



Stephen Hargreaves & Jonathan Patterson
Co-directeurs par interim des études d'opéra
Co-Acting Directors of Opera Studies

ARIODANTE

G.F. HANDEL

A stylized, three-dimensional archway graphic in shades of grey and white, positioned behind the letter 'D' in the title "ARIODANTE".

Bienvenue à la 61^e saison de l'Opéra McGill!

Après la folie du Festival B!NGE de mars dernier, avec sept opéras en 24 heures dans cinq endroits différents sur le campus de McGill et à l'extérieur, je suis convaincu que tout le monde envisage avec enthousiasme la saison 2017-2018 qui ne présentera que huit (8) opéras! Cet automne, le remarquable Jonathan Patterson et le non moins remarquable Stephen Hargreaves ont accepté de me remplacer temporairement comme co-directeur par intérim des études d'opéra pendant mon année sabbatique. À tous les deux, mes sincères remerciements d'avoir pris les choses en main pour le semestre !

Au programme, quatre opéras complets (*Ariodante* de Haendel, *Lucia di Lammermoor* de Donizetti, *Dialogues des Carmélites* de Poulenc et *Candide* de Bernstein), trois opéras en un acte (faisant partie du nouveau *Proje(c)t Horizons* d'Opéra McGill) et, en complément de saison, un cycle de mélodies mises en scène pour deux chanteurs et un piano à quatre mains (*Arias and Barcarolles* de Bernstein).

D'abord, je me réjouis de voir la quantité d'œuvres dramatiques que nos étudiants pourront explorer, apprendre, répéter, étudier, écouter et interpréter !

Les formidables collaborateurs qui les accompagneront comprennent trois anciens artistes en résidence, une autre initiative nouvelle visant à relier ceux qui sont récemment sortis d'Opéra McGill aux étudiants actuels, dans l'esprit d'un réseau de mentorat. Aria Umezawa revient de l'Opéra de San Francisco, où elle est boursière de l'*Adler Fellowship*, pour mettre en scène *Ariodante*; Jennifer Szeto (du même programme) agira comme répétitrice en résidence cet hiver et la soprano Jacqueline Woodley (qui chante régulièrement avec la *Canadian Opera Company*) dirigera des sessions spéciales de mentorat auprès de nos finissants. De plus, le très talentueux Boris Brott, ancien assistant de Bernstein, sera de retour pour diriger *Candide* : l'Orchestre de chambre McGill sera dans la fosse.

Vous ne voudrez pas manquer les événements suivants : le 26 novembre au studio d'opéra Wirth, présentation de trois œuvres en un acte produites entièrement par des étudiants de Schulich dans le cadre du *Proje(c)t Horizons*; le 24 mars, notre spécial « mini-B!NGE » comprendra une seule exécution de *Dialogues des Carmélites*, mis en scène par votre dévoué serviteur (également auteur de la réduction pour piano); une conférence en matinée sur l'opéra dans les années 1950; enfin, un cycle de mélodies de Bernstein pour mezzo, baryton et deux pianistes en version concert (par Russell Wustenberg, ancien d'Opéra McGill). Comme par les années passées, les professeurs Stephen Hargreaves et Hank Knox assureront la direction musicale respectivement de Donizetti et de Haendel. À titre de metteur en scène des opéras de Donizetti, Poulenc et Bernstein, je collaborerai avec la solide équipe de concepteurs formée de Vincent Lefèvre, Ginette Grenier, Serge Filiatrault et Florence Cornet.

En somme, toute une saison en perspective. Soyez présents pour apprécier l'immense talent de nos étudiants : bienvenue à tous!

Patrick Hansen

Directeur de l'Opéra McGill et directeur des études d'opéra

Welcome to Opera McGill's 61st season!

After the craziness of last March's BINGE Festival performing seven operas in twenty-four hours in five different venues on and off McGill's campus, I'm sure everyone involved is looking forward to this season of just eight (8!) operas. This Fall, the amazing Jonathan Patterson and equally amazing Stephen Hargreaves have agreed to fill in for me as Co-Acting Directors of Opera Studies while I am on sabbatical. A hearty thanks for their leadership during this semester!

This season, we are presenting four complete operas (Handel's *Ariodante*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Bernstein's *Candide*), three one-act operas (part of Opera McGill's new initiative *Proje(c)t Horizons*), and a staged song cycle for two singers and four hands (Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles*) to complete our season.

I, for one, am thrilled at the amount of opera our students are getting to explore, learn, rehearse, research, watch, and perform!

The amazing collaborators our students will be working with include three alumni Artists-In-Residence, again a new initiative that seeks to connect recent Opera McGill alumni with the current students in order to create a network of mentorship. Aria Umezawa returns from her prestigious Adler fellowship at the San Francisco Opera to direct *Ariodante*, Jennifer Szeto (also an Adler Fellow) returns as a guest coach in residence this winter, and soprano Jacqueline Woodley (who sings regularly with the Canadian Opera Company) returns to lead special mentoring sessions with our exiting graduate students. In addition, the wonderfully talented, and former Bernstein assistant, Boris Brott returns to conduct our students in performances of *Candide* with his McGill Chamber Orchestra in the pit.

You'll also not want to miss the *Proje(c)t Horizons* performances of three one-acts produced entirely by students here at Schulich on November 26th in Wirth Opera Studio, or our special "mini-BINGE" on March 24th that will include a one-time only performance of *Dialogues des Carmélites* staged by yours truly (as well as providing the orchestral reduction on the piano), a morning lecture on opera in the 1950s, and a staged version (by Opera McGill alumnus Russell Wustenberg) of Bernstein's song cycle for mezzo, baritone, and two pianists. As has been the case for the last number of years, McGill professors Stephen Hargreaves and Hank Knox will musically direct the Donizetti and Handel, respectively, and I will collaborate with our amazing team of designers, Vincent Lefèvre, Ginette Grenier, Serge Filiatrault, and Florence Cornet, as stage director for the Donizetti, Poulenc, and Bernstein operas.

All in all, quite a season. Welcome and enjoy our incredibly talented students!

Patrick Hansen

Director of Opera McGill & Opera Studies

Les 9, 10 et 11 novembre 2017
à 19 h 30

November 9-11, 2017
at 7:30 p.m.

Opéra McGill

Stephen Hargreaves, répétiteur principal, co-directeur par intérim des études d'opéra /
Principal Coach, Co-Acting Director of Opera Studies

Jonathan Patterson, co-directeur par intérim des études d'opéra /
Co-Acting Director of Opera Studies

Ariodante

George Frideric Handel
(1685 - 1759)

Orchestre baroque de McGill / McGill Baroque Orchestra

Hank Knox, chef / conductor

Aria Umezawa, metteure en scène / stage director

Vincent Lefèvre, décors / set design

Ginette Grenier costumes / costume design

Serge Filiatrault, éclairages / lighting design

Florence Cornet, maquillages / makeup

Ariodante est dédié à Valérie Kinslow pour ses nombreuses années de coaching, d'enseignement, et de soutien aux départements de musique ancienne et de chant à l'École de musique Schulich

Ariodante is dedicated to Valerie Kinslow for her many years of teaching, coaching, and support in the Early Music and Voice areas here at the Schulich School of Music

Distribution / Cast

	<i>9 / 11 novembre</i>	<i>10 novembre</i>	<i>doublures / cover</i>
Ariodante	Veronica Pollicino	Sarah Bissonnette	Mikayla Jensen-Large
Ginevra	Christine Jay	Élodie Bouchard	Sarah Dufresne
Dalinda	Jacoba Barber-Rozema	Nicole Burke	Laura Fishman
Polinesso	Nicholas Burns	James Brown	Olivier Benoît
Lurcanio	Patrick McGill	Patrick McGill	Alexander Cappellazzo
Odoardo	Zachary Rubens	Zachary Rubens	Alexander Cappellazzo
Roi d'Écosse / King of Scotland	Jean-Philippe Mc Clish	Cesar Naassy	Jean-Philippe Lupien

chœur / chorus

Olivier Benoît, Alexander Cappellazzo, Sarah Dufresne, Laura Fishman, Mikayla Jensen-Large, Jean-Philippe Lupien

danseurs / dancers

Flordespina Dodds, Larissa Godin, Maureen Leaman, Leslie Maiden, Elyse Rondeau

Orchestre baroque de McGill / McGill Baroque Orchestra

Hank Knox, *chef / conductor*

violons baroques / baroque violin

Marie Nadeau-Tremblay
Elise Paradis
Tomo Newton

Frédéric-Alexandre Michaud
Isabelle Douailly-Backman
Rebecca Ruthven
Alexandra LaPerrière

altos baroques / baroque viola

Tatiana Friesen
Hannah LaGassey
Heather Weinreb

violoncelles baroques / baroque cello

Nicholas Loucks
Kiersten Fage
Eliana Zimmerman

contrebasse / double bass

Shanti Nachtergaele

trompettes / trumpet

Christopher Price
Duncan Campbell

cors naturel / natural horn

Dan Nesca
Christopher Price

hautbois baroques / baroque oboe

Joel Verkaik
Floris van Vugt

basson baroque / baroque bassoon

Aaron Goler

archilute et guitare baroque / archlute & baroque guitar

Jonathan Stuchbery

clavecins / harpsichord

Qiao Chu
Justin Luchinski
Sébastien Mitra
Poppy Kipfer

Notes du metteur en scène

Il me semble parfois que mon existence est aussi fragile qu'une porcelaine. Peu de temps avant mon arrivée à Montréal pour la production d'*Ariodante*, je marchais vers l'Opéra de San Francisco pour mon travail et j'entendais passer des avions à réaction au-dessus de ma tête. C'était la même semaine que la tuerie à Las Vegas. Moins d'un mois après que la Corée du Nord eut lancé son second missile au-dessus du Japon. À peine deux mois depuis les manifestations en Virginie. J'entendais donc des avions et, dans un premier réflexe, j'ai cru que nous subissions une attaque.

Cette pensée a duré moins d'une seconde, et je l'ai vite chassée parce que je la trouvais ridicule. Effectivement, quelques minutes plus tard, je recevais un courriel d'information de la maison d'opéra : c'était la Semaine de la flotte à San Francisco et les *Blue Angels* (escadron responsable des vols de démonstration de la marine américaine) offraient des spectacles aériens pour le public. J'étais soulagée, mais le fait d'avoir songé un instant à me préparer pour une attaque m'a néanmoins laissée perplexe.

Compte tenu du climat politique actuel, j'imagine que beaucoup de gens partagent mon sentiment. C'est comme si nous attendions un seul événement déclencheur – une attaque terroriste, un tweet malveillant, une fausse accusation d'adultère – et toute la planète sera détruite.

Aussi rationnels et éclairés que nous croyions être, nous ne pouvons nier l'existence de nos émotions, lesquelles nous entraînent à agir de manière irrationnelle. En ce sens, le conflit interne qui sévit dans *Ariodante* semble encore plus adapté aux temps modernes qu'au XVIII^e siècle.

Le droit écossais était régi par la croyance selon laquelle les individus étaient fondamentalement justes et que, grâce à leur faculté d'introspection et de réflexion rationnelle, les communautés seraient naturellement portées à agir en toute justice. Pourtant, il suffit d'une seule ligne de récitatif pour convaincre Ariodante que Ginevra l'a trahi, et un père que sa fille est indigne... Ginevra n'a pas la chance de se défendre d'un crime passible de la peine de mort. Aujourd'hui, il est facile d'y voir une faiblesse de l'opéra et de contester la manière expéditive dont les personnages tranchent le conflit, tout en reconnaissant que s'ils avaient soulevé ces questions complexes, ils auraient mis en péril leur existence de plus en plus fragile.

Sans doute convient-il de contextualiser *Ariodante* en l'opposant à notre vision du monde postérieure aux Lumières. L'œuvre évoque la fragilité de ce monde et la crainte qu'il puisse s'embraser à tout moment. Elle exprime notre besoin d'espérer – à l'instar de certains philosophes écossais des Lumières – que dans l'éventualité d'un désastre, l'humanité affrontera la tempête et, grâce à sa faculté d'introspection, verra l'avènement d'une société plus juste.

-- Aria Umezawa

Synopsis

Act I

Au début d'*Ariodante*, Ginevra, princesse d'Écosse, se prépare pour la journée, se revêtant de ses plus beaux atours pour impressionner Ariodante à qui elle espère être fiancée. Sa servante, Dalinda, lui demande si son père, le roi d'Écosse, approuve cette union, et Ginevra admet qu'il en a attisé la flamme. C'est alors qu'un personnage obséquieux, Polinesso, entre dans la chambre de Ginevra et lui confesse son amour. Celle-ci le rejette avec fermeté et se retire. Dalinda, révélant sa propre attirance pour Polinesso, lui explique qu'il rivalise avec Ariodante pour obtenir la main de Ginevra. Polinesso séduit la servante et l'entraîne dans un complot qui vise à tromper Ariodante pour mieux gagner les faveurs de Ginevra.

Ginevra et Ariodante, loin des machinations de Polinesso, se déclarent leur amour. Le roi les surprend dans ce moment d'intimité et, avec un rire comme seul un parent peut en émettre, il consolide leur union et ordonne que la nouvelle se répande à la grandeur du royaume. Tandis que tout le monde est centré sur le bonheur du couple, Polinesso manipule Dalinda en lui laissant croire qu'il la désire ardemment. Lurcanio, frère d'Ariodante, gagné par l'esprit ambiant, confesse à son tour son amour à Dalinda qui le repousse froidement. Une fête marque la promesse d'engagement entre Ariodante et Ginevra.

entracte

Act II

Plus tard, prenant Ariodante à part, Polinesso lui exprime sa surprise que la main de Ginevra lui soit accordée alors que lui, Polinesso, était déjà l'amant de Ginevra. Pour ajouter à la supercherie, il invite Ariodante à assister à une scène où Ginevra (en réalité Dalinda déguisée) se comporte comme sa maîtresse et l'accueille dans sa chambre. Terrassé par la douleur, Ariodante forme le projet de se suicider, mais Lurcanio sort de l'ombre – où il s'était caché pendant tout ce tableau – et il le convainc plutôt d'exercer sa vengeance. Ariodante se retire, anéanti. Polinesso réapparaît, satisfait dans sa vilénie.

Alors que le roi finalise les préparatifs pour le mariage, Odoardo, un courtisan, l'informe qu'Ariodante s'est jeté à la mer. Ginevra entre dans la pièce avec le pressentiment que quelque chose de grave vient d'arriver. Quand elle apprend la nouvelle, elle s'évanouit. Lurcanio surgit et, dans sa fureur, il révèle ce dont il a été témoin la veille. Le roi renie sa fille pour son inconduite sexuelle et la condamne à la peine de mort.

entracte

Act III

Ariodante, qui s'était réellement jeté à la mer, injurie tous les dieux d'avoir permis qu'il soit encore en vie. Il entend des cris de détresse, puis il trouve Dalinda poursuivie par des hommes mandatés par Polinesso pour assassiner la jeune femme. Il réussit à les écarter et Dalinda dévoile la vérité sur le complot monté contre lui.

Au moment où le roi se prépare à l'exécution de sa fille, Odoardo le supplie de faire preuve de clémence en autorisant quelqu'un à rétablir l'honneur de Ginevra. Polinesso arrive et se pose comme son défenseur. Ginevra entre, dévastée par sa condamnation, et demande la permission à son père de lui baiser la main. Celui-ci l'étreint sur sa poitrine, regrettant amèrement de devoir lui donner la mort si aucun chevalier ne vient défendre son honneur.

Un duel s'engage entre Lurcanio et Polinesso, lequel est blessé dès le début. Lurcanio en appelle d'autres à prendre la relève. Le roi lui-même s'apprête à s'avancer quand Ariodante, déguisé jusque-là, enlève son casque et révèle son identité de même que le complot de Polinesso. Dalinda se présente pour l'appuyer et Odoardo recueille l'aveu de culpabilité de Polinesso juste avant qu'il expire.

Ginevra, toujours dans sa cellule, se sent encore suspendue entre la vie et la mort. Ariodante fait irruption, suivi de tous les courtisans en fête. Les amants sont réunis de nouveau, Dalinda et Lurcanio proclament leur amour et tous célèbrent le triomphe de l'honneur et de la vertu sur la convoitise et l'ambition.

Synopsis rédigé par Russell Wustenberg

Traduction : © Le Trait juste

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Biographies

Hank Knox

Reconnu pour ses « prestations dynamiques et hautes en couleur », le claveciniste Hank Knox se produit dans les salles de concert, les églises, les musées, les galeries d'art et les résidences privées un peu partout sur le globe. Membre fondateur d'Arion Orchestre Baroque, il a effectué des tournées en Europe, au Japon et en Amérique du Nord et du Sud en plus d'avoir joué et enregistré avec Tafelmusik, Les Violons du Roy et l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. Convaincu de la nécessité de partager avec le public la sonorité exceptionnelle tant de clavecins anciens que de répliques d'instruments historiques, Hank Knox compte à son actif plusieurs enregistrements – tous louangés par la critique – sur des instruments d'époque très rares : ainsi, il a fait paraître deux séries de pièces pour clavier de Frescobaldi enregistrées sur un clavecin italien de 1677, de même que des œuvres de d'Anglebert sur la copie d'un clavicythérium, ou clavecin vertical. Il a aussi endisqué des transcriptions d'arias et d'ouvertures d'opéras de Haendel sur trois clavecins historiques de la collection de la Fenton House, à Londres, et des transcriptions d'œuvres de Geminiani sur un instrument Kirkman datant de environ 1772. Son plus récent CD, un récital consacré à J. S. Bach, est sorti en septembre 2013. Directeur du programme de musique ancienne à l'Université McGill, Hank Knox est à la tête de l'Orchestre baroque de McGill; à ce titre, il a dirigé un bon nombre d'opéras, dont *Dido and Aeneas* de Purcell, *Thésée* de Lully, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* de Monteverdi ainsi que *Giulio Cesare*, *Agrippina*, *Alcina* et *Rinaldo* de Haendel.

Aria Umezawa

Aria Umezawa est directrice artistique de la maison d'opéra indépendante Opera 5, établie à Toronto, et la conceptrice, directrice et auteure de la série *Web Opera Cheats*. Comme boursière de l'*Adler Fellowship*, elle en est à sa première année à l'Opéra de San Francisco – elle est d'ailleurs la première en quinze ans à avoir obtenu cette récompense pour se perfectionner dans la mise en scène. En 2016, elle a été choisie pour participer au programme *Merola Apprentice Stage Director*. Son travail dans le cadre du grand concert final a été salué par le *San Francisco Chronicle* : « Samedi soir à la *War Memorial Opera House*, Aria Umezawa a fait preuve d'une élégance, d'une verve et d'une pure imagination théâtrale comme je n'en ai jamais vues depuis des décennies. Cette jeune artiste canadienne [...] a dirigé ses collègues stagiaires avec l'habileté d'un maître d'expérience. » En décembre prochain, elle dirigera *The Future Is Now : Adler Fellows Concert*.

Aria Umezawa a réalisé bon nombre de mises en scène cette année : *Hamlet* d'Ambroise Thomas pour le *West Edge Opera*; les *ChamberWORKS* et le *SF OPERA LAB POP-UP : Oakland Edition!* pour l'*OPERA LAB* de San Francisco; également, le gala du 60^e anniversaire du *Merola Opera Program*. Comme metteuse en scène de *La voix humaine* de Poulenc, elle a remporté le prix 2013 du Cercle des critiques de la capitale à l'*Ottawa Fringe Festival*. Au même titre, elle a dirigé la première canadienne de plusieurs œuvres, dont *Talk Opera* du compositeur Milton Granger, établi à New York, et *Storybook* de Darren Russo, ainsi que la première nord-américaine d'*Artemisia* de Cavalli à l'*Helios Opera* de Boston. Des publications électroniques et imprimées, tels le *San Francisco Classical Voice*, le *Boston Globe*, le *Boston Phoenix* et le *Barcza Blog* de Toronto, ont fait l'éloge de son style visuel irrévérencieux, postmoderne, impressionnant et décalé. Le *Metro News*, le *Jezebel* et le *Huffington Post*, ainsi que les médias sociaux et les maisons d'opéra nord-américaines ont aussi assuré une belle visibilité à son travail. Elle est également diplômée de l'École de musique Schulich.

Patrick Hansen

Patrick Hansen poursuit sa carrière exceptionnelle partout en Amérique du Nord à titre de chef d'opéra, répétiteur et metteur en scène. Il est présentement directeur des études d'opéra à l'École de musique Schulich de l'Université McGill à Montréal, au Québec.

Pour sa direction du chef-d'œuvre de l'opéra *Bluebeard's Castle* de Bartok, la critique Anthony Tommasini du *New York Times* a louangé « son rythme souple et ses couleurs vives », tandis que Martin Bernheimer, critique du *Financial Times* et gagnant du prix Pulitzer, a écrit que « Hansen a respecté l'équilibre délicat entre la passion et l'introspection. Il a transposé une grande partie de l'essai épique de Bartók en de l'angoisse psychosexuelle. » David Patrick Stearns du *Philadelphia Inquirer* a souligné que « Hansen a révélé un autre côté de la partition : trait après trait de caractérisation musicale qui est souvent masquée par une couleur orchestrale éclatante, dessinant avec adresse l'oreille dans le cœur assombri des deux personnages ».

Ses mises en scène lui ont valu des éloges tant au Canada qu'aux États-Unis : « Le chef Patrick Hansen... a réussi à saisir toute l'âme de *La Bohème* et à évoquer – ce que, malheureusement, peu de metteurs en scène ont réussi – Paris

comme toile de fond riche en personnages. Lorsqu'il n'y a plus eu de place sur scène pour la foule durant l'acte II, celle-ci est simplement descendue dans la salle... le volet comique était réussi... Le jeu des artistes a été solide tout au long de l'opéra. » - Wayne Gooding, *Opera Canada*. « Dès que le rideau s'est fermé sur la plus récente œuvre présentée par l'Opéra McGill, jouée vendredi, j'ai tout de suite voulu la revoir. La distribution des huit chanteurs était bonne. Le chef Patrick Hansen a su faire ressortir l'aspect dramatique. Le viol [de Lucrèce] comportait une scène de lutte étrusco-romaine ainsi qu'un lumineux effet de théâtre : une vive lumière s'allume et Tarquin, laissant soudainement tomber sa robe, devient pur animal, judicieuse idée. » - Arthur Kaptainis, *The Montreal Gazette*.

M. Hansen a fait partie du personnel de musique du *Lyric Opera of Chicago*, du *Pittsburgh Opera*, du *Tulsa Opera*, de l'*Opera Memphis*, du *Des Moines Metro Opera*, de l'*Ash Lawn Opera*, du *Juilliard Opera Center* et du *Glimmerglass Opera*. Il a également agi à titre de directeur artistique du *Florida Grand Opera* lors de l'ouverture du Centre des arts situé au centre-ville de Miami, projet d'une valeur d'un demi-milliard de dollars.

M. Hansen est récemment revenu au *Kennedy Center* pour sa quatrième collaboration en tant que metteur en scène avec le *Essential Verdi* du *Washington Chorus*. Au cours des dernières années, il a réalisé la mise en scène de *Die Fledermaus* à deux reprises (*Opera 5* et Opéra McGill), il est apparu en tant que pianiste dans un concert de chansons et de scènes de Shakespeare au *Toronto Music Festival* et il a réalisé la mise en scène de *Die Fledermaus*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Alcina*, *The Impresario*, *Le château de Barbe-Bleue*, *Sid the Serpent*, la création nord-américaine de *East O 'the Sun West O ' the Moon* de Garner, *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, et un nouvel opéra de Garner / Hansen, *Much Ado*, à Londres, Angleterre. Cette année il sera metteur en scène de *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Candide*, *Dialogues des Carmélites* et la création bulgare de *Street Scene*.

Stephen Hargreaves

Dans un monde de plus en plus spécialisé, Stephen Hargreaves se considère très chanceux de pouvoir diviser ses aptitudes musicales de plusieurs manières. Lorsque sa mère a remarqué qu'il avait un trouble d'élocution tandis qu'il commençait à parler, on lui a fait porter subséquemment des ensembles d'aérateurs transtympaniques à 11 reprises. Dès le moment qu'il a pu entendre clairement, il est tombé amoureux avec le son et la musique sous toutes leurs formes. Formé comme pianiste solo et corniste, Hargreaves a fréquenté l'*Indiana University* où il a étudié avec Myron Bloom tout en perfectionnant son jeu pianistique. C'est là qu'il fait la rencontre de Martina Arroyo qui lui inculque son amour du répertoire vocal et, par la suite, de l'opéra. Les débuts professionnels de Hargreaves se réalisent très tôt, lui permettant de payer ses études universitaires en tant que pianiste accompagnateur et écoutant sa dernière année pour lui permettre d'agir à titre de répétiteur et chef adjoint. S'ensuit pendant 15 ans une série d'engagements professionnels, dont des concertos solos, tels que le 2^e de Brahms et le 3^e de Rachmaninoff, de la musique de chambre en collaboration avec des instrumentistes et chanteurs, de nombreux récitals solos et des rôles de chef, chef adjoint et clavecin continu pour des compagnies d'opéra régionales et internationales, cumulant plus de 100 productions uniques avant l'âge de 40 ans. Hargreaves adore les défis et défend la virtuosité autant dans la musique ancienne que dans les nouvelles œuvres qui font reculer les frontières musicales et artistiques. À cet égard, il a toujours cru en l'importance et au besoin de cultiver l'amour de la musique chez les autres et d'instiguer ceux qui s'adonnent à la musique avec la plus grande passion et la défendent au plus haut niveau à se perfectionner davantage. Il est ravi d'être professeur à l'Université McGill et espère pouvoir partager ses connaissances et inspirer son entourage à devenir la nouvelle génération de musiciens la plus accomplie.

Hargreaves a dirigé à l'*Opera Theater*, à l'*Opera Omaha*, au *Lyric Opera of Kansas City*, au *Glimmerglass Festival*, au Festival lyrique de Belle-Île-en-Mer, au *Pine Mountain Opera* et a assisté de nombreux chefs dont Steuart Bedford, Harry Bicket, Jane Glover, Emmanuelle Haïm, Stephen Lord, Alan Gilbert, Julius Rudel, Nader Abbassi et Rinaldo Alessandrini. Hargreaves a également travaillé comme répétiteur vocal et chef assistant pour le *Washington National Opera*, la *Canadian Opera Company*, au *Santa Fe Opera*, l'*Utah Opera*, le *Dallas Opera* et *Light Opera Works*.

Jonathan Patterson

Établi à Montréal, Jonathan Patterson est un artiste multidisciplinaire qui œuvre dans les domaines du théâtre, de l'opéra et de la comédie musicale. Ses récentes réalisations comprennent : *Le portrait de Manon*, *L'heure espagnole*, *Speed Dating Tonight!* (Opéra McGill, directeur); *Million Dollar Quartet* (*Sudbury Theatre Centre/Thousand Islands Playhouse*, rôle de Sam Phillips et directeur musical); *Last Night at the Gayety* (au *Centaur Theatre*, chorégraphe); *The Producers* (le Centre Segal des arts de la scène, rôle de Roger DeBris et chorégraphe); *Bluenose* (*Black Theatre Workshop*, chorégraphe); *Into*

the Woods, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Académie du Centre Segal, directeur); *A Song of Fiction* (*Kaleidoscope Theatre Montreal*, rôle de Jesse et chorégraphe de danses à claquettes). Dans la présente saison, Jonathan dirigera les productions de *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, *Xanadu* et *Captain Aurora : A Superhero Musical*. Il signe aussi des chorégraphies pour la collecte de fonds annuelle du Centre Segal et pour l'ensemble primé *Lyric Theatre Singers*.

À titre de spécialiste des arts de la scène, Jonathan fait partie du personnel enseignant de l'École de musique Schulich depuis 2010, servant actuellement de co-directeur par intérim des études d'opéra, un poste qu'il occupait en 2014-2015. Il donne aussi des cours de théâtre musical à la *St. George's School of Montreal* et à l'Académie du Centre Segal, en plus d'offrir de nombreux cours particuliers à son studio privé. En janvier, il a été désigné par le journal *The Gazette* de Montréal comme l'artiste de théâtre à surveiller en 2017 pour son travail tant comme acteur que comme chorégraphe.

Florence Cornet

Depuis plus de 25 ans Florence pratique et enseigne le maquillage de scène. Elle travaille depuis ses débuts professionnels dans l'univers du théâtre et de la scène et a également travaillé à la télévision et au cinéma pendant une quinzaine d'années. Elle a enseigné dans plusieurs écoles de théâtre dont, ces dernières années, à l'École nationale de théâtre du Canada, ainsi qu'à l'École nationale de cirque du Canada situées à Montréal.

Scène, télévision, cinéma l'ont également amenée vers le cirque, elle a conçu les maquillages pour 2 spectacles au Cirque du Soleil : *Koöza* et *Michael Jackson immortal tour*. Sa première collaboration avec Opéra McGill a été *Rinaldo* à l'automne 2012. On a pu voir son travail au TNM dans *Le Roi se meurt*, dans *Petite vérité inventée* à la Maison théâtre et dans *Survivre* au théâtre de Quat'sous.

Serge Filiatrault

Diplômé de la section de production de l'École nationale de théâtre du Canada, Serge Filiatrault a travaillé sous différents angles dans le milieu du spectacle depuis déjà plus de quinze ans. Que ce soit à titre d'éclairagiste pour le Festival international de jazz de Montréal ou dans diverses autres fonctions, il s'avère toujours une clef importante pour la réussite d'un spectacle.

Ginette Grenier

Diplômée de l'École Nationale de Théâtre du Canada, Ginette Grenier a conçu de nombreux costumes et décors pour le théâtre, la danse et le cinéma. Avec plus de 70 conceptions à son actif, sept de ses productions ont été mises en nomination au "Gala des Masques" ainsi qu'un Prix Opus pour *Marisol et Rémi sur les chemins de la nuit* avec l'OSM. Pour Opéra McGill elle a conçu les costumes de *Radamisto*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Thésée*, *The Rake's Progress*, *La Bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, *Volpone*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pygmalion*, *Venus et Adonis*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Little Women*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Rodelinda*, *Die Fledermaus*. et *The BINGE Opera Festival*.

Vincent Lefèvre

Diplômé en Arts Appliqués à Strasbourg en France, Vincent Lefèvre a fini ses études en scénographie à l'École nationale de Théâtre du Canada en 1997. Il a signé plus d'une centaine de conceptions de décors et costumes en théâtre, danse ainsi qu'en opéra. Ses réalisations avec Opéra McGill incluent *Don Giovanni*, *Idomeneo*, *Louis Riel*, ainsi que les productions *Albert Herring*, *Così fan tutte*, *Alcina*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Volpone*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pygmalion*, *Venus et Adonis*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Little Women*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Rodelinda*, *Die Fledermaus*. et *The BINGE Opera Festival*. Plusieurs des productions auxquelles Vincent a participé ont été mises en nomination : *Louis Riel* avec Opéra McGill et *Marisol et Rémi sur les chemins de la nuit* avec l'OSM ont reçu un Prix Opus, *The Caretaker* au Centaur en 2007 en nomination pour le décor par les MECCAs.

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Director's Notes

Sometimes it seems to me that the reality I occupy is as fragile as a piece of glass. Not long before I arrived in Montreal for this production, I was walking to work at the San Francisco Opera, and I heard jets flying overhead. This was the same week as the shooting in Las Vegas. Less than a month after North Korea launched its second missile over Japan. Barely two months since the protests in Virginia. I heard those jets, and my first instinct was that we were under attack.

The thought lasted less than a second, and I quickly dismissed it as ridiculous. Sure enough, moments later I received an email from the opera house informing me that it was Fleet Week in San Francisco, and the Blue Angels (the US Navy's flight demonstration squadron) would be performing air shows for the public. While this was a relief, the realization that my first instinct had been to brace for an attack, was nonetheless a sobering one.

Given today's political climate, I imagine that many people share this sentiment. It feels as if we are waiting for that one igniting event — that terrorist attack, that ill-conceived Tweet, that false accusation of adultery, and our whole world will be shattered.

As rational or enlightened as we might hope to be, we cannot deny the presence of our emotions, and that these emotions cause us to act irrationally. In this sense, the internal conflict of *Ariodante* feels more suited to the modern day than to the 1700's.

Scottish jurisprudence was governed by the belief that all individuals were fundamentally just, and that through introspection and rational reflection, all communities would be naturally inclined towards fairness. Yet, it takes exactly one line of recitative to convince Ariodante that Ginevra has betrayed him, for a father to call his daughter wanton. Ginevra is not given an opportunity to defend herself when accused of a crime punishable by death. It is easy to see these as failings of the opera. Today we can question the convenient way that the opera wraps up while recognizing that for these characters to have asked these complex questions would have jeopardized their increasingly fragile realities.

Perhaps today we can contextualize *Ariodante* in contrast to our post-Enlightenment world. This opera speaks to the fragility of our society, the fear that it could be thrown into chaos at any moment, and our need to hope that, as the Scottish Enlightened philosophers believed, in the event of a disaster, humanity will weather the storm, and through introspection, emerge out the other side a more just, and fair society.

-- Aria Umezawa

Synopsis

Act I

Our drama opens as Ginevra, the princess of Scotland, gets ready for her day, dressing especially nice to impress Ariodante, to whom she hopes to be engaged. Ginevra's handmaiden, Dalinda, asks if her father, the King of Scotland, approves of the match, and Ginevra admits that he has been fanning the flames. Just then, the slimy Polinesso enters Ginevra's chamber, confessing his own love for the princess. Ginevra staunchly rejects him, and leaves. Dalinda, revealing her own attraction for Polinesso, tells him that it is Ariodante with whom he is competing for Ginevra's hand. Polinesso beguiles Dalinda into a plan to trick Ariodante and win Ginevra for himself.

Ginevra and Ariodante, unaware of the machinations of Polinesso, declare their love for one another. The King catches them in their amorous moment, and, laughing in the way only a parent can, solidifies their union and calls for the message to be spread throughout the kingdom. While everyone else is focused on the happy couple, Polinesso manipulates Dalinda into thinking he truly longs for her. Lurcanio, Ariodante's brother, caught up in the mood of the season, also confesses his own love for Dalinda, who coldly rejects him. A celebration is held for the newly promised couple.

entracte

Act II

Later, pulling Ariodante aside, Polinesso expresses surprise that Ginevra's hand would be given when he, Polinesso, was already Ginevra's lover. He seals the deception by approaching Dalinda, disguised, as her mistress, inviting Polinesso into her bed chamber. Grief-stricken, Ariodante goes to kill himself, when Lurcanio emerges from the shadows—where he has been hiding the whole time—and convinces him instead to seek revenge. Ariodante leaves, devastated. Polinesso reemerges, satiated in his villainy.

As the King finalizes preparations for the wedding, Odoardo, a courtier, bears news that Ariodante has thrown himself into the sea. Ginevra enters the room, sure that something terrible has happened, and—being given the news—swoons. Lurcanio appears, furiously proclaiming what he saw the night before. The king disowns his daughter for sexual irregularity, for which the punishment is death.

entracte

Act III

Ariodante, who really did jump into the ocean, rails against the gods that they have allowed him to live. Hearing cries, Ariodante finds Dalinda, pursued by assassins sent by Polinesso. Ariodante drives them away and Dalinda reveals the truth of Polinesso's plot to him.

As the King now prepares his daughter's execution, Odoardo begs for the King to have sympathy and allow someone to defend her honour. Polinesso offers himself as her champion. Ginevra, devastated by her condemnation, begs to be allowed to kiss even her father's hand. Clutching her to his breast, he laments that, unless a champion knight steps forward to defend her honour, she will have to be killed.

A duel between Lurcanio and Polinesso begins, and Polinesso is quickly wounded. Lurcanio calls for any others to take up the cause. The King himself is about to step forward, when Ariodante, hitherto disguised, casts off his helmet and reveals himself along with Polinesso's plot. Dalinda steps forward to support him, and Odoardo brings Polinesso's dying confession that it was all true.

Ginevra, still in her cell, feels she still hovers between life and death. Ariodante bursts in, followed by all the celebrating courtiers. The lovers are reunited, Dalinda and Lurcanio announce their love for one another, and all celebrate that honor and virtue has triumphed over greed and ambition.



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Biographies

Hank Knox

Hailed internationally for his “colorful, kinetic performances,” Hank Knox performs on harpsichord in concert halls, churches, museums, galleries and homes around the globe. A founding member of Montreal’s Arion Baroque Orchestra, with whom he has toured North and South America, Europe and Japan, Mr. Knox also regularly performs and tours with Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, *Les Violons du Roy* and *l’Orchestre symphonique de Montréal*, among other groups, ensembles and orchestras. Dedicated to sharing the unique sounds of antique harpsichords, as well as fine copies of historical keyboards, he has released a number of acclaimed recordings on rare instruments, including two collections of Frescobaldi’s keyboard works on a 1677 Italian harpsichord and a collection of works by D’Anglebert performed on an upright harpsichord. In addition, Knox has made a recording of Handel opera arias and overtures transcribed for harpsichord on three remarkable instruments from the historical keyboard collection at Fenton House in London, England, as well as a recording of music by Francesco Geminiani, also transcribed for harpsichord and performed on a 1772 instrument by Kirkman. A solo recital of works by J. S. Bach was released to enthusiastic reviews in September, 2013. He can also be heard on numerous recordings with the Arion and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestras. Hank Knox teaches in the Early Music program at the Schulich School of Music where he conducts the McGill Baroque Orchestra. He has directed a great number of Baroque operas for Opera McGill, including Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, Lully’s *Thésée*, Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* and Handel’s *Agrippina*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Alcina* and *Rinaldo*.

Aria Umezawa

Aria Umezawa is the Artistic Director of Toronto-based independent opera company, *Opera 5*, and the creator, director, and writer of the webseries *Opera Cheats*. She is currently a first-year Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera - the first stage director to be awarded the fellowship in fifteen years. She was the 2016 Merola Apprentice Stage Director, where her staging of the Merola Grand Finale concert was praised by the San Francisco Chronicle: “Over the decades, I’ve never seen the job dispatched with the elegance, verve and sheer theatrical imagination that Aria Umezawa brought to it on Saturday night in the War Memorial Opera House. This young Canadian artist...marshalled her fellow Merolini with the dexterity of an experienced master.” She will be directing *The Future Is Now: Adler Fellows Concert* in December of this year.

Among her directing credits this year, Aria has directed Ambroise Thomas’ *Hamlet* for West Edge Opera; ChamberWORKS and *SF OPERA LAB POP-UP: Oakland Edition!* for SF OPERA LAB; and the Merola 60th Anniversary Gala for the Merola Opera Program. Her staging of Poulenc’s *La voix humaine* took home the Capital City Critics Circle Critic’s Choice Award at the 2013 Ottawa Fringe Festival. She has directed the Canadian premier of several works including New York-based composer, Milton Granger’s *Talk Opera*, Darren Russo’s *Storybook*, and the North American premier of Cavalli’s *Artemisia* (Helios Opera, Boston). She has been praised for her irreverent, post-modern, wondrous and quirky visual style by online and print publications such as The San Francisco Classical Voice, The Boston Globe, The Boston Phoenix, and Toronto’s Barcza Blog; her work has been featured in Metro News, Jezebel, and The Huffington Post, as well as on the social media pages of opera companies across North America. Aria is also an alumna of the Schulich School of Music.

Patrick Hansen

Patrick Hansen continues his unique career throughout North America as an operatic conductor, vocal coach, and stage director. Currently he is the Director of Opera Studies at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University in Montreal, Quebec.

For his conducting of Bartok’s operatic masterpiece *Bluebeard’s Castle*, *New York Times* critic Anthony Tommasini praised his “lithe pacing and vivid colors” while Pulitzer prize-winning *Financial Times* critic Martin Bernheimer wrote “Hansen respected the delicate balance between passion and introspection. He made much of Bartok’s epic essay in psycho-sexual angst.” David Patrick Stearns in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* noted “Hansen revealed another side of the score: stroke after stroke of musical characterization that’s often obscured by dazzling orchestral color, skillfully drawing the ear into the two characters’ hearts of darkness.”

His stagings have garnered praise in both Canada and the United States. Wayne Gooding in *Opera Canada*: “Director Patrick Hansen...captured the opera’s bohemian vitality and evoked – which, unfortunately, many productions fail to do – the city of Paris itself as the characterful backdrop to the action. When he ran out of space for the crowd in Act II, the crowd simply spilled down into the auditorium... the comic business was well handled... The acting, indeed, was a strong

point throughout.” and Arthur Kaptainis in *The Montreal Gazette*: “After the Opera McGill performance on Friday I wanted to see it again...The eight singers were nicely cast...Director Patrick Hansen made a fair case for the drama. The violation [of Lucretia] involved some Etrusco-Roman wrestling and an almost literally blinding coup de theater: Lights flare and Tarquinius suddenly drops his robe, and becomes pure animal. It was a good invention.”

Mr. Hansen has been on the musical staffs of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pittsburgh Opera, Tulsa Opera, Opera Memphis, Des Moines Metro Opera, Ash Lawn Opera, The Juilliard Opera Center, and Glimmerglass Opera as well as being the Director of Artistic Administration for Florida Grand Opera during the opening of the half-billion dollar downtown Miami arts centre.

At ease in opera and musical theatre, his stage directing credits encompass the entire spectrum of repertoire now being presented by opera companies: *Così fan tutte*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Fille du régiment*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *La traviata*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Albert Herring*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, *La bohème*, *The Rape of Lucretia* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as the baroque specialties *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Imeneo*, *Thésée*, *Agrippina*, *Alcina* and the musicals *Camelot* and *Trouble in Tahiti*.

The former director of the Young American Artist Program at Glimmerglass Opera Mr. Hansen recently returned to the Kennedy Center for his fourth collaboration as stage director with the Washington Chorus' *Essential Verdi*. In the past year and a half, he has conducted *Die Fledermaus* twice (Opera 5 and Opera McGill), appeared as pianist in a concert of Shakespeare songs and scenes with the Toronto Music Festival, and directed *Die Fledermaus*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Alcina*, *The Impresario*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Sid the Serpent*, the North American premiere of Garner's *East O' the Sun West O' the Moon*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, and workshopped a new opera by Garner/Hansen, *Much Ado*, in London, England. This coming year he will be directing *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Candide*, *Dialogues des Carmelites*, and the Bulgarian premiere of *Street Scene*.

Stephen Hargreaves

In an increasingly specialized world, Stephen Hargreaves considers himself very lucky to divide his musical skills in a variety of ways. Upon Hargreaves' mother noticing he had slurred speech as a beginning talker, he subsequently went through 11 sets of ear tubes. From the moment he could hear clearly, he fell in love with sound and music in all forms. Trained as a solo pianist and french horn player, Hargreaves attended Indiana University where he studied with Myron Bloom while furthering his piano skills and eventually making the acquaintance of Martina Arroyo from whom he gained a love of vocal repertoire and, ultimately, opera. Hargreaves' professional start came early, paying for his college education as a collaborative pianist and truncating his senior year to act as repetiteur and assistant conductor. This was followed by a string of professional engagements in the following 15 years that included performing solo concerti such as Brahms' 2nd, Rachmaninoff's 3rd; collaborative chamber work with instrumentalists and singers; multiple solo recitals and operatic conducting/assistant conducting/harpsichord continuo at regional and international companies amounting to over 100 unique productions and counting. Hargreaves loves a challenge and gravitates toward virtuosic early music and new works that push boundaries both musically and artistically. To this regard, he has always believed in the value and need for fostering the love of music in others and furthering the level of education for those pursuing music with the greatest passion and at the highest level. He is thrilled to be a professor at the Schulich School of Music and hopes to share what he knows and inspire those around him to be the finest new generation of musicians.

Hargreaves has conducted at Chicago Opera Theater, Opera Omaha, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Glimmerglass Festival, *Festival Lyrique de Belle-île-en-mer*, Pine Mountain Opera, Union Avenue Opera and Des Moines Metro. He has assisted conductors including Stephen Lord, Stuart Bedford, Harry Bicket, Jane Glover, Emmanuelle Haïm, Alan Gilbert, Julius Rudel, Nader Abbassi, Pablo Heras Casado and Rinaldo Alessandrini.

Jonathan Patterson

Based in Montréal, Jonathan is a multidisciplinary artist whose work spans from theatre to opera to musicals. Recent credits include: *Le portrait de Manon*, *L'heure espagnole*, *Speed Dating Tonight!* (Opera McGill, director); *Million Dollar Quartet* (Sudbury Theatre Centre/Thousand Islands Playhouse, Sam Phillips/music director); *Last Night at the Gayety* (Centaur Theatre, choreographer); *The Producers* (Segal Centre, Roger DeBris/choreographer); *Bluenose* (Black Theatre Workshop, choreographer); *Into the Woods*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Segal Centre Academy, director); *A Song of Fiction* (Kaleidoscope Montreal, Jesse/tap choreographer). Later this season, Jonathan will direct productions

of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, *Xanadu*, and *Captain Aurora: A Superhero Musical*. Jonathan also provides choreography for the Segal Centre's Annual Fundraiser and the award-winning Lyric Theatre Singers.

As a performing-arts educator, Jonathan has been on the Schulich School of Music's teaching staff since 2010, currently serving as the Acting Director of Opera Studies, a position he previously held during the 2014-15 season. Jonathan also teaches musical theatre classes at St. George's High School, the Segal Centre Academy, and has a very busy private studio. In January, Jonathan was featured by the Montreal Gazette as the theatre artist to watch in 2017 for his work as both an actor and a choreographer.

Florence Cornet

Florence has been a stage makeup artist, makeup designer and teacher for more than 25 years. She has also worked in the television and film industry for fifteen years. She has taught in several theater schools. She is currently teaching at the National Theatre School of Canada, and the National Circus School of Canada in Montreal.

Stage, television, and cinema have also led her to the circus; she was the makeup designer for *Koöza* and the *Michael Jackson Immortal* tour from Cirque du Soleil. Her first collaboration with Opera McGill was for *Rinaldo* in the fall of 2012. Her work has also been seen at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in *Le roi se meurt*, *Petite vérité inventée* at *Maison Théâtre* and *Survivre* at *Théâtre de Quat'sous*.

Serge Filiatrault

A graduate of the production section of the National Theatre School of Canada, Serge Filiatrault has worked in different capacities in the entertainment industry for more than fifteen years. Whether as lighting designer for the Montreal International Jazz Festival, or in various other functions, he is always key to a show's success.

Ginette Grenier

A 1997 graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, Ginette Grenier has designed many costumes as well as sets for theatre, dance and film. With over seventy shows to her credit, Mme Grenier has earned seven nominations for "Le Gala des Masques" and an Opus nomination for *Marisol et Rémi sur les chemins de la nuit* with the OSM. Her past costume creations for Opera McGill include *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Thésée*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Radamisto*, *La Bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, *Volpone*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pygmalion*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Little Women*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Rodelinda*, *Die Fledermaus*. and *The B!NGE Opera Festival*.

Vincent Lefèvre

A 1997 graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, Vincent Lefèvre received his first Applied Arts training in Strasbourg, France. He has designed over a hundred sets and costumes for theatre, dance and opera productions in Montreal and Ottawa. His credits include Opera McGill set designs for *Don Giovanni*, *Idomeneo*, *Louis Riel*, *Albert Herring*, *Così fan tutte*, *Alcina*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Volpone*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pygmalion*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Little Women*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Rodelinda*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *The B!NGE Opera Festival*. His work has been nominated for several awards including: set design for *The Caretaker* at the Centaur 2007 by the MECCAs; *Louis Riel* with Opera McGill and *Marisol et Rémi sur les chemins de la nuit* with the OSM both received Opus awards.

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Jacoba Barber-Rozema, soprano (Dalinda)

de / from: Toronto, ON

Récemment / Recent: Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Guildhall School & Opéra McGill

Prochainement / Upcoming: Director, *Une demoiselle en loterie*, Opéra McGill Proje(c)t Horizons

Olivier Benoît, haute-contre / countertenor (Polinesso, doublure / cover)

de / from: Longueuil, QC

Récemment / Recent: La belle mère, *Cendrillon*, Collège Vincent d'Indy

Prochainement / Upcoming: New World Friar, *Candide*, Opéra McGill

Sarah Bissonnette, mezzo-soprano (Ariodante)

de / from: Boucherville, QC

Récemment / Recent: First Witch, *Dido and Æneas*, Opéra McGill

Élodie Bouchard, soprano (Ginevra)

de / from: Alma, QC

Récemment / Recent: Serpina, *La Serva Padrona*, Opéra dans le Parc

Prochainement / Upcoming: soloist, *Messa Vortiva* (Zalenka), Compagnie baroque Mont-Royal

James Brown, haute-contre / countertenor (Polinesso)

de / from: Portland, ME, USA

Récemment / Recent: Saxon Priest, *King Arthur*, American Bach Soloists Academy

Prochainement / Upcoming: Old Lady, *Candide*, Opéra McGill

Nicole Burke, soprano (Dalinda)

de / from: Littleton, MA, USA

Récemment / Recent: Despina, *Così fan tutte*, Accademia dell'arte Opera (AEDO)

Prochainement / Upcoming: Player #5, *Candide*, Opéra McGill

Nicholas Burns, haute-contre / countertenor (Polinesso)

de / from: Vancouver, BC

Récemment / Recent: Soloist, Bach's *BWV 90, 180, 192*, La Bande Montréal Baroque

Prochainement / Upcoming: Soloist, Handel's *Messiah*, Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra

Alexander Cappellazzo, ténor / tenor (Lurcanio & Odoardo, doublure / cover)

de / from: Scarborough, ON

Récemment / Recent: Sailor, *Dido and Æneas*, Opéra McGill

Prochainement / Upcoming: 1^e Commissaire, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Opéra McGill

Sarah Dufresne, soprano (Ginevra, doublure / cover)

de / from: Niagara Falls, ON

Récemment / Recent: Morgana, *Alcina*, Accademia Europea dell'Opera

Prochainement / Upcoming: Aspésie, *Une demoiselle en loterie*, Opéra McGill Proje(c)t Horizons

Laura Fishman, soprano (Dalinda, doublure / cover)

de / from: Yardley, PA, USA

Récemment / Recent: ensemble member, Canadian National Youth Choir

Prochainement / Upcoming: Spanish Man, *Candide*, Opéra McGill

Christine Jay, soprano (Ginevra)

de / from: Boston, MA, USA

Récemment / Recent: Lucia, *The Rape of Lucretia*, Oberlin Opera Theatre

Prochainement / Upcoming: US Vocal Scholar, Voices8

Mikayla Jensen-Large, mezzo-soprano (Ariodante, doublure / cover)

de / from: Ottawa, ON

Récemment / Recent: Soloist, Carissimi's *Jephte*, Capella Antica

Prochainement / Upcoming: Soloist, La Guerre's *Cantates françaises sur des sujets tirez de l'Écriture* (excerpts), self-produced

Jean-Philippe Lupien, baryton-basse / bass-baritone (Roi d'Écosse / King of Scotland, doublure / cover)

de / from: Sherbrooke, QC

Récemment / Recent: Don Inigo Gomez (doublure / cover), *L'heure espagnole*, Opéra McGill

Prochainement / Upcoming: Officier, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Opéra McGill

Jean-Philippe Mc Clish, baryton-basse / bass-baritone (Roi d'Écosse / King of Scotland)

de / from: Québec, QC

Récemment / Recent: The King, *Fêtes Galantes*, Opera 5

Prochainement / Upcoming: Raimondo, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Opéra McGill

Patrick McGill, ténor / tenor (Lucranio)

de / from: Devon, PA, USA

Récemment / Recent: Soloist, Bach's *Magnificat*, Church of St. Andrew & St. Paul

Prochainement / Upcoming: Normanno, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Opéra McGill

Cesar Naassy, baryton-basse / bass-baritone (Roi d'Écosse / King of Scotland)

de / from: Beirut, Lebanon

Récemment / Recent: Fiorello, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra

Prochainement / Upcoming: Raimondo, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Opéra McGill

Veronica Pollicino, mezzo-soprano (Ariodante)

de / from: Coram, NY, USA

Récemment / Recent: Jean de Moncerf, *Le portrait de Manon*, Opéra McGill

Prochainement / Upcoming: Soloist, Handel's *Messiah*, The Cantabile Chorale and Orchestra

Zachary Rubens, ténor / tenor (Odoardo)

de / from: Ottawa, ON

Récemment / Recent: Camille, *The Merry Widow*, McGill Savoy Society

Prochainement / Upcoming: Player #2, *Candide*, Opéra McGill

L'Opéra McGill souhaite exprimer sa reconnaissance à **The Stephenson School of Highland Dance** pour leur participation dans cette production de *Ariodante*.

Opera McGill would like to express its gratitude to **The Stephenson School of Highland Dance** for their participation in *Ariodante*.



Cette représentation fait partie des épreuves imposées aux étudiant(e)s suivant(e)s pour l'obtention du diplôme indiqué :

This performance is presented by the following students in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree or diploma indicated:

Veronica Pollicino (classe de / class of Joanne Kolomyjec) M.Mus
Sarah Bissonnette (classe d' / class of Annamaria Popescu) M.Mus
Élodie Bouchard (classe de / class of Dominique Labelle) M.Mus
James Brown (classe de / class of Dominique Labelle) M.Mus
Nicholas Burns (classe de / class of Dominique Labelle) M.Mus
Christine Jay (classe de / class of Joanne Kolomyjec) M.Mus
Patrick McGill (classe de / class of John Mac Master) G.Dip
Cesar Naassy (classe de / class of Winston Purdy) M.Mus

Ce concert sera webdiffusé par l'École de musique Schulich les 10 et 11 novembre

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Russell Wustenber	Régisseur de la production / Production Stage Manager
Stephen Hargreaves, Hank Knox, Elizabeth Koch	Préparation des rôles / Role Preparation
Lindsay Gable	Directeur adjoint / Assistant Director
Jaclyn Grossman	Régisseuse adjointe / Assistant Stage Manager
Qiao Chu, Poppy Kipfer,	Répétiteurs / Rehearsal Harpsichordists
Justin Luchinski, Sébastien Mitra	
Jonathan Stuchbery	Lutémiste / Rehearsal Lutenist
Nick Loucks	Violoncelliste / Rehearsal Cellist
Maureen Leaman, Jennifer Stephenson	Chorégraphes / Choreographers
Jonathan Addleman	Accord et entretien des clavecins / Harpsichord Technician
San Francisco Opera Association	Surtitres / Surtitles
Jaclyn Grossman	Préparation des surtitres / Surtitles Preparation
Ryan Nauta	Opérateur des surtitres / Surtitles Operator
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Serge Filiatrault	Gérant, scène et productions / Manager, Operations & Stage
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Daniel Duguay	Pollack Hall Stage Managers and Stage Crew
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Heidi Doucet, Melanie Ann Fallnbigl	Assistante - maquillage / Assistant to Makeup
Marie-Josée Boyer	Assistante - costumes / Assistant to Costumes
Olivia Watson	Habilleuse / Dresser
Patrick Hansen	Directeur de l'Opéra McGill et directeur des études d'opéra /
Jonathan Patterson	Director of Opera McGill & Opera Studies
Stephen Hargreaves	Co-directeur par intérim des études d'opéra /
Lena Weman	Co-Acting Director of Opera Studies
Stefano Algieri, Joanne Kolomyjec, Aline Kutan,	Répétiteur principal, Co-directeur par intérim des études d'opéra /
Dominique Labelle, John Mac Master, Brett Polegato,	Principal Coach, Co-Acting Director of Opera Studies
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Mathieu Bourassa	Coordonnateur de webdiffusion / Webcasting Coordinator
Jennifer Nulsen, John Castillo Oruezabal	Techniciens de webdiffusion / Webcasting Engineers
Mathilde Lemieux, Haruka Nagata,	Techniciens de mixage / Mixers
Jennifer Nulsen, Carl Roberge	
Stefan Fong, Mariane Generale,	Techniciens du son / Audio Technicians
John Castillo Oruezabal	
Richard King	Supervision de l'audio / Audio Supervision
Mathieu Bourassa, Jennifer Nulsen	Présentateurs de la webdiffusion / Webcasting Announcers
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Le Trait juste	Traductions / Translations
Assemble Ensemble	Conception du programme / Program

Ariodante: Breaking conventions to save a career

Nicholas Burns

Premiered in 1735 at London's Covent Garden, Handel's fate seemed to hinge on the success of *Ariodante*. In 1735, Handel found himself caught in the middle in a pseudo 'royal operatic feud'. There were two main opera theatres in London: Covent Garden, which was supported and sponsored by King George II, and Opera of the Nobility, which was supported by the Prince of Wales, a vocal dissident to King George II. Opera of the Nobility was formed in 1733, and with its inception poached Handel's star castrato, Senesino. One can sense Handel releasing feelings of spite toward Senesino in the arias composed for (the character) Ariodante, the leading castrato role for the show. Giovanni Carestini, who played this title role in 1735, sings arias that are not only much longer than those that were composed for Senesino's roles, but are seemingly even more virtuosic in nature than anything Handel ever composed for Senesino. While of course this inference that Handel's feelings toward Senesino manifested musically in *Ariodante* is just speculation, there are other examples of Handel adding even more space for decadence in *Ariodante* than in his past operas. Another example of this are all the dances that he composed for *Ariodante*. This is the first time in his career that one of his operas contains dance music (that was actually danced to). Handel also ends an act (act II) with an accompanied recitative, another compositional anomaly that does not appear anywhere else in his large oeuvre of operas.

Ariodante, while still derived from the clear operatic traditions of Handel's previous operas, seems to desperately seek a renewed vitality. While still giving audiences what they had

come to expect, Handel is subtly reaching to new ideas in *Ariodante*. The very fact that it is Handel's only opera set in Scotland sets this opera apart from his others. The antagonizing evil character, Polinesso, in *Ariodante*, is for an alto voice type. This seems to stray also from his convention of a tenor or bass singer playing the antagonist.

Polinesso was premiered by Italian contralto, Maria Caterina Negri. Negri was born in 1704, and premiered many of Handel's contralto roles, portraying both male and female characters. Of notable mention are her credits for portraying Bradamante in Handel's *Alcina* and Amanzio in Handel's *Giustino*. Negri also premiered the role of Bradamante in Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso* and the role of Arsace in Vivaldi's *Rosilena ed Oronta*. One of Vivaldi's biographers, Egidio Pozzi noted Negri's impassioned temperament both on and off stage. Her ability to portray both male and female characters may stem from the fact that she received a large amount of her training in Bologna from a castrato named Antonio Pasi. Her inherent vocal abilities seemed to capture the attention of opera goers immediately, as she made her professional debut in Florence at age 15, and soon after was singing in opera houses in Frankfurt and Prague. Negri's casting in *Ariodante* seems like an obvious choice for Handel, given that *Ariodante* had to be a success.

Despite Handel's best compositional efforts (and *Ariodante's* success), Covent Garden eventually went under several years later (as did Opera of the Nobility), but the creative desperation that Handel instilled in this work still lingers to this day. It's this subtle sense of desperate renewal that still makes *Ariodante* a poignant work today.

Christine Jay

26 October 2017

Opera McGill

Ariodante: Questions of Morality and Fake News

Imagine the following characters onstage together: Elle Woods from *Legally Blonde*, Iago from Shakespeare's *Othello*, the early medieval warrior Beowulf, Susanna from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Liam Neeson in the film *Taken*. In theory, these personalities could coexist within an optimal situation; however, in the context of Handel's *Ariodante*, emotional equilibrium is fleeting. The catalyst of discord in this analogy and in *Othello* is that of Iago, the lying misfit attempting to climb the ladder of social hierarchy. If we continue with the analogy, then Elle Woods (Ginevra) and Beowulf (*Ariodante*) are betrothed; today is their wedding day. While incorporating Elle's father, Liam Neeson (the King), and Elle's maid, Susanna (Dalinda) into the wedding party, doubt is planted in the minds of every virtuous character by Iago (Polinesso).

Understanding the distinct character personalities in *Ariodante* is integral for a satisfying audience experience. In fact, such engaging characters and corresponding arias may have been the spark *Ariodante*'s popularity in 1734 London. Loosely based off of Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem, *Orlando Furioso* (1516), Handel wrote his final three operas: *Orlando*, *Ariodante*, and *Alcina*.¹ Antonio Salvi, a court physician to the Florentine Medici family and frequent librettist, deftly adapted two sections of *Orlando Furioso* for Handel's *Ariodante* adding moments of humor, romance, and intense pathos.² According to Charles Burney, on "January 8th,

¹ Johnson-Haddad, Miranda. "Englishing Ariosto: "Orlando Furioso" at the Court of Elizabeth I." *Comparative Literature Studies* 31, no. 4 (1994): 323-50.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/stable/40246959>.

² Chisholm, Duncan. *Early Music* 10, no. 1 (1982): 101-05.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/stable/3126747>.

ARIODANTE was first performed. This opera continued in run, and always by his Majesty's command, till March 5th.³ Although popular, Handel's success was often fleeting; a rival company, The Opera of the Nobility, was established in 1733⁴ and most of Handel's singers defected to the rival company by 1734. Until the collapse of the rival Opera of the Nobility in 1737, Handel lived an intense and stressful compositional life composing and reviving new works to entice audiences. By 1735 Handel's lack of spectators and patrons seemed dire; with the performance of his final and most popular opera, *Alcina*, he once again asserted himself as the dominant opera and oratorio composer in London.

Although not as prominent as *Alcina*, *Ariodante* was successful because of the high-quality arias Handel created for the original cast. Indeed, in rehearsals for Opera McGill's *Ariodante*, conductor Hank Knox has frequently praised the beauty and musical integrity of each aria. Several moments in *Ariodante* are noteworthy for Handel's creativity as a composer, especially several of Ariodante's famous arias, namely "Con l'ali di costanza," "Scherza infida," and "Dopo notte." Written for the virtuoso male alto Giovanni Carestini, "Dopo notte" and "Con l'ali di costanza" dazzle with vocal leaps while the singer executes minutes of fast notes with few places to breathe. Another creative moment is Ginevra's mad scene in Act II after she has been notified of her husband's death and disowned by her father. Ginevra flashes between moments of intense sadness, anger, frustration, confusion, and loss; Handel demonstrates these quick changes with fast harmony shifts and a furious instrumental passage imitating the howls of Hell's furies.

³ Burney, Charles, and Frank Mercer. *A general history of music from the earliest ages to the present period* (1789). (New York: Dover, 1957), 791, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015007939377>.

⁴ Ellen T. Harris. "Handel: 'A necromancer in the midst of his own enchantments'." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (2003): 832-849. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed October 26, 2017).

Handel created a treasure trove of beautiful and compelling arias that correspond to each character's current emotional state.

Another essential detail in *Ariodante* is Handel's inclusion of the Scottish law that states a woman will be burned at the stake in a month if suspected of infidelity and if no champion will fight for her honor in a duel. Incorporating this detail into the opera provides multiple distinct viewpoints, such as the role of morality, the Almighty, and the church in 18th-century Scottish justice. With the inclusion of such a law raising the stakes amid situations of extreme doubt, *Ariodante* turns into a battle for personal morals and honor. If viewed within a modern sense, this Scottish infidelity law could certainly be scrutinized as barbaric and imbued with gender bias designed to shame and silence women like Ginevra. Refreshingly, *Ariodante* in *Orlando Furioso* and Handel's opera later realizes this breach of morality and therefore lack of justice on behalf of the princess (Elle Woods) he loves. Morality is shown to be as fleeting as personal equilibrium in some situations in *Ariodante*.

As an 18th-century London audience member, seeing Handel's operas fully-staged and with new music based on fashionable texts must have been exciting. While the movie and opera characters described in the beginning were of personal choice, the average 18th-century concert goer most likely would have used her past opera knowledge of characters and her favorite singers to describe the marvels of a new opera to another interested person. A royal success, Handel's *Ariodante* incorporated elements of morality, law, and justice within a specific personality set of characters with sparkling arias to match. Although Iago (Polinesso) may be the first instigator of doubt, his demise is also the reconciliatory agent for peace that confirms the narrative's ending. The remaining characters each learn valuable lessons in trust, fake news, and communication. The finale ends with a double wedding and new beginnings.

Ariodante Program Notes

Ariodante is an opera seria in three acts written by George Frideric Handel in 1734. The story is taken from Canti 5 and 6 of Ludovico Ariosto's epic *Orlando Furioso*. Antonio Salvi adapted this story for his libretto *Ginevra, principessa di Scozia*, which was then adapted again into a libretto for Handel's opera.¹ *Ariodante* was first performed on January 8th, 1735, and was the first Handel opera performed at the newly built Covent Garden Opera House, then known as the Theatre Royal in London, England. Although the opera is still widely performed to this day, during its original run it only had 11 performances, and was not received particularly well by the public. However, many critics consider this the most accessible of Handel's operas due to an understandable plot and an even and constant flow of drama without supernatural forces. Robert Baxter goes as far to say that *Ariodante* "*dispenses with magic and confusing subplots to focus on a straightforward and dramatically effective story of evil and jealousy that recalls Shakespeare's Othello [...] but in contrast to Shakespeare's tragedy, ends happily, with love triumphant.*"².

I have the pleasure of interpreting the role of Lurcanio, Ariodante's brother and fellow warrior. Lurcanio is an accomplished warrior and a respected man at court, who fights to seek justice for and avenge his brother's death. His high-class status and success in defeating the villain Polinesso for the sake of justice led me to perceive Lurcanio as a hero without fault in the plot. Thus far in my portrayal of Lurcanio, I kept asking myself one question: "What makes Ariodante more heroic than Lurcanio?" I searched the score for an answer to this question but

¹ Pines, Roger 141

² Baxter, Robert 191

other than the number of arias, the difference still remained unclear. However, upon closely examining the source material, specifically *Canto 5 of Orlando Furioso*, it becomes clear that Lurcanio is more flawed than I originally believed. In his impetuous accusal of Ginevra and quest for revenge, Lurcanio blindly defends a law that is unjust and cruel in the eyes of Ariosto. This becomes clear in *Canto 5* when Rinaldo, after learning of the conflict, replies: “And must a gentle damsel die by fire, [...] Cursed be the law by which the dame is tried! Cursed he who would permit a doom so dire! Perish (such fate were just!) who cruel proves!”³ This condemnation by the hero Rinaldo in *Canto 5* caused me to rethink my portrayal of Lurcanio and to re-examine the differences between Lurcanio and Ariodante. As the story continues throughout *Canti 5 and 6*, Ariodante proves himself to be quite progressive -- at least regarding women and their unjust punishments -- especially in contrast to Lurcanio. Reflecting on the differences between the two allowed me to develop a more complex and fully informed characterization.

With this new insight I was able to delve further into Lurcanio’s journey throughout the opera and explore how he grows from beginning to end. I find that he starts as a brazen and headstrong warrior who possess some heroic qualities. Over the course of the opera, however, he experiences an emotional journey -- from the loss of his brother, to his slaying of Polinesso, and even threatening the King. Through these actions and the triumphant return of Ariodante, I believe Lurcanio learns how to fairly punish those guilty of crimes and how to be a more just warrior through his brother’s example.

³ *Canto V Orlando Furioso*

Works Cited

1. Pines, R. 1997. "Handel: Ariodante". *OPERA QUARTERLY*. 13 (2): 141-142.
2. Baxter, Robert. 1985. "Ariodante". *The Opera Quarterly*. 3 (3): 191-192.
3. Ariosto, Lodovico, and John Hoole. 1799. *Orlando furioso*. London: Otridge and Son.

The program notes are written by the student performing, and are presented by the student in partial fulfilment of the requirements of their course.

Ces notes de programme sont écrites par l'étudiant-interprète et sont présentées en tant que réalisation partielle des critères de leur cours.

Veronica Pollicino (Algie)
October 26, 2017
Graduate Studies
Prof. Joanne Kolomyjec

Program Notes for Opera McGill's Production of Ariodante
By Georg Friedrich Händel

“Although there is little question that the directors of the Royal Academy placed Handel in a unique position compared to his Continental colleagues, the directors’ understanding of the necessity of establishing a cast before any other aspect of production could take place is significant for a number of reasons” & “Directors...realized the necessity of determining who their singers were before the composers and librettists could begin their work.”¹

It is widely known that Georg Friedrich Händel is one of the great master composers but what may not be more commonly appreciated is that while his creative genius is clearly evident in his compositions, what sets him apart was his ability to craft and cater his works to highlight and feature the singers he was working with at the time. One notable example of Handel’s ability to craft a role for a particular singer was the title role of his 1735 opera Ariodante, which he composed for castrato Giovanni Carestini.

Born in 1704 in Filottrano, Italy. Like most castrati, Carestini began his vocal training at an early age. Carestini continued on to become a student of the famed castrato singer Antonio Maria Bernacchi who was also the teacher of the much-revered Carlo Broschi, more commonly known as “Farinelli”, arguably the most famous castrato of all time. It has been said that Carestini’s voice began more as a soprano castrato, which later developed into a more contralto timbre, without losing the higher vocal register.

¹ LaRue, C. Steven. “Cast, Libretti, Composer” from *Handel and His Singers: The Creation of the Royal Academy Operas, 1720-1728*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1995. 4

Scholars have said that Carestini was “tall, beautiful and majestic.”² He was said to have been “-animated and intelligent actor and having a considerable portion of enthusiasm in his composition, with a lively and inventive imagination, he rendered everything he sung interesting by good taste, energy and judicious embellishments. He manifested great agility in the execution of difficult divisions from the chest in a most articulate and admirable manner. It was the opinion of Hasse as well as of many other eminent professors, that whoever had not heard Carestini was unacquainted with the most perfect style of singing.”³

Handel and Carestini came to work together after Handel sent his recruiter and manager Owen Swiney, to Italy on a scouting trip in 1730. Swiney heard Carestini and persuaded him to go to London to work with the great Handel. Their collaboration, though short lived, was a fruitful one, as Handel created extraordinary roles for Carestini, including the title role in *Ariodante*. Handel put Carestini’s vocal agility, expansive tessitura and superb acting skills to great use in this role.

The character of Ariodante, is lead to believe that his betrothed Ginevra, has been unfaithful, driving him to attempt suicide. It is my opinion that Ariodante has one of the most extraordinary and transformative emotional arcs in Handelian repertoire. Many of the emotions Ariodante expresses through arias and duets, are of polarizing opposite states; extreme elation and rejoicing in the happiness of love (including the arias like the pastoral “*Qui d’amor nel suo linguaggio*”, the virtuosic “*Con l’ali di costanza*”, and most notable “*Dopo notte*”) countered by the anguish and despair felt through the

² Burney, Charles. *A General History of Music from the earliest Ages to the Present Period (1789)* with critical and historical notes by Frank Mercer. New York: Dover Publications, (1957). (The Royal Academy of Music). 782

³ Burney, Charles. *A General History of Music from the earliest Ages to the Present Period (1789)* with critical and historical notes by Frank Mercer. New York: Dover Publications, (1957). (The Royal Academy of Music). 782

prospect of being betrayed by the one he loves and multiple failed suicide attempts (the devastatingly beautiful “*Scherza infida*” and the impassioned “*Cieca notte*”) Handel definitely attempted to stretch Carestini’s acting and vocal skills to create a most unique and impactful character. Each aria for Ariodante is demanding for the singer; requiring agility and dramaticism in both the higher and lower registers of the voice.

The plot of *Ariodante*, HWV 33 is derived initially from Italian poet Ludovico Ariosto’s 1516 epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, which was later adapted by *Ariodante*’s librettist Antonio Salvi. The source material of *Ariodante* proved to undoubtedly provide great inspiration for Handel, as he composed not only one but three operas in total, including *Ariodante* (*Orlando* HWV 32 [1733], *Alcina* HWV 34 [1733]).

The characters that Handel wrote, in *opera seria* for Carestini, are of great emotional depth and profundity that are distinct. Given that Carestini was such a compelling actor, it would make sense for Handel to give Carestini such compelling and dramatic material. Interestingly, Handel composed the title character of Ariodante for Carestini, as well as Ruggiero in *Alcina*, both in the same year of 1735. Opera McGill performed *Alcina* in its last season and it’s evident that the similarities in the characters can be traced to their muse. It should also be noted that Carestini and Handel did not have a long working relationship, as potentially the same emotional characteristics that lead to those emotional characters may have challenged their relationship as well.

At the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, Handel’s score is met with new vigor and vision in Aria Umezawa’s production. Umezawa’s production is unique in that it is inspired by the original setting of the score in Scotland, but rather moves the era into a fictional gothic-inspired setting.

Join Opera McGill and the McGill Baroque Chamber Orchestra as we embark on the journey of Ariodante - filled with love, deception, anguish and elation. With Handel's spectacular score and outstanding cast and crew, this promises to be a production not to be missed.