



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

HANDEL
ACIS AND GALATEA

Senate House, Cambridge

MARGARET FAULTLESS
NICHOLAS MULROY
music directors

ZEPHYR BRÜGGEN
stage director

Tuesday 13 March 2018, 8.00pm



UNIVERSITY OF
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HANDEL *ACIS AND GALATEA*

Cambridge University Collegium Musicum

Members of

Cambridge University Chamber Choir

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Senate House, Cambridge

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We gratefully acknowledge help and support from the following:

- The University of Cambridge for giving permission to perform in this historic building.
- The Faculty of Music for their support of the Cambridge University Collegium Musicum.
- Cambridge University Musical Society for their support of the Cambridge University Chamber Choir.
- Elaine and Clifford Bartlett and the Early Music Company for the performance material. In lieu of a performance fee, a donation has been given to the Cambridge Branch of the Alzheimer's Society.

THE PERFORMERS

The Cast

Acis Nicholas Mulroy
Galatea Helena Moore
Polyphemus Louis Marlowe
Damon Louis Watkins
Coridon Catherine Clark

Vocal Consort

Catherine Clark
Chloe Allison
Louis Watkins
Ed Cunningham
Frankie Postles

Orchestra

1st Violins Maggie Faultless, Karolina Csáthy,
 Laura Alexander
2nd Violins Rachel Stroud, Carol Hawkey,
 Mark Seow
 Celli Laura van der Heijden,
 Rachael Kennedy
 Bass Alex Jones
 Oboes Bethan White, Katie Lewis
Recorders Sophie Westbrooke, Chloe Allison
Harpichord Edward Reeve, Luke Fitzgerald

There will be an interval of 15 minutes after Act 1.

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Acis and Galatea

Modern blackbox theatres are designed to be a space that could be any space. They are, essentially, non-spaces. For me, a theatrical concept is not something one crafts then plants inside a space; it is born of the space itself. I like to think of space as if it were another actor with which the human actors can interact, acknowledging its being situated in space and time instead of ignoring it, like the blackbox theatre encourages. Fortunately, Senate House is not a blackbox theatre.

Senate House, built four years after the première of *Acis and Galatea*, might be the least pastoral setting imaginable: a home of degree-giving, meetings, and debates. So how, and why might we stage a pastoral opera in here? Moreover, the pastoral is a genre that often wants to escape its own temporality and is set in a time and space far away from its audience. The story of *Acis and Galatea* is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which starts with a tale of the Golden Age: an uncorrupted time when man's "words were simple, and his soul sincere", when it was always spring, and food grew spontaneously.

Eighteenth-century Britain was also invested in tales of golden ages. Over the course of the century the population doubled. The countryside came to represent a kind of authenticity in the face of rapid urbanisation. A debate around the genre arose between the 'Ancients' and the 'Moderns', and aspiring writers of pastorals were forced to think about the time and space of their work: should it be located in a Golden Age, or in eighteenth-century Britain? Alexander Pope, in his 1717 *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry*, advised that the simplicity of shepherds "by giving us an esteem for the virtues of a former age, might recommend them to the present." John Gay, however, the main librettist of *Acis and Galatea*, and a friend of Pope, approached the subject from a more political, satirical angle: his famous *Beggar's Opera* is subtitled 'A Newgate Pastoral'.

Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, too, is partly a parody of the genre. Set in a naïve Arcadia, *Acis and Galatea* exist in complete harmony with nature. The plot is complicated when the monstrous Polyphemus, a parodic double of *Acis*, "raging, melting, and burning" with love for *Galatea*, disrupts their world. The chorus of shepherds tells the lovers that "no joy shall last." But, even if Polyphemus does kill *Acis* with a rock, the bittersweet conclusion sees love triumph when *Galatea* uses her divine powers to transform *Acis* into a river.

The eighteenth-century quest for authenticity resonates in our increasingly hectic, technological and 'post-traditional' urban society, where rainforests are burning and cows are packed away in industrial farms, far away from the "pleasure of the plains". This performance of *Acis and Galatea* in Senate House shows the contrast between the modern time and space that the building represents, and the pastoral idylle that the characters of the opera inhabit: reminding its audience of a place where gentle Arcadian love is "murm'ring still."

Zephyr Brünnen

Acis and Galatea was Handel's first dramatic work written in English, and was composed during his period at Cannons between 1717–1719, home of James Brydges, the Earl of Carnarvon and later Duke of Chandos. The libretto was written collaboratively by the poets John Gay, Alexander Pope, John Hughes and John Arbuthnot, and borrows freely from John Dryden's English translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book XIII), published in London in 1717. The work was hugely popular in Georgian London and had been performed at least seventy times by the middle of the century. It was even revived and re-orchestrated by Mozart in 1788, and performed by Mendelssohn in 1728. However, Mozart's introduction of newly-developed instruments such as the clarinet changes the music in a fundamental way: it is Handel's sumptuous use of the timbres of the instruments available to him, and his play with their sonic and social associations, that makes his musical setting of this Arcadian myth so compelling.

Handel's enchanting orchestral textures and subversions of formal and generic convention give the work a psychological depth that belies the naïve Arcadia that is established in the opening scenes. The tension inherent in the artificial representation of nature is hinted at in the writing of Galatea's first aria, 'Hush ye pretty warbling choir' which is notated in a complex 9/16 metre, with brief interjections in 3/8. An awkward hemiola over the phrase "pretty, pretty warbling choir" has none of the dance-like elegance of the "warbling" recorders; whilst Galatea attempts to control nature ("Hush!"), she can only imitate it artificially. Handel employs the recorder again to further disturb the sound of a monster trying to sing an amorous aria. Polyphemus is portrayed simultaneously as a comically blundering lover, and a frightening force of nature. The presence of the sopranino recorder in his aria 'O Ruddier than the Cherry' provides an ironic contrast to the "hundred reeds of decent growth" that he calls for "to make a pipe for my capacious mouth" – vividly emphasized by the enormous registral leap deployed over the words.

Whilst little is known about the first performance, at the time Handel was writing *Acis and Galatea* the Cannons estate was undergoing its own metamorphosis: as well as extensive building work, elaborate plans were in progress for the installation of beautiful water features and fountains in the gardens. Perhaps fittingly, the image of the fountain threads throughout the text, from the "purling streams and bubbling fountains" that stir up Galatea's passions, to the "crystal fountains" that Acis imagines her bathing in, to the final act of metamorphosis in which Galatea transforms Acis' body into an eternal "fountain bright". The orchestra themselves are transformed into the "murm'ring" brook in the swirling figures of Galatea's final aria, which oscillate fluidly between E flat major and A flat major over harmonically metamorphosing pedals in the bass line. This transformative murm'ring figure transcends even conventional form, flowing eternally onwards by eluding the *da capo* repetition of Galatea's aria, and re-emerging again in the final Chorus.

Rachel Stroud

BIOGRAPHIES

Nicholas Mulroy

Born in Liverpool, Nicholas Mulroy has appeared at many of the world's leading venues and festivals including Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House, the Salzburg Festival, Glyndebourne, Boston Symphony Hall, the BBC Proms, Paris Opéra, the Edinburgh International Festival, and Wigmore Hall. He has particularly enjoyed



prolonged collaboration with conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Jordi Savall, Paul McCreesh, Lars-Ulrik Mortensen, Margaret Faultless, Richard Tognetti, John Butt and Laurence Cummings. Known particularly for his work in music of the Baroque era, he has also sung with symphony orchestras in Auckland, Brussels, Melbourne, Copenhagen, the St Paul Chamber Orchestra, and frequently with the BBC Philharmonic. He has recorded extensively, and as a recitalist has been heard in repertoire from Monteverdi to Piazzolla, via Schubert and Janáček. Future plans include recitals at Wigmore Hall, with RTE in Dublin, and a return to the St Paul Chamber Orchestra. He is in increasing demand as a teacher, is a vocal tutor at Goldsmith's and has given masterclasses in the UK, France, Poland, US, and in 2014 was Distinguished Artist in Residence at the Australian National University in Canberra. He is a Musician in Residence at Girton College, Cambridge and was recently elected ARAM.

Helena Moore

Helena Moore is a third year reading Music at Trinity College, Cambridge. Past opera roles include Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*, (Welsh National Youth Opera) and for Cambridge University Opera Society: Iphis in *Jephtha*, Servilia in *La Serva Padrona*, the Snow Child in *The Snow Child*, Venus in *Venus and Adonis*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute* and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*. Recent Oratorio solos include Beethoven's 9th Symphony



(SJCMS), Mozart's Requiem (St Martin's in the Fields), Brahms' Requiem, Mahler's 4th Symphony, Bach's *St John Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*, and Handel's *Dixit Dominus* in King's College Chapel. She has also performed solos for King's College Choir under Stephen Cleobury and St John's College Choir under Andrew Nethsingha for the Bach Cantata evensongs. As well as performing regularly in recitals, she was selected for the Pembroke Lieder

Scheme in her first and third year having taken part in masterclasses with Joan Rodgers, Amanda Roocroft, Audrey Hyland, David Jones and John Mark Ainsley. She looks forward to continuing her studies at the Royal Academy of Music having received an entrance scholarship.

Louis Marlowe

After earning a Specialist Musician scholarship to Wells Cathedral School as a pianist in 2002, Louis started formal vocal tuition in 2003 with Laurence Whitehead. After winning three different classes in the Taunton Singing Festival in late 2004, singing quickly replaced the piano as his first study. This led to further study at the University of York as a Music undergraduate in 2010, under the tutelage of Rachel Nicholls and Alexander Ashworth, and then permanent singing work in Lincoln Cathedral Choir in 2013. In 2015 Louis was lay clerk in the Choir of St John's College Cambridge and is now under the instruction of David Lowe. Louis has had occasional solo work, the role of Judas and the aria *Gebt mir meinem Jesum wieder* in a performance of J.S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion* alongside James Gilchrist and Peter Harvey in 2011 being a particular highlight. Other solo work includes Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, Vaughan-Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*, and Stravinsky's *Les noces*.



Louis Watkins

Louis first started singing as a chorister at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace before becoming Head Chorister there. He was awarded a Choral Scholarship to Hampton School, Middlesex. During this time he sang as a treble soloist for the BBC in George Crumb's 'Total Immersion' Festival at The Barbican, in *The Magic Flute* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera and the English National Opera and in Opera Holland Park's production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and featured as a soloist on U2's album, *No Line on the Horizon*. Louis was awarded a Gap



Year Choral Scholarship at Truro Cathedral where, aside from his duties, he enjoyed working within the Music Department at Truro School. Louis is now reading Music at St John's College, Cambridge, where he holds a Choral Scholarship under Andrew Nethsingha.

Catherine Clark

Catherine is a fourth year Earth Scientist and currently studies singing with Helen Groves. Having sung in Clare Choir for the past three years, she decided to leave in September to take up the position of Clare May Ball President. Keen to keep some singing in her calendar, Catherine joined the Cambridge



University Chamber Choir and Cadenza, Cambridge's premier mixed a cappella group. During her time in Clare Choir, Catherine performed as a soloist in repertoire such as Bach's *Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild* and Josquin's *Missa Pange Lingua*. She has appeared live on the radio and has been interviewed on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* in her role as Senior Choral Scholar. Aged 17, Catherine was the youngest member of the National Youth Chamber Choir of Great Britain and has recorded widely with the combined National Youth Choirs. This performance will be Catherine's opera debut.

Margaret Faultless

Margaret Faultless performs music from Monteverdi to the present day, and has appeared as soloist, concert-master and director with orchestras all over the world, from LPO (London) the Handel and Haydn Society (Boston) and the Russian National Orchestra. She is co-leader of The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and has led the orchestra at Glyndebourne, the Salzburg Festival and in many performances at their regular series at the South Bank, with conductors and directors such as Gustav



Leonhard, Frans Brüggen, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Mark Elder, Sir Roger Norrington, Vladimir Jurowski, Ivan Fischer and Semyon Bychkov. She also plays a significant role in their education programme for young professionals. For twelve years, Margaret led the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra as concert-master and soloist in their ten-year project to perform and record all of J.S Bach's Cantatas. She is a regular director and Director of Studies of the European Union Baroque Orchestra and is the Artistic director of *Music for Awhile*. A passionate chamber musician, she was a member of the London Haydn Quartet for ten years. Margaret lectures on performance practice and her own research interests of leadership in orchestras and ensembles. A graduate of Clare College, she is Director of Performance at the Faculty of Music in Cambridge. She is an Honorary Fellow of Birmingham Conservatoire and Head of Historical Performance at The Royal Academy of Music where she has been awarded the prestigious Honorary Membership of the Academy and was recently appointed a Professor of the University of London.

Zephyr Brüggén

This performance of *Acis and Galatea* marks Zephyr's directorial return to Cambridge since her three years as a Classics student at King's. She is currently training to be a theatre director in her hometown, Amsterdam, but Zephyr's faculties as a director find common ground in both cities. In 2016



she directed 'i, Byrd' in King's Chapel, the result of a plan amongst friends which escalated to a public immersive experience examining the relationship between performance, space, and audience. The success of the performance, combined with the exciting potential of inter-disciplinary collaboration, paved the way for the foundation of a musical and theatrical collective, 'rites', which challenges the conventions of the stage and celebrates a non-prescriptive mode of performance. When theatre, classics, and music overlap in her home away from home, you can be sure Zephyr won't be far away.



Cambridge University Collegium Musicum performing
Monteverdi *Vespers* in King's College Chapel

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY COLLEGIUM MUSICUM

Patrons: Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Roger Norrington

Artistic Director: Margaret Faultless

Associate Director: Martin Ennis

Student President: Rachel Stroud

The Cambridge University Collegium Musicum is a vibrant ensemble that invites students to experience historical performance, giving them the rare opportunity to perform on period instruments and learn historical performance techniques.

The ensemble was launched in 2006, when the Faculty of Music commissioned copies of baroque instruments from leading makers in this country and abroad with a vision to ignite a passion for early music in the next generations of musicians and thinkers. These instruments are made available to interested students, who then receive coaching in historical performance techniques and perform regularly under the direction of Margaret Faultless, an historical performance specialist, co-leader of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and head of Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music.

Collegium Musicum aims to push the boundaries of performance expectations, giving daring and energetic performances in some of Cambridge's best performance spaces. Recent projects have included a semi-staged performance of John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and a complete *Brandenburg Concerto Cycle* in the Round Church, a conductor-less performance of Bach's *St John Passion* with Nicholas Mulroy and the University Chamber Choir in St John's College Chapel and Girton College Hall, and a performance of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in King's College Chapel. The group also regularly collaborates with other professional groups and musicians, including His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts and regular side-by-side workshops with the Academy of Ancient Music directed by Richard Egarr.



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY CHAMBER CHOIR

Director: Martin Ennis

Associate Directors: David Lowe, Nicholas Mulroy

Student President: Helena Moore

Manager: Katharine Ambrose

Cambridge University Chamber Choir (CUCC) aims to provide the best student singers with the opportunity to perform, to the highest possible standard, repertoire that is not usually undertaken by Cambridge chapel choirs. Directed by Martin Ennis with David Lowe and Nicholas Mulroy, and featuring regular guest conductors, it typically undertakes three or four projects a year. CUCC often places an emphasis on secular music rather than sacred, and it often foregrounds repertoire that allows singers to appear as soloists or in small groups. However, the choir also performs on a regular basis with groups such as Cambridge University Orchestra and the Faculty of Music's Collegium Musicum (a period-instrument ensemble directed by Margaret Faultless). CUCC members are also frequently offered opportunities to take part in projects involving multiple choirs. The chamber choir is a fantastic opportunity for experienced singers who are looking to work in a more intimate environment or on a project basis. Through choosing such a diverse range of repertoire, the ensemble takes the university's best choral singers and helps them achieve standards that exceed their expectations. Recent highlights have included participation in an international festival of sacred music in Yale, collaborations with the Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra in works by Vaughan Williams, Nielsen, Stravinsky and Brahms, pioneering performances of Venetian polychoral music, and participation in The Cardinal's Musick's 25th-anniversary performance of Tallis's *Spem in Alium*.



Cambridge University Collegium Musicum and Cambridge University Chamber Choir performing Purcell *Hail, Bright Cecilia* in West Road Concert Hall

