



CHACONNE

SUPER AUDIO CD

HANDEL AMADIGI

Tim Mead · Anna Dennis
Mary Bevan · Hilary Summers

CHANDOS early music

Early Opera Company
CHRISTIAN CURNYN



**GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL, C. 1720,
THE SO-CALLED CHANDOS PORTRAIT**

Painting attributed to Sir James Thornhill (1675/76–1734)
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GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685 – 1759)

AMADIGI DI GAULA, HWV 11 (1715)

Opera in Three Acts

On an anonymous adaptation (probably by Nicola Francesco Haym, 1678 – 1729)
of the libretto *Amadis de Grèce* (Paris, 1699) by Antoine Houdar de La Motte (1672 – 1731)

Performing edition prepared by Peter Jones

Melissa, sorceress, in love with Amadigi.....**Mary Bevan** soprano
Amadigi di Gaula, hero, lover of Oriana**Tim Mead** countertenor
Oriana, daughter of the King of the Fortunate Islands**Anna Dennis** soprano
Dardano, Prince of Thrace**Hilary Summers** contralto
Orgando, sorcerer, uncle of Oriana**Patrick Terry** countertenor

Chorus and Orchestra of Early Opera Company
Christian Curnyn

		Time	Page
COMPACT DISC ONE			
[1]	1 Overture. Largo – Allegro – Largo –	3:35	72
[2]	Gavotta. Allegro	1:12	72
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[3]	2 Recitativo. Amadigi: 'Or che di negro ammanto' with <i>Dardano</i>	2:15	72
[4]	3 Aria. Dardano: 'Pugnerò contro del fato'. Presto	3:42	74
Scene 2			
[5]	4 Accompagnato. Amadigi: 'Oh notte! oh cara notte'	1:05	74
[6]	5 Cavatina ed Accompagnato. Amadigi: 'Notte, amica dei riposi'. Largo –	3:11	74
[7]	[Sinfonia.] Allegro – Amadigi: 'Che miro? infido fato!' –		
	6 Recitativo. Amadigi: 'Ch'impedito è ogni passo' –	0:41	75
Scene 3			
[8]	Recitativo. Melissa: 'E tu cerchi fuggir? perfido, ingrato!' – with <i>Amadigi</i>	1:26	75
[9]	7 Aria. Amadigi: 'Non sa temere'. Allegro	3:49	77

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Scene 4			
[10]	8 Recitativo. Melissa: 'Il crudel m'abbandona, e mi detesta'	1:08	77
[11]	9 Aria. Melissa: 'Ah! spietato! e non ti muove'. Largo – Allegro – Largo da capo	5:16	78
Scene 5			
[12]	10 Recitativo. Amadigi: 'Risveglian queste fiamme il mio coraggio' with <i>Dardano</i>	1:55	78
[13]	11 Aria. Amadigi: 'Vado, corro al mio tesoro'. Allegro	3:12	82
Scene 6			
[14]	12 Recitativo. Dardano: 'Deh! ferma, oh Dio! già penetrò la soglia'	0:33	82
[15]	13 Aria. Dardano: 'Agitato il cor mi sento'. Allegro	4:20	83
[16]	14 Sinfonia. Largo – Allegro	2:30	83
Scene 7			
[17]	15 Recitativo. Oriana: 'Cieli, che fia? qual rumore improvviso' with <i>Amadigi</i>	1:17	83
[18]	16 Siciliana. Oriana: 'Gioie, venite in sen'. Largo	4:49	84
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		Time	Page
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22	20 Aria. Oriana: 'Oh caro mio tesor'. Largo, e staccato	6:04	86
	Scene 8		
23	21 Recitativo. Amadigi: 'Cieli! Numi! che miro?' with <i>Dardano, Melissa, Oriana</i>	0:47	86
24	22 Aria. Melissa: 'Io godo, scherzo e rido'. Allegro	3:31	88
	Scene 9		
25	23 Recitativo. Amadigi: 'Ferma, deh! ferma, oh Dio!'	0:26	88
26	24 Aria. Amadigi: 'O rendetemi il mio bene'. Largo, e staccato	5:29	88
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28	26 Aria. Amadigi: 'Sussurrate, onde vezzose'. Largo	3:14	89
29	27 Recitativo. Amadigi: 'Numi! che veggio?' –	1:21	89
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[32]	28 Aria. Oriana: 'S'estinto è l'idol mio'. Largo	7:31	93
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10	38 Aria. Melissa: 'Se tu brami di godere'. Allegro	3:56	100
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19	46 Aria. Oriana: 'Dolce vita del mio petto'. Largo	4:42	110
Scene 2			
20	47 Recitativo. Melissa: 'Sento, né so che sia'	1:01	110
21	48 Aria. Melissa: 'Vanne lungi dal mio petto'. Presto	2:05	110
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22	49 Recitativo. Oriana: 'Se t'offese Oriana' with <i>Amadigi, Melissa</i>	1:22	111
23	50 Duetto. Oriana and Amadigi: 'Cangia alfine il tuo rigore'. Larghetto	5:08	112
24	51 Recitativo. Melissa: 'No, no! ho già risolto'	0:31	113
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25	52 Accompagnato. Ghost of Dardano: 'Han penetrato i detti tuoi l'inferno'. Largo, e staccato	1:27	113

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	TT 77:05		

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MARY BEVAN



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and the majority use no metal wound strings.

Single manual Italian harpsichord, 1991,
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after Carolus Grimaldi

Instrument provided by Oliver Sandig

Temperament: Vallotti, Young
Pitch: A = 415 Hz

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ANNA DENNIS

HANDEL: AMADIGI DI GAULA, HWV 11

By the end of 1710 George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759) had arrived in England for the first time, and soon afterwards he quickly prepared his opera *Rinaldo*, which was unveiled on 24 February 1711 at the Queen's Theatre on the Haymarket. A flamboyant crusader epic packed with sorcery, fantasy, and chivalry, *Rinaldo* marked the first time that any entirely Italian opera had been newly conceived and created especially for the London stage. However, it is unlikely that its composer stayed for all fifteen performances: he had resumed official duties as *Kapellmeister* at the court of the Elector of Hanover; but by the end of July 1711 he was studying to improve his command of the English language. He was back in London by mid-October 1712, and this second visit evolved into life-long residence. During the 1712 / 13 season of the Queen's Theatre he contributed two radically dissimilar new operas: the tragicomic pastoral *Il pastor fido* (first performed on 22 November 1712) and *Teseo* (first performed on 10 January 1713), a three-act Italianised reinvention of Philippe Quinault's five-act French *tragédie*

en musique, set originally by Lully in 1675. At some point during summer 1713 Handel's next opera, *Silla*, may have been performed, perhaps only privately; its printed libretto, dedicated to the Duc d'Aumont (Louis XIV's ambassador to Britain), is dated 2 June 1713. No other evidence about its production survives, either in diary records or advertisements in London's newspapers. When Queen Anne died, heirless, on 1 August 1714, the last Stuart monarch of Great Britain was succeeded by her distant relative the Elector of Hanover, who was crowned George I at Westminster Abbey on 20 October. The Queen's Theatre on the Haymarket was accordingly re-named the King's Theatre, and the rebranded opera house opened its 1714 / 15 season just three days later. The long season peaked with Handel's brand-new *Amadigi di Gaula*, first performed on 25 May 1715.

Both the autograph score and performing score are lost. Happily, the music is preserved in numerous early manuscript copies – some probably copied from the missing performing score. Handel seldom let good musical material go to waste, so the overture's *Largo*

and *Allegro*, and nine vocal numbers, were adapted (sometimes substantially) from *Silla*, which had not been performed publicly (if at all). Two of these reworked numbers – Dardano’s ‘Pugnerò contro del fato’ (I.1) and Amadigi and Oriana’s duet ‘Cangia alfine il tuo rigore’ (III.3) – featured ideas borrowed from Reinhard Keiser’s *Octavia* (Hamburg, 1705). For Amadigi’s ‘Vado, corro al mio tesoro’ (I.5), Handel inverted an idea from a movement in his own large-scale Marian cantata *Donna, che in ciel di tanta luce splendi* (Rome, c. 1707). Nevertheless, the lack of primary sources means that we have no ballet music for ‘a Dance of enchanted Knights and Ladies’ mentioned in the printed wordbook (I.7), and perhaps elsewhere. Some lost dances may have been carried over into Handel’s *Water Music* (17 July 1717), or may be preserved among the miscellaneous orchestral pieces organised by the publisher John Walsh into ‘concertos’ for Op. 3 (1734).

Nor do we know where Handel was living during the composition, preparation, and production of *Amadigi*. His first biographer, John Mainwaring (1760), claimed that during the mid-1710s the composer was ‘chiefly, if not constantly, at the Earl of Burlington’s’. The polymath Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington (1694–1753), was

an active patron of music, art, and literature (the poet Alexander Pope was a frequent guest), and an architect whose own designs and encouragement of protégés nurtured Palladianism in eighteenth-century Britain. It seems that Handel was a houseguest at Burlington House, in Piccadilly, from about 1713 to 1716. During 1714/15 the twenty-year-old Boyle was away on the first of his grand tours to Italy, but he returned to London on 23 April 1715, at exactly the right time to witness the completion and preparations of *Amadigi*. Handel’s apparent lodgings may explain why the printed wordbook was dedicated to Lord Burlington by the King’s Theatre manager, John James Heidegger, who asserted that ‘the Sons of Art flourish under Your Patronage’, praised Boyle’s ‘most refin’d Taste and mature Judgment’, and acknowledged

that Generous Concern Your Lordship
has always shown for the promoting of
Theatrical Musick, but this Opera more
immediately claims your Protection, as it
is compos’d in Your own Family.

The wordbook does not credit the adapter of the libretto for Handel’s setting, but it was probably Nicola Francesco Haym (1678–1729), a Roman cellist and theatre poet who had been in London since 1701.

Its source was *Amadis de Grèce* by Antoine Houdar de La Motte (1672 – 1731), whose libretto was set to music by André Cardinal Destouches for the Paris Opéra in 1699, and this five-act *tragédie en musique* was frequently revived in Paris and Versailles up to 1751. A dramatist, literary critic, and member of the Académie Française, La Motte also wrote librettos for Marais (including *Sémélé*, 1709) and Campra (notably the opera-ballet *L'Europe galante*, 1697), but declined an approach from Rameau in 1727. He took his cue from Quinault's libretto *Amadis* for Lully (Paris Opéra, 1684), based on episodes from Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadis de Gaula* – a Spanish collection of adventures, prepared sometime between 1492 and 1505, but which had its roots in much older mediaeval Portuguese books of chivalric tales (Cervantes chose Montalvo's *Amadis* and its host of imitators as Don Quixote's favourite books). However, La Motte derived his plot instead from one of several mid-sixteenth-century sequels by Feliciano de Silva. Set in Greece, it concerns the knight Amadis, an illegitimate son of the King of Gaul (a mythical kingdom in Brittany) but brought up in Scotland, who is famed for his valour and fidelity. He and Niquée, daughter of the king of Thebes, are deeply in love – much to

the chagrin of the jealous sorceress Mélisse, who obsessively desires the hero for herself. Among other doomed strategies, she enters into a pact with the Prince of Thrace, formerly a close friend and comrade of Amadis, but now secretly his implacable rival for the beautiful Niquée (who despises the prince's unwelcome advances). The selfish notions of love harboured by Mélisse and the prince are in reality inflamed passions, juxtaposed with the heroic couple's virtuous steadfastness under extremely testing circumstances, and their malignant deceptions prove fatal to both: after the prince has been killed by Amadis in a duel, Mélisse summons his miserable ghost, who reveals that Amadis and Niquée are protected by heaven, and that the sorceress will never prevail against them. Bitterly acknowledging her fate, Mélisse stabs herself. Zirphée (a benevolent sorceress), the aunt and protector of Niquée, appears in a *deus ex machina* to confirm that the persecutions of the reunited lovers are over.

The London adaptation for Handel transferred the language into Italian, occasionally emulated some of La Motte's lines of recitative, retained many of the spectacular incidents involving furies and demons, and loosely translated a few of the French aria texts – including Amadigi's

invocation to night (I.2) and gazing into the Fountain of True Love (II.1), the sombre denunciation of Melissa by the ghost of Dardano (III.4), and the dying sorceress's farewell (III.5). The lengthy prologue in praise of Louis XIV (featuring the enchantress Zirphée and enchanter Zirene, and troupes of genies, animated statues, and flying spirits) was cut, assorted *divertissements* were removed, the drama was restructured from five into three acts, superfluous characters were eliminated, the remaining action was abridged to its necessary core events, and new suitable aria texts were provided (the English translation in the 1715 wordbook merely summarised these). The names of Amadis and the lovesick sorceress Mélisse were Italianised, whereas the hero's friend-turned-rival acquired the name Dardano (perhaps after Quinault's villain, Ardan), and the name and national origins of the princess reverted to Oriana, daughter of the king of the Fortunate Islands (i.e., England), as she had appeared in Montalvo and Quinault. In the final scene, after Melissa has killed herself, the *deus ex machina* is a brief appearance by Oriana's uncle Orgando (a magician), who has had a sex-change from Quinault's benevolent enchantress Urganda.

The last stage work which Handel composed before the launch of the Royal

Academy of Music (1720–28), *Amadigi* is the finest of his early London operas in terms of musical sophistication, theatrical pacing, and a perfectly balanced exploration of the interconnected relationships, motivations, and emotional divergences among just four dissimilar yet equally arresting characters. The moral of the drama is that sincere mutual love, which is truthful, pure, compassionate, and selfless (Oriana and Amadigi), shall always be vindicated over selfish kinds of love, which are deceiving, coercive, or possessive infatuations (Melissa and Dardano). In the presentation of this allegory, each of the four characters is portrayed with psychological clarity, supported by consistently high levels of rich musical invention. Other than two arias featuring solo trumpet, and one number including two recorders, the music demonstrates Handel's inexhaustible resourcefulness at musical painting with a palette of oboes and bassoons (sometimes used solo or in trio combinations), strings (ranging from unison violins to five-part writing), and basso continuo (including two instances of the essential stipulation that the harpsichord remain silent).

Handel's tempo markings range from *Adagio* to *Presto*, but nine prominent numbers are marked *Largo* – such as the

exquisite cavatina of Amadigi 'Notte, amica dei riposi' (a G minor invocation to night to spread a comforting veil over his troubled heart), Melissa's bitter complaint in the soliloquy 'Ah! spietato!' (in E minor, 3/2 time, with mournful solo oboe, and marked *senza cembalo* apart from the middle section, in which Melissa's fiery spirit briefly recovers before an emphatic return of desolate melancholy), Oriana's rapturous *Siciliana* 'Gioie, venite in sen' (its vocal part weaving contrapuntally with four-part strings in E flat major), and Amadigi's softly pastoral cavatina 'Sussurrate, onde vezzose, limpidette' (featuring a pair of murmuring recorders and gentle four-part strings). Oriana weeps over the seemingly dead body of her lover in 'S'estinto è l'idol mio' – a contrapuntal F minor *Largo* of compositional sophistication that was praised by Charles Burney for its

pathetic subject, the natural and pleasing imitations in the instrumental parts, the richness of the harmony, the affecting modulation, particularly in the second part; but above all, the strain of sorrow which runs through every passage of the voice-part[.] (*A General History of Music*, 1789)

The historian concluded that these elements 'all conspire to render it one of the most

perfect compositions of the kind with which I have been acquainted'. Another sublime *Largo* is the D minor sarabande 'Pena tiranna'. Placed at the emotional centre of the opera, it portrays Dardano's lonely and hopeless truth by means of a plaintive vocal melody, suspended solo oboe, weaving solo bassoon, five-part strings (three violin parts), and the harpsichord silenced throughout: both Dardano and the audience know that he shall never win Oriana's love. Oriana awaits death in 'Dolce vita del mio petto', an exquisite A minor partnership between voice and oboe. The dying farewell of Melissa, in 'Io già sento l'alma in sen', is a brief G minor sarabande with four-part strings, marked *sempre piano*, its rhythms breaking up as the sorceress's life ebbs away.

Elsewhere, Handel provides plenty of animated and extrovert music. The malcontent Dardano barely contains his seething secret jealousy in 'Pugnerò contro del fato', an energetic *Presto* in G minor for unison violins and bassi. The first entrance of Melissa and her troop of infernal spirits is an F major triple-time *Allegro* that rudely interrupts the nocturnal reverie of Amadigi. The hero's retorts to Melissa over her bunny-boiling obsession ('Non sa temere questo mio petto') and to Dardano on his revelation

of enmity ('Vado, corro al mio tesoro') are lively triple-time B flat major arias, whereas the treacherous reaction of Dardano to his failure to pass through a flaming magical loggia is G minor turbulence ('Agitato il cor mi sento'). Amadigi's jaunty love song 'È sì dolce il mio contento' has four-part strings with oboes doubling the first violins in the ritornelli, but the vocal part is accompanied by violins only, without bass. It is almost as if Dardano takes this as the template when, transformed by Melissa's magic to look like Amadigi, he gleefully proclaims adoration to the unsuspecting Oriana in 'Tu mia speranza' – also a quick aria in A major, but this time the violins play in unison, doubled by violas an octave below, over droning pedal notes in the bass. Its exuberant imitation of rustic bagpipes is diametrically opposite, in pace and key, to the miserable reality which Dardano so recently voiced in 'Pena tiranna', but the unbridled jubilation of his only major-key aria is profoundly ironic: the only time he is happy is when his appearance is identical to that of his bitter rival.

Melissa unleashes scathing mockery in 'Io godo, scherzo e rido', a B flat major *Allegro* in 6/8 that uses four-part strings with oboes. The indignant reaction of Oriana to Amadigi's misplaced accusations of infidelity

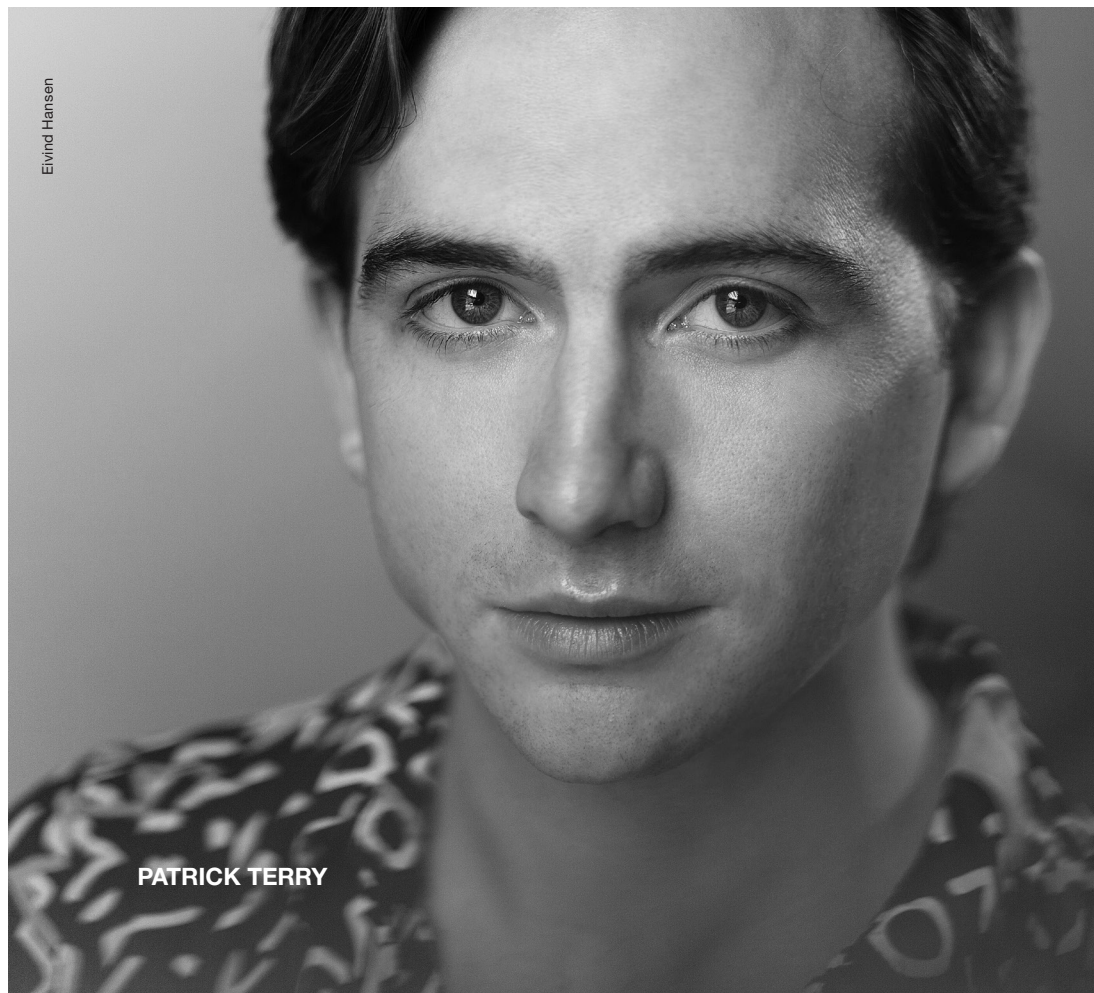
is the fast C minor outburst 'Ti pentirai, crudel'. Her noble defiance of Melissa's death threats is a rhetorically commanding quick B flat major aria ('Affannami, tormentami'), albeit with an *Adagio* middle section in G minor, in a different metre, and a solo oboe. Inevitably, as hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, Melissa responds imperiously in 'Desterò dall'empia dite', a flamboyant triple-time D major showpiece launched by a massive forty-one-bar ritornello for trumpet in dialogue with oboe. The sorceress's vain effort to banish feelings of love for Amadigi ('Vanne lungi dal mio petto') is a volatile *Presto* in B flat major that features concertante violin passages and vivid oboes. All the music in the final scene – Amadigi's 'Sento la gioia' (a D major hornpipe in 3/2 time featuring solo trumpet), the quick cut-time chorus and connecting dance for shepherds and shepherdesses – foreshadows styles which Handel would cultivate two years later, in the *Water Music*.

All four roles were composed for high voices. The title hero was created by Nicola Grimaldi (1673 – 1732), known by his nicknames Nicolino or Nicolini. The Neapolitan alto castrato had worked and lived in Venice, performed at the Queen's Theatre from 1708 to 1712 (creating the title hero in



HILARY SUMMERS

Claire Newman-Williams



Eivind Hansen

PATRICK TERRY

Rinaldo), and returned to London shortly before the first production of *Amadigi*. Melissa was composed for Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti (d. 1742), known as ‘La Pilotti’; she had a wide vocal compass of two octaves, and worked in London from 1710 to 1717. She appears to have specialised in jilted sorceresses – Handel also composed the scorned enchantresses Armida (*Rinaldo*) and Medea (*Teseo*) for her. He composed Oriana for the Italian-born English soprano Anastasia Robinson (c. 1692 – 1755), who studied singing with William Croft (master of the Chapel Royal choir). Having made her operatic debut as recently as 1714, she fell sick after the first night of *Amadigi*, and her role appears to have been taken for the remainder of the run by Caterina Galerati (fl. 1701 – 1721). Later on, between 1720 and 1724, her voice having descended to an alto range, Robinson created several roles in Handel’s Royal Academy operas, including Zenobia (*Radamisto*) and Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*); after her marriage to the Earl of Peterborough she retired from the stage. Dardano was sung by the contralto Diana Vico (fl. 1707 – 1732), who had performed in operas by Gasparini, Lotti, Porta, Orlandini, and Porpora in her native Venice, and took part in Vivaldi’s first fully

fledged stage work, *Ottone in villa* (Vicenza, 1713). She was employed at the King’s Theatre from 1714 to 1716, singing in revivals and pasticcios. From 1720 she sang in Munich and in operas by Vinci in Naples. It is not known who performed Orgando’s soprano recitatives in the *lieto fine*.

In addition to Handel, who directed from the harpsichord, the King’s Theatre orchestra included the violinists Pietro and Prospero Castrucci. Both pupils of Corelli, the brothers had worked in Rome for Cardinal Ottoboni and Prince Ruspoli; they had just been recruited by Lord Burlington during his grand tour and arrived in London on 1 May 1715, just in time for *Amadigi*. The cello section presumably included Haym, most likely the adaptor of the libretto. Solo oboe parts were played by John Ernest Galliard, who had trained in the Celle court orchestra (a mostly French band apparently heard and admired by the schoolboy Bach) and, from 1706, worked in London as a chamber musician and as an oboist and recorder player in theatres; he was a founding member of the Academy of Ancient Music, and translated into English the influential treatise on singing by the Bolognese castrato Pier Francesco Tosi.

On 25 May 1715, *The Daily Courant* advertised the opera’s first performance,

announcing 'All the Cloaths and Scenes entirely New', that there would be a 'variety of Dancing', but warning that

there is a great many Scenes and
Machines to be mov'd in this Opera,
which cannot be done if Persons should
stand upon the Stage, (where they could
not be without Danger) it is therefore
hop'd no Body... will take it Ill that they
must be deny'd Entrance on the Stage.

In the event, *Amadigi* ran for a total of six performances. Other dates were advertised but abandoned on account of Robinson's illness, but also to some extent cancelled because of the extraordinarily hot summer that made conditions in the King's Theatre intolerable. Moreover, the season was cut short by the first Jacobite Rebellion, the diarist of 'The Opera Register' noting on 31 October 1715:

No Opera performed Since the 23th [*sic*]
July the Rebellion of the Tories & Papists
being ye cause – the King & Court not
liking to go out into Such Crowds these
troublesome times.

Amadigi was revived at the King's Theatre in 1716 and 1717. Advertisements in *The Daily Courant* reveal that the original cast, including the return of Robinson, gave performances between February and

July 1716; on 20 June the orchestra played an additional 'Two New Symphonies', one of them an F major piece later published as the first movement of the concerto Op. 3 No. 4 (HWV 315), and on 12 July Attilio Ariosti played a 'New Symphony' on 'a New Instrument call'd, Viola D'Amour'. A season later, performances between February and May 1717 featured the same cast again, except with the castrato Antonio Bernacchi (1685 – 1756) as Dardano; advertisements clarify that Anastasia Robinson performed 'all the Songs which was [*sic*] Originally Compos'd for this Opera'. On 23 February (Handel's thirty-second birthday) the opera had to be 'performed without Scenes, The Stage being in the same magnificent Form as it was in the Ball' (in other words, as it had been fitted out for Heidegger's masquerade two days before). On 21 March, a new scene was added for Robinson and Nicolino, and there were additional dances; on 11 April there were 'several Entertainments of Dancing... particularly, a Spanish Dance', and on 30 May 'Two Pieces of Musick' were to be added 'between the Acts'.

On 17 July 1717, nearly seven weeks after his final performance of *Amadigi*, Handel unveiled the *Water Music* for a Royal barge party on the River Thames. He never revived

the opera again during the Royal Academy years (1720–28) or the 1730s. Its unusual casting, for only four voices, all of them sopranos or altos, may have been unsuitable for larger companies of singers, which always featured at least one bass and often a tenor. Handel made very little reuse of its excellent music in later works. Elements of Amadigi's pastoral 'Sussurrate, onde vezzose' (II.1) were remodelled, in different ways, for high tenor solos in the Cannons anthems *O come let us sing unto the Lord* (HWV 253) and *The Lord is my light* (HWV 255), both composed for the Earl of Carnarvon's local parish church in c. 1718. An idea in the duet 'Crudel, tu non farai' (a confrontation between Amadigi and Melissa in II.4) was reworked for the central section ('For us the zephyr blows') of 'Oh, the pleasure of the plains' in *Acis and Galatea*, also composed for Cannons in 1718. The ritornello of Amadigi's lament 'O rendetemi il mio bene', at the end of Act I, served as a model nearly twenty years later for the title hero's disconsolate 'Cieca notte' in *Ariodante* (III.1).

A drastically altered pasticcio version was organised by Keiser in Hamburg in 1717 under the title *Oriana*, but *Amadigi* was not heard again until a bowdlerised production was staged at Osnabrück, in 1929, and the opera was not revived in Britain until

Unicorn Opera produced it in Abingdon in 1968. Since then, its reputation has steadily increased. There have been twenty different staged productions since 1991, and this is its third complete commercial recording. The score was already admired in the late eighteenth century by Burney, whose survey enthused that

There is more enchantment and machinery in this opera than I have ever found to be announced in any other musical drama performed in England... there is more invention, variety, and good composition, than in any one of the musical dramas of Handel which I have yet carefully and critically examined.

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Synopsis

Act I

Trapped in an enchanted garden by the infatuated Melissa (a sorceress), the hero, Amadigi (a famous knight of the mythical kingdom of Gaul), attempts to escape under cover of night. He is reproached by his close friend, Dardano (a Prince of Thrace), for treating Melissa's obsessive love ungratefully, but the hero shows him a miniature picture

of Oriana (daughter of the King of the Fortunate Islands), and explains that they love each other steadfastly. His own secret desire for Oriana causes Dardano to abandon his friend on the pretext of searching for an escape route, but actually he intends to betray him by warning Melissa ('Pugnerò contro del fato', I.1). Amadigi invokes night to spread its thickest veil to comfort his troubled heart ('Notte, amica dei riposi', I.2), but the scene is flooded by sunlight, and statues, fountains, and vases spring up from the ground to herald the arrival of Melissa and her troop of infernal spirits (Sinfonia, I.2). The sorceress warns Amadigi not to try rescuing the captive Oriana from a magically protected tower, but her offers of love mingled with violent threats (that he will be destroyed by harpies, Cerberus, furies, and flames) are rejected forthrightly by the hero ('Non sa temere questo mio petto', I.3); Melissa complains bitterly in a soliloquy that her constant affection is rewarded only by cruelty ('Ah! spietato!', I.4).

Amadigi and Dardano (now secretly in league with Melissa) approach Oriana's tower, but their entrance is barred by a flaming loggia, above which it is inscribed that only the most faithful lover and valiant hero may pass through unharmed. Unable to suppress enmity for his former friend any longer, Dardano

reveals himself to be the rival of Amadigi for Oriana, and declares that the treacherous gateway is a test of their worthiness. The hero responds disdainfully ('Vado, corro al mio tesoro', I.5) and walks safely through the flames of the magical gateway, whereas Dardano fails and cannot enter; incensed to be found wanting, he flees to seek Melissa ('Agitato il cor mi sento', I.6). The loggia splits apart amid darkness, thunder, and lightning, before the scene calms: Amadigi beholds Oriana surrounded by enchanted knights and ladies, amidst beautiful rows of columns. Oriana descends from a throne, and the reunited lovers tenderly express their feelings for each other (Oriana's 'Gioie, venite in sen', Amadigi's 'È sì dolce il mio contento', a lost dance for the knights and ladies, and Oriana's 'Oh caro mio tesoro', I.7), but they tarry too long to escape and are caught by the furious Melissa, who orders some of her demons and Dardano to carry away Oriana, and commands other demons to block the path of Amadigi; the enchantress mocks his grief scathingly ('Io godo, scherzo e rido', I.8). Left alone, Amadigi laments his and Oriana's misfortune ('O rendetemi il mio bene', I.9).

Act II

Amadigi finds himself in a garden with, in

the distance, a magnificent palace; the garden contains what he believes to be the Fountain of True Love. The hero invokes pleasant streams to comfort his tormented heart and mind ('Sussurrate, onde vezzose, limpidette', II.1). It turns out that the fountain is another of Melissa's magical deceptions: when he gazes into it, Amadigi sees a false vision of Oriana and Dardano lovingly embracing, and falls despairingly into an enchanted sleep. Melissa and her demons bring Oriana to the garden; believing her lover to be dead, Oriana weeps for him ('S'estinto è l'idol mio', II.3), takes the sword of the unconscious Amadigi, and prepares to kill herself; the hero recovers his senses just in time to interrupt her action, but he is still persuaded by the false vision in the fountain and wrongly denounces her for supposed infidelity ('T'amai, quant'il mio cor', II.3). Oriana reacts indignantly, and storms off ('Ti pentirai, crudel', II.3). Melissa suddenly emerges, prevents the miserable Amadigi from stabbing himself, and transforms the scene into a horrible cave, in which monsters arise from the bowels of the earth. She instructs them to punish Amadigi unless he yield and accept her amorous advances – but he spurns her fearlessly (the duet 'Crudel, tu non farai', II.4).

Alone in the sorceress's palace, Dardano has been unceremoniously rejected by Oriana, and

he despairs at the pitiful reality that he shall never win her love, even with Melissa's support ('Pena tiranna', II.5). Melissa arrives, and proposes to metamorphose his appearance into that of Amadigi, so that Dardano can possess Oriana. Initially uneasy about the deception, Dardano is reassured by Melissa ('Se tu brami di godere', II.6), whose spell transforms him into the likeness of Amadigi. He encounters Oriana, who apologises for her earlier anger. The disguised Dardano ecstatically proclaims his adoration for her ('Tu mia speranza', II.8), and he is about to take advantage of the situation but becomes distracted when he spies the real Amadigi in the distance, and hot-headedly rushes off to fight him. The clash of swords is heard, and the bewildered Oriana learns from the enraged Melissa that the real Amadigi has killed Dardano in a duel. Even under threats of death and the power of hell, the noble Oriana defies the enchantress and vows that neither sorcery nor torture will force her to renounce Amadigi ('Affannami, tormentami', II.9). The frustrated Melissa responds imperiously by summoning every conceivable impious ghoul to plague those who despise her ('Desterò dall'empia dite', II.10).

Act III

In the palace of the sorceress, the resolute

Oriana awaits torment and death ('Dolce vita del mio petto', III.1). In the cavern where she practices her dark magic, Melissa is puzzled that none of her strategies to win Amadigi from her rival has worked. As she prepares a lethal poison for them, Melissa tries to dismiss feelings of love for her intended victim, which increase all the more as he spurns her ('Vanne lungi dal mio petto', III.2). Amadigi and Oriana are brought in by the demons, each begging for the life of the other to be spared; together, they implore Melissa for mercy ('Cangia alfine il tuo rigore', III.3). Instead, the implacable sorceress conjures the ghost of Dardano, anticipating that his shade will relish her intended vengeance on their mutual behalf. However, the apparition of Dardano announces that, in punishment by Hell, he is commanded to bring a message: the gods are averse to her injustices, they support the fidelity and true love of Oriana and Amadigi, and have resolved upon the sorceress's own doom ('Han penetrato i detti tuoi l'inferno', III.4).

After the ghost disappears, Melissa spitefully attempts to murder Oriana with a small slim dagger, but is astonished when an unseen power prevents her from striking the fatal blow. At last confronted by the inescapable force of divine punishment for

her crimes, the broken-hearted sorceress finds her hitherto unassailable confidence crumbling away; rejected by both heaven and hell, she fatally stabs herself and, as her life ebbs away, bids farewell to Amadigi ('Io già sento l'anima in sen', III.5). Melissa's tragic fate is pitied by the liberated Amadigi and Oriana, and suddenly the cave is transformed into a beautiful palace (Sinfonia). The magician Orgando (Oriana's uncle) descends in a chariot surrounded with clouds; he confirms that their torment is over, and joins the hands of Oriana and Amadigi in marriage. The hero rejoices ('Sento la gioia', III.6), and Orgando announces that he has prepared magic harmony and a rural dance for shepherds and shepherdesses to celebrate the nuptials ('Godete, oh cori amanti' and a dance, III.6).

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During the season 2021 / 22, the soprano **Mary Bevan** MBE performed *Die Schöpfung* with the Academy of Ancient Music under Laurence Cummings, a tour of *Messiah* with Kammerorchester Basel under Paul McCreesh, *Theresienmesse* with the Handel and Haydn Society under Harry Christophers, the Mass in B minor with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and

Chorale under Richard Egarr, a tour of the St John Passion with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment directed by Mark Padmore, *Messiah* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and a tour of Handel's *Serse* with The English Concert under Harry Bicket that included an appearance at Carnegie Hall, New York. She recently made her début with the Royal Danish Opera, sang Dalinda (*Ariodante*) at the Bolshoi Theatre, Weill's *Street Scene* at Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Dalinda with The English Concert under Bicket, and the world première of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. She has sung Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) and Eurydice (Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*) at English National Opera, Lila (David Bruce's *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*) at The Royal Opera, the title role in Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Coraline* at the Barbican, title role of Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo* at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, and Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at The Globe main stage. During the 2022 / 23 season she is scheduled to return to The Royal Opera as Morgana (a new production of *Alcina*), to perform *LIGHT: Bach Dances* with the Hofesh Shechter Company at the Philharmonie de Paris, and to return also to Garsington Opera.

Mary Bevan is a recipient of the Young Artist award of the Royal Philharmonic Society and the Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent in Music, and was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Praised by *The New York Times* for his 'alluring' and 'consistently excellent' interpretations and by *The Guardian* for his 'rich, mellifluous sound', the countertenor **Tim Mead** read Music as a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge, before continuing his vocal studies at the Royal College of Music, London. During the 2021 / 22 season he sang *Messiah* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, La Chapelle Harmonique, Royal Northern Sinfonia, and Wrocław Baroque Orchestra, the St Matthew Passion on a European tour with Collegium Vocale Gent, Mass in B minor with Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, and Bach's Stabat Mater with Arcangelo, as well as cantatas by Bach with La Folia Barockorchester and the Gabrieli Consort at the Wigmore Hall. He has recently sung Dardano (*Amadigi*) at Garsington Opera, Apollo (*Death in Venice*) at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Ulisse (Francesco Corselli's *Achille in Sciro*) at

Teatro Real, Madrid, Athamas (*Semele*) at Opera Philadelphia, Goffredo (*Rinaldo*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Endimione (*Calisto*) at Teatro Real, Madrid and Bayerische Staatsoper, Bertarido (*Rodelinda*) at Opéra de Lille and English National Opera, Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) at Opera Philadelphia, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and Bergen Nasjonale Opera, Hamor (*Jephtha*) at the Opéra national de Paris, the title role in *Akhmaten* and Ottone (*Agrippina*) at Opera Vlaanderen, The Boy and Angel 1 (George Benjamin's *Written on Skin*) at the Bolshoi Theatre, and Arsamene (Cavalli's *Xerse*) with Le Concert d'Astrée at Opéra de Lille, Theater an der Wien, and Théâtre de Caen. On the concert platform, he has appeared at the BBC Proms, as well as with Emmanuelle Haïm and Le Concert d'Astrée, Jonathan Cohen and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Harry Bicket and The English Concert, Robin Ticciati and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and William Christie and Les Arts Florissants, among many others. Tim Mead has amassed a substantial discography.

Described by *The Times* as a 'delectable soprano and a serene, ever-sentient presence', **Anna Dennis** performs a repertoire ranging

from the opera house to the concert hall and from baroque music to the première of new works. She has notably performed Britten's *War Requiem* at the Berliner Philharmonie, Thomas Adès's *Life Story* at Lincoln Center, New York, Orff's *Carmina Burana* in Lisbon with the Orquestra Gulbenkian, and Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium* at the Sydney Opera House. She has appeared at the BBC Proms with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, among others. On the operatic stage she has recently sung the title role in Tom Coult's *Violet* with the London Sinfonietta in collaboration with Britten Pears Arts, Florinda (*Rodrigo*) and Emira (*Siroe*) at the Internationale Händel Festspiele Göttingen, Lucy Schmeeler and Claire (Bernstein's *On the Town*) at the Hyogo Performing Arts Center, Japan, Paride (Gluck's *Paride ed Elena*) at Staatstheater Nürnberg, Katherine Dee (Damon Albarn's *Dr Dee*) at English National Opera, Bersi (*Andrea Chénier*) at Opera North, Ilia (*Idomeneo*) at Birmingham Opera Company, and Strawberry Seller and Strolling Player (*Death in Venice*) at Teatro alla Scala, Milan. She has additionally created roles in new operas by Francisco Coll, Jonathan Dove,

Yannis Kyriakides, Edward Rushton, and Will Tuckett. On the concert platform she has worked with orchestras such as the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Early Opera Company, Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, and Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, as well as conductors of the calibre of Jonathan Cohen, Christian Curnyn, Maxim Emelyanychev, Adam Fischer, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Masaaki Suzuki, and Peter Whelan. Anna Dennis is a busy recording artist with a substantial discography to her name.

Born in South Wales, **Hilary Summers** is one of the world's few genuine contraltos and has made more than forty CDs spanning works from the early baroque period to the present day. She has sung in most of the major concert halls and opera houses of the world. Greatly respected for her interpretations of the baroque repertoire, she has long been in demand for Handelian roles and has given more than a hundred performances of *Messiah*. With Christian Curnyn and the Early Opera Company she has recorded Juno (*Semele*), Disinganno (*Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*), Rosmira (*Partenope*), Teodata (*Flavio*), and

Amastre (*Serse*). She worked closely with the iconoclastic composer and conductor Pierre Boulez and together with the Ensemble Intercontemporain recorded his masterwork *Le Marteau sans maître*, a recording that won a Grammy Award. She went on to perform the piece worldwide and under his baton also performed *Le Visage nuptial*, Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, and Ligeti's *Aventures* and *Aventures nouvelles*. A specialist in contemporary repertoire, she possesses a range of three octaves, which has excited the imagination of many composers. She has participated in several operatic world premières, singing the role of Stella (Carter's *What Next?*) for Staatsoper Berlin, Madame Irma (Peter Eötvös's *Le Balcon*) at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Miss Prism (Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest*) with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and White Queen, Dormouse, and Cook (Gerald Barry's *Alice's Adventures Underground*), among others. Hilary Summers also created the role of Nell (György Kurtág's *Fin de partie*) at Teatro alla Scala, Milan, to great critical acclaim.

Winner of the Loveday Song Prize at the 2017 Kathleen Ferrier Awards and Second Prize at the Handel Singing Competition of the 2019

London Handel Festival, as well as appointed a Samling Artist in 2018, the countertenor **Patrick Terry** was born and raised in Janesville, Wisconsin, USA, and studied at the Royal Academy of Music, in London. His operatic engagements have included the roles of The Boy and Angel 1 (George Benjamin's *Written on Skin*) with the Melos Sinfonia, Serafino (Gerald Barry's *The Intelligence Park*) at Music Theatre Wales, Rosencrantz (Brett Dean's *Hamlet*) at Oper Köln, Ruggiero (*Alcina*) at Opera North, Eustazio (*Rinaldo*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and Andronico (*Tamerlano*) at The Grange Festival. Additionally, he has sung Ruggiero and the title role in *Teseo* with La Nuova Musica. Between 2018 and 2020 Patrick Terry was a member of the Olivier Award nominated Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, travelling to Japan to appear in 'Le Promesse', a Gala Concert by Young Opera Singers of the World, at the New National Theatre, Tokyo, and singing Arsace (*Berenice*), Joacim (*Susanna*), and Artemis (Hans Werner Henze's *Phaedra*).

Founded in 1994 by its music director, Christian Curnyn, with the vision to celebrate baroque music in ways that delight and inspire audiences, **Early Opera Company**

is now firmly established as one of Britain's leading early music ensembles. The Company collaborates with world-class partners, impresses audiences with outstanding productions, recordings, and broadcasts of baroque opera and early music, and invests in the professional development of the next generation of musicians specialising in the baroque. It was nominated for an Olivier Award (Outstanding Achievement in Opera) for a production with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at the Roundhouse and Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. This association continued, winning five-star reviews for performances of Rossi's *Orpheus* at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses* at the Roundhouse.

The Company has a strong reputation for its performances of works by Handel, including *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Serse*, *Alceste*, and *La resurrezione*, having made notable appearances at the Wigmore Hall and St John's Smith Square, London. It also specialises in works of the French baroque, such as Charpentier's *Actéon* and Rameau's *Platée* and *Castor et Pollux*. Frequently broadcast on BBC, it featured on #OperaPassion Day on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* from the Victoria and Albert



Sim Canetty-Clarke

EARLY OPERA COMPANY



Museum, BBC4's TV series *Rule Britannia: Music, Mischief and Morals in the 18th Century*, BBC Radio 3's *Opera on 3* (Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses*), and at the BBC Proms.

Early Opera Company's recording of *Acis and Galatea* was released on CD by Chandos Records in 2017, to wide critical acclaim, being named Album of the Week in *The Sunday Times* and winning the Opera category at the *BBC Music Magazine* Awards. The Company's previous releases on Chandos, which include recordings of *Serse*, *Alceste*, *Partenope*, *Semele*, and *Flavio*, have won further awards and been named Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*.

Christian Curnyn is widely recognised as one of the UK's leading conductors specialising in baroque and classical repertoire. In 1994, he founded the Early Opera Company, with which he has given notable performances throughout the UK and abroad, and made multiple award-winning recordings for Chandos Records. He is a regular guest at English National Opera, where he has conducted notable performances of *After Dido*, Katie Mitchell's realisation of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Handel's *Partenope*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Rodelinda*, Rameau's *Castor and*

Pollux, and Charpentier's *Médée*, among others. He has also conducted acclaimed productions at Scottish Opera, Garsington Opera, Opera North, and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, as well as Komische Oper Berlin, Oper Frankfurt, Salzburger Landestheater, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, in Lisbon, Händel-Festspiele, in Halle, Opera Australia, New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, and Chicago Opera Theater. On the concert platform, Christian Curnyn has conducted the Academy of Ancient Music, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, The English Concert, Essener Philharmoniker, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Hallé, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. His Chandos recording of *Partenope* won widespread critical acclaim while that of *Semele* was chosen as a Best Recording of 2008 by *The Sunday Times*, made an Editor's Choice in the magazine *Gramophone*, and awarded the 2008 Stanley Sadie Handel Recording Prize.



Eric Richmond

CHRISTIAN CURNYN

HÄNDEL: AMADIGI DI GAULA, HWV 11

Ende des Jahres 1710 hielt sich Georg Friedrich Händel (1685 – 1759) zum ersten Mal in England auf, und wenig später komponierte er innerhalb kurzer Zeit seine Oper *Rinaldo*, die am 24. Februar 1711 im Queen's Theatre am Haymarket uraufgeführt wurde. Bei dem üppig mit Zauberei, Fantastereien und ritterlichen Tugenden ausgestatteten Kreuzfahrer-Epos handelte es sich um die erste rein italienische Oper, die eigens für die Londoner Bühne konzipiert und komponiert wurde. Dass der Komponist bei allen fünfzehn Aufführungen anwesend war, ist allerdings eher unwahrscheinlich; er hatte inzwischen wieder seine offiziellen Pflichten als Kapellmeister am Hof des Kurfürsten von Hannover aufgenommen. Ende Juli 1711 widmete er sich allerdings vor allem der Verbesserung seiner englischen Sprachkenntnisse. Mitte Oktober 1712 war er zurück in London, und dieser zweite Besuch mündete in seinen lebenslangen Aufenthalt in der britischen Metropole. In der Spielzeit 1712/ 13 lieferte er dem Queen's Theatre zwei höchst unterschiedliche neue Opern – das tragikomische Pastorale *Il pastor fido*

(Uraufführung am 22. November 1712) sowie *Teseo* (Uraufführung am 10. Januar 1713), eine drei Akte umfassende Nachdichtung von Philippe Quinaults fünftakteriger französischer *tragédie en musique*, die ursprünglich im Jahr 1675 von Lully vertont worden war. Im Verlauf des Sommers 1713 scheint dann Händels nächste Oper, *Silla*, zur Aufführung gekommen zu sein, möglicherweise nur in privatem Kreis; das dem Duc d'Aumont (dem Botschafter Ludwigs des XIV. in London) gewidmete gedruckte Libretto ist auf den 2. Juni 1713 datiert. Weitere Belege für eine Inszenierung dieser Oper finden sich weder in kalendarischen Aufzeichnungen noch in Londoner Zeitungsanzeigen. Als Königin Anne am 1. August 1714 ohne Nachfahren verstarb, folgte auf die letzte Monarchin aus dem Hause Stuart ein entfernter Verwandter – der Kurfürst von Hannover, der am 20. Oktober in der Westminster Abbey als George I. gekrönt wurde. Das Queen's Theatre am Haymarket wurde entsprechend in King's Theatre umbenannt, und nur drei Tage später eröffnete das umgewidmete Haus seine Opernsaison 1714/ 15. Die lange

Spielzeit gipfelte in Händels brandneuer Oper *Amadigi di Gaula*, die am 25. Mai 1715 uraufgeführt wurde.

Sowohl das Kompositionsautograph als auch die Aufführungspartitur sind heute verschollen. Zum Glück aber ist die Musik in zahlreichen handschriftlichen Kopien erhalten, von denen es sich bei einigen wohl um Abschriften der verlorenen Aufführungspartitur handelt. Händel pflegte sein musikalisches Material nur selten zu vergeuden, daher übernahm er das *Largo* und das *Allegro* der Ouvertüre sowie neun Gesangsnummern in (zum Teil wesentlich) überarbeiteter Form aus seiner Oper *Silla*, die ja nicht öffentlich präsentiert worden war (wenn sie überhaupt jemals zu Gehör gebracht wurde). Zwei dieser überarbeiteten Nummern – Dardanos “Pugnerò contro del fato” (I.1) und das von Amadigi und Oriana gesungene Duett “Cangia alfine il tuo rigore” (III.3) – enthalten musikalische Gedanken, die aus Reinhard Keisers *Octavia* (Hamburg 1705) entlehnt sind. Für Amadigis “Vado, corro al mio tesoro” (I.5) verwendete Händel eine thematische Idee aus einem Satz seiner eigenen Marienkantate *Donna, che in ciel di tanta luce splendi* (Rom, um 1707) “in inverso”. Trotzdem bedeutet das Fehlen von Primärquellen, dass die in dem gedruckten

Libretto (I.7) erwähnte Ballettmusik für einen “Tanz der verzauberten Ritter und Damen” und vielleicht weitere Tanzeinlagen heute nicht mehr zugänglich sind. Einige der verlorenen Tänze könnten in Händels *Wassermusik* (17. Juli 1717) übernommen worden sein oder sind vielleicht in den verschiedenen Orchesterwerken enthalten, die der Verleger John Walsh für Händels op. 3 (1734) in “Konzerte” umarbeitete.

Wir wissen ebenfalls nicht, wo Händel in der Zeit der Komposition, Einrichtung und Inszenierung von *Amadigi* lebte. Sein erster Biograph John Mainwaring (1760) behauptet, der Komponist habe sich in den mittleren 1710er Jahren “vorwiegend, wenn nicht dauerhaft, bei dem Earl of Burlington” aufgehalten. Der Universalgelehrte Richard Boyle, dritter Earl of Burlington (1694 – 1753), war ein reger Förderer von Musik, Kunst und Literatur (der Dichter Alexander Pope war ein häufiger Gast) und tat sich vor allem auch als Architekt hervor, der mit eigenen Entwürfe und mittels der Unterstützung seiner Protégés im achtzehnten Jahrhundert wesentlich zur Verbreitung des palladischen Stils in Großbritannien beitrug. Anscheinend lebte Händel von etwa 1713 bis 1716 als Hausgast im Burlington House am Piccadilly. In dem

Zeitraum 1714 bis Anfang 1715 unternahm der einundzwanzigjährige Boyle die erste seiner ausgedehnten Bildungsreisen nach Italien, doch er kehrte am 23. April 1715 nach London zurück – gerade rechtzeitig, um bei der Vollendung und den Proben von *Amadigi* anwesend zu sein. Händels mutmaßlicher Aufenthaltsort würde auch erklären, warum John James Heidegger, der Manager des King's Theatre, das gedruckte Libretto Lord Burlington widmete; Heidegger betonte, "die Söhne der Kunst floriieren unter Ihrem Patronat", pries Boyles "erlesenen Geschmack und reifes Urteilsvermögen" und bestätigte das von Eurer Lordschaft stets erwiesene großzügige Engagement für die Förderung der Bühnenmusik; doch diese Oper beansprucht Ihre Unterstützung auf noch direktere Weise, da sie in Ihrer eigenen Familie komponiert wurde.

Der Bearbeiter des Librettos für Händels Vertonung wird in dem Textbuch nicht genannt, doch handelte es sich wahrscheinlich um Nicola Francesco Haym (1678 – 1729), einen römischen Cellisten und Dramatiker, der sich seit 1701 in London aufhielt. Die Vorlage war *Amadis de Grèce* von Antoine Houdar de La Motte (1672 – 1731); André Cardinal Destouches hatte das Libretto 1699 für die Pariser Opéra vertont, und bis 1751

wurde diese fünftaktige *tragédie en musique* regelmäßig in Paris und Versailles aufgeführt. La Motte, ein Dramatiker, Literaturkritiker und Mitglied der Académie Française, verfasste auch Libretti für Marais (darunter *Sémélé*, 1709) und Campra (insbesondere die Ballettoper *L'Europe galante*, 1697), lehnte ein 1727 von Rameau kommendes Angebot jedoch ab. La Motte ließ sich von Quinaults Libretto *Amadis* für Lully (1684 an der Pariser Opéra inszeniert) anregen, das auf Episoden aus Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvos *Amadis de Gaula* basierte, einer zwischen etwa 1492 und 1505 in Spanien entstandenen Sammlung von Abenteuergeschichten, die selbst wiederum in wesentlich älteren portugiesischen Rittererzählungen aus dem Mittelalter wurzelte (Cervantes benannte Montalvos *Amadis* und die Vielzahl von dessen Nachahmern als Don Quixotes Lieblingslektüre). Die Handlung leitete La Motte allerdings aus einer von Feliciano de Silva im mittleren sechzehnten Jahrhundert verfassten Fortsetzung ab. Die in Griechenland spielende Geschichte handelt von dem Ritter Amadis, einem in Schottland aufgewachsenen illegitimen Sohn des Königs von Gallien (einem mythischen Königreich in der Bretagne), der für seinen Heldenmut und seine Treue berühmt ist. Amadis und

Niquée, die Tochter des Königs von Theben, sind einander innig zugetan – sehr zum Verdruss der eifersüchtigen Zauberin Mélisse, die den Helden selbst mit zwanghafter Intensität begehrt. Neben anderen zum Scheitern verurteilten Strategien schließt sie einen Pakt mit dem thrakischen Prinzen Dardano, einem vormals engen Freund und Kameraden von Amadis, der inzwischen aber heimlich zu dessen unerbittlichem Rivalen um die Gunst der schönen Niquée geworden ist (die die unliebsamen Avancen des Prinzen verschmäht). Bei den selbstsüchtigen Vorstellungen von Liebe, die Mélisse und der Prinz hegen, handelt es sich tatsächlich eher um glühende Leidenschaft – ein klarer Gegensatz zu der selbst unter extrem herausfordernden Bedingungen tugendvollen Standhaftigkeit des heldenmutigen Liebespaars –, und ihre böartigen Täuschungen erweisen sich schließlich für beide als fatal: Nachdem der Prinz von Amadis im Duell getötet wird, appelliert Mélisse an seinen glücklosen Geist, der ihr offenbart, dass Amadis und Niquée vom Himmel geschützt werden und die Zauberin niemals über sie siegen wird. Mélisse muss ihr Schicksal voller Bitternis akzeptieren und erdolcht sich selbst. Zirphée (eine wohlwollende Zauberin), die Tante

und Beschützerin von Niquée, erscheint nun in einem *Deus ex Machina* und bestätigt, dass die Verfolgungen der wiedervereinten Liebenden ein Ende haben.

Für die für Händel angefertigte Londoner Adaptation wurde die italienische Sprache gewählt; der Librettist bildete einige Zeilen von La Mottes Rezitativen nach, übernahm viele der spektakulären Episoden, in denen Furien und Dämonen auftreten, und übersetzte grob einige der französischen Arientexte – darunter Amadigis Anrufung der Nacht (I.2) und sein Blick in die Quelle der wahren Liebe (II.1), die unheilvolle Verdammung Melissas durch Dardanos Geist (III.4) und die Abschiedsworte der sterbenden Zauberin (III.5). Der ausgedehnte Prolog zum Lob von Ludwig XIV. (präsentiert von der Zauberin Zirphée und dem Zauberer Zirene sowie einer großen Zahl von Dschinns, lebenden Statuen und fliegenden Geistern) wurde gestrichen, verschiedene *divertissements* wurden ebenfalls entfernt, das fünftaktige Drama zu einem dreiaktigen Werk umstrukturiert, überflüssige Figuren eliminiert, die verbleibende Handlung auf das notwendige Kerngeschehen gekürzt und es wurden passende neue Arientexte verfasst (in der englischen Übersetzung des Textbuchs von 1715 sind diese nur in einer

Zusammenfassung abgedruckt). Die Namen von Amadis und der liebeskranken Zauberin Mélisse wurden italienisiert, während der vom Freund zum Feind gewordene Rivale nun Dardano hieß (vielleicht nach Quinaults Schurken Ardan); Name und Nationalität der Prinzessin erscheinen zurückverwandelt in Oriana, Tochter des Königs der Glücklichen Inseln (das heißt England), wie sie auch in Montalvo und Quinault erschien. In der letzten Szene (nachdem Melissa sich umgebracht hat) taucht als *Deus ex machina* kurz Orianas Onkel Orgando (ein Zauberer) auf – die bei Quinault erscheinende wohlwollende Zauberin Urganda hat eine Geschlechtsumwandlung erfahren.

Amadigi – das letzte Bühnenwerk, das Händel vor der Gründung der Royal Academy of Music (1720 – 1728) komponierte – überragt seine übrigen frühen Londoner Opern hinsichtlich seiner hochentwickelten Musikalität, seines dramatischen Tempos und einer perfekt austarierten Erkundung der ineinandergreifenden Beziehungen, Motivationen und emotionalen Divergenzen unter den lediglich vier unterschiedlichen, doch gleichermaßen faszinierenden Figuren. Die Moral des Dramas ist, dass aufrichtige gegenseitige Liebe, welche wahrhaft, rein, mitfühlend und selbstlos ist (Oriana und

Amadigi), sich immer durchsetzen wird gegenüber den selbstsüchtigen Arten von Liebe, bei denen es sich um Täuschung, Zwang oder besitzergreifende Verblendung handelt (Melissa und Dardano). In der Darstellung dieser Allegorie ist jede der vier Figuren mit psychologischer Klarheit gezeichnet, unterstützt von einem durchgehend hohen Maß an komplexem musikalischem Einfallsreichtum. Abgesehen von zwei Arien mit Solotrompete und einer Nummer mit zwei Blockflöten belegt die Musik Händels unerschöpflichen Einfallsreichtum mit einer Palette von musikalischen Klangfarben, die Oboen und Fagotte (manchmal solistisch oder in Trio-Kombinationen), Streicher (von unisono geführten Violinen bis hin zu einem fünfstimmigen Ensemble) und Basso continuo umfasst (einschließlich zweier Stücke mit der unverzichtbaren Vorschrift, dass das Cembalo zu schweigen habe).

Händels Tempoangaben reichen von *Adagio* bis *Presto*, neun zentrale Nummern tragen allerdings die Bezeichnung *Largo* – darunter Amadigis exquisite Cavatina “Notte amica dei riposi” (ein in g-Moll stehender Appell an die Nacht, sie möge sein bekümmertes Herz mit einem trostbringenden Schleier bedecken),

Melissas bittere Klage in ihrem Monolog “Ah! spietato!” (e-Moll, 3 / 2-Takt, mit trauervoller Solo-Oboe und der Anweisung *senza cembalo* mit Ausnahme des Mittelteils, in dem Melissas feuriges Temperament kurz aufscheint, bevor ihre verzweifelte Melancholie mit Nachdruck zurückkehrt), Orianas leidenschaftlich-schwärmerische *Siciliana* “Gioie, venite in sen” (deren Vokalpartie in kontrapunktischer Manier mit einem vierstimmigen Streichersatz in Es-Dur verwoben ist) und Amadigis sanftmütig-pastorale Cavatina “Sussurrate, onde vezzose, limpidette” (mit einem Paar murmelnder Blockflöten und einem sanften vierstimmigen Streichersatz). In “S’estinto è l’idol mio” vergießt Oriana Tränen über den scheinbaren Körper ihres Geliebten – ein kontrapunktisches *Largo* in f-Moll von hoher kompositorischer Komplexität, das Charles Burney besonders pries für sein

rührendes Thema, die natürlichen und gefälligen Imitationen in den Instrumentalpartien, den Reichtum seiner Harmonik und die zu Herzen gehende Modulation, vor allem im zweiten Teil; ganz besonders aber für den Zug von Traurigkeit, der jede Passage der Vokalpartie durchdringt[.] (*A General History of Music*, 1789)

Der Historiker endete mit der Bemerkung, all diese Elemente “fügen sich zusammen zu einer der perfektsten Kompositionen dieser Art, die mir je begegnet sind”. Ein weiteres großartiges *Largo* ist die Sarabande in d-Moll “Pena tiranna”, die den emotionalen Mittelpunkt der Oper bildet. Sie schildert Dardanos einsame Erkenntnis der Hoffnungslosigkeit mittels einer klagenden Vokalmelodie, lang ausgehaltenen Tönen in der Solo-Oboe und pendelnden Achteln im Solo-Fagott, fünfstimmigem Streichersatz (mit drei Violinpartien) und durchweg schweigendem Cembalo; Dardano und das Publikum wissen, dass er Orianas Liebe niemals gewinnen wird. In “Dolce vita del mio petto”, einem exquisiten Zwiegespräch von Singstimme und Oboe in a-Moll, wartet Oriana auf den Tod. Und der Abschied der sterbenden Melissa in “Io già sento l’alma in sen” ist eine kurze Sarabande in g-Moll mit vierstimmigem Streichersatz, die die Bezeichnung *sempre piano* trägt und deren rhythmischer Puls sich auflöst, indem die Zauberin ihr Leben aushaucht.

Anderswo bietet Händel ein reichliches Maß an lebhafter und extrovertierter Musik. In “Pugnerò contro del fato”, einem dynamischen *Presto* in g-Moll für unisono geführte Violinen und Bässe,

kann der missgestimmte Dardano seine heimlich gehegte rasende Eifersucht kaum unterdrücken. Beim ersten Auftritt von Melissa und ihrer Horde von höllischen Geistern handelt es sich um ein *Allegro* in F-Dur und im Dreiertakt, das Amadigis nächtliche Träumerei rüde unterbricht. Die Erwidernungen des Titelhelden auf Melissas obsessive Avancen ("Non sa temere questo mio petto") und Dardanos Offenbarung seiner neuerdings feindlichen Haltung ("Vado, corro al mio tesoro") sind lebhaft Arien in B-Dur und im Dreiertakt, während Dardanos verräterische Reaktion auf seine Unfähigkeit, die in Flammen stehende magische Loggia zu passieren, sich in musikalischen g-Moll-Turbulenzen äußert ("Agitato il cor mi sento"). Amadigis heiteres Liebeslied "È sì dolce il mio contento" weist in den Ritornellen einen vierstimmigen Streichersatz auf, in dem die ersten Violinen von Oboen verstärkt werden; die Vokalpartie hingegen wird lediglich von Violinen begleitet, während der Bass schweigt. Es scheint fast, als habe Dardano dies als Vorlage genommen, als er – von Melissas Zauber in das Ebenbild Amadigis verwandelt – in "Tu mia speranza" der nichtsahnenden Oriana gegenüber hämisch seine Verehrung zum Ausdruck bringt – auch dies eine

lebhaft Arie in A-Dur, doch diesmal erklingen die Violinen unisono, verstärkt von den Bratschen in der tieferen Oktave über brummenden Borduntönen im Bass. Deren überschwängliche Imitation rustikaler Dudelsackklänge bildet bezüglich Metrum und Tonart einen diametralen Gegensatz zu der kläglichen Wirklichkeit, die Dardano eben noch in "Pena tiranna" zum Ausdruck brachte, doch der unbändige Jubel seiner einzigen Arie in einer Dur-Tonart ist zutiefst ironisch – das einzige Mal, dass er glücklich ist, ist ausgerechnet dann, als er genauso aussieht wie sein Erzrivale.

In "Io godo, scherzo e rido" – einem *Allegro* in B-Dur und 6/8-Takt, das einen vierstimmigen Streichersatz mit Oboen verwendet – entfesselt Melissa ihren beißenden Spott. Orianas indignierte Reaktion auf Amadigis unangebrachte Beschuldigung der Untreue ist ihr rascher Ausbruch in c-Moll in "Ti pentirai, crudel". Ihre edle Abwehr von Melissas Todesdrohungen äußert sich in einer rhetorisch überlegenen temporeichen Arie in B-Dur ("Affannami, tormentami"), allerdings mit einem *Adagio* in g-Moll als Mittelteil, der in einer anderen Taktart steht und mit solistischer Oboe besetzt ist. Da die Hölle bekanntlich keine Wut kennt, die der

einer verschmähten Frau vergleichbar wäre, reagiert Melissa unweigerlich mit herrischer Geste in “Desterò dall’empia dite”, einem temperamentvollen Paradestück in D-Dur und im Dreiertakt, das mit einem von Trompete und Oboe im Dialog vorgetragene massiven, einundvierzig Takte umfassenden Ritornell beginnt. Das vergebliche Bemühen der Zauberin, ihre für Amadigi empfundenen Liebesgefühle zu unterdrücken (“Vanne lungi dal mio petto”), äußert sich in einem sprunghaften *Presto* in B-Dur mit konzertanten Violinpassagen und agilen Oboen. Insgesamt antizipiert die Musik der letzten Szene – Amadigis “Sento la gioia” (eine Hornpipe in D-Dur und im 3/2-Takt mit Solotrompete), der rasche Allabreve-Chor und der damit verbundene Tanz der Schäfer und Schäferinnen – bereits die stilistischen Errungenschaften, die Händel zwei Jahre später in seiner *Wassermusik* kultivieren würde.

Für alle vier Rollen sah die Komposition hohe Stimmen vor. Den Titelhelden schuf Nicola Grimaldi (1673 – 1732), der vor allem unter seinen Spitznamen Nicolino oder Nicolini bekannt war. Der neapolitanische Kastrat hatte als Altist in Venedig gelebt und gewirkt; er war von 1708 bis 1712 am Queen’s Theatre aufgetreten (wo er in

Rinaldo die Titelrolle kreierte) und kurz vor der ersten Inszenierung von *Amadigi* nach London zurückgekehrt. Die Melissa wurde für Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti († 1742) geschrieben; auch als “La Pilotti” bekannt, verfügte sie über einen großen Stimmumfang von zwei Oktaven und trat von 1710 bis 1717 in London auf. Sie scheint sich auf verschmähte Zauberinnen spezialisiert zu haben – Händel komponierte auch die Rollen der verachteten Zauberinnen Armida (*Rinaldo*) und Medea (*Teseo*) für sie. Die Oriana schrieb er für die aus Italien gebürtige englische Sopranistin Anastasia Robinson (um 1692 – 1755), die bei William Croft (dem Kapellmeister des Chors der Chapel Royal) Gesang studiert hatte. Nachdem sie erst 1714 ihr Operndebüt gefeiert hatte, erkrankte sie nach der ersten Aufführung von *Amadigi* und für die restliche Spielzeit sprang anscheinend Caterina Galerati (nachweisbar 1701 – 1721) ein. Später dann, zwischen 1720 und 1724, schuf Robinson, deren Stimme inzwischen auf den Ambitus eines Alts gesunken war, verschiedene Rollen in Händels Opern für die Royal Academy, darunter Zenobia (*Radamisto*) und Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*); nachdem sie den Earl of Peterborough geheiratet hatte, zog sie sich von der Bühne zurück. Dardano wurde von der Altistin

Diana Vico (nachweisbar 1707 – 1732) gesungen, die in ihrer Heimatstadt Venedig in Opern von Gasparini, Lotti, Porta, Orlandini und Porpora aufgetreten war und an Vivaldis erstem großen Bühnenwerk *Ottone in villa* (Vicenza 1713) mitwirkte. Vico war von 1714 bis 1716 am King's Theatre engagiert und trat in Wiederaufführungen und Pasticci auf. Ab 1720 sang sie in München und in Opern von Vinci in Neapel. Wer Organdos Sopranrezitative im *lieto fine* übernahm, ist nicht bekannt.

Neben Händel, der vom Cembalo aus dirigierte, gehörten zum Orchester des King's Theatre die Geiger Pietro und Prospero Castrucci. Die Brüder waren beide Schüler von Corelli und hatten in Rom für Kardinal Ottoboni und Fürst Ruspoli gearbeitet; sie waren von Lord Burlington während dessen Grand Tour verpflichtet worden und trafen am 1. Mai 1715 in London ein, gerade rechtzeitig für ihre Mitwirkung in *Amadigi*. Zur Cello-Gruppe zählte mutmaßlich auch Haym, der mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit für die Bearbeitung des Librettos verantwortlich war. Die solistischen Oboen-Partien spielte John Ernest Galliard, der in der Hofkapelle von Celle ausgebildet worden war (einem weitgehend französisch geprägten Ensemble, das der junge Bach anscheinend als Schüler

gehört und bewundert hatte) und ab 1706 in London als Kammermusiker und an verschiedenen Theatern als Oboist und Blockflötist beschäftigt war; er war Gründungsmitglied der Academy of Ancient Music und übersetzte die einflussreiche Abhandlung des Bologneser Kastraten Pier Francesco Tosi über das Singen ins Englische.

Am 25. Mai 1715 kündigte der *Daily Courant* die Uraufführung der Oper an und spezifizierte, dass "alle Kostüme und Szenen gänzlich neu" seien und dass es "verschiedene Tänze" gebe, warnte aber,

es gibt in dieser Oper eine Vielzahl von beweglicher Bühnentechnik, die aber nicht eingesetzt werden kann, wenn sich Personen auf der Bühne befinden sollten (wo sie sich nicht aufhalten können, ohne sich zu gefährden); es wird daher hoffentlich niemand ... übelnehmen, dass der Zugang zur Bühne untersagt bleiben muss.

Letztlich wurde *Amadigi* sechs Mal auf der Bühne präsentiert. Weitere Aufführungstermine waren vorgesehen, kamen jedoch nicht zustande – teils war dies durch Robinsons Erkrankung bedingt, teils mussten sie abgesagt werden, weil sich die klimatischen Bedingungen im King's Theatre wegen des ungewöhnlich heißen Sommers

unerträglich gestalteten. Hinzu kam, dass die Spielzeit wegen des Jakobiten-Aufstands zu einem vorzeitigen Ende kam; am 31. Oktober 1715 hielt das Opernregister fest:

Keine Oper aufgeführt seit dem
23. Juli, Grund ist die Rebellion der
Tories & Papisten – da der König &
Hofstaat in diesen schwierigen Zeiten
sich nicht gerne unter solche Mengen
mischen.

In den Jahren 1716 und 1717 wurde *Amadigi* am King's Theatre erneut inszeniert. Ankündigungen im *Daily Cowant* zeigen, dass die Oper zwischen Februar und Juli 1716 in der ursprünglichen Besetzung – auch Robinson war inzwischen zurückgekehrt – zur Aufführung kam; am 20. Juni spielte das Orchester außerdem „zwei neue Sinfonien“, eine davon ein Werk in F-Dur, das später als der erste Satz des Konzerts op. 3 Nr. 4 (HWV 315) veröffentlicht wurde; und am 12. Juli spielte Attilio Ariosti eine „neue Sinfonie“ auf „einem neuen Instrument, das Viola d'Amour genannt wird“. In der folgenden Spielzeit gab es zwischen Februar und Mai 1717 weitere Aufführungen mit derselben Besetzung, nur sang den Dardano nun der Kastrat Antonio Bernacchi (1685–1756); wie Anzeigen zu entnehmen ist, gab Anastasia Robinson „sämtliche Arien, die ursprünglich

für diese Oper komponiert worden sind“. Am 23. Februar (Händels zweiunddreißigsten Geburtstag) musste die Aufführung „ohne szenische Darstellung“ auskommen, „da die Bühne sich in dem prachtvollen Zustand wie während des Balls“ befand (mit anderen Worten, wie sie zwei Tage zuvor für Heideggers Maskerade dekoriert worden war). Am 21. März gab es eine neue Szene für Robinson und Nicolino sowie weitere Tänze; am 11. April wurden zudem „mehrere Tanzunterhaltungen ... insbesondere ein spanischer Tanz“ präsentiert, und am 30. Mai sollten „zwei Musikstücke“ hinzukommen, die „zwischen den Akten“ erklangen.

Am 17. Juli 1717, fast sieben Wochen nach seiner letzten Aufführung von *Amadigi*, präsentierte Händel anlässlich einer königlichen Bootspartie auf der Themse seine *Wassermusik*. In den Jahren der Royal Academy (1720–1728) und den 1730ern gab es keine weitere Aufführung. Die ungewöhnliche Besetzung mit nur vier – ausschließlich aus Sopranen und Altstimmen bestehenden – Vokalpartien mag für größere Opernensembles wenig geeignet gewesen sein, da diese immer auch mindestens einen Bass und oft einen Tenor umfassten. Auch die exzellente Musik verwendete Händel in späteren Werken kaum wieder. Elemente

von Amadigis pastoralem “Sussurrare, onde vezze” (II.1) arbeitete er auf je unterschiedliche Weise für hohe Tenorsoli in die Cannons Anthems *O come let us sing unto the Lord* (HWV 253) und *The Lord is my light* (HWV 255) ein, die er beide um das Jahr 1718 für die Pfarrkirche des Earl of Carnarvon komponierte. Einen musikalischen Gedanken aus dem Duett “Crudel, tu non farai” (eine Konfrontation zwischen Amadigi und Melissa in II.4) verwendete er für den Mittelteil (“For us the zephyr blows”) von “Oh, the pleasure of the plains” in seiner Pastoraloper *Acis and Galatea*, die er ebenfalls 1718 für Cannons schrieb. Das Ritornell von Amadigis Lamento “O rendetemi il mio bene” am Schluss des ersten Aktes diente ihm nahezu zwanzig Jahre später als Vorlage für das untröstliche “Cieca notte” des Titelhelden in *Ariodante* (III.1).

Eine drastisch geänderte Pasticcio-Fassung des Werks wurde unter dem Titel *Oriana* 1717 von Reinhard Keiser in Hamburg präsentiert, doch *Amadigi* kam lange Zeit nicht mehr zur Aufführung. Erst im Jahr 1929 gab es in Osnabrück die Inszenierung einer entstellten Fassung, und in Großbritannien wurde das Werk erst 1968 mit einer Aufführung von Unicorn Opera in Abingdon wiederbelebt. Seither ist seine Reputation stetig gewachsen.

Seit 1991 gab es zwanzig unterschiedliche Inszenierungen, und dies ist die dritte vollständige kommerzielle Einspielung. Das Werk erweckte bereits im späten achtzehnten Jahrhundert die Bewunderung von Charles Burney, der sich in seiner Beurteilung begeistert zeigte:

Es gibt in dieser Oper mehr Verzauberung und bewegliche Bühnentechnik, als ich jemals in irgendeinem anderen in England aufgeführten Musikdrama angekündigt gefunden habe ... es versammelt sich hier mehr Einfallsreichtum, Abwechslung und ausgezeichnete Musik als in irgendeinem anderen der Musikdramen Handels, die ich bisher sorgfältig und kritisch geprüft habe.

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Synopse

Erster Akt

Der Titelheld der Oper – Amadigi, ein berühmter Ritter des mythischen Königreichs Gallien – ist von der verliebten Melissa (einer Zauberin) in einem verwunschenen Garten gefangengesetzt worden und versucht nun, im Dunkel der Nacht zu entfliehen. Sein

enger Freund Dardano (ein thrakischer Prinz) macht ihm Vorhaltungen, weil er Melissas obsessiver Liebe mit Undankbarkeit begegne, doch Amadigi zeigt ihm eine Miniatur von Oriana, der Tochter des Königs der Glückseligen Inseln, und erklärt, dass sie einander in unverbrüchlicher Liebe zugetan seien. Sein eigenes heimliches Begehren Orianas veranlasst Dardano, seinen Freund unter dem Vorwand zu verlassen, dass er für ihn einen Fluchtweg suche, doch eigentlich beabsichtigt er, ihn zu verraten, indem er Melissa warnt (*“Pugnerò contro del fato”, I.1*). Amadigi appelliert an die Nacht, sie möge ihren dichtesten Schleier ausbreiten, um sein bekümmertes Herz zu bedecken (*“Notte, amica dei riposi”, I.2*), doch die Szene erstrahlt in gleißendem Sonnenlicht und aus dem Boden erheben sich Statuen, Springbrunnen und Vasen, um die Ankunft Melissas und ihrer Horde höllischer Geister anzukündigen (*Sinfonia, I.2*). Die Zauberin warnt Amadigi, er solle nicht versuchen, die in einem durch Magie geschützten Turm gefangene Oriana zu befreien, doch der Held weist ihre mit rabiaten Drohungen (dass er von Harpyien, Zerberus, Furien und Feuer vernichtet werde) vermischte Liebesofferte sofort zurück (*“Non sa temere questo mio petto”, I.3*); in einem Monolog beklagt sich Melissa daraufhin bitterlich, dass

ihre beständige Zuneigung grausam belohnt werde (*“Ah! spietato!”, I.4*).

Amadigi und Dardano (der inzwischen heimlich mit Melissa verbündet ist) nähern sich Orianas Turm, doch ihr Eintreten wird durch eine brennende Loggia verhindert, über der eine Inschrift prangt; diese besagt, dass nur ein getreu Liebender und tapferer Held unverletzt passieren darf. Dardano, der seine feindselige Haltung gegenüber seinem früheren Freund nicht länger verbergen kann, gibt sich als Amadigis Rivale um Orianas Gunst zu erkennen und erklärt, dass das tückische Portal als Test ihrer Würdigkeit diene. Der Protagonist Amadigi reagiert verächtlich (*“Vado, corro al mio tesoro”, I.5*) und durchschreitet die Flammen des magischen Portals sodann sicheren Fußes, während Dardano scheitert und nicht eintreten kann. Erbst über sein Unvermögen eilt er fluchtartig zu Melissa (*“Agitato il cor mi sento”, I.6*). Die Loggia bricht nun unter Donner und Blitz in düsterer Atmosphäre entzwei, bevor die Szene sich beruhigt und Amadigi Oriana zwischen prachtvollen Säulen erblickt, umringt von verzauberten Rittern und Damen. Oriana steigt von einem Thron herab und die wieder vereinten Liebenden beteuern einander voller Zärtlichkeit ihre Gefühle (Orianas *“Gioie,*

venite in sen", Amadigi "È sì dolce il mio contento", ein – leider nicht überlieferter – Tanz für die Ritter und Damen und Orianas "Oh caro mio tesoro", I.7); doch sie verweilen zu lange, um noch fliehen zu können, und werden von der zornigen Melissa eingefangen, die einigen ihrer Dämonen und Dardano aufträgt, Oriana wegzuschleppen, und anderen Dämonen befiehlt, Amadigi den Weg zu versperren; mit beißendem Hohn mokiert die Zauberin seinen Kummer ("Io godo, scherzo e rido", I.8). Amadigi bleibt allein zurück und beklagt sein und Orianas Unglück ("O rendetemi il mio bene", I.9).

Zweiter Akt

Amadigi findet sich in einem Garten, in der Ferne steht ein prachtvoller Palast; der Garten enthält, wie er glaubt, den Brunnen der wahren Liebe. Der Held Amadigi bittet um wohlthuend strömendes Wasser, um sein geplagtes Herz und Gemüt zu trösten ("Sussurrate, onde vezzose, limpidette", II.1). Doch es stellt sich heraus, dass der Brunnen nur eine weitere von Melissas magischen Täuschungen ist – als er hineinblickt, sieht Amadigi eine falsche Vision von Oriana und Dardano in liebevoller Umarmung; darauf hin fällt er verzweifelt in einen verwünschten Schlaf. Melissa und ihre

Dämonen bringen Oriana in den Garten; diese glaubt, ihr Geliebter sei tot, und beklagt ihn tränenreich ("S'estinto è l'idol mio", II.3). Sodann ergreift sie das Schwert des bewusstlosen Amadigi und will sich umbringen, doch Amadigi kommt gerade noch rechtzeitig wieder zu Bewusstsein, um sie daran zu hindern; er ist allerdings immer noch von dem im Brunnen erblickten Trugbild überzeugt und klagt Oriana irrigerweise wegen ihrer mutmaßlichen Untreue an ("T'amai, quant' il mio cor", II.3). Oriana reagiert indigniert und stürmt davon ("Ti pentirai, crudel", II.3). Plötzlich taucht Melissa auf; sie verhindert, dass der unglückliche Amadigi sich erdolcht, und verwandelt die Szene in eine schreckliche Höhle voller Monster, die aus dem Inneren der Erde emporstreben. Sie instruiert diese Wesen, Amadigi zu bestrafen – es sei denn, er gebe nach und akzeptiere ihre verliebten Avancen. Doch er weist sie couragiert zurück (Duett "Crudel, tu non farai", II.4).

Allein im Palast der Zauberin, ist Dardano von Oriana rüde zurückgewiesen worden und verzweifelt nun an der bedrückenden Einsicht, dass er niemals ihre Liebe gewinnen wird – selbst mit Melissas Unterstützung nicht ("Pena tiranna", II.5). Melissa kommt hinzu und

schlägt vor, seine äußere Erscheinung in die von Amadigi zu verwandeln, so dass er sich ihrer bemächtigen könne. Dardano zögert zunächst, sich auf diese Täuschung einzulassen, doch Melissa beruhigt ihn ("Se tu brami di godere", II.6) und verleiht ihm mithilfe ihrer Zauberkünste das Aussehen von Amadigi. Er trifft auf Oriana, die sich für ihr verärgertes Verhalten entschuldigt. Der getarnte Dardano beteuert verzückt, wie sehr er sie anbetet ("Tu mia speranza", II.8) und steht im Begriff, die Situation auszunutzen, als er in der Ferne den wahren Amadigi zu erblicken glaubt und hitzköpfig forteilt, um diesen zum Kampf herauszufordern. Der Klang aufeinanderprallender Schwerter ist zu hören und die verstörte Oriana erfährt von der wutentbrannten Melissa, dass der echte Amadigi Dardano im Duell getötet hat. Selbst unter Androhung des Todes und der Höllenmacht widersteht die edle Oriana der Zauberin auch jetzt und schwört, dass weder Hexerei noch Folterqualen sie zwingen können, Amadigi aufzugeben ("Affannami, tormentami", II.9). Die herrische Melissa bringt ihre Enttäuschung zum Ausdruck, indem sie jegliches erdenkliche pietätlose Monster auffordert, die zu plagen, die sie geringschätzen ("Desterò dall'empia dite", II.10).

Dritter Akt

Im Palast der Zauberin erwartet die resolute Oriana Folter und Tod ("Dolce vita del mio petto", III.1). In der Höhle, wo sie ihre schwarze Magie ausübt, zeigt sich Melissa verwundert darüber, dass keine ihrer Strategien, Amadigi ihrer Rivalin abspenstig zu machen, zum Erfolg geführt hat. Während sie für die beiden ein tödliches Gift bereitet, versucht sie, Empfindungen von Liebe zu ihrem intendierten Opfer zu unterdrücken, doch diese werden umso heftiger, je mehr Amadigi sie zurückweist ("Vanne lungi dal mio petto", III.2). Amadigi und Oriana werden von den Dämonen hereingebracht. Beide flehen darum, dass das Leben des anderen verschont werde; gemeinsam bitten sie Melissa um Gnade ("Cangia alfine il tuo rigore", III.3). Stattdessen beschwört die unerbittliche Hexe den Geist von Dardano; sie erwartet, dass sein Schatten Gefallen daran finden wird, sie in ihrer beider Namen Rache üben zu sehen. Doch der Geist von Dardano verkündet, dass er bei Androhung höllischer Strafen eine Botschaft zu überbringen habe: Die Götter lehnen die von ihr verübten Ungerechtigkeiten ab, sie unterstützen die Treue und wahre Liebe von Oriana und Amadigi und sehen für die Zauberin selbst ein düsteres Schicksal vor ("Han penetrato i detti tuoi l'inferno", III.4).

Nachdem der Geist verschwunden ist, versucht die gehässige Melissa, Oriana mit einem kleinen schmalen Dolch zu ermorden, und ist erstaunt, als eine unsichtbare Macht sie daran hindert, den tödlichen Stich auszuführen. Als sie sich zu guter Letzt von der unentrinnbaren Kraft der göttlichen Strafe für ihre Verbrechen konfrontiert sieht, spürt die verzweifelte Magierin, wie ihr bisher unerschütterliches Vertrauen wegbricht; von Himmel und Hölle zurückgewiesen, fügt sie sich einen fatalen Dolchstoß zu, und während ihre Lebenskräfte schwinden, sagt sie Amadigi Lebewohl ("Io già sento l'alma in sen", III.5). Melissas tragisches Schicksal wird von den befreiten Liebenden Amadigi und

Oriana beklagt, und plötzlich ist die Höhle in einen prachtvollen Palast verwandelt (Sinfonia). Der Zauberer Orgando (Orianas Onkel) schwebt in einem von Wolken umgebenen Triumphwagen herab; er versichert, dass ihre Qualen vorüber sind und vereint die Hände von Oriana und Amadigi in der Ehe. Der Titelheld frohlockt ("Sento la gioia", III.6) und Orgando verkündet, dass er zur Feier der Hochzeit magische Harmonien und einen rustikalen Tanz für Schäfer und Schäferinnen vorbereitet habe ("Godete, oh cori amanti" und ein Tanz, III.6).

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

HAENDEL: AMADIGI DI GAULA, HWV 11

À la fin de l'année 1710, Georg Friedrich Haendel (1685 – 1759) se rendit en Angleterre pour la première fois, et sans tarder, il prépara son opéra *Rinaldo* qui fut dévoilé au public le 24 février 1711 au Queen's Theatre, sur le Haymarket. Cette épopée flamboyante à l'allure de croisade truffée de sorcellerie, de fantaisie et de chevalerie fut le premier opéra entièrement italien conçu et créé spécialement pour la scène londonienne. Il est peu probable qu'Haendel soit resté pour les quinze représentations, car il avait à nouveau des fonctions officielles comme *Kapellmeister* à la cour du prince électeur de Hanovre. Mais, vers la fin de juillet 1711, il s'était mis à l'étude de l'anglais pour améliorer sa maîtrise de la langue, et il regagna Londres à la mi-octobre 1712 – une seconde visite qui se transforma en résidence à vie. Au cours de la saison 1712 / 1713 du Queen's Theatre, Haendel fournit deux nouveaux opéras radicalement dissemblables: l'opéra pastoral tragi-comique *Il pastor fido* (créé le 22 novembre 1712) et *Teseo* (créé le 10 janvier 1713), une réinvention italianisée en trois actes de la tragédie en musique

en cinq actes de Philippe Quinault, mise en musique originellement par Lully en 1675. Il est possible que l'opéra qu'Haendel composa ensuite, *Silla*, ait été exécuté au cours de l'été 1713, peut-être en privé seulement; le livret imprimé, dédié au duc d'Aumont (l'ambassadeur de Louis XIV en Grande-Bretagne), est daté du 2 juin 1713. Il ne subsiste aucune autre évidence de sa production, que ce soit dans des chroniques ou dans les annonces de la presse à Londres. Quand la reine Anne mourut le 1er août 1714, sans héritier, la succession de la dernière représentante de la monarchie Stuart de Grande-Bretagne fut assurée par son lointain parent, le prince électeur de Hanovre, qui fut couronné en tant que George I à Westminster Abbey, le 20 octobre. Le Queen's Theatre sur le Haymarket fut ainsi renommé King's Theatre, et l'opéra, dans sa nouvelle mouture, ouvrit sa saison 1714 / 1715 trois jours plus tard. Cette longue saison connut un sommet avec le tout nouvel opéra de Haendel *Amadigi di Gaula*, créé le 25 mai 1715.

Tant la partition autographe que celle destinée à la représentation de l'opéra sont

perdues. Heureusement, la musique est sauvegardée dans de nombreuses copies anciennes du manuscrit – certaines étant des copies de la partition destinée à l’exécution de l’œuvre disparue. Haendel laissait rarement se perdre du matériau musical de qualité, et donc le *Largo* et l’*Allegro* de l’ouverture, et neuf numéros vocaux furent adaptés (parfois substantiellement) de *Silla* dont il n’y avait pas eu de représentation publique (ni autre peut-être). Deux de ces numéros retravaillés – “Pugnerò contro del fato” de Dardano (I.1) et le duo d’Amadigi et d’Oriana “Cangia alfine il tuo rigore” (III.3) – contenaient des idées empruntées à *Octavia* de Reinhard Keiser (Hambourg, 1705). Pour “Vado, corro al mio tesoro” d’Amadigi (I.5), Haendel inversa une idée d’un mouvement de sa propre cantate mariale de grande envergure *Donna, che in ciel di tanta luce splendi* (Rome, vers 1707). Néanmoins, l’absence de sources originales signifie que nous n’avons pas de musique de ballet pour “a Dance of enchanted Knights and Ladies” mentionné dans le livret imprimé (I.7) et peut-être ailleurs. Certaines danses perdues peuvent avoir été reprises dans *Water Music* de Haendel (17 juillet 1717) ou peuvent avoir été préservées parmi les diverses pièces orchestrales organisées par l’éditeur John Walsh en “concertos” pour l’op. 3 (1734).

Nous ne savons pas non plus où vivait Haendel pendant la composition, la préparation et la production d’*Amadigi*. Son premier biographe, John Mainwaring (1760), affirma qu’au milieu des années 1710, le compositeur était “principalement, si pas constamment, chez le comte de Burlington”. Richard Boyle, troisième comte de Burlington (1694 – 1753), était un érudit et un mécène actif dans l’univers de la musique, des arts et de la littérature (le poète Alexander Pope fut fréquemment l’un de ses hôtes) ainsi qu’un architecte dont les propres dessins et les encouragements à ses protégés ont nourri le palladianisme au dix-huitième siècle en Angleterre. Il semble qu’Haendel fut l’un des hôtes de Burlington House, à Piccadilly, de 1713 à 1716 environ. Au cours des années 1714 – 1715, Boyle, qui avait alors vingt ans, fit son premier grand tour d’Italie, mais il revint à Londres le 23 avril 1715 juste au bon moment pour être témoin du parachèvement et des préparatifs d’*Amadigi*. L’endroit où était apparemment hébergé Haendel peut expliquer pourquoi le livret fut dédié à Lord Burlington par le directeur du King’s Theatre, John James Heidegger, qui affirma que “les Fils de l’Art sont florissants sous votre patronage” et loua Boyle pour “son goût raffiné et la maturité de son jugement”; il souligna aussi

le grand intérêt que vous avez toujours porté à la promotion de la musique dramatique, cependant cet opéra requiert plus immédiatement votre protection du fait qu'il a été composé au sein de votre propre famille.

Le texte ne cite pas le nom de l'adaptateur du livret pour la mise en musique de Haendel, mais ce fut probablement Nicola Francesco Haym (1678 – 1729), un violoncelliste et poète dramatique romain qui était à Londres depuis 1701. Sa source fut *Amadis de Grèce* d'Antoine Houdar de La Motte (1672 – 1731) dont le livret fut mis en musique par André Cardinal Destouches pour l'Opéra de Paris en 1699, et cette tragédie en musique en cinq actes fut souvent reprise à Paris et à Versailles jusqu'en 1751. Dramaturge, critique littéraire et membre de l'Académie française, La Motte écrivit aussi des livrets pour Marais (y compris, *Sémélé*, 1709) et Campra (notamment l'opéra-ballet *L'Europe galante*, 1697), mais il refusa une demande de Rameau en 1727. Il prit exemple sur le livret *Amadis* pour Lully (Opéra de Paris, 1684), basé sur des épisodes de *Amadis de Gaula* de Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo – un recueil de récits d'aventures, écrits entre 1492 et 1505, mais qui s'enracinaient dans des livres de contes chevaleresques portugais datant

du Moyen Âge (Cervantès choisit *Amadis* de Montalvo et ses nombreux imitateurs comme livres préférés de Don Quichotte). Toutefois, l'intrigue de La Motte s'inspire plutôt de l'une des suites écrites par Feliciano de Silva au milieu du seizième siècle. L'action a lieu en Grèce et est centrée sur le chevalier Amadis, fils illégitime du roi de Gaulle (un royaume mythique de Bretagne), mais élevé en Écosse, réputé pour sa valeur et sa fidélité. Amadis et Niquée, la fille du roi de Thèbes, sont très amoureux – ce qui chagrine beaucoup Mélisse, une sorcière jalouse obsédée par son souhait d'avoir pour elle le héros. L'une de ses stratégies maléfiques est de conclure un pacte avec le prince de Thrace, auparavant ami proche d'Amadis, mais devenu secrètement son rival implacable pour la superbe Niquée (qui montre du dépit face aux avances très peu bienvenues du prince). Les conceptions égoïstes de l'amour de Mélisse et du prince sont en réalité le reflet de passions dévorantes et s'opposent à la constance vertueuse du couple héroïque en des circonstances extrêmement éprouvantes, et leur déception pernicieuse leur sera fatale à tous deux. En effet, après que le prince a été tué en duel par Amadis, Mélisse fait venir son misérable fantôme qui révèle qu'Amadis et Niquée sont protégés par le ciel et que la sorcière n'arrivera

jamais à ses fins. Amèrement consciente de son destin, Mélisse se poignarde. Zirphée (une sorcière bienveillante), la tante et la protectrice de Niquée, apparaît en un *deus ex machina* pour confirmer que les persécutions des amants réunis sont terminées.

Dans l'adaptation londonienne pour Haendel le texte est transposé en italien, et il y a quelques imitations occasionnelles de lignes de récitatif de La Motte, une grande partie des nombreux incidents spectaculaires mettant en scène des Furies et des démons ainsi qu'une traduction libre de certains textes français d'arias – y compris l'invocation à la nuit d'Amadigi (I.2) et le regard jeté vers la Fontaine de l'amour vrai (II.1), la sombre dénonciation de Mélissa par le fantôme de Dardano (III.4) et l'adieu de la sorcière agonisante (III.5). Le long prologue faisant l'éloge de Louis XIV (avec l'enchanteresse Zirphée et l'enchanteur Zirene ainsi qu'une foule de génies, de statues animées et d'esprits volants) est supprimé, les différents divertissements les accompagnant ont disparus, le drame est réduit de cinq actes à trois, les personnages non indispensables sont éliminés, l'action subsistante est abrégée et réduite à ses éléments essentiels, et enfin, de nouveaux textes d'arias plus appropriés sont ajoutés (la traduction anglaise dans le texte

de 1715 ne donne qu'un résumé de ceux-ci). Les noms d'Amadis et de la sorcière Mélisse maladivement amoureuse sont italianisés, tandis que l'ami du héros devenu son rival est baptisé Dardano (un nom peut-être inspiré de celui du scélérat de Quinault, Ardan), et le nom et les origines nationales de la princesse sont changés en Oriana, fille du roi des Îles des Bienheureux (c'est-à-dire l'Angleterre), comme chez Montalvo et Quinault. Dans la scène finale, après que Mélissa s'est donné la mort, le *deus ex machina* est une brève apparition de l'oncle d'Oriana, Orgando (un magicien), qui a changé de sexe par l'entremise d'Urganda, la bienveillante enchanteresse de Quinault.

La dernière œuvre opératique que Haendel composa avant le lancement de la Royal Academy of Music (1720 – 1728), *Amadigi* est le plus beau de ses premiers opéras de Londres en termes de sophistication musicale et de rythme dramatique, et il s'agit d'une exploration parfaitement harmonieuse des relations, des motivations et des divergences émotionnelles interconnectées de quatre personnages seulement qui n'ont rien de similaire et sont tous les quatre saisissants. La morale du drame est que l'amour mutuel fidèle, pur, bienveillant et généreux (Oriana et Amadigi) prévaudra toujours sur les amours

égoïstes qui sont décevants et coercitifs ou sont des engouements possessifs (Mélissa et Dardano). Dans la présentation de cette allégorie, chacun des quatre personnages est illustré avec une grande limpidité psychologique, rehaussée d'une invention musicale toujours très riche. Outre deux arias avec solo de trompette et un numéro incluant deux flûtes à bec, la musique témoigne de la créativité inépuisable de Haendel lorsqu'il s'agit de broser un tableau musical avec une palette de hautbois et de bassons (jouant parfois en solo, ou par trois), de cordes (allant de violons à l'unisson jusqu'à cinq parties) et basse continue (incluant deux exemples où il est expressément prévu qu'il est essentiel que le clavecin reste silencieux).

Les annotations de tempo de Haendel vont de *Adagio* à *Presto*, mais neuf numéros importants sont annotés *Largo* – comme l'exquise cavatine d'Amadigi "Notte amica dei riposi" (en sol mineur, le héros implore la nuit de répandre un voile de réconfort sur son cœur qui souffre), la complainte amère de Mélissa dans le soliloque "Ah! spietato!" (en mi mineur et en 3 / 2, avec un triste solo de hautbois, et annoté *senza cembalo* sauf la section centrale dans laquelle Mélissa retrouve sa fougue avant un retour emphatique d'une sombre mélancolie), la *Siciliana* délirante

"Gioie, venite in sen" d'Oriana (sa partie vocale entrelacée en contrepoint avec les cordes en quatre parties en mi bémol majeur) et la cavatine délicatement pastorale d'Amadigi "Sussurrate, onde vezzose, limpidette" (avec une paire de flûtes à bec qui murmurent et quatre douces parties de cordes). Oriana pleure devant le corps apparemment sans vie de son amant dans "S'estinto è l'idol mio" – un *Largo* contrapuntique en fa mineur de composition sophistiquée qui fut admiré par Charles Burney pour son

sujet pathétique, les imitations naturelles et plaisantes dans les parties instrumentales, la richesse de l'harmonie, les modulations touchantes particulièrement dans la seconde partie; mais surtout, l'intense tristesse qui imprègne chaque passage de la partie vocale[.] (*A General History of Music*, 1789)

L'historien conclut que ces éléments "contribuent à en faire l'une des compositions les plus parfaites du genre que j'aie entendue". Un autre exemple de *Largo* sublime est la sarabande en ré mineur "Pena tiranna". Placée au centre émotionnel de l'opéra, elle illustre la réalité de la condition de Dardano, esseulé et désespéré, par une mélodie vocale

plaintive, un hautbois solo aérien, un basson solo ondulant, cinq parties de cordes (trois parties de violon) et le clavecin constamment silencieux: tant Dardano que le public savent que jamais Oriana ne l'aimera. Oriana attend la mort dans "Dolce vita del mio petto", un exquis partenariat en la mineur entre voix et hautbois. L'adieu de Mélissa qui se meurt dans "Io già sento l'alma in sen" est une brève sarabande en sol mineur pour cordes à quatre parties, annotée *sempre piano*, son rythme se désintégrant tandis que s'éteint la sorcière.

Ailleurs, Haendel nous offre en abondance une musique animée et exubérante. Dardano, mécontent, arrive à peine à maîtriser sa jalousie secrète et dévorante dans "Pugnerò contro del fato", un énergique *Presto* en sol mineur pour violons à l'unisson et basse. La première apparition de Mélissa et de sa troupe d'esprits infernaux est un *Allegro* en fa majeur de rythme ternaire qui interrompt brutalement la rêverie nocturne d'Amadigi. La réplique du héros à Mélissa au sujet de son obsession revancharde ("Non sa temere questo mio petto") et à Dardano à propos de la révélation de son animosité ("Vado, corro al mio tesoro") sont de vives arias en si bémol majeur et en rythme ternaire tandis que la réaction traîtresse de Dardano qui n'a pas réussi à passer au travers des flammes

d'une loggia magique est un épisode plein de turbulence en sol mineur ("Agitato il cor mi sento"). La mélodie d'amour enjouée d'Amadigi "È sì dolce il mio contento" est exécutée par quatre parties de cordes avec des hautbois doublant les premiers violons dans les ritournelles, mais la partie vocale est accompagnée seulement par les violons, sans registre grave. C'est presque comme si Dardano prenait ceci comme modèle, quand transformé par les pouvoirs magiques de Mélissa pour ressembler à Amadigi, il proclame joyeusement son adoration à Oriana qui est sans méfiance dans "Tu mia speranza" – aussi une aria rapide en la majeur, mais cette fois les violons jouent à l'unisson, doublés par les altos une octave plus bas, sur le bourdon de notes de pédale dans les graves. Son imitation exubérante de cornemuses rustiques est diamétralement opposée, par le rythme et la tonalité, à la misérable réalité que Dardano vient de décrire dans "Pena tiranna", mais cette jubilation débridée de son unique aria dans une tonalité majeure est profondément ironique: la seule fois où il est heureux est lorsque son apparence est identique à celle de son amer rival.

Mélissa se lance dans une moquerie acerbe avec "Io godo, scherzo e rido", un *Allegro* en si bémol majeur, en 6/8, qui fait appel à des cordes à quatre parties avec

hautbois. La réaction indignée d'Oriana aux accusations d'infidélité déplacées d'Amadigi est exprimée par cet éclat en un ut mineur alerte "Ti pentirai, crudel". Son noble mépris des menaces de mort de Mélissa est une rapide aria en si bémol majeur dominant par sa rhétorique ("Affannami, tormentami"), mais avec une section centrale *Adagio* en sol mineur, de rythme différent, et un hautbois solo. Inévitablement, comme l'enfer n'a point de colère pareille à celle d'une femme méprisée, Mélissa répond autoritairement dans "Desterò dall'empia dite", un joyau flamboyant en ré majeur et en rythme ternaire lancé par une ritournelle imposante de quarante-et-une mesures pour un dialogue de trompette et hautbois. Les vains efforts de la sorcière pour éliminer tout sentiment d'amour pour Amadigi ("Vanne lungi dal mio petto") s'expriment dans un *Presto* volatil en si bémol majeur avec des passages concertants aux violons et des hautbois vifs. Toute la musique de la scène finale – "Sento la gioia" chanté par Amadigi (un hornpipe en ré majeur avec solo de trompette), le chœur rapide en 2/2 et la danse qui l'accompagne pour bergers et bergères – annonce des styles que Haendel allait mettre à profit deux ans plus tard dans *Water Music*.

Les quatre rôles furent composés pour des voix du registre aigu. Le rôle du héros fut créé

par Nicola Grimaldi (1673 – 1732), connu par ses surnoms Nicolino ou Nicolini. Le castrat alto napolitain avait vécu et travaillé à Venise, il s'était produit au Queen's Theatre de 1708 à 1712 (créant le rôle-titre de *Rinaldo*) et avait regagné Londres peu avant la première production d'*Amadigi*. Le rôle de Mélissa fut composé pour Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti (d. en 1742), connue comme "La Pilotti". Elle avait un ample registre vocal de deux octaves; elle travailla à Londres de 1710 à 1717. Elle semble s'être spécialisée en sorcières éconduites – Haendel composa pour elle aussi le rôle de l'enchanteresse méprisée Armida (*Rinaldo*) et Medea (*Teseo*). Il composa Oriana pour la soprano anglaise, née en Italie, Anastasia Robinson (vers 1692 – 1755) qui étudia le chant avec William Croft (maître de chœur de la Chapelle royale). Celle-ci fit ses débuts opératiques dès 1714, puis tomba malade après la première représentation d'*Amadigi*. Son rôle semble avoir été repris pour le reste des représentations par Caterina Galerati (fl. 1701 – 1721). Plus tard, entre 1720 et 1724, sa voix étant descendue au registre alto, Robinson créa plusieurs rôles dans les opéras de la Royal Academy de Haendel, notamment Zenobia (*Radamisto*) et Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*); après son mariage avec le comte de Peterborough, elle se retira

de la scène. Le rôle de Dardano fut chanté par le contralto Diana Vico (fl. 1707 – 1732), qui avait chanté dans des opéras de Gasparini, Lotti, Porta, Orlandini et Porpora dans sa Venise natale, et qui chanta dans la première œuvre dramatique véritable de Vivaldi, *Ottone in villa* (Vicence, 1713). Elle travailla au King's Theatre de 1714 à 1716, se produisant dans des reprises et des pasticcios. À partir de 1720, elle chanta à Munich et dans des opéras de Vinci à Naples. On ignore qui chanta les récitatifs sopranos d'Orgando dans le *lieto fine*.

En plus de Haendel qui dirigeait depuis le clavecin, l'orchestre du King's Theatre comprenait les violonistes Pietro et Prospero Castrucci. Tous deux élèves de Corelli, les frères avaient travaillé à Rome pour le cardinal Ottoboni et le prince Ruspoli; ils venaient d'être recrutés par Lord Burlington pendant son grand tour d'Italie et étaient arrivés à Londres le 1er mai 1715, juste à temps pour *Amadigi*. Dans la section des violoncelles, il y avait Haym, très probablement l'adaptateur du livret. Les parties de hautbois solo furent jouées par John Ernest Galliard qui s'était formé dans l'orchestre de la cour de Celle (un orchestre essentiellement français qui fut entendu et admiré par Bach étudiant) et, dès 1706, il travailla à Londres comme

chambriste, ainsi que comme hautboïste et flûtiste à bec dans différents théâtres; il fut membre fondateur de l'Academy of Ancient Music, et traduisit en anglais l'important traité sur le chant du castrat bolognais Pier Francesco Tosi.

Le 25 mai 1715, *The Daily Courant* annonça la première de l'opéra soulignant "All the Cloaths and Scenes entirely New" (Tous les costumes et décors sont entièrement neufs) et ajoutant qu'il y aurait "une grande diversité de danses", mais avec cet avertissement:

il y a un grand nombre de décors et machines à bouger dans cet opéra, ce qui ne peut être fait s'il y a des personnes sur scène (où on ne pourrait se trouver sans danger); il est donc à espérer que nul ne prendra de mauvaise part le refus d'accéder à la scène.

En l'occurrence, il y eut six représentations d'*Amadigi*. D'autres dates furent annoncées puis abandonnées ensuite en raison de la maladie de Robinson, mais elles furent annulées aussi dans une certaine mesure en raison de l'été extrêmement chaud qui rendit les conditions dans le King's Theatre intolérables. De plus, la saison fut interrompue par la première rébellion jacobite, le chroniqueur de "The Opera Register" notant ceci le 31 octobre 1715:

Aucun opéra n'a été représenté depuis le 23 juillet à cause de la révolte des Tories & Papists – le roi & la cour préférant ne pas sortir parmi de telles foules en ces temps troublés.

Amadigi fut repris au King's Theatre en 1716 et 1717. Des annonces dans *The Daily Courant* révélèrent que diverses représentations de l'opéra dans sa distribution originale, notamment avec Robinson, auraient lieu entre février et juillet 1716. Le 20 juin, l'orchestre joua en supplément "Deux nouvelles symphonies", l'une d'elles était une pièce en fa majeur publiée plus tard comme premier mouvement du concerto op. 3 no 4 (HWV 315), et le 12 juillet, Attilio Ariosti joua "une nouvelle symphonie" sur "un instrument neuf appelé viole d'amour". Une saison plus tard, entre février et mai 1717, des représentations eurent lieu avec une fois encore la même distribution, à l'exception du rôle de Dardano interprété par le castrat Antonio Bernacchi (1685 – 1756). Les annonces précisent qu'Anastasia Robinson chanta "toutes les mélodies qui furent composées originellement pour cet opéra". Le 23 février (le jour des trente-deux ans de Haendel), l'opéra dut être exécuté "sans décors, la scène étant dans l'état magnifique, comme pour le bal" (en d'autres mots, comme elle avait été

aménagée pour la mascarade de Heidegger deux jours plus tôt). Le 21 mars, une nouvelle scène fut ajoutée pour Robinson et Nicolino, et il y eut des danses supplémentaires. Le 11 avril, il y eut "plusieurs divertissements avec danses... particulièrement une danse espagnole", et le 30 mai, "deux pièces de musique" furent ajoutées "entre les actes".

Le 17 juillet 1717, près de sept semaines après la représentation finale d'*Amadigi*, Haendel leva le voile sur *Water Music* pour une fête à bord du navire royal sur la Tamise. Il ne reprit jamais l'opéra au cours des années de la Royal Academy (1720 – 1728) ou pendant les années 1730. Sa distribution inhabituelle, pour quatre voix seulement, toutes des sopranos ou des altos, peut ne pas avoir convenu à de grandes compagnies de chanteurs dont faisaient toujours partie au moins une basse et souvent un ténor. Haendel ne reprit que très peu son excellente musique dans ses œuvres ultérieures. Des éléments de la mélodie pastorale d'*Amadigi* "Sussurrante, onde vezzosa" (II.1) furent remodelés, de différentes manières, pour des solos de ténor aigu dans les hymnes de Cannons (demeure seigneuriale du comte de Carnarvon dans le Middlesex) *O come let us sing unto the Lord* (HWV 253) et *The Lord is my light* (HWV 255), tous deux composés pour

l'église paroissiale du comte de Carnarvon aux environs de 1718. Un motif du duo "Crudel, tu non farai" (une confrontation entre Amadigi et Mélissa dans II.4) fut retravaillé pour la section centrale ("For us the zephyr blows") de "Oh, the pleasure of the plains" dans *Acis and Galatea*, composé aussi pour Cannons en 1718. La ritournelle de la lamentation d'Amadigi "O rendetemi il mio bene", à la fin de l'Acte I, servit de modèle près de vingt ans plus tard pour la mélodie de l'inconsolable héros de l'œuvre "Cieca notte" dans *Ariodante* (III.1).

Une version pasticcio drastiquement modifiée fut conçue par Keiser à Hambourg en 1717 et intitulée *Oriana*, mais *Amadigi* ne fut plus entendu jusqu'à ce qu'une production expurgée soit mise en scène à Osnabrück, en 1929, et l'opéra ne fut plus repris en Grande-Bretagne jusqu'à ce que l'Unicorn Opera le produise à Abingdon en 1968. Depuis, sa réputation s'est sans cesse accrue. Il y a eu vingt différentes mises en scène depuis 1991, et ceci est le troisième enregistrement commercial intégral. La partition était déjà admirée à la fin du dix-huitième siècle par Burney dont sont extraits ces mots enthousiastes:

Jamais, à ma connaissance, autant d'enchantement et de machinerie ne

furent annoncés pour aucun autre drame musical représenté en Angleterre... il y a plus d'invention, de diversité et de qualité de composition que dans toute autre œuvre du genre de Haendel que j'ai examinée, minutieusement et de manière critique.

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Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs

Synopsis

Acte I

Enfermé dans un jardin enchanté par Mélissa, une sorcière éprise de lui, le héros Amadigi (un célèbre chevalier du royaume mythique de Gaule) tente de s'échapper à la faveur de la nuit. Son ami proche, Dardano (un prince de Thrace), lui reproche sa réaction déplaisante face à l'amour obsessionnel de Mélissa, mais le héros lui montre une miniature d'Oriana (la fille du roi des Îles des Bienheureux) et lui explique qu'ils s'aiment profondément. Ses sentiments secrets pour Oriana amènent Dardano à abandonner son ami sous prétexte qu'il cherche un chemin par lequel fuir, mais en réalité il a l'intention de le trahir en avertissant Mélissa de la situation ("Pugnerò contro del fato", I.1). Amadigi implore la nuit d'étendre son voile épais pour apaiser les

tourments de son cœur (“Notte, amica dei riposi”, I.2), mais la scène est inondée par la lumière du soleil, et des statues, des fontaines et des vasques se dressent pour annoncer l’arrivée de Mélissa et sa cohorte d’esprits infernaux (Sinfonia, I.2). La sorcière avertit Amadigi de ne pas tenter de sauver Oriana qui est emprisonnée dans une tour protégée par des forces magiques, mais ses promesses d’amour mêlées de menaces violentes (il sera anéanti par des harpies, par Cerbère, par des Furies et le feu) sont rejetées par le héros sans détour (“Non sa temere questo mio petto”, I.3). Mélissa, soliloquant, se lamente amèrement en voyant que sa constante affection n’est récompensée que par de la cruauté (“Ah! spietato!”, I.4).

Amadigi et Dardano (maintenant secrètement de mèche avec Mélissa) s’approchent de la tour d’Oriana, mais une loggia en feu leur barre la route, et la surmontant, se trouve une inscription les avertissant que seul l’amant le plus fidèle et le héros le plus vaillant pourront traverser les flammes indemnes. Incapable de maîtriser plus longtemps les sentiments négatifs qu’il éprouve pour son ancien ami, Dardano révèle qu’il est le rival d’Amadigi pour la conquête du cœur d’Oriana et déclare que cet obstacle périlleux permettra de tester leur valeur. Le

héros répond dédaigneusement (“Vado, corro al mio tesoro”, I.5) et traverse sans péril la barrière de feu magique, tandis que Dardano n’y réussit pas et ne peut entrer dans la tour. Furieux d’être retrouvé en attente de traverser les flammes, il se sauve et part à la recherche de Mélissa (“Agitato il cor mi sento”, I.6). La loggia s’effondre dans les ténèbres, l’orage et les éclairs, puis le calme revient: Amadigi contemple Oriana qui est entourée de chevaliers enchantés et de dames dans une superbe rangée de colonnes. Oriana descend du trône sur lequel elle se trouve et les amants réunis expriment tendrement combien ils s’aiment (Oriana dans “Gioie, venite in sen”, Amadigi dans “È sì dolce il mio contento”, une danse perdue pour les chevaliers et les dames, et Oriana encore dans “Oh caro mio tesoro”, I.7), mais ils attendent trop longtemps avant de fuir et sont rattrapés par Mélissa, en furie, qui ordonne à une partie des démons et à Dardano d’emporter Oriana, et à d’autres de bloquer la route d’Amadigi; la sorcière se moque de manière cinglante de son chagrin (“To godo, scherzo e rido”, I.8). Laisse seul, Amadigi se lamente sur sa malchance et celle d’Oriana (“O rendetemi il mio bene”, I.9).

Acte II

Amadigi se retrouve dans un jardin et

aperçoit au loin un magnifique palais. Dans ce jardin se trouve ce qu'il pense être la Fontaine de l'Amour vrai. Le héros invoque les eaux bénéfiques d'apaiser les tourments de son cœur et de son esprit ("Sussurrare, onde vezzose, limpidette", II.1). Il semble que la fontaine soit un autre maléfice de Mélissa, car lorsqu'il regarde l'eau, Amadigi y voit une fausse image d'Oriana et de Dardano qui s'étreignent amoureuxment. Désespéré, il tombe dans un profond sommeil sous l'effet des pouvoirs magiques de la sorcière. Mélissa et ses démons conduisent Oriana au jardin, qui, pensant que son amant est mort, le pleure ("S'estinto è l'idol mio", II.3) et prend le poignard d'Amadigi qui est inconscient pour se donner la mort. Le héros revient à lui juste à temps pour l'arrêter, mais il est encore convaincu de la réalité de la vision qu'il a eue en regardant les eaux de la fontaine et il dénonce son infidélité ("T'amai, quant' il mio cor", II.3). Oriana réagit, indignée, et s'enfuit ("Ti pentirai, crudel", II.3). Mélissa apparaît soudain, elle empêche le malheureux Amadigi de se donner la mort et transforme la scène en une caverne horrible dans laquelle des monstres émergent du ventre de la terre. Elle leur donne l'ordre de punir Amadigi sauf s'il cède et accepte ses avances amoureuses – mais il l'ignore avec audace (le duo "Crudel, tu non farai", II.4).

Dardano resté seul dans le palais de la sorcière, rejeté par Oriana sans cérémonie, est désespéré face à la funeste réalité: jamais il n'arrivera à la convaincre de l'aimer, même avec l'aide de Mélissa ("Pena tiranna", II.5). Mélissa arrive et propose de métamorphoser son apparence pour qu'il ressemble trait pour trait à Amadigi et puisse ainsi se faire aimer d'Oriana. Toujours déçu, Dardano est rassuré par Mélissa ("Se tu brami di godere", II.6) dont les pouvoirs magiques le transforme en sosie d'Amadigi. Il rencontre Oriana qui le prie d'excuser le mouvement de colère qu'elle a eu. Dardano, déguisé, lui déclare extatiquement son adoration pour elle ("Tu mia speranza", II.8), et il est sur le point de profiter de la situation quand il est distrait par ce qu'il aperçoit dans le lointain: le véritable Amadigi, et il part sur un coup de tête le provoquer en duel. On entend les coups d'épées, et Oriana, ahurie, apprend par Mélissa, en furie, que le véritable Amadigi a tué Dardano. Ni les menaces de mort, ni la puissance des forces de l'enfer n'empêchent la noble Oriana de défier l'enchanteresse et elle jure que la sorcellerie pas plus que la torture ne la forceront à renoncer à Amadigi ("Affannami, tormentami", II.9). Mélissa, frustrée, répond d'un ton impérieux en demandant instamment à tous les goules

impies possibles et imaginables de jeter un mauvais sort à ceux qui la méprisent (“Desterò dall’empia dite”, II.10).

Acte III

Dans le palais de la sorcière, Oriana, résignée, attend les tourments et la mort (“Dolce vita del mio petto”, III.1). Dans la caverne où elle pratique sa magie noire, Mélissa s’étonne de ce qu’aucune de ses stratégies pour s’attirer les faveurs d’Amadigi et l’éloigner de son rival n’ait fonctionné. Pendant qu’elle prépare pour eux un poison létal, Mélissa essaye d’écarter tout sentiment d’amour pour sa victime, mais sa passion augmente au fur et à mesure qu’il la repousse (“Vanne lungi dal mio petto”, III.2). Amadigi et Oriana sont conduits dans la caverne par les démons, chacun priant pour que l’autre ait la vie sauve; ensemble, ils implorent Mélissa de les prendre en pitié (“Cangia alfine il tuo rigore”, III.3). Au lieu de cela, l’implacable sorcière appelle le fantôme de Dardano, anticipant que son ombre va savourer la vengeance qu’elle compte prendre à l’égard des deux amants. Toutefois, le fantôme de Dardano annonce qu’un châtement du ciel l’oblige à apporter un message: les dieux sont opposés à ses injustices, ils soutiennent la fidélité et l’amour véritable d’Oriana et d’Amadigi et ont décidé

du destin maléfique de la sorcière (“Han penetrato i detti tuoi l’inferno”, III.4).

Après que le fantôme a disparu, Mélissa tente avec hargne de tuer Oriana avec une petite dague, mais elle est étonnée quand une puissance occulte l’empêche de porter le coup fatal. Enfin, confrontée à la force implacable du châtement divin pour ses crimes, la sorcière, le cœur brisé, sent sa confiance indéfectible s’évanouir; rejetée à la fois par le ciel et l’enfer, elle se donne la mort d’un coup de poignard et, à l’agonie, elle dit adieu à Amadigi (“Io già sento l’alma in sen”, III.5). Le destin tragique de Mélissa suscite la pitié d’Amadigi et Oriana maintenant libérés, et soudain la caverne est transformée en un merveilleux palais (Sinfonia). Le magicien Orgando (l’oncle d’Oriana) descend sur un char entouré de nuages et confirme aux amants la fin de leurs tourments. Il joint ensuite leurs mains pour les unir par le mariage. Le héros est heureux (“Sento la gioia”, III.6), et Orgando annonce qu’il a préparé une musique magique et une danse pastorale pour les bergers et les bergères en honneur de leurs noces (“Godete, oh cori amanti” et une danse, III.6).

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Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs

AMADIGI DI GAULA, HWV 11

COMPACT DISC ONE

1 1. Ouverture e

2 Gavotta

Atto primo

Scena I

Giardino di Melissa. Notte.

Amadigi e Dardano

3 2. Recitativo

Amadigi

Or che di negro ammanto

È ricoperto il cielo, e ognun riposa,

Prencipe, andiamo, ove l'onor invita;

Abbandoniam queste incantate soglie,

Che già troppo contrarie

Furo alla gloria mia ed al mio amore.

Dardano

Già d'Amadigi il nome

Fa incredibil le prove

Della forza del braccio e del valore;

Dopo tante vittorie

Tempo è dunque ch'ascolti

Della vaga Melissa

Gl'innamorati pianti.

Mira, come qui ride il fiore, e come

Verdeggia il prato, e limpido il ruscello

Quì come irriga il suolo!

Tutto con l'arti sue forma d'incanti,

Per piacer a te sol, che sei sua vita.

AMADIGI OF GAUL, HWV 11

COMPACT DISC ONE

1. Overture and

Gavotte

Act I

Scene 1

Melissa's garden. Night.

Amadigi and Dardano

2. Recitative

Amadigi

Now that the sky is covered

by a black cloak and all are sleeping,

Prince, let us go where honour invites;

let us leave this bewitched place,

which has already been too unfavourable

to my reputation and to my love.

Dardano

The name of Amadigi already

has given incredible proof

of the strength of his arm and his valour;

after so many victories

it is now time for you to listen

to lovely Melissa's

sighs of love.

See, how the flowers smile, and how

green the meadows are, and how the clear stream

waters the ground here!

All this she does by magic

to please only you, who are her life.

Amadigi

Più cerca ella piacermi, io più la sprezzo.

Dardano

Ingrato dunque sei.

Amadigi

Mira, e poi dimmi ingrato,
(*Gli mostra il ritratto di Oriana.*)
Mira questi colori,
Che non sono ch'un'ombra al par del giorno,
E di' se posso, oh Dio!
Per Melissa lasciar l'idolo mio?

Dardano

(Ah! che miro, oh stelle?
Quest'è il mio ben! Si finga!)
Ella ti corrisponde?

Amadigi

M'ama quant'io l'adoro.
Ma, che più qui si tarda? Andiam, oh Prence!

Dardano

Signor, più non m'oppongo alle tue brame;
Resta ch'intanto io vado,
Per ricercare un opportuno calle,
Che celi agli occhi altrui il nostro scampo.

Amadigi

Quivi t'attendo.

Amadigi

The more she tries to please me, the more I
despise her.

Dardano

Then you are ungrateful.

Amadigi

Look at this, and then call me ungrateful.
(*He shows him Oriana's portrait.*)
Look at these colours,
which are but a shadow compared to day,
and tell me if I could, O God!
leave my idol for Melissa?

Dardano

(Ah! What do I see, O heavens?
That is my love! I will dissemble!)
And does she return your love?

Amadigi

She loves me as much as I adore her.
But, why this delay? Prince, let us go!

Dardano

My Lord, I shall no longer oppose your wishes,
stay here, while I go
to find a suitable passage
which from eyes of others will hide our flight.

Amadigi

I will wait for you here.

Dardano
(Ed io di sdegno avvampo!)

4 3. Aria

Dardano
Pugnerò contro del fato,
Vendicato il cor sarà.

Né'l rivale sarà altiero,
Ch' al mio piè vinto cadrà.

Pugnerò, *ecc.*

(*Parte.*)

Scena II
Amadigi solo

5 4. Accompagnato
Amadigi

Oh notte! oh cara notte,
Spiega più oscuro velo!
E tu, nume dei sogni,
Soccorri un fido amante
Con i silenzi e l'ombre!

Ché giammai favoristi, con l'orror del tuo nero,
Un cor del mio più fido e più sincero.

6 5. Cavatina ed Accompagnato
Amadigi

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

Dardano
(And I burn with rage!)

3. Aria

Dardano
I will fight against fate,
my heart will be avenged.

My rival will no longer be proud
when he falls defeated at my feet.

I will fight, *etc.*

(*Exit.*)

Scene 2
Amadigi alone

4. Accompagnato
Amadigi

O night! O dear night,
spread your darkest veil!
And you, god of dreams,
assist a faithful lover
with silence and shadows!

You have never helped, with your grim black,
a heart truer or more sincere than mine.

5. Cavatina and Accompagnato
Amadigi
Night, friend of those who rest,
ah, assist me and comfort
my troubled breast.

7

[Sinfonia]

(Si schiarisce in un subito la scena, scaturiscono da terra vasi, fontane e statue – ed una truppa di spiriti infernali inviati da Melissa, da tutti i lati della scena, si oppongono alla partenza di Amadigi.)

Che miro? infido fato!
Bramo la notte, e'l sol m'apporta il giorno?
Fuggirò; ma dove? forse di qui?
Ah no!

6. Recitativo**Amadigi**

Ch'impedito è ogni passo
Allo scampo, alla fuga;
Ah! Melissa, Melissa! io son tradito.
Ma che? s'apra col ferro il varco.

(Mentre pone il pugno alla spada, sopraggiunge Melissa.)

Scena III

Melissa ed Amadigi

8

Melissa

E tu cerchi fuggir? perfido, ingrato!
Deh! Melissa t'arresti.

Amadigi

Nulla può ritenermi.

Melissa

Ti piegherà il mio pianto.

[Sinfonia]

(The scene suddenly becomes light, and vases, fountains, and statues rise from the earth – and from all parts of the scene a troupe of infernal spirits, sent by Melissa, prevent Amadigi's leaving.)

What do I see? Fickle fate!
I ask for night, and the sun brings me day?
I shall flee, but where? Perhaps here?
Ah, no!

6. Recitative**Amadigi**

Every way is barred
to escape, to flight;
Ah! Melissa, Melissa! I am betrayed!
But what? I will open the way with my sword.

(As he puts his hand on his sword, Melissa suddenly appears.)

Scene 3

Melissa and Amadigi

Melissa

And you seek to fly? Traitor, ingrate!
Ah, Melissa has stopped you.

Amadigi

Nothing can detain me.

Melissa

My tears will make you yield.

Amadigi
Ho già risolto.

Melissa
I sospir...

Amadigi
Non gli apprezzo.

Melissa
Adoprerò lusinghe.

Amadigi
Solo l'ardor di gloria il cor mi tocca.

Melissa
E pur so ch'Oriana il sen t'accende.

Amadigi
Dunque perché mi segui?

Melissa
Crudel, perché t'adoro.

Amadigi
E se sdegno il tuo foco,
Come farai ch'io t'ami?

Melissa
Nella torre incantata è già il tuo bene;
Va' dunque, empio spietato,
Vanne a colei che t'arde il cor, ma pensa,

Amadigi
I have already decided.

Melissa
Sighs...

Amadigi
I do not value them.

Melissa
I shall try flattery.

Amadigi
Only zeal for glory touches my heart.

Melissa
And I know too well that Oriana fires your
breast.

Amadigi
Then why do you follow me?

Melissa
Cruel one, because I adore you.

Amadigi
And if I disdain your passion,
what can you do to make me love you?

Melissa
Your sweetheart is already in the enchanted tower;
go then, false cruel one,
go to her who fires your heart, but remember,

Che Melissa sdegnata
Tutti i mostri d'inferno,
Tutte l'arpie più sozze,
Cerbero, furie, fuoco e fiamme appresta;
E pria che la rivale al sen ti stringa,
Fra mille pene io ti vedrò perire.

Amadigi
L'arti tue non faranno
Che accrescer al mio petto e forza e ardire.

9 7. Aria
Amadigi
Non sa temere
Questo mio petto,
S'ardir l'accende,
L'accende amor.

Saprà vedere
Odio e dispetto,
Strane vicende
Non teme il cor.

Non sa temere, *etc.*

(*Parte.*)

Scena IV
Melissa sola

10 8. Recitativo
Melissa
Il crudel m'abbandona, e mi detesta.
Numi! e soffrire il deggio?

that indignant Melissa will summon
all the monsters of hell,
all the foulest harpies,
Cerberus, furies, fire, and flames;
and before my rival should clasp you to her breast
I would see you perish in a thousand torments.

Amadigi
Your arts will serve only
to add strength and courage to my heart.

7. Aria
Amadigi
This my heart
knows no fear
when ardour enflames it,
when love enflames it.

You will see that
neither hatred and spite,
nor strange events
put fear in my heart.

This my heart, *etc.*

(*Exit.*)

Scene 4
Melissa alone

8. Recitativo
Melissa
The cruel one abandons me and hates me.
Gods! Must I suffer this?

Ingrato, segui il foco che t'arde,
 Segui l'amor, che ti consuma, oh ingrato!
 Invano ti lusinghi;
 Che l'arti mie sapran farti morire.
 Ma Cielo! e come
 Morir farò chi vita è di quest'alma?
 Ah! che già sento in petto
 Che l'odio e l'ira va cangiando aspetto.

11 9. Aria

Melissa

Ah! spietato! e non ti muove
 Un affetto sì costante,
 Che per te mi fa languir!

Ma crudel, tu non sai come
 Fai sdegnar un'alma amante,
 Che tu brami di tradir.

Ah! spietato! *ecc.*

(Parte.)

Scena V

Loggia infiammata, che impedisce l'entrata della
 torre di Oriana.
 Amadigi e Dardano

12 10. Recitativo

Amadigi

Risveglian queste fiamme il mio coraggio;
 Abbattuti ho li mostri, e tu il vedesti;
 Or questa sola prova
 Del braccio mio alfin mi resta.
 Ma, quai caratteri io veggio! Sì legga!

Ingrate, follow the fire that burns you,
 follow the love that consumes you, ingrate!
 In vain you flatter yourself
 that my arts cannot kill you.
 But, heavens! And how
 can I kill him, who is life to my soul?
 Ah! I already feel in my breast
 that hate and anger are changing their looks.

9. Aria

Melissa

Ah, pitiless one! And are you not moved
 by so constant a love,
 which makes me languish for you?

But, cruel one, you do not know how
 you make indignant a loving soul,
 that you wish to betray.

Ah, pitiless one! *etc.*

(Exit.)

Scene 5

A loggia in flames, which bars the entrance to
 Oriana's tower.
 Amadigi and Dardano

10. Recitative

Amadigi

These flames reawaken my courage;
 I have defeated the monsters, and you saw it;
 now only this trial
 of my strength at last remains to me.
 But, what characters do I see! Read!

(Dardano legge.)

Dardano

“A un sol le fiamme è di passar concesso,
Ch'egli è l'eroe più forte,
Che scelse Amor fra tanti,
Per quivi unir i due più fidi amanti!”

Amadigi

Prencipe, or si conosce
Che felice mi vuol amica stella,
Se dopo tante pene
Stringer potrò al mio sen Oriana bella.

(Va per traversar le fiamme.)

Dardano

Amadigi, t'arresta,
E meco pria favella.

Amadigi

Che mai?

Dardano

Io tuo rivale e tuo nemico io sono.

Amadigi

Numi!

Dardano

D'Oriana invaghito,
Ma sprezzato da lei, di te geloso
Cercai di lusingarti
Nell'amor di Melissa;

(Dardano reads.)

Dardano

“To one only is it granted to pass the flames,
to him who is the strongest hero,
whom Love has chosen from many,
here to unite the two most faithful lovers!”

Amadigi

Prince, now I know
that my friendly star wants me happy,
if after so many pains
I can clasp to my breast fair Oriana.

(He goes to cross the flames.)

Dardano

Amadigi, stop,
and speak with me first.

Amadigi

Whatever?

Dardano

I am your rival and your enemy.

Amadigi

Gods!

Dardano

In love with Oriana,
but despised by her, jealous of you,
I tried to flatter you
with the love of Melissa;





La tua fuga scopersi, e invano opra;
Or ch' all' estremo dei miei mali io giunsi,
Finger più non si dee; meco convienti,
Che tuo nemico e tuo rival mi scopro,
Provar chi di noi fia più degno amante.

Amadigi

Troppo nel pregio mio tu parte avesti;
Or sia del fallo tuo pena bastante,
Saper ch' io sono il più gradito amante.

13 11. Aria

Amadigi

Vado, corro al mio tesoro,
Non apprezzo il tuo furor.

Per un vago e bel crin d' oro
Foco e fiamme è poco al cor.

Vado, *ecc.*

(Attraversa le fiamme.)

Scena VI

Dardano solo

14 12. Recitativo

Dardano

Deh! ferma, oh Dio! già penetrò la soglia;
Lo seguirò nel fuoco.
Ma un ignoto poter me lo contrasta;
Si tenti ancor, non posso.
Dunque il vedrò gioir, sugli occhi miei?

I disclosed your flight, but in vain;
now that my ills have come to the extreme
I can no longer pretend; now it suits me
to declare myself your enemy and rival,
to try which of us is the more worthy lover.

Amadigi

You have had too much share of my reputation;
now for your deceit, your penance enough will be
to know that I am the more welcome lover.

11. Aria

Amadigi

I go, I run to my treasure,
I do not value your anger.

For a fair and lovely golden head
fire and flames are little to the heart.

I go, *etc.*

(He crosses the flames.)

Scene 6

Dardano alone

12. Recitative

Dardano

Ah, stop, O God! He has already crossed the
threshold;
I will follow him into the fire.
But an unknown power prevents me;
if I try again, I cannot.
Then will I see him rejoice before my eyes?

No! Melissa, a te aspetta
Far su l'empio per me, per te vendetta.

15 13. Aria

Dardano

Agitato il cor mi sento
Dall'affetto e dal furor.

Un rivale che pavento
Fa che peni questo cor.

Agitato, *ecc.*

(*Parte.*)

16 14. Sinfonia

(La loggia incantata si spezza, e cade al suono di strepitosa Sinfonia; si oscura la scena, con tuoni, e lampi, e si rischiarà all'apparire d'Oriana, la quale comparisce circondata da cavalieri e dame incantati, e si cangia la scena in un bellissimo colonnato.)

Scena VII

Amadigi ed Oriana, e truppa di cavalieri e dame incantati

17 15. Recitativo

Oriana

Cieli, che fia? qual rumore improvviso
Agitò questo luogo?
Ah! che veggio? Amadigi, il mio bene.

No! Melissa, I look to you
to take vengeance on this base man for me, for you.

13. Aria

Dardano

Agitated do I feel my heart
by love and fury.

A rival that I fear
makes this heart suffer.

Agitated, *etc.*

(*Exit.*)

14. Sinfonia

(The enchanted loggia breaks and falls at the sound of a boisterous Sinfonia; the scene darkens, with thunder and lightning, and clears again at the appearance of Oriana, who comes surrounded by enchanted knights and ladies, and the scene changes to a beautiful colonnade.)

Scene 7

Amadigi and Oriana, and a company of enchanted knights and ladies

15. Recitativo

Oriana

Heavens, what is it? What sudden noise
shook this place?
Ah, what do I see? Amadigi, my love.

Amadigi

Io ti tolgo agl'incanti,
Ma il tuo bel volto, Oriana,
Fa che incantato io resti.

Oriana

Temo che inganno sia di qui mirarti.

Amadigi

Temer non dei, mia cara!
Della cruda Melissa
L'arte per me fu vana;
Bella, al seno ti stringo.

Oriana

S'inganno egli è, dolce è per me l'inganno.
Amadigi, si pensi
Come da queste soglie tu mi torrai.

Amadigi

Ostacolo più non v'è, libera sei.

Oriana

Dunque sono finiti i pianti miei.

18 16. Siciliana

Oriana

Gioie, venite in sen,
Brillate nel mio cor,
Ché tutto il mio dolor
Fuggi, spari da me!

S'è meco il caro ben,
Altro non curo, no,

Amadigi

I free you from enchantments,
but your fair face, Oriana,
makes me remain enchanted.

Oriana

I fear that seeing you here is deception.

Amadigi

You must not fear, my dearest!
The arts of the cruel Melissa
were vain on me;
fair one, I clasp you to my breast.

Oriana

If he is a deception, sweet is the deceit to me.
Amadigi, think
how from this place you will free me.

Amadigi

There is no more obstacle; you are free.

Oriana

Then my tears are at an end.

16. Siciliana

Oriana

Joys, come to my breast,
shine in my heart,
so that all my care
will fly, will vanish from me!

If my dear love is with me,
I do not wish for any other thing, no,

E sempre io goderò,
Caro mio ben, con te.

Gioie, *ecc.*

19. Recitativo

Amadigi

In questo istante io provo
Di mia vita il più grato e bel momento.

Oriana

Amor, basta, non più! Troppo è il contento.

Amadigi

La gioia opprime i sensi,
E a te vicino, oh bella,
Divien dolce d'Amor l'aspra quadrella.

20. Aria

Amadigi

È sì dolce il mio contento,
È sì grato il mio piacer!

Ché nel seno io già sento
Ché non v'è più da temer.

È sì dolce, *ecc.*

*(Vanno a sedere e segue una danza di cavalieri e
dame incantate.)*

21. Recitativo

Oriana

Andiamo ora, mio ben, che più si tarda?

and I shall rejoice for ever
dear love, with you.

Joys, *etc.*

17. Recitative

Amadigi

In this instant I enjoy
the best and loveliest moment of my life.

Oriana

Dear love, enough! The pleasure is too great.

Amadigi

Joy overwhelms my senses,
and near to you, O fair one,
sweet becomes the bitter dart of Love.

18. Aria

Amadigi

So sweet is my happiness,
so great is my pleasure!

In my breast I already feel
that there is no more to fear.

So sweet is, *etc.*

*(They go to seat themselves and there follows a
dance of enchanted knights and ladies.)*

19. Recitative

Oriana

Let us go now, my dearest, what more delays us?

Amadigi

Prima convien, che a preparar men vada
Quanto alla nostra fuga ancor bisogna;
Attendi, oh bella, intanto
Nelle contigue stanze il mio ritorno.

Oriana

Vanne, ma tosto riedi;
Ché lontana da te duro è il soggiorno.

22 20. Aria

Oriana

Oh caro mio tesor,
Deh! presto torna a me,
E vieni a consolar
Quest'alma amante!

Ché non può questo cor
Esser lontan da te,
Ché bramo ognor mirar
Il tuo sembiante.

Oh caro mio tesor, *etc.*

Scena VIII

Melissa, che sopraggiunge; Dardano a parte, e
detti

23 21. Recitativo

Amadigi

Cieli! Numi! che miro?

Dardano

(Ecco la mia vendetta!)

Amadigi

First it is fit that I should go to prepare
all that we need for our flight;
wait, O fair one, meanwhile
in the adjoining rooms for my return.

Oriana

I go, but return soon;
when away from you, waiting is hard.

20. Aria

Oriana

O my dearest treasure,
ah, quickly return to me,
and come to console
this loving soul!

For if this heart
is far from you,
it always longs to see
your face.

O my dearest treasure, *etc.*

Scene 8

Melissa, who suddenly appears, Dardano to one
side, and the aforesaid

21. Recitative

Amadigi

Heavens! Gods! What do I see?

Dardano

(Here is my revenge!)

Melissa
Demoni, accorrete!
Qui si conduca Oriana.

(Vengono i demoni, e portano Oriana.)

Amadigi
Che mai sarà?

Dardano
(Se la toglie rivale, io son contento.)

(Parte.)

Oriana
Melissa, oh Dio!

Amadigi
Io ti soccorro!

Melissa
Ritenetelo, oh furie!

Amadigi
Oh Numi!

(Parte Oriana.)

Melissa
Ora il furor, la rabbia e l'ira mia
Distrugga queste mura a te sì care;
Vanne altrove a lagnarti!
Il tuo rival gioisca al tuo dolore,
E il contento di lui roda il tuo core.

Melissa
Demons, hasten!
Bring Oriana here.

(The demons come and take Oriana.)

Amadigi
Whatever will be?

Dardano
(If they take her from my rival, I am happy.)

(Exit.)

Oriana
Melissa, O God!

Amadigi
I will rescue you!

Melissa
Detain him, furies!

Amadigi
O Gods!

(Exit Oriana.)

Melissa
Now my fury, rage, and wrath
will destroy these walls so dear to you;
go elsewhere to complain!
Your rival rejoices at your sorrow,
and his happiness gnaws at your heart.

²⁴ 22. Aria
Melissa
 Io godo, scherzo e rido,
 Crudel, nel tuo dolor.

Tu m'insegnasti, infido,
 A dare affanni a un cor.

Io godo, *ecc.*

(*Parte.*)

Scena IX
 Amadigi solo

²⁵ 23. Recitativo
Amadigi
 Ferma, deh! ferma, oh Dio!
 Cruda furia d'inferno,
 Nata per tormentar due fidi amanti,
 Ascolta li miei pianti,
 Rendimi il mio tesoro,
 Ché così troppo è fiero il mio martoro!

²⁶ 24. Aria
Amadigi
 O rendetemi il mio bene,
 Astri infidi,
 O pur fatemi morir.

Ché non posso in tante pene
 Io più vivere e soffrir.

O rendetemi, *ecc.*

22. Aria
Melissa
 I rejoice, jest, and laugh,
 cruel one, at your sorrow.

You taught me, faithless one,
 how to give pain to a heart.

I rejoice, *etc.*

(*Exit.*)

Scene 9
 Amadigi alone

23. Recitative
Amadigi
 Stop, ah, stop, O God!
 Cruel fury of hell,
 born to torment two faithful lovers,
 listen to my weeping,
 give me back my treasure,
 for my torture is too great!

24. Aria
Amadigi
 Either give me back my love,
 faithless stars,
 or let me die.

For in such pain I can no longer
 live and suffer.

Either give me back, *etc.*

Atto secondo

Scena I

La scena rappresenta un giardino con un bellissimo palazzo in distanza, nel mezzo del quale si vede la fontana del Vero Amore.
Amadigi solo

27. Recitativo

Amadigi

Io ramingo men vado
Per valli e per foreste, afflitto e solo,
Né so dove mi volga incerto il piede.
Ma quivi appunto io scorgo
D'amor l'antro incantato,
L'acqua del quale i dubbi amanti accerta;
Voglio in essa specchiarmi,
Per veder s'il mio ben fida è in amarmi.

28. Aria

Amadigi

Sussurrate, onde vezzose,
Limpidette, consolate
Questo misero mio cor.

Sussurrate, *ecc.*

(Riguarda nella fontana.)

29. Recitativo

Amadigi

Numi! che veggio? Oriana
Accarezza il rivale, e mi disprezza?
Cruda, perfida, ingrata!
Mai più di donna ascolterò li pianti.

Act II

Scene I

The scene represents a garden with a beautiful palace in the distance, in the middle of which is seen the Fountain of True Love.
Amadigi alone

25. Recitative

Amadigi

I go wandering
through vales and forests, sad and alone,
nor do I know where to direct my uncertain steps.
But here I see
the enchanted grotto of love,
the waters of which assure doubting lovers;
I want to look at myself in it,
to see if my love is faithful in loving me.

26. Aria

Amadigi

Murmur, fair waves
and limpid, console
this my wretched heart.

Murmur, *etc.*

(He looks into the fountain.)

27. Recitative

Amadigi

Gods! What do I see? Oriana
caresses my rival, and scorns me?
Cruel, traitress, ungrateful!
No more will I listen to a woman's weeping.

Ma già m'opprime il core
Della sua crudeltà l'alto dolore;
Io manco, io mo...

(Cade svenuto sopra un sasso.)

Scena II

Melissa e detto

30 Melissa

Svenne Amadigi dal suo duolo oppresso;
(Fa i suoi scongiuri.)
Si risvegli dal sonno.
Furie, accorrete, e quivi
Oriana apportate,
E premio al suo amore
Sia lo sdegno e rigor, odio e dolore!

(Parte.)

Scena III

Oriana ed Amadigi

31 Oriana

Cieli! che sarà mai?
Ecco il mio ben, ma, oh Dio!
Estinto è l'idol mio!
(Si avvicina ad Amadigi.)
Amadigi, sole degli occhi miei,
Chi dei sensi ti priva? Oh ciel! Non odi?
Spietatissima sorte!
Ah, che Melissa ha dato a lui la morte!
E per maggior tormento
Vuole che estinto io miri il mio contento.

But now my heart is oppressed
by her cruelty, with great sorrow.
I faint, I die...

(He falls in a faint upon a rock.)

Scene 2

Melissa and the aforesaid

Melissa

Amadigi faints, oppressed by sorrow;
(She casts her spells.)
I will rouse him from sleep.
Furies, hasten, and here
bring Oriana,
and the reward of their love
will be disdain and harshness, hatred and sorrow!

(Exit.)

Scene 3

Oriana and Amadigi

Oriana

Heavens! What will ever be?
Here is my love, but, O God!
my idol is dead!
(She draws close to Amadigi.)
Amadigi, sun of my eyes,
who has deprived you of your senses? O heaven!
You do not hear?
Most cruel fate!
Ah, Melissa has given him death!
And for greater torment
wants me to see my happiness dead.

32 28. Aria
Oriana
S'estinto è l'idol mio,
Morire io voglio ancor.

Ché viver non saprai
Con tanti affanni al cor.

S'estinto, *ecc.*

COMPACT DISC TWO

1 29. Recitativo
Oriana
Ma qual scampo al mio affanno?
Si prenda il proprio ferro
Dell'estinto consorte,
(*Va per prendere la spada di Amadigi.*)
Ed unisca due cori una sol morte.

(*Amadigi si risente.*)

Amadigi
Chi mi sveglia dal sonno?

Oriana
Amadigi, mio ben! Tu vivi e spiri?

Amadigi
Chi sei, che chiedi?

28. Aria
Oriana
If dead is my idol,
I want to die, too.

For I cannot live
with so many cares in my heart.

If dead, *etc.*

COMPACT DISC TWO

29. Recitative
Oriana
But what way out of my grief?
I'll take the sword
of my dead lover,
(*She goes to take Amadigi's sword.*)
and unite two hearts in one death.

(*Amadigi comes to.*)

Amadigi
Who wakes me from sleep?

Oriana
Amadigi, my love! You live and breathe?

Amadigi
Who are you, what do you want?

Oriana
Non conosci Oriana?

(Amadigi si leva.)

Amadigi
Oriana,
Un'infida, che per altri m'abborre?

Oriana
Infida tu mi chiami?

Amadigi
Sì, perfida e crudele.

Oriana
Che feci mai?

Amadigi
Va', chiedilo a te stessa, e lo saprai.

Oriana
Dunque quando credea
Che tu, ingrato, m'amassi,
Tu così mi disprezzi?

Amadigi
Ho magnanimo il core,
E amar non so ch'altrui promise amore.

2 **30. Aria**
Amadigi
T'amai, quant' il mio cor
Già seppe amarti;

Oriana
Do you not recognise Oriana?

(Amadigi rises.)

Amadigi
Oriana,
a faithless one, who for another abhors me?

Oriana
Unfaithful you call me?

Amadigi
Yes, traitress and cruel.

Oriana
Whatever have I done?

Amadigi
Go, ask yourself that, and you will know.

Oriana
Then when I believed
that you, ingrate, loved me,
even then you despised me?

Amadigi
I have a noble heart,
and cannot love one who has promised love to
another.

30. Aria
Amadigi
I loved you, as much as my heart
could love you;

Or che tu cangi amor,
Io ti disprezzo;

Se cangio il mio desir,
Di me, deh, non lagnarti;
L'offese a non soffrir
È il petto avvezzo.

T'amai, *ecc.*

3 31. Recitativo

Oriana
Chi mai creduto avria
Ch'Amadigi, il mio ben, fosse crudele!

Amadigi
E chi creduto avria
Ch'Oriana ver' me fosse infedele!

Oriana
Infida tu mi chiami,
Quand'io t'adoro? Ingrato!

Amadigi
So che per altri è il seno tuo piagato.

4 32. Aria

Oriana
Ti pentirai, crudel,
D'avermi offesa un dì,
Perfido, ingrato!

now that you have changed your affection,
I despise you;

if I change my affection,
do not complain about me;
to suffer such transgressions
my heart is not accustomed.

I loved you, *etc.*

31. Recitative

Oriana
Who could ever have believed
that Amadigi, my love, could be cruel!

Amadigi
And who could ever have believed
that Oriana could be unfaithful to me!

Oriana
Unfaithful you call me,
when I adore you? Ungrateful!

Amadigi
I know that by another your heart is wounded.

32. Aria

Oriana
You will repent, cruel one,
one day for having offended me,
traitor, ungrateful!

S'io ti seguì fedel,
Saprò fuggirti ancor,
Crudo, spietato!

Ti pentirai, *ecc.*

(*Parte.*)

Scena IV

Amadigi, e poi Melissa

5 33. Recitativo
Amadigi

Dunque colei, da cui
Speravo ogni conforto, al grave affanno,
Così mi sprezza e fugge?
E nel medesimo istante
Che fede mi giurò, di fè mi manca?
Ed io vivo, e non moro?
Faccia pur quest' acciaro
Ciò che non puote il duolo.

(*Vuol uccidersi, ma vien trattenuto da Melissa, che
sopraggiunge.*)

Melissa

Fermati, e vivi!

Amadigi

Cruda Melissa, lascia
Ch'io dia fine al mio duol con la mia morte.

Melissa

Puoi tue pene finir senza morire.

If I followed you faithfully,
I shall know how to fly from you also,
cruel, merciless one!

You will repent, *etc.*

(*Exit.*)

Scene 4

Amadigi, and then Melissa

33. Recitative
Amadigi

Then she, from whom
I hoped for consolation in my great pain,
thus despises me and flees?
And in the same moment
that she swore faith to me, lacked faith in me?
And I live and do not die?
Let this sword do
that which grief could not.

(*He would kill himself, but is stopped by Melissa,
who arrives suddenly.*)

Melissa

Stop, and live!

Amadigi

Cruel Melissa, let
me put an end to my sorrow with my death.

Melissa

You can end your pain without dying.

Amadigi

Benché a me sia crudele,
Quella per cui sospiro,
A lei sempre qual fui sarò fedele,
Né altro io da te bramo,
Che mi lasci morir, già ch'io non t'amo.

Melissa

Io più soffrir nol posso;
Non sperar, con la morte,
Dar fine alle tue pene,
Che prima ti convien, alma spietata,
Provar quanto far può una donna sdegnata.
Divenga in questo loco,
Ogni placido aspetto, orrore e foco!
(*La scena si cangia in un antro orribile.*)
E voi, de' miei furori
Orridi esecutori,
Accorrete a punir chi mi disprezza!

(*Dei mostri sortono dal seno della terra, s'odono
tuoni nell'aria.*)

Amadigi

L'anima è troppo avvezza
Alle pene, agli affanni,
E se credi con questo
D'amollire il mio cor, folle, t'inganni.

Melissa

Cessate omai, cessate!
Che più gravi tormenti a lui preparo;
Circondatelo, oh furie!
(*Le furie lo circondano.*)

Amadigi

Although she is cruel to me,
she for whom I sigh,
I will always be as faithful as I was,
nothing other I ask of you
than to let me die, as I cannot love you.

Melissa

I can bear no more;
do not hope that by death
you will put an end to your pains.
For before you end, cruel heart,
you will find what a slighted woman can do.
In this place, let change
every pleasant sight into horror and fire!
(*The scene changes to a horrible cavern.*)
And you, of my fury
the horrid executioners,
hasten to punish him who despises me!

(*Monsters come out from the bowels of the earth,
thunder is heard in the air.*)

Amadigi

My soul is too accustomed
to pain, to suffering,
and if you think with this
to soften my heart, foolish one, you are deceived.

Melissa

Cease then, cease!
Greater torments I shall prepare for him;
surround him, furies!
(*The furies surround him.*)

Vedrà nelle mie soglie
Ciò che nel fonte ei vide;
Vo' ch' il suo duolo al mio divenga eguale,
E colei che l'adora ami il rivale!

6 34. Duetto

Melissa ed Amidigi
Crudel, tu non farai
Ch' il tuo rigor giammai
Perturbi la costanza.

Amadigi
Ho petto da soffrire
Ogn' aspro e rio martire,
Né temo il tuo rigor
Né tua possanza.

Melissa
S' hai petto da soffrire
Ogn' aspro e rio martire,
Torrò col mio rigor
La tua speranza.

Melissa ed Amidigi
Crudel, tu non farai, *ecc.*

(Partono.)

Scena V
Palazzo di Melissa.
Dardano solo

He will see within my realm
that which he saw in the spring;
I want his pain to be equal to mine,
and she whom he adores to love his rival!

34. Duet

Melissa and Amadigi
Cruel one, you will not make
your harshness ever
trouble my faithfulness.

Amadigi
I have a breast which will suffer
every sour and harsh affliction;
I fear neither your severity,
nor your might.

Melissa
If you have a breast which will suffer
every sour and harsh affliction,
I will take, with my cruelty,
your hope away.

Melissa and Amadigi
Cruel one, you will not make, *etc.*

(Exeunt.)

Scene 5
Melissa's palace.
Dardano alone

7

35. Recitativo**Dardano**

D'un sventurato amante
 Provo tutte le pene in questo petto:
 Ama Oriana Amadigi, e me disprezza;
 Mi promette Melissa
 Conforto al mio tormento,
 Ma tardi veggio, oh Dio!
 Ch'è vano ogni potere al duolo mio.

8

36. Aria**Dardano**

Pena tiranna
 Io sento al core,
 Né spero mai
 Trovar pietà.

Amor m'affanna,
 E il mio dolore
 In tanti guai
 Pace non ha.

Pena tiranna, *ecc.*

(Mentre vuol partire, vien ritenuto da Melissa.)

Scena VI

Melissa e detto

9

37. Recitativo**Melissa**

Arresta, oh Prince!
 Quivi fra brevi istanti
 Vedrai quella che adori,

35. Recitative**Dardano**

Those of an unhappy lover
 are all the pains I feel in this breast:
 Oriana loves Amadigi, and despises me;
 Melissa promised me
 comfort in my torment,
 but too late I see, O God!
 that all her power is vain against my grief.

36. Aria**Dardano**

Tyrannical pain
 I feel in my heart,
 nor do I hope ever
 to find comfort.

Love leaves me breathless
 and my sorrow
 in so many woes
 have no peace.

Tyrannical pain, *etc.*

(While he moves to leave, he is held back by Melissa.)

Scene 6

Melissa and the aforesaid

37. Recitative**Melissa**

Stop, O Prince!
 Here in a few moments
 you will see her whom you adore,

Mite agli affanni tuoi,
Né più, qual già solea, aspra e crudele.

Dardano
Come ciò fia?

Melissa
Con incantati giri
Cangio tue forme, e ai lumi d'Oriana
Non più di Tracia il Prence,
Ma Amadigi parrai;
E invisibili a lui ambi sarete.

Dardano
E a che giovar ciò deve?

Melissa
Che t'amerà colei, che tanto adori.

Dardano
Ma sott'altro sembiante.

Melissa
Ancor che per inganno,
Piace l'essere amato a un core amante.

10 **38. Aria**
Melissa
Se tu brami di godere,
Lascia pur a me il pensiero,
Ch'io contento ti farò.

Non avrai più tanti affanni,
Ed il fine de' tuoi danni
Io con piacere mirerò.

made mild by your grief,
and no longer, as she was, harsh and cruel.

Dardano
How can that be?

Melissa
By my enchanted circles
I shall change your form, and to the eyes of Oriana
you will no longer as the Prince of Thrace
but as Amadigi appear;
and both of you will be invisible to him.

Dardano
But what good will that be?

Melissa
That loving you will be she whom you so adore.

Dardano
But in the likeness of another.

Melissa
Even if it is by deceit,
pleased to be loved by a loving heart.

38. Aria
Melissa
If you long to rejoice,
leave the thinking to me,
that I may make you happy.

You will no longer have so many cares,
and the end of your hurt
I will see with pleasure.

Se tu brami di godere, *ecc.*

(*Parte.*)

Scena VII
Dardano solo

11 39. Recitativo

Dardano
Ma, se questo non basta
A mitigar la pena mia crudele,
Altra strada si tenti;
Sarà di questo ferro
Scopo chi è la cagion d'ogni mia doglia,
E i lacci del suo amor lo sdegno scioglia.

Scena VIII
Oriana e detto, da essa creduto Amadigi

12 Oriana
Amadigi, mio ben! deh! quando mai
Finirai di dar pene al core amante?
Deh! dimmi, in che t'offesi?

Dardano
(“In che t'offesi?”
Da me ciò non si seppe;
L'arte assista l'inganno, o son scoperto.)

Oriana
Contami la cagion dell'ira tua?

If you long to rejoice, *etc.*

(*Exit.*)

Scene 7
Dardano alone

39. Recitative

Dardano
But, if this is not enough
to alleviate my cruel pain,
I will try another way;
the target of this sword
will be he who is the cause of all my grief,
and the bonds of his love my wrath will break.

Scene 8
Oriana and the aforesaid, supposed by her to be
Amadigi

Oriana
Amadigi, my love! Ah, whenever
will you stop giving pain to a loving heart?
Ah, tell me, how have I offended you?

Dardano
(‘How have I offended you?’
I never thought of such a thing;
may art assist the deception, or I am discovered.)

Oriana
Will you tell me the reason for your anger?





Dardano

Bella, i trascorsi del labbro
Non giungono nel cor di chi ben ama.

Oriana

Se t'offesi, perdona!
Fu involontaria colpa,
Se fu colpa la mia.

Dardano

Il rammentarmi dei passati errori
Arrossir fa le gote;
Più di ciò non si parli.

Oriana

Cesse Melissa, e si compiace anch'essa
Del reciproco affetto.

Dardano

Dunque, mio ben, sei mia?

Oriana

Ostacol più non trovo ai nostri ardori.

Dardano

Or sian dunque beati i nostri amori!

13 40. Aria

Dardano

Tu mia speranza,
Tu mio conforto,
Sei di quest'alma
L'amato ben.

Dardano

Fair one, slips of the tongue
do not reach the heart of one who loves well.

Oriana

If I have offended you, forgive me!
It was an unintentional offence,
if the offence was mine.

Dardano

To remember my past errors
brings blushes to my cheeks;
no more let us speak of it.

Oriana

Melissa has stopped, and she too is pleased
by our mutual affection.

Dardano

Then, my love, you are mine?

Oriana

No more hindrance I see to our passion.

Dardano

Then our love is blessed!

40. Aria

Dardano

You are my hope
you are my comfort,
of this soul
you are the dearest love.

La mia costanza
È giunta in porto,
Ed ho la palma
Del tuo bel sen.

Tu mia speranza, *ecc.*

(Finita l'aria, Amadigi attraversa la scena senza veder Dardano, da cui è però veduto, e che lo segue adirato.)

41. Recitativo
Dardano

Ma qui il rival! Si vendichi l'offesa!

(Parte.)

Oriana

Così mi lascia, e parte?
Sento strepito d'armi; e che sarà?

(Si sente rumore di armi.)

Scena IX

Melissa, che sorte furiosa, e detta

Melissa

Cieli! Numi! soccorso, astri crudeli!

Oriana

Che t'affligge, oh Melissa?

My faithfulness
has reached harbour,
and I have the palm
of your fair heart.

You are my hope, *etc.*

(At the end of the aria, Amadigi crosses the scene without seeing Dardano, by whom he is seen, however, and who follows him angrily.)

41. Recitative
Dardano

My rival here! Now to avenge the offence!

(Exit.)

Oriana

Does he leave me thus and depart?
I hear the clash of swords; what can this be?

(The clashing of swords is heard.)

Scene 9

Melissa, who enters in a rage, and the aforesaid

Melissa

Heavens! Gods! Help, cruel stars!

Oriana

What is the matter, Melissa?

Melissa

Ascolta! quel che poc'anzi
Amadigi pareva, di Tracia è il Prence,
Che veduto Amadigi
Corse per tor la vita al suo rivale;
Egli Amadigi assale;
Il di cui braccio invitto,
D'un colpo ch'il difende
Ha il suo rival trafitto;
Mira colà di Tracia il Prence estinto!

Oriana

Or tu forse m'inganni.

Melissa

Più ingannar non ti voglio,
Troppo fian veri
Quelli che a voi preparo aspri tormenti.

Oriana

Barbara! e che ti feci?

Melissa

M'involasti un amante.

Oriana

Colpa mia già non fu.

Melissa

Fia tuo l'affanno.

Oriana

Ti puniranno i Numi.

Melissa

Listen! He, who a short while ago
appeared to be Amadigi, is the Prince of Thrace,
on seeing Amadigi
he ran to take his rival's life;
he attacked Amadigi,
he, whose arm is unvanquished,
defended himself with a blow
and ran his rival through;
see there the Prince of Thrace dead!

Oriana

Now perhaps you are deceiving me.

Melissa

I do not wish to deceive you more,
they will be too true
and cruel the torments which I prepare for you.

Oriana

Barbarous wretch! What have I done to you?

Melissa

You stole a lover from me.

Oriana

It was not my fault.

Melissa

Yours will be the torment.

Oriana

The gods will punish you.

Melissa

Trema per me Cocito.

Oriana

Il Ciel gli empi condanna.

Melissa

Ma eseguisce l'inferno.

Oriana

Giove per te s'adira.

Melissa

Se non cessi d'amarlo...

(La minaccia.)

Oriana

L'amerò sin che ho vita.

Melissa

Morrai, se non v'assenti.

Oriana

Ascolta!

Perfida incantatrice, empia Megera!

Tesifone d'inferno, arpia del mondo,

Tu ben veder potrai

Guizzar nell'aria i pesci,

Gli augel' volar nell'onde,

Farsi gelido il fuoco,

Bruciar il gelo, ed appianarsi i monti,

E alle nubi salir le valli e gli antri,

Ma far già non potrai

Melissa

I can make hell tremble.

Oriana

Heaven condemns the wicked.

Melissa

But it is hell that executes them.

Oriana

Jove will be angry at you.

Melissa

If you do not stop loving him...

(She menaces her.)

Oriana

I will love him as long as I have life.

Melissa

You will die, if you do not agree.

Oriana

Listen!

Treacherous sorceress, wicked Megæra!

Tisiphone of hell, harpy of the world,

you may be able to make

fish dart in the air,

birds fly in the waves,

fire freeze,

ice burn, the mountains level,

and valleys and caves climb to the clouds,

but you can never make

Ch' il fervido desio
Mai si stanchi d' amar l' idolo mio.

Melissa

Son sorda ai detti tuoi.

(Vuol partire, ma Oriana la ritiene.)

15 42. Aria

Oriana

Affannami, tormentami,
È vano il tuo rigor.

Si vago è l' idol mio,
Che di cangiar desio,
Non ha potere il cor.

Affannami, *ecc.*

(Parte.)

Scena X

Melissa sola

16 43. Recitativo

Melissa

Mi deride l' amante,
La rivale mi sprezza,
Ed io lo soffro, oh stelle?
No, non sarà giammai
Ch' io perda il mio vigor fra pene e guai.

my ardent soul
ever tire of loving my idol.

Melissa

I am deaf to your words.

(She would leave, but Oriana detains her.)

42. Aria

Oriana

Vex me, torment me,
your harshness is in vain.

So fair is my dearest one
that to change affection
my heart has no power.

Vex me, *etc.*

(Exit.)

Scene 10

Melissa alone

43. Recitativo

Melissa

My lover derides me,
my rival detests me,
and I must suffer it, O stars?
No, it will never be
that I will lose my courage through grief and woe.

17

44. Aria

Melissa

Desterò dall'empia dite
Ogni furia a farvi guerra,
Crudi, perfidi, sì, sì.

Ombre tetre, omai sortite
Dall'avello che vi serra,
A dar pene
A colui che mi schernì!

Desterò dall'empia dite, *ecc.*

Atto terzo

Scena I

Palazzo di Melissa.

Oriana, condotta da demoni

18

45. Recitativo

Oriana

Dove mi guida il fato mio tiranno?
Quì Melissa mi vuol? quì mi condanna
A soffrir pene e affanni?
E che mai feci, oh sorte?
Perché adoro Amadigi,
Deggio dunque aver morte?
Sì, sì, neri ministri
D'una furia d'averno,
D'una infida Megera,
Conducetemi pur dove v'addita,
Ché per cagion sì cara
Troppo fia dolce a me perder la vita.

44. Aria

Melissa

I shall awaken from cruel Dis
every Fury to make war on you,
cruel one, traitress, yes, yes.

Blackest ghosts, now come forth
from the dungeons in which you are imprisoned,
to give pain
to those who mock me!

I shall awaken from cruel Dis, *etc.*

Act III

Scene I

Melissa's palace.

Oriana, led by demons

45. Recitativo

Oriana

Where does my cruel fate lead me?
Is it here Melissa wants me? Here she condemns me
to suffer pain and torment?
And what did I do, O fate?
Because I adore Amadigi,
must I then suffer death?
Yes, yes, you gloomy ministers
of a fury from the lake Avernus,
of a treacherous Megera,
lead me then where she commands you,
as, for a cause so dear,
it will be a pleasure to lose my life.

19

46. Aria

Oriana

Dolce vita del mio petto,
Io per te morirò beata.

E più puro avrò l'affetto
Di quest'alma sventurata.

Dolce vita del mio petto, *ecc.*

(*Parte.*)

Scena II

Il teatro rappresenta un antro destinato
agl'incanti di Melissa.
Melissa sola

20

47. Recitativo

Melissa

Sento, né so che sia,
Agitato il pensier; è mesto il core,
E ingombra l'alma mia pena e timore;
Forse perché preparo
All'ingrato Amadigi acerba morte?
Ma che ci posso far, se più l'adoro
Quanto più m'abborrisce!
Egli a ciò mi costringe.
Amadigi qui venga,
E seco Oriana, cagion del mio tormento,
Ch'oppressa dal rigor già l'alma io sento.

21

48. Aria

Melissa

Vanne lungi dal mio petto,
Vano amor, ch'io vo' vendetta.

46. Aria

Oriana

Sweet life of my heart,
I will die for you blessed.

And purer I will have affection
for this unfortunate soul.

Sweet life of my heart, *etc.*

(*Exit.*)

Scene 2

The theatre represents a cave appointed for
Melissa's sorcery.
Melissa alone

47. Recitative

Melissa

I feel, but know not why,
my thoughts disturbed and my heart heavy,
and my soul oppressed by grief and fear;
perhaps it is because I am preparing
for ungrateful Amadigi a cruel death?
But how can I help it, when the more I adore him
the more he abhors me!
So he compels me to proceed.
Bring Amadigi here,
and with him Oriana, reason for my torment,
for weighed down with cruelty I now feel my soul.

48. Aria

Melissa

Go far from my breast,
false love, for I want vengeance.

Non darò mai più ricetto
A un'amabile saetta.

Vanne lungi dal mio petto, *ecc.*

Scena III
I demoni, che conducono Amadigi ed Oriana,
incatenati, e detta

22 **49. Recitativo**
Oriana
Se t'offese Oriana,
Ella sol si punisca.

Amadigi
Se ti sprezza Amadigi,
Egli sol merta pene.

Melissa
E pene, e morte avrai! Da te principio.

(Va per ferire Amadigi.)

Oriana
Numi! aita, soccorso!

Melissa
Ma, che nuova pietade
Mi passeggia nel petto?
Perfido traditore,
La tua morte vorrei, ma il cor nol vuole.

I will never again give admittance
to love's arrow.

Go far from my breast, *etc.*

Scene 3
Demons, who lead Amadigi and Oriana in
chains, and the aforesaid

49. Recitativo
Oriana
If Oriana has offended you,
she alone should be punished.

Amadigi
If Amadigi has slighted you,
he alone deserves pain.

Melissa
And pain and death you will have! You first.

(She goes to wound Amadigi.)

Oriana
Gods! Help and succour us!

Melissa
But, what new pity
comes into my breast?
False traitor,
I want your death, but my heart does not wish it.

Amadigi

Ah! che non giova a me la tua pietade,
Mentre ch'io temo, oh Dio!,
Per Oriana, il mio ben, per l'idol mio.

Melissa

Ed ancor tu m'inviti?
T'ucciderò nel cor di lei spietato.

(Va per uccidere Oriana.)

Amadigi

Ah ferma!

Oriana

No! Melissa,
Salva il mio ben, ed io contenta moro.

Melissa

Ma no! fia troppo breve
Questa pena a un ingrato;
Darò con mille morti
A lei pene, a te affanni, e a me conforti.

23 50. Duetto

Oriana ed Amadigi

Cangia alfine il tuo rigore,
Senti, oh Dio! di noi pietà!

Deh! ti muova il mio dolore,
Troppo usasti crudeltà.

Cangia alfine, *ecc.*

Amadigi

Ah, of no use for me is your pity,
while I fear, O God!,
for Oriana, my love, my idol.

Melissa

And again you irritate me?
I will kill you by way of her pitiless heart.

(She goes to kill Oriana.)

Amadigi

Ah, stop!

Oriana

No! Melissa,
spare my love, and I shall die happy.

Melissa

But no! Too short
this pain would be for an ingrate;
I will give with a thousand deaths
to her pain, to you grief, and to me comfort.

50. Duetto

Oriana and Amadigi

Change at last your harshness,
feel, O God, pity for us!

Ah, may my sorrow move you,
you have used too much cruelty.

Change at last, *etc.*

24

51. Recitativo

Melissa

No, no! ho già risolto.
Ombra del suo rivale,
Prencipe sfortunato,
In virtù de' miei detti
Sorti dal regno oscuro,
E qui meco t'unisci a far vendetta
Del mio amor, del tuo amor, del nostro oltraggio!

Scena IV

Ombra del Prencipe di Tracia, e detti

25

52. Accompagnato

Ombra

Han penetrato i detti tuoi l'inferno,
E i Numi, nemici all'ingiustizia,
Proteggon contro te due fidi amanti;
E per maggior mia pena
Vogliono ch'io ti rammenti
Ch'è giunta pur la fin del lor tormenti.

(Sparisce l'ombra.)

Scena V

Amadigi, Melissa ed Oriana

26

53. Recitativo

Melissa

Cieli! ingiusti e inclementi!
Dunque a voi soli fia
La vendetta concessa?

51. Recitative

Melissa

No, no! I am resolved.
Ghost of his rival,
unfortunate Prince,
by virtue of my words
come from the realm of darkness,
and unite yourself with me to take vengeance
for my love, for your love, for our wrongs!

Scene 4

Ghost of the Prince of Thrace, and the aforesaid

52. Accompagnato

Ghost

Your words have penetrated hell,
and the gods, enemies of injustice,
protect two faithful lovers against you;
and for my greater pain
they command me to tell you
that near their end are now their torments.

(The ghost vanishes.)

Scene 5

Amadigi, Melissa, and Oriana

53. Recitative

Melissa

Heavens! Unjust and unkind!
Is it then only to you
that vengeance is granted?

Oriana

A che mai si risolve?

Amadigi

Io temo ancora.

Melissa

Ma che!

Muoia la mia rivale!...

(Vuol uccidere Oriana, ma si sente ritenere.)

Ch' il piè m' arresta, oh stelle?

Ah! che voi proteggete, infidi Numi,

Una coppia felice!

Io sola, sventurata!

Cielo e inferno m' abborre;

Morir si de' e, si muoia!

(Si ferisce con uno stilo.)

54. Accompagnato ed Arioso

Melissa

Addio, crudo Amadigi!

Spira la tua nemica, anzi l' amante.

Godi del mio morir, barbaro, ingrato!

Già il piè vacilla e il lume,

Ed un freddo mortal già mi sorprende;

Felice è la mia morte,

Se un tuo sospir compiangi la mia sorte.

Io già sento l' alma in sen,

Che da me partendo va.

(Cade sopra un sasso, e muore.)

Oriana

Whatever can she resolve to do?

Amadigi

I fear still.

Melissa

But what!

Let my rival die!...

(She would kill Oriana, but finds herself restrained.)

What holds my feet back, O stars?

Ah, it is you who protect, unfaithful gods,

a happy couple!

I alone am unfortunate!

Heaven and hell abhor me;

I ought to die, and die I will!

(She stabs herself with a dagger.)

54. Accompagnato and Arioso

Melissa

Farewell, cruel Amadigi!

Now dies your enemy, or rather your lover.

Rejoice at my death, barbarian, ingrate!

Already my feet are unsteady, as is my sight,

and a mortal cold already seizes me;

happy will be my death,

if one sigh of yours mourns my fate.

I already feel my soul in my breast,

which from me departs.

(She falls upon a rock and dies.)

28

55. Recitativo

Oriana
Che orrore!

Amadigi
Infelice Melissa!

Oriana
Ma ch'ascolto?

Amadigi
Che sento?
Qual chiarore improvviso abbaglia i lumi?

Oriana
Or sì che ci protegge il Cielo, e i Numi.

(L'antro si cangia in un bellissimo palazzo, e dopo breve ed allegra sinfonia, discende un carro coperto da nubi, nel quale si vede l'incantatore Orgando, zio d'Oriana.)

29

56. Sinfonia

Scena VI
Orgando e detti

30

57. Recitativo

Orgando
Son finiti i tormenti, omai si goda!
Il Ciel, che vi protegge,
Vuol che cessin gl'incanti,
E con dolci sponsali
Si uniscan con le destre i cori amanti.

55. Recitative

Oriana
What horror!

Amadigi
Unhappy Melissa!

Oriana
But what do I hear?

Amadigi
What do I see?
What sudden light dazzles my eyes?

Oriana
Now I know that Heaven and the gods protect us.

(The cave changes into a beautiful palace, and after a brief and lively sinfonia, a chariot covered with clouds descends, in which is seen the sorcerer Orgando, Oriana's uncle.)

56. Sinfonia

Scene 6
Orgando and the aforesaid

57. Recitative

Orgando
Your torments are at an end, now you may rejoice!
Heaven, which protects you,
wants all enchantments to cease,
and with sweet nuptial rites
let your hands unite two loving hearts.

Amadigi

Cara, la man ti stringo.

Oriana

Più dolce è inaspettato un gran contento.

Amadigi

Or ti ringrazio, Amor, del mio tormento!
Cara mia sposa, adesso
Ogni nube spari d'atro dolore,
S'Orgando e il Dio d'amore
Con più soavi incanti
Unisce i due più fidi e casti amanti.

31 58. Aria

Amadigi

Sento la gioia,
Ch'in sen mi brilla,
E già scintilla
Nel ciel la stella
Del Dio d'amor.

Sarò beato
Con te, mia bella,
E amico il fato
Già mi promette
Contento al cor.

Sento la gioia, *ecc.*

32 59. Recitativo

Orgando (*disceso dal suo carro*)

Godete omai felici,
Oh fortunati sposi!

Amadigi

My dearest, I clasp your hand.

Oriana

Sweeter is a great joy when unexpected.

Amadigi

Now I thank you, Love, even for my pains!
My dear spouse, now
all the clouds of cruel grief are vanished,
for Orgando and the God of Love,
with sweeter enchantments,
unite two faithful and chaste lovers.

58. Aria

Amadigi

I feel the joy
that shines in my heart,
and already sparkles
the star in the sky
of the God of Love.

I shall be blessed
with you, my fair one,
and friendly fate
already promises me
my heart's content.

I feel the joy, *etc.*

59. Recitativo

Orgando (*descending from his chariot*)

Rejoice now, and be happy,
O fortunate bridal couple!

E qual già preparai
Danze campestri e magica armonia,
Qui del vostro goder preludio sia.

33 60. Coro

Coro

Godete, oh cori amanti,
Ché non v'è più dolor;
Cangiato ha i vostri pianti
In riso il Dio d'amor!

Oriana ed Amadigi

Or sì m'alletti,
Speranza del mio sen;
Non più velen,
Ma sol diletta
Io provo in questo cor.

Coro

Godete, oh cori amanti,
Ché non v'è più dolor;
Cangiato ha i vostri pianti
In riso il Dio d'amor!

34 61. Ballo di Pastori e Pastorelle

Libretto attributed to
Nicola Francesco Haym (1678 – 1729)

I have already prepared
country dances and magic harmony
to be to your future joys a prelude.

60. Chorus

Chorus

Rejoice, O loving hearts,
for there is no more grief;
your tears changed to smiles
has the God of Love!

Oriana and Amadigi

Now I am happy,
hope of my soul;
no more bitterness,
but only joys
I feel in this heart.

Chorus

Rejoice, O loving hearts,
for there is no more grief;
your tears changed to smiles
has the God of Love!

61. Dance of Shepherds and Shepherdesses

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Helen Willis



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DPA: 4006 & 4011

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CM 402 microphones are hand built by the designer, Jörgen Thureson, in Sweden.

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CHANDOS

Soloists/Early Opera Company/Curnyn

CHSA 0406(2)

CHACONNE DIGITAL

2-disc set **CHSA 0406(2)**

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)
AMADIGI DI GAULA HWV 11 (1715)

Opera in Three Acts

On an anonymous adaptation
(probably by Nicola Francesco Haym, 1678–1729)
of the libretto *Amadis de Grèce* (Paris, 1699)
by Antoine Houdar de La Motte (1672–1731)

Performing edition prepared by Peter Jones



Melissa, sorceress, in love with Amadigi	Mary Bevan soprano
Amadigi di Gaula, hero, lover of Oriana	Tim Mead countertenor
Oriana, daughter of the King of the Fortunate Islands	Anna Dennis soprano
Dardano, Prince of Thrace	Hilary Summers contralto
Orgando, sorcerer, uncle of Oriana	Patrick Terry countertenor

**Chorus and Orchestra of
Early Opera Company
CHRISTIAN CURNYN**

COMPACT DISC ONE	COMPACT DISC TWO
ACT I & ACT II (BEGINNING)	ACT II (CONCLUSION) & ACT III
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