Performance Saturday, July 8 at 8:15 p.m.
U.S. Stage Premiere

Premiere Performance (Respighi Realization) Teatro Alla Scala, Milan, 1935

We are delighted that our first production in Chautauqua’s new Amphitheater is this unique blending of new and old—Respighi’s 1935 realization of Monteverdi’s 1607 masterpiece. Chautauqua Opera would like to dedicate tonight’s performance to the countless men and women who worked so tirelessly to design and build this magnificent venue and centerpiece for the entire Chautauqua community. Thank you!

CAST

Orfeo
Daniel Belcher

La Musica/Silvia (La Messaggera)/La Speranza
Heather Johnson*

Euridice
Chelsea Friedlander*

Pastori
Eric Wassenaar*, Omar Najmi*, Natalie Rose Havens*, Tascha Anderson*

Ninfa
Helen Hassinger*

Caronte
Ricardo Ceballos de la Mora*

Spiriti
Eric Wassenaar*, Natalie Rose Havens*, Helen Hassinger*, Blake Jennings*

Plutone
Evan Ross*

Proserpina
Megan Grey*

Apollo
Arnold Livingston Geis*

Coro
Chautauqua Opera Young Artists

Bambini
Lydia Kushmaul, Eve Kushmaul, Alexandra McKee
+ Chautauqua Opera Debut
* 2017 Chautauqua Opera Young Artist

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION

Conductor
Steven Osgood

Stage Director/Choreographer
Keturah Stickann

Lighting Designer
Michael Baumgarten

Set Designer
Caleb Wertenbaker

Costume Designer
B. G. FitzGerald

Wig/Makeup Designer
Martha Ruskai

Chorus Master
Carol Rausch

Assistant Director
Cara Consilvio

Assistant Conductor
Daniela Candillari

Coach/Accompanists
Miriam Charney

Diction Coach/Supertitles
Allison Voth

Technical Director
John P. Woodey

Properties Master/Scenic Artist
Theresa Pierce

Stage Manager
Catherine Costanzo

Lead Assistant Stage Manager
Anna Reetz

Assistant Stage Managers
Miriam Michaels, Patricia Garvey

Concertmaster
Vahn Armstrong

CREDITS

Orchestral materials furnished by Boosey and Hawkes
Scenery constructed by Local #266 I.A.T.S.E
Lighting provided by Advanced Production Group
Costumes constructed by the Chautauqua Opera Costume Shop
Wigs provided by Martha Ruskai

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

The mythology of Orpheus is wide and varied. He was a poet, potentially a king; he quelled the sirens from the bow of the Argo; his music could move stones. So why is it that the one part of his story we keep coming back to is his love and loss of the fair Euridice? I think it’s because she makes him human, and therefore his tale becomes our tale. There is not one of us on this earth who will not, at some point, wish desperately for the return of a loved one who has passed, who will not throw ourselves on the mercy of the great beyond to bring someone back to us. In this sense, we are all Orpheus. His journey to the Underworld is a poetic realization of the grief process that humans go through every day, and this is part of the reason why this story continues to resonate millennia later. Our Orpheus in this presentation lives in rural America, and so his world will seem very familiar. This is the beauty of the well told myth: the story keeps returning, and returning, and returning, like the great circle of time, like the cyclical nature of life. And with each telling, we will continue to recognize his pain within ourselves.

— Keturah Stickann
SYNOPSIS

Prologue
The Spirit of Music invites the audience to listen to the story of Orfeo.

Act I
In Thrace, the villagers celebrate the marriage of Orfeo and Euridice.

Act II
A few days later, Euridice and her friends run off to pick flowers while Orfeo serenades the villagers. His love song is interrupted by a messenger bringing tragic news: Euridice has been bitten by a snake and is dead. In shock and overcome with grief, Orfeo vows to travel down to the Underworld to bring Euridice back.

-Intermission-

Act III
Orfeo travels to the Underworld, accompanied by Hope, who abandons him when they reach the gates. At the River Styx he sings to the boatman Caronte, who is unmoved, but the music eventually lulls him to sleep and Orfeo slips past.

Act IV
In the Underworld, Proserpina begs her husband Pluto to allow Euridice to return to earth. Pluto consents, but only if Orfeo leads Euridice out of the Underworld without turning back to look at her. Orfeo agrees, but on their way home, anxiety overtakes him. He turns, sees Euridice, and loses her again.

Act V
Back in Thrace, Orfeo sings of his grief. His father, Apollo, descends from the skies to console him. Together they ascend to the heavens. The villagers remain bent on punishing Orfeo.

NOTES FROM THE MAESTRO

Working with living composers, as I often do, keeps you on your toes — especially when those living composers are writing operas. There is a multitude of ways in which music can propel drama, drama can inform musical structure, and characters can be brought to life through a composer’s hand. What I learn from collaborating on a new work is a constant influence on how I approach standard repertoire, and vice versa.

Imagine then my curiosity when I was invited to conduct the North American premiere of the “Montespighi” L’Orfeo (Ottorino Respighi’s realization of Monteverdi) at the Wintergreen Festival in 2007. Opera companies around the world were busy marking the 400th Anniversary of the premiere of Monteverdi’s first opera. But this concert performance of the “Montespighi” in the mountains outside Charlottesville, Virginia was going to be something truly unique!

The score that Monteverdi left for L’Orfeo leaves great room for interpretation. For Respighi, one of the first modern composers to gain access to the original score, creating his own performing version of the opera was a lifelong dream. The opera you hear tonight is one of the last pieces Respighi wrote before his death.

What would Monteverdi have written had he been alive in 1907 rather than in 1607? Would he have deployed a Respighi-sized orchestra had it been available to him? What type of pungent harmonies would he have found for this intensely emotional tale? I like to think that Monteverdi would have loved Respighi’s realization of his opera. I certainly do, and I am tremendously excited to be presenting the first staging of this opera in the United States, here in Chautauqua’s magnificent Amphitheater!

— Steven Osgood

CHAUTAUQUA OPERA ORCHESTRA

Violin I
Vahn Armstrong, Concertmaster
David Hult, Assistant Concertmaster
Erica Robinson
Cheryl Bintz
Lenelle Morse
Olga Kaler
Ming Gao
Amanda Gates
Adrienne Finet
Anton Shelepov

Violin II
Diane Bruce, Principal
Simon Lapointe, Assistant Concertmaster
Barbara Berg
Ch risy Berginc
Margaret Cooper
Lara Sipols
Karen Lord-Powell
Jonathan Richards

Viola
Christopher Fischer, Principal
Jennifer Stahl, Assistant
Cynthia Frank
Connie Lorber
Eva Stern
Kayleigh Miller

Cello
Lars Kirvan, Principal
Jeffrey Szabo, Assistant
Marie Shmorhun
Daryl Goldberg
Peter Anderegg
Si Cheng Liu

Flute
Richard Sherman, Principal
Emma Moon
Kathy Levy (Piccolo)
Alistair Howlett (Piccolo)

Oboe
Jan Eberle, Principal
Joan Wright
Jason Weintraub (English Horn)

Clarinet
Eli Eban, Principal
William Amsel
Daniel Spitzer (Bass Clarinet)

Bassoon
Jeffrey Robinson, Principal
Benjamin Atherholt

Horn
William Caballero, Principal
William Bernatis
Donna Dolson
Charles Waddell
Mark Robbins

Trumpet
Chuck Berginc, Principal
Peter Lindblom
Leslie Linn

Trombone
John Marcellus, Principal
Christopher Wolf
Eric Lindblom

Tuba
Frederick Boyd, Principal

Timpani
Brian Kushmaul, Principal

Percussion
Thomas Blanchard, Principal

Harp
Beth Robinson, Principal

Harp
Joanne King