

AGRIPPINA

Georg Friedrich Handel (1685 - 1759)

It is announced that Claudius, the Emperor of Rome, has lost his life in a storm at sea. His wife Agrippina eagerly makes use of his absence and plots to secure the throne for Nero, her son from a previous marriage. She obtains help from her accomplices and supposed lovers Pallas and Narcissus. However, before this plan can be carried out, it is reported that the emperor is alive. As a mark of gratitude to Otho for saving his life, the emperor promises him the throne. This is much to the displeasure of the empress. Agrippina takes advantage of the love both the emperor and his saviour have for the lady-in-waiting. She spreads various lies to set the two against each other.

Everybody comes to greet the emperor on his return. However, Otho is branded a traitor and he seeks support from his confidants. They, however, leave him in the lurch. Nevertheless, the lady-in-waiting, who in the meantime has fallen in love with him, believes he is innocent. She has a plan and in this way will expose Agrippina's schemes. Her accomplices realise that they have been used. They tell the emperor of his wife's evil designs. Nevertheless Agrippina cunningly manages to convince her husband of her good intentions.

The lady-in-waiting tries to convince the emperor of Otho's innocence. As a result, Claudius sees that he was wrong. It is not Otho but Nero who has deceived him. The lady-in-waiting intends to prove this to him. Her plan works and Nero denies his love for the lady-in-waiting and once again admits his political ambitions. However, when Agrippina attempts to secure the throne for Nero, Pallas and Narcissus accuse her of treachery. She insists that everything she did was to protect the throne for Claudius. Nevertheless, the emperor decides to give Otho the throne. However, nobody is really satisfied with the arrangement. Despite all the deceit, Claudius decides to give everyone what they want.