



LA FENICE

notiziario di informazione musicale e avvenimenti culturali

PRESS RELEASE

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***Farnace* by Vivaldi staged at Teatro Malibran**

With the new production of ***Farnace***, La Fenice has added a new, important piece to its fascinating journey on the discovery of Vivaldi's operas. After *Orlando furioso* (2018) and *Dorilla in Tempe* (2019), the Venetian Opera House is now offering an innovative production of Vivaldi's opera, with direction by Christophe Gayral, stage design by Rudy Sabounghi, costumes by Elena Cicorella and light design by Giuseppe Di Iorio. Once again Diego Fasolis, one of the greatest experts on the music of **Antonio Vivaldi**, will conduct the orchestra while the singers was composed during the same period as *Dorilla*. In fact, it premièred at Teatro Sant'Angelo in Venice during the very same theatre season, on 10 February 1727. It is this first edition, with the "I Barocchisti" modern version, by Renzo Bez, Andrea Marchiol and Alberto Stevanin that will be staged at Teatro Malibran on 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 July 2021.

By 1727 Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) had reached the height of his fame in Europe. Just two years earlier, the magazine *Mercure de France* had had no hesitation in describing him as "les plus habile compositeur qui soit à Venice". A short while earlier, the publisher Michel-Charles Le Cène had printed one of his last authorised concerto collections: *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione*, which was mainly responsible for Vivaldi's success in France. *Farnace* is just one of the operas Vivaldi composed between 1726 and 1728 and it was in this period that the Red Priest composed, in order, *La Dorilla* for Teatro Sant' Angelo, *Ipermestra* for Teatro della Pergola in Florence and lastly, *Farnace*, also for Teatro Sant'Angelo. The librettos for the two "Venetian" operas were written by Antonio Maria Lucchini, who had already worked with Vivaldi ten years earlier (*Tieteberga*, 1717).

The plot is based on the dynastic tragedy of King Farnace, who was held hostage by his mother-in-law and imprisoned. However, in order to guarantee a pragmatic happy end, the proud Berenice's love for her daughter Tamiri, Farnace's wife, finally wins, thus saving the son-in-law's life. Secondary characters include the authoritative but benevolent portrayal of the Roman conquerors (Pompeo and Aquilio), who show greater humanity than the barbarian antagonists, Berenice and Gilade.

From a musical point of view, "In Venice, *Farnace* as a contralto has some marvellous numbers," explains the director Diego Fasolis, "The incredible "Gelido in ogni vena", or the chromatic "Spogli pur l'ingiusta Roma" alone are enough to make the entire opera a masterpiece. Vivaldi entrusts the two prime donnas with a wide range of emotions Tamiri opens with the aria "Combattono quest'alma" full of fear and ends with a moving "Forse, o caro, in questi accenti",



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while Berenice sings “Da quel ferro che svenato” and “Quel candido fiore”. Anyone who has seen our other productions will be able to recognise echoes of *Orlando* and *Dorilla in Tempe* in different tonalities and characters.”

Christophe Gayral adds, “*Farnace* is about subjects that are totally timeless, universal and contemporary: the war of man against man, human rivalry, the lust for power, the infernal circle of family revenge, and amorous intrigue ... it’s a bit like watching a Netflix series. [...] As is so often the case in librettos in that period, the plot in *Farnace* is both simple and complicated: the characters are clearly defined but become less coherent as the plot unravels; the story itself is incongruent in part (some of the great battles last just a minute, some of the characters change their ideas radically, without any real reason, and so on ...). In short, the production has to remain absolutely faithful to the plot, but it also has to be able to bring out the best of the opera, and at times offer new staging ideas with the aim of finding the true logic in how the plot unfolds, and therefore creating a new, coherent drama”.

The cast in this new Fenice production includes Christoph Strehl in the title role, Lucia Cirillo as Berenice, Queen of Cappadocia, and Sonia Prina as her daughter, Tamiri. In addition, Rosa Bove will be singing in the role of Selinda, Valentino Buzza as Pompeo, Antonio Giovannini as Prince Gilade and David Ferri Durà as the Roman Prefect Aquilio. Finally, in alternation we also have Pietro Moretti and Beatrice Zorzo as the young son of Farnace and Tamiri. Choir Master is Marino Moretti.

With Italian over-titles, the production will be staged Friday 2 July 2021 at 7 pm, Sunday 4 July 2021 at 5 pm, Tuesday 6 July 2021 at 7 pm, Thursday 8 July at 7 pm and Saturday 10 July 2021 at 5 pm.

Tickets for *Farnace* (from € 15,00 to € 100,00) can be purchased at the sales points Vela Venezia Unica di Teatro La Fenice, Tronchetto, Ferrovia, Piazza San Marco, Rialto boat line number 2, and Accademia, Mestre. For more information visit www.teatrolafenice.it.