



2022-23 Season

Curtis Opera Theatre Presents *Ariodante*, George Frideric Handel's riveting tale of dark obsession, desire, and royal intrigue, May 4-7

Director Omer Ben Seadia and conductor David Stern make their Curtis debut in this dazzling, haute couture-inspired production, featuring members of Philadelphia's internationally acclaimed baroque orchestra, *Tempesta di Mare*

PHILADELPHIA, PA—April 19, 2023—The **Curtis Opera Theatre's** 2022–23 season concludes **May 4 through May 7 at 7:30 p.m.** at the **Perlman Theater** in the **Kimmel Center** with **George Frideric Handel's** riveting tale of obsession, desire, and royal intrigue, *Ariodante*. Based upon Ludovico Ariosto's epic sixteenth-century poem *Orlando furioso*, this glorious Baroque masterpiece follows the story of Princess Ginevra, daughter of the King of Scotland, and her fiancé, the noble knight Ariodante. Acclaimed director **Omer Ben Seadia** leads a phenomenal cast of rising young opera stars accompanied by members of Philadelphia's "emotionally provocative" baroque orchestra, **Tempesta di Mare**, under the baton of renowned conductor **David Stern**.

Known for her inventive, thoughtful, socially conscious productions, Omer Ben Seadia's clever concept for Curtis Opera Theatre's *Ariodante* highlights the psychological, action-packed elements of the piece. Her vision is accentuated by a striking backdrop of towering, shifting, candlelit gold panels courtesy of scenic designer and art director **Ryan M. Howell**, the atmospheric lighting design of **Joe Beumer**, and stunning, haute couture-inspired costumes by **Ryan Park**, a nod to the opera's elaborate Baroque aesthetic and the sleek silhouettes of the elegant fashion houses of Paris.

This production of *Ariodante* "centers around personal perceptions and how they are malleable and easily manipulated. These themes are represented on stage by the imagery of veiling and masking," says Ms. Ben Seadia. "The last few years have been plagued by questions of what truth is and how easily the perception of one's self and others can be obscured. Through the twists and turns of this drama, Handel drives the plot forward in a heart-pounding way while also suspending our ability to dive into the psychology of our protagonists. With elegant and edgy designs by this skilled design team, we are bringing powerful images of

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light and shadow, reflection, and opulence, while highlighting the human form and condition. Finally, the production asks us to consider love as an act of ultimate faith—in ourselves and in others.”

As the opera opens, the King of Scotland announces that he has approved the marriage of Ginevra and Ariodante. Rejecting the advances of the loathsome Polinesso, Duke of Albany, the princess confides to her handmaid Dalinda that she is madly in love with Ariodante and now has her father's blessing to marry him. But their blissful wedding plans are thwarted in a cruel twist of fate. Dalinda, infatuated with the duke, is persuaded to impersonate the princess to win his dark affections. Ariodante, believing he has witnessed his fiancée in the arms of another, is convinced of the lie and becomes distraught and suicidal. Tormented by the perceived betrayal he is despondent and inconsolable.

Amid false accusations of infidelity, the King disowns Ginevra as he hears that Ariodante has tragically drowned in despair due to his daughter's supposed betrayal. Polinesso, in pursuit of the throne, had ordered the court handmaids to murder Dalinda, the only living witness to his sinister scheme. Saved by Ariodante, Dalinda confesses her misdeeds, the two unite to clear the princess's name, and true love is vindicated in this compelling 18th-century opera seria. Conductor **David Stern** and director **Omer Ben Seadia** make their Curtis debut leading the cast and members of the **Curtis Symphony Orchestra** in this fully staged opera, sung in Italian with English supertitles.

Single tickets for *Ariodante* start at \$19: [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

The **Curtis Opera Theatre** has become known for imaginative productions, bold concepts, and absorbing theatre. Under the artistic direction of Eric Owens and the Hirsig Family Chair in Vocal Studies, Miloš Repický, promising young singers work alongside established professional directors and designers, resulting in fresh interpretations of standard repertoire and contemporary works. All of Curtis's students in vocal studies are cast regularly throughout each season, receiving a rare level of performance in fully staged productions, in recitals at Field Concert Hall, and as soloists with Curtis on Tour and the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. Curtis's educational approach opens professional opportunities for Curtis graduates, who sing with top opera companies across the United States and Europe, including La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, Houston Grand Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera.

About the Curtis Institute of Music

The Curtis Institute of Music educates and trains exceptionally gifted young musicians to engage a local and global community through the highest level of artistry. For nearly a century Curtis has provided each member of its small student body with an unparalleled education alongside musical peers, distinguished by a “learn by doing” philosophy and personalized attention from a faculty that includes a high proportion of actively performing musicians. With admissions based solely on artistic promise, no student is turned away due to financial need. Curtis invests in each admitted student, ensuring no tuition is charged for their studies and they enter the profession free from educational debt. In a typical year, Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings in Philadelphia and around the world. Learn more at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

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CURTIS OPERA THEATRE: *ARIODANTE*

Music by George Frideric Handel

Libretto unknown, anonymously adapted from Antonio Salvi's *Ginevra principessa di Scozia*, based upon Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*.

Featuring members of Tempesta di Mare, orchestra

Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 5, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 6, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 7, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center, 300 S. Broad Street

David Stern, conductor

Omer Ben Seadia, stage director

Johnathan McCullough, assistant stage director

Ryan M. Howell, scenic designer

Ryan Park, costume designer

Joe Beumer, lighting designer

Brittany Rappise, hair and makeup supervisor

Mary Moon, violence design and fight direction

CAST

	May 4, 6	May 5, 7
King of Scotland	Evan Gray	Evan Gray
Polinesso	Anastasiia Sidorova	Anastasiia Sidorova
Odoardo	Jason Kakuk	Jason Kakuk
Lurcanio	Joseph Tancredi	Benjamin Schaefer
Ginevra	Sarah Fleiss	Juliette Tacchino
Dalinda	Emilie Kealani	Dalia Medovnikov
Ariodante	Lucy Baker	Sophia Maekawa

TICKETS

Single tickets: \$19–55, sold by the Kimmel Cultural Campus Box Office at KimmelCulturalCampus.org, or (215) 893-1999.

Fully staged production with members of Tempesta di Mare, sung in Italian with English supertitles by Miriam Lewis.

The Curtis Opera Theatre is generously supported by the Ernestine Bacon Cairns Trust, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, and the Wyncote Foundation.

Omer Ben Seadia's participation is generously underwritten by Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman.

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