



Venus & Adonis

A masque for the
entertainment of the King

Music by John Blow, with a libretto
based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

Friday, 30 August 2013

7.00pm

Methodist Ladies' College,
Hadley Hall

MUSICAL DIRECTION – Georg Corall

CHORUS MASTERS – Robert Faulkner and Rhiannon Taylor

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE - The Venus and Adonis
Workshop Baroque Orchestra (a student orchestra tutored
by Perth Baroque)

STAGE DIRECTION AND PRODUCTION – Jane Davidson

BAROQUE DANCE COACH– Steven Player

DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY - Seanne Kinsey

CAST:

Linda Barcan and Stephen Grant as Venus and Adonis

Patricia Alessi as Cupid

Andrew O'Connor as the Huntsman

Chorus and Dancers from Methodist Ladies' College and

Christ Church Grammar School, Claremont, WA



www.mlc.wa.edu.au

www.historyofemotions.org.au

NOTES ON THE PROJECT:

This entertainment was first performed for Charles II and his courtiers c1683. The work occupies a special place in musical history as it comprises continuously sung text with accompanying dramatic action and popular dances of the day. Though described as a 'masque' by the composer, its structural features have led historians to regard it as England's earliest surviving 'opera'.

In Ovid's original story, the Goddess of Love, Venus, is with her son, Cupid, and he accidentally pierces her with one of his arrows. The next person Venus sees is the handsome human youth, Adonis, with whom she immediately falls in love. He is a hunter, and she decides, that in order to be with him, she will take on the form of the goddess of the hunt, Artemis. Eventually she warns Adonis of the danger of hunting the wild boar, but he does not heed the warning and is gored to death by the boar. The opera is a variation on this story, with Cupid addressing the audience to offer a pungent critique of courtly life, and allowing comic elements to enter the story.

At the time of composition, the work has had only one performance outside of the court, at Josias Priest's Chelsea Boarding School in 1684. It is for this reason that we have chosen to develop this creative production at the Methodist Ladies' College. The project is a tripartite collaboration between the Methodist Ladies' College, in association with Christ Church Grammar School, the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, hosted at UWA, and the musicians of Perth Baroque.

This project brings together academics, performers and students to investigate in theory and practice the long history of human emotional behavior. Through it we explore how experiences and expressions of emotion have transformed over time and how musical emotions are susceptible to changing cultural context and belief.

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