

OPERA •PROPS•

UW Opera Props News October 2013

Ariodante, by George Frideric Handel

University Opera production directed by William Farlow

UW Chamber Orchestra conducted by James Smith

University Opera presents one of the greatest of Handel's operas, *Ariodante*



The cast and crew of University Opera look forward to presenting *Ariodante*, a virtuosic opera with strongly dramatic story. Sung in Italian with English surtitles by Christine Seitz, the work will be given three performances – Friday, October 25 at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, October 27 at 3:00 p.m. and Tuesday, October 29 at 7:30 p.m. All shows will be presented at the Carol Rennebohm Auditorium in Music Hall on the UW campus.

“Although *Ariodante* has a happy ending it is a complex, dark work,” says director William Farlow. “Stunningly beautiful music accompanies the characters as they search for the truth. It is a captivating story of betrayal and reconciliation.”

Farlow's casts include undergraduate and graduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Music, supported by the **UW Chamber Orchestra** under the direction of conductor **James Smith**. Casts for the Friday and Tuesday performances feature **Lindsay Metzger** (*Ariodante*), **Anna Whiteway** (*Ginevra*), **Christina Kay** (*Dalinda*), and **Spencer Schumann** (*Polinesso*). The corresponding cast for Sunday's performance features **Susanna Beerheide**, **Caitlin Ruby Miller**, **Lydia Rose Eiche**, and **Gerrod Pagenkopf**. Performing in all three performances are **Daniel López-Matthews** (*Lurcanio*), **Erik Larson** (*the King*), and **William Ottow** (*Odoardo*).

Production staff includes assistant conductor **Kyle Knox**, costume designers **Sydney Krieger** and **Hyewon Park**, technical director **Greg Silver**, lighting designer **Steven M. Peterson**, scenic artist/set designer **Liz Rathke**, vocal coach **Thomas Kasdorf** and chorus master **Susan Goeres**.

Tickets are \$22 for the general public, \$18 for senior citizens and \$10 for UW-Madison students, available through the Campus Arts Ticketing office at (608) 265-ARTS and online at arts.wisc.edu. Tickets also may be purchased at the Vilas Hall Box Office, Monday-Friday, 11:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Any unsold tickets may be purchased at the door beginning one hour before the performance.

Dinner nearby at the UClub is available Friday, October 25 – see page 5, inside.

Ariodante – Synopsis

ACT I. The mutual love of the Princess Ginevra and Prince Ariodante is encouraged by her father, the King of Scotland. As the opera begins, Ginevra is confiding her feelings to her attendant Dalinda when Polinesso, who covets the throne, bursts into Ginevra's room and declares his love for her, which she rebuffs. Dalinda explains to Polinesso that Ginevra loves Ariodante, but confides to him that she herself finds him attractive. Polinesso realizes that he can exploit Dalinda's infatuation with him. Meanwhile in the royal gardens Ariodante and Ginevra, exchanging vows,

receive the King's blessing. The King sees Ariodante as his successor.

Polinesso persuades Dalinda to dress up as Ginevra and admit him to her room that night. He promises to make her his wife. Dalinda is overjoyed, and when Ariodante's brother Lurcanio appears and declares his love for her, she quickly evades him. The act ends with the betrothed royal couple expressing their happiness and calling upon all to celebrate with dancing and song.

ACT II. That night, Ariodante, too excited to sleep, takes a walk in the royal gardens. There he encounters Polinesso, who feigns surprise at the news of the forthcoming marriage and claims to be enjoying Ginevra's favors. When Ariodante furiously reaches for his sword, Polinesso promises to substantiate the charge. He tells Ariodante to hide and see for himself Ginevra's disloyalty. Lurcanio, who has been surprised to see his brother talking with the hated Polinesso, is also hiding and observing what is going on. Polinesso knocks on the private door to the royal apartments, and in answer to his signal Dalinda, disguised as Ginevra, lets him in and closes the door. Ariodante, horrified at this apparent betrayal, is about to kill himself by falling on his sword when Lurcanio, who has also been duped, rushes forward to prevent him throwing away his life for such a woman. Ariodante goes off in utter despair, while Polinesso, feigning love to Dalinda, gloats over the success of his ruse. [Shades of *Much Ado about Nothing!*]

The following morning the King is about to declare Ariodante his heir, when Odoardo reports that the Prince has madly thrown himself into the sea and was drowned. The King hurries to break the news to Ginevra, who collapses in shock. Lurcanio bursts in, accuses Ginevra of driving his brother to suicide by her infidelity, and demands to revenge his brother in single combat. He will fight anyone who offers to champion her cause. The King declares that the unfaithful Ginevra is no longer his daughter. Ginevra, bewildered at the charge and at his rejection of her, goes mad.

ACT III. Polinesso has hired two assassins to silence Dalinda. They ambush her in a forest, but Ariodante, who has been aimlessly wandering about, by chance is there to save her. She is amazed to see him alive, and he is equally astonished to learn from her of Polinesso's plot. Ariodante sets out immediately for the palace with Dalinda.

The King has refused even to see his daughter until a champion for her can be found to defend her honor. Polinesso, hoping for both Ginevra and the throne if successful, offers himself. Though Ginevra refuses his aid, her father insists that she let Polinesso defend her honor. Lurcanio fights Polinesso and swiftly dispatches him. Lurcanio, still burning to avenge his brother's supposed death, challenges any further champions of Ginevra, and the King himself is about to defend the family honor when a knight whose face is hidden by his closed visor appears to defend her. Lurcanio is eager to fight, but the knight raises his visor and reveals himself as Ariodante. He offers to explain all if the King will pardon Dalinda for her unwitting part in the deception. Odoardo brings news that Polinesso, as he lay dying, has confessed his treachery. The King rushes off to his daughter with the happy news. Dalinda, repenting her former love and the deception into which it led her, now gladly accepts Lurcanio's renewed love.

The King tells the despairing Ginevra that she has been vindicated. He embraces his daughter and reunites her with Ariodante. She is thrilled to find him still alive, and there is general rejoicing.

HANDEL'S ARIOSTO, PART TWO by John W. Barker

For most readers there are three great epic poems in all literature: the two by Homer, and the *Aeneid* by Virgil. But Italians know there are two others (both written in Italian): one is *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), a free ramble through the First Crusade written by Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), and *Orlando furioso* (definitive version 1532) by Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533). They are among the greatest literary works of the Italian Renaissance.

Tasso's epic has inspired its share of operatic offshoots – a good ninety-five of them, starting with Monteverdi and extending to Dvorák, and including Handel's early hit *Rinaldo* (1711) among them. With a traceable eighty-five operas (between 1619 and 1942) drawing on his epic, Ariosto comes in a close second. For Handel he was a major source.

In its final form, Ariosto's poem is cast in forty-six cantos of tightly designed *ottava rima* verse. The title *Orlando furioso* might be translated as "Mad Orlando" or, better, "Roland Raving". The image is of the title character driven mad over rejection by the woman he loves, Angelica, who prefers the peasant Medoro. But the poem is a complex interweaving of many stories. Ariosto followed an earlier poet in taking the age of Charlemagne and his paladin Roland (Orlando) as the setting for chivalric tales of (totally imaginary) war between Christian Franks and Saracens outside Paris and for romantic ones (such as the love of the saracen Ruggiero for the Christian Bradamante, against the machinations of the sorceress Alcina).

The diversity of stories and subplots in the epic made it a quarry for opera librettists, who crafted innumerable stage texts out of selected episodes. It was such profusion of Italian libretti that gave Handel himself a lot to draw upon. Those existing libretti, and not Ariosto's original poem, were what Handel worked with, it should be understood. In 1733 Handel used a hand-me-down libretto for his *Orlando*, focused on the Orlando-Angelica-Medoro triangle, and featuring one of his finest mad scenes.

Then, in 1735, with expanded theatrical resources, he mounted two further operas of Ariosto background: *Ariodante* and *Alcina*. His resources now gave him a proper chorus, but, above all, allowed him to utilize the services of the ballerina Marie Sallé and her troupe of French dancers. For them Handel wrote dance episodes – in *Ariodante* sets that ended each of the three acts. Nowadays, these dance groupings are often omitted, either for reasons of economy or out of an utter misunderstanding of Handel's Baroque theatrical idiom that is now quite prevalent. But, when properly used, they add significant musical and dramatic subtexts to the proceedings beyond mere spectacle.

For *Ariodante* Handel himself revised the old libretto significantly. The story it presents derives from Canto V in Ariosto's poem, presenting a sideline adventure in which Orlando is driven by a storm off to Scotland – about as distant and exotic a place as an Italian might imagine. There, he rescues from treacherous murder the lady Dalinda. She tells him about the unhappy situation of her mistress, Ginevra, daughter of the Scottish King, unfairly slandered and denied union with her beloved Ariodante. Orlando then kills in battle the villainous Polinesso, allowing Ginevra and Ariodante to be united after all.

Handel's libretto simplifies matters by eliminating Orlando altogether as a character. In a sense, Ariodante himself assumes much of the role of the expunged hero. The key personalities are two pairs of lovers. Ariodante loves Ginevra and is promised her hand and his kingdom by her father. Ariodante's brother Lurcanio loves Dalinda. The villain is the ambitious Polinesso, who persuades Dalinda of his love for her and enlists her in a scheme to discredit Ginevra. That scheme is an almost exact parallel to the episode that brings misunderstandings and turmoil to Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*. In this case, the machinations of Polinesso are revealed after he is fatally wounded in combat with Lurcanio. Far from being threatened with death for infidelity (a

Scottish law invented by Ariosto), Ginevra is vindicated, the loving pairs are reunited, and all ends joyously – without any need for Orlando at all.

Handel's third and final Ariosto opera (not a "trilogy", but sometimes described as such), *Alcina*, has come to bulk large in the public surge of interest in the composer's Italian operas – along with *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* among the leaders. Nevertheless, *Ariodante* is steadily winning its own place in the top listings. It has a strong story line, uncluttered by all the usual Baroque tangles of overlapping and conflicting loves. Its characters are strongly etched, even despite the gender-bending of Handel's original casting. (His Ariodante was the mezzo-soprano castrato Carestini; his villain, Polinesso, was written for a female contralto; all according to fashions and audiences's vocal tastes of the time.) The issues of genuine as against false love, of loyalty as against betrayal, of the triumph of truth over evil, are timeless themes, set forth with Handel's unerring dramatic skill.

Above all, the score is full of wonderful music: a torrent of arias and three duets, as well as orchestral gems and all the delicious dances. Ariodante's despairing aria in Act II, "Scherza infida", while well-known as a recital showpiece, is not the only show-stopping item of unforgettable lyric beauty. (In that, by the way, notice Handel's artful use of bassoons in the accompaniment. And listen for other lovely instrumental effects, especially for outdoors scenes. Who says Handel's orchestrations require improvement?)

With or without the help of today's stage directors, Handel's operas are steadily becoming established in a standard repertoire we once thought began with Mozart. Ariodante is a perfect example of why that is happening.

Mark Your Calendar: Two Key Events for Saturday, October 19 and Tuesday, November 26

October 19 at Mills Concert Hall, 8:00 – Prof. Jim Doing will present another program in his series "**Teaching Favorites for the Voice Studio.**" This concert will feature Jim and five female voice students in 26 selections that Jim has found useful for teaching phrasing, diction and phonetics. As Jacob Stockinger explained in his Well-Tempered Ear blog about a previous concert in this series: "It was like sitting in on Art Song 101, allowing us to hear what makes for good repertoire, good programming" and cordiality in the concert hall, as well as improved singing! See these: <http://welltempered.wordpress.com/2010/02/16/> and www.youtube.com/user/tenorjamesdoing

Our next **Opera Workshop** program is slated for Tuesday, November 26 at 7:30 in Music Hall, and *dedicated to Ilona Kombrink*. The scenes offered will be chosen from *Carmen*, Cavalli's *L'Ormindo*, *La Traviata*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Die Fledermaus*. Singers featured will be Jenny DeMain, CatieLeigh Laszewski, Kirsten Larson, Joshua Sanders, William Ottow, Sheila Wilhelmi, Daniel López-Matthews, Sarah Richardson, Thomas Leighton. Directors will be Daniel López-Matthews, Mimmi Fulmer, William Farlow. The accompanists will be pianists Thomas Kasdorf and Michael Bartlett.

Mark your calendar: Our next **Opera Workshop** program is slated for Tuesday, November 26 at 7:30 in Music Hall, and will be dedicated to Ilona Kombrink. The scenes offered will be chosen from *Carmen* (Act II quintet), Cavalli's *L'Ormino* (Act I, Scene VII), *La Traviata* (Act III), *Giulio Cesare* (Act II duet), *Die Fledermaus* (Act III trio).

Singers featured will be Jenny DeMain, CatieLeigh Laszewski, Kirsten Larson, Joshua Sanders, William Ottow, Sheila Wilhelmi, Daniel López-Matthews, Sarah Richardson, and Thomas Leighton. Directors will be Daniel López-Matthews, William Farlow and Mimmi Fulmer.

The accompanists will be pianists Thomas Kasdorf and Michael Bartlett.

Madison Opera Trips bus excursions to Lyric Opera's current season are scheduled for:

Monday, October 21 – *Otello*

Tuesday, December 10 – *Die Fledermaus*

Wednesday, February 26 – *Rusalka*

Wednesday, March 5 – *La clemenza di Tito*

For information on these bus trips to Chicago, call Fern Lawrence at (608) 238-1529 or email via FernLawrence@hotmail.com

Ilona Kombrink Memorial Concert to be held October 20

Emeritus Professor Ilona Kombrink passed away on August 9 in Stoughton. A Memorial Concert and celebration of Ilona's life will be held on Sunday, October 20 at 3:00 in the Grand Hall at Capitol Lakes Retirement Community, 333 W. Main Street, Madison. A reception will follow.

Opera Props News is published each semester for the members of UW Opera Props.

Editorial Committee: Charles Anderson, Kristine Bengtson, Ann Campbell, Helen Schmedeman, Dan Shea. Opera Props website: uwOperaProps.org

A Dining Idea for Friday, October 25, Opening Night for *Ariodante*

You are invited to join our Opera Props group at the University Club for a social hour:

Cash bar and conversation 5:00 - 5:45 in the Fireside Room (downstairs; elevator nearby).

From **5:45 - 7:10, a light dinner** will be served plated style in the Banquet Room across the hall, with coffee and water provided. Wine can be purchased at the Fireside Room bar.

Our Program: Countertenor Gerrod Pagenkopf, our rising star alumnus, will join us at dinner and tell us of his views of Handel's *Ariodante*, especially of his role as Polinesso.

The Menu, with choice of entrée

House fall salad - Fresh mixed greens topped with toasted walnuts, Door County cherries and pumpkin vinaigrette (with rolls and butter).

Entrée choice 1: Seared Norwegian salmon with dill crème fraîche, over lemon basmati rice served with garlic asparagus, or

Entrée choice 2: Herb-roasted fall root vegetables tossed in fresh pasta with basil and Parmesan and Romano cheeses, olive oil and garlic.

Dessert choice 1: Chef Jilek's own from-scratch **pumpkin cheese cake** with apricot cinnamon whipped cream, or

Dessert choice 2: Cantaloupe and honey dew **fall melon sorbet** served with crème fraîche.

This meal is \$30 inclusive (no tip/tax fees).

Please send us your list of names of those attending, with their entrée and dessert choices, and a check for your group (\$30 per person). Checks should be payable to "UW Opera Props," please mail **by October 20** to

Dan Shea, 3337 Conservancy Lane, Middleton 53562.

Questions? Call Dan at 215-0757. The University Club is located at 803 State Street mall.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF OPERA PROPS

Dear friend of the University Opera,

The Opera Props Board

Tom Akagi
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Last August a group of music lovers from Opera Props and Madison Opera met in Santa Fe to see this season's opera festival offerings. The main motivation for most of us was the revival of *La Traviata* which promised a debut of special interest: soprano Brenda Rae as Violetta, with reports already in the NY Times of her "gorgeous" tones. Here's what the current (November) issue of *Opera News* says of her: "What made this revival memorable was the Violetta of Santa Fe debutante Brenda Rae. An American still at the start of her career, Rae is already making waves in Europe ... Rae's soprano is contained, well-focused and flexible: 'Sempre libera,' whose coloratura she mastered with ease, was musically a showstopper and dramatically ... acted with mastery." OK, do tell, where is this young American dazzler from, anyway? Why, Appleton and then Madison, where Brenda Rae Klinkert graduated from UW's Opera program (2004) before going on to graduate school at Juilliard and a pile of prizes and competition wins.

Brenda invited all thirty of us to join her backstage after the opera to meet tenor husband Chad Graham (UW 2004) and the rest of her proud family, a fine time indeed.

Make no mistake, a successful classical music career is built upon a huge chain of unlikely events, but when it happens we all can enjoy the big glow. And less spectacular successes can still involve great personal enjoyment and useful, productive careers. A month after the Santa Fe *Traviata*, we were in Mills Hall to celebrate the interaction of baritone Nate Stampley (another student of Mimmi Fulmer) and pianist-composer Jamie Schmidt. Just in the Voice area of UW's School of music, dozens of success stories of various orders shine proudly: Go to Mimmi Fulmer's website http://music.wisc.edu/faculty/bio?faculty_id=32 to check for yourself.

Unfortunately resources for student recruitment and support remain inadequate at UW-Madison, and for now far-sighted individuals have to try to fill the gap. There was very good news from the *John and Carolyn Peterson Charitable Foundation* recently, when they called to tell us of another grant, for \$65,000 to cover support of graduate students in the Opera program for several years. And there was a wonderful anonymous grant of \$10,000 over the summer that enabled a big rise in the quality of this year's productions. These were great boosts and help us to redouble our efforts: Can you think of ways to help? (*Remember, there are tax advantages to giving in 2013; for advice on contributions to Opera, please feel free to call Jon Sorenson at the UW Foundation.*)

In the meantime, uncertainty is the rule: Bill Farlow retires at the end of this academic year, with no replacement yet in sight. He's leaving us with two beautiful productions in the works: By all means join us for *Ariodante* this semester, and Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict* next!

- Dan Shea

Cast Profiles for *Ariodante* – Learn about the artists.

Ariodante (mezzo-soprano): **Lindsay Metzger** (appearing October 25, 29) believes that “honor, love and loyalty define Ariodante as a man. In the first act he is has all these and his life is content. But in act two everything is taken from him, and by act three, he is left with nothing, begging the gods for death. It's a very human moment; even though there might be nothing to live for, something within urges him forward. With good timing by Dalinda and the help of his brother, he regains all that has been lost and prevails over evil.”

Lindsay, a Chicagoland native, graduated from DePaul University. She has a Paul Collins Fellowship at the UW-Madison, where she is pursuing a Master's degree in opera with Julia Faulkner. Her recent roles include Beppe in *L'amico Fritz* at UW, the title role in *La Cenerentola* with Lyric Opera's Opera in the Neighborhood, and Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* this past summer with La Musica Lirica. Lindsay was a soloist in Fauré's *Requiem* with the Grant Park Symphony in 2011 and an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera in 2012.

Susanna Beerheide (October 27) thinks “Handel's hero Ariodante is a very expressive person who trusts in humanity's goodness, but his entire universe collapses in the moment when he loses faith in Ginevra's fidelity. The music expresses well the nuances of the human soul in all imaginable circumstances, from excessive joy in “Con l'ali di costanza“ to profound sadness and wish for death in “Scherza, infida,“ with all the emotional stages in between. Because Handel presents Ariodante's strengths as well as his vulnerability and weakness, this opera is both moving and wonderfully multifaceted.”

Susanna is a new Master's student, studying with Mimmi Fulmer. Born in northwestern Germany, Susanna attended the Humboldt-University in Berlin, graduating in Musicology and Italian Philology. Her artistic activity includes theater; in Berlin, she appeared with the Theaterforum Kreuzberg. Her interests range from opera to Lieder interpretation and chamber music. This summer she worked with the distinguished Latvian conductor Kaspars Putniņš, singing in his Tenso Europe Chamber Choir for young professional singers, an annual festival choir that meets in Riga.

Susanna came to UW because of its many opportunities for young singers: “The full scale production of Ariodante is a valuable learning experience. The educational system is completely new to me, but I have enjoyed the challenge so far. Living in the US is also new, but as long as the farmer's market stays open I will be fine!”

Ginevra (soprano): **Anna Whiteway** (October 25, 29) is a sophomore studying with Elizabeth Hagedorn. She previously has studied with Julia Faulkner and Daniel Wilmot-Johnson (Viterbo University). *Ariodante* is Anna's second opera, having played a hand maiden in last year's *Medea*. She is especially grateful to UW-Madison School of Music donor (and Opera Props board member) Kathleen Harker for a four year scholarship and to the Stamps Family Charitable Foundation, and her parents for their support of her journey as a student and performer. Anna also shares some singing background with tenor William Ottow, having worked with Mike Esser at La Crosse High School.

Caitlin Ruby Miller (October 27) has “enjoyed playing with the emotional spheres that are portrayed in Ginevra's arias. These musical soliloquies provide an opportunity to gain dramatic skills in holding the stage. As Ginevra digs into the desperation and desire to die in Act II, each aria sequentially deepens in sadness with her removal from reality. The turning point for her mood in Act III is ingeniously composed: Ginevra has lost all hope, “there remains but death,“ and the end of her line “di morir“ is unaccompanied, this perfectly expresses her vulnerability. Immediately afterwards, the orchestra resumes on a triumphant major allegro, characters stream in, and all are reunited.”

Caitlin is a senior studying with Julia Faulkner. She sang the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* this summer with La Musica Lirica, and is grateful for the “opportunity to have worked under the baton of Joseph

Rescigno and the direction of Candace Evans, internationally well respected.” At UW she sang Musetta in *La Bohème*. Last year she returned home to Spring Green to perform excerpts from Handel’s *Messiah*. Caitlin recently performed Barber’s “Knoxville: Summer of 1915” in recital with pianist Thomas Kasdorf and will perform the piece with Mikko Utevsky’s Wisconsin Youth Chamber Orchestra in 2014. After graduation, she plans to move to Chicago and audition for graduate programs and young artist apprenticeships.

King of Scotland (bass): Evansville WI native **Erik Larson** advises: “It’s a key fact that Il Re is at the bottom of everything. He is a father who loves his daughter. Despite having a responsibility to uphold the law of his kingdom, he struggles with having to carry out the law against her.”

Eric, a senior, studies with visiting professor, Elizabeth Hagedorn. His roles with the University Opera have been Masetto in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and Creonte in Cherubini’s *Medea*. He has also sung with the Madison Savoyards and been a member of the Madison Opera Chorus since high school. This past summer Eric joined La Musica Lirica, in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, a five week program for young singers that provides coaching, master classes, Italian lessons, and performances in fully staged productions. There he performed the roles of Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Slook in Rossini’s *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*. After graduation, Erik plans on pursuing further study and development in opera performance.

Lurcanio (tenor): Of mastering Handel’s music, **Daniel A. Lopez-Matthews** says, “The music in this show is extremely challenging; it’s fast, it’s high, it’s low, and the recitatives can be tough to figure out. I’d say the greatest challenge is making it not sound like a challenge.”

In his second year of graduate study with Julia Faulkner, Daniel is thrilled to sing his first Handel role. The Otterbein University graduate is from Athens OH. After graduation, Daniel participated in Opera Columbus’s outreach program, touring schools in John Davies’s *The Billy Goats Gruff*. In summer 2012, Daniel sang Frederick in *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Resort Quisisana in Maine, which offers seven shows a week for three months. Last summer, Daniel joined Lindsay Metzger, Erik Larson and Caitlin Miller at La Musica Lirica, singing Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Edoardo in *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*.

Polinesso (contralto/ countertenor): “Polinesso may trick you,” warns countertenor **Spencer Schumann** (October 25, 29), “and make you think he actually loves Ginevra or cares about Dalinda but the truth is, he is really power hungry. At the beginning of the opera when it is revealed that the King approves of Ginevra and Ariodante’s love, Polinesso realizes that his path to power is going to take an elaborate plan. So, he conjures up the idea to deceive everyone. In his aria, ‘Se l’inganno sortisce felice,’ he makes it clear that if all of his deceptive tricks work, there is no point in being good, he would rather commit his life to evil. I like to think that this character is totally different from my real self, and that makes playing him so much fun!” A recipient of the UW-Madison School of Music Vocal Performance Scholarship as well as a UW Opera Props Award, Spencer finished his degree last spring, and has continued his studies with Mimmi Fulmer: “We have been working together for the past 5 years and it has been a great journey. She has been so wonderful in supporting me both in my singing and my Certificate of Entrepreneurship,” a new program from the UW-M School of Business that focuses on the skills needed to be successful entrepreneurs. Spencer will be the first music student to receive this certificate, having been the Events Coordinator for the student organization Arts Enterprise, that offers a course in business skills to artists.

Spencer sang in University Opera’s *Gianni Schicchi* and was in the chorus for *Maria Stuarda*. He was a soloist in the Taliesin Choir and the Janesville Choral Union performances of Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. He has performed as a soloist with the University Collegium Musicum. Spencer has roots in two Wisconsin communities: Fall River, where his family owns Schumann Printers Inc.; and Beaver Dam, where he attended Wayland Academy. And Spencer is the first recipient of The Cheryl Gryga Memorial Award for Opera: “I was lucky enough to sing with, and befriend, her daughter, Megan Gryga, while she studied voice

here. It is an honor for me since I know the family personally and continue to keep up with Megan as she pursues her M.M. at Houston.”

Spencer plans to take a break from university to explore singing opportunities in the area and continue to develop his voice. “I’m very thankful for the great opportunities that the University has given me, and all the wonderful people I have had the pleasure to work with. I’ve also found a passion for arts administration and I hope to continue my ties with Opera For The Young, where I currently intern. And I hope to continue my studies in both arts administration and voice.”

Countertenor **Gerrod Pagenkopf** (October 27) has been praised by the Houston Chronicle as having “an elegant bearing and a sweet, even sound,” and by the Boston Musical Intelligencer as “emit[ting] one gorgeous mellifluousness after another.” Mr. Pagenkopf made his professional operatic debut in 2008 with Amarillo Opera as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. Other opera credits include the title roles in Actéon, Orlando, Rinaldo as well as Ottone (*L’incoronazione di Poppea*), Endimione and Satirino (*La Calisto*), Niso (L’Artemisia), Sorceress, Second Witch, and Spirit (Dido and Aeneas), Tolomeo (Giulio Cesare), Arsamenes (*Serse*), Public Opinion (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), and the Refugee (*Flight*). A native of Northern Wisconsin, Pagenkopf earned his BS in music education from the UW-Madison and a Master’s degree in vocal performance from the University of Houston.

Dalinda (soprano): **Christina Kay** (October 25, 29) says, “In the beginning, Dalinda seems young and naive, a girl who doesn’t realize the consequences of her actions until it’s too late, and who is easily taken advantage of by the selfish, power-hungry Polinesso. At the same time, she can be just as seductive and subtly manipulative as Polinesso, and I think that is one of the most interesting aspects of her character. She isn’t really on a “side” until the end, because she is both Ginevra’s confidant and Polinesso’s means to an end. She goes through lots of emotional highs and lows, and the whole ordeal forces her to grow up, because she sees her foolishness and its consequences and is forced to deal with the guilt and confusion that go along with it. So I see her as subtle and many-faceted, which makes her more human.”

A native of Harrisburg, PA, Christina is a Masters’ student studying with Paul Rowe. She is a graduate of Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. This summer, at Camp-of-the-Woods, a Christian family resort on Lake Pleasant in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, she performed in two musical reviews, which featured highlights from Cinderella (Cinderella) and West Side Story (Maria). Previous credits include First and Second Spirit (Die Zauberflöte), Mrs. Segstrom (A Little Night Music), Chava (Fiddler on the Roof), and Older Amy (Little Women the Musical). Christina particularly enjoys singing early music, and has performed as a soloist with the UW Collegium, Madison Summer Choir, and Madison Early Music Festival Chorus.

Lydia Rose Gionfriddo Eiche (October 27), commenting on Handel’s skill at portraying characters, says “Handel reflects Dalinda in subtle ways. Only one of her arias is in a major key and yet none of them are sad. They are either seductive or fiery. Her character and her music have a great deal of subtlety. It brings to light the fact that Dalinda is not always what she seems, whether that be good or bad.”

Lydia has been praised for her “pinpoint security and handsome tone”. She has sung as soloist with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* at UW–Madison, where she is a senior, studying voice with Mimmi Fulmer. In June she sang Susanna in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* at Opera Orvieto, an international summer training program. Her awards include the John David Anello Sr. & Albert A. Silverman Memorial Scholarship from the Civic Music Association of Milwaukee and First Place in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Auditions, Wisconsin Chapter. Having won first place in the annual scholarship competition of the MacDowell Club of Milwaukee, she will be performing in a concert in April 2014. Originally from Muskego, Lydia plans to get a Masters degree in vocal performance or opera.

Odoardo (tenor): William Ottow comments about his role, "Odoardo is the favorite of the King. Although he has no arias to himself, it is important in that he is the King's connection to the world of the people below him. He often reports to the King about the results of tasks performed by others that the King cannot carry out himself."

William is a junior from La Crosse, where he developed his love of singing studying with Mike Esser. Now studying with Jim Doing, he has sung the Captain of the Guard in *Medea* and in the chorus of *Don Giovanni*.

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