

# Handel: Rodrigo

Costumes designed and made by

Enrico Coveri Maison



Rodrigo, King of Spain



Esilena, his wife



Florinda, sister to Giuliano



Giuliano,  
Count of Ceuta



Evanco, son of the  
former King of Aragon



Fernando,  
general to Rodrigo







## GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

### Rodrigo

ovvero *Vincer se stesso è la maggior vittoria*, HWV5

Opera in three acts

*Reconstructed performing edition by Alan Curtis*

### Ensemble San Felice

**Federico Bardazzi** conductor

**Luciano Alberti** stage direction

Costumes designed and made

by **Enrico Coveri Maison**

Video projections realised by **Il Gobbo e la Giraffa**

Rodrigo

Esilena

Florinda

Giuliano

Evanco

Fernando

**Gloria Banditelli** *mezzo-soprano*

**Laura Cherici** *soprano*

**Annamaria dell'Oste** *soprano*

**Leonardo De Lisi** *tenor*

**Susanna Rigacci** *soprano*

**Caterina Calvi** *contralto*

## SYNOPSIS

### Argument

Rodrigo, having deposed Vitizza as ruler of Spain, has seduced Florinda by offering to put her on the throne in place of his true queen, Esilena, but has now reneged on the promise, even though Florinda has borne him a son. Meanwhile Vitizza's son Evanco has risen up against Rodrigo, who has sent his general Giuliano (Florinda's brother) to quell the rebellion.

### Act One

Florinda is furious with Rodrigo for his treachery, but Rodrigo defends himself by saying that matters of state outweigh those of the heart; Florinda swears revenge.

Esilena complains to Fernando (another of Rodrigo's generals) of the unhappiness caused by Rodrigo's interest in other women; Fernando consoles her, after which Rodrigo arrives and the couple effect a reconciliation.

Giuliano now enters with the rebel Evanco as his prisoner. Evanco hurls insults at Rodrigo, who responds by ordering a slow and painful execution, but Esilena persuades her husband to let him live on as a prisoner. Rodrigo puts Evanco in Giuliano's care, and Esilena sings the general's praises.

Giuliano offers Evanco the hand of friendship, and Evanco resolves to remain strong. Florinda now enters and tells Giuliano of the slight she has suffered at Rodrigo's hands. Enraged, Giuliano swears to avenge his sister by supporting Evanco's cause. Florinda is delighted.

Alone, Rodrigo is full of foreboding. Fernando and Esilena enter with the news that Giuliano has taken up arms against him with Evanco. Rodrigo confesses to Esilena that the new rebellion is the result of his rash promise to Florinda; Esilena offers to step aside and leave the way clear for Florinda in order to prevent another conflict. Rodrigo refuses to allow it, but agrees to let Esilena go to Florinda as a messenger of peace. Alone, Esilena resolves that she will indeed leave Rodrigo to Florinda.

*Interval: 20 minutes*

### Act Two

Giuliano, Evanco and Florinda are looking forward to the coming battle, when Giuliano receives a letter from Fernando appearing to offer support if he will meet him in secret. Evanco and Florinda suspect a trap, but Giuliano agrees to go and see Fernando. Evanco declares his love for Florinda, but she tells him that, while she loves him too, her thoughts are only for revenge. Esilena arrives to offer a surprised Florinda her husband, but Florinda now wants only Rodrigo's death.

Rodrigo ponders his possible defeat and, when Esilena returns, she promises to join him in death if necessary. Suddenly, Fernando enters; he has tricked Giuliano, and now brings him in as his captive. Rodrigo orders death for Giuliano, but Esilena persuades him to make him a hostage instead, and Fernando is sent away to demand Evanco's return and Florinda's exile. Esilena and Rodrigo reaffirm their love; Esilena is happy.

Outside the city Florinda and Evanco are pursuing their campaign. The gates open to reveal Fernando, who says that unless Rodrigo's demands are met, Giuliano will die. Giuliano defiantly urges his allies on. Evanco shoots an arrow, killing Fernando, and the rebel forces pour into the city.

### Act Three

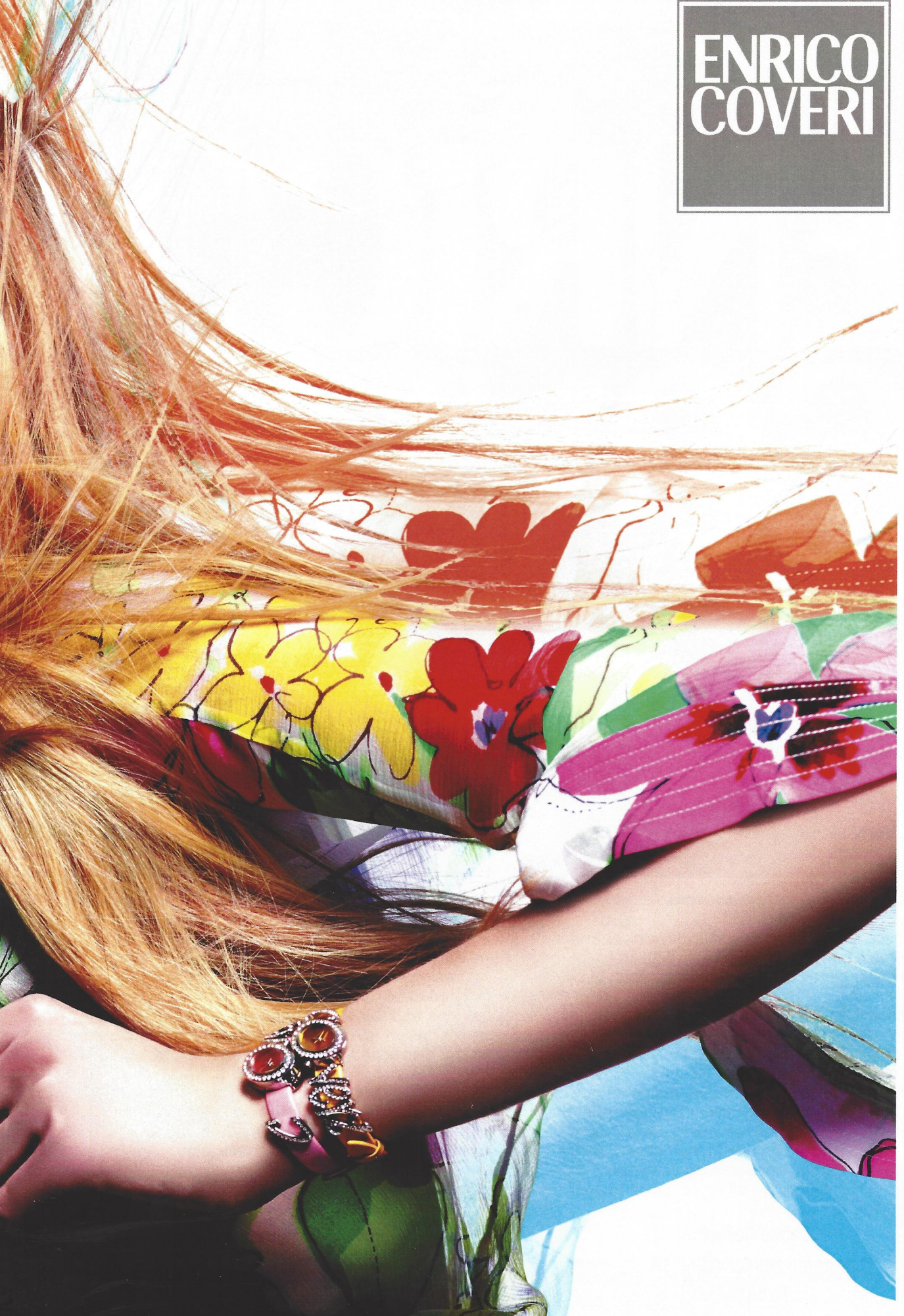
Rodrigo bemoans this latest turn of events, but is rallied by Esilena. Alone, Esilena offers herself to the gods in Rodrigo's place.

Giuliano exults in his victory, and looks forward to Rodrigo's death. Rodrigo enters, pursued by Evanco and refusing to surrender. As Giuliano and Evanco prepare to kill him, they are stopped by Florinda, who demands to carry out the task herself. Esilena now enters carrying a baby – the son of Rodrigo and Florinda – which she holds as a shield before Rodrigo. Florinda relents, and Evanco and Giuliano are persuaded by Esilena to let Rodrigo live. Florinda declares her unconditional love for Evanco, and all praise Esilena's moderating influence.

The two couples – Rodrigo and Esilena, and Evanco and Florinda – elaborate on their love, before Rodrigo puts a stop to future conflict by abdicating, ceding the kingdom of Aragon to Evanco, and Castile to Florinda's son (with Giuliano as regent). Esilena declares that self-conquest is the greatest of all triumphs, and the opera ends in rejoicing.



ENRICO  
COVERI





# ENRICO COVERI

Francesco Martini Coveri, artistic director of Enrico Coveri Maison, has an inexhaustible curiosity for the Arts, his interests embracing music from Mozart to the avant-garde as well as music outside the Classical tradition. His passion for this type of initiative began in 2000, when he designed the costumes for *The Great Gatsby*, a two-act ballet by André Prokovsky staged at La Scala, Milan.

Since then, he has been involved in prestigious collaborations with the worlds of music and cinema.

Coveri was delighted to accept Prof. Luciano Alberti's proposal to design and make the costumes for Handel's *Rodrigo*, an Italian opera, dedicated to Grand Prince Ferdinando de' Medici and first performed in Florence in 1707.

Coveri says: "I find of great interest the confrontation of crafts and spheres which do not strictly belong together, though they are closely linked through reciprocal influences and cross-currents. While keeping in mind the severe style of a war opera, I came up with costumes that are elegant, soft and modern, giving a narrative meaning to the colours, so that they play an important part in the dramatic plot.

Designing and realising costumes for the theatre is important and richly interesting work.

I think it is above all an occasion to apply the same values to fashion as to costume design."

**Enrico Coveri**  
**Lungarno Guicciardini, 19**  
**Firenze**

**Showroom**  
**Via Manzoni, 43**  
**Milano**

[www.coveri.com](http://www.coveri.com)