

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching up to touch a laurel branch. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a large piece of fabric. The laurel leaves are green and have a distinct shape. The hand is light-skinned and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame.

Handel Apollo e Dafne
& Armida abbandonata

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

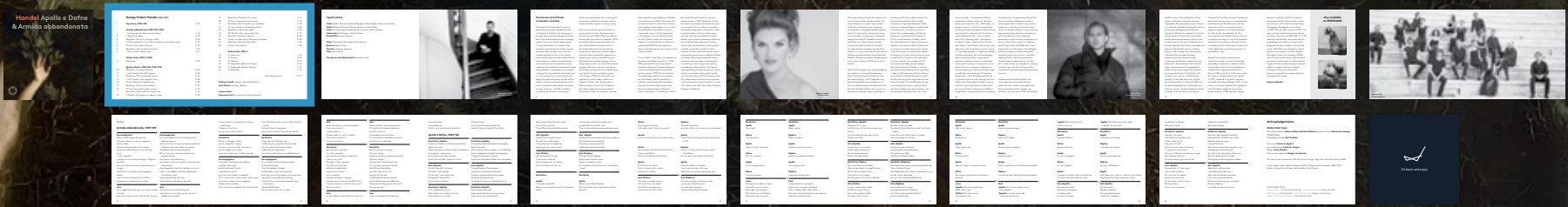
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Total playing time: 72. 27

Kathryn Lewek, soprano (Armida & Dafne)
John Chest, baritone (Apollo)

il pomo d'oro
Francesco Corti, conductor and harpsichord



Emotional verisimilitude in Handel's cantatas

Throughout the seventeenth century, proponents of opera wrestled with the ontological justification for the genre in an age when verisimilitude governed the arts. The fundamental question posed by sceptics was: why should people speak in song? Aspirations to recapture the putative power of ancient Greek musical recitation did not offer much traction outside rarefied courtly circles, and so opera quickly became associated with the extraordinary, in which context persons and situations communicating in song might be rationalised as appropriate. Gods and goddesses, sorceresses and monsters made up the supernatural personnel, and, on a mortal level, our more perfect and happy Arcadian ancestors, as well as the religious, those in extreme distress, and comic characters were stock characters, as they all sang in 'real life' (whether in tending their flocks, worshipping

deities, lamenting their loss, or singing to accompany hard physical work), and so could justifiably 'speak in song' in opera.

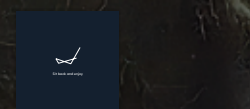
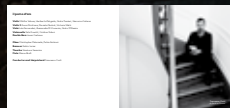
Such reasoning led opera librettists to mine particular texts: the poetic epics *Orlando furioso* (1516/1532) by Ludovico Ariosto and *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575) by Torquato Tasso were favourites, but also Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which in its combination of pastoral settings, supernatural figures and metamorphic transformations especially appealed to seventeenth-century sensibilities, and facilitated spectacular staging. It is for these reasons that one of the first operas (called a *favola in musica*), was Jacopo Peri's *Dafne*, based on one of Ovid's tales and written for a court performance in Florence in 1598. The first public (as opposed to court) opera, which was staged in Venice, was *Andromeda* in 1637, drawing on the myth of Perseus and Andromeda also popularised by Ovid. And in 1640, the Venetian carnival

opera was *Gli amori d'Apollo e di Dafne*, set by Francesco Cavalli. (Such was the success of Cavalli's opera that its arias were used by street singers, such as the blind Venetian, Paolo Britti, to set his improvised poems.) Ovid's popularity in the period was such that the story of the ill-fated nymph was also been treated in sculptural terms, in Bernini's celebrated 1625 Roman sculpture of Apollo and Daphne at the moment of her transformation.

It is not hard to see, then, why Handel, at the end of his Italian sojourn of c.1706-1709, and fresh from the triumphant Venetian staging of his opera *Agrippina* with an extraordinary 27 consecutive performances in 1709-10, should turn to this celebrated operatic story. Indeed, he had already tried his hand at it in a double-work setting, *Der beglückte Florindo* (Florindo made happy) and *Die verwandelte Daphne* (Daphne metamorphosed) for Hamburg in 1705-6.

But unlike Peri and Cavalli, or his own earlier essays, in 1710 Handel did not set the story as an opera, but rather as a two-voice cantata. The cantata was a genre Handel had engaged in fully while in Italy, and particularly in Rome, where opera was (at the time) banned by the Pope. Rome's many princes (including cardinals) thus satisfied their longing for musical drama with cantatas and oratorios given privately (and often lavishly) in their palaces. The 80+ cantatas Handel wrote during this period came in different shapes and sizes, reflecting varied performance contexts, from *jeu d'esprit* improvised in an evening to works commissioned for a wedding or other festivity. The former were generally relatively simple, solo-voice continuo cantatas which might include just two arias and last 8-10 minutes, while the latter were orchestrally accompanied multi-voice works, almost operatic in scale (the three-voice *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* and *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*).

Handel *Apollon e Dafne*
& *Armida abbandonata*



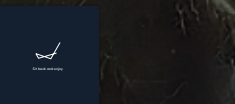
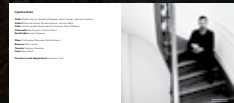


Kathryn Lewek
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Although we do not know the occasion for which it was written, *Apollo e Dafne* (*La terra è liberata*, in correct form) seems to fit into this latter group. It appears, on the basis of the paper Handel used to write it on (some from Venice and some from Hanover), to have been composed during the course of Handel's move from Italy back to northern German lands. It may have been written for Handel's new Hanoverian employer, the electress Sophia, or it may have been for the elector Palatine and the electress Anna Maria de' Medici in Düsseldorf, where Handel moved on to in the summer of 1710, en route to London.

While Ovid's original story treated Daphne as a cipher in a competition between Apollo and Cupid as to whose bow was the most powerful (with Cupid winning by shooting Apollo and causing him to fall in unrequited love), Handel's unknown librettist transformed the tale to focus on the tension between Apollo and Daphne.

In keeping with the cantata format, the librettist removed the other Ovidian characters (Cupid and Daphne's father, Peneus), and gave Daphne a determined commitment to chastity in service to Diana. The cantata begins with Apollo boasting in recitative of his defeat of Python and liberation of Delphi, which has freed the earth of terror ('*La terra è liberata*'). He claims credit for the power of his bow in his first, jaunty aria, '*Pende il ben dell'universo da quest'arco salutar*', and goes on to boast that his bow is more powerful than Cupid's in the muscularly virtuosic '*Spezza l'arco e getta l'armi*'. Such pride inevitably comes before a fall, and the arrival of Dafne in a lilting, pastoral siciliana singing of her happiness in liberty, '*Felicissima quest'alma, ch'ama sol la liberta*', indicates how the nymph's unselfconscious grace might capture the hubristic Apollo. He immediately accosts her, boasting that he is a god, at which she claims allegiance solely to Diana, and he attempts the pickup line, 'Oh, if you



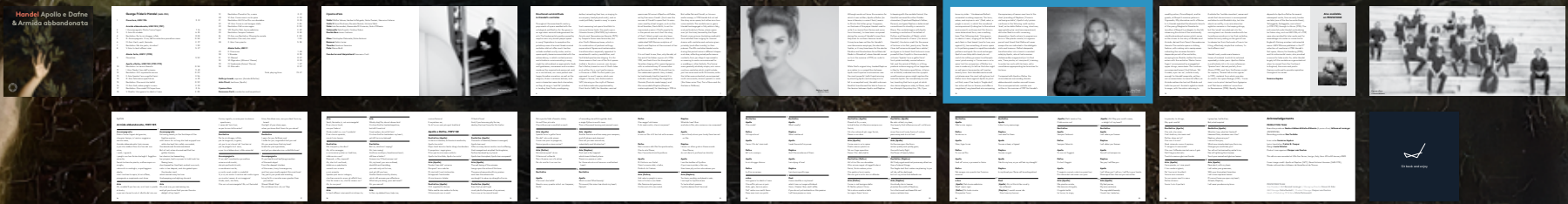
know my sister...'. He deserves Dafne's somewhat mocking response, 'You burn, adore, and implore in vain' ('Ardi, adori, e preghi in vano'), in which the woodwind accompaniment (linking her to the natural environment) continues, but this time in more determined form, over a walking bass. Their following duet, 'Una guerra ho dentro il seno', singing of the 'battle' each feels in their breast (one for love, one against it), has something of comic opera in its pattering speech in repetitive melodic patterns and quick-fire vocal exchanges. Apollo's courtship skills clearly do not match his military prowess: he attempts more lyrical wooing in 'Come rosa in su la spina', but his comparison of Dafne to a rose is made only to tell her that she might as well give in because she will lose her beauty soon. Such blandishments would not please even the most willing lover, but Dafne turns them against Apollo to point out that, even if her body is 'fragile dust', her virtue will live on forever, and offers a magisterial, long-breathed aria comparing

the supremacy of reason over love to the stars' placating of Neptune ('Come in ciel benigna stella'). Apollo's oily lyricism continues in the following multi-section 'duet', as he stalks Dafne in long, slow lines, appropriating her wind accompaniment, while she flees him with increasing desperation. Apollo returns to pugnacious form in 'Mie piante correte', his vigorous pursuit and threat that Dafne will never escape the sun indicated in the obbligato violin and bassoon. Dafne's desperate transformation into a laurel is narrated solely by Apollo, who at last assumes statesmanlike magnanimity in his final aria, 'Cara pianta, co' miei pianti', claiming to water her roots with his tears, while nonetheless appropriating her branches for his brow.

Compared with *Apollo e Dafne*, the circumstances surrounding *Armida abbandonata*'s creation are well known. This accompanied solo cantata was written in the summer of 1707 for Handel's



John Chest
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wealthy patron, Prince Ruspoli, and his guests, at Ruspoli's summer palace in Vignanello, fifty kilometres north of Rome. In it, Handel exploited the dramatic talents of the young Margherita Durastante (another of Ruspoli's protégés), to the full, rehearsing the cliché of the emotionally volatile abandoned woman which serves as the climax to the story of Rinaldo and Armida, derived from Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. The cantata opens in striking fashion, with rushing violin semiquavers indicating the sorceress Armida's desperate pursuit of her erstwhile, escaping lover, Rinaldo, before the voice enters with the recitative 'Dietro l'orme fugaci', accompanied by arpeggiated upper strings, *senza bassi*. The continuo-accompanied lament that follows, 'Ah! Crudele, e pur ten vai', unfolds slowly enough for Handel's exquisite, written-out ornamentation to have full effect, as Armida realises she has lost Rinaldo and halts her pursuit. Armida's agitation leads to anger, with the violins returning to

illustrate the 'horrible monsters', waves and winds that she summons in accompanied recitative to sink Rinaldo's ship, but she relents as swiftly, in an aria where her agitation remains in the leaping strings, but the 'winds' are subdued into the running bass line. Armida wrestles with her tumultuous emotions in her final recitative, before forlornly calling on the god of love to release her from the bonds of love in her lilting, affectively simple final siciliana, 'In tanti affanni miei'.

Handel's early works were treasure troves of material to which he returned repeatedly in later years. *Apollo e Dafne* is particularly rich in its cross-references: 'Spezza l'arco' derived partially from *Almira* (1705), and from the Roman motet for soprano, 'Saeviat tellus inter rigores' (c.1707), material from which was also re-used in the opera *Rodrigo* (1707). 'Come rosa in su la spina' derived from *Agrippina* and 'Deh lascia addolcire' came from *La Resurrezione* (1708). Equally, Handel

dipped into *Apollo e Dafne* for several subsequent works, from an early London cantata (one of the few he wrote there), 'Echeggiate, festeggiate, numi eterni' (c.1710-1712) through to *Alcina* (1735). The instrumental works Handel wrote during his Italian stay, such as HWV 336, of c.1707, were also revisited for later works and for assemblage into suites or concertos for England's thriving amateur instrumental scene: HWV 336 was published in the 11th collection of overtures in 1758. Handel's first opera, *Almira*, for Hamburg (1705), and its instrumental music, also provided a source for later works. So, while Handel largely left the cantata as a genre behind when he moved from the Continent to England, the music and poetic themes continued to provide inspiration throughout his career.

Suzanne Aspden

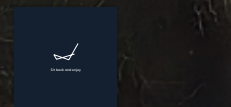
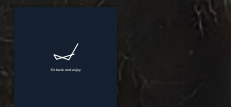
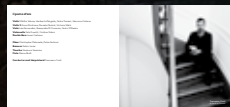
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il pomo d'oro
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Händel
Apollò e Dafne
& Armida abbandonata

Cast

Apollò	Luca Laurenti
Dafne	Clara Giamberini
Armida	Clara Giamberini
Alcide	Luca Laurenti
Amore	Luca Laurenti

Music

Composers	George Frideric Handel
Librettos	Antonio Congiunti, Giovanni De Rossi, Pietro Metastasio, Nicola Francesco Haym
Produced by	Andrea Giamberini
Music Supervisor	Matteo Fumagalli
Conductor	Mauro Maurizi
Stage Director	Mauro Maurizi
Stage Design	Mauro Maurizi
Production Design	Mauro Maurizi
Lighting Design	Mauro Maurizi
Costume Design	Mauro Maurizi
Production Office	Mauro Maurizi

Production

Produced by Andrea Giamberini

Production Office

Mauro Maurizi

Production Office

Mauro Maurizi

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Mauro Maurizi

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Lyrics

Armida abbandonata, HWV 105

Accompagnato

Dietro l'orme fugaci del guerrier,
che gran tempo, in lascivo soggiorno
ascoso avea,
Armida abbandonata il piè movea;
e poi che vidde al fine che l'oro del suo
crine,
i vezzi, i sguardi,
i preghi non han forza che legli il fuggitivo
amante,
fermò le stanche piante, e afissa sopra un
scoglio,
calma di rio cordoglio, a quel leggiere
abete,
che il suo ben le rapia, le luci affisse,
piangendo e sospirando così disse:

Aria

Ah, crudele! E pur ten vai, e mi lasci in preda
al duolo,
e pur sai che sei tu solo il diletto del mio cor.

2 **Accompagnato**

Following wearily in the footsteps of the
fugitive warrior,
with whom for so long she had enjoyed love
while she kept him safely concealed,
the abandoned Armida wandered.
But at last, when she realised that her
golden tresses,
her charms, her beseeching,
her prayers, had no power to hold back her
fleeing lover,
she stopped her tired feet, and sat on a rock,
calm in her despair; and she gazed upon
the slender mast
which carried away her love.
And weeping, and sighing, she said:

3 **Aria**

Ah, cruel one, you are leaving me,
and yet you know that you are the sole
delight of my heart!

Come, ingrato, e come puoi involare a
questo sen,
il seren de' lumi tuoi,
se per te son tutta ardor?

4 **Recitativo**

Per te mi struggo, infido,
per te languisco, ingrato;
ah, pur lo sai che sol da' tuoi bei rai
per te piagato ho il seno,
e pur tu m'abbandoni, infido amante!

5 **Accompagnato**

O voi, dell' incostante e procelloso
amare orridi mostri,
dai più profondi chiostri,
a vendicarmi uscite,
e contro quel crudele in crudelite!
Sì, sì sì, sia vostro il vanto e del vostro rigore
un mostro lacerar di voi maggiore!
Onde, venti, che fate,
Che voi nol sommergete? Ah, no! Fermate!

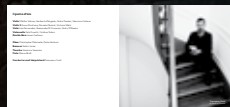
How, thankless one, can you steal from my
breast
the light of your starry eyes,
when you know that I burn for you alone?

4 **Recitativo**

I yearn for you, faithless one!
I suffer for you, ungrateful that you are!
Ah, you even know that my heart
breaks for your eyes alone,
and yet you abandon me – unfaithful lover!

5 **Accompagnato**

O, you fearful and terrifying monsters
of the sea's abyss!
From the deepest cloisters
of the ocean, hurry to avenge me,
and turn your cruelty against this cruel lover!
Yes, yes! In your pride and boasting
bring forth a monster even greater than
yourselves!
Waves! Winds! Stop!
Do not drown him – ah, no! Stop



Aria

Venti, fermate, sì, nol sommergete!
È ver che mi tradi,
ma pur l'adoro!
Onde crudeli no, non l'uccidete!
È ver che mi sprezzò,
ma è il mio tesoro.

Recitativo

Ma che parlo, che dico?
Ah, ch'io vaneggio;
e come amar potrei un traditore,
infelice mio core?
Rispondi, o Dio, rispondi!
Ah, che tu ti confondi,
dubbioso e palpitante
vorresti non amare
e vivi amante.
Spezza quel laccio indegno,
che tiene avvinto ancor gli affetti tuoi.
Che fai misero cor, che fai misero cor?
Ah, tu non puoi!

Aria

In tanti affanni miei assisti mi almen tu,

6

Aria

Winds, stay! No, do not drown him!
It is true that he has betrayed me,
but still I love him!
Cruel waters, do not kill him!
It is true that he has broken my heart,
yet still he is my beloved!

Recitative

But no, what am I saying?
Ah, I am raving!
And how could you, treacherous heart,
still love a traitor?
Answer me, O God, answer me!
Ah, my heart, you are confused,
doubtful and trembling,
you wish only not to love,
and yet still you love.
Shatter these unworthy chains,
which still ensnare your affections.
What are you doing, poor sad heart?
Ah, you cannot!

8

Aria

In this, my darkest hour, help me,

nume d'amore!
E se pietoso sei,
fa ch'io non ami più quel traditore!

Apollo e Dafne, HWV 122**Recitativo (Apollo)**

La terra è liberata, la Grecia è vendicata,
Apollo ha vinto!
Dopo tanti terrori e tante stragi che desolano
E spopolano i regni giace
Piton per la mia mano estinto.
Apollo ha trionfato, Apollo ha vinto!

Aria (Apollo)

Pende il ben dell' universo
Da quest' arco salutar.
Di mie lodi il suol rimbombe
Ed appresti l'ecatombe
Al mio braccio tutelar.

Recitativo (Apollo)

Ch'ìl superbetto Amore
Delle saette mie ceda a la forza;
Ch'omai più non si vanti

O God of Love!
And, if you have any pity for me,
destroy the love I have for this traitor.

Recitativo (Apollo)

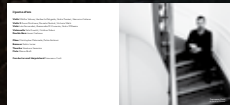
The earth is liberated, Greece is avenged,
Apollo has won!
After so many terrors and so much suffering,
that ravaged and emptied the kingdoms,
Python lies dead by my hand.
Apollo has triumphed, Apollo has conquered!

Aria (Apollo)

The well-being of the universe
hangs upon the virtue of this bow.
The ground resounds with my praises
and even the catacombs
are taught to value my strength of arms.

Recitativo (Apollo)

Even that proud Cupid
must yield to the power of my arrows;
from now on he cannot boast



De la punta fatal d'aurato strale;
Un sol Piton più vale
Che mille accesi e saettati amanti.

Aria (Apollo)

Spezza l'arco e getta l'armi
Dio dell' ozio e del piacer.
Come mai puoi tu piagarmi,
Nume ignudo e cieco arcier?

Aria (Dafne)

Felicissima quest' alma
Ch'ama sol la libertà.
Non v'è pace, non v'è calma
Per chi sciolto il cor non ha.

Recitativo**Apollo**

Che voce! che beltà!
Questo suon, questa vista il cor trapassa;
Ninfa!

of wounding me with his golden dart;
a single Python is worth more
Than a thousand burning and pierced lovers.

Aria (Apollo)

Shatter the bow and toss away your weapons,
god of laziness and pleasure!
How will you ever wound me,
naked deity and blind archer?

Aria (Daphne)

That soul is the happiest
which loves its liberty alone.
There is no peace or calm
for those who do not have an unattached
heart.

Recitativo**Apollo**

What a voice! What beauty!
This sound, this vision has struck my heart;
Nymph!

Dafne

Che veggo? ahi lassa:
E chi sarà costui, che mi sorprese?

Apollo

Io son un Dio ch'il tuo bel volto accese.

Dafne

Non conosco altri Dei fra queste selve,
Che la sola Diana;
Non t'accostar divinità profana.

Apollo

Di Cintia io son fratel:
S'ami la suora abbi, o bella,
Pietà di chi t'adora.

Aria (Dafne)

Ardi adori e preghi in vano
Solo a Cintia io son fedel.
Alle fiamme del germano
Cintia vuol ch'io sia crudel.

Daphne

What do I see? Alas:
and who is this, who comes on me unawares?

Apollo

I am a God, whom your lovely face has set
on fire.

Daphne

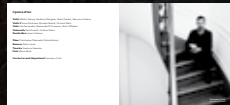
I know no other gods in these woods
than Diana;
do not dare to profane her divinity!

Apollo

I am the brother of Cynthia:
if you love my sister, o fair one,
then have pity on him who adores you.

Aria (Daphne)

You burn, worship, and plead in vain;
I am loyal to Cynthia alone.
To her brother's passion
Cynthia desires that I be cruel.



Recitativo**Apollo**

Che crudel!

Dafne

Ch'importuno!

Apollo

Cerco il fin de' miei mali.

Dafne

Ed' io lo scampo.

Apollo

Io mi struggo d'amor.

Dafne

Io d'ira avvampo.

a due

Una guerra ho dentro il seno
 Che soffrir più non si può.
 Ardo, gelo, temo e peno
 S'all' ardor non metti freno
 Pace aver mai non potrò.

17

Recitative**Apollo**

What cruelty!

Daphne

What insistence!

Apollo

I seek the end of my woes.

Daphne

And I the avoidance of them.

Apollo

I am dying of love!

Daphne

I am burning with rage.

18

Duet

I have a battle in my breast
 which I can no longer withstand.
 I burn, I freeze, I fear, and I suffer,
 if you do not put restraints on this passion
 I will have peace no more.

19

Recitativo (Apollo)

Placati al fin, o cara;
 La beltà che m'infiamma sempre non
 fiorirà,
 Ciò che natura di più vago formò,
 Passa e non dura.

Recitative (Apollo)

Be calm at last, my dear;
 the beauty that inflames me will not bloom
 forever,
 since the most lovely forms of nature
 pass away and do not last.

20

Aria (Apollo)

Come rosa in su la spina
 Presto viene e presto va.
 Tal con fuga repentina
 Passa il fior della beltà.

Aria (Apollo)

As the rose upon the thorn
 arrives quickly and quickly goes;
 thus with hasty flight
 the flower of beauty fades.

21

Recitativo (Dafne)

Ah! ch'un Dio non dovrebbe
 Altro amore seguir ch'oggetti eterni
 Perirà, finirà caduca polve
 Che grata a te mi rende,
 Ma non già la virtù che mi difende.

Recitative (Daphne)

Ah! If only a god would not pursue any other love
 than of eternal things;
 The fragile dust that makes me pleasing to you
 will die, will be destroyed,
 but not my virtue that defends me.

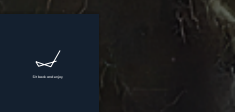
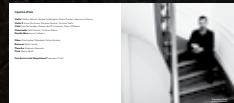
22

Aria (Dafne)

Come in ciel benigna stella
 Di Nettun placa il furor,
 Tal in alma onesta e bella
 La ragion frena l'amor.

Aria (Daphne)

As a kindly star in heaven
 placates the wrath of Neptune,
 So in the honest and beautiful soul
 reason restrains love.



Recitativo**Apollo**

Ode la mia ragion.

Dafne

Sorda son io.

Apollo

Orsa, tigre tu sei.

Dafne

Tu non sei Dio.

Apollo

Cedi all' amor, o proverai la forza.

Dafne

Nel sangue mio questa tua fiamma
amorza.

a due

[Apollo] Deh lascia addolcire
Quell' aspro rigor.

[Dafne] Più tosto morire
Che perder l'onor.

24

23

Recitative**Apollo**

Listen to my reasonings.

Daphne

I am deaf to them.

Apollo

You are a bear, a tigress!

Daphne

You are no god.

Apollo

Yield to my love, or you will feel my strength!

Daphne

In my blood your flame will be extinguished.

24

Duet

[Apollo] Ah, let this bitter cruelty
be softened.

[Daphne] I would sooner die
than lose my honour.

[Apollo] Deh! cessino l'ire,
O dolce mio cor!

Recitativo**Apollo**

Sempre t'adorerò.

Dafne

Sempre t'aborirò.

Apollo

Tu non mi fuggirai.

Dafne

Si che ti fuggirò.

Apollo

Ti seguirò; correrò, volerò su passi tuoi.
Più veloce del sole esser non puoi.

Aria (Apollo)

Mie piante correte,
Mie braccia stringete,
L'ingrata beltà.
La tocco, la cingo,

[Apollo] Ah! May your wrath cease,
o delight of my heart!

25

Recitative**Apollo**

I will adore you forever.

Daphne

I will abhor you forever.

Apollo

You will not escape me.

Daphne

Yes, yes, I will flee you.

Apollo

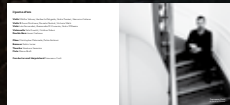
I will follow you! I will run, I will fly in your tracks.
More rapid than the sun you cannot be.

26

Aria (Apollo)

My feet pursue,
My arms embrace
The ungrateful beauty.
I touch her, I seize her,

25



La prendo, la stringo,
Ma, qual novità!

I grasp her, I enfold her;
But, what surprise!

27

Recitativo (Apollo)

Che vidi, che mirai,
Ciel! destino, che sarai mai!
Dafne, dove sei tu?
Che non ti trovo?
Qual miracolo nuovo ti rapisce,
Ti cangia e ti nasconde?
Che non t'offenda mai del verno il gelo
Ne'il folgore dal cielo
Tocchi le sacre e gloriose fronde.

Recitative (Apollo)

What do I see, what do I behold?
Heavens! Fate, whatever can it be?
Daphne, where are you?
I cannot find you;
What new miracle steals you from me,
Changes you and hides you?
You will not be harmed by winter's ice,
Nor will lightning from heaven
Touch your sacred and glorious leaves.

28

Aria (Apollo)

Cara pianta, co' miei pianti
Il tuo verde irrigherò,
De' tuoi rami trionfanti
Sommi eroi coronerò.
Se non posso averti in seno
Dafne almeno
Sovra il crin ti porterò.

Aria (Apollo)

Dear plant, with my tears
I will water your greenness,
With your triumphant branches
I will crown supreme heroes.
If I cannot have you upon my heart,
At least, Daphne,
I will wear you above my brow.

Acknowledgements**PRODUCTION TEAM**

Executive producer **Gesine Lübben & Giulio d'Alessio** (il pomo d'oro) & **Renaud Loranger** (PENTATONE)

Recording producer **Ken Yoshida**

Liner notes **Suzanne Aspden**

Lyrics translation **Calvin B. Cooper**

Design **Lucia Ghielmi**

Product management **Kasper van Kooten**

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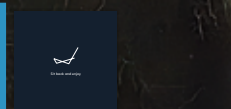
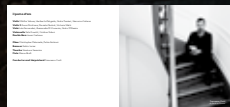
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Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

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Sit back and enjoy

