



SWEETER THAN ROSES

SONGS BY
HENRY PURCELL

ANNA DENNIS SOPRANO
SOUNDS BAROQUE
JULIAN PERKINS DIRECTOR

Sweeter than roses

Songs by Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

Anna Dennis *soprano*

Sounds Baroque

James Akers *theorbo & baroque guitar*

Henrik Persson *viola da gamba*

Julian Perkins *director, harpsichord, spinet⁵⁻⁶ & organ*

'[...] Dennis's golden tone and rounded upper register held us enchanted'
The Times

'[...] the recording [from Sounds Baroque] is a model of clarity and warmth'
International Record Review

This recording is dedicated to the memory of Gwen Serena Hooper.

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

1. **Sweeter than roses**, Z. 585/1 [3:34]
2. **Cupid, the slyest rogue alive**, Z. 367 [2:39]
3. **On the brow of Richmond Hill**, Z. 405 [1:40]
4. **She loves and she confesses too**, Z. 413 [2:25]

Henry Lawes (1596–1662)

5. **No Reprieve** [4:20]
6. **A Lover's Legacy** [1:47]

Francesco Corbetta (1615–1681)

Suite in C major for guitar

7. Caprice de Chacone [2:50]
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10. Autre Chacone [1:35]

Henry Purcell

11. **Urge me no more**, Z. 426 [3:47]
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13. **Now that the sun hath veil'd his light (An Evening Hymn)**, Z. 193 [4:19]

Giovanni Battista Draghi (1640–1708)

Suite in E minor for harpsichord

14. Prelude [0:46]
15. Allmand [3:18]
16. Corrant [1:54]
17. The Complaint [2:34]
18. Aire [1:16]
19. Jigg [2:05]

Henry Purcell

20. **Love arms himself in Celia's eyes**, Z. 392 [3:05]
21. **Celia's fond, too long I've lov'd her**, Z. 364 [2:36]
22. **I came, I saw, and was undone (The Thralldom)**, Z. 375 [4:15]
23. **Oh! fair Cedaria, hide those eyes**, Z. 402 [4:13]
24. **How blest are shepherds** (from *King Arthur*, Z. 628, arr. Sounds Baroque) [6:14]

Total playing time

[67:33]



Engraved portrait of Henry Purcell by Robert White (1645–1703) after John Closterman (1660–1711), from *Orpheus Britannicus*

Sweeter than roses: Songs by Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

It was the publisher Henry Playford (1657–1709) who established Henry Purcell's mythic status. Three years after the composer's untimely death he issued a handsome memorial collection of vocal music, entitling it *Orpheus Britannicus*. In the preface he declared: 'The Author's extraordinary Talent in all sorts of Musick is sufficiently known, but he was especially admir'd for the Vocal, having a peculiar Genius to express the energy of English Words, whereby he mov'd the Passions of all his Auditors [hearers]'.

What exactly was Playford referring to? Partly it was Purcell's uncanny knack of capturing speech-rhythms, as his fellow composer (and one-time fellow Chapel Royal chorister) Henry Hall (1656–1707), organist of Hereford Cathedral, wrote in a prefatory poem for the collection:

Each syllable first weigh'd, or short, or long,
That it might too be Sense, as well as Song.

But that was only a first step. Purcell also had an unerring skill at highlighting key words, sometimes with a stab from the supporting harmony, more often within the vocal line itself. In the opening bars

of *Sweeter than roses*, for instance, he uses both repetition and sensuous melodic curves to intensify in turn the words 'cool', 'warm', 'dear', 'trembling' and 'freeze'. In the 1695 tragedy *Pausanias* the song is sung by the calculating Pandora as she contemplates a seduction for shady political ends; the starkly contrasting second strain, illustrating 'victorious love' with suitably military fanfare figures, appears to prefigure her success, though in the event she fails.

Cupid, the slyest rogue alive (1685), On the brow of Richmond Hill (1691) and She loves and she confesses too (1680) give

some idea of the sheer diversity of Purcell's art. The first falls into no fewer than seven short and contrasting sections, but is almost entirely declamatory – as always with Purcell, not in the manner of Italian recitative but with a clear metrical structure and muscular bass lines. The setting shades briefly into lyricism only when Cupid, stung by a bee, flies to his mother's arms for comfort (he gets short shrift); the rhythmic subtlety of the vocal lines is very striking. The second is a cheerfully straightforward number, with bold melodic outlines in a dance metre. The third unfolds over a reiterated, or 'ground', bass, stated unaltered more than twenty times below a constantly evolving and effortlessly varied vocal line. Purcell's skill in creating

such movements was extraordinary; this early example is relatively simple, but he soon learnt how to manipulate the bass line so as to shift it into different keys, as he does in **Now that the sun hath veil'd his light** (*An Evening Hymn*, 1688), with its quietly ecstatic vocal line – and also how to embed a ground in a larger structure, as in **Oh! fair Cedaria, hide those eyes** (c. 1690), where a triple-time ground with gently florid vocal lines is framed by declamatory writing in common time.

Urge me no more (1682) represents yet another distinct type of structure. The bipartite song – the first strain declamatory, the second tuneful – had originated in Italy but long since been absorbed into the English tradition. This specimen, though, offers an intriguing variant on the familiar pattern: the first strain, dominated by dramatically jagged vocal lines vividly evoking the extravagant and gloomy imagery of the text, is more than twice as long as the second, which serves as little more than a discomfiting coda; music indeed for the violently unsettled times described in the poem. That of **In the black, dismal dungeon of despair** (1688) shifts the unease from the societal to the spiritual sphere – a self-lacerating rant, far removed from the peaceful certainties expressed in the poem of

Now that the sun hath veil'd his light, despite being by the same author and roughly contemporaneous with it. Purcell responded with a histrionic declamatory setting that deploys all of his rhetorical techniques: tortured harmonies, precipitous vocal lines with jagged rhythms and extremes of register, and above all, insistent repetition: the words ‘Is there no redemption? no relief?’ are set three times, each higher in pitch and more powerful.

Love arms himself in Celia's Eyes (c. 1695) is another bipartite song, but again one with a difference: the common-time opening strain itself falls into two distinct sections. The first features militaristic fanfare figures evoking ‘arms’; the second is an extended dialogue between vocal and bass parts deftly suggesting the ‘repeated thoughts’ of the text. Most unusually, for the closing strain the music shifts not only from common to triple time but also from bright major to bleak minor, reflecting the poem's vain appeal to pitiless ‘cruel reason’; a curvaceous melisma and an icy dissonance vividly highlight the ‘cold’ breast of Celia, the rejected lover's mistress. Another cruel nymph of the same name is portrayed in **Celia's fond, too long I've lov'd her** (1694), this time in a skittish dance-measure setting, full of vocal flourishes indicative of her wantonness and inconstancy. **I came, I saw,**

and was undone (*The Thraldom*) brings us a third (two stanzas again) – but this is more than crossed swain, this time railing against love itself (‘hard master’), rather than the lover. Purcell's setting, on an ambitious scale, offers yet another twist on the bipartite plan, with a dramatic, boldly declamatory opening leading into a faster section – beginning precisely on the word ‘quickly’ – with crisp short vocal phrases over a marching and sometimes scurrying bass line, before a shift into triple metre and a more lyrical mood.

Unbridled lyricism, though, is rare in Purcell's single songs. Understandably he reserved it for other contexts: stand-out solo movements in longer works such as odes and, most notably, operas. In the latter he excelled at producing, with all the aplomb of a conjurer drawing a rabbit out of a hat, a knock-'em-dead show-stopping tune: quite literally show-stopping, in an age that was not shy of demanding encores. (His great choral ode *Hail! bright Cecilia* was immediately repeated in its entirety at its first performance – all fifty minutes of it!) One of the most memorable of these operatic big tunes, **How blest are shepherds**, must still have been ringing in the ears of the audience heading homeward from *King Arthur* (1691). Purcell secured maximum impact by stating it five times – orchestra, solo (two stanzas), and chorus

merely a lovely melody: it is art that conceals art, for its direct and limpid music sets words celebrating a pastoral life of Arcadian simplicity. Despite its superlative quality, the piece never made it into print until nearly a hundred years after the young composer's death: a surprising failure to exploit a number from a show which, in the theatre, had been a smash hit.

Although Purcell bestrode the Restoration musical scene like a colossus, he also stood on the shoulders of earlier English giants. He was heir to the glorious sacred polyphony of the Tudors; to the rich instrumental chamber music of the earlier-seventeenth century; and to the wonderfully distinctive solo songs of mid-century composers, of whom perhaps the most notable was Henry Lawes (1595–1662). The flexible, asymmetrical gestures of his **No Reprieve** anticipate many such in Purcell's declamatory music, though the structure of the song is unusual, embodying four statements of a lengthy and musically memorable refrain reiterating submission to Fate. **A Lover's Legacy** is an Italianate bipartite song – an antecedent of the type we have already encountered in Purcell's *Love arms himself* and *Urge me no more*, though its first strain is more melodious than declamatory, while its second taps into the same vein of simple

direct lyricism that Purcell was to mine so deeply thirty or forty years later.

For all his rootedness in English traditions, Purcell was keenly aware of musical trends in France and Italy. The constant traffic between the courts of Charles II and Louis XIV included strong cultural and specifically musical elements; for example, Pelham Humfrey (1647–1674), a former Chapel Royal chorister, who was choirmaster there during Purcell's final chorister years, had been sent to study in France as soon as his own voice had broken. Purcell will certainly have known of Francesco Corbetta (1615–1681), an Italian composer who had risen to eminence at the French court as a virtuoso guitarist and theorbo player, and had, moreover, made extended visits to London (though there is no evidence of any musical link between the two men). Corbetta's Suite in C major appeared in print in a volume which was published in Paris in 1671 but, following his first visit to the English court, was dedicated to Charles II. It follows the well established outline of the dance suite, save that its opening movement is not in free form but instead based on a regular repeated harmonic framework (rather contradicting its title, 'Caprice') – a distant cousin, then, of Purcell's own chaconnes and

ground-bass movements. Curiously, another chaconne forms the finale.

Purcell certainly knew Giovanni Battista Draghi (1640–1708), and was directly influenced by him, in the important area of writing for full orchestra. Draghi, another Italian composer and virtuoso performer, this time on the harpsichord and organ, had been long resident in London. He was the first composer in England to add trumpets to the customary strings and woodwind, in *From Harmony*, his setting of John Dryden's (1631–1700) 1687 ode to St Cecilia; Purcell famously and totally eclipsed Draghi's orchestral prowess in his operas and odes from 1690 onwards. Nevertheless the two seem to have remained on friendly terms: an autograph manuscript of harpsichord music by Purcell, still containing blank pages, passed at some point into the hands of Draghi, who added further works of his own. Draghi's Suite in E minor is one of six published in London in 1707. Its layout follows the well-worn baroque formula, a prelude followed by a sequence of contrasting dance movements – exactly as do Purcell's eight keyboard suites, with which those of Draghi may worthily stand comparison.

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What makes a composer English?

Musick and Poetry have ever been
acknowledg'd Sisters, which walking
hand in hand, support each other; As
Poetry is the harmony of Words ... so
is Musick the exaltation of Poetry. Both
of them may excel apart, but sure they
are most excellent when they are
joyn'd, because nothing is then wanting
to either of their Perfections...

From the dedication to *Dioclesian*,
Henry Purcell

Henry Purcell's mastery at setting the English language is undisputed. But those of us who are not scholars perhaps pay insufficient attention to the influences he drew from France and Italy. Many of his songs have extensive runs on single syllables and arresting declamatory vocal figures whose roots are surely the madrigalian dramas of Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643), or even Carlo Gesualdo (1566–1613), while his seamless shifting between recitative and dance-like arioso is reminiscent of the courtly music dramas of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687). So, how is it that Purcell's frame of reference is European, yet his musical identity remains quintessentially English?

This enigma about Purcell continues to intrigue this performer. His musical fluidity is extraordinary. And how can his powerful harmonies be both so simple and yet so sophisticated? In the same way that J. S. Bach's (1658–1750) keyboard suites combine the dance-like with the intellectual, the overlapping of bass and melody phrases in 'Dido's Lament' are at once cerebral, human and theatrical. The earthy man who penned the instruction 'Belch' in his notorious Catches was also he who created scenes of unparalleled tenderness and drama in vocal and instrumental works that haunt us to this day. Let us imaginatively reconstruct the meeting between a fifty-one-year-old Purcell and the twenty-five-year-old George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) when the latter first came to London in 1710. One of musical history's most galling 'What ifs...'

It would be presumptuous to claim that our musical medley answers any of these questions. Rather, by drawing attention to Purcell's creative contradictions, we hope to engage you in creative listening. On a technical level, the hypnotic eternal ground (in which the bass line repeats a musical phrase) weaves a thread through our programme, underpinning *She loves and she confesses too*, *Now that the sun hath veil'd his light (An Evening Hymn)* and *Oh! fair Cedaria, hide those eyes*, while we

reserve the idiom of the repeated verse for the final item in our own arrangement, that celebrates a long tradition of domestic music-making.

Interspersed are works that embrace emotional extremes; a tortured harmonic shift ushers in the 'untuned fortunes' in the woeful *Urge me no more*, while dance itself extols the tangible bliss of that first kiss in *Sweeter than roses*. An angular vocal line evokes a profound bleakness in *In the black, dismal dungeon of despair*, while jerky rhythms depict the 'pricking' of Cupid by a bee in the delightfully coquettish *Cupid, the slyest rogue alive*.

Nobody can exist in a vacuum, of course, and the other composers featured here are only a selection among those many who in some way acted in counterpoint with Purcell. Francesco Corbetta and Giovanni Battista Draghi were esteemed London-based Italian musicians, the latter losing to Purcell in the infamous Battle of the Organs in 1684. Despite his Italian provenance, Draghi's E minor suite is strongly Anglo-French in character; while the first three movements draw from the rarefied French world of Louis Couperin (1626–1661), the last three have the rhythmic zest common to many tunes composed for the English Restoration theatre.

Would Purcell have known works by the Lawes brothers? It seems likely that Purcell was drawn to Henry Lawes's songs with continuo, many of which are infused with the spoken qualities of Italian recitative and deliberate rhythmic discontinuity. Purcell uses similar devices to conjure ephemeral beauty from seemingly fragmentary musical components. But he goes further in turning up the dramatic heat. His songs can even seem like vignettes from Samuel Beckett's plays: powerful narratives that do not shy away from moments of awkwardness, vulnerability and ambiguity. How can one not be lured by the emotional honesty of this 'English Orpheus'?

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Texts

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

1. *Sweeter than roses*, Z. 585/1

Sweeter than roses, or cool evening breeze,
On a warm flow'ry shore, was the dear kiss,
First trembling made me freeze,
Then shot like fire all o'er.
What magic has victorious love!
For all I touch or see since that dear kiss,
I hourly prove, all is love to me.

*Richard Norton (1666–1732), from
Pausanias, the Betrayer of his Country*

2. *Cupid, the slyest rogue alive*, Z. 367

Cupid, the slyest rogue alive,
One day was plund'ring of a hive,
But as with too, too eager haste,
He strove the liquid sweets to taste,
A bee surpris'd the heedless boy,
Prick'd him and dash'd the expected joy.
The urchin, when he felt the smart
Of the envenom'd, angry dart,
He kick'd, he flung, he spurn'd the ground,
He blow'd, and then he chaf'd the wound,
He blow'd, and chaf'd the wound in vain,
The rubbing still increas'd the pain.
Straight to his mother's lap he hies,
With swelling cheeks and blubber'd 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 gor'd and wounded me!
'And are not you', 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 pois'nous dart
Against some poor unwary heart,
How little is the archer found,
And yet how wide, how deep the wound!'

*John Dryden (1631–1700), from Sylvae,
derived from Theocritus, Idyll No. 19*

3. *On the brow of Richmond Hill*, Z. 405

On the brow of Richmond Hill,
Which Europe scarce can parallel,
Ev'ry eye such wonders fill
To view the prospect round;
Where the silver Thames does glide,
And stately courts are edified,
Meadows deck'd in summer's pride,
With verdant beauties crown'd;
Lovely Cynthia passing by,
With brighter glories blest my eye,
Ah, then in vain, in vain, said I,
The fields and flow'rs do shine;
Nature in this charming place
Created pleasure in excess,
But all are poor to Cynthia's face,
Whose features are divine.

*Thomas d'Urfey (1653–1723), from
Ode to Cynthia*



4. **She loves and she confesses too**, Z. 413

She loves and she confesses too,
 There's 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, triumph, enter in.
 What's this, ye Gods? What can it be?
 Remains there still an enemy?
 Bold Honour stands up in the gate,
 And would 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 ev'ry other spright
 Thou attempt'st not men to affright,
 Nor appear'st but in the light.

Abraham Cowley (1618–1667) from The Mistress

Henry Lawes (1596–1662)

5. **No Reprieve**

Now, now, Lucatia, now make haste,
 If thou wilt see how strong thou art,
 There needs but one frown more to waste
 The whole remainder of my heart.

Alas! Undone to Fate, I bow my head
 Ready to die, now die, and now am dead.
 You look to have an age of trial
 Ere you a lover will repay;
 But my state brooks no more denial,
 I cannot this one minute stay.
 Alas! Undone to Fate, I bow my head
 Ready to die, now die, and now am dead.
 Look in my wound and see how cold,
 How pale and gasping my soul lies,
 Which nature strives in vain to hold,
 Whilst wing'd with sighs away it flies.
 Alas! Undone to Fate, I bow my head
 Ready to die, now die, and now am dead.
 See, see already Charon's boat,
 Who grimly asks, 'Why all this stay?'
 Hark how the fatal Sisters shout!
 And now the call 'Away, away!'
 Alas! Undone to Fate, I bow my head
 Ready to die, now die, and now am dead.

Sir John Berkenhead (1617–1679)

6. **A Lover's Legacy**

Fain would I, Chloris, ere I die,
 Bequeath you such a legacy,
 As you might say when I am gone,
 'None has the like!' My heart alone
 Were the best gift I could bestow
 But that's already yours you know.
 So that till you my heart resign
 Or fill with yours the place of mine,
 And by that grace my store renew,
 I shall have nought worth giving you,
 Whose breast has all the wealth I have,

Save a faint carcase and a grave.
But had I as many hearts as hairs,
As many loves as love has fears,
As many lives as years have hours,
They should be all and only yours.

Anonymous

Henry Purcell
11. **Urge me no more**, Z. 426

Urge me no more, this airy mirth belongs
To better times, these times are not for songs.
The sprightly twang of the melodious lute
Agrees not with my voice, and both unsuit
My untun'd fortunes. Th'affected measure
Of strains that are constrain'd afford no pleasure.
Music's the child of mirth, where griefs assail
The troubled soul, both voice and fingers fail;
My grief's too great for smiling eyes
To cure or counter charms to exorcise.
The raven's dismal croaks, the midnight howls
Of empty wolves mix'd with the screech of owls,
The nine sad knolls of a dull passing bell,
With the loud language of a nightly knell,
And horrid outcries of revenged crimes,
Join'd in a medley, is music for these times.
These are no times to touch the merry strings
Of Orpheus, no, Ah! no, these are no times to sing.
How can my music relish in your ears,
That cannot speak for sobs nor sing for tears?

Anonymous, c. 1600

12. **In the black, dismal dungeon of despair**, Z. 190

In the black, dismal dungeon of despair,
Pined with tormenting care,
Wracked with my fears, Drowned in my tears,
With dreadful expectation of my doom
And certain horrid judgement soon to come:
Lord, here I lie,
Lost to all hope of liberty,
Hence never to remove
But by a miracle of Love,
Which I scarce hope for or expect,
Being guilty of so long, so great neglect.
Fool that I was, worthy a sharper rod,
To slight thy courting, O my God!
For thou did'st woo, entreat and grieve,
Did'st beg me to be happy and to live;
But I would not; I chose to dwell
With Death, far from thee, too near to Hell.
But is there no redemption, no relief?
Thou saved'st a Magdalen, a thief –
O Jesu! Thy mercy, Lord, once more advance;
O give me such a glance
As Peter had; thy sweet, kind, chiding look
Will change my heart, as it did melt that rock.
Look on me, sweet Jesu, as thou did'st on him!
'Tis more than to create, thus to redeem.

Bishop William Fuller (1608–1675)

13. **Now that the sun hath veil'd his light**, Z. 193

Now, now that the sun hath veil'd his light
And bid the world goodnight;
To the soft bed my body I dispose,
But where shall my soul repose?

Dear, dear God, even in thy arms,
And can there be any so sweet security?
Then to thy rest, O my soul,
And singing, praise the mercy
That prolongs thy days!
Alleluia!

Bishop William Fuller

20. **Love arms himself in Celia's eyes**, Z. 392

Love arms himself in Celia's eyes
Whene'er weak reason would rebel,
And ev'ry time I dare be wise,
Alas, a deeper wound I feel.
Repeated thoughts present the ill,
Which seeing I must still endure.
They tell me love has darts to kill,
And wisdom has no pow'r to cure.
Then cruel reason give me rest,
Quit in my heart thy feeble hold,
Go try thy force in Celia's breast,
For that is disengag'd and cold.
There all thy nicest arts employ,
Confess thyself her beauty's slave,
And argue whilst she may destroy,
How great, how godlike 'tis to save.

Matthew Prior (1664–1721)

21. **Celia's Fond, too long I've lov'd her**, Z. 364

Celia's fond, too long I've lov'd her,
Too much flame consumes the fuel;
Much she pleas'd when first I mov'd her,
But much more when she was cruel.

Ere she lov'd I did adore her,
And give over thus, thus before her.

attr. Peter Anthony Motteux (1663–1718)

22. **I came, I saw, and was undone**, Z. 375

I came, I saw, and was undone,
Lightning did thro' my bones and marrow run;
A pointed pain pierc'd deep my heart,
A swift cold trembling seiz'd on ev'ry part;
My head turn'd round, nor could it bear
The poison that was enter'd there.
So a destroying angel's breath
Blows in the plague and with it hasty Death;
Such was the pain did so begin,
To the poor wretch when Legion enter'd in.
'Forgive me, God', I cry'd, for I
Flatter'd myself I was to die;
But quickly to my cost I found
'Twas cruel Love, not Death had made the wound.
Death a more gen'rous rage does use,
Quarter to all he conquers does refuse,
Whilst Love with barbarous mercy saves
The vanquish'd lives to make them slaves.
I am thy slave, then let me know,
Hard master, the great task I have to do;
Who pride and scorn do undergo,
In tempests and rough seas thy gallies row,
They pant, and groan, and sigh, but find
Their sighs increase the angry wind.
Like an Egyptian tyrant, some
Thou weariest out in building but a tomb;
Others with sad and tedious art
Labour i' the quarries of a stony heart.
Of all the works thou dost assign

To all the sev'ral slaves of thine,
Employ me, mighty Love, to dig the mine.

Abraham Cowley

23. Oh! fair Cedaria, hide those eyes, Z. 402

Oh! fair Cedaria, hide those eyes
That hearts enough have won;
For whosoever sees them dies,
And cannot ruin shun.
Such beauty and charms are seen
United in your face,
The proudest can't but own you queen
Of beauty, wit and grace.
Then pity me, who am your slave,
And grant me a reprieve;
Unless I may your favour have,
I can't one moment live.

Anonymous

**24. How blest are shepherds (from
King Arthur, Z. 628)**

How blest are shepherds, how happy their lasses,
While drums and trumpets are sounding alarms.
Over our lowly sheds all the storm passes
And when we die, 'tis in each other's arms.
All the day on our herds and flocks employing,
All the night on our flutes and in enjoying.
Bright nymphs of Britain with graces attended,
Let not your days without pleasure expire.
Honour's but empty, and when youth is ended,
All men will praise you but none will desire.
Let not youth fly away without contenting;

Age will come time enough for your repenting.

John Dryden

Instruments

14 course theorbo made by Günter Marx, Erlangen 1986, after Matteo Sellas (Brussels No. 255), c. 1635.

5 course baroque guitar made by Bruce Brook, East Sussex 2003, after Alexandre Voboam, Paris 1676.

Viola da gamba made by Jane Julier, Devon 2012, after Michel Colichon, Paris 1695. Bow made by Gerhard Landwehr, the Netherlands.

Double-manual harpsichord made by Malcolm Rose, Lewes 1997, after an anonymous Parisian instrument of 1667 in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Kindly loaned by Malcom Rose and tuned by Edmund Pickering.

Spinnet made by John Rawson, London c. 1979, after an anonymous English spinnet of 1708 in the Royal College of Music Museum, London. Kindly loaned by Malcolm Greenhalgh and tuned by Edmund Pickering.

Chest organ made by Winold van der Putten and Berend Veger, Winschoten 1993, after historical models. Kindly loaned by James Johnstone and tuned by Edmund Pickering.

Tuning: 1/6 comma circulating temperament.



Julian Perkins (Photography: Benjamin Harte)

Sounds Baroque

Since its creation by Director Julian Perkins in 2005, Sounds Baroque has devoted itself to conveying the thrilling theatricality and intense passion of music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Comprising some of the finest period instrumentalists of our times, Sounds Baroque has collaborated with many eminent singers and actors including Simon Callow, Peter Capaldi, Rebecca Evans, Dame Emma Kirkby, Timothy West and David Wilson-Johnson, as well as an illustrious array of younger stars including Anna Dennis, Ashley Riches, Anna Starushkevych and William Towers.

Sounds Baroque is heard regularly on BBC Radio 3 and has appeared at London's Southbank Centre, Kings Place and St John's Smith Square, and at international festivals in Cheltenham, JAM on the Marsh, London, Roman River, Ryedale, Tel Aviv, Two Moors and York. Beyond the baroque it has given world premieres of works by Paul Ayres, Stephen Dodgson and Iain Farrington, and often undertakes educational projects and engages in pre-performance talks and debates.

Recent and ongoing projects include the opera pasticcio, *Casanova*, devised by writer and critic Stephen Pettitt and Julian Perkins

and premiered at London's Kings Place in 2016. Praised by Opera magazine as 'a witty pasticcio', it features re-arranged and re-texted works by seventeen mostly baroque and classical composers (but including Bellini as well!) and has what might well be the world's longest-held note in a recitative.

Sounds Baroque's discs for Avie Records, *Conversazioni I* and *Conversazioni II*, explore the wealth of vocal and instrumental music conceived for artistic gatherings – or conversazioni – in Rome at the turn of the eighteenth century.

2018 saw the birth of a new partnership with Cambridge Handel Opera where group principals perform alongside and mentor the next generation of period instrumentalists in operas by Handel and his contemporaries. Their acclaimed production of Handel's *Rodelinda* included advanced students from Cambridge University, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Royal College of Music, Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama and the Utrechts Conservatorium.

Anna Dennis (soprano)

Anna Dennis studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London. Notable concert performances have included Britten's *War Requiem* at the Berlin Philharmonie,

Anna Dennis (Photography: Jet)



Russian operatic arias with Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco, roles in all three Monteverdi operas in John Eliot Gardiner's world tour of the Trilogy, Thomas Ades' *Life Story* accompanied by the composer at the Lincoln Center's White Light Festival in New York, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with the Orquestra Gulbenkian in Lisbon and Bach cantatas with Les Violons du Roi in Montreal. Her BBC Proms appearances include performances with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Britten Sinfonia and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Recent opera roles include: Paride in Gluck's *Paride ed Elena* and Iphigenie (*Iphigenie en Tauride*; both Nürnberg Internationale Gluck Festsspiele); Katherine Dee in Damon Albarn's *Dr Dee* (English National Opera); Emira in Handel's *Siroe* and *Rosmene* in Handel's *Imeneo* (Göttingen Händel Festsspiele); Bersi in *Andrea Chenier* (Opera North), Ilia in *Idomeneo* directed by Graham Vick (Birmingham Opera Company) and Queen of the Night *Zauberflöte* (Clarion, New York).

Her recordings include: Rameau's *Anacreon* of 1754 with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; Handel's *Siroe* and *Joshua* with Laurence Cummings and

Festspiel Orchester Göttingen; Couperin's *Lecons de Tenebre* with Jonathan Cohen and Arcangelo; and a disc featuring chamber works by the Russian composer Elena Langer, *Landscape with Three People*, on the Harmonia Mundi label.

James Akers (theorbo & baroque guitar)

James Akers studied with Jakob Lindberg at the Royal College of Music, London and, following a Junior Fellowship at Trinity College of Music, began performing widely with leading artists, ensembles, orchestras, opera and theatre companies including Alison Balsom, Dame Emma Kirkby, I Fagiolini, the Dunedin Consort, Stile Antico, English National Opera, Opera North, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Essen Philharmonie, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and Damon Albarn. He has released several solo recordings of lute and romantic guitar music and given recitals throughout Europe at major venues and festivals. He lectures on period plucked string instruments and performance practice at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Throughout his varied career James has explored music from a stylistic perspective, combining diligent research with expressive playing, to communicate the continuity of musical expression through the centuries.

Henrik Persson (viola da gamba)

Originally from Stockholm, Henrik Persson studied baroque and classical cello with Jennifer Ward-Clark and viola da gamba with Richard Campbell at the Royal Academy of Music, London. Specialising in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century repertoire, Henrik has performed and toured extensively throughout the UK and the world for many years as first continuo player for the New London Consort and with the Musicians of the Globe. He is a member of the Musical and Amicable Society in the Midlands, with whom he also makes solo appearances, and is a founding member and co-director together with Caroline Ritchie of the New Vialles consort. Other work includes regular appearances with Amici Voices, Florilegium, the Hanover Band, the Academy of Ancient Music, Cambridge Handel Opera and Spiritato. Henrik also tutors at the annual Baroque Opera and Oratorio courses at Benslow Music. His first solo recording together with Jonathan Rees and the Musical and Amicable Society of music for Weston Park was released in 2018.

Julian Perkins (director, harpsichord, spinet & organ)

Julian Perkins is Founder Director of Sounds Baroque and Artistic Director of Cambridge Handel Opera.

As a player, Julian has performed concertos with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Northern Sinfonia and Orchestra of The Sixteen, and has gained a wealth of experience performing with many leading period instrument ensembles and modern orchestras. He has performed as the solo harpsichordist in productions at the Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera and Northern Ireland Opera, featured on BBC Radio 3's Early Music Show and appeared at numerous venues such as London's Wigmore Hall, New York's Lincoln Center and Sydney Opera House, as well as at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh International Festival. His acclaimed discography includes chamber, solo and opera recordings for Avie, Chandos, Coro, Opus Arte and Resonus on a wide range of instruments, including the Royal Harpsichord at Kew Palace.

Conducting engagements have included staged opera productions for the Buxton International Festival, Cambridge Handel Opera, Dutch National Opera Academy, Grimeborn Festival, Guildhall School of

Music & Drama, Kings Place, New Chamber Opera and New Kent Opera, in addition to numerous concert performances.

Julian read music at King's College, Cambridge, before pursuing advanced studies at the Schola Cantorum, Basle and the Royal Academy of Music, London. He is also a visiting coach at the Royal Opera House, directs the annual Baroque project with Southbank Sinfonia, and has given masterclasses at the National Opera Studio and several music colleges.

Subscribers

Subscribers were essential in supporting music publications throughout the baroque era. I have resurrected this tradition in order to help fund this recording, and am very grateful to the subscribers listed below.

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Yvonne Horsfall Turner
Charlotte Way
Mark Windisch

In addition to those listed, I should like to thank Richard Austen, Philip Blake-Jones, Merith Godwin-Greer, Malcolm Greenhalgh, Emeritus Professor Peter Holman MBE, Richard and Abigail Hooper, James Johnstone, Edmund Pickering, Malcolm Rose, Laura Royde, Dr William Salaman, Dr Ruth Smith, Michael Wade OBE, Judith Wardman and many others who have made this project possible.

Julian Perkins

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Trafalgar Park supports a range of musical activities, often linked to charitable fundraising (www.trafalgarpark.com).

Producer, engineer & editor: Adam Binks

Recorded at 24-bit/96kHz resolution

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