

operamission
from the composer to the audience

Thursday, January 16, 2014, 7:00 PM
Saturday, January 18, 2014, 3:00 PM
Sunday, January 19, 2014, 3:00 PM

Library, Fabbri Mansion
New York City

CLAUDIO, Roman emperor (41-54 A.D.) — Paul Goodwin-Groen, bass

AGRIPPINA, his wife — Karen Driscoll, soprano

NERONE, Agrippina's son from a previous marriage — Kimberly Sogioka, mezzo-soprano

OTTONE, commander of the imperial army — José Lemos, countertenor

POPPEA — Marcy Richardson, soprano

PALLANTE, a freedman — Jorell Williams, baritone

NARCISO, a freedman — Joseph Hill, countertenor

LESBO, servant to the emperor — Brian Mextorf, baritone

GIUNONE, the goddess — Sarah Nelson Craft, mezzo-soprano

conductor JENNIFER PETERSON

stage director JEFF CALDWELL

costume designer CHARLES CAINE

with the **operamission HANDEL Band** on historical period instruments

Opening night was made possible by Jo Dare and Bob Mitchell

original illustration by Tomi Um

AGRIPPINA

operamission HANDEL Band**continuo**

Jennifer Peterson, harpsichord
 Kevin Payne, theorbo
 Ezra Seltzer, baroque violoncello

concertmaster

Daniel S. Lee

baroque violins

Daniel S. Lee, Francis Liu, Katie Hyun
 Peter Kupfer, Dongmyung Ahn, Vita Wallace

baroque violas

Dan McCarthy, Jessica Garand

baroque violincello

Ezra Seltzer, Hannah Collins

baroque double bass

Doug Balliett

theorbo

Kevin Payne

baroque oboe, recorder

Aaron Reichelt, Lindsay McIntosh

baroque bassoon

Ben Matus

natural trumpet

Andrew Kozar, Bruno Lourensetto

Assitants to the Director

Katherine Leigh, Eugenio Contenti, Diego Diaz

Production Assistant

Nicholas Kuhn

Italian coach

Stefano de Peppo

AGRIPPINA

Dramma per musica in three acts

Music: **George Frideric Handel**

Libretto: **Vincenzo Grimani**

Place and Time:

Rome, around the middle of the first century

The ARGUMENT of the original printed libretto explains the background of the plot:

Agrippina, the daughter fo Augustus's nephew Germanicus, was the wife of Domitius Enobarbus, by whom she had a son called Domitius Nero. After her second marriage to the Emperor Claudius all her energies were bent on securing the throne for her son Nero; when an astrologer told her that her son would gain the empire but kill his mother, she replied: 'Let him kill me provided he becomes emperor.' This woman of great talent, eager to reign and as ambitious as she was powerful, so worked on her husband Claudius that she obliged him to give Nero the rank of Caesar. She owed her success to the spiritual weakness of Claudius, who was totally given over to luxury, off his guard and in love, and above all had won the glory of conquering Brittania for Rome. Ottone was the husband of Poppea, an ambitious and vain woman also loved by Nero, who later took her from Ottone and married her. Claudius put boundless trust in his freedman, especially Pallante and Narciso, who were also used by Agrippina.

ACT ONE**Sinfonia**

Agrippina's private apartments

Agrippina tells Nerone that the time is ripe for him to assume the throne, and shows him a letter announcing that Claudio has been drowned at sea. She advises him to lose no time in wooing the people with promises and bribes; he willingly agrees.

Aria – NERONE

*Con saggio tuo consiglio
 il trono ascenderò.
 Men Cesare che figlio
 te, madre, adorerò.*

With the wisdom your counsel
 I shall ascend the throne.
 Less an emperor than a son,
 you, mother, I shall adore.

Aware that Narciso and Pallante secretly desire her love, she summons Pallante.

She seats herself in a melancholy attitude.

Pretending to be distracted by love for him, she induces him to declare his devotion. She tells him that Claudio is dead and no one else knows; if he will go to the Capitol and stir up the people to proclaim Nerone emperor, she will accept him as her consort. He is delighted.

Aria – PALLANTE

*La mia sorte fortunata
dalle stelle oggi me discende,
se vien oggi da te.*

My propitious fate
descends today from the stars,
through you to me.

*Che in te sol, bella adorata,
la mia stella mi risplende
per gloria di mia fè.*

For in you alone, beautiful adored one,
my star shines on me,
making glorious my faithfulness.

He leaves.

She then follows the same tactics with Narciso, with the same result.

Aria – NARCISO

*Volo pronto lieto il core
è presago di gioire.*

I hurry away, my heart light
at the prospect of happiness.

*Volerò da loco a loco
sovra l'ali del mio amore,
e col fervido mio foco
farò pago il to desire.*

I shall fly from place to place
on the wings of love,
and with passionate fervor
shall do your bidding.

He leaves

Agrippina looks forward to enjoying the fruits of her cunning.

Aria – AGRIPPINA

*L'alma mia frà le tempeste
ritrovar spera il suo porto
Di costanza armato il petto,*

Amidst the tempest
my soul hopes to reach its port.
With constancy I've armed my breast.

*che d'un regno al dolce aspetto
le procelle più funeste
son oggetti di conforto.*

that with fair land in sight,
even the most baleful storms
seem objects of comfort.

The square in front of the Capitol

Arioso

NERONE, surrounded by the populace, distributing money

*Qual piacer a un cor pietoso
l'apportar sollievo a' miseri!*

What pleasure it affords a kind heart
to bring relief to the wretched!

Recitative

Here, you must have some too.

Arioso (cont.)

*Mà rassembra tormentoso
il veder frà turbe tante,
che vi manchi un zelo amante
almen commiseri.*

Yet it grieves me to see
that amidst all these crowds
you have no zealous supporter
to commiserate your state.

Pallante and Narciso sing his praises. Agrippina enters, announces the death of Claudio, and asks the people to choose a successor. Without waiting for them, she, Pallante, and Narciso in a quartet proclaim Nerone, who accepts.

Quartet

PALLANTE

Il tuo figlio

Your son...

NARCISO

La tua prole

Your offspring...

NARCISO, PALLANTE

*merta sol scettro e corone;
Viva Nerone!*

...alone deserves sceptre and crown;
long live Nerone!

AGRIPPINA

Viva Nerone!

Long live Nerone!

*Vieni, oh figlio, ascendi al trono,
vieni, oh Cesare di Roma*

Come, my son, ascend the throne.
Come, o emperor of Rome!

NERONE

*Al regnar giunto già sono,
vengo a cinger d'allor la chioma.*

To reign I am already ready,
I come to circle my locks with laurel.

*Agrippina and Nerone ascend the throne.
Trumpets are heard.*

Arietta

LESBO

Allegrezza!

Rejoice!

*Claudio giunge d'Anzio al porto;
che del mar ch'il volle assorto
domò Otton l'alta fierezza.*

Claudio is arrived at the port of Anzio;
Ottone subdued the vaunting pride of
the ocean, that wished him drowned.

Amid general consternation, Agrippina assures Nerone that he will get the throne in the end, and she avows her joy that Claudio is safe.

Lesbo announces the arrival of Ottone, whom the four conspirators (*aside*) blame as the cause of their misfortunes, and goes off to Poppea to make an assignation for Claudio.

Ottone explains how he saved Claudio, who promised him the succession as a reward. He asks to speak to Agrippina alone and tells her he loves Poppea more than the throne (he is not yet married to her).

She wins his confidence by agreeing to further his suit – but for her own purposes, for she is aware of Claudio's attachment to Poppea.

Aria – AGRIPPINA

*Tu ben degno
sei dell'allor,
(mà di sdegno
arde il mio cor.)*

Right worthy are you
of the laurel.
(My heart meanwhile
is aflame with anger.)

*Con l'oggetto
che fà il tuo amor
havrai nel petto
dolce l'ardor*

For the one
who inspires your love
a gentle flame
burns in your breast.

Ottone rejoices that the same day has promised him the throne and his love.

Aria – OTTONE

*Lusinghiera mia speranza,
L'alma mia non ingannar!
Sorte placida in sembianza,
il bel volto non cangiar!*

O flattering hope,
deceive not my heart!
Smiling fate,
do not change your countenance!

Poppea's chamber

Aria – POPPEA

*before the mirror
Vaghe perle,
eletti fiori,
adornatemi la fronte!*

Precious pearls,
Choice flowers,
adorn my brow!

*Accrescete a mia bellezza
la vaghezza
a svegliar nel petti amori
ha nel' cor le voglie pronte.*

Increase the rarity
of my beauty.
To awaken love in men's hearts
I have in mine a ready desire.

Ottone, Claudio, and Nerone have all declared their love, but none of them knows when she is telling the truth.

Lesbo informs her that Claudio will visit her this very night, and she pretends that all her thoughts have been about him; she will welcome him – as her sovereign, of course, not her lover.

Agrippina, who has overheard this, slips away delighted that fate is playing into her hands. Poppea wonders why Ottone is not coming rather than Claudio.

Aria – POPPEA

*È un foco quel d'amore
che penetra nel core,
mà come? non si sà.*

Love is a fire
that enters the heart.
But how? No one knows.

*S'acende a poco a poco,
mà poi non trova loco,
e consumar ti fà.*

It ignites very slowly,
but then grows larger
and burns you up completely.

Agrippina returns and asks if she loves Ottone. Terrified that Ottone has agreed to yield her to Claudio in return for the succession: if she wants revenge, let her make Claudio jealous by saying that Ottone has forbidden her to see him, then let her promise Claudio everything, but withhold it until he agrees to remove the cause of her unhappiness. Poppea falls into the trap. Agrippina promises to save her from Claudio's importunities.

Aria – AGRIPPINA

*Ho un non sò che nel cor,
che in vince di dolor
gioja mi chede.*

There is something in my heart
which instead of sorrow
prompts me to joy.

*Mà il cor, uso a temer,
le voci del piacer
o non intende ancor,
o inganno del pensier
forse le crede.*

But I accustom my heart to fear
the voices of pleasure.
Either it no longer listens,
or due to the mind's trickery
the heart perhaps believes them.

Poppea, horrified at Ottone's faithlessness, decides not to tolerate his contempt.

Aria – POPPEA

*Fà quanto vuoi
li scherni tuoi
non soffrirò.*

Do what you will,
I shall not suffer
your mockery!

*Dentro al mio petto
sdegno e vendetta resveglierò*

Within my breast
I shall awaken scorn and vengeance.

Aria – CLAUDIO

*Pur ritorno a rimirarvi,
vaghe luci, stelle d'amor.*

Once again I behold you in wonder,
my pretty eyes, my stars of love;

*Nè mai stanco d'adorarvi
offro in voto e l'alma e'l cor.*

never tired of worshipping you
I offer in tribute my soul and my heart.

She receives him coldly and follows Agrippina's plan, with embroideries of her own, repeatedly *looking off-stage* for Agrippina. Claudio declares that Ottone shall not be Emperor and begins to press his advances.

Arietta – CLAUDIO

*Vieni, oh cara,
ch'in lacci stretto
dolce diletto
Amor prepara!*

Come, my dear,
so that in a tight embrace
love may prepare
our sweet delight!

As he embraces her, Lesbo, who has been on guard, runs in and announces Agrippina: there is no time to lock the doors.

Trio

CLAUDIO

*E quando mai,
i sensi del tuo amor,
bella, godrò?*

POPPEA

Quando vorrai!

LESBO

Partiam, Signor!

And when
shall I enjoy your love,
my lovely?

Whenever you wish!

Let's go, my lord!

Claudio and Lesbo leave.

Agrippina, who has heard everything, and Poppea embrace, delighted at the success of their scheme.

Aria – AGRIPPINA

*Non hò cor che per amarti;
sempre amico a te sarà.*

My heart exists only to love you;
I shall always be your friend.

*Con sincero e puro affetto
io ti stringo a questo petto,
mai di frodi, inganni ed arti
sia trà noi l'infedeltà.*

With pure and sincere affection
I bind myself to your breast:
may trickery, deception and cunning
never come between us.

Poppea looks forward to punishing Ottone for putting his ambition above her love.

Aria – POPPEA

*Se giune un dispetto
a' danni del cor,
si cangia nel petto
l'amore in furor.*

If something vexatious
wounds the heart,
love changes to fury
in the breast.

*Non ama chi offende
o segue l'Amor,
il cor si diffende
da efimero ardor.*

He who offends
neither loves, nor follows Cupid;
so the heart defends itself
from a momentary passion.

ACT TWO

Act II opens in a street next to the imperial palace, decorated for Claudio's triumph. Pallante and Narciso, finding they have been hoodwinked, agree to join forces. Ottone enters, looking forward to his coronation.

Aria – OTTONE

*Coronato il crin d'alloro
io sarò nel campidoglio.*

Crowned with the laurel wreath
shall I be, on the Capitol.

*Mà più bramo il bel ch'adoro
che non fò corona e soglio.*

But greater still is my desire for the
beauty I adore than for either crown or
throne.

The freedmen pay him compliments. Agrippina, Poppea, Nerone, and attendants come down from the palace. In a dialogue full of asides Agrippina tells Ottone she gave Poppea his message, and Poppea that it was a request for forgiveness.

Before her lies can be exposed Claudio enters "in a triumphal machine," and all greet him in chorus.

Chorus

*Di timpani e trombe
al suono giulivo
il giorno festivo
per tutto rimbombe!*

To the joyous clamor
of trumpets and drums
our festal day
resounds for all!

*Roma aplauda il gran Regnante,
viva Claudio trionfante!*

Rome cheers on its great ruler.
Long live triumphant Claudio!

Descending from the machine, he boasts of his conquest of Brittania and the sea.

Aria – CLAUDIO

*Cade il mondo soggiogato
e fà base al Roman soglio*

Let the subjugated world fall
and become the foundation of the
Roman throne.

*Mà quel regno fortunato
ch'è soggetto al campidoglio!*

For what a happy realm
is that subject to the Capitol!

Agrippina greets him with a great show of devotion, and the others pay obsequious respect. He welcomes them (with a whispered assurance of his love to Poppea), but when Ottone asks for his promised reward he denounces him as a traitor. Thunderstruck, Ottone appeals in turn to Agrippina, Poppea, and Nerone. Each rejects him in a brief aria and goes out...

Aria – AGRIPPINA

*Nulla sperar da me,
anima senza fè,
cor traditore!*

Expect no help from me,
you faithless,
treacherous man!

*Fasto che t'abbagliò,
perchè non t'additò
cotanto orrore?*

Dazzled by splendor
was your vicious crime
not apparent to you?

She leaves.

Recitative – OTTONE

And you, Poppea, my beloved!

Aria – POPPEA

*Tuo ben è' l trono,
io non son più tuo ben.*

Your beloved is the throne,
I am no longer your beloved.

*È quello il tuo contento,
ed io per te ne sento
la gioja del mio sen.*

And there lies your contentment,
and I feel for you
joy in my heart

She leaves.

Recitative – OTTONE

Help me, Nerone, for pity's sake!

Aria – NERONE

*Sotto il lauro che hai sul crine
le sciagure e le ruine
tu non puoi già paventar.
Anch' il fulmine rispetta
quella fronde, ch'è oggi eletta
la tua fronte a coronar.*

Protected by the laurel on your brow
misfortune and ruin
surely cannot dismay you?
Even the thunderbolt respects
the foliage which today is chosen
to adorn your head.

He leaves.

...followed by Narciso, Pallante, and Lesbo: Caesar's enemy is also theirs. He reproaches Claudio, his friends, the gods, and most of all Poppea for their unjust accusations, and calls on the listeners to pity his grief.

Accompagnato – OTTONE

O Ottone, what dreadful thunderbolt is this!

Ah, ungrateful Caesar, faithless friends, unjust heaven!

Yet how much more unjust, ungrateful and unfaithful than heaven,

Caesar or friends, is Poppea!
I, a traitor? I, a monster of unfaithfulness?
Ah, heavens, ah, wicked fate!
Could any suffering be worse than mine?

Aria – OTTONE

*Voi che udite
il mio lamento,
compatite il mio dolor!*

You who hear
my lament,
share my grief with me.

*Perdo un trono, e pur lo sprezzo;
mà quel ben che tanto apprezzo,*

I lose a throne, which I despise,
but my beloved, whom I prize so
greatly,

*ahi che perderlo è tormento
che disanima il mio cor.*

ah! what torment it is to lose her,
unmanning my very heart within.

A garden with fountains.

Aria – POPPEA

*Bella pur nel mio diletto
mi sarebbe l'innocenza.*

How lovely it would be
to find my beloved innocent.

*Un desio mi sento in petto
che vorrebbe usar clemenza.*

I feel an urge within me
to be merciful.

Seeing him approach, thoughtful and sad, *she sits by a fountain and feigns sleep.* He begins to address the fountain...

Arioso – OTTONE

*Vaghe fonti, che mormorando
serpeggiate nel seno all'erbe...*

Pretty streams that, murmuring,
wind along your grassy way...

...sees her apparently asleep.

Arioso (cont.)

*Voi dormite, oh luci care,
e la pace gode il core.*

You sleep, o lovely eyes,
and peace refreshes your heart.

Pretending to dream, she calls out several times 'Ottone traditore!'

Arioso (cont.)

*Anch' il sonno, oh Dio, t'inganna,
perch'io sembri un infedele!*

Even sleep, o god! deceives you,
since you think me unfaithful!

*Dimmi almen, qual sia il fallire
che cagiona il tuo rigore?*

Tell me, at least,
what fault engenders your coldness?

He hides when she appears to wake up and, seemingly speaking to herself, asks how he can deny that he surrendered her to Claudio in return for the throne. He throws himself at her feet and, preventing her departure, gives her his sword to stab him if she still thinks him guilty. She takes it and turns the point towards him. When she hesitates between believing him or Agrippina, he denounces the latter with such vigour that Poppea silences him. Let him come to her house when it is safe, and if he is innocent she will pity him. She gives him back his sword.

Aria – OTTONE

*Ti vo' giusta e non pietosa,
bella mia, nel giudicarmi.*

I would have you just, not merciful,
my darling, in judging me.

*Tutto son, tutto innocente!
se poi trovi il cor che mente,
ti perdono il condannarmi.*

I am completely innocent!
if then you find my heart has lied,
I shall forgive your condemnation.

Poppea now understands the motive for Agrippina's lies and resolves to have vengeance.

Aria – POPPEA

*Ingannata una sol volta
esser posso, mà non più.*

Deceived just once
I can be – but not more.

*Quando crede il cor ascolta;
mà scoperta poi la frode
fassi sordo, e più non ode*

When it trusts, the heart listens;
but once deception is uncovered
it makes itself deaf, and no longer
hearkens

chi mendace un giorno fù.

to the one who lied the day before.

When Lesbo requests an assignation for Claudio at her house she accepts in the hope that it may further her design. Nerone now appears; she decides to play him up for her own ends and invites him too.

Aria – POPPEA

*Col peso del tuo amor
misura il tuo piacer
e la tua spene!*

Against the weight of your love
measure your pleasure
and your hope.

*Sè fedele il tuo cor,
spera pur di goder,
e sperì bene.*

If your heart is faithful,
it hopes for pleasure,
and your hope is well-founded.

Aria – NERONE

*Quando invita la donna l'amante
è vicino d'amore il piacer.*

When a woman invites her lover,
love's pleasure is close at hand.

*Il dir: vieni ad un istante,"
egli è un dir, "vieni a goder!"*

When she says: "Come straightaway,"
it's a way of saying: "Come and enjoy
yourself!"

Agrippina's apartments.

Aria – AGRIPPINA

Pensieri, voi mi tormentate.

Thoughts, how you torment me,

*Ciel, soccorri a miei disegni,
il mio figlio fà che regni,
e voi Numi il secondate!*

May heaven aid my plans!
Let my son reign,
smile upon him, you gods!

Agrippina has trusted Narciso and Pallante too far, fears Ottone's merit and Poppea's courage, and plans further mischief.

She promises Pallante her love if he will dispose of Narciso and Ottone; with a remark about her tigerish heart he gives an equivocal promise to keep faith.

Aria – PALLANTE

*Col raggio placido della speranza
la mia costanza
lusinghi in me.*

With a mild ray of hope
my constancy
leads me on.

*Così quest' anima di più non chiede,
ch'è la sua fede
la sua mercè.*

So my heart seeks no more
than her faith
and compassion.

A similar scene is at once enacted with Narciso.

Aria – NARCISO

*Spererò, poichè mel dice
quel bel labro, oh donna Augusta!*

Then I shall hope,
since these lovely lips tell me to, o
regal woman.

*E se spero esser felice,
la mia speme, ellaè ben giusta.*

And if I hope to be happy,
such hope is reasonable.

When Claudio enters, full of hypocritical affection, she pretends to fear for his safety and avises him to frustrate Ottone's hopes by declaring Nerone his successor.

Before he goes to meet Poppea she makes him swear to publish the announcement the same day.

Aria – CLAUDIO

*Basta che sol tu chieda,
per ottener da me
bocca amorosa.*

It is enough for you to ask
for me to give,
my pretty lips.

*Solo ch'il cor ti veda
tutto si perde in te,
guancia vezzosa!*

As soon as I see your heart,
all is lost in you,
pretty cheeks.

Recitative – AGRIPPINA

Fate smiles favorably on me today, provided that my beloved son is Caesar, I can meet any danger.

Aria – AGRIPPINA

*Ogni vento ch'al porto lo spinga,
ben che fiero minacci tempeste,
l'ampie vele gli spande il nocchier.*

Whatever wind blow him to port,
no matter how fiercely threaten the
tempest,
the mariner spreads wide his sails.

*Regni il figlio, mia sola lusinga,
sian le stelle in aspetto funeste,*

If my son reign, my one hope,
let the stars show however dismal an
aspect,
yet will I look on unconcerned.

senza pena le guarda il pensier.

ACT THREE

Act III opens in *Poppea's room, with a doorway in front and two others at the side*. Assuring Ottone of her love, she tells him to hide and contain his jealousy, whatever he hears.

Aria – OTTONE

*Tacerò, purchè fedele
nel tuo sen conservi amor.*

I will be silent,
as long as you truly love me.

*Soffrirò, benchè crudele
contro me sia tuo rigór.*

I will endure, though your coldness
towards me be cruel.

He hides.

Nerone enters, ardent and out of breath.

Poppea says she loves him (to Ottone's secret agony) but tells him he is late: Agrippina is coming (*she looks off-stage*), and he must hide till she has gone.

Aria – NERONE

*Coll' ardor del tuo bel core
fà più rapidi i momenti!*

May your dear heart's passion
make the moments pass more
quickly!

*Che famelico il mio amore
troppo è già de' suoi contenti.*

For my love is already quite ravenous
for its satisfaction.

He hides.

Next come Claudio and Lesbo. Poppea chides the Emperor for not really loving her. When he points to all he has done for her, mentioning the punishment of Ottone, she *pretends to weep* and says it was not Ottone who imposed on her but Nerone. Claudio is incredulous but promises revenge if she can prove her statement. She *leads him to the doorway in front, goes to Nerone's doorway and draws the curtain*. Thinking Claudio has gone, Nerone emerges and is denounced by the angry Emperor, to the delight of Poppea and Ottone. He departs, relying on Agrippina to avenge him. Poppea now asks Claudio to protect her against Agrippina: not till his consort's rage is assuaged shall he enjoy her love.

Aria – CLAUDIO

*Io di Roma il Giove sono,
nè v'è già chi meco imperi.*

I am the God of Rome,
and share my power with none.

*Van ramminghi al piè del trono,
dov' io son, gl'altrui pensieri.*

Around the foot of my throne
flit the ambitions of others.

Poppea makes Ottone promise that he loves her more than anyone or anything, including the throne.

Aria – OTTONE

*Pur ch'io ti stringa al sen,
mio caro e dolce ben,
io son contento.*

So long as I may clasp you to my
breast,
my sweetest love,
I am happy.

*Senza di te, mio cor,
è tutto in me dolor,
tutto è tormento*

But without you, my own heart,
I am nothing but pain,
nothing but torment.

Recitative – POPPEA

Then fold your wings, my Cupid, to repose within the sweet nest of my heart.

Aria – POPPEA

*Bel piacere
è godere
fido amor!
questo fà contento il cor.*

To enjoy
faithful love
is true pleasure!
It brings the heart contentment.

*Di bellezza
non s'apprezza
lo splendor,
se non vien d'un fido cor.*

Beauty's splendor
has no worth
unless its source is a faithful heart.

The imperial hall.

Nerone asks for Agrippina's help against the wrath of Claudio. She rebukes him for spoiling her plans through his rash love and tells him to abandon Poppea: only the throne is worthy of him. He renounces all base desires.

Aria – NERONE

<i>Come nube che fugge dal vento abbandono sdegnato quel volto.</i>	As a cloud flies from the wind, I renounce her despised face.
<i>Il mio foco nel seno già spento, di quest' alma già il laccio è disciolto.</i>	The fire now cold within my breast, my heart has already loosed its chain.

Pallante and Narciso inform Claudio of Agrippina's double-dealing and confess their own misdemeanors. Claudio is more puzzled than ever as to who is telling the truth; but their words corroborate Poppea, and he offers them his protection. When Agrippina renews her pleas on Nerone's behalf, Claudio accuses her of usurping his power. She admits it, but says it was for the safety of the city and the throne: did not Nerone step down when Claudio was found to be safe? She calls on Pallante and Narciso to witness the truth of her account, and they shamefacedly confirm it. Claudio is forced to admit her good faith; but she is not so sure of his, and taxes him with taking his cue from Poppea. When she says Ottone loves Poppea, he lays the blame on Nerone and sends for all three. Agrippina is confident of turning the tables. Claudio hopes to sort out the tangle and live in peace.

Aria – AGRIPPINA

<i>Se vuoi pace, oh volto amato, l'odio reo fuga da te!</i>	If you want peace, oh my beloved, may your vile hatred flee from you!
<i>Guard' in me, nume adorato, il mio amore e la mia fè.</i>	See in me, adored god, my love and my loyalty.

When Poppea, Nerone, and Ottone arrive, Claudio accuses Nerone of hiding in Poppea's room. He cannot deny it. But Claudio causes general consternation by ordering Nerone to marry Poppea and proclaiming Ottone his successor.

Ottone refuses the throne: the loss of Poppea would be tantamount to death. Agrippina asks who loves Poppea now.

Claudio finally satisfies everyone by reversing the male roles. After adding (as an aside) that his heart is now free from Poppea now that she is loved by another, he invokes Juno to bless the marriage of Ottone and Poppea.

All rejoice at the double triumph of love and empire.

Chorus

<i>Lieto il Tebro in crespi l'onda sotto ai rai del nuovo allor,</i>	May the happy Tiber curl its waves beneath the new laurel's glitter,
--	---

<i>e festeggi su la sponda pien di gioja il Dio d'amor!</i>	and may the god of love disport himself gaily to the shore!
---	--

Recitative – GIUNONE

To celebrate the joining of Ottone and Poppea,
Giunone descends from heaven to scatter lilies,
and from the sublime bridal bed I happily expect
new vassals for Claudio,
and new sons for exalted Rome.

Aria – GIUNONE

<i>V'accendano le tede i raggi delle stelle.</i>	Let the rays of the stars light up our nuptial torches.
<i>Esse per tanta fede già splendono più belle.</i>	In honor of such faithfulness they shine all the more brilliantly.

Fine dell'Opera

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

COSTUME DESIGNER – **Charles Caine** brings his wealth of talents and experience to operamission for our first fully-costumed production. After 16 seasons as resident costume designer at the Metropolitan Opera, he designed for many other opera companies, including Canadian Opera, Montreal Opera, San Francisco, Seattle, San Diego, Chicago Lyric, Washington Opera, Philadelphia, Orlando, Dallas, Houston, Miami, and NYCO. His designs have appeared in the acclaimed PBS-TV production of *Luisa Miller* starring Domingo, Milnes and Scotto. He is also now presenting lectures recalling the glories from the Golden Days backstage at the Met.

STAGE DIRECTOR – **Jeff Caldwell** returns to operamission with this third opera in the Handel series. He holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and Indiana University School of Music. He sings with the Brick Presbyterian Chancel Choir just a few blocks away from this lovely new venue.

GIUNONE – **Sarah Nelson Craft**, mezzo-soprano, is a versatile performer, equally at home with opera, oratorio, and art song from the Baroque to Contemporary. Most recently she sang the role of Ninetta in Verdi's *Les vêpres siciliennes* at the Caramoor Festival in Katonah, NH. In the last two seasons she performed at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall as the alto soloist in both Bach's *Mass in B minor* and Handel's *Messiah* with the National Chorale. Other recent performances include the title role in Rossini's *La cenerentola* with Fargo-Moorhead Opera and Second Woman in *Dido and Aeneas* at the Macau International Music Festival in China. A devotee of new music, Ms. Craft frequently works with living composers to premiere new works and has sung in many readings of new operas with American Opera Projects.

AGRIPPINA – **Karen Driscoll**, soprano, She has attracted considerable interest from her appearances throughout North America during past numerous seasons performing leading soprano roles for Seattle Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Florentine Opera, L'Opéra de Montréal, Virginia Opera, Baltimore Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas, Vancouver Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera/Columbus, Toledo Opera, Opera Carolina, Hawaii Opera Theater, Fresno Grand Opera, New Jersey State Opera, Long Beach Opera and Palm Beach Opera just to name a few. Karen is also an active recitalist and concert artist.

CLAUDIO – **Paul Goodwin-Groen**, bass, has sung in London at the Royal Opera House, with the Royal Ballet and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, at the Sydney Opera House and in Germany. He has recently returned to NYC.

NARCISO – Countertenor **Joseph Hill**'s credits include his critically acclaimed 2010 off-Broadway debut in *The Last Castrato*, his 2011 New York operatic debut singing the roles of Il Destino and Satirino in Cavalli's *La Calisto* with the Vertical Player Repertory, ongoing engagements with La Fiocco Baroque Ensemble and Vox Fidelis throughout the 2013-2014 season, Tolomeo in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* for the Metropolitan Opera Guild, and 2012 winner of the Orpheus Handel Award at the National Orpheus Vocal Competition. Upcoming engagements include the role of Narciso in Handel's *Agrippina* with Operamission in January of 2014. Mr. Hill is in his ninth year as Director of Music and Organist at the Community Presbyterian Church of Mountainside, NJ, where he maintains an active piano and voice studio and conducts the Mountainside Community Chorus in annual concerts.

CONCERTMASTER – Period violinist **Daniel S. Lee** enjoys a varied career as a soloist, chamber musician, concertmaster, and teacher. Praised for his “ravishing vehemence” [New York Times], he has appeared as a soloist and guest concertmaster with the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, American Baroque Orchestra, Baroque Orchestra of Maine, Quodlibet Ensemble, San Francisco Bach Choir, and Yale Collegium Players. He also regularly collaborates with TENET. With his ensemble, the Sebastians (www.sebastians.org), he won the Audience Prize at the 2012 Early Music America Baroque Performance Competition, and was a finalist of the 2011 York Early Music International Competition. As a violino piccolo specialist, he frequently appears as a soloist in Bach's first Brandenburg Concerto and cantata 140, and has given the modern-day premiere of his own transcription of Johann Pfeiffer's concerto. He is on the violin, viola and chamber music faculty at Connecticut College. More information can be found at www.danielslee.com.

OTTONE – **José Lemos** won the 2003 International Baroque Vocal Competition in Chimay, Belgium. A native of Brazil and Uruguay, he has since appeared in operas across the globe: Tanglewood—Britten *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*Oberon*), Boston Baroque—Handel *Giulio Cesare* (*Julius Caesar*), Zurich Opera—*Giulio Cesare* (*Nireno*) and *Agrippina* (*Narciso*), Buenos Aires—Monteverdi *Poppea* (*Arnalta*), Seattle Early Music Guild—*Poppea* (*Ottone*), Göttingen Handel Festival—*Giulio Cesare* (*Tolomeo*), and in two operas at the Boston Early Music Festival—Lully *Psyche* (*Silène*), and Steffani's *Niobe* (*Nerea*). He has also performed with Wm. Christie's *Les Arts Florissants* throughout Europe and at Lincoln Center, and in 2008 and 2013 he sang the role of Darius in The Cloisters *Play of Daniel*. Last season, he also appeared with Opera de Nice in Scarlatti's *Tigrane*, and Vlaamse Opera Ghent in *Agrippina* with Paul McCreesh. In addition to opera, he tours in a recital of baroque arias with harpsichordist Jory Vinikour and thorbist Deborah Fox, and in repertoires of renaissance music with The Baltimore Consort.

LESBO – Baritone **Brian Mextorf** recently made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut as Judas in Bach's *Mattäuspasion* under the baton of Maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Other recent highlights include Gianni Schicchi (*Gianni Schicchi*), Four Villains (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Demetrius (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Guglielmo and Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), and Keçal (*Bartered Bride*) with Westminster Opera Theatre and Oberlin Opera Theatre. In 2012 as a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Brian “excelled in three smaller roles” (Opera News) as Frog Footman/Seven in the American Premiere of Unsuk Chin's *Alice in Wonderland*. Brian holds a Bachelor of Music from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and is currently a student of Laura Brooks Rice at Westminster Choir College.

THEORBO – Lutenist **Kevin Payne** is active as a recitalist, accompanist, and continuo player in the New York area. Kevin is a member of Juilliard 415, the Buxtehude Consort, and the Peabody Consort, with whom he recently completed a tour of Taiwan. Recent ensemble work includes performances with the Yale Schola Cantorum, Bard College Opera, Juilliard 415, and Hesperus, and he has worked with noted conductors including William Christie, Monica Huggett, Jordi Savall, and Masaaki Suzuki. Performance venues include Alice Tully Hall and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan. Kevin was chosen to represent the Lute Society of America for their 2011 Emerging Artist Recital series at the Boston Early Music Festival.

POPPEA – **Marcy Richardson**, soprano. Hailed by the New York Times for her "clear, pealing voice" (Musica Nuova-The Arianna Project) and Opera News for her "best all-around performance" as a "perfect seconda donna" (Princeton Festival-role of Dalinda in Handel's *Ariodante*), soprano Marcy Richardson has performed and recorded an entire program of Handel's Seconda Donna arias with the Operamission Handel Band. When she's not singing Handel, she is often championing new music and premiering contemporary works throughout the city, or training on aerial hoop and pole, her other passion. Originally from Grosse Pointe, MI, Ms. Richardson graduated from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music with both her BM and MM in voice performance. Please visit www.marcyrichardson.com

CONTINUO VIOLONCELLO – Lauded for his "beauty of tone and keenness of musicianship" (Opera Britannia), cellist **Ezra Seltzer** is a founding member and principal cellist of the Sebastians, and has performed as guest principal cellist of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Musica Angelica, Orchester Wiener Akademie, and the Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra. He has also appeared as a soloist and principal cellist at the Boulder Bach Festival, and was associate principal cellist at the Carmel Bach Festival this past summer. With the vocal ensemble TENET, he performed at the Festival Casals de Puerto Rico as well as at Berkshire Bach in Massachusetts. In New York, he regularly performs chamber music at Helicon Foundation Symposia, the 4x4 Baroque Music Festival, and at Music Before 1800. This season he will also appear with the Portland Baroque Orchestra, Baroque Band, and New York Baroque Incorporated.

NERONE – Praised by Opera (UK) as "...the most opulent female sound on the stage..." young Japanese-American mezzo-soprano **Kimberly Sogioka** is drawing much attention as an exciting artist on the operatic and concert stage. Ms. Sogioka's 2013/14 season engagements include Giovanna in *Rigoletto* with Opera New Jersey, and Nerone in *Agrippina* with operamission, Dulcinée in Massenet's rarely performed *Don Quichotte* with Utopia Opera, a solo song recital of Berlioz and de Falle at her alma mater La Sierra University, as well as singing Angelina in *La Cenerentola* in masterclasses with the Metropolitan Opera Guild in New York City. A frequent collaborator with composers in new music projects, Ms. Sogioka created the role of Nurse 3 in the Metropolitan Opera and English National Opera workshop of Michael Torke's *Senna*, Susanna in Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* with the Aspen Opera Theatre Center, and has collaborated with Clint Borzoni in his world premier operas *Margot Alone in the Light* and *Antinous and Hadrian*, as well as with Stephen Andrew Taylor in scenes from his opera *Paradises Lost* with operamission.

PALLANTE – **Jorell Williams**, acclaimed by The New York Times for his "magnificent, rich toned" baritone and his "perfect" comic timing, is gaining international success on both the opera and concert stages. Upcoming performances include recitals with Grammy Award nominee Damien Sneed, as well as role debuts with Opera on the Avalon, OperaMission, Syracuse Opera, and contemporary works with the American Opera Projects Composers and the Voice series. He has performed with the Caramoor Festival, Chautauqua Opera, Amarillo Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Opera North, Ravinia Steans Music Institute, Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance, Mark Morris Dance Company, New York City Encores!, Essential Voices USA, and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

operamission.org

Conductor and harpsichordist **Jennifer Peterson** is the director of **operamission**, a new arts organization which is currently completed its twenty-first presentation since its founding in February of 2009. **operamission** has been bringing opera, chamber music, art song, and cabaret to audiences in the lobby of the Gershwin Hotel in the New York City's Flatiron District in inventive new ways, as in its laboratory-style presentation 'Così fan tutte: Some Assembly Required,' a chronological cabaret of Kurt Weill's vocal music, operatic world premieres, and Handel operas presented with historical instruments, including the recently critically acclaimed North American premiere of Handel's first opera, *Almira, Königin von Castilien*, never before staged outside of Germany and Austria.

Ms. Peterson has appeared at over fifty opera companies in the United States and internationally, including the New York City Opera, Opera Memphis, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Des Moines Metro Opera, and the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv, Israel. Having received her musical training at the Oberlin College-Conservatory of Music, the Indiana University School of Music, and the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY where she co-founded the Rochester Chamber Opera, Ms. Peterson has also been actively involved in historical performance as a harpsichordist and chamber musician, as well as being an avid purveyor of new opera to new audiences.

Born in Anchorage, Alaska, Jennifer grew up on the west coast and has been residing in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens, since 1997 while maintaining an active vocal coaching studio in midtown Manhattan.

operamission's 2012-13 season included an interactive presentation of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the work's premiere; a Winter Cabaret Evening, presenting the winners of a Cabaret Song Composition Contest held on Twitter, co-hosted by Peterson, composer/songwriter Michael Ching, and baritone/composer Michael Weyandt. Informal Art Song jam sessions in the spirit of 21st-century Schubertiads are a recent addition to operamission's offerings. The season culminated in May of 2013 with the North American premiere of Handel's first Italian opera *Rodrigo*, which premiered in Florence in 1707.

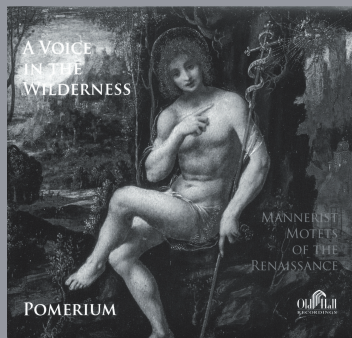
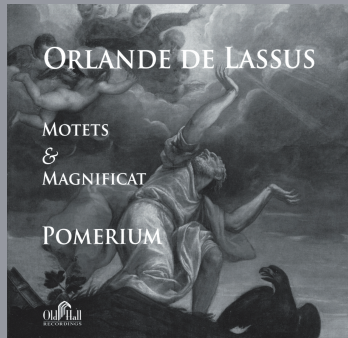
And in August of 2013 operamission collaborated with New York's Queer Urban Orchestra in a public reading of composer Clint Borzoni and librettist Edward Ficklin's full-length opera *Antinous and Hadrian*, commissioned and developed by **operamission**.

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For those interested in contributing to **operamission**, please visit **operamission.org/support** at your convenience. We've got 36 Handel operas to go!

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Agrippina was premiered in Venice, Italy at the Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo on December 26, 1709, led by the composer.

Agrippina: Margherita Durastanti and Elena Croce
 Poppea: Diamante Maria Scarabelli
 Ottone: Francesca Maria Vanini-Boschi
 Claudio: Antonio Francesco Carli
 Nerone: Valeriano Pellegrini
 Pallante: Giuseppe Maria Boschi
 Narciso: Giuliano Albertini
 Lesbo: D. Niccolo Pasini
 Giunone: (?)

The edition used for this production was **Friedrich Chrysander's**, published in Leipzig on January 1, 1874.

We would also like to acknowledge author **Winton Dean** (1916-2013) for his vast contribution of research on Handel's 39 operas, and from whose book *Handel's Operas* the above synopsis was drawn.

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