

Tuesday 15 June, 6pm

Historical Performance Opera Scenes 2021

Handel *Semele*, 1744, *Scene from Act 3*

Juno	Amelia Chambers
Semele	Noam Pnini
Jupiter	Hamish James

Jupiter (Jove) has once again cheated on his wife Juno; this time with Semele. Semele is now isolated in Jupiter's palace, and is dissatisfied that her new lover refuses to show himself to her in his true godlike form. Jupiter knows that, far from transforming Semele into a goddess, appearing in his true state would burn her to a crisp.

Juno comes to Semele in the guise of Semele's sister, Ino. 'Ino' tells Semele that the only way to get what she wants from Jupiter is to withhold sex. As Semele contemplates progressing to the immortal plane, Jupiter approaches. Juno disappears, and Jupiter reveals to Semele a dream in which she fled from him.

Cavalli *La Calisto*, 1651, *Scene from Act 3*

Calisto	Theano Papadaki
Giunone	Rachel Roper
Furie 1	Anna Gregg
Furie 2	Amelia Chambers

In disguise as the goddess Diana, Jove has seduced Calisto.

Calisto dreams of the blissful time she spent in devotion to her goddess, and chides Diana for failing to come to her.

Juno, accompanied by the Furies, arrives to punish Calisto for being part of yet another marital infidelity. She turns Calisto into a bear, and condemns her to wander the earth, hairy and unwanted. Left alone, Juno addresses other wronged wives, and warns that the time will come when women turn the tables.

Cesti Il Tito, 1666 Act 2, Scene 4 – 6

Tito	Hamish James
Celso	Eliran Kadussi
Sabina	Elizabeth Thomson

The Roman emperor Tito is laying siege to Jerusalem; he has also fallen in love with the Jewish queen, Berenice.

Tito has just overheard Lepido, his general, confessing his love for Berenice; then Berenice's brother Agrippa welcoming the chance to cast Tito aside.

Tito is furious and vows revenge on the traitors, even if he must become "a Nero" to do so.

Tito commands his most trusted soldier, Celso, to murder Lepido and Agrippa; Celso is shocked, but capitulates when Tito gives his blessing to Celso's relationship with Sabina, the emperor's niece.

Sabina has followed Celso to Jerusalem disguised as a man; and has, unfortunately, overheard Celso voicing his admiration for Berenice. She decides to impersonate her own brother, and tell Celso that Sabina has died of a broken heart, just to see how Celso reacts. Celso immediately recognises Sabina, and decides to string her along by seeming totally indifferent to the tragic news. Death comes to everyone, he says; like a wave, it engulfs us all.

Handel Alcina, 1728 Aria and Trio Act 3

Oberto	Anna Gregg
Alcina	Inês Reis
Astolfo	Hamish James
Bradamante	Clover Kayne
Ruggiero	Rachel Roper

Alcina rules her island with an iron fist inside a velvet glove: she welcomes visitors, but they tend to go missing, never to be seen again. This was the case with Astolfo, whose child Oberto has been searching for him until now.

The next to fall under Alcina's power was the soldier Ruggiero. Ruggiero's fiancée Bradamante has only just managed to extract him from Alcina's influence. Alcina has actually fallen in love with Ruggiero, resulting in the waning of her magical powers.

As our scene begins, Oberto appears, sensing that his father is nearby. Alcina has in fact turned Astolfo into a lion. She urges Oberto to kill the beast, but the power of filial love proves stronger than her threats and her strategies.

With Alcina laid low, Bradamante and Ruggiero arrive en route to their escape from the island. Alcina insists that she only wants the best for them, whilst trying to get back inside Ruggiero's head and re-establish her control over him. She tries every trick in the book, but the betrothed couple stand firm in their true faith in one another.

Handel *Radamisto*, 1720 *Quartet Act 3, Scene 10*

Radamisto	Eliran Kadussi
Zenobia	Sophie Heywood
Polissena	Theano Papadaki
Tiridate	Francisco Reis

Tiridate, consumed with lust for Zenobia, the wife of Radamisto, has invaded the country, and taken the throne. Tiridate has offered Zenobia an impossible choice: either she submits to his desires or Radamisto will die. As the scene begins, Polissena, Tiridate's wife (and Radamisto's sister) rushes in with the news that Tiridate's army is in revolt. It is now Tiridate who must face a choice – yield or perish.

Rameau *Les Surprises de L'Amour*, 1748 *Scene 4 (Les Sibarites, 1753)*

Astole	Jia Huang
Hersilide	Elizabeth Thomson

Hersilide is the leader of the Sibarites, a people devoted to happiness and pleasure. Her peaceful rule is being challenged by Astole, leader of the warlike Crotonians. In an open debate, Hersilide invites her opponents to put down their weapons and join her pleasurable, loving society; meanwhile Astole urges the people to throw off their idleness and acquire a thirst for glory. Astole is increasingly dumbfounded by the effect Hersilide is having upon him. In private conversation, she seeks to convert him to a less aggressive world view, and introduces him to the concept of love...

Cavalli *L'Egisto*, 1643 *Scene from Act 2*

Semele	Inês Reis
Fedra	Theano Papadaki
Hero	Sophie Heywood
Didone	Clover Kayne
Amor	Noam Pnini
Apollo	Francisco Reis

In a comic interlude from the main action of the opera, four heroines who died for love seek revenge on Amor (Cupid). They capture him in the underworld and make him give up his weapons, but are interrupted by the arrival of the god Apollo, to whom they must concede authority. Apollo and Amor strike a deal – Apollo will guarantee Amor's safety from the women *if* Amor reunites the lovers Clori and Egisto. With his transaction complete, Apollo urges the women to change their view of Amor's 'crimes' – we cannot blame love, he says; it is Fate which dictates our fortunes. Once Amor has gone, Apollo and the four women deliver the moral of the story: do not trust that lovin' feeling!!

Company

Liz Marcus music director, harpsichord

Victoria Newlyn stage director

Christopher Suckling Head of Historical Performance, Deputy Head of Academic Studies

Soprano

Anna Gregg

Theano Papadaki

Noam Pnini

Inês Reis

Elizabeth Thomson

Mezzo-soprano

Amelia Chambers

Sophie Heywood

Clover Kayne

Rachel Roper

Countertenor

Eliran Kadussi

Tenor

Hamish James

Bass/Baritone

Jia Huang

Francisco Reis

Violin

Luna De Mol

Kryštof Kohout

Pedro Rodrigues

Viola

Aleksandra Lipke

Cello

Charlotte Walker

Flute

Ka Wing Wong

Oboe

Emily Crichton

Harp

Emilia Agajew

Theorbo

Matilde Freiria

William Carter

Harpsichord

Matthew Brown

Frederick Waxman

Thanks to:

Marie Cayeux french coaching

Robert Coupe props

Manuela Ray-Alvarez wings

This performance took place on Friday 4 June 2021 in Milton Court Concert Hall. It was recorded and produced live by Guildhall School's Recording & Audio Visual department.