



AAM



JOHN ECCLES
SEMELE

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC
CAMBRIDGE HANDEL OPERA

JULIAN PERKINS
ANNA DENNIS
RICHARD BURKHARD
HELEN CHARLSTON
WILLIAM WALLACE
AOIFE MISKELLY
HÉLOÏSE BERNARD
GRAEME BROADBENT
JONATHAN BROWN
RORY CARVER
CHRISTOPHER FOSTER
BETHANY HORAK-HALLETT
JOLYON LOY
JAMES RHOADS

L
AAM
L

SEMELE

(/'semɪli/; Greek: Σεμέλη Semelē)



an opera composed by
to a libretto by

JOHN ECCLES
WILLIAM CONGREVE



ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC
Julian Perkins



GODS

Jupiter King of the Gods
Richard Burkhard

Juno Queen of the Gods
Helen Charlston

Iris handmaid to Juno
Héloïse Bernard

Cupid God of Love
Bethany Horak-Hallett

Somnus God of Sleep
Christopher Foster

Apollo Sun God and God of Prophecy
Jolyon Loy



The first surviving page of John Eccles' autograph score of *Semele*. This is heard on this album from the fifth bar of *Ah me! What Refuge now is left me?*, sung here by Anna Dennis as Semele [track 05, CD1].
Library of the Royal College of Music, MS.183, f.1r



Portrait of William Congreve, 1670-1729, by Sir Godfrey Kneller; National Portrait Gallery, London
Oil on canvas, 91cm x 71cm, 1709

MORTALS

Cadmus King of Thebes

Jonathan Brown

Semele daughter of Cadmus

Anna Dennis

Ino sister of Semele

Aoife Miskelly

Athamas a prince of Boeotia

William Wallace

Chief Priest

Graeme Broadbent

Second Priest

Rory Carver

Third Priest

James Rhoads

First Augur

Rory Carver

Second Augur

James Rhoads



Soloists from Cambridge Handel Opera, Julian Perkins (centre, director & harpsichord), and the Academy of Ancient Music acknowledge applause at the end of a performance of John Eccles' *Semele* in the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, November 2019

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC

Leader

Bojan Čičić

Continuo

bass violin
bass viol
harpsichords
theorbo, guitar

Jonathan Rees
Reiko Ichise
Julian Perkins & Peter Holman
William Carter

Keyboard Technician

Edmund Pickering

Orchestra Manager

Fiona McDonnell

Concerts & Projects Co-ordinator

Alice Pusey

Librarian

Emilia Benjamin

Pitch

A = 415 Hz

Temperament

1/6 comma meantone

Lead mutes courtesy of Bill Thorp

full orchestra details pages 185-186



ARGUMENT

Introductory to the

OPERA of *SEMELE*.

After Jupiter's Amour with Europa, the Daughter of Agenor, King of Phœnicia, he again incenses Juno by a new Affair in the same Family; viz. with Semele, Neice to Europa, and Daughter to Cadmus King of Thebes. Semele is on the Point of Marriage with Athamas; which Marriage is about to be solemniz'd in the Temple of Juno, Goddess of Marriages, when Jupiter by ill Omens interrupts the Ceremony; and afterward transports Semele to a private Abode prepar'd for her. Juno, after many Contrivances, at length assumes the Shape and Voice of Ino, Sister to Semele; by the help of which Disguise, and
T 3 artful

THANK YOU

The Academy of Ancient Music, Cambridge Handel Opera Company and Cambridge Early Music are very grateful to their supporters, whose generosity, alongside the AAM Strategic Recording Fund, has enabled this recording, in particular:

Bartleet Family Trust
Opera Restor'd
Vox Musica Trust

Dr. Michael Berman CBE
Professor David and Professor Rosamond McKitterick
Robin Myers
Professor Eric W. Nye and Professor Carol D. Frost
Christopher Purvis CBE
Alan Sainer
Dr. Roger Savage
Two anonymous benefactors

In addition to all those credited elsewhere for their involvement, we are very grateful to Emma Abbate, Mandy Aknai, Caroline Anderson, Beatriz Aranguren, Dr. Rosemary Bechler, John Bickley, Claire Bowdler, Prof. Rebecca Herissone, Yvonne Horsfall Turner, Peter Linnitt, Dr. Estelle Murphy, Paul Nicholson, Andrew Radley, Christopher Scobie, Catherine Sutherland, Heather Swain and Judith Wardman for their invaluable input and support.

ARGUMENT.

artful Insinuations, she prevails with her to make a Request to Jupiter, which being granted must end in her utter Ruin.

This Fable is related in Ovid. Metam. L. 3. but, there, Juno is said to impose on Semele in the Shape of an old Woman, her Nurse. 'Tis hoped, the Liberty taken in substituting Ino instead of the old Woman will be excus'd: It was done, because Ino is interwoven in the Design by her Love of Athamas; to whom she was marry'd, according to Ovid; and, because her Character bears a Proportion with the Dignity of the other Persons represented. This Reason, it is presumed, may be allowed in a Thing intirely fictitious; and more especially being represented under the Title of an Opera, where greater Absurdities are every Day excus'd.

It was not thought requisite to have any Regard either to Rhyme, or Equality of Measure, in the Lines of that Part of the Dialogue which was design'd for the Recitative Stile in Musick. For as that Stile in Musick is not confin'd to the strict Observation of Time and Measure, which is requir'd in the Composition of Airs and Sonata's, so

ARGUMENT.

neither is it necessary that the same Exactness in Numbers, Rhymes, or Measure, should be observed in Words design'd to be set in that manner, which must ever be observed in the Formation of Odes and Sonnets. For, what they call Recitative in Musick, is only a more tuneable Speaking; it is a kind of Prose in Musick; its Beauty consists in coming near Nature, and in improving the natural Accents of Words by more Pathetick or Emphatical Tones.



T 4 Persons

Ino.
Lous alone Lous alone Lous alone has both has both undons Lous alone Lous alone Lous alone has both

Athamas.
Lous alone Lous alone Lous alone has both has both undons Lous alone Lous alone Lous alone has both

Ritornell. All his Instruments.
has both undons
has both undons

Cadmus.
Cadmus.
An wretched Prince

The second and third pages of librettist William Congreve's 'Argument Introductory to the Opera of Semele,' which precedes the complete libretto published by Jacob Tonson in *The Second Volume of the Works of Mr. William Congreve* (published London, 1710)

From John Eccles' autograph score of *Semele*, the end of *You've undone me* [track 21, CD1], showing a following eight-bar passage written to cover the entrance of Cadmus, but subsequently deleted. Library of the Royal College of Music, MS.183, f.15r

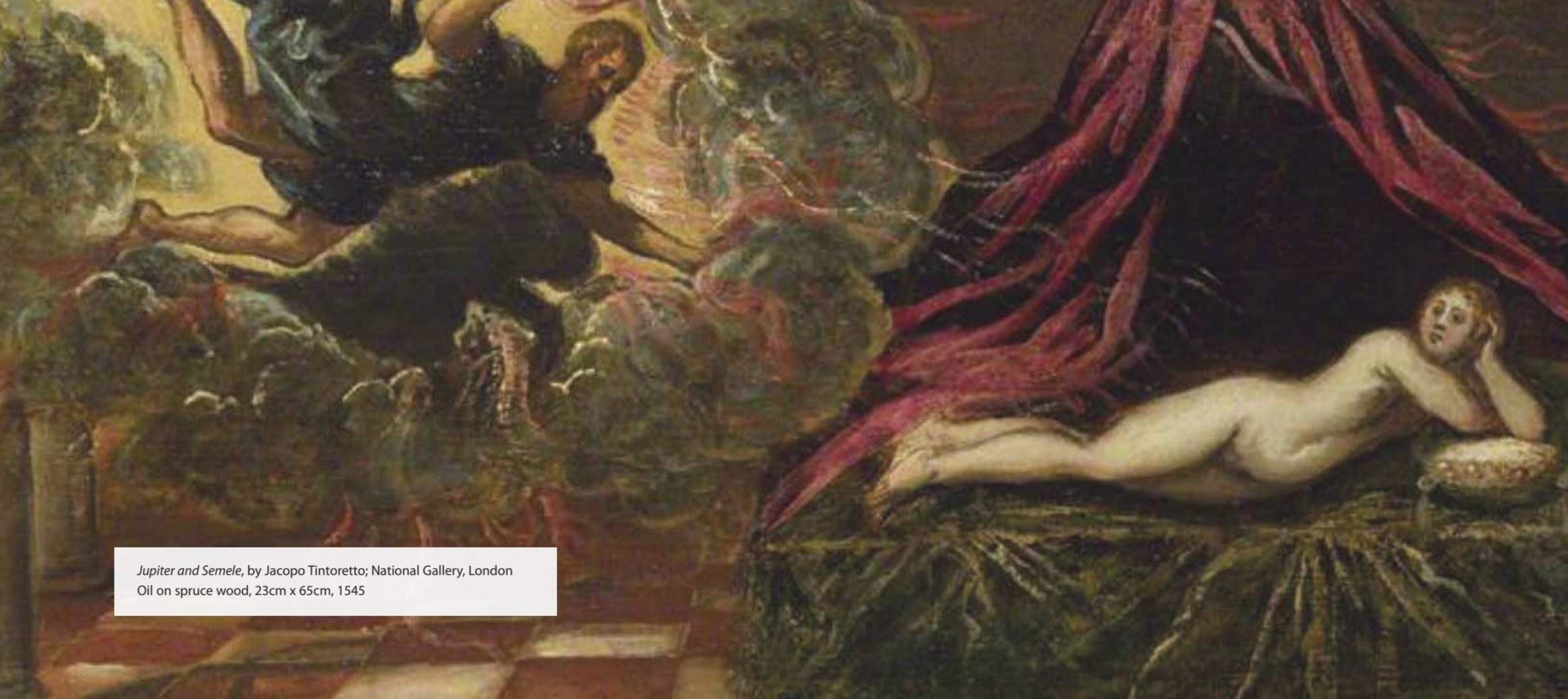
After Jupiter's Amour with Europa, the Daughter of Agenor, King of Phaenicia, he again incenses Juno by a new Affair in the same Family; viz. with Semele, Niece to Europa, and Daughter to Cadmus King of Thebes. Semele is on the Point of Marriage with Athamas; which Marriage is about to be solemniz'd in the Temple of Juno, Goddess of Marriages, when Jupiter by ill Omens interrupts the Ceremony; and afterwards transports Semele to a private Abode prepar'd for her. Juno, after many Contrivances, at length assumes the Shape and Voice of Ino, Sister to Semele; by the help of which Disguise, and artful Insinuations, she prevails with her to make a Request to Jupiter, which being granted must end in her utter Ruin. This Fable is related in Ovid. Metam. L. 3 but, there, Juno is said to impose on Semele in the Shape of an old Woman, her Nurse. 'Tis hoped, the Liberty taken in substituting Ino instead of the old Woman will be excus'd: It was done, because Ino is interwoven in the Design by her love of Athamas; to whom she was marry'd, according to Ovid; and, because her Character bears a Proportion

with the Dignity of the other Persons represented. This Reason, it is presumed, may be allowed in a Thing intirely fictitious; and more especially being represented under the Title of an Opera, where greater Absurdities are every Day excus'd.

It was not thought requisite to haue any Regard either in Rhyme, or Equality of Measure, in the Lines of that Part of the Dialogue which was design'd for the Recitative Stile in Musick. For as that stile in Musick is not confin'd to the strict Observation of Time and Measure, which is requir'd in the Composition of Airs and Sonata's, so neither is it necessary that the same Exactness in Numbers, Rhymes, or Measure, should be observed in Words design'd to be set in that manner, which must ever be observed in the Formation of Odes and Sonnets. For, what they call Recitative in Musick, is only a more tuneable Speaking, it is a kind of Prose in Musick; its Beauty consists in coming near Nature, and in improving the natural Accents of Words by more Pathetick or Emphatical Tones.

CONTENTS

Credits		01-16	Ovid's changing fortunes	Dr. Stephanie Oade	101-105
Argument Introductory	William Congreve	19-20	Ovid: translations through the centuries	Dr. Stephanie Oade & Alexander Van Ingen	108-115
Contents		21-22	Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>: English translations		117-120
Tracklist		25-30	Recordings of other settings of <i>Semele</i>	Alexander Van Ingen	121-122
Foreword	Alexander Van Ingen	32-34	Other recordings of Eccles' works	Alexander Van Ingen	124-126
Foreword: Un-crushing a butterfly	Julian Perkins	35-36	Musica Britannica 76: score edition		127-132
Twice born (from <i>Mythos</i>)	Stephen Fry	38-46	<hr/>		
The gods as we know them: the ancient mythological tradition	Dr. Stephanie Oade	48-50	Synopsis	Richard Platt	136
Argive genealogy: a chart		51-52	Libretto	Act I	138-144
The gods and mortals of the opera	Dr. Stephanie Oade	54-56		Act II	146-153
'A thing intirely fictitious'	Dr. Ruth Smith	58-61		Act III	154-165
Preparing Juno	Helen Charlston	63-64	<hr/>		
Lead mutes	Bill Thorp	65-67	Biographies	Performers	167-177
'Like the bread of life'	Judy Tarling	69-76		Contributors	178-182
John Eccles and <i>Semele</i>	Prof. Peter Holman	78-81	Academy of Ancient Music	About	183-184
John Eccles and the London stage	Dr. Alan Howard	83-94		Orchestra and instruments	185-186
John Eccles, Master of the King's Musick and Patrick Lamb, Royal Master Cook	Ivan Day	95-100		Team	187
			Cambridge Handel Opera Company		189
			Cambridge Early Music		192
			AAM supporters		193-194
			AAM Records: other releases		195-198



Jupiter and Semele, by Jacopo Tintoretto; National Gallery, London
Oil on spruce wood, 23cm x 65cm, 1545

TRACKLIST

The original manuscript of *Semele* only itemises some of the instrumental movements (and has no tempo indications). In the absence of consistent alternative terms, the titles and subdivisions adopted here have been chosen to help listeners navigate the work and to identify specific musical numbers.

Details of music added are included within this tracklist in brief; for fuller information on these, editorial reconstructions, and the edition used, see pp.127-132.

CD1

1	Overture <i>[taken from Eccles' Rinaldo and Armida, 1699]</i>	[Largo – Allegro]	1'00
ACT I			
Scene 1			
2	Recitative	<i>Chief Priest</i>	Behold auspicious Flashes rise 1'34
3	Aria <i>[taken from From this happy Day, in Eccles' Birthday Ode for 1703, used as a basis for reconstruction]</i>	<i>2nd Priest & Chief Priest</i>	Lucky Omens bless our Rites 0'50
4	Recitative	<i>Cadmus & Athamas</i>	Daughter, obey, Hear, and obey 0'53
5	Aria	<i>Semele</i>	Ah me! What Refuge now is left me? 0'29
6	Aria	<i>Athamas</i>	See, she blushing turns her Eyes 2'47
7	Aria	<i>Athamas</i>	Hymen haste, thy Torch prepare 2'16
8	Recitative	<i>Ino, Athamas & Semele</i>	Alas! She yields, and has undone me 1'35
9	Quartet	<i>Cadmus, Ino, Athamas & Semele</i>	Why dost thou thus untimely grieve? 1'18
10	Symphony		1'47
11	Recitative	<i>Chief Priest</i>	Avert these Omens, all ye Pow'rs! 0'19
12	Trio	<i>Chief Priest, 2nd & 3rd Priests</i>	Avert these Omens, all ye Pow'rs! 0'39
13	Recitative	<i>Chief Priest, 2nd Priest, Athamas & Semele</i>	Again auspicious Flashes rise 1'00

14	Symphony		Cease your Vows 1'16
15	Recitative	<i>Chief Priest</i>	0'11
Scene 2			
16	Recitative	<i>Athamas</i>	O Athamas, what Torture hast thou born! 0'34
17	Aria	<i>Ino</i>	Turn, hopeless Lover, turn thy Eyes 0'54
18	Recitative	<i>Athamas</i>	She weeps! 2'45
19	Aria	<i>Athamas</i>	Such unavailing Mercy is in Beauty found 0'20
20	Recitative	<i>Ino & Athamas</i>	Ah me, too much afflicted! 1'05
21	Duet	<i>Ino & Athamas</i>	You've undone me 2'17
Scene 3			
22	Recitative	<i>Cadmus, Athamas & Ino</i>	Ah, wretched Prince, doom'd to disastrous Love! 2'14
Scene 4			
23	Recitative	<i>Cadmus</i>	See, see, Jove's Priests and holy Augurs come 1'56
24	Trio	<i>Chief Priest, 1st & 2nd Augurs</i>	Hail, Cadmus, hail! 0'12
25	Aria	<i>1st Augur</i>	Endless Pleasure, endless Love 1'40
26	Aria	<i>Chief Priest</i>	Haste, haste, to Sacrifice prepare 1'49
27	Chorus	<i>Priests & Augurs</i>	Cease your Mourning 0'58
ACT II			
Scene 1			
28	Symphony		2'27
29	Recitative	<i>Juno & Iris</i>	Iris, impatient of thy Stay 1'02
30	Aria	<i>Iris</i>	There from mortal Cares retiring 1'27

31	Aria	<i>Iris</i>	Thither Flora the Fair	2'00
32	Recitative	<i>Juno</i>	No more – I'll hear no more	2'49
33	Aria	<i>Juno</i>	Not one of curst Agenor's Race I'll spare	1'21
34	Recitative	<i>Iris & Juno</i>	Hear, mighty Queen	0'30

Scene 2

35	Aria	<i>Cupid</i>	See, after the Toils of an amorous Fight	1'39
36	Aria	<i>Cupid</i>	Come Zephyrs, come, while Cupid sings	2'44
37	Aire		Dance of the Zephyrs	1'25

[taken from Eccles' A Sett of Aires Made for The Queen's Coronation..., movement 8]

38	Aria	<i>Semele</i>	O Sleep, why dost thou leave me?	0'56
----	-------------	---------------	----------------------------------	------

Scene 3

39	Aria	<i>Cupid</i>	Sleep forsaking	0'56
40	Recitative	<i>Semele</i>	Let me not another Moment	1'42
41	Aria	<i>Jupiter</i>	Lay thy Doubts and Fears aside	0'18
42	Recitative	<i>Jupiter</i>	Nor was I absent	3'11
43	Aria	<i>Semele</i>	If cheerful Hopes	0'20
44	Duet	<i>Semele & Jupiter</i>	If this be Love, not you alone	3'01
45	Recitative	<i>Semele & Jupiter</i>	Ah me! / Why sighs my Semele?	1'13
46	Aria	<i>Semele</i>	With my Frailty don't upbraid me	2'26
47	Recitative	<i>Jupiter & Semele</i>	Thy Sex of Jove's the Masterpiece	1'41
48	Aria	<i>Jupiter</i>	Thy needless Fears remove	1'20
49	Recitative	<i>Jupiter & Semele</i>	By my Command	1'07

Scene 4

50	Symphony			1'47
----	-----------------	--	--	------

[taken from Eccles' Rinaldo and Armida, 1699]

TT CD1: 72'07

CD2

ACT III

Scene 1

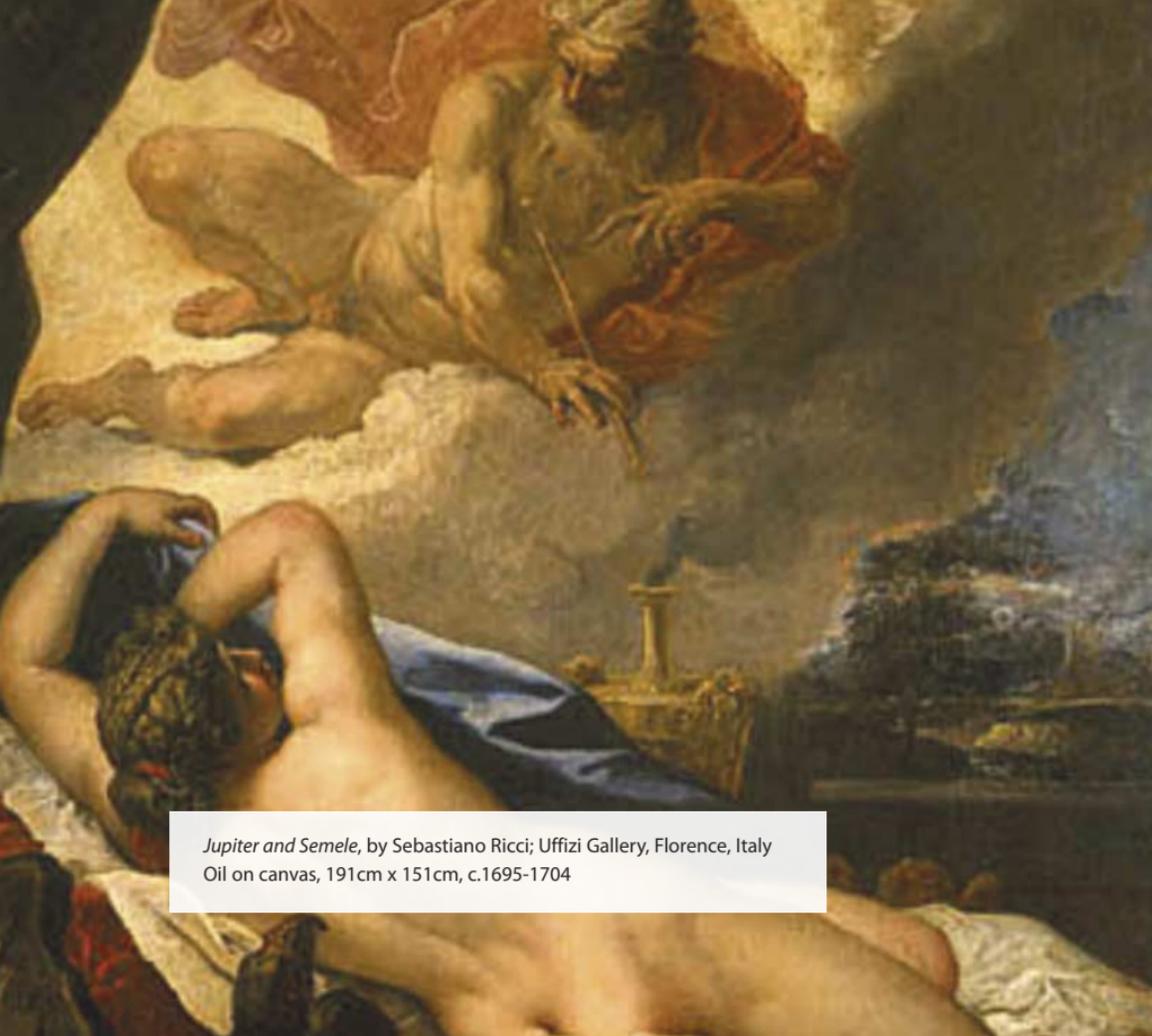
1	Symphony		[Adagio – Presto]	1'09
2	Recitative	<i>Juno & Iris</i>	Somnus, awake	0'38
3	Aria	<i>Somnus</i>	Leave me, loathsome Light	2'56
4	Recitative	<i>Iris & Juno</i>	Dull God, can'st thou attend the Waters fall	0'27
5	Duet	<i>Juno & Iris</i>	Only Love on Sleep has Pow'r	2'17
6	Recitative	<i>Juno</i>	Somnus, arise	0'29
7	Aria	<i>Somnus</i>	More sweet is that Name	2'00
8	Recitative	<i>Juno & Somnus</i>	My Will obey	1'48
9	Duet	<i>Juno & Somnus</i>	Away let us haste	1'18

Scene 2

10	Aria	<i>Semele</i>	I Love and am lov'd	2'33
----	-------------	---------------	---------------------	------

Scene 3

11	Recitative	<i>Juno & Semele</i>	Thus shaped like Ino	1'03
12	Aria	<i>Juno</i>	Behold in this Mirrour	1'11
13	Recitative	<i>Semele</i>	O Ecstasy of Happiness!	0'54
14	Aria	<i>Semele</i>	Ah charming all o'er!	0'36
15	Recitative	<i>Juno & Semele</i>	Be wise as you are beautiful	0'23
16	Aria	<i>Juno</i>	Unknowing your Intent	1'47
17	Recitative	<i>Semele & Juno</i>	But how shall I attain to Immortality?	1'23
18	Aria	<i>Semele</i>	Thus let my Thanks be paid	1'23
19	Recitative	<i>Juno & Semele</i>	Rich Odours fill the fragrant Air	0'37



Jupiter and Semele, by Sebastiano Ricci; Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy
Oil on canvas, 191cm x 151cm, c.1695-1704

FOREWORD

Alexander Van Ingen

Photo: Phil Tragen



Performances telling the story of Semele have been a part of history for as long as the myth itself, and it is intriguing and exciting to imagine how previous settings might have interpreted and embellished the basic plot, and how they might have been performed and resonated with the audiences of the day. Carnicus II wrote a fully-staged theatrical play between c.380 BCE and c.340 BCE, likely to have been performed in the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens¹; and Aeschylus followed between c.499 BCE and c.456 BCE, with a similar assumption of performance in Athens². Both, perhaps along with other dramatists' settings, would have involved music as well as

the spoken word, but now only our imaginations can suggest how these may have sounded, or the effect they may have had.

For composer John Eccles however, it is a different story. We now know so much (even if there is plenty still to discover) about instruments and performance in the eighteenth century that we believe we have a pretty good idea of how Eccles' music would have sounded, had his *Semele* ever been performed in his lifetime. Rediscovering neglected pieces of music is a core part of the Academy of Ancient Music's mission, and it is all the more exciting when it is a work such as this, composed just before a major turning point in the style of writing for opera in England. Eccles' setting of *Semele* shows us a strong contrast to the Handel setting of the same story which was to come some decades later, and significantly gives us a taste of the direction that the development of

¹ University of Oxford, APGRD, Ancient Performances database
[<http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/ancient-performance/performance/406>]

² [<http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/ancient-performance/performance/574>]

English operatic repertoire might have taken had it not been for Handel's exceptional influence in eighteenth-century England as he popularised a more Italian school of opera composition.

The Academy of Ancient Music's founder, the late Christopher Hogwood, was a pioneering 'musical detective', and his spirit of discovery runs throughout AAM's activity on and off the concert platform. Recent major projects have seen AAM publish new critical editions of Handel's *Brookes-Passion*, Dussek's *Messe Solemnelle* and more, alongside first-rate recordings accompanied by a wealth of deep scholarship. This complete recording of Eccles' *Semele* is the world premiere recording on period instruments by a professional ensemble, and took place in late 2019 along with a performance in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge (AAM is Cambridge University's Orchestra-in-Residence). We are delighted to welcome Julian Perkins as the music director for this notable project alongside a wonderful cast of soloists, individually chosen by Julian. Our thanks to Cambridge Handel Opera Company and Cambridge Early Music for working in partnership with the Academy of Ancient Music to make this concert and recording possible; and to Prof. Peter Holman and Dr. Ruth Smith for their expertise. Thank you, too, to AAM's violinist Bill Thorp, who crafted lead mutes specially for this project; to Claire Bowdler for her energy in assembling the many disparate parts of such an enterprise; and to recording engineer and editor Dave Rowell for a fabulous recording.

Our ongoing thanks to the Academy of Ancient Music's supporters, donors, researchers and performers, without whom we would be unable to do all that we do. AAM receives no government grant or Arts Council funding, and we are wholly dependent on our generous family of supporters to underpin our research, concert work, outreach and recordings: thank you. We hope that this recording will serve for many as a starting point to a greater exploration of the rich world of English opera, and we look forward to sharing our own research and musical journey with you.



Alexander Van Ingen
Chief Executive, Academy of Ancient Music
Recording & Executive Producer



Soloists for John Eccles' *Semele*, pictured at the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, 2019, ahead of performance. From left to right: Bethany Horak-Hallett (Cupid), [Dave Rowell (recording engineer)], William Wallace (Athamas), Héloïse Bernard (Iris), Helen Charlston (Juno), Aoife Miskelly (Ino), Jonathan Brown (Cadmus), Jolyon Loy (Apollo), James Rhoads (3rd Priest, 2nd Augur), Anna Dennis (Semele)

Un-crushing a butterfly

The year is 2107. Intrepid explorers can go back in time, providing they keep to the designated path. But in Ray Bradbury's short story *A Sound of Thunder* (1952), one time-traveller becomes alarmed at the scheduled approach of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* and deviates by running off into the forest. On returning to the present, he notices a crushed butterfly on the sole of his boot. This mishap caused a hiccup in the food chain that has radically affected the political landscape of his own time.



John Eccles' *Semele* could be considered a crushed butterfly that missed its moment. Composed in about 1706, its probable première was only in 1964. Yet it shows how English opera might have developed after Henry Purcell's death in 1695 before the triumphant arrival in 1711 of the Saxon thunderbolt, George Frideric Handel.

And herein lies our challenge. Such is the success of Handel's *Semele* that Eccles' earlier version has, until recently, been a mere historical footnote. Moreover, as William Congreve's modern editor, the late Professor Donald McKenzie, states, in setting the libretto '... Handel made it a concert and lightened it into comedy; whereas '... Eccles

deepened it, and in writing intimately at every point to its dramatic structure, set it musically within a world where divine malignancy, and the power to enforce it, inevitably darken all human hopes of happiness.' Here, *Semele's* opening aria shows all the uncertainty and fragility of a young girl who simply doesn't know whether she should marry the mortal Athamas or go with Jupiter, King of the Gods. The music veers between arioso and recitative in which a long-held note in the violin line is nothing short of a primal wail. In Act III, Handel indulges in virtuosic excess in *Semele's* 'Myself I shall adore', while Eccles actually goes against Congreve's libretto indications in setting these same words in recitative. Eccles' confused heroine has integrity but falls victim to Juno's and Jupiter's matrimonial discord.

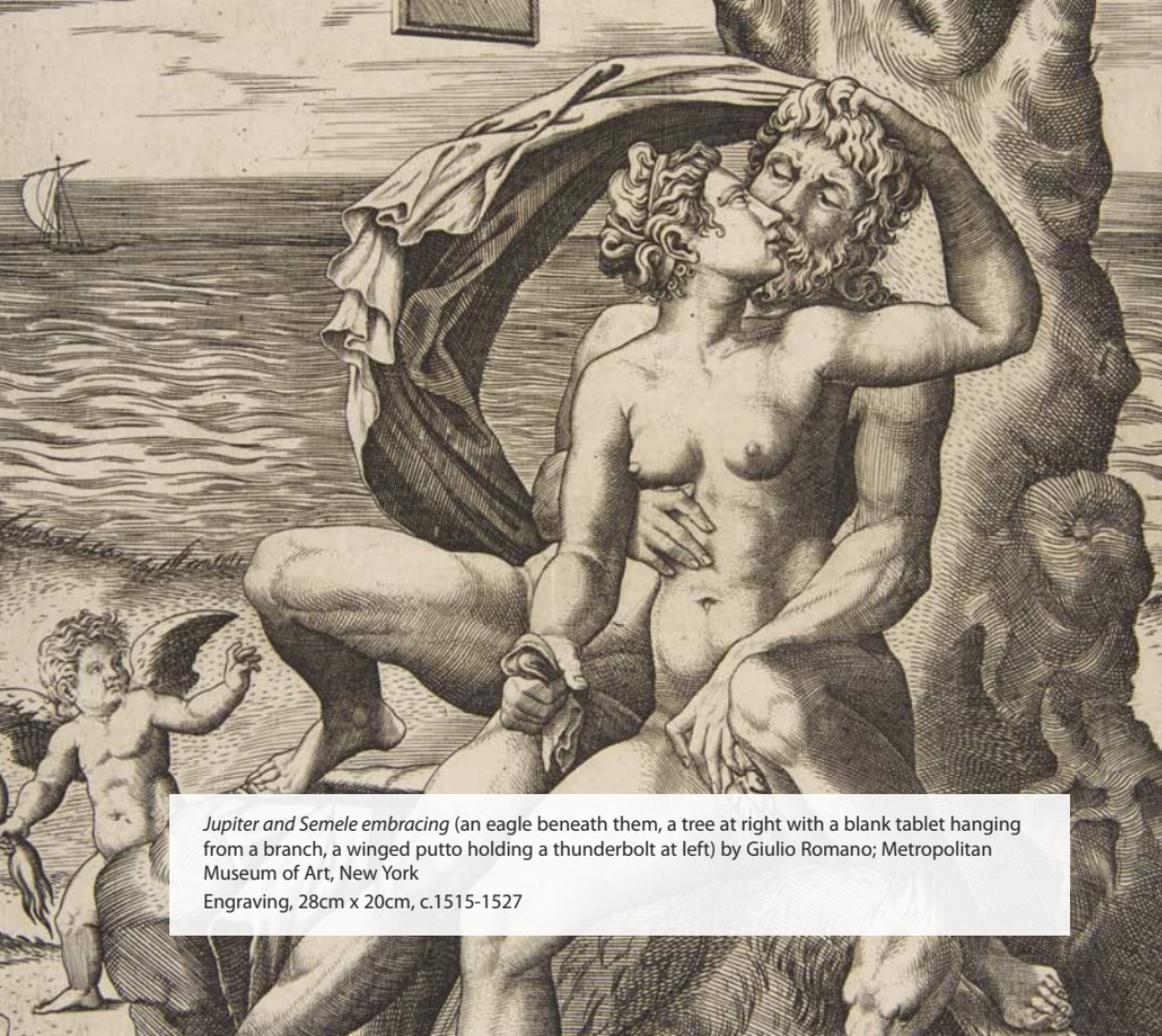
This opera oozes drama. Juno's deadly outburst with 'Not one of curst Agenor's Race I'll spare' captures a wronged queen hell-bent on revenge. How alarming that this revenge has the added sweetness of torture: *Semele's* life ebbs away over the course of a mournful symphony that lasts 26 bars. Worse still that this inexperienced mortal is one whom Jupiter has come to love. When he realises that *Semele* must die from his own lightning bolts, the lurch into F-sharp minor for 'Ah! Take heed' is both devastating and poignant in its brevity. (Could this funereal sonority replete with throbbing quavers have inspired Handel's 'Se pietà' in *Giulio Cesare*?) Jupiter's following number sees him trapped by his own oath: the words 'Tis past Recall' are set identically three times interspersed within recitative. This is a horrific moment of self-realisation in which we realise that even the King of the Gods cannot escape Fate.

These flawed characters can of course only come to life with a first-rate team. Together with the deep commitment of every performer, this adventure has been blessed by the expertise of Professor Peter Holman, Dr. Alan Howard and Dr. Ruth Smith (my final pre-recording conversation with Ruth concerning this work's feisty marriage between text and music lasted over six hours!). The calm professionalism of Alexander Van Ingen and his colleagues at the Academy of Ancient Music, together with the proactive support of Cambridge Handel Opera and Cambridge Early Music, show what can be achieved through creative partnerships.

How might things have been different had Handel not settled in London? We here take on the mantle of the intrepid explorer in deviating from the linear path of musical hagiography and 'un-crushing' a butterfly. In doing so, we discover an opera in which the potent fusion of the English language with music bears comparison with the best of Eccles' successors. Perhaps the harrowing narrative of the mortal adrift even finds resonances in twentieth-century opera. I hope you can share my experience of this English gem on its own terms as a profoundly moving and life-affirming drama.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Julian'.

Julian Perkins
director & harpsichord



Jupiter and Semele embracing (an eagle beneath them, a tree at right with a blank tablet hanging from a branch, a winged putto holding a thunderbolt at left) by Giulio Romano; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Engraving, 28cm x 20cm, c.1515-1527

MYTHOS: THE STORY OF SEMELE

Stephen Fry

*In his book *Mythos*, Stephen Fry draws on his vivid storytelling ability to create an immersive, lively and humorous retelling of Greek myth. Published in 2017, and part of a stage tour beginning in Canada at the Shaw Festival in 2018 and performed across the UK in 2019, *Mythos* follows centuries of story-tellers, composers and dramatists inspired by tales from the ancient world, and charts the interbreeding and family feuding that led to the rise of the Olympians – Zeus (later Jupiter, in Roman mythology), Hera (Juno), Apollo (Apollo), Eros (Cupid), and many others. We are grateful to Stephen Fry and his publishers, Penguin Random House, for permission to print his retelling of the story of Semele here.*

[*Mythos* is published by Penguin Random House, ISBN: 9781405934138]

Alexander Van Ingen



TWICE BORN

The Eagle Lands

After Cadmus and Harmonia departed on their travels, their son-in-law Pentheus reigned in Thebes¹. He was not a strong king, but he was honest and did the best he could with the limited store of character and cunning on which he was able to call. While the city-state flourished

¹ Cadmus and Harmonia's sons Polydorus and Illyrius were too young to rule. In time Polydorus would go on to reign in Thebes, and Illyrius would rule over the kingdom that bore his name, Illyria.

well enough under him, he needed always to look over his shoulder to the children of Cadmus, his brothers- and sisters-in-law, whose greed and ambition posed a constant threat. Even his wife Agave seemed contemptuous of him and anxious for him to fail. His youngest sister-in-law, Semele, was the only one with whom he felt at all at ease, in truth because she was less worldly than her brothers Polydorus and Illyrius, and nothing like as ambitious for wealth and position as her sisters Agave, Autoñoë and Ino. Semele was a beautiful, kindly and generous girl, content with her life as a priestess at the great temple of Zeus.

One day she sacrificed to Zeus a bull of especially impressive size and vigour. The offering complete, she took herself off to the River Asopos to wash the blood from her. It so happened that Zeus, pleased with the sacrifice and intending anyway to look in on Thebes to see how the city prospered, was flying over the river at the time in his favourite guise of an eagle. The sight of Semele's naked body glistening in the water excited him hugely and he landed, turning himself quickly back into his proper form. I say 'proper form', for when the gods chose to reveal themselves to humans they presented themselves in a reduced, manageable guise that did not dazzle or overawe. Thus the figure that stood on the riverbank smiling at Semele appeared human. Large, stunningly handsome, powerfully built and possessed of an unusual radiance, but human all the same.

Crossing her arms over her breasts Semele called out, 'Who are you? How dare you sneak up upon a priestess of Zeus?'

'A priestess of Zeus, are you?'

'I am. If you mean any harm to me I will cry out to the King of the Gods and he will rush to my aid.'

'You don't say so?'

'You may be sure of it. Now leave.'

But the stranger came closer. 'I am well pleased with you, Semele,' he said.

Semele backed away. 'You know my name?'

'I know many things, loyal priestess. For I am the god you serve. I am the Sky Father, the King of Olympus. Zeus, the all-powerful.'

Semele, still half in the river, gasped and fell to her knees.

'Come now,' said Zeus, striding through the water towards her, 'let me look into your eyes.'

It was splashy, frenzied and wet, but it was real love-making. When it was over Semele smiled, blushed, laughed and then wept, leaning her head on Zeus's chest and sobbing without cease.

'Don't cry, dearest Semele,' said Zeus, running his fingers through her hair. 'You have pleased me.'

'I'm sorry, my lord. But I love you and I know all too well that you can never love a mortal.'

Zeus gazed down at her. The eruption of lust he had felt was all over, but he was surprised to feel the stirrings of something deeper, glowing like embers in his heart. A god who operated in vertical moments with no real thought for consequences along the line, he really did experience just then a great wellspring of love for the beautiful Semele, and he told her so.

'Semele, I do love you! I love you sincerely. Believe me now when I swear by the waters of this river that I will always look after you, care for you, protect you, honour you.' He cupped her face in his hands and bent forward to bestow a tender kiss on her soft, receptive lips. 'Now, farewell, my sweet. Once every new moon I will come.'

Dressed in her gown, her hair still damp and her whole being warm and bright with love and happiness, Semele walked back across the fields towards the temple. Looking up, a hand shading her eyes, she saw an eagle sweep and soar through the sky, seemingly into the sun itself, until the dazzle of it made her eyes water and she was forced to look away.

The Eagle's Wife

Zeus meant well.

Those three words so often presaged disaster for some poor demigod, nymph or mortal. The King of the Gods did love Semele and he really meant to do his best by her. In the fervour of his new infatuation he managed conveniently to forget the torments he had endured, maddened by the gadfly sent by his vengeful wife.

Alas, Hera may no longer have had Argus of the hundred eyes to gather intelligence for her, but she had thousands of eyes in other places. Whether it was one of the jealous sisters, Agave, Autoonö or Ino, who spied on Semele and whispered to Hera the story of the love-making in the river, or whether it was one of the Queen of Heaven's own priestesses, is not known. But find out Hera did.

So it was that, one afternoon, Semele, returning with romantic sentiment to the place of her regular amorous encounters with Zeus, encountered a stooping old woman leaning on a stick.

'My, what a pretty girl,' croaked the old woman, slightly overdoing the cracked and cackling voice of a miserable crone.

'Why thank you,' said the unsuspecting Semele with a friendly smile.

'Walk with me,' said the hag, pulling Semele towards her with her cane. 'Let me lean upon you.'

Semele was polite and considerate by nature in a culture where the elderly were in any case accorded the greatest attention and respect, so she accompanied the old woman and endured her roughness without complaint.

'My name is Beroë,' said the old woman.

'And I am Semele.'

'What a pretty name! And here is Asopos,' Beroë indicated the clear waters of the river.

'Yes,' assented Semele, 'that is the river's name.'

'I heard tell,' here the old woman's voice lowered into a harsh whisper, 'that a priestess of Zeus was seduced here. Right here in the reeds.'

Semele went silent, but the flush that spread instantly up her neck to her cheeks betrayed her as completely as any spoken words.

'Oh, my dear!' screeched the crone. 'It was you! And now that I look, I can see your belly. You are with child!'

'I...I am...' said Semele with a becoming mixture of diffidence and pride. 'But... if you can keep a secret...?'

'Oh, these old lips never tell tales. You may tell me anything you wish, my dear.'

'Well, the fact is that the father of this child is – none other than Zeus himself.'

'No!' said Beroë. 'You don't say so? Really?'

Semele gave a very affirmative nod of the head. She did not like the old woman's sceptical tone. 'Truly. The King of the Gods himself.'

'Zeus? The great god Zeus? Well, well. I wonder... No, I mustn't say.'

'Say what, lady?'

'You seem such a sweet innocent. So trusting. But, my dear, how can you know that it was Zeus? Isn't that exactly what some wicked seducer might say just to win you?'

'Oh no, it was Zeus. I know it was Zeus.'

'Bear with an old woman and describe him to me, my child.'

'Well, he was tall. He had a beard. Strong. Kindly...'

'Oh no, I'm sorry to say so, but that is hardly the description of a god.'

'But it was Zeus, it was! He turned himself into an eagle. I saw it with my very own eyes.'

'That's a trick that can be taught. Fauns and demigods can do it. Even some mortal men.'

'It was Zeus. I *felt* it.'

'Hm...' Beroë sounded doubtful. 'I have lived amongst the gods. My mother is Tethys and my father Oceanus. I raised and nursed the young gods after they were reborn from Kronos's stomach. It's true. I know their ways and their natures and I tell you this, my daughter. When a god manifests himself or herself as they truly are it is like a great explosion. A wondrous thing of force and fire. Unforgettable. Unmistakable.'

‘And that’s just what I felt!’

‘What you felt was no more than the ecstasy of mortal love-making. Depend upon it. Tell me now, will this lover of yours come to you again?’

‘Oh, yes indeed. He visits me faithfully every change of the moon.’

‘If I were you,’ said the old woman, ‘I would make him promise to reveal himself to you as he *really* is. If he is Zeus you will know it. Otherwise I fear you have been made a fool of, and you are far too lovely and trusting and sweet-natured for that to be allowed. Now, leave me to contemplate the view. Shush, shush, go away.’

And so Semele left the crone, growing more and more hotly indignant all the while. She could not help it, but this warty and wrinkled old creature had got under her skin. So typical of old age to try to take away any pleasure that youth might feel. Her own sisters, Autonoe, Ino and Agave, had disbelieved her when she told them proudly of how she loved Zeus and Zeus loved her. They had shrieked with incredulous mocking laughter and called her a gullible fool. And now this Beroë doubted her story too.

Yet maybe, just *maybe* there was something in what her sisters and the old witch said. Gods surely had more to them than warm flesh and solid muscle, appealing as those were? ‘Well,’ Semele said to herself, ‘two more nights and there’ll be a new moon in the sky, and I can prove that nasty interfering old hag wrong.’

Had Semele chanced to turn and look back towards the river, she might have witnessed the extraordinary sight of that nasty interfering old hag, now youthful, beautiful, magisterial and imperious, rising up to the clouds in a purple and gold chariot drawn by a dozen peacocks. And had she the gift of second sight, Semele might have been granted a vision of the actual BEROË, innocent old nurse of the gods, living out her life miles away in respectable retirement on the coast of Phoenicia.²

² The real Beroë, an Oceanid who had indeed nursed the young gods, gave her name to the city of Beirut.

The Manifestation³

It was with some impatience that, on the night of the new moon, Semele paced up and down by the banks of River Asopos, awaiting her lover. He arrived at last, this time as a stallion – black, glossy and fine, galloping through the fields towards her as the sun set in the west behind him, seeming to set his mane on fire. Oh, how she loved him!

He let her stroke his flanks and palm his hot nostrils before he transformed himself into the shape she knew and loved so well. Hugging and holding him hard, she began to cry.

‘My darling girl,’ said Zeus, his finger running down to her belly, where it traced the outline of their child, ‘not weeping again? What am I doing wrong?’

‘You really are the god Zeus?’

‘I am.’

‘Will you promise to grant any wish?’

‘Oh, must you really?’ said Zeus with a sigh.

‘It’s nothing – not power or wisdom or jewels, or anything like that. And I don’t want you to destroy anyone. It’s a small thing, really it is.’

‘Then,’ said Zeus, chucking her affectionately under the chin, ‘I will grant your wish.’

‘You promise?’

‘I promise. I promise by this river – no, I’ve already sworn one thing by it. I shall promise you by the great Stygian stream herself.’⁴ Raising his hand with mock solemnity, he intoned, ‘Beloved Semele, I swear by sacred Styx that I will grant your next wish.’

‘Then,’ said Semele with a deep breath, ‘show yourself to me.’

‘How’s that?’

³ Another word for the appearance and revelation of a god to a mortal is ‘theophany’.

⁴ It was common, e.g. Apollo’s promise to Phaeton, for gods to swear by this dark and hateful river.

'I want to see you as you really are. Not as a man, but as a god, in your true divinity.'

The smile froze on Zeus's face. 'No!' he cried. 'Anything but that! Do not wish such a thing. No, no, no!'

It was the tone of voice that gods often used when they realized that they had been trapped into a rash promise. Apollo cried out in the same way, you will remember, when Phaeton called upon him to honour his oath. Suspicion flared up in Semele.

'You promised, you swore by Styx! You swore, you swore an oath!'

'But my darling girl, you don't know what you're asking.'

'You swore!' Semele actually stamped her foot.

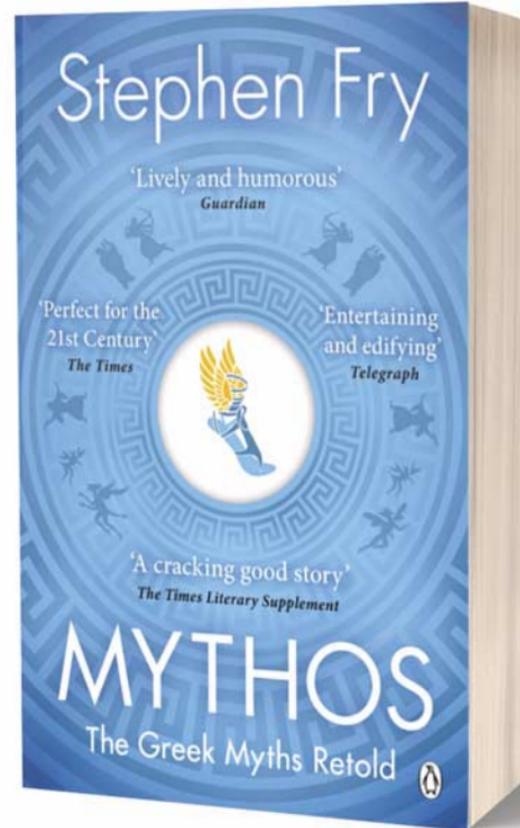
The god looked up at the sky and groaned. 'I did. I pledged my word and my word is sacred.'

As he spoke Zeus began to gather himself into the form of a great thundercloud. From the centre of this dark mass flashed the brightest light imaginable. Semele looked on, her face breaking into a broad and ecstatic smile of joy. Only a god could change like this. Only Zeus himself could grow and grow with such dazzling fire and golden greatness.

But the brightness was becoming so fierce, so terrible in the ferocity of its glare, that she threw up an arm to shade her eyes. Yet still the brilliance intensified. With a crack so loud that her ears burst and filled with blood, the radiance exploded in bolts of lightning that instantly struck the girl blind. Deaf and sightless she staggered backwards, but too late to avoid the blazing force of a thunderbolt so powerful that it split her body open, killing her at once.

Above him, around him, inside him, Zeus heard the triumphant laughter of his wife. Of course. He might have known. Somehow Hera had tricked this poor girl into forcing the awful promise from him. Well, she would not get their child. With a peal of thunder Zeus returned to flesh and blood and plucked the foetus from Semele's belly. It was too young to breathe the air, so Zeus took a knife and sliced open his thigh and tucked the embryo inside. Holding it tight within this makeshift womb Zeus knelt down to sew the child safely into his warm flesh.⁵

⁵ An astonishing story. As Ovid himself says of it: 'If man can believe this...'





Jupiter and Semele (fragment, showing Semele, and Juno in disguise), by Jean-Baptiste Deshayes de Colleville; Norton Simon Museum, California, USA
Oil on canvas, 160cm x 169cm, c.1760

THE GODS AS WE KNOW THEM: THE ANCIENT MYTHOLOGICAL TRADITION

Dr. Stephanie Oade

The gods and goddesses of the classical mythological tradition began their literary lives in three epic poems: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by Homer (c.750 BCE), and Hesiod's *Theogony* (c.700 BCE). Widely performed for centuries after their composition by bards in the sung story-telling tradition and later disseminated in writing, these works immortalised their creators and began a long tradition of reinvention and renewal in the works of later writers, artists and composers.

Hesiod's didactic work, the *Theogony*, represents an attempt to organise the various and often inconsistent strands of local mythology into a coherent, linear whole. It outlines the Greek creation story, charting the divine genealogy from Chaos through the primordial entities to the Titans, Giants and Cyclopes. The Olympian gods followed, violently overthrowing their Titan ancestors. At this point humankind appeared on the scene and the Olympian gods, having mated incessantly amongst themselves, then turned their attentions to these mortals. Semele, Hesiod tells us, is doubly entwined in these unions: herself the daughter of the goddess Harmonia – therefore the granddaughter of Aphrodite (Venus in the Roman tradition)¹ – she bore Dionysus (Bacchus) to Zeus (Jupiter)². Lesser gods, semi gods, nymphs and Greek heroes were born from these divine–mortal unions, and with these heroes (Achilles, Anchises, and Aeneas, the latter of whom would later be taken up by Virgil and immortalised as the founder of Rome) came the beginning of Greek 'history'. Whilst Hesiod passes no moral judgement on the behaviour of the gods or their couplings with mortals, certain themes that recur in other mythological literature are established: hatred, revenge, sex, and the complicated relationships between gods and mortals.

Whilst Hesiod catalogues and enumerates his immortals, the gods in Homer are developed into richly drawn characters.³ In the heroic (to us, brutal) world of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, there is no sense of righteous, benevolent divinity (thus no parallel to be drawn with a Christian God) – these gods are sometimes kindly and just, but more often selfish, fickle, devious, and lustful. Moreover, for

¹ *Theog.* 975-978.

² *Theog.* 940-942.

³ Similarly treated centuries later in Virgil's Roman epic, the *Aeneid*.

a variety of reasons they are deeply partisan when it comes to humankind: perhaps a people may have proved particularly loyal; perhaps siding with one city offers the opportunity for competition with a rival god(ess); perhaps an illegitimate family line draws out feelings of loyalty or resentment. Indeed, illegitimate, semi-divine families are not uncommon or out of the ordinary in this epic world, but the dynamics of power dictate that gods bed mortal women far more often than the other way round,⁴ often resulting in the punishment of the mortal women by resentful goddesses, as in the case of Semele and her sister Ino.⁵

The vengeful treatment of humans by gods – the fact that a city may be cursed, or a mortal destined to unwittingly commit atrocities or to be punished for an unknown sin – became the cornerstone of Greek tragedy. The plays are an exploration of the metaphysical in helping to understand human misfortune: they show an acceptance of tragic circumstance, an appreciation of unstoppable fate, as well as a concern for appeasing and worshipping the terrifying powers of Olympus. Indeed, in wider life as in theatre, the various channels of communication between humans and gods (prayer, sacrifice, oracles, the festivals of plays, music and sporting competition that were performed) were crucial in maintaining a certain equilibrium, not just in currying favour but staving off reproach, with particular areas or groups often choosing to focus on a single protective divinity: hence the development of divine cults across the Greek-speaking world.

Having developed thus over centuries of Greek literature and life, the Olympian gods underwent a major change with the rise of Rome as a superpower. Trade, conquest, and Romanisation of Greek-speaking areas led to the absorption of Greek culture into Roman society, summarised centuries later by the poet Horace: 'Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresti Latio' ('*captured Greece conquered the wild victor and brought culture to rustic Italy*').⁶ Greek deities merged with local

Roman deities, their names were changed and personalities developed, their stories expanded and refined. By the early first century CE, the Graeco-Roman gods, now known by their new names (Jupiter for Zeus, Juno for Hera, Bacchus for Dionysus etc.) were so deeply entrenched in Roman religion with such sprawling mythology that the poet Ovid was able to draw them together into a continuous fifteen-book narrative starting (as in Hesiod) with the Creation and ending in the apotheosis of Julius Caesar just a half century before. Ovid's witty, erudite and comprehensive *Metamorphoses* became a mythological handbook, as well as a source of inspiration for artists from his own age to ours. His are the ancient gods most familiar to us and, thanks to Ovid, their mortal lovers, women like Semele, have found immortality too.

⁴ The sea goddess Thetis' affair with the mortal Peleus is a notable exception, though she then refused to marry him and left him after the birth of their son Achilles.

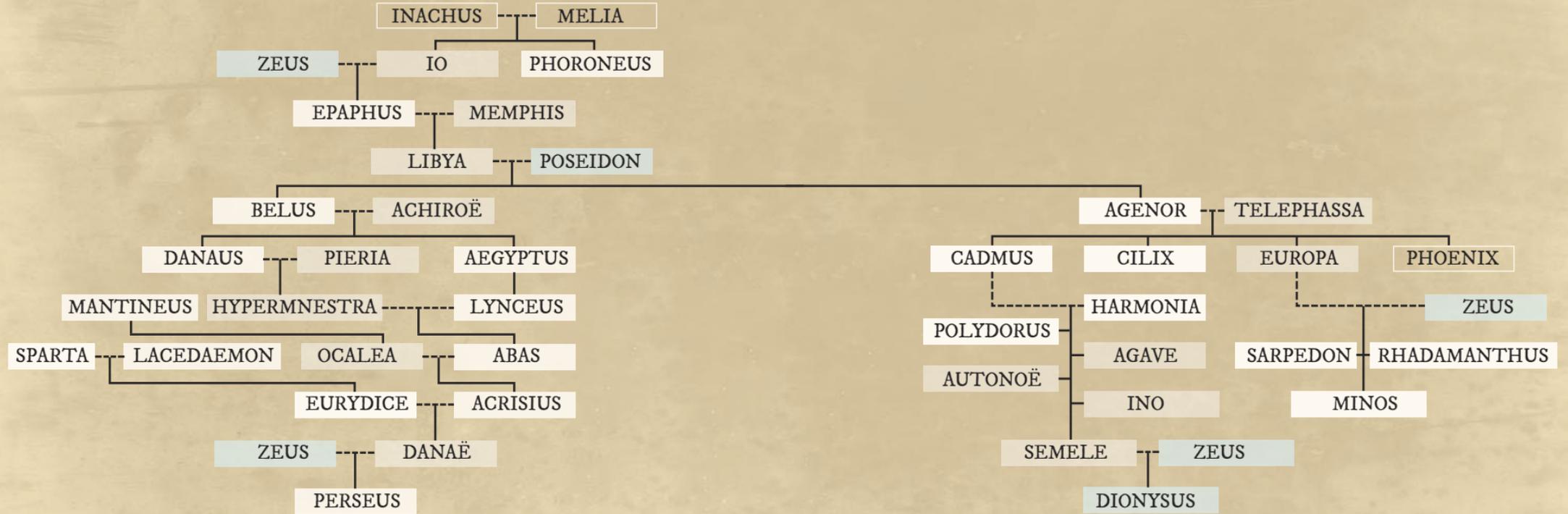
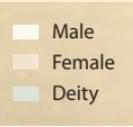
⁵ Semele is referred to only briefly in Homer, *Iliad* 14.323-5.

⁶ *Epistle* 2.1.156.



Jupiter and Semele, by Luca Ferrari; Castelveccchio, Verona, Italy
Oil on canvas, c.1640

ARGIVE GENEALOGY IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY





Julian Perkins (director, harpsichord) directs the Academy of Ancient Music during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles' *Semele* at St. Jude-on-the-Hill, London, 2019

THE GODS AND MORTALS OF THE OPERA

Dr. Stephanie Oade

The Gods

Jupiter (Zeus in the Greek tradition) – king of the gods. Hesiod tells the story of his birth and rise to power: his father Saturn (Cronus), the Titan ruler of the heavens, feared that he would be overthrown by his own child so ate each one as they were born. At the birth of Jupiter, however, his mother substituted for him a stone, which Saturn duly ate, allowing Jupiter to grow up safely. Once strong enough, Jupiter forced Saturn to expel his siblings, Neptune, Pluto, Ceres, Juno and Vesta, who together overthrew their father, leading to a new divine order and the rise of the Olympian gods. In Italy, Jupiter was worshipped as *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* ('Jupiter, the greatest and best') even before the rise of the Roman Republic. He was associated with storms and thunder.

Juno (Hera in the Greek tradition) – wife of Jupiter (Zeus); mother to Mars; queen of heaven and womanhood (particularly associated with marriage and childbirth), though she had numerous epithets and many other roles in Roman life. Despite her antagonistic role in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where she works to foil the Trojan Aeneas' mission to found Rome, she became the patron goddess of the city and was worshipped alongside Jupiter and Minerva on the Capitol Hill.

Iris – messenger of the gods in Homer's *Iliad* and later in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where she is often sent by Juno. Known as 'swift footed' and 'golden winged', she is the personification of the rainbow, but more often represented in art, sculpture and pottery as a winged maiden.

Cupid (Eros in the Greek tradition) – god of love; son of Venus, the goddess of love and sex. He is variously portrayed as a youthful mischief-maker, kindly bringer of happiness, or a careless youth with a quiver full of love-inducing arrows. He often acts at the command of Venus but, as told by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses* (*The Golden Ass*), Venus did not always get her own way: in her jealousy, she once ordered Cupid to make the beautiful mortal Psyche fall in love with the first hideous thing she saw; Cupid, however, fell in love with Psyche himself and made her his wife. Cupid features heavily in the love poetry of the late Roman Republic / early Roman Empire (late first century BCE / early first century CE), especially in the *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria* of Ovid.

Somnus (Hypnos in the Greek tradition) – according to Hesiod, one of the earliest divine entities. The son of Nyx (the Night goddess) who also bore Doom, Fate, Death, and the Tribe of Dreams. Generally content to snooze in his cave, his help is frequently enlisted by Juno (Hera). In Book 14 of Homer's *Iliad*, Hera persuades Hypnos to lull her husband Zeus to sleep so she can interfere with the Trojan War and help the Greeks. Ovid, in the story of Ceyx and Alcyone (*Met.* 11.409), describes how Juno sent Iris to the 'cloud-wrapped palace of Somnus' (11.591) to ask Somnus to tell Alcyone of her husband's death in a dream. Somnus sends three 'out of the horde of his thousand children' (11.633) to shape Alcyone's dreams and bear the news.

Apollo – son of Jupiter (Zeus) and the Titaness Leto; twin brother of the virgin huntress goddess, Diana (Artemis); the only important god who appears the same in Greek and Roman traditions. He is god of the sun, of prophecy (most associated with the Pythian oracle at Delphi), healing and plague, archery and agriculture, music and poetry, as well as reason, logic, beauty of form and moderation. He is often held up in contrast to his wild, emotional half-brother Bacchus (Dionysus), and the two are used by Nietzsche to represent the two extremes of creative form and process.

The Mortals

Cadmus – father of Semele and Ino; husband of the goddess Harmonia; legendary king and founder of Thebes in the ancient area of Boeotia in central Greece. According to ancient sources he was born in Phoenicia (an area of independent city states along the coast of the Levant, eastern Mediterranean) and was sent by his father Agenor to find his sister Europa, who had been abducted by Zeus. He was ordered by an oracle to follow a cow and establish a city where it lay down; thus was the city of Thebes founded, peopled from sown dragon's teeth.

Semele – daughter of the goddess Harmonia and the mortal Cadmus; sister of Ino. Her story is referenced in numerous Greek and Roman sources, though some allude to a later part of her story in which Bacchus fetches her from the Underworld and introduces her to the immortal throng as the goddess Thyone. As a cult figure in antiquity, Semele had a sanctuary at Thebes with an open air enclosure associated with her bridal chamber. It seems that her rituals were performed exclusively by women, centring on invoking Bacchic frenzy and celebrating her deification. According to Ovid (*Fasti* 6.503 ff.), she was identified with the goddess Stimula and was worshiped in a grove near the harbour town of Ostia, just outside Rome.

Ino – sister of Semele and second wife to Athamas. Some mythological traditions focus on the 'wicked stepmother' line (Ino's hatred of Athamas' children by the nymph Nephele); others follow on from the story of Semele. After Juno's deception of Semele, Semele's consequent death and the birth of Bacchus from Jupiter's thigh, Ino raises her infant nephew, keeping him safe from the vengeful Juno. Ino did not, however, escape the goddess' wrath: Juno made Athamas mad so that he killed his child, Learches, thus driving Ino to kill herself and their other son, Melicertes, by jumping from a cliff into the sea. Jupiter, however, in gratitude for her care of his son Bacchus, changed her into a maritime deity called Leucothea (the White Goddess). In the form of Leucothea, she appears in Homer's *Odyssey*, where she saves the hero Odysseus from drowning.

Athamas – husband first to the goddess Nephele, with whom he had twins, Phrixus and Helle, and a younger son Makistos; he then married Ino with whom he had two children, Learches and Melicertes, both of whom died at the hands of their parents (see above). He went on to have another four children, with his third wife.

Priests – in Greek and Roman religion, priests were not mediators between people and gods, nor were they experts in religion, pastoral leaders, or moral exemplars; rather they each served a particular god, maintaining their sanctuary or temple, and were specialists in the correct execution of that god's particular rituals. They acted principally as religious administrators. Although anyone could become a priest (including women), considerable prestige was attached to some roles and many had considerable influence in state affairs. In Rome, priesthood was predominantly political. The Rex Sacrorum was the highest priestly position, an appointment for life from the most elite political families; members of the lower priestly orders belonged to one of four religious 'colleges', including the Augurs (see below).

Augurs – a category of priest in ancient Rome; they were consulted about all state and many private decisions, whether to go to war, for example, or whether to pass a new law. Augurs would observe the flight of birds for evidence of whether the gods would approve of the proposed venture. During the joint consulship of Julius Caesar and Marcus Bibulus in 59 BCE, the two men argued over Caesar's proposed agrarian bill; Bibulus tried to block the bill by locking himself in his house for the rest of the year, claiming that he was watching the heavens, and bringing all state function to a halt until his augury concluded or returned positive signs (Caesar ignored him anyway).



Richard Burkhard (centre-left, baritone, Jupiter) and Anna Dennis (centre-right, soprano, Semele) with the Academy of Ancient Music and Julian Perkins (centre, director & harpsichord) during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles' *Semele* at St. Jude-on-the-Hill, London, 2019

'A THING INTIRELY FICTITIOUS'

Dr. Ruth Smith

In the final version that he printed in his *Works* of 1710, Congreve justified his *Semele* on the grounds that it was to be 'represented under the Title of an Opera, where greater Absurdities are every Day excus'd'. But his libretto, one of the best ever written in English, is vividly realistic, nicely balancing irony, comedy and pathos in character-drawing as convincing as in his plays, and even more delightful.

Congreve explains that he diverges from Ovid's well-known account of Semele's story (*Metamorphoses* Book 3) by altering Juno's disguise. He also, though he does not say so, invents all of Act I, most of Act II, and much of Act III. With Act I he plunges us immediately into a crisis of multiple baulked loves: Ino loves Athamas who loves Semele who loves Jupiter who loves Semele, but she is on the point of being married to Athamas, whom she does not love. Ovid begins the story with Juno finding out that Semele is pregnant by Jupiter, and it is the pregnancy that rouses her rage. She contrives Semele's destruction not with the bait of immortality but – aptly disguised as Semele's old nurse – with the mundane question of doubtful paternity (how can you be sure the father of your baby is king of the gods?). Congreve's Semele is both less materialistic and more self-absorbed, and by Act III more explicitly ambitious: 'How foolish a Thing is Fruition! ... I die for the Joys of Ambition!'

Congreve begins, teasingly, by suggesting that her aspirations might be justified. After she has been carried away, the priests and augurs instruct her father and his court to worship Jupiter and Semele jointly (perhaps a knowing nod to the Roman cult of Semele as goddess). She seems to have become more powerful even than Jupiter, in one of Congreve's more blatant double-entendres and witty cross references: 'On her Bosom Jove

reclining, / Useless now his Thunder lies, / To her Arms his Bolts resigning' (anticipating the manner of her eventual demise). Iris reports to Juno that dawn now runs to Semele's clock, for Aurora has to wait around each morning until she opens her eyes. But the Semele we find in her custom-built palace is still the confused girl who in Act I begged 'O Jove, in Pity teach me which to choose'. The insecure kept woman of a busy magnate in a well-serviced but lonely love-nest, transported from her natural sphere, she is out of her depth in her new one, where 'conscious of a Nature far inferior, I shun Society'. Her fatal desire to know Jupiter fully may for us have sympathetic resonances even of Duke Bluebeard's Judith.

The gods are as frail as the humans. Jupiter warns Semele not to become jealous like his wife, who makes no secret of her 'Rage and Jealousie' at her first appearance (another nice instance of Congreve's intra-textuality is that phrase's recurrence in Jupiter's wry description of the Arcadians at the end of the same Act: 'There, without Rage of Jealousie, they burn...'). Jupiter is managed by Cupid in his first scene with Semele, and in his second by the titillating dream his wife engineers. Jupiter and Semele are in a very human relationship which is at first delightful and rapturous, then shadowed with things not said, eventually destroyed by things said. For in *Semele*, in contrast to much baroque opera seria, the rulers and subjects, mortals and immortals, are on the same level in their desires and their inability to realise them. Semele cannot be wholly at one with Jupiter, but neither can Jupiter have both a complaisant mistress and an uncomplaining wife, nor will Juno be able to keep her philandering husband on Olympus.

Semele is Congreve's creation. In Ovid she is merely credulous, and proud to be bearing Jupiter's child. Her longings, her immersion in love, her charm, her vanity, her temper, her contrition are all Congreve's, the harvest of his witty and understanding portrayal of women in his plays. In a text whose absence of moral judgements would have made it Exhibit A in Jeremy Collier's *Farther Vindication of the Short View of the Prophaneness of the English Stage* (1708) had it come to performance, perhaps the most startling sidestepping of censoriousness is Jupiter's joyous acceptance of Semele's 'With my Frailty don't upbraid me, / I am Woman as you made me' (Eccles

brilliantly shifts the metre to stress 'as you made me'). His response, that women are his masterpiece and she 'the most excelling', simultaneously reflects the vanity of the Restoration rake, looks forward ironically to Jupiter's own destruction of his greatest creation, and reflects the actual artificer's satisfaction.

Semele, like all the best art, is about art. As well as being the god of wine, Dionysus (Bacchus) is the god of theatre and its illusions. One of the most haunting aspects of *Semele* is its intermingling of reality and fantasy. Semele wants to dream so that she can be deceived by an image of happiness: 'O Sleep, again deceive me'. Jupiter is driven by a false dream of Semele abandoning him to make a promise that will destroy her. It is only in disguise that Jupiter can enjoy Semele, and his real self burns her up. Juno's mirror tricks Semele into believing herself better than she is. Juno's vision too is blurred by her desires, for revenge and for a faithful husband: the confidence of her final lines that 'Heav'n hereafter will be Heav'n indeed' will soon be overturned by Jupiter's next affair, with Semele's younger cousin Danaë. The Elysian scene that Jupiter conjures into being at the heart of the work, where Arcadians are able to 'taste the Sweets of Love without its Pains', is a wishful ideal of pastoral perfection. The healing that Apollo finally promises is illusion too: wine confers befuddlement, and 'Love's Reign's at an end' not least because drink renders men incapable.

Congreve defended his plays against Collier's initial salvo with one of his own. Present-day commentators think he should have kept clear of pamphlet argument, too obviously not his strength. He could have produced no better demonstration that an adult audience doesn't need simple moral take-home messages than his charming, witty, thought-provoking *Semele*.

Semele's unfortunate family

'Mortals whom Gods affect [love] / Have narrow Limits set to Life, / And cannot long be bless'd' is a truism of classical Greek thought. Congreve was well versed in ancient Greek and Roman culture, and would have known that in the opinion of the ancient Greeks, humans attract the interest of gods at their peril. Semele's wistful insight could be the epigraph of his libretto.

From the genealogical point of view Semele is not a social climber. She was already very well connected. Her maternal grandparents were the deities of love and war, Venus and Mars. But in numerous generations her unfortunate family realised the danger of attracting divine attention, which happened more than once. Before Semele caught his eye, Jupiter had seduced her aunt Europa. When Juno intemperately vows to destroy the race of Agenor, who was Semele's paternal grandfather, Congreve's audience would have known it was no idle threat.

Juno's revenge can be traced down the family line. Cadmus, Semele's father, has to suffer because he founded Thebes while searching for his sister Europa. Semele's sister Agave murdered her own son at the instigation of her own nephew, Semele's son Bacchus. Semele's nephew Actaeon was killed by his own hounds at the instigation of the goddess Diana. Semele's great-great-nephew Oedipus killed his father and married his mother. Even Ino and Athamas were punished, for rearing their nephew, the infant Bacchus, after Jupiter saved the embryonic baby from his mother's ashes and brought him to term in his own thigh. In Congreve's libretto Jupiter prevents the marriage of Athamas and Semele at the start and ordains the marriage of Ino and Athamas at the end, but sanctioning marriages is Juno's prerogative and Jupiter had no right to interfere (cf Fricka and Wotan).

In some versions of the myth Bacchus redeems Semele from the underworld and makes her a constellation, so she does attain the immortality she wishes for in the opera. Being a direct descendant of both Jupiter and Juno, she is a goddess in one of the earliest accounts of *her*, Hesiod's poem *Theogony* (c. 700 BCE), and she was worshipped as the goddess Stimula in a Roman cult described by Ovid and his contemporary Livy in works that Congreve would have known. But in Congreve's very human version, Semele is immortal 'only' in the music he inspired.

Dr. Ruth Smith
historian of eighteenth-century culture



Anna Dennis (soprano, Semele) during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles' *Semele* at St. Jude-on-the-Hill, London, 2019

PREPARING JUNO

Helen Charlston

For a person who thinks of herself as reasonably non-confrontational, there is something exhilarating about playing a character drenched in power, ready at any moment to flick from poise to fury. Juno's command of her emotions and her insatiable need for revenge are always on a knife-edge: a manic back and forth that is portrayed so convincingly in Eccles' music. Eccles exploits the full vocal range, jumping between the highest and lowest registers. Each time you think Juno has got a handle on the situation, be it laying plans with Iris or successfully tricking Semele into believing she is Ino, she can never fully bridle her fury bubbling under the surface.

In preparing for this recording, one of the things I found most difficult was avoiding continuous side-by-side comparisons between Eccles' version of c.1706 with Handel's of 1744. Whilst the librettos are very similar, the ways in which the two composers set it vary greatly, Eccles choosing different moments for arias, and therefore for repetitions of text. One particularly stark example of this occurs in Act II, as Juno concocts her plan of action to drag Somnus into the scheme. A favourite of many mezzos, Handel's fiery aria for Juno 'Hence, Iris, hence away' has been in my repertoire for years, so I was surprised in my preparation for the Eccles version to come across these lines set as an extended recitative. This epitomises Eccles' pithy approach to Juno's character development: a crucial moment in the plot that cannot be slowed down by an aria, with its repetitions of text and orchestral ritornelli. Instead, Juno has whipped herself into such a frenzy, she needs to list her commands and set the plan into immediate action.

Much of this opera is in recitative form, interspersed with short arias of two distinct sections rather than the many extended da capo arias that one might expect from Handel. There is a certain ease and naturalness of ornamentation that develops in this seemingly concise musical setting which becomes part of the characterisation. Julian and I found Juno needed to wind herself up musically to match the frenzied nature of her text delivery, so we built on Eccles' varied use of tessitura throughout to achieve this. It was in Juno's triumphant final aria, in which she lets vengeance overtake her completely, that we felt for the first time she would indulge in extended cadential ornamentation. We hint again at this self-absorption at the beginning of Act III, when Juno arrives

at Somnus' cave commanding him to awake. As she becomes absorbed in the deliciousness of her plan and the sensuality of her power, we extended Eccles' ascending patterns in the final 'Somnus arise' as far as we could, completing the scale with a high A. There's little chance he'd have slept longer after that.

While I might have harboured a feeling of Handelian déjà vu each time I approached a new scene, Eccles' setting of this wonderful story justifies itself in its own right. Juno has been an immensely enjoyable role to sing, and I hope our interpretation of her extraordinary character will provoke a sparkling response.

*Helen Charlston
mezzo-soprano*



Helen Charlston (mezzo-soprano, Juno) during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles' *Semele* at the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, 2019

HARMONIE UNIVERSELLE. CONTENANT LA THEORIE ET LA PRATIQUE DE LA MUSIQUE.

Où il est traité de la Nature des Sons, & des Mouvements, des Consonances, des Dissonances, des Genres, des Modes, de la Composition, de la Voix, des Chants, & de toutes sortes d'Instruments Harmoniques.

Par F. MARIN MERSENNE de l'Ordre des Minimes.



A PARIS,
Chez SEBASTIEN CRAMOISY, Imprimeur ordinaire du Roy,
rue S. Jacques, aux Cicognes.

M. DC. XXXVI.
Avec Privilège du Roy, & Approbation des Docteurs.

LEAD MUTES

Bill Thorp

The first known reference to mutes for stringed instruments is to be found in Marin Mersenne's vast treatise *Harmonie Universelle* (1636, front cover shown to the left); his countryman Lully and (in England) Purcell were among the first to specify their use, and on hearing the muted sound one can readily appreciate why composers might wish to avail themselves of this special effect, for a mute not only dampens the sound, but also changes its colour or quality, and that according to the materials used. Over the years many have been tried (I have colleagues who, ever resourceful, and in the absence of something more conventional, have used a paper clip, clothes peg or rolled-up dollar bill), but early mutes were generally made from wood, leather or lead. Vivaldi specified the use of lead mutes – piombi, as opposed to the usual sordini – in his oratorio *Juditha Triumphans* and some of the violin concertos (involvement in projects of which led me to manufacture my



Some of the lead mutes used for this recording of Eccles' *Semele*, the huge double bass mute on the right

small collection); and in *Semele* Eccles, at the point where Somnus is commanded to “*awake... and lift up thy heavy Lids of Lead*”, indicates ‘*leads on the instruments*’. This was probably not solely word painting, as the sound of strings muted by lead is especially beguiling: subdued and sweet, almost ethereal (see image from the autograph manuscript score, p.83 and p.196).

On a practical level the pliable quality of the metal means that some attention is required to keep the mutes well-fitted (and probably led to their decline in use); this same quality makes it so useful to a roofer, and I am indebted to my own (the music-loving Mr O’Dowdall) for the kind donation of offcuts which furnished the mutes’ raw material.



More mutes from the Thorp Collection:

Top row (from left): copy of Leopold Mozart’s, mid 18th century, boxwood; two 19th-century versions, ebony and shell; 20th-century model in a light metal alloy.

Bottom row (from left): 20th-century leather mute; the popular modern Tourte sliding model, rubber; homemade leather version (courtesy G.F. Thorp); practice mute in heavy nickel-plated brass.



Bill Thorp (left, violin), with Emilia Benjamin (centre, violin), and Jordan Bowron (right, viola) during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles’ *Semele* at the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, 2019



Above: Title page from John Playford's *The Division Violin*, published in London, 1684

Opposite page: detail from *The Violin Player*, Gerard van Honthorst, 1626

'LIKE THE BREAD OF LIFE'

Judy Tarling



For this recording, the Academy of Ancient Music's string players largely used bows with clip-in frogs, a small number having bows with a screw-tightening mechanism which started to appear in the 1700s. The design of a bow (and the grip used to hold it) can radically affect the sound produced, the versatility of an instrument-bow combination, and the techniques employed in the performance of the music. The following article considers the development of the bow around the time of Eccles' Semele, the virtuosic violinists who drove the pace of change, and the performing characteristics of the bows of the time.

'Like the bread of life' – Italian influence on violin playing in London c. 1700

In 1674 John Playford published his *Introduction to the Skill of Musick*, a general music tutor which contained 'A Brief Introduction to the Playing of the Treble-violin', our earliest English tutor for the violin. It is from this elementary tutor, clearly aimed at gentlemen amateur players, that we learn valuable details about the technique of playing the violin, a skill which previously would have been transmitted between professionals, without the need for written instructions. Playford writes: 'the bow is held in the right hand, between the ends of the Thumb and the three first Fingers, the Thumb being staid upon the hair of the Nut, and the three Fingers resting upon the Wood'. The nut was also called the frog, after the shape of part of a horse's hoof. This way of holding the bow (see right), known as the 'thumb under' bow-hold, was common practice, and was reiterated in 1694 by John Lenton in *The Gentleman's Diversion*, clearly also aimed at the amateur player.

The late-seventeenth-century bow had a much narrower ribbon of hair than is seen on modern bows, and the stick of the violin bow was straight and short (about 60 cm), becoming out-curved when placed under tension by a removable wedge or clip at the frog, as shown to the right. The distance between the hair and the frog was generally quite wide, to keep the hair pulled away from the stick



right to the point of the bow. The player could alter the tension slightly, and hence the volume of sound and degree of articulation, by pressing the thumb on the hair. Players in this recording of *Semele* are using bows with clip-in frogs, but although this is unusual for baroque violinists today, it is not the first time they have been used. Back in the early 1980s players for the Academy of Ancient Music's recording of Georg Muffat's *Florilegium* suites, written in the style of Lully, [available in re-issue on Decca / L'Oiseau-Lyre, 4759118] used specially commissioned short bows with the clip-in mechanism. Much was learned during this project by experimenting with the thumb-under bow hold.

Roger North, an amateur musician writing as the seventeenth century turned into the eighteenth, described how 'The use of the violin had bin little in England except by comon fiddlers', principally for dancing and theatre music. This situation was revolutionised by the arrival of two astonishing violinists from abroad. We learn about their reception from North, who witnessed performances by these two great players. The first to upset the status quo was Nicola Matteis, a tall, proud Italian virtuoso who, according to North, 'taught the English to hold the bow by the wood onely and not to touch the hair, which was no small reformation'. Apart from the bow-hold, which differed radically from that described by Playford and Lenton, his bow was 'long as for a base violl', and he was able to astound the audience by using double stopping (playing more than one note at once). His bow stroke, facilitated by the longer bow, gave him 'superior powers, an arcata as from the clouds, and after that a querolous expostulatory style'. North also commented on his expressive range: 'so violent was his conference of extreams, whereof the like I never heard before or since'.

The second violinist who astounded his English listeners was Thomas Baltzar, known as 'the Swede'. He arrived in England from Lübeck in northern Germany about 1655, and North claims he 'shewed so much mastery upon that instrument, that gentlemen, following also the humour of the Court, fell in *pesle mesle*, and soon thrust out the treble viol ... Baltazar had a hand as swift as any, and used the double notes very much', but, in contrast to the heavenly Matteis, his playing was judged to be

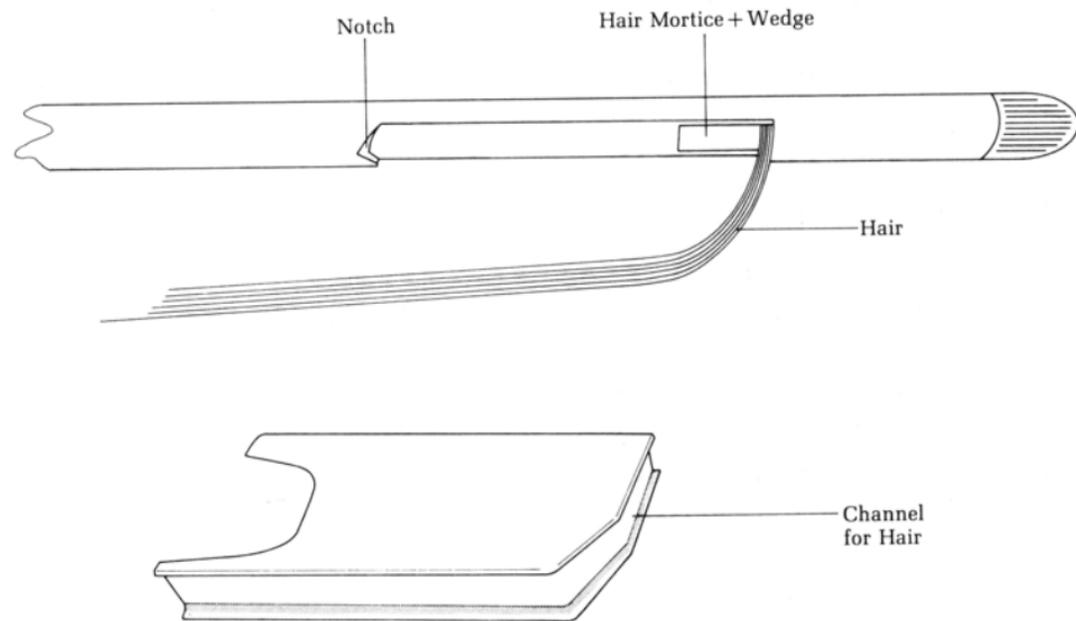


Illustration of a clip-in frog mechanism for a bow, John Dilworth, 1992

harsh and rough. His own compositions (some published by Playford in *The Division Violin*, 1685, the front page of which is shown on page 69) showed an advanced technique, and observers were astonished at how his left hand ran up and down the fingerboard. The character of his playing was so devilish that one listener felt the need to examine his leg to see if a hoof was attached.

After these two performers had been heard at court and in society, North noted a rise in the popularity of the violin among gentlemen, who were able to persuade professionals and teachers such as the proud Matteis to lead them in domestic music making. From the early eighteenth century, the social status of the violin family became established on a more acceptable footing, one to which gentlemen could aspire. Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707–1751), played the cello, thus further adding to the decline of the viol consort.

From the 1680s, Henry Purcell and contemporary composers, such as the Italian Giovanni Battista Draghi (died 1708), had already established a change which favoured Italian style, especially in vocal music, but North, although he called Purcell's trio sonatas 'noble' and 'very artificiall and good musick' ('artificiall' meaning skilful, full of clever devices) described them as 'clog'd with somewhat of an English vein, for which they are unworthily despised'. According to North it was the concurrence of two circumstances, the music of Arcangelo Corelli and the playing of Matteis, that 'convert[ed] the English Musick intirely over from the French to the Italian taste'. He described Matteis as 'a sort of precursor who made the way for what was to follow', and the music of Corelli, North tells us, 'cleared the ground of all other sorts of musick whatsoever'. When Corelli's music, especially his concertos (opus 6) arrived, they were easy, being printed, to pass around amongst amateur players, and were described as 'like the bread of life'. Now Italian style took England by storm. North looked back with regret to the passing of the viol consort, which had been 'thrust out', condemning the new mania for the hierarchical ensemble of violins which demanded a leader and

Fig: V. The Error



Fig: IV.

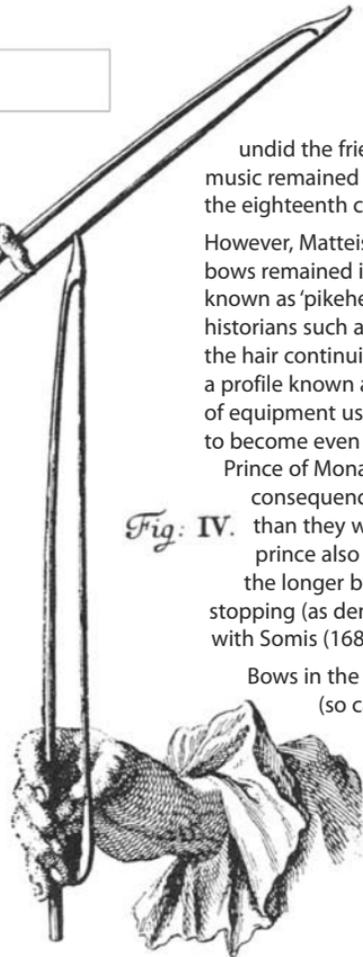


Image: an illustration from Leopold Mozart's *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*, published in Augsburg, 1756

undid the friendly equality of parts in the consort. The Italian style represented by Corelli's music remained the desired model for composers, including Handel, to imitate throughout the eighteenth century.

However, Matteis turned out to be somewhat of a maverick with his longer bow, and shorter bows remained in common use. Images of short bows from the 1680s show a tapered profile known as 'pikehead'. Corelli's conjectured bow profile published by nineteenth-century historians such as Féti's (1856), and confirmed by reports, showed an important development, the hair continuing to be at a greater distance from the stick right up to the point of the bow, a profile known as 'swan-bill'; and as far as is possible to tell, this remained the favoured style of equipment used by Italian violinists. From Corelli's time, the Italian school of playing began to become even more distinct from the French. Seletsky tells us that in 1731 a protégé of the

Prince of Monaco was sent to Paris to study with Rebel, one of Lully's pupils, but as a consequence of his adopting the longer bow, the prince found his sounds 'less pleasing than they were when he had only a short bow, with which he articulated more'. The prince also noticed a tendency to touch the other strings by mistake, a characteristic of the longer bow which would facilitate the playing of chords and contrapuntal double-stopping (as demonstrated by Matteis). This pupil was subsequently sent to Turin to study with Somis (1686-1763), a pupil of Corelli, who favoured the shorter bow.

Bows in the seventeenth century were made from exotic hardwoods such as snakewood (so called after its sometimes spectacularly spotted appearance), which had arrived in Europe from the Amazon in the sixteenth century. These dense, heavy hardwoods meant that the bow could be made stronger than previously. The snakewood bow could be flexed, using more tension, to give a pronounced outwardly curved profile. With the clip-in frog, the hair of the bow exerts tension directly onto the stick, meaning that it can articulate individual notes more clearly and play separately bowed

notes much faster. In bows with the screw mechanism, the hair is attached to the frog, not the stick, creating an intermediate connection between the hair and the stick, slowing the possible speed of interaction between the hair and the string. It could be said that the screw mechanism may have contributed to the eventual preference for a softer start to the bow stroke described by Leopold Mozart (see image on previous page), father of Wolfgang Amadeus, and Francesco Geminiani (1751), a pupil of Corelli who worked in London (see image right).



The division style of playing, where the slow notes of popular tunes were divided into smaller, faster notes with the intention of showing off the skill of the performer, was much used in the seventeenth century. The speed of articulation is made possible by allowing the bow's innate lively qualities under tension to function freely when using a very light touch. If techniques used for later styles of music, learned with a later design of bow, are forced on an earlier one, the player may be frustrated by its apparent lack of response, as the life of the bow is effectively 'killed' by the force derived from habits learned through using later style bows. The compositions of Baltzar and Matteis show us how far this virtuosity could be taken.

Few bows from the late seventeenth century have survived, but one fine example with a clip-in frog (Ashmolean Museum 19a, also listed as catalogue no. WA1948.137) has been much copied, although frequently adapted with the more convenient screw mechanism ubiquitous amongst baroque players today. How much this choice was dictated by twentieth-century bow makers, and how often this modification was requested by the players is an open question. But, even when fitted with the screw mechanism, by comparing the playing characteristics of this bow (19a) with bows from later in the eighteenth century, the player finds that the direct, explosive contact it makes with the string is very different from the soft beginning to the stroke described in the later, mid-century tutors. In spite of his description of the soft beginning to the bow-stroke, which is harder to execute with the earlier profile, Leopold's bow does not appear to have changed much

from the earlier model. His bow may have looked old-fashioned to his son's generation, who would have started to adopt bows with the new, longer, in-curved profile, today called the 'transitional' style of bow (transitional to the model perfected by Tourte 1785-90, length 75 cm).

It is disputed when exactly the screw mechanism was introduced; perhaps the early 1700s, perhaps as late as mid-century. Bows with clip-in frogs remained standard and in use until the 1770s. Two of Tartini's bows (c. 1760) have been preserved with their clip-ins, evidence that baroque virtuosity was not inhibited by using this type of bow.

John Eccles was himself a violinist and would no doubt have led any changes to the style of playing through his compositions, which adopted new, more Italianate ways of playing that endured until the time of Geminiani in London. The Italian style remains the best-known and most popular style of baroque music for performers and listeners everywhere, and it seems that the virtuosity we associate with Italian music was practised with a short bow using a clip-in frog, not the models with a screw mechanism preferred by many of today's baroque orchestras.

Judy Tarling
performer, teacher and writer

Image (left): detail from an illustration in Francesco Geminiani's *The Art of Playing on the Violin*, published in London, 1751

Sources of information:

- Dr. Burney's Musical Tours in Europe, volume 1. An Eighteenth-Century Musical Tour in France and Italy*, ed. Percy Scholes (London, OUP, 1959)
John Dilworth, 'The violin and bow – origins and development'. *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, ed. Robin Stowell, pp. 1-29 (Cambridge, CUP, 1992)
Peter Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court 1540-1690* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993)
Roger North on Music, transcribed from his essays of c. 1695-1728, ed. John Wilson (London, Novello, 1959)
Robert E. Seletsky, 'New light on the old bow – 1'. *Early Music* 32, May 2004, pp. 286-301
Judy Tarling, *Baroque String Playing 'for ingenious learners'* (St. Albans, Corda Music Publications, 2000)



Peter Holman (centre, harpsichord) during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles' *Semele* at the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, 2019

JOHN ECCLES AND *SEMELE*

Professor Peter Holman

John Eccles was born, probably in 1668, into a family of London musicians, and had his first experience as a composer in the early 1690s working for London's single theatre company, the United Company. In 1695 the actor Thomas Betterton led a breakaway group that formed a rival company at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Eccles became its musical director, producing a large amount of theatre music over the next decade. He formed a close working relationship with William Congreve, the leading playwright of Betterton's company, and in 1701 he seems to have collaborated with him in devising the competition to set Congreve's masque *The Judgment of Paris*. As the most experienced and high-profile theatre composer of the four who entered, Eccles doubtless expected to win, but the prize was rather unexpectedly taken by John Weldon, then a little-known Oxford organist. However, Eccles continued to collaborate with Congreve. He set his *Hymn to Harmony*, performed on St. Cecilia's Day in 1702, and soon after they seem to have started to plan an Italian-style opera based on the story of Semele from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. There is circumstantial evidence that their intention was for it to open Sir John Vanbrugh's new opera house in the Haymarket, which had been in the planning stage since 1703 and was due to open in the spring of 1705.

However, *Semele* was not performed when the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, as it was called, opened on 9 April 1705. It is possible that Eccles had not finished the score, though it is more likely that the theatre was not yet ready for a production that would have needed stage machinery; Congreve requires deities to descend from, and ascend to, the stage heaven. In the event, the theatre opened with *Gli amori d'Ergasto*, an opera by the German composer Jacob Greber, who had been working in London since 1702. Nearly two years later, in January 1707, a literary periodical announced that *Semele* was 'ready to be practis'd', though it again failed to reach the stage. One cannot help suspect a conspiracy: the Italians involved in opera in eighteenth-century London repeatedly tried to maintain a closed shop, attempting to prevent operas by non-Italians reaching the stage or becoming commercial successes. But in any case, in 1707 opera had temporarily been transferred to Drury Lane; by that time Congreve was no longer involved in the Haymarket Theatre;

and Eccles' leading lady Anne Bracegirdle (for whom the role of Semele was surely intended) was on the point of retiring from the stage. Eccles had become Master of the King's Music in 1700, and after about 1710 his musical activities were more or less confined to writing and directing the annual court odes for the New Year and the monarch's birthday. He eventually retired to Kingston upon Thames, supposedly spending most of his time fishing, and died in 1735.

So far as is known, Eccles' *Semele* remained unperformed and forgotten until the 1960s. Congreve's libretto is best known today in the version an anonymous adaptor made for Handel; it was set by him for performance in his 1744 Lenten oratorio season. Eccles' setting was finally given a concert performance in the Holywell Music Room, Oxford, on 4 June 1964 under the direction of Stoddard Lincoln, who had recently completed an Oxford D.Phil. thesis on the composer. The first stage production was put on by Opera da Camera in London at St. John's, Smith Square, on 22 April 1972, conducted by Steuart Bedford. The edition used for this recording was originally made for that occasion and was published in the Musica Britannica series in 2000. Its editor, Richard Platt (1928–2013), was a talented painter who studied at the Royal College of Art and taught at Falmouth College of Art for many years, before turning to musicology and eventually making an important contribution to the rediscovery of English eighteenth-century music.

Semele was written at the point in English musical and dramatic history when the Purcell type of 'dramatic opera' – a spoken play with elaborate operatic scenes – was about to be supplanted by all-sung Italian opera. The first Italian-style operas in England were either pasticcios adapted and translated from old Italian operas or were works by the violinist Thomas Clayton, who was unfortunately a poor composer. Had it been produced, *Semele* might have been the prototype for further all-sung operas in English, but in the event the triumphant production of Handel's *Rinaldo* in 1711 established opera in Italian as the mainstream in London. English aristocrats, who were increasingly experiencing Italian opera at first hand while on the Grand Tour, were strong supporters of London's Italian opera company and its glamorous singers, so it was hard for the

English-speaking theatres to provide effective competition. They did so mainly by satirising Italian opera – as in, for instance, *The Beggar's Opera* of 1728 – or by continuing the native tradition of writing musical scenes for spoken plays. All-sung English opera was produced in fits and starts throughout the eighteenth century and was not fully established in London until the nineteenth century.

Given his situation as a younger contemporary and rival of Henry Purcell, still working in the theatre when Italian opera was established in London, it is not surprising that Eccles mixed the English and Italian styles in *Semele*. Much of the instrumental music, such as the remarkable pizzicato symphony that introduces the 'Cave of Sleep' at the beginning of Act III, or the beautiful symphony played just before Semele dies, is in the Purcellian style, and the same is true of the music given to Somnus, the God of Sleep, as he unwillingly responds to Juno. Here Eccles was inspired by the parallel situation in Purcell's *King Arthur*, where the Cold Genius is roused by Cupid, even using the same pulsating string accompaniment. Eccles has a little joke for his orchestra: at the point where Iris commands Somnus to 'lift up thy heavy Lids of Lead', he marks the parts 'Leads on the instruments' – mutes for stringed instruments at the time were usually made of lead.

However, for most of the vocal music Eccles uses a light Italian style, inspired by the operas by Alessandro Scarlatti and his contemporaries that were being imported to England at the time. His recitatives are an effective mixture of the *parlando* Italian idiom and the more expressive Purcellian declamatory style. A few of the airs use the full Italian da capo pattern, though more often he followed English tradition by writing strophic songs with orchestral ritornelli, by casting them in two contrasted sections, or just by writing through-composed numbers without any repeated sections. Eccles also tends to be more ready than Italian composers to vary the mood and the thematic material of airs according to the meaning of particular words, as in Semele's aria in Act II, 'If cheerful Hopes and chilling Fears', where each phrase is given its own idea. This was rather old-fashioned by the early eighteenth century, as was Eccles' practice of reserving four-part orchestral

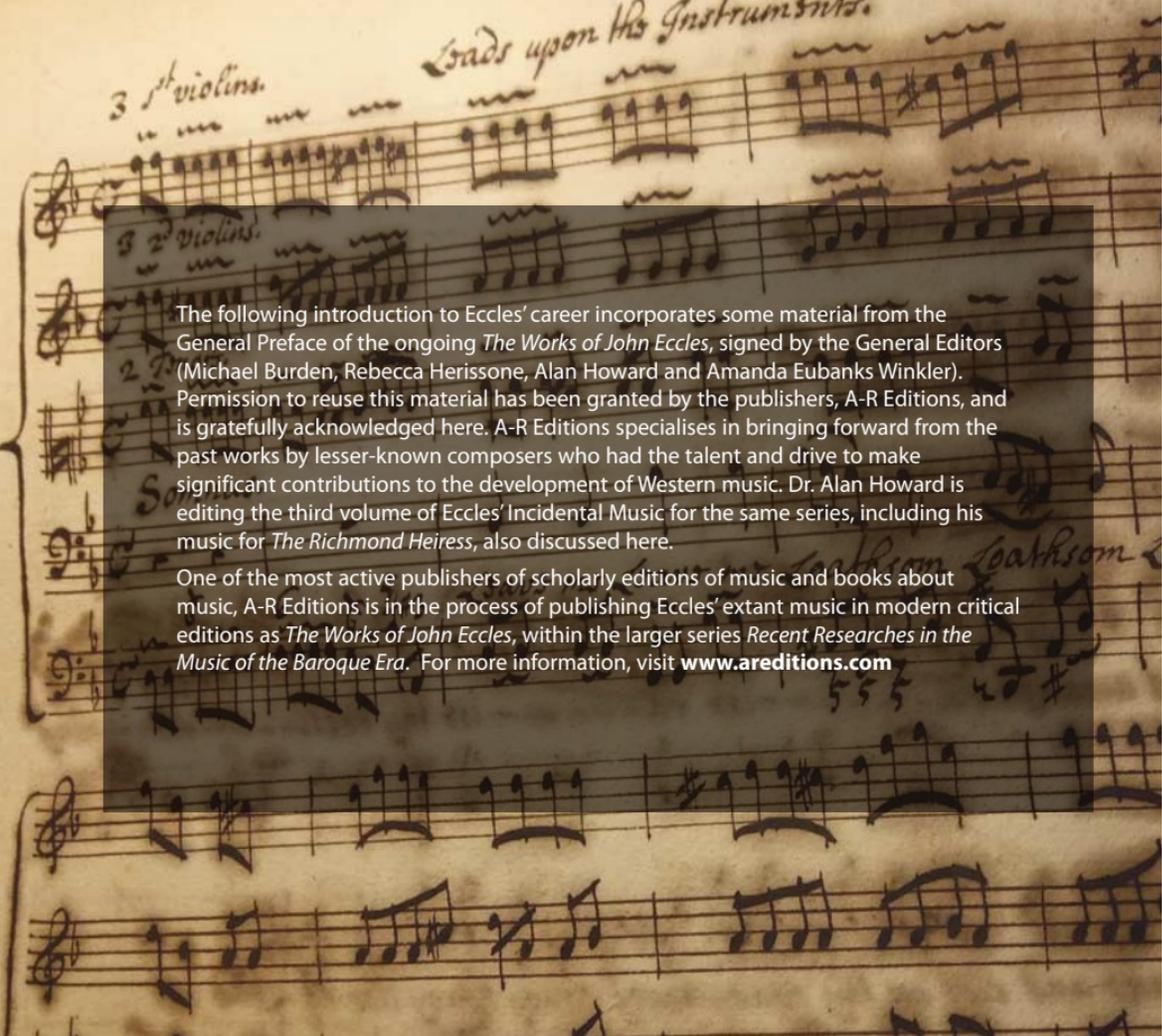
string writing for the accompaniment of bass voices; it was apparently thought that basses were the only English singers with voices strong enough to compete with the full orchestra. In many of the airs the orchestra is reduced to unison violins and basses, a typical Italian texture, and the solo vocal passages are often accompanied just by a single violin with continuo. Eccles was a violinist himself and presumably expected to lead the orchestra in performances of *Semele*; he certainly wrote idiomatic violin parts of considerable virtuosity.

It is fortunate that *Semele* survives in a score that has long been presumed to be Eccles' autograph, now in the library of the Royal College of Music in London, less so that there are a few pages missing from the manuscript. Richard Platt made good the gaps in the music partly by borrowing from other works by Eccles: the fine overture comes from his music for the play *Rinaldo and Armida* and the beautiful symphony that ends Act II from a suite written for Queen Anne's coronation in 1702. Also, Eccles' score just specifies strings and continuo, at a time when it was standard practice for theatre orchestras in London to include wind players, whether in English theatre music or Italian operas. Thus, had *Semele* reached the stage, it might have been in a revised version rather different from the score that has come down to us. But that is speculation, and we must be grateful for what we have: Eccles' setting is a highly dramatic and effective response to Congreve's text, quite different in intention and effect from Handel's setting, and deserves to be much better known.

Professor Peter Holman
Emeritus Professor, University of Leeds
harpsichordist, musical director and researcher



Jonathan Brown (left, Cadmus), William Wallace (centre-left, Athamas), Anna Dennis (centre-right, Semele) and Aoife Miskelly (right, Ino) with Julian Perkins (centre, director & harpsichord), during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles' *Semele* at the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, 2019



The following introduction to Eccles' career incorporates some material from the General Preface of the ongoing *The Works of John Eccles*, signed by the General Editors (Michael Burden, Rebecca Herisson, Alan Howard and Amanda Eubanks Winkler). Permission to reuse this material has been granted by the publishers, A-R Editions, and is gratefully acknowledged here. A-R Editions specialises in bringing forward from the past works by lesser-known composers who had the talent and drive to make significant contributions to the development of Western music. Dr. Alan Howard is editing the third volume of Eccles' Incidental Music for the same series, including his music for *The Richmond Heiress*, also discussed here.

One of the most active publishers of scholarly editions of music and books about music, A-R Editions is in the process of publishing Eccles' extant music in modern critical editions as *The Works of John Eccles*, within the larger series *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*. For more information, visit www.areditions.com

JOHN ECCLES AND THE LONDON STAGE

Dr. Alan Howard

John Eccles dominated the production of theatrical music in London in the decade following Henry Purcell's death in 1695. The latter's remarkable achievements in the theatre during the last five years of his life are well known, and were authoritatively chronicled by Curtis Price, in his *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (1984). Any comparison between the two composers may seem to raise Eccles' name to a higher plane than he deserves, but it is appropriate when we consider the extraordinary amount of music Eccles contributed to London theatrical entertainments in the years surrounding the turn of the century: songs and incidental music for more than seventy plays across his career, alongside more than ten larger-scale productions – so-called semi-operas or dramatic operas, masques and Italian-style operas in English – that he wrote either himself or in collaboration with others. In a time of considerable upheaval in the organisation of the theatres in London, and heady rivalry between competing dramatists, actors and musicians, Eccles' status was one of the few constants. Indeed, even before Purcell's departure from the scene, there is evidence that Eccles' music rivalled that of his more famous predecessor, at least in terms of popularity with the notoriously fickle London theatrical public.

Much as is the case with Purcell, Eccles' success at meeting the demands of the larger genres towards the end of his active career has resulted in a privileging of all-sung, Italian style works as a measure of his achievements. *Semele* arguably offers a case in point: never performed in the composer's lifetime, it could hardly be said to have contributed to Eccles' popularity while he lived. Yet in the light of the subsequent dominance of all-sung Italian opera, firmly established in London during Eccles' lifetime, works like *Semele* which appear closer to this dominant genre often seem the better markers of his success. In reality, nevertheless, most of his output was conceived on a much smaller scale, comprising suites of instrumental music and small numbers of songs for the dozens of spoken plays that were enlivened by his musical contribution. No doubt a large part of Eccles' popularity, among audiences and literary collaborators alike, was the result of his unerring ability to provide songs that fitted perfectly within their dramatic contexts, offering carefully tailored vehicles for his singers' talents and remaining highly accessible in tone.

Little is known about Eccles' early life. Born about 1668, we hear nothing of him until the 1690s; unlike many other English composers, he seems not to have begun his career as a boy chorister at the Chapel Royal. In 1694 he is recorded as a musician – probably a violinist – in the King's Band, although he did not receive a salary until 1696, when he took over Thomas Tollett's duties as one of the king's twenty-four musicians-in-ordinary. From 1700 he was Master of the King's Music, replacing Nicholas Staggins.

Presumably because these court appointments rarely paid well (or promptly), Eccles spent most of his energy during this period writing for the stage. He had begun his theatrical career with Christopher Rich's United Company, which had formed in 1682 as a result of the merger between the two patent companies – that is, the two licensed theatre companies – known as the King's and the Duke's. His first known composition for the theatre dates from 1690: a song, 'Ah, whither shall I fly', performed in Elkanah Settle's *Distressed Innocence: or, the Princess of Persia*. It was later published in Eccles' *Collection of Songs* issued by the London publisher John Walsh in 1704, a retrospective collection perhaps inspired by the posthumous publication of Purcell's songs in *Orpheus Britannicus* (1698) and John Blow's equivalent *Amphion Anglicus* (1700) – though Eccles and Walsh had the considerable advantage that most of the songs it contained had been published before in engraved songsheets, so that the original plates could simply be reused for the compilation. The text of 'Ah, whither shall I fly' also appeared in William Congreve's novel *Incognita*, which although published in 1692 appears to have been written in 1689/90. The relationship between Eccles and Congreve proved enduring and fruitful for both parties: Eccles wrote music for many of Congreve's plays and set his *Ode to St. Cecilia* as well as his two libretti, for *The Judgment of Paris* (1701) and *Semele*.

From around 1693 Eccles was composing regularly for the United Company, where he worked alongside Henry Purcell – most famously in the first two parts of Thomas D'Urfey's adaptation of *Don Quixote*, the second of which included Eccles' hit mad song 'I burn, I burn' for the star actress-singer Anne Bracegirdle. This song made such an impact that apart from being widely copied and reprinted, it even inspired musical responses from both Purcell and the respected Moravian immigrant composer Gottfried Finger.

When the United Company split in 1694, Eccles followed the rebel actors – Thomas Betterton, Elizabeth Barry and Bracegirdle among them – to the new company which occupied the theatre (in fact a former tennis court) at Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he became the principal house composer. He would work there for a little over a decade, until the rival companies based at Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields reunited in 1705. His semi-retirement around 1707 to Hampton Wick, near Kingston upon Thames, is sometimes portrayed as a response to the disappointment caused when *Semele* failed to make it to the stage. According to the pioneering eighteenth-century music historian John Hawkins he spent his retirement fishing, though in fact he continued to write court odes until his death in 1735 and seems also to have supplied music for the theatre on occasion. The accounts for the original production of Nicholas Rowe's *Jane Shore* at Drury Lane in February 1714 include a charge of 10s 'For Goeing to Kingston / For the Tunes on Sunday / And Return on Monday' which Price has suggested implies that a messenger was sent to collect a set of Act Music (that is, instrumental music for performance before the play and during the intervals) that Eccles had written for the play.

A fascinating opportunity to gauge the extent of Eccles' success is offered by the critical response to another of his early collaborations with Purcell, the music for D'Urfey's 1693 farce *The Richmond Heiress*. In his dedication in the 1693 play-book, D'Urfey noted the unusual prominence of music in the play; there are at least eight surviving songs including those by Purcell and Eccles, one by Solomon Eccles (probably our composer's uncle) and several anonymous. Writing to John Walsh (later the publisher of Eccles' *Songs*), the playwright and former Poet Laureate John Dryden described the audience reaction to the singers in *The Richmond Heiress*:

"D'Urfey has brought another farce upon the Stage: but his luck has left him: it was sufferd but foure dayes; and then kickd off for ever. Yet his Second Act, was wonderfully diverting; where the scene was in Bedlam: & Mrs Bracegirdle and Solon [the actor Thomas Doggett] were both mad: the Singing was wonderfully good, And the two whom I nam'd, sung better than Redding and Mrs Ayloff, whose trade it was: at least our partiality carryed it for them."

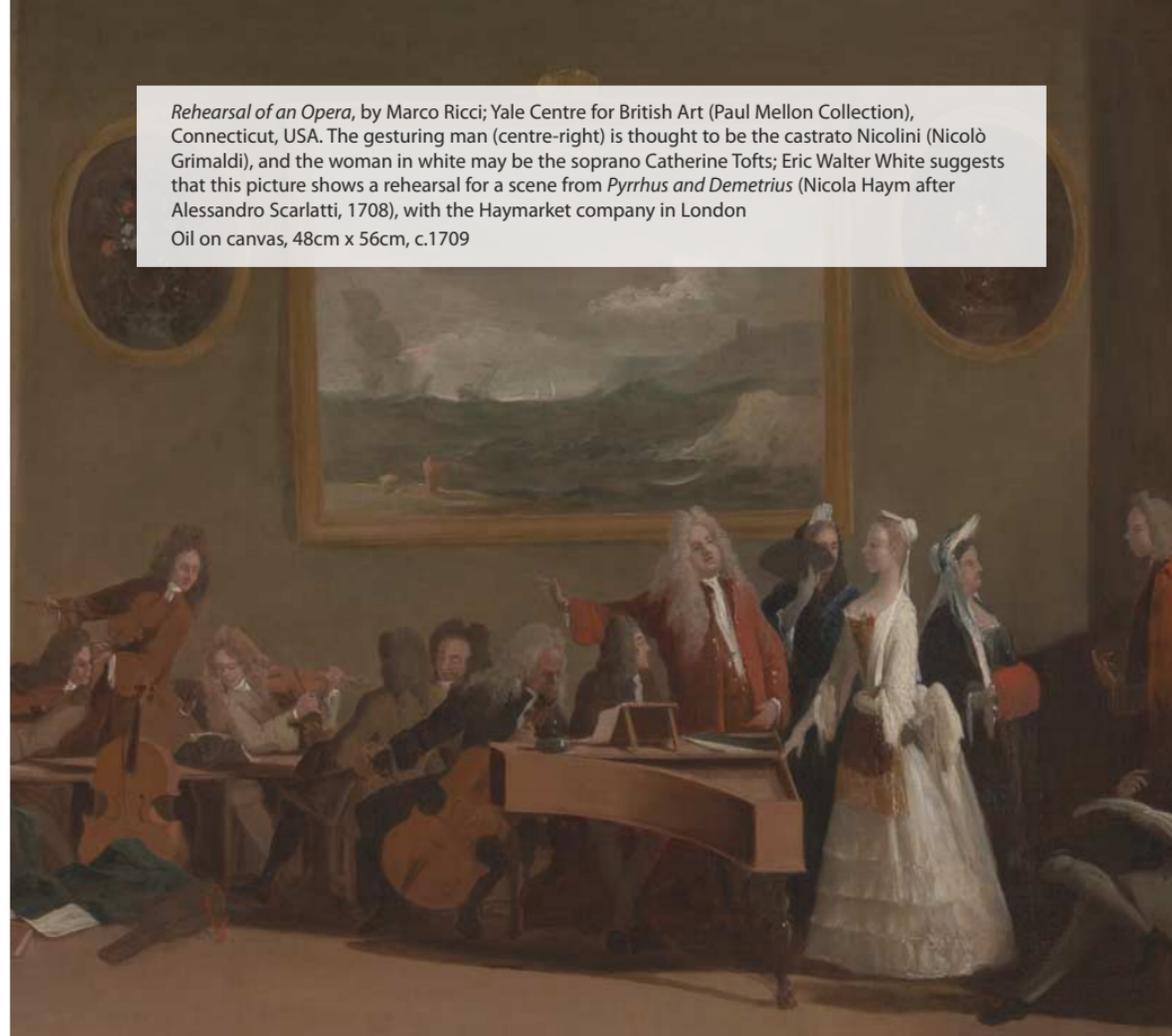
The particular scene described by Dryden places the relative strengths of Purcell's and Eccles' music and their relationship with the surrounding drama in direct contrast. What Dryden describes as 'Bedlam', after the famous London asylum for the insane, is represented on stage by the house of the quack Dr Guaiacum, into whose care the heroine, Fulvia (played by Mrs Bracegirdle), has placed herself – feigning her own madness – as protection from the attentions of her many romantic suitors. Though D'Urfey frames Guaiacum's methods as somewhat hare-brained, his encouragement of his patients to express their experiences through the media of song and dance invoked longstanding beliefs about the use of music to combat melancholy, not to mention resonating strongly with modern ideas about the therapeutic use of music.

On finishing her own song earlier in the scene Fulvia asks for more music, calling out in her mock-ravings 'bring in Orpheus there' – at once a call for a singing madman and for a song by Purcell (raising the intriguing possibility that the composer was already being associated with Orpheus in his lifetime). The professional singers John Reading and Mrs. Ayliff then sang Purcell's fine mad dialogue 'Behold the man that with gigantick might', the Doctor explaining to Fulvia's guardian, Sir Charles Romance, that 'these are Lunaticks – by me appointed on purpose to indulge the Humour ... You may perceive by this ... the Frenzy will wear off by degrees'.

At this point in the scene, then, the action is brought to a halt in a highly contrived manner in order to introduce a pair of singers with no spoken roles in the play, and while they sing all the main characters are relegated to the status of audience. Purcell's music for the song is typically accomplished, including a blustery bass solo as virtuosic as some of his court music and an attractive triple-time air for the soprano employing the typically pathetic descending tetrachord bass. But what was at stake in Dryden's response to the scene was not so much the quality of the music as the manner of its performance, and in this Eccles and his actor-singers Bracegirdle and Doggett had the considerable advantage that Eccles' song 'By those pigsneys', which followed, was far better integrated into D'Urfey's action.

Doggett's entry as Quickwit – an accomplice of Frederick, the Heiress' preferred suitor at the start of the play – sees him in the guise of a fellow patient of Dr Guaiacum who begins a musical paean to his

Rehearsal of an Opera, by Marco Ricci; Yale Centre for British Art (Paul Mellon Collection), Connecticut, USA. The gesturing man (centre-right) is thought to be the castrato Nicolini (Nicolò Grimaldi), and the woman in white may be the soprano Catherine Tofts; Eric Walter White suggests that this picture shows a rehearsal for a scene from *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (Nicola Haym after Alessandro Scarlatti, 1708), with the Haymarket company in London
Oil on canvas, 48cm x 56cm, c.1709



sweetheart, Mopsa, with her shining eyes ('Pigsney' is an archaic diminutive form of 'pig's eye' that was used as a term of endearment), 'breasts as white as curds and cream', 'cherry lips and dimpled chin'. Guaiacum is delighted when Fulvia joins in, exclaiming 'She makes up to him now ... they are curing one another'; the song is converted with her participation into exactly the sort of ribald dispute over the female participant's questionable virtue for which the two singers (Doggett and Bracegirdle) were to become famous in the following years.

The resulting series of lively exchanges between two characters central to the plot was just what was missing from Purcell's song earlier in the scene, and seems most likely to have contributed to the relative success of Eccles' dialogue as reported by Dryden. Whereas Purcell's song is largely extraneous to the narrative, D'Urfey cleverly makes the Doggett / Bracegirdle duet essential to the action: only at the end of the song does Fulvia recognise Quickwit's charade for what it is, when he takes the opportunity (still 'in character') to slip her a letter from her beloved Frederick.

Dryden's account of the performance makes it clear that the audience's 'partiality carried it' for the singers, and the fact that the song was sung by major characters in an amusing dramatic situation surely contributed greatly to this reaction and the resulting success of the song. This performative element to Eccles' music must always be considered, no matter how simple his songs seem on the page. When placed within its theatrical context, Eccles' craft becomes clear: he allowed his performers plenty of room to communicate with their audiences without having to worry about hitting the next difficult note.

It must have been these characteristics that particularly attracted Anne Bracegirdle to Eccles' music; at any rate, from this point onwards her career as an actress is increasingly combined with her singing roles, and according to Price she sang no music by any other composer in public for the rest of her career. In this way she formed a productive creative collaboration with the composer, who was also her singing master – a collaboration just as important for Eccles as was his work with Congreve (indeed, Bracegirdle was also close to Congreve, which attracted much gossip; she acted in many of his plays in the latter part of the 1690s, singing songs by Eccles in many of these roles). The role of Fulvia in D'Urfey's *The Richmond Heiress* set the tone for many more of her appearances,

and as so often in Restoration theatre the success of her onstage characterisation – not least in Eccles' music – echoed her offstage persona.

In the years leading up to the play Bracegirdle had become a fashionable crush among the theatre audience. Colley Cibber observed that 'her Youth and lively Aspect threw out such a Glow of Health and Cheerfulness, that on the Stage few Spectators that were not past it could behold her without Desire'; and indeed just months before *The Richmond Heiress* this passion had got out of hand when an infatuated officer, Captain Richard Hill, attempted to abduct the actress. Convinced (probably wrongly) that Bracegirdle was having an affair with the actor William Mountfort, Hill and his accomplice Lord Mohun ambushed his supposed rival, and Hill ran him through the chest with his sword. Mohun was tried and scandalously acquitted of the murder by the House of Lords, while Hill fled into exile and escaped justice.

In light of this very public controversy, Bracegirdle's impassioned cries of 'I'm still a maid' at the end of Fulvia's mad dialogue in *The Richmond Heiress* had as much relevance to real life as they did to her onstage role – which might explain the success of Eccles' music still further. The episode itself, meanwhile, seems not to have done her upright reputation any harm in the long run: indeed, so enduring was her chaste image that she features as a symbol of youth, beauty and innocence in the person of Flora in Godfrey Kneller's famous equestrian portrait of King William III, painted in 1701 (an allegory of the 1697 Peace of Ryswick).

Given the strength of their collaborations, it is unsurprising that Eccles, Congreve and Bracegirdle all transferred their allegiance together to the new theatre at Lincoln's Inn Fields when Thomas Betterton led his breakaway troupe away from the United Company in 1694 – a response in part to complaints over financial mismanagement and in part to the executive style of the Drury Lane manager Christopher Rich. The rivalry between the two companies over the following decade is relatively well known, but in musical terms it is particularly interesting to note that the division set up a stark contrast: left behind at Drury Lane were the professional singers, organists and establishment musicians, principal among them Henry Purcell and then, after his death, his cousin Daniel, together with Jeremiah Clarke and the singer-composer Richard Leveridge; what might be termed a 'Chapel

Royal' camp. The new theatre, by contrast, boasted Eccles as its main house composer, with his very different training and background as a violinist; this status was reflected in the backgrounds of his colleagues who contributed smaller amounts of instrumental music, such as John Lenton and William Corbett. Among others who wrote for the theatres, the only significant composer to move between the rival camps was the Moravian Gottfried Finger, who was perhaps not so encumbered by natural allegiance to either group: he contributed songs and instrumental music to Lincoln's Inn Fields productions from 1694, but from 1701 (after a spell abroad) he became a key member of the Drury Lane company, contributing to two of Rich's elaborate 'dramatic operas'.

These elaborate productions were the most obvious public manifestation of the musical rivalry between the two theatre troupes in this period. The genre, combining spoken drama with extended musical episodes and elaborate stage effects, had reached its apogee in the music of Purcell in the early 1690s with such works as *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*. (Dryden's term 'Dramatick Opera' for such works is generally now preferred to Roger North's faintly pejorative 'semi-opera'.) It had long been thought of as the natural form for English language musical theatre, as opposed to all-sung opera, according to ideas expressed in print by commentators including the composer Matthew Locke, Dryden, and the Huguenot immigrant journalist Peter Motteux, who wrote in the early 1690s that 'Experience hath taught us that our English genius will not relish that perpetual Singing' found in continental works (though I wonder sometimes whether this should not be interpreted at least in part as a satirical remark).

Capitalising on his musical resources, Rich sought to attract audiences with productions including Purcell's last such work, *The Indian Queen*, with its final masque added by Daniel Purcell, then *Brutus of Alba* (1696), the long-popular *Island Princess* (1699), and two elaborate entertainments by Elkanah Settle, *The World in the Moon* (1697) and *The Virgin Prophetess* (1701). Betterton responded in kind, despite the constraints of the smaller and less well equipped theatre at Lincoln's Inn Fields, mounting 'dramatic operas' with music by Eccles such as John Dennis' *Rinaldo and Armida* (1698) and, later, planning to produce George Granville's *The British Enchanters* (in the end performed after the companies reunited in 1706).

Rehearsal of an Opera, by Marco Ricci; Yale Centre for British Art (Paul Mellon Collection), Connecticut, USA. Eric Walter White suggests that this picture shows a rehearsal for a scene from *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (Nicola Haym after Alessandro Scarlatti, 1708), with the Haymarket company in London

Oil on canvas, 46cm x 58cm, c.1709



There was also a series of musical masques by Motteux and Eccles, notably *The Loves of Mars and Venus* (1696), on which Eccles collaborated with Godfrey Finger, and *Acis and Galatea* (1701). Between these came *Europe's Revels for the Peace* (1697), which has recently been published in the ongoing Eccles edition; given its heady mix of patriotic triumphalism and egregious national stereotypes (with dances for 'people of several nations' including the Dutch, French, Spanish and English, an air for an Irish raparee or Jacobite soldier, and an extended episode for a Young Savoyard rustic with his 'raree show' or travelling curiosity stall) the work seems curiously timely as I write during the long-running saga of Brexit!

The notion of the rival 'Chapel Royal' and 'instrumentalist' musical camps associated with the two theatres also spills over interestingly into one of the key episodes in the establishment of all-sung opera on the London stage: the famous competition to set to music Congreve's libretto for *The Judgment of Paris*. The sponsors of this competition were the members of the recently formed Kit Kat Club, a loose organisation of artists and patrons with strong Whig connections – Congreve was a member himself, as were the Dukes of Somerset and Bedford, and the publisher Jacob Tonson, who administered the prize.

The choice of subject for the libretto was an obvious one for a musical competition: a classical beauty contest between Juno, queen of the Gods, Pallas Athena, goddess of war and wisdom, and Venus, goddess of love, which is decided by the hapless shepherd, Paris (Jupiter, King of the Gods, has declined to pass judgment for fear of antagonising the competitors). Four contending settings were eventually mounted in 1701, at the Dorset Garden Theatre, which had been newly reconfigured after several years out of action. Among the composers involved, Eccles must have seemed the likely victor to many, not least since he had the advantage of a close and longstanding relationship with Congreve. He was opposed by Daniel Purcell from the Drury Lane 'Chapel Royal' camp, and by the young John Weldon, then based in Oxford but – as a former pupil of Henry Purcell – more closely associated with the organists; the final competitor was the foreigner Gottfried Finger. The eventual surprise choice of Weldon as victor seems to have been something of a compromise, favouring neither Purcell of Drury Lane nor Eccles of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Finger may

well have been overlooked, as he seems to have suspected, because of his non-native status (he left England soon afterwards, never to return).

Despite missing out on the top prize, Eccles' music for *The Judgment of Paris* clearly showed his capabilities in Italian-style opera in English. In a striking foretaste of the violin obbligati in *Semele*, Eccles accompanied Juno's main aria in *The Judgment of Paris* with an elaborate violin solo that he surely played himself; in so doing he associated himself with Juno, who as Queen has the highest status among the three goddesses – though of course she, like Eccles, is not the eventual winner of the contest.

This attempt at an English all-sung opera seems to have been met with some enthusiasm, and when Congreve and Sir John Vanbrugh planned their new theatre in the Haymarket – which would provide for the spectacular effects long denied to audiences at Lincoln's Inn Fields – it must have seemed an obvious choice to attempt something similar for the inaugural production. Congreve provided the libretto for *Semele*, and his long-time collaborator Eccles completed the music, though in the end this project too proved ill-fated, and never saw the stage until the twentieth century. Congreve's libretto would be revived for Handel's *Semele* (1744), which was to become much better known; but with the revival of interest in Eccles' music his earlier setting stands as testimony to the very real potential that existed for serious Italian-style opera in English at the start of the eighteenth century. The re-emergence (or rather emergence) of *Semele* is thus long overdue. No doubt Eccles will continue to be remembered primarily for the large volume of his incidental music, but his unperformed opera proved no less fertile ground for the qualities of tonal directness, strong musical characterisation and adept dramatic pacing which had served him so well in his shorter works.

Dr. Alan Howard
College Lecturer and Director of Studies in Music,
Selwyn College, University of Cambridge

JOHN ECCLES, MASTER OF THE KING'S MUSIC AND PATRICK LAMB, ROYAL MASTER COOK

Ivan Day

When Queen Anne sat down to her coronation feast in Westminster Hall in 1702 she was entertained by a group of court musicians who performed a delightful suite composed especially for the occasion by Eccles. By the time of his death in 1735, he was the only Master of the King's Music ever to have served four monarchs. However, his contemporary, the celebrated cook Patrick Lamb (c.1650–1709), who prepared the Queen's lavish feast, could make exactly the same boast. When he died in 1709, Lamb had been Master Cook to Charles II, James II, William and Mary, as well as Anne.

About eighteen years older than Eccles, Lamb's career started in the kitchens of Whitehall in 1662 as 'the youngest child of the Pastry', before being promoted in 1677 to Master Cook to Charles II's queen consort. His career paralleled that of Eccles for fourteen years, from 1694 to 1708. Although their time at court overlapped, there are no records that they ever met, but both played vital roles in palace life and were surely aware of each other's work.

Court composers and royal cooks had more in common than most would assume. In the preface to Lamb's book, *Royal Cookery* (1710), we are told about the nature and context of important court proceedings:

"the magnificence of these publick Regales made on the more solemn Occasions of installing Princes on their Thrones, of admitting Peers to their Honours, Ambassadors to their Audiences, and Persons of Figure to the Nuptial Bed."

Lamb prepared the magnificent food for these key events, while Eccles composed the sublime musical diversions, both honouring their monarch with the splendour of their creations.

English court cookery at this period was complex and flamboyant, with lavish baroque table displays influenced by Versailles court fashions, dominated by pyramids of fruit and sweetmeats set out on towering sets of salvers. Lamb's book is packed with detailed engravings of the stunning table arrangements he created during his long career. Though he was a noted practitioner of an

Image: Title page from
The Queen's Royal Cookery,
by T. Hall, London, 1709



THE QUEEN'S Royal COOKERY:

OR,

Expert and ready Way for the Dressing
of all Sorts of Fleth, Fowl, Fish: Either
Bak'd, Boil'd, Roasted, Stew'd, Fry'd,
Broil'd, Hash'd, Frigafied, Carbonaded,
Forc'd, Collar'd, Sous'd, Dry'd, &c. After
the Best and Newest Way. With their
several Sauces and Salads.

And making all sorts of PICKLES.

ALSO

Making Variety of Pies, Pasties, Tarts,
Cheese-Cakes, Custards, Creams, &c.

WITH

The ART of Preserving and Candyng
of Fruits and Flowers; and the making of
Conferves, Syrups, Jellies, and Cordial Waters.
Also making several Sorts of English Wines,
Cyder, Mead, Metheglin.

TOGETHER,

With several Cosmetick or Beautifying
Waters: And also several sorts of Essences and
Sweet Waters, by Persons of the highest Quality.

By T. Hall, Free Cook of London.

The Second Edition.

London: Printed for C. Bates, at the Sun and Bible
in Gilt-spur street, in Pye-corner: And A. Bettesworth,
at the Red Lion on London-bridge, 1713.

Licence according to Order.

élite French court style of cuisine, many of the recipes in his book are fundamentally English in nature; his buttered crabs depend on a subtle amalgam of vinegar, cinnamon and sugar, an ancient sweet-sour culinary style, completely out of fashion in France, where the savoury flavours of meat reductions, morels and truffles were now à la mode. Unlike some native French cooks, Lamb didn't frown at ingredients associated with the common folk. His beetroot fritters are a masterpiece of crimson speckled with the spring green of fresh parsley.

Recipe books with royal associations were bestsellers and Lamb's was still in print well after his death. Unfortunately there were a number of imitators and imposters. A little book launched in 1709 by T. Hall, called *The Queen's Royal Cookery*, illustrated with a portrait of Queen Anne, attacked other works for including 'old and antiquated recipes'. However, over forty of its recipes were lifted from a collection published in 1669. Nevertheless, its naïve woodcut frontispiece offers interesting glimpses into contemporary culinary spaces, each kitchen maid's coiffure adorned with a fashionable *frentange*. Despite its inclusion of some rather out-of-date recipes, some are very typical of the period when Eccles was the Queen's Master of Music. A very unusual Grand Sallet includes exotic ingredients such as pickled bamboo, mango and capers, testifying to the extent of foreign trade at this period. One recipe in particular, for dressing a pike, may have appealed to Eccles, who is said to have spent much of his free time angling.

Ivan Day
food historian, broadcaster, educator and writer



RECIPES

To butter Crabs.

When they are boi'd take the Meat out of their Bodies, and strain it with the Yolks of three or four hard Eggs, Claret, Vinegar, Sugar and pounded Cinnamon; then set it to stew in a Pipkin with fresh Butter for Quarter of an Hour, and serve them up as above.

In a previous recipe Lamb instructs us to put the meat into the cleaned crab shell. A very small amount of vinegar and sugar is required to get the sweet-sour effect.

from Patrick Lamb, Royal Cookery (London, 3rd edition, 1726)

Beets

“Are a Sort of Root, that for being common ought not to be despised; They are eaten either in Salads, or fry'd in the following Manner.”

To fry Beets.

Having bak'd them in an Oven, peel them, and cut them in Slices long-ways, and of the Thickness of half an Inch or rather more; The large ones when cut, are almost of the Shape of Soles. Then steep them in thin Batter, made of White Wine, the finest Wheat-Flower, Cream, the White and Yolk of Eggs (more Yolk than White) Pepper, Salt and Cloves beaten to Powder: When they have lain in the Batter a little while, take them out and drudge them with Flower, crummed Bread and shred Parsly: then fry them, and when they are dry serve them in Plates or small Dishes with Juice of Lemon.

We likewise make a Fricasse of them with Butter, Parsly, Onions, Pepper and Salt.

from Patrick Lamb, Royal Cookery (London, 3rd edition, 1726)

Image: detail, showing Court musicians performing at the coronation feast of King James II, from Francis Sandford *The History of the Coronation of the most high, most mighty, and most excellent monarch, James II...* London, 1687

To make a grand Sallet.

Take half a pound of Butter, and clap it down in the middle of a large Pewter-dish, then have some shred red and white Cabbage, some Parsley pick'd fine and laid upon the Butter, so as to cover it, then stick a branch of Laurel in the middle of the Butter; then have these Things as followeth, as pickl'd French-beans, pickl'd Sparrow-grass, Broom-buds, Mushrooms, pickl'd Schollops, pickl'd Oysters, Anchovies wash'd and split, Capers, Luke-Olives, Mangoes, Bambooes; if it be in the Spring, when Sallet is very young; then have a little Spring-Sallet finely pick'd, and lay in one quarter; you must divide your Dish into so many Parts, as to lay a little of all these Things alone by themselves; one Mango is enough, it must be laid in whole: Garnish your Dish in Summer with Flowers and slic'd carv'd Limons, and in the Winter, with carved Limon, and red and white Cabbage in Vinegar, to make it keep its Colour, some pickl'd Barberries; garnish your Dish, and set it upon a Stand in the middle of the Table; let it be the first and last Dish upon the Table.

from T. Hall, The Queen's Royal Cookery (London, 1709)

This colourful panoply of pickles and salad stuff was a typical baroque centrepiece dish, probably derived from the *insalata reale* of Naples.

Sparrow-grass was a popular vernacular name for asparagus; Luke-Olives were olives imported from Lucca in Tuscany.

The East India Company shipped pickled mangoes and pickled bamboo into London. They were served to Anne's father King James II at his coronation feast in 1685. They were scarce, and many recipes exist in the cookery books for substitutes made from melons. T. Hall gives instructions to prepare them from walnuts, so it is unlikely that he ever saw real mangoes.

ROYAL COOKERY:
OR, THE
Compleat Court-Cook.

CONTAINING THE
Choicest Receipts in all the several
Branches of Cookery, *viz.* for making of
Soops, Bisques, Olio's, Terrines, Surtouts,
Puptons, Ragoos, Forc'd-Meats, Sauces,
Patties, Pies, Tarts, Tanlies, Cakes,
Puddings, Jellies. &c.

As likewise

Forty Plates, curiously engraven on Copper,
of the Magnificent Entertainments at Corona-
tions and Instalments; of Balls, Weddings, &c.
at Court; as likewise of City-Feasts.

To which are added,

Bills of Fare for every Month in the Year.

By PATRICK LAMB, *Esq;*
Near Fifty Years Master-Cook to their late
Majesties King Charles II. King James II. King William
and Queen Mary, and Queen Anne.

*The Third Edition, with considerable Additions, by a Gentle-
man, who was Cook to the abovenamed Kings and Queens,
and also to his present Majesty.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for E. and R. NUTT, and A. ROBER; and sold
by D. BROWNE without Temple Bar, J. ISTEED in
Fleetstreet, and T. COX under the Royal Exchange. 1726.

To dress a Pike.

Cut him in pieces, and strew upon him
Salt and scalding vinegar; boil him in
Water and White-wine, when he is
boiling, put in Sweet-Herbs, Onions,
Garlick, Ginger, Nutmeg and Salt; when
he is boiled, take him out of the Liquor,
and let him drain, in the mean time, beat
Butter and Anchovies together, and pour
it on the Fish, squeezing a little Orange
and Limon upon it.

from T. Hall, The Queen's Royal Cookery (London, 1709)

Image: Title page from *Royal Cookery, or, The Compleat Court-Cook* by Patrick Lamb, London, first published 1710

OVID'S CHANGING FORTUNES

Dr. Stephanie Oade

Although the story of Semele was known from the earliest days of Greek literature and recurred sporadically in the ancient literary consciousness for centuries,¹ the principal source for the modern reader, as it was for William Congreve and John Eccles, is Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (published around 8 CE).² This fifteen-book epic poem is concerned, as the name suggests, with transformations. Thus, in the poem's first lines, Ovid sets out his theme:

*"Changes of shape, new forms, are the theme which my spirit impels me now to recite. Inspire me, O gods (it is you who have even transformed my art), and spin me a thread from the world's beginning down to my own lifetime, in one continuous poem."*³

However, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is not simply a series of stories about change, it is an unbroken narrative of intertwined stories about gods and mortals and natural phenomena, charting the history of the universe from its creation to the apotheosis of Julius Caesar just half a century before Ovid's own time. With its stories influencing Western culture's greatest creators from Shakespeare to Titian to Ted Hughes, it is considered to be one of the most important works in the literary canon. Yet the significance of the poem is not simply found in Ovid's encyclopaedic knowledge of myths and his imaginative means of linking them, but in his psychological insights, his rich characterisations, and his witty, even impish, flourishes of virtuosity.

¹ Homeric Hymn v.21; Apollodorus Mythographicus iii.5.3; Cicero *de Natura Deorum* iii.23; Pindar *Pythian* iii.99; Diodorus Siculus iv.25; Apollonius Rhodius i.636; Pindar *Olympian* ii.44; *Pythian* xi.1; Pausanias ii.21.2; Apollodorus Mythographicus iii.5.3.

² A year of great significance for the poet: having offended the emperor Augustus (likely with his scandalous poem, *Ars Amatoria* (The Art of Love), though the poet himself hints at a more personal reason when he refers to 'carmen et error', a poem and a mistake: *Tristia* 2.207, 4.1.25-6, 2.103-4, 3.5.49-50), Ovid was sent into exile, never to return, despite writing continuously of his grief and misery in Tomis on the Black Sea, the 'last outback at the world's end' (*Ex Ponto* 2.7.66, translated by Peter Green, quoted by Bob Dylan in *Aint Talkin'*). For readers curious to uncover the titillating world of the *Ars Amatoria*, the Penguin edition, *Ovid, The Erotic Poems* (1982), translated and introduced by Peter Green, is recommended.

³ Translation by David Raeburn, *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Penguin Classics, 2004). This edition has excellent introductory notes by Dennis Feeney on the poem and the poet.

In Ovid's voice, the story of Jupiter, Juno and the mortal girl Semele is a tale of a vengeful goddess whose changed appearance allows her to deceive an unsuspecting and foolish girl, a god too keen to please his mortal lover with rash promises, and a divine baby 'twice-born'. Such is the extraordinary range of Ovid's imagination, the story of Semele links the tragedy of Actaeon turned into a stag and killed by his own hounds with the anecdote of Jupiter and Juno betting on whether sex is better for the male or the female.

Though it may be one of the most singular ancient literary works, as well as one of the most influential, and indeed one of the most readable, the reception of the *Metamorphoses* from the time of its composition to the modern day has not been continuous, nor has it been smooth. By briefly charting its popularity amongst readers, artists and scholars in Western Europe, it is possible to reflect upon the poem's changing fortunes in relation to changing social and cultural trends, and to see how the various works of art it inspired (such as the opera by Congreve and Eccles) fit into a wider pattern of artistic output.

After the fall of Rome, the *Metamorphoses* almost disappeared from view, but was preserved in manuscript fragments until its meteoric rise to prominence in the twelfth century.⁴ For the next few centuries through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Ovid's fame and popularity depended on his reputation as a 'covert Christian who had written erotic tales and fables in order to convey sacred doctrine and moral wisdom'.⁵ Christian readings uncovered hidden allegory, most famously in the anonymous fourteenth-century *Ovid moralisé* and *Ovid moralizatus* by Petrus Berchorius (1340-42). Even as late as 1564, Arthur Golding found parallels between the *Metamorphoses* and the Bible, prefacing his celebrated English translation with the words, 'There is no fable of Ovid which does not make for edification. And a little ingenuity will interpret every book in a sense most profitable to the reader'. Into the seventeenth century, Francis Bacon wrote in *The Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609) that 'My judgement is that a concealed instruction and allegory is intended in many

⁴ Tarrant's edition has a full discussion of the manuscript tradition: *P. Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoses*, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford, 2004).

⁵ Hardin, R.F., 'Ovid in Seventeenth-Century England', *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 24 No. 1 (1972), 45.

of the ancient fables, and the French Jesuit Laurence Le Brun appended *Ovidius Christianus* to his *Virgilius Christianus* (1661), with the tales altered to become stories of converted penitents.

For the artists of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, the *Metamorphoses* was a repository of mythological material: paintings and sculptures inspired by Ovid proliferated;⁶ even opera, a brand new musical-theatrical form, began its life indebted to Ovid, with the Rinuccini / Peri operas *Dafne* (1597) and *Euridice* (1600). Later, composers such as Jean-Baptiste Lully with his librettist Philippe Quinault returned to Ovid again and again, composing numerous *tragédies en musique* such as *Cadmus et Hermione*, *Atys*, *Isis*, *Proserpine*, *Persée*, and *Phaëthon*. Across Europe, the stories of Orpheus and Eurydice, Perseus and Andromeda, Venus and Adonis, Pyramus and Thisbe, and the rape of Persephone were told and retold on stages in music, spoken form and dance, familiar, popular and seemingly endlessly adaptable for contemporary tastes.⁷

George Sandys' 1626 edition of the *Metamorphoses* was so popular that a second edition with fulsome commentary followed in 1632, continuing the tradition of seeking hidden significance and allegory. But over the coming century, and despite the dominance of Ovidian themes in artistic and cultural life, the popularity of Ovid's poetry in England began to decline. Allegory fell out of fashion, revealing Ovid's paganism, humour, and sexual themes in all their explicit glory. By 1717, Samuel Garth was moved to write an apology for Ovid in the preface to his edition (which, incidentally, still considered many of the stories in an allegorical light), acknowledging that the poet was 'too much run down at present by the critical spirit of this nation'. John Dryden, despite drawing extensively on Ovid,⁸ highlighted a distaste for Ovid's poetic style once stripped of allegorical readings: 'he often writ too pointedly for his subject, and made his person speak more Eloquent than the violence of their Passion would admit; so that he is frequently witty out of season' (Preface to *Ovid's*

Epistles, translated by *Several Hands* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1680)). Social and cultural changes propagated Ovid's decline: allegations of vulgarity, triviality, and immaturity in his affected verbal displays abounded; ancient classics started to be displaced by vernacular literature on European bookshelves; and scholarly fashion moved from Rome to Greece, where Latin texts were read, tastes favoured the more serious and morally edifying works of Horace and Virgil.

Nevertheless, it is against this backdrop of Ovidian decline that we find a pocket of musical compositions based on the story of Semele, beginning with the *Semele* by Congreve and Eccles in c.1706, followed by Marais' opera in 1709, Destouches' 1717 cantata, then *El estrago en la Fineza o Jupiter y Semele* (an opera-like work with spoken dialogue) by Antonio de Literes in 1718, and Handel's *Semele* in 1744. The familiarity of Ovid's stories among composers and audiences, as well as their endless potential for dramatic turns and outpourings of emotion, ensured that the influence of the *Metamorphoses* continued to ride high in artistic circles long after scholarly opinion had turned away from his verses.

As the nineteenth century dawned, Ovid had become so unfashionable that he was considered little more than a mythological handbook and a school textbook,⁹ and there was a general assumption that most educated people would grow out of his tricks and fancies, even if they were captivated by them in their youth. De La Harpe in *Lycée, ou Cours de Littérature* (1799) quotes a witticism from a contemporary: 'I loved Ovid at the age of twenty, I love Horace now that I am forty'.¹⁰ Yet even in this Ovidian dark age, the poet does not completely disappear from the artistic consciousness, and Semele makes a dramatic appearance in Gustave Moreau's symbolist painting of 1894-5.¹¹

Where there were hints of a resurgence of interest in Ovid in the early years of the twentieth century (for example in works by Ezra Pound, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot), the spotlight was more often thrown

⁶ For the story of Jupiter and Semele alone in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there are paintings by Tintoretto, Dosso Dossi, Caron, Ferrari, Perrier, Bon Boullogne and Voorhout.

⁷ See Solomon, J., 'The Influence of Ovid in Opera', in *A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid* (Wiley Blackwell, 2014).

⁸ For Dryden and Pope, see Horowitz, J.F., 'Ovid in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century England', in *A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid* (Wiley Blackwell, 2014).

⁹ Ovid still looms large on the UK school curriculum, featuring in A level literature studies, as well as verse composition.

¹⁰ Coon, R.H., 'Vogue of Ovid since Renaissance', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 25 No. 4 (1930), 284.

¹¹ For a detailed list of Ovidian music at this time, see Poduska, D.M., 'Classical Myth in Music: A Selective List' *The Classical World*, Vol. 92 No. 3 (1999), 195-276. For a wider cultural view, see Vance, N. 'Ovid and the nineteenth century' in Martindale, C., *Ovid Renewed* (Cambridge, 1988), 215-231.

on his exile poetry with exile poetry with its themes of artistic isolation, the disintegration of the self, and the opposition between the state and the individual.¹² But through these turbulent years, the appeal of the artistic concept of change gathered pace: artists such as Franz Kafka (*Die Verwandlung*, 1912), Hermann Hesse (*Pictors Verwandlungen*, 1922), Virginia Woolf (*Orlando: A Biography*, 1928) and Richard Strauss (*Metamorphoses*, 1945) reinvigorated Ovid's ideas of change, drawing on their potential for rebirth, gender fluidity, and identity division-disintegration.¹³

Ovidian scholarship soon caught up. An exploration of Ovid's life and works came in 1945 with Hermann Fränkel's *Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds*, followed by L. P. Wilkinson's seminal *Ovid Recalled*, published in 1955, shortly before Ovid's twentieth centenary. Since then, Ovidian scholarship has proliferated and, though there may be calls from some quarters for his poetry to be taught with a trigger warning, the *Metamorphoses* is enjoying another golden age: translations abound, and new audiences are secured by wonderful and various retellings (such as Ted Hughes' *Tales From Ovid*, 1997), explorations (for example the huge multi-art collaboration between the Royal Ballet and the National Gallery in 2012, *Metamorphosis: Titian 2012*) and popular books (Stephen Fry's *Mythos*, 2017).

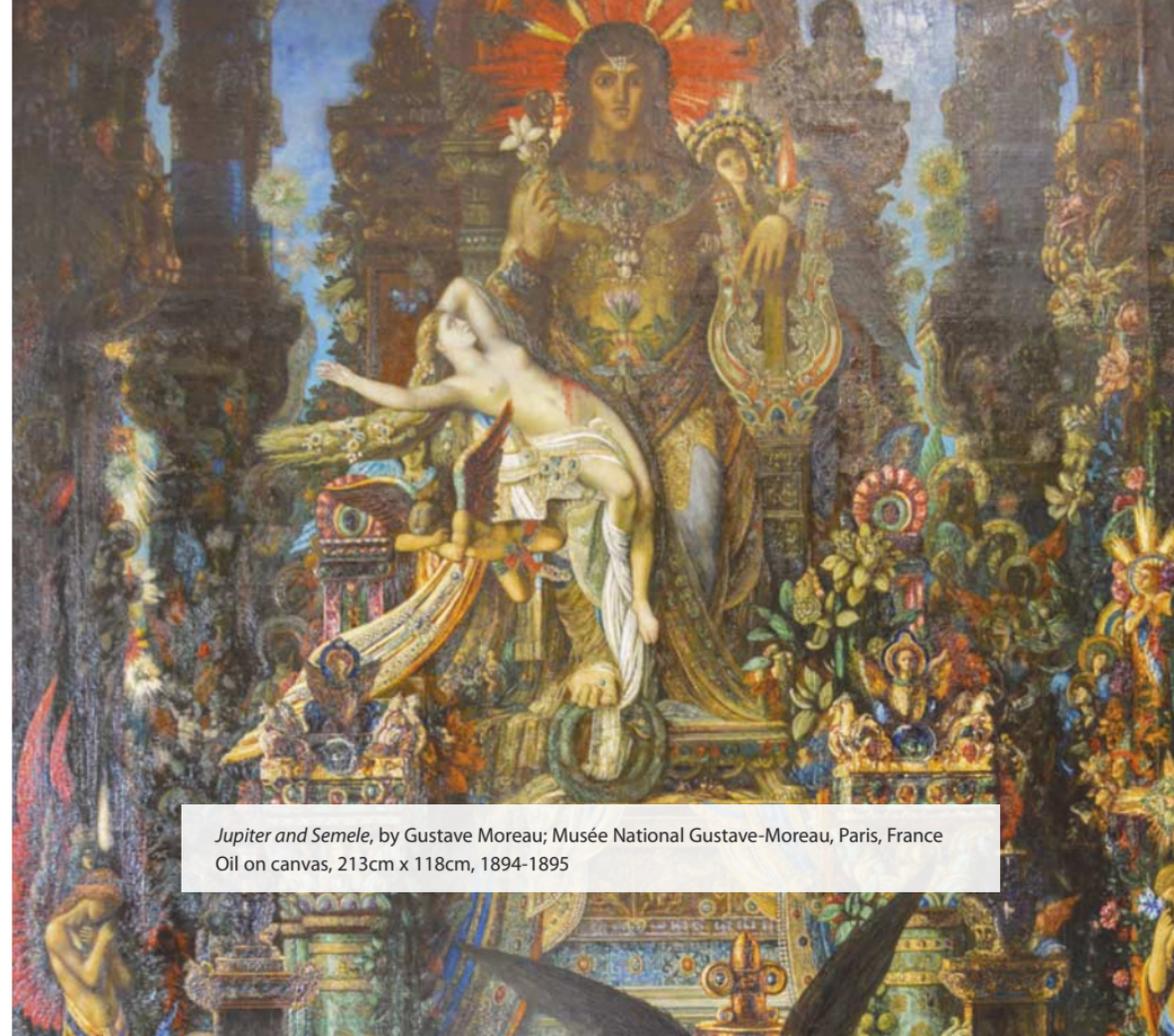
John Wain in his essay 'Ovid in English'¹⁴ has a leading English critic ask 'What has been the influence of Ovid on English literature?' The reply comes, 'What, for that matter, has been the influence of whisky on English politics? Such things are not, finally, subject to measurement'. But it is not true of English literature alone: despite changing tastes and fashions, Ovid's singular voice and his remarkable tales can be found embedded throughout Western culture, and surely feel as vibrant and relevant to the modern audience as they did at their composition over two millennia ago.

Dr. Stephanie Oade

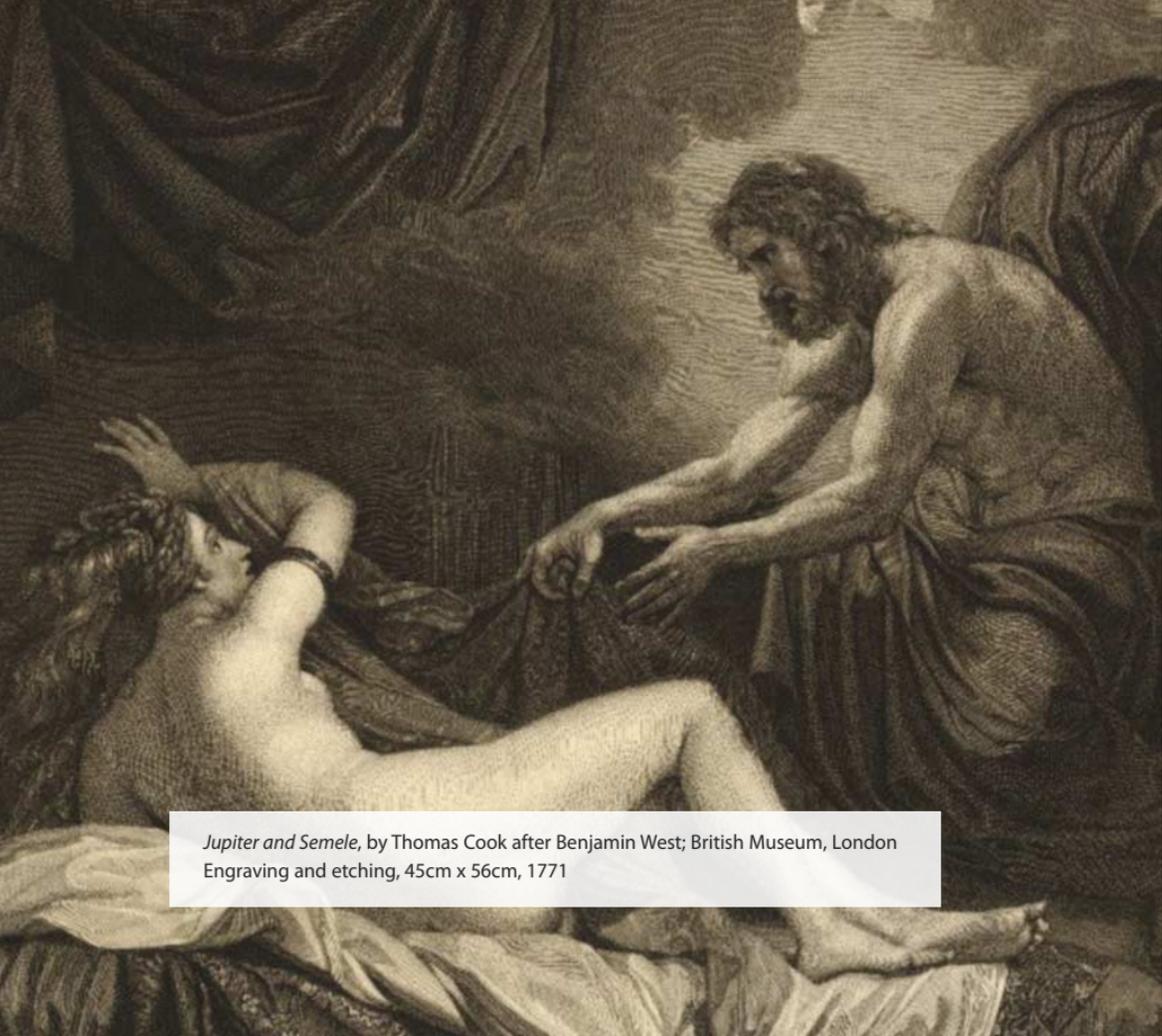
¹² An excellent discussion of the exile poetry and an English translation can be found in Peter Green's, edition *Ovid, The Poems of Exile, Trista and the Black Sea Letters* (University of California Press, 2004).

¹³ For more on these works and the trends of the twentieth century, see Ziolkowski, T., 'Ovid in the Twentieth Century', in *A Companion to Ovid*, Knox, P. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) and Ziolkowski, T., *Ovid and the Moderns* (Cornell University Press, 2004).

¹⁴ In *Preliminary Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1957) 41.



Jupiter and Semele, by Gustave Moreau; Musée National Gustave-Moreau, Paris, France
Oil on canvas, 213cm x 118cm, 1894-1895



Jupiter and Semele, by Thomas Cook after Benjamin West; British Museum, London
Engraving and etching, 45cm x 56cm, 1771

OVID: TRANSLATIONS THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Ovid's popularity in England through the centuries is in large part due to numerous translations and retellings, from William Caxton 540 years ago to Stephen Fry in the modern day. As these writers take up the challenge of rendering Ovid's endlessly changing and surprising world in the English language, they must also make it fresh and relevant for their contemporary audience. Indeed, the most successful versions not only offer non-Latinists the opportunity to engage with a classic of the literary canon, but also provide a unique snapshot of the writers' own time, style and interpretation. Reading the new texts in conjunction with each other and with the original Latin becomes a journey through literary time, offering a fascinating view of Ovid's changing reception, and drawing out endless interpretative possibilities. The following pages provide a brief summary of some of the more important and better known translations, and a list of complete editions of the *Metamorphoses* (numerous translations of individual tales and isolated books also appear throughout the centuries), with details of modern publication where available.

*Dr. Stephanie Oade &
Alexander Van Ingen*

1480, William Caxton

Caxton (the 'father of English printing', merchant, diplomat and prolific translator) produced a prose version of the *Metamorphoses*, translated not from Ovid's original Latin but from the anonymous French allegorical retelling *Ovide Moralisé*. It was prepared for the press but was not printed. Such is the importance of this translation that when the long-lost first volume reappeared in 1964 it was sold to an American bookseller at Sotheby's for £90,000 (1966); there followed a campaign to keep it in England. The single surviving manuscript is now in Magdalene College, Cambridge.

"Semelle, daughter of Cadynus, was a playsaunt & fayre damoysselle. Jupyter ravysshed and deflowred her, and this thyng was concealid in suche wyse til that she conceived. Whan Juno knewe therof she was moche esprysed with jalousie and was right angry, and descended fro heuen coverd with a derke clowd..."

1567, Arthur Golding

Golding's full translation of 1567 ('A worke very pleasaunt and delectable', the title page suggests) was that known by Shakespeare and Spenser. Golding had previously printed the first four books of the *Metamorphoses* in 1565. His edition was the first direct translation from Latin to English, and the first to be widely available, with seven further editions printed over the next fifty years. As well as changing the metre to suit the stresses of the English language, rendering Ovid's dactylic hexameter (6 'bars' of long-short syllable combinations in each line) into rhyming couplets of iambic heptameter (7 'bars' of short-long syllables in each line), Golding also sought to draw out hidden meanings and find Christian significance in the pagan original. The translation has continued to be read, Ezra Pound calling it 'the most beautiful book in the English language'.

*"Another thing cleane overthwart there commeth in the nicke
The Ladie Semell great with childe by Jove as then was quicke.
Hearat she gan to freat and fume, and for to ease hir heart,
Which else would burst, she fell in hande with scolding out hir part..."*

1632, George Sandys

It is believed that Sandys' 1626 edition of the *Metamorphoses* was the first poetry written in English in the New World, while Sandys was treasurer of the colony of Virginia in the 1620s (though the first five books had likely been completed before his posting). The edition was so popular that a second edition was published in 1632 with notes and allegorical commentary. Sandys laid out his intentions thus: 'Since it should be the principal end in publishing of Bookes, to inform the understanding, direct the will, and temper the affections; in this second Edition of my Translation, I have attempted (with what success I submit to the Reader) to collect out of sundry Authors the Philosophical sense of these fables of Ovid'. The translation is in heroic couplets, a rhyming pair of lines in iambic pentameter (5 'bars' of short-long syllables per line), the form pioneered by Chaucer and popular for translations of classical epics into English (e.g. John Dryden's *Virgil* and Alexander Pope's *Homer*).

*"Now new occasions fresh displeasure moue:
For Semele was great with child by loue.
Then, thus shee scolds: O, what amends succeeds
Our lost complaints! I now will fall to deeds."*

1717, Samuel Garth (ed.)

Poet and physician Sir Samuel Garth edited – and contributed his own translations to – *Ovid's Metamorphoses in Fifteen Books, Translated by the Most Eminent Hands*. Printed in two luxurious folios, it was the final publication in the distinguished career of bookseller and publisher Jacob Tonson, and appears to have served in some way as a memorial to the deceased John Dryden. Not only does the edition feature Dryden's translations from the 1690s of books 1 and 12 of the *Metamorphoses* (it is thought he had been planning more), Garth's preface concludes not with praise of Ovid but with fulsome praise of Dryden. Besides Garth and Dryden, the contributors included Alexander Pope, William Congreve, Joseph Addison, Laurence Eusden, Arthur Maynwaring, Samuel Croxall, Nahum Tate (whose edited volume of books I–V appeared in 1697), William Stonestreet, and John Gay. The volume was republished several times over the next decades. A similar compilation edited by George Sewell was issued in two volumes in 1717.

*"Besides, to aggravate her hate, she heard
How Semele, to Jove's Embrace preferr'd,
Was now grown big with an immortal Load,
And carry'd in her womb a future God."*

1748, Nathan Bailey

Nathan Bailey was an eminent English philologist and lexicographer (his *Dictionarium Britannicum* of 1730 and 1736 was used by Samuel Johnson for his dictionary). His version of Ovid, *A new translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses into English prose* (1748) moved away from poetic translation and was at the start of a trend for printing the Latin text alongside the English translation for

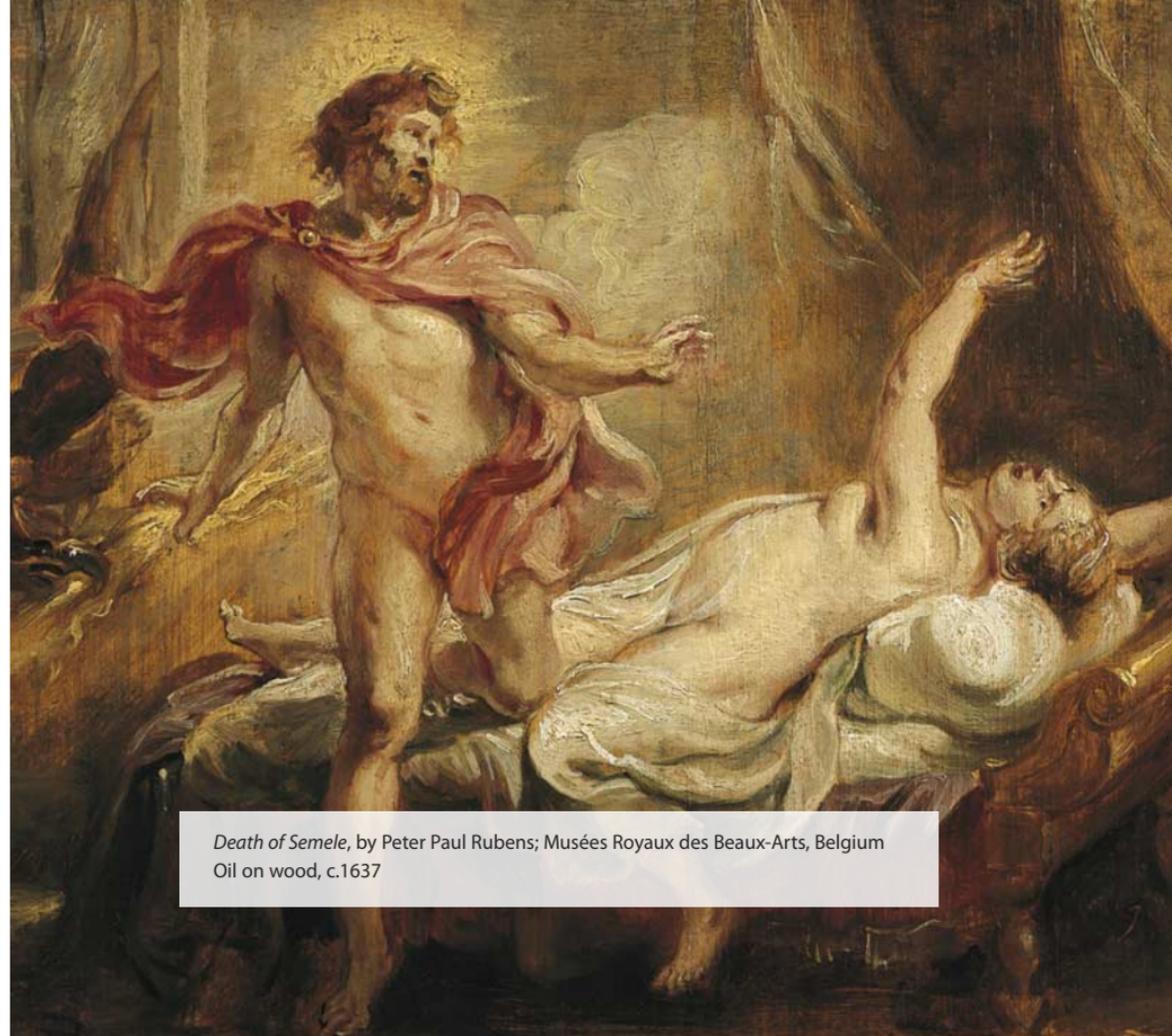
didactic purposes. Similar efforts by others followed with *The first book of Ovid's metamorphoses, with a literal interlinear translation, and illustrative notes, on the plan recommended by Mr Locke* (1828) and James Hamilton's *A Selection from the Metamorphoses of Ovid, adapted to the Hamiltonian system, by a literal and interlineal translation* (1829).

"When lo a fresh occasion of discontent succeeds to the former, and she grieves that Semele is with child by the blood of great Jupiter. She then gave a loose to her rage..."

1807, J. J. Howard (ed.)

The Metamorphoses of Publius Ovidius Naso in English blank verse by Howard was published in two volumes by John Hatchard, whose original shop is still in business on Piccadilly, London. Blank verse (unrhymed poetry in iambic metre – a short / unstressed syllable then a long / stressed syllable) was pioneered by Marlowe and Shakespeare, used by Milton in *Paradise Lost* and later taken up by Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. In his preface to the edition, Howard expresses his high hopes for the form and outlines his intentions in relation to Ovid's content: 'The translator confides his attempt to render the beauties of Ovid accessible to English readers, and to chasten the prurience of his ideas and his language, so as to fit his writings for more general perusal'. The success may be gauged by a contemporary review in the *Monthly Review*: 'Of all the classical productions of the reign of Queen Ann, perhaps none reflect so little credit on the Augustan age as [Howard's] translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It is executed by several writers, with varying degrees of merit, and singular diversities of style, but generally in a bald and ungraceful language, and almost always in a very inharmonious verse. The greater portion of the work is absolutely below mediocrity, and the most finished passages do not rise above it.'

*"... Now fresh cause
Of wrath succeeds; enrag'd the goddess learns
That Semelé, embrac'd by mighty Jove,
Is pregnant. Straight broke loose her angry tongue,
And loud she storm'd..."*



Death of Semele, by Peter Paul Rubens; Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Belgium
Oil on wood, c.1637

1916, Frank Justus Miller

Miller was a leading American classicist and translator. His prose translations of Ovid and Seneca for the Loeb Classical Library were considered somewhat regressive in their time but, by virtue of Loeb's wide availability and readership, are still much used today. The Loeb Classical Library was founded in 1912 with the intention of bringing the most important ancient texts to a wide and amateur audience, containing minimal critical apparatus and the most precise Latin / Greek text available alongside a literal but readable translation.

"And lo! A fresh pang was added to her former grievance and she was smarting with the knowledge that Semele was pregnant with the seed of mighty Jove. Words of reproach were rising to her lips."

1954-5, A. E. Watts / Mary Innes / Rolfe Humphries

Ahead of the 2000th anniversary of Ovid's birth (1957--9), in 1954-5 there were three separate translations of the *Metamorphoses* (as well as the publication of L. P. Wilkinson's seminal study *Ovid Recalled*). A. E. Watts rendered his translation of the *Metamorphoses* in the heroic couplets (rhyming iambic pentameters) of Dryden and Pope, while Mary Innes wrote a prose translation suitable for a readership increasingly turning their backs on the classics and questioning the worth of ancient languages in education. She described it as an attempt 'to produce a version which, while remaining faithful to the text, offers pleasant and easy reading, even to the non-classicist'. American poet Rolfe Humphries' translation falls into (what he called) loose ten-beat unrhymed lines. Humphries' work is the best known of the three; Innes' perhaps the most accurate, though its prose form made it less useful and less interesting for scholars and students of Latin; Watts' version was the most critically acclaimed but the least circulated, despite the inclusion by way of illustration of Pablo Picasso's 1930-1931 *Etchings on Ovid's Metamorphoses*.

Watts:

*"She turned, full store, on all the Tyrian line;
Which dealt her soon, when Semele was found
With child by Jove, a second grievous wound..
She loosed her tongue to scold..."*

Innes:

"Then fresh fuel was added to the fire of her former wrath, and she was indignant to find that Semele was heavy with child by Jove. She checked the words of abuse that sprang to her lips..."

Humphries:

*"And now, it seemed, she had another grievance,
Another grudge, for Semele, she knew,
Was pregnant with the seed of Jove. She started
To limber up her tongue for good round cursing..."*

1986, A. D. Melville

Melville's translation in 'unacademic' style became a modern classic and a standard reference guide to Ovid's original. Although it is in blank verse, chosen (according to Melville) for being 'versatile, elegant, sonorous and beautiful', there is some rhyme for effect. In his preface, Melville refers to his 1954-5 predecessor, describing the main value of Humphries' work as 'a warning of the difficulty of the task'.

*"She turned against her kin. Yes, now a new
Offence followed the last, the grievous news
That Semele was pregnant by great Jove.
Harsh words rose to her lips..."*

1997, Ted Hughes

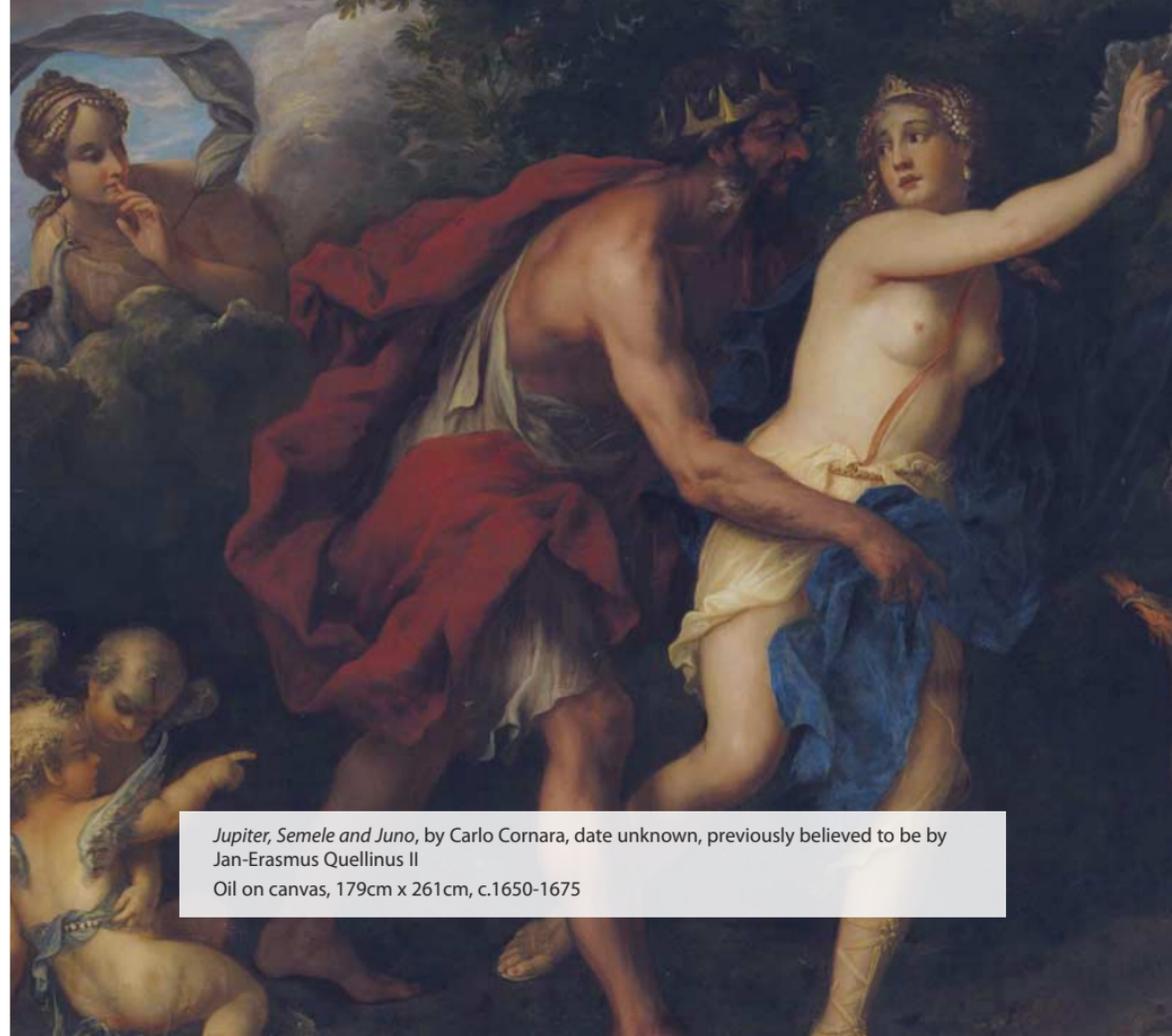
Although not a full translation, Ted Hughes' *Tales from Ovid* must be mentioned as one of the most important examples of classical reception in recent decades. It is not so much a direct translation, but rather a re-imagining of twenty-four passages from the *Metamorphoses*. Contemporaneous with *Birthday Letters* (eighty-eight poems on his relationship with Sylvia Plath), *Tales from Ovid* arose after Hughes contributed to the 1995 volume *After Ovid, New Metamorphoses* edited by Michael Hofmann and James Ladun (other contributors including Simon Armitage, Seamus Heaney and Christopher Reid), and decided to expand and develop his translations. This acclaimed and important collection is both highly accurate and refreshingly individual. It won the Whitbread Book of the Year award in 1997. Hughes also adapted Seneca's *Oedipus* (1968) and translated Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy (1999).

*"Juno was incensed when she learned it,
Jove had impregnated Semele.
Curses
Came bursting out of her throat, but she swallowed them"*

2004, David Raeburn

Raeburn was a Classics teacher and headmaster, and later a tutor at Oxford University, playing a key role in the revival of performances of Greek plays at New College. His translation uses long 6-beat lines (a metre famously used by Longfellow in *Evangeline*) in an attempt to recapture some of the momentum of Ovid's original dactylic hexameter. It was published by Penguin Classics to replace Mary Innes' translation.

*"...Suddenly,
Further cause for resentment: Semele, Cadmus' daughter,
Was pregnant by mighty Jove! Queen Juno's tongue was already
Sharpened, when 'What has my scolding ever achieved?' she thought."*



Jupiter, Semele and Juno, by Carlo Cornara, date unknown, previously believed to be by Jan-Erasmus Quellinus II
Oil on canvas, 179cm x 261cm, c.1650-1675

OVID'S METAMORPHOSES: ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Caxton, William (1480) *The Booke of Ovyde Named Metamorphose*

- ed. Moll, R.J. (2013) The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies / The Bodleian Library. The edition includes an introduction to Caxton, his translation, his source and the history of the Magdalene College manuscript.

Golding, Arthur (1567, 1575, 1584, 1587, 1593, 1603, 1612) *The XV bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis, translated into English meeter*

- *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation of 1567*, ed. Nims, J.F. (2000) Paul Dry Books, Philadelphia. The edition includes introduction, notes and a new essay on Shakespeare's Ovid by Jonathan Bate.
- *Ovid's Metamorphoses, Translated by Arthur Golding*, ed. Forey, M. (2002) Penguin Classics, London. The edition includes introduction and notes.

Sandys, George (1626, 1628, 1638, 1656; with extensive notes, illust. F. Cleyn and S. Savery 1632, 1640) *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished*

- ed. Hulley, K.T. and Vandersall, S.T. (1970) University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln NE.
- A digital copy of the 1632 text is available in full at <https://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/sandys/contents.htm>

Garth, Samuel et al. (1717; 2 vols 1720, 1727; rev. Amsterdam 1732; 1736 etc.) *Ovid's Metamorphoses in Fifteen Books. Translated by the most eminent hands.* ed. Tissol, G. (1998) Wordsworth Classics, Ware.

Sewell, George et al. (2 vols 1717, 1724, 1726, 1733) *Ovid's Metamorphoses... by several hands.*

Bailey, Nathan (1748, 1793, 1797 etc. with Latin) *A new translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses into English prose. With Latin.*

Howard J. J. (2 vols 1807) *The metamorphoses of Publius Ovidius Naso in English blank verse.*

Orger, Thomas (2 vols 1811, 1814) *Ovid's Metamorphoses. With Latin.*

Brooks, Nathan Covington (1849) *The metamorphoses of Publius Ovidius Naso... elucidated by an analysis and explanation of the fables. With Latin.*

Riley, Henry Thomas (1851, 1859, 1867, 1869, 1870) *The Metamorphoses. Prose.*

Rose, John Benson (1866) *The Metamorphoses of Ovid.*

King, Henry (1871) *The Metamorphoses of Publius Ovidius Naso. Translated into English blank verse.*

Miller, Frank Justus (2 vols 1916) *Metamorphoses*, Loeb Classical Library, London.

Brookes More (3 vols 1922-57) *Ovid's Metamorphoses... in English blank verse*, Marshall Jones Co., Francetown NH.

Watts A. E. (1954) *The Metamorphoses*, University of California Press, Berkeley (1954); Cambridge University Press, London (1955); North Point Press, San Francisco, illustr. P. Picasso (1980).

Humphries, Rolfe (1955) *Metamorphoses*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington (1955); Mark Paterson, London (1957).

Innes, Mary M. (1955) *Metamorphoses*, Penguin Classics, London.

Gregory, Horace (1958, 1960) *The Metamorphoses*, Signet, New York, illustr. Z. Gay

Sisson, C. H. (1968) *Metamorphoses*, Methuen and Co Ltd, London.

Melville, A. D. (1986, 1987) *Ovid Metamorphoses*, Oxford World Classics, Oxford, ed. Kenney, E.J.

Boer, Charles (1989) *Metamorphoses*, Sprint Publications (Dunquin Series), Dallas.

Mandelbaum, Allen (1993, 1995) *The Metamorphoses*, Harcourt Brace, San Diego; New York; London.

Mandelbaum, Allen (1986) *Ovid in Sicily: a new verse translation of selections from the Metamorphoses*, Sheep Meadow Press, New York, illustr. M. de Roman. With Latin.



Slavitt, David R. (1994) *The Metamorphoses of Ovid: translated freely into verse*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Adpt Mary Zimmermann (2002) *Metamorphoses: A Play*, North Western University Press, Evanston IL.

Hughes, Ted (1997) *Tales from Ovid: twenty-four passages from the metamorphoses*, Faber and Faber, London.

Simpson, Michael (2001, 2003) *The metamorphoses of Ovid*, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Martin, Charles (2003) *Metamorphoses*, W.W. Norton and Co., New York.

Raeburn, David (2004) *Metamorphoses: A New Verse Translation*, Penguin Classics, London. With introduction by Dennis Feeney.

Fry, Stephen (2017) *Mythos*, Penguin, London (not a translation but notable for its lively retellings of Greek myths, including the story of Semele and other tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*).

Image (left): *Semele and Jupiter*, by Bon Boullogne (the elder); Musée de Tessée, Le Mans, France
Oil on canvas, 146cm x 91cm, c.1700-1704

RECORDINGS OF OTHER SETTINGS OF SEMELE

Alexander Van Ingen

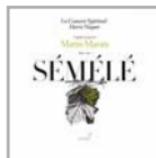
MARIN MARAIS: SÉMÉLÉ

2008: *Le Concert Spirituel* / **Hervé Niquet**

Shannon Mercer, Bénédicte Tauran, Jaël Azzaretti, Hjördis Thébault, Andres J. Dahlin, Thomas Dolié, Lisandro Abadie, Marc Labonnette

First performed in 1709 (by the Paris Opera at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal), *Sémélé* is set to a libretto by Antoine Houdat de la Motte, and was Marais' final opera. The de la Motte libretto bears significant narrative differences from that by William Congreve.

[Glossa, GCD921614]

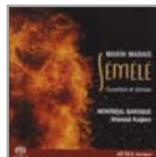


MARIN MARAIS: SÉMÉLÉ (Overtures & Dances)

2007: *Montréal Baroque* / **Wieland Kuijken**

Overtures & Dances

[Atma, SACD22527]



ANTONIO DE LITERES: JÚPITER Y SEMELE

2003: *Al Ayre Español* / **Eduardo López Banzo**

Mata Almajano, Lola Casariego, Soledad Cadoso, Marina Pardo, Jordi Ricart, Jose Hernández, Virginia Ardid

Live concert recording, following a version of the score reworked for performance in Lisbon in 1723. Libretto by José de Cañizares, after Ovid.

[Harmonia Mundi, HMI987036.37]



HANDEL, MARAIS & DESTOUCHES: SÉMÉLÉ

2015: *Les Ombres* / **Sylvain Sartre & Margaux Blanchard**

Chantal Santon Jeffrey, Mélodie Ruvio

The myths of Semele and Icarus, told through music by three composers

[Mirare, MIR260]



HANDEL: SEMELE

2009: *Orchestra 'La Scintilla'* / **William Christie**

Cecilia Bartoli, Liliana Nikiteanu, Birgit Remmert, Isabel Rey, Charles Workman, Anton Scharinger, Thomas Michael Allen

DVD, stage production by Robert Carsen

[Decca, 0743323]



JOHN ELIOT GARDINER - HANDEL

2007: *Monteverdi Choir & Orchestra* / **John Eliot Gardiner**

Patrizia Swellam, Timothy Penrose, Robert Lloyd, Norma Burrowes, Anthony Rolfe-Johnson, Maldwyn Davies, Catherine Denley, Della Jones, Elisabeth Priday, David Thomas

Part of a multi-disc set, including Handel's *Semele* and various other works by Handel

[Erato, 2564698385; also released on 'Handel edition Vol.5, Semele etc', Warner Classics, 2564696118]



HANDEL: SEMELE

2007: *Early Opera Company* / **Christian Curnyn**

Rosemary Joshua, Hilary Summers, Richard Croft, Stephen Wallace, Brindley Sharratt, Gail Pearson, David Croft

[Chaconne / Chandos, CHAN0745(3)]



HANDEL: SEMELE

1993: *Ambrosian Opera Chorus, English Chamber Orchestra* / **John Nelson**

Kathleen Battle, Marilyn Horne, Samuel Ramey, John Aler, Michael Chance, Neil Mackie, Sylvia McNair

[DG Archiv, 4357822]



Semele.

=plain and hearing must Refuse her why do you cease to gaze upon me why missing turn a

=may some other Object seems more pleasing

Alto violin.
Jupiter.

Ghy wouldst thou remove my Semele from

From John Eccles' autograph score of *Semele*, the end of *Thy Sex of Jove's the Masterpiece* [track 47, CD1] and the beginning of *Thy needless Fears remove* [track 48, CD1], showing a clearly altered time-signature followed by erased bar-lines and minim rests.
Library of the Royal College of Music, MS.183, f.45v

OTHER RECORDINGS OF ECCLES' WORKS

Alexander Van Ingen

John Eccles is a significantly under-recorded composer, and of the recordings that do exist, many are just a handful of arias included on a wider album. Eccles is deserving of greater recognition in the recording catalogue, and it is to be hoped that the knowledge and dissemination of his music will continue to increase. Selected recordings featuring Eccles' work(s), including the complete *The Judgment of Paris*, are listed here in the encouragement of further exploration.

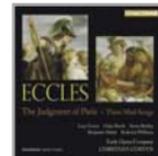
ECCLES: THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS & THREE MAD SONGS

2009: **The Early Opera Company / Christian Curnyn**

Roderick Williams, Benjamin Hulett, Susan Bickley, Claire Booth, Lucy Crowe

The Judgment of Paris; Three Mad Songs (taken from *She Ventures*, and *He Wins*);
The Way of the World; The Comical History of Don Quixote

[Chaconne / Chandos, CHAN0759]



JOHN ECCLES: THE MAD LOVER

2018: **Olivia Vermeulen, Capella Orlandi Bremen / Thomas Ihlenfeldt**

Featuring music and arias from: *The Rape of Europa*; *The Ambitious Slave*; *Love Betray'd*; *The Agreeable Disappointment*; Song set of *Mrs. Bracegirdle*; *The Comical History of Don Quixote*; *Cyrus the Great*; *The Fickle Shepherdess*; *The Mad Lover*; *Acis and Galatea*; *Wine and Love*; and works by Finger

[CPO, 5550612]



SEMELE, BY JOHN ECCLES

2004: **Florida State University Opera / Anthony Rooley**

Leslie Mangrum, Brenda Gau, Barbara Clements, Erica Cochran, Diane Coble,
Kathleen Phipps, Lee Tayler, Mathew Toberson, Kyle Ferrill, Bragi Valsson, Scott MacLeod,
Michael Moreno

[Forum, FRC9203] This recording is now unavailable, but may occasionally be found second-hand

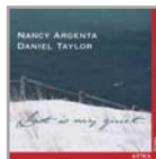


LOST IS MY QUIET

2003: Nancy Argenta, Daniel Taylor, Theatre of Early Music / Christopher Jackson

Featuring music from: The Mad Lover; Ode for St. Cecilia; Don Quixote; and works by Blow, Daniel Purcell, and Henry Purcell

[Atma, ACD22300]



MAD SONGS

2004: Catherine Bott, New London Consort

Must then a faithful lover go?; Take him gently; Let all be gay; Restless in thought; I burn my brain; Love's but the frailty; Cease of Cupid; and works by Blow, Finger, Daniel Purcell, Henry Purcell, and Weldon

[Decca, 4762099, re-released 2010: L'Oiseau-Lyre / Decca, 4331872]



ORPHEUS WITH HIS LUTE

2004: Catherine Bott, Rachel Brown, The Parley of Instruments / Peter Holman

Can Life be a Blessing; and works by Arne, Chilcot, Clarke, Fesch, Greene, Leveridge, Purcell, Smith, Weldon, and Woodcock

[Hyperion, CDA67450]



SIMONE KERMES: LOVE

2016: Simone Kermes, La Magnifica Comunità / Enrico Casazza

I burn, I burn; Restless in Thoughts; and works by Boesset, Briceño, Cesti, Downland, Lambert, Legrenzi, Manelli, Merula, Monteverdi, and Purcell

[Sony, 88875111382]



SIMPSON: THE SEASONS

2016: Sirius Viols: Hille Perl, Marthe Perl, Frauke Hess

A Ground (hidden track at the end of the album); plus Christopher Simpson's *The Seasons*

[Deutsche HM, 88875190982]



SOUND THE TRUMPET

2008: Mark Bennett, The Parley of Instruments / Peter Holman

Suite 'made for the Queen's Coronation'; and works by Barrett, Corbett, Croft, Finger, Paisible, and Purcell

[Helios, CDH55258]



DIVISON-MUSICK

2012: Johannes Strobl, Irene Klein, Jane Achtman, Amandine Beyer

A Divison on a Ground by Mr. John Eckles; works by Baltzar, Banister, Jenkins, Lawes, and Simpson

[Ramée, RAM1204]



MUSICA BRITANNICA 76: SCORE EDITION

This recording is based on the edition *John Eccles, Semele: An Opera*, edited by Richard Platt, Musica Britannica, 76 (London: Stainer & Bell, 2000). The only known primary source for the music is a manuscript in the library of the Royal College of Music, London (MS 183), which Platt identifies as autograph. It is a full score in an oblong folio format (some images of which are provided through this booklet) in which a few pages are missing. Additions to that score, performed as part of this recording, were chosen from other works by Eccles or reconstructed by Platt in this edition; further details of both the edition, and additions, are given in the following (which is reproduced from MB 76, with the kind permission of the trustees of The Musica Britannica Trust). Additional information on Platt's edition, methodology and more can be found in the score from publishers Stainer & Bell. [MB 76, ISBN 9780852498590, pictured]



When the Musica Britannica edition was first planned, some 70 years ago, eighteenth-century vocal and dramatic music was immediately in the frame. Of the first 100 volumes in the series so far, nineteen contain eighteenth-century music, the first and last by Thomas Arne who seems to have been considered the best composer to champion British music in the period of Handel's dominance. Plans to publish John Eccles' *Semele* were laid in the early 1970s, but it eventually appeared to honour the millennium, Richard Platt's edition becoming MB76 in 2000, the first, and so far the only, representative of the genre from the generation between Purcell and Arne. Eccles' *The Judgment of Paris* was considered along with its rivals in the famous 1701 competition, but Arne's later setting was preferred. Justice is finally being done to Eccles, Greene, and others in this period who composed fine dramatic music, too often neglected; *Semele* in particular fully deserves to emerge from the shadow cast by Handel's later setting.

Primary Sources

There is only one source for the music of the opera, a full score now in the library of the Royal College of Music (MS 183), some images of which are included in this book. Richard Platt's comparison with an autograph letter of Eccles' (undated, and seemingly addressed to an official in the Wardrobe department) in the Public Record Office (LC9/389 (2)) led him to the conclusion that this score is entirely in the composer's own hand. In it there are a few pages missing, not only at the beginning and the end but also in Act III, and here music has been editorially provided, as also for those missing dances in Act II where only the key is indicated in the score (see 'Additional Music'). Possibly because of the missing pages, there is no contemporary attribution present, and since Platt's identification, further research has been undertaken looking at Eccles' scores. Dr. Estelle Murphy confirms Platt's identification of the autograph score by comparison with the known autograph of Eccles' 1703 ode *Inspire us genius of the day*, in an identical hand (and where several peculiarities of Eccles' writing remain intact, for example, his lowercase letter 'E', his beaming of quavers and semiquavers, and his tendency to place accidentals slightly above their correct position).

The manuscript itself (henceforth **A**) is in an oblong folio format measuring 29.2 X 22.7 cm, and was purchased by the College in 1883, shortly after the Sacred Harmonic Society (to whom it had been presented by their Librarian, W.H. Husk) was disbanded. At some earlier date it had evidently belonged to one T. Bennett Elcon, whose name and place of residence (Avignon) are written on a label now pasted on the inside front cover; above that is another label bearing the title: 'Semele An Opera'. Though attributed at one stage to Handel, his name was subsequently cancelled and replaced by Eccles (in another hand). The legibility of the score has at times been seriously affected by the use of very acid ink, with consequent 'bleed through' from the other side of the page.

As the opera was never (so far as is known) performed during the composer's lifetime, there is no corresponding printed libretto. The most authoritative source of the verbal text, therefore, is the edition (henceforth **L**) published by Jacob Tonson in 1710 as part of *The Second Volume of the Works of Mr. William Congreve*, and this (rather than **A**) is followed in all details of spelling, initial capitals

and punctuation. In the Tonson edition the stage directions are often rather fuller than those in **A**; in the Musica Britannica edition both are generally shown, with those in **L** taking precedence over those in the manuscript score.

Congreve's introductory argument [reprinted in this booklet, pp.19-20] not only describes his attitude to the use of recitative, but also suggests a certain contempt for the librettos of his day (with such works as *Arsinoë* quite possibly in mind). In **L** all text intended as recitative is printed in roman type, and all those words in rhyming verse intended to be sung as formalised air in italic; this functional distinction is for the most part carefully preserved in Eccles' setting.

Eccles' Revisions

At some later stage, presumably not long after the completion of the opera, Eccles made a number of alterations to the score. Though ff.2-4v, 37-39v and 74-77v are all written on paper with the same watermark as the rest of the manuscript, and have the same number of staves per page (ten), they were clearly ruled with a different rastrum, and would appear therefore to have been inserted as a replacement for whatever music was there first. They also differ in using the modern natural sign, whereas the rest of the manuscript used an earlier (and by now old-fashioned) system in which sharps were used to cancel flats, and vice versa – or rather they did until Eccles, having discovered the natural, then went systematically through the score replacing very nearly all of those accidentals so used (mainly sharps) with a sign (the modern natural) which one must suppose was unfamiliar to him earlier on (i.e. when the work was actually being composed). In several places the time signature and/or placement of bar-lines has also been altered.

In some numbers, the 2/4 time signature (with its fairly lively implications of speed) replaces whatever Eccles originally wrote. Elsewhere *alla breve* time signatures, prefacing music barred as if in 2/4, have had their vertical cross-strokes and all 'extra' bar-lines scratched out; occasionally, on

the other hand, it is only the time signature which has been changed. Also erased and rewritten an octave lower are the violin parts in various bits of 'Hail, Cadmus, hail!'. The use of the retorted time signature said by Purcell to imply 'a brisk and airy time' (*A Choice Collection of Lessons for the Harpsichord or Spinnet*, 1696) is here found only in those movements which have been editorially supplied (CD 1, Overture [track 01], 'Lucky Omens bless our Rites' [track 03] and Aire [track 37]).

Secondary Sources

Despite the fact that the opera as such was never performed during the composer's lifetime, three airs from the second act were published separately sometime in the early years of the eighteenth century; neither the name of the publisher nor the actual dates of publication are known, however. These are as follows:

X Cupid's 'See, after the Toys of an amorous fight'. [CD1, track 35] The only known copies (in *GB-Cfm* and *Lbl*) are headed: 'Air in y^e OPERA of SEMELE[,] the words by M^r Congreve, Compos'd by M^r In^o Eccles, to be accompany'd by a Violin, or second treble little Flute' (whose part – on the uppermost of four staves – is here transposed up a fourth to D minor). The air itself is printed on single-sided sheets, and a prefatory stage direction reads: 'Semele is seen sleeping on a Couch, Zephyrs fanning her while Cupid sings y^e following song'. Textually, this source corresponds very closely with **A**, and though there are some changes of pitch and note values, it almost certainly derives from It.

Y Cupid's 'Come Zephyrs, come'. [CD1, track 36] The only known copies (in *GB-Cfm*, *Ob* and *US-Wc*) are headed: 'Air in the Opera of Semele[,] the words by M^r Congreve Set by M^r John Eccles'. The air is printed in three-part score (Violin, Cupid and figured bass) with a transposed version of the violin part headed 'Sym for the FLUTE' at the foot of the second page. Though the music derives ultimately from **A**, the version printed here is rather more elaborate than that in the MS.

Z Semele's 'O Sleep, why dost thou leave me', [CD1, track 38] and Cupid's immediately following 'Sleep forsaking, seize him waking' [CD1, track 39]. The only known copies (*GB-Cfm* and *US-Wc*) are headed: 'Air in the Opera of Semele, the words by M^r Congreve Set by M^r John Eccles'. Apart from the fact that the semibreves in the bass of Semele's aria (bb.1-6) are here written as minim and minim rest, the text is virtually identical with **A**, even to the extent of including the stage direction 'Cupid leading in Jupiter' at bar 16. The dynamics in Cupid's aria are drawn from this source.

Additional Music

As stated on p.128 (see 'Primary Sources'), the score lacks not only an Overture, but also a few pages of vocal music at the beginning and the end; there is also a bit missing in Act III, whilst the dances in Act II are indicated merely by their titles and keys ('Dance of Zephyrs in A:#' and 'Dance in A:#'). In the present edition these gaps have been filled by using music from other works by Eccles, the sources for which are as follows:

B *Lbl* Add. MS 29378: a full score of Eccles' *Rinaldo and Armida* (1699). This provides the 'Overture', found in the MS on ff.5v-6v [CD1, track 01]. The missing 'Symphony' in Act II [CD1, track 50] is also taken from this same source (f.33), but is here transposed down from F to E major to fit in with the key sequence at this point.

C *Lbl* Add. MS 31456: a full score of Eccles' Birthday Ode for 1703 ('Inspire us, genius of the Day'). The duet, 'From this happy Day' (ff.8-13) is here used as the basis of 'Lucky Omens bless our Rites' [CD1, track 03]. The section used is on ff.8-9v, with the omission of a 16-bar ritornello between bars 4 and 5 which, in this context, would hold up the action. There is another copy of the ode in *Lbl* Add. MS 31405, but this, being textually inferior, is here ignored.

D *Harmonia Anglicana ... The fourth Collection* (published by Walsh in 1702). This provides music for the Dance of the Zephyrs in Act II scene 2 [CD1, track 37]. Originally this was movement 8 from *A Sett of Aires Made for The Queen's Coronation by M^r I. Eccles Master of Her Majesty's Musick*. The only known copies are *GB-Lbl* press-mark b. 28 a. (first Treble), *GB-Lcm* press-mark XXIX.A.12 and *GB-Lg* G. Mus. 153 (second Treble) and *GB-Lcm* press-mark XXIX.A.28 (Tenor and Bass, the latter missing several bars).

Editorial Reconstructions

With the exception of a few bars of recitative, the following reconstructions complete the missing bars in sections where a fair proportion of the original has survived. These editorial passages, all clearly indicated as such in the score, are as follows:

Act I: first recitative, bb.1-6 [CD1, track 02]; second recitative, bb.1-6 [CD1, track 04], and *Ah me! What Refuge now is left me?*, bb.1-4 [CD1, track 05]

Act II: *Only Love on Sleep has Pow'r*, b.25 [CD2, track 05] to *More sweet is that Name*, b.15 [CD2, track 07]

Act III: *Then Mortals be merry*, b.93 to the end [CD2, track 39]

© Copyright 2000, The Musica Britannica Trust
and Stainer & Bell Ltd

S E M E L E.

A N

O P E R A.



A Natura discedimus: Populo nos damus, nullius rei bono auctori, et in hac re, sicut in omnibus, inconstantissimo.

Seneca Ep. 99.



Printed in the YEAR MDCCLXI.

(173)



S E M E L E.



ACT I. SCENE I.

The SCENE is the Temple of Juno, near the Altar is a Golden Image of the Goddess. Priests are in their Solemnities, as after a Sacrifice newly offer'd; Flames arise from the Altar, and the Statue of Juno is seen to bow.

CADMUS, ATHAMAS, SEMELE, and INO.

FIRST PRIEST.

BEHOLD auspicious Flashes rise;
Juno accepts our Sacrifice;
The grateful Odor swift ascends,
And see, the Golden Image bends.

FIRST and SECOND PRIEST.

*Lucky Omens bless our Rites,
And sure Success shall crown your Loves;*

Peaceful

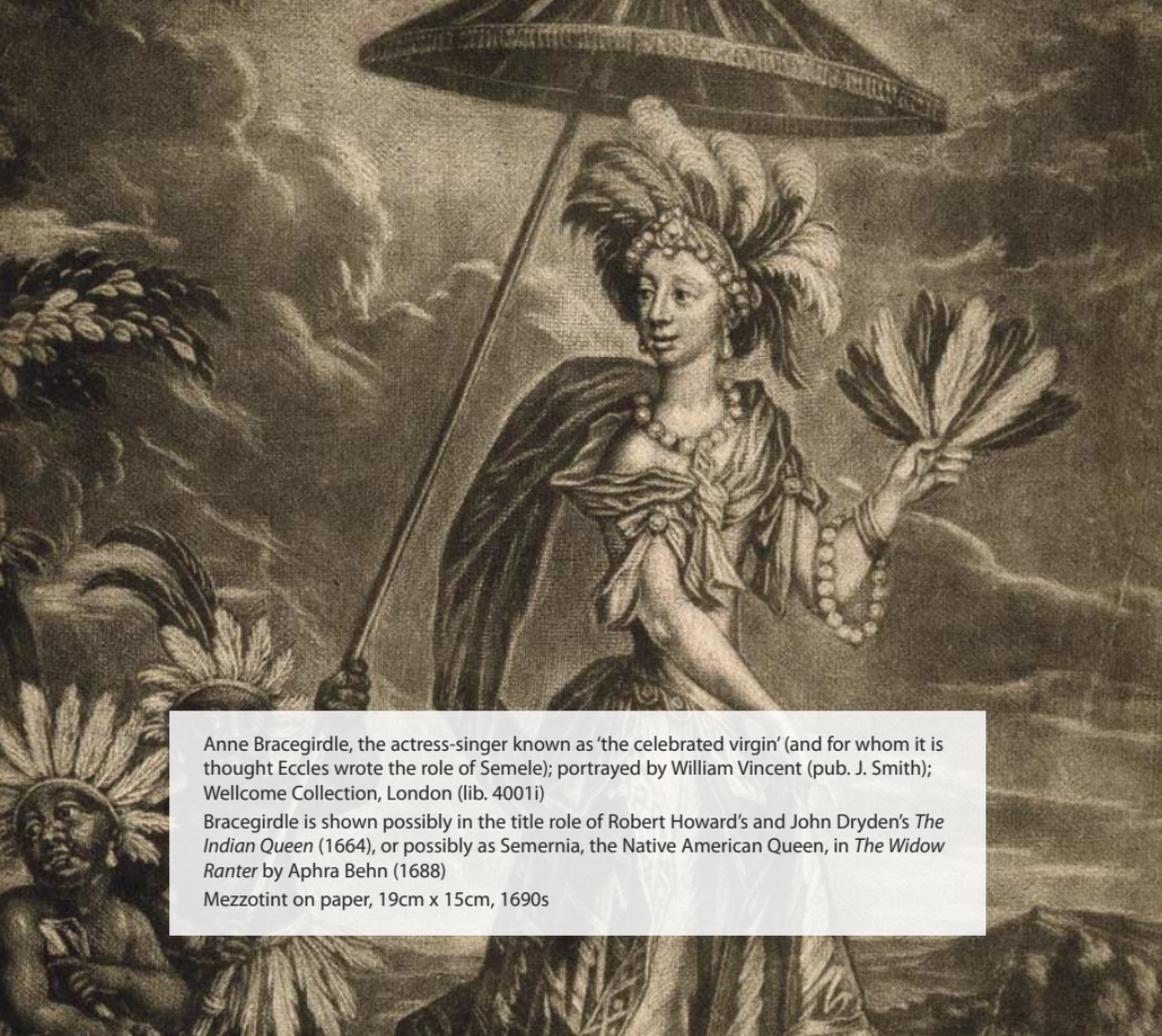
SEMELE AN OPERA

A Natura discedimus: Populo nos damus, nullius rei bono auctori, et in hac re, sicut in omnibus, inconstantissimo

Seneca Ep.99

We forsake nature and commit ourselves to the public, a bad guide in anything, and in this, as in everything, most inconsistent

[Seneca *Epistles*, 99]



Anne Bracegirdle, the actress-singer known as 'the celebrated virgin' (and for whom it is thought Eccles wrote the role of Semele); portrayed by William Vincent (pub. J. Smith); Wellcome Collection, London (lib. 4001i)

Bracegirdle is shown possibly in the title role of Robert Howard's and John Dryden's *The Indian Queen* (1664), or possibly as Semernia, the Native American Queen, in *The Widow Ranter* by Aphra Behn (1688)

Mezzotint on paper, 19cm x 15cm, 1690s

SYNOPSIS

Richard Platt

ACT I

Semele is in love with Jupiter, but is on the point of being married unwillingly to Athamas. The ceremony is interrupted by Jupiter's thunder, and the sacrificial flame on Juno's altar is extinguished, whereupon the priests advise everyone to leave the temple. Ino and Athamas are left alone together. She is professing her love for him when Cadmus enters to relate how Semele has been carried off by an eagle, which the priests and augurs identify as Jupiter himself. 'Endless pleasure, endless love', an augur declares, 'Semele enjoys above'.

ACT II

Juno, angered by what has taken place, has ordered Iris, her messenger, to find out where Jupiter and Semele are. Iris describes Semele's happiness, and warns that the palace is guarded by dragons. Juno decides to visit Somnus, the God of Sleep, to obtain his assistance. The scene changes to Semele's palace, where she is attended by Cupid. Jupiter enters and they sing of their love for one another. Semele, however, realises how transitory is her mortal lot, and therefore her happiness. To divert her from these thoughts, Jupiter summons her sister Ino, and arranges entertainment for them.

ACT III

Juno, accompanied by Iris, visits Somnus and asks to borrow his magic rod to charm the dragons; then for Ino to be put to sleep so that Juno can take her place. Thus disguised, Juno visits Semele and persuades her to withhold her favours from Jupiter until he has sworn to grant her any request. To achieve her own immortality, Semele must ask Jupiter to appear before her as a god. Though Jupiter warns Semele of the danger, she insists on her request being granted, but in carrying out his promise he is unable to avoid destroying her. The opera ends with Athamas marrying Ino at Jupiter's command and Apollo prophesying that Bacchus, the unborn child of Jupiter and Semele, will rise from her ashes.



Richard Burkhard (left, baritone, Jupiter) and Anna Dennis (right, soprano, Semele), with Julian Perkins (far left, director & harpsichord) during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles' *Semele* at St. Jude-on-the-Hill, London, 2019

LIBRETTO

William Congreve

The libretto and stage directions given here are as printed by Jacob Tonson in 1710; there may be minor discrepancies when compared to the score edition (see pp.127–132 in this booklet) used for this recording.

ACT I

Overture

[CD1, Track 1]

Scene 1 Bœotia. The Scene is the Temple of Juno, near the Altar is a Golden Image of the Goddess. Priests are in their Solemnities, as after a Sacrifice newly offer'd; Flames arise from the Altar, and the Statue of Juno is seen to bow.

Cadmus, Athamas, Semele, and Ino [also Chief Priest and Second Priest]

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|--|
| <i>Chief Priest</i> | [2] | Behold auspicious Flashes rise;
Juno accepts our Sacrifice;
The grateful Odour swift ascends,
And see the Golden Image bends. |
| <i>2nd Priest, Chief Priest</i> | [3] | Lucky Omens bless our Rites,
And sure Success shall crown your Loves;
Peaceful Days and fruitful Nights,
Attend the Pair that she approves. |
| <i>Cadmus</i> | [4] | Daughter, obey,
Hear, and obey.
With kind Consenting
Ease a Parent's Care;
Invent no new Delay. |
| <i>Athamas</i> | | O hear a faithful Lover's Pray'r;
On this auspicious Day
Invent no new Delay. |
| <i>Semele [apart]</i> | [5] | Ah me!
What Refuge now is left me?
How various, how tormenting,
Are my Miseries! |

O Jove assist me.
 Can Semele forgo thy Love,
 And to a Mortal's Passion yield?
 Thy Vengeance will o'ertake
 Such Perfidy.
 If I deny, my Father's Wrath I fear.
 O Jove, in Pity teach me which to chuse,
 Incline me to comply, or help me to refuse.

Athamas [6] See, she blushing turns her Eyes;
 See, with Sighs her Bosom panting:
 If from Love those Sighs arise,
 Nothing to my Bliss is wanting.

[7] Hymen haste, thy Torch prepare,
 Love already his has lighted;
 One soft Sigh has cur'd Despair,
 And more than my past Pains requited.

Ino [8] Alas! she yields,
 And has undone me:
 I can no longer hide my Passion;
 It must have Vent –
 Or inward burning
 Will consume me.
 O Athamas –
 I cannot utter it –
 On me fair Ino calls
 With mournful Accent,
 Her Colour fading,
 And her Eyes o'erflowing!
 O Semele!
 On me she calls,
 Yet seems to shun me!
 What wou'd my Sister?
 Speak –

Ino
 Cadmus [9] Thou hast undone me.
 Why dost thou thus untimely grieve,
 And all our solemn Rites prophane?
 Can he, or she, thy Woes relieve?
 Or I? Of whom dost thou complain?
 Of all; but all, I fear, in vain.
 Can I thy Woes relieve?
 Can I assuage thy Pain?
 Of whom dost thou complain?
 Of all; but all, I fear, in vain.

Ino
 Athamas
 Semele
 Cadmus, Athamas, Semele
 Ino

Symphony [10]
 [It lightens, and Thunder is heard at a distance, then a Noise of Rain; the Fire is suddenly extinguish'd on the Altar: The Chief Priest comes forward.

Chief Priest [11] Avert these Omens, all ye Pow'rs!
 Some God averse our holy Rites controlls.
 O'erwhelm'd with sudden Night, the Day expires!
 Ill-boding Thunder on the Right Hand rolls.
 And Jove himself descends in Show'rs,
 To quench our late propitious Fires.

Chief Priest, 2nd & 3rd Priests [12] Avert these Omens, all ye Pow'rs!
 [Flames are again kindled on the Altar, and the Statue nods.

Chief Priest [13] Again auspicious Flashes rise,
 Juno accepts our Sacrifice.

[The Fire is again extinguish'd.

Second Priest Again the sickly Flame decaying dies:
 Juno assents, but angry Jove denies.
 Thy Aid, Pronubial Juno, Athamas implores.
 Thee Jove, and thee alone, thy Semele adores.

Athamas [apart]
 Semele [apart]

Symphony [14]

[A loud Clap of Thunder; the Altar sinks.

Chief Priest [15] Cease, cease your Vows, 'tis impious to proceed;
Be gone, and fly this holy Place with Speed:
This dreadful Conflict is of dire Presage;
Be gone, and fly from Jove's impending Rage.

[All but the Priests come forward. The Scene closes on the Priests, and shews to View the Front and Outside of the Temple. Cadmus leads off Semele, Attendants follow. Athamas and Ino remain.

Scene 2

Athamas [16] O Athamas, what Torture hast thou born!
And O, what hast thou yet to bear!
From Love, from Hope, from near Possession torn,
And plung'd at once in deep Despair.

Ino [17] Turn, hopeless Lover, turn thy Eyes,
And see a Maid bemoan,
In flowing Tears and aking Sighs,
Thy Woes, too like her own.
Turn, hopeless Lover, turn thy Eyes,
And see a Maid bemoan.

Athamas [18] She weeps!
The gentle Maid, in tender Pity,
Weeps to behold my Misery!
So Semele wou'd melt
To see another mourn.
[19] Such unavailing Mercy is in Beauty found,
Each Nymph bemoans the Smart
Of every bleeding Heart,
But that where she her self inflicts the Wound.

Ino
Athamas

Ino

Athamas

Ino

Athamas

[20] Ah me, too much afflicted!
Can Pity for another's Pain
Cause such Anxiety!
Cou'dst thou but guess
What I endure;
Or cou'd I tell thee –
Thou, Athamas,
Wou'dst for a while
Thy Sorrows cease, a little cease,
And listen for a while
To my Lamenting.
Of Grief too sensible
I know your tender Nature.
Well I remember,
When I oft have su'd
To cold, disdainful Semele;
When I with Scorn have been rejected;
Your tuneful Voice my Tale wou'd tell,
In Pity of my sad Despair;
And, with sweet Melody, compel
Attention from the flying Fair.
Too well I see
Thou wilt not understand me.
Whence cou'd proceed such Tenderness?
Whence such Compassion?
Insensible! Ingrate! –
Ah no, I cannot blame thee:
For by Effects unknown before,
Who cou'd the hidden Cause explore?
Or think that Love cou'd act so strange a Part,
To plead for Pity in a Rival's Heart.
Ah me, what have I heard!
She does her Passion own.

Ino What, had I not despair'd,
 You never shou'd have known.
 [2s1] You've undone me,
 Look not on me;
 Guilt upbraiding,
 Shame invading;
 Look not on me,
 You've undone me.

Athamas With my Life I wou'd atone
 Pains you've borne, to me unknown.
 Cease to shun me.

Both Love, love alone
 Has both undone.

Scene 3 Enter Cadmus attended.

Cadmus [22] Ah, wretched Prince, doom'd to disastrous Love!
 Ah me, of Parents most forlorn!
 Prepare, O Athamas, to prove
 The sharpest Pangs that e'er were borne:
 Prepare with me our common Loss to mourn.

Athamas Can Fate, or Semele invent
 Another, yet another Punishment?

Cadmus Wing'd with our Fears, and pious Haste,
 From Juno's Fane we fled;
 Scarce we the brazen Gates had pass'd,
 When Semele around her Head
 With azure flames was grac'd,
 Whose Lambent Glories in her Tresses play'd.
 While this we saw with dread Surprise,
 Swifter than Lightning downwards tending
 An Eagle stoop'd, of mighty Size,

Athamas
Ino On Purple Wings descending;
 Like Gold his Beak, like Stars shone forth his Eyes,
 His Silver plummy Breast with Snow contending;
 Sudden he snatch'd the trembling Maid,
 And soaring from our Sight convey'd;
 Diffusing ever as he lessening flew
 Celestial Odour and Ambrosial Dew.
 O Prodigy, to me of dire Portent!
 To me, I hope, of fortunate Event.

Scene 4 Enter to them the Chief Priest, with Augurs and other Priests.

Cadmus [23] See, see, Jove's Priests and holy Augurs come;
 Speak, speak of Semele and me declare the Doom.

Chief Priest, 1st & 2nd Augurs [24] Hail, Cadmus, hail! Jove salutes the Theban King.
 Cease your Mourning,
 Joys returning,
 Songs of Mirth and Triumph sing.

First Augur [25] Endless Pleasure, endless Love
 Semele enjoys above;
 On her Bosom Jove reclining,
 Useless now his Thunder lies,
 To her Arms his Bolts resigning,
 And his Lightning to her Eyes.
 Endless Pleasure, endless Love
 Semele enjoys above.

Chief Priest [26] Haste, haste, to Sacrifice prepare,
 Once to the Thunderer, once to the Fair:
 Jove and Semele implore:
 Jove and Semele like Honours share,
 Whom Gods admire, let Men adore;
 Haste, haste, to Sacrifice prepare.



Jupiter and Semele, by François Perrier
Oil on canvas, 160cm x 96cm, 17th century

Priests & Augurs [27] Cease your Mourning,
Joys returning,
Songs of Mirth and Triumph sing.

[Exeunt omnes.

ACT II

Symphony [28]

Scene 1 The scene is a pleasant Country, the Prospect is terminated by a Beautiful Mountain adorn'd with Woods and Water-falls. Juno and Iris descend in different Machines. Juno in a Chariot drawn by Peacocks; Iris on a Rainbow; they alight and meet.

Juno [29] Iris, impatient of thy Stay,
From Samos have I wing'd my Way,
To meet thy slow Return;
Thou know'st what Cares infest
My anxious Breast,
And how with Rage and Jealousie I burn;
Then why this long Delay?

Iris With all his Speed not yet the Sun
Thro' half his Race has run,
Since I to execute thy dread Command
Have thrice encompass'd Seas and Land.
Juno Say, where is Semele's Abode?

'Till that I know,
Tho' thou had'st on Lightning rode,
Still thou tedious art and slow.
Iris Look where Citheron proudly stands,
Boeotia parting from Cecropian Lands.
High on the Summit of that Hill,

- Beyond the Reach of Mortal Eyes,
By Jove's Command, and Vulcan's Skill,
Behold a new-erected Palace rise.
- [30] There from mortal Cares retiring,
She resides in sweet Retreat;
On her Pleasure, Jove requiring,
All the Loves and Graces wait.
- [31] Thither Flora the Fair
With her Train must repair,
Her amorous Zephyr attending,
All her Sweets she must bring
To continue the Spring,
Which never must know there an Ending.
Bright Aurora, 'tis said,
From her old Lover's Bed
No more the grey Orient adorning,
For the future must rise
From fair Semele's Eyes,
And wait 'till she wakes for the Morning.
- [32] No more – I'll hear no more.
How long must I endure? –
How long, with Indignation burning,
From impious Mortals
Bear this Insolence!
Awake Saturnia from thy Lethargy;
Seize, destroy the curst Adulteress.
Scale proud Citheron's Top;
Snatch her, tear her in thy Fury,
And down, down to the Flood of Acheron
Let her fall, let her fall, fall, fall:
Rolling down the Depths of Night,
Never more to behold the Light.

*Iris**Juno*

[They ascend.]

- If I am own'd above,
Sister and Wife to Jove;
(Sister at least I sure may claim,
Tho' Wife be a neglected Name,)
If I th'imperial Sceptre sway – I swear
By Hell –
Tremble thou Universe this Oath to hear,
Not one of curst Agenor's Race I'll spare.
I swear by Hell –
Tremble thou Universe this oath to hear,
Not one of curst Agenor's Race I'll spare,
no not one.
- [33] Hear, mighty Queen, while I recount
What Obstacles you must surmount;
With Adamant the Gates are barr'd,
Whose Entrance two fierce Dragons guard:
At each approach they lash their forky Stings,
And clap their brazen Wings:
And as their scaly Horrors rise
They all at once disclose
A thousand fiery Eyes,
Which never know Repose.
Hence, Iris, hence away,
Far from the Realms of Day;
O'er Scythian Hills to the Meotian Lake
A speedy Flight we'll take:
There, Somnus I'll compel
His downy Bed to leave and silent Cell:
With Noise and Light I will his Peace molest,
Nor shall he sink again to pleasing Rest,
'Till to my vow'd Revenge he grants Supplies,
And seals with Sleep the wakeful Dragons Eyes.
- [34]

Scene 2 The Scene changes to an Apartment in the Palace of Semele; she is sleeping; Loves and Zephyrs waiting.

Cupid [35] See, after the Toils of an amorous Fight,
Where weary and pleas'd, still panting she lies;
While yet in her Mind she repeats the Delight;
How sweet is the Slumber that steals on her Eyes!
[36] Come Zephyrs, come, while Cupid sings,
Fan her with your silky Wings;
New Desire
I'll inspire,
And revive the dying Flames;
Dance around her
While I wound her,
And with Pleasure fill her Dreams.

Aire, A Dance of Zephyrs [37]
[after which Semele awakes, and rises.

Semele [38] O Sleep, why dost thou leave me?
Why thy visionary Joys remove?
O Sleep, again deceive me;
To my Arms restore my wandering Love.

Scene 3 Two Loves lead in Jupiter; while he meets and embraces Semele, Cupid sings.

Cupid [39] Sleep forsaking,
Seize him waking;
Love has sought him,
Back has brought him;
Mighty Jove tho' he be,
And tho' Love cannot see,
Yet by feeling about,

Semele [40] He has found him out,
And has caught him.
Let me not another Moment
Bear the Pangs of Absence,
Since you have form'd my Soul for Loving,
No more afflict me
With Doubts and Fears, and cruel Jealousie.
Jupiter [41] Lay your Doubts and Fears aside,
And for Joys alone provide;
Tho' this Human Form I wear,
Think not I Man's Falsehood bear.
Lay your Doubts and Fears aside,
And for Joys alone provide.
You are Mortal, and require
Time to rest and to respire.
[42] Nor was I absent,
Tho' a while withdrawn,
To take Petitions
From the needy World.
While Love was with thee
I was present;
Love and I are one.
Semele [43] If cheerful Hopes
And chilling Fears,
Alternate Smiles,
Alternate Tears,
Eager Panting,
Fond Desiring,
With Grief now fainting,
Now with Bliss expiring;
If this be Love, not you alone,
But Love and I are one.

<i>Both</i>	[44]	If this be Love, not you alone, But Love and I are one.			Most complying When denying, To be follow'd, only flying.
<i>Semele</i> <i>Jupiter</i>	[45]	Ah me! Why sighs my Semele? What gentle Sorrow Swells thy soft Bosom? Why tremble those fair Eyes With interrupted Light? Where hov'ring for a Vent, Amidst their humid Fires, Some new-form'd Wish appears. Speak, and obtain.	<i>Jupiter</i>	[47]	Thy Sex of Jove's the Masterpiece, Thou, of thy Sex, art most excellent. Frailty in thee is Ornament, In thee Perfection, Giv'n to agitate the Mind And keep awake Men's Passions; To banish Indolence, And dull Repose, The Foes of Transport And of Pleasure.
<i>Semele</i>		At my own Happiness I sigh and tremble; Mortals whom Gods affect Have narrow Limits set to Life, And cannot long be bless'd. Or if they could – A God may prove inconstant. Beware of Jealousie: Had Juno not been jealous, I ne'er had left Olympus, Nor wander'd in my Love.	<i>Semele</i>		Still I am Mortal, Still a Woman; And ever when you leave me, Though compass'd round with Deities, Of Loves and Graces, A Fear invades me, And conscious of a Nature Far inferior, I seek for Solitude, And shun Society.
<i>Jupiter</i>		With my Frailty don't upbraid me, I am Woman as you made me. Causeless doubting or despairing, Rashly trusting, idly fearing. If obtaining Still complaining, If consenting Still repenting,	<i>Jupiter [apart]</i>		Too well I read her Meaning, But must not understand her. Aiming at Immortality With dangerous Ambition, She would dethrone Saturnia, And reigning in my Heart Would reign in Heaven.

Semele

Lest she too much explain,
I must with Speed amuse her;
It gives the Lover double Pain
Who hears his Nymph complain,
And hearing must refuse her.
Why do you cease to gaze upon me?
Why musing turn away?
Some other Object
Seems more pleasing.

Jupiter

[48] Thy needless Fears remove,
My fairest, latest, only Love.

[49] By my Command,
Now at this Instant,
Two winged Zephyrs
From her downy Bed
Thy much-lov'd I no bear;
And both together
Waft her hither
Thro' the balmy Air.

Semele

Shall I my Sister see!
The dear Companion
Of my tender Years.

Jupiter

See, she appears,
But sees not me,
For I am visible
Alone to thee.
While I retire, haste and meet her,
And with Welcomes greet her
While all this Scene shall to Arcadia turn,
The Seat of happy Nymphs and Swains.
There without the Rage of Jealousie they burn,
And taste the Sweets of Love without its Pains.



The infant Bacchus torn from Semele's womb to be sewn into Jupiter's thigh, by Ludovico Dolce c.1558

Scene 4 Jupiter retires. Semele and Ino meet and embrace. The Scene is totally changed, and shews an open Country. Several Shepherds and Shepherdesses enter. Semele and Ino, having entertain'd each other in dumb Shew, sit and observe the Rural Sports, which end the Second Act.

Symphony [50]

Act III

Symphony [CD2, Track 1]

Scene 1 The Scene is the Cave of Sleep, the God of Sleep lying on his Bed. A soft Symphony is heard, then the Musick changes to a different Movement.

Enter Juno and Iris.

Juno [2] Somnus, awake,
Raise thy reclining Head;
Iris Thyself forsake,
And lift up thy heavy Lids of Lead.
Somnus [waking] [3] Leave me, loathsome Light;
Receive me, silent Night.
Lethe, why does thy lingring Current cease?
O murmur, murmur me again to Peace.

[Sinks down again.

Iris [4] Dull God, can'st thou attend the Waters fall,
And not hear Saturnia call!
Juno Peace, Iris, peace, I know how to charm him,
Juno, Iris Only Love on Sleep has Pow'r;
O'er Gods and Men
Tho' Somnus reign,
Love alternate has his Hour.
Pasithea's Name alone can warm him.

Juno, Iris [5] Only Love on Sleep has Pow'r;
O'er Gods and Men
Tho' Somnus reign,
Love alternate has his Hour.
Juno [6] Somnus, arise,
Disclose thy tender Eyes;
For Pasithea's Sight
Endure the Light:
Somnus, arise.
Somnus [rising] [7] More sweet is that Name
Than a soft purling Stream;
With Pleasure Repose I'll forsake,
If you'll grant me but her to soothe me awake.
Juno [8] My Will obey,
She shall be thine.
Thou with thy softer Pow'rs
First Jove shalt captivate,
To Morpheus then give Order,
Thy various Minister,
That with a Dream in Shape of Semele,
But far more beautiful,
And more alluring,
He may invade the sleeping Deity;
And more to agitate
His kindling Fire,
Still let the Phantom seem
To fly before him,
That he may wake impetuous,
Furious in Desire,
Unable to refuse whatever Boon
Her Coyness shall require.

Somnus
Juno

I tremble to comply.
 To me thy leaden Rod resign,
 To charm the Centinels
 On Mount Citheron;
 Then cast a Sleep on mortal Ino:
 That I may seem her Form to wear,
 When I to Semele appear.
 Obey my Will, thy Rod resign,
 And Pasithea shall be thine.
Somnus
 All I must grant, for all is due
 To Pasithea, Love and you.
Juno & Somnus [9] Away let us haste,
 Let neither have rest,
 'Till the sweetest of Pleasures we prove;
 'Till of Vengeance possess'd
 I doubly am bless'd / Thou doubly art bless'd,
 And thou art / I am made happy in Love.

[Exeunt Juno and Iris.

Somnus retires within his Cave, the Scene changes to Semele's Apartment.

Scene 2 Semele alone.

Semele [10] I Love and am lov'd, yet more I desire;
 Ah, how foolish a Thing is Fruition!
 As one Passion cools, some other takes Fire,
 And I'm still in a longing Condition.
 Whate'er I possess
 Soon seems an Excess,
 For something untry'd I petition;
 Tho' daily I prove
 The Pleasures of Love,
 I die for the Joys of Ambition.

Scene 3 Enter Juno as Ino, with a Mirrour in her Hand.

Juno [apart] [11] Thus shaped like Ino,
 With Ease I shall deceive her,
 And in this Mirrour she shall see
 Herself as much transform'd as me.
[To Semele]
 Do I some Goddess see!
 Or is it Semele?
Semele
 Dear Sister speak,
 Whence this Astonishment?
Juno
 Your Charms improving
 To Divine Perfection,
 Shew you were late admitted
 Amongst Celestial Beauties.
 Has Jove consented?
 And are you made Immortal?
Semele
 Ah no, I still am Mortal,
 Nor am I sensible
 Of any Change or new Perfection.
Juno [giving her the Glass] [12] Behold in this Mirrour,
 Whence comes my Surprise;
 Such Lustre and Terror
 Unite in your Eyes,
 That mine cannot fix on a Radiance so bright;
 'Tis unsafe for the Sense, and too slipp'ry for Sight.
Semele [looking in the Glass] [13] O Ecstasy of Happiness!
 Celestial Graces
 I discover in each Feature!
 Myself I shall adore,
 If I persist in gazing;
 No Object sure before
 Was ever half so pleasing.
 How did that Look become me!

[Offering the Glass
[Withdraws her hand again
 [14] Ah charming all o'er!
[Offering the Glass, withdraws her Hand again.
 Here – hold, I'll have one Look more,
 Though that Look I were sure would undo me.

Juno [taking the Glass from her [15] Be wise as you are beautiful,
 Nor lose this Opportunity.
 When Jove appears,
 All ardent with Desire,
 Refuse his proffer'd Flame
 'Till you obtain a Boon without a Name.

Semele
Juno [16] Can that avail me?
 Unknowing your Intent,
 And eager for possessing,
 He unawares will grant
 The nameless Blessing,
 But bind him by the Stygian Lake,
 Lest Lover-like his Word he break.

Semele [17] But how shall I attain
 To Immortality?
Juno Conjure him by his Oath
 Not to approach your Bed
 In Likeness of a Mortal,
 But like himself, the mighty Thunderer ,
 In Pomp of Majesty,
 And heavenly Attire;
 As when he proud Saturnia charms,
 And with ineffable Delights
 Fills her encircling Arms,
 And pays the Nuptial Rites.
 By this Conjunction

With entire Divinity
 You shall partake of heav'nly Essence,
 And thenceforth leave this Mortal State
 To reign above,
 Ador'd by Jove,
 In spite of jealous Juno's Hate.

Semele [Embracing Juno [18] Thus let my Thanks be paid,
 Thus let my Arms embrace thee;
 And when I'm Goddess made,
 With Charms like mine I'll grace thee.

Juno [19] Rich Odours fill the fragrant air
 And Jove's Approach declare.
 I must retire –
Semele
Juno [apart] Adieu – your Counsel I'll pursue.
 And sure Destruction will ensue.
 Vain wretched Fool – *[to her]* Adieu. [Exit.]

Scene 4 Jupiter enters, offers to embrace Semele; she looks kindly on him, but retires a little from him.

Jupiter [20] Come to my Arms, my lovely Fair,
 Soothe my uneasie Care:
 In my Dream late I woo'd thee,
 And in vain I pursu'd thee,
 For you fled from my Pray'r,
 And bid me despair.
 Come to my Arms, my lovely Fair,
 Soothe my uneasie Care.

Semele [21] Tho' 'tis easie to please you,
 And hard to deny;
 Tho' Possessing's a Blessing
 For which I could die,
 I dare not, I cannot comply.



Jupiter and Semele, by Nicolas Bertin c.1524

- Jupiter* [22] When I languish with Anguish,
And tenderly sigh,
Can you leave me, deceive me,
And scornfully fly?
Ah fear not. You must not deny.
- Semele & Jupiter* [23] I dare not, I must not comply.
Ah fear not; you must not deny.
- Jupiter* [24] Oh... Semele,
Why art thou thus insensible?
Were I a Mortal,
Thy barbarous disdain
Would surely end me,
And Death at my complaining
In Pity would befriend me.
- Semele* [25] I ever am granting,
You always complain;
I always am wanting,
Yet never obtain.
- Jupiter* [26] Speak, speak your Desire,
I'm all over Fire.
Say what you require,
I'll grant it – now let us retire.
- Semele* [27] Swear by the Stygian Lake.
Jupiter By that tremendous Flood I swear,
Ye Stygian Waters hear,
And thou Olympus shake,
In witness to the Oath I take.
- [Thunder at a distance, and underneath.
- Semele* You'll grant what I require?
Jupiter I'll grant what you require.

Semele [28] Then cast off this human Shape which you wear,
 And Jove since you are, like Jove too appear;
 When next you desire I should charm ye,
 As when Juno you bless,
 So you me must caress,
 And with all your Omnipotence arm ye.

Jupiter [29] Ah! take heed what you press,
 For beyond all Redress,
 Should I grant what you wish, I shall harm ye.

Semele [30] I'll be pleas'd with no less,
 Than my Wish in Excess;
 Let the Oath you have taken allarm ye:
 Haste, haste, and prepare,
 For I'll know what you are;
 So with all your Omnipotence arm ye.

Scene 5 She withdraws, Jupiter remains pensive and dejected.

Jupiter [31] Ah! whither is she gone! unhappy Fair!
 Why did she wish? – Why did I rashly swear?
 'Tis past, 'tis past Recall,
 She must a Victim fall.
 Anon, when I appear
 The mighty Thunderer,
 Arm'd with inevitable Fire,
 She must needs instantly expire.
 'Tis past, 'tis past Recall,
 She must a Victim fall.
 My softest Lightning yet I'll try,
 And mildest melting Bolt apply:
 In vain – for she was fram'd to prove
 None but the lambent Flames of Love.
 'Tis past, 'tis past Recall,
 She must a Victim fall.

Scene 6 Juno appears in her Chariot ascending.

Juno [32] Above measure
 Is the Pleasure
 Which my Revenge supplies.
 Love's a Bubble
 Gain'd with Trouble,
 And in possessing dies.
 With what Joy shall I mount to my Heav'n again,
 At once from my Rival and Jealousie freed!
 The Sweets of Revenge make it worthwhile to reign,
 And Heav'n will hereafter be Heav'n indeed. [She ascends.]

Scene 7 The Scene opening discovers Semele lying under a Canopy, leaning pensively. While a mournful Symphony is playing she looks up and sees Jupiter descending in a black Cloud; the Motion of the Cloud is slow. Flashes of Lightning issue from either Side and Thunder is heard grumbling in the Air.

Symphony [33]

Semele [34] Ah me! too late I now repent
 My Pride and impious Vanity.
 He comes! far off his Lightnings scorch me.
 – I feel my Life consuming:
 I burn, I burn – I faint – for Pity I implore –
 O help, O help – I can no more.

[Dies.]

Symphony [35]

[As the Cloud which contains Jupiter is arrived just over the Canopy of Semele, a sudden and great Flash of Lightning breaks forth, and a Clap of loud Thunder is heard; when at one instant Semele with the Palace and the whole present Scene disappears, and Jupiter re-ascends swiftly. The Scene totally changed represents a pleasant Country, Mount Citheron closing the Prospect.

Scene 8 Enter Cadmus, Athamas and Ino.

Ino [36] Of my ill-boding Dream
Behold the dire Event.
Cadmus, Athamas
Ino O Terror and Astonishment.
How I was hence remov'd,
Or hither how return'd, I know not:
So long a Trance with-held me,
But Hermes in a Vision told me
(As I have now related)
The Fate of Semele,
And added, as from me he fled,
That Jove ordained I Athamas should wed.
Cadmus Be Jove in ev'ry thing obey'd.

[Joyns their Hands.

Athamas Unworthy of your Charms, myself I yield;
Be Jove's Commands and yours fulfill'd.
Cadmus See from above the bellying Clouds descend,
And big with some new Wonder this Way tend.

Scene 9 A bright Cloud descends and rests on Mount Citheron, which opening, discovers Apollo seated in it as the God of Prophecy.

Apollo [37] Apollo comes to relieve your Care,
And future Happiness declare.
[38] From Tyrannous Love all your Sorrows proceed,
From Tyrannous Love you shall quickly be freed.
From Semele's Ashes a Phoenix shall rise,
The Joy of this Earth, and Delight of the Skies:
A God he shall prove
More mighty than Love,
And a sovereign Juice shall invent,
Which Antidote pure
The sick Lover shall cure,
And Sighing and Sorrow for ever prevent.
[39] Then Mortals be merry, and scorn the blind Boy;
Your Hearts from his Arrows strong Wine shall defend:
Each Day and each Night you shall revel in Joy,
For when Bacchus is born, Love's Reign's at an end.

Chorus [40] Then Mortals be merry, and scorn the blind Boy;
Your Hearts from his Arrows strong Wine shall defend:
Each Day and each Night you shall revel in Joy,
For when Bacchus is born, Love's Reign's at an end.

[Dance of Satyrs.
[Exeunt omnes.
FINIS

BIOGRAPHIES

PERFORMERS



Julian Perkins – director & harpsichord

Described as ‘exuberantly stylish’ by the *Sunday Times*, Julian Perkins enjoys a demanding career as a conductor and keyboard player. He loves bringing his many experiences as a leading performer on period instruments to his work with singers, period instrument ensembles and modern orchestras, and is Artistic Director of Cambridge Handel Opera and Founder Director of Sounds Baroque.

Julian Perkins has performed at the Salzburg Festival, Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms. He has gained a wealth of experience performing with many prominent period instrument ensembles and modern orchestras including concerto appearances with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Orchestra of The Sixteen and Florilegium – and fondly remembers performing in the series of Handel operas with the Academy of Ancient Music directed by the late Christopher Hogwood. In addition to appearing as solo harpsichordist for productions at the Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera and Northern Ireland Opera, he has featured on the BBC *Early Music Show* and played at venues such as London’s Wigmore Hall, New York’s Lincoln Center and Sydney Opera House. An avid recitalist, Julian has broken new ground at over a dozen international festivals in giving solo concerts on the clavichord, with programmes that have included complete performances of J. S. Bach’s two books of *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*. Trips to the US have included recitals for the Mozart Society of America and the Boston Clavichord Society. His various recordings have been described as ‘monumental’ (*American Record Guide*), ‘a virtuoso showcase’ (*The Guardian*) and ‘exemplary’ (*MusicWeb International*).

With Sounds Baroque, Julian has directed numerous performances with actors and singers including Simon Callow, Peter Capaldi, Rebecca Evans, Dame Emma Kirkby, Mark Padmore, Christopher Purves and Timothy West. He has conducted twenty Baroque projects with Southbank Sinfonia and opera productions for organisations including the Buxton International Festival, Cambridge Handel Opera, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Kings Place, Netherlands Opera Academy, New Chamber Opera,

New Kent Opera and Snape Maltings. In addition to Eccles’ *Semele*, the 2020-21 season saw him release the world première recording of Stephen Dodgson’s opera *Margaret Catchpole* for Naxos.

Julian read music at King’s College, Cambridge, before pursuing advanced studies at the Schola Cantorum, Basle and the Royal Academy of Music, London. Research is an essential element in Julian’s performing career, and he has written articles published by Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press and Rhinegold Publishing. Historically informed musicianship inspires his work as a visiting coach at the Royal Opera House, and masterclasses that he gives for the National Opera Studio, music colleges and universities both in the UK and abroad. www.julianperkins.com



Bojan Čičić – leader

Known for his intelligent and virtuosic playing on both the violin and viola d’amore, Bojan Čičić specialises in repertoire ranging from the late 16th century to the violin concertos of Mendelssohn and Beethoven. In 2018 he was appointed the leader of the Academy of Ancient Music. He has appeared as a soloist with the Kioi Hall Chamber Orchestra Tokyo, Instruments of Time and Truth, and the Budapest Festival Orchestra, and appears as a leader with the European Union Baroque orchestra. Bojan formed his own group, the Illyria Consort, to explore rare repertoire of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Bojan has featured as leader on numerous recordings with ensembles Florilegium, La Nuova Musica, and Arcangelo. In 2016, Bojan was appointed Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music. He is passionate about training the next generation of instrumentalists in historically informed playing styles. www.bojancicic.com

Reiko Ichise – continuo *bass viol*

Reiko was born in Tokyo and began her musical training as a pianist. She read musicology at the Kunitachi College of Music where she started playing the viola da gamba, having lessons with Yukimi Kanbe and Tetsuya Nakano.

In 1991 she came to Britain to study gamba with Richard Boothby, winning the foundation scholarship at the Royal College of Music. Whilst there, she won the



concerto prize and completed her postgraduate study with distinction. Since leaving the RCM, she has established herself as one of the leading gamba players in the UK, appearing in venues including the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall and the Royal Opera House as a chamber musician, orchestral player and soloist. She has worked with many leading conductors and orchestras including Sir John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists, Sir David Willcocks and the English Chamber Orchestra, Paul McCreech and the Gabrieli Consort, Kurt Masur and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and Richard Egarr and the Academy of Ancient Music, for whom she is Principal Viola da Gamba.



Jonathan Rees – continuo *bass violin*

Jonathan Rees has performed across the globe as cellist and gamba player with the UK's leading historical performance and chamber ensembles. He has performed as continuo / principal cellist and gamba soloist with the Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Dunedin Consort, The Sixteen, ENO, Britten Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata, La Nuova Musica and Solomon's Knot.

He has performed with the viol consorts Fretwork and Phantasm, and is a founder member of Neue Vialles. As a chamber musician and soloist he has performed at the Wigmore Hall, London Baroque Festival, at the York, Lammermuir, Hastings and Bristol Early Music Festivals amongst others, and venues across Europe. He has given historical performance classes at the Royal Academy of Music, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Birmingham Conservatoire, Cambridge University and the Royal Northern College of Music. He has been employed by the University of Cambridge as a researcher into 17th-century French street song, and is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. Outside the world of music he spends a lot of his time making compost and growing plants for the sustenance of humans, bees, butterflies and even the odd lucky greenfly. www.jonathanreescello.co.uk

Héloïse Bernard – *Iris soprano*

After graduating with a Masters in French Literature in Paris, Héloïse began her singing studies with Alexandra Papadjakou. She recently graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the tutelage of Wilma MacDougall.



Throughout her studies, she has benefitted from the guidance of Roberta Alexander, Carolyn Watkinson, Jan Waterfield and Patricia MacMahon. On stage she has sung Susanna in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Opera de Castelló; Amore in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in London with the company OrQueta, as well as Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in Tallinn, Estonia. www.heloisebernard.com



Graeme Broadbent – Chief Priest *bass*

Graeme Broadbent studied at the Royal College of Music with Lyndon Van der Pump and at the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire, Moscow, with Yevgeny Nesterenko. He has sung more than forty roles for The Royal Opera, most recently Odin in the world premiere of Higgins' *The Monstrous Child*, also Satyr and Pluto (Rossi's *Orpheus* at Shakespeare's Globe), King Ariadenus (*L'Ormindo*), King Marke, Colline, Timur and Doctor Grenvil. Other appearances include Lieutenant

Ratcliffe in *Billy Budd* (Bolshoi Opera); John Claggart (Mikhailovsky Theatre); Doctor Grenvil and Hans Foltz (Glyndebourne Festival); Prince Gremin and Doctor Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Scottish Opera); John Claggart, Padre Guardiano, and the Commendatore (Genoa); Old Servant in *The Demon* (Chelsea Opera Group); Ramfis, the Commendatore, Prince Gremin and Sparafucile (Opera Holland Park); Swallow in *Peter Grimes* (Rome and Beijing) and *Where the Wild Things Are* (Los Angeles). Concert appearances include Verdi's *Requiem* (Royal Albert Hall), Shostakovich's Symphony 14 (Queen Elizabeth Hall) and Mahler's 8th Symphony (Royal Festival Hall).

Jonathan Brown – Cadmus *baritone*

Jonathan Brown was born and raised in Toronto. He studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto), the University of Western Ontario and the University of Cambridge, as well as the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh with Sir Thomas Allen and Anthony Rolfe Johnson. Operatic roles include Marcello (*La Bohème*, Royal Albert Hall), Belcore (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Count Almaviva, Yamadori (*Madam Butterfly*), Giove (*La Calisto*), Orestes (*Giasone*), Garibaldo (*Rodelinda*), Ariodate (*Xerxes*), Silvio (*I Pagliacci*), Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), Shepherd (*Venus and Adonis*) and



Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*). He performed the role of Trojan (*Idomeneo*) for Sir Simon Rattle with the Berlin Philharmonic in the Salzburg Easter Festival. He has performed Orfeo (*Pastore*) at Lille Opera, Le Chatélet, Paris and Opéra du Rhin with Emmanuelle Haïm.

He made his debut with Sir John Eliot Gardiner in Holland (Naarden) as the baritone soloist in a concert of Bach cantatas and thereafter was a regular soloist with performances in Zurich, Brussels and Paris. These performances formed part of the Bach Cantata pilgrimage and subsequent CD release on the Soli Deo Gloria label.

He has worked regularly with Philippe Herreweghe, touring South America (Christus in Bach's *St John Passion*), and he features in Purcell's *Ode to St Cecilia* for Harmonia Mundi. He was a soloist on the Harmonia Mundi recordings of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Blow's *Venus and Adonis* under the direction of René Jacobs. He has recorded the baritone solos in Fauré's *Requiem* with the London Festival Orchestra for BMG and appears in the role of the Forester in Sullivan's *The Golden Legend* for Hyperion.

Richard Burkhard – Jupiter baritone

Anglo/Swiss baritone Richard Burkhard started his singing career as a boy chorister at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. He later graduated with Distinction from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, before winning a bursary to study at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena with legendary tenor Carlo Bergonzi. He is a previous winner of the Decca Prize at the Kathleen Ferrier Vocal Awards at the Wigmore Hall, and winner of the Royal Overseas League Voice Competition.



Recent operatic roles include Count Gil (*Il Segreto di Susanna*) for Opera Holland Park, the title role in *Gianni Schicchi* for Opera North, a Levite (*Solomon*) at the Royal Opera House, Papageno (*The Magic Flute*) for Scottish Opera and Ford (*Falstaff*) for Garsington Opera. Other roles include Harry Easter (*Street Scene*) for Teatro Real in Madrid, Marcello (*La Bohème*) for English National Opera, Tiridate (*Radamisto*) for Northern Ireland Opera, Tolstoy (*Sevastopol*) for ROH at the Linbury Studio, Bosola (*Duchess of Malfi*) for Punchdrunk/ENO, Sir Despard Murgatroyd (*Ruddigore*) for Opera North and Garibaldo (*Rodelinda*) for ENO and the Bolshoi in Moscow, for which he was nominated for a

prestigious Golden Mask Award. He also sang the role of Oliver Simons (*The Shops*, Rushton) at the Bregenz Festival, Marullo (*Rigoletto*) for Opéra de Nantes and Papageno for New Zealand Opera. In concert he has recently ventured into the Wagner repertoire, singing roles such as Amfortas (*Parsifal*) for Saffron Opera Group and Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*) for Northern Wagner Society. Other concert highlights include the Sorceress (*Dido and Aeneas*) with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Joabel (*Davide et Jonathas*, Charpentier) in New York, Barcelona and London with Emmanuelle Haïm, Bello (*Fanciulla del West*) with the Concertgebouw and the bass solos in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the OAE under Sir Roger Norrington. Concert appearances with other top UK orchestras have taken him to venues such as the Royal Albert Hall, Bridgewater Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall. In recital Richard has recently sung at St Martin-in-the-Fields, St John's Smith Square, deSingel in Antwerp and at the Ruhr Festival in Germany as a guest of pianist Irwin Gage.

Rory Carver – Second Priest; First Augur tenor

Tenor Rory Carver made his debut at the Brighton Early Music Festival in the title role of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, and returns to sing Ovid and Apollo in da Gagliano's *La Dafne* in 2020. Rory is a Lauréat of the 9th edition of Le Jardin des Voix, the young artist programme of Les Arts Florissants, performing the role of Il Podestà in Mozart's *La finta giardiniera*. Rory was a competitor at the 2019 Wigmore Hall/Independent Opera International Song Competition, a 2019 Garsington Opera Alvarez Young Artist and a 2018 Oxford Lieder Young Artist Platform finalist.



Rory studied at the Royal College of Music as a Douglas and Hilda Simmonds scholar. His roles for the RCM International Opera School included Monsieur Lacouf in Poulenc's *Les mamelles de Tirésias* and Damone in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (1732 version), as well as a performance of Warlock's *The Curlew* in the RCM's inaugural Chamber Music week. www.rorycarver.com

Helen Charlston – Juno mezzo-soprano

Acclaimed for her musical interpretation, presence and 'warmly distinctive tone' (*The Telegraph*), Helen Charlston is quickly establishing herself as a key performer in the next generation of British

singers. She won first prize in the 2018 Handel Singing Competition, was a Rising Star of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 2017–2019 and was a 2018 City Music Foundation Artist. Helen began singing as a chorister and head chorister of the St Albans Abbey Girls Choir. She then studied music at Trinity College, Cambridge where she held a choral scholarship for four years.

Concert highlights include recitals at Barbican Sound Unbound 2019, York Early Music Festival, London Handel Festival, Händel-festspiele Halle, Korčula Baroque Festival and Leicester International Music Festival. In the 2019/20 season, Helen made debuts with the Academy of Ancient Music (*Dusseck Messe Solemnelle*), Queensland Symphony Orchestra (Handel *Messiah*), Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra (Bach *Mass in B minor*) and the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra (Bach *St Matthew Passion*). She joined Fretwork for recitals at Wigmore Hall and York Early Music Christmas Festival, and continues her solo song commissioning project with lutenist Toby Carr.

Operatic roles include Messaggera and Proserpina (Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*), First Witch (*Dido and Aeneas*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Florence Pike (*Albert Herring*), Ino (Handel *Semele*), Sara (*Tobias and the Angel*) and Dinah (*Trouble in Tahiti*). Helen created the role of Dido in *Dido is Dead*, by Rhiannon Randle, and premiered the role of Anna in *Blue Electric* (Tom Smail). Often heard on BBC Radio 3 in live concert relays, Helen features on recordings of Bach *Mass in B minor* (Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment / Trinity College Choir), and Bach *Actus Tragicus* and *Himmelskönig, sei willkommen* (Amici Voices / Amici Baroque Players), both on Hyperion. Her 'mesmerising delivery' on the Amici Voices CD was singled out by *Gramophone Magazine* as the highlight of the recording.

www.helencharlston.com



Anna Dennis – Semele *soprano*

Anna studied at the Royal Academy of Music. Notable concert performances have included Britten's *War Requiem* at the Berlin Philharmonie, Russian operatic arias with Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco, Thomas Adès' *Life Story* accompanied by the composer at the Lincoln Center's White Light Festival in New York, Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Orquestra Gulbenkian in Lisbon, Bach's *Christmas*

Oratorio with the Australian Chamber Orchestra in Sydney Opera House and a trilogy of Monteverdi operas on a world tour with Sir John Eliot Gardiner. Operatic performances include Handel's *Siroe*, *Imeneo* and *Rodrigo* at the Göttingen Handel Festspiel with Laurence Cummings, Gluck's *Paride ed Elena* and *Iphigenie en Tauride* at the Nuremberg Gluck Festspiel, Damon Albarn's *Dr Dee* at English National Opera, Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* at Opera North, Mozart's *Idomeneo* at Birmingham Opera Company and many premieres of newly-composed stage works at the Royal Opera, Aldeburgh Festival, Bregenz Festspiel and elsewhere.

Christopher Foster – Somnus *bass*

Educated at Newcastle University and the Britten-Pears School, Christopher was a winner of the N.F.M.S. Young Concert Artists' Award, a finalist in the Richard Tauber Competition and one of the inaugural Samling Scholars, studying with Sir Thomas Allen.



An experienced concert performer throughout the UK and Europe with orchestras such as the RPO and BBC SO and conductors such as Marc Minkowski, Pierre Boulez and Sir Andrew Davis, highlights have included: Paweł Łukaszewski's *Requiem* (world premiere, Presteigne Festival), Mozart's *Requiem* (Royal Festival Hall), Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Durham Cathedral, the world premiere of Nicholas Smith's *Love, Friendship and Longing* (in Mandarin) at Cadogan Hall and Handel's *Messiah* (Concert Hall, Forbidden City, Beijing). As a recitalist, he has been a particular champion of English song, appearing in diverse venues and festivals such as the Purcell Room, Banqueting House, Gregynog, Presteigne, Britannia in Bamberg in Germany and three appearances for the English Music Festival.

Operatic appearances have included: Arkel, Debussy (arr. Constant), *Impressions de Pelléas*; Mozart's Sarastro and Leporello; *Kawabata*, Philip Glass, *Hotel of Dreams* (UK premiere); Traveller, Britten, *Curlew River*; Arthur, Maxwell Davies, *The Lighthouse*; Friar Laurence, Gounod, *Romeo and Juliet*; Raimondo, Donizetti, *Lucia di Lammermoor*; performances in Puccini operas: Sacristan *Tosca*; Yamadori *Madama Butterfly*; Benoit, Alcindoro, and Colline, *La Bohème* and roles in two Edward Lambert operas at the Tête à Tête Festival.

Christopher studied with Gary Coward and Anna Sims and when not singing, he enjoys photography, fine wine, the cinema and cycling at the gym, though not necessarily in that order.

www.christopher-foster.com

Bethany Horak-Hallett – Cupid *mezzo-soprano*

An OAE Rising Star for their 2019-2021 seasons, Bethany made her Royal Festival Hall, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Kings Place debuts as part of the scheme.

Acknowledgements include first prize in the 2019 Normandy International Music Competition Concours Corneille in association with Le Poème Harmonique. She made her Glyndebourne debut as Kitchen Boy in Dvořák's *Rusalka*, also covering the role of Siren in Handel's *Rinaldo*. She subsequently made her Berlin Philharmonie debut as Kitchen Boy with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin in their concert performance of *Rusalka*, conducted by Robin Ticciati. She returned to the Brighton Early Music Festival to perform the roles of Juno and Ino in Handel's *Semele*, and will tour extensively with Collegium Vocale Gent as part of their Brahms *Schicksalslied* project.

2018 highlights included her role debut as Cherubino in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Merry Opera), joining Iford Arts as a Young Artist for Bernstein's *Candide*, and the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus for their 2018 and 2019 seasons. Alongside pianist Paolo Rinaldo, she won the prestigious Elisabeth Schumann Lieder Competition, and also featured as a Brighton Early Music Festival Young Artist, playing Cupid in Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and Venere in Monteverdi's *Il ballo delle ingrate*.

www.bethanyhorakhallett.com



Jolyon Loy – Apollo *baritone*

Jolyon Loy studies at the Alexander Gibson Opera School at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and is a graduate of the Verbier Festival's Atelier Lyrique, the Royal Academy of Music and Magdalen College, Oxford University, where he read French and Italian and sang with the chapel choir. Recent roles include Wächter (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) under Valery Gergiev and 1st Priest /



2nd Armed Man (*Die Zauberflöte*) at Verbier Festival, Sonora (*La Fanciulla del West*) for Wexford Festival Opera and Schaubard (*La Bohème*) for Clonter Opera. He is a Britten Pears Young Artist and has performed in masterclasses with Bryan Hymel, Thomas Hampson, Thomas Quasthoff, Dame Sarah Connolly, Dame Felicity Lott and Barbara Frittoli. www.jolyonloy.com



Aoife Miskelly – Ino *soprano*

Northern Irish soprano Aoife Miskelly is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM), where she studied with Royal Academy Opera.

For Oper Köln, Aix-en-Provence, La Monnaie, Hyogo Performing Arts Centre Japan, WNO, Opera North, Irish National Opera and the Royal Opera House Muscat, Oman, Aoife's highlights include Gretel *Hänsel und Gretel*, Vixen

Bystrouška *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Gilda *Rigoletto*, Susanna/Cherubino *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Pamina *Die Zauberflöte*, Despina *Così fan tutte*, Servilia *La clemenza di Tito*, Zerlina *Don Giovanni*, Musetta *La Bohème*, Governess *The Turn of the Screw*, Helena *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Polissena *Radamisto*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden*, Thérèse, Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, Eliza *My Fair Lady*, Claire de Loone *On The Town*, Sophie Scholl, Peter Maxwell Davies' *Kommilitonen!*, Cecily Cardew, Gerald Barry's *The Importance of being Earnest* and Harey Detlev Galnert's *Solaris*.

www.aoifemiskelly.com

James Rhoads – Third Priest; Second Augur *tenor*

Australian born tenor James Rhoads recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music where he studied with Ryland Davies and Iain Ledingham. While studying, he received 2nd prize in the Joan Chissell Schumann Lieder Prize and sang for the prestigious Academy/Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata series. In 2019 he sang Daphnis in James Harris' pastiche *The Spring* for the Salisbury International Arts Festival and Emilio in Handel's *Partenope*. Prior to commencing his studies at the Royal Academy of Music, he read Music at King's College, London, where he studied with Alex Ashworth. www.jamesrhoads.com





William Wallace – Athamas tenor

William Wallace, winner of the 2016 London Handel Singing Competition (Regina Etz Prize), graduated from the National Opera Studio and the Royal College of Music. William made his acclaimed debut at Longborough Festival Opera in 2018 as Steuermann in *Der fliegende Holländer* and in Spring 2019 performed the role of Grimoaldo in Handel's *Rodelinda* with the newly reformed Cambridge Handel Opera. He also made his debut at the Wigmore Hall performing Ahasuerus in Handel's oratorio *Esther* for the London Handel Festival, and as Jonathan in *Alexander Balus* for the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen in May 2018.

William covered Arbante for Glyndebourne Festival's production of *Hipermestra* and Ferrando for Glyndebourne's 2017 tour of *Così fan Tutte*. He also performed Tamino in *The Magic Flute* with Mid Wales Opera, The Sailor and The Spirit in Les Arts Florissants' production of *Dido and Aeneas* and the title role in Thomas Arne's *Alfred* for the Northern Opera Group. During 2016 William performed Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* for Winslow Hall Opera and for Opera Project in Bristol. At the Rye Festival in September 2016 he performed Quint in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. He sang The Schoolmaster in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with British Youth Opera, for which he received the 2015 Dame Hilda Bracket Award from the Sadler's Wells Trust.

William's extensive oratorio and concert repertory includes Mozart's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle*, Handel's *Messiah*, *Joseph and His Brethren*, *Esther*, *Theodora*, *Judas Maccabeus* and *Acis and Galatea*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and *Harmoniemesse*, Saint-Saëns' *Oratorio de Noël* and Bach's Cantatas, Magnificat and Passions (as Evangelist and tenor soloist). He has made two appearances on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* singing Handel and Britten, and also as soloist in *Messiah* in the Royal Albert Hall and at St George's Hanover Square for the London Handel Society.

www.williamwallacetenor.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS



Ivan Day is a food historian, broadcaster and writer who specialises in the recreation of historically accurate food and table settings. Like practitioners of early music who use period instruments in their performances, Ivan employs original culinary equipment and methods rather than working in a modern kitchen. As a result he has put together a unique and important collection acquired over fifty years. He loves nothing better than roasting a joint in front of the fire using an early modern period clockwork rotisserie, or revealing the beauty of a gingerbread pressed from an original Jacobean mould. He has

applied the same philosophy to his numerous recreations of period table settings, using important original silver, porcelain, table linen and cutlery to evoke the culinary zeitgeist of the past. His work has been exhibited in numerous museums in the UK, US and Europe, including the Metropolitan in NYC, the Getty Museum and the Detroit Institute of Arts. He worked as the period food consultant to the 2019-20 Fitzwilliam Museum exhibition *Feast and Fast* and was a contributing author to the exhibition catalogue. He is the author of many books and academic papers on food culture.

www.historicfood.com



Stephen Fry is an award-winning comedian, actor, presenter and director. He rose to fame alongside Hugh Laurie in *A Bit of Fry and Laurie* (which he co-wrote with Laurie) and *Jeeves and Wooster*, and was unforgettable as General Melchett in *Blackadder*. He hosted over 180 episodes of *QI*, and has narrated all seven of the Harry Potter novels for the audiobook recordings. He is the bestselling author of four novels – *The Stars' Tennis Balls*, *Making History*, *The Hippopotamus* and *The Liar* – as well as three volumes of autobiography – *Moab is My Washpot*, *The Fry Chronicles* and *More Fool Me*. www.stephenfry.com

Professor Peter Holman studied at King's College, London, with Thurston Dart, and as a student directed the pioneering early music group Ars Nova. In 1979 he founded, with Roy Goodman, The Parley of Instruments, now recognised as one of the leading exponents of Renaissance and Baroque string consort music. In 1985 he became Musical Director of the newly-formed Opera Restor'd, which specialises in authentic productions of eighteenth-century English operas and masques, and he is also the Artistic Director of the annual Suffolk Villages Festival, which promotes high-quality performances of early music in a rural area of eastern England. Emeritus Professor of Historical Musicology at Leeds University, Peter was a professor at the Royal Academy of Music for ten years, and has also taught at many conservatories, universities and summer schools in Britain, Europe and the USA. He spends much of his time in writing and research and has special interest in the early history of the violin family, in European instrumental ensemble music of the Renaissance and Baroque and in English seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music.



Peter regularly contributes articles and reviews to a range of newspapers and journals and has published many editions of early music. His book *Four-and-Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court, 1540-1690* (Oxford University Press, 1993) was awarded the Derek Allen Prize by The British Academy, and he has published a range of other books and papers.



Dr. Alan Howard is College Lecturer and Director of Studies in Music at Selwyn College, Cambridge, and Director of Studies in Music at Downing College, Cambridge. Alan's research focuses on the music of Henry Purcell and his contemporaries in Restoration England, and more broadly on music between the sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries. Methodologically, alongside interests in historical musicology and editorial practice, he is particularly interested in developing contextualised analytical approaches to this repertoire. He has published research in leading journals including the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, *Music and Letters*, *The Musical Times* and *Early Music*; his edition of *Odes on the Death of Henry Purcell* for the Purcell Society was published by Stainer & Bell in 2013, as was a volume of essays

jointly edited with Rebecca Herissone, *Concepts of Creativity in Seventeenth-Century England*. His book *Compositional Artifice in the Music of Henry Purcell* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2019. He is a member of the Purcell Society Committee and a General Editor of A-R Editions' Works of John Eccles, for whom he is also editing the third volume of Eccles' *Incidental Music for the Theatre*.

Dr. Stephanie Oade is a musician, classicist and teacher. After studying for two simultaneous degrees (one in cello performance from the Royal Northern College of Music and one in Latin from the University of Manchester), Stephanie went on to enjoy a successful musical career, performing across the UK as part of the Countess of Munster Recital Scheme before freelancing with the UK's leading orchestras and then taking up a position in the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. During this time she continued to work on classics publications as an independent scholar (including an article published in the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Dittersdorf's *Twelve Symphonies on Ovid's Metamorphoses*) and in 2018 she was awarded a doctorate from Oxford University for her work on the musical reception of the ancient poet Catullus. She now teaches classics at Oundle School and is mother to a young family.



Recording engineer **Dave Rowell** studied on the renowned *Tonmeister* course at the University of Surrey, and following a year in industry working alongside Alexander Van Ingen, Mike Hatch and Simon Eadon, moved into the freelance world specialising in the location recording of classical music. As an engineer and editor, Dave is in demand for both his technical abilities and his musical ear, leading to numerous awards, notably for the Signum Classics recording of Britten's *Peter Grimes*. Releases which Dave has engineered and edited frequently feature at the Gramophone Awards, BBC Music Magazine Awards and similar prestigious events, and he is a Mastered for iTunes certified mastering engineer. www.filoclassical.com



Dr. Ruth Smith is a regularly invited writer, lecturer and broadcaster on Handel's oratorios and operas. Her *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) was awarded a Cambridge University PhD and a British Academy prize. Other publications include *Charles Jennens: The Man behind Handel's Messiah*, and over 20 entries in the *Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia*.

Speaking engagements have taken her to Australia, South Africa, the USA, Italy, France and Germany. She is a Council member and trustee of the Handel Institute. From 1983 to 2011 she was a careers adviser at Cambridge University Careers Service.

Judy Tarling played the violin and viola in the Academy of Ancient Music during the 1970s and 1980s, taking part in the recordings of Muffat's *Florilegium* suites and the first complete Mozart symphonies on period instruments. In 1981 she was invited to join the recently formed The Parley of Instruments (directed by Peter Holman), with which she took part in over eighty recordings of English music for Hyperion's *English Orpheus* series. From 1985 she led The Parley's pioneering renaissance string band. Judy was principal viola for Roy Goodman's Brandenburg Consort and for twenty years principal viola of The Hanover Band. Her books (*Baroque String Playing – for ingenious learners* and *The Weapons of Rhetoric: a guide for musicians and audiences*) have become required reading for students of performance practice worldwide, and have led to invitations to meet her readers in Tel Aviv, Sao Paulo, Veracruz, The Juilliard School and the universities of Harvard, Indiana and Oberlin. www.judytarling.com



Bill Thorp studied at Clare College, Cambridge, and in a long and varied career has performed with a folk group, an opera company, symphony orchestras and period instrument ensembles (joining AAM in 1984, memorably); in shows, theatres, studios, films and pizza houses, embracing a wide range of styles (from extemporised Elizabethan consort music to a number one hit in Slovenian pop). He is also an arranger, with published collections for string quartet, piano trio, fiddle duet and cello ensemble.



CEO of the Academy of Ancient Music from 2017, **Alexander Van Ingen** was previously Executive Producer for Decca Classics and a producer of classical records. Working for both major and independent record labels, his considerable discography and distinguished client list won numerous industry awards and accolades in the wider press. A passionate advocate for music, Alexander has consulted on the specification and design of recording studios (in London, the Middle East, Kazakhstan, India and Sussex), hosted seminars, appeared on discussion panels, given lectures, and served on various international competition juries. His training as a cellist included historically informed performance with Peter Holman at Leeds Baroque and elsewhere. Proud of AAM's strong successes – including being the world's most-listened-to period instrument group – Alexander is ambitious for the future of AAM, looking to ensure the ensemble's long-term legacy delivered by way of excellence on the concert platform, in the classroom, and in the recording studio. Projects uncovering new and neglected works such as Eccles' *Semele*, Handel's *Brockes-Passion* and Dussek's *Messe Solemnelle*, and research projects in collaboration with leading scholars and universities, ensure that AAM remains at the cutting edge of historically informed performance and continues to contribute to the wider field of musicological scholarship.

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC

The Academy of Ancient Music is an orchestra with a worldwide reputation for excellence in baroque and classical music. It takes inspiration directly from the music's composers, using historically informed techniques, period-specific instruments and original sources to bring music to life in committed, vibrant performances.

The ensemble was founded by Christopher Hogwood in 1973 and remains at the forefront of the worldwide early music scene more than four decades on; Richard Egarr became its Music Director in 2006.

The Academy of Ancient Music has always been a pioneer. It was established to make the first British recordings of orchestral works using instruments from the baroque and classical periods and has released more than 300 discs, many of which are still considered definitive performances. (Among its countless accolades for recording are Classic BRIT, Gramophone and Edison awards.)

It has now established its own record label, AAM Records, and is proud to be the most listened-to orchestra of its kind online.

AAM's education and outreach programme, AAMplify, nurtures the next generation of audiences and musicians. With this expanding programme, working from pre-school through tertiary education and beyond, AAM ensures its work reaches the widest possible audience and inspires people of all ages, backgrounds and cultural traditions.

AAM is based in Cambridge and is Orchestra-in-Residence at the University of Cambridge. Its London home is the Barbican Centre, where it is Associate Ensemble, a title AAM also holds at the Teatro San Cassiano in Venice. It is also Orchestra-in-Residence at The Grange Festival; the Milton Abbey International Summer Music Festival; and The Apex, Bury St. Edmunds, as well as being Artistic Partner to London's Culture Mile and Research Partner to the University of Oxford.

Visit www.aam.co.uk to find out more.



Players of the Academy of Ancient Music, photographed at the Barbican, London, 2018

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC

VIOLIN I

Bojan Čičić

Violin by Rowland Ross, UK, 2001, after Stradivarius, Italy. Bow by Gerhard Landwehr, Netherlands, 2009

Elin White

Violin by Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow, Poland, 2015, after Marcin Groblicz, Krakow, Poland, early 17th century. Bow by Jan Strumphler, Utrecht, Netherlands, 2017, after 17th century models

Iona Davies

Violin by unknown maker, Tyrol, c.1750. Bow by Brian Tunnicliffe, UK, c.1990, copy of English bow, late-17th century

Sijie Chen

Violin by unknown maker, Italy. Bow by Percy Bryant, UK, 1980 (kindly lent by Brian Smith)

VIOLIN II

Davina Clarke

Violin by Francesco Ruggieri, Cremona, Italy, 1659. Bow by Richard Wilson, Cambridge, UK, 2010

Liz McCarthy

Violin by Andrea Castagneri, Paris, France, 1740. Bow by Hans Reiners, Berlin, Germany, 2008, copy of Salzburg model, 1700

Bill Thorp

Violin by Edmund Aireton, London, mid-18th centry. Bow by Brian Tunnicliffe, England, UK, 1981, copy of an English bow (no.19 in the collection at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK), late 17th century

Emilia Benjamin

Violin by Jonathan Woolston, Cambridge, UK, 2013, copy of violin by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, Milan, Italy, c.1755. Bow by Anthony Baylis, Cambridge, UK, 2009-10

VIOLA

Jane Rogers

Viola by Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow, Poland, 2008, after Guarneri, Italy. Bow by Clément Lê Quan, Poitiers, France, 2019

Jordan Bowron

Viola by Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow, Poland, 2013, after Nicolo Amati, Cremona, Italy, 1640. Bow (with clip-in frog) by unknown maker

Carmen Maria Martinez

Viola by unknown maker, Bohemia, c.1780, copy of Gasparo da Salò (Gasparo Bertolotti), c.1780. Bow by unknown maker, Amsterdam, Netherlands

BASS VIOLIN

Jonathan Rees

Bass violin by Kai-Thomas Roth, Somerset, UK, 1955. Early baroque bow (with clip-in frog) by Anthony Baylis, Cambridge, UK, 2009

Gavin Kibble

Bass violin by Bryan Maynard, York, UK, 1986 after Amati, Cremona, Italy, 1610 (kindly lent by Anna Holmes). Bow by Richard Moser, Köln, Germany, 2016, copy of an unattributed bow in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria

VIOLONE

Timothy Amherst

Bass by unknown maker, Saxony, Germany, mid-18th century. Bass bow, overhand style, by unknown maker, England, c.1750

THEORBO & GUITAR

William Carter

Theorbo by Klaus Jacobsen, London, UK, 2009, after Italian models

Guitar by Martin Haycock, West Dean, UK, 1990, after Matteo Sellas, Venice, Italy, 17th century

BASS VIOL

Reiko Ichise

6-stringed bass viol by Norman Myall, Colchester, UK, 2000. Bow by Norman Myall, Colchester, UK, 2000

HARPSICHORD

Julian Perkins

Single-manual, double-strung Italian harpsichord by Mark Ransom and Claire Hammett, London, UK, 2001, after Carlo Grimaldi, Messina, Italy, c.1700

Tall trestle kindly supplied by Malcolm Greenhalgh

Peter Holman

Single-manual, double-strung Italian harpsichord by Colin Booth, Wells, UK, 1988, after Giovanni Battista Berardino, Rome, Italy, mid- to late-16th century

THUNDER SHEET

Elaine So

Thunder sheet by Tim Gunnell, Cambridgeshire, UK, 21st century

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Richard Egarr

HOGWOOD FELLOW

Emma Safe

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Alexander Van Ingen

HEAD OF CONCERTS & PLANNING

Fiona McDonnell

EDUCATION & OUTREACH ADVISOR

Sue Pope

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT

Liz Brinsdon

HEAD OF FINANCE

Julie Weaver

MARKETING & AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Kemper Edwards

DEVELOPMENT & EVENTS MANAGER

Alice Pusey

LIBRARIAN

Emilia Benjamin

PR CONSULTANT

Artium Media Relations

PROGRAMME EDITOR

Sarah Breeden

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Paul Baumann CBE

Hugh Burkitt

Elizabeth de Friend

Philip Jones (Chair)

Ash Khandekar

Graham Nicholson

John Reeve

Terence Sinclair

Madeleine Tattersall

Janet Unwin

Kim Waldock

DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Elise Badoy Dauby

Hugh Burkitt

Elizabeth de Friend (Chair)

Andrew Gairdner MBE

Philip Jones

Agneta Lansing

Roger Mayhew

Craig Nakan

Chris Rocker

Terence Sinclair

Madeleine Tattersall

COUNCIL

Richard Bridges

Kate Donaghy

Matthew Ferrey

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood CBE

Nick Heath

Lars Henriksson

Christopher Lawrence

Christopher Purvis CBE

(Honorary President)

Sir Konrad Schiemann

Rachel Stroud

The Lady Juliet Tadgell

Dr. Christopher Tadgell

DELICIAE MUSICÆ:

BEING, A

Collection of the newest and best SONGS

Sung at Court and at the Publick Theatres, most of them within the Compass of the FLUTE.

WITH

A Thorow-Bass, for the *Theorbo-Lute*,
Bass-Viol, *Harpfichord*, or *Organ*.

Composed by several of the Best Masters.

THE SECOND BOOK.



F. H. Van Hove. Sculp.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *J. Heptinstall*, for *Henry Playford* near the Temple-Church;
or at his Houfe over-againft the *Blew-Ball* in *Arundel-street*:
Where alfo the First Book may be had. 1695.

Cover image from *Deliciae Musicæ*, F. H. Van Hove (printed. J. Haptinstall for Henry Playford), pub. 1695; National Library of Scotland (Ing.154(2)). No known images of John Eccles exist, however in her 'Portraits of Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle' [*Theatre Notebook*, 15.4 (1961): 129–37], Lucyle Hook suggests that the female performer depicted here is Anne Bracegirdle (for whom Eccles wrote many of his soprano roles), and speculated that the male lutenist may be John Eccles, rehearsing a song with the actress-singer (the book containing a number of songs by Eccles). Although Peter Holman points out in his essay in this booklet that Eccles was a violinist rather than a lutenist, players and performers at the time were often multi-instrumentalists, so it is not impossible that this could be Eccles.

CAMBRIDGE HANDEL OPERA COMPANY

Cambridge Handel Opera Company (CHOC) mounts productions of Baroque operas that celebrate the fusion of music and the stage, with performances that trust the composer and are not just historically informed, but also 'historically inspired'.

Performances are led from the harpsichord by Artistic Director Julian Perkins. The company unites the best of youth and experience, with casts that combine upcoming stars and more established solo singers, and an orchestra in which leading professionals work and perform alongside advanced students.

CHOC presents fully-staged operas by Handel in alternation with concert performances of lesser-known works by his English contemporaries. CHOC's productions are events for the wider community, accompanied by educational workshops for students in Cambridge state schools, open dress rehearsals, opportunities for advanced music students and seminars that focus not only on the music and the drama, but also on the cultural arena in which Handel and his British contemporaries competed and flourished.

www.cambridgehandel.org.uk

Artistic Director

Julian Perkins

Company Manager

Claire Bowdler

Planning Co-Ordinator

Heather Swain

Artistic Advisor

Dr. Andrew Jones

Board of Trustees

Michael Darvell

Professor Peter Holman MBE (Vice Chair)

Amy Klohr

Professor David McKitterick

Dr. Alan Morgan

Richard Perkins

Louise Soden (Chair)

Roy Swain

Ambassadors

Dr. Simon Bailey

Dr. Alan Howard

Andrew Radley

Dr. William Salaman

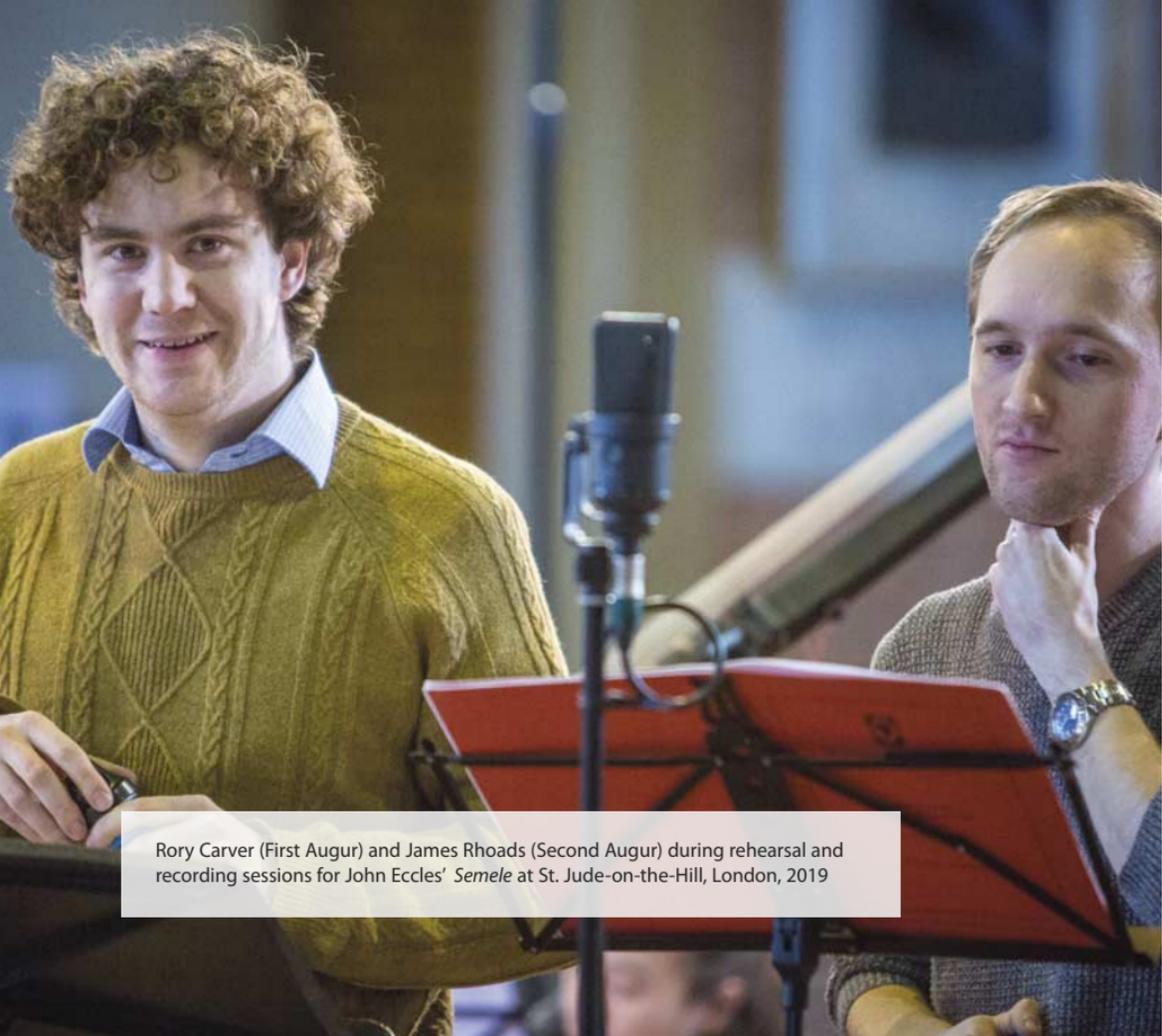
Dr. Ruth Smith

Ian Soden (treasurer)

Professor Tony Watts OBE



Cambridge Handel Opera Company's production of Handel's *Rodelinda* at The Leys, Cambridge, 2018



Rory Carver (First Augur) and James Rhoads (Second Augur) during rehearsal and recording sessions for John Eccles' *Semele* at St. Jude-on-the-Hill, London, 2019

CAMBRIDGE EARLY MUSIC

Cambridge Early Music runs a lively education programme for all ages, from young people to adults, which encompasses a wide range of musical genres within early music. Central to the calendar are two prestigious Summer Schools, one on Baroque music, the other on Renaissance music.

Cambridge Early Music also works closely with local universities to offer opportunities to students and supports young musicians through Cambridgeshire Music Hub and Cambridgeshire Music. A number of active and engaging education projects and workshops take place throughout the year, often in conjunction with CEM's annual Festival of the Voice. CEM is particularly supportive of young emerging ensembles and those starting out on their careers by offering a prize in the York Early Music Festival International Young Artists Competition and collaborating with the Brighton Early Music Live scheme.

Alongside CEM's active education programme, a series of concerts takes place throughout the year in which leading early music ensembles and soloists from across the UK and abroad perform in historic Cambridge venues. The highlight of the season is the Cambridge Festival of the Voice, with a concentration of concerts and other events across a weekend exploring a particular composer's work or theme in depth.

Partners and funders include:

The Helen Hamlyn Trust
Humanities in the European Research Area
REMA/Early Music in Europe
Hughes Hall
Cambridge University Press

The Williams Church Music Trust
The Howard Foundation
Cambridgeshire Music Hub
University of Cambridge
Anglia Ruskin University

www.cambridgeearlymusic.org

THANK YOU

The AAM is indebted to the following trusts, companies and individuals for their support of the orchestra's work

MUSIC SPONSORS

Music Director

Matthew Ferrey

Sub-Principal First Violin

Graham Nicholson

Principal Viola

Elizabeth and Richard de Friend

Sub-Principal Viola

Nicholas and Judith Goodison

Principal Cello

Dr. Christopher and
Lady Juliet Tadjell

Sub-Principal Cello

Newby Trust Ltd

Principal Flute

Terence and Sian Sinclair

Principal Oboe

David and Linda Lakhdhir

Principal Harpsichord

Chris and Alison Rocker

Principal Theorbo

John and Joyce Reeve

Principal Trumpet

John and Madeleine Tattersall

Audience Communications

Dr. Julia Ellis

Discounted tickets for under 26s

Philip Jones

Digital: Supporter Database

Annual License

Philip Jones

AAM ACADEMY

Lady Alexander of Weedon

Dr Carol Atack and

Alex van Someren

Elise Badoy Dauby

Julia and Charles Bland

Richard and Elena Bridges

Mrs D Broke

Hugh Burkitt

Clive Butler

Jo and Keren Butler

Daphne and Alan Clark

Kate Donaghy

The Hon Simon Eccles

Mr John Everett

Marshall Field CBE

Tina Fordham

Malcolm and Rosalind Gammie

Madeleine Gantley

Christopher Hogwood CBE, in
memoriam

Graham and Amanda Hutton

Mr and Mrs Evan Llewellyn

Mark and Liza Loveday

Anne Machin

Roger Mayhew

Alessandro Orsaria

Christopher Purvis CBE and

Phillida Purvis MBE

Mrs Julia Rosier

Sir Konrad and Lady

Schiemann

Mr Michael Smith

Mrs S Wilson Stephens

Christopher Stewart

Mr Peter Tausig

Stephen Thomas

Mr Anthony Travis

Mrs Janet Unwin

Julie and Richard Webb

Mark West

Mr Charles Woodward

Tony and Jackie Yates-Watson

and other anonymous donors

AAM ASSOCIATES

Dr Aileen Adams CBE

Angela and Roderick Ashby-Johnson

Marianne Aston

His Hon. Judge Michael Baker, Q.C.

Professor John and

Professor Hilary Birks

Charles and Ann Bonney

Elisabeth and Bob Boas

Mrs Stephanie Bourne

Adam and Sara Broadbent

George and Kay Brock

Drs Nick and Helen Carroll

David and Elizabeth Challen

Derek and Mary Draper

Nikki Edge

Christopher and Jill Evans

Andrew and Wendy Gairdner

The Hon. William Gibson

The Hon. Mr and Mrs Philip Havers

Miles and Anna Hember

Mrs Helen Higgs

Andrew Jackson

Mr and Mrs Charles Jackson

Heather Jarman

Alison Knocker

Richard and Romilly Lyttelton

Richard Meade

Mr Peter and Mrs Frances Meyer

Mrs Marilyn Minchom Goldberg

Professors Eric Nye and Carol Frost

Nick and Margaret Parker

Peggy Post

Chris and Valery Rees

Jane Rabagliati and

Raymond Cross

Michael and Giustina Ryan

Dr Robert Sansom

The Hon. Zita Savile

Thomas and Joyce Seaman

Mr Peter Shawdon

Ms Sarah Shepley and

Mr Kevin Feeney

Colin and Brenda Soden

Fiona Stewart

Peter Thomson and

Alison Carnwath

Professor Tony Watts OBE

Peter and Margaret Wynn

Patricia C Yeiser, USA

and other anonymous donors

TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS

Ambache Charitable Trust

Amberstone Trust

Angus Allnatt Charitable

Foundation

Constance Travis

Charitable Trust

Daiwa Anglo-Japanese

Foundation

The Derek Hill Foundation

J Paul Getty Jr General

Charitable Trust

John Armitage Charitable Trust

John Ellerman Foundation

Limoges Charitable Trust

The Perry Family

Charitable Trust

R K Charitable Trust

Sir John Fisher Foundation

William A Cadbury

Charitable Trust

and other anonymous trusts and

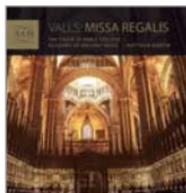
foundations

FRANCISCO VALLS

Missa Regalis

The Choir of Keble College, Oxford, Academy of Ancient Music / Matthew Martin – Director & Solo Organ

The world-premiere recording of Francisco Valls' *Missa Regalis*. A Spanish composer with bold ideas, Valls' tenure at Barcelona Cathedral caused a substantial musical controversy when he composed his *Missa Scala Aretina* - a second soprano entry to unprepared 9th chord triggering fellow composers to publish a pamphlet against his forward-thinking use of harmony.



AAM008

DARIO CASTELLO

Sonate Concertate In Stil Moderno, Libro Primo

Richard Egarr – Director, Harpsichord & Organ

Working at the same time as Monteverdi, Dario Castello wrote innovative and ground-breaking sonatas that had a profound effect on generations of Italian composers. More widely published than Shakespeare in the 17th century, very little is known about him today.

"A joy for ear and spirit" GRAMOPHONE

"This is a gem of a CD" THE STRAD



AAM005

J.S. BACH

St. Matthew Passion (1727 version)

*Elizabeth Watts, Sarah Connolly, James Gilchrist, Thomas Hobbs, Matthew Rose, Ashley Riches, Christopher Maltman
Academy of Ancient Music, Choir of AAM / Richard Egarr – Director & Harpsichord*

"[Gilchrist] is a supremely courageous and intelligent reading whose interaction with the human volatility of Matthew Rose's Jesus is profoundly affecting... [Connolly's] 'Erbarme dich' is simply unmissable... [this] compellingly original vision of this greatest of all musical tombeaus, with its fresh anticipation founded on collective adrenaline and uniformly outstanding lyrical Bach-singing... is a triumph." GRAMOPHONE



AAM004

J.S. BACH

Orchestral Suites

Academy of Ancient Music / Richard Egarr – Director & Harpsichord

Written during Bach's years in Leipzig where he had a wider range of instruments at his disposal than ever before, these Suites revel in new sonorous possibilities, employing varied combinations of wind, brass, stringed instruments and timpani.

"Exuberant and full of vitality." BBC Radio 3

"Menuets and Gavottes are poised and unhurried while the Overtures themselves sparkle with amiability... This is an engaging release" BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

J.S. BACH

St. John Passion (1724 version)

*Elizabeth Watts, Sarah Connolly, James Gilchrist, Andrew Kennedy, Matthew Rose, Ashley Riches, Christopher Purves
Academy of Ancient Music, Choir of AAM / Richard Egarr – Director & Harpsichord*

"Gilchrist [is] a highly articulate Evangelist... Matthew Rose a distinctly human Jesus and Ashley Riches a suitably assertive Pilate... There is some gorgeous solo playing... this is a splendid performance which leaves the listener exhausted..."

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

THE BIRTH OF THE SYMPHONY:

Handel to Haydn

Academy of Ancient Music / Richard Egarr – Director & Harpsichord

The 18th century saw an outpouring of symphonies, with over 10,000 composed worldwide from Sicily to North Carolina. The first release on the AAM's own label surveys some of the diverse works which were central to the development of the genre, pioneering new sounds and bringing instrumental music to the forefront of European culture.

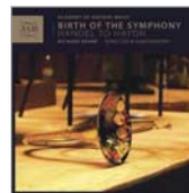
"AAM's performances gave virtually unalloyed pleasure... their style is bold and fiery, though there is ample tenderness... [La Passione is] certainly one of the most powerful and disturbing performances on disc." GRAMOPHONE



AAM003



AAM002



AAM001