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CLASSICS



Henry Purcell

Dido & Aeneas

Armonico Consort

Christopher Monks *musical director*

Rachael Lloyd

Robert Davies

Elin Manahan Thomas

DIDO & AENEAS HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)

1 **Overture** [1.50]

ACT I

SCENE: THE PALACE

2 **Belinda & Chorus:** "Shake the cloud from off your brow" [1.03]
3 **Dido:** "Ah! Belinda, I am press'd with torment" [3.11]
4 **Belinda & Dido:** "Grief increases by concealing" [0.29]
5 **Chorus:** "When monarchs unite, how happy their state" [0.17]
6 **Dido & Belinda:** "Whence could so much virtue spring?" [1.37]
7 **Belinda, Second Woman & Chorus:** "Fear no danger to ensue" [1.27]
8 **Belinda, Aeneas, Dido:** "See, your royal guest appears" [0.43]
9 **Chorus:** "Cupid only throws the dart" [0.38]
10 **Aeneas:** "If not for mine, for Empire's sake" [0.21]
11 **Belinda:** "Pursue thy conquest love" [0.48]
12 **Guitars' Chaconne** [0.46]
13 **Chorus:** "To the hills and the vales" [1.09]
14 **The Triumphant Dance** [1.17]

ACT II

SCENE I: THE CAVE

15 **Prelude for the Witches (Sorceress & First Witch):** "Wayward sisters" [1.42]
16 **Chorus:** "Harm's our delight" [0.15]
17 **Sorceress:** "The Queen of Carthage, whom we hate" [0.26]
18 **Chorus:** "Ho ho ho, ho ho ho!" [0.10]
19 **First & Second Witches, Sorceress:** "Ruin'd ere the set of sun?" [1.03]
20 **Chorus:** "Ho ho ho, ho ho ho!" [0.09]
21 **First & Second Witches:** "But, ere we this perform" [1.08]
22 **Chorus:** "In our deep vaulted cell" [1.33]
23 **Echo Dance of Furies** [1.06]

SCENE II: THE GROVE

24 **Ritornelle** [0.46]
25 **Belinda & Chorus:** "Thanks to these lonesome vales" [2.49]
26 **Second Woman:** "Oft she visits this lone mountain" [1.47]
27 **Aeneas & Dido:** "Behold, upon my bended spear" [0.27]
28 **Belinda & Chorus:** "Haste to town" [0.49]
29 **Spirit & Aeneas:** "Stay, Prince! and hear great Jove's command" [2.32]

ACT III

SCENE I: THE SHIPS

30 **The Sailor's Dance I** [0.35]
31 **Drunken Sailor & Chorus:** "Come away, fellow sailors" [1.01]
32 **The Sailor's Dance II** [0.41]
33 **Sorceress, First & Second Witches:** "See, the flags and streamers curling" [1.00]
34 **Sorceress:** "Our next motion" [0.32]
35 **Chorus:** "Destruction's our delight" [0.37]
36 **The Witches' Dance** [1.15]

SCENE II: THE PALACE

37 **Dido, Belinda & Aeneas:** "Your counsel all is urged in vain" [3.33]
38 **Chorus:** "Great minds against themselves conspire" [1.20]
39 **Dido:** "Thy hand, Belinda; darkness shades me" [0.58]
40 **Dido:** "When I am laid in earth" [3.37]
41 **Chorus:** "With drooping wings" [3.15]

Total timings: [50.45]

RACHAEL LLOYD DIDO • ROBERT DAVIES AENEAS • ELIN MANAHAN THOMAS BELINDA
RODERICK MORRIS SORCERESS • ELOISE IRVING SECOND WOMAN/FIRST WITCH/SPIRIT
JENNI HARPER SECOND WITCH • MILES GOLDING DRUNKEN SAILOR

ARMONICO CONSORT
CHRISTOPHER MONKS MUSICAL DIRECTOR

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DIDO & AENEAS

HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)

At the Trafalgar Square end of Whitehall in London stands a statue to King Charles I. At the other end of Whitehall, in the grounds of the Palace of Westminster, stands a statue to Oliver Cromwell, the man who led the public beheading of the King in 1649, leaving Britain bereft of monarch or regent and which ushered in the 12 years known as the Commonwealth. Those twelve years were dominated by the rule of Puritanism, which, whilst not forbidding theatrical performances of any kind, none the less created a climate in which such entertainment was severely curtailed.

Once the Monarchy had been restored, the relative freedom of theatrical performances in London gradually returned. When Charles II came to the throne in 1661, Henry Purcell was two years old, having been born in Old Pye Street, just over half a mile from where the King's father had been beheaded. Purcell's own father was to die when the boy was four, and Henry was placed in the care of his uncle, a noted musician, who nurtured the inclinations of Henry and his two brothers, ensuring they each received a thorough musical training – Henry as a

Chapel Royal chorister. It is sometimes claimed that Henry, the most gifted of the three, was already composing at the age of nine, although the first extant piece definitely ascribable to him is an ode for Charles II's birthday, written in 1670.

As a trained singer from childhood, in daily contact with vocal and instrumental music, Purcell's predilection for the voice, and for word-setting, came naturally to him. His gifts were such that, when his voice broke and he was obliged to leave the Chapel choir, a musical career was a natural choice. Although Purcell composed instrumental music alongside keyboard works and music for strings, it was only to be expected that he was attracted more by the growing fashion for theatrical drama with its significant musical content of arias, choruses and dances. Not that English opera had become as thriving a genre in the closing decades of the 17th century as it had in Italy, but if drama with music was to be heard anywhere in England, it was in the capital, where, as a Londoner born and bred, Purcell's reputation grew considerably, especially following what is known as the Glorious Revolution of 1688 which saw King William III and his wife Queen Mary crowned as joint British monarchs.

Purcell was then at the height of his powers, and following the example set by his former teacher John Blow's opera *Venus and Adonis* (in reality, the first genuine English opera) in 1683, it was only a matter of time before Purcell produced his first great operatic work, *Dido and Aeneas*, six years later, itself indebted in no small measure to *Venus and Adonis*, which had been performed before King Charles II prior to its revival at 'Mr Josias Priest's Boarding-School at Chelsea, By Young Gentlewomen.'

It may seem strange to us today to realise that *Dido and Aeneas* was also first produced at that self-same school, rather than in a theatre, but the school in question was no modern-style educational establishment. It was, as we have seen, a boarding-school for 'young gentlewomen', situated in Chelsea (then 'Little Chelsea'), founded and run by Josias Priest, whose theatrical credentials were of the highest order and whose fame was widespread since he first appeared on the London stage prior to 1670. Priest was to live into his 90th year, dying in 1735. In Restoration theatrical productions, dance had become a regular and expected part of the evening's entertainment, and being able to dance was considered a necessary accomplishment in the social aspirations of young educated ladies.

We should not therefore be surprised by the (originally) seventeen dances in *Dido and Aeneas* – including those in the Prologue, for which music has not survived – for, apart from being fashionable, they would have afforded the young ladies of Priest's establishment with an ideal opportunity to display their talents and to demonstrate the school's standards. We know also that the staging of the opera was exceptionally detailed; the scenery was elaborate, and possibly ostentatious, and the extraordinarily dramatic impact of the work within its relatively short playing time (one-hour) must have made a remarkable impression.

But such impressions as the work conveyed in Chelsea did not lead to a flowering of opera in England, although Priest and Purcell collaborated on a number of further operas: *Dioclesian*, *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen* in successive years (1690-92). But the combination of King William's indifference to music, the death of his music-loving wife Mary in 1694 (which drew from Purcell one of his greatest works, known as the *Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary*), and Purcell's own premature demise in November 1695 at the age of 36, caused opera in England not

to develop as it did on the Continent. It was not until Handel's arrival in London, 17 years after the death of Purcell, that the genre began to be established as fashionable entertainment.

The fate of *Dido and Aeneas* did not wholly die with Purcell's death: the opera was first produced in London on the theatrical stage in February 1700, although not perhaps in a manner of which either Purcell or his librettist, Nahum Tate, would have approved, being apparently split into various interludes in an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. How this was achieved is perhaps best left to the imagination, but what cannot be denied is the continuing power of Purcell's music in the years following his death. Around two centuries were to pass before, in the 1890s, *Dido and Aeneas* was successfully revived, gradually being accepted and taking its rightful place as the first great operatic masterpiece by a British composer.

The essence of what makes *Dido and Aeneas* a great operatic masterpiece is that the individual characters within the story, which in turn Tate adapted and condensed from Virgil, are recognisably human, and exist in human situations – not solely 'placed' in locale or

historical accuracy – with which the intelligent listener and observer can identify. To take one example, and not from the main protagonists who are identified in the opera's title, the part of Belinda, Dido's confidant, has an almost Shakespearean depth and humanity – she is not a naive or simple soul but one who sees the inherent affection and humanity of the love between Dido and Aeneas and seeks at all times to ensure their relationship is as trouble-free and as destined (as she sees it) to be fulfilled as it should.

This is a significant dramatic development in operatic characterisation, one for which Tate must take great credit (indeed, rather more than he is often given), but the finest dramatist in the world cannot, by himself, make a great opera: in the case of *Dido and Aeneas* we have a great composer whose experience in dramatic staged music, in his profound understanding of the qualities of the human voice, and his experience in writing for strings were exceptional in English music at this time (a very small 'orchestra' indicates the intimacy of the story itself, the interplay of the main characters, as well as throwing the weight of the musical argument wholly on the singers rather than being intermittently dependent upon

any incidental instrumental colouration; it also makes the opera relatively inexpensive to mount within a suitably-sized room or hall). Such a combination of practicalities adds greatly to the appeal of the work and, once more, focuses attention on Purcell's masterly setting of Tate's libretto: the most famous part of the opera, Dido's final lament, is set to a chaconne-like ground bass which concentrates the depth of her emotion. Purcell begins the aria in a totally gripping mood of restrained pathos (a chromatic descent), his musical equivalent of the dramaturgy being so simple yet so profound in its impact, the more so as it does not proceed to an outpouring of sentimental grief – the more moving for revealing, at this climactic moment, Dido's inherent restraint. It is this restraint which has coloured her relationship with Aeneas – and which Belinda is keen to see relaxed to enable the relationship, from Dido's standpoint, to become fulfilled. There can be little doubt that it was the character of Dido that exerted the creators' imagination more than Aeneas – making the opera ideal for performance at a theatrical 'boarding-school for young gentlewomen'.

But *Dido and Aeneas* is not some kind of tragic scene writ over an hour: the colouration and setting of locale – the background against which the tragedy is played out – add depths of verisimilitude which transcend and open out the situation: 'placing it', as it were, in a deeper human context. So the dances, and the Sailors' music, and the elements of 'other-worldliness' of the observing spirits and Sorceress act as the staged personification of us, observers to the human drama. There is also a subtle reference to contemporary events: the first chorus: 'When monarchs unite, how happy their state,' was – in 1689 – surely a direct reference to the accession to the throne of the joint British monarchs William and Mary the previous year.

How much is therefore contained within this hour-long opera!

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DIDO & AENEAS

1 Overture

ACT I

Scene: The Palace

Enter Dido, Belinda and train

2 Belinda

Shake the cloud from off your brow,
Fate your wishes does allow;
Empire growing, Pleasures flowing,
Fortune smiles and so should you.

Chorus

Banish sorrow, banish care,
Grief should ne'er approach the fair.

3 Dido

Ah! Belinda, I am press'd
With torment not to be Confess'd,
Peace and I are strangers grown.
I languish till my grief is known,
Yet would not have it guess'd.

4 Belinda

Grief increases by concealing.

Dido

Mine admits of no revealing.

Belinda

Then let me speak; the Trojan guest
Into your tender thoughts has press'd;
The greatest blessing fate can give
Our Carthage to secure and Troy revive.

5 Chorus

When monarchs unite, how happy their state,
They triumph at once o'er their foes and their fate.

6 Dido

Whence could so much virtue spring?
What storms, what battles did he sing?
Anchises' valour mix'd with Venus' charms
How soft in peace, and yet how fierce in arms!

Belinda

A tale so strong and full of woe
Might melt the rocks as well as you.
What stubborn heart unmov'd could see
Such distress, such piety?

Dido

Mine with storms of care oppress'd
Is taught to pity the distress'd.
Mean wretches' grief can touch,
So soft, so sensible my breast;
But ah! I fear, I pity his too much.

7 Belinda, Second Woman & Chorus

Fear no danger to ensue,
The hero loves as well as you,
Ever gentle, ever smiling,
And the cares of life beguiling,
Cupid strew your path with flowers,
Gather'd from Elysian bowers.

Aeneas enters with his train

8 Belinda

See, your royal guest appears;
How godlike is the form he bears!

Aeneas

When, Royal Fair, shall I be bless'd
With cares of love and state distress'd?

Dido

Fate forbids what you pursue.

Aeneas

Aeneas has no fate but you!
Let Dido smile and I'll defy
The feeble stroke of Destiny.

9 Chorus

Cupid only throws the dart
That's dreadful to a warrior's heart,

And she that wounds
can only cure the smart.

10 Aeneas

If not for mine, for Empire's sake,
Some pity on your lover take;
Ah! make not, in a hopeless fire,
A hero fall, and Troy once more expire.

11 Belinda

Pursue thy conquest, Love; her eyes
Confess the flame her tongue denies.

12 Guitars' Chaconne

13 Chorus

To the hills and the vales,
to the rocks and the mountains
To the musical groves
and the cool shady fountains.
Let the triumphs of love
and of beauty be shown,
Go revel, ye Cupids,
the day is your own.

14 The Triumphant Dance

At the end of the Dance thunder and lightening

ACT II

Scene I: The Cave

Enter Sorceress

15 Prelude for the Witches

Sorceress

Wayward sisters, you that fright
The lonely traveller by night,
Who, like dismal ravens crying,
Beat the windows of the dying,
Appear! Appear at my call,
and share in the fame
Of a mischief
shall make all Carthage flame.
Appear!

Enter Enchantresses

First Witch

Say, Beldame, say what's thy will.

16 Chorus

Harm's our delight and mischief all our skill.

17 Sorceress

The Queen of Carthage, whom we hate,
As we do all in prosp'rous state,

Ere sunset, shall most wretched prove,
Depriv'd of fame, of life and love!

18 Chorus

Ho ho ho, ho ho ho!

19 First and Second Witches

Ruin'd ere the set of sun?
Tell us, how shall this be done?

Sorceress

The Trojan Prince you know, is bound
By Fate to seek Italian ground;
The Queen and he are now in chase.

First Witch

Hark! Hark! The cry comes on apace.

Sorceress

But, when they've done, my trusty Elf
In form of Mercury himself
As sent from Jove shall chide his stay,
And charge him sail tonight
with all his fleet away.

20 Chorus

Ho ho ho, ho ho ho!

Enter two drunken sailors

21 First and Second Witches

But, ere we this perform,
We'll conjure for a storm
To mar their hunting sport,
And drive 'em back to court.

22 Chorus *in the manner of an echo*

In our deep vaulted cell
the charm we'll prepare,
Too dreadful a practice for this open air.

23 Echo Dance of Furies

Scene II: The Grove

Enter Aeneas, Dido, Belinda, and their train

24 Ritornelle

25 Belinda & Chorus

Thanks to these lonesome vales,
These desert hills and dales,
So fair the game, so rich the sport,
Diana's self might to these woods resort.

26 Second Woman

Oft she visits this lone mountain,
 Oft she bathes her in this fountain;
 Here Actaeon met his fate,
 Pursued by his own hounds,

And after mortal wounds
Discover'd too late.

A Dance to entertain Aeneas by Dido's women

27 Aeneas

Behold, upon my bending spear
A monster's head stands bleeding,
With tushes far exceeding
Those did Venus' huntsman tear.

Dido

The skies are clouded, hark! how thunder
Rends the mountain oaks a sunder.

28 Belinda and Chorus

Haste, haste to town, this open field
No shelter from the storm can yield.

Exit Dido and Belinda and train

*The Spirit of the Sorceress descends to Aeneas in
the likeness of Mercury*

29 Spirit

Stay, Prince! and hear great Jove's command;
He summons thee this night away.

Aeneas

Tonight?

Spirit

Tonight thou must forsake this land,
The Angry God will brook no longer stay.
Jove commands thee, waste no more
In Love's delights, those precious hours,
Allow'd by th'Almighty Powers
To gain th'Hesperian shore
And ruined Troy restore.

Aeneas

Jove's commands shall be obey'd,
Tonight our anchors shall be weighed.

Exit Spirit.

But ah! what language can I try
My injur'd Queen to pacify:
No sooner she resigns her heart,
But from her arms I'm forc'd to part.
How can so hard a fate be took?
One night enjoy'd, the next forsook.
Yours be the blame, ye gods! For I
Obey your will, but with more ease could die.

Chorus

Thanks to these lonesome vales

ACT III

Scene I: The Ships

Enter the Sailors

30 The Sailor's Dance I**31 Drunken Sailor & Chorus**

Come away, fellow sailors,
your anchors be weighing.
Time and tide will admit no delaying.
Take a boozy short leave
of your nymphs on the shore,
And silence their mourning
With vows of returning,
But never intending to visit them more.

32 The Sailors' Dance II

Enter Sorceress & Witches

33 Sorceress

See, the flags and streamers curling,
Anchors weighing, sails unfurling.

First Witch

Phoebe's pale deluding beams
Guilting o're deceitful streams.

Second Witch

Our plot has took,
The Queen's forsook.

First and Second Witches

Elissa's ruin'd, ho, ho!
Our plot has took,
The Queen's forsook, ho, ho!

34 Sorceress

Our next motion
Must be to storm her lover on the ocean!
From the ruin of others
our pleasures we borrow,
Elissa bleeds tonight,
and Carthage flames tomorrow. Ho, ho!

35 Chorus

Destruction's our delight
Delight our greatest sorrow!
Elissa dies tonight
and Carthage flames tomorrow. Ho, ho!

36 The Witches' Dance

*Jack o'Lantern leads the sailors out of
their way among the enchantresses*

Scene II: The Palace

Enter Dido, Belinda and the train

37 Dido

Your counsel all is urged in vain;
To earth and heav'n I will complain!
To earth and heav'n why do I call?
Earth and heav'n conspire my fall.
To fate I sue, of other means bereft,
The only refuge for the wretched left.

Enter Aeneas

Belinda

See, Madam, see where the Prince appears;
Such sorrow in his looks he bears,
As would convince you still he's true.

Aeneas

What shall lost Aeneas do?
How, Royal Fair, shall I impart
The God's decree, and tell you we must part?

Dido

Thus on the fatal Banks of Nile,
Weeps the deceitful crocodile
Thus hypocrites, that murder act,
Make heav'n and gods the authors of the Fact.

Aeneas

By all that's good ...

Dido

By all that's good, no more!
All that's good you have forswore.
To your promis'd empire fly
And let forsaken Dido die.

Aeneas

In spite of Jove's command, I'll stay.
Offend the gods, and love obey.

Dido

No, faithless man, thy course pursue;
I'm now resolv'd as well as you.
No repentance shall reclaim
The injur'd Dido's slighted flame,
For 'tis enough, whate'er you now decree,
That you had once a thought of leaving me.

Aeneas

Let Jove say what he will: I'll stay!

Dido

Away, away! No, no, away!

Aeneas

No, no, I'll stay, and love obey!

Dido

To Death I'll fly
If longer you delay;
Away, away!.....

Exit Aeneas

But Death, alas! I cannot shun;
Death must come when he is gone.

38 Chorus

Great minds against themselves conspire,
And shun the cure they most desire.

39 Dido

Thy hand, Belinda, darkness shades me,
On thy bosom let me rest,
More I would, but Death invades me;
Death is now a welcome guest.

40 Dido

When I am laid in earth,
May my wrongs create
No trouble in thy breast;
Remember me, but ah! forget my fate.

Cupids appear in the clouds o're her tomb

41 Chorus

With drooping wings ye Cupids come,
And scatter roses on her tomb.
Soft and Gentle as her heart
Keep here your watch, and never part.

ARMONICO CONSORT

Christopher Monks *Artistic Director/Harpsichord*

Soloists

Rachael Lloyd *Dido*
Robert Davies *Aeneas*
Elin Manahan Thomas *Belinda*
Roderick Morris *Sorceress*
Eloise Irving *Second Woman/First Witch/Spirit*
Jenni Harper *Second Witch*
Miles Golding *Drunken Sailor*

Chorus

Jenni Harper, Eloise Irving *Soprano*
Sarah Denbee, Roderick Morris *Alto*
Ruairi Bowen, Guy Simcock *Tenor*
Francis Brett, Michael Hickman *Bass*

Orchestra

Miles Golding *Violin I*
Ben Sansom *Violin II*
Nichola Blakey *Viola*
Gabriel Amherst *Cello*
Andrew Durban *Double Bass*
Robin Jeffrey *Theorbo*

Armonico Consort is one of the largest and most innovative organisations of its kind in the UK, existing to inspire audiences with its unique programmes and seeking to facilitate access to exceptional and exciting music for as broad an audience as possible. The group works with the finest musical talent using authentic period instruments, performing up to fifty concerts a year across the country and beyond. They regularly work with the best solo musicians in the world, with recent partnerships including Sir Willard White, Nicola Benedetti, Dame Emma Kirkby and Elin Manahan Thomas. They have received critical acclaim for their performances and recordings, with several five star reviews from The Times and The Independent. Highlights of Armonico Consort's past work include performing *The Magic Flute* at The Barbican, joining forces with Nicola Benedetti for Vivaldi's Violin Concertos at the Hampton Court Palace Festival

and Carmina Burana with AC Academy singers at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. The group has worked with many inspirational names over the years, including Jeremy Irons, Dame Judi Dench and Dame Evelyn Glennie. The proudest achievement of Armonico Consort is the foundation of the AC Academy, an initiative which seeks to provide free, first-class music education opportunities to children from all backgrounds across the UK. AC Academy

works in partnership with the Royal Albert Hall, in a relationship which saw 1300 young singers perform at the venue in March 2013.

Over 100,000 children have benefitted from the AC Academy thus far, and over its choir creation scheme aims to directly tackle music education cuts by providing sustainable in-school singing opportunities for up to half a million children.



RACHAEL LLOYD

Rachael Lloyd studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, graduating with a BMus Hons. Since completing her studies she has performed with many prominent opera companies both in the UK and abroad. Roles performed include Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Meg Page in *Falstaff* for Glyndebourne On Tour, Mme Anderssen in *A Little Night Music* for Theater du Chatelet, Amastris in *Xerxes* for English Touring Opera and Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* for Theater Thüringen Germany.



In 2011 Rachael made her Royal Opera House debut as Kate Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. The 2012/13 season saw her make her debut with English National Opera as Pitti-Sing in Jonathan Miller's legendary production of *The Mikado* and also the title role in *Carmen* for Raymond Gubbay at The Royal Albert Hall.

On the concert platform she has sung under the batons of great conductors such as Kurt Mazur, Sir Richard Hickox, Vladimir Jurowski and Sir Simon Rattle. Concert highlights include Mendelsohn's *Elijah* with Kurt Mazur

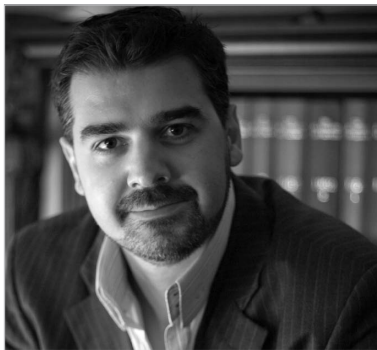
at the RAH, Handel's *Messiah* with the OAE and The Sixteen at the Royal Festival Hall, Ravel's *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* with the LPO and a recital of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -Leben* and Elgar's *Sea Pictures* at Opera de Lille, France.

ROBERT DAVIES

Robert studied at Sheffield University and the GSMD before embarking on a solo career on both opera stage and concert platform.

Awarded the Erich Viertheer Memorial Award at Glyndebourne in 2003, Robert went on to appear as Mr Gedge in *Albert Herring*, Marcello in *La Boheme*, Count in *Le Nozze de Figaro* and Falke in *Die Fledermaus* for Glyndebourne on Tour. Other roles include the title roles in *Figaro* for English Touring Opera and *Rigoletto* for Bury Court Opera; Zurga in *Pearl Fishers* for Reisopera, Holland; Demetrius in *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* and Papageno in *Magic Flute* for ETO; Ned Keene in *Peter Grimes* at the Stadttheater, Bern; Chef Grec in *Les Troyens* for Châtelet, Paris; Ottokar in *Der Freischutz* at the Opera Comique, Paris. He has also performed under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Mark Elder, Ed Gardner, Vladimir Jurowski and Robin Ticciati.

Recordings include Monteverdi's *Vespers* with the OAE, Bach's *St John Passion*; Handel's *Esther* with Dunedin Consort; Haydn's *The Creation* for Alte Musik/ORF and Hawes'



Angel for Decca. Known for excelling in a wide range of repertoire, his performances include the World Premier of *Blitz Requiem* in St Paul's Cathedral with the RPO (recorded for Classic FM); the 50th Anniversary (Gardiner) Monteverdi *Vespers* in King's College, Cambridge (BBC Radio 3 live), Barcelona and Versailles (recorded live for DVD); Bach's *Mass in B Minor* in Duomo, Pisa (Gardiner); Orff's *Carmina Burana* in Barbican, London; Brahms' *Requiem* in Worcester, Westminster and Coventry Cathedrals; Mozart's *Mass in C minor* in St David's Hall, Cardiff with Florilegium; Bach's *St John Passion* (OAE/Polyphony) in St John's, Smith Square and Antwerp.

ELIN MANAHAN THOMAS

Elin Manahan Thomas was born and bred in Swansea, and first studied Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at Clare College, Cambridge, before turning to the world of music, and to performing and presenting. She is known for her interpretation of baroque music and made the world premiere recording of a newly-discovered Bach cantata in 2006 for Sir John Eliot Gardiner. Elin has also recorded and performed Handel with the Orchestra of the Sixteen, Vivaldi and Pergolesi with Florilegium, Dowland and Campion with David Miller (lute), Mozart with the AAM and she released her debut solo disc of baroque music with the OAE. In August 2012 Elin thrilled the world when she performed at the Paralympics Opening Ceremony in London before a global audience of one billion people.

Elin's concert repertoire ranges from the renaissance to the contemporary, and she is known for both her innovative recital programmes, and her appearances with the greatest British orchestras, among them the RPO, LSO, Halle, BBC NOW and BBC Philharmonic. She received great acclaim for her *Pie Jesu* on Naxos' award-winning



recording of the Rutter Requiem, and gave world premiere performances of Sir John Tavener's *Requiem* (with the RLPO) and *Love Duet* (Manchester International Festival). She has also been the voice of an Audi advert, and a PS4 game! She has performed in Classic FM's fifteenth birthday concert; on *Friday Night is Music Night* for Radio Two; at Songs of Praise's *The Big Sing*; was invited to perform in the Vatican on Easter Sunday, as well as appearing at the Edinburgh International Festival with the Royal Flanders Ballet; and she made her BBC Proms debut in the Dr Who Prom, alongside Daleks! Elin is an Honorary Fellow at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and Swansea University.

RODERICK MORRIS

Roderick Morris studied music at Cambridge, then with Royal Academy Opera, and has travelled extensively to places such as South Korea, Japan, North America and Germany. He has appeared as a soloist at Kings Place, St John's Smith Square, on BBC Radio 3, and also performed a duet recital with Michael Chance in the Holywell music room in Oxford. His oratorio credits include the *St Matthew Passion* under Masaaki Suzuki, and David in Handel's *Saul* at the Spittalfield's Festival with Laurence Cummings. Operatically he has worked with companies including ENO and Iford, and his opera roles include Guido in *Flavio*, the title role in Cavalli's *Il Giasone*, and Cupid in *Venus and Adonis* with La Nuova Musica.



ELOISE IRVING

Eloise Irving is a soprano who was a choral scholar at Kings College, London. She is currently studying singing with Paul Farrington having trained in acting at Webber Douglas and voice/harp at the Guildhall School of Music.

She began her professional career by winning the 1998 BBC Radio 2 Choirgirl of the Year competition. This led to her appearing as a soloist in a wide range of music programmes on radio and television and further solo performances at the Royal Festival Hall, Fairfield Hall and Birmingham Symphony Hall.

Recent opera engagements include appearing as Almirena in Handel's *Rinaldo* with Longborough Festival Opera, Galatea in *Acis and Galatea* with Chilmark Opera and performing the role of Maria in *the Imperfect Pearl*, a new opera which premiered at Kings Place.

She has also performed and recorded with Polyphony, Tenebrae, AAM, Philharmonia Voices, Oxford Baroque, Platinum Consort, Sarum Consort, Oxford Camerata, the Eric Whitacre Singers and Gareth Malone's Voices.



CHRISTOPHER MONKS

A dynamic and innovative conductor and keyboard player, Christopher Monks is the founder and Artistic Director of Armonico Consort. In addition to work for the group, he has conducted other ensembles including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia and European Union Chamber Orchestra. Christopher has conducted at many of the major concert halls in the UK, including The Barbican, Wigmore Hall and Cadogan Hall, the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, St David's Hall in Cardiff and the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon. In addition to this, his work at venues abroad include those in Tel Aviv, Naples, Paris, Dublin and Sardinia. He has worked regularly with many of the major UK festivals including Hampton Court Palace, The Henley Festival, Brighton, Bath, Chelsea, Cambridge, Oxford and Canterbury. His critically acclaimed recordings are played every week on Classic FM and BBC Radio 3 in addition to radio stations across the globe. Prior to his work with Armonico Consort, Christopher studied music at the University of Cambridge, and then with David Hill at Winchester Cathedral, before collaborating with many of the world's



greatest conductors as a keyboard player with the CBSO. He has commissioned many new works, including the epic *Prodigal Son* by Girling, premiered with Dame Evelyn Glennie. Other major projects include conducting Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* with Armonico Consort and The Philharmonia, and Verdi's *Requiem* with Sir Willard White. Christopher is also founder of the AC Academy education network, which has delivered free first class musical opportunities to over 100,000 children since it began 10 years ago.

Recorded in the Church of St Augustine, Kilburn, on the 20th and 21st October 2014.

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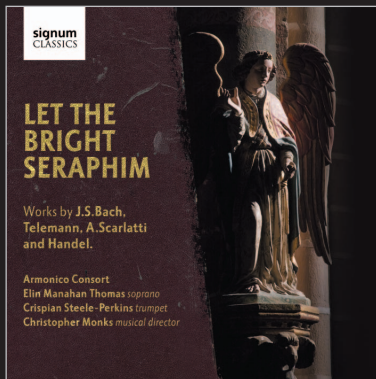
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