

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS BY STRAUSS – AT A GLANCE

OPERA BACKGROUND

- This work consists of an opera within an opera. The Prologue (Section I) shares events that occur prior to the performance of the new opera. The Opera (Section II) shares the actual performance of the opera.
- “A cockeyed take on art, love, and fidelity, *Ariadne auf Naxos* is at once divinely comic and profoundly enchanting. It's a collision of opera buffa with opera seria – a kind of *Big Bang Theory* meets *Masterpiece Theatre*.” – Pacific Opera Victoria

MAIN CHARACTERS

- Prima Donna/Ariadne (ah – ree – AHD - nay) – princess and daughter of the king of Crete
- Tenor/Bacchus (Bah – kuss) – handsome and heroic God
- Zerbinetta (zer – bih – NET – tah) - the beautiful young leader of the troupe of comedians
- Composer – a composer, defending music as one of the highest art forms
- Harlekin (HAR – leh – kin) – fun loving and hard-working member of the troupe of comedians
- Najade (NI – yad), Dryade (DRI – yad) and Echo – the three nymphs who attempt to cheer Ariadne as she grieves
- Truffaldin (truh – FALL – din), Brighella (brih – GAY – lah), Scaramuccio (scah – rah – MOO – kee – oh) – members of Zerbinetta’s troupe of comedians

WHAT HAPPENS?

- The richest man in town is hosting a party. His guests will be treated to a new opera – *Ariadne auf Naxos*. A troupe of comedians is also hired to perform and provide comic relief.
- Running behind schedule, the host decides that both groups will perform their works simultaneously, so they do not have to delay the much anticipated fireworks display.
- A quirky operatic mashup of the two performances begins.
- Ariadne, abandoned by her lover Theseus, sings of her longing for death on the island of Naxos with Najade, Dryade and Echo.
- A stranger arrives. Ariadne hopes it is Death’s messenger, Hermes, but it is the god Bacchus. Bacchus becomes enamored of Ariadne and they sing a loving duet as Zerbinetta happily observes.

YOU’LL WANT TO SEE THIS SHOW IF...

- You like a comedy of errors!
- You are a fan of mythology
- You like to hear super-human female opera singers tackle amazing vocal feats! (a.k.a. – coloratura)
- You are ready to experience Strauss’ music - full of lush orchestral textures and colors – considered to be one of the greatest masters of orchestrations.