

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN OPERA

www.hgo.org.uk - www.facebook.com/hgopera



PRESS RELEASE 24 September 2018

The Secret Marriage

by Domenico Cimarosa

Libretto by Giovanni Bertati, after the play by David Garrick and George Coleman

English Translation by David Pippin

• Stage Director: SINÉAD O'NEILL • Music Director: CHRIS HOPKINS

• With the HGO ORCHESTRA

at

JACKSONS LANE THEATRE, HIGHGATE, LONDON N6 5AA

November 16th to 25th, 2018

Contact HGO Chairman

DAVID CONWAY

david.conway@hgo.org.uk

07767 203661

for any additional enquiries or
information

HGO, North London's leading opera company, presents a new production of Domenico Cimarosa's masterpiece of *opera buffa*, 'THE SECRET MARRIAGE'. 'What a treat to bring Cimarosa's sparkling, effervescent opera to life', says director SINÉAD O'NEILL. 'It was an immediate hit in 1792, and it's easy to see why. Fast-paced, with direct, well-drawn characters, tangled love affairs, confusion and misunderstandings, it is light-hearted, touching, and charming.'

Carolina is secretly married to her father's manservant, Paolino, the factotum of her pompous father, the merchant Geronimo. To win over Geronimo's favour, Paolino has masterminded a marriage contract between Carolina's elder sister and a Count. The Count's arrival, however, brings general pandemonium, as wires get crossed, plots misfire and romantic intentions are grievously mistaken. Carolina and Paolino must somehow untangle the threads.....

Neglected today, *The Secret Marriage* was in its time more popular even than Mozart's comedies. The fifty-third opera of Domenico Cimarosa, (in his time celebrated from Naples to St. Petersburg), when the Emperor Leopold heard it during its first run in Vienna he demanded it be repeated in full that same evening. It was a huge success and had well over 100 outings in its first year alone, reaching every European capital in the next few years. Not so much looking back to Mozart, Cimarosa's wit and style prefigure Rossini, born three weeks after the opera's premiere - this household sitcom was written almost 25 years before *The Barber of Seville*.

In HGO's production the opera, with its nimble score, buzzes from the start with effervescent energy. Cimarosa's score elicits a huge range of colour, and ensembles and arias abound for the very busy cast of six; an extraordinary variety ranging from deft patter and raucous argument to glorious lyricism, all in perfect balance. And that's reflected in HGO's pacy staging which recognizes that this is at heart pure musical theatre; sometimes subtle, sometimes slapstick, but always with an steady and compelling connection to the unfolding story.

On **November 2nd**, the Italian Cultural Institute in Belgrave Square London will be hosting a free event with HGO singers, Production Director Sinéad O'Neill and Music Director Chris Hopkins presenting Domenico Cimarosa's life and works, including the performance of some of the composer's most notable works, including arias from 'The Secret Marriage'. See <http://tiny.cc/secretatici> for details.

SINÉAD O'NEILL is delighted to return to HGO, having directed Susannah in 2008. Earlier this year, Sinéad was Stage Director of the inaugural Glyndebourne Opera Cup, and she returns to Glyndebourne in summer 2019 to direct the revival of Annabel Arden's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Previously for Glyndebourne, she directed the 2017 Tour revival of *Barbiere* and the BBC Proms semi-stagings of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Barbiere*. Sinéad founded Cambridge City Opera to create new work spanning artistic disciplines. Her original pieces include *The Barrington Hippo*, (with Kate Whitley), *The Raven*, *On the Axis of this World*, and *London Burned*, (all with Matt Rogers), and *The Albatross*, (with Kim Ashton). Sinéad is a Board Member of English Touring Opera.

Following the success of his ENO debut last season conducting Cal McCrystal's *Iolanthe*, the conductor and pianist **CHRIS HOPKINS** will be conducting *The Magic Flute* and other works there in the next two years, alongside work at Garsington Opera and elsewhere. Previously he has worked with WNO, NI Opera, Holland Park Opera, Wide Open Opera, Opera Danube, OTC Ireland, and performed at venues in Britain, the US, Asia and extensively in Europe as well as live and recorded appearances on BBC 1, Radio 3 and Radio 4. Chris was honoured in 2013 to be made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Hampstead Garden Opera, in being since 1990, is a company committed to the development of young singers, and stages two productions each year. Its consistently high musical, vocal and productions standards make HGO an important part of the artistic life of north London.



HGO won the Off West End (Offies) Opera Production Award 2013 for its 2012 staging of *Così fan tutte*, and have been finalists for the same award in the 2014, 2015, and 2016 Offies.

“What do you go to the opera for? The question has a thousand answers, but if you’re going to Mozart’s Marriage of Figaro, the chances are that you’re expecting some frothy romantic comedy, some elegant music and a bunch of tunes that will stay in your head when the show is over. But on a good day, it can be so much more than that, and Bruno Ravello’s production for Hampstead Garden Opera pulls out all the stops. Mozart’s music lends itself well to the reduced format of conductor/continuo plus thirteen musicians (broadly speaking, one of each instrument). Oliver-John Ruthven conjured up a marvelous performance: brisk and upbeat but never overpowering for the comedy, airy and impossibly romantic for the slower melodic passages. For sheer musicality, I can’t remember enjoying the music as much in any sized opera house.”

David Karlin’s 5 star review of *The Marriage of Figaro* for **Bachtrack**.

Performances of *The Secret Marriage*:

Evenings at 7.30 pm – Nov 16, 17, & 20-24

Matinées at 4.00pm – Sundays Nov 17 & 25

Matinée at 2.30pm – Saturday Nov 24

Tickets: (unreserved) £27 (Premium Seats) £22 (General Admission) (Concessions £20 – Nov 16 & 17)

Box Office: 0800 411 8881

Online: www.hgo.org.uk/tickets