



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Love, Reason and Wine - Radiant Revival of Cesti Orontea

Chamber Opera of Vienna, 11.12.2025 [ENA]

Antonio Cesti's L'Orontea at Theater an der Wien's Kammeroper looks set to be one of the most enticing baroque offerings of the 2025/26 season: a rarity with a rich performance history, brought to life by a superb early-music ensemble, an imaginative director and a cast steeped in 17th-century style. The house presents the work as a *dramma musicale* in three acts to a libretto by Giacinto Andrea Cicognini, focusing on a queen who swears off love, only to be undone by passion when a shipwrecked painter appears at her court.

At the heart of the piece stands Queen Orontea, ruler of Egypt, who at the outset proudly defends her emotional independence and rejects the entanglements of marriage. Her carefully constructed world begins to wobble when the handsome artist Alidoro is washed ashore as a castaway. She falls violently in love with him, even as he flirts unashamedly with Silandra, a lady-in-waiting promised to another man, Corindo. Around them, courtiers, servants and hangers-on are swept into a whirl of desire, jealousy and disguises until it seems that no character has escaped Cupid's chaos.

What makes L'Orontea so fascinating is the way it moves between intimacy and social panorama. Like many Venetian operas of the mid-17th century, it juxtaposes masters and servants, high politics and tavern humour, serious reflection and sparkling comedy. Theater an der Wien rightly draws attention to the way the boundaries between classes and even genders blur, much as they did in the teeming, carnival-like theatre culture of baroque Venice. Underneath all the amorous intrigue sits a philosophical question posed explicitly in the theatre's own description: in life, should we follow the seductions of love, the cool logic of reason, or the hedonistic credo of the servant Gelone, who prefers a good bottle of wine to any romantic turmoil?

Historically, Cesti's opera is no footnote. Premiered in Innsbruck in 1656, Orontea became one of the most widely performed Italian operas of the 17th century, with numerous revivals across major European centres. The score, in a prologue and three acts, lies at a crucial point in opera's evolution, bridging Monteverdi's intense declamation and the more melodically expansive style that would dominate later in the century. Theater an der Wien highlights how Cesti, a successor to Monteverdi, marries clear text-setting with lines of unusual sensual beauty. The opera contains several arias that have taken on a life of their own in recital, such as "Intorno all'idol mio" and "Addio Corindo", emblematic of Cesti's gift for long, sighing melodies.

Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

Haftungsausschluss:

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.



International Press Service.....

For this new production, the musical forces are ideal. Lautten Compagny Berlin, under their long-time artistic director Wolfgang Katschner, is one of Germany's most acclaimed and inventive baroque ensembles, praised for their infectious joy in performance and their ability to make early music speak directly to contemporary listeners. Katschner himself, originally a lutenist, has devoted much of his career to historically informed performances of 17th- and 18th-century repertoire, with a particular affinity for opera. His work often combines rhythmic vitality with a keen ear for colour, exactly the qualities that Cesti's shifting blend of recitative, arioso and ensemble requires.

In the intimate acoustic of the Kammeroper, one can expect a light, transparent sound in which every instrumental line and every expressive ornament in the voices comes through clearly. The choice of Tomo Sugao as stage director points to a production that will be theatrically alert and visually articulate. Sugao, a Japanese-born director with an international profile, has built a reputation for productions that bring "virtuoso movement" and clear narrative flow to both classic and contemporary works. He has worked widely across Asia and Europe, from Mozart and Handel to Szymanowski and John Adams, which gives him the stylistic flexibility needed to unlock L'Oronte's unique mixture of philosophical depth and earthy humour.

At Theater an der Wien he is joined by designer Julia Katharina Berndt and lighting designer Karl Wiedemann, forming a team well placed to capture both the opulence of an Egyptian court and the more intimate, human scale of the characters' emotional journeys. The Kammeroper itself, with its compact auditorium in Vienna's historic centre, is an inspired venue for this score. The theatre's own description emphasises how L'Oronte thrives on blurred social boundaries; hearing it at close range, with the orchestra not in a deep pit but in tangible dialogue with the stage, will only heighten that effect.

The audience is drawn into the same space as Oronte and her servants, watching the queen's carefully guarded public persona gradually undermined by private feeling—a dynamic that is much more immediate when no singer is far away. In casting terms, Theater an der Wien and Lautten Compagny have assembled a line-up that genuinely excites early-music enthusiasts. British soprano Hilary Cronin takes on the title role, making her debut with the company in the process. Cronin has already attracted attention in the UK and Europe for her work with leading period-instrument ensembles, including projects with conductors such as John Eliot Gardiner and Paul McCreesh, and for her assured command of baroque style.

As Oronte, she will need to traverse the queen's journey from steely, almost ideological rejection of love to a state of dizzy, painful vulnerability. Her clear, flexible soprano and expressive phrasing make her exceptionally well suited to Cesti's long lines and to the psychological nuance of the role. Opposite her, Spanish countertenor Gabriel Díaz appears as Alidoro, the painter whose very presence destabilises the court. Díaz is widely regarded as one of the finest countertenors of his generation, with a career that spans

Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

Haftungsausschluss:

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.



International Press Service.....

collaborations with ensembles such as La Capella Reial de Catalunya, La Grande Chapelle and Vox Luminis, and performances under conductors including Jordi Savall and Andrea Marcon.

His background in historically informed performance promises an Alidoro who is not only vocally agile and stylish, but also dramatically alert to the character's blend of charm, opportunism and genuine feeling. The supporting cast further underlines the production's focus on baroque expertise. As Silandra, the lady-in-waiting caught between duty and desire, Austrian soprano Maria Ladurner brings a voice noted for its bright sheen and impeccable stylistic sense, honed through specialised training in baroque singing and a series of acclaimed performances in early-music repertoire across Europe.

The role of Giacinta, another key female figure in the network of intrigues, is sung by Viennese mezzo-soprano Therese Troyer, an alumna of the Gumpoldskirchner Spatzen children's choir who has quickly established herself on Austrian stages and now returns to the Kammeroper in this new baroque project. Alexander Strömer, in the double role of Gelone and Creonte, will embody both the comic, wine-loving servant and the more serious court figure, a showcase for his versatility as actor and singer; Theater an der Wien itself has highlighted his Gelone—"eternally drunk" and irresistibly vivid—as one of the production's central attractions.

In sum, Theater an der Wien's L'Orontea promises a rare combination: a historically significant but too-seldom-heard work, in a chamber setting perfectly tailored to its scale, entrusted to a first-rate baroque ensemble and a thoughtfully chosen creative team. With Wolfgang Katschner and Lautten Compagnie animating Cesti's sensual, flexible score, Tomo Sugao exploring the opera's blend of romantic comedy and philosophical inquiry, and a cast led by Hilary Cronin and Gabriel Díaz, this production has all the ingredients to show why L'Orontea once captivated 17th-century.

[Bericht online lesen:](#)

https://culture.en-a.eu/kunst_kultur_und_musik/love_reason_and_wine_radiant_revival_of_cesti_orontea-92588/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Dr. Nadejda Komendantova

Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

Haftungsausschluss:

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.