

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

operamission will present the North American premiere of Handel's first Italian opera, *Rodrigo*, at the Gershwin Hotel in New York May 21, 23, and 25, 2013.

NEW YORK, New York (April 17, 2013) — **George Frideric Handel's** first Italian opera receives its North American premiere next month at the Gershwin Hotel in the Flatiron District. *Rodrigo*, or "**Vincer se stesso è la maggior vittoria**" ("To conquer oneself is the greatest victory") will be presented by **operamission** and **Neke Carson** as the latest installment in their joint series of concerts, operas, and cabaret.

Conductor **Jennifer Peterson** and director **Jeff Caldwell** lead an impressive cast and period baroque orchestra, presenting the complete work in its original Italian. The three-act opera was composed in 1707 during the composer's early sojourn in Rome, possibly at the behest of Ferdinando de' Medici, receiving its world premiere at the Teatro del Cocomero in Florence the same fall. Drawn from a pre-existing *libretto* by **Francesco Silvani**, this essential story of revenge, betrayal, love, and the subjugating of egos was crafted into its existing form by either Handel himself or another unnamed librettist.

Countertenor **Nicholas Tamagna**, "exquisite...substantial" (*Opera Now*), leads the cast as Rodrigo, the King of Hispania. Icelandic soprano **Dísella Lárusdóttir**, called "breathtaking" by the *New York Times*, plays his wife Esilena following her recent Metropolitan Opera debut. The *seconda donna* Florinda is the young beauty who has been ruined by the King and is in pursuit of vengeance. She is portrayed by soprano **Madeline Bender**, hailed by *Opera News* as "a standout" and by *L'Opinion Indépendante* as "charming" and "completely fresh and natural."

A story based on historical events, tenor **John Carlo Pierce** (Bavarian State Opera, Halle, Mainz, Cologne) portrays Florinda's brother Giuliano, representing the infamous Count Julian of Ceuta who, according to legend, betrayed Hispania to the Muslim invaders in the early 8th century out of vengeance for King Roderic, who had made one of Julian's daughters pregnant. Countertenor **Christopher Newcomer**, having recently made his Broadway debut as Mary Sunshine in *Chicago*, sings the soprano role of Evanco, in love with Florinda and the son of Vitizza, Prince of Aragon, who has just been slain by Rodrigo's army. Countertenor **Daniel Bubeck**, "eloquent" and "alluring" (*New York Times*) is Fernando, Rodrigo's general.

operamission, bringing the art form 'from the composer to the audience,' has established its artistic presence in the New York classical music scene, *Rodrigo* being its eighteenth presentation since March of 2009. Presenting works both of today and the past, **operamission's** productions have ranged from concerts of Handel opera with period instruments to fully-staged operatic world premieres. Live videostreaming of **operamission's** innovative programming has also exposed opera, art song, chamber music, and popular cabaret evenings of Francis Poulenc and Kurt Weill to international audiences. The groundbreaking presentation of '*Così fan tutte*: Some Assembly Required' in August 2010 put the troupe on the map with its dynamic format, enriching audience awareness of opera as an accessible and vital genre.

The **Gershwin Hotel** is located at 7 East 27th Street in New York. Tickets range from \$30 to \$75 and are available in advance at [Brown Paper Tickets](#). Performances are Tuesday, May 21, Thursday, May 23, and Saturday, May 25, all beginning at 7:30 PM.

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