

GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL / UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

THE RALPH OPERA PROGRAM PRESENTS

Xerxes

an opera seria by **George Frideric Handel**



DIRECTED BY
JOHN CARLO PIERCE

featuring the
CSU SINFONIA
Chamber Orchestra
Conducted by **WES KENNEY**

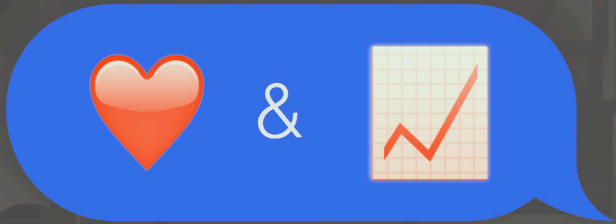
OCT. 26-29

Colorado State University

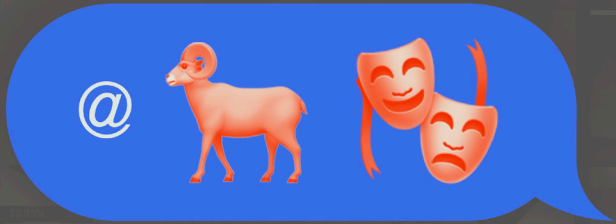
SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

LOVE AND INFORMATION A NEW PLAY



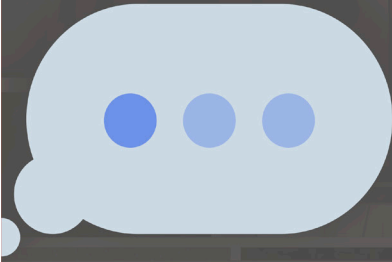
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in our peculiar age
of infinite information.

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— Los Angeles Times, 2015



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"Love and Information" is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, INC.

NOV. 10 through NOV. 18
ASCSU of Colorado State University

Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Evening 11/18 at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday Matinee 11/11 at 1:00 p.m.

Sunday Matinee 11/12 at 2:00 p.m.

Studio Theatre University Center for the Arts 1400 Remington Street, Fort Collins, CO S18 adults, S8 youth (under 18) Free for CSU students* *All the young students with valid CSU ID.

CSUArtsTickets.com (970) 491-ARTS (2787)

DIRECTED BY LAURA JONES

Xerxes

an opera seria by **George Frideric Handel**

DR. JOHN CARLO PIERCE, DIRECTOR
WES KENNEY, CONDUCTOR
CHRISTOPHER REED, VOCAL COACH

Serse, HWV 40 / G. F. HANDEL

(10/26, 10/28)

(10/27, 10/29)

Serse

Pablo Romero

Natalie Simpson

Romilda

Younwoo Seo

Anyaleen Bradley

Arsamene

Emily Gehman

Ingrid Johnson

Atalanta

Andrea Weidemann

Madi Davis

Amastre

Angela Lamar

Jonathan Wilson

Ariodate

Dominic Aragon

Jonathan Wilson

Elviro

Eric Paricio

Andrew Wallace

Wedding Music

***Sono liete, fortunate*, HWV 194 / G. F. HANDEL**

Soprano

Abigail Farmer

Abigail Farmer

Alto

Genevieve Sullivan

Kassidy King

Chorus

Anna Bonjour

Abigail Farmer

Kassidy King

Benjamin Mandelstam

Maisie Phillips

Madeline Roaldson

Jonathan San Agustin

Genevieve Sullivan

Ivy Taylor

Luke Thatcher

PRODUCTION TEAM

Set Designer Zhanna Gurvich

Costume Designer Maile Speetjens

Hair and Make-Up Designer Isabella Huff

Lighting Designer Judith Franco

Props Master Megan Ross

Stage Manager Emily Monaldi

Producer Price Johnston

Production Manager Hally Albers

Technical Director Steven Workman

Costume Shop Director Maile Speetjens

Master Electrician Joshua Legate

Properties Director Tobias Harding

Charge Scenic Artist Heidi Larson

Assistant Technical Director David Ash

Assistant Set Designer Duncan Port

Assistant Lighting Designer Ray McGowan

Draper Kate Mott

Stitcher Elise Kulovaney

Assistant Stage Managers Jessica Kroupa, Gia Pizzachini, David Van Name

Electrics Shop Jorrey Calvo, Shaye Evans, Lachlan Fordyce, Judith Franco, Olivia Parker

Paint Shop Bradley Calahan, Daniel Isaacs, Kaya Rudolph, Heather Salyer, Tara Spencer, Annabel Wall

Costume Shop James Arnold, Isabella Huff, Abigail Jordan, Richard Keesling, Jessica Kroupa, Stephanie Olson, Gabriella Pizzchini, Michelle Schrader, Ryan Wilke-Bruan

Scenic Shop Shay Dite, Bruce Gammonley, Duncan Port, David Van Name, Ryan Volkert, Sonny Walls, Daniel Zumwalt

Prop Shop Rocky Eisentraut, Ray McGowan, Megan Ross, Nicole Young, Daniel Zumwalt

Wardrobe Crew Christine Burquest, Jennifer Murray

Light Board Operator Whitney Roy

Deck Crew Jacob Bielmaier, Keegan Bockhorst, Ethan Durant-Childress, Ryan Leibold

Follow Spot Operators Jacob Bielmaier, Ryan Leibold

CSU SINFONIA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Frangel López Ceseña, *Concertmaster*
Josh Steinbecker, *Asst. Conertmaster*
Graeson Van Anne

Violin 2

Josè Alberto, *Principal*
Brandon Lin, *Asst. Principal*
Rawan Jarrar

Viola

Regan DeRossett, *Principal*
Xareny Polanco, *Asst. Principal*

Cello

Norma Parrot, *Principal*
Paul Walcott, *Asst. Principal*

Bass

Michael Rinko, *Principal*

Flute

Katie Miswell, *Principal*
Courtney Pham

Oboe

Euridice Alvarez, *Principal*
Sonja Barber

Bassoon

Sara Horton, *Principal*

Trumpet

Thad Alberty, *Principal*

Harpichord

Alaina de Bellevue

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PROGRAM NOTES

The number and variety (of Handel's opera arias) is so great, and the powers of capturing the most subtle nuances of feeling so outstanding, that one is tempted to believe that there is no emotion of which humanity is capable that has not found musical expression in Handel's operas.

— Donald J. Grout

Xerxes (Italian, *Serse*), by George Frederic Handel, is loosely based on the history of King Xerxes I, who ruled the Persian Empire from 486 B.C. to 465 B.C. Set in a time of royal and martial power, *Serse's* plot involves love, loss, jealousy, and a burgeoning misunderstanding over a letter. Premiering in 1738, *Serse* was one of Handel's last compositions in the genre of opera, and his last opera under the appointment of the King of England. While *Serse* was not popular with English audiences upon its debut, more recently it has been revived and studied with increased interest. *Serse's* opening aria, "Ombra mai fu" is perhaps the most memorable and beloved number in the opera. The aria's comic quality, coupled with a strange seriousness, exemplifies the opera's inter-tangling plot.

A year after he moved to London, Handel was appointed *Kapellmeister*, or court musician, to King George I, serving from 1711 to 1734. During these years, Handel wrote music for the King's Theatre and helped establish the Royal Academy of Music, the opera company with which Handel premiered many of his operas. In the early 1730s, a company now known as The Nobility Opera became the rival of the Royal Academy. The Nobility Opera moved its productions into the King's Theatre, causing Handel to seek opportunities elsewhere. From 1734 to 1737, Handel was employed at the Covent Garden Theatre, offering opera in a venue that more commonly produced spoken plays. In 1738, Handel returned to the King's service and created the Second Royal Academy opera company. From 1737 to 1738, he was commissioned to write two operas: *Giulio Cesare* and *Serse*.

The story of Xerxes had been set previously by Francesco Cavalli (1654) and Giovanni Bononcini (1694). Handel used the libretto of Cavalli's setting as inspiration for his own *Serse*, for which Bononcini wrote the libretto. At the time Handel composed *Serse*, his compositional interests were drifting away from opera and towards the genre of oratorio; un-staged dramas like *Messiah* are the works with which Handel's name is most associated. As the composer's tastes began to change, so did his operas. The compositional aspects seen throughout *Serse* are untypical style of Baroque opera style. Handel and librettist Bononcini deviated from traditional *opera seria* by employing both serious and comic elements throughout the work. In addition, Handel strayed from the customary sense of form. Many of the arias in *Serse* are not in da capo form, which contains more ornamental and improvisatory action, and are binary and through-composed. Because of Handel's modifications to Baroque expectations, *Serse* proved largely unsuccessful.

Perhaps because of its initial failure, *Serse* was not performed again until 1920; other Handel operas during this time were also scarcely produced. The beginning of the twentieth century sparked a Baroque opera revival and a “Handel Renaissance” movement reached Germany in 1920, when art historian Oskar Hagen and his colleagues at the University of Göttingen revived Handel's *Rodelinda*, *Ottone*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Serse*, all in the span of one year. Although postwar Germany encompassed a very nationalistic culture, Hagen's productions were met with positivity and engendered other Baroque opera revivals in Europe. In the 1950s and 1960s, various music societies in Germany and England that were more accustomed to performing Handel's oratorios also began programming his operas, thus resurrecting neglected works such as *Serse*.

The Ralph Opera Program presents a condensed version of *Serse*, in two acts rather than three. The production is performed in Italian with English supertitles. The opera features a dispute between King Xerxes and his brother Arsamene for the heart of fair Romilda, as well as Romilda and her sister Atalanta's feud for the love of Arsamene. Amastre (historically based on the wife of Xerxes) is betrothed to King Xerxes, but ultimately resolves the show's drama. Set at an Ivy League college in the 1960s, the characters are realized as football players and students rather than royalty, military, and aristocratic citizens. In this production, King Xerxes is the football captain and his servant Elviro is portrayed as a 60s flower-child hippie. Army general Ariodate, the father of Romilda and Atalanta, is presented as the college's football coach. The chorus is Xerxes's army, and the orchestra, which plays on the stage among the characters, is the football team's marching band.

The musical and dramatic content of *Serse* contains much diversity that must not be overlooked. The blossoming web of relationships between the characters gives the opera a richness (and a comedy) that is without comparison. Handel relates to the human experience by presenting a variation of deep emotions. As Scholar Winton Dean says of Handel's operatic writing, “In painting the frailties and foibles of human nature, they reveal the complex truths and turbulent passions beneath, so that while we laugh that the characters' antics we also feel with them.”

— Program note by Andrea Weidemann

U P C O M I N G P E R F O R M A N C E S

MUSIC PERFORMANCES

Halloween Organ Extravaganza	October 31, 7, 9, and 11 p.m.	ORH, UCA
<i>Virtuoso</i> Series Concert / Goble & Hirshfield, Voice, Saxophone, Piano	November 2, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA
Guest Artist Concert / Ed Saindon, Percussion / FREE	November 3, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA
<i>Virtuoso</i> Series Concert / Faculty Chamber Music	November 6, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA
Voice Area Recital / FREE	November 7, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA
Woodwind Area Recital / FREE	November 8, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA
Trombone Studio Recital / FREE	November 8, 7:30 p.m.	GCH, UCA
It Could Be Anything / New Music Ensemble Concert	November 12, 7:30 p.m.	GCH, UCA
Clarinet Studio Recital / FREE	November 13, 7 p.m.	GCH, UCA
<i>Virtuoso</i> Series Concert / Tiffany Blake, Soprano	November 13, 7:30 p.m.	ORH, UCA

RALPH OPERA PROGRAM PERFORMANCES

<i>Xerxes</i> by George Frideric Handel	October 26, 27, 7:30 p.m.	GCH, UCA
<i>Xerxes</i> by George Frideric Handel	October 28, 8 p.m.	GCH, UCA
<i>Xerxes</i> by George Frideric Handel	October 29, 2:00 p.m.	GCH, UCA

DANCE PERFORMANCES

Fall Dance Concert	November 9, 10, 7:30 p.m.	UDT, UCA
Fall Dance Concert	November, 11, 2 p.m.	UDT, UCA
Fall Dance Capstone Concert	December 8, 9, 7:30 p.m.	UDT, UCA
Fall Dance Capstone Concert	December 9, 2 p.m.	UDT, UCA

THEATRE PERFORMANCES

<i>Love and Information</i> by Caryl Churchill	November 10, 16, 17, 7:30 p.m.	UT, UCA
<i>Love and Information</i> by Caryl Churchill	November 11, 1 p.m.	UT, UCA

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