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The Chicago Lyric Opera is one of the biggest, well-known, and successful opera houses in the world. In a season, they put on an average of seventy-two performances of about eight different operas. They make over fifty-five million in revenue, and spend over sixty million on the programs themselves. Costumes and scenery are extremely important to this opera company as well. The Opera's extravagant and elegant architecture is enough to see how outward appearances matter immensely to their reputation. The actual employees of the opera make out fairly well, ranging from the cleaning services pricing just over \$230,000 to vice president Sir Andrew Davis paid just over \$613,000. Obviously this opera can afford to pay highly skilled and reliable employees, considering they consult Renee Fleming, and they strive for excellence and good reputation.

Staging a show such as *The Coronation of Poppea* can be a large project considering the interpretation of each opera house. Octavia's 'Farewell Aria' is a scene focused on the soloist with a small orchestral accompaniment. The orchestra itself would be smaller because of the time period in which the opera was written and performed. This music was written in a time of humanism, causing the words and actual notes go hand in hand in the interpretation and expression of the aria.

If the Chicago Lyric Opera were to stage this scene, it would probably have a fair amount of background scenery from the previous scene. Even though I am not familiar with the opera, I can imagine that Octavia may have recently come from speaking to her banisher or someone

whom she cared about who rejected seeing her. This scene would probably have full Roman columns constructed, with large and detailed buildings. These would be extremely accurate because the Chicago Lyric Opera can afford to hire experts on ancient Roman architecture to make the scene as realistic as possible. Also, costuming would be completely accurate for the time period. In general, Chicago Lyric Opera seems that it would use a more authentic interpretation of costuming and scenery instead of a modern one to focus on the extravagance and attention to detail. As Octavia enters the stage, I can imagine all of this scenery in the background with a single unobtrusive spotlight on her. She may enter with a dirge-like step to follow the orchestration. The orchestra would be the best instrumentalists available, and I would not be surprised if the orchestra had some authentic instruments included.

The last scene in *The Coronation of Poppea* is a love duet between Nero and Poppea. They sing to each other of the triumph of their love, and how Nero has finally been freed from his wife. This scene has been a spot of trouble for directors due to the nature of the interpretation and placing in the production. This song could be interpreted as more solemn and sad, triumphant, or pure bliss between lovers. Chicago Lyric Opera would most likely go for the triumphant or blissful interpretation. The scenery, costumes, and staging could be more dramatic due to the mood of the interpretation. Chicago Lyric Opera strives to be dramatic and memorable, and would endeavor to play up the last scene as much as possible. The singers could enter from different sides of the stage and meet each other in the middle. They could playfully make their way to each other through an elaborate set, possibly a garden or town square. Chicago Lyric Opera would also have the largest possible orchestra for this scene, largest meaning the biggest orchestra appropriate for the time period and orchestration.

Chicago Lyric Opera is impressive, successful, and ambitious in all aspects. If they were staging this opera, they would strive for the biggest and the best. The costuming, scenery, and staging would be flawless, and the best musicians would be hired to make the production as polished as possible.