

WORLDWIDE EDITION  
IN ENGLISH

# l'opera

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

Measure Publishing - Annum II - n. 3 - English international - April 2025 - \$29



Muti



Radvanovsky



Kabaivanska



# SUMMER PROGRAMS

MADE IN ITALY

MILAN, ITALY 

## FASHION

14-18 YEARS OLD

RafflesMilano

## DESIGN

14-18 YEARS OLD

RafflesMilano

## FOOD

14-18 YEARS OLD

Congusto  
institute

## PERFORMING ARTS

Singing, acting, directing

18-30 YEARS OLD

TEATRO ARCIMBOLDI

COMING SOON!

Go to page 66 to read the full article

NUMBER 3 - APRIL 2025

**Publisher**

Stefano "Steve" Acunto  
 Publisher  
 Measure Publishing, LLC  
 Box 1010, Greenwich CT 06831,  
 in collaboration with  
 Alba Srl  
 Via Solferino, 7 - 20121 Milano

**Administration**

Via Bernardo Quaranta, 40  
 20139 Milano  
 Tel. 02.36560227  
 e-mail: rivopera@gmail.com  
 www.loperaonline.com

**Editor-in-Chief**

Sabino Lenoci

**Deputy Editor**

Giancarlo Landini

**Music Section Coordinator**

Giancarlo Landini

**Editorial Secretary**

Emilio Alba

**International Coordination**

Avvocato Daria Pesce

**Marketing Director**

Enrico Bomarsi

**Advertising**

Donatello Michieli

**Contributors to this issue:**

Giancarlo Landini, Andrea Merli, Claudia Mambelli, Livio Costarella, Erica Culiati, Paolo Piro, Piero Mioli, Bernd Hoppe, Silvia Campana, Sandro Compagnone, Alberto Bazzano, Vincenzo Grisostomi Travaglini, Sara Patera, Mario Merigo, Stefano Russomanno, Aurora Alba, Francesco Germinario, Christian Helmut Mayer, Daria Pesce, Marc Onkelincs, Albert Garriga, Andres Moreno Morgiba

**Correspondents:**

*Argentina:* Marcelo Renard  
*Austria:* Helmut Christian Mayer, Eva Pleus  
*Brasil:* Norberto Modena  
*Spain:* Marcelo Cervelló - Eroles  
*Germany:* Bernd Hoppe  
*U.S.A.:* Mario Hamlet - Metz  
 - Marta Tonegutti

**Advertising sector:**

Millo System - Viale Emilio Caldara, 7  
 20122 Milano  
 E-mail: millosystem@millosystem.it  
 Tel. 02 36560277

**Annual Subscription**

Italy: € 75,00  
 Abroad: € 180,00  
 Back issues: € 14,00

**Art Director Int'l Edition**

Claudia Palmira

**Page Layout**

Moreno Marchese  
 Francesca Romana Pollastrini

**Exclusive distributor for Italy**

SQ.DI.P. Srl  
 Via Bettola, 18 - Cinisello Balsamo (Mi)  
 Tel. +3902 66030400  
 Fax: +3902 66030269

The literary rights of all published writings are reserved.

The opinions expressed in the articles reflect solely the views of their authors. Photographs and manuscripts submitted to the Editorial Office will not be returned, even if they are not published. Reproduction, even partial, of the texts and photographs published is prohibited without the written authorization of the Publisher.

**Monthly magazine**

Poste Italiane Spa - Sped. in abb. postale - D.L. 353/2003 (conv. in L. 27/02/04 - n. 46)

Art. 1. Comma 1 - LO/Milano  
 Iscrizione al Tribunale di Milano  
 nr. 4 del 15/01/2016  
 Registrazione ROC 26185

## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

2 Continuum

## ANNIVERSARIES

5 VINCENZO BELLINI The Infinite Pain of the Melody  
 9 VINCENZO BELLINI Bellini or Nostalgia (new observations)

## CURRENT EVENTS

11 MILAN EVGENIJ ONEGIN Onegin Lacks a Soul  
 13 NAPLES ROMÉO ET JULIETTE A Stellar Juliette  
 16 TURIN RIGOLETTO Unfit to Live  
 18 VERONA LA WALLY A Woman without Peace  
 20 FLORENCE RIGOLETTO, ANNA NETREBKO, RECITAL A Sad Rigoletto and a Splendid Anna  
 23 UDINE THE BAT Operetta... what a Passion  
 24 TRIESTE IL TRITTICO A Distressing Journey into the Afterlife

## FROM ABROAD

32 ZURICH MANON LESCAUT, FIDELIO A Macabre Dream, A Race Towards the Light  
 34 ZURICH AGRIPPINA Intrigue and Poison in Manhattan  
 35 OSANNE MITRIDATE RE DI PONTO A World of Emotions  
 36 MADRID LA CORTE DE FARAÓN A Hymn to Lightness  
 38 MADRID LA VIDA BREVE, LA TEJAS VERDES The Tragic Fate of Women  
 41 SEVILLE IPHIGÉNIE EN TAURIDE A Manifesto Against the Barbarity of War  
 42 LAS PALMAS BY GRAN CANARIA IL TABARRO, LE VILLI The Odd Couple  
 43 BRUXELLES GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG At Monnaie the Ring ends  
 44 COPENAGHEN THE BARBER OF SEVILLE, MARY STUART Figaro... a Vagabond  
 46 PARIS I PURITANI The Swing of Passions  
 48 LONDON FESTEN Beyond the Mask of Respectability  
 50 MONTE CARLO DAS RHEINGOLD Wagner in the Eyes of a Child  
 51 PALM BEACH LA TRAVIATA A Traviata According to the Script  
 52 CHICAGO PUCCINI CONCERT Sondra Radvanovsky Celebrates Puccini  
 55 ATHENS THE BARBER OF SEVILLE And Figaro Ended up in Mexico  
 56 ATHENS LA FORZA DEL DESTINO The Destiny of Men Between Heaven and Earth  
 58 RICCARDO MUTI AND THE VIENNA PHILHARMONIC Chronicle of a Triumph

## MUSEUMS

60 TRIESTE The Magnificent World of Carlo Schmidl

## CD &amp; DVD

63 OPERA LIVE French Composers

## EVENTS

64 RAINA KABAIVANSKA A Party for the Diva

## OPERA STARS IN AMERICA

10 MARIO DEL MONACO 10 Years of Glory  
 68 MARIO DEL MONACO Giuseppe Di Stefano and the States

## CALENDAR

80 PROGRAM by Aurora Alba

# Continuum

By Steve Acunto

Visitors to Milan will take pleasure in noting the restored front of La Scala finished in November including a beautiful heavenly blue, most imaginative coloring, following 240 days of work. The restoration of the work on Giuseppe Piermarini's masterpiece refigured the so-called Apollo, which today appears along the building's roof facing via Verdi. Piermarini was chosen by Maria Teresa back in 1778 for this historic undertaking; his design concepts have better than withstood the tests of time.

---

*La Scala has announced that it will open the season December 7 with Lady Macbeth of Mtensk. Many have raised their eyebrows over this choice for a gala opening night, but we think the opera might surprise skeptics and actually send home an affirmation of the theater itself as a creative ground with few boundaries, although not as guard rail free as the Met.*

---

---

*In New York, The Metropolitan Opera has announced it's 2025 2026 season which will be a strong mix of classics together with a continued innovations of new composers and new works. It is very satisfying for traditional subscribers to note that the opera house will repeat the operas Turandot. Tristan and Isolde, Andrea Chenier, Madama Butterfly and other customary best sellers that will give singers a chance to improve upon historical precedents..or not!*

---

A new work, Innocence, has drawn quite a bit of interest as has Opening Night choice: The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay, based upon a Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Michael Chabon set in pre WWII and involving the rise of Nazism and opposition to it.

The Met's gargantuan sized budget and its traditions call upon the management and staff to enliven patron interest, ticket buyer interest, and to spur regularly its relations with funding sources of all types. We cannot help but admire the sheer vitality of effort that goes into producing a Met season. Its impact on the city economy, on thousands of artists and on the very art form itself is immeasurable. Whether the formula is sustainable under the current structure is a question that will be answered only with time. Fact is, operating deficits always plague artistic institutions, and, in the world of music, enterprises that offer ranges of cacophonous, silly, unbridled self expression by individuals the content of whose expressions is simply not worth hearing or knowing gives the world audiences for inferior artistic efforts, utterly predictable redundant and hollow Broadway shows and sound or noise in place of music. It seems that the junk is winning precisely at a time when our society needs a lift, a sense of its origins and its artistic patrimony. This should not imply snobbisme or elitism, but simply a need for a balance among offerings to the public, no matter how challenging it might be to muster the patience to have a complete experience with an opera, such as Tristan and Isolde. In an age of Taylor Swift that aesthetic climb may seem impossible, but I am given hope recalling that a good friend showed me a photograph of a 1933 gathering at an opera house in Italy, which featured most of the individuals in formal dress with their well coiffed hair- all white and gray -unavoidably prominent. That year, and probably every year before and after, there have been speculators holding that the opera was a dying art since it appealed to senior adults, the wealthy, the educated and the academically capable.

While the average Italian shoemaker, German train conductor or French baker during the 1930s would argue that elite was not a necessary descriptor of the art, today it has become a bit more evident. But opera lovers must ask the question: so what? Same is true for most golfing, first class air, travel, many vacation places, hotels, restaurants, and clothiers

So what?

---

*One great advantage the opera has is that its subject matter endures in the soul far longer than obtaining a cabin cruiser large enough to invade a foreign country, of taking one's family to Disney World for a week - pure penance - or having a gourmet dinner at a five star restaurant for the cost of a small automobile - at least one would hope it would endure.*

---

The art form stands as a consumable with a long life for its advocates and clientele, an experience actually offered to anyone, anywhere regardless of wealth.

And while appeals to new audiences generally do not go very well and while pandering to ethnic groups or interest groups has also proved to be futile, the Opera still works for those willing to work hard and to combine intellect and emotion to experience its greatness.

My first look at the new season brought back that sense of a motus animi continuum.

'Continuum' may be the key word in that Latin expression.

Enjoy.

**SA**



TEATRO LIRICO DI CAGLIARI  
FONDAZIONE

Lirica&Balletto  
2024-2025

# La Wally

Alfredo Catalani

dramma lirico in quattro atti



aprile

24 · 26 · 27 · 29 · 30

maggio

2 · 3 · 4

*maestro concertatore e direttore* Lü Jia

Orchestra e Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari

*maestro del coro* Giovanni Andreoli

*regia, scene, costumi e luci* Massimo Pizzi Gasparon Contarini

nuovo allestimento del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari

Biglietteria del Teatro Lirico  
tel. 070 4082230 - 070 4082249

 #teatroliricodicagliari  
[www.teatroliricodicagliari.it](http://www.teatroliricodicagliari.it)



SARDEGNA



On the occasion of the 190th anniversary of the birth of Vincenzo Bellini, our magazine relies on Maurizio Modugno to outline the portrait of Amina, the protagonist of *La Sonnambula*, while Giuliano Gallone proceeds to delve into the psychology of the composer.

# The Infinite Pain of the Melody

by Maurizio Modugno

In the grand palace of melodramatic theatre between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there exists a *galerie des glaces*—certainly less glorious than that of Versailles, yet perhaps more evocatively adorned by a gallery of feminine faces: many of which unmistakably bear the common expression of abandonment, melancholy, unwept tears, disorientation, and at times, the total eclipse of reason. Yet these marks never mar their delicate beauty—instead, they add a furrow of suffering, faint or profound, and awaken in the observer a subtle sense of remorse.

They are Cecchina, or *The Good Girl*; Nina, or *The Madwoman for Love*; Angelina and Ninetta, *Lodoïska*, *Ophélie* and *Constance*, *Linda* and *Lucia*, *Imogene*, *Elvira*, and *Amina*; and they will become *Lady Macbeth*, *Desdemona*, *Marguerite*, and *Anita la Navarraise*. They journey from the triumph of virtue to bloodied hands, from helpless wanderings through valleys and castles to churches and prisons where their irrepressible delirium echo. Among these many potential patients of Dr. Freud, a particular tenderness—longstanding and not ours alone—is reserved for that “sleepwalker” who makes her pathological state the very title of Vincenzo Bellini’s seventh opera: *La sonnambula*, set to Felice Romani’s deft libretto.

It is not for us to recount here the opera’s brief compositional history, nor how the aborted *Hernani*, silenced at birth by censorship, was partially transfigured into it; nor how many elder and younger sisters this work may have on both sides of the Alps. What matters is to look at who Bellini originally composed the role of the Swiss maiden for—and secondly, at the singer who, however briefly, captured the composer’s artistic and human fascination like perhaps no other. And from these, as interpretation has ever revealed composition for us, to glean the intentions behind this most unorthodox of Bellini’s characters.

*La sonnambula* premiered at Milan’s Teatro Carcano on March 6, 1831, with Giuditta Pasta and Giovanni Battista Rubini, and met with undeniable success. We do not know how deliberate the choice of Pasta was—accustomed as she was to grand tragic roles—for a part rooted, albeit distantly, in the “ingén-



Portrait of Giuditta Pasta, formerly Amina

ue” of *pièces à sauvetage* or the *semiseria* tradition. It is true that Rossini had chosen a contralto from opera seria, Teresa Belloc, for *La gazza ladra*. Likewise, Donizetti would write for Luigia Abbada—another former dramatic contralto—in *La figlia del reggimento*.

Of Pasta, whose contralto origins are no secret, it was said that

her “middle and low registers were naturally meager, muffled [...] and even her articulation difficult: yet she enunciates with clarity, for through sheer artistry she insists on being above all a dramatic interpreter. [...] Her voice, however, was capable of expressing the most intense passions, accompanied by physical gestures previously unknown on the lyric stage.” (Carlo Ritorni, *Lessons on the Composition of Every Poem and Every Opera Related to Music*, Milan, 1841). Stendhal, too, praised “those veiled and, so to speak, stifled sounds that render with such strength and truth certain moments of profound agitation and passionate anguish.”

It was common practice in the early 1800s for opera’s great divas—“prima donnas” or, later, “absolute”—to don the garb of village maidens, much like queens and courtesans of the ancien régime play-acting in pastourelles, comédies larmoyantes, and mezzo carattere pieces. The pure lyric or light soprano was, at the time, a “seconda donna” and rarely emerged from minor theaters with lighter repertoires (opéra-comique and vaudeville). It would be the late nineteenth century—as we well know—that emancipated the “Liberty-style coloratura” in dramatic coloratura roles: though such readings are fundamentally inauthentic.

This is why Amina’s entrance aria, “Come per me sereno”—framed by chorus and orchestra with those prominently placed horns—does not feel like a childlike epiphany, but rather the awakening of a woman to life, one of innocent yet vibrant sensuality. And still, she is traversed by a vein—if not already morbid, at least deeply sensitive and secretly sorrowful. Bellini’s melodic outpouring is never without a latent melancholic inflection, never without a shadow, past or imminent. Entrusting this role to a voice of tragic weight and timbre invites the listener into a sonic contemplation of a “sublime pathos” that resonates all the more when underscoring the line’s descents into the lower register or emphasizing words in the text that suggest Amina’s inner wounds have only just begun to heal. The embroidery of increasingly dense ornamentation over a flowing line gives the character a weightless grace, an élévation that makes her seem to drift into an unreal world—perhaps a dream. A non-place that will become her natural domain.

Amina’s emotional protagonism is affirmed in Elvino’s andante sostenuto, “Prendi, l’anel ti dono,” in which she repeatedly intervenes, transforming it into a duet and then a brief ensemble that closes the scene. This pattern continues in Scene Seven, where—after a stunned exchange with Elvino—even his “Son geloso del zefiro errante” is counterpointed by her, turning it into a fleeting duet of reconciliation.

Yet it is Scene Eleven of Act I and Scene Three of Act II that weave together a knot of torn feelings, provoking foundational musical and dramatic inventions. The somnambulistic episode, the awakening, the anguish at the false accusations—these gradually implode within Amina’s clear and delicate soul, placing her at the center like a defendant on trial, dazed by favor



Maria Callas, Amina directed by Visconti, at La Scala

and disgrace, sorrowful and crushed. Like Violetta at the end of the party scene in *La Traviata*, by a Verdi who clearly had not forgotten *La sonnambula*. Elvino’s act of ripping away her ring, and the sudden wilting of the “gentle violet,” rupture the girl’s unconscious understanding of cause and effect (innocence vs. accusation, lack of memory vs. inexplicable consequences), triggering a fearful fracture in reason and a (perhaps) momentary entry into the corridor of madness. Indeed, a dream world emerges as the only possible refuge.

Federico Forconi writes eloquently: “The composer expands with such intensity the weeping of the innocent protagonist over the little bouquet given by Elvino, that it becomes the opera’s emotional summit. Once again, an inseparable connection is achieved. [...] Amina and the flower are one; thus, they must share the same fate: one afflicted, the other withered, both crushed by suffering that clashes violently with their purity and is only deepened by it. A few measures earlier, as she reaches for the ring that is no longer there, the clarinets recall the melody of ‘Prendi, l’anel ti dono,’ soon replaced by the flute hinting at ‘Ah! vorrei trovar parole’—perhaps the mu-



The end of the opera  
in a period print

sical moment of greatest distance between the young woman and her beloved. [...] That the drama arises from the clash between these two themes is not itself new. In this sense, *La sonnambula* follows in the tradition of *Cecchina* and *Nina*. What is original and masterful is the way this conflict is portrayed. Where eighteenth-century works used a new pathos and the theme of madness, Bellini and Romani instead rely on a precise dramaturgical strategy condensed into two scenic objects. During Amina's lament over the bouquet, Elvino intervenes twice with phrases supported by the oboe. A gesture the librettist had placed in the *tempo di mezzo*—but which the composer moves to the *cantabile*. [...] Elvino then physically enters her dream, musically and scenically. It is here that he can return the ring, and the chorus, waking her, sings 'Viva Amina!' as at the opera's opening, thus reviving the wedding celebration." (Program notes for La Fenice Opera House, Venice, 2012)

Let us add, without doubt, that Amina's vocal line—in the desolate recitative "Oh! Se una volta sola," the heart-wrenching lament "Ah! Non credea mirarti," and the exuberant cabaletta "Ah! Non giunge"—is far from conventional. The *andante cantabile* (which, let us be clear, should be read as *lento*) sits centrally in the *tessitura*, but flows from note to note with a liquidity comparable only to Chopin's *Nocturnes*. After the break marked by "Potria il pianto mio" (where the "or" suggests meandering *coloratura*), and the return to "Ah! Non credea,"



Amina's loneliness  
in a modern setting

Bellini now explicitly writes *lento* and introduces embellishments that rise and fall as if weightless.

The return to reality—ushered in by Rodolfo, Elvino, and the chorus—is immediately repelled by Amina, who "covers her eyes with her hands: 'Oh, heavens! Where am I? What do I see? Ah! For mercy's sake, do not wake me!'"

Henriette Sontag, Amina,  
in a 19th century lithograph



# On the psychologist's couch Bellini or Nostalgia (new observations)

by Giuliano Gallione\*

**L**et us resume here, to lead the discussion toward more challenging but also more intriguing goals, the theme of nostalgia in Bellini, now framed in a way more capable of capturing the messages—conscious or not—that our composer sent to us in that thirty-year stretch of the 1800s, a period that saw all the rational certainties of the previous century overturned, opening up—to us, yes, to his heirs—a new world soon to be inhabited by the unheard-of. Literally. Nostalgia has become fertile ground for philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience (intentionally excluding religion, art, and all other forms of human culture).

Is nostalgia an organic fact? One of the many responses to environmental stimuli? Or is it one of the psyche's answers to what was right, or beautiful, or necessary? A value judgment, in short, within an imperfect cognitive system that tries to analyze its own components?

A study of Bellinian nostalgia forces us to return to the mind-body dualism on one hand, and on the other, to a biological vision of the body and a cognitive conception of the mind.

But if we examine carefully the role of nostalgia in Bellini's opera, we find certain responses that, in their own way, comfort and console us.

Amina—the great archetypal embodiment of nostalgia that becomes a dream, and within that dream, aches with the very nostalgia that weighs upon her waking life (how vast, how profound is Bellini's musical complexity!)—Amina, as we were saying, in relation to her own body, becomes nostalgia made flesh, a phenomenon transfor-

med into melody, and thus into logos.

The two Aminas—the one who dreams and the one who moves through reality while dreaming—express the full complexity of the nostalgia phenomenon, making the self-other dynamic inseparable. I is another, Rimbaud wrote in those same years. And he was right. But Bellini goes further: the great invention of nostalgia embodied both in the dream and in the tangible world leads us to the threshold of a mystery that was already beginning to emerge into consciousness—and which remains our question today:

Who am I? Who was I?

Who is the Other? Who were they?

The imperfect tense of nostalgia (and of the question itself) lends both weight and dimension to the inquiry, enriching it with an anthropological mystery we are only now bold enough to explore, projecting ourselves forward:

Who was I? Why does it pain me to be what I once was? What could I become if I let go of nostalgia?

We do not yet have meaningful examples of important melodies composed by AI, but it would be interesting to hear arias of nostalgia composed by one who has no past, only a future—one who can perhaps perceive only vague, residual emotions of nostalgia.

Let us hold dear our *Sonnambula*, who, for quite some time still, will return us—each time we listen—to ourselves, and to our cursed, blessed nostalgia.

*\*Psychotherapist*



The melancholy of Lake Como, where Bellini composed **La Sonnambula**

T

Stagione  
2025

R



BCPT

# La bohème

GIACOMO PUCCINI

4.6.10.12  
aprile

direttore  
RICCARDO BISATTI

regia  
MARIALUISA BAFUNNO

FILARMONICA  
DI PARMA

CORO DEL TEATRO  
REGIO DI PARMA

nuovo allestimento  
in coproduzione  
TEATRO REGIO DI PARMA  
OPERALOMBARDIA  
ITEATRI DI REGGIO EMILIA



Il programma completo è su  
[teatroregioparma.it](http://teatroregioparma.it)

  
TEATRO REGIO  
PARMA

P

# Onegin Lacks a Soul



by Giancarlo Landini

“**T**he heart’s shatterings”—these are the words of one of the protagonists in *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov. For Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, who in one of his letters criticized *Aida*, the torments of an Ethiopian princess were counterfeit currency. The heart’s shatterings, on the other hand, are hard cash—real and resonant. A theme (that of love and impossible love) to be explored, guided by Pushkin’s novel in verse which the Composer himself, along with Konstantin Shilovsky, transforms into seven lyrical scenes, spread across three acts, uneven in length—the first lasting as long as the other two combined.

The core of the dramaturgy, then, lies in the lyrical self and its unfathomable, often inextricable tangles: the whims of the heart, its flickering, which music—more than any other art—can reveal.

But all this would need—no, demands—a direction that goes far beyond dutiful professionalism, proper exposition, and the textbook clarity of Timur Zangiev, supported by La Scala’s excellent Orchestra and Chorus, prepared by Alberto Malazzi. Zangiev is good, very good (perhaps)... provided one is willing to forgo the heart’s shatterings, the plunges of this music, the nostalgia of this song, the contrast between open melody and a new, original declamation.

To express the heart’s flickering, Tchaikovsky invents a vocality all his own, offering Tatiana and Onegin a melodic declamation that pairs with Puccini’s recitar cantando. It molds itself to the word and decisively distances itself from both Italian and French opera. But perhaps to fully experience all this, something more is required than Zangiev’s conducting—especially if one has not come to La Scala as a tourist, dressed out of place, taking selfies and toasting at the buffet.

One must understand—and we’re certain the new superintendent does (unlike the outgoing one)—that La Scala is not a repertory

---

*Milan: the new production of Evgenij Onegin, directed by Mario Martone, disappoints*

---

house, and hopefully—so I dare to hope—it never will be. Each performance is, or should be, an event. Which is why routine, however refined, meant for an audience that consumes music rather than lives it, must be shunned.

On stage, things don’t improve. Our protagonist, alias Tatiana, is Aida Garifullina, who certainly has the bearing and figure for the role. But I must confess, I’ve never quite understood the international acclaim this otherwise capable soprano enjoys. She sings with care, but without those “heart shatterings”—without chiaroscuro, vocal force, authoritative high notes (especially in the finale, to underscore the steely nature of the girl-turned-princess), and without the dynamic range to carve out the Letter Scene with the nuances that



Scenes from **Evgenij Onegin** at La Scala  
(photo by Brescia/Amisano)



correspond to the heart's agitation.

Alexey Markov, a baritone with a penetrating voice, makes for a determined, harsh Onegin—pushed nearly to cynicism by Martone's direction. It's an effective portrayal, but one-dimensional, with his best moment in the long arioso of Act I, Scene III, when he delivers a scathing little lecture to Tatiana. In the finale, though, Onegin ought to be more desperate, more damned—and above all, support the few but crucial high notes the Composer places in the role with more boldness.

The standout is undoubtedly Dmitri Korchak, who rightly receives warm applause after his aria in Act II. Confident singing, fine technique, very clear and expressive phrasing, some excellent chiaroscuro, and skillful use of mezzo voce. But what the role of Lensky—and especially his aria—can truly become, when infused with that authentically Russian singing, where Italian bel canto (welcomed on the soil of the Tsars) marries Tchaikovsky's melodic language, is something only tenors like Ivan Kozlovsky and Sergei Lemeshev can reveal. I suggest the reader seek out their interpretations online.

Dmitry Ulianov's Prince Gremin is decidedly questionable, especially in a theatre that once echoed with the plastic, aristocratic, and passionate singing of Nicolai Ghiaurov in the famed aria of Act III. Surrounding them—with successful ensemble chemistry in Act I—are Alisa Kolosova's widow Larina, Elmina Hasan's Olga, and Julia Gertseva's Filippyevna. Monsieur Triquet was Yaroslav Abaimov, adequately charming in his delightful couplets. Rounding out the cast were Huanhong Li as a guardsman, Oleg Budaratsky as Zaretsky, and Andrzej Glowienka as a peasant.

Mario Martone directs the production, with sets by Margherita Palli, costumes by Ursula Patzak, and lighting by Pasquale Mari. We're faced with yet another "film" of modern stage direction. The action is updated to the twentieth century. The first two acts unfold in a sort of

steppe, to highlight—Martone writes—the natural element. A valid idea. Unfortunately, the house of the widow Larina, a landowner, is a kind of concrete cube—a tram stop shelter, really. Tiny. Perhaps the Bolsheviks have passed through? Judging by the clothing, I'd say yes. All that's left is this sort of garage without a gate. They even eat off a picnic table, they're in such a bad way.

Onegin is an unlikable gentleman who flirts with the girls, somewhere between clerk and corporate manager. The garage also doubles as Tatiana's room, filled with old books like a dusty backroom from *The Name of the Rose*. The Larin family's ball becomes a rustic fair suitable even for Pagliacci: bleacher-like scaffolding, loose choreography, and constant betrayal of the libretto's text—but who even notices anymore?

The duel between Onegin and Lensky is played out as a polite game of Russian roulette: one gun, one bullet. To top it off, the tram shelter and the books spontaneously combust—an (overly simplistic) metaphor for the collapse of Tatiana's dreams, who until now has mistaken novels for reality.

The third act, however, is resolved with a swirl of red curtains representing an aristocratic palace, where people dance as if in a nightclub. From the gallery, a lady tried to suggest there might be some disconnect between the music and staging, but the usual progressives quickly silenced her. In any case, here the direction achieves its one—at least for me—valid moment in an otherwise misaligned production: the stage empties and darkens, and Tatiana is slowly pulled into the shadows—a powerful metaphor for her choice to extinguish every last heart-shattering ache.

Not bad. But not nearly enough.

*2 March*

---

# A Stellar Juliette

by Sandro Compagnone

Strange but true: *Roméo et Juliette* by Charles Gounod had never before been staged at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. And yet, it's an opera of utterly delightful listening—filled with pages practically built for mid-scene applause, where the French composer unfurls the full breadth of his melodic gifts. This gap has finally been closed with a production that premiered a year and a half ago in Bilbao, featuring the very same two leads from that debut.

But make no mistake—this show has one dazzling, sovereign queen, and her name is Nadine Sierra. It's almost a shame to say it, because the rest of the cast (including conductor and director) are certainly worthy of high praise. But what can you do? When the American soprano launches into “Amour, ranime mon courage”—a spectacular and treacherous aria—you hold your breath, suspended by the sheer beauty of her voice and the commanding presence she exudes on stage.

Sierra indulges in a charming bit of bravado: the final high note, which she has clipped short in other performances, is here sustained all the way through the orchestral close, unleashing a storm of ovations we haven't witnessed in years. It practically forces—so to speak—an electrifying encore. Yet her entire performance was sublime, beginning with the famous “Je veux vivre”: the fullness and radiance of her tone, the interpretive sensitivity, the commanding brilliance of her high notes, the velvety smoothness of her phrasing, the spot-on dramatic inflections. A velvet fabric woven with a thousand hues—from shadowy to blazing—where the wealth of overtones gives her voice a heat that stirs the blood. And not to mention her acting prowess: perhaps a directorial choice, or perhaps pure instinct, but the childlike awkwardness with which she enacts her wedding to Romeo is utterly endearing. A great, truly great soprano. Javier Camarena also deserves his share of applause. As Roméo,

## *Naples: Nadine Sierra lights up the local world premiere of Gounod's Roméo and Juliette*

the Mexican tenor displays gleaming assurance (we'll overlook a few slightly unfocused high notes early on, likely just warming up) and a tenderness completely in tune with his character. His vocal timbre is transparent and luminous, and whatever solidity might be lost in favor of refinement is more than compensated by his piercing clarity—his voice slices through the hall like a blade.

Unreserved praise also goes to Gianluca Buratto (a noble, burnished Frère Laurent), Alessio Arduini (Mercutio), and Marco Ciaponi (Tybalt)—superb antagonists who delivered precise and authorita-

Scenes from **Roméo and Juliette** at Teatro San Carlo (Photo Luciano Romano)





tive performances. Solid support from Mark Kurmanbayev as Capulet, Yunho Kim as the Duke of Verona, Antimo Dell'Omo as Paris, Sun Tianxuefei as Benvolio, and Maurizio Bove as Gregory. An extra round of applause for the expressive Gertrude of Annunziata Vestri and the sprightly Stéphanò of Caterina Piva. The chorus, under Fabrizio Cassi, was excellent.

On the podium, conductor Sesto Quatrini led a finely detailed and emotionally engaged interpretation, clearly expressed through the eloquence of his left hand—the hand of feeling. Unforgettable was the look he gave to the owner of a cellphone that began to ring right at the start of Sierra's encore—a single glare that could turn Medusa to stone.

Giorgia Guerra's direction appears minimal at first glance: Federica Parolini's set is composed solely of a looming concrete wall and a monolith-tower that cleverly transforms from Juliet's balcony into

the lovers' tombstone. But thanks to the evocative video projections by Imaginarium Studio, which conjure stylized architecture and star-strewn skies, and to Fiammetta Baldiserrì's ever-subtle lighting, the environment becomes a kind of magical bubble, where nothing more is needed. The vivid costumes by Lorena Marin are era-appropriate—no leather trench coats or camo fatigues, thankfully, which is always a relief. The stage movement, both of individuals and the ensemble, is meticulously crafted: no gratuitous or frantic action, everything purposeful and well-considered. A performance that lingers in the heart.

In the end, a triumph—there's no laziness in calling it that—greeted all the performers. But for Nadine Sierra, the ovation was nothing short of explosive.

---

*February 15*



СОФИЙСКА ОПЕРА И БАЛЕТ



SOFIA OPERA AND BALLET

24/25

# SOFIA OPERA WAGNER FESTIVAL

26 JUNE – 5 JULY

PREMIERE

## TANNHÄUSER

- 26 JUNE 18:00
- 5 JULY 16:00

## DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN

DAS RHEINGOLD  
• 28 JUNE 18:00

DIE WALKÜRE  
• 29 JUNE 16:00

SIEGFRIED  
• 1 JULY 18:00

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG  
• 3 JULY 18:00



С ПОДДЪРЖКАТА НА  
WITH THE SUPPORT OF  
  
MOTO-PHONE

СОФИЙСКА ОПЕРА И БАЛЕТ  
SOFIA OPERA AND BALLET  
ул. „Врабча“ № 1 | 1 Vrabcha Str.  
+359 2 800 62 66 / 0879 40 76 43  
reservations@operasofia.bg

БАЛЕТИ | TICKETS  
[WWW.OPERASOFIA.BG](http://WWW.OPERASOFIA.BG)  
eventim

МЕДИЙНИ ПАРТНЬОРИ | MEDIA PARTNERS

# Unfit to Live

by Alberto Bazzano

Scenes from **Rigoletto** at the Teatro Regio (Photo by Mattia Gaido)

The new production of *Rigoletto* is entrusted to Leo Muscato, who returns to Turin after his successes with Vivaldi's *Incoronazione di Dario* in 2017 and Paër's *Agnes* in 2019. The Muscato-Parolini-Aymonino trio now tackles a work from the great repertory, offering a compelling and evocative interpretation. The action is relocated to the time of the Belle Époque, a period defined by optimism, progress, and social and cultural prosperity. But this arrow aimed at the future hovers over a precipice.

On stage, representing a world that glitters on the surface, yet is fundamentally on the brink of collapse, is a large undulating wall made of distorting mirrors, rotating on a platform to define the locations of the action. The environment, in fact, could be just one—Leo Muscato warns in the program notes; “it is what happens inside the characters that makes us perceive it differently each time.”

*Rigoletto* has two faces: the public and the private. Publicly, the Verdi character is a jester at the service of the city's most powerful and wealthy man. Privately, he is a father in need of affection, living for his daughter. The house, where he retreats after work, is a small corner of serenity for him. Here, he finds Gilda. In the first act, their encounter is, not coincidentally, introduced by a festive melody. But soon, the tone darkens. It shifts to a minor key as soon as it touches *Rigoletto*'s unhappiness. And it is on this unhappiness that the director places his emphasis.

*Rigoletto* is a frustrated, deformed man. His body is marked by a hump, psoriasis, and alopecia. At first, when he appears on stage, he wears a bulky, worn-out coat. On his head, a wide-brimmed hat. The clothes he wears serve to conceal a physicality he is ashamed of. He is full of anger and resentment toward others. He constantly

## *Turin: Leo Muscato makes Rigoletto the brother of the antiheroes of Italo Svevo*

broods, and when he acts, he falters. In the end, *Rigoletto* is inept. Like Alfonso Nitti and Emilio Brentani, the antiheroes from Italo Svevo's novels, to whom the Belle Époque environment alludes. In this version, the jester's home is not even a peaceful refuge, as the music might suggest. *Rigoletto* lives alone, for Gilda grew up in a convent surrounded by many unfortunate women like her. The nuns





take care of her. And it is in the church annexed to the convent, amid candles and the image of the Blessed Virgin, that Gilda meets the man who presents himself as the student Gualtier Maldé. Eight years have passed since Nicola Luisotti last conducted the ensembles of the Regio. It was 2017, with *Pagliacci* by Leoncavallo on the program. He offers an intense reading of Verdi's score, and the Orchestra of the Regio supports him. He pays close attention to the agogic and musical characterization of the situations. He breathes with the characters on stage and supports their singing. For instance, in the opening of "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata," the succession of sixteenth notes entrusted to the strings is an explosion



that musically translates the despair underlying *Rigoletto's* invective. Among the singers, Giuliana Gianfaldoni stands out as Gilda, with a secure and finely crafted vocal quality. One appreciates her attention to detail and the clarity of her sound. Among the high points of her performance is the rendition of "Caro nome." Here, her work is admirable. The dream of love is conveyed through transparent notes that thin out in the flourishes, musically translating the movements of the soul. In the cadence, with great effect, the voice dissolves and enters an instrumental realm that recalls the flute.

*Rigoletto* is the Romanian baritone George Petean. On stage, he is convincing. He brings to life a tormented character, particularly suffering when Gilda recounts the outrage she endured. The instrument is there, though the phrasing could be more refined—too often relying on a heavy accentuation. His singing is secure, but the upper range is slightly rough around the edges, especially in the first act. Later, the performance improves, and both "Cortigiani" and "Si, vendetta" are supported by correct breathing.

Piero Pretti is a good Duke of Mantua. However, his timbre does not seduce, which limits him. His main strengths are energy, boldness, and the clear brilliance of his high notes. Goderdzi Janelidze is a suitably sinister Sparafucile with a solid low register.

Martina Belli proves to be the ideal interpreter for the role of Maddalena. She has the physical presence and vocality suited to the part. Alongside the leads, Emanuele Cordaro (Monterone), Siphokazi Molteno (Giovanna), Janusz Nosek (Marullo), Daniel Umbelino (Borsa), Tyler Zimmermann (Ceprano), Albina Tonkikh (Contessa di Ceprano), and Chiara Maria Fiorani (Paggio) also perform.

---

February 28

# A Woman without Peace

by Roberto Mori

*Verona: Catalani's Wally at the Filarmonico*



**T** Among the Italian composers of the late 19th century who assimilated the lessons of German Romanticism, Alfredo Catalani (1854–1893) occupies a singular position. Verdi regarded him as a mere imitator of Wagner and referred to *La Wally* as “the German opera of the Lucchese.” A harsh judgment, yet undoubtedly more realistic than Mahler’s surprising praise: “the most beautiful Italian opera I have ever conducted.”

Composed to a libretto by Luigi Illica, based on the modest novel *Die Geier-Wally* (1875) by Wilhelmine von Hillern, *Wally* was staged at La Scala in 1892. It is an opera in which delicate atmospheres coexist with dramatic outbursts, Wagnerian chromatics and echoes of Verdi, but also harmonic devices that anticipate Puccini. While the rhythms, especially in the choruses and dances, are lively and vigorous, the overall writing bears a predominantly lyrical imprint, and it reveals a lack of theatrical sense (which explains the divergent opinions of Verdi and Mahler). At the center of this flimsy and disjointed tale is a solitary protagonist, restless and always on the run: she abandons her father, schemes a murder (which she immediately regrets), surrenders herself to a man who disgusts her, and ends up committing suicide. Both she and the other characters possess a sketchy psychology worthy of 1980s/90s Brazilian soap operas or, if you prefer, today’s Turkish TV series. There are, however, some very beautiful musical moments, such as the two preludes to Acts III and IV and the famous “Ebben, ne andrò lontana,” but in terms of theatricality and dramatic credibility, Catalani’s most famous work remains a weak opera. It is clear that in order to support such a work, suitable protagonists are required, particularly a soprano capable of tackling a rather demanding score. When *Wally* was performed in Piacenza, in the same production revived last month by the

Fondazione Arena at the Filarmonico in Verona, the role of the title was taken by Saioa Hernández, who possessed all the vocal and expressive qualities required by the part. In this instance, however, we heard Eunhee Maggio, a Korean soprano with a voice that was not particularly captivating, lacking resonance in the middle-low register but well-projected in the high range.

Maggio sang with great commitment, bearing the weight of the role overall, but with a notable coldness in her interpretation, leaving much to be desired in terms of vocal and scenic charisma. Carlo Ventre did not shine for his superb timbre (especially in the medium range) or psychological depth. Despite some forced vocal emissions, his Hagenbach nonetheless stood out for its robust sound, fairly resonant high notes, and a certain interpretive vigor. In the role of the antagonist Gellner, baritone Youngjun Park imposed himself with a beautiful, resonant voice, solid technique, perfect diction, and an immersive phrasing. Well-constructed in characterization and vo-



Scene from **La Wally** at Teatro Filarmonico (Photo Ennevi)



cally incisive was the character of Stromminger, the domineering father played by Gabriele Sagona. Eleonora Bellocci was also good, portraying the en travesti role of Walter with clear and light vocalism, aptly handling the agility passages in the edelweiss canzonetta. Completing the cast were Marianna Mappa, an effective Afra, and Romano Dal Zovo, a lackluster Pedone di Schnals.

From the podium, Antonio Pirolli performed well in the complex task of conducting the orchestra, providing a solid narrative and a balanced interaction with the singers on stage (though less so with the chorus at the beginning of Act I). In his reading, passionate outbursts alternated with lyrical retreats, dramatic sweeps with delicate moments, skillfully delineating the opera's different atmospheres, from the idyllic to the stormy. The production presented in Verona, where the opera had been absent for over a century, was the same one seen in 2017 in Emilia-Romagna theaters and in Lucca. A production in which Nicola Berloffia reinterprets the opera, re-

casting the story from the early 19th century to the 1940s, giving it a cinematic, almost film noir style. The scenic design by Fabio Cherstich unfolds on a slanted plane, suggesting instability and tension, while in the background, the silhouette of a snow-covered mountain stands out, with the lighting by Valerio Tiberi accentuating the contrast between external coldness and inner unease. Berloffia's direction, in turn, emphasizes the violence and rawness of the story, underlining the brutality of almost all the characters. Even Wally herself doesn't inspire much sympathy: she is depicted as a greedy and determined woman, capable of extreme actions, and alien to any romantic suggestion. The audience was not particularly large, but the reception was cordial.

*February 19*



# A sad *Rigoletto* and a Splendid Anna

by Davide Annachini

Scene from **Rigoletto** at the Teatro del Maggio Fiorentino (Photo Michele Monasta)

**T**he *Rigoletto* at the Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino was a revival of the production by Davide Livermore (sets by Giò Forma, costumes by Gianluca Falaschi, lighting by Antonio Castro, video by D-Wok) that first premiered in 2021 during the height of the COVID pandemic, initially for a single streamed performance and later, months later, in a reopened theater for just three shows. Thus, this was a production that had not yet been fully exploited, but even in this revival, directed by Stefania Grazioli (with Gian Maria Sposito assisting with the costumes, Fabio Rossi for lighting, and Elena Barsotti for choreography), the grim and raw essence of the staging remained. Set in the underworld of organized crime in a non-Italian metropolis, everything oozed death, reckoning, as well as degradation and squalor. In this context, *Rigoletto*'s house became a sordid underground laundromat, and Sparafucile's hideout a luxurious brothel—an interpretation that, in itself, could be plausible in a reimagining of the opera, if the director's approach hadn't excessively favored an expressionist style that felt at odds with Verdi's poetic intentions, coupled with some decidedly unoriginal ideas that we would have gladly done without. One such moment was the "Caro nome," where Gilda pulled a sheet out of the washing machine to use it as a bridal veil in a fantasized wedding scene with Gualtier Maldé; even more questionable was the simulated fellatio by Maddalena during "le mie pene consolar" from the Duke, which is already conveyed in the music without needing to be explicitly depicted, especially for younger audiences.

The heavy and overstated style of the production found no redemption even in the performance, which had its strong point in the incisive and theatrical conducting of Stefano Ranzani. His leadership of the Orchestra and the Chorus of the Maggio (the latter well-pre-

---

*Florence: Rigoletto returns to the stage,  
directed by Livermore*

---





pared by Lorenzo Fratini) was solid, but at times he had to contend with voices in need of more spacious and accommodating tempi, if not occasionally clumsy, as was the case with the tenor's disarming mistake in the offstage reprise of "Donna è mobile." Celso Albello, for example, revealed that the role of the Duke now feels somewhat tight for him, due to a certain vocal heaviness that prevents the necessary lightness in the bright passages and, at the same time, the smooth emission in the legato required to tackle a difficult aria like "Parmi veder le lagrime"—which he ultimately brought to a close with noticeable strain—despite his explosive high notes, such as the B-flat at the end of the duet with Gilda or the natural high C in the cabaletta. A similar comment could be extended to Olga Peretyatko, whose voice perhaps no longer fully meets the demands of the role, either due to a certain impoverishment of tone or a certain harshness in the extreme high notes (as revealed by the repeated climbs to high C in the reprise of "Veglia o donna" or, even more, the cadenza in "Caro nome"). Yet, the intelligence of the performer—through a refined use of colors in the softer dynamics—managed to redeem these limitations, presenting a character whose psychological evolution was vivid and undoubtedly aligned with Verdi's concept of a Gilda that is less of a doll and more of a woman. The Spanish-American baritone Daniel Luis de Vicente—who recently arrived in Italy—was the curiosity of this edition and, ultimately, the most interesting and applauded element. Though a bit rough in the lower register, his voice showed great range, the ability to sing both loudly and softly, sustain long phrases, and comfortably reach high notes. He tackled the demanding role of Rigoletto with authority, his generosity perhaps needing more careful monitoring but clearly establishing himself as the authentic protagonist, which, with time, he may deepen even further into a more personal and sensitive in-

terpretation.

As for the rest, the cast included Eleonora Filipponi's lackluster Maddalena, whose vocal technique lacked the projection needed to stand out in the Quartet and in several moments of her role, Alessio Cacciamani's incisive but somewhat lightweight Sparafucile, Manuel Fuentes' excellent Monterone, the functional Giovanna of





Anna Netrebko in Concert at the Teatro del Maggio Fiorentino (Photo Michele Monasta)



Janetka Emilia Hosco, followed by Yurii Strakhov's Marullo, Daniele Falcone's Borsa, Huigang Liu's Ceprano, Letizia Bertoldi's Contessa di Ceprano, Egidio Massimo Naccarato's Usciere, and Aloisa de Nardis' Paggio.

The audience, finally present in large numbers for such a popular title, responded with some warmth, though they let several famous moments of the opera pass in complete silence.

### Anna Netrebko's Stunning Recital

In between Rigoletto performances, a recital by Anna Netrebko took place, not to be missed, as it was the only one planned in Italy during the Russian soprano's European tour. She was accompanied by the excellent pianist Pavel Nebolsin and mezzo-soprano Elena Maximova. The program, centered heavily on music from her homeland, alternated romances by Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Rachmaninoff with operatic pieces from the Italian repertoire (Bellini, Cilea, Leoncavallo) and foreign composers (Strauss, Delibes, Prokofiev, and again Rimsky-Korsakov). In an evening full of grace, but especially in a repertoire so well-suited to her sensitivity and style, Netrebko showcased a voice still intact in its lyrical qualities and enormous interpretive potential, allowing her to demonstrate an expansive voice that is always soft, velvety, rich in harmonics, seamlessly transitioning from fortes to pianissimos, even in high notes, with absolute ease and precision. This was a stark contrast to her

more recent forays into heavier repertoire. One might regret that this generous and passionate interpreter has swiftly moved past roles like *Gioconda*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Turandot*, and now *Abigaille*, when so many lyric roles could still be explored, as this recital revealed—more so than the rather insignificant *Nedda's* ballad, the charming but not memorable *Adriana's* humble servant, or the intense monologue of *Ariadne*—the cavatina of *Giulietta* from *I Capuleti* was a youthful remake, sung with a sweetness, an enchantment of sound, and an incredible ease in hitting the high, soft notes—truly astonishing for a voice usually engaged in much heavier repertoire.

Beyond her purely vocal performance, which was of absolute beauty, Netrebko's interpretation was equally remarkable—always communicative, passionate, and poetic in the Russian lieder—she also embodied the diva, captivating but never affected, playful in her graceful movements on stage (dressed in a D&G floral ensemble) and, above all, radiant as she offered her singing to an ecstatic audience. She was a delightful partner in duets with Maximova in *Lakmé* and *War and Peace*, and with Nebolsin, who dazzled in his piano solos, including a brilliant *Fantasie-Impromptu* by Chopin. The diva of our times concluded this exceptional Florentine event with the somewhat retro *Non ti scordar di me* by De Curtis, earning a triumph that was, in the end, entirely deserved.

*February 20-21*

# Operetta... what a Passion

by Andrea Merli

**I**n The Giovanni da Udine Theater presents, in its national premiere, a new production by the Associazione Fantasia in Re, directed by Stefano Giaroli, a highly successful version of Die Fledermaus, the masterpiece by Johann Strauss Jr. Die Fledermaus is more of an opera than an operetta, though it retains the spoken parts and comedic, sparkling elements, and it is a challenging work that demands a top-tier cast and orchestral performance. Unconditional praise goes to the versatile, cohesive, and yet precise Orchestra Sinfónica delle Terre Verdiane, especially in the many obbligato passages for solo instruments, as well as to the Coro dell'Opera di Parma, which was excellent for its stage participation as well. Giaroli conducted with vigor and energy, not neglecting to inject sweetness and nostalgia into the concerted "Dui du" of the second act.

The cast was youthful and fresh, with the splendid and brilliant Adele sung by soprano Lina Tsiklauri, the revelation of the evening, and the no less talented Rosalinde performed by soprano Scilla Cristiano, who joined the company at the last minute due to another colleague's absence. Cristiano's voice was pleasant and soaring. The excellent Eisenstein was portrayed by the handsome tenor Alessandro Fantoni, confirming his fine vocal qualities. A charming group of veteran artists included the hilarious Alfred, "tenorissimo" Danilo Formaggi, who not only delivered extraordinary high C's but also showed remarkable comic exuberance as a leading actor. Following him was the priceless, "fluid" Prince Orlovsky, in the masculine interpretation of mezzo-soprano Anna Malavasi, who effortlessly transitioned from seductive Carmen to improbable "macho." Closing the trio was the perfect Frank, sung by tenor Fulvio Massa, whose strong character, ironic flair, and impeccable acting were spot-on.

A special mention goes to the actor-singer Alessandro Brachetti, who

---

*Udine: full success for the new version of the Bat, directed by Stefano Giaroli*

---



played Dr. Falke and, with a clever stage trick, also portrayed the jailer Frosh. In addition to being extremely charming and skillfully differentiating the two roles, he created a compelling performance that immediately established a vital connection with the audience, who happily followed along with roaring laughter, thanks to perfectly timed and well-controlled lines. This success is also due to the dramaturgical revision by Silvia Felisetti, who brought great verve to the role of Ida, Adele's sister under the false name of Galina, an unlikely interpreter of Russian for Prince Orlovsky. Simone Mastria played the lawyer Blind with wit. Rounding out the cast were two talented and elegant dancers: Silvia Caprini and Brenno Simonetta.

The sets and costumes were designed by Artemio Cabassi, a symbol of elegance and a guarantee of good taste, a magician in choosing colors and fabrics for costumes that would be an understatement to call simply "costumes."

If we must find a fault, it's the inevitable amplification for a traveling company. While well-balanced and useful for supporting the spoken part in a theater with 1200 seats, it was certainly not needed for the more established voices. But, in these cases, one must make the best of necessity.

Next, the 6th of April will bring Cin Ci Là, the operetta by Lombardo and Ranzato, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year!

---

March 2

| Immagies of the **Bat**



Di Erica Culiati



# A Distressing Journey into the Afterlife

The Last Performance in Trieste of *Il Trittico*, New Production by the Fondazione Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi in Co-Production with the Fondazione Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Absent for 51 Years from the Trieste Stages. It must be said that the three hours and forty minutes flew by thanks to the conducting of Maestro Francesco Ivan Ciampa. It almost felt like listening to a surround sound recording, so perfect was the performance. The maestro was, unsurprisingly, greeted with thunderous applause.

Pier Francesco Maestrini, starting from the premise that Puccini initially wanted to write three one-act operas titled *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, conceived the direction through the lens of Dante's Divine Comedy, blending in elements of Tim Burton and George A. Romero.

Visually, it was a stunning spectacle, with projections by Nicolas Boni framed by two arches opening onto a rocky wall, a permanent element for all three operas, and the magic of the lighting by Daniele Naldi. Skies shattered by lightning, heavy with clouds foretelling the tragedy that would soon unfold in *Il Tabarro*, or softened by the golden twilight over the ruins of a cloister while the sea crashes against a cliff in *Suor Angelica*.

And it is precisely the latter that, from a directorial standpoint, we liked the most. *Suor Angelica* should represent *Purgatorio*, here immersed in a dreamlike dimension, where Anastasia Bartoli made a magnificent debut in the leading role, crowned by the audience with "brava" and vigorous applause.

Her bright, seductive timbre enchanted the audience, and their empathy would have been even stronger if, during the confrontation with her aunt, the Princess, played flawlessly and coldly (despite

---

*Trieste: Francesco Ivan Ciampa conducts Il Trittico in the Dante-inspired direction by Pier Francesco Maestrini.*

---

being indisposed) by Chiara Mogini, Angelica had addressed her aunt more directly.

Overall, however, the claustrophobic rhythm had its own charm, well supported by the nuns, made up like *Corpse Bride*, from Abbess Giovanna Lanza to Novice Mistress Federica Giansanti, from Irene Celle, Federica Sardella, and Veronika Foia (respectively *Suor Dolcina*, *Suor Genovieffa*, and *Suor Osmina*) to Erica Zulika Benato and Elena Serra (*Suor Infermiera* and *Suora Zelatrice*), the two *Cercatrici*,



Scenes from **Il Trittico** at the Teatro Verdi  
(Photograph by Fabio Parenzan)



Aziza Omarova and Alessandra Gambino, and the lay sisters, Anna Ciprian and Selma Pasternak, all the way to Tatiana Previati, the novice.

Menacing, yet evocative, was the forest of suicides, as in the 13th Canto of the Divine Comedy, although the transformation of Angelica into a tree reminded us of Ovid's vegetal metamorphoses, especially that of Daphne. A disturbing tableau that vanishes in a whirl of light because Angelica's prayer will be heard by the Madonna, who will reunite her with her son.

Hell materializes in *Il Tabarro*. The Seine is the Acheron, Michele (Roman Burdenko, impressive both in this role and in *Gianni Schicchi*) is Charon, the ferryman of lost souls, a tormented figure who wants to regain his wife's love. After this Dantean beginning, the characters of the libretto emerge: rejected souls, damned/forced, from the underworld. A humanity overwhelmed by pain, fatigue, and frustration. Tinca (Enrico Iviglia) who drinks to "drown his sad thoughts", while Giorgetta (Olga Maslova, vocally excellent but somewhat stiff in her acting) no longer loves Michele and steals moments of passion with Luigi (Mikheil Sheshaberidze, passionate in contrast) always fearing to be caught, which, of course, happens.

Chiara Mogini here plays Frugola, with a brilliant voice, while in *Schicchi* she will be a greedy Zita. We also enjoyed tenor Pierluigi D'Aloia, both in the role of the song seller and as Rinuccio in *Schicchi*.

*Gianni Schicchi* was the part we liked the least, set in a world of zombies, dark and distressing. The mischievous theme, like a *commedia dell'arte*, is swallowed up in this world of the undead, which ends with volcanic eruptions and fiery ashes from Sodom and



Gomorrah. Sara Cortolezzi's Lauretta was charming, and all the supporting roles were good.

The costumes by Stefania Scaraggi contrasted with Maestrini's vision, which was overall interesting, very well-crafted, effective, but less convincing in *Schicchi*. Applause and stolen photos with cell phones, as usual.



"Vincerò"  
the Aria Scarf  
from *Turandot*

International shipping from Rome, Italy

Discover

*The Opera Line*

Artist-designed  
100% silk luxury scarves  
by Claudia Palmira

Sold at  
The Met Opera Shop  
and online at [byclu.com](http://byclu.com)



[www.byclu.com](http://www.byclu.com)

# 10 Years of Glory

by Giancarlo Landini

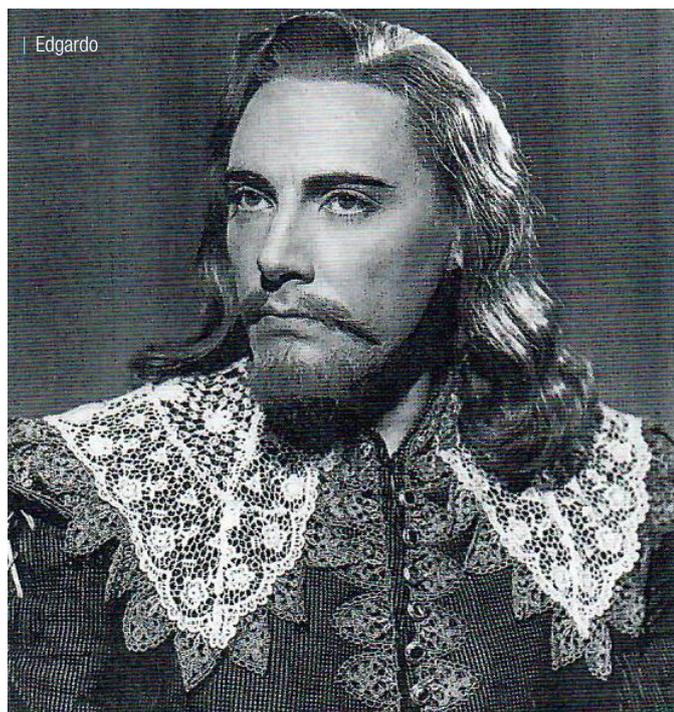
## The debut and the first triumphs

The American experience holds a central place in Mario Del Monaco's career. It begins in 1950, when the young tenor is on the verge of leaving behind a long apprenticeship and becoming one of the most acclaimed artists of the 20th century. Ten years have passed since the start of his true theatrical career (1940). A lot of provincial life and, after the war, a gradual rise to prominence that leads him to make his mark on Italy's major stages, including the Fenice in Venice, the San Carlo in Naples, the Arena in Verona, and more, until his debut at the Piermarini theatre (in December 1945, he already performed *Madama Butterfly* at the Lirico in Milan, with the Scala orchestra, heavily bombed by the Allies). His first appearance at the Met was on November 27, 1949, in *Manon Lescaut*, followed shortly by *Andrea Chénier* with Renata Tebaldi, conducted by Victor De Sabata in commemoration of Umberto Giordano. With *Manon Lescaut*, he made his debut at the Met on November 27. The New York performance follows a busy period filled with commitments. There were appearances in Latin America (where he had been a regular since 1947), including his debut in *Otello* at the Colón Theatre in Buenos Aires on July 30. He also performed at San Francisco's War Memorial (*Aida*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Manon Lescaut*), with these titles later reprised in Los Angeles. Was the debut at the Met successful? Certainly.

Mr. Bing was certainly not impressed by the sacred distinctions

## *Mario Del Monaco at Met*

of critics (everyone does their job). He recognized the charisma of the young Italian tenor and understood that he would be a very important asset for his theater. He proceeded with increasingly tempting contracts to ensure his presence. In essence, the Met's superintendent now found himself with two emerging Italian tenors on his roster: Mario Del Monaco and Giuseppe Di Stefano. *Manon Lescaut* was just a taste. Del Monaco returned to the Met with *Aida* in November 1951; from then until May 1953, his activities were primarily in the United States, with a few summer exceptions at the Arena di Verona and the Terme di Caracalla. In 1953, his return to Italy was a sensation, with the historic Florence production of *La Forza del destino*, conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos with Renata Tebaldi, a fixture in Del Monaco's career. Between 1952 and 1953, numerous new titles were added, including some operas that are not typically associated with Del Monaco: *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Il Trovatore*. He sporadically performed Donizetti's opera from 1941 through the Met performances, in which he bid it farewell, though he later recorded it in recital, singing "Tombe degli avi miei." He kept Verdi's operas in his repertoire for 10 years, from 1947 to 1957, and made a complete recording for Decca in 1956. At the Met, Del Monaco debuted as Manrico in March 1952, when Robert Merrill made his return, having been dismissed by Mr. Bing the previous se-



| Edgardo



| Don Alvaro

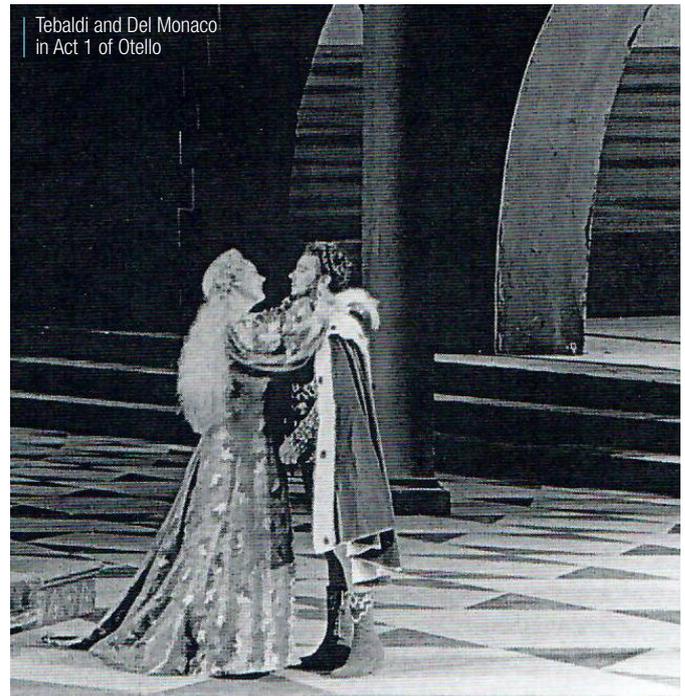
ason for failure to adhere to contractual rules. Critics noted the accuracy of the costumes, the strength of his acting, and did not spare critiques of a singing style that seemed resistant to legato. However, in other sections of the opera, his voice proved its worth. We don't have live recordings of those performances (or at least, I am unaware of any), but the 1957 RAI broadcast edition (which is more interesting than the aforementioned Decca recording) can be listened to attentively, free from the usual prejudices that have often accompanied Del Monaco's work, with some still stubbornly denying his greatness. His exceptional and decidedly unique voice does not naturally bend to legato, but the expressive force emanating from his masculine, noble, and heroic timbre is undeniable, even in a challenging passage like "Ah! Sì ben mio." One is then captivated by his performance of the "Miserere" (a moment in which 19th-century audiences awaited Manrico's turn). Del Monaco sings it with a voice befitting a hero of great fame and misfortune, capable of finding both poignant and virile lyrical accents in the subsequent duet with Azucena, when he sings, "Riposa, o madre."

#### A contested Otello and a superb Alvaro

However, the critics at the Met were not as fond of his first Otello in New York, performed in February 1952 with Eleanor Steber and Leonard Warren, due to the intensity of his interpretation, which, according to critics, strayed from a more complex characterization anchored in Shakespeare. Cecil Smith wrote in *Musical America*:

Mario Del Monaco, who has sung Otello more frequently than any other tenor in Italian and Latin-American productions of Verdi's opera in the last two or three years, appeared in the role for the first time at the Metropolitan in the season's second performance. The cast was otherwise unchanged from that of Feb. 9, and Fritz Stiedry again conducted.

The sheer physical power of his voice, the solidity and clarion ring of his upper tones and the baritone strength of his lower ones, made Mr. Del Monaco seem better equipped by nature to cope with the grueling music than any Metropolitan tenor since Leo Slezak. Although he frequently seemed to be using his voice to the absolute limit of its volume, he did not get tired, and indeed employed more color and refinement of nuance in the last two acts than he had at the beginning. The "Esultate," hurled above the noise of the storm, was truly imposing, and such other big moments as "Ora e per sempre addio" and "Sì, pel ciel" (in which he was admirably seconded by Leonard Warren, the Iago) were genuinely magnificent in sound. Many moments in his singing, however, were merely crude and others seemed thoughtless, as though he had not taken time to discover the musical inflections implied by the score and the drama. When he turned his attention to expressive coloration he employed it very effectively, but too often he was content to plough through considerable passages with rather undistinguished loud singing. His impersonation of the character was not of a kind that is admired in this country. Before the evening was over he had used nearly every conceivable cliché of old-fashioned melodramatic



Tebaldi and Del Monaco  
in Act 1 of Otello

acting, and several times he was so intent on making a success for Del Monaco that he quite forgot to pretend to be Otello. When this happened—usually in conjunction with loud, high notes—the continuity was interrupted by applause and cheers from the corner of the house in which the claque apparently continues to congregate on certain Italianate occasions. A good many moments in his acting did, however, seem genuine, with the result that the crudities of his deportment elsewhere seemed unfortunate and unnecessary.

These are debatable reasons, which I do not share: Del Monaco's Otello at the Colón Theatre (available in a live recording) is a force of nature and deserves full attention for its consistent, formidable vocal interpretation, always in service to a well-founded dramatic reading. Del Monaco, contrary to what is often believed and repeated, was always an interpreter attentive to every detail; nothing in his approach to characters was left to chance. Moreover, the review does not overlook many positive aspects of his take on the Verdi character.

There is also room for a noteworthy Radamès in Aida, a new production that earned this praise from Virgil Thomas in the *Herald Tribune*:

Mario Del Monaco is a slenderish young man with a very large voice. It is a robust but not coarse tenor of great vibrancy and wide range, one of the purest tenor voices lately encountered. Last night he mostly sang loud, but in a few passages he showed that he can also sing softly and that he has some color variation at his command. Handled with intelligence, he might become a great tenor star in the grand style. He has the voice for it. Beyond the usual remarks about his tendency toward muscular singing, capable of adapting to a more restrained expressiveness, it is striking when the reviewer calls Del Monaco's voice

one of the purest ever heard. That year, the first of the operas Decca released in microgroove, inaugurating a glorious series, was indeed *Aida*, starring Renata Tebaldi, with whom he created one of the most celebrated artistic pairings in the opera world. That same year, Decca also released his first operatic recital, along with several 78 rpm records, a format still in production in the early 1950s.

### The glories of *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*

While his *Otello* and *Alvaro* interpretations earned acclaim, Del Monaco's contributions to the Italian verismo repertoire also shone brightly. His performances in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, both central works in the verismo tradition, were legendary. He brought an emotional depth to the passionate characters of Turiddu and Canio, respectively, that elevated these operas to new heights. His portrayal of Canio in *Pagliacci*—especially in the famous “*Vesti la giubba*” aria—was particularly memorable for its raw emotional power, with Del Monaco pouring every ounce of anguish and desperation into the role. In *Cavalleria Rusticana*, his interpretation of Turiddu was equally compelling. Del Monaco's voice brought both strength and vulnerability to the role, capturing the conflicted emotions of the young man caught in a tragic love triangle. His renditions of the opera's iconic arias, like “*Mamma, quel vino è generoso*,” were filled with such intensity that they left audiences breathless.

### The later years: international success and artistic challenges

By the late 1950s and 1960s, Mario Del Monaco's reputation had spread far beyond Italy. His voice, still powerful and rich, had become a symbol of the heroic tenor. He performed on the great stages of the world, including La Scala in Milan, the Royal Opera House in London, and the Vienna State Opera, among many others. His schedule was grueling, often performing in multiple cities in one week. Yet, despite the wear and tear on his voice, Del Monaco's performances continued to draw crowds. His commanding presence and unmistakable vocal style made him a favorite among opera lovers.

However, the 1960s also marked a period of increasing vocal strain. As his voice matured, Del Monaco faced challenges in maintaining the same level of vocal brilliance that had marked his earlier years. Critics began to notice subtle cracks in his once-perfect technique, and his performances became less frequent. Yet, despite these struggles, his passion for singing remained unwavering.

He continued to perform and record through the 1970s, although with less regularity. In his later years, Del Monaco was often seen as a reminder of a bygone era of opera, when tenors were larger-than-life figures who embodied the roles they sang. While his vocal powers were not what they once were, his stage presence and deep connection to the music continued to make his performances unforgettable.

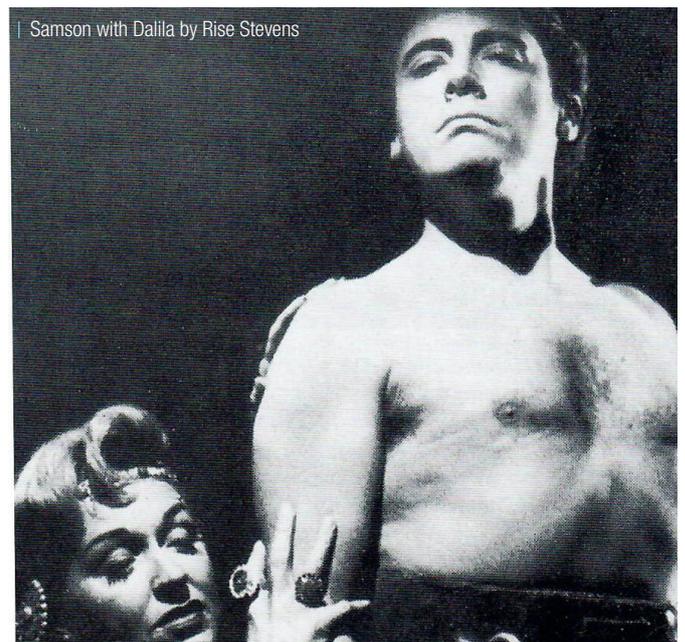
### A Legacy

Mario Del Monaco's legacy as one of the greatest tenors of the 20th century remains secure. His voice, powerful and full of dramatic intensity, was a defining feature of his career, and



| Del Monaco and Mister Bing

his performances in the operas of Verdi, Puccini, and other Italian composers are still considered some of the finest in opera history. Despite the controversies that surrounded his career—whether regarding his interpretations of certain roles or his vocal technique—Del Monaco's artistry was undeniable. His impact on the world of opera is immeasurable. He brought a unique combination of strength, passion, and emotional depth to his roles, and his ability to convey the inner life of his characters set him apart from his contemporaries. Even today, recordings of Del Monaco's performances continue to inspire and influence aspiring tenors, and his place in the pantheon of opera greats remains secure.



| Samson with Dalila by Rise Stevens



TEATRO LIRICO DI CAGLIARI  
FONDAZIONE

Lirica&Balletto  
2024-2025

# Il barbiere di Siviglia

Gioachino Rossini



marzo

14 · 15 · 16 · 19 · 20 · 21 · 22 · 23

*direttore* Salvatore Percacciolo

Orchestra e Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari

*maestro del coro* Giovanni Andreoli

*regia* Filippo Crivelli *ripresa da* Daniela Zedda

allestimento del Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli

Biglietteria del Teatro Lirico  
tel. 070 4082230 - 070 4082249

 #teatroliricodicagliari  
[www.teatroliricodicagliari.it](http://www.teatroliricodicagliari.it)



SARDEGNA



# A Macabre Dream

*Zurich: Barrie Kosky's feverish Manon Lescaut, starring Saimir Pirgu*

Confronting **Manon Lescaut** means immersing oneself in a musical universe where passion merges with despair, lyricism with brutality, ecstatic love with the anguish of loss. The Opernhaus Zürich has entrusted this new production to Barrie Kosky, a director known for his provocative and refined visions, who here offers an interpretation filled with visual suggestions, though with results that are not always convincing.

Kosky reinterprets the story as a baroque nightmare, a macabre dance in which Manon is trapped in a grotesque and merciless world. His main inspiration is the symbolist painter James Ensor, whose unsettling masks come to life on stage through an omnipresent chorus that watches, judges, and condemns. The settings are overloaded with details, an explosion of images with strong aesthetic impact, though at times they overshadow the musical drama. While this visionary dimension emphasizes the feverish nature of Puccini's writing, it also interrupts the narrative tension at crucial moments, reducing the emotional impact of some key scenes.

One particularly bold dramaturgical choice is the decision to anticipate the death of Des Grieux before Manon's, leaving her in a metaphorical and real desert, alone with her tragedy. Although theoretically this device should amplify the sense of abandonment, in practice it alters the opera's climax, detaching it from the musical progression that Puccini has so carefully constructed.

The element that united both audience and critics in unanimous enthusiasm was the extraordinary performance of Saimir Pirgu. The Albanian tenor, making his debut in the role of Des Grieux, delivered a masterful interpretation, tackling one of the most challenging tenor roles with ease and intensity. His voice, expansive and luminous, stood out for its elegant phrasing and flawless projection. The height of his exaltation came with "No! No!...pazzo sono! Guardate," culminating in a natural high C of impressive certainty. The final duet with Elena Stikhina was the crowning moment of a memorable performance, sealed with a rare and powerful natural high D.



Elena Stikhina brought a multifaceted Manon to life, vocally sumptuous and scenically intense. Her dense, warm timbre shone in "In quelle trine morbide," while the famous "Sola, perduta, abbandonata" showcased her ability to sculpt the phrasing with sensitivity, although the minimalism of the fourth act somewhat softened its dramatic impact.

On the podium, Marco Armiliato conducted the orchestra with his usual mastery in Puccini's repertoire. His direction successfully highlighted the contrasts of the score, from the heart-wrenching lyricism of the Intermezzo to the feverish tension of the third act, without ever succumbing to excessive pathos. The sound of the Philharmonia Zürich was refined and vibrant, although the female section of the chorus showed some fragility that had been noticed in previous productions.

Among the supporting roles, Konstantin Shushakov was a correct but not particularly incisive Lescaut, while Shavleg Armasi delivered an authoritative and vocally solid Geronte. Siena Licht Miller stood out in the role of the Musician, with elegant singing and a remarkable stage presence.



Images of **Manon Lescaut** at the Opernhaus  
(Photo Monika Rittershaus Tonisuter)



# A Race Towards the Light

*Zurich: Fidelio returns to the stage directed by Andrea Homoki*

The Opernhaus Zürich has revisited Beethoven's *Fidelio* in the staging by Andreas Homoki, which, years after its debut (2013/14), continues to challenge and stimulate the Zurich audience. In this final season of Homoki as the theater's Intendant, the revival of this production takes on a special meaning, almost a legacy of his artistic journey at the helm of the theater. From its very first appearance, the production has stood out for its psychological depth, for its desire to go beyond mere narrative, delving into the interior lives of the characters and exposing their fragilities and contradictions.

However, it cannot be denied that some elements continue to provoke doubt, the most controversial being the prologue. The introduction of a fragment from the second act Quartet and Leonora No. 3, before the actual opera even begins, alters the traditional structure and creates a temporal dissonance that can disorient the audience. On one hand, this directorial choice symbolically foreshadows the finale and creates an atmosphere of tension, but on the other hand, it risks diminishing the emotional impact of Florestan's liberation, which arrives almost as an event already foretold, stripped of its cathartic force. On the podium, Krzysztof Urbanski conducted with his usual energy and precision, offering a reading rich in details and nuances. The Philharmonia Zürich responded with an impeccable performance, skillfully shaping the tensions and hopes that animate Beethoven's score. Special praise goes to the Chorus, which delivered moments of great emotional intensity, such as in the Prisoners' Chorus, where the voices blend in a cry of pain and hope that stirs the soul.

Jennifer Holloway gave a deeply layered interpretation of Leonore, with a confident voice, impeccable technique, and remarkable musical sensitivity. Her "Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin?" was a crescendo of emotions, shifting from anger to despair, to the resolute determination that drives her to fight for justice. Equally moving was the duet with Florestan, "O namenlose Freude!", where Holloway expressed with delicacy the joy and tenderness of their reunion.

Images of **Fidelio** at the Opernhaus  
(Photo Herwig Prammer)



Marco Jentsch, who replaced Eric Cutler in the role of Florestan, sang with a rich timbre and musicality, though his approach to the role was more lyrical than the character demands. His "Gott! Welch Dunkel hier!" was expressive but did not reach the power and breadth ideal for the character, who should embody strength and endurance in the face of tyranny.

Wolfgang Koch, as Pizarro, was effective, though he could have taken more risks in terms of cruelty and menace. His performance came across as somewhat one-dimensional, lacking the shades that would have made the character even more unsettling. Christof Fischesser, on the other hand, fully convinced as Rocco, displaying an elegant vocality and notable stage presence. His Rocco was a man torn between duty and conscience, a complex and multi-faceted character that Fischesser portrayed with great skill.

Andrew Owens (Jaquino) and Ziyi Dai (Marzelline) completed a cohesive and high-quality cast, contributing to create a powerful emotional tableau.



# Intrigue and Poison in Manhattan

*Zurich: Great performance and overwhelming direction for Händel's Agrippina*

L'Opernhaus Zürich ha presentato una nuova produzione by **Agrippina** by Georg Friedrich Händel, in una rilettura audace and moderna. La Direction by Jetske Mijnsen sposta la vicenda dal mondo dell'antica Roma all'universo della finanza americana, trasformando la lotta per il potere imperiale in una guerra by successione all'interno by una dinastia imprenditoriale by Manhattan. Il risultato è uno spettacolo teatrale by forte impatto, che evoca il clima delle serie TV contemporanee come *Succession*, arricchito dalla direzione Musicale magistrale by Harry Bicket alla guida dell'orchestra La Scintilla.

La produzione ha brillato per l'attenzione ai dettagli and la raffinatezza dell'esecuzione. La Scintilla, sotto la direzione esperta by Bicket, ha offerto una lettura filologica ma mai sterile della partitura, esaltando la fluidità dei Recitativi and il vigore ritmico delle Arie. Il continuo ha giocato un ruolo fondamentale, con un'eccellente realizzazione by Claudius Herrmann al violoncello, Enrico Maria Cacciari al clavicembalo and Azul Lima all'arciliuto. Il lavoro congiunto tra Bicket and Mijnsen ha portato ad alcune scelte Musicali mirate, tra cui la trasposizione by alcune arie and la riduzione by certe sezioni per rendere la drammaturgia più scorrevole.

Anna Bonitatibus, Agrippina, ha una presenza scenica magnetica and una vocalità impeccabile; ha dominato ogni scena, restituendo con precisione i complessi giochi by potere del personaggio. La sua esecuzione by "Pensieri, voi mi tormentate" è stata uno dei momenti più intensi della serata.



Images of **Agrippina** at the Opernhaus  
(photo Monika Ritterhaus)



Christophe Dumaux ha creato un Nerone capriccioso and manipolabile, con una voce potente and una notevole agilità vocale. Lea Desandre, Poppea, ha incantato con la sua voce luminosa and una perfetta padronanza della coloratura, brillando particolarmente in "Se giunge un dispetto", resa con grande espressività and precisione tecnica.

Jakub Józef Orlinski, Ottone, ha offerto una prova by grande eleganza stilistica, pur risultando talvolta troppo omogeneo nell'approccio espressivo. Nahuel by Pierro ha dato vita a un Claudio carismatico and ambiguo, con una voce autorevole che ben si adattava al suo ruolo by patriarca in declino. Ottime anche le prove by José Coca Loza (Pallante), Alois Mühlbacher (Narciso) and Yannick Debus (Lesbo), che hanno completato un ensemble vocale by altissimo livello. Mijnsen ha costruito un affresco teatrale by straordinaria efficacia, sfruttando la scenografia by Ben Baur per creare un ambiente dinamico and iperrealistico. Il lussuoso attico by Manhattan, con stanze intercomunicanti and arredi moderni, è diventato il palcoscenico perfetto per i giochi by potere and le tensioni drammatiche. La regista ha saputo equilibrare momenti by puro dramma con situazioni by comicità pungente, enfatizzando il carattere satirico dell'opera.

Un tocco by genialità è stato il finale inaspettato: nella visione by Mijnsen, Poppea, stanca by essere al centro delle manipolazioni by uomini assetati by potere, decide by avvelenarli tutti. L'unica a salvarsi è Agrippina, che con un gesto calcolato rovescia il contenuto

by Albert Garriga Puig

# A World of Emotions

**O**péra de Lausanne has brought *Mitridate, re di Ponto* by Mozart back to the stage with a bold and stylized approach, prioritizing the emotional dimension of the drama over a conventional historical reconstruction. Emmanuelle Bastet's staging transformed the opera into a narrative suspended in time, where the tension between duty and passion was expressed through an abstract scenic design. The director immersed the protagonists in an essential geometric space, marked by moving staircases and light plays that shaped the inner conflicts of the characters more than a defined physical reality. The dominant color, a deep blue, evoked both the sea and the depth of emotions, guiding the audience on a metaphorical journey into the human soul.

At the helm of the orchestra, conductor Andreas Spering skillfully highlighted the freshness and dynamism of the Mozartian score, bringing out the orchestral writing with clear phrasing and meticulous attention to sound transparency. His direction proved agile and expressive, granting a natural breath to the numerous virtuosic sections without succumbing to academic rigidity. The most dramatic moments were rendered with great sensitivity, maintaining a constant tension between the passionate impulses of the music and the delicate lyrical nuances. Particularly effective was the handling of the recitatives, which were well articulated and never mechanical, contributing to a dramatic interpretation that was organic and engaging.

From a vocal standpoint, the production relied on a young and cohesive cast. Lauranne Oliva portrayed an Aspasia of great expressive intensity, with a refined vocal line and an interpretation that conveyed both the fragility and strength of the character. She particularly shone in 'Nel sen mi palpita', delivering the aria with confidence and precision in the agility passages. Her stage presence dominated, finding

## *Lausanne: new production of Mitridate king of Ponto, starring Paolo Fanale*



an excellent balance between technique and interpretation. Alongside her, Athanasia Zöhrer offered a vibrant reading of Sifare, with a bright timbre and remarkable fluidity in vocal delivery. The aria 'Lungi da te', performed with extraordinary delicacy, highlighted the perfect dialogue between her voice and the solo horn, creating one of the most moving moments of the evening. The chemistry between the two performers made the duets particularly evocative, adding extra pathos to the musical narrative. Zöhrer's interpretation highlighted both the heroic and vulnerable nature of her character, lending her a rare intensity on stage.

Farnace, entrusted to Sonja Runje, excelled with incisive phrasing and rich timbre. Her portrayal precisely conveyed the complexity of the character, playing on the nuances of her voice to highlight the inner turmoil and dramatic evolution of the rebellious prince. Her stage presence provided an effective contrast to the expressive nobility of Aspasia and Sifare. Particularly striking was her interpretation of 'Venga pur, minacci e frema', where she showcased impressive control of coloratura and a powerful, secure vocal delivery.

Paolo Fanale, as Mitridate, tackled the challenging writing of the role with confidence, demonstrating great musicality despite some roughness in the high notes. His stage portrayal helped define the figure of a king torn between ambition and paternal feelings, emphasizing the tragic nature of the character who watches his world collapse amidst betrayals and internal conflicts. He performed 'Tu che fedel mi sei' with great expressivity, successfully conveying the king's inner turmoil in a scene charged with pathos.

The cast was completed by Aitana Sanz, a notably elegant Ismene, capable of expressive nuances that lent depth to the character. Rémy Burnens (Marzio) and Nicolò Balducci (Arbate) both added significant value to their respective roles.



by Andrea Merli

Scenes from **La corte de Faraón**  
at the Teatro de la Zarzuela


# A Hymn to Lightness

*Madrid: Vicente Lleó's the court of the Pharaoh triumphs at the Zarzuela*

**A** Zarzuela, as is well known, is the Spanish musical theater genre. As such, it embraces various styles over the course of about a century, give or take: its period of greatest brilliance was in the mid-19th century until the 1950s. It also evolved toward operetta, following the French successes of Offenbach and the Viennese works of Lehar, and later into revista and musical comedy.

**La Corte de Faraón**, from 1910 with a libretto by Guillermo Perrín and Miguel de Palacios and music by the Valencian Vicente Lleó, is truly a “biblical” operetta, according to the authors, which also winks at revista and cabaret, especially in its plot, deemed “sicaliptic” from its debut due to its erotic pride: on the one hand, General Putifar cannot fulfill his duties as a newlywed because an ill-aimed arrow has struck him precisely... there, amputating him; on the other, the “biblical” and chaste José, with divinatory powers as long as he maintains his chastity, is desired by both Lota, Putifar’s wife in a state of perpetual virginity, and the lustful Queen, neglected by her sleepy, drunken husband. The music is brilliant, energetic, and at times exquisitely refined, orchestrated with great skill, where even Aida and Lohengrin are quoted, both literally and ironically.

Now, the production finally arrives at the Teatro de La Zarzuela in a fortunate rendition that first premiered in 2012 at the Teatro Arriaga in Bilbao, revived in 2015, and toured to other Spanish theaters.

The direction comes from the “magician” of light theater in Spain (and beyond), Emilio Sagi, who, along with Enrique Viana (a tenor of many talents), adapted the libretto to modern times. This might raise eyebrows among “purists” (assuming such exist in operetta), but it is an almost obligatory practice in light theater, which reflects the passage of time and the change in even sexual orientations. What seemed excessive in the 1999 production at the Teatro de La Zarzuela under the direction of the Argentine Alfredo Arias—who took a decidedly bold approach, earning boos and general protests at the premiere—after 26 years, in a more discreet and restrained form, is now completely digestible.

Thus, in the present version, the character of Arikón (“maricón” in Spanish, meaning “fag” in Italian), played by a comic actor, an exaggerated gay caricature with all the politically incorrect ticks typical of an era where homosexuality was secretly tolerated but ridiculed, has been removed. Conversely, the advice of the three Theban widows to the new bride—total submission to the husband’s will: “cuidalo, mimalo, no le digas a nada que no” (take care of him, pamper him, and never say no)—has been reversed into an emancipated awareness of the female condition, if not even “feminist”, without losing the spirit and irony inherent in the unusual trio.

Finally, a theatrical and genius touch: the character of Sul, the provocative Babylonian girl offered to the Pharaoh, is played by Enrique Viana, a stunning Drag Queen. Not only does he perform the famous Babylonian couplets—so famous they were plagiarized by our own Carlo Lombardo, turning them into the “Tango delle manequins” in the operetta *Madama di Tebe*—but he takes control of the audience, breaking the fourth wall and encouraging everyone, first the men and then all people, regardless of sex or marital status, to repeat the



famous refrain: “Ay ba, ay ba, ay babilonio que marea, ay va, ay va, ay vamonos pronto a . . . Judea” with the help of the ever-complicit orchestra.

The success was delirious, with standing ovations even at the eleventh performance, as noted in the reviews, out of the 15 shows, all of which were sold out long in advance. The cast responded very well: the “lyrical” roles, almost all of them, are very exposed, and throughout the one-act performance lasting about an hour and thirty minutes (without intermission), musicality and vocal qualities akin to operatic works are required. Of course, in this case, the credibility of

the performance, particularly from the beautiful Lota (soprano María Rey-Joly), the confident General Putifar, mutilated in his private parts (baritone Ramiro Marturana), and the Chaste José, who appears on stage practically naked (tenor Jorge Rodríguez-Norton, with a muscular physique), is of vital importance. Needless to say, they were all excellent both vocally and, most importantly, as actors. Very good was the exuberant Faraona of mezzo-soprano María Rodríguez, the always-drunk Pharaoh played by baritone Enric Martínez-Castignani, the dreamy Raquel of soprano Anya Pinto, and the imposing High Priest, the Ranfis of the operetta, played by bass José Manuel Díaz. Very amusing were the actors Jesús García Gallera and Rafael Lobeto, respectively Selha and Seti, the general’s attendants, with special mention given to the three hilarious “widows”: Ra, Amparo Soler; Sel, Amelia Font; and Ta, Leticia Rodríguez.

The orchestra of the Comunidad de Madrid was excellent, and the Coro Titular of the Teatro de la Zarzuela, prepared by Antonio Fauró, was impeccable and highly involved in the scenes. Leading it all, with great spirit but also with the necessary ironic grandeur in the choral and ensemble scenes, was Carlos Aragón, who imparted timing, colors, and intentions suited to the comedy, even participating with enthusiasm in the dialogues. The staging, which could easily have worked for an Aida, was enhanced by a perfect set designed by Daniel Bianco, with the imaginative costumes, some of which were updated, by Gabriela Salaverri; flawless lighting by Eduardo Bravo; and the exuberant choreography by Nuria Castejón, entrusted to six dancers who were not only lively but also engaging in their acting.

At the end of the performance, the chorus and soloists lingered to repeat, varying the lyrics, the famous couplets, with the audience singing along, never tiring of applauding. An hour and a half of pure joy: what a great remedy!



# The Tragic Fate of Women

by Stefano Russomanno

U One of the major offerings of the Teatro Real this year, in terms of new work, was the world premiere of **Tejas verdes**, a short opera commissioned from composer Jesús Torres, who had previously written *Tránsito* for the Madrid theater four years ago. To extend the length of the performance, *Tejas verdes* was paired that evening with another Spanish opera of similar size but well-known, **La vida breve** by Manuel de Falla, a title that had inaugurated the modern reopening of the Teatro Real in 1997. It was *La vida breve* that had the task of opening this unusual double

## *Madrid: World premiere of Tejas verdes by Jesús Torres*

bill, separated chronologically by over a century—an appreciable distance both in terms of subject matter and stylistic and linguistic features—but which finds its common denominator in the tragic fate of a woman whose dream of love is shattered by class oppression



Scenes from **La Cenerentola** at the Lyric Opera (Photo Michael Brosilow)



Scenes from **La vida breve**  
(Photo Javier del Real)





and ideological tyranny. Heavily influenced by verismo but with many symbolist and post-Wagnerian undertones, *La vida breve* owes its most immediate appeal to its moments of captivating folkloric color: foremost among them, the two grand Spanish dances, and the performance of the flamenco cantaor (in this case, a woman).

The version presented by the Teatro Real was particularly strong due to the intense portrayal of the protagonist Salud by Adriana González. Eduardo Aladrén was a solid Paco, while Ana Ibarra's Nonna and Rubén Amoretti's Zio Sarvaor were both rock-solid in their roles. The other roles were well executed, although the cantaora of María Marín was somewhat strained.

The direction by Rafael R. Villalobos sought to establish links between the two works by introducing the silent presence of characters from *Tejas verdes* into the unfolding of *La vida breve*. Sometimes, this hybridization felt forced and contrived: this was evident in the two grand Spanish dances, where the dancers—disregarding the context of Falla's opera—wore the same outfits and gestures (military) as the guards from *Tejas verdes*, with choreography that led to depictions of rape and violence. The set design, which was minimalistic yet effective, provided continuity with simple movements, maintaining the atmosphere of both works, where grey and dark tones predominated, though not without the occasional contrast offered by the wall full of red roses.

Based on a play by Fermín Cabal (who also wrote the libretto), *Tejas verdes* takes its title from the eponymous detention center opened during the dictatorship of Pinochet. It is here that Colorina is imprisoned, her only crime being her relationship with a political opponent. In order to avoid betraying her Miguel, Colorina endures unspeakable torture and violence before being murdered and disappearing without a trace. Torres employs a dramatic language, though not devoid of plasticity and lyricism, dissonant at times but without radical peaks, built on a skilful orchestral treatment where percussion plays a significant role. Rather than developing a straightforward action, the narrative of *Tejas verdes* relies on the evocative power of



scenes where different temporal planes overlap. The protagonism falls on three female soloists, while the male chorus represents the guards. The counterpoint to such violence is provided by the female chorus, which intersperses brief lyrical fragments based on poems by Miguel Hernández, who died in prison at the end of the Spanish Civil War.

A magnificent performance by Natalia Labourdette in the role of Colorina, well supported on stage by Alicia Amo and María Miro. Ana Ibarra, the only singer present in the cast of both operas, embodied the sadistic Doctor with absolute credibility.

Musical director Jordi Francés also seemed to want to establish connections between the two works, as he was careful not to overemphasize the folkloric elements in Falla's score. His work on Torres' opera was commendable. The choir, orchestra, and dancers all gave splendid performances.

# A Manifesto Against the Barbarity of War

Image from *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Photo by Guillermo Mendo/Teatro de la Maestranza)



by Andrés Moreno Mengibar

## Seville: *Gluck's Iphigénie en Tauride* goes straight to the heart for the effectiveness of the show and the execution

1 6 March 2022. More than a thousand people had sought refuge in the city theater of Mariupol, Ukraine. On the roof, the word “Children” was clearly written to warn the Russian army. Theater and culture as a refuge against barbarism. But it was of no use—more than six hundred people perished in the Russian bombings. This is how the excellent theatrical performance conceived by Rafael Rodríguez Villalobos begins (a co-production of the Teatro de la Maestranza, Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, and the Opéra Orchestre National de Montpellier), which, for me, was his finest operatic work seen at the Maestranza. With conceptual sobriety, addressing the heart of the conflicts (political, familial, personal) of the characters, helping to clarify rather than obscure the plot, without excess, and with very measured movements from the actors, Villalobos makes us understand the true root of the conflicts between Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, Orestes, and Iphigenia. The destroyed theater and the dim light fit perfectly with the darkness of their passions. There are moments of violence, including sexual violence, but these are consistent and by no means scandalous, following a logical narrative in the context of warfare and a cataclysm of intersecting emotions. Apart from their musical performance, the singers acted excellently—no easy feat, given the lack of dramatic action in most of the scenes.

The conductor, the Greek Zoe Zeniodi, achieved something very special: she made the Royal Symphonic Orchestra of Seville sound

like a period ensemble without actually being one. She marked very pronounced tempi, rich in accents and sforzandi, frequently searching for dynamic contrasts, especially in the abundant orchestral recitatives. She sought out colors with great attention, highlighting the timbres of the woodwinds or the nuanced sound of the timpani. She never lost sight of the voices and made sure not to overwhelm them in the most dramatic moments.

The evening's great winner was Raffaella Lupinacci, who carried the weight of this opera on her shoulders. She used a particularly beautiful and smooth voice in service of expression and emotion, with magnificent projection—not only in the arias but especially in the accompanied recitatives, where she exhibited very precise phrasing supported by clear articulation and diction.

Edward Nelson, a baritone with a rich and colorful voice, was also a superb phrasing artist, able to shape his sound according to the words. After a less-than-ideal start, tenor Alasdair Kent (Pylades) found beautiful moments in the duet of Act III, proving his ability to navigate even the more challenging passages of a demanding tessitura in the high register.

It is always a pleasure to listen to voices as rich and theatrical as those of Damián del Castillo (Thoas) and Andrés Merino (A Scythian/Priest). Mireia Pintó (Second Priestess/Greek Woman) gave a less impressive performance compared to her recent *Norma* in Seville. The other soloists were excellent, with a special mention to the promising Sabrina Gárdez (Diana/First Priestess).

The choir was excellent, especially the female section, which faced one of its greatest challenges, given the quantity and quality of its interventions.

# The Odd Couple

by Andrea Merli

*Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Il Tabarro and Le Villi offer the public an unprecedented synthesis of Puccini's art*

The 58th opera season in Las Palmas opened at the Teatro Pérez Galdós with an unusual Puccini double bill—one that, in fact, answers a long-forgotten wish of the composer himself. Back in 1917, having just completed *Il Tabarro*, the first of the one-act operas that comprise *Il Trittico*, Puccini had considered pairing it with his very first opera, *Le Villi* (1884), which had been expanded to two acts and enriched with three additional arias for soloists during its 1885 revision at the Teatro Regio in Turin. While *Il Tabarro* had previously graced the island's stage (last seen in March 1984), *Le Villi* made its absolute debut in this context—a rarity even in Italian theaters.

The juxtaposition of Puccini's most "unconventional" work (if you'll allow the term)—with its raw social commentary in Luigi's aria *Hai ben ragione*, modern harmonic textures, urban soundscape touches like car horns and industrial noise—with the youthful, romantically "scapigliato" yet richly symphonic legend of *Le Villi* offers a fascinating contrast. In just over two hours, we witness Puccini's astonishing artistic evolution across 35 years of musical creation.

The elegantly attentive audience packed the theater and warmly embraced this "odd couple," served by a production both refined and keenly focused. Daniele Piscopo, who directed and designed the sets, recreated the world of Paris's underclass along the banks of the Seine and aboard the moored barge with compelling realism. The characters were drawn with naturalistic precision—never exaggerated—supported by fluid staging and intuitive blocking. Claudio Martín's costumes were spot-on: he nudged *Il Tabarro* forward a decade in time, while preserving the original period for *Le Villi*. Grace Morales crafted a lighting scheme that transitioned beautifully from dusk to deep night, enhanced by evocative projections on the backdrop.

The mood shifted dramatically with *Le Villi*, whose gothic aura was conjured anew by visual projections, gauzy tulle effects, and, most memorably, the atmospheric choreography of Natalia Medina and her superb dance company.

Musically, the evening was a triumph—especially thanks to the three soloists who performed in both operas. Soprano Carmen Giannattasio was first a passionate, fiery Giorgetta, delivering *È ben altro il mio sogno* with vocal and emotional abandon. Then, as the virginal Anna, she gave a delicate, elegiac rendition of *Se come voi piccina*, before transforming into the possessed wraith of the legend, fully embracing its dramatic charge. Baritone Dario Solari was a compelling Michele—tender in the duet with Giorgetta, then



Images of *Le Villi* and *Il Tabarro* at the Pérez Galdós Theater (Photo Nacho González Oramas/ACO)

bitter in *Nulla, silenzio*, and ferocious in the chilling final line *Vieni nel mio tabarro*, where he conceals a corpse beneath his cloak. He was equally effective as Guglielmo in *Le Villi*, a more conventional role, but graced with the poignant aria *Anima santa della figlia mia*, sung with genuine pathos.

The evening's most resounding ovation went to Jonathan Tetelman, especially after Roberto's aria *Torna ai felici dì*, perhaps the opera's most iconic moment alongside the frenzied tarantella-like *Tregenda*. Tetelman also shone as Luigi, the doomed dockworker. With his radiant, expansive voice, rich in harmonics and golden timbre, he sailed through the spinto tenor repertoire, showing notable artistic growth. Unlike his performance in *Fedora* a year prior (also in the Canaries), his tone here was freer, less strained—even in the demanding top register. In short: *habemus tenore!*

The supporting cast was equally commendable. Starting with the recorded voice of Giuseppe Reggiori as narrator, who appears twice—before the symphonic interlude *L'Abbandono* and again during the *Tregenda*—delivering a poetic text that quotes Dante, concluding with the iconic lines: "Ei, tremando di freddo e di paura, / È già nel mezzo della Selva oscura."

Alessandra Della Croce made for a lively, high-placed Frugola with a vibrant mezzo timbre, paired well with Max Hochmuth (*Il Talpa*), a young bass whose artistry continues to mature each season. Tenor David Barrera gave a sharp, well-defined portrayal of *Il Tinca*, and the young lovers—Giacomo Capitta and Marina Diaz—sang with fresh, well-matched tone. Special mention goes to veteran tenor Francisco Navarro (b. 1951), who reprised the role of the *Street Song Vendor*—a part that marked his professional debut in 1984.

The Festival de Ópera Chorus, prepared by the indomitable Olga Santana, delivered with precision and energy, while the Gran Canaria Philharmonic Orchestra, under the sure hand of Maestro Lorenzo Passerini, navigated the vastly different sonic worlds of both operas with authority and flair. Passerini struck the ideal atmospheres and guided his forces with conviction.

A richly deserved success for the entire company.



# At Monnaie the *Ring* ends

by **Attilio Moro**

Image by **Götterdämmerung**  
at the Monnaie (Photo: Monika Pittershaus)

**O**n February 25th, La Monnaie in Brussels will receive the 2024 Opera Award for Best European Opera House from the Berlin Opera Awards. For La Monnaie, this was the year of the *Ring*, culminating this February with *Götterdämmerung*.

The cycle had begun back in November 2023 with a *Das Rheingold* in which Romeo Castellucci delivered some of his most striking work to date—that *Rheingold* got the whole opera world talking. After his staging of *Die Walküre*, however, things took an unexpected turn. For reasons still not entirely clear (some whispered of lavish megalomania), Castellucci left mid-cycle, and the theater handed the rest of the tetralogy to Pierre Audi, a more restrained director, who worked with video artist Chris Kondek and costume designer Petra Reinhardt.

This *Götterdämmerung* is, all told, a fine piece of theater—musically and scenically, vocally and visually, in lighting, costume, choreography... with a few excessive touches in the final act that do not, however, mar the whole. What felt lacking was a strong directorial vision. Audi's staging, while elegant and coherent, misses that imaginative leap, that singular idea to elevate it into the realm of the unforgettable.

Audi revisits a motif from *Siegfried*—projected footage of children drawing monsters—to nod at the psychoanalytic roots of the drama. But in an age like ours, obsessed with hyper-capitalism, it was a missed opportunity not to delve into Wagner's theme of human ruin through gold-lust. Still, there were inspired moments—like the prologue with the three Norns (Marvin Monreal, Iris Van Vijnen, Katie Lowe) perched like somber birds on a scaffold, wrapped in misty costumes, weaving threads they can no longer control. A striking metaphor for the end of time—fate, for both gods and mortals, unspooled and out of reach.

The rest of Audi's direction felt like a dignified, calligraphic illustration. The geometric sets, dominated by massive rectangular blocks from which singers occasionally emerged, were bathed in intense lighting—mostly deep blues and reds in shifting tones. The chorus and the Rhinemaidens moved with fluid, well-rehearsed choreography, blending dance and gesture with subtle grace.

## Brussels: Pierre Audi signs *Twilight of the Gods*

As for the singers, Bryan Register gave us a distinctly American *Siegfried*—bold, vigorous, occasionally brash, not prone to introspection. Ingela Brimberg (*Brünnhilde*), a true dramatic soprano with a voice rich in color and nuance, was one of the evening's most anticipated performers. In *Starke Scheite sichtet mir dort*, she showed formidable vocal control and stamina. She reaffirmed the strong impression she made in *Siegfried* back in September.

Ain Anger, a magnificent basso profondo, dominated the stage as *Hagen*—not only vocally but physically. Towering at nearly two meters, draped in an ominous black cloak that swept the floor, he cut a hieratic, sinister figure and earned some of the night's loudest applause. Among the rest of the cast: Andrew Foster-Williams as *Gunther*, Annette Frirsch as *Gutrune*, Nora Gubisch as a soulful *Waltraute*, and Scott Hendricks as a rugged *Alberich* all gave solid performances.

La Monnaie's orchestra once again proved itself to be among the finest in Europe—sharp and muscular in the hammer-blows of *Siegfried's* funeral march, yet delicate in the flutes and strings. The horns, oboes, and bassoons shone brightly without overpowering. Under Alain Altinoglu, everything felt seamlessly organic. He grasped the very architecture of the *Ring*. “The whole tetralogy,” he remarked, “feeds off ‘mother cells’—thematic nuclei that interweave throughout the score and are, in turn, constructed around a single note: the E-flat that opens *Das Rheingold*.” Seventeen hours of music, all stemming from one solitary pitch.

He also confided that Castellucci had originally wanted to begin *Das Rheingold* with the final scene of *Götterdämmerung*—a bold move intended to emphasize the philosophical essence of the *Ring*: the eternal cyclical return of human fate. An eccentric idea? Perhaps. But speaking of eccentricities, it's worth recalling that Wagner once dreamed of ending *Götterdämmerung* not just with the burning of *Valhalla*—but with the destruction of the entire theater. A wooden theater, built for the purpose... to burn.

# Figaro... a Vagabond



by Eva Pleus

Images from *The Barber of Seville* at the Opera (Photo Miklos Szabo)

In the ultra-modern theater of the Danish capital, built on a specially created island, Rossini's opera was presented under the title *Barberen i Sevilla*. This production from the 2017/18 season was rehearsed for weeks, making it a true premiere—aptly termed a “Repremiere.”

Director Martin Lyngbo, hailing from the realm of spoken theater, embarked on his first staging of a lyric opera. As anticipated, he did not rely on the power of the music but instead crafted a narrative centered around a Charlie Chaplin-esque vagabond who assumes the role of the false barber. The set and costumes, designed by Rikke Juellund, were entirely in black and white, stylistically mirroring silent films with their chases and slapstick gags. For instance, during the overture, Rosina attempts to escape and is promptly caught.

After the introduction, the major surprise: the false Figaro immediately delivers his grand entrance aria, omitting the entire first scene with Almaviva, Fiorillo, and the Chorus. The director justifies this cut by assuming that today's audience prefers to get straight to the heart of the story, deeming the scene unnecessary. Other omissions include Bartolo's search for the letter paper used by Rosina for her note, leading him unexpectedly into “Un dottor della mia sorte.” Equally missing is the episode where Figaro, searching for the house key, breaks Bartolo's tureen and plates. Instead, events unfold continuously around the doctor's house, in the true barber's shop, and in the notary's office.

“La calunnia” is “enhanced” with smoke bombs, and the figure of Chaplin's “The Kid” appears (whose alcoholic mother will join Bartolo's family, just as Berta will marry Basilio). In the end, the

## *Copenhagen: Matteo Beltrami conducts Rossini's masterpiece destroyed by absurd direction*

protagonist remains alone in the spotlight. Moreover, there's no Chorus, as the Officer of the Force also sings their lines. The chaos and the grand final scene of the first act found effective



solutions both scenically and in terms of mime, but repeatedly there's an excess: even an experienced audience might struggle to stay focused on the music. Nonetheless, the sold-out theater erupted in laughter, aided by the Danish translation projected on stage (while the English translation was displayed above).

A particularly satisfying encounter was with Austrian mezzo-soprano Patrizia Nolz, portraying a determined Rosina with a warm voice, brilliant vocal technique, and excellent Italian pronunciation. In the title role, we heard American Dean Murphy from the ensemble of the Deutsche Oper Berlin. With his baritone voice of neutral color, he tackled the role effortlessly, impressing us more with his physical commitment than with the quality of his singing. From his stage presence, South African Sonnyboy Dladla appeared somewhat inhibited as Count Almaviva, a sentiment also reflected in his tenor voice with a restricted emission.

The theater's resident ensemble featured Morten Staugaard (Bartolo), Tae Jeong Hwang (Basilio), Frederikke Kampmann (Berta, deprived of her aria), and Frederik Rolin (Officer, Notary). Their vocal performances were more than adequate, with Hwang, a substitute chorister for the regular role-holder, also delivering commendably. On the podium of the theater's orchestra, Det Kongelige Kapel, Matteo Beltrami ensured the singers could breathe despite constant movement, imparting to the musical realization the liveliness and Italian flair lacking on the scenic side. Let's not forget pianist Thomas Bagwell with his elegant accompaniment of the recitatives. In the end, the audience expressed their gratitude with standing ovations.

*Maria Stuarda* by Gaetano Donizetti: World premiere in Denmark  
The direction was entrusted to French Mariame Clément, who presumably aimed to cater to an audience unaccustomed to the realities of a bel canto opera, which often focuses on rather static stage events. Thus, she maintained the action in its original period but allowed Julia Hansen, responsible for sets and costumes, creative freedom. In this staging, the English queen is



present until the end (according to the libretto, her final scene is at the beginning of the second act) because Clément shows us the doubts she faces due to her decision to send Maria Stuarda to her death. We also see her complexes when her advisor Cecil, a staunch advocate for Maria's execution, appears in the guise of the Queen's father, Henry VIII. These are well-handled details that never feel forced.

However, to avoid exclusion from the circle of pseudo-modern directors, Clément added some unnecessary elements: Talbot and Cecil wear wristwatches displayed ostentatiously, Maria's execution is filmed, and the related command is given via a rotary phone.

On the podium of the theater's orchestra, Paolo Arrivabeni upheld the flag of Italian bel canto, offering an interpretation that went beyond mere correctness. Elisabeth Jansson's Elizabeth was particularly interesting; with a light-colored mezzo-soprano voice that flowed well, she presented a character study of the English queen without ever neglecting the bel canto aspect. Gisella Stille sang the titular role with good technique and stylistic sensitivity. However, she lacked the personality for the opera's core moment, Maria's outburst "Figlia impura di Bolena" during the dramatic climax of the action.

American tenor Galeano Salas, the only non-member of the theater's permanent ensemble, enriched the performance with a Mediterranean touch. His Leicester, whose character within the dramatic framework wasn't entirely successful, possessed an expressive lyric tenor voice of beautiful color.



Moments of **Maria Stuarda**  
(Photo Camilla Winther)

# The Swing of Passions

by Paolo Piro

Images of *I Puritani* at the Opéra Bastille (Photo Sebastien Mathe)

## Paris: *I Puritani* and *Lisette Oropesa* set the Opéra Bastille alight

It might not be an exaggeration to say that, of all the repertoire belonging to the “romantic bel canto” tradition, *I Puritani* is the opera dearest to the Parisian public. It was here, at the Théâtre-Italien, that it premiered in January 1835, performed by the most illustrious vocal quartet in operatic history (Grisi–Rubini–Tamburini–Lablache). It was here that people could be heard humming its melodies in the streets. And it was here that the opera’s triumph earned Bellini the Légion d’honneur and the reputation of Europe’s foremost opera composer—a glory as dazzling as it was fleeting, since he would die just eight months later. The magnetism of this masterpiece seems wholly intact even today: ten performances scheduled at the massive Bastille Opera House (with over 3,000 seats), and a sold-out house each night—helped, no doubt, by a policy of discounted tickets. But the real draw was the kind of rare enthusiasm that fills a theater with electricity—waves of applause and open ovations, not just at the curtain, but scene after scene throughout the evening. The spell cast is, of course, that of a score of exquisite beauty—but also of a protagonist who commands the stage with irresistible presence.

Lisette Oropesa debuted in the role of Elvira just over two years ago in Naples (in a concert version), and has since recorded it in studio for EuroArts. If the album documents a voice of pristine purity—remarkable in timbre, technique, and musicality, even within the limits of a solid but not dazzling virtuosity (as noted by Giancarlo Landini in *l’opera* no. 100, p. 74)—then on the stage of the Opéra Bastille, the Cuban-American soprano marries herself to the character with a sincerity that, free of affectation or diva theatrics, is utterly enchanting and deeply moving.

In her, the femme-enfant comes alive: dreamlike and fragile, with a skin-deep sensitivity, eternally poised between longing and introspection, caught in a man’s world of warfare and honor that seems to dismiss her feelings—and yet is, in truth, driven by them.

Laurent Pelly’s production—first unveiled in 2013 and revived in 2019 (see *l’opera* no. 42, p. 34)—is conceived entirely around her. Quite literally: Elvira is trapped within a rotating prison-castle shaped like a metal cage, built atop a constantly turning platform. Pelly’s staging seeks to embody the swirling, obsessive landscape of Elvira’s mind, as if the drama were nothing more than a projection of her inner world—an emotional pendulum swinging between love, hope, and the terror of abandonment, teetering always on the brink of madness.

The overwhelming centrality of the heroine—highlighted by both staging and Oropesa’s magnetic presence—nearly eclipses the rest of the cast, who don’t always rise to the same level. One exception is the outstanding Roberto Tagliavini: a Giorgio of exemplary poise and vocal nobility. Lawrence Brownlee, for his part, offsets the slight wear of his timbre with masterful technique and polished artistry, giving his Arturo both virile drive and tender lyricism. More disappointing is Andrii Kymach as Riccardo: a constricted vocal emission and lack of tonal color undermine the considerable physical and vocal stature of the Ukrainian baritone.

Among the excellent supporting cast—first and foremost Maria Warenberg as Enrichetta, a recent addition to the Opéra ensemble—and a chorus that excelled despite a reduced roster (due to seasonal illness), the entire performance was shaped with elegance and precision under the baton of Corrado Rovaris. His conducting was supple and stylish, finely tuned to balance and dynamic contrast, capable of both vitality and surrender. Exactly what’s needed to illuminate the musical treasures of so inspired an opera.



TEATRO ALLA SCALA



Per la prima volta alla Scala,  
un capolavoro settecentesco di satira  
del mondo teatrale,  
su libretto di de' Calzabigi.

# L'OPERA SERIA

Florian Leopold Gassmann

Direttore

Christophe  
Rousset

Regia

Laurent  
Pelly

29 marzo; 1, 3, 6, 9 aprile 2025

*Diretta streaming LaScalaTv: 3 aprile ore 19.15*

Scopri tutti gli spettacoli su  
[teatroallascala.org](http://teatroallascala.org)

Si ringrazia la Fondazione Milano per la Scala  
con il generoso sostegno di  
Aline Foriel-Destezet

Sponsor Principale della Stagione e LaScalaTv  
INTESA  SANPAOLO

# Beyond the Mask of Respectability

by Silvia Campana

Sets by **Festen**  
at Covent Garden

A fitting response to the often-posed question of the themes around which contemporary opera should revolve seems to come from the English capital, where the world premiere of **Festen**, the latest opera by British composer Mark-Anthony Turnage, took place at the celebrated Royal Opera House. A co-production with the Finnish National Opera and Ballet, this work follows Turnage's exploration of more extravagant subjects—such as the salacious story of Anna Nicole Smith in *Anna Nicole* (2011) and the fantasy world of Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2018) at the Barbican. With *Festen*, the composer's focus seems to have shifted to a more real-world universe, dense with uncomfortable and thorny shadows.

*Festen* draws its inspiration from the 1998 film of the same name by Thomas Vinterberg (which went on to win the Jury Prize at the 51st Cannes Film Festival). This film served as the starting point for the Dogme 95 movement—an almost sacred artistic credo, created by Vinterberg in collaboration with Lars von Trier. The movement was rooted in a rigid ten-point manifesto (strictly realistic filming, no soundtrack, handheld camera, no special lighting or use of filters, etc.), where all commercial cinematic conventions were expressly excluded in order to focus the audience's attention on a narrative as close to reality as possible.

That said, Turnage's opera seems to break away from the Manichean simplicity of the filmic product, creating a genuine contemporary musical theatre work. The opera seeks to speak to its audience by overturning the apparent virtues of its world in order to reveal the vices upon which they are based. The drama centers around a birthday party thrown for the sixtieth birthday of Helge, a wealthy Danish man, at his family-owned hotel. Invited to the party are his three children—Christian, Michael, and Helena (it will later be revealed that the fourth, Linda, committed suicide). It is Christian, the eldest son, who transforms the toast to his father into a harsh accusation,

## *London: Triumphant success for the world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's Festen*

accusing him of years of repeated sexual abuse that he and his now-deceased twin sister endured. And, as the discovery of a letter will reveal, this abuse ultimately led to the sister's death.

The entire drama revolves around the reaction to Christian's words, which are met with near silence from the guests, and how their attachment to a long-established way of life merges with their stubborn refusal to know, accept, and act in response—even when confronted with the revelation of a crime. Silence, in this world, has become the chosen form of social communication.

Lee Hall's excellently crafted libretto gleefully mocks several English behavioral codes (particularly during the dinner scene), continually





switching rhythms that are expertly played on a perpetual chiaroscuro of expression.

Turnage's score, which blends soul influences (Miles Davis) with contemporary classical references (Britten), seemingly moves around a linear structure, but in fact finds its main key to interpretation through the word. The brief preludes immediately immerse the listener in the composer's world, where eclecticism isn't a limitation but a deliberate stylistic choice. The theme of the overwhelming power of silence is expressed in two chilling orchestral pauses, stark, still images that carry profound significance. Central and dominating in the score is the clever and jarring use of seemingly harmless folk motifs (a Danish birthday song, a mocking and racist version of the English nursery rhyme Baa Baa Black Sheep, and a sinister Conga that shifts its rhythm into that of a whirling dance), which act as a disorienting litmus test, revealing that perhaps hell is right here—and we, the devils.

Given the subject matter and the power of the message, Turnage might have taken the piece even further, beyond the effective mask of sarcasm, which, by contrast, sometimes proves more potent and intense than the declared action itself.

The staging by Richard Jones, set in a simple and linear stage space (designed by Miriam Buether), frames the hotel's various spaces with an essential structure, significantly veiled by a screen that, with each scene change, gradually reveals an image of a green sofa—the silent witness to the abuse.

A thorough performance analysis was devoted to the singers, who fully inhabited their complex individual roles. The British tenor Allan Clayton, in the central role of Christian, successfully conveyed the character's complexity and power with an interesting and theatricality-controlled timbre.

The French baritone Stéphane Degout defined the character of Michael, the second-born, whose relationship with his wife Mette

(played by the vibrant Philippa Boyle) painted a vicious marital portrait, full of sexual blackmail and verbal abuse.

Helena and her Black fiancé Gbatokai were expertly portrayed by Natalya Romaniw and Peter Brathwaite, whose measured singing perfectly captured their discomfort.

The excellent Gerald Finley brought to life the birthday celebrant Helge, while Rosie Aldridge was well-suited as the submissive wife Else, whose reactions—once unfrozen from a frigid disinterest—erupted in the most intense hysteria.

The supporting characters were equally well-cast: Thomas Olie-mans as Helmut (the master of ceremonies), Susan Bickley as the biting, provocative grandmother, Aled Hall as a knowing chef (complicit and determined to bring the truth to light), Julian Hubbard as Lars (the receptionist), Clare Presland as Pia (the waitress, to whom the composer dedicates an aria), John Tomlinson as the grandfather, and Marta Fontanals-Simmons as Linda (the dead daughter who was also a victim of the father), appearing as a sinister ghost alongside her brother. Kitty Whately completed the cast as Michelle (another waitress).

The Royal Opera Chorus, under the direction of William Spaulding, performed excellently. Edward Gardner, leading the orchestra of the Royal Opera House, brought out the nuances of the score, successfully supporting even the more groove-driven sections, which might not have seemed fully suited to a classical ensemble.

The hall was packed to the last seat, and the extraordinary public success (with a standing ovation) alongside the eclectic generational diversity—from youth to the most mature—left little doubt as to the outcome of the performance, and the kinds of themes contemporary opera should engage with... at least in England.

# Wagner in the Eyes of a Child

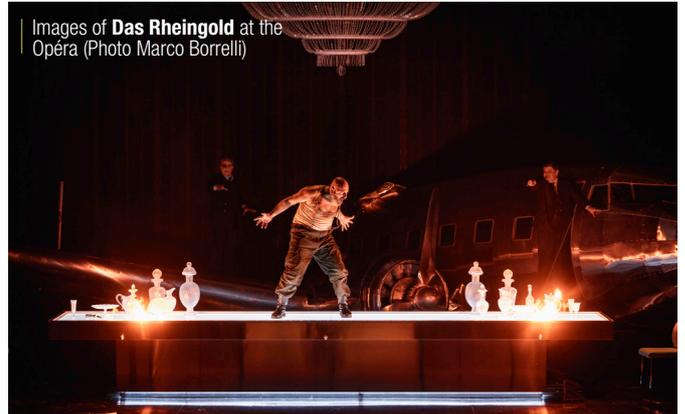
by Alberto Bazzano

## *Monte Carlo: Philology and futurism in Rheingold at the Salle Garnier*

**D**as Rheingold, the prelude to Richard Wagner's Ring des Nibelungen, takes center stage at the Salle Garnier in Monte Carlo, the production is one of great allure. The direction is by Davide Livermore, who collaborates with D-Wok for the video projections (absolutely central to this production), Eleonora Peronetti for the sets, Gianluca Falaschi for the costumes, and Antonio Castro for the lighting. The latter is deliberately pervasive, bursting into the auditorium, coloring the stuccoed ceiling of the Opéra with red and green.

The story is seen through the eyes of a child, whose image is projected onto a screen. The child writes phrases on a white sheet of paper that evoke a playful or fairy-tale-like dimension: "Im Spiel bin ich der Bestimmer" (In play, I am the one in charge), "Im Spiel sind wir die großen" (In play, we are the great ones), "Und was spielen wir jetzt?" (And what shall we play now?). The child then folds the paper into an airplane and makes it soar. The paper airplane transforms into a real aircraft with a front double propeller, which encounters a storm and crashes. The first time, it sinks into the waters of the Rhine. The second time, it crashes among glaciers. The third time, it crashes into the lava flows of Alberich's underground realm. Finally, it gets lost amid the shifting reflections of a northern lights display. The action unfolds around the wreckage of the aircraft. At times, the child's image materializes onstage, accompanied by Wotan. The play of projections is dominant but does not overshadow the movement of the characters on stage. There is an underlying balance that ties the various components of the performance together, and this is maintained throughout the entirety of the show.

However, some visual solutions are less convincing due to their overly convoluted nature. For example, when Alberich transforms into a dragon to flaunt his prodigious powers. The apocalyptic effect that follows is suggested through war images, buildings collapsing under bombings, and the ever-present Nazi parade—an image that



Images of **Das Rheingold** at the Opéra (Photo Marco Borrelli)

has been seen and re-seen countless times. A bold and surprising choice is to entrust the performance of a Wagner score to Gianluca Capuano and Les Musiciens du Prince-Monaco. Both the Milanese conductor and the Monegasque ensemble, in fact, are more at home in the baroque repertoire, which they approach with dedication and philological spirit. The sensitivity they bring is at odds with the sonic monumentality of a certain interpretative tradition of Wagner's theatre. I'm referring to the historical line that begins with Wilhelm Furtwängler and Hans Knappertsbusch, and continues through their disciples, still influential today. The search for heightened transparency, a less forceful instrumental line, favors the creation of a balanced relationship with the text, where the word is captured in its primal meaning and does not succumb to the overwhelming avalanche of sound.

The vocal company rises to the occasion. The undisputed star is Péter Kálmán as Alberich, with his thunderous and well-projected voice. He competes with the magnificent Erda, sung by Ekaterina Semenchuk, who, in the final scene's monologue, delivers a terrifying prophecy: "Alles, was ist, endet. Ein düst'rer Tag dämmert den Göttern" (Everything that is, ends. A dark day dawns for the gods). Wotan's imperial dream of power—here effectively embodied by Christopher Purves—symbolized by the theme of Walhalla, represents, from a psychological standpoint, a neurotic response to the idea of mortality. Michael Laurenz brings solid vocal abilities to Mime. Wolfgang Ablinger-Sperrhacker portrays Loge with strong character, both vocally and dramatically. Donner and Froh appear dressed as pilots, with curious wooden wings sprouting from their shoulders. Their voices are provided by the commendable Kartal Karagedik and Omer Kobiljak. The costumes for the giants are equally unique. Fasolt and Fafner are mountain men, accustomed to facing the cold in woolen garments. The horns they wear suggest their primitive origins. They are excellently portrayed by David Soar and Wilhelm Schwinghammer. Deniz Uzun is expressive as Fricka. Mélissa Petit is equally strong as both Freia and Woglinde. Lastly, the remaining Rhine daughters—Kayleigh Decker as Wellgunde and Alexandra Kadurina as Flosshilde—prove functional to the overall production.

# A *Traviata* According to the Script

by Mario Hamlet-Metz



Images of *La Traviata* at Palm Beach Opera

Prurists and traditionalists left positively elated after this production of *La Traviata* in Palm Beach—an interpretation that returns us to the mid-19th century after decades of modernized stagings that have flung Verdi's heroine forward in time and across cultures. Scenic and costume designer Desmond Heeley offered a relatively simple depiction of the slightly garish elegance of Violetta's and Flora's salons, a charming sunroom for the lovers' retreat, and the bleak quarters of the dying courtesan. That same clarity guided Omer Ben Seadia's direction: precise stage instructions for chorus and soloists were evident, but equally clear was her attention to eliciting deeply human performances from the principals. The only unconventional element—gratuitous, perhaps—was the presence of Mademoiselle Germont, who accompanied her father on both of his visits to Violetta. David Stern's musical direction was just as clean and unfussy. Finally, with the curtain down, he allowed the two preludes to unfold with exquisite sensitivity. He then painted, with bright strokes, the frivo-



## *Palm Beach: Traditional show and excellent performance for Verdi's Opera*

lous social atmosphere of the courtesans' soirées, and, by the end, led us into the raw, unmistakable desolation of the heroine's final moments. Stern opted to restore a few oft-cut passages: the tenor's cabaletta "O mio rimorso," the baritone's "No, non udrai rimproveri," and the second stanza of "Addio del passato."

Making her debut at this theater, soprano Gabriella Reyes left a deeply favorable impression, both vocally and dramatically. Her voice is flexible and pleasantly toned, especially in the middle register, with an upper extension that easily reached the B-flat; the volume could swell impressively—though at times, admittedly, at the expense of tonal purity. But her Violetta was all there: she laughed, loved, suffered, and died on stage with a credibility that was not only convincing but profoundly moving.

We had already admired Mario Chang's youthful, fresh lyric tenor and compelling stage presence in last year's *Tosca*. Now, as Alfredo, he reaffirmed those vocal strengths and gave a portrayal that felt instinctively right: passionate as a lover, aggressive in jealousy, and earnest in both his infatuation and his despair.

Baritone Michael Chioldi, now in his tenth appearance with the company, was the most seasoned of the leads, and it showed—in expressive singing and refined acting. His Germont père, initially severe, commanded authority in the confrontation scene with his son at Flora's party, then turned inward with a stern self-reckoning once he realized the harm he had done.

The three leads were supported by an excellent chorus under the direction of Gregory Ritchey and by a cast of young singers, all of them well-prepared—indeed, many seemed ready for more substantial roles.

Sondra Radvanovsky in Concert  
at the Lyric Opera

by Marta Tonegutti



# Sondra Radvanovsky Celebrates Puccini

A well-conceived program of Puccini arias brought the centennial celebrations to a close in Chicago—and marked the welcome return of Sondra Radvanovsky, who has recently moved back to her hometown. Radvanovsky has long been a favorite with Lyric Opera audiences, most recently as *Lady Macbeth* in 2022, and before that as *Norma*, *Anna Bolena*, and in other bel canto roles that culminated in the celebrated *Three Donizetti Queens* concert in 2019. Just a month ago, her *Floria Tosca* at the Met was a triumph, as is her recent recording of *Turandot* with Jonas Kaufmann, conducted by Antonio Pappano with the Orchestra of Santa Cecilia. In short, there's no question: her soprano voice, now fully matured—generous in scope and richly nuanced—has found its natural home in Puccini, and can effortlessly carry every role, from *Butterfly* to *Turandot*, via *Manon*, *Minnie*, and *Suor Angelica*.

The proof was in this ambitious and extensive concert devoted entirely to Puccini—a project that came about almost by chance, as Radvanovsky explained in a conversation with conductor Enrique Mazzola, who led the Lyric Opera Orchestra: “Anthony [Freud, then Artistic Director] asked me what else I'd like to do, and he suggested a concert with an aria from every Puccini opera. I said yes without thinking too much. I didn't realize how many operas there were! I love challenges, and so it began.”

A challenge indeed for any soprano, yet in a recent interview Radvanovsky assured audiences that both vocally and expressively, Puccini fits her like a glove. Her voice, she said, is comfortable even in the highest and most stratospheric reaches required by roles like *Butterfly* and *Turandot*. The secret? Approaching these roles with the full technical and expressive arsenal honed through years in the bel canto repertory—from those finely spun, legato lines to the softness of tone and refined control over color and dynamics. With such tools,

---

*Chicago: Triumphant concert dedicated to the great composer, conducted by Enrique Mazzola*

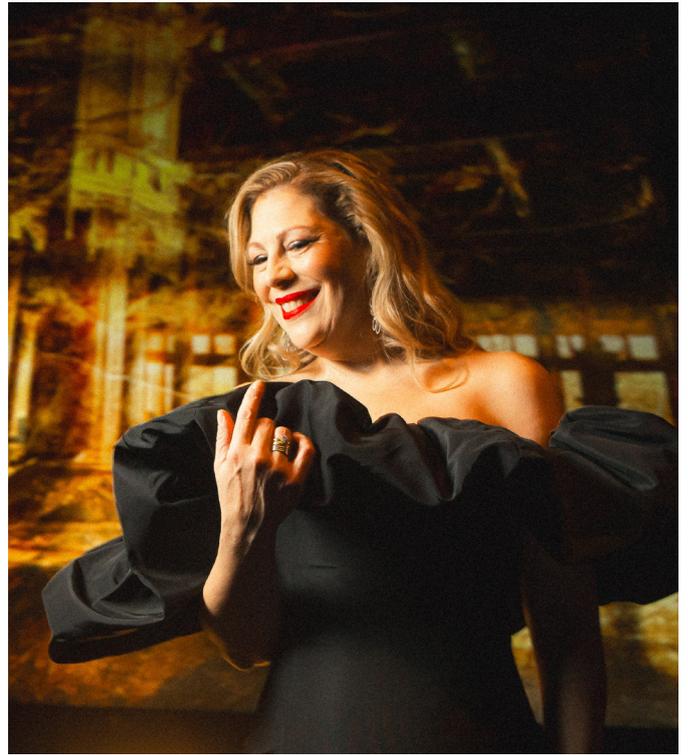
---

even the icy *Turandot* is allowed to glow and thaw, her frozen heart warmed from within.

This being a concert setting, Radvanovsky shaped the tempi to her liking, leaning into virtuosic effects—especially in the mesmerizing play of dynamics, launching notes in a whispered *pianissimo* before swelling into radiant crescendos, then retreating once more into silence. Her voice brightens and floats in the upper register, then darkens and gains heft in the middle and lower ranges. At this point in her career, Radvanovsky's instrument has it all: weight, power, breadth of range and volume, masterful phrasing and breath control, and a painterly palette of colors she wields like brushstrokes.

What continues to define her as an interpreter is that warm, burnished timbre—and a vocal expressivity that often teeters on the edge of vulnerability. At the peak of a phrase sung in *pianissimo*, her voice can seem as though it might break or collapse in on itself, only to reemerge moments later in full bloom. Some of her interpretive choices—slower-than-usual tempi and perhaps an overgenerous use of vibrato—may obscure the pure, pliant lines of Bellini's bel canto (as certain *Casta diva* recordings reveal), but these are mostly absorbed within the denser, more forgiving fabric of Puccini's writing.

“*Vissi d'arte*,” however, felt a touch heavy—lacking the airy transparency and whispered intimacy of a prayer, whispered by *Tosca* not only to God but also to *Scarpia*. Similar interpretive choices, clearly shaped in dialogue with Mazzola and the orchestra, colored her ren-



ditions of *Mimi* and *Butterfly*—both of which might have benefited from a lighter, more flowing touch. In contrast, Minnie burst forth with dazzling charisma, while her portrayals of *Manon* and *Suor Angelica* reached heights of genuine dramatic potency. Visually, the concert was beautifully enhanced by shifting projections surrounding the orchestra on three sides—none more evocative than the *Manon Lescaut* intermezzo, which soared from the orche-

stra into a sunset-streaked sky. The collaboration between conductor and singer was tightly knit, and moments of levity and joy punctuated the evening whenever the vivacious, ever-personable Radvanovsky took the microphone to address the audience directly—who responded with warmth and enthusiasm. Generous to the end, Radvanovsky closed the evening with a masterful *Musetta's Waltz*, gifted to her listeners with sublime abandon—and the promise of a return.





## Alessandro Villa

### Fotografo di Scena

La fotografia di scena è il racconto di mille racconti. E' il perenne tentativo di racchiudere in un singolo istante la visione del regista, il sentimento dell'autore, la musica, i testi e i silenzi, l'emozione di chi porta in scena l'opera e di chi quella scena ha contribuito a costruirla con scenografia, luci e costumi.

La fotografia di scena è la ricerca del tutto, è l'ambizione di catturare, cercando nei particolari, l'essenza e l'emozione.

La fotografia di scena è il racconto del visibile e dell'invisibile.

La fotografia di scena è un istante, è la scelta dell'attimo in cui fermare il tempo.

La fotografia di scena è amore per il teatro. Fare belle fotografie con una macchina di qualità tra le mani non è sufficiente, è come una recita senza cuore. E' necessario (di più indispensabile !) il rispetto per gli artisti, per il palco, per il silenzio, per il pubblico. E' sempre imprescindibile, la bellezza!



E-mail: [photo.avilla@gmail.com](mailto:photo.avilla@gmail.com)



Site: [www.photoavilla.it](http://www.photoavilla.it)



Profilo Instagram  
@photo.avilla



Images from **The Barber of Seville**  
at the Teatro Olimpia "Maria Callas"

# And Figaro Ended up in Mexico

by Dimitrios Kiousopoulos

**L'** As the curtain rose at the Olympia – Municipal Music Theatre "Maria Callas," the scene revealed a distinctly "Mexican" setting: a pink three-story house dominated the stage, its façade doubling as a projection screen for the surtitles (in Greek only). A towering cactus anchored the right side of the stage, and the action unfolded along staircases, under the portico, across balconies, and around the sliding doors of this imposing house. The only problem? We were supposed to be in Seville.

Gioachino Rossini's ever-popular opera buffa **Il barbiere di Siviglia** was the inaugural operatic choice of baritone Tassis Christoyannis, now newly installed as Artistic Director. He entrusted the production to the eminent stage director Vassilis Papa-vassiliou and his frequent collaborator Nicoleta Filosoglou, who had previously directed two highly successful productions for the Greek National Opera's young artists program. Sets, costumes, and dramaturgy were crafted by the equally celebrated Angelos Mentis, with lighting by Elisa Alexandropoulou—simple, yet effective.

A first run of performances took place in October, while the theatre was still in a transitional state, but it was the February revival that truly brought the production into its own.

Into the streets of Seville strides... Super Figaro, a comic-book-style superhero of everyday life, sporting a tight costume, cape, and a giant embroidered F on his chest. But unlike his fictional counterparts, this Figaro offers his services strictly... for a fee. The directorial team struck a careful balance, proving that opera is, above all, great theatre—especially when anchored to a well-constructed libretto that doesn't need overwrought invention to feel alive. There were even mo-



## *Athens: in the new Barber Figaro becomes a superhero*

ments of true dramatic gravity; Almaviva's eventual unmasking felt like a bona fide anagnorisis.

Crucially, a palpable synergy existed between direction and musical leadership, creating a cohesive melodramatic experience. Conductor Yorgos Zivras elicited a vibrant, propulsive performance from the Athens Municipal Orchestra. His conducting had clear theatrical timing, masterfully building Rossini's signature crescendos, while also accompanying the recitatives from the fortepiano with both taste and creativity.

The February cast featured two young Greek singers with growing European careers. Martha Sotiriou, making her role debut as Rosina, was an utter delight—graceful on stage and vocally agile. Vassilis Kavagias (Almaviva) and Yorgos Iatrou (Figaro) both delivered strong, nuanced performances. Marios Sarantidis (Bartolo) and Christoforos Stamboglis (Basilio) blended excellent singing with well-honed comic instincts, while Mina Polychronou (Berta) crafted a bold, spirited anti-Rosina of her own. Rounding out the ensemble were Nikos Masourakis (Fiorello, Officer) and the Athens Municipal Chorus, expertly led by Stavros Beris.

Only one detail left us puzzled—not so much who added the castanets to the final scene (they also appear in Almaviva's first aria, where they're cleverly folded into a flamenco rhythm by the music director), but how such an addition was allowed to slip through at all.

# The Destiny of Men Between Heaven and Earth

by Dimitrios Kiouopoulos



## Athens: Verdi's masterpiece returns to Athens after 27 years

A long-awaited return of Verdi's **La Forza del destino** to the Greek National Opera—after 27 years! In attendance for the premiere was none other than the President of the Hellenic Republic, Ekaterini Sakellaropoulou.

For the occasion, esteemed opera director Rodula Gaitanou returned to Greece exactly a decade after her last collaboration with the National Opera. She set the action in the first half of the 20th century, against a backdrop of the two world wars, the Spanish Civil War, and the Italian partisans. The staging delivered a theatrically sound and cohesive production.

Less clear, however, was the rationale behind certain narrative updates. During the overture, a video projection (designed by Dick Straker) showed a cardinal violently tearing a baby and a young girl from their mother's arms. As the curtain rose, we understood: this cardinal was the Marquis of Calatrava—Leonora's father in disguise—and the girl was Leonora, now a young woman, playing alongside her brother. When Alvaro enters, the Cardinal brandishes a pistol; Alvaro disarms him with ease, and as he lets the weapon fall, it discharges—killing the father-cardinal. In the next scene, an adult Don Carlo di Vargas is already in pursuit of the lovers.

The monastery scene was set in a graveyard, with ossuaries and glowing crucifixes (sets and costumes by George Souglides). The Virgin Mary herself appears to care for Leonora, echoing the Baro-



Scenes from **La forza del destino** at the Opera Nazionale of Athens



que image of Mary as an intercessor between the celestial and the earthly. The friars take their vows clutching human skulls, shifting the symbol of vanitas into a literal threat of eternal damnation. In general, the production placed strong emphasis on religious imagery, while Don Alvaro's Indian heritage was largely sidelined.

Themes of military violence were front and center. Particularly striking was the camp scene, with a kind of macabre tarantella danced around corpses (choreography by Dimitra Kastellou), and in the 'Rataplan'—where Preziosilla, reimagined as a female officer, was whipped. Giuseppe Di Iorio's lighting was superb throughout.

Paolo Carignani, a conductor with a strong rapport with the Greek National Opera, led with precision and sensitivity. The chorus, under the direction of Agathangelos Georgakatos, was in top form—one of its finest performances in recent memory, both vocally and theatrically.

Cellia Costea (Leonora) delivered a superb performance in a role that seemed tailor-made for her voice. Equally commanding was Dimitri Platanius as Don Carlo di Vargas. Argentine tenor Marcelo Puente was an intense and moving Don Alvaro.

Petros Magoulas gave a standout dual performance—first as the Cardinal/Marquis of Calatrava and later as Padre Guardiano. Also notable were Ioanna-Vasiliki Koraki (Curra), Yannis Kalyvas (Mastro Trabuco), Maxim Klonovskiy (The Surgeon), and especially Georgios Papadimitriou (the Mayor/Alcade).

Oksana Volkova's Preziosilla had undeniable stage energy, despite an unflattering costume and an unintentionally comical wig. Yanni Yannissis gave a fine performance as Fra Melitone.

A great success.



by Giancarlo LandiniRiccardo Muti in Concert  
at Scala (Photo Silvia Lelli)


# Chronicle of a Triumph

**R**iccardo Muti's appearances in the Piermarini Hall are always events. They always have been—and even more so when he appears with the Wiener Philharmoniker. It reaffirms a formidable artistic alliance, one that has shared many significant moments at La Scala. Tuesday, February 25 marked Muti's sixth concert in Milan with the Vienna Philharmonic: the first was on November 5, 1990, followed by September 2, 1994, April 9, 2000, May 11, 2005, and most recently on May 11, 2021.

The program featured Franz Schubert's **Symphony No. 4** in C minor, D 417 "Tragic," and Anton Bruckner's **Symphony No. 7** in E major—two pillars of Viennese symphonic tradition, as eloquently noted in the program essay by Giovanni Carli-Ballola.

Muti delivered a superlative reading of Schubert's Fourth Symphony, a work he had previously recorded with this very orchestra in the Große Saal of Vienna's Musikverein in 1987. But anyone who revisited that earlier recording before attending the concert would have recognized a conductor not content to rest on the laurels of past achievement. Far from it—Muti reinhabits the score, reshaping it, uncovering fresh insights, and revealing nuances hitherto unknown to us.

He brings forth the underlying intricacy of a structure that, while





clearly rooted in models like Haydn, Mozart, and—as Carli-Ballola points out—Cherubini (then widely performed in Vienna), ultimately shines with its own light. The symphony masterfully blends contrapuntal discipline with Schubert's innate melodic gift, shaped by a firm grasp of form and the unique tonal blends that, in early 19th-century Vienna, belonged to no one but Schubert. Written in 1816, the symphony belongs to the composer's first six, conceived for semi-private performances among peers at the Imperial-Royal Seminary where he had been enrolled.

Muti's interpretation of Bruckner's work was no less accomplished. The maestro has been engaging deeply with Bruckner in recent years: last year at the Salzburg Festival he conducted a significant performance of the Eighth Symphony, and on August 14 this year, he is slated to conduct the Mass No. 3 in F minor in a program that opens once again with Schubert's "Tragic."

Tackling Bruckner's Seventh—first performed in Leipzig in 1884 to avoid the entrenched hostility of Viennese critic Hanslick—requires the fundamental skill of mastering the composer's vast architectural vision and leading the listener through its expansive journey (over an hour of music) without losing thematic cohesion. Muti navigates this landscape with clarity: identifying the thematic nuclei, tracing their evolution, and rendering their motivic transformations with precision. But there is also his sensitivity to the distinct atmosphere of each

movement (majestic in the first, contemplative in the Adagio, impetuous in the Scherzo, and overwhelming in the Finale), his ability to illuminate intricate counterpoint, and his revelatory approach to Bruckner's orchestration.

All of this is achieved in the closest of collaborations with an orchestra of rare refinement—one that has built a privileged rapport with the Italian conductor. The reverence of the Wiener Philharmoniker, reflected in the precision and intensity of their performance, is yet another testament (if one were needed) to Muti's stature as the greatest Italian conductor and one of the most distinguished on the international stage.

It seems almost redundant to speak of the crystalline string playing, the warm lyricism of the cellos, or the woodwinds' enchantment. Or to express astonishment at the brass section's solidity—as in the Bruckner's opening. We are in the presence of an ensemble of the highest order, performing music that seems to be its native language, with total immersion in its spirit.

A triumph. At the end of the concert, Muti rightfully noted that after a symphony like Bruckner's, any encore would be out of place. Besides, as he said, he and the orchestra were soon departing for New York. He took a final bow and offered his thanks to an audience that never tired of applauding him.

# The Magnificent World of Carlo Schmidl

by Erica Culiati

**T**he Schmidl alphabet, an alphabet of images, objects, sounds, documents, is the exhibition that celebrates the hundredth anniversary of the Civic Theatre Museum.

Inaugurated on December 19 at Palazzo Gopcevich, the exhibition showcases the variety and richness of the collections of the Trieste museum, which was founded thanks to the music publisher Carlo Schmidl.

The catalyst for its creation was the inauguration of the Museo Teatrale alla Scala. L'Indipendente on July 11, 1913, published an editorial titled "For a Theatre Museum in Trieste," highlighting that certain members of the Teatro Verdi's management wished to establish a similar institution to document the activities of all the city's theatres. Aside from the theatre's archive, there was little material, so the idea arose to turn to Carlo Schmidl (1859-1943), who, since 1872, when he entered as a clerk and copyist at the Vicentini music store founded by Domenico Del Maschio in 1813, had begun his own historical-musicological collection.

But who is Schmidl? We know very little about his private life, as articles and correspondence mostly concern his professional activities. The museum houses two small portraits of his grandmother and father, Anton, a conductor, bandleader, and Hungarian composer.

In September 1891, Carlo married Anastasia Serra (1862-1954). She had debuted as an amateur in the opera Tutti in maschera, but would later dedicate herself primarily to translations, mastering French, German, and English, translating both musical texts such as *La Violetta* by Mozart and theatrical works, as well as musical teaching manuals.

Perhaps for convenience, Carlo harbored anti-Slavic sentiments—this is suggested by an article in L'Indipendente from 1897, titled "Revised and Corrected," in which it was noted that Schmidl's house had been reprimanded for including some Slavic editions in a catalog. Schmidl explained that the catalog dated back to 1894 and that the inclusion had been a mistake; the revised catalogs would completely exclude Slovenian music.

On the other hand, details about Schmidl's professional life abound. Beginning in 1883, he launched his publishing career, which by 1913 had surpassed 6,000 titles, a venture that continued until 1940, when he transferred his editions, praised for their accuracy and clear, correct print, to the Giuliana Music House. He organized concerts, worked on the *Dizionario Universale dei Musicisti*, whose first edition was published by Ricordi, and was the founder and first publisher of the competitions for Trieste's popular *canzonetta*. In 1889, he took over the Vicentini music shop, where in addition





to his own editions, he sold the finest European brands of musical instruments. He would open branches of Ricordi throughout Europe, and later, his own company.

Carlo Schmidl became a central figure in the city. In 1920, he signed an agreement with the City of Trieste, allowing his collection to be temporarily housed in rooms at the Teatro Verdi. In 1922, Schmidl offered his cultural heritage to the city (which upon his death would become property of the Municipality), and during the premiere of *Tristan und Isolde* on December 20, 1924, the museum was inaugurated. It would remain at the Verdi until 1991, after which it was temporarily relocated to Palazzo Morpurgo for several years, and finally, in 2006, it found a permanent home at Palazzo Gopceovich.

At the time, newspapers described his collection, valued at over 50,000 lire, as containing "one thousand volumes of books on history, biography, and musical theory, portraits, paintings, theatrical scenes, autographs, musical editions from the 1500s onward, medals, opera librettos, sonnets, notices and programs, manuscripts, newspapers, documents from theatres and concert halls in Trieste, photographs of various artists, performance posters, and the invitation to the dress rehearsal of Verdi's *Stiffelio* performed for the first time in Trieste, as well as a handwritten letter from the old Verdi to Schmidl." Today, with new acquisitions and donations, the collection far exceeds what is on display.

The library holds one hundred thousand pieces, and the archival collections include 4,000 archive boxes, among which are the archives of the Teatro Stabile del Friuli-Venezia Giulia and the Teatro Verdi. The Chapowalenko Collection, for instance, contains the correspondence between Serge Lifar, Romola Nijinsky, and Harald Kreutzberg. The museum's holdings also include 100,000 posters and programs, 600 archive boxes of press clippings and documen-

tation, more than 50,000 photographs, 30,000 autographs, and an additional 20,000 pieces in the multimedia archive.

Curator Stefano Bianchi, head of the Schmidl collection, assisted by Elisabetta Buffulini, Emilio Medici, and Cristina Zacchigna (with the collaboration of Francesco Recanati and Cristiano Rossetti), has chosen to present the museum's collections "suggesting a path based on the logic of the alphabet, from A to Z. For each letter—some, in fact, we've duplicated (such as the L dedicated to composers Carl Ferdinand Lickl and Franz Lehár)—there is an object or a character."

Under the letter E, visitors get a taste of Schmidl's music editions, while under the letter P, they'll find the late 19th-century melodic piano of Giovanni Racca. Some letters are dedicated to artists who were frequent guests in Trieste, such as Eleonora Duse (letter D) and Fedora Barbieri (letter B), with a stage costume from *La Favorita* by Donizetti. The letter S is for Giorgio Strehler, the Trieste-born director whose rich archive of bibliographic, archival, and documentary material is housed at the museum, as well as for Carlo Schmidl. Giuseppe Verdi is not forgotten, and the museum preserves many relics related to him, including a lullaby he autographed and dedicated to "the graceful little flower," meaning Gabriele, born May 28, 1850, the son of tenor Giovanni Severi, composed during his stay in Trieste in connection with the staging of *Stiffelio*, for which he was a guest at Severi's villa.

Kudos to Matteo Bartoli for Basiq, who graphically encapsulated the exhibition's design.

The exhibition is open to the public in the Attilio Selva Hall at Palazzo Gopceovich until Sunday, May 4, 2025, with free entry (hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday). [www.museoschmidl.it](http://www.museoschmidl.it)

# THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

*direttore*  
Jordi Bernàcer

*regia*  
Yannis Kokkos

*scene, costumi*  
Yannis Kokkos

*disegno luci*  
Vinicio Cheli

*videoproiezioni*  
Eric Duranteau

*maestro del coro*  
Marco Medved

*Collatinus*  
Marco Spotti

*Lucretia*  
Stefanie Iranyi

*Junius*  
Rory Musgrave

*Tarquinius*  
Christian Senn

*Bianca*  
Nicole Piccolomini

*Lucia*  
Francesca Benitez

*Male Chorus*  
Moritz Kallenberg

*Female Chorus*  
Caterina Dellaere

## ORCHESTRA DEL TEATRO PETRUZZELLI

18 aprile 2025 | ore 20.30 [ turno A ]

22 aprile 2025 | ore 20.30 [ turno B ]

24 aprile 2025 | ore 18.00 [ turno D ]

27 aprile 2025 | ore 18.00 [ turno C ]

Nuova produzione  
Nuovo allestimento  
scenico  
Fondazione  
Teatro Petruzzelli

Info&Botteghino 080.9752810 | [fondazionepetruzzelli.it](http://fondazionepetruzzelli.it)



MINISTERO  
DELLA CULTURA



REGIONE PUGLIA



CITTÀ DI BARI



CITTÀ  
METROPOLITANA DI BARI

MAIN SPONSOR

**FINECO**

PRIVATE  
BANKING

# French Composers

by Davide Steccanella

To begin with Meyerbeer, I recommend the spectacular performances by Joan Sutherland and Renata Scottò, respectively in *Gli Ugonotti* from the Decca edition and in *Roberto il Diavolo* in the live recording of her sensational Florence performance conducted by Sanzogno with the great bass Boris Christoff. For Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, the classic Philips edition conducted by Colin Davis with Vickers is still compelling. For Thomas, I suggest *Hamlet* with Sutherland and Mignon with Horne. For Gounod, I recommend the Decca edition of *Faust* conducted by Bonyngé with the wonderful trio of Corelli, Sutherland, and Ghiaurov, the *Mireille* on EMI with Mirella Freni and Alan Vanzo, and the Arthaus DVD of the stunning *Romeo et Juliette* production with the couple of lovers, who were also lovers in real life at the time, Alagna/Gheorgiu.

For *I Racconti di Hoffmann*, I suggest the Decca edition with Joan Sutherland, who masterfully sings all three female roles, alongside Plácido Domingo. For *Samson et Dalila*, the EMI edition with Domingo and Meier is a must. For Delibes, I recommend the Decca edition with Sutherland, who is unmatched in the French repertoire, and for Louise, the Sony edition conducted by Prêtre.

As for Massenet, I suggest the EMI edition of *Manon*, conducted by Rudel, with the brilliant Beverly Sills and Nicolai Gedda. For *Esclarmonde*, the ethereal Sutherland from the Decca edition is highly recommended. For *Don Quichotte*, the superb Ghiaurov, also on Decca. And for *Werther*, the definitive recording remains Alfredo Kraus' performance, captured on EMI's CD with Plasson conducting. Of Alfredo Kraus, perhaps the most elegant and "French" tenor voice of the post-war period despite his Spanish nationality, I also recommend the Bongiovanni edition of *I Pescatori di Perle* by Bizet, conducted by Cillario. As for Bizet's other, more famous opera, a few more lines are needed. The tragic tale of the soldier Don José's love for the gypsy Carmen, which culminates in the most brutal and, in some respects, the most sensually jealous murder in the history of opera, has always been one of the most beloved works by audiences.

Although Bizet conceived the opera for a small theatre with a reduced orchestra, giving ample space to the spoken recitatives in the French style, the 20th-century performance tradition has transformed *Carmen* into a sort of grand pseudo-verismo drama, with strong colors and impactful sonorities. The sensational overture, which reprises the famous "Toreador" theme, has appeared in many cellphone ringtones, the protagonist's entrance "Habanera" has been used in a detergent advertisement, and even a master of cinema like Francesco Rosi attempted Bizet's masterpiece a few years ago.

A pinnacle for any mezzo-soprano worth their salt, *Carmen* has been interpreted by the most significant voices of the century, and this is also true for the two beautiful male roles of the lovers Don José and Escamillo, sung by the most celebrated dramatic tenors and baritones of our time. Despite all the discographic and theatrical success, today there are still two editions of this opera worth recommending, both of which, in a singular coincidence, were released in the same

year, 1964, and, another rare coincidence, both with a soprano in the title role.

The RCA edition conducted by Herbert von Karajan is a triumph of bright, sensual colors, designed for a quartet of protagonists with rich and voluptuous voices, particularly in the main duo formed by Leontyne Price and Franco Corelli, alongside whom stands a sensational young Mirella Freni as Micaela. The EMI edition conducted by Georges Prêtre, on the other hand, is colder and more cerebral, but offers the opportunity to hear Maria Callas' last great creation on disc, which, as usual, delves into the many different demands of the protagonist in a way that goes far beyond mere sensuality.

Also notable is the contribution of Claudio Abbado, who, after presenting a famous edition with Teresa Berganza in the 1970s, inaugurated the 1984 season at La Scala with a controversial production by Faggioni, which featured, alongside a still interesting—if vocally slightly worn—Shirley Verrett, who had been a great *Carmen* in her golden years, an extraordinary pair of singing actors in Plácido Domingo and Ruggero Raimondi.



## **Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791 - 1864)**

*Les Huguenots*, Bonyngé, Vrenios, Sutherland, Arroyo, Ghiuselev, Tourangeanu, Bacquier (Decca, 1969)

*Roberto il Diavolo*, Live Florence 1968, Sanzogno, Scottò, Merighi, Christoff (Myto)

## **Hector Berlioz (1803 - 1869)**

*Les Troyens*, Davis, Vickers, Lindholm, Veasey, Glossop (Philips, 1969)

## **Ambroise Thomas (1811 - 1896)**

*Hamlet*, Bonyngé, Milnes, Sutherland, Winbergh (Decca, 1983)

*Mignon*, De Almeida, Horne, Vanzo, Welting, Von Stade, Zaccaria (Sony, 1999)

## **Charles Gounod (1818 - 1893)**

*Faust*, Bonyngé, Ghiaurov, Corelli, Sutherland (Decca, 1966)

*Romeo et Juliette*, Live, Summers, Alagna, Gheorghiu (DVD Arthaus Music)

*Mireille*, Plasson, Freni, Vanzo, Baquier, Van Dam (EMI, 1979)

## **Jacques Offenbach (1819 - 1880)**

*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Bonyngé, Sutherland, Domingo, Bacquier (Decca, 1971)

## **Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 - 1921)**

*Samson et Dalila*, Myung-Whun Chung, Domingo, Meier, Fondary, Ramey (EMI, 1991)

## **Georges Bizet (1838 - 1875)**

*Carmen*, Karajan, Price, Corelli, Merrill, Freni (RCA, 1964)

*Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, Cillario, Kraus, Maliponte, Bruscantini (Carillon, Bongiovanni, 1970)

## **Leo Delibes (1836 - 1891)**

*Lakmé*, Bonyngé, Sutherland, Vanzo, Bacquier, Berbié (Decca, 1967)

## **Jules Massenet (1842 - 1912)**

*Manon*, Rudel, Sills, Gedda, Bacquier, Souzay (EMI, 1970)

*Esclarmonde*, Bonyngé, Sutherland, Aragall, Grant, Quilico, Tourangeau (Decca, 1975)

*Werther*, Plasson, Kraus, Troyanos, Manuguerra, Barbaux (EMI, 1979)

*Don Quichotte*, Kord, Ghiaurov, Bacquier, Crespin (Decca, 1978)

## **Gustave Charpentier (1860 - 1704)**

*Louise*, Prêtre, Cotrubas, Domingo, Bacquier (Sony, 1976)

## **Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)**

*Pelléas et Mélisande*, Karajan, Stilwell, Von Stade, Van Dam, Raimondi (EMI, 1978)

by Sabino Lenoci

# A Party for the Diva

**E** What a celebration!! A magical evening was lived on December 15th, the birthday of one of the most beloved Divas of Belcanto, Raina Kabaivanska!

The theater was packed, bolstered by her fans who had traveled from all over Europe, with Bulgaria in the lead, but also from Sicily, including a group of long-time friends who have been following the singer for many years (led by Raina's long-time friend Giuseppe Galati from Palermo, Cataldo Russo from Verona, Pierluca Bertè from Venice, Mariano Dalle Rose from Rome, Flavio Carnevali, Andrea Stanisci, and Giulia Zuccheri from Trieste), all coming from across Italy to present Raina with a plaque in memory of this fabulous day!

The atmosphere in the hall was not only one of joy in witnessing a concert of young talents but also of awareness in celebrating a milestone of the global operatic world, an artist who has given so much of herself—not just on the stage with her interpretations, but also in the training and teaching of young talents, under the imperative “Freedom and respect for music!” as she advises the many young people from all over the world who have sung under her attentive eye, performing arias from the great repertoire.

At the helm of the Orchestra of the Modena Conservatory, Istituto Tuminelli, was Maestro Paolo Andreoli, who conducted the young and talented orchestra with emotion and great involvement in the scores.

The lengthy program included:

Die Zauberflöte, “Der Hölle Rache” with soprano Miyoung Lee;

Don Giovanni, “Mi tradi quell’alma ingrata” with mezzo-soprano Marta Lazzaro;

---

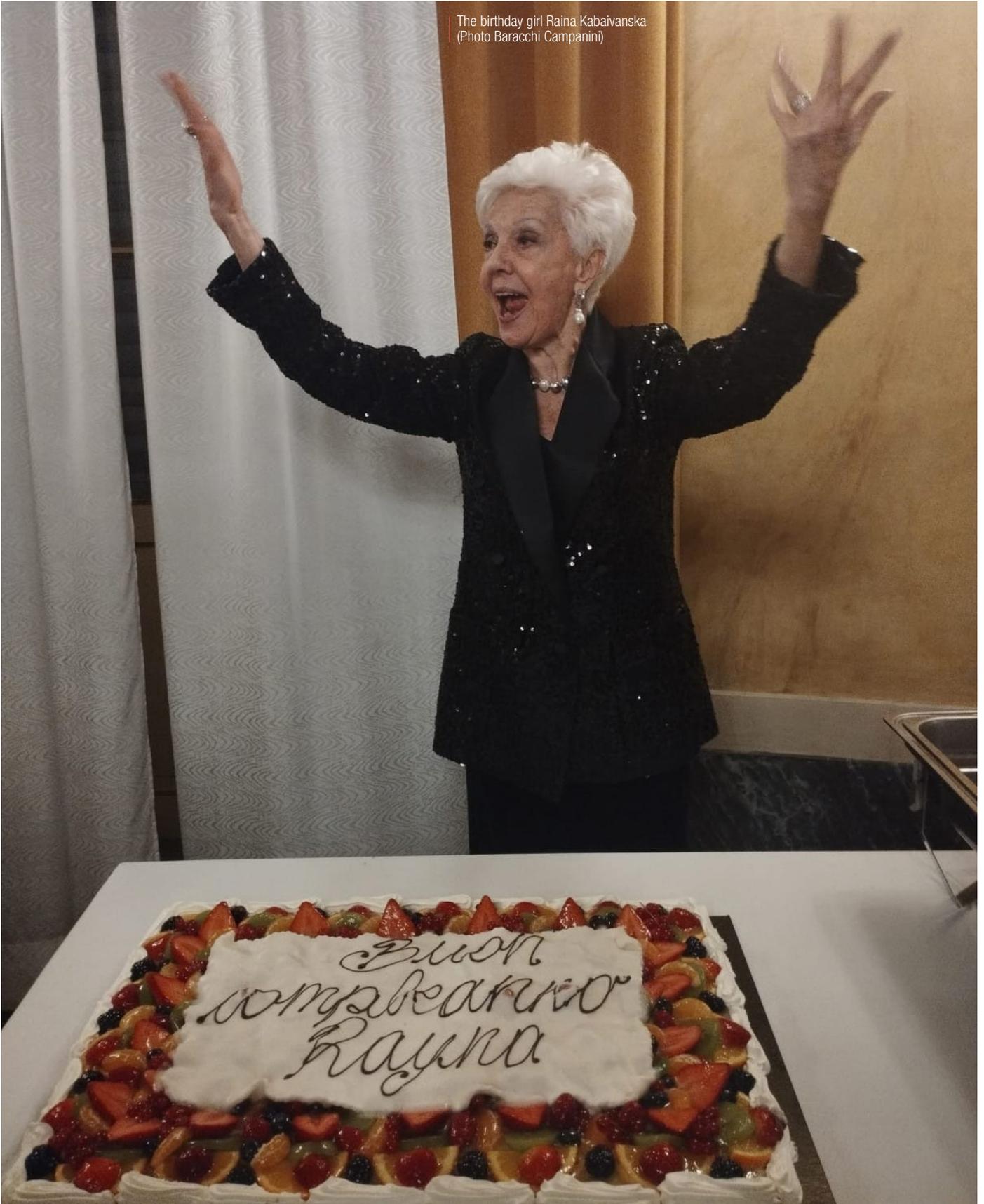
*Modena: Teatro Comunale celebrates Raina Kabaivanska's birthday with a concert by her students*

---



The protagonists of the Concert with Raina Kabaivanska (Photo Baracchi Campanini)

The birthday girl Raina Kabaivanska  
(Photo Baracchi Campanini)



# The Secret of Timeless Art: Raina Kabaivanska

It is a moment of affection for an artist whom we have come to appreciate and know for her dignified elegance and sharp intelligence. But the milestone is also an opportunity for reflection, a critical judgment, and a historical placement. We can begin with a definition: A singer-actor among the most significant of the post-war period; she has combined the art of singing with that of acting, achieving historical results across many areas of the operatic repertoire, from Romanticism to the Young School to the music of the twentieth century.

Anyone wishing to trace the history of post-war opera theater cannot omit Raina Kabaivanska: Bulgarian by origin, Italian by training, launched by the then prestigious Viotti Competition in a scorching role like Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro*. It would seem like destiny: Puccini and Verismo. If it weren't for the fact that La Scala (under Antonio Votto) had her debut in *Agnese del Maino* in the first modern Milanese revival of *Beatrice di Tenda* by Bellini, alongside Joan Sutherland. The debut was a springboard that led her to national and international stages: Covent Garden and the Met. She debuted there on October 27, 1962, as Nedda in *Pagliacci*, with Carlo Bergonzi. From there, she ventured into the late-Romantic repertoire: Alice in *Falstaff*, Leonora in *La forza del destino*, and Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* by Verdi.

Anyone who listens to her will recognize, on the one hand, the mastery of her high-class singing—support, projection, legato, control of the range, and play of light and shade; on the other hand, an effective artistic intuition. For example, in *Don Carlo*, she paints the dignity of the queen and the depth of the woman. Just listen to her voice on the word *Francia* in “*Tu che le vanità,*” where the sweet *diminuendo* creates a striking contrast with the dark sounds she creates in the phrase “*un giorno sol durò.*”

If we want to stay in the Romantic 1800s, we must listen to her Leonora in *Il Trovatore* (conducted by Herbert von Karajan), who in “*D’amore sull’ali rosee*” expresses a vibrantly human character, with a line of singing illuminated by intense shades of light and dark, where the medium density melts into soaring ascending lines.

In her engagement with the Romantic theater, we must also revisit her performances in Donizetti's works. In Roberto Devereux, which she sang at the Opera of Rome in 1988, the famous finale “*Quel*



The delivery of the plaque by the fans led by Giuseppe Galati

*sangue versato*” (perhaps the most important passage of the opera) is supported by a tragic declamation that honors the expressive *belcanto* typical of mature Donizetti. We should not forget that her portrayal could rival that of legendary cinematic actresses like Bette Davis or Vivien Leigh.

The expression “singer-actor” should not, therefore, be seen as reductive, as if an artist redeems singing through acting, but rather as encompassing an artist who always combines both, creating theater and developing the character in its entirety.

Much of her art found its ideal ground in the Young School, remembering also the contributions she made to two boisterous titles, La

*Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Figaro's Cavatina with baritone Hae Kang;  
*La Cenerentola*, “*Nacqui all'affanno*” with mezzo-soprano Maria Salvini;

*Faust*, “*Ah! Je ris de me voir si belle*” with soprano Norma Sereni;

*I vespri siciliani*, “*O tu Palermo*” with bass Toni Nezc;

*Il Trovatore*, “*Tacea la notte placida*” with soprano Maria Francesca Rossi;

“*Di quella pira*” with tenor Donghyun Kim;

*Samson et Dalila*, “*Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix*” with mezzo-soprano

Baia Saganelidze;

*Tosca*, “*Vissi d'arte*” with soprano Iolanda Massimo;

“*E lucevan le stelle*” with tenor Giuseppe Michelangelo Infantino.

After the intermezzo from *Manon Lescaut*, the “climactic” moment of the evening arrived, where the beautiful and talented students, projected into a great career in international theaters, La Scala first and foremost, paid tribute to Raina, seated in the front row, with the “*Flower Duet*” from *Madama Butterfly*—a magnificent performance by soprano Vittoria Yeo and mezzo-soprano Veronica Simeoni.

Wally and Mefistofele (the latter at La Scala in 1964 with Bergonzi, Ghiaurov, conducted by Gavazzeni).

In the Puccini year, it is essential to highlight the historical importance of Raina Kabaivanska's *Tosca* and *Cio-Cio-San*, in which she gave unforgettable performances. In *Tosca* (including her 1980 performance at La Scala with Pavarotti), Kabaivanska returns the character to its diva dimension, always carrying herself as if she were on stage, whether entering Sant'Andrea della Valle, Scarpia's study, or on the platform of Castel Sant'Angelo. The diva, after killing Scarpia, moves as though on a set. Meanwhile, the woman is shown to be real—vibrant in love and suffering, sublimated in one of the most intense and heartfelt "Vissi d'arte" ever heard. While captivated by the relationship between voice and gesture, by the beauty of her figure, and by the intensity of her acting, it is impossible to forget her mastery of singing: the support that allows her to float the voice on the breath, creating a line where the perfection of execution is vivid and pulsating.

Furthermore, anyone seeking an example of what Puccini's theater is all about should listen to and watch (the internet offers wonderful examples, but among them, the 1988 Bologna performance seems emblematic) the finale of *Madama Butterfly*. One is struck by her acting, for example, the nervousness of the hands as they cradle the child, as if *Cio-Cio-San* were wanting to feel the child's features for the last time. One is mesmerized by the singing, which makes it intense, cutting, even violent, revealing the high dramatic potential of *Cio-Cio-San*'s voice, benefiting (this observation applies to other characters too) from her unmistakable timbre.

In the repertoire of the Young School, Raina Kabaivanska was able to fully highlight *Francesca* in *Francesca da Rimini* by Riccardo Zandonai, focusing on its theatrical dimension, full of passion, elegance, bearing, acting skills, and vocal mastery.

But it is precisely in the final phase of her long career that the definition of "singer-actor" finds further confirmation in her ability to embrace and conquer new challenges. Before recalling titles and works of high cultural lineage, one must first acknowledge her performance in *The Merry Widow*. The innate elegance of Raina Kabaivanska, her style, characteristic of a lady of rank, revealed in her gestures, bearing, and poise, makes her an Anna Glawari of rare charm, embodying that glamour without which *Léhar's* operetta does not work. In *Vilja*, Raina gives a masterclass in singing: the supported sound expands and, enriched by harmonics, spreads with a contagious effect that stirs the soul. When watching the video testimonies, one wonders if the chorus is simply waiting for their part to start or if they, enraptured, are admiring such beauty, pleased to frame her. And as always, the perfection of her singing

is never divorced from the vibrancy of her accent, serving a phrasing that is always plastic and participatory.

Next comes the association with *The Makropulos Affair* by Janáček, where Raina Kabaivanska portrayed Emily Marty. Once again, she achieved an incredible success in the role of a mysterious and marvelous being who has lived for three centuries, thanks to a magical elixir, almost a metaphor for an artist beyond time, capable of overcoming trends but always as relevant as the famous Bulgarian soprano. In this context, more than the connection with *La Voix humaine*—a necessary stop for any great singer in the later stages of their career—and the Countess in *The Queen of Spades* (though we should not forget that her repertoire also includes *Tatiana* in *Eugene Onegin*, with which she bid farewell to the Met in 1979), it is essential to evoke the Countess Madeleine, the protagonist of *Capriccio* by Richard Strauss.

The idea of casting her in this role came from Carlo Fontana during his tenure at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna. Fontana, who always knew how to showcase Raina Kabaivanska's artistry, presented her with the project; it included, first and foremost, the Italian rhythmic version by Fedele D'Amico (with the usual professionalism that distinguishes her, Raina Kabaivanska would never have ventured into the German language, foreign to her artistic experience), and the direction of Luca Ronconi.

The result was a fascinating interpretation, perfect for balancing theater and music, singing and acting: she created a character who once again crowned her as the lady of the stage, just as the Countess was in her castle.

Raina Kabaivanska accomplished an extraordinary feat that rarely happens in opera theater, as opposed to cinema. While in cinema, actors and actresses gradually adapt to aging, transitioning from youthful figures to more mature ones, in opera, the great risk is seeing sopranos and tenors age into roles that no longer suit them. In contrast, Raina Kabaivanska, having moved beyond *Tosca*, *Manon*, and *Butterfly*, found new roles to keep her art alive, until she finally left the stage to enter a new role that she still fills today: as a voice teacher. Even in this role, she occupies a timeless space: educated in the principles of the great Italian school, which dates back to the 1600s, Raina Kabaivanska imparts them to her students, so they understand that the elixir of life for a singer lies in technique. To become a historic artist, however, requires a special kind of genius, not granted to everyone. But certainly to Raina Kabaivanska.

**Giancarlo Landini**

Then, suddenly, a surprise! Maria Agresta arrived, unexpected due to other commitments, but at the last minute she rushed to Modena for Raina, performing an emotional "Ave Maria" from Verdi's *Otello*! The theater literally exploded! Endless applause, followed by final greetings with all the protagonists on stage together with Raina, performing a Christmas greeting "Merry Christmas" and then "Tanti Auguri a te"!

It is well known the affection I have for Raina Kabaivanska, both as the protagonist of many operas, which I never missed, but especially

for having been by my side, along with many stars of the global theater, for my Sarzana Opera Festival, created back in 2002 together with her! A wonderful period that will always remain in my heart!

My emotion and tears were understandable from my seat, as I celebrated her 90th birthday (and she doesn't look a day over 60) to a beautiful and radiant Raina!

Happy Birthday, my beloved!

# Giuseppe Di Stefano and the States

by [Giancarlo Landini](#)

## A Star is Born

Sicilian by birth, Milanese by adoption, Di Stefano had been practicing singing since the late 1930s. During the war in Switzerland, he began his association with opera, making a series of marvelous recordings later released posthumously by EMI, while also working for Radio Lausanne, where he was still active in 1946. In that year, he started performing successfully in numerous Italian theaters, specializing in the typical repertoire of lyric tenors of the time: Nadir from *The Pearl Fishers*, Des Grieux from *Manon*, Elvino from *La Sonnambula*, Fritz from *L'Amico Fritz*, but also the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and Alfredo in *La Traviata*. By the end of 1946 and early 1947, he had already performed abroad in some of the mentioned roles. At La Scala, he achieved an extraordinary success. On the pages of the *Corriere della Sera*, Franco Abbiati, the dean of music critics, usually brief in his judgments about performers, wrote an enthusiastic review. Giuseppe Di Stefano has a beautiful voice, one of the most beautiful ever heard: masculine and sweet, delicate and commanding; his

timbre holds the warmth of sensuality and the freshness of youth. His singing flows spontaneously, supported by an innate musicality that allows him to embrace the melody and sing it with a frankness entirely new, instinctively surpassing the outdated style of the great tenors active between the two world wars. His diction is crystal clear, and he knows how to phrase with captivating tone. He is handsome and has charisma. He quickly becomes the darling of the La Scala audience and remains so throughout his career. The triumph at La Scala serves as a prestigious springboard, immediately followed by a whirlwind of engagements and another triumph at La Scala, in the autumn of 1948, in *Thomas's Mignon*, where his interpretation of Wilhelm Meister becomes legendary. His first 78 rpm records for EMI (the label with which he signed an exclusive contract) increase his success and make him instantly popular.

## The Met Debut

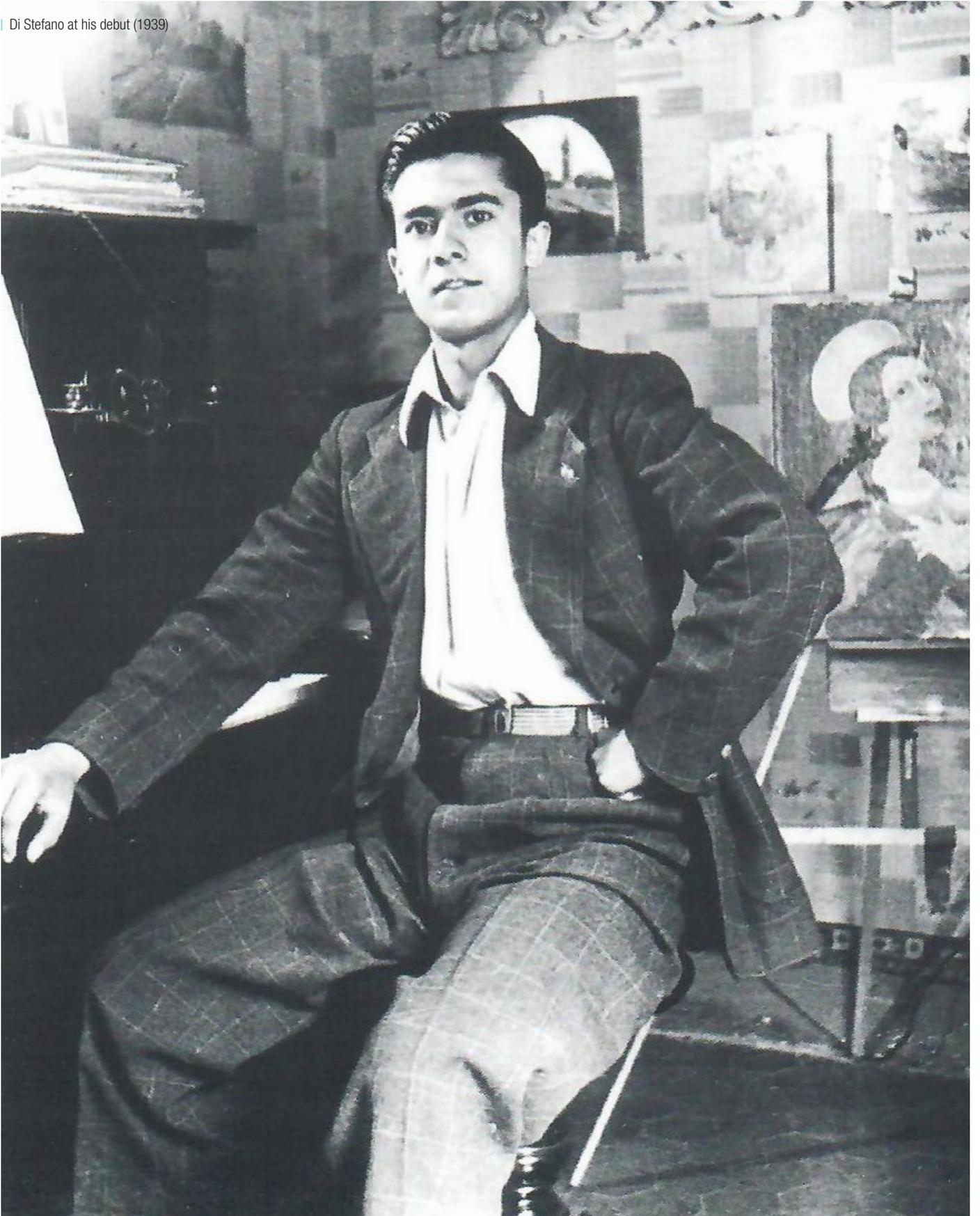
The Metropolitan Opera and Mr. Bing could certainly not let slip what might be the greatest Italian tenor of the post-war period, capable of continuing the legacy of singers like Caruso, Martinelli, Lauri-Volpi, and Gigli. Let us not forget that Mario Del Monaco was called to the Met two years later, in 1950. And so, on February 25, 1948, Di Stefano debuted at the Met as the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, alongside Leonard Warren, who, together with Lawrence Tibbett, should be considered one of the most important American baritones of the 20th century and one of the historic voices of the opera stage. In March, he performed *Manon*; with these two roles, he toured some of the major cities in the United States, including Los Angeles and Dallas. Before returning in the autumn with *Mignon*, there was time for a return to Italy, Latin America, and participation in his first season in Mexico City. During those years, the Palau de Bellas Artes organized performances with the golden voices of the time, hiring the great Italian artists. Among them, a rising star like Giuseppe Di Stefano could not be missing. In January 1949, he returned to the Met, reprising *Rigoletto* alongside Lawrence Tibbett.

Giuseppe Di Stefano returned to the role of the Duke of Mantua for the first time since his debut on February 25, 1948. Any tentativeness that may have been apparent at that time had now completely vanished, and he sang the role with the utmost confidence and finesse. Apart from his habit of pushing up to high notes, which could become a bothersome mannerism if he does not correct it, Mr. Di Stefano's performance warranted only the highest praise. His voice sounded remarkably free and beautiful at all times; his phrasing was constantly musical, and he delivered Verdi's melodies with model legato, yet with the requisite sharpness of accentuation. Though his acting did not penetrate far beneath the surface of the character, he looked great and demonstrated that his stage presence was rapidly attaining the polish it had sometimes lacked.

| Duke of Mantua at the Met (1948)



| Di Stefano at his debut (1939)





Di Stefano with Sir Rudolf Bing

On Music America, Cecil Smith highlighted the artistic growth of the young tenor, emphasizing the qualities of a voice of great allure, the value of an interpretation that was steadily improving, but also identifying what could be considered the Achilles' heel of Giuseppe Di Stefano: the tendency to rely too much on his magnificent vocal resources, sometimes at the expense of a more complex technical and artistic depth.

1949 was a year of frequent performances on the main American stage. After the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, he performed Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, strangely paired with Strauss's *Salome*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, the Italian tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Fenton in *Falstaff*, and Faust in Gounod's *Faust*.

The reader may refer to numerous live recordings that provide a valuable testimony of Di Stefano's artistry. Let's not forget the feats in *Faust*, where in the famous cavatina "Salut demeure, chaste et pure," Di Stefano hits the high C; we recommend two listens: the first is Alfredo's aria from the second act of *La Traviata*, "Lunge da lei...De' miei bollenti spiriti" (January 23, 1949). Di Stefano's voice is captured in the freshness of his early career: sweet and masculine; the tenor showcases intimate and confidential singing; the melody flows naturally and spontaneously. As he climbs to the high notes, it shines with the youthful boldness, perfectly capturing the heartfelt emotions of an Alfredo still unaware of the tragedy that is about to befall his love for Violetta. The second is the aria of the Italian tenor (December 3, 1949). Here, Di Stefano adopts a different vocal approach that gives the sound the penetration and incisiveness needed to express the emphasis of a piece that seems to belong to a serious 18th-century opera. The melody is delivered with a forward thrust, with that open vocal style that might upset purists, but which Di Stefano keeps perfectly controlled in this moment. His clear diction, the almost disdainful accent, give the piece an almost heroic flavor.

Between 1950 and 1951, Di Stefano performed as the Count of Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, which he had already debuted in Mexico City, while in the preceding months he had made a

name for himself in several American metropolises. Among the highlights were performances in San Francisco, with two concerts, one with Renata Tebaldi and the other with Bidu Sayao, and several operatic titles, including *Lucia di Lammermoor*, where he would later become a celebrated interpreter, especially in performances conducted by Karajan with Maria Callas.

### The Requiem with Toscanini

However, it is not *Almaviva* (which was not appreciated by critics) that draws our attention, but rather the two evenings of February 26 and 27, at Carnegie Hall. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Giuseppe Verdi's death, under Arturo Toscanini's direction, alongside Herva Nelli, Fedora Barbieri, and Cesare Siepi, Di Stefano sings the Requiem Mass. The listener should hear "Ingemisco" and "Hostias": Urged on by the feverish orchestra of Toscanini, Di Stefano performs an "Ingemisco" of remarkable expressive power, where the sweetness Verdi demands is conveyed through the warm humanity that the tenor pours into his phrasing, capturing the colors of fear, shame, and fervent prayer. Di Stefano takes the A and B-flat notes with a firm, decisive clarity. Purists will certainly notice unorthodox emission techniques, but the natural force of his voice is such that it burns away any faults, transforming them into virtues. No less astonishing is "Hostias," where Di Stefano's voice emerges above the strings, which Toscanini demands to be played with extreme vibrancy, in a mezzo-soprano-like, emotionally penetrating half-voice.

His debut in *Madama Butterfly* in 1952 closes the first phase of Giuseppe Di Stefano's career at the Met, surrounded by mixed reviews.

### First Return to the Metropolitan

He returned in 1955 as Don José in *Carmen*. Meanwhile, much had changed. The lyric tenor had become decidedly more dramatic, even verging on a spinto tenor. At La Scala, he was firmly established in roles like Enzo in *La Gioconda*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, and Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. He had become the constant partner of Maria Meneghini Callas in the series of complete operas recorded by EMI with the La Scala Orchestra, spanning from Bellini's *I Puritani* to Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, to Puccini's *Tosca*. Directed by Victor De Sabata, they created what is perhaps the most beautiful *Tosca* recording of all time, alongside Maria Callas. But he also left his mark as Cavaradossi with Renata Tebaldi in the gala performance of April 24, 1954, marking the opening of the Fiera Campionaria, an event as important as the season's inauguration. Less than a month later, he performed Eugene Onegin, portraying Lenski alongside Renata Tebaldi's Tatiana. In November 1954, he returned to the United States, performing *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Maria Callas in Chicago, and *Tosca* with Eleanor Steber.

In 1955, he debuted *Carmen* at La Scala, the first time the opera was performed in French at the Piermarini Theatre, conducted by Herbert von Karajan. His activity became frenetic, and the repertoire was nothing short of eclectic, including Don Alvaro at La Scala with Renata Tebaldi, Arturo and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* in Chicago with Maria Callas, Rodolfo with Renata Tebaldi, and Turiddu with Ebe Stignani, without forgetting the remarkable performance of *La Traviata* with Maria Callas in the production by Luchino Visconti.

Giuseppe Di Stefano, absent from the Metropolitan Opera since



Di Stefano, Otello in Pasadena

the 1951-52 season, returned in the season's third performance of Bizet's *Carmen* to give his first Metropolitan performance of the role of Don José, which he had sung at La Scala and elsewhere. It was good to hear his beautiful voice again and to observe that he had improved in stage presence and dramatic ability in the meantime. While his voice sounded a bit dry and thin in the first act, it gained in volume and brilliance as the evening progressed, and it maintained the caress, the plasticity, and the exciting quality that characterize all great Italian tenors. What a pity that Mr. Di Stefano became flustered at the close of the Flower Song, spoiling Bizet's most felicitous harmonic touch! Up until that point, he had sung it more beautifully than anyone I had heard in years. It was in the final act, however, that he was at his best. His Don José was a pitiable, broken victim, only gradually rising to a fury of murderous resentment and despair. Vocally and dramatically, this was a notable achievement. Earlier, he had seemed stiff and uneasy, but it was clear that he was a singer the Metropolitan should cherish.

This was a successful performance that highlighted the transformation of the tenor from his early career into a voice that excelled in more dramatic roles. This aspect, which worked well in Bizet's opera, seemed to be a limitation in his reprise of *Faust*, about which Henry V. Lewinger wrote in the *Musical Courier*: "This year the title role was sung by Giuseppe Di Stefano, who has rejoined

the Metropolitan roster. His voice has exceptional sweetness and beauty, but for the more dramatic accents of this assignment, he lacks power and often resorts to pushing, which does not enhance the quality of his singing."

After a *Rigoletto*, where Di Stefano reprised a more mature Duke of Mantua, it was *Tosca* that won universal acclaim. He sang it for the first time on January 13 with Zinka Milanov and Tito Gobbi at his Met debut; Jay S. Harrison in the *Herald Tribune* had words of praise, comparing Di Stefano's voice to that of Björling, an idolized tenor in the American opera world: "For his part, Mr. Di Stefano was not to be bested by a newcomer to the Met's roster. His singing was the most beautiful I have heard from a tenor in longer than I care to recall, and his work of the evening clearly announced that, with the singular exception of Bjöerling's, his voice is the most lavishly lovely in opera today. Throughout, his larynx curved with ineffable grace, and tones were set free with effortless purity and élan. In every way, his Cavaradossi was a character worth remembering."

The same praise was repeated on January 24 when Di Stefano was joined by Renata Tebaldi and the famous German baritone Paul Schöffler. The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* wrote: "Opposite her [Renata Tebaldi] as Mario Cavaradossi was the Sicilian tenor Giuseppe Di Stefano, also new here in this role. Mr. Di Stefano's is a beautiful lyric tenor in the best Italian tradition. He phrases with taste, and his tone is caressing in its purity and texture. His 'E lucevan le stelle' was the work of an artist, and the audience gave vent to a second ovation. Mr. Di Stefano also brings much dignity and a touch of restraint to his portrayal of the Roman painter. Both he and Miss Tebaldi have the smoldering temperament, capable of bursting into sudden flame that *Tosca* requires."

### Di Stefano's Final Return

In 1955, another Italian tenor, now largely forgotten, Giuseppe Campora, made his Met debut. Supported by Decca, he quickly won the favor of the public in some roles better suited to Di Stefano's voice than the more dramatic parts that he had been increasingly taking on. Di Stefano returned to the Met only on January 27, 1965. In the nearly nine years between his previous appearance and this new debut, the famous tenor had performed frequently in the States: repeatedly in Chicago, *La Gioconda* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* with Renata Tebaldi in 1957, *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Anna Moffo in 1958, *Turandot*, *Carmen*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1959, again *Carmen*, *Tosca*, and *Fedora* with Renata Tebaldi in 1960, confirming his choice to embrace a vast repertoire without neglecting more dramatic vocal parts. In 1963, he performed *Andrea Chénier* and *Manon Lescaut* in Cincinnati, and held a major concert at Carnegie Hall. In 1965, he was back at the Met for a single performance of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. By now, Di Stefano's career was clearly in decline, despite his enduring charisma and the support of fans. But this was an ill-considered debut: it was an opera he did not know and which required extensive preparation; the protagonist's role was long and difficult and did not suit his temperament. He did not achieve the expected success. Thus, the curtain fell on Di Stefano's activity at the Met, though not in the U.S., where in 1966, in Pasadena, California, he performed *Otello*. There would still be room for unfortunate concerts with Maria Callas and a masterclass in Los Angeles in 1986. The years of his astonishing debut were, sadly, long behind him.

## Italy

### BARI

**Fondazione Teatro Petruzzelli**  
Via Salvatore Cognetti, 8 –  
70121 Bari  
Tel. (+39) 080/9752840  
Fax (+39)080/9752845  
info@fondazionepetruzzelli.it –  
www.fondazionepetruzzelli.it

April 18, 22, 27

#### *THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA*

Music by Benjamin Britten  
Conductor Francesco Cilluffo – Direction, sets  
and costumes Yannis Kokkos  
Cast Marco Spotti, Stefanie Iranyi, Rory  
Musgrave, Christian Senn, Nicole Piccolomini,  
Francesca Benitez, Moritz Kallenberg,  
Caterina Dellaere

### CAGLIARI

**Teatro Lirico by Cagliari**  
Via Sant'Alenixedda - 09128 Cagliari,  
Tel.: (+39) 070/40 82 1  
Fax: (+39) 070/40 82 22 / 45 / 51  
www.teatroliricodicagliari.it

March 14, 15, 16, 18, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23

#### *IL BARBIERE* by *SIVIGLIA*

Music Gioachino Rossini - Libretto by Cesare  
Sterbini  
Conductor Giovanni Andreoli – Direction  
Filippo Crivelli - sets Emanuele Luzzati –  
Costumes Santuzza Cali  
Cast Maxim Mironov/Chuan Wang, Giulio  
Mastrototaro/Vincenzo Taormina, Annalisa  
Stroppa/Michela Guarrera, Daniele Terenzi/  
Marcello Rosiello, Peter Martincic/Marco  
Spotti, Chiara Notarnicola, Giuseppe

April 24, 26, 27, 29, 30 May 2, 3, 4

#### *LA WALLY*

Music Alfredo Catalani - Libretto by Luigi Illica  
Conductor Giovanni Andreoli – Direction  
sets and costumes Massimo Gasparon  
Cast Oksana Dyka/Rachele Stanisci, Antonella  
Colaiani, Elena Schirru, Marcelo Alvarez/  
Konstantin Kipiani, Devid Cecconi/Igor  
Podoplelov

### CATANIA

**Teatro Massimo Bellini**  
Via Giuseppe Perrotta, 12  
95131 Catania  
Tel. +39 095/7306111

March 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15

#### *DON GIOVANNI*

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –  
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte  
Conductor Beatrice Venezi – Direction Davide  
Garattini Raimondi – Sets Ezio Frigerio –  
Costumes Franca Squarciapino  
Cast Markus Werba/Christian Federici, Desirée  
Rancatore/Elisa Verzier, Valerio Borgioni/  
Matteo Falcier, Andrea Comelli/Luca Park,  
Jose' Maria Lo Monaco/Evgeniya Vukkert,  
Cristian Senn/Salvatore Salvaggio, Shi Zong/  
Costantino Finucci, Albane Carrere/Cristin  
Arsenova

April 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19

#### *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by  
Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Conductor Alessandro D'Agostini - Direction  
and sets Lino Privitera - Costumes Alfredo  
Corno  
Cast Valeria Sepe/Myrtò Papatanasu, Laura  
Verrecchia/Carlotta Vichi, Paola Francesca  
Natale/Serafina Liberman, Leonardo Caimi/  
Carlo Ventre, Luca Galli/ Francesco Landolfi,  
Saverio Pugliese/Mauro Bolognesi, Roberto  
Accurso, Gianfranco Montesor, Filippo Micale

### FLORENCE

**Fondazione del Teatro del May**  
**Musicle Fiorentino**  
Piazzale Vittorio Gui - 50144 Firenze  
Tel.: (+39) 055/2779 350  
www.operadifirenze.it

March 9, 11, 14, 16

#### *NORMA*

Music by Vincenzo Bellini – Libretto by Felice  
Romani  
Conductor Michele Spotti – Direction Andrea  
De Rosa – Sets Daniele Spanò – Costumes  
Gianluca Sbicca  
Cast Jessica Pratt, Maria Laura Iacobellis,  
Mert Sungu, Riccardo Zanellato

#### 87 Festival del May Fiorentino

April 13, 16, 23, 27

#### *SALOME*

Music by Richard Strauss – Libretto by  
Hedwig Lachmann  
Conductor Alexander Soddy – Direction  
Emma Dante – Sets Carmine Maringola –  
Costumes Vanessa Sannino  
Cast Nikolai Schukoff, Anna Maria Chiuri,  
Allison Oakes, Iain Paterson, Eric Fennell,  
Marvic Monreal, Arnold Beuyen, Mathias  
Frey, Patrick Vogel, Franz Gurtelschmied, Karl  
Huml, William Hernandez, Frederic Jong Baek,  
Michele Pertusi

April 18

#### *MESSA DA REQUIEM*

Music by Giuseppe Verdi  
Conductor Zubin Mehta  
Cast Roberta Mantegna, Agnieska Rehlis,  
Seok Jo

May 3

#### *WAR REQUIEM*

Music by Benjamin Britten  
Directed by Diego Ceretta  
Cast Elizaveta Shuvalova, Ian Bostridge,  
Dietrich Henschel

May 25, 28, 31

#### *DER JUNGE LORD*

Music by Han Werner Henze – Libretto by  
Ingeborg Bachmann  
Conductor Markus Stenz – Direction Daniele  
Menghini – Sets Davide Signorini – Costumes  
Nika Campisi  
Cast Levent Bakirci, Matteo Falcier, Caterina  
Dellaere, Andreas Mattersberge, Yuri  
Strakhov, Marina Comparato, Eleonora  
Bellocchi, Nikoletta Hertsak, Antonio Mandrillo,  
James Kee

### MILAN

**Teatro alla Scala**  
Piazza della Scala - 20121 Milano  
Tel. (+39) 02/88791  
www.teatroallascala.org

March 2, 5, 8, 11

#### *EVGENIJ ONEGIN*

Music by Pëtr Il'ic Cajkovskij – Libretto by  
Pëtr Il'ic Cajkovskij and Konstantin Shilovskij  
Conductor Timur Zangiev – Direction Mario  
Martone - Sets Margherita Palli – Costumes  
Ursula Patzak  
Cast Alisa Kolosova, Aida Garifullina, Elmina

Hasan, Julia Gertseva, Alexey Markov, Dmitry Korchak, Dmitry Ulyanov, Oleg Budaratskiy, Yaroslav Abaimov

March 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30 April 2, 4

### TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa  
Conductor Michele Gamba – Direction Davide Livermore – Sets Giò Forma – Costumes Gianluca Falschi  
Cast Chiara Isotton, Elena Stikhina, Francesco Meli, Fabio Sartori, Luca Salsi, Enkhbat Amartuvshin, Huanhong Li, Marco Filippo Romano, Carlo Bosi

March 29 April 1, 3, 6, 9

### L'OPERA SERIA

Music by Florian Leopold Gassmann – Libretto by Ranieri de' Calzabigi and Pietro Metastasio  
Conductor Christophe Rousset – Direction and costumes Laurent Pelly – Sets Massimo Troncanetti  
Cast Pietro Spagnoli, Mattia Olivieri, Giovanni Sala, Josh Lovell, Julie Fuchs, Andrea Carroll, Serena Gamberoni, Alessio Arduini, Alberto Allegrezza, Lawrence Zazzo, Filippo Mineccia

April 27, 30 May 3, 6, 10

### IL NOME DELLA ROSA

Music by Francesco Filidei – Libretto by Francesco Filidei and Stefano Busellato  
Conductor Ingo Metzmacher – Direction Damiano Michieletto – Sets Paolo Fantin – Costumes Carla Teti  
Cast Lucas Meachem, Kate Lindsey, Katrina Galka, Gianluca Buratto, Daniela Barcellona, Marco Filippo Romano, Roberto Frontali, Giorgio Berrugi, Owen Willetts, Giovanni Sala, Carlo Vistoli, Leonardo Cortellazzi, Adrien Mathonat

May 14, 17, 20, 23, 27, 30

### TRITTICO WEILL

Music by Kurt Weill - Libretto by Bertolt Brecht  
Conductor Riccardo Chailly – Direction Irina Brook  
Cast Alma Sadé, Lauren Michelle, Elliott Carlton Hines, Andrew Harris, Matthäus Schmidlechner, Michael Smallwood, Geoffrey Carey, Andrew Harris, Elliott Carlton Hines, Markus Werba, Matthäus Schmidlechner

## MODENA

### Teatro Comunale Luciano Pavarotti – Mirella Freni

Via del Teatro 8 - I-41100 Modena  
Tel.: (+39)059/20 69 93  
[www.teatrocomunalemodena.it](http://www.teatrocomunalemodena.it)

March 20, 22, 23

### CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

Music by Pietro Mascagni – Libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci  
**PAGLIACCI**  
Music and Libretto by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
Conductor Aldo Sisillo - Direction Plamen Kartaloff - Costumes Nella Emil Dimitrova-Stoyanova  
- Sets Giacomo Andrico  
Cast Teresa Romano, Fabián Veloz, Ernesto Petti, Angelo Villari, Amadi Lagha, Eleonora Filippini, Francesca Cucuzza, Daniela Schillaci, Marina Shakhdinanova, Angelo Villari, Fabián Veloz, Ernesto Petti, Giuseppe Infantino, Hae Kang

April 11, 13

### HENGITI – RESPIRO / JEZIORO POPIOLOW – LAGO by CESARE / PERLA by SPERANZA

Music by Paavo Korpiljaakko, Benjamin Baczewski, Marco Attura – Libretto by Mirva Koivukangas, Jagoda Jagson, Vincenzo De Vivo  
Direction Matteo Mazzoni - Sets and costumes Joanna Borkowska

## NAPLES

### Teatro by San Carlo

Via San Carlo 98 - 80132 Napoli  
Tel.: (+39)081/79 72 331  
[www.teatrosancarlo.it](http://www.teatrosancarlo.it)

March 20, 23, 26, 29

### SALOME

Music by Richard Strauss – Libretto by Hedwig Lachmann  
Conductor Dan Ettinger - Direction Manfred Schweighofler - Sets Nicola Rubertelli - costumes Kathrin Dorigo  
Cast Charles Workman, Emily Magee, Ricarda Merbeth, Brian Mulligan, John Findon, Štěpánka Pucálková, Gregory Bonfatti, Kristofer Lundin, Sun Tianxuefei, Dan Karlström, Stanislav Vorobyov, Liam James Karai, Žilvinas Miškinis, Alessandro Abis, Artur Janda, Giacomo Mercaldo, Vasco Maria Vagnoli

April 16, 19, 23, 26, 29

### LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini  
Conductor Jonathan Darlington – Direction, sets and costumes Hugo De Ana  
Cast Anna Pirozzi, Gabriele Viviani, Martin Muehle, Alberto Robert, Mariano Buccino, Leon Kim, Lodovico Filippo Ravizza, Antonio Garés, Clemente Antonio Daliotti, Gregory Bonfatti, Paolo Antognetti, Pietro by Bianco, Lorenzo Mazzucchelli, Sebastia Serra, Antonia Salzano, Gabriele Ribis, Yunho Kim, Michele Maddaloni

April 24, 27

### ATTILA

Music Giuseppe Verdi - Libretto by Temistocle Solera and Francesco Maria Piave  
Conductor Diego Ceretta  
Cast Ildar Abdrazakov, Ernesto Petti, Sondra Radvanovsky, Luciano Ganci, Francesco Domenico Dot, Sebastia Serra

May 18, 21, 23, 25, 27

### LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT

Music Gaetano Donizetti - Libretto by Jean-François Bayard and Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges  
Conductor Riccardo Bisatti – Direction Damiano Michieletto - Sets Paolo Fantin - costumes Agostino Cavalca  
Cast Pretty Yende, Ruzil Gatin, Sergio Vitale, Sonia Ganassi, Eugenio by Lieto, Marisa Laurito, Salvatore De Crescenzo, Ivan Lualdi

## PALERMO

### Teatro Massimo

Piazza Verdi, 90138 Palermo PA  
Tel. (+39) 091 6053580  
[biglietteria@teatromassimo.it](mailto:biglietteria@teatromassimo.it)

March 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25

### FAUST

Music by Charles Gounod – Libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré  
Conductor Daniel Oren – Direction Fabio Ceresa – Sets Tiziano Santi – Costumes Giuseppe Palella  
Cast Ivan Ayón Rivas, Arthur Espiritu, Federica Guida, Benedetta Torre, Erwin Schrott, Nicolas Courjal, Andrew Hamilton, Anna Pennisi, Daniele Muratori Caputo

# Program

April 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18

## *L'ELISIR D'AMORE*

Music by Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by Felice Romani  
Conductor Gabriele Ferro – Direction Ruggero Cappuccio – Sets Nicola Rubertelli – costumes Carlo Poggioni  
Cast René Barbera, Galeano Salas, Desirée Rancatore, Giulia Mazzola, Vittorio Prato, Andrea Piazza, Paolo Bordogna, Francesco Vultaggio, Federica Maggi

---

May 20, 22, 24, 25, 27

## *SALOME*

Music by Richard Strauss – Libretto by Hedwig Lachmann  
Conductor Omer Meir Wellber – Direction Bruno Ravella – Sets and costumes Leslie Travers  
Cast Charles Workman, Anna Maria Chiuri, Astrid Kessler, Tommi Hakala, Ewandro Stenzowski, Michael Gibson, Raphael Wittmer, Marcello Nardis, Sascha Emanuel Kramer, Benjamin Suran, Lukasz Konieczny, Blagoj Nacoski, Mariano Orozco, Maria Cristina Napoli

---

## PARMA

**Teatro Regio by Parma**  
Via Garibaldi 16/A - 43100 Parma  
Tel.: (+39) 0521/20 39 93  
[www.teatroregioparma.it](http://www.teatroregioparma.it)

March 1, 5, 7, 9

## *IL BARBIERE* by *SIVIGLIA*

Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by Cesare Sterbini  
Conductor George Petrou – Direction, sets and costumes Pier Luigi Pizzi  
Cast Maria Kataeva, Davide Luciano, Ruzil Gatin, Roberto De Candia, Carlo Lepore, Licia Piermatteo, William Corò

---

April 4, 6, 10, 12

## *LA BOHÈME*

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Conductor Riccardo Bisatti – Direction and costumes Marialuisa Bafunno – Sets Eleonora Peronetti  
Cast Roberta Mantegna, John Osborn, Juliana Grigoryan, Alessandro Luongo, Roberto Lorenzi, Alei Kulagin

---

May 3, 6, 9, 11

## ANDREA CHÉNIER

Music by Umberto Giordano – Libretto by Luigi Illica  
Conductor Francesco Lanzillotta – Direction Pier Francesco Maestrini PIER FRANCESCO MAESTRINI – Sets Nicolas Boni – Costumes Stefania Scaraggi  
Cast Gregory Kunde, Luca Salsi, Natalia Gavrilan, Saioa Hernandez, Andrea Pellegrini, Manuela Custer, Enrico Casari

## PIACENZA

**Teatro Municipale**  
Via Giuseppe Verdi 41  
29100 Piacenza  
Tel.: (+39)0523/49 22 51  
[biglietteria@teatripiacenza.it](mailto:biglietteria@teatripiacenza.it)  
[www.teatripiacenza.it](http://www.teatripiacenza.it)

March 28 – 30

## *CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA*

Music by Pietro Mascagni – Libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti  
*PAGLIACCI*  
Music and Libretto by Ruggero Leoncavallo  
Conductor Aldo Sisillo – Direction Plamen Kartaloff – Sets Giacomo Andrigo – New production  
Cast (Cavalleria rusticana) Teresa Romano, Francesca Cucuzza, Angelo Villari, Ernesto Petti, Eleonora Filipponi; (Pagliacci) Daniela Schillaci, Angelo Villari, Ernesto Petti, Giuseppe Infantino, Hae Kang

---

April 9, 11, 13

## *DIE ZAUBERFLOTE*

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder  
Conductor Massimo Raccanelli – Direction Marco Bellussi – Sets Matteo Paoletti Franzato – Costumes Elisa Cobello – New production  
Cast Antonio Mandrillo, Leonor Bonilla, Dmitri Grigorev, Claudia Urru, Gianluca Failla, Alessandra Adorno, Gesua Gallifoco, Silvia Calio, Janessa Shae O'Hearn, Lorenzo Martelli, Giulio Riccò, Carlo Enrico Confalonieri

---

## ROME

**Teatro dell'Opera**  
Piazza Beniamino Gigli 7  
00184 Roma  
Tel.: (+39)06/48 16 0255  
[www.operaroma.it](http://www.operaroma.it)

March 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

## *TOSCA*

Music Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Conductor Daniel Oren – Direction Alessandro Talevi – Sets and costumes Adolf Hohenstein  
Cast Anna Netrebko / Yolanda Auyanet, Yusif Eyvazov / Luciano Ganci, Amartuvshin Enkbath / Gabriele Viviani, Gabriele Sagona, Domenico Colaiani, Saverio Fiore

---

March 18, 21, 23, 25, 26

## *ALCINA*

Music by Georg Friedrich Händel  
Conductor Rinaldo Alessandrini – Direction Pierre Audi – Sets and costumes Patrick Kinmonth  
Cast Mariangela Sicilia, Carlo Vistoli, Caterina Piva, Anthony Gregory, Mary Bevan, Silvia Frigato, Francesco Salvadori  
April 23, 24, 26, 27, 29 May 2

## *SUOR ANGELICA*

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giovacchino Forzano  
Conductor Michele Mariotti – Direction Calixto Bieito – Sets Anna Kirsch – costumes Ingo Krügler  
Cast Corinne Winters / Yolanda Auyanet, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Annunziata Vestri  
*IL PRIGIONIERO*  
Musica and Libretto by Luigi Dallapiccola  
Conductor Michele Mariotti – Direction Calixto Bieito – Sets Anna Kirsch – costumes Ingo Krügler  
Cast Ekaterina Semenchuk, Mattia Olivieri, John Daszak

---

May 9, 11,

## *TOSCA*

Music Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Conductor James Conlon – Direction Alessandro Talevi – Sets and costumes Adolf Hohenstein  
Cast Anna Pirozzi, Luciano Ganci, Claudio Sgura, Luciano Leoni, Domenico Colaiani  
Saverio Fiore

---

May 14, 16, 18, 21, 23

## *IL RE PASTORE*

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Pietro Metastasio  
Conductor Manlio Benzi – Direction Cecilia Ligorio – Sets Gregorio Zurla – Costumes Vera Pierantoni Giua  
Cast Juan Francisco Gatell, Miriam Albano, Francesca Pia Vitale, Benedetta Torre, Krystian

Adam

## TURIN

## Teatro Regio Torino

Piazza Castello, 215 - Torino  
tel +39 011 8815 241/242

March 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11

*RIGOLETTO*

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Horace Everett

Conductor Nicola Luisotti - Direction Leo Muscato - Sets Federica Parolini -

Costumes Silvia Aymonino

Cast George Petean, Devid Cecconi, Giuliana Gianfaldoni, Daniela Cappiello, Piero Pretti, Oreste Cosimo, Goderdzi Janelidze, Luca Tittoto, Martina Belli, Veta Pilipenko, Siphokazi Molteno, Emanuele Cordaro, Janusz Nosek, Mark Kim, Pete Thanapat, Albina Tonkikh, Chiara Notarnicola

April 1, 3, 6, 8, 11, 13, 16

*LA DAMA by PICCHE*

Music by Pëtr Il'ic Cajkovskij – Libretto by Modest Il'ic Cajkovskij

Conductor Valentin Uryupin – Direction Richard Jones – Sets and costumes John Macfarlane

Cast Zarina Abaeva, Mikhail Pirogov, Jennifer Larmore, Elchin Azizov, Vladimir Stoyanov, Deniz Uzun, Alexey Dolgov, Vladimir Sazdovski, Ksenia Chubunova, Joseph Dahdah, Viktor Shevchenko, Irina Bogdanova, Albina Tonkikh

May 13, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26

*HAMLET*

Music Ambroise Thomas - Libretto by Michel Carré and Jules Barbier

Conductor Jérémie Rhorer - Direction Jacopo Spirei - Sets Gary McCann - Costumes Giada Masi

Cast John Osborn, Riccardo Zanellato, Nicolò Donini, André Courville, Alexander Marev, Julien Henric, Sara Blanch, Marko Mimica, Clémentine Margaine

## TRIESTE

Fondazione Teatro Lirico  
"Giuseppe Verdi"Riva Tre November 1, 34121 Trieste  
Tel 040 6722200

info@teatroverdi-trieste.com

March 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30

*DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER*

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner

Conductor Enrico Calesso - Direction

Henning Brockhaus - Sets Alfons Flores –

Costumes Giancarlo Colis

Cast James Rutherford, Clay Hilley, Elena

Batoukova-Kerl, Albert Dohmen

April 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 27

*LUCIA by LAMMERMOOR*

Music by Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by

Salvatore Cammarano

Conductor Daniel Oren - Direction Bruno

Berger-Gorski – Sets Carmen Castanon

Cast Jessica Pratt, Stefan Pop, Carlo Lepore,

Maxim Lisiin, Miriam Artico

May 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25

*RIGOLETTO*

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

Conductor Daniel Oren - Direction Vivien Hewitt

Cast Amartuvshin Enkhbat, Enkeleda Kamani, Galeano Salas, Martina Belli, Carlo Striuli, Miriam Artico

## VENICE

## Teatro La Fenice

Campo San Fantin nr 1965  
30124 Venezia  
Tel.: (+39) 041/ 24 24  
www.teatrolafenice.it

March 7, 9, 11, 13, 15

*IL TRIONFO DELL'ONORE*

Music Alessandro Scarlatti - Libretto by

Francesco Antonio Tullio

Conductor Enrico Onofri – Direction Stefano

Vizioli – Sets and costumes Ugo Nespolo

Cast Giulia Bolcato, Rosa Bove, Raffaele Pe,

Francesca Lombardi Mazzulli, Dave Monaco,

Luca Cervoni, Giuseppina Bridelli, Tommaso

Barea

March 28, 30 April 1, 4, 6

*ANNA BOLENA*

Music by Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by Felice Romani

Conductor Renato Balsadonna – Direction, sets and costumes Pier Luigi Pizzi

Cast Alex Esposito, Lidia Fridman, Carmela

Remigio, William Corò, Enea Scala, Manuela Custer, Luigi Morassi

May 2, 4, 10, 13, 15

*DER PROTAGONIST*

Music by Kurt Weill – Libretto by Georg Kaiser

Conductor Markus Stenz – Direction Ezio Toffolutti

Cast Matthias Koziorowski, Martina

Welschenbach, Dean Murphy, Alexander

Geller, Zachary Altman, Szymon Chojnacki,

Matteo Ferrara, Remy Bres-Feuillet

May 16, 18, 20, 22, 24

*ATTILA*

Music Giuseppe Verdi - Libretto by Temistocle Solera

Conductor Sebastiano Rolli – Direction Leo Muscato - Sets Federica Parolini - Costumes

Silvia Aymonino

Cast Michele Pertusi, Vladimir Stoyanov,

Anastasia Bartoli, Andeka Gorrotxategi,

Andrea Schifauo, Francesco Milanese

## VERONA

## Teatro Filarmonico

Fondazione Arena by Verona  
Via Roma - 37121 Verona  
Tel.: (+39) 045/80 51 891  
Fax: +39 (045) 80 31 443  
www.arena.it

March 16, 19, 21, 23

*ELEKTRA*

Music by Richard Strauss – Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Conductor Michael Balke – Direction Yamal das Irmich – Alessia Colosso – Costumes

Eleonora Nascimbeni

Cast Anna Maria Chiuri, Lise Lindstrom, Ewa

Vesin, Peter Tantsits, Thomas Tatzl, Nicolò

Donini, Anna Cimmarrusti, Veronica Marini,

Leonardo Cortellazzi, Stefano Rinaldi Miliani,

Raffaella Linti, Lucia Cervoni, Marzia March,

Francesca Maionchi, Manuela Cucuccio

Estero

BARCELONA

# Program

## Gran Teatre del Liceu

La Rambla 51-59 -  
08002 Barcelona (Spagna)  
Tel.: (+34)93 485 99 00 -  
Fax: (+34)93 485 99 19  
informacio@liceubarcelona.com -  
www.liceubarcelona.com

March 17, 19, 21, 14, 27, 30

### LOHENGRIN

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
Conductor Josep Pons – Direction Katharina Wagner – Sets Marc Loher – Costumes Thomas Kaiser  
Cast Gunther Groissbock, Klaus Florian Vogt, Elisabeth Teige, Olafur Sigurdarson, Irène Theorin, Roman Trekel, Jorge Rodriguez Norton, Gerardo Lòpez, Ferran albrich, Marc Pujol

April 16, 22, 25, 28 – May 2, 5, 7, 8

### LA SONNAMBULA

Music by Vincenzo Bellini – Libretto by Felice Romani  
Conductor Lorenzo Passerini – Direction Barbara Lluch – Sets Christof Daniel Hetzer – Costumes Clara Peluffo Valentini  
Cast Fernando Radò, Carmen Artaza, Nadine Sierra/Caterina Sala, Xavier Anduaga/Omar Mancini, Sabrina Gardez, Isaac Galàn

April 29, 30 – May 26, 27

### THE MONSTER IN THE MAZE

Music by Jonathan Dove – Libretto by Alasdair Middleton  
Conductor Manel Valdivieso – Direction Paco Azorin – Costumes Anna Guell  
Cast Roger Padullés, Marc Pujol Manyà, Carol Garcia, Elias Arranz

May 25, 28, 31 – June 3, 5, 7,

### GIULIO CESARE

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel – Libretto by Nicola Francesco Haym  
Conductor William Christie – Direction Calixto Bieito – Sets Rebecca Ringst – Costumes Ingo Kruegler  
Cast Xavier Sabata, Jan Antem, Teresa Iervolino, Helen Charlston, Julie Fucks, Camero Shahbazi, José Antonio Lòpez, Alberto Miguélez Rouco

## BERLIN

### Staatsoper Unter den Linden

Unter den Linden 7 - 10117 Berlin  
Tel.: (+49) 30/ 20 35 45 55

## www.staatsoper-berlin.de

March 16, 20, 27, 29 – April 3

### DIE AUSFLUGE DES HERRN BROUCEK

Music and libretto by Leos Janacek  
Conductor Simon Rattle – Direction Robert Carsen – Sets Radu Boruzescu – Costumes Annemarie Woods  
Cast Peter Hoare, Ales Briscean, Gyula Orendt, Lucy Crowe, Carles Pachon, Clara Nadeshdin, Natalia Skrycka, Arttu Kataja, Stephan Rugamer, Linard Vrielink, Tachan Kim

March 21, 23, 30 – April 2, 4

### SIMONE BOCCANEGRA

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave  
Conductor Eun Sun Kim – Direction Federico Tiezzi – Seene Maurizio Balò – Costumes Giovanna Buzzi  
Cast Ludovic Tézier, Elena Stikhina, Marko Mimica, Fabio Sartori, Alfredo Daza, Friedrich Hamel, Tahean Kim, Maria Kokareva

April 12, 15, 18, 20

### PARSIFAL

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
Conductor Philippe Joerdan – Direction and sets Dmitri Tcherniakov – Costumes Elena Zaytseva  
Cast Lauri Vasar, Rné Pape, Andreas Schager, Tomas Tomasson, Elina Garanca, Kurt Rydl, Maria Kokareva, Rebecka Wallroth, Florian Hoffmann, Andrés Moreno Garcia, Johan Kroggius, Manuel Winckhler, Evelin Novak, Adriane Queriroz, Sandra Laagus, Sonja Herranen, Clara Nadeshdin, Natalia Skrycka, Anna Kissjudit

April 13, 16, 21, 26, 29

### NORMA

Music by Vincenzo Bellini – Libretto by Felice Romani  
Conductor Francesco Lanzillotta – Direction Vasily Barkhatov – Sets Zinovy Margolin – Costui Olga Shaishmelashvili  
Cast Rachel Willis Sorensen, Dmitry Korchak, Elmina Hasan, Riccardo Fassi, Maria Kokareva, Gonzalo Quinchahual

April 25, 30 – May 2, 6

### TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Conductor Giuseppe Mentuccia – Direction Alvis Hermanis – Sets and costumes Kristine Jurjane

Cast Ailyn Pérez, Vittorio Gricolo, Roman Burdenko, Arttu Kataja, David Ostrek, Florian Hoffmann, Dionysios Avgerinos, Tachan Kim

April 27 – May 1, 3, 7

### LES PECHEURS DE PERLES

Music by Georges Bizet – Libretto by Michel Carré and Eugène Cormon  
Conductor Giedrė Slekytė – Direction Win Wenders – Sets David Regehr – Costumes Montserrat Casanova  
Interperti Juliana Grigoryan, Anthony Leòn, Gyula Orendt, David Wakeham

May 4, 8, 10, 16

### DER FLIEGENDE HOLLANDER

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
Conductor Pablo Heras-Casado – Direction Philipp Stoelzl – Sets Philipp Stoelzl and Conrad Moritz Reinhardt  
Cast James Rutherford, Falk Struckmann, Clara Nadeshdin, Andreas Schger, Anna Kissjudit, Sivabonga Maqungo

May 15, 18, 22, 25, 28

### IL TROVATORE

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Salvatore Cammarano  
Conductor Alexander Soddy – Direction Philipp Stoelzl – Sets Conrad Moritz Reinhardt and Philipp Stoelzl – Cotumi Ursula Kudrna  
Cast Anna Netrebko, Sandra Laagus, Goerge Petean, Riccardo Fassi, Agnieszka Rehlis, Yusif Eyvazoc, Gonzalo Quinchual

May 27 – June 21

### ROMEO ET JULIETTE

Music by Charles Gounod – Libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré  
Conductor Giuseppe Mentuccia – Direction Marianne Clément – Sets and costumes Julia Hansen  
Cast Nino Machaidze, Ktharina Kammerloher, Johan Kroggius, David Ostrek, Arttu Kataja, Tachan Kim, Long Long, Corinna Scheurle, Gonzalo Quinchahual, Jaka Mihelac, Nicolas Testé, Manuel Winckhler

## LONDON

### Royal Opera House

Covent Garden  
Bow St. London – WC2E 9DD –  
Londra  
Tel. +44 20 7240 1200  
www.roh.org.uk

March 3, 6, 10, 13, 16, 22

**IL TROVATORE**

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Salvatore Cammarano

Conductor Giacomo Sagripanti – Direction Adel Thomas – Costumes Annemarie Woods  
Cast Michael Fabiano, Rachel Willis-Sorensen, Aleksei Isaev, Agnieszka Rehlis, Riccardo Fassi

March 19, 22, 24, 27, 29 – April 1, 4, 12, 15, 19

**TURANDOT**

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni

Conductor Rafael Payare – Direction Andrei Serban – Sets and costumes Sally Giacobbe  
Cast Sondra Radvanovsky, SeokJong Back, Anna Princeva, Adam Palka, Hansung Yoo

April 9, 11, 14, 21, 24, 26 – June 11, 16, 18, 21, 24, 26 – July 1, 3

**CARMEN**

Music by Georges Bizet – Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovis Halevy

Conductor Mark Elder – Direction Damiano Michieletto – Sets Paolo Fantin – Costumes Carla Teti  
Cast Aigul Akhmetshina, Freddie De Tommaso, Yaritza Veliz, Lukasz Golinski, Jamie Woollard

May 1, 4, 7, 11, 14, 17

**DIE WALKURE**

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner

Conductor Sir Antonio Pappano – Direction Barrie Kosky – Sets Rufus Didwizsus – Cotumi Vittoria Behr  
Cast Christopher Malman, Elisabet Strid, Lise Davidsen, Sranislas de Barbeyrac, Soloman Howard

May 23, 25, 28, 30 – June 2, 6, 10

**FAUST**

Music by Charles Francois Gounod – Libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

Conductor – Direction David McVicar – Sets Carl Eduard – Costumes Brigitte Reiffenstuel  
Cast Stefan Pop, Erwin Schrott, Lisette Oropesa, Boris Pinkhasovich, Hongni Wu

**MADRID**

**Teatro Real**

Plaza de Oriente s/n - 28013 Madrid  
Tel.: (+34) 91/ 516 06 60

March 23, 25, 26, 28, 30 – April 1, 4, 5, 8, 9,  
**MITRIDATE, RE** by PONTO

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Vittorio Amedeo Cigna Santi

Conductor Ivor Bolton – Direction Claud Guth – Sets Christian Schmidt – Costumes Ursula Kudrna – New production  
Cast Juan Francisco Gatell/Siyabong Maqungo, Sara Blanch/Ruth Iniesta, Elsa Dreisig/Vanessa Goikoetxea, Franco Fagioli/Tim Mead, Pretty Yende/Sabina Puertolas, Juan Sancho/Jorge Franco, Franko Klisovic

April 3

**LUOMO FEMMINA**

Music by Baldassare Galuppi – Libretto by Piero Chiari

Conductor Vincent Dumestre – Versione in forma by Concerto  
Cast Eva Zaicik, Lucile Richardot, Victoire Bunel, Anas Séguin, Victor Sicard, Paco Garcia

April 30 – May 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11,

**LA FIABA DELLO ZAR SALTAN**

Music by Nikolai Rimski-Korsakov – Libretto by Vladimir Belski

Conductor Karel Mark Chichon – Direction and sets Dmitri Tcherniakov – Costumes Elena Zaytseva – New production  
Cast Ante Jerkunica, Svetlana Aksenova, Stine Marie Fischer, Bernarda Bobro, Carole Wilson, Bogdan Volkov, Nina Minasyan, Vasily Gorshkov, Alejandro del Cerro, Alexander Vassiliev, Alexander Kravets

May 1

**JEPHTHA**

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel – Libretto by Thomas Morell

Conductor Francesco Corti – Versione in forma by Concerto  
Cast Michael Spyres, Joyce DiDonato

**Teatro del Canal**

May 6, 7, 9, 10, 11

**DON GIOVANNI NON ESISTE**

Music by Helena Canovas – Libretto by Alberto Iglesias

Conductor Jhoanna Sierralta – Direction Barbara Lluch – Sets Blanca Anyon – Costumes Clara Peluffo  
Cast pablo Garcia Lopez

**Teatro Real**

May 14, 17

**ATTILA**

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Temistocle Solera

Conductor Nicola Luisotti – Esecuzione in forma by Concerto  
Cast Christian Van Horn, Artur Rucinski, Sondra Radvanovsky, Michael Fabiano, Moises Marin, In Sung Sim

May 16

**TAMERLANO**

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel – Libretto by Nicola Haym

Conductor René Jacob – Esecuzione in forma by Concerto  
Cast Paul Antoine Bénos-Dijan, Thomas Walker, Polina Pastirchak, Alexander Chance, Helena Rasker, Matthias Wickhler

May 28, 29, 31 - June 1

**LAS INDIAS GALANTES**

Music by Jean-Philippe Rameau – Libretto by Louis Fuzelier

Conductor Leonardo Garcia Alarcón – Direction Bintou Dembéle – Costumes Anais Durand Munyankindi  
Cast Julie Roset, Ana Quintans, Mathias Vidal, Andreas Wolf

**NEW YORK**

**The Metropolitan Opera**

Lincoln Center - New York, New York  
State 10023

Tel.: (+1) 212 362 6000

[www.metopera.org](http://www.metopera.org)

March 3, 8, 11, 15, 19, 22, 25, 29

**MOBY DICK**

Music by Jake Heggie – Libretto by Gene Scheer

Conductor Karen Kamensek – Direction Leonard Foglia – Sets Robert Brill – Costumes Jane Greenwood  
Cast Jani Brugger, Brandon Jovanovich, Stephan Costello, William Burden, Peter Mattei, Malcolm MacKenzie, Ryan Speed Green

March 4, 7, 10, 12, 15

**FIDELIO**

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven – Libretto by Georg Friedrich Treitschke and Joseph Sonnleithner

Conductor Susanna Malkki – Direction Jurgen Flihm – Sets Robert Israele – Costumes

# Program

Florence von Gerkan

Cast Lise Davidsen, Ying Zanna, David Butt Philip, Magnus Dietrich, Tomasz Konieczny, René Pape, Stephan Milling

March 5, 8, 13, 17, 21 – May 25, 29 – June 1

## LA BOHEME

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Conductor Kensho Watanabe/Yannick Nézet-Séguin/Aleksandr Soddy/Riccardo Frizza – Direction and sets Franco Zeffirelli – Costumes Peter J. Sala

Cast Ailyn Perez/Gabriella Reyes/Eleonora Buratto/Kristina Mkhitarian/Corinne Winters, Emily Pogorele/Adela Zaharia/Bretagne Renée/Gabriella Reyes, Dmitry Popov/Mathew Polenzani/Joseph Calleja, Boris Pinkhasovich/David Bizic/Luca Micheletti/Anthony Clark Evans, Gihoon Kim/SWean Michael Plumb, Bogdan Talos/Park Jongmin/Nicolas Testé/Aleksander Kopeczi, Donald Maxwell

March 14, 18, 22, 26, 29 – May 9

## AIDA

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni  
Conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin/Aleksander Soddy/John Keenan – Direction Michael Mayer – Sets Christina Jones – Costumes Susa Hilferty – New production  
Cast Angel Blue/Christina Nilsson, Judit Kutasi/Elina Garanca, Piotr Beczala/Brian Judge, Quinn Kelsey/Eric Owens/Michele Chioldi/Amartuvshin Enkhbat, Dmitry Belosselskiy/Aleksandr Vinogradov/Morris Robinson, Krzysztof Baczyk

March 23, 28 – April 1, 4, 7, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23, 26

## DIE ZAUBERFLOTE

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Emmanuel Schikaneder  
Conductor Evan Rogister – Direction Simon Mc Burney – Sets Michael Levine – Costum Nicky Gillibrand  
Cast Golda Schultz, Kathryn Lewek, Ben Bliss, Thomas Ebenstein, Thomas Olimans, Shenyang, Stephan Milling

March 31 – April 5, 8, 11, 13, 18, 22, 26 – May 3, 7, 10, 14, 17

## LE NOZZE by FIGARO

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte  
Conductor Joana Mallwitz – Direction

Cast Federica Lombardi/Jacquelyn Stucker, Olga Kulchynska/Rosa Feola, Marianne Crebasse/Emily D'Angelo, Elisabetta Vescovo, Joshua Hopkins/Adam Plachteka, Michael Sumuel/Luca Pisaroni, Maurizio Muraro

April 15, 19, 21, 25, 30 – May 3, 8, 16, 22, 27, 31

## IL BARBIERE by SIVIGLIA

Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by Cesare Sterbini  
Conductor Giacomo Sagripanti – Direction Bartlett Sher – Sets Michael Yeragan – Costumes Caterina Zuber  
Cast Isabella Leonardo/Aigul Akhmetshina, Alwrence Brownlee/Jack Swanson, Davide Luciano/Andrej Zhilikhovsky, Nicola Alaimo/Patrizio Carfizzi/Peter Kalman, Aleksandr Vinogradov

April 29 – May 2, 6, 10, 13, 17, 21

## SALOME

Music by Richard Strauss – Libretto by Hedwig Lachmann  
Conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin/Derrick Inoye – Direction Claus Guth – Sets Etienne Plus – Costumes Ursula Kudrna  
Cast Elza van den Heever, Michelle De Young, Gerhard Siegel/Ciad Shelton, Piotr Buszewski, Peter Mattei

## PARIS OPERA NATIONAL

Opéra National de Paris  
120 rue de Lyon - 75012 Paris (France)  
Tel.: (+33) 1 771 25 24 23  
[www.operadeparis.fr](http://www.operadeparis.fr)

## Opéra Bastille

March 4, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, 25, 27

## PELLEAS ET MELISANDE

Music by Claude Debussy – Libretto by Maurice Maeterlinck  
Conductor Antonello Manacorda – Direction Waidi Mouawad – Sets Emmanuel Clolus – Costumes Emmanelle Thomas  
Cast Sabine Devielhe, Huw Montague Rendall, Gordon Bintner, Jea Teitgen, Sophie Koch, Amin Ahangaran

## Amphitheatre Olivier Messiaen

March 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21  
*L'ISOLA DISABITATA*

Music by Joseph Haydn – Libretto by Pietro Metastasio  
Conductor Francois Lopez-Ferrer – Direction Simon Valastro  
Cast Artisti de l'Academie

## Palais Garnier

March 21, 26, 28 – April 3, 6, 9

## IL VIAGGIO, DANTE

Music by Pascal Dusapin – Libretto by Frédéric Boyer  
Conductor Kent Nagano – Direction Claud Guth – Sets Etienne Plus – Costumes Gesine Vollm  
Cast Bo Skovhus, David Leigh, Christel Loetzsch, Jennifer France, Danae Kontora, Dominique Visse, Giacomo Prestia

## Opéra Bastille

March 29 – April 1, 4, 9, 12, 17, 20, 25

## DON CARLOS

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle  
Conductor Simone Young – Direction Krzysztof Warlinski . Sets and costumes Malgorzata Szczesniak  
Cast Charles Castronovo, Marina Rebeka, Christian Van Horn, Ekaterina Gubanova, Andrzej Filonczyk, Elexander Tsymbalyuk, Sava Vemic, Marine Chagnon

April 29 – May 2, 6, 9, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28

## IL TRITICO

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giovacchino Forzano and Giuseppe Adami  
Conductor Carlo Rizzi – Direction Christof Loy – Sets Etienne Pluss – Costumes Barara Drosihn  
Cast Misha Kiria, Asmik Grigorian, Enkeleida Shkosa, Alexey Neklyudov, Dean Power, Lavinia Bini, Manel Esteve Madrid, Scott Wilde

## VIENNA

## Wiener Staatsoper

Opern-Ring - A-1015 Wien (Austria)  
Bundestheaterkassen, Hanuschgasse 3, A-1010 Wien  
Tel.: (+43)1/514 44 2960  
[www.wiener-staatsoper.at](http://www.wiener-staatsoper.at)

March 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 – May 16, 20, 23, 26

## NORMA

Music by Vincenzo Bellini – Libretto by Felice Romani  
Conductor Michele Mariotti – Direction Cyril

Teste – Sets Valérie Grall – Costumes Marie La Rocca  
 Cast Juan Diego Florez, Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, Federica Lombardi, Vasilisa Berzhanskaya, Anna Bondarenko, Hiroshi Amako

March 24, 27, 31 – April 4, 6  
**IOLANTA**

Music by Piotr Ilic Tschaikowski – Libretto by Modest Tschaikowski  
 Conductor Tugan Sakhiev – Direction Evgeny Titov – Sets Rufus Didwizsus – Costumes Annemarie Woods  
 Cast Ivo Stanchev, Boris Pinkhasovich, Dmytro Popov, Attila Mokus, Daniel Jenz, Simonas Strazdas, Sonya Yoncheva, Monika Bohinec, Maria Nazarova, Daria Sushkova

April 25, 28 – May 2, 5  
**DIE ZAUBERFLOTE**

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Emmanuel Schikaneder  
 Conductor Franz Welser-Most – Direction Barбора Horakova – Sets Falko Herold – Costumes Eva Butzkies  
 Cast Georg Zeppenfeld, Juliam Prégardien, Jochen Schmeckenbecher, Serena Saenz, Slavka Zamecnikova, Jenni Hietala, Alma Neuhaus, Stephanie Maitland, Ludwig Mittelhammer, Ilia Staple, Matthaues Schmidlechner

May 22, 25, 29 – June 1, 4  
**TANNHAUSER**

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
 Conductor Philippe Jordan – Direction Lydia Steier – Sets Momme Hinrichs – Costumes Alfred Mayerhofer  
 Cast Gunther Groissbock, Clay H. illey, Ludovic Tézier, Daniel Jenz, Wolfgang Bankl, Marcus Pelz, Malin Bystroem, Ekaterina Gubanova, Ilia Stanle

## ZÜRICH

### Opernhaus

Falkenstrasse 1 - CH-8008 Zürich  
 (Svizzera)  
 Tel.: (+41) 44 /268 66 66  
 www.opernhaus.ch

March 1, 6, 13, 16, 22  
**MANON LESCAUT**

Music by Giacomo Puccini  
 Conductor Marco Armiliato – Direction Barrie Kosky – Sets Rufus Didwizsus – Costumes Klaus Bruns

Cast Elena Stikhina, Konstantin Shushakova, Saimir Pirgu, Shavleg Armasi, Daniel Norman, Valeriy Murga, Siena Licht Miller, Alvaro Diana Sanchez, Raul Gutierrez, Samson Setu, Lobel Barun

March 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 18, 27, 30  
**AGRIPPINA**

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel – Libretto by Vincenzo Grimani  
 Conductor Harry Bicket – Direction Jetske Mijnsen – Sets Ben Baur – Costumes Hannah Clark  
 Cast Nahuel by Piero, Anna Bonitatibus, Christophe Dumaux, Lea Desandre, Jakub Józef Orłowski, Josè Coca Loza, Hagen Matzeit, Yannick Debus

March 4, 8, 16, 21, 26  
**DIE LUSTIGE WITWE**

Music by Franz Lehar – Libretto by Victor Lèon and Léo Stein  
 Conductor Ben Glassberg – Direction Barrie Kosky – Sets Klaus Grunberg – Cotumi Gianluca Falaschi  
 Cast Michael Kraus, Anastasiya Taratorkina, Michael Volle, Vida Miknevičutė, Andrew Owens, Omer Kobiljak, Nathan Haller, Valeriy Murga, Maria Stella Maurizi, Chao Deng, Flavia Stricker, Brent Michael Smith, Irène Friedli, Barbara Grimm, Pietro Cono Genoa, Davide Pilleram Sara Pena, Steven Seale, Alessio Urzetta, Sina Friedli, Romy Neumann, Sara Pennella, Noa Joanna Ryff, Natalia Lòpez Toledano, Alessio Marchini

March 23, 25, 28, 30 – April 4, 6, 11  
**DAS GROSSE FEUER**

Music by Beat Furrer – Libretto by Thomas Stangl  
 Conductor Beat Furrer – Direction Tatjana Gurbaca – Sets Henrik Ahr – Costumes Silke Willrett  
 Cast Leigh Melrose, Andrew Moore, Liliana Nikiteanu, Sarah Aristidou, Ruben Drole

April 13, 16, 24, 27 – May 4  
**LOHENGRIN**

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
 Conductor Axel Kober – Direction Andreas Homoki – Sets Wolfgang Gussmann – Costumes Gussmann and Susana Mendoza  
 Cast Christof Fischesser, Piotr Beczala, Simone Schneider, Martin Gantner, Anna Smirnova, Michael Kraus, Christopher Willoughby, Felix Gygli, Tomislav JukicMaximilian Bell

April 21, 25 – May 2, 6, 9, 17, 21, 29 – June 1

### DIE TOTE STADT

Music by Wolfgang Korngold – Libretto by Paul Schott  
 Conductor Lorenzo Viotti – Direction and sets Dmitri Tcherniakov – Costumes Elena Zaytseva  
 Cast Eric Cutler, Vida Miknevičutė, Bjorn Burger, Evelyn Herltizius, Rebecca Olvera, Siena Licht Miller, Nathan Haller, Alvaro Diana Sanchez

April 26 – May 3, 8, 11, 15  
**RIGOLETTO**

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave  
 Conductor Andrea Sanguineti – Direction Tatjana Gurbaca – Sets Klaus Grunberg – Costumes Silke Willrett  
 Cast Liparit Avetisyan, Quinn Kelsey, Branda Rae, Brent Michael Smith, Elena Maximova, Stanislav Vorobyov, Andrew Moore, Daniel Norman, Samson Setu, Maria Stella Maurizi, Sylwia Salamonska, Steffan Lloyd Owen

May 6, 8, 10, 14, 16,  
**JACOB LENZ**

Music by Wolfgang Rihm – Libretto by Michael Frohling  
 Conductor Adrian Kelly – Direction Mélanie Huber – Sets and costumes Lena Hiebel  
 Cast Yannick Debus, Maximilia Bell, Maximilian Lawrie, Marie Lombard, Slavia Sriccker, Indyana Schneider, Dominika Stefanska, Felix Gygli, Lobel Barun

May 18, 22, 24, 31 – June 3  
**DON PASQUALE**

Music by Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by Giovanni Ruffini  
 Conductor Ivan Lòpez-Reynoso – Direction Christof Loy – Sets Johannes Leiacker – Costumes Barbara Drosihn  
 Cast Pietro Spagnoli, Florian Sempy/  
 Konstantin Shushakov, Andrew Owens, Olga Peretyatko, Samson Setu, R.A. Guther, David Foldszin, Ursula Deuker

Visit our website:  
[operarealities.com](http://operarealities.com)