



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

CHAN 3147

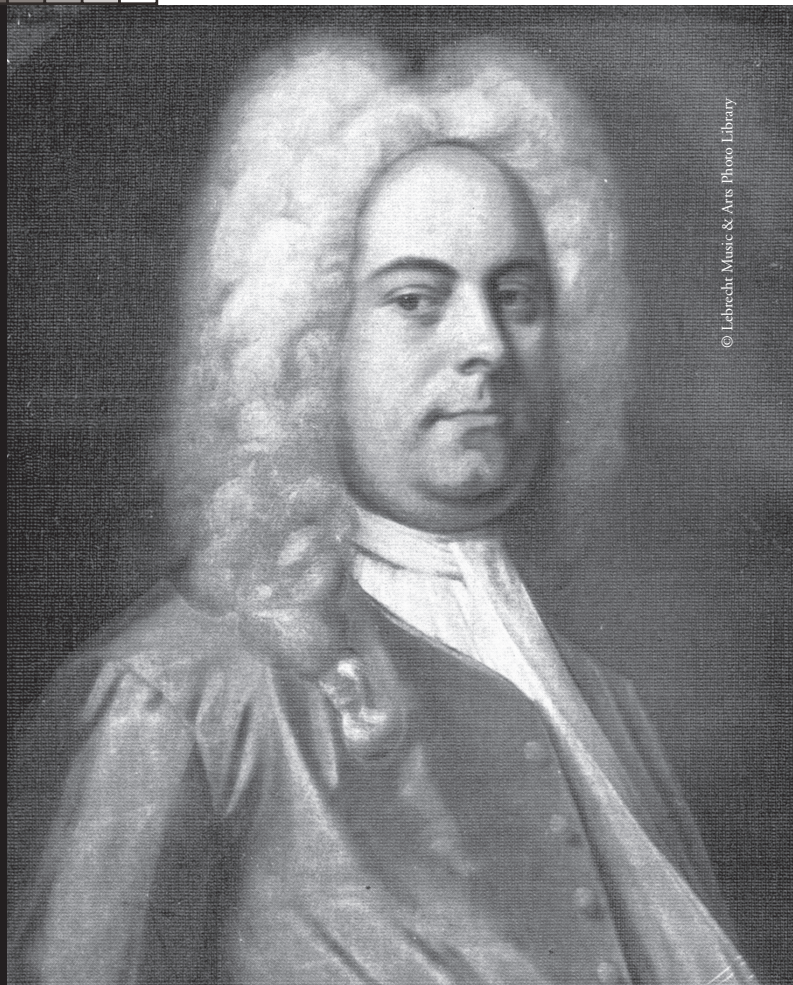
CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH

Handel
Scenes from
ACIS & GALATEA

ARCHIVE SELECTION



GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL



© Labrecht Music & Arts Photo Library

George Frideric Handel

(1685–1759)

Acis and Galatea

Masque in two acts

Words by John Gay and others

Galatea	Joan Sutherland <i>soprano</i>
Acis	Peter Pears <i>tenor</i>
Damon	David Galliver <i>tenor</i>
Polyphemus	Owen Brannigan <i>bass</i>

harpsichord continuo	Thurston Dart
St Anthony Singers	
Philomusica of London	Sir Adrian Boult



Time Page

1	Sinfonia	3:42	[p. 40]
Act I			
2	Chorus: 'Oh the pleasure of the plains!' <i>Chorus</i>	5:41	[p. 40]
3	Recitative: 'Ye verdant plains and woody mountains'	1:02	[p. 40]
4	Air: 'Hush, ye pretty warbling quire!' <i>Galatea</i>	4:29	[p. 40]
5	Air: 'Where shall I seek the charming fair?' <i>Acis</i>	2:40	[p. 40]
6	Recitative: 'Stay, shepherd, stay!'	0:34	[p. 40]
7	Air: 'Shepherd, what art thou pursuing?' <i>Damon</i>	3:03	[p. 40]
8	Recitative: 'Lo, here my love!'	0:34	[p. 41]
9	Air: 'Love in her eyes sits playing' <i>Acis</i>	6:05	[p. 41]
10	Recitative: 'Oh! didst thou know the pains of absent love'	0:26	[p. 41]

Time Page

11	Air: 'As when the dove' <i>Galatea</i>	4:54	[p. 41]
12	Duet: 'Happy we' <i>Acis, Galatea</i>	2:42	[p. 41]
13	Chorus: 'Wretched lovers!' <i>Chorus</i>	5:16	[p. 41]
Act II			
14	Recitative: 'I rage – I melt – I burn'	1:38	[p. 42]
15	Air: 'O ruddier than the cherry' <i>Polyphemus</i>	3:21	[p. 42]
16	Recitative: 'Whither, fairest, art thou running' <i>Polyphemus, Galatea</i>	1:29	[p. 42]
17	Air: 'Cease to beauty to be suing' <i>Polyphemus</i>	3:37	[p. 42]
18	Air: 'Would you gain the tender creature' <i>Damon</i>	4:04	[p. 42]
19	Recitative: 'His hideous love provokes my rage'	0:35	[p. 43]

20	Air: 'Love sounds th'alarm' <i>Acis</i>	3:10	[p. 43]
21	Recitative: 'Cease, oh cease, thou gentle youth' <i>Galatea</i>	0:40	[p. 43]
22	Trio: 'The flocks shall leave the mountains' <i>Acis, Galatea, Polyphemus</i>	2:32	[p. 43]
23	Recitative: 'Help, Galatea! Help, ye parent gods!' <i>Acis</i>	1:33	[p. 43]
24	Chorus: 'Mourn, all ye muses!' <i>Chorus</i>	3:13	[p. 43]
25	Air with Chorus: 'Must I my Acis still bemoan' <i>Galatea, Chorus</i>	4:31	[p. 44]
26	Recitative: 'Tis done! Thus I exert my pow'r divine'	0:30	[p. 44]
27	Air: 'Heart, the seat of soft delight' <i>Galatea</i>	3:59	[p. 44]
28	Chorus: 'Galatea, dry thy tears' <i>Chorus</i>	3:06	[p. 44]

TT 79:23



AKG Images

Title page of sheet music for *Acis and Galatea*, dating from around 1725



Sir Peter Moores, Patric Schmid and Dame Joan Sutherland
at the Cardiff Singer of the World competition

Joan Sutherland recorded *Acis and Galatea* in the same year – 1959 – that she shot to stardom singing Lucia at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden – the start of her international career. We are grateful to the Decca Music Group Ltd for enabling us to include this historic recording in our Opera in English Archive Collection, and above all, to Dame Joan for her wonderful contribution to the lyric arts throughout her long career.

Peter Moores

Sir Peter Moores, CBE, DL
November 2007

I am delighted to hear that *Acis and Galatea* is being re-released by the Peter Moores Foundation and Chandos, and must say how glad I am that another Handel opera is now in Chandos' Opera in English catalogue.

I first sang in *Acis* in a concert performance before leaving Sydney in 1948 or '49 and it was one of the first Handel operas in which I appeared, but it wasn't until much later on in my career that I recorded it in London. It is a wonderful piece, full of memorable tunes which still have a habit of coming into my mind spontaneously at odd moments – rather jolly to hum along to when doing the housework!

Once again, I'd like to say how happy I am that this recording is now available and hope that it will introduce a whole new generation of young people to this magnificent music.

Joan Sutherland

Dame Joan Sutherland
November 2007



Acis and Galatea, a Masque

Handel's Masque *Acis and Galatea* enjoyed remarkable popularity during the eighteenth century. None of Handel's other works were played more often – about seventy performances are known to have been given by the middle of the century – and *Acis and Galatea* was one of the few of his works which were published in his lifetime in an edition containing not only the 'Favourite Songs', but complete with Overture, choruses and recitatives. The work remained popular after his death: *Acis and Galatea* was one of the four Handel pieces which Baron Gottfried van Swieten commissioned Mozart to bring up to date in 1788; Mendelssohn performed it in 1828, and in 1857 Meyerbeer planned a stage production of it. Currently there are no less than nine recordings of the whole work available in various versions.

In subject, *Acis and Galatea* is a piece very much of its time. The pastoral theme of amorous nymphs and shepherds, described with varying degrees of decorum and usually set in a classical context, was extremely popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in literature, painting and music.

The immediate source of Handel's libretto was the poet laureate John Dryden's translation of the 'Story of Acis, Polyphemus and Galatea' from the thirteenth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Authorship of the masque is uncertain; a libretto printed for performances in 1739 attributed it to John Gay, author of *The Beggar's Opera*, while a copy of the work made around 1730 gives Alexander Pope as its author. One John Hughes certainly wrote the words of the aria 'Would you gain the tender creature...' and it may well be that the libretto was a joint effort; all three were, along with Handel, members of Lord Burlington's and the Duke of Chandos' artistic circles.

The story of Acis had been the subject of operas before Handel's time. In France Charpentier (1660) and Lully (1686) had set it to music and in England, in 1707, it provided the subject of a masque by John Eccles. Handel himself set an Italian version of the fable to music in the cantata *Acis, Galatea e Polifemo*, written in Naples in 1708. But it was not until ten years later that his English masque *Acis and Galatea* appeared.

The exact dates of the work's composition or of its first performance are not known, but an edition of its 'Songs and Symphonies' printed about 1725 tells us that it was written and performed for the (future) Duke of Chandos, at whose palatial residence Cannons, near then-rural Edgware, Handel was installed as resident composer for some years from 1716. A manuscript copy of the *Acis and Galatea* score is known to have been in the Duke's library in 1720 and in early 1718 a guest at the house referred to it as 'a little opera'.

From the beginning, *Acis and Galatea* was described as a 'masque'. By Handel's time the term no longer applied only to the lavish confections of music, dancing, words and spectacle devised by Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones and others for the entertainment of the Stuart court. In the absence of such profligate patronage a simpler form of musical drama had evolved where arias, recitatives and choruses 'in the Italian manner', usually on mythological and pastoral subjects were performed with quite modest forces for the delectation of cognoscenti and the wider musical public. Masques by John Hughes and Johann Christian Pepusch, Master of the Music at Cannons, were very much in vogue when Handel was in service to the Duke and,

no doubt, their success encouraged him to turn to the genre.

Handel never gave us a definitive edition but the one recorded here is a very satisfying compromise between the various versions, which even included a bilingual version in English and Italian dating from 1734. The year of this recording's first release was 1960, which was just about the birth of authentic performances. Sir Adrian Boult was the conductor, and he, with the Philomusica of London, and the St Anthony Singers, enter into the spirit of the absolutely delightful work. The great strength of this version is Peter Pears whose singing of Acis's 'Love in her eyes sits playing' is an object lesson in style: beautifully phrased, perfectly articulated, and with a charming, almost sensuous lilt to its rhythm. He also excels in 'Love sounds th'alarm' especially in its middle section.

This was one of the rare collaborations of Pears with Joan Sutherland. Perhaps her Galatea is a shade artful in manner for a shepherdess, but of course it is sung with exquisite tone.

There is a good Damon in David Galliver, and in Owen Brannigan a superb Polypheme, ripe and witty, every word and every note

relished. We are consoled in the absence of da capos by the elegance of all the singing. This CD will be very welcome to lovers of this infinitely delightful work and enthusiasts for the singing of Sutherland and Pears.

© 2007 Alan Blyth

Alan Blyth died shortly after writing the above note, the last of several for Chandos' Opera in English series. Alan's detailed knowledge of singers and the operatic repertoire was immense, and we acknowledge with gratitude his significant contribution to the series.

Born in Sydney, Australia in 1926, **Joan Sutherland** (Galatea) was taught singing by her mother until the age of nineteen, when she trained formally with John and Aida Dickens. She sang in concerts and broadcasts throughout Australia and in 1947 made her Sydney concert debut as Purcell's Dido. In 1951 she sang the title role in Eugene Goossens's *Judith* at the Sydney Conservatorium. That same year she went to London to study at the Opera School of the Royal College of Music with Clive Carey. She joined the Covent Garden company where she

made her debut as the First Lady (*The Magic Flute*) in 1952.

At Covent Garden she sang a variety of roles including Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*), Aida, Frasquita and Micaëla (*Carmen*), several roles in the *Ring* Cycle, and the three soprano roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. She created the role of Jenifer (Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*), and sang Madame Lidoine in the British premiere of Poulenc's *The Dialogues of the Carmelites*. In 1956 she made her Glyndebourne debut as Countess Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*).

Her talent lay particularly in Italian *bel canto* opera, and she sang roles such as Alcina, Gilda and Desdemona. In 1958 she made her international debut as Donna Anna at the Vancouver Festival. In 1959 she appeared at Covent Garden in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

As a leading exponent of the *bel canto* repertoire she enjoyed huge success in all the major international opera houses, extending her repertoire to include roles such as Bellini's Amina, Elvira, Beatrice di Tenda and Norma, Rossini's *Semiramide*, Donizetti's *La Fille du regiment*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Lucrezia Borgia* and *Anna Bolena*. Other roles included Violetta, Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Amalia (*I masnadieri*),

Roger Houston



JOAN SUTHERLAND

Cleopatra (*Julius Caesar*), Marguerite de Valois (Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*), Marguerite (*Faust*), Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and *Turandot*.

Joan Sutherland's concert and recital repertoire is extensive, with a vast catalogue of recorded work. She was made a DBE in 1979, and in 1991 was appointed a member of the Order of Merit.

Peter Pears (Acis) was one of the most distinguished and distinctive English tenors of the post war era, celebrated for his interpretations of Elizabethan lute songs, German lieder, the Bach Passions and the music of Britten. Born in 1910 in Farnham, Surrey, he was educated at Lancing College (where he was a keen bassoonist and pianist) and at Keble College, Oxford (where he read PPE), though for a time he was also assistant organist at Hertford College. After four years teaching at a prep school, he won an operatic exhibition to the Royal College of Music where he made his operatic debut in 1934. In the mid-1930s he was a member of the BBC Singers and the New English Singers (touring the USA twice), as well as spending a season in the Glyndebourne Chorus. His meeting with Benjamin Britten in 1937 was to change

both their lives, professional and personal. In 1940 Britten composed his *Michelangelo Sonnets* for him, the first of many song-cycles and other vocal works written with Pears's voice in mind; the cycle was also a public declaration of their partnership, and they remained together until Britten's death in 1976.

Pears's operatic career developed during the war with the Sadler's Wells Company, for whom he sang roles such as Almaviva, Alfredo, Vasek, Tamino and Ferrando. But it was his assumption of the title role in Britten's *Peter Grimes* in 1945 that propelled him (and Britten) to wider international attention. Grimes was the first of twelve Britten roles (all recorded) created by Pears, ending with Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* in 1973. Other notable roles included Pandarus in the premiere of Walton's *Troilus and Cressida*, Oedipus Rex (under Stravinsky), and Idomeneo. Many other composers wrote works written specially for Pears, including Henze, Lutoslawski, Nordheim, Lennox Berkeley, Tippett and Walton. He continued singing until he was seventy, when a stroke brought his long career to an abrupt end. He was appointed CBE in 1957 and KBE in 1978. He died in Aldeburgh in 1986.



PETER PEARS



© Lebrecht Music & Arts Photo Library

David Galliver (Damon) was born in Bristol in 1925 and was educated at Shrewsbury School. After a period of service in the Navy he went to New College, Oxford, from 1947 to 1950, where he studied languages (French and German). He studied singing with Arthur Kranmer and Lucie Manen. He is remembered particularly for his performances in the Bach Passions and Mozart operas.

In mid 1960s David Galliver moved to Australia and became one of the most significant figures in the musical life of South Australia. He sang in the Australian premiere of Britten's War Requiem in 1964, subsequently giving many performances of the works of Britten and Tippett. He held the post of Elder Professor of Music at Adelaide University from 1966 to 1984. He died in 2001.

Owen Brannigan (Polyphemus) was born at Annitsford in Northumberland in 1908. Originally a carpenter by trade, he studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music in London, winning its gold medal in 1942. The following year he made his debut with Sadler's Well's as Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*), remaining with the company until 1948, and returning from 1952–8.

As well as specialising in Mozart, he created the roles of Swallow (*Peter Grimes*), Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) and Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*). Britten went on to compose for him the roles of Noye (*Noye's Fludde*) and Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Other roles included Hasselbacher (Malcolm Williamson's *Our Man in Havana*), Courtras (John Gardner's *The Moon and Sixpence*), and Agenor (Malcolm Williamson's *The Violins of Saint-Jacques*). He performed at Glyndebourne from 1946, where roles included Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), and at Covent Garden from 1948. Owen Brannigan died in 1973.

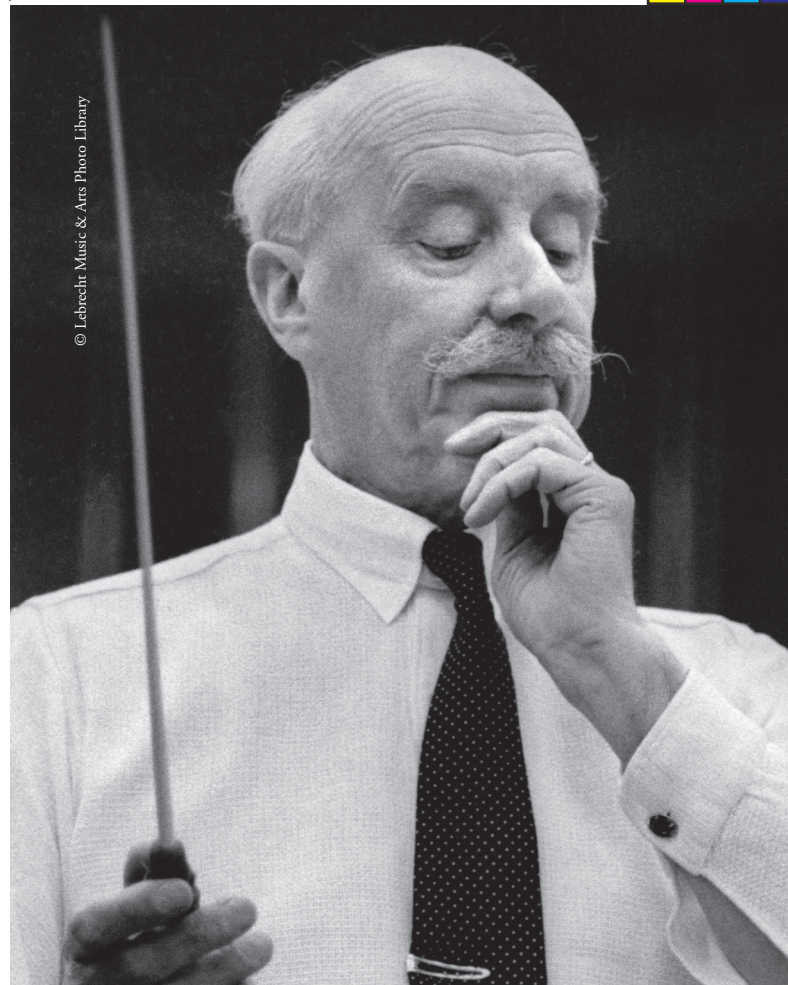
The English conductor **Sir Adrian Boult** was born in 1889 and educated at Westminster School, Christ Church, Oxford, and the Leipzig Conservatoire. He began his long and distinguished career in 1914; four years later Holst invited him to conduct the first (private) performance of *The Planets*. Having consolidated his position throughout the 1920s, including a spell as musical director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, he was appointed conductor of the newly formed BBC Symphony Orchestra in



1930. Under Boult's training and leadership, the BBCSO quickly became an ensemble of the front rank. Boult's international career burgeoned in the 1930s, both with the BBCSO on tour and as a guest of many distinguished foreign orchestras, and he developed an enviable reputation for the wide range of his repertory, which not only embraced fine readings of Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms but also his beloved Elgar and Vaughan Williams. Less well-known is the fact that he was responsible for bringing to wider attention in the UK

Berg's *Wozzeck*, Busoni's *Doktor Faust* and significant pieces by Bartok, Stravinsky and Copland.

Enforced retirement from the BBC in 1950, saw him take up an appointment with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, an orchestra with which he maintained a close association for the remainder of his career, as well as making guest appearances. He was a prolific recording artist from the 1930s onwards, making his final disc in 1978 at the age of eighty-nine. Sir Adrian Boult died in 1983.



© Lebrecht Music & Arts Photo Library

SIR ADRIAN BOULT





PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

British philanthropist Sir Peter Moores established the Peter Moores Foundation in 1964 to realise his charitable aims and, to fulfill one of these, the Compton Verney House Trust in 1993 to create a new art gallery in the country. Through his charities he has disbursed many millions to a wide variety of arts, environmental and social causes 'to get things done and open doors for people'.

Sir Peter's philanthropic work began with his passion for opera: in his twenties he helped a number of young artists in the crucial, early stages of their careers, several of whom – Dame Joan Sutherland, Sir Colin Davis and the late Sir Geraint Evans amongst them – became world-famous.

Today, the Peter Moores Foundation supports talented young singers with scholarships, has made it possible for Chandos Records to issue the world's largest catalogue of operas recorded in English translation, and enabled Opera Rara to record rare bel canto repertoire which would otherwise remain inaccessible to the general public.

In live performance, the Foundation has encouraged the creation of new work and schemes to attract new audiences, financed the publication of scores, especially for world premieres of modern operas, and enabled rarely heard works to be staged by British opera companies and festivals.

Projects supported by the Foundation to help the young have ranged from a scheme to encourage young Afro-Caribbeans 'stay at school' for further education, to the endowment of a Faculty Directorship and Chair of Management Studies at Oxford

University (providing the lead donation which paved the way for the development of the Said Business School).

In 1993 the Foundation bought Compton Verney, a Grade I Georgian mansion in Warwickshire, designed by Robert Adam, with grounds by Capability Brown. Compton Verney House Trust was set up by Sir Peter to transform the derelict mansion into a world-class art gallery that would provide an especially welcoming environment for the 'first-time' gallery visitor. The gallery, which houses six permanent collections, a Learning Centre for all ages, and facilities for major visiting exhibitions, was opened in March 2004 by HRH the Prince of Wales. The Compton Verney website can be found at: www.comptonverney.org.uk

Sir Peter Moores was born in Lancashire and educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He was a student at the Vienna Academy of Music, where he produced the Austrian premiere of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and at the same time was an assistant producer with the Vienna State Opera, working with Viennese artists in Naples, Geneva and Rome, before returning to England in 1957 to join his father's business, Littlewoods. He was Vice-Chairman of Littlewoods in 1976, Chairman from 1977 to 1980 and remained a director until 1993.

He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In 1992 he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire by HM the Queen. He was appointed CBE in 1991 and received a Knighthood in 2003 for his charitable services to the arts.



Acis and Galatea, eine Masque

Händels Masque *Acis and Galatea* erfreute sich im achtzehnten Jahrhundert außerordentlicher Beliebtheit. Keine andere seiner Kompositionen wurde häufiger gespielt – bis etwa 1750 sind siebzig Aufführungen dokumentiert – und *Acis and Galatea* gehörte zu den wenigen Werken, die noch zu seinen Lebzeiten in einer Gesamtausgabe veröffentlicht wurde, die nicht nur “Die schönsten Lieder” enthielt, sondern auch die Ouvertüre, Chöre und Rezitative. Nach seinem Tod verlor das Stück nicht an Wirkung: *Acis and Galatea* war eines der vier Händel-Werke, die Baron Gottfried van Swieten 1788 von Mozart neu einrichten ließ; Mendelssohn führte es 1828 auf, und 1857 dachte Meyerbeer an eine Bühnenszenierung. Derzeit liegen nicht weniger als neun Gesamtaufnahmen des Werkes in verschiedenen Fassungen vor.

Vom Thema her ist *Acis and Galatea* typisch für den damaligen Zeitgeschmack. Die Pastorale mit liebestrunkenen Nymphen und Schäfern – mit mehr oder weniger Anstand im Rahmen der Antike dargestellt – bildete im siebzehnten und achtzehnten

Jahrhundert ein Lieblingsobjekt der Literatur, Malerei und Musik. Händels Libretto bezieht sich direkt auf die vom englischen Hofdichter John Dryden erstellte Übersetzung der “Geschichte von Acis, Polyphemus und Galatea” aus dem XIII. Buch der *Metamorphosen* des Ovid. Der eigentliche Autor der Masque steht nicht fest. Ein für Aufführungen im Jahre 1739 gedrucktes Libretto gibt John Gay an, den Autor der *Bettleroper*, während eine um 1730 angefertigte Abschrift Alexander Pope als Verfasser nennt. Mit Sicherheit stammt eine Arie (“Would you gain the tender creature...”) aus der Feder von John Hughes, und es ist durchaus möglich, dass es sich letzten Endes um eine Gemeinschaftsarbeit handelte; alle drei genannten Autoren gehörten, ebenso wie Händel selbst, den Künstlerkreisen um Lord Burlington und den Herzog von Chandos an.

Den Wert des Stoffes für die Oper hatte Händel nicht als erster erkannt. Aus Frankreich lagen bereits Vertonungen durch Charpentier (1660) und Lully (1686) vor, und in England hatte 1707 John Eccles eine Masque geschrieben, während Händel

selbst die Geschichte erstmals verarbeitet hatte, als er 1708 in Neapel die italienische Kantate *Acis, Galatea e Polifemo* komponierte. Dennoch sollte es weitere zehn Jahre dauern, bis seine englische Masque *Acis and Galatea* erschien. Die genauen Daten der Vollendung und der Uraufführung des Werkes sind nicht überliefert, doch aus einer gedruckten Ausgabe der ihm entzogenen “Lieder und Sinfonien” von 1725 geht hervor, dass *Acis and Galatea* für den künftigen Herzog von Chandos auf dessen Landsitz Cannons bei Edgware, wo Händel ab 1716 für einige Jahre als Hauskomponist angestellt war, geschrieben und inszeniert wurde. Wir wissen, dass die Bibliothek des Grafen im Jahre 1720 eine Abschrift der Partitur besaß, und Anfang 1718 bezog sich ein Gast des Hauses auf die “kleine Oper”.

Von Anfang an wurde *Acis and Galatea* als eine Masque beschrieben. Diese Bezeichnung war zu Händels Zeiten nicht mehr ausschließlich jenem theatralischen Spektakel vorbehalten, das Größen wie Ben Jonson und Inigo Jones mit Musik und Wort, Tanz und Bühneneffekten zur Unterhaltung am Hof der Stuarts zu veranstalten pflegten. In Ermangelung derart verschwenderischer Gönnerschaft hatte sich eine schlichtere Form

des Musikdramas entwickelt, bei der Arien, Rezitative und Chöre “nach italienischer Art” gewöhnlich mit mythologischen und pastoralen Themen und unter bescheidenem Aufwand vor Kennern und der breiteren musikalischen Öffentlichkeit dargeboten wurden. Masques von John Hughes und Johann Christian Pepusch, Kapellmeister in Cannons, fanden großen Anklang, als Händel im Dienst des Herzogs stand, und ihr Erfolg bestärkte ihn zweifellos, sich dem Genre zuzuwenden.

Händel hat uns keine definitive Fassung hinterlassen, doch die vorliegende Aufnahme ist ein äußerst zufriedenstellender Kompromiss. Man schrieb das Jahr 1960, als die historische Aufführungspraxis von sich reden zu machen begann. Sir Adrian Boult führte den Taktstock, und mit der Philomusica of London und den St. Anthony Singers ließ er sich vom Geist dieses bezaubernden Werkes verführen. Was diese Aufnahme so wertvoll macht, ist Peter Pears. Seine Acis-Arie “Love in her eyes sits playing” ist ein Musterbeispiel für stilistische Vollkommenheit: wunderschön phrasiert, perfekt artikuliert und mit einem bezaubernden, geradezu sinnlich-rhythmischen Schwung. Auch in “Love



sounds th'alarm" ist er überragend, besonders im mittleren Abschnitt.

Es war eines der wenigen Gemeinschaftsprojekte von Peter Pears und Joan Sutherland. Vielleicht ist ihre Galatea für eine Schäferin etwas zu maniert, aber ihre Klangschönheit ist natürlich exquisit.

Damon ist mit David Galliver gut besetzt, und Owen Brannigan ist als Polypheme grandios: genüsslich und geistreich, jedes Wort und jede Note ausgekostet. Über den Verzicht auf da capos tröstet uns die sängerische Eleganz hinweg. Freunde dieses zaubernden Werkes und Bewunderer der Gesangkunst von Sutherland und Pears werden die Wiederaufnahme in den Katalog zu schätzen wissen.

© 2007 Alan Blyth

Übersetzung: Andreas Klatt

Die Australierin **Joan Sutherland** (Galatea) wurde 1926 in Sydney geboren und zunächst von ihrer Mutter Singen unterrichtet, bevor sie mit 19 Jahren ihre Studien bei John und Aida Dickens fortsetzte. Sie sang landesweit in Konzerten und Rundfunksendungen und gab 1947 in Sydney ihr Kontertdébut als Purcells Dido. 1951 sang sie die Titelrolle

in Eugene Goossens *Judith* am Sydney Conservatorium. Im selben Jahr ging sie nach London, um bei Clive Carey an der Opernschule des Royal College of Music zu studieren. Sie trat dem Ensemble der Royal Opera Covent Garden bei, wo sie 1952 als Erste Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) debütierte.

In Covent Garden erlebte man sie auch in verschiedenen anderen Rollen, wie Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*), Aida, Frasquita und Micaëla (*Carmen*), diversen Partien im *Ring* und den drei Sopranrollen in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Sie schuf die Rolle von Jenifer (Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*) und sang Madame Lidoine in der britischen Erstaufführung von Poulencs *Dialogues des Carmélites*. 1956 debütierte sie in Glyndebourne als Gräfin Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

Ihre große Stärke lag in der italienischen *Belcanto*-Oper, mit Rollen wie Alcina, Gilda und Desdemona. Ihr internationales Debüt gab sie 1958 als Donna Anna beim Vancouver Festival. 1959 trat sie in Covent Garden in der Titelrolle von *Lucia di Lammermoor* auf.

Als führende Exponentin des *Belcanto*-Repertoires feierte sie auf allen berühmten Opernbühnen der Welt rauschende Erfolge, und sie erweiterte ihr Repertoire auf Rollen

wie Bellinis Amina, Elvira, Beatrice di Tenda und Norma, Rossinis *Semiramide*, Donizettis *La Fille du regiment*, Maria Stuarda, *Lucrezia Borgia* und *Anna Bolena*. Hinzu kamen auch Violetta, Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Amalia (*I masnadieri*), Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare in Egitto*), Marguerite de Valois (Meyerbeers *Les Huguenots*), Marguerite (*Faust*), Puccinis *Suor Angelica* und *Turandot*.

Joan Sutherland blickt auf ein weit reichendes Konzert- und Recital-Repertoire und eine umfangreiche Diskographie zurück. Sie wurde 1979 in den Adelstand erhoben und 1991 von Königin Elizabeth II. in den Order of Merit aufgenommen.

Peter Pears (Acis), einer der bemerkenswertesten englischen Tenöre der Nachkriegszeit, war besonders für seine Interpretation elisabethanischer Lautenlieder, deutscher Lieder, der Bach-Passionen und der Musik Brittens weltberühmt. Er wurde 1910 in Farnham (Surrey) geboren, besuchte das Lancing College (wo er sich auf dem Fagott und am Klavier hervortat) und studierte Philosophie, politische Wissenschaften und Wirtschaft am Keble College Oxford; unterdessen arbeitete er zeitweilig auch als stellvertretender Organist am Hertford

College. Nach vierjähriger Lehrtätigkeit an einer privaten Grundschule erhielt er ein Opernstipendium für das Royal College of Music, wo er 1934 als Opernsänger debütierte. Mitte der dreißiger Jahre war er Mitglied der BBC Singers und der New English Singers (mit denen er zweimal auf USA-Tournee ging) und sang für eine Spielzeit im Glyndebourne Chorus. Seine Begegnung mit Benjamin Britten 1937 lenkte das berufliche und persönliche Leben beider in neue Bahnen. 1940 komponierte Britten die *Michelangelo Sonnets* für ihn, als ersten von vielen Liederzyklen und Vokalwerken, bei denen er die Stimme von Pears im Ohr hatte; der Zyklus war auch eine öffentliche Erklärung des gemeinsamen Lebensbündnisses, das bis zum Tode Brittens 1976 ungebrochen blieb.

Die Opernkarriere Pears' nahm während der Kriegsjahre bei der Sadler's Wells Company Gestalt an; dort sang er Rollen wie Almaviva, Alfredo, Vasek, Tamino und Ferrando. Doch mit der Titelrolle in Brittens *Peter Grimes* gewann er (wie auch der Komponist) 1945 auch breite internationale Anerkennung. Grimes sollte die erste von zwölf Rollen sein, die Britten für Pears schrieb und 1973 mit Aschenbach in *Death in*



Venice abschloss. Alle sind uns in Aufnahmen erhalten. Weitere Partien waren Pandarus in der Unraufführung von Waltons *Troilus and Cressida*, Oedipus Rex (unter der Leitung Strawinskys) und Idomeneo. Auch viele andere Komponisten schrieben Werke speziell für Pears, so etwa Henze, Lutoslawski, Nordheim, Lennox Berkeley, Tippett und Walton. Erst ein Schlaganfall in seinem siebzigsten Lebensjahr zwang ihn abrupt, seine lange Gesangskarriere aufzugeben. Peter Pears wurde 1957 mit dem britischen Verdienstorden CBE ausgezeichnet und 1978 in den Adelsstand erhoben. 1986 starb er in Aldeburgh.

David Galliver (Damon) wurde 1925 in Bristol geboren und besuchte die Shrewsbury School. Er diente in der Marine und studierte danach von 1947 bis 1950 Romanistik und Germanistik am New College Oxford. Gesangsunterricht nahm er bei Arthur Kranmer und Lucie Manen. Besonders seine Auftritte in Bach-Passionen und Mozart-Opern sind von bleibender Erinnerung.

Mitte der sechziger Jahre ging David Galliver nach Australien, wo er sich als einer der wichtigsten Vertreter des dortigen Musiklebens profilierte. Er wirkte 1964 an

der australischen Erstaufführung von Britten's *War Requiem* mit und kehrte später immer wieder zu den Werken Britten's und Tippett's zurück. Von 1966 bis 1984 lehrte er als Elder Professor für Music an der Universität Adelaide. Er starb im Jahr 2001.

Owen Brannigan (Polypheme) wurde 1908 in Annitsford (Northumberland) geboren. Er war Schreiner von Beruf, studierte jedoch Gesang an der Guildhall School of Music in London, wo er 1942 die Goldmedaille gewann. Im Jahr darauf debütierte er als Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) an Sadler's Wells, wo er bis 1948 blieb und in den Jahren 1952–58 nochmals dem Ensemble angehörte.

Neben den Mozart-Partien, auf die er spezialisiert war, kreierte er die Rollen von Swallow (*Peter Grimes*), Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) und Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*). Eigens für ihn schrieb Britten die Partien von Noye (*Noye's Fludde*) und Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Weitere Rollen waren Hasselbacher (Malcolm Williamsons *Our Man in Havana*), Courtras (John Gardners *The Moon and Sixpence*) und Agenor (Malcolm Williamsons *The Violins of Saint-Jacques*). In Glyndebourne verkörperte er ab 1946 Rollen wie Leporello

(*Don Giovanni*), und ab 1948 trat er an der Royal Opera Covent Garden auf. Owen Brannigan starb 1973.

Der englische Dirigent **Sir Adrian Boult** wurde 1889 geboren und nahm seinen Bildungsweg über die Westminster School, die Universität Oxford (Christ Church) und das Leipziger Konservatorium. 1914 trat er seine lange, beneidenswerte Karriere an; vier Jahre später wurde er von Holst eingeladen, die erste (private) Aufführung der *Planeten* zu dirigieren. Nachdem er in den zwanziger Jahren seinen Ruf untermauert hatte, unter anderem als Musikdirektor des City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, wurde er 1930 zum Dirigenten des neuen BBC Symphony Orchestra ernannt. Unter der Schulung und Leitung Boult's etablierte sich das BBCSO bald als Orchester ersten Ranges. Während der dreißiger Jahre entfaltete sich die internationale Karriere Boult's, als er mit dem BBCSO auf Tournee ging und bei

vielen berühmten ausländischen Orchestern als Gastdirigent auftrat. Dabei tat er sich auch mit einem ungemein breiten Repertoire hervor, indem er nicht nur Beethoven, Schubert und Brahms von ihrer besten Seite zeigte, sondern auch die von ihm verehrten Engländer Elgar und Vaughan Williams. Weniger bekannt ist der Umstand, dass man in Großbritannien die nähere Bekanntschaft mit Bergs *Wozzeck*, Busonis *Doktor Faust* und wichtigen Werken Bartoks, Strawinskys und Coplands weitgehend ihm verdankt.

Nachdem er von der BBC zwangsweise in den Ruhestand versetzt worden war, übernahm er 1950 das London Philharmonic Orchestra, dem er bis an das Ende seiner Karriere eng verbunden blieb, und trat verstärkt als Gastdirigent auf. Er war ein schaffensfreudiger Schallplattenkünstler mit einer Diskographie, die von den frühen dreißiger Jahren bis 1978 reicht, als er 89-jährig seine letzte Aufnahme vorlegte. Sir Adrian Boult starb 1983.



Acis and Galatea, un Masque

Le masque de Haendel *Acis and Galatea* (*Acis et Galatée*) a joui d'une remarquable popularité au cours du XVIII^e siècle. Aucune autre œuvre de Haendel n'a été jouée plus souvent – on a la trace d'environ soixante-dix représentations avant le milieu du siècle –, et c'est l'une des rares à avoir été publiées de son vivant dans une édition contenant non seulement les "Airs favoris" mais aussi l'Ouverture, les chœurs et les récitatifs. Ce masque a conservé sa popularité après la mort du compositeur: *Acis and Galatea* est l'une des quatre pièces de Haendel dont le baron Gottfried van Swieten a demandé la modernisation à Mozart en 1788; Mendelssohn l'a fait jouer en 1828, et en 1857 Meyerbeer a envisagé une production scénique. À l'heure actuelle, pas moins de neuf enregistrements de l'œuvre intégrale sont disponibles dans différentes versions.

Par son sujet, *Acis and Galatea* est représentatif de son époque. Le thème pastoral des nymphes et des bergers amoureux, évoqué avec un respect variable des bienséances et généralement replacé dans un cadre classique, est extrêmement populaire aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles en littérature, peinture et musique.

La source immédiate du livret de Haendel est l'"Histoire d'Acis, Polyphème et Galatée", provenant du treizième livre des *Métamorphoses* d'Ovide, dans la traduction du poète lauréat John Dryden. L'auteur du masque lui-même n'est pas connu avec certitude; un livret imprimé à l'occasion de représentations en 1739 l'attribue à John Gay, à qui l'on doit *The Beggar's Opera* (*L'Opéra du gueux*), tandis qu'une copie de l'œuvre réalisée aux alentours de 1730 cite Alexander Pope. Un certain John Hughes a certainement écrit les paroles de l'air "Would you gain the tender creature...", et le livret pourrait bien être le fruit d'une collaboration; les trois hommes étaient, à l'instar de Haendel, membres des cercles artistiques de Lord Burlington et du duc de Chandos.

L'histoire d'Acis a été le prétexte d'opéras avant l'époque de Haendel. En France, Charpentier (1660) puis Lully (1686) l'ont mise en musique, et en Angleterre elle a fourni le sujet d'un masque de John Eccles en 1707. Haendel lui-même a mis en musique une version italienne de la fable dans sa cantate *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, datant de Naples et

de 1708. Mais son masque anglais *Acis and Galatea* n'a vu le jour que dix ans plus tard. On ignore les dates exactes de composition et de création de l'œuvre, mais une édition des "Songs and Symphonies" de Haendel imprimée en 1725 nous informe qu'elle a été écrite et interprétée pour le (futur) duc de Chandos; Haendel a en effet été compositeur en résidence à Cannons, la somptueuse propriété du duc située près d'Edgware, alors en pleine campagne, pendant quelques années à partir de 1716. On sait que la bibliothèque du duc contenait un exemplaire manuscrit de la partition d'*Acis and Galatea* en 1720, et au début de l'année 1718 un invité de la maison y fait référence comme à "un petit opéra".

Dès le départ, *Acis and Galatea* est décrit comme un "masque". À l'époque de Haendel, le terme ne désigne plus seulement les dispendieux mélanges de musique, de danse, de poésie et de spectacle conçus par Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones et d'autres pour divertir la Cour des Stuart. En l'absence de mécènes aussi prodiges, un type de drame musical plus simple a été mis au point, où les airs, récitatifs et chœurs "à la manière italienne", généralement sur un thème mythologique ou pastoral, sont exécutés par des musiciens assez peu nombreux pour le plus grand plaisir

d'amateurs éclairés et du public musical plus généralement. Les masques de John Hughes et Johann Christian Pepusch, maître de la musique à Cannons, sont très en vogue à l'époque où Haendel est au service du duc, et leur succès l'encourage certainement à s'intéresser à ce genre.

Haendel ne nous a pas légué une édition définitive, mais celle enregistrée ici est un compromis très satisfaisant entre les différentes versions. Elle date de 1960, et donc des débuts des interprétations authentiques. Sir Adrian Boult, à la tête du Philomusica de Londres et du St Anthony Singers, entre dans l'esprit de cette œuvre absolument ravissante. Le grand atout de cette version est Peter Pears, dont l'interprétation de l'air d'Acis, "Love in her eyes sits playing", est une leçon de style: un phrasé magnifique, une articulation parfaite, et un balancement rythmique charmant, presque sensuel. Il excelle aussi dans "Love sounds th'alarm", notamment dans la section centrale.

Il s'agit d'une des rares collaborations entre Peter Pears et Joan Sutherland. Sa Galatée est peut-être un brin trop sophistiquée pour une bergère, mais la voix elle-même est bien sûr de toute beauté.

David Galliver nous propose un bon Damon, et Owen Brannigan un superbe



Polyphème, gaillard et plein d'esprit, goûtant pleinement chaque mot et chaque note. L'élégance sans faille du chant nous console de l'absence de *da capo*. La réapparition de cet enregistrement en CD sera fort appréciée par tous les amoureux de cette œuvre infiniment séduisante, et par tous les admirateurs du chant de Joan Sutherland et de Peter Pears.

© 2007 Alan Blyth
Traduction: Josée Bégaud

Née en 1926 à Sydney (Australie), **Joan Sutherland** (Galatée) prend des cours de chant avec sa mère jusqu'à l'âge de dix-neuf ans puis continue sa formation avec John et Aida Dickens. Elle chante en concert et pour la radio dans toute l'Australie, et en 1947 fait ses débuts à Sydney, en concert, dans le rôle de Didon de Purcell. En 1951, elle y chante au Conservatoire le rôle titre de *Judith* d'Eugene Goossens. La même année, elle part à Londres étudier avec Clive Carey à l'Opera School du Royal College of Music. Elle entre dans la troupe de Covent Garden où elle fait ses débuts en incarnant la Première Dame (*La Flûte enchantée*) en 1952.

À Covent Garden, elle chante toute sorte

de rôles dont Amelia (*Un bal masqué*), Aida, Frasquita et Micaëla (*Carmen*), plusieurs rôles de la tétralogie du Ring, et les trois rôles de soprano des *Contes d'Hoffmann*. Elle crée le rôle de Jenifer (*The Midsummer Marriage* de Tippett) et chante Madame Lidoine lors de la création britannique des *Dialogues des carmélites* de Poulenc. En 1956, elle paraît pour la première fois à Glyndebourne en comtesse Almaviva (*Les Noces de Figaro*).

Elle se montre particulièrement douée pour le *bel canto* italien et chante des rôles comme Alcina, Gilda et Desdemona. En 1958, elle chante sa toute première Donna Anna au Festival de Vancouver. En 1959, elle revient à Covent Garden dans le rôle titre de *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

En tant qu'interprète hors pair du *bel canto*, elle connaît un immense succès dans les principaux Opéras du monde entier et étend son répertoire à des rôles comme Amina, Elvira, Beatrice di Tenda ou Norma de Bellini; elle chante *Semiramide* de Rossini, *La Fille du régiment*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Lucrezia Borgia* ou *Anna Bolena* de Donizetti. Parmi ses autres rôles, citons Violetta, Leonora du *Trouvère*, Amalia d'*I masnadieri* de Verdi, Cléopâtre (*Jules César*), Marguerite de Valois (*Les Huguenots* de Meyerbeer), la Marguerite

de *Faust*, ou bien encore Suor Angelica et Turandot de Puccini.

Le répertoire de récital et de concert de Joan Sutherland est impressionnant, et elle a beaucoup enregistré. Elle a été faite DBE (commandeuse de l'empire britannique) en 1979, et en 1991 est devenue membre de l'Ordre du Mérite.

Peter Pears (Acis) a été l'un des ténors les plus éminents et les plus originaux de l'après-guerre, célèbre pour ses interprétations des chansons pour luth élisabéthaines, des lieder allemands, des Passions de Bach ou de la musique de Britten. Né en 1910 à Farnham, dans le Surrey, il a fait ses études au Lancing College (où il était fort bon bassoniste et pianiste) ainsi qu'au Keble College d'Oxford (où il a étudié la philosophie, les sciences politiques et l'économie), même s'il a été quelque temps organiste adjoint au Hertford College. Après quatre ans comme instituteur dans une école primaire privée, il obtient sur concours une bourse d'études pour étudier le chant au Royal College of Music et y fait ses débuts lyriques en 1934. Au milieu des années 1930, il est membre des BBC Singers et des New English Singers (et part deux fois en tournée aux États-Unis), et passe une

saison au sein du Chœur de Glyndebourne. Sa rencontre avec Benjamin Britten en 1937 change la vie des deux hommes, aussi bien sur le plan personnel que professionnel. En 1940, Britten compose à son intention ses *Sonnets de Michel-Ange*, premier de nombreux cycles de lieder et d'autres pièces vocales écrits spécifiquement pour la voix de Peter Pears; c'est aussi une déclaration publique de leur relation privée, et ils resteront ensemble jusqu'à la mort de Britten en 1976.

La carrière lyrique de Peter Pears se développe pendant la guerre au sein de la troupe de Sadler's Wells, pour laquelle il chante des rôles comme Almaviva, Alfredo, Vasek, Tamino et Ferrando. Mais c'est son interprétation du rôle titre de *Peter Grimes* de Britten en 1945 qui les signale, lui et Britten, à l'attention internationale. Grimes est le premier de douze rôles du compositeur britannique (tous enregistrés sur disques) créés par Peter Pears, le dernier étant celui d'Aschenbach dans *Mort à Venise* en 1973. D'autres rôles notables incluent Pandarus lors de la création de *Troilus and Cressida* de Walton, Œdipe Rex (sous la direction de Stravinsky) et Idoménée. Bien d'autres compositeurs écrivent des œuvres



à l'intention de Peter Pears, dont Henze, Lutoslawski, Nordheim, Lennox Berkeley, Tippett et Walton. Il continue à chanter jusqu'à ce qu'une attaque mette brusquement fin à sa longue carrière, à l'âge de 70 ans. Il a été fait CBE (compagnon de l'empire britannique) en 1957, et KBE (chevalier de l'empire britannique) en 1978. Il est mort à Aldeburgh en 1986.

Né à Bristol en 1925, **David Galliver** (Damon) est élève à la Shrewsbury School. Après avoir servi dans la marine britannique, il devient étudiant en langues (français et allemand) au New College d'Oxford de 1947 à 1950. Il apprend le chant avec Arthur Kranmer et Lucie Manen. On se souvient surtout de lui pour ses interprétations des Passions de Bach et des opéras de Mozart.

Au milieu des années 1960, David Galliver part pour l'Australie et y devient l'une des plus importantes figures musicales d'Australie-Méridionale. Il participe à la création australienne du *War Requiem* de Britten en 1964, puis chante fréquemment les œuvres de Britten et de Tippett. De 1966 à 1984, il occupe la chaire Elder de professeur de musique à l'Université d'Adélaïde. David Galliver est mort en 2001.

Owen Brannigan (Polyphème) est né à Annitsford, dans le Northumberland, en 1908. Charpentier de métier, il étudie le chant à la Guildhall School of Music, à Londres, et remporte la médaille d'or en 1942. L'année suivante, il fait ses débuts à Sadler's Wells dans le rôle de Sarastro (*La Flûte enchantée*) et continue à chanter au sein de cette troupe jusqu'en 1948, avant d'y retourner de 1952 à 1958.

Spécialiste de la musique de Mozart, il crée aussi les rôles de Swallow (*Peter Grimes*), de Collatin (*Le Viol de Lucrece*) et du Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*). Britten compose ensuite à son intention les rôles de Noé (*Noé et le Déluge*) et de Bottom (*Le Songe d'une nuit d'été*). Il chante aussi Hasselbacher de *Our Man in Havana* et Agenor des *Violins of Saint-Jacques*, deux œuvres de Malcolm Williamson, ainsi que Courtras dans *The Moon and Sixpence* de John Gardner. Il se produit à Glyndebourne à partir de 1946, y interprétant notamment Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), et à Covent Garden à partir de 1948. Owen Brannigan est mort en 1973.

Le chef d'orchestre anglais **Sir Adrian Boult** est né en 1889 et a fait ses études à la Westminster School, à Christ Church

(Oxford) et au Conservatoire de Leipzig. Il commence sa longue et remarquable carrière en 1914; quatre ans plus tard, Holst l'invite à diriger la création (privée) de ses *Planètes*. Ayant consolidé sa réputation tout au long des années 1920, y compris comme directeur musical de l'Orchestre symphonique de la ville de Birmingham, il est nommé en 1930 à la tête de l'Orchestre symphonique de la BBC (BBCSO), nouvellement formé. À travailler sous la houlette de Boult, cet orchestre ne tarde pas à devenir une formation de premier plan. La carrière internationale du chef britannique s'épanouit dans les années 1930, à la fois à la tête du BBCSO en tournée et comme chef invité de nombreux orchestres étrangers renommés; l'étendue de son répertoire – qui inclut de belles interprétations

non seulement de Beethoven, de Schubert et de Brahms mais aussi d'Elgar et de Vaughan Williams, deux compositeurs qu'il aime particulièrement – lui assure une réputation enviable. On sait moins que c'est grâce à lui que *Wozzeck* de Berg, *Doktor Faust* de Busoni et d'autres pièces importantes de Bartók, Stravinsky et Copland s'imposent peu à peu au Royaume-Uni.

Mis à la retraite par la BBC en 1950, il devient directeur de l'Orchestre philharmonique de Londres, formation avec laquelle il conserve des relations étroites jusqu'à la fin de sa carrière, y compris comme chef invité. Dès les années 1930, il grave de nombreux disques, réalisant son dernier enregistrement en 1978, à quatre-vingt-neuf ans. Sir Adrian Boult est mort en 1983.



Acis and Galatea, Masque

Acis and Galatea, il masque di Handel, ebbe grande successo nel XVIII secolo. Nessun'altra opera del compositore fu eseguita più spesso – si sa che ne erano state allestite circa settanta rappresentazioni alla metà del secolo – e fu una delle poche pubblicate durante la vita di Handel in un'edizione contenente non solo i brani preferiti, ma con tanto di Ouverture, cori e recitativi. L'opera continuò ad avere successo dopo la morte del compositore e fu uno dei quattro lavori di Handel di cui il barone Gottfried van Swieten commissionò a Mozart l'aggiornamento nel 1788; Mendelssohn la eseguì nel 1828, e nel 1857 Meyerbeer ne preparò un allestimento teatrale. Attualmente esistono ben nove registrazioni dell'opera completa disponibili in versioni diverse.

Per quanto riguarda l'argomento, *Acis and Galatea* è un brano del suo tempo. Il tema pastorale di ninfe e pastori innamorati, descritto in varie sfumature convenzionali e normalmente ambientato in un contesto classico, ebbe molta fortuna nei secoli XVII e XVIII in letteratura, pittura e musica. La fonte immediata del libretto di Handel fu la

traduzione del poeta laureato John Dryden della “Storia di Aci, Polifemo e Galatea”, tratta dal tredicesimo libro delle *Metamorfosi* di Ovidio. L'identità dell'autore del Masque è incerta: un libretto stampato per essere rappresentato nel 1739 l'attribuiva a John Gay, autore di *The Beggar's Opera*, mentre una copia dell'opera risalente al 1730 circa ne attribuisce la paternità ad Alexander Pope. L'autore del testo dell'aria “Would you gain the tender creature...” fu sicuramente un certo John Hughes e forse il libretto fu il risultato di una collaborazione; tutti e tre, insieme con Handel, fecero parte dei circoli artistici di Lord Burlington e del duca di Chandos.

La storia di Aci era stata soggetto di opere prima dell'epoca di Handel. In Francia l'avevano musicata Charpentier (1660) e Lully (1686) e in Inghilterra, nel 1707 aveva fornito il soggetto di un masque a John Eccles. Lo stesso Handel musicò una versione italiana della favola nella cantata *Acis, Galatea e Polifemo*, composta a Napoli nel 1708. Ma il masque in inglese intitolato *Acis and Galatea* comparve solo dieci anni dopo. Non sono note le date precise della composizione

dell'opera o della sua prima rappresentazione, ma secondo un'edizione delle “Songs and Symphonies”, pubblicata intorno al 1725, sarebbe stata composta ed eseguita per il (futuro) Duca di Chandos, nel suo castello di Cannons, nei pressi dell'allora rurale quartiere di Edgware; Handel fu compositore residente qui per diversi anni a partire dal 1716. Si sa che una copia manoscritta della partitura di *Acis and Galatea* era presente nella biblioteca del duca nel 1720 e all'inizio del 1718 un ospite della dimora la citò chiamandola “piccola opera”.

Fin dall'inizio, *Acis and Galatea* fu definita un “Masque”. All'epoca di Handel il termine non indicava più i ricchi allestimenti di musica, danza, parole e spettacolo ideati da Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones e altri per dilettare la corte degli Stuart. In mancanza di protettori altrettanto munifici si era sviluppata una forma più semplice di melodramma in cui arie, recitativi e cori “alla maniera italiana”, normalmente di argomento mitologico e pastorale, venivano eseguiti con organici alquanto modesti, per dilettare gli intenditori e gli appassionati di musica. I masque di John Hughes e Johann Christian Pepusch, Maestro di Musica a Cannons, erano molto in voga all'epoca in cui Handel fu a servizio del Duca

e sicuramente il loro successo lo spinse ad accostarsi al genere.

Handel non lasciò un'edizione finale, ma quella di questa registrazione è un compromesso molto soddisfacente tra le varie versioni. Era il 1960, più o meno all'inizio del periodo in cui cominciarono a emergere le esecuzioni “autentiche”. Il direttore era sir Adrian Boult che, insieme con la Philomusica of London e un coro, entra nello spirito di quest'opera deliziosa. La grande forza di questa versione è Peter Pears nei panni di Acis. La sua interpretazione di “Love in her eyes sits playing”, è una vera lezione di stile: meraviglioso fraseggio, articolazione perfetta, e una cantilena deliziosa, quasi sensuale nel ritmo. Eccellente anche l'interpretazione di “Love sounds th'alarm”, soprattutto nella sezione centrale.

Questa fu una delle rare collaborazioni tra Pears e Joan Sutherland. Forse la Galatea del soprano è un po' ricercata e di maniera per una pastorella, ma è sempre cantata con sfumature squisite.

David Galliver è un valido Damon e Owen Brannigan un superbo Polypheme, maturo e arguto, che gusta ogni parola e ogni nota. Nell'assenza dei da capo ci consola l'eleganza del canto. Questa riapparizione



della registrazione su CD sarà senz'altro la benvenuta per gli amanti di quest'opera deliziosa e per gli appassionati della Sutherland e di Pears.

© 2007 Alan Blyth

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Nata a Sydney, in Australia, nel 1926, **Joan Sutherland** (Galatea) studiò con la madre fino all'età di diciannove anni, per poi proseguire con John e Aida Dickens. Dopo una serie di concerti e trasmissioni radiofoniche in tutta l'Australia, nel 1947 esordiva a Sydney in concerto con la Didone di Purcell. Nel 1951 cantava il ruolo di protagonista nella *Judith* di Eugene Goossens al Conservatorio di Sydney. Nello stesso anno si trasferiva a Londra per studiare presso la Opera School del Royal College of Music con Clive Carey. Entrava poi al Covent Garden dove esordiva come Prima Damigella (*Il flauto magico*) nel 1952.

Al Covent Garden interpretava tra l'altro Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*), Aida, Frasquita e Micaëla (*Carmen*), diversi ruoli nella tetralogia del *Ring* e i tre ruoli per soprano nei *Contes d'Hoffmann*. Creava il

ruolo di Jenifer (*The Midsummer Marriage* di Tippett), e cantava Madame Lidoine alla prima britannica dei *Dialogues des Carmélites* di Poulenc. Nel 1956 debuttava a Glyndebourne nelle vesti della contessa Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

Il suo talento era particolarmente spiccato nelle opere italiane di belcanto, nei ruoli di Alcina, Gilda e Desdemona. Nel 1958 veniva l'esordio internazionale nel ruolo di Donna Anna al Festival di Vancouver. Nel 1959 era la volta del ruolo di protagonista nella *Lucia di Lammermoor* al Covent Garden.

In veste di principale esponente del repertorio del belcanto, Joan Sutherland ha riscosso enorme successo nei principali teatri lirici, ampliando il proprio repertorio per includere i ruoli di Amina, Elvira, Beatrice di Tenda e Norma di Bellini, *Semiramide* di Rossini, *La Fille du régiment*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Lucrezia Borgia* e *Anna Bolena* di Donizetti. Ha cantato inoltre Violetta, Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Amalia (*I masnadieri*), Cleopatra (*Julius Caesar*), Marguerite de Valois (*Les Huguenots* di Meyerbeer), Marguerite (*Faust*), *Suor Angelica* e *Turandot* di Puccini.

Joan Sutherland ha al suo attivo un vasto repertorio di concerti e recital e una discografia enorme. Nel 1979 è stata

nominata Dame of the British Empire e nel 1991 è stata insignita di un Order of Merit.

Peter Pears (Aci) fu uno dei più illustri e originali tenori inglesi del dopoguerra, famoso interprete di brani elisabettiani con accompagnamento di liuto, lieder tedeschi, Passioni di Bach e musica di Britten. Nato nel 1910 a Farnham, nel Surrey, studiò presso il Lancing College (dove si appassionò al fagotto e al pianoforte) e poi presso il Keble College di Oxford (dove studiò PPE), sebbene per qualche tempo fu anche aiuto organista presso l'Hertford College. Dopo quattro anni di insegnamento in una scuola, vinse un concorso lirico al Royal College of Music dove esordì nella lirica nel 1934. A metà degli anni Trenta fece parte dei BBC Singers e dei New English Singers (svolgendo due tournée negli USA), oltre a collaborare con il Coro di Glyndebourne per una stagione. Il suo incontro con Benjamin Britten nel 1937 avrebbe cambiato la vita di entrambi dal punto di vista professionale e personale. Nel 1940 Britten compose per lui i *Michelangelo Sonnets*, primo di molti cicli di canzoni e altre opere composte proprio per la sua voce; il ciclo fu anche una dichiarazione pubblica del sodalizio personale che sarebbe

proseguito fino alla morte di Britten nel 1976.

La carriera lirica di Pears si sviluppò durante il periodo bellico con la Sadler's Wells Company, dove il tenore interpretò i ruoli di Almaviva, Alfredo, Vasek, Tamino e Ferrando, tra l'altro. Ma fu il ruolo di protagonista nel *Peter Grimes* di Britten nel 1945 a garantire maggiore spicco internazionale al tenore (e a Britten). Quello di Grimes fu il primo di dodici ruoli composti da Britten e creati da Pears (e tutti registrati); l'ultimo fu quello di Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* nel 1973. Altri ruoli importanti compresero Pandarus nella prima del *Troilus and Cressida* di Walton, Oedipus Rex (diretto da Stravinskij), e Idomeneo. Molti altri compositori scrissero opere per Pears, tra cui Henze, Lutoslawski, Nordheim, Lennox Berkeley, Tippett e Walton. Il tenore continuò a cantare fino all'età di settant'anni quando la sua lunga carriera venne bruscamente interrotta da un ictus. Pears fu nominato Commander of the British Empire nel 1957 e Knight of the British Empire nel 1978. Morì ad Aldeburgh nel 1986.

David Galliver (Damon) nacque a Bristol nel 1925 e studiò presso la Shrewsbury School.



Dopo un periodo in marina, frequentò il New College di Oxford dal 1947 al 1950, dove studiò lingue (francese e tedesco). Studiò canto con Arthur Kranmer e Lucie Manen. È ricordato soprattutto come interprete delle Passioni di Bach e delle opere di Mozart.

A metà degli anni Sessanta, David Galliver si trasferì in Australia e divenne una delle figure più significative della vita musicale dell'Australia del sud. Fu interprete della prima australiana del War Requiem di Britten nel 1964 e successivamente diede molte interpretazioni delle opere di Britten e Tippett. Fu docente di musica presso l'università di Adelaide dal 1966 al 1984. È morto nel 2001.

Owen Brannigan (Polypheme) nacque ad Annitsford nel Northumberland nel 1908. Falegname di professione, studiò canto presso la Guildhall School of Music di Londra, vincendone la medaglia d'oro nel 1942. L'anno successivo esordiva a Sadler's Well nelle vesti di Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*) e rimaneva con la compagnia fino al 1948, facendovi ritorno nel periodo 1952–8.

Oltre a specializzarsi in musica mozartiana, creò i ruoli di Swallow (*Peter Grimes*), Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) e

Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*). In seguito Britten compose per lui i ruoli di Noye (*Noye's Fludde*) e Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Altri ruoli inclusero Hasselbacher (*Our Man in Havana* di Malcolm Williamson), Courtras (*The Moon and Sixpence* di John Gardner) e Agenor (*The Violins of Saint-Jacques* di Malcolm Williamson). Owen Brannigan è morto nel 1973.

Sir Adrian Boult direttore d'orchestra inglese, nacque nel 1889 e studiò presso la Westminster School, Christ Church, Oxford, e il conservatorio di Lipsia. Iniziò la sua lunga e illustre carriera nel 1914; quattro anni dopo Holst lo invitò a dirigere la prima esecuzione (privata) dei *Pianeti*. Dopo aver consolidato la propria posizione negli anni Venti, con un periodo come direttore musicale della City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, tra l'altro, nel 1930 fu nominato direttore della BBC Symphony Orchestra appena costituita. Sotto la formazione e la direzione di Boult, la BBCSO divenne ben presto un organico di prima linea. La carriera internazionale di Boult continuò ad avanzare negli anni Trenta, sia con la BBCSO in tournée sia con interventi come ospite di molte illustri

orchestre estere. La sua invidiabile reputazione è legata al suo vasto repertorio che, oltre a comprendere belle letture di Beethoven, Schubert e Brahms includeva anche gli amati Elgar e Vaughan Williams. È meno noto il fatto che fu Adrian Boult a fare conoscere meglio nel Regno Unito il *Wozzeck* di Berg, *Doktor Faust* di Busoni e alcuni brani significativi di Bartók, Stravinskij e Copland.

Dopo il ritiro forzato dalla BBC nel 1950 il direttore accettò una nomina della London Philharmonic Orchestra, con cui mantenne uno stretto rapporto per il resto della sua carriera, oltre a collaborare come ospite. Adrian Boult fu un prolifico artista discografico dagli anni Trenta in poi; incise l'ultimo disco nel 1978 a ottantanove anni. È morto nel 1983.



1 Sinfonia

Act I

Chorus

- 2** Oh, the pleasure of the plains!
Happy nymphs and happy swains,
Harmless, merry, free and gay,
Dance and sport the hours away.
For us the zephyr blows,
For us distills the dew,
For us unfolds the rose,
And flow'rs display their hue.
For us the winters rain,
For us the summers shine,
Spring swells for us the grain,
And autumn bleeds the vine.
Oh, the pleasure of the plains!
Happy nymphs and happy swains,
Harmless, merry, free and gay,
Dance and sport the hours away.

Recitative

Galatea

- 3** Ye verdant plains and woody mountains,
Purling streams and bubbling fountains,
Ye painted glories of the field,
Vain are the pleasures which ye yield;
Too thin the shadow of the grove,
Too faint the gales, to cool my love.

Air

Galatea

- 4** Hush, ye pretty warbling quire!
Your thrilling strains
Awake my pains,
And kindle fierce desire.
Cease your song, and take your flight,
Bring back my Acis to my sight!

Air

Acis

- 5** Where shall I seek the charming fair?
Direct the way, kind genius of the mountains!
O tell me, if you saw my dear!
Seeks she the grove, or bathes in crystal
fountains?

Recitative

Damon

- 6** Stay, shepherd, stay!
See, how thy flocks in yonder valley stray!
What means this melancholy air?
No more thy tuneful pipe we hear.

Air

Damon

- 7** Shepherd, what art thou pursuing?
Heedless running to thy ruin;
Share our joy, our pleasure share,
Leave thy passion till tomorrow,
Let the day be free from sorrow,
Free from love, and free from care.

Recitative

Acis

- 8** Lo, here my love! turn, Galatea, hither turn
thine eyes;
See, at thy feet the longing Acis lies!

Air

Acis

- 9** Love in her eyes sits playing,
And sheds delicious death;
Love in her lips is straying,
And warbling in her breath!
Love on her breast sits panting
And swells with soft desire;
No grace, no charm is wanting,
To set the heart on fire.

Recitative

Galatea

- 10** Oh! didst thou know the pains of absent
love,
Acis would ne'er from Galatea rove.

Air

Galatea

- 11** As when the dove
Laments her love,
All on the naked spray;
When he returns,
No more she mourns,
But loves the live-long day.
Billing, cooing,

Panting, wooing,
Melting murmurs fill the grove,
Melting murmurs, lasting love.

Duet

Acis and Galatea

- 12** Happy we!

Galatea

What joys I feel!

Acis

What charms I see!

Galatea

Of all youths thou dearest boy!

Acis

Of all nymphs thou brightest fair!

Galatea and Acis

Thou all my bliss, thou all my joy!
Happy we!

Chorus

- 13** Wretched lovers! Fate has past
This sad decree: no joy shall last.
Wretched lovers, quit your dream!
Behold the monster Polypheme!
See what ample strides he takes!
The mountain nods, the forest shakes;
The waves run frighten'd to the shores:
Hark, how the thund'ring giant roars!



Act II

Recitative

Polyphemus

- [14] I rage – I melt – I burn!
The feeble god has stabb'd me to the heart.
Thou trusty pine,
Prop of my god-like steps, I lay thee by!
Bring me a hundred reeds of decent growth,
To make a pipe for my capacious mouth;
In soft enchanting accents let me breathe
Sweet Galatea's beauty, and my love.

Air

Polyphemus

- [15] O ruddier than the cherry,
O sweeter than the berry,
O nymph more bright
Than moonshine night,
Like kidlings blithe and merry.
Ripe as the melting cluster,
No lily has such lustre;
Yet hard to tame
As raging flame,
And fierce as storms that bluster!

Recitative

Polyphemus

- [16] Whither, fairest, art thou running,
Still my warm embraces shunning?

Galatea

The lion calls not to his prey,
Nor bids the wolf the lambkin stay.

Polyphemus

Thee, Polyphemus, great as Jove,
Calls to empire and to love,
To his palace in the rock,
To his dairy, to his flock,
To the grape of purple hue,
To the plum of glossy blue,
Wildings, which expecting stand,
Proud to be gather'd by thy hand.

Galatea

Of infant limbs to make my food,
And swill full draughts of human blood!
Go, monster, bid some other guest!
I loathe the host, I loathe the feast.

Air

Polyphemus

- [17] Cease to beauty to be suing,
Ever whining love disdaining.
Let the brave their aims pursuing,
Still be conquiring not complaining.

Air

Damon

- [18] Would you gain the tender creature,
Softly, gently, kindly treat her:

Suff'ring is the lover's part.

Beauty by constraint possessing
You enjoy but half the blessing,
Lifeless charms without the heart.

Recitative

Acis

- [19] His hideous love provokes my rage.
Weak as I am, I must engage!
Inspir'd with thy victorious charms,
The god of love will lend his arms.

Air

Acis

- [20] Love sounds th'alarm,
And fear is a-flying!
When beauty's the prize,
What mortal fears dying?
In defence of my treasure,
I'd bleed at each vein;
Without her no pleasure,
For life is a pain.

Recitative

Galatea

- [21] Cease, oh cease, thou gentle youth,
Trust my constancy and truth,
Trust my truth and pow'rs above,
The pow'rs propitious still to love!

Trio

Acis and Galatea

- [22] The flocks shall leave the mountains,
The woods the turtle dove,
The nymphs forsake the fountains,
Ere I forsake my love!

Polyphemus

Torture! fury! rage! despair!
I cannot, cannot bear!

Galatea and Acis

Not show'rs to larks so pleasing,
Nor sunshine to the bee,
Not sleep to toil so easing,
As these dear smiles to me.

Polyphemus

Fly swift, thou massy ruin, fly!
Die, presumptuous Acis, die!

Recitative

Acis

- [23] Help, Galatea! Help, ye parent gods!
And take me dying to your deep abodes.

Chorus

- [24] Mourn, all ye muses! Weep, all ye swains!
Tune, tune your reeds to doleful strains!
Groans, cries and howlings fill the neighb'ring
shore:
Ah, the gentle Acis is no more!



Air with Chorus

Galatea

- 25 Must I my Acis still bemoan,
Inglorious crush'd beneath that stone?

Chorus

Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve!
Bewail not whom thou canst relieve.

Galatea

Must the lovely charming youth
Die for his constancy and truth?

Chorus

Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve!
Bewail not whom thou canst relieve;
Call forth thy pow'r, employ thy art,
The goddess soon can heal thy smart.

Galatea

Say what comfort can you find?
For dark despair o'erclouds my mind.

Chorus

To kindred gods the youth return,
Through verdant plains to roll his urn.

Recitative

Galatea

- 26 'Tis done! Thus I exert my pow'r divine;
Be thou immortal, though thou art not mine!

Air

Galatea

- 27 Heart, the seat of soft delight,
Be thou now a fountain bright!
Purple be no more thy blood,
Glide thou like a crystal flood.
Rock, thy hollow womb disclose!
The bubbling fountain, lo! it flows;
Through the plains he joys to rove,
Murm'ring still his gentle love.

Chorus

- 28 Galatea, dry thy tears,
Acis now a god appears!
See how he rears him from his bed,
See the wreath that binds his head.
Hail! thou gentle murm'ring stream,
Shepherds' pleasure, muses' theme!
Through the plains still joy to rove,
Murm'ring still thy gentle love.
John Gay and others

Fayer - Vienna





The Opera In English Series

CHAN 3011(2)	Donizetti: Don Pasquale	CHAN 3079(2)	Verdi: Falstaff
CHAN 3027(2)	Donizetti: The Elixir of Love	CHAN 3116(2)	Verdi: A Masked Ball
CHAN 3083(2)	Donizetti: Lucia of Lammermoor	CHAN 3136(2)	Verdi: Nabucco
CHAN 3017(2)	Donizetti: Mary Stuart	CHAN 3068(2)	Verdi: Otello
CHAN 3073	Janet Baker sings scenes from Mary Stuart	CHAN 3030(2)	Verdi: Rigoletto
		CHAN 3023(2)	Verdi: La traviata
CHAN 3003	Leoncavallo: Pagliacci (The Touring Company)	CHAN 3036(2)	Verdi: Il trovatore (The Troubadour)
		CHAN 3067	A Verdi Celebration
CHAN 3004	Mascagni: Cavalleria rusticana (Rustic Chivalry)	CHAN 3091(2)	Bizet: Carmen
		CHAN 3014(3)	Gounod: Faust
CHAN 3005(2)	Pagliacci & Cavalleria rusticana	CHAN 3089(2)	Gounod: Faust (abridged)
CHAN 3008(2)	Puccini: La bohème	CHAN 3033(2)	Massenet: Werther
CHAN 3070(2)	Puccini: Madam Butterfly	CHAN 3134(2)	Poulenc: The Carmelites
CHAN 3000(2)	Puccini: Tosca	CHAN 3130(3)	Berg: Lulu
CHAN 3066	Jane Eaglen sings Tosca	CHAN 3094(2)	Berg: Wozzeck
CHAN 3086(2)	Puccini: Turandot	CHAN 3019(3)	Handel: Julius Caesar
CHAN 3025(2)	Rossini: The Barber of Seville	CHAN 3072	Janet Baker sings scenes from Julius Caesar
CHAN 3097(2)	Rossini: The Thieving Magpie		
CHAN 3074(2)	Verdi: Aida	CHAN 3143(2)	Humperdinck: Hansel and Gretel
CHAN 3052(2)	Verdi: Ernani	CHAN 3081(2)	Mozart: The Abduction from the Seraglio

Great Operatic Arias

CHAN 3057(3)	Mozart: Don Giovanni	CHAN 3127	Christine Brewer
CHAN 3103(2)	Mozart: Idomeneo	CHAN 3096	Elizabeth Futral
CHAN 3113(3)	Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro	CHAN 3035	Yvonne Kenny
CHAN 3121(2)	Mozart: The Magic Flute	CHAN 3099	Yvonne Kenny 2
CHAN 3022	Strauss: Der Rosenkavalier (The Knight of the Rose, highlights)	CHAN 3049	Della Jones
		CHAN 3142	Jennifer Larmore
CHAN 3119(2)	Wagner: The Flying Dutchman	CHAN 3010	Diana Montague
CHAN 3054(3)	Wagner: The Rhinegold	CHAN 3093	Diana Montague 2
CHAN 3038(4)	Wagner: The Valkyrie	CHAN 3112	Barry Banks
CHAN 3045(4)	Wagner: Siegfried	CHAN 3006	Bruce Ford
CHAN 3060(5)	Wagner: Twilight of the Gods	CHAN 3100	Bruce Ford 2
CHAN 3065(16)	Wagner: Complete Ring Cycle	CHAN 3088	Bruce Ford sings Viennese Operetta
CHAN 3133	Bartók: Bluebeard's Castle	CHAN 3013	Dennis O'Neill
CHAN 3101(2)	Janáček: The Cunning Little Vixen	CHAN 3105	Dennis O'Neill 2
CHAN 3029(2)	Janáček: Osud (Fate)	CHAN 3085	Alan Opie
CHAN 3106(2)	Janáček: Jenůfa	CHAN 3077	Andrew Shore
CHAN 3138(2)	Janáček: The Makropulos Case	CHAN 3032	Alastair Miles
CHAN 3145(2)	Janáček: Katya Kabanova	CHAN 3044	John Tomlinson
CHAN 3007	Mussorgsky: Boris Godunov (highlights)	CHAN 3076	John Tomlinson 2
		CHAN 3118	Sir Thomas Allen
CHAN 3128(2)	Smetana: The Bartered Bride	CHAN 3078	Baroque Celebration
CHAN 3042(2)	Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin		



Recent Releases



CHAN 3143(2)

48

Recent Releases



CHAN 3145(2)

49



Licensed from Decca Music Group Limited, a division of Universal Music Group
Original LP release: SOL 60011-12 (2 LPs) 1960

Recording producer Michael Bremner

Sound engineer Alan Reeve

Remastering Rachel Smith

Recording venue Watford Town Hall; June 1959

Front cover Photo courtesy of Dame Joan Sutherland © Vivienne – London

Back cover Photo of Sir Adrian Boult © G. MacDonnic/Lebrecht Music & Arts

Design Cassidy Rayne Creative

Booklet editor Kara Reed

Digital remastering © 2007 Chandos Records Ltd

© 2007 Decca Music Group Ltd



HANDEL ACIS AND GALATEA - SUTHERLAND / PEARSON / BOULT

CHANDOS
CHAN 3147

CHANDOS DIGITAL

CHAN 3147

George Frideric Handel
(1685–1759)

ACIS & GALATEA

Masque in two acts
Words by John Gay and others

Printed in the EU	Public Domain
LC 7038	ADD TT 79:23
24-bit/96 kHz digitally remastered	

Galatea Joan Sutherland *soprano*
Acis Peter Pears *tenor*
Damon David Galliver *tenor*
Polyphemus Owen Brannigan *bass*

harpsichord continuo Thurston Dart
St Anthony Singers
Philomusica of London Sir Adrian Boult

Recorded at Watford Town Hall; June 1959
Previously released on Decca: SOL 60011-12 (2 LPs) 1960

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

Digital remastering © 2007 Chandos Records Ltd © 2007 Decca Music Group Ltd Chandos Records Ltd • Colchester • Essex • England

HANDEL ACIS AND GALATEA - SUTHERLAND / PEARSON / BOULT

CHANDOS
CHAN 3147