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*The Virtuoso*  
**HANDEL**



**CHICAGO BAROQUE ENSEMBLE**

John Mark Hovindaal, director

with

**PATRICE MICHAELS**

soprano

# GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

- 1 Non saria poco from "Atalanta" (6:28)  
transcribed for flute and strings

**Cantata: Un' alma innamorata** (17:00)

- 2 Recitative: Un' alma innamorata (0:25)  
3 Aria: Quel povero core (8:08)  
4 Recitative: E pur benche egli veda (0:23)  
5 Aria: Io godo, rido e spero (5:37)  
6 Recitative: In quanto a me ritrovo (0:19)  
7 Aria: Ben impari come se ama (2:05)

- 8 **Sventurato godi, o core abbandonato** (7:14)  
from "Floriodante"  
transcribed for harpsichord solo

**Cantata: Chi rapi la pace al core?** (8:39)

- 9 Aria: Chi rapi la pace al core? (3:32)  
10 Recitative: Figlio d'un fabbro, e amore (0:35)  
11 Aria: Pupilla lucente (4:32)

**Sonata in C for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord** (13:08)

- 12 Adagio (4:28)  
13 Allegro (2:30)  
14 Adagio (3:10)  
15 Allegro (2:50)

**Cantata: La Lucrezia** (18:48)

- 16 Recitative: O Numi eternil (0:55)  
17 Aria: Già superbo del mio affanno (5:16)  
18 Recitative: Ma voi forse nel Cielo (0:51)  
19 Aria: Il suol che preme (3:46)  
20 Recitative: Ah! che ancor nel abisso (1:30)  
21 Arioso: Alla salma infedel (4:02)  
22 Recitative: A voi, padre, consorte (0:52)  
23 Arioso: Già nel seno (0:41)  
24 Recitative: Sento ch' il cor si scuote (0:52)  
25 **Spera si mio Caro** from "Admetus" (7:08)  
transcribed for flute and strings

PATRICE MICHAELS, soprano

CHICAGO BAROQUE ENSEMBLE John Mark Rozendaal, director

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# THE VIRTUOSO HANDEL

notes by John Mark Rozendaal

Both in his own time and after his death, Handel's high reputation as a composer has rested mainly on the grandly stirring gestures of his most public works: the operas and oratorios he composed for the theaters of Georgian London. Yet Handel's oeuvre includes a substantial body of chamber music, including some of the most satisfying and beautiful secular music of the period. The works selected for this disc come from a variety of sources; they include works created as vocal chamber music as well as operatic excerpts adapted for small-scale instrumental presentation.

The earliest works on our program are the three cantatas, all dating from Handel's Italian sojourn of 1706–1709. During his stay in Italy, Handel produced at least forty solo cantatas, most of them scored for soprano and continuo — a body of work that represents the zenith of an important genre in Italian music. Between 1650 and the end of the Baroque era, Italian composers wrote dozens of such works to fill an apparently insatiable demand. Alessandro Scarlatti composed over 600.

Marc' Antonio Cesti satirized the craze in a mock cantata titled “Aspetate, adesso canto!” (“Wait! I'm Singing Now!”):

Everyone is looking for texts, all women want them . . . Ladies, nuns, old maids, wives, widows, female relations, public women, private ones, princesses, damsels; I don't say which ones; enough only that so, so many want fantastic stuff and don't know how to sing fa la la la la. . . . Some ask for canzonets and some want recitatives, some sacred, some lascivious, and some full of tales; you assure each one that these are verses and not gold pieces; if they wanted so many coins even all Peru could not satisfy!

Singing in Italy must have had a social function similar to the role that athletics plays in our society today: a popular, stimulating pursuit for amateurs, a medium for self-improvement, a high-stakes career track that could take a lucky few out of the ghettos into the most glittering social circles, and a source of wonder and admiration

for the audiences who relished the awe-inspiring achievements of the pros. The young Handel had the good fortune to enter this intensely vocal culture at the very top of the heap. His entrée into Italian society was through the Medici family; hence his first stop in the peninsula was Florence. It was in Rome, however, that Handel found the most fertile grounds on which to cultivate his musical genius. Handel was housed and patronized there by Marchese Francesco Ruspoli, who introduced him to the Academy of the Arcadians, an influential circle of noblemen and clerics with interests in literary reform and music. At the Academy, Handel's cantatas were performed by some of the finest musicians in Europe (including Arcangelo Corelli and the soprano Margherita Durastante) and heard by a small audience of highly discerning connoisseurs. These intimate occasions seem to have inspired some of Handel's most exquisitely refined work. Handel's cantatas resemble their Italian models in that most of the texts are about love, often with pastoral conceits. A relatively small number of exceptional pieces deal with mythological or historical topics (e.g., *La Lucrezia*).

In the love cantatas, the texts are often bizarrely

abstracted. Personal and situational references are stripped away; the lover and beloved are not named or described. What remains is a narrative in which the characters are hearts, souls, eyes, with all of their Petrarchian significance — subject to the alchemical powers of Love personified as the blind archer god. One can only guess what sorts of sublimations were involved in the production and presentation of such poetry in a circle of persons that included a large number of clergy as well as unmarried men and women.

Livy's *History of Early Rome* was one of the most widely read books of the seventeenth century. Its themes of personal heroism in opposing despotism made it a favorite in circles with republican ideals. The book includes the dramatic story of Lucretia, a faithful wife whose rape by Prince Tarquin drove her to suicide and inspired the Romans to depose their monarchy and establish a republic. The tale was a favorite theme of artists, poets, and musicians throughout Europe for centuries, with treatments by St. Augustine, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Tintoretto, Keiser (Handel's mentor at the Hamburg Opera), Botticelli, and Giambologna, to name only a few. The tale admits innumerable angles for treatment — moral, political, erotic,

psychological. Handel's cantata is a masterpiece of characterization that involves the audience in a harrowing emotional spiral of grief and rage. The heroine's initial expression of her sorrow and sense of injustice elicits sympathy that only grows as we follow her progression of appeals to hell for vengeance and fits of self-condemnation, culminating in a hateful suicidal frenzy. The survival of an unusual number of manuscript copies suggests that this cantata was one of Handel's more famous chamber works during his lifetime.

One of the manuscript sources of Sonata in C Major bears conflicting attributions to Handel and to the Nuremberg organist Johann Michael Leffloth (1705–1731). Both attributions are considered unreliable on stylistic grounds. Regardless of authorship, this charming piece is valued in part for its unusual treatment of the harpsichord in a virtuoso role, something rarely found in chamber music of this period.

The arias "Non saria poco" from *Atalanta* and "Spera si mio Caro" from *Admetus* are presented here in transcriptions originally published by the prolific London music printer, John Walsh. Starting in 1739, Walsh became Handel's exclu-

sive publisher, and produced dozens of prints of the composer's operas, oratorios, concertos, and chamber music. Some of these publications seem to have had scant supervision by Handel. These offerings were principally designed not for use by professional musicians, but rather for domestic use. As such, they bear testimony to the public's craving for this music, and the satisfaction listeners had in savoring Handel's fine airs in the intimacy of a musical household.

The impulse to enjoy the most memorable moments of operas in homemade renditions was not confined to amateurs and "wannabes," however. Handel himself could not resist. The harpsichord transcription of "Sventurato godi, o core abbandonato" from *Floridante* comes from an autograph manuscript and represents Handel's own recasting of the gestures of this moving opera air in his own favored performance medium.

# Un' alma innamorata

## ② Recitative

Un' alma innamorata,  
prigioniera d'amore,  
vive troppo infelice.  
Divien sempre maggiore  
il mal, che non intende,  
allor nell' amar schiava si rende.

A soul in love  
is a prisoner of love,  
and lives so unhappily,  
never realizing  
that the misery only worsens  
and makes you a slave.

## ③ Aria

Quel povero core,  
ferito d'amore,  
sospira se adira, se vive fedel.  
Sia il solo dolore  
geloso timore,  
le pene e catene martire crudel.

That poor heart,  
wounded by love  
sighs whether it is angered, or whether it lives faithfully.  
Only sorrow, jealous fear,  
suffering, constraints  
and cruelty await him.

## ④ Recitative

E pur benchè egli veda  
morta del suo servir,  
la speme istessa  
vuole col suo languir  
viver con essa.

And although he sees  
that in his loyalty  
Hope herself has perished,  
he persists in wanting her  
to join him in his suffering.

## ⑤ Aria

Io godo, rido e spero,  
ed amo piu d'un core,  
e so ridir perchè.  
Se segue il mio pensiero  
un vagabondo amore  
cercate voi dov' è.

I enjoy myself, I laugh and I hope,  
and love more than one sweetheart,  
and I'll tell you why.  
If a wandering love  
follows my thoughts,  
catch him if you can.

## ⑥ Recitative

In quanto a me ritrovo  
del riso ogni diletto,  
se sprezzo dell' amore  
le sue severe leggi, ed il rigore.

As for me,  
I find delight in laughing,  
if I disdain the harsh and rigorous  
laws of Love.

7 Aria

Ben impari come se ama  
in amor chi vuol goder.

Non ha pari alla mia brama  
il rigor del nume arcier.

Learn well the art of loving  
if you want to enjoy life:

The rigours of the armed Cupid  
are no rival to my desire.

## Chi rapì la pace al core?

9 Aria

Chi rapì la pace al core?  
Chi dal sen l'alma rubò?

Ah! lo so, con un guardo fatto dardo,  
nume cieco mi piago.

Who robbed my heart of its peace?  
Who ripped my soul from its breast?

Ah, I know that with a single piercing glance  
It was the blindfolded god who wounded me.

10 Recitative

Figlio d'un fabbro, e amore  
col ner d'una pupilla  
segnò la morte al core,  
e perchè suoi trionfi  
soffera più superbi e crudeli,  
quell' occhio che fu strale  
cangiò Cupido in face funerale.

The son of a blacksmith and of Love,  
with the aid of her black eyes  
he aimed and mortally wounded my heart,  
and to make his triumph  
more brazen and more cruel,  
Cupid took those eyes that were his arrows  
and changed them into a funeral pyre.

11 Aria

Pupilla lucente,  
in stella funesta  
amore cangiò.

Così quel splendore,  
con empio rigore,  
la morte additò.

Those shining eyes,  
were changed by Cupid  
into my unlucky stars  
who, in their splendor,  
with cruelest harshness  
sentenced me to death.

## La Lucrezia

16 Recitative

O Numi eterni! O stelle!  
che fulminate empîi tiranni,  
impugname a miei voti  
orridi strali voi con fochi tonanti  
incenerite il reo Tarquinio e Roma;

Oh eternal Gods! Oh stars  
who strike down impious tyrants,  
answer my prayers;  
fearful lightning with thundering flame,  
incinerate the guilty Tarquin and Rome.

dalla superba chioma,  
omai trabocchi il vacillante alloro,  
s'apra il suolo in voragini, si celi,  
con memorando esempio,  
nelle viscere sue l'indegno – e l'empio.

17 Aria

Già superbo del mio affanno,  
traditor dell'onor mio  
parte l'empio, lo sleal.

Tu punisci il fiero inganno,  
del fellon, del mostro rio,  
giusto Ciel, parca fatal.

18 Recitative

Ma voi forse nel Cielo  
per castigar maggior del mio delitto,  
state oziosi, o provocati Numi:  
se son sorde le stelle,  
se non mi odon le sfere,  
a voi tremende Deità del abisso mi volgo,  
a voi s'aspetta del tradito onor mio  
far la vendetta.

19 Aria

Il suol che preme,  
l'aura che spira  
l'empio Romano,  
s'apra, s'infetti.

Se il passo move,  
se il guardo gira,  
incontri larve,  
ruine aspetti.

20 Recitative

Ah! che ancor nel abisso  
dormon le furie, i sdegni e le vendette;  
Giove dunque per me non ha saette,  
è pietoso l'inferno?  
Ah! ch'io già sono in odio al Cielo, ah! dite:

From the proud head  
let the waving laurel now be wrest.  
Let a chasm open in the earth  
as a memorable example,  
to swallow the unworthy villain.

Now proud of my sorrow,  
the betrayer of my honor  
leaves, heartless, disloyal.

Punish the proud liar  
the guilty monster, for his felony,  
just Heaven, deadly Fate.

But perhaps in Heaven,  
to punish my crimes more,  
the Gods stand idle;  
if the stars are deaf,  
if the spheres hear me not,  
I turn to you, great God of the abyss,  
my betrayed honor awaits  
upon your vengeance.

May the earth he treads,  
the air he breaths,  
the villainous Roman,  
open, poison him.

Where he walks,  
where he looks,  
may demons meet him,  
ruin await him.

Ah! Still in the abyss  
the furies, rage, and revenge sleep;  
Has Jove no thunderbolts for me?  
Is hell merciful?  
Ah! I am already despised in Heaven, ah! say:



e se la pena non piomba sul mio capo,  
a' miei rimorsi è rimorso il poter  
di castigarmi.

Questi la disperata anima mia puniscan, sì, sì  
Ma il ferro che già intrepido stringo

21 Arioso

Alla salma infedel porga la pena.

22 Recitative

A voi, padre, consorte, a Roma, al mondo  
presento il mio morir;  
mi si perdoni il delitto esecrando  
ond'io macchiai involontaria il nostro onor,  
un' altra più detestabil colpa  
di non m'aver uccisa  
pria del misfatta, mi si perdoni.

23 Arioso

Già nel seno comincia  
a compir questo ferro  
i duri uffizii;

24 Recitative

Sento ch'il cor si scuote  
più dal dolor di questa caduta invendicata,  
che dal furor della vicina morte.

Ma se qui non m'è dato  
castigar il tiranno, opprimer l'empio  
con più barbaro esempio,  
per ch'ei sen cada estinto  
stringerò a danni suoi mortal saetta,  
e furibonda e cruda  
nell inferno farò la mia vendetta.

if punishment does not rain down upon my head  
for my remorse, remorse itself  
will have the power to punish me.

Punish my hopeless soul, yes, yes.  
But the steel which I fearlessly grasp

Brings to the faithless body its punishment.

To you, Father, husband, to Rome, to the world,  
I offer my death;  
May I be forgiven for my horrible crime  
with which I unwillingly stained our honor;  
for another more detestable sin,  
that of not killing myself  
before the misdeed, may I be forgiven.

Already in my breast  
the steel begins to fulfill  
its hard offices;

I feel my heart shudder  
more with sadness at this unavenged defeat  
than with horror of approaching death.

But if I am not granted  
to punish the tyrant here and now  
or defeat him with the barbarous cruelty he deserves,  
I will see to it that he falls dead,  
I will grasp the deadly arrow,  
and furious and cruel  
I will avenge myself in Hell.

# PATRICE MICHAELS

soprano



Patrice Michaels has concertized extensively, appearing with noted ensembles including the St. Louis, Atlanta, Milwaukee, San Antonio, Phoenix, and Shanghai Symphonies; the Minnesota Orchestra; Chicago's Grant Park Orchestra and Music of the Baroque; the Maryland Handel Festival; the Dallas Bach Society; the Chicago Baroque Ensemble; and Boston Baroque. Conductors with whom she has collaborated include Robert Shaw, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Nicolas McGegan, Joseph Silverstein, Andrew Parrott, and Zdenek Macal. Ms. Michaels has sung with opera companies throughout North America including Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Cleveland Opera, Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, the Tacoma Opera, Colorado's Central City Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, and at the Banff Centre in Canada. A highlight of her 1999–2000 season was a series of concerts in Havana, Cuba where she performed in the International Contemporary Music Festival with Trio Chicago and Friends.

This is Patrice Michaels' ninth recording for Cedille Records. Her recordings for other labels include Bach's St. Matthew Passion with Sir Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony for London Records, Mozart's Requiem on the Amadis Label, and Mozart's C Minor Mass with Chicago's Music of the Baroque.



## CHICAGO BAROQUE ENSEMBLE

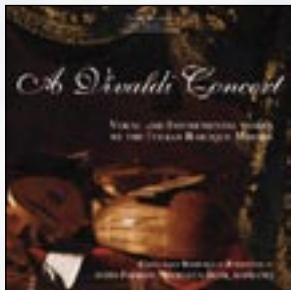
John Mark Rozendaal, director

The Chicago Baroque Ensemble was formed in 1993 to perform music of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries on period instruments. To date the Ensemble has produced eight seasons of critically acclaimed, sold-out concerts as well as eight live broadcast concerts on WFMT radio, five commercially released compact discs, educational programs for both musicians and general audiences, and

been presented on numerous concert series, including the Boston Early Music Festival and the Howard Mayer Brown Early Music Series at the University of Chicago. Special projects have included collaborations with His Majestie's Clerkes, The Newberry Consort, recorder virtuoso Aldo Abreu, violinist Rachel Barton, and viola da gambist Mary Springfels. CBE's programs transport listeners to the cultural centers of early modern Europe and help the audience to share the spirit of the music making. The Chicago Tribune has called the Chicago Baroque Ensemble's concerts "stylish and caring performances by what has already turned out to be a most accomplished group of period-instrument virtuosi."

Participating on this recording are Chicago Baroque Ensemble members Anita Miller-Rieder, transverse flute; Jeri-Lou Zike, violin; Susan Rozendaal, viola; John Mark Rozendaal, viola da gamba and cello; and David Schrader, harpsichord.

ALSO BY THE CHICAGO BAROQUE ENSEMBLE & PATRICE MICHAELS  
ON CEDILLE RECORDS



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#### A VIVALDI CONCERT

Chicago Baroque Ensemble  
with Patrice Michaels, soprano  
"The Chicago Baroque Ensemble . . . performs on period instruments at a stellar level of artistry and scholarship . . . Soprano Patrice Michaels Bedi . . . lifts the performance to a higher realm. Nothing short of spectacular, she sings virtuoso motets and cantatas with the purity of a child, flies through florid passage-work like a musical acrobat, matches her voice to the pure tone of baroque obbligato instruments and enlivens Italian recitative with the personality of a Mozartean soubrette." (Cleveland Plain Dealer)



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#### THE WORLD OF LULLY

Chicago Baroque Ensemble  
with Patrice Michaels, soprano  
"This recording of Lully works and tribute pieces from his students is a treasure . . . Individually and collectively, the Chicago Baroque Ensemble's passionate playing fills these stately pieces with invigorating spirit. These performances showcase Lully's well-constructed, elegant, and melodious compositions . . . the operatic pieces [are] enhanced by Patrice Michaels Bedi's sensuous warm-toned, luxuriant voice. Bedi caresses the French lyrics, adding abundant sparkle to several tracks. All this virtuosity invites repeated listening." (Early Music America)