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# ARIANNA a la recherche

## The fourth opera in the Monteverdi trilogy

Monteverdi himself regarded *Arianna* - composed in 1608 during a period of intense creativity that included *Orfeo* (1607), *Ballo delle Ingrate* (also 1608) and the (1610) *Vespers* - as his masterpiece.

But apart from the famous *Lamento* (published in 1723) and a few more phrases from that scene preserved in a manuscript copied by Luigi Rossi, Monteverdi's music remains lost.

Andrew Lawrence-King's re-make incorporates these fragments, and sets the whole of Rinuccini's libretto 'in Claudio's voice', drawing on the latest scholarship and detailed research into documents surviving from the original production. The music of the solo Lamento-scene survives on two staves – voice and continuo. But audience members described actress La Florinda in the title role, her lament accompanied by violins and viols and interspersed with trios from the chorus and dialogue with other characters: string-and voice-parts had to be added to complete the scene.

Musicologists now understand that the libretto provided Monteverdi with a large-scale formal design, indicating recitative and aria, strophic choruses and structures of repeats and recapitulations. Andrew Lawrence-King's research into Baroque Gesture and period treatises on musical theatre reveals the secrets of Monteverdi's *via natura alla immitatione* – the natural way to convey emotion in music by imitating the performance of a fine actor in spoken drama.

Surveying this work of construction, *a la recherche d'Arianna perdue*, the architectural plan is Rinuccini's, and every single brick and timber is from one or other piece by Monteverdi. The Lamento itself has been restored and re-scored to reflect its original form. But Andrew Lawrence-King's work of re-shaping and re-placing each element into the 17<sup>th</sup>-century design is new.

*Arianna a la recherche* was performed by OPERA OMNIA Moscow in a production with historical staging in 2017. For this European premiere, our new version adapts Rinuccini's Tragedy to concert length, preserving all the original fragments, and emphasising the musical delights of choruses and instrumental sinfonias.

*Crete, Greece, c2023 BC* Arianna, Princess of Crete, helped Teseo kill the monstrous Minotaur. They are returning to Athens, together with Teseo's soldiers and the Counsellor, when their ships drop anchor at the lonely island of Naxos...

**Prologue:** *Mantua, Italy 1608* **Apollo**, Sun-God and patron of Music, descends to earth and invites the royal bride to listen to an ancient story, sung to new music.

**Act I:** *Naxos, c2023 BC* **Venus**, goddess of love, warns her unruly son, **Amore** – Cupid - that Teseo will abandon Arianna and sail away from Naxos without her. But the gods of Olympus have a plan to rescue Arianna. Meanwhile, **Teseo's** ships arrive in the port.

The **Soldiers** celebrate their victory. Teseo sends them to rest aboard their ships: tomorrow they will sail home to Athens. He, the **Counsellor**, and Arianna will lodge on the island.

**Arianna** is homesick for Crete, but Teseo promises that she will be Queen in Athens. She is comforted by his faithfulness. As night falls, the **Fishermen** sing to the stars.

**Act II:** Teseo is torn between his love for Arianna, and his duty. The Counsellor urges him to abandon his foreign bride. A **Messenger** reports that the ships are ready to sail. They leave just before dawn. The Fishermen are still singing.

**Act III:** Arianna is looking everywhere for Teseo. Her maid, **Dorilla**, asks the Fishermen if they heard any noise of ships leaving port: they answer that everything was quiet. Arianna is tormented by hope, but the wise **Fisherwoman** suspects Teseo left in secret. The Fishermen contrast their simple, good life with Teseo's cunning, evil plan.

## INTERVAL

**Act IV:** The **Herald** is enraged at Teseo's deceit. The Fishermen wonder what will happen to poor Arianna. The **Herald** sees the noble lady on the beach.

Arianna laments, the Fishermen sympathise. Dorilla hears the sound of trumpets from the port, has Teseo returned? The Fishermen sing of rescued spouses and journeys through Hell for the sake of love.

**Act V:** Another **Herald** welcomes the good news of a new day. **Bacco** has rescued Arianna, and Amore blesses their love. Heaven and earth rejoice.

Bacco's **Soldiers** celebrate, Amore is triumphant. Arianna is blessed, to be comforted by a god. **Giove** [Jupiter] grants Arianna a place amongst the stars [the constellation Ariadne's Hair]. Bacco invites Arianna to immortal life. Gods and mortals sing in harmony.

