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CLASSICS

# DIVINE IMPRESARIO

*Nicolini on Stage*

**RANDALL SCOTTING**

MARY BEVAN    LAURENCE CUMMINGS

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC



When I think about Nicolò Grimaldi - the castrato who conquered the opera world under the stage name Nicolini - the word that comes to mind is *impresario*. Not in the limited sense of a theatre manager, but rather as a creative force who shaped the artform itself. Nicolini wasn't content just to stand and sing; he directed performances, he reworked libretti, and he elevated the standard of acting in opera. 'Divine Impresario' felt like the right title for this album because it not only celebrates Nicolini's divine voice but also his visionary spirit - that rare combination of performer and artistic catalyst.

Today, Nicolini is best remembered for the music Handel wrote for him, yet the castrato's world was so much larger. He sang for an astonishing range of composers, all of whom wrote arias that captured his dramatic range and vocal brilliance. Many of the works recorded here haven't been heard since Nicolini's lifetime and reviving them has been a thrilling process of rediscovery.

Perhaps the quality that makes Nicolini most compelling is how far he was willing to go in the service of theatrical storytelling. Nowhere was this more apparent than in his many returns to the stage as *Idaspe*, a role he sang in various productions where he became a 'lion tamer'. London audiences were electrified by the scene in Mancini's *Idaspe fedele* in which he slays a 'live' lion onstage; it was one of the city's most talked-about theatrical moments. Addison's *Spectator* joked about the revolving cast of lion actors; eyewitnesses marvelled at Nicolini's bearing in a flesh-coloured costume; and the public demanded encores of the combat, forcing the lion to 'come back to life'. At one point, as guests of Queen Anne, four Native American Indian chiefs attended this opera starring a portly castrato in a nudesuit pretending to fight a lion, while singing in a refined soprano register. The spectacle must have been a real head-scratcher for them! Our album offers this famed scene from *Idaspe* with 'Mostro crudel che fai?' in the music of Riccardo Broschi, as well as the delicate 'È vano ogni pensiero' from Francesco Mancini's setting of the opera, hopefully revealing a glimpse of how Nicolini could wrestle monsters and still sing with incomparable elegance.

For me, stepping into this repertoire is a kind of conversation across time, with Nicolini, but also with the idea of what it means to be an impresario today. Like him, I'm drawn to music-making that is dramatically committed. In recording this music, I sought to channel the intensity for which Nicolini was famous and to honour his legacy as the divine impresario: defined by an ambition for opera to be more than just dazzling technique, but also a captivating and emotional experience.

- Randall Scotting, March 2026

<b>1</b>	<b>Mostro crudel che fai?</b> from IDASPE Riccardo Broschi (c. 1698-1756)   Venice 1730	4:34	<b>9</b>	<b>È vano ogni pensiero</b> from IDASPE FEDELE Francesco Mancini (1672-1737)   London 1710	8:56
<b>2</b>	<b>Porto piagato in petto</b> from AMBLETO Francesco Gasparini (1661-1727)   London 1712	3:01	<b>10</b>	<b>Venti turbini</b> from RINALDO G.F. Handel   London 1711	5:02
<b>3</b>	<b>Sinfonia</b> from RINALDO   Instrumental George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)   London 1711	1:02	<b>11</b>	<b>Nò, non piangete nò</b> from TITO MANLIO Attilio Ariosti (1666-1729)   London 1717	4:43
<b>4</b>	<b>Cara sposa</b> from RINALDO G.F. Handel   London 1711	10:00	<b>12</b>	<b>Sì, t'intendo o core amante</b> from TOMIRI F. Gasparini   London 1709	3:41
<b>5</b>	<b>Spiegami il tuo desio</b> from SIFACE Nicola Porpora (1686-1768)   Venice 1726 with Mary Bevan, soprano	5:55	<b>13</b>	<b>Questo conforto</b> from ANTIOCO F. Gasparini   London 1712	5:47
<b>6</b>	<b>Oh notte!... Notte amica</b> from AMADIGI G.F. Handel   London 1715	4:47	<b>14</b>	<b>Pensa se ancor</b> from MITRIDATE Giovanni Antonio Gaj (1690-1764)   Venice 1729	5:18
<b>7</b>	<b>Come nave in mezzo all'onda</b> from SIFACE N. Porpora   Venice 1726	5:28	<b>15</b>	<b>Crudel tu non farai</b> from AMADIGI G.F. Handel   London 1715 with Mary Bevan, soprano	5:30
<b>8</b>	<b>Per te bell'idol mio</b> from ANTIOCO F. Gasparini   London 1711 with Mary Bevan, soprano	4:48		Total Time	78:37



## EPIC GUISES by Joseph Cermatori

He was born into a poor Neapolitan family in 1673, but his star rose quickly. After making his stage debut in Naples at only twelve years old, the young castrato Nicolò Grimaldi, known affectionately as Nicolini, rapidly made appearances in Rome, Bologna, Parma, Genoa, and Reggio nell'Emilia, most notably in the operas of Alessandro Scarlatti. Celebrated throughout Italy by the end of the seventeenth century, he was inducted into the Order of Saint Mark's Cross in Venice in 1705 for his outstanding performances in the leading role of Francesco Gasparini's *Antioco*. Thus singled out for greatness, his name would from then on carry the title 'Cavaliere' - knight.

Nicolini's status as a performer of singular excellence soon became known throughout Europe and England. A fledgling enterprise with a mission to perform Italian opera in London had to have this hot-ticket headliner for their first Haymarket season in 1708. Together, Sir John Vanbrugh, the manager and architect of the new Queen's Theatre in London, and Charles Montagu, the Earl of Rochester and then the Queen's Ambassador to the city of Venice, wagered they could lure Nicolini across the English Channel. With a three-year contract and the exorbitant offer of a £1,000 salary - an amount that would have taken a skilled tradesman of the time thirty years to earn - they succeeded in signing this eminent soprano castrato to their enterprise.

Nicolini was not the first Italian castrato to perform in England; several lesser singers had made the journey in the 1680s and 1690s without much acclaim. What set him apart were his exceptional gifts for dramatic portrayal, a voice of notable beauty and nuance, and his incomparably fortunate timing. Arriving in England in the autumn of 1708 and premiering on stage in mid-December with Scarlatti's *Pirro e Demetrio*, he encountered a London audience hungry for Italian opera. By all accounts, he sang brilliantly, becoming an international superstar almost overnight. Opera historian Angus Heriot claims that during these years, Nicolini was 'perhaps more than any other single person responsible for the popularity of Italian opera in England'.

First-hand accounts from the time make clear that Nicolini's charisma and success on stage stemmed not only from his considerable musical talent, but also from his exceptional acting. Since opera's inception, the unique challenge it has posed for performers is the demand - from audiences, managers, and composers alike - that they be able to sing and act convincingly. In Nicolini's lifetime few operatic performers, castrati or otherwise, succeeded in meeting this high bar, but he advanced the art form in ways that continue to echo through the centuries. Soon after the singer's star turn in *Pirro e Demetrio*, the editor, critic, playwright, and notorious opera sceptic Richard Steele published an enthusiastic review of Nicolini's performance in *The Tatler*, going so far as to praise his acting over the current leading English actors of the day:

For my own part, I was fully satisfied with the sight of the actor, who, by the grace and propriety of his action and gesture, does honour to the human figure. Every one will imagine I mean Signor Nicolini, who sets off the character he bears in an opera by his action, as much as he does the words of it by his voice. ... Our best actors are somewhat at a loss to support themselves with proper gesture, as they move from any considerable distance to the front of the stage; but I have seen the person of whom I am now speaking enter alone at the remotest part of it, and advance from it with such greatness of air and mien as seemed to fill the stage, and at the same time, commanded the attention of the audience with the majesty of his appearance.

Steele perceived that, more than any other singer in London's history to date, Nicolini had succeeded at bringing together the two separate timeframes of operatic performance, the time of singing and that of acting. In his performances, the two appeared to advance in complete concurrence, like twin hands on the two perfectly synchronised clocks in Leibniz's celebrated metaphor for the simultaneous operation of matter and minds. In opera, the performer's body must unite these two times into a single living art, both embodied and ensouled. Within Steele's observations, the theatre historian Joseph Roach has detected a new 'point of view', an emerging sensibility enacted in the castrato's stage presence and endorsed by *The Tatler*: namely, the view 'that acting is a Fine Art, like painting, architecture, or music'.

As Roach describes it, Nicolini cultivated this view early on, during his conservatory studies in Naples, where training for young singers combined the rigorous and holistic study of vocal technique, harpsichord performance, musical composition, theory and counterpoint, acting exercises, declamation (including posture and gesture), and 'letters', an all-encompassing term for classical literature and history. Vocalists of the era were expected to become virtuosic in the original sense of that term, acquiring and demonstrating knowledge across the broadest spectrum of artistic and academic topics. At that time, the diva performer needed also to be a virtuoso scholar. A castrato's genius had to unfold both through his command of 'letters', the kind of scholarly knowledge that would allow him to compose or adapt operatic libretti, as well as through his mastery of vocal technique and the expected ornamentation of musical performance.



Nicolini's talents in these diverse areas made him especially congenial to Vanbrugh's Haymarket opera company. Vanbrugh's design for the Queen's Theatre combined, for the first time in England's history, a modern proscenium archway with a dedicated playing space for an orchestra. Opening in 1705, with overly-resonant acoustics that frustrated actors in spoken verse drama, its auditorium proved better for singers of the newly fashionable Italian opera. With this favourable performing environment and a shining endorsement in *The Tatler*, Nicolini helped to further the operatic vogue.

Building on his academic training, the virtuoso would not rest content with merely headlining the Haymarket operas as *primo uomo* singer. He also collaborated on their productions as a libretto adaptor, staging coordinator, and consultant on season repertoire. In some cases, he even provided the musical scores for the works to be performed, having brought them from Italy. He courted scandal with his 1710 appearance in the leading role of Francesco Mancini's *Idaspe fedele* - in a much-discussed stage turn, he was featured in a snug, flesh-coloured costume simulating nudity for a scene of onstage gladiatorial combat with a lion. He also likely adapted that opera's libretto to best suit his theatrical and musical strengths for London performances.

This production and Nicolini's nude scene captured attention, both in the pages of Addison and Steele's *The Spectator*, and among the theatregoing elites of the time, including Lady Mary Wortley Montagu whose private letters describe with enthusiasm the 'great gallantry' of Nicolini's performance. The lion-fighting scene from *Idaspe* ('Mostro crudel che fai?') - recorded on this album in a musical setting of the libretto not by Mancini, but by Riccardo Broschi - cemented Nicolini's position in London and abroad as magnetic stage performer, daring impresario, and talk-of-the-town.

Today, Nicolini is perhaps best remembered for his collaborations with George Frideric Handel, who arrived to London in 1711. Handel's *Rinaldo* of that year featured Nicolini in the title role, as did his *Amadigi di Gaula* of 1715. These operas have bequeathed to us some of the singer's most enduring musical

moments, four of which are included here in this album-length tribute to the great castrato. Scotting's work in preparing this recording is a project decidedly in Nicolini's spirit, combining the virtuosity of historical erudition and research with a consummate performer's gifts and expertise in early music repertoire.

Alongside beloved arias and duets like 'Cara sposa', 'Venti turbini', and 'Crudel tu non farai' from Nicolini's two Haymarket projects with Handel, here Scotting provides glimpses into the castrato's wide-ranging work with less remembered composers of the era like Gasparini, Ariosti, and Giaj. The prevailing taste of the 1710s and 1720s - the great heyday of *opera seria* in London, and with it the last vestiges of the English Restoration's heroic dramas - are strongly evidenced in these selections. We catch glimpses of Nicolini arrayed in an assortment of epic guises - knights, generals, princes, kings, heroes, all caught variously in states of grief, supplication, boastfulness, sincerity, and desire. Amid this array of baroque character types, we can view Scotting and Nicolini together in their shared dual-focus, admiring the impresario both as a virtuosic scholar and a virtuosic artist of the stage.

In 1742, a decade after Nicolini's death, his contributions to opera were still held in high esteem. While in a celebrated 1723 treatise on vocal technique and operatic performance the castrato and noted voice teacher Pier Francesco Tosi questioned whether 'a perfect Singer can at the same time be a perfect Actor'; it was John Ernest Galliard, the 1742 English translator of Tosi's treatise, who felt compelled to include a footnote answering Tosi's original question. He asserted to the British readership that 'Nicolini, who came the first time into England about the Year 1708, had both Qualities, more than any that have come since. He acted to perfection, and did not sing much inferior'. Even more impressively, Nicolini's extraordinary style of performance was remembered and beloved in the cultural imagination until at least the end of the eighteenth century, when the British music historian Charles Burney published his four-volume *General History of Music* (1776-1789), describing the humbly-born Neapolitan castrato who rose to conquer the stages of Europe as 'the first truly great singer who had ever sung in our theatre'.

### 1673-1690 | A STAR IS BORN

Nicolò Grimaldi arrives into the world; he is born in Naples around April 5<sup>th</sup> 1673. In 1685, at just 12 years old, he steps onto the stage in Francesco Provenzale's *La Stellidaura vendicata*. By 13, he's already the highest-paid singer in Scarlatti's *L'Olimpo in Mergellina*. Naples knows: a new sensation has arrived.

### 1690s | THE ITALIAN YEARS

Now known as 'Nicolini', he sings across Italy taking on heroic roles in Rome, Bologna, Parma, Genoa, and Naples. Audiences are entranced by his voice and charisma, and composers like Scarlatti and Mancini write new roles specifically for him.

### 1700-1707 | BUILDING A LEGEND

Now a bonafide leading man, his fame spreads north; in Genoa, Reggio Emilia, and Venice, Nicolini headlines major productions by Gasparini and Pollaro. In 1705, he creates his most famous role, Idaspe in Francesco Mancini's *Idaspe fedele*, a role he will perform many times throughout his life.

### 1708-1712 | CONQUERING LONDON

England falls under his spell. Invited by the Queen's Theatre, Nicolini arrives in London with a superstar's reputation and he debuts in Scarlatti's *Pirro e Demetrio* to vast acclaim. He becomes the face of Italian opera in Britain during these years - thrilling audiences in a revival of his earlier success in Naples, Mancini's *Idaspe fedele* (where he famously fights a 'lion' onstage) and in Handel's *Rinaldo* (1711), where the aria 'Cara sposa' moves Londoners to tears. Nicolini's three-year contract ends in 1712 and he returns home to Italy.

### 1713-1717 | BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Back home, Nicolini dazzles Naples with a string of new Scarlatti operas (*Arminio*, *Tigrane*, *L'amor generoso*), but London calls again. He returns for Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula* and Ariosti's *Tito Manlio*, among others, continuing to act as both performer and collaborator, shaping libretti and stagings to ensure that performances played to his strengths. After revivals of *Rinaldo* and *Pirro e Demetrio*, he leaves England for good.

### 1718-1720 | THE MAESTRO RETURNS

Now a very successful (though somewhat aged) performer, Nicolini returns to familiar stages in Italy performing works by Leo, Porpora, Vinci, Orlandini, Hasse, and Giay. During the 1720s, he transitions from romantic heroes to powerful father figures and noble statesmen who are more in-line with his age. He sings alongside younger stars like Farinelli and Cuzzoni, commanding equal respect and applause.

### 1729-1730 | VENICE'S GOLDEN SEASONS

Venetian audiences see Nicolini perform in four outstanding productions: Leo's *Catone in Utica* (title role); Porpora's *Semiramide riconosciuta* (as the prince Scitalce); Broschi's *Idaspe* - his fourth time embodying this signature role; and Hasse's *Artaserse*, playing the wise and tragic father, Artabano, opposite Farinelli, a passing of the torch between two eras of castrato greatness.

### 1731-1732 | THE FINAL CURTAIN

Still performing leading roles into his late 50s, Nicolini takes the stage in Orlandini's *Massimiano* and Leo's *Argene*. But in January 1732, he falls ill and dies while rehearsing on stage at the age of 59 in Naples, just days before the premiere of Pergolesi's *Salustia*. Nicolini's legacy was that of a trailblazer: a singer remembered for his dignity and refinement, who compelled London to fall in love with Italian opera by embodying a union of vocal brilliance and dramatic acting.

A close-up portrait of Randall Scotting, a man with wavy, light brown hair and a beard, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a dark blue shirt and a brown blazer. The background is dark with out-of-focus lights.

# RANDALL SCOTTING

COUNTERTENOR

Countertenor, Randall Scotting, is sought-after by some of the world's most esteemed opera houses and concert halls. He recently made spectacular debuts at The Royal Opera House, Bayerische Staatsoper, and Staatsoper Hamburg, and upcoming he will debut at Carnegie Hall and La Fenice in Venice. Randall's breakout moment came in 2019 at London's Royal Opera House when he stepped in last-minute for Sir David McVicar's production of Britten's *Death in Venice*; he was praised for 'singing brilliantly' to sold-out audiences, after which he joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera. In 2023, he originated the role of Adone in the world-premiere of *Venere e Adone* at the Staatsoper Hamburg under Kent Nagano, earning praise for a 'vocally and physically muscular' performance. He has previously worked with additional organizations including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Santa Fe Opera, the New York Philharmonic, Italy's Spoleto Festival, Boston Baroque, and Sydney's Pinchgut Opera, among others.

Dramatically persuasive and intensely musical, Randall is recognised for winning over audiences with his vocal beauty, stylish singing, and charismatic stage presence. Releasing several solo albums in recent years, he is building a growing profile as a recording artist. For his debut album, *The Crown*, with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment led by Laurence Cummings, Randall was lauded for 'ravishing vocalism' and 'impressive beauty and warmth'. Signum Classics then released *Lovesick*, an album of lute and folk songs featuring Randall and Grammy award winner and lutenist Stephen Stubbs; widely praised and noted as 'not only beautifully sung, but "lived"'. Randall's most recent album, *Infinite Refrain*, with London's Academy of Ancient Music offers 17th-century arias and love duets for countertenor and tenor. It received glowing acclaim as 'a vibrantly seductive' and 'strikingly beautiful declaration of same-sex love' from 'two of the Baroque repertoire's most outstanding singers'.

Remarkable for the breadth of his artistic curiosity, Randall delights in defying expectations. He has delved into contemporary and genre-crossing projects, from improvising live with Bobby McFerrin at Carnegie Hall to performing with the avant-garde cabaret troupe Company XIV in a blend of opera, folk, and pop music. Trained at London's Royal College of Music, the Juilliard School, and as a Fulbright Scholar at Budapest's Liszt Academy, Randall's scholarly credentials complement his performing career. In 2018 he was awarded a PhD from the Royal College of Music in London for his thesis on the castrato Senesino (Francesco Bernardi) and early 18th-century Italian opera. He has presented research at major institutions including the Handel House Museum and the British Society for Eighteenth Century Studies.

During the 2025/26 season, Mary Bevan debuts with the Dutch National Opera as Neola in a new Michel van der Aa commission entitled *Theory of Flames*, sings the role of Pat Nixon in John Adams's *Nixon in China* conducted by the composer in Rome, returns to the Semperoper Dresden as Michal in Handel's *Saul*, and appears in concert with the English Concert (Harry Bicket), Early Opera Company (Christian Curnyn), Gabrieli Consort (Paul McCreesh), Netherlands Bach Choir (Richard Egarr), The Hallé (John Adams), and Aurora Orchestra (Nicholas Collon), and returns to Wigmore Hall for a solo evening recital.

In recent seasons Bevan has sung the title role *La Calisto* with the Bayerische Staatsoper, *La Folie Platée* for the Opernhaus Zurich, *Cleopatra Giulio Cesare* with Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, *Morgana Alcina* with the Royal Ballet and Opera Covent Garden, *Eurydice Orfeo ed Eurydice* for Teatro La Fenice, *Dalinda Ariodante* at the Bolshoi Theatre, *Rose Maurrant* in Weill's *Street Scene* for the Opera de Monte Carlo and Teatro Real Madrid, and *Marzelline Fidelio* for the Royal Danish Opera. Her many roles for the English National Opera include *Susanna Le nozze di Figaro*, *Eurydice Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Zerlina Don Giovanni*, *Yum-Yum The Mikado*, and *Despina Così fan Tutte*.

Bevan's many recent concert appearances have included her Carnegie Hall debut as *Dalinda* with the English Concert, *Creation* at the Barbican with the Academy of Ancient Music, Sally Beamish's *The Judas Passion* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and Bach's *Mass in B Minor* at the BBC Proms. She toured extensively across Europe, Australia, Asia, and the US with the Kammerorchester Basel, Australian Chamber Orchestra, and English Concert, and has performed numerous world premieres, including Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Roxanna Panufnik's *Faithful Journey* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. She has also performed with the BBC Symphony and BBC Concert orchestras, Handel & Haydn Society Boston, and Philharmonia Baroque, and she appears regularly in recital at Wigmore Hall.

Bevan's many releases on Signum Records include *Elegy*, art song albums, *Voyages* and *Divine Muse*, and French song album *Visions Illuminées*, as well as *Handel's Queens*, and *A Most Marvellous Party* featuring the music of Noël Coward with tenor Nicky Spence. She has also recorded with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, and for the Chandos, Albion, and Resonus labels. Bevan was awarded an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list in 2019 and was made a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in 2025.



**MARY  
BEVAN**  
SOPRANO

Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as a conductor and a harpsichord player. A noted authority on Handel, the Guardian has written of him "he now ranks as one of the composer's best advocates in the world. Self-effacing on the podium, faithful above all to the score, he matches Handel's energy and invention with unmistakable lyricism, generosity and dignity". He is Music Director of the Academy of Ancient Music and Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto and he has previously held positions as Artistic Director of the Internationale Händel- Festpiele Göttingen (2011-2021) and Musical Director of the London Handel Festival (1999-2024).

Frequently praised for his stylish and compelling performances in the opera house, his career has taken him across Europe conducting new productions at houses including Royal Ballet and Opera Covent Garden (*Jephtha*), Glyndebourne (*Giulio Cesare*), Opernhaus Zurich (*Belshazzar*, *King Arthur*), Oper Frankfurt (*Hercules*), Dutch National Opera (*Idomeneo*), Theater an der Wien (*Saul*), Gothenburg Opera (*Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Alcina*, and *Idomeneo*), Theater Basel (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Halle Handel Festival (*Agrippina*), Théâtre du Châtelet Paris (*Saul*) and Opera de Lyon (*Messiah*). He has worked with directors including Barrie Koskie, David McVicar, Christoph Marthaler, Deborah Warner, Adele Thomas, Claus Guth, Oliver Mears, Sebastian Baumgarten, John Caird, Graham Vick, and Peter Sellars.

Equally at home on the concert platform, Laurence is regularly invited to conduct both period and modern instrument orchestras worldwide. In recent seasons this has included Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Netherlands Bach Society, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Tonnkunstler Orchester Graffeneg, Music of the Baroque Chicago, St Paul Chamber Orchestra Minneapolis, St Louis Symphony, and Handel and Haydn Society Boston.

His recordings include two previous album collaborations with Randall Scotting, both on Signum Classics: *The Crown, Heroic Arias for Senesino* with Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and *Infinite Refrain, Music of Love's Refuge* with Academy of Ancient Music. Further to these, he has recorded orchestral albums on BIS, Sony BMG, Harmonia Mundi, and Chandos, as well as a series of live opera and concert performances recorded at the Göttingen International Handel Festival and released on Accent.



**LAURENCE  
CUMMINGS**  
CONDUCTOR

# ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC



AAM is an orchestra with a worldwide reputation for excellence in baroque and classical music. Using historically informed techniques, period-specific instruments and original sources, we bring music vividly to life in committed, vibrant performances.

Established more than 50 years ago by Christopher Hogwood to make the first British recordings of orchestral works using original instruments, Academy of Ancient Music has released more than 300 albums to date, collecting countless accolades including Classic BRIT, Gramophone and Edison awards. We are proud to be the most listened-to period-instrument orchestra online, with over one million monthly listeners on streaming platforms. AAM recently celebrated the orchestra's Golden Anniversary with the completion of a landmark project to record Mozart's complete works for keyboard and orchestra, a series described by the Financial Times as having 'set new standards'.

Beyond the concert hall, AAM is committed to nurturing the next generation of musicians and music-lovers through our innovative side-by-side learning and participation initiative, AAMplify. Working with music colleges and universities across the UK, we engage the next generation of period instrumentalists with side-by-side

sessions, masterclasses and other opportunities designed to bridge the gap between the conservatoire and the profession, safeguarding the future of historical performance.

AAM proudly holds the position of Associate Ensemble at London's Barbican Centre and the Teatro San Cassiano, Venice, and Orchestra-in-Residence at the University of Cambridge and The Apex, Bury St Edmunds.

Keyboard  
Laurence Cummings

Violin I  
Bojan Čičić  
Magdalena Loth-Hill  
Davina Clarke

Violin II  
Agata Daraškaitė  
Iona Davies  
Persephone Gibbs

Viola  
Jane Rogers  
Jordan Potter

Cello  
Joseph Crouch  
*(except on arias 9 & 13)*  
Sarah McMahon  
*(only on arias 9 & 13)*

Imogen Seth-Smith

Double Bass  
Judith Evans

Oboe  
Joel Raymond  
Oonagh Lee

Horn  
Gavin Edwards  
David Bentley

Bassoon  
Ursula Leveaux

Theorbo  
Kristiina Watt

## ALBUM SPONSORS

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Maryanne Tagney

Linda Hill

James Meehan

Stanley & Marion Bergman

Jenny & Duncan Goldie-Scot M & JS Michael Theisen

## 1 **Mostro crudel che fai?** (Idaspe)

IDASPE Act III sc 7 | Venice 1730

R. Broschi (c. 1698-1756)

Giovanni Pietro Candi (fl. 1696-1703)

In this scene, Idaspe finds himself in a Roman amphitheatre facing a lion. Condemned to fight or die, he faces his fear and taunts the lion with coloratura while daring it to attack and rip open his chest. In typical Baroque opera fashion, all of this showmanship is actually to win the heart of his beloved, Berenice, who watches from the crowd. While the lion may eviscerate the rest of his body, Idaspe warns that it should not touch his heart which belongs to his beloved and is a centre of constancy that no external violence can reach.

A moment of rousing spectacle, Broschi paints the scene with precision, turning the confrontation into a display of vocal virtuosity while utilising repeated octave leaps in the violins to depict the rush of excitement his leading man is experiencing. Love wins, the hero prevails, and everyone leaves the amphitheatre (and the opera theatre) filled with excitement.

*Mostro crudel, che fai?  
Vieni col tuo furore  
A lacerarmi il sen:*

*Ma non toccare il core,  
Il cor che già serbai  
Fedele al caro ben.  
Mostro, etc.*

*Cruel monster, what are you doing?  
Come with your fury  
To tear open my breast:*

*But do not touch my heart,  
The heart that I already preserved  
Faithful to my dear beloved.  
Cruel monster, etc.*

## 2 **Porto piagato in petto** (Ambleto)

AMBLETO Act I sc 6 | London 1712

F. Gasparini (1661-1727)

Apostolo Zeno (1668-1750)  
& Pietro Pariati (1665-1733)

In *Ambleto*, Gasparini and his librettists tell their version of the Hamlet story. The source for this opera is the Danish histories of Mersius, Pontanus, and Saxo Grammaticus, not Shakespeare's play, and Nicolini portrays the noble Prince of Denmark and rightful heir to the throne. This aria appears early in the drama, at the point when Ambleto (Hamlet) - isolated in a treacherous court and accused of weakness - begins to turn inward, confronting the dissonance between his inner truth and the façade demanded by his circumstance.

Hamlet is a multi-faceted character, providing ample opportunities for Nicolini to display his acting prowess. As the opera opens, Hamlet's mother has been forced into a marriage with his uncle (and the usurper of the throne) and in order to remain at court long enough to contrive a way to recover his rightful place as King, Hamlet speaks in riddles and feigns madness. This aria is the first moment when we see him alone, honestly sharing the exhaustion he feels at having to pretend and his anger at having to play along when everyone else is lying. This moment is tinged with bitterness, betrayal, and internal turmoil. Gasparini composes music that pushes forward with muscular defiance. This opera was likely favoured by Nicolini for its dramatic complexities and stunning arias.

*Porto piagato in petto  
Innamorato il cor',*

*Pur deggio a mio dispetto  
Celar col traditor.  
Porto, etc.*

*I carry, wounded, in my breast,  
An enamored heart.*

*Yet I must, to my dismay,  
Dissemble with the traitor.  
I carry, etc.*

#### 4 **Cara sposa** (Rinaldo)

RINALDO Act I sc 7 | London 1711

**G.F. Handel** (1685-1759)

Giacomo Rossi (fl. 1710-1731)

based on Torquato Tasso (1544-1595)

One of Handel's most lyrically poignant operatic moments, 'Cara sposa' has become well-known for good reason. The character Rinaldo faces what life without his beloved might be like. Moments before this aria, Rinaldo and Almirena are pledging eternal devotion to each other when the sorceress Armida bursts in with a cloud of smoke and the shrieks of her demonic companions, abducting Almirena. The heroic crusader is left confused, devastated, and swinging his sword at shadows, unable to save her from capture. In this aria, he is completely undone - a warrior stripped of purpose, strength, and collapsing into heartbreak.

Here, Handel composed music of astonishing psychological depth. The aria unfolds in long, sighing lines - each phrase a pained mixture of grief and disbelief. In some moments, the slow descent of the melody feels like a physical sinking to the ground, and in others, aching chromatic scales climb slowly upward, as if in slow-motion, giving the illusion that Rinaldo is reaching for solid ground that is perpetually out of reach. Harmonically, too, Handel paints Rinaldo's pain with suspensions that masterfully depict his sorrow.

*Cara sposa, amante cara,  
Dove sei?  
Deh! Ritorna a' pianti miei!*

*Del vostro Erebo sull'ara,  
Colla face del mio sdegno  
Io vi sfido, o spirti rei!  
Cara, etc.*

*Beloved spouse, dearest lover,  
Where are you?  
Oh! Return to my tears!*

*On the altar of your shadow-world,  
With the torch of my contempt  
I defy you, o wicked spirits!  
Beloved, etc.*

#### 5 **Spiegami il tuo desio** (Siface & Viriate)

SIFACE Act III sc 5 | Venice 1726

**N. Porpora** (1686-1768)

Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782)

By the time we reach this Act III duet, things have gotten very complicated. Siface, a North African king, has promised to marry Viriate, the daughter of his longtime rival - a political peace deal. Viriate, who embodies steadfast love and virtue, is at first committed to making the marriage happy, but that plan has gone up in flames when Siface betrays her with another woman. Viriate remains dignified, even when slandered, imprisoned, and condemned to death by the hot-headed Siface. Just before this duet, Viriate refuses to allow Siface, who has treated her horribly, to be killed as part of an uprising. This thaws Siface's heart and he feels remorse; he thinks he may love her again. Here, the two circle each other in a haze of guilt and confusion. Every question is met with an interrupted half-answer depicting an aching mix of love and mercy, while they struggle to understand the feelings in their hearts and the possible repercussions.

**Vir:** *Spiegami il tuo desio,  
Parla, che vuoi da me:  
Sif:* *Non posso, o Dio!  
Vir:* *Perche?  
Perche su gl'occhi miei  
Ritorni a sospirar?  
Sif:* *Risponder ti vorrei  
Ma non mi sò spiegar.*

**Vir:** *Tacendo  
Non intendo  
Quel che nel cor tu senti.  
Sif:* *Mi mancano gl'accenti  
Quando vorrei parlar.  
Spiegami, etc.*

**Vir:** Tell me your desire,  
Speak, what do you want from me:  
**Sif:** I cannot, o god!  
**Vir:** Why?  
Why glancing at my eyes  
Do you weep again?  
**Sif:** I want to answer you  
But I cannot explain myself.

**Vir:** When you are silent  
I do not understand  
What you feel in your heart.  
**Sif:** I lack the words  
When I try to speak.  
Tell me, etc.

**6 Oh notte!... Notte amica** (Amadigi)

G.F. Handel (1685-1759)

AMADIGI Act I sc 2 | London 1715

librettist unknown

*Amadigi* is the second (and final) opera that Handel composed for Nicolini. After the huge success of *Rinaldo*, which had at least 37 performances from 1711 to 1717, Handel chose to write another so-called 'magic opera' for his London audience. As the story unfolds, Amadigi finds himself at the centre of a love-triangle; his affections are directed toward Oriana, while the sorceress Melissa is infatuated with him. Melissa's kingdom is a treacherous place and when it becomes clear to her that Amadigi loves only Oriana, and will never return her affections, she eventually captures, enchains, and tortures both of the young lovers. In this early scene, Amadigi sings alone on stage while shrouded in darkness. Adapted from Antoine Houdar de Lamotte's *Amadis de Grèce* (1699), the scene transforms solitude into enchantment. In the *accompagnato*, Handel's music shimmers with long suspensions and diminished chords that evoke the moon's cool, silver beams. The *arioso* utilises weighty arpeggios, long melodic lines, and suspensions, asking the night to quell Amadigi's suffering.

*Oh notte! oh cara notte,  
Spiega il più oscuro velo!  
E tu, nume dei sogni,  
Soccorri un fido amante  
Con i silenzi e l'ombra!  
Chè giammai favoristi con l'orror  
del tuo nero  
Un cor del mio più fido, e più  
sincero.*

*Notte amica dei riposi,  
Deh m'assisti, e riconforta  
Il mio sen che sta penando.*

*Oh night! Oh, dear night,  
Spread your thickest veil!  
And you, deity of dreams,  
Assist a faithful lover  
With silence and with shades!  
For you never favoured with the  
depth of your darkness  
A heart more faithful and sincere  
than mine.*

*Friendly night of repose,  
Assist me and comfort  
My heart that is suffering.*

**7 Come nave in mezzo all'onde** (Siface)

N. Porpora (1686-1768)

SIFACE Act II sc 4 | Venice 1726

P. Metastasio (1698-1782)

In this scene, the Numidian king Siface confronts a political crisis. The father of Siface's beloved, Orcano, has stormed into a peaceful garden ready to draw his sword over perceived affronts to his family. He intends to disown his daughter, who has dared to love the king. Ismene attempts, unsuccessfully, to soften her father's fury, begging him not to carry torment in his heart. Left alone with the outraged nobleman, Siface must both quell the outburst and reassert control. He begins with a challenge of loyalty and once Orcano's defiance has softened, Siface reveals that he has intercepted a letter in which his current fiancée confesses her love for another. This revelation overturns the political union that had bound Siface elsewhere and clears the path for a legitimate marriage with Ismene. At precisely this moment, 'Come nave in mezzo all'onde' emerges; a display of rhetorical mastery that disguises authority as tender reassurance. Metastasio's nautical metaphor positions Siface as both rescuer and navigator. The aria crystallizes Siface's public persona as charismatic and commanding and exposes the father's vulnerability. Porpora heightens the mood with vocal writing so smooth and assured it renders the king's manipulations irresistible.

*Come nave in mezzo all'onde  
Si confonde il tuo pensiero.  
Non temer, che il buon nocchiero  
Il camin t'insegnerà.*

*Basterà per tuo conforto  
L'amor mio nella procolla.  
La tua guida, la tua stella,  
Il tuo porto egli sarà.  
Come, etc.*

*Like the ship in the midst of waves,  
Your thought is confused.  
Fear not, for the good captain  
Will teach you the way.*

*It will be enough to comfort you,  
My love in the storm,  
Your guide, your star,  
Your port it will be.  
Like the ship, etc.*

**8 Per te bell'idol mio** (Antioco & Arsinoe) **F. Gasparini** (1661-1727)

ANTIOCO Act I sc 10 | London 1712

A. Zeno (1668-1750)

Arsinoe is a lovelorn and tragic princess who is meant to ascend the throne and marry her beloved Antioco. The power-hungry Ptolemy, who rules as her proxy until she is of appropriate age, tries instead on her coronation day to poison her. She is alerted to his malicious plan and alternately drinks a safe concoction. She denounces Ptolemy and feigning madness, acts as if she doesn't recognize Antioco, her true love. Antioco is stripped of his title as General and ordered to leave the kingdom and become a vagabond, alone and devastated with grief. Suddenly, Arsinoe reappears and confesses that her madness was a ploy.

While he longs to be with her, Antioco is forced by Ptolemy to leave. It is here that the star-crossed lovers sing their goodbyes with intense dramatic pathos in the duet 'Per te bell'idol mio'. Theirs is a love that endures through suffering and they pledge faith so fierce that even nature must bear witness. Gasparini's music mirrors the lover's heartrending passion; the voices weaving together in radiant counterpoint that feels both tender and tragic. Antioco and Arsinoe depart, believing their love to be permanently doomed as the curtain closes on Act I.

*Per te bell'Idol mio,  
Per te mio caro bene,  
L'alma spirar desio  
Per non mancar di fè.*

*Le selve, i sassi, i fiumi,  
Il ciel, le stelle, i Numi,  
Sapranno che frà pene  
Io moro sol per te.  
Per te, etc.*

*For you, my beautiful idol,  
For you my dear beloved,  
My soul breathes desire  
So as not to lack faithfulness.*

*The forests, the rocks, the rivers,  
The sky, the stars, the gods,  
They will know that amidst pain  
I die only for you.  
For you, etc.*

**9 È vano ogni pensiero** (Idaspe)

**F. Mancini** (1672-1737)

IDASPE FEDELE Act I sc 16 | London 1710

G. P. Candi (fl. 1696-1703)

revised by Giulio Convò (fl. 1696-1703) & Silvio Stampiglia (1664-1725)

In the moments leading up to 'È vano ogni pensiero', Idaspe is alone and free to speak his mind, rather than acquiesce to a treacherous court. He resolves to take revenge on Artaxerxes whose cruelty toward his beloved, Berenice, has escalated. Denouncing the 'inhuman tyrant', he decides there must be a reckoning. This moment crystallises Idaspe's transformation from a fugitive acting cautiously to a hero ready to strike.

After this furious outburst, Idaspe is calmed by thoughts of his beloved. Though he grieves and suffers, his mind is fully on Berenice. He affirms that no threat or manipulation can erase her saintly presence from his heart. Mancini's musical setting is strikingly intimate: the voice interwoven with solo violin and guitar; this delicacy heightening the sense of private anguish. Idaspe commits himself to defeating the tyrant, while simultaneously anchoring his identity in unwavering constancy to his beloved. The aria closes Act I not with triumphant assertion but rather the still inner confidence of being guided by devotion and love.

*È vano ogni pensiero  
Di togliere dal sen  
L'imago del mio ben,  
Che tanto bramo.*

*L'alma con duolo fiero,  
Spirar potrà languendo;  
E pur dirò morendo,  
Io amo, io amo.  
È vano, etc.*

*In vain is every thought  
To remove from my breast  
The image of my beloved,  
Whom I so desire.*

*My soul with fierce grieving  
I shall expire, languishing;  
And yet I will say, dying:  
I love, I love.  
In vain is, etc.*

## 10 Venti turbini (Rinaldo)

RINALDO Act I sc 9 | London 1711

G.F. Handel (1685-1759)

G. Rossi (fl. 1710-1731)

based on T. Tasso (1544-1595)

Soon after Rinaldo's heartbroken lamentations of 'Cara sposa,' he has now mustered his strength and is ready to fight for his beloved, Almirena, who was snatched by the evil sorceress Armida. In 'Venti turbini,' the crusading hero erupts into a flurry of coloratura - a tempestuous cry for the elements themselves to aid his vengeance. Devastated by the loss of his love and provoked by sorcery, Rinaldo asks the winds and heavens to arm him for the upcoming battle.

Handel masterfully sets this Act I closing moment with obligato violin and bassoon to musically create the storm, mimicking the swirling winds of a forceful gale while building tension with repeated octave leaping patterns that whip like unrelenting winds. Rinaldo is answered in declamatory unison from the rest of the orchestra; the intricately woven counterpoint subsides only long enough for Rinaldo to burst forth in gusts of virtuoso defiance. When Nicolini sang this aria in 1711, London audiences would have heard not just a warrior's fury, but the thrill of virtuosity itself. It was such a success that *Rinaldo* was revived multiple times over six years for London audiences who seemed to never tire of its spectacle.

*Venti, turbini, prestate  
Le vostre ali a questo piè!*

*Cieli, numi, il braccio armate  
Contro chi pena mi diè!  
Venti, etc.*

Winds, storms, lend  
Your wings unto these, my feet!

Heavens, gods, equip this arm  
Against her who gave me such pain!  
Winds, etc.

## 11 Nò, non piangete nò (Manlio)

TITO MANLIO Act I sc 3 | Venice 1717

Attilio Ariosti (1666-1729)

Nicola Haym (1678-1729)

In the opening scenes of *Tito Manlio*, Ariosti and his librettist, Nicola Haym, construct a dramatic framework where private emotion and public duty collide with unusual immediacy. Act I begins with a foreboding and intimate nightmare: Manlio's betrothed, Servilia, awakens terrified by a vision foretelling of Manlio's death if he goes to battle. When Manlio arrives, she pleads for him to delay his departure. Manlio's sister also enters and begs him not to go to war, yet he insists that his civic duty outweighs any personal fear. The hero is at a crossroads: loved intensely, warned repeatedly, yet as a soldier he is bound to act.

In this charged atmosphere Manlio sings 'Nò, non piangete nò,' an intimate reassurance that while he must go he will return and he symbolically leaves his heart and soul behind to comfort Servilia. Manlio expounds in melodic turns about his ever-faithful heart and softly comforts his beloved, yet the accompaniment beneath contains the accented, driving quality of a militaristic march, depicting the urgency with which his battalion heads off to war. Far from a simple love song, this is the last tender gesture before the narrative of the opera pivots toward conflict and judgment.

*Nò, non piangete nò  
Che presto tornerò  
Pupille amate.*

*In pegno di mia fè  
Vi lascio l'alma e il cor  
Mà ch'io qui resti ancor  
Non Io sperate.  
Nò non, etc.*

No, weep not no,  
For soon I will return,  
Beloved eyes.

As a pledge of my faithfulness  
I leave you my soul and heart,  
But do not hope  
For me to remain here.  
No, do not, etc.

## 12 *Sì, t'intendo o core amante* (Tigranes) **F. Gasparini** (1661-1727)

**TOMIRI** Act II sc 6 | London 1709

Peter Anthony Motteux (1663-1718)

In the pasticcio opera *Tomiri*, the librettist structures the dramatic action around an increasingly volatile triangle of conflicting desires, loyalties, and obligations. By this scene, the narrative has tightened around the figure of Tigranes, the defeated Armenian king who finds himself conflicted between military honor and ungovernable love. The preceding scenes have exposed him to successive reversals: first the humiliation of defeat, then the discovery that his rival in war may also be a rival in love. The uncertainty he senses from his beloved suspends Tigranes between faint hope and renewed anguish, unable to resolve whether he is beloved, pitied, or simply dismissed.

Responding directly to the vacillation and ambiguity he has just witnessed in his beloved, Tigranes now understands that her heart is conflicted between two men. This aria, most likely by Gasparini, heightens the character's emotional tug-of-war, playing here more to the soldier than the lover, and the warrior becomes unhinged and defeated, not by arms but by emotion. The opera *Tomiri* was highly successful in London, receiving at least 43 total performances between 1707 and 1728, being revised often and presented in various mixes of English and Italian languages, depending on the cast and changing preferences of the audience.

*Sì, t'intendo, o core amante  
Libertà più non m'avanza;*

*Tu spezzasti le catene,  
Ma nascenti le mie pene,  
Hanno fiera la sembianza.  
Sì, t'intendo, etc.*

Yes, I understand, oh loving heart  
Freedom no longer remains to me;

You broke the chains,  
But in being born, my pains  
Resemble a fierce beast.  
Yes, I understand, etc.

## 13 *Questo conforto* (Antioco)

**F. Gasparini** (1661-1727)

**ANTIOCO** Act III sc 4 | London 1712

A. Zeno (1668-1750)

As Act III opens, Antioco, chained to a prison wall, struggles in vain to free himself as his beloved Arsinoe calls to him from outside. She desperately tries but fails to move a heavy stone which blocks the prison entrance. Another woman eventually removes the stone, prompting Arsinoe to rage with jealousy as she feels she has been cast aside and assumes romance is somehow involved. Arsinoe, who has feigned madness throughout the opera, candidly labels Antioco a traitor and conjures infernal imagery of Furies, Hecate, and the barking of Cerberus. Tensions simmer and misunderstandings are compounded.

Still imprisoned and left alone after the tumult, Antioco sinks into exhaustion and resignation. While he remains faithful to Arsinoe, he fears that her confusion and anger may worsen his situation. Yet, in this tragic state and amid his despair, a flicker of hope remains and with 'Questo conforto solo' Antioco clings to the possibility that love can still save him. There is a sense that all outward struggle has fallen away and with Gasparini's rhythmically lilting *Siciliana* and melodically leaping vocal line, there is an amorous sense of devotion. Love, then, has become both the source of Antioco's torment and also his solace.

*Questo conforto solo  
Avanza al mio gran duolo,  
E al mio martoro.*

*E tutta la mia fè  
Anima mia per te  
Guardo e moro.  
Questo, etc.*

This comfort alone  
Remains in my great suffering,  
And my affliction.

And all my faith,  
My soul, for you,  
I behold, and die.  
This comfort, etc.

## 14 **Pensa se ancor** (Mitridate)

MITRIDATE Act III sc 6 | Venice 1729

**G.A. Giaj** (1690-1764/1759)

Domenico Lalli (1679-1741)

& A. Zeno (1668-1750)

Mitridate, a ruler engaged in relentless warfare and grudging political alliances, has convinced himself that beauty and seeming goodness are nothing more than hidden snares. Forced into this atmosphere, Apamea is an Armenian princess who once loved and is still loyal to Mitridate's son, Farnace. Mitridate is highly skeptical of his son, who he fears is trying to overthrow him.

'Pensa se ancor' depicts Mitridate's rule at its most uncompromising: an ultimatum issued not through emotional persuasion but as a sovereign threat. Unwavering, he asserts to Apamea that love and fidelity are worthless unless they serve the needs of the state. He warns that resistance will provoke revenge and for Apamea, this is the moment when love, loyalty, and survival all collide and are magnified by Mitridate's fury and menacing threats. In Giaj's stark and declamatory setting, the music operates like an extension of Mitridate's command - rhythmically blunt, stripped of tenderness, and propelled by a relentless drive that mirrors the king's mounting rage with jagged melodic lines.

*Pensa, se ancor resisti,  
Che posso vendicarmi.  
Risolviti a placarmi,  
O'l fulmine cadrà.*

*Non dir, ch'amore, e fede  
Ti unisce ad altra (o?) amante.  
Gl'affetti in cor regnante,  
Se il regno non li chiede,  
Son bizzarra, e viltà.  
Pensa, etc.*

Consider, if you resist again,  
That I may take revenge.  
Resolve yourself to appease me,  
Or the lightning will crash.

Do not say that love and faithfulness  
Unite you with another lover,  
The affections that rule your heart,  
If royal obligation doesn't demand it,  
Are outlandish, and haughty.  
Consider, etc.

## 15 **Crudel tù non farai** (Amadigi & Melisaa) **G.F. Handel** (1685-1759)

AMADIGI Act II sc 4 | London 1715

librettist unknown

Act II of *Amadigi* reaches a critical moment of confrontation in this duet where Handel stages a direct clash between the hero's steadfast virtue and the sorceress Melissa's broken-hearted determination. Melissa attempts to bend Amadigi's heart with threats and cunning, but he remains unshakable in his love for another. Melissa's supernatural power frays in the face of Amadigi's unyielding devotion. By contrast, Amadigi sings with calm certainty: he can suffer every harsh martyrdom and her severity and strength have no power to shake his constancy.

Handel's music heightens this duel with intertwined vocal lines and twisting harmonic turns, while the counterpoint dramatises the push and pull between seduction and fidelity. The result is a duet of emotional tension and a heroic stand against manipulation. By the end of the scene nothing has been resolved, rather, the emotional stakes have intensified. Melissa's fury and Amadigi's resolve now stand in open conflict, propelling the drama forward.

**A due:** *Crudel tù non farai  
Ch' il tuo rigor già mai,  
Perturbi la costanza;*

**Amad:** *Ho' petto da soffrire  
Mel: S'hai petto da soffrire*

**A due:** *Ogn' aspro, e rio Martire,*

**Amad:** *Nè temo il tuo rigor*

**Mel:** *Torrò col' mio rigor*

**Amad:** *Nè tua possanza*

**Mel:** *La tua speranza.*

*Crudel, etc.*

**Both:** *Cruel one, you will never,  
With your strictness,  
Disturb my constancy;*

**Amad:** *I have the heart to suffer*

**Mel:** *Yes, I have the heart to suffer*

**Both:** *Each harsh and wicked martyr,*

**Amad:** *Neither do I fear your rigor*

**Mel:** *I will persevere with my rigor*

**Amad:** *Nor your powers*

**Mel:** *Your hope.*

*Cruel one, etc.*



# CREDITS & COLLABORATORS

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The Academy of Ancient Music plays on period instruments at A=415 Hz

Laurence Cummings plays a 2022 instrument made by Alan Gotto in Norwich, modelled after an anonymous Italian harpsichord from the collection of the late Christopher Hogwood. It was provided and tuned by David Wright.

**Nicholas Parker:** Producer    **Tom Lewington:** Audio engineer, mixing, and mastering  
**Alex Sermon:** Assistant engineer    Musical coaching: **Yukiko Oba** and **Murray Hipkin**

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