

Antonia Bembo

L'Ercole amante

Debus · Zurflüh

Rosati · Tricou

il Gusto Barocco

Jörg Halubek





il Gusto Barocco, Jörg Halubek

Antonia Bembo

1640–1720

L'Ercole amante

Opera in Five Acts and a Prologue · Libretto: Francesco Buti

First performance: 26 May 2023, Stuttgart, Germany

Ercole

Yannick Debus baritone

Deianira

Alena Dantcheva soprano

Iole

Anita Rosati soprano

Hyllo

David Tricou tenor

Giunone

Flore Van Meerssche soprano

Venere, Pasithea

Chelsea Marilyn Zurflüh soprano

Paggio

Arnaud Gluck alto

Licco

Andrés Montilla Acurero tenor

Nettuno, Eutyro, Mercurio

Hans Porten baritone

il Gusto Barocco

Jörg Halubek harpsichord and conductor

Guillem Borràs Garriga Discovery and Edition

il Gusto Barocco

Juan María Braceras, Sonoko Asabuki violin

Zohar Alon-Shner, Johannes Frisch viola

Jonathan Pešek violoncello

Fred Uhlig double bass

Claire Genewein, Yasuka Kribus transverse flute

Georg Fritz, Priska Comploi oboe

Andrew Burn bassoon

Josías Rodríguez Gándara lute

Chiara Granata harp

Elías Hostalrich Llopis organ

Matteo Pirola musical assistance

CD 1

1	Ouverture	2'04
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Act 1

2	Scena Prima (Ercole): <i>Come si beffa Amor del poter mio</i>	4'45
3	Scena Seconda (Venere, Coro di Grattie, Ercole): <i>Se ninfa a i pianti di veri amanti</i>	9'04
4	Scena Terza (Giunone): <i>E vuol dunque ciprigna</i>	4'51

Act 2

5	Entrée	1'39
6	Scena Prima (Iole, Hyllo): <i>Amor ardor più rari</i>	7'27
7	Scena Seconda (Paggio, Iole, Hyllo): <i>Ercole a dirti invia</i>	1'32
8	Scena Terza (Paggio): <i>E che cosa è quest'amore?</i>	0'51
9	Scena Quarta (Licco, Paggio): <i>Buon dì gentil fanciullo</i>	1'44
10	Scena Quinta (Deianira, Licco): <i>Misera, ohimè, ch'ascolto</i>	5'39
11	Scena Sesta (Pasithea, Coro d'Aure e Ruscelli): <i>Mormorate o fumaticelli</i>	7'55

Act 3

12	Entrée	1'51
13	Scena Prima (Venere, Ercole): <i>Sol s'inarcan gli emisferi</i>	5'04
14	Scena Seconda (Ercole, Paggio): <i>O quale instillano</i>	1'55
15	Scena Terza (Ercole, Iole, Hyllo): <i>Bella Iole</i>	5'48
16	Scena Quarta (Ercole, Iole): <i>E tu a che pensi Iole?</i>	1'14
17	Scena Quinta (Giunone, Iole): <i>Sonno potente nume</i>	3'21
18	Scena Sesta (Iole, Hyllo): <i>D'Eutyro anima grande</i>	1'15
19	Scena Settima (Mercurio, Ercole, Iole): <i>Svegliati Alcide, e mira</i>	1'46

20	Scena Ottava (Ercole, Deianira, Iole): <i>Più di salvarlo tenti</i>	2'46
21	Scena Nona (Deianira, Hyllo): <i>Figlio tu prigioniero?</i>	3'47
22	Scena Decima (Licco, Paggio): <i>A Dio, Paggio</i>	1'08

Total time 77'55

CD 2

Act 4

1	Entrée	1'12
2	Scena Prima (Hyllo): <i>Ahi che pena è gelosia</i>	4'33
3	Scena Seconda (Paggio, Hyllo): <i>Zefiri che gite</i>	5'27
4	Scena Terza (Hyllo): <i>Ohimè, ch'il mar con cento fauci</i>	0'53
5	Scena Quarta (Giunone, Nettuno): <i>Salva, Nettuno</i>	1'29
6	Scena Quinta (Giunone, Hyllo): <i>Dunque del mio potere</i>	3'17
7	Scena Sesta (Deianira, Licco): <i>Alfin perduto ho il figlio</i>	3'44
8	Scena Settima (Coro di Sacrificanti, Ombra d'Eutyro, Iole, Deianira, Licco): <i>Gradisci o re</i>	8'31

Act 5

9	Entrée	1'19
10	Scena Prima (Eutyro, Coro d'anime infernali): <i>Come solo ad un grido</i>	3'49
11	Scena Seconda (Ercole, Licco, Iole, Coro di Sacerdoti, Deianira): <i>Al fine il ciel</i>	8'06
12	Scena Terza (Iole, Deianira, Licco, Hyllo): <i>Veggio, o di veder parmi?</i>	3'38
13	Scena Quarta (Giunone, Iole, Hyllo, Deianira): <i>Se a pro d'un vero amore</i>	2'59
14	Scena Quinta (Coro, Giunone, Deianira, Iole, Hyllo, Licco, Ercole): <i>Virtù, che soffre alfin</i>	0'50

Total time 50'02

ZWISCHEN DEN ZEITEN, ZWISCHEN DEN KULTUREN

Für Frauen gab es im 17. Jahrhundert drei Möglichkeiten, am Musikleben teilzunehmen. Da war erstens eine adlige Geburt: Musik war, wie Lesen und Schreiben, selbstverständlicher Teil der Erziehung, und zwar nicht nur Gesang oder das Beherrschen eines Instruments, sondern auch Musiktheorie und sogar das Komponieren. All dies fand freilich nur im privaten Umfeld statt. Da waren zweitens die Nonnen: In ihren Klöstern mussten (durften) sie selbst die Musik machen, und nicht wenige von ihnen waren nicht nur als Musikerinnen, sondern auch als Komponistinnen tätig. Auch zu den Klöstern gab es wenig öffentlichen Zutritt. Und da waren drittens Musikerinnen, die sich in der Öffentlichkeit präsentierten – ihnen haftete generell die Faszination des Anrüchigen an: Unter den Kurtisanen fanden sich manche, zu deren Dienstleistungen auch das Musizieren gehörte. Berufssängerinnen, die auf der Opernbühne ihr Geld verdienten, galten ebenfalls als wenig ehrbar, und ein Ausnahmetalent wie die Sängerin und Komponistin Barbara Strozzi konnte auch deshalb ihre musikalischen Begabungen verwirklichen, weil sie als unehelich geborene, früh von einem verheirateten Liebhaber geschwängerte Frau ohnedies nicht für die Rolle als ebenso achtbare wie unsichtbare Ehefrau infrage kam.

EINE VENEZIANISCHE EXILANTIN

Antonia Bembo gehört in keine der drei Kategorien, aber auf eine seltsame Weise kommt sie allen dreien nahe. Geboren in Venedig um 1640 als Tochter eines Arztes, war sie zwar nicht von adliger Geburt, erhielt aber eine sorgfältige Ausbildung, zu

der auch die Musik gehörte. Nach eigenem Bekunden war kein Geringerer als der berühmte Opernkomponist und nachmalige Markuskapellmeister Francesco Cavalli einer ihrer Lehrer. 1659 wurde sie an Lorenzo Bembo aus einer der großen venezianischen Patrizierfamilien verheiratet, und sie hätte wohl das Leben einer vornehmen Dame geführt, wäre diese Ehe glücklicher verlaufen, hätte ihr Gemahl sie nicht geschlagen, notorisch betrogen und ihr Geld in einer Weise durchgebracht, dass sie ihre Juwelen vor ihm in einem Kloster verstecken musste, um dort den Aufenthalt ihrer Tochter finanziell garantieren zu können. 1672 wagte sie den Versuch, sich von ihm scheiden zu lassen, freilich ohne Erfolg. Irgendwann danach fasste sie den Entschluss, Venedig zu verlassen und sich anderswo ein neues Leben aufzubauen. Da kam ihr der Aufbruch des venezianischen Botschafters nach Frankreich gerade recht, in der Delegation mitzureisen. Am Hof des Sonnenkönigs fiel sie durch ihre musikalischen Fertigkeiten auf und erhielt von Ludwig XIV. eine Pension und eine Wohnung in einem christlichen Damenstift zugesprochen, wo sie zurückgezogen bis zu ihrem Tod um 1720 lebte und sich zunehmend der Komposition weltlicher und geistlicher Musik widmete. 1695 überreichte sie Ludwig XIV. eine erste große Sammlung weltlicher Kantaten in italienischer und sogar in französischer Sprache, und 1707 vertonte sie ein altes Opernlibretto noch einmal neu, das eng mit Ludwig XIV. verbunden war.

OPERNPREMIERE MIT HINDERNISSEN

Ludwig XIV. hatte im Juni 1660 die spanische Infantin Maria Teresa geheiratet, und diese Hochzeit war ein großer diplomatischer Erfolg des Premierministers,

Kardinal Jules Mazarin. Als Giulio Mazzarini geboren und in Rom aufgewachsen, hatte dieser sich, seit er 1642 zum ersten Minister aufgestiegen war, darum bemüht, den päpstlichen Einfluss am französischen Hof zu mehren und den jungen Ludwig XIV. mit italienischer Kultur zu beeindrucken. 1649 war die erste italienische Oper am französischen Hof vor dem elfjährigen König aufgeführt worden. Für die Hochzeitsfeierlichkeiten 1660 beauftragte Mazarin dann mit Francesco Cavalli den berühmtesten italienischen Opernkomponisten, die Festoper zu schreiben: In *Ercole amante* geht es um die Geschichte von Herkules und seiner Gemahlin Deianira, um deren Sohn Hyllos und die Prinzessin Iole, die Hyllos liebt, aber von Herkules begehrt wird. Nach vielen Verwicklungen stirbt Herkules und vermählt sich im Himmel mit Bellezza, der Schönheit, während auf Erden Iole und Hyllos heiraten können. Verschiedene Hindernisse führten dazu, dass *Ercole amante* nicht rechtzeitig auf die Bühne gebracht werden konnte. Als die Oper dann im Februar 1662 tatsächlich aufgeführt wurde, war alles anders geworden. Mazarin war in der Zwischenzeit gestorben, und Ludwig XIV. beilegte sich, eine Wende in der Kulturpolitik herbeizuführen – weg vom italienischen Einfluss, hin zu einer genuin französischen Kultur. Ludwig XIV. war ein begeisterter Tänzer, und so lag ihm daran, den italienischen Gesang in seiner Hochzeitsoper mit französischem Tanz zu erweitern. Es entstand, in der Zusammenarbeit mit seinem bevorzugten Tanzkomponisten Jean-Baptiste Lully, mit Xerxès eine Oper, in der sich die Musik Cavallis mit der Lullys mischte – eine Hybride aus italienischem Gesang und französischer Instrumentalmusik. Zehn Jahre später präsentierte Lully seine erste französischsprachige Oper.

DIE OPER IM STILDISPUT

Was mag Antonia Bembo dazu bewogen haben, 45 Jahre nach der Uraufführung dieses alte Libretto noch einmal hervorzuholen und neu zu vertonen? Auf eine Aufführung zu spekulieren, wäre wohl hoffnungslos gewesen. Die Geschmacksvorstellungen davon, welche Geschichten auf der Opernbühne mit welchen Erzählstrategien abgehandelt werden sollten, hatten sich extrem geändert. Italienische Oper wurde überall in Europa gespielt, nur nicht in Frankreich. Und Bembo hatte keinerlei Kontakte zu Opernhäusern. Vielleicht ging es der Komponistin aber gar nicht um eine Aufführung, sondern noch einmal um eine Reflexion dessen, was die italienische und die französische Musik ausmachte. Der Anlass könnte eine Diskussion gewesen sein, die zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts in den Pariser Salons entbrannte und fast ein Jahrhundert lang nicht verstummen sollte. 1702 hatte François Raguenet, Priester und Schriftsteller, ein Buch mit dem Titel *Parallèle des Italiens et des Français en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras* veröffentlicht, in dem er sich als glühender Verehrer der italienischen Oper offenbarte und die französische im Vergleich dazu mittelmäßig fand. Ihm hatte ein anderer Autor, der Jurist und Politiker Jean-Laurent Le Cerf de La Viéville, mit einer zweibändigen *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française* geantwortet, was Raguenet 1705 noch einmal zu einer Erwiderung unter dem Titel *Défense du Parallèle des italiens et des français, en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras* herausforderte. In diesem Disput ging es um die Kühnheit der italienischen Musik und das allzu Regulierte der französischen. In der Sache waren

sich die Kontrahenten sogar einig, in der Beurteilung allerdings lagen sie weit auseinander.

KÜHNE GESÄNGE, GEMESSENE RHYTHMEN

Mit Sicherheit hat Antonia Bembo diese Diskussion verfolgt, und vielleicht hat sie sich noch einmal mit den kompositorischen Mitteln, die ihr zur Verfügung standen, vergewissern wollen, wie es um die italienischen und die französischen Anteile in *Ercole amante* beschaffen sein konnte. Ihre Version ist ein komplexes Gebilde aus typisch italienischen und typisch französischen Anteilen, und das mit einer Musik, die beides in sich trägt – die Kühnheit des Gesangs und die Gemessenheit der Rhythmen. Typisch französisch sind die zahlreichen Tänze und die großen Chorszenen, die sogenannten Divertissements, wie sie Lully für die französische Oper entwickelt hatte, etwa die Unterweltchöre zu Beginn des 5. Aktes. Typisch italienisch sind dagegen die Arien der Protagonisten – der tragischen ebenso wie der komischen. Den Unterschied zwischen französischer und italienischer Musik macht gleich der Beginn der Oper deutlich – eine französische Ouvertüre, gefolgt von einem Auftritt der Titelfigur mit einer Arie voller virtuoser Koloraturen, wie sie der italienischen Oper eigen waren. Bedenkt man allerdings, dass Antonia Bembo ihren *Ercole amante* im selben Jahr fertigstellte, in dem Alessandro Scarlatti in Venedig *Mitridate Eupatore* und Georg Friedrich Händel in Rom sein Oratorium *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* aufführten, wird die stilistische Entwicklung deutlich, die die italienische Musik inzwischen durchlaufen hatte. Scarlatti wie Händel bevorzugten die großen virtuoson Da-capo-Arien, die *Ercole amante* schon

deshalb nicht zu Gebote standen, weil die Arienformen in den 1660er Jahren, als das Libretto entstand, noch gänzlich anderen Gesetzen gehorchten. Antonia Bembos Oper scheint auch deshalb ein wenig aus der Zeit gefallen zu sein, weil ihr Libretto eine frühere Sicht der Kommunikation zwischen den Protagonisten repräsentiert. Ihre Auseinandersetzung mit *Ercole amante* ist eine sehr persönliche Rückschau auf eine Opernform, die nirgendwo mehr existierte, ein eigener Beitrag, der gar nicht für die Öffentlichkeit selbst gedacht war, vielleicht eine letzte, imaginäre Konversation, eine letzte Hommage an den alten Sonnenkönig, der sich für Oper schon seit längerer Zeit gar nicht mehr interessierte, dem sie aber viel zu verdanken hatte.

– Silke Leopold

SYNOPSIS

ERCOLE / Herkules (lat. Herakles)

DEIANIRA / Gattin des Herkules

HYLLO / Hyllos, Sohn von Herkules und Deianira

IOLE / Geliebte des Hyllos, von Herkules umworben

GIUNONE / Juno, Göttin der Ehe und Fürsorge

LICCO / Lichas, Diener des Herkules

VENERE / Venus, Göttin der Liebe

PASITHEA / eine der Grazien

PAGGIO / Page des Herkules

NETTUNO / Neptun, Gott des Meeres

OMBRA DEL RE EURITO / Schatten des Königs Eutyros, Vater der Iole

CORO / Chöre der Grazien, Zephyren und Bäche, Opferpriester

1. UND 2. AKT

In einem Wald beklagt Herkules, die Liebe von Iole nicht erobern zu können. Venus verspricht, ihm zu helfen. Als Beschützerin der Ehe muss Juno verhindern, dass Herkules seine Gattin Deianira vernachlässigt und die Liebe zwischen Iole und Hyllos, ihrem gemeinsamen Sohn, zerstört. Herkules selbst tötete einst Ioles Vater, König Eutyros. Im Hof des Königspalasts schwören sich Hyllos und Iole ewige Liebe, als Herkules' Page von Iole verlangt, ihn im Garten zu treffen. Er erzählt Lichas und Deianira von Herkules' Plänen. Deianira sieht ihr eigenes und das Glück ihres Sohnes zerschlagen. Juno muss Venus' Pläne durchkreuzen. In der Höhle der Träume bittet sie die Grazie Pasithea, ihr den Gott der Träume zu leihen.

3. UND 4. AKT

Im Garten hat Venus eine verzauberte Bank vorbereitet. Auf ihr erwacht Ioles Liebe zu Herkules.

Er bittet Iole um ihre Hand, da versetzt Juno ihn in tiefen Schlaf. Sie befreit Iole aus dem Zauber und drängt sie, Herkules zu töten. Als Iole das Schwert erhebt, hält Hyllos sie ab. Lichas weckt Herkules, der seinen Sohn mit dem Schwert erblickt. Wollte er ihn töten? Er sucht Rache. Deianira bittet um Gnade. Iole verspricht ihm die Heirat, um Hyllos zu verschonen. Herkules lässt ihn einsperren und verbannt Deianira. In einem Turm gefangen, erfährt Hyllos von der Hochzeit und stürzt sich ins Meer. Juno rettet ihn mit Neptuns Hilfe. Auf dem Friedhof trauern Deianira und Lichas um ihn. Iole ruft den Geist ihres Vaters Eutyros. Deianira erzählt ihr von Hyllos' Tod. Iole will sterben. Lichas hat die Lösung: Überredet Iole Herkules, den Umhang des Zentauren Nesso anzulegen, wird er Deianira wieder lieben.

5. AKT

In der Hölle will sich der Geist von Eutyros an Herkules rächen. Herkules ist glücklich über die Heirat mit Iole. Als er Nessos Umhang anlegt, verspürt er furchtbare Schmerzen, die ihn in den Tod treiben. Deianira erkennt den unbeabsichtigten Mord an ihrem Mann. Da erscheint der totgeglaubte Hyllos. Juno tröstet sie: Herkules ist in den Olymp aufgestiegen und hat La Bellezza, die Schönheit, geheiratet.

– Daniela Marxen

Yannick Debus ist ein gefragter Solist, insbesondere im Rossini-, Mozart- und Barockrepertoire. Zu seinen aktuellen Engagements gehören die Partie des Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* sowie die Hauptrolle in *Jakob Lenz* an der Oper Zürich, an der er Ensemblemitglied ist. Zukünftige Rollen umfassen Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Conte Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, und Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. Ein weiterer Schwerpunkt von Debus' Schaffen liegt auf dem Lied- und Konzertfach, womit er regelmäßiger Gast an den großen Konzerthäusern Europas ist. Höhepunkte waren die Rolle des Orfeo in Monteverdis *L'Orfeo* unter der Leitung von René Jacobs mit dem Freiburger Barockorchester u.a. in der Pariser und Berliner Philharmonie sowie dem Teatre Liceu Barcelona. Ebenso mit René Jacobs Apollo in *Apollo e Dafne* und Christus in der Johannes-Passion.

Seine Auftritte in Brahms' Requiem mit den Bamberger Symphonikern unter der Leitung von Manfred Honeck, Orffs *Carmina Burana* im Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Mahlers *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* an der Staatsoper Stuttgart sowie ein Liederabend beim Eppaner Liedersommer auf Einladung von Brigitte Fassbaender waren jüngst außergewöhnliche musikalische Momente.

Alena Dantcheva begann ihre musikalische Ausbildung im Alter von fünf Jahren in ihrer Heimatstadt Sofia. Später führten sie ihre Studien an das Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi in Turin, wo sie Abschlüsse in den Fächern Harfe und Gregorianischer Gesang erwarb. Danach setzte sie ihre Gesangsausbildung bei Laura Bracco, Claudia Visca und Daniel Muñoz fort. Alena Dantcheva tritt als Solistin und Ensemblemitglied in Europa, den USA und Japan mit einem breiten Repertoire von mittelalterlicher

bis hin zu zeitgenössischer Musik auf. Sie singt regelmäßig in Ensembles für Alte Musik wie Concerto Italiano, La Capella Reial de Catalunya, I Barocchi, La Venexiana und Accademia Montis Regalis. Eine intensive und langjährige Zusammenarbeit verbindet sie mit dem auf spätmittelalterliche Musik spezialisierten Ensemble La Fonte Musica unter der Leitung von Michele Pasotti. Ihre Leidenschaft gilt auch der zeitgenössischen Musik, sowohl in Solodarbietungen mit Klavierbegleitung als auch mit kleineren Ensembles. Mit il Gusto Barocco nahm sie 2018 Monteverdis Marienvesper für CD auf.

Die osttiroler Sopranistin **Anita Giovanna Rosati** hat sich in den letzten Jahren ein breites Repertoire vom Barock bis zur Moderne angeeignet und gab zahlreiche Rollendebuts aus dem Kern- und Randrepertoire. So war sie in der laufenden Spielzeit 2024/2025 bereits als Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) und Corinna (*Il viaggio a Reims*) am Salzburger Landestheater zu erleben. Im Frühjahr wird sie als Colonnella in Salieris selten gespielter Oper *Il mondo alla rovescia* dort zu hören sein. Daneben gibt sie ihr Debut als Fantastica in einer Adaption von Johann Staub' Operette *Indigo und die 40 Räuber* im Rahmen des Wiener Johann Strauß Jahres. Zu Ihrem Repertoire gehören Rollen wie Celia (*Lucio Silla*), Sacerdotessa (*Aida*), Ice (*Anthropozän*), Amore (*Orphée*), Lily/Marie (*Der Reigen*), Jemmy (*Guillaume Tell*). Bei den Tagen der Alten Musik Herne war sie in Bembos *Ercole amante* zu hören. Beim Barockmusikfestival Potsdam und bei den Innsbrucker Festwochen für Alte Musik gastierte sie als Dorillo in Pasquinis *Idalmia*. Anita Rosati studierte an der Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien bei Edith Lienbacher. Sie war

Teilnehmerin des Young Singers Project bei den Salzburger Festspielen 2017.

Der französische Tenor **David Tricou**, Absolvent der Konservatorien in Montpellier und Paris, ist bekannt für seine Haute-Contre-Stimme, ideal für französische Barockoper. David Tricou war bereits in einer ganzen Reihe von Opernproduktion zu hören: Lully (*Armide, Persée*), Rameau (*Pygmalion, Anacréon, Castor et Pollux*), Charpentier (*David et Jonathas*), Campra (*Le Carnaval de Venise*), Cavalli (*L'Egisto*), Rossi (*L'Orfeo*), Graun (*Adriano in Siria*), Bembo (*Ercolo Amante*) und weiteren. Als gefragter Mozart-Interpret sang er *Die Zauberflöte, Mitridate, Bastien und Bastienne* und *Così fan tutte*. Auch das italienische Bel-Canto-Repertoire (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia, L'Elisir d'Amore*) deckt David Tricou ab, außerdem brachte er mehrere zeitgenössische Werke von Dayer und Carrara zur Uraufführung.

Im Rahmen seiner regen Konzerttätigkeit in ganz Frankreich und Europa arbeitet er mit renommierten Dirigent:innen wie William Christie, Hervé Niquet, Raphaël Pichon, Vincent Dumestre, Gaétan Jarry, Sébastien Daucé, Valentin Tournet, Damien Guillon, Dorothee Oberlinger und Jörg Halubek zusammen.

Die belgische Sopranistin **Flore Van Meerssche** debütierte Sommer 2022 bei den Salzburger Festspielen und war Stipendiatin des Young Singers Project. 2023 kehrte sie als Eva in Haydns *Die Schöpfung* unter der Leitung von Jordi Savall nach Salzburg zurück. Weitere Höhepunkte bildeten ihr Debüt bei den Osterfestspielen in Baden-Baden mit den Berliner Philharmonikern unter Kirill Petrenko. Bei den Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik war sie 2021 in Matthesons *Boris Goudenow* zu erleben.

Van Meerssche sang unter Dirigenten wie Philippe Herreweghe, Titus Engel, Francesco Corti und Peter Whelan und musizierte mit Klangkörpern wie den Wiener Philharmonikern, den Berliner Philharmonikern, den Münchner Philharmonikern, Le Concert des Nations, dem Collegium Vocale Gent und il Gusto Barocco. Sie schloss ihre Master-Studien Liedgestaltung und Konzertgesang bei Prof. Fenna Kügel-Seifried mit Auszeichnung ab. Meisterkurse bei u.a. Malcolm Martineau, Helmut Deutsch, Lisette Oropesa, Piotr Beczala und Ian Bostridge ergänzen ihre Ausbildung. 2021 gewann sie mit ihrem Duo-Partner Gyeongtaek Lee den »Prix de Mélodie« beim Internationalen Lied-Wettbewerb Nadia et Lili Boulanger in Paris.

Chelsea Marilyn Zurflüh, Schweizer Sopranistin mit Wurzeln auf den Seychellen, ist die Gewinnerin des renommierten 78. Concours de Genève 2024. Nebst dem ersten Preis erhielt die junge Sopranistin neun Spezialpreise, darunter eine Rolle im Grand Théâtre de Genève und weitere Konzertmöglichkeiten. Die Schweizerin war als Gerhilde in der *Walküre*-Produktion des Stardirigenten Kent Nagano auf Tournee und trat in den renommiertesten Konzertsälen auf. Darunter die Staatsoper Prag, die Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, der Dresdner Kulturpalast, die Kölner Philharmonie und das KKL Luzern. Andere Konzertengagements führten sie ins Concertgebouw Amsterdam, in die Tonhalle Zürich und in den Wiener Konzertverein. Von der Saison 2021 bis 2023 war sie Mitglied des Internationalen Opernstudios in Zürich und war bereits als Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, als Zaida in *Il Turco in Italia*, als Atalanta in *Serse* und weiteren Rollen auf der Bühne des Opernhauses zu erleben. Bei den Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten

Musik verkörperte sie die Licori in Vivaldis *La Fida Ninfa*. Chelsea schloss ihr Masterstudium »Specialized Music Performance Opera« 2021 bei Barbara Locher in Bern mit Bestnote ab.

Arnaud Gluck singt als Solist in Opern, Oratorien und Konzerten in Frankreich und ganz Europa. Zu seinen Rollen zählen Spirit (*Dido and Aeneas*) mit Stefan Plewniak an der Opéra royal de Versailles, Pastore (*Orfeo*) mit Jordi Savall, Unulfo (*Rodelinda*) mit dem ahimè! Opernverein, Paggio (*L'Ercole Amante*) mit il Gusto Barocco, Pietro (*La Passione di Gesù Cristo*) und La Gloria (Oratorium *La Morte delusa*). Zudem vertrat er Frankreich beim 10-jährigen Jubiläum des VOX Baroque Festivals in Tirana und Korçë 2023.

In größeren Besetzungen singt er mit Ensembles wie La Cetra – Vokalensemble, dem Chor der Opéra Royal de Versailles, dem Ensemble Correspondances oder den Profeti della Quinta.

Arnaud studierte an der Schola Cantorum in Basel bei den Countertenören Carlos Mena und Flavio Ferri-Benedetti sowie dem Bariton Ulrich Messthaler und schloss dort 2024 mit einem Master-Diplom ab. Er ist Preisträger der Wettbewerbe Jeunes Talents mit dem Ensemble Saint-Honoré, des Internationalen Wettbewerbs für Alte Musik Biagio Marini mit dem Ensemble Auditio Dignum (1. Preis) und des Concours international de chant baroque de Froville mit dem 2. Preis der Jury sowie dem Gemelli Factory-Preis.

Der Tenor **Andrés Montilla Acurero** arbeitet regelmäßig mit Dirigenten und Musikern wie Rinaldo Alessandrini, Francesco Cera, Fabio Lombardo, Marco Mencoboni, Alessandro Quarta, Jordi Savall und Michele Vannelli sowie mit Ensembles wie La

Capella Reial de Catalunya, Concerto Italiano, Micrologus, Concerto Romano, Ensemble Arte Musica, L'Homme armé, Dramatodia, De Labyrinth und Voces Suaves.

Sein Repertoire umfasst Tenor/Alt-Partien italienischer Werke des 17. Jahrhunderts, die französischen Haute-Contre-Partien des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts, die Tenor-Partien des 18. Jahrhunderts sowie Bachs Evangelisten-Partien.

Geboren in Venezuela, begann Acurero seine musikalische Ausbildung bei Niños Cantores del Zulia bei Juan Carlos Bersague. Er studierte danach Gesang bei Alessandro Quarta, Barockgesang bei Gemma Bertagnolli (Conservatorio L. Refice), Gregorianik und Semilogie bei Alberto Turco und Franz Praßl, und Vokalkammermusik bei Anthony Rooley (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis). Neben der Musik absolvierte er auch einen Ph.D. Politische Philosophie unter der Leitung des Philosophen Paul Gilbert.

Von 2007 bis 2018 war **Hans Porten** Mitglied der Aurelius Sängerknaben Calw. Hans genoss das Singen im Chor mit berühmten Orchestern wie den Berliner Philharmonikern, unter Dirigenten wie Daniel Barenboim. Als Kind sang er den zweiten Knaben in Mozarts *Zauberflöte* an der Staatsoper Berlin.

Im Juli 2019 war er in seiner ersten Hauptrolle als Orpheus bei Classic Open Wildberg in Glucks Oper *Orpheus und Eurydike* zu hören. Neben vielen weiteren Opern sang er im Juli 2022 bei den Münchner Opernfestspielen der Bayerischen Staatsoper den 5. Diener in *Capriccio* von Richard Strauss.

2022 nahm er solistisch am Meisterkurs der Bachwoche Stuttgart teil und war 2023 Barock-

Akademist von il Gusto Barocco unter der Leitung von Prof. Jörg Halubek.

Er ist als Solist, vor allem mit Barockmusik, national gefragt. Außerdem ist Hans Porten Gast in vielen Spitzenensembles, wie dem Kammerchor Stuttgart, ensemble cantissimo, dem Vokalensemble Rastatt, figure humaine Kammerchor und dem Sindelfinger Vokalkabinett.

Er studierte von 2018 bis 2025 Bachelor und Master Gesang bei Prof. Teru Yoshihara an der Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart.

»Schwungvoll, frohgelaunt und perfekt« – so beschrieb die FAZ das Ensemble **il Gusto Barocco**. Das Barockorchester, 2008 vom Dirigenten, Cembalisten und Organisten Jörg Halubek in Stuttgart gegründet, besteht aus einem festen Kreis international führender Virtuos:innen der jüngeren Generation. Sie verbindet die Musiziertradition der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, die Verbindung von Forschung und Praxis und eine lang gewachsene, musikalische Vertrautheit.

Herzstück ist die »Stuttgarter Reihe«. Neben verschiedenen Programmschwerpunkten von Orgel-Exkursion bis zur württembergischen Hofbibliothek, finden hier die Uraufführung und Wiederentdeckung vergangener Barockopern statt. Zu den jüngsten Ausgrabungen zählen *Adonis* von Johann Sigismund Kusser und die Uraufführung von Antonia Bembos *Ercole amante*. Der Nuovi talenti-Wettbewerb für junge Barockensembles und ein Engagement-Preis für junge Sänger:innen im Rahmen des Internationalen Cesti-Gesangswettbewerbes ergänzen das Portfolio. Zu den Meilensteinen neben der »Stuttgarter Reihe« zählen die Residenz als Festspielorchester der Bachwoche Ansbach und der

Monteverdi-Zyklus am Nationaltheater Mannheim, der mit *L'Orfeo 2026* seinen Abschluss findet.

Jörg Halubek ist als Dirigent, Cembalist und Organist Spezialist für historische Aufführungspraxis und Alte Musik. Mit seinem Ensemble **il Gusto Barocco** führt er eine eigene Reihe in Stuttgart und setzt dabei den Schwerpunkt u.a. auf die Wiederentdeckung vergessener Opern. 2025 veröffentlicht das Ensemble zwei Alben: Bachs *Kunst der Fuge* und die Oper *L'Ercole amante* von Antonia Bembo.

Halubek gelang mit der Weltersteinspielung der Barockoper *Adonis* von Johann Sigismund Kusser (2024) eine bedeutende Wiederentdeckung. 2025 führt er die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Luzerner Theater fort, wo er den Doppelabend *Requiem für einen Gefangenen* dirigiert. Zudem leitet er die wiederentdeckte Kantate *Amor vincitore* von Johann Christian Bach an den Schwetzingen SWR Festspielen.

Frühere Dirigate führten ihn u. a. an die Komische Oper Berlin und das Nationaltheater Mannheim, wo er den Monteverdi-Zyklus mitgestaltete. Halubek, Professor für Historische Tasteninstrumente an der Musikhochschule Stuttgart, ist als Cembalist und Organist international tätig und Preisträger des Internationalen Johann-Sebastian-Bach-Wettbewerbs. 2026 erscheint das abschließende Album seiner Gesamteinspielung von Bachs Orgelwerk, »Bach Organ Landscapes«.



Yannick Debus



Alena Dantcheva



Anita Rosati



David Tricou



Flore Van Meerssche



Chelsea Zurflüh



Arnaud Gluck



Andrés Montilla Acurero



Hans Porten

BETWEEN ERAS, BETWEEN CULTURES

There were three ways for women in the 17th century to participate in the world of music. The first was through the virtue of a noble birth—music was, just like reading and writing, central to education. This not only meant singing or mastering an instrument, but also studying music theory and composition. All of this took place in a private setting, of course. The second way was joining a convent—nuns had to (and thus were allowed to) make their own music, and more than a few were not only musicians, but also composers. But there was little public access to convents. And then there were musicians who performed in public—there was a general fascination surrounding them, but they also had a certain reputation. Among courtesans were some that made music a part of their services. Professional singers who earned their living on the opera stage were also considered to be of little honour, and an exceptional talent like the singer and composer Barbara Strozzi was therefore able to realise her musical talents because, as an illegitimately born woman who herself had been impregnated at an early age by a married lover, she was not considered for the role of the equally honourable and invisible wife.

A VENETIAN IN EXILE

Antonia Bembo does not fit into any of these categories, but in a strange way is close to all three. She was born in Venice in 1640. Being the daughter of a doctor, she was not of noble birth, but received a thorough education which included music. According to her own writings, no less than

Francesco Cavalli, the famous opera composer and conductor at San Marco, was one of her teachers. In 1659 she was married to Lorenzo Bembo from one of the great Venetian patrician families. She would probably have led the life of a noble lady if this marriage had been more fortunate, that is if her husband had not beaten her, notoriously cheated on her and squandered her money in such a way that she had to hide her jewels from him in a convent in order to financially ensure her daughter's stay there. In 1672, she dared an attempt to divorce him, but to no avail. At some point, she decided to leave Venice and to start a new life somewhere else. The departure of the Venetian ambassador to France came at just the right time for her to travel with the delegation. She attracted attention at the court of the Sun King with her musical abilities and was awarded a pension and an apartment in a Christian convent by Louis XIV. She lived there in seclusion until her death around 1720, devoting herself increasingly to composing secular and sacred music. In 1695, she presented Louis XIV with the first major collection of secular cantatas in Italian and even in French, and in 1707 she set new music to an old opera libretto that was closely associated with Louis XIV.

OPERA PREMIERE WITH OBSTACLES

Louis XIV had married the Spanish princess Maria Teresa in June of 1660, and this wedding was the great diplomatic success of the Prime Minister, Cardinal Jules Mazarin. Born Giulio Mazzarini and raised in Rome, he had endeavoured to increase papal influence at the French court and impress the young Louis XIV with Italian culture since ascending to the position of first minister in 1642. The first

Italian opera was performed at the French court before the 11-year old king in 1649. For the wedding festivities in 1660, Mazarin commissioned the most famous Italian opera composer of the time, Francesco Cavalli, to write a festive opera: *Ercole Amante*. It is about the story of Hercules and his wife Deianira, their son Hyllus and the princess Iole, who is in love with Hyllus, but desired by Hercules. After many complications, Hercules dies and marries Bellezza the beauty, in heaven while on earth Iole and Hyllus are able to marry. Many obstacles led to the fact that *Ercole Amante* was not able to be performed in time for the wedding. By the time the opera was finally premiered in 1662, everything had changed. Mazarin had died by then and Louis XIV was hurrying to implement a change in his cultural policies—away from Italian influences and towards a true French culture. Louis XIV was a dance enthusiast, so he was inclined to expand the Italian arias with French dances for his wedding opera. In collaboration with his favourite composer of dance Jean-Baptiste Lully, he created an opera in which Cavalli's music was mixed with that of Lully—a hybrid of Italian song and French instrumental music. Lully presented his first French language opera ten years later.

THE OPERA IN A STYLISTIC DISPUTE

What could have moved Antonia Bembo to dig up this old libretto and set it to new music 45 years after its premiere? It would have been hopeless to speculate that a performance would take place. The tastes about what subjects should be treated on the opera stage and which narrative strategies should be used had changed dramatically by then. Italian opera was performed throughout Europe but

no longer in France. And Bembo had no contacts to opera houses whatsoever. Maybe the composer was not really interested in a performance, but used the piece to reflect on Italian and French music. The inspiration for the opera could have been a discussion that flared up in Parisian salons at the beginning of the 18th century and continued for almost a century. In 1702, François Ragueneau, a priest and writer, had published a book entitled *Parallèle des Italiens et des Français en ce qui concerne la musique et les opéras*, in which he revealed himself to be an ardent admirer of Italian opera and found French opera mediocre by comparison. Another author, the lawyer and politician Jean-Laurent Le Cerf de La Viéville, responded to him with a two-volume *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française*, which Ragueneau in turn challenged in 1705 with a response entitled *Défense du parallèle des italiens et des français, en ce qui concerne la musique et les opéra*. This dispute was about the audacity of Italian music and the overly regulated nature of French music. The opponents even agreed on the matter, but they were worlds apart in their assessment.

BOLD SONG, METERED RHYTHMS

Antonia Bembo surely followed the discussion and using the compositional means available to her perhaps wanted to explore how the Italian and French components of *Ercole amante* would interact. Her version is a complex weave of typically Italian and typically French elements, with music that integrates both—the audacity of the vocal lines and the measured nature of the rhythms. The numerous dances and large choral scenes, the so-called *diversissements*, as developed by Lully for French opera,

such as the underworld choruses at the beginning of Act 5, are typically French. In contrast, the tragic as well as the comic arias of the protagonists are typically Italian. The difference between French and Italian music is made clear right at the beginning of the opera—a French overture followed by the entrance of the title character with an aria full of virtuosio coloratura so typical of Italian opera. Considering that Antonia Bembo completed her *Ercole Amante* in the same year that Alessandro Scarlatti's *Mitridate Eupatore* was performed in Venice and George Frederick Handel's oratorio *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* was performed in Rome, the stylistic developments of Italian music become clear. Both Scarlatti and Handel favoured the great virtuosio da capo arias, which *Ercole amante* did not have at its disposal, if only because the forms of aria in the 1660s, when the libretto was written, still followed completely different rules. Antonia Bembo's opera also seems to be a bit old fashioned because her libretto symbolizes an earlier view of communication between the protagonists. Her review of *Ercole amante* is a very personal retrospective of an operatic form that no longer existed anywhere. It is her own personal contribution that was not intended for the public at all, or perhaps it was a last imaginary conversation, a last homage to the venerable Sun King. Unfortunately, he had not been interested in opera for quite some time. She owed him a great deal nonetheless.

– Silke Leopold

SYNOPSIS

ERCOLE / Hercules (lat. Herakles)
 DEIANIRA / Spouse of Hercules
 HYLLLO / Hyllus, Son of Hercules and Deianira
 IOLE / Hyllus' beloved, courted by Hercules
 GIUNONE / Juno, Goddess of marriage and care
 LICCO / Lichas, Servant of Hercules
 VENERE / Venus, Goddess of Love
 PASITHEA / one of the Graces
 PAGGIO / Page of Hercules
 NETTUNO / Neptune, God of the sea
 OMBRA DEL RE EURITO / Ghost of King Eurytus, father of Iole
 CORO / Chorus of Graces, Zephyrs, Brooks, and Sacrificing Priests

ACTS 1 AND 2

In a forest, Hercules laments his inability to win the love of Iole. Venus promises to help him. As the protector of marriage, Juno must prevent Hercules from neglecting his wife Deianira and destroying the love between Iole and Hyllus, their son. Hercules once killed Iole's father, King Eurytus. In the courtyard of the royal palace, Hyllus and Iole swear eternal love to each other, when Hercules' page demands that Iole meet him in the garden. He tells Lichas and Deianira of Hercules' plans. Deianira sees her own and her son's happiness destroyed. Juno must thwart Venus' plans. In the cave of dreams, she asks one of the graces Pasithea to lend her the god of dreams.

ACTS 3 AND 4

In the garden, Venus has prepared an enchanted bench. On it, Iole's love for Hercules awakens. He asks Iole for her hand, so Juno puts him into a deep sleep. She frees Iole from the spell and urges her to kill Hercules. When Iole raises her sword, Hyllus stops her. Lichas wakes Hercules, who sees his son with the sword. Did he want to kill him? He seeks revenge. Deianira begs for mercy. Iole promises to marry him to spare Hyllus. Hercules has him locked up and banishes Deianira. Imprisoned in a tower, Hyllus learns of the wedding and throws himself into the sea. Juno saves him with Neptune's help. Deianira and Lichas mourn him in the cemetery. Iole summons the ghost of her father Eurytus. Deianira tells her of Hyllus' death. Iole also wants to die. Lichas has the solution: if Iole persuades Hercules to put on the cape of the centaur Nesso, he will love Deianira again.

ACT 5

In hell, the ghost of Eurytus wants to take revenge on Hercules. Hercules is happy about his marriage to Iole. When he puts on Nesso's cloak, he feels terrible pain that drives him to his death. Deianira recognises the unintentional murder of her husband. Hyllus, who was believed to be dead, appears. Juno comforts her: Hercules has ascended to Olympus and married La Bellezza, the Beauty.

– Daniela Marxen

Yannick Debus is a sought-after soloist, particularly for Rossini, Mozart and baroque repertoire. His current engagements include the role of Harlequin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and the title role in *Jakob Lenz* at the Zurich Opera, where he is a member of the solo ensemble. Future roles include Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Conte Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*.

Another aspect of Debus' work involves lied and concert repertoire. He makes regular guest appearances at major concert halls in Europe. Highlights include the role of Orfeo in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* under the direction of René Jacobs with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra in the Paris Philharmonie and Berlin Philharmonie and at the Teatre Liceu Barcelona. He also performed under René Jacobs as Apollo in *Apollo e Dafne* and Christus in *St John's Passion*.

His performances in Brahms *Requiem* with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Manfred Honeck, Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* at the Stuttgart State Opera and a recital at the Eppan Lied Festival at the invitation of Brigitte Fassbaender were recent extraordinary musical experiences.

Alena Dantcheva began her musical education at the age of five in her native Sofia. She later studied at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi in Turin, where she earned degrees in both harp and Gregorian chant. Afterwards, she continued her vocal studies with Laura Bracco, Claudia Visca and Daniel Muñoz. Alena Dantcheva performs as a soloist and in ensembles throughout Europe, the USA and Japan with a broad repertoire from the middle ages to contemporary music. She sings regularly

with early music ensembles such as Concerto Italiano, La Capella Reial de Catalunya, I Barocchisti, La Venexiana and Accademia Montis Regalis. She has had an intensive and long-time collaboration with Ensemble La Fonte Musica, an ensemble specializing in the music of the Late Middle Ages, under the direction of Michele Pasotti. She is also committed to new music, both as a soloist with piano accompaniment as well as with small ensembles. She recorded Monteverdi's *Vespers* on CD with il Gusto Barocco in 2018.

In recent years, Austrian soprano **Anita Giovanna Rosati** has acquired a broad repertoire ranging from baroque to modern and has performed numerous debuts in roles from the standard repertoire as well as lesser known works. She has already appeared as Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) and Corinna (*Il viaggio a Reims*) at the Salzburg State Theater during the 2024–25 season. This spring, she will sing the role of Colonnella in Salieri's seldom performed opera *Il mondo alla rovescia*. She also gave her debut as Fantastica in an adaptation of Johann Strauss' operetta *Indigo und die 40 Räuber* as part of Vienna's Johann Strauss bicentenary celebrations. Her repertoire also includes roles such as Celia (*Lucio Silla*), Sacerdotessa (*Aida*), Ice (*Anthropozän*), Amore (*Orphée*), Lily/Marie (*Der Reigen*) and Jemmy (*Guillaume Tell*). At the Herne Early Music Festival, she performed in Bembo's *Ercole Amante*. At the Potsdam Baroque Music Festival and at the Innsbruck Early Music Festival, she made guest appearances as Dorillo in Pasquini's *Idalma*. Anita Rosati studied with Edith Lienbacher at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts. She was a participant in the Young Singers Project at the Salzburg Festival in 2017.

French tenor **David Tricou**, a graduate of the conservatories of Montpellier and Paris, is renowned for his haute-contre voice, ideal for Baroque, Mozart and contemporary music.

He has performed roles in a number of operas including those by Lully (*Armide*, *Persée*), Rameau (*Pygmalion*, *Anacréon*, *Castor et Pollux*), Charpentier (*David et Jonathas*), Campra (*Le Carnaval de Venise*), Cavalli (*L'Egisto*), Rossi (*L'Orfeo*), Graun (*Adriano in Siria*) and Bembo (*Ercole Amante*).

A sought-after Mozart interpreter, he has sung in *Die Zauberflöte*, *Mitridate*, *Bastien und Bastienne* and *Così fan tutte*. He is also well-versed in the Italian bel-canto repertoire (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*) and has premiered several contemporary works by Dayer and Carrara.

He regularly appears in concerts and recitals throughout France and Europe and frequently collaborates with such conductors as William Christie, Hervé Niquet, Raphael Pichon, Vincent Dumestre, Gaëtan Jarry, Sébastien Daucé, Valentin Tournet, Damien Guillon, Dorothee Oberlinger and Jörg Halubek.

The Belgian soprano **Flore Van Meerssche** had her debut at the Salzburg Festival in the summer of 2022 and was a scholar with the Young Singers Project. She returned to Salzburg in 2023 as Eva in Haydn's *Creation* under the direction of Jordi Savall. Other highlights include her debut at the Easter festival in Baden-Baden with the Berlin Philharmonic under Kirill Petrenko. She performed in Mattheson's *Boris Goudenow* at the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music in 2021. Van Meerssche has sung under conductors including Philippe Herreweghe, Titus Engel, Francesco Corti and Peter Whelan and

with ensembles such as the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Munich Philharmonic, Le Concert des Nations, Collegium Vocale Gent and il Gusto Barocco. She completed her Master's degree in art song and voice with distinction, studying with Fenna Kügel-Seifried. She also participated in master classes with Malcolm Martineau, Helmut Deutsch, Lisette Oropesa, Piotr Beczala and Ian Bostridge, among others. Together with her duo partner Gyeongtaek Lee, she won the Prix de Mélodie at the Nadia et Lili Boulanger International Voice-Piano Competition in Paris in 2021.

Chelsea Marilyn Zurflüh, a Swiss soprano with roots in the Seychelles, is the winner of the prestigious 78th Concours de Genève 2024. In addition to the first prize, the young soprano received nine special prizes, including a role at the Grand Théâtre de Genève and other performance opportunities. The Swiss soprano toured as Gerhilde in *Die Walküre* led by star conductor Kent Nagano and has performed in the most prestigious concert halls. These include the Prague State Opera, the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, the Dresden Kulturpalast, the Cologne Philharmonie and KKL Lucerne. Other concert engagements have taken her to the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Tonhalle Zurich and the Vienna Konzertverein. From the 2021 to the 2023 season, she was a member of the International Opera Studio in Zurich and has already appeared as Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Zaida in *Il Turco in Italia*, Atalanta in *Serse* as well as other roles. At the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, she played Licori in Vivaldi's *La Fida Ninfa*. Chelsea completed her Master's degree in Opera Performance with Barbara Locher in Bern in 2021, graduating with top marks.

Arnaud Gluck performs as an opera, oratorio and concert soloist in France and throughout Europe. His past roles have included Spirit (*Dido and Aeneas*) with Stefan Plewniak at the Opéra Royal de Versailles, Pastore (*Orfeo*) with Jordi Savall, Unulfo (*Rodelinda*) with the ahimè! Opernverein, Paggio (*L'Ercole Amante*) with il Gusto Barocco, Pietro (*La Passione di Gesù Cristo*) and La Gloria (in the oratorio *La Morte delusa*). He also represented France at the 10th anniversary of the VOX Baroque Festival in Tirana and Korçë in 2023.

He also sings in larger ensembles such as La Cetra – Vokalensemble, the Chorus of the Opéra Royal de Versailles, the Ensemble Correspondances and Profeti della Quinta.

Arnaud studied at the Schola Cantorum in Basel with countertenors Carlos Mena and Flavio Ferri-Benedetti and with baritone Ulrich Messthaler, graduating with a Master's degree in 2024. He is a prizewinner of the *Jeunes Talents* competition with the Ensemble Saint-Honoré, the International Early Music Competition Biagio Marini with the ensemble Auditium Dignum (1st prize) and the Concours international de chant baroque de Frouville with 2nd prize from the jury and the Gemelli Factory Prize.

Andrés Montilla Acurero performs regularly with musicians such as Rinaldo Alessandrini, Francesco Cera, Fabio Lombardo, Marco Mencoboni, Alessandro Quarta, Jordi Savall and Michele Vannelli and with ensembles including La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Concerto Italiano, Micrologus, Concerto Romano, Ensemble Arte Musica, L'Homme armé, Dramatodia, De Labyrinth and Voces Suaves.

His repertoire primarily encompasses tenor roles from the 17th and 18th centuries, with particular

emphasis on the 17th century High tenor/Alto Italian music, the Haute-contre of the Musique baroque française and the role of the Evangelist in Bach's oratorios.

Born in Venezuela, he started his musical training at Niños Cantores del Zulia with Juan Carlos Bersague. He then studied voice with Alessandro Quarta, earning a degree in Baroque singing with Gemma Bertagnolli (Conservatorio L. Refice). He then pursued studies in chant semiology with Alberto Turco and Franz Praßl, and vocal chamber music with Anthony Rooley (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis). Besides music, Andrés also has earned a Ph.D. in political philosophy under the guidance of philosopher Paul Gilbert.

From 2007 to 2018, **Hans Porten** was a member of the Aurelius Boys' Choir in Calw. Hans enjoyed singing in the choir with famous orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic under conductors including Daniel Barenboim. As a child, he sang the role of "zweiter Knabe" in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the Berlin State Opera. In July 2019, he sang his first main role as Orpheus in Gluck's opera *Orpheus und Eurydike* at Classic Open Wildberg. In addition to many other operas, he also sang the role of the Fifth Servant in *Capriccio* by Richard Strauss at the Munich Opera Festival of the Bavarian State Opera in July 2022. In 2022 he participated in the master class of the Stuttgart Bach Festival and was the Baroque scholar of *il Gusto Barocco* under the direction of Prof. Jörg Halubek in 2023. He performs mostly Baroque music as a soloist all over Germany. Hans Porten has also made guest appearances with many top ensembles including the Stuttgart Chamber Choir, ensemble cantissimo, the vocal ensemble Rastatt, the chamber choir *figure humaine* and

the Sindelfinger Vokalkabinett. From 2018 to 2025, he earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree in voice, studying with Teru Yoshihara at the Stuttgart University of Music and Performing Arts..

"Spirited, cheerful and perfect" is how the FAZ describes the ensemble **il Gusto Barocco**. The baroque orchestra, founded in Stuttgart in 2008 by conductor, harpsichordist and organist Jörg Halubek, consists of a fixed core of internationally leading virtuosos of the younger generation. They are connected to the musical tradition of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and united by a long-standing musical collaboration.

The heart of the group is their concert series in Stuttgart. In addition to their varied programming from organ excursions to the Württemberg Court Library, they present the premieres and re-discovery of forgotten Baroque operas. Among their latest unearthings include *Adonis* by Johann Sigismund Kusser and the premiere of Antonia Bembo's *Ercole Amante*. Their Nuovi talenti competition for young baroque ensembles and a commitment prize for young singers as part of the International Cesti Singing Competition are also part of their work. Milestones alongside their Stuttgart concert series include their residence as the festival orchestra for the Ansbach Bach Festival and the Monteverdi cycle at the Mannheim National Theatre, which will conclude with *L'Orfeo* in 2026.

Jörg Halubek, a specialist for historical performance practice, is a conductor, harpsichordist and organist. Together with his ensemble *il Gusto Barocco*, he has a concert series in Stuttgart and is committed to rediscovering forgotten operas. In 2025, the ensemble will release two albums—Bach's

Art of the Fugue and the opera *L'Ercole amante* by Antonia Bembo.

The world premiere recording of the Baroque opera *Adonis* by Johann Sigismund Kusser (2024) was one of Halubek's significant re-discoveries. In 2025, as part of his continuing collaboration with the Lucerne Theater, he conducted a double bill entitled "Requiem for a Prisoner". He also conducted the re-discovered cantata *Amor vincitore* by Johann Christian Bach at the Schwetzingen SWR festival.

He has also conducted at the Komische Oper in Berlin and the Mannheim National Theater, where he conducted a Monteverdi cycle. Halubek is professor of historical keyboard instruments at the Stuttgart University of Music. He performs harpsichord and organ internationally and is a prizewinner of the International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition. In 2026, the final album of his complete recordings of Bach's organ works "Bach Organ Landscapes" will be released.



il Gusto Barocco

Antonia Bembo – L'Ercole amante

Libretto: Francesco Buti

CD 1

1 Overture

ATTO PRIMO

2 Scena prima

La scena si cangia ne' lati in boscareccia, e nella prospettiva in un gran paese contiguo alla città d'Eocalia.

ERCOLE

Come si beffa Amor del poter mio!
A me cui cede il mondo
farà contrasto una donzella? (oh dio!)
Come si beffa Amor del poter mio!

Dunque chi tanti mostri
vide esangui trofei di sua forza
scempio farà di femminil fiera,
e trafitto cadrà da un van desio?

Come si beffa Amor del pianger mio!

Aria

*Ah Cupido io non so già
perché il ciel soffrir ti deggia?
Di Pluton l'orrida reggia
un di te più reo non ha.*

O di quale empietà
sacrilego tiranno ogn'or riempi
il credulo tuo regno?

Antonia Bembo – L'Ercole amante

Libretto: Francesco Buti

CD 1

1 Overture

ACT ONE

2 Scene One

The scene is set at the edge of a wooded area, and in the distance is a large village adjacent to the city of Eocalia.

HERCULES

How Amor mocks my power!
Can a young maiden resist me
to whom the whole world yields? (O God!)
How Amor mocks my power!

So he who has seen so many
bloodless trophies of his strength
shall now bow down to a woman's pride?
Fall from a vanity of desire?

How Amor mocks my tears!

Aria

*Oh Cupid, I don't understand,
why heaven must suffer you?
Not even in Pluto's horrid palace
are such wicked creatures as you.*

Oh you sacrilegious tyrant
how impious is
your credulous kingdom!

Mentre ne' di lui tempi
l'adorate Cottine
di grazia, e di beltà non celano altro alfine
ch'idoli abominevoli qua' sono
interesse, perfidia, orgoglio, e sdegno.
Così avvien per lole che l'altar del cor mio
sparga d'alti sospir malgrati i fumi,
e che vittima infausta io mi consumi.

[3] Scena seconda

Cala dal cielo Venere con le Grazie in una macchina.

Venere, Ercole, coro di Grazie.

VENERE Aria

*Se ninfa a i pianti di veri amanti
non mai pieghevole niega mercé;
di ciò colpevole amor non è.*

CORO DI GRATTIE

Se ninfa a i pianti di veri amanti
non mai pieghevole niega mercé;
di ciò colpevole amor non è.

VENERE Aria – Seconda Stanza

*Scoglio sì rigido
mostro sì frigido
non regge il mar
ch'amaro al pari
non deva amar.*

CORO DI GRATTIE

Scoglio sì rigido
mostro sì frigido
non regge il mar
ch'amaro al pari non deva amar.

The veneer of beauty
cannot conceal all
the abominable idols of
interest, perfidy, pride
and disdain in all your temples!
And so also did this to lole
For the altar of my heart burns.
Its fumes consume me.

[3] Scene Two

Venus descends from the sky with the Graces in a chariot.

Venus, Hercules, chorus of Graces.

VENUS Aria

*If a grace is not moved
by the tears of true lovers,
Amor cannot be to blame.*

CHORUS OF GRACES

If a grace is not moved
by the tears of true lovers,
Amor cannot be to blame.

VENUS Aria – Second Verse

*Even a rock so rugged,
A monster so frigid
in the immense ocean
must reward love
with the love it receives.*

CHORUS OF GRACES

Even a rock so rugged,
A monster so frigid
in the immense ocean
must reward love with the love it receives.

VENERE

Vanne al loco, e m'attendi, e fa ch'iole
pur vi renda pria che manchi il sole,
ch'io dell'armi provvista
onde sua ferità vincer presumo,
preverrò diligente i di lei passi
per dispor quivi pria, ch'ella vi giunga
rovente acuto strale,
che per te l'arda, e punga.

Aria

*Strale invisibile,
ch'inevitabile tal forza avrà,
ch'all'insensibile
piaga insanabile
imprimerà.*

Su dunque ogni tristezza
sia dal tuo cor sbandita,
ch'in amor l'allegrezza
come al ciel più gradita
con più felicità le gioie invita.

VENERE E ERCOLE

Fuggano a vol
dal bell'impero
del nume arciero
le pene, e 'l duol.

CORO

E in lui così
gioie sol piovinò,
e si rinnovò
quegli aurei di.

VENERE E ERCOLE

Struggasi il gel

VENUS

Go to the garden, and see to it that
Iole return there before the sun sets,
so that I may arm myself
to conquer her ferocity,
I will diligently forestall her steps
to place there before she reaches you
a burning, sharp arrow
that will make her burn for you.

Aria

*This arrow
Invisible
and irresistible
such force will have
that it will inflict an incurable wound.*

So banish all sadness
from your heart!
For in the sight of love,
as most pleasing to the heavens
leads to joy and greater happiness.

VENUS AND HERCULES

May sorrow and pain
be banished from
the beautiful empire
of the archer god.

CHORUS

And in his kingdom thus
only joy may rain down,
and the golden era
be renewed.

VENUS AND HERCULES

Let the frost be chased away

d'ogni fierezza
ogni amarezza
il cangi in miel.

(La macchina di Venere rimonta al cielo)

ERCOLE

Infelice, e disperato
mentre mestissimo
vo notte e dì.

Aria

*Qual di bene inaspettato
raggio purissimo
m'appari?*

Ah che s'acceso un cor
avvien mai che disperi,
non sa come in amor
con sovrano poter fortuna imperi,

Aria

*Di tal nume alla possanza
nulla invincibile già mai si dà
egli ogn'or con gran baldanza
fin l'impossibile ceder fa.*

[4] Scena terza

*Nel resto de' nuvoli di detta macchina essendo
ascosa Giunone, questa si discovre assisa in un
gran pavone.*

GIUNONE

E vuol dunque ciprigna,
per far contro di me gl'ultimi sforzi
de' più pungenti oltraggi,

from all pride
and all bitterness,
changed to honey!

(Venus' chariot returns to the sky)

HERCULES

Unhappy, and desperate
while I grieve
day and night.

Aria

*What unexpected good
purest ray
has appeared to me?*

Ah, a heart is kindled with despair,
not knowing
how love
is smiled upon by fortune.

Aria

*Of such a god, to whose power
is unconquerable for she never gives up
and with her great boldness,
even the strongest yield.*

[4] Scene Three

*Amidst the clouds, Juno, being hidden,
climbs down from the great chariot.*

JUNO

And so Venus is determined
with all her effort to stand against me,
and to harm me

favorir chi le voglie ebbe sì intese
ad offendermi ogn'ora,
che ne gli impuri suoi principi ancora
prima d'esser m'offese?
Chi pria di spirar l'aure
spirò desio di danneggiarmi,
e dopo aver dal petto mio
tratti i primi alimenti al viver suo,
con ingrata insolenza
d'uccidermi tentando osò ferirmi?
Ah ch'intesi i disegni
ma non sia ch'a disfarli altri m'insegnì.
Di reciproco affetto
ardon Hyllò, e Iole,
e sol per mio dispetto
l'iniqua deà non vuole,
ch'Imeneo li congiunga? anzi procura
per il mio scorno maggiore,
ch'il nodo maritale ond'è ristretto
Ercole a Deianira alfin si rompa;
a ciò ch'Iole a questi
del di lei genitore empio omicida
con mostruosi amplessi oggi s'innesti.
E con qual arte oh dio? con arti indegne
d'ogni anima più vil non che divina.

Aria

*Ma in amor ciò ch'altri fura
più d'amor gioia non è
e un'insipida ventura
ciò ch'egli in dono,
o ver pietà non diè.*

*In amor ciò ch'altri fura più
d'amor gioia non è.
Se non vien da gratta arsurà
volontaria all'altrui fé*

to favour those who had such intentions
to mock me every hour,
that in their impure offenses
even beginning in the womb.
Who, before drawing his first breath,
he nursed the desire to harm me,
and after having drawn from my breast
the first nourishment of eternal life,
with ungrateful insolence
tried to kill me and dared to wound me?
Ah, I understood their plans
but may others teach me how to undo them.
Of mutual affection
are Hyllus and Iole,
and only to spite me
does the wicked goddess
resist their marriage. And what's more, to my
greater chagrin
she is trying to ensure that the marriage bond
that binds Hercules to Deianira
is finally broken;
so that Iole may be joined to him,
her parent's impious murderer
with monstrous embraces today is grafted.

Aria

*But in love what others steal
is not joy, but love
and a bland adventure
gave he not as talent,
nor out of pity nor honour.*

*In love, what others take from you
is not joy.
If it does not come from a grateful voluntary
ardour to the faith of others, it changes*

*cangia affatto di natura
come d'odio condita ogni mercé.*

Ma che più con inutili lamenti
il tempo scarso alla difesa io perdo?
Su portatemi o venti
alla grotta del Sonno, e d'aure infeste
corteggiato il mio tron versi per tutto
pompe del mio furor fiamme, e tempeste.

*(Giunone parte e fa cader dalle nuvole della sua
macchina, Tempeste e Fulmini che formano una
danza per fine del primo atto.)*

ATTO SECONDO

5 Entrée

6 Scena prima

*La scena si cangia in un gran cortile del palazzo
reale.*

HYLLO E IOLE
Amor ardor più rari
accessi mai non ha,
che quelli onde del pari
le nostre alme disfa
d'avverso ciel le lampe
contro di lui si sforzino,
ch'in vece, che l'amorzino,
l'arricchiran di vampe.

IOLE

Pure alfine il rispetto
di figlio al genitor sia ch'in te cangi
si amoroso linguaggio.

*completely in nature, as if every mercy were
seasoned with hate.*

But what do I lose more with useless lamentations
except for scarce time for defence?
O winds, carry me to the cave of Sleep, and from
the infested heavens, woo my throne, and pour all
the pomp of my fury, flames and storms, over
everything.

*(Juno departs and causes storms and lightning to
ensue, which ends in a dance that concludes Act
One)*

ACT TWO

5 Entrée

6 Scene One

*The scene changes to a large courtyard of the
royal palace.*

HYLLUS AND IOLE
Amor has never kindled
rarer passions,
than those which make
our hearts burn.
The heavens have conspired,
to snuff out the flames,
but they cannot extinguish our fire.
but will only fan them.

IOLE

Yet in the end, your claims of love
shall change out of respect of a son
for his father.

HYLLO

E di rivale il titolo odioso
qualunque altro bel nome,
che concorra con lui, rende ozioso;
una sol vita il genitor mi diede,
che per te, che mia vita
molto più cara sei
mille vite darei.

IOLE

E per te sol mio bene,
all'empio usurpator contenta i' cedo
il regno, e 'l mondo tutto, e te sol chiedo.

HYLLO E IOLE **Aria**

*Gare d'affetto ardenti
deh non cedete a i guai,
e nel goder non vi stancate mai,
che de' vostri argomenti
nell'uguaglianza sol tutta si sta
l'amorosa felicità.*

7 **Scena seconda**

PAGGIO

Ercole a dirti invia, ch'altro non bada,
che di saper, se nel giardin de' fiori
di condurti a diporto oggi t'aggrada.

IOLE

Come fia, che ciò nieghi?
D'un che sovra di me le stelle alzarò
son comandi anco i prieghi.

HYLLUS

Those who have my father
as a rival
for them is little hope,
only a single life did my father give to me,
But for you,
who is much more dear to me
I would give a thousand lives.

IOLE

And for you alone my only love, would I gladly
yield my kingdom and the whole world to the
wicked usurper, if only I could have you.

HYLLUS AND IOLE **Aria**

*Oh ardent affection
Oh, never fall into despair,
rapture that never tires!
In this mutual affection
the seed of love lives forever.*

7 **Scene Two**

PAGE

Hercules sends me to ask you,
if you would like to go for a stroll in the flower
garden this evening.

IOLE

How could I refuse
someone whom the stars above obey,
his wish is my command.

HYLLO

Ahi qual torbido, e amaro
velen presaga gelosia m'appresta,
di cui solo il timor già mi molesta.

IOLE

Da sì grave timor l'alma disvezza,
che quanto Ercol per me palesa affetto,
tant'ha rispetto, ed io per te fermezza.
Torna, digli, ch'io vado: Hyllò vien meco.

HYLLO

E quando io non son teco?
Se dovunque il mio piè giri, o la mente
t'adoro impatiente.

8 Scena terza

PAGGIO **Aria**

*E che cosa è quest'amore?
Di cui parlan tanto in corte,
e canzon di mille sorte
di lui cantano a tutt'ore.*

9 Scena quarta

LICCO

Buon dì gentil fanciullo.

PAGGIO

E buona notte.

LICCO

Ma dove in tanta fretta?

HYLLUS

Ah! What murky, bitter poison
infects me with jealousy?
Even the fear of this already troubles me.

IOLE

Be fearless in your soul my love
even if Hercules shows feelings for me,
he is respectful and I steadfast.
Go and tell him I shall come. Hyllus accompany
me!

HYLLUS

How could I not be with you?
Wherever my steps or my spirit
take me, you are always there to be adored.

8 Scene Three

PAGE **Aria**

*And who is this Amor?
Of which they speak so much at court
and songs of a thousand sorts
are sung about him at all hours?*

9 Scene Four

LICHAS

Good morning, gentle boy!

PAGE

And good night.

LICHAS

But where are you going in such a hurry?

PAGGIO

A far da gran messaggio.

LICCO

Ascolta un poco, aspetta;
che so qual possa aver faccende un Paggio.

PAGGIO

E che tu sai? ch'iole ad Ercole...

LICCO

T'invia.

PAGGIO

Sì affé m'invia...

LICCO

A dirgli.

PAGGIO

È vero a dirgli...

LICCO E PAGGIO

Ch'al giardino de' fiori ella si renderà com'ei desia.

PAGGIO

Sei tu qualche indovino?

LICCO

E ben famoso,
ch'in simil guisa a me nulla è nascoso.

PAGGIO

Basta per questa corte ogn'or volare
si vede un sì gran numero d'amori,
che non abbiamo a fare,
che ne vengan di fuori.

PAGE

To deliver an important message.

LICHAS

Wait, listen!
I know what a Page needs to do.

PAGE A

And what do you know? That lole...

LICHAS

...has sent you to Hercules

PAGE Y

Yes, has sent me to...

LICHAS

...to tell him...

PAGE

Yes, that she will...

LICHAS AND PAGE

...meet him in the flower garden, as he desires.

PAGE

Are you a seer?

LICHAS

A famous one,
nothing is hidden from me.

PAGE

Enough! So many loves
does one see at this court
flitterings every hour in secret, so that no one
knows what is going on.

LICCO

E perché ha in odio Iole Ercole?

PAGGIO

Perché uccise Eutro.

LICCO

Ed ama il figlio poi di chi gli uccise
il padre?

PAGGIO

E tu, ch'il tutto sai
non sai, ch'Ercol' m'attende?
e ch'egli è amante?
E che fra quanti mai
ardono al mondo d'amorosa fiamma
non v'è di pazienza una sol dramma.

10 Scena quinta

DEIANIRA

Misera, ohimè, ch'ascolto.
Non so, se più gelosa
esser dea come madre,
o come sposa;
O presagi funesti:
Ercole spirti non ha,
se non feroci,
e non ferian già questi
i di lui primi parricidi atroci.

Aria

*Ahi ch'amarezza
meschina me
è la certezza
di rotta fé!*

LICHAS

But why does Iole hate Hercules?

PAGE

Because he killed Eurytus.

LICHAS

And he loves the son of the man who killed his
father?

PAGE

And don't you, who knows everything,
not know that Hercules is waiting for me?
And that he is in love?
And that those
who burn with amorous flames
are not so patient?

10 Scene Five

DEIANIRA

How wretched, what must I hear?
Whether to be more jealous
as a goddess, a mother
or a wife;
Oh dark omens!
Hercules has no spirit
only ferocity.
Killing his children
would not be his first atrocity.

Aria

*Alas, how bitter
is the certainty
of the course
I have taken!*

*Ahi come, ohimè, la gelosia
di furie l'Erebo impoverì.
E l'alma mia ne riempì.*

*S'in amor si raddoppiassero
tutti i guai, tutti i tormenti,
e ch'in lui solo mancassero
i sospetti, e i tradimenti
fora amor tutta dolcezza.*

LICCO

Ben lo dicea, che noi saremmo venuti
a incontrar pene, e rischi:
ah che d'Ercole irato
qualche stral ben rotato
parmi sentir, ch'intorno a me già fischi.

DEIANIRA

Ah Licco il cor ti manca, ohimè,
che sia di me senza il tuo aiuto?

LICCO

Ah Deianira!
Dunque, dunque tu temi?
Io non ho già paura.

DEIANIRA

Dunque che far dovrem?

LICCO

Per tanto avvertir ne conviene
che qualche beffa, o crocchio
non c'irriti a parlare, e di tal sorte
farem la guerra all'occhio.

*Alas, how woefully has jealousy
Impoverished the Furies.
And my soul is filled with them.*

*If in love all the troubles,
all the torments were doubled,
and if in him alone suspicions
and betrayals were lacking,
love would be devoid of all sweetness.*

LICHAS

I have warned you, that we shall only
expect pain and danger,
The angry Hercules
and his well-aimed arrows
seem to be whistling all around me.

DEIANIRA

Ah Lichas! Your heart fails you, alas.
What will become of me without your help?

LICHAS

Oh Deianira!
So, so you fear him?
I'm not afraid.

DEIANIRA

So what shall we do?

LICHAS

We will dress in peasants' clothes
and avoid anything
that could provoke us to speak.
And keep silent of our origin and intentions.

[11] Scena sesta

La scena si cangia nella grotta del Sonno.

PASITHEA

Mormorate o fiumicelli,
sussurrate o venticelli,
e col vostro sussurro, e mormorio
dolci incanti dell'oblio,
ch'ogni cura fugar ponno
lusingate al sonno il Sonno.

Aria

*Chi da ver ama
vie più il diletto
del caro oggetto
che 'l proprio brama,
quind'è ch'io posi
la notte, e 'l die
le contentezze mie
del consorte gentil ne' bei riposi.*

PASITHEA

Mormorate
o fiumicelli, sussurrate
o venticelli,
e col vostro sussurro, e mormorio
dolci incanti dell'oblio,
ch'ogni cura fugar ponno
lusingate al sonno il Sonno.

CORO D'AURE E RUSCELLI

*Dormi, dormi, o Sonno dormi
fra le braccia a Pasithea
ninfa aver non ti potea
più d'affetti a' tuoi conformi:
dormi, dormi o Sonno dormi.*

[11] Scene Six

Scene change to the cave of sleep.

PASITHEA

Murmur ye brooks,
whisper ye breezes,
and weave with your whispers
and murmurs
sweet enchantments of oblivion!
That can banish all cares and bring sleep to rest.

Aria

*Those who truly love
more greatly delight
in the dear object
that they crave,
therefore I lay down
at night, and during the
day I find my contentment
in the beautiful repose of my gentle consort.*

PASITHEA

Murmur ye brooks,
whisper ye breezes,
and weave
with your whispers
and murmurs
sweet enchantments of oblivion!
That can banish all cares and brings sleep to rest.

CHORUS OF SPRINGS AND BROOKS

*Slumber, slumber, o sleep slumber!
Slumber in Pasithea's arms!
None of the graces could have
More affectionate arms
Slumber, slumber, o sleep slumber.*

ATTO TERZO

12 Entrée

13 Scena prima

Si cangia la scena in un giardino d'Eocalia, e Venere cala dal cielo a terra, in una nuvola, che sparisce.

VENERE

Sol s'inarcàn gli emisferi per stupor
che trovar l'inferno io spero
più cortese oggi, ch'Amor,
ma per me fin dalla cuna
fu geloso ei del suo imper,
e vi soffre di fortuna
il tirannico voler,
che timor non gli arreca,
compagnia nel regnar pur che sia cieca.
Pur ch'io giunga a cangiar nel crudo seno
d'Iole il core, e te lo renda amante
ne trarrò tal piacere,
che fia d'ogni opra mia premio bastante,
mira quest'è la verga onde fa Circe
magiche meraviglie;
al di cui moto ubbidienti ancelle
per patto inalterabile son tutte
de' lidi Acherontei l'anime felle.
Or in virtù di sì potente stelo
dove tocco la terra
nascerà seggio erboso in cui riposte,
da spiriti lascivi a ciò costretti
le mandragore oscene
di pallido color la Lidia pietra
e d'amorose rondinelle i cori
faràn ch'Iole allor, ch'in lui s'affida
cangi per te il suo sdegno in dolci amori.

ACT THREE

12 Entrée

13 Scene One

The scene changes to a garden in Eocalia, and Venus descends from the sky to the ground in a cloud which then disappears.

VENUS

The sun arches the hemispheres to amaze me,
and I hope to find the underworld
more courteous today,
than the God of Love,
who since the cradle
was jealous of my empire,
and his tyrannical will
suffers from the Goddess Fortuna,
who despite her blindness,
yearns to play with fate.
If I succeed in changing the raw bosom
of Iole's heart, and make you her lover
I will derive such pleasure,
which will be a sufficient reward for all my labours.
Behold, this is the rod by which
Circe works his magic wonders;
at whose motion, obedient hand
maids by an unalterable pact
are all the souls of the Acheronian shores.
Now by virtue of this powerful rod
where I touch the ground
a grassy seat will spring up in which,
by lascivious spirits forced to do
so the obscene mandrakes
shall be hidden.
If Iole sits and settles down here,
her disdain for you will change into sweet love.

(nasce di sotto terra la sedia incantata fatta di erbe e di fiori)

ERCOLE

Diva ad opre sì rare
insolito tremor tutto mi scuote,
Ma pur nel pensier mio sceman di pregio
quelli, ch'è me prometti
sospirati diletta,
qual or lasso m'avveggiò
ch'è far miei di giocondi
tratte non fian tai gioie
dal mar d'amor, ma da gli stigi fondi.

VENERE

Infelice non sai?
Che nel gran regno del mio figlio arciero
non v'è (tolto il penar) nulla di vero.
Prendi il crin, che fortuna
per mia man t'offre in dono.
ma mentre a te giusta ragion m'involò
se d'altro uopo ti sia
Mercurio invierò, che ratto vola.

14 **Scena seconda**

ERCOLE Aria

*O quale instillano
in arso petto
rai, che sfavillano
di gran beltà,
umil rispetto,
bassa umiltà:
il ciel ben sa
a sì suprema
adorabil maestà,
s'èi pur non trema?*

*(the enchanted chair made of grass and flowers
rises from the ground)*

HERCULES

Goddess, of such rare deeds
an unusual tremor shakes me!
But it is this art
and not the heavens
in which these longed-for delights have arisen.
Is it not the sea of Amor,
but from the depths
of the underworld
that the maiden was forced upon me.

VENUS

Unhappy one, do you not know?
That in the great kingdom of my brother
the archer Cupid there is no truth except for
pain? Take the hair, which Fortuna
offers to you as a gift.
I must depart for other adventures.
If you have need of anything else
I will send Mercury, who flies swiftly.

14 **Scene Two**

HERCULES Aria

*O what instils
in my ardent breast
rays that sparkle with great beauty,
humble respect,
deep humility
and subservience.
Heaven well knows
such supreme
adoring majesty,
if it does not tremble?*

PAGGIO

Sarà com'hai disposto lole qui ben tosto.

ERCOLE

E dove la trovasti?

PAGGIO

Nel cortil regio a favellar d'amore.

ERCOLE

A favellar d'amor? con chi?
deh dillo, dell'amor mio?

PAGGIO

Dell'amor suo con Hyllò.

ERCOLE

Come? Dunque il mio figlio
mio rivale divenne?
A tal temerità sarebbe ei giunto?
Tu non hai ben compreso
semplicetto garzone.

PAGGIO

Eccoli appunto.

15 Scena terza

ERCOLE **Aria**

*Bella lole, e quando mai sentirai
di me pietà?*

IOLE

Quando il mio cor capace
fosse d'un lieve amor per chi m'uccise
il genitor diletto aver per me dovresti
orrore, e non affetto.

PAGE

lole will soon be here as you have requested.

HERCULES

And where did you find her?

PAGE

In the royal courtyard, talking of love.

HERCULES

Talking of love? With whom?
Oh, tell me, of my love? Tell me!

PAGE

Of her love with Hyllus.

HERCULES

What? So my son
became my rival?
Would he have gone so far?
You have surely heard wrong,
you simpleton.

PAGE

Here they are.

15 Scene Three

HERCULES **Aria**

*Beautiful lole, and when will you ever
feel pity for me?*

IOLE

If my heart were capable
of a little love for he who killed my beloved father
then you should feel repulsion
for me, not affection.

ERCOLE

Ma pon bella in oblio
sì funeste memorie, e sì noiose,
e qui meco t'assidi,
poiché depost'anch'io
l'innata mia ferocia, anzi cangiata
in conocchia la clava
ravisar ti farò, che quale ogn'altra
tua più devota ancella
non mai prenderò a vile
di renderti ogni ossequio il più servile.

Aria

*Qua gira gli occhi Atlante
e per somma beltà
mira quel, ch'oggi fa
Ercole amante:
ma non ne rider già
che se tale è
il voler del pargoletto arcier.
Tutte son opre gloriose, e belle
tanto il filar, che sostener le stelle.*

IOLE

Ma qual? ma come io sento
spuntare entro il mio petto
per te improvviso, e involontario affetto
onde forz'è ch'io t'ami
e ch'amor mio ti chiami.

HYLLO

Ohimè, ch'ascolto!
E non sogno? e son desto? e non già stolto?
Così cangiasi Iole?
Fragil femminea fede;
ben merta i tradimenti un, che ti crede.

HERCULES

But let us, my lovely,
banish such ugly memories to oblivion!
Sit here with me,
since I too have laid aside
my innate ferocity,
and exchanged my club
for a distaff, and I will ravish you,
and I will take you in a way that
no other of your most devoted handmaidens ever
has, and I will show you the most servile respect.

Aria

*Atlas, turn your eyes to me!
And for the sake of beauty
behold the object
of Hercules' love today:
But do not venture to laugh yet!
For such is the will
of the archer boy.
All are glorious works, and beautiful
both the spinning, and supporting the stars.*

IOLE

But what is that?
But how I feel welling up within my breast
a sudden and involuntary affection for you.
It forces me to love you
and to call you my love.

HYLLUS

Alas, what do I hear!
Am I not dreaming? Am I awake? Am I not already
a fool? Has Iole changed so?
Fickle female faith;
Those who believe in you, Amor, deserve betrayal.

ERCOLE

Hyllo, di che ti offendi?
Che senso ha tal linguaggio?
(Non mal l'intese il Paggio)
ami tu dunque lole?

HYLLO

Io per un'empia ingrata al padre,
al mondo, al ciel spergiura,
che soffrissi nel cuor d'amor l'arsura?

IOLE

O me infelice, o misera, che fei?
Uccidetemi, oh dèi!

ERCOLE

Finora a te d'Eutyro
ne men di Deianira unqua non calse.
Parti!

HYLLO

A dio: andrò morte a cercar per quelle balze.

16 Scena quarta

ERCOLE

E tu a che pensi lole?

IOLE

All'error mio, se ben ciò che mia lingua
disse pur dianzi ah no,
non lo diss'io.

ERCOLE

Dunque su di tua mano
per fermezza amorosa
quello porgimi sol d'esser mia sposa.

HERCULES

Hyllus, why are you offended?
What is the meaning of such language?
(The Page understood correctly)
Do you love lole then?

HYLLUS

I, an ungrateful wretch, who betrayed my father,
the world, heaven,
have I tolerated the heat of Amor in my heart?

IOLE

Oh unhappy me, oh wretched me, what have I
done? Kill me, oh gods!

HERCULES

Neither Eurytus
nor Deianira have ever been in your thoughts.
Leave us!

HYLLUS

Farewell! I will go and seek death in those ravines.

16 Scene Four

HERCULES

And what are you thinking about, lole?

IOLE

About my mistake, if what my tongue said just now
is true, ah no, I did not say it.
but someone else.

HERCULES

Then give me your hand as a sign of
of loving steadfastness
as my bride.

IOLE

No 'l rifiuto, ma lascia,
ch'in segrete preghiere
del genitore all'oltraggiato spirito
per addolcirlo in qualche guisa almeno
prima, ch'affatto a te mi doni in preda,
io licenza ne chieda.

17 Scena quinta

*Torna ad apparir in aria Giunone nel suo carro
col Sonno.*

GIUNONE

Sonno potente nume
fu qui pur opportuno il nostro arrivo;
dunque poiché tu sei
dell'innocenza amico,
e con la verga a cui fu facil prova
le sempre desti luci
tutte velare ad Argo
vanne veloce, e in Ercole produci
un più cieco letargo.

IOLE

E quale inaspettato
sonno prodigioso
prevenendo Imeneo lega il mio sposo?

GIUNONE

lole, lole, ah sorgi
sorgi rapida, e fuggi, e t'allontana
dall'incantato seggio, e a me t'appressa
che di ben tosto risanarti è d'uopo
dal magico veleno, ond'hai l'anima oppressa:
prendi, fiuta quest'erba,
Arma più tosto, arma figlia la mano
di questo acuto acciario,

IOLE

I do not refuse, but leave me a moment
in intimate prayer
in remembrance of the outraged spirit
of my dead father.
And to ask his permission before
I give myself up to you completely.

17 Scene Five

*Juno appears in her chariot in the sky with the
god of dreams.*

JUNO

Sleep, mighty deity
our arrival here was timely indeed;
Since you,
friend of innocence,
with the rod that
closed Argos'
hundred watchful eyes
forever, go quickly to Hercules
and put him in the deepest of sleeps!

IOLE

And what unexpected prodigious sleep
does Hymenæus
bind my future spouse with?

JUNO

lole, lole, ah rise
rise quickly, flee, and move away
from the enchanted seat,
And come to me that I may quickly
heal you from the magic poison, which has
oppressed your soul: take this herb,
smell it, arm yourself
with this sharp steel

(ch'abile a penetrare ogni riparo
per me temprò Vulcano)
e mentre imprigionato
da i legami del Sonno i più tenaci
sta quel mostro sì crudo
d'ogni difesa ignudo,
vanne, e vendica ardita
con la morte di lui
le mie offese, e i tuoi danni,
ch'altro scampo non ha d'Hyllo la vita.
Vanne, e poichè spedita al ciel'io torno
ad ovviare in ciò l'ire di Giove
fa' ch'io vi giunga il crin di lauri adorno.

[18] Scena sesta

Iole, Hyllus and Ercole che dorme

IOLE

D'Eutyro anima grande
a questo core, a questo braccio imbelles
tanto furor, tanto vigor comparti
che possa or qui sacrarti,
con insigne vendetta
(universal di cui desio rimbomba)
vittima sì dovuta alla tua tomba.
Prendi o mio genitor dall'arso lido
di Flegetonte, il sangue
di quest'empio tiranno,
che nel tuo nome uccido.

HYLLO

Ohimè, che fai? Cessa.

IOLE

Deh lascia.

(from the anvil of Vulcan
skilled in penetrating every armour)
While the most tenacious of monsters here
lies naked and defenceless in the
bonds of sleep,
go and boldly avenge
my offences
with his death!
By no other means
can you save Hyllus' life
and may I hasten to heaven
with my hair crowned with laurels
to allay the wrath of Jupiter.

[18] Scene Six

Iole, Hyllus and the sleeping Hercules

IOLE

Great soul of Eurytus
allow this heart, and this weak arm
share such fury, such vigour
that I may make this sacrifice,
with a vengeance so renowned
(the universal rumour of which resounds)
as due a victim to your tomb.
Take, my father, from the burning shores
of Phlegethon, the blood
of this impious tyrant,
whom I kill in your name.

HYLLUS

What dost thou? Cease!

IOLE

Leave me!

HYLLO
Ah cessa.

IOLE
Lascia se m'ami.

[19] Scena settima

Mercurio d'un volo risveglia Ercole e parte.

MERCURIO
Svegliati Alcide, e mira.

ERCOLE
E dove, o bella? Dove? ah qui pur di nuovo
temerario importuno io ti ritrovo?
Ed a qual fine impugni
ferro micidial? Per tor la vita
a chi s'ingiustamente a te la diede?
Ah se cotanto eccede
tuo scellerato ardir, giust'è la voglia,
che quel viver ingrato,
ch'a torto a te fu dato
ora a ragione io toglia.

IOLE
Alcide, ah ch'io fui quella
per vendicar Eutyro,
e per sottrarmi alle tue insidie, io quella,
che sola di trafiggerti tentai.
Quindi è, che s'Hyllo uccidi,
com'essend'io sola cagion, ch'ei mora,
di me stessa farò giustizia, e or ora
morta qui mi vedrai.

HYLLUS
Cease!

IOLE
Leave me if thou lovest me!

[19] Scene Seven

Mercury in flight awakens Hercules and departs.

MERCURY
Hercules! Awaken and behold!

HERCULES
And where, oh beautiful one?
Where, ah here again, rash importunate one,
do I find you?
And to what end
do you wield deadly steel?
Ah, if so much exceeds
your wicked audacity, just as much as your desire,
that I now rightly take away
that ungrateful life,
which was wrongly given to you.

IOLE
Hercules, ah, I was the one
to avenge Eurytus,
and escape your traps,
I was the one who alone tried to stab you.
So it is, that if you kill Hyllus,
as if I alone were the cause of his death,
I will take justice into my own hands,
and you will see me dead here right now.

20 Scena ottava

ERCOLE

Più di salvarlo tenti
più l'accusi, e tu menti,
ma ch'al tuo crime, o pure
a mie gelose cure
il tuo rigor s'ascrive
soffrir più non saprei, no che tu viva.

DEIANIRA

Ah barbaro di fé, di pietà avaro.
Non basta avermi l'amor tuo ritolto,
ch'ancor toglier mi vuoi pegno sì caro.

ERCOLE

Ambo morrete, e fra tant'altre prove
che fer di me già sì famoso il grido
dicasi ancor, ch'altri duo mostri uccisi
una moglie gelosa, e un figlio infido.

IOLE

Ah senti pria: s'alcuna spene
ch'io pieghi all'amor tuo, restar ti puote,
solo al viver di lui questa s'attiene;
s'ei mor, fia, ch'ogni speme anco a te pera, e
s'egli vive, spera.

ERCOLE

E s'egli vive spera? ogni possanza
sovra l'anime amanti ha la speranza.
(a *Deianira*)
Vanne tu dunque, e torna al patrio nido,
(a *Hyllo*)
e tu va' prigionier nella torre del mar,
ch'altro riparo

20 Scene Eight

HERCULES

The more you try to save him
the more you accuse him, and you lie,
but that for your crime,
or even for my jealousy
your rigour is to blame
I could not bear to know you alive.

DEIANIRA

Ah, barbarian of faith, miser of pity.
Is it not enough that you have taken away my love,
you still want to take away my most cherished
pledge?

HERCULES

You will both die, and among the many other
heroic tales that I am already so famous for
may be sung again, that I have killed two more:
a jealous wife, and a treacherous son.

IOLE

Ah hear me first: there is still hope
that I bend to your love, you may remain
only if his life is spared.
If he dies, all hope is lost for you,
and if Hyllus lives, there is hope.

HERCULES

And if Hyllus lives, there is hope?
Hope has all power over loving souls.
(to *Deianira*)
Go then, and return to your home,
(to *Hyllus*)
and you go as a prisoner
in the tower by the sea, for my jealousy

sicuro aver non può mia gelosia,
e con lole intanto io vedrò chiaro
del mio sperar, del viver tuo che fia?

21 Scena nona

DEIANIRA
Figlio tu prigioniero?

HYLLO
Madre tu discacciata?

DEIANIRA
E vive in sen di padre un cor sì fiero?

HYLLO
Ed in cor di marito alma sì ingrata.

DEIANIRA
Figlio tu prigioniero?

HYLLO
Madre tu discacciata?

DEIANIRA
Non fosse a te crudele,
e gli perdonerei l'infedeltà.

HYLLO
Non fosse a te infedele,
e lieve troverei sua crudeltà.

DEIANIRA E HYLLO
S'a te pietà non spero
ogni sorte a me fia sempre spietata.

can find no other safe shelter,
lole asked me to spare your life,
to keep my hope of her love alive.

21 Scene Nine

DEIANIRA
You, my son, a prisoner?

HYLLUS
You, my mother, banished?

DEIANIRA
And how can a father harbour such a cruel heart?

HYLLUS
And how can a husband's heart have such an
ungrateful soul?

DEIANIRA
You, my son, a prisoner?

HYLLUS
You, my mother, banished?

DEIANIRA
If he hadn't been so cruel to you,
I would forgive his infidelity.

HYLLUS
If he hadn't been so unfaithful to you,
I would find his cruelty mild.

DEIANIRA AND HYLLUS
If I don't hope for your mercy,
every fate will always seem cruel to me.

DEIANIRA
Figlio tu prigioniero?

HYLLO
Madre tu discacciata?

DEIANIRA
Figlio...

HYLLO
Madre...

DEIANIRA E HYLLO
Ogn'or desti a me dell'amor tuo
segni più espressi,
ah voglia il ciel, che questi
non sian gli ultimi amplessi.

22 Scena decima

LICCO
A Dio, Paggio.

PAGGIO
A dio, tutti.

LICCO
A rivederci.

LICCO E PAGGIO **Aria**
*Amor, chi ha senno in sé,
va già d'accordo,
ch'il più contento è in te
chi è il più balordo.
Ogni dolce, che puoi dare
è d'assenzio atro scioppo
e le tue gioie più rare*

DEIANIRA
You, my son, a prisoner?

HYLLUS
You, my mother, banished?

DEIANIRA
Son ...

HYLLUS
Mother ...

DEIANIRA AND HYLLUS
Every hour you prove to me
how great your love is for me,
may heaven grant that these embraces
not be our last.

22 Scene Ten

LICHAS
Godspeed, Page.

PAGE
Godspeed, all.

LICHAS
Farewell.

LICHAS AND PAGE **Aria**
*Amor, those who have sense,
already know,
Only the biggest fools
rely on your promises.
Every sweet pierce of your arrows
is either atrocious absinthe or syrup
and your rarest joys*

*o son false, o costan troppo:
e così in simil frode
lieto è più chi men vede,
e crede, e gode.*

CD 2

ATTO QUARTO

1 Entrée

2 Scene prima

*La scena si cangia in un mare sui liti del quale
sono molte torri, ed in una di esse Hyllò prigio-
niero.*

HYLLO Aria

*Ahi che pena è gelosia
ad un'alma innamorata
ch' i sospetti abbandonata
teme ogn'or sorte più ria.
Ad Alcide allor ch'iole
crudelmente in ver me pia,
di sperar alfin concesse;
io credei, che m'uccidesse,
solo il suon di tai parole,
ma il morir manco duol fia.*

Ma che veggio? ecco un messo,
che viene a dritta voga, è il Paggio? è desso.

*are either fake or too expensive:
and so in similar deceit
the happiest are those who see least, and
believe and enjoy.*

CD 2

ACT FOUR

1 Entrée

2 Scene One

*Scene changes to a sea with many
towers on its shores; Hyllus is a prisoner in one of
them.*

HYLLUS Aria

*Oh what pain is jealousy
to a loving soul!
abandoned to suspicion,
fearing each hour more.
Iole, when you told Hercules,
he could still have hope,
I thought that the sound of your words
would kill me.
But to die
would be less pain.*

But what do I see? Through the billows,
a messenger comes swiftly. Is it the Page? It is.

3 **Scena seconda**

Apparisce nel detto mare il Paggio in una barchetta.

PAGGIO Aria

*Zefiri che gite
da' vicini fiori
involando odori
e qua poi fuggite;
fate alla mia prora
ch'oggi il mar si spiani,
voi pur cortigiani
siete de l'aurora.
Noto è a voi Cupido
che d'ogn'un fa giuoco,
e per l'altrui fuoco
or me trae dal lido.
A voi pur convenne
far l'ufficio mio,
così avessi anch'io
come voi le penne.*

HYLLO

*Che novella m'arrechì? è buona, o rea?
Ma che parlo infelice?
Sperar più verun bene a me non lice.*

PAGGIO

*Iole alfin astretta
di maritarsi al furibondo Alcide
con questo foglio a te mi spinse in fretta.*

HYLLO

*Porgilo dunque;
(legge il biglietto)
»Alla tua fé tradita,
chiedo giusto perdono,*

3 **Scene Two**

*The Page appears in a small boat on the shore.
Page and Hyllus*

PAGE Aria

*Zephyrs, that on
the neighbours' flowers fly,
spreading fragrance here
and fleeing there;
do as you please
with my sails,
and make the sea today
as smooth as a mirror;
you courtiers of the dawn,
it is well known
that Cupid plays with each one of you,
and for the fire of others
now draws me from the shore.
It was right for you
to do my job,
if only I too had feathers like you.*

HYLLUS

*What news do you bring me? Is it good or bad?
But why do I speak so unhappily?
To hope for good is not in my power.*

PAGE

*Iole at last consented
to marry the fulminant Hercules,
and sends this letter to you.*

HYLLUS

*Let me see it!
(reads the letter)
"To your betrayed love,
I ask for just forgiveness,*

se per serbarti in vita
ad Ercole mi dono.«
Che per serbarmi in vita? Oh cieco errore!
Ah, che ciò per me sia morte peggiore.
Torna veloce, oh dio,
torna veloce, e dille,
ch'essendo essa fedele all'amor mio,
se morirò, sì contento
scenderà questo spirto al basso mondo,
ch'in alcun tempo mai
non ne vider gli elisei un più giocondo.
Ma che, s'altrui si dona, o il duol atroce
di sì perfida sorte,
o la mia destra mi darà in tal punto
una sì amara, e sconsolata morte,
ch'affannosa, e dolente
quest'alma in approdar le stigie arene
infin quivi parrà mostro di pene.
Sprai tu ben ridir queste querele?

PAGGIO

Pur ch'il mar infedele
non mi vieti il ritorno, e di già parmi
che ben voglia agitarmi: o numi algosi
correte al mio soccorso.

(Si muove la tempesta in mare)

4 Scena terza

HYLLO

Ohimè, ch'il mar con cento fauci, e cento
tutte rabbia spumanti
non par ch'ad altro furioso aneli
ch'a divorar quel poverello.

(Il Paggio si sommerge)

for I give myself
to Hercules, to save your life".
What, to save my life? Oh blind error!
Ah, may this be a worse death for me.
Return quickly and tell her,
if she stays faithful to my love,
so contented will this spirit
descend to the underworld,
that never in any time have the Elysians
seen a more joyful one than I.

But if she yields to another, either the atrocious
pain of such a perfidious fate,
or my own hand will give me
such a bitter and disconsolate death,
that my breathless and painful soul
upon reaching the Stygian shores
will evoke fear in all hearts with its pain.
Will you render my entreaty?

PAGE

As long as the unfaithful sea
does not forbid my return,
and already I feel that it wants to stir:
O gods of the sea come to my aid!

(A storm rolls in from the sea)

4 Scene Three

HYLLUS

Ah! The sea is furious,
gale forces rage over the vessel,
and threatens to devour the poor page
with a hundred hungry mouths.

(The page drowns)

O pur di'! ti spaventa
l'imagin del morir squallida, e tetra;
chi fugge gelosia nulla l'arresta
Su, su, dunque a morir, ch   'l chiaro nome
dell'amato mio sole
indorar mi potr   l'ombre pi   dense
del Tartaro profondo: lole, lole.

(Hyllo si precipita in mare)

[5] Scena quarta

*Apparisce nell'aria Giunone, in un gran trono e
cala in soccorso d'Hyllo.*

GIUNONE

Salva, Nettuno, ah salva
quel troppo ardito giovine, e sovienti,
che t'acquist   non favorevol grido
il negato soccorso
all'amoroso nuotator d'Abido.

*(Sorge dal mar Nettuno in una gran conchiglia
tirata da cavalli marini, e in essa si vede Hyllo
salvato)*

NETTUNO

Eccoti, o d  a contenta;
che nulla al tuo voler negar poss'io;
n   fu mia negligenza
ma ben sua renitenza il tardar mio;
n   credo unqua pi   avvenne, che dall'orribil gola
della vorace, e non mai sazia Dite
fosser ritorti a forza
contro la lor voglia i miseri mortali
come o succede in questo, o forsennato,
e chi rende al tuo gusto
di s   amabil sapor l'estremo fato?

Hyllus! You are trembling
by the thought of dying, squalid and gloomy;
There is no evading jealousy,
it makes no retreat. Then I shall come to die,
for the bright name of my beloved sun
will gild the darkest shadows
of the deep Tartarus: lole! lole!

(Hyllus throws himself into the sea)

[5] Scene Four

*Juno appears in the air in a great throne and
descends to help Hyllus.*

JUNO

Neptune, ah save that all too bold
young man, and remember,
do not deny him your strong arms
as you did with the beloved swimmer of Abydos,
which made you infamous

*(Neptune rises from the sea in a great shell drawn
by sea-horses, and the rescued Hyllus is seen
inside.)*

NEPTUNE

Behold him, O goddess content;
You can be satisfied,
Your will is my command,
But how this young man turned away
and removed himself from my grip! Who would
have thought that a mortal
would refuse my help like this fool.
Miserable lovers,
Why do you want to die?
Why exchange this sweet life
for a watery death?

(Hyllo entra nella macchina di Giunone, e Nettuno s'attuffa nel mare)

[6] Scena quinta

GIUNONE

Dunque del mio potere
diffiderai tu solo?

HYLLO

Diva a che viver più chi vive al duolo?
Ma pure ossequioso
ti chieggo umil perdono,
che quantunque penoso,
grato il viver mi fia poich'è tuo dono.

GIUNONE

Vanne dunque, e pur spera,
e non t'annoï il dar più fede a me,
h'a i sensi tuoi.

Danza allegro

*Congedo a gl'orridi
suoi flutti altissimi
poi ch'il mar diè,
zefiri floridi
su festosissimi
volate a me,
e in danza lepida
da voi si venere
la mia virtù,
che sempre intrepida
contro di Venere
vittrice fu.
Sol gl'amor regnino
da quali spieghisi*

(Hyllus climbs into Juno's chariot and Neptune plunges into the sea)

[6] Scene Five

JUNO

So you resist
my godly power?

HYLLUS

Goddess, is a life lived in grief worth living?
I humbly
ask thy pardon,
though painful
I am still grateful for my life since it is thy gift.

JUNO

Go therefore, and keep up hope,
And trust more in my premonitions
than your own senses!

Danza allegro

*Leave to its chasms
and highest waves,
that the sea gave,
zephyrs flourishing
the most festive
you fly to me,
and in a lively dance
my virtue
will come to you,
which, always intrepid
against Venus
was victorious.
May love alone reign,
from which fair*

onesto ardor,
e i cieli sdegnino
ch'in altro impieghisi
il lor favor:
desir che seguino
affetti ignobili
staian sempre in duol,
e si dileguino dell'alme nobili
qual nebbia al sol.

(Scendono sul palco Hyllò e Giunone e poi questa parte e rimonta al cielo nella sua macchina)

[7] Scena sesta

Si cangia la scena in un giardin di cipressi pieno di sepolcri reali.

DEIANIRA

Alfin perduto ho il figlio
e già vicina è l'ora,
che dona ad altra sposa il mio consorte,
né perciò avvien ch'io mora?
Armi non ha da uccidermi la morte,
già che tanti dolor non mi sbranaro;
ed a che peggio i fati ahi mi serbaro?
Prendi Licco fedele
questi de' miei tesor poveri avanzi
per passar meno incomodi i tuoi giorni,
e rimira se puoi,
un di questi sepolcri aprirmi in cui
d'ogni speranza di conforto ignuda
per non mirar più il sol mi colchi, e chiuda.

LICCO

Deh saccia o Deianira,
desio sì forsennato,

ardour springs;
and may the heavens
be angry that their favour
be employed in aught else:
may base desires
pursue them, and may ignoble affections
be ever in sorrow,
and vanish from noble souls
like mist before the sun.

(Hyllus and Juno appear on stage and then leave, ascending to heaven in her chariot)

[7] Scene Six

The scene changes to a cypress garden full of royal sepulchres.

DEIANIRA

I have lost my son
and the hour is near
when my consort will give my spouse to another,
and yet I am to die?
Death has no weapon with which to kill me,
since so much pain will not tear me apart;
and what worse fate awaits me?
Take, faithful Lichas,
these poor treasures of mine,
that you may pass your days with less discomfort,
and consider if you can,
one day, open these sepulchres in which I am
buried, naked and without any hope of comfort,
so as to stop me from looking at the sun.

LICHAS

Cast out, O Deianira,
this desire so mad,

che di quanti nell'urna abbia Pandora
e disastri, e ruine, e pene, e danni,
e dolori, ed affanni,
e angosce, e crepacuori io ti so dire,
ch'il peggior mal di tutti è di morire.
Ma che pompa funebre
scorgo venir? Tiriamoci in un lato
che qual lugubre aspetto a te fia grato.

[8] Scena settima

*Iole con la pompa funebre, coro di Sacrificanti,
ombra d'Eutyro, Deianira, Licco, coro di Dami-
gelle d'Iole.*

CORO DI SACRIFICANTI

Gradisci o re,
il caldo pianto
ch'in mesto ammantò
afflitta gente
dal cor dolente
sparge per te!
Gradisci o re.
Tua sepoltura
Ah ch'il real sepolcro
formando entro di sé dubbi mugiti:
ah, ah, (ch'esser ciò potete?)
tutto trema, e si scuote.

*(Rovina il sepolcro d'Eutyro, e apparisce l'ombra
di lui)*

EUTYRO

Che sacrifici ingrati?
Che prieghi ingiuriosi?
Che voti obbrobriosi?
Porgonsi a me?

that of all those in Pandora's box –
disasters, ruin, pain, damage,
sorrow, anguish, heartbreak –
I can tell you the worst of all
is to die.
But what funeral pomp
do I see coming? Let us draw to one side
so that you may be grateful for such a mournful
sight.

[8] Scene seven

*Iole with funeral procession, chorus of sacrificing
priests, ghost of Eurytus, Deianira, Lichas, chorus
of Iole's court maids.*

CHORUS OF SACRIFICING PRIESTS

Receive them, O King,
The warm weeping
The mournful mantle
of afflicted people
from the sorrowful heart
pours out for thee!
Receive them, O King
Your grave
has been prepared.
Do you hear the soft cries
from the royal sepulchre? (What can that be?)
Everything trembles, and shakes.

(Eurytus' sepulchre opens, and his ghost appears)

EURYTUS

What ungrateful sacrifices?
What insulting prayers?
What obnoxious vows?
Are they offered to me?

così s'oltraggia Eutyro?
Dunque chi del mio sangue
fe' scempio ingiusto, del mio sangue ancora far
vorrà suo diletto?
ah non fia mai:
e tu dar vita a i parti
di chi morte a me di è (figlia) potrai?

IOLE

Ben resiste l'avverso mio volere
d'Ercole alle preghiere,
e alla forza di lui pur fatta avrei
resistenza invincibile, ma d'Hyllo,
d'Hyllo a te già non men, ch'è me sì caro,
che delle nostre offese
non fu complice mai.

EUTYRO

Tant'ha d'Eutyro il nudo spirito ancora
invisibile possanza,
che neglette, e schernite
le temerarie voglie
del nemico fellone, saprà salvare insieme
l'innocente garzone.

DEIANIRA

O disperata speme. Hyllo è già morto.

IOLE

Ohimè, che di'!

DEIANIRA

Sul più vicino scoglio
della di lui prigion mentre attendevo,
che qualche picciol legno
colà mi conducesse
a consolarlo almen col mio cordoglio,

This is how you disgrace Eurytus?
Then he who is stained by my blood
will still take pleasure
in my flesh and blood?
No, never!
And how could you,
my (daughter) give him new life?

IOLE

All of Hercules force
would have never made me yield.
What I have done,
I have done so for Hyllus
who is as dear to me as you.
Who was, as opposed to his father,
never an accomplice to our offences.

EURYTUS

My raw spirit still has
enough invisible power.
The reckless desires of the foul foe
shall be squelched,
thus I will save
the innocent servant.

DEIANIRA

O desperate hope. Hyllus is already dead.

IOLE

Oh alas, what sayest thou!

DEIANIRA

On the nearest cliff
To his prison while I waited
on a wooden vessel,
that was to lead me to him
to console him at least with my mourning,

lo vidi all'improvviso, ohimè,
dall'alto cader nel mar d'un salto.

EUTYRO

Dunque, a qual altro fin, che per più strano mio
spregio, e scorno?
Or di te far vorrai un esecrabil dono
al barbaro inumano?

(l'ombra di Eutyro sparisce)

IOLE

Hyllo il mio bene è morto?
altro che pianti
vuol da me tal dolore:
egli sol per mio amore
disperato s'uccise, ed io fra tanti
segni della sua fé tano più chiari
fia ch'a morir dalla sua fede impari;
troppo io pregiai la vita,
ed or m'avveggo
quanto il morir più vale;
questa spoglia mortale
scopo è sol di sventure,
e degno seggio
d'Amor sono gli elisei, ov'ei più splende
né tirannia, né duolo alcun l'offende.
Attendetemi dunque, alme dilette
d'Hyllo, e d'Eutyro in pace,
ch'a raggiungervi io corro, ombra seguace.

LICCO

Ferma ti prego,
Dunque non ti sovviene, o Deianira,
che per ciò far mezzo sì raro avemo?
Veggio, ch'il duol estremo
ti rende smemorata, e quella veste,

I saw him suddenly, oh, alas!
From on high leap into the sea.

EURYTUS

So to what end except for my
scorn and shame
do you make yourself a gift
to this inhuman barbarian?

(Eurytus's ghost disappears)

IOLE

Hyllus, my love, dead?
My grief is profound,
Tears shall not quell it.
He died only for my love
His faith unequal;
The signs of his love so clear,
That I want to follow
his example.
I leave this mortal husk
the spoils of misfortunes,
Where the worthy seat of Amor's power
Only shines brightly in Elysium
Where no tyranny,
nor grief offends it.
Attend unto me therefore,
Beloved souls of Hyllus, and of Eurytus
In peace up there,
I run, a follower of shadows.

LICHAS

Please stop, I beg thee!
O Deianira, have you forgotten
that rare magic we have?
I see that extreme grief
makes thee forgetful, think of that garment

che già Nesso centauro
in morendo a te diè,
qui pur non vale?
Per far ch'Alcide allor che l'abbia in dosso
ogn'altro amor ch'il tuo ponga in non cale?

DEIANIRA

Chi sa, che fia ben ver?

LICCO

Ne farem prova.

IOLE

Ma ciò per ravnivare Hyllon non giova.

ATTO QUINTO

9 Entrée

10 Scena prima

La scena si cangia in inferno.

EUTYRO

Come solo ad un grido,
che giunto a pena d'Acheronte al lido
formai, vi radunate anime ardite?
Su, così pur contro il comun nemico
vostro furore alla mia rabbia unite,
che più dunque s'aspetta?
Pera mora il crudel, su su vendetta.

CORO D'ANIME INFERNALI

Pera mora il crudel,
su su vendetta.

which Nessus the centaur
in dying gave to thee,
when Hercules puts it on
shall any other love than thine
be in his heart?

DEIANIRA

Who knows if it will work?

LICHAS

We shall prove its worth.

IOLE

But that will not help return Hyllus.

ACT FIVE

9 Entrée

10 Scene One

The scene changes to the underworld.

EURYTUS' GHOST

How at a single shout,
made at the shores of Acheron
do you bold souls gather!
Unite your fury with my anger,
thus against the common enemy
what more then is awaited?
The cruel ones die and putrefy! Revenge, revenge!

CHORUS OF INFERNAL SOULS

The cruel ones die and putrefy!
Revenge, revenge!

EUTYRO

Se nel terrestre mondo
per iniquo favor d'ingiusto cielo
il suo corporeo velo
alla nostra mortal spoglia prevalse,
ad onta del suo orgoglio al fine impari,
che di sdegno, e di forze ogn'alma è pari.
Su, su dunque ombre terribili
su voliam tutte in Eocalia,
nuova in ciel schiera stimfalia
contra il reo furie invisibili,
e con le vipere
onde Tesifone
tormenta l'anime
flagellamogli il cor;
fin ch'immenso dolor
con angosce rabbiose il renda esanime.

CORO D'ANIME INFERNALI

Su, su dunque all'armi, su, su,
su corriamo a vendicarci!

EUTYRO

Ah più val più diletta,
che quante gioie ha il ciel una vendetta.

[11] Scena seconda

La scena si cangia in un portico del tempio di Giunone Pronuba.

ERCOLE

Al fine il ciel d'Amor
per me si serenò,
e i nembi di rigor,
Ma pur l'amata lole
l'adorato mio sole
ecco a me viene,

EURYTUS

If in the terrestrial world
by the iniquitous favour of unjust heavens
your corporeal veil over our mortal spoil prevailed,
in spite of his pride will learn in the end,
that each of our vengeful souls is equal in
indignation and strength.
Come, come, then, terrible shadows,
let us all fly to Eocalia,
new in heaven's ranks, and with vipers, like
Stymphalia, against the guilty one, invisible furies,
and with vipers,
like Thesephona,
torment the souls,
scourge their hearts;
until immense pain
with raging anguish renders them lifeless.

CHORUS OF INFERNAL SOULS

To arms, to arms!
Let us take our vengeance!

EURYTUS

Ah vengeance is worth more
than all the joys of heaven.

[11] Scene Two

The scene changes to a portico of Juno Pronuba's temple.

HERCULES

In the end the heavens
of Love have calmed for me,
and the clouds of rigor,
But even the beloved lole,
my adored sun,
comes to me,

dunque affatto il mio sen
sgombrate o pene.

LICCO

Quando com'è tuo ufficio,
dar quella veste ad Ercole dovrai
per far di nozze tali il sacrificio,
quest'altra in vece, il cui valor ben sai,
destramente da me prender potrai.

IOLE

Così farò: ma che? per diffidenza
di rimedio sì incerto, ho il sen ripieno
di gelosa temenza,
pur quando mi tradisca ogn'altro scampo,
soccorso mi darà pronto veleno.

ERCOLE

Deh non muovere Iole il piè restio,
ver chi dominator del mondo intero
solo in goder dell'anima tua l'impero
por la felicità del tuo desio.

CORO DI SACERDOTI DI GIUNONE

*Pronuba, e casta dea
l'alme de' nuovi sposi
con lacci avventurosi
annoda, e bea.*

ERCOLE

E di che temi, Iole, e di che tremi?

IOLE

Ecco il mio viver giunto
a un formidabil punto.

Therefore do not empty my
heart of pain.

LICHAS

When you give this clothing to Hercules,
as is your duty,
to complete the wedding,
exchange it for this other one,
whose valour you well know.

IOLE

I'll do so: but what? Such an
uncertain remedy,
my breast is filled with fear,
when any other escape betrays me,
poison will be my final aid.

HERCULES

Oh, move your reluctant feet towards me
Iole! I, who dominates the whole world
desire nothing more than enjoying your soul's
empire,
bringing the happiness of your desire.

CHORUS OF THE PRIESTS OF JUNO

*Pronuba, chaste goddess of marriage,
whose bold laces knots the souls
of this blissful pair!*

HERCULES

What do you fear, Iole, and why do you tremble?

IOLE

This is the terrifying moment,
when my life is at stake.

ERCOLE

Deh su porgimi ardità
la veste, ond'io ben tosto
per i nostri imenei
renda olocausto a i dèi.

ERCOLE

Ma qual pungente arsura
la mia ruvida scorza intorno assale?
e per quando la tua
insensata pigrizia, (oh gran tonante)
il conquasso destina
dell'universo, ohimè, s'ora no 'l fai?
E a che riserbi il cielo?
Che nel perder Alcide a perder vai?
Ma l'atroce mia doglia
imperversando ogn'or pochi respiri
mi lascia più, deh s'il morire è forza,
ardasi la mia spoglia
né della terra, i di cui figli uccisi
s'esponga un rifiuto:
a dio, cielo, a dio Iole, eccomi Pluto.

LICCO

Che dite? Il mio non fu rimedio tardo,
ma un poco più (ch'io non credea) gagliardo.

DEIANIRA

Ma che? l'ombra del figlio
ecco ch'ad incontrarmi
ver me riede pietosa.

12 Scena terza

IOLE

Veggio, o di veder parmi?
Non atteso contento!

HERCULES

Pass me the robe!
So that our marriage
may be blessed
by the Gods.

HERCULES (*After putting on the robe*)

But what prickly heat assails my skin and singes
me?

And when will your senseless laziness,
(oh great thunder) conquer the universe,
oh alas, if not now?

And why do you spare heaven?

That you shall lose Hercules?

But the atrocious pain of my grief grows evermore
leaving me but a few more breaths.

Now, if I must yield to death,

let my bare body burn,

so that the earth, whose children I murdered
cannot refuse it.

Farewell, heavens! Farewell, Iole!

Here I am Pluto!

LICHAS

What do you say, Deianira? My remedy was not
tardy, but worked more vigorously (than expected).

DEIANIRA

But what do I see?

Is this the approaching ghost

of my son coming back to meet me, mercifully?

12 Scene Three

IOLE

Am I seeing correctly?
What unexpected contentment!

Ah che dar fede
a gl'occhi il cor non osa.

DEIANIRA
Oh che opportun ristoro!

LICCO
Oh che spavento!

IOLE
Hyllo?

DEIANIRA
Figlio?

DEIANIRA E IOLE
Sei tu?

HYLLO
Mercé di Giuno
son io dal mar salvato
acciò per gl'occhi miei
versi in un mar di pianto
il cor stemprato.
Se qual ridirlo intendo
vero è del caro padre
il fato orrendo.

DEIANIRA
Saranno almen le ceneri d'Alcide
le più pompose de' funebri onori
e più sparse di lagrime,
e di fiori.

DEIANIRA, IOLE, HYLLO E LICCO
Dall'ocaso a gl'Eoi
ah non fia chi non pianga,

I must have faith in my eyes,
for the things my heart does not dare to feel.

DEIANIRA
Oh what relief!

LICHAS
Oh what a fright!

IOLE
Hyllus?

DEIANIRA
My son?

DEIANIRA AND IOLE
Is it you?

HYLLUS
By the mercy of Juno am I
saved from the sea
so that I may pour out my heart
swollen with grief
in a sea of tears.
Before anyone repeats this,
I can truly say that the fate of my dear father
was horrible.

DEIANIRA
At least Hercules' ashes
will be given the most splendid funeral honours
and his grave shall be
showered with tears and flowers.

DEIANIRA, IOLE, LICHAS AND HYLLUS
From the depths of time
through the eons all will weep

ch'oggi il sol de gl'eroi
estinto, ohimè, rimanga.

13 Scena quarta

Cala Giunone nell'ultima macchina corteggiata dall'armonia de' cieli, ed apparisce nella più alta parte di questi Ercole sposato alla Bellezza.

GIUNONE

Se a pro d'un vero amore il giusto Giove
meraviglie non fa,
a che riserberà sue maggior prove?

IOLE E HYLLLO

Oh deà come n'arrequii!

DEIANIRA

Ch' a i detti tuoi non lice a noi
fede negar né ossequi.

IOLE E HYLLLO

Oh deà come n'arrequii!
Che dolci gioie oh deà
versi nel nostro seno,
il ciel benigno a pieno
che più dar ne potea?
Che dolci gioie oh deà.

14 Scena quinta

CORO

Virtù, che soffre alfin mercede impetra
e degno campo a' suoi trionfi è l'etra.

for today the sun of the heroes
has been extinguished.

13 Scene Four

Juno descends in her chariot, flanked by heavenly bodies. Above them are Hercules and his new bride, the goddess of beauty on thrones.

JUNO

If the righteous Jupiter does not bless
true love,
what is then greater proof of his power?

IOLE AND HYLLUS

Oh goddess, how you fill us with joy!

DEIANIRA

It does not befit us mortals
to deny faith or not respect your words.

IOLE AND HYLLUS

Oh goddess how you fill us with joy!
What sweet joys oh goddess
pours into our bosoms,
Could any benevolent heaven
give us any more?
What sweet joys oh goddess!

14 Scene Five

CHORUS

Virtue, which suffers at last, obtains its reward
and a worthy field for its triumphs is heaven.



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