ALMIRA
Königin von Castilien
ALMIRA, Queen of Castile

music by Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759)
words by Friedrich Christian Feustking,
a German translation of an Italian libretto from 1691 by Giulio Pancieri (L’Almira)
1704, HWV 1

presented by operamission and Neke Carson
at the Gershwin Hotel, New York City
Saturday, May 26, 2012 (North American Première)
Tuesday, May 29 and Thursday, May 31, 2012

conducted by Jennifer Peterson
staged by Jeff Caldwell

with the operamission HANDEL BAND

original illustration by Tomi Um
this evening’s cast:

*Almira*, Queen of Castile, secretly in love with Fernando.

soprano **CHRISTY LOMBARDOZZI**

*Edilia*, a princess of royal blood.

soprano **NEL SNAIDAS**

*Consalvo*, Prince of Segovia, Almira’s guardian.

bass **MARK RISINGER**

tenor **KEITH JAMESON**

*Osman*, his son.

*Fernando*, Secretary to the Queen, an orphan, subsequently recognized to be Consalvo’s youngest son.

baritone **MICHAEL WEYANDT**

*Raymondo*, a king from Mauritania.

baritone **DAVID KRAVITZ**

*Bellante*, Princess of Aranda.

soprano **KRISTEN PLUMLEY**

tenor **KARIM SULAYMAN**

*Tabarco*, Fernando’s servant.
Chorus (Grandees of Castile)
Denise Crawfort
Allegra Durante
Dara Epstein
Nicole Guberman
Elizabeth Hubbell
Bert Boone
Clay Donaldson
Allen Dorsey
Arvid Johansson
Eric Pagan

Dancers (of Spanish Knights and Ladies, the Ball after the Assembly,
of Europeans, Asians, Africans, of Charlatans and Harlequins)
Arvid Johansson
Nicole Guberman
Ariel Miasnik

Choreography by Ariel Miasnik and Arvid Johansson

Assistant to the Director: Allen Dorsey

operamission HANDEL BAND

baroque violins - Daniel S. Lee (concertmaster), Dongmyung Ahn, Aaron Brown, Tatiana Daubek, Ansel Eklund,
Katie Hyun, Francis Liu, Joan Plana, Vita Wallace
baroque violas - Jessica Troy (principal), Kyle Miller, Audrey Selph
baroque oboes & recorders - Priscilla Smith (solos), Kristin Olson
continuo - Ezra Seltzer (baroque cello - recitatives), Paul Dwyer (baroque cello), Wen Yang (baroque bass)
and on baroque bassoon: Clayton Zeller-Townson (May 26), Andrew Schwartz (May 29 and 31)
natural trumpets - Timothy Will (principal), Brian Kanner, Andrew Kozar, John Charles Thomas
ALMIRA
Singspiel in drei Handlungen (opera in three acts)

The ARGUMENT in the 1704 libretto explains the background of the plot:

Alfonso King of Castile sent Consalvo on a mission to Sicily, whither he travelled in company with his wife Almira. A son, Floraldo, was born to them there. On the return journey to Castile Consalvo’s ship was wrecked; he himself was saved, though not before he had passed through mortal danger. Almira perished, and Floraldo was also regarded as lost, since no trace of him could be found. In fact Floraldo was rescued by a fisherman who, finding him afloat in his cradle, brought him up under the name of Fernando. When fully grown he found his way to Castile, unaware of his origin or rank. Here Consalvo out of natural kindliness received him into his household, not realizing his identity. The young man was given everything that could contribute to his happiness. Eventually Consalvo brought him to court together with Osman, his son by an earlier marriage, and here he won the esteem of the Crown Princess Almira. In the meantime the King died, leaving to Consalvo the government of his kingdom and placing Almira in his care with the specific direction that when she attained her twentieth year she was to receive the royal authority at Consalvo’s hands and marry one of his sons, since his family was of royal blood.

Ouverture.

- the first act -

In a stately amphitheater Valladolid, the capital of Castile, Consalvo fulfills this charge.

CONСALVO

Arioso.

Almire
regiere
und führe
beglücket den Scepter, grossmütig die Kron’.

CHOR

Viva Amira!

Arioso.

Almira
shall reign
and bear the scepter joyfully
and the crown magnanimously.

Chacconne, Saraband.

Almira appoints Osman commander-in-chief, Consalvo chief counsellor, and Fernando ‘Secretarius.’

OSMAN

Arioso.

Ah, my heart would be
eternally bound,
so let the candles
of her eyes not be ignited:
as causes of infernal pain.

Ach wiltu die Herzen
auf ewig verbinden,
so lass doch die Kerzen
der Augen nicht Zünden:
denn Flammen zu fühlen
und sie nicht zu kühlen,
sind höllische Schmerzen.
FERNANDO  So ben che regnate
        più degna di te
        il mondo non ha.
        Per alto favore
        legato il mio core
        ogn’ora sarà.

Aria.
I know that the world does not possess
a ruler more worthy than you.
For your higher benefit
my heart shall be bound to you forevermore.

Consalvo gives Almira a document containing Alfonso’s last wish, that she marry one of Consalvo’s family.

CONSALVO  Leset, ihr funkelnden Augen, mit Fleiss,
leset, ihr sollet mit gnädigem Blicken
Einen von meinem Geblüte beglücken,
leset, was meine Vergnügen schon weiss.

Arioso.
Read, your sparking eyes, with diligence,
read, you should with gracious glances
bring joy to one of my kin,
read what my delight already knows.

Almira is much distressed, since she loves Fernando.

ALMIRA  Chi più mi piace io voglio
        stretto legarmi al sen,
        Mi sento un tal ardore
        ch’ogn’ora pensa il core
        al lucido suo ben.

Arioso.
He who pleases me most
I want to clasp to my breast,
I feel such ardor
that at every hour my heart is thinking
of its radiant beloved.

Arioso.
Most beautiful roses and narcissuses,
in your wondrous magnificence
let me kiss the image of Osman,
which has made me fall in love.

EDILIA  Schönste Rosen und Narcissen,
lasst in eurer Wunderpracht
mich das Bild von Osman küssen,
welches mich verliebt gemacht.

Arioso.
Tall lime trees, growing green
and serving as gentle shade,
trouble yourselves
to show me in your branches
if the noble blossom of hope
will ever sweeten my suffering?

When Osman enters, his equivocal behavior infuriates Edilia.

OSMAN  Du irrst dich, mein Licht,
        ich mein’es so nicht.
        Ich werde dich lieben,
        und bleibt dir verschrieben

Aria.
You are mistaken, my light,
I don’t mean it that way.
I will love you,
and my heart remains
When Edilia asks Osman to swear a formal oath of devotion, he says he will do so at a more convenient time. She threatens him with the fury of a woman scorned.

Osman believes Edilia’s pride and violence will abate when she discovers he is after the crown.

Too timid to approach Almira, Fernando decides to entrust his declaration of love to the bark of a tree. Almira watches as he begins to write, ICH LIEBE DI[E ICH NICHT DARF NENNEN] (‘I love her whom I may not name’).

...but Fernando stops carving after the first ten letters, which she misinterprets as ICH LIEB EDI[LIA]. She denounces him furiously as a traitor; he exits sorrowfully.
Aria.
The agony of jealousy
gnaws at my heart.
Do not say that my soul is wicked,
for to die of jealousy
is the worst of all deaths.

Consalvo, learning from Edilia that a knight has been false to his oath,
swears that he shall be punished even if he is his own son.
Though bitterly distressed to hear that it is indeed Osman,
and seeing his hopes of the crown blighted, he acknowledges his promise.

Arioso.
He who for the sake of wealth and advancement
breaks plighted troth,
and does not intend to keep a sworn pledge of love,
will realize that on earth
his hoped-for star of joy
can become a comet of fear.

Arioso.
No longer between yes and no
do I want to always waver like this!
My heart can remain no longer
amid the Syrtes night and day.

The set changes to a hall in the palace in which a ball and ‘Assemblée’ are to take place.
Fernando’s servant Tabarco makes preparations for the party.
Tabarco complains that since the Queen has ordered an Assemblée,
he has to get all his games ready - cards, dice; but the best pastime at court is a young woman.

Arioso, Rittornello.
At court to be called ‘galant’
you need: a hand of cards:
To play ombre,
or make a table at basset,
is now all the fashion and a delicious business,
However, what I value the most are
cinq neuf and passe-dix.

Fernando, determined that his love shall withstand the blows of fate…
...overhears Osman’s decision to abandon his former love for the pursuit of Almira and the throne.

Edilia is resolved not to upset herself over Osman, and the pair renounce their old ties in a duet.

Consalvo and the court enter, including Bellante, Princess of Aranda. Edilia makes Osman jealous by choosing Fernando as her partner. Osman approaches Bellante.

Osman, uncertain what to make of this, refuses Tabarco’s jocular invitation to a game and plays with Consalvo. Tabarco sits on the ground and plays dice with himself. The ball begins.

Courante, Bourée, Menuet, Rigaudon, Rondeau.

End of the First Act.
In the Queen’s audience chamber, Fernando announces the arrival of an ambassador from Mauritania. Raymondo, bearing letters of credence, is introduced by Consalvo. Raymondo, who is in fact the King of Mauritania in disguise, congratulates Almira on her accession and presents the letters of credence. She replies graciously, and all depart except Consalvo, Bellante, and Tabarco (who hides).

Bellante complains that love has proved an illusion. Consalvo makes gallant advances, and when she accuses him of toying with her youth, he addresses her directly in a love song.

Bellante leaves in displeasure. Tabarco is amused to note that she loves the son, but is loved by the father.

Fernando, in his room, orders Tabarco to admit no one, and tries to concentrate on state business, but his mind strays to Almira. He begins a letter to her and is interrupted by repeated knocking on the door.

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**BELLANTE**

*Chi sà, mia spema?*

*Dopo nube di dolore*

*più seren il ciel d’amore*

*per te un dì resplenderà.*

**Aria.**

Who knows, my hope?

After a cloud of grief

the Heaven of love will shine more serenely

for you one day.

**CONSALVO**

*Lass ein sanftes Händedrücken*

*nur entzücken meine Brust,*

*lass mir deine Lilgen Wangen*

*nur umfangen,*

*ach so ist vergnügt die Lust.*

**Arioso.**

Let a gentle hand-clasp

only delight my breast.

Let your lily-white cheeks

only enfold me,

ah, then my desire satisfied.

**TABARCO**

*Alter schadt der Thorheit nicht,*

*wenn ein greises Angesicht*

*noch will junge Mädchen küssen,*

*muss er wissen,*

*dass sein heisser Zeitvertreib*

*ihm den Leib*

*und den Lebensfaden bricht.*

**Arioso, Rittornello.**

Old age matters not to folly,

if a hoary old face

still wants to kiss a young girl,

he must realize of life.

that his hot past-time

will break his body and the thread of life.

**TABARCO**

*Habbiate pazienza*

*non tien audienza.*

*Si trova occupato*

*in cose di stato*

*grandezza si stima*

*il far aspettare sensir a la prima.*

**Aria.**

Have patience,

no hearing’s being held.

We’re engaged

in affairs of state.

It’s considered grand

to make people wait;
Eventually Fernando tells Tabarco to open the door, and rises from his writing desk, leaving what he has written. Osman enters with a request for help: he loves Almira, and begs Fernando to put in a good word for him.

Embarrassed, Fernando says he will do his best. As Almira approaches, Osman hides, and Fernando tries to conceal what he has written. Almira insists on reading it…

“Should I in secret nourish the ardor within my breast, and your graciousness not be my nourishment, then, like a magnet, my power will be consumed, and finally be burnt away with pain.”

...and she assumes it is addressed to Edilia. Misunderstanding her, Fernando offers to quench the flames of love if she finds them distasteful.

Instead of seeking an explanation, Almira consults Fernando about marriage into Consalvo’s family, and asks if she should love Osman. Trapped, Fernando says that no mortal is worthy of her hand, while Osman (aside) curses Fernando as a traitor to friendship. Consalvo asks Almira to sanction a marriage, but the mere mention of Edilia’s name sends her into an aria of refusal.

Consalvo remarks that Osman must keep his promise to Edilia, and determines to quell his pride. Osman comes out of hiding and leaves.
OSMAN  
Scepter und Kron  
bleibet grossmütiger Liebe zu Lohn;  
alles muss weichen,  
kann ich erreichen  
englische Schönheit bei Purpur und Thron.

In a courtyard with doors leading from the Queen’s apartments to other rooms,  
Raymondo expresses the hope of being accepted as Almira’s consort…

RAYMONDO  
Mi da speranza al core di giunger a regnar.  
Contento far mi poi  
o sorte se le voi,  
dunque non mi lasciar.

…which was the reason he came in disguise.

RAYMONDO  
Zweier Augen Majestät  
die fast alle Welt entzücket  
und mit Liebesfesseln drückt,  
war mein Leitstern und Magnet.

Accompagnement, Aria.

ALMIRA  
Ich kann nicht mehr verschwiegen brennen  
und ohne Rettung untergehn:  
Ich muss die lang verhehlte Brunst  
Fernando selbst bekennen;  
des hohen Himmels milde Gunst  
hat ihn allein zum Purpur ausersehen,  
icch lasse mich von seiner Brust nicht trennen,  
Verhängniss, ach! es ist um mich geschehn!

Move i passi a le ruine,  
chi per guido ha un cieco infante.  
Il bendato, ch’orme stampa,  
spesso inciampa,  
nè fermezza un Dio volante.

Seeing Osman coming, she hides.

OSMAN  
Svenerò chi fa guerra a questo cor  
sin ch’a piè non mi cadrà  
fremerà gelosia nel suo furo.

Arioso.

Arioso, Rittornello.  
Scepter and crown  
remain the reward of generous love;  
all must give way  
if I can obtain  
angelic beauty through purple and throne.

Aria.

My heart gives me hope of gaining a kingdom.  
You can make me happy  
if you wish, oh fate,  
so do not leave me.

Aria.

The majesty of two eyes  
which enchants almost all the world,  
and with chains of love impressed,  
was my guiding star and magnet.

Accompagnement, Aria.

I can no longer burn in silence,  
and perish without rescue;  
I must make known to Fernando himself  
my long hidden passion;  
high heaven’s gentle grace has chosen him alone  
for the purple robe.  
I will not allow myself to be parted from his breast.  
Ah, fate, it has happened!

His steps turn towards ruin,  
whoever has a blind boy as a guide.  
The blindfolded boy, as he goes on foot,  
often stumbles,  
and a flying god has no constancy.

Seeing Osman coming, she hides.
Osman meets Fernando and challenges him to fight, without telling him what his offense is.
Osman demands Fernando’s dagger, which Fernando surrenders.
Osman measures the dagger against his own, and finds them alike. Almira snatches the weapon and goes out unrecognized.
Osman taunts Fernando with sheltering under the protection of a woman.

FERNANDO  Ob dein Mund wie Plutons Rachen
Schwefel, Gift und Feuer speit
muss ich deiner Bosheit lachen,
weil mein Eisen
dir soll weisen
Löwenmuth und Tapferkeit.

If your mouth, like Pluto’s revenge,
spits brimstone, poison and fire,
I must laugh at your malice,
because my sword
should show you
a lion’s courage and bravery.

Arioso, Rittornello.

In the Queen’s antechamber, Almira, overjoyed at having saved Fernando’s life,
envies the sword for living where she wishes to be, at his side.

ALMIRA  Sanerà la piaga un dì,
chi l’apri dulcemente in questo petto,
Ogni angoscia fuggirà,
il tormento cedera
a le smanie del diletto.

The one who gently opened the wound in my heart
will one day heal it.
Every anxiety will flee,
and torment shall yield
to the frenzy of delight.

Almira tells Consalvo that Raymondo has explained his status and motives,
and they go off discussing court business. Edilia, finding the sword, assumes it is Osman’s
and that he means to face the Queen armed. Osman jumps to the conclusion that it was Edilia who stole the sword.
In an outburst of mutual recrimination, he accuses her of toying with Fernando,
while she taunts him with pursuing Almira.

EDILIA  Der Himmel wird strafen dein falsches Gemüth.
Die Rache wird lohnen verborgene Tücke,
verstören, verkehren, versehren, verheeren
dein zeitliches Glück,
dass Ruh’ und Vergnügung sich deiner entzieht.

Heaven will punish your faithless heart,
vengeance will reward hidden malice,
confusing, overturning, injuring, ravaging
your transient fortunes,
so that peace and contentment elude you.

Aria.

Tabarco comes in with a post-bag containing various petitions, commissions, sealed letters, etc.
which he has been ordered to deliver. He fall and drops them, peeps into some letters,
finds they are all about love, and reads one:

“Yes, rage as you will, you lines written in anger,
my heart remains unmoved, my soul remains calm,
a quiet spirit stands firm against love’s thunderbolts,
and passes swiftly through this rage to its freedom:
I kiss your hand,
which will deliver me all unbidden from the chains of love’s slavery.”
...and recognizes a woman’s hand.

**Arioso, Rittornello.**

Pretty little skirt with the furbelow,
what news have you got for us?
what then is your command?
What beauty will be wearing you?
your friendship comes very close.
Shall you, a silent witness, call
perhaps for a sought-after Yes?

He runs off to complete his errands.

End of the Second Act.

**NO PAUSE**

- the third act -

**Entrée.**

An elaborate pageant commences. Three processions enter, each representing one of the continents:
first Fernando (Europe)...

**Aria, Entrée.**

Bow down, globe of the world,
and admire my glory;
justly the garland of victory
is placed on my brow.

...then Osman (Africa)...

**Aria, Rigaudon.**

All must yield to my splendor;
to my Nile every river
must offer humble tribute,
even the Euphrates and the Tiber
must surrender to its flood.

...then Consalvo (Asia).
Aria, Saraband.

You proud globe of earth!
give to the burden of my nobility
and to the dignity of my scepter
the first prize of preference.

Almira gives the prize to Europe (Raymondo takes this as an indication of her love);
Edilia and Bellante vote for Africa. A fourth procession appears, led by Tabarco as Folly.

Aria, Gigue.

Come, magnify the glory of Folly,
for the greater part of the earth
is subject to me.
This head is full of maggots and catarrh,
which torment it every day,
that one drags along clowns,
and another cannot abide
the beat of the windmill,
he must toil with the dog-star
as his inalienable property,
now he turns this way and that
like the biggest of fools.

Aria.

Gush forth, you overflowing tears,
give relief to my heart.
But, ah no, fulfill my desires,
just bring me to the cold tomb:
for I must nourish myself
with anxiety and constant pain.

Raymondo tries to comfort Edilia and invites her to favor him.

Aria.

Grant me only a glance of compassion
after the floods of tears.
Let the sun
of your delight
greet my joy, so often longed-for,
with kindly rays.

Edilia returns a doubtful answer.
Accompagnement, Arioso.

BELLANTE

Ja, Amor, deine Grausamkeit
muss dieses Herz ohn alle Rettung fühlen.
Wenn wirstu meine Flammen kühlen
mit Julep der Zufriedenheit!
Es ist umsonst, ich liebe leere Schatten,
ich ehre den, der meine Liebe fleucht,
Bellante sucht mit Osman sich zu gatten,
der sich vielmehr nach Kron und Insul zeucht,
hingegen tracht Consalvens matte Lust
die schon entflammte Brust
mit kalter Neigung zu umfassen,
die ich muss ewig hassen.

Blinder Schütz,
brich die ungerechte Spitz
deiner Pfeilen,
die kein Sterblicher wird heilen;
wozu sind die Wunden nütz?

Ja, Love, this heart must feel
your cruelty without any relief.
When will you cool my flames
with the sweet medicine of contentment?
It is useless, I love empty shadows,
I revere him who flees my love,
Bellante seeks to be united with Osman,
who instead is drawn to crown and mitre,
whereas Consalvo’s feeble desire strives to embrace
my already inflamed breast
with a cold inclination
which I must ever hate.

Bellante again repulses Consalvo.

CONSALVO

Unartige Schöne,
wiltu mich verlassen,
so will ich auch hassen
dich falsche Sirene.

Ungracious beauty,
if you will abandon me,
I will surely hate you,
you false siren.

FERNANDO

Edele Sinnen
schaffen von hinnen,
was Unmuth und Schaden zufügt
und trachten hingegen
nach allen Vermögen,
zu werden auf Erden in süsster Ruhe vergnügt.

Noble thoughts
soothe away
whatever causes annoyance and harm.
And on the contrary
strive by all means
to become on earth delighted in sweetest repose.

Consalvo returns and orders Fernando to prison;
Fernando surrenders his dagger and after bitter reflections about court favor is led away.

FERNANDO

Was ist des Hofes Gunst?
ein Dunst,
so schleunig zieht davon;
ein Labyrinth der Zeiten,
so uns von Kron’ und Thron
zum Kerker pflegt zu leiten.

What is the favor of the court?
A mist,
that swiftly disperses;
a labyrinth of the times,
that invariably takes us
from crown and throne to prison.
Consalvo explains to Almira that Fernando’s guilty passion for Edilia has profaned the palace. Wracked by jealousy, she vows to separate Fernando from his love.

**Arioso, Rittornello.**

**ALMIRA**

Vedrai, s’ a tuo dispetto  
cangiar ben tosto affetto,  
crudele, io ti farò.  
Se da le braccia ancora  
di lei, che t’innamora  
disgiungerti saprò.

You will see, despite yourself,  
I shall soon make you change your affections,  
cruel man.  
Since from the very arms  
of her whom you love  
I can dislodge you.

**RAYMONDO**

Edilia,  
du bleibest mein,  
ich werde nimmer wanken,  
mein Herz soll dir ergeben sein,  
die Sinnen und Gedanken  
sind dir, mein Engel, nah.

Edilia,  
you remain mine  
I will never waver,  
my heart shall be devoted to you,  
my feelings and thoughts  
are with you, my angel.

Edilia accepts Raymondo’s devotion and they go out.

**Accompagnement, Aria.**

**ALMIRA**

Treuloser Mensch, ist mein Gemüth gleich zart,  
so will ich doch mit Beil und scharfen Eisen,  
nach wilder Trogloditen Art,  
dir meine Wuth und grimme Rache weisen:  
mein Herze schlägt, es will vor Eifer splittern,  
Blut, Mord und Tod  
streift mir durch Knochen, Mark und Bein.  
Castilien soll ganz bestürzet sein  
und vor Ensetzen bebend zittern,  
wen ich dein Herz, dein falsches Herz zerstücke,  
und dich nach Lethens Strom mit Angst und Zeter schicke.

Faithless man, gentle as is my soul,  
I will yet show you, with axe and sharp sword,  
in the manner of savage cave-dwellers,  
my fury and fierce vengeance:  
My heart throbs, it will burst with passion;  
blood, murder and death  
tear through every part of my body,  
Castile shall be utterly aghast,  
and, trembling, shake in terror,  
when I split your heart, your false heart, asunder,  
and send you shrieking in terror to Lethe’s waters.

Kochet ihr Adern entzündete Rache.  
Bringet zusammen Phlegetons Flammen,  
dass ich bestrafte des Frevelers Sache.

Blazing vengeance boils your veins,  
concentrating the flames of Phlegethon  
to punish the crime of a wicked man.

When Osman begins his wooing with flowery compliments, Almira abruptly cuts him short. Tabarco hands Almira a letter from Fernando in prison. She tears it open…

“Fernando, whom the burden of fetters weighs down,  
throws, great queen, a paper at your feet,  
and wishes only to know out of your magnanimity  
if perhaps this gem could be a reason for his misfortune?”
...and finds a heart of rubies bearing her name (‘Almira’s Property’).
This convinces Almira of Fernando’s innocence, but she decides to conceal her true feelings
and sends Tabarco back with a message that Fernando must die before sunset.

ALMIRA

Werthe Schrift, geliebte Zeilen,
seid geküsst!
Amor hat statt seiner Pfeilen,
umb mein Herz zu übereilen
euch von neuen ausgerüst.

Dear script, beloved lines,
be kissed!
Cupid, instead of his arrows,
has newly provided you
in order to set my heart racing.

Osman intercepts Edilia, who tries to give him the slip, and then compares his repentance with crocodile’s tears.

RAYMONDO

Quel labro di coral schernito mio rival
non baccierai, no, no.
Quell’onda che t’affonda in porto me guidò.

Those lips of coral, my scorned rival,
you shall not kiss, no, no.
Those waves which engulf you have brought me to harbor.

An underground prison.

FERNANDO

Der kann in Blitz und Donner lachen,
den seiner Unschuld Lorbeer deckt.
Wenn auch die Elementen krachen,
so wird sein Muth doch nicht erschreckt.
Lass alles stürmen,
ihn kann beschirmen,
was nach der wahren Tugend schmeckt.

He can laugh amid lightning and thunder,
whom the laurel of his innocence crowns.
If the elements also roar,
even then, his courage will not falter.
Let all things rage,
those which savor the true virtue
can protect him.

Tabarco brings Almira’s message, and asks where Fernando’s money is, since he hopes to inherit it.

FERNANDO

Verhängniss, wiltu denn nur mich Verlass’nen fallen?
soll Tugend untergehn, und Unschuld sein gedrückt?
Warum bin ich in AmphitritensWellen
nicht wie ein kleines Kind erstickt?
Wenn doch der Sternen Grimm nach deinem Rath
mein Unglück aussersehnd und fest beschlossen hat.
Doch nein, Almira gibt den harten Schluss,
ich soll mein Blut vergiessen:
ein Wort, dass ich nicht widersprechen muss,
nur würde dass die Todesangst versüsst,
wenne vorher mein fast erblaster Mund
ihr möchte meine Treu’ und Liebe machen kund,
und diese Wort’ zum Abschied flössen ein:
Fernando stirbet dein!

Fate, will then you only precipitate my abandonment?
Shall virtue perish, and innocence be oppressed?
Why was I, as a little child,
not drowned in Amphitrite’s waves?
if by your decree the wrath of the stars
has determined my downfall and firmly settled it?
But no. Almira decrees my cruel end,
I shall shed my blood:
only one word, which I must not deny,
would sweeten this agony of death,
if only my mouth, nearly devoid of life,
could make known to her my fidelity and love,
and could let flow this word at my departing:
“Fernando dies yours.”
Fernando stirbet dein, er stirbet dein, Almire, as long as I draw breath I will be your very own.

so lang ich Othem führe, will ich dein eigen sein.

Almira overhears this, savors it, and at last coming forward, interrupts Fernando, and releases his chains. All is explained.

Duet, Rittornello.

ALMIRA & FERNANDO

Duet.

Flirt, you sparkling eyes, with me.
Melt, you lips, in dewy kisses,
speak and jest, laugh and caress,
bring forth perfect pleasures.

Arioso.

I burn truly, without affecting you,
your heart remains harder yet than diamond;
you can arouse the fire with hot torment,
and still cherish the subject with constancy.

Osman replies that on the contrary he loves her, and they fall into each other’s arms.

Duet.

My griefs must vanish,
if only you will let me find in you sweet rest.

Almira tells Consalvo of her reconciliation and Fernando’s gift of rubies. Consalvo, much agitated, asks him where he got it. When Fernando explains that it was around his neck when he was picked up by a fisherman, Consalvo greets him as his long-lost son Floraldo. Consalvo’s wife’s name was Almira, the jewel was his bridal gift to her, and she hung it around Floraldo’s neck. Fernando and Osman embrace as brothers. Amid general rejoicing (with Tabarco and his horse) Almira fulfills her father’s last wish and accepts Consalvo’s son as her King and consort.

Recitative.

My angel…
My delight…
I lay myself in rapture on your breast.

Chor.

We hope that Heaven will, after the turmoil,
welcome us again with joyful glances,
will sugar and sweeten the bitter pain,
and let the life, granted by Love, last forever.

End of the Opera.
the cast:

KEITH JAMESON, tenor, recently performed the Novice in *Billy Budd* at the Metropolitan Opera, and Grandpa Joe in *The Golden Ticket* with Atlanta Opera. He also sang with Boston Baroque as tenor soloist in Haydn's *The Creation*, which will be released on compact disc in June. He is the Founder and Director of the Greenwood Music Festival in his hometown of Greenwood, SC, which will celebrate its sixth season in 2013 with a production of Britten's *Noye's Fludde*. Keith next sings Sancho Panza in *Man of La Mancha* in Greenwood in June, and returns to the Metropolitan Opera next year in *Carmen*, *Francesca da Rimini*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera*.

Baritone DAVID KRAVITZ has been hailed by critics for his “large, multi-layered” and “sumptuously flexible” voice, his “power and eloquence,” his “deeply considered acting” and “confident stage presence,” his “drop-dead musicianship,” and his “deep understanding of the text.” In recent seasons he has performed with New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Atlanta Opera, Florentine Opera, and other companies around the United States. On the concert stage, his appearances include the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, Boston Baroque, and many times on Emmanuel Music’s renowned Bach Cantata series. He recently recorded works by Mohammed Fairouz with the Borromeo String Quartet for the Naxos label, and he can also be heard in works of J.S. Bach, John Harbison, Andy Vores, and Peter Child on Koch International Classics, New World, and BMOP/sound (forthcoming). Next season’s highlights include Stravinsky’s *Le Rossignol* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit, the American premiere of MacMillan’s *Clemency* with Boston Lyric Opera, and Nick Carraway in the Boston premiere of Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby* with Emmanuel Music. Before turning to music full time, Mr. Kravitz had a distinguished career in the law that included clerkships with Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O’Connor and Stephen Breyer.

Soprano CHRISTY LOMBARDOZZI has performed roles such as Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Diane in *Orphée aux Enfers*, Polpolka in *Comedy on a Bridge*, and Belinda in *Dido and Æneas*. Her European credits include Lisette in *La Rondine*, Lidochka in *Moskva, Cheremushki*, Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, and Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater*. Ms. Lombardozzi holds degrees from Yale University and the University of Tennessee.

Connecticut native KRISTEN PLUMLEY has performed with New York City Opera, Chautauqua Opera and Virginia Opera, among others, in roles such as Norina, Adina, Zerlina, Gilda and Musetta. She has also appeared with the symphony orchestras of Cleveland, Baltimore, St. Louis, Indianapolis and Seattle. While she greatly enjoys opera of all types, as well as operetta and concert work, her favorite concert is one of music from science fiction movies and television shows, in which she appears with Star Trek’s George Takei. She lives in New Jersey with her husband and 6-year-old twins.

MARK RISINGER, bass, has received acclaim throughout the United States, Mexico, and Europe in roles such as Mozart’s Figaro, Leporello, and the “Hoffmann” villains. Possibly the craziest thing he has ever sung was the part of Bull in *Where with Wild Things Are* with the Boston Symphony. His favorite concert repertoire includes Haydn’s *The Creation*, Mozart’s Requiem, and Bach’s Passions. Handel has been a life-long addiction - he took his first steps while listening to a recording of *Messiah* - so when he’s not teaching music history at a prep school, he is a guest lecturer for numerous orchestras and opera companies, as well as an editor for the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe.

NELL SNAIDAS began her career singing leading roles in Zarzuelas at New York City’s Repertorio Español. Operatic performances include her European debut in Alessandro Scarlatti’s *Gli Equivoci nel Sembiante* at the Teatro Garibaldi in Palermo,
Sicily as well as creating the role Princess Olga in the world-premiere of the Boston Early Music Festival’s production of Johann Mattheson’s opera *Boris Goudenow* in Boston and Tanglewood. In addition she has appeared as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and almost every Baroque orchestra in the United States. Of Uruguayan-American descent, specialization in Italian and Spanish Baroque music has taken her all over the globe. This year she received a Grammy nomination for her renditions of 17th and 18th century songs of Spain and Latin America on the album “The Kingdoms of Castille” with El Mundo.  

**KARIM SULAYMAN** is consistently praised for his sensitive musicality, vivid portrayals, and beautiful vocalism. With a vast repertoire that spans renaissance to contemporary music, the young tenor/haute-contre is establishing himself as a sophisticated and versatile artist of his generation and enjoys a busy calendar in opera and concert performances throughout the world. He was recently described as possessing a “lyrical, expressive and appealing tenor,” (Washington Post), and was hailed for his “energetic and elastic performance” (Opera News) and “apt comedic gifts” (New York Times). Most recently he has debuted with Lincoln Center, Boston Lyric Opera, New York City Opera, Carnegie Hall, and the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, as well as Opera Lafayette at the Kennedy Center. In the summer of 2011 he completed his second summer residence at Marlboro Music Festival, and will be a part of the Musicians from Marlboro Tour in the 2012-13 season. His growing discography includes a critically acclaimed portrayal of Acis in Handel’s *Acis and Galatea* with Mercury Baroque, and Philidor’s *Sancho Pança* for Naxos. A future release of Grétry’s *Le Magnifique*, also for Naxos, is scheduled for 2012.

Baritone **MICHAEL WEYANDT** has appeared throughout the United States under such conductors as James Levine and Lorin Maazel, in the standard opera repertoire, art song, and experimental music. With operamission, he has performed Mozart in Bryant Park, Poulenc cabaret, and a deconstructed *La Bohème*. He is also a composer, and actively works with other composers to develop new work and techniques for the voice. During a leave from graduate school, Michael lived and taught in rural China for four semesters.

**the leaders of the operamission HANDEL BAND:**

Period violinist **DANIEL S. LEE** enjoys a varied career as a soloist, chamber musician, concertmaster, and teacher. He has performed as a soloist with the American Baroque Orchestra and Quodlibet Ensemble and served as a guest concertmaster/leader for the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, TENET, Musica Raritana at Rutgers, and Yale Schola Cantorum. He has co-founded and directs the Sebastian Chamber Players, whose performance at the finals of 2011 York Early Music International Competition was praised for its “smooth sophistication” (Yorkshire Post) and “well-thought-out articulation and phrasing” (Early Music Review). As a violino piccolo specialist, he has performed Bach’s first ‘Brandenburg’ Concerto with faculty members of Yale School of Music and given the modern-day premiere of Johann Pfeiffer’s concerto. He is on the violin/viola faculty at Connecticut College.

Lauded for his “beauty of tone and keenness of musicianship” (Opera Britannia), cellist **EZRA SELTZER** graduated from the inaugural class of Juilliard’s Historical Performance Program. This season he has performed with the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, at the 4x4 Baroque Music Festival, and in Helicon Foundation concerts. As principal cellist of Musica Angelica, he toured the West Coast with Emma Kirkby and Daniel Taylor. He also recently completed a tour of Mexico as principal cellist of the Orchester Wiener Akademie. Ezra is co-founder and principal cellist of the Sebastian Chamber Players, who were finalists of the 2011 York International Early Music Competition and the 2011 Early Music America/Naxos Recording Competition. He attended Yale University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts in History and Master of Music in Cello, studying with Aldo Parisot and Ole Akahoshi. He was also a post-graduate fellow in the Yale Baroque Ensemble under the direction of Robert Mealy.
PRISCILLA SMITH has performed with The Waverly Consort, Early Music New York, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Musica Angelica, Trinity (Wall Street) Baroque Orchestra, The Handel & Haydn Society, Ex Umbris, Juilliard Baroque and Orchester Wiener Akademie. She has toured the United States, Europe and South America, and as a member of Piffaro has collaborated with such groups as the Concord Ensemble, Capilla Flamenca, Psallentes, The Crossing, The Newberry Consort, Parthenia, The Folger Consort, and ARTEK. Her performances have been called “spirited” by the New York Times and “particularly fine” by the Washington Post. Smith is a graduate of Temple University, where she was a modern oboe student of Louis Rosenblatt, and the Juilliard School, where she was a baroque oboe student of Gonzalo Ruiz. She is on the faculty of Temple University, where she directs the Early Music Ensemble.

priscillasmith.org

the creative team:

JEFF CALDWELL is a versatile musician and theater artist. His career encompasses opera, musical theater, and everything in between and on the fringe. After earning degrees in Piano Performance from Oberlin Conservatory and Stage Direction for Opera from Indiana University, he moved to Seattle and taught at the University of Washington and Cornish College of the Arts, specializing in singing training for their professional actor training programs. He appeared as a faculty guest artist in several productions at both schools, including the roles of Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and Bunthorne in *Patience*. He also music directed and conducted productions at the 5th Avenue Theater, Seattle Repertory Theater, Seattle Civic Light Opera, and Village Theater, and sang with the Seattle Opera Chorus in several new productions.

Since moving to New York City he has played keyboards in the Broadway pit of *The Producers*, sung with the New York City Opera Chorus and the New York Philharmonic, and taught in the Drama Division at Juilliard, NYU’s Tisch and CAP21 programs.

Conductor, pianist and harpsichordist JENNIFER PETERSON is the director of operamission, a new arts organization which has completed its fourteenth presentation since its founding in February of 2009. operamission is bringing opera, chamber music, art song and cabaret to audiences in the lobby of the Gershwin Hotel in the New York City’s Flatiron District in inventive new ways, as in its laboratory-style presentation ‘*Così fan tutte*: Some Assembly Required,’ a chronological cabaret of Kurt Weill’s vocal music, operatic world premieres, and Handel operas presented with historical instruments.

Ms. Peterson has appeared at over fifty opera companies in the United States and internationally, including the New York City Opera, Opera Memphis, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Des Moines Metro Opera, and the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv, Israel. Having received her musical training at the Oberlin College-Conservatory of Music, the Indiana University School of Music, and the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY where she co-founded the Rochester Chamber Opera, Ms. Peterson has also been actively involved in historical performance as a harpsichordist and chamber musician, as well as being an avid purveyor of new opera to new audiences.

Born in Anchorage, Alaska, Jennifer grew up on the west coast and has been residing in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens, since 1997 while maintaining an active vocal coaching studio in midtown Manhattan.

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operamission would like to thank...

• at the Gershwin Hotel: Neke Carson, Suzanne Tremblay, Ninfa Lemache-Lopes, and the hotel staff.
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• the talented Tomi Um (illustrator), Patrick Mallury (photographer), and Meredith Kaufman (videographer).
• Professors Graydon Beeks of the American Handel Society and Colin Timms of the Handel Institute (Great Britain).
• Thomas Jocks, Patrick Jones, Peter Kozma, Gonzalo Ruiz - research assistance and general inspiration.

Sponsors: Richard A. Peterson (Mr. Jameson), Nicholas Tamagna (Ms. Smith), Rebecca Harrison (trumpets), Janet Harris, Partow Payandeh, Brendan Ratchford, Mark Walters.

The edition used for this production was Friedrich Chrysander’s, published in Leipzig on August 1, 1873.

We would also like to acknowledge author Winton Dean for his vast contribution of research on Handel’s 39 operas.
Performance history of *Almira*:

January 8, **1705** - Theater am Gänsemarkt, **Hamburg** (conducted by Georg Friedrich Händel)
February 7, **1732** - Theater am Gänsemarkt, **Hamburg** (conducted by Georg Philipp Telemann)
January 14, **1878** - Stadttheater, **Hamburg** (truncated severely, double-bill with Gluck’s *Le cadi dupé*)
June 25, **1879** - Carola-Theater, **Leipzig** (truncated severely, double-bill with Mozart’s *Der Schauspieldirektor*)
February 23, **1885** - Stadttheater, **Hamburg** (festival for Händel’s 200th birthday, truncated severely)
October 23, **1905** - **Hamburg** (truncated severely, double-bill with Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*)
February 23, **1985** - Städtische Oper, **Leipzig**
May 7, **1994** - Ensemble Fiori Musicali, **Bremen** and Händel-Festspiele, **Halle**
February 18, **2005** - Badisches Staatstheater, **Karlsruhe**
November 12, **2005** - Oktogonale 2005, **Hamburg**
August 8, **2009** - Donauffestwochen im Strudengau, **Grein, Donau** (Austria)
July 15, **2004** - Amherst Early Music Festival (conductor: Andrew Lawrence-King, director Drew Minter; truncated)
May 26, **2012** - operamission, **New York**

*Almira* was the only Handel opera performed during the 19th Century.