

DYNAMIC

CDS 626/1-2 **DDD**
DIGITAL LIVE RECORDING

Antonio Vivaldi
(Venice, 1678 - Vienna 1741)

Argippo

Dramma per musica, libretto by Domenico Lalli
Reconstruction by Ondřej Macek

Argippo	Veronika Mráčková Fučíková
Zanaida	Pavla Štěpničková
Osira	Jana Bínová - Koucká
Silvero	Barbora Sojková
Tisifaro	Zdeněk Kapl

Hofmusici
Baroque Ensemble
Artistic Director: Ondřej Macek

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ENGLISH LIBRETTO

1 Sinfonia

ACT ONE

Cabinet of the Grand Mogor, in Indian style.

The Scene is set in the Royal palace of Agra, capital city and place of residence of the Grand Mogor.

First Scene

Tisifaro, and Zanaida weeping.

2 **Tisifaro** - Daughter, must I live thus for ever? Must bitter tears for ever wet your cheeks, and their source be unknown to me?

Zanaida - I am unworthy to be called your daughter: suffice this.

Tisifaro - Daughter...

Zanaida - If, as you say, I am your daughter, why tarry? Bare your sword, thrust it in me, and thus alone be just and merciful, because I shall be punished; and in an instant removed from this cruel slow dying.

Tisifaro - Speak, reveal...

Zanaida - Leave me, father, I must go.

Tisifaro - Where?

Zanaida - To my death.

Tisifaro - Why?

Zanaida - My honour...

Tisifaro - Ah, go on.

Zanaida - ... is what...

Tisifaro - Yes?

Zanaida - ... makes me...

Tisifaro - Continue. (Oh, my troubled mind!)

Zanaida - I cannot say more; I am distraught.

3 If a lightning, however slow, does not avenge my insult, that wicked man will fall, victim of my just wrath. (And yet I am your wife, return and I shall forgive you. My eyes, may through your tears flow all the anguish of my betrayed love.) (She leaves.)

Scene II

Tisifaro, and Silvero.

4 **Tisifaro** - What confused notions of spouse, revenge, honour and betrayed faith does she rave about?

Silvero - Sir...

Tisifaro - Prince: I am increasingly worried about Zanaida

Silvero - Seeing your trouble I lose my peace as well. (My error oppresses me.)

Tisifaro - And will no human remedy serve any purpose? Oh woe!

I have throne, and wealth, and I disdain myself:
I lived and reigned: I live no more, nor do I reign.
(He leaves.)

Scene III

Silvero alone.

Hapless Zanaida,

You think Argippo is your spouse since I, with hidden deception, tied the sacred knot with you. I was glad then, now I am desperate. Argippo, having married another one, arouses a tremendous fury in this princess, and I feel crushed by remorse, which painfully scourges my heart, a well-deserved punishment for too bold an error.

5 Remorse is the punishment of one's faults! It corrodes, it bleeds you from within, a painful terror.

The entrance of Tisifaro's royal palace, with view over part of the city, bathed by the river Gemini; from a strange vessel are disembarking, with their retinue:

Scene IV

Argippo, and Osira, welcomed with pomp by Tisifaro, before whom they lay down, as a mark of respect, the insignia of their kingdom as a ratification of vassalage; then, singing the following chorus, they all enter the palace, from which a rav-ing Zanaida runs out, followed by Silvero.

6 **Chorus** - The king of Cingone alights on the Indian shores of the billowy Gemini, husband and lover of a fair beauty. And before the Grand Mogor unswerving respect and faith he pledges, and asks for his friendship. (All file in.)

7 **Zanaida** - They are here? The wicked perjurers? The traitor...? My rival...? Is it true? And I don't strike yet? Heart, what are you thinking? Revenge, ah God! But the deep wound in my heart bleeds once again.

Silvero - Princess, curb ...

Zanaida - Curb? What? I only yearn for death, slaughter, destruction... Alas, what am I saying!

Silvero - (I would tell her that I am the traitor.)

Zanaida - How many times have I repented being cruel towards your love!

Silvero - Why were you cruel?

Zanaida - It was my crucial Fate.

Silvero - (I can still hope.) But if I were to return to my first love, would you satisfy it with equal ardour?

Zanaida - When I could, I did not want to. Ah, for pity's

sake,
leave this place.
If Zanaida should love again,
only Silvero would set her heart on fire.

Scena V

Osira with her retinue, and the above.

Osira - Royal lady...

Zanaida - O Gods!

help me. So bold are they
that they dare appear before me
those monsters from the infernal Cocytus?
My eyes, ah, turn away
from the horrible sight, or
be blinded and do not open for ever more.
(She leaves in a fury.)

Osira - What does this mean?

Silvero - Bear it,

do not be surprised. Ever since the day
you married, she has been deeply troubled.

Argippo - O wicked Destiny!

Osira - Adverse fate.

Argippo - But prince, you leave her
alone in her madness? Go, follow her
and offer her assistance.

Silvero - (Remorse is killing me.)
(He leaves.)

Argippo - It often thunders
when, by his flock,
in his wonted dark cave,
the fearful shepherd lies.
Then the storm passes,
dawns returns and the sky is serene;
the shepherd rises,
and the sight of a fair day
chases his fear away.
(He leaves.)

Scene VI

Osira alone.

9 The fury of Zanaida
also stirs within me, and I do not understand
the reason for it;
yet in my heart
is a vague feeling of dread.
10 No sooner had I seen
a stretch of clear sky
than a terrible storm
has come to cloud it over.
But against fate
death at least will be strong;
for my tender heart
seems born to fear.

The royal gardens.

Scene VII

Tisifaro, then Zanaida.

11 **Tisifaro** - What good is having defeated many enemies
if, deprived of rest or comfort,
after a thousand dangers,
I shipwreck in the very harbour?

Zanaida - Father.

Tisifaro - Daughter.

Zanaida - I have decided...

Tisifaro - What?

Zanaida - I shall reveal...

Tisifaro - Perhaps
your inner troubles?

Zanaida - Precisely...

Tisifaro - Speak.

Zanaida - But first promise me...

Tisifaro - What?

Zanaida - That after hearing
the cause of my grief...

Tisifaro - Tell me!

Zanaida - You will kill me.

Tisifaro - What are you saying?

Zanaida - Oh shame!

Tisifaro - Courage, my daughter.

Zanaida - I think...

Tisifaro - Go on.

Zanaida - That my dreadful sorrow...
Since my lips fail, let this letter speak.
(She gives him a letter and leaves.)

Tisifaro - What terrible image
of fateful misfortunes
will be contained in this letter? I see
my fears approach, and I open it and read.
*Father: a fierce traitor
made me his wife with a hidden union,
then he left and forsook me; he married
another woman, and it is not enough:
he appears before me with her, and mocks
my honour, tainting my life
with the bitterest poison.*

The bold man is Argippo.

Argippo? Oh God!

Oh miserable father! Oh lost honour!

Oh unpropitious day! Oh sorrowful event!

Oh daughter! Oh traitor! Oh treachery.

12 There can be no forgiveness,

I am no longer a father
but a monster from Hades
overwhelmed with fury.

What am I to do

torn as I am

between honour

and love?

Gods, take pity on me,
comfort me in my grief.

13 Sinfonia

ACT TWO

Atrium of the royal palace.

Scene I

Silvero, Zanaida, then Osira.

14 Silvero - Zanaida, if a measure of pity for my love still lives in you, promise me forgiveness, silence and faith, and hear me out.

Zanaida - I promise you all.

Silvero - And I shall reveal all.

Osira - Royal lady.

Silvero - (Ah, how untimely!)

Zanaida - O God!

What horrible ghost appears before me?

Ah, I cannot stand the sight.

Osira - And why do you bear such hatred against me?

Zanaida - No, no, queen, I hate my own pain in you, not the innocence of your soul. In your countenance I see my own harrowed heart, the traitor, the mocked faith, the source of my tears. Ah, allow me to avert my eyes from you.

Osira - I comply with all your wishes, since I offend you.

Silvero - (She's raving mad, and I know why.)

15 Zanaida - Of my just pain ask no more

if you don't want to taint your innocent heart.

Because of you, it swells in my bosom, but you are not the one

who caused it to be born in me:

it is not your fault

if I am suffering.

(She leaves.)

Scene II

Osira, and Silvero, then Argippo.

16 Osira - What unfair reasons make her complain and leave?

Silvero - You shall not learn the slightest worry from lips moved by troubled thoughts.

Osira - I see that, yet I am growing worried.

Silvero - Your dear husband will comfort you.

Argippo - Prince.

Osira - My life! *(To Argippo.)*

Argippo - Beloved wife.

Silvero - I bow to you, Sire, and leave you with your beloved.

Osira - Dearest, my courage begins to waver.

Argippo - And why this sudden sorrow?

Osira - I do not know; I feel my peace threatened, but cannot tell by what.

Argippo - Do not let an unjustified fear disturb your peace. Now I must go to the King, who has asked for me.

Osira - My fear is mounting. O God!

Argippo - I must go, fear nothing, my treasure.

17 If anyone criticises your fear, he shall see our love, he shall hear about it, and then he'll know whether your heart is weak.

When love springs from such a beautiful source, even the heroes submit to it, even the Gods are in awe.

Scene III

Osira alone.

18 I fear, but I know not what I fear. Dreams, ghosts, gloomy nocturnal shadows foretell misfortunes, wherefore I feel I am dying, my heart stabbed by my unfounded torment.

19 A certain something weighs upon my heart, and though it is no grief it plagues me. I am troubled, and know not why, but only a wicked fear can frighten my soul.

Rooms of Tisifaro.

Scene IV

Tisifaro, and Silvero.

20 Tisifaro - Most wicked stars, what good is it that from the Orient's most famous lands, kings come to lay tributes at my feet, if I end up being equal in misfortune to my vassals?

Silvero - And if I were able to mend your heart's wound, Sire?

Tisifaro - You cannot mend a wound that has become infected.

Silvero - And yet... (Must I accuse myself?)

Tisifaro - Ah, touch honour with an impure hand but once and the stain can only be washed in blood.

Silvero - And blood...

(Be strong, my heart!) If I were the one who upon your honour ...

Tisifaro - Argippo is approaching; leave me: soon

I shall tell you all about
the illness and its cure.

Silvero - I do as you bid and leave.

(The more I hide, the more I betray my duty.)

21 I would give my blood and my life
to help you,

to appease your misery.

If I talk, I will suffer,

if I keep silent I already feel
my heart throb in my breast.

(*He exits.*)

Scene V

Argippo, and Tisifaro.

22 **Argippo** - Noble soul, worthy of the vastest empires,
not only of one, I come to you
as your subject.

Tisifaro - I am in dire need
of your advice, my faithful friend,
in a serious matter.

(I'll pretend for the moment with the unworthy traitor.)

Argippo - I hang from your lips.

Tisifaro - Have a seat. What
I must reveal to you requires
your long and faithful silence.

Argippo - As you order, I seat myself.

Tisifaro - Do you see, o king, this letter?

Argippo - I see it.

Tisifaro - It is
from a friendly prince, who asks for
some drastic remedy
to his extreme grief.

Argippo - What afflicts him?

Tisifaro - You should know
that Heaven granted him
a single daughter, loved
as much as I love Zanaida;
a young king,
who was visiting,
fell in love with her. Her weakness,
the prince's boldness, and love
led them to tie

a secret union; and thus
the guileless girl (oh, horror!)
was deprived of her innocence.

Argippo - A deed unworthy of a prince.

Tisifaro - There is more. Listen: the faithless man
forsake her, fell in love with another,
tied another knot.

Argippo - Brute, wicked man.

Tisifaro - There is more yet.

Argippo - More, whatever else?

Tisifaro - He went back,
with his wife, to the royal palace
where he committed his fault,
showing no fear, nor shame for his crime.

Argippo - This is too much, it goes beyond all limits!

Tisifaro - Now that poor father
asks my advice.

What would you do?

Argippo - I am not worthy, Sire...

Tisifaro - Answer.

Argippo - I dare not.

Tisifaro - I order you.

Argippo - Then I obey.

I would force that traitor, that brute
to slay with his own hand
his wife, then give his hand,
still dripping with the blood
of his chosen spouse,
to the betrayed woman, who is equally his.

Tisifaro - What? Would it not be
fairer to slay the man, who is guilty,
than the woman, who is not?

Argippo - No. That way the outrage
would be redressed but not the honour. He
would die twice if he had
to kill his own wife, and she has no use
for her innocence, if her very life kills
somebody else's honour.

Tisifaro - There is no other way?

Argippo - This one seems to me the best.

Tisifaro - Since you choose such a mean,
here, this is the letter: open it and read.

Argippo - *Father: a bold traitor
joined with me in secret, making me his wife,
then left, forsaking me; he married another
woman, and it is not enough:
now he comes before me with her, and mocks
my honour; the bitterest poison
of my life,
the impudent man is Argippo.*

Argippo?

Tisifaro - Indeed.

Argippo - She lies.

Tisifaro - You did. You pronounced
your own sentence: now carry it out,
and hope for no mercy from my fury.

Argippo - Gods, what treachery! At least, sir,
summon Zanaida; let her look me in the eye
and, if she can, convince me.

Tisifaro - Here she is.

Scene VI

Zanaida, and the above.

Tisifaro - Daughter, Argippo wants to speak to you.
He says he is innocent.

Zanaida - You, innocent?

Did you not, covered
by the darkness of the night...

(Ah, just Gods!

Why do you not hurl your bolts of lightning?)

Did you not join with me?

Ah, what shame, what distress!

Did you not say to me, wicked man,
that upon your return your would have
revealed our union to my father?

And now, bold man,

you come back married to another, and with her?
And you say you are innocent? Ah, wicked monster!
I would tear you to pieces... ah, no; no revenge
could ever redress such an outrage! Oh God!

Who can help me? Who can counsel me?
Death. Yes, my death. Only
my death, father, can help, and your forgiveness.

Argippo - (Yet I am innocent.)

Tisifaro - (The traitor is confused.)

Zanaida - I want no father,
but a judge, and if my error
arouses any pity in you, you are unjust.

23 I am guilty of staining my honour,
you are guilty of trusting me.

Death, oh God! I expect from you.

Offended father, just king,

vent your fury on me.

Have no mercy, either on me

or on him, who spurned me.

I shall die for my weakness,

he will die for his betrayal.

Scene VII

Tisifaro, and Argippo.

24 Tisifaro - There is enough evidence. And now
carry out the punishment you yourself
deemed appropriate,

though smaller by far than your excess.

(He exits.)

Argippo - I, an adviser? A judge! I, the minister
of the cruel death of an innocent?

Of my own wife? Of my beloved idol?

I, who am innocent?

Ah Gods, do you not see, do you not

come to our aid? And do you give

your favours to the criminal, your punishment to us?

25 The simple shepherdess

always moans

when she sees stormy clouds

gather over the meadow.

But, once the storm has passed,

she looks in happiness

on the countryside, on the hills

bedecked with fair flowers and tender grass.

CD2

1 Sinfonia

ACT THREE

A small garden adjacent to Osira's apartment.

Scene I

Osira, then Argippo.

2 **Osira** - Horrible ghosts
haunt my heart. Argippo is not
coming yet, and I still ignore
what serious matter
summoned him to the Mogor. The breeze
that sweetly blows nurtures my hope
to see my beloved returning, but then beguiles me,
and my uncertainty is such
that every instant makes me more worried.

3 I feel my heart pierced

by a ray of hope,

but doubt returns

and I have no peace.

Torn between turmoil and serenity

this soul is undecided;

it is suspicious – trusting,

and cannot decide.

4 But here comes Argippo. O dearest,

What did the Mogor want? What did he tell you?

What did he say? You appear

confused: do you not answer? Why does

your handsome face grow pale? Why do you stand so still?

Argippo - And I still live? And I still breathe? O Gods!

Osira - You say nothing? You sigh? Alas, what is wrong?

Keep my misfortune from me no longer,

were it even my own death.

Argippo - (Cruel man! But you are mistaken. Argippo

will die a thousand times

among the most painful torments

before slaying, or allowing...)

Osira - Tell me, then:

is it my death?

Argippo - It is.

Osira - Gods! And why?

Argippo - His daughter accuses me

of depriving her of her honour with a fake union;

he believes her, and to deliver

a punishment equal to the crime, wants me to slay you

and marry Zanaida.

Osira - Very well. Argippo:

may you have a long and happy life, I fear nothing

from death if I die for you: bare...

why tarry? Bare your sword, and with one stroke

obey the Mogor, compensate for the damage

of her stained honour; relieve him from his pain,

carry out your duty: let your life

comfort my dying. Our love

will not die with me. Here is my bosom.

Go on, run it through, take my heart,

but then keep it...

Argippo - You shall keep mine...

Scene II

As Argippo is about to stab himself to death, Silvero runs in and stops him. Osira, then Tisifaro with Guards.

Osira - Ah, what are you doing?

Silvero - The blow was deflected.

Osira - Take his sword.

Argippo - O God!

I feel my desperate soul
escape my breast, and I am fainting.
(*He collapses unconscious.*)

Osira - Ah my husband!

Tisifaro - What do I see! My order has not been carried out yet? Ho there: seize Osira, and put her in fetters. You, restrain Argippo.

Osira - Go on, brute, show all your cruelty.

Tisifaro - Go, Silvero, you take care of it.

Silvero - I go. (Oh, dreadful order.)
(*Exiting.*)

Osira - For you I go to my death
happy and joyful,
light of my heart,
beloved spouse.
If you could give me,
my dearest, a single glance,
I would be fully comforted
in my harsh destiny.
(*The Guards lead Osira away, followed by Silvero.*)

Scene III

Argippo alone.

8 Where am I...? My wife...
Ah cruel tyrant! Osira!
Osira, where are you?
Ah, I can already see the blood of my beloved,
still warm, steaming. Stay, o God!
barbarians, the blow,
for that blood is innocent: I am not guilty.
Zanaida is lying... Ah, fate!
Alas, what grief! Ah, death!
In every vein
7 my blood runs cold.
The thought of my dead spouse
fills me with terror.
And to my added misery
I cannot find the revenge,
which, perhaps,
that innocent heart justly awaits.

Scene IV

Zanaida, and Silvero.

9 **Zanaida** - Silvero, what trouble clouds your countenance?

Silvero - Osira must die.

Zanaida - Is that the cause of your distress?

Were you in love with her?

Silvero - Silvero, to love, has but one heart and it belongs to Zanaida.

Zanaida - Live, and hope:

my fury is already partly appeased
by the death of Osira, and perhaps
also by that of Argippo.

Live, and hope, and the Gods may
take pity on your faith, on my suffering.

9 Your doubtful mind
has nothing to fear,
has nothing to worry about;
and yet it is troubled,
and it holds no hope.
Take comfort in me,
and thus chase
all fears away from you.
(*She exits.*)

Scene V

Silvero alone.

10 Unhappy love of mine,
if she must take pleasure in someone else's death;
But it will not be. Let us pretend
that Osira is dead to see whether
Zanaida loves me, and then I shall
reveal my guilt, and die,
or still hope
for the King's forgiveness.

11 A flattering
thought tells my heart
that one day I will be happy;
but if she does not see the truth,
how, o God, can I go on living?

The altar of the god Kam in the middle of a pleasant grove, lit at night, and all the trappings of a sacrifice.

Scene VI

Tisifaro, and Silvero; then Zanaida.

12 **Tisifaro** - Is Osira dead?

Silvero - She is dead.

Tisifaro - Very well. Now
summon Argippo, and Zanaida.

Silvero - At this instant.

Tisifaro - I feel my pain
and my anger subside.

Silvero - Here she is.

Tisifaro - Daughter, shed
no more tears. The man
who gave you love, honour decrees
that he will be your husband.

Zanaida - I, of Argippo? But how
can I...? O God...

Tisifaro - If you were
weak enough to sin, now you must
be strong enough to bear your punishment.

Zanaida - I'd rather die!

Tisifaro - What thought is that?

Zanaida - Alas!

If the Medusa's head
appeared before my eyes
I would not feel the chill that freezes me now.

Silvero - Now yes, no more delays.

Tisifaro - Prepare yourself, he is coming.

Zanaida - Where shall I hide?

Scene VII

Argippo, and the above.

Argippo - Wait, Zanaida; you
must know...

Zanaida - What do you want?

Argippo - Here where the earth
is still stained with the blood of...

Zanaida - I flee from you.

13 In a solitary wood,
in a humble place
as a simple shepherdess
I will lead my life.

And my modest state
shall provoke less anger
in cruel Fate,
in my wicked Star.

14 Tisifaro - Stop, my daughter. Argippo,
Osira is dead. Your only thought
now must be to appease with a new vow
the vow that you betrayed

Argippo - Argippo
shall sooner raise his hand
and give you, and himself, death.

Tisifaro - And shall I suffer
yet this insult? Ho there, ministers,
restrain the traitor with harsh fetters:
prepare him
for the sacrifice.

Set fire to the stake, and where
the flames are higher, and hotter,
sprinkle them with Dionysus's sacred liquor.

Zanaida - Alas! My heart is throbbing.

Argippo - Brute! Slake
your fury; I fear nothing, and with courage
await here my death from your hand.

Tisifaro - God, you who love rightful people
and punish the wicked ones:
as his penance, not my revenge,
from the Heavens, where you reign,
accept this illustrious victim.

(He prepares to strike him with an axe.)

Silvero - Wait, Sir: if death
must befall the man who offended your honour,
I am the one who must die.

Tisifaro - What do I hear?

Zanaida - O God!

Silvero - I acted in shadows,
now I shall make public admission. It was I who,
to the discredit of Argippo, my rival, disguised as him,
in profound darkness
tied with your daughter the sacred knot.

I am the guilty one, lord;
that king is innocent, I am the traitor.

Zanaida - Is that true?

Tisifaro - And you dared?

Argippo - O gods!

Tisifaro - Then Argippo's death
shall be replaced by yours. Ho there...

Zanaida - Ah, father, and king...

Tisifaro - No more. The unworthy man must die.

Argippo - Noble king, ah grant,
if I lost my better half,
that I too may end my life today.

Tisifaro - That is the reason why he must die.

Zanaida - No, father,
do not think that you can lower
that blade over my dear spouse
before you have run my breast through.

Tisifaro - The blood
of Osira...

Last Scene

Osira, and the above.

Osira - Osira is alive, and lives only
thanks to Silvero.

Argippo - O Gods! What do I see?
My Osira!

Osira - Sir,
If saving my life
was Silvero's crime, punish me.

Tisifaro - Stars! What shall I do?

15 Osira - What will you do? You shall forgive
an error caused by Love,
who knows how to weaken every heart.
And the error he committed,
if you will,
Hymen and his torch
will change into an honour.

16 Zanaida - Great king, noble father:
love, honour, the Gods' will,
our blood, the kingdom
all advise forgiveness
for Silvero, and for me. It was Destiny's fault
more than ours.

Argippo - Lofty monarch:
if my past sorrow causes you
to see any merit in me, please
hear me. My friend Silvero,
the noble, royal lady...

Tisifaro - Heaven wants it, let it be done.

Zanaida - Dear spouse!

Silvero - My life.

Osira - My treasure.

Argippo - What happiness!

Silvero - What joy!

Tisifaro - I am relieved.

Be happy, noble souls, and if I do not disdain,
in reparation of my offended honour,
to grant the offender forgiveness,
you too grant it to me, and I shall be happy.

17 Chorus - If Love feeds on trickery,
today let us only find joy in Love.
If it is born within us under such rules,
let us forgive all his errors.