



**Hampstead Garden Opera**

**PRESENTS**

# **IDOMENEIO**

**Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

**English translation by David Parry**

# **PROGRAMME**

## Hampstead Garden Opera presents **Idomeneo, King of Crete**

*Dramma per musica*, K366, set to a libretto by Giovanni Battista Varesco, after Antoine Danchet's *Idomenée*

### **Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** English translation by David Parry

“Salzburg is no place for my talents. In the first place, professional musicians there are not held in much consideration; and secondly, one hears nothing, there is no theatre, no opera; and even if they wanted one, who is there to sing?” So wrote Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in the summer of 1778 in a letter to a close family friend, the Jesuit priest Joseph Bullinger.

The previous year, the 21-year-old Mozart, desperate to escape from the shackles of his employer, the mean, autocratic and disagreeable Archbishop Colloredo, finally obtained leave of absence to seek his fortunes elsewhere in Europe. Among the places he visited with his mother in search of work was Mannheim, a vibrant centre of music in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with, reputedly, the best orchestra in Europe. It was also the home of the Weber family, one of whose daughters, Aloysia, Mozart courted, and another, Constanze, he ultimately married. Although he never obtained employment at the Palatine court, he soaked himself in the Mannheim style and made friends with many of its practitioners. He told the Elector of Bavaria, Karl Theodor, “to write an opera here is my dearest wish”. The operatic repertoire in Mannheim was wide and much admired by Mozart, offering works by, among others, J. C. Bach, Jommelli and Gluck, respectively German, Italian and French, and all, in their various ways, developing the concept of *opera seria*, whose rules and conventions were first codified earlier in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by - primarily - the Italian poet and librettist Metastasio.

*Opera seria* - serious opera - is to all intents and purposes a 20<sup>th</sup> century phrase coined to distinguish this kind of opera, usually called *dramma per musica* 200 years earlier, from *opera buffa* - comic opera. Serious opera was for the nobility, and dealt with big issues such as gods and heroes struggling with the conflict between love and duty, with characters often derived from ancient Greece and Rome. It was not necessarily tragic, but it was essentially serious, allowing little or no scope for wit and humour (although Handel did his best). By contrast, *opera buffa* (or in France *opéra comique* and in Germany *singspiel*) was more of a middle-class entertainment, dealing with themes and characters from everyday life, and often replacing recitative with dialogue. Mozart, being the genius he was, took both forms into new, previously uncharted, territory - not just structurally, but by the depth of his characterisation and the emotive power of his music. By 1779, he was back in Salzburg: and the court of Bavaria had moved to Munich, taking most of the Mannheim musicians with it. In August 1780, Mozart finally got the commission he had been angling for: he was invited by the opera intendant (the Director-General in the service of the court), Count Joseph Seeau, to write an opera to open the 1780-81 Carnival season in Munich.

This would be a major court occasion, and the subject would be prescribed as part of the commission. The Elector was a Francophile and well-read: he and the court authorities would have been aware that a French-based story, with its use of choruses and ballets, would offer more scope and flexibility to Mozart than a strict Metastasian Italian libretto. So the subject chosen was *Idomenée*, based on an opera by composer André Campra and librettist Antoine Danchet, written in 1712. A libretto was commissioned from a reasonably competent Italian poet, chaplain and court musician Giambattista Varesco. Being based in Salzburg, he was in a position to work closely with Mozart, although he had to produce the text in consultation with Count Seeau. This opera was in turn based on a play of the same name by Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, written seven years earlier.

The characters in Mozart's opera are based far more on 18<sup>th</sup> century French literature than on the legends of ancient Greece. In Homer's *Iliad* Idomeneus, King of Crete, grandson of Minos, and great grandson of Zeus and Europa, is presented as a warrior general, a great spearman, fierce as a wild boar, and resembling a lightning bolt hurled down from Mount Olympos by Zeus. Homer doesn't mention his return to Crete after the war: that was left to Virgil in Book III of the *Aeneid*, but all Virgil says is that Idomeneus reached Crete safely and then fled into exile. The story of Idomeneus' vow to Neptune to sacrifice the first person he encountered on reaching land after a storm at sea appears only 300 years later in a commentary on the *Aeneid* by a renowned Roman grammarian, Maurus Servius Honoratus - but he doesn't specify the name of the victim, or whether the sacrifice was actually carried out.

1300 years after that, in 1699, François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon included the story of Idomeneus' vow and sacrifice of his son as a passing episode in his book *Les Aventures de Télémaque* a book which Mozart used as one of his sources. Idomeneus' son was still nameless - he only acquired the name Idamante six years later in de Crébillon's play - but he did meet his death at the hand of his father. Ilia, in a sense the heroine of the opera, is a fiction of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. She is one of the supposedly fifty children of King Priam (so what's the harm in inventing another?), most of whom lost their lives in the Trojan war. Ilia survives as a prisoner of the Cretans. Her name (Ilione in the Campra/Danchet opera) is presumably based on Homer's name for Troy, Ilium. Finally we meet Electra, daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, King and Queen of Mycenae in Argos, better known as the protagonist of Sophocles' play and Richard Strauss' opera of that name. There is no *locus classicus* for her appearance in Crete (as, it would seem, a refugee from Mycenae after her father was butchered by her mother on his return from Troy), but Campra and Danchet give her a major role in their opera.

Most of the principal characters end up mad or dead (or both) in one or another of the French sources for Idomeneo but not in Mozart's and Varesco's opera. One can only guess at the extent to which Mozart was the dominant influence in the shape and emphasis of the libretto, and of its characterisation, but it is clear from his letters home from Munich that he had plenty to say to Varesco. What comes through clearly in what is assuredly Mozart's first great opera - arguably the greatest of all *opera seria* - is that the principles of the Enlightenment played a considerable part in the dénouement.

The central tenet of Enlightenment thinkers, who could be found throughout society, was that knowledge should be based on logic, observation and reason, rather than tradition and myth.

They believed that people should think for themselves, rather than submit to an absolute authority, be it king, pope or god, or put up with social injustice. Human beings were not helpless dependants on the whim of the gods: they could influence their destiny through feeling and reason. Applying these theories to Idomeneo, we find, for instance, that:

- Ilia, although admitting the conflict between loyalty to Troy, her family and love, is able to put aside old enmities and move on. She can embrace Idamante's generosity of spirit into her own life:

- Electra, by contrast, is trapped by the intensity of her jealousy and sense of betrayal, which destroy her hope, and eventually her reason. She cannot even name Ilia - she refers to her as a vile Trojan slave. (It is a moot point whether Electra is free to resume her witch-hunt of her father's killer, or whether, in this version of her story, life ends in Crete.)

- Idamante, although prepared to be sacrificed in order to free his father from his injudicious vow, is spared to take over the kingdom from his father, with Ilia at his side. It is Neptune/Mozart who is moved by Ilia's and Idamante's love to rewrite the tragic ending of all the earlier versions.

- Even Idomeneus, who must face exile, describes himself as the happiest of people, as he sees his successors make peace with former enemies and look to a future built on hope and love.

Mozart was in the fortunate position of knowing most of the musicians and singers available to him from his years in Mannheim. He set off for Munich in November 1780 having already begun composition. His father had to act as a constant intermediary between him and Varesco. Mozart's sense of drama and timing gave rise to extensive cuts in the libretto, and he had to tailor the music to the performers' ability and whims. Composers of *opera seria* were supposed to defer to their singers, though Mozart, even at 24, was skilled at getting what he wanted. For instance, his Idomeneo, Anton Raaff, was well past his prime at 66, but Mozart treated him with immense care and courtesy, writing à propos a change Raaff had suggested: "He is right, and even were he not, some courtesy ought to be shown to his grey hairs". But Mozart held his own on the big issues. For instance, Raaff thought little of the glorious quartet in Act III, the emotional high point of the opera: but Mozart refused to alter a note, and we can see how tactful he was in dealing with the singer as he describes their exchange in a letter to his father.

Mozart used the accepted forms of *opera seria* in Idomeneo, but he took them to new heights and in new directions. The four elements that he blended so skilfully are:

- *Recitativo secco* or dry recitative, accompanied by keyboard and cello. These are the sections most akin to conversation, staying close to the rhythm and stress of normal speech, and are used to advance the plot: - *Recitativo accompagnato*, or orchestrally accompanied recitative, used for passages of high drama, and less freely declaimed than dry recitative:

- *Arias*, usually constructed on the same pattern as the ABA, so-called *da capo*, arias of the Handelian period, but with much greater freedom of key, vocal line, instrumentation and harmonisation, especially in the repeat sections. The arias often elide into the next recitative seamlessly rather than ending in a great flourish. Above all, they illustrate the emotional state of the character at the time.

- *Choruses*, which play an important part in putting the behaviour of the main characters into a social framework. The Cretans, Trojans, sailors, priests, etc., caught up in the action bring home to the listener what it means to be a prisoner in a foreign land, to be shipwrecked in a violent storm, to be terrified by an all-engulfing monster, to need to placate the angry gods with human sacrifices and so on. They are called on finally to express the joy of the people at a happy ending to what threatens at the start to be a grim and gruesome tragedy.

Time ran out for all the myriad changes and adjustments needed for one reason or another, and Mozart was clearly far from content with the final shape of the piece by the time of the première (twice postponed) on 29 January 1781. At the beginning of that month he had written to his father in Salzburg that "my head and my hands are so full of Act II that it would be no wonder if I were to turn into a third act myself". He was still making cuts at the last minute (he had written three hours of music in all) and it is difficult for present-day directors to know what Mozart would have regarded as a definitive score. We have no first-hand account of the first performance, since Leopold Mozart and his daughter were both present in Munich, and Wolfgang had no need to write letters to them. Only three performances were given in Munich, and the piece was not played again in Mozart's lifetime, though he longed to hear it in Vienna. Stanley Sadie sums up its beauties, and its importance in Mozart's operatic output: "With its unparalleled richness of orchestral writing, its abundance of wonderfully expressive orchestral recitative and its grandly conceived choral scenes, Idomeneo represents a new departure, a venture into a field of a kind he never again had opportunity to explore, and a profoundly musical response to the problems of serious opera in the generation after Gluck. Mozart's solution was not, like Gluck's, a simplification, a paring down of opera to its dramatically essential elements; on the contrary, his score is one of the most complex and elaborate of the time, and the most closely worked in its key structure - the linking of particular groups of keys with different characters of emotions - and its motivic treatment, where certain types of phrase are used allusively, especially in the orchestral recitative. The flexibility of the structure, with a musical texture that often abjures the traditional breaks (except where they serve dramatic ends), was new for Mozart and is something he never did again. . . . Idomeneo remains, in many respects, the richest and most original of all Mozart's operas, and indeed of all serious operas of the 18<sup>th</sup> century."

It took a very long time for Idomeneo to arrive in Britain. The first performance was not until 1934 in Glasgow, and it reached England (Glyndebourne) only in 1951. It still remains a comparative rarity in the opera house, and HGO are proud and excited to present a production in the intimate setting of Upstairs at the Gatehouse, where audiences can experience its full emotional impact and originality.

## THE STORY

### Introduction

Take as your starting point a world populated by capricious gods who manipulate events to suit themselves, treat human beings as their playthings, and expect sacrifices to placate their wrath and to avert disaster. Introduce into this harsh environment a warrior king on a dangerous voyage home after a long and arduous siege. His prisoners, under the command of his son, have already arrived safely; but he is still at sea in a fierce storm conjured up by Neptune, god of the waves. Fearing shipwreck, he promises Neptune to sacrifice the first person he meets on landing in exchange for his safety.

However, since this is the world of late 18<sup>th</sup> century opera and of the Enlightenment and not of ancient Greece, do not expect a tragic ending to the story: Mozart had other ideas. The gods can still cause plenty of trouble in their determination to punish men for their arrogance and folly: but they do not always get their own way. It is possible for men to be master of their own destiny, albeit at a price.

The principal characters in the opera (but not in ancient Greek literature) are **Idomeneo**, King of Crete, who was one of the Greek generals in the Trojan war: his son, **Idamante**: **Ilia**, a Trojan princess who was captured by Idomeneo - her father, King Priam was killed in the war: and **Elettra**, who fled to Crete when her father, King Agamemnon of Argos, was murdered on his return from the war.

### Act I

**Ilia** is alone, bemoaning her fate. Her family and friends are dead: she is a prisoner of the Cretans: she has been shipwrecked along with her captors: she has fallen in love with the hated enemy **Idamante**, who saved her life. Now she is torn between loyalty to her father, and (undeclared) love for the prince. To cap it all, she believes that **Idamante** is captivated by **Elettra**. Yet when she gazes up at **Idamante**, all her hatred melts away.

**Idamante** arrives to summon the whole city to celebrate peace. He is also a troubled soul, fearing his beloved father has been swallowed up in the storm at sea: but he tells **Ilia** that there is hope that **Minerva** may have protected him, since his fleet has been sighted off shore. **Ilia** is sardonic: the Trojans have to suffer the fury of the gods while **Minerva** smiles on the Cretans. Not so, says **Idamante**. The Trojans will all be freed: the only prisoner left will be himself - captured by the beauty of **Ilia**. **Ilia** has to hide her feelings, which **Idamante** misreads as anger. **Ilia** takes refuge in duty, reminding him of the enmity between their fathers. **Idamante** gives way to his feelings in a long, complex aria: he is innocent and hurt by **Ilia**'s rejection - he adores her, and is in anguish. He would kill himself if that was her will: he can see her eyes command it - she has only to say the word. The prisoners are freed, and rejoice that war is over - "may love and reason draw hatred's poison and bring new joy", they all sing. Two Cretan women praise the warrior who ends the fighting and brings peace to the world. Two Trojan men pay homage to **Ilia**, whose beauty has brought them freedom.

**Elettra** chides **Idamante**: the release of the Trojans is an insult to the Greeks. **Idamante** rejects her rebuke - it's enough to have won: this is the time to show mercy. **Arbace**, Idomeneo's counsellor, enters with terrible news: Idomeneo is dead, drowned in the storm. **Idamante**, out of his mind with grief, heads for the shore: **Ilia**, still smarting at the sufferings of Troy, is nevertheless full of pity, while **Elettra** is desperate for a different reason: she has feared the attraction between **Idamante** and **Ilia**. And feels she has lost the only friend who could prevent her beloved prince

From marrying this "vile Trojan slave". **Elettra** is not quite the single-minded avenging Fury of Sophocles or Richard Strauss, but she shares the same temperament: her fierce anger and jealousy surface in a bitter, self-pitying tirade against the woman who has stolen her lover. Both of them will feel her rage, her "cruel spite".

This tumultuous aria *segues* into a chorus of Cretan sailors clinging for dear life to flotsam, while the waves hurl them against the shore as they beg Heaven to relent and come to their rescue. At last the storm subsides and they crawl to safety, leaving their leader on the beach alone. It is **Idomeneo** - he has been saved after all. He ought to be peaceful but he is full of apprehension, because the vow he gave to Neptune in return for his safety - that he would sacrifice the first person he met on land - was wrong, and he fears he will be haunted by his innocent victim. **Idomeneo** is in despair: "must I suffer living death for the weakness of a moment?"

As his aria ends, he catches sight of the 'wretch whom I must sacrifice' - **Idamante**, of course, who, as he looks out over the wreckage of the Cretan fleet, glimpses a survivor. He greets him as a fellow-sufferer with the will and power to help him. "Have you really suffered so much", asks **Idomeneo**: **Idamante** explains, and recognition slowly dawns on them both. **Idamante**'s short-lived joy turns to bemusement, as **Idomeneo** seems to reject his son. **Idomeneo** warns him to keep his distance, and leaves **Idamante** to reflect ruefully on the tears that have so quickly drowned his happiness. To find his father and within minutes to lose him - it is a torment too deep to be borne.

### SHORT INTERVAL

### Intermezzo and Act II

The citizens of Crete give thanks to Neptune for restoring their king, and two of their company sing of how the sparkling waves reflect the sea-god's glory. They praise the gods who saved them from the horrors of hell. But the chorus knows that the fanfares signal the preparation of the sacrifice: "the god shall have blood". **Idomeneo** tells **Arbace** of the promise he made to Neptune, and who has to be the victim of the promised sacrifice. **Arbace** is horrified. "Tell me how to save my beloved son", pleads **Idomeneo**. "Send him abroad", advises **Arbace**, "but don't tell the people - we'll find another way to placate the god". **Idomeneo** approves: **Idamante** can escort **Elettra** back to Argos. **Ilia** greets **Idomeneo** warmly; the king reciprocates with equal graciousness, and promises honourable friendship. **Ilia** goes one step further in a gentle aria: she has lost her father, her loved ones, her homeland: henceforth he will be her father, and Crete will be her home.

**Idomeneo** is puzzled by this display of warmth: is there more to her happiness than this? Can she have fallen in love with **Idamante**? He suspects that the wrath of heaven has been aroused again by **Idamante**'s premature release of the Trojan captives, and of **Ilia** in particular. Now there are three victims to be sacrificed on the sea-god's altar: a swift death for one, a slow torture of grief for the others. In his anguish, **Idomeneo** lets fly in a ferocious aria, giving vent to the storms within him, which rage more fiercely than the tempest from which he was saved. Thus Neptune takes vengeance on his pride: he demands the god to tell him why he was rescued at the point of death, only to drown in grief hours later. There is no answer: only vocal fireworks. **Elettra**, by contrast, is overjoyed by the turn of events: she is free to return to her homeland in the company of her beloved. Her heart is bursting: with her rival safely out of the way, she is confident of her power to charm **Idamante** into forgetting his love for **Ilia**. The tigress sheathes her Claws in an affectionate aria, dreaming of how she will persuade her loved one to put aside his childish

Passion and embrace her loving heart. Suddenly she hears a march in the distance: it is calling her to board the ship. She will leave the shores of Crete, where she (like everyone else, it seems) has suffered deeply, with sweet contentment and no resentment. All is ready for the journey: the citizens, joined by Elettra, sing softly that the sea is calm for the voyage (in a chorus that is a precursor, even down to the rare key of E major, of the great trio *Soave il vento* ["May the breezes blow lightly"] in *Così fan tutte* where the girls bid farewell to their lovers).

**Idomeneo**, somewhat pompously and unconvincingly, bids Idamante set sail and distinguish himself by deeds of heroism in Argos: "if you want to learn to be a king", he admonishes him, "begin now by helping the suffering; be worthy of yourself and of your father". This leads to a moving, bittersweet farewell trio, in which Idomeneo, Idamante and Elettra express their feelings in turn before uniting their voices in a firm affirmation: they will trust heaven's mercy to shield them from harm. But no sooner said than undone: another violent storm flares up and the citizens are terrified that the gods' anger will destroy them all. They're positive that a crime must have been committed to make Neptune so angry and the culprit shall die!

In the mayhem, **Idomeneo** calls out to the god that he and he alone is the guilty one and should be punished. He is defiant: if Neptune demands another victim for his transgression, he will not stand for it: it is not justice. The storm continues to rage, and the Cretans, unable to grasp what is happening or why, can only flee from what seems like impending disaster.

## INTERVAL

### Act III

**Ilia**, alone, has no need to hide her heartache. But she still has to suffer the agony of being close to her lover without being able to confess her passion. She bids the breezes (E major again!) take her message to Idamante: she loves him now and forever in joy and pain, a love so tender as will never occur again in this life. As Idamante approaches, Ilia is thrown into confusion: should she speak out or stay silent, stay or hide? **Idamante** tells her that he is seeking her out not to press his love on her, but to ask her forgiveness before going to his death. A terrible sea-monster is creating havoc in the city, and it is for him to deal with it or die in the attempt. Ilia reminds him that the empire depends on him. But empire means nothing to Idamante if Ilia is not at his side. Idamante's determination to embrace death finally drives Ilia to declare her love. Idamante can scarcely trust what he hears - is this a false dream to soothe his woes? Ilia is even more distressed, remorseful and guilt-ridden. But finally she bursts out "I love you, adore you, and if you mean to perish, I shall die of grief". Finally they are free to celebrate their love, which they do in a rapturous duet.

To their dismay, their idyll is interrupted by the arrival of **Idomeneo** and **Elettra**. Idamante takes the initiative and asks his father why he avoids him, and appears to hate him. Is he the cause of Neptune's anger? Idomeneo sticks to his hard line: Idamante has been exiled, he is not welcome; he must obey and leave. Ilia says she will join him in exile - alive or dead, they will stick together. Idamante bids her farewell. In the ensuing quartet, the emotional heart of the opera and a match for any of Mozart's operatic ensembles, the four characters pour out their hearts. Idamante will leave, but alone. Elettra is furious at their parting, the others deeply sorrowful.

Solemn music ushers in the **High Priest** with a dire message for Idomeneo. Does he realise the carnage the monster is creating in the city? That every street is a river of blood? Thousands upon thousands have been swallowed up by the bloated creature, which becomes greedier by the minute.

Idomeneo alone has the power to save his people; they cry out for help, and he takes no action. "To the temple, your highness" calls the Priest. But who is to be sacrificed? Reluctantly, Idomeneo reveals that the victim is to be Idamante. "May it please the gods," he cries bitterly, "to see a father kill the son he loves so deeply." The Cretans are horrified, and the High Priest pleads for Heaven's mercy on the innocent. Death is staring everyone in the face.

**Idomeneo**, echoed by the priests, sings a prayer to Neptune bidding him temper his anger, and to calm the storm. He implores the god to accept their repentance and to restore his favour. This solemn moment is suddenly interrupted by paeans of praise off-stage. What is happening, demands Idomeneo? **Arbace** enters with the joyful news that Idamante, far from embracing his death, has killed the monster. Alas, responds the king: now Neptune's wrath will return with redoubled force to punish them - and Idamante will find the death he sought. **Idamante** enters, resolved to fulfil his sacrificial role, and bids his father accept a final kiss. He now understands - his father's strange behaviour stemmed from love, not rejection, and nobly offers his life in the assurance that this will bring peace and blessings to the people. Idomeneo in turn begs Idamante's forgiveness - his son is the victim of blind unyielding fate. Suddenly it is too much: he cannot strike the blow. Idamante bids him stand firm, and not to let pity or love distract him from what he must do. He urges his father to strike: death holds no terrors for him. But as Idomeneo's resolve returns, and they exchange a last kiss, **Ilia** rushes in to halt the sacrifice. There is general consternation. She demands that the knife be turned on her - she should be the victim.

As she commands Idomeneo to kill her, there is a roll of thunder. **The Voice of Neptune** is heard. Justice is to be done: Ilia's and Idamante's love has triumphed. Idomeneo must lay down his crown: Idamante will rule in his place, and Ilia will be his queen. Heaven is content, and the innocent are rewarded.

Idomeneo, Idamante and Ilia are in rapture: only **Elettra** is enraged. Her jealousy knows no bounds. She would rather follow her brother Orestes to hell than live to see her rival triumph over her. The venom and vehemence of her final outburst bring her to the point of death - but she cannot quite bring herself to take her life - or so it seems. Peace and calm follow this rancorous display: it remains only for **Idomeneo** to do the god's bidding. His vow has been redeemed: and in his last decree, he cedes the throne to Idamante, and welcomes Ilia as the royal consort. Among his happy people, he declares himself to be the happiest. Amid general rejoicing, the Cretans give their blessing to the couple and wish them joy and happiness.

*Notes and synopsis by Alastair Macgeorge, April 2008.*

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN OPERA'S  
next production at 'Upstairs at the Gatehouse'  
will be another 'first',  
Donizetti's irresistible romantic comedy,  
**L'Elisir d'Amore (The Elixir of Love)**  
- November 6<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> 2008 -

## THE CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

April 10, 12, 18, 20 (matinee)

April 11, 13 (matinée), 17, 19

<b>ILIA</b> Princess of Troy, daughter of King Priam	<b>Stefanie Kemball-Read</b>	<b>Julia Hessey*</b>
<b>IDAMANTE</b> Son of Idomeneo, King of Crete	<b>Louise Adamson*</b> (April 12, 17, 18, 20)	<b>Violetta Gawara*</b> (April 10, 11, 13, 19)
<b>TWO CRETAN WOMEN</b>	<b>Katy Powis*</b> <b>Katy Butcher*</b>	<b>Iris Korfker*</b> <b>Amaia Arregui</b>
<b>TWO TROJAN PRISONERS</b>	<b>Philip Hayes*</b> <b>Martin Musgrave</b>	<b>Alex Routledge</b> <b>Matthew Holt</b>
<b>ELETTRA</b> Princess of Argos, daughter of King Agamemnon	<b>Helen-Julie Johnson</b>	<b>Hannah Sawle*</b>
<b>ARBACE</b> Counsellor of Idomeneo	<b>Alex Routledge</b>	<b>Philip Hayes*</b>
<b>IDOMENEO</b> King of Crete, returning from the Trojan war	<b>Philip Modino</b>	<b>George Smart*</b>
<b>HIGH PRIEST</b> of the Cretan temple	<b>Philip Hayes*</b>	<b>Alex Routledge</b>
<b>VOICE OF NEPTUNE</b> God of the sea, the Earth-Shaker	<b>Danny Smyth*</b>	<b>Matthew Jelf*</b>

Shipwrecked Cretans, Trojan prisoners, Cretan citizens, Priests,

Amaia Arregui, Katy Butcher\*, Claudia Conway, Jessica Flynn\*,  
Philip Hayes\*, Matthew Holt, Liz Hunt, Matthew Jelf\*, Iris Korfker\*,  
Antonia Leach, Martin Musgrave, Jill Noakes, Nicola Ogborn\*, Katy Powis\*,  
Alex Routledge, Danny Smyth\*

\* Début with HGO

## THE DIONYSUS ENSEMBLE

(Orchestral Manager Léonie Adams 07947 070 909)

<b>Violin1(leader)</b>	<b>Laura Virtanen</b>
<b>Violin 2</b>	<b>Esther Hopkinson</b>
<b>Viola</b>	<b>Suzanne Evans</b>
<b>Cello</b>	<b>Valerie Welbanks</b>
<b>Double Bass</b>	<b>Samuel Rice</b>
<b>Flute</b>	<b>Debbie Martin</b>
<b>Oboe</b>	<b>Jose Azkue</b>
<b>Clarinet</b>	<b>Felicity Vine</b>
<b>Bassoon</b>	<b>Debbie Barnes</b>
<b>Horn</b>	<b>Kerry Reid</b>
<b>Timpani</b>	<b>Ric Elsworth</b>
<b>Continuo keyboard</b>	<b>Katrine Reimers</b>
<b>Continuo cello</b>	<b>Valerie Welbanks</b>

Orchestral reduction by Tony Burke © Pocket Publications

## THE PRODUCTION TEAM

<b>Production Director</b>	<b>Sebastian Harcombe</b>
<b>Music Director/Conductor</b>	<b>Katrine Reimers</b>
<b>Consultant Music Director</b>	<b>Robin Newton</b>
<b>Assistant Music Director</b>	<b>Alastair Macgeorge</b>
<b>Assistant Rehearsal Pianists</b>	<b>Suzu Ruffles</b>
	<b>Domenica Cardullo</b>
<b>Production Design</b>	<b>Nicolai Hart-Hansen</b>
<b>Assistant Director/Stage Manager</b>	<b>Jodie Kearns</b>
<b>Lighting Design</b>	<b>Cameron Bannister</b>

## THE PERFORMERS

**Amaia Arregui** (*Cretan Woman & Chorus*) was born in Bilbao, Spain, and moved to London in 2005 to study the Swedish-Italian School technique with the soprano Ann De Renais first, and with Cathy Pope since 2006. She obtained the Diploma in Opera Performance from Birkbeck College in 2006. A member of the Bilbao Symphonic Choir for 5 years, performing often as the choir main soloist, she also sang with the Bilbao Opera Chorus during the 2001-2004 seasons. As a soloist, she has performed small roles in Spanish operas and operettas, Abrizza (*El Asombro de Damasco*), Emma (*Los Gavilanes*), a seller (*La Vida Breve*), Carmen (*Carmen*, scenes) with Birkbeck College, Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*, scenes) in a private performance at the Arts Club, and Filipyevna (*Yevgeny Onegin*) with HGO in November 2007.

**Alex Routledge** (*Arbace & High Priest*) read Classics and Modern Greek at Oxford, following this with a Post Graduate Diploma in Vocal Studies at the Royal Academy. Initially a baritone, he retrained as a tenor with David Maxwell Anderson and Philip Doghan at the RAM. Alex has sung *comprimario* roles and chorus with a number of companies, including Opera Holland Park, Vox Lirika, English Bach Festival, Central Festival Opera, London City Opera, Opera d'Amici, Vivace Opera and European Chamber Opera, as well as larger roles in scenes with the RAM and Morley College. He first appeared with HGO in the recent production of *Yevgeny Onegin*.

**Antonia Leach** (*Chorus*) has now been an enthusiastic member (both as a singer, and helping behind the scenes) of HGO for four years, and *Idomeneo* will be the eighth opera she has had the pleasure of singing with the company. She appeared in Opera London's *Marriage of Figaro* earlier this year, and will be taking part in Vox Lirica's summer 2008 production of *La Traviata*. Antonia will be returning to sing in HGO's production of *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Upstairs at The Gatehouse in November.

**Claudia Conway** (*Chorus*) has sung previously with HGO in the chorus of Handel's *Alcina*. In October 2006 she appeared as Novice/Nursing sister in *Suor Angelica* and as a bridesmaid in *Trial by Jury* for Opera Moriarty. She gained a diploma in Opera Performance from Birkbeck College in 2006. Claudia has performed as soloist in two operatic cabaret performances and as 'prom concert' soloist with the Watford Philharmonic, as well as having played children's singing roles at ENO, Royal Opera House and Unicorn Theatre during her school years. Her voice teacher is Marie Hayward-Segal.

**Danny Smyth** (*Voice of Neptune*) is currently undertaking a PGCE in Secondary Music at the Institute of Education. He has sung as a soloist in various works including Purcell's *Come ye Sons of Art* (Ambleside Choral Society), Mozart's *Coronation Mass* (Leicester University Choral Society) and Haydn's *Nelson Mass* (Charnwood Choral Society). Danny has also appeared as Ford in Nikolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Mr Gobineau in Menotti's *The Medium* and Seneca in Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppaea* at Leeds College of Music, as well as singing in the choruses of British Youth Opera and the Skipton Building Society Camerata. This is his debut with HGO.

**George Smart** (*Idomeneo*), before becoming a policeman, studied at the Royal Academy of Music and then went on to sing for a number of companies including Glyndebourne, Bayreuth and Nederlands Opera in Amsterdam (chorus). Roles have included Lenskiy (Opera South East, Southgate) and Macduff (Southgate). This is his HGO debut.

**Hannah Sawle** (*Elettra*) is currently on a gap year before returning to do her MMus at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she gained a First in her BMus (Hons), studying with Margaret Humphrey Clark. Currently a member of Laudibus and the Choir of the Academy of Ancient Music, she also recorded with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra while studying at Chethams School of Music. Operatic roles include Popova (*The Bear*) and Hélène (adaptation of *La Belle Hélène*). Operatic scenes include Susan (*A Dinner Engagement*), Nancy (*Albert Herring*), Charlotte (*Werther*), Marzelline (*Fidelio*), Carmen (*Carmen*) and Dorabella (*Così fan Tutte*). This is Hannah's debut with HGO.

**Helen-Julie Johnson** (*Elettra*) enjoys a busy schedule, performing principal roles for several Opera companies in and around London. Helen has recently performed the roles of Mimi (*La Bohème*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Micaela (*Carmen*), Amelia (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan Tutte*), Countess Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Mařenka (*The Bartered Bride*), Pamina (*The Magic Flute*), Antonia (*The Tales of Hoffmann*), Butterfly (*Madam Butterfly*), Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*), Violetta (*La Traviata*) and the title roles in *Suor Angelica* and Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*. This coming autumn, Helen will be performing the role of Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*). She studies with Raymond Connell and is coached by Christopher Gould and Linnhe Robertson.

**Iris Korfker** (*Cretan Woman & Chorus*) is an MMus student at Trinity College of Music studying with Alison Wells. She received the Eva Malpass Scholarship and was awarded the Paul Simm Opera Prize for her role of Blanche in *Dialogues des Carmélites* (TCM). Other roles include 2nd spirit *Magic Flute* (BYO and Dartington), Suki Tawdry *Beggars' Opera* (TCM), various roles *Dido and Aeneas* (with Aldeburgh Music Club and others). She performed in the St Martin-in-the-Fields lunchtime recital series, and was soprano soloist in Handel's *Laudate Pueri Dominum* and *Dixit Dominus* (Thomas Tallis Society). This is Iris' debut with HGO. Future engagements: Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate* (with London Irish Symphony Orchestra) and Fiordiligi *Così fan Tutte* (Situation Opera).

**Jessica Flynn** (*Chorus*) has been singing in church choirs since the age of eight, and successfully completed all her RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) exams while at school. Currently studying World Music at the School of Oriental and African Studies, *Idomeneo* is Jessica's first venture into the world of opera, and she is delighted to be making her debut with HGO.

**Jill Noakes** (*Chorus*) sang in choruses, and took small parts in ensembles, with Floral Opera, for many years. She studies singing with Carlos Aransay. With HGO she has been in the chorus of *Carmen*, *Magic Flute*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *La Traviata* & *Yevgeny Onegin*. Jill studied piano in Venice, Italy with Gino Gorini and then, at the Guildhall School of Music, with Robert Collet and Mary Peppin. She is coached by Richard Shaw in London. She teaches piano privately locally. Jill is looking forward to singing in the chorus of *La Traviata* with Vox Lirika in June.

**Julia Hessey** (*Ilija*) began her singing training as a Junior Exhibitioner at Trinity College of Music, London. She graduated in music from the University of Birmingham and later joined 'The Knack,' an ENO Baylis programme. In 2004, Julia completed postgraduate studies in singing at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. Since then, she has continued her studies in London. Operatic roles include Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Despina (*Così Fan Tutte*), Papagena (*The Magic Flute*), Servilia (*La Clemenza di Tito*), Barbarina (*Marriage of Figaro*), Le Petit Yniold (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Blanche de la Force (*Dialogues of the Carmélites*), Giulietta (*I Capuleti e I Montecchi*), Lisa (*The Grand Duke*), Melissa (*Princess Ida*), Eliza (*The Zoo*), and Clara (*The Duenna*). *Idomeneo* is Julia's debut with HGO.

**Katy Butcher** (*Cretan Woman & Chorus*) studied at Royal Holloway where she graduated with an MMus in performance and Musicology and was awarded the Dame Felicity Lott bursary to continue her studies. She has sung with Opera at Bearwood, Opera Nova, and Harrow Opera in roles including Pamina (*Magic Flute*), the Nursing Sister (*Suor Angelica*). *Idomeneo* is her first appearance with HGO. Future engagements include Despina (*Così fan Tutte*) with Harrow Opera.

**Katy Powis** (*Cretan Woman & Chorus*) initially trained as a flautist and pianist. She began singing whilst studying at Cambridge where she joined the University Chorus and Fitzwilliam College Chapel and Chamber Choirs. She has performed in the UK and abroad with the BBC Symphony Chorus and in 2007 completed Birkbeck University's Concert Singing Foundation Course with Distinction. *Idomeneo* represents her opera (and HGO) début.

**Liz Hunt** (*Chorus*) sang in the choruses of *Macbeth*, *Le Comte Ory*, and *La Traviata* with Floral Opera. *Idomeneo* will be her third opera with HGO and she has thoroughly enjoyed rehearsing it. Liz sings with the Medici Choir, under John Baird, and recently sang with them in a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at St Giles' Church near Tottenham Court Road, London.

**Louise Adamson** (*Idamante*) is studying for a Masters in Performance with Linda Hirst at Trinity College of Music. She holds scholarships from the Elsie Skellern, Susan Morden, Culter's Company, Kathleen and John Wates Trusts. Recent operatic appearances include Third Boy in *Die Zauberflöte* at Dartington, chorus in Carmen with Mean Time Opera and chorus in *Dialogues des Carmélites* at Trinity College of Music. Louise is a regular Oratorio soloist and has appeared recently with Highgate Choral Society, The London Chorus, Eastcote Choral Society and Downland Chorale. She also gives recitals as a soloist and with her vocal trio Troika. *Idomeneo* marks her début with HGO.

**Martin Musgrave** (*Chorus & 2<sup>nd</sup> Trojan*) started singing with the New Zealand National Youth Choir at age 16 in 1988, and then went on to study singing at Victoria University of Wellington with Emily Mair. Whilst at Victoria he understudied Leporello (*Don Giovanni*). He then joined Wellington City Opera, in 1993, performing *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Peter Grimes*, and *Bitter Calm* (Chris Blake). He joined Hampstead Garden Opera in 2006, where he has sung *The Marriage of Figaro* (Chorus), *La Traviata* (Baron Douphol), *Don Giovanni* (Chorus), and *Yevgeny Onegin* (Captain Petrovich). He also recently sang in Opera London's début production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

**Matthew Holt** (*Chorus & 2<sup>nd</sup> Trojan*) started singing with the London Welsh Chorale in 2005. He has since sung several times at the Royal Festival Hall with the South Bank's Voicelab project led by Mary King. He started taking singing lessons last year in order to annoy his neighbours. Matthew was a chorus member in HGO's productions of *La Traviata* (2006) and *Don Giovanni* (2007) and played the role of Zaretskyi in *Yevgeny Onegin* (2007). He was also recently a chorus member for Opera London's production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

**Matthew Jelf** (*Voice of Neptune*) studied with Yvonne Seymour as a bass-baritone, successfully graduating from the University of York in 2007. Matthew is primarily a choral singer, working as a soloist and piano accompanist in York, Bristol and London. He is currently working with The Exmoor Singers of London under James Jarvis, Ionian Singers of London under Timothy Salter, and making his London début in an operatic role with HGO. Previous operatic roles include 'The Constable' in a rare performance of Elizabeth Maconchy's *The Three Strangers*, staged in the Sir Jack Lyon's Concert Hall, York under the direction of her daughter, composer and lecturer Dr Nicola LeFanu.

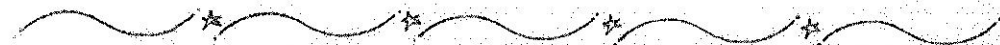
**Nicola Ogborn** (*Chorus*) spent five years training in classical music at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama & Trinity College of Music. She spent a further year at the Royal Academy of Music studying Musical Theatre. Nicola has been involved with London Voices and has sung Ligeti in Lucerne, Handel in Paris and Paul McCartney at the Albert Hall. She has also appeared as a soloist with Wandsworth Symphony Orchestra, sung in Taiwan for the Sounds of The Human World Competition and has recorded songs for New Musicals and Short Films. This will be Nicola's first appearance with HGO.

**Philip Hayes** (*Arbace & High Priest*) is, sadly, a tax consultant by day. Of a musical family, this is Philip's first production with HGO, though he has been involved in other amateur choirs and opera groups since childhood. Recent stage roles include Tamino (*The Magic Flute*), Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*), The Prince (*Rusalka*), Jupiter (*Semele*), Earl Essex (*Gloriana*), Wilhelm Meister (*Mignon*) and the title role in Rossini's *The Count Ory*. As an oratorio soloist, Philip has also performed much of the standard repertoire, most recently Handel's *Messiah* and CPE Bach's *Magnificat*, and will be singing Rossini's *Stabat Mater* in May. This is Philip's first appearance with HGO.

**Philip Modino** (*Idomeneo*) is currently in his last year of a Bachelor's degree at Trinity College of Music. Philip has been involved in the performing arts as a singer, pianist, conductor, guitarist, director and producer. He has performed in numerous venues in Greece including the National Theatre and in London he has performed in venues such as King's College Anatomy Theatre, Old Royal Naval College Chapel, Blackheath Halls, St John's Smith Square and the Barbican. He has also recorded for the BBC in Maida Vale Studios. In 2007 Philip sang the roles of Yamadori (*Madam Butterfly*) and Lenskiy (*Yevgeny Onegin*) and will be singing Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*) in May 2008 in Spain.

**Stefanie Kembal-Read** (*Illia*) trained at Trinity College of Music, obtaining her postgraduate diploma with distinction. Her operatic experience includes Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) (with HGO), Constance (*Les Dialogues des Carmélites*), Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*), Belinda & First Witch (*Dido and Aeneas*), and most recently the title role in Mozart's lesser-known operatic jewel *Zaide* at St John's, Smith Square. Also an active oratorio soloist, she recently performed Bach's *Matthew Passion* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and gives many private recitals either solo or as half of duo SIRENE. (see [www.stefaniekembalread.co.uk](http://www.stefaniekembalread.co.uk)).

**Violetta Gawara** (*Idamante*) was born and studied in Poland. She regularly took part in the prestigious Warsaw Autumn Festival, performed with every major Polish orchestra and recorded for Polish Radio. Her operatic experience includes Cherubino (*Marriage of Figaro*), Hansel (*Hansel & Gretel*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) and Xerxes. She made her London début last year with EBF at the Banqueting House under Laurence Cummings, singing Proserpina in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*. This summer she will perform in Offenbach's *Bluebeard* for Grange Park Opera. *Idomeneo* will be Violetta's début with HGO.





## THE MUSIC TEAM

**Katrine Reimers (Musical Director)** studied music at King's College, Cambridge, piano accompaniment at GSMD, and was a trainee répétiteur at the National Opera Studio. As a pianist she has worked for numerous opera companies, including The Royal Opera, ENO, Classical Opera Company, Independent Opera and Opéra de Bauge. As Musical Director she led Vision Opera from 2001 to 2006, and in 2007 was Assistant Conductor for Paddock Production's collaboration with Finnish National Opera. She directed/produced HGO's 2005 production of *Alcina*. Always interested in community and educational projects, Katrine has enjoyed much involvement with the education departments of Opera Brava and ENO Baylis.

**Alastair Macgeorge (Assistant Music Director/Répétiteur)** spent most of his working life in the consumer movement (28 years with *Which?* and, from 1991 to 2003, supporting fledgling groups all over Eastern Europe and Central Asia). An early starter on the piano but never a great practiser, he infuriated his father, a gifted accompanist, by 'strumming' (i.e. playing what came into his four-year-old head). This led to a lifetime of music-making in many contexts - domestic chamber music; accompanying singers and instrumentalists; with HGO since its foundation, and now Chairman; and composition, notably the score for *Murder in the Cathedral* in St. Michael's, Highgate, in 1991, and a few songs, choral pieces and other small-scale works.

**Suzy Ruffles (Répétiteur)** began studying the piano at the age of four. She undertook a postgraduate diploma in piano accompaniment at Trinity College of Music in 2005, studying under Eugene Asti and Christine Croshaw, completing the course in July 2007. She now has a busy schedule accompanying many different and varied performers. Suzy has recently worked as répétiteur for Meantime Opera's *Carmen* and Trinity College's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Minotaur Music Theatre's *Così Fan Tutte* and HGO's *Yevgeny Onegin*. She hopes to continue working with HGO for a long time to come and wishes them every success for *Idomeneo*.

**Domenica Cardullo (Répétiteur)** was born in Italy, and studied piano and composition at the Archangelo Corelli conservatoire in Messina, her home-town. She also qualified as a teacher for young students. Domenica worked in London from 1999 to 2005, acquiring extensive experience as an accompanist during this period. She then moved to France for two years, working for an International Dance School, returning to London in 2007 as a regular accompanist.

**The Dionysus Ensemble**, formed by cellist Léonie Adams in 2003, specialises in opera performances with reduced orchestration and chamber orchestral concerts. It consists of young professional musicians and is based in London. Recent productions have included *Yevgeny Onegin*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Traviata*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Alcina*, *The Magic Flute* and *Mary Stuart* (all with HGO), *The Barber of Seville* and *Carmen*, with performances across the UK, including the Purcell Room on London's South Bank. See [www.leonieadams.com](http://www.leonieadams.com) for further information, and [www.operatalent.com](http://www.operatalent.com) for an interview with Léonie.

"The Verdi score was, as always, played superbly by the young Dionysus Ensemble. As soon as the overture started I was transported by their heavenly glorious sounds."

National Operatic and Dramatic Association 2006

"Special mention should be made of the 12-piece Dionysus Ensemble's orchestral reduction led by Robin Newton"

Camden New Journal, April 2007

"Musically it was sublime as always. New MD Robin Newton with his young talented Dionysus Ensemble... played the Mozart score brilliantly."

National Operatic and Dramatic Association, 2007

"Musical support under the direction of Robin Newton was to a very high standard with good balance between orchestra and stage."

National Operatic and Dramatic Association, November 2007

## THE PRODUCTION TEAM

**Sebastian Harcombe (Production Director)** read music at London university before training as an actor at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA). Extensive work in classical theatre includes principal roles at the Royal National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal Court and Lyric Theatre Hammersmith. Directorial credits include the plays *Rosmersholm*, *The Maids*, *La Ronde* and *The Pains of Youth* and the operas *Dido and Aeneas*, *Alceste*, *Dreamlives*, *La Voix Humaine* (Opera Now Choice 2007) and, for HGO, *Yevgeny Onegin*. Sebastian runs the MA course in European Classical Acting at Drama Centre, London and the music theatre company *Liederkreis* ([www.liederkreis.com](http://www.liederkreis.com)).

**Nicolai Hart Hansen (Set Designer)** trained at Central School of Speech and Drama and Slade School of Fine Art. His recent theatre work includes: *Intro to Nitro* (Greenwich Theatre), *Mine* (Kaos Theatre), *Some Girls are Bigger than Others*, *Watership Down* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Playing the Victim* (Told by an Idiot at the Royal Court), *Project E* (BAC), *Winter Under the Table* (Copenhagen), *Love and Money* (Young Vic), *Japes* (Not The National Theatre), *Behind the Iron Mask* (Duchess Theatre), *Medea in Jerusalem* (Rattlestick Theatre, New York), *Burleigh Grimes* (Bridewell), *The Kitchen*, (Embassy Theatre), *More Lies About Jerzy*, *The Last Obit*, (New End) and *Dolores* (Arcoia). Opera: in 2007, *Yevgeny Onegin* (HGO); and in 2008, *Idomeneo* (HGO) and *Happiness* (ROH2).

**Jodie Kearns (Assistant Director/Stage Manager)** started her music training at St. Patrick's College in her native Ireland, then, having moved to London, gained a Diploma in Opera Performance from the University of London. Roles include Tessa (*The Gondoliers*), Ursule (Berlioz *Béatrice et Bénédicte*), Edith (*Pirates of Penzance*) and Nora, in both Syngé's play and Vaughan-Williams' opera, *Riders to the Sea*. She has also performed major mezzo roles in scenes from many operas including *Carmen* (*Carmen*), *Idamante* (*Idomeneo*), *Isabella* (*L'Italiana in Algeri*), *Hänsel* (*Hänsel und Gretel*) and *Dorabella* (*Così fan Tutte*). This will be Jodie's second venture with HGO: she joined the *Onegin* team last November in the joint role of Assistant Director and understudy for Olga.

**Cameron Bannister (Lighting Designer)** first worked with HGO as Assistant Lighting Designer to Alex Stone on *Yevgeny Onegin* last November, so this will be his second experience of lighting a production at Upstairs at the Gatehouse. Cameron is currently finishing a BA honours degree at the Central School of Speech and Drama in Production Lighting. His most recent design work includes Bisera Winters' *A Night For Orpheus* and lighting for the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's *Robin Hood's Merriment* event.

## A VERY BIG THANK-YOU FROM HGO

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