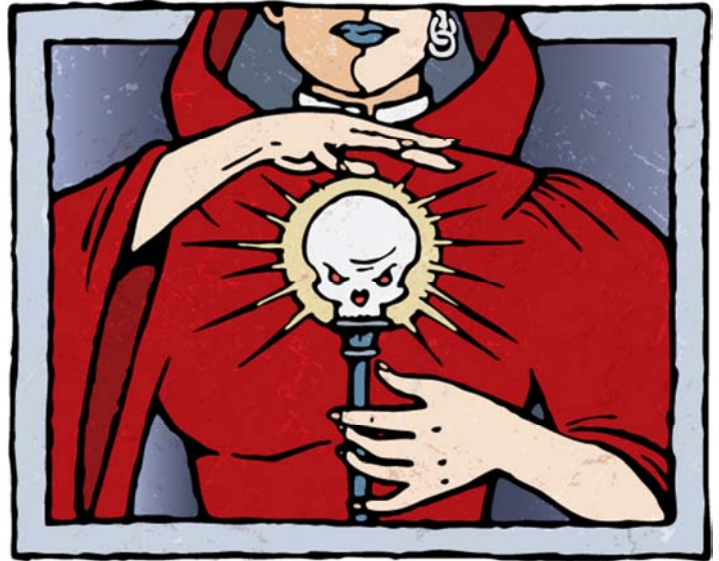


•••• AMADIGI DI GAULA ••••

Music by Georg Friedrich Händel
Anonymous libretto adapted from
Antoine Houdar de la Motte's
Amadis de Grèce



Amadigi di Gaula is a **Baroque** “magic opera” based on a **Renaissance** story about a **Medieval** knight. It is also an **Italian** opera written by a **German** composer for an **English** audience, based on a **French** play, based on a **Spanish** book. The knight, Amadís of Gaul, was first featured in a collection of stories about chivalry published in Spain in 1508. Amadís later became the model for Cervantes’ great knight of the woeful countenance, Don Quixote. Amadís is a Christian **knight errant***; courteous, gentle, sensitive, but invincible in battle.

Amadís is a Christian **knight errant***; courteous,

THE CHARACTERS:

Amadigi – Knight errant in love with Oriana

Dardano – Amadigi’s fellow knight, also in love with Oriana, unbeknownst to Amadigi

Oriana – Princess of “the Fortunate Isles”

Melissa – A sorceress in love with Amadigi who will stop at nothing to ensnare him, employing magic, her own considerable charms, kidnapping, demons, shapeshifting and calling forth a ghost

*See Page 11 for the article *What the Heck is a “Knight Errant”?*

"I am not afraid"
- *Amadigi*

CAST

Amadigi: Christopher Ainslie
Melissa: Kathleen Kim
Oriana: Katherine Manley
Dardano: David Trudgen



Conductor: Matthew Halls
Director: Alessandro Talevi

Performed in Italian with English supertitles.

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Matinees at 2:30 pm – July 13, 17, 27, 29; August 2, 4*, 6
Evenings at 8:00 pm – July 2, 7, 15, 23; August 4

Opera Notes - Free pre-performance preview in
Williams Stables at 1:50 and 7:15 pm.

* Thursday August 4 - Nina Odescalchi Kelly Family Matinee, featuring
Apprentice Artists in the major roles.

Händel and Magic Operas

Georg Friedrich Händel was one of the greatest of the Baroque composers. The first “stage” of opera was called **Baroque** (from the Italian word *barocco*, meaning *exuberant*) and lasted from approximately 1600-1750. The musical emphasis was on highly ornamented arias and duets in the “**da capo**” style, in which the original melody returns to close the aria, though with even more elaborate detail. The focus was upon singers, not story, and a tale did not need to be sensible as long as it allowed opportunity for frequent vocal display. Other than occasional stormy passages, instrumental emphasis was upon strings and harpsichord, often echoing the singers’ phrases.



Georg Friedrich Händel,
as painted by Thomas Hudson.

Händel (b. 1685) was German, but most of his career took him elsewhere, most notably Italy and England. He settled in England when he was 28 and stayed there for the rest of his long life, even becoming a British subject. Over his lifetime Händel wrote 42 operas and managed a major opera company in London, but most people today remember him instead for his choral and orchestral works such as *The Messiah*, *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. His operas have begun to return to public favor over the last 40 years, thanks to support from famous singers and conductors like Marilyn Horne and Neville Marriner.

Five of Händel’s operas (including *Amadigi di Gaula*) are of a type, very popular at the time, called “magic opera.” Action takes place in an enchanted realm where at least one major character has supernatural powers. In this case, Melissa, the Sorceress, provides the magic. These operas called for elaborate stage machinery and sensational set changes.

Baroque opera generally gave its leading male roles to **castrati**, whose voices blended the high range of a woman’s voice with the power of a man. (Castrati were men who had undergone castration as young boys to keep their voices unchanged, a tradition that started in Italian church choirs during the period when women were banned from singing in public by papal decree). When such operas are performed today, these roles are usually taken by female singers in male costume, male **countertenors**, or sometimes transcribed into the tenor range. Two of the characters, the knights Amadigi and Dardano, were castrati roles and will be sung by countertenors in the Central City Opera 2011 production.

What the Heck is a “Knight Errant”?

"I want you to know, Sancho, that the famous Amadís de Gaula was one of the greatest knights-errant. No, I'm wrong in saying 'one of,' he was the only one, the best, he was unique, and in his time the lord of all those in the world... He was the guiding light, the star of all brave and enamoured knights, and all of us who fight under the banner of love and chivalry should imitate him... I want to imitate Amadís..."

Don Quixote I, chapter 25 by Miguel de Cervantes



Amadigi (or Amadís) of Gaul was a fictional **Medieval knight errant** who first appeared in print in a Spanish book by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo, published during the **Renaissance**.

According to the dictionary, a **knight errant** is a wandering knight travelling in search of adventure. A **knight** is originally a person of noble birth trained to arms and **chivalry**. The term “knight errant” was first used in a late 14th-century Middle English poem called *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Characters fitting this description are found in literature and history from around the world. In French Medieval history they were called the Paladins of Charlemagne (Amadigi and Dardano are Paladins); in Japan, disenfranchised Samurai warriors were called Ronin; in Russian literature Bogatyrs served as protectors of their homeland.

The term “**Medieval**” refers to the Middle Ages, a period that lasted from the 5th to the 15th century B.C.E. During the High Middle Ages in Europe (the period in which Amadigi is found), Christian-oriented art and architecture flourished and Crusades were mounted to recapture the Holy Land from Muslim control. The codes of chivalry and courtly love developed during this time. **Chivalry** was a moral, religious and social code of knightly conduct. The virtues of courage, honor, and service were emphasized as well as the idealization of women.

A series of famines, plagues and constant warfare brought the Middle Ages to an end, followed by the **Renaissance**, a cultural movement that began in Italy and spread to the rest of Europe by the 16th century. The Renaissance emphasis on knowledge gained by studying past history (especially Greek classics) profoundly affected European art, literature, philosophy, politics, science and religion, producing such famed personages as Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Machiavelli. The costumes and sets you will see in *Amadigi di Gaula* are inspired by Renaissance paintings and architecture.



Venus and Mars by Botticelli

Character Spotlight:

AMADIGI DI GAULA'S AMADIGI

CHRISTOPHER AINSLIE

South African countertenor Christopher Ainslie makes his Central City Opera and North American debut in the title role in *Amadigi di Gaula*. Christopher now lives in London and has rapidly established himself as a leading interpreter of Baroque opera and oratorio in Great Britain and Europe.



This summer Central City Opera will have the opportunity to hear another Baroque opera which also means hearing a countertenor or two. Even having heard this voice type before, our readers are continually in shock and awe. Could you briefly explain when and how you came to discover you were a countertenor and what we should listen for in this unique voice type?

Despite the increased prominence of this voice with the revival of Baroque opera, the **countertenor** is still surprisingly little understood. And this is something I really enjoy - singing in a voice type whose technical and repertoire boundaries are still being actively explored. I came to sing countertenor through my experience growing up in a cathedral choir in Cape Town. After one's career as a boy treble, most singers move to the alto ranks, where they find the range more or less comfortable - I found it very comfortable! I believe any man could train this part of his voice, but for some perhaps the vocal structure makes it easier than for others. My 'other' voice is a light baritone; David Daniels [*another famous countertenor*] was a tenor... it's a choice to sing as a countertenor.

Technically speaking, the countertenor is not a falsetto, but rather a fully-supported use of the voice, with full vocal fold closure, and an exaggerated tilt to the larynx, which puts the voice

into the higher register. Many singers do use the falsetto voice – a head voice, not fully connected to the body – and use forced air-pressure to create the higher register, which results in an airy or 'hooty' sound. (I think this might be where the misconception comes from, that the countertenor voice inherently has a shorter lifespan than other voices. If you blast enough air at any vocal structure, it won't last long! But as the countertenor technique was being developed and explored, this is something that was often relied on, and thought to be the way that countertenors needed to sing.)

I believe the voice should be used technically just as any other voice type (perhaps most easily compared to a mezzo-soprano or alto), and that the standard expected of countertenors has for a long time been much too low! The mere fact that we can sing high is no longer enough, and people are now starting to expect us to match the technical standards of any other voice on stage - and rightly so. Things to listen for, I believe, are the absence of a 'hooty' or airy sound, and a sound that is connected to the body, i.e. not just a head voice. This does not necessarily mean a big sound - alas, far too often audiences seem to be impressed only by volume rather than vocal and expressive artistry - but a refined sound, with a healthy vibrato or "spin" like any other voice. On the whole, the things to look out for in a countertenor sound will be the same as those you look for in other voice types... beauty, colour, emotional and soulful expression and vocal artistry.

This summer you make your United States debut; what does this mean for a singer and what is your reaction to singing on a new continent, not to mention at 8,496 feet?

As for my United States opera debut, I am lucky to be based in the countries where much of the Baroque music we perform has its roots. And it is an incredible thrill to be part of the team bringing the opera for its United States premier. What a

privilege and exciting prospect! I have sung in a few operas in the United Kingdom for the first time since the 1700s, and each time it is such a fortunate position to be in – to be presenting an opera for the first time, for all practical purposes; something nearly everyone listening will never have heard before. In a way this takes us back to what it might have been like in Baroque times, before the age of recording equipment, and this is something I find very exciting. As the countertenor becomes more accepted and well known, and as the repertoire grows – both by rediscovery of baroque works and by new composition – I hope this will help open the door to many of the wonderful stages in the United States, and I look forward to coming back again and again!

I have heard of the stunning beauty of the area surrounding Central City Opera, and also of the challenge of singing at such an altitude, and I look forward to both the beauty and the challenge!! As I prepare the role, I am trying to imagine being out of breath all the time... I hope this will help prepare me!

You began your career as a boy chorister and now you are a young singer whose career is really taking off. What advice do you have for other aspiring young artists?

Advice for up-and-coming young artists – I think it is fundamentally important that performers develop their styles based on what is important to them - not what "the industry" expects. Each singer's gift is unique and as valid or special as any other, and I think it is really important to acknowledge where one's performing spirit comes from and lies, and bring this to the stage. This variety of individuals on the stage is something so special...embrace your uniqueness!!

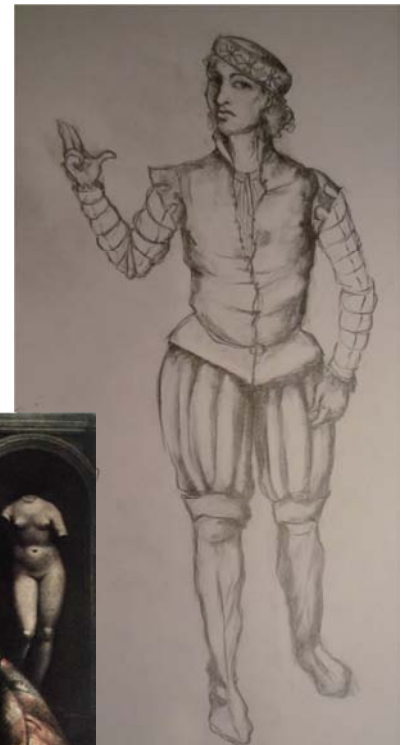
How do you approach creating a new character? Any special research you will do to create Amadigi?

Of course the pure vocal and memory work is a large chunk of preparing for a role, but with this comes a process of personalizing the role, which is crucial in creating a character. While I am learning the music, I develop my personal reasons for every utterance that the character makes. It may sound

obvious, but nothing can be sung just because that's what Mr. Händel wrote! In Händel's day, the performers may have approached their roles in a different way. We aim to be true to the musical style, to the best of our knowledge, but the characterization of roles is a very different game to what it would have been (unless we go in for a pure baroque-gesture performance, but that's not what this show is about!). For me it is about finding a direct link to my centre, and allowing this to come through in the music Händel wrote, and feeling how that is expressed in my physicality. Then I arrive at rehearsals, and the creative process together with the rest of the cast and musical and stage directors begins, and this is something I look forward to with great anticipation!!

RIGHT: Costume rendering of Amadigi in this summer's production by designer Madeleine Boyd.

BELOW: The designer's source material, *Portrait of a Man (1511)* by Domenico Capriolo.



Take advantage of the many

FRINGE FESTIVAL

attractions during the Summer Festival!

Opera Notes – Free previews before every performance at 1:50 p.m. or 7:15 p.m. in Williams Stables

Après Opera – After the show, share cocktails and enjoy impromptu performances by 2011 company performers, or pianist Jerry Weiss and solo guitarist Grant Gordy at the Teller House. No cover charge!

Lunch & A Song – Lunch and a 30-minute performance to whet your opera appetite at the relaxed Teller House. Tickets just \$30

Short Works – Staged scenes from beloved operas performed by members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program. Select dates at 1:15 p.m. in Williams Stables, prior to matinees. Tickets \$12 (\$8 for season subscribers)

Signor Deluso – Based on Moliere's play *Sganarelle*, the comic opera *Signor Deluso* by Thomas Pasatieri follows two couples who suspect their true loves are having affairs. Directed by Central City Opera Artistic Director Emeritus, John Moriarty. Select dates at 1:15 p.m. Tickets \$12 (\$8 for subscribers)

Jazz Brunches – Pop up for a finger-snappin' great time at our Jazz Brunches, featuring fine food and hot jazz. Just \$35 for brunch buffet and jazz, select dates at 11:45 a.m. in the Teller House.

SinFest – Get in touch with your inner sinner at this progressively sinful experience. See the one-hour Kurt Weill opera *The Seven Deadly Sins*, followed by a sinful evening of dance, slam poetry, experiential art, swing dance, and an indulgence of food and wine. Tickets just \$50...if you dare.

For tickets to these events visit
www.centralcityopera.org
or call the Central City Opera
Box Office at 303.292.6700

Sundays at St. James – A unique opportunity to experience exquisite instrumental and vocal works performed by company members and the popular group New York Polyphony, in one of Colorado's oldest churches, St. James Methodist, across from the Opera House. Tickets \$32 each or all three for \$68.

The Nina Odescalchi Kelly Family Matinees – Opera lovers of all ages will enjoy these full-length productions with "what-to-listen-for" introductions and post-performance autograph sessions. Tickets \$15 for children ages 6-18, \$20 for adults

Carmen – Tuesday, July 28 at 2:30 p.m.

Amadigi di Gaula – Tuesday, August 4 at 2:30 p.m. This performance includes a costume contest and magic show. Add the **Take a Child to the Opera** option for an extra \$10, for inside information about the opera accompanied by pre-performance family fun activities, theatre games, and a post-opera talkback. Sponsored by the Central City Opera House Association Guild.

Central City Days (July 30-31) – This uncommon weekend takes modern fun to historic heights with a gold mine of Central City adventures that celebrates all that's good and great about our state.

Summer Performing Arts Intensive (July 16-31) - Central City Opera and the Colorado Springs Conservatory partner to offer a two-week intensive for students ages 14-19 that includes immersion studies in drama, opera and musical theater. Students are in residence for 10 days in Colorado Springs and then move to Central City where they will attend Festival productions, participate in coachings and classes, and perform their own scenes program for **public performances July 30th at 2:30 p.m & 31st at 10:00 a.m. Tickets \$5.**

RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CARMEN

Media Links:

- Overture - <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/6782>
- En vain pour eviter – <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/1776>
- Carmen quintet - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_1mnk77Of0
- Flower Aria - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hy8-QGmMeO8>

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Media Link:

- Opening Scene – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMwx9H7Eftk>

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Media Links:

- Pride - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/pride.html>
- Envy - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/envy.html>
- Anger - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/anger.html>
- Sloth - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/sloth.html>
- Greed - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/greed.html>
- Gluttony - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/gluttony.html>
- Lust - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/lust.html>

THE BREASTS OF TIRESIAS

Media Link:

- Poulenc on Piano - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCg-x_bO820

MISCELLANY

- Schedule to 2011 Festival - <http://www.centralcityopera.org/2011Festival>

Special thanks to the following for their contributed materials, help and expertise in creating this season's Opera Insider:

Christopher Ainslie
Heather Brecl
Elizabeth Caballero
Ken Cazan
Brian Cook
Dr. Erin Hackel
Joanna Mongiardo

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Check out the Central City Opera Education and Community Programs available during the REST of the year!

Mozart & Company, for **elementary** students, introduces the basics of opera – song, story, costumes and props – in arias and short vignettes. Study guide provided in advance.



Build an Opera! for **3rd through 12th grades**, provides extended artist residencies for students to engage in performing and creating musical stories.



The Great Opera Mix-Up, also for **elementary** students, invites student participation in a mini-opera to provide a deeper acquaintance with story and character. Study guide provided in advance.



Build an Opera workshop, a 5-day workshop for **K-12 teachers** intending to enroll their schools in *Opera Alive!*, prepares teachers for incorporating opera music and stories into curriculum. Free to teachers. Graduate or Continuing Education Credits available.



How the West Was Sung, for **upper elementary and middle school** students, establishes the historical contexts for opera as popular entertainment in the days before iPod and DVD and brings Colorado historical characters to life. Study guide provided in advance.



Performing Arts Intensive, a two-week summer program in collaboration with the Colorado Springs Conservatory. The Conservatory provides two weeks of instruction and preparation of opera and theatrical scenes for students **ages 14-19**. The group comes to Central City for an intensive four-day experience including attendance at festival operas, workshops and master classes taught by Festival artists and staff, tours and a culminating performance of the students' scenes program in Williams Stables.



En Mis Palabras (In My Own Words), for **middle and high school** students. A bilingual Spanish and English opera follows a 15-year-old girl trying to balance the conflicting influences of her Mexican family cultural traditions and her peer community. Bilingual study guides provided in advance.



Opera on the Go, for **all ages** features arias and scenes from operas and musical theater staged with costumes, props, and musical accompaniment.



Family Matinees, for children **ages 6 to 18** and their companion adults, are special performances of Festival repertoire operas (performed by participants in the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artist Training Program) with tickets at significantly discounted prices.



Opera in the Rockies, touring program, presents community performances and in-school programs in communities throughout the Rocky Mountain region.



Concerts for family audiences – **Smooth OPERator** and **Love Notes** are available for booking by area concert venues and recreation districts.



Visit www.centralcityopera.org/education for more information. To schedule an event or program contact the Education and Community Programs office: 303-331-7026 or education@centralcityopera.org