

# NEWSLETTER

of the

## American Handel Society

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### JUILLIARD OPERA: *ATALANTA* REVIEW

*Mark Risinger*

One of the happier developments for historical performance in New York City over the last ten years or so has been the creation of Juilliard415, a period instrument ensemble that performs early orchestral repertoire as well as accompanying the baroque repertoire of the Juilliard Opera. This fall's operatic production, Handel's *Atalanta*, promised to be an exciting opportunity to hear a work that had received only one previous New York performance; it had been selected on the recommendation and with the musicological consultation of Professor Ellen Harris. Sadly, the production was somewhat overshadowed by the tragic death of one of its orchestra members only a few hours before the opening night performance was scheduled to begin. Consequently, the Wednesday evening premiere was canceled, with only the two subsequent performances taking place on Friday and Sunday. Both the cast of singers and the orchestra are to be commended for their fortitude in carrying on



*Mary Beth Nelson (Meleagro) and Shelén Hughes (Atalanta) in the Juilliard Opera production of Atalanta. Photo credit: Richard Termine.*

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### *THEODORA* BY PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE

*Graydon Beeks*



*Countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen (Didymus) and Richard Egarr (conductor/harpsichordist) with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale in the performance of Theodora. Photo credit: Frank Wing.*

In October 2022 the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale, under the direction of Richard Egarr, presented four performances of *Theodora* in the Bay Area. I heard the last of these, given in the First Congregational Church of Berkeley on Sunday, October 23. Handel's only oratorio on a Christian subject, *Theodora* is notoriously long and experienced audiences approach it expecting a work on the scale of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. The version performed here, which came in at approximately 160 minutes including one intermission, was cut significantly. The

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