

BLACKHEATH HALLS OPERA 2021 PRESENTS

Venus & Adonis

Music by John Blow

EVALUATION REPORT

TUE 28 & THU 30 SEP
SAT 2 & SUN 3 OCT

blackheathhalls.com



PRODUCTION TEAM

Director

James Hurley

Musical Director

Christopher Stark

Designer

Rachel Szmukler

Lighting Designer

Jo Palmer

Movement Director

Jasmine Ricketts

CAST

Venus **Claire Lees**

Adonis **Harry Thatcher**

Cupid **Rebecca Leggett**

Shepherdess **Anna Pych; Eleanor Kemp**

1st Shepherd **Robert Lydon; Lucas Artisio**

2nd Shepherd **Lawrence Gillians; Bill Semple**

3rd Shepherd **Garreth Romain; Miranda Ostler**

In 2021 Blackheath Halls Opera performed John Blow's Venus and Adonis. Thought to be the first opera written in English and performed at the court of King Charles II, the opera is a delightful mixed masque of solo arias, choruses and dances. It includes a special chorus for a school of young Cupids, lending itself perfectly to our intergenerational company.

We performed the hour long piece 8 times, splitting our 100 strong company in half to take 4 performances each.

This smaller group format gave our production team the chance to create a detailed version of the Venus and Adonis story.

Setting the opera in a modern day TV studio, Playing Cupid is a tired and increasingly unpopular dating show which is trying to reinvent itself by bringing back Adonis as one of Venus's suitors. Presenter, Cupid, connives this plan to bring some enthusiasm back into Venus's search for love. However, her plan backfires and leaves Venus genuinely broken-hearted.

Our opera company threw themselves into this drama as evil and manipulative TV show producers, creators, an on show audience and a group of little Cupids dancing to jingles and supporting their own favourite suitor. The production included film footage and a delightfully tawdry pink and garish set, and there was a particularly celebratory atmosphere, returning to in person performance after Covid-19 forced our 2020 production online.

STATISTICS



8

Performances

66

Rehearsal
Sessions

200+

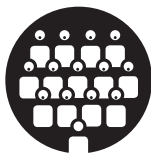
Hours of
Rehearsal

3

Taster
Sessions

4

Days of Youth
Opera Company
Summer School



138

People engaged

43

under 18s

40

Sessions 100%
FREE for Youth
Opera Company
and special school
participants



1094

Tickets
Sold

104

Free Tickets



1

BSL signed
performance



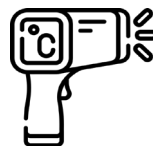
30

Pairs of pink
trouser



8

Pairs of pink
angel wings



2315

Temperature
checks



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



Many thanks again for an amazing experience. It seemed particularly special this time round.



"I really enjoyed it and I hope we have another opera soon!"

"It is very fun to act in the opera and sing with professionals"



“Although it may sound a little far-fetched, this will go down as one of the best experiences of my life.”



“ Inspired context, relevant and thought-provoking concept, clever use of space and sparkling set design. ”





AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

“A welcome
escape from
reality for an
hour.”

“Imaginative
staging - a
combination
between Love
island and
[musically] Dido
and Aeneas.”



...a lively performance from all.
James Hurley's hectic, pink-and-
gold TV gameshow production,
with Cupid as host, kept everyone
busy...spirited and fun.

★★★★ The Observer



“Gorgeous singing,
super production
and such a clever
interpretation”



“I just love the
community operas
and this was so
very special”



“In an age when such TV shows as
Love Island or The Bachelor are
taken completely seriously, the playful
concept behind Hurley’s production
worked brilliantly.” Planethugill



This project was
supported by
Many generous individuals

Patrons
Edward Gardner OBE
Nicky Spence

**OFF
AIR**



BLACKHEATH HALLS OPERA

Look out for details of the
2022 Opera Gala Night
in the New Year