

MARC ANTONIO  
*e*  
CLEOPATRA

JOHANN ADOLF HASSE

*ars lyrica*  
HOUSTON

JAMIE BARTON

AVA PINE

MATTHEW DIRST

# MARC' ANTONIO

e

# CLEOPATRA

1725

JOHANN ADOLF HASSE

(1699 - 1783)

WORLD PREMIERE COMPLETE RECORDING BY

*ars lyrica*  
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## DISC ONE – Total Time - 46:22

1. Sinfonia: *Spiritoso e staccato – Allegro* - 3:04
2. Sinfonia: *Spiritoso e staccato – Grazioso* - 2:27
3. Recitativo: *Da quel salso elemento* - 2:32
4. Aria (Marc'Antonio): *Pur ch'io passa a te* - 6:11
5. Recit: *Signor, la tua sciagura* - 1:05
6. Aria (Cleopatra): *Morte col fiero aspetto* - 4:13
7. Recit: *Or che la mia fortuna* - 1:31
8. Aria (Marc'Antonio): *Fra le pompe peregrine* - 9:47
9. Recit: *Sì, mèl rammento, o caro* - 1:38
10. Aria (Cleopatra): *Un sol tuo sospiro* - 6:04
11. Recit: *Così rapido fugge e vola il tempo* - 2:51
12. Duetto (Marc'Antonio & Cleopatra): *Attendi ad amarmi* - 4:57

## DISC TWO – Total Time - 43:28

1. Recit: *Signor, la tua speranza* - 2:17
2. Aria (Cleopatra): *A Dio trono, impero a Dio* - 5:01
3. Recit: *Ab, tolgia il ciel, mia cara* - 0:40
4. Aria (Marc'Antonio): *Come veder patrei* - 6:06
5. Recit: *Lascia, Antonio, deb lascia* - 1:31
6. Aria (Cleopatra): *Quel candido armellino* - 8:37
7. Recit: *L'eroica tuo coraggio* - 1:00
8. Aria (Marc'Antonio): *Là tra i mirti degl'Elisi* - 8:01
9. Recit: *Poichè la morte sola* - 4:02
10. Duetto (Marc'Antonio & Cleopatra): *Bella etade avventurosa* - 6:09

*In 1721 a young German tenor by the name of Johann Adolf Hasse traveled to Italy to hone his craft and seek his fortune.*

His work at the Hamburg Opera and at the Brunswick court assured entrée into Italian musical circles, and he quickly found opportunities in Rome, Venice, and Florence, much as the youthful Handel had done just a few years earlier. The Italians even honored him with the same nickname they had given Handel, “Il Sassone,” despite Hasse’s non-Saxon origins. Settling in Naples, Hasse studied composition first with Nicola Porpora, then Alessandro Scarlatti, the grey eminence of Italian opera and oratorio, and began to write seriously for the stage. By 1730 he produced at least seven operas, eight intermezzi, and three *serenate*, the most significant of which is *Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra*.

As a genre, the *serenata* (or “serenade”) falls somewhere between solo cantata and full-length *opera seria*, though the dimensions and scoring of such works varies considerably. Owing perhaps to the long tradition of lover’s serenades, the Baroque serenata typically sets a familiar love story and was often used as a kind of compositional gift for an important patron. Concert performance was the norm, though many likely incorporated at least some theatrical gestures; some even included painted backdrops and costumes. *Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra* was written for a Neapolitan banker, at whose palace the work was first performed in 1725 by two of the greatest singers of the age: castrato Carlo Broschi (aka Farinelli), who took the role of Cleopatra, and contralto Vittoria Tesi, who appeared as Antony. While this kind of cross-casting might seem eccentric to us, in the eighteenth century gender-bending reinforced the artificial nature of the theatrical experience: naturalistic acting styles had not yet been invented, and the depiction of real-life situations was largely restricted to comic, not serious, forms of entertainment.



Johann Adolf Hasse  
(1699-1783)

The libretto, by poet and impresario Francesco Ricciardi, begins with Antony’s fateful military loss to Octavian’s superior forces. Putting aside all dreams of empire, Antony declares that his love for Cleopatra is worth more than any kingdom. Cleopatra is likewise reluctant to pursue the conflict with Rome, and is ready to die if necessary to preserve her honor. Reminiscing about their courtship and affair only makes their predicament more poignant: Antony & Cleopatra’s love will not defeat Octavian, though it gives them both comfort and courage. Rather than submit to Rome, Cleopatra proposes suicide, and though Antony initially rejects the idea, he too embraces it in the end. Eschewing sadness, the serenata ends with a joyful celebration of a “beautiful, eventful age,” a time when love triumphed, even over death.

Hasse's score makes vivid the complex emotions of his title characters in eight arias, two duets, and some highly expressive recitative; the whole is introduced by a *Sinfonia* in two movements. Though the work is scored for just strings and continuo, this recording adds various woodwinds (oboes, recorders, flute, and bassoon), rendering even more colorful Hasse's imaginative and supple ideas.

*Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra* likely had several performances in Naples and elsewhere and was mentioned by German theorist Johann Joachim Quantz (in 1755) as one of Hasse's most successful works. It brought him considerable fame in Italy, where it led to a number of full-length operas for Naples and other Italian cities. The work likely resonated deeply with Neapolitans — who, like the famous lovers, faced the unpleasant prospect of domination by a foreign power. But unlike Antony and Cleopatra, who choose death over captivity, Naples had grown accustomed to Hapsburg rule: the final recitative incorporates an obligatory bow to Emperor Karl VI and his consort Elizabeth.

From 1730 onwards Hasse served as *Kapellmeister* to the Saxon court in Dresden and was widely admired for his superior understanding of the lyric style. His operas were among the first seen by the young Mozart, and though Gluck's reforms threatened to put an end to Italian *opera seria*, Hasse continued to produce such works in Vienna, Venice, and elsewhere until the early 1780s. He and his wife, the great soprano Faustina Bordoni, were perhaps the first “power couple” in operatic history.

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1. - 2. *Sinfonia*

3. *Recitativo*

**MARC' ANTONIO**

Da quel salso elemento  
a cui d'un vasto impero  
vulli cieco fidar l'alta fortuna,  
ecco, o bella regina,  
che, te seguendo, a te ritorno  
e parmi che nulla di funesto  
abbia la sorte mia, se posso ancora  
sedermi avvinto d'amoroso laccio  
a la mia bella Cleopatra in braccio.

**CLEOPATRA**

Qual dunque a me ritorni,  
mio sposo e re? Come nomarti deggio?  
Sei vincitore o di vittoria privo  
trionfante d'Ottavio o fuggitivo?

**MARC' ANTONIO**

Mei chiedi ancor,  
non sai che là d'Azio sul mare  
chi de l'orbe roman l'imperio agusto  
contender volle al Cesare regnante  
era di Cleopatra ancor l'amante?

**CLEOPATRA**

Dunque fuggesti?

1. - 2. *Sinfonia*

3. *Recitative*

**MARK ANTONY**

From that briny element  
which I trust with the great fortune  
of a vast empire,  
here, o beautiful queen,  
whom I follow, I return;  
and for me there seems nothing dismal  
about my fate, so long as  
I can be wrapped in the loving snare  
of my beautiful Cleopatra's arms.

**CLEOPATRA**

In what guise do you return,  
my husband and king? What shall I call you?  
Are you the victor or the vanquished,  
triumphant over Octavian or a fugitive?

**MARK ANTONY**

Must you keep asking?  
Don't you know that he, who on the sea near Actium,  
for control of the mighty Roman empire  
dared to challenge Caesar,  
was the lover of Cleopatra?

**CLEOPATRA**

So you fled?

**MARC' ANTONIO**

Appena de' tuoi legni  
mirai da noi scoatarsi  
le fugaci antenne:  
chè, solo a te pansando,  
più non curai della famosa lite,  
da la battaglia io mi partii primiero  
dell'onor dell'impero  
posi in oblio le ambiziose idee  
e al mio rival lasciando  
libero il varco a la vittoria illustre  
mostrai d'amor per segno  
che Cleopatra val più assai d'un regno.

*4. Aria***MARC' ANTONIO**

Pur chi'io possa a te, ben mio,  
palesar quel che desio,  
più non curo dell'impero  
e sol basta al mio pensiero  
di regnar nel tuo bel cor.

Pur chi'io v'abbia solo il trono,  
al superbo mio nemico  
tutto il mondo e Roma io dono  
e per te dell'odio antico  
caro ben, mi scordo ancor.

*5. Recitativo***CLEOPATRA**

Signor, la tua sciagura grave m'è più  
perchè a me stessa io deggio rimpoverar,  
che fui nella naval tenzone

**MARK ANTONY**

As soon as I saw  
the fleeing sails of your ships  
pulling away from us,  
thinking only of you,  
I lost my desire for the battle,  
and so I left as soon as possible;  
and those ambitious ideas about honor and empire  
I consigned to oblivion.  
By leaving open for my rival  
the path to a brilliant victory,  
I showed proof of my love:  
Cleopatra is worth much more than a kingdom.

*4. Aria***MARK ANTONY**

If only I could reveal, my beloved,  
my desire for you,  
then I'd no longer care for empire,  
and it would be enough for me to know  
that I reign in your beautiful heart.

If only I could have its throne,  
then to my arrogant enemy  
I'd give the whole world and Rome;  
and that old enmity  
for your sake, my love, I would forget.

*5. Recitativo***CLEOPATRA**

Sir, your misfortune moves me deeply,  
and I must reproach myself,  
for in this naval combat

delle perdite tue prima gagione;  
ma di viltà non accusarmi e credi  
che s'io schvai della battaglia il rischio  
se 'l Cesar latino  
affrontar non osai con pugna ardita,  
la tema sol di schiavitù mi trasse  
lungi dal dubbio evento,  
chè di morte più acerbo mi sarebbe  
se'l nemico rival con fasto e orgoglio  
trarmi potesse avvinta in Compidoglio.

*6. Aria***CLEOPATRA**

Morte col fiero aspetto  
orror per me non ha,  
s'io posso in libertà  
morir sul trono mio,  
dove regnai.

L'anima uscir dal petto  
libera spera ognor,  
sin dalle fasce ancor  
sì nobile desio  
meco portai.

*7. Recitativo***MARC' ANTONIO**

Or che la mia fortuna  
con l'incostanza sua mi volge il crine  
la passata grandezza, il fasto antico  
e le cure amorose  
sveglian in mente mia  
memorie care sì, ma tormentose.  
Ah, ti ricordi, o bella,

It was the main cause of your defeat.  
But don't accuse me of cowardice  
and think that I deserted you somehow:  
if in opposing Caesar  
I did not dare enter the fight,  
it was only the fear of slavery that drew me  
far away from that chancy conflict;  
for it would be more bitter than death  
to have our enemy, with pomp and pride,  
drag me, vanquished, into the capitol.

*6. Aria***CLEOPATRA**

The fierce face of death  
holds no horror for me  
so long as I can, in freedom,  
die on the throne  
where I reigned.

My soul hopes at all times  
to escape free from my breast;  
since I left the cradle,  
I bore this noble desire  
within me.

*7. Recitativo***MARK ANTONY**

Now that fate,  
in its capriciousness, lets me look back,  
the former greatness, pageantry,  
and love's cares  
awaken in my mind;  
dear memories, yes, but tormenting ones.  
Ah, do you remember, beautiful one,

su le cilici arene,  
 quando di tua bellezza  
 a me splendor facesti il primo raggio  
 ch'io con umile omaggio  
 vinto mi resi e ch'al tuo bel sembiante  
 prigioniero d'Amore  
 più che al trono dell'Asia io diedi il core?

### 8. Aria

#### MARC' ANTONIO

Fra le pompe peregrine  
 mi splendeva il serto al crine  
 e col core pien d'amore  
 mi dicea: «Bell'idol mio,  
 sol desio languir per te.»

L'alto fasto e la grandezza  
 l'anima mia non cura e sprezza,  
 brama sol di far serene  
 le tue luci a le mie pene  
 con l'ardor della mia fè.

### 9. Recitativo

#### CLEOPATRA

Si, mel rammento, o caro, e tu vedesti  
 qual di pronuba idea dolce favella  
 I nostri cori in equal fiamme accese.  
 Frutto di nostri amori  
 ci diede il ciel cortese,  
 cui natura concesse  
 di beltade e valor doti supreme,  
 e dell'Asia e l'Egitto  
 fur l'ornamento e la speranza insieme.  
 Dell'oriente altero

the Sicilian sands  
 when the first ray of your beauty  
 shone upon me,  
 and I, in humble tribute,  
 yielded, a prisoner of Love,  
 and gave my heart to your beautiful soul  
 rather than to Asia's throne?

### 8. Aria

#### MARK ANTONY

Amidst the exotic pomp  
 her crown shone on me,  
 and with a heart full of love  
 she said to me, "My beloved,  
 I want only to pine for you."

For pageantry and grandeur  
 my soul has nothing but disdain;  
 it longs instead  
 for my sorrow to lighten your eyes  
 with the ardor of my faith.

### 9. Recitativo

#### CLEOPATRA

Yes, I remember, my love;  
 you saw how the sweet words of the marriage bed  
 lit a fire in both our hearts.  
 As fruit of our love,  
 heaven kindly gave us a son  
 to whom nature granted  
 the supreme gifts of beauty and valor,  
 and who, for Asia and Egypt  
 represents both grace and hope simultaneously.  
 From the haughty Orient

più regi umiliati al pie' traesti  
 e pur allor vedesti  
 ch'in sì bel trono assisa  
 di Cleopatra altro il piacer non era  
 che vagheggiar il tuo real sembiante  
 e ch'in te riguardava,  
 più ch'Antonio signore, Antonio amante.

### 10. Aria

#### CLEOPATRA

Un sol tuo sospiro,  
 un guardo d'amore  
 con dolce martiro  
 giungeva al mio core  
 le piaghe a sanar.

D'eguale desio  
 quell'anima ardea  
 e allor ti dicea:  
 «Sì, caro ben mio, te sol voglio amar.»

### 11. Recitativo

#### MARC' ANTONIO

Così rapido fugge e vola il tempo  
 e delle trasandate alme dolcezze  
 altro a noi non avanza  
 ch'inutile memoria,  
 che penosa ne fa la rimembranza.

#### CLEOPATRA

Se di prospera sorte  
 gustammo un tempo il lusinghiero aspetto,  
 or che con mesto oggetto

you drew kings to be humbled at your feet;  
 and yet you saw that for Cleopatra,  
 seated on her beautiful throne,  
 there was no greater pleasure  
 than the delights of your royal countenance,  
 and that she saw in you  
 not Antony the ruler but Antony the lover.

### 10. Aria

#### CLEOPATRA

A lone sigh from you,  
 a loving glance  
 with sweet pain  
 came to my heart  
 to heal my wounds.

With that same desire  
 my soul burned  
 and said to you,  
 "Yes, my beloved, I want to love only you."

### 11. Recitativo

#### MARK ANTONY

Time flees and flies so quickly,  
 of our former sweet pleasures  
 nothing is left  
 but useless memory,  
 which is painful to recall.

#### CLEOPATRA

Just as we once looked forward  
 to fortunate times,  
 now that misfortune

comincian le sventure ad agitarci  
 convien ch'alma reale,  
 sempre a se stessa eguale,  
 degl'infortuni suoi prema l'orgoglio.  
 Se libera sul soglio  
 poss'io morir, non avrà colpa il fato  
 che render possa il mio gran cor turbato.

#### MARC' ANTONIO

L'eroico tuo coraggio,  
 mia vezzosa regina,  
 l'Africa il vanta e a tuto il mondo è noto,  
 ma se Ottavio mi vinse in naval pugna  
 e fuggitivo io torno,  
 non son oppresso già.  
 Tanto mi resta di forze ancor ch'a lui  
 sarà la sua vittoria un di funesta.

#### CLEOPATRA

E donde mai può si abbattuta e doma  
 la fortuna d'Antonio trar di speme un conforto,  
 che i lacerati allori  
 faccia a lui rinverdire in su la chioma  
 e'l riconduca vincitore in Roma?

#### MARC' ANTONIO

L'Africa e l'Asia non son vint'ancora,  
 di poche infrante navi  
 tiene Ottavio acquisto  
 e posso ancor, s'ei baldanzoso aspira  
 a seguir le mie tracce,  
 d'Egitto in difesa  
 più re vassalli e fare  
 dubbia di nuovo a lui l'alta contesa.

troubles us with painful things,  
 a royal soul must always  
 stay true to itself,  
 and remain proud despite tragedy.  
 If in freedom on my throne  
 I die, my fate will not bear the blame  
 for troubling my generous heart.

#### MARK ANTONY

Your heroic courage,  
 my charming queen,  
 is vaunted in Africa and known the world over;  
 but if Octavian has defeated me at sea  
 and I return as a fugitive,  
 I am not yet vanquished.  
 So much of my strength remains  
 that his victory will one day be fatal.

#### CLEOPATRA

And from where, though despondent and subdued,  
 does Antony find the comfort of hope,  
 that his faded laurel wreath  
 might once again turn green  
 and return him victorious to Rome?

#### MARK ANTONY

Africa and Asia are not yet lost;  
 with only a few fragile ships,  
 Octavian maintains these acquisitions,  
 and if he is rash enough  
 to follow my tracks,  
 in defense of Egypt  
 I can still call up enough royal vassals  
 to shift this conflict's outcome.

#### 12. Duetto

#### MARC' ANTONIO

Attendi ad amarmi,  
 vezzosa regina.

#### CLEOPATRA

Più fida in amarti  
 di me non si trova,  
 ma, o Dio, che ti giova  
 senz'armi l'amor?

#### MARC' ANTONIO

Che amor saprà darmi  
 vittoria e valor?

Un cor che non teme  
 non può dirsi vinto,  
 fortuna se 'l preme,  
 opprimer non sa.

#### CLEOPATRA

Ma questo è conforto  
 d'un cor disperato,  
 che contro del fato  
 non mostra viltà.

#### 12. Duet

#### MARK ANTONY

Keep loving me,  
 charming queen.

#### CLEOPATRA

One more faithful to you  
 you'll never find,  
 but, oh God, what good to you  
 is love without weapons?

#### MARK ANTONY

Because love will give me  
 victory and courage?

A heart without fear  
 cannot be defeated,  
 despite fate's oppression  
 it refuses to yield.

#### CLEOPATRA

Oh, what comfort  
 for a desperate heart,  
 which facing ruin  
 shows no cowardice.



1. *Recitativo***CLEOPATRA**

Signor, la tua speranza  
 è una speme fallace e lusinghiera,  
 che il ver t'adombra e contro a' detti miei  
 fa che ti cred'ancora  
 infelice assai men di quel che sei.  
 Quelli che a me tu senti  
 principi a te vassalli,  
 l'Asia intiera e le forze dell'Egitto  
 vinte d'Aszio già fur nel sol conflitto;  
 e a l'orgoglioso Cesare nemico  
 altro di più non resta  
 che a valicar poche onde  
 per trionfar di nostra sorte  
 e tutta vedersi a' piedi suoi  
 di schiavitù de la catene avvinta  
 l'Africa e l'Asia, umiliata e vinta.

**MARC' ANTONIO**

Dunque che far dobbiam, poichè è sì dura  
 nostra fiera sventura,  
 che ci si toglie ancora  
 vive aure di speranza,  
 quella che a tutti gli infelici avanza.

**CLEOPATRA**

Tu sai che il disperar d'ogni salute  
 degl'infelici è l'unica speranza.  
 Io dell'invida Parca

1. *Recitative***CLEOPATRA**

Sir, your hope  
 is tempting but deceptive;  
 it masks the truth, and contrary to my words,  
 it makes you see yourself  
 less fortunate than you really are.  
 Those who you see  
 as my princes and as your vassals,  
 all of Asia and the forces of Egypt  
 were defeated together at Actium;  
 and proud, hostile Caesar  
 needs only  
 to overcome a few waves  
 to triumph over us  
 and to see at his feet,  
 defeated by the chains of slavery,  
 Africa and Asia, humbled and vanquished.

**MARK ANTONY**

Then what shall we do, since our fate  
 is so cruel and hard  
 that even the last glimmer of hope,  
 which is all that remains for the ill-fated,  
 is snuffed out.

**CLEOPATRA**

You know that to abandon thought of rescue  
 is the only hope of the unfortunate.  
 I neither tremble nor fear

l'orrido aspetto non pavento o temo  
 quando è rimedio a un infortunio estremo.

2. *Aria***CLEOPATRA**

«A Dio trono, impero a Dio.»  
 dirò allor con alma forte,  
 «io vi lascio e corro a morte  
 per morire in libertà.»

Ed a te dirò, ben mio:  
 «Se da me l'esempio apprendi,  
 a seguir chi t'ama attendi  
 con l'istessa maestà.»

3. *Recitativo***MARC' ANTONIO**

Ah, tolga il ciel, mia cara,  
 auguri sì funesti,  
 ancor non mi cred'io tanto infelice  
 che per toglierti a l'onta  
 d'esser schiava d'Ottavio  
 io sia costretto a darti  
 come in un estremo male  
 pegno estremo d'amor colpo mortale.

4. *Aria***MARC' ANTONIO**

Come veder potrei  
 quegl'occhi, o Dio, che sono

in the horrible face of envious Destiny,  
 if it relieves a more extreme misfortune.

2. *Aria***CLEOPATRA**

"Farewell, throne, farewell empire,"  
 I shall heartily say,  
 "I leave you and embrace death,  
 in order to die in freedom."

And to you, my beloved, I will say,  
 "If you heed my example,  
 then follow she who loves you,  
 with the same dignity."

3. *Recitative***MARK ANTONY**

May heaven carry away, my love,  
 such morbid predictions.  
 I am not so desperate  
 to save you from the shame  
 of being Octavian's slave  
 that I'd feel compelled to give you,  
 even in such dire circumstances,  
 a deathblow as a final pledge of love.

4. *Aria***MARK ANTONY**

How could I look on  
 as those eyes, oh God,



luce degl'occhi miei  
pallidi a me girar!

Ah, ch'in pensarvi, o cara,  
sento una pena amara,  
che passa con ufroro  
il core a lacerar.

### 5. Recitativo

#### CLEOPATRA

Lascia, Antonio, deh lascia  
di sì teneri accenti il mesto sfogo.  
Patimmo già quando dell'Asia il trono  
illustrato splendea dalle nostre armi  
e da' trionfi nostri;  
tra le pompe e tra gl'ostri  
di prospera fortuna  
su l'ali del favore  
le dolcezze gustai d'un dolce amore.  
Or infelici siam, tutta già piove  
sovra del nostro capo  
di sdegnato destin l'ira crudele.  
D'inutili querele vano è lo sfogo.  
Altro a noi far non resta  
che con anima forte  
gir gloriosi ad affrontar la morte.

### 6. Aria

#### CLEOPATRA

Quel candido armellino  
per non macchiar la spoglia

the light of my own eyes,  
grow dim to me!

When I think of that, dearest,  
I feel a bitter pain  
that strikes with fury  
and tears at my heart.

### 5. Recitative

#### CLEOPATRA

Stop, Antony, please stop  
weeping over such tender things.  
We have already seen the illustrious throne of Asia  
resplendant with our weapons  
and our triumphs;  
amidst the pomp and majesty  
of prosperous fortune,  
on wings of favor  
I enjoyed the sweetness of our tender love.  
Now we face distress, with the cruel rage  
of scornful destiny  
raining down upon our heads.  
Our laments are pointless.  
Nothing remains for us  
but to prepare with brave hearts  
to face an honorable death.

### 6. Aria

#### CLEOPATRA

This snow-white ermine  
avoids staining its coat

al rischio sta vicino,  
nè de fuggir s'invoglia,  
ma lieto al cacciatore  
abbandonar si sa.

Pria ch'un superbo impero  
macchi il mio regio onore,  
di morte il volto fiero  
non mi spaventerà.

### 7. Recitativo

#### MARC' ANTONIO

L'eroico tuo coraggio, bella regina,  
ammiro io sì che tutto  
sento nelle mie vene sento nelle mie vene  
risvegliarsi l'ardire.  
Se in vita io fui tuo compagno fedele,  
voglio ch'ancora  
a l'estremo tuo fato unito io mora.

### 8. Aria

#### MARC' ANTONIO

Là tra I mirti degl'Elisi  
indivisi ancor vivremo  
e colà discenderemo  
senza macchia di viltà.

Tra le ombre dove giace  
lieta pace e vera gioia  
ci amerem poi senza noia  
con ardore e fedeltà.

but doesn't flee from danger;  
instead of flight  
it offers itself up joyously  
to the hunter.

Though an arrogant empire  
tries to stain my royal honor,  
the fierce face of death  
will not frighten me.

### 7. Recitative

#### MARK ANTONY

Your heroic courage, beautiful queen,  
I admire so much that  
I feel resurgent in my veins  
my own boldness.  
If in life I was your faithful companion,  
I want also at the end  
to be united with you in death.

### 8. Aria

#### MARK ANTONY

Among the myrtles of Elysium,  
we will live forever  
and we will descend there  
unstained by cowardice.

Amid the shadows, where  
glad peace and true joy play,  
we will never tire of loving each other  
with passion and faithfulness.

9. *Recitativo***CLEOPATRA**

Poichè la morte sola  
 può renderci onorati ed indivisi  
 delle nostre sfortune ad onta ancora,  
 caro mio ben, si mora;  
 e l'orgoglioso vincitor latino,  
 se avvien ch'in queste arene  
 a trionfar di nostra sorte ei venga,  
 mezzo il piacer di sua vittoria ottenga.

**MARC' ANTONIO**

Si, moriremo, o cara,  
 ch'ai decreti del cielo  
 mal qua giù si contrasta.  
 Su le perdite mie voglio ch'innalzi  
 Cesare un solo impero,  
 e che restando al successor la chiama  
 degl'allori di Roma  
 stabile renda di tal scettri il pondo  
 a la man che dovrà reggere il mondo.  
 Quindi al volger degli anni  
 sotto il cielo germano  
 sorgerà nuovo sole  
 che da la maure arene ai lidi coì  
 la terra illustrerà coi raggi suoi:  
 questi fu Carlo il sovraumano, il grande,  
 che con opre ammirande  
 oscurerà quanti o la Grecia o Roma  
 coi chiari inchiostri suoi  
 sinora a noi vantò famosi eroi.

9. *Recitativo***CLEOPATRA**

Since only death  
 can render us honorable and united,  
 despite our misfortunes,  
 my beloved, so we wish to die.  
 And if the victorious Roman  
 should come proudly onto these sands  
 to triumph over our fate,  
 his victory will be worth far less.

**MARK ANTONY**

Yes, we will die, my beloved,  
 for the judgment of heaven  
 cannot be opposed.  
 After I'm gone I want Caesar to build  
 a single, united empire,  
 one where all those who succeed  
 on the laurel of Rome  
 will with the steady weight of the scepter  
 in his hand rule the world.  
 Then, with the passing of the years,  
 beneath the German sky,  
 a new sun will rise,  
 which from the Moorish sands to the Eastern shores  
 will brighten the land with its rays:  
 just as Charles, the superhuman, the great,  
 who with his admirable works  
 obscures those that Greece or Rome  
 praised with their noble words  
 until now as heroes.

**CLEOPATRA**

Di sì fulgido sole  
 sarà compagna una lucente stella,  
 di cui più chiara e bella  
 unqua non vide il sol cui l'Istro inaffia.  
 Al balenar de' suoi bei raggi  
 oscuro fia d'ogni altra beltade  
 e il pregio e il vanto,  
 tai che colui che in Mantua  
 trasse i natali e che d'eroi cantando  
 tant'alto ascese in sul castalio monte  
 da l'orrido Acheronte  
 tornar dovrebbe a riveder le Muse.  
 Così d'Elisabetta il nome illustre  
 degna tromba sia data,  
 onde ei possa volar per chiaro stile  
 dal biondo Idaspe a la remota Tile.

10. *Duetto***CLEOPATRA, MARC' ANTONIO**

Bella etade avventurosa  
 godi sì ch'andrai fastosa  
 di tua gran felicità.

Perchè ignude d'ogni zelo  
 scenderan per te dal cielo  
 la giustizia e la pietà.

**CLEOPATRA**

The shining sun  
 will be accompanied by a bright star,  
 clearer and more beautiful than any  
 ever seen in the lands watered by the Danube.  
 The sparkle of its beautiful rays  
 will obscure the honor and pride  
 of all other great beauties  
 so much so that he, who was born in Mantua  
 and who, singing the praises of the heroes,  
 ascended to Apollo's mountain  
 from the dread Acheron<sup>1</sup>,  
 will need to seek out the Muses anew.  
 Thus let Elizabeth's illustrious name  
 be honored, so that  
 it resounds with great clarity  
 from the yellow Hydaspes<sup>2</sup> to remote Thule.<sup>3</sup>

10. *Duet***CLEOPATRA, MARK ANTONY**

Beautiful, eventful age,  
 you delight in passing,  
 proud of your good fortune.

Because you've been stripped of all cares,  
 justice and mercy from heaven  
 will descend upon you.

1 - "Acheron" = the River Styx, the entrance to Hades. Also used as a synonym for Hell by Vergil.

2 - "Hydaspes" = the Jhelum river in India

3 - "Remote Thule" = "Ultima Thule" was used at the time to refer to Iceland, although it can also refer to a poetic idea of an impossibly far place.



# ars lyrica

## MUSIC OF THE BAROQUE

Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, **ARS LYRICA HOUSTON** has begun to make a name for itself in the international early music community. Its distinctive programming favors little-known dramatic and chamber works that merit revival, and its home series “sets the agenda for imaginative period-instrument programming in Houston,” according to the *Houston Chronicle*. Ars Lyrica’s numerous premières include the first American performance of Handel’s *Il Trionfo del Tempo e della Verità* and local premières of Jacopo Peri’s *Euridice*, John Blow’s *Venus and Adonis*, Handel’s *Flavio*, and Monteverdi’s *1610 Vespers*, among other works. These pioneering efforts have begun to attract international attention: *Gramophone* recently praised Ars Lyrica’s debut CD for its “exemplary skill and taste,” the ensemble’s musicians for their “impassioned performance” of never-before recorded works by Alessandro Scarlatti. More information on Ars Lyrica can be found at [www.arslyricahouston.org](http://www.arslyricahouston.org).

## MATTHEW DIRST

Artistic Director and conductor **MATTHEW DIRST** is the first American to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord, including first prize at the American Guild of Organists Young Artist Competition (1990) and second prize at the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition (1993).

In addition to his work with Ars Lyrica, he also serves as Associate Professor of Music at the University of Houston and has authored numerous articles on Baroque performance practice and on Bach in particular. Noted for his stylish playing of both familiar and little-known repertory, his recent performances of Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” were praised as “an extremely taut and accurate traversal” (*The New York Sun*), “a technically dazzling, deeply moving performance” (*Houston Chronicle*), “of irresistible rhythmic impulse [and] dazzling virtuosity” (*Dallas Morning News*).



Photo by Darren Sabino



Photo by Karen Almond

## AVA PINE

Soprano **AVA PINE**, admired by audiences and critics alike for her “sheer vocal beauty, ease and eloquence, and “rewarding musicianship,” excels in music ranging from Baroque to contemporary. In her debut with the Florentine Opera, she was praised as the production’s “vocal queen...who sang and acted Pamina with heartbreaking, honeyed sweetness.” She has sung numerous roles, including Melissa in Boston Baroque’s production of Handel’s *Amadigi di Gaula*, Josephine for Lyric Opera of Kansas City’s *HMS Pinafore*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Naples, and Adina in Fort Worth Opera’s production of *L’Elisir d’amore*. She is a frequent collaborator with early music ensembles, including Ars Lyrica, Concert Royal, the New York Baroque Dance Company, the Dallas Bach Society, the Orchestra of New Spain, and the Texas Camerata. She has also appeared as an oratorio soloist with the Dallas and Fort Worth Symphony Orchestras, the Orpheus Chamber Singers, and with the famed choir of men and boys at St Thomas Episcopal Church, New York.

## JAMIE BARTON

Mezzo-soprano **JAMIE BARTON**, a winner of the 2007 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, has been described by *Opera News* as a “rising star” with a “sumptuous voice.” A 2009 graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, she has already appeared with the Metropolitan Opera as the Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, as Emilia in *Otello* with the Canadian Opera Company and as Marcellina in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, among other roles. She has been heard in recital at the Kennedy Center, under the auspices of the Marilyn Horne Foundation, and at Carnegie Hall as part of their *Great Singers: Evenings of Song* series. Additional concert engagements have included Bernstein’s *Opening Prayer* and “Jeremiah” Symphony with the Colorado Symphony and a number of appearances with Ars Lyrica. Her oratorio credits include Brahms’ *Alto Rhapsody*, Durufle’s *Requiem*, Bach’s *Cantata 197*, Handel’s *Alexander’s Feast*, Honegger’s *King David*, Mozart’s *Requiem*, and the world premiere of Chris Theofanidis’s *The Refuge*.



Photo by Jonathan Timmes



**ARS LYRICA HOUSTON** (on period instruments)

*Marc' Antonio* Jamie Barton, *mezzo-soprano*  
*Cleopatra* Ava Pine, *soprano*

Zachary Carrettin, Hae-a Lee, Maria Lin - *violin I*  
Alan Austin, Kurt Johnson, Nadia Lesinska - *violin II*  
James Dunham, Erika Lawson - *viola*  
Barrett Sills - *cello*  
Deborah Dunham - *violone*

Kathryn Montoya, Kathleen Staten - *oboe & recorder*  
Kathleen Staten - *traverse*  
Benjamin Kamins - *bassoon*  
Richard Savino - *theorbo & guitar*  
Matthew Dirst - *conductor & harpsichord*

**Ars Lyrica Houston – Marc' Antonio e Cleopatra – Johann Adolf Hasse – DSL-92115**

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