate harpsichord, also with Daniel Yeadon.

His book on performing practices in Romantic piano playing will be published by Oxford University Press in 2011.

FIONA CAMPBELL

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Australian-born mezzo-soprano Fiona Campbell is an accomplished international performer, recitalist and recording artist. A Vocal category winner in the ABC Young Performers Awards and an Opera Awards winner in the Australian Singing Competition, she has consistently received wide critical acclaim for her powerful performances and exquisite musicianship.

Fiona sings regularly as a principal artist with the major ensembles in Australia and has also appeared with the Brodsky Quartet, Tokyo Philharmonic, Soloists of the Royal Opera House Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Prague Chamber Orchestra, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opera North, Opera Australia and Pinchgut Opera.

Her career highlights include singing several concerts with tenor José Carreras in Japan and Korea, and as his special guest artist in Australia. And she recently made her debut at Suntory Hall in Tokyo and Cadogan Hall in London, performing with soprano Barbara Bonney.

Fiona has recorded many recitals for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and her discography includes Early French Cantatas, Idomeno, Juditha Triumphans, Just Classics 2 and The Classic 100 Opera. She has also recorded her first solo album Love, Loss, Lust, which will be available on iTunes.

In 2011 her busy concert schedule includes Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire with the Australia Ensemble, a tour with the ACO (in Listen to This, curated by Alex Ross) and guest appearances with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. Fiona also has an exciting new collaboration with the Australian String Quartet.

www.fionacampbell.com.au

DAVID WALKER

COUNTERTENOR

American countertenor David Walker is sought after as an operatic and oratorio artist in a diverse repertoire. His career highlights range from singing Bertarido opposite Renée Fleming in Handel's *Rodelinda* for the Metropolitan Opera, to the title role in the North American and Paris premieres of *The Elephant Man* by Laurent Petitgerard.

He also sang the Refugee in the North American and Australian premieres of Jonathan Dove's *Flight* (which won him an Australian Helpmann Award nomination), and the title role in Glass's *Akhmaten* in Strasbourg.

In earlier repertoire he has appeared as Goffredo in *Rinaldo* in Munich (released on DVD), Nero in *The Coronation of Poppea* for English National Opera, and in the title role in Handel's *Flavio* at New York City Opera. For Sydney's Pinchgut Opera he has sung Holofernes in Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans* (released on ABC Classics) and *L'Ormino* by Cavalli.

David has performed with many of the major North American opera companies and festivals, as well as leading ensembles specialising in baroque and classical repertoire, and in 1998 he was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions winner.

His European engagements have included the Göttingen Handel Festival, Opera North, Stadttheater Klagenfurt, Academy of Ancient Music, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the Kaleningrad Orchestra.

In 2010 David Walker scaled down his performance schedule while studying for a dual master's degree in arts and business administration, in preparation for the next stage in his career: arts and music management.

www.davidwalkercountertenor.com



KEYBOARD AND DIRECTOR

Neal Peres Da Costa

(Appears courtesy of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music)

Harpichord: Colin Booth, Wells, UK (1999) after Vincenzo Sodi, Florence, (c.1750); used by courtesy of the Sydney Early Music Instrument Collection.

Chamber organ: Henk Klop, Garderen, The Netherlands (2007); used by courtesy of ABC Classics, Cantillation and Pinchgut Opera
Keyboard instruments prepared by Mark Woodward

FIRST VIOLINS

Julia Fredersdorff

Violin: 18th-century Cremonese, labelled 'Laurentius Storioni 1789'
Bows: Solange Chivas, after a mid-17th-century model
(Cavalli and Steffani);
Solange Chivas, after an early 18th-century model baroque bow
(Handel)

Miranda Hutton

Violin: Annette Voll (2009) after Stradivarius, 1730
Bow: Gerhard Landwehr

Lisa Stewart

Violin: Romino Montagna, 1722, Venus;
kindly loaned by Rosalind and David Halton
Bow: Matthew Coltman, UK (2000)

SECOND VIOLINS

Alice Evans

Violin: Mittenwald, c.1750
Bow: Matthew Coltman, UK

Myce Clohessy

Violin: Mittenwald, c.1780
Bow: Pieter Affortit, The Netherlands

Robin Wilson

Violin: John Johnston, Sydney (1986) after Stradivarius, c.1713
Bow: Roger Doe, UK (2006); courtesy Sydney Conservatorium
of Music Early Music Collection

VIOLA

Nicole Forsyth

Viola: Ian Clarke, Toowoomba, Queensland (1998)
after Maggini, c.1680
Bow: Italian (1994)

CELLO

Daniel Yeadon

Cello: William Forster II, England, 1781
Bass Violin: Martin Bowers, Essex, UK (1993); loaned by Pinchgut Opera
Violone: Ben Hall, Sydney (1980s)

DOUBLE BASS

Maxime Bibeau

Double Bass: Attr. Paul Claudot, c.1825

Bow: Matthew Colman, UK (1999)

VIOLA DA GAMBA/VIOLONE

Laura Vaughan

Bass Viola da Gamba:

Henner Harders, Mansfeld, Germany (2007)

after Colichon, Paris, 1683

Viola da Gamba Bow:

Solange Chivas (2009), early 17th-century model

Lirone: Ian Watchorn, Melbourne, Australia (2009)

Lirone Bow: Harry Grabenstein, Williston, USA (2009)

LUTE

Simon Martyn-Ellis

Theorbo: Jiri Cepelak, Prague (2004)

Theorbo: Peter Biffin, Armidale (2009);
courtesy Sydney Conservatorium of Music Early Music Collection

RECORDER

Mikaela Oberg

Treble Recorder:

Fred Morgan, Daysford, Australia (1982)

after Jacob Denner, Nuremberg c.1720

OBOE

Kirsten Barry

Oboe: Toshi Hasegawa (1995),

after Jacob Denner, Nuremberg, c.1710

BASSOON

Simon Rickard

Bassoon: Mathew Dart, London (1995)

after Johann Christoph Denner, Nuremberg, c.1690

Executive Producers: Lyle Chan, Anna Cerneaz

Recording Producer: Lyle Chan

Recording Engineer: Bob Scott

Project Manager: Anna Cerneaz

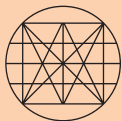
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