

Tyrannick Love

Choice *Ayres* and *Songs* from the Restoration Stage

THE ORPHEUS ENSEMBLE



- 1** HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695) Sweeter than Roses
Sung in the tragedy Pausanias, 1695
Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, I, 1698 (& 1702)
- 2** HENRY PURCELL When first Amintas su'd for a Kiss
A new song to a Scotch Tune
Henry Playford, The Theater of Music, Vol IV, 1687
- 3** JOHN BLOW (1649-1708) Lysander I persue in vain *
A Mad Song.
Publ. by public subscription, Amphion Anglicus, 1700
- 4** HENRY PURCELL If Musick be the Food of Love (first setting)
The Gentleman's Journal, June 1692
Margaret Laurie, Ed., Purcell Society Edition, Vol 25
- 5** JOHN ECCLES (1672-1735)
I burn, my Brain consumes to Ashes
Sung by Anne Bracegirdle in T D'Urfey's Don Quixote II, 1694
Curtis Price, ed., Music for London Entertainment 1660-1800,
1984
- 6** HENRY PURCELL Whilst I with Grief did on you look
Sung by Jemmy Bowen in Don Quixote, Part 2, 1695
Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, I, 1698 (& 1702)
- 7** HENRY PURCELL Cupid the slyest rogue alive
Henry Playford, The Theater of Music, Vol 2, 1685
Margaret Laurie, Ed., Purcell Society Edition, Vol 25
- 8** HENRY PURCELL I Attempt from Love's sickness
Sung by Letitia Cross in The Indian Queen, 1695
Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, I, 1698 (& 1702)
- 9** HENRY PURCELL Bess of Bedlam
A Mad Song. John Playford, Choice Ayres and Songs, 1683
- 10** HENRY PURCELL Ah! How sweet it is to Love
Sung by Mrs Ayliff in Tyrannick Love, or the Royal Martyr, 1694
Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, I, 1698 (& 1702)
- 11** SAMUEL AKEROYDE (1684-1706) *
Farweel bonny Wully Craig
A new Scotch Song. Sung in Thomas Crowne's play Sir
Courtly Nice. Henry Playford, The Theater of Music, Vol 3, 1686
- 12** HENRY PURCELL From Rosy Bow'rs
A Mad Song. Sung by Letitia Cross in T. D'Urfey's Don Quixote,
Part 3, 1695 Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, I,
1698 (& 1702)
- 13** PELHAM HUMFREY (1647-1674)
Cupid once, when weary grown
John Playford, Choice Ayres, Songs and Dialogues, II, 1676
- 14** HENRY PURCELL Beneath a Poplar's shadow lay me
A Mad Song. Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, II,
1698 (& 1702)
- 15** HENRY PURCELL Musick for a while
Sung by John Pate in Dryden and Nathaniel Lee's Oedipus, 1692
Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, II, 1698 (& 1702)
- 16** HENRY PURCELL
If Musick be the Food of Love (second setting)
Deliciae musicae I/2, 1695
Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, I, 1698 (& 1702)
- 17** HENRY PURCELL Dear, Pritty Youth
Sung by Letitia Cross in The Tempest, 1695
Henry Playford, Orpheus Britannicus, I, 1698 (& 1702)
- 18** GIOVANNI B. DRAGHI Where art thou, God of Dreams?
from the play Romulus & Hersilia
Henry Playford, The Theater of Music, Vol 3, 1686 †



I. Songs for the Restoration Stage

This recording presents a collection of dramatic songs written for the London stage in the last decades of the seventeenth century and later printed for an enthusiastic public. While most of the songs are by Henry Purcell, the works by his contemporaries included here provide a wider musical context which enables us to hear the remarkable range of music which was fashionably integrated with the restoration of theatrical life during the reigns of Charles II, James II, William and Mary. It represents some of the best works from a scintillating moment in English musical history, witnessed by some of its most perceptive diarists, Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, and extensively commented on by an acute and articulate observer, Roger North, musical enthusiast and attorney-general to Charles II and James II.

The theatres of Shakespeare and his contemporaries at the beginning of the seventeenth century remained closed during the Commonwealth, 'when', according to Roger North, 'most other good arts languished, Musick held up her own head, not at Court nor (in the cant of those times) profane Theatres, but in private society, for many chose rather to fiddle at home, than to goe out, and be knockt on the head abroad'. When theatrical performances were once more permitted, many innovations were seen: two new theatres, Drury Lane and Dorset Garden, were built with the more modern design of proscenium, which enhanced the acoustics for songs performed in front of the curtain line; elaborate scenery and illusionistic machines were considered integral to the theatrical experience; female parts were played

by women rather than boys; and the action could be framed by music and punctuated by song, as the returning King had witnessed many times in the lavish theatrical entertainments at the French court. Revivals of Shakespeare were produced in the new style, with ingenious scenery and new music: the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was transformed into *The Faery Queen*; *The Tempest* was given a new production, both with extensive musical additions. New plays by Dryden, D'Urfey, Crowne and many others included music before each act which added to the evening's entertainment. This music is most often heard today gathered into suites for orchestra. Less well-known are the dramatic songs inserted into the plays which are performed on this recording.

The Drury Lane and Dorset Garden companies merged in 1682 to become The United Company. After some thirteen years of successful productions the principal actors revolted against 'the tyranny and vulgarity' of its director, Christopher Rich, in 1695 and left to set up a new and rival company at Lincoln's Inn Fields, of which John Eccles was to become the musical director. The company opened a new theatre in the Haymarket in 1705, for which it was likely that Eccles' opera *Semele* was intended. Unfortunately, he did not finish the score until 1707, by which time the Italian opera had become established and the era of Restoration musical theatre was finished.

This recording, then, contains some of the more important works of the major figures in this brief but brilliant moment in the history of English music, from the introduction of the Italian style with Draghi, through the brilliance

of Purcell to his successor Eccles as the musical master of the London theatre. That is, until the arrival of Handel.

II. Different Songs for different singers.

Sometimes these songs were written for the actors to sing; sometimes singers became actors: thus the musical demands of these dramatic songs vary from the modest to the virtuosic. One of the most accomplished actresses of the day, Anne Bracegirdle, achieved such success with Eccles' 'I burn, I burn' in Thomas D'Urfey's play *Don Quixote* part I, that she had the same composer write all her other stage songs. D'Urfey acclaimed her performance 'incomparably well sung and acted', and may have written the text of 'Whilst I with Grief did on you look', set by both Finger and later Purcell, which bears the subtitle 'On hearing Mrs Bracegirdle ... in *Don Quixote*. 'I burn, I burn' belongs to a small genre of mad songs well represented on this recording: three by Purcell, 'Bess of Bedlam', 'From Rosy Bow'rs' and 'Beneath a Poplar's shadow'; and one by Blow, 'Lysander I persue in vain' which push to extremes the capacity of the new Italian style to express emotions in music.

In quite a different category to the actor-singers were the singers incorporated into the cast of plays for the sake of diverting the theatrical audience with music. Such inserted songs and musical framework accounted for much of Purcell's output in the 1690s, the last five years of his life. The countertenor John Pate was an accomplished exponent of the Italian decorated style of singing described in Giulio Caccini's *Le nuove musiche* (1601), which by

Purcell's day had become part of the English musical vernacular. He was described by Evelyn as 'reputed the most excellent singer England ever had', and gave the first performance of 'Musick for a while' in 1692. Mrs Ayliff was another accomplished singer. She premiered 'Ah! How sweet it is to love' from the play after which this recording is named.

By 1695 Purcell's fame as a composer attracted some of the most gifted young singers to learn from him. Two of these, Letitia Cross (who gave the first performances of 'I Attempt from Love's sickness', 'From Rosy Bow'rs' and 'Dear, Pritty Youth') and Jemmy Bowen, (who performed 'Whilst I with Grief did on you look' as well as other works in 1695) were children at the time, Miss Cross being only 12 years old. She was 'three years too young', i.e. three years before the age of consent, then 15.

III. The Composers.

Giovanni Battista Draghi, the oldest of the composers on the recording, was an Italian harpsichordist, organist and composer who resided in London. The diarist John Evelyn thought him an 'excellent and stupendous artist'. He composed many instrumental works for the theatre as well as songs. His 'Where art thou, God of Dreams?' from the anonymous play *Romulus & Hersilia* exemplifies the Italian style which was so influential throughout Europe in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Roger North says of him in his *Memoires of Musick*: 'he conformed at last to the modes of his time, and fell into the theatricall way, and composed to the semioperas divers pieces of vocall and instrumentall entertainment with very

good success; and then gave way to the divine Purcell and others, who were coming full sail into the superiority of the musically faculty'.

Pelham Humfrey, was trained as a chorister in the Chapel Royal. At 17 he spent three years studying in France and Italy, and after five further years, during which he composed music for both church and court performance, was appointed Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal at 25. There, where he may have taught the young Henry Purcell, he was able to introduce both the French and Italian musical styles he had mastered. 'Cupid once, when weary grown' was included in John Playford's collection of *Choice Ayres, Songs & Dialogues* 1676, two years after his death at age 26.

John Blow was two years younger than Humfrey, but outlived him by 38 years. They were contemporaries as choristers in the Chapel Royal, and Blow succeeded Humfrey as Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal. He was appointed organist at Westminster Abbey in 1668 and was followed in that position by Purcell in 1679, resuming the post after Purcell's death in 1695. *Amphion Anglicus*, from which 'Lysander I persue in vain' is taken, was a collection of his works published by public subscription in 1700.

Henry Purcell was born in 1659, ten years after Blow. He, like Humfrey and Blow, was a chorister in the Chapel Royal, published his first composition at the age of eight with a piece in *Catch as catch can* (1667) and demonstrated his accomplishments with the publication of his *Twelve Sonatas of III Parts* (1680) and *Ten Sonatas in Four Parts* (1683). He retained court appointments under Charles II, James II,

William III and wrote memorable music for the death of Queen Mary. He composed music for some forty theatrical productions, including 13 sets of instrumental music (more than 100 individual pieces) as well as a very substantial number of songs, the variety of which this recording exemplifies. His death in 1695 was marked by a magnificent Ode by John Blow to a poem by John Dryden, and general recognition that he was the most brilliant composer of his day.

After his success in writing dramatic songs for Anne Bracegirdle and his appointment as musical director of the Lincoln's Inn Fields company, John Eccles became the principal London composer of music for the theatre. Eccles' work has much in common with Purcell's: a mastery of English declamation, and integration of the expressive elements of the Italian style and great elegance of formal structure.

Samuel Akeroyde was an English violinist employed amongst the King's Musicians between 1687 and 1690, and composer of more than 100 songs, many of which were written for contemporary plays.

© JOHN STINSON 1999

Melbourne-based, THE ORPHEUS ENSEMBLE has been performing together since 1992. It specialises in exploring English and Italian music of the 17th and early 18th century.

THE ORPHEUS ENSEMBLE

Vivien Hamilton, *soprano*
Margaret Waugh, *baroque cello*
Priscilla Taylor, *harpsichord*

with

Stephen Freeman, *baroque violin* †
Julie Hewison, *baroque violin* †
Ruth Wilkinson, *viola da gamba* *

Baroque cello:

Alastair McAllister, Melbourne 1986
(Peregrino Zanetto, 1589)

Harpsichord:

Jean Louis Coquillat, Melbourne 1980
(Andreas Ruckers, 1650)

Violins:

B.J. Boussu, Brussels 1759; Robin Venables, Melbourne 1987 (Stradivari, 1705)

Viola da gamba:

Ian Watchhorn, Canberra 1982

BOOK I. *Orpheus Britannicus.*

3

A Song in *Tyrannick Love, or the Royal Martyr.*

H! how Sweet, ah! how Sweet, how Sweet it is to Love; Ah! ah!

ah! how gay is young de—fire: And what plea—sing pain, and what

plea—sing pain we prove, when first, when first we feel a Lovers fire; Pains of

Photograph: Phillip Cannizzo

Cover illustration: from title page of Henry Playford, *The Theatre of Music*, based on an original etching by Wenceslaus Hollar

Cover treatment: Simon Wright

Recorded at Move Records studio by Martin Wright and Vaughan McAlley
Produced by Alastair McAllister and The Orpheus Ensemble

© 1999 Move Records, Melbourne

move.com.au