

George Frideric HANDEL (1685–1759) THE POWER OF LOVE Arias from Handel Operas

AMANDA FORSYTHE, soprano

APOLLO'S FIRE | The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra | on period instruments

Jeannette Sorrell, direction

10	Air from Terpsichore	2:30
9	Dunque I lacci/Ah, crudel!, from <i>Rinaldo</i>	7:47
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Texts & Translations

Amor è qual vento, from Orlando

Amor è qual vento, che gira il cervello, ho inteso che a cento commincia bel bello a farli godere, ma a un corto piacere dà un lungo dolor.

Se uniti due cori si credon beati gelosi timori li fan sfortunati; se un core è sprezzato, divien arrabbiato, così fa l'amor.

Geloso tormento, from Almira

Geloso tormento mi va rodendo il cor.

Non dite, che vile quest'anima sia, ch'il morir di gelosia tra le morti è la peggior.

Un cenno leggiadretto, from Serse

Un cenno leggiadretto, un riso vezzosetto, un moto di pupille può far innamorar.

Lusinghe, pianti e frodi son anche certi modi, che destano faville, e tutti io li so far. Love is like the wind, that makes the brain turn, I heard that it starts when it pleases to give a hundred pleasures, but for a short pleasure, it offers long suffering.

If two united hearts believe they are happy jealous fears make them unhappy; if a heart is scorned, it becomes angered, this is how love works.

The torment of jealousy is gnawing at my heart.

Don't say that this soul is unworthy, for dying of jealousy is the worst way to die.

A pretty little gesture, a charming little smile, a movement of the eye can make one fall in love.

Flattery, weeping and deceptions are other certain ways, to generate sparks, and I know how to do them all.

Qual farfalletta, from Partenope

Qual farfalletta Giro a quel lume E 'l mio Cupido Le belle piume Ardendo va.

Quel brio m'alletta Perché m'è fido La mia costanza ogn'altra avanza cangiar non sa. Like a little butterfly,
I turn around that lamp.
And my Cupid
burns
the beautiful feathers.

The sparkle entices me, because he is true to me, my loyalty is greater than anyone else's and it won't change.

Piangerò, from Giulio Cesare

RECITATIVO

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.

Aria

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. RECITATIVE

So it is thus that in one day I lose both pomp and grandeur? Cruel fate!
Cesare, my beautiful god, is perhaps dead;
Cornelia and Sesto are powerless and can't help me. O god!
There is no more hope in my life.

Aria

I will cry my fate, so cruel and mean, so long as I have life in my breast. But then when dead, turned ghost, I will agitate the tyrant all around night and day.

Texts & Translations

Il primo ardor, from Ariodante

Il primo ardor è così caro a questo cor, ch'estinguerlo non vuol quest'alma amante.

Io son fedel, nè mai crudel, e sempre a lui sarà il cor costante. The first flame is so dear to this heart, that this loving soul doesn't want to put it out.

I am faithful, never cruel, and my heart will always be loyal to him.

Dunque I lacci/Ah crudel, from Rinaldo

RECITATIVO Dunque i lacci d'un volto. tante gioie promesse, li spaventi d'Inferno, forza n'avran per arrestar quel crudo? E tu il segui, o mio core! Fatto trofeo d'un infelice amore! No! si svegli 'l furore, si raggiunga l'ingrato, cada a' miei piè svenato! Ohimè! Che fia? Uccider l'alma mia? Ah! Debole mio petto, a un traditor anco puoi dar ricetto? Su, su, furie, ritrovate nova sorte di pena e di flagello! s'uccida, sì... eh! no, ch'è troppo bello!

ARIA
Ah! crudel,
Il pianto mio
Deh! Ti mova per pietà!
O infedel,
al mio desio
proverai la crudeltà.

RECITATIVE

Will the lines of a face, with so much promised happiness, the terrors of Hell, have enough strength to stop one? And you follow him, my heart! you, now the trophy of an unhappy love! No, let the fury awake, let it reach the ungrateful one, let him fall dead at my feet! Alas, what? To kill my loved one? Ah, my weak breast, can you still welcome a traitor? Go, go, furies, find a new kind of pain and punishment! let him be killed, yes... no, for he's too handsome!

ARIA
Alas! Cruel one,
let me weeping
move you to mercy!
Oh unfaithful
you will taste the cruelty
of my desire.

Tornami a vagheggiar, from Alcina

Tornami a vagheggiar, te solo vuol' amar quest' anima fedel, caro, mio bene!

Già ti donai il mio cor fido sarà il mio amor; mai ti sarò crudel, cara mia spene. Look at me again, for this loyal soul wants to love only you, my dear one!

I have already given you my heart, my love will be true; I will never be cruel to you oh my beloved hope.

Amarti si vorrei, from Teseo

Amarti sì vorrei Il Cielo, il Ciel lo sa; Ma più non deggio amarti, Oh Dei che crudeltà: La dura sorte mia Vuòl ch'infedel ti sia E solo per salvarti, Nascondo la pietà. I would really like to love you, Heaven knows; but I must not love you any longer, oh gods, what cruelty: my harsh fate demands that I be unfaithful to you and only to save you I hide my pity.

Da Tempeste, from Giulio Cesare

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.

—4—

The ship shattered by storm if it then reaches safely a port, doesn't know what else to desire. Thus between pain and a weeping heart now that it finds its comfort again makes the soul happy.

translations by Alexandra Amati-Camperi



George Frideric Handel by Balthasar Denner (1685–1749) oil on canvas, c. 1726–1728, National Portrait Gallery

Love, Despair & Virtuoso Fire by Jeannette Sorrell

George Frideric Handel dominated the London opera stage for three decades in the first half of the 18th century. Along with his contemporaries Rameau and Vivaldi, Handel was responsible for bringing the genre of baroque opera to its culmination. With a sophisticated background including early training in Germany followed by five years of study in Italy, Handel arrived on the London scene at a moment when the city was ready to embrace his blend of ambition and international sophistication. A true artist-entrepreneur, he started three commercial opera companies within fifteen years, managing to convince the English nobility that they absolutely needed this entertainment in a foreign language with mostly foreign singers.

However, the London audience was fickle. Handel's successes spawned rivals. He both made and lost a fortune during his years as the Andrew Lloyd Webber of 18th-century London. Like the characters to whom he gave voice, Handel was destined for tumultuous successes, failures, and upheavals. Perhaps this is inevitable for anyone who dedicates himself to that passionate art form of love and despair: opera.

Our exploration of the power of love in Handel's writing traverses nine different operas and a ballet. Here follows a brief introduction to each of these works. In these notes, the operas are listed in chronological order, allowing us to trace the composer's development and creative path over the course of thirty years.

Almira, Queen of Castile (1705). This was Handel's first opera, composed when he was spending a summer playing in the Hamburg orchestra at the age of 19. The libretto is partly in German and partly in Italian, as was the custom at the Hamburg opera house. The opera was a great success. The story concerns the young Queen Almira, who has recently inherited the throne. She is supposed to marry a prince, but is secretly in love with her secretary, Fernando. In the Act I aria "Geloso tormento," Almira sings of her jealous anguish as she believes (mistakenly) that Fernando is flirting with another woman. Handel brilliantly conveys both her rage and her sorrow through the orchestral writing, where the oboe plays a lyrical lament while the strings play pounding repeated notes, which are marked "forte" by Handel each time they appear.

Rinaldo (1711). This was Handel's first opera for London, and in fact it was the first Italian-language opera written specifically for the London stage. Exploring the themes of love, battle and redemption, the story is set during the Crusades and is inspired by Torquato Tasso's 1581 epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (Jerusalem Delivered). The opera faced some resistance from London critics hostile toward the new trend of Italian language. Nevertheless, it was a great popular success, thanks to the richly colorful orchestration and many special staging effects.

Rinaldo is a nobleman in the Christian army that is laying siege to Jerusalem. His betrothed, Almirena, is abducted by the sorceress Armida, Queen of Damascus. In Act II, Rinaldo faces the powerful Armida and demands the release of his beloved. The sorceress-queen finds herself falling in love with him, but Rinaldo rejects her. In a jealous rage, the tormented Armida calls upon her Furies to find "a new kind of pain and punishment" for Rinaldo - but then changes her mind, because "he is too handsome." This dramatic soliloquy consists of the recitativo accompagnato "Dunque i lacci" followed by the tragic aria "Ah, crudel!" Here Handel vividly depicts Armida's despair and madness. The da-capo aria opens with an ominous Largo featuring oboe and bassoon in dialogue. The ensuing B-section is a furious explosion of coloratura fireworks for the soprano and strings. At the return of the tragic Largo, the tumultuous and rapid changes of Armida's moods become painfully apparent.

Teseo (1713). This was Handel's third London opera. Having learned from the failure of his second opera, *Il Pastor fido*, he returned to the formula that had won success for *Rinaldo*: "magical" stage effects – in this case, flying dragons and apparitions. The formula worked and the opera was popular. The story concerns the love of the Athenian hero Teseo and the Princess Agilea. In Act IV, Agilea has been abducted by the evil sorceress Medea and is told by Medea that she must reject Teseo or else see him be killed. Agilea agrees reluctantly, and in an apparition she fearfully tells Teseo that she must not love him anymore, though she wants to. This is the intimate aria, "Amarti sì vorrei." Scored for only soprano and continuo, it stands out in this five-act opera as a moment of quiet and troubled sweetness.

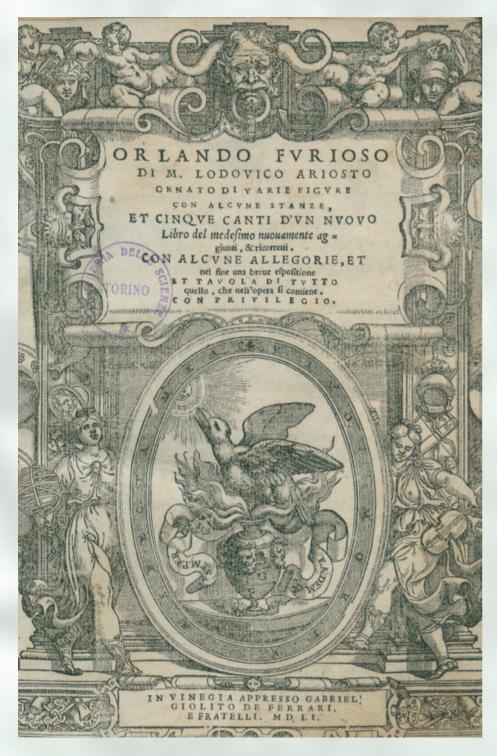
Giulio Cesare (1724). This great opera featured the renowned Francesca Cuzzoni in the pivotal role of Cleopatra. Cleopatra seduces Cesare to gain the throne of Egypt, but then falls passionately in love with him. Handel beautifully conveys her passions and fears – as a political leader and a woman in a violent milieu. Cleopatra sings the famous tragic aria, "Piangerò la sorte mia" (I will lament my fate) in Act III when she fears that Cesare is dead. She believes she has lost both her lover and her powerful position. In the fiery B-section of this da capo aria, Cleopatra imagines the

vengeance she will wreak on her enemies after her death, as a ghost. In the following scene, she sings the coloratura aria "Da Tempeste," which uses the metaphor of a ship tossed at sea to convey her conflicting emotions.

Partenope (1730). This comic opera was composed for the King's Theatre in London. The plot (accused of being "frivolous" at the time) concerns Queen Partenope of Naples, whose hand in marriage is being sought by two different princes. The role of Partenope was created by the great Italian singer Anna Maria Strada del Pò, who was Handel's leading lady in over 24 operas from 1729 to 1737. The pithy critic Ms. Pendarves wrote of Strada, "her voice is without exception fine, but her person very bad, and she makes frightful mouths." The Act II aria "Qual farfaletta" (Like a little butterfly) demonstrates Queen Partenope's flirty and imperious nature. The graceful trilled figures in the violins suggest the flitting butterfly who is irresistibly drawn to the lamp, as lovers are drawn to Partenope.

Orlando (1733). This opera was the first in Handel's great trilogy based on Ludovico Ariosto's 1516 epic poem, *Orlando Furioso*. The poem is concerned with love and chivalry, and takes place against the medieval backdrop of the war between Charlemagne's Christian knights and the Muslim Saracen army. In *Orlando*, the great soldier Orlando of Charlemagne's army falls desperately in love with the pagan princess Angelica. Angelica, however, loves another man; consequently Orlando is driven to madness. Meanwhile, the shepherdess Dorinda is in love with the African prince Medoro. In Act III, Medoro tells her that his heart is not his to give. She then sings of love's turbulent passions in the brilliant coloratura aria "Amor è qual vento" (Love is like the wind). Both singer and orchestra are tossed in a whirlwind as Handel skillfully calls up musical storm imagery.

Ariodante (1735). This opera composed for Covent Garden was the second in Handel's *Orlando furioso* trilogy. The naive servant girl Dalinda sings "Il primo ardor" to express her secret love for the wicked Duke Polinesso, who is actually using her as a pawn. Dalinda's eagerness and excitement tumble forth from this aria in a volley of rapid notes. Handel composed the role of Dalinda for the 23-year-old English singer Cecilia Young, of whom Charles Burney wrote, "her style of singing was infinitely superior to that of any other English woman of her time."



Alcina (1735). The third in Handel's *Orlando furioso* trilogy for Covent Garden, this opera concerns the adventures of the heroic knight Ruggiero and his fiancée Bradamante on the enchanted island ruled by the sorceress Alcina. The cast featured many of the same singers as the *Ariodante* production a few months earlier. While Anna Maria Strada played Alcina, Cecilia Young created the role of Morgana, Alcina's flirty young sister. Morgana is infatuated with "Ricciardo" (Bradamante disguised as a man). At the end of Act I, she sings the flirtatious coloratura aria "Tornami a vagheggiar," believing that Ricciardo loves her as she loves him.

Serse (1738) – In this work, known in English as Xerxes, Handel made important innovations to the *opera seria* tradition. Perhaps influenced by the recent success of ballad operas such as *The Beggar's Opera*, he dared to mix in some comic relief, which had been banished from *opera seria* for many years. He also greatly reduced the amount of recitative and the number of da-capo arias in favor of shorter arias with much less repetition. These innovations were rejected by the public and thus *Serse* was a complete flop in Handel's lifetime. But it is much esteemed today. The action is theoretically set in Persia in 480 B.C., but there is little in the story or the music to suggest this. The heroine Rodalinda has a mischievous sister named Atalanta. Atalanta has many tricks for making men fall in love with her. In the playful aria "Un cenno leggiadretto," she brags about her talents for attracting the opposite sex, whether by means of a flirty gesture, a charming smile, flattery, weeping or deception.



Named for the Greek music of the dance, the 1734 **Terpsichore** ballet suite was composed in French style to feature the Parisian ballerina, Marie Sallé. Handel inserted these new dance movements into a revival of his 1712 opera *Il Pastor fido*. Madame Sallé had caused a sensation in London earlier that year by appearing on stage in a shape-hugging, "Grecian-style" muslin dress, with her hair let down. Handel was hoping that the new dances with Sallé would boost ticket sales for *Il Pastor fido*, which had not been successful in its original form.



Since the Terpsichore dance movements were designed to be interspersed in an opera, we are interweaving them amongst the various arias on the disc. The Chaconne from this suite had been composed earlier as part of Parnasso in Festa, an allegorical piece about Apollo summoning the Muses to demonstrate their arts at a festival. In this Chaconne, I imagine different muses entering the stage, and we change the mood of the piece as each muse appears. One can see why Handel re-used the Chaconne in Terpsichore; it fits beautifully thanks to its French-inspired idiom. The fiery Entrée, titled "Jalousie/Jealousy," is a character piece featuring the typical French violin flourishes known as coups d'archets. The graceful Air with flutes in triple meter is a kind of Menuet, but also exists in a vocal version. The Ballo for flutes and violins is a lively and playful passepied.

> © Jeannette Sorrell San Quirico d'Orcia, Tuscany, Italy 2015

VIOLIN

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HARPSICHORD

Jeannette Sorrell

Mademoiselle Sallé by Maurice Quentin de La Tour (1741) Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Museum



AMANDA FORSYTHE is recognized internationally as one of today's finest lyric sopranos and a leading interpreter of baroque repertoire. Praised for her "Handel mastery" (NEW YORK TIMES), she is particularly admired as a coloratura singer and noted for her "light and luster, wonderful agility and silvery top notes" (OPERA NEWS).

Born in New York City, she received her university education at Vassar College before studying vocal performance at New England Conservatory. She made her New York recital debut as the winner of the 2003 George London Foundation Awards. She also received prizes from the Liederkranz Foundation and the Naumburg Foundation.

Ms. Forsythe made her European operatic debut in 2007 in the role of Corinna in Il viaggio a Reims at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro. This led to an immediate invitation to debut at the Grand Théâtre de Genève as Dalinda (Ariodante), where she was proclaimed "the discovery of the evening" (FINANCIAL TIMES). Her subsequent returns to the Rossini Opera Festival include Bellini duets in the 'Malibran' recital at the invitation of Joyce di Donato, and most recently the role of Jemmy in Guillaume Tell with Juan Diego Florez. Other notable European debuts include Dalinda (Ariodante) at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, and Barbarina (Le nozze di Figaro) at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris. Since then she has returned to Covent Garden several times, including the roles of Manto in Steffani's Niobe, Nannetta in Falstaff (described by GRAMOPHONE as "meltingly beautiful"), and most recently, Amour in Gluck's Orphée under Sir John Eliot Gardiner, to open the 2015-16 season. In 2016 she tours with Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists in the Mozart Requiem and Mozart C Minor Mass.

In the U.S., she is a frequent opera soloist with the Boston Early Music Festival, including the roles of Niobe and Manto in Steffani's Niobe, Poppea in Monteverdi's L'incoronazione di Poppea, and Edilia in Handel's Almira, for which she received rave reviews. Her debut performance as Iris (Semele) for Seattle Opera led to a return invitation in the role of Pamina (Die Zauberflöte) in 2017.

As a concert artist, she appears frequently with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra (San Francisco), Apollo's Fire (Cleveland), Boston Baroque, and Pacific MusicWorks (Seattle). She recently made her debut with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under the baton of Sir Antonio Pappano, where she will return for concert performances of Fidelio (Marzelline) in 2017. Other concert and oratorio highlights include the title role in Handel's Teseo with Philharmonia Baroque at Tanglewood and Lincoln Center; Messiah with the Seattle Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque, and Apollo's Fire; Handel's Orlando and Il trionfo del tempo with Early Music Vancouver; and Bach's St. John Passion as well as Handel, Haydn and Mozart arias with Apollo's Fire. In 2016 she makes her debut with The Boston Symphony under Andris Nelsons in Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Ms. Forsythe can be heard on several recordings with the Boston Early Music Festival, including the 2015 GRAMMY-winning recording of Charpentier's La descente d'Orphée aux enfers. Other recordings include Handel's Messiah and Mozart's "Parto m'affretto" (from Lucio Silla) with Apollo's Fire (Avie); the title role in Handel's Teseo with Philharmonia Baroque (PBO's own label); and Handel's Orlando with Early Music Vancouver (ATMA). DVD recordings include the Pesaro productions of L'equivoco stravagante and Guillaume Tell. "The Power of Love" with Apollo's Fire and Jeannette Sorrell is Ms. Forsythe's debut solo recording.



JEANNETTE SORRELL has won international attention as a leading creative voice among the new generation of early-music conductors. She has been credited by BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE for forging "a vibrant, life-affirming approach to the re-making of early music... a seductive vision of musical authenticity."

She grew up as a pianist and dancer, studying literature and foreign languages. As a conductor, she was one of the youngest students ever accepted to the prestigious conducting courses of the Aspen and the Tanglewood music festivals. She studied conducting under Roger Norrington, Leonard Bernstein, and Robert Spano. After discovering the harpsichord as a university student, she moved to Amsterdam to study with Gustav Leonhardt. She won both First Prize and the Audience Choice Award in the 1991 Spivey International Harpsichord Competition, competing against over 70 harpsichordists from Europe, Israel, the U.S., and the Soviet Union.

As the founder and conductor of Apollo's Fire, she has toured and performed throughout North America and Europe, including such venues as the BBC Proms in London, the Madrid Royal Theatre, the Grand Théâtre of Bordeaux, London's Wigmore Hall, the Tanglewood Festival, and the Aspen Music Festival.

As a guest conductor, Sorrell has worked with many of the leading American symphony orchestras. Her debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony in 2013 as conductor and soloist in the complete *Brandenburg Concertos* was met with standing ovations every night, and hailed as "an especially joyous occasion" (PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW). She has also led the New World Symphony (Miami), the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, the Opera Theatre of St. Louis with the St. Louis Symphony, Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), and has appeared with the Cleveland Orchestra as guest keyboard artist. In 2014 Ms. Sorrell filled in for British conductor Richard Egarr on five days' notice, leading the complete *Brandenburg Concertos* and playing the harpsichord solo in *Brandenburg no. 5*, for the closing concert of the Houston Early Music Festival. In 2015 she returned to the Pittsburgh Symphony as conductor/soloist.

Praised for her "inspired leadership" (THE INDEPENDENT, London), Sorrell has attracted national attention and awards for creative programming. She has been a guest several times on the BBC's interview/performance program In Tune and NPR's Performance Today. Five of her 21 commercial recordings have been bestsellers on the BILLBOARD classical chart, including the complete Brandenburg Concerti and harpsichord concerti of Bach (with Sorrell as harpsichord soloist and director), which was praised as "a swaggering version... brilliantly played by Sorrell" (THE SUNDAY TIMES, London). She has also released four discs of Mozart, and was hailed as "a near-perfect Mozartian" (FANFARE RECORD MAGAZINE). Other recordings include Handel's Messiah, the Monteverdi Vespers and three creative crossover projects: Come to the River - An Early American Gathering; Sacrum Mysterium - A Celtic Christmas Vespers; and Sugarloaf Mountain - An Appalachian Gathering.

Sorrell holds an Artist Diploma from Oberlin Conservatory, and honorary doctorate from Case Western University, two special awards from the National Endowment for the Arts for her work on early American music, and an award from the American Musicological Society.

APOLLO'S FIRE was founded by the award-winning harpsichordist and conductor Jeannette Sorrell. Sorrell envisioned an ensemble dedicated to the baroque ideal that music should evoke the various *Affekts* or passions in the listeners. Apollo's Fire is a collection of creative artists who share Sorrell's passion for drama and rhetoric.

Hailed as "one of the pre-eminent period-instrument ensembles" (THE INDEPENDENT, London), Apollo's Fire has performed four European tours, including sold-out concerts at the BBC Proms in London, the Aldeburgh Festival (UK), Madrid's Royal Theatre, London's Wigmore Hall, Bordeaux's Grand Théàtre, and major venues in Lisbon, Metz (France), and Bregenz (Austria), as well as concerts on the Birmingham International Series (UK) and the Tuscan Landscapes Festival (Italy). Chosen by the TELEGRAPH as one of London's "Best 5 Classical Concerts of 2014," AF was praised for "superlative music-making... combining European stylishness with American entrepreneurialism."

North American tour engagements include the Tanglewood and Aspen Music Festivals, the Boston Early Music Festival series, the Library of Congress, and major venues in Toronto, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Houston. The ensemble has performed two major U.S. tours of the Monteverdi Vespers (2010 and 2014) and a 9-concert tour of the *Brandenburg Concertos* in 2013. Apollo's Fire is signed to Columbia Artists Management (CAMI) for exclusive representation in North and South America, and is managed in the U.K. by Intermusica (London).

At home in Cleveland, Apollo's Fire enjoys sold-out performances at its subscription series, which has drawn national attention for creative programming. Apollo's Fire has released 21 commercial recordings. Five of them have become bestsellers on the classical BILLBOARD chart: the Monteverdi Vespers, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos & Harpsichord Concertos, and Jeannette Sorrell's three crossover programs: Come to the River – An Early American Gathering; Sacrum Mysterium - A Celtic Christmas Vespers; and Sugarloaf Mountain – An Appalachian Gathering.



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on period instruments

Jeannette Sorrell, direction

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A special thanks to Martin Pearlman for his Partenope and Serse ornaments, to Alexandra Amati-Camperi for her excellent translations, to my parents for their neverending support, and to my husband, for showing me the power of love.

– Amanda Forsythe

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