

HARRIS THEATER PRESENTS CONTENTS

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, conductor
Monteverdi Choir
English Baroque Soloists
L'incoronazione di Poppea
OCTOBER 15, 2017

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L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA CELEBRATING MONTEVERDI 450

Fifty years ago, Monteverdi epitomized for me all that was most exotic and alluring about Italian music of the early 17th century. His music spoke to audiences so directly: it demanded their attention through its glorious palette of colors and the passionate utterance in which it was couched, whether composed for the church, the chamber, or the theatre. I became hooked, much in the same way that many people (myself included) are drawn to the works of his contemporaries: Shakespeare or John Donne, Rubens or Caravaggio—all humanists in the fullest sense of the term. These great creative artists were of a generation that lived through those turbulent, seminal years either side of 1600, a quasi-millennial moment of apocalyptic end-of-times apprehension. It was a theme that surfaces most obviously in Shakespeare's late plays. Nor was it just the scientists and philosophers who contributed to the ferment of ideas that turned the intellectual life of Europe upside down.

Now, four centuries later, we have an opportunity to bring about a significant breakthrough in public awareness of Monteverdi's part in this revolution. As good a place to start as any would be by celebrating and recalibrating that astonishing fusion of rich musical beauty with theatrical verisimilitude that is the hallmark of his operas. A fitting 450th-birthday present to Monteverdi, I believe, would then be to put the excitement, and perhaps also the trepidation, back into his music.

An extract from the essay "Monteverdi at the Crossroads"
published in the journal *Early Music*, xlv/3 (August 2017)

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L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

PROGRAM

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, conductor
Monteverdi Choir
English Baroque Soloists

POPPEA / FORTUNA	Hana Blažíková
NERONE	Kangmin Justin Kim
OTTAVIA	Marianna Pizzolato
SENECA	Gianluca Buratto
OTTONE	Carlo Vistoli
DRUSILLA / VIRTÙ / PALLADE	Anna Dennis
ARNALTA	Reginald Mobley
AMORE / VALLETTO	Silvia Frigato
SOLDATO I / LIBERTO	Furio Zanasi
FAMIGLIARE	Gareth Treseder
LUCANO	Zachary Wilder
DAMIGELLA	Francesca Boncompagni
MERCURIO / LITTORE	John Taylor Ward
NUTRICE	Michał Czerniawski
SOLDATO II	Robert Burt
VENERE	Francesca Biliotti

DIRECTORS	Sir John Eliot Gardiner Elsa Rooke
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Rick Fisher
COSTUMES	Isabella Gardiner Patricia Hofstede
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Matthew Muller
STAGE MANAGER	Noel Mann
MUSIC ASSISTANTS	Paolo Zanzu Antonio Greco
LANGUAGE COACH	Matteo Dalle Fratte

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L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

MONTEVERDI AND THE BIRTH OF OPERA

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) was undoubtedly the most significant composer of his generation. He was born in Cremona and studied there with Marc'Antonio Ingegneri, choirmaster of the cathedral. In 1590 he moved to Mantua to join the court musicians of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, becoming their director in 1601. His duties involved composing music for entertainment, for the chamber, and for devotional purposes: hence his publications of the first decade of the seventeenth century, ranging from books of madrigals through his first opera, *Orfeo*, to the *Missa...ac vespere* containing the so-called 1610 Vespers. Other music, however, is lost, including the bulk of his second opera, *Arianna*, composed for the festivities celebrating the wedding of Prince Francesco Gonzaga and Margherita of Savoy in 1608.

Monteverdi was seriously overworked during those festivities, which led to his increasing dissatisfaction with life in Mantua, coupled with concerns over the changing political climate there. Following Vincenzo Gonzaga's death in February 1612, Monteverdi was discharged from service by the new duke. In August 1613, however, he gained the plum job of choirmaster at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, one of the most prestigious positions in Italy. His duties there were not arduous, and they left him free to write music for other Venetian institutions and patrons, as well as for the Gonzagas in Mantua (he remained a subject of the duke and therefore obligated to him), the Farnese dukes in Parma, and the Habsburg court in Vienna. The fact that much of this music for patrons outside Venice was for theatrical entertainments was in part a result of his being commissioned to write it, but clearly Monteverdi also had some kind of passion for the stage, and for what dramatic music might bring to it.

These were exciting times: Monteverdi was a close contemporary of Galileo Galilei and Peter Paul Rubens (both of whom he probably met in Mantua), and of William Shakespeare and Francis Bacon. A clear sense of modernity is apparent in his secular and sacred music, and still more in his work for the theatre. Although opera was "invented" in Florence in the 1590s, Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607) is the earliest example of the genre still to hold the stage. He also participated in the next significant stage in opera's long history: the opening of the first "public" opera house in Venice in 1637, soon followed by a number of other theatres there. By report, it was only with some reluctance that he decided to enter what was becoming a highly competitive field: after all, he was now in his 70s. But few can have expected him to produce three new operas in quick succession: *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (1640), *Le nozze d'Enea in Lavinia* (1641; now lost) and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. With *Orfeo*, Monteverdi had set the nascent genre on a secure footing. His *L'incoronazione*, however, took it in an entirely new direction.

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L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

SYNOPSIS

The opera is set in Rome, conflating and reworking events of 58-65 C. E.

PROLOGUE

Fortuna (Fortune), Virtù (Virtue), and Amore (Cupid) dispute their respective powers. Amore claims to be master of the world, as the story of Nerone (Nero) and Poppea (Poppaea) will prove.

ACT I

Poppea's palace

Ottone (Otho) arrives at the house of his beloved Poppea and sees Nerone's soldiers outside, asleep. He realizes that she is together with Nerone and curses her faithlessness. The soldiers wake and complain about their job and the decline of Rome; they also feel sorry for Empress Ottavia (Octavia) being so badly treated. Nerone enters with his mistress. They take a sensuous farewell as Poppea emphasizes her love for him and seeks to guarantee their marriage. She is left alone with her nurse, Arnalta, to discuss tactics. She ignores Arnalta's common sense warnings, for Amore and Fortuna are on her side. Arnalta is left to grumble at her mistress's folly.

City of Rome

Ottavia despairs at her humiliation while her nurse (Nutrice) suggests that she should take a lover. Seneca, shown in by Ottavia's page, Valletto, urges restraint and appeals to her dignity; Valletto responds by mocking Seneca's pedantry. As Seneca reflects on power and the transitory nature of life, Pallade (Pallas Athene) appears to warn him of his impending death. Seneca welcomes the news. Nerone enters and discusses with Seneca his plans to repudiate Ottavia and wed Poppea. The philosopher urges reason, but Nerone is inflamed to anger. Poppea then calms him down, suggesting that Seneca must be killed. Ottone confronts Poppea over her infidelity, but she dismisses him; Arnalta feels somewhat sorry for the poor man. Ottone tries to come to his senses and vows revenge. He then turns to Drusilla, who has always loved him, and swears that he will favor her over Poppea, though he knows that his words contradict his heart.

ACT II

Seneca's villa

Seneca praises stoic solitude. The god Mercurio (Mercury) appears, warning him again of death, which the philosopher accepts happily. Liberto enters with Nerone's command that Seneca must die by the end of the day, and is impressed by the philosopher's calmness in response to it. Seneca gathers his familiars round him; they urge him not to die, but he is determined, and they leave to prepare the bath in which he will open his veins.

— INTERMISSION —

L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

SYNOPSIS cont.

(ACT II continues)

City of Rome

Following a flirtatious episode between Valletto and a maidservant (Damigella), Nerone and Lucano (Lucan) celebrate the news of Seneca's death with wine and song, praising Poppea's beauty. Ottone realizes that he still loves Poppea, but Ottavia orders him to assume female garb and kill her; he cannot refuse. Drusilla delights in her love for Ottone, and Ottavia's nurse wishes she were in her place. Ottone explains to Drusilla his plan for Poppea, and she gives him her clothes.

Poppea's garden

Poppea rejoices in Seneca's death and prays for Amore to support her; Arnalta then lulls her to sleep. Amore watches overhead, proclaiming his power to protect humankind, as Ottone enters dressed as Drusilla and tries to kill Poppea. Amore prevents the deed; Poppea wakes and gives the alarm as Ottone escapes. Amore vaunts his success.

ACT III

City of Rome

Drusilla joyfully anticipates Poppea's death, but Arnalta identifies her as the would-be assassin and she is arrested. Nerone sentences her to death, but Ottone, in turn, confesses his guilt, despite Drusilla's persistent attempts to protect her beloved. Nerone banishes Ottone while praising Drusilla as a model of womanly behavior, and she asks to go into exile with him. Ottone accepts the punishment with glad heart. Now that Ottone has implicated Ottavia in the affair, Nerone has the excuse he needs, and he banishes her too. He and Poppea rejoice that the way is clear to their marriage. Ottavia bids a halting farewell to her home and friends. Arnalta revels in the exaltation of her mistress as empress of Rome. (The Ottavia and Arnalta scenes are reversed in some sources.)

Nerone's palace, with gods in the heavens

Nerone crowns Poppea, and the consuls and tribunes pay homage. Amore proclaims his triumph to the approval of his mother, Venere (Venus), and a chorus of cupids celebrates the marriage. Nerone and Poppea have a final ecstatic duet.

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L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

PROGRAM NOTES

“Virtue, hide yourself!”

Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1643) is one of those famously immoral operas that constantly challenge the audience and the critic. Its position is somewhat akin to Mozart's *Così fan tutte*; a late (in Monteverdi's case, last) work by a great composer who is expected to reveal some kind of deeper truth through art, and yet with a subject that, on the face of it, seems to fly in the face of all human values. Emperor Nero is married to Octavia but spends his days in amorous dalliance with Poppaea, wife of (in the opera, loved by) Otho. Octavia and Otho end up in exile. Seneca, Nero's disapproving tutor, is forced to die by his own hand. And if we know our Roman history, even the “crowning” of Poppea is but a temporary victory; she will be viciously murdered by an emperor who himself will come to a fiery end. Is this really what opera should be about?

Those facts of history may provide some vindication for the plot of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and the librettist Giovanni Francesco Busenello acknowledged his debt to the Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius. “But here,” he said, “we represent things differently.” As usual in the case of 17th-century opera, it is the prologue that sets the frame. Three allegorical characters take to the stage: Virtù, Fortuna, and Amore (Cupid/Love). “Virtue, hide yourself!” says Fortuna (“Deh nasconditi, o Virtù”), only to be browbeaten by Amore, who claims that he will always triumph over virtue and fortune, as the work to come will prove. But if *L'incoronazione* presents the triumph of love, our moral problems return: how can we possibly condone what Nerone and Poppea do to each other in bed and out?

Sex and the city

It was not unusual to have allegorical characters appear on the operatic stage to make the point that we are but a plaything of the gods. When opera was “invented” in Florence in the late 1590s, its focus on Greek mythology gave a veneer of classical respectability to an essentially anti-classical genre, and also justified precisely what was most irrational about opera: the fact that dramatic characters should sing rather than speak. Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* (1600), the first opera to survive complete, dealt with that great musician of classical antiquity, Orpheus, who was also the subject of Monteverdi's first opera, *Orfeo* (1607). There is nothing too implausible, or for that matter too immoral, here. Indeed, *Euridice* and *Orfeo* are remarkably civilized works, catering precisely for the educated, courtly environments for which they were written.

Opera in the first third of the 17th century was essentially an art for the court, designed to entertain and edify the princes of Italy and to display their grandeur. After the first “public” opera house opened in Venice in 1637, the genre took a very different turn. Venice was a republic and fiercely proud of its detachment from the north Italian courts on the one hand, and from Rome and the Church on the other. It vaunted itself as the last, great heir to the Greek and Roman republics of antiquity. The

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PROGRAM NOTES cont.

classicizing tendencies of Monteverdi's first Venetian opera, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, are clear, as is its critique of degenerate courtiers and their parasites. This political edge is stronger still in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, placing on the stage the antics of a famously degenerate emperor, who might feasibly be compared with a degenerate papacy. Poppea clearly served the purpose of political propaganda, lauding Venice and its governance over any other part of the world.

But Venice was also the pleasure-garden of Europe, a mecca then as now, for tourists on the Grand Tour seeking to admire its art and architecture and, still more, to revel in its libidinous pleasures. Delights both licit and illicit were the stuff of that particularly Venetian phenomenon, Carnival, the period between Christmas and Lent when identities were masked, when the world turned upside down, when sex was for sale on every street corner, and when Venetian theatres opened their doors nightly. How better to draw a ticket-buying audience than to have an opera that celebrated on the stage the libidos seeking no less satisfaction in the bedchambers of Venice's celebrated courtesans? And if the singers were beautiful, and the voices seductive, the attraction was greater still.

“Speaking” and “singing”

This mixing of the political with the sensual was characteristic of the Venetian Accademia degli Incogniti, whose members were closely associated with early public opera. *L'incoronazione di Poppea* has often been read as coming particularly close to that academy's agendas. But there is another 'academic' problem here. Opera is a highly neurotic genre, constantly concerned to justify what cannot be justified: the presence of song. The problems of verisimilitude—of being true to life—might be mitigated in the case of operas based on mythological subjects whose superhuman heroes can plausibly adopt some heightened form of rhetorical delivery. But mere mortals, even from a distant historical past, pose a different set of problems. Even if we accept that declamatory recitative is merely some manner of 'speech', we are left with the question of how to interpret those moments when the characters shift into more lyrical musical styles.

For example, at the very beginning of Act I of *L'incoronazione*, Ottone begins with a brief declamatory statement (“E pur io torno”—“And so I return...”) that immediately shifts into triple time (“E pur io torno qui”—“and so I return here”). His text then moves into three-line stanzas, which Monteverdi sets (after the first) as a kind of strophic aria, separating the stanzas with instrumental ritornellos. But why is Ottone “singing” here, and does that strengthen or weaken him as a character? To give another example, when later in Act I Ottavia's nurse (Nutrice) offers her advice on how best to respond to Nerone's infidelity — the empress should take a lover of her own — she tells her to listen to her “accenti” (“accents”; potentially a musical term), presents her homily in structured verse, but then says that Ottavia should reflect on this “discourse” (“Fa riflesso al mio discorso”). The problems multiply as Monteverdi creates such lyrical moments even when not prompted by Busenello's poetry, which he does

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PROGRAM NOTES cont.

frequently in the case of Nerone and Poppea's sensuous encounters. Here they sing beyond all bounds of logic or propriety. This may, of course, be Monteverdi's point. But it is bothersome all the same.

Trusting the sources

The case of Ottone, at least, might reflect problems with the surviving sources for *L'incoronazione*, which are complex. We have a printed scenario (a synopsis of the action) associated with the first performances in 1643, a printed libretto for a performance in Naples in 1651, and Busenello's edition of the libretto in his collected works, *Delle hore ociose* (Venice, 1656). The music survives in two manuscripts: one now in Naples, perhaps associated with the 1651 performance; the other in Venice, copied in the early 1650s in circles associated with Francesco Cavalli, who was Monteverdi's pupil and a distinguished opera composer in his own right. There is also some evidence that *L'incoronazione* was done in Venice in 1646 (three years after Monteverdi's death), although we have no materials directly related to that performance. The musical sources seem to reflect the interventions of various composers — whether the 1643 or 1646 *L'incoronazione* did the same is a different, and unanswerable, question — and for a while scholars argued that much of the final scene of the opera as well as some parts of Ottone's music are by one or more other, later hands, probably including Cavalli and another Venetian opera composer, Francesco Saccati. More recent thinking, however, has shifted back in favour of more of the opera being by Monteverdi, or at least closer to him.

This is a problem for those seeking to hear a single composer's voice — and Monteverdi's in particular — in the opera, though one could also argue that it hardly matters: the work is what it is. Nor should we forget the practicalities of life in the 17th-century opera house, when music would be added, subtracted, or revised according to immediate performance needs. And these musical sources reflect theatrical realities in other ways, too. Instrumental parts are left blank, and the vocal lines often seem presented in a skeletal format. Bringing this music to sonic life is a challenge designed both to vex and to delight the performer. That, too, is part of the theatrical game.

Trusting our ears

We have to trust the performers, but can we trust our own reading of the performance? Or to put the question another way, how can we be sure that the music expresses what we think it expresses. Poppea's siren songs may seem seductive enough, but as with Ottone, do they enhance or diminish the status of the character? How should we read that outrageous scene between Nerone and Lucano warbling over Seneca's death and Poppea's beauty? When Ottavia sings almost wholly in recitative, does that make her noble or barren? When Seneca's associates exhort him not to die, they do so by way of tortuous chromaticism (so: serious) followed immediately by a dance-tune (so:

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PROGRAM NOTES cont.

comic). The musical signs remain frustratingly unclear, and the music itself seems constantly to shift focus.

Perhaps Busenello and Monteverdi wanted to leave us guessing. None of the characters in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* is particularly sympathetic: Nerone ignores the needs of his empire (according to the soldiers in Act I), Poppea is manipulative, Ottone is weak, Ottavia engages in blackmail, and even Drusilla colludes in murder. Seneca might seem to rescue the opera for some moral cause, though he comes across as pompous (so Valletto says), and he dies too soon. (It may also be significant that the opera omits a scene following Seneca's death in the 1656 libretto that shows him being welcomed into heaven by a chorus of Virtues.) At that point, the entire opera might best be read by way of some manner of ironic subversion: nothing is what it (musically) seems.

Such questions might not have bothered a Venetian audience in 1643, though certainly they are troublesome today. But perhaps that is what makes *L'incoronazione* still so fascinating, with questions far more interesting than the answers it may or may not provide. And, love her or hate her, Poppea will never leave you cold.

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Tim Carter is the author of Monteverdi's Musical Theatre and has worked extensively on music in late Renaissance and early Baroque Italy; he has also published books on Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro, on Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma!, and on Understanding Italian Opera. He is David G. Frey Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The synopsis and articles by Tim Carter were commissioned for the Monteverdi 450 performance of L'incoronazione di Poppea at this year's Edinburgh International Festival.

L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

BIOGRAPHIES

Sim Canetty-Clarke



Sir John Eliot Gardiner, conductor

Founder and artistic director of the Monteverdi Choir, the English Baroque Soloists, and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, John Eliot Gardiner is one of the most versatile conductors of our time.

He appears regularly with leading symphony orchestras such as the LSO, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Royal Concertgebouw, Bayerischer Rundfunk, and at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Formerly artistic director of the Opéra de Lyon (1983-88) and chef fondateur of its orchestra, the center of his opera projects in France moved at first to the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris with Gluck's *Orphée* and *Alceste*, Weber's *Oberon*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, and most notably with Berlioz's *Les Troyens* in 2003, and then to the Opéra Comique where he conducted new productions of *Carmen*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Chabrier's *L'Etoile*, and the Weber-Berlioz *Le Freyschütz* with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique.

Acknowledged as a key figure in the early music revival of the past five decades, he has led his own ensembles in a number of ambitious large-scale tours, including a year-long Bach Cantata Pilgrimage to celebrate the 250th year of the composer's death in the millennium year. Currently he is leading the celebrations of the 450th anniversary of Claudio Monteverdi's birth, with a seven-month tour of the composer's three surviving operas.

In 2014, two of Gardiner's ensembles celebrated momentous anniversaries: with the Monteverdi Choir, he returned to King's College, Cambridge to perform Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, exactly fifty years to the day after their inaugural concert in the famous chapel. The 25th anniversary of the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique was marked by the filming of a BBC TV documentary on Beethoven and their first visit to Latin America, and culminated in a celebratory European tour. The two ensembles came together in August for a BBC Prom performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, widely acclaimed and hailed by one critic as "the concert of the year."

The extent of Gardiner's repertoire is illustrated by over 250 recordings for major record companies and by numerous international awards including the Gramophone's Special Achievement Award for live recordings of the complete church cantatas of J.S. Bach by Soli Deo Gloria.

In recognition of his work, Sir John Eliot Gardiner has received several international prizes, and honorary doctorates from the University of Cambridge, the University of Lyon, the New England Conservatory of Music, the University of Pavia and the University of St Andrews. He is an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music, an Honorary Fellow of King's College, London, of the British Academy and of King's College, Cambridge. In 2008, he received the prestigious Royal Academy of Music Bach Prize. Gardiner was made Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in 2011 and was given the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2005. In the UK, he was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1990 and awarded a knighthood for his services to music in the 1998 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

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BIOGRAPHIES cont.

In 2013, following the publication of his long-awaited book on Bach, *Music in the Castle of Heaven* (Allen Lane), he won the Critics' Circle's Outstanding Musician award. In 2014, Gardiner became the first ever President of the Bach Archive in Leipzig. He became the inaugural Christoph Wolff Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Harvard University in 2014-15 and has recently been awarded the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Prize.



Elsa Rooke, co-director

Born and bred in Paris, stage-director and drama teacher Elsa Rooke completed a Ph.D in Literature and Music on 20th century opera at the Sorbonne. Invited to publish papers and give talks on this subject, both in France and in England, she also translated novels, essays, and opera librettos from English and Italian into French.

Trained by drama coach Alain Garichot (École de l'Opéra de Paris), she has worked as stage-manager, assistant director, dramaturge, and director throughout Europe, taught acting to young singers (Jeunes Voix du Rhin, William Christie's Académie des Arts Florissants, Hautes Écoles de Musique de Lausanne et de Genève), and was appointed Director of one of France's major National Drama Schools (Saint-Étienne).

A long-term collaborator with Adrian Noble, she has revived many opera productions for him over the past 15 years, from New York to Moscow. She also worked in partnership with Gwenaël Morin on Peter Handke's *Introspection* (Théâtre de la Bastille, Paris) and on four plays by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, in which she also performed (Théâtre du Point du Jour, Lyon).

She directed the European Premières of both Dominic Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*, and Conrad Susa and Anne Sexton's *Transformations* for the Opéra de Lausanne. Other credits as stage-director include productions for the Opéra National de Bordeaux, Opéra National de Lyon, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Opéra de Genève... (*The Turn of the Screw*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Cenerentola*, *Idomeneo*, *Hansel und Gretel*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Comédie sur le Pont*...). More recently, she wrote the libretto in English, French, and German for a new opera, based on the life and works of Annemarie Schwarzenbach: *Le Ruisseau Noir*, composed by Guy-François Leuenberger. The production, which she also directed, was commissioned by the Haute École de Musique de Genève, and conducted by Michael Wendeborg (Théâtre du Grütli, Geneva).

L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

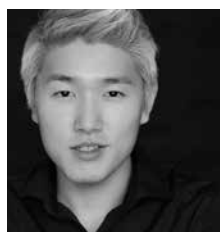
BIOGRAPHIES cont.



Poppea / Fortuna | Hana Blažiková, soprano

Hana Blažiková graduated from the Prague Conservatory (2002) in the class of Jiří Kotouč, and later undertook further study with Poppy Holden, Peter Kooij, Monika Mauch, and Howard Crook. Today, Blažiková specializes in the interpretation of Baroque, Renaissance, and Medieval music, performing with ensembles and orchestras around the world, including

Collegium Vocale Gent, Bach Collegium Japan, Sette Voci, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, L'Arpeggiata, Gli Angeli Genève, La Fenice, Nederlandse Bachvereniging, Tafelmusik, Collegium 1704, Collegium Marianum, Musica Florea, and L'Armonia Sonora. Blažiková has performed at many world festivals, including Edinburgh International Festival, Oude Muziek Utrecht, Tage Alter Musik Regensburg, Resonanzen, Festival de Sablé, Festival de la Chaise-Dieu, Arts Festival Hong-Kong, Chopin i jego Europa, Bachfest Leipzig, Concentus Moraviae, Summer Festivities of Early Music, and Festival de Saintes. In 2010 and 2013, she took part in the widely-praised tour of *St Matthew Passion* under the direction of Philippe Herreweghe, and in 2011 she made her debut in Carnegie Hall with Masaaki Suzuki's Bach Collegium Japan. She also sang in *St John Passion* with Boston Symphony Orchestra during the Easter period of 2011. In November 2014, she participated in the stage production of *Orfeo Chaman* with L'Arpeggiata in Bogota. Blažiková appears on more than 30 CDs, including the well-known series of Bach's cantatas with Bach Collegium Japan. Hana also plays gothic and romanesque harp, and presents concerts in which she accompanies herself on this instrument. She is also a member of Tiburtina Ensemble, which specializes in the Gregorian chant and early medieval polyphony.



Nerone | Kangmin Justin Kim, countertenor

Korean-American countertenor Kangmin Justin Kim's recent engagements include his Paris debut as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* at Opéra Comique conducted by Marc Minkowski, Oreste in *La Belle Héléne* at Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito* in Montpellier, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* and the title role in the world premiere of

Pym in Heidelberg, Idamante in *Idomeneo* in Giessen, Sesto in *Giulio Cesare* at the Oak Park Handel Festival, Menelao in Cavalli's *Elena* in Montpellier, Angers, Nantes, and Rennes, Enea in Vinci's *Didone abbandonata* and his solo recital *Gelosia* at the Rococo Theatre Schwetzingen, and a Handel concert at Styriarte in Graz. In addition to his role as Nerone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and *Speranza* in *L'Orfeo* in Barcelona, Leipzig, Edinburgh, Luzern, Berlin, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner; upcoming engagements include *Giulio Cesare* in Glyndebourne under the musical direction of William Christie, *Arsilda* in Bratislava, Caen, Lille, Luxembourg, Versailles, and Dijon, *Speranza* in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* in Dijon, and *Romeo* in Zingarelli's *Giulietta e Romeo* in Schwetzingen. Kim was born in South Korea and grew up in Chicago. He studied voice, opera, and musical theater at Northwestern University in Evanston and the Royal Academy of Music in London. He is a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the Les Azuriales Prize, the International Innsbruck Singing Competition for Baroque Opera, the Oxford Lieder Young Artist Platform, the Michael Head Song Prize, the Prix Mermod, and the Stuart Burrows International Voice Award.

L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

BIOGRAPHIES cont.



Ottavia | Marianna Pizzolato, mezzo-soprano

Marianna Pizzolato made her debut at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro with *Il Viaggio a Reims*, becoming a reference performer for the main Rossini roles, as well as for Baroque and eighteenth century's repertoire; she is now considered one of the foremost voices of our time. Pizzolato regularly sings in prestigious theaters and festivals all over the world such as Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London, Opéra National de Paris, Nikikai Opera Theatre in Tokyo, Sante Fe Opera Festival, Belcanto Opera Festival in Wildbad, Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Opéra Royal de Wallonie in Liège, Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Teatro Massimo in Palermo working with conductors such as Bruno Campanella, Daniele Gatti, Riccardo Muti, Antonio Pappano, and Alberto Zedda. Pizzolato recorded for EMI, Virgin Classics, Dynamic, Naïve/Opus 111, Naxos, Opera Rara. Future plans include: Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at the Menuhin Festival Gstaad and in Wroclaw (concert and recording) with Kammerorchester Basel under with Giovanni Antonini; *Tancredi* in Bremen (concert version) with Accademia Bizantina and Ottavio Dantone; Rossini's *Stabat Mater* in Edinburgh with the Accademia di Santa Cecilia under Antonio Pappano and at the Tanglewood Festival with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit; Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer* with the Bremen Philharmoniker in Bremen; *Il Viaggio a Reims* at Bolshoi Theatre; *La Donna del Lago* in Liège, Michele Mariotti conducting; *Falstaff* in Madrid; recitals in Rouen. Pizzolato will make her awaited debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York singing Hedwige in *Guillaume Tell*.



Seneca | Gianluca Buratto, bass

A noble and round voice, Gianluca Buratto is rapidly establishing himself as one of most versatile basses of his generation. His recent engagements include: Bach's *B minor Mass* with Savall in Madrid and Barcelona, both Mozart and Jommelli's *Betulia liberata* with Riccardo Muti in Salzburg, Ravenna and in Wroclaw under Rovaris; Bach's *St John Passion* with Lopez-Banzo in Spain and Germany; *Macbeth* at the Salzburg Festival, Rome and Chicago with Riccardo Muti then at La Scala in Milan; *Le nozze di Figaro* in Barcelona with Rousset; *La Bohème* (with Riccardo Chailly) and *I Due Foscari* in Valencia; Rota's *Mysterium* at the Vatican City, Naples, Bari, and Milan (concert and recording) with La Verdi Orchestra; *Rigoletto* in Genoa under Luisi and in Bogotá; Händel's *Rinaldo* and *Admeto* in Wien; Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* with Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques in Nancy and Paris; *La Bohème* in Rome, Palermo and Amsterdam; *I Puritani* in Florence; *Rigoletto* at the Sferisterio Opera Festival in Macerata; *Le Duc d'Albe* in London for Opera Rara; Verdi's *Requiem* in Manchester under Mark Elder. Most recently, he starred in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and *Vespers* on US tour, at the Wigmore Hall in London and in Versailles under the baton of Sir John Eliot Gardiner; *Guglielmo Ratcliff* at the Wexford Festival Opera, Francesco Cilluffo conducting; Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* in Liège under the baton of Paolo Arrivabeni; a solo recital at the Wigmore Hall in London. Plans include: *I Due Foscari* in Amsterdam; Faccio's *Amleto* and *Turandot* at the Bregenzer Festspiele; *Semiramide* in London for Opera Rara; *La Bohème* at the Opera in Florence; Berlioz' *Roméo et Juliette* in Beirut; *Le nozze di Figaro* in Zurich; *Don Giovanni* in Bilbao.

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BIOGRAPHIES cont.



Ottone | Carlo Vistoli, countertenor

After studying classical guitar and piano, Carlo Vistoli began his vocal training as countertenor in 2005 with William Matteuzzi and Sonia Prina. He studied at Ferrara Conservatorio (Renaissance and Baroque Singing) and at Bologna Alma Mater University (Cultural Heritage). In 2012 - 2013, Carlo Vistoli made his stage debut as Sorceress in Henry Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas* in Cesena and Ravenna and later appeared in Bologna Teatro Comunale as Licida in Josef Mysliveček's *L'Olimpiade*. Les Ambassadeurs and Alexis Kossenko invited him to Poitiers and Warsaw, where he made his debut in the title role of Handel's *Tamerlano*. In Rome and Bologna, he sang Purcell's *King Arthur*. He sang Piritoo in *Elena* by Cavalli, conductor Garcia Alarcon, in Rennes and Nantes (Aix en Provence Festival production). In Shanghai, he sang Tolomeo in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, the first performance in China with Opera Fuoco conducted by David Stern. Since 2015, Vistoli has been a member of the ensemble Le Jardin des Voix conducted by William Christie, with whom he toured France, Australia, and China, with concerts in Paris, Moscow, New York and Lucerne. In June 2015, he took part to the world premiere of *L'Amore che move il sole* by Adriano Guarnieri at the Ravenna Festival, a piece revived in 2016 Spoleto Festival. He was Febo in *Dafne* by Caldara in Venice, with Teatro La Fenice Orchestra and Giovanni Montanari, Spirit in *Dido and Aeneas* in Turin, Teatro Regio, with conductor Federico Maria Sardelli. In April 2016, he sang Ottone in Handel's *Agrippina* at Brisbane Baroque Festival. In the 2016-17 season, he appeared in concerts with Le Jardin des Voix; he also took part to Monteverdi *L'Orfeo* with Les Arts Florissants and made his debut at Aix en Provence Festival with Cavalli's *Erismena*. Vistoli won several important awards in international competitions such as 4th International Competition Città di Bologna 2012, 5th Renata Tebaldi International Competition 2013 - Baroque Repertoire (San Marino).



Drusilla / Virtù / Pallade | Anna Dennis, soprano

Anna Dennis studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Noelle Barker. Concert performances have included Britten's *War Requiem* at the Berlin Philharmonie, Thomas Ades' *Life Story* accompanied by the composer at the Lincoln Center's White Light Festival in New York, a program of Russian operatic arias with Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco, Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Orquestra Gulbenkian in Lisbon, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra in Sydney Opera House, and Haydn's *Schöpfung* with Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa in Japan. Her BBC Proms appearances include performances with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Britten Sinfonia and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Recent operatic roles include: Paride in Gluck's *Paride ed Elena* (Nuremberg Opera House), Katherine Dee in Damon Albarn's *Dr Dee* (English National Opera), Emira in Handel's *Siroe* (with Laurence Cummings, Göttingen Händel Festspiele), Bersi in *Andrea Chenier* (Opera North) and Ilia in Mozart's *Idomeneo* directed by Graham Vick (Birmingham Opera Company). A keen interpreter of contemporary music, Dennis has created roles in premieres of Francisco Coll's *Cafe Kafka* (Royal Opera House/Opera North), Jonathan Dove's *The Walk from the Garden* (Salisbury Festival), Edward Rushton's *The Shops* (Bregenz Festspiele), Will Tuckett's *Pleasure's Progress* (Royal Opera

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BIOGRAPHIES cont.

House), and Yannis Kyriakides' *An Ocean of Rain* (Aldeburgh Festival). Her recordings include Rameau's *Anacreon* of 1754 with the Orchestra of the Age Enlightenment, Handel's *Siroe* and *Joshua* with Laurence Cummings and Festspiel Orchester Göttingen, and a CD of Russian composer Elena Langer's chamber works, *Landscape with Three People* on the Harmonia Mundi label. Performances in 2016 included Rosmene/Handel's *Imeneo* at the Göttingen Festspiele, Despina at the Lichfield Festival, *Iphigenie en Tauride* at the International Gluck Festspiele in Nuremberg and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with the Orquestra Gulbenkian in Lisbon.



Arnalta | Reginald Mobley

Particularly noted for his “crystalline diction and pure, evenly produced tone” (*Miami Herald*), as well as an “elaborate and inventive ornamentation” (*South Florida Classical Review*), countertenor Reginald Mobley is highly sought after for baroque, classical and modern repertoire. Past performances of note include the premiere of a reconstruction of Bach's *St Mark Passion* at the Oregon Bach Festival, devised and led by Matthew Halls, a premiere of Eric Banks' *Aluta continua: the passion of David Kato Kisule* with Coro Allegro, concerts of Bach's *Easter Oratorio* and Lully's *Te Deum* with Bach Collegium San Diego, and an extensive tour of sixteen concerts performing Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists led by Sir John Eliot Gardiner. With the latter he also made an acclaimed debut at the BBC Proms in August 2017, and releases an anticipated recording of Bach's *Magnificat* this autumn. Further highlights of the 2016-2017 season included several performances with the Seattle Symphony and Calgary Philharmonic Orchestras and an innovative project with the Academy of Ancient Music entitled *Bach Reconstructed*. This season he returns to the Academy of Ancient Music for Purcell's *King Arthur* at the Barbican in London, ahead of Handel's *Messiah* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and extensive tours to North America and Europe, again with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestras. Alongside, Mobley will soon release of a new disc with the Agave Baroque Ensemble *Peace In Our Time*, focusing on the 400th anniversary of the beginning of the Thirty Years' War. He tours next summer with harpsichord/pianist Henry Lebedinsky, presenting *Every time I feel the Spirit: 200 Years of Music by Black Composers*.



Amore | Silvia Frigato, soprano

Winner of the Francesco Provenzale Baroque Singing Competition in Naples (2007), Silvia Frigato now performs at numerous prestigious concert venues and festivals, collaborating with such artists as Rinaldo Alessandrini, Fabio Biondi, Gianluca Capuano, Claudio Cavina, Ottavio Dantone, Antonio Florio, John Eliot Gardiner, Lorenzo Ghielmi, Philippe Herreweghe, Sigiswald Kuijken, Stefano Montanari, and Federico Maria Sardelli. She recently starred in Monteverdi's *Vespers* with the Monteverdi Choir and Sir John Eliot Gardiner, in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan and in Jommelli's *L'Isola Disabitata* at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, both under Rinaldo Alessandrini. After her debut at the Maggio Musicale in Florence with Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (2014) she returned as Yniold in Daniele Abbado's new production of *Pélleas et Mélisande* under the baton of Daniele Gatti (2015). Frigato was chosen by Sir John Eliot Gardiner for the first and the second edition of Accademia Monteverdiana in Sarteano, performing in the opening concert of the Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival.

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She sang the opening concert at the Trigonale Festival in Austria with La Risonanza and Fabio Bonizzoni, Monteverdi's *Vespers* in Prague and Dresden with Collegium 1704 and Václav Luks; Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* in Venice and Milano (with I Pomeriggi Musicali) and a concert of music by Anton Webern for Bologna Festival. Frigato sang and recorded for Brilliant Classic unpublished music by Manna and Feo with the Fondazione Pietà de' Turchini in Naples. Future plans: *Juditha Triumphans* (Vagaus) at the Teatro Comunale in Ferrara; Monteverdi's *Vespers* with Ensemble Matheus and Jean-Christophe Spinosi on tour in France; Biber's *Missa Salisburgensis* in Salzburg with Collegium 1704 and Václav Luks; Martinu's *Mirandolina* (title role) and *La Sonnambula* (Lisa) at La Fenice in Venice.



Soldato I / Liberto | Furio Zanasi, baritone

Furio Zanasi began his career devoting himself to Early Music, with a repertoire spanning from the madrigal to cantatas, from oratorio to Baroque opera. He has appeared in prestigious festivals and opera houses all over Europe, the USA, and Japan, singing under conductors such as Rinaldo Alessandrini, René Jacobs, Jordi Savall, Alan Curtis, Gabriel Garrido, Ivor Bolton, Reinhard Goebel,

Alessandro De Marchi, Ottavio Dantone, Andrea Marcon, Philippe Herrewé, Thomas Hengelbrock, and Riccardo Chailly. He has sung in renowned opera houses all over the world including: Wiener Konzerthaus, Salzburg Festival, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, Teatro alla Scala, Opera of Rome, Massimo of Palermo, Maggio Fiorentino in Florence, La Fenice in Venice, Teatro Regio Torino, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Dresder Semper Oper, Liceu in Barcelona, Zarzuela in Madrid, Theater Basel, Staatsoper München, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Operas of Lyon and Bordeaux, La Monnaie in Bruxelles, and Opera Garnier Paris. He has sung Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, recorded by Naive, on tour as well as in a new production at Den Norske Opera in Oslo. He was Ulisse in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, where he took part to the Monteverdi Trilogy as well with Rinaldo Alessandrini, directed by Robert Wilson. Zanasi has recorded for the main European Radios and more than 60 CDs for different labels.



Famigliare | Gareth Treseder, tenor

After graduating from both the University of Bristol and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Welsh tenor Gareth Treseder became an Apprentice for Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Monteverdi Choir. Solo engagements during his Apprenticeship included Bach's *Cantata No. 61* and *Cantata No. 70* in Paris' Cité de la Musique, Berlin's Philharmonie and London's

Cadogan Hall. He has since performed as a consort soloist in the following Soli Deo Gloria recordings: *Live at Milton Court: Handel Bach Scarlatti* and *JS Bach: Motets*. He performed the role of The Shepherd in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* alongside the London Symphony Orchestra at The Barbican and for the LSO's CD release. Recent solo performances include Handel's *Dixit Dominus* for HRH The Prince of Wales in Buckingham Palace; Monteverdi's *Vespers* in New York's Carnegie Hall, King's College Cambridge, and Château de Versailles; Mozart's *Requiem* in the Royal Albert Hall; Handel's *Messiah* in the Colston Hall; Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in London's St John's Smith Square; Schumann's *Paradies und die Peri* as the "Jüngling" in Leipzig's Gewandhaus; Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* in Cologne's Philharmonie and Vienna's Konzerthaus; Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in Trinity College Cambridge;

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BIOGRAPHIES cont.

Bach's *Cantata No. 198, Trauerode* in Pisa Duomo; Orff's *Carmina Burana* in Gloucester Cathedral. Gareth also composes sacred choral works, which have been performed and recorded across the UK, America and Australia. *A Song Was Heard at Christmas* and *Blessed be that Maid Marie* were recently recorded by the BBC Singers, and several works have since been published by Boosey and Hawkes.



Lucano | Zachary Wilder, tenor

American tenor, Zachary Wilder was a member of Le Jardin des Voix with William Christie and has since performed all over Europe and throughout the US with groups such as Les Arts Florissants, Boston Early Music Festival, Collegium Vocale Gent, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, San Antonio Symphony, Cappella Mediterranea, American Bach Soloists, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Early Opera Company and Early Music Vancouver. A keen performer of Baroque repertoire, Wilder's performance highlights include *Un Sylphe (Zaïs)* in France and Amsterdam with Les Talens Lyriques (CD released under the label Aparté), *Tirsi* in Gagliano's *La Dafne* in Bruges with L. Alarcon and Cappella Mediterranea, and *St John Passion* (Brussels, Barcelona, Seville) with Herreweghe. He has also performed *Damon* in *Acis and Galatea* in California with The American Bach Soloists, *Septimus* in *Theodora* with Early Music Vancouver (USA and Canada), Haydn's *Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze* in Paris with Orchestre de Chambre de Paris under the baton of Mo. Alarcón, *B minor Mass* with the Grand Rapids Symphony, and Lucano in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and *Telemaco* in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* both for Boston Early Music Festival. More recently, Wilder has performed Mozart's *Requiem* in St Paul's Cathedral under John Rutter, performances and a recording of Bach's *Magnificat* with Arion Baroque in Montreal, *Messiah* with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, *Trasimede/ l'Interesse* in Cavalli's *l'Oristeo* in Marseille, *Euryale* in *Persée* by Lully in Paris and Versailles (also recorded), Beethoven's 9th Symphony with Mercury Orchestra (Houston), and *Zadok* in Handel's *Solomon* in Hannover. Future engagements include Wilder's début with the San Francisco Symphony for performances of *Messiah* and Everardo in Zingarelli's *Giulietta e Romeo* with Theater und Orchester Heidelberg.



Damigella | Francesca Boncompagni, soprano

Born in Arezzo in 1984, Francesca Boncompagni graduated in violin with distinction in 2005 from the Rinoldo Franci Conservatory in Siena. In the same year, she began her formal vocal training with Donatella Debolini. She also studied with Lia Serafini, Jill Feldman, Sara Mingardo and Alessio Tosi. In 2007, she attended William Christie's Le Jardin des Voix, and took part in the documentary *Baroque Académie* produced and broadcast by Channel France 3. She is now attending the AVES (Advanced Vocal Ensemble Studies) with Evelyn Tubb and Anthony Rooley at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Basel. In 2008, she won first prize in the Francesco Provenzale Baroque Singing Competition in Naples. She works with prestigious Baroque ensembles such as Les Arts Florissants, Collegium Vocale Gent, Modo Antiquo, La Venexiana, Accademia Bizantina, De Labyrintho and Cappella della Pietà dei Turchini, and with conductors including Claudio Cavina, Federico Sardelli, Walter Testolin, Antonio Florio, Ottavio Dantone, Paul Agnew, William Christie, Philippe Herreweghe and Frans Brüggen. She has been a permanent

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BIOGRAPHIES cont.

member of the young ensemble RossoPorpora since 2013. She has sung in some of the most important concert halls in the world, such as Palazzetto Bru Zane in Venice, Tonhalle in Zurich, Salle Pleyel, Cité de la Musique and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Alte Oper in Frankfurt, Bunka Kaikan and Opera City in Tokyo, Philharmonie in Berlin, Lincoln Center in New York. She has recorded for Pentatone, Phi, Virgin Classics, Brilliant Classics, France Musique, Stradivarius and Deutsche Harmonia Mundi.



Mercurio / Littore | John Taylor Ward, baritone

The “dynamic young baritone” John Taylor Ward (Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*), has been praised for his “impressive clarity and color,” “velvety suaveness” (*New York Times*), “Stylish Abandon” (*The New Yorker*), “lovely, firm bass” (*Opera Britannia*), and “finely calibrated precision and heart-rending expressivity” (*Washington Post*). This season, he has appeared as

a principal artist on five continents, joining ensembles such as Les Arts Florissants (as a laureate of the Jardin des Voix), Collegium Vocale Ghent, the Boston Camerata, and the Grammy-winning chamber ensemble Roomful of Teeth. Other recent credits include several roles in the Boston Early Music Festival’s cycle of Monteverdi operas, the premiere staging of Orfeo Chaman with the ensemble L’arpeggiata, and performances of Viver’s *Copernicus* and Saariaho’s *La Passion de Simon* under the direction of Peter Sellars. Originally from Boone, NC, Ward is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and holds two advanced degrees from Yale University. He is a recipient of the Margot Fassler Award for Excellence in Research and Performance (2012), the Yale School of Music Alumni Prize (2013), the Harriet Hale Wooley Scholarship for American Artists in Paris (2013), the Carmel Bach Festival’s Virginia Best Adams Fellowship (2014), and the Helpman Award for Best Classical Chamber Music Performance (Australia, 2015). He is the co-founder and associate artistic director of the Lakes Area Music Festival (Brainerd, MN) as well as a founding core member of Cantata Profana, which was recognized with Chamber Music America’s 2015 award for Most Adventurous Programming.



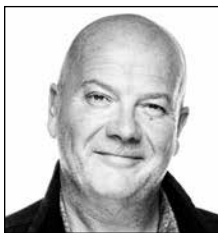
Nutrice | Michał Czerniawski, countertenor

Polish countertenor Michał Czerniawski studied singing at the Music Academy in Gdansk and Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. Czerniawski worked extensively with William Christie (Jardin des Voix world tour, 30th Anniversary of Les Arts Florissants at Opera Comique), Masaaki Suzuki, and Mark Padmore (Aldeburgh Music). His concert repertoire includes

Handel’s oratorios like *Messiah* and *Solomon* (Solomon’s Knot), as well as Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* (Cracow Chamber Opera), *Salve Regina* (London Handel Festival), Scarlatti’s *Il Primio Omicidio* (Wratistavia Cantans). Opera work has included Corrindo in *L’Oroneta* by P.A. Cesti (Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Music and Wigmore Hall with David Bates and La Nuova Musica), Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen* (Teatr Wielki w Poznaniu, Opera na Zamku w Szczecinie), Handel’s *Acis & Galatea* and *L’Opera Seria* by F. Gassmann with New European Opera, J. Peri’s *Euridice* with British Youth Opera, *Orlando Generoso* by Steffani at Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham, as well as *The Fairy Queen*, Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, Cavalli’s *Jason*, and Handel’s *Agrippina* with English Touring Opera. Future engagements include performances at Göttingen International Handel Festival and Bachfest in Leipzig.

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BIOGRAPHIES cont.



Soldato II | Robert Burt, tenor

Robert Burt studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His career has taken him to opera houses and concert halls around the world. He is most associated with the role of Iro in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, which he has sung for Chicago Opera Theater, Opera North, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Geneva Opera, Teatro Real de

Madrid, Aix-en-Provence, New York and on DVD, conducted by William Christie, with whom he has also worked on Cesti's *Il Tito* (Strasbourg) and Purcell's *Fairy Queen* (Glyndebourne). Recent and future plans include Dancing Master in *Manon Lescaut* (Royal Opera House), Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd* (Adelphi Theatre, London), Mopsa & Flute in *The Fairy Queen* (Glyndebourne under Laurence Cummings), Arnalta in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Montpellier), Evangelist in *St John Passion* and Beadle in *Sweeney Todd* (Reisopera), Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, Dr Blind in *Die Fledermaus*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and Biaso in *Gioielli della Madonna* (Opera Holland Park), Goro (RTE Concert Orchestra) and Mr Fiorentino in *Street Scene* (London, Paris and Barcelona). Further engagements include Pirelli (Chichester Festival Theatre), Evangelist in a staged *St John Passion* (Reisopera), Kittywake/ Landlord in *Ludd & Isis* (Royal Opera House), Mopsa/Flute in *The Fairy Queen* (Paris, Caen and New York with William Christie and Les Arts Florissants), King Bobeche in *Bluebeard* (Grange Park), Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (ENO), L'Incredibile in *Andrea Chenier*, Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Hadji in *Lakme* (Opera Holland Park), and the world premieres of both *Family Matters* for Tête à Tête Opera and Stephen Barlow's *King - a Cathedral Opera*, as Henry II, in Canterbury Cathedral.



Venere | Francesca Biliotti, contralto

Francesca Biliotti was born in Venice. In 2004, she graduated from the Università L.Bocconi in Milan. During her final year at University, she was awarded a Level I Music Diploma from the Conservatorio G. Cantelli in Novara, achieving the highest mark possible, under the supervision of Silvana Manga. She has received various prizes, including first prize

at the Camera Barocco section of the Opera Rinta Competition in 2009. She was also a finalist at the 5th Ravello Città Della Musica International singing competition. In 2012, she was the winner at the Francesco Albanese Competition, and a finalist in the la Citta, Sonora Competition in Milan. Also in 2012 she was the winner of "Best Mezzo-Soprano" at the Franca Mattiucci Competition in Asti. In 2013, she took second place at the 67th European Community Competition for young singers in Spoleto, where from May to September she took part in a training program, under the guidance of Lella Cuberli and Renato Bruson. On this course, she performed in several concerts and sung the lead role in the contemporary opera *Euridice* by G.M. Scappucci. Recent performances include: a recital of Cantatas by Vivaldi and Benedetto Marcello (Tuscia Opera Festival); Maddalena in Verdi's *Rigoletto* (Brescia); soloist in Vivaldi's *Dixit Dominus* with the Soloists of Moscow, conductor Yuri Bashmet (Yaroslavl Festival); Isabella in Rossini's *L'italiana in Alegri* and Angelina in *La Cenerentola* (Teatro Nuova Turin); Gluck's *Orfeo*, title role (Teatro Olimpico, Vincenza). She has also performed as a soloist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*.

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ENGLISH BAROQUE SOLOISTS

The English Baroque Soloists have long been established as one of the world's leading period instrument orchestras. Throughout their repertoire, ranging from Monteverdi to Mozart and Haydn, they are equally at home in chamber, symphonic, and operatic performances and the distinctive sound of their warm and incisive playing is instantly recognisable.

The ensemble has performed at many of the world's most prestigious venues, including Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Sydney Opera House. During the course of the 1990s they performed Mozart's seven mature operas and recorded all of his piano concertos and mature symphonies.

The English Baroque Soloists are regularly involved in joint projects with the Monteverdi Choir, with whom they famously took part in the trailblazing Bach Cantata Pilgrimage in 2000, performing all of Bach's sacred cantatas throughout Europe. They also toured Gluck *Orphée et Eurydice* in Hamburg and Versailles, following a staged production at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in collaboration with the Hofesh Shechter Dance Company.

Highlights in 2016 included tours of Bach's *Magnificat* in E flat, *Lutheran Mass* in F major, and Cantata 'Süßer Trost' with the Monteverdi Choir in venues around Europe, and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* as well as a mixed programme of Mozart Symphonies 39-41, *Requiem* and *Great Mass in C Minor*.

Their most recent recording is Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, which was released by Soli Deo Gloria in March 2017.

VIOLINS

Kati Debretzeni (Leader)
Iona Davies
Henry Tong
Anne Schumann (Second Principal)
Henrietta Wayne
Davina Clarke

RECORDERS

Rachel Beckett
Catherine Latham

CORNETTI

Frithjof Smith
Richard Thomas

HARP

Gwyneth Wentink

DULCIAN

Györgyi Farkas

VIOLAS

Fanny Paccoud
Lisa Cochrane
Małgorzata Ziemkiewicz
Aliye Cornish

CELLO

Marco Frezzato

GAMBA/LIRONE

Kinga Gáborjáni

DOUBLE BASS

Valerie Botwright

HARPSICHORD

Antonio Greco
Paolo Zanzu

CHITARRONE/LUTES

David Miller
Alex McCartney
Josías Rodríguez Gándara
Jørgen Skogmo

L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

MONTEVERDI CHOIR

MONTEVERDI CHOIR

Founded by Sir John Eliot Gardiner as part of the break-away period instrument movement of the 1960s, the Monteverdi Choir has always focused on bringing a new perspective to their repertoire. The primary difference as an ensemble lies in its ability to communicate music to their audiences worldwide, as the choir goes beyond the music, seeking to create immediacy and drama in everything they do. This approach has led to the Monteverdi Choir being consistently acclaimed as one of the best choirs in the world over the past 50 years.

The Monteverdi Choir has over 150 recordings to its name and has won numerous prizes, setting itself apart from other ensembles through the scope of their projects, pursuing a theme over several months, rather than weeks. Among a number of such trail-blazing tours was the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage, during which the Choir performed all 198 of J. S. Bach's sacred cantatas in more than 60 churches throughout Europe and America. The project was recorded by Soli Deo Gloria, the company's own record label, and hailed as "one of the most ambitious musical projects of all time" by *Gramophone Magazine*.

The Choir regularly performs works across a wide-ranging repertoire: noted for its ability to switch composer and idiom with complete stylistic conviction. Last year, the Choir took part in a variety of projects—from Bach's *Mass in B Minor* tour and recording with the English Baroque Soloists, to a tour of the U.S.A. with Monteverdi's *Vespers* and *L'Orfeo*. In 2015, the Monteverdi Choir also performed Mozart's Requiem in D minor in both the Aldeburgh Festival and the annual Anima Mundi in Pisa: International Church Music Festival. It also collaborated with the Tonhalle Orchestra on Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* under the direction of Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

The Choir has also participated in several staged opera productions, including most recently Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in September 2015; working in collaboration with the Hofesh Shechter dance company. Other opera productions include *Le Freyschütz* (2010) and *Carmen* (2009) at the Opéra Comique in Paris, and in 2003 the Choir performed *Les Troyens* at the Théâtre du Châtelet.

Tenor

Hugo Hymas
Graham Neal

Bass

Alex Ashworth
Samuel Evans
Lawrence Wallington

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Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater is a comprehensive fundraising effort to transform our physical space and expand our partnerships with resident companies, exceptional artists and ensembles, and members of the greater community.

We are pleased to acknowledge donors who have contributed one-time campaign gifts or multi-year pledges of \$5,000 or more between the inception of the campaign on July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2017. The continued growth and success of the Harris Theater would not be possible without this generosity and support.

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The Harris Theater for Music and Dance is pleased to recognize our donors who have contributed \$250 or more to the Theater's Annual Fund from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017. Through their support of our resident companies, general operations, and community engagement programs, these generous individuals play a direct role in sustaining the future of extraordinary music and dance in Chicago.

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The Harris Theater gratefully acknowledges our performance sponsors, without whom our 2017-18 season would not be possible. These generous individuals and organizations have contributed gifts of \$5,000 or more to support the renowned artists and companies taking the stage this season and establish the Theater as a cultural anchor in Chicago.

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The Harris Theater proudly recognizes the members of our *Harris Theater Presents* Consortium. Their annual membership gifts made between October 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017 make it possible for the Theater to present some of the world's most prestigious artists and ensembles who are influencing the landscape of their respective art forms.

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The Harris Theater for Music and Dance would like to thank the following individuals who chose to honor a special person in their lives, celebrate a milestone event, or memorialize an inspirational friend of family member with a tribute gift to the Theater between October 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017.

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The Harris Theater for Music and Dance is pleased to recognize members of the *Legacy Society*, who have committed to make a future gift to the Theater. To learn more about planned giving at the Harris, please contact Elizabeth Halajian, Director of Development, at 312.334.2460.

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Rental information: If you have any questions about the Harris Theater, including rental of the facility, group tours, or volunteer opportunities, please call the administrative office Monday through Friday, 9AM–5PM, at 312.334.2407.

Ticket purchases: To purchase tickets, visit HarrisTheaterChicago.org. Call or visit our Box Office at 312.334.7777 Monday through Friday, 12–6PM or until curtain on performance days.

In consideration of other patrons and the performers: Please turn off all cell phones. Photography is not permitted in the Theater at any time and texting during performance is strictly prohibited. Film or digital images will be confiscated or deleted by the Harris Theater house staff; violators will be subject to a fine. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house management. Smoking is prohibited within the Harris Theater. Allowance of personal items and baggage into the auditorium space is at the sole discretion of house management.

For your safety: Please take a moment and note the nearest exit. In the event of an emergency, follow the directions of the Harris Theater house staff. In the event of an illness or injury, inform the Harris Theater House Manager.

Accessibility: Infrared assisted listening devices are available from the Harris Theater house staff. To accommodate your seat selection, wheelchair accessible seating as well as swing arm aisle seating is available on all levels of the theater. Please advise the Box Office of any accommodations prior to the performance.

Parking: Discounted parking validation is available for all ticket holders using the Millennium Park Garage. A validation machine is located next to the Box Office on the Orchestra Level, as you enter the Theater lobby.

Lost and found: Retrieved items will be held for 30 days with the Harris Theater