

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: RECLAIMING THE VOCAL HIGH GROUND: PERFORMING
BAROQUE REPERTOIRE IN A MODERN WORLD

Jeanne Elise Fischer, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2005

Dissertation directed by: Professor Linda Mabbs
School of Music

The early music revival of the late twentieth century revolutionized music with the birth of historically informed performance. With this revolution came a stereotype of the "early music singing voice" as small, bright, straight-toned, and unfortunately, often inferior technically to the mainstream opera singer. An assessment of the validity of this stereotype was made through readings of treatises and modern manuals of performance practice, and through listening to recordings. Sources on ornamentation, recitative, dance rhythm, and baroque gesture were examined, resulting in the finding that these issues are far more important to historical accuracy than are voice timbre and size. This dissertation is comprised of three historically informed performances intended to satisfy both the early music specialist and the mainstream voice teacher.

Program One (May 15, 2004) is a performance of The "Peasant" Cantata, BWV 212, by J.S. Bach, with The Bach Sinfonia at the Washington Conservatory

of Music. Program Two (January 29, 2005) is the role of Eurilla in a staged production of Antonio Vivaldi's serenata, *Eurilla e Alcindo*. The performance is a collaboration with the Baltimore-based ensemble, La Rocinante, and is conducted from the keyboard by Joseph Gascho. Program Three (March 14, 2005) is a solo recital entitled, *Fairest Isle: Music of Baroque London*. All three programs are documented in a digital audio format available on compact disc, with accompanying programs and notes also available in digital format.

RECLAIMING THE VOCAL HIGH GROUND: PERFORMING BAROQUE
REPERTOIRE IN A MODERN WORLD

by

Jeanne Elise Fischer

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2005

Advisory Committee:

Professor Linda Mabbs, Chair
Professor Elke Frederiksen
Professor Richard King
Professor Edward Maclary
Professor Delores Ziegler

The *Bach*
Sinfonia

Daniel E. Abraham, Music & Artistic Director

*Bach & Telemann:
The Working Life*



Saturday, May 15, 2004

Saturday, May 15, 2004 at 8:00 PM
Washington Conservatory of Music • Bethesda, Maryland

Bach & Telemann: The Working Life

The Bach Sinfonia

Daniel E. Abraham, Music & Artistic Director

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)

Der Schulmeister—Komische Kantate

1. Overture & Recitative: Moderato (pomposo)
2. Aria: Allegro moderato
3. Recitative and Youth Choir
4. Recitative
5. Aria: Allegretto

Dennis Blackwell, *baritone* (Schoolmaster)
Students of the Washington Conservatory of Music

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Cantata Burlesque—Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet, BWV 212 (“Peasant Cantata”)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. [Overture] | 13. Recitative (Soprano) |
| 2. Aria (Duet) | 14. Aria (Soprano) |
| 3. Recitative (Bass & Soprano) | 15. Recitative (Bass) |
| 4. Aria (Soprano) | 16. Aria (Bass) |
| 5. Recitative (Bass) | 17. Recitative (Soprano) |
| 6. Aria (Bass) | 18. Aria (Soprano) |
| 7. Recitative (Soprano) | 19. Recitative (Bass) |
| 8. Aria (Soprano) | 20. Aria (Bass) |
| 9. Recitative (Bass & Soprano) | 21. Recitative (Soprano & Bass) |
| 10. Aria (Soprano) | 22. Aria (Soprano) |
| 11. Recitative (Bass) | 23. Recitative (Bass) |
| 12. Aria (Bass) | 24. Chor (Soprano & Bass) |

Jeanne Elise Fischer, *soprano* & Dennis Blackwell, *baritone*
Tamara Thweatt, *flute obbligato*
Lisa Emrich, *horn obbligato*
Wendy Harton Benner, *violin obbligato*

INTERMISSION

VOCAL TEXTS (TELEMANN)

Georg Philipp Telemann Der Schulmeister ("The Schoolmaster") Komische Kantata

Overture

Recitative (Schoolmaster)

Ihr Jungen, sperrt die Ohren auf!

Children, open your ears!

Ich will mein Amt verwalten

To answer the call of duty

Und Singestunde mit euch halten.

I'm going to give you a singing lesson.

Singt alle nach,

All sing with me

Gebt Achtung drauf:

And listen closely:

C D E F G A H C!

C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C!

(The youth choir sings with the Schoolmaster)

(Schoolmaster):

Das ist das ganze Fundament,

This is the groundwork of it all,

Auf deutsch, der ganze Grund.

This is what it's all about.

Manch kahler Lumpenhund,

Some other knuckleheads,

Der dieses alles

Who don't understand this,

Nicht versteht, spricht ja:

Sing thusly:

DO RE MI FA SOL LA

Do, re, mi, fa, sol, la,

Sei tutta musical!

And thinks that is "tota musica"!

Allein es ist erlogen und erstunken!

However, these are blatant lies.

Obleich die dumme Welt

True, this foolish world

Oft Wasser hat getrunken,

Often drinks water,

So stimmt mir doch ein jeder bei,

But everyone will agree:

Daß Doppelbier viel besser sei.

A good beer is much better.

Aria

Wenn der Schulmeister singet,

When the schoolmaster sings,

So klingt es wunderschön,

It all sounds wonderful.

Denn wenn ich meinen Baß

und Stimme will erheben,

If I would raise my fine basso voice,

So muß so lernt doch Achtung geben!

So must one learn to listen to it.

Wie klingt denn das?

Well, how does it sound?

Ganz schlecht!

Quite awful!

Ich muß es selbst gestehn...

Even I must admit it.

Wenn der Schulmeister singet . . .

When the schoolmaster sings . . .

Recitative and Youthchoir

(Schoolmaster):

Das war ein rechtes Meisterstück,

That was a real masterpiece.

Dergleichen weder Telemann, noch Hasse selbst

I'm not even sure Telemann or Hasse could write one.

Zuwege bringen kann.

Half as good.

Doch hab ich weder Stern noch Glücke,

But as I have no lucky star or good fortune,

Weil mir zum äußersten Verdruß

To my unhappy shame,

Stets eine Sau das Spiel verderben muß;

Some swine always spoils my performance.

Dann klingt es freilich abgeschmackt,

If in bad taste these measures are,

Das macht das böse Ding,

Which you rascals do not keep...

Der Takt, den könnt ihr Flegel nicht begreifen,

In proper time, which does not let you grasp

Ich mag euch singen oder pfeifen?

Whether I sing it for you or whistle it instead?

Um euch recht gründlich anzuführen,

Now, to lead you on the right path,

So wollen wir was Künstliches probieren,

We shall try out something artistic.

Es hat es noch

This was once made long ago

Herr Hammerschmidt gemacht:

By Maestro Hammerschmidt,

Es geht nach Fugenart,

And goes like a fugue.

Ihr Bengel, habet acht!

You rascals, pay attention!

(Schoolmaster with Youth Choir):

Ceciderunt in profundum

(Schoolmaster):

Nein, nein! Ihr Schlingel,

No, no! You little devils

habt nicht recht gezählt.

Can't count right!?

Noch einmal fang ich an,

I'll start again.

Gebt acht, daß ihr nicht fehlt!

Pay attention, so you don't go wrong!

Ceciderunt in profundum

Und machte unserm gnädigen Herrn
And makes for our most gracious lord
 Aus einer Fledermaus viel Taler gern.
A single bat into a host of dollars.*

*The Fledermaus ("bat") was a mis-struck Adler Eagle coin and, hence, coin of little value. The frugal wife turns her pennies into dollars.

12. Aria (Bass)

Fünzig Taler bares Geld
Fifty talers in ready coin,
 Trockner Weise zu verschmausen,
Throat unmoistened forced to muzzle
 Ist ein Ding, das harte fällt,
Is a thing that's hard to learn
 Wenn sie uns die Haare zausen,
Even when our hair they tousle;
 Doch was fort ist, bleibt wohl fort,
But what's gone is gone for good;
 Kann man doch am andern Ort
In another neighborhood
 Alles doppelt wieder sparen;
All this sum will we make twice again;
 Laßt die fünfzig Taler fahren!
Let the fifty cause no trouble.

13. Recitative (Soprano)

Im Ernst ein Wort!
A serious word!
 Noch eh ich dort
Before I think
 An unsre Schenke
About our village tavern
 Und an den Tanz gedenke,
And to go to the dance,
 So sollst du erst der Obrigkeit zu Ehren
You should, indeed, in honor of the Master
 Ein neues Liedchen von mir hören.
Hear this new song of mine.

14. Aria (Soprano & Flute obbligato)

Klein-Zschocher müsse
Klein-Zschocher ever
 So zart und süße
Be as tender and sweet
 Wie lauter Mandelkerne sein.
As purest almonds.

In unsere Gemeine
Within our goodly parish
 Zieh heute ganz alleine
Nothing else today should flourish
 Der Überfluss des Segens ein.
But abundant rich blessings.

15. Recitative (Bass)

Das ist zu klug vor dich
That's much too fancy for you;
 Und nach der Städter Weise;
It's in the big-city style;
 Wir Bauern singen nicht so leise.
We peasants sing don't sing so softly.
 Das Stückchen, höre nur, das schicket sich vor mich!
Now hear this ditty which is just right for me!

16. Aria (Bass & Horn obbligato)

Es nehme zehntausend Dukaten
We hope now that Our Chamberlain make
 Der Kammerherr alle Tag ein!
Ten thousand ducats every day!
 Er trink ein gutes Gläschen Wein,
Let him drink a glass of good wine,
 Und lass es ihm bekommen sein!
And let him find its taste right fine!

17. Recitative (Soprano)

Das klingt zu liederlich.
That sounds too lackaday.
 Es sind so hübsche Leute da,
There are so many fine people here,
 Die würden ja
They will, I fear,
 Von Herzen drüber lachen;
laugh heartily at it;
 Nicht anders, als wenn ich
No different, I should say,
 Die alte Weise wollte machen:
If I were sing an old-fashioned tune:

18. Aria (Soprano & Horn obbligato)

Gib, Schöne,
Give us, beautiful women,
 Viel Söhne
Many sons
 Von artger Gestalt,
Right handsome and tall
 Und zieh sie fein alt;
And raise them up well;
 Das wünschet sich Zschocher und Knauthain fein bald!
*This is what both Zschocher and Knauthain wish!**

*A reference to the lord & lady having only daughters up to that time.

19. Recitative (Bass)

Du hast wohl recht.
You are probably quite right.
 Das Stückchen klingt zu schlecht;
That my little song sounds too coarse;
 Ich muss mich also zwingen,
And so I must force myself

Was Städtisches zu singen.
To sing a big-city tune.

20. Aria (Bass & Violin obbligato)

Dein Wachstum sei feste und lache vor Lust!
May your growth be steady and laugh for joy!
Deines Herzens Trefflichkeit
May your heart be of virtue fair
Hat dir selbst das Feld bereit',
Has itself prepared you for the fields
Auf dem du blühen musst.
In which you shall bloom.

21. Recitative

(Soprano): Und damit sei es auch genug.
And let that be an end to it all.
(Bass): Nun müssen wir wohl einen Sprung
Now ought we not for just a bit have a hop
In unsrer Schenke wagen.
Into our tavern?
(Soprano): Das heißt, du willst nur das noch sagen:
This means, you just want to add this:

22. Aria (Soprano)

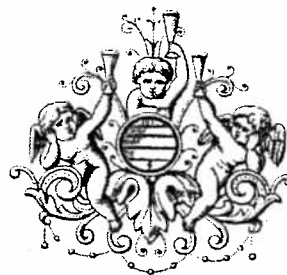
Und dass ihr's alle wisst,
And so that you may all know,
Es ist nunmehr die Frist
It is now time
Zu trinken.
to drink.
Wer durstig ist, mag winken.
Whoever is thirsty should give a sign.
Versagt's die rechte Hand,
If right hand won't obey
So dreht euch unverwandt
Then turn around resolutely
Zur linken!
To the left one!

23. Recitative

(Bass): Mein Schatz, erraten!
My dear, you guessed it!
(Soprano): Und weil wir nun
And since we now
Dahier nichts mehr zu tun,
Have no more to do here,
So wollen wir auch Schritt vor Schritt
We will make our way straight
In unsre alte Schenke waten.
To our old tavern.
(Bass): Ei! hol mich der und dieser,
Ho! Let those two now join me,
Herr Ludwig und der Steuer-Reviser
Sir Ludwig and the tax examiner
Muß heute mit.
Must come along today.

24. Chor (Duet)

Wir gehn nun, wo der Dudelsack
We march now where the bagpipe
In unsrer Schenke brummt;
Drones in our old tavern;
Und rufen dabei fröhlich aus:
And, so doing, shouts with joy as we carouse:
Es lebe Dieskau und sein Haus,
Long live Dieskau and his house,
Ihm sei beschert,
May he be granted
Was er begehrt,
His every desire
Und was er sich selbst wünschen mag!
And whatever else he might lack!



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Geld”), passepied (“Dein Wachst un sei feste”), and a paysanne (“Und dass ihr’s alle wisst”). A more refined minuet style is reserved for the central aria (“Klein Zschocher Müsse so zart und süsse”). Bach even incorporates well-known folk tunes of the day. The cantata also boasts the reuse of several movements from earlier works, including two movements from Bach’s cantata BWV 201 *Geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Wind — Der Streit Zwischen Phoebus und Pan* (“The Contest between Phoebus and Pan”) of 1732.

The story depicts the dialogue of a couple who live on the Kleinzschochern estate. This lighthearted, public entertainment shows not only Bach’s flexibility and versatility as a composer, but also his ability to understand what would both appeal to and portray the common villager. In fashioning this entertainment out of real-life occasions, Picander and Bach offer us wonderful insights into the society and musical traditions of the time.

Johann Sebastian Bach composed four orchestral suites, each containing a French-style overture followed by a group of instrumental dances. The numbering applied to Bach’s four surviving orchestral suites is now a matter of convention, as the order does not reveal compositional chronology or publication history. In fact, the First and Fourth suites date from Bach’s Cöthen period (1717-1723), perhaps his most prolific period of orchestral and instrumental composition. The Second and Third suites are from the Leipzig period (1723-1750), being likely composed for the Leipzig Collegium Musicum concerts held in Zimmerman’s Coffeehouse. This voluntary association of professional musicians and gifted amateurs gave regular public concerts in the 1730s. The B-minor suite (the Second) is the smallest and most intimate of the four works being scored for flute, strings, and continuo.

The work opens with the traditional French overture, a form that combines a slow opening section marked by dotted rhythms and harmonic suspensions with a subsequent faster section with fugal character. Normally both sections are repeated. Occasionally—as in this suite—the slower opening returns briefly at the end. The remainder of the work consists of stylized dance movements whose characters are determined largely by the basic metrical patterns of the dances. These dances, however, are intended for concert use, not for the dance hall. The flute’s prominent part offers plenty of opportunity for virtuosity, as in the Double to the Polonaise, a kind of variation on the dance, and the well-known Badinerie—a term derived from the French for “banter”—which describes the soloist’s chatter with and before the rest of the ensemble.

— Daniel E. Abraham



ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Soprano Jeanne Elise Fischer is one of America's rising young baroque specialists. Her solo appearances have included concerts with the Smithsonian Chamber Players, the Washington Bach Consort, the Dryden Ensemble, and Modern Musick. Having completed a Master's Degree at London's Royal Academy of Music, her British performances include modern-day premieres of recently discovered Handel cantatas with the London-based Brook Street Band, as well as a candlelit concert at St. Martin-in-the-Fields as part of the Outstanding Young Artists' Series. Ms. Fischer also appears as a baroque dancer, most recently with Pittsburgh's Chatham Baroque, and the Rochester-based Publick Musick. She is currently a doctoral fellow at the University of Maryland, and is making her third appearance with The Bach Sinfonia having first appeared in May 2002 as soloist for the Washington, D.C. premiere of Handel's rediscovered *Gloria* and last season on the program "Hear Here! Washington's Earliest Music".

Tamara Thweatt, *baroque flute*, served as a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 2000-2002, following the completion of her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Michigan in 1999 and is currently Professor of Flute at the University of Iowa. Ms. Thweatt has performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Toledo Symphony Orchestra and many regional ensembles. As a Fulbright Scholar to England, Ms. Thweatt studied with Trevor Wye and performed recitals in London and Berlin. In the USA, Ms. Thweatt has studied under Leone Buyse, Walfrid Kujala, Clement Barone, Jeffery Zook, and Charles Delaney. Ms. Thweatt, has served on the faculties of Concordia College in Ann Arbor and the Interlochen Arts Camp. Baroque music, especially the works of J. S. Bach, is an area of special interest for Ms. Thweatt. She has studied the baroque flute and has performed the solo flute part in Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2* with the Michigan Chamber Players, recently performed the Vivaldi *C Major Piccolo Concerto* with the Pontiac Oakland Symphony, and the C.P.E. Bach's *Flute Concerto in A Major* with The Bach Sinfonia. She also enjoys chamber music of all styles and periods, and performed George Crumb's *Vox Balaenae* at Interlochen.



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this season,
and our future possible.

Supplementary Program Notes
Peasant Cantata, BWV 212, by J.S. Bach
The Bach Sinfonia, May 15, 2004

Rhythm is an extremely important element of historically informed performance; perhaps the most important. What differentiates the early music movement from its predecessors is the abandonment of the romantic, rubato style that dominated nineteenth-century performances of Bach, Handel, and others. The early music movement has focused on the dance rhythms so essential to baroque style, and so pervasive in all types of baroque compositions. In playing a dance, the actual tempo is not as important as consistency of tempo. A dance would be unrecognizable with significant rubato changes and romantic distortions of the overall rhythm.

One of the most helpful aspects of the early music movement has been reconstruction of early dances. Dancing masters left behind written choreographies, as well as clear instruction manuals on how to read dance notation, so re-creating the dances is possible. There has been substantial debate on subtleties of dance style, just as there has been in music, but the basic dances, the “scores,” are fairly clear.

There are a few common misconceptions about baroque dance. One is that there is a specific dance for each dance form: a “gigue” dance, a “sarabande” dance, etc., so that any time a particular dance is heard, a trained dancer could simply do the appropriate dance. Except for the minuet, this is not at all true. In general, dances are made up a few steps in different combinations. Every choreography is different, though they are all made of the same general steps. There are countless giges, sarabandes, bourrées, and courantes, to name a few. Each matches the music for which it was choreographed. For example, the well-known “Bourrée d’Achille” fits perfectly with its own music, but could not be danced correctly with any other bourrées. A more modern analogy could be the Sugar Plum Fairy’s solo in the Nutcracker. Even if a piece had the same overall rhythm, the choreography would not be effective without its original music.

The second misconception relates to dance tempi. When dance reconstruction began, scholars were delighted, thinking that finally, we would gain an exact idea of tempo in baroque dance suites and other music. Unfortunately for them, this was not the case. Tempo in a dance depends on the intricacy of the choreography and the individual dancer(s), though there are very general guidelines. A passepied is faster than a minuet, for instance, and a sarabande is usually slower. There is much variety, though, within the same dance form. For example, an especially high-jumping dancer might take a gigue much more slowly than another dancer, in order to have time to show off jumping ability. Generally, expert dancers with superior balance and arm movements prefer slower tempi than beginning dancers. If a performer is working with a dancer, the dancer decides the tempo. However, many dance suites were never intended to be danced at all. Thus, even with our modern dance knowledge, the tempo is ultimately up to the performer, just as it has always been.

So, one might ask, exactly how are dances useful if not to determine the tempo? The answer is simple: knowledge of baroque dance gives a musician valuable clues about the overall rhythm and mood of a piece. This knowledge has been one of the trademarks of the early music movement, to the extent that today’s performers can learn a great deal about dance rhythms from recordings of their recent predecessors. The Peasant Cantata is an excellent piece from which to learn about baroque rhythm, since it is based almost entirely on dances.

Program Notes:

Eurilla e Alcindo by Vivaldi

Because you have already received program notes detailing the background and general information on this serenata, I have chosen in my notes to examine several aspects of performance practice that arose during rehearsals for this production. The main areas of focus will be recitative and staging. These issues have broader implications than those in our production alone. As baroque opera continues to grow in popularity, and early works permeate mainstream opera repertoire, issues like the following will arise in many performances. Our production involved a mix of historical and operatic specialists, with very interesting results.

One of the first stumbling blocks we encountered was in recitative. The “early music” stereotype of recitative is very different from its mainstream operatic counterpart. Mary Cyr states it beautifully when she says, in *Vivaldi and Opera*,

Despite the warnings of eighteenth-century writers, singers and conductors today are still often tempted to rely on a metrical performance of recitative, either by allowing the note values to dictate a speed or by maintaining a regular pulse throughout.

In my experience as a singer whose freelance work is mostly baroque, this statement is absolutely true. Unlike mainstream operatic accompanists and coaches, early musicians usually insist on keeping rhythm strictly accurate. Indeed, there is a mentality among historical performers that singers are terrible counters in general, that mainstream singers cannot count at all, but that early music singers are smarter and therefore should be able to try to count and do the recitatives in rhythm. Strictly rhythmic recitative is often antithetical to the language, placing accents on the wrong words or syllables. It is no way to perform recitative, baroque or not.

There are several reasons for historical performers’ insistence on playing the written rhythms in recitatives. Firstly, the early music movement in general tends to focus on playing what the composer intended to the extent that it can be determined. Changing the rhythm is seen by many scholars and performers as deviating from the composer’s intention. Secondly, there is no instrumental equivalent of recitative; it is a vocal phenomenon. Early music instrumentalists are almost never vocal specialists, and understandably so. They have often spent years switching from a modern instrument to its baroque counterpart, leaving little room for additional vocal specialization. While mainstream operatic coaches are often fluent or semi-fluent in French, German, and Italian, harpsichordists rarely have this linguistic knowledge. Not knowing the language, it is difficult to understand singers’ desire to take rhythmic liberties with the text. Finally, while mainstream operatic recitative is usually accompanied only by keyboard, baroque recitative has a whole continuo section: at least one chordal and one low string instrument, and often several players at once. This means that instrumentalists always outnumber the singer, so it is not surprising that continuo recitative is approached from an instrumental perspective.

Eurilla & Alcindo

Serenata a Tré, R.V. 690
by Antonio Vivaldi

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Eurilla Jeanne Fischer
Nice Jennifer Royall
Alcindo Tony Boutté

Kate Vetter Cain, director
Joseph Gascho, conductor

La Rocinante

Christof Richter, baroque violin
Leslie Nero, baroque violin
Daniel Rippe, baroque cello
William Simms, theorbo & baroque guitar

Special Thanks to:

Francesco Colletti, George R. Brunk III, Maria Letizia
Sebastiani at the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino,
and Elena Tsai.

*This opera is being presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree.*

Tony Boutté is a student of François Loup.

Jeanne Fischer is a student of Linda Mabbs.

Joseph Gascho is a student of Webb Wiggins.

Jennifer Royall is a student of Martha Randall.

program

PRIMA PARTE

Overture
Aria di Eurilla Mio cor, povero cor
 Recitativo (Eurilla, Nice)
Aria di Eurilla Con i vezzi lusinghieri
 Recitativo (Nice, Eurilla)
Aria di Nice Digli che miri almeno
Aria di Alcindo Mi sento in petto
 Recitativo (Alcindo, Eurilla)
Aria di Eurilla No, no che non è viltà
 Recitativo (Alcindo)
Aria di Alcindo Nel suo carcere ristretto
 Recitativo (Eurilla)
Aria di Eurilla Alla caccia di un cuore spietato
 Recitativo (Nice, Eurilla)
Aria di Nice Ad infiammare il seno

- INTERMISSION -

SECONDA PARTE

Aria di Eurilla Se all'estivo ardor cocente
Aria di Alcindo Acque placide che correte
 Recitativo (Alcindo, Eurilla, Nice)
Aria di Nice Come l'erba in vago prato
 Recitativo (Alcindo, Eurilla)
Aria di Alcindo Dell'alma superba
 Recitativo (Eurilla)
Aria di Eurilla La dolce, dolce auretta
 Recitativo (Alcindo)
Aria di Alcindo L'altero, bianco giglio
 Recitativo (Nice)
Aria di Nice Di Cocito nell'orrido regno
 Recitativo (Eurilla, Alcindo)
Aria di Eurilla Vorresti lusingarmi
 Recitativo (Alcindo, Eurilla)
Coro (Eurilla, Nice, Alcindo)

Notes and Translations

~ I ~

I chose to begin this recital with the music of Henry Purcell, without which no concert of English music could ever be complete. Purcell, known as "Orpheus Britannicus," lived a tragically short life, but nevertheless left behind hundreds of songs, most dating from 1680-1695. *Fairest Isle*, which opens the set, is a tribute both to Purcell and to Britain. The song is distinctly English in its unusual harmonies, though its rhythm suggests a French sarabande. Purcell is to English song composition what Shakespeare is to theatrical writing; no composer before Purcell (and arguably since Purcell) set the English language so effectively. The next two songs are notable for their word painting, one of Purcell's trademarks. For instance, the word "fierce" in *If music be the food of love* is set to harsh, angular coloratura, modulating unexpectedly at its end. In *An Evening Hymn*, the line "that prolongs thy days" is set to a very long musical phrase, with "that" prolonged over the bar line. The most interesting example of word painting is the way that Purcell sets the word "singing." In both above-mentioned songs, "singing" features coloratura passagework, unlike the *cantabile* style we in the modern era might choose if we tried to musically paint "singing." Such a setting sheds light on the seventeenth-century view of singing. It appears that fast coloratura notes more than legato defined singing in Purcell's day.

Fairest Isle

Fairest isle, all isles excelling
Seat of pleasure and of love
Venus here would choose her dwelling
And forsake the Cyprian grove.
Cupid from his favorite nation
Care and envy will remove.
Jealousy that poisons passion
And despair that dies for love.
Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,
Sighs that blow the fire of love,
Soft repulses, kind disdaining
Shall be all the pains you prove.
Every swain shall pay his duty,
Grateful every nymph shall prove.
And as these excel in beauty,
Those shall be renowned for love.

If Music be the food of love

If music be the food of love,
Sing on, 'till I am filled with joy.
For then my listening soul you move
To pleasures that can never cloy.
Your eyes, your mein, your tongue declare
That you are music everywhere.
Pleasures invade both eye and ear,
So fierce the transports are they wound.
And all my senses feasted are
Though yet the treat is only sound.
Sure I must perish by your charms
Unless you save me in your arms.

Now that the sun hath veiled his light (An Evening Hymn)

Now that the sun hath veiled his light
And bid the world goodnight,
To the soft bed my body I dispose,
But where shall my soul repose?
Dear God, even in thy arms.

And can there be any so sweet security?
Then to thy rest, oh my soul.
And singing, praise the mercy
That prolongs thy days.
Hallelujah!

Ah! how sweet it is to love
Ah! how sweet it is to love,
Ah! how gay is young desire,
And what pleasing pains we prove,
When first we feel a lover's fire.
Pains of love are sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are.

Cupid, the slyest rogue alive,
Cupid, the slyest rogue alive
One day was plundering of a hive,
But as with too eager haste,
He strove the liquid sweets to taste,
A bee surprised the heedless boy,
Pricked him and dashed the expected joy.
The urchin, when he felt the smart
Of the envenomed, angry dart,
He kicked, he flung, he spurned the ground,
He blowed and then he chafed the wound.
He blowed and chafed the wound in vain,
The rubbing still increased the pain.
Straight to his mother's lap he hies,
With swelling cheeks and blubbered eyes.
Cries she, "What does my Cupid ail?"
When thus he told his mournful tale.
"A little bird they call a bee,
With yellow wings, see mother, see
How it has gored and wounded me!"
"And are you not," replied his mother,
"For all the world just such another,
Just such another peevish thing,
Like in bulk and like in sting?
For when you aim a poisonous dart
Against some poor, unwary heart,
How little is the archer found,
And yet how wide, how deep the wound."

She loves and she confesses too
She loves and she confesses too,
There is then at last no more to do.
The happy work's entirely done,
Enter the town which thou hast won.
The fruits of conquest now begin,
Lo triumphs, enter in.
What's this, ye gods? What can it be?
Remains there still an enemy?
Bold honour stands up at the gate,
And may yet capitulate.
Have I o'ercome all real foes,
And shall this phantom me oppose?
Noisy nothing, stalking shade,
By what witchcraft wert thou made,
Thou empty cause of solid harms?
But I shall find out counter charms,
Thy airy devilship to remove
From this circle here of love.
Sure I shall rid myself of thee
By the night's obscurity
And obscurer secrecy.
Unlike to any other sprite
Thou attempts not men to affright,
Nor appearst but in the night.

~ IV ~

Handel's *Giulio Cesare* premiered in 1724, during the peak of the Royal Academy of Music, when Italian opera was at the height of its popularity. Handel composed the role of Cleopatra for the famous Italian soprano, Francesca Cuzzoni. Cuzzoni was known for her violent temper and her fierce rivalry with fellow soprano, Faustina Bordoni, who arrived in London in 1726. Cuzzoni's appearance as Cleopatra, however, predates such notoriety, coming at a time when Londoners worshipped her singing. Charles Burney wrote that Cuzzoni had "a voice that was equally clear, sweet, and flexible. It was difficult for the hearer to determine whether she most excelled in slow or rapid airs." He goes on to describe her flawless technique, subtle yet beautiful embellishments, perfect trills and intonation, and high notes "unrivalled in clearness and sweetness."

"V'adoro pupille" comes from Act II of the opera, when Cleopatra, cleverly disguised, attempts to woo Caesar. Later, in Act III, Cleopatra has been imprisoned by her brother, Ptolemy, and fears that her love, Caesar, is dead. She alternates between despair and vengeance in "Piangerò la sorte mia."

ambition. Interestingly, Congreve's text, from *The Way of the World*, was also set by Eccles. Both Eccles and Arne deserve to be heard more frequently, but unfortunately, many of their vocal works are currently available only in facsimile. Hopefully these worthy composers will eventually have the place they deserve in mainstream English vocal repertoire.

Must then a faithful lover go?

Must then a faithful lover go,
Scorned and banished like a foe?
Oh, let me rage, despair,
Curse my fate, yet bless the fair.
For oh, in spite of her disdain,
I still must love and hug my chain.
Yet why should love my heart molest,
When hate her soul possesses?
Revenge or scorn should rule my breast,
While such a swain she blesses.
Then I'll no more to coyness sue,
Faith and constant love, adieu!
Farewell dotage, fond disease,
Welcome freedom, welcome ease!
I'll rove and I'll range,
I'll love and I'll change.
Every hour and every place,
Every fair and every face,
I'll vow and protest,
I'll swear and deceive
All who like me are so mad to believe!

Oh come, oh come my dearest

Oh come, oh come my dearest and hither bring
Thy lips adorned with all the blooming spring.
A thousand sweets thy fragrant atoms blend,
Which in a vale of joys thy breath attend.
Thy love in gentle murmurs to my soul apply.
Heal me with kisses, or else I die.

Love's but the frailty of the mind

Love's but the frailty of the mind
When 'tis not with ambition joined.
A sickly flame which if not fed expires
And feeding wastes in self-consuming fires.
'Tis not to wound a wanton boy
Or am'rous youth that gives the joy,
But 'tis the glory to have pierced a swain
For whom inferior beauties sighed in vain.
Then I alone the conquest prize,
When I insult a rival's eyes.
If there's delight in love 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me!

program

Fairest Isle

from King Arthur

If music be the food of love

Now that the sun hath veil'd his light

Henry Purcell

(1659–1695)

Luci barbare spietate

Giovanni Bononcini

(1670–1747)

Ah! How sweet it is to love

from Tyrannic Love

Cupid, the slyest rogue alive

She loves and she confesses too

Henry Purcell

Intermission

V'adoro pupille

Piangerò la sorte mia

from Giulio Cesare in Egitto

George Frideric Handel

(1685–1759)

Adagio, from Sonata in C Major

Diverse bizzarie sopra La Vecchia

Sarabande ò pur ciaccona

Nicola Matteis

(fl. late 17th century)

Must then a faithful lover go?

from The Mad Lover

Oh come, oh come, my dearest

from The Fall of Phaeton

Love's but the frailty of the mind

John Eccles

(1668–1735)

Thomas Arne

(1710–1778)

George Frideric Handel

*This recital is being presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree.
Jeanne Fischer is a student of Linda Mabbs.*