



Dear Trustees of Angel Early Music

We are writing on behalf of Ensemble OrQuesta to extend our thanks to you for the grant that you gave us to support our performances of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea at the Arcola Theatre*, during the Grimeborn Opera Festival from July 26th to July 30th, 2022.

This was our fifth appearance at the festival, and it was an honour to have been asked to open the festival this year. We undertook six performances of the opera: 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, July at 7:30pm, and 30th July at 3pm. Intensive rehearsals took place in the eight days preceding the performances at St Margaret's Church in Putney, with our stage and music director Marcio da Silva offering skilled coaching in all aspects of performance, stagecraft, musical style, language, and vocal technique to our young artists.

The project involved eight young professional singers at the onset of their careers, 5 early career early-music instrumentalists, and an early career assistant director. Because we had received your support for our young artists, we were able to use other funds to bring in an additional early music specialist, the eminent Predrag Gosta, on the harpsichord, and a specialist lutenist to support the work of our instrumentalists.

Our production manager worked extremely hard on publicity pre-, during, and post- production. This was important in terms of extending our audience base, increasing our press impact, and maximising publicity for our young artists. Our extended support team ensured that the programme, website information, and flyers were of a professional standard.

We thought you might like to access various things about the production to see the importance we place on **high standards** in all aspects of our work.

There is a page on our website which gives all the original **information** about our production [here](#).

There is also a page which includes the **full reviews** of the production [here](#).

If you would prefer to access just some **sample quotes** from the reviews you can find these [here](#).

The **programme** for the production can be downloaded as a **pdf** [here](#).

The **programme** can also be viewed as a **Flipbook** if you prefer, [here](#).

Photos of the production can be viewed [here](#).

Impact: audience.

We were pleased with the number of tickets sold overall. On the first night audience was 69% of capacity. Other performances averaged around 55% capacity, apart from the Saturday afternoon performance which sold just 30% of capacity. We believe strongly in the importance of the Grimeborn festival. It is increasingly recognised as an important event in the cultural calendar as it offers access to innovative and creative opera performances at reasonable prices in an unusual and intimate performance space where the close proximity of audience and performers enables a deep engagement with both music and drama.

The first performance was extremely well attended by reviewers (19% complimentary tickets), which gave us an excellent boost in the press - the production received outstanding reviews (see further below). A limited number of complimentary tickets were given for subsequent performances (1%-5%) to supporters or potential sponsors.

From the increase in our mailing list and from feedback received we know that we reached a range of new audience members with this production. The Arcola Theatre team were very enthusiastic about our production run and the positive feedback from audiences.

Impact: young artists.

1. As noted, the intensive rehearsal period included coaching for young artists in all aspects of stagecraft, language, technique, musical style, and vocal technique as needed. The presence at many rehearsals of an early music specialist on the harpsichord and a specialist lutenist ensured an opportunity for our young artists to embed their understanding of the music of the period and feel secure in all aspects of the baroque style.

2. Since we were able to secure the attendance of a strong quota of high-profile reviewers at our first night and they were so favourably impressed by what they saw, this resulted in excellent reviews and first-rate exposure for our young artists.

Young Artist Feedback:

We asked our young artists for feedback following their experience. We have collected points under four headings and then have included their 'summary' comments in full.

Musically:

"thank you for the really useful help with how to sustain singing during difficult movement"; "invaluable support with how to put in the right ornamentation"; "thank you for all the help with my Italian"; "I really appreciated the opportunity to practise with the lute and harpsichord".

Dramatically:

"I found your creativity and imagination inspirational"; "you really helped me to know how to move more naturally"; "I couldn't have done that scene without your careful support"; "I really liked the way you got me to convey internal emotion with minimal external movement"; "Our love scenes worked because you showed us exactly what to do and when to do it – you were so clear and so supportive in showing us how to move in a way that would draw the audience in without alienating or shocking them – we couldn't have done it without you!"; "You really helped me to learn how to pace my movement to match the music without making it look too obvious".

Professionally:

"It's just so much fun to work with this team of young artists"; "I really had to learn how to build up my stamina gradually and be careful with my voice – you were so good at reminding us to pace ourselves"; "I learned a lot about building a media profile from watching Helen doing all the EO posts – she is so on it!".

Personally:

"This production run really challenged me – there was a lot of music to remember, and I didn't want to let the rest of the team down."; "Getting great reviews has really raised my confidence"; "I feel proud of what we achieved – it was so much fun, and I want to do it again!".

Summary comments in full:

"Learning L'incoronazione di Poppea under the musical direction of Marcio da Silva was an amazing opportunity. Musically it enlarged my understanding of playing harpsichord and organ in the specific style of venetian opera at Monteverdi's time. It was great to communicate with the other musicians, share expertise and create further contacts. It was just one more of all the splendid experiences working together in an amazing team, having a great rehearsal and performance in a great atmosphere, and of course performing at the Grimeborn Festival at the Arcola Theatre. I will look forward to many more of these projects and hope for large support to make this possible. Ensemble OrQuesta is offering people jobs and opportunities where every day feels like a benefit."

"Working with Ensemble OrQuesta at Grimeborn has been my first step into the professional world. With them and the opportunities they offer me, I get the necessary experience and visibility we need as artists. I am so lucky to work with them and their incredibly loving and talented team."

"Taking part in Poppea was a hugely valuable experience for me as a young artist: the exposure with reviews and mentions in national newspapers and websites will be very useful for my career progression. I have also gained insights into the workings of an early Baroque masterpiece, especially with regards to ornamentation."

"Performing the roles of Ottavia and Virtù for Ensemble OrQuesta was a fantastic experience. This is the first Monteverdi opera I've done, and I've been totally converted. I really love the style and am very keen to do more baroque opera. I found it to be almost like performing Shakespeare with the text leading the music. Working with Marcio and the team was truly inspiring, it was one of those experiences where I've come away having realised that there is so much more to learn."

"I view Ensemble OrQuesta's Grimeborn festival participation as a huge opportunity to expose baroque music to new audiences in an intimate setting with intimate staging. Often baroque music is performed in a way that showcases it if it were a museum exhibit - a relic of the past to be enjoyed purely from an academic perspective. Ensemble OrQuesta's productions do the opposite - expose audiences to the raw beauty, emotion, and drama of baroque compositions so that audiences fall in honest love with the music regardless of its academic implications. Yes, audiences can still show up for academic fulfilment, but they leave with a much deeper appreciation of the music and the wonder it can evoke."

"Performing in Ensemble OrQuesta's production of L'incoronazione di Poppea has been a fantastic opportunity to work with inspiring musical colleagues, realising the dramatic direction of Marcio da Silva. I was given the opportunity to explore a new role (Drusilla) and work with new colleagues in this truly authentic opening

production of the 2022 Grimeborn Festival. Performing this work has given me great exposure, and mentions in the press, in addition to helping me grow as a performer and musician.”

“Being back on the Arcola Theatre, was very emotional. I have forgotten the impact that the close audience can have on you, especially on the first evening, when we knew that the media was there to judge us. Working with Marcio, is always a pleasure, as he is pushing the team to the edge of perfection at all levels. Personally, this chance brought me good mentions for my performance and my voice, which is reassuring me that I am on the right track. After Covid, this was the second opera that I performed on full stage, and it was important to me to work with a team that helped me to regain my confidence in a supportive way. I really hope to work again with Ensemble OrQuesta in the future.”

We were delighted to receive such positive feedback from our Young Artists. We were also thrilled to be reviewed in highly positive terms by Fiona Maddocks of The Observer alongside BBC Proms 14 and 16. Her ★★★★★ review declared: ‘All 10 singers impressed, the cast led superbly by Helen May (Poppea) and Julia Portela Piñón (Nerone).’ Full review [here](#).

Some highlights:



The poster features a black and white photograph of a man and a woman in period costume. The man is looking at the woman, who is looking upwards. The background is dark with some architectural elements visible.

arcola theatre

EO Ensemble OrQuesta
GRIMEBORN

TUESDAY 26TH JULY 19:30
WEDNESDAY 27TH JULY 19:30
THURSDAY 28TH JULY 19:30
FRIDAY 29TH JULY 19:30
SATURDAY 30TH JULY 15:00
SATURDAY 30TH JULY 19:30

Monteverdi
L'Incoronazione di Poppea