



472 151-2

A portrait of David Hobson, a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

DAVID
hOBSON
Handel Arias

Sinfonia Australis
Cantillation
Antony Walker



GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

<i>Semele</i> , HWV58 (1743) Act 2 Scene 2	
1	Where'er you walk 3'41
<i>Serse</i> , HWV40 (1737) Act 1 Scene 1	
2	Frondi tenere e belle – 0'39
3	Ombra mai fù 2'39
<i>Ode for St Cecilia's Day</i> , HWV76 (1739)	
4	The trumpet's loud clangor 3'15
<i>Solo trumpet: Leanne Sullivan</i>	
<i>Messiah</i> , HWV56 (1741) Part 1	
5	Comfort ye my people – 2'51
6	Ev'ry valley shall be exalted 3'00
<i>Esther</i> , HWV50b (1732) Act 1 Scene 2	
7	Tune your harps to cheerful strains 3'49
<i>Oboe: Linda Walsh</i>	
<i>Samson</i> , HWV57 (1741) Act 1 Scene 2	
8	Total eclipse! 2'43
<i>Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno</i> , HWV46a (1707) Part 2	
9	Lascia la spina, cogli la rosa 3'45
<i>Tamerlano</i> , HWV18 (1724)	
10	Ciel e terra armi di sdegno Act 1 Scene 6 3'09
11	Sù la sponda del pigro Lete Act 3 Scene 1 4'57
<i>Oboe: Linda Walsh</i>	

<i>Acis and Galatea</i> , HWV49b (1732) Part 1	
12	Love in her eyes sits playing 4'53
<i>Oboe: Linda Walsh</i>	
<i>Athalia</i> , HWV52 (1733) Act 1 Scene 3	
13	Gentle airs, melodious strains! 2'38
<i>Solo cello: Susan Blake</i>	
<i>Atalanta</i> , HWV35 (1736) Act 1	
14	Care selve, ombre beate 2'24
<i>Jephtha</i> , HWV70 (1751) Act 3	
15	Waft her, angels, through the skies 3'19
16	Silent Worship 2'12
Adapted by Arthur Somervell from 'Non lo dirò col labbro' from <i>Tolomeo, re di Egitto</i> , HWV25 (1728) Act 1 Scene 2	
<i>Judas Maccabaeus</i> , HWV63 (1746) Act 2	
17	My arms! Against this Gorgias will I go – 0'18
18	Sound an alarm! 3'37

Total Playing Time 55'13

David Hobson, *tenor*
Sinfonia Australis
Cantillation 4, 18
Antony Walker, *conductor*

PER IL TENORE The Tenor In 18th Century London

The most favoured voice type in *opera seria* throughout most of Europe from roughly the last half of the 17th century and through the first half of the 18th century was that of the castrato. The Abbé Ragueneau in his *Comparison between the French and Italian Music and Operas* seemed to sum up general impressions in 1709 by saying that:

... no man or woman in the world can boast of a voice like theirs: they are clear, they are moving, and affect the soul itself. Sometimes you hear a symphony so charming that you think nothing in music can exceed it, till on a sudden you perceive it was designed only to accompany a more charming air sung by one of these castrati, who, with a voice the most clear, and at the same time equally soft, pierces the symphony, and tops all the instruments with an agreeableness which they that hear it may conceive, but will never be able to describe.

Although the tenor voice had started off dominating the major roles of operas in the early 17th century (in works by Monteverdi, Caccini and Peri for example), by around 1660 tenors were increasingly allotted subsidiary characters. These were roles such as servants, notaries, beadle, old women and nurses, with the last two being performed in travesty. The castrato's clear, powerful, phenomenal voice seemed to be the ideal vehicle for the heroic and dramatic sentiments of lover, king, queen or prince.

Things started to change around the turn of the century, with the tenor voice being used by opera composers more and more to characterise the roles of princes, kings, generals or trusted companions. Alessandro Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Gasparini and Porpora in particular started to elevate the tenor's position in the *dramatis personæ* from supernumerary to that of *terzo* or even *secondo uomo*. There are several reasons for this renewed interest. Firstly, castrati were expensive (Cibber called them "costly canary-birds") and in the eyes of impresarios it often needed only one to 'pull in the crowds'. Secondly, the range and expressiveness of the tenor voice perfectly accorded with the new aesthetic trends of the day – melodiousness, gracefulness, elegance and simplicity; hallmarks of *il stilo galante*. The

viola-like tessitura of the tenor suited well the new melodic shapes that were emerging from Italy. Thirdly, the increasing demands for realism prompted by continuing developments in operatic reform called on composers to use voices that reflected the character they were portraying. Although castrati still played women, and travesty roles continued well into the nineteenth century, there was a general impetus towards naturalism and believable representations of character. Hence, tenors now rarely played old women in *opera seria* (*opera buffa*, in contrast, had its own rich tradition of comic travesty, masks and gender confusion). In Rome, as well, Papal dictums forbade women on the stage, and so the convention of all-male casts compelled Roman composers to utilise the tenor voice.

Virtuoso tenors such as Francesco Borosini, Antonio Barbieri, Marc' Antonio Mareschi, Antonio Denzio and Annibale Pio Fabri, all well-versed in the modern style, started to appear on the Italian stage in the 1720s. True to the traditions of *opera seria*, we soon find operas being tailored to their individual vocal characteristics. Star-singers were often the single defining force behind the creation of an opera production, influencing choice of libretti, the number and type of arias and even the overall

dramatic flow. Handel acknowledged this process in 1728 when he requested that new singers were to be engaged on each occasion so that new operas could be written for new performers. Incidentally, it is worth noting that a *primo uomo* or *prima donna* generally earned three times as much as the composer and ten times as much as the librettist or a supernumerary. These men and women were influential musicians.

In 1724 the Royal Academy dismissed Bononcini, Handel's famous 'rival', engaging Handel as its principal composer. Unusually, the Academy contracted the distinguished tenor Francesco Borosini as leading man, rather than a castrato. This novelty prompted the newspapers to comment, wryly, on the physical difference between castrato and tenor: "It is commonly reported that this Gentleman [Borosini] was never *cut out for a Singer*" (*Weekly Report*, 17 October 1724). Handel completed his setting of *Tamerlano* in July, to a 1711 libretto of Piovene modified by Haym. Borosini arrived in London early in September and Handel soon discovered that he had misjudged the singer's tessitura. But even more importantly, Borosini had brought with him a setting of the opera by Gasparini that had been produced, with himself in the leading role and with many of his ideas, five years earlier. Handel realised

that the libretto of this 1719 production was dramatically an improvement, and so set out, in the ensuing two months, to almost completely re-write the opera. It opened on the 31st of October at the King's Theatre and received 12 performances. Lady Bristol wrote after the premiere to her husband: "You know my ear too well for me to pretend to give you any account of the Opera farther than that the new man [Borosini] takes extremely ...".

Tamerlano is one of Handel's greatest achievements, and the great care he took over revising the libretto led him to explore the psychological motivations of the characters with the same intensity of his earlier *Giulio Cesare*. Bajazet is a tragic, contradictory character who musically and dramatically dominates the stage throughout the three acts, all set (uniquely for Handel) in one locale – the tyrant Tamerlano's palace. *Ciel e terra armi di sdegno* is Bajazet's second aria, and portrays his heroic refusal to give Tamerlano his daughter's hand in return for his life. The impulsive rhythms of the strings suggest his constancy as his own interjections denote his implacability. *Sù la sponda del pigro Lete* was an aria that Handel originally wrote for Borosini before the singer arrived and revisions took place. In the opening scene of Act III, Bajazet and

his daughter Asteria agree to commit suicide with Bajazet, in the ensuing aria, contemplating their reunion in the after-life. Although this was eventually discarded, Handel took great care in painting the scene – two versions of the aria exist, both in the unusual key of B-flat minor. These two settings are closely-wrought marvels of transparent counterpoint where subtle harmonic colourings portray Bajazet's morbid introspection. Dean and Knapp comment that "Bajazet was not only Handel's first important tenor part, but one of his greatest, without a rival before the late oratorios."

On the 29th of January, 1728, a hastily put together farce by John Gay entitled *The Beggar's Opera* opened at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre. It had all the ingredients of success; well-known tunes people could hum, it was in English, it had wit, down-to-earth humour, an attractive leading lady and satirised, amongst other things, the government, royalty and opera. Phenomenally it captured London's attention. The *Daily Journal* noted, two days after the premiere, that it was "written in a manner wholly new and very entertaining, there being introduced instead of Italian airs about 60 of the most celebrated old English and Scottish tunes. There was present there, as well as last night, a prodigious concourse of

Nobility and Gentry, and no theatrical performance for these many years has met with so much applause." Mrs. Pendarves, a steadfast Handel supporter wrote: "Yesterday I was at the rehearsal of the new opera composed by Mr. Handel. I liked it extremely, but the taste of the town is so depraved that nothing will be approved of but burlesque. *The Beggar's Opera* entirely triumphs over the Italian one. I have not yet seen it, but everybody says it is very comical and full of humour: the songs will soon be published." London audiences were sick and tired of hearing about the catty fights of overpaid star-singers ("Nasty pussies!" said one broadsheet, "Odious filthy things! Let them stay at home and starve, or sing at reasonable rates!"), they didn't understand the language ("Gibberish! Chattering monkeys! ... I do not understand a word on't!"), there was too much recitative (the Beggar in Gay's opera says: "I have not made my opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue; for I have no recitative"), people were wearying of the relentless *da capo* arias and the ancient Greek and Roman stories about gods and heroes were seen to be just plain unnatural and, anyway, they weren't that exciting anymore. *The Beggar's Opera* was exactly what the public wanted and it played out to full houses for hundreds of nights. All this

against the background of the Royal Academy being declared insolvent – "the Fund for maintaining Opera's being exhausted, they ceased ... – the Singers left England," said the Earl of Shaftesbury. Mrs. Pendarves and others commented that "operas will not survive longer than this winter: they are at their last gasp ... harmony is almost out of fashion." But Handel continued to write for dwindling houses. *Tolomeo* ran for only seven nights. Some of the arias, like 'Non lo dirò col labbro', display the balanced symmetry and graceful melody of popular composers like Leo or Vinci. Perhaps Handel was trying to win back his audience. (Incidentally, it is the overt tunefulness of this aria and others of the period that perhaps led the English composer Sir Arthur Somervell [1863-1937] to set a selection to English words in the early 20th century. 'Non lo dirò col labbro' is sung as **Silent Worship** in this recording.)

Four years later, in February of 1732, Viscount Percival mentioned in his diary a performance of "the *History of Hester*, writ by Pope and composed by Hendl. This oratoria or religious opera is exceeding fine, and the company were highly pleased ...". The work was *Esther* and it was London's first taste of a true oratorio. The *Daily Journal* reported in an advertisement that

“There will be no Action on the Stage, but the House will be fitted up in a decent Manner, for the Audience.” The absence of action and the idea of a religious opera was a novelty in itself and *Esther* was very successful, attracting a wide audience. Although *Esther* has had its critics (Winton Dean comments that its “historical importance exceeds [its] aesthetic stature”), the work displays a rich orchestration and imaginative sheen. **Tune your harps to cheerful strains** is one such example – a simple but highly effective duet between the voice and oboe with pizzicato strings imitating the sound of the harp.

Since *The Beggar's Opera*, various factions had been attempting to cash in on some of the reasons for its success – namely the use of English words, English singers and popular libretti. An English opera consortium, made up of the Arne family, the composer J. F. Lampe and Henry Carey paraded a series of works upon the stage (one of them was grandly entitled *The Opera of Operas*) and, for the most part, were very successful. In 1732, the year of *Esther*, they even revived a Handel masque, *Acis and Galatea*, thus creating the strange situation where Handel was in competition with one of his own works, but put on by rivals. *Acis and Galatea* had been revised

and altered by Handel over the years and in its final form contains some of his most beautiful material. **Love in her eyes sits playing** is Acis' declaration of love for Galatea. Handel paints this scene appropriately in the pastoral mode – siciliano-like gestures lie inside a graceful, elegant melody. Although the idea of an English Opera was welcomed by both public and critics and there was also a definite possibility of solid financial support, Handel seemed to show no interest. 18th century commentators like Burney and Hawkins thought this was an error of judgement on Handel's part, pointing out the “manifest inferiority” of his later operas and vainly imagining what Handel would have done with an English text. It seems that Handel was determined not to set English words to works that were to be performed with action, probably preferring to work with traditional Italian libretti and the more mellifluous sounds of the vowels. People had remarked before on the unsuitability of English words in recitative. But works done in “the manner of an oratorio,” however, were different. Not being acted upon the stage and employing a large chorus (one report from 1733 describes a performance, “ ’tis excessive noisy, a vast number of instruments and voices”), Handel was able to single-

handedly create a new genre whilst still paying homage to *opera seria* in its traditional form. He continued to write operas throughout his career but it seems that from 1742 to 1748 the 30 to 40 Italian operas produced in London by Handel and others had little success. Tastes were swinging more and more to comedy ballad opera, Italian comedy and, of course, the oratorio.

This new creation created some controversy almost immediately, as Handel was presenting religious texts in a theatre rather than in a church, and the charge of blasphemy surfaced intermittently over the next 20 years. An anonymous pamphlet of 1732 describes the excitement:

This being a new Thing set the whole World a Madding; Han't you be at the *Oratorio*, says one? Oh! If you don't see the *Oratorio* you see nothing, says t'other; so away goes I to the *Oratorio*, where I saw indeed the finest Assembly of People I ever beheld in my Life, but, to my great Surprize, found this Sacred *Drama* a mere Consort [concert], no Scenary, Dress or Action, so necessary to a *Drama* ... *Senesino* and *Bertolli* made rare work with the *English*

Tongue you would have sworn it had been *Welch* ...

Although the first London performances of the oratorios featured the castrati and sopranos of the Italian opera, Handel soon found that English singers trained for the stage were cheaper and, on the whole, better able to impart a dramatic aura that compensated for the absence of action. They could also deliver the text clearly and accurately. Mrs. Thrale reports an anecdote that was the talk of the town: a castrato once pronounced “I come my Queen to Chaste Delights” as “I comb my Queen to catch the Lice.” The tenor voice, neglected in *opera seria*, now often held the main dramatic roles in the oratorios of the 1730s and 1740s. Tastes were changing in their appreciation of the tenor voice. When Handel put on the opera *Lotario* in 1729, Paolo Rolli remarked with surprise at the popularity of Annibal Pio Fabri: “Would you have believed that a tenor could have such a triumph here in England?”

Handel was now able to utilise the talents of many excellent English tenors, among them John Beard (c.1717-1791), Thomas Lowe (?-1783), Philip Rochetti (fl. 1730-1740) and Thomas Salway (fl. 1730s). John Beard, in particular, was one of Handel's

favoured singers and he was first tenor in his company from 1734 to 1759. It was reported that “Mr. Handel is so full of his Praises that he says he will surprise the Town with his performances.” Beard was the leading English singer of his day with Burney saying that he “constantly possessed the favour of the public by his superior conduct, knowledge of Music, and intelligence as an actor.” He created the role of Mathan in *Athalia* (1733) and won public acclaim for his sensitive treatment of **Gentle airs, melodious strains!** Here, Mathan attempts to soothe Athalia and “lull the regal mourner’s pains” in a ravishing aria scored for continuo and obbligato cello. The upper strings enter, magically, in the final four bars.

Beard was probably on hand for a performance of the *Ode for St Cecilia’s Day* which was premiered at Lincoln’s Inn Fields on the 22nd of November, 1739. Handel set Dryden’s 1687 ode by scoring in the appropriate instruments when called upon in the text, being a celebration of the patron saint of music. **The trumpet’s loud clangor** is scored brilliantly for trumpets, timpani, oboes and strings. It abounds in “shrill notes of anger,” “mortal alarms” and a “double, double, double beat of the thund’ring drum.” Beard was Jupiter and

Apollo in the *Story of Semele* in 1743 singing the favourite air **Where’er you walk** with its “cool gales” in the higher strings as well as creating the title role of *Samson* in 1741 and *Judas Maccabaeus* in 1746. The moving aria of the blind Samson (**Total eclipse!**) was sung by Beard “with great feeling” according to Coxe. Later revivals in the 1750s were conducted by the nearly blind Handel at the organ. This “affected the audience so forcibly, that many persons present were moved even to tears.”

Handel had been ill in 1745 and while George II was in Hanover, Charles Edward the Young Pretender (‘Bonnie Prince Charlie’) landed in Scotland and prepared to march on London. There followed a fervour of nationalism and Handel composed four works with militaristic overtones. *Judas Maccabaeus* is one such oratorio and the pertinence of **Sound an alarm!** where Judas “calls the brave and only brave” to action would not have been lost on the audience. After an aria with just continuo scoring, Judas exclaims again “Sound an alarm!” and three trumpets, timpani, oboes, strings and diverse continuo answer with an astonishingly loud tattoo. The chorus respond with “We hear the pleasing, dreadful call.” Handel then suddenly stops everything for two bars of silence

before falteringly continuing in a stumbling series of modulations with the doubtful “if to fall ...” With the words “religion” and “liberty,” catch-cries of the time, we resume in triumphant D major.

Messiah is Handel’s most popular work, but in a sense it is his most unusual and atypical oratorio. For a start it is purely biblical, the scriptural words being put together by Charles Jennens, it was the only oratorio ever performed in a consecrated building and it lacks the dramatic momentum of other works which contained a *dramatis personæ*. Composed quickly over 24 days for a charity performance in Dublin in 1741, *Messiah* was revised and its orchestration enlarged in subsequent London performances. The opening tenor *accompagnato* and *air* (**Comfort ye my people and Ev’ry valley shall be exalted**) show the mature Handel’s skill at setting English text and it is these memorable moments – “Ev’ry valley shall be exalted”, “the crooked straight and the rough places plain” – that partly account for the work’s continued success.

Winton Dean notes that “the whole direction of English oratorio was changed by [Handel’s] choice of Beard’s tenor voice for the part of Samson.” Handel continued throughout the 1740s to experiment with through-composed arias, rather than the

more operatic *da capo* form, succeeding at once to knit the dramatic flow together as well as explore a wider harmonic palette. The singers he was working with were vastly different in technique and training to the Italians of the 1720s, and so we find a greater emphasis and dramatic import in the orchestral accompaniment as Handel paints the scene there rather than in the voice. **Waft her, angels, through the skies** from *Jephtha* (1751) is a perfect example. Again sung by Beard at its premiere, the wafting of the angels is heard in the dotted figures of the first violins rather than in the voice.

The tenor voice had clearly found a firm place for itself in London’s musical life by the 1750s. Favourite airs from the oratorios and operas were published by Walsh and others in order to capitalise on the ever-growing amateur market. Transposed into all sorts of keys for all sorts of voices, gentlemen tenors could now sing popular arias like the sarabande-derived ‘Lascia ch’io pianga’ (heard on this recording in its earliest aria form *Lascia la spina, cogli la rosa* from *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* [The Triumph of Time and Disillusion] of 1707) or the famous *Ombra mai fù* from *Serse*, with its calm solemnity. Handel himself transposed or altered roles in revivals of oratorios and operas throughout

the 1740s and 1750s in order to accommodate singers of varying ability. Accordingly, the opening aria (*Care selve*) of the first act of *Atalanta* (1736) has been recorded here in a tenor version. It is hard to believe this short, beautiful arioso was not written by a native, so assimilated were Handel's Italianisms.

One thing is certain; an anonymous writer of 1709 would have been delighted observing the trends of the 1750s when he posed the question: "I can't see why the part of Caesar or Alexander may not properly enough be performed by a counter-tenor or tenor or any other voice, provided the performer in acting as well as singing is able to maintain the dignity of the character he represents." In the new field of English oratorio it seems Handel and John Beard had succeeded on all accounts.

Erin Helyard

Select Bibliography

- D. Arundell, *The Critic at the Opera: Contemporary Accounts on Opera in London over Three Centuries*, Da Capo Press [1980 reprint], New York, 1957
W. Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques*, Oxford University Press, London, 1959
W. Dean & J. M. Knapp, *Handel's Operas: 1704-1726*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987 rev. 1995
C. Hogwood, *Handel*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1988
G. Freedley & J. A. Reeves, *A History of the Theatre*, Crown Publishers, New York, 1941
R. Strohm, *Essays on Handel & Italian Opera*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985

1 Where'er you walk

JUPITER

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 you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;
trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade.

*Probably adapted by Newburgh Hamilton,
after Alexander Pope*

Frondi tenere e belle ... Ombra mai fù

SERSE

- 2 Frondi tenere e belle
del mio platano amato,
per voi risplenda il Fato.
Tuoni, lampi, e procelle
non v'oltraggino mai la cara pace,
nè giunga a profanarvi austro rapace.

*Tender and beautiful branches
of my beloved plane-tree,
Fate smiles upon you.
May thunder, lightning, and storms
never bother your dear peace,
nor may you be violated by blowing winds.*

- 3 Ombra mai fù
di vegetabile
cara ed amabile
soave più.

*Never was the shade
of any plant
sweeter, dearer or
more agreeable than yours.*

*Anonymous adaptation after
Silvio Stampiglia, after Nicolò Minato*

4 The trumpet's loud clangor

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! hark! Cries hark the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat."

CHORUS

The trumpet's loud clangor excites us to arms

TENOR

The trumpet's loud clangor excites us to arms

CHORUS

To arms, to arms, excites us to arms
with shrill notes of anger, and mortal alarms.

The double, double, double beat of the thund'ring drum
Cries: "Hark! hark! Cries hark the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat."

John Dryden

Comfort ye my people ... Ev'ry valley shall be exalted

- [5] 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 pardon'd.
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 XL, 1-3

- [6] Ev'ry valley shall be exalted,
and ev'ry mountain and hill made low,
the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

Isaiah XL, 4

- [7] **Tune your harps to cheerful strains**

FIRST ISRAELITE

Tune your harps to cheerful strains,
moulder idols into dust.

Great Jehovah lives and reigns,
we in great Jehovah trust.

Tune your harps to cheerful strains,
moulder idols into dust.

*Esther libretto probably by Alexander Pope and
John Arbuthnot after Jean Racine*

- [8] **Total eclipse!**

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!

Total eclipse! No sun, no moon,
all dark amidst the blaze of noon.
Why thus depriv'd Thy prime decree?
Sun, moon and stars are dark to me!

Adapted by Newburgh Hamilton after John Milton

9 Lascia la spina, cogli la rosa

PLACERE

Lascia la spina, cogli la rosa;
tu vai cercando il tuo dolor.

Canuta brina per mano ascosa,
giungerà quando nol crede il cor.

Lascia la spina, cogli la rosa;
tu vai cercando il tuo dolor.

Benedetto Pamphili

*Leave the thorn, pluck the rose;
you go about looking for sorrow.*

*The hoar frost will get there by secret means,
even though the heart may not believe.*

*Leave the thorn, pluck the rose;
you go about looking for sorrow.*

10 Ciel e terra armi di sdegno

BAJAZET

Ciel e terra armi di sdegno,
morro' invitto, e sarò forte.

Chi disprezza pace e regno,
non potrà temer la morte.

Ciel e terra armi di sdegno,
morro' invitto, e sarò forte.

*Adapted by Nicolò Francesco
Haym after Agostino Piovene*

*Let him move heaven and earth in his anger,
I shall die unvanquished, and strong.*

*He who can forgo peace and his kingdom,
can never fear death.*

*Let him move heaven and earth in his anger,
I shall die unvanquished, and strong.*

11 Sù la sponda del pigro Lete

BAJAZET

Sù la sponda del pigro Lete
là m'aspetta,
se vi giungi pria di me.

Che suanita la vendetta,
ti promete di seguirti la mia fè.

Sù la sponda del pigro Lete
là m'aspetta,
se vi giungi pria di me.

*Adapted by Nicolò Francesco
Haym after Agostino Piovene*

*If you attain the shores
of the lazy river Lethe before me,
wait for me there.*

*Once vengeance has been done,
I promise faithfully to follow you.*

*If you attain the shores
of the lazy river Lethe before me,
wait for me there.*

12 Love in her eyes sits playing

ACIS

Love in her eyes sits playing,
and sheds delicious death;
love on her lips is straying,
and warbling in her breath!

Love on her breast sits panting,
and swells with soft desire;
no grace, no charm is wanting,
to set the heart on fire.

Love in her eyes sits playing,
and sheds delicious death;
love on her lips is straying,
and warbling in her breath!

*Acis and Galatea libretto by John Gay,
John Hughes and Alexander Pope after Ovid*

13 Gentle airs, melodious strains!

MATHAN

Gentle airs, melodious strains!
Call for raptures out of woe.

Lull the regal mourner's pains,
sweetly soothe her as you flow.

Gentle airs, melodious strains!
Call for raptures out of woe.

Samuel Humphreys after Jean Racine

14 Care selve, ombre beate

MELEAGRO

Care selve, ombre beate,
vengo in traccia del mio cor!

Anonymous adaptation after Belisario Valeriani

*Dear forests, sweet shadows,
I come to seek my heart!*



15 Waft her, angels, through the skies

JEPHTHA

Waft her, angels, through the skies,
far above yon azure plain.

Glorious there, like you, to rise,
there, like you, forever reign.

Waft her, angels, through the skies,
far above yon azure plain.

Jephtha *libretto* by Thomas Morrell after
Judges XI and G. Buchanan

Silent Worship

16 Did you not hear my lady
go down the garden singing?
Blackbird and thrush were silent,
to hear the alleys ringing.
Oh saw you not my lady
out in the garden there?
Shaming the rose and lily,
for she is twice as fair.

Though I am nothing to her,
though she must rarely look at me
and though I could never woo her,
I love her till I die.

Surely you heard my lady,
go down the garden singing?
Silencing all the songbirds,
and setting the alleys ringing.
But surely you see my lady,
out in the garden there?

Riv'ling the glitt'ring sunshine,
with a glory of golden hair.

Arthur Somervell

My arms! Against this Gorgias
will I go ... Sound an alarm!

JUDAS MACCABAEUS

17 My arms! Against this Gorgias will I go.
The Idumean governor shall know,
how vain, how ineffective his design,
while rage his leader, and Jehovah mine.

18 Sound an alarm! Your silver trumpets sound,
and call the brave, and only brave, around.
Who listeth, follow: to the field again!
Justice with courage is a thousand men.

Sound an alarm! Your silver trumpets sound,
and call the brave, and only brave, around.

CHORUS

We hear the pleasing, dreadful call:
and follow thee to conquest;
if to fall, for laws, religion, liberty, we fall.

Judas Maccabaeus *libretto* by Thomas Morell
after *I Maccabees* and Flavius Josephus

David Hobson

David Hobson began his operatic career with Victoria State Opera in 1987 as Rodolfo in *La bohème* and Frederick in the company's production of the Broadway version of *The Pirates of Penzance*. This was followed by Nadir in *Les pêcheurs de perles* for Opera ACT and Nanki-Poo in *The Mikado* for West Australian Opera. The following year marked his debut with The Australian Opera as Perchik in *Fiddler on the Roof*, followed by Lawrence in the world premiere of Brian Howard's *Whitsunday*. In the same year he was awarded the Dame Joan Sutherland Scholarship.

Since this time, David Hobson has become one of Australia's best known opera singers. He has performed many roles for the national company, Opera Australia, including Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Marco in *The Gondoliers*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, the Architect in the world premiere of *The Eighth Wonder* based on the conception and construction of the Sydney Opera House, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Rodolfo in the Baz Luhrmann production of *La bohème*, Nanki-Poo, Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Piquillo in *La Péricole*,

and Orphée in *Orphée et Eurydice* – the last five being televised nationally. He has also performed for Victoria State Opera as Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, Ferrando, Lindoro and, in concert, the title role in *The Student Prince*, and Alfred in *Die Fledermaus* at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. In 1994 he appeared with San Francisco Opera as Chevalier de Danceny in the world premiere of *Dangerous Liaisons*, partnering Thomas Hampson and Frederica von Stade under the baton of Donald Runnicles.

David Hobson's concert engagements have included *Messiah* with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in Hobart and Sydney, Carols in the Domain, Gala New Year's Eve concerts in Perth and Hobart, a Bernstein concert at the Sydney Opera House, numerous appearances with The Australian Pops Orchestra, *Elijah* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under Christopher Hogwood, and a performance in the presence of Prince Edward.

Recent performances include Eisenstein for Opera Australia in Sydney and Melbourne, Nadir for West Australian Opera and Opera Australia, concerts in Melbourne and Sydney with the Australian Philharmonic Orchestra, *Opera in the Vineyards* in the Hunter Valley and a recital of French Lieder for the Australian National Gallery in Canberra. In 2002, his

performances for Opera Australia will include Don Ottavio, and Michael Chamberlain in the world premiere of Moya Henderson's opera *Lindy*. He will also perform with Simone Young and the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra in a gala concert featuring the music of Bellini.

An equally versatile artist in other forms of music, David Hobson is also a composer whose works include a music theatre version of *Macbeth*, workshopped by the Victorian Arts Centre, and the chamber composition, *Remembering Rosie*, which was premiered in 2001 by OzOpera. He has worked in the areas of rock and jazz, recording and television, and together with the Australian composer David Hirschfelder, released a highly acclaimed CD of original compositions entitled *Inside This Room*. He also features on the soundtrack to the films *Elizabeth* and *Better than Sex*, and has made television appearances on *Class Acts* for the ABC, *Good Morning America* and the *Today Show* for Channel 9, and the 1999 Australian Performing Rights Association Association (APRA) award telecast.

David Hobson's discography includes The Australian Opera's productions of *The Gondoliers*, *Don Giovanni* and *La bohème* – the CD of which was nominated for an

ARIA award – and *Inside This Room*. His performances have been distinguished by numerous awards including Operatic Performer of the Year in the MO Awards, Sydney Critic's Circle Award for Rodolfo, Piquillo and Orphée, and The Age Performing Arts Award for Best Performer in Opera. In 1998 he received an ARIA award for his video collaboration with Christine Anu and Baz Luhrmann, *Now Until The Break Of Day*. His debut recording for ABC Classics, *French and Italian Arias* was released to critical acclaim.

Sinfonia Australis

The newly formed orchestra Sinfonia Australis was created to work with Cantillation, and already has a life of its own in recordings and films. Made up of Sydney's best players the group is featured on several CDs – including *Lotus Moon*, with soprano Shu-Cheen Yu, which was nominated for an Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) award in 2001, Fauré's *Requiem*, and the soundtrack of the Australian film, *The Bank*. Future recordings include a disc of folk-songs of the world with Shu-Cheen Yu and a recording of Handel's *Messiah*.

VIOLIN I Anna McDonald (leader), Caron Chan,
Alison Haiki, Michelle Kelly, Laszlo Kiss
VIOLIN II Petra Davis, Jonathan Hendl,
Jane Piper, Robin Wilson
VIOLA David Wicks, Marianne Yeomans
CELLO Susan Blake, Rosemary Quinn
BASS Kirsty McCahon, Helen Georgiades
OBOE Linda Walsh, Duncan Thorpe
BASSOON Vicki Grant
TRUMPET Leanne Sullivan, Helen Gill,
Greg Flynn
HARPSICHORD / CHAMBER ORGAN
Erin Helyard [2], [5]-[9], [13], [14], [17], [18],
Linda Kent [1], [3]-[5], [10], [11], [12], [15], [16]
TIMPANI Brian Nixon

Cantillation

The newly formed chorus, Cantillation, under the direction of Australian conductor Antony Walker, is made up of Australia's finest professional choristers. 2001 and 2002 engagements include projects with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs. Cantillation recently performed John Adam's *Harmonium* with Edo de Waart and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to great acclaim, as part of the chorus for Mahler's Symphony No. 8 at the invitation of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and as the semi-chorus in the world premiere of Nigel Butterley's *Spell of Creation*.

Cantillation performs in a wide variety of musical styles ranging from the Renaissance to music of the 21st century, and specialises in music for chorus and orchestra (working with the chamber orchestra, Sinfonia Australis) and 'a cappella' choir. The group also has a particular commitment to Australian music.

Working extensively with ABC Classics, Cantillation has already recorded six discs including Fauré's *Requiem*, the soundtrack of the Australian film *The Bank*, an album of Christmas music and a disc of great sacred

choral works of the twentieth century.

Future recordings and releases include Orff's *Carmina Burana*, a CD of Italian Renaissance church music and discs of Duruflé, Stravinsky, Honegger and Steve Reich. Future performances include concerts and recordings of works by Bach, Handel, Pergolesi, Vivaldi and Ross Edwards, with such diverse groups as the Sydney Symphony, Synergy, Australian Virtuosi and the Sydney Children's Choir.

SOPRANOS Miriam Allan, Alison Morgan,
Josie Ryan

ALTOS Jenny Duck-Chong, Marianne Powles,
Natalie Shea

TENORS Alan Maddox, David McKenzie,
Brett Weymark

BASSES Christopher Allan, Timothy Chung,
Ben Macpherson

Antony Walker



Born in Sydney, Antony Walker is at the forefront of a new generation of Australian musicians, having established a reputation for artistic excellence in direction and performance over

the last decade.

Currently resident in the UK, Antony Walker's particular focus is on opera and choral repertoire. Appointed Chorus Master and Staff Conductor to the prestigious Welsh National Opera in 1998, his skill in raising technical and artistic standards of performance is widely acknowledged. Conducting engagements with WNO have included *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and most recently performances of *Queen of Spades* and *La Traviata*; he has also assisted John Nelson in *Giulio Cesare* at Rome Opera. Since 1997 Antony Walker has been an annual visitor to the USA conducting *Mitridate* and *Idomeneo* at Wolf Trap Opera and *Le nozze di Figaro* and a double bill of *I Pagliacci* and *Carmina Burana* for Minnesota Opera. In 2001 he made his debut with Cincinnati

Opera conducting *Die Zauberflöte*.

Notable appearances on the international concert platform have included Haydn's *Creation* with the Selangor Philharmonic and National Symphony Orchestra of Malaysia, and a 500-voice performance of the Berlioz' *Te Deum*. He has also appeared in the presence of the Queen conducting the WNO Chorus and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales at the opening of the new Welsh Assembly.

In Australia, Antony Walker has conducted leading symphony and chamber orchestras and instrumental ensembles around the country including the Adelaide, Melbourne, West Australian and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras and the Australian and Adelaide Chamber Orchestras, Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, and many of Australia's finest contemporary ensembles. Recent highlights have included the worldwide live simulcast of a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for the opening ceremony of the Nagano Winter Olympics, and conducting at the Sydney Opera House for the 2000 millennium celebrations. For Opera Australia he has conducted *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Faust*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Die Zauberflöte*.

As Musical Director of Sydney Philharmonia Choirs from 1993 to 1997,

Antony Walker performed many large-scale works including Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach's Mass in B Minor and *St Matthew Passion*, Berlioz' *Roméo et Juliette* and Britten's *War Requiem*. At the same time he led the company in strengthening its focus on new music, particularly by Australian composers. His direction saw the re-shaping of both Choirs, a leaning towards stylistic authenticity in performance of works from the 17th and 18th centuries, and a particular commitment to vocal technique. Under his leadership, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs achieved greater levels of critical acclaim (including a highly successful tour of South Korea with the Philharmonia Motet Choir) and new heights of professionalism and artistic excellence. Antony Walker returns regularly to Sydney Philharmonia Choirs as a guest conductor, and in 2001 conducted Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* and the world premiere of Nigel Butterley's *Spell of Creation*.

Antony Walker's commitment to contemporary composition and performance are evidenced by more than 70 premiere performances of works by Australian composers and many Australian premieres of significant international compositions including Arvo Pärt's *Passio*, Poulenc's *Figure Humaine* and Iannis Xenakis' *Idmen*

A and B. Many of these performances were given under his direction by The Contemporary Singers, which he co-founded in 1986.

Antony Walker's growing list of recordings includes Fauré's *Requiem* and *La Naissance de Vénus*, the debut release by vocal ensemble Cantillation and chamber orchestra Sinfonia Australis – both ensembles founded and directed by Antony; *Ode to Joy*, a double CD of great works for chorus and orchestra; *Lotus Moon*, featuring soprano Shu-Cheen Yu; several CDs of contemporary Australian choral music; Australian chamber works with the Sydney Alpha Ensemble; a disc of the music of Peggy Glanville-Hicks with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and a choral/instrumental CD of Australian Christmas Carols. Future releases include a CD of Australian works for choir and percussion with The Contemporary Singers and Synergy Percussion; a second CD with Shu-Cheen Yu; a disc of Italian Renaissance vocal music; a collection of 20th century sacred choral works; and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with Cantillation, Synergy and Australian Virtuosi.

2002 will see Antony Walker conduct the first performances for Pinchgut Opera – Handel's *Semele*; a season of *La bohème* for Minnesota Opera and *Queen of Spades* for

Teatro Comunale di Bologna; as well as continuing work with WNO and recordings of *Messiah* and works by Pergolesi, Ross Edwards and Duruflé for ABC Classics.

Executive Producers Robert Patterson, Lyle Chan
Product Manager Anna-Lisa Whiting
Recording Producer Stephen Snelleman
Recording Engineer Jim Atkins
Associate Producers Virginia Read, Gregory Yurisich
Editing Oscar Gaona, Jim Atkins
Mixing and Mastering Oscar Gaona / Studios 301
Cover Design Paul Carland and Imagecorp Pty Ltd
Booklet Design Imagecorp Pty Ltd
Cover Photography Eric Blaich
Booklet Photography James Pipino

For Cantillation and Sinfonia Australis
Music Director Antony Walker
Manager Alison Johnston

ABC Classics would like to thank Emma Beechey, Julie Simonds and Karl Vyzard (Symphony Australia)

Recorded 25 July - 2 August 2001 in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Eugene Goossens Hall, Ultimo, Sydney

© 2002 Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
© 2002 Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
Distributed in Australasia by Universal Classics & Jazz, a division of Universal Music Group, under exclusive licence. Made in Australia. All rights of the owner of copyright reserved. Any copying, renting, lending, diffusion, public performance or broadcast of this record without the authority of the copyright owner is prohibited.



