

Oratorio^(IRE)

Karel Miedema's Pedigree Evaluation

Danehill – Mahrah by Vaguely Noble

Unravelling pedigrees is art, not science.

No-one has yet cracked the code, and there are as many theories as there are big winners.

Conventional wisdom holds that sire-lines are the key to success. Combining sires with sires of broodmares is what makes computers hum in their number crunching analysis of stakes performers. But sometimes, when everyone zigs, you need to zag. Take an opposite view and see what gives.

Forget sire and broodmare sire combinations.

Forget ordinary stakes performers.

Instead, concentrate on the Gr1 winners in the female family.

To breed a Gr1 winner, breed the way a family's Gr1 winners are bred.

In the female family of Oratorio the spotlight falls on Codex, a multiple G1 winner whose victories included the Preakness Stakes and Santa Anita Derby. He died young, siring just three crops of foals, numbering not more than one hundred. His most notable legacy includes South Africa's champion sire Badger Land, and multiple G1 winning filly Coup de Fusil.

The dam of Codex is Roundup Rose, full sister to Oratorio's third dam Katonka. The sisters are daughters of the unraced mare Minnetonka, with the next two dams being Heliolight and Champion 3yo Real Delight. The latter was inducted into America's Hall Of Fame. Apart from Heliolight, Real Delight produced daughter Plum Cake, dam of South Africa's champion sire Plum Bold and grandam of US champion sire Alydar. Talent aplenty in the female line.

In terms of kin-breeding (which is inbreeding to female-line ancestors who have great commonality of pedigree elements) interesting pictures unfold.

Codex is closely kinbred, with 2x3 All Beautiful x Heliolight. His G1 daughter Coup de Fusil is kinbred 3x4x3 All Beautiful x Heliolight x Floral Girl. In Badger Land, Heliolight goes to his third damsire Khaled.

Alydar's dam Sweet Tooth is kinbred 2x2 Two Lea x Real Delight. Alydar was mated to Oratorio's third dam Katonka, both having Real Delight as their third dam, through sisters Plum Cake and Heliolight. That made the resulting offspring

Montage (grandam of Oratorio) inbred 4x4 Real Delight, and closer up kinbred 2x2 Sweet Tooth x Minnetonka.

To get Oratorio's dam Mahrah, Montage visited champion Vaguely Noble, which wasn't the first time this sire had been tried with the family. He already sired multiple G2 winner Talakeno (half brother to Montage) and G2 winner Eminency (half brother to Montage's dam Katonka).

Vaguely Noble is kinbred to close kin-relatives, 4x5 Baby Polly x Seaweed, who both are close kin to Real Delight's dam Blue Delight (appears 5x5 in Montage), as well as to Blue Delight's dam Chiclight. This links the kin-breeding from Vaguely Noble to the (k)inbreeding in Montage in resulting offspring Mahrah.

The mating of Mahrah to Danehill which produced Oratorio further enhanced the female line kin-breeding elements. Danehill's grandam Spring Adieu is close kin to Minnetonka, the pair appearing 3x4 in Oratorio. The significant elements in the kin-breeding are Spring Adieu's

sire Buckpasser (close kin to Minnetonka's dam Heliolight) and dam Natalma, who is close kin to Bold Ruler, grandsire of Minnetonka. Bold Ruler looks significant, as he's the sire of Minnetonka's close kin-relative Plum Bold (kinbred 3x3 through Bold Ruler's grandam Outdone x Blue Delight from the female line).

Oratorio went to stud in Ireland and Australia in 2006. If kin-breeding through his female line elements is relevant, his best offspring should reflect this.

To date, in South Africa, there have been nine (imported) runners by Oratorio, of which eight are winners, five with black type. Arguably the best of these is **Soweto Slew**, a 3-time stakes placed stakes winner (MR 102). Soweto Slew is from the same female line as Oratorio, and is kinbred 4x2 to full sisters Katonka and Roundup Rose (the colt's dam is half sister to Codex).

From Oratorio's first European crop came a host of stakes performers, notably Gr1 winner Beethoven (rated 117) and Fencing Master (rated 116), who finished 1-2 in the Gr1 Dewhurst Stakes as 2yo's, and recent 2012 stakes winner Eton Forever (rated 115).

Eton Forever is out of a half sister to sire Green Desert, and is kinbred 6x4 Heliolight x Tulle. This is interesting, given that Oratorio's half brother Fahim (a Gr1 placed stakes winner, and sire in his own right) is by Green Desert, and kinbred 4x5 Tulle x Heliolight. Same kin-cross, in opposite direction.

English Gr1 winner **Beethoven** is out of Sadler's Wells mare Queen Titi, from the female line of Medaglia d'Oro (by Sadler's Wells son El Prado). Beethoven is female-line kinbred 5x4 Minnetonka x Ringing Bells, and behind it 6x5 Heliolight x Prayer Bell. Interesting to note that Prayer Bell is the third dam of Badger Land's Gr1 winning son All Will Be Well. Beethoven's dam is full sister in blood to the dam of Gr1 winner and sire Henrythenavigator – their grandams are full sisters; both are close kin to Mr Prospector.

Fencing Master (who stood his first season as a sire in 2012 in Zimbabwe) is out of Moonlight Dance. That mare is by Alydar's son Alysheba out of Madelia (half sister to Mount Hagen). Alysheba is kinbred 5x4 Blue Delight x Baba Kenny, which links to the double Blue Delight in Oratorio's female line.

International Gr1 producing sire ORATORIO



Coincidentally, **Temida**, a 2012 German Gr1 winner for Oratorio, has the same tail female line as Fencing Master. The latter's grandam Madelia is close kin to Temida's fifth dam Sun Rose. This is the female line also of South African stallion Peacetime. There's no real kin-link here with Oratorio's pedigree, but the coincidence of the female line links may be noteworthy.

Where From Here

Descendants from Oratorio's female line are widely available and should be first port of call.

Plum Bold was South African champion sire in 1981, following six seasons at Vogelvlei Stud in the late 'Seventies before being re-exported to Gainesway the USA. He's represented in the SA mare population by offspring from many highclass daughters and sons. Plum Bold's champion son Bold Tropic (exported for stud to USA) is close kin to Heliolight, through duplicated lines of Real Delight and elements from his damsire Herculeaneum. The latter is also damsire of a host of other highclass Plum Bold runners and could be significant. Herculeaneum is close kin to Alycidon, sire (among others) of Preamble.

Former Daytona-stallion **Who Duzzit** is very close kin to Minnetonka, the pair by sons of Bold Ruler from grandams who are full sisters (Real Delight and Bubbley).

Slewpendous, who is out of a half sister to Plum Bold, is kinbred 3x2 Fair Charmer x Plum Cake and behind it 6x4 Myrtlewood x Blue Delight. Myrtlewood is ancestress of Seattle Slew and Mr Prospector. This is also the tail-female line of sire Elusive Quality, whose sire son Elusive City is out of a half sister to Codex' G1 winning daughter Coup de Fusil, mentioned earlier. Perhaps members of this female line (Seattle Slew, Mr P, Elusive Quality, Tourbillon) are of more than passing interest for Oratorio.

Alydar is represented in the South African mare population through sons Centenary and Steady Beat.

Codex can be found through his son Badger Land, who was champion sire and has many highclass daughters as well as a sire-son, Badger's Drift. The latter is from the female line of Blushing Groom, with female line ancestress Aimee close kin to Heliolight. Other Codex stallions Important Business and Lost Code can be found in much smaller numbers.

Green Desert, through his female line, has done well with Oratorio's female line. In addition, he's close kin to Oratorio's sire Danehill. Green Desert, among others, is damsire of Kahal.



Oratorio's broodmare sire **VAGUELY NOBLE**.

Following a memorable 7-length win in the 1968 Gr1 Observer Gold Cup, two-year-old colt Vaguely Noble, who had no classic engagements, was sent to the December Sales. He fetched 136,000 guineas, over three times the highest amount previously paid at public auction in Britain for a horse in training. The gamble paid off, as Vaguely Noble won the Arc as a 3yo and rated Timeform 140. He was sent to stud at Gainesway in the USA, where he remained until his death in 1989, having sired Champions of both sexes on both sides of the Atlantic, with outstanding mare Dahlia his torchbearer.

Vaguely Noble makes for solid kin-breeding in the dam of Oratorio, suggesting descendants of his female line might do well with Oratorio. The family produced German champion (and sire) Lombard, and in South Africa has many female descendants of Lorehana, notably by Al Mufti (including champion Arabian Lass) and Tiger Ridge – they should make for interesting mates for Oratorio.

An important factor for future mates for Oratorio might be the fact that his notable female line ancestor **Heliolight** is very close kin to **Buckpasser**, who is widespread in the South African mare population. National Assembly, Al Mufti and Northern Guest have Buckpasser as their damsires. National Assembly especially looks interesting, as his pedigree build-up makes him very close kin to Oratorio. National Assembly has an excellent record with mares carrying Jungle Cove (bt Bold Ruler), who is close kin to Minnetonka in Oratorio's female line and enters the picture as well.

Al Mufti is interesting especially through daughters from the Lorehana female line, which also is the one of Oratorio's damsire Vaguely Noble. Al Mufti, among others, produced Champion 2yo filly Arabian Lass from the family. Tiger Ridge (out of Al Mufti's sister) also has female descendants. Lorehana's dam is a half sister to German champion (and sire) Lombard. Former SA stallion Miletus belongs in the same camp.

Another to note is Caesour, who is close kin to Oratorio's sire Danehill, while his grandam Dinner Partner is very close kin to Heliolight.

PICK OF THE BUNCH

Suitable mares for Oratorio could include

1. **descendants from his own female line, incl Plum Bold** (incl as damsire of Royal Chalice), **Slewpendous, Who Duzzit, Alydar** (Centenary, Steady Beat), **Codex** (Badger Land, Badger's Drift; Important Business, Lost Code)
2. **Buckpasser, widespread, but notably National Assembly** (especially when combined with Jungle Cove), **Northern Guest, Al Mufti, Tiger Ridge, etc.**
3. **Caesour**
4. **Green Desert** (incl as damsire of Kahal)
5. **Seattle Slew, Mr Prospector, Elusive Quality, Tourbillon** (Djebel/Never Bend)
6. **lines with which Gr1 sire Plum Bold has been successful in SA** (notably Herculeaneum, Alycidon (Preamble))
7. **Vaguely Noble** (Manshood, Indigo Magic, Carpocrates), **and descendants from his female line** (Lombard; broodmare Lorehana, notably with Al Mufti; Miletus)