



Handel
Serse



THE ENGLISH CONCERT
HARRY BICKET
EMILY D'ANGELO | LUCY CROWE
MARY BEVAN | PAULA MURRIHY
DANIELA MACK | NEAL DAVIES
WILLIAM DAZELEY

Credits →

Tracklist →

Programme note →

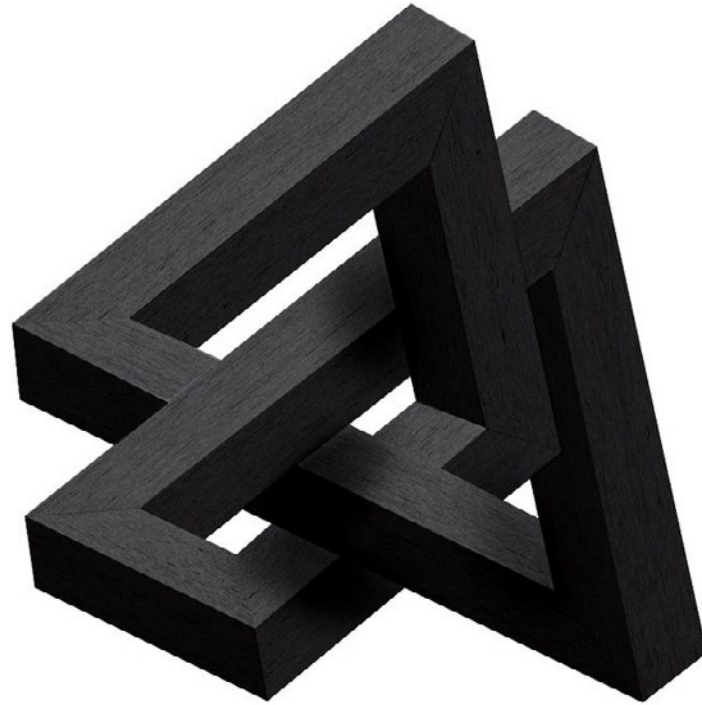
Sung texts →

Biographies →

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George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Serse, HWV 40

MENU

THE ENGLISH CONCERT

HARRY BICKET *director/harpsichord*

SERSE	EMILY D'ANGELO <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
ARSAMENE	PAULA MURRIHY <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
AMASTRE	DANIELA MACK <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
ROMILDA	LUCY CROWE <i>soprano</i>
ATALANTA	MARY BEVAN <i>soprano</i>
ARIODATE	NEAL DAVIES <i>bass-baritone</i>
ELVIRO	WILLIAM DAZELEY <i>baritone</i>

THE ENGLISH CONCERT WOULD LIKE TO DEDICATE
THIS RECORDING TO JOHN REEVE FOR HIS EXTRAORDINARY
AND LONGSTANDING SERVICE AS FORMER CHAIRMAN
AND TRUSTEE.

1 — OUVERTURE 5:39

ACTI

2	—	ACCOMPAGNATO	Frondi tenere (Serse) 0:35
3	—	ARIA	Ombra mai fu (Serse) 2:35
4	—	RECITATIVO	Siam giunti, Elviro (Arsamene, Elviro) 0:23
5	—	SINFONIA E RECITATIVO	Sento un soave concerto (Arsamene, Elviro) 1:50
6	—	ARIA	O voi (Romilda, Arsamene, Elviro, Serse) 2:05
7	—	RECITATIVO	Arsamene (Serse, Arsamene) 0:21
8	—	ARIA	Và godendo vezzoso e bello (Romilda) 1:59
9	—	RECITATIVO	Quel canto a un bell'amor (Serse, Arsamene) 1:14
10	—	ARIA	Io le dirò che l'amo (Serse, Arsamene) 3:14
11	—	RECITATIVO	Arsamene (Romilda, Arsamene, Atalanta) 1:06
12	—	ARIA	Sì, sì, mio ben (Atalanta) 2:47
13	—	RECITATIVO	Presto, Signor (Elviro, Arsamene, Serse, Romilda) 1:14
14	—	ARIA	Meglio in voi col mio partire (Arsamene) 2:15
15	—	RECITATIVO	Bellissima Romilda (Serse) 0:29
16	—	ARIA	Di tacere (Serse) 2:12
17	—	RECITATIVO	Aspide son (Romilda) 0:11
18	—	ARIA	Nemmen coll'ombre (Romilda) 2:41
19	—	ARIA	Se cangio spoglia (Amastre) 1:48

20	—	RECITATIVO	Pugnammo, amici (Ariodate, Amastre) 0:17
21	—	CORO	Già la tromba (Soldati) 0:39
22	—	RECITATIVO	Ecco Serse (Amastre, Serse, Ariodate) 0:50
23	—	ARIA	Soggetti al mio volere (Ariodate) 2:03
24	—	CORO	Già la tromba (Soldati) 0:40
25	—	RECITATIVO	Queste vittorie (Serse, Amastre) 1:32
26	—	ARIA	Più che penso (Serse) 7:37
27	—	RECITATIVO	Eccoti il foglio (Arsamene, Elviro) 0:37
28	—	ARIOSO	Signor, Signor (Elviro) 0:31
29	—	ARIA	Non so se sia la speme (Arsamene) 4:59
30	—	RECITATIVO	Tradir di regia sposa (Amastre) 0:23
31	—	ARIA	Saprà delle mie offese (Amastre) 4:12
32	—	RECITATIVO	Al fin sarete (Atalanta, Romilda) 1:05
33	—	ARIA	Se l'idol moi (Romilda) 4:12
34	—	RECITATIVO	Per rapir quel tesoro (Atalanta) 0:18
35	—	ARIA	Un cenno leggiadretto (Atalanta) 3:46

ACT II

36	—	ARIOSO	Speranze mie fermate (Amastre) 0:43
37	—	ARIOSO	Ah, chi voler fiora (Elviro) 0:48
38	—	RECITATIVO	E chi direbbe mai (Elviro, Amastre) 2:28
39	—	ARIA	Or che siete (Amastre) 2:46
40	—	RECITATIVO	Quel curioso è partito (Elviro) 0:22
41	—	ARIOSO E RECITATIVO	A piangere ogn'ora (Atalanta, Elviro) 1:41
42	—	ARIOSO	Ah, tigre infedele! (Elviro) 0:15
43	—	RECITATIVO	Parti, il re s'avvicina (Atalanta, Elviro) 0:17
44	—	ARIOSO	È tormento troppo fiero (Serse) 1:20
45	—	RECITATIVO	Di quel foglio (Serse, Atalanta) 1:14
46	—	ARIA	Dirà che amor (Atalanta) 1:29
47	—	RECITATIVO	Voi quel foglio lasciate (Serse, Atalanta) 0:12
48	—	ARIA	Dirà che non m'amò (Atalanta) 1:40
49	—	RECITATIVO	Ingannata Romilda! (Serse, Romilda) 0:36
50	—	DUETTINO	L'amerete? (Serse, Romilda) 0:58
51	—	ARIA	Se bramate d'amar (Serse) 6:02
52	—	ACCOMPAGNATO	L'amerò? (Romilda) 0:48
53	—	ARIA	È gelosia (Romilda) 2:46
54	—	RECITATIVO	Giacché il duol (Amastre, Elviro) 0:32
55	—	ARIA	Anima infida (Amastre) 1:42

56	—	RECITATIVO	È pazzo affé (Elviro, Arsamene)	0 : 52
57	—	ARIA	Quella che tutta fé (Arsamene)	3 : 22
58	—	CORO	La virtute sol potea (Marinari)	0 : 27
59	—	RECITATIVO	Ariodate (Serse, Ariodate)	0 : 29
60	—	CORO	La virtute sol potea (Marinari)	0 : 31
61	—	ARIOSO	Per dar fine alla mia pena (Arsamene)	1 : 27
62	—	RECITATIVO	Arsamene, ove andate? (Serse, Arsamene)	1 : 14
63	—	ARIA	Sì, la voglio (Arsamene)	2 : 37
64	—	RECITATIVO	V'inchino (Atalanta, Serse)	0 : 25
65	—	ARIA	Voi mi dite (Atalanta)	3 : 10
66	—	RECITATIVO	Saria lieve ogni doglia (Serse)	0 : 16
67	—	ARIA	Il core spera e teme (Serse)	6 : 06
68	—	ACCOMPAGNATO	Me infelice (Elviro)	1 : 00
69	—	ARIA	Del mio caro Bacco amabile (Elviro)	1 : 35
70	—	DUETTINO	Gran pena è gelosia! (Serse, Amastre)	1 : 48
71	—	RECITATIVO	Aspra sorte! (Serse, Amastre)	1 : 00
72	—	ARIA	Val più contento core (Romilda)	1 : 55
73	—	RECITATIVO	Vuò ch'abbian fine (Serse, Romilda, Amastre)	1 : 13
74	—	ARIA	Chi cede al furore (Romilda)	3 : 58

ACT III

75	—	SINFONIA	2:58	
76	—	RECITATIVO		Sono vani (Arsamene, Romilda, Atalanta, Elviro) 1:51
77	—	ARIA		No, no, se tu mi sprezzi (Atalanta) 1:08
78	—	RECITATIVO		Ecco in segno (Romilda, Elviro, Arsamene, Serse) 1:13
79	—	ARIA		Per rendermi beato (Serse) 3:36
80	—	RECITATIVO		“Ubbidirò al mio re”? (Arsamene, Romilda) 1:09
81	—	ARIA		Amor, tiranno Amor (Arsamene) 4:28
82	—	RECITATIVO		Come già vi accennammo (Serse, Ariodate) 0:40
83	—	ARIA		Del Ciel d’amore (Ariodate) 2:22
84	—	RECITATIVO		Il suo serto rifiuto (Romilda, Serse, Amastre) 2:44
85	—	ARIA		Cagion son io (Amastre) 3:21
86	—	RECITATIVO		Romilda infida (Arsamene, Romilda) 0:22
87	—	DUETTO		Troppo oltraggi la mia fede (Romilda, Arsamene) 2:19
88	—	CORO		Ciò che Giove destinò (Ministri) 0:39
89	—	RECITATIVO		Ecco lo sposo! (Ariodate, Arsamene, Romilda) 1:19
90	—	CORO		Chi infelice si trovò (Ministri) 0:26
91	—	RECITATIVO		Se ne viene Ariodate (Serse, Ariodate) 1:58
92	—	ARIA		Crude furie (Serse) 3:27
93	—	RECITATIVO		Perfidi! (Tutti) 2:16
94	—	ARIA E CORO		Caro voi siete all’alma (Romilda) 3:41

Intense competition between the Opera of the Nobility (1733–37) and Handel’s company (1734–37) eventually precipitated the collapse of both in summer 1737. The Opera of the Nobility’s dwindling fortunes at the King’s Theatre on the Haymarket led to the departure of their main attraction, the castrato Farinelli. The 1736/37 season at Covent Garden was the busiest schedule of performances Handel ever attempted, including thirty-nine performances of twelve works. Such a frenetic calendar of bustling activity was impossible to sustain permanently, not least when he suffered a worsening paralytic disorder in late April and May 1737. From July until October, his health was restored sufficiently by taking the cures at spas in Tunbridge Wells and Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen), but before setting off on his travels he had already negotiated with the manager John James Heidegger (and presumably the remnants of the Opera of the Nobility) to return to the King’s Theatre as nothing more than a hired gun. John Mainwaring’s *Memoirs of the Life of the late George Frederic Handel* (1760) claims that the composer was paid the considerable fee of £1,000 to provide and direct two new operas (*Faramondo* and *Serse*) and the pasticcio *Alessandro Severo*. He was also permitted a lucrative benefit oratorio concert that probably earned him at least another £1,000, according to speculation by the eyewitness Earl of Egmont¹.

Serse has elements that seem like a progressive foreshadow of late eighteenth-century Mozartian *opere buffe*: the work’s flexible dramatic construction, an ironic libretto loaded with humorous situations, and a comic servant grumbling

¹ The bulk of musical direction during the makeshift 1737/38 opera season was shared between Giovanni Battista Pescetti and Francesco Maria Veracini. Handel’s fee of £1,000 in 1738 is worth approximately £118,000 today.

about the folly of his aristocratic superiors. In fact, all of these factors have firm foundations in seventeenth-century Venice and Rome. Nicolò Minato (c. 1630–1698) wrote *Il Xerse* for Venice's Teatro SS. Giovanni e Paolo, where it was first performed in 1655 with music by Cavalli. The poet lampooned events described in Herodotus's account of the Graeco-Persian wars. Xerxes I (the son of Darius the Great) ruled the Achaemenid Empire from 486 BC until his assassination by a disgruntled courtier in 465 BC. Six years into his reign, Xerxes attempted an ambitious military and naval expedition to conquer Greece. He ordered his engineers to construct twin bridges over the Hellespont (now the Dardanelles), an expanse of sea more than one kilometre wide, stretching from Abydos (on the Asian shore) to Sestos (on the European side). Herodotus claims that on his way to Abydos, Xerxes 'came across a plane tree of such beauty that he was moved to decorate it with golden ornaments and to appoint a guardian for it in perpetuity'. After arriving at the Hellespont, the bridges made using flax and papyrus were destroyed in a violent storm. The infuriated emperor beheaded his engineers and ordered that the waters of the Hellespont receive three hundred lashes. A second bridge was built by tying together boats to support decking made of wooden planks covered with brushwood and soil; the Persian troops crossed to Sestos but XERXES's invasion failed when his army suffered a crushing defeat at Salamis.

Minato's Venetian *Argomento* acknowledged that the plot was a mixture of historical events and feigned verisimilitudes. The librettist invented the bitter rivalry between Xerxes and his brother Arsamenes (also a historical character) for Romilda, which is complicated by the knock-on effects of the emperor's betrayal of his fiancée Amastris, who arrives at Abydos disguised as a man and soon realizes the king's deception. The drama was fleshed out with a host of minor characters, but its main focus was the dangerous implications of the obsessive title character's unpredictable

volatility. Minato's text was rewritten extensively by Silvio Stampiglia (1664–1725) for a production on 25 January 1694 at Rome's Teatro di Torre di Nona, with music by Giovanni Bononcini. In the preface to the Roman wordbook, Stampiglia (using his Arcadian Academy pseudonym Palemone Licurio) clarified that he had remodelled the old Venetian text to make it 'conform to the geniality of modern times': he removed some scenes, added new ones, altered many recitatives, and all but eight of the aria texts were entirely new – although Stampiglia fashioned several new arias from Minato's recitatives.

Over forty years later, the catalyst for Handel's setting of Stampiglia's version of *Xerse* was his close familiarity with a manuscript of Bononcini's score that was copied in Rome in about 1707 for the English grand tourist John Blathwayt. Handel must have had easy access to the manuscript because he extracted thematic ideas from at least thirty of Bononcini's numbers for 'borrowings' when writing at least ten different works between 1734 and 1738: *Ariodante*, *Alcina*, *Alexander's Feast*, *Atalanta*, *Arminio*, *Giustino*, *Il trionfo del Tempo e della Verità*, *Berenice* and *Faramondo*, before modelling plenty of his own *Serse* on Bononcini's settings of the same words. A few numbers are close parodies invested with Handel's own sophisticated harmonic vocabulary, but more often short fragmentary motivic ideas from the source serve as a springboard for his transformative imagination and compositional skills. He probably lifted the words directly from Bononcini's score; it is unlikely that the composer or an Italian literary assistant consulted the 1694 Roman wordbook. If so, the unusual procedure of taking the libretto from a musical source might explain the retention of archaic seventeenth-century features (such as the comic servant Elviro) that tended to be excised from London adaptations of old Italian texts. Three other minor characters were omitted from Handel's version (Amastre's tutor Aristone, Romilda's page Clito

and Serse's confidant Eumene), the recitatives were abridged, several aria texts were omitted, four were transferred to different positions, and some new chorus texts were added.

Handel began composing *Serse* on 26 December 1737, only two days after he had completed *Faramondo* (first performed on 3 January 1738). After completing the drafts of all three Acts of *Serse* on 6 February 1738, he spent another eight days filling in the orchestral details and refining the composition before the score was completed on 14 February. His typically swift pace and resourceful treatment of musical themes and models borrowed from Bononcini (and, to a lesser degree, from Alessandro Scarlatti, Telemann and Keiser) should not be misconstrued as complacency or low creativity. The autograph manuscript reveals that he invested considerable effort and expertise in tailoring music perfectly to dramatic situations: many of them were crafted meticulously, redrafted substantially, and often shortened; unusually, half of the arias are through-composed single-section arias without *da capo* repeats. Conventional longer *da capo* structures were applied to emphasize moments of particular intensity or importance to characterization. For example, three longer *da capo* arias illustrate Serse's extreme swings of mood. 'Più che penso alle fiamme' (I.xi) portrays the naive would-be lover fantasizing with exaggerated sentimentality (as in the famous opening number, 'Ombra mai fù'). In contrast, Serse's animated response to rejection by Romilda in 'Se bramate d'amar chi vi sdegnà' (II.iv) is an arrogant self-deception, and hints at the ill-tempered, venomous bully exposed later in the petulant climax, 'Crude furie degl'orridi abissi' (III.xi). These key moments reveal that the fickle Serse's violent rage is never far from boiling over into physically dangerous consequences for those around him at risk of his absolute power: the sappy fool who heaps adoration upon an attractive tree, and who imagines that his brother's lover

Romilda will welcome his unhinged advances, is equally hasty to banish Arsamene, to callously betray his fiancée Amastre, and to threaten the woman he supposedly now loves with a painful death when his lust is irrevocably thwarted.

Arsamene has ardent love music or lilting sicilianos mourning his misfortune ('Quella che tutta fé per me languia d'amore', II.vii), and his occasional displays of assertiveness ('Sì, la voglia, e la otterrò', II.ix) do not possess the psychopathic childishness of his brother. There are also emotive outbursts for Amastre, whose rejection puts her on a courageous path towards vengeance. Romilda's initial mockery of Serse's adoration of the plane tree turns swiftly to discomfort when she instead becomes the newest object of Serse's infatuation; her dignified manner portrays her as the perfect match for Arsamene, whereas her sister, Atalanta, is an entertaining flirtatious schemer (her flighty 'Un cenno leggiadretto' ends Act I with an amusing coquettishness). Their father, Ariodate, is portrayed as a slow-witted but well-intentioned soldier. There is a legend that the comic servant Elviro's song whilst disguised as a flower seller was based by Handel on street cries heard on the streets of London; this possibility is supported by a fragment of music in the composer's own handwriting (now at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge) which transcribes a cry from a match-seller heard 'near a brandy shop St Giles's in Tyburn Road'.

Serse was first performed at the King's Theatre on the Haymarket on 15 April 1738. On the same date, the *London Daily Post* reported the unveiling of a statue of Handel at Vauxhall Gardens, sculpted by Louis-François Roubiliac (it is now in the V&A Museum). Even if the musician was immortalized in an elaborate marble monument well within his own lifetime, the short-term fate of *Serse* was much less fortunate – it ran for only five performances. Two days after the final performance, the fourth Earl

of Shaftesbury reported from London to James Harris in Salisbury that ‘Xerxes is beyond all doubt a fine composition’, but that ‘The singers perform it very indifferently which is a great disadvantage to it’. An anonymous French visitor attended the first performance and noted in his journal ‘the scenery mediocre, the recitatives harsh, the singers generally quite bad, the orchestra good’.

The title-role was sung by the conceited Pugliese castrato Gaetano Majorano (nicknamed ‘Caffarelli’), who had studied in Naples with Porpora; he soon afterwards irritated Handel by encouraging friends to boycott the final performance of *Faramondo* on 16 May (the composer retaliated on the night by playing every note of Caffarelli’s voice part on the harpsichord, as if coaching an inexperienced young singer). Romilda was written for the Italian-trained French soprano Elisabeth Duparc (‘La Francesina’), who became Handel’s principal soloist for the next eight years, creating prima donna roles in his last operas and many English-language masterpieces, such as Michal in *Saul*, the soprano solos in the *Song for St Cecilia’s Day*, *Penseroso* in *L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, the title-role in *Semele*, Nitocris in *Belshazzar* and Iole in *Hercules*. The mezzo-soprano Maria Antonia Marchesini (‘La Lucchesina’) specialized at playing male characters, and took the part of Arsamene (a year later she may have been the Witch of Endor in the first performances of *Saul*). Atalanta was sung by the soprano Margherita Chimenti (‘La Droghierina’), and Elviro by the little-known bass Antonio Lottini. Two cast members had both sung for Handel during the early 1730s before defecting to the newly founded Opera of the Nobility: the Bolognese contralto Antonia Margherita Merighi (the jilted and vengeful Amastre) had created the similar character Rosmira in *Partenope* (also based on an old Stampiglia libretto), and the Venetian bass Antonio Montagnana (Ariodate) had been the first Zoroastro in *Orlando*.

In 1789 the music historian Charles Burney misjudged that *Serse* was full of ‘feeble writing’ and disliked its ‘mixture of tragic-comedy and buffoonery’. However, it is precisely the qualities of anti-heroic comedy intermingled with warm-hearted sentimentality that helped the special merits of *Serse* to be recognized eventually. In 1992 the late Anthony Hicks praised it astutely as ‘one of the composer’s most consistently satisfying scores, moving surefootedly between farce and tragedy and always responding with insight to the emotions of its very human characters’. The first modern revival took place at Göttingen in 1924 in a bowdlerized arrangement by Oskar Hagen. A few productions in the USA soon followed, and the first British revival since 1738 took place at Loughton, Essex, in 1935. English National Opera celebrated Handel’s 300th birthday on 23 February 1985 with Nicholas Hytner’s witty and uncut production, which has been revived in London (frequently), São Paulo, Bologna, Chicago, Antwerp, Ghent, Melbourne, Houston and San Francisco. There have been at least 217 different productions of *Serse* since 1924, which puts it second only to *Giulio Cesare* in statistical popularity. More than a hundred of these have occurred since 1985 – not only in ubiquitous Handelian heartlands (Britain, Germany and, to an extent, France and the USA), but also in Poland, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Japan, Sweden, Ireland, Hungary, Argentina, Denmark and China. Winton Dean, the progenitor of modern Handel studies, extolled *Serse* as a masterpiece that ‘springs to palpitating life in the theatre’ and ‘carries conviction on all levels’. One might say that the same observations can be true of a studio recording by experienced stage performers; this interpretation by The English Concert and Harry Bicket is the opera’s fourth complete commercial audio recording since the turn of the millennium.

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1 – OUVERTURE

1 – OVERTURE

ATTO I

ACT I

*Belvedere a canto d'un bellissimo giardino
in mezzo di cui v'è un platano.*

*A summerhouse to one side of a magnificent garden,
in the middle of which stands a plane tree.*

SCENA I

SCENE 1

Serse sotto il platano.

Xerxes under the tree.

2 – ACCOMPAGNATO

2 – ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE

SERSE Frondi tenere, e belle
del mio platano amato,
per voi risplenda il fato.
Tuoni, lampi, e procelle
non v'oltraggino mai la cara pace,
nè giunga a profanarvi austro rapace.

XERXES May fate prove kind to you,
tender and beautiful leaves
of my beloved plane;
and may thunder, lightning and tempest
never disturb your precious peace,
nor the preying south wind profane you.

3 – ARIA

3 – ARIA

SERSE Ombra mai fu
di vegetabile
cara ed amabile
soave più.

XERXES Never was nature's
own shade
more beloved or sweetly
treasured than thine.

Si tiene ammirando il platano.

He stands and admires the tree.

SCENA II

*Arsamene, Elviro insonnito,
e Romilda nel belvedere.*

4 – RECITATIVO

ARSAMENE Siam giunti, Elviro ...

ELVIRO Intendo.

ARSAMENE Dove alberga ...

ELVIRO Seguite.

ARSAMENE L'idol mio.

ELVIRO Dite pure.

ARSAMENE Oh, se fortuna ...

ELVIRO Sì, così è ...

ARSAMENE Tu, dove vai?

ELVIRO Men vado

ad appoggiarmi, ché di sonno io cado.

ARSAMENE Vien quì pronto, ti dico.

Si ode breve sinfonia.

5 – SINFONIA E RECITATIVO

ARSAMENE Sento un soave concerto.

ELVIRO Andiam vicini.

ARSAMENE Andiam.

ELVIRO Son di Romilda questi villaggi?

ARSAMENE Sì, lasciami udire!

ELVIRO Così della città poco discosti.

ARSAMENE Non parlar più!

ELVIRO Me n'anderò a dormire.

ARSAMENE Non ti partir ...

SCENE 2

*Arsamenes, Elviro, who looks tired,
and Romilda in the summer-house.*

4 – RECITATIVE

ARSAMENES We have arrived, Elviro ...

ELVIRO I know.

ARSAMENES ... at the abode ...

ELVIRO Yes...

ARSAMENES ... of my beloved.

ELVIRO I am all ears.

ARSAMENES Oh, if only Fortune ...

ELVIRO Yes, absolutely ...

ARSAMENES And where do you think you are going?

ELVIRO I'm going to go

and lie down, because I'm half dead with sleep.

ARSAMENES Come back here this instant.

A short symphony is heard.

5 – SINFONIA AND RECITATIVE

ARSAMENES I hear sweet music ...

ELVIRO Let's draw a little nearer then.

ARSAMENES Let us do so.

ELVIRO So, this is where Romilda lives?

ARSAMENES Yes. Let me listen.

ELVIRO Not too far from the city, either.

ARSAMENES That's enough!

ELVIRO I think I'll go and find myself a bed.

ARSAMENES You'll stay right here!

6 – ARIA

ROMILDA (*nel belvedere*) O voi ...
 ARSAMENE Questa è Romilda.
 ROMILDA O voi, che penate!
 ELVIRO Romilda, è ver?
 ARSAMENE Sì, taci.
 ELVIRO E chi favella?
 ROMILDA O voi,
 che penate per cruda beltà, un Serse ...

SCENA III

Serse e detti.

SERSE Qui si canta il mio nome?
 ROMILDA ... un Serse mirate,
 che d'un ruvido tronco acceso stà;
 e pur non corrisponde altro al suo amor,
 che mormorio di fronde.

7 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Arsamene.
 ARSAMENE Mio Sire.
 SERSE Udite?
 ARSAMENE Udii.
 SERSE Conoscete chi sia?
 ARSAMENE Io? Nò, Signore.
 SERSE Io, sì.
 ARSAMENE (Ahimè, che gelosia m'accora!)
 SERSE Che dite?
 ARSAMENE Che amerei sentirla ancora.

6 – ARIA

ROMILDA (*in the summer-house*) All you ...
 ARSAMENES That's her, Romilda!
 ROMILDA All you who suffer ...
 ELVIRO Romilda? Really?
 ARSAMENES Yes, quiet!
 ELVIRO I haven't said a word.
 ROMILDA All you who suffer
 at the hands of cruel beauty, behold Xerxes ...

SCENE 3

Xerxes and the above.

XERXES Do I hear my name being sung?
 ROMILDA Behold Xerxes,
 all afire with passion for a coarse tree trunk,
 his love answered only
 by the murmur of the leaves!

7 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Arsamenes!
 ARSAMENES My lord?
 XERXES Did you hear that?
 ARSAMENES Indeed –
 XERXES And do you know who it is?
 ARSAMENES I do not, my lord.
 XERXES Well, I do.
 ARSAMENES (I am consumed with jealousy!)
 XERXES What are you saying?
 ARSAMENES That I would love to hear that voice again.

8 – ARIA

ROMILDA Và godendo vezzoso e bello
 quel ruscello la libertà.
 E tra l'erbe con onde chiare
 lieto al mare correndo v`a.

9 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Quel canto a un bell'amor l'anima sforza.
 Per mia dama la scelgo.
 ARSAMENE (Oh Dei, che sento!)
 Signor, ella è Romilda; è principessa:
 ma parmi non convenga ...
 SERSE Eh! Mi diceste
 non conoscerla. Or come?
 ARSAMENE Sol la conosco al nome.
 SERSE E al canto ancora.
 Se dama non convien, sarà mia sposa.
 L'approvate?
 ARSAMENE Signor, a un re non lice
 ergere al trono chi non è regina.
 SERSE Per dama non convien,
 sposa non lice.
 Nulla vi piace; è rigido il consiglio.
 Mi sia compagna al soglio.
 Le direte che l'amo, io così voglio.
 ARSAMENE Io?
 SERSE Sì, voi.
 ARSAMENE Non ho il modo di parlarle.
 SERSE Cercatelo ...
 ARSAMENE Ma, Sire, e se non posso ...
 SERSE Perché?
 ARSAMENE Ma la modestia ... e alfine ...

8 – ARIA

ROMILDA Charming and playful,
 the brook revels in its freedom.
 And gliding through meadows with pure ripples
 it rushes seaward full of joy.

9 – RECITATIVE

XERXES This song enchants the soul with love.
 I want this woman to join my court.
 ARSAMENES (Oh gods! What do I hear!)
 My lord, that is Romilda, a princess,
 and it seems unfit to me that ...
 XERXES Ah! I thought you said
 you didn't know her. Explain yourself.
 ARSAMENES I know her only by name.
 XERXES And by her voice, it would appear.
 Well, if not a courtesan, she shall be my bride.
 Do you approve of that?
 ARSAMENES It is not lawful, sir, that a king
 should marry a woman who is not of royal blood.
 XERXES Unfit to be a courtesan ...
 not lawful as a bride ...
 You turn down every suggestion!
 She shall sit by my side on the throne.
 Tell her that I love her. That is my wish.
 ARSAMENES !!
 XERXES Yes, you!
 ARSAMENES I wouldn't know how to speak to her.
 XERXES Then find a way.
 ARSAMENES But, my lord, if I should fail ...
 XERXES Why should you?
 ARSAMENES Modesty! as well as ...

SERSE Intesi. Io gliel' dirò,
ch' a parlar meglio appresi.

10 – ARIA

SERSE Io le dirò che l' amo,
né mi sgomenterò.

E perché mia la bramo,
so quel che far dovrò.

ARSAMENE Tu le dirai che l' ami
ma non t' ascolterà.

Quella beltà che brami
solo di me sarà.

Serse parte.

SCENA IV

Romilda, Atalanta, Arsamene ed Elviro.

11 – RECITATIVO

ROMILDA Arsamene.

ARSAMENE Romilda, oh Dei! Pavento
che' l tuo più volte a me giurato
amore tu non sparga d' oblio.

ROMILDA Perché parli così?

ARSAMENE Lo so ben io. Il re ...

ATALANTA Chi? Serse?

ROMILDA E che da me richiede?

ARSAMENE Tenterà la tua fede.

ATALANTA (Se può vincerle il cor,
oh me felice!)

(a Romilda)

XERXES Very well. I shall tell her myself,
since I am clearly better at it.

10 – ARIA

XERXES I shall tell her of my love,
and feel quite undaunted.

And since I desire her to be mine,
I' ll know how to go about it.

ARSAMENES You may well tell her of your love,
but she will not listen to you.

The beauty that you desire
shall be mine alone.

Exit Xerxes.

SCENE 4

Romilda, Atalanta, Arsamenes and Elviro.

11 – RECITATIVE

ROMILDA Arsamenes ...

ARSAMENES Oh heavens, Romilda, I am afraid
that you will cast aside the love
you have so often s worn to me!

ROMILDA Whatever makes you say so?

ARSAMENES I know it all too well: the king ...

ATALANTA Who? Xerxes?

ROMILDA And what should Xerxes want of me?

ARSAMENES He is about to tempt your faithfulness.

ATALANTA (Oh what bliss
if he could conquer her heart.)

(to Romilda)

Vien acceso ogni cor dal tuo bel sguardo.

ROMILDA Io non temo.

ARSAMENE Io pavento.

ATALANTA (Ed io tutt'ardo!)

Dimmi, Arsamene, e credi
che la germana mia tradirti possa?

ARSAMENE Crollan le querce annose
a una gran scossa.

ROMILDA Ma Romilda resiste.

ATALANTA (Ah, fosse infida!)

ROMILDA Mai sarà
l'alma mia da te disciolta.

ARSAMENE Che diletto!

ATALANTA (Che doglia!) Ascolta, ascolta!

Lo guarda con tenerezza, facendogli molti vezzi.

12 – ARIA

ATALANTA Sì, sì, mio ben, sì, sì,

io vivo per te sol,

io per te moro.

Amo chi mi ferì,

e pure al mio gran duol

non ho ristoro.

Romilda notte e dì

va esclamando così,

“Io per te moro”.

Parte.

All hearts are fired by your beauty.

ROMILDA I am not afraid.

ARSAMENES I am terrified.

ATALANTA (And I am all aflame!)

Tell me, Arsamenes, do you believe
that my sister could ever betray you?

ARSAMENES The hardiest of oaks will succumb
to an earthquake.

ROMILDA Romilda is unshakable.

ATALANTA (Oh, that she were unfaithful!)

ROMILDA Never shall
my soul be set asunder from yours.

ARSAMENES What a relief!

ATALANTA (What a pity!) Listen!

She looks at him tenderly and flirtatiously.

12 – ARIA

ATALANTA Yes, yes! my love, yes, yes,

for you alone I live,

for you alone I die.

I love the man who wounds me,

though my suffering

is relentless.

These are Romilda's own words,

night and day:

‘For you I die.’

Exit.

13 – RECITATIVO

ELVIRO Presto, Signor, vien Serse.
 ARSAMENE Io qui mi celo.
 Si nasconde con Elviro.

SCENA V

*Serse e Romilda;
 Arsamene ed Elviro nascosti.*

SERSE Come, qui,
 Principessa, al ciel sereno?
 Forse agl'inviti d'Arsamene usciste?
 ROMILDA Egli non mi chiamò.
 SERSE Parlavvi almeno.
 ROMILDA Ma, Sire ...
 SERSE Basta, udite.
 ROMILDA, il fato al trono
 oggi vi scorge, amor v'ingemma il serto.
 ROMILDA Non aspiro tant'alto.
 Io non ho merto.
 SERSE Ne so ben la cagione.
 Arsamene m'offende,
 ma ...

Escono Arsamene ed Elviro.

ARSAMENE Io, Sire?
 Tolga il Ciel, che v'offenda.
 ROMILDA Ei non sapea ...
 SERSE Tacete. E voi veloce
 lunge da questa corte qual torrente

13 – RECITATIVE

ELVIRO Quick, my lord, Xerxes is coming.
 ARSAMENES I'll hide here.
 He hides with Elviro.

SCENE 5

*Xerxes and Romilda;
 Arsamenes and Elviro in hiding.*

XERXES You, my princess,
 out here in the evening air?
 Was it at Arsamenes' invitation?
 ROMILDA He did not send for me.
 XERXES But he spoke to you, at least.
 ROMILDA In truth, my lord ...
 XERXES Stop, enough. Listen.
 ROMILDA, today destiny offers you a throne,
 love crowns you with jewels.
 ROMILDA I do not aspire to such heights:
 I am quite unworthy.
 XERXES I am well aware of the reasons,
 and Arsamenes offends me with them.
 However ...

Arsamenes emerges with Elviro.

ARSAMENES Heaven forbid, my lord,
 that I should offend you!
 ROMILDA He knew nothing ...
 XERXES Silence! And you,
 remove yourself from my court,

volgete il piede!

ARSAMENE Andrò, benché innocente.

SERSE Pure se promettete

lasciar Romilda ...

ELVIRO (*all'orechio del suo padrone*)

Eh! dite! io lo farò.

SERSE ...posso usarvi pietate.

ARSAMENE Oh! questo no.

14 – ARIA

ARSAMENE Meglio in voi col mio partire
gelosia s'estinguerà.

Io men vado al mio morire,
voi restate in libertà.

Parte con Elviro.

SCENA VI

*Serse e Romilda immobile
senza guardar il re.*

15 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Bellissima Romilda, eh, non celate
l'adorato sembiante!

Uditemi, Romilda, io sono amante.

E pur tacete ancora?

Dite un sì, dite un no,

dite ch'io mora.

faster than the rushing river!

ARSAMENES I go, though I am innocent.

XERXES Should you, however,

swear to relinquish Romilda ...

ELVIRO (*in his master's ear*)

I say, that's what I would do!

XERXES ... I am willing to show mercy.

ARSAMENES Ah! No, never!

14 – ARIA

ARSAMENES May this banishment of mine
extinguish your jealous rage.

I go to meet my death,
and leave you to enjoy your freedom.

Exit with Elviro.

SCENE 6

*Xerxes and Romilda, who stands motionless,
avoiding the king's gaze.*

15 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Most beautiful Romilda, oh hide not
your beloved features from me.

Pay heed to me, Romilda: I am in love.

Yet still you say nothing?

Say yes, say no,

or say you wish me dead!

16 –ARIA

SERSE Di tacere e di schernirmi,
ah! crudel, chi t’insegnò?
Oh, lasciate d’esser belle,
care luci, amate stelle,
oh, cessate di ferirmi
ché mai più vi seguirò,
ah! crudel!

Parte.

SCENA VII

Romilda sola.

17 – RECITATIVO

ROMILDA Aspide sono
a’ detti tuoi d’amore,
né vuò macchiar’ d’infedeltà
il mio core.

18 – ARIA

ROMILDA Nemmen coll’ombre d’infedeltà
voglio tradire l’anima mia.
E se’l mio bene suo mal si fà
incolpi amore, non gelosia.

Parte.

16 – ARIA

XERXES Whoever taught you, cruel one,
to remain silent and mock me thus?
Oh that you were not so enchanting,
dear eyes, beloved stars.
Oh that you would not wound me thus,
that I need pursue you no more,
cruel one!

Exit.

SCENE 7

Romilda alone.

17 – RECITATIVE

ROMILDA I am cold as an asp
to your words of love.
I shall never taint my heart
with unfaithfulness.

18 – ARIA

ROMILDA Not even with a shade of unfaithfulness
would I ever betray my soul.
And if my beloved causes his own harm,
let him blame love, not jealousy.

Exit.

SCENA VIII

*Cortile. Amastre in abito da uomo,
seguita da uno scudiere.*

19 – ARIA

AMASTRE Se cangio spoglia
non cangia core,
ma nell'amore
sono l'istessa.

Si ritira in disparte.

SCENA IX

Ariodate, seguito da soldati con prigionieri,
ed insegna prese a' nemici, ed Amastre.

20 – RECITATIVO

ARIODATE Pugnammo, amici,
e stette per noi bella vittoria.

AMASTRE

(Dunque è vinto il re moro? Oh noi felici!)

ARIODATE Ed accresce di Serse ognor la gloria!

21 – CORO DI SOLDATI

SOLDATI Già la tromba,
che chiamò le schiere all'armi,
or si scioglie in dolci carmi,
e vittorie a noi rimbomba.

SCENE 8

*A courtyard. Amastres disguised as a man,
followed by a page.*

19 – ARIA

AMASTRES Though I change my appearance,
I shall never change my heart,
for my love will always
remain the same.

She withdraws to one side.

SCENE 9

*Ariodates, followed by soldiers who guard prisoners,
and trophies captured in battle; and Amastres.*

20 – RECITATIVE

ARIODATES How bravely we have fought, my friends,
and how sweet is our victory!

AMASTRES

(Then the Mauri's king is conquered? Oh joy!)

ARIODATES And Xerxes' glory swells by the hour!

21 – CHORUS OF SOLDIERS

SOLDIERS Hear the trumpet
which summoned the ranks to arms
soften its tone with mellow strains,
victory resounding in our ears.

SCENA X

Serse, e detti.

22 – RECITATIVO

AMASTRE (Ecco Serse,

oh che volto, oh che splendore!)

SERSE Ariodate, v'abbraccio.

Il vostro ferro sempre porta vittoria.

ARIODATE Del vostro nome sol questa è la gloria.

SERSE In premio de' disagi,

ch'ora diamo alla vostra città,

che di nostr'armi fatta è piazza,

a sostener l'impresa d'Atene;

or vi prometto,

Romilda, vostra figlia,

avrà sposo reale

della stirpe di Serse, a Serse eguale.

ARIODATE Così arditi fantasmi

nel pensier non ammetto.

SERSE Ite, così prometto.

23 – ARIA

ARIODATE Soggetti al mio volere

gli astri non voglio, no.

Ma quel che fan le sfere

sempre lodar saprò.

SCENE 10

Xerxes, and the above.

22 – RECITATIVE

AMASTRES (Xerxes is coming:

oh how glorious, how splendid he is!)

XERXES Ariodate, I embrace you.

Your sword never fails to bring victory.

ARIODATES Our glory is owed to your name alone.

XERXES In compensation for the hardships

endured by your city,

which has become our army's garrison

in the struggle against Athens,

we pledge to you

that your daughter Romilda

shall have a royal husband:

a man of Xerxes' own kin, equal to Xerxes!

ARIODATES That is beyond

my most audacious dreams.

XERXES Go; you have our word.

23 – ARIA

ARIODATES I would never expect

the stars to submit to my wishes.

But I will always accept

whatever they think fit.

24 – CORO DI SOLDATI

SOLDATI Già la tromba,
che chiamò le schiere all'armi,
or si scioglie in dolci carmi,
e vittorie a noi rimbomba.

Partono Ariodate e I soldati.

SCENA XI

*Serse, ed Amastre
col suo scudiere in disparte.*

25 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Queste vittorie, io credo,
predicono trionfi anco al mio amore.
AMASTRE (Parla di me;
hai vinto, sì, mio core.)
SERSE Impaziente io vivo
d'abbracciar quell'amato mio tesoro.
AMASTRE (E di gioia non moro?)
SERSE Ma pur, che dirà Amastre,
e l'offeso suo padre
del mio imeneo, del mio novello amore?
AMASTRE (E così mi schernisce il traditore?)
SERSE Benché di regio sangue
non sia l'idolo mio,
una vassalla illustrar poss'io
colle mie nozze. Al fin, crede decenti
i voler d'un gran rege il mondo.
AMASTRE (*con voce alta*) Menti.
SERSE (*voltandosi*)

24 – CHORUS OF SOLDIERS

SOLDIERS Hear the trumpet
which summoned the ranks to arms
soften its tone with mellow strains,
victory resounding in our ears.

Exeunt Ariodates and soldiers.

SCENE 11

*Xerxes, and Amastres
in the background with her page.*

25 – RECITATIVE

XERXES These victories, I am certain,
are a foretaste of my triumphs in love.
AMASTRES (He speaks of me!
Yes, you have conquered my heart.)
XERXES How I yearn to hold
my beloved treasure in my arms.
AMASTRES (I shall die with delight!)
XERXES And yet what will Amastres,
and her outraged father,
say to this marriage and to my new love?
AMASTRES (Is he rejecting me? The traitor!)
XERXES Though the woman I worship
is not of royal blood,
yet as her husband I can ennoble her.
And in the end the world
approves the actions of a great king.
AMASTRES (*aloud*) You lie!
XERXES (*turns around*)

Chi parla olà? Chi siete?

AMASTRE Forastieri, Signor.

SERSE Ma a chi mentita tu desti?

AMASTRE Al mio compagno,
che sostener volea, che il vasto Eufrate ...
e che'l ponte che fate ...
sarebbe esposto ai venti;
io per discorso allor dissi: tu menti.

(accennando Serse)

SERSE Sciocchi mi rassemblete.

Ite lontani! *(Amastre parte)*

Non dee render ragione il mio decoro.
Sempre mi torna in mente il bel che adoro.

26 – ARIA

SERSE Più che penso alle fiamme del core
più l'ardore crescendo sen va.
E'l mio petto è ricetta ben poco
di quel foco che pena mi dà.

Parte.

SCENA XII

Arsamene ed Elviro.

27 – RECITATIVO

ARSAMENE Eccoti il foglio, Elviro,
a Romilda lo porta.

(gli da una lettera)

ELVIRO Siete pur risoluto?

ARSAMENE Sì, vanne!

Who said that? Who are you?

AMASTRES Strangers, my lord.

XERXES And whom did you call a liar?

AMASTRES My companion,
who claims that the mighty Euphrates ...
and that the bridge that you are building ...
will be destroyed by the wind;
so I disagreed by saying: 'You lie!'

(indicating Xerxes)

XERXES You sound like fools.

Begone! *(Amastres leaves)*

It is not becoming to my state to explain myself.
My beloved returns constantly to my mind.

26 – ARIA

XERXES The more I think of the flames in my heart,
the more I burn with passion.
But my breast can hardly contain
the fire that consumes me.

Exit.

SCENE 12

Arsamenes and Elviro.

27 – RECITATIVE

ARSAMENES Here is the letter, Elviro;
deliver it to Romilda.

(gives him a letter)

ELVIRO Are you absolutely sure?

ARSAMENES Yes – go!

ELVIRO (*in atto di partire, poi ritorna*)

Io vi saluto.

Che parlarle volete,
altro non le scrivete?

ARSAMENE No.

ELVIRO Ma sono, voi sapete,
con voi bandito; e se son conosciuto?
Siete pur risoluto?

ARSAMENE Vanne, non tardar più.

ELVIRO Come gliel'ho da dar?

ARSAMENE Pensaci tu.

ELVIRO Che stravagante scena!
(*Pensa un poco e poi risoluto dice:*)

28 – ARIOSO

ELVIRO Signor, Signor, lasciate fare a me:
io l'ho pensata bene.
Corro, volo, parto, vo,
e più presto tornerò
che se avessi l'ali al piè.

Parte.

29 – ARIA

ARSAMENE Non so se sia la speme
che mi sostiene in vita
o l'aspro mio dolor.
So che quest'alma geme,
dacché mi fu rapita
la gioia del mio cor.

Parte.

ELVIRO (*about to go, then turns back*)

As you wish.

But don't you want to write anything other
than that you wish to speak to her?

ARSAMENES No!

ELVIRO But, you see, I am
banished with you ... what if they recognise me?
Are you absolutely certain?

ARSAMENES Just go.

ELVIRO And how am I supposed to deliver it?

ARSAMENES You can think about that yourself.

ELVIRO What a circus!
(*thinks for a moment, then speaks decisively:*)

28 – ARIOSO

ELVIRO My lord, my lord, leave it to me,
I've thought it out quite brilliantly!
I'll run, I'll fly, I've packed my sack,
and in a flash you'll see me back,
as fast as if my feet had wings!

Exit.

29 – ARIA

ARSAMENES Is it hope
that keeps me alive,
or is it this bitter pain?
For certain, this soul has been sighing
ever since the joy of my heart
was wrenched from me.

Exit.

SCENA XIII

*Amastre sola.*30 – RECITATIVO

AMASTRE Tradir di regia sposa
la fé promessa? E chiamerello il mondo
un decente voler? No, che dei regi
son giustizia e clemenza i più gran pregi.

31 – ARIA

AMASTRE Saprà delle mie offese
ben vendicarsi il cor.
Colui che l'ira accese
proverà il mio furor.

Parte.

SCENA XIV

*Atalanta e Romilda.*32 – RECITATIVO

ATALANTA Al fin sarete sposa al vostro Serse.
ROMILDA Che? Mio, Serse non è.
ATALANTA Meno Arsamene.
ROMILDA Egli sì, perché l'amo.
ATALANTA Egli no, perché parte esule errante.
Perdete un re per un perduto amante.
ROMILDA Perduto amante? E come?
ATALANTA Ha il core acceso d'altre fiamme.
ROMILDA Di chi?

SCENE 13

*Amastres alone.*30 – RECITATIVE

AMASTRES And will he then break his promise
to his royal bride? And is the world supposed
to approve this? Never, for justice and pity
are the greatest qualities of a monarch.

31 – ARIA

AMASTRES My heart shall find its vengeance
for the offence I have endured.
The man who ignited my anger
will feel the weight of my fury.

Exit.

SCENE 14

*Atalanta and Romilda.*32 – RECITATIVE

ATALANTA So you can finally marry your Xerxes.
ROMILDA What are you saying? He is not my Xerxes!
ATALANTA Nor is Arsamenes yours.
ROMILDA Yes he is, for I love him.
ATALANTA No he isn't, for he is now a wandering exile.
You are losing a king for a lover you've already lost.
ROMILDA A lost lover? What do you mean?
ATALANTA Another woman's flames light up his heart.
ROMILDA Whose?

ATALANTA Ben lo saprete.

ROMILDA Dunque odierò Arsamene,
e al re gli affetti tutti darò; che dite?

ATALANTA Allor prudente
certo vi chiamerò; ed Arsamene
in sposo io chiederò.

ROMILDA E che dunque l'amate?

ATALANTA No, ma poi l'amerò.

ROMILDA E sì tosto potrete
render d'amore i vostri sensi accesi?

ATALANTA Mi sforzerò.

ROMILDA Ah, che pur troppo intesi!

33 – ARIA

ROMILDA Se l'idol mio
rapir mi vuoi,
cangia desio, ch'è vanità.
Quei dolci lacci
snodar non puoi,
che mi legaro la libertà.

Parte.

SCENA XV

Atalanta sola.

34 – RECITATIVO

ATALANTA Per rapir quel tesoro
che te colma di gioia e me d'affanni,
se amor non basta, adoprerò gl'inganni.

ATALANTA You ought to know.

ROMILDA And must I then hate Arsamenes,
and give my affection to the king? Is that it?

ATALANTA I would consider that wise;
and I could then ask to be
Arsamenes' wife myself.

ROMILDA Do you love him?

ATALANTA No, but I might soon.

ROMILDA And could you really
fall in love that quickly?

ATALANTA I could try.

ROMILDA Ah, it is all too clear now!

33 – ARIA

ROMILDA If you intend to take
my love from me,
come to your senses, for it is all in vain.
You shall never
untie the sweet bonds
destined to tether my freedom.

Exit.

SCENE 15

Atalanta alone.

34 – RECITATIVE

ATALANTA If love will not suffice
to seize the treasure that fills you with joy
and me with distress, I must resort to deceit.

35 – ARIA

ATALANTA Un cenno leggiadretto,
un riso vezzosetto,
un moto di pupille
può fare innamorar.
Lusinghe, pianti e frodi
son anche certi modi,
che destano faville
e tutti io li so far.

Fine dell'Atto primo.

35 – ARIA

ATALANTA A graceful little gesture,
a coquettish little smile,
or a twinkle in the eye:
these should bewitch the man.
Flattery, tears and guile
are also trusty methods
of stoking a fire,
and I'll try all of these!

End of Act I.

SCENA I

*Piazza della città con loggia.
Amastre, e poi Elviro, che vende fiori,
e parla la lingua franca.*

36 – ARIOSO

AMASTRE Speranze mie fermate,
non mi lasciate ancor.

37 – ARIOSO

ELVIRO Ah, chi voler fiora di bella giardina,
giacinta, indiana, tulipana, gelsomina?

38 – RECITATIVO

ELVIRO E chi direbbe mai
ch'io sono Elviro?
Ma se del foglio
poi sapesse il re?
AMASTRE (Che parla egli del re?)
ELVIRO Credo Arsamene
pianti e sospiri al vento spargerà;
e che per moglie
al fin il re l'avrà.
AMASTRE (Il re per moglie? Chi?
Cieli, che sento!)

SCENE 1

*A square in the city with an arcade.
Amastres, then Elviro, selling flowers,
and speaking in a common dialect.*

36 – ARIOSO

AMASTRES Stay a while longer, my hopes;
do not leave me yet.

37 – ARIOSO

ELVIRO Who will buy flowers from my pretty garden?
Hyacinths, cotton plants, tulips, jasmine!

38 – RECITATIVE

ELVIRO And whoever would have guessed
that I am Elviro!
But what if the king
discovers about the letter?
AMASTRES (What is he saying about the king?)
ELVIRO Well, if you ask me, Arsamenes
can shed his tears and sighs to the winds,
for in the end
the king will have her for his wife.
AMASTRES (Wife to the king? Who?
Heavens, what do I hear!)

ELVIRO Serse però dovrebbe
aver per sposa dama di regio sangue,
e non vassalla:

questa non gli fa onore.

AMASTRE (Dunque io sono schernita.

Ah, traditore!) Amico ...

ELVIRO (*vuol scappar via*)

Ah, ci fui colto.

AMASTRE Ferma, olà, dico a te;

perché scappar?

ELVIRO Da mia che cercar?

Voler flora comprar? Ma ...

AMASTRE No. Si dice

che Serse sarà sposo in questo dì:

vorrei saper di chi?

ELVIRO Ma dire, tu chi star?

e perché dimandar?

AMASTRE Viaggiante curioso,

e ch'ama il re.

ELVIRO Poiché ti star buon uom,

mi dir a te.

Ma taser, non parlar!

AMASTRE Di' pur, non dubitar.

ELVIRO Ariodate, de chista

città signor, che stare a re vassallo,

aver figlia Romilda,

e re voler chista sposar;

ma chista sempre dir:

“Se mi sposar, morir.”

AMASTRE Ma Romilda ama il re?

ELVIRO No, ma fratello,

ch'aver nome Arsamene.

ELVIRO Xerxes should really marry a lady
with proper royal blood,

and not a vassal:

this woman doesn't do much for his dignity.

AMASTRES (Then I really am rejected?

The traitor!) Listen, my friend ...

ELVIRO (*tries to escape*)

Help! I've been caught out!

AMASTRES Stop! You there!

There is no need to run away!

ELVIRO What do you want from me?

Did you want some flowers? Here ...

AMASTRES No! I hear it said

that Xerxes will be married today,

and I would like to know to whom!

ELVIRO Who are you, anyway?

And why do you want to know?

AMASTRES A curious traveller,

who is fond of the king.

ELVIRO You seem a good enough fellow,

so I'll tell you.

Keep it to yourself, mind! Not a word –

AMASTRES You may trust me.

ELVIRO Ariodates, a gentleman

of this city and vassal to the king,

has a daughter called Romilda,

and the king wants to marry her;

but all she says is:

'If he marries me, I'll die.'

AMASTRES But Romilda loves the king?

ELVIRO No, she loves his brother,

a fellow named Arsamenes.

AMASTRE E questo forse
i dolor suoi le scrive?

ELVIRO Ahimè!

Ti star devina?

(spasseggiando)

Chi voler fiora di bella giardina?

AMASTRE Dimmi!

ELVIRO Nu saper altro.

(spasseggiando)

Tulipana, gelsomina!

AMASTRE Perché m'uccida il duolo
mancava solo esser tradita ancora.

ELVIRO Chi voler fiora, fiora?

39 – ARIA

AMASTRE Or che siete, speranze, tradite,
sì, fuggite, fuggite da me.

E in quest'anima oppressa dal duolo
resti solo la bella mia fé.

Parte.

SCENA II

Elviro, poi Atalanta.

40 – RECITATIVO

ELVIRO Quel curioso è partito,
oh! che indiscreto!

Matto non son
per dirgli il mio segreto.

La signora Atalanta a me sen viene.

Oh! bene, bene, bene!

AMASTRES And this fellow has perhaps
written to her of his grief?

ELVIRO Mercy on us!

You must be a fortune teller!

(paces up and down)

Who will buy flowers from my pretty garden?

AMASTRES Tell me!

ELVIRO That's all I know!

(pacing up and down)

Tulips, jasmine!

AMASTRES My grief needed only
this final stroke of infidelity to end my life.

ELVIRO Who will buy flowers? Flowers!

39 – ARIA

AMASTRES Now that you are betrayed, my hopes, go
yes, you may leave me.

And let nothing remain in this grieving soul
but my own faithfulness.

Exit.

SCENE 2

Elviro, then Atalanta.

40 – RECITATIVE

ELVIRO That inquisitive fool's gone ...
how indiscreet he was!

At least I wasn't so stupid
as to give away my secret.

Oh good, good, good:

here comes the lady Atalanta.

41 – ARIOSO E RECITATIVO

ATALANTA A piangere ogn'ora
amor mi destina.

ELVIRO Ah! Chi voler flora
di bella giardina?

Voler giacinta? Voler gelsomina?

ATALANTA Olà! Vieni qua.

Degli aspri miei dolori
le acute spine adorerò co' fiori.

ELVIRO Ma mi chi star?

ATALANTA Non so.

ELVIRO Mi ben guardar.

ATALANTA Tu quivi? O sventurato!
Guarda bene ...

Che porti?

ELVIRO Porto un foglio di Arsamene
all'amata Romilda.

ATALANTA A me lo porgi!

ELVIRO Glielo darete poi?

ATALANTA Sì!

ELVIRO Ma dov'è?

ATALANTA Sta nelle stanze sue scrivendo al re.

ELVIRO Al re? Ma che gli scrive?

ATALANTA Che in lui spera,
in lui vive.

ELVIRO E d'Arsamene?

ATALANTA Punto non si sovviene.

42 – ARIOSO

ELVIRO Ah, tigre infedele!
Cerasta crudele!

41 – ARIOSO AND RECITATIVE

ATALANTA I am destined by love
to shed tears forever.

ELVIRO Hey! Who will buy flowers
from my pretty garden?

Would you like hyacinths? Some jasmine?

ATALANTA You there! Come here!

I shall adorn
the sharp thorns of my anguish with flowers.

ELVIRO Excuse me, and who might I be?

ATALANTA I do not know.

ELVIRO Well, look carefully!

ATALANTA You, here? Oh, you poor man!
Do be careful! ...

And what do you have there?

ELVIRO I have a note from
Arsamenes for his sweetheart, Romilda.

ATALANTA Give it to me!

ELVIRO Will you give it to her?

ATALANTA Yes!

ELVIRO Where is she?

ATALANTA She is in her rooms, writing to the king.

ELVIRO To the king? What is she writing?

ATALANTA That her hopes, indeed her life,
lie with him.

ELVIRO But what about Arsamenes?

ATALANTA She can barely remember him.

42 – ARIOSO

ELVIRO Oh, the faithless tigress,
the vicious viper!

43 – RECITATIVO

ATALANTA Parti, il re s'avvicina.

ELVIRO Ah! Chi voler fiora
di bella giardina!

Va via in fretta.

SCENA III

*Serse ed Atalanta,
che legge il foglio d'Arsamene.*

ATALANTA

(Con questo foglio mi farò contenta.)

44 – ARIOSO

SERSE È tormento troppo fiero
l'adorar cruda beltà.

Vede Atalanta, che finge di leggere.

45 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Di quel foglio, Atalanta,
lice saper gli arcani?

Saran forse amorosi?

ATALANTA È ver, ma strani.

SERSE Son più curioso.

ATALANTA Ma ...

SERSE Ma che?

ATALANTA Io temo ...

Mi perdonate?

SERSE Sì.

43 – RECITATIVE

ATALANTA Go now, the king is coming.

ELVIRO Ah! Who will buy flowers
from my pretty garden?

He hurries away.

SCENE 3

*Xerxes and Atalanta,
who is reading Arsamenes' letter.*

ATALANTA

(This letter should bring me happiness.)

44 – ARIOSO

XERXES It is too harsh a torment
to adore so cruel a beauty.

He sees Atalanta, who is pretending to read.

45 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Will you share, Atalanta,
the mysteries of that letter?

Might they be of love?

ATALANTA They are, my lord, but most peculiar.

XERXES I am even more curious to know.

ATALANTA But ...

XERXES But what?

ATALANTA I fear that ...

oh do forgive me, my lord ...

XERXES I do.

ATALANTA Dunque leggete.

(Serse prende la lettera e guarda la firma.)

(Deh! Seconda l'inganno, o ignudo arciero!)

SERSE Scrive Arsamene.

ATALANTA È vero.

SERSE *(legge basso)*

A chi scrive Arsamene?

ATALANTA A me.

SERSE A voi?

ATALANTA Vi sdegnate?

SERSE Stupisco.

Ma s'egli ama Romilda?

ATALANTA No, Signor: ella ben l'ama

ma lui finge d'amarla,

affinché quieta non sturbi

il nostro amore.

SERSE Strana avventura!

Godi sì, mio core!

ATALANTA Dunque vi prego, o Re, se l'approvate,

che pubblico imeneo lo faccia mio.

SERSE Bella, farò, che sia

o vostro sposo,

o preda all'ira mia.

46 – ARIA

ATALANTA Dirà che amor per me

piagato il cor non gli ha.

Ma non gli date fé,

ch'egli fingendo va.

ATALANTA Please read it.

(Xerxes takes the letter and looks at the signature.)

(Oh Love, help my enterprise!)

XERXES It is written by Arsamenes.

ATALANTA Yes, it is from him.

XERXES *(reading the letter)*

To whom is Arsamenes writing?

ATALANTA To me.

XERXES To you?

ATALANTA Does it offend you?

XERXES I am bewildered:

does he not love Romilda?

ATALANTA No, my lord: she loves him dearly,

but he only pretends to love her,

to keep her from interfering

with our own love.

XERXES A strange scheme!

But what joy this brings to my heart!

ATALANTA I beseech you, my lord: if you approve,

let him be mine by public marriage.

XERXES I shall ensure, fair Atalanta,

that he becomes either your husband,

or prey to my fury.

46 – ARIA

ATALANTA He will tell you that love

has not wounded his heart on my account.

But do not believe him,

for he is simply pretending.

47 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Voi quel foglio lasciate a me per prova.
 ATALANTA (Bella frode, se giova!)
 SERSE Itene pure.
 ATALANTA Ma vi ricordo ...
 SERSE E che?

48 – ARIA

ATALANTA Dirà che non m'amò
 che mai per me languì.
 Ma non credete, no,
 che fingerà così.

Parte.

SCENA IV

Serse e Romilda.

49 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Ingannata Romilda!
 (Le dà la lettera d'Arsamene.)
 Ecco, leggete, dite poi
 se Arsamene amar dovete.
 ROMILDA Leggo.
 SERSE Né vi sdegnate?
 ROMILDA A chi scrive?
 SERSE Alla sua cara Atalanta,
 sapete già, io non mento.
 ROMILDA (Non m'uccider, tormento!)
 SERSE Che farete?
 ROMILDA Piangendo ognor vivrò.

47 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Leave me the note as proof.
 ATALANTA (A fine ruse, if it works!)
 XERXES You may go.
 ATALANTA Do not forget, however ...
 XERXES What?

48 – ARIA

ATALANTA He will tell you that he never loved me,
 that he never pined for me.
 But do not believe it – no!
 for he will pretend just so!

Exit.

SCENE 4

Xerxes and Romilda.

49 – RECITATIVE

XERXES How you are deceived, Romilda!
 (He gives her Arsamenes' letter.)
 Here, read this and then tell me
 if Arsamenes deserves your love.
 ROMILDA I will, my lord.
 XERXES Are you not outraged?
 ROMILDA To whom is he writing?
 XERXES To his beloved Atalanta.
 You know I am telling the truth.
 ROMILDA (Oh torture, do not kill me!)
 XERXES What will you do now?
 ROMILDA I shall weep for the rest of my days.

50 – DUETTINO

SERSE L'amerete?

ROMILDA L'amerò.

SERSE E pur sempre vi tradi?

ROMILDA L'empia sorte vuol così.

SERSE Se ben fiero v'ingannò?

ROMILDA L'amerò.

SERSE L'amerete?

ROMILDA L'amerò.

51 – ARIA

SERSE Se bramate d'amar chi vi sdegnà,

vuò sdegnarvi, ma come non so.

La vostr'ira, crudel, me l'insegna;

tento farlo, e quest'alma non può.

Parte.

SCENA V

Romilda sola.

52 – ACCOMPAGNATO

ROMILDA L'amerò?

Non fia vero.

Amante traditor!

Sorella infida!

Godete di mie pene.

Barbara, menzognero!

L'amerò? Non fia vero.

50 – DUETTINO

XERXES Will you still love him?

ROMILDA I shall.

XERXES Yet you are betrayed ...

ROMILDA Pitiless fate decrees it.

XERXES And if he proudly rejects you?

ROMILDA I shall still love him.

XERXES Will you still love him?

ROMILDA I shall.

51 – ARIA

XERXES If you still love the man who rejects you,

I too should reject you, but know not how.

Your anger, cruel one, is urging me to do so:

I try to obey, but my soul will not respond.

Exit.

SCENE 5

Romilda alone.

52 – ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE

ROMILDA Will I still love him?

Oh, that it were untrue!

My lover betrays me,

and my sister deceives me!

How you must relish my suffering ...

Barbarous woman! Treacherous man!

Will I still love him? Oh, that it were untrue!

Ma voi, che delirante me ascoltate,
forse saper bramate
la mia furia crudele ora chi sia?

53 – ARIA

ROMILDA È gelosia
quella tiranna
che tanto affanna
l’anima mia.
Del suo veleno
m’asperge il seno,
e mi condanna
a pena ria.

Parte.

SCENA VI

*Amastre in atto di uccidersi,
ed Elviro.*

54 – RECITATIVO

AMASTRE Giacché il duol non m’uccide,
m’uccida questo ferro.
ELVIRO (*la trattiene*)
Ohibò, che fate?
Pensate, e poi, se mi volete credere,
vivate sol per ben mangiar e bere.
AMASTRE Via su, pria di morire
a quell’alma crudel corriamo a dire:

But all you who hear my frenzy,
do you wish to know the name
of the ravening fury that grips me?

53 – ARIA

ROMILDA The tyrant
that so afflicts
my soul
is jealousy herself.
She injects her venom
in my breast
and condemns me
to implacable agony.

Exit.

SCENE 6

*Amastres, on the point of killing herself,
and Elviro.*

54- RECITATIVE

AMASTRES Since grief will not kill me,
may this sword bring my end.
ELVIRO (*restrains her*)
How now! What are you doing?
Listen here, if you’ll take my advice: live,
if only for the sake of wine and a good dinner.
AMASTRES I have made up my mind: before I die,
I shall find that cruel man and tell him:

55 – ARIA

AMASTRE Anima infida,
tradita io sono.
Vien, tu m'uccida,
io ti perdono.

Parte infuriata.

SCENA VII

Elviro, poi Arsamene.

56 – RECITATIVO

ELVIRO È pazzo affé.
ARSAMENE Elviro ...
ELVIRO Voi qui, Signor? Fuggiamo.
ARSAMENE Che ti disse Romilda?
ELVIRO Ad Atalanta
diedi il foglio, e mi disse
che la vostra Romilda amava il re,
che stava a lui scrivendo.
ARSAMENE Di nera infedeltate o mostro orrendo!
Ma, non bene intendesti? Parla a me ...
ELVIRO V'ho detto già,
ch'ama e che scrive al re.
Che volete di più?
ARSAMENE Forse scherzò?
ELVIRO Ohibò, ohibò! Parlò troppo da vero.
ARSAMENE O di tigre
crudel core più fiero!

55 – ARIA

AMASTRES Before you, oh faithless soul,
stands a wronged woman.
Come, then, kill me;
I forgive you.

She leaves in a frenzy.

SCENE 7

Elviro, then Arsamenes.

56 – RECITATIVE

ELVIRO He's completely mad!
ARSAMENES Elviro ...
ELVIRO You here, my lord? Let's disappear!
ARSAMENES What did Romilda tell you?
ELVIRO I gave the letter
to Atalanta, and she told me
that your Romilda was in love with the king,
and that she was just then writing to him!
ARSAMENES Oh traitor of the blackest dye!
But you must have misunderstood ... Tell me!
ELVIRO I've told you:
she loves the king and she's writing to him.
What more do you want?
ARSAMENES Perhaps she was teasing!
ELVIRO Oh dear, no. She was telling the truth.
ARSAMENES Oh heart
more savage than the cruel tiger!

57 – ARIA

ARSAMENE Quella che tutta fé
per me languia d'amore,
no, che più mia non è,
perduto ho il core.
Che pensa il Ciel, che fa?
Non sa col suo rigore
punir chi reo sen va
di tanto errore.

Partono.

SCENA VIII

*Ponte costruito sopra vascelli in mezzo al mare,
e che congiunge l'Asia all'Europa,
sopra il lido dell'Asia accampamento di Serse.
Serse, Ariodate e coro di marinari.*

58 – CORO DI MARINARI

MARINARI La virtute sol potea
giunger l'Asia all'altra riva.
Viva Serse, viva, viva!

59 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Ariodate.
ARIODATE Signore.
SERSE Del mare ad onta
e sin del vento infido
seppi giunger ancor Sesto ad Abido.
Tu vanne pronto ad ordinar le schiere.

57 – ARIA

ARSAMENES The very woman who pined for me,
so unswervingly truthful,
is no longer mine
and my heart is lost.
What will you do now, ye heavens?
Do you not know that anyone guilty
of such transgression deserves
your implacable rage?

Exeunt.

SCENE 8

*A pontoon stretching across several ships,
linking Asia with Europe.
Along the Asian shore is Xerxes' camp.
Xerxes, Ariodates and a chorus of sailors.*

58 – CHORUS OF SAILORS

SAILORS Genius alone could have
joined Asia's shore with yonder bank.
Long live Xerxes, hurrah, hurrah!

59 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Ariodates!
ARIODATES My lord.
XERXES See how in spite
of the swell and the fearsome wind
I have linked Sestos with Abydos.
Go and assemble the ranks immediately.

ARIODATE Ubbidirò.

SERSE Pria della terza aurora
di passar in Europa è il mio volere.

ARIODATE Per esempio dei regi
i tuoi gloriosi pregi
con caratteri d'or la fama scriva.

Parte.

60 – CORO DI MARINARI

MARINARI La virtute sol potea
giunger l'Asia all'altra riva.
Viva Serse, viva, viva!

SCENA IX

Arsamene e Serse.

61 – ARIOSO

ARSAMENE Per dar fine alla mia pena
chi mi svena per pietà?

62 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Arsamene, ove andate?
ARSAMENE A ber l'onda di Lete,
sol per scordarmi che fratel mi siete.
SERSE Cessi lo sdegno ...
ARSAMENE E in voi la tirannia.
SERSE Voglio sposarvi al bel che v'innamora.
ARSAMENE E mi schernite ancora?
SERSE So di qual fiamma ardete.
Lessi le vostre note, invan tacete.

ARIODATES I am your servant.

XERXES My plan is to cross into Europe
within three days.

ARIODATES May fame inscribe in golden letters
your glorious worth
as an example to all kings.

Exit.

60 – CHORUS OF SAILORS

SAILORS Genius alone could have
joined Asia's shore with yonder bank.
Long live Xerxes, hurrah, hurrah!

SCENE 9

Arsamenes and Xerxes.

61 – ARIOSO

ARSAMENES Oh, that some kind soul might kill me,
and put an end to my suffering!

62 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Arsamenes, where are you going?
ARSAMENES To drink the waters of Lethe,
and forget that you are my brother.
XERXES Enough of this indignation ...
ARSAMENES And enough of your tyranny.
XERXES I want you to marry the woman you love.
ARSAMENES Do you mock me still?
XERXES I know whom you love so passionately:
I have read your letter. Your silence is in vain.

ARSAMENE (Ah! Che Romilda, oh Dei!
mostrò il mio foglio!)
Ed or che lo confesso,
e che già lo sapete?
SERSE Per consorte l'avrete.
ARSAMENE Ora lasciate
ch'io vi baci la man.
SERSE Tanto l'amate?
ARSAMENE Più che l'anima mia.
SERSE Che nol diceste pria?
Lieti saremo ambo in un stesso dì.
Io sposo di Romilda ...
ARSAMENE Ed io di chi?
SERSE D'Atalanta.
ARSAMENE E così voi
m'ingannate?
SERSE So che Atalanta amate.
ARSAMENE Amo Romilda.
SERSE Eh, non fingete più.
ARSAMENE Dunque Romilda
a me non concedete?
SERSE Lo so; non la volete.

63 – ARIA

ARSAMENE Sì, la voglio e l'otterrò!
E se il Ciel per me non splende,
gli empî mostri e l'ombre orrende
di Cocito invocherò.

Parte.

ARSAMENES (Oh heavens,
has Romilda shown him my letter?)
And must I now confess my love
when you know it already?
XERXES You shall have her for your bride.
ARSAMENES Allow me
to kiss your hand!
XERXES Do you love her so very dearly?
ARSAMENES More than my own life.
XERXES Why did you not say so before?
We shall both find happiness on the same day:
I as Romilda's husband –
ARSAMENES And I ... ?
XERXES As Atalanta's.
ARSAMENES Do you think you can
deceive me like this?
XERXES I know you love Atalanta.
ARSAMENES I love Romilda!
XERXES Oh, enough of this pretence!
ARSAMENES So you will not
grant me Romilda?
XERXES I know you do not want her.

63 – ARIA

ARSAMENES I want her, and I shall have her!
And if the heavens will not shine upon me,
I shall invoke the vile monsters
and hideous shades of Cocitus.

Exit.

SCENA X

Atalanta e Serse.

64 – RECITATIVO

ATALANTA V'inchino, eccelso Re.
 SERSE Negò Arsamene
 d'essere vostro amante,
 e per Romilda sol egli è costante.
 Dunque da ver non v'ama; e voi lasciate
 di soffrir tante pene, e non l'amate.

65 – ARIA

ATALANTA Voi mi dite che non l'ami
 ma non dite se potrò.
 Troppo belle son le stelle
 ch'al suo volto il Ciel donò.
 Troppo stretti quei legami
 onde amor m'incatenò.

Parte.

66 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Saria lieve ogni doglia,
 se potesse un amante
 amar e disamar sempre a sua voglia.

SCENE 10

Atalanta and Xerxes.

64 – RECITATIVE

ATALANTA I bow to you, great king.
 XERXES Arsamenes denies
 that he is in love with you
 and appears resolutely true to Romilda.
 He clearly does not love you, and you
 might ease your suffering by not loving him.

65 – ARIA

ATALANTA You tell me not to love him,
 but you do not tell me how.
 Far too lovely are the eyes
 heaven gave his handsome face.
 Far too tight are the bonds
 that tether me with love.

Exit.

66 – RECITATIVE

XERXES How bearable pain would be,
 if a lover could only fall
 in and out of love at his leisure.

67 – ARIA

SERSE Il core spera e teme
penando ognor così,
se goderà in amore
saper ancor non può.
Lo chieggo alla mia speme,
ella mi dice, sì,
ma poi freddo timore
sento che dice, no.

Parte.

SCENA XI

Elviro solo.

68 – ACCOMPAGNATO

ELVIRO Me infelice, ho smarrito il mio padrone!
Ma mi confesso reo; son pazzo affé.
Egli ha smarrito me.
Forse per questo ponte ei se ne andò;
no, ch'io nol vedo, no ...
Ma qual adombra il Ciel nubilo oscuro?
Sento che l'onde fremono,
sento che l'aria sibila;
son restato all'oscuro;
voglio partir in fretta.
Si spezza il ponte,
(*corre al lido*)
a te, fa cor, gambetta.
Perché nemico al mio temperamento
è l'acquoso elemento.

67 – ARIA

XERXES All the while suffering,
the heart lives in hope and fear,
never knowing whether love
will bring any pleasure.
When I question hope,
her reply is yes;
then I turn to doubt:
her icy word is no.

Exit.

SCENE 11

Elviro alone.

68 – ACCOMPANIED RECITATIVE

ELVIRO Wretch that I am! I've lost my master!
And it's my fault, too, what a fool!
Well, actually, he's lost me.
I wonder if he's gone across this bridge.
No, I can't see him there.
My word, though, look at those black clouds!
Listen to those waves crashing
and the wind howling.
It's got quite dark!
I think I'll be off, and with all speed,
for if the bridge breaks up
(*runs to the shore*)
it's best to be well clear.
My temperament is no friend
to such watery elements!

69 – ARIA

ELVIRO Del mio caro Bacco amabile
nell'impero suo potabile
amo solo d'abitar.
L'acqua rende ipocondriaco;
il bon vin sin nel zodiaco
la mia testa sa inalar.

Parte.

SCENA XII

Luogo di ritiro contiguo alla città.
Serse da una parte, e Amastre dall'altra.

70 – DUETTINO

SERSE Gran pena è gelosia!
AMASTRE Lo sa il mio cor piagato.
SERSE Per altri io son sprezzato ...
AMASTRE Per altri anch'io tradita ...
SERSE e la mia fé tradita.
AMASTRE schernita è l'alma mia.
SERSE ED AMASTRE
Gran pena è gelosia!

71 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Aspra sorte!
AMASTRE Empie stelle!
SERSE O Romilda crudel!
AMASTRE Serse rubelle!
SERSE Chi parla?
AMASTRE Un infelice.

69 – ARIA

ELVIRO The only land I'd choose to live
in is the drinkable empire
of my dear, sweet Bacchus.
Water makes a man a hypochondriac,
but a decent wine sends
my head soaring into the heavens!

Exit.

SCENE 12

*A secluded place near the city.
Xerxes on one side, Amastres on the other.*

70 – DUETTINO

XERXES Jealousy is an unbearable torment:
AMASTRES My wounded heart knows well,
XERXES I am spurned for another man ...
AMASTRES I am betrayed for another woman ...
XERXES ... and my hopes have been betrayed.
AMASTRES ... and my soul has been scorned.
AMASTRES AND XERXES
Jealousy is an unbearable torment.

71 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Oh bitter fate!
AMASTRES Oh inclement stars!
XERXES Oh heartless Romilda!
AMASTRES Oh callous Xerxes!
XERXES Who goes there?
AMASTRES A desolate soul.

SERSE E chi sei tu?

AMASTRE Un che vi servì in guerra,
e fu ferito.

SERSE Vuoi tornar a servirmi?

AMASTRE Ci penserò.

SERSE Perché?

AMASTRE Perché non vuoi servir senza mercé.

SERSE Che? Mi trovasti ingrato?

AMASTRE Son rimasto ingannato.

SERSE (*vede Romilda, che viene*)

(Ma sen viene il mio ben.)

Scostati; appresso noi parlerem.

Tengo un affar ch'importa.

Ritorni a me in brevi ore.

AMASTRE

(Tornerò per tua pena, o traditore!)

Si ritira in disparte.

SCENA XIII

Serse, Romilda ed Amastre in disparte.

SERSE Romilda, e sarà ver,
che sempre in vano pianger mi lascerete?
Che dite? Rispondete.

72 - ARIA

ROMILDA Val più contento core
che quanto il mondo aduna.
Più vale un ben d'amore
che cento di fortuna.

XERXES And who are you?

AMASTRES One who served you in war,
and was wounded.

XERXES Do you wish to serve again?

AMASTRES I shall think about it.

XERXES How so?

AMASTRES I will not serve without a reward.

XERXES What? You found me ungrateful?

AMASTRES I found myself deceived.

XERXES (*sees Romilda approaching*)

(Here comes my beloved.)

Go away now; we shall talk later.

I have important business to deal with.

Come back to me soon.

AMASTRES

(I shall return to punish you, you traitor!)

She withdraws to one side.

SCENE 13

Xerxes and Romilda, and Amastres to one side.

XERXES Can it really be, Romilda,
that I must weep hopelessly forever?
What say you? Answer me!

72 - ARIA

ROMILDA A happy heart is worth more
than the riches of the whole world.
A single bounteous love is worth more
than a hundred turns of good fortune.

73 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Vuò ch'abbian fine i miei dolori immensi.

ROMILDA Lasciate, ch'io ci pensi.

SERSE No, datemi la destra.

AMASTRE Olà! Fermate,
ch'il re v'inganna.

SERSE Ch'ardimento è questo?

Olà, condotto sia

in oscura prigion!

AMASTRE Morirò pria!

Si mette in difesa colla spada in mano.

SERSE Temerità importuna!

Strano disturbo!

Parte sdegnato.

*Le guardie attaccano Amastre
che si difende.*

ROMILDA (O mia buona fortuna!)

(ai soldati)

Cessate, olà!

(I soldati cessano l'attacco.)

E voi, prode guerriero,

riponete quel brando.

Ite; approverà Serse

il moi comando.

Le guardie partono.

73 – RECITATIVE

XERXES I demand an end to my great suffering.

ROMILDA Allow me to think it over.

XERXES No, give me your right hand!

AMASTRES No! Beware, you there:
the king deceives you!

XERXES How dare he?

Ho! Let him be taken

to the darkest dungeon!

AMASTRES I shall die first!

She draws her sword and raises it in defence.

XERXES Troublesome but daring.

Quite remarkable!

He leaves in a fury.

*The guards set upon Amastres,
who defends herself.*

ROMILDA (What good fortune!)

(to the guards)

Stop there!

(They stop fighting.)

And you too, brave warrior,

put away your sword.

You may leave us; Xerxes will approve

my command.

The guards leave.

SCENA XIV

Romilda ed Amastre.

AMASTRE La fortuna, la vita,
e l'esser mio in eterno obligeate.

ROMILDA Ite, non vi fermate.
Che se venisse il re! Ditemi solo,
che v'indusse del re a sturbar le voglie?

AMASTRE Perché vi vuol sforzar d'essergli moglie,
e fiamme più gradite
v'ardono il sen.

ROMILDA Partite.

Amastre parte.

74 - ARIA

ROMILDA Chi cede al furore
di stelle rubelle
amante non è.
Trionfa in amore
del fato spietato
l'invitta mia fé.

Fine dell'Atto secondo.

SCENE 14

Romilda and Amastres

AMASTRES I am eternally grateful to you
for my fate, my life, my very existence.

ROMILDA Begone! Do not linger,
for the king may return. But tell me one thing:
what made you oppose the wishes of the king?

AMASTRES He is forcing you to marry him,
whilst another flame
glows in your breast.

ROMILDA Begone!

Exit Amastres.

74 - ARIA

ROMILDA The lover who bows
to the fury of treacherous fate
cannot know the meaning of love.
My faith is strong,
and triumphs in love,
scorning pitiless destiny.

End of Act II.

75 – SINFONIA

SCENA I

Galleria.

Arsamene, Romilda, Elviro.

76 – RECITATIVO

ARSAMENE Sono vani i pretesti ...

ROMILDA Sì, ad Atalanta scrivesti.

ARSAMENE Elviro parlerà.

ROMILDA Sì, Atalanta dirà ...

ROMILDA ed Arsamene

Oh amare pene!

ROMILDA Ecco Atalanta viene.

SCENA II

Atalanta e detti.

ATALANTA

(Ahi! Scoperto è l'inganno! E che farò?)

ELVIRO Brutti imbrogli son questi!

Ho la febbre, e la voce...

(ad Atalanta)

Deh, Signora,

75 – SINFONIA

SCENE 1

A gallery.

Arsamenes, Romilda, and Elviro.

76 – RECITATIVE

ARSAMENES Your excuses are in vain ...

ROMILDA You wrote to Atalanta.

ARSAMENES Elviro will talk!

ROMILDA Atalanta will tell you ...

ROMILDA and Arsamenes

Oh what bitter torment!

ROMILDA See, Atalanta is coming!

SCENE 2

Atalanta, and the above.

ATALANTA

(My ploy has been uncovered! What shall I do?)

ELVIRO These tricks aren't very fair!

I have a temperature, and my voice ...

(to Atalanta)

Come, my lady,

dite per carità
 quel che diceste a me.

ATALANTA Dissi: Romilda scrive,
 ed ama il re.

ARSAMENE Che volete di più?

ROMILDA Dunque ingannate?

ATALANTA Piano, non v'adirate!
 Dissi così, per far partire il servo,
 che voleva parlarvi.

ROMILDA Seguite pur, son pronta ad ascoltarvi.

ATALANTA Serse mi sopraggiunse,
 e prese il foglio.

(ad Arsamene)

Io per giovarvi, dissi: è scritto a me;
 mi finsi amante, ed ho ingannato il re.

ARSAMENE Or che dite, Romilda?

ROMILDA Or che dite, Arsamene?

ARSAMENE Che v'adoro ...

ROMILDA Che siete il caro bene.

(Si abbracciano.)

Fate Atalanta pur quanto sapete,
 Arsamene il mio ben non mi torrete.

77 - ARIA

ATALANTA No, no, se tu mi sprezzì,
 morir non vuò.

Fo certi vezzi
 col mio sembiante,
 che un altro amante
 trovar saprò.

Parte.

please tell them
 what you said to me.

ATALANTA I said that Romilda loved the king
 and was writing to him.

ARSAMENES What more do you want?

ROMILDA Are you deceiving both of us?

ATALANTA Please, please! Keep your temper!
 I said it to make the servant go away,
 because he wanted to speak to you.

ROMILDA Go on: I am listening.

ATALANTA Then Xerxes appeared
 and took the letter.

(to Arsamenes)

So, to help you I said it was to me;
 I pretended to be your lover and misled the king.

ARSAMENES What do you say to that, Romilda?

ROMILDA What do you say to that, Arsamenes?

ARSAMENES That I adore you!

ROMILDA That you are my dearest love!

(They embrace.)

Do whatever you will, Atalanta,
 you will never take my beloved from me!

77 - ARIA

ATALANTA Oh no, no, I will not die
 on account of your contempt.

My looks
 I can soon alter
 and find a lover
 elsewhere.

Exit.

SCENA III

Romilda, Arsamene, Elviro, e poi Serse.

78 – RECITATIVO

ROMILDA (*ad Arsamene*)

Ecco in segno di fé la destra amica.

ELVIRO Ecco Serse, ecco Serse ...

ARSAMENE Oh, che sciagura!

ELVIRO Ed io v'aspetterò fuor delle mura.

Corre via.

ROMILDA Nascondetevi!

ARSAMENE (*si nasconde*)

Oh sorte!

SERSE Che vi mosse, Romilda,
a quel guerriero donar la libertate?

ROMILDA Il suo valore.

SERSE Tutto potete;
è vostro il regno e il core.

Già siete mia regina.

ROMILDA Signor,
volo tant'alto è gran rovina.

SERSE Deh, non negate più.

ROMILDA Negarò sempre.

SERSE Franger io ben saprò ...
Intendete, Romilda?

ROMILDA (Ahi, che farà?)

SERSE Non partirò, se pria ...
basta ... che dite?

ROMILDA Che del mio genitor ci vuol l'assenso.

SCENE 3

Romilda, Arsamenes, Elviro, and then Xerxes.

78 – RECITATIVE

ROMILDA (*to Arsamenes*)

Take my right hand as a token of my fidelity.

ELVIRO Xerxes is coming, Xerxes is coming!

ARSAMENES Oh, misfortune!

ELVIRO I'll be waiting for you outside the city walls.

He hurries off.

ROMILDA Hide yourself!

ARSAMENES (*hides*)

Oh, cruel fate!

XERXES Romilda, what moved you
to grant that warrior his freedom?

ROMILDA His valour, sir.

XERXES So be it:
my kingdom and my heart are yours,
and you are already my queen.

ROMILDA My lord,
to aspire to such heights would spell my ruin.

XERXES Oh, deny me no longer!

ROMILDA I will deny you for ever.

XERXES I always get my own way ...
Do you understand, Romilda?

ROMILDA (Ah! What does he mean?)

XERXES I shall not leave, before ...
enough! What do you say?

ROMILDA That you would need my father's consent.

SERSE E poi che dubbio v'è?
 ROMILDA Ubbidirò il mio re.
 SERSE Vado a chiederlo,
 e intanto mi stillo in gioia.
 ROMILDA Ed io mi struggo in pianto.

79 – ARIA

SERSE Per rendermi beato
 parto, vezzose stelle,
 e poi, pupille belle,
 a voi ritornerò.
 Farfalla al vostro lume
 il core innamorato
 ardendo le sue piume
 fenice io sorgerò.

Parte.

SCENA IV

Arsamene e Romilda.

80 – RECITATIVO

ARSAMENE “Ubbidirò al mio re”?
 Oh, che limpido amor! Che bella fé!
 ROMILDA (*mezza svenuta vien,
 sostenuta dalle sue damigelle*)
 Ahi, ch'io mi moro!
 ARSAMENE Romilda?
 ROMILDA Vi fermate.
 ARSAMENE Romilda?
 ROMILDA Andate, andate ...

XERXES And after that?
 ROMILDA Then I shall obey my king.
 XERXES I shall go and ask him now,
 and rejoice in my fortune!
 ROMILDA Whilst I drown in my tears ...

79 – ARIA

XERXES I leave you, oh graceful stars,
 to secure my bliss;
 and then, most beautiful eyes,
 to you I shall return.
 My yearning heart is like a moth
 captivated by your light,
 and if my wings are scorched like
 a phoenix I shall rise again.

Exit.

SCENE 4

Arsamenes and Romilda.

80 – RECITATIVE

ARSAMENES ‘Then I shall obey my king.’ –
 A love most pure, an exemplary faithfulness!
 ROMILDA (*swooning,
 supported by her ladies*)
 Ah! I am dying!
 ARSAMENES Romilda?
 ROMILDA Stop!
 ARSAMENES Romilda?
 ROMILDA Just go:

Serse il re sovvenirmi potrà,
quando m'ucciderà.

ARSAMENE Tanto m'odiate?

ROMILDA Tanto v'adoro!

Addio, vi lascio, addio!

ARSAMENE Vi fuggo ...

ROMILDA E dove andate, idolo mio?

ARSAMENE Dove vuol

fiera sorte. E voi, dove?

ROMILDA Alla morte.

ARSAMENE Eh, dite al trono
che promesso vi fu.

ROMILDA Vi lascio, addio,
non mi vedrete più.

Le damigelle la conducono via sostenendola.

81 – ARIA

ARSAMENE Amor, tiranno Amor,
per me non hai pietà,
farmi languir ognor
è troppa crudeltà.

Un core, un petto sol
tanto soffrir non sa,
o cangia tempre al duol,
o dammi libertà.

Parte.

Xerxes the king will bring me comfort
by killing me.

ARSAMENES Is that how much you loathe me?

ROMILDA That is how much I love you!

Farewell, I am leaving you, farewell!

ARSAMENES Then I shall go.

ROMILDA Oh my darling, where to?

ARSAMENES Wherever a barbarous destiny
will take me. And you?

ROMILDA To my death.

ARSAMENES Come, come! You mean
to the throne that is promised you.

ROMILDA I am leaving you, farewell;
you will see me no more.

Still supporting her, her ladies lead her away.

81 – ARIA

ARSAMENES Love, oh love, you tyrant,
how pitiless you are.
You are far too cruel
to let me languish like this.

No heart or breast can endure
such relentless suffering:
then grant relief from this torment,
or give me back my freedom.

Exit.

SCENA V

*Boschetto.**Serse ed Ariodate.*82 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Come già vi accennammo
 sposo del nostro sangue,
 a piacer vostro destiniamo a Romilda.

ARIODATE Alto è l'onore! E ...

SERSE L'approvate? Assentite?

ARIODATE Bramo sol d'ubbidirvi.

SERSE Dunque udite:

verrà tra poco nelle vostre stanze
 persona eguale a noi,
 del nostro sangue:
 fate che vostra figlia
 per suo sposo l'accetti.

ARIODATE Del vostro sangue?

E così noto a me?

SERSE Quanto Serse.

Parte.

ARIODATE Arsamene, altri non è.

SCENE 5

*A grove.**Xerxes and Ariodates.*82 – RECITATIVE

XERXES As we have already said,
 a man of our kin, with your consent,
 is destined to become Romilda's husband.

ARIODATES The honour is overwhelming! And ...

XERXES Do you approve? Do you give your consent?

ARIODATES My sole desire is to obey you.

XERXES Then pay heed:

a person of equal rank to us,
 and of our own blood
 will shortly arrive at your residence.

Ensure that your daughter
 accepts him as her husband.

ARIODATES Of your own blood?

And familiar to me?

XERXES As familiar as Xerxes!

Exit.

ARIODATES It has to be Arsamenes!

83 – ARIA

ARIODATE Del Ciel d'amore
sorte sì bella
chi mai sperò!
Per mio splendore
qual fu la stella
che lampeggiò.

Parte.

SCENA VI

*Romilda che
esce sdegnata.*

84 – RECITATIVO

ROMILDA Il suo serto rifiuto,
e dite a Serse in riportargli il dono,
che fida amante
ad altri sposa io sono.

Vuol partire, ed incontra Serse.

SCENA VII

Serse e Romilda.

SERSE Fermatevi, mia sposa e mia regina!
ROMILDA Che dite? Ohimè!
Così non mi chiamate!
SERSE Perché?

83 – ARIA

ARIODATES Who ever wished
for so happy an outcome
from the sphere of love!
What star could glow
so brightly
for my glory?

Exit.

SCENE 6

*Romilda, who is about
to leave, full of indignation.*

84 – RECITATIVE

ROMILDA I spurn Xerxes' crown!
And when you return his gift,
tell him that I am faithfully
betrothed to another.

She comes face to face with Xerxes himself.

SCENE 7

Xerxes and Romilda.

XERXES Stop, my bride and queen!
ROMILDA What are you saying?
Oh, do not call me that!
XERXES Why not?

ROMILDA Perché oscurate il decoro real ...
 SERSE Come?
 ROMILDA Ascoltate.
 Arsamene m'amò ...
 SERSE Principio infausto!
 ROMILDA Fu modesto e fedel ...
 SERSE Basta!
 ROMILDA Servimmi
 tacito adoratore.
 SERSE Ah, m'uccidete!
 ROMILDA Ma ardito al fin ...
 SERSE Che?
 ROMILDA Non ardisco, o Sire,
 m'arrossisco, Signor, non lo dirò.
 Parto, e lo scriverò.
 SERSE No, no, seguite!
 ROMILDA Non so se ardire
 o se fortuna fu ...
 SERSE Ah, che non posso più!
 ROMILDA Le sue labbra accostò ...
 SERSE Dove?
 ROMILDA Alle mie,
 e ... e ... e ...
 SERSE E vi baciò, non è? Ditelo!
 ROMILDA Appunto.
 SERSE Per fuggir le mie nozze,
 ora mentite.
 Mia siasi ver o no:
 delle sue colpe abbia il castigo.
(alle guardie)
 Olà, pronti volate,
 Arsamene uccidete!

ROMILDA You bring a blemish to your crown.
 XERXES How so?
 ROMILDA Pay heed to me!
 Arsamenes has been my lover ...
 XERXES An inauspicious start!
 ROMILDA He was discreet and loyal.
 XERXES Enough!
 ROMILDA He served me
 and adored me with modesty.
 XERXES Ah! You are killing me!
 ROMILDA But eventually, he grew more bold ...
 XERXES What?
 ROMILDA I dare not, my lord!
 I am blushing, and cannot tell you.
 Let me go and I shall write it to you.
 XERXES No, no, continue!
 ROMILDA Whether by audacity or fate,
 I do not know ...
 XERXES Ah! I can bear this no longer!
 ROMILDA He drew his lips close ...
 XERXES To ... ?
 ROMILDA To mine ...
 and ... and ... and ...
 XERXES And he kissed you, did he not? Say it!
 ROMILDA In truth.
 XERXES You are lying
 to avoid marrying me.
 But whether it is true or not,
 he shall be punished for his transgression.
(to his guards)
 Guards ho! Fly this instant
 to Arsamenes and slay him!

Vedova di quel bacio,
poi sposa mi sarete.

You shall first become the widow of that kiss,
and then my bride!

Parte sdegnato.

Exit in a fury.

ROMILDA Mio re, mio sposo, sì!
Oh, amare pene!
Fermate, e viva il caro mio Arsamene!

ROMILDA Be then my king and husband!
Oh, the bitter pain!
But hold your peace, and let my Arsamenes live!

SCENA VIII

SCENE 8

Romilda ed Amastre con lettera alla mano.

Romilda and Amastres, who is holding a letter.

ROMILDA Prode guerrier ...
AMASTRE Signora ...
ROMILDA A me venite!
Se nel petto nudrite
alma cortese e pia,
le mie preghiere udite!
AMASTRE Comandi, e non preghiere
a me porger dovete.
Io mi sovveggo,
che toglieste il mio piè
da' lacci di quell'empio ingrato re.
ROMILDA Ingratissimo appunto!
Egli comanda
che Arsamene s'uccida.
In voi il mio cor si fida;
cercatelo, e per voi nota gli sia
questa sentenza ria.
AMASTRE Vado pronto a servirvi,
ed io vi priego di far recare

ROMILDA Brave warrior ...
AMASTRES My lady ...
ROMILDA Come to my help!
If your breast holds
a kindly and pious soul,
hear my prayer!
AMASTRES You should command me
and not beseech me.
I remember well how
you freed me from the chains
of that depraved and black-hearted king.
ROMILDA The blackest of hearts, indeed!
He has ordered
that Arsamenes be put to death.
I now place my trust in you:
seek him and tell him
of this wicked sentence.
AMASTRES I shall serve you without delay.
And I ask you that you convey this letter

al re questo mio foglio.
 ROMILDA Volo per ispedirlo.
 (Oh, mio cordoglio!)

Parte.

85 – ARIA

AMASTRE Cagion son io
 del mio dolore,
 e so perché.
 Ama il cor mio
 un traditore
 con troppo amore,
 con troppa fé.

Parte.

SCENA IX

Arsamene e Romilda.

86 – RECITATIVO

ARSAMENE Romilda infida,
 e di me pensa ancora?
 ROMILDA Romilda, che vi adora
 di voi pensa ad ogn'ora.
 ARSAMENE Per spronarmi a partire,
 non per salvar chi v'ama,
 dite che Serse brama il mio morire.

of mine to the king.
 ROMILDA I shall have it delivered this instant.
 (Oh, what torment!)

Exit.

85 – ARIA

AMASTRES I am the cause
 of my own suffering,
 and the reason I know well:
 my heart loves
 a traitor
 with too much devotion,
 with too much faith.

Exit.

SCENE 9

Arsamenes and Romilda.

86 – RECITATIVE

ARSAMENES Is the faithless Romilda
 still thinking of me?
 ROMILDA Romilda adores you
 and thinks of you incessantly.
 ARSAMENES You tell me of Xerxes' sentence
 to spur my departure,
 not to save the man who loves you.

87 – DUETTO

ROMILDA Troppo oltraggi la mia fede,
 alma fiera, core ingrato!
 ARSAMENE Troppo inganni la mia fede,
 alma fiera, core ingrato!
 ROMILDA È tiranna la mercede
 che riceve il mio petto innamorato.
 ARSAMENE Non è questa la mercede,
 che si deve al mio petto innamorato.

Partono per diverse parti.

SCENA X

*Gran salone con illuminazione;
 nel fondo del quale v'è il simulacro
 del sole con ara dinanzi,
 e sopravvi foco acceso.
 Coro di ministri all'intorno del simulacro.*

88 – CORO DI MINISTRI

MINISTRI Ciò che Giove destinò
 impedir l'uomo non sa.

*Ariodate, Romilda ed Arsamene
 dal fondo della scena.*

89 – RECITATIVO

ARIODATE Ecco lo sposo!
 Io ben ne fui presago,
 quanto m'arride il fato.
 ARSAMENE Alma fiera!

87 – DUET

ROMILDA You insult my loyalty beyond measure,
 merciless soul, ungrateful heart!
 ARSAMENES You deceive my loyalty beyond measure,
 merciless soul, ungrateful heart!
 ROMILDA A mercy most tyrannical
 confronts my loving breast!
 ARSAMENES This is not the mercy
 deserved by my enraptured breast!

Exeunt in opposite directions.

SCENE 10

*A grand and brightly lit hall.
 In the background, an image
 of the sun and an altar,
 on which a fire is burning.
 A chorus of priests around the image.*

88 – CHORUS OF PRIESTS

PRIESTS What has been destined by Jupiter
 cannot be hindered by man.

*Ariodates, Romilda, and Arsamenes
 appear from the back of the stage.*

89 – RECITATIVE

ARIODATES Here is the bridegroom!
 Just as I had foreseen –
 destiny smiles upon me.
 ARSAMENES Merciless soul!

ROMILDA Core ingrato!
 ARSAMENE E ROMILDA
 Troppo oltraggi la mia fede!
 ARIODATE A colmarmi d'onore,
 Signor, so che veniste.
 ROMILDA (*in atto di partire*)
 Ah, il genitore!
 ARIODATE Romilda, non partite!
 ARSAMENE Ariodate, che dite?
 ARIODATE Che a voi do la mia figlia
 per serva umile e sposa,
 come m'impose il re.
 ARSAMENE Serse l'impose?
 ARIODATE A me stesso.
 ROMILDA (Che ascolto?)
 ARIODATE E voi veniste
 per prenderla in consorte?
 ARSAMENE Altro non bramo.
 ROMILDA (Oh, me beata! Oh, sorte!)
 ARIODATE Romilda, acconsentite?
 ROMILDA Sì, mio padre e Signore.
 ARIODATE Stringete omai le destre ...
 ROMILDA ED ARSAMENE
 E in uno il core!

Si danno la mano.

ARIODATE Ora corriamo a Serse
 per render grazie d'un sì grande onore.

Partono tutti tre.

ROMILDA Ungrateful heart!
 ARSAMENES AND ROMILDA
 You insult my loyalty beyond measure!
 ARIODATES I know why you have come,
 my lord, and you overwhelm me with honour.
 ROMILDA (*about to leave*)
 Ah! Father!
 ARIODATES Romilda! Do not go!
 ARSAMENES What did you mean, Ariodates?
 ARIODATES That I grant you my daughter,
 to be your humble servant and wife,
 as the king himself has commanded me.
 ARSAMENES Xerxes decreed this?
 ARIODATES To myself.
 ROMILDA (What do I hear?)
 ARIODATES Are you not here
 to take her for your wife?
 ARSAMENES I desire nothing else.
 ROMILDA (Oh bliss! Oh fortune!)
 ARIODATES Do you accept, Romilda?
 ROMILDA Yes, my father and lord.
 ARIODATES Then join your hands.
 ROMILDA AND ARSAMENES
 And our hearts too, as one!

They take each other's hands.

ARIODATES Let us now hasten to Xerxes
 and thank him for so high an honour.

Exeunt all three.

90 – CORO DI MINISTRI

MINISTRI Chi infelice si trovò
pien di gioia or lieto va.

SCENA XI

Serse, poi Ariodate.

91 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Se ne viene Ariodate.
È tempo omai
di scoprir che son io
che Romilda desio.
Eccomi, Ariodate.
ARIODATE Invitto Sire, v'inchino ...
SERSE Or che vi sembra?
Lo sposo egual vi dissi ...
ARIODATE È un alto onore.
SERSE Romilda vaga
ne sarà paga?
ARIODATE Non brama più.
SERSE Ma perché mai non viene?
Dov'è?
ARIODATE Collo sposo.
SERSE Come?
ARIODATE Collo sposo, Signor.
SERSE Che sposo? Ahimè?
ARIODATE Come imponeste ...
SERSE Che imposi? Che?
ARIODATE Eguale a voi,
del vostro sangue,
e venne nelle mie stanze ...

90 – CHORUS OF PRIESTS

PRIESTS Those afflicted with unhappiness
now leave blessed with joy and contentment.

SCENE 11

Xerxes, then Ariodates.

91 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Here comes Ariodates.
The time has come
to reveal to him that it is I
who want to marry Romilda.
Here I am, Ariodates!
ARIODATES Oh my great lord, I bow before you ...
XERXES What say you to this?
The husband I mentioned ...
ARIODATES The honour is great!
XERXES Will fair Romilda
be happy with the choice?
ARIODATES She yearns for nothing more.
XERXES But why does she not come?
Where is she?
ARIODATES With her new husband.
XERXES I beg your pardon?
ARIODATES With her new husband, my lord.
XERXES What husband? – Oh woe!
ARIODATES The one you decreed.
XERXES I decreed? What?
ARIODATES Of your standing and of your own kin,
who would come
to my residence ...

SERSE E sono sposi?

ARIODATE Sono.

SERSE Empio!

Perfido! Indegno!

ARIODATE Mio Re?

SERSE Tu m'hai tradito,
e per tuo re tenti chiamarmi,
ardito!

*(Un paggio porta una lettera a Serse,
e gli parla basso.)*

Romilda a me l'invia? Perfida donna!

Crede co' inchiostri rei

incantar follemente i sdegni miei?

ARIODATE (Perché non moro,
o Ciel!)

SERSE Leggi!

(Dà la lettera ad Ariodate, che legge.)

Che fai?

ARIODATE "Ingratissimo amante!"

SERSE Come? Ingrato mi chiama?

E tanto ella osa?

ARIODATE "Venni per esser vostra."

SERSE E altrui si sposa?

ARIODATE "Trovai che mi sprezzate."

SERSE Oh note scelerate!

ARIODATE "Parto,
ma il Ciel punirà vostre colpe."

SERSE Colpe di avverti amato.

ARIODATE "Io piangerò
sino all'ultimo fiato. Amastre."

SERSE Che?

ARIODATE Non di Romilda è il foglio.

XERXES And they are married?

ARIODATES Indeed.

XERXES Treacherous,
perfidious, worthless wretch!

ARIODATES My king?

XERXES You have betrayed me!
And you have the audacity still
to call me your king!

*(A page brings him a letter
and speaks to him.)*

From Romilda? Oh, the perfidious woman!

Does she think she can appease my wrath
with the charms of her pen?

ARIODATES (Why does the ground
not swallow me up?)

XERXES Read it!

(He hands the letter to Ariodates, who opens it.)

Well?

ARIODATES 'Oh most thankless lover!'

XERXES What! Does she call me thankless?

How dare she?

ARIODATES 'I came here to become yours.'

XERXES And she marries someone else?

ARIODATES 'And found that you had scorned me.'

XERXES Oh, venomous letter!

ARIODATES 'I leave,
but heaven will punish your offence.'

XERXES The offence of having loved you!

ARIODATES 'I shall weep
till my dying breath. Amastres.'

XERXES What?

ARIODATES The letter's not from Romilda.

*Serse prende con sdegno
la lettera e guarda la firma.*

SERSE Amastre? Vanne,
e ti allontana indegno!
Non mancava altro tedio in tanto sdegno!

Ariodate si ritira in disparte.

92 – ARIA

SERSE Crude furie degl'orridi abissi,
aspergetemi d'atro veleno!
Crolli il mondo, e'l sole s'eclissi
a quest'ira che spira il mio seno!

*Nel partire sdegnato gli si fanno inanzi
Arsamene, Romilda, Amastre,
Atalanta ed Elviro.*

SCENA ULTIMA

Tutti.

93 – RECITATIVO

SERSE Perfidi! E ancor osate
venirmi innanzi?
ARIODATE Che furor!
ARSAMENE Cessate.
Umili al vostro piè ...
SERSE Sol per schernirmi!
ARSAMENE Come, Signor?
SERSE Tu m'hai Romilda tolta.

*Incensed, Xerxes takes the letter
and looks at the signature.*

XERXES Amastres! Get out of my sight,
you wretch.
What more could happen to increase my pain?

Ariodates withdraws to one side.

92 – ARIA

XERXES Oh savage Furies from the hideous abysses,
smother me with your venom!
May the world cave in and the sun be eclipsed
by my ire, may my breast finally meet its end!

*As he leaves in a fury he is confronted
by Arsamenes, Romilda, Amastres,
Atalanta, and Elviro.*

FINAL SCENE

All.

93 – RECITATIVE

XERXES Perfidious creatures!
You dare still cross my path?
ARIODATES What fury!
ARSAMENES Peace, my lord!
Humbly at your feet, we ...
XERXES You come to insult me!
ARSAMENES How so, my lord?
XERXES You have taken Romilda from me!

ARSAMENE Fu per vostro comando.

ARIODATE È ver ...

ROMILDA Confermo!

SERSE E quando?

Temerari pretesti!

(Tira la spada.)

Questo ferro a quell'empia in seno immergi!

ARSAMENE Ch'io sveni la mia sposa?

Svenerò pria il tuo core!

AMASTRE *(a Serse)*

Datelo a me, Signore!

SERSE E chi sei tu,

ch'ognor sempre mi sturbi?

AMASTRE Uno che cerca far giusta vendetta.

Volete che si sveni

un'alma che tradì chi pur l'adora?

SERSE Sì.

AMASTRE E si squarci quel core?

SERSE Sì.

AMASTRE Mori dunque, ingrato e traditore!

*(Gli rapisce a forza il ferro,
presentandoglielo al petto.)*

Ecco Amastre tradita,

e ognor fedele,

e tu spietato e rio

la disprezzi così?

SERSE Uccidetemi sì!

AMASTRE *(volge il ferro contro di se)*

Morir degg'io.

SERSE Fermate! Ora mi pento ...

AMASTRE E torni ad amarmi?

SERSE Sì, ma di tua pietate indegno sono.

ARSAMENES By your own command.

ARIODATES It is true ...

ROMILDA I vouch for it.

XERXES And when?

This is all pretence!

(He draws his sword.)

Plunge this sword into the heart of the traitress!

ARSAMENES I, kill my own wife?

I would sooner cut open your heart!

AMASTRES *(to Xerxes)*

Hand it to me, my lord!

XERXES And who are you,

with your relentless pestering?

AMASTRES One who seeks rightful revenge.

Do you wish me to pierce that heart

that has repaid true love with treachery?

XERXES Yes!

AMASTRES And cut it to pieces?

XERXES Yes!

AMASTRES Then die, you shameless traitor!

*(She snatches the sword from Xerxes' hand
and offers it to his breast.)*

Before you stands Amastres, betrayed

yet ever loyal.

But so pitiless and iniquitous are you,

that still you show her scorn!

XERXES So be it: kill me!

AMASTRES *(turning the blade on herself)*

I am the one who should die.

XERXES Stop! Now I repent ...

AMASTRES And will you love me once again?

XERXES Yes, but I am unworthy of your mercy ...

AMASTRE Amami pur, o caro,
io ti perdono!

Si abbracciano.

ELVIRO Sono tutto tremante.
ARIODATE Or sparve il duolo.
ARSAMENE Io respiro, e stupisco.
ROMILDA Io mi consolo.
ATALANTA Ed io cercherò
altrove un altro amante.
SERSE Amici,
compatite i miei furori,
e godete felici i vostri amori.

94 – ARIA E CORO

ROMILDA (*ad Arsamene*)
Caro voi siete all'alma
dolce voi siete al cor.
Son dalla vostra palma
fatta trofeo d'amor!

CORO Ritorna a noi la calma
riede la gioia al cor.
Per riportar la palma
s'uniro amore e onor!

Fine dell'Opera.

Il Xerse by Silvio Stampiglia (1664–1725),
adapted from *Il Xerse*
by Nicolò Minato (c. 1630–1698)

AMASTRES Then love me, my dearest,
for I forgive you.

They embrace.

ELVIRO I am all a-tremble!
ARIODATES See how all affliction has vanished.
ARSAMENES I breathe again, but I'm amazed.
ROMILDA Oh, what relief.
ATALANTA And I shall seek
another lover elsewhere ...
XERXES Forgive my past ill humour,
good friends,
and take joy in your love!

94 – ARIA AND CHORUS

ROMILDA (*to Arsamenes*)
How dear you are to my soul.
How sweet you are to my heart.
I am the palm that you shall bear
as a trophy of our love.

CHORUS Calm and peace return to us;
joy smiles in our hearts.
And, to bear away the palm,
honour and joy have united.

End of the Opera.

Translation: Fabio Perselli
With thanks to BMG and Virgin / EMI Classics

The English Concert

The English Concert is an outstanding orchestra: exceptional, in the world-renowned quality, ambition and variety of its live and recorded output; unique, in the zeal of its players for working and performing together; unwavering, in its desire to connect with its audience throughout the world.

Under the artistic direction of Harry Bicket and principal guest director Kristian Bezuidenhout, The English Concert has earned a reputation for combining urgency, passion and fire with precision, delicacy and beauty.

The artistic partners the orchestra collaborates with reflect and enhance its pursuit for new ways to bring music to life. Joyce DiDonato, Dame Sarah Connolly, Iestyn Davies, Alison Balsom, Trevor Pinnock, Dominic Dromgoole, Tom Morris and many more have not only brought their extraordinary skills to individual projects but continue to help the orchestra to shape the way it performs.

One cornerstone of the orchestra's annual cycle is its international Handel Opera tour. Blossoming from an ongoing relationship with Carnegie Hall, the itinerary now regularly takes in the Theater an der Wien, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Elbphilharmonie, Barbican Hall, LA Opera and Cal Performances, Berkeley, and the roster of great halls continues to grow. Meanwhile, the orchestra's regular London series allows it to explore a radically different path, presenting programmes to its home audience that challenge and inspire. The English Concert is associate orchestra at Garsington Opera.

In 2023, the orchestra launched *Handel for All*, a landmark project to film and make freely available all of Handel's works (www.englishconcert.co.uk/handel-for-all).



Harry Bicket

director

Internationally renowned as an opera and concert conductor of distinction, Harry Bicket is especially noted for his interpretation of Baroque and Classical repertoire and since 2007 has been Artistic Director of The English Concert, one of Europe's finest period orchestras. In 2013, following regular guest appearances for Santa Fe Opera, he became their Chief Conductor and in 2018 assumed the music directorship. In Santa Fe, he has led productions of *Carmen*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Fidelio*, *La finta giardiniera*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Alcina*, *Candide* and *Così fan tutte*, as well as concert performances of Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with Renée Fleming. Born in Liverpool, he studied at the Royal College of Music, London, and Oxford University.

Highlights with The English Concert have included international tours of Handel's *Solomon*, *Alcina*, *Ariodante*, *Theodora*, *Hercules*, *Semele* and *Radamisto*; as well as televised performances of Bach's *B minor Mass* and Handel's *Samson* for the BBC Proms. Other projects have included a series of highly successful live-streamed concerts from historic venues in the London area; a staged version of Handel's *Messiah* for the Bristol Old Vic directed by Tom Morris, Bach's Cantatas for Advent and Wayne Eagling's *Remembrance* ballet, set to Handel's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*.

Recordings to date with The English Concert include releases for Virgin Classics, Chandos and Harmonia Mundi featuring Elizabeth Watts, David Daniels, Lucy Crowe, Dame Sarah Connolly and Rosemary Joshua as well as a concerto album released on Signum. His discography also includes five recordings with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, among them a collection of Handel opera arias with Renée Fleming (Decca) and Ian

Bostridge (EMI), as well as selections from Handel's *Theodora*, *Serse*, and the cantata *La Lucrezia* with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson (Avie Records), which was nominated for a Grammy Award. His Gramophone Award-nominated albums also include *Sento Amor* with David Daniels featuring arias by Gluck, Handel and Mozart (Virgin Veritas) and *Il tenero momento* with Susan Graham featuring arias by Mozart and Gluck (Erato).



Emily D'Angelo

mezzo-soprano

Hailed by *The New York Times* as 'one of the world's special young singers', Emily D'Angelo has continued her meteoric rise and firmly established herself as one of the most exciting and critically acclaimed artists of her generation. The mezzo-soprano is the first and only vocalist to have been presented with the Leonard Bernstein Award from the Schleswig-Holstein Festival. A 2020 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist, one of Canada's 'Top 30 Under 30' classical musicians, and WQXR's '40 Under 40' singers to watch, D'Angelo made her stage debut, at only 21 years of age, as Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Spoleto Festival dei Due Mondi, where she was awarded the 2016 Monini Prize.

Over the past seasons, D'Angelo has made a string of widely acclaimed role and house debuts, further cementing her status as one of today's most sought-after performers. Highlights include her house and role debut as Ottavia (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) at Zurich Opera; her role and house debut as Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*) at the Royal Opera House in London; her role debut as Idamante (*Idomeneo*) at Bavarian State Opera; her house and role debut as Angelina in *La Cenerentola* at Semperoper Dresden; Prince Charming in *Cinderella* at the Metropolitan Opera; her house debut as Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) and her role debut as Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) at Teatro alla Scala; her house debut at Paris Opera presenting, in another role debut, Siébel in Gonouuds' *Faust* and Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

D'Angelo is a Deutsche Grammophon exclusive recording artist. Her debut album *enargeia* was named one of the 50 best albums of 2021 by NPR, the best Canadian classical album of 2021 by the CBC, was featured on NPR's 100 best songs of 2021, and received JUNO and Gramophone awards in 2022.

Paula Murrihy

mezzo-soprano

Irish mezzo-soprano Paula Murrihy enjoys a busy career working at the highest level in both Europe and the US. Previously a member of Oper Frankfurt's acclaimed ensemble, she created the role of Carmen in Barrie Kosky's iconic production, which she also reprised in Frankfurt for their 2020 revival.

Murrihy's operatic highlights and notable debuts have included singing the title role Ariodante in a livestreamed concert performance at the Royal Opera House, conducted by Christian Curnyn; Stéphanie in *Roméo et Juliette* for her house debut at the Bolshoi Theatre as well as her company debut at the Metropolitan Opera; and Idamante in Peter Sellars's production of *Idomeneo* at the Salzburg Festival, conducted by Teodor Currentzis.

On the concert platform Murrihy enjoys a close relationship with music-Aeterna and Currentzis with performances in Russia and throughout Europe. More recently, she joined Baroque ensemble The English Concert for performances as Micah in Handel's *Samson*, Ruggiero in *Alcina* and Arsamene in *Serse*, touring Europe, Spain and the US, with venues including Carnegie Hall. In 2020 Murrihy released her debut solo album, titled *I will walk with my love*, with American pianist Tanya Blaich on Orchid Classics.

Daniela Mack

mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack leads the vanguard of a new generation of opera singers, infusing her artistry with a mix of intensity, adventurousness and effortless charisma. Mack has appeared in many of the world's most important opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, English National Opera, Teatro Real, Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Verbier Festival. Her many roles include the title role in *Carmen*, Charlotte in *Werther*, Romeo in *I Capuleti et i Montecchi*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Angelina in *La Cenerentola*, Bradamante in *Alcina*, Rosmira in *Partenope* and Idamante in *Idomeneo*. She also created roles in the world premieres of Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's *Elizabeth Cree* (title role) at Opera Philadelphia, and in David T. Little and Royce Vavrek's *JFK* (Jacqueline Kennedy) at Fort Worth Opera with subsequent performances at Opéra de Montréal.

Also a distinguished concert singer, she has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and The English Concert. Born in Buenos Aires, Mack studied at Louisiana State University and was a finalist in the 2013 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition. She is also an alumna of the Adler Fellowship programme at San Francisco Opera.

Lucy Crowe

soprano

Lucy Crowe studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London, where she is a Fellow and Professor of Performance mentoring. With repertoire ranging from Purcell, Handel and Mozart to Donizetti's Adina, Verdi's Gilda, Puccini's Masetta and Janáček's Vixen, she has sung with opera companies throughout the world, including the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne Festival, English National Opera, Teatro Real, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bavarian State Opera, Dutch National Opera, Gran Teatre del Liceu and Metropolitan Opera.

In concert, Crowe has performed with the world's finest conductors and orchestras including City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Emmanuelle Haïm, Sakari Oramo and Andris Nelsons, Berliner Philharmoniker with Daniel Harding and Nelsons, Wiener Philharmoniker with Nelsons, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment with Richard Egarr, Scottish Chamber Orchestra with Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Monteverdi Choir & Orchestra with Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Sir Antonio Pappano, Los Angeles Philharmonic with Gustavo and London Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle.

In recital Crowe has appeared at the Royal Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, Edinburgh, Mostly Mozart and Salzburg Festivals and the BBC Proms. Her fast-growing discography includes her debut solo album for Linn released in 2021 featuring Berg, Strauss and Schoenberg. Crowe received a Grammy nomination in 2021 for Best Opera Recording for Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Simon Rattle.

Mary Bevan

soprano

Mary Bevan's recent engagements include a return to the Royal Opera House, as Morgana in the new Richard Jones *Alcina*, *LIGHT: Bach dances* with the Hofesh Shechter Company at the Philharmonie de Paris, Euridice in *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Teatro La Fenice and her debut with the Bavarian State Opera as the title role in *La Calisto*. She will make her debut with the Zurich Opera House in 2023/24.

Other highlights include her debut with the Royal Danish Opera, Dalinda in *Ariodante* at the Bolshoi Theatre, Weill's *Street Scene* for Opéra de Monte-Carlo, and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and Eurydice in Offenbach's *Orpheus* for English National Opera. Previously Bevan appeared at the Royal Opera House in David Bruce's *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*, Turnage's *Coraline*, Rossi's *Orfeo* and as Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Concert highlights include tours with The English Concert and Harry Bicket which included her Carnegie Hall debut as Dalinda. She has also performed recently in concert with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Kammerorchester Basel, and made a return to the BBC Proms in 2022.

Bevan is a winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist award and UK Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent in music and was awarded an MBE in the Queen's birthday honors list in 2019.

Neal Davies

bass-baritone

Neal Davies studied at King's College, London, and the Royal Academy of Music, and won the Lieder Prize at the 1991 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition. He has appeared with the Oslo Philharmonic and Mariss Jansons, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Pierre Boulez, The Cleveland and Philharmonia orchestras and Christoph von Dohnányi, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Frans Brüggen, The English Concert and Harry Bicket, Concerto Köln and Ivor Bolton, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Edward Gardner, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and David Zinman, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Sir Andrew Davis, and the London Symphony and Vienna Philharmonic orchestras under Daniel Harding.

Further highlights include David Afkham and the Spanish National Orchestra, New York Philharmonic with Jonathan Cohen, Philadelphia Orchestra with Bernard Labadie, and the National Symphony Orchestra with Fabio Biondi. Davies has been a regular guest of the Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms.

His wide discography includes *Songs of Travel* with the Hallé Orchestra and Sir Mark Elder, *Il ritorno di Tobia* with Bolton, *Messiah*, *Theodora*, *Saul* and *The Creation* (Gramophone Award, 2008) under Paul McCreesh, *Jenůfa* and *The Makropulos Case* under Sir Charles Mackerras, Barber's *Vanessa* under Leonard Slatkin, *Messiah* under René Jacobs, Britten's *Billy Budd* with Harding (Grammy Award, 2010) and *Acis and Galatea* under Christian Curnyn (BBC Music Magazine Award, 2019).

William Dazeley

baritone

William Dazeley's international career has led him to prestigious international opera houses such as the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Berlin, Salzburg Festival, San Francisco Opera, La Monnaie, Théâtre du Châtelet and Aix-en-Provence Festival. His most recent engagements include Sivan Eldar's *Like Flesh* for Opéra de Lille, Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier and Opéra National de Lorraine, Elviro in *Serse* with The English Concert in New York and London, and Starveling in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Opéra de Rouen.

Concerts have included Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, Cadogan Hall, Mozarteum Salzburg and Aspen Festival. He has worked with orchestras and ensembles such as Berliner Philharmoniker, San Francisco Symphony, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Monteverdi Choir, London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and BBC Philharmonic Orchestra.

The English Concert

Harry Bicket *director/harpsichord*

violin 1

Nadja Zwiener

Annie Gard

Julia Kuhn

Oliver Cave

Silvia Schweinberger

violin 2

Tuomo Suni

Alice Evans

Jacek Kurzydło

Chloe Kim

Jeffrey Girton

viola

Alfonso Leal del Ojo

Louise Hogan

Stefanie Heichelheim

cello

Joseph Crouch

Jonathan Byers

Poppy Walshaw

double bass

Jan Zahourek

theorbo

Sergio Bucheli

Pablo Fitzgerald

oboe & recorder

David Dickey

Oonagh Lee

bassoon

Katrin Lazar

Sally Jackson

horn

Ursula Paludan Monberg

Martin Lawrence

trumpet

Mark Bennett

harpsichord

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chorus

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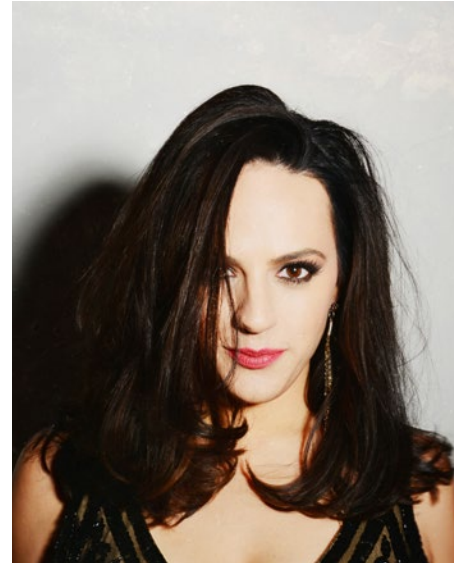
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