

ABOUT OPERA ANIMATA

Based in the greater Los Angeles area, Opera Animata strives to develop the relationship between the community and the arts. Opera Animata was conceived in the fall of 2013 by General and Artistic Director Jenny Ohrstrom, and is committed to helping young singers, performers, directors, conductors, and composers by providing opportunities for their talents to emerge. The company is dedicated to helping these artists continue to work on their craft between finishing their academic studies and developing their careers.

Our mission is to serve the community by producing quality opera that embodies the spirit, culture, and creativity unique to Los Angeles while preserving and promoting the art form.

Opera Animata's 2014-2015 Season

December 2014

Hansel and Gretel

March 2015

Orfeo ed Euridice

April 2015

Animata in Taberna

August 2015

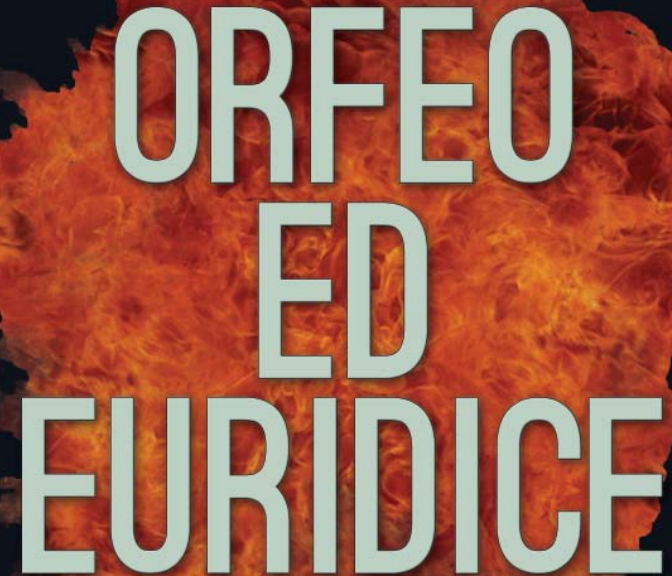
Dido and Aeneas

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OPERA ANIMATA PRESENTS



ORFEO ED EURIDICE

MARCH 20 & 21 AT 8 PM | SEMI-STAGED WITH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, MONROVIA

SPECIAL THANKS

Father Neil and St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Linda Taubenreuther

Becky at Queen's Closet

Steve Nolen

Vanessa Martinez

Maurice Godin

Kayla Bailey

Tiffany Argumedo

Ted Roze

Please silence your cell phones
and refrain from flash photography during the opera.

Join us after the performance for
a reception in Guild Hall.

ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION

In Gluck's original version, the role of Orfeo was played by a castrato voice: a man who could sing in a female vocal range. After the era of the castrato ended, the popular casting solution was to use a mezzo-soprano to portray the male lead character. Opera Animata is building on this tradition by taking it one step further and changing the role of Orfeo to be a woman, a choice reflective of the progressive time in which we live and the continued advancements of human rights.

The production you see tonight is a collaborative effort by the artists you see on stage. For this production, we set aside the paradigm of a stage director executing a single artistic vision, a long-lived tradition that remains the norm in operatic performance. Instead, we have opted to incorporate the ideas of the performers in order to yield the most organic expression of the emotions and relationships portrayed in *Orfeo ed Euridice*. We look forward to immersing you in the world that we have collectively created!

Cover and program design by Alyssa Brode

Opera Animata presents

ORFEO ED EURIDICE

by Christoph Willibald Gluck

March 20 & 21, 2015 at 8 pm
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Monrovia CA

CAST

Orfeo Sarah Reynolds
Euridice Jenny Ohrstrom
Amor Alyssa Brode
Chorus Joel Castro, Daniel Charleston,
Shannon Gomes, Billy Malone, Trisha Rivera,
Mary Robles, Alexandra Sanfilippo, Jennifer White

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Keyboard.....Sosi Chifchiyan
Violin 1 Shawn Cai
Violin 2 Jordan Slocum
Viola..... Brandon Encinas
Cello..... Billy Tobenkin

collaboratively directed by
Jenny Ohrstrom, Sarah Reynolds and Alyssa Brode

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

The opera begins with nymphs and shepherds lamenting the death of Euridice, who was bitten by a snake. Left alone, Orfeo, Euridice's wife, adds her voice to the rites. With only echo replies, Orfeo vows to rescue Euridice from the underworld. Amor, the god of love, appears with word that Jove, pitying Orfeo, will allow her to descend into the land of the dead to retrieve Euridice. To make this trial more difficult, Orfeo must neither look at Euridice, nor explain why looking is forbidden. Otherwise, she will lose Euridice forever. Orfeo agrees and begins her voyage. At the gates of Hades, furies and ghosts try to deny Orfeo's passage to the underworld. Orfeo's lament softens and placates them. She is eventually allowed to pass through to the Elysian fields.

ACT II

In Elysium, Orfeo is moved by the beauty of the landscape. Heroes and heroines bring Euridice to Orfeo, and without looking at Euridice, Orfeo takes her away. Orfeo leads Euridice toward the living world, forbidden to look at her and unable to explain why. Euridice, hurt and confused by Orfeo's refusal to look at her, panics at the thought of a life without the love of Orfeo. In desperation, Orfeo turns to her, and Euridice dies once again. Grief-stricken, Orfeo wonders how she can live without Euridice, and decides to kill herself. Amor appears and stops Orfeo from suicide. In response to Orfeo's demonstrated deep love and devotion, Amor revives Euridice. The three return to Earth. In the temple of love, Orfeo, Euridice, Amor, and the nymphs all celebrate the power of love.

degrees. She is a frequent concert soloist and in her free time enjoys performing as a vocalist and hand percussionist in Claremont, CA-based cover band, The Falconers. Mary currently works as adjunct faculty at Cypress College where she serves as director of the chamber singers and concert choir as well as teaching private and class voice.



Alexandra Sanfilippo (Chorus) is a soprano from Los Angeles, California. Her former opera credits include Dew Fairy and Sandman in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Drusilla in Monteverdi's *L'incornazione di Poppea*, a spirit in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, and Augusta's friend Mary in Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. For three years in a row, Alexandra was featured as a guest artist, performing opera arias and duets at the "Taste of Italy" fundraiser for the Italian American Museum of Los Angeles and has also had the privilege of performing in the Valley Performing Arts Center for its opening gala in the spring of 2011. Alexandra is a recipient of the Milt Young Music Scholarship, Helen Conner Nern Vocal Scholarship, and the Robert Pike Whitten Arts Scholarship. She holds both her bachelor's and master's degrees in music from California State University, Northridge. Visit AlexandraSanfilippo.com for more information.



Jennifer White (Chorus) is originally from Texas and has been living in Los Angeles for the past nine years. She received her bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. Previous roles include Dorabella in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Second Witch in *Dido and Aeneas*. She currently studies voice with Sarah Reynolds and would like to thank Jenny for having her back performing with Opera Animata!



Sarah Reynolds (Orfeo) is a singer and voice teacher living in Los Angeles. She is a frequent concert soloist, most recently performing the Pie Jesu in Duruflé's *Requiem*, For the Mouse in Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, and Brahms' *Rhapsodie*, Op. 53. Other credits include the role of the Witch in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* with Opera Animata and Bradamante in Handel's *Alcina* at the Napa Music Festival. She recently performed with Pasadena Opera in their inaugural production of *Candide* and Long Beach Opera in the SoCal premiere of *Death of Klinghoffer*. Sarah was named a "Recommended Artist" by the 2014 Beverly Hills Auditions council. Sarah is thrilled to be singing the role of Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo and Euridice* with Opera Animata. Sarah is a graduate of The New England Conservatory of Music, MM Vocal Performance, and The College of New Jersey, BM Vocal Performance. For more information please visit www.sarahreynolds.net.



Trisha Rivera (Chorus) is a mezzo-soprano based out of Long Beach, California. Her roles include Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, Prince Charmant in *Cendrillon*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Third Knitter in *A Game of Chance*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* and Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Trisha studied in Austria through the American Institute of Musical Studies, where she performed at the Schlossberg Kasematten. As a member of the Northridge Singers choir, Trisha sang at the opening of Kodak Hall, with the LA Philharmonic at Disney Hall, and at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales where they won "Choir of the World" honors. She is a recipient of the Arts Council Scholarship as well as Opera Student of the Year from California State University, Northridge where she earned her Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance.



Southern California-raised soprano **Mary Robles (Chorus)** has been an active performer since she stepped into ruby red slippers as Dorothy for her first leading role. Her former credits include Sesto in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, Kim in *Bye Bye Birdie*, Rosalia in *West Side Story* and opera scene roles including Yum-Yum in *The Mikado*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, and a Grisette in *Die Lustige Witwe*. Mary attended the University of Oregon where she majored in vocal performance and music education and received both her bachelor's and master's

ARTISTS



Alyssa Brode (Amor) is a Philadelphia-born soprano whose performance experience spans both coasts. Her recent opera credits include Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*), Laetitia (*The Old Maid and the Thief*), the Fairy Godmother (Massenet's *Cendrillon*), Second Woman (*Dido and Aeneas*) and the Foreign Woman (*The Consul*). As a member of the renowned Westminster Symphonic Choir, Alyssa had the privilege of performing symphonic masterworks with some of the world's most prominent conductors (Pierre Boulez, Kurt Masur, Lorin Maazel) and orchestras (New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin). Alyssa holds voice performance degrees from Westminster Choir College and California State University, Northridge and is a recipient of the Robert Barbera Scholarship in Voice, the Village Voices Scholarship and the Rachel Ketchie Memorial Award and a member of the Pi Kappa Lambda music honor society. Visit alysabrode.com for more information.



Joel D. Castro (Chorus) is a baritone born and raised in Los Angeles, California. He received his BA in Theatre, Classics, and Music from Santa Clara University and his MM in Vocal Performance from California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Some of his prominent roles include Father in *Hansel and Gretel*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas*, Bob in *The Old Maid and the Thief*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Le Roi in *Cendrillon* and Jud Fry in *Oklahoma!* He has performed in Austria for the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) Festival Orchestra in Graz. Awards include Village Voices Scholarship from the Village Voices Chorale, Richard Owens Founder's Scholarship from AIMS, Vocal Arts Graduating Graduate Award from CSUN, and a Geoffrey Award for Best Supporting Actor from the Morgan-Wixson Theatre for Jud Fry in *Oklahoma!* He has performed with Los Angeles Metropolitan Opera, Celestial Opera and City of Angels Community Choir. Next month he will be singing the roles of Silvio in *Pagliacci* and Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Celestial Opera. When not singing, Joel can be found practicing stage combat and medieval martial arts.



Daniel Charleston (Chorus), a Long Beach, CA native, is a graduate of the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University, Long Beach. Performance experiences include the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, Pacific Symphony, Pasadena Pops, Southeast Symphony, Cal State Long Beach Opera Institute, and the Long Beach Mozart Festival. He is a regular performer with Artes Vocales of Los Angeles and Pacific Opera Project, having sung in *Sweeney Todd*, *The Mikado*, *Carmen*, *La Calisto*, *Tosca*, and *The Abduction from The Seraglio*. He

currently is the Tenor Section Leader and Soloist at Bay Shore Church in Belmont Shore, CA, where he can be heard as the tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah* this Spring. www.danielcharleston.com



Sosi Chifchiyan (Keyboard) is one of the leading piano accompanists in her native country of Bulgaria. She has more than twenty years of experience as a chief pianist and opera coach at Bulgaria's prominent Plovdiv State Opera House. She also worked as a piano accompanist in vocal classes at the Academy of Music, Dance, and Fine Arts and the National School of Music in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. In the USA, Sosi Chifchiyan collaborates with Center Stage Opera, Orange County High School of the Arts, and California State University, San Bernardino. As a

performer, Sosi plays concerts, international competitions, workshops, and concert tours throughout Europe. Her vast vocal and instrumental repertoire includes 40+ complete operas and collaborations with renowned performers including opera singers Krassimira Stoyanova-Kammersängerin and Kaludi Kaludov, conductors Borislav Ivanov, Milen Natchev and Georgi Dimitrov, and stage directors Plamen Kartalov and Pavel Gerdzhikov.



Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, soprano **Shannon Gomes' (Chorus)** extensive experience spans repertoire ranging from the Nightingale in *Once Upon a Mattress* to Mimi in *La Bohème*. She has appeared in productions with Alameda Civic Light Opera, Pleasanton Playhouse, and Pacific Opera Project, as well as a variety of venues in southern California. Past performances include *Manon*, *Magic Flute*, *Falstaff*, *Street Scene*, *The Old Maid and the Thief*, *The Mikado*, *Into the Woods*, *South Pacific*, *Sound of Music*, *Kiss Me Kate*,

Sweeney Todd and *Cinderella*, as well as singing Geraldine in Barber's *Hand of Bridge* in Northridge. With a particular affinity for the songs of Aaron Copland and the *Airs of Poulenc*, she was selected as a participant in both Intimate Opera and Songfest summer programs. Miss Gomes received her undergraduate training at Randolph-Macon Women's College and her Master of Music from Cal State Northridge.



Billy Malone (Chorus), baritone, is enthusiastic to be making his Opera Animata and Los Angeles debut in *Orfeo ed Euridice*. A recent transplant from Michigan, he studies voice with Dr. Steven Kronauer, with whom he helped found the chorale Artes Vocales of Los Angeles (AVOLA) in September 2014, where he serves as bass section leader, board member and treasurer. Other opera appearances include *Don Giovanni* at the San Francisco Lyric Opera, *The Magic Flute*, as well as musical theatre appearances in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Hair*, and *La*

Cage aux Folles. Always switching things up, he has a B.S. in Genetics from the University of Michigan and was an accomplished massage therapist and M.T. instructor before escaping the frozen north.



Jenny Ohrstrom (Euridice) has been seen in Los Angeles as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, as Miss Pinkerton in *The Old Maid and the Thief*, and as a soprano soloist for *Carmina Burana*. Previous roles include Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, Laurie Moss in *The Tender Land*, and Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas* as well as concert performances of arias from *Il trovatore*, *Carmen*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Rusalka*. Jenny is a winner of CSUN's and CWU's Concerto Competitions, and a recipient of the Village Voices Chorale Scholarship, Nancy Hooker Scholarship,

NATS-LA Summer Study Grant, and the CSUN Graduate Fellowship for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity. She holds a Master of Music in Voice Performance from California State University, Northridge and a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington. Jenny is an alumna of the programs Classical Singing in New York, LidalNorth in Oslo, Norway, the Opera Studio of the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria, and the new NAPA Music Festival in Napa, California. For more information, visit jmohrstrom.com.