On this week’s WCPE Opera House, please join me for George Frideric Handel’s *Faramondo*, a story about the legendary King of the Franks. Set to a libretto by Apostolo Zeno, *Il Faramondo* was first performed in Venice on December 27, 1698 to music by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo. In 1719 Francesco Gasparini produced a considerably revised version of the opera in Rome, and it was this version, after further removing about half the recitatives, that Handel used. Handel's *Faramondo* was first performed at the King’s Theatre, London, on January 3, 1738.

Based on a mythical tale of the early Frankish kingdoms, *Faramondo* concerns Gustavo, King of the Cimbrians (baritone Peter Castildi), who believes his son Sveno to have been killed by Faramondo, King of the Franks (mezzo-soprano D’Anna Fortunato in a “trouser” role). Gustavo’s daughter Rosimonda (mezzo-soprano Jennifer Lane) has feelings for Faramondo and his son Adolfo (soprano Mary Ellen Callahan in another “trouser” role) has the hots for Faramondo’s sister Clotilde (soprano Julianne Baird), thus Gustavo’s hapless attempts to spur his children into taking revenge for Sveno’s death are doomed to failure.

**Rudolf Palmer** conducts the Brewer Chamber Orchestra in this 1996 Vox Classics recording, CD number 7536.


As a bonus, we'll hear soprano Dorothea Röschmann sing “Quel torrente ch s’innalza” from Handel's *Giustino*.

**Bob Chapman**

W. Robert Chapman, Host of the Thursday Night Opera House