

## SYLVAN GLADES

On **Sunday 10th May** Austral Harmony welcome you to a pastoral-themed baroque music day.

The venue is **St John's College Chapel** in the beautiful grounds of the University of Queensland. The light intimate space of the chapel features cedar wood and Australian timbers, perfect for our Arcadian setting.

The **SYLVAN GLADES Chamber Music Workshop** will run from **12.30 - 2.30pm** including a short break, and we will be looking at pastoral movements from Concerto Pastorale by Johann Christoph Pez - scored for 2 treble recorders & strings with opportunity for the string parts to be doubled by other instruments. Further repertoire TBC after 10th April. Music will be supplied in advance.

The Early Music Society of Queensland is most generously lending their **baroque string quartet instruments** (violins, viola, `cello) with gut strings and baroque bows for anyone interested in giving these a try. Please send Expression of Interest via the Enrolment Form available from [janeysbach@gmail.com](mailto:janeysbach@gmail.com).

Please bring a packed lunch if you would like to attend Austral Harmony's **Sylvan Glades & Crystal Fountains Concert from 3-4pm** embracing the myth of Acis & Galatea and other pastoral music by Handel. FREE to workshop attendees.

Please register via ENROLMENT FORM  
**ENROLMENT DEADLINE: 10th April**

## ACIS & GALATEA

Based on the Greek myth of Acis and Galatea as told by Ovid in his epic poem, *Metamorphoses*, George Frideric Handel's drama in miniature is an enchanting evocation of love and nature expressed in a continual flow of mellifluous melody. The little opera was premiered in 1718, a few years after Handel settled in England and was employed as court composer to James Brydges, the Earl of Carnarvon (later Duke of Chandos) at Cannons, his stately home in an outlying district of London. The establishment retained a small number of musicians including five singers who gave intimate performances for private audiences.

The piece has remained enduringly popular, revised and performed throughout Handel's lifetime. Towards the end of the C18th Mozart re-orchestrated the work adding clarinets, horns and prominent parts for two bassoons. Forty years later Mendelssohn expanded the orchestral forces to include wind and brass, and Meyerbeer planned a performance in the mid C19th.

A libretto after John Dryden amalgamates verses of English poets John Gay, Alexander Pope and John Hughes. Doubling the vocal lines with instruments is a characteristic of Handel's compositional style, and our 'Sylvan Glades & Crystal Fountains' suite of instrumentally conceived arias is true to C18th arrangements for small ensemble.

A 'rural prospect, diversified with rocks, groves and a river' sets the Arcadian scene where nymphs are happy and free. Plains are verdant, mountains woody, streams purling, and fountains bubbling. The seasons are favourably described, and reference is made to the shepherd's tuneful pipe. Hearts are set on fire as Acis, our conventional gentle shepherd, seeks for his love amid the woods (*Where Shall I Seek the Charming Fair?*) Galatea is the object of his affection - a semi-devine water nymph who sings of her passion as the thrilling strains of birdsong kindle fierce desire (*Hush Ye Pretty Warbling Quire*). Their romantic meeting excites amorous feelings with *Love in Her Eyes Sits Playing*, while *As When the Dove Laments her Love* is a song illustrating the affectionate billing and cooing of a dove. Things take a dramatic turn at the entrance of the monster Polyphemus who is equally desirous of Galatea, as expressed in his famously bombastic *O ruddier than the cherry, O sweeter than the berry* aria. A shepherd counsels soft and kind treatment with graceful lyricism in *Would you Gain the Tender Creature*. When Acis is killed by the giant, emotions are tense and a chorus sings poignantly of mourning in doleful strains (*Mourn all ye Muses*). Finally, through the divine intervention of Galatea, Acis is transformed to assume eternal existence in the shape of a murmuring stream (*Galatea dry thy Tears*).

As perfect companions to this evergreen entertainment, Austral Harmony perform small-scale chamber works by Handel - a Trio with thematic references to other works composed during the Cannons period, and a Quadro which is likewise stylistically similar in its economical use of musical means.



François Boucher - Shepherd Piping to a Shepherdess