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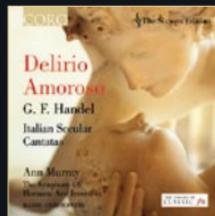
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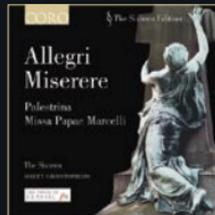
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CORO *live*

§ The Sixteen Edition

Fedel e Costante

HANDEL ITALIAN CANTATAS

Elin Manahan Thomas

Principals from The Symphony of
of Harmony and Invention

There are many things about The Sixteen that make me very proud, above all the nurturing of future talent. Over the years, we have produced some outstanding performers; among them are Carolyn Sampson, Sarah Connolly, Mark Padmore, Christopher Purves and Jeremy White.

Elin is someone destined for that stardom; she is not only a stylish and intelligent singer but also possesses an individuality of expression and interpretation that makes

her unique amongst her peers. This live recital of Handel Italian Cantatas was part of the 2006 Handel in Oxford Festival. Those who were actually present at that concert were witness to a performance of captivating communication and sparkling intelligence.

It is now for you to enjoy the immediacy of this Live recording.

Harry Christophers

AGRIPPINA

1	Recit: <i>Dunque sarà pur vero</i>	1.05
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TU FEDEL? TU COSTANTE?

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ARMIDA ABBANDONATA

19	Recit: <i>Dietro l'orme fugaci</i>	1.03
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23	Aria: <i>Venti, fermate, sì</i>	2.30
24	Recit: <i>Ma che parlo, che dico?</i>	0.53
25	Aria: <i>In tanti affanni miei</i>	4.13
	Total playing time	65.10

Welcome to the world of four women, all of whom have been betrayed by love and its deceitful charms, to varying degrees and for numerous reasons.

Agrippina condotta a morire pretends to voice the words of Agrippina, sister of Caligula and wife of Claudius, on the eve of her death. She has poisoned her husband to ensure that the Roman empire falls under the control of her son, Nero, and now he in turn, after years of struggling against his mother's control, decides to kill her. In fact, Nero organised several attempts on his mother's life – three times through poison, once with a rigged ceiling, and once using a collapsible boat! – until she was eventually stabbed and clubbed to death by an assassin.

In Handel's account of her last moments, Agrippina is furious at the savage audacity of her son, and at the barbarity of fate, as the Rome she loves abandons her. The cantata sees her vacillate from fiery monarch in outrage to a tender mother appalled by her son's weakness. At the last, she resigns herself



to a noble death, at the hands of her cruel, ignoble son.

In a happier vein, but still focussing on love's treacherous ways, *Nel dolce dell' oblio* describes the sweet oblivion of sleep, as the beloved Fili lies dreaming of her darling. In her thoughts, love plays tricks, deceiving her with charming images of

her beloved so as to make her love him all the more. But surely, Handel sagely suggests, even if we all awoke from the dream of love and realised its deception, we would still decide that its lies have their charms, and so would prefer to be blinded by it in spite of everything: and so say all of us!

Tu fedel? Tu costante? has a theme which has resonated through the ages! The singer berates her beloved, Fileno, for his philandering ways. He is in love with a hundred beauties, and wishes to share his heart among them all, leaving the singer feeling used and humiliated. Until the last aria, that is, when she decides either to love another, or else – horror of horrors! – to live entirely without love.

Finally, *Armida abbandonata* tells a tale which has been told many times in music throughout history. It is an episode which is taken from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, in which the crusader Rinaldo is captured, and indeed captivated, by the Saracen witch, Armida. When she falls in love with the warrior, Armida bewitches him to love her in return, but eventually her spell fails, so that Rinaldo

returns to his ship and abandons her. In some versions of the story, the pair are eventually reunited, but Handel's cantata picks up the tale at its saddest point, and opens with the sorceress wandering, desolate and alone. She bemoans her fate, torn between a desperate love and a furious hatred, and the cantata closes with a meltingly sad refrain, as Armida faces her destiny of lonely, unrequited love.

I have lived and breathed these cantatas for many months, and have been haunted, if not possessed, by the overwhelming emotion captured in every one. Indeed, each cantata is almost a whole opera in itself, and brings to life four remarkable personalities who inspired Handel to compose some of his finest, most dramatic music. It has been a privilege to perform these works, and I hope that they will prove a powerful and moving collection.

Elin Manahan Thomas

Italian Cantatas

Most of Handel's chamber cantatas were written during his youthful years in Rome between about 1707 and 1709. The secular cantata flourished in Rome as nowhere else because opera was banned by Papal decree and so cantatas became the main vehicle for the star singers of the time. Indeed, some works grew to semi-dramatic proportions – like *Agrippina* and *Armida* – with elaborate accompanying instrumental parts and singers in genuine character roles. This was an elite entertainment then, and one in which composers, poets and performers could experiment with new ideas which would have been alien to the rigid conventions governing contemporary *opera seria*.

The structure of the cantata had been standardised in the later works of Alessandro Scarlatti and his Neapolitan contemporaries and usually consisted of two da capo arias, each preceded by a brief recitative – the so-called R-A-R-A form. Their subject matter was similarly stylised: love was usually in the air, and

was usually played out in a never-never land of lush pastoral groves inhabited by fickle nymphs and shepherds endlessly bemoaning the sweet pains brought by Cupid's arrows. *Nel dolce dell' oblio* fits this mould perfectly – cast in the R-A-R-A pattern, and concerned with nothing more than a sleepless shepherdess whose nights are filled with thoughts of her lover. Handel lifts the work out of the ordinary by responding to the theme of sleep – as he often did – by writing an exquisite obbligato part for the recorder or flute.

Armida abbandonata is an altogether more ambitious work. It was written in Rome in June 1707 for the Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli who employed Handel at his Roman palace and country estate at Vignanello between 1707 and 1709. Ruspoli seems to have had virtually a standing order for cantatas from Handel, who supplied him with around forty such pieces. Most were relatively modest in scale, but eight of them, including *Armida*, required elaborate instrumental accompaniments and tested their soloists

to the extreme – in this case the talented Margherita Durastanti, who subsequently followed Handel to London and sang in some of his finest operas during the 1720s.

The anonymous text was based on the epic poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* (Jerusalem Liberated) by the sixteenth-century Italian poet Torquato Tasso. Armida is a Saracen sorceress who has cast her spells over the Christian knights, and in this episode of the story she has been deserted by her soldier lover. At first she laments, but then becomes angry and calls on the monsters of the deep to punish him. She soon discovers, though, that despite his faithlessness she still loves him and calls the monsters off. Finally she prays to the God of Love to help her forget him.

The cantata opens with an impassioned accompanied recitative in which Armida's sense of desolation is heightened by Handel's silencing of the underpinning continuo part, thus throwing the voice into sharp relief. The opening aria 'Ah! Crudelè' is in Handel's most economical and personal style – a spot-lit soliloquy accompanied by continuo alone.

The change in Armida's sentiment is vividly charted in the two following recitatives: the first with stark continuo accompaniment, the second accompanied by furious rushing strings. This leads to an operatic 'rage' aria, 'Venti, fermate, si, fermate', full of pounding octaves in the upper strings depicting Armida's wrath as she conjures up monsters. The final aria sets Armida's appeal to the God of Love to the lilting rhythms of a 12/8 siciliana. Although she begs to forget her lover, Handel's music suggests a deeper emotional ambivalence in its use of unsettling chromaticism, a widely leaping unison violin accompaniment and a deeply personal middle section in which the strings are silenced. Handel's gifts for such psychological insights were to find fuller expression a few years later in his operas for the London stage.

Agrippina condotta a morire may well have been written at around the same time and possibly for the same singer as *Armida*. The two cantatas certainly have a lot in common. Both are tragic works, each featuring a classical heroine in crisis, and show Handel in experimental mood, trying to capture the mental turmoil of

his characters by blurring the distinction between recitative and aria and creating declamatory *scenas* where the emotions fluctuate wildly.

The plot, drawn from Roman history, is simple. Queen Agrippina is for the chop, and over the course of five arias and recitatives she laments her fate and rages against her son – the Emperor Nero – who has decided she's too dangerous to live. But should we pity her? Handel's not sure. After all, she poisoned anyone who crossed her, including her third husband the Emperor Claudius. Her spiky arrogance and emotional instability are clearly audible in the music, and yet so too is an inner core of vulnerability – Handel always had a bit of a soft spot for his anti-heroes. The cantata ends starkly with a short recitative, but Handel still had a lot more to say about this complex character and devoted a whole opera to Agrippina in 1709.

Tu fedel? Tu costante? is also about a feisty woman. It was one of the first cantatas Handel wrote for his Roman patron Marquis Ruspoli. In fact we can date it precisely, since the score and parts are mentioned in a copyist's bill

dated 16 May 1707. As with *Armida* and *Agrippina*, the singer for whom it was intended was Ruspoli's protégée Margherita Durastanti, and there's a strong possibility that the anonymous text was specifically written to reflect her bold personality. It portrays a woman firmly and decisively rejecting her fickle lover (Fileno), and it comes as a welcome break from the usual conventions of pastoral love, generally expressed from the male perspective.

Unusually, the cantata opens with a delightfully garrulous instrumental introduction – possibly intended to express the 'brio' which Fileno says he admires so much in the woman. The work also ends with a novel touch – a miniature aria with a butter-wouldn't-melt-in-my-mouth sort of tune in which the singer finally and un sentimentally dismisses the philandering Fileno with a flea in his ear. Handel obviously enjoyed writing this piece, and later returned to the delightful aria 'Se non ti piace' which he reworked as the final chorus of *Alexander's Feast*.

Simon Heighes

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Agrippina condotta a morire

1 Recitativo

*Dunque sarà pur vero, che disseti la
terra il sangue mio?
E soffrir deggio, o Dio, che mi
trapassi il sen destra ribelle?
Cruda Roma! Empie stelle!
Barbaro mio destin! Figlio inumano!
E qual furore insano a condannar vi
spinge alma innocente?
Ah, cuore! Ah, cuor dolente!
Cuor di madre tradita e disprezzata,
vuol così la tua sorte:
spira l'anima forte, vilipesa,
schernita, invindicata!*

So, has it really come to this, that the
earth shall drink my blood?
And must I suffer, O God, yielding my
breast to the rebellious sword?
Cruel Rome! Wicked stars!
Barbarous fate! Inhuman son!
What insane fury drives you to condemn
an innocent soul?
Ah, my agonised heart, heart of a mother
who is betrayed and scorned –
see before you your fate!
Let my strong spirit die, reviled,
despised and unavenged!

2 Aria

*Orrida, oscura l'etra si renda
e spesso avvampi col balenar.*

*E tuoni e lampi, per mia sventura,
a sparger prenda nel mio spirar!*

Horrid and dark the heavens rend
themselves asunder, and countless flashes
of lightning flare.
And they thunder and crash for my
misfortune, and rain down upon me in
my last hour.

3 Recitativo

*Ma pria che d'empia morte, nel
misero mio seno, giunga l'atro veleno;
pria che pallida esangue sparga
ne'fiati estremi e l'alma e'l sangue;
Giove, Giove immortale, tu, che
vuoti dall' etra, sopra il capo de' rei,
la tremenda faretra,
tu, che fra gli altri Dei, di provvido e
di giusto hai pregio e vanto,
vendica questo pianto,
e la ragion di così acerba pena;
tuona, Giove immortal,
tuona e balena!*

But before cruel death pours his black
poison into my miserable breast;
before I, wan and bloodless, breathe my
last, and surrender my soul and my blood;
Jove, immortal Jove, you who from high
heaven rain down your tremendous arrows
on the heads of evildoers;
you, who above other gods value and prize
wisdom and justice –
avenge these tears,
and the cause of such bitter pain.
Send your thunder, immortal Jove,
thunder and lightning!

4 Aria

*Renda cenere il tiranno un tuo
fulmine crudel,
Giove in ciel, se giusto sei!
In vendetta dell' inganno,
usa sdegno e crudeltà,
per pietà de' torti miei!*

Turn the pitiless tyrant to ashes with your
cruel thunderbolt,
Jove in heaven, if you are just!
As vengeance for my deception,
use all your scorn and cruelty,
if you pity me.

5 Recitativo

*Si, si, del gran tiranno provi l'alta
potenza'l traditore;
lacerò l'empio core,*

Yes, let the traitor feel the power of the old
celestial tyrant!
Let his black heart be torn in pieces,

*esca d'augel rapace,
renda sol per mia pace il suo destino; e
sparsa e palpitante, sopra le nude arene,
miri poscia ogni fibra il
pellegrino;
con pestiferi fiati gli ultimi suoi respiri
avveleni la terra,
e l'ossa infrante, fra tormenti severi,
pria che l'anima spiri,
servano poi d'orror a' passeggeri;
mora l'indegno figlio... Ah!
Che a tal nome penso ancor che son
madre, e manca il mio furor,
ne sò dir come.*

6 Arioso

*Come, o Dio, bramo la morte a chi
vita ebbe da me?*

Recitativo

*Forsennata che parli?
Mora, mora l'indegno!
Che d'empio morte è degno, chi sol
brama godere al mio periglio!
Ho rossor d'esser madre a chi forse
ha rossor d'esser mio figlio.*

Arioso

Sì, sì, s'uccida, lo sdegno grida!

and fed to the birds!
Only if this is his destiny can I have peace.
And scattered, trembling, over the bare
sands, may his limbs be seen by the lonely
wanderer.
With evil vapours let his last breath
poison the world.
And before he dies, let his bones,
broken in severe torment,
bring horror to all passers-by.
Let my unworthy son die! ... Ah!
That one word recalls that I am his mother
still, and suddenly my fury vanishes:
I cannot tell how.

How, O God, can I wish for the death of
him to whom I gave life?

Mad woman, what are you saying?
Let the impudent traitor die!
He, whose only enjoyment is to delight in
my terrible fear.
I am ashamed to be the mother of him, who
is surely, himself, ashamed to be my son!

Yes, yes, let him die! My fury cries out...

Recitativo

*E chi? Lamata prole?
Ahi! Tolga il ciel che chiuda i lumi ai
rai del sole;
viva benchè spietato,
sì, viva!
E si confonda, con esempio d'amor,
un cuore ingrato.*

Arioso

*A me sol giunga la morte,
Che sarò costante e forte.*

Recitativo

*Incauta e che mai dissi?
Non vuol che Roma apprenda,
che cinta d'oro e d'ostro io fui
bastante a partorire un mostro.*

Arioso

*Cada lacero e svenato, mora sì, mora
l'indegno che nemico a me si fè!*

Recitativo

*Sparga quel sangue istesso, che sol
per mio diletto trasse tenero infante
nella materne viscere concetto.*

But who? My beloved child?
Ah, heaven forbid that he should close his
eyes to the light of the sun.
Let him live, though he is merciless,
yes, let him live!
And may his ungrateful heart be confounded
by the example of love I will show him.

Let death come to me alone,
and I will be constant and strong.

Foolish woman, what am I saying?
I do not want Rome to know that I,
enrobed in gold and regal purple, was
capable of giving birth to such a monster!

Torn to shreds, disembowelled, let him die,
he who has made an enemy of me!

Spill that blood which, for my delight, he
stole into his veins from his mother's womb.
Let the wicked Nero die, yes, let him perish!

*Pera l'empio Neron, sì, pera...
Ah! Come in sì fiero periglio torni
su i labbri miei nome di figlio.*

Arioso

*Come, o Dio, bramo la morte a chi
vita ebbe da me?*

Recitativo

*Sì, sì, viva Nerone,
e sol de la sua madre servan l'ossa in
sepolte a gli aratri d'inciampo;
beva l'arido campo, bevan le selve
incolte, tratto dal cor che langue il
più vitale e spiritoso umore;
indi tutta rigore passi l'anima infelice,
là ne' più cupi abissi;
ivi apprenda empietà, poscia ritorni
a funestar d'un figlio ingrato i giorni.*

7 Aria

*Se infelice al mondo vissi,
ne' profondi e cupi abissi,
infelice ancor sarò.
Ma vendetta almen farò!
Ombra nera, e larva errante,
di rigor furia, Baccante,
chi m'offese agiterò!*

... Ah, how is it that, even in so perilous a
time as this, my lips can still utter the name
of my son?

How, O God, can I wish for the death of
him to whom I gave life?

Yes, yes, let Nero live.
May only the bones of his mother be
a hindrance to the plough.
May the dry fields, and the wild woods,
drink up my most vibrant and vital spirit,
drained from a dying heart.
Then, cold as ice, let my unfortunate soul
pass on and sink into the dark abyss,
there to learn evil and soon return,
to afflict the days of a thankless son.

If I have lived an unhappy life on earth,
then in the deep and dark abyss,
I shall be unhappy still.
But I shall at least have vengeance!
As a black shadow, a restless ghost,
a Fury and Bacchante,
I shall return to torment my betrayer!

8 Recitativo

*Trema l'ingrato figlio di plauso
trionfal sponde gemmate; stridan le
ruote aurate, e superbo, e tiranno di
tal vittoria altero giunga cinto d'alloro
in Campidoglio!
Che l'ultrici saette io di Giove non voglio
a fulminare il contumace orgoglio!
Io sola, ombra dolente, se vuol
barbaro Ciel che sì m'accora,
che'il colpevole viva, e'l giusto mora.*

9 Aria

*Su lacerate il seno, ministri,
e che si fa?
Usate ogni rigore,
morte vi chiede il core, e morte date
almeno a chi non vuol pietà!*

Recitativo

*Ecco a morte già corro, e d'un figlio
ingrato sarò pur vanto, che si nieghi
a la madre, e l'onor della tomba,
e quel del pianto.*

Let my ungrateful son tremble! May the
triumphant cheers of a glimmering throng
follow the golden chariot, as the haughty
tyrant, proud of his victory, arrives crowned
with a laurel wreath at the Capitol.
I do not need the tremendous thunderbolts of
Jove to strike him down in his hateful pride;
I, a lamenting shadow, must do it alone, since
barbarous heaven wishes me to suffer thus.
So the guilty lives, and the innocent dies.

Up, ministers, and rend my breast –
why do you hesitate?
Be as cruel and harsh as you will,
my heart begs you for death. At least, give
death to her who wants no pity from you!

See, I run to my death! And so my cruel
son can boast that he denied his mother the
privilege of a tomb, nor even honoured her
with tears.

Nel dolce dell' obbligo

10 Sonata & Recitativo

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

Aria

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

Recitativo

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

Aria

Ha l'inganno il suo diletto, se i pensier mossi d'affetto stiman ver ciò che non sanno.

Ma se poi, si risveglia un tal errore il pensier ridice a noi: "ha l'inganno il suo dolore"!

In sweet sleep, my adored Fili, though resting, was wakeful in her thoughts. And still, in this quiet moment, Love did not cease to trouble her sleeping peace, in his various ways.

From the first moment, sleep seems to paint before her the picture of her lover; and in this peace and stillness, she seems to embrace the chains of his love.

Thus she lay sleeping, faithful as always to the heart that she adores. And in the shadows she breathed in the light of him, for whom she sighs.

Deceit has its charms! Or so it seems if our thoughts, moved and confused by love, believe to be true that which they do not even know.

But, if the mind awakens from such a cheating dream, may it speak the truth to us all: "such deceit also brings pain"!

Tu fedel? Tu costante?

11 Sonata & Recitativo

*Tu fedel? Tu costante?
Ah, non è vero!
Tu usurpi ingiustamente titoli così belli, empio Fileno!
Tu fedel, cui scintillano nel seno sempre nove faville?
Tu costante, ch' il cuore vanti diviso in mille parte e in mille?
Incostante, infedele, traditore!
Questi, Fileno, questi giusti titoli sono e pregi tuoi, onde superbo ir puoi spergiuro, menzognero!
Tu fedel, tu costante?
Ah, non è vero!*

12 Aria

*Cento belle ami Fileno, e poi vanti aver in seno un costante e fido cor!
Stolta è ben colei che crede, ch' in te sia costanza e fede,
empio, infido, mentitor!*

You, faithful? You, constant? Ah, that isn't true. You claim such noble titles unjustly, evil Fileno. You, faithful, in whose desire there is always a new fire burning? You, constant, who boast that your heart can be divided into a thousand pieces and more? Inconstant, unfaithful, traitor – these, Fileno, these are the correct and true titles for you, and yet you walk around proudly as a perjurer, a liar. You, faithful? You, constant? Ah, that isn't true!

Fileno, you love a hundred beauties, and then boast that you have a constant and faithful heart! Stupid is she, who believes that in you resides a constant and loyal love, O wicked lover!

13 Recitativo

Locchio nero vivace di Fili a te dà pena; di Licori ti piace il labbro lusinghiero; di Lidia il biondo crine al tuo core è catena; in me ti piace il brio: e con vario desio, or per Lidia, or per Fili, or per Licori, ed or per me, vantando nel tuo seno nudrir costanti ardori con volubile genio ed incostante, sei di tutte, o Fileno, infido traditor, non fido amante!

Fili's lively dark eyes strike pain in your heart; in Licori, it is her luscious lips you love; it's Lidia's long blonde tresses which have ensnared your desires; in me, it's my vivacity that pleases you; and with constantly-changing fancies – boasting that you have in your breast a constant heart, now for Lidia, now for Fili, now for Licori, and now for me – with such a fickle nature you are in truth, O Fileno, betraying all of us, and in no way a faithful lover!

14 Aria

Se Licori, Fili ed io abbiam parte nel tuo core, come poi dir, traditore, ch'il tuo core è tutto mio? Se a me doni ed a Licori, ed a Lidia il cor, Fileno, quanti mai racchiudi in seno dillo ingrato quanti cori!

If Licori, Fili and I all share your heart between us, how can you say, traitor, that your heart belongs in its entirety to me? If you give your heart to me, and to Licori, and to Fili at the same time, Fileno, how many hearts do you actually have in your breast? Tell me, O thankless lover!

15 Recitativo

Ma, se non hai più d'un sol cuore in petto, o tra lascia d'amarmi, o fai che sola io sia dell'amor tuo gradito oggetto, che a me più duole,

But if you do not have more than one sole heart in your breast, either stop loving me, or ensure that I alone am the object of your desire; for what gives me most pain,

e pesa del non essere amata l'esser da te tradita e vilipesa.

more even than not being loved by you, is being an object of betrayal and scorn.

16 Aria

Se non ti piace amarmi, forzar non ti poss'io, se amor mi vuoi negar, non mi potrò doler, no, no. Ma se per oltraggiarmi quel cor, che già fu mio, ad altri vuoi donar, io non saprò tacer.

If it doesn't please you any more to love me, I cannot force you. If you want to deny me your love, I won't find cause to complain. But if, in an insult to me, you give your heart to another, this heart which once was mine – then, I will not be able to keep silent!

17 Recitativo

Ma il tuo genio incostante non può lasciar d'amare, e ti fa sempre amante, or di questa, or di quella, che sembra a gli occhi tuoi vezzosa e bella. Che farò dunque, che farò? Spietato, infido, traditor, spergiuo, ingrato; più non me tradirai. Si lascerò d'amarti, e tanto t'odierò quanto t'amai.

But your fickle nature cannot cease from loving, and it means that you are always a lover, either of this beauty or of that one, who seems beautiful and attractive in your eyes. What shall I do, then? What shall I do? Cruel, faithless, disloyal, liar, ungrateful lover! No more will I let you betray me. Yes, I will stop loving you, and soon I will hate you as much as once I loved you.

18 Aria

Si crudel, ti lascerò, novo amante troverò, che per mia sia tutta amor. Se non trovo, tornerà all' antica libertà senza amar questo mio cor.

Yes, cruel one, I will leave you. I shall find a new love, who will love me alone. If I don't find a lover, my heart will return to its old freedom, and live *without* love!

Armida abbandonata

19 Recitativo

*Dietro l'orme fugaci del guerrier,
che gran tempo, in lascivo soggiorno
ascoso avea, Armida abbandonata
il piè movea; e poi che vidde al
fine che l'oro del suo crine, i vezzi,
i sguardi, i preghi non han forza
che leghi il fuggitivo amante, fermò
le stanche piante, e affissa sopra un
scoglio, calma di rio cordoglio, a
quel leggiere abete, che il suo ben
le rapia, le luci affisse, piangendo e
sospirando così disse:*

20 Aria

*Ah, crudele! E pur ten vai, e mi lasci
in preda al duolo, e pur sai che sei
tu solo il diletto del mio cor.
Come, ingrato, e come puoi involare
a questo sen, il seren de' lumi tuoi,
se per te son tutta ardor?*

21 Recitativo

*Per te mi struggo, infido,
per te languisco, ingrato;*

Following wearily in the footsteps of the fugitive warrior, with whom for so long she had enjoyed love while she kept him safely concealed, the abandoned Armida trekked. But at last, when she realised that her golden tresses, her charms, her beseeching, her prayers, had no power to hold back her fleeing lover, she stayed her tired feet, and sat on a rock, calm in her despair; and she gazed upon the slender mast which carried away her love. And weeping, and sighing, she said:

Ah, cruel one, you are leaving me, and yet you know that you are the sole delight of my heart!
How, thankless one, can you steal from my breast the light of your starry eyes, when you know that I burn for you alone?

I yearn for you, faithless one!
I suffer for you, ungrateful that you are!

*ah, pur lo sai che sol da' tuoi bei rai
per te piagato ho il seno, e pur tu
m'abbandoni, infido amante!*

Ah, you even know that my heart breaks for your eyes alone, and yet you abandon me – unfaithful lover!

22 Accompagnato

*O voi, dell' incostante e procelloso
amare orridi mostri, dai più profondi
chiostri, a vendicarmi uscite, e contro
quel crudel in crudelite!
Sì, sì sì, sia vostro il vanto e del
vostro rigore un mostro lacerar di voi
maggiore! Onde, venti, che fate, che
voi nol sommergete? Ah, no! Fermate!*

O, you fearful and terrifying monsters of the sea's abyss! From the deepest cloisters of the ocean, hurry to avenge me, and turn your cruelty against this cruel lover! Yes, yes! In your pride and boasting bring forth a monster even greater than yourselves! Waves! Winds! Stop! Do not drown him – ah, no! Stop!

23 Aria

*Venti, fermate, sì, nol sommergete!
È ver che mi tradi,
ma pur l'adoro!
Onde crudeli no, non l'uccidete!
È ver che mi sprezzò,
ma è il mio tesoro.*

Winds, stay! No, do not drown him! It is true that he has betrayed me, but still I love him!
Cruel waters, do not kill him! It is true that he has broken my heart, yet still he is my beloved!

24 Recitativo

*Ma che parlo, che dico? Ah, ch'io
vaneggio; e come amar potrei un
traditore, infelice mio core?
Rispondi, o Dio, rispondi! Ah, che*

But no, what am I saying? Ah, I am raving! And how could you, treacherous heart, still love a traitor?
Answer me, O God, answer me! Ah, my

*tu ti confondi, dubbioso e palpitante
vorresti non amare e vivi amante.
Spezza quel laccio indegno, che tiene
avvinto ancor gli affetti tuoi.
Che fai misero cor, che fai misero cor?
Ah, tu non puoi!*

25 Aria

*In tanti affanni miei assisti mi almen
tu, nume d'amore!
E se pietoso sei,
fa ch'io non ami più quel traditore!*

heart, you are confused, doubtful and trembling, you wish only not to love, and yet still you love. Shatter these unworthy chains, which still ensnare your affections. What are you doing, poor sad heart? Ah, you cannot!

In this, my darkest hour, help me,
O God of Love!
And, if you have any pity for me,
destroy the love I have for this traitor.



In rehearsal

ELIN MANAHAN THOMAS

Born and bred in Swansea, before graduating from Clare College Cambridge in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, Elin is fast coming to light as one of Wales's leading young sopranos. She is the first singer ever to record Bach's *Alles mit Gott*, a birthday ode written in 1713 and discovered in 2005. In 2006, Elin made her debut at the Royal Opera House as Papagena, in the Lincoln Center New York and the San Francisco Symphony Hall with Mozart's *Requiem*, and the Birmingham Symphony Hall with Fauré's *Requiem*. She first received great acclaim for her 'Pie Jesu' on Naxos' award-winning recording of John Rutter's *Requiem*, and was praised as soloist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, under Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

Recent concert performances include Britten's *Death in Venice* for Richard Hickox in the QEH; Mozart concert arias with the Gabrieli Consort in the Barbican; Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Peter Schreier in St John's Smith Square; Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* in King's College Chapel, Cambridge; Glück's *Orfeo* in the Snape Maltings; Haydn's *Heiligmesse* and Mozart's *Vespers* on a tour of the USA; Monteverdi's *Vespers* in St. Mark's, Venice; Mendelssohn's *Midsummer*

Night's Dream in the Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona; and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in Seoul and Kuala Lumpur. She has performed Judith Weir's *King Harald's Saga* in collaboration with the composer, and premiered Sir John Tavener's latest work *Shunya* at his 60th birthday concert. On the opera stage, Elin has played the role of Pamina (Mozart *Die Zauberflöte*), The Governess (Britten *Turn of the Screw*), Micaela (Bizet *Carmen*), Ninetta (Mozart *La Finta Semplice*) and Arminda (Mozart *La Finta Giardiniera*), Despina (Mozart *Così Fan Tutte*), Mermaid (Weber *Oberon*) and Coryphée (Berlioz *Les Troyens*) at the Châtelet Theatre, Angelica (Handel *Orlando*), Constance (Poulenc *Dialogue des Carmélites*), Lucy (Menotti *The Telephone*), and recently *Night/Nymph* in the Armonico Consort's acclaimed production of Purcell's *Fairy Queen*.

Elin studied as a post-graduate at the Royal College of Music, where she was awarded the Ted Moss and Bertha Stach-Taylor Lieder Prize. In 2005 she was a finalist in the prestigious Joaninha Award. Elin has recently been signed to Universal Music Classics and Jazz.

THE PRINCIPALS FROM THE SYMPHONY OF HARMONY AND INVENTION

Violins:	Walter Reiter, Miles Golding
Cello:	Joe Crouch
Flute:	Katy Bircher
Theorbo:	David Miller
Harpsichord:	Alastair Ross

THE SYMPHONY OF HARMONY AND INVENTION

The *Symphony of Harmony and Invention* is the creation of its conductor, Harry Christophers. The orchestra's strengths have been built around his passion for baroque music, that of its inspirational leader, Walter Reiter, and a continuo section full of invention and style. The accent is always on freshness of delivery. Part of its existence is as period-orchestra to The Sixteen and here it acts as a superb complement to the choir in major works of the baroque and classical eras.

The orchestra has emerged triumphantly in the field of Baroque opera. After praised semi-staged performances of Purcell's *Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv and London, a fully-staged production of Purcell's *King Arthur*, in Lisbon's Belém Centre, was followed by an invitation from the Lisbon Opera House to perform the complete cycle of Monteverdi's operas. The first, a new production by Aidan Lang of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, took place in 1998 and *Poppea* at English National Opera in October 2000 was a subsequent triumph. Over the past two seasons, it has appeared at

the Buxton Festival in productions of Handel's *Semele* and *Hercules*.

Its many recordings, on Hyperion, Virgin, Chandos and now on The Sixteen's own label CORO, have won critical approval and international accolades, including a Grand Prix du Disque (Handel *Messiah*), Diapason d'Or (Teixeira *Te Deum*) and Deutsche Schallplatten prize (Handel *Alexander's Feast*). Its recent disc on the CORO label, entitled 'Heroes and Heroines', a recording of Handel arias with the stunning British mezzo-soprano, Sarah Connolly, is nothing short of a revelation. Critics everywhere have been ecstatic in their praise.

The *Symphony of Harmony and Invention* has appeared at all the world's major concert halls and festivals it is a regular performer at the Barbican's Mostly Mozart Festival and at other UK festivals. Future engagements include concerts in Amsterdam, the Canary Islands, Lisbon, Porto, Madrid and Valencia.

The Principals from THE SYMPHONY OF HARMONY AND INVENTION

Walter Reiter
Alastair Ross
Miles Golding
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Katy Bircher
Joe Crouch



Recorded live at the 2006

Handel
in
Oxford Festival

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