

FORTHCOMING DATES & TICKET INFORMATION



Calendar Listing

*Those events marked with an asterisk * are University events*

Recitals

April

27 - Edward Edgcumbe, *countertenor*

May

4 - Ashley Francis-Roy, *bass*

11 - Tanya Sen, *soprano*

18 - Joshua Powell, *bass*

25 - Daniel Laking, *countertenor*

June

1 - Charlotte Robinson, *soprano*

Handel: Alexander's Feast

Musical Director: Harry Sever

6 June 2012

New College Chapel, 8.00pm

8 - Guy Cutting, *tenor*

15 - Elizabeth Biddle, *soprano*

Summer Opera

4 (Preview), 7 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 July 2012

The Warden's Garden, New College

New Chamber Opera - New Chamber Opera Ensemble
The Band of Instruments - Phoenix - Cutting Edge

Singing Patron James Bowman

Director of Productions Michael Burden

Director, the Summer Opera Steven Devine

Director, The Band of Instruments Roger Hamilton · *Director, Opera Studio* Benjamin Holder

Repetiteurs Benjamin Holder, Harry Sever · *Company Secretary* Clare Atkinson

Comptroller Graham Midgley · *Wardrobe* Diana Lintott, Fiona Hodges

Production Administrator Jasmine Chin · *Recitals Administrator* Daniel Laking

New Chamber Opera · 4 Mansfield Road · Oxford OX1 3TA

Tel: 01865 281 966 · Fax: 01865 279 590 · Email: info@newchamberopera.co.uk

Web pages: <http://www.newchamberopera.co.uk>

Company No 3502769 · Charity No 1095069

TICKET DETAILS

**Lunchtime Vocal
Recitals
1.15pm**

**New College Antechapel
£2/£1 concessions
on the door**

*Handel
Alexander's
Feast*

6 June 2012

8.00pm

New College Chapel

Tickets

**£10 / £5 concessions
on the door**

Summer Opera

**Wednesday 4 (Preview)
Sunday 8 & Tuesday 10**

New Chamber Opera

Please download forms from

<http://www.newchamberopera.co.uk>

Saturday 7 & Friday 13

New College Development Office

(01865) 279 337

Tuesday 10

OXPIP (01865) 778 034

Wednesday 11

Friends of the Oxford Botanic Garden

(07722) 605 787

Saturday 14 & Sunday 15

Friends of WNO (01865) 408 045



Summer Opera



Mozart: Il re pastore

Conductor - Steven Devine; Director - Michael Burden

Aminta: Kate Semmens; **Elisa:** Rachel Shannon; **Tamiri:** Merryn Gamba; **Alessandro:** Adam Tunnicliffe;
Agenore: Tom Raskin

4 (Preview), 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 July 2012

The Warden's Garden, New College

When is a shepherd not a shepherd? An easy question you might think, but the answer - when he is really the rightful King of Sidon - may surprise even members of the most hardened opera audience. Introduce a shepherdess, Elisa, as his devoted lover, with a father's permission to marry him, and the confusions abound. Aminta goes to claim his throne from Alessandro, the King of

Macedonia, who has toppled the tyrant Stratone, and who now has interim power. The price of (reluctantly) claiming his throne, Aminta discovers, is that he has to wed Tamiri, the daughter of Stratone. Consternation! What will happen to Elisa, the woman he loves? Counterpoint to this (now) unhappy situation, is Tamiri herself, plus her own lover, Agenore, a local aristocrat; they are also happily in love and

planning to wed. All four are distressed at the proposed marriages, and finally, Tamiri and Elisa throw themselves at the mercy of Alessandro, who realizes he is about to commit an injustice, and agrees that the pairs of lovers can marry, and that Aminta can ascend the throne. One of Metastasio's most engaging plots, *Il re pastore* was first performed in 1751, and in Mozart's version in 1775.

Mailing List

Mailing Lists. Each hard copy and electronic mailing returns out of date addresses; it would be helpful if members of both mailing lists could keep their address up to date. Anyone who would like to join the electronic mailing list - used for reminders of forthcoming events - please let us know?

Joseph Volpe ... Humanitas Professor of Opera



**Oxford University's
Humanitas Visiting Chair of Opera**
Events are free and open to the public

Thursday, 26th April 2012, 5pm
Magdalen Auditorium
Inaugural Address:
'Whither opera in the 21st Century?'

Saturday, 28th April 2012
Magdalen Auditorium
2pm
Joseph Volpe in conversation
4.15pm
Round Table discussion:
'Opera: past, present and future'

Joseph Volpe has had a long and distinguished career in the world of the performing arts.

Joseph Volpe is best known for being General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera from 1990 to 2006. In all, he spent 42 years working at the Metropolitan Opera in various capacities, rising rapidly to managerial positions and was the first head of the Met Opera to advance from within the ranks of the company's management.

As General Manager, Volpe expanded the Met repertory by reducing the number of operas repeated from prior seasons and by increasing the overall length of the season. During his tenure, there were 4 world premieres, 22 Met premieres, and four commissions – more new works than under any other General Manager since Giulio Gatti-Casazza, who ran the company from 1908-1935. He also expanded the Met's international touring activities.

In 1998, Volpe instituted an education project for young children in cooperation with the City of New York Department of Education. The program emphasizes direct experience with music and opera for students in New York City schools. Volpe also established a partnership with the University of Connecticut that

provides students from the music and departments with behind-the-scenes access to the creative processes taking place in the opera house.

Volpe conceived and developed "Met Titles," an innovative titling system introduced during the 1995-96 season opening night performance of *Otello*. This system provides individual title screens on the backs of the seats for those members of the audience who wish to utilize them, but do not distract those who do not.

Sound fiscal management and fresh customer service initiatives characterized Volpe's tenure. Volpe strengthened the Met's administration through a re-organization and initiated the development of *Tessitura*, a management software program for conducting targeted marketing and fundraising appeals, which is now licensed to more than 200 opera companies worldwide.

Labor relations under Volpe's management were without contract disputes for over two decades, the longest period of labor peace in the company's history. In fact, Mr. Volpe's successor Peter Gelb hired him in February 2010 to represent the Met in its current negotiations with the labor unions. After leaving the Met, Volpe worked briefly as a consultant to Giuliani

Partners and then joined Theatre Projects Consultants, a leading theater design firm in 2008. At TPC, Volpe advises clients on all aspects of a project, from conception and design to daily operations and fiscal management. As their senior project advisor, he uses his diverse experience to provide valuable insights to major arts organizations as they move into new facilities or reorganize existing ones.

In addition to his project work, Volpe provides his expert counsel to TPC's US operations as a general advisor in all facets of the organization - from guiding their strategic development to acting as a senior advisor to the board.

Volpe has been a guest lecturer at Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. For five years he taught a course entitled "Managing in the Performing Arts" at New York University's Stern School of Business. He has received honorary degrees from numerous universities, including Georgetown University, Fordham University, and Hamilton College.

Mr. Volpe is the author of *The Toughest Show on Earth, My Rise and Reign at the Metropolitan Opera*, published by Random House in 2006.

Upcoming ... *Alexander's Feast*

Harry Sever introduces *Alexander's Feast*

Music by George Frideric Handel
Libretto by Newburgh Hamilton

Hear how Timotheus' various lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
While, at each change, the son of Libyan

Jove

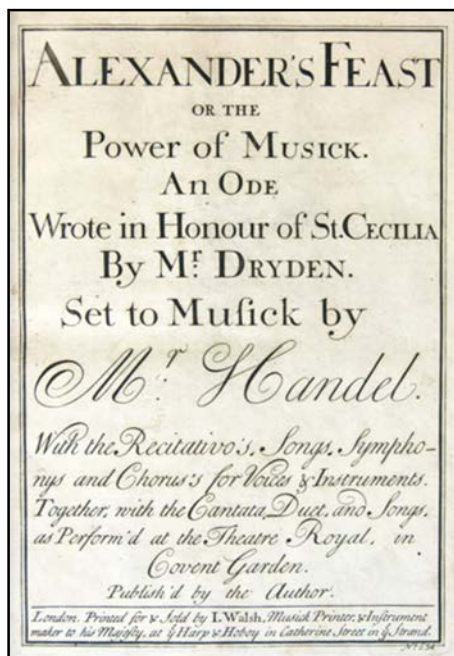
Now burns with glory, and then melts with
love;

Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow;
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature

found,

And the world's victor stood subdu'd by
sound!

This passage from Pope's 'Essay on Criticism' – which appeared on the title page of the programme at the first performance in 1736 – summarises the enormous variety of colours and emotions that Handel presents us in his great Ode, *Alexander's Feast*. Based on John Dryden's poem of the same name, it tells the story of a royal banquet held in Persepolis, the Persian city captured by the Greeks. Alexander the Great and his mistress Thaïs are



6th June 2012
8.00 pm
New College Chapel

entertained by the musician Timotheus, playing his lyre and singing. Alexander is so moved by Timotheus' music that he is driven to burn the city to the ground, seeking vengeance for the death of his soldiers.

On one level, the story deals with the personal drama of the king and his desire to exact revenge on the Persians. On a broader level, however, this is a piece that addresses the power of music itself, and it serves as an ode in honour of St. Cecilia, the patroness of musicians. Handel, playing the role of Timotheus, presents us with an array of different styles and moods: dramatic choruses; instrumental movements; virtuoso arias (including the famous 'Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries'); and even short concertos for harp and organ, imitating events onstage. We, the audience, are encouraged to play the role of Alexander – 'the world's victor...subdu'd by sound' – allowing alternate passions to 'fall and rise' with the rich variety of Handel's music. *Alexander's Feast* is an astonishing (if underappreciated) showcase, not only of singers and instrumentalists alike, but of the power of music itself.

Orpheus, as reviewed by Daniel Malcolm from *Oxford Theatre Review*

Orpheus in the Underworld is unusually a spoof of the same genre of which it is a classic; New Chamber Opera's production is a tribute to both its satirical and the artistic merits. The original butt of Offenbach's satire may be long forgotten, but his ironic perversion of antiquity's most tragic romance is funnier and Frenchier than ever (though there are a hell of a lot of very English puns about the underworld too). The only time sullen Orpheus – who, with his groomed goatee and cravat, looks like he's been plucked from Montmartre – shows any affection for Eurydice is when he mistakes her for his lover-shepherdess Cloe; meanwhile, Eurydice loathes her husband – especially his whining violin. Her shoulders coquettishly wiggle (ooh-la-la) not for him but for the devilishly dapper Pluto.

It's not just the terrestrial scenes which are so faithful to French infidelity (and unfaithful to myth). Heaven too seems a touch Parisian as the gods start a revolution over their Olympian diet of nectar and ambrosia

('Down with nectar – vive la révolution'). Jupy (Jupiter's pet name) keeps his tousled head of hair but loses his dignity as his lovers' panties are paraded across stage (one of which ended up hanging from the conductor's music stand). For all the fun he has with myth, Offenbach's real target was of course opera. And as Orpheus' smug commentary on the key changes indicates – he's the embodiment of the tradition under attack.

Indeed, there is as little love lost between Offenbach and the musical establishment as between the philistine Eurydice and the pretentious Orpheus. The irony is of course that Eurydice (the sublime Julia Sitkovetsky) is – like Offenbach – more musically masterful than the man she mocks. One moment she is literally buzzing up and down the operatic scales in an attempt to seduce a fly (Jupiter in a most peculiar disguise), the next she's shaking the Sheldonian with a high-pitch outpouring of bathetic passion.

At times the orchestra ended up playing second fiddle – and not just to Orpheus (whose melodramatic mimes of playing the violin are indeed accompanied by

the first violin). The opportunities for comic sound-effects weren't exploited often enough by instrumentalists content to remain in the background and support the singers. A notable exception was the use of the trombones' slides to simulate turbulence during the delightfully anachronistic flight of Orpheus to Olympus wearing a Biggles-style flying helmet. But Pluto's melodramatic revelation of his divine identity to Eurydice called for a bit more pyrotechnics from the brass – the lights went down on cue, but the volume didn't quite rise to the occasion. The whole orchestra did however muster gusto for the rumbustious can-can romp – the only time the pit really outshone the stage.

New Chamber Opera's fresh take on such baggage-laden scenes as the can-can showed that they are no more overawed by tradition than Offenbach himself (though Jupiter's attempts at contemporary dance left much to be desired). The imaginativeness and irreverence of the whole performance was epitomised by the three heads of Cerberus during the curtain-call when they lifted their back legs like a dog about to piss.