

operamission presents

53rd Street Handel

Wednesday, November 16, 2016

An original pastiche:

'Theseus in the Flatiron: a Handelian Family Drama'

The Cast, in order of appearance:

mezzo-soprano JESSICA BOWERS as "Theseus" (world-famous family therapist, recently arrived from Athens)

baritone MICHAEL WEYANDT as "Bajazet" (patriarch of a family in crisis)

bass CORY CLINES as "Varo" (Theseus' personal librarian and Metastasian philosopher, by way of the Aegean)

countertenor MATTHEW TRUSS as "Radamisto" (Bajazet's son, betrothed to Dorinda)

soprano AMELIA WATKINS as "Angelica" (Bajazet's estranged daughter)

soprano JENNIFER ROBERTS JENKINS as "Dorinda" (a *pastorella* from an outer borough)

assisted by the operamission HANDEL Band:

Brendan Ratchford, baroque violin; David Bakamjian, baroque 'cello; Jennifer Peterson, harpsichord

ARGUMENT

Our story is of Theseus, a female hero.

Brought in from Athens to intervene as a renowned family crisis counselor, she arrives to find Bajazet suffering from extreme depression due to the estrangement of his daughter Angelica.

Angelica is in a loveless marriage with Rodomonte, a wealthy business tycoon.

Angelica disapproves of her brother Radamisto's involvement with Dorinda, and has hired Theseus to meet with them all in an attempt to separate the happy couple.

As our story begins, the family is no longer on speaking terms, driving Bajazet to the brink of suicide.

Scene 1

*Bajazet confesses his recent thoughts of suicide to Theseus,
who reminds him to think of his family.*

*Forte e lieto a morte andrei,
se celassi ai pensier miei
della figlia il grande amor.*

Strong and gladly would I go to death,
if I could banish from my thoughts
my great love for my daughter.

*Se non fosse il suo cordoglio,
la vedresti in me più orgoglio,
io morrei con più valor.*

If it were not for her entanglement,
you would see more pride in me,
I would die with more valor.

(from *Tamerlano*, HWV 18, Act I)

baritone **Michael Weyandt**

Scene 2

*Varo, Theseus' assistant, reflects on Bajazet's children:
his daughter uses her sex appeal to climb the social ladder,
and his son suffers from love for a woman from a different social class.*

*Se un bell'ardire
può innamorarti,
perchè arrossire?
perchè sdegnarti?
di quello strale, che vi piagò?*

If a fiery passion
has the power to enamor,
why be ashamed?
why be indignant?
is it that arrow that has wounded you?

*Perchè soffrire
si gran tormento?
se dà contento
dire al suo bene
provo gran pene,
che far potrò?*

Why suffer
in such great torment?
if he is content
to speak of his love
to demonstrate great pain,
what can one do?

(from *Ezio*, HWV 29, Act I)

bass **Cory Clines**

Scene 3

*Radamisto shares his troubles with Theseus,
who begins to become more concerned for the family's well-being.*

*Cara sposa, amato bene,
prendi speme,
che non sempre irato il cielo
volgerà lo sdegno in me.*

*Sgombra, oh Dio, dal nobile core
il dolore,
che il vederti lagrimare
fa tremar lo spirto e il piè.*

Dear betrothed, beloved treasure,
take hope
that irate heaven will not always
turn its scorn on me.

Banish, oh God, from a noble heart
sorrow,
because seeing you weep
makes me tremble in my spirit and at my feet.

(from *Radamisto*, HWV 12, Act I)

countertenor **Matthew Truss**

Scene 4

Angelica meets with Theseus to see if she has made any progress.

*Angelica becomes suspicious of Theseus' loyalties
and Theseus reassures her of her qualifications and her commitment to help the family.*

*Nel pagnar col mostro infido
la pietà del patrio lido
forza accresce al mio valor.*

To fight the evil monster
compassion for my native shores
increasingly strengthens my valor.

*Dura è l'opra,
e il gran periglio
arte chiede,
e vuol consiglio,
non per guida un cieco amor.*

Weighty is the work
and the peril is great
art is required,
and demands counsel,
not to be guided by a blind love.

(from Arianna in Creta, HWV 32, Act I)

mezzo-soprano **Jessica Bowers**

Scene 5

*Angelica is unconvinced of Theseus' dedication, and reminds her that she is her client.
She demands that Theseus take her side in the family's affairs.*

*Se fedel vuoi ch'io ti creda,
fà che veda
la tua fedeltà.*

If you want to make me believe that you are loyal,
make me see
your fidelity.

*Finchè regni nel mio petto
il sospetto,
mai l'amor vi regnerà.*

As long as suspicion reigns in my breast
love will never reign in it.

(from *Orlando*, HWV 31, Act I)

soprano **Amelia Watkins**

Scene 6

*Theseus is conflicted: her plans to reconcile the family seem to be failing,
yet she believes Angelica has good intentions.*

Sinfonia

(from *Ezio*, HWV 29, Act III)

Scene 7

*Radamisto returns to tell Theseus more about his broken heart,
yet she is distracted by her own feelings of hopelessness.*

THESEUS: *Son nata a lagrimar,
RADAMISTO: Son nato a sospirar,
e il dolce mio conforto,
ah, sempre piangerò.*

*Se il fato ci tradì,
sereno e lieto di
mai più sperar potrò.*

THESEUS: I was born to weep,
RADAMISTO: I was born to sigh,
and the sweet comfort,
ah, is always to cry.

If fate has betrayed us,
never again can I hope
for a serene and happy day.

(from Giulio Cesare, HWV 17, Act I)

countertenor **Matthew Truss**
mezzo-soprano **Jessica Bowers**

Scene 8

Dorinda interrupts a meeting between Angelica and Theseus, and realizes that they have been conspiring together. Theseus attempts to reassure Dorinda that she will resolve everyone's conflicts, but Angelica mocks her and tells her to pursue someone other than Radamisto.

THESEUS: *Consolati, oh bella,*
ANGELICA: *Gentil pastorella,*
ch'al fine il tuo core
è degno d'amore
e amor troverà!

DORINDA: *Non sò consolarmi,*
non voglio sperare,
più Amor non può darmi
l'oggetto d'amare
che perder mi farà!

ANGELICA: *Non perder la spene,*
ch'è l'unico bene!

THESEUS: *Hai l'alma costante,*
per esser amante!

DORINDA: *Nò, solo frà pene*
il cor viverà.

THESEUS: Console yourself, oh beautiful,
ANGELICA: Gentle shepherdess,
that at last your heart
is worthy of love
and will find love!

DORINDA: I don't know how to console myself,
I don't want to hope,
Love can no longer give me
the object of love
that made me lose myself!

ANGELICA: Don't lose hope,
that is the singular goodness!

THESEUS: You have a faithful soul,
to be loved!

DORINDA: No, only amidst suffering
will my heart live.

(from *Orlando*, HWV 31, Act I)

soprano **Jennifer Roberts Jenkins**

soprano **Amelia Watkins**

mezzo-soprano **Jessica Bowers**

Scene 9

Angelica decides to secretly observe the rest of Theseus' sessions with her family.

*Bajazet returns, newly resolved to commit suicide;
hoping Angelica will finally understand how unhappy he is.*

*A suoi piedi padre esangue
la superba mi vedrà.*

At her feet, her exhausted father,
the proud woman will see me.

*Se non hà del mio sdegno
e del mio sangue
o timor, o almen pietà.*

If she doesn't hold fear or at least pity
for my scorn and for my blood.

(from *Tamerlano*, HWV 18, Act I)

baritone **Michael Weyandt**

Scene 10

*Resigned to the disapproval of Radamisto's family,
Dorinda tells Theseus that she plans to elope with him and escape the Flatiron.*

*Nasconde l'usignol' in alti rami il nido
al serpe e al cacciator;
ma il volo spesso è fido
dove lo porta amor;
che il può tradir non sà.*

*Lontano, sì, ma in pene,
quest'alma dal suo bene
più l'arte ingannerà.*

The nightingale hides its nest in high branches
from the serpent and from the hunter,
but the frequent and faithful flight
where it carries love;
it doesn't know that it betrays itself.

Far away, but in pain,
this soul of its love
will deceive more craftily.

(from Deidamia, HWV 42, Act I)

soprano **Jennifer Roberts Jenkins**

Scene 11

Varo muses on social mobility.

*Though less wealthy, Dorinda seems to have the most control over her happiness,
while Bajazet's family members are more likely to be victims of fate.*

*Nasce al bosco in rozza cuna
un felice pastorello,
e con l'aure di fortuna
giunge i regni a dominar.*

Born of the forest in a crude cradle
a happy shepherd,
and with fortune's breezes
comes the power to dominate.

*Presso al trono in regie fasce
sventurato un altro nasce,
e fra l'ire della sorte
và gli armenti a pascolar.*

Near the throne, swaddled in regal cloth
another is born unfortunate,
and amidst the ire of fate
go the flocks to graze.

(from *Ezio*, HWV 29, Act II)

bass **Cory Clines**

Scene 12

*When Bajazet tells Radamisto of his plans to commit suicide,
Radamisto resolves to exact revenge on Angelica and her husband.*

*Ferite, uccidete,
oh numi del ciel!
quel empio tiranno,
che forza a penare il misero cor.*

*Vendetta voi fate sul empio crudel,
mà poi diffendete
la giusta cagione dal aspro rigor.*

Wound them, kill them,
oh gods of heaven!
this villainous tyrant,
that forces pain on a miserable heart.

You take revenge on the cruel villains,
but then you defend
the just cause from harsh rigor.

(from *Radamisto*, HWV 12, Act I)

countertenor **Matthew Truss**

Scene 13

Having seen her family's anguish, Angelica is overcome with emotion and turns to Theseus for comfort.

*Non potrà dirmi ingrata,
perchè restai piagata
da un così vago stral.*

He won't be able to call me ungrateful,
because I remained wounded
by such a lovely dart.

*Se, quando amor l'offese,
ei pur mal si difese
dall'arco suo fatal.*

For when love offended him,
he badly defended himself
from such a fatal blow.

(from *Orlando*, HWV 31, Act II)

soprano **Amelia Watkins**

Scene 13, *scena ultima*

*Theseus has Varo bring in the entire family and Dorinda,
helping them come together over promises of a brighter future.*

*Bella sorge la speranza lusinghiera
nel mio seno, nè fallace o menzognera
più la crede il fido cor.*

*Già la calma
io spero all'alma
nè funesta
ria tempesta
più rinnova il mio timor, il mio dolor.*

Now a flattering hope rises beautifully
in my breast, neither fallacy nor lies
will my faithful heart believe any longer.

Already I feel a calmness
in my soul
no fatal tempest
will renew my fears,
my sorrow.

(from Arianna in Creta, HWV 32, Act III)

soprano **Jessica Bowers**

CORO

*Bella sorge la speranza lusinghiera
al nostro seno, nè fallace o menzognera
più la crede il nostro cor,
già la calma habbian nell'alma,
nè funesta
ria tempesta,
più non teme il nostro amor.*

Now a flattering hope rises beautifully
in our breasts, neither fallacy nor lies
will our hearts believe any longer,
already we have calmness in our souls,
no fatal tempest
will threaten our love.

(from Arianna in Creta, HWV 32, Act III)

Thank you for attending
53rd Street Handel

This evening's program was curated by Jennifer Peterson and Jordan Rutter.

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