

Jeremy Sams

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND

The Met
ropolitan
Opera **HD**
LIVE

Live Broadcast: JANUARY 21, 2012

Conductor
WILLIAM CHRISTIE

Production
PHELIM MCDERMOTT

Associate Director & Set Designer
JULIAN CROUCH

Costume Designer
KEVIN POLLARD

Lighting Designed by
BRIAN MACDEVITT

Choreographer
GRACIELA DANIELE

Animation & Projection Design
59 PRODUCTIONS

Ariel DANIELLE DE NIESE
Miranda LISETTE OROPESA
Sycorax JOYCE DIDONATO
Prospero DAVID DANIELS
Ferdinand
ANTHONY ROTH COSTANZO
Neptune
PLÁCIDO DOMINGO
Caliban LUCA PISARONI

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ACT I

Prospero, exiled Duke of Milan, lives on a remote island with his daughter Miranda, surrounded by his books, potions, and instruments of magic. Prospero had at first taken up with the sorceress Sycorax, who ruled the island. But having loved her, he left her, banishing her to the dark side of the island, stealing her sprite servant Ariel and enslaving her son Caliban.

Our story begins some 16 years later, as an aging Prospero conceives a final plan to ensure Miranda's future happiness and end his exile. He divines that a ship is passing nearby bearing the King of Naples and Prince Ferdinand, whom Prospero has destined for Miranda. Prospero commands Ariel to perform a spell that will cause a storm and shipwreck the royals on the island. In return, he promises Ariel his freedom.

Caliban, who has overheard their conversation, rushes to tell Sycorax. Sensing that Prospero is vulnerable, Sycorax tells Caliban to steal a vial of dragon's blood from Prospero's cell, which she will use to restore her enfeebled powers so she and Caliban can regain control of the island.

Prospero finds Miranda troubled by dreams and unfamiliar emotions. Meanwhile, Caliban steals the vial, vowing that he will rule the island with Miranda as his queen. He substitutes another vial of worthless lizard's blood, which Ariel mistakenly uses for the Tempest Spell—with catastrophic consequences: Two pairs of honeymooning lovers—Helena and Demetrius, Hermia and Lysander—are shipwrecked and separately cast ashore on the island.

Prospero now commands Ariel to find Prince Ferdinand and cast a spell on him to ensure that Ferdinand and Miranda will fall in love immediately. But the first man Ariel sees is Demetrius, not Ferdinand. Ariel dutifully casts the spell on him and leads him to Miranda. The two fall in love, much to Prospero's fury.

Meanwhile, Lysander has come ashore, cursing Neptune for, he thinks, washing his beloved Hermia out to sea. Ariel wrongly assumes that he has finally found Ferdinand and casts the spell to make Miranda and Lysander fall in love—much to Demetrius's fury.

On the other side of the island, an exhausted Helena arrives, observed by Sycorax, who decides she will give Helena to Caliban as his queen instead of Miranda, the daughter of her enemy. Using the stolen vial, Sycorax conjures a spell to make Helena fall in love with Caliban—much to his delight—and hopes the spell is strong enough to last.

Ariel, having cast a spell on the wrong man twice, realizes that the true Ferdinand must still be somewhere out at sea. He decides to go to the very top—and calls upon Neptune for help. The sea god appears, furious that a human, Lysander, has been cursing him and angry that Ariel has disturbed his peace. Ariel begs Neptune to find Ferdinand, and Neptune finally agrees to scour the seas.

Prospero observes the chaos he has wrought—lovers mismatched, Ariel frantic, Caliban running wild, and Ferdinand nowhere in sight. He despairs of ever achieving his dream.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Hermia awakens from a nightmare, only to realize that her dream was all too true: Her new husband Lysander was swept away from her in the storm. She runs off to find him and discovers him doting on Miranda—with no memory of his wife.

Sycorax, meanwhile, exults in her revived powers and the certainty that she will soon have her revenge on Prospero and regain control of the island for her son.

Hermia is reunited with Helena. Helena's memory and emotions have been stirred by the sight of Demetrius, despite the fact that he is with Miranda and fails to recognize her. Hermia and Helena bemoan the fickleness of men. Helena then takes off after Demetrius, spurning Caliban, who is crushed. Caliban rushes to Sycorax for consolation, but she explains that hearts that love can always be broken.

Caliban, in his fury, steals a magic book from Prospero's cell and conjures a dream of himself as a potentate of the world, attended by loving subjects. When his fantasy spins out of control and the creatures turn on him, Prospero intervenes and disperses them.

Meanwhile, Neptune has found Ferdinand's ship and sent it racing toward the island. Ferdinand looks toward his future. Like Miranda, he has been dreaming of an elusive someone.

Ariel sets about putting matters to rights, leading the five mismatched lovers through a forest maze until they fall asleep side by side. Ariel ensures through his magic that, when they awaken, the lovers are paired with their proper and previous mates. The five make their way to the shore to see Ferdinand and the king arrive, greeted by Prospero. Ferdinand reads the pardon ending Prospero's exile. When he sees Miranda, he falls in love instantly, deeply and forever—no spell required.

Sycorax enters and challenges Prospero. When he rebuffs her, Neptune appears and takes her part, berating Prospero for victimizing others as he himself was once victimized. Ashamed, Prospero begs forgiveness of Sycorax and gives the island back to her and her son. Neptune extols the virtues of mercy and Sycorax grants Prospero forgiveness. All join to celebrate a new day of joy, peace, and love.

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