

# THOMAS A. ARNE

## Overtures and Cantatas

Stefanie True, soprano • Zoltán Megyesi, tenor  
Capella Savaria • Mary Térey-Smith, conductor





The year 2010 marks the 300th birthday of Thomas Augustine Arne, here celebrated by a selection of overtures and cantatas from 1748 to 1771. Arne greatly influenced British music, moving it away from older Baroque traditions and the influence of Handel, to a style that was enriched by the traditions of Italian opera, but which remained recognizably British.

When David Garrick revived Purcell's *King Arthur* in 1770 at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, he wanted the score to be updated. Arne supplied a new overture and ten songs. The overture makes use of flutes, instead of oboes, and their distinctive colouring invokes a specific aspect of the story. After the vigorous unison phrase in the opening movement, the flutes imitate the song of the cuckoo. This imitation is not merely decorative for, in Act IV, scene 2, Arthur is revealed walking in woodland, and utters "Hark! Musick, and the warbling Notes of Birds." The expressive slow movement contains halting phrases that often end in rests. Could this have been Arne's portrayal of King Arthur's love interest, the blind Emmeline? The military nature of the story is revealed in the stirring march which ends the overture.

*The Spring* was first performed at the Vauxhall Gardens in London in 1760. The anonymous text is pastoral in nature and describes the love-struck and languishing Florio's address to Silvia, his beloved. Finally, as winter turns to spring, Silvia's heart begins to melt.

*Judith*, Arne's only surviving oratorio, relates the story of the Hebrew widow who defeats the invader, Holofernes, by getting him drunk and decapitating him. First heard in 1761, audiences were initially surprised that *Judith* did not sound like a Handelian oratorio, but Charles Dibdin, a younger rival composer, held the score in high esteem, writing that "*Judith* is one of the noblest compositions that ever stamp fame on a musician." The overture is in three movements, with the imposing first movement making great use of changing dynamics and leaping motion to create dramatic contrasts. The second movement is given over to the strings, and is plaintive in mood, with sighing phrases. The full orchestra returns for the formal minuet that concludes the overture. The tone of this movement is more ceremonial, perhaps, than dance-like—befitting the conclusion to the sombre story of Judith and Holofernes.

The earliest work on the recording is the cantata, *Chaucer's Recantation*, from 1750. Christopher Smart's text is a sequel to his lyric, *The Precaution*, also set by Arne. *The Precaution* warned young men about womanly wiles, and the opening recitative of *Chaucer's Recantation* quotes directly from it. The published score states: "CHAUCER, the celebrated English Poet, being hard set upon by ye Ladies of his Time for writing a Song call'd (From sweet bewitching Tricks of Love) which was a great Satire on that Sex; In order to make them ample amends, wrote the following Recantation." The poet is not much humbled by the response to his earlier song, and the recantation con-

tinues the satiric tone of *The Precaution*.

*Love and Resentment* stems from 1766, and its text paints a picture of a shepherdess who resists the advances of Damon, but then is angry when he turns elsewhere. The original soloist was Charlotte Brent, Arne's former student. The vocal part covers a full two octaves and contains brilliant coloratura writing. The angry recriminations in the final aria may have come back to haunt Arne: Charlotte Brent was his mistress between 1755 and 1766. In November of 1766, she married the violinist, Thomas Pinto, to the surprise and distress of Arne.

*Eliza*, an opera from 1754, was initially censured by the Lord Chamberlain because of its political content. Although much appreciated in Dublin, the libretto had to be altered for its London performances. After the chordal opening, the music shows Arne's contrapuntal ability, with its two subjects ultimately combined. The central movement makes use of archaic longa notes, here ornamented by Mary Térey-Smith. The minuet which follows is in a more modern idiom, and makes great use of dynamic contrasts. The overture enjoyed a long history as a concert item, and was heard at the concerts of the Vauxhall Gardens during the 1790s.

One of the least known of Arne's cantatas is *Reffley Spring*. The title refers to an area outside of King's Lynn where the Reffley Society was established to celebrate free speech. During their ritual they drank a

special punch whose recipe was kept secret. The Society held a celebration dedicated to Bacchus and Venus in 1756, and it is likely that Arne composed the cantata for this occasion. Its text is a cross between a pageant and a recipe, with the result being rather like a cooking show in fancy dress. As a result of Arne's cantata, the punch recipe is now slightly less secret. . . The tenor soloist acts as the High Priest, while actors mime the parts of Venus and Bacchus. The first aria is one of the loveliest of Arne's tunes, and the way that Arne "illustrates" the various actions in the recitative texts through his string writing is sure to bring a smile to the face of the listener.

The concluding work on the programme is the overture to *The Fairy Prince*, one of Arne's most successful stage works. The work was adapted from the masque, *Oberon and the Fairy Prince* (1611) by Ben Jonson, transformed to become an allegory of George III. Arne's music and the spectacular production did much to compensate for the rather dusty plot, and the overture, in particular, was so popular that Arne published it in performing parts. Once heard, the music is hard to forget, with its joyous sense of head-long propulsion.

- Paul F. Rice



Texts:

*The Spring*

When wintry Blasts and rustling Storms expire,  
And Nature kindles up her genial Fire;  
Then the gay Park puts on a lively Green,  
And SILVIA there in all her Charms is seen:  
O'er her stain'd Cheeks Vermilion Blushes ran;  
A Goddess mov'd, and FLORIO thus began.  
Think Peerless fair one, then explain,  
Whence tender Passions rise.  
Why pants my Heart with pleasing Pain,  
Why languish thus my Eyes,  
'Tis surely Nature's gentle call,  
Love's sweetest Joys to prove.  
'Tis Youth, 'tis Health, 'tis Life, 'tis All,  
'Tis All 'tis Life for what means Life, but Love.  
Here, his Voice failing, as his rapture rose.  
In moving Sighs he seem'd to breath his Vows.  
Soon to his heart the refluent Spirits came,  
And thus blaz'd forth the brightness of his Flame.  
Now Springing Verdure decks the Plains,  
And Love o'er youthful Nature reigns,  
In thy dear Breast soft Passions rise,  
And shed new softness o'er thy Eyes.  
Improve sweet Maid the smiling hour,  
Yield to HYMEN'S gentle Pow'r.  
So shall the World my SILVIA find,  
Strictly good, and fondly kind.

*Chaucer's Recantation*

1. Old CHAUCER once to this reechoing Grove,  
Sung of the sweet bewitching Tricks of Love.  
But soon he found h'had sullied his Renown,  
And arm'd each charming Hearer with a Frown:  
Then self-condemn'd, anew his Lyre he strung.  
And in repentant Strains, this Recantation Sung.  
Long since unto her native Sky,  
Fled Heav'n descended Constancy,  
Nought now that's stable's to be had,  
The World's grown mutable and mad.  
Save Women, They we must confess,  
Are Miracles of Stedfastness;  
And ev'ry witty, pretty witty, pretty Dame,  
Bears for her Motto, still the same.  
The flow'rs that in the Vale are seen.  
The white, the yellow, blue and green.  
In brief complexion idly gay.  
Still set with ev'ry setting Day:  
Dispers'd by Wind or chill'd by Frost,  
Their Odor's gone, their Colour's lost.  
But what is true, tho' passing strange.  
The Women never Fade or change.

2. The Wife Man said that all was vain,  
And Follies universal reign,  
Its Vot'ries Wisdom oft enthralls,  
Riches torment, and Pleasure palls,  
And 'tis alas!  
A gen'ral Rule That each Man soon or lates a Fool:  
In WOMEN 'tis th'Exception lies,  
For they are wond'rous WISE,

This earthly Ball with Noise abounds,  
And from its Emptiness it sounds,  
FAME'S deaf'ning Din, the Hum of Men,  
The Lawyer's Plea, and Poet's Pen:  
But WOMEN here no one suspects,  
'Twere hard t'include that silent Sex:  
For poor DUMB THINGS, so meek's their Mold,  
You scarce can hear them when they Scold.

3. A hundred Mouths, a hundred Tongues,  
A hundred Pair of iron Lungs.  
Five Heralds. and five thousand Criers.  
With Voice whose Accent never tires.  
Ten speaking Trumpets of a size,  
Wou'd Deafness with their Din surprise.  
Your Praise, dear Nymphs, shall sing and say,  
And those that will believe it may.

*Love and Resentment*

Why Damon, wilt thou strive in vain, my firm  
resolves to move,  
My heart alas may feel the pain, but scorns the guilt  
of Love.  
Perfidious too, like all the rest,  
Is faithless Damon grown?  
Ah! canst thou seek to wound the breast that pants  
for thee alone.  
No, no, for a thought so meanly base,  
Ungrateful, thou shalt find,  
The heart, that cou'd admire thy face,  
Can hate thee for thy mind.

*Reffley Spring*

[Recitative] Long has this sacred fount profusely  
flow'd,  
Fed the fat Paunch, and swill'd the guzzl'ing crowd,  
O'er Cook maids virtue balmy slumbers shed,  
And sleepy sent the sweaty Cit to bed.  
Yet still its genial sweets neglected run,  
By all acknowledg'd , but repaid by none,  
Here then we snatch from infamy its name,  
And wing its Virtues to the heights of fame.  
Mortals approach! This pleasing scene invites,  
Prepare the Song, begin the mystic rites.  
To Love's fair Goddess first the Goblet fill.  
And with her sweetness, sugar o'er the rill.  
That he who drinks may quaff the honey'd flame,  
And she who sips may tipple down the same.

[Air] Softly flow, thou silver Stream,  
Sweetly as the Lover's dream,  
That lifts the Soul to bliss.  
Here let bashful Sal approve,  
Boist'rous Harry's rustic Love.  
To am'rous Sigh, breath fond replies,  
And render kiss for kiss.  
[Recitative] Now to the jolly God devote the Bowl,  
And bid the stream a stronger current roll,  
The flaming liquid to the Toper pour,  
And mighty Brandy have the Refflian Shore.  
With Strength the happy Lover to inspire,  
And warm the clay cold Virgin with desire.



[Gavotte] Here the Stream with brandy stronger,  
Vigour from the Spring we'll gain,  
And when Passion lives no longer,  
Drink and give it life again.

[Recitative] Now press the fruit, let the pure Acid fly.  
To sharpen keen Circumspection's Eye,  
That when beneath yon Hawthorn's friendly glade,  
In dalliance sweet the loving pair is laid.  
There may they rest secure from prying Elves,  
And Reffley's Joys be sacred to themselves.  
Hence ye profane, ye pert intruders, hence!  
From Reffley far be rude impertinence,  
Whilst yet we charge the Bowl, exalt the strain.  
Till pealing Echoes roar it back again!  
High raise the jovial Chorus, one and all,  
And ye who cannot sing, in raptures brawl.

[Air & Chorus] Ye Vot'ries of Beauty of Wit, Love  
and Wine,  
To dullness give Wisdom and Care,  
To Joy tune your ears and bow down at the Shrine,  
Where Mirth, Love and Friendship appear.  
Who shuns a sweet Girl, or refuses the Bowl,  
From Reffley's pure Fount let him fly.  
Away he's no man, a mere thing without Soul;  
He breaths for no end, let him die.  
CHORUS: Aloft let our Mirth mount on rapture's  
light wing,  
Resound all the Woods, Re-echo the floods,  
With Venus and Bacchus and Reffley's sweet Spring.

2. Here Nature's soft Music salutes the rapt Ear,  
And Melody dwells on each Tongue.  
The Graces a banquet of Pleasures prepare,  
And Bacchanals shout in a Song.  
To Reffley's bright Deities swell the glad strain,  
Still Reffley's delight be the theme.  
Whilst Reffley flows on may that Pleasure remain,  
And our's be the sweets of the stream. CHORUS.

3. Here Age forget all the Troubles of Life,  
The Miser think light of his Pelf.  
The Husband forget, his loud, termagant Wife.  
The Fribble forget his dear self,  
Sweet Molly forget that she ever was coy,  
And Dick that she e'er was unkind.  
For all taste one pleasure, sink down in one joy.  
And leave all their Sorrows behind. CHORUS.

4. Then fill up each Glass, Drink oblivion to Care,  
For Reffley such Virtue imparts.  
Give Life to gay Hope, kill the Monster Despair,  
And toast the dear Girl of our Hearts.  
Nor let us, so long as Life dribbles on,  
Forget the sweet scene of our joys.  
Through Life we'll enjoy it, and when that is gone,  
Enjoy it again in our Boys. CHORUS.

**Stefanie True** is a native of Canada who studied in Toronto with Catherine Robbin before undertaking graduate training with Jill Feldman in the Hague. Stefanie True has performed in numerous concert performances of oratorios and Mass settings in Europe and Central America, while her operatic appearances have included performances of Campra's *L'Europe galante* with William Christie at the Festival Ambronay. She has made several CD recordings, including works by Handel and Lully.

**Zoltán Megyesi** is a member of the Hungarian State Opera in Budapest where he specializes in Mozart and Rossini. He has also performed in concert and oratorio throughout Europe, including a performance of Handel's *St. John Passion* before Juan Carlos, King of Spain. Dr. Megyesi is much in demand for recording, and he has made CDs of Fasch's *Passio Jesu Christi*, Galuppi's *La Clemenza di Tito*, sacred music by Franz Tunder, as well as recordings of music by Geist, Lickl, Tihanyi and Saint-Philbert.

**Mary Térey-Smith** is an Hungarian-born conductor and musicologist. Upon graduation from the Liszt Ferenc Academy in Budapest at the age of eighteen, she was hired as a vocal coach at the Hungarian State Opera, where she subsequently became an assistant conductor. She served as resident conductor of the Tatabánya Symphony Orchestra between 1952-56, but immigrated to Canada in 1956. Mary Térey-Smith was awarded a Ph.D. in musicology in 1971 by the Eastman School of Music, and taught at Western Washington University from 1967

until 2001. The conductor's association with Capella Savaria began in 1995 with a series of recordings. Concert appearances in the U.S.A., Hungary and Germany followed, in addition to numerous recordings.

The original instrument orchestra, **Capella Savaria**, was founded in 1981. The orchestra is situated in the western Hungarian town of Szombathely, and it takes its name from the area's Roman name, Savaria. Informed by careful study of historical practices, the orchestra's concert and broadcast performances have been greeted with praise. The orchestra has recorded extensively, has been awarded the "Record of the Year" prize in Hungary on five occasions. Concert appearances outside of Hungary have taken the ensemble to Israel, South America, the United States, and Canada, as well as important festivals in Europe such as those held in Brugge, Innsbruck, Regensburg, Göttingen, Halle and Utrecht. The artistic director of Capella Savaria is Zsolt Kalló, who is also orchestra leader and concertmaster. A graduate of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest, Zsolt Kalló also studied at the Salzburg Mozarteum.

#### Vocal Ensemble:

Krisztina Czeller - soprano  
Krisztina Seregély - soprano  
Ákos Paulik - bass





# THOMAS A. ARNE (1710-1778)

## Overtures and Cantatas

*Stefanie True, soprano • Zoltán Megyesi, tenor*  
*Capella Savaria • Mary Térey-Smith, conductor*



CRC 3072

DDD

Overture to <b>King Arthur:</b>	(5:59)	Overture to <b>Eliza:</b>	(18:57)
1 Con spirito	2:49	10 Largo	1:04
2 Largo	1:23	11 Allegro con spirito	2:25
3 March	1:46	12 Grave	0:49
		13 Andante Minuetto	1:58
4 Cantata: <b>The Spring</b> (Stefanie True)	8:11		
		14 Cantata: <i>Reffley Spring</i> (Zoltán Megyesi)	12:38
Overture to <b>Judith:</b>	8:11		
5 Con spirito	4:19		
6 Andante	2:02	Overture to <b>The Fairy Prince:</b>	(6:50)
7 Minuet	1:49	15 Allegro	2:51
		16 Andante	2:25
8 Cantata: <b>Chaucer's Recantation</b> (Zoltán Megyesi)	6:02	17 Presto	1:32
9 Cantata: <b>Love and Resentment</b> (Stefanie True)	5:45		

Total Time: 59:56



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