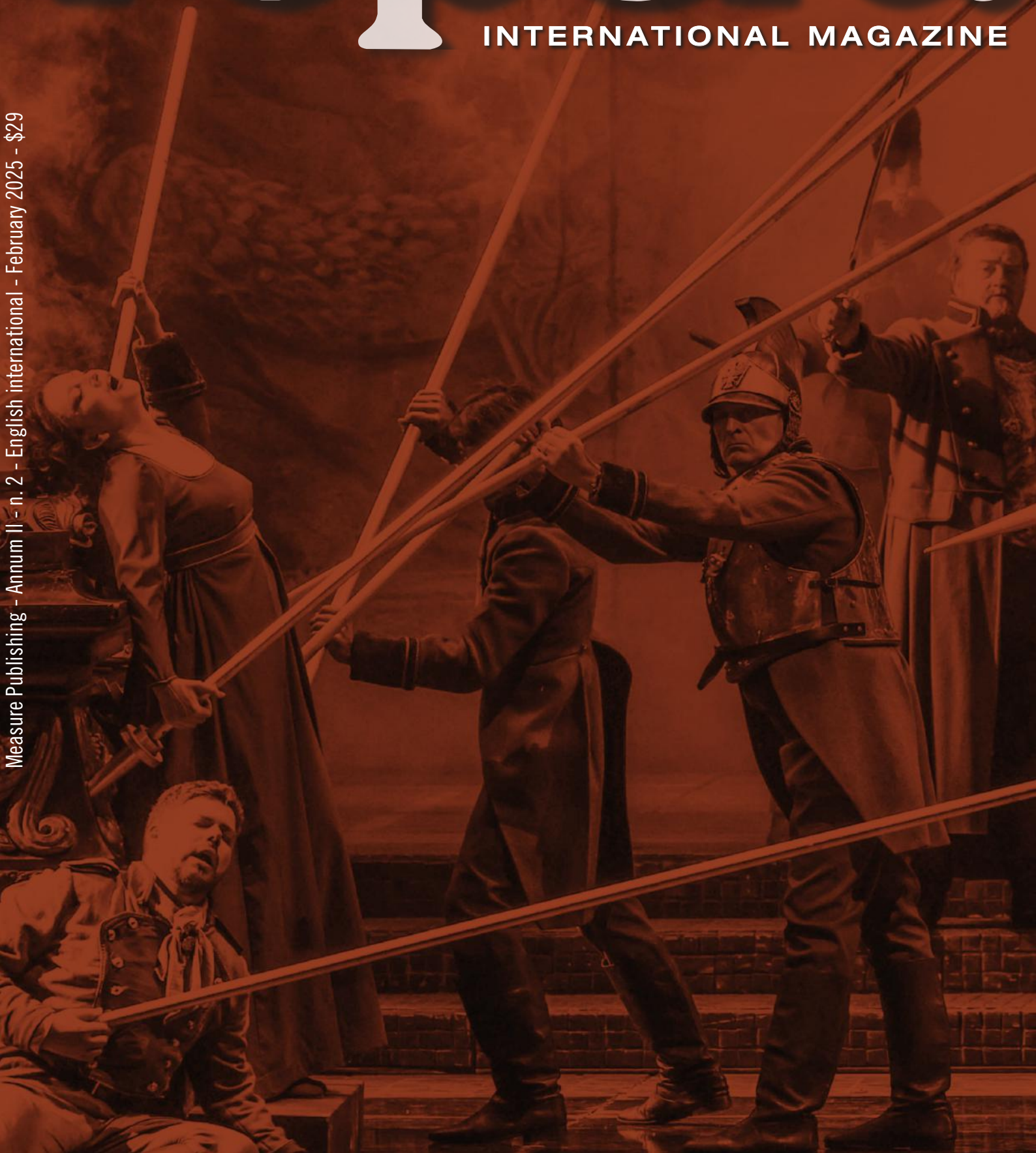


# l'opera

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE



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Musica di Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Dramma giocoso in due atti, su libretto di Lorenzo Da Ponte

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# Palm Beach: Anna Netrebko Triumphs in Song...and in Principle

By **Steve Acunto**

**A**gain, we learn how right Aristotle was back when and where democracy was created: we are political beings, all; two thousand plus years later, politics is seemingly inescapable.

Political conflict in so many forms has been added regrettably, but inevitably to the art world's critical instrument panel and has been made to mix with art forms, artists and institutions. Opera has hardly been immune over its 400 plus year history right up to today, as social media pulses applause for one's personal views, one's personal "news" and one's advice on what to choose well before the curtain rises. The best of artists are being judged for their political persuasion – or perceived political choices-, usually based upon bad information, gossip or lopsided partisanship, General Managers and Board Members alike have been made to become instant judges and juries well past what their roles, competence and, I think, their governing rules and by laws include.

So, we turn onto North County Road in Palm Beach as a media drum beat sounds an as a protest (maybe 30 people) try to interrupt – or cloud or darken- Anna Netrebko's rather courageous, "return to the USA" appearance at the Breakers. Naively believing that the Diva's perceived support of her native Russia over the interest of the Ukrainian people was marked by her silence on the topic, making her anathema in the current political wave of sentiment, the attendees were treated to some street theatre and then to some real theatre that was convincingly apolitical and centered only upon beauty. - both the musical performance and the soprano's.

The facts were lost on the protesters and much of the media, but, more important, so was their sharing of her stellar creativity and reverence for the complex and commensurately rewarding art form – an art dedicated in many of its greatest works, coincidentally, to narratives condemning war and political evil. There could be understandable misgiving if she had made her personal views – whatever they are- the content of the Playbill, placing her art second and her career at risk, effectively at the mercy of a war's outcome.

No such actions were taken by Mme Netrebko. While she has continued to appear on important stages throughout the rest of the world – she wowed us at La Scala a few weeks ago -- her return to the United States, was heroically and wisely presented with fitting grace by the Palm Beach Opera with a profoundly beautiful recital and gala – styled dinner in early February.

More than 400 attended the black-tie event which brought together leaders of Palm Beach's cultural, art and philanthropic worlds – a generous, elegant assembly of the island's finest. Kudos to James Barbato, the PBO's GM and to its Board for stepping up to see this through.

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*Political correctness, political posturing and political differences can besiege Opera companies and artists. The band width in such instances must be widened to countenance art and performance above choices that might be personal to an artist- unless, of course, we are talking about the nihilistic extremes of political advocacy.*

---

The distinguished soprano distinguished herself vocally and personally.

She was in brilliant form and won the hour with her stunning stage presence.

Speaking of stage presence, President Trump has undone the leadership of the Kennedy Center in Washington, although his motives are probably no different from any prior President who has had that particular appointive power. The programming may change, possibly for the better, or maybe not. If the Kennedy Center discourages innovation or if its new Board veers off the narrow road of great taste and high standards to advocate for a political party, that would be as hideous as any use of the Institution for political goals. It has happened and can happen, whether we like to admit it or not.

We do have reason to expect that the Business Man in Chief's appointees will honor the KC's traditional programming core and that its standards of taste will continue to rise to attract the world's classical audiences to its important theater—in the city that President seeks to revitalize. Maybe Mme Netrebko will grace that stage before long.

**SA**



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# Splendid Recital Marks Return

By Mario Hamlet-Metz

Anna Netrebko  
in Concert in Palm Beach

## *Palm Beach: Palm Beach: Anna Netrebko Acclaimed in an Extraordinary Concert*

A handful of Palm Beach residents, who are also members of the Met's board and clearly disagree with Peter Gelb regarding Anna Netrebko's forced "artistic exile," organized a concert/gala in their Floridian city. The event did not take place at the Kravis Center theater but at the elegant Breakers Hotel, where the Russian soprano—at the peak of her brilliant career and beloved by audiences—appeared smiling, radiant, and in top vocal form.

The concert was preceded by a grand reception and followed by a dinner for those willing to pay \$1,250 per person, all in support of the Palm Beach Opera. We did not expect a particularly innovative or challenging program for such an occasion, yet Ms. Netrebko selected some interesting pieces in which she demonstrated her superiority both as a vocalist and as an interpreter.

A skilled communicator, the soprano engaged with the audience warmly, introducing the pieces she was about to perform alone or

alongside young singers from the company's Academy of Vocal Arts. Exuding confidence and fully aware of the impeccable state of her instrument, she commanded attention with her volume and brilliance, especially when ascending into the upper register. The soprano also seemed to enjoy testing how long she could sustain her breath. She performed "Io sono l'umile ancella," followed by Nedda's Ballad. She sang melancholic songs by Rimsky-Korsakov and Rachmaninoff; in a piece by Tchaikovsky chosen for the occasion, Netrebko playfully portrayed a troubadour serenading his beloved under her balcony. She also delighted in dancing while embodying Hanna Glawari and Giuditta.

Together with tenor Anthony Ciaramitaro, she performed the Act I duet from *La Bohème*; with Ashlyn Brown, she sang the Barcarolle from *The Tales of Hoffmann*; with Mario Manzo, the duet from *The Merry Widow*; and with the entire Academy, *O Sole Mio*.

For the encore, she chose only one piece: "O mio babbino caro."

For the record, she was accompanied on the piano by Ángel Rodríguez.



# Trump Raises Curtain on U.S. Opera, 'Resets' Washington's Kennedy Center

The Metropolitan Opera  
of New York

By Francesco Zanibellato

## **T**he Metropolitan Opera of New York

A second presidency of Donald Trump could leave a profound mark on the political, social, and cultural landscape of the United States. But what scenarios might unfold for the world of opera?

Opera has never been a relevant theme in Trump's political agenda; it is highly unlikely that he would make any direct decisions regarding opera houses. The only apparent connection between Trump and this world seems to be his alleged friendship with Luciano Pavarotti. During his campaign rallies, Trump has often played recordings of the famous tenor, particularly the iconic rendition of *Nessun dorma*. However, even in the absence of direct decisions, the new political and cultural climate, the policies adopted during his first administration, and speculations about his second term could still have an indirect impact on opera and classical music in general.

### **Cuts to Public Funding**

One of the aspects that could most affect the future of the American musical landscape concerns public funding policies. During his first presidency, Trump repeatedly proposed substantial cuts to arts funding, putting the future of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) at risk, although he never managed to eliminate federal support entirely. The effects of his policies were already felt in states governed by Republican administrations, which implemented significant reductions in state arts funding.

A notable case is Florida, where, under Governor Ron DeSantis in 2023, state arts funding was entirely eliminated, causing a deep crisis among local companies. The Florida Grand Opera, for instance, was forced to drastically downsize its seasons, cut jobs, and reduce educational programs. It is plausible that this trend could

## *New York: Opera in the United States*

intensify, pushing many regional institutions toward downsizing or even closure.

The cuts to public funding would not have significant consequences for major institutions like the Metropolitan Opera of New York, which survive thanks to private patrons and foundations. However, the worst effects would be felt by smaller companies. The necessity of securing alternative funds could lead to increased competition for sponsorships and private donations, putting pressure on all artistic organizations, even those less dependent on public funds.

### **Impact on International Talent**

Immigration policies represent another potential critical factor for the opera world. Opera is, by nature, a global art form. During his first presidency, Trump adopted a restrictive approach to immigration, complicating the process of obtaining visas for foreign workers, including highly specialized professionals such as musicians, singers, and conductors.

A second term could see even stricter restrictions. This risk could result in a reduction of artistic and cultural diversity, directly impacting the quality of operatic productions. To address this situation, some companies might be forced to rely more on local artists, investing in the training of new American talent.

### **Social Divisiveness and Inclusion Challenges**

The debate on inclusivity in the arts has taken center stage in recent years. Many cultural institutions have adopted Diversity, Equity, and









Il War Memorial Opera House  
of San Francisco

Inclusion (DEI) policies to ensure greater representation of artists from ethnic minorities and disadvantaged communities.

For example, Francesca Zambello, director of the Washington National Opera, implemented a policy stating that no production cast can be composed of more than 50% white performers. However, during his first presidency, Trump frequently criticized such initiatives, viewing them as manifestations of excessive “political correctness.” In a second term, his administration might exert pressure to scale back inclusion policies in cultural institutions. A similar shift has already occurred in university admissions following a historic Supreme Court decision, influenced by justices appointed by the Republican party. On the other hand, supporters of this approach see an opportunity to refocus on artistic skills and meritocracy, reducing the risk of selections perceived as politically motivated.

### The Debate on “Problematic” Operas and Political Correctness

A particularly heated topic concerns the growing criticism of operas perceived as containing cultural stereotypes or elements accused of racism.

Famous works such as Verdi’s *Aida* and *Otello* are often at the center of this debate, as well as accusations of cultural appropriation regarding Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*.

As a result, opera houses have become very cautious about staging these works or have modified certain elements to avoid controversy. For example, in the new production of *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera of New York, to avoid alleged colonialist triumphalism, the traditional Triumphal March was transformed into a parade of archaeologists, dressed like Indiana Jones, carrying newly unearthed archaeological discoveries from the sands of history.

It is difficult to predict how a second Trump presidency might influence this debate. On one hand, a more conservative cultural climate could emerge, reducing these criticisms and guiding theaters toward more traditional productions. On the other hand, it is more likely that artists and opera management—who are generally progressive—would react to Trumpism by hardening their positions, intensifying social activism, imposing even stricter restrictions on so-called “problematic” operas, and enforcing more rigid politically correct criteria. ■



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# La Scala: New Season, Leadership Lights the Stage





# A Great Season Underway

By Sabino Lenoci

**G**reat titles. Repertoire and novelties. Absolute. But not only that. The season opens in the name of Giuseppe Verdi, with *La forza del destino*. Riccardo Chailly continues his Verdian journey, a path he has pursued for decades, and at La Scala, as Musical Director, he has already made a significant mark with titles ranging from Verdi's early works to his mature productions. A star-studded cast, as befits the great Milanese theater.

## Verdi

Verdi returns twice, with two revivals. The first is *Falstaff*, scheduled between January and February. The production, a tried-and-true one by Giorgio Strehler, is paired with the ever-reliable *Falstaff* by Ambrogio Maestri, conducted by Daniele Gatti, who is no stranger to La Scala's interpretation of this ultimate Verdian masterpiece.

In October, towards the autumnal close of the season, *Rigoletto* returns. This time, Mario Martone's recent production takes the stage. On the podium, Marco Armiliato conducts with the *Rigoletto* of Amartuvshim Enkbat and the Duke of Mantua of Vittorio Grigolo, alternating with Dimitri Korchak.

## Searching for the Ring

Between these two Verdi moments, La Scala offers an interesting array of proposals. First, the first and second parts of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* will be staged, starting with *Das Rheingold* in October, an introductory piece. The posters still list Christian Thielemann, who, due to health reasons, has stepped down from conducting *Das Rheingold* and the rest of the Ring cycle. The responsibility of the Tetralogy is now entrusted to Alexander Soddy, who has already stepped in for the final performances of *Das Rheingold*. A wealth

Images from the rehearsals of *La forza del destino*, the inaugural opera of the new season at the Teatro alla Scala (Photo Brescia/Amisano - Teatro alla Scala)



of renowned names in the cast, with Klaus Florian Vogt performing both Siegmund and Siegfried, while Michael Volle remains as Wotan, and Camilla Nylund is awaited as Brünnhilde.

### **Belcanto**

The early 19th-century Italian repertoire is marked by three titles, which will span the end of the spring season and resume in September. *Norma* arrives, a title absent from La Scala for decades and always eagerly awaited by the audience. Fabio Luisi, a conductor with sure Bellinian faith, will lead, while Olivier Py directs the staging. Marina Rebeka, who has recently recorded her interpretation of the Druid priestess, takes the title role, while Adalgisa is performed by Vasilisa Berzhanskaya. The two leading ladies will be accompanied by Michele Pertusi's Oroveso, a veteran of La Scala and Bellini's opera, and Freddie De Tommaso as Pollione. Next comes *Cenerentola* in Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's timeless production, which can be considered a classic. Gianluca Capuano will conduct, and the cast will consist of the soloists from the La Scala Academy, as is customary for the revival of the season's productions. The belcanto section concludes with *La Fille du régiment* in a new production, a collaboration between the Liceu, the Met, Covent Garden, and the Vienna Staatsoper. On the podium, Evelino Pidò, a master of early 19th-century Italian and French repertoire. The star of the evening: Juan Diego Flórez, Tonio par excellence, a role that has brought him great success. He is joined by Julie Fuchs as Marie and Pietro Spagnoli as Sulpice

### **Between Russia and Italy**



Late European Romanticism is represented by two milestones in La Scala's season. Between February and March, Russian music is featured with Eugene Onegin, Tchaikovsky's masterpiece in Mario Martone's direction, which marks a new production for La Scala, conducted by Timur Zangiev. Alexey Markov sings Onegin, facing Aida Garifullina's Tatjana. Michele Gamba will then conduct one of the most famous titles in the repertoire. After last year's *Turandot*, Gamba returns to conduct *Tosca* in Davide Livermore's production, which opened La Scala's season a few years ago. The stage will feature a cast of great performers for *Floria Tosca* and *Cavaradossi*: Chiara Isotton alternates with Elena Stikhina, while Fabio Sartori and Francesco Meli alternate as *Cavaradossi*. *Scarpia* will be portrayed by Luca Salsi and Amartuvshin Enkhbat.







### The 18th Century

The 18th century is represented by a production of *Così fan tutte*, directed by Robert Carsen, at the season's close. On the podium, Alexander Soddy, who now leads the Tetralogy. A cast of great interest: Elsa Dreisig as Fiordiligi, alongside Giovanni Sala and Luca Micheletti as Ferrando and Guglielmo. The first of these will also be heard as Ford in *Falstaff*. The second, considered a specialist in 18th-century opera, will also sing *Sospiri* in Florian Leopold Gassmann's *Opera seria*, scheduled between March and April. But regarding the 18th century, March brings a real treat in concert form: *Mitridate, re di Ponto* by Mozart, conducted by Christophe Rousset with Les Talents Lyriques and a star-studded cast.

### The 20th Century and the Second Millennium

The 20th century is represented by Kurt Weill with *Die sieben Todsünden*, *Mahagonny Songspiel*, and *Happy End*. The renowned conductor works with Irina Brook's direction in this new production, which has already been partially presented during the pandemic's closed performances. Contemporary music will have a highly

anticipated premiere. La Scala has commissioned Francesco Filidei, one of the leading composers in the current musical landscape, to write *Il nome della rosa*, an opera based on Umberto Eco's famous novel. The production will be directed by Damiano Michieletto, one of the most innovative directors in contemporary opera, with Ingo Metzmacher on the podium. A cast of notable names including Gianluca Buratto, Daniela Barcellona, Marco Filippo Romano (Melitone in *La forza del destino*), Roberto Frontali, and Giorgio Bellugi. Lucas Meachem will star as Guglielmo de Baskerville, while the role of Adso is written en travesti for Kate Lindsey.

### For Pleasure

The season also offers a plethora of symphonic concerts, special concerts (such as Rameau's *Les Indes galantes* in November 2025 with the Cappella Mediterranea, conducted by Leonardo García Alarcon), singing recitals, guest orchestras (including Riccardo Muti with the Vienna Philharmonic, Sir Antonio Pappano with the London Symphony Orchestra, and Kirill Petrenko with the National Academy of Santa Cecilia Orchestra), and piano concerts, making this a season of truly grand scope, as befits La Scala. ■

# Between Classic and Contemporary

By Sabino Lenoci

**D**ecember 17—ten days after Saint Ambrose and the opening of the opera season—the doors of the Teatro alla Scala open for the youth preview, marking the inauguration of the Ballet Season. On stage, a classic of the repertoire and perhaps the most mysteriously festive of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's ballets: *The Nutcracker*, in the legendary choreography and direction of Rudolf Nureyev—an undisputed classic. The production will also feature a guest of great renown on the evenings of December 18 and 20: Hugo Marchand, one of the most celebrated dancers of our time and danseur étoile of the Paris Opéra Ballet since 2017. Between February and March, the season shifts from classical to contemporary with a program offering the audience a chance to experience the work of three of the greatest choreographers on the international stage. Philippe Kratz presents *Solitude* Sometimes to the music of Thom Yorke and Radiohead; Angelin Preljocaj's *Annociation* is set to the compositions of Stéphane Roy and Antonio Vivaldi; and Patrick de Bana's *Carmen* is accompanied by Rodion Shchedrin's score. This marks a new production by Teatro alla Scala, premiering for the first time. Another new production takes center stage in April: a ballet inspired by Grieg's famous *Peer Gynt*, choreographed by Edward Clug, placing the spotlight on this singular figure immortalized by the Norwegian composer. May brings the fourth edition of the Gala Fracchi, a highly successful format that continues to draw a large audience. With this event, the Milanese theater pays tribute to one of the greatest ballerinas of all time. Carla Fracchi's profound and visceral connection with La Scala and the city of Milan is well known. Having emerged from the ranks of the Teatro alla Scala Ballet Academy, she went on to craft one of the most illustrious careers in dance, transcending the collective imagination and becoming a true icon, cherished by audiences not only in the theater but also through her many television appearances and the narrative that television itself has woven around her life as an artist. The first part of the season



Roberto Bolle with Patrick de Bana in rehearsal for the Fracchi Gala (Photo: Brescia/Amisano - Teatro alla Scala)

concludes with two very different titles. The first is the dazzling *Paquita*, a new production at La Scala featuring Pierre Lacotte's choreography and music by Edvard-Marie-Ernest Deldevez and Ludwig Minkus, arranged by Davide Coleman. The second is *Swan Lake*, in the choreography of Rudolf Nureyev. As with the season's opening ballet, this is another Tchaikovsky masterpiece—one of the most beloved titles worldwide, forever enchanting audiences with its incredibly romantic tale of the White Swan and the Black Swan. September opens with a tribute to the great Nijinsky, a pivotal figure in the history of modern dance. This evening assembles three works, reviving the legendary dancer's own choreographies, which helped usher ballet into the twentieth century. The program includes *Petrushka*, set to the music of Igor Stravinsky; *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, one of Nijinsky's historic creations, set to Debussy; and *Le Pavillon d'Armide*, with a score by Nikolai Tcherepnin. One of the performances (date to be confirmed) is expected to feature Roberto Bolle—a dancer who needs no introduction, stepping into this production as the modern heir to the legendary Russian artist. The season draws to a close in November, in anticipation of the following year's reopening, with an evening dedicated to William Forsythe: *The Blake Works*, an homage to the choreographer and his masterful artistry. Lastly—though chronologically earlier, scheduled for March 3—we highlight the Academy Ballet School Performance of the Teatro alla Scala Ballet Academy. This inclusion serves as a reminder of La Scala's dual mission: not only as a stage for internationally acclaimed productions but also as a vital institution for training the next generation of dancers. In doing so, the theater continues to foster and spread the art of ballet—an art form with a remarkable capacity to captivate, unite, and inspire creativity in contemporary society. ■





By Giancarlo Landini

# La Scala and *La Forza*

With *La Forza del Destino*, Giuseppe Verdi made peace with the Teatro alla Scala, for which, after decades, he had not composed an opera. As would later happen with *Aida*, in many ways it was an absolute premiere. *La Forza del Destino* premiered in St. Petersburg in 1862; it was revived in Italy at the Apollo Theatre in Rome in 1863 and, finally, at La Scala in February 1869, in its definitive version, with a radically modified final scene. For the changes to the libretto, Verdi turned to Antonio Ghislanzoni. The process is now well-documented thanks to the recent publication of the *Carteggio Verdi Ghislanzoni*, edited by Ilaria Bonomi, Edgardo Buroni, and Marco Spada (see the review in the “Visti, ascoltati, letti per voi” section).

The stellar cast included famous names: Mario Tiberini as Don Alvaro, and Teresa Stolz as Leonora. Both able to embody a passionate vocality, full of emotion. Yet, it was also filled with constant invitations to sing delicately, searching for *chiaroscuro* to express the fierce contrasts within them. No less important were the other interpreters: Don Carlo, Padre Guardiano, Melitone, and Preziosilla, respectively Luigi Colonnese, Marcel Junca, Giacomo Rota, and Ida Benzy Nagy.

The *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, Ricordi's official publication, in several issues following the premiere at La Scala, published brief artistic-biographical sketches of the principal performers in the Milanese *Forza*. These were signed by Giovanni Ricordi himself, who captured the artistic qualities of each performer, noting their theatrical contributions even before their vocal abilities in the creation of this new genre of theatre that Verdi envisioned. Yet, the journey of *Forza* at La Scala lasted less than ten years, coming to a halt in 1877 with a performance illuminated by Julian Gayarre, the legendary Spanish tenor, where the old style was revived, blending sweetness and passion to give the Verdi tenor nobility and strength.

Thirty-one years later, Arturo Toscanini brought *La Forza del Destino* back to La Scala, though the March 19, 1908 premiere was a disaster due to the unfortunate choice of Icilio Calleja, who, immersed in the naturalistic repertoire, proved inadequate for such a complex vocal part. The prejudices that still accompany this work today were made evident by the review published the following day in *Corriere della Sera*: “And indeed, it is hard to listen to this popular *Forza* without effort and boredom. It is too old-fashioned in its melodramatic forms and too soft in its tragic libretto. It belongs to the old repertoire, to the operas we heard sung by great artists, and which must entirely rely on the virtuosity of the performers.”

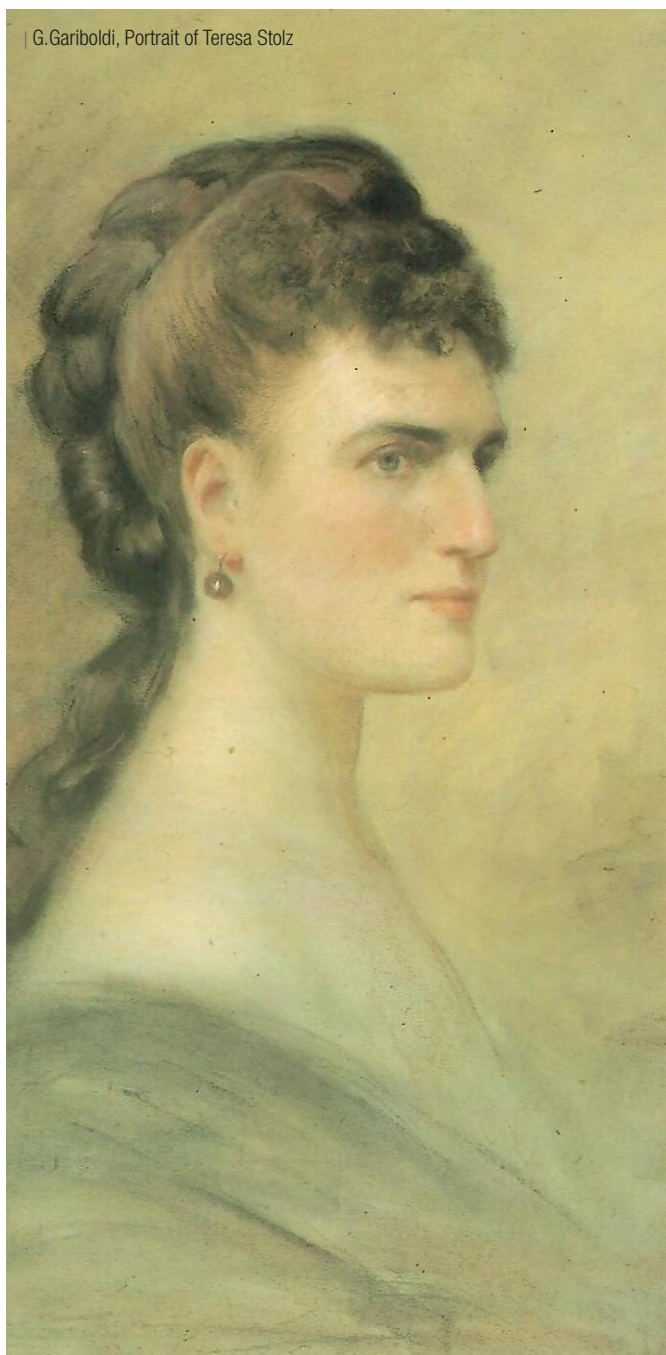
However, Toscanini's love for *La Forza del Destino* proved

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## *Many memories and Some Reflections*

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G. Gariboldi, Portrait of Teresa Stolz





M. Caballé, Act II, Scala, 1978



steadfast. When he revived it at La Scala on November 17, 1928, Gaetano Cesari's extensive review precisely captured the reasons behind the theater's decision. The renowned critic noted that, in many ways, this revival was part of the Verdi Renaissance in Germany, which brought back neglected scores like *Macbeth* and *Nabucco*. He also observed that Francesco Merli, a powerful tenor, was able to handle the risks of a role that requires solutions far removed from the prevailing naturalism, just as Don Carlo was entrusted to Benvenuto Franci, famous for his fiery temperament. Cesari pointed out, albeit implicitly, the changes in the style of

tenors over the past fifty years. Tiberini was a graceful tenor of the old school, able to reconcile Don Alvaro with Corradino from Rossini's *Matilde di Shabran*, a role in which he was the leading performer. Merli, on the other hand, was a disciple of Francesco Tamagno, interpreting the Verdi style and the new naturalistic repertoire. Cesari also emphasized the importance of choosing a voice for the Padre Guardiano that could express, through its timbre, the character's severe spiritual concentration, a key to understanding the plot, as Verdi assigned him the pivotal role of guiding the story's moral compass.





Conscious of the limits and grandeur of the score, and the risks of its inherent dissonance, Toscanini conducted (in Cesari's words) with the same rigor one would use for a concert. He did not fail to emphasize the importance of the scenic setup in defining the action's locations. This was not the only instance where the set design contributed significantly to the success of *La Forza del Destino* at La Scala. In the memorable 1978 production (notable for Giuseppe Patanè's conducting and the cast of Montserrat Caballé, José Carreras, Piero Cappuccilli, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Maria Luisa Nave, and Sesto Bruscantini, directed by Lamberto

Puggelli), Renato Guttuso's set design (with Paolo Bregni's collaboration) created a visually striking world.

Between the two world wars, the opera returned under various conductors (Giuseppe Del Campo, Gabriele Santini, Gino Marinuzzi), with prominent singers of the time, including Bianca Sacciati, Iva Pacetti, Gina Cigna, and Don Carlo performed by Enrico Molinari, Carlo Galeffi, Carlo Morelli, Armando Borgioli, and Gino Bechi. Tancredi Pasero sang *Padre Guardiano*, and Ebe Stignani performed *Preziosilla*, representing the ongoing evolution of *La Forza* at La Scala.



Don Alvaro, costume design for the world premiere in 1869



A Verdian style of singing solidified during this time, exemplified by Beniamino Gigli, who succeeded Francesco Merli in the role of Don Alvaro, but Merli returned in the 1946 edition. Gigli's performance was exceptional, marked by the beauty of his timbre, technical prowess, and emotive expression, demonstrating a shift away from the noble style originally intended by Verdi.

From the end of the war until the 1978 edition, *La Forza del Destino* was revived regularly, with sets by Nicola Benois and conducted by Antonino Votto, who succeeded Sergio Failoni and Victor De Sabata, who had previously conducted the opera at La Scala in 1943.

Readers should seek out the 1955 edition, which is of the highest level, with Votto's conducting, Renata Tebaldi's Leonora, and Giuseppe Di Stefano's performance, whose diction and phrasing were both remarkable for their clarity and realism. This was modern in its accents, capturing the essence of Verdi's vocal line with an unmatched theatrical intensity.

In 1999, Riccardo Muti revived *La Forza del Destino* at La Scala, marking the end of a long absence. This revival was part of a larger resurgence of Verdi's work, including a non-live recording

with Mirella Freni as Leonora.

Finally, *La Forza del Destino* was performed at La Scala in September 2001, in the original version written for St. Petersburg, conducted by Valery Gergiev. While a comparison of the two versions is beyond the scope of this piece, it is worth noting that Verdi's evolution in style—marked by changes in vocal tessitura and emotional expression—is clearly visible in these two versions, reflecting his ongoing search for soul and expression, always forward-thinking. ■

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Stagione  
2025

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BCPT

# Opera

Giovanna d'Arco  
24.26.30 gen, 1 feb

Il barbiere di Siviglia  
1.5.7.9 mar

La bohème  
4.6.10.12 apr

Andrea Chénier  
3.6.9.11 mag



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



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# The Archetypes of Destiny

By Giuliano Gallone\*

Opera has often been accused of not having received, from Verdi, the same level of attention he dedicated to his previous works and would lavish, in the future, on the masterpieces of his maturity. But a careful reading of Verdi's correspondence reveals the feverish attention he actually devoted to *La Forza del Destino*, considering it "a powerful, singular, and vast drama." From its very first performance in St. Petersburg to its debut at La Scala more than seven years later, the opera underwent a continuous process of revisions and refinements—one of the few

times Verdi worked with such meticulous diligence. "Too many deaths," he himself lamented, and this concern accompanied him through the opera's successive revisions. Yet, when it finally premiered in 1879, all the "improvements" made over the years resulted in an immediate and overwhelming success. And yet, the opera remains subject to an ambivalent reception—perhaps crude, perhaps not—shaped by a possibly forced, possibly natural juxtaposition of romanticism and religion, patriotism and fatalism. Some claim it fails to leave the audience with a unified impression of musical power, calling it a work without

F. Goya, *The Visit of the Monks*  
(private collection)



J. De Valdes Leal,  
*Allegory of Salvation*







a center. The apparent psychological simplification seen in *Rigoletto*, *Azucena*, *Ernani*, and others is, in *La Forza del Destino*, distributed generously among all the major characters. Here, complexity prevails, emerging through a novel orchestration and a psychological depth granted to each character. Nothing and no one is left to chance, making a psychoanalytic reading of the opera both intricate and exhilarating. Leonora, Don Carlo, and Don Alvaro are just three figures navigating the vast sea of Fate, which sweeps up everything and everyone in its path. They move between unconscious impulses and universal archetypes that inexorably govern their destinies. Leonora, a perfect embodiment of Jung's Anima archetype, symbolizes purity and self-sacrifice. Yet, she dares to rebel against paternal authority by fleeing her home. But the complexity of her character lies in the aftermath: rebellion gives way to guilt, leading her to voluntary penance. Nothing is definitive—everything is swept away by the force of destiny. Thus, her sublimation of love for Alvaro culminates in an isolated hermitage, in the sacrifice of the very Self for which she had once dared so much. Leonora adopts what Strategic Psychotherapy would call a “failed solution” of self-isolation, which allows her to avoid confronting the pain of loss and remorse. However, this does not truly resolve her internal conflict; instead, it crystallizes her suffering, preventing her from ever finding a new balance. Don Alvaro also seeks redemption for the accident that caused Leonora's father's death, yet the Shadow that haunts him is relentless, driving him toward violence and self-destruction. He cannot escape his fate: every attempt to abandon his Shadow fails, leaving him unable to find peace. Trapped in a vicious cycle of actions that always lead him back to the same place, his quest for redemption only

fuels guilt and destruction, reinforcing destiny as an inescapable force. On a perhaps more elementary psychoanalytic level, Don Carlo embodies an obsession with vengeance, the unyielding rule of blood law, and the relentless need to uphold honor. His internal dynamics can be seen as a “symmetrical escalation”: the more Carlo seeks revenge, the more he feeds his own rage and suffering. He is a prisoner of a self-perpetuating vicious cycle in which vengeance can never truly be satisfied—his actions do not resolve his inner conflict but exacerbate it. He projects the role of the enemy onto Alvaro, triggering a self-destructive spiral that culminates in their final duel and ultimately leads to his death. To renounce oneself, Jung would say, is to die to oneself. Fra Melitone, with his irony and reprimands, plays the role of the “strategic disturber.” He introduces cognitive dissonance in the protagonists, unsettling them and holding up a mirror to reflect upon their actions. While he does not necessarily guide them toward resolution, Melitone serves as a disruptive element that challenges how they perceive themselves and their choices. Few of Verdi's operas possess such explicit evocative power: here, his characters fail to integrate their Shadows, their guilt, their frustrations. They rely on repetitive strategies to cope with their pain or inner conflict. However, their inability to modify these strategies becomes their prison—a compulsion to repeat that leaves no room for the possibility of a different future. Their “solutions” prove counterproductive, trapping them in a trajectory that, rather than freeing them, condemns them to remain slaves to a destiny of their own making—victims of the force of destiny.

\* psychotherapist ■



# Observations on the Force of Destiny

By Giancarlo Landini

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## *Conversation with Riccardo Chailly*

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Unlike other works from Verdi's mature period, *La Forza del Destino* has not always enjoyed the endorsement and support of renowned conductors—those absolute maestros who, alongside opera, integrate symphonic works into their repertoire and offer interpretations that transcend mere significant readings, instead broadening their vision beyond conventional limits. Yet, the 20th century saw illustrious names championing *La Forza del Destino*, as evidenced by a wealth of live recordings. Among these, Bruno Walter and Fritz Busch stand out, fervent advocates of the Verdi Renaissance that took root in the English-speaking world in the early 1900s, albeit influenced by a sometimes questionable

tradition and intellectual reservations towards a work that the intelligentsia often regarded with suspicion. In the 1950s, a pivotal contribution came from Dmitri Mitropoulos, whose interpretations—both in Italy (notably the celebrated 1953 Florence edition) and abroad—set a reference point. More recently, Thomas Schippers, James Levine, Georg Solti, Zubin Mehta, and Antonio Pappano have added their voices to this legacy. Within this landscape, there exists an entirely Italian lineage of conductors, tracing back to Franco Faccio—the conductor of the opera's world premiere at La Scala and a founding figure of the Italian school of orchestral direction—through Arturo Toscanini, Victor De Sabata, Tullio Serafin, and Giuseppe Sinopoli, culminating in Riccardo Chailly. A privileged interpreter of Verdi's repertoire throughout his artistic trajectory, Chailly is now conducting *La Forza del Destino* for the first time. He does so in his own theater, La

Il Maestro Riccardo Chailly  
(Photo by Brescia/Amisano - Teatro alla  
Scala)



Scala, as part of a journey that in recent years has taken him from *Giovanna d'Arco* to *Don Carlo*, the latter being the work with which he inaugurated the previous season. It is the Maestro himself who now speaks to us about *La Forza del Destino*, highlighting key aspects of the opera that will open the 2024/25 La Scala season on December 7.

### **What significance does *La Forza del Destino* hold in the history of La Scala?**

"*La Forza del Destino* should be regarded as Verdi's work of reconciliation with La Scala. After the premiere of *Giovanna d'Arco*, Verdi spoke and wrote in very negative terms about how this theater neither served his music nor knew how to handle stage productions or cast formations. This rupture lasted twenty-four years (*Giovanna d'Arco* premiered in 1845), during which Verdi entirely absented himself from preparing any production for La Scala. And that is an immense period—especially when considering the output of a composer who shaped the very history of this theater."

### **How would you define Verdi's presence in conducting *La Forza del Destino*?**

"The fact that Verdi personally came to oversee the 1869 production is an extraordinary event—one that cannot be overlooked as I now bring *La Forza del Destino* back to La Scala. The Milan version carries with it three gifts: the grand Symphony, which I have conducted worldwide for nearly half a century and which consistently brings us tremendous success in international tours; the Ronda in Act III; and the final Trio."

### **What weight does this final passage carry?**

"Verdi wanted this passage to be cathartic—something that would transcend the earthly realm and transport us to another dimension. The new ending of *La Forza del Destino* emerged from the artistic evolution Verdi underwent in the late 1860s. If we examine the chronology of his compositions, we see that the St. Petersburg version predates the French *Don Carlo*, but the Milan revision follows the Italian *Don Carlo* and precedes *Aida* by two years. It thus belongs to a pivotal moment in Verdi's artistic arc."

### **What is *La Forza del Destino*?**

"It is an opera of immense complexity. This will be the sixteenth Verdi opera I conduct. I have performed numerous excerpts in concert form but never staged the full theatrical version. For me, conducting this opera in the complete critical edition by Philip Gossett and William Holmes—without sacrificing



anything from the Milan version—is a major and historic milestone. It is important to remember that this version has been absent from La Scala for twenty-five years. In 2001, Valery Gergiev conducted the St. Petersburg version, but it is almost astonishing to recall that *La Forza del Destino* has not opened a La Scala season since 1965. That means it has been missing from December 7 for fifty-nine years, when Gianandrea Gavazzeni conducted it with Margherita Wallmann's staging."

### **Can we say that this is a considerable temporal gap?**

"Yes, it is a significant lapse, and I felt it was crucial to select *La Forza del Destino* as the opening title of the season. While reviewing the chronology of the opera's performances, I noticed something curious. Since 1951, when the December 7 tradition began, Verdi has always played a decisive role in the season openers, alternating with other Italian and foreign composers. However, *Rigoletto* has never inaugurated a La Scala season. This is quite surprising, considering that all the other key milestones of Verdi's career have found their place in the December 7 tradition."

### **What are the fundamental moments in this score?**





"This score is filled with sublime moments. However, as a conductor, I would like to highlight seven key moments that, from my perspective—bearing the responsibility of leading the orchestra—resonate differently than they might for a listener."

#### **What are these moments?**

"First, the Symphony: a breathtaking and monumental page—the last one Verdi composed—which, in eight minutes, encapsulates the opera's main themes. Second, the finale of Act II: 'La Vergine degli angeli' is a deeply moving piece that echoes collective prayers from *Nabucco* and *I Lombardi alla prima Crociata*. Third, the introduction to Act III before Alvaro's romanza, 'O tu che in seno agli angeli,' where Verdi employs a clarinet solo for five minutes—a novel

theatrical device to create an atmosphere of mournful melancholy. Fourth, Don Carlo's romanza, 'Urna fatale,' where Verdi conveys the character's obsession through the haunting, breath-stealing intensity of the string accompaniment. Fifth, the duet between Padre Guardiano and Melitone in Act IV, which showcases Verdi's mastery in blending the tragic and comic—a skill he would later perfect in *Falstaff*. Sixth, Leonora's great romanza in Act IV, 'Pace, mio Dio,' where the orchestration's rarefied texture allows the harp to become the dominant voice. Finally, the concluding Trio, 'Non imprecare, umiliati a Lui,' where Verdi introduces the bass clarinet for the first time in the opera, adding a sense of torment and profundity."

#### **Is it fair to say that Verdi's orchestral writing here exhibits a particular timbral sensitivity?**

"Absolutely. The Symphony, the Ronda, and the Trio—pages written specifically for La Scala—speak for themselves, illustrating the evolution in Verdi's orchestration. His use of the chorus is also striking, with distant voices creating powerful sonic spaces, such as in the pilgrims' prayer in Act II or 'La Vergine degli angeli.'"

#### **To what references does *La Forza del Destino* point?**

"It naturally recalls grand opéra, but I find a stronger parallel with Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, in its depiction of history through everyday life scenes. Gino Roncaglia once described *La Forza del Destino* as a 'zibaldone'—a collection of everything: gunshots, escapes, duels, wandering pilgrims, convent rituals, and military camps. No other Verdi opera gathers such diverse elements into a fresco reminiscent of *I Promessi Sposi*, which Verdi himself once contemplated adapting. Imagine what might have been!"

#### **Did La Scala have a moral obligation to reopen a season with *La Forza del Destino*?**

"I would say yes. Don Carlo has frequently led La Scala's season openers, but sixty years of absence demanded that *La Forza del Destino* reclaim its place at the forefront of our attention." ■

# Protagonist: Dance

## *High Fashion Tailoring Service of Dance at La Scala*

In the Temple of Opera, Dance Has Always Been a Protagonist. The history of ballet and its school in Milan is undoubtedly a jewel in the crown of Teatro alla Scala. In this mesmerizing and captivating world, dance costumes hold a unique role—almost as an accomplice to the artist—following every movement and enhancing interpretation. Through the Teatro alla Scala's costume workshop, our atelier has contributed to countless ballets, weaving professional relationships with internationally renowned costume designers, dancers, and choreographers. For years, Sartoria Brancato—now Compagnia Italiana della Moda e del Costume—has been an integral part of prestigious productions, both classical and contemporary, refining tailoring techniques in service of dance. By selecting or creating fabrics and embellishments tailored to each specific need, we have played a vital role in elevating this art form that radiates beauty and harmony.

Throughout over fifty years of history, we have collaborated on great repertory ballets and lesser-known choreographies. Our journey began in the 1970s with Carla Fracci, Beppe Menegatti, and Luisa Spinatelli, with whom we also created the costumes for the latest 2024 production of Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*. Generations of dancers have grown under our watch and been

### Foto 1

Carla Fracci in *Giselle*, 1983.  
Choreographers: Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot.  
Set and costume designer: Alexandr Benois.  
Photo: Lelli and Masotti ©Teatro alla Scala



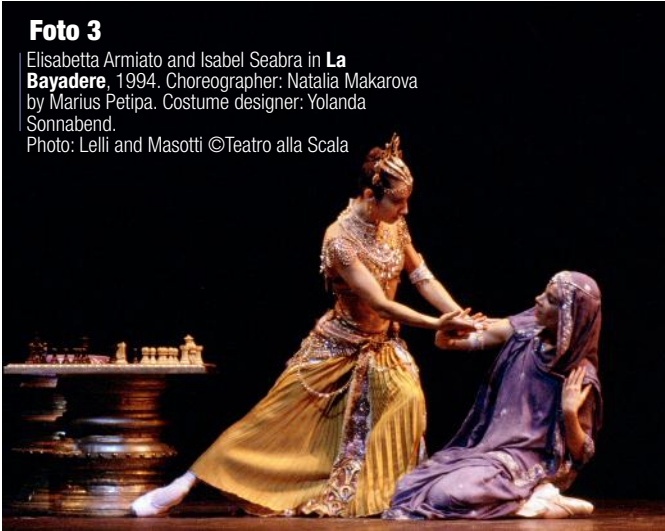
### Foto 2

Annamaria Grossi and Bruno Vescovo in *The Sleeping Beauty*, 1993. Choreographer and director: Rudolf Nureyev. Set and costume designer: Franca Squarciapino. Photo: Lelli and Masotti ©Teatro alla Scala



**Foto 3**

Elisabetta Armiato and Isabel Seabra in **La Bayadere**, 1994. Choreographer: Natalia Makarova by Marius Petipa. Costume designer: Yolanda Sonnabend. Photo: Lelli and Masotti ©Teatro alla Scala



adorned by our hands, up to the current Étoile, Nicoletta Manni. The allure of this craft and its inherent beauty fuel our passion.

**1983 GISELLE (Photo 1)**

Our artistic collaboration with Carla Fracci was profound and enduring. We crafted over 150 stage costumes for her, many for Teatro alla Scala. Giselle, the ballet that epitomizes Romanticism in dance, offered Fracci the opportunity to showcase her immense interpretative depth—especially in the first act's finale, clad in this ethereal costume: a layered tutu draped in a veil of hand-dyed pale blue silk, edged with two cornflower-colored ribbons, complementing the velvet bodice trimmed with Valenciennes lace and adorned with a delicate bouquet of tiny flowers.

**1993 THE SLEEPING BEAUTY (Photo 2)**

Often hailed as the “ballet of all ballets,” Nureyev's choreography—

adapted from Petipa—was among the Russian maestro's most cherished works. This production spans two centuries of history, featuring costumes that encapsulate the world of dance, from classical tutus to Degas-inspired designs, from minimalistic dancewear to the grand, opulent attire of the Royal Court. Franca Squarciapino's unmistakable touch brought these costumes to life as if plucked from a painting, using sumptuous fabrics and precious materials she personally sourced from the Far East.

**1994 BAYADERE (Photo 3)**

In 1994, we embarked on a singular yet fascinating collaboration with Yolanda Sonnabend for La Bayadère, a world steeped in Eastern mystique. The production starred Isabel Seabra as Nikiya and Elisabetta Armiato as Gamzatti, both resplendent in iridescent silks and intricate Indian embroidery. Their costumes, enhanced with exquisite headdresses and elaborate yet featherlight jewelry, were designed to seamlessly flow with the dancers' movements.

**2003 A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (Photo 4)**

Luisa Spinatelli's delicate pastel-hued costumes shimmered with an iridescent magic, transporting us to Shakespeare's enchanted forest. With meticulous shading on devoré silk, the fabrics moved fluidly within Balanchine's choreography. Watercolor sketches came to life onstage, blending blues, pinks, and the lush greens of a dreamlike woodland teeming with elves, gnomes, and butterfly-like fairies.

**2014 JEWELS (Photo 5)**

In Balanchine's triptych, inspired by Claude Arpels' gemstones, narrative gives way to sheer technique and virtuosity. The costume creation was a feat of technical mastery, drawing from photographic records of Anna Karinska's original designs and meticulously supervised by Holly Hynes. The production takes audiences on a journey through dance and costume history:

**Foto 4**

Roberto Bolle and Alessandra Ferri in **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, 2003. Choreographer: George Balanchine. Set and costume designer: Luisa Spinatelli. Photo: Andrea Tamoni ©Teatro alla Scala



**Foto 5**

**Emeralds:** Vittoria Valerio, Antonino Sutura  
**Diamonds:** Friedmann Vogel, Polina Semionova  
**Rubies:** Paola Giovenzana, Andreas Lochmann  
**Jewels:** 2014. Choreographer: George Balanchine.  
 Costume designer: Barbara Karinska, supervised by Holly Hynes.  
 Photo: Brescia and Amisano ©Teatro alla Scala



from the 19th-century Romanticism of Emeralds, with its Degas-inspired tutus, to the dynamic, body-hugging designs of Rubies, pulsating with fiery intensity, and concluding with Diamonds, whose pristine, flat tutus pay homage to the grand tradition of Russian ballet. Every embroidery was hand-stitched, with trimmings recreated identically to the originals, serving as the foundation for the dazzling gemstones, each meticulously sewn one by one.

**2023 COPPELIA (Photo 6)**

For the 2023/2024 ballet season opener, choreographer Alexei Ratmansky reimagined Coppélia in a Ukrainian village reminiscent

of his childhood. Under the keen eye of costume designer Jérôme Kaplan, and against the ticking clock, the entire production's costumes were completed in just over a month. Blending folklore with classical ballet, traditional embroidery and headpieces were handcrafted by Ukrainian artisans—an intentional act of solidarity in a time of profound hardship. The final result is a tapestry of nuanced details: each costume, even for the corps de ballet, is uniquely distinguished by fabric colors, embroidery, and floral motifs, all expertly harmonized with Kaplan's unmistakable aesthetic. ■

**Foto 6**

At the center: Nicoletta Manni and Timofej Andrijashenko in **Coppelia**, 2023. Choreographer: Aleksej Ratmanskij.  
 Set and costume designer: Jérôme Kaplan.  
 Photo: Brescia e Amisano ©Teatro alla Scala





# The Human Face of Power

By Vincenzo Grisostomi Travaglini



Scenes from the **Simon Boccanegra**  
Teatro dell'Opera (Photo by Fabrizio Sansoni)

In the programmatic indication of “The Faces of Power,” the Rome Opera season was inaugurated with a new production of Simon Boccanegra.

The musical realization is particularly notable and appreciated, with Maestro Michele Mariotti on the podium, a conductor who became known and admired in 2007 with this very title at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna. Back then, he was a revelation, and even more so today, deeply immersed in exploring the Verdi score, secure and continuous, the true pulsating heart of a commanding orchestra. His interpretive approach is relentless, in both the softness and the unrest of an advanced nineteenth century Giuseppe Verdi, whose second version of this opera increasingly adheres to persuasive compositional solutions: vigor and disillusionment. Mariotti stands out in the complex score with unwavering certainty, evoking spontaneous emotional impulses of Risorgimento ideals, but veiling them with strength in broad passages of sound research, embracing solutions that reflect mature, introspective artistry, always looking forward. The piano and pianissimo are delicately shaped, and the atmospheric brushstrokes influenced by French styles are powerfully descriptive, amplified in perception: the prologue’s beginning; the whisper and power of the “sea”! In the fortissimo passages, the clamorous developments and impressions envelop with intensity, with brass playing that is both powerful and clear. The elegance of the sound never allows the instrumentation to overshadow the voice; it is constantly homogeneous and dialogical, in symbiosis with the stage. Mariotti, together with the chorus master Ciro Visco, brings unexpected and innovative colors to the score, with remarkable sensitivity in the instrumental and emotional delivery, as well as in the vocal strength.

This impressive achievement is supported by a cast that primarily shines in the lower voices, so significant in maintaining the moral equilibrium of Verdi’s mature melodrama. In the 1881 version,

*Rome: Michele Mariotti, Luca Salsi, Michele Pertusi, and Eleonora Buratto deliver a landmark Simon Boccanegra.*

the vocal distribution is in line with that of 1857, but the roles acquire more distinctly pronounced expressions. The protagonist, Luca Salsi, is a measured Simone, with an intense and humanly vibrating expression. In the tradition of the Verdi baritone, his dark timbre naturally lends itself to greater flexibility in emission, solid and sought-after, both in the murmuring and in the higher register, whether in medium or forte: always impeccable in legato. Meticulous in his stage presence, he delivers a narrative full of humanity, laced with solitude.



Particularly defining are the symmetries between the baritone and bass, from Salsi's Boccanegra to Michele Pertusi's Fiesco, a seasoned artist in the broad repertoire of the bussetano, a soloist who always manages to add distinctive intensity to his interpretation. The Fa diesis of *Il lacerato spirito* is confident, not only as a closing plea but as a testament to the timbre and effect of the low note; the introspective portrayal of the noble Jacopo Fiesco (Andrea Grimaldi) further confirms the artist's maturity.

Eleonora Buratto, as Amelia Grimaldi, bears the challenging task of affirming herself as the only woman (aside from the maid) in a drama defined by darkness, conflict, revenge, and regret. Despite some initial roughness in her rendition of *Come in quest'ora bruna*, she gradually aligns with the development of her character, finishing the cavatina with a flexible and elegant voice. Her confidence grows in her encounter with her beloved Gabriele, with agility in the duet *Sì, sì dell'ara il giubilo* and increasing tension in the astonishment and sweetness of the paternal revelation *Ah! Stringi al sen Maria che t'ama / Ah! Figlia, il cor ti chiama*, a seal of Verdi's depiction of the father-daughter relationship: soprano-baritone, a connection that in this edition finds intense resonance between Buratto and Salsi. Gabriele Adorno, the noble rival of the Doge, is played by Stefan Pop, whose delivery is more than correct. His tone is passionate and demonstrates an expansive musical sensitivity. His phrasing is accurate, but he struggles to distinguish himself in the complexity of the fabric with its various marked nuances. His initial enthusiasm is engaging and sensitive, but in the second-act aria, he tends to overdo it, slipping into a rougher emission, though he fares better in the concluding trio.

Baritone Gevorg Hakobyan joins the ensemble with a rich, timbred voice and confident interpretation, showcasing the bitterness of the ambitious courtier Paolo Albiani, requiring a stage presence and adherence to the precise vocal and character distribution. The supporting roles are equally excellent, including Luciano Leoni as Pietro, Angela Nicoli as Amelia's maid, and Michael Alfonsi as the Captain of the crossbowmen.

The direction by Richard Jones is attentive, though it leans heavily into the social conflict between the plebeians and the aristocracy. In the prologue, the choice of modern clothing for the bourgeois and port workers feels like an ideological update that seems out of place. This blend becomes clearer in the Council scene, with the contrast between the noble and popular councillors and the sea consuls, and the stylistic clash between the dignitaries'



period costumes and the modern attire of the chaotic crowd. The production is enriched by the meticulous teamwork, with sets by Antony McDonald: the spaces of the prologue are well distributed in the "Square," with colonnades leading to a lighthouse on the horizon, marking the location of the action in the maritime republic of Genoa, and the Church of San Lorenzo with a bell looming overhead (or Campanon de Păxo?), recalling the many orchestral interventions. On a funeral pedestal lies Maria's body, beloved by Boccanegra, from whom he had a daughter. This same pedestal will rise in the first act to reveal the young girl, named Maria and later adopted by her grandfather Grimaldi, twenty-five years later. The Giardino dei Grimaldi is effectively reimaged on a rocky shore, with an imposing lookout tower striped in white marble and black slate. Thanks to the impeccable lighting by Adam Silverman, with great visual impact, and the synchronization of moving walls and costumes designed by McDonald, the Council Hall materializes with a black background that highlights the characters and dynamics of the scene, which most characterizes this second version, deeply marked by the significant and anonymous intervention of Arrigo Boito. Choreography for the mimed movements by Sarah Fahie, weapons master Renzo Musumeci-Greco.

The second act revisits the previous work of the creators of *Kát'a Kabanová*, with the Doge's room replaced by a shabby conspiracy room from the early twentieth century, so the staging settles into the conventional and lacks a sense of poetic vision. For the finale, the production returns to the prologue where Simon Boccanegra, twice Doge of Genoa, will die poisoned by the traitor Paolo Albiani, collapsing onto the same pedestal as his beloved Maria, while outside, a marble effigy of him stands as a symbol of the loneliness—or perhaps the futility—of the ambition and struggle for power.



# The Drama of a Life Without Hope

By Vincenzo Grisostomi Travaglini

*Rome: Tribute to Jean Cocteau and Francis*

*Poulenc at the Reate Festival at Villa Torlonia.*

The post-war years in France, through the lens of Jean Cocteau and Francis Poulenc, take center stage at the Reate Festival, with dramaturgy à l'Italienne, or theatrical adaptation that could be defined with the French term *au pied de la lettre*. The conductor Enrico Saverio Pagano delves into the nostalgic *les années folles* of *La dame de Monte-Carlo* and *La voix humaine* with youthful sensitivity, analytically but with restrained sensuality. These are unclassifiable works, because they are poetic/tragic monologues set to music with complicity and artistic creation in that process very dear to the surrealists, which, in order to be resolved without an intellectual interpretation, requires the performance to establish the intimate relationship between the orchestral fabric and singing, in emotional alignment. This formula, however, was not fully realized in the production staged in the ideal space and form of the Teatro di Villa Torlonia in Rome. Cocteau is one of the masters of the absurd dramatic school, and Poulenc, in his musical writing, is far more complex and structured than it might appear, requiring in its performance a surrender to the nuances that characterize the French spirit, fiercely Parisian of the time. The Maestro, leading the Roma Tre Orchestra, an excellently trained university ensemble, lacks a certain abandonment, and in the search for sound, tends to contain the richness of the compositional discourse, its transparency, and marked sensuality. The alternating dialogue between word and orchestral response finds in soprano Angela Nisi a technically accomplished interpreter, sketching a portrayal of exaggeration, if one may call it eclectic, of the two women, where nothing is taken entirely seriously, with sharp irony that, however, does not always come through in the overall relationship. Especially with *La voix humaine*, Jean Cocteau inaugurates a new way of conceiving literary space, in which the dramatic tension



of the opera is based on the absence of the central character, in this case, the man whom "Elle" loved. Angela Nisi maintains the role's passionate tension, adding harmonic unity that strengthens a structure based on the methodical segmentation of expressed or lived emotions. The use of long vocal moments without music

emphasizes the tragedy of a hopeless situation and gives the audience direct access to the protagonist's tormented psyche. Similarly, despite its gaudy charm, *La dame de Monte Carlo* brings us back to the figure of despair tied to the decay of the flesh and financial decline. In the end, suicide is the only way to end a life that once sparkled with glitter and feathers: a "Cocotte" starving for love. The directorial project by Cesare Scarton is incisive and attentive, with

emotional shifts enhanced by lighting effects by Andrea Tocchio and graphic motifs by Flaviano Pizzardi. The progression of the two titles follows: the intoxication of gambling intertwined with the sophistication of the disquiet of abandonment. A 1920s dress to start, with a visible change into a bathrobe for the second title, in the elegance of costume designer Laura Biagiotti. The stage is dominated by the black and white of a vintage film, with a burst of color in the delirious evocation of the failed suicide attempt, ending in a monochrome scene with a bouquet of red roses in chromatic contrast: the soloist wears a bridal veil for an impossible marriage, symbolizing a journey into the unknown. Michele Della Cioppa's *mise en abyme*, composed of concentric squares, recalls the Baroque concept dear to Pierre Corneille in his *Illusion Comique*, but more likely refers to the metronomic indication of the essential rhythm in Francis Poulenc's music. The representation of the inescapable spiral of time overwhelms both *La Dame de Monte-Carlo* in the Mediterranean and the protagonist of *La voix humaine*, drawn into her tearful logorrhea, clinging to the imaginary thread of the telephone. In both of Jean Cocteau's poems, the use of mirrors, present in both texts and their reflections, suggests an abyssal depth of despair, which echoes with Parisian sarcasm the terms of the fatal emotional rupture of the two heroines.



# A Story of Money and Sex

By Erica Culiati



A sumptuous premiere at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste. On the program, *La Traviata*. The direction by Arnaud Bernard was a success, with all six performances selling out. The director sets the action in 1950s Paris, a choice that raised eyebrows among some who would have preferred a more traditional setting, i.e., the nineteenth century. When Verdi staged it, he had to accept what the management of La Fenice had decided. The action was moved to the era of Louis XV. It wasn't until the twentieth century that costumes in the style of the 1800s were adopted. The performance was superb. The three settings, as per the libretto, were faithfully respected. Alessandro Camera did an excellent job: for Violetta's house, he chose a large ice-colored

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*Trieste: Arnaud Bernard stages **La Traviata** in 1950s Paris.*

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table and chairs, surrounded by high anthracite walls and doors through which the protagonists enter and exit, slashing the interior with cold lights (kudos to Emanuele Agliati, the lighting designer). For the first scene of the second act, the country house, the image presented to the audience is somewhat American Beauty, where instead of red roses, we have autumn leaves, and a chaise longue furnishes this empty room. For the second scene, at Flora's party, total black dominates, with a crystal chandelier reigning above. In the final act, Violetta's bedroom, the environment is in turmoil, with chairs on the floor, rolled-up rugs, and an armchair, all tinted by mercurial light enhanced by soft falling snow. For Verdi, it was a story of love and its failure due to social reasons and the protagonist's past, while for the director, the focus is on the relationship between money and the woman-object-desire. Alfredo's interaction with Violetta is that of a brute who pounces on the woman of his obsession, pinning her to the floor or to the table in voracious (but also somewhat ridiculous) embraces. This dynamic of violence against women, which today resonates strongly in the media, is projected onto the stage, where during the two noisy parties, the women are pulled and groped. Some boos were heard during the Gypsies' party, where they were transformed into effeminate drag queens, while from a top hat emerged a Josephine Baker who frolicked



Scenes from **La Traviata** at Teatro Verdi  
(Photo by Fabio Parenzan)





with a somewhat tipsy Flora, armed with a whip. This last scene seemed out of place when considering how puritanical society was in the 1950s and 1960s. Since the theater has several limited-view seats, we believe not everyone had the chance to see the protagonists who were typically positioned at the side of the stage. A director's sensitivity should also consider the viewer.

However, credit where credit's due: a great example of theater, the Germont duet, where the father and son, curled on the floor in a fetal position, are isolated by a black backdrop, as the notes drown in the desperate song of a father who loves.

The costumes by Carla Ricotti are beautiful, with delicate colors in the first act, with floating veils and tight corsets, but the reference to the 1950s is only expressed in the ankle-length, flared skirts worn by Violetta and Annina.

A well-deserved success for the Verdi orchestra. Maestro Enrico Calesso, the theater's resident conductor, showcased the potential of all the sections of the orchestra, accompanying without overpowering the singers. Warm and prolonged applause for Roberto Frontali, Germont père, who gave a masterclass in singing, but also in interpretation.

Also excellent was Antonio Poli, a somewhat adolescent, obstinate Alfredo, as obstinate as youth itself, with a solid technique and clear diction. A great performance by Maria Grazia Schiavo, whose clear phrasing was greatly appreciated by the audience. The public was rightly generous to the entire cast. Eleonora Vacchi, a seductive Flora; Saverio Fiore, Alfredo's friend Gastone; Francesco Verna, Baron Douphol; Francesco Auriemma, Marquis d'Obigny; Andrea Pellegrini, Dr. Grenvil. Not to forget Gianluca

Sorrentino, Giuseppe Olivieri, and Damiano Locatelli, respectively in the roles of Giuseppe, a servant of Flora, and a commissioner. A special mention goes to Veronica Prando, who infused her Annina with great personality. Always up to the task, the Verdi chorus, directed by Paolo Longo. Applause and calls for more.



# The Deceptions of Love

After the trilogy of three Manon operas—confirming the high cultural value of this theater—the Regio di Torino officially inaugurates the season with Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*.

*Le nozze di Figaro* represents the point of intersection between two important 18th-century trilogies: the “Mozart-Da Ponte” one, in which this title belongs, and the literary trilogy of Beaumarchais, centered on the character of Figaro.

Thus, *Le nozze di Figaro* has an important backstory that cannot be forgotten. The director of the production, Emilio Sagi, is aware of this and captures the distinctiveness of the characters within a context of continuity. Figaro is always “the hero of the Enlightenment”—as he defines him in the program notes—but he has a more mature view of reality. Rosina is the same: the lively and dynamic girl of the past, though disillusioned by repeated abandonments. In the end, love is unstable, and Mozart magnificently tells this story in the “crazy day.” This is the backdrop that the director works with. For him, the subject is essentially a comedy of misunderstandings, full of eroticism, intrigues, and infidelities. Naturally, there is also the theme of criticism toward the Ancien Régime—the opera was written in 1786, and revolutionary winds were beginning to blow fiercely—but this theme comes only secondarily.

A secondary protagonist is the city of Seville with its tiles and lush patio in the final act. The Spanish atmosphere permeates the stage. It can be felt in the frantic movements of the characters, in the pervasive dances, and in the collective scenes, which, thanks to Renata Schussheim's costumes and Eduardo Bravo's lighting, seem to evoke the paintings of Francisco Goya. The sets by Daniel Bianco are beautifully crafted, arranged on parallel planes that are connected through doors and openings. Through them, the eye penetrates deeply, capturing the liveliness of the secondary actions. The design is traditional but elegant, proving that one can create quality theater while meticulously following the directions of the libretto.

At the Regio, Leonardo Sini makes his debut. Born in 1990 in Sassari, this young conductor made a name for himself at the Georg Solti competition in Bucharest in 2017. From there, his career took off. Verdi and Puccini are his focus, even with lesser-known titles such as *Le Villi*, *Edgar*, *Alzira*, and *Stiffelio*. He has a deep, thoughtful connection with Mozart. He temporarily declined *Mitridate* and *Idomeneo*, but embraced the Da Ponte trilogy. It is no surprise that among his upcoming engagements are *Don Giovanni* in Las Palmas and *Le nozze di Figaro*



*Turin: with Mozart's masterpiece, the Regio season is inaugurated.*



in Liège.

Sini conducts the orchestra of the Regio with dynamism. He infuses the notes with cheerfulness and vivacity but does not forget the melancholic side of the score, giving it the necessary emphasis.

Vito Priante is the Count of Almaviva. He commands the stage with distinction and aristocratic posture. He sings well, draping the line with velvety tonal shades. Next to him is the Countess, interpreted by Ruzan Mantashyan. The Armenian soprano delivers an uneven performance. In the cavatina “Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro,” she does not shine. The tone is harsh, and there's a glassy quality to the timbre. Things go much better in the third act during the aria “Dove sono i momenti,” which is sung with heartfelt emotion in a play of calibrated intensities.

Giorgio Cauduro is an outgoing, extroverted Figaro. He has the physicality that helps him embody the role. His performance is a crescendo that reaches its peak in the aria “Aprite un po' quegli occhi,” sung in front of the stage, engaging the audience, who become part of the dialogue with the soft lighting. His diction is clear, and his phrasing is precise. If one must find a flaw, it would be in some excessively muffled high notes—especially the syllabic “si” at the end of “Se vuol ballare”—in an attempt to impart unnecessary bronze-like reflections to the voice.

José Maria Lo Monaco is a sweet, carefree, and poetic Cherubino. Onstage, he is excellent, and his voice is fitting. It is worth remembering, despite misguided attempts to cast countertenors in the role, that the right voice for the page is that of a mezzo-soprano performing en travesti.

Giulia Semenzato gives Susanna a bright timbre and a soft emission. Chiara Tirota is also excellent as Marcellina, and Andrea Concetti delivers a solid performance as Bartolo. Among the supporting roles, a special mention goes to the carefree Basilio of Juan José Medina (who I would have liked to hear more in the aria “In quegli'anni, in cui val poco,” which was unfortunately omitted) and the effective Barbarina of Eugenia Braynova.



By Silvia Campana

# The Too Fairytale-Like World of Angelina



Verona: *Francesco Lanzillotta conducts Cenerentola, starring Maria Kateva*

After ten years, *La Cenerentola* returns to the Teatro Filarmonico in a new production by the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino.

Director Manu Lalli, in collaboration with Roberta Lazzeri (sets) and Gianna Poli (costumes), seems to draw inspiration from the world of fairy tales to shape her interpretation of the Rossini score, though in reality, it has little to do with that world. The setting conceived by the director moves within a fairy-tale context, represented more by the perpetual and bustling presence of fairies, sequins, and elves than by a more theatrical and in-depth interpretation, which could perhaps have blended better with the not always consoling view of the fairy-tale world referenced by certain characters (above all Don Magnifico).

Admittedly, charming ideas abound in this stage space (clearly inspired by Ponnelli), elegantly dominated by revolving flats and huge stacked books on which the fairy creatures move nimbly (a delightful touch is the small Fairy with a giant onion-shaped clock in hand, gently tugging at the girl's dress to remind her of the fateful midnight, just as Alidoro, the new Prospero, summons the storm), but their presence at times feels invasive, predictable, and not very magical.

References to enchanted worlds can, if not carefully balanced, backfire, risking trivializing the content at times.

Maria Kateva is an artist with remarkable vocal ability, possessing a beautiful and rich sound that spans the entire range. She is strong

in the high register and also exhibits soft richness and expressive depth in the lower register. She shows extreme ease in performing the famous Rondò finale, which, as is well-known, presents no small challenge. A poised and measured performer, attentive to accent and word, her Angelina was thus complete and successful in every aspect.

Pietro Adaini's Don Ramiro was technically well-resolved, though the artist's vocal approach, which tends to pull the sound back, somewhat affected projection.

Alessandro Luongo was lively and exuberant, bringing all the verve to Dandini's character, resolving it musically in a correct and varied manner.

Carlo Lepore gave a highly interesting and well-sketched Don Magnifico, who, if not for the numerous gags that often multiply during performances, would certainly have appeared even more defined.

Matteo D'Apolito resolved the character of Alidoro with solemn bonhomie.

A bit too theatrically exaggerated but generally correct and attentive were Daniela Cappiello's

Clorinda and Valeria Girardello's Tisbe.

The Chorus of the Foundation, directed by Roberto Gabbiani, performed well.

Francesco Lanzillotta's reading was attentive and measured, guiding the orchestra of the Foundation to highlight even the most shadowy moments of the famous score.

A full success and applause for all the performers and the conductor.



Images of *La Cenerentola* at the Teatro Filarmonico (Photo by Ennevi)



# A Life Between Joy and Despair

By Francesco Germinario

The “Premio Fausto Ricci” presents *La Traviata*: the protagonists are the young talents chosen by the Jury of last year’s 12th Competition. The performance is co-produced by Maria Chiara Camponeschi of Music & Art Production.

The singers proved to be capable, bringing success to the two performances at the Teatro dell’Unione in Viterbo, which will then go on tour to the theaters of Civitavecchia, Asti, Orvieto, and Milan; this fact gives the competition special importance, as it allows the singers to measure themselves on stage.

The complexity of the subject, derived from Alexandre Dumas’ drama *La dame aux camélias*, adapted by Francesco Maria Piave, presented many challenges for Verdi: a Parisian courtesan who, amidst the revelry of parties, discovers love but is tragically destined to die young. The opera, composed for the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, initially faced a halt due to its scandalous theme, which required Verdi to make a series of adjustments and revisions for it to be staged.

All the controversy surrounding the title is brought forward in this production, where the story, throughout the centuries, retains its romantic yet truthful aspect, remaining a drama that still feels contemporary today.

Certainly, *La Traviata* is not the easiest opera for a debut, but thanks to the creative team (director Davide Garattini Raimondi, along with lighting designer Paolo Vitale, and set and costume designer Danilo Coppola, with flamenco choreography directed by Laura Stella), who trained the young singers, the result thrilled the audience, filling the Teatro Unione.

Davide Garattini Raimondi has crafted a clean and elegant production,

*Viterbo: Davide Garattini Raimondi’s direction guides the winners of the Fausto Ricci Prize in La Traviata.*

with bold choices, such as the very raw ending. The four scenes move through time, with the first scene in black and white, presenting a party disguised as a nightmare, where all the participants dressed as brides seem to remind Violetta of something she will never have, something that will remain a dream, until Alfredo arrives and makes everything seem possible. The second act has a clear division between the right side in black and the left side in white; the right side has no stage

Scenes from **La Traviata** at Teatro dell’Unione (Photo by Giuseppe Cesareo)







elements, only cold lights, while the left side has a disheveled double bed and warm lights, representing romance on one side and reality on the other. The second act plays with the characters entering and exiting these two distinct areas, highlighting the different moments of the drama. The second scene of the second act, Flora's party, is, in contrast, an explosion of red and passion because the loving dance between Alfredo and Violetta has now broken, showing the bruises of something that can no longer be lived. The third act, born from the last scene, is sparse and cold, hitting the audience and leaving them breathless, just as Violetta does on stage.

The two Violettas, Ilaria Vanacore and Yuliya Pogrebnyak, proved to be up to the task with their excellent vocal and stage quality. Ilaria Vanacore, with her beautiful timbre and a top-notch interpretative line,

portrayed a sweet, in-love, and suffering character. Yuliya Pogrebnyak was no less impressive, with good diction and phrasing, and a thorough exploration of her character.

The two Alfredos were remarkable. Vincenzo Spinelli brought his beautiful vocal qualities to the role, with a lovely timbre, beautiful singing line, and perfect high notes, along with acting skills: initially a disappointed lover, and later, a sufferer. Nico Franchini, with his beautiful tenor voice and a strong presence, impressed the audience with his vocal extension and color. Antonino Giacobbe played Giorgio Germont with mastery and a beautiful baritone color, highlighted in "Di Provenza," maintaining the composure of a conservative father, indifferent to Violetta's drama.

The rest of the cast was ideal in bringing the performance to success, including Romina Cicoli (Flora Bervoix), Marianna Menniti (Annina), Alessandro Fiocchetti (Gastone), Jacopo Burla (Baron Douphol), Giovanni Augelli (Doctor Grenvil), Francesco Cascione (Marchese d'Obigny), Alessandro Napolitano (Giuseppe), Nicola Luger (servant), each with their own vocal qualities.

Conductor Fabrizio Bastianini, leading the Etruria Ensemble Orchestra, brought out the special characteristics and drama of Verdi's score, paying close attention to the stage protagonists, the artistic masses, and the well-prepared Chorus under the guidance of Barbara Bastianini.

A roaring success with the audience giving a warm reception to all the performers, celebrating the debut of these young talents. Next year, the "Premio Fausto Ricci" will present a Giacomo Puccini opera, *La Bohème*, dedicated to the great Luciano Pavarotti, who made his debut with this very Puccini title.



# The Deceptions of the Heart and Power

*Bergamo: great masterpieces and successful debuts in the Donizetti Festival program.*

Scene from **Roberto Devereux** at the Donizetti Theatre

By Giancarlo Landini

## The Drama of an Elderly Queen

If Elisabetta had been able to listen to Don Pasquale, especially the final scene, perhaps she would have avoided the mess she got herself into. It's true that the queen does not marry, but falling in love late in life with a young man already in love with someone else—who is younger than her—is always a muddle. Especially when the other woman is the wife of a powerful lord. Joking aside, Roberto Devereux is always a tough challenge. A Donizetti title, now part of the standard repertoire. It was revived by Leyla Gencer at the San Carlo in 1964. The object of desire for all the prima donnas devoted to the bel canto of the early nineteenth century (Caballé, Sills, Ricciarelli, Devia, to name only the most important). Expressive bel canto. Not by chance, it was crafted by Donizetti for the voice of Giuseppina Ronzi De Begnis, who, judging by the chronicles, was not comparable to Jessica Pratt. But Jessica Pratt, born a lyrical-light virtuoso (Zerbinetta, to be clear), has been drawn to other vocal qualities as well. Perhaps due to human maturity, or artistic growth. Like Edita Gruberova or Mariella Devia did. And it's right that this is the case. After all, today's performer doesn't have to match the past one, whose voice we don't even know concretely. But she must sing the role with credibility. And I'd say she certainly does. She does so in the clarity of the recitatives, always delivered with expression. She does so in the soaring of the cantabile sections ("L'amor suo mi fé beata" and especially "Vivi ingrato a lei d'accanto") which are shaded by light games created with airy half-voices, artful phrasing, and a careful interplay between sound and word. She captures the expressiveness inherent in Donizetti's mature style, which serves as

his signature. She does so with a technical and artistic awareness that allows her to give full weight to the famous final "Quel sangue versato" and the dramatic declamation that Donizetti invents for such a tragic moment. There are the low notes, where the tessitura drops to emphasize the fury of the unfortunate queen. Notes that, in Pratt's range, are not golden, but rather of copper. Yet, without forcing, she compensates with expression and resolves them. At certain moments, we would have wished for a bit more variation. We have Pratt, and yet we constrain her to a restrained virtuosity; for example, in the cabaletta of the first act ("Ah! Ritorna qual ti spero"), where Sills' studio recording from 1969 is right there to be listened to. Philology? Well, let's free ourselves from that. Is it the conductor's will to maintain a soberly measured reading? Well, for a moment, we can allow a deviation, given that on stage there is a singer of such rank. Moreover, let it be clear, with the contribution of the Donizetti Festival Orchestra and the Chorus of the Accademia della Scala (well-prepared by Salvo Sgrò), Riccardo Frizza, who chose the original Neapolitan version from 1837, gives a fantastic Devereux. A strict, tight, and intense Devereux. In doing so (and in the process liberating us from the dreadful overture Donizetti added for Les Italiens), he presents an opera that is truly innovative and dramaturgically modern: a conflict of diverse human natures grappling with life. He does so with a careful and resolute gesture, ensuring no discontinuities; he does so with an art of accompanying the singing, making sure that the expression of feelings is never confined to a preordained rhythmic structure not dictated by the character's needs. Yet, he achieves this without diminishing the



overall rigor of the design. Then there are the instrumental details, the tone, which is always important, but especially for Donizetti. What makes Pratt's performance admirable is also her acting, which fits well into the production staged by Stephen Landridge, with sets and costumes by Kate Davenport and lighting by Peter Mumford. A simple yet effective production, one that doesn't shy away from an Elizabethan tone, but avoids the trap of turning it into a historical drama. Nor does it make the plot trivial. Devereux is not a Netflix fiction, and Elisabetta's story is not Gabriella's in *Inganno*. Cammarano and Donizetti have the good taste not to end everything with a light-hearted conclusion; for Roberto, a few dinners at a restaurant and a room in a palace are not enough. Here, music elevates (in the philosophical sense) the passions. To bring these to light, the director highlights some objects: the bed, the throne. These are identified with the red of passion, sucked into black backdrops, symbols of death. To reinforce this idea, he has a life-sized puppet resembling death itself, wandering through the court and brushing past Roberto, ready to seize him. However, there are a few too many skulls in the finale of the second act, where Death goes to bed with a young man in his underwear in a grotesque solution. The grotesque is a category that perhaps belongs to Shakespeare, to Elizabethan theatre, but not to Donizetti. John Osborn as Roberto confirms himself as one of the most fitting voices for this style and repertoire, whether he's drawing the fiery spirit of the warrior, indulging in the impetuous love for Sara, or resolving the prison scene with a mixed sound that is both sweet and virile. He excels in the rhapsodic exaltation of the cabaletta, "Bagnato il sen di lagrime." Sara finds a happy definition in Raffaella Lupinacci, whose intense timbre, almost dark, gives the character a strong personality, while her solid preparation allows her to shine in a thankless role with convincing phrasing. Simone Piazzola is a reliable Sheriff both in singing and on stage. Worth noting is the impact of David Astorga, who makes Lord Cecil a true antagonist. The cast also includes Ignas Melnikas as Sir Gualtiero, from the Donizetti Workshop, and Fulvio Valenti as Nottingham's family member and the Knight. A success, with a television-like enthusiasm, as it's done today.

### Poor Don Pasquale

There are two reasons to listen to this edition of *Don Pasquale*: the critical edition edited by Roger Parker and Gabriele Dotto; and Roberto De Candia's *Don Pasquale*. The first does justice to the interventions that tradition has piled onto a score that has been too famous and too often listened to. Once again, the critical edition restores to the opera and the composer all the merits of a brilliant musical dramatist. The second creates an original character that removes him from the usual clichés, doing so through singing that is always measured, never forced, but always attentive to the word and the detail of the phrase. Unfortunately, he is the star of a deplorable show, marred by the naivety of the direction. The problem isn't the modernization: that's been seen before. But the series of inconsistencies, the implausibility of the other characters, and the bad taste of many situations. *Don Pasquale* is a fool. Of course. He gets made a fool of by the doctor. Sure. But the doctor can't be a young man wandering around in slippers and Bermuda shorts, pulling behind him (supposedly) a sister who lives in a broken-down car and a notary who looks like he escaped from home. The Chorus



should be made up of servants spying on a master who has lost his mind, not a group of ragged individuals cheering for free love. What love? Considering that Norina and Ernesto are hardly the most alternative people in this story. But if you want to be credible with an alternative reading, you need to cast an Ernesto who is a young man, not a middle-aged man who looks like the younger brother of Don Pasquale, and not a Don Pasquale who's a real character, like Roberto De Candia's. It's possible to laugh at the pink elephant that roams around in the second act or even at the porters in plush outfits, like mice or rabbits. Or perhaps we should think the pink elephant is a reference to a well-known English idiom referring to the hallucinations of those using drugs. A plausible hypothesis, considering the wild characters the director places on stage. If you want to laugh at the lines in Bergamasco dialect, feel free. But a refined product like *Don Pasquale* should not become a farce of this kind. And why hire Amélie Niermeyer to create the sets and costumes by Maria-Alice Bahre, the choreography by Dustin Klein, the lighting by Tobias Löffler, for a show that is unpleasant to watch, when the Festival could have given space to young, talented Italians? I hope no one is naïve enough to believe that such a direction would make the production international. Adding to this is the weakness of the other performers and the lack of personality in the direction of Iván López-Reynoso, leading the aforementioned and always praised Masse Artistiche. One has to wonder why the Festival chose this conductor, when Italy offers the opportunity to select from emerging figures. It seems that Javier Camarena was not in top form, judging by a series of small uncertainties from the very first phrases, and the lack of color in *Cercherò lontana terra*, or the lack of charm in the serenade and the duet of Act III. For Norina and Dr. Malatesta, Giulia Mazzola and Dario Sogos, both from the Bottega Donizetti, were cast. The idea is a good one. Giulia Mazzola has good vocal skills, a beautiful voice, and proper technique for the cantabile, though there's still work to be done on coloratura and the high register. Dario Sogos is a likable artist, moving easily on stage, but at this point, I don't see any particularly remarkable vocal merits or a fully developed technique. One could observe that "Bella siccome un angelo" should be sung with bel canto lift, support, position, smoothness, and that the comic aspect lies in the fact that a portrait worthy of Elvira in *I Puritani* is instead used to depict a shabby Norina. Donizetti's letters

tell us what his ironic taste was like. The fast syllabic passages are a virtuosity of the buffo, but the first requirement—the conductor should know this—is that everything should not only be intelligible but absolutely clear. But that was not the case in the Act III duet. Moreover, the farce staged by the director was hardly the ideal setting to explore all the vocal subtleties of this work, which (let's not forget) was written for four exceptional performers and requires a range of refinements to bring out its sharp elegance, but also that bittersweet mix, which, through its jokes, reveals the sad fate of poor Don Pasquale. Here, he has had to suffer not only his human dramas but also the absurdities of a mediocre production.

### Love Conquers Everything

Zoraida di Granata is presented as part of the Donizetti 200 project, which systematically presents works composed by the Bergamasco 200 years ago. As we know, Donizetti's catalog is crowded with titles. In 2022, the choice was made for *Chiara e Serafina*. Therefore, Zoraida di Granata, which had premiered at the Teatro Argentina in Rome in January of the same year, was not included. Given its success, the opera was remounted in January 1824 in the same theater, but with a rather complex reworking. Among the causes of this was the presence of Rosmunda Pisaroni, a renowned contralto, already a notable interpreter of Rossini's works, who, among other things, had sung Malcom in *La Donna del lago*. In the cast of this version were also Domenico Donzelli and Almunzir, while Luigia Boccabadati Gazzuoli was involved in the Zoraida role. She would play an important role in the history of Donizetti's theater and early 19th-century Italian opera. This is not a review to delve into the complex events of the first version and its revision. For a precise framing, one should read chapters 10 and 18 of *Le prime rappresentazioni di Donizetti nella stampa coeva* by Annalisa Bini and Jeremy Commons, published by Skira, a fundamental contribution to understanding Donizetti's theater. Additionally, the scholarly essay by Paolo Fabbri in the *Quaderno della Fondazione Teatro Donizetti*, QF 72, dedicated to Zoraida di Granata. However, it should also be noted that Opera Rara has released a recording of the first version of Zoraida di Granata, with the reworked sections from the 1824 version appended in the third and fourth CDs. And now, to the opera. When Stendhal listened to it in Rome, he found it extremely boring and described Donizetti as a young man without talent. He was wrong about Donizetti, as his masterpieces were still to come. At the time, Donizetti was grinding away in the musical mill. The authoritative Fétis, even in 1830, placed Donizetti at the bottom of a ranking of composers active at the time. But Stendhal was right about Zoraida di Granata. The opera is academic, constructed on a use of forms that is predictable and repetitively reiterated, with a few exceptions, such as the Romanza (sic) for Zoraida, the subsequent Terzetto, and some steps in the scene of the torture in Act II. All of this is sprinkled with that happy melodizing typical of Donizetti, but here, it's never invigorated by a brilliant melody or that color which would later become one of his signature traits. In Rome, the opera was performed by virtuosos of high rank, such as Caballé, who could even make the phone book sound glorious, inciting delirium. Here, Zoraida only comes alive when Cecilia Molinari, as Abenamet, enters the stage. With her valuable voice, musicality, beautiful technique, stylistic knowledge, and proper phrasing, Cecilia Molinari brings



energy and drive to her performances, shaking off the boredom that would otherwise envelop the score (see Montale). Zoraida, as portrayed by Zusana Markova, has a fine voice in the center but is lacking in the upper register and doesn't always show the necessary agility in the coloratura, as seen in the *Stretta* of her aria. However, she has a way of presenting the phrase and a stage presence that makes her credible as the pursued innocent, especially in the scene of the torture. The villainous Almunzir is played by tenor Konu Kim, who has a voluminous voice, supported by good technical preparation, allowing him to meet the demanding vocal requirements. In the great aria of Act II, he manages the high extremes with an effective mixed emission. However, his diction feels more learned than truly owned, and in Italian opera, the interpretation always passes through the combination of singing and words. When this doesn't happen, everything becomes rigid, as it does here. In his attempt to be exceedingly villainous, Kim ends up overemphasizing the accents. The other performers from the Bottega Donizetti include Valerio Morelli as Ali, Lilla Takacs as Ines, and Tuty Hernandez as Almanzor. The first deals with another villainous character, resolving him with a sharp singing style, which needs to be balanced with a more nuanced phrasing. The second sings in a supporting role, handling it decently, especially in her brief aria before the finale, while the third is solid in her small part. Alberto Zanardi conducts the Orchestra Gli Originali, which plays on period instruments, while the Chorus is from the Accademia della Scala, always well-prepared by Salvo Sgrò. Zanardi offers a precise and diligent reading of Zoraida, unfolding each number with clarity, contributing to the tedium of this long score.

Pretty hot success!





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Regia **Italo Nunziata**

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### PRIMA DELLA SCALA

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Libretto di **Stefano Valanzuolo**  
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### L'ELISIR D'AMORE

Musica di **GAETANO DONIZETTI**  
Direttore **Enrico Lombardi**  
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Testo **Alessandro Barbaglia**  
Attrice **Elena Ferrari**  
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Orchestra Filarmonica Italiana  
Coro Novecento, diretto da Maurizio Saccegna  
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# A Rusalka that Stays in the Heart

By Sandro Compagnone

Scenes from **Rusalka** at the theatre di San Carlo (Photo Luciano Romano)

The opera season at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples was inaugurated with a new production of *Rusalka* by Antonín Dvořák, and the decision was made to focus on two highly captivating names: the controversial, debatable, and never mundane director Dmitri Tcherniakov, who also designed the sets, and the soprano Asmik Grigorian, whose well-deserved and already solidified fame continues to rise. After ten minutes of the performance, we had already sharpened the pencil of our sterile sarcasm: the “electric shock” promised by Tcherniakov had hit its mark. On the gigantic screen placed halfway across the stage, an animated film (or graphic novel, if you’re feeling contemporary) was projected, in which the Nymphs were nothing

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*Napoli: Asmik Grigorian and Dmitri Tcherniakov, formidable creators of a reference performance.*

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more than a synchronized swimming team; here they appeared, in flesh, bones, and bathing suits, teasing the Water Spirit who, in a coach’s tracksuit, extends his hands (and does so heavily, though only in the animated fiction, even with *Rusalka*). The mermaid sits there, dejected, with her gym bag, on a locker room bench. This sets the tone for the entire performance: the entire story is, in fact, told through the cartoon, which does so in a contemporary key—the Prince drives a Ferrari, the protagonist wanders through a modern city, to access the witch Jezibaba’s house, one must ring the bell—but then, with a fascinating mechanism (whose operation we confess we didn’t fully understand, but which owes its ingenuity to video and light designers Alexey Poluboyarinov and Gleb Filshtinsky), the large screen opens up like a cinematic fade, revealing glimpses and spaces from which the characters emerge and act, at times becoming somewhat trapped and miniaturized. Some things are unforgivable, and we’re not so much thinking of the erotic approach of the Witch with *Rusalka*, but rather the transformation, complete with explanatory caption, of the gamekeeper and the servant in the libretto into the very parents of the poor girl, rendering the mocking they inflict upon the mermaid entirely incongruous and gratuitous. Then, as the performance reaches its end, we realize that it has worked, and we have been captivated: the paradox is that this happened because Tcherniakov’s proclamation, “it will not be a







fairy tale, it will not be sentimental” (nowadays, to navigate some productions, one must consult the director’s notes manual), betrayed itself, and in this betrayal, it found its meaning and allure. The worn clothes of the characters, the gloom of that cold basement frozen in neon where the story concludes, the violence of certain interactions—all are, in every way, “fairy tale,” if it is true, as it is, that fairy tales are often terrible and cruel. And the stroke of fantasy with which, at the masked ball, Rusalka dresses as a mermaid (magnificent the costume designed by Elena Zaytseva, who elsewhere opts for a disorienting everydayness) closes that circle which had been attempted to break. The power of certain archetypes imposes itself: Tcherniakov may not have realized that he sought to surpass them not because they are “sentimental,” but precisely because they are profound and disturbing, and from this short circuit, as sometimes happens, theater is born. Take a look at the choice made for the endings of the acts: in the first two, on the final chord, contrary to the now established custom, all the lights in the hall are turned on, and it’s like waking from a dream; only at the end of the opera do we fall into darkness, and we are left trapped in that dark world and its piercing impenetrability.

One could not ignore, given its peculiarity, the direction. But it’s a shame, because this performance, if it stays in the heart, has only one signature, and one light—that of the Lithuanian soprano Asmik Grigorian. It’s impossible to distinguish vocal talent from stage presence: the former earns applause for the purity of the tone, the sharpness of the high notes, the dramaturgical relevance of the phrasing, while the latter takes your breath away. Stealing the scene by sitting hunched in silence on a chair, dressed in a hoodie, baggy pants, and sneakers, speaks to a gift that is not of great singers, but of great actresses. And yet, there is nothing “acted”: those little

gestures, those glances, that way of walking are not something you’re taught. It’s what surfaces from the depths of a soul that, evidently, must be as vast as a primordial jungle. And then she sings, and there is transparency, fire, truth, and illusion; there’s a golden thread that envelops the story and determines its color; there is a true artist.

The rest of the cast is excellent. Adam Smith is a passionate and resonant Prince, slightly fatigued in the third act. Ekaterina Gubanova draws a brilliant Princess, self-assured and disdainful; Gabor Bretz is a Lord of the Waters with dark incisiveness. Anita Rachvelishvili is an irresistible Witch, rough and Luciferian just enough. Peter Hoare and Maria Riccarda Wesseling (gamekeeper and servant, or unexpectedly Rusalka’s parents, take your pick) are not vocally disadvantaged by the excessive caricatured direction. The three Nymphs (Julietta Aleksanyan, Iulia Maria Dan, Valentina Pluzhnikova) and the hunter (Andrey Zhilikhovsky) perform well. As required, the choir, directed by Fabrizio Cassi, is diaphanous.

From the podium, Dan Ettinger interpreted Dvorák’s marvelous score with great sensitivity and introspection, capturing all its moonlit enchantments and dramatic flashes, perhaps with a certain preference for the latter, which at times was felt in the balance between the pit and the stage.

In the end, despite a notable rush to escape at the last note (it was almost midnight), the performance was met with a vibrant success from the audience for all the performers, with a triumph and a shower of flowers for Grigorian, ovations for Rachvelishvili, and, it should be noted, no significant dissent, as feared, for Tcherniakov.

# A Hero in Search of Peace

By Claudia Mambelli

Scenes from **The Return of Ulysses to His Homeland** at the Teatro Alighieri  
(Photo by Zani-Casadio)



It is the “wandering heroes in search of peace” who return to their homeland. Their names are Ulysses and Aeneas, whose roots sink deep into Greek mythology. Both veterans of the Trojan War, albeit on different fronts. We are in the full swing of Baroque Seventeenth Century, which is encapsulated in the Autumn Trilogy that concludes the 35th edition of the Ravenna Festival, signed by two great masters: Pier Luigi Pizzi, the dean of Italian directors, and Ottavio Dantone, a giant of the 17th and 18th century repertoire who always seeks that correspondence between word and music in the Baroque, where affections and feelings are embedded.

On the stage of the Teatro Alighieri, a diptych unfolds, the first panel being Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses to His Homeland*. The Return of Ulysses debuted at the Carnival of Venice in 1640, with a libretto by Giacomo Badoaro, now presented in a critical version by Bernardo Ticci. The Homeric hero's story is interpreted by the expert hand of Pier Luigi Pizzi, who, with the refined elegance that distinguishes him on every occasion, places it in a shared stage space for both titles, pure, almost metaphysical, timeless in its simplicity, where very few elements stand out—symbolic objects identified in the tree of life, which is also the tree of the ship with which Ulysses reaches Ithaca. Here, the beautiful costumes in black, white, and red seem to unite past and future in long, flowing cloaks and techno-leather materials.

From the very beginning, the memory of Penelope's loom guides the audience through Monteverdi's work, seen as a symbol of wisdom and perseverance in resisting the suitors and for the unique feeling she has for her distant husband. It is a place of memory where one of the most touching moments is underscored by the reunion between father and son, a love sealed in silence with no explanation. Emphasizing its significance is the priceless touch of Ottavio Dantone,

## Ravenna: *Monteverdi's The Return of Ulysses to His Homeland* opens the Autumn Trilogy

who, with his Accademia Bizantina, now celebrating forty years of splendid activity, refines this ancient score with delicate resonances where the poetic word gives voice to the emotions we carry in our hearts, offering a smooth direction rich in elegiac abandonments, a play of accents and colors of absolute reciprocal freedom. The cast presents a high-level array of male voices, supported by the exuberant imagination of the instrumentalists. Mauro Borgioni, an artist of great style, with a soft, flowing vocal line, shapes a passionate Ulysses, full of youthful impulses intertwined with the abandonment of the darkest despair, expressive with a variety of accents. Of great interest is also the Trio of the Suitors. Federico



| Jakub Jozef Orlinski



Domenico Eraldo Sacchi, Danilo Pastore, and Jorge Navarro Colorado express a moment of powerful expressive energy. And the fiery Iro of Robert Burt transcends comedy in a portrayal of human degradation. Gianluca Margheri's great personality shines through in the dual role of Jupiter and Time, while Federico Domenico Eraldo Sacchi also doubles as the other deity, Neptune, with great depth, as does Valerio Contaldo in the role of Telemachus. Therefore, pleasing timbres abound, even in the female voices, some lighter than others. Among them, however, Delphine Galou stands out as Penelope with a soft timbre, full of deep emotional involvement that grows into a sort of painful hallucination. Candida Guida is brilliant as Juno, as is Chiara Nicastro as Fortuna, and following them is Margherita Maria Sala as Ericea, with the effervescent pair of Melanto (Charlotte Bowden) and Eurymachus (Ziga Copi). Lastly, Eumetes (Luca Cervoni) and the Human Fragility of Danilo Pastore.

Finally, the acclaimed phenomenon Orlinski arrives with *Beyond*. At thirty-three, he seems just twenty thanks to his Apollonian physique and charismatic appearance, which make him a new sex symbol. The Polish Jakub Jozef Orlinski, endowed with an extraordinary voice that many describe as "celestial," touches, engages, and entertains beyond the limits of a classical concert in a pseudo-journey of discovery. He is accompanied by the intense ensemble Pomo D'Oro,

founded in 2012, whose name is a reference to the work Antonio Cesti composed in 1667. Orlinski's performance includes vocal and instrumental pieces from early Italian Baroque composers, including the great Claudio Monteverdi, Giulio Caccini, Johann Caspar Keril, and Francesco Cavalli, blended in a pleasant mix with lesser-known names such as Pallavicino, Marino, and Jarzebski. His warm and brilliant voice, at times overly relaxed but always intense, tackles the classical repertoire with an interpretive force that turns everything upside down, making us forget the sole flaw of the recital's early moments, with a monotonous sound undoubtedly related to the choice of pieces all in the same key. But this is certainly not due to his extraordinary performance, which shines like a pop concert with lights, costume changes, and audience incursions, where he is hailed as a true diva during the four encores. Orlinski, as the true performer he is, does not shy away from the enthusiasm his performance generates. He is charming, likeable, thanks the audience in Italian with spontaneity, and gives a final shake to the embalmed world of opera, so far removed from his way of being.

By [Giancarlo Landini](#)

# Music, the Soul of the World

**T**he second panel of the *Trilogia d'autunno*, which revolves around the theme of wandering heroes in search of peace, presents an original production that owes its brilliance to Pier Luigi Pizzi. *Dido and Aeneas* on the Feast of St. Cecilia combines Henry Purcell's two most famous works, the *Orpheus Britannicus*: the mini-opera *Dido and Aeneas* and the *Ode for St. Cecilia*, "Heil, bright Cecilia."

The performance reinterprets some historical facts in a contemporary light: *Dido and Aeneas*, composed for a girls' school in Chelsea, where the original prologue has been lost. We are then in a modern Conservatory, a music school, where professors and students (the members of the orchestra and choir, the vocal students, the mimes) celebrate St. Cecilia and reflect on the powers of Music. To better experience it, they stage *Dido and Aeneas*, before returning to perform the final part of the *Ode*, which thus becomes both Prologue and Epilogue. *Dido and Aeneas* on the Feast of St. Cecilia thus becomes a journey of education. The boys and girls of life, pain, love, contradiction, and death live through the drama of *Dido and Aeneas*. But they process it through music, which guides us toward peace, reaffirming that art restores the harmony lost due to the rift of war (Aeneas is the son of the Trojan war, Dido of her brother-in-law's lust for power); the disasters of political reasons that lead the heroes to wander. In Purcell's opera, Mercury, who in Virgil carries the order of Jupiter, is portrayed as a mischievous sprite, sent by witches, figures typical of English theatre and culture (foreign to the *Aeneid*), who behave as malevolent presences, metaphors for the evil that acts in History. In this context, it matters little to determine whether *Dido* and

*Ravenna: Pier Luigi Pizzi and Ottavio Dantone tell the joy of music through the voice of Henry Purcell*



Moments from *Didone and Enea* in Ravenna (Photo by Zani-Casadio)

*Aeneas* is truly an opera, how it blends with the masque genre, or lament the absence of ballet (unnecessary for the dramaturgy); what matters is that there is a chronological inversion, with the opera from 1687 and the ode from 1692. Even with these adjustments, the charm of the two works remains intact, for the intelligence of the



structure, the harmonic richness, the inventiveness of the melodies, and the art of originally absorbing French and Italian models, leading to pages of great allure, the most notable being the lament of dying Dido, which alone embodies the greatness of its composer.

Pier Luigi Pizzi directs, designs the sets and costumes, while Oscar Frosio provides the lighting. The show is staged in the same set that hosted *Il ritorno di Ulisse in patria*. We are in a bright environment, played in shades of gray and white; the students are strictly dressed in black (jeans, sweaters, soft slippers) and slide harmoniously into a charming and continuous interaction. A small stage, placed at the center and surrounded by a deep blue curtain, identifies the site of the drama, which spills over into the space before it. The evening's action unfolds as if the audience does not exist, and the students are free within their school, starting with the members of the Accademia Bizantina, who descend into the pit with the same nonchalance as in a lesson. The transition from the ode to the drama happens

with equal naturalness, further reinforcing the idea of a search for meaning through music.

The music is beautifully realized by the renowned ensemble led by Ottavio Dantone, joined by the Coro della Cattedrale di Siena Guido Chigi Saracini (prepared by Lorenzo Donati). The cantata is performed by soprano Charlotte Bowden, contraltos Delphine Galou and Candida Guida, baritone Mauro Borgioni, basses Gianluca Margheri, Federico Domenico Eraldo Sacchi, and tenor Ziga Copi, whose versatile and unique voice creates a space and particularity with a happy blend of technique and style.

In the opera, Arianna Venditelli shines as Dido, not only composed in voice and gesture, but also capable of phrasing with a vivid sense of word and not missing the iconic lament, which is moving precisely because it is stripped of excess. Mauro Borgioni is a fitting Aeneas, with a happy relationship between voice and character, the dignity of the singing, and his stage presence. Charlotte Bowden is a fresh and astute Belinda; Delphine Galou, Chiara Nicastro, Paola Valentini Molinari, are vocally incisive and scenically provocative in the roles of the Sorceress, First and Second Witch. Ziga Copi is again appreciated in his brief appearance as the spirit (Mercury). Completing the cast are Candida Guida's Handmaid and Jurge Navarra Colorado, who gives a lively highlight to the sailor's role, to which Purcell assigns one of the most brilliant moments of the score. A resounding success.





# The Romantic Hero

By [Anna Brotzu](#)



A splendid production of *Werther* by Jules Massenet premiered on Friday, November 29, at 8:30 PM at the Teatro Comunale di Sassari, as part of the 2024 season of the Ente Concerti Marialisa De Carolis. In the title role, tenor Francesco Demuro delivers an intense portrayal of the romantic hero, his voice vibrant and rich in nuance, capturing the full spectrum of emotion—from tenderness to torment, from passion to the heartrending farewell to life. The cast is illuminated by Egle Wyss's Charlotte, who brings out the elegance of Massenet's mesmerizing score, revealing the character's inner turmoil and contradictions of the heart. Equally compelling are baritone Andrea Porta (Le Bailly), soprano Ilaria Vanacore (Sophie), and

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*Sassari: Francesco Demuro preforms as Werther*

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baritone Domenico Balzani (Albert), alongside Nicolas Resinelli (Schmidt), Michael Zeni (Johann), Simone Casu (Bühlmann), and Aurora Carta (Katchen). At the podium, Daniele Agiman leads with finesse, while Stefano Vizioli's evocative staging transports the tragic tale into the realm of memory—or perhaps, a dream.

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Images of *Werther*  
at the Teatro Comunale  
(Photo by Elisa Casula)



# The Many Talents of the Young Spontini

By Ermanno Calzolaio

At twenty-five, Gaspare Spontini made his debut on the Neapolitan stage after completing his studies at the prestigious Conservatorio di San Pietro a Majella. In a turbulent historical moment—marked by the invasion of Napoleonic troops and the Bourbon court's relocation from Naples to Palermo—Spontini was commissioned to compose three new operas. It was a major opportunity to establish a connection with the court. In 1800, in Palermo, he composed three works, including *I quadri parlanti*, which vanished without a trace after its premiere at the Teatro Santa Cecilia. Decades passed in silence. Then, in the 1990s, a copy of the opera's libretto surfaced at the University of California, Berkeley. Yet the real breakthrough came only in 2016, when the manuscript score—remarkably well-preserved—was discovered in the library of the Château d'Ursel in Belgium. Musicologist Federico Agostinelli prepared the critical edition, which was used for the opera's first modern performance. This fascinating and commendable rediscovery sheds new light on the musical theater of the era and the talent of the young composer from the Marche region. The plot follows a familiar structure: The elderly Don Bertoldo has hired a new governess, the young and clever Chiarella, with whom he quickly becomes infatuated. His niece Rosina and the servant Menicuccio warn him, but the maid Bettina defends Chiarella, and Don Bertoldo remains steadfast in his determination to marry her. Through a series of misunderstandings, Chiarella skillfully dodges suspicion about her supposed plan to wed Captain Belfiore—who, in reality, is in love with Rosina. The truth is ultimately revealed thanks to the portraits of Don Bertoldo and Rosina, behind which the characters secretly eavesdrop on Chiarella's love confession. In the end, new couples form with Don Bertoldo's reluctant blessing, leaving him alone—reminiscent of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Composed in a short span of time, *I quadri parlanti* borrows the overture from *La fuga in maschera*, and Spontini reworks material from his previous compositions for various closed numbers. The style is fairly conventional, especially in the arias—well-crafted but lacking particularly striking elements. However, there are moments of brilliance, particularly in the ensemble scenes. Noteworthy is the Act I sextet (“Che faccio? Che dico?”) and, above all, the Act I finale, where Spontini, in some ways, anticipates the grand finales of Rossini—plunging all the characters into confusion while propelling the narrative forward with remarkable rhythmic energy. Also distinctive is the opera's final scene, accompanied by mandolin, featuring an engaging and effective musical motif. At the Teatro Pergolesi, a bold and fitting choice was made to entrust the production to young talents. A set and costume design competition, dedicated to the legendary scenographer Josef Svoboda, was held for the occasion. The winners, two students from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Carrara, delivered an imaginative staging: Alessandra Bianchettin's simple yet ingenious

*Jesi: The talking paintings in a world premiere after 250 years of oblivion.*



set unfolds like a square, transforming into the interior of Don Bertoldo's home—complete, of course, with the “talking” paintings. The result is colorful and full of humor. In the same vein, Asya Fusani's vibrant costumes, though eighteenth-century in style, incorporate modern touches—such as sneakers worn by all the characters.

Gianni Marras's direction is straightforward and free of surprises. The cast, composed entirely of young performers, displays strong cohesion. Martina Tragni brings wit and charm to the role of Chiarella, handling the virtuosic passages with confidence, despite some strain in the upper register. Alfonso Michele Ciulla, as Don Bertoldo, showcases a bass buffo voice already suited for more demanding roles. Davide Chiodo impresses as Menicuccio, the honest and sincere servant who sings in Neapolitan dialect, navigating the role's challenges with skill. Michela Antenucci's Rosina stands out with her well-projected, full-bodied voice, as does Giada Borrelli's Bettina. Among the two tenors, Giuseppe Di Giacinto (Captain Belfiore) offers a musical and graceful interpretation but lacks brilliance in the upper range, while Francesco Tuppo alternates between the roles of Abbate and Falloppa. A special mention goes to conductor Giulio Prandi, whose stylistically refined and precise reading is entirely deserving of praise. Leading the Time Machine Ensemble, an orchestra of exceptionally young musicians, he ensures a performance marked by unity and precision—even in the most intricate solo passages. A resounding success.







General manager

Dario Di Vietri  
tenore

foto Martynas Alekša

Calaf in Turandot  
Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre  
Produzione di Robert Wilson



# The Tragedy of Otello: Between Dream and Reality

By Roberto Mori

Scene from **Otello** a La Fenice  
(Photo by Michele Crosera)

After the cancellation of the premiere due to a strike called by major trade unions (following previous cancellations of *Turandot* and the double bill *La fabbrica illuminata* and *Erwartung*), the inaugural opera of La Fenice's 2024/25 season finally took the stage on Saturday, November 23, to an enthusiastic reception.

Verdi's *Otello* is a work particularly dear to outgoing superintendent Fortunato Ortombina, who has programmed it multiple times since the 2012/13 season. On that occasion, as in other revivals, Myung-Whun Chung was on the podium—just as he was for this performance.

The Korean maestro delivered a reading of immense impact, powerful and built on stark dramatic contrasts. From the very first measures—where the orchestra and chorus unleashed a storm of overwhelming intensity—Chung seemed more intent on sculpting the turbulence of the characters' souls and unleashing the raw force of tragedy than on highlighting the tenderness and nocturnal intimacy of the score. More fury than psychological nuance, more venom than warmth, more heroism than pity. A persistent undercurrent of anxiety, darkness, and unease ran throughout, never allowing the drama to fully soften. Compared to previous Venetian productions, this interpretation intensified the tragic dimension at the expense of lyricism and symphonic refinement. In terms of vocal coordination, even without a precisely defined interpretive vision, Chung carefully balanced the orchestral sound to accommodate the needs of the singers—starting with the lead.

Francesco Meli made his role debut as Otello. His voice, renowned for its luminous, lyrical quality, lacks the dramatic

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*Venezia: Otello, Conducted by Chung  
Opens La Fenice— Starring Francesco Meli  
and the formidable Jago of Luca Micheletti*

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weight, volume, and dark bronze timbre characteristic of many past Otello interpreters. Yet, within La Fenice's intimate acoustics, his vocal presence proved more than sufficient, allowing him to project without difficulty. While his declamation in the *Esultate* and certain dramatic passages was not always incisive, his clear diction, well-conceived phrasing, and committed interpretation rendered him a credible protagonist. Vocally, apart from a couple of slightly flat high notes, his performance was solid. His Otello emerged as a lyrically noble and vulnerable figure—a modern, dignified take on the role, though one that could have benefited from greater variety in color, nuance, and phrasing.

Karah Son's Desdemona was less compelling. Her voice lacked resonance in the lower register but gained weight and presence in the upper range, with an audible vibrato both in full voice and *pianissimo*. While her singing was technically correct, her expression felt somewhat generic and cold, exacerbated by occasionally unclear diction.

Luca Micheletti, by contrast, delivered an extraordinary Jago in every respect—vocally, dramatically, and scenically. Without resorting to overt histrionics, his approach was analytically precise and psychologically penetrating, capturing the character's almost "metaphysical" malevolence and his calculated, methodical psychological destruction of Otello. It is difficult to imagine a

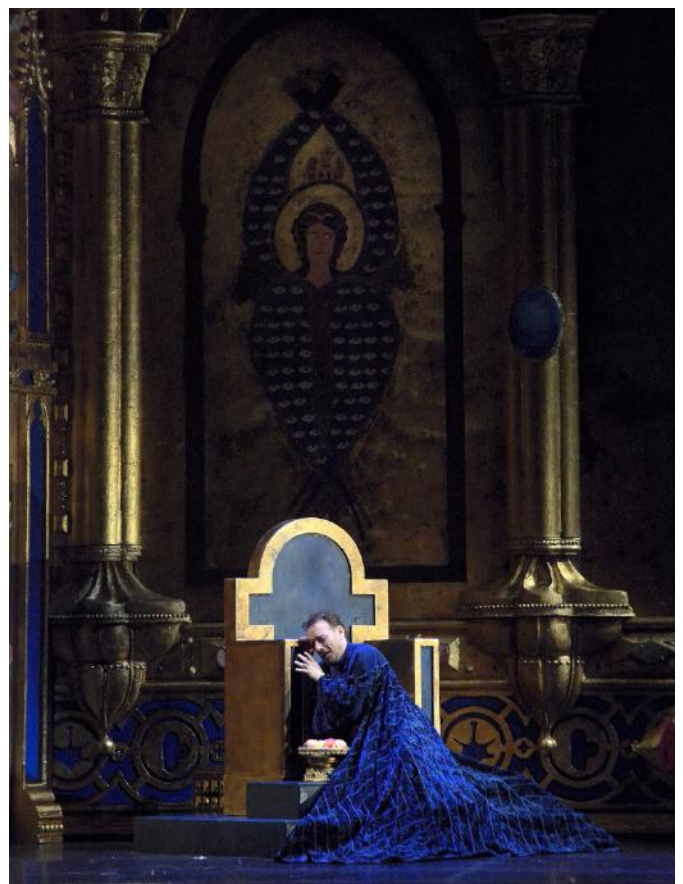




more complete Jago today.

Among the supporting cast, Francesco Marsiglia's Cassio, though previously a more vocally striking and refined interpreter, seemed somewhat pale here. Emilio Casari was an effective Roderigo, as were Anna Malavasi's Emilia and Francesco Milanese's Lodovico. The cast was completed by William Corò as Montano and Antonio Casagrande as the Herald.

Fabio Ceresa's production moved between historical evocation and dreamlike representation. The dominant visual elements—both in Massimo Checchetto's set design and Claudia Pernigotti's costumes—drew inspiration from the gold mosaics of St. Mark's Basilica and the jeweled splendor of the Pala d'Oro, evoking a rich Byzantine aesthetic. The stage was dominated by a large three-arched window, appearing to rise from the waters of the Venetian lagoon, its openings cleverly integrated into the action. Ceresa's directorial concept revolved around the clash between dark, demonic forces—embodied by Jago and physically represented on stage by a hydra, a multi-headed sea monster animated by mimes—and the celestial, benevolent forces guiding Desdemona, visualized as angelic presences. In the end, however, the forces of light are doomed to fall, as Othello, consumed by jealousy, turns to murder. The final scene—where a triumphant Jago, surrounded by crawling demons, gazes down upon the lifeless Othello and Desdemona—carries an unsettling weight, casting, perhaps unintentionally, a new nihilistic perspective on Verdi's late-career pessimism and his vision of the world and transcendence.





# Catania Applauds Bellini

By Sabino Lenoci



In the musical world, every year brings the opportunity to celebrate great composers. After the centenary of Giacomo Puccini, we now mark 190 years since the death of the great Vincenzo Bellini. And what better way to begin the 2025 celebrations than with *Norma*?

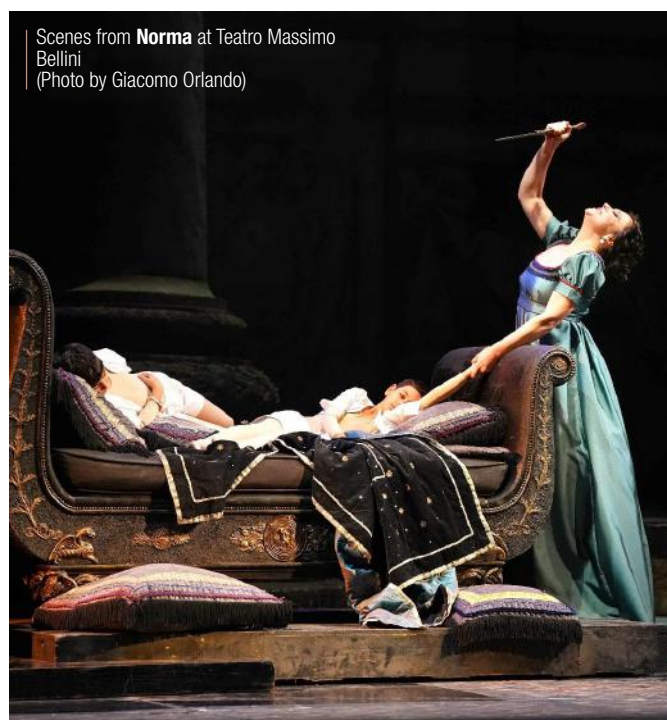
As was customary, Bellini composed his works primarily with the lead performer in mind. For *Norma*, he focused on an exceptionally powerful character—the protagonist of Alexandre Soumet's tragedy—and entrusted Felice Romani with writing the libretto. The story of the priestess who breaks her vows for love, along with the Celtic-barbaric theme and the ancient rituals in the sacred Druidic forest, deeply fascinated the romantic Bellini. He structured *Norma* as a succession of highly engaging musical numbers, such as the final trio with Norma, Pollione, and Adalgisa, and the magnificent *Casta Diva*, a piece that has captivated leading sopranos throughout history—above all, Maria Callas, who, in the modern collective imagination, is *Norma*.

Bellini had at his disposal soprano Giuditta Pasta, tenor Domenico Donzelli, and soprano Giulia Grisi—it is easy to imagine his emotion in setting Soumet's poem to music.

The production was curated by Hugo de Ana, who took on the triple role of director, set designer, and costume designer, with a staging originally from Sofia Opera. The setting featured a grand palace hall with imposing columns sliding across the stage, marking the entrance of the artists and chorus. De Ana emphasized the power of the soldiers and their calls for war, while directing *Norma*'s movements in a style reminiscent of silent cinema.

Young conductor Leonardo Sini led the performance from the po-

## Catania: *Norma* Successfully Opens the Opera Season



Scenes from **Norma** at Teatro Massimo  
Bellini  
(Photo by Giacomo Orlando)





dium of the ever-attentive Orchestra of Teatro Bellini with a firm and decisive gesture, bringing out both the poetry and drama of Bellini's score. He skillfully controlled the massed chorus, which had been well-rehearsed and directed by maestro Luigi Petrozziello, as well as the overall stage dynamics.

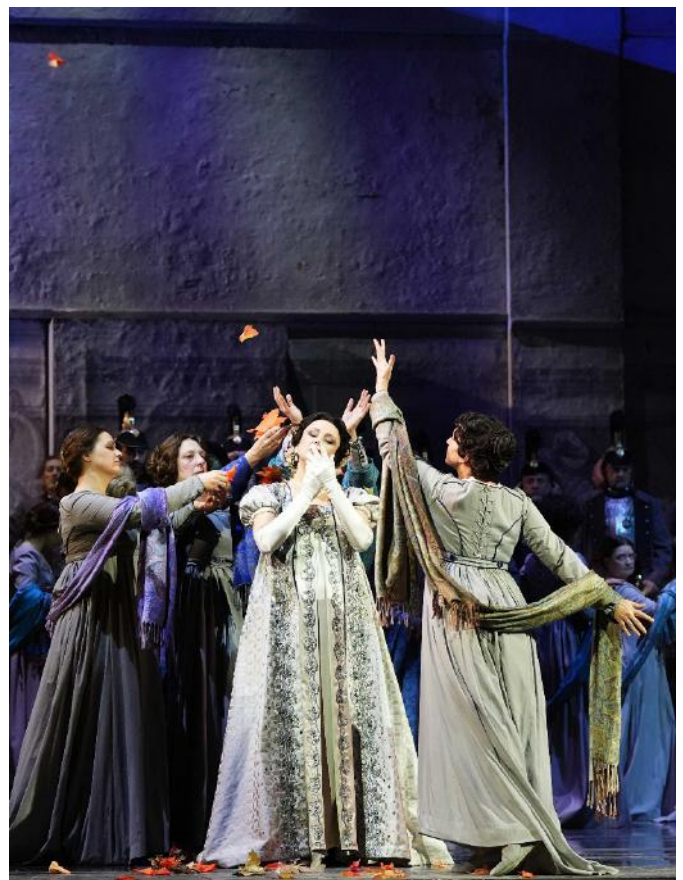
The vocal ensemble had its strongest asset in Irina Lungu, an artist of great vocal and theatrical temperament, with a beautiful voice, refined phrasing, and clear diction. Her *Casta Diva* was masterfully performed and warmly received by the audience. Carmela Remigio, alternating in the role of the priestess, delivered a remarkable interpretation.

Tenor Antonio Poli portrayed Pollione as an audacious man in love with both Norma and Adalgisa, displaying a solid upper register and fine vocal technique. Meanwhile, tenor Ivan Magri triumphed on all fronts, showcasing a powerful and beautiful voice, an outstanding high register, and a striking stage presence.

Elisa Balbo's Adalgisa featured delicate vocal nuances and flawless phrasing, while mezzo-soprano Aya Wakizono, alternating in the role, impressed with a rich, melodious voice full of expressive nuances.

Carlo Lepore and Alessio Cacciamani alternated as Oroveso with excellent results, as did Marco Puggioni and Blagoj Nacoski in the role of Flavio. The contributions of Anna Malavasi and Alessandra Della Croce as Clotilde played a crucial role in the success of the production.

Sold-out performances! The audience, including a large number of enthusiastic young spectators attending a special school performance, greeted the cast with warm applause.





# The Tragic Story of Two Poor Lovers

By Bernd Hoppe

Juliette is a nonconformist. The color of her hair speaks to this: a faded blue that surely displeases her parents but attracts Roméo. Even the attire of the Capulet daughter, with jeans and a hoodie, is idiosyncratic and, above all, does not suit her social status. However, in her new production of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at the Staatsoper, Mariame Clément does not focus on the historical events narrated by the libretto of Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, based on Shakespeare's tragedy. She radically relocates the opera to the present, with the support of set designer Julia Hansen. The stage is set in a run-down apartment building, where Julia's birthday is being celebrated at the start. A birthday banner and balloons decorate the space, along with guests in shabby clothes. Once again, the desolate imagery is striking: a dilapidated basketball gym where the aggressive argument between the Montagues and Capulets takes place; Juliette's room, with posters on the walls and knick-knacks on the shelf, where the lovers spend their wedding night; a grim hospital room where Juliette lies on an autopsy table, draped in a white shroud, being washed by attendants. The videos, designed by Sébastien Dupouey, overlay surreal atmospheres (a kaleidoscope of fluttering butterflies and a carpet of flowers or romantic nightscapes, including a starry sky), but they do not change the barren, desolate landscape. Ulrik Gad's lighting is entirely unmotivated, and the bizarre choreography by Mathieu Guilhaumon, featuring six Juliettes, is completely unnecessary. As for the direction of the characters, the ideas of the French director are rather modest, with the singers forced into a static performance. Elsa Dreisig, in particular, tries to free herself from all of this. Her Juliette is



*Berlin: Elsa Dreisig Triumphs in Roméo et Juliette at the Staatsoper*



Immagini di *Romeo et Juliette* alla Staatsoper  
"unter Linden" (Foto Monika Rittershaus)

lively and agile. True, her soprano voice lacks the individual color and unmistakable timbre. But she possesses the youthful sound suitable for the role; it is clear, delicate, and bright. The coloratura in "Je veux vivre" is executed perfectly, though the high notes can be questionable. The second aria, the poison aria ("Dieu! quel frisson"), is sung with emphasis. She does not fail to stand out in the duets with Roméo; she proves to be the strength of the evening because Amitai Pati, as Roméo with bleached hair, fell short of expectations. His tenor voice lacks poetry, lyrical magic, and cohesion. Up until the intermission, there were forced high notes, especially in "Ah! lève-toi, soleil!" Furthermore, his acting was disappointing. However, in the combat scene, he surprised with his sharpness. In the secondary roles, Nicolas Testé was particularly convincing as Frère Laurent. He serves as a teacher in a classroom with rows of desks and a blackboard, and strangely enough, he marries the young couple. Vocally, he stands out with his dark-hued bass voice. Manuel Winckhier, coming from the theater academy, also delivered authoritative tones as Le Duc. Arttu Kataja, as Capuleti, was less convincing, while Mariana Prudenskaya made an impressive impression in the small role of Gertrude. Stéphan, Ema Nikolovska, is an androgynous figure here, singing the chanson "Que fais-tu, blanche tourterelle" with a lush mezzo-soprano voice. The Staatsoper Chorus (prepared by Dani Juris) acts as the audience in the prologue, vocally convincing, especially in "O jour de deuil!" Stefano Montanari and the Staatskapelle Berlin appropriately paint the lyricism of the opera, but at times one would have liked more fragrance and a richer palette of colors. On several occasions, the conductor did not seem attentive to the singers, who were forced to push. At the end, there were disapprovals for Montanari, but especially for the direction, while Elsa Dreisig, in particular, was celebrated.



# A Postmodern and Surreal World

By **Stefano Borgioli**

## *Wiesbaden: lively performance and biting execution of Ligeti's Le Grande Macabre*

**L**e Grand Macabre is the first new production of the season at the Hessisches Staatstheater and also marks the debut of the new artistic directors, Dorothea Hartmann and Beate Heine, as well as the new musical director, Leo McFall. For the centenary of Hungarian composer György Ligeti's birth (1923), the only opera composed by Ligeti has seen a significant resurgence of interest with performances in Frankfurt, Munich, and Vienna. Now, it has arrived in Wiesbaden. *Le Grand Macabre* (inspired by the surrealist play *La Balade du Grand Macabre* by Belgian author Michel de Ghelderode) challenges conventional operatic narratives by blending satire, dark humor, and a postmodern, surreal aesthetic. The musical passages transcend the boundaries of traditional opera, combining elements of comedy, fear, and paradox. It is a kind of musical collage that spans five centuries of music, from Monteverdi to Beethoven's *Eroica* and Scott Joplin's ragtime. Singing, speaking, and shouting alternate throughout the libretto, which occasionally indulges in deliberately vulgar tones. The language is deconstructed, often made up of short, sometimes shouted phrases. Verses from the *Apocalypse* alternate with alliterations, nursery rhymes, and overtly erotic allusions (which, in today's context, may seem somewhat outdated). Certainly, it presents a non-trivial challenge for directors, conductors, and singers alike. Director Pinar Karabulut, also making her Wiesbaden debut, sets the breathtaking action on a circular

stage with segments that extend over the orchestra pit and face the first rows of the audience (set design by Jo Schramm, who also designs the lighting). The set resembles a circus ring. Above the stage looms a gigantic glass cone hanging from the ceiling, a transparent structure casting green and bluish reflections. This will eventually become the telescope through which the sky of the *Apocalypse* is observed, or the space-time passage through which *Nekrotzar* arrives and departs. The orchestra remains visible at the back of the stage, becoming an additional protagonist. The action is entirely driven by the performance (the set is almost bare), resulting in a lively spectacle with comedic moments that lighten the tension, sometimes even resembling a musical. The proximity of the characters to the audience makes the spectators feel even more involved in the events and passions unfolding on stage. There's certainly no risk of boredom; in fact, if there's any danger, it's that the hyperactivity of the acting might eventually feel a bit tiring. Teresa Verghe's costumes accentuate the circus-like atmosphere of the performance: colorful, fantastical, almost carnival-like, they erase gender differences and depict a fluid, ever-changing humanity. Often ambiguous. And in this uninhibited atmosphere, the *Apocalypse* doesn't seem to be taken seriously by anyone.

Leo McFall conducts the Hessisches Staatsorchester Wiesbaden in a crystalline performance, paying close attention to the details of the complex musical machinery built by Ligeti. The vocal cast is certainly up to the task, navigating between Baroque inserts and modernity.

Baritone Seth Carico is the star of the evening, a *Nekrotzar* with a shifting voice (even to falsetto!) and a powerful, wild expression that often evokes Jack Nicholson's *Joker*. Though his plan to destroy the world fails, he holds his ground throughout the evening. Tenor Cornel Frey, as the clownish and disheveled *Piet vom Fass*, literally supports him (when he rides on his back). The comic talent of the *Astradamors* (Sion Goronwy) and *Mescalina* (Ariana Lucas) is remarkable. Both display impressive vocal agility while engaging in their little domestic circus of perversion. The metallic colorations of Josefine Mindus, often at vertiginous heights, are striking in her role as the head of the Political Police (and as *Venus*), a kind of disoriented *Queen of the Night*. Galina Benevich is absolutely surreal as *Prince Go-Go*, a small woman with a powerful voice and energetic performance. The lovers Amanda and Amando (mezzo-soprano Fleuranne Brockway and soprano Inna Fedorij) are transformed into two voluptuous, passionate figures brimming with lyrical outbursts.

The squabbling ministers (tenor Sascha Zarrabi and bass Hovhannes Karapetyan) are sufficiently grotesque.

It was undoubtedly a successful evening, one that the audience clearly appreciated throughout the performance, offering warm applause at the end.



**Le Grande Macabre**  
in Wiesbaden (Photo by Sandra Then)

Image of Sweeney Todd  
at the Komische Oper



# Beware of the Barber

By Berndt Hoppe

**T**wenty years ago, the Komische Oper presented the Berlin premiere of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, adding a new musical to its repertoire. The premiere had a special stamp, as the popular actress Dagmar Manzel appeared for the first time in an opera theater in the role of Mrs. Nellie Lovett in this new production, directed by Barrie Kosky at the Schiller Theater. Katrin Lea Tag designed the set. A proscenium in the style of a Victorian theater and a crumpled red velvet curtain set the tone for a picturesque look. Hanging murals on stage depict historical and modern urban landscapes. At the center of the stage is Mrs. Lovett's snack bar, on the upper floor of which Sweeney Todd has set up his barbershop with the fateful chair. After years of exile, decreed by Judge Turpin, Todd returns to London for revenge. Anyone who sits in the barber's chair slips, after a laryngeal incision, into the basement, where the creative Mrs. Lovett transforms the corpse into a tasty meat pie. Each murder is accompanied acoustically by a hellish scream from the entire orchestra. However, Kosky's production is contained; it avoids exaggerated effects and relies entirely on the virtuosity of its ensemble. It is dominated by Dagmar Manzel, who, after her first portrayal of the character in 2004, is even more enchanting. She proves to be a versatile and convincing actress, capable of sustaining the complex personality of this

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*Berlin: Barrie Kosky stages Sweeney Todd, the musical thriller by Stephen Sondheim*

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singular character. The dialogues compensate for her slightly diminished vocal output. Vocally, the English baritone Christopher Purves surpasses her and is also convincing as the protagonist. The secondary roles are brilliantly performed, with Alma Sadé as Sweeney's daughter Johanna, Hubert Zapiór as her lover Anthony, and Jens Larsen as Judge Turpin. Dramatic moments are delivered by Ivan Tursic, the excitable barber Pirelli, Todd's first victim in the chair, and Sigelit Feig, a coarse beggar. A special mention goes to the young tenor Tob Schimon, Tobias, who received a special round of applause from the audience for his beautiful voice and sensitive interpretation. The soloists of the Komische Oper Berlin chorus (prepared by David Cavelius) embody the people who comment on the action. James Gaffigan conducts the work very well, which stands between musical thriller and noir operetta.



# A Drama Without a Soul

*Lione: Stéphane Degout is the strong protagonist of a disappointing production of Wozzeck*

A slightly bitter opening for the 2024/25 season at the Lyon Opera, marked by a *Wozzeck* that is fully convincing musically but somewhat disappointing in its direction. Let's start with the sore point: Richard Brunel's direction, the general director of the Lyon Opera, is needlessly convoluted in its references to previous works (particularly from the world of cinema), bland and trivial on a scenic level, tragically out of focus in character development. Abandoning the alienated soldier, oppressed and tormented by military hierarchy and dissatisfied in his family life, the *Wozzeck* seen by Brunel wears the mask of the everyman, a guinea pig for medical experimentation in a claustrophobic social environment, dominated by the articulated arm of an enormous, omnipresent light projector, a lamp-eye that seems to simultaneously illuminate and surveil. Thus, we say goodbye to the tragic grandeur of Büchner's drama, so effectively rendered by Berg's music. Even the sets are not immune to what seems to be an attempt to sterilize the drama: Brunel resolves the issue with a combination of sliding modules à la "polly pocket", certainly well-crafted but so far removed from the atmosphere evoked by the score and libretto! At least the director deserves credit for avoiding the use of unnecessary video projections, but limiting the damage is not enough to do justice to *Wozzeck*: trivializing the pond scene by replacing the mirror of water with the kitchen sink in *Wozzeck*'s house is an unforgivable crime! The production fares far better musically. Particularly successful is Stéphane Degout's debut in the title role: the French baritone approaches the role without holding back, yet avoids falling into the trap of hypertrophic



vocal expressiveness of questionable taste (and avoids turning the character into a caricature of the pathological neurotic), staying true to the ideal of an authentically lyrical line of singing, able to combine the intensity of interpretation with vocal nobility and an attention to the beauty of sound that is rarely found in interpreters of the anti-hero *Wozzeck*. Ambur Braid, already appreciated in Lyon in previous seasons and here called to bring the complex and delicate character of Marie to life, manages to create a successful contrast with Degout's *Wozzeck*, standing up to him with vocal resources both imposing in volume and broad in tonal range, deployed without reserve and with extreme naturalness.

The three secondary roles are also entirely successful. Thomas Ebenstein is a convincing Captain both onstage and vocally, with a powerful and homogeneous chest voice and crystalline, strong falsetto passages. Equally solid is Thomas Faulkner's performance as the Doctor, particularly successful in the lower register, where the English bass finds the necessary support to deliver a voice with a rich, harmonic timbre. More awkward onstage, Robert Watson nonetheless delivers a standout vocal performance as the Drum Major, not holding back in the passionate outbursts called for by Berg's score for this tenor role.

On the podium, Daniele Rustioni, conducting the Lyon Opera orchestra, marks an important milestone in his personal musical journey with *Wozzeck*, once again managing to blend incisiveness with lyricism, tension with lyrical momentum, harmonic density with transparency in the vocal lines. Once more, the Milanese conductor proves his skill as a sound alchemist, making intelligible the counterpoint of voices, skillfully shaping the orchestral texture of Berg's score, without sacrificing its expressiveness and timbral violence (almost making one forget the limitations of the orchestra pit at the Lyon Opera). The cast receives warm and well-deserved applause; the direction team, however, faces less enthusiastic reactions, narrowly avoiding outright protest.



Images by **Wozzeck** at the Opéra  
(Photo by Jean-Louis Fernandez)

# The Struggles of the Young Puccini

By Alessandro Mormile

*Nice: Giuliano Carella conducts the premiere version of Edgar*

In 2008, the Teatro Regio di Torino led the revival of Edgar by Giacomo Puccini in its four-act version, the one that, according to the reconstruction of the missing parts, presents what the audience at La Scala in Milan heard when the opera had its world premiere in 1889. Puccini revisited the score, subjecting it to endless revisions and rethinking, ultimately shortening it to three acts, which is the form it is most frequently performed in today. Now, the Opéra de Nice, for the opening of its 2024/25 season and in homage to the centenary of Puccini's death, reintroduces the original version in a new production that allows for reflection on a score that, while failing to reach the heights of genius, is a reflection of a musical era facing a delicate transition in Italian melodrama. Puccini was drawn to the verse tragedy *La Coupe et les lèvres* by Alfred de Musset, from which Ferdinando Fontana drew inspiration for the libretto. The result is a melodramatic hodgepodge that tackles the theme of pure and unattainable love, reflecting the eternal conflict between sublime love and libertinism. This has been the subject of many late 19th-century European musical theater works, giving forbidden passion, outside the bounds of convention, a fatal and deadly connotation similar to Wagner's portrayal of the conflict between Venus and Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, where the protagonist is faced with a choice leading to his ruin. The opera did not convince the author himself, so much so that he nearly disowned it ("God save us from this opera," Puccini himself wrote), after having revised it endlessly. It is rich in musical prompts, dressing a nearly gothic drama, balancing between references to grand-opera (through the historical subject), with highly rhetorical ensemble scenes, and Puccinian melodism that struggles to take flight, remaining far from the brilliant results Puccini would soon achieve in his later works, starting with *Manon Lescaut*. Reviving it is an act of courage, as it is quite complex. In Nice, the baton of Giuliano Carella, leading the Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice and a large choral mass, consisting of the Choeur de l'Opéra de Nice and the Choeur d'enfants of the same theater, delivers a truly remarkable performance, conducted respectively by Giulio Magnanini and Philippe Négrel. The musical direction is perfectly balanced between the bubbling symphonism of some sections and a focus on intense lyricism, offering the opera a vision of compact unity and dramatic fluency, made possible by the successful production of Nicola Raab, who directs it. The sets and costumes by George Souglides, essential and minimalist, do not respect the 14th-century historical setting during the time of Philip the Fair and the Franco-Flemish war. Instead, they place the story in the 20th century, brushing against verismo atmospheres, with clear references to *Cavalleria rusticana* by Mascagni and *La Navarraise* by Massenet. However, the way the direction develops and treats the subject is anything but blood-soaked and superficial. It seeks to explore the interiority of the protagonists, evoking symbols of their actions and attempting

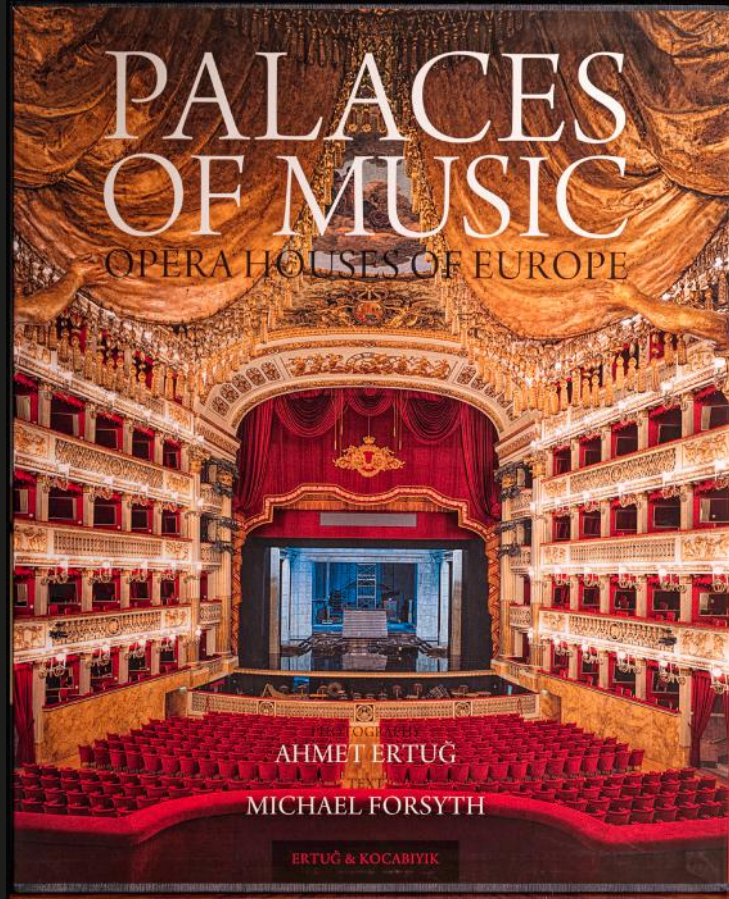


Images of **Edgar** at the Opéra  
(Photo by Dominique Jaussein)

to give the choral crowd a dramatic identity ready to accompany the troubled journey of Edgar, as though it were an unsettled path of the mind. On stage, as bare as possible, one sees only an almond tree in bloom, tables, chairs, and two slanted corner walls with openings. The skill of the performers manages to bring coherence to a direction that is certainly not predictable, but rather intriguing. The protagonist, Edgar, is the tenor Stefano La Colla, who has the right volume and brilliance for the role, although his control of emission does not always allow him to give a generous highlight to such a challenging part. In the aria of the second act, "Orgia, chimera dall'occhio vitreo," he tries to be expressive in the opening of "O soave vision di quell'alba d'april," but ultimately becomes a bit stiff and monotone. However, in the curse directed at Tigrana, which concludes the third act, he is eloquent and resonant. The two rival women, both sopranos as required by the original version of the opera, are Ekaterina Bakanova, the delicate Fidelia, and Valentina Boi, the sensual and disturbing Tigrana. The first struggles with some harshness in emission, tending to push, but in the aria of the third act, "Addio, mio dolce amor!," she sings with feeling and ardent passion before what she believes to be the corpse of her beloved. Valentina Boi also does her best not to suffer from an impractical vocal writing and, despite forced high notes and some muffled sounds in the lower register, demonstrates the fiery, corrosive, and impetuous temperament that the role requires. The best performance, however, comes from baritone Dalibor Jenis as Frank, standing out in the aria of the first act, "Questo amor, vergogna mia," where he gives the aria the right expressive weight needed for the heartfelt confession, tinged with bitterness, that the page transmits. Completing the cast is the excellent Gualtiero by Giovanni Furlanetto. The evening, well received, serves as a precursor to a co-production that, after Nice, will appear in the future seasons of the Opéra National de Lorraine in Nancy and the Teatro Regio di Torino.



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Images from **Les contes d'Hoffmann**  
at Covent Garden

# Journey to the Center of the Mind

By Silvia Campana

After debuting in Sydney in July 2023 and opening the season at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice in November of the same year, Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, directed by Damiano Michieletto, has arrived in London. This production, in collaboration with Opera Australia, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden Foundation, and Opera National de Lyon, has found a remarkable resonance on the British stage, perfectly complementing the heterogeneous structure of the opera, which blends various styles, sounds, and themes within the musical landscape of the late nineteenth century. Each staging of this opera, marked by a lengthy and troubled genesis, ends up responding to the specific needs of individual directorial visions, which, despite all good intentions, ultimately shape the work to their liking, adding or removing pieces. In this case, the musical choices align with a precise directorial plan; it has evolved compared to the Venetian version, where the dramatic depth was more explored, whereas the London version is more eclectic and imaginative. This latter interpretation is the refined result of a highly nuanced and detailed analysis of both musical and theatrical sources.

Damiano Michieletto's direction (revised under the supervision of Eleonora Gravagnola) embarks on a complex and layered journey, taking us through Hoffmann's fantastical tale into the poetic reality of his dreams, embedded within a prismatic universe in which we too inevitably lose ourselves. Brilliantly supported by Paolo Fantin's set designs and Carla Teti's costumes, the director's stage space evokes the naked mind, visualized through a simple empty room where openings introduce subtle references to the narrative path. We venture into an interior space where time marks the boundaries,

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*London: Les Contes d'Hoffmann with  
direction by Damiano Michieletto, starring  
Juan Diego Flórez*

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and where the writer lives—or rather, attempts to relive—the poetic power of his loves, increasingly intense and diverse as his life matures.

The three stages of life distinguish the three acts, shaping the context: Act I unfolds in a school, with Olympia appearing almost like the blue-haired fairy to the young Hoffmann/Pinocchio, dressed in a paper outfit; Act II shifts to a darker tone, moving to a classical dance school where Antonia is cared for; Act III takes place in a nightclub where cynicism has replaced sentiment. Regardless of the individual settings, what stands out in Michieletto's reading is how he conveys these spaces through the protagonist's inner journey, within his fantastical creations, nightmares, and anxieties. From the very Prologue, the director reveals his cards by projecting us into an undefined space where the poet, reduced to a homeless state and accompanied by a Nicklausse who seems half between Papageno and Ariel, moves through a room where gigantic shadows on the walls suggest that soon we too will enter that same magic lantern, where anything can happen—and so it does.

Perfectly in tune with a theatrical spirit that is deeply Anglo-Saxon (with numerous references to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), the stage will feature devils of all sorts, stilt walkers, mice, ballerinas—all engaged in the same dance, serving a deep and magnetic



dramaturgy where comedy and tragedy weave together into a single, robust fabric of universal emotions.

Juan Diego Flórez tackled the formidable character with great technical mastery and musical precision. His vocal refinement and skillful phrasing allowed him to bring out the best in his character, even in moments where a more robust timbre was required.

Alex Esposito took on the challenging task (both vocally and theatrically) of portraying the four incarnations of evil present in the score (Lindorf, Coppélius, Le docteur Miracle, Dapertutto) and did so excellently, with a charismatic and eclectic theatricality. His performance subtly blurred and often merged the thin walls of irony with those of sarcasm, brutality, and cruelty, demonstrating a keen dramatic and theatrical approach, with a voice always fully controlled and in service to both the character and the score.

Olga Pudova gave Olympia a solid technical definition, though she remained somewhat distant from the distinctive traits that define the character. Likewise, Marina Costa-Jackson did not fully capture her character's depth through an especially expressive approach, leaving her on the periphery.

Ermonhela Jaho, as Antonia, once again demonstrated how often a singer's vocal ability transcends being just a tool. Her performance conveyed the feeling of a young woman trapped by anxiety in an undefined and chilling dimension, from which she cannot escape, but which she elevated to a universal level, projecting it toward us with powerful contemporary relevance. Jaho used every fiber of her body and voice to communicate this, and the result was extraordinarily effective theatrically.

Julie Boulianne, as Nicklausse, was completely at ease with her



multifaceted role, while Alistair Miles provided a deeply thoughtful interpretation of Crespel.

The cast was excellently rounded out by Christine Rice (Musa/Mother of Antonia), Christophe Mortagne (Andrès/Cochennille/Frantz/Pitichinaccio), Siphe Kwani (Hermann/Schlemil), Jeremy White (Luther), Ryan Vaughan Davies (Nathanael), and Vincent Ordonneau (Spalanzani).

The numerous dancers involved in this production also delivered a highly measured and expressive performance.

The Royal Opera Chorus, conducted by William Spaulding, performed excellently.

Antonello Manacorda, conducting the Royal Opera House Orchestra, showed a keen expressive sensitivity, focusing on a vision that was at times perhaps overly contemplative but nonetheless varied and ever-changing. The performance was met with great enthusiasm.

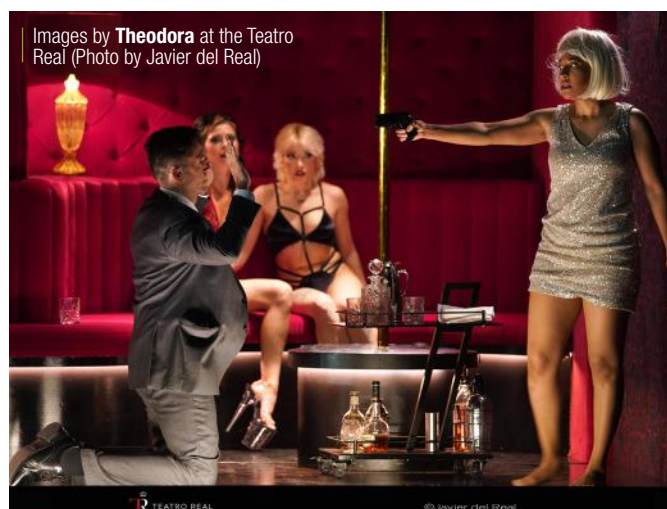


# To the Composer's Good Peace

By **Stefano Russomanno**

*Madrid: Katie Mitchell reinterprets Handel's Theodora freely*

Among all of Handel's oratorios, *Theodora* is undoubtedly one of the ones best suited to being staged. It is no coincidence that it has already been the subject of such initiatives in the past, such as the one undertaken by Peter Sellars in 1996 at the Glyndebourne Festival. The libretto by Thomas Morell evokes the sacrifice of the Christian Dorothea, martyred in Antioch in the 4th century for refusing to bow to the Roman deities. The plot of the oratorio, far from being static, is rich with twists that highlight the psychology of the protagonists, and despite the aura of holiness, the element of love takes center stage thanks to the relationship between Dorothea and the Roman officer Didymus, who unsuccessfully tries to protect her from the governor Valens' abuse, eventually sharing martyrdom with her. In reality, we are dealing with a melodrama disguised as a sacred action. This has little to do with the staged version prepared by Katie Mitchell, who sets the plot in the present day, in the kitchen of an embassy in Antioch. The Christians are, in fact, terrorists preparing a bomb. The contrast between the Romans (men) and the Christians (women) is seen through a gender conflict lens, and when Valens – presented as a sort of sexual predator – condemns Theodora to serve in a brothel, the portrayal does not shy away from gritty details, to the point that the production includes an intimacy coordinator. However, Mitchell takes her greatest liberty with the ending: instead of walking resignedly towards martyrdom, Theodora grabs a weapon to kill Valens and all the Romans with him.



Told this way, the director's provocative interpretation might seem extravagant; in reality, the production has an undeniable logic and coherence that captivates the audience once the starting point is accepted. Mitchell skillfully portrays the psychological evolution of the characters through gestures (a beautiful touch is moving the singers in slow motion at certain moments), her direction is free from any dull moments, and it integrates with Handel's music, provided the original libretto is put aside. Part of the success of the staging is also due to the successful scenic design, where various environments – the kitchen, the salon, the brothel, the freezer – are arranged horizontally and moved by a machine that slides them from right to left and vice versa.

All the singers have perfectly absorbed the director's sometimes challenging scenic instructions. Julia Bullock may not be the ideal Theodora vocally, but she managed to convey emotion in the most poignant moments. No criticism, however, for Joyce Di Donato's portrayal of Irene, who owned the role in all its nuances. The countertenor Iestyn Davies (Didymus) showcased a pleasant timbre, without forcing his voice despite the vastness of the Teatro Real, also demonstrating a certain dramatic flair. Ed Lyon and Callum Thorpe were able to inject the required "virility" into their roles of Septimius and Valens, and both sang well.

Ivor Bolton, whose past as a Handelian conductor at the Teatro Real had been anything but memorable, conducted on this occasion with sensitivity a score he clearly knows well. Certainly, in some passages, there is a sense of lacking more vigor, but all in all, his direction served Handel's music well. The choir's performance was good, while the orchestra mixed modern and baroque instruments (horns and trumpets were natural) with homogeneous results.



By Andrea Merli

# A World of Emotions

A production of *La forza del destino* is being revived at the Liceu, a collaboration with the Opéra National de Paris that first premiered in 2012. In short, a “minimalist” performance, one that will have many longing for the concert version, conceived by Jean-Claude Auvray, who also directs, with the (few) sets by Alain Chambon. The scenery is almost exclusively limited to props: tables, some chairs, including a 17th-century “throne,” which is omnipresent from the first scene in the Calatrava house, to the inn in Hornachuelos, then in the open space of the convent, in the camp at Velletri, and finally back again in Hornachuelos. With good grace, thanks to the Gondrand or any moving company, as the props must be precious: don’t ask for a historical-psychological interpretation, because this goes beyond human comprehension. Just as little has to do with our national Risorgimento, when the opera was composed by the former senator of the kingdom, the renouncing Giuseppe Verdi in 1861, even less with the Savoy-Italian flag, and even more unlikely, with the Spanish Bourbon crest, a house that, if it had intervened in our wars of independence, would probably have sided with the Neapolitan relatives of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Let’s not even mention the “graffiti” Viva la Guerra, which was erased by a superimposed Viva Verdi from a patrol of “pacifist” soldiers preceding the duet of refusal between Alvaro and Don Carlo. Irrelevant trivia aside, how many in the audience (in Spain as in France) will know the meaning of the acronym Viva V.E.R.D.I.? A rhetorical question. That said, though, with a super-conventional direction, the music fortunately made up for the visual shortcomings. Above all, the thrilling direction of Nicola Luisotti, who not only captivated the large audience with his exemplary reading, earning endless ovations from the first appearance on the podium, but immediately won over the orchestra and chorus (here with several reinforcements from Italy) who were led with care and maximum results by the very talented Maestro Pablo Assante, also highly appreciated for preparing the soloists for the numerous passages in the act at Velletri and later in the “soup scene” in the final act.

Luisotti not only confirms himself as one of the foremost interpreters and executors of our repertoire, but captures the true essence of this score in its various atmospheres. He shifts from tragic urgency to burlesque, popular, and deliberately exaggerated tones. I think of the entrance of Preziosilla, where Verdi, borrowing from the Oscar of *Un ballo in maschera*, sarcastically and ironically criticizes the military world, which he secretly despised. He then moves to moments of sublime contemplation, as in an inspired “La Vergine degli Angeli,” sung with an ethereal and almost elusive sound, and the overwhelming “Manzonian” finale. The phrases in the trio sung by Father Guardian, Alvaro, and the dying Leonora moved the entire hall, which listened in religious silence. Many in Barcelona hope Luisotti will become the next permanent conductor.

The double cast (here referring to the first one that performed on November 12) aligned artists with proven skill and role specificity: from the two lead women, Anna Pirozzi, an ideal Leonora, counted with great vocal means, paying particular attention to half-voices, breath control, and pianissimi, executed with extreme musical precision, only to emerge in a consistently brilliant and effortless upper range. Her Leonora is also compelling

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*Barcelona: A terrible performance, but a great execution, wonderfully conducted by Nicola Luisotti.*

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interpretively, especially in the great duet with the bass, most notably in the final act, filled with poignant and palpable emotion. Saïa Hernández, heard in a “dress rehearsal” due to scheduling conflicts—unfortunately, she doesn’t possess the gift of ubiquity—also possesses a remarkable voice, more incisive and cutting, but with equal attention to accent and phrasing, perhaps even more so. Her Leonora is more desperate, determined, and sharp, but still highly commendable. Brian Jadge’s Don Alvaro showcases material of the highest quality: a commanding voice, a brilliant timbre, and ease in the high register. Interpretively, he portrays a combative and proud character, more inclined toward dramatic

expression than the introspective phrases Alvaro must deliver with a contained tone, avoiding pushing toward the forte, risking sounding monotonous. That said, the American tenor received nothing short of a triumphant reception. Success also smiled on Pugliese Francesco Pio Galasso, a more lyrical than dramatic voice, thus predictably cautious, at least in the dress rehearsal, but with a correct musical line and the use of more nuanced colors, accent, and phrasing to develop further. It was, after all, a rehearsal. The baritone Amartuvshin Enkhbat, Don Carlo di Vargas, needs no further praise. A voice

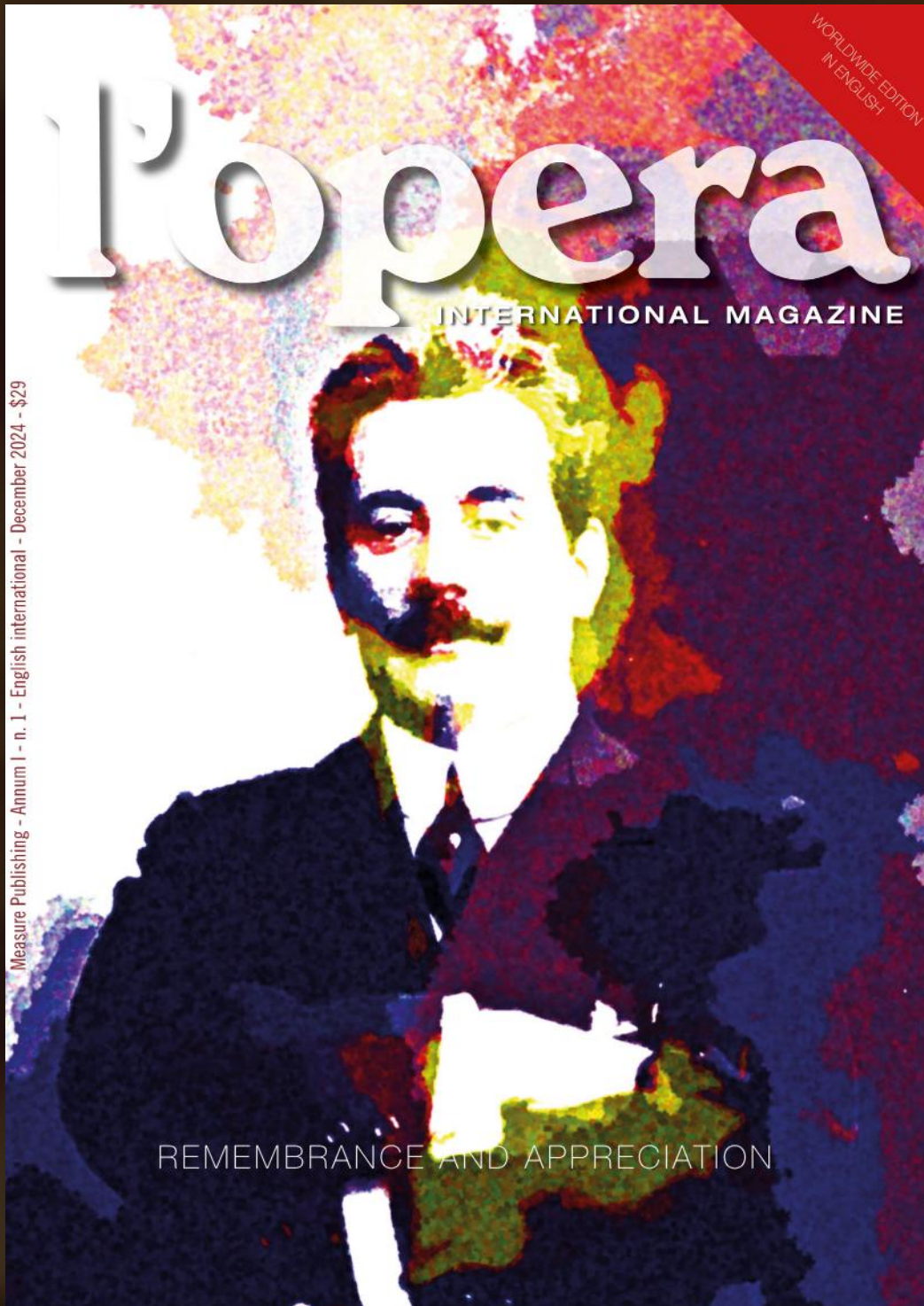
like his, on debut at the Gran Teatre del Liceu, had not been heard in years. In the first cast, the excellent Artur Rucinski delineated a noble character, even in the excesses of anger, with exemplary and meticulous vocal line.

Caterina Piva portrayed a sparkling Preziosilla, very light-hearted in her soprano delivery. Also skillful scenically but less vocally effective was Szilvia Vörös. The two Fathers Guardian, John Relyea, with his bituminous timbre, and Alejandro López, struggling with the high notes, did their job without much merit. The two Melitone performances were excellent: Pietro Spagnoli, a model of vocal and scenic excellence, and the intriguing, sonorous, and comedic Luis Cansino in the second cast. Tenor Moisés Marín and mezzo-soprano Laura Vila participated in all performances: he was a brilliant Trabuco and later a Rinvendaiolo in the camp scene; she was precise in the prologue, followed by the symphony, which also allowed for scene changes without intervals.

A special mention goes to bass Giacomo Prestia, originally slated to perform as Father Guardian, but who, due to a personal health issue, chose to step into the role of the Marquis of Calatrava. Always authoritative in voice, he adjusted his singing to a more domestic tone in the first phrases addressed to his daughter, then became incisive yet always restrained in his disdainful, suppressed fury in his lines toward Don Alvaro and the “infamous” daughter at death’s door. A masterclass in interpretation and how the voice must bend to the scenic demands. Brilliant.



Image of *La forza del destino* at the Liceu (Photo by A. Bofill)



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# The Timeless Charm of the Ancient Fairy Tale

By Andrés Moreno Mengíbar

*Seville: The production of Turandot by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle returns to the Maestranza.*

There are operatic productions that, unlike others, grow younger with the passage of time. Such is the case with this production of *Turandot* by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and Sonja Frisell, from 1987, which we had the opportunity to see in Seville in 1998 and again in 2010. With the update of theatrical technology, this fairy tale continues to captivate audiences. We must commend Juan Manuel



Guerra for the lighting profile and visual effects update, as well as Emilio López for the direction, which flowed more smoothly than we remember, particularly in the scenes with Ping, Pang, and Pong, with carefully crafted choreography. After his brilliant performance in the last *Tosca* at the Maestranza, Gianluca Marcianò has once again demonstrated that opera is in his veins as well as in his head. His conducting is theatrical, adapted to every dramatic moment, knowing how to adjust the weight of the orchestra according to the situation. For example, the transition from the dense, powerful sound of the opening scene to the transparency of the orchestra in the subsequent invocation to the Moon. And the same in the first scene of the second act, with delicate sound in the evocation of Honán's house. The way he adjusted the dynamics at the end of the first act was in the best Italian tradition. The Chorus of the Teatro de la Maestranza surpassed itself in this challenging occasion, with superb brilliance and blend, and an exceptional ability to create nuance in the most poetic moments (particularly the invocation to the Moon). This observation also applies to the Escolania de Los Palacios, well-prepared respectively by Íñigo Sampil and Aurora Galán. Oksana Dyka was far from being a correct Turandot. Her voice sounds open, with shrill and metallic high notes. There are no nuances, no colors. Jorge de León was also out of control in terms of emission steadiness (notable vibrato) throughout the first act. His muscular singing and abrupt phrasing couldn't sustain the subtleties of "Non piangere Liù," but were adequate for the riddle scene and "Nessun dorma." The best performance of the evening was undoubtedly that of Miren Urbieta-Vega as Liù: phrasing, voice control, and perfect sound regulation. All of this allowed her to move the audience in "Signore, ascolta" and the death scene. Another great surprise was Pablo Ruiz's Ping: in addition to being





Scenes from **Turandot**  
at the Teatro de la Maestranza

a magnificent actor, he has a baritone voice with dark hues but perfect projection, round and flexible, as demonstrated by the use of half-voices in passages like "Oh, China." With the help of Manuel de Diego and Jorge Franco, the first scene of the second act was very successful. Maxim-Kuzmin Karaev (Timur) was an authentic basso but with flexible phrasing, and of the same high quality were César San Martín (Mandarino) and Josep Fadó (Altoum). The Symphony Orchestra played with both power and delicacy, with an excellent brass section. In the second cast, Jacopo Brusa forced the sound, not

making the task of the singers easier, especially Héctor Sandoval as Calaf. The voice has warmth and color, very passionate in phrasing, but lacks projection. Kristina Kolar, as Turandot, has a full-bodied sound with no shrillness in the high notes and good phrasing ability. Laura Brasó's Liù, delicate and luminous, was rewarded with vibrant applause. Also excellent was Alejandro Baliñas as Timur, with an authentic basso voice, who proved himself in the death scene of Liù.





# Great voices for Puccini

By Alberto Bazzano

The Monegasque autumn opens with Puccini: three operas in quick succession. After a performance of *La Rondine*, a rightful tribute due to its absolute connection with the region—since the first performance of the opera took place at the Salle Garnier on March 27, 1917, with Gilda Dalla Rizza, Tito Schipa, and the baton of Gino Marinuzzi—it is now the turn of *La Bohème* and *Tosca* at the Grimaldi Forum, conducted by Marco Armiliato. Let me begin with the positive reception of both performances from the audience. The venue, lacking the charm of the Salle Garnier but still of considerable size, was filled with attentive and engaged spectators. This is a

*Monte Carlo: La bohème and Tosca bring success to the Monegasque autumn.*

noteworthy fact. In a historical moment when theaters, even those of the highest caliber, struggle to sell out—even with valuable productions—the turnout at these performances demonstrates just how vital Puccini still is, unaffected by any crisis. Naturally, the success is also attributed to the presence of distinguished performers. At the top of the list is Anna Netrebko as Mimì and Roberto Alagna as Cavaradossi.

Netrebko is an absolute soprano, extremely versatile, able to move effortlessly across the furthest territories. Her successful collaboration with the bel canto of Bellini and Donizetti does not prevent her from embracing Verdi (even from his mature period) as well as the Russian and Wagnerian repertoires. Even within the realm of Puccini, her wide vocal range allows her to span, pairing the stentorian drive of *Turandot* with the twilight lyricism of *Mimì*. In her interpretation, the Parisian flower girl is not the fragile young woman draped in a certain interpretative tradition, but rather the woman who, with dignity, faces her ill fate. The signs of illness are apparent from her entrance, where, with vivid realism, she collapses after barely managing to climb the stairs. Netrebko is a convincing actress who doesn't just resolve the role through singing but brings it to life on stage. However, her interpretation appeals more to the mind than to the heart. A sense of coldness permeates her performance. Always. Even more so here, with



Scenes from *La Bohème* at the Opéra  
(Photo by Marco Borrelli)



Moments of **Tosca** in Monte Carlo  
(Photo by Marco Borrelli)



Mimi, a character who essentially calls to the soul. Technically, everything works magnificently. The voice, of precious metal, rings out resonantly, reaching its peak in the canonical moments. In particular, in the “Donde lieta uscì” of the third scene, performed in full respect of the musical agogic.

While Netrebko proves worthy of her illustrious name, Yusif Eyvazov as Rodolfo impresses with his meticulous attention to phrasing. The timbre may not be privileged, but it is softened by an imperative diction that renders the conversational singing—so essential in Puccini—transparent. His instrument supports the tessitura, becoming robust in the upper range. The held high C at the end of “Gelida manina” is a clear display of health and athleticism. Florian Sempey is a baritone with a strong voice and good stage presence. In the final analysis, he holds his ground against the iconic couple. His Marcello is a man who freely embraces his artistic fate. The woman he loves, Musetta, is portrayed by the elegant and composed Nino Machaidze. Giorgi Manoshvili gives Colline the allure of a velvety tone. Biagio Pizzuti performs well as Schaunard. Matteo Peirone (Alcindoro), Fabrice Alibert (Benoît), and Vincenzo di Nocera complete the cast with honor. As for the visual aspect, the staging is that of Jean-Louis Grinda (director), Rudy Sabounghi (sets), and Diane Belugou (costumes). A co-production with the Royal Opera of Muscat in Oman, it was previously presented in Monte Carlo in 2020.

France, as evoked by the libretto, is not that of Louis-Philippe, but rather the period straddling the two World Wars of the 20th century. A large window in a metal frame dominates the first scene. Through it, one can see the smoking chimneys beneath the “gray” Parisian sky. The Latin Quarter act is a riot of lights. The buildings, dressed for celebration and surrounded by floating colorful balloons, invite the joy of the nighttime revelry. The atmosphere is that of the joy found in a funfair. The frequent use of projections superbly conveys the intense snowfall at the gates of Hell, as well as evokes the passage of time through the rapid succession of

images representing the months of the year. Tosca is announced as a concert performance.

In reality, it is performed at least semi-staged. The protagonists act on stage as they would in a normal performance. What is missing are the costumes and furniture. However, the scenes are presented through projected photographs depicting Roman settings: the Church of Sant’Andrea della Valle, Palazzo Farnese (both exterior and interior), and Castel Sant’Angelo.

Anticipation surrounds Roberto Alagna’s performance. The singer’s rich timbre and careful phrasing do justice to the character, the ultimate positive figure, to whom the final notes of the score are entrusted, full of passion. Over thirty years of career have not affected his voice, which remains solid, even with an increase (sometimes self-assured) of strength and brilliance in the high notes. Luca Salsi is no less impressive. His Scarpia embodies the image of cunning servitude to evil. While continuing in the tradition of the villain, where the booming sound gives an important expressive resource, he maintains a level of formal composure that imparts a modern allure to the role.

In this context, Maria José Siri appears as a clay pot among iron ones. Clearly, she is not having a good night. Her voice is weak and lacks adequate projection. Her Tosca lacks the grandeur that is the diva’s trademark. Let us not forget that Puccini fell in love with the character after seeing Sarah Bernhardt perform it. She redeems herself in the execution of “Vissi d’arte,” but it is only a moment. The Monte Carlo Opera Chorus, led by Stefano Visconti, knows its craft and dominates the Te Deum scene. Noteworthy are the supporting roles, beginning with Giovanni Romeo’s sacristan, Giorgi Manoshvili’s Angelotti, and Reinaldo Macias’s Spoletta. On the podium, Marco Armiliato proves to be a good conductor, imaginative in phrasing and balanced in sound, both in *La Bohème* and in *Tosca*. There is no disconnection between the stage and the pit, in a perspective that places the drama at the center of the musical journey, drawing energy and vital impulse from it.

# The Redemption of Humanity in Chains

By Marta Tonegutti

Scenes from **Fidelio** at the Lyric Opera  
(Photo by Todd Rosenberg)

Regiethheater finds less space in American opera houses than in European ones. Opera audiences here have rather traditional tastes, much like in Europe, but the American public has more of a voice due to the private sponsorship system and the lack of state funding. However, the staging of *Fidelio* at the Lyric Opera has satisfied everyone, from the most traditional to those more open to innovation, thanks to the intelligent direction of Matthew Ozawa, which amplifies Beethoven's message about the darkness of imprisonment and political persecution, illuminated by the shining beacon of justice and regained freedom.

The large two-level metal and glass structure, which dominates the stage, designed by Alexander V. Nicholas, who also designed the video projections, appears light and transparent. It is a modern prison, or rather, a place of forced containment where entire families are held, with women and children separated from the men. Perhaps it is a center for migrants, like those scattered across the world, imprisoning people at the borders between nations.

First, we see the side of the structure housing the offices and security personnel, spacious and efficient rooms overseen by the benevolent head jailer, Rocco. His daughter, Marzelline, appears in a suit like the other secretaries, listening to the advances of the guard, Jaquino, while typing a letter. Leonore/*Fidelio* is part of the security staff, dressed in a bulletproof vest with a large "Security" label on her back. She busily moves up and down the stairs, carrying boxes and performing tasks of trust for Rocco in the hope that he will allow her access to the special cells in the basement, where her husband, Florestan, is imprisoned. Meanwhile, Marzelline reveals her naive love for *Fidelio* and hopes to make him her husband, with

*Chicago: Enrique Mazzola and Matthew Ozawa deliver a splendid Fidelio*

the enthusiastic support of her father, the painful disappointment of Jaquino, and the bewilderment of Leonore.

The structure then rotates to reveal the prison interiors: we see men and women crowded against the prison bars, following the movements of the guards up and down the stairs, or sitting silently at long benches without visitors. Some children try to play, but are quickly stopped. We hear Don Pizarro's thirst for revenge, followed by the despair but also the firm determination of Leonore to save her husband in the aria "Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin?". It is in







the prisoners' chorus that follows ("O welche Lust, in freier Luft"), one of the highest points of the opera and the entire Beethovenian oeuvre, where Ozawa's staging genius is revealed. Thanks to the mix of men, women, and children and the successful costumes (designed by Jessica Jahn), combining everyday clothes with bright yellow uniforms worn by some of the prisoners, the human mass that crowds against the outer edge of the structure and on the metal stairs, seeking the light, comes to symbolize an entire humanity in chains, momentarily regaining hope from goodness: families reunite, lovers embrace, children play together. The voices we hear are only male, but the condition is universal and touches us all. The second act is equally effective. For the festive final chorus ("O Gott, welch ein Augenblick"), the reunited families move about the stage or sit on the ground as everyone celebrates the power of love in the reconquest of freedom.


Enrique Mazzola approaches his first *Fidelio* with authority, and the orchestra responds with flexibility in sound and dynamics, elegant phrasing, transparent texture that highlights the melodic lines entrusted to the woodwinds, and urgent but contained rhythms. He has an enviable cast of soloists, some of whom were already featured in the production when it was presented at the San Francisco Opera in 2021 and then at the Canadian Opera Company last season.

The star of the cast is South African soprano Elza van den Heever, who delivers an unforgettable performance as Leonore/*Fidelio*. Her voice is very rich and expansive, perfectly controlled in terms of emission and volume, with a wide dynamic range. In the higher register, it becomes sharp as a knife that cuts through the orchestra. In the pianissimos, the intensity never fades but rather subsides only to rise again. Her stage presence is well-rounded, with the lighter moments of the first act (the intentionally awkward dialogues

with Marzelline and Rocco) balancing the intense drama of the character. Florestan is American tenor Russell Thomas in one of his best performances after recent *Ernani* and *Radamès* portrayals. The writing is difficult and demanding, but the singer handles it well from the aria "Gott, welch Dunkel hier!". There is a lack of legato, and the attack of the notes is often forced, but the voice is broad and powerful. Surrounding them are the beautiful voices of Sydney Mancasola as Marzelline and Daniel Espinal as Jaquino (both making their debut in Chicago), and especially the deep and agile bass of Dmitry Ivashchenko, a Rocco of captivating presence and expressiveness. Baritone Brian Mulligan is a Don Pizarro who spares no cruelty, handling the role with a firm and imposing voice. Alfred Walker is also commendable as Don Fernando, and the Lyric Opera chorus is absolutely magnificent, giving its best in this Beethovenian masterpiece.







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By Francesco Zanibellato

# A Tosca Always New

Two months after an unsuccessful season opener with *Grounded*—a half-empty hall and unanimously negative reviews—the Metropolitan has brought *Tosca* by Puccini back to the stage in the celebrated production by David McVicar, alternating a series of top-tier casts through January 2025. In the November 2024 revival, Quinn Kelsey and Freddie De

*New York: Puccini's opera in the splendid production by McVicar; excellent performances by Freddie De Tommaso and Quinn Kelsey*



Scenes from **Tosca**  
at the Metropolitan

Tommaso triumphed, with De Tommaso making his debut at the New York theater.

McVicar's production, seven years after its first presentation, retains all the freshness and brilliance it had then. Unlike some productions that seem to age poorly, revisiting *Tosca* a second time in quick succession, I had the feeling that this staging continues to reveal new details. One example among many is the figures in the first act, meticulously arranged to appear as though they've stepped straight out of lithographs from the early 19th century or a film by Luigi Magni. Or the fire in the fireplace in the second act, which blazes when Scarpia sings his aria, then gradually fades throughout the act until it is completely extinguished when Tosca places the candelabras next to the baron's body. McVicar shows how it's possible to create new meanings without necessarily layering interpretations on top of those already intended by the composers. In the world of opera, there's room for everything, but it's these kinds of productions that make opera lovers out of newcomers, those who will form the audience of tomorrow. Following McVicar's vision, John Macfarlane designed sets that seem to have been captured live from the original locations, yet are freely inspired by reality, aimed at making them functional for the opera. Specifically, the third act (the most faithful of the three) presented a Castel Sant'Angelo placed



obliquely, with a triumphant St. Michael silhouetted against the most beautiful painted backdrop I've ever seen, complete with St. Peter painted in the far-left background, in the finest classical scenic tradition. Conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin wanted a sound that was both sumptuous and cohesive for this *Tosca*, in a symphonic approach to Puccini's work. Once again, however, the conductor made the orchestra play too loudly, continually overshadowing the singers throughout the performance and forcing them into a constant battle with the orchestra to be heard. The orchestral incursions that made "this is Tosca's kiss" and other key moments of the opera incomprehensible were simply unacceptable. The flaw is so ingrained in Nézet-Séguin's style that I don't think I've ever heard a performance of his that escapes it.

Freddie De Tommaso, debuting at the Met, has all the qualities needed for Cavaradossi: brilliant high notes, temperament, stage presence, and half-tones. The young English tenor created a lively, romantic, and impulsive figure, with frequent vocal exploits perfectly integrated into the character's psychology. De Tommaso was generous with the audience (even overcoming the orchestral wall), showing ease in notes above the *passaggio*, always well emitted and round. "E lucevan le stelle" deserved an encore.

Quinn Kelsey, as Scarpia, reaffirms his status as a great interpreter of Puccini. After the success of *Rigoletto* the previous month on the same stage, this baritone once again astonished with his accent and phrasing, giving dramatic sense to every musical line. Few today are as expressive, with such clear diction, and sing so well. Kelsey fits perfectly into the tradition of singers with perfect Italian dramatic

pronunciation, like Tito Gobbi or Giuseppe di Stefano—not bad, considering he was born, raised, and trained in Hawaii. Tosca was Lise Davidsen, the Norwegian singer we had already heard earlier this year in *La forza del destino* on the same stage. Davidsen has a well-projected voice, consistent across her range, with dazzling high notes: qualities enough for a top-tier singer. However, her expressive and acting abilities were more lacking, always generic with a less convincing stage presence. With Cavaradossi, she seemed to lack the chemistry of a lover; with Scarpia, she lacked dramatic and realistic accents; in the funeral ritual scene and finale, she lacked the elegant gesture of an operatic diva. It was interesting to compare her Tosca to the previous cast's Aleksandra Kurzak, who, in contrast, compensated for a voice tending towards the light with all the expressive abilities of a great interpreter.

Patrick Carfizzi, as the Sacristan, reaffirmed his skill as an excellent character actor. Tony Stevenson designed a Spoletta that was both dignified and insinuating. His role was especially important in this staging because, at the opera's conclusion, he remains the last character on stage, reflecting on the recent events as the curtain falls. Christopher Job was a convincing Sciarone, Kevin Short seemed once again a bit too stentorian as Angelotti, and twelve-year-old Luka Zylík was the perfect shepherd boy.

The audience gave a warm welcome to all the performers, with the inevitable standing ovation. During the performance, there were attempts at open applause from a few spectators drawn to the high notes of the lead duo.





# An Absolutely French Work

By Paolo Piro

## Paris: *The splendid Fille du régiment* by *Evelino Pidò*

**D** Is *La Fille du régiment* really the work of a chameleon-like Donizetti? It has been said that, in order to charm the Parisian audience of 1840, the composer cloaked himself in the garb of his transalpine colleagues, trading his own style for the infamous *esprit gallic*. Yet Evelino Pidò's direction at the Opéra Bastille seems to prove otherwise: it is Donizetti—having absorbed the essence of Opéra-Comique—who wields the conventions of the genre in his own way, without any stylistic disguise. In the breadth and flexibility of phrasing, as in a myriad of timbral and dynamic nuances, Pidò highlights how Donizetti assimilated the French aesthetic while maintaining an entirely recognizable musical personality. The Opéra orchestra performs magnificently: precise and spirited, favoring refined gradations over stark contrasts, with a rare fluidity in oscillating between the two poles of martial comedy and amorous elegy. It's an interpretation devoid of both brutality and saccharine excess, imbued instead with a constant tremor of poetry—one that envelops, without stifling, the opera's essential lightness and irony. The result is a kind of sentimental fairy tale set against a social and patriotic backdrop, perfectly aligned with Laurent Pelly's theatrical vision.

This is the now-classic production first unveiled in London in 2007, where the context of national rebellion (Tyrol annexed to Bavaria, a vassal state of Napoleon) and the tension between rural class and aristocracy (embodied respectively by the Tyrolean Tonio and the Marquise of Berkenfield) is treated with humorous detachment, never descending into rhetoric. The irony is blatant from the very first

Scenes from *La fille du régiment*  
at the Opéra Bastille (Photo by Elisa Haberer)







act's set design, where a landscape of geographical maps stands in for the Tyrolean valleys. Everything connected to the military world is bent toward the pursuit of amusement. Case in point: the tank on which Tonio bursts into the Marquise's salon in Act II, just in time to thwart the wedding. This anti-realist approach marries a brisk theatrical rhythm with exuberant acting, lending the production an irresistible freshness and vibrancy.

What makes the entire mechanism work is an ideally cohesive cast, which—both scenically and vocally—has little, if anything, to envy from the previous Paris revival in 2012 (which featured the legendary duo of Natalie Dessay and Juan Diego Flórez). Julie Fuchs is a delightful Marie, at times utterly irresistible in her spontaneity and stage presence: mercurial, exuberant, never vulgar, effortlessly shifting from impulsive tomboy to dreamy, love-struck young woman. If in the first act the purity of her timbre, the flexibility of her delivery, and the ease of her agility aren't quite enough to make the interpretation truly distinctive, it is in the second act that the French soprano unleashes a deeply personal expressivity. She imbues her great aria ("Par le rang et par l'opulence," followed by *Salut à la France*)—one of the evening's most memorable moments—with intense, finely wrought emotional nuances.

As Tonio, Lawrence Brownlee convinces more through his technical mastery and command of phrasing than through his vocal sheen, which is noticeably dimmed compared to the warm, penetrating ring of his best days.

Lionel Lhote's straightforward geniality lends Sulpice an immediate and touching charm. Susan Graham, authoritative in both sung and spoken passages, infuses the Marquise of Berkenfield's worldly pride with a thousand shades of humanity. Meanwhile, Felicity Lott's sovereign presence as the Duchess of Crakentorp bathes the stage

in an almost mystical aura.

Every performer, including the chorus—cohesive, versatile, and expertly prepared by Ching-Lien Wu—contributes to the triumph of a revival that feels as fresh as a premiere. It serves as a reminder—if one were needed—of the benefits of these productions that, without any pedagogical mission, simply "limit" themselves to entertaining.





# Rusalka and Her Magical World

By Fabiana Crepaldi

## Rio de Janeiro: Local Premiere of Antonín Dvorák's Masterpiece

Antonín Dvorák's *Rusalka* arrived at the Teatro Municipal, 120 years after the composer's death. To make this happen, *Rusalka* in the production by Brazilian director André Heller-Lopes debuted in March.

For Heller-Lopes, the real world of the story resides in the aquatic kingdom where *Rusalka* lives. The Prince's world, where she embarks on a quest for true love, is pure fantasy. The most important thing, however, is that this fantasy does not arise from *Rusalka*'s daydreams, but from the music itself. In the first and third acts, Renato Theobaldo's beautiful and functional set design features chairs, shelves, and a few instruments of an orchestra ready to welcome musicians and begin a concert. Like small moons—*Rusalka* is tied not only to water but also to the night and the moon—metal spheres suspended above reflect Gonzalo Cordova's lighting throughout the theater. Beyond the orchestra's chairs, there is a gramophone. The music, immaterial and timeless, is the focal point of the stage. With choreography by Bruno Fernandes and Mateus Dutra, in the first act, the nymphs sing and dance around the gramophone. In the final act, *Rusalka* and the Prince meet in front of the gramophone.

In the second act, the Prince's palace is set with transparent panels: nothing is defined, everything is a dream. The scene places us in eastern countries where women are richly dressed (a stunning creation by costume designer Marcelo Marques), but they have no voice—much like *Rusalka* among humans.

The Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Municipal delivered an excellent performance under the direction of Luiz Fernando Malheiro. The cast, entirely made up of Brazilian singers, included tenor Geilson Santos and countertenor Herbert Campos, who played the Forest Guard and the Kitchen Assistant, respectively, as well as Eliane Coelho, the grand dame of Brazilian opera, in a special appearance as the Foreign Princess. The three nymphs (sopranos Carolina



Images of *Rusalka* at the Teatro Municipal (Photo by Daniel Ebendinger)

Morel and Mariana Gomes, and mezzo-soprano Lara Cavalcanti) formed a beautiful and harmonious ensemble with their doubles (three dancers: Julia Cobras, Manoela Leopoldino, and Gabriela Mendes).

Mezzo-soprano Denise de Freitas shone in the role of the Witch (Ježibaba), with resonant low notes, brilliant high notes, and great stage presence. Bass-baritone Lício Bruno had a warm, not too dark tone that suited the Lord of the Waters (Vodník) perfectly. An excellent performer, he created an engaging and consistent character.

The demanding role of the Prince was entrusted to the excellent tenor Giovanni Tristacci. He was a perfect Prince: expansive vocal delivery, beautiful and brilliant tone, secure line of singing, and good stage presence. In the final scene, he managed to sing with legato and sweetness, even in the high C. The title role went to Ludmilla Bauerfeldt, one of Brazil's leading sopranos of the current generation. With her lyrical tone, she brought *Rusalka* to life in a moving way. The legato and phrasing she used in the famous Song to the Moon—sung while lying on a piano—transmitted the lyrical essence of *Rusalka*'s dream. In the second act, after showcasing her acting skills, the soprano used the power of her high notes in the scene with the Lord of the Waters. In the third act, Bauerfeldt was such a true interpreter that she moved the audience deeply.





By [Giancarlo Landini](#)

# Before, During and After

## Before

In September 1945, Maria Callas bid farewell to Athens after performing in a substantial series of recitals of *O Zittanos Foittitis* (alias *Der Bettelsstudent*), a popular operetta by Carl Millöcker. That fall, she was in New York—a young singer with a solid background from her studies and performances in Greece, where she had explored a wider and more diverse repertoire than one might expect. Like many young singers, she was eager to be heard and secure good opportunities. She tried to catch Arturo Toscanini's attention, without success, but through Giovanni Martinelli, one of the most famous tenors of his century and a favorite among New York audiences, she secured an audition at the Metropolitan Opera. On December 3, she was heard for the first time, singing "Vissi d'arte" from *Tosca* and "Casta Diva" from *Norma*—two arias that would become key repertoire pieces for her. She auditioned again on December 21, adding (perhaps) "D'amor sull'ali rosee." The theater offered her a contract, which, incredibly, she turned down, claiming they were offering her unsuitable roles like *Desdemona* and *Butterfly*. In the months that followed, she befriended Luise Caselotti, a mezzo-soprano of some merit and an excellent pianist, and her husband, Edgard Bagarozzy. During this period of inactivity, she worked as a waitress in a restaurant where the staff performed opera arias. She also worked as a maid/babysitter at the home of Maestro Failoni, where she was heard and admired. Meanwhile,

## *The Bitter-Sweet America of Maria Callas*

Bagarozzy began planning a *Turandot* production in Chicago, where Callas was set to sing the lead role alongside Mafalda Favero and Galliano Masini. Complex events, which don't fit within the space of this article, led to the failure of this project. Maria Callas was heard by Giovanni Zenatello, one of the most famous tenors of the 20th century, who took her to Italy and helped her debut in *La Gioconda* at the Arena di Verona. Many may not know that that season at the Arena was supposed to open with *Faust* by Gounod, with Renata Tebaldi and Nicola Rossi Lemeni in the leading roles. The two seem to have had mutual affection. On the opening night of *Faust*, it rained, and the opening opera became *La Gioconda*. What a twist of fate! The then-unknown Maria Callas, through an unexpected summer storm, unintentionally stole the spotlight from Renata Tebaldi, who, by 1947, was already an established star.

## During

During the brightest years of her career, according to the most severe critics—from 1947 to 1953, when her voice showed no signs of wear—Maria Callas kept away from the United States, focusing on her artistic career primarily in Italy, with occasional performances in Latin America and some notable European appearances. She returned in 1954, to the Lyric Opera of Chicago, where she was greeted with feverish anticipation. The press described her as a Marilyn Monroe who could sing. She chose three of her signature roles. Nicola Rescigno conducted *Norma*, *La Traviata*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In Bellini's opera, she was joined by Mirtò Picchi, Giulietta Simionato, and Nicola Rossi Lemeni. In *La Traviata*, she was accompanied by the French-speaking tenor Leopold Simoneau and Tito Gobbi, while in *Lucia*, she sang with Giuseppe Di Stefano and Gian Giacomo Guelfi. She triumphed in each of the works she performed, but it was *Lucia* that caused a sensation. She returned to Chicago in October the following year. It had been an intense few months, during which Maria Callas had opened *La Scala* with *La Vestale* and, shortly after, had performed in *Andrea Chénier* with Mario Del Monaco. She also performed *Sonnambula* and *La Traviata* at *La Scala*. Returning to Chicago, she sang *I Puritani*, *Il Trovatore* with Jussi Björling, and, for the first time on stage, *Madama Butterfly*. It had been several years since she had turned down the offer from the Metropolitan, but now Maria Callas had lost weight and had a physique more fitting for the role of the geisha. Surrounded by eager anticipation, with long lines at the box office to get tickets, she performed and delivered one of the most modern and unique interpretations of Puccini's opera. During the performances, she received a legal summons from Eddy Bagarozzy, who sought compensation for a broken contract, which she had signed too lightly when leaving for Italy. The case, documented by the press, and immortalized in a photograph that circulated worldwide, only increased anticipation for her debut at the Met. Maria Callas had become a tabloid diva, and those promoting her career skillfully capitalized on the public's morbid fascination with her, making use of the press, television, and radio. On October 29,



Photographic portrait of Maria Callas at the time of her American debut

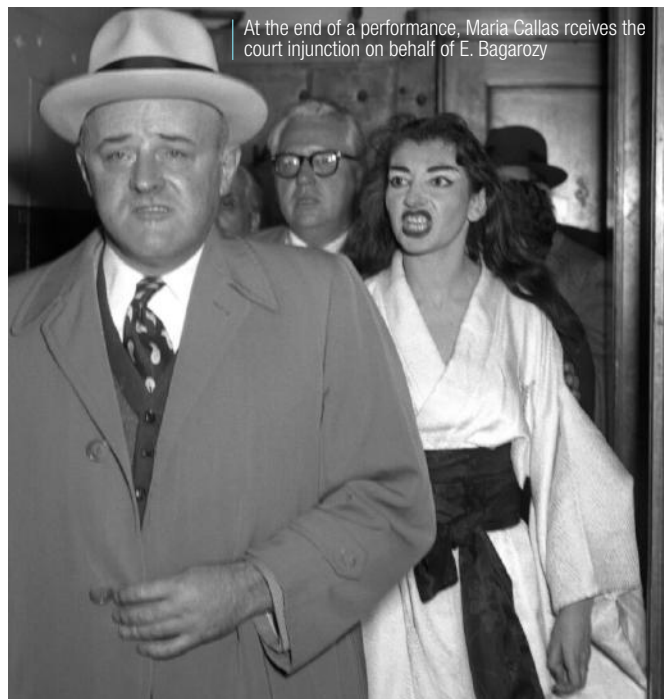
1956, Maria Callas opened the season at the New York theater with *Norma*. She succeeded, but didn't steal the show. Mario Del Monaco and Fedora Barbieri held their own and didn't merely act as her backdrop. Their respective followers gave her a run for her money, and Callas, though in form, seemed somewhat calculated in her attempts to evoke the right effects on stage. The following month, it was *Tosca*. Dmitri Mitropoulos conducted, with Giuseppe Campora, an Italian tenor then at the height of his fame, and George London, a Canadian bass-baritone of great voice and strong personality, by her side. In the first act, she appeared as a pale Floria, with a voice that lacked power and with a perceptible vibrato. She moved with discretion. She resembled a movie actress (the American press compared her to Audrey Hepburn) but didn't seem destined to set hearts ablaze. After the intermission, the situation flipped: Maria Callas unleashed her talents and created an incandescent *Tosca*, memorable for the passion with which she defended Cavaradossi and punished Scarpia. Her performance benefited from her youth (she was only 33 years old), which removed the matronly quality that tradition often imparted to the role. On November 25, she performed a fragment of the second act on the Ed Sullivan Show with George London and Mitropoulos.

#### After

Next came *Lucia di Lammermoor*. It wasn't the *Lucia* of the century. The live recordings bear witness to that. The Chicago press pointed out that it was inferior to her performance at the Lyric Opera in the same role. However, I share the opinion of those critics who, despite acknowledging the limitations of those performances, highlighted the revolutionary and innovative aspects of Callas's *Lucia*. I am surprised that, even today, some place the transcendental virtuosity of other singers above Callas, failing to grasp the profound impact of her interpretation in this role. The situation was further complicated by a conflict with baritone Enzo Sordello. Callas insisted that Mr. Bing remove him from the production, which he did. This matter caused a media stir, and Sordello, a competent baritone, suffered significant consequences. It was a dispute that fueled tensions with Bing, ultimately leading to the Met's break with the Greek soprano.

#### A Few Observations to Conclude

"Whatever else Maria Meneghini Callas may be, she is certainly an artist of outstanding gifts. The gifts are peculiar ones, not exactly comparable to those of any other singer now before the public. Last year, in reviewing her *Norma*, I commented on her striking presence as a theatrical personality, on the extraordinary brilliance and accuracy of her technique, on her intuitive sense of drama, on the elegance of her musical style, and on the enormous, though not limitless, range of her voice. I had some reservations, however; its predominant reediness and its tendency to wobble slightly in its highest notes disturbed me a bit. At the time, though, I pointed out that despite these flaws, she had turned in the most satisfying performance of *Norma* heard at the Metropolitan in at least a generation. Some of her other subsequent performances were less satisfying. Her *Lucia*, for example, proved to be rather strenuous. The role, designed for the lighter type of coloratura soprano, did not seem suited to her voice, and she came to grief, somewhat conspicuously, in her top notes. The limitations she disclosed were, however, of an entirely physical nature. Few dramatic sopranos have dared to tackle *Lucia*, and the fact that Miss Callas—who is best described as a dramatic soprano with astonishing coloratura flexibility—could sing it at all was quite remarkable. Last week, Miss



At the end of a performance, Maria Callas receives the court injunction on behalf of E. Bagarozzy

Callas returned to the Metropolitan in a more congenial role, that of *Violetta* in *La Traviata*—and this time, I must say, she left me in complete agreement with the most fervent of her admirers, who bellowed and thundered their approval after every aria. Taken as a whole, her interpretation of the part was far and away the finest that I have encountered at the Metropolitan or anywhere else in all the years I have been listening to opera. The high notes again wobbled very slightly now and then, but I am beginning to accept the reedy tone quality as a characteristic of Miss Callas's vocal personality; when one has become used.



The historic embrace between Renata Tebaldi and Maria Callas





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February 28 March 1, 2, 4, 5, 6  
**MANON LESCAUT**

Music by Giacomo Puccini  
Conductor Francesco Cilluffo – Director,  
Sets and Costumes Massimo Gasparon  
Performers Marigona Qerkezi, Hanying  
Tso, Ric Furman, Konstantine Kipiani,  
Biagio Pizzuti, Filippo Ravizza, Andrea  
Concetti, Saverio Pugliese, Lorian  
Castellano, Tiziano Rosati, Saverio  
Pugliese

April 18, 22, 27  
**THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA**

Music by Benjamin Britten  
Conductor Francesco Cilluffo – Director,  
Sets and Costumes Yannis Kokkos  
Performers Marco Spotti, Stefanie Iranyi,  
Rory Musgrave, Christian Senn, Nicole  
Piccolomini, Francesca Benitez, Moritz  
Kallenberg, Caterina Dellaere

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**LA GIOCONDA**

Music by Amilcare Ponchielli – Libretto  
Tobia Gorrio  
Conductor Giovanni Andreoli – Director,  
Sets and Costumes Filippo Tonon  
Performers Irina Churilova/Veronica  
Dzhioeva, Silvia Beltrami, Andrea  
Silvestrelli/Volodymyr Morozov, Agostina  
Smimero/Benedetta Marchesi, Marco

Berti/Antonello Palombi, Alberto Gazale

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

**IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA**

Music Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by  
Cesare Sterbini  
Conductor Giovanni Andreoli – Director  
Filippo Crivelli – Sets Emanuele Luzzati –  
Costumes Santuzza Cali  
Performers 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 – Director,  
Sets and Costumes Massimo Gasparon  
Performers Oksana Dyka/Rachele Stanisci,  
Antonella Colaanni, Elena Schirru, Marcelo  
Alvarez/Konstantin Kipiani, Devid Cecconi/  
Igor Podoplelov

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March 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15  
**DON GIOVANNI**

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –  
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte  
Conductor Beatrice Venezi – Director  
Davide Garattini Raimondi – Sets Ezio  
Frigerio – Costumes Franca Squarciarino  
Performers 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  
– Director and Sets Lino Privitera –

Costumes Alfredo Corno

Performers 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 Montresor, Filippo  
Micale

### FLORENCE

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

February 16, 18, 20, 23  
**RIGOLETTO**

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by  
Francesco Maria Piave  
Conductor Stefano Ranzani – Director  
Davide Livermore – Sets Giò Forma –  
Costumes Gianluca Falaschi  
Performers Celso Albello, Daniel Luis de  
Vicente/Leo Kim, Olga Peretyatko, Alessio  
Cacciamani, Eleonora Filippini, Manuel  
Fuentes

March 9, 11, 14, 16  
**NORMA**

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

### MILAN

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

February 5, 9, 12, 15, 20, 23  
**DIE WALKURE**

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
Conductor Simone Young/Alexsander  
Soddy - Director David McVicar - Sets  
David McVicar and Hannah Postlewaite -  
Costumes Emma Kingsbury



Performers Klaus Florian Vogt, Günther Groissböck, Michael Volle, Elza van den Heever, Okka von der Damerau, Camilla Nylund

February 19, 22 March 2, 5, 8, 11  
*EVGENIJ ONEGIN*

Music by Pëtr Il'ic Cajkovskij – Libretto by Pëtr Il'ic Cajkovskij and Konstantin Shilowski

Conductor Timur Zangiev – Director Mario Martone – Sets Margherita Palli – Costumes Ursula Patzak

Performers 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 – Director Davide Livermore – Sets Giò Forma – Costumes Gianluca Falschi  
Performers 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 – Director and Costumes Laurent Pelly – Sets Massimo Tronchetti

Performers 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 – Director Damiano Michieletto – Sets Paolo Fantin – Costumes Carla Teti

Performers 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

## MODENA

**Teatro Comunale Luciano Pavarotti – Mirella Freni**

**Via del Teatro 8 - I-41100 Modena**

**Tel.: (+39)059/20 69 93**

**www.teatrocomunalemodena.it**

February 21, 23

*I DUE FOSCARI*

Music Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by

Francesco Maria Piave

Conductor Matteo Beltrami – Director

Joseph Franconi Lee – Sets and

Costumes William Orlandi

Performers Luca Salsi, Luciano Ganci,

Marigona Qerkezi, Antonio Di Matteo,

Marcello Nardis, Ilaria Alida Quilico,

Manuel Pierattelli, Eugenio Maria

Degiacomi

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 – Director Plamen

Kartaloff – Costumes Nella Emil Dimitrova-

Stoyanova

– Sets Giacomo Andrico

Performers Teresa Romano, Fabián Veloz,

Ernesto Petti, Angelo Villari, Amadi Lagha,

Eleonora Filipponi, Francesca Cucuzza,

Daniela Schillaci, Marina Shakhdinanova,

Angelo Villari, Fabián Veloz, Ernesto Petti,

Giuseppe Infantino, Hae Kang

April 11, 13

*HENGITI – RESPIRO / JEZIORO  
POPIOLOW – LAGO DI CESARE /  
PERLA DI SPERANZA*

Music by Paavo Korpiaakko, Benjamin

Baczewski, Marco Attura – Libretto by

Mirva Koivukangas, Jagoda Jagson,

Vincenzo De Vivo

Director Matteo Mazzoni – Sets and

Costumes Joanna Borkowska

## NAPLES

**Teatro di San Carlo**

**Via San Carlo 98 - 80132 Napoli**

**Tel.: (+39)081/79 72 331**

**www.teatrosancarlo.it**

February 15, 18, 21, 23, 25

*ROMÉO ET JULIETTE*

Music by Charles Gounod – Libretto by

Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

Direttore Sesto Quatrini – Director

Giorgia Guerra – Sets Federica Parolini

– Costumes Lorena Marin Performers

Nadine Sierra, Javier Camarena, Gianluca

Buratto, Alessio Arduini, Caterina Piva,

Mark Kurmanbayev, Marco Ciaponi,

Annunziata Vestri, Yunho Kim, Antimo

Dell'Omo, Sun Tianxuefei, Maurizio Bove

March 20, 23, 26, 29

*SALOME*

Music by Richard Strauss – Libretto by Hedwig Lachmann

Conductor Dan Ettinger – Director

Manfred Schweighofler – Sets Nicola

Rubertelli – Costumes Kathrin Dorigo

Performers 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 –

Director, Sets and Costumes Hugo De Ana

Performers 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 Di 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

Performers Ildar Abdrazakov, Ernesto

# Program

Petti, Sonda Radvanovsky, Luciano  
Ganci, Francesco Domenico Dot, Sebastia  
Serra

## 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 – Director Fabio  
Ceresa – Sets Tiziano Santi – Costumes  
Giuseppe Palella  
Performers Ivan Ayón Rivas, Arthur  
Espiritu, Federica Guida, Benedetta Torre,  
Erwin Schrott, Nicolas Courjal, Andrew  
Hamilton, Anna Pennisi, Daniele Muratori  
Caputo

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

### L'ELISIR D'AMORE

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

## PARMA

### Teatro Regio di 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 DI SIVIGLIA

Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by  
Cesare Sterbini  
Conductor George Petrou – Director, Sets  
and Costumes Pier Luigi Pizzi  
Performers Maria Kataeva, Davide  
Luciano, Ruzil Gatin, Roberto De Candia,  
Carlo Lepore, Licia Piermatteo, William  
Corrò

April 4, 6, 10, 12

### LA BOHÈME

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

## PIACENZA

### Teatro Municipale

**Via Giuseppe Verdi 41 - 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 d  
Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti  
**PAGLIACCI**  
Music and Libretto by Ruggero  
Leoncavallo  
Conductor Aldo Sisillo – Director Plamen  
Kartaloff – Sets Giacomo Andrigo – New  
Production  
Performers (Cavalleria rusticana) Teresa  
Romano, Francesca Cucuzza, Angelo  
Villari, Ernesto Petti, Eleonora Filippini;  
(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 – Director  
Marco Bellussi – Sets Matteo Paoletti  
Franzato – Costumes Elisa Cobello – New  
Production  
Performers 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 - Roma**  
Tel.: (+39)06/48 16 0255  
[www.operaroma.it](http://www.operaroma.it)

February 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

### LUCREZIA BORGIA

Muscia di Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by  
Felice Romani  
Conductor Roberto Abbado – Director  
Valentina Carrasco – Sets Carles Berga –  
Costumes Silvia Aymonino  
Performers Alex Esposito / Carlo Lepore,  
Lidia Fridman / Angela Meade, Enea Scala  
/ René Barbera, Daniela Mack / Teresa  
Iervolino, Arturo Espinosa, Alessio Verna,  
Eduardo Niave, Roberto Accurso, Enrico  
Casari, Rocco Cavalluzzi

March 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

### TOSCA

Music Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by  
Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Conductor Daniel Oren – Director  
Alessandro Talevi – Sets and Costumes  
Adolf Hohenstein  
Performers 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

Muscia di Georg Friedrich Händel  
Conductor Rinaldo Alessandrini –  
Director Pierre Audi – Sets and Costumes  
Patrick Kinmonth  
Performers 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 – Director  
Calixto Bieito – Sets Anna Kirsch –  
Costumes Ingo Krüger  
Performers Corinne Winters / Yolanda  
Auyanet, Marie-Nicole Lemieux,  
Annunziata Vestri  
**IL PRIGIONIERO**  
Muscia and Libretto by Luigi Dallapiccola  
Conductor Michele Mariotti – Director



Calixto Bieito - Sets Anna Kirsch -  
Costumes Ingo Krügler  
Performers Ekaterina Semenchuk, Mattia  
Olivieri, John Daszak

## TURIN

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

February 27, 28 March 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8,  
9, 11

### RIGOLETTO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi - Libretto by  
Horace Everett

Conductor Nicola Luisotti - Director Leo  
Muscato - Sets Federica Parolini -  
Costumes Silvia Aymonino

Performers 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 DI PICCHE

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

Conductor Valentin Uryupin - Director  
Richard Jones - Sets and Costumes  
John Macfarlane

Performers 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

## TRIESTE

**Fondazione Teatro Lirico "Giuseppe  
Verdi"**  
**Riva Tre Novembre 1, 34121 Trieste**  
**Tel 040 6722200**  
**info@teatroverdi-trieste.com**

February 21, 22, 23, 28 March 1, 2

### IL TABARRO

Music Giacomo Puccini - Libretto by  
Giuseppe Adami

### SUOR ANGELICA

Music Giacomo Puccini - Libretto by  
Giovacchino Forzano

Conductor Francesco Ivan Ciampa -  
Director Pier Francesco Maestrini - Sets  
Nicolas Boni - Costumes Stefano  
Scaraggi

Performers (Il Tabarro) Roman Burdenko,  
Olga Maslova; (Suor Angelica) Anastasia  
Bartoli, Giovanna Lanza, Erica Zulikha  
Benato, Chiara Mogini

### GIANNI SCHICCHI

Music Giacomo Puccini - Libretto by  
Giovacchino Forzano

Conductor Daniel Oren - Director  
Giancarlo Del Monaco

Performers Benato Roman Burdenko, Sara  
Cortolezzis, Riccardo Raos, Erica Zulikha  
Benato, Enrico Iviglia, Nicolò Ceriani

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

### DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
Conductor Enrico Calesso - Director  
Henning Brockhaus - Sets Alfons Flores -  
Costumes Giancarlo Colis  
Performers James Rutherford, Clay Hilley,  
Elena Batoukova-Kerl, Albert Dohmen

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

### LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Music by Gaetano Donizetti - Libretto by  
Salvatore Cammarano

Conductor Daniel Oren - Director Bruno  
Berger-Gorski - Sets Carmen Castanon  
Performers Jessica Pratt, Stefan Pop,  
Carlo Lepore, Maxim Lisiin, Miriam Artiano

## VENICE

**Teatro La Fenice**  
**Campo San Fantin nr 1965 - Venezia**  
**Tel.: (+39) 041/ 24 24**  
**www.teatrolafenice.it**

February 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 19, 23, 25, 28

### RIGOLETTO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi - Libretto by

Francesco Maria Piave

Conductor Daniele Callegari - Director  
Damiano Michieletto - Sets Paolo Fantin -  
Costumes Agostino Cavalca  
Performers Luca Salsi, Dalibor Jenis, Ivan  
Ayon Riva, Davide Giusti, Maria Grazia

Schiavo, Mattia Denti, Marina Comparato,  
Carlotta Vichi, Gianfranco Montresor,  
Armando Gabba, Roberto Covatta, Matteo  
Ferrara, Rosanna Lo Greco

February 20, 21, 22, 26, 27 March 1,  
2, 4

### IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Music by Gioachino Rossini - Libretto by  
Cesare Sterbini

Conductor Renato Palumbo - Director  
Bepi Morassi

Performers Antonino Siragusa, Dave  
Monaco, Marco Filippo Romano, Simone  
Del Savio, Chiara Amarù, Laura Verrecchia,  
Roberto de Candia, Lodovico Filippo  
Ravizza, Francesco Milanese, William  
Corrò, Giovanna Donadini

March 7, 9, 11, 13, 15

### IL TRIONFO DELL'ONORE

Music Alessandro Scarlatti - Libretto by  
Francesco Antonio Tullio

Conductor Enrico Onofri - Director  
Stefano Vizioli - Sets and Costumes Ugo  
Nespolo

Performers 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 - Director,  
Sets and Costumes Pier Luigi Pizzi  
Performers Alex Esposito, Lidia Fridman,  
Carmela Remigio, William Corrò, Enea  
Scala, Manuela Custer, Luigi Morassi

## VERONA

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

February 16, 19, 21, 23,

### LA WALLY

Music by Alfredo Catalani - Libretto by  
Luigi Illica

Conductor Antonio Pirolli - Director

Richard Wagner

# DIE WALKÜRE

Direttori

Simone Young (5, 9, 12 feb.)  
Alexander Soddy (15, 20, 23 feb.)

Regia

David McVicar

5, 9, 12, 15, 20, 23  
febbraio 2025

In diretta streaming su [www.lascala.tv](http://www.lascala.tv)

12 febbraio 2025, ore 17.45

Siegmund	Klaus Florian Vogt
Hunding	Günther Groissböck
Wotan	Michael Volle
Sieglinde	Elza van den Heever
Brünnhilde	Camilla Nylund
Fricka	Okka von der Damerau

Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala

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DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN Ciclo completo a marzo 2026

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Nicola Berloff – Sets Fabio Cherstich –  
Costumes Valeria Donata Bettella  
Performers Maria Josè Siri, Gabriele  
Sagona, Marianna Mappa, Eleonora  
Bellocci, Carlo Ventre, Youngjun Park,  
Romano Dal Zovo

March 16, 19, 21, 23

### *ELEKTRA*

Music by Richard Strauss – Libretto by  
Hugo von Hofmannsthal  
Conductor Michael Balke – Director Yamal  
das Irmich – Alessia Colosso – Costumes  
Eleonora Nascimbeni  
Performers 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

# Abroad

## BARCELONA

**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

February 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26  
*REQUIEM*

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
Conductor Giovanni Antonini – Director,  
Sets and Costumes Romeo Castellucci  
Performers Anna Prohaska, Marina Viotti,  
Levy Sekgapane, Solomon Howard

February 20

### *LA MEROPE*

Music by Domènec Terradellas – Libretto  
by Apostolo Zeno  
Conductor Francesco Conti – Concert  
Performance  
Performers Valerio Conaldo, Eموke

Barath, Francesca Pia Vitale, Sunhae Im,  
Paul-Antoine Bénos-Djian, Margherita  
Maria Sala, Matthew Newlin

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

### *LOHENGRIN*

Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
Conductor Josep Pons – Director  
Katharina Wagner – Sets Marc Loher –  
Costumes Thomas Kaiser  
Performers 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 – Director  
Barbara Lluch – Sets Christof Daniel  
Hetzer – Costumes Clara Peluffo Valentini  
Performers 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 – Director  
Paco Azorin – Costumes Anna Guell  
Performers Roger Padullés, Marc Pujol  
Manyà, Carol Garcia, Elias Arranz

## BERLIN

**Staatsoper Unter den Linden**  
Unter den Linden 7 - 10117 Berlin  
Tel.: (+49) 30/ 20 35 45 55  
www.staatsoper-berlin.de

February 7, 10, 14

### *ELEKTRA*

Music by RichYoung – Director Patrice  
Chéreau – Sets Richard Peduzzi –  
Costumes Caroline de Vivas  
Performers Evelyn Herltzius, Irène Thorin,  
Vida Mikneviciūtė, Stephan Rugamer, Lauri  
Vasar, David Wakeham, Cheryl Studer,  
Natalia Skrycka, Sivabonga Maungo, Olaf  
Bar, Bonita Skrycka, Anna Kissiudt, Clara

Nadeshdin, Roberta Alexander

February 4, 6, 8, 11, 15, 21

### *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –  
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte  
Conductor Finnean Downie Dear, Director  
Jurgen Flimm – Sets Magdalena Gut –  
Costumes Ursula Freese  
Performers Gyula Orendt, Evelin Novak,  
Maria Kokareva, Riccardo Fassi, Rebecka  
Wallroth, Katharina Kammerloher, Florian  
Hoffmann, Marcel Beekman, Patrick  
Zielke, Olaf Baer, Regina Koncz

February 9, 13, 16, 22, 27

### *RUSALKA*

Music by Antonin Dvorak – Libretto by  
Kvapil Jaroslav  
Conductor Tomas Hanus – Director Kornel  
Mundruczo – Sets and Costumes Monika  
Pormale  
Interperts Christian Karg, Brian Jagde,  
Anna Samuil, Jongmin Park, Anna  
Kissjudit, Jaka Mihelac, Clara Nadeshdin,  
Maria Kokareva, Rebecca Wallroth, Sandra  
Laagus, Tachan Kim

February 20, 23, 26 – March 1, 7, 9

### *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by  
Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Conductor Carlo Montanaro – Director  
Eike Gramss – Sets and Costumes Peter  
Sykora  
Performers Maria Agresta, Natalia  
Skrycka, Sandra Laagus, Carles Pachon,  
Gonzalo Quinchahual, Tachan Kim, George  
Andguladze, Dionysios Avgerinos

February 28 – March 2, 6, 8, 14

### *IDOMENEO*

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –  
Libretto by Giambattista Varesco  
Conductor Alessandro De Marchi –  
Director David McVicar – Sets Vicki  
Mortimer – Costumes Gabrielle Dalton  
Performers Rolando Villazon, Emily  
D'Angelo, Serena Sacuz, Hanna-Elisabeth  
Muller, Gonzalo Quinchahual, Florian  
Hoffmann, Friedrich Hamel, Serafina  
Starke, Sandra Laagus, Dionysios  
Avgerinos

March 16, 20, 27, 29 – April 3

## *DIE AUSFLUGE DES HERRN BROUCEK*

Music and libretto by Leos Janáček  
Conductor Simon Rattle – Director  
Robert Carsen – Sets Radu Boruzescu –  
Costumes Annemarie Woods  
Performers Peter Hoare, Ales Briscuin,  
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 – Director  
Federico Tiezzi – Sets Maurizio Balò –  
Costumes Giovanna Buzzi  
Performers 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 – Director and  
Sets Dmitri Tcherniakov – Costumes Elena  
Zaytseva  
Performers Lauri Vasar, Rné Pape,  
Andreas Schager, Tomas Tomasson, Elina  
Garanca, Kurt Rydl, Maria Kokareva,  
Rebecka Wallroth, Florian Hoffmann,  
Andrés Moreno Garcia, Johan Krogus,  
Manuel Winckler, 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 – Director  
Vasily Barkhatov – Sets Zinovy Margolin –  
Costume Olga Shaishmelashvili  
Performers 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 – Director

Alvis Hermanis – Sets and Costumes

Kristine Jurjane

Performers 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 – Director Win  
Wenders – Sets David Regehr – Costumes  
Montserrat Casanova  
Interpreters Juliana Grigoryan, Anthony Leòn,  
Gyula Orendt, David Wakeham

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Tel. +44 20 7240 1200  
[www.roh.org.uk](http://www.roh.org.uk)

February 3, 5, 9, 12

## *AIDA*

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by  
Antonio Ghislanzoni  
Conductor – Director Robert Carsen – Sets  
Miriam Buether – Costumes Annemarie  
Woods  
Performers Anna Pirozzi, Riccardo Massi,  
Ekaterina Semenchuk, Amartuvshin  
Enkhbat, Alexander Kopeczi

February 26 – March 3, 6, 10, 13, 16,  
22

## *IL TROVATORE*

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by  
Salvatore Cammarano  
Conductor Giacomo Sagripanti – Director  
Adel Thomas – Costumes Annemarie  
Woods  
Performers 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 – Director  
Andrei Serban – Sets and Costumes Sally

Giacobbe

Performers Sondra Radvanovsky,  
SeokJong Back, Anna Princeva, Adam  
Palka, Hansung Yoo

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

## *CARMEN*

Music by Georges Bizet – Libretto by Henri  
Meilhac and Ludovico Halevy  
Conductor Mark Elder – Director Damiano  
Michieletto – Sets Paolo Fantin –  
Costumes Carla Teti  
Performers Aigul Akhmetshina, Freddie De  
Tommaso, Yaritza Veliz, Lukasz Golinski,  
Jamie Woollard

## MADRID

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

February 3, 6, 9, 12, 14, 18

## *EUGENIO ONEGIN*

Music by Piotr Il'ic Chaikovsky – Libretto by  
Kostantin Silovski and Piotr Chaikovski  
Conductor Gustavo Gimeno/Kornilios  
Michailidis – Director Chtistof Loy – Sets  
Raimund Orfeo Voigt – Costumes Herbert  
Muraier – New Production  
Performers Katarina Dalrymple, Kristina  
Mkhitarian, Victoria Karkacheva, Elena  
Zilio, Iurii Samoilov, Bogdan Volkov, Maxim  
Kuzmin-Karavaev, Frederic Jost, Juan  
Sancho

February 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22

## *LA VIDA BREVE*

Music by Manuel de Falla – Libretto by  
Carlos Fernandez Shaw  
*TEJAS VERDES*  
Music by Jesus Torres – Libretto by Fermin  
Cabal – Prima esecuzione assoluta  
Conductor Jordi Frances – Director and  
Costumes Rafael R. Villalobos – Sets  
Emanuele Sinisi – New Production  
Performers (La vida breve) Adriana  
Gonzales, Eduardo Aladrén, Ana Ibarra,  
Rubén Amoretti, Carmen Maeo, Gerardo  
Bullón, Alejandro del Cerro; (Tejas verdes)  
Natalia Labourdette, Maria Mirò, Sandra  
Ferrandez, Alicia Amo, Ana Ibarra, Laura  
Vila



February 21

**LA MEROPE**

Music by Domènec Terradellas – Libretto by Apostolo Zeno – World Premiere  
 Conductor Francesco Corti – Concert Performance  
 Performers Eموke Barath, Francesca Pia Vitale, Paul Antoine Bénos-Djian, Valerio Contaldo, Sunhae Im, Margherita Maria Sala

March 23, 25, 26, 28, 30 – April 1, 4, 5, 8, 9,

**MITRIDATE, RE DI PONTO**

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Vittorio Amedeo Cigna Santi  
 Conductor Ivor Bolton – Director Claud Guth – Sets Christian Schmidt – Costumes Ursula Kudrna – New Production  
 Performers 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 – Concert Performance  
 Performers Eva Zaiczik, 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 – Director and Sets Dmitri Tcherniakov – Costumes Elena Zaytseva – New Production  
 Performers Ante Jerkunica, Svetlana Aksenova, Stine Marie Fischer, Bernarda Bobro, Carole Wilson, Bogdan Volkov, Nina Minasyan, Vasily Gorshkov, Alejandro del Cerro, Alexander Vassiliev, Alexander Kravets

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

**MOBY DICK**

Music by Jake Heggie – Libretto by Gene Scheer  
 Conductor Karen Kamensek – Director Leonard Foglia – Sets Robert Brill – Costumes Jane Greenwood  
 Performers 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 – Director Jurgen Flimm – Sets Robert Israele – Costumes Florence von Gerkan  
 Performers 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 – Director and Sets Franco Zeffirelli – Costumes Peter J. Sala  
 Performers 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/Alexsander Kopeczi, Donald Maxwell

March 14, 18, 22, 26, 29 – May 9

**AIDA**

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni  
 Conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin/Alexsander Soddy/John Keenan – Director Michael Mayer – Sets Christina Jones – Costumes Susa Hilferty – New Production

Performers Angel Blue/Christina Nilsson, Judit Kutasi/Elina Garanca, Piotr Beczala/Brian Jadge, 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**

Musica di Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Emmanuel Schikaneder  
 Conductor Evan Rogister – Director Simon Mc Burney – Sets Michael Levine – Costume Nicky Gillibrand  
 Performers 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 DI FIGARO**

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte  
 Conductor Joana Mallwitz – Director Performers 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 DI SIVIGLIA**

Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by Cesare Sterbini  
 Conductor Giacomo Sagripanti – Director Bartlett Sher – Sets Michael Yeragan – Costumes Caterina Zuber  
 Performers 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 – Director Claus Guth – Sets Etienne Plus – Costumes Ursula Kudrna  
 Performers Elza van den Heever, Michelle De Young, Gerhard Siegel/Ciad Shelton,

Piotr Buszewski, Peter Mattei

## PARIS OPERA NATIONAL

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## Palais Garnier

February 1, 7, 11, 13, 15, 19, 23  
**CASTOR ET POLLUX**  
Music by Jean-Philippe Rameau – Libretto by Pierre-Joseph Bernard  
Conductor Teodor Curentzis – Director and Sets Peter Sellars – Costumes Camille Assaf  
Performers Jeanine De Bique, Stéphanie d'Oustrac, Reinoud Van Mechelen, Marc Mauillon, Claire Antoine, Laurence Kilsby

## Opéra Bastille

February 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 19  
**DAS RHEINGOLD**  
Music and Libretto by Richard Wagner  
Conductor Pablo Heras-Casado – Director Calixto Bieito – Sets Rebecca Ringst – Costumes Ingo Krugler  
Performers Ludovic Tézier, Florent Mbia, Matthew Cairns, Simon O'Neill, Kwangchul Youn, Mika Kares, Brian Mulligan, Gerhard Siegel

February 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27 – March 2, 5  
**I PURITANI**  
Music by Vincenzo Bellini – Libretto by Carlo Pepoli  
Conductor Corrado Rovaris – Director and Costumes Laurent Pelly – Sets Chantal Thomas  
Performers Lisette Oropesa, Lawrence Brownlee, Andrii Kymach, Roberto Tagliavini, Vartan Gabrielian, Nicholas Jones, Maria Warenberg

February 28 – March 4, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, 25, 27  
**PELLEAS ET MELISANDE**  
Music by Claude Debussy – Libretto by Maurice Maeterlinck

Conductor Antonello Manacorda – Director Waidi Mouawad – Sets Emmanuel Clolus – Costumes Emmanuelle Thomas  
Performers Sabine Devieille, 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 – Director Simon Valastro  
Performers 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 – Director Claud Guth – Sets Etienne Plus – Costumes Gesine Vollm  
Performers Bo Skovhus, David Leigh, Christel Loetsch, 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 Mèry and Camille du Locle  
Conductor Simone Young – Director Krzysztof Warlikowski . Sets and Costumes Malgorzata Szczesniak  
Performers Charles Castronovo, Marina Rebeka, Christian Van Horn, Ekaterina Gubanova, Andrzej Filonczyk, Elexander Tsybalyuk, 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 – Director Christof Loy – Sets Etienne Pluss – Costumes Barara Drosihn  
Performers Misha Kiria, Asmik Grigorian, Enkeleida Shkosa, Alexey Neklyudov, Dean Power, Lavinia Bini, Manel Esteve

Madrid, Scott Wilde

## VIENNA

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[www.wiener-staatsoper.at](http://www.wiener-staatsoper.at)

February 1, 4, 7, 10 – April 25, 28 – May 2, 5  
**DIE ZAUBERFLOTE**  
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Emmanuel Schikaneder  
Conductor Franz Welser-Most – Director Barbora Horakova – Sets Falko Herold – Costumes Eva Butzkies  
Performers Georg Zeppenfeld, Juliam Prégardien, Jochen Schmeckenbecher, Serena Saenz, Slavka Zamecnikova, Jenni Hietala, Alma Neuhaus, Stephanie Maitland, Ludwig Mittelhammer, Ilia Staple, Matthaues Schmidlechner

February 22 – March 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 – May 16, 20, 23, 26  
**NORMA**  
Music by Vincenzo Bellini – Libretto by Felice Romani  
Conductor Michele Mariotti – Director Cyril Teste – Sets Valérie Grall – Costumes Marie La Rocca  
Performers 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 Illic Tschaikowski – Libretto by Modest Tschaikowski  
Conductor Tugan Sakhiev – Director Evgeny Titov – Sets Rufus Didwizsus – Costumes Annemarie Woods  
Performers Ivo Stanchev, Boris Pinkhasovich, Dmytro Popov, Attila Mokus, Daniel Jenz, Simonas Strazdas, Sonya Yoncheva, Monika Bohinec, Maria Nazarova, Daria Sushkova

## ZURICH

## Opernhaus



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February 2, 8, 15

### *FIDELIO*

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven – Libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner and Georg Friedrich Kinde Conductor Krzysztof Urbanski – Director Andreas Homoki – Sets Henrik Ahr – Costumes Barbara Drosihn Performers Andrew Moore, Simon Neal, Eric Cutler, Jennifer Holloway, Christof Fischesser, Ziyi Dai, Andrew Owens, Tomislav Jukic, Maximilian Bell

February 9, 13, 16, 19, 23 – March 1, 6, 13, 16, 22

### *MANON LESCAUT*

Music by Giacomo Puccini  
Conductor Marco Armiliato – Director Barrie Kosky – Sets Rufus Didwizsus – Costumes Klaus Bruns Performers Elena Stikhina, Konstantin Shushakova, Saimir Pirgu, Shavleg Armasi, Daniel Norman, Valeriy Murga, Siena Licht Miller, Alvaro Diana Sanchez, Raul Gutierrez, Samson Setu, Lobel Barun

February 28 – March 2

### *IL VIAGGIO A REIMS*

Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by Luigi Balocchi  
Conductor Dominic Limburg – Esecuzione in forma semiscenica di Annette Weber Performers Solisti della Internazionale Operastudios

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

### *AGRIPPINA*

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel – Libretto by Vincenzo Grimaldi  
Conductor Harry Bicket – Director Jetske Mijnsen – Sets Ben Baur – Costumes Hannah Clark Performers Nahuel Di Pierro, 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 – Director Barrie Kosky – Sets Klaus Grunberg – Costumes

Gianluca Falaschi

Performers Michael Kraus, Anastasiya Taratorkina, Michael Volle, Vida Mikneviciutė, 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 López 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 – Director Tatjana Gurbaca – Sets Henrik Ahr – Costumes Silke Willrett Performers 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 – Director Andreas Homoki – Sets Wolfgang Gussmann – Costumes Gussmann and Susana Mendoza  
Performers 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 – Director and Sets Dmitri Tcherniakov – Costumes Elena Zaytseva Performers Eric Cutler, Vida Mikneviciutė, Bjorn Burger, Evelyn Herlitzius, 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 – Director Tatjana Gurbaca – Sets Klaus Grunberg – Costumes Silke Willrett

Performers 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

Con il patrocinio di:



**27 febbraio 2025 ore 20.00**

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## SOLITUDE SOMETIMES

Coreografia Philippe Kratz  
Assistente coreografo Casia Vengoechea  
Musica Thom Yorke e Radiohead  
Scene Carlo Cerri e Philippe Kratz  
Costumi Francesco Casarotto  
Luci Carlo Cerri  
Video designer Carlo Cerri e OOPStudio  
Produzione Teatro alla Scala

## ANNONCIATION

Coreografia Angelin Preljocaj  
Supervisione coreografica Claudia De Smet  
Musiche Stéphane Roy (Crystal Music)  
Antonio Vivaldi (Magnificat)  
Scene Angelin Preljocaj  
Costumi Nathalie Sanson  
Luci Jacques Châtelet  
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## CARMEN

Coreografia Patrick de Bana  
Assistente coreografo Aida Badia  
Libretto José Andrade  
Musica Rodion Šchedrin (Carmen Suite)  
El Pele&Vicente Amigo (Aconteció)  
Montse Cortés con Juana la del Pipa (Ayer en Hoy)  
Scene Ricardo Sánchez Cuerda  
Costumi Stephanie Bäuerle  
Luci Ivan Vinogradov  
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## IL TEATRO ALLA SCALA

**Un passato illustre e un futuro altrettanto ricco.**

Il Teatro alla Scala, inaugurato a Milano alla fine del Settecento, è un tempio dell'opera celebre nel mondo intero per il suo pubblico appassionato ed esigente, e per il suo ruolo centrale nell'età d'oro della lirica.

Su questo palco hanno trionfato grandi compositori come Gioachino Rossini, Giuseppe Verdi e Giacomo Puccini, e hanno debuttato le opere più amate come *Otello* e *Madama Butterfly*. Ancora oggi, tra queste pareti dorate dall'acustica eccezionale, echeggiano le migliori voci della scena lirica dando vita a interpretazioni indimenticabili che accrescono la fama di un palcoscenico entrato di diritto nella leggenda. **Benvenuti al Teatro alla Scala.**

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