

EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER

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T R A N S C E N D I N G   T I M E

# G.F. Handel's Theodora

A NORTHWEST BAROQUE MASTERWORKS PROJECT

Saturday, 14 February, 2015  
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

with the generous support of the

vancouver  
foundation

## THE ARTISTS

**Alexander Weimann**  
MUSIC DIRECTOR & HARPSICHORD

VOCAL SOLOISTS:

**Nathalie Paulin**  
SOPRANO

**Krisztina Szabó**  
MEZZO-SOPRANO

**Lawrence Zazzo**  
COUNTERTENOR

**Zachary Wilder**  
TENOR

**Matthew Brook**  
BASS-BARITONE

**Pacific Baroque Orchestra**

**Vancouver Cantata Singers**  
(Choir prepared by Paula Kremer)

This project was made possible in part  
through the generous support of

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foundation



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## PROGRAMME

George Frideric Handel  
(1685-1759)

# Theodora

(1750)

- AN ORATORIO -

Words by Thomas Morell

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

**Theodora**  
a Christian of noble birth  
**Nathalie Paulin**  
(soprano)

**Didymus**  
a Roman Officer, converted and in love with Theodora

**Lawrence Zazzo**  
(alto)

**Septimius**  
his friend

**Zachary Wilder**  
(tenor)

**Valens**  
President of Antioch  
**Matthew Brook**  
(bass)

**Irene**  
a Christian  
**Krisztina Szabó**  
(mezzo-soprano)

**Chorus of Christians**

**Chorus of Heathens**



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# THE MUSICIANS

## Alexander Weimann

MUSIC DIRECTOR, HARPSICHORD & ORGAN

## VANCOUVER CANTATA SINGERS

(Choir prepared by Paula Kremer)

SOPRANO	ALTO	TENOR	BASS
Anne Bonnycastle	Melanie Adams	Dean Edmundson	Peter Alexander
Rachel Brown	Maureen Bennington	Kris Fulton	Andy Booth
Missy Clarkson	Brittany Bird	Trevor Mangion	Derrick Christian
Laurie Edmundson	Ann Chen	Gower Roberts	Doug Colpitts
Sarah McGrath	Tiffany Chen	Clinton Stoffberg	Chris Doughty
Wendy McMillan	Liz Hamel	Troy Topnik	Matthew Fisher
Benila Ninan	Beth Helsley	Jamie Turner	Jacob Gramit
Madeline Lucy Smith	Sarah McNair	Orrin Doyle	Gerald Harder
	Joshua Haberman		J. Evan Kreider
			Bernard Lambrechts

(Rehearsal accompanist: Christina Hutton)

## PACIFIC BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I	<b>Chloe Meyers</b> (concertmaster) - unknown builder (Italy, c. 1760) <b>Christi Meyers</b> - Ekhard Seidl (1998), after Giuseppe Guarneri <b>Tekla Cunnigham</b> - Sanctus Seraphin (Venice, 1746) <b>Angela Malmberg</b> - Jason Viseltear & John Young (New York City, 2004), after Pietro Guarneri (Mantua, 1701) <b>Arthur Neele</b> - Hendrick Jacobs and his stepson Pieter Rombouts (Amsterdam, c. 1700)
VIOLIN II	<b>Linda Melsted</b> - Nicolò Amati (Cremona, 1670) <b>Paul Luchkow</b> - Christopher Dungey (Eugene OR, 1986), after Jacob Stainer <b>Christine Wilkinson Beckman</b> - Jason Viseltear (New York City, 2011) after instruments by Giuseppe Testore <b>Brandon Vance</b> - Jan Pawlikowski (Krakow, Poland, 2007) after Marcin Grobicz I.
VIOLA	<b>Mieka Michaux</b> - William Forster (English, 18th C.) <b>Glenys Webster</b> - John Newton (Toronto, 1991) <b>Joanna Hood</b> - Edmond Aireton (London, c. 1754)
VIOLONCELLO	<b>David Morris</b> - Bohemian, maker unknown (c. 1810) <b>Nathan Whittaker</b> - Gustav Griener (Breitonfeld, Germany, 1875)
VIOLONE	<b>Natalie Mackie</b> - Dominic Zuchowicz (1991), after Gasparo da Salò
DOUBLE BASS	<b>Curtis Daily</b> - from the atelier of Ignazio Ongaro (Venice, c.1770)
OBOE	<b>Curtis Foster</b> - Sand Dalton (Lopez Island, WA, 2004) after J.H. Eichentopf (Leipzig, c. 1720) <b>Kristen Olson</b> - Joel Robinson (Wilsonville OR, 2011) after Saxon-style oboes, c. 1720
BASSOON	<b>Katrina Russell</b> - Olivier Cottet (1986) after Eichentopf (Leipzig, early 18th C.)
TRUMPET	<b>Kris Kwapis</b> - Frank Tomes (London, 2002), after Johann Leonhard Ehe III (Nuremberg, Germany, 1746) <b>Bruno Lourensetto</b> - Rainer Egger (Basel, 2012) after Johann Wilhelm Hass (Nuremberg, Germany, 1746)
NATURAL HORN	<b>Andrew Clark</b> - Andreas Jungwirth (Vienna, 1996), after Leichnamschneider (Vienna, c. 1720) <b>Steve Denroche</b> - Syhre Parforce (Germany, 2010) after Leichnamschneider (Vienna, 18th C.)
FLUTE	<b>Soile Stratkauskas</b> - Martin Wenner (Singen, Germany, 2004) after Carlo Palanca (Torino, c. 1750)
ORGAN	<b>Michael Jarvis</b> - baroque-style chamber & continuo organ by Helmuth Wolff (Laval, QC, 1995), from the instrument collection of Early Music Vancouver
LUTE	<b>Konstantin Bozhinov</b> - 14-course archlute by Jason Petty (Wellington, NZ, 2011) after Matteo Sellas (Venice, 17th C.)
TIMPANI	<b>Mark Goodenberger</b> - baroque-style 18th-century "Pauken" in the Viennese tradition by Peter Kogan (Minnesota, 2012), from the instrument collection of Early Music Vancouver

## PROGRAMME NOTES

By 1749, George Frideric Handel (Georg Friedrich Händel) was still revered as England's foremost composer, though keeping ahead of the ever-changing whims of London's notoriously fickle audiences was an ongoing challenge. The 65-year-old's obligations for the coming season were daunting. He was to provide Fireworks Music in celebration of the recent Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, inspect and inaugurate the new pipe organ he was donating to the Foundling Hospital (his favourite charity), write several more organ concerti, and contract soloists and instrumentalists for multiple performances of several earlier oratorios. Finding time to write even a single new oratorio for the coming Lenten Season would be difficult.



Only 38 years earlier, this young German's Italian opera *Rinaldo* had been so successful that the king and others persuaded Handel to move to London. But by 1741 and 37 operas later, ticket receipts were no longer covering costs. The Londoners' former thirst for Italian opera had been well-quenched. Fortunately, the enterprising Handel had already begun offering entertaining oratorios in English in 1732 for the austere weeks of Lent, when society's upper classes felt obliged to submit to ecclesiastical admonitions to forego secular theatrical performances during the season of repentance. Handel realized how readily texts extolling heroic biblical figures could supplant those about ancient deities and Roman politicians. Omitting stage sets and staging helped to quiet uneasy consciences even further, and yet the oratorio libretti, operatic soloists, choir and orchestra could remain as dramatic as in any opera. Being sung in English also worked, as Handel learned when he presented *Esther* in London (1732, libretto by Alexander Pope - not to be confused with Pope Alexander). By the 1740s, Handel was managing to write one, and sometimes two new oratorios for the coming Lenten season's concerts. Yes, his audiences still adored *Messiah* year after year, but they wanted other oratorios as well - annually.

Thus it was that in 1749, when Handel turned his attention to the coming 1750 Lenten season, he quite naturally asked his latest favourite librettist, the Rev. Thomas Morell (1703-84) to create something special. Morell had been reading

*Love and Religion Demonstrated in the Martyrdom of Theodora, and of Didymus* (London: John Taylor, 1703), written by the Irish physicist and chemist, Robert Boyle (1627-91, best known for "Boyle's Law").

Settling on the more manageable title *Theodora*, Morell created a libretto which he felt would both stimulate Handel's creativity and appeal to English audiences. Rather than another story from Hebrew scripture (*Deborah*, *Saul*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Joseph and his Brethren*, *Joshua*, *Solomon*) or the Apocrypha (*Judas Maccabaeus*), Morell turned to this legendary story of two martyred saints set in the societal and political struggles between the established Roman state religion and the new faith becoming known as

Christianity. This offshoot of Judaism was increasingly attracting slaves and women - the marginalized who had little to lose by exploring the ideals of equality and economic charity advocated by Jesus and St Paul. By the third century, Christianity was beginning to infiltrate certain isolated circles of Roman noble women, occasionally an entire Roman household, and even individual Roman soldiers secretly converted. The oratorio's opening pages reveal the growing opposition to the old religious thinking. Constantine's Edict of Milan would decriminalize Christianity in 313, but our story takes place 302-305, in Antioch during the reign of Diocletian.

Morell saw how a story focusing on two individuals in this environment could give expression to profound conflicts of loyalties between friends, the struggle between the status quo and new ideas, and the inner anguish over whether to remain a secret Christian, recant Christianity or die for your faith. Add to this the tension between physical and platonic love, and *Theodora's* inner struggle (as a Christian virgin of noble birth) between the expediency of escaping a sentence of enforced prostitution (occasionally associated with certain religious festivals) and the agony of renouncing her faith - there is more than enough dramatic fodder for each aria and recitative. In all this turmoil, Morell found ways to insert subtle pleas for freedom of thought and even religious freedom, topics of contemporary interest as Methodism gained adherents at the expense of the established national

church in the midst of an increasingly secular society. Whatever its merits, this story about two Roman Christian martyrs was far removed from the previous year's oratorios featuring the magnificent pageantry of Solomon or the charming rural comedy of Susanna.

Handel considered the libretto for *Theodora* to be the best and most stimulating he had ever encountered. Indeed, the role of *Theodora* is generally considered his best for soprano. Successful oratorios, like all theatrical works set to music, require emotive texts which encourage the composer to create music supporting each distinct emotion through the character of its accompanying melody, and by the rhythms reflecting the relative intensity or contemplative nature of the words. Most wonderfully of all, the orchestra's changing colours and moods continually depict the passing emotional landscapes on the expansive musical canvas. But even small touches can transform us, as when, in the *Symphony* which opens Act II, Scene 2 (set in prison), the strings play repeated chords, which are answered by a single note held by the flute – a melody which is as fettered as *Theodora* herself. It is always fascinating to follow what Handel does with the orchestra in the succession of arias, now simply undergirding the vocalist, now providing a melodic counterfoil, now vigorously competing for attention, now outshining even the most acrobatic vocal arabesques.

Julian Herbage once quipped that "Handel's pagans always have an ear for a catchy tune, and an almost complete ignorance of counterpoint." By contrast, the Christians get the more profound choruses – often with superb counterpoint. *Biographia Dramatica* reports that Handel was asked "whether he did not consider the grand [Hallelujah] Chorus in *The Messiah* as his masterpiece. 'No,' said he, 'I think the chorus "He saw the lovely youth", at the end of the second part in *Theodora*, far beyond it.'" Contemplative choruses can be truly effective for the sensitive listener.

One wonders why such an oratorio did not initially succeed in London. Handel once quipped that it was because "The Jews will not come to it as to Judas because it is a Christian story; and the ladies will not come because it is a virtuous one." Charles Burney writing of slim attendances at Handel's concerts one season, reported, "Sometimes, however, I have heard him, as pleasantly as philosophically, console hi[s] friends, when, previous to the curtain being drawn up, they have lamented that the house was so empty, by saying, 'Nevre moind; di moosic vil sound de petter.'" Fortunately, today's audiences are embracing *Theodora* wholeheartedly, as the recent Glyndebourne Festival Opera's 1996 revival proved. Be prepared to be amazed by how effectively this wonderful music continues to speak to us 266 years after it was written by the composer, who – single-handedly – began the English world's love affair with English oratorio.

– BY J. EVAN KREIDER –

# THEODORA

## ACT ONE

### Overture

### SCENE 1

Valens, Didymus, Septimius, Chorus of Heathens.

### Recitative

#### VALENS

'Tis Dioclesian's natal day.  
Proclaim throughout the bounds of Antioch  
A feast, and solemn sacrifice to Jove.  
Whoso disdains to join the sacred rites,  
Shall feel our wrath in chastisement, or death.  
And this, Septimius, take you in charge.

### Air

#### VALENS

Go, my faithful soldier, go:  
Let the fragrant incense rise,  
To Jove, great ruler of the skies.

### Chorus of Heathens

And draw a blessing down,  
On his imperial crown,  
Who rules the world below.

### Recitative

#### DIDYMUS

Vouchsafe, dread Sir, a gracious ear to my request.  
Many there are in Antioch, who disdain  
An idol-offering, yet are friends to Cæsar.

#### VALENS

It cannot be. They are not Cæsar's friends,  
Who own not Cæsar's gods. I'll hear no more.

### Air

#### VALENS

Racks, gibbets, sword and fire,  
Shall speak my vengeful ire,  
Against the stubborn knee.  
Nor gushing tears,  
Nor ardent pray'rs,  
Shall shake our firm decree.  
Racks, gibbets, ... *da capo*

[Exit Valens.]

### Chorus of Heathens

For ever thus stands fix'd the doom,  
Of rebels to the gods and Rome,  
While sweeter than the trumpet's sound,  
Their groans and cries are heard around.



## SCENE 2

### Recitative

#### DIDYMUS

Most cruel edict! Sure, thy generous soul,  
Septimius, abhors the dreadful task  
Of persecution. Ought we not to leave  
The free-born mind of man still ever free?  
Since vain is the attempt to force belief  
With the severest instrument of death?

### Air

#### DIDYMUS

The raptur'd soul defies the sword,  
Secure of virtue's claim,  
And trusting Heav'n's unerring word,  
Enjoys the circling flame.  
No engine can a tyrant find,  
To storm the truth-supported mind.  
The raptur'd soul ... *da capo*

### Recitative

#### SEPTIMIUS

I know thy virtues, and ask not thy faith;  
Enjoy it as you will, my Didymus.  
Though not a Christian, for I worship still  
The gods my fathers worship'd, yet I own,  
Something within declares for acts of mercy.

### Air

#### SEPTIMIUS

Descend, kind pity, heav'nly guest,  
Descend, and fill each human breast  
With sympathizing woe.  
That liberty, and peace of mind,  
May sweetly harmonize mankind,  
And bless the world below.  
Descend, ... *da capo*

## SCENE 3

Theodora, with the Christians.

### Recitative

#### THEODORA

Though hard, my friends, yet wholesome are the truths,  
Taught in affliction's school, whence the pure soul  
Rises refin'd, and soars above the world.

### Air

#### THEODORA

Fond, flatt'ring world, adieu!  
Thy gaily-smiling pow'r,  
Empty treasures,  
Fleeting pleasures,  
Ne'er shall tempt or charm me more.  
Faith inviting,  
Hope delighting,  
Nobler joys we now pursue.

### Recitative

#### IRENE

O bright example of all goodness!  
How easy seems affliction's heavy load,  
While thus instructed, and companion'd thus,  
As 'twere with Heav'n conversing, we look down  
On the vain pomp of proud prosperity.

### Air

#### IRENE

Bane of virtue, nurse of passions,  
Soother of vile inclinations,  
Such is, prosperity, thy name.

### Chorus of Christians

Come, mighty Father, mighty Lord,  
With love our souls inspire,  
While grace and truth flow from thy word,  
And feed the holy fire.

## SCENE 4

### Recitative

#### IRENE

The Lord is still the same, today, for ever,  
And his protection here, and everywhere.  
Still shall thy servants wait on Thee, O Lord,  
And in thy saving mercy put their trust.

### Air

#### IRENE

As with rosy steps the morn,  
Advancing, drives the shades of night,  
So from virtuous toil well-borne,  
Raise Thou our hopes of endless light.

### Chorus of Christians

All pow'r in Heav'n above or earth beneath  
Belongs to Thee alone,  
Thou Everlasting One,  
Mighty to save in perils, storm and death.

## SCENE 5

Enter Septimius.

### Recitative

#### SEPTIMIUS

Mistaken wretches! Why thus blind to fate,  
Do ye in private oratories dare  
Rebel against the President's decree?  
And scorn with native rites to celebrate the day,  
Sacred to Cæsar and protecting Jove?

**Air**

**SEPTIMIUS**

Dread the fruits of Christian folly,  
And this stubborn melancholy,  
fond of life and liberty.  
Chains and dungeons ye are wooing  
And the storm of death pursuing,  
rebels to the known decree.

**Recitative**

**THEODORA**

Deluded mortal! Call it not rebellion  
To worship God: it is his dread command,  
His, whom we cannot, dare not, disobey  
Tho' death be our reward.

**SEPTIMIUS**

Death is not yet thy doom,  
But worse than death to such a virtuous mind.  
Lady, these guards are order'd to convey you  
To the vile place, a prostitute, to devote your charms.

**Accompagnato**

**THEODORA**

Oh, worse than death indeed! Lead me, ye guards,  
Lead me, or to the rack, or to the flames,  
I'll thank your gracious mercy.

**Air**

**THEODORA**

Angels, ever bright and fair,  
Take, oh take me to your care;  
Speed to your own courts my flight,  
Clad in robes of virgin white.  
Angels, ... *da capo*

[Exit Theodora with Septimius]

**SCENE 6**

Enter Didymus.

**Recitative**

**DIDYMUS**

Unhappy, happy crew! Why stand you thus,  
Wild with amazement? Say, where is my love,  
My life, my Theodora?

**IRENE**

Alas! She's gone.  
Too late thou cam'st to save  
The fairest, noblest, best of women.  
A Roman soldier led her trembling hence  
To the vile place, where Venus keeps her court.

**Air**

**DIDYMUS**

Kind Heav'n, if virtue be thy care,  
With courage fire me,  
Or art inspire me,  
To free the captive fair.  
On the wings of the wind will I fly,  
With this princess to live, or this Christian to die.  
Kind Heav'n, ... *da capo*

[Exit Didymus]

**SCENE 7**

**Recitative**

**IRENE**

O love, how great thy pow'r! But greater still,  
When virtue prompts the steady mind to prove  
Its native strength in deeds of highest honour.

**Chorus of Christians**

Go, gen'rous, pious youth,  
May all the pow'rs above  
Reward thy virtuous love,  
Thy constancy and truth,  
With Theodora's charms,  
Free from these dire alarms;  
Or crown you with the blest,  
In glory, peace and rest.

— INTERVAL —

# ACT TWO

## SCENE 1

Valens, and Chorus of Heathens.

### Recitative

VALENS

Ye men of Antioch, with solemn pomp,  
Renew the grateful sacrifice to Jove;  
In honour of the smiling deities,  
Fair Flora, and the Cyprian queen.

### Chorus of Heathens

Queen of summer, queen of love  
And thou, cloud-compelling Jove,  
Grant a long and happy reign,  
To great Cæsar, king of men.

### Air

VALENS

Wide spread his name,  
And make his glory  
Of endless fame  
The lasting story.

### Recitative

VALENS

Return, Septimius, to the stubborn maid,  
And learn her final resolution.  
If ere the sun with prone career has reach'd  
The western isles, she deigns an offering  
To the great gods, she shall be free; if not,  
The meanest of my guards with lustful joy  
Shall triumph o'er her boasted chastity.

### Chorus of Heathens

Venus laughing from the skies,  
Will applaud her votaries.  
While seizing the treasure  
We revel in pleasure,  
Revenge sweet love supplies.

## SCENE 2

Theodora, in her Place of Confinement.

### Symphony

### Recitative

THEODORA

O thou bright sun! How sweet thy rays  
To health, and liberty! But here, alas,  
They swell the agonizing thought of shame,  
And pierce my soul with sorrows yet unknown.

### Symphony

### Recitative

THEODORA

But why art thou disquieted, my soul?  
Hark! Heav'n invites thee in sweet rapt'rous strains,  
To join the ever-singing, ever-loving choir  
Of saints and angels in the courts above.

### Air

THEODORA

Oh, that I on wings could rise,  
Swiftly sailing through the skies,  
As skims the silver dove!  
That I might rest,  
For ever blest,  
With harmony and love.  
Oh, that I on wings ... *da capo*

## SCENE 3

Didymus and Septimius.

### Recitative

DIDYMUS

Long have I known thy friendly social soul,  
Septimius, when side by side we fought  
Dependant on each other's arm. With freedom then,  
I will disclose my mind. I am a Christian,  
And she with pure religious sentiments inspir'd  
My soul, with virtuous love inflam'd my heart.

SEPTIMIUS

No more!  
The shame reflects too much upon thy friend.

### Air

SEPTIMIUS

Though the honours that Flora and Venus receive  
From the Romans, this Christian refuses to give,  
Yet nor Venus, nor Flora, delight in the woe  
That disfigures their fairest resemblance below.

### Recitative

DIDYMUS

Oh, save her then, or give me pow'r to save,  
By free admission to th'emprison'd maid!

SEPTIMIUS

My guards, not less asham'd of their vile office,  
Will second your intent, and pleasure me.

### Air

DIDYMUS

Deeds of kindness to display,  
Pity suing,  
Mercy wooing,  
Who the call can disobey?  
But the opportune redress  
Of virtuous beauty in distress,



Earth will praise and Heav'n repay.  
Deeds of kindness ... *da capo*

## SCENE 4

Irene, with the Christians.

### Recitative

IRENE

The clouds begin to veil the hemisphere,  
And heavily bring on the night, the last  
Perhaps to us. Oh, that it were the last  
To Theodora, ere she fall a prey  
To unexampled lust and cruelty.

### Air

IRENE

Defend her, Heav'n! Let angels spread  
Their viewless tents around her bed.  
Keep her from vile assaults secure,  
Still ever calm, and ever pure.  
Defend her, ... *da capo*

## SCENE 5

Theodora's Place of Confinement.

Didymus at a distance, the visor of his helmet clos'd.

### Recitative

DIDYMUS

Or lull'd with grief, or rapt her soul to Heav'n  
In innocence of thought, entranc'd she lies.

### Air

DIDYMUS (*approaching her*)

Sweet rose and lily, flow'ry form,  
Take me your faithful guard,  
To shield you from bleak wind and storm —  
A smile be my reward.

### Recitative

THEODORA (*starting*)

Oh, save me, Heav'n, in this my perilous hour!

DIDYMUS

Start not, much injur'd princess, I come not  
As one, this place might give you cause to dread;  
But your deliverer, and that dear ornament to Theodora,  
Her angel-purity. If you vouchsafe,  
But to change habit with your Didymus (*discovering himself*).

THEODORA

Excellent youth!  
I know thy courage, virtue and thy love;  
This becomes not Theodora,  
But the blind enemies of truth. Oh no,  
It must not be! Yet Didymus can give  
A boon, will make me happy.

DIDYMUS

How, or what? My soul with transport  
Listens to the request.

### Air

THEODORA

The pilgrim's home, the sick man's health,  
The captive's ransom, poor man's wealth,  
From thee I would receive.  
These, and a thousand treasures more,  
That gentle death has now in store,  
Thy hand and sword can give.

### Accompagnato

DIDYMUS

Forbid it, Heav'n!  
Shall I destroy the life I came to save?

THEODORA

Ah! What is liberty or life to me,  
That Didymus must purchase with his own?

DIDYMUS

Fear not for me; the pow'r that led me hither  
Will guard me hence. If not, His will be done!

THEODORA

Yes, kind deliverer, I will trust that pow'r  
Farewell, thou generous youth!

DIDYMUS

Farewell, thou mirror of the virgin state!

### Duet

THEODORA

To thee, thou glorious son of worth,  
Be life and safety giv'n.

DIDYMUS

To thee, whose virtues suit thy birth,  
Be every blessing giv'n.

BOTH

I hope again to meet on earth,  
But sure shall meet in Heav'n.

## SCENE 6

Irene, with the Christians.

### Recitative

IRENE

'Tis night, but night's sweet blessing is denied  
To grief like ours.  
Be pray'r our refuge, pray'r to Him, who rais'd,  
And still can raise, the dead to life and joy.

### Chorus of Christians

He saw the lovely youth, death's early prey,  
Alas, too early snatch'd away!  
He heard his mother's fun'ral cries:  
"Rise, youth", He said. The youth begins to rise.  
Lowly the matron bow'd, and bore away the prize.

## END OF ACT TWO

### ACT THREE

#### SCENE 1

Irene, with the Christians.

##### Air

**IRENE**  
Lord, to Thee each night and day,  
Strong in hope, we sing and pray.  
Though convulsive rocks the ground,  
And thy thunders roll around,  
Still to Thee, each night and day,  
We sing and pray.

#### SCENE 2

Enter Theodora, in the habit of Didymus.

##### Recitative

**IRENE**  
But see, the good, the virtuous Didymus!  
He comes to join with us in pray'r for Theodora.

**THEODORA** (discovering herself)  
No, Heav'n has heard your pray'rs for Theodora.  
Behold her safe! Oh, that as free and safe  
Were Didymus, my kind deliverer!  
But let this habit speak the rest.

##### Air

**THEODORA**  
When sunk in anguish and despair,  
To Heav'n I cried, Heav'n heard my pray'r,  
And bade a tender father's care  
The gen'rous youth employ.

##### Solo and Chorus

**CHRISTIANS**  
Blest be the hand, and blest the pow'r,  
That in this dark and dang'rous hour,  
Sav'd thee from cruel strife.

**THEODORA AND CHRISTIANS**  
Lord, favour still the kind intent,  
And bless thy gracious instrument  
With liberty and life.

### SCENE 3

##### Recitative

**IRENE**  
Ah, Theodora, whence this sudden change,  
From grief's pale looks, to looks of redd'ning joy?

**THEODORA**  
O my Irene, Heav'n is kind,  
And Valens too is kind, to give me pow'r  
To execute in turn my gratitude,  
While safe my honour.

##### Duet

**IRENE**  
Whither, Princess, do you fly,  
Sure to suffer, sure to die?

**THEODORA**  
No, no, Irene, no,  
To life and joy I go.

**IRENE**  
Vain Attempt, oh stay, oh stay!

**THEODORA**  
Duty calls, I must obey. [Exit Theodora]

##### Air

**IRENE**  
New scenes of joy come crowding on  
While sorrow fleets away,  
Like mists before the rising sun  
That gives a glorious day.

### SCENE 4

Valens, Didymus, Septimius, and Chorus of Heathens.

##### Recitative

**VALENS**  
Is it a Christian virtue then,  
To rescue, from the hands of justice, one condemn'd?

**DIDYMUS**  
Had your sentence doom'd her but to death,  
I then might have deplor'd your cruelty,  
But should not have opposed it.

**VALENS**  
Take him hence,  
And lead him to repentance, or to death.

## SCENE 5

Enter Theodora.

**THEODORA**

Be that *my* doom. You may inflict it *here*,  
With legal justice, *there* 'tis cruelty.

**SEPTIMIUS**

Dwells there such virtuous courage in the sex?  
Preserve them, O ye gods, preserve them both.

**Air**

**SEPTIMIUS**

From virtue springs each gen'rous deed  
That claims our grateful pray'r.  
Let justice for the hero plead,  
And pity save the fair.  
From virtue springs... *da capo*

**Air**

**VALENS**

Cease, ye slaves, your fruitless pray'r!  
The pow'rs below  
No pity know,  
For the brave, or for the fair.

**Recitative**

**DIDYMUS**

'Tis kind, my friends, but kinder still  
If for this daughter of Antiochus,  
In mind, as noble as her birth, your pray'rs  
Prevail, that Didymus alone shall die.

**Chorus of Heathens**

How strange their ends,  
And yet how glorious,  
Where each contends,  
To fall victorious,  
Where virtue its own innocence denies,  
And for the vanquish'd the glad victor dies!

**Recitative**

**DIDYMUS** (to Valens)

On me your frowns, your utmost rage exert,  
On me, your prisoner in chains.

**THEODORA**

Those chains  
Are due to me, and death to me alone.

**VALENS**

Are ye then judges for yourselves?  
Not so our laws are to be trifled with.  
If both plead guilty, 'tis but equity  
That both should suffer.

**Air**

**VALENS**

Ye ministers of justice, lead them hence,  
I cannot, will not bear such insolence.  
And as our gods they honour, or despise,  
Fall they their supplicants, or sacrifice.

[Exit Valens]

## SCENE 6

**Recitative**

**DIDYMUS**

And must such beauty suffer?

**THEODORA**

Such useful valour be destroy'd?

**SEPTIMIUS**

Destroy'd,  
Alas, by an unhappy constancy!

**DIDYMUS**

Yet deem us not unhappy, gentle friend,  
Nor rash; for life we neither hate, nor scorn,  
But think it a cheap purchase for the prize  
Reserv'd in Heav'n for purity and faith.

**Air and Duet**

**DIDYMUS**

Streams of pleasure ever flowing,  
Fruits ambrosial ever growing,  
Golden thrones,  
Starry crowns,  
Are the triumphs of the blest.  
When from life's dull labour free,  
Clad with immortality,  
They enjoy a lasting rest.

**THEODORA AND DIDYMUS**

Thither let our hearts aspire:  
Objects pure of pure desire,  
Still increasing,  
Ever pleasing,  
Wake the song, and tune the lyre  
Of the blissful holy choir.

[Exeunt]

## SCENE 7

Irene, with the Christians.

**Recitative**

**IRENE**

Ere this, their doom is past and they are gone  
To prove that love is stronger far than death.

**Chorus of Christians**

O love divine, thou source of fame,  
Of glory, and all joy!  
Let equal fire our souls inflame,  
And equal zeal employ,  
That we the glorious spring may know,  
Whose streams appear'd so bright below.

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## THE ARTISTS

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### Alexander Weimann

music director

Alexander Weimann is one of the most sought-after ensemble directors, soloists, and chamber music partners of his generation. After travelling the world with ensembles like Tragicomedia, Cantus Cölln, the Freiburger Barockorchester, the Gesualdo Consort and Tafelmusik, he now focuses on his activities as Artistic Director of the Pacific Baroque Orchestra in Vancouver, and as Music Director of Les Voix Baroques, Le Nouvel Opéra and Tempo Rubato.

Recently, he conducted the Montreal-based baroque orchestra Ensemble Arion, Quebec City's Les Violons du Roy, and the Portland Baroque Orchestra; both the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra have regularly presented him as a featured soloist. In past years, he often conducted the Victoria Symphony and Symphony Nova Scotia, most recently with Handel's *Messiah*.

Alexander Weimann can be heard on some 100 CDs. He made his North American recording debut with the ensemble Tragicomedia on the CD *Capritio* (Harmonia Mundi), and won worldwide acclaim from both the public and critics for his 2001 release of Handel's *Gloria* (ATMA Classique). Volume 1 of his recordings of the complete keyboard works by Alessandro Scarlatti appeared in May 2005. Critics around the world unanimously praised it, and in the following year it was nominated for an Opus Prize as the best Canadian early music recording. Recently, he has also released an Opus Award-winning CD of Handel oratorio arias with soprano Karina Gauvin and his new Montreal-based ensemble Tempo Rubato, as well as a recording of Bach's *St. John's Passion* and various albums with Les Voix Baroques of Buxtehude, Carissimi and Purcell. His latest album with Karina Gauvin and Arion Baroque Orchestra (*Prima Donna*) won a Juno Award in 2013, and a complete recording of Handel's *Orlando* was released in the fall of 2013, with an exciting group of international star soloists and the Pacific Baroque Orchestra performing.

Alexander Weimann was born in Munich, where he studied the organ, church music, musicology (with a summa cum laude thesis on Bach's secco recitatives), theatre, medieval Latin, and jazz piano.

### Nathalie Paulin

soprano

[THEODORA]

Nathalie Paulin has established herself in the United States, Canada, Europe and the Far East as an interpretive artist of the very first rank. Winner of a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Opera Performance, she has collaborated with internationally renowned conductors including Jane Glover, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Antony Walker, Sir Roger Norrington, Andrew Parrott, Jonathan Darlington, Hervé Niquet, David Agler, Richard Bradshaw, Bernard Labadie, Michael Christie, Robert Spano, Mario Bernardi, Graeme Jenkins, Andrew Litton and Yoav Talmi on both the concert platform and in opera.

Critics have been lavish in their praise. Reviewing from Chicago, John van Rhein noted that "Paulin in particular is a real find; her

rich, agile voice possesses great depth and allure, her manner radiates sensuous charm." Ms. Paulin debuted for L'Opéra de Montréal as Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and for Chicago Opera Theater as Galatea in *Acis and Galatea*. She was re-engaged by Chicago Opera Theater for the title role in *Semele* and for Mary in *La Resurrezione*, both by Handel. She has also been heard as Constance in *Dialogues des Carmélites* for Calgary Opera, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* for L'Opéra de Québec and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Cincinnati Opera. The Dallas Opera featured her in *Carmen* and *Cunning Little Vixen*.

Frequently heard on both the French and English CBC networks, she is a past winner of the Montréal Symphony Competition and holds a Master's Degree from the Université de Montréal. She won the Dvorak prize and has also received awards and prizes from the George London Foundation in New York, the Young Mozart Singers' Competition in Toronto and the Canadian Music Competition. Ms Paulin is currently a member of the Vocal Department at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.

### Krisztina Szabó

mezzo-soprano

[IRENE]

Hungarian-Canadian Krisztina Szabó has become highly sought after in both North America and Europe as an artist of supreme musicianship and stagecraft. The Chicago Tribune exclaimed, "Krisztina Szabó stole her every scene with her powerful, mahogany voice and deeply poignant immersion in the empress' plight" after her performance of Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. She made her Lincoln Center début as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at the Mostly Mozart Festival where she was praised in the New York Times for being "clear, strong, stately and an endearingly vulnerable Dorabella."

Krisztina Szabó sings frequently at the Canadian Opera Company and has been seen in diverse roles, such as Idamante (*Idomeneo*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), The Double-Offered in the Time Before (*The Handmaid's Tale*), and Nancy (*Albert Herring*). She is a frequent performer of recital, concert, and chamber repertoire, and has appeared as a soloist with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*), the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir (Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*), the Elora Festival Orchestra (Verdi's *Requiem*), and the Oregon Symphony (Mozart's *Requiem*). Ms. Szabó has appeared on television featured in CBC's "Opening Night" in concert with the Canadian Opera Company. On film, she can be seen as Zerlina with Dimitri Hvorostovsky in *Don Giovanni Revealed: Leporello's Revenge*, and she can be heard as the voice of Leanne in the opera movie *Burnt Toast*.

Ms. Szabó finished her postgraduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, England, after completing her undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario. She has been the recipient of the Emerging Artist grant from Canada Council and was recently honoured by her home town of Mississauga with a star on the Music Walk of Fame in its inaugural year.

### Lawrence Zazzo

countertenor

[DIDYMUS]

Lawrence Zazzo made his operatic debut as Oberon (*A Midsummer*

*Night's Dream*) to great acclaim while completing his vocal studies at the Royal College of Music in London. He has since appeared at many of the world's leading opera houses including The Metropolitan Opera, Staatsoper unter den Linden, Oper Frankfurt, Bayerische Staatsoper, Opernhaus Zürich, Opera di Roma and La Monnaie. His recent appearance in the title role in *Giulio Cesare* conducted by Emmanuelle Haim at Opéra national de Paris is available on DVD.

Highlights for the current season include *Semele* with both Concerto Köln under Ivor Bolton and the Canadian Opera Company in guest performances at BAM in New York, the world premiere of Rolf Riehm's *Sirenen* for Oper Frankfurt conducted by Martyn Brabbins and his debut at Festival d'Aix-en-Provence as *Oberon* under Kazushi Ono.

With an already buoyant discography, Lawrence Zazzo's first orchestral disc, *A Royal Trio*, featuring music by Ariosti, Bononcini and Handel with La Nuova Musica and David Bates was released in October 2014 on Harmonia Mundi.

## **Zachary Wilder** tenor

[SEPTIMIUS]

Described as possessing a "remarkably clear, flexible lyric tenor," and a "radiant tone". Zachary Wilder is a much sought-after performer on both the operatic and concert stage. He has performed with numerous groups internationally, including Ars Lyrica Houston, Back Bay Chorale, Blue Heron, Boston Early Music Festival, Britten-Pears Baroque Orchestra, Camerata Ventepane, Cappella Mediterranea, Emmanuel Music, Ensemble Clematis, A Far Cry, Festival D'Aix-en-Provence, Green Mountain Project, Handel & Haydn Society, Harvard Baroque Orchestra, Houston Bach Society, les Arts Florissants, Mark Morris Dance Group, Mercury Orchestra, Pacific Musicworks, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Tenet Ensemble, and Tesseræ. He was chosen by William Christie for the 2013 edition of Jardin des Voix, was named a Lorraine Hunt Lieberson Fellow at Emmanuel Music, Adams Masterclass Fellow at the Carmel Bach Festival, a former Gerdine Young Artist at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, as well as a Tanglewood Music Center Fellow. He can be heard on Boston Early Music Festival's Grammy-nominated recording of Lully's *Psyché*, as well as their recordings of Charpentier's *Actéon* and John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* on the CPO label.

Operatic roles include Alessandro in Mozart's *Il Re Pastore*, Renaud in Lully's *Armide*, Grimoaldo in *Rodelinda*, Osman in Handel's *Almira*, Mordecai in *Esther*, Coridon in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Telemaco and Pisandro in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, Mercurio in Zamponi's *Ulisse nell'Isola di Circe*, Testo in Monteverdi's *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, Iro in Cavalli's *Elena* and Tantalus and Ixion in Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*.

On the concert platform, Zachary is internationally in great demand; his repertoire includes Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* and *Madrigals, Book VII*, Haydn's *Creation* and *The Seasons*, the Evangelist in Bach's *Saint John* and *St Matthew Passions*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Handel's *Messiah*.

## **Matthew Brook** bass-baritone

[VALENS]

Matthew Brook is one of the country's leading and most experienced bass-baritones. He has developed a world-wide reputation for his interpretation of the music of J.S. Bach and Handel, but his musical tastes stretch way beyond this period of music, often performing new compositions at major festivals and concert halls, and he has performed on the operatic stages of Europe singing Weber, Mozart,

Bizet, Chabrier, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Bernstein and Monteverdi.

Worldwide performances as a soloist and career highlights include working with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Richard Hickox, and orchestras such as the Philharmonia and London Symphony Orchestra. Matthew has performed at many of Europe's top festivals, including The Edinburgh Festival and the BBC Proms.

He has a long list of appearances in recordings of Bach and Handel, including the *St. Matthew* and *St. John Passions* and *B Minor Mass* (Linn records), as well as many Bach Cantatas; last year he recorded the *Weinachts-Oratorium* with Stephen Layton and Hyperion. His other recordings of Handel include the Gramophone Award winning *Messiah* for Linn, a highly acclaimed Polyphemus from *Acis and Galatea*, Haman from *Esther*, and, for Virgins Classics, Il Re from *Ariodante* with Joyce di Donato in the title role. Last year, he appeared on a recording of *Jephtha* with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen.

His DVD recording of the *St. Matthew Passion* with John Nelson from the St Denis Festival was released last year and the new Linn Records Mozart *Requiem* with John Butt has received much praise.

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## **Pacific Baroque Orchestra**

The Pacific Baroque Orchestra (PBO) is recognized as one of Canada's most exciting and innovative ensembles performing "early music for modern ears". PBO brings the music of the past up to date by performing with cutting edge style and enthusiasm. Formed in 1990, the orchestra quickly established itself as a force in Vancouver's burgeoning music scene with the ongoing support of Early Music Vancouver.

In 2009 PBO welcomed Alexander Weimann, one of the most sought-after ensemble directors, soloists, and chamber music partners of his generation, as Artistic Director. Weimann's imaginative programming and expert leadership have drawn in many new concertgoers, and his creativity and engaging musicianship have carved out a unique and vital place in the cultural landscape of Vancouver.

PBO regularly joins forces with internationally celebrated Canadian guest artists, providing performance opportunities for Canadian musicians while exposing West Coast audiences to a spectacular variety of talent. The Orchestra has also toured in BC and the northern United States, and across Canada as far as the East Coast. The musicians of the Pacific Baroque Orchestra have been at the core of many large-scale productions by Early Music Vancouver in recent years, including many summer festival performances led by Alexander Weimann.

## **Vancouver Cantata Singers**

Vancouver Cantata Singers was founded in 1957, and has become one of Canada's preeminent, award-winning choral ensembles. The choir has become known for technical virtuosity, fine blend and exceptionally high performance standards encompassing 500 years of choral repertoire. VCS has been awarded the Canada Council's top prize in choral singing, the Healey Willan Grand Prize, more than any other choir in the country. Led by Paula Kremer since 2013, VCS also commissions new works from critically acclaimed composers, which leads to extremely successful and innovative collaborations with regional and international artists and ensembles.