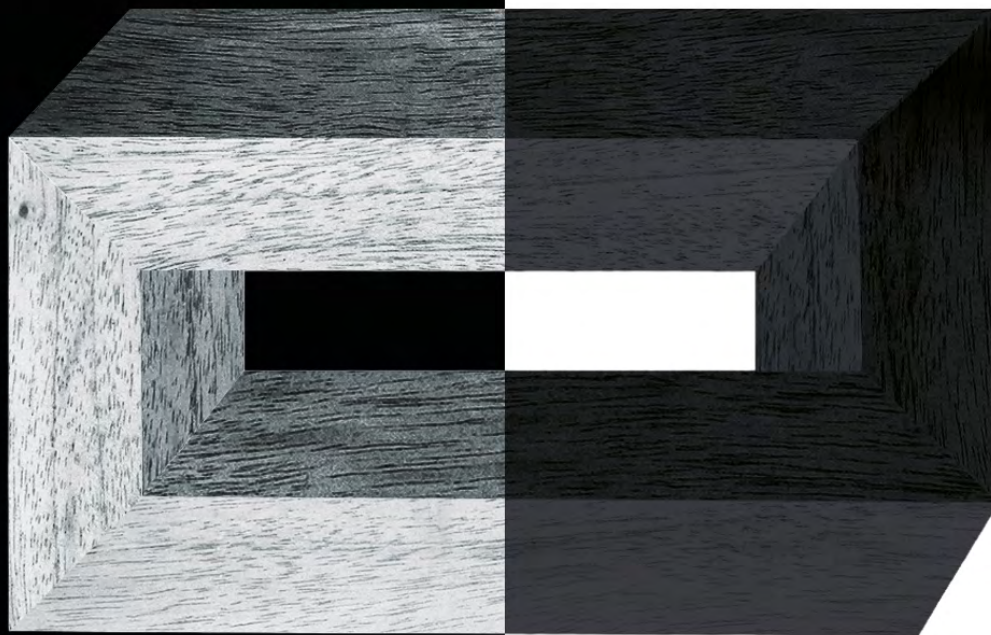


LINN

Handel

Giulio Cesare



THE ENGLISH CONCERT

HARRY BICKET

LOUISE ALDER | CHRISTOPHE DUMAUX

BETH TAYLOR | PAULA MURRIHY

JOHN HOLIDAY | MORGAN PEARSE

MEILI LI | THOMAS CHENHALL

MENU

TRACK LISTING

ENGLISH

SUNG TEXTS

BIOGRAPHIES



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George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
Giulio Cesare in Egitto, HWV 17

THE ENGLISH CONCERT
HARRY BICKET *director*

Interlocutori romani

GIULIO CESARE Primo Imperatore de' Romani
CURIO Tribuno di Roma
CORNELIA Moglie di Pompeo
SESTO Pompeo, Figlio di Pompeo e Cornelia

CHRISTOPHE DUMAUX *countertenor*
THOMAS CHENHALL *baritone*
BETH TAYLOR *mezzo-soprano*
PAULA MURRIHY *mezzo-soprano*

Interlocutori egizi

CLEOPATRA Regina d'Egitto
NIRENO Confidente di Cleopatra e Tolomeo
TOLOMEO Re d'Egitto, fratello di Cleopatra
ACHILLA Duce General dell'Armi, e consigliere di Tolomeo

LOUISE ALDER *soprano*
MEILI LI *countertenor*
JOHN HOLIDAY *countertenor*
MORGAN PEARSE *baritone*

Volume 1

1 — OUVERTURE 2:58

ACT I

2	—	CORO	Viva, viva il nostro Alcide	1:25
3	—	ARIA	Presti omai l'egizia terra (Cesare)	2:00
4	—	RECITATIVO	Curio, Cesare (Cesare, Curio, Cornelia, Sesto, Achilla)	3:44
5	—	ARIA	Empio, dirò, tu sei (Cesare)	3:33
6	—	RECITATIVO	Già torna in sé (Curio, Sesto, Cornelia)	1:30
7	—	ARIA	Priva son d'ogni conforto (Cornelia)	6:59
8	—	RECITATIVO	Vani sono i lamenti (Sesto)	0:21
9	—	ARIA	Svegliatevi nel core (Sesto)	4:21
10	—	RECITATIVO	Regni Cleopatra (Cleopatra, Nireno, Tolomeo)	2:16
11	—	ARIA	Non disperar, chi sa? (Cleopatra)	4:04
12	—	RECITATIVO	Sire, Signor! (Achilla, Tolomeo)	1:26
13	—	ARIA	L'empio, sleale (Tolomeo)	3:14
14	—	ACCOMPAGNATO	Alma del gran Pompeo (Cesare)	2:29
15	—	RECITATIVO	Qui nobile donzella (Curio, Cesare, Cleopatra)	1:32
16	—	ARIA	Non è sì vago e bello (Cesare)	3:27
17	—	RECITATIVO	Cleopatra, vincesti (Nireno, Cleopatra)	0:34
18	—	ARIA	Tutto può donna vezzosa (Cleopatra)	5:04

19	—	RECITATIVO	Ferma, Cleopatra (Nireno, Cleopatra)	0:24
20	—	ARIA	Nel tuo seno, amico sasso (Cornelia)	3:36
21	—	RECITATIVO	Ma che! (Cornelia, Cleopatra, Sesto, Nireno)	2:18
22	—	ARIA	Cara speme (Sesto)	5:46
23	—	RECITATIVO	Vegli pur il germano (Cleopatra)	0:26
24	—	ARIA	Tu la mia stella sei (Cleopatra)	5:11
25	—	RECITATIVO	Cesare, alla tua destra (Tolomeo, Cesare, Achilla)	0:57
26	—	ARIA	Va tacito e nascosto (Cesare)	7:20
27	—	RECITATIVO	Sire, con Sesto (Achilla, Tolomeo, Cornelia, Sesto)	2:21
28	—	ARIA	Tu sei il cor di questo core (Achilla)	4:47

Volume 2**ACT I (end)**

- | | | | |
|---|---|------------|--|
| 1 | — | RECITATIVO | Madre! (Sesto, Cornelia) 0:34 |
| 2 | — | DUETTO | Son nata a lagrimar (Sesto, Cornelia) 9:12 |

ACT II

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|--|
| 3 | — | RECITATIVO | Eseguisti, oh Niren (Cleopatra, Nireno, Cesare) 1:32 |
| 4 | — | SINFONIA E RECITATIVO | Taci! (Cesare, Nireno) 1:52 |
| 5 | — | ARIA E RECITATIVO | V'adoro, pupille (Cleopatra, Cesare) 5:10 |
| 6 | — | RECITATIVO | Vola, vola mio cor (Cesare, Nireno) 1:11 |
| 7 | — | ARIA | Se in fiorito ameno prato (Cesare) 8:03 |
| 8 | — | ARIOSO | Deh piangete, oh mesti lumi (Cornelia) 2:46 |
| 9 | — | RECITATIVO | Bella, non lacrimare (Achilla, Cornelia, Tolomeo) 1:32 |
| 10 | — | ARIA | Se a me non sei crudele (Achilla) 3:21 |
| 11 | — | RECITATIVO | Bella, contanto abborri (Tolomeo, Cornelia) 0:46 |
| 12 | — | ARIA | Sì, spietata (Tolomeo) 2:53 |
| 13 | — | RECITATIVO | Su, che si tarda? (Cornelia, Sesto, Nireno) 2:12 |
| 14 | — | ARIA | Cessa omai di sospirare (Cornelia) 3:49 |
| 15 | — | RECITATIVO | Figlio non è (Sesto) 0:20 |
| 16 | — | ARIA | L'angue offeso mai riposa (Sesto) 5:37 |
| 17 | — | RECITATIVO | Esser qui deve in breve (Cleopatra) 0:39 |
| 18 | — | ARIA | Venere bella (Cleopatra) 4:06 |

19	—	RECITATIVO	Che veggio (Cesare, Cleopatra, Curio)	3:05
20	—	ARIA E CORO	Al lampo dell'armi (Cesare)	3:16
21	—	ACCOMPAGNATO	Che sento? Oh Dio! (Cleopatra)	1:09
22	—	ARIA	Se pietà di me non senti (Cleopatra)	9:24
23	—	RECITATIVO	Questo è luogo (Tolomeo, Cornelia, Sesto, Achilla)	3:36
24	—	ARIA	L'aure che spira (Sesto)	4:45

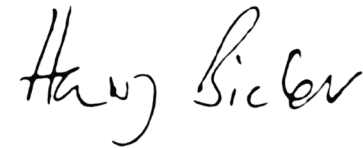
Volume 3**ACT III**

1	—	RECITATIVO	In tal modi (Achilla)	0:36
2	—	ARIA	Dal fulgor di questa spada (Achilla)	3:29
3	—	SINFONIA		0:36
4	—	RECITATIVO	Vinta cadesti al balenar (Tolomeo, Cleopatra)	0:49
5	—	ARIA	Domerrò la tua fierezza (Tolomeo)	3:43
6	—	RECITATIVO	E pur così in un giorno (Cleopatra)	0:49
7	—	ARIA	Piangerò la sorte mia (Cleopatra)	6:16
8	—	ACCOMPAGNATO ED ARIA	Dall'ondoso (Cesare)	9:02
9	—	RECITATIVO	Cerco invan Tolomeo (Sesto, Achilla, Cesare, Nireno)	3:04
10	—	ARIA	Quel torrente, che cade dal monte (Cesare)	3:45
11	—	RECITATIVO	Tutto lice sperar (Sesto, Nireno)	0:30
12	—	ARIA	La giustizia ha già sull'arco (Sesto)	4:00
13	—	ACCOMPAGNATO	Voi, che mie fide ancelle (Cleopatra, Cesare)	3:47
14	—	ARIA	Da tempeste il legno infranto (Cleopatra)	6:16
15	—	RECITATIVO	Cornelia, è tempo omai (Tolomeo, Cornelia, Sesto)	2:03
16	—	ARIA	Non ha più che temere (Cornelia)	4:00
17	—	SINFONIA		3:11
18	—	RECITATIVO	Qui Curio (Nireno, Cesare, Sesto, Cornelia, Cleopatra)	2:04
19	—	DUETTO	Caro! Bella! (Cleopatra, Cesare)	5:05
20	—	RECITATIVO	Goda pur or l'Egitto (Cesare)	0:18
21	—	CORO	Ritorni omai nel nostro core	3:00

A note by Harry Bicket

Giulio Cesare is one of the most performed of Handel's operas, and certainly one of the pieces that I have conducted the most in my career. Conducting productions in Munich, the Met, Barcelona, Vienna and working with directors such as Richard Jones, David McVicar and Herbert Wernicke gave me an insight into the myriad ways in which this miraculous piece can reveal itself. And then there is the cast, themselves veterans of numerous productions, who bring their own understanding and experience of these multi-faceted characters.

Recordings can only ever be a snapshot of a particular moment in time, but I hope that this one will encapsulate the joy we all had in revisiting this extraordinary work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Harry Bicket". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'H' and a long, sweeping underline.

Handel's *Giulio Cesare*

Handel moved into his new rented house in Brook Street, near Hanover Square, in July 1723. Shortly afterwards he began composing *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* in preparation for the next season of the Royal Academy of Music. His manuscript is dated imprecisely 'Anno 1723', but at the point of completing the closing chorus Handel's creative labours were far from finished. The draft score was subjected to at least seven different phases of substantial revision for nearly half a year before it was eventually finalized and ready shortly prior to the first performance.

Nicola Francesco Haym (1678–1729), a Roman cellist and Italian secretary of the Royal Academy of Music, modelled the libretto on an old drama by Giacomo Francesco Bussani (*fl.* 1673–80) set to music by Antonio Sartorio for the 1676/77 Venice carnival; Haym also drew ideas from a revised version of Bussani's text staged at Milan in 1685. The story is based on events during the Alexandrine War (October 48–March 47 BC), an Egyptian dynastic squabble that occurred in the milieu of an on-going Roman civil war (January 49–March 45 BC). The conflict had started when former consul Gaius Julius Caesar (100–44 BC) refused an order from the senate to relinquish command of his battle-hardened legions in Gaul. Instead, Caesar and his army crossed the Rubicon to invade Italy and seize power. His erstwhile ally Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (106–48 BC) was charged by the senate to protect the Republic from Caesar's despotic ambitions. Pompey moved his forces east across the Adriatic to marshal larger numbers of experienced troops, but they were routed decisively by Caesar at Pharsalus (in Thessaly) in August 48 BC. Pompey, his wife Cornelia Metella and his son Sextus Pompeius Magnus Pius (c. 67–35 BC) fled to Alexandria to seek shelter from Ptolemy XIII (63–47 BC), co-regent of Egypt with his sister Cleopatra VII (69–30 BC). An 'Argument' in the London wordbook (1724) cites some of Bussani's classical sources, explains the gist of the plot succinctly and concludes 'it was thought necessary in the present Drama to make Sestus the Instrument of Ptolomey's Death in Revenge for his Father's Murder, varying from History only in Circumstances of Action.'

The opera begins with Achilles's presentation of Pompey's decapitated head to Caesar; otherwise, the drama deviates from history considerably. Cornelia (Pompey's fifth wife) was Sextus's step-mother but her relationship to him is simplified to full parenthood (his real mother was Pompey's third wife Mucia Tertia). The characterization of Caesar as a courageous military hero and ardent lover implies a more youthful figure than his historical counterpart, who was already 54 when he met Queen Cleopatra VII. Handel's audience would have had no qualms accepting incongruity between the operatic Giulio Cesare (a paragon of magnanimity, wisdom and righteous courage) and the corrupt Gaius Julius Caesar (whose scheming, bribing, murdering and fornicating his way into becoming dictator for life had been chronicled with salacious sarcasm by Plutarch, Suetonius and Lucius Cassius Dio). The flawed and contradictory real Caesar was transformed into an epitome of what a virtuous ruler *should* be like. The *lieto fine* restores civilized order tidily: justice is obtained via Sextus's rite of passage from youth to manhood (avenging his father's murder and liberating his mother from impending sexual slavery), and the lovers Caesar and Cleopatra are united blissfully without any omens of the Ides of March, Mark Anthony, and so on.

Haym removed Bussani's frequent use of disguise and cross-dressing, thereby purging comic elements and transforming Cornelia and Sextus into entirely serious characters. For the Parnassus scene in which Cleopatra (calling herself Lydia) seduces Caesar whilst dressed as Virtue – a blatant irony – much of the dialogue and stage directions were taken from the 1685 Milanese libretto but mingled skilfully by Haym with an aria ('V'adoro, pupille') from the 1677 Venetian text; for Cleopatra's evocation of Parnassus, Handel created the special effect of the pit orchestra of strings and continuo playing in tandem with an exotic on-stage band consisting of nine costumed instrumentalists to represent the Muses (oboe, two violins, viola, cello, viola da gamba, bassoon, harp and theorbo). Haym abridged Bussani's recitatives by about a third, rewrote several aria texts using only snippets from the sources and transferred some words to different characters: 'Tu sei il cor di questo core' had been a love duet for Caesar and Cleopatra (Milan, 1685), but for London it became an ideal text to convey the frustrated Achilles's futile wooing of Cornelia. Some arias without

literary antecedents might have been newly-written by Haym. Two important new scenes were added to Act III: the dying Achilles's defection to the Romans and Cleopatra's lament whilst in chains.

The composition of the score was protracted by necessary deletion, alteration, rewriting, transfer or substitution of many numbers. Many of Handel's decisions had far-reaching consequences on musicodramatic elements. For instance, he strengthened the pathos of Cleopatra's defeat and imprisonment by replacing an F minor siciliano scored for four-part strings ('Troppo crudele siete') with the E major lament 'Piangerò la sorte mia', featuring flute, commencing without an orchestral introduction and Cleopatra's hopelessness juxtaposed with a fierce middle section vowing that her spectre will haunt Ptolemy. Likewise, Cleopatra's accompanied recitative 'Che sento? Oh Dio' was originally much shorter and led into a lively and florid heroic A minor aria ('Per dar vita'), but Handel discarded this scheme in favour of a lengthened *accompagnato*, adding a contrasting second section that also modulated into 'Se pietà di me non senti' in the distinctive key of F sharp minor.

Handel borrowed judiciously from some of his old works. 'Va tacito e nascosto', the cunning Caesar's veiled manoeuvring around political traps during a parley with Ptolemy, was developed from a number for alto and continuo in the cantata *Vedendo amor* (Rome, c. 1707–8). Sextus's 'Cara speme' was developed from the Daughter of Zion's yearning for redemption sung immediately prior to Christ's death in the *Brockes Passion* (written for Hamburg, c. 1715–16); Sextus's critical moment of private apprehension about his quest was added too late for inclusion in the 1724 wordbook in its context but appended after the final chorus on the last page with a cue to Act I scene viii. Ptolemy's petulant 'L'empio, sleale' had been composed for Senesino to sing in a benefit performance of *Ottone* on 26 March 1723, although it is unclear if the castrato performed it on that occasion.

Handel's music exploits a kaleidoscopic instrumentation. Positioned after the richly orchestrated Parnassus scene, Caesar's ecstatic 'Se in fiorito ameno prato' is an ostentatious dialogue between florid voice and concertante violin, with mirthful strings, oboes and

bassoons playing in thirds over long rustic bass notes; the solo violin part was played by Pietro Castrucci, a Roman disciple of Corelli who led Handel's theatre orchestras from 1715 until 1737. As well as solo horn in 'Va tacito e nascosto', Handel uses four horns (two pairs with differently pitched crooks) in the bookending choruses and an extravagant sinfonia that heralds the triumphant *scena ultima*. A flute ('traversa') doubles the first violins in Cornelia's 'Priva son d'ogni conforto' and Cleopatra's 'Piangerò la sorte mia'. Two recorders ('flauti') are used sparingly but tellingly in the *ombra* middle section of Sextus's turbulent 'Svegliatevi nel core' (when he imagines his father's ghost demanding justice) and an octave above Cornelia's voice in 'Cessa omai di sospirare'. A solo oboe doubles Cleopatra's voice in 'Tutto può donna vezzosa' and also plays in the introduction to her despondent 'Voi, che mie fide ancelle' (an accompagnato interrupted by skirmishing strings that depict the sound of fighting outside before she can proceed into an aria of lamentation). Bassoons reinforce Achilles in 'Tu sei il cor di questo core' and soar plangently within polyphonic strings during Cleopatra's distressed 'Se pietà di me non senti'.

Four-part strings are used varyingly for Ptolemy's vindictive reaction to Cornelia's disdain ('Sì, spietata'), the imagery of a coiled serpent ready to strike in Sextus's 'L'angue offeso mai riposa' (the first violins reinforced by oboes), the exquisite pathos in Cornelia and Sextus's tragic duet 'Son nata a lagrimar', and to create philosophical profundity in Caesar's 'Alma del gran Pompeo' and serene sublimity in his bedraggled plaint 'Aure, deh per pietà'. Unison violins, with or without separate violas, are employed to convey furious tension in Caesar's 'Empio, dirò, tu sei', the caustic taunting of sibling rivalry in Cleopatra's 'Non disperar, chi sa?', her flirtatious prayer to Venus to aid her seduction of Caesar ('Venere bella'), Ptolemy's vindictive gloating at her defeat and imprisonment ('Domerò la tua fierezza'), and Cleopatra's gleeful exuberance in the flashy 'Da tempeste il legno infranto' (its violins occasionally splitting flexibly into two parts). The intimate use of only continuo accompaniment in arias is reserved for soliloquies when a character in crisis invokes hope against the odds: Sextus's 'Cara speme' and the humiliated Cornelia's 'Deh piangete, oh mesti lumi' (when tending the garden of Ptolemy's harem).

The premiere of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* took place at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket on 20 February 1724. The title-role was acted by the Sienese castrato Francesco Bernardi, nicknamed Senesino (1686–1758), who had sung every leading *primo uomo* role for the Royal Academy of Music company since December 1720. Caesar's 'Non è sì vago e bello', his spontaneous declaration that Lydia's beauty surpasses spring flowers, was a popular printed song-sheet and even illustrated in Senesino's portrait engraved by Alexander Van Haecken (1735). Cleopatra was played by the Parmesan soprano Francesca Cuzzoni (1696–1778), whose London debut as Teofane in Handel's *Ottone* was in January 1723. Sesto Pompeo was created by Margherita Durastanti (*fl.* 1700–34), who had sung for Handel in Rome and Venice before rejoining him in London in early 1720. Cornelia was the English alto Anastasia Robinson (*c.* 1692–1755), whose voice had sunk in range since Handel had written the soprano role Oriana for her in *Amadigi* (1715); she retired from the London stage at the end of the 1723/24 season after marrying the Earl of Peterborough. Tolomeo was assigned to the Florentine castrato Gaetano Berenstadt (1687–1734), whose German father was a musician at the Medici court. Achilla was tailor-made for bass Giuseppe Maria Boschi (*fl.* 1703–44), the only singer to participate in all thirty-two of the Royal Academy of Music's productions from 1720 until the company's collapse in 1728. Cleopatra's servant and confidant Nireno (castrato Giuseppe Bigonzi) and the Roman tribune Curio (bass John Lagarde) sang in only recitatives and choruses.

A few weeks after the first performance, the Parisian newspaper *Le Mercure de France* (March 1724) reported that 'This work is hailed in London as a masterpiece of music, even by the admission of the Italians'. On 10 March the visitor Friedrich Ernst von Fabrice wrote (in French) from London to a friend that 'The opera has been thriving extremely well since the new one by Handell, called *Julius Caesar*, in which Senesino and Cozzuna shine beyond description, has been on the stage, the house having been just as full for the seventh performance as at the first; Besides this the squabbles between the Directors, and everyone taking sides between the singers and the composers often provide scenes which are very entertaining for the public'. However, not everyone was impressed by *Giulio Cesare*: the poet John Byrom sat in the front row of the gallery in the King's Theatre on 29 February

and wrote to his wife a few days later that ‘it was the first entertainment of this nature that I ever saw, and will I hope be the last, for of all the diversions of the town I least of all enter into this’. It was probably in Handel’s 1732 revival that an on-stage accident sparked an amusing anecdote recounted in *Fog’s Weekly Journal* (10 February 1733): ‘A Piece of the Machinery tumbled down from the Roof of the Theatre upon the Stage just as *Senesino* had chanted form these Words; *Cesare non seppe mai, che sia timore*. Caesar does not know what Fear is. The poor Hero was so frightened that he trembled, lost his Voice, and fell a-crying.’

The first attempt to resurrect a completely uncut *Giulio Ceare* in modern times, with all voices at the correct pitch and sung in Italian, was a pioneering production at The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham, in 1977. Although it is by far the most frequently staged of Handel’s operas over the last century, unabbreviated interpretations continue to be exceptionally rare. The English Concert’s recording reconstructs the version given at its first performances in 1724.

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Synopsis

ACT I

Julius Caesar pursues the defeated Pompey to Egypt, where his rival has sought refuge with Ptolemy XIII (co-regent with his sister Cleopatra VII). Upon arrival in Alexandria, Caesar and the Romans are welcomed by the Egyptians. Pompey's wife Cornelia and son Sextus persuade Caesar to grant clemency to Pompey. Achilas arrives with gifts of golden vessels from Ptolemy; the Egyptian general is entranced by Cornelia's beauty. Pompey's decapitated head is served on a salver to the enraged Caesar, who denounces Ptolemy's treachery. The distressed Cornelia's attempted suicide is prevented by Curius; she declines his ill-timed proposal. Sextus vows to avenge his father's murder.

The eunuch Nireus informs Cleopatra that her brother ordered Pompey's beheading. Seeking to become sole sovereign of Egypt, she plans to seduce Caesar. Ptolemy is taunted by his sister and then receives a report from Achilas that their scheme to ingratiate themselves with Caesar by giving him Pompey's head has back-fired; the general proposes he will behead Caesar on condition he is rewarded with Cornelia. Ptolemy exults that Caesar's death will secure him the kingdom.

Caesar contemplates the transience of vain ambition while gazing at the funerary urn containing Pompey's ashes atop a pile of the deceased general's military trophies. He is visited by Cleopatra, calling herself Lydia; she weeps that her fortune has been stolen by Ptolemy and implores Caesar for justice. The enamoured Caesar promises to help. Cleopatra and Nireus observe Cornelia's attempted suicide in front of Pompey's urn; Sextus takes the sword from his mother and declares he shall be the instrument of vengeance on Ptolemy. 'Lydia' steps forward and offers Nireus as their guide.

Caesar and Ptolemy exchange diplomatic pleasantries but the wary Caesar compares himself to a stealthy hunter avoiding Ptolemy's traps. Achilas introduces Cornelia and Sextus, who denounces Ptolemy and challenges him to fight. Ptolemy imprisons Sextus

and enslaves Cornelia as a gardener in his seraglio. Mother and son lament disconsolately as they are separated.

ACT II

Nireus brings Caesar to a depiction of the Palace of Pleasure on the slopes of Parnassus. A symphony of ravishing music is heard as the mountain opens to reveal 'Lydia' enthroned as Virtue, accompanied by the nine Muses and singing adoringly to Caesar. When the enraptured Roman steps forward, Parnassus shuts. Nireus promises Caesar will get a proper welcome in Lydia's apartments, where he will also be introduced to Cleopatra.

In the seraglio garden, Cornelia scorns the ardent Achilles, who is commanded by Ptolemy to depart and vanquish Caesar before receiving his reward. However, Ptolemy wants Cornelia for himself and accosts her forcefully. Her third attempted suicide is interrupted by Sextus, liberated from prison by Nireus. Cornelia is taken away to Ptolemy's harem; Nireus suggests this is Sextus's chance to catch Ptolemy off guard.

Cleopatra asks Venus to make her irresistible to Caesar; she pretends to sleep. Caesar arrives and declares love to 'Lidia'. Curius bursts in warning Caesar that he is betrayed by Egyptians seeking to assassinate him. Cleopatra reveals her real identity, goes to quell the conspirators but returns hastily and advises Caesar to escape. He resolves to face his enemies and departs to fight. The anxious Cleopatra prays for his safety.

In his seraglio, Ptolemy puts down his sword and orders Cornelia to sleep with him. Sextus grabs Ptolemy's sword but he is thwarted by Achilles, who reports to his master that Caesar has drowned after diving from a high balcony into the harbour, and that Cleopatra has gone to the Romans to raise an army. Achilles asks for his reward but Ptolemy refuses to give him Cornelia; labelled a traitor by his master, Achilles considers defecting to the Romans. Sextus is encouraged by his mother to make another attempt on the tyrant's life.

ACT III

At the port of Alexandria, Achilas switches allegiance. In the ensuing battle Cleopatra is defeated; she is shackled and mocked by Ptolemy. Cleopatra despairs but vows her ghost will haunt her brother. Caesar is washed ashore, having swum to safety. Isolated from his forces, he watches Sextus and Nireus find the mortally wounded Achilas; the dying general confesses his culpability for Pompey's murder, passes Sextus a seal authorising command of a hundred warriors, and reveals there is a secret passage into the palace. Caesar emerges and takes the seal from Sextus; Caesar proclaims he shall rescue Cleopatra and Cornelia, and help Sextus's quest for revenge.

Imprisoned in her apartments, Cleopatra bids farewell to her handmaidens as she prepares to die, but Caesar and his soldiers vanquish Ptolemy's guards; he tells the overjoyed Cleopatra to meet him at the harbour. Cornelia defends herself with a dagger against the rapacious Ptolemy; Sextus kills him. Caesar and Cleopatra celebrate with their followers. Sextus and Cornelia offer Ptolemy's crown and sceptre to Caesar, but he grants them to Cleopatra; they proclaim their love and everyone celebrates the return of liberty and peace.

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Giulio Cesare in Egitto, HWV 17

Volume 1

1 – OUVERTURE

ATTO I

*(Campagna d'Egitto
con antico ponte
sopra un ramo del Nilo)*

SCENA PRIMA

*(Cesare e Curio passano
il ponte con il seguito)*

2 – CORO

Viva, viva il nostro Alcide!
Goda il Nilo in questo dì!
Ogni spiaggia per lui ride,
ogni affanno già sparì.

3 – ARIA

CESARE Presti omai l'egizia terra
le sue palme al vincitor.

4 – RECITATIVO

CESARE Curio, Cesare venne,
e vide e vinse;
già sconfitto Pompeo, invan ricorre
per rinforzar de' suoi guerrier
lo stuolo d'Egitto al re.

1 – OVERTURE

ACT I

*(A plain in Egypt
with an ancient bridge
over a branch of the Nile)*

SCENE 1

*(Julius Caesar and Curius,
who pass over the bridge with attendants)*

2 – CHORUS

Long live our Alcides!
Let the Nile rejoice on this day!
Every shore smiles on him,
every care has vanished.

3 – ARIA

CAESAR Now let the land of Egypt bestow
its palms to the victor.

4 – RECITATIVE

CAESAR Curius, Caesar came
and saw and conquered:
Pompey, already defeated, in vain runs
to the King of Egypt for reinforcements
for his troops.

CURIO Tu qui, signor,
giungesti a tempo appunto,
a prevenir le trame:
ma chi ver noi se n' viene?

SCENA SECONDA
(*Cornelia e Sesto entrano*)

CESARE Questa è Cornelia.

CURIO Oh sorte!
Del nemico Pompeo l'alta consorte?
Cesare, a questa un tempo
sacrai la libertade.

CORNELIA Signor: Roma è già tua.
Teco han gli dei oggi diviso il regno;
ed è lor legge che del grand'orbe al pondo
Giove regoli il ciel, Cesare il mondo.

CESARE Da Cesare che chiedi,
gran germe de' Scipioni, alta Cornelia?

CORNELIA Dà pace all'armi!

SESTO Dona l'asta al tempio,
ozio al fianco, ozio alla destra.

CESARE Virtù de' grandi
è il perdonar le offese:
venga Pompeo, Cesare abbracci;
e resti l'ardor di Marte estinto:
sia vincitor del vincitor il vinto.

CURIUS You arrived here, Sir,
at the right time
to thwart his plans.
But who comes towards us?

SCENE 2
(*Cornelia and Sextus enter*)

CAESAR This is Cornelia.

CURIUS Oh fate!
The noble wife of our enemy Pompey?
Caesar, at one time
I sacrificed my liberty to her.

CORNELIA Sir, Rome is already yours.
Today the gods have divided their realm with you,
and it is their decree that of the universe,
Jove rules the heavens, Caesar the earth.

CAESAR What do you ask of Caesar,
great descendant of the Scipios, noble Cornelia?

CORNELIA Let the weapons be silent!

SEXTUS Give the spear to the temple,
rest your flanks, rest your arm.

CAESAR The prerogative of the great
is to pardon offences:
let Pompey come, embrace Caesar,
and let the fury of Mars remain extinguished:
and may the vanquished vanquish the victor.

SCENA TERZA

*(Achilla entra con stuolo di Egizii
che portano aurei bacili)*

ACHILLA La reggia Tolomeo t'offre in albergo,
eccelso eroe, per tuo riposo;
e in dono quanto
può donare un tributario trono.

CESARE Ciò che di Tolomeo
offre l'alma regal, Cesare aggrada.

ACHILLA Acciò l'Italia ad adorarti impari
in pegno d'amistade, e di sua fede
questa del gran Pompeo superba testa
di base al regal trono offre al tuo piede.

*(Uno degli Egizii svela un bacile,
sopra il quale sta il capo tronco di Pompeo)*

CESARE Giulio, che miri?

SESTO Oh dio! che veggio?

CORNELIA Ahi lassa!
Consorte! Mio tesoro!

CURIO Grand'ardir!

CORNELIA Tolomeo, barbaro traditor!
Io manco, io moro ...
(Si sviene)

CESARE Curio, su, porgi aita
a Cornelia, che langue.
(Piange)

SCENE 3

*(Achilas with a group of Egyptians
bearing golden salvers)*

ACHILAS Ptolemy offers you the palace
as your lodging, great hero, for your rest,
and whatever gifts
a subject kingdom can give.

CAESAR That which the royal heart of Ptolemy
offers, Caesar accepts with pleasure.

ACHILAS So that Italy may learn to love you,
as a token of friendship and his faith,
he offers at your feet this proud head of great
Pompey as the foundation of your royal throne.

*(One of the Egyptians unveils a salver,
on which is Pompey's severed head)*

CAESAR Julius, what are you looking at?

SEXTUS O God! What do I see?

CORNELIA Ah, wretched me!
Husband! My treasure!

CURIUS Such impudence!

CORNELIA Ptolemy, barbarous traitor!
I faint, I die ...
(She faints)

CAESAR Curius, hurry, bring help
to Cornelia, who faints.
(Weeps)

CURIO Che scorgo? O stelle!
Il mio bel sole esangue!

ACHILLA (Questa è Cornelia?
O che beltà! Che volto!)

SESTO Padre! Pompeo!
Mia genitrice! Oh dio!

CESARE Per dar urna sublime
al suo cenere illustre,
serbato sia sì nobile teschio.

ACHILLA Oh dèi!

CESARE E tu involati, parti!
Al tuo signore di' che l'opre de' regi,
sian di bene o di mal,
son sempre esempio.

SESTO Che non è re,
chi è re fellon, chi è un empio.

ACHILLA Cesare, frena l'ire ...

CESARE Vanne! Verrò alla reggia,
pria che oggi il sole
a tramontar si veggia.

5 – ARIA

CESARE Empio, dirò, tu sei,
togliti a gli occhi miei,
sei tutto crudeltà.
Non è da re quel cuor,

CURIUS What do I see, O stars!
My fair one pale as death.

ACHILAS (This is Cornelia?
Oh, what beauty! What a face!)

SEXTUS Father! Pompey!
My mother! Oh God!

CAESAR To give his illustrious ashes
a magnificent urn,
let his noble head be preserved.

ACHILAS Oh gods!

CAESAR And you, make haste, depart!
Say to your lord that the actions of kings,
whether good or bad,
are always an example.

SEXTUS He is no king,
he is a treacherous king, a villain.

ACHILAS Caesar, restrain your anger ...

CAESAR Be gone! I will come
to the palace before the sun
is seen setting today.

5 – ARIA

CAESAR Wicked, I shall say, you are,
depart from my sight,
you are wholly cruel.
That heart is not a king's

che donasi al rigor,
che in sen non ha pietà.
(Parte)

SCENA QUARTA
(Curio, Sesto, Cornelia, che ritorna in sé)

6 – RECITATIVO
CURIO Già torna in sé.

SESTO Madre!

CURIO Cornelia!

CORNELIA Oh stelle! Ed ancor vivo?
Ah! tolga quest'omicida acciaro
il cor, l'alma al sen.
(Vuol rapire la spada dal fianco
di Sesto per isvenarsi,
e Curio la frastorna)

CURIO Ferma: invan tenti tinger
di sangue in quelle nevi il ferro.
Curio, che ancor t'adora,
e sposa ti desia, se pur t'aggrada,
vendicarti saprà con la sua spada.

CORNELIA Sposa a te?

CURIO Sì.

CORNELIA Ammutisci!

SESTO Tu nemico a Pompeo,
e tanto ardisci?

that gives itself to harshness,
and has no pity in its breast.
(Exit)

SCENE 4
(Curius, Sextus, Cornelia, who is coming round)

6 – RECITATIVE
CURIUS She is coming round.

SEXTUS Mother?

CURIUS Cornelia?

CORNELIA Oh stars! And I still live?
Ah, may this deadly sword tear out
my heart, my soul from my breast.
(She tries to snatch the sword
from Sextus's side to kill herself,
but Curius prevents her)

CURIUS Stop! In vain you try to stain the sword
with blood in your snow-white breast.
Curius, who still adores you,
and wants you for his wife, if it pleases you,
will know how to avenge you with his sword.

CORNELIA Wife to you?

CURIUS Yes

CORNELIA Be silent!

SEXTUS You, an enemy to Pompey,
and you dare so much?

CURIO Cornelia, se m'aborri,
m'involero al tuo aspetto;
sol per non molestarti,
giurerà questo cor di non amarti.
(Parte)

SESTO Madre!

CORNELIA Viscere mie!

SESTO Or che farem tra le cesaree squadre,
tu senza il caro sposo, io senza il padre?

7 – ARIA

CORNELIA Priva son d'ogni conforto,
e pur speme di morire
per me misera non v'è.
Il mio cor da pene assorto
è già stanco di soffrire,
e morir si niega a me.
(Parte)

8 – RECITATIVO

SESTO Vani sono i lamenti;
è tempo o Sesto omai
di vendicare il padre:
si svegli alla vendetta
l'anima neghittosa,
che offesa da un tiranno invan riposa.

9 – ARIA

SESTO Svegliatevi nel core,
furie d'un'alma offesa,
a far d'un traditor
aspra vendetta.
L'ombra del genitore

CURIUS Cornelia, if you abhor me,
I shall fly from your sight:
only so as not to annoy you,
this heart will swear that it does not love you.
(Exit)

SEXTUS Mother!

CORNELIA My own flesh!

SEXTUS Now what can we do among Caesar's troops,
you without your dear husband, me without a father?

7 – ARIA

CORNELIA I am deprived of all comfort,
and yet there is no hope of dying
for me, wretched one.
My heart, laden with cares,
is already tired of suffering,
and death denies itself to me.
(Exit)

8 – RECITATIVE

SEXTUS Lamentations are in vain;
it is time, Sextus, now
to avenge your father;
let vengeance now arouse
your indolent soul,
which, insulted by a tyrant, seeks rest in vain.

9 – ARIA

SEXTUS Awake in my heart,
you furies of an insulted soul,
to take harsh vengeance
against a traitor!
My father's ghost

accorre a mia difesa,
e dice: a te il rigor,
figlio si aspetta.
(Parte)

SCENA QUINTA
(Gabinetto di Cleopatra)

10 – RECITATIVO

CLEOPATRA Regni Cleopatra;
ed al mio seggio intorno popolo
adorator arabo e siro
su questo crin la sacra benda adori:
su, chi di voi miei fidi
ha petto e cor di sollevarmi al trono,
giuri su questa destra eterna fede.

NIRENO (*Entra*)
Regina, infausti eventi.

CLEOPATRA Che fia?
Che tardi?

NIRENO Troncar fe' Tolomeo
il capo ...

CLEOPATRA Ohimè! di chi?

NIRENO ... del gran Pompeo.

CLEOPATRA Stelle! costui che apporta?

NIRENO Per stabilirsi al soglio
a Cesare mandò fra' doni involto ...

CLEOPATRA Che gli mandò?

hurries to my defence,
and says: 'ruthlessness,
my son, is expected of you.'
(Exit)

SCENE 5
(Cleopatra's chamber)

10 – RECITATIVE

CLEOPATRA May Cleopatra reign,
and around my throne let the adoring people,
Arab and Syrian,
bow before the sacred band that binds my hair:
come, let those of you, my faithful ones,
who have heart and spirit to raise me to the throne,
swear eternal faith on this my hand.

NIRENUS (*He enters*)
My Queen, ill-omened events!

CLEOPATRA What has happened?
Why do you delay?

NIRENUS Ptolemy has ordered
the beheading ...

CLEOPATRA Alas! Of whom?

NIRENUS ... of great Pompey.

CLEOPATRA Heavens, what does this mean?

NIRENUS To establish himself on the throne
he sent to Caesar among covered gifts ...

CLEOPATRA What did he send to him?

NIRENO ... l'esanimato volto.

CLEOPATRA Su, partite o miei fidi;
(*a Nireno*)
... e tu qui resta;
alle cesaree tende
son risolta portarmi,
e tu, Nireno mi servirai da scorta.

NIRENO Cosa dirà Tolomeo?

CLEOPATRA Non paventar; col guardo,
meglio ch'egli non fece
col capo di Pompeo,
Cesare obbligherò:
invano aspira al trono;
egli è il germano, e la regina io sono.
(*Entra Tolomeo*)

TOLOMEO Tu di regnar pretendi,
donna superba e altera?

CLEOPATRA Io ciò, ch'è mio contendo;
e la Corona dovuta alla mia fronte
giustamente pretendo.

TOLOMEO Vanne, e torna omai, folle,
e qual di donna è l'uso,
di scettro invece a trattar l'ago e il fuso.

CLEOPATRA Anzi tu pur effeminato amante
va' dell'età sui primi nati albori
di regno invece a coltivar gli amori.

NIRENUS The lifeless head.

CLEOPATRA Go, leave, my loyal subjects,
(*to Nirenus*)
and you stay here:
I am resolved to take myself
to Caesar's camp,
and you, Nirenus, will serve as my escort.

NIRENUS What will Ptolemy say?

CLEOPATRA Don't be afraid; with a glance
I will be able to compel Caesar
better than he has done
with Pompey's head:
he aspires to the throne in vain;
he is the brother, and I am the queen.
(*Ptolemy enters*)

PTOLEMY Are you pretending to reign,
haughty and proud woman?

CLEOPATRA I compete for what is mine;
and rightfully claim the crown
that belongs on my head.

PTOLEMY Go, and now return, madwoman,
to the proper place of a woman,
use the needle and distaff instead of the sceptre.

CLEOPATRA It is rather you, effeminate lover,
that at the dawn of your life
should cultivate love instead of a kingdom.

11 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Non disperar, chi sa?
se al regno non l'avrai,
avrai sorte in amor.
Mirando una beltà
in essa troverai
a consolar il cor.
(Parte con Nireno)

SCENA SESTA

12 – RECITATIVO

ACHILLA (*Entra*)
Sire, Signor!

TOLOMEO Achilla, come fu
il capo tronco da Cesare gradito?

ACHILLA Sdegnò l'opra.

TOLOMEO Che sento?

ACHILLA T'accusò d'inesperto,
e troppo ardito.

TOLOMEO Tant'osa un vil romano?

ACHILLA Il mio consiglio
apprendi o Tolomeo:
verrà Cesare in corte;
in tua vendetta cada costui,
come cadde Pompeo.

TOLOMEO Chi condurrà l'impresa?

11 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Don't despair, who knows?
if you have no luck in reigning
you may have it in love.
Looking at a beauty
in her you will find
how to console your heart.
(Exit with Nirenus)

SCENE 6

12 – RECITATIVE

ACHILAS (*He enters*)
Your Majesty, Lord!

PTOLEMY Achilles, how did Caesar
receive the severed head?

ACHILAS He deplored the deed.

PTOLEMY What do I hear?

ACHILAS He accused you of inexperience
and being too bold.

PTOLEMY A base Roman dared so much?

ACHILAS Listen to
my advice, Ptolemy!
Caesar is coming to the court;
let him fall victim to your revenge,
as Pompey fell.

PTOLEMY Who will undertake the venture?

ACHILLA Io ti prometto darti estinto
il superbo al regio piede,
se di Pompeo la moglie
in premio a me il tuo voler concede.

TOLOMEO È costei tanto vaga?

ACHILLA Lega col crine,
e col bel volto impiega.

TOLOMEO Amico, il tuo consiglio
è la mia stella:
vanne, pensa e poi torna.
(Parte Achilla)
Muora Cesare, muora;
e il capo altero sia del mio piè sostegno.
Roma oppressa da lui libera vada,
e fermezza al mio regno
sia la morte di lui più che la spada.

13 – ARIA

TOLOMEO L'empio, sleale indegno
vorria rapirmi il regno,
e disturbar così
la pace mia.
Ma perda pur la vita
prima che in me tradita
dall'avidò suo cor
la fede sia.

SCENA SETTIMA

*(Quartieri nel campo di Cesare con l'urna nel mezzo,
ove sono le ceneri del capo di Pompeo,
sopra eminente cumulo di trofei)*

ACHILAS I promise to give you
the arrogant one dead at your royal feet,
if you are willing to concede
Pompey's wife as my prize.

PTOLEMY She is so beautiful?

ACHILAS She binds with her hair,
and wounds with her face.

PTOLEMY My friend, your counsel
is my guiding star;
go, consider, and then return.
(Exit Achilles)
Let Caesar die, die
and his proud head be my footstool.
May Rome, oppressed by him, become free,
and may his death, more than the sword,
do more to establish my rule.

13 – ARIA

PTOLEMY The wicked one, disloyal, unworthy,
would rob me of my kingdom
and so disturb
my peace of mind.
But let him lose his life,
before my confidence
should be betrayed
by his greedy heart!

SCENE 7

*(Quarters in Caesar's camp, with the urn
containing the ashes of the head of Pompey,
upon an illustrious pile of trophies)*

14 – ACCOMPAGNATO

CESARE Alma del gran Pompeo,
che al cenere suo d'intorno
invisibil t'aggiri,
fur'ombre i tuoi trofei,
ombra la tua grandezza, e un'ombra sei:
così termina al fine il fasto umano;
ieri che vivo occupò un mondo in guerra,
oggi risolto in polve un'urna serra.
Tal di ciascuno, ah! lasso!
il principio è di terra, e il fine è un sasso.
Misera vita! oh, quanto è fral tuo stato!
Ti forma un soffio, e ti distrugge un fiato.
(*Entra Curio*)

15 – RECITATIVO

CURIO Qui nobile donzella
chiede chinarsi al Cesare di Roma.

CESARE Se n' venga pur.

CLEOPATRA Tra stuol di damigelle
io servo a Cleopatra,
Lidia m'appello,
e sotto il ciel d'Egitto di nobil sangue nata;
ma Tolomeo mi toglie
barbaro usurpator la mia fortuna.

CESARE (Quanta bellezza
un sol sembiante aduna!)
Tolomeo sì tiranno?

CURIO (Se Cornelia mi sprezza,
oggi a Lidia rivolto
collocherò quest'alma in sì bel volto.)

14 – ACCOMPAGNATO

CAESAR Soul of great Pompey,
that hovers invisible
about your ashes,
your trophies were a shadow,
your greatness a shadow, and you are a shadow.
Thus in the end ends human pomp.
Yesterday he, when alive, engaged a world in war,
today, dissolved into dust, an urn encloses.
So for everyone (alas!)
the beginning is earth, the end a stone.
Wretched life! Oh, how frail is your condition!
A sigh forms you, and a breath destroys you.
(*Curius enters*)

15 – RECITATIVE

CURIUS Here a noble maiden
asks to bow to Caesar of Rome.

CAESAR Then let her come.

CLEOPATRA Among a party of young ladies
I serve Cleopatra,
my name is Lydia,
born of noble blood under the skies of Egypt;
but Ptolemy robbed me,
barbarous usurper, of my fortune.

CAESAR (How much beauty
is gathered in a single face!)
Ptolemy is such a tyrant?

CURIUS (If Cornelia scorns me,
from today, turning to Lydia,
my soul will fix on so lovely a face.)

CLEOPATRA (*S'inginocchia avanti Cesare,
e dice piangendo*)
Avanti al tuo cospetto;
avanti Roma, mesta, afflitta, e piangente
chiede giustizia.

CESARE (Oh dio! come innamora!)
(*Leva da terra Cleopatra*)
Sfortunata donzella:
in breve d'ora deggio portarmi in corte,
oggi colà stabilirò tua sorte.
(Che bel crin!)

CURIO (Che bel sen!)

CLEOPATRA Signor: i tuoi favori
legano quest'anima.

CESARE E la tua chioma i cori.

16 – ARIA

CESARE Non è sì vago e bello
il fior nel prato,
quant'è vago e gentile
il tuo bel volto.
D'un fiore il pregio a quello
solo vien dato,
ma tutto un vago aprile
è in te raccolto.
(*Parte*)

17 – RECITATIVO

NIRENO Cleopatra, vincesti;
già di Cesare il core,
tributario al tuo volto amor ti rende,
e tutto il suo voler da te dipende.

CLEOPATRA (*Kneels before Caesar
and says, weeping*)
Before your presence,
before Rome, sad, distressed and weeping,
I ask for justice.

CAESAR (Oh God! How am I falling in love!)
(*Caesar raises Cleopatra*)
Unfortunate maiden, in a short time
I must take myself to court,
there I will turn my attention to your fate.
(What lovely hair!)

CURIUS (What a fair bosom!)

CLEOPATRA My Lord, this soul
is bound by your favours.

CAESAR And hearts by your tresses.

16 – ARIA

CAESAR The flower of the meadow
is not as fair and lovely
as the beauty and sweetness
of your fair face.
It may be compared
only to a flower,
but all the beauty of April
is brought together in you.
(*Exit with Curius*)

17 – RECITATIVE

NIRENUS Cleopatra, you have conquered:
already Caesar's heart,
in thrall to your face, renders love to you,
and all his will depends on you.

CLEOPATRA Cerchi pur Tolomeo con empietà
di cor le vie del trono,
che a me d'avito regno
farà il nume d'amor benigno dono.

18 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Tutto può donna vezzosa,
s'amorosa
scioglie il labbro, o gira il guardo;
ogni colpo piaga il petto,
se difetto
non v'ha quel che scocca il dardo.
*(Mentre Cleopatra vuol partire,
vien ritenuta da Nireno)*

19 – RECITATIVO

NIRENO Ferma, Cleopatra;
osserva qual femmina dolente
con grave passo,
e lacrimoso ciglio quivi si porta.

CLEOPATRA Al portamento,
al volto donna volgar non sembra:
osserviamo in disparte
la cagion del suo dolo.
(Si ritirano)

SCENA OTTAVA

20 – ARIA

CORNELIA Nel tuo seno, amico sasso
sta sepolto il mio tesoro.

21 – RECITATIVO

CORNELIA Ma che! Vile,
e negletta sempre starai Cornelia?

CLEOPATRA Then let Ptolemy look for
the way to the throne with wickedness of heart,
it is to me that the kind god of love
will give the ancestral throne.

18 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA A pretty woman can do anything,
if with a tender air
she opens her lips or turns her gaze.
Every blow can wound the heart,
if she who looses the dart
is without defect.
*(As Cleopatra goes to leave,
she is restrained by Nirenus)*

19 – RECITATIVE

NIRENUS Stop, Cleopatra,
look, that sad woman
with grave steps
and tearful eyes brings herself here.

CLEOPATRA By her deportment, by her face
she does not seem to be a common woman;
let us observe from afar
the reason for her grief.
(They retire)

SCENE 8

20 – ARIA

CORNELIA Within your breast, friendly stone,
lies buried my dear one.

21 – RECITATIVE

CORNELIA But what! Will you always be
vile and neglected, Cornelia?

CLEOPATRA (È Cornelia costei?
la moglie di Pompeo?)

CORNELIA Ah no! tra questi arnesi
un ferro sceglierò:
con mano ardita
contro di Tolomeo dentro la reggia.

*(Non sì tosto Cornelia ha preso
una spada fuori degli arnesi di guerra
che Sesto sopraggiunge)*

SESTO Madre ferma; che fai?

CORNELIA Lascia quest'armi:
voglio contro il tiranno
uccisor del mio sposo
tentar la mia vendetta.

SESTO Questa vendetta
a Sesto sol si aspetta.
(Sesto toglie la spada a Cornelia)

CORNELIA O dolci accenti!
O care labbra!
Dunque sull'alba de' tuoi giorni
hai tanto cor?

SESTO Son Sesto,
e di Pompeo erede son dell'alma!

CORNELIA Animo, o figlio, ardire!
Io coraggiosa ti seguirò.

SESTO Ma! (oh dio!)
chi al re fellone ci scorterà?

CLEOPATRA (Is this Cornelia,
Pompey's wife?)

CORNELIA Ah no! among these tools
I will choose a sword,
and with a bold hand,
against Ptolemy in the palace ...

*(No sooner has Cornelia taken
a sword from the war gear
than Sextus arrives)*

SEXTUS Mother, stop; what are you doing?

CORNELIA Let go of these weapons:
I want to take my revenge
against the tyrant,
the murderer of my husband.

SEXTUS That vengeance
is expected from Sextus only.
(Sextus takes the sword from Cornelia)

CORNELIA O sweet words!
O dear lips!
Then in the dawn of your days
you have so much heart.

SEXTUS I am Sextus,
and of Pompey heir to his spirit.

CORNELIA Courage, my son, and dare!
I will follow you bravely.

SEXTUS But, O God,
who will guide us to the villainous king?

CLEOPATRA Cleopatra

NIRENO (Non ti scoprir!)

CLEOPATRA E Lidia ancor,
perché quell'empio cada,
ti saran scudo,
e t'apriran la strada.

CORNELIA E chi ti sprona amabile donzella,
oggi in nostro soccorso offrir te stessa?

CLEOPATRA La fellonia
d'un re tiranno, il giusto.
Sotto nome di Lidia
io servo a Cleopatra;
se in virtù del tuo braccio
ascende al trono, sarai felice,
e scorgerai qual sono.

CORNELIA Chi a noi sarà di scorta?

CLEOPATRA (*Accennando a Nireno*)
Questi, che alla regina è fido servo,
saprà cauto condurvi all'alta impresa.

SESTO Figlio non è,
chi vendicar non cura
del genitor la morte.
Armerò questa destra,
e al suol trafitto cadrà punito
il gran tiran d'Egitto.

22 – ARIA

SESTO Cara speme, questo core
tu cominci a lusingar.

CLEOPATRA Cleopatra.

NIRENUS (Do not reveal yourself!)

CLEOPATRA And Lydia too,
so that the villain may fall,
will be your shield,
and open the way for you.

CORNELIA And what drives you, fair maiden,
to offer yourself in our aid today?

CLEOPATRA The crimes
of a tyrant king, justice.
under the name of Lydia
I serve Cleopatra;
if thanks to your arms
she ascends the throne, you will be happy,
and discover what I am.

CORNELIA Who will be our escort?

CLEOPATRA (*Indicating Nirenus*)
This one, who is a faithful servant to the queen,
with caution will guide you to the great enterprise.

SEXTUS He is no son,
who does not care to avenge
the death of his father.
I will take arms,
and the great tyrant of Egypt will fall punished
to the ground, run through.

22 – ARIA

SEXTUS Dear hope, you begin
to flatter this heart.

Par che il ciel presti favore
i miei torti a vendicar.
(Partono Cornelia, Sesto e Nireno)

23 – RECITATIVO

CLEOPATRA Vegli pur il germano
alla propria salvezza:
che già contro gli mossi
di Cesare la spada,
di Sesto e di Cornelia il giusto sdegno.
Senza un certo periglio
non creda aver solo d'Egitto il regno.

24 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Tu la mia stella sei
amabile speranza,
e porgi ai desir miei
un grato, e bel piacer.
Qual sia di questo core
la stabile costanza,
e quanto possa amore
s'ha in breve da veder.
(Parte)

SCENA NONA
(Atrio nel palagio de' Tolomei)

25 – RECITATIVO

TOLOMEO Cesare, alla tua destra
stende fasci di scettri
generosa la sorte.

CESARE Tolomeo, a tante grazie
io non so dir, se maggior lume
apporti mentre l'uscio del giorno
egli diserra il sole in cielo

For it seems that heaven lends its favour
to avenge my wrongs.
(Exeunt Cornelia, Sextus and Nirenus)

23 – RECITATIVE

CLEOPATRA Let my brother watch out
for his own safety:
already raised against him are
Caesar's sword and
the righteous disdain of Sextus and Cornelia;
he should not imagine alone to have rule over
Egypt without a certain danger.

24 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA You are my guiding star,
friendly hope,
and grant to my wishes
a sweet and fair satisfaction.
Soon we shall see
the steady constancy
of this heart,
and how much love can do.
(Exit)

SCENE 9
(Atrium of Ptolemy's palace)

25 – RECITATIVE

PTOLEMY Caesar, fate in her generosity
has placed sheaves of sceptres
in your hand.

CAESAR Ptolemy, to so many merits
I cannot say which brings greater light,
the sun in heaven,
as it opens the gate of day,

o Tolomeo qui in terra.
Ma! sappi, una mal'opra
ogni gran lume oscura.

ACHILLA (*a Tolomeo*)
(Sino al real aspetto egli t'offende.)

TOLOMEO (Temerario latin!)

CESARE (So che m'intende.)

TOLOMEO Alle stanze reali
questi, che miri, t'apriran le porte,
e a te guida saranno.
(Empio, tu pur venisti in braccio a morte.)

CESARE (Scorgo in quel volto
un simulato inganno.)

26 – ARIA

CESARE Va tacito e nascosto,
quand'avidò è di preda
l'astuto cacciatore.
E chi è mal far disposto,
non brama, che si veda
l'inganno del suo cor.
(*Parte*)

SCENA DECIMA

27 – RECITATIVO

ACHILLA Sire, con Sesto il figlio,
questa è Cornelia.

TOLOMEO (Oh che sembianze, amore!)

or Ptolemy here on earth.
But be aware, that every bad deed
darkens each great light.

ACHILAS (*to Ptolemy*)
(Will he insult you even to your royal face?)

PTOLEMY (Impudent Latin!)

CAESAR (I know he understands me.)

PTOLEMY These men
whom you see will open the doors to
the royal chambers and will be your guides.
(Villain, you too have come into the arms of death.)

CAESAR (I see dissembling treason
in that face.)

26 – ARIA

CAESAR The astute hunter
goes quietly and hidden
when he is eager for prey.
And anyone who is disposed to do evil,
does not wish that anyone can see
the deceitfulness of his heart.
(*Exit*)

SCENE 10

27 – RECITATIVE

ACHILAS My Lord, with Sextus the son
this is Cornelia.

PTOLEMY (Oh what a vision, Love!)

CORNELIA Ingrato, a quel Pompeo,
che al tuo gran padre il diadema reale
stabilì sulla chioma,
tu recidesti il capo in faccia a Roma!

SESTO Empio, ti sfido a singolar certame;
veder farò con generosa destra
aperto a questo regno
che non sei Tolomeo,
che se' un indegno.

TOLOMEO Olà! da vigil
stuol sian custoditi questi romani arditi.

ACHILLA Alto signor,
condona il lor cieco furor.

TOLOMEO Per or mi basta,
ch'abbia garzon sì folle
di carcere la reggia.
(alle guardie)
Costei, che baldanzosa
vilipese il rispetto
di maestà regnante,
nel giardin del serraglio
abbia per pena il coltivar i fiori.
(ad Achilla)
Io per te serbo
questa dell'alma tua bella tiranna.

ACHILLA Felice me!

TOLOMEO (Quanto costui s'inganna!)
(Parte)

CORNELIA Ungrateful! Did you, in the face
of Rome, cut off the head of that Pompey,
who placed the royal diadem
on your great father's head?

SEXTUS Wicked one, I challenge you to single combat:
with my noble hand, I will show,
to the whole kingdom,
that you are no Ptolemy,
you are a villain.

PTOLEMY Hey there! Let these insolent
Romans be placed under guard.

ACHILAS Great Lord,
pardon their blind fury!

PTOLEMY For now it is enough for me
to have this so foolish boy
imprisoned in the palace.
(to the guards)
She, who rashly
insulted the respect
of the reigning monarch,
will have as punishment to cultivate flowers
in the garden of the harem.
(to Achilas)
I keep for you
the fair tyrant of your soul.

ACHILAS Lucky me!

PTOLEMY (How much he fools himself!)
(Exit)

SCENA UNDICESIMA

ACHILLA Cornelia, in quei tuoi lumi
sta legato il mio cor,
se all'amor mio giri sereno il ciglio,
e i talami concedi,
sarà la madre in libertà col figlio.

CORNELIA Barbaro, una romana sposa
ad un vil egizio?

SESTO A te consorte?
Ah no; pria della morte ...

ACHILLA Olà, per regal legge
omai si guidi prigionier nella reggia
così audace garzon.

CORNELIA Seguirò anch'io
l'amata prole, il caro figlio mio.

ACHILLA Tu ferma il piede, e pensa
di non trovar pietade a ciò,
che chiedi, se pietade
al mio amor pria non concedi.

28 – ARIA

ACHILLA Tu sei il cor di questo core,
sei il mio ben, non t'adira!
Per amor io chiedo amore,
più da te non vuoi bramar.
(Parte)

SCENE 11

ACHILAS Cornelia, my heart is bound
by your eyes. If you turn your eyes
kindly to my love,
and agree to wed me,
the mother with the son will be freed.

CORNELIA Barbarian, a Roman woman
wife of a vile Egyptian?

SEXTUS Consort to you?
Ah no, rather death ...

ACHILAS Hey there: by royal order now,
at once place this audacious boy
in prison in the palace.

CORNELIA I shall follow too
my beloved child, my dear son.

ACHILAS You stay there, and consider:
you will not find
the mercy you ask for,
if you do not take pity on my love.

28 – ARIA

ACHILAS You are the heart of this heart,
you are my beloved, do not be angry.
Out of love I ask for love,
I do not want to ask more from you.
(Exit)

Volume 2

1 – RECITATIVO

SESTO Madre!

CORNELIA Mia vita!

SESTO Addio!

*(Mentre le guardie vogliono condur via Sesto,
Cornelia corre a ritenerlo per un braccio)*

CORNELIA Dove, dove, inumani
l'anima mia guidate? Empi, lasciate,
che al mio core, al mio bene
io porga almen gli ultimi baci. Ahi pene!

2 – DUETTO

CORNELIA E SESTO
Son nata a lagrimar,
e il dolce mio conforto,
ah sempre piangerò:
se il fato ci tradì,
sereno e lieto dì
mai più sperar potrò.

Son nato a sospirar,
e il dolce mio conforto,
ah sempre piangerò:
se il fato ci tradì,
sereno e lieto dì
mai più sperar potrò.

1 – RECITATIVE

SEXTUS Mother!

CORNELIA My life!

SEXTUS Farewell.

*(As the guards go to lead Sextus away,
Cornelia runs to restrain him by the arm)*

CORNELIA Where, where, inhuman ones,
do you lead my beloved son? Villains,
at least let me give my heart,
my dearest one the final kisses.

2 – DUET

CORNELIA & SEXTUS
I am born to weep
and my sweet comfort,
ah, I shall ever bewail.
If fate has betrayed us,
I can never hope for
a serene and happy day.

I am born to sigh
and my sweet comfort,
ah, I shall ever bewail.
If fate has betrayed us,
I can never hope for
a serene and happy day.

ATTO II

*(Deliziosa selva di cedri
con il monte Parnaso nel prospetto,
il quale contiene in se' la reggia della Virtù)*

SCENA PRIMA

3 – RECITATIVO

CLEOPATRA Eseguiesti, oh Niren,
quanto t'imposi?

NIRENO Adempito è il comando.

CLEOPATRA Giunto è Cesare in corte?

NIRENO Io ve 'l condussi,
ed ei già a queste soglie il piè rivolge.

CLEOPATRA Ma dimmi:
è in pronto la meditata scena?

NIRENO Infra le nubi
l'altra reggia sfavilla;
ma che far pensi?

CLEOPATRA Amore già suggerì all'idea
stravagante pensier; ho già risolto,
sotto finte apparenze
far prigionier d'amor chi 'l cor m'ha tolto.

NIRENO A lui ti scoprirai?

CLEOPATRA Non è ancor tempo.

NIRENO Io che far deggio?

ACT II

*(A charming grove of cedars
with Mount Parnassus in prospect,
which contains the Palace of Virtue)*

SCENE 1

3 – RECITATIVE

CLEOPATRA Have you done, Nirenus,
all I commanded you?

NIRENUS Your command has been carried out.

CLEOPATRA Has Caesar arrived in the court?

NIRENUS I conducted him there,
and even now he makes his way towards us.

CLEOPATRA But tell me:
is the planned spectacle ready?

NIRENUS Amidst the clouds
the great palace shimmers;
but what are you thinking of doing?

CLEOPATRA The god of love has already
suggested an extravagant idea to my thoughts;
I have resolved under false pretences to make
a prisoner of love he who has taken my heart.

NIRENUS Will you reveal yourself to him?

CLEOPATRA It is not yet the time.

NIRENUS What must I do?

CLEOPATRA Attendi
Cesare qui in disparte; indi lo guida
in questi alberghi, e poi lo guida ancora
colà nelle mie stanze, e a lui dirai,
che per dargli contezza
di quanto dal suo re gli si contende,
pria che tramonti il sol Lidia l'attende.
(Parte)

SCENA SECONDA

NIRENO Da Cleopatra apprenda
chi è seguace d'amor l'astuzie e frodi.

CESARE Dov'è, Niren,
Dov'è l'anima mia?

NIRENO In questo loco
in breve verrà Lidia, signor.

4 – SINFONIA
(*Qui s'ode vaga sinfonia di vari strumenti*)

RECITATIVO
CESARE Taci!

NIRENO Che fia?

CESARE Cieli, e qual delle sfere
scende armonico suon,
che mi rapisce?

NIRENO Avrà di selce
il cor chi non languisce.

CLEOPATRA Wait for
Caesar in hiding; then lead him
to this place, and afterwards lead him again
to my chambers, and tell him,
that to give an account
of what the king is plotting against him,
before the sun sets, Lydia awaits him.
(Exit)

SCENE 2

NIRENUS Let him, who is a follower of love,
learn from Cleopatra wiles and deceits.

CAESAR Where, Nirenus,
where is my love?

NIRENUS To this place,
in a short time Lydia will come, my Lord.

4 – SYMPHONY
(*A lovely symphony of various instruments is heard*)

RECITATIVE
CAESAR Be silent!

NIRENUS What could it be?

CAESAR Heavens, and what is this harmonious
sound descending from the spheres,
which ravishes me?

NIRENUS Who does not languish
has a heart of flint.

SINFONIA

*(S'ode nuovamente una sinfonia;
s'apre il Parnasso,
e vedesi in trono la Virtù,
assistita dalle nove Muse)*

RECITATIVO

CESARE Giulio, ch e miri?
E quando con abisso di luce
scesero i numi in terra?

5 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA V'adoro, pupille,
saette d'amore,
le vostre faville
son grate nel sen.
Pietose vi brama
il mesto mio core,
ch'ogn'ora vi chiama
l'amato suo ben.

RECITATIVO

CESARE Non ha in cielo il tonante
melodia che pareggi un sì bel canto.

ARIA

CLEOPATRA V'adoro, pupille ...

6 – RECITATIVO

CESARE Vola, vola mio cor, al dolce incanto.
*(Mentre Cesare corre a Cleopatra,
si chiude il Parnasso,
e torna la scena come prima)*
E come?
Ah! che del mio gioir
invido è il nume!

SYMPHONY

*(Here Parnassus opens,
and Virtue is seen
on her throne,
attended by the nine Muses)*

RECITATIVE

CAESAR Julius, what do you see?
And when, in a torrent of light,
have the gods descended to earth?

5 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA I adore you, fair eyes,
arrows of love,
your sparks
sweetly pierce my breast.
My sad heart
begs for your pity,
that every hour calls you
its beloved.

RECITATIVE

CAESAR The Thunderer does not have in heaven
a melody equal to such a sweet song.

ARIA

CLEOPATRA I adore you ...

6 – RECITATIVE

CAESAR Fly, fly, my heart, to this sweet enchantment ...
*(As Caesar runs to Cleopatra,
Parnassus closes,
and the scene returns to its original form)*
and what?
Ah, the gods
are jealous of my happiness!

NIRENO Signor, udisti,
e che ti par di Lidia?

CESARE Virtù cotanta
Lidia possiede?
Ah! Che se già piangente
mi saettò tra le armi,
io ben m'avveggiò,
che bellezza sì vaga
cantando lega,
e lagrimando impiaga.

NIRENO Signor, se amor t'accese,
non t'affligger no, no;
Lidia è cortese: anzi, se non t'è grave,
ella t'attende nelle sue stanze or.

CESARE Lidia mi brama?

NIRENO Ed ella a Cleopatra
anche ti scorterà.

CESARE Guidami tosto
in seno al mio tesoro,
acciò che dolce renda il mio martoro.

7 – ARIA

CESARE Se in fiorito ameno prato
l'augellin tra fiori, e fronde
si nasconde,
fa più grato
il suo cantar.
Se così Lidia vezzosa
spiega ancor notti canore,
più graziosa

NIRENUS Listen, my Lord,
what do you think of Lydia?

CAESAR Does Lydia then
possess such virtue?
Ah, since her tears have
already pierced my heart,
I now realize well
that beauty so lovely
binds with her singing,
and wounds with her tears.

NIRENUS My Lord, if love has enflamed you,
do not grieve, no, no; Lydia is kind.
Indeed, if it is not too much trouble for you,
she awaits you even now in her rooms.

CAESAR Lydia wishes to see me?

NIRENUS And she will also
take you to Cleopatra.

CAESAR Lead me at once
to my treasure,
so that she may make my torment sweet.

7 – ARIA

CAESAR If in a pleasant flowery meadow
a little bird hides itself
among flowers and leaves,
it makes its song
lovelier.
If thus lovely Lydia also makes
her melodious voice heard in the night,
even more delightful

fa ogni core
innamorar.

SCENA TERZA

*(Giardino del serraglio,
dove corrisponde quello delle fiere.
Cornelia, con piccola zappa nelle mani,
che vien coltivando i fiori)*

8 – ARIOSO

CORNELIA Deh piangete,
oh mesti lumi,
già per voi non v'è più speme.

9 – RECITATIVO

ACHILLA Bella, non lacrimare,
cangerà il tuo destin le crude tempre.

CORNELIA Chi nacque a sospirar,
piange per sempre.

ACHILLA Un consenso amoroso,
che tu presti ad Achilla
può sottrarti al rigor di servitù.

CORNELIA Olà! così non mi parlar mai più.

ACHILLA Oh dio! Ascolta, ove vai?

CORNELIA Fuggo da te per non mirarti mai.

SCENA QUARTA

*(Mentre Cornelia fugge,
incontra Tolomeo,
che la prende per la mano)*

she makes every heart
enamoured.

SCENE 3

*(Garden of the seraglio,
which adjoins that of the wild beasts.
Cornelia, with a little hoe in her hands,
cultivating the flowers, and then Achilles)*

8. ARIOSO

CORNELIA Ah weep,
sad eyes,
already for you there is no more hope.

9 – RECITATIVE

ACHILAS Fair one, do not weep!
Your cruel fate will change.

CORNELIA Who is born to sigh,
weeps for ever.

ACHILAS A loving consent
which you give to Achilles
can free you from the rigour of servitude.

CORNELIA What! Never speak to me like that again.

ACHILAS O God! Listen, where are you going?

CORNELIA I flee from you never to see you more.

SCENE 4

*(As Cornelia flees,
she meets Ptolemy,
who takes her by the hand)*

TOLOMEO Bella, placa lo sdegno.

CORNELIA Lasciami, iniquo re!

ACHILLA Sire, qua mi portai,
per ammollir questa crudel,
che adoro.

TOLOMEO Fu pietosa a' tuoi detti?

ACHILLA Ella mi sprezza ognor,
ed io mi moro.

TOLOMEO (Respiro, oh ciel!)
Bella, lo sdegno ammorza.
(Tira da parte Achilla)
Amico, e ben?

ACHILLA Signor, oggi vedrai
Cesare estinto al suolo,
re vendicato, e regnator tu solo.

TOLOMEO Parti,
eseguisce, e spera;
avrà 'n mercede la tua crudel.
(Folle è costui se 'l crede.)

10 – ARIA

ACHILLA Se a me non sei crudele,
ognor sarò fedele
a te questo mio cor.
Ma se spietata sempre
ver me non cangi tempre,
aspetta sol rigor.
(Parte)

PTOLEMY Fair one, calm your fury!

CORNELIA Let me go, wicked king!

ACHILAS Sire, I came here
to soften this cruel one,
whom I adore.

PTOLEMY Did she take pity on your words?

ACHILAS She still scorns me,
and it is killing me.

PTOLEMY (I breathe again, O heaven!)
Fair one, calm down!
(Takes Achilas aside)
Well, my friend?

ACHILAS My Lord, today you will see
Caesar dead on the ground,
you, an avenged king, and sole ruler.

PTOLEMY Leave,
carry it out, and take heart;
you will have your cruel beauty as a reward.
(He's a fool if he believes that.)

10 – ARIA

ACHILAS If you are not cruel to me,
this my heart
will always be faithful.
But if you are still merciless
and do not change your attitude towards me,
expect only harshness.
(Exit)

11 – RECITATIVO

TOLOMEO Bella, contanto aborri
chi ti prega d'amar?

CORNELIA Un traditore
degnò non è d'amor.

TOLOMEO Tanto rigore?
Ma se un re ti bramasse?

CORNELIA Sarei una furia
in agitargli il core.

TOLOMEO Possibil che in quel volto
non alberghi pietà?
Che in questo seno.
*(Stende la destra al seno di Cornelia,
che sdegnosa si ritira)*

CORNELIA Freni l'anima insana
lo stimolo del senso,
pensa che son Cornelia,
e son romana.
(Parte)

TOLOMEO Tanto ritrosa a un re?
Perfida donna.
Forza userò,
se non han luogo i prieghi,
e involarti saprò
ciò ch'or mi nieghi.

12 – ARIA

TOLOMEO Sì, spietata, il tuo rigore
sveglia l'odio in questo sen.

11 – RECITATIVE

PTOLEMY Fair one, do you so loathe him,
who begs you for love?

CORNELIA A traitor
is not worthy of love.

PTOLEMY Such harshness?
But if a king were to desire you?

CORNELIA I would be a fury
and tear out his heart.

PTOLEMY Can it be possible
the pity does not dwell in that face?
That within this breast ...
*(Stretches out his hand towards Cornelia's bosom;
she recoils indignantly)*

CORNELIA Let your insane mind
restrain the ardour of your senses;
remember, I am Cornelia,
and I am a Roman.
(Exit)

PTOLEMY Such resistance to a king?
Perfidious woman!
I will use force
if my pleas are unavailing,
and will tear from you
what you now deny me.

12 – ARIA

PTOLEMY Yes, merciless one, your harshness
arouses hatred in this breast.

Giacché sprezzì questo core,
prova infida il mio velen!
(Parte)

SCENA QUINTA

13 – RECITATIVO

CORNELIA (*Che rientra*)
Su, che si tarda? or che partì 'l lascivo,
un generoso ardir l'onor mi salvì;
tra le fauci de' mostri
mi scaglierò da queste eccelse mura,
cibo sarò di fiere;
non paventa il morir un'alma forte.
Addio Roma, addio Sesto;
io corro a morte.

SESTO (*Entra*)
Ferma! che fai?

CORNELIA Chi mi trattiene il passo?

SESTO Madre?

CORNELIA Madre! che veggio?
Figlio, Sesto, mio core!
Come qui ne venisti?

SESTO Io per sottrarti
al regnator lascivo,
di Niren con la scorta
quivi occulto mi trassi.

CORNELIA Troppo è certo
il periglio in cui, figlio, t'esponi.

Since you despise my heart,
you will taste, faithless one, my venom!
(Exit)

SCENE 5

13 – RECITATIVE

CORNELIA (*Re-enters*)
Come, why tarry? Now the lewd one has gone,
noble courage will save my honour;
I will throw myself from these high walls
into the jaws of monsters,
I shall be food for wild beasts;
a strong heart does not fear dying.
Farewell Rome, farewell Sextus!
I run to death.

SEXTUS (*Enters*)
Stop! What are you doing?

CORNELIA Who is holding me back?

SEXTUS Mother!

CORNELIA Mother? What do I see?
Son, Sextus, my dear one!
How did you get here?

SEXTUS I, to save you
from the lecherous king,
with Nirenus as guide,
hid myself secretly there.

CORNELIA The danger to which
you expose yourself, my son, is too certain.

SESTO Chi alla vendetta aspira
vita non cura o madre.
Si cadrà Sesto, o caderà il tiranno.

SCENA SESTA

NIRENO (*Entra*)
Cornelia, infauste nove.
Il re m'impone,
che tra le sue dilette io ti conduca.

CORNELIA Oh dio!

SESTO Numi, che sento?

NIRENO Non vi turbate no:
unqua sospetto a Tolomeo non fui;
ambi verrete là, dove il re tiranno
è in preda alle lascivie:
colà Sesto nascoso
in suo potere avrà l'alta vendetta;
egli solo, ed inerme
far non potrà difesa.

SESTO Molto, molto ti devo.

CORNELIA Assista il cielo
una sì giusta impresa.

14 – ARIA

CORNELIA Cessa omai di sospirare,
non è sempre irato il cielo;
contro i miseri suol fare
benché tardo le vendette.
Il nocchier, s'irato è il mare,
mai non perde la speranza,

SEXTUS Who aspires to revenge
does not care for life, mother.
Yes, Sextus will fall, or the tyrant will fall.

SCENE 6

NIRENUS (*Enters*)
Cornelia, bad news.
The king has ordered me to take you
into the midst of the women of his harem.

CORNELIA O God!

SEXTUS Gods, what do I hear?

NIRENUS Do not worry, no:
the king has never suspected me;
you both will come there where the tyrant
king is in thrall to lechery.
There Sextus, hidden,
will have the power to take noble revenge;
the king, alone and unarmed,
will have no defence.

SEXTUS Much, much I owe you.

CORNELIA May heaven aid
such a just enterprise.

14 – ARIA

CORNELIA Now stop sighing,
heaven is not always angry
with the wretched; it usually takes,
even if slowly, vengeance.
The helmsman, even if the sea is angry,
never loses hope,

onde avvien che la costanza
la salute a lui promette.
(Parte)

15 – RECITATIVO

SESTO Figlio non è, chi vendicar
non cura del genitor lo scempio.
Su dunque alla vendetta
ti prepara, alma forte,
e prima di morir altrui dà la morte!

16 – ARIA

SESTO L'angue offeso mai riposa,
se il veleno pria non spande
dentro il sangue all'offensor.
Così l'alma mia non osa
di mostrarsi altera e grande
se non svelle l'empio cor.
(Parte)

SCENA SETTIMA
(Luogo di delizie)

17 – RECITATIVO

CLEOPATRA Esser qui deve in breve
l'idolo del mio sen Cesare amato;
ei sa che qui l'attende
Lidia sua, che l'adora;
per discoprir, se porta il sen piagato,
fingerò di dormir, porterò meco,
mascherato nel sonno, amor, ch'è cieco.
(Si pone a sedere)

18 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Venere bella,
per un istante,

which shows that standing firm
promises his safety.
(Exit)

15 – RECITATIVE

SEXTUS He is no son, who does not care
to avenge the murder of his father.
Up, then, for revenge
prepare yourself, strong heart,
and before dying, deal death to another!

16 – ARIA

SEXTUS The offended snake never rests
until first it has spread its poison
into the offender's blood.
So my soul will not dare
to show itself proud or great,
until it has torn out the wicked heart.
(Exit)

SCENE 7
(A pleasure garden)

17 – RECITATIVE

CLEOPATRA Soon will be here
the idol of my heart, beloved Caesar;
he knows that here is waiting
his Lydia, who adores him;
to find out whether he bears a wounded heart,
I shall pretend to sleep, and I shall bring with me,
masked in sleep, Love, who is blind.
(She sits)

18 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Fair Venus,
for a moment,

deh! mi concedi
le grazie tutte
del dio d'amor.
Tu ben prevedi
che 'l mio sembiante
dée far amante
un regio cor.
(*Finge di dormire*)

19 – RECITATIVO

CESARE Che veggio, oh numi!
Il mio bel sol qui dorme!
Vaga Lidia, adorata,
ah! se di tanto incendio
che mi bolle nel seno,
ti penetrasse al cor qualche scintilla,
ben potresti sperar
dalla tua sorte d'essermi
forse un dì sposa e consorte.

CLEOPATRA (*sorgendo*)
Sposa? T'adorerò fino alla morte.

CESARE Olà!

CLEOPATRA Che, ti conturbi?

CESARE Una donzella,
serva di Cleopatra a tanto aspira?

CLEOPATRA Cesare, frena l'ire:
giacché desta m'aborri,
perché m'abbi ad amar, torno a dormire.
(*Va per tornar al suo luogo*)

ah, grant me
all the graces
of the god of love.
You foresee well
that my appearance
should make a lover
of a royal heart.
(*Pretends to sleep*)

19 – RECITATIVE

CAESAR What do I see, O gods?
My fair sun sleeping here?
Lovely Lydia, adored one,
ah, if of all the fires
that are boiling in my breast,
a few sparks penetrated to your heart,
you could well hope that your fate
might be one day
to be my wife and consort.

CLEOPATRA (*rising*)
Wife? I will adore you until death.

CAESAR Easy now!

CLEOPATRA What is disturbing you?

CAESAR A maid,
servant to Cleopatra, aspires to so much?

CLEOPATRA Caesar, calm down!
Since you abhor me awake,
I shall go back to sleep, so you can love me.
(*Goes to return to her former position*)

SCENA OTTAVA

CURIO (*Entra con spada impugnata*)
Cesare, sei tradito.

CESARE (*Snuda il brando*)
Io tradito?

CLEOPATRA Che sento?

CURIO Mentr'io ver le tue stanze,
signor, t'attendo,
odo di genti e spade ripercosso fragor;
ed una voce
gridar: «Cesare mora»,
ed improvviso a te ne volo,
ad arrecar l'avviso.

CESARE Così dunque in Egitto
regna la fellonia? Bella, rimanti;
sono infausti per noi cotesti lidi.

CLEOPATRA Fermati, non partir,
che tu m'uccidi.

CESARE Lascia, Lidia!

CLEOPATRA Che Lidia?
Io volerò al conflitto;
in tua difesa sino agli stessi abissi
scenderia Cleopatra.
(Ohimè, che dissi?)

CESARE Cleopatra?

SCENE 8

CURIUS (*Enters with sword in hand*)
Caesar, you are betrayed.

CAESAR (*Draws his sword*)
I betrayed?

CLEOPATRA What do I hear?

CURIUS While I was waiting for you
near your rooms, my Lord,
I heard people and the sound of swords
and a voice crying
'Die Caesar',
and quickly I ran to you,
to bring you this news.

CAESAR Thus reigns treachery
in Egypt, then? Fair one, remain;
these shores are ill-fated for us.

CLEOPATRA Stop, do not go,
you will kill me.

CAESAR Let me go, Lydia.

CLEOPATRA What Lydia?
I will rush into in your defence,
Cleopatra would descend
even into the abyss.
(Alas, what have I said?)

CAESAR Cleopatra?

CLEOPATRA Sì.

CESARE Dov'è?

CLEOPATRA Cesare,
volgi in questo seno,
e non altrove il lampo
di quegli occhi, che adoro:
son Cleopatra,
e non più Lidia in campo.

CESARE Sei Cleopatra?

CLEOPATRA In breve
de' congiurati il temerario ardire
questo aspetto regal farà, che cada;
torna al fianco signor quella tua spada.
(Parte)

CESARE Curio, a sì strani eventi
resto immobile sasso.

CURIO Stupido son.

CESARE Che udisti mai, cor mio?
Lidia è Cleopatra? E la spregiasti?
Oh dio!

CLEOPATRA *(Che frettolosa ritorna)*
Fuggi, Cesare, fuggi.
Dalle regie tue stanze
a questa fonte volano i congiurati.

CESARE Come; nemmen Cleopatra
valse a frenar sì perfido ardimento?

CLEOPATRA Yes

CAESAR Where is she?

CLEOPATRA Caesar,
turn towards this heart,
and nowhere else, the light
of those eyes, which I adore:
I am Cleopatra,
and no longer disguised as Lydia.

CAESAR You are Cleopatra?

CLEOPATRA In an instant
the sight of my royal person will make
the conspirators' reckless boldness to fail:
my Lord, return your sword to your side.
(Exit)

CAESAR Curius, before such strange events
I stand turned to stone.

CURIUS I am confused.

CAESAR Whatever did you hear, my heart?
Lydia is Cleopatra? And I insulted her?
O God!

CLEOPATRA *(Returning hurriedly)*
Fly, Caesar, fly!
The conspirators are rushing
from your chambers to this fountain.

CAESAR What? Even Cleopatra
could not restrain such audacious treachery?

CLEOPATRA La porpora reale
scudo non è bastante al tradimento.

CESARE Vengano pure: ho core.
Cesar non seppe mai che sia timore.

CLEOPATRA Oh dio!
Tu il cor mi struggi;
sàlvati o mio bel sol,
Cesare fuggi.

20 – ARIA E CORO

CESARE Al lampo dell'armi
quest'alma guerriera
vendetta farà.
Non fia che disarmi
la destra guerriera
chi forza le dà.
(Parte con Curio)

CONGIURATI (*di dentro*)
Mora Cesare, mora!

21 – ACCOMPAGNATO

CLEOPATRA Che sento? Oh Dio!
Morrà Cleopatra ancora.
Anima vile che parli mai? Deh taci,
avrò, per vendicarmi
in bellicosa parte
di Bellona in sembianza un cor di Marte.
Intanto oh numi,
voi che il ciel reggete,
difendete il mio bene,
ch'egli è del seno mio conforto e speme.

CLEOPATRA The royal purple
is an insufficient shield against treason.

CAESAR Let them come then, I have courage.
Caesar does not know what fear is.

CLEOPATRA O God,
you are breaking my heart;
save yourself, my fair sun!
Caesar, flee!

20 – ARIA AND CHORUS

CAESAR In the clash of arms
this warrior heart
will take revenge.
Whatever gives it its strength
cannot disarm
this war-like hand.
(Exit with Curius)

THE CONSPIRATORS (*offstage*)
Die Caesar, die!

21 – ACCOMPAGNATO

CLEOPATRA What do I hear? O gods!
Must Cleopatra die too?
Wretched soul, what are you saying? Ah, be silent!
To avenge myself
in warlike combat
I shall have the form of Bellona, the heart of Mars.
Meanwhile, O gods,
you who rule the heavens,
protect my beloved!
For he is the comfort and the hope of my heart.

22 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Se pietà di me non senti
giusto ciel io morirò.
Tu da' pace a' miei tormenti
o quest'alma spirerò.

SCENA NONA

(Camera nel serraglio)

23 – RECITATIVO

TOLOMEO Questo è luogo di pace,
onde il ferro depongo,
(Pone la spada sopra una tavola)
che inutile ornamento
ora è questo in amor fero stromento.

CORNELIA (Numi! che fia di me?)

TOLOMEO Ma! qui Cornelia:
questo candido lin tu prendi in segno,
secondo il mio costume,
di colei che destino al regio letto,
alle notturne piume.

*(Cornelia prende il fazzoletto,
e poi lo getta con sdegno.
Entra Sesto)*

SESTO (Ora è il tempo,
oh mia destra:
il proprio ferro che uccise il genitore,
l'empio trafigga.)

22 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA If you feel no pity for me,
just heaven, I shall die.
Grant relief to my torments,
or this soul will expire.

SCENE 9

(A room in the seraglio)

23 – RECITATIVE

PTOLEMY This is a place of peace.
where I lay aside my sword,
(Puts the sword on a table)
for such a cruel instrument
is, in love, a useless ornament.

CORNELIA (Gods! What will become of me?)

PTOLEMY But Cornelia is here?
Take this pure white linen as a sign,
according to my custom,
of she who is destined
for the royal couch, the bed of feathers.

*(Cornelia takes the handkerchief
and then throws it away with disdain.
Sextus enters)*

SEXTUS (Now is the time,
O my hand;
the same sword that killed my father,
will run the villain through.)

SCENA DECIMA

*(Mentre Sesto vuol prendere la spada di Tolomeo,
vien sorpreso da Achilla,
che entra in furia e la prende)*

ACHILLA Sire, prendi!

TOLOMEO Che fia?

SESTO (Stelle crudeli!)

ACHILLA Arma la man,
che non è tempo, o sire,
di star fra vezzi in amorosa parte;
queste veneri lascia,
e vola a Marte.

TOLOMEO Qual nemica fortuna?

ACHILLA Mentre io cerco di Cesare la strage,
s'avventa egli fra i nostri,
ma il numero di molti
alla virtù d'un solo al fin prevale;
fugge con Curio, e da balcon sublime
si scaglia d'improvviso in mezzo il porto,
ed io miro in un punto Curio sommerso,
e Cesare già morto.

CORNELIA (Cesare morto?)

SESTO (Oh Numi!)

ACHILLA Or Cleopatra
vola al campo romano,
e delle trombe ai bellicosi carmi,

SCENE 10

*(As Sextus goes to take Ptolemy's sword,
he is surprised by Achilles,
who enters furiously and takes it)*

ACHILAS My Lord, take it!

PTOLEMY What is happening?

SEXTUS (Cruel stars!)

ACHILAS Arm yourself,
for it is not the time
to lose yourself in the pleasures of love;
leave these Venuses,
and hurry to Mars!

PTOLEMY What unlucky fortune ...

ACHILAS While I was seeking Caesar's death,
he rushed among us,
but the number of many
prevailed against the courage of one;
he fled with Curius, and from a high balcony
they suddenly threw themselves into the middle
of the harbour, and at one point I saw Curius submerged,
and Caesar already dead.

CORNELIA (Caesar is dead?)

SEXTUS (O gods!)

ACHILAS Meanwhile Cleopatra
hastened to the Roman camp,
and with trumpets and warlike songs,

di Cesare in vedetta,
corre co' suoi contro
il tuo campo all'armi.

TOLOMEO D'una femmina
imbelle non pavento i furori.

ACHILLA A te sol resta
che in premio di tant'opra
in isposa costei tu mi conceda.

TOLOMEO Temerario.
Beltà che non ha pari
d'un tradimento in guiderdon pretendi?

ACHILLA Sire ...

TOLOMEO Ammutisci, e parti;
son re, saprò premiarti.

ACHILLA Il mio servir
questa mercé riceve?

TOLOMEO Olà!

ACHILLA (A chi fede non ha,
fe' non si deve.)
(Parte)

TOLOMEO Ciascuna si ritiri;
dopo breve soggiorno
vittorioso fra voi farò ritorno.
(Parte con le favorite)

to avenge Caesar,
she and her followers rushed in arms
to attack your camp.

PTOLEMY I am not afraid
of the anger of a weak woman.

ACHILAS It only remains for you,
as a reward for so much work,
to give this woman in marriage to me.

PTOLEMY Such audacity!
Beauty without equal
do you expect as a reward for treason?

ACHILAS Your Majesty ...

PTOLEMY Be silent and be gone!
I am king; I know how to reward you.

ACHILAS Is this the thanks
I receive for my service?

PTOLEMY Enough!

ACHILAS (One owes no faith
to he who has none.)
(Exit)

PTOLEMY Let all now retire;
after a little time
I shall return victorious among you.
(Exit with his favourites)

SCENA UNDICESIMA

SESTO Ecco in tutto perduta
la speme di vendetta:
ferro, inerme ti vedo,
io per non più soffrir morte a te chiedo.
(Tira la spada per uccidersi)

CORNELIA Ferma: che fai?
se perverso il destino fe' vano il colpo,
invan disperi o Sesto.

SESTO Or che Cesar è estinto
che più sperar possiamo?

CORNELIA Animo, ardire:
Niren già t'apre il passo;
al campo vanne,
colà tu rivedrai l'empio tiranno,
e a lui fa' poi mirar con alma forte,
che incontrar sai, non paventar la morte.
(Parte)

SESTO Seguirò tanto
con ignoto passo,
ogn'orma del tiranno,
finché nel suo periglio
farò che cada esangue
del padre l'uccisor per man del figlio.

24 – ARIA

SESTO L'aure che spira
tiranno e fiero
egli non merta
di respirar.
Mi sveglia all'ira

SCENE 11

SEXTUS Behold,
all hope of vengeance is lost!
Sword, I see you unguarded,
to suffer no more I ask you for death.
(Takes the sword to kill himself)

CORNELIA Stop: what are you doing?
Even if wilful fate has made our blow useless,
you despair in vain, Sextus.

SEXTUS Now that Caesar is dead,
what more can we hope for?

CORNELIA Take courage and dare!
Nirenus has already opened the way for you;
go to the camp:
there you will see the evil tyrant again,
and then, with a strong heart, you can show him
that you know how to meet, not fear, death.
(Exit)

SEXTUS I shall follow
the tyrant's steps
wherever they may lead,
until in his peril
I shall make the murderer of my
father fall, dead at the hands of the son.

24 – ARIA

SEXTUS Tyrannical and cruel,
he does not deserve
to breathe
the gentle breezes.
That brutal heart

quel cor severo,
sua morte solo
mi può placar.

Volume 3

ATTO III

*(Bosco vicino alla città di Alessandria,
con una parte del porto a margine)*

SCENA PRIMA

1 – RECITATIVO

ACHILLA In tal modi si premia
il mio lungo servir, la fede mia?
Barbaro re, ti pentirai fra breve
d'avermi offeso, andiamo
prodi campioni, e a Cleopatra
avanti offriam le nostre insegne,
offriamle il core,
e sia menda al tardar l'alto valore.

2 – ARIA

ACHILLA Dal fulgor di questa spada
vuò che cada
umiliato un empio cor;
già non dée soffrir l'offese
che difese
il suo regno col valor.
(Parte)

awakens my anger,
only his death
can calm me.

ACT III

*(A wood near the city of Alexandria,
Achilas with a squad of soldiers)*

SCENE 1

1 – RECITATIVE

ACHILAS In such a manner
is my long service, my faith rewarded?
Barbarous king, soon you will repent
having offended me. Let us go,
brave champions, and before Cleopatra
let us offer our banners,
let us offer her our hearts,
and shame on him who is slow in showing courage.

2 – ARIA

ACHILAS From the brightness of this sword
I want to see an evil heart
fall humiliated.
Surely he should not suffer insult,
he who defended
his country with courage.
(Exit)

SCENA SECONDA

3 – SINFONIA

*(Al suono d'una bellica sinfonia
segue la battaglia tra soldati
di Cleopatra e di Tolomeo,
e questi ultimi hanno la vittoria;
finita la sinfonia,
entra Tolomeo con Cleopatra prigioniera)*

4 – RECITATIVO

TOLOMEO Vinta cadesti al balenar
di questo mio fulmine reale.

CLEOPATRA Tolomeo non mi vinse;
mi tradì quella cieca,
che tiran ti protegge,
senz'onor, senza fede,
e senza legge.

TOLOMEO Olà! sì baldanzosa
del vincitor al riverito aspetto?
S'incateni costei.
(Una guardia incatena Cleopatra)

CLEOPATRA Empio crudel,
ti puniranno i dèi.

TOLOMEO Costei,
che per germana aborro e sdegno,
si conduca alla reggia; io colà voglio
che ad onta del suo ardire,
genuflessa m'adori a piè del soglio.

SCENE 2

3 – SYMPHONY

*(To the sound of a warlike symphony,
the battle between the soldiers
of Cleopatra and Ptolemy follows;
the latter are victorious;
at the end of the symphony,
enter Ptolemy with Cleopatra prisoner)*

4 – RECITATIVE

PTOLEMY You fell defeated at the flash
of this, my royal lightning.

CLEOPATRA Ptolemy has not defeated me;
I was betrayed by blind fortune,
which tyrant, protects you,
without honour, without faith,
and without law.

PTOLEMY Enough! So bold before
the victor to whom respect is due?
Let her be chained.
(A guard puts Cleopatra in chains)

CLEOPATRA Cruel monster!
The gods will punish you.

PTOLEMY Let this one,
whom as sister I abhor and despise,
be taken to the palace; there I want
that, in spite of her audacity,
to worship me, kneeling at the foot of the throne.

5 – ARIA

TOLOMEO Domerò la tua fierezza
ch'il mio trono aborre, e sprezza,
e umiliata ti vedrò.
Tu qual Icaro ribelle
sormontar brami le stelle,
ma quell'ali io tarperò.
(Parte)

SCENA TERZA

6 – RECITATIVO

CLEOPATRA E pur così in un giorno
perdo fasti, e grandezze?
Ahi fato rio!
Cesare il mio bel nume è forse estinto;
Cornelia, e Sesto inermi son,
né sanno darmi soccorso. O dio!
Non resta alcuna speme al viver mio.

7 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Piangerò la sorte mia
sì crudele e tanto ria
finché vita in petto avrò.
Ma poi morta d'ogn'intorno
il tiranno e notte e giorno
fatta spettro agiterò.
(Parte)

SCENA QUARTA

*(Giulio Cesare, da una parte,
poi Sesto dall'altra con Nireno,
ed Achilla, steso sul margine
del porto mortalmente ferito)*

5 – ARIA

PTOLEMY I will vanquish your pride
which abhors and despises my throne,
and I will see you humiliated.
You, like rebellious Icarus,
want to climb higher than the stars,
but I will clip your wings.
(Exit)

SCENE 3

6 – RECITATIVE

CLEOPATRA And so in a single day
I lose splendour and greatness?
Ah cruel fate!
Caesar, my beautiful idol, is perhaps dead;
Cornelia and Sextus are powerless,
and do not know how to give me aid. O God!
No hope remains in my life.

7 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA I will weep over my fate,
so cruel and so harsh,
as long as I have life in my breast.
But when I am dead,
I shall become a ghost and torment
the tyrant from all directions, night and day.
(Exit)

SCENE 4

*(Julius Caesar to one side,
then Sextus to the other with Nirenus,
and Achilles, lying on edge
of the harbour, mortally wounded)*

8 – ACCOMPAGNATO ED ARIA

CESARE Dall'ondoso periglio
salvo mi porta al lido
il mio propizio fato.
Qui la celeste parca
non tronca ancor lo stame alla mia vita!
Ma dove andrò? e chi mi porge aita?
Ove son le mie schiere?
ove son le legioni,
che a tante mie vittorie il varco apriro?
Solo in queste erme arene
al monarca del mondo errar conviene?

Aure, deh per pietà
spirate al petto mio
per dar conforto oh dio
al mio dolor.
Dite: dov'è, che fa
l'idol del mio sen,
l'amato e dolce ben
di questo cor?

Ma d'ogni intorno i' veggio
sparse d'arme e d'estinti
l'infortunate arene;
segno d'infausto annunzio al fin sarà.

9 – RECITATIVO

SESTO Cerco invan Tolomeo
per vendicarmi, e il mio destino
spietato a me l'asconde.

ACHILLA (*Sul margine del porto,
mortalmente ferito*)
Hai vinto, o fato!

8 – ACCOMPAGNATO AND ARIA

CAESAR From the peril of the waves
my propitious fate
has brought me safe to the shore.
Here heavenly Parca
has not yet cut the thread of my life!
But where shall I go? And who will bring me aid?
Where are my troops?
Where are the legions
that paved the way to so many of my victories?
Is it right for the monarch of the world
to wander alone on these deserted sands?

Breezes, ah, for pity
breathe on my breast,
to bring comfort, O God,
to my sorrow.
Say, where is she, what is
the idol of my soul doing,
the beloved and sweet love
of this heart.

But on all sides I see
the dismal sands
strewn with weapons and the dead,
it must be an inauspicious sign of my end.

9 – RECITATIVE

SEXTUS I vain I look for Ptolemy
to avenge myself, and my cruel destiny
hides him from me.

ACHILAS (*On the edge of the harbour,
mortally wounded*)
You have won, Fate!

SESTO Quai tronche voci?

ACHILLA Avete vinto o stelle!

CESARE (Due guerrieri?
In disparte de' loro accenti il suono
udir io voglio, e penetrar chi sono.)
(*Si ritira*)

NIRENO (*a Sesto*)
È questi Achilla,
in mezzo al sen piagato.

CESARE (Achilla è il moribondo?)

NIRENO (*ad Achilla*)
Amico, amico!

ACHILLA (*a Nireno*)
Oh cavalier ignoto
che con voci d'amico
articoli il mio nome,
deh, se fia mai che ti conceda il fato
di favellar un giorno
alla bella Cornelia, al sol di Roma:
digli che quell'Achilla,
che consigliò del gran Pompeo la morte.

SESTO (Ah scellerato!)

CESARE (Ah, iniquo!)

ACHILLA Che per averla in moglie,
contro Cesare ordì l'alta congiura.

SEXTUS What dying voice?

ACHILAS You have won, stars!

CAESAR (Two warriors?
I will stand to one side
to hear their voices and discover who they are.
(*He retires*)

NIRENUS (*to Sextus*)
This is Achilas,
wounded in the breast.

CAESAR (Achilas is dead?)

NIRENUS (*to Achilas*)
Friend, friend!

ACHILAS (*to Nirenus*)
O unknown warrior,
who speaks my name
with the voice of friendship,
ah, if ever fate ever allows you
to speak one day
to the fair Cornelia, under Rome's sun,
tell her that that Achilas,
who advised the death of great Pompey ...

SEXTUS (Ah, villain!)

CAESAR (Ah, scoundrel!)

ACHILAS That to have her as wife,
devised the great conspiracy against Caesar ...

SESTO (Ah, traditor!)

CESARE (Fellone!)

ACHILLA Sol per cagion di vendicarsi
un giorno contro il re Tolomeo
giunse in tal notte a spirar
l'alma in guerra.
Questo sigil tu prendi;
nel più vicino speco
cento armati guerrieri
a questo segno ad ubbidir son pronti;
con questi puoi per sotterranea
via penetrar nella reggia,
e in breve d'ora torre all'empio Cornelia,
e insieme far che vendicato io mora.
(Dà il sigillo a Sesto e spira)

NIRENO Spirò l'alma il fellow.

SESTO Tu scaglia intanto
il cadavere indegno
del traditor nell'onde.

SCENA QUINTA

CESARE (*Giulio Cesare si avvanza,
e toglie il sigillo a Sesto*)
Lascia questo sigillo.

SESTO (*Alza la visiera*)
Oh dèi!

CESARE Che veggio!

SESTO Signor!

SEXTUS (Ah, traitor!)

CAESAR (Criminal!)

ACHILAS ... only for reason to avenge
himself one day against King Ptolemy,
last night gave
his life in battle.
Take this seal:
in a nearby cave
a hundred armed warriors
are ready to obey this sign:
with these you can get into the palace
by an underground way, and in a short time
rescue Cornelia from the evil one,
and also see that I die avenged.
(Gives the seal to Sextus and dies)

NIRENUS The criminal has breathed his last.

SEXTUS Meanwhile, throw
the unworthy body
of the traitor into the waves.

SCENE 5

CAESAR (*Julius Caesar,
who seizes the seal from Sextus*)
Let go of that seal.

SEXTUS (*Lifts his visor*)
O gods!

CAESAR What do I see?

SEXTUS My Lord!

CESARE Tu Sesto?

SESTO E come vivo Cesare?
e illeso ch'il sottrasse alla parca?

CESARE Io fra l'onde
nuotando al lido giunsi:
non ti turbar; mi porterò alla reggia,
e m'aprirò con tal sigil l'ingresso.
Teco Niren mi siegua;
o che torrò alla sorte
Cornelia e Cleopatra,
o avrò la morte.

10 – ARIA

CESARE Quel torrente, che cade dal monte,
tutto atterra che incontro lo sta.
Tale anch'io, a chi oppone la fronte
dal mio brando atterrato sarà.
(Parte)

SCENA SESTA

11 – RECITATIVO

SESTO Tutto lice sperar,
Cesare vive.

NIRENO Segui o Sesto i suoi passi.

SESTO Achilla estinto?
or sì che il ciel comincia
a far le mie vendette.
Sì, sì, mi dice il core
che mio sarà il desiato onore.

CAESAR You, Sextus.

SEXTUS And how Caesar, di you escape
from the Fates alive and unharmed?

CAESAR I swam through the waves
and reached the shore.
Do not worry: I shall take myself to the palace,
and I shall open the entrance with this seal.
You and Nirenus follow me:
either I shall rescue
Cornelia and Cleopatra
from fate, or I shall have death.

10 – ARIA

CAESAR That torrent, which falls from the mountain,
brings down all that stand against it.
I am the same, anyone who opposes me
will be cut down by my sword.
(Exit)

SCENE 6

11 – RECITATIVE

SEXTUS We may hope for everything,
Caesar is alive.

NIRENUS Follow, Sextus, in his footsteps.

SEXTUS Achilles is dead?
Now I see that heaven
begins to avenge me,
yes, yes, my heart tells me
that the longed-for honour shall be mine.

12 – ARIA

SESTO La giustizia ha già sull'arco
pronto strale alla vendetta
per punire un traditor.
Quanto è tarda la saetta
tanto più crudele aspetta
la sua pena un empio cor.
(Parte con Nireno)

SCENA SETTIMA

(Appartamento di Cleopatra)

13 – ACCOMPAGNATO

CLEOPATRA Voi, che mie fide ancelle
un tempo foste or lagrimate invan,
più mie non siete.
Il barbaro germano,
che mi privò del regno,
a me vi toglie, e a me torrà la vita.
(Si ode strepito d'armi nella scena)
Ma! qual strepito d'armi?
Ah sì, più mie non siete,
spirar l'alma Cleopatra or or vedrete.

CESARE (Cesare con spada
nuda in mano e soldati)

Forzai l'ingresso a tua salvezza, oh cara.

CLEOPATRA Cesare o un'ombra sei?

CESARE Olà, partite omai
empi ministri d'un tiranno spietato;
Cesare così vuol, pronti ubbidite!
(Scaccia le guardie di Tolomeo)

CLEOPATRA Ah! ben ti riconosco

12 – ARIA

SEXTUS Justice already has on its bow
an arrow ready for vengeance,
to punish a traitor.
The longer the arrow is delayed.
so much crueller will be the suffering
that awaits an impious heart.
(Exit with Nirenus)

SCENE 7

(Cleopatra's apartment)

13 – ACCOMPAGNATO

CLEOPATRA You, who were once
my faithful handmaids, weep in vain,
you are no longer mine.
My barbarous brother,
who deprived me of the kingdom,
has taken you from me, and will take my life.
(The clashing of arms is heard offstage)
But what clashing of arms?
Ah yes, you are mine no longer,
and now you will see how Cleopatra will die.

CAESAR (Enters with drawn
sword and soldiers)

I forced my entry to save you, my beloved!

CLEOPATRA Are you Caesar or a ghost?

CAESAR Depart at once,
wicked servants of a merciless tyrant!
Caesar wishes thus, obey immediately!
(Ptolemy's guards scatter)

CLEOPATRA Ah, I recognize you well,

amato mio tesoro
al valor del tuo braccio;
ombra no tu non sei Cesare amato.
(Corre ad abbracciarlo)

CESARE Cara ti stringo al seno;
ha cangiato vicende il nostro fato.

CLEOPATRA Come salvo ti vedo?

CESARE Tempo avrò di svelarti
ogni ascosa cagion del viver mio;
libera sei, vanne fra tanto al porto,
e le disperse schiere in un raduna;
colà mi rivedrai; Marte mi chiama
all'impresa total di questo suolo.
Per conquistar non che l'Egitto,
un mondo basta l'ardir
di questo petto solo.
(Parte)

14 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA Da tempeste il legno infranto,
se poi salvo giunge in porto
non sa più che desiar.
Così il cor tra pene, e pianto,
or che trova il suo conforto
torna l'anima a bear.

SCENA OTTAVA
(Sala reggia di Tolomeo)

15 – RECITATIVO

TOLOMEO Cornelia, è tempo omai
che tu doni pietade a un re, che langue.

my beloved treasure,
by the valour of your arm!
A ghost, no you are not, beloved Caesar.
(Runs to embrace him)

CAESAR Dearest, I clasp you to my breast:
the course of our destiny has changed.

CLEOPATRA How is it that I see you safe?

CAESAR I will have time to reveal to you
the mysterious circumstances of my being alive.
You are free, hurry to the harbour,
and there gather together the scattered troops:
you will see me again there: Mars calls me
to the decisive battle for this country.
To conquer, not just Egypt,
but the world, the courage
of this heart is enough.
(Exit)

14 – ARIA

CLEOPATRA The ship, broken by storms,
when it reaches the harbour safely
does not know what it wants.
So the heart, after pain and sighing,
when it finds its consolation,
returns the soul to happiness.

SCENE 8
(The throne room)

15 – RECITATIVE

PTOLEMY Cornelia, it is now time
that you take pity on a king who languishes.

CORNELIA Speri invano mercede.
Come obliar poss'io
l'estinto mio consorte?

TOLOMEO Altro te n'offre il regnator d'Egitto;
cara al mio sen ti stringo ...

CORNELIA Scostati indegno,
e pensa che Cornelia è romana.

TOLOMEO Non ho più da temer:
Cesare estinto, Cleopatra umiliata,
or non ascolto che il mio proprio voler.
(Si vuol accostar di nuovo)

CORNELIA Se alcun non temi,
temi pur questo ferro,
che a me sola s'aspetta
far del morto consorte or la vendetta!

SCENA NONA
*(Mentre Cornelia corre alla vita di Tolomeo,
sopraggiunge Sesto con spada nuda in mano)*

SESTO T'arresta o genitrice!
A me, oh tiranno!

TOLOMEO *(Snuda il ferro)*
Io son tradito. Oh numi!

SESTO Sappi perfido mostro,
e per tua pena:
salvo i numi serbar dai tradimenti
Cesare invitto, e Cleopatra ei sciolse
dall'ingiuste catene; ei qui se n' viene:

CORNELIA You hope for pity in vain.
How can I forget
my dead husband?

PTOLEMY The ruler of Egypt offers you another one;
dearest, I clasp you to my breast.

CORNELIA Stay away from me, you villain,
and remember that Cornelia is a Roman.

PTOLEMY I have nothing more to fear:
Caesar is dead, Cleopatra humiliated,
now I listen to nothing except my own will.
(Tries to approach her anew)

CORNELIA If you fear no one,
then fear this weapon,
for it is for me alone
to take revenge for my husband's death!

SCENE 9
*(While Cornelia hurls herself at Ptolemy,
Sextus arrives with a drawn sword)*

SEXTUS Stop, mother!
To me, tyrant!

PTOLEMY *(Draws his sword)*
I am betrayed, ye gods!

SEXTUS Know, perfidious monster,
and for your pains:
the gods saved unbeaten Caesar
from treachery, and released Cleopatra
from unjust chains; he is coming here;

io lo precorro; e questo chiede
quel sangue ch'è dovuto a Sesto.

TOLOMEO Del folle ardir
ti pentirai ben presto.
*(Si battono, e Tolomeo vien ferito,
e cade morto in scena)*

CORNELIA Or sì ti riconosco,
figlio del gran Pompeo,
e al sen ti stringo.

SESTO
Giace il tiranno estinto;
or padre sì, tu benché vinto,
hai vinto.
(Parte)

16 – ARIA

CORNELIA Non ha più che temere
quest'alma vendicata,
or sì sarò beata,
comincio a respirar.
Or vuò tutto in godere
si cangi il mio tormento,
ch'è vano ogni lamento,
se il ciel mi fa sperar.
(Parte)

I come before him, and this sword
calls for the blood that is due to Sextus.

PTOLEMY You will soon repent
your foolish recklessness.
*(They fight, and Ptolemy is wounded
and falls dead on stage)*

CORNELIA Now yes, I recognize you,
great Pompey's son,
and clasp you to my breast.

SEXTUS
The tyrant has fallen dead;
now Father, although you were beaten,
you have truly won.
(Exit)

16 – ARIA

CORNELIA This avenged heart
has nothing more to fear,
yes, it now will be blessed,
I begin to breathe again.
Now I want all my torment
to change to rejoicing,
for every lament is in vain,
if heaven makes me hope.
(Exit)

SCENA ULTIMA

(Porto di Alessandria)

17 – SINFONIA

*(Cesare, Cleopatra e séguito d'egizi
con trombe e timpani, finita la sinfonia entrano.
Curio e Nireno, e poi Sesto e Cornelia,
con un paggio che porta lo scettro
e la Corona di Tolomeo)*

18 – RECITATIVO

NIRENO Qui Curio vincitor,
qui tuo l'Egitto;
in quest'ondoso piano
Cesare ognun acclama
signor del mondo e imperator romano.

CESARE *(a Nireno)*
Del suo fido servir
premio condegno avrà Nireno;
(a Curio)
Curio, già del tuo forte braccio
si conosce il valor.
(Sesto e Cornelia s'inginocchiano)
Ma qui Cornelia?

SESTO Signor, ecco a' tuoi piedi
e di Cornelia e di Pompeo il figlio;
egli la grande offesa
del tradimento enorme
vendicò con suo brando,
e tolse a Tolomeo l'alma col sangue.

CESARE E morì Tolomeo?

CORNELIA Se Sesto in mia difesa

LAST SCENE

(The Port of Alexandria)

17 – SYMPHONY

*(Caesar, Cleopatra and a suite of Egyptians
with trumpets and drums: at the end of the symphony
Curius and Nirenus enter, then Sextus and Cornelia,
with a page bearing Ptolemy's
crown and sceptre)*

18 – RECITATIVE

NIRENUS Behold Curius victorious,
Egypt is yours;
in this rolling plain,
all acclaim Caesar
ruler of the world and Roman Emperor.

CAESAR *(to Nirenus)*
For his faithful service,
Nirenus will have a worthy reward;
(to Curius)
Curio, the valour of your mighty arm
is already known.
(Cornelia and Sextus, who kneels)
But Cornelia here?

SEXTUS My Lord, here at your feet
is the son of Cornelia and Pompey;
he has avenged the great crime
of monstrous betrayal
with his sword,
and took Ptolemy's life and his blood.

CAESAR Ptolemy is dead?

CORNELIA If Sextus had not hurried

pronto non accorrea,
di Cornelia l'onore era in pericolo.

CESARE La vendetta del padre
è ben dovuta al figlio;
sorgi, Sesto,
ed amico al sen t'accolgo.

SESTO Ogni affetto di fede in te rivolgo.
(Si abbracciano)

CORNELIA Dell'estinto tiranno
ecco i segni reali, a te li porgo.
*(Dà la Corona,
e lo scettro di Tolomeo a Cesare)*

CESARE Bellissima Cleopatra:
quel diadema che miri,
a te s'aspetta;
io te ne cingo il crine regina dell'Egitto;
darai norma alle genti,
e legge al trono.

CLEOPATRA Cesare, questo regno
è sol tuo dono.
Tributaria regina imperator
t'adorerò di Roma.

CESARE (Amor chi vide
mai più bella chioma?)

19 – DUETTO

CLEOPATRA E CESARE
Caro! Più amabile beltà
mai non si troverà
del tuo bel volto;

to my defence,
Cornelia's honour would have been in peril.

CAESAR Revenge for a father
is a son's duty;
rise, Sextus,
and I hold you to my heart as a friend.

SEXTUS I turn all my loyalty to you.
(They embrace)

CORNELIA Here are the royal emblems
of the dead tyrant; I offer them to you.
*(Gives Ptolemy's crown
and sceptre to Caesar)*

CAESAR Fairest Cleopatra,
that diadem which you are looking at,
awaits you;
I shall place it on your brow; Queen of Egypt,
you will give guidance to the people
and laws to the throne.

CLEOPATRA Caesar, this kingdom
is but your gift;
as a vassal queen
I shall adore the Emperor of Rome.

CAESAR (Love, has anyone seen
such lovely hair?)

19 – DUET

CLEOPATRA & CAESAR
Dear one! A more gracious beauty
will never be found
than your fair face.

in me non splenderà
né amor né fedeltà
da te disciolto.

Bella! Più amabile beltà
mai non si troverà
del tuo bel volto;
in te non splenderà
né amor né fedeltà
da me disciolto.

20 – RECITATIVO

CESARE Goda pur or l'Egitto
in più tranquillo stato
la prima libertà: Cesare brama
dall'uno all'altro polo
che il gran nome roman sbanda la fama.

21 – CORO

Ritorni omai nel nostro core
la bella gioia ed il piacer;
sgombrato è il sen d'ogni dolor,
ciascun ritorni ora a goder.

CLEOPATRA E CESARE

Bel contento il sen già si prepara,
se tu sarai costante ognor per me;
così fuggì dal cor la doglia amara
e sol vi resta amor, costanze e fé.

Giacomo Francesco Bussani (*fl.* 1673–80)
Nicola Francesco Haym (1678–1729)

In me will not shine
love or fidelity
apart from you.

Fair one! A more gracious beauty
will never be found
than your fair face.
In you will not shine
love or fidelity
apart from me.

20 – RECITATIVE

CAESAR From henceforth let Egypt
enjoy in greater tranquility
its former freedom. Caesar wishes
that the great name of Rome
should spread from pole to pole.

21 – CHORUS

Now let fair joy and peace
return to our hearts;
our souls are freed from all sorrows,
let all rejoice again.

CLEOPATRA & CAESAR

My breast already swells with great contentment,
if you will be always faithful to me;
thus bitter woe has left my heart,
and all that remain are love, constancy and faith.

Translation by Peter Jones © Peter Jones 2025

The English Concert

The English Concert was founded in 1972. It was at the forefront of a revolution in the way early music was performed. Early pioneers, like TEC founder Trevor Pinnock, embraced this journey of curiosity and exploration, discovering new sounds and textures that enriched the emotional impact of the music. This also coincided with a golden age of recording technology and, through LPs, cassettes, and CDs, The English Concert soon became a household name. Outstanding musicianship was suddenly accessible to many.

Since 2008, under the helm of Artistic Director Harry Bicket, TEC has deepened its commitment to Handel's operas and oratorios, and continued to build on its global reputation. From Carnegie Hall to the Incheon Arts Center, with regular appearances at the BBC Proms and a residency at Garsington Opera, TEC has become known not just as a great period orchestra, but, to quote US friends, 'a great orchestra, period'. Over half a century in, TEC's Handel for All project (creating performance films of all of Handel's music made available for free) provides a focus for its 'second 50 years' and is reaching new audiences who might not otherwise get to enjoy Baroque music. Their trademark dynamism, whether seen on stage, on record, or on camera, feels somehow ever-renewing.

Harry Bicket

director

Born in Liverpool, Harry Bicket is internationally renowned for his interpretations of Baroque and Classical repertoire. He studied at the Royal College of Music and the University of Oxford, where he was organ scholar at Christ Church. He is an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music and was appointed OBE in the 2022 Queen's birthday honours.

In 2007, Bicket was appointed Artistic Director of The English Concert. With the ensemble, he has undertaken an ambitious project to record all of Handel's works as an online resource. Since 2013, Bicket has also served as Music Director of Santa Fe Opera, conducting a wide range of repertoire including *Don Giovanni*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Fidelio*, *Carmen*, *Alcina*, *Candide* and *Così fan tutte*. He has also appeared with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company, Houston Grand Opera, and leading opera houses across Europe, including Opéra national de Paris, Bayerische Staatsoper, Opernhaus Zürich and the Liceu, Barcelona, where he received the opera critics' best conductor prize.

A prolific recording artist, his extensive discography includes numerous acclaimed recordings with The English Concert, as well as GRAMMY®- and Gramophone-nominated collaborations with artists such as Renée Fleming, Ian Bostridge, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, David Daniels and Susan Graham.

One of the most in-demand artists today, British soprano **Louise Alder** has firmly established herself as ‘an instinctive singing-actress’ (*The Arts Desk*) and ‘a terrific talent, combining a big, lustrous voice with flawless intonation and keen intelligence’ (*The Times*). A hugely versatile artist, she is equally at home in the world’s most important opera, concert, and recital venues such as the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Wiener Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper, Carnegie Hall, and Wigmore Hall, where she held a widely acclaimed artistic residency in 2024. Her extensive discography includes *Chère Nuit: French Songs*, featuring works from Ravel to Yvain (Chandos); *The Russian Connection*, featuring songs by Rachmaninov, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Medtner and Britten (Chandos); an album of Strauss Lieder, *Through Life and Love* (Orchid Classics) with pianist Joseph Middleton; *Theodora* (title role, Arcangelo/Alpha Classics); Lucia (*The Rape of Lucretia*, Opus Arte/Glyndebourne); and Silandra in Cesti’s *L’Oronteia* (OEHMS Classics/Oper Frankfurt). A former member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt, Alder studied at the Royal College of Music’s International Opera School, where she was the inaugural Kiri Te Kanawa Scholar. She is the winner of the Young Singer Award at the 2017 International Opera Awards, the Dame Joan Sutherland Audience Prize at the 2017 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, the 2015 inaugural Young British Soloists’ Competition, and the recipient of Glyndebourne’s 2014 John Christie Award.

*

Christophe Dumaux is one of the most sought-after singers in the world. He is a regular guest on the world’s major opera stages. In 2001, Dumaux burst onto the opera scene as Eustazio in Handel’s *Rinaldo*, conducted by René Jacobs at the Festival Radio France Montpellier Occitanie. Since this thunderous debut, his career has been firmly established in the world’s leading musical venues: Metropolitan Opera in New York, Opéra national de Paris, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Wiener Staatsoper, Theater an der Wien, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Salzburg and Glyndebourne Festivals, and BBC Proms. He tackles masterpieces from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from Monteverdi to Mozart, not forgetting, of course, Handel, undoubtedly one of the geniuses he has

served most extensively. Christophe Dumaux sang Ottone in *Agrippina* in Hamburg; the title role in *Orlando* at the Theater an der Wien and the Teatro Real in Madrid; Polinesso in *Ariodante* at the Wiener Staatsoper, in Salzburg, at the Bolshoi Theatre, Opéra national de Paris and the Opéra national du Rhin; Athamas in *Semele*, Arsamene in *Serse* and then Nerone in *Agrippina* at the Opernhaus Zürich. Dumaux has a special connection with the opera *Giulio Cesare*: after singing the role of Tolomeo all over the world, he has now established himself as an exceptional interpreter of the title role.

★

Lauded by *The Guardian* for her ‘dark and focused’ voice, ‘sensational coloratura’ and ‘spectacular singing’, **Beth Taylor** is one of today’s most electrifying mezzo-sopranos. Taylor regularly performs with many of the world’s leading orchestras, including the Berliner Philharmoniker, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Münchner Philharmoniker, Münchner Rundfunkorchester, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Wiener Symphoniker, Orchestra of the Gran Teatre del Liceu and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. Career highlights include appearances as Bradamante in Handel’s *Alcina* and Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* at Glyndebourne; Dardano in *Amadigi di Gaula* and Falliero in Rossini’s *Bianca e Falliero* at Oper Frankfurt; the title role in *La Cenerentola* at Opéra national de Nancy-Lorraine; Giuliano Gordio in Cavalli’s *Eliogabalo* at Opernhaus Zürich; Arsace in Rossini’s *Semiramide*, Erda in Wagner’s *Das Rheingold* and La Cieca in Ponchielli’s *La Gioconda* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Anna in Berlioz’s *Les Troyens* at the Salzburg Festival and the BBC Proms. A graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and The Open University, Taylor’s teachers include Jennifer Larmore, Margaret Izatt and Iain Paton. Taylor was a grand finalist at the 2023 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, the winner of the 2022 Elizabeth Connell Award and the third prize winner at the 2019 Wigmore Hall competition.

★

Irish mezzo-soprano **Paula Murrihy** is a former member of Oper Frankfurt's ensemble where her roles included Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Lazuli (*L'étoile*), Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Medoro (*Orlando Furioso*), Dejanira (*Hercules*) and Carmen in Barrie Kosky's celebrated production. She has since appeared at leading houses including the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Opéra national de Paris, Gran Teatre del Liceu, Teatro Real, La Monnaie, Semperoper Dresden, Santa Fe Opera, Bolshoi Theatre, Dutch National Opera, Palau de les Arts Valencia and the Salzburg Festival. A frequent collaborator with Harry Bicket and The English Concert, her recent roles include Goffredo (*Rinaldo*), Micah (*Samson*) and Arsamene (*Serse*). She has also worked with the Academy of Ancient Music, Britten Sinfonia, Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, Radio Filharmonisch Orkest and major North American orchestras. An accomplished recitalist, Murrihy has appeared at Wigmore Hall and major festivals. She released her debut solo album *I will walk with my love* in 2020.

★

John Holiday is a distinctive and versatile artist, praised as 'one of the finest countertenors of his generation' (*Los Angeles Times*) and for singing that is 'arrestingly powerful, secure and dramatically high' (*The Wall Street Journal*). Moving fluidly between Baroque repertoire, contemporary opera and American song with stylistic authority and technical assurance, Holiday stars on leading international stages, including the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Komische Oper Berlin and Bayerische Staatsoper, as well as with the world's top orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony and many others. A committed advocate for new music, Holiday has been featured in numerous world premieres, including works by Kevin Puts, Caroline Shaw, Luna Pearl Woolf, Matthew Aucoin and Daniel Bernard Roumain. In addition to his classical work, he curates *The John Holiday Experience*, an eclectic concert programme spanning classical, pop, jazz and R&B. Holiday's debut album, *Over My Head*, has been released on Pentatone in 2026.

★

Morgan Pearse is one of the most exciting baritones of his generation. He studied at the Royal College of Music where he won the Lies Askonas prize and gold medal at the Royal Over-Seas League Annual Music Competition. He was a member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio and subsequently made his UK debut at English National Opera singing Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*. Opera highlights have included Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* and Araspe in *Tolomeo* (Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe), Sid in *Albert Herring* (Buxton International Festival), Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* (State Opera South Australia), Scarpia in *Tosca* (Opera Holland Park), Ned Keene in *Peter Grimes* (Auckland Philharmonia), Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opernhaus Zürich), baritone in *L'Idalma* (Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik), *La serva padrona* with Pinchgut Opera and Papageno (Russian National Orchestra). Performance highlights include solo recitals at Wigmore Hall, and concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Radio Filharmonisch Orkest, The Hallé, Gabrieli Consort & Players, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Academy of Ancient Music, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, King's College Choir Cambridge, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, London Handel Festival and Sydney Philharmonic Orchestra.

*

London-based **Meili Li** is the first Chinese countertenor to establish an international career. He is the winner of the Farinelli Competition (2016) and second prize at the London Handel Festival Competition (2022). He has appeared at the Royal Opera House, Royal Danish Opera, Staatsoper Hamburg, Bayerische Staatsoper, Theater an der Wien, Victorian Opera, London Handel Festival and the Beijing Music Festival. Roles include Licida (*L'Olimpiade*) in Irish National Opera's Olivier-nominated production, Nerone (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and the title roles in Handel's *Giustino* and *Tolomeo* and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. He has collaborated with conductors including Harry Bicket, Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Kent Nagano, Laurence Cummings, Vladimir Jurowski and Jordi Savall. *The New York Times* praised his 'crystalline

timbre deftly suited for Handel' following his Carnegie Hall debut, while *The Guardian* described his voice as 'glorious ... breathtaking'. He studied film at Peking University before completing a master of arts in vocal studies (DipRAM, distinction) at the Royal Academy of Music and an artist diploma in opera (distinction) at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

*

Award-nominated English baritone **Thomas Chenhall** made his international debut as Laquais in *Don Quichotte* at the Wexford Festival Opera in 2019. Since graduation from the Royal Academy of Music in 2021 he has worked extensively throughout the UK, Europe and the United States. Chenhall has performed Handel's *Messiah* to a sold out Usher Hall in Edinburgh under the baton of Michael Bawtree and appeared at the Royal Opera House as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. He made his house debut at the Glyndebourne Festival as Curio in David McVicar's production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare*. He recently performed the title role in a concert performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with the BVA Trust and Glyndebourne Players in London and made his house debut covering Schaunard in English National Opera's revival of Sir Jonathan Miller's *La bohème*.



Louise Alder
@Will Alder



Christophe Dumaux
@Edouard Brane



Beth Taylor
@Olivia da Costa



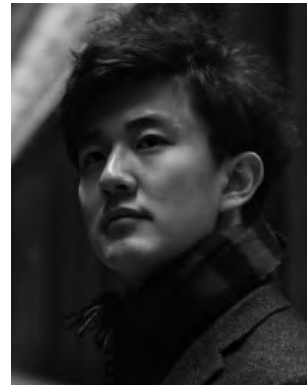
Paula Murrihy
@Barbara Aumüller



John Holiday
@Shervin Lainez



Morgan Pearce
@Eric Melear



Meili Li
@Shitong Zhang



Thomas Chenhall
@Ben Reason

The English Concert

Harry Bicket *director/harpsichord*

violin 1

Nadja Zwiener
Annie Gard
Kinga Ujszászi
Anna Curzon
Jeffrey Gorton
Jimmy Drancsak

violin 2

Tuomo Suni
Elizabeth MacCarthy
Jacek Kurzydło
Davina Clarke
Mark Seow

viola

Alfonso Leal del Ojo
Louise Hogan
Joanna Patrick

cello

Joseph Crouch
Jonathan Byers
Samuel Ng (doubling gamba)

double bass

Alexander Jones

flute

Katy Bircher (doubling recorder)

oboe

Clara Espinosa Encinas
Jon Olaberría López-Quintana

bassoon

Katrin Lazar (doubling recorder)
Fergus Butt

horn

Ursula Paludan Monberg
Joseph Walters
Peter Moutoussis
Anna Drysdale

theorbo

Pablo FitzGerald Cerdán

harp

Oliver Wass

harpsichord

Tom Foster

This recording was made with the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, donors to The English Concert in America, and our Friends and Patrons. We dedicate it to George Burnett on the occasion of his retirement as Chair of the Board of The English Concert. George's visionary leadership enabled us to expand our concert activity and he was instrumental in setting up our Handel for All project. This recording is his, as much as ours.



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