

# THE COCKPIT

EO Ensemble  
OrQuesta



HASTINGS  
PHILHARMONIC  
ORCHESTRA

# Le Nozze di Figaro Mozart

Wednesday 21st February -  
Saturday 24th February 2024 7pm  
The Cockpit

Ensemble OrQuesta Company  
Ensemble OrQuesta Opera Academy\*  
HPO Ensemble

Marcio da Silva Stage/Music Director  
Predrag Gosta Conductor  
Re-orchestration Marcio da Silva

Peter Mould  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Marcio da Silva / Flávio Lauria *Figaro*  
Helen May / Kristina Archer\* *Susanna*  
Oshri Segev *Count Almaviva*

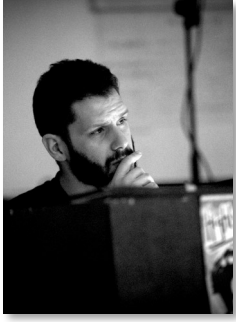
Kathleen Nic Dhiarmada / Hollie-Anne Clark\* *Countess Almaviva*  
Rosemary Carlton-Willis / Andrea Rodriguez-Gomez\* *Marcellina*  
Anna-Luise Wagner / Rashelle Shifrin\* *Cherubino*

Flávio Lauria / Harrison Gration\* *Don Bartolo*  
Rachel Allen *Barbarina*

Joshua Furtado-Mendes\* *Basilio/Don Curzio*  
Jay Rockwell *Antonio*

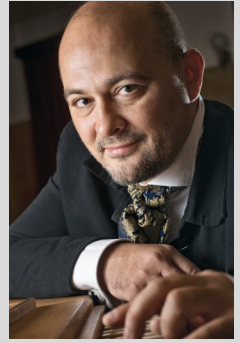
\* EOOA - Thursday 22nd February

[ensembleorquesta.com](http://ensembleorquesta.com) | [hastingsphilorchestra.co.uk](http://hastingsphilorchestra.co.uk)



**Stage/Music Director** - born in Brazil, **Marcio da Silva** studied singing, and choral and orchestral conducting at the Conservatoire de Toulouse, France. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in orchestral conducting from the Hochschule für Musik, Freiburg, Germany, before moving to London to undertake a Masters in orchestral conducting at the Royal College of Music. During this time, he was one of three conductors to take part in the London Symphony Orchestra Conducting Master Class with Sir Colin Davis and was one of the three finalists at the Princess Astrid International Conducting Competition. As a guest conductor Marcio has conducted orchestras in Poland, Italy, Czech Republic, Germany, Turkey, Norway, Brazil and Kosovo. Marcio was Music Director of Woodhouse Opera from 2012 until its final season in 2018, and he is the founder of Ensemble OrQuesta. In these roles he has conducted and directed over 30 fully staged productions of operas ranging from less regularly performed works such as Lully's *Armide*, to popular works such as *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute* and *La bohème*. In 2021 he stage and music directed Cavalli's *L'Egisto* for Hampstead Garden Opera. Marcio is also music director of the Hastings Philharmonic Choir and the Billingshurst Choral Society and Artistic Director of Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Conductor - Predrag Gosta.** Predrag is a renowned conductor and harpsichordist who is an alumnus of the Trinity Laban and Georgia State University in Atlanta, USA. Beside being a member of Ensemble OrQuesta, in London he is the director of New Trinity Baroque and the Makris Symphony Orchestra. With them he has performed with some of the most recognised names in the early music world, including Emma Kirkby, Evelyn Tubb, and Steven Devine, as well as Rachel Brown, Adrian Butterfield, Bojan Čičić, and Zefira Valova. He is also the Artistic Director of the Belgrade Early Music Festival, the Belgrade Baroque Academy, and the New Belgrade Opera in Serbia, and the Music Director of the Gwinnett Ballet Theatre in Atlanta, USA. Active on the opera platform, Predrag has conducted to international acclaim, opera companies in the USA, Switzerland, Germany, Bulgaria and Serbia. On the concert platform he has conducted some of the best orchestras in the world, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the National Philharmonic in Washington DC, the Russian National Orchestra in Moscow, as well as the Sofia, Ruse, Burgas and the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestras. Currently, Gosta is also in the final year of his doctoral research at the University of Oxford. Among his many CD recordings are two with the LSO and ten with NTB.



## HASTINGS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA ENSEMBLE



Clarinet 1 **Boyan Ivanov**  
Clarinet 2 **Hannah Shilvock**

Violin 1 **Isabela Stocka**  
Violin 2 **Andrew Kelly**  
Viola **Jordi Morell**  
Cello **Ekaterina Solomennik**  
Double Bass **Adam Churchyard**

**Thank you for joining us for this exciting new development in the evolution of Ensemble OrQuesta in which we launch performance runs of our Mozart productions in our favourite fringe venues in London.**

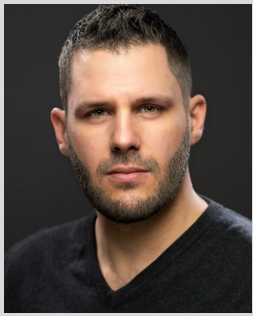
**Ensemble OrQuesta** was created in 2014 by its artistic director **Marcio da Silva**. In recent years Ensemble OrQuesta has taken a number of professional productions to fringe venues in London including The Cockpit Theatre, Marylebone, and the Arcola Theatre where Ensemble OrQuesta have been invited to be part of the Grimeborn Festival for six consecutive years., and we have received considerable critical acclaim. In 'The Guardian's' list of ['The top ten best classical music of 2021'](#) EO's Arcola Theatre production of Handel's *Alcina* - 'Handel stripped down and brilliant' - was named **No 4**: above Grange Park's *L'heure espagnole* and Garsington Opera's *Der Rosenkavalier*. In July 2022 EO was invited to open the 2022 Grimeborn Festival (Arcola Theatre) with our production of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. This received two 5-star and seven 4-star reviews and OFFIE nominations for Best Opera Production and Best Opera Performance and was one of three finalists for Best Opera Performance. In 2021 Ensemble OrQuesta took its production of Handel's *Alcina* to the Arcola Theatre and to the *Théâtre Basse Passière* in Normandy. They will return to Normandy in 2025 with their 5-star production of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*.

Reviewers have designated EO as a 'ground-breaking company', with a 'formidable reputation', to be applauded for 'outstanding creativity and musical authenticity' for performances that are 'musically outstanding and totally gripping'. Our ensemble work has been described as 'quite remarkable', and our vocal work as 'impressive' 'outstanding', 'triumphant' and 'brilliant'.

Ensemble OrQuesta takes a particular pride in running a series of highly-regarded opera academies each year. The purpose of these academies is to give singers from all over the world the opportunity to perform entire roles in a fully staged opera production, with professional accompaniment. Singers benefit from ten days of intensive tuition and training from the Ensemble OrQuesta team of specialists, being coached on style, acting, language, technique and movement. The success of these academies has lured singers from all over the world: Ireland, France, Canada, USA, Brazil, Romania, Hong Kong, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Japan, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, Germany, Sweden, Israel, Greece, Austria, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Argentina and the UK. For this production of *Le nozze di Figaro*, EO Opera Academy participants have worked alongside the professional cast to prepare roles for their own professional performance here at **The Cockpit Theatre** on **Thursday, February 22nd, at 7pm**. The professional cast will be performing on **Wednesday, 21st February, Friday, 23rd and Saturday, 24th February at 7pm**.

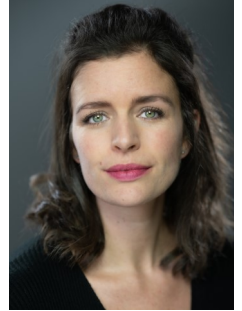
Ensemble OrQuesta have been fortunate to secure support from several trusts and foundations in recent years. We would like to thank **The Foyle Foundation** for core funding support, and **Angel Early Music, The Leche Trust** and **The Marchus Trust** for their support of previous productions. This production is generously supported by **The Garrick Charitable Trust** and **The Cavalli Foundation**. Without this kind support our work would not be possible.

**The EO Trustees**



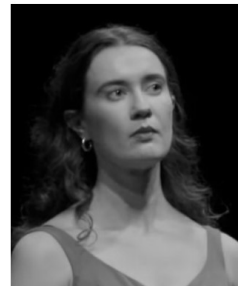
**Figaro - Marcio da Silva** first gained renown as a boy soprano performing as a soloist in Germany, Italy, and Brazil, including performances for audiences of over 32,000 people. In 1998 he studied in Arizona for six months, graduating from the celebrated Phoenix Boys Choir. He went on to study singing, alongside choral and orchestral conducting, at the Conservatoire de Toulouse, receiving his *Diplôme d'Études Musicales*. Marcio also gained extensive experience in opera, beginning as a child soloist at Palacio das Artes in Belo Horizonte, and then subsequently at the Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse, and the Théâtre des Champs Elysees and the Théâtre du Chatelet in Paris. As a singer (baritone and countertenor) Marcio has performed the roles of Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*, Orfeo in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Arnalta in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Mercurio in Cavalli's *La Callisto*, Aristone in Cavalli's *Xerse*, Thésée in Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Colas in Mozart's *Bastien et Bastienne* and La Haine in Lully's *Armide*. Marcio performs regularly as a recitalist most recently Vaughan Williams' 'Songs of Travel' and Schubert's 'Die Winterreise'. He is an experienced vocal coach & speaks seven languages fluently.

**Susanna - Helen May** holds an MA with Distinction from the Royal Academy of Music with a DipRAM for outstanding final recital. She was immensely grateful for the support of the Josephine Baker Trust and the William Gibbs Trust. Praised for her 'vivid, velvety-rich' voice and for displaying 'the flexibility of tone and dramatic power that holds an audience rapt,' Helen's opera credits include: Poppea In EO's OFFIE nominated production of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*; Mozart's Countess (*Le Nozze di Figaro*); Despina (*Così fan tutte*); Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*); and First Lady (*The Magic Flute*); Alcina (*Alcina*, Handel); Galatea (*Acis and Galatea*, Handel); Nerone (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*); Climene, (*L'Egisto*, Cavalli); Amastre (*Xerse*, Cavalli); OFFIE nomination Calisto (*La Calisto*, Cavalli); Diane (*Hippolyte et Aricie*, Rameau); Emilie (*Les Indes Galantes*, Rameau); Aurore, (*Céphale et Procris*); Giannetta (*L'elisir d'amore*, Donizetti); Mimi (*La bohème*), and cover Jenůfa (*Jenůfa*, Janáček). Forthcoming roles include Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*, Opera South East). Helen is an experienced oratorio soloist and recitalist. Recent highlights include Verdi *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*, Brahms *Eine Deutsches Requiem*, and Haydn *The Creation*. Upcoming engagements include Mozart *Requiem* and Bach *St Matthew Passion*.



**Count - Oshri Segev** baritone has sung under the batons of Zubin Mehta, Kurt Mazur, Asher Fisch, Roberto Abbado, Daniel Oren, Michele Gamba, Sebastiano Rolli, Giuliano Carella, Patrick Summers and Dan Ettinger. He has sung with all the leading vocal ensembles in Israel including the Israeli Opera and The Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra. His engagements included *Sailor* in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, *Ramiro* in *Cenerentola* and *Count Almaviva* in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* by Rossini, *Nemorino* in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, *Don Giovanni* and *Don Ottavio* in Don Giovanni, *Tamino* in *The magic flute*, *Arbace* in *Idomeneo*, *Podesta* in *La finta Giardiniera*, *Conte Almaviva*, *Don Basilio* and *Don Curzio* in *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Mozart, *Judge and Servant* in *Un ballo in maschera*, *a Messenger* in *Aida*, *Gastone* in *La Traviata*, *Conte di Lerme* in *Don Carlo*, *Abdallo* in *Nabucco*, *Ruiz* in *Il Trovatore*, *Captain* in *Simon Boccanegra* by Verdi, *Spoleta* in Puccini's *Tosca*, *Schmidt* in Massenet's *Werther*, *Older brother* in Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, *Remendado* in Bizet's *Carmen* and *Natanael* and *Spalanzani* in Offenbach's *The tales of Hoffmann*. Segev sang *Ferrando* in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with "Orquesta Ensemble" in 2019. Segev is a recipient of the 2006-2010 Buchman-Mehta School of music (Tel-Aviv University) scholarship, 2013-2014 America-Israel Cultural fund Scholarship, the 2018 Ronen Foundation Scholarship, the 2018 Buchholtz scholarship on behalf of IVAI and the 2018 Coster-Newman Scholarship (Canada) for the Emerging Artist.

**Countess - Kathleen Nic Dhiarmada** As a member of the Irish National Opera Young Artist Studio for their 22/23 season, Kathleen covered the roles of Norina in *Don Pasquale* and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. While studying at Royal Academy Opera under the tutelage of Kate Paterson, Raymond Connell and Ingrid Surgenor, Kathleen performed the roles of Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other roles include Sour Dolcina in *Suor Angelica* (Wexford Festival Opera), Musetta in *La bohème* (Hampstead Garden Opera), Poppea in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and Morgana in *Alcina* (Ensemble Orquesta). As an Alvarez Young Artist at Garsington Opera, Kathleen performed the role of Fiordiligi for their annual OperaFirst performance. She looks forward to working at Glyndebourne this summer where she will be a Jerwood Young Artist, covering Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* and singing in the chorus. Kathleen was generously supported by the Carr-Gregory trust during her studies at Royal Academy Opera and is currently supported by the Irish Arts Council Agility Award. In March 2023 Kathleen won the Dramatic Cup at the Dublin Feis Ceoil which enabled her to travel to New York to study with James Smidt (Haus of Shmizzay) and Rachelle Jonck, both of whom she still works with.



**Marcellina - Rosemary Carlton-Willis** is a British soprano and voice actor. With Ensemble Orquesta she has performed the roles of Armide (*Armide*, Rameau), Giunone and Il Destino (*La Calisto*, Cavalli), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*, Mozart), Phèdre (*Hippolyte et Aricie*, Rameau) and Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*, Purcell). She is currently preparing the role of Teseo (*Teseo*, Handel). Other lead roles include Juliette (*Romeo et Juliette*, Gounod), Cinderella's Mother (*Into the Woods*, Sondheim), Marjorie (*Allegra*, Rodgers and Hammerstein), Micaela (*Carmen*, Bizet), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*, Puccini), Sophie (*Werther*, Massenet), Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*, Mozart), Barbarina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mozart) and Dorinda (*Orlando*, Handel). With Musica Adriatica, Rosemary released the first complete recording of Ivan Lukačić's *Sacrae Cantiones* in 2020 for the work's 4th centenary, on Croatia Records. In 2019 Rosemary was awarded the Richard Strauss Prize and the third Prize at the Elbe Internationaler Gesangswettbewerb. Rosemary studied voice (classical and baroque) at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and historical performance practice at the University of York. She currently studies privately with Ira Siff.

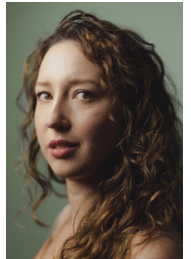
**Cherubino - Anna-Luise Wagner** is a German soprano and linguist based in London. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, researching the seventeenth-century opera singer, writer, and courtesan Margherita Costa. Alongside her studies, Anna worked as dramaturg and translator on high-profile opera productions in Germany, Austria, Italy, and the US. She also founded Marginalia, an interdisciplinary performance collective bringing academic research to life on stage. As a soprano with a 'warm and generous' voice (*Opera Magazine*), Anna's repertoire ranges from early baroque opera to contemporary pieces. Onstage highlights include title role/*Partenope* (Festivals Malta) conducted by Antonio Florio at the Teatru Manoel in Valletta; title role/*Agrippina*, *Belinda/Dido and Aeneas*, and *Susanna/Le nozze di Figaro* with Hampstead Garden Opera; *Dorine/Céphale et Procris*, *Amore and Damigella/L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Fatime/Les Indes galantes* with Ensemble Orquesta; *Gretel/Hansel & Gretel* and *Juliet/Juliet & Romeo* with Marginalia; *Clorinda/La Cenerentola* (Random Opera); as well as several roles with Cambridge University Opera including *Cleopatra/Giulio Cesare*, *Micaëla/Carmen*, *Adina/L'elisir d'amore*, title role/*Sāvitrī*, and *Despina/Così fan tutte*. Anna also created the title role of Green Opera's *Fillu*, a Lieder-opera telling the love story of Eugenie Schumann and the Austrian soprano Marie Fillunger.





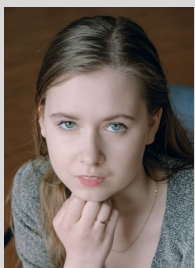
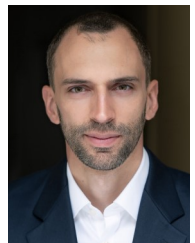
**Don Bartolo** - Brazilian bass-baritone **Flávio Lauria** graduated from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro with a Bachelor degree in singing. He has been a regular performer in Brazil, Canada and the UK, particularly favouring Mozartian roles such as Figaro, and Don Alfonso. Of his Leporello, Opera Canada commented that his aria *Madamina Il Catalogo è questo* was 'flawlessly performed', (2018). The Hastings Observer applauded his 'amiable Papageno,' and noted that '*He is the only Papageno I have ever come across able to do his own whistling – a magnificent feat!*' (2019). Flavio made his debut at The Cockpit in 2022, as Bellone in Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*. The Stage noted that his performance 'bursts with energy'. In 2023 took part in the world premiere of the contemporary opera *O Homem Amarelo*, by Brazilian composer Cyro Delvizio, as Mario de Andrade, and in the UK premiere of Elisabeth Jaquet de la Guerre's opera *Cephale et Procris*, performing the roles of Pan and Erictee. His repertoire also includes Vodník (Rusalka), Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*), Comus (Charpentier's *Plaisirs de Versailles*), Giove (Cavalli's *La Calisto*), Seneca (Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Melisso (Händel's *Alcina*), Colline (*La bohème*), Nicholas (Barber's *Vanessa*) and Morales (*Carmen*).

**Barbarina - Rachel Allen.** Hailing from the west coast of Canada, Rachel has been praised for bringing 'great tenderness' and 'seductive power' to her singing. Particularly lauded for her interpretation of baroque repertoire, Rachel has appeared as a concert soloist in Canada and the UK, performing works including Bach's *St John Passion*, Handel's *Solomon*, and Couperin's *Leçons des ténèbres* among others. Recent operatic roles include Venus in John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* for the 2023 Ryedale Festival conducted by Eamonn Dougan, *Poppea* (2023), *Valetto*, *Fortuna*, and *Pallade* (2022, Grimeborn) in Ensemble OrQuesta's OFFIE nominated production of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and *Morgana* (*Alcina*, Grimeborn Festival). Rachel recently completed her Master's degree at the Royal College of Music where she studied with Alison Wells. There, she was a finalist in the 2023 Brooks van der Pump English Song competition and appeared as a soloist in Bach's *Easter Oratorio* and Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre's *L'isle de Délos*. A keen ensemble singer, Rachel performs regularly with the Monteverdi Choir, and has sung with the Gabrieli Consort, London Choral Sinfonia, Theatre of Early Music, and in the chorus of Opera Atelier. This spring she looks forward to making her role debut as Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the Overstrand Festival of Early Music.



**Basilio/Don Curzio\*** - French-British tenor **Joshua Furtado-Mendes** is an undergraduate at the Royal Academy of Music where he studies with a scholarship. He has received tutelage from vocal professors including Mark Wildman, Nuccia Focile and Ryland Davies. During his time at the Junior RAM, Joshua performed in adaptations of Gilbert & Sullivan's *Mikado* and J.S. Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*. Performances in December 2021 saw him in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* directed by Iain Ledingham and a recital at the Romanian Cultural Institute. In March 2022 Joshua featured in the world premiere of the show series '24 Italian Songs and Arias' at Battersea Arts Centre in collaboration with Brian Lobel and Gwyneth-Ann Rand. In September 2022 he appeared in a televised BBC Proms broadcast of Beethoven's 9th Symphony as a member of the Chineke Foundation directed by Kevin John Edusei. Joshua made his solo operatic debut as Malcolm in an Uncovered Opera Company production of Verdi's *Macbeth* in February 2023 and later sang the role of Gastone in *La Traviata* with Instant Opera. 2023 also saw him featured as soloist in Haydn's Nelson Mass and Handel's Messiah. Future engagements include oratorio solo debuts in Schubert's *Mass No.4 in C major* and Carl Nielsen's *Fynsk Foraar*.

**Antonio** - bass **Jay Rockwell** is delighted to have been invited to perform with Ensemble OrQuesta again. Recent roles include *Jalousie* and *Neree* (*Cephale et Procris*, Jacquet de la Guerre), Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Monteverdi), and Melisso (*Alcina*, Handel), all with Ensemble OrQuesta, and Sarastro (*Magic Flute*, Mozart) with Berlin Opera Academy. Previous roles include *Le Fauteuil* and *L'Arbre* (*L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, Ravel) and Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*) with Conservatorio Superior de Música Valencia, Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) with Ensemble OrQuesta Opera Academy, Seneca (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Monteverdi) with Saluzzo Opera Academy, and Colline (*La bohème*, Puccini) with North Wales Opera Studio. Jay is currently studying at the Conservatorio Superior de Música Valencia.



**Susanna\* (Thursday)** - **Kristina Archer** is a Czech-British soprano currently based in The Netherlands. Her recent successes include performances of her trio 'Ensemble PAX' at the Utrecht Early Music Festival, as well as interpreting the winning piece of the Young Composer's Meeting in Apeldoorn 'A' alongside Orkest de Ereprijs. During her studies, she has performed in operas such as Peri's *L'Euridice* and Caccini's *Alcina*, both directed by Michael Chance. As a professional choral singer, Kristina has worked with the Dutch Baroque Choir, Golden Circle Ensemble, and alongside Cappella Amsterdam and the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century. Kristina started her musical education as a chorister at Lincoln Cathedral and continued her studies at the Music Secondary School of Prague. Kristina currently studies classical and early singing at The Royal Conservatory of The Hague under Rita Dams, Catrin Wyn-Davies, Peter Kooij, Robin Blaze, and Pascal Bertin.

**Countess Almaviva\* (Thursday)** - British soprano **Hollie-Anne Clark** is an opera and vocal artist and theatre actor, Hollie's ability to sing a variety of genres with ease attracts a wide audience. Her music releases are increasingly successful, and she is building a significant online presence. Her debut album - *Pure Imagination* - received high-acclaim, being described as a 'stunning mix of Broadway, film and Disney' (Classical Crossover Magazine 2023). It is available now for digital download. Her classical cinematic EP- *Enchanted* - was released on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Hollie-Anne has performed a variety of roles for companies such as Mid Wales Opera and Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra, and internationally with the Berlin Opera Academy Orchestra. With the BBC, she has performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Cadogan Hall, St David's Hall and the Wales Millennium Centre, in the BBC Prom series, including the Last Night of the Proms, and has been a featured soloist on BBC Radio 3. She is a recent Young Artist of the opera programme at the Wales International Academy of Voice, training with renowned tenor Dennis O'Neill.





**Marcellina\* (Thursday) - Andrea Rodriguez-Gomez** is a mezzo-soprano studying with a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music with Alex Ashworth and Janet Haney. Hailing from the United States, Andrea has performed internationally in venues such as Carnegie Hall and in competitions such as Corsica Lirica International Competition in Ghisonaccia, Corsica. Roles include La Frugola (Il Tabarro) with Harrow Opera, Octavian (Der Rosenkavalier) in concert for Muzika! The Grand Strand Festival, and Dritte Dame (Die Zauberkolben) with LAH-SOW in Philadelphia. Andrea has a particular affinity with Spanish song, stemming from her Puerto Rican heritage. In 2023, she sang in the UK Debut of Pepe Romero's *Mi Jardín Solitario*, as well as performing De Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares* for the Academy's Transcending Border Concert Series at the Italian Cultural Institute. In August 2024, Andrea will make her debut as Mimi in the PPOA Slovenian Tour of *La Bohème* with Maestro Pehlivan.

#### Don Bartolo\*

**(Thursday) - Harrison Gratton** is a British baritone studying with Alex Ashworth, Raymond Connell and Chad Vindin at the Royal Academy of Music. Roles have included Ford and Pistola (Falstaff, Verdi) under the baton of Joseph Rescigno, Mephistopheles (Faust, Gounod) with New Sussex Opera, Fasolt (Das Rheingold), Il Commendatore (Don Giovanni, Mozart) with London Philanthropic Orchestra, Colline (La Bohème, Puccini) with North Welsh Opera, Rodimarte Bombarda (Il trionfo dell'onore, Scarlatti), Masetto (Don Giovanni), Bartolo (Le Nozze di Figaro), Leporello (Don Giovanni, Mozart). He has been praised in these roles for his 'Booming Basso' (Sussex Arts and Culture) 'stunning vocal talents' (onmagazine) and 'the power of his voice' (reviews hub). His concert repertoire includes multiple Haydn Masses, Handel's Messiah and Israel in Egypt, the Fauré and Brahms Requiem, multiple Bach Cantatas and the Johannes-Passion, Mozart's C-minor Mass and, in recital, Schubert's



**Cherubino\* (Thursday) - Rashelle Shifrin** is an Israeli Coloratura Mezzo Soprano. She is an alumni of the Academy of Music and Dance in Jerusalem and also a guest performer at the Jerusalem Opera Theater. Her repertoire includes Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera* (G. Verdi), Musetta in *La Bohème* (G. Puccini), Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* (W.A. Mozart), Taumännchen and Sandmännchen in *Hänsel und Gretel* (E. Humperdinck), Cizí Kněžna in *Rusalka* (A. Dvořák), and Nerone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (C. Monteverdi). In 2020 Rashelle has immigrated to Germany where she performed as a Guest Artist in Schloss Henfenfeld roles such as Elettra in *Idomeneo* (W.A. Mozart), and Angele Didier in *Der Graf von Luxemburg* (F. Lehár). Rashelle was also a Participant of the Tel Aviv IVAI concert lecture program, where she performed Russian romance songs by composer S. Rachmaninoff, as well as participated in the master class of Susana Poretsky (Metropolitan Opera) and Melath Andrea (Budapest Opera House).

### Outline synopsis

**On the wedding day of Figaro and Susanna, the fickle Count Almaviva, who has lost interest in his wife, attempts to seduce Susanna. She and Figaro conspire with the long suffering Countess Almaviva to outwit him and to teach him a lesson in fidelity, but his young page, Cherubino, inadvertently upsets the carefully laid plans, and relationships are severely tested. All of this is brought to life by Mozart's music of consummate grace, wit, and joyous invention, with Da Ponte's sparkingly adroit libretto.**

*Le nozze di Figaro*, is an *opera buffa* (comic opera) in **four acts** composed by the thirty-year-old Mozart in 1786 to an Italian libretto by Lorenzo **Da Ponte**. It premiered at the Burgtheater in **Vienna** in May **1786**. The opera's libretto is based on the 1784 provocative stage comedy by **Pierre Beaumarchais**. The opera was the first of three collaborations between Mozart and Da Ponte; it was followed by *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*.

The story of *Le nozze di Figaro* is a whirlwind of mistaken identities and twists and turns, taking place on a single crazy day – the wedding day of the charismatic Figaro and his resourceful wife Susanna. Unfortunately, Figaro and Susanna's philandering master, Count Almaviva, has designs on Susanna and is determined to stop the wedding taking place. Meanwhile the page Cherubino's passion for the ladies jeopardizes his job, and Countess Almaviva longs to regain her husband's love.

Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess plot to shame the Count and save Cherubino from banishment. But their plans don't run smoothly, particularly when the elderly Marcellina tries to force Figaro to marry her. An astonishing revelation prevents this happening, but tension mounts as it becomes uncertain whether the Count will still find a way to thwart the wedding, and whether the Countess will be able to win back her husband's affection.

### Reception

*Le nozze di Figaro* was an instant success; although it was performed only nine times in Vienna in the year of its composition, it went on to be a triumph in **Prague**. Its bubbling overture, its brilliantly crafted arias - which give insights into the personalities of the characters who sing them - and its lively and intricate ensemble scenes won the hearts of nearly all who witnessed it. Encores became so numerous that after the work's third performance the emperor declared that, to keep the evening to a reasonable length, only numbers written for a single voice could be repeated in any opera.

Perhaps its success is hardly surprising. The score is packed full of arias that cover a huge range of emotions, from the humour of Figaro's ironic farewell to Cherubino (**'Non più andrai'**) to the poignancy of **'Dove sono'**, as the Countess remembers past happiness.

As so often with Mozart, **forgiveness** is a key theme, and the Count's Act IV plea to his wife, **'Contessa, perdono'**, is one of opera's most moving moments. It remains one of the most often performed and most widely popular opera of modern times.

## Back Story (Overture)

- Marcellina meets Bartolo / A baby is born / A baby is abducted / Figaro meets the Count
- The count asks him to help him in getting Rosina, who is promised to marry Bartolo.
- The Count and Rosina get married and she becomes the countess.
- Figaro meets Susanna / They move into the Count's palace.
- It is the day of their wedding and Susanna is getting a room ready with the other helpers from the palace.

## Susanna and Figaro's wedding day

### Morning

**9am:** Susanna, while setting up a room, looks at the hat that she has made for her wedding, which is today and tries to get Figaro's attention. Meanwhile, Figaro is measuring the room to see if the bed that the Count has given them will fit in that room. She realizes that this room is intended for them and explains to Figaro that the Count has been making advances on her and that this proximity to their room would make things worse. Figaro decides to make a plan against the count.

**10am:** Marcellina and Bartolo have a conversation about the fact that Figaro has signed a contract which says that if he doesn't pay the money he has borrowed from Marcellina, instead, he will need to marry her. Bartolo promises to help since this would give him vengeance for the fact that Figaro helped the count steal Rosina (the countess) from him.

**11am:** Susanna comes back, and after a short encounter with Marcellina (who hates her), she sees Cherubino. He explains that the Count has expelled him from the castle after seeing him with Barbarina and he asks for Susanna to ask the countess to intervene. As they speak, the count arrives and Cherubino hides. Short after, Basilio arrives and makes insinuations about the fact that, first, the count likes Susanna, and second, Cherubino is in love with the countess. The count hides as soon as Basilio arrives but reveals himself once he overhears Basilio talking about Cherubino.

**11.30pm:** Cherubino is discovered in the room. Shortly after, led by Figaro, workers from the castle come to pay homage to the count. Figaro announces that their wedding is already organized. The count says he is happy to go through with wedding them but asks for time to prepare a big party, with the hope that Marcellina's plan of marrying Figaro will succeed.

**12pm:** The count decides to send Cherubino in the army as punishment.

### Afternoon

**2pm:** In the countess's room, Susanna has told her about the count's advances. Then Figaro comes in to explain the situation and his plan. He explains that the count would like to reinstate his feudal right over Susanna. His plan is, through a letter, to tell the count that the countess will be with a lover at the time of the party. Then Susanna should tell him to meet her in the garden but he will send Cherubino, instead, dressed as a woman. They will then surprise him and not only embarrass him but force him to do what they want in regards to Cherubino. The ladies approve the plan.

**2.30pm:** Cherubino arrives with the commission to the army. They decide to dress him up as a woman as Figaro instructed but in the meantime the count arrives. Cherubino hides in the closet while Susanna isn't in the room. The count arrives, shows the countess the letter he received from Figaro and asks who is in the closet. She lies, saying it's Susanna and doesn't allow him to go in. He decides to open it himself but as he goes to get the tools with the countess, Cherubino swaps places with Susanna, jumping from the window into the garden. The count and countess arrive and they are both surprised when Susanna walks out of the closet. The ladies decide, then, to say that this was all a plan to punish him for his jealousy. They openly say that the letter he had received was from Figaro.

**3.30pm:** Figaro arrives and asks for them all to go get ready for the party. The count asks him about the letter. He decides to stick to his plan and says he doesn't know it. The ladies don't understand. Meanwhile, Antonio, the gardener arrives saying he saw a man jump from the window. Figaro decides to say that it was him who jumped from the window, to hide the fact that Cherubino hasn't departed for Seville. Marcellina, Bartolo and Basilio arrive and reveal their plan. Figaro must either pay or marry Marcellina instead of Susanna. The count promises to hear them out.

### Evening

**5pm:** The countess decides on a new plan and tells Susanna to tell the count she will meet him in the garden during the party. She then comforts her in saying that she will go herself and surprise him. Susanna hopes that going through with this plan, the count will be forced to side with Figaro against Marcellina and marry them.

**6pm:** Figaro, the Count, Curzio, Bartolo and Marcellina meet to decide Figaro's fate and the Don Curzio decides that either he pays or he marries her. Figaro then says that because he is a noble man, he needs the permission of his parents. He explains that he doesn't know who they are and that he was abducted as a baby. Bartolo and Marcellina then realize that he is their son. Marcellina and Bartolo decide to also get married in the evening.

**6.30pm:** The countess decides to write a song to the count to specify where he should meet. In the meantime, Barbarina arrives with some local girls and Cherubino who she has disguised as a girl to prevent the count from finding out he isn't in Seville. Antonio arrives and reveals his identity. Figaro arrives and Antonio says Cherubino has confessed to jumping from the window, although he hasn't. Figaro says that he might have jumped as well and invites all to the party.

**7.30pm:** At the hall for the wedding party, the guests arrive. Susanna hands the count the song from the countess and Figaro sees it.

**9pm:** In the garden, Barbarina is looking for the pin from the letter which Susanna had given to the count. Figaro arrives and suspects that Susanna is actually cheating on him with the count. The countess, dressed as Susanna, is surprised by Cherubino who wants a kiss. Both the count and Figaro get jealous of who they think is Susanna but is actually the countess. The count and the countess leave and Figaro recognizes Susanna. They decide to play with the count, who comes back and believes his wife is with Figaro. He then catches Figaro but then realizes that he was seducing the countess instead of Susanna. He asks for forgiveness, and she pardons him.,

## The significance of the play, the libretto, and the opera.

Beaumarchais' **play** was in several senses revolutionary. So, in dramatic terms, is La Ponte's **libretto**, by virtue of its length, its combination of clarity and complexity, its consistency, and its momentum. But perhaps the most revolutionary thing about it is its use of **ensembles**. Of its twenty-eight numbers, only half are for solo voice. Such a concentration on ensembles was unprecedented in 18th-century opera and brought with it a new dramatic dimension to the medium - characters became more fully rounded as they interacted with each other and were presented in a variety of social contexts and evolving situations.

In compositional terms **Mozart** was well equipped to turn da Ponte's brilliant concept into a masterpiece of dramatic art. He had at his fingertips brilliantly tuneful melodies, imaginative orchestration, rhythmic drive, skilful key and tempo changes, and subtly varied harmonies. From these elements he produced some extraordinary ensemble moments. The **Finale to Act Two** is renowned for its complexity and its integration of dramatic and musical meaning. The **Finale to Act Three**, which deals with the comedy of disguises, misunderstandings and unexpected revelations of identity, bursts with witty comedy.

And at intervening points, in **arias** and **cavatinas**, in powerful and emotionally charged lines of **recitative** that are both varied and effective in propelling the drama forward, and in light and energetic bursts of **chorus** numbers, Mozart uses his music mastery to bring the individual characters and their emotional journeys to life: the volatility and irascibility of the **Count** is conveyed in rushing scales, leaps, dynamic contrasts, and a wide vocal range; the nobility and dignity of the **Countess** is portrayed in long graceful phrases and enhanced by melting obligato instruments, and her inner agitation is felt in gently throbbing accompaniments and poignant chromatic inflections; the excitement and underlying eroticism of **Cherubino's** burgeoning sexual discovery and youthful self-awareness is deftly handled with breathless phrases, palpating accompaniment, and hesitant chromaticisms; the courtly tempo and sudden burst of coloratura emphasise **Marcellina's** slightly comic pretentiousness; whilst **Figaro** and **Susanna** are given sparkling melodies, their rich characterisation is enhanced by varied orchestration, dance rhythms add a sense of fun to moments of dramatic scheming, and harmonic variety reflects their energy and emotional range; and to top it off Mozart skilfully brings to life **Basilio's** silky obsequiousness, and the simplicity of the **peasants** in folk-like harmonies.

Delighting in the social and emotional complexity provided by Beaumarchais' controversial backdrop, musicologists all agree that this is Mozart on prime musical form.

## Extended synopsis with placement of main arias, cavatinas and ensembles

### Act I

Figaro happily measures the space where the bridal bed will fit in their new room, while Susanna tries on part of her wedding outfit in front of a mirror. (**Duet: 'Cinque, dieci, venti' - 'Five, ten, twenty'**). He is quite pleased with the room; Susanna is not convinced (**Duetto: 'Se a caso madama la notte ti chiama' - 'If the Countess should call you during the night'**). Susanna points out that it is dangerously close to the lecherous Count's room. The Countess rings for Susanna and she rushes off to answer.

Figaro, confident in his own resource-fulness, resolves to outwit the Count (**Cavatina: 'Se vuol ballare signor contino' - 'If you want to dance, sir count'**). Figaro leaves, and Dr. Bartolo arrives with Marcellina, his old housekeeper. Figaro had previously borrowed money from her and had promised to marry her if he couldn't repay her at the appointed time; she now intends to enforce that promise by suing him. Bartolo, seeking revenge against Figaro because he facilitated the union of the Count and Rosina, agrees to represent Marcellina *pro bono*, and assures her, in comical lawyer-speak, that he can win the case for her (**aria: 'La vendetta' - 'Vengeance'**).

Bartolo leaves, Susanna returns, and Marcellina and Susanna exchange politely delivered sarcastic insults (**duet: 'Via resti servita, madama brillante' - 'After you, brilliant madam'**). Susanna triumphs in the exchange by congratulating her rival on her impressive age. Marcellina departs in a fury. Cherubino arrives and, after describing his budding infatuation with all women, particularly with his 'beautiful godmother' the Countess (**aria: 'Non so più cosa son' - 'I don't know anymore what I am'**), asks for Susanna's help with the Count. The Count is furious with Cherubino having discovered him with the gardener's daughter, Barbarina, and plans to punish him. Cherubino pleads with Susanna to ask the Countess to intercede on his behalf.

When the Count appears, Cherubino hides behind a chair, not wanting to be seen alone with Susanna. Finding Susanna alone, the Count intensifies his attempts to seduce her, even offering her money. When Basilio the music teacher enters, the Count rushes to hide behind the same chair. Cherubino hurriedly jumps onto the chair and Susanna scrambles to cover him with a dress.

When Basilio starts to gossip about Cherubino's attraction to the Countess, the Count angrily leaps from his hiding place (**terzetto: 'Cosa sento!' - 'What do I hear!'**). He makes fun of the page's constant flirting and describes how he caught him with Barbarina under the kitchen table. As he lifts the dress from the chair to show how he lifted the tablecloth to expose Cherubino, he finds Cherubino! The Count is furious, but he is reminded that Cherubino overheard his advances on Susanna, something the Count wants to keep secret from the Countess.

Cherubino is saved from punishment by the entrance of peasants from the Count's estate; Figaro hopes to force the Count to promise to forfeit his *droit de seigneur*. The Count dodges Figaro's strategy by postponing the promise. The Count says that he forgives Cherubino, but he sends him off to his army regiment in Seville. Figaro gives Cherubino mocking advice about the harsh, military life ahead of him from which all comforts, especially women, will be banned (**aria: 'Non piu andrai' - 'No more gallivanting'**).

## Act II

The Countess laments her husband's infidelity (**aria: 'Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro' – 'Grant, love, some comfort'**). Susanna comes in to get the Countess ready for the day. She responds to the Countess's questions by telling her that the Count is not trying to seduce her; he is merely offering her money in return for her affection. Figaro enters and explains his plan to distract the Count with anonymous letters warning him of adulterers. He has already sent one to the Count (via Basilio) that indicates that the Countess has a rendezvous that evening. They hope that the Count will be too busy looking for imaginary adulterers to interfere with Figaro and Susanna's wedding. Figaro advises the Countess to keep Cherubino around. She should dress him up as a girl and lure the Count into an illicit rendezvous where he can be caught red-handed. Figaro leaves.

Cherubino then arrives, sent in by Figaro – he is eager to co-operate. Susanna urges him to sing the song he wrote for the Countess (**aria: 'Voi che sapete che cosa è amor' – 'You ladies who know what love is, is it what I'm suffering from?'**). After the song, the Countess, seeing Cherubino's military commission, notices that the Count was in such a hurry that he forgot to seal it with his signet ring. Susanna and the Countess then embark on their plan. Susanna takes off Cherubino's cloak. She begins to comb his hair and teach him to behave and walk like a woman (**aria: 'Venite, inginocchiatevi' – 'Come, kneel down before me'**). Then she leaves to get a dress for Cherubino, taking his cloak with her.

While the Countess and Cherubino are waiting for Susanna to return, they hear the Count arriving. Cherubino hides in the closet. The Count demands to be allowed into the room and the Countess reluctantly unlocks the door. The Count enters and hears a noise from the closet. He tries to open it, but it is locked. The Countess tells him it is only Susanna, trying on her wedding dress.

At this point, Susanna re-enters unobserved, quickly realises what is going on, and hides behind a couch (**Trio: 'Susanna, or via, sortite' – 'Susanna, come out!'**). The Count shouts for her to identify herself, but the Countess orders her to be silent. Furious and suspicious, the Count leaves in search of tools to force the closet door open. The Countess follows. As they leave, the Count locks all the bedroom doors to prevent the intruder from escaping.

Cherubino and Susanna emerge from their hiding places, and Cherubino escapes by jumping through the window into the garden. Susanna then takes Cherubino's place in the closet, vowing to make the Count look foolish (**duet: 'Aprite, presto, aprite' – 'Open the door, quickly!'**).

The Count and Countess return. The Countess, thinking herself trapped, desperately admits that Cherubino is hidden in the closet. The enraged Count draws his sword, promising to kill Cherubino on the spot, but when the door is opened, they only find Susanna (**Finale: 'Esci omai, garzon malnato' – 'Come out of there, you ill-born boy!'**). The Count demands an explanation; the Countess tells him it was a practical joke, to test his trust in her. Shamed by his jealousy, the Count begs for forgiveness. When the Count queries about the anonymous letter, Susanna and the Countess reveal that the letter was written by Figaro, and delivered by Basilio.

Then Figaro arrives and tries to start the wedding festivities, but the Count berates him with questions about the anonymous note. Just as the Count begins to run out of questions, Antonio the gardener arrives, complaining that a man has jumped out of the window and damaged his carnations while running away. Antonio adds that he thought the running man was Cherubino, but Figaro claims it was he himself who jumped out of the window and pretends to have injured his foot while landing.

Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess attempt to discredit Antonio as a chronic drunkard whose constant inebriation makes him unreliable and prone to fantasy, but Antonio brings forward a paper which, he says, was dropped by the escaping man. The Count orders Figaro to prove he was the jumper by identifying the paper (which is, in fact, Cherubino's army commission). Figaro is at a loss, but Susanna and the Countess manage to signal the correct answers, and Figaro triumphantly identifies the document. His victory is, however, short-lived: Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio enter, bringing charges against Figaro and demanding that he honour his contract to marry Marcellina, since he cannot repay her loan. The Count is delighted to postpone the wedding in order to investigate the charge.

## Act III

The Count mulls over the confusing situation. Urged by the Countess, Susanna enters and gives a false promise to meet the Count later that night in the garden (**duet: 'Crudel! perchè finora' – 'Cruel girl, why did you make me wait so long'**). As Susanna leaves, the Count overhears her telling Figaro that he has already won the case. Realizing that he is being tricked (**recitative and aria: 'Hai già vinta la causa! ... Vedrò, mentr'io sospiro' – 'You've already won the case!' ... 'Shall I, while sighing, see'**), he resolves to punish Figaro by forcing him to marry Marcellina.

Figaro's hearing follows, and the Count's judgment is that Figaro must marry Marcellina. Figaro argues that he cannot get married without his parents' permission, and that he does not know who his parents are, because he was stolen from them when he was a baby. The ensuing discussion reveals that Figaro is Raffaello, the long-lost illegitimate son of Bartolo and Marcellina. A touching scene of reconciliation occurs. During the celebrations, Susanna enters with a payment to release Figaro from his debt to Marcellina. Seeing Figaro and Marcellina together, Susanna mistakenly believes that Figaro now prefers Marcellina to her. She has a tantrum and slaps Figaro's face. Marcellina explains, and Susanna, realising her mistake, joins the celebration. Bartolo, overcome with emotion, agrees to marry Marcellina that evening in a double wedding (**sextet: 'Riconosci in questo amplesso' – 'Recognize in this embrace'**).



All leave, before Barbarina, Antonio's daughter, invites Cherubino back to her house so they can disguise him as a girl. The Countess, alone, ponders the loss of her happiness (**aria: 'Dove sono i bei momenti' – 'Where are they, the beautiful moments'**). Meanwhile, Antonio informs the Count that Cherubino is not in Seville, but in fact at his house. Susanna enters and tells her mistress about the plan to trap the Count. The Countess dictates a love letter for Susanna to send to the Count, which suggests that he should meet Susanna that night, 'under the pines'. The letter tells the Count to return the pin which fastens the letter (**duet: 'Sull'aria..che soave zeffiretto' – 'On the breeze... What a gentle little zephyr'**).

A chorus of peasants, among them Cherubino disguised as a girl, arrives to serenade the Countess. The Count arrives with Antonio and, discovering the page, is enraged. His anger is quickly dispelled by Barbarina, who publicly recalls that he had once offered to give her anything she wants in exchange for certain favours - she asks for Cherubino's hand in marriage. The Count allows Cherubino to stay. The act closes with the double wedding, during which Susanna delivers her letter to the Count (**Finale: 'Ecco la marcia – 'Here is the procession'**). Figaro watches the Count prick his finger on the pin, and laughs, unaware that the love-note is an invitation for the Count to meet with Susanna.

#### **Act IV**

Following the directions in the letter, the Count has sent the pin back to Susanna, giving it to Barbarina. However, Barbarina has lost it (**aria: 'L'ho perduta, me meschina' – 'I have lost it, poor me'**). Figaro and Marcellina see Barbarina, and Figaro asks her what she is doing. When he hears the pin is Susanna's, he is overcome with jealousy, especially as he recognises the pin to be the one that fastened the letter to the Count. Thinking that Susanna is meeting the Count behind his back, Figaro complains to his mother, and swears to be avenged on the Count and Susanna, and on all unfaithful wives. Marcellina urges caution; Figaro will not listen.

Figaro rushes off, and Marcellina resolves to inform Susanna of Figaro's intentions. Marcellina sings an aria that laments why female wild beasts get along with each other, but rational humans can't (**aria: 'Il capro e la capretta' – 'The billy-goat and the she-goat'**).

Motivated by jealousy, Figaro tells Bartolo and Basilio to come to his aid when he gives the signal. Basilio comments on Figaro's foolishness and claims he was once as frivolous as Figaro was. Figaro muses bitterly on the inconstancy of women (**recitative and aria: 'Tutto è disposto ... Aprite un po' quegli occhi' – 'Everything is ready ... Open those eyes a little'**).

Susanna and the Countess arrive, dressed in each other's clothes. Marcellina is with them, having informed Susanna of Figaro's suspicions and plans. After they discuss the plan, Marcellina and the Countess leave, and Susanna teases Figaro by singing a love song to her beloved within Figaro's hearing (**aria: 'Deh vieni, non-tardar' – 'Oh come, don't delay'**). Figaro is hiding behind a bush and, thinking the song is for the Count, becomes increasingly jealous.

The Countess arrives in Susanna's dress. Cherubino shows up and starts teasing 'Susanna', endangering the plan. (**Finale: 'Pian pianin le andrò più presso' – 'Softly, softly I'll approach her'**) The Count gets rid of him by striking out in the dark. His punch ends up hitting Figaro, but the point is made and Cherubino runs off.

The Count now begins making earnest love to 'Susanna', and gives her a jewelled ring. They go offstage together, where the Countess dodges him, hiding in the dark. Onstage, meanwhile, the real Susanna enters, wearing the Countess' clothes. Figaro mistakes her for the real Countess, and starts to tell her of the Count's intentions, but he recognizes his bride in disguise. He plays along by pretending to be in love with 'my lady' and invites her to make love then and there. Susanna loses her temper, and slaps him. Figaro lets on that he has recognized Susanna's voice, and they make peace, resolving to conclude the comedy together (**'Pace, pace, mio dolce tesoro' – 'Peace, peace, my sweet treasure'**)

The Count, unable to find 'Susanna', enters frustrated. Figaro gets his attention by loudly declaring his love for 'the Countess'. The enraged Count calls for his people and for weapons: his servant is seducing his wife. (**Ultima scena: 'Gente, gente, all'armi, all'armi' – 'Gentlemen, to arms!'**) Bartolo, Basilio and Antonio enter as, one by one, the Count drags out Cherubino, Barbarina, Marcellina and the 'Countess'. Everyone begs him to forgive Figaro and the 'Countess', but he loudly refuses, repeating 'no' at the top of his voice, until finally the real Countess enters and reveals her identity.

The Count, seeing the ring he had given her, realizes that the 'Susanna' he was trying to seduce was in fact his wife. Ashamed and remorseful, he kneels and pleads for forgiveness himself (**'Contessa perdono!' – 'Countess, forgive me!'**). The Countess, more kind than he (**'Più docile io sono' – 'I am more mild'**), forgives her husband and everyone is happy!

**Ensemble OrQuesta are immensely grateful for the generous support that The Garrick Charitable Trust and The Cavalli Foundation have given to this production. We are delighted to announce that this production of *Le nozze di Figaro*, with the Ensemble OrQuesta Company cast, will be performed at the Arcola Theatre as part of the Grimeborn Festival 2024. We hope to see you there!**