

# **ACIS & GALATEA**

**I was invited to direct Handel's "Acis & Galatea" by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in 1987. I staged this as a dance-opera. Apart from directing, I also did the stage and costume design for this production.**

**"Acis & Galatea" was originally a serenata consisting mainly of da capo arias with short recitatives in between. The continuous repetition of the lengthy first section of each da capo aria made the work dramatically static on stage, and the recitatives did not always give enough time**

**to carry out the stage action suggested by the drama. For this reason, most of the da capo sections were abridged and new characters created (e.g., birds, the genius of the mountains, cupids, muses) to prevent static stage situations. These characters were based on the libretto. Each character was identified by the costume and played by singers and dancers – e.g., at the end of Act I, there were four pairs of Acis and Galatea on stage.**

**<https://www.howaion.co.uk/projects/acisgalatea.html>**

**At that time, and unbeknown to me, I was much influenced by my childhood memories of Cantonese opera in Hong**

**Kong despite my Western Classical music training and living most of my life in England. Therefore this was probably the very first performance in the world of Handel's "Acis & Galatea" staged as a dance opera in the style of Cantonese opera with a Cantonese-speaking cast. This became obvious to me when I looked at the production photos many years later. You can see the full story in my PhD thesis (free download) - search for "Acis & Galatea" in the PDF file.**

**<https://www.howaion.co.uk/phdthesis/index.html>**

**Ho Wai-On (Ann-Kay)**