



The Memorial Church of Harvard University
Sunday, May 7, 2023

Harvard Ferris Choral Fellows
Members of the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra
Edward Elwyn Jones, conductor

Acis and Galatea (ca. 1718)

Music by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Libretto by John Gay (1685–1732), Alexander Pope (1688–1744),
and John Hughes (1677–1720)

Acis: Arhan Kumar
Galatea: Olympia Hatzilambrou
Polyphemus: Soren Choi
Damon: Isabella Meyer
Coridon: Fahim Ahmed
Dorinda: Peggy Yin

Violins: Amelie Sie (concertmaster), Patricia Ku, Silvia Casacuberta Puig,
Madeleine Riskin-Kutz, Alison Souza, Lifeng Tang (principal second)
Cello: Phoebe Carrai, Sol Gutiérrez-Lara, Tyler James
Bass: Guinevere Connor
Oboes: Emily Ostrom, Sookhyun Lee
Harpsichord: Edward Elwyn Jones

Ferris Choral Fellows of the Harvard University Choir

Edward Elwyn Jones, Gund University Organist and Choirmaster
David von Behren, Assistant University Organist and Choirmaster
Carson Cooman, Research Associate in Music and Composer in Residence
Frank Kelley, Vocal Instructor
Sophie Choate and Soren Choi, Choir Secretaries

Soprano: Sophie Choate, Olympia Hatzilambrou, Isabella Meyer, Peggy Yin
Alto: Ari Cheriyan, Rose Du, Inés Hynett, Sonya Johnson-Yu, Nicole Newell
Tenor: Fahim Ahmed, Ian Chan, Isaac Kim, Arhan Kumar
Bass: Lucas Amory, Soren Choi, Judah Lampkin, Christopher Ong

1. Sinfonia

2. Chorus

Oh, the pleasure of the plains!
Happy nymphs and happy swains,
Harmless, merry, free and gay,
Dance and sport the hours away.
For us the zephyr blows,
For us distills the dew,
For us unfolds the rose,
And flow'rs display their hue.
For us the winters rain,
For us the summers shine,
Spring swells for us the grain,
And autumn bleeds the wine.

3. Accompagnato

Galatea

Ye verdant plains and woody mountains,
Purling streams and bubbling fountains,
Ye painted glories of the field,
Vain are the pleasures which ye yield;
Too thin the shadow of the grove,
Too faint the gales, to cool my love.

4. Air

Galatea

Hush, ye pretty warbling quire!
Your thrilling strains
Awake my pains,
And kindle fierce desire.
Cease your song, and take your flight,
Bring back my Acis to my sight!

5. Air

Acis

Where shall I seek the charming fair?
Direct the way, kind genius of the mountains!
O tell me, if you saw my dear!
Seeks she the grove, or bathes in crystal fountains?

6. Recitative

Damon

Stay, shepherd, stay!
See, how thy flocks in yonder valley stray!
What means this melancholy air?
No more thy tuneful pipe we hear.

7. Air

Damon

Shepherd, what art thou pursuing?
Heedless running to thy ruin;
Share our joy, our pleasure share,
Leave thy passion till tomorrow,
Let the day be free from sorrow,
Free from love, and free from care!

8. Recitative

Acis

Lo, here my love, turn, Galatea, hither turn thy eyes!
See, at thy feet the longing Acis lies.

9. Air

Acis

Love in her eyes sits playing,
And sheds delicious death;
Love on her lips is straying,
And warbling in her breath!
Love on her breast sits panting

And swells with soft desire;
No grace, no charm is wanting,
To set the heart on fire.
Love in her eyes. . . da capo

10. Recitative

Galatea

Oh, didst thou know the pains of absent love,
Acis would ne'er from Galatea rove.

11. Air

Galatea

As when the dove
Laments her love,
All on the naked spray;
When he returns,
No more she mourns,
But loves the live-long day.
Billing, cooing,
Panting, wooing,
Melting murmurs fill the grove,
Melting murmurs, lasting love.

12. Duet

Galatea, Acis

Happy we!
What joys I feel!
What charms I see
Of all youths/nymphs thou dearest boy/brightest fair!
Thou all my bliss, thou all my joy!

13. Chorus

Wretched lovers! Fate has past
This sad decree: no joy shall last.
Wretched lovers, quit your dream!
Behold the monster Polypheme!
See what ample strides he takes!
The mountain nods, the forest shakes;
The waves run frighten'd to the shores:
Hark, how the thund'ring giant roars!

14. Accompagnato

Polyphemus

I rage — I melt — I burn!
The feeble god has stabb'd me to the heart.
Thou trusty pine,
Prop of my godlike steps, I lay thee by!
Bring me a hundred reeds of decent growth
To make a pipe for my capacious mouth;
In soft enchanting accents let me breathe
Sweet Galatea's beauty, and my love.

15. Air

Polyphemus

O ruddier than the cherry,
O sweeter than the berry,
O nymph more bright
Than moonshine night,
Like kidlings blithe and merry.
Ripe as the melting cluster,
No lily has such lustre;
Yet hard to tame
As raging flame,
And fierce as storms that bluster!

16. Recitative

Polyphemus

Whither, fairest, art thou running,
Still my warm embraces shunning?

Galatea

The lion calls not to his prey,
Nor bids the wolf the lambkin stay.

Polyphemus

Thee, Polyphemus, great as Jove,
Calls to empire and to love,
To his palace in the rock,
To his dairy, to his flock,
To the grape of purple hue,
To the plum of glossy blue,
Wildings, which expecting stand,
Proud to be gather'd by thy hand.

Galatea

Of infant limbs to make my food,
And swill full draughts of human blood!
Go, monster, bid some other guest!
I loathe the host, I loathe the feast.

17. Air

Polyphemus

Cease to beauty to be suing,
Ever whining love disdaining.
Let the brave their aims pursuing,
Still be conqu'ring not complaining.

18. Air

Coridon

Would you gain the tender creature,
Softly, gently, kindly treat her:
Suff'ring is the lover's part.
Beauty by constraint possessing
You enjoy but half the blessing,
Lifeless charms without the heart.

19. Recitative

Acis

His hideous love provokes my rage.
Weak as I am, I must engage!
Inspir'd with thy victorious charms,
The god of love will lend his arms.

20. Air

Acis

Love sounds th'alarm,
And fear is a-flying!
When beauty's the prize,
What mortal fears dying?
In defence of my treasure,
I'd bleed at each vein;
Without her no pleasure,
For life is a pain.
Love sounds. . . da capo

21. Air

Dorinda

Consider, fond shepherd,
How fleeting's the pleasure,
That flatters our hopes
In pursuit of the fair!
The joys that attend it,
By moments we measure,
But life is too little
To measure our care.

22. Recitative

Galatea

Cease, oh cease, thou gentle youth,
Trust my constancy and truth,
Trust my truth and pow'rs above,
The pow'rs propitious still to love!

23. Trio

Galatea & Acis

The flocks shall leave the mountains,
The woods the turtle dove,
The nymphs forsake the fountains,
Ere I forsake my love!
Polyphemus
Torture! fury! rage! despair!
I cannot, cannot bear!

Galatea & Acis

Not show'rs to larks so pleasing,
Nor sunshine to the bee,
Not sleep to toil so easing,
As these dear smiles to me.

Polyphemus

Fly swift, thou massy ruin, fly!
Die, presumptuous Acis, die!

24. Accompagnato

Acis

Help, Galatea! Help, ye parent gods!
And take me dying to your deep abodes.

25. Chorus

Mourn, all ye muses! Weep, all ye swains!
Tune, tune your reeds to doleful strains!
Groans, cries and howlings fill the neighb'ring shore:
Ah, the gentle Acis is no more!

26. Solo & Chorus

Galatea

Must I my Acis still bemoan,
Inglorious crush'd beneath that stone?
Chorus
Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve!
Bewail not whom thou canst relieve.

Galatea

Must the lovely charming youth
Die for his constancy and truth?

Chorus

Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve!
Bewail not whom thou canst relieve,
Call forth thy pow'r, employ thy art,
The goddess soon can heal thy smart.

Galatea

Say what comfort can you find?
For dark despair o'erclouds my mind.

Chorus

To kindred gods the youth return,
Through verdant plains to roll his urn.

27. Recitative

Galatea

Tis done! Thus I exert my pow'r divine;
Be thou immortal, though thou art not mine!

28. Air*Galatea*

Heart, the seat of soft delight,
 Be thou now a fountain bright!
 Purple be no more thy blood,
 Glide thou like a crystal flood.
 Rock, thy hollow womb disclose!
 The bubbling fountain, lo! it flows;
 Through the plains he joys to rove,
 Murm'ring still his gentle love.

29. Chorus

Galatea, dry thy tears,
 Acis now a god appears!
 See how he rears him from his bed,
 See the wreath that binds his head.
 Hail! thou gentle murm'ring stream,
 Shepherds' pleasure, muses' theme!
 Through the plains still joy to rove,
 Murm'ring still thy gentle love.

Program Notes

Although no date appears on the autograph of *Acis and Galatea*, it is believed that Handel composed the masque in the spring of 1718. It was commissioned by the Earl of Carnarvon “for his own diversion’ and for outdoor performance at Cannons (where Handel spent the years 1717 and 1718). The subject matter—derived from book 13 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*—was a popular choice for contemporary operas and other musical entertainments, including Lully’s pastorale *Acis et Galathée*, and Eccles’s masque *Acis and Galatea* (a work which Handel certainly knew). The libretto was a collaboration by John Gay, Alexander Pope, and John Hughes, all of whom had worked with Handel in Piccadilly (1713–1717). After the first performance, Handel (as was his wont) revised *Acis and Galatea* a number of times: this afternoon’s performance most closely resembles the original version, though some aspects of later revisions have been incorporated. *Acis and Galatea* was Handel’s most frequently performed work during his lifetime, and its popularity did not end with the composer’s death: both Mozart and Mendelssohn made arrangements of the piece. The simplicity, grace, and sheer beauty of the vocal writing make the opera’s appeal understandable and assure its continued success.

Edward Jones

Synopsis**Act 1**

Nymphs and shepherds frolic in Arcadian bliss, celebrating their carefree lives. The semi-divine nymph Galatea is searching for her love—the shepherd Acis—and castigates the birds for igniting her desire. Acis, too, is seeking Galatea, but meets his fellow shepherd, Damon, instead, who implores him to tend to his flock. Merriment ensues at the end of Act 1 when the lovers find each other.

Act 2

Polyphemus—a cyclops—stomps on to the scene and attempts to woo Galatea, who flees. The shepherd Coridon advises the giant to try a different tactic with Galatea, but Acis intervenes and challenges the cyclops to a battle. Galatea entreats Acis to believe her constancy: the two sing a love duet which, unfortunately, is overheard by Polyphemus. The cyclops hurls a rock at Acis, which immediately kills him. The grief-stricken Galatea uses her divine power to transform Acis into a murmuring stream, which is extolled by all.