

arcola
theatre

EO Ensemble
Orchestra

ALCINA

Handel



25th– 29th August 2021

Marcio da Silva *Stage/Music Director*

Stephanie Gurga *Music Director/Harpsichord*

Laura Hensley *Assistant Stage Director*

Benjamin Riedel *Assistant Stage Director/ Stage Manager*

Cédric Meyer *Archlute / Baroque Guitar*

Edmund Taylor, Kirsty Main *Violin*

Georgie Davis *Viola, Jacob Garside* *Cello/Continuo*

Helen May * | Rosemary Carlton-Willis + Alcina

Laura Fleur * | Emily Kyte + Ruggiero

Kathleen Nic Dhiarmada * | Rachel Allen + Morgana

Maya Wheeler-Colwell * | Marienella Phillips + Bradamante

Kieran White *Oronte*

John Holland-Avery *Melisso*

Poppy Shotts *Oberto*

Ethan Udovich *Chorus / Cover Oronte*

*** 25th, 27th, 28th (Matinee), 29th + 26th, 28th (Evening)**

2022 Opera Academies - United Kingdom

'This ensemble is certainly one to watch'
Tim Hochstrasser - Live Theatre UK Reviews

'tempestuous evening of operatic delight'
'an enchanting revival by the enterprising Ensemble OrQuesta and Brazilian director Marcio da Silva'
Peter Barker, Traffic Light Theatre Goer GREEN



5th-13th March, Hastings
L'Orfeo (Monteverdi)
(Tuition fee: £500)



25th April-5th May, Hastings
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
(Tuition fee: £800)



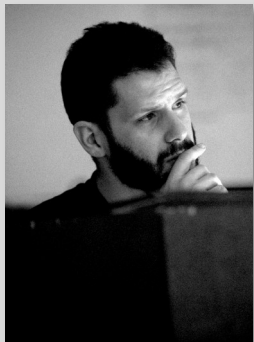
26th July to 4th Aug, London
Cephale et Procris
Jacquet de la Guerre
(Tuition fee: £650)



4th to 13th August, London
L'Incoronazione di Poppea
(Monteverdi)
(Tuition fee: £700)

- Performance of a role in a fully staged production in original language with professional orchestra accompaniment.
- Tuition on style, pronunciation, movement, acting and vocal technique.
- Professional pictures.
- Application requirements: cv and recording to auditions@ensembleorquesta.com
- Roles will be allocated upon receipt of suitable applications.

Ensemble OrQuesta was created in 2013 by its artistic director Marcio da Silva. It brings together artists who are dedicated to performing Baroque music in all its richness and diversity to the highest of standards. In recent years Ensemble OrQuesta have brought their professional productions to the Grimeborn Festival at the Arcola Theatre and taken them to other venues in the UK and abroad. These productions have secured considerable critical acclaim. Since 2014 Ensemble OrQuesta has organised 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 orchestral 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. Marcio da Silva and Stephanie Gurga are at the heart of this team, but other contributors have included: stage director Jenny Miller, counter-tenor Victor Soares, lutenist Taro Tacheuchi, conductor Neylson Crepalde, Italian Coach Alessandra Fasolo, movement coach Patrick Dailey, and others. Marcio da Silva is both stage and musical director of the productions but is particularly grateful for Stephanie's musical expertise and support. The increasing 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 across the UK. This production of Alcina grew out of an Ensemble OrQuesta opera academy held in London in 2019. It will be taken on tour to Normandy, France, in September of this year.



Stage/Music Director - born in Brazil, **Marcio da Silva** studied singing, and choral and orchestral conducting at the Conservatoire de Toulouse. 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. He obtained a Bachelor of Music degree from the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg, Germany, and a Master's degree from the Royal College of Music. 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 the Ensemble OrQuesta. In these roles he has conducted and directed over 20 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. He is also music director of the Grange Choral Society, the Billingshurst Choral Society and Hastings Philharmonic Choir, and artistic director of the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra. www.marciodasilva.com

Harpichord/Music Director - **Stephanie Gurga** studied piano at DePauw University in Indiana (USA), and at the Ecole Normale de Musique Alfred Cortot in Paris, finally specialising in early music at the Musikhochschule in Freiburg, Germany, from whence she graduated with an Artist's Diploma in harpsichord performance in 2009. She completed an MMus in fortepiano performance in 2012. Invited by festivals of international renown, Stephanie has participated in many concerts as a soloist and in chamber music ensembles with performances at the Grand Auditorium of Lyon (FR), Palacios das Artes (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), National Music Museum (South Dakota, USA), Ritratti festival (IT), Ticino Musica Festival Lugano (CH), Orecchio di Giano de Roma (Italy), Lauenen Chamber Concerts (CH), Associazione Mozart (Italy), the Swiss Chamber Concerts, the Grange Concert Series (Christ Church, Great Britain), University Artist Series (Johannesburg, South Africa), the Artists Festival in Istanbul (Turkey), the National Concert Hall (Taiwan), the Théâtre Athenée of Paris (FR), and Schloss Bad Krozingen (Germany). Since 2010 she has been engaged as an accompanist at the HEMU 'Vaud-Valais-Fribourg' in Lausanne, Switzerland. Stephanie also has a busy international schedule acting as continuo for a range of choirs and orchestras and has recently recorded with violist Diemut Poppen. www.stephaniegurga.com



Archlute: Swiss lutenist **Cédric Meyer** was first trained as a classical guitarist at the University of Music Lausanne, and then at the Geneva University of Music. Subsequently he received training on traditional plucked instruments, including the lute and baroque guitar. Cédric performs in a variety of musical projects on modern and historical instruments, as soloist, chamber musician and basso continuo player, in Switzerland, France, Italy, England and Brazil. Alongside his artistic activities, he teaches at the Music Schools of Pully and Renens (Vaud, Switzerland).



Assistant Stage Director - Laura Hensley is an emerging theatre director who graduated from Bristol Old Vic's MA in Drama Directing in 2020. Since graduating, Laura has directed Martin Crimp's *Fewer Emergencies* for Rose Bruford College, where she also completed her undergraduate degree in European Theatre Arts, and is currently working on developing scripts with new writers for fringe theatre. Laura has experience as an actor, dramaturg and workshop facilitator as well as directing, and she is particularly interested in working with young people, family and community audiences. Her first production with Ensemble OrQuesta was *Don Giovanni* in 2017, and she has worked regularly with the company ever since.

Assistant Stage Director/ Stage Manager - Benjamin Riedel is a graduate of Rose Bruford College. Benjamin has worked as Assistant Stage Director for Ensemble OrQuesta for Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, 2019, Cavalli's *Xerse*, 2018 and Lully's *Armide*, 2017. We are delighted to welcome him back to the team for our performances of *Alcina* at the Grimeborn Festival in August 2021. Benjamin also works as a deviser and performer including for shows entitled 'Today is my One Hundredth Birthday' and 'One Man and his Dog'. These have been toured to a number of fringe venues.



Violin I - Edmund Taylor is a violinist specialising in historical performance. After training at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Edmund founded the period instrument ensemble Bellot Ensemble, to give talented soloists the opportunity to perform early music concertos, as well as to perform a variety of repertoire from the renaissance to the classical period. Edmund has directed his group in such venues as St George's Hanover Square and the Chapel of St Peter and St Paul, alongside choral directors such as Ralph Allwood MBE, as well as working closely with singers such as the award-winning Julien Van Mellaerts. In 2019 the Bellot Ensemble gave the UK premiere of Telemann's reconstructed 'Erklingt Durch Gedoppelt Annehmliche Töne' Cantata. Edmund performs regularly across the UK and Europe as a violinist and leader for other period instrument ensembles and has a particular passion for operatic works from the Baroque period. He is also a music lecturer at CityLit in central London, and is co-founder of the charitable initiative healingnotesmusic.



Violin II - Kirsty Main graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music with a BMus in violin performance. She specialised in historical performance during her Masters (MMus, Merit) at the University of Glasgow in conjunction with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Kirsty was a Britten-Pears Young Artist on baroque violin where she co-led a performance of Handel's *Theodora* at Snape Maltings. She regularly plays with Eboracum Baroque, Newcastle Baroque, the Bellot Ensemble, the Zimmermann Band and as leader of the Kellie Consort. She is also a member of Convivio who have recently performed at Handel and Hendrix in London and for the Faversham Music Society. Other recent engagements include those with, the Scottish Ballet orchestra, the Scottish Festival Orchestra, Opera Dei Lumi, the Broen Ensemble, the London Contemporary Music Festival Orchestra, and the New Generation Festival Orchestra. Kirsty performs regularly with the Cairn String Quartet. www.kirstymain.com

Viola - Georgie Davis is currently a Viola player in the Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square after completing her Bachelor of Music degree with a 1st Class Honours at the Royal College of Music in 2020. She has played with ensembles such as the English National Opera (Evolve), Bath Festival Orchestra (Co-Principal), HerEnsemble, and was the reserve for London Philharmonic Orchestra (Foyle Future Firsts). She has worked with conductors such as: Ashkenazy, Sir Mark Elder, Ed Gardiner, Nicholas Collon and Sue Perkins. Georgie thoroughly enjoys playing both Baroque Viola with Ensemble OrQuesta alongside Modern Viola, and also embarking on leading creative workshops for people with Alzheimers and Dementia in the Turtle Key Arts company.

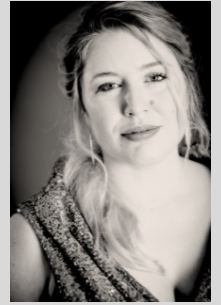


Cello - Jacob Garside took up the cello at the age of 12. In the sixth form he attended the Centre for Advanced Training at Sage Gateshead, prior to reading Music at the University of Bristol where he took cello lessons with Ioan Davies (Fitzwilliam Quartet), conducted the University Baroque Ensemble and String Orchestra and was principal cellist for the Opera and Musical Theatre societies' productions. As a soloist, Jacob has premiered Change Sung-a's Concerto for Cello and String Orchestra. Jacob was very involved in the University's New Music Ensemble and led projects with the Contemporary Music Venture, focusing on new music for period instruments. Assisted by a scholarship from the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment he went on to study cello and viola da gamba in the Historical Performance Department of the Royal Academy of Music. He is co-principal cellist of the Zeitgeist Chamber Orchestra and the Bellot Ensemble and has recently recorded CDs with La Nuova Musica and Fretwork.



Alcina - Soprano Helen May graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with a Master's in Vocal Performance (Distinction) and a DipRAM for outstanding final recital performance, having benefitted from the support of the William Gibbs Trust and the Josephine Baker Trust. In 2020 she was nominated for an OFFIE Award for her performance as Calisto in Cavalli's *La Calisto* at The Cockpit Theatre. Helen has undertaken roles for Woodhouse Opera, Hampstead Garden Opera, Royal Academy Opera, Ensemble OrQuesta, Barefoot Opera, Opera Anywhere, Bury Court Opera, London Opera Players, and Oxfordshire Contemporary Opera. Lead roles have included: Mozart's Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*); Despina (*Così fan tutte*); First Lady (*The Magic Flute*); and Barbarina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*); Climene (*L'Egisto*, Cavalli); Galatea (*Acis and Galatea*, Handel); Morgana (*Alcina*, Handel); Nerone and Valletto (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Monteverdi); Diane (*Hippolyte et Aricie*, Rameau); Giannetta (*L'elisir d'amore*, Donizetti); Woodpecker (*Cunning Little Vixen*, Janáček); Nimue (*Merlin*, premiere, Keith Beal) and cover Aurora (*Aurora*, premiere, Noah Moseley). Forthcoming roles include: Countess Almaviva, (*Le Nozze di Figaro*); Mimi (*La bohème*, Puccini)); and cover Jenůfa (Jenůfa, Janáček). Future oratorio engagements include, Mozart's *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G minor*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Haydn's *Creation*. www.helenmaysoprano.com

Alcina - 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). In addition to her roles with Ensemble OrQuesta, other lead roles include Juliette (*Romeo et Juliette*, Gounod), Cinderella's Mother (*Into the Woods*, Sondheim), Marjorie (*Allegro*, 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. www.rosemarycarltonwillis.com



Ruggiero - Laura Fleur British mezzo soprano Laura Fleur is studying on the Opera course at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. She previously graduated with a first class honours undergraduate degree and a Master of Performance degree with distinction from the Royal College of Music. Laura is a 2019 Leeds Lieder Festival Young Artist and a 2020 Garsington Alvarez Young Artist. Operatic experience includes Ernestina in *L'Occasione fa il ladro* (British Youth Opera), Pompea in *The Little Green Swallow* (Guildhall Opera), Mrs Kneebone in *A Dinner Engagement* (RCM Opera Studio), the title role in *Dido and Aeneas* (Hurn Court Opera), Melanto in *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse* (Suffolk Villages Festival), Nerone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (The New Renaissance Collective), Amastre in Cavalli's *Xerse* and Dafne in Caccini's *Euridice* (Ensemble Orquesta). In Summer 2020 she was cast to cover Second Nymph in Garsington Opera's production of *Rusalka*. In Opera Scenes she has performed as Sesto (*La Clemenza di Tito*), Marie (*Written on Skin*), Béatrice (*Béatrice et Bénédict*), Mercédès and L'Enfant at the GSMD. At the Drottningholm Slottsteater, Stockholm, she performed in Handel Opera Scenes as Serse and Sesto. Laura is a Wax Chandlers' Scholar and is supported by The Margery and Stephen Wright Eisinger Award, a Help Musicians Sybil Tutton award, a Countess of Munster award, the Mario Lanza Foundation and the Pimlott Foundation. Upcoming engagements include Véronique in Bizet's *Le Docteur Miracle* and Armelinde in Viardot's *Cendrillon* with Guildhall Opera. www.laurahockingmezzo.co.uk

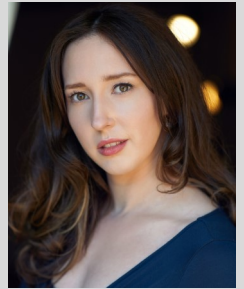
Ruggiero - Emily Kyte Mezzo-soprano Emily Kyte trained on the opera course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and on the English National Opera OperaWorks programme. Most recently, she sang the role of the Owl and covered the role of the Fox in Longborough Festival Opera's production of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Other roles include Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*) for Opera på Skäret, Edith (*The Pirates of Penzance*) for Merry Opera, and The King for Johann Strauss' *The Queen's Lace Handkerchief* for Opera della Luna. Emily covered Idamante (*Idomeneo*) for English Touring Opera in 2019, as well as singing the mezzo role in their SEND production *Waxwings*. Other cover roles include Zulma (*L'Italiana in Algeri*) for Garsington Opera. In 2019, Emily was a soloist for *Tarantara*, a gala performance of the works of Gilbert & Sullivan, performed at the Chichester Festival Theatre and conducted by Martin Handley. Other concert credits include the female solo quartet in Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* with the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, and the alto solo in Handel's *Utrecht Te Deum* and *Utrecht Jubilate* with the English Chamber Orchestra. Emily has sung as a soloist at Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall and Barbican Hall. www.emilykyte.com





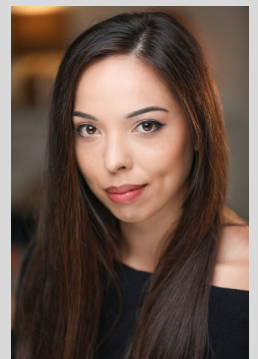
Morgana - Kathleen Nic Dhiarmada. Kathleen is an Irish soprano studying with Kate Paterson and Raymond Connell. Recently graduating with a distinction in Vocal Studies from the Royal Academy of Music, Kathleen is now continuing her studies at Royal Academy Opera with the generous support of the Carr-Gregory Trust. Kathleen has performed lead roles in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helena, Royal Academy Opera 2020), Puccini's *La bohème* (Musetta, Hampstead Garden Opera, 2019) and Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Poppea, Ensemble OrQuesta, 2019). Kathleen looks forward to playing Lauretta in Royal Academy Opera's production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* later this year. Oratorio engagements include Fauré's *Requiem* (Dún Laoghaire Choral Society), Haydn's *Creation* (Armagh City Choir) and Mozart's *C minor Mass* (English Baroque Choir).

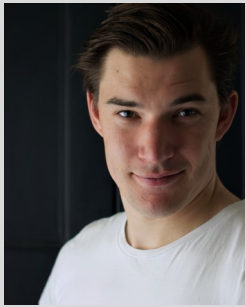
Morgana - Rachel Allen Hailing from the west coast of Canada, soprano Rachel Allen is praised for bringing "great tenderness" and "seductive power" to her singing (Opera Going Toronto). Particularly known for her interpretation of baroque repertoire, she has appeared as a concert soloist with ensembles including La Modestine, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Victoria Baroque Players, and the Theatre of Early Music. Recent performance highlights include playing Bellezza, Semele, and Seconda Hora in Cavalli's *L'Egisto* with Hampstead Garden Opera and a recital of Bach arias in Music at Hill's Midtown Concert Bach Festival. Rachel trained with sopranos Nancy Argenta and Ingrid Attrot in Victoria, Canada. In the Victoria Conservatory of Music's Opera Studio, she performed as Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Hermia (*The Fairy Queen*), Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* excerpts) and Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*). She was awarded the Ethel James Rose Bowl and Roberto and Mary Wood Scholarship at the Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival and subsequently represented British Columbia at the National Festival. Rachel received her Bachelor of Music at the University of Toronto, studying at the Royal Northern College of Music in her final year. This autumn, she will begin her master's degree at the Royal College of Music studying with Alison Wells and looks forward to making her debut in the Monteverdi Choir in their 2021-22 season.



Bradamante - Maya Wheeler-Colwell British-Belgian mezzo-soprano, Maya Colwell graduated with Distinction from the Masters course at the Royal Academy of Music, where she was awarded the Alice Gamble Award and the Amanda Von Lob Memorial Prize, and holds a First Class BA in Music from the University of Bristol. Maya studies with Elizabeth Ritchie and benefits from the continued mentorship of Angela Hickey. In September 2019, Maya premiered the title role of Dorian Gray in the new opera by Oliver Bowes to great acclaim, in a production at the historic Bedford Pub in Balham. She also made her debut as a soloist with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Hilary Davan-Wetton at Cadogan Hall. Maya is part of the additional chorus at La Monnaie in Brussels, and was a member of the British Youth Opera's Serena Fenwick programme. Previous roles include: Dido, *Dido and Aeneas*; Zerlina, *Don Giovanni*; Fortuna and Valletto, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*; Despina, *Così fan tutte*; Mercedes, *Carmen*; Zita, *Gianni Schicchi*; Old Lady, *Candide*; and Die Knusperhexe, *Hansel and Gretel*. Alongside her work as a singer, Maya also works as the creative director of Love Opera, coordinating and devising innovative productions of operatic treasures. Maya is delighted to return to EnsembleOrQuesta to reprise the role of Bradamante which she first performed in 2019. www.mayacolwell.com

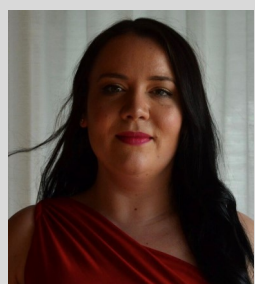
Bradamante - Marienella Phillips British-Filipino mezzo-soprano, Marienella Phillips, made her Welsh National Opera debut as Mrs Charlton in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (2019) [conductor Karen Kamensek, director Martin Constantine]. In 2020 she graduated from the RWCMD's David Seligman Opera Studio where she was taught by Anne Mason and coached by John Fisher and Stephen Wood. There she played Dorabella in excerpts from Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the Welsh National Opera Orchestra conducted by Carlo Rizzi; won the Adelina Patti and Dolan Evans Prizes 2019 and was a finalist for the Sir Ian Stoutzker Prize 2021. In June, she played Hansel in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* for Longborough Festival Opera's Playground Opera Tour, directed by Maria Jagusz and conducted by Jessica May. As a director, she was an associate on Early Opera Company's *Dido and Aeneas* conducted by Christian Curnyn and directed by Martin Constantine for Buxton International Festival 2021. Previous operatic roles include: Dido (*Dido & Aeneas*, RWCMD), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*, RWCMD), Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*, Somerset Opera), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*, Cardiff Opera), Second Lady (Serenata Singers, Cardiff), Tessa (*The Gondoliers*, RWCMD), Nancy Waters (*Albert Herring*, RWCMD), Pinocchio (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*, RWCMD), Second Boy (*The Magic Flute*, RWCMD) and Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*, Opera'r Ddraig). www.marienellaphillips.com





Oronte - Kieran White. British tenor Kieran White enjoys success in the UK and is emerging as a sought after artist Europe. Operatic engagements include Damon, Acis and Galatea, for Dorset Opera; Arnalta L'Incoronazione di Poppea, Cockpit Theatre; title-role, L'Egisto for Hampstead Garden Opera; Hippolyte, Hippolyte et Aricie, Grimeborn Festival; Acis, Acis and Galatea, Ensemble OrQuesta; Ruggiero, Caccini, La liberazione di Ruggiero; Pastore in Gagliano's La Dafne for Brighton Early Music Festival; and Sailor, Dido and Aeneas, Grange Festival. Upcoming engagements include Castor, Castor et Pollux with Warsaw Chamber Opera. On the recital platform he has performed with Elizabeth Kenny (lute/theorbo) and Zita Silva (Harp), at the Sherborne Music Festival. Recent engagements include Bach Weihnachtsoratorium (Evangelist and tenor solo) with Collegium Musicum, Bergen; Bach Matthäus-Passion (Evangelist) with Iain Ledingham; Bach Johannes-Passion (tenor solo) with Bristol Bach Choir; Bach Matthäus-Passion (tenor solo) with Copenhagen Soloists; Stainer Crucifixion with Edvard Grieg Kor; Bach Cantatas with Amsterdam Baroque; Monteverdi Vespro della Beata Vergine with Edvard Grieg Kor; Bach's B Minor Mass at the Thuringer Bachwochen in the Erfurt Dom; and Bach Johannes-Passion (Evangelist) with the ensemble Gli Angeli, in Geneva. www.kieranwhitetenor.com

Melisso - British-Iranian baritone, John Hormoz Holland-Avery, is a prize-winning postgraduate of the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, studies supported by the Mercers' Company and an Independent Opera Voice Scholarship. Opera credits include: Chorus in Bart's *Oliver!*, Verdi's *Don Carlo* (Grange Park Opera), the title role Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Hidraot/Ubalde in Lully's *Armide*, Periarco in Cavalli's *Xerse* (UK premiere), Bellone/Ali in Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*, Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (Ensemble OrQuesta), and Don Alfonso, *Don Giovanni* (Devon Opera), Traveller in Britten's *Curlew River* (Opera Xylem), Step-Out Baritone (cover) in Noah Mosley's *Aurora* (Bury Court Opera), Pluton in Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* (Ensemble OrQuesta), Alidoro (cover) in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (British Youth Opera), and Dr Falke in J. Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus* (Windsor and Eton Opera), Dottore in Verdi's *La Traviata* (Teddington), Giove in Cavalli's *La Calisto* (Ensemble OrQuesta), and Harasta in Janacek's *Cunning Little Vixen* (Riverside Opera), and Hipparco in Cavalli's *L'Egisto* (Hampstead Garden Opera). He performed in the Serena Fenwick Training Programme Summer Concert (BYO) soon due for YouTube broadcast, and as a founding member of Eboracum Baroque, recorded Handel's *Messiah* for 2021 release.



Oberto - Poppy Shotts Yorkshire Soprano, Poppy Shotts, is an alumna of the Royal College of Music, London and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. A 2018 Lies Askonas Finalist, 2019 Somerset Song Prize finalist, and 2018 National Mozart Competition and Royal Overseas League Semi-Finalist, Poppy has been supported by the Countess of Munster, Derek Butler Award, Henry Wood Award and the Il Circolo Italian Cultural Award. Poppy was the soprano soloist for the 2020 Naxos recording of Massenet's *Visions* with the RSO. Concert work includes Peer Gynt (LPO, Cadogan Hall), Mahler's 4th Symphony (RCS) and French Melodie with Roger Vignoles (RCM). Poppy joined the chorus of Scottish Opera in 2020. Opera credits include Madame Goldentrill (Pulp Rocket Theatre, Lampport Hall), Crocodile (Hull Urban Opera Digital Horror Opera), Barbarina, (RCM Opera School, directed by Sir Thomas Allen), Léila, (RCM Opera Scenes, directed by Matthew Monahan), Nedda, (RCM Opera Scenes, directed by Polly Graham), Cleopatra (RCM Opera Scenes, directed by Stuart Barker), Pamina with Ensemble OrQuesta, Susanna with Matchbox Opera, Soprano Soloist for Satie's *Socrates* one woman work with Hull Urban Opera, Dew Fairy at the St. Magnus International Festival, Erste Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* (2018), and Abigail Williams in *The Crucible* (2019) with the Berlin Opera Academy. www.poppyscotts.com

Ethan Udovich - Chorus (Cover Oronte) Italian-American tenor Ethan Udovich hails from the Greater Philadelphia Area. He is an alumnus of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and the University of Delaware. Main stage opera roles in the Indiana University (IU) Opera Theatre include Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), Fisherman (*The Three Hermits*), and Street Singer (*Bernstein Mass*). Further opera credits include Giles Corey (*The Crucible* - Berlin Opera Academy), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte* - Bloomington Chamber Opera 2020 and Austrian American Mozart Academy Salzburg 2017), Rustighello (*Lucrezia Borgia*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Judge Danforth (*The Crucible*), and Pedrillo (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) all for University of Delaware Opera Theatre, and Giuseppe (*La Traviata* - Annapolis Opera). Ethan created the role of Justin in the new musical *Campus Chatter* (produced and written by Xiang Gao), as part of the University of Delaware Master Players Concert Series. Ethan has sung Opera Chorus with IU Opera Theatre for *L'elisir d'amore*, and the IU Washington National Opera production of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Additional opera chorus credits include *Falstaff* (Opera Delaware), and *La Traviata* and *Faust* (Annapolis Opera). This is Ethan's first appearance with Ensemble OrQuesta. www.ethanudovich.com



Historical context: After the success of *Rinaldo* in 1711, Handel settled in London. The founding of the opera company the Royal Academy of Music (1719), in the **King's** Theatre in Haymarket, provided him with a unique and grand venue. Handel's reputation grew as he produced a succession of well-received operas such as *Radamisto* (1720), *Giulio Cesare* (1724), and *Rodelinda* (1725). However, in 1734, he lost the lease on the theatre and had the frustration of observing its take-over by the rival company, the Opera of the Nobility, supported by the Prince of Wales. With it went his star castrato Senesino.

Undeterred, Handel focused his energies on the rather less fashionable new Covent Garden theatre, the **Theatre Royal**, which had been built at the top of Bow Street on the site now occupied by the Royal Opera House. On 8 January 1735 he presented *Ariodante*, based on the epic poem Orlando Furioso, written by the Italian Ludovico Ariosto in the early 1500s. Ariosto's passionate characters and exotic settings attracted many opera composers, enticed by its star-crossed lovers, dark magic and madness. Vivaldi wrote two such; both Lully and Haydn wrote one. Handel created three. Unfortunately, *Ariodante* had only limited success. Handel had already composed nearly 30 operas for London audiences, but the appeal of Italian *opera seria* was beginning to wane. Herein lies an explanation for **Handel's search for a more fascinating and spectacular focus** for his next opera, and his choice of the seductive and fiery enchantress Alcina as the subject.

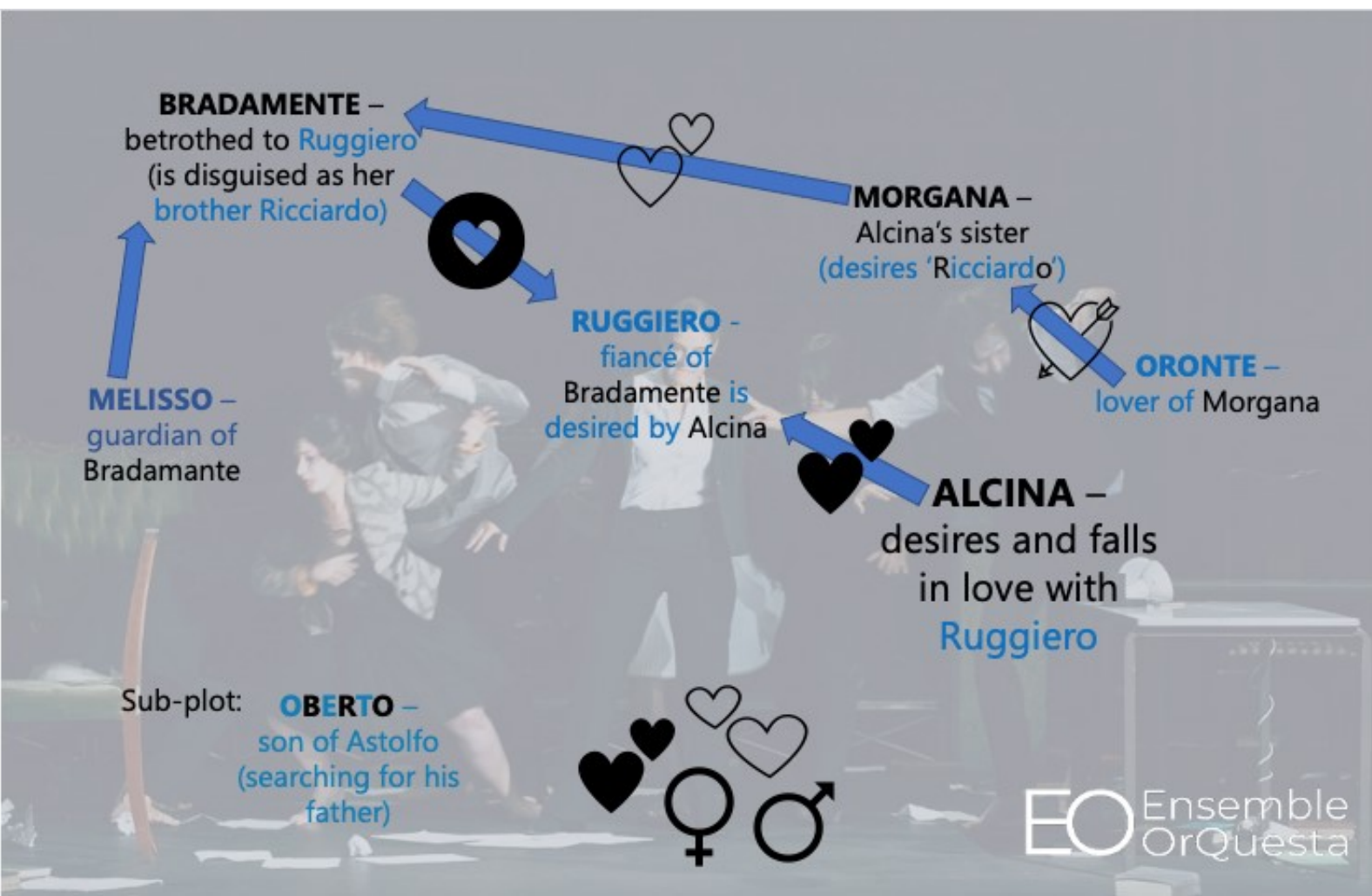
Antonio Fanzaglia had written a libretto (*L'Isola di Alcina*, 1728) for Riccardo Broschi (1698-1756), the brother of the famous castrato singer Farinelli. Handel set to work composing music to match an anonymous adaptation of this libretto, which includes most elements of the **Alcina** tradition. She is portrayed as a fearsome but tragic enchantress who uses her powers to bewitch warriors, and then keeps them prisoner on her enchanted island. However, she is undone when she falls in love with the foolish Ruggiero, whose brave fiancée comes to rescue him. The subsequent battle for Ruggiero's heart and soul is **symbolic**: the fight is between sensuality and duty; between the clamorous allure of the present and the imperative obligations of the past; between illusion and love. In the end, it is the strength of mortal love that defeats Alcina's enchantments.

Into this Alcina-dominated narrative, Handel added **a subplot**, which did not appear in Broschi's original. This element included the boy Oberto and was created to showcase the talents of a new discovery, the young William Savage. He had been immensely successful as Joas in the performances of *Athalia* that preceded *Alcina*, and it seems that Handel added the role at the last moment to capitalise on the boy's popularity.

Alcina premiered on 16 April **1735** at a significant point in Handel's career and in the changing world of London opera. The spectacle offered by the impressive machinery deployed for the transformation scenes and by Handel's inventive and melodic music, went some way to re-establishing his reputation with the fickle London public. It became the composer's last great London opera success, running for 18 days - a remarkable achievement for the time. It even survived the disgrace of Marie Sallé being hissed off the stage for wearing a rather provocative costume during one of the ballet sequences.

When retrospectively assessing **Alcina's significance**, musicologists are inclined to comment on the **coincidental symbolism**: notably, the opera ends with the powers of the enchantress ousted, and Alcina herself fading away. Art and life seem to echo each other. The *opera seria* world itself was being pushed to one side to allow room for comedic opera, and *Alcina* was destined to be the last enchantress that Handel wrote. Before too long the theatre and the enchanted world slipped away from him. Five years later (with *Deidamia*, 1741), Handel gave up opera, and from that point onwards he devoted himself primarily to oratorio (Messiah, 1742 etc), producing a succession of sixteen such major works before his death in 1759. A new and rather glorious chapter had begun, but the musical delights of *Alcina* represent a distinctive and outstanding achievement in Handel's extraordinarily diverse repertoire, and it deserves to be celebrated.

Survival guide to the characters in *Alcina*



Alcina (soprano) - a powerful 'enchantress', who desires and falls in love with Ruggiero.

Ruggiero (mezzo) - fiancé of Bradamante (who is under a spell and suffering from amnesia for most of the opera), who is desired by Alcina: this is a female singer, who is dressed as a man, who is actually playing the part of a man.

Bradamante (mezzo) - betrothed to Ruggiero; she is searching for Ruggiero, and is disguised as her brother Ricciardo: this is a female singer, dressed as a man, but she is really a woman in the Alcina story.

Morgana (soprano) - an enchantress, Alcina's sister, who desires 'Ricciardo' (who is Bradamante in disguise).

Melisso (baritone) - guardian of Bradamante.

Oronte (tenor) - lover of Morgana.

Oberto (soprano) - son of Astolfo (searching for his father): a female singer, dressed as a boy, playing the part of a boy.

Outline synopsis

Ruggiero has been abducted by the powerful enchantress, Alcina. His fiancée, Bradamante, is determined to rescue him. Borrowing some of her brother Ricciardo's clothes, she disguises herself and convinces her guardian, Melisso, to take her to Alcina and Morgana's 'domain.'

But Alcina's power is exceptionally strong. Ruggiero does not remember his former life, and he does not recognise Bradamante. It is only through the use of a magic talisman that Ruggiero is able to see Alcina's enchanted domain for what it really is - a desolate wasteland. Everything he has grown to know and to love has been a lie.

Being reunited with Bradamante empowers Ruggiero and he is able to defeat Alcina. He destroys the 'vessel' that contains her power, and all the former lovers of Alcina who had been trapped by her magic, transform back into humans. Wickedness is defeated and true love triumphs.

The music

Alcina was designed to be a 'magic' opera, enhanced with supernatural effects, and using sophisticated machinery, in order to regain the upper hand in the rivalry between competing theatres. But Handel did not just rely on spectacular sets and equipment to create impact. Most notably, in his writing for the character of Alcina, who shares centre stage with the mortal Ruggiero, Handel seems to be at the peak of his dramatic characterisation. Alcina is a deeply drawn character, who takes the simple story in unexpected directions. She is one of Handel's most remarkable creations: dangerously seductive, we are torn between an empathetic response to her forlorn desperation and passionate love for Ruggiero, and harsh condemnation of her cruelty and self-centred reign of terror. Her magnificent arias - Handel's reward to the soprano Anna Maria Strada del Pò - are enthralling in their variety and complexity.

Alcina retains many of the traits of the enchantresses who preceded her: Armide, Medea, and Melissa. She is as familiar with **fury** as the others are - threatening and vindictive when betrayed. Yet she also gives us a glimpse into her sensitive soul when she is trapped between the desire for vengeance and the **pain** of not being loved. In the end Alcina makes what is a fatal mistake for an enchantress: she who turns the lovers she tires of into stone and animals, falls deeply in love with Ruggiero, and yearns to keep him close to her. This transformation makes her uniquely vulnerable.

In the **six arias** that Handel gives to Alcina - two per act - the composer uses his musical imagination and all the skills of his craft to express the fluctuations in the amorous feelings that mark Alcina's transformation as a character, and to chart her insidious emotional collapse. The beauty, intensity and dramatic range of her singing evolves as the opera unfolds. Her arias are powerfully contrasting. Her initial aria in **Act 1, 'Di', cor mio, quanto t'amai'**, (written in chamber music style with interchanges between voice and instruments), expresses the highly-charged eroticism of a love-struck seductress. In the second aria in this act, in **'Si, son quella'**, (written in solo-song style accompanied by simple continuo), she responds with a soulful, seemingly anxious humility to the reproaches of Ruggiero, who suspects she is infatuated with Ricciardo.

In **Act 2**, Alcina's tone changes in the face of Ruggiero's betrayal. Her pivotal aria - the lament **'Ah! mio cor'**, upon learning that Ruggiero is preparing to flee - makes full use of the da capo form to express her pain, and it is one of the highlights of the work. Despite her past capricious abuse of men, her love for Ruggiero is real, and Alcina is torn between agonising disappointment and passionate rage. In the opening *Andante larghetto* she plaintively calls to the gods and stars, begging to know why her love has betrayed her. On the words **'alone, alone in tears,'** she jumps between octaves and descends chromatically, emphasizing her desolation and recalling the classic lament motif of a descending tetrachord. The central section, written in concerto style with a brilliant vocal part, brings a dramatic contrast. Furious strings underscore Alcina's shift to rage, as she vows that Ruggiero must either come back to her or suffer eternally. In the da capo, her devastating sorrow returns, accentuating her impotence. Although she vows revenge, Alcina simply longs for her love to be reciprocated.

Prior to her second aria of **Act 2**, Alcina sings the only accompanied recitative in the opera (**'Ah Ruggiero crudel!'**), as she ineffectually attempts to cast another spell on Ruggiero. A chordal background coalesces into unison semi-quavers as she begins her incantation. The spirits refuse to answer, and the mood is ice-cold as all the strings, except *colla parte* violins, desert her. In the aria that follows, **'Ombre pallide'**, the initial sequence of notes echoes the chromatically tinged octaves on 'alone' from her earlier lament, as she realises that her isolation is permanent. This aria includes desperate, at times frantic, entreaties to the spirits, who fail to respond now that she is deprived of her supernatural powers.

In **Act 3**, her first aria, **'Ma quando tornerai'**, again displays all Alcina's contradictions: impotent fury and the acute pain of loss duel in her tormented heart. Here Handel uses the concerto style again, (virtuosic solo part and orchestral ritornellos), but opts for a *sarabande* with sustained orchestra, in the central section.

The intensely passionate melodic line expresses an intractable belief in Ruggiero's love, despite evidence of his reignited affection for Bradamante. By contrast, the final aria, **'Mi restano le lagrime'**, written as a *siciliana* with orchestra throughout, conveys total despair; Alcina is wretched and resigned to her lonely fate, and asserts her desire to disappear 'into the clear waves', to **'turn oneself into a rock'** to escape the pain.

Alcina is ready to die, but she is an immortal, and this relief is denied to her. In desperation she makes a final attempt to entice Ruggiero away from Bradamante. The opera's emotional climax lies in the sole **trio** that follows - **'Non è amor, nè gelosia'**. Rather than a dialogue in recitative, we hear a glorious musical blend: a fully orchestrated da capo 'aria', through which the reunited couple refuse to heed Alcina's urgent appeals for mercy and her warnings about the future. Since they can no longer be seduced by her artifices, Alcina's world collapses, defeated by the strength of their mortal love.

Beside her, the ardent lover and errant fiancé **Ruggiero** - written for Farinelli's rival, the leading castrato Giovanni Carestini (1705-1760), who also created the role of Ariodante - can at first seem rather pallid. Indeed, Carestini considered rejecting one of Ruggiero's beautiful arias, because he felt it was technically too simplistic and unworthy of his immense talent. Yet this aria, **'Verdi prati' (Act 2)** - a beautifully fluid and simple melancholic meditation - holds universal appeal, because it manifests Ruggiero's nostalgic farewell to the enchanted world that so temptingly seduced him: **'Green prairies, lovely forests, You will lose your beauty. And when flattering appearance is gone, To your first honour, All will come back to you'**. This farewell seems to express all the regret of humankind in the face of the finiteness of beauty, which inexorably fades away with the withering onslaught of time.

It stands in striking contrast to Ruggiero's highly virtuosic **Act 3** aria, **'Stà nell' Ircana'**. In this, Ruggiero makes a confident declaration as he gains his freedom - a perfect illustration of Handelian *bel canto* - celebrating the moment when he detaches himself from Alcina's power and rediscovers his heroic identity. Handel also grants Ruggiero orchestral novelty through the addition of recorders to **'Mio bel tesoro'**, and high horns to the triumphant **'Stà nell' Ircana'**. Their additional orchestral colour helps to emphasise, in turn, the initial deception of Ruggiero and his subsequent restoration to the role of the hero.

Neither does Handel stint in giving the other characters wonderful music: even the bass, **Melisso**, (first played by Gustavus Waltz, who seems to have doubled as Handel's cook), is given an expansive, stirring aria: **'Pensa a chi geme' (Act 2)**.

Alcina's sister **Morgana** (first played by 23-year old Cecilia Young, future wife of Thomas Arne) has an effervescent expression of joy at the end of **Act 1** - the celebrated show-stopper **'Tornami a vagheggiar'** - as well as a pair of heartfelt arias with violin and cello obbligato (including the passionately mournful **'Credete al mio dolore', Act 3**).

Her rejected suitor **Oronte**, (originally sung by the 21-year-old British tenor John Beard), has three light arias of great charm, each uniquely distinct in style (**'Semplicetto! A donna credi', Act 1**; **'É un folle', Act 2**; and the delightfully lyrical **'Un momento di contento', Act 3**).

The rejected fiancée **Bradamante** also has distinctive music (notably the passionately jealous **'È gelosia', Act 1**, & the passionately vengeful **'Vorrei vendicarmi', Act 2**), which include deep reaching melodic lines and moments of brilliant coloratura display.

***Alcina* in the 21st century and this production**

This production of *Alcina* was originally **premiered in July 2019** as part of an international opera academy organized by Ensemble OrQuesta Opera Academies. Ensemble OrQuesta established its academies in 2013 to provide training and stage experience for talented young professional opera singers at the onset of their careers. During an intensive ten-day-period we develop a performance concept, which is subsequently honed to the highest standard, before being presented to audiences at more prestigious venues. We had been invited to share this production at the 2020 Grimeborn Festival; our fourth invitation to participate in this annual Festival. We are delighted to be sharing it with audiences during 2021, as we emerge from the pandemic.

An 18th century opera about an enchantress does not seem an obvious choice for a modern, innovative approach. But *Alcina* has plenty to offer. In this opera Handel chose to avoid the rational world where everyone ultimately needs to surrender to the power of reason, listen to the dictates of the heart, and respond to the promptings of conscience. This provided an opportunity for him to explore key parameters of human behaviour and pose important questions about the nature of love and erotic desire, and about the destructiveness of unfettered power. These fundamental issues remain pertinent in the 21st century.

This is a strikingly powerful story. *Alcina* herself is considered to be **one of Handel's most remarkable creations**: dangerously seductive, audiences are torn between empathy for her forlorn desperation and passionate love for her counterpart, and harsh condemnation of her cruelty and self-centred reign of terror. This production aims to give a 21st century audience fresh access to Handel's extraordinary music and his unique characterisation by placing it in a controversial modern context.

The Ensemble OrQuesta production of *Alcina* is inspired by the **#MeToo movement** – the social movement against **sexual abuse** and **sexual harassment** which originally found voice in 2006 and achieved global prominence online in late 2017. In order to encourage the audience to question the stereotypical analysis, in this production it is the female power figure (*Alcina*) who will abuse her position of power. *Alcina* sometimes abuses her power over women and sometimes over men, to demonstrate that sexual harassment is not simply an issue which is confined to a male boss preying on a female employee; it is a **power issue** not just a male-female domination issue.

Our story takes place in a modern office setting - think **'Devil wears Prada'** if you will - with *Alcina* as the 'boss'. The set is deliberately stark and simple so that it can be representative of any number of office environments. All events take place within the office itself. *Alcina's* 'magical powers' in this production are the professional authority she exercises over her employees and the sexual domination she deploys over younger inexperienced co-workers.

Alcina wields her power both with brazen intensity and with subtle seduction in the formal setting amongst the desks, and she also broods menacingly, bemusing them with declarations of passion in the less formal 'bar-type' setting implied on the fringes of the office.

When simply seen in 18th century-style surroundings or cast within a purely 'fantastical' setting, Handel opera can seem to lack relevance or impact. Yet, the themes explored within this opera are timeless. By setting this production in a contemporary work environment, the characters and themes become more easily accessible. The **key themes** of illusion and addiction, instant gratification, and short attention spans are all contemporary topics. The strikingly powerful female figures within this opera immediately engage keen observers of **sexual discrimination**, and the baroque **sexual fluidity** (exemplified in this production in the fluid non-gender specific dress code) encourages the questioning of stereotypes. Since Handel's gifts were such that his music is immeasurably rich and diverse, modern audiences will not only find new insights within the opera, but they will also be sublimely entertained – there is some stunning music here which deserves to be heard.

The central character of Alcina is surrounded by a **vibrant array of contrasting characters** to whom Handel gives wonderful music: passionately jealous, passionately vengeful, passionately mournful, effervescent, expansive, lyrical and melodious. The fact that these characters explore emotions within frameworks that have clear modern relevance, should give the opera a fresh and thought provoking impact. The human interactions of loyalty, jealousy, infatuation, sexual desire, eroticism, despair, rage, sorrow, and passion, are brought to life by the rich characterisation and power of the music and should seem more immediate and relatable because the characters interact within a recognised modern setting.

Movement and symbolism is important in our productions. In baroque times dance was a key element of opera performances, and some modern performances of baroque operas retain dance episodes. By contrast we aim for a distinctive stylised approach. Simple **choreographic gestures** are incorporated within the drama, and at various points our singers move on stage in **patterns** or shapes in a manner that not only recognises the connection between movement and music but also exemplifies character interactions and transformations. Those who succumb to Alcina's power or fall 'under her spell', have **white paint** applied on their faces, and their movement and behaviour changes. These movements and interactions are part of a creative process undertaken by the cast, evolving as characters prepare to perform the work. In performance the music should take on a distinctive visual dimension for the audience.

Postscript: the significance of *Alcina* for Handel and its 21st century impact

Because Alcina was an enchantress and therefore stood outside the confines of the rational world, Handel could explore certain aspects of the human condition, certain kinds of truth, for which there was no room in the historical, real-people world of most of the heroic opera of the age. The decorum of heroic opera demanded that, eventually, everyone in the opera, good and bad alike, surrendered to the power of reason, listened to the dictates of the heart, and to the promptings of conscience. A magic opera like *Alcina* could **dare to be different**.

Alcina did not need to come to a worthy end. When passion threatens to overwhelm her, she does not need to step back from the brink; Alcina can abandon herself to her passions until they destroy her. Treading the path of many before and after, Handel used the freedom of artistic expression to explore key parameters of human behaviour: to pose fundamental questions about the nature of love and erotic desire, and about the destructiveness of unfettered power.

Perhaps we are meant to emerge as keen supporters of the heroic Ruggiero. Indeed, his steady choice of the righteous path back to duty is joyously celebrated by the entire cast in the finale, alongside the vanquishing of the wicked enchantress. But, whatever lessons we may take home about toxic behaviour and the self-destructive tendencies of human nature, many of us find that our affections are insidiously drawn towards the more complex, vibrant, and alluring Alcina. In stepping outside societal constraints Handel surely created the most fully 'human' of his operatic characters. The depth of characterisation achieved and the impact she has on audiences as a result is formidable. Perhaps it is indeed fitting that she was his final 'enchantress'.

We hope we have succeeded in bringing *Alcina* to life for our 2021 Grimeborn Festival audiences, and that we have done justice to Handel's glorious music.

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**Our 2018 production
at Grimeborn was
Cavalli's Xerse.**

**If you haven't booked a
ticket for this
marvellous
performance do so
NOW' Ruthw
@Strewthieruthie**

★★★★The Idle Woman Blog, September 2018
'I leapt at the chance to see Cavalli's version of this
fabulous story performed by Ensemble OrQuesta..
Unlike most of the audience, I suspect, I'd actually
seen Cavalli's rare opera before.. and so the bar was
high. But it turned out that the OrQuesta show was
actually a fascinating complement.. Very simply
staged, with costumes in sombre shades of black,
and with a stunning silver-wire tree as the only prop,
it was a pared-down, effective performance of a
seldom-seen opera – and a welcome introduction to
some exciting young singers.'

**'Cavalli's Xerse, in an often mesmerising #Grimeborn pro-
duction by @EnsemblOrQuesta at @arcolatheatre, proves a
much more rewarding rediscovery than last year's
Hipermestra at Glyndebourne. I think @Strewthieruthie felt
the same.' Yehuda Shapiro @YehudaShapiro**

Opera Magazine, November 2018 Yehuda Shapiro
' a smartly-paced, absorbing evening that ending with da Silva's own take
on the supposedly *lieto fine*, evoking shades of Poppea..'
"The production, stylized but penetrating, lucidly traced the opera's web of
relationships and manipulations'
'In something of an operatic caucus race, each of the eleven soloists
deserved a prize... the smaller roles were just as strongly articulated and
characterized..'

★★★★ Plays to See. August 2018
This production.. is a triumph – both
for Marcio da Silva and his team and
for the festival..
It is difficult to explain why such a
foolish plot and such formal and
ancient musical conventions can
combine to provide an evening of
operatic magic in Dalston 564 years
after its premiere. But they absolutely
do.. Owen Davies

**#Xerse @arcolatheatre
@EnsemblOrQuesta superb
performance last night. Congrats
to whole team for such a fine
production of an opera that
should be seen more often. Look
out for review @PlaystoSee.'
@OwenMillsD**

**Gorgeous Cavalli in Dalston!
First time at #Grimeborn –
fabulous evening. Thank you
@EnsemblOrQuesta and
@arcolatheatre.'
Karen Brookfield
@KarenBrookf21**

**A treat all round – great band, singing,
ensemble and production. And rare to get
Cavalli. Bravi @EnsemblOrQuesta, #Grimeborn
and @arcolatheatre.' Melissa Scot
@Monteverdi1610**



**Our 2019 production
at Grimeborn was
Rameau's
*Hippolyte et Aricie.***

**'Grimeborn's Hippolyte et
Aricie bring baroque vibrancy
to Dalston' Operamania
(@Operamania)**

**'Splendid Singing in
Grimeborn's Staging of
Hippolyte et Aricie. The
voices carried the evening
triumphantly... the choruses
brilliantly done, with huge
character as well as vocal
prowess from the soloists.'
Seen and Heard
International – 14th August
2019 (Colin Clarke)**

**'The utter highlight of
#Grimeborn do not
miss! @arcolatheatre
#opera
@EnsemblOrQuesta'
John-Paul Stonard
(@johnpaulstonard)**

**Ensemble OrQuesta are pushing
boundaries and championing up
-close opera in its original lan-
guage.' The Reviews Hub – 14th
August 2019 (Maryam Philpott)**

**'This was an impressive version of a
complex work which played to a
capacity audience. A simple staging
was inevitable, and effective use was
made of the tiny performing area.'
Early Music Reviews – 13th August
2019 (Andrew Benson-Wilson)**

**'last night's performance of
'Hippolyte et Aricie' at the Arcola
Theatre was musically outstanding
and totally gripping. What a lot of
gifted artists! Thank you so much,
and I am looking forward to seeing
future productions.' Grimeborn
Audience Member (14th August 2019)**

**★★★★ The Stage - 14th August 2019
'Stylish and vividly theatrical condensed version
of Rameau's baroque masterpiece. Hippolyte et
Aricie, a take on the Phaedra story first seen in
1733, is a landmark opera by a supreme French
composer, yet opportunities to see it are
infrequent... While Rameau conceived it as a
grand spectacle, Ensemble OrQuesta presents
an intimate staging using a condensed version
of the score... [and] this production really ramps
up when the human relationships take centre
stage.' (Yehuda Shapiro)**

**'Marcio da Silva's version was powerful and dramatically punchy... This
was a brave performance which prized dramatic emotion...In an ideal
world Ensemble OrQuesta would have been able to perform this opera
on a larger scale with a longer rehearsal period. But economics said
otherwise, and what they achieved was impressive.'**

★★★½ Planet Hugill – 17th August 2019 (Robert Hugill)



Applications are still being accepted for the final Ensemble OrQuesta Opera Academy of 2021. Remaining places are limited.

To apply, please send a cv and recording to: auditions@ensembleorquesta.com



LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

MOZART

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Building on the ongoing success of our Mozart opera series - *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2016, *Don Giovanni* in 2017, *Così fan tutte* in 2018 and *The Magic Flute* in 2019 - Ensemble OrQuesta undertakes a new production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* directed by Marcio da Silva, in partnership with the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Academy will take place from 7th to 17th October in Hastings, with performances at the Vinehall Theatre on the 16th and 17th October 2021.

Each participant will perform at least one performance of a role in a fully staged production of the opera in Italian (English surtitles) with the accompaniment of the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra Ensemble.

The course will be led by Ensemble OrQuesta Artistic Director Marcio da Silva and conductor Kieran Staub. Professional pictures will be taken at both dress rehearsals.

Tuition fee: £750 (does not include accommodation)