



**Season 2012/13**

# **N. A. Porpora Polifemo**

Drama per musica  
Libretto: Paolo Antonio Rolli



# Polifemo

## The Oeuvre

The legends surrounding Polyphemus the Cyclops, one-eyed son of Poseidon and the nymph Thoosa, are a popular theme in music and literature alike. POLIFEMO was the last work Nicola Antonio Porpora composed for the Opera of Nobility in London, a business in direct competition to Georg Frideric Handel's opera company. While Handel had to resort to adding renowned bal-let troupes and fulminating choirs to his productions, in order to attract an audience, Porpora relied solely on Farinelli's vocal ability. This was especially true for POLIFEMO. In the same vein as Porpora united top castrato vocalists to bring his works to life on stage, Parnassus ARTS Productions is proud to present some of the world's leading counter-tenors today, and once again revive the glory of days long gone.

### NICOLA PORPORA

Italian composer and singing teacher. He entered the Conser-vatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo in Naples at the age of ten and studied there for approximately a decade; his first op-era, Agrippina, was performed in the Neapolitan Royal Pal-ace in 1708. It appears he held title of maestro di cappella to the Prince of Hessen-Darmstadt from 1711 until 1725, during which time his second and third operas, Flavio Anicio Olibrio (1711) and Basilio re d'oriente (1713), were produced in Naples. In 1714 he composed Adanna e Teseo to fulfill an op-eratic commission from the Viennese court, and Temistocle was premiered at the Hoftheater in Vienna in 1718; other works dating from this time include two serenatas, Angelica (1720) and Gli orti esperidi (1721), with texts by the young Metasta-sio. Between 1715 and 1721 Porpora served as a teacher of

singing and composition at the Conservatorio di S. Onofrio in Naples and became famous as a singing instructor; his pupils included Farinelli, Caffarelli, and Salimbeni.

His first opera for Rome, Berenice regina d'Egitto(1718), was written with Domenico Scarlatti, followed by Porpora's own Roman operas Eumene (1721) and Adelaide (1723) as well as his first opera to a libretto by Metastasio, Didone abbando-nata (Reggio, 1725). He settled in Venice in 1726 and became maestro at the Ospedale degli incurabili until 1733.

Porpora was invited to London by a group of noblemen who were organizing the Opera of the Nobility (in competition with Handel); the company opened its season with Arianna in Nasso(1733), and Porpora composed four more operas for London before leaving in 1736 for Venice, where he took up his old post at the Incurabili the following year. After short intermezzi in Naples and Venice (where he was maestro di coro at the Ospedale della Pietà and the Ospedaletto), he was in Dresden as the singing teacher to Princess Maria Antonia, composing the opera Filandro (1747) for her birthday. If his rivals thus far had been Leonardo Vinci in Italy and Georg Friedrich Handel in London, he found a new nemesis in Dresden: Johann Adolph Hasse. After Hasse was named Oberkapellmeister, Porpora left for Vienna, where he not only taught the art of singing, but also composition to the young Haydn, who in exchange became his valet and keyboard ac-companist. He returned to Naples in 1758, where he served again at the Loreto and the Conservatorio di S. Onoftio. Porpora's output includes over forty operas, a large number of solo cantatas and oratorios, as well as some Masses and a few instrumental works.

# Polifemo Cast



**Franco Fagioli**  
(Aci)



**Xavier Sabata**  
(Ulisse)



**Mary-Ellen Nesi**  
(Calipso)



**Christian Senn**  
(Polifemo)



**Laura Aikin**  
(Galathea)



**Hanna Herfurtner**  
(Nerea)



# Polifemo Cast

# Date

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**Bach Consort Wien**  
(Orchestra)

**22 February 2013:** Theater an der Wien,  
Vienna (AT)



**Rubén Dubrovsky**  
(Conductor)

## FRANCO FAGIOLI

Franco Fagioli one of the leading countertenors worldwide today. His performances of Handel's heroes such as Giulio Cesare, Ariodante, Teseo, Bertarido or Rossini's Arsace in Aureliano in Palmira have been unanimously acclaimed. His breathtaking vocal technique and the beauty of his voice on all registers have set new standards.

In 2011 Franco Fagioli was awarded the Premio Abbiati, the most prestigious musical award in Italy. For the first time in its 30-years old history, the Premio Abbiati is granted to a countertenor.

Parnassus ARTS Productions presents Franco Fagioli in the role of Aci.

## XAVIER SABATA

Xavier Sabata regularly performs on the most important opera stages, such as Teatro La Fenice, Gran Teatre de Liceu in Barcelona, Konzerthaus Wien in Vienna, Schlossfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Teatro Real Madrid, Festival Aix-en-Provence and many others.

Within the season 2011/12, the artist will be performing in 7 European countries, on 11 different stages in opera houses, festivals and concert venues, and with 9 different orchestras in Europe, such as the renowned orchestra Les Arts Florissants. During this upcoming season, Mr. Sabata will also be recording three new productions with the labels Virgin Classics/EMI, Decca and Sony.

Parnassus ARTS Productions presents Xavier Sabata in the role of Ulisse.

## RUBÉN DUBROVSKY & BACH CONSORT

When the Argentinean Rubén Dubrovsky debuted as opera conductor in the new production of Vivaldi's Orlando Furioso at Oper Köln in 2008, he was immediately identified as one of the most exciting new conductors on the baroque and classical field. His interpretation combines vibrancy, vigor, a pulsating temper and a rare sensitivity to sound and mood, with applied knowledge of historical performance practice. Shortly thereafter, he debuted at one of the most renowned opera houses in Spain: the Palau de les Arts València made him musical director of the new production of Martín y Soler's opera Arbore di Diana übertragen (2008). More invitations for new opera productions followed: at Theater Kiel for Giulio Cesare (season 2009/10), Rinaldo (season 2010/11), and Radamisto (season 2011/12); at Oper Bonn for Tamerlano (season 2010/11), and his debut at Semperoper Dresden for L'Incoronazione di Poppea (seasons 2010/11, 2011/12). Aside of his operatic works, Rubén Dubrovsky regularly performs at Wiener Musikverein with his own ensemble, the Viennese Bach Consort.

Rubén Dubrovsky is the founder of Bach Consort Wien, which, under his baton, advanced quickly to become one of the leading baroque ensembles in Austria. It is celebrated in the media for its „conceptual clarity“ as well as its „inspiring virtuosity.“

So far, Bach Consort Wien has played on stages such as Brucknerhaus Linz, Palau de la Música in Barcelona, Lisinsky Hall Zagreb, Festival RheinVokal, Händelfestival at Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, Donau Festival, among others. Many of their concerts have been recorded by Österreichischer Rundfunk, Südwestfunk or Catalunya Música.

Rubén Dubrovsky was named artistic director for baroque operas at the Winterfestival in Schwetzingen, from the season 2011/12 onward.

bach consort  
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