

Measure Publishing - Annum II - n. 6 - English international - September 2025 - \$29

WORLDWIDE EDITION
IN ENGLISH

l'opera

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE





TEATRO ALLA SCALA

Fondazione di diritto privato

INTESA  SANPAOLO

STAGIONE D'OPERA 2025 • 2026

UNA LADY MACBETH DEL DISTRETTO DI MCENSK

di Dmitrij Šostakóvič
dal 7 al 30 dicembre 2025

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

di Richard Wagner
dal 1 al 17 febbraio 2026

DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN

di Richard Wagner
1-7 marzo (1° ciclo) / 10-15 marzo 2026 (2° ciclo)

TURANDOT

di Giacomo Puccini
dal 1 al 29 aprile 2026

PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

di Claude Debussy
dal 22 aprile al 9 maggio 2026

NABUCCO

di Giuseppe Verdi
dal 16 maggio al 9 giugno 2026

CARMEN

di Georges Bizet
dall'8 al 27 giugno 2026

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

di Gaetano Donizetti
al 26 giugno al 17 luglio 2026

L'ELISIR D'AMORE

di Gaetano Donizetti
dal 5 al 16 settembre 2026

LA TRAVIATA

di Giuseppe Verdi
dal 19 settembre al 15 ottobre 2026

FAUST

di Charles Gounod
dal 20 ottobre all'8 novembre 2026

STAGIONE DI BALLETO 2025 • 2026

LA BELLA ADDORMENTATA NEL BOSCO

di Rudolf Nureyev
dal 18 dicembre 2025 al 13 gennaio 2026

GALA FRACCI

Quinta edizione
dal 31 gennaio al 3 febbraio 2026

MCGREGOR / MAILLOT / NAHARIN

di Wayne McGregor, Jean-Christophe Maillot, Ohad Naharin
dal 18 al 28 marzo 2026

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

di Christopher Wheeldon
dal 21 al 30 maggio 2026

DON CHISCIOTTE

di Rudolf Nureyev
dal 2 al 16 luglio 2026

GISELLE

di Jean Coralli e Jules Perrot
dal 1 al 23 ottobre 2026

BALANCHINE BAUSCH STRAVINSKY

dal 7 al 21 novembre 2026

**Maggiori dettagli sugli spettacoli e gli abbonamenti
sul sito www.teatroallascala.org**

NUMBER 6 - SEPTEMBER 2025

Publisher

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

Administration

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

Editor-in-Chief

Sabino Lenoci

Deputy Editor

Giancarlo Landini

Music Section Coordinator

Giancarlo Landini

Editorial Secretary

Emilio Alba

International Coordination

Avvocato Daria Pesce

Marketing Director

Enrico Bomarsi

Advertising

Donatello Michieli

Contributors to this issue:

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

Correspondents:

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

Advertising sector:

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

Annual Subscription

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

Art Director Int'l Edition

Claudia Palmira

Page Layout

Moreno Marchese
Francesca Romana Pollastrini

Exclusive distributor for Italy

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

The literary rights of all published writings are reserved.

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

Monthly magazine

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

Art. 1. Comma 1 - LO/Milano

Iscrizione al Tribunale di Milano

nr. 4 del 15/01/2016

Registrazione ROC 26185

FROM THE PUBLISHER

2 De Gustibus...Gets a Boost

CURRENT EVENTS

- 4 MILAN IL TROVATORE A Dive into the Past
6 CAGLIARI AIDA The Power of the Heart's Reasons
8 FLORENCE L'ELISIR D'AMORE Adina Takes the Podium
10 NAPLES ROBERTO DEVEREU The Queen and Her Lover Have Lost Their Way
12 VERONA RIGOLETTO Verdi Between Debuts and Tradition
14 SIENA LA VOIX HUMAINE, IL PRIGIONIERO In Defense of Freedom
18 SIENA LA GIUDITTA/MEDUSA The Myth Between Ancient and Modern
20 SPOLETO VIENI QUI CARLA, GIORNO DI NOZZE, IL TÈ DELLE TRE The Tragicomedies of an Unhappy Bourgeoisie
22 TAORMINA AIDA The Splendid Grandeur of Verdi's Masterpiece
24 MACERATA LA VEDOVA ALLEGRA, RIGOLETTO, MACBETH Lo Sferisterio between Opera and Operetta
30 PESARO ZELMIRA, L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI, LA CAMBIALE DI MATRIMONIO Forward with Courage
34 ROME LA RESURREZIONE, WEST SIDE STORY, LA TRAVIATA, DON GIOVANNI At Caracalla, Opera Is Made by the Directors
38 MARTINA FRANCA L'ENFANT ET LES SORTILÈGES, TANCREDI, OWEN WINGRAWE, CONCERTO SINFONICO The World of Music Between War and Peace
42 MONTEPULCIANO CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA The Cantiere Celebrates with Mascagni
44 SASSARI MADAMA BUTTERFLY Cio-Cio-San between Illusion and Truth
45 SASSARI CARMINA BURANA The World and Fortune in Orff's Masterpiece
46 VENICE ATTILA, TOSCA Verdi and Puccini Confronting History
50 TORRE DEL LAGO SUOR ANGELICA, TOSCA, LA BOHÈME, TURANDOT, MADAMA BUTTERFLY, RECITAL NETREBKO, MANON LESCAUT The Colors of Life and Death
54 BOLOGNA CANDIDE Musical, Opera, or Operetta?
55 SAVONA THE BARBER OF SEVILLE The Irresistible Cunning of Figaro

FROM ABROAD

- 57 ORANGE IL TROVATORE Anna Netrebko, Super Diva at the Chorégies
58 AIX-EN-PROVENCE LOUISE, LA CALISTO, THE STORY OF BILLY BUDD, DON GIOVANNI, THE NINE JEWELLED DEER Stories of Women from the Baroque to the Twentieth Century
62 BAYREUTH SIEGFRIED, PARSIFAL, DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NURNBERG Wagner between great voices and bizarre stagings
66 SAN PAOLO GALA VERDIANO, TRILOGIA VERDIANA Cia Ópera São Paulo celebrates its 35th season
69 SOFIA FESTIVAL WAGNER The Torments of Love
80 FRANKFURT ALCINA A Sorceress Between Händel and Fellini
80 FRANKFURT ALCINA A Sorceress Between Händel and Fellini
80 FRANKFURT ALCINA A Sorceress Between Händel and Fellini
80 FRANKFURT ALCINA A Sorceress Between Händel and Fellini

INTERVIEWS

- 68 RAQUEL PAULIN, JOYCE MARTINS, TAYANA ROVERSO Three Women in the Mirror
72 FABRIZIO MIRACOLO "The Soul of Puccini Returns Home"
74 JAMEZ MCCORKLE The Voice of Siegmund

PREVIEWS

- 68 FESTIVAL VERDI DI PARMA Silver Anniversary for the Verdi Festival

De Gustibus...Gets a Boost

By **Steve Acunto**

Restaurant reviews intrigue me. Think of the categories that are taken into account by a reviewer, from the cuisine to the ambience and everything between. There are easy, even entertaining analogies that mark evaluation of the culinary art and the sublime vocal art. That legendary home of gourmet experience, La Scala, has just posted a standard affecting ambience. Let other opera companies take note and perhaps follow the example.

For many of us who own ties and may be found with our favorite companions who own actual dresses befitting the subject they follow, going to the opera, and finding in the next box, a group of individuals who appear to have just left their jobs as zoo cage cleaners, coal miners, and sous chefs in fast food establishments, it's quite a destructive presence that destroys any sense of respect for the art form or the occasion of its celebration. I can tell stories that punctuated many years of parterre box e experiences at the Met and at the San Francisco, Lyric, and a host of European houses that would discourage anyone from "making a night of it". La Scala management has taken a stand and will hold visitors to a motto that befits the subject; that is, a dress code will now filter flip-flops, extremely short shorts, and a variety of other informal flags of modernity unhinged to our legacy.

While I do not believe that formal wear should be a requirement, there is a balance in all of these things. Even the most liberal of private clubs still require gentlemen to wear collared shirts and jackets and prohibit jeans and sneakers. A parallel set of rules applies to women.

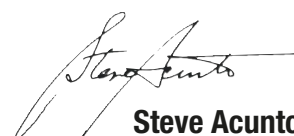


The impact is not insignificant: there is a sense of shared pursuit, and while statement dressing will have its day again, the sense of disrespect manifested by those inappropriately attired is gone.

True: *de gustibus non disputandum est.*

See you at La Scala in your opera best

SA


Steve Acunto
 Publisher



T

Festival Verdi
2025

R

Verdi e
ShakespeareParma e Busseto
20 settembre
19 ottobre

BCPT

FES VER TIVAL DI VERDI OFF 25 10

Otello

Macbeth
Versione 1847

Falstaff

Gala Verdiano

Messa da Requiem

Gala Accademia Verdiana

Ramificazioni

Timon Études

Ouverture

89 Seconds to Midnight

Disdemonia. Δυσδαιμονία
Cattiva stella

Verdi Street Parade

Il sonno uccidesti

teatroregioparma.it



TEATRO REGIO
PARMA

P

By Giancarlo Landini

A Dive into the Past

The Cast of **Il Trovatore** at the Mahler Auditorium (Photo by Marco Borrelli)



Il *Trovatore* has always sparked debate and is often regarded as the most challenging title to perform among Verdi's so-called "Romantic" or "Popular Trilogy" (call it as you wish). Its premiere at the Teatro Apollo in Rome in 1853 was a triumph, followed by a world tour and an enduring success with the broadest audiences. Yet it was eyed with suspicion by the intelligentsia, who—riding the Wagnerian wave—considered Verdi the embodiment of an Italian art form that the younger generation

*Milan: Resounding Success for Il Trovatore,
Conducted by Vincenzo Milletari at the Auditorium*

of the time hoped would escape the confines of the old and the obsolete.

So when Toscanini brought *Il Trovatore* back to La Scala in 1901, even Giulio Ricordi thought he had lost his mind. He hadn't. Toscanini conducted the opera, kept the famous high C of "Di quella pira," and for that very reason (perhaps) engaged the Spanish tenor Juan Biel as Manrico. From then on, *Il Trovatore* continued on its perennial path: an opera for great voices—truly great voices—often relishing in vocal excesses that delighted audiences.

From the 1970s onward, with the advent of the Belcanto Renaissance, the cards were reshuffled: questions arose as to how Verdi should be performed in order to do him justice. Montserrat Caballé gave a landmark example with the 1967 Maggio Musicale production, but even earlier, in the 1959 RAI *Trovatore*, Leyla Gencer had clearly shown that the so-called "Verdi soprano"—sanctified by tradition—did not match what Verdi had actually written (score in hand). In that performance, Gencer sang a Verdi quite different from her partners Mario Del Monaco, Ettore Bastianini, and Fedora Barbieri.

And that wasn't all. In a memorable recording, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau demonstrated how "Il balen del suo sorriso" should truly be sung. He didn't improvise—he simply sang what Verdi had written. Likewise, Marilyn Horne showed in exemplary fashion how





"Stride la vampa" should be delivered, executing all the written trills that serve a dramatic, not virtuosic, purpose—depicting Azucena's state of alienation. At La Scala, a baton of the highest pedigree once revealed the opera's nocturnal Romanticism, its Schubertian transparencies.

The summer *Trovatore*, triumphantly staged at the Auditorium of Via San Gottardo by the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, disregarded all this—much to the joy of the audience, who reveled in Verdi sung with full-throated passion. Yet one need only read the first twenty pages of Paolo Gallarati's Verdi ritrovato to realize what is lost when one ignores Verdi's search for *chiaroscuro* singing, meant to capture the ceaseless play of light and shadow that stirs the souls of his characters.

Leading the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano and the Chorus of the Opera di Parma (prepared by Massimo Focchi Malaspina), Vincenzo Milletari conducted a *Trovatore* that was dark-hued and briskly paced, propelled by momentum—though at times (the first scene's *stretta*, "Sull'orlo dei tetti," and the Act II concertato) the drive tipped into the mechanical. The ovations were thunderous. Yet effect is one thing, relevance another. A more attentive approach might have steered Ernesto Petti away from tackling the Count with sheer force, or from delivering "Il balen del suo sorriso" with unbridled impulse. It seems a waste to possess a voice as beautiful and sonorous as Petti's (among the finest today) without guiding it toward the nuanced singing Verdi prescribes.

The same could be said of Alessia Panza's Leonora—an excellent soprano voice, well-suited to the role, but lacking in those delicate, whispered inflections that are the very soul of "D'amor sull'ali rosee," and in the lightness required for the rapid trills of the Act I

cabaletta and the florid passages of the duet with the Count. Her artistry would gain immensely from greater finesse, though she scored brilliant moments in the cavatina, the Act I trio, and the formidable cabaletta "Tu vedrai," crowned by ringing high Cs.

Manrico was Angelo Villari, a robust tenor with solid credentials in the spinto repertoire. He lacked gentleness in the serenade, yet found fine moments in the duet with Azucena, particularly in the lower register. He disappointed in "Ah! sì, ben mio," which requires a smoother legato line, longer breaths, nobility of phrasing, a more pronounced trill, and above all, the mezzoforte singing that brings out this poet-hero's essence. As for "Di quella pira," unless one can hurl blazing high Cs, audiences have long learned to do without. In the "Miserere" and the duet with Leonora, poetic breath was missing; by contrast, Villari was at home in the jealous outbursts.

Azucena was sung by Silvia Beltrami, who brought generous tone and phrasing to the role of the gypsy. Yet here too, alongside the force of "Condotta ell'era in ceppi," one would hope for the elusive quality of "Stride la vampa," with its floating trills, and the evocative half-voice that makes "Ai nostri monti" truly magical.

Adolfo Corrado (Ferrando) displayed the commanding voice that is rightfully propelling him toward international recognition. The cast was rounded out by Alessia Camarin (Ines), Gianluca Gheller (Ruiz), Angelo Lodetti (An Old Gypsy), and Marco Gasparri (A Messenger)—all members of the Opera di Parma chorus.

In short, it felt like hearing a *Trovatore* much as it might have sounded thirty or forty years ago, without, however, the phenomenal voices that then could redeem stylistic shortcomings.

The chronicle requires me to record the resounding success.

July 10

By Anna Brotzu

The Power of the Heart's Reasons

Verdi's masterpiece returned to the island's capital in the refined staging by Franco Zeffirelli, originally created for the Teatro di Busseto on the centenary of the composer's death and revived here by Stefano Trespidi. This intimate version of the opera highlights the emotions and inner turmoil of its protagonists.

In the first cast, Jennifer Rowley offers an intense, passionate, and

Cagliari: Franco Zeffirelli's Famous Minimalist Aida Revived to Great Success

Scenes from **Aida** at the Teatro Lirico
(Photo: Matteo Collu and Laycon)





fragile *Aida*—a tormented heroine torn between love and homeland, from “Ritorna vincitor!” to the third act aria, and culminating in the splendid yet merciless finale. Antonello Palombi captures Radamès’ warrior spirit, his youthful ardor, and naïve dream of happiness, with a rich, full-bodied voice, while Enkelejda Shkosa embodies the ambiguity of Amneris, a powerful and ambitious woman who cannot bear rejection and, once wounded, demands vengeance.

In the second cast, Marta Mari gives voice to *Aida*’s intimate drama; Carlo Ventre, with his heroic and ringing timbre, portrays a Radamès destined for glory but vanquished by love; while Chiara Mogini conveys the harsh and implacable nature of Amneris.

Peter Martincic and George Andguladze alternated as the Pharaoh and Ramfis, Devid Cecconi and Igor Podoplelov as Amonasro, the indomitable warrior king, alongside Mauro Secci (a Messenger), Nikolina Janevska (a Priestess), and Eleana Andreoudi (principal dancer). On the podium, Gianluca Marcianò led the orchestra and chorus of the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari (with Giovanni Andreoli as chorus master) in an intriguing, modern reading of the opera, where symbols of political and religious power, as well as martial themes, frame the human passions at its core.

In Zeffirelli’s *Aida* (with costumes by Anna Anni, lighting by Fiammetta Baldiserri, and choreography by Luigia Frattaroli), a felicitous balance is struck between grand choral tableaux and intimate solo scenes, between the dictates of the heart and the unstoppable course of events—all while resonating with painful echoes of contemporary conflicts, caught between the triumph of the victors and the bitterness of the defeated.



July 11

Adina Takes the Podium



The short summer season of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino took place, as usual, in the open-air cavea of the theater, presenting a production of *L'Elisir d'amore* clearly aimed at the tourist audience, yet by no means lacking in quality or merit. Most importantly, it achieved genuine public success, with hearty laughter from many who were likely experiencing the opera for the first time. A well-cast ensemble, a capable conductor, and engaging direction were, after all, the ingredients for an enjoyable and thoroughly entertaining performance, far removed from the loftier expectations of the indoor season and the Maggio Festival in particular. That said, it is worth noting how Alessandro Bonato approached his task with great seriousness—arguably even a touch of solemnity. His conducting was attentive to the balance between pit and stage, the orchestral sound, and expressive dynamics, emphasizing the lyrical and sentimental aspects of *L'Elisir* rather than the comedic, particularly in the elegant and subtle coloristic choices. This was a legitimate and intelligent choice, given that the opera's most inspired passages lean in this direction, whereas the more playful sections, while executed without flaw, could have benefited from greater spontaneity and less restraint. Considering the conductor's youth, one might suggest allowing a bit more playful abandon, as the technical aspects are fully under control, embracing the slightly cheeky and lively spirit Donizetti intended.

On stage, a lively and musical quartet delivered carefully managed comedy, without resorting to touristy exaggeration, and with excellent command of the stage. Antonio Mandrillo was a thorou-

Florence: A Polished L'Elisir d'amore, Well Sung and Expertly Conducted by Alessandro Bonato

ghly convincing Nemorino, in the tradition of the lyric-light tenor, with a timbrally rich and gentle voice, perhaps not particularly expansive in the high notes but consistently focused and colorfully varied, complemented by clear diction and a charmingly plump stage presence, perfectly capturing the character of the sweet gardener-protagonist. Lavinia Bini gave Adina a full, well-modulated middle voice, though tending to strain on the high notes, which she navigated deftly in line with traditional expectations, resolving the role with precision and ease. The direction portrayed her as a proper, no-nonsense teacher—the kind we all





remember from school, in a suit and glasses, immediately strict and unapproachable—and Bini brought the character to life with strong stage empathy and sharp ease, even without the expected softening.

The same naturalness was evident in Roberto De Candia, a consummate actor who as Dulcamara-Zampanò, the cynical charlatan, once again delivered a masterclass in comic interpretation: perfectly resonant singing across the range, impeccable diction even in rapid passages, expressive phrasing never overdone, and restrained, natural, and incisive gestural language—a rare model, surviving the tradition of the great Bruscantini, which young singers would do well to study. Hae Kang, as Belcore, confirmed his powerful, dashing baritone, fitting the image of the swaggering policeman envisioned by the direction, demonstrating, as he did in last year's Rossini *Figaro*, both muscular singing and

flawless diction, with strong communicative presence. Aloisa de Nardis was a precise and credible Giannetta, while the Orchestra and Chorus of the Maggio (prepared by Lorenzo Fratini) maintained their usual high level of professionalism.

Though clearly a modest production, Roberto Catalano's staging (sets by Emanuele Sinisi, costumes by Ilaria Ariemme, lighting by Oscar Frosio), a co-production with the Haydn Foundation of Bolzano and Trento, provided lively pacing and a contemporary, yet plausible, setting. Within a suburban playground with sometimes slightly intrusive tubular structures, the characterization of both the individual characters and the chorus stood out as a true strength of the production, entertaining the audience and giving the *Elisir* a coherent and justified purpose.

July 14



The Queen and Her Lover Have Lost Their Way

With Roberto Devereux, Teatro San Carlo in Naples closed its journey through Gaetano Donizetti's so-called "Tudor Queens" trilogy, begun with *Anna Bolena* (2023) and continued with *Maria Stuarda* (2024). The production was entrusted to a creative team including Jetske Mijnsen (direction), Ben Baur (sets), Klaus Bruns (costumes), Cor van den Brink (lighting), and, in Italy, Riccardo Frizza on the podium, in a co-production with the Dutch National Opera and the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia. This detailed rundown is offered to note that any spectator seeking a unifying interpretive thread across the trilogy may come away somewhat disoriented.

In *Anna Bolena*, the first part moved from simple illustration to the exuberant gestures of the second act, while in *Maria Stuarda* the stage inventions—some less successful—sometimes overpowered the scene. In *Devereux*, Mijnsen appears to have left the protagonists largely to their own devices. Possibly prioritizing visual impact—the first act set in a lavish bedroom, costumes inspired by the twentieth century, the narrative concluding in dark, claustrophobic spaces—the impression is that singers were given minimal guidance, resulting in habits that undermine engagement: bodies and gaze constantly directed toward the audience, limited interaction, and recital-style gestures. At the time, we praised the previous productions for "intelligent interpretation" and "genuine suggestion," yet the conclusion of this trilogy leaves a sense of dissatisfaction, prompting reflection on whether our earlier judgments were influenced by the theatrical vitality now absent.

Fortunately, the cast was excellent. Basso-baritone Nicola Alaimo delivered a sumptuous performance as the Duke of Nottingham: the transition from fraternal friendship with Devereux to ruthless hatred upon discovering his affair with the Queen is conveyed through a vocal timbre that shifts from warm and burnished to harsh and roaring, while maintaining control over phrasing and consistent vocal power. Roberta Mantegna, who impressed last year as Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at San Carlo, shines here as Elisabetta, with exemplary technique and control. Her richly resonant voice creates a uniform texture in her phrasing—soft in tender moments, incisive in anger, and clear and brilliant in the high register.

Equally remarkable is Annalisa Stroppa, whose enveloping mezzo tone gives the unhappy Sara a theatrical truth that transcends tech-

Naples: Confused Staging, Excellent Cast for Roberto Devereux



Scenes from **Roberto Devereux** at Teatro San Carlo (Photo: Luciano Romano)

nique, delivering genuine emotion: a masterclass in understanding the difference between singing the notes and singing what the notes mean.

In the title role, Ismael Jordi was less convincing. While the upper register is secure, with a solid and well-defined vocal body, the middle range becomes thin, transparent, and light—not unpleasant, even charming, but noticeably different from full-voiced singing—a perennial issue of the passaggio. Reliable performances came from Enrico Casari (Lord Cecil), Mariano Buccino (Sir Gualtiero Raleigh), Giacomo Mercaldo (a knight), and Ciro Giordano Orsini (a member of Nottingham's household). The chorus, directed by Fabrizio Cassi, was strong as always, and Riccardo Frizza provided a precise, faithful reading of the score from the podium.

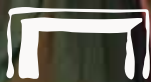
Audience reactions reflected this: ovations for Alaimo, enthusiastic applause for Mantegna and Stroppa, polite applause for Jordi, and whistles for the direction.

July 16



oltre

il teatro che (si) trasforma



TEATRO LIRICO DI CAGLIARI

Sardinia Opera

stagione 2025/26

opera.danza.concerti

By Giancarlo Landini



Verdi Between Debuts and Tradition

There are two reasons to attend *Rigoletto* at the Arena: the production itself and the Duke of Mantua, performed by Pene Pati, a tenor of international acclaim, making his Arena debut.

Set designer Raffaele del Savio, working with Carla Gallieri's costumes, drew inspiration from Ettore Fagioli's historic 1928 production, widely regarded as one of the most representative scenographers in the Veneto-Trentino area from the late 19th to the early 20th century. Fagioli's work encompassed prestigious private and public buildings and extended to outdoor stage design, achieving functional yet visually striking solutions inspired by late Romantic naturalism, with echoes of contemporary painting of his time.

This production is a jewel in a season that alternates experimentation—such as Poda's *Nabucco* and *Aida*—with tradition, whether it be the productions of Franco Zeffirelli or De Ana, or this homage to the Arena's grand history. As Graziana Pezzini notes, Fagioli not only realized sets but also theorized guidelines for the Arena's scenography. Here, the gigantic silhouette of the Gonzaga castle dominates the view, while the stage alternates between different settings: the Duke's palace, *Rigoletto's* home, and Sparafucile's lair, reconstructed with precision and imagination, particularly striking along the banks of the Mincio.

Ivo Guerra's direction is cautious yet clear, making effective use of the vast stage and drawing on mime performers—appearing as tritons—who enliven the first act's festivities and contribute, almost as infernal presences, to Gilda's abduction.

The evening's true architect is Michele Spotti, leading the Orche-

Verona: Pene Pati Makes Arena Debut in Rigoletto, Conducted by Michele Spotti

stra and Chorus of the Fondazione Arena di Verona (chorus prepared by Roberto Gabbiani). Spotti balances the demands of Verdi's dramaturgy with the Arena's spatial constraints, supporting singers with appropriately proportioned sound and intelligently chosen tempi. His skill was rewarded by the ovation he received at the performance's conclusion.

Pene Pati, however, was disappointing. While his voice has a precious timbre and the generous projection of a lyric tenor—more suited to less demanding roles (e.g., Nemorino) or smaller venues—the range is impressive (up to the high D at the end of Act II's cabaletta). Yet technical inconsistencies emerge in note placement, timbral unevenness, and discontinuous projection, particularly in ascending lines that peak on high notes (e.g., “Adunque amiamoci” culminating on B-flat, or “Vieni e senti del mio core”). Pati does attempt mezzavoce and dynamic nuance, as in the recitative preceding “Parmi veder le lagrime” and the aria itself, but results are mixed, with some acceptable moments and others more questionable—especially “La donna è mobile,” which drew boos at the conclusion. His stage presence is also uneven, at times awkward—a spirited young man suddenly placed in a Renaissance court without the elegance or manners of a nobleman. Perhaps reading Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* would help him grasp the art of sprezzatura, in which the Duke is a master.



The absence of the originally cast Amartuvshin was offset by Ludovic Tézier's *Rigoletto*. His solid, imposing, resonant baritone marks him as one of today's leading singers. Tézier presents a vigorous, mature *Rigoletto*, convincingly from "Pari siamo" onward. He is a formidable counterpart to the Duke and court, delivering a respectable "Cortigiani," though the "revenge" scene lacks the ferocity achieved by Leo Nucci in recent decades, thanks to a powerful upper register that Tézier does not match. He shines in the third act recitatives and in the nuanced, moving portrayal of the three duets with Gilda.

After Nadine Sierra's withdrawal, Nina Minasyan took over the role of Gilda. Her voice is gentle, polished, and precise, though small for both the Arena and the Verdi Renaissance's more incisive conception of the character. Gianluca Buratto achieved personal success as Sparafucile, commanding both vocally and theatrically, and Martina Belli's Maddalena was equally strong. Abramo Rosalen delivered an effective Monterone, while Matteo Macchioni's Borsa stood out, his voice twice as large as Pati's, effectively intimidating the Duke in Act I. The cast was rounded out by Agostina Smimmo (Giovanna), Nicolò Ceriani (Marullo), Ildenori Inoaue (Count of Ceprano), Francesca Maionchi (Countess), Ramaz Chikviladze (Usher), and Elisabetta Zizzo (Page).

August 8

In Defense of Freedom

Siena: Davide Garattini Raimondi Stages La Voix humaine and Il Prigioniero at the Chigiana Summer Festival

By Giancarlo Landini

Scenes from **Il Prigioniero** at Teatro dei Rozzi in Siena (Photo: Daniela Neri)

Unusual Pairs

When planning a program, organizers know—or at least should know—that an evening must be designed to “make the night.” That is, a lineup should entertain the audience enough to justify the ticket price, or, when no ticket is involved, the cost of renting or owning a stage. Over time, expectations have changed, and today it is normal to experience *Salome* or *Elektra* as a standalone evening. And indeed, these are substantial works. But this was not the case—for example—for the audience at New York’s Met in the first half of the 20th century, where Richard Strauss’ operas were often paired with Gianni Schicchi. A striking contrast between the bloodthirsty biblical heroine and the Luciferian trickster of Dantean memory. But it does not stop there. Sometimes Strauss was paired with *Cavalleria rusticana*, a decidedly odd combination despite the shared theme of blood and knives: the executioner’s in one, Alfio’s in the other. Or with *La serva padrona*: poor Serpina, so accommodating that she agrees to marry an old man just to change her social status and not remain a servant, ending up with a lustful Tetrarch and a princess inclined to necrophilic practices—albeit served on a silver basin. Naturally, these are things of another era, when, still at the Met, Verdi’s *Requiem* was staged alongside the Convent scene from *La forza del destino*, likely due to the shared sacred denominator. And do not think that these productions were conducted by minor maestros. On the contrary: the podium saw conductors of the caliber of Bruno Walter. Careful planners, sparing with money and unwilling to spend it without a clear return, attentive both to the stage and to the theater bar, which loses revenue without intermissions.

Over time, a taste for reshuffling emerged, breaking the iron-

clad pair of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, or avoiding presenting the entire *Trittico* in a single evening—a challenge for any theater given the number of performers, rehearsals, and sets. Hence the choice to present works individually or pair them with different pieces, seeking a logical or at least plausible connection.

The Reason for a Pair

One reason to attend the Teatro dei Rozzi in Siena is the boldness of a program that, in a single evening, pairs Francis Poulenc’s *La Voix humaine* with Luigi Dallapiccola’s *Il Prigioniero*. Nicola Sani, artistic director of the Fondazione Accademia Chigiana di Siena, explained the reasoning before the performances on July 24 and 25, as part of the Chigiana Summer Festival. We also note that Dallapiccola’s *Il Prigioniero* is presented on the 50th anniversary of the composer’s death, in Florence, 1975, and that the staging of both works is a co-production





with the Piccolo Opera Festival, in collaboration with the Centro Studi Luigi Dallapiccola, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Guido Levi Lighting Lab, Verona Accademia per l'Opera, and Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, with patronage from ANED-Firenze, the Memorial of Deportations, and the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno.

It goes without saying that unusual pairings like these pose a serious challenge for the director, who must make the combination plausible and give concrete form to theoretical explanations that may be presented verbally or in the program notes. In this case, the task was undertaken by Davide Garattini Raimondi—and it was far from simple. Not for a minor reason (excuse the deliberate play on words).

On one side, we have one of Poulenc's most successful works. With a libretto by Jean Cocteau, *La Voix humaine* premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1959 and twelve days later at La Piccola Scala. A fully human and psychological story, it unfolds over 40 minutes around a telephone through which Elle speaks (but is it true?) to Lui, before ultimately committing suicide, sealing a relationship already ended—or perhaps no longer existing at the time of the call. It is useful to recall that Cocteau's play dates from 1930, when the telephone was still an advanced means of communication, and even by 1959 (especially in Italy) it was certainly not present in every household. The originality of the pairing lies in the fact that the story is set to music by one of those 20th-century composers looked upon with suspicion by the intelligentsia, accused of the "fault" of being able to establish a close connection with the audience, of not renouncing singing, and of writing works destined to enter the repertoire.

On the other side is Luigi Dallapiccola: a giant of 20th-century music, but with a language that the avant-garde regarded with respect and attention. A committed musician, as clearly shown by *Il Prigioniero*, which premiered at the Teatro Comunale in Florence, though already performed in concert form by RAI in 1949. A political story, depicting an innocent victim of injustice, of power, and of state reason that sacrifices everything and everyone to its preservation. Here it is embodied by the Inquisition, in a thematic line established over time from Alfieri's *Filippo*, to Verdi's *Don Carlo*, to Dostoevsky's *Grand Inquisitor*.

In Search of Denied Freedom

The key to pairing two such different works and composers lies in the director's decision to move the action of *Il Prigioniero* from the era of the Inquisition to that of Nazi persecution. The choice has a clear foundation in a conception of music whose civic function is central and which, therefore, cannot and must not ignore the drama of racial persecution, racism upheld by reckless political visions, and the world persecuted by tyrannical despots and masses manipulated by ideology. It is no coincidence that the prologue of *Il Prigioniero* is Dallapiccola's *Canti di prigionia*, considered among his masterpieces.

From this choice, Garattini Raimondi transforms Elle, the protagonist of *La Voix humaine*, into a wealthy woman living during the Nazi-Fascist deportations, in a house filled with furniture and belongings. Lost in the psychological maze of her relationship—true or presumed, ongoing or already ended—she does not notice her possessions being taken, as happened to those who were deported from their homes to concentration camps. The idea is subtle and refined, in its ability to capture both the



Images from **La Voix humaine** by the Accademia Chigiana
(Photo: Daniela Neri)

universal dimension of human drama and to allude to the historical dimension, which saw many Jews not realizing what was happening, or not thinking it could come to such barbarity. The original strength of the idea is matched by the skill of its realization, with the naturalness of the protagonist's acting and the precise timing of the objects' removal by people we later encounter in Dallapiccola's drama, artfully illuminated by Manfredi Michelazzi under Luca Bronzo's guidance, lighting designer for GuidoLeviLab. Everything moves like a hallucinatory ballet within Domenico Franchi's sets: a ceaseless back-and-forth in which even the man who could be on the other side of the phone—and who becomes the Prisoner—participates in the unconsciousness of the looming persecution. We understand this at the very end of Dallapiccola's opera: in the prison where he is confined, objects are in a situation diametrically opposed to that of *La Voix humaine*. The man lives in emptiness, and on the last chords above the stage hovers the sinister telephone, now transformed into a shower nozzle from which—well we know—not water, but lethal gas emerges, as in the gas chambers prepared for the Final Solution.

Garattini Raimondi skillfully unites the two works without forcing them, telling the story of freedom sought and denied, the illusion of being able to live without fighting, evoking the world of the camps with discreet allusion; by avoiding overly explicit historicization, he emphasizes even more the sad universality of criminal exercise of power, which from time to time dons different colors: the Inquisition, Fascism, Nazism, Communism, Capitalism, which, as in *Anchorage*, devastate people and nations.

Young Voices for Two Masterpieces

The cast for the evenings consisted of students from William Matteuzzi's Advanced Singing Course, a celebrated tenor and today a distinguished teacher. The context, as Nicola Sani emphasized, is not that of a traditional opera season, but the culmination of a high-level academy—one of Italy's most representative institutions.



Consequently, *La Voix humaine* was entrusted to two young performers: Zuzanna Klemanska on the first evening, and Annapaola Trevenzuoli on the second. Different voices, different personalities, both incisive, but above all young in a role traditionally reserved for seasoned divas: as if they were Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard* (the famous 1950 film, released in Italy as *Viale del tramonto*) in search of impossible lovers. The youth of the performers flips the situation and offers the audience a new perspective: the drama of solitude, the prison of madness caused by abandonment through the coldness of mechanical means (yesterday the telephone, today a text message), has no age and devastates equally, even young people. The opera was performed in the piano version, which highlights even more the plastic vivacity of Poulenc's vocal writing, its strength, its incisiveness in moving from declamation to melody, to gasp and cry. Francesco De Poli proved masterful in establishing a complex dialogue with the solo voice: he does not merely accompany, but develops a nuanced interplay, emphasizing the density of Poulenc's language.

Il Prigioniero was also performed in piano reduction, here entrusted to the remarkable playing of Luigi Pecchi, with the expected percussion interventions and the Cathedral of Siena Choir, Guido Chigi Saracini, prepared carefully by Lorenzo Donati, which the director placed in the gallery so that the interventions, almost raining from above, created a strong emotional impact. Mario Ruffini conducted.

Il Prigioniero found a superb cast.

July 24 - 25



TEATRO
Verdi Trieste
Fondazione Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi di Trieste

STAGIONE SINFONICA 2025

1° CONCERTO

GIOVEDÌ 11 SETTEMBRE 2025 ORE 19.30

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Direttore **HARTMUT HAENCHEN**

Pianoforte **VADYM KHOLODENKO**

In collaborazione con la SOCIETÀ DEI CONCERTI DI TRIESTE
nell'ambito del FESTIVAL DI TRIESTE - IL FARO DELLA MUSICA



2° CONCERTO

DOMENICA 14 SETTEMBRE 2025 ORE 19.30

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Direttore **LUKA HAUSER**

Pianoforte **JAN LISIECKI**

In collaborazione con la SOCIETÀ DEI CONCERTI DI TRIESTE
nell'ambito del FESTIVAL DI TRIESTE - IL FARO DELLA MUSICA



3° CONCERTO

LUNEDÌ 22 SETTEMBRE 2025 ORE 19.30

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Direttore **PINCHAS STEINBERG**

Con ANA MARIA LABIN, DENIZ UZUN, ANTONINO SIRAGUSA, GEZIM MYSHKETA

Con ORCHESTRA E CORO DEL TEATRO NAZIONALE SLOVENO DI MARIBOR

4° CONCERTO

DOMENICA 28 SETTEMBRE 2025 ORE 18.00

FEDELI D'AMORE di **GIORGIO BATTISTELLI**

Oratorio in forma scenica per due voci, coro e orchestra

Direttore **ENRICO CALESSO**

NUOVA COMMISSIONE DELLA FONDAZIONE TEATRO LIRICO GIUSEPPE VERDI DI TRIESTE

5° CONCERTO

SABATO 4 OTTOBRE 2025 ORE 18.00

SERGEJ PROKOF'EV

MODEST MUSORGSKIJ

Direttore **ARIF DADASHEV**

Violoncello **ETTORE PAGANO**

6° CONCERTO

VENERDÌ 17 OTTOBRE 2025 ORE 19.30

SERGEJ RACHMANINOV

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Direttore **DANIEL OREN**

Pianoforte **ALEXANDER GADJIEV**

In collaborazione con FVG ORCHESTRA

7° CONCERTO

VENERDÌ 24 OTTOBRE 2025 ORE 19.30

PÈTR IL'IC ČAJKOVSKIJ

NICCOLÒ PAGANINI

RICHARD STRAUSS

Direttore **ENRICO CALESSO**

Violino **GIUSEPPE GIBBONI**

8° CONCERTO

MARTEDÌ 23 DICEMBRE 2025 ORE 19.30

GIOACHINO ROSSINI

Direttore **GIULIO PRANDI**

Con ALINA TKACHUK, MICHELA GUARRERA, CHUAN WANG, ALESSANDRO RAVASIO

STAGIONE LIRICA E DI BALLETO 2025-26

28, 30 NOVEMBRE, 5, 7, 11, 13 DICEMBRE 2025

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

di **GIOACHINO ROSSINI**

Maestro Concertatore e Direttore **ENRICO CALESSO**

Regia, scene e costumi **PIER LUIGI PIZZI**

NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO DELLA FONDAZIONE TEATRO LIRICO GIUSEPPE VERDI DI TRIESTE

29 NOVEMBRE, 4, 6, 10, 12, 14 DICEMBRE 2025

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

di **WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

Maestro Concertatore e Direttore **ENRICO CALESSO**

Regia, scene e costumi **PIER LUIGI PIZZI**

NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO DELLA FONDAZIONE TEATRO LIRICO GIUSEPPE VERDI DI TRIESTE

9, 10 (2 RAPP.), 11, 13 (2 RAPP.) GENNAIO 2026

SERATA PETIT/WHEELDON/PASTOR

Balletto

Direttrice del Ballo e Étoile **ELEONORA ABBAGNATO**

Étoiles, Primi Ballerini, Solisti e Corpo di Ballo del Teatro dell'Opera di Roma

ALLESTIMENTO DEL TEATRO DELL'OPERA DI ROMA

ORCHESTRA E TECNICI DELLA FONDAZIONE TEATRO LIRICO GIUSEPPE VERDI DI TRIESTE

30, 31 GENNAIO, 1, 6, 7, 8 FEBBRAIO 2026

AUFSTIEG UND FALL DER STADT MAHAGONNY

(ASCESA E CADUTA DELLA CITTÀ DI MAHAGONNY)

di **KURT WEILL**

Maestro Concertatore e Direttore **BEATRICE VENEZI**

Regia **HENNING BROCKHAUS**

Scene **MARGHERITA PALLI**

Costumi **GIANCARLO COLIS**

ALLESTIMENTO IN COPRODUZIONE TRA FONDAZIONE TEATRO REGIO DI PARMA

E FONDAZIONE I TEATRI DI REGGIO EMILIA

27, 28 FEBBRAIO, 1, 6, 7, 8 MARZO 2026

IL TROVATORE

di **GIUSEPPE VERDI**

Maestro Concertatore e Direttore **RENATO PALUMBO**

Regia **LOUIS DÉSIRÉ**

Scene e costumi **DIEGO MÉNDEZ CASARIEGO**

ALLESTIMENTO IN COPRODUZIONE TRA OPÉRA DE SAINT-ÉTIENNE

E OPÉRA DE MARSEILLE

2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12 APRILE 2026

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

di **GIACOMO PUCCINI**

Maestro Concertatore e Direttore **GIULIO PRANDI**

Regia **ALBERTO TRIOLA**

Scene **EMANUELE GENUZZI** e **STEFANO ZULLO**

ALLESTIMENTO DELLA FONDAZIONE TEATRO LIRICO GIUSEPPE VERDI DI TRIESTE

8, 10, 14, 16, 22, 24 MAGGIO 2026

ROMÉO ET JULIETTE

di **CHARLES GOUNOD**

Maestro Concertatore e Direttore **LEONARDO SINI**

Regia **PAOLO VALERIO**

NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO DELLA FONDAZIONE TEATRO LIRICO

GIUSEPPE VERDI DI TRIESTE IN COPRODUZIONE CON IL TEATRO STABILE

DEL FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA - IL ROSSETTI

19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28 GIUGNO 2026

ELEKTRA

di **RICHARD STRAUSS**

Maestro Concertatore e Direttore **ENRICO CALESSO**

NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO DELLA FONDAZIONE TEATRO LIRICO GIUSEPPE VERDI DI TRIESTE

Maestro del Coro **PAOLO LONGO**

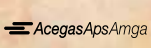
ORCHESTRA, CORO E TECNICI DELLA FONDAZIONE TEATRO LIRICO GIUSEPPE VERDI DI TRIESTE

PROMOZIONI SPECIALI PER I GIOVANI UNDER 34

INFORMAZIONI, PRENOTAZIONI E VENDITA BIGLIETTERIA
DEL TEATRO VERDI DI TRIESTE
boxoffice@teatroverdi-trieste.com

Numero Verde
800 898 868

www.teatroverdi-trieste.com



The Myth Between Ancient and Modern

By Franco Calabrese

When tradition meets the contemporary and strikes a balance between old and new, it can offer a musical theatre performance that is both intricate and highly accessible. Such was the case in Siena, at a packed Teatro dei Rinnovati, where *Giuditta/Medusa* presented an original and highly engaging double program.

This Italian premiere, exclusive to the Chigiana International Festival 2025 under the “Derive” series, was structured as a scenic diptych, pairing Alessandro Scarlatti’s *La Giuditta* (1660–1725), on the 300th anniversary of the composer’s death, with the Italian premiere of *Medusa*, a new opera commissioned from French composer Yann Robin with a libretto by Elisabeth Gutjahr. From the first moments, the audience was captivated, experiencing approximately two hours of performance filled with emotional surprises, set against an atmosphere of chiaroscuro, evocative lighting, and fog generated by smoke machines, blending dissonant modern sounds with consonant ancient harmonies. Scene changes were executed entirely with the curtain open by the performers themselves, within a minimalist set composed of sliding panels, through which the performers moved with measured precision, almost like a mechanism of silent exactitude.

This was a new co-production resulting from a collaboration between the Accademia Chigiana and the Mozarteum University of Salzburg, within the Chigiana-Mozarteum Baroque Program. Far more than a mere juxtaposition of old and new, it was a dramaturgical exploration reflecting on the transmission of myths, the metamorphosis of images, and the visionary power of musical theatre. *Giuditta/Medusa* are two sides of the same coin: two severed heads—one of the Gorgon, the other of the Assyrian general Holofernes—two

Siena: Alessandro Scarlatti’s La Giuditta Harmoniously Engages with Medusa, World Premiere by Yann Robin

Scenes from **La Giuditta/Medusa** at the Teatro dei Rinnovati (Photo: Daniela Neri)





parts of the same tableau illuminated by a single light, that of Caravaggio. With this diptych, Chigiana concludes its cycle of new opera productions.

The performances by both singers and orchestra were excellent. Scarlatti's *La Giuditta*, a two-part oratorio in the "Cambridge" version preserved in the Rowe Music Library of King's College, with text by Antonio Ottoboni, featured soprano Anastasia Fedorenko as the beautiful and wealthy widow of Betulia, mezzo-soprano Sveva Pia Laterza as her nurse, and tenor Lucas Pellbäck as Holofernes. The instrumental score was performed by the renowned Barockorchester der Universität Mozarteum, under the direction of charismatic viola da gamba virtuoso Vittorio Ghielmi.

Medusa, composed by Yann Robin to a libretto by Elisabeth Gutjahr, featured mezzo-soprano Sveva Pia Laterza as Fillide, basso Dominik Schumertl as Caravaggio, and soprano Anastasia Fedorenko as Angelus Novus, accompanied by the ARCo Ensemble led by Kai Röhrig. The direction was by Florentine Klepper.

"If *Giuditta* speaks to us from a distant past, *Medusa* speaks from the future of the myth," explains Nicola Sani, Artistic Director of the Accademia Chigiana. "On stage, two profoundly different works intertwine in a unique theatrical experience that spans centuries and establishes a dialogue between them." Sani adds, "This is not merely a comparison between ancient and modern, but a deep dialogue between artistic languages and temporalities. In the prologue, Robin imagines Caravaggio as he paints his *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, inspired by the model Fillide Melandroni, a Roman courtesan and his muse. Fillide thus becomes both the historical face of the Judith in the painting and the echo of the abstract Judith of the oratorio. The boundary between art and life, painting and theatre,

dissolves. In the epilogue, the Angelus Novus appears, evoking Paul Klee's painting and Walter Benjamin's philosophical interpretation: an angel who gazes upon the ruins of the past while being carried forward into the future."

August 27



Scenes from **Il trittico Negri** in Spoleto
(Photo: Niccolò Perini)

By Giancarlo Landini

The Tragicomedies of an Unhappy Bourgeoisie

Full, total, and vibrant success. For a magical evening—one of those nights that makes you leave the theater (in this case, the Caio Melisso) happy to have been there and, unusually, even entertained. The magician of the evening is Pier Luigi Pizzi, responsible for the direction, sets, costumes, and lighting—executed by Eva Bruno. Yet the true inspirer is the Artistic Director, Enrico Girardi, who has essentially reshaped the 79th season of the Teatro Sperimentale, boldly programming contemporary works alongside the classics (this year, *Le nozze di Figaro* directed by Henning Brockhaus), including *Nanof*, *L'Altro* by Antonio Agostini as the opening title in its world premiere (unprecedented in Italy), Lieder repertoire, 18th-century works, and an immersion into 1950s musical theater—the neglected era, looked upon with disdain by the avant-garde and scorned by the intelligentsia of the time (and perhaps even today).

This year, the spotlight falls on Gino Negri (1919–1991), a versatile Milanese composer who made the city the center of his life and output, collaborating with prestigious institutions, beginning with the Piccolo Teatro. Three works are presented: *Vieni qui Carla*, *Giorno di nozze*, and *Il tè delle tre*, all with libretti by Negri himself. *Vieni qui Carla*, inspired by Moravia's *Gli Indifferenti*, premiered in a semi-private form at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan on November 29, 1956. The plot follows Leo and Carla navigating the boredom of love within a bourgeois context of hypocrisy—money, propriety, desire, and sex. *Giorno di nozze*, premiered on April 10, 1959, at the newly reopened Teatro Gerolamo—a privileged site of Milanese life, of which Negri was an expression—is a monologue. On her wedding day, Marina is consumed by nostalgia for a great love experienced for

Spoletto: Pier Luigi Pizzi and Marco Angius present an original Trittico by Gino Negri

a single day. On the phone, accompanied by the radio (Elio singing *La Canzone del Coccodrillo* with piano by Antonio Vicentini), Marina indulges in memories before pragmatically deciding to marry a





wealthy industrialist from the Bassa Bergamasca: a nine-room house with amenities, a housekeeper, a cook, minks, holidays, fashion shows—the (false) myths of the economic boom, the dreams of truly small-bourgeois Italy.

Il tè delle tre caricatures a chaotic party (the tea, with an “h,” is at five o’clock) of three singers—sort of disheveled Gloria Swansons from Bovis—hosting a concert at their home for Lina, a famous singer (actually a thief) who, after performing under various guises across Italian and German repertoires, robs them, only for the evening to end with tarallucci and wine.

The listening experience moves from the engaged, ironic dodecaphony of *Vieni qui Carla*, a concentrated piece echoing the pace and silences of Michelangelo Antonioni’s cinema, to the delightful inspiration of *Giorno di nozze*, where Negri manipulates diverse musical languages with absolute nonchalance, to the unleashed farce of *Il tè delle tre*, where pure amusement reigns. The masterpiece, arguably, is *Giorno di nozze*, for its successful portrait of a woman and her world, rendered with inventive freedom, expressive liberty, and vocal lines that confidently flirt with light genres. Conversely, *Vieni qui Carla* struggles with the vocal demands, the perennial challenge of modern and contemporary opera.

Pizzi crafts a production that evokes a world with minimal props, observing it with nostalgia, irony, and sympathy: the grand piano, a magnificent gray leather sofa—an emblem of 1950s Milanese chic—and a staircase from which the ladies descend, part Olga Villi, part Sanremo guests. He manages the action with the finesse of a seasoned drama director: he does not overshadow but shapes characters, molds actors, and orchestrates movements with perfect synchronicity and studied gestures. Every detail is meticulously at-

tended to, culminating in a final runway that becomes a spectacle within the spectacle, while the audience goes wild.

The evening’s success would not have been complete without Marco Angius, conducting the Ensemble Calamani of the Teatro Lirico Sperimentale. A specialist in modern and contemporary repertoire, Angius is, above all, a consummate musician. Free from affectation or stage anxiety, he emphasizes the robust musical substance of *Vieni qui Carla*, supports the melodic world of *Giorno di nozze* and *Il tè delle tre*, ensuring Negri’s complex “caravansera” does not derail and that the farce remains perfectly orchestrated. Special mention goes to Maestro Antonio Vicentini, piano accompanist, who engages fully while maintaining his artistry.

The students of the Sperimentale are excellent, guided by Pizzi and Angius, fully immersing themselves in Negri’s theater. Ranking them would be both futile and unfair; they should be acknowledged collectively as the architects of the evening’s success, each bringing their unique strengths to the two performances attended: Beatrice Caterino and Gaia Cardinale (Carla), Alberto Petricca and Dario Soggos (Leo), Kristyna Kustkova and Giorgia Cosentino (Marina), Luca Giacomelli Ferrarini and Paolo Mascari (a surprise famous soprano), Chiara Latini and Eleonora Benetti (Favetta, former singer), Emma Alessi Innocenti and Francesca Lione (Splendore, former singers), Ornella (former singer, played by a young musician, Samuele Marelli, on vibraphone due to loss of speech), and a decrepit butler by Jacopo Spampanato.

As already mentioned, the success was undeniable, but the correct term is truly triumph.

August 29–30

The Splendid Grandeur of Verdi's Masterpiece

By Sabino Lenoci

Images of **Aida**
at Teatro Greco

A distinctive feature of the Festival Lirico dei Teatri di Pietra, held in Sicily, is the choice of venues for its productions. The Greek Theatre of Syracuse, the Ancient Theatre of Taormina, and the Open-Air Theatre of Tindari provide a stunning backdrop for the scheduled performances, particularly for the staging of **Aida**, presented in Taormina's magnificent Greek Theatre, dominated by a breathtaking panorama with Mount Etna erupting in the background!

The triumph of this production lies in the exquisite costumes by Domenico Franchi, sourced from the Opera of Krakow—lavish and richly detailed—giving the entire staging a special sense of grandeur. The set design, conceived by Andrea Santini, conceals Mount Etna but remains highly effective, especially thanks to projections by Michele Falasconi and special effects by the Vanity Make-up Academy Team, which, combined with the flowing and opulent costumes, allow the large audience to fully enjoy Verdi's masterpiece.

Maestro Filippo Arlia delivered an intense interpretation on the podium with the young Orchestra Filarmonica della Calabria, while the large Sicilian Lyric Choir, expertly trained by Maestro Francesco Costa, significantly contributed to the evening's success. Choreographies by Sarah Lanza enhanced the performance of the Festival's

Taormina: a uniquely captivating Aida at the Festival of Stone Theatres

Ballet Company.

Salvo Dolce's direction successfully guided the characters on stage, highlighting them both scenically and vocally, such as the impressive Amneris of Veronica Simeoni, with her strong, colorful voice. Equally commendable was Walter Fraccaro's Radamès, with a bright tenor and smooth vocal line, perfectly matched with Pumeza Matshizika's *Aida*, endowed with a beautiful timbre and powerful voice throughout.

Baritone Badral Chuluunbaatar was an effective Amonasro, with a pleasing vocal color, complemented by colleagues who completed the cast: Deyan Vatchkov (King of Egypt), Leonora Ilieva (High Priestess), and Federico Parisi (Messenger). The large audience, which filled the theatre, warmly celebrated all the protagonists with long and enthusiastic applause.

July 29



ANCONA
TEATRO DELLE MUSE
"FRANCO CORELLI"
STAGIONE
LIRICA
2025



FONDAZIONE
TEATRO DELLE MUSE

10 E 12 OTTOBRE

8 OTTOBRE *ANTEPRIMA GIOVANI*

IL TROVATORE

dramma lirico in quattro parti di **Salvatore Cammarano**
musica di **Giuseppe Verdi**

direttore **Andriy Yurkevych**
regia e scene **Giuseppe Dipasquale**
costumi **Stefania Cempini**
video artist **Francesco Lopercolo**

Il Conte di Luna **Serban Vasile**
Leonora **Salome Jicia**
Azucena **Valentina Pernozzoli**
Ferrando **Yongheng Dong**
Manrico **Amadi Lagha**
Ines **Antonella Granata**
Ruiz **Alessandro Fiocchetti**

Orchestra Sinfonica "G. Rossini"
Coro Lirico Marchigiano "V. Bellini"

nuovo allestimento **Fondazione Teatro delle Muse**

5 E 7 DICEMBRE

3 DICEMBRE *ANTEPRIMA GIOVANI*

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

opera buffa in due atti su libretto di **Cesare Sturbini**
musica di **Gioachino Rossini**

direttore **Jacopo Brusa**
regia e scene **Damiano Michieletto**
costumi **Carla Teti**

Il Conte di Almaviva **Pietro Adaini**
Don Bartolo **Giuseppe Toia**
Rosina **Aleksandra Meteleva**
Figaro **Hae Kang**
Don Basilio **Alessandro Spina**
Berta **Laura Khamzatova**
Fiorello **Davide Chiodo**

FORM – Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana
Coro del Teatro Ventidio Basso

allestimento del **Maggio Musicale Fiorentino**

coproduzione **Fondazione Teatro delle Muse**
e **Fondazione Rete Lirica delle Marche**

www.fondazionemuse.org



la **Fondazione Teatro delle Muse** è sostenuta da



Comune di
Ancona



MINISTERO
DELLA
CULTURA



main partner

partner

si ringraziano

in collaborazione con



Lo Sferisterio between Opera and Operetta

By Ermanno Calzolaio



Scenes from **Die Lustige Witwe** at the Macerata Opera Festival (Photo Simoncini)

Lights and Shadows in a Not Always Happy *Die Lustige Witwe*

The 61st season of the Sferisterio opens with a decidedly bold choice, presenting *Die Lustige Witwe* by Lehár and venturing into the operetta repertoire. The idea came from the previous artistic director Paolo Gavazzeni, recently replaced by Marco Vinco, who found himself managing a season largely already planned by his predecessor.

The acoustics of the Sferisterio are very good, but being outdoors, the dialogues still need amplification, creating a certain disharmony compared to the musical part. The greatest concern, however, is the decision not only to present the work in Italian but to heavily intervene in the text, particularly regarding the character of Njegus, transformed into a caricature from Neapolitan comedy, entirely at odds with the original spirit. The elegance characterizing Lehár's music and the libretto, which relies on refined misunderstandings and double meanings, is completely betrayed by the often crude dialogues invented by Gianni Santucci.

Musically, interventions were also radical and questionable. The very first scene is unsettling: Chopin's famous funeral march, arranged for orchestra by Elgar, is performed as background for the funeral of banker Glawari, complete with screams and laments from the chorus—a truly tasteless choice. The most significant interpolations occur in the third act, which includes, in addition to the can-can from Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, quotations from Mahler's Fourth Symphony (who appreciated Lehár's music, as recalled by his wife Alma), as well as the long ballet *Gaité parisienne*, accompanying repetitive and monotonous cho-

reography. In short, a veritable pastiche, far from the elegance that director Arnaud Bernard claimed as the hallmark of his production.

Musically, conductor Marco Alibrando attempts to find balance, keeping the orchestral volume moderate and seeking some Viennese-style phrasing, which nevertheless struggles to emerge amidst the general confusion. The most successful moments are the accompaniment to Vilja's song, both intimate and inspired, and the duet between Rossillon and Valencienne, where the conductor manages to create an ethereal atmosphere that finally does justice to Lehár's music.

The cast's strength is Mihaela Marcu as Hanna Glawari. The Romanian soprano is convincing on stage, measured and elegant. Her voice is full-bodied yet capable of delicate pianissimos, with some difficulty in the upper register, which she handles securely but sometimes forced. Alessandro Scotto di Luzio is a convincing





Images of **Rigoletto** at the Arena di Santeramo (Photo Simoncini)

Daniilo, with a straightforward tenor timbre, generous and musical. The other tenor, Valerio Borgioni, confirms himself in Rossillon as one of the most interesting voices, confident and bold, yet also soft, with only minor tension in extreme high notes (the high Cs in the pavilion scene sound slightly strained).

Cristin Arsenova is lively on stage as Valencienne, but her very limited voice prevents the character from emerging fully. Alberto Petricca's Baron Zeta is very focused, and overall the secondary roles are well chosen, particularly the witty Sylviane of Laura Esposito, the brilliant Saint-Brioche of Francesco Pittari, and the resonant Bogdanowitsch of Giacomo Medici. Marco Simeoli is a lively Njegus, but the character remains the weak point of the production, with often sexist lines of poor taste. The audience reception was good, though without great enthusiasm.

Rigoletto Returns Successfully, Directed by Federico Grazzini

The season's lineup included two revivals: *Rigoletto* and *Macbeth*, respectively directed by Federico Grazzini and Emma Dante. The setting of *Rigoletto* in an abandoned amusement park proves very effective. A massive mask dominates the back of the stage and becomes, in a way, the key to understanding Verdi's masterpiece, whose protagonists all wear masks, which they remove only in moments of solitude: the Duke, when alone reflecting on Gilda; Rigoletto, when reaching his daughter; Gilda, when confessing her love for Gualtier Maldè. A particularly poignant moment is Rigoletto arriving at the trailer where Gilda stays, carrying the suitcase containing his jester's costumes. Equally effective is how the direction manages the chorus, especially during the

recounting of the kidnapping at the start of the second act. Less engaging are the solutions for the "Si vendetta" scene, Gilda's killing (rather ridiculous), and especially the finale where Gilda sings...from the sky, reducing the pathos of the traditional version. Overall, however, the performance works very well and does not hinder the musical narrative.

Spanish conductor Jordi Bernàcer, after a rather anonymous first act with a soulless Prelude and metronomic concertato, grows in depth, showing skill in accompanying singers, shaping the orchestral part of "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata," and reaching a truly inspired finale with the Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana, which seems transformed compared to the performance of *Die Lustige Witwe* the day before.

On stage, the production's intended highlight was Ernesto Petti, who had to withdraw a month before the season started. The





role went first to Georgian baritone Nikoloz Lagvilava, well-known in his country but little abroad, who had to step down due to illness during rehearsals, leaving Damiano Salerno to perform at the premiere. The Sicilian baritone delivers a very authoritative Rigoletto, with a well-produced, secure, and timbrally rich voice in all registers. Interpretively, he impresses by avoiding any exaggerated gestures and bringing out the many facets of this complex character. Ruth Iniesta returns to the Sferisterio for the third consecutive time, after Lucia and Liù, confirming her stature as a remarkable vocalist, with an impressive high register (the E of “vendetta” is stellar), and the ability to inhabit the role of the young, far-from-naïve, and lively Gilda. Only minor stiffness in the high register slightly affects her otherwise excellent performance. Disappointing is Ivan Magri, whose recent move into dramatic tenor roles (Calaf, in particular) leaves the lyrical qualities of the Duke of Mantua somewhat heavy. His upper register projection is limited and, although competent, does not excite or captivate. Luca Park’s Sparafucile is solid, albeit with a slightly shaded lower register, while Carlotta Vichi’s Maddalena is appropriate. Among the supporting roles, Alberto Comes stands out as Monterone with a remarkable voice, Aleksandra Meteleva (Giovanna), Giacomo Medici (Marullo), and Francesco Pittari (Borsa) also deliver strong performances.

Macbeth Successfully Revived, Directed by Emma Dante

As the season’s final title, the Sferisterio revived Emma Dante’s acclaimed Macbeth, first staged in 2019 in co-production with Palermo’s Teatro Massimo and Turin’s Teatro Regio. Years later, the directorial concept remains intelligent and effective. The Sicilian director, drawing on her theatrical experience, highlights the opera’s central themes, especially the obsession with power, symbolized by the presence of numerous crowns on stage. Original and impactful solutions abound, such as the second-act banquet scene where Macbeth climbs a very high throne, which ends up crushing him during the appearances of Banquo’s ghost. To further emphasize the obsession with the crown, the aria “Mal per me,” written by Verdi in 1847, is restored in the finale, concluding with the line: “vil corona e sol per te.” Questionable is the choice to have the protagonist read the letter sent to Lady



Macbeth at the start of the first act (“Nel dì della vittoria”), which undermines Verdi’s intended effect. Overall, the production works well, thanks also to skillful lighting and impressive choreography. On stage, Marta Torbidoni debuts as Lady Macbeth, delivering a beautiful voice, secure in agility, and capable of mastering all the work’s challenges. The sleepwalking scene is perhaps the most successful, ending on an unusually pure D. Torbidoni, following last year’s debut as Norma in Macerata, confirms herself as one of the most interesting voices in this repertoire. The lead role was initially to be performed by Davide Luciano, who withdrew, leading to Franco Vassallo taking over. Vassallo is a solid professional, with an unforced voice and expressive pianissimos, enhancing the murder scene of Duncan and the duets with Lady Macbeth, though the character remains somewhat in the background. Simon Orfila is a commanding Banquo, shaping his aria “Come dal ciel precipita” with precise phrasing. Antonio Poli delivers a splendid Italianate tenor in Macduff, with minor tension in the high register. Supporting roles are well performed, including Oronzo D’Urso (Malcolm), Federica Sardella (Dama), and Luca Park (the imposing doctor).

The musical success is attributed to the skilled baton of Fabrizio Maria Carminati, who offers an original interpretation. After a somewhat anonymous prelude, he impresses with attention to orchestral detail and masterful accompaniment of the singers. Some choices of elongated tempi may appear debatable (as in the first-act concertato), but they emphasize the richness of the orchestration. Cutting the long third-act ballets is understandable, while restoring the aforementioned aria interrupts dramatic continuity. Overall, Carminati ensures excellent balance with the stage and brings out the best in the Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana and the Bellini Chorus (under Christian Starinieri), which has rarely seemed so cohesive and precise.

10 August

OPERA & DANCE AT THEIR MOST INTENSE

Aigul Akhmetshina. *Carmen*, 2024 - Royal Opera House © Camilla Greenwell

OPERA

GIUSEPPE VERDI

OTELLO

Luisotti - Alden / **SEP - OCT**

ANTONIO VIVALDI

FARNACE*

I Gemelli / **SEP**

PIETRO MASCAGNI

IRIS*

Callegari / **OCT**

BÉLA BARTÓK

BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE / THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN

Gimeno - Loy / **NOV**

HENRY PURCELL

THE FAIRY QUEEN*

Vox Luminis / **NOV**

GEORGES BIZET

CARMEN

Kim - Michieletto / **DEC - JAN**

PAUL DUKAS

ARIANE ET BARBE-BLEUE

Steinberg - La Fura dels Baus /
JAN - FEB

GIUSEPPE VERDI

I MASNADIERI*

Lanzillotta / **FEB**

FRANCISCO COLL

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

Coll - Rigola / **FEB**

G. F. HÄNDEL

GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO*

Il Pomo d'Oro / **FEB**

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Bolton - Warner / **MAR**

JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY

ARMIDE*

Le Poème Harmonique / **MAR**

BEDŘICH SMETANA

THE BARTERED BRIDE

Gimeno - Pelly / **APR**

ANTONIO VIVALDI

IL GIUSTINO*

Freiburger Barockorchester / **APR**

CHARLES GOUNOD

ROMÉO ET JULIETTE

Rizzi - Jolly / **MAY - JUN**

G. F. HÄNDEL

ARIODANTE*

La Cetra Barockorchester Basel / **JUN**

FERNANDO VELÁZQUEZ

THE STUNTMEN

Velázquez - Albet/Borrás / **JUN**
(at Teatros del Canal)

GIUSEPPE VERDI

IL TROVATORE

Luisotti - Negrín / **JUN - JUL**

* In concert version

DANCE

BALLET NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA

MEDEA

OCT

NEW ADVENTURES

SWAN LAKE: THE NEXT GENERATION

NOV

ROYAL SWEDISH BALLET

JULIET & ROMEO

MAY

Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro Real



TICKETS NOW ON SALE **TEATROREAL.ES**

+34 900 24 48 48 · BOX OFFICE · GROUPS: VENTATELEFONICA@TEATROREAL.ES

Plaza de Oriente, s/n — Madrid (Spain)

Public Administrations



MADRID

Technology lead sponsor



Energy lead sponsor



Main sponsors



Sponsors



A woman with long brown hair is seen from behind, wearing a black off-the-shoulder dress. She is holding a long, flowing red scarf that is draped across her back and arms. The background is a deep red, vertically pleated curtain. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the scarf and the woman's hair.

"Vincerò"
the Aria Scarf
from *Turandot*

International shipping from Rome, Italy

Discover

The Opera Line

Artist-designed
100% silk luxury scarves
by Claudia Palmira

Sold at
The Met Opera Shop
and online at byclu.com



www.byclu.com

Forward with Courage

By Davide Annacchini



The 46th edition of the Rossini Opera Festival aimed for a perfectly balanced lineup, featuring a grand serious opera (**Zelmira**), an opera buffa (**L'italiana in Algeri**), and a farce (**La cambiale di matrimonio**), with the first two as new productions and the third as a revival, alongside numerous concerts and the customary *Viaggio a Reims* performed by the young artists of the Accademia Rossiniana. The effort to maintain the festival's usual high standard was evident, especially when compared with the upcoming R.O.F. 2026 edition, which, following government cuts to historic events like this, has already announced a scaled-down program, featuring only a single new production directed by Livermore for *Le Siège de Corinthe* and revivals of two farces: the now-legendary Ponnelle version of *L'occasione fa il ladro* and the young Michieletto's *La scala di seta*. With such fiscal clouds, there is little cause for optimism for institutions like R.O.F., which have made culture and theatrical craftsmanship an emblem of Italy on the international stage; consequently, this year's season must be considered, with its strengths and weaknesses, as a brave, ambitious, and consistently high-quality edition, faithful to the festival's style.

The Splendid **Zelmira** by Anastasia Bartoli

Staging an opera like *Zelmira*, for example, is no small feat, and certainly no other theater could have done it better today. Rossini's last work from the Neapolitan period and penultimate in Italy—before Semiramide and his final departure for Paris—*Zelmira* is a

Pesaro: Lights and Shadows for the 46th Edition of the Rossini Opera Festival

melodrama of vast tragic scope, not structured according to traditional forms but unfolding through grand scenes, interspersed with solo passages of extreme dramatic virtuosity, designed for the vocal triangle “soprano-baritenor-tenore contraltino” in the experimental style typical of Neapolitan works—novel in form, futuristic in conception, nearly unperformable because tailored to three atypical voices such as those of Colbran, Nozzari, and David. While in the past the Pesaro festival offered commendable productions



Scenes from **Zelmira**
at the Auditorium Scavolini
(Photo: Amati Bacciardi)

of *Zelmira*, particularly in vocal quality but sometimes lacking in results (perhaps Rome and Venice hit the mark more accurately with superb specialists like Gasdia, Merritt, Blake, Matteuzzi), the current performance had many arrows in its quiver within a visually striking production. Following last year's sensational *Ermione*, the festival relaunched (albeit as a second choice, since the initial—arguably debatable—selection had fallen on Pretty Yende) Anastasia Bartoli, a soprano whose dramatic voice was perfectly suited to a Colbran role, of hybrid tessitura and tragic prominence, here also capable of pathos. Considering that *Zelmira*'s score was among Callas' personal items and that Virginia Zeani was the first to revive the role in 1965—a sort of Rossinian pioneer able to sing both Lucia and Violetta as well as Elsa and Aida—it is clear that the stature of this part was better understood than later, when the role passed to lighter, more agile voices. Bartoli, with her dark yet radiant timbre, genuinely dramatic vocal breadth, and impressive range that allowed her to plunge into the low notes as well as project up to high Cs and Ds with astonishing clarity, delivered a complete and captivating *Zelmira*. She mastered dynamic modulation at any pitch, handled virtuosic bravura and grace as expressive tools, sculpted the recitatives with precision, and portrayed a figure simultaneously statuesque, enigmatic, passionate, and sorrowful. Her personal triumph, echoing the success of her *Ermione* (but when will we see her as Armida or Semiramide?), was shared within a company perfectly aligned in a unified interpretive vision.

Lawrence Brownlee mastered Ilo's hyperbolic writing—full of high Cs and Ds, trills, scales, and intricate coloratura—as a true virtuoso, without making us forget or long for previous stars like Blake, Matteuzzi, or Florez. Enea Scala plunged into Antenore's abnormal vocal demands with impressive daring, confronting cavernous lows and piercing highs with a timbre not without harshness and an expressionist rather than bel canto approach, effectively delineating a neurotic, sinister, yet intriguing character. Marina Viotti's Emma—reviving the aria written for Fanny Eckerlin in the fortunate 1822 Vienna revival—was particularly effective in the mid-to-upper range, with colors and fluidity that contrasted with the more constrained lower register, giving an impression of a soprano rather than a mezzo. Marko Mimica's Polidoro was commendable, vocally intense and dramatically severe (more centered than low), while Gianluca Margheri's Leucippo stood out for successfully portraying the story's dark, manipulative psychological-sexual figure. Completing the cast were Paolo Nevi as Eacide and Shi Zong as the High Priest, under Giacomo Sagripanti's direction, attentive to both dramatic pacing and the bel canto prominence of each voice, coherently delivering a dark and devastating interpretation. The Orchestra of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna and the Chorus of Teatro Ventidio Basso, prepared by Pasquale Veleno, supported the production with flexibility, performing across the entire auditorium and even some balconies, tackling 360-degree sound projection challenges. Calixto Bieito's debut at R.O.F. arrived considerably late compared to twenty or thirty years ago, when the Spanish director gained fame for provocative productions emphasizing nudity and



Image from *L'Italiana in Algeri* at the Rossini Opera Festival (Photo: Amati Bacciardi)

sexual references. In today's era, where shocking opera is increasingly difficult, the occasional lesbian/gay kiss in this production remained isolated, failing to provoke curiosity or surprise. Stripped of these elements, Bieito's fragility became apparent: his production, full of hermetic and sometimes obscure ideas, remained largely in the director's mind. The many undecipherable symbols, the constant lack of communication among exhausted characters, and the eccentric stage choices—rolling characters in dirt or water, or making them sing mouthfuls under a bench—defined this show, mainly focused on a central-stage set of undeniable effect (a luminous platform by Bieito and Barbora Horakova reminiscent of Piper's historic dance floor), dark costumes by Ingo Krügler, and lighting by Michael Bauer. However, the passionate engagement of the performers was insufficient to convince the audience, which, after honoring the musical component with deserved applause, showed no mercy toward Bieito, who provocatively blew kisses toward the whistling crowd.

Daniela Barcellona in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, conducted by Dmitry Korchak

This year's other new production was *L'Italiana in Algeri*, staged by Pesaro's Rosetta Cucchi (sets by Tiziano Santi, costumes by Claudia Pernigotti, video by Nicolas Boni, lights by Daniele Naldi), featuring Isabella as a drag queen, inspired by Priscilla, Queen of the Desert, even starting with the shuttle transporting the protagonists to the theater, and offstage pre-show antics, widely adopted by other festivals. The idea could have been intriguing, giving the gullible Mustafà not only the joke but the deception, but it required a light, ironic, surreal touch, in the style of Almodóvar. Cucchi opted instead for heavy, caricatural comedy with exaggerated innuendo (why show Taddeo's backside to indicate where he might end up?), without refining the acting—mostly frontal and proscenium-bound—and with staging that resembled vaudeville, jarring for a festival that historically restored Rossini buffo with subtlety and comic finesse, from Ronconi, Ponnelle, and De Simone to early Michieletto and recent Pizzi.

The performance itself carried a sense of heaviness, beginning with conductor Dmitry Korchak, a highly regarded tenor who, on



Moments from **La cambiale di matrimonio** in Pesaro (Photo: Amati Bacciardi)



the podium, needed more lightness, dynamic sensitivity, and careful vocal balancing. For example, why not moderate Misha Kiria's thunderous Taddeo, or demand greater agility and high notes from an inexperienced tenor like Josh Lovell, especially in a festival featuring two of the leading Lindoros of the Rossini-Renaissance? Fortunately, the opera's stars delivered: Daniela Barcellona revived the vibrant, virtuosic Rossinian vocalism, pairing technical mastery with interpretive flair, playful and witty, asserting herself as the true queen of Rossini travesti. Giorgi Manoshvili's Mustafà was a revelation: often confined to minor roles, he displayed a beautiful, intense, wide, homogeneous voice, agile in the high register, and a commanding stage presence, avoiding grotesque excesses even in absurd costuming. Supporting roles included Vittoriana De Amicis' somewhat nasal Elvira, Andrea Nino's competent Zulma, and Gurgen Baveyan's Haly. The Orchestra of Teatro Comunale di Bologna, with the Ventidio Basso chorus, was somewhat less inspired than in *Zelmira*. The audience responded warmly, largely composed of foreigners, laughing freely at even modest gags.

La Cambiale di matrimonio Returns, Starring Pietro Spagnoli

The most consistently successful show was undoubtedly *La cambiale di matrimonio*, a 2020 revival recalling the cautious reopening of theaters during Covid. Gary McCann's tasteful production and Laurence Dale's fluid, amusing direction (lights by Ralph Kopp) captured the essence of this early Rossini farce. Focused on scenic fluidity in early 19th-century London, the lightness of comic energy (centered on a bear baking cakes), and well-defined characters, the production thrived on performers' skill, all perfectly suited to their roles. Dominating were the baritone duo Pietro Spagnoli (Tobia Mill) and Mattia Olivieri (Slook), the former for impeccable diction and sharp comic timing, the latter for athletic vocal presence, demonstrating how Italian theatre—light, witty, precisely timed—should be performed. The company also included the charming Fanny of Paola Leoci, the romantic Milfort of Jack Swanson, and the competent Norton and Clarina of Ramiro Maturana and Ines

Lorans, under Christopher Franklin's lively and elegant direction, leading the Filarmonica Gioachino Rossini, which was not always flawless. The audience's reception was enthusiastic, with early evening performances of the *Soirées Musicales* by Vittoriana De Amicis, Andrea Nino, Paolo Nevi, and Gurgen Baveyan achieving notable, if slightly academic, results.

Returning ten years after her debut at the Accademia Rossiniana, Vasilisa Berzhanskaya—now among the most versatile voices—delivered an unmissable recital. The Russian mezzo-soprano—recently Adalgisa at La Scala, soon to sing Norma in Parma—showcased her immense vocal potential with an all-soprano program, ranging from Colbran pages in *Semiramide* and *Armida* to pure soprano works, including the finale of *Sonnambula*, Medora's aria from *Il Corsaro*, and even Lucia's cavatina from *Lamermoor* (plus the Bolero from *I Vespri Siciliani* as an encore). What might have seemed capricious proved her chameleonic ability to alternate shadowy and sweet tones with extraordinary effect, as in last year's remarkable Corinna in *Viaggio a Reims*. Remarkably, Berzhanskaya's mezzo voice extended fluidly into the upper register (on this occasion up to high D), with nuance and expressiveness of a true soprano. While "Regnava nel silenzio" might have seemed a vocal whim, Amina suited her, reflecting the hybrid voice of Pasta, transposed for a contralto like Alboni (as evoked by Horne and von Stade). Even more so, "Bel raggio lusinghier" and especially *Armida's* transcendental finale found the burnished color, dramatic vigor, and dazzling leaps of what might plausibly have been Colbran's vocalism. Berzhanskaya, accompanied sensitively by François Lopez-Ferrer leading the Sinfonica G. Rossini, demonstrated to the audience that *Armida* is already with us.

Stagione 2025/2026

Benvenuti curiosi



Don Giovanni, W. A. Mozart

4, 8, 10, 11 e 12 ottobre

Don Juan no existe, H. Cánovas

7 e 9 ottobre

The Fairy Queen, H. Purcell

23 novembre

Cecilia Bartoli in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, C. W. Gluck

29 novembre

Lucrezia Borgia, G. Donizetti

3, 6 e 9 dicembre

Maria Stuarda, M. Hennessy

1 febbraio

Sogno di una notte di mezza estate, B. Britten

12, 14 e 16 febbraio

Cabildo, A. Beach

6 e 7 marzo

Marina, E. Arrieta

14, 17 e 19 marzo

Il barbiere di Siviglia, G. Paisiello

10 maggio

La flauta magica, W. A. Mozart

14 maggio

Einstein on the beach, P. Glass

26 maggio

Aida, G. Verdi

20, 23, 24, 26, 27 e 28 giugno

Recitali lirici

Franco Fagioli

6 ottobre

Xabier Anduaga

7 dicembre

Juan Diego Flórez

13 marzo

Jakub Józef Orliński

15 aprile

Image from **La Resurrezione**
(Photo: Fabrizio Sansoni)

At Caracalla, Opera Is Made by the Directors

By Vincenzo Grisostomi Travaglini

In summer, in dialogue with current events, the Caracalla Festival of the Teatro dell'Opera grants directors the right of reportage, featuring Italian and Roman debuts. Artistic programming is entrusted to Damiano Michieletto, who will shine as director of the new production of *West Side Story*. Two stages are used: one among the imposing ruins of Caracalla, the other at the Basilica of Maxentius.

A Fully Secular Resurrection

On stage are the inner turmoils of the various protagonists, as in *La Resurrezione*, portraying the anguish of an ordinary family; in Violetta of *La traviata* with childhood trauma; and *Don Giovanni*, obsessively reliving his conflicted relationship with his father. In Handel as in Mozart, an abundance of plush toys appears—exaggerated in the former within the room of the secularized Christ, cuddly in the latter at Maxentius. Visual symbols seem repeated, albeit with different “dramaturgical” functions; the use of cutouts or puppets is exquisite in Bernstein, inappropriate in *Don Giovanni*. The festival, in the jubilee year, is realized thanks to the commitment of the Orchestra of the Foundation, the meticulous preparation of the Choir by maestro Ciro Visco, and the sophisticated, engaged Ballet Corps directed by Eleonora Abbagnato.

The series opens at the Basilica of Maxentius with a didactic, somewhat tedious evening: the monologue *La gioia interiore* by theolo-

gian Vito Mancuso, preceded by the seven-voice spiritual madrigals *Lagrima di San Pietro* by Orlando di Lasso, performed admirably by the ensemble Erra Cantando. Days later, the same venue hosted director Ilaria Lanzino for Handel's oratorio *La Resurrezione*, a reworking outside any traditional schema, scarcely sacred, ostensibly focused on the human (as suggested by the 2025 program title: “Between Sacred and Human”). The staging is handled with ease, manipulating religious themes and telling an alternative story. Originally composed and performed in Rome for Easter 1708 with great splendor, Lanzino overturns the biblical text in favor of a con-



temporary, troubled family core, with a mother (Maddalena), father (San Giovanni), and grandmother Cleofe, grieving the loss of a child/nephew, a surrogate for Jesus' death. Various devices unfold in a convoluted progression with fictitious settings: an interior home and a hospital waiting room.

Yet the production is not devoid of theatrically enticing elements: the Angel as a pop star of the late 20th century with cheerleader parade, and the Devil/Lucifer in numerous disguises—from clown to blatantly drag queen in black-silver lamé. The plot traces the child's birth and shock at his death; Maddalena, an alcoholic, faints at the altar supported by Lucifer ("He has risen today to bring Earth to Heaven!") but is miraculously revived by the reappearing Christ/son, while the self-styled San Giovanni finds consolation in another woman, producing further offspring. Hope is not indulged: Maddalena vanishes in grief, the rest embrace despondently; in music: "Praise be in Heaven and on Earth."

The challenging scenographic setup within the majestic ruins is handled by Dirk Becker, evoking U.S. realism reminiscent of Edward Hopper. Costumes by Annette Braun are vivid; lighting by Marco Filibeck effective. At the end, the director, defying a partially hostile audience, steps forward confidently, strutting. The excesses of German Regietheater are redeemed by the concrete execution of the Orchestra Nazionale Barocca dei Conservatori under George Petrou, an expert in 18th-century repertoire, particularly Handel; some cuts favoring the stage are regretted. The company is attentive and engaged, balancing credibility and vocal integrity: Sara Blanchi (Angel), Ana Maria Labin (Maddalena), Teresa Iervolino (Cleofe), Charles Workman (San Giovanni), and Giorgio Caoduro (Lucifer).

Michele Mariotti and Damiano Michieletto for *West Side Story*

At the Baths of Caracalla, Leonard Bernstein's dazzling *West Side Story* is brought to life with the vigorous direction of Michele Mariotti and effervescent staging by Damiano Michieletto. The musical pulses with vitality; Mariotti's orchestration merges seamlessly with Michieletto's direction, which interprets social malaise symbolically, reflecting the disillusionment of immigrant youth grappling with a problematic dream. Mariotti highlights Bernstein's symphonic inspirations, linking Broadway tradition to composers like Mahler, Schumann, and Haydn, marked by finger snaps and sudden percussion, emphasizing the contrast between Puerto Rican Sharks and North-European Jets. Bernstein stated in 1963 that beyond the beauty of mambo, cha-cha-cha, and huapango rhythms, *West Side Story* is an invitation to inclusion, hoping for a better world through cultural and musical diversity.

The stage, by Paolo Fantin, is a 1950s abandoned pool with discarded tires and a large diving board, modernizing the balcony from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, freely adapted by Arthur Laurents. The prologue-dance is energized by the dynamic Opera Ballet Corps with inventive choreography by Sasha Riva and Simone Repele, autonomous yet referencing Jerome Robbins' vision. Rival gangs emerge, highlighted by Carla Teti's vibrant costumes. Everything

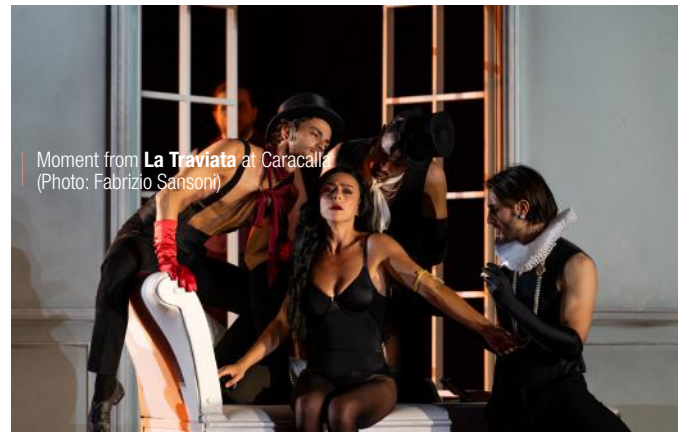
works flawlessly: movements, intentions, and irreverent inventions. Lighting by Alessandro Carletti dialogues between modernity and the enveloping thermal architecture, with foggy effects evoking New York's manholes.

The cast is outstanding, including Marek Zurowski with soft tenor timbre and nuanced shading, contrasting with Sofia Caselli's passionate, soprano-style Maria ("Te adoro, Anton" / "Te adoro, Maria"), trained in the UK musical theater tradition. Each performer deserves mention, notably Natascia Fonzetti (Anita), Sergio Giacomelli (Bernardo), Sam Brown (Riff), Felice Lungo (Chino). The finale sees the entire company reprise the mambo, with Mariotti and Michieletto fully engaged.

Sláva Daubnerová's Anti-Romantic *La Traviata*

Still at the Baths, the Verdi title receives an all-female direction from Slovak director Sláva Daubnerová, known for unconventional interpretations. Her vision of *La traviata* is austere, overtly anti-romantic, denying emotional indulgence. Violetta's illness is emphasized with static actions where sentiment seems absent. The cost is emotional detachment, yet the recitative structure is intriguing, providing an original narrative coherence. Perhaps recalling *La dame aux camélias*, the prelude shows the protagonist's corpse on a hospital bed, revived in memory during the introduction with the chorus in black, representing bourgeois judgment; similar motifs occur at Flora's home. The staging is rigid: Violetta disrobes into a black body suit, referencing past abuse, while illness ravages her body (cancer, not tuberculosis). Soloists appear alternately, geometrically framed, perfectly coordinated. Dance adds depth: "Death" embodied seductively by Alessio Rezza, white and black swans, doctors, and other figures from the Opera di Roma Ballet Corps, with voluptuous bunnies surrounding Violetta in the first act finale. Choreography by Ermanno Sbezso.

Alexandre Corazzola's scenography uses minimal elements: white modular walls and an oversized headless bust with pierced breasts (referencing Germont's imposed sacrifice), splitting in the last act into hospital panels. Lighting by Alessandro Carletti reveals mood and setting; synchronized movement of furniture is performed by actors/waiters. Costumes by Katerina Hubená support the narrative:



Moment from *La Traviata* at Caracalla
(Photo: Fabrizio Sansoni)



Scene from **Don Giovanni** in Rome
(Photo: Fabrizio Sansoni)

Violetta's sensual black body suit, white robe, Germont's elegant red coat, and the women's 19th-century mourning dresses. The "slight indisposition" of Corinne Winters affected the first act; her agile high register was slightly uneven. The American soprano impresses, making Violetta believable, particularly in the second act; "Addio del passato" is exquisitely rendered. Sempre libera remains true to the score (no high E-flat), tenor C remains unaltered; the score is nearly complete. Tenor Piotr Buszewski's Alfredo seems superficial, detached from textual nuances; baritone Luca Micheletti excels as Germont. The company is impeccable, including young talents of Progetto Fabbrica. Conducted by Francesco Lanzillotta, the musical balance is preserved despite the soprano's issues, recovering dramatic intensity in the second part.

Vasily Barkhatov's Bizarre Don Giovanni

Back at the Basilica of Maxentius came Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, directed in his Roman debut by Russian Vasily Barkhatov. No seduction here—rather, loud dissent. The setting is an amusement park, hardly original. *Don Giovanni*'s unresolved paternal complex dominates: the Commendatore doubles as his father, killed in a duel and reduced to ashes, whose remains recur throughout. Giovanni's unresolved sexuality is symbolized by necklaces he gives to every woman, recalling his mother's trauma when her husband snatched hers.

A park bench becomes the central prop, where Giovanni's parents appear. Bizarrely, during "Fra cento affetti e cento," giant puppets like Unicorn and SpongeBob dance; Donna Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio wear cartoonish costumes (Bee Maya, Ursula the Octopus, Gingerbread Man) while singing "Protegga il giusto cielo." Popcorn is distributed repeatedly and finally flung during the Commendatore's fatal lines.

Act II unfolds in a hall of mirrors, a scenic solution that redeems the staging with its play of mistaken identities, fitting Da Ponte's libretto. The chorus parades around on a visitor train, apparently enjoying themselves.

Scenography by Zinovy Margolin includes a Ferris wheel; Olga Shaishmelashvili's costumes evoke the 1960s; Alexander Sivaev's lighting adds effects. The finale uses the Vienna version, minus the

Prague moral, but with questionable cuts. A rarely performed comic duet is added with dubious sadomasochistic staging.

Conductor Alessandro Cadario held things together brilliantly, ensuring balance and cohesion despite the venue's poor acoustics.

Baritone Roberto Frontali, at the peak of his career, debuted in the title role, but the director's portrayal of Giovanni as "aged and defeated" undermined him. Maria Grazia Schiavo shone as Donna Anna; Vito Priante was a strong Leporello; Mihai Damian a lively Masetto; Gianluca Buratto an imposing Commendatore; Anthony Léon a less incisive Ottavio. Carmela Remigio (Elvira) and Eleonora Bellocci (Zerlina) were excellent. Instead of hell, Giovanni ascends in a Ferris wheel cabin. Applause for conductor and singers; loud boos for Barkhatov and team.

29 June, 17–19–20 July

The New Season: Wagner, Premieres, and Unusual Offerings

The 2025/26 season of the two Roman Foundations opens under Wagner's sign: the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia inaugurates on 23 October with *Die Walküre* in staged form at the Auditorium Parco della Musica, conducted by Daniel Harding, staged by Vincent Huguet. At the Teatro dell'Opera little more than a month later, on 27 November, *Lohengrin* opens under Michele Mariotti, directed by Damiano Michieletto.

The Teatro dell'Opera's programming spans three centuries, from Baroque to contemporary, under the season title "Double Dream." Preceding in early November, as the closing of the 125th anniversary of *Tosca*'s premiere, comes a special performance in the original 1900 staging, broadcast live on RAI-3.

Next is *La bohème* in an "impressionist" staging by Davide Livermore, starring soprano Carolina López Moreno. The contemporary takes center stage with the world premiere of *Inferno*, music by Lucia Ronchetti, libretto from Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

In collaboration with Dresden's Semperoper, a new staging of Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. The Händel project continues with his first oratorio, *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno*, directed by Robert Carsen.

April 2026 brings *Roméo et Juliette* by Charles Gounod, part of a new three-year collaboration with Teatro di Roma, which will stage Shakespeare's tragedy.

Then *Tancredi* by Rossini, with tragic ending, starring countertenor-contralto Carlo Vistoli, despite Rossini's historical rejection of the castrato voice. Conducted by Mariotti, directed by Emma Dante.

Verdi's *La traviata* returns in Sofia Coppola's staging with Valentino costumes. Next *Le nozze di Figaro* by Mozart, and finally Verdi's *Falstaff*, again under Michele Mariotti.

Alongside, the Teatro Nazionale will host additional productions, with projects for young artists, schools, and outreach, fostering deeper dialogue with Rome's diverse communities.

V.G.T.



Roma
Auditorium
Parco della Musica

Ottobre 2025
Giovedì 23, ore 18
Sabato 25, ore 15
Lunedì 27, ore 18

Inaugurazione della
Stagione 25/26

santacecilia.it

**Orchestra dell'Accademia
di Santa Cecilia**

Direttore **Daniel Harding**
Regia **Vincent Huguet**
Scene **Pierre Yovanovitch**
in collaborazione con **Tirelli Trappetti**

Wotan **Michael Volle**
Brünnhilde **Miina-Liisa Väreä**
Sieglinde **Vida Miknevičiūtė**
Siegmund **Jamez McCorkle**
Hunding **Stephen Milling**
Fricka **Okka von der Damerau**

Nuova produzione
dell'Accademia Nazionale
di Santa Cecilia

**Richard
Wagner**
La Valchiria



Accademia Nazionale
di Santa Cecilia

Soci fondatori di diritto



Socio fondatore pubblico



Soci fondatori privati



Partner istituzionale



Partner istituzionale 2025



Sponsor 2025



The World of Music Between War and Peace



By Giancarlo Landini

5 1st Festival of the Valle d'Itria. A turning point and the beginning of a new course, entrusted to Silvia Colasanti, composer and, in this instance, Artistic Director. The Festival revolves around the theme of war and peace, sadly still of tragic relevance.

It opens with *Tancredi* by Gioachino Rossini, but the highlights are the Italian premiere of *Owen Wingrave* by Benjamin Britten and Symphony No. 14 for soprano, bass, strings, and percussion, Op. 135 by Dmitri Shostakovich, conducted by Fabio Luisi, a renowned conductor and Musical Director of the festival. In an interview with Francesco Mazzotta (see the program booklet, p.115) regarding the choice of this work by the Russian composer, he responds: "For two reasons, shared with the festival's new Artistic Director, Silvia Colasanti, in the desire to offer a view on the modernity toward which Martina is moving." With this answer, Luisi points to the Festival's new course, confirmed by the 2026 program, centering on *Ur-Carmen* by Bizet and a Casella-Stravinsky diptych (*La favola di Orfeo – Pulcinella*), without neglecting Baroque (now more relevant than ever) with a comedy by Francesco Provenza (*Il schiavo di sua moglie*). Let us go through the Festival's titles in the order we experienced them.

Ravel's Enchantments

In the Cloister of San Domenico (the magical space of magical Martina), *L'enfant et les sortilèges* by Maurice Ravel is performed on the centenary of its creation at the Opéra de Monte-Carlo on March 21, 1925; the opera is staged in Didier Puntos' adaptation and entrusted to the students of the Rodolfo Celletti Academy: Elena Antonini (L'Enfant), Manami Maejima (Maman, La libellule, L'Écureuil), Barbara Křišáková (La Bergère, La Chouette), Chiara Maria Fiorani (Le Feu, Le Rossignol), Claudia Ceraulo (La Prin-



Scene de *Les enfants et les sortilèges*
al Chiostro San Domenico

cesse), Ambra Biaggi (La Chatte, La Tasse chinoise, Un Pâtre), Yue He (Le Chauve-souris, Une Pastourelle), Nicola Ciancio (Le Fauteuil, Un Arbre), Kostantinos Stafylides (L'Horloge comtoise, Le Chat), Joaquin Cangemi (La Théière, Le Petit Vieillard, La Rainette). Precisely the naïveté of the staging and the functional simplicity of the direction give the performance its appeal, which is too much to call mere charm, yet too little to reduce to simple pleasure. In other words, everyone does their best, yet they create a cohesive group, functional to the overall result.

The production is by Rita Consentino, with sets and costumes by Francesca Cosanti. On a platform stretching across the Cloister, the story of the capricious, selfish child unfolds clearly and simply; his animated toys educate him to harmonious relations with others. Each soloist carries the cardboard figure of their character, with walls and furniture appearing as if from an illustrated album.

The staging's imaginative play is enhanced by the Children's Choir of the Paolo Grassi Foundation (prepared by Angela Lacarbonara) and the L.A.Chorus, Lucania & Apulia Chorus (prepared by Luigi Leo) within the clear execution of the ensemble, composed of Giulio Francesconi (flute), Federica Del Gaudio (cello), Gabriele Maggi and Michele D'Urso (percussion), Anastasia and Liubov Gromoglasova (piano four hands), and Valerio Lorenzo (prepared piano). Even in the reduced version, the charm of Ravel's timbre is enjoyed, while the musical worlds inspiring the composer stand out, serving a wholly new vocality in evident experimentation. The credit goes to the director, Myriam Farina, for the successful synthesis of the elements in a performance warmly appreciated by the large audience.

Tancredi Through a Child's Eyes

Tancredi is Rossini's first opera performed at the Festival; the only one in the 1976 lineup (rich, however, in high-level concerts), the festival's second year when its fate was still uncertain, and initiatives were pioneering. The cast included Viorica Cortez (*Tancredi*), Lella Cuberli (Amenaide), one of Rodolfo Celletti's early discoveries, Eduardo Gimenez (Argirio), and Martine Dupuy as Isaura (also engaged with Margherita Rinaldi in Rossini's *Stabat Mater*); the conductor was John Perras, although the program of that year mentions Alberto Zedda (who was right?).

Why *Tancredi*? It is an opera of war and peace, reaffirming the Festival's connection to Bel Canto, which (Celletti teaches) culminates with Rossini. It is heard in Philip Gossett's critical edition with both finales: the happy one, written for the Venice premiere (6 February 1813); the serious one, for the Ferrara edition (24 March 1813). These had already been experienced at the ROF in a memorable staging. Rossini's first serious masterpiece, *Tancredi* was among Stendhal's favorite scores, who admired the irresistible simplicity achieved through virtuoso expressivity, still distant from the grandeur of his later works. Notably, Rossini had yet to write extended coloratura as he would in Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra. The serious finale, with the protagonist's death, adds to the score's allure, resolved in sublime recitar-cantando,



Momento di *Tancredi*
al Palazzo Ducale

where Rossini revives Monteverdian lessons with original power. An opera for distinguished virtuosos, *Tancredi* has enjoyed memorable performances during the Rossini Renaissance, which serve as benchmarks and, in this case, stumbling blocks.

The main issue of the disappointing *Tancredi* is Andrea Bernard's direction, which, as usual, imposes another film on the opera. *Tancredi* is staged in a playground torn by ferocious war (Gaza? Perhaps). The story is seen through a child's eyes, interacting with the action, helping Amenaide or guiding *Tancredi*'s movements. Yet, it is insufficient. The director cannot accept *Tancredi*'s tragic death; almost everyone must live happily ever after. The problem is not the film Bernard imagines, which has relevant references and omissions, but its execution. Apart from the inert scene by Giuseppe Stellato, costumes by Ilaria Ariemme, and lighting by Pasquale Mari (limited by the festival stage's lighting), Bernard overwhelms the action with countless devices: gestures, subplots, evolutions of the child (the excellent Carlo Buonfrate). One senses that the director, like most of his colleagues, does not trust the singing or Bel Canto dramaturgy, resolved in vocal transfiguration of passions, and must intervene constantly, disturbing narrative flow and singer focus.

Leading the Orchestra of the Accademia Teatro alla Scala and the L.A.Chorus Lucania & Apulia Chorus, Sesto Quatrini conducts with diligent care, ensuring orchestral function but without a compelling narrative drive, special energy, or enhanced attention to vocal nuances, colors, and phrasing. Partly to be excused, our evening suffered from increasingly severe cold, which surely affected the overall result.

Tancredi is Yulia Vakula, who replaced Anna Goryachova during rehearsals. Russian, a Celletti Academy student, Vakula has everything to become a full-fledged Rossini protagonist, including en travesti roles: timbre, vocal beauty, natural coloratura inclination, and excellent language command. But! It would benefit the Festival to dedicate a full year with an excellent vocal coach (available in Martina) to refine aspects needing further development (impeccable intonation, skilled virtuosity, clear declamation, osmosis with Rossini style and practice). For now, she is an artist in progress. "Di tanti palpiti," which should elicit thunderous applause, passes lightly; the love duet with Amenaide seeks sensuous color play, Argirio's martial boldness is lacking, and

the tragic finale requires noble and modern declamation, distinct from recitative.

Amenaide is Francesca Pia Vitale, a renowned soprano with many successful roles, including Glauce in the *Medée* at La Scala. Here she delivers the part with dignity but without the lyrical sublimity of intimate passages (“Come è dolce all’anima mia”) or the virtuosity exuberance (e.g., in “Giusto Dio che umile adoro”), which echoes Viennese classicism. In “Ah! D’amore in tal momento,” a Mozartian nuance is perceptible, in phrases seeking sparkling high notes with instrumental clarity.

Dave Monaco, after successes as Conte d’Almaviva and Don Ramiro, tackles Argirio, a part demanding a true baritenor. Despite occasional tessitura elevation, the artist’s preparation is excellent, though he should choose roles suited to his voice.

Hinano Yorimitsu (Isaura) and Giulia Alletto (Roggiero) perform diligently, including minor arias. Adolfo Corrado handles Orbazzano competently, a supporting part mostly relegated to recitative or ensemble.

Good success, though the audience suffered from the cold and the second act’s excessive length (one hour fifty minutes).

Owen Wingrave: Britten’s Courage

Now to the Festival’s jewels: two works worth the trip. The first is *Owen Wingrave*, a two-act opera by Benjamin Britten on a libretto by Myfanwy Piper, based on a Henry James story, broadcast by the BBC (16 May 1971); staged at Covent Garden (10 May 1973), it had never been performed in Italy. Britten demonstrates the vitality of contemporary theater, capable of reaching audiences with a personal style and strong communicative impact, confirming him as one of the 20th century’s most authoritative voices, despite avant-garde colleagues’ indigestible abstruseness.

The drama highlights the Festival’s theme through Owen’s persecution as a conscientious objector. He faces a family of military conservatives—racist, violent, upholding the crown and its values, possibly still justifying their narrowness. The story of the Wingrave house further reveals Britten’s psychological intricacy, seen in his other works.

The action’s brevity—two acts, rapid pacing, character sculpting, skillful orchestration, versatile declamation from near-speech to magical ballad opening Act II—adds to the drama’s effect. Daniel Cohen conducts the Orchestra of the Accademia Teatro alla Scala with apt tension, febrile anxiety when needed, tonal color attention, and respect for the singing. On stage, Åneas Humm embodies Owen physically, vocally, and artistically. The cast is effective and expressive: Simone Fenotti as the General (originally Peter Pears’ role), Kristian Lindroos and Lucia Pellegrino as Spencer and Mrs. Coyle, Charlotte-Anne Simpley as the determined Miss Wingrave, Ruairi Bowen as Lechmere, Chiara Bocca-bella and Sharon Carty as Mrs Julian and Kate Julian, Chengai Bao as Narrator. Andrea De Rosa’s agile direction clearly defines characters, aided by Giuseppe Stellato’s sets: a gallery of faceless portraits dominates the stage, evoking a closed, hostile, hypocritical world; two side staircases create various spaces,



while the Children’s Choir in the wings and the ballad in the auditorium heighten Owen’s torment.

A resounding success.

A Requiem Without Hope

The Festival’s second jewel is Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 14. It unfolds across 11 poems by various authors (García Lorca, Guillaume Apollinaire, Wilhelm Küchelbecker, Rainer Maria Rilke), meditating on death beyond hope. The symphony is a severe, unrelenting reflection, with an essentially chamber-like ensemble, integrating diverse material from Dies irae citations to twelve-tone series and Russian melodies. Fabio Luisi conducts the Orchestra of the Accademia Teatro alla Scala to exceptional results, demonstrating the mastery of a world-renowned baton. He deeply connects with the score, delivering it with his characteristic sobriety.

Lidia Fridman and Adolfo Corrado are sensitive, musical, incisive singers, adept at becoming pliant instruments of the music. Fridman stands out; Corrado impresses, though the tessitura favors graves, suited to Slavic basses rather than Italian voices.

Triumphant success from a packed audience that filled the Ducal Palace Courtyard.

28, 29, 30 July, 1 August

OPERA

25 | 26



TEATRO
MUNICIPALE
PIACENZA

19 | 21 DICEMBRE 2025

GIUSEPPE VERDI

STIFFELLO

libretto FRANCESCO MARIA PIAVE

LEONARDO SINI direttore PIER LUIGI PIZZI regia, scene e costumi

GREGORY KUNDE, LIDIA FRIDMAN, VLADIMIR STOYANOV, RICCARDO RADOS, ADRIANO GRAMIGNI, PAOLO NEVI, CARLOTTA VICHI

coproduzione Teatro Municipale di Piacenza, Teatro Comunale Pavarotti Freni di Modena, Teatro Valli di Reggio Emilia
NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO

23 | 25 GENNAIO 2026

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

DON GIOVANNI

libretto LORENZO DA PONTE

ENRICO PAGANO direttore ANDREA BERNARD regia

MARKUS WERBA, RENZO RAN, CLAUDIA PAVONE, MARCO CIAPONI
CARMELA REMIGIO, TOMMASO BAREA, ALBERTO PETRICCA, GRETA DOVERI

coproduzione Teatro Municipale di Piacenza, Teatro Comunale Pavarotti Freni di Modena
NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO

27 FEBBRAIO | 1 MARZO 2026

GIOACHINO ROSSINI

L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI

libretto ANGELO ANELLI

ALESSANDRO CADARIO direttore FABIO CHERSTICH regia

GIORGIO CAODURO, GLORIA TRONEL, BARBARA SKORA, GIUSEPPE DE LUCA
RUZIL GATIN, LAURA VERRECCHIA, MARCO FILIPPO ROMANO

coproduzione Teatro Valli di Reggio Emilia, Teatro Comunale Pavarotti Freni di Modena, Teatro Municipale di Piacenza, Teatro Alighieri di Ravenna
Fondazione Haydn di Bolzano e Trento, Teatri di OperaLombardia
NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO

27 | 29 MARZO 2026

DAVIDE TRAMONTANO

CRONACA DI UN AMORE CALLAS E PASOLINI

libretto ALBERTO MATTIOLI

ENRICO LOMBARDI direttore DAVIDE LIVERMORE, MERCEDES MARTINI regia

BRUNO TADDIA, CARMELA REMIGIO, CATERINA MELDOLES, DIDIER PIERI

coproduzione Teatro Municipale di Piacenza, Fondazione Haydn di Bolzano e Trento
NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO | PRIMA ASSOLUTA

17 | 19 APRILE 2026

GEORGES BIZET

CARMEN

libretto HENRI MEILHAC e LUDOVIC HALÉVY

AUDREY SAINT-GIL direttrice STEFANO VIZIOLI regia

MARIA KATAEVA, JOSEPH DAHDAH, JAQUELINA LIVIERI
GIANLUCA FAILLA, MATTEO TORCASO, TIZIANO ROSATI, ELENA ANTONINI
DONATELLA DE LUCA, ENRICO IVIGLIA, WILLIAM ALLIONE

coproduzione Teatro Comunale Pavarotti Freni di Modena, Teatro Municipale di Piacenza, Teatro Alighieri di Ravenna
Fondazione Haydn di Bolzano e Trento, Teatri di OperaLombardia
NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO

2 | 4 OTTOBRE 2026

GIACOMO PUCCINI

LA BOHÈME

libretto LUIGI ILLICA e GIUSEPPE GIACOSA

VINCENZO MILLETARI direttore LEO NUCCI regia

CLAUDIA PAVONE, MARIAM BATTISTELLI, LIPARIT AVETISYAN, GIANLUCA FAILLA
FERNANDO CISNEROS, DIEGO MAFFEZZONI, DARIO GIORGELE

coproduzione Teatro Municipale di Piacenza, Teatro Comunale Pavarotti Freni di Modena
Allestimento Teatro Comunale Pavarotti Freni di Modena

6 | 8 NOVEMBRE 2026

RICHARD WAGNER

LOHENGRIN

libretto RICHARD WAGNER

MARTIJN DENDIEVEL direttore PLAMEN KARTALOFF regia

SORIN COLIBAN, DMITRY KORCHAK, OLGA MASLOVA, CLAUDIO SGURA
ANNA MARIA CHIURI, MICHAEL HAVLICEK

coproduzione Teatro Municipale di Piacenza, Teatro Comunale Pavarotti Freni di Modena
Allestimento del Teatro dell'Opera di Sofia

The Cantiere Celebrates with Mascagni

By Roberto Del Nista

Images of **Cavalleria rusticana**
at the Cantiere di Montepulciano

Golden accolades for the historic Cantiere Poliziano. Indeed, in 2025, the well-known festival celebrates fifty years of activity. The opening evening is entrusted to opera, specifically *Cavalleria rusticana*, staged in Piazza Grande. The artistic choice of this title is singular and somewhat peculiar, as for such an anniversary one might have expected a rarer, less frequently performed work, in line with the festival's usual tradition of distinguishing itself in past editions. From Mascagni, we recall the memorable production of *Si* back in 1987; thereafter, his works were entirely absent. Perhaps the choice can be justified by the commemoration of eighty years since Mascagni's death, combined with the intent to attract a substantial audience—an intention perfectly realized, as the vast Piazza Grande sold out, with spectators applauding both at the curtain rising and at the end of the performance.

Less successful, however, was the execution itself. It is both surprising and regrettable—considering Cantiere's long-standing, meticulous, and prestigious activity—to witness an evident decline, not only in style but also in the pretentiousness of artistic choices regarding both vocal and instrumental parts. This is the first striking disappointment compared to previous years.

We had previously appreciated Sofia Janelidze as Maddalena (*Rigoletto*, Pisa 2016). Now she appears as Santuzza, and it is unfortunate to note—compared to the past—how constrained this role feels for her: the emission tends to be guttural, with intonation and attacks not always perfect; perhaps exacerbated by the bothersome cold wind blowing across the piazza throughout the performance. Hector Lopez (*Turiddu*) faces similar issues; nevertheless, both singers achieve full audience approval in their (brief) high notes. Giada

Montepulciano: *Cavalleria rusticana* Opens the Festival with a Staging Detached from the Opera's Dramaturgy

Venturini (*Lucia*) and Chiara Scannapieco (*Lola*) perform with decorum, within limits. Luca Galli (*Alfio*) stands out for intensity and relatively homogeneous color, though phrasing in the mid-low range could be improved; he also demonstrates high-note portamenti. Completely uneven is the Poliziana Choir, the Gruppo Corale Le Grazie, and the Arcadelt Choir: three separate ensembles united for the occasion, guided by Judy Diodato and Barbara Valdambri, both well-known, established professionals called to resolve an improbable situation in a short time.

The unevenness—mainly due to the lack of cohesion among the three ensembles—is compounded by non-existent intonation and imprecise attacks. The lack of alignment, for both soloists and choirs, could be attributed to the unfortunate positioning of conductor Carlo Goldstein, as the ensembles are placed behind and to the right of the baton, forcing him to conduct simultaneously toward the orchestra and the opposite direction to the singers. In this situation, Goldstein works miracles, particularly with the Orchestra of the 50th Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte di Montepulciano, in collaboration with the Accademia di Belle Arti di Urbino.

Goldstein's interpretation is astute and precise: he extracts soft and intense sonic colors from the sections, the result of careful orchestration; the score is meticulously attended to in terms of agogics



and dynamics.

Alessandra Premoli signs the direction; Anna Missaglia the costumes, which are in fact non-existent, as all clothing is contemporary. Premoli's idea of utilizing Piazza Grande's splendid architectural scenography is commendable; far less so is contextualizing *Cavalleria rusticana* in modern times, with the pretentious intent of conveying the now overused social concept of violence against women caused by lack of communication; indeed, today, communication is often excessive—the missing element is dialogue. The opera's dramaturgy does not seem to imply such violence; rather, the opposite: it is *Turiddu* who is killed out of jealousy and Santuzza's betrayal, amplified by envy for *Lola's* beauty.

Premoli's concept completely overturns the opera's original meaning and disregards the libretto. Regarding lack of communication, all villagers and protagonists have smartphones: Santuzza shows *Alfio* *Lola's* betrayal (it is unclear whether she filmed, photographed, or displayed messages on WhatsApp); the brief scene recalls Paolo Genovese's film *Perfect Strangers* (2016).

Still riding the wave of contemporary references, or certain film and TV fiction, *Alfio's* entrance occurs in a powerful luxury sedan driven by a personal chauffeur: the traditional carter is elevated to mob boss, a less arduous and far more lucrative profession, confirmed by the ostentatious display of numerous banknotes in front of everyone, while children prostrate themselves and the populace takes selfies with him. It remains unclear where the horse is supposed to be (perhaps *Alfio* refers to the car's horsepower, measured today in kW), nor what purpose the nonexistent whip serves or which back it cracks; his woman/partner/wife *Lola* appears as a high-class

escort, fitting beside a boss with bodyguards.

This is unfortunate for those experiencing the opera for the first time while reading the libretto attentively.

The famous Intermezzo, originally indicating the passage of time needed for a liturgical function, now becomes a distracting sound over rapidly flowing videomapping images (technically precise by Guido Levi Lighting Lab) projected onto the Palazzo Contucci façade, recalling a century of history with successive laws on social and family rights: women's suffrage, divorce, abortion, etc., up to the present-day issue of femicide; entirely absent in *Cavalleria*, where "maschicidio" would be more fitting. The so-called special effects, intended to amaze, emerge as mere side effects of this image-driven society.

On the other hand, Premoli succeeds in guiding the entire vocal cast, moving choir and soloists with absolute, natural ease; the *physique du rôle* of the protagonists is well-centered.

Inevitably, one asks why it is necessary to alter the intrinsic, natural meaning of a well-established work, disregarding its dramaturgy and intended purpose, to convey messages with supposedly redemptive or cathartic aims. Would it not be simpler—and truly contemporary—to write a new opera, following examples from visual and literary arts?

Any artistic subject is beautiful by its natural essence; not by how one wishes it to be.

11 July

Cio-Cio-San between Illusion and Truth

By Anna Brotzu

Scenes from **Madama Butterfly** in Piazza d'Italia, Sassari (Photo by Elena Casula)

A symphony of cherry blossoms evoked the dreamlike atmosphere of **Madama Butterfly** by Giacomo Puccini, staged in Piazza d'Italia in Sassari for the 2025 summer season of La Grande Lirica d'Estate, presented by the Ente Concerti Marialisa De Carolis, and it captivated the audience. An evocative mise en scène—between flower-maidens and living sculptures—for this open-air production directed by Alberto Gazale, where the house is suggested by a veil and a rock garden, and the colorful wedding feast gives way to whispered love dialogues, then to the long wait, and finally to the tragedy's climax with the ritual of seppuku.

An unexpected prelude featured the moving “Humming Chorus” from Act II, performed in memory of Antonello Lambroni, a member of the De Carolis choir who passed away prematurely. From there,



Sassari: Vittoria Yeo and Francesco Demuro, passionate protagonists of Butterfly directed by Alberto Gazal

Madama Butterfly unfolded with the cruel poetry of an unhappy love, where two cultures collide and the fragile butterfly, pierced “so that she may never fly again,” takes her own life when faced with the bitter truth and the collapse of her dream of happiness.

On stage, soprano Vittoria Yeo (a pupil of Raina Kabaivanska, already acclaimed at La Fenice in Venice, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, and the Rome Opera House) in the role of Cio-Cio-San, conveyed all the freshness and nuances of the young girl's character—the radiant gentleness and grace of a creature from the Land of the Rising Sun—alongside tenor Francesco Demuro, fresh from international triumphs on the world's most important stages. After his acclaimed *Werther*, he delivered an outstanding *Pinkerton*, with remarkable stage presence and a clear, powerful voice capable of embracing the full range of emotions: ardent passion at the beginning, and remorseful resignation at the end.

The cast also featured the intense Irene Molinari (the faithful Suzuki), a convincing Fabian Veloz (Consul Sharpless), and a brilliant Nicolas Resinelli (Goro, the Nakodo), along with Michael Zeni (Prince Yamadori) and Teppei Matsunaka (Uncle Bonzo), joined by Eva Goreux (Kate Pinkerton), Giuseppe Lisai (Imperial Commissioner), Simone Casu (Registrar), Antonella Masia (Cio-Cio-San's Mother), Tania Esposito (the Aunt), and Giulia Cabizza (the Cousin).

At the podium, conductor Sergio Oliva (with chorus master Francesca Tosi) was warmly welcomed and showered with applause for the opera's most celebrated pages—above all, the finale.

July 10

The World and Fortune in Orff's Masterpiece

By Anna Brotzu



With the overwhelming rhythms of Carl Orff's **Carmina Burana**, La Grande Lirica d'Estate opened in Sassari: all the "barbaric" power of the profane songs set to music by the German composer resounded in the double performance on the open-air stage of Piazza d'Italia.

On the podium, Francesca Tosi (musical director and chorus master) led the orchestra and chorus of the Ente Concerti Marialisa De Carolis, together with the Children's Choir (directed by Salvatore Rizzu), the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Choir, and the solo voices of baritone Domenico Balzani, soprano Evgeniya Vukkert, and tenor Antonino Siragusa.

The corpus of medieval goliardic poetry came to life through Orff's evocative score, composed in the 1930s: an anthology of twenty-four pieces that move fluidly among satirical, amorous, playful, and convivial themes. A brilliant (re)invention of melodies, for a choral and instrumental work in which percussion takes center stage—from the emblematic opening invocation "O Fortuna" to "Ave formosissima," and the triumphant return of "O Fortuna" in the blazing

Sassari: Great Success for Carmina Burana, Conducted by Francesca Tosi

finale, greeted by a sea of applause and an eagerly awaited encore. It was a shining performance by the three soloists, the vocal ensembles, and the De Carolis orchestra, which Francesca Tosi skillfully guided through the challenges of a complex and enthralling score that evokes the cultural atmosphere of the Middle Ages, with ironic accents and profane harmonies.

The revival of Carl Orff's masterpiece on the Coral Riviera, on Tuesday, July 1 at 9:30 p.m., inaugurates a new synergy between the Ente Concerti Marialisa De Carolis, the Municipality of Alghero, and the Fondazione Alghero, with Carmina Burana resounding against the evocative backdrop of the city's harbor quay.

June 28



Images of **Carmina Burana** in Piazza d'Italia
(Photo by Elena Casula)



Verdi and Puccini Confronting History

By Roberto Mori

There is a Verdi who inflames piazzas and galvanizes spirits with his “political” theatre, and there is a Verdi who digs into the fissures of History, among ruins, collapses, and lost illusions. Two souls often seen in contrast, yet powerfully coexisting in *Attila*, the dark, seismic melodrama that premiered at La Fenice in Venice on March 17, 1846.

Set in a fifth century on the brink of apocalypse, the opera embraces and overturns Venice’s founding myth: the arrival of Aquileian refugees in the “Adriatic Lagoons” is not a beginning but a flight, an uncertain exodus toward a future yet to be imagined. And while *Risorgimento* echoes resound in choruses, challenges, and invectives, what dominates the stage is an overwhelming sense of devastation. This is the aspect director Leo Muscato emphasized in his new staging for Teatro La Fenice. In his vision, *Attila* is an opera of collapse: music—built mostly on minor tonalities and dark timbres—seems to give form to the ruins of a civilization, while the stage teems with characters corroded by doubt, resentment, and betrayal. The barbarian invader becomes a distorted mirror of his opponents: even those meant to embody “civilization” are consumed by obsessions and ambiguities. There are no heroes, no redemption, no catharsis—only a musical beauty that, here and there, illuminates the disaster without promising salvation.

Muscato opts for sobriety and symbolism, transforming the drama of origins into a tale of collapse and survival. Federica Parolini’s stage design—a dense forest evoked by slender poles and shifting lights—becomes an abstract space of ruin and hope, alluding both to the forest where the story unfolds and to the foundations of Venice itself. The prologue opens on a burning Aquileia, with tongues

Venice: Michele Pertusi and Anastasia Bartoli Star in Attila Directed by Leo Muscato

of fire licking the backdrop: the staging gazes more at the disintegration of a world than at the celebration of a rebirth. No updating, no patriotic rhetoric: *Attila* is treated as a drama of imperial decline, steeped in violence, corruption, and power games. The renunciation of spectacle translates into an essential language that seeks deeper meaning in imagery. Yet this visual coherence comes with a certain static quality: crowds move predictably, and characters sometimes feel trapped in a direction that, while avoiding bombast, risks rigidity.



Scenes from *Attila* at Teatro La Fenice
(Photo by Michele Crosera)



Sebastiano Rolli ensured an energetic reading, capable of restoring both the Risorgimento aura and the dramatic tension of the work. His choices favored brisk tempi, sharp momentum, and well-balanced contrasts, alternating naturally between the epic force of choral scenes and more lyrical, introspective passages, always attentive to phrasing and orchestral color. The performance also stood out for its fidelity to the critical edition and structural integrity, with all cabaletta repeats included in accordance with historical practice. It was precisely here that the most radical choice emerged: the da capo passages were performed with systematic *rallentandos*, intended as expressive variations. A philologically considered option, which the conductor himself publicly defended, though in performance it sometimes produced a predictable, even mannered effect, dulling the theatrical drive and relentless character of these sections.

Vocally, Venice's *Attila* fielded a generally solid cast. Michele Pertusi embodied the king of the Huns with his customary authority, delivering a stylistically refined interpretation, attentive to phrasing and nuance, especially in reflective moments. Arias like *Mentre gonfiarsi l'anima* revealed a thoughtful, tormented Attila—more human than barbaric. Yet a less commanding stage presence than usual, coupled with projection that was not always imposing, shaped a figure closer to twilight than dominance. A conscious reading, but not a definitive one, for a role demanding vocal vigor, power, and theatrical magnetism.

Anastasia Bartoli tackled the daunting role of Odabella with energy and determination, effectively sketching the warrior driven by vengeance. While some strain in the upper register and a certain lack of bite in forceful coloratura emerged, the young soprano fully convinced on the lyrical side. *Oh! del fuggente nuvolo* displayed

her strongest assets: supple phrasing, nuanced shading, a captivating timbre, and innate musicality. A generous interpretation that showcased temperament and artistic personality.

As Foresto, Antonio Poli revealed a well-rounded, warm, and even voice, managed with taste and full identification with the character. He balanced lyrical passages, sung with noble legato, and dramatic moments, delivered with vigor and fine accent. Though some top notes lacked brilliance and certain half-voices approached falsetto, the performance remained praiseworthy.

More restrained but precise was Vladimir Stoyanov, who offered a correct, well-controlled Ezio. Though lacking overwhelming impact, secure emission and tasteful inflection compensated. A solid and balanced performance.

The cast was rounded out capably by Francesco Milanese (Leone) and Andrea Schifauda (Uldino), while the theatre's chorus, under Alfonso Caiani, stood out for precision and cohesion. The audience offered warm applause to all, with ovations particularly for Bartoli and Poli.

Chiara Isotton as Tosca, conducted by Daniele Rustioni in Joan Anton Rechi's unconvincing staging

With *Tosca*, Puccini tackled a subject tied to a precise historical climate: Rome in 1800, marked by the fall of the Jacobin Republic and the return of papal power. It is not only the libretto that anchors the action in concrete locations—Sant'Andrea della Valle, Palazzo Farnese, Castel Sant'Angelo—but also the music itself, which evokes the solemn grandeur of Rome through alternating liturgical choruses, popular song, historical fresco, and private drama. For this reason, any change of era is a delicate undertaking—though not impossible. The story can hold in other times and contexts, provided



the transposition is supported by a coherent dramaturgical project and a convincing realization

In Joan Anton Rechi's new production for La Fenice, the setting is shifted to the 1950s, in an undefined country ruled by a "faceless regime," where social control is exercised not through symbols or uniforms but through mutual suspicion and fear of denunciation. On paper, the premise works. The problem is that this invisible power never finds real scenic translation, remaining an abstract concept without effective or credible theatrical embodiment. The impression is closer to a criminal underworld than a dictatorship.

The idea of placing the action in open spaces to symbolize Tosca and Cavaradossi's longing for freedom also fails to convince, resulting instead in dark, claustrophobic environments. Act I unfolds before the monumental, oppressive doorway of a church under restoration, with scaffolding and fragments of frescoes revealed by Cavaradossi and the Sacristan. In the finale, the door opens to a procession with a Sevillian-style statue of the Virgin: a picturesque touch that uproots Rome from Puccini's horizon and replaces it with religious folklore foreign to the drama. Act II shifts to the garden of a two-story bourgeois villa, with barren trees, elegant women, henchmen, and a black sedan in the foreground—stage for Scarpia's violence and murder. The replacement of the famous "banquet table" with a luxury car adds no dramaturgical sense, while the alternation of refined salons and glimpses of brutality remains sketched rather than developed. Act III, inspired by Piranesi's Imaginary Prisons, reduces to a characterless structure, lacking dawn light or evocative power. The Shepherd Boy becomes an angel without function, Cavaradossi is executed with a gunshot to the temple, and Tosca leaps into the void as prescribed by the libretto.

Overall, the staging relies on predictable gestures, without real psychological depth, assembling scenic signs seen elsewhere: the operation feels more like a collage of prefabricated solutions than a unified vision. The idea of updating Tosca as a universal denunciation of dictatorship collapses against a fragmented staging that fails to translate conceptual suggestions into credible theatrical realization.

Musically, however, Daniele Rustioni drew from La Fenice's orchestra (in excellent form) what was lacking on stage: atmosphere and



color. He read Tosca not as a verismo work but as a drama projected into the twentieth century, where the symphonic texture constantly reshapes emotions and sentiments. With broad phrasing and well-judged tempi, he ensured the dramatic and musical continuity Puccini sought, alternating drama and lyricism while maintaining balance with the voices, especially in conversational singing. A demonstration that fidelity to the score and emotional intensity can coexist, restoring the modernity of Puccini's orchestral dramaturgy, already tinged with cinematic language.

In harmony with Rustioni, Chiara Isotton delivered a Tosca centered on vocal line rather than veristic effects. With a full lyric soprano voice, solid in the middle and lower register, firm at the top, and capable of a broad, rich sound, she combined expressive intensity with vigilant musicality. Her commitment to the character's psychological shifts was precise. Vissi d'arte, balanced between emotion and control, earned the evening's only mid-performance ovation.

Equally far from exaggeration was Riccardo Massi's Cavaradossi. After a somewhat muted *Recondita armonia*, the tenor recovered, displaying a dark-hued, pleasant timbre and secure, if not always ringing, high notes. In love duets he shaped phrases with refinement, while in *E lucevan le stelle* he found the right balance of lyricism and ardor, confirming a stylistically assured interpretation.

Roberto Frontali's Scarpia appeared well-controlled expressively, though hindered by indisposition, evident in intonation and stamina issues, particularly in Act II. The rest of the cast proved functional: Matteo Peirone's Sacristan lacked distinctive direction, while Mattia Denti (Angelotti), Cristiano Olivieri (Spoletta), Matteo Ferrara (Sciarone), and Emanuele Pedrini (Jailer) all supported effectively. The chorus, under Alfonso Caiani, and the Piccoli Cantori Veneziani, prepared by Diana D'Alessio, added excellent contributions.

Final applause greeted all, with special acclaim for Isotton and Massi.

May 16, August 29

ROSSO

STAGIONE
2025/2026



10-23 OTTOBRE 2025

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

RICCARDO ZANDONAI

ANDREA BATTISTONI
DIRETTORE D'ORCHESTRA

ANDREA BERNARD
REGIA

NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO

PARTNER INTESA SANPAOLO



8-16 NOVEMBRE 2025

IL RATTO DAL SERRAGLIO

W. A. MOZART

GIANLUCA CAPUANO
DIRETTORE D'ORCHESTRA

MICHEL FAU
REGIA

CON IL SOSTEGNO DI Italgas



27-29 NOVEMBRE 2025

ROBERTO BOLLE IN CARAVAGGIO

BRUNO MORETTI

ROBERTO BOLLE
ÉTOILE

MAURO BIGONZETTI
COREOGRAFIA

UNA PRODUZIONE ARTEDANZA



5-14 DICEMBRE 2025

ROMEO E GIULIETTA

SERGEJ PROKOF'EV

BALLETTO DEL TEATRO
NAZIONALE DI PRAGA

FILIP BARANKIEWICZ
DIRETTORE ARTISTICO

JOHN CRANKO
COREOGRAFIA



19-28 DICEMBRE 2025

IL LAGO DEI CIGNI

PĚTR IL'IČ ČAJKOVSKIJ

BALLETTO DELL'OPERA
NAZIONALE DI RIGA

AIVARS LEIMANIS
DIRETTORE ARTISTICO

MARIUS PETIPA
E LEV IVANOV
COREOGRAFIA



20-27 GENNAIO 2026

LA CENERENTOLA

GIOACHINO ROSSINI

ANTONINO FOGLIANI
DIRETTORE D'ORCHESTRA

MANU LALLI
REGIA



24 FEBBRAIO - 7 MARZO 2026

MACBETH

GIUSEPPE VERDI

RICCARDO MUTI
DIRETTORE D'ORCHESTRA

CHIARA MUTI
REGIA

NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO

CON IL CONTRIBUTO DI REALE
MUTUA



31 MARZO - 12 APRILE 2026

DIALOGHI DELLE CARMELITANE

FRANCIS POULENC

YVES ABEL
DIRETTORE D'ORCHESTRA

ROBERT CARSEN
REGIA E LUCI



6-17 MAGGIO 2026

I PURITANI

VINCENZO BELLINI

FRANCESCO LANZILLOTTA
DIRETTORE D'ORCHESTRA

PIERRE-EMMANUEL
ROUSSEAU
REGIA, SCENE E COSTUMI

NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO



12-21 GIUGNO 2026

TOSCA

GIACOMO PUCCINI

ANDREA BATTISTONI
DIRETTORE D'ORCHESTRA

STEFANO PODA
REGIA, SCENE, COSTUMI,
COREOGRAFIA E LUCI

NUOVO ALLESTIMENTO

ORCHESTRA, CORO E CORO DI VOCI BIANCHE TEATRO REGIO



A Moment from **Suor Angelica** at the Caruso Auditorium in Torre del Lago (Photo: Giorgio Andreuccetti)

By **Roberto Del Nista**

The Colors of Life and Death

The seventy-first edition of the Puccini Festival anticipated its opening night with a production of **Suor Angelica** (July 13). Originally scheduled for the Mitoraj Space in the Garden of the Grand Theatre, bad weather forced the performance indoors at the Caruso Auditorium. Perhaps this enforced relocation helped emphasize the claustrophobic—albeit cloistered—atmosphere of Puccini's one-act opera; the chamber-like instrumental adaptation by Sirio Sacchetti, conducting the Bazzini Consort Ensemble with Alessio Masi at the piano, enhanced and deepened the work's inherent sense of religious intimacy.

The entire vocal cast was well-balanced and of good quality, featuring Cristina Giannelli (Angelica), Maria Candirri (Mother Superior), Elena Finelli (Genovieffa), Roxana Diaz Vanden Bosch (Osmina), Francesca Pusceddu (Dolcina), Maria Salvini (Nurse), and Maria Eleonora Caminada (Novice). Special mention must go to Sofia Janelidze (the Princess Aunt). We had heard Janelidze two days earlier in Montepulciano as Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana* (July 11); if in the Mascagni role she seemed uneasy, this time the result was markedly superior. Janelidze tackled the aristocratic role with determination and vocal assurance. This significant improvement can be explained by the considerable difference in vocal writing between Mascagni and Puccini: in the latter, Janelidze is clearly more at ease.

Davide Garattini Raimondi's stage direction—he was also responsible for sets and lighting, assisted by Barbara Palumbo—was insightful and acute. His concept, rooted in an essential and symbolic language, aimed to break the fourth wall (indeed, the work had originally been conceived for staging in the Grand Theatre garden) and thus to intensify the physical and psychological proximity with the audience, as though they were integral to the drama. Props were reduced to a

Torre del Lago: Suor Angelica at the Festival in the Sharp Direction of Davide Garattini Raimondi

minimum—yet rich in meaning. Combined with a carefully crafted lighting design, they enhanced Stefania Parisini's costumes.

The colors black and white dominated throughout, a chromatic polarization symbolizing good and evil, darkness and light, sin and grace. From the very beginning, when the nuns are seen at laundry work with white sheets, this symbolism was clear; only Angelica folds her sheet in her arms, rocking it as though it were a child: a subliminal prelude to the tragic revelation awaiting her. This eloquent chromaticism culminates when Angelica, after ingesting poison, removes her black habit to reveal a white gown underneath.

Particularly striking was the directorial decision to bring the Princess Aunt back on stage during Angelica's agony and have her sing with the choir of nuns: a bold stroke that encapsulated cruelty and compassion, while exposing the hypocritical bigotry of institutional religion—pharisaical traits that recur in every age and place.

A packed auditorium, an enthusiastic audience.

Tosca Opens the Puccini Festival

The new leadership at the Puccini Festival has included in its operatic lineup singers of international renown, belonging to the so-called star system. In **Tosca**, the three principal roles are performed by Roberto Alagna (Mario), Aleksandra Kurzak (Floria), and Luca Salsi (Scarpia), all voices already familiar on the international stage.

Alagna consolidates his undisputed stage professionalism; however,

the signs of time are noticeable: his tenor timbre has lost some brilliance and color, the sound is somewhat monochromatic and lacking in overtones. Nevertheless, he delivers prolonged and resonant portamentos at key moments, winning over the audience even with the stage open; over the course of the opera, a certain progressive vocal fatigue is also evident.

Salsi approaches his role with determination—perhaps excessively so in the second act—and stage confidence. His intensity is fully employed, if not slightly overdone, as in the second act his volume occasionally borders on emphatic shouting, sacrificing the subtle, insinuating phrasing typical of the character (first and second acts), which is meant to stealthily influence *Tosca* and Cavaradossi. Despite Scarpia's overt sadism, he remains a baron, a nobleman with refined manners and tastes: tools useful for pursuing his less-than-noble ends.

Aleksandra Kurzak has a somewhat harsh, cutting timbre; the darkened color and emission make her a more combative than enamored *Tosca*, though certain phrases are delivered with soft messa di voce, such as “Ed io venivo a lui tutta dogliosa” (Act I). Yet in the second act, Kurzak also yields to an unpleasant, near-shouting emission in duets with Scarpia: musical moments evoking the so-called verismo school, completely absent in Puccini's score, where any outburst is expressed in declamation.

Measured performances from Claudio Ottino (Sacristan); routine-level decorum from Luciano Leoni (Angelotti), Francesco Napoleoni (Spoletta), Paolo Pecchioli (Sciarrone), Omar Cepparolli (Jailer), and Francesca Presepi (Shepherd).

The Festival Puccini Chorus and Children's Choir, trained respectively by Marco Faelli and Viviana Apicella, delivered an appreciable performance. On the podium, Giorgio Croci. Croci's interpretation was excessively slow, bordering on tedious, without agogic movement, broad breathing, or orchestral color emerging from the orchestration; the balance between pit and stage was constantly precarious. Croci also repeated a now-common error among conductors: pausing after “Recondita armonia” to allow the tenor a customary round of applause. While this may please the audience, it undermines the beautiful instrumental phrase following the aria, which concludes on “Facciam piuttosto il segno della Croce”. If Puccini did not insert a pause after the aria, there is surely a reason.

Alfonso Signorini signed the stage direction and costumes, the latter particularly elegant for *Tosca*. Signorini's vision is monumental, grandiose, and almost pharaonic, both in the design of the moving set (well executed by Juan Guillermo Nova) and in the action. His direction is over-the-top: at the beginning, Mario resembles more a house painter than a professional artist, using a roller typically meant for walls to apply a white stripe on an already finished painting of Attavanti; his line “Dammi i colori” addressed to the Sacristan loses its original meaning. The entrance of the people before the Te Deum vaguely recalls the analogous sequence in Luigi Magni's film *La Tosca* (1973); the huge (and disproportionate) monstrosity appearing just before the end of the first act evokes over-the-top special effects, like the immense cloud of incense—more like a fire—surrounding the moment: ill-judged choices that, instead of impressing, distort the scale and architectural proportions.

The second act feels like a fiction, with tasteless, risqué moments (the mimed, semi-assault of *Tosca* by Scarpia) and a visible torture scene inflicted on Cavaradossi in a corner of the stage, seemingly intended to provoke a voyeuristic fascination with the macabre. The third act bears no resemblance to Castel Sant'Angelo. The entire opera is staged under dark, somber lighting (carefully designed by Valerio Alfieri), emphasizing clerical obscurantism and a general sense of



A Scene from *Tosca* at the Puccini Festival
(Photo: Giorgio Andreuccetti)

claustrophobia.

The director received loud protests at the end; the audience applauded politely for the rest of an otherwise forgettable performance.

Vittorio Grigolo and Nino Machaidze Star in *La Bohème*, Directed by Ettore Scola

The second production of the Festival Puccini was *La Bohème*, staged under the direction of Ettore Scola in 2014, revived in 2021 and now overseen by Marco Scola Di Mambro, the late director's grandson; Di Mambro had assisted his grandfather back in 2014. Scola's direction retains a cinematic touch, offering a comprehensive view of the attic (first and fourth scenes), including the exterior of the building, adjacent streets, and streetlamps. The second and third scenes, however, respect tradition. The sets by Luciano Ricceri are very well crafted and functional, and the costumes by Cristina Da Rold are appropriate. Valerio Alfieri's lighting design is excellent.

When writing about *Tosca* on July 18, we noted the excessive duration of the performance due to various factors; now, *La Bohème* is even longer: interruptions began in the first scene due to light, intermittent rain, over which no mortal has control. To alleviate the wait for the stoic audience, Vittorio Grigolo (Rodolfo) stepped in. The tenor deserves praise for executing some witty, humorous ad-libs, entirely outside the score, which effectively lightened the mood and entertained the audience.

As a singer, Grigolo demonstrates notable intensity, with a metallic timbre lacking overtones; repeated portamentos (even unnotated) earn the audience's approval. His commitment is considerable—perhaps slightly overdone—leading to a few mishaps, such as at the end of the first scene.

Technical deficiencies were noticeable in Vittorio Prato (Marcello) and Antonio Di Matteo (Colline), while Italo Proferisce (Schaunard) performed with better decorum.

Nino Machaidze (Mimi) displayed uneven color at times; her timbre was slightly darkened, and her emission not always controlled, occasionally tending toward emphatic delivery at the expense of intonation, with a constant vibrato. The soprano showed a certain interpretive detachment, failing at times to fully convey the semantic meaning of the text, remaining distant from moments of pathos (third and fourth scenes).

Sara Blanch (Musetta) was lively and confident, able to shift convincingly from a flirtatious, provocative young woman (second scene) to a jealous and sarcastic character (third scene), and finally to altruistic and charitable (fourth scene).

The supporting cast was competent: Claudio Ottino, previously Sacristan in *Tosca* (July 18), performed a measured Benoît; Matteo Mollica (Alcindoro), Francesco Napoleoni (Pargignol), Francesco Auriemma (Sergeant), and Simone Simoni (Customs Officer) performed adequa-



Image from *La Bohème* in Torre del Lago
(Photo: Giorgio Andreuccetti)

tely.

Pier Giorgio Morandi conducted, confirming his meticulous approach previously noted in 2008 for *Edgar* at the Puccini Festival. Morandi maintained care in phrasing, allowing broad orchestral breathing and attention to dynamics; however, an unclear pause—whether deliberate or accidental—just before Mimi's death disrupted synchronization with the stage action.

The Festival Puccini Orchestra, Chorus, and Children's Choir (still under Marco Faelli and Viviana Apicella) delivered good results. The audience, though not as numerous as for the previous night, responded enthusiastically, even with the stage open.

Despite the Rain, *Turandot* Triumphs

"Ladies and gentlemen, good evening and welcome to the seventy-first edition of the Puccini Festival. Tonight you will witness the opera *Tosca*"... Upon this announcement by the speaker, the audience—a very large crowd—erupted in an immense, unanimous roar of disapproval, since the opera about to be performed was actually *Turandot*, not *Tosca*. After the necessary correction, followed by a loud, sardonic applause, Puccini's final opera began.

Perhaps the erroneous announcement foreshadowed an evening born under a bad star; or rather, under dark and threatening clouds: that mischievous Jupiter Pluvius prevented the staging of the third act, later salvaged through a rapid—albeit debatable—solution by the organizers. Therefore, our evaluation of the staging is limited to the first and second acts; a selection from the third act was presented semi-staged in the theater foyer, accompanied by piano (inexplicably an upright) played by Michi Tagasaki. Soloists and chorus, still in costume, concluded the opera—now unamplified—with Alfano's ending. This solution served more to satisfy the audience, eager to hear the "Vincerò" aria, take selfies, and record videos with the performers, than to adhere strictly to the artistic line: being close to *Turandot*'s premiere (April 25, 1926), it would have been more appropriate to conclude with Liù's death.

Gregory Kunde's Calaf is robust, with notable intensity and expressive portamenti and cadenzas; however, even Kunde shows signs of age. Yet his solid experience delivers a convincing Calaf in the first two acts; in the third, the tenor generously projects his voice, which resonates powerfully in the confined foyer (compared to the outdoor arena), fully winning over the audience.

Anna Pirozzi is *Turandot*. She approaches the role with decisiveness and undeniable professionalism: her voice is clear and evenly colored

across the range; the character is convincing, although the role seems slightly constraining—at the edge of her capabilities—especially in the second-act duet with Calaf. In the third act, like Kunde, her vocal delivery is stronger.

Carolina Lopez Moreno's Liù is interesting and worth revisiting: the soprano's timbre is slightly darkened; her technique requires further refinement. In the first-act aria, notes break on filati, and the messa di voce at the end is short and uncertain, though she performs much better in the third act.

The indestructible Michele Pertusi gives a satisfying performance as Timur, despite his brief stage presence. Sergio Vitale, Andrea Tanzillo, and Tiziano Barontini, as Ping, Pang, and Pong, are well-coordinated, skilled, and natural on stage, avoiding caricature. Massimiliano Pisapia plays Altoum. The remainder of the cast, including Luca Dall'Amico (Mandarin), Andrea Volpini (Prince of Persia), and Irene Celle and Maria Salvini (First and Second Handmaidens), perform with dignity. Renato Palumbo conducts with dignity; we would have preferred greater support for the orchestra and voices, along with more pronounced instrumental colors and more energetic transitions in certain passages. Nevertheless, Palumbo maintains balance between pit and stage. The Festival Puccini Chorus, directed by Marco Faelli, was somewhat uneven; the children's choir, under Chiara Mariani, was very well prepared. Alfonso Signorini's staging, assisted by Andrea Tocchio, was lavish, well-executed, and aesthetically pleasing. Signorini remains rooted in tradition, with a multifaceted vision of the opera: Carla Tolo-meo's excellent and moving sets clearly distinguish interior and exterior spaces, alternating close-ups with perspective views, where the vanishing line is the lake. This separation of spaces also highlights social stratification.

A curious and attention-grabbing element conceived by the direction: Liù—secretly—suggests the solution to the third riddle in Calaf's ear, an entirely new idea considering the character, invented by Puccini and his librettists, which could open interesting historical interpretations. The aesthetic balance between lavishness—which never becomes cloying—and the elegant, colorful costumes by Fausto Puglisi, along with Valerio Alfieri's excellent lighting, is remarkable.

Manu Lalli's *Green Butterfly*

The evening was virtually sold out, with an audience quick to give approval—sometimes misplaced and with the stage open—for every portamento or cadenza, however arbitrary, from the main performers. The main merit of this Puccini Festival is having engaged internationally renowned singers, already established on the global stage.

Vincenzo Costanzo returned as Pinkerton; we had previously heard him in the same role and on the same stage in summer 2022 (see *l'opera*, September 2022). The singer possesses a bright, though forced, timbre and delivers portamenti and cadenzas, yet his phrasing still leaves much to be desired; his emission is uncertain and not always perfectly in tune. Costanzo's stage presence, however, remains relaxed and commanding.

Unfortunately, Maria Agresta also experienced an off-night, despite her evident efforts to give her best. Both characters failed to convey much of their inner life.

Luca Micheletti (Sharpless) was elegant and measured on stage; his intensity was modest but he fulfilled his role with honest dignity. Chiara Mogini (Suzuki) navigated the role skillfully, particularly in the third act; however, her timbre leans more toward soprano than mezzo, despite her solid low notes. Nicola Pamio's Goro was misplaced and exaggerated.

The supporting cast performed within acceptable norms: Francesca

Paoletti (Kate), Andrea Tabili (Bonzo), Francesco Auriemma (Yakusidé), Manuel Pierattelli (Yamadori), Roberto Rabasco (Commissioner), and Francesco Lombardi (Registrar).

Francesco Ivan Ciampa's conducting left something to be desired; his interpretation was rather slow and monotonous, with frequent imbalance between pit and stage (first act). Orchestral colors were muted, and the chorus, led by Marco Faelli, lacked homogeneous sound and tuning.

Manu Lalli, who also designed the sets and costumes, revisited her 2020 direction, first created for the Puccini Festival and reviewed by us in 2022 (see *l'opera*, September 2022), adding some new variations. She maintains a "green" vision—using a term very much in vogue today—where the lush vegetation of the first act wilts in the second and third, symbolizing the need to care for nature: like *Butterfly*, if neglected, it dies. Valerio Alfieri's meticulously designed lighting brings out the spring and autumn forest colors; the addition of fireflies among the branches during the first-act duet evokes the Japanese concept of *hotaru*, a metaphor for passionate love.

These commendable ideas were, however, offset by gratuitous and inappropriate choices: introducing Gioia/Dolore (Valentin Dall'Amico Brambach) at the beginning of the second act, thus diminishing the impact of the subsequent coup de théâtre; superfluous extras performing semi-choreographed movements on the side of the main action and settings, unnecessary distractions that weighed down the overall vision.

Finally, the choice to have Pinkerton appear at the end of the third act, witnessing—unseen by *Butterfly*—her suicide, was questionable and daring. Why did Puccini and his librettists specify in the stage directions "Pinkerton (shouting from inside)", only to have him kneel in front of *Butterfly*'s body? Perhaps they envisioned him as remorseful and repentant.

The Triumph of Anna Netrebko

An exceptional concert took place on August 13 at the Gran Teatro di Torre del Lago. The undisputed star was Anna Netrebko, winner of the 56th "Premio Puccini," awarded on December 20, 2024. She was the protagonist in every sense, as Netrebko performed all the solo arias and duets.

Accompanied by tenor Martin Muehle and baritone Jérôme Boutillier, Netrebko highlighted her well-known vocal and interpretive qualities. The mezzosoprano Laura Verrecchia also appeared on the program, but in a minor supporting role as Amneris (Aida "La fata pietra" scene, duet, and finale). It is a pity she was not given more stage time, as we had noted her excellent performance as Suzuki in *Butterfly* (Puccini Festival, August 6, 2022) and as Isabella (Livorno, Teatro Goldoni, March 31, 2023). Her light vibrato does not compromise her performances, especially in Puccini.

"Vissi d'arte" (encored) was exemplary: breaths, phrasing, messa di voce, and filati combined into a performance of rare interpretive depth; in duets and trios, Netrebko again commanded the stage. Memorable were her portamenti, which in a full opera might disrupt the action, but in a concert setting created an extraordinary theatrical effect: the soprano's generosity emotionally captivated the audience. For example, in the encore "O mio babbino caro", the final A on the syllable "-tà" was sustained for four additional measures. Netrebko also conducted the entire concert like a true queen.

Martin Muehle's emission was monochromatic and slightly recessed; his Italian diction was not optimal, with some incorrect words (*Tosca* duet). Jérôme Boutillier showed somewhat muted intensity; in Frank's aria (*Le Villi*), the baritone sang precisely but with a slightly academic



A Moment from **Manon Lescaut** in Torre del Lago
(Photo: Giorgio Andreuccetti)

technique. Michelangelo Mazza conducted the evening optimally. The sold-out audience was ecstatic.

Manon Lescaut Closes the Festival, Starring Maria José Siri and Luciano Ganci

Manon Lescaut concluded the Puccini Festival. The production is the 2002 staging by Igor Mitoraj, who also designed the sets and costumes, now revived respectively by Luca Pizzi and Cristina Da Rold.

Maria José Siri debuted in the title role, unfortunately suffering a minor injury upon entering in the fourth act; despite this mishap, Siri, with a noble gesture of professionalism, completed the performance, visibly in pain, seated on a piece of the set. In the first three acts, the soprano demonstrated her professional skill and stage mastery, though she did not always succeed in *mezzecoci* and *filati*: a debut still to be consolidated and refined.

Luciano Ganci was unconvincing as Des Grieux, struggling in a role not entirely suited to him. Claudio Sgura, as Lescaut, also fell short: his brilliance was muted, and some notes were imprecise. Paolo Antognetti (Edmondo) performed correctly; the supporting cast included Giacomo Prestia (Geronte), Matteo Mollica (The Innkeeper), Nicola Palmio (Dance Master), Manuel Pierattelli (Lamplighter), Roberto Rabasco (Sergeant), and Omar Cepparolli (Commander). Alessandra Della Croce (Musician) showed serious technical and emission deficiencies. Valerio Galli conducted with caution, maintaining balance and cohesion between orchestra pit and stage. The Festival Puccini Orchestra delivered good sonorities.

The staging had already been analyzed in July 2002 during the 48th edition of the Torre del Lago festival (see *l'opera*, September 2002). Daniele De Plano revived it, adding a choreographic element—somewhat unnecessary—in the second act. Valerio Alfieri's lighting design was effective.

The conductor Galli and, especially, Maria José Siri received strong and enthusiastic applause from the audience.

July 13, 18, 19, 25; August 8 and 30 13-18-19-25 luglio, 8 e 30 agosto

By Pierfilippo Baraldi

Musical, Opera, or Operetta?

If it ran for only two months on Broadway in '56, it was not due to eccentricity of style, but rather to the still-effective corrosive power of old Voltaire: anti-American in the era of McCarthy; anti-Western, with cascading consequences today. The theatricality is decidedly Anglo-American, with that delightfully refined taste for the most extreme nonsense, yet musically all the spices come from the European pantry. Naturally, these are only impressions, recalled—not without sarcasm—by Bernstein's memory, almost as involuntary reflexes: the Venetian casino barcaroles, the parodically florid jewel aria, the sea storm, the earthquake, the surrender to the sentimental waltz (here Parisian, not Viennese, of knights without roses and ladies without... well) or the tango of a Spanish-flavored exoticism inevitably winking at Carmen.

Above all dominates Bernstein's sovereign melodicism, inexhaustible, generous, sunny, and joyous. It acts as an icebreaker for the Italian audience. Therefore, there is undeniably substance, both in the philosophical-literary source and in the musical writing, which is rare to find in so-called "commercial" musicals. Having failed to enter the house of success through the musical door, after a thousand rewrites and revivals it finally managed to sneak in through the window—albeit the opera window. This exposes it to the mortal risk of "operatization."

Let me explain. If there is something opera could learn from the musical (and there is), it is the professionalism with which musicals keep the flame of energy always alive on stage, lively and contagious. Woe to the bogged-down, hieratic style with built-in yawns that too often confirms the most tired clichés about opera. In the case of *Candide*, the vocal writing—generally focused on the middle register—does not require great opera singers, but mostly excellent singing actors. Perhaps exceptions are Cunegonde, generous with high notes; *Candide*, protagonist of the brief "lyric" passages; and the very high-tenor Governor. The baritone part of Pangloss (and others) occasionally ventures into the high register, but in character, consistency, and frequency, these can be resolved non-orthodoxly by an actor whose voice is not necessarily trained but, otherwise, in tune. Likewise for the Old Lady: I would choose character over sheer vocal power.

In short, musically almost anything can be forgiven, provided the acting is good and, for everyone, text intelligibility is more than suf-

Bologna: The Thousand Doubts of Candide in Its Local Premiere at the Comunale

ficient. Here in Bologna, where the title debuts, there is a tendency toward that sort of "operatization," perhaps intended (vainly) to cater to the tastes of the subscribing music-lover. Indeed, this "operatization" is inherent in the latest Scottish Opera 1988 revision—and it is by no means certain that, as the ultimate word, it is necessarily preferable.

Bernstein's exuberance translates into a rather noisy orchestration (not entirely his), so much so that one might, horrible dictu, suggest amplification of the soloists. Kevin Rhodes dominates it with sparkling pride, making it perfectly coherent in its obstinate paroxysm.

In the cast, Bruno Taddia shines in his quadruple role as Voltaire, the narrator, Cacambo (the Spanish-accented servant), Pangloss (the singing philosopher of the best of all possible worlds), and Martin (the singing janitor of the worst of all possible worlds). He delivers perhaps the highest moment of the musical (operetta, or whatever you prefer), and the most applauded: "Words, words, words," where even the words are Bernstein's. His talents: histrionic skill, excellent English and accent, rich, soft, and full voice.

Tetiana Zhuravel is a Cunegonde of fine presence and beautiful voice, never sharp though not impeccable in the expected high notes. The protagonist Marco Miglietta immediately shows himself as a true tenor, with a broad, well-projected voice, but unfortunately also with some quirks that, if forgiven in opera, are somewhat distracting in this role. Arms at the sides or outstretched, hand clenched or on the heart—a gestural repertoire that can become a burden.

David Astorga is solid, covering five roles including the Governor and Vanderdendur, with straightforward tenor voice and charming stage presence. Madelyn Renée's Old Lady works well, more through clear diction and acting than vocal weight. Also notable in the strong cast are Aloisa Aisemberg's brilliant Paquette and Felix Kemp's fluid Maximilian.

The production, with sets by Mauro Tinti and costumes by Danilo Coppola, has elegance and visual sobriety, despite everything that happens on stage. Renato Zanella's direction, also choreographer, runs smoothly: he imagined all of *Candide*'s (mis)adventures as initiation trials devised by the clever Cunegonde, in league with Pangloss, to make him mature and worthy of her love.

Yet who knows whether the lack of reception of contemporary Anglo-American musical theater in Europe, especially in Italy, is due to the physiological conservatism of the Empire's peripheral areas, a conscious rejection of the cultural colonialism of the victors (but what about cinema back then?), or simply general lazy indolence. In any case, it should not be underestimated.

July 8



Image from *Candide* in Bologna
(Photo: Andrea Ranzi)

By Silvia Campana

The Irresistible Cunning of Figaro

It is not so easy nowadays to attend productions that combine fidelity to the score with a robust sense of musical theater. This element is always significant, but it becomes particularly crucial during the summer season, when theater programming often moves from traditional venues to outdoor spaces that can combine the coolness of summer nights (increasingly a chimera year by year) with the evocative power of the location. Savona, in this respect, can take advantage of a prestigious and monumental structure such as the imposing Priamar Fortress overlooking the sea.

For years now, the Teatro dell'Opera Giocosa has offered an interesting program there and, in its new production, has successfully reconciled all the brilliance and contagious charm of a beloved masterpiece such as G. Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Through a reading that is anything but trivial yet firmly anchored in an original and coherent directorial vision, Renato Bonajuto, in dynamic collaboration with Artemio Cabassi (a master in creating costumes with their own theatrical signature), presents an engaging interpretation of the work. This is achieved through a skillful combination of virtuosic use of projections—brilliantly executed and effectively evoking the sense of live theater with particular and delightful backstage details—and expert work with ensembles and individual performers.

The courtyard of the fortress is fully exploited through a series of movements which, in their simple effectiveness, highlight the natural brilliance of the score without weighing down the dramaturgy; on the contrary, they underscore its structure with inventive flair. Equally interesting and effective is the idea of moving the Overture before the scene at Rosina's house, treating everything that precedes it as



Images from *The Barber of Seville* at the Priamar Fortress in Savona

Savona: The Barber of Seville in Renato Bonajuto's clear-cut direction, conducted by Giovanni Di Stefano

a kind of prologue to the actual dramatic action.

The careful attention to character development—never ridiculed with contrived gags but explored in every nuance—delivers each character in their typicity, making them perfect drivers of sophisticated comic theater.

Overall, the young cast was balanced and confident on stage. Manuel Amati, with a beautiful timbre, portrayed a brilliant and vain Almaviva with expressive charm. Paolo Ingrassiotta excelled as Figaro, fully convincing with his interesting vocal qualities, measured energy, and consistently communicative theatricality. Angela Schisano, as Rosina, displayed a remarkable instrument, allowing her to effectively shape her character.

Matteo D'Apolito was excellent, conveying to his elegant Don Bartolo the sharp pomposity characteristic of the role, without resorting to banal counter-scenes that often prove counterproductive for both character and production. Giovanni Battista Parodi's Don Basilio was imposing, while Claudia Belluomini's Berta was successful in voice and stage presence. Michelangelo Ferri also did well as Fiorello.

The Chorus of the Teatro dell'Opera Giocosa, conducted by the talented Gianluca Ascheri, was solid. Giovanni Di Stefano led the Voxonus Orchestra with professionalism and engagement. Enthusiastic applause at the end greeted all the performers and the conductor of this brilliant production, which, for its professionalism and artistic care, deserves to be staged in other evocative venues across Italy.

June 29



TEATRO ARCIMBOLDI

SUPPORTED BY
BCC MILANO

Corso costumi teatrali

Fondazione Ezio Frigerio e Franca Squarciapino

20-24 OTTOBRE 2025
24-28 NOVEMBRE 2025

A photograph of a woman with short brown hair, wearing a patterned sweater, and a man with white hair and glasses, wearing a dark shirt. They are both looking down at a large, textured, light-colored object, possibly a costume or a prop, in a workshop or studio setting with shelves in the background.

A Milano, nella prestigiosa cornice del Teatro degli Arcimboldi, sei giorni di Corso intensivo con Franca Squarciapino, Oscar per i migliori Costumi per il film *Cyrano de Bergerac*, inquadrato in una razionale visione didattica arricchita che rappresenta un'opportunità straordinaria per chi intenda intraprendere con serietà lo studio della preparazione dei Costumi per lo Spettacolo.

Foto © Andrea Tamoni - Teatro alla Scala

INFORMAZIONI E ISCRIZIONI

Opera Promotion Via Giovanni Scheiwiller n°7 – 20139 Milano Tel. + 39 352 0953649 - e-mail: corsiarcimboldi@gmail.com

By [Andrea Merli](#)

Anna Netrebko, Super Diva at the Chorégies

*Orange: Star-studded cast for *Il Trovatore*, conducted by Jader Bignamini*

At the ancient Roman Theatre of Orange, where an intense musical activity takes place, the most delectable highlight of the season arrived: *Il Trovatore*. This followed a concert evening featuring the Marseille Philharmonic Orchestra in the symphony from *Le Roy d'Ys* by Édouard Lalo—which truly deserves to be performed in Italy as well—the Concerto Op. 74 for harp and orchestra by Glière, and Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, all under the enthusiastic and intense guidance of its principal conductor, Michele Spotti.

Verdi's masterpiece relied on the magnetic presence of diva Anna Netrebko, accompanied by the highly commendable tenor Yusif Eyvazov and the equally talented Marie-Nicole Lemieux. The production also featured the capable Conte di Luna of Russian baritone Aleksei Isaev and the St. Petersburg bass Grigory Shkarupa as Ferrando, all under the direction of the excellent Jader Bignamini. Notable contributions came from Vincenzo Di Nocera as tenor Ruiz, Stefano Arnaudo as the Old Gypsy, and especially the superb Ines, sung by soprano Claire de Montiel—the same who substituted Marina Rebeka in Cherubini's *Medea* at La Scala.

Although this was a “concertante” version, it was in fact guided by an anonymous yet diligent and appreciative directorial hand. Beyond the evocative images projected onto the Roman ruins, which effectively illustrated the settings of the various scenes—from the nocturnal castle of the first act, to the camp, and finally to the gloomy prison—the movements of the outstanding Chorégies chorus, complemented by the Opéra Grand Avignon, were essential and well-paced, under the baton of Kira Parfeevets and coordinated by Stefano Visconti. The entrances and exits of the soloists were precise and appropriate, with performers interacting admirably even in the absence of full sets. Vincent Cussey's lighting ideally completed the experience, demonstrating that, in contrast to the absurdities imposed by some directors seeking personal acclaim (disregarding libretto and music), these minimalist versions allow the audience to focus more fully on musical and vocal elements, while enabling soloists to give their best performance.

Men wore tuxedos, the chorus was strictly in black, and the three women showcased their individual costumes: Azucena in a flaming red dress; Ines first in blue and then in black in the convent scene; Leonora initially in an elegant moss-green gown with a wide flowing train, then in a long, low-cut China blue dress in the second part of the opera. As is now customary, the four acts were presented together. At the helm, Jader Bignamini delivered a brilliant and nimble interpretation, demonstrating great familiarity with the score, presented almost in its



Image from *Il Trovatore* in Orange
(Photo: G. Grommelle)

entirety, including all cabalettas and “pira,” while carefully respecting the staging and singing requirements, and skillfully projecting the voices in the open-air setting—which, although acoustically excellent, is inevitably dispersive without a proper orchestra pit, unlike the Arena di Verona. The result was a passionate direction enthusiastically received by the audience, both in moments of tension—such as the finale of the first act, the second-act climax following a dreamlike “Sei tu dal ciel disceso,” which seemed truly celestial, and the march at the start and end of the camp scene in the third act—and in lyrical passages like “A sì ben mio” and the elegiac “D’amor sull’ali rosee,” which opened a fourth act of rare intensity.

The enthusiasm was, of course, predictable given the leading couple: she, with virtually unparalleled skill, delivered a performance of astonishing breath control and vocal beauty, always secure in the high register, with a mid-to-low range free from strain. Alongside her miraculous technique was her artistry: passionate, engaged, attentive to the sung word, measured in phrasing, and incisive in accent—a truly magnetic presence for beauty, charisma, and charm.

Yusif Eyvazov delivered a vocally powerful Manrico. The “pira,” a challenge for many, was handled with incredible ease and naturalness, producing ringing high Cs, especially on the fateful “All’armi!” His contribution went beyond high notes and volume, demonstrating mastery in a singing style that embraced all dynamics, from piano to fortissimo, supported by meticulous phrasing, precise interpretative intentions, and stylistic awareness.

Marie-Nicole Lemieux gave a beautiful performance as Azucena, easily reaching the high notes while avoiding an accentuation (“or”) in the second-act duet with Manrico, and culminating in a brilliant high note at the opera’s conclusion. Her voice, with a soprano-like timbre but strong and well-produced center and low registers, was equally remarkable in her expressive phrasing and powerful temperament.

Baritone Aleksei Isaev gave a solid Conte di Luna, with only a few minor slips (“rospino” in two or three points—ah, singing outdoors carries risks), yet still fully matched his colleagues’ level. Originally scheduled for Ferrando was Riccardo Zanellato; Grigory Shkarupa performed the role with honor. The performance was a resounding success.

Image of **Louise** at the Aix Festival
(Photo Monika Rittershaus)

By **Andrea Merli and Albert Garriga Puig**

Stories of Women from the Baroque to the Twentieth Century

Louise was once a repertory opera, when it first saw the spotlight at the Opéra-Comique in Paris (February 2, 1900), achieving great success, including in Italy, in the rhythmic translation by Amintore Galli with which it debuted at the Teatro Lirico in Milan (April 4, 1901). Modern performances are extremely rare. In Italy, one must go back to November 1977 (Teatro Verdi in Trieste, Ulysse Santicchi, sets and costumes, Giulio Chazallettes, direction, conducted by Bruno Bartoletti, Italian version, starring Adriana Maliponte, Giorgio Merighi, Paolo Washington, Rosa Laghezza as the Mother). It has been heard at the Théâtre de l'Archevêché, in the original "shortened" version by the composer himself: it is an opera that urgently needs to return to the repertoire. Charpentier's writing, who also penned the libretto, is fascinating in its treatment of "Wagnerian" themes while maintaining an unmistakable, recognizable identity. This is not an opera limited to the famous aria *Depuis le jour*, the staple of all the most prestigious "prima donnas"; it is rich in ideas, portrayed through engaging music, at times raw but more often dreamy, where the protagonist—a character of shocking modernity for the time—determined to obtain her freedom, including sexual, and free herself from the oppressive family and social conventions (let us not forget Charpentier was an anarchist!), is counterbalanced by the true antagonist: the "Ville Lumière," repeatedly evoked both in the text and, above all, in the music: a center of attraction, a place of perdition for the father-master, a beacon of freedom for the young lovers.

Fundamental in this new production, in collaboration with the Opéra de Lyon, Palazzetto Bru Zane – Center for French Romantic Music in Venice, and the Théâtre national de l'Opéra-Comique, is the di-

Aix-en-Provence: Elsa Dreisig is the outstanding performer of Charpentier's Louise, upended by Christof Loy's staging

rection entrusted to Giacomo Sagripanti; he captured the spirit with an inspired, engaging reading, of tight rhythm, leading the chorus and orchestra of the Opéra de Lyon, with chorus master Benedict Kearns, the children's voices of the Bocche del Rodano guided by Samuel Coquard, and the band formed by the Orchestre des Jeunes de la Méditerranée.

The list of roles participating in the morning first scene of the second act, in the tailor's workshop where Louise works, and then in Montmartre, the "sacred hill," during the second scene's party, is endless, and it is probably what justifies its absence from the stage, somewhat like Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*. Noteworthy, in the cameo of *La Balayeuse*, is Annick Massis, a precious presence. Equally skilled, among others, are Camille Croux as Irma, Carol Garcia as Gertrude, a marchand d'habits and *Papa dei Pazzi* by Grégoire Mour, *Le Gavroche* and the *Apprentice* by Céleste Pinel.

The main roles certainly concern the Mother, a slightly worn but functional voice for the character, sung by mezzo-soprano Sophie Koch, who also plays the atelier director; the Father, also in the role of the *Chiffonnier*, who, not coincidentally, mourns his lost daughter, sung by bass Nicolas Courjal, with a sonorous, full, and slightly rough voice required by the possessive character. Finally, Julien, here also taking on the role of the gallant Nightwatchman, sung by English tenor



Moment from **La Calisto** at Aix-en-Provence (Photo Monika Rittershaus)



Adam Smith, who undoubtedly has the physique du rôle for the part of the robust lover, with a generous voice, proper temperament, and very precise phrasing; he might need to adjust the high notes, which sound open and often shouted.

It goes without saying that to stage the opera, one must rely on an excellent lead: the brilliant Elsa Dreisig, French-Danish soprano, seemed ideal. A lyric voice of fine quality, with dramatic crescendos during the performance, she delivered a stunning rendition of the famous aria—by the way, the opera has no “closed numbers,” explaining the lack of applause between scenes—and seemed perfect, both interpretively and vocally, to embody the soul of this rebellious girl who emancipates herself, even fleeing home in the final scene. Here, the bittersweet notes begin: Christof Loy’s staging, counting on a single set effectively designed by Etienne Pluss, the atrium of a psychiatric hospital revealed practically only at the end, the costumes—around the 1950s—by Robby Duiveman, lighting by Valerio Tiberi, and inevitably the dramaturgy by Louis Geisler. The original plot, which scandalized the 1900 audience, is practically changed for the absolute contemporary relevance of the story, to the point that many felt “cheated” by the absence of period costumes, in the story of a paranoid girl, led by overprotective parents to a public psychiatric facility. Thus, the entire action is the product of Louise’s disturbed imagination, including her incestuous relationship with her father (the myth of Myrrha, to be precise), and her “escape” is simulated as suicide: instead of running away, she throws herself out the hospital window, a modern Tosca! Darkness in the hall at the father’s cry: “Louise!” and when the lights return, on the final chords, the family is complete, with the poor disturbed girl leaving; the psychologist is actually Julien’s alter ego, existing only in the protagonist’s disturbed imagination.

Loy’s directorial work is very well executed, both for character development and stage movements, as one audience member rightly noted on leaving: “For once that Louise is performed, it would be desirable to see, as well as hear it, in its original dramaturgical version.” Perfectly agreed.

Calisto does not forgive

The fifteenth title in a long list of at least 32, *La Calisto* belongs to the full maturity of Francesco Cavalli, the most prolific opera composer of the 17th century. Based on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* with a libretto by Giovanni Faustini, poet and impresario of Teatro Sant’Apollinare in Venice, *La Calisto* premiered on November 28, 1651, and quickly gained fame as a “cursed” opera due to the sudden death of the librettist and one of the performers during the show, which forced Cavalli to make some modifications. The “drama for music in a prologue and three acts” is undoubtedly the most famous and performed among the composer’s works.

After the rediscovery of the original, starting from the 1970 edition at the Glyndebourne Festival under the direction of Raymond Leppard, starring Cotrubas, the opera gained considerable popularity, thanks also to the 1994 version directed by René Jacobs with Maria Bayo as Calisto and the Genoese baritone Marcello Lippi as Jupiter: it toured half of Europe; I myself attended it at the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya in Barcelona. The libretto, rich in witty ideas and plot twists, essentially portrays the prevailing licentiousness in the Venetian Republic.

All this is barely visible in the elegant, austere, and pleasant staging (at the Théâtre de l’Archevêché) by Dutch director Jetske Mijnsen. In reality, in the practically single, though rotating, set by Julia Katharina Berndt, with precious 18th-century costumes by Hannah Clark, lighting by Matthew Richardson, choreography by Dustin Klein, and, could it be missing?, dramaturgy by Kathrin Brunner, we witness what some, with certain presumption, call a “costume concert.” Movement is not absent, but the lack of character development flattens the interpretation, even musically and dramatically. Finally, the feminist idea of having Calisto stab Jupiter, with a finale reminiscent of *Götterdämmerung*, with the protagonist, a new Brünhilde, ascending the celestial throne, inexplicably disrupts everything.

The musical part, however, was very pleasant and well received. The orchestral ensemble Ensemble Correspondances led by Sebastien Daucé delivered a reading full of pathos, yet witty, with excellent rhythm and attention to the voices on stage. Among the skilled per-



The story of Billy Budd
(Photo Monika Rittershaus)

formers were two Italians, perfectly suited to their roles: mezzos Anna Bonitatibus (Juno and Eternity in the brief prologue) and Giuseppina Bridelli. Perfect in the role, both as the amorous Zeus and in disguise as Diana, was Californian bass Alex Rosen, with a rounded, well-emitted voice. Excellent, though very different in vocal color and character, were the poetic Endymion, sung by countertenor Paul-Antoine Bénois-Djian, and the Satyr, also Destiny in the prologue and then Fury, by Théo Imart, with a very penetrating voice. Correct was American bass-baritone Douglas Ray Williams, in the roles of Silvano and later Fury, substituting Bolivian José Coca Loza; the British baritone Dominic Sedgwick was an appreciable Mercury; the Texan tenor David Portillo, Nature in the prologue and then Bread and Fury, and the hilarious American tenor Zachary Wilder as the dissatisfied Linfea, both performed very well. Finally, making her debut in this complicated story of misunderstandings, the 24-year-old soprano from Perpignan, Lauranne Oliva, was simply exquisite for vocal freshness, delightful on stage, and endowed with a temperament that will open doors to a vast repertoire. The audience, stingy with applause between scenes, showed genuine and warm enthusiasm at the final curtain call of this second performance.

Between Future and Memory

Among the world premieres at the 2025 Aix-en-Provence Festival, *The Story of Billy Budd, Sailor*, staged at the Théâtre du Jeu de Pau-me, emerged as the most inspired, moving, and daring opera of the



edition. It is not a simple reduction of Britten's famous score, but a true reinvention by British composer Oliver Leith, in deep dialogue with the original text, driven by a radically contemporary vision. Reduced to its dramatic and expressive skeleton, the opera presents itself as a stage ritual of strong intensity. Britten's imposing symphonic machinery gives way to a chamber formation with keyboards and percussion; the choirs disappear, and the small cast assumes multiple roles on an almost empty stage. A light bulb, a wig, a table. Every gesture matters, every silence vibrates. Leith's score, hypnotic and rich in acoustic and atmospheric colors, creates a rarefied sound environment, full of suspense and tension.

Conductor Finnegan Downie Dear transforms this writing into a pulsating narrative flow, capable of moving without emphasis, with rare poetic precision. The three keyboardists and the percussionist, together with the theatrical gesture, become an integral part of the story. On stage, Ted Huffman's direction moves like a ritual choreography: minimalist but full of meaning. Desire, guilt, and exclusion emerge in all their strength without rhetorical excess. The homoerotic subtext, so central in Britten, here manifests naturally and with political clarity, never becoming a manifesto. Young baritone Ian Rucker embodied a luminous and devastating Billy Budd, with great vocal freshness and emotional tension. Joshua Bloom, in the double roles of Claggart and Dansker, impressed with versatility and stage presence. Christopher Sokolowski offered a fragile, vulnerable Vere, capable of commanding the stage with contained intensity. The rest of the cast, composed of young artists from the Voice Residency, completed a cohesive and rigorous ensemble.

More than a revival, *The Story of Billy Budd, Sailor* is a statement of intent—a work that does not celebrate Britten, but interrogates, translates, and reinvents him for our time. In a festival often divided between tradition and experimentation, this creation demonstrated that true innovation comes from essentiality and dramatic truth.

Tribute to Pierre Audi

The 2025 Aix-en-Provence Festival was marked by deep emotion and collective gratitude. Just weeks after his passing, on July 6, the Grand Théâtre de Provence hosted a moving tribute to Pierre Audi, a central figure in transforming the festival into an international platform for creation, reflection, and cultural dialogue. Numerous artists, friends, and institutional representatives participated, alternating words, music, and silences. Among the most touching contributions were Peter Sellars, recalling Audi's radical ethics and human generosity, and Claus Guth, emphasizing his vision of theater as collective construction, always serving thought. Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General, evoked his commitment to an opera connected to the contemporary world, citing works such as *Innocence*, *Resurrection*, or *L'Amour de loin* as examples of his support for new voices, memory, and interculturality.

The tribute alternated with moments of intense musical poetry: Wagner's *Siegfried-Idyll* conducted by Simon Rattle, elegies by Rossini and Saariaho performed by Anna Bonitatibus and Stéphane Degout, Wagnerian *Träume* in Nina Stemme's voice, and an aria by William Webb performed by countertenor Paul-Antoine Bénos-Djian. In line



Don Giovanni
(Photo Monika Rittershaus)

with this legacy, the festival also received the 2025 Birgit Nilsson Prize, awarded for the first time to an institution rather than an individual. The award, accompanied by a one-million-dollar prize, highlights the exemplary role of the Aix Festival in promoting contemporary creation, musical excellence, and building bridges between cultures—all elements that defined Pierre Audi's artistic vision.

Opera, but not too much

With a radically different aesthetic, *The Nine Jewelled Deer* was presented at the LUMA space in Arles as a new spiritual opera, inspired by a Buddhist fable and focused on themes of sacrifice and compassion. However, the stage experience is much closer to a performative ceremony than a traditional opera. Peter Sellars conceived a symbolic and ritualistic direction, made of slow gestures, stillness, and evocative set design, but lacking true dramatic tension or narrative construction. The performance remained suspended in a contemplative and rarefied dimension, without conflict or scenic development, often leaving a sense of stasis and distance.

Sivan Eldar's music, performed by a refined instrumental ensemble, offered moments of genuine sonic beauty, thanks to the performers' quality and the skillful use of textures. Real-time electronics (IRCAM, Agustin Muller) helped create a dreamlike, floating atmosphere but did not support a recognizable narrative arc. The two lead voices dominated the stage with great expressive power: Ganavya Doraiswamy impressed with a shamanic presence and dark, hypnotic timbre; Aruna Sairam added spiritual depth and resonances from the Carnatic tradition. Together, they embodied the opera's ritual heart, more than true theatrical characters.

Ultimately, it was a proposal consistent with the Aix Festival's focus on contemporary creation and intercultural dialogue, but it ended up in a self-referential aesthetic, more contemplative than theatrical.

Scenes from **Siegfried** at the Wagner Festival (Photo by Enrico Nawrath)

By Attilio Moro

Wagner between great voices and bizarre stagings

High quality and little comfort. And the spectators pay for the enjoyment of the performance—of which they have the privilege to be part—with back pain (wooden chairs, cramped spaces). High quality, yes. But one must always reckon with the uncertainty of the staging, with directors increasingly tempted by the sensational and less and less bound by respect for the work or even simply by good taste. Even in this *Siegfried* by Valentin Schwarz there were some false notes. Some bizarre and unconvincing ideas. Like when Schwarz transforms Fafner, the dragon Siegfried kills, into a terminally ill patient lying in a hospital bed, with an IV in his arm and a nurse at his side... Or when he places a submachine gun in Mime's hands, and a pistol in Wotan's. Or sits Siegfried at a table with a bowl and chopsticks: an extravagance meant to allude to something, but hard to say to what. ... But the sets are beautiful and well balanced.

Siegfried is Klaus Vogt, the Wagnerian tenor par excellence. Others may on occasion do better in the role, but Vogt is Siegfried, as Pavarotti was Calaf, or Callas was Medea. Intense, precise, with a velvety or crystalline voice, swift changes of timbre, he sings to perfection “Ehi Mime, bist du so...”, though the staging made him more of a braggart than a mystical visionary. Brünnhilde (Katherine Foster) does not appear lying in the shrine where she sleeps surrounded by magic fire, but standing, motionless, wrapped in a long white bandage, like a mummy, and watched over by a bodyguard. Siegfried awakens her by eluding the guard and laboriously unrolling the long bandage: a beautiful idea, full of pathos and scenically effective.

Bayreuth: the Festival between Modernity and Tradition

Finally, the love duets of the finale—Brünnhilde's “Oh kindischer Held...” and Siegfried's “Lachend erwachst...” —are sublime. Wotan (Tomasz Konieczny), in business suit and with the air of a financier or generic wheeler-dealer, loses the hieratic charm of the Wanderer, but sings with the right tones the sorrowful resignation and the lurking cupio dissolvi of the character. Victoria Randem is the Woodbird, astonishing in the impossible vocal runs of her chirping; very convincing too was Mime (Chung Huang), treacherous, hypocritical; he sings with a distorted voice (as befits the character) “Als zullendes Kind...” and fills the stage with great expressive power and incredible agility.

Simone Young conducted the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra with precision. And after 149 years, she became the first woman to break the male taboo of conducting a Wagner opera at Bayreuth.

Parsifal

Parsifal is Bayreuth. Performed here more than 100 times, there is no Festival without *Parsifal*. Wagner wanted his last opera, the one he cherished like a late-born child, never to leave Bayreuth. And his heirs, for as long as they could, made sure his wish was respected. Then, once the copyright expired, *Parsifal* traveled the world. But it has always returned to Bayreuth, faithfully every year. Now, regarding this *Parsifal* by Jay Scheib, it is understandable

Moments from **Parsifal** in Bayreuth
(Photo by Enrico Nawrath)



that every director wants to leave his mark. And Scheib certainly left a lot of his. First of all, so-called Augmented Reality, or Hyper-reality, which, by magnifying details with superimposed images, brutally digs into every fold and even into the wrinkles of the singers. Three hundred spectators (I was not among them) were given special glasses with which they could “enter” the show (so I was told). And frankly, I felt no envy: I believe the audience must remain the audience if the performance is to remain a performance.

Scheib’s second surprise was the destruction of the Grail. In the final scene, instead of revealing the Grail so that its light may redeem Amfortas and the community of Knights, Parsifal hurls it to the ground, shattering it into pieces. The director’s sacrilegious intent is obvious: having lost the sense of the sacred, modern man has destroyed all Grails. But the gesture comes across as risky and also a little banal.

Apart from this, Scheib did well. Magnificent is the garden scene of Kundry, with the sensuality of a tropical forest, a perfect harmony of music, colors, singing, and the dance of the flower-maidens. By contrast, effectively stark and desolate is the desert of the third act, where Amfortas and the Knights, waiting for the Redeemer, drag themselves about like ghosts. With a sinister tracked vehicle topped by cannons looming on the scene.

Ekaterina Gubanova is Kundry, and she managed to convey the full complexity of one of Wagner’s most accomplished, contradictory, and tormented characters. She held up the entire second act without faltering, precise, her mezzo-soprano voice rich in vibration, her stage presence monumental, tragically intense like

Medea, perfidious and sensual like Alcina. And her moving redemption at the end of the drama, when, in the guise of a penitent, loosening her hair with which she dries Parsifal’s feet, she sings with a broken voice “Dienen... dienen...”.

Also excellent was Klingsor (Jordan Shanahan), pure malice and Luciferian grandeur, singing “Die Zeit ist da” at the beginning of the second act with a rich timbre and expressionist theater-like





Images from **Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg** (Photo by Enrico Nawrath)

gestures, reminiscent, one might say, of Berlin cabaret of the 1920s.

Amfortas is Michael Volle, a Bayreuth veteran: simply moving when, with resigned pathos, he drags himself in the third act with arms outstretched toward his father's corpse, singing "Mein Vater! Hochgesegneter der Helden...". Parsifal is Andreas Schager. A great Wagnerian tenor, with a clear, powerful voice, versatile in timbres and volumes, he magnificently sustained the role

throughout the three acts, with just one drop in voice when, on stage with Gurnemanz, he sang "Ich sah sie welken...". Understandable. At Bayreuth one comes to sing, and this was his third evening in a row...

The others all did well: experienced and at the top of their game. The orchestra, conducted by Pablo Heras Casado, was impeccable: precise entrances, a perfect alternation of winds and violins in the Prelude, which splendidly introduces the musical themes that then intertwine throughout the three acts.

Seventeen minutes of applause.

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg is pure enjoyment.





l'opera
INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

ROBERTO ALAGNA GIULIANA DISTEFANO BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS

Un viaggio attraverso la Canzone Napoletana, Siciliana e Italiana

SEASON 2026

CARNEGIE HALL, NEW YORK
TEATRO MASSIMO, PALERMO
TEATRO ANTICO DI TAORMINA
TEATRO LA VALLETTA DI MALTA

By **Fabiana Crepaldi**

The stars of the **Italian Opera Gala Recital** at the Municipal Theatre of São Paulo (Photo José Luiz)



Cia Ópera São Paulo celebrates its 35th season

A special week for opera lovers in São Paulo. On the initiative of the Consulate General of Italy in São Paulo and the Italian Cultural Institute of São Paulo, the two proposed performances were part of the 35th season of Cia Ópera São Paulo, created in 1991 by the tenor and producer Paulo Esper, general director of the company, based on the idea of his teacher, the baritone Gino Bechi. Esper celebrated forty years of a successful career, which in 2022 earned him the title of Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy for his services to Italian opera in Brazil. Over these four decades, he has served as a jury member in important singing competitions in Italy and around the world. The premiere of the Trilogy coincided with Esper's 2,000th performance.

The Theatro Municipal hosted a Gala with two internationally renowned Italian soloists: Simone Piazzola and Laura Verrecchia.

The Gala began with three famous chamber pieces: *A vucchella* and *L'alba separa dalla luce l'ombra* by Pier Paolo Tosti, and *La Danza* by Gioachino Rossini. Through these pieces, the audience had their first encounter with baritone Simone Piazzola, soprano Greta Cipriani, and mezzo-soprano Laura Verrecchia. On piano, Daniel Gonçalves, one of Brazil's leading accompanists, supported them with confidence and musicality throughout the gala.

Cipriani also performed "Pace, pace, mio Dio" from Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*, which was somewhat too dramatic for the young soprano's lyrical timbre, and "Vissi d'arte" from Puccini's *Tosca*, with which she won over the audience through her sensitive interpretation. As soon as she took the stage, Laura Verrecchia impressed with her extroverted personality. The program offered a panorama of the mezzo-soprano's repertoire. It began with Rossini (*La Danza* and

São Paulo: grand celebration of opera with Laura Verrecchia, Simone Piazzola, Greta Cipriani

"Una voce poco fa" from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), the composer who marked the first decade of the singer's career, and moved on to pieces with dramatic vocal lines: "Voi lo sapete o mamma" from Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and "O don fatale" from Verdi's *Don Carlo*, indicative of the repertoire toward which the young artist is moving.

While in Rossini *Verrecchia* demonstrated vocal control and a highly personal interpretation, she shone in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Don Carlo*. She particularly excelled in the aria of Princess Eboli, which she performed with impeccable verve, using all the resources of her incandescent voice. It was one of the highlights of the gala.

For lovers of *Don Carlo*, another magical moment of the gala was the death scene of Rodrigo, performed by Simone Piazzola, a baritone of clear fame. The wind support in the finale of "Son io, mio Carlo" was remarkable. In "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata," Piazzola demonstrated perfect mastery of Verdi's text. He closed his performance with "Nemico della patria" from Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*: a masterclass in verismo singing.

The program also included two duets. Piazzola and Verrecchia displayed the vigor and warmth of their voices in "Turiddu mi tolse l'onore" from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. With Cipriani, Piazzola performed "Mira d'acerbe lagrime... tu mia, tu mia" from the final act of Verdi's *Il Trovatore*.



Scenes from the **Verdi Trilogy**
at the Teatro Sérgio Cardoso
(Photo Adriano Escanhuela)

Great success for the Verdi Trilogy directed by Davide Garattini Raimondi

At Teatro Sérgio Cardoso, the Verdi Trilogy debuted with the IV Scene from *Il Trovatore*, the III Act from *Rigoletto*, and *La Traviata*.

The Trilogy began with the final act of *Il Trovatore*, following a well-deserved tribute to Paulo Esper's career. The inspired direction of Davide Garattini Raimondi gave the production fluidity, sensitivity, and a suitably intimate touch. The refined set design by Giorgia Massetani—unchanged across the three operas, only repositioning the stage objects—opted for light structures and pale colors, allowing Raimondi's lighting to change the mood of each scene.

The two duets were highlights not only of *Il Trovatore* but of the evening. In "Mira d'acerbe lagrime," the velvety-voiced Leonora, soprano Joyce Martins, faced the expressive and musically confident Conte di Luna, baritone Vinicius Atique, a Brazilian singer with remarkable vocal resources. The other duet, passionate and incandescent, was "Che! Non m'inganno" between Leonora and Manrico, performed by tenor Richard Bauer, who has a heartbreaking voice and is a faithful follower of the Italian singing tradition.

Mezzo-soprano Nathália Serrano displayed consistent singing and timbre in both the roles of Azucena and Maddalena in the final act of *Rigoletto*, where the delicate and captivating Gilda, played by Raquel Paulin, contrasted beautifully with Rodolfo Giugliani's voice. Giugliani, blessed with a rare voice, masterfully handled the nuances of Verdi's phrasing, earning admiration in the role of *Rigoletto*. Also participating were tenor Alan Faria (Duke of Mantua) and bass Gianluca Braghin (Sparafucile).

In the third act of *La Traviata*, Garattini brought the already-deceased Leonora and Gilda on stage during the prelude to announce

Violetta's imminent death and ensure cohesion in the production. Excellent performers included Thayana Roverso in the title role, Daniel Umbelino, currently a member of the Teatro Regio di Torino ensemble, as Alfredo, and Vinicius Atique returning as Giorgio Germont, a role he had performed in 2023 in an acclaimed production at Theatro Municipal in Rio de Janeiro. Umbelino's impeccable phrasing was complemented by Roverso's expressive and light singing, portraying a fragile and agitated Violetta in her final moments.

The Santo André Symphony Orchestra was conducted by the experienced Abel Rocha, one of the few conductors specializing in operatic repertoire active in Brazil. This expertise translated into confident, dynamic, and nuanced direction, with particular attention to the singers, allowing the performance to flow perfectly.

Finally, I want to emphasize the merits of such a bold and unprecedented production in Latin America as this Verdi Trilogy. Beyond offering the audience the pleasure and enchantment of Verdi's music, it allowed a large cast of Brazilian artists to perform under the guidance of competent professionals like Garattini, Rocha, and Esper.



By Sabino Lenoci

Three Women in the Mirror

We asked the three protagonists of this unique show, Raquel Paulin (Gilda), Tayana Roverso (Violetta), and Joyce Martins (Leonora), to talk about their characters and this singular production.

Raquel Paulin – Gilda

Who is Gilda for you?

"Gilda represents what can be called purity. Her love is deep; in a way, almost naive, for the man she loves more than herself. Like a child discovering life for the first time, she has found in that love her reason for existence. She is a strong, courageous, innocent woman who believes that love is the most important thing in life."

What was the biggest challenge you had to overcome?

"Finding the motivation to start the final act as if it were the first, fully aware of what had happened before. The audience needed to understand what was happening and why the characters found themselves in that situation. Davide Garattini's direction was crystal clear: he asked us to make the characters' stories understandable and plausible."

Do you agree with the choice of presenting the final acts of *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, and *Il Trovatore*—with the deaths of Gilda, Violetta, and Leonora—on the same evening?

"Absolutely! There was no better way to pay homage to Giuseppe Verdi and these three so important women. What would opera be without the sacrifices of Leonora, Gilda, and Violetta?"

Why?

"Presenting the final acts of these three operas on the same evening highlights the close similarities between these women, their stories, their relationships with the other characters, and the power of love. This triptych is about love and the sacrifices these women are willing to make for it."

Joyce Martins – Leonora

Who is Leonora for you?

"Leonora represents romantic love taken to the extreme of sacrifice. While Manrico and the Count exist in the realm of action and war, Leonora embodies purity, devotion, and the transcendence of love."

How was it to portray the Verdi heroine?

"Singing Verdi is always a great pleasure! I have already performed *La Traviata*; studying Leonora, I was struck by the different vocal approaches Verdi adopted, showing his search for diversity between the two operas. Leonora is demanding because of the lightness required in the high notes, with a strong middle register. These nuances were a vocal challenge that I greatly enjoyed tackling. In the final act, the character becomes more dense and dramatic, requiring a robust vocal delivery. All of Leonora's emotional weight—from meeting her love, to convincing the Count to accept her proposal, to then feeling rejected by Manrico near his death—is conveyed very

effectively. I was very happy and fascinated to bring Leonora to life in all her nuances."

Do you agree with the choice of presenting the final acts of *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, and *Il Trovatore*—with the deaths of Gilda, Violetta, and Leonora—on the same evening?

"I think it's very interesting for the audience to witness the finales of three such different operas on the same night, yet all united by the theme of the deaths of Gilda, Violetta, and Leonora. It is a real privilege to experience, in one evening, the expressive power and poetic diversity with which Verdi shaped these heroines. A refined and fortunate choice by Paulo Esper, capable of offering the audience the emotional climax of three masterpieces."



Raquel Paulin, Gilda
(Photo Adriano Escanhuela)

Joyce Martins,
Leonora (Photo
Adriano Escanhuela)

Tayana Roverso,
Violetta (Photo
Adriano Escanhuela)

Tayana Roverso – Violetta

Who is Violetta for you?

"Violetta is one of the most extraordinary roles for a soprano. She is an intense character from beginning to end, full of emotions, colors, and nuances. Violetta is a strong and independent woman who finds redemption for her entire life through love. To portray her means to delve deeply into the complexity of her soul, conveying to the audience both her fragility and her determination."

In the Verdi triptych in São Paulo, how was it to portray a Verdi heroine?

"It was a very intense and unusual experience. Jumping directly to the third act—the most dramatic and emotionally charged moment—without the natural buildup Verdi creates in the full narrative was a major interpretive challenge. However, thanks to careful work on intentions and gestures together with the director, I was able to give each moment of Violetta the right measure, making the story coherent even in the absence of the full dramatic progression."

Do you agree with the choice of presenting the final acts of *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, and *Il Trovatore*—with the deaths of Gilda, Violetta, and Leonora—on the same evening?

"Absolutely yes. It was a brilliant idea. Even though these characters are very different from each other, it clearly emerges how Verdi, widowed and marked by the loss of the woman he loved, perhaps wanted to exorcise the pain of loss."

Why?

"Focusing the performance on the final acts of the three operas makes the triptych more accessible to the audience, without sacrificing narrative beauty. This approach highlights the final drama, offering an intense and immediate vision of the characters' emotions; at the same time, it emphasizes Verdi's recognizable style. The audience can perceive the grand feelings and dramaturgical choices of the composer, noticing the common threads between the heroines and Verdi's poetic vision, without losing the depth and intensity of each character."

By **Sabino Lenoci**

The Torments of Love



A new chapter of the Wagner Festival, which in recent years has become one of the flagship events of the Sofia Opera. This time it is Tannhäuser's turn, one of the most demanding and complex operas in Richard Wagner's output. A romantic tale like no other, it highlights the German composer's evolution toward an increasingly personal and original artistic vision compared to his earlier works.

The production is entrusted to director Plamen Kartaloff, who envisions an extremely faithful interpretation; one might call it naturalistic, decidedly counter to the trend on most European stages, where Wagner is often subjected to psychoanalysis. Kartaloff opts for a stylized setting, using lighting to create a spectrum of atmospheres required by the opera: from the red of the perverse world of Venusberg, where the hero risks losing his soul, to the soft, severe, and even cold colors of the Landgrave's court, dominated by Elisabeth's virtue. Costumes

Sofia: Tannhäuser adds a new chapter to the Wagner Festival

follow suit, abstract in the Venusberg scene and becoming traditional as the story unfolds, with Kartaloff presenting a sober, linear, and reassuring Middle Ages.

This theatrical approach allows the music to shine, under the confident direction of Constantin Trinks, who emphasizes the strength of Wagner's invention from the Overture onward, through the opera's many moments—for example, the grand concerted finale of Act II—culminating in the final purification. The result is supported by the excellent Sofia Opera Orchestra, while the Chorus deserves special mention for its demanding role in this work.

Tannhäuser is sung by Martin Iliev, a robust tenor who handles the challenging tessitura and length of the role, capturing the character's torment across his various emotional states. He is opposed by Rado-stina Nikolaeva as Venus and Eleonora Djodjoska-Mladeniva as Elisabeth. Nikolaeva possesses the vocal fullness needed to convey the perverse goddess's passions, while Djodjoska-Mladeniva delivers the lyrical intensity that defines Elisabeth.

Supporting the protagonist is Wolfram, sung by Ventseslav Anastasov, a strong baritone and confident performer who honors the notable passages of his part. The Landgrave, Hermann, portrayed by Petar Buchvov, exudes authority, while the other knights—so important in the Act II contest—are well represented: Emil Pavlov as Walther, Angel Antonov as Heinrich, Stefan Vladimirov as Biterolf, and Angel Hristov as Reinmar. The cast is completed by the young shepherd, Maria Pavolova.

The production was met with great success.

| Images of **Tannhäuser** in Sofia



A Sorceress Between Händel and Fellini

By Stefano Borgioli

Frankfurt: Johannes Erath's captivating Alcina, starring Monika Buczkowska

An Alcina suspended between the austere and the flamboyant, the new production by Johannes Erath, closed the calendar of premieres at the Frankfurt Opera. From the mirror on the back wall of a bistro, one magically enters Alcina's bedroom. That is her island, where her spells take place and the tangled love intrigues unfold, based on Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso. A large room framed by dark wooden walls of an upper-middle-class home. But within this austere setting, created by set designer Kaspar Glarner, Alcina comes to life almost in a Fellini-like manner. Very circus-like, with ropes and trapezes descending from above, clown-painted faces, stage magic, and women cut in half. Alcina's past lovers, instead of being transformed into animals, plants, and rocks as in the original, here turn into zombies wandering the stage in undershirts, only to rebel against the sorceress when she loses her powers.

The carefully constructed set, suspended in a timeless dimension, reflects the universal and enduring emotions evoked by Händel's music. The costumes, also designed by Glarner, are elegant and reminiscent of the 1920s (like the vintage telephone on the wall). The result is an evening full of charm, with a dynamic and spectacular visual impact. In a high-level vocal cast, soprano Monika Buczkowska stands

out in the demanding title role. With a statuesque stage presence, she conveys the full range of emotions that trouble the sorceress, thanks to a broad and luminous voice. Her naturalness and consistently solid, controlled emission make her performance of the aria "Oh mio cor...", effectively the opera's centerpiece, worth the entire evening.

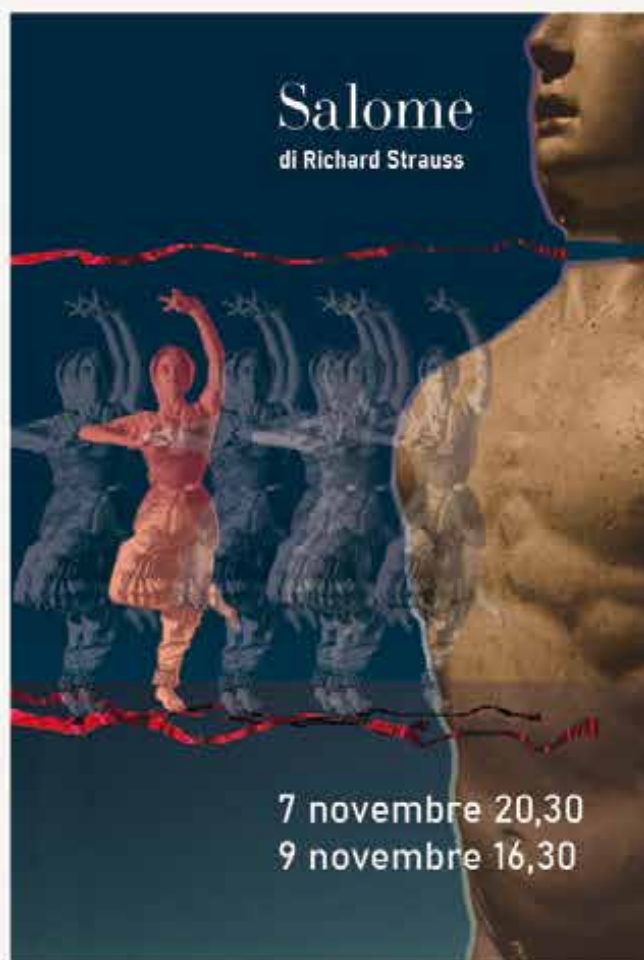
Delicate work is done by Elmar Hauser, one of the leading counter-tenors of the new generation, in giving voice and gesture to the character of Ruggiero. Though not very loud in volume, his soprano timbre captivates with agility and interpretive elegance. Katharina Magiera's Bradamante is effective, portraying Alcina's rival with a burnished, heartfelt mezzo-soprano. Soprano Shelén Hughes stands out as Morgana for her capricious elegance and silvery timbre, while soprano Clara Kim, in the role of the young Oberto searching for his father Astolfo, impresses with the brilliance of her coloratura. Tenor Michael Porter delivers a compelling Oronte, with acting charisma and expressive nuance. Erik van Heyningen portrays Melisso with authoritative gestures and a voluminous baritone voice.

The baton is in the hands of Julia Jones, who conducts Händel without unnecessary pomp, measured and almost thoughtful, yet perfectly conveying the whirlwind of emotions in the score: anger, revenge, love, jealousy. The solo passages for violin and cello are enchanting, and the continuo group is excellent. At the final curtain, the audience gives warm applause to all the performers.



Image of **Alcina** at the Frankfurt Opera (Photo Monika Rittershaus)

Stagione
Lirico Sinfonica 2025



“The Soul of Puccini Returns Home”

By Sabino Lenoci

Conversazione con Fabrizio Miracolo

In the place where he lived and composed, the Festival renews itself to resonate worldwide with a fresh vision, rooted in excellence and beauty. We spoke about it with Fabrizio Miracolo, President of the Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago.

President, I understand you have announced major changes to the Puccini Festival. Can you tell us about them?

“Yes, we are experiencing a moment of profound renewal. From the very first day, I felt the need to elevate the Festival to a level of great prestige, both artistically and organizationally. The changes touch various areas: the quality of productions, the enhancement of the location where it takes place, the relationship with the audience, and collaborations with top-tier artists. The goal is to ensure that

those who come to Torre del Lago do not merely attend an opera but experience an immersive journey into Puccini's music, atmosphere, and soul.”

Giacomo Puccini is celebrated worldwide! We hope his Festival is equally admired.

“That is exactly what we are striving to achieve. Puccini is already beloved everywhere: his music moves, touches, and unites people. But it is essential that the Festival bearing his name is recognized as a major international event. A Festival that does not only celebrate the past but looks to the future with courage and ambition, becoming a reference point both for those who love his music and for those discovering it.”

A worldwide institution to further promote our greatest composer.

“Exactly. The Festival must increasingly become a true cultural institution recognized globally. Not just a summer appointment, but a



Il Teatro Grande Giacomo Puccini
a Torre del Lago



The President of the Puccini Foundation,
Fabrizio Miracolo

permanent center for activity, reflection, and promotion of Puccini's operatic heritage. We are working in this direction with new synergies, educational and artistic projects, and a vision that places Puccini's legacy at the center, keeping it alive, relevant, and powerful."

Promoting the territory where he lived...

"This is another fundamental aspect. One cannot truly understand Puccini without knowing Torre del Lago, Lake Massaciuccoli, the silences, and the light that inspired him. His home and landscapes are integral to his music. That is why we are also working on enhancing the territory: we want visitors to feel as though they are

entering Puccini's world, in a place uniquely tied to his sensibility and genius."

Aiming for the highest artistic level...

"Of course. That is our priority. A Festival bearing Giacomo Puccini's name has a moral duty to pursue excellence. We have engaged extraordinary artists, great voices, skilled teams, and productions crafted in every detail. At the same time, we have welcomed new energies, because quality comes from balancing experience and innovation. Every artistic choice is made with respect for the work, and with the conviction that only through maximum dedication can we truly honor such an immense legacy."

The Voice of Siegmund

By Giancarlo Landini

Conversation with Jamez McCorkle

A highlight among the musical events of the autumn, *Die Walküre*, conducted by Daniel Harding, opens the Santa Cecilia season. The cast features some of the most interesting Wagnerian singers on the international scene, including tenor Jamez McCorkle. At thirty-five, he has a voice of undeniable quality, is a good musician, and a careful and attentive interpreter who fits into the landscape of today's Heldenentenors. He reached worldwide fame portraying Omar in the opera of the same name, courageously telling a story of violence and oppression.

How did your passion for music begin?

"I started playing the piano at age four in New Orleans. One Sunday at the Bethany United Methodist Church, I saw our choir director, Barbra Murray, perform a solo and told my mother I wanted lessons. I studied with Barbra for about five years before moving on to Gable Watkins for three more. I then entered NOCCA Riverfront, where I studied with Sakiko Ohashi, a pianist trained at Juilliard, spending mornings at high school and afternoons at NOCCA. This activity began to grow beyond a hobby when I won a competition that allowed me to perform Grieg's Piano Concerto with an orchestra. A milestone for me was my graduation recital, where I performed Rachmaninoff's Piano Sonata No. 2 along with other pieces, opera arias, and songs. The piano is still central to my work and accompanies me in concerts, including singing Schumann's *Dichterliebe*."

When and why did you choose singing?

"The transition came through a series of random moments. At NOCCA Riverfront, I heard a singer perform Handel's 'Total Eclipse.' I asked the teacher for the music, took it home, memorized it, and sang it for her the next day. Then Hurricane Katrina disrupted high school. I moved through five schools and returned to New Orleans for my final year. My piano practice had faded, and my teacher wanted me out of the department. As I was leaving, the voice teacher for whom I had sung years before told my mother that I could join the singing department if I wanted. That's how I started singing."

What were your first roles?

"My first role with an orchestra was a Servant in *La Traviata*. There was a line, 'Dinner is ready,' that still makes me smile. My first leading role outside school came in 2018 as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* at Michigan Opera Theatre, now Detroit Opera. I also studied Siegmund with the Dallas Symphony, with Christopher Ventris. The role that became my first real calling card was Omar in the opera by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels. I performed it all across the U.S., from the premiere at Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston to the San Francisco Opera."

What is your repertoire?

"My main repertoire includes Bacchus in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Grigoriy in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, which will be my debut at the Royal Opera House in February; Florestan in Beethoven's *Fidelio*; Laca in Janáček's *Jenufa*; Erik in Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*; the title role in Wagner's *Parsifal*; Macduff in Verdi's *Macbeth*; and Hamlet in Brett

Dean's *Hamlet*. In concert, I perform Verdi's *Requiem* and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. In recitals, I perform Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, which I sing and accompany on piano."

What did your debut as Omar ibn Said mean to you?

"It was a moment of public acknowledgment and an act of respect for a story too often silenced. It made visible a narrative of Black Africa in a space that rarely hosts it. Omar wrote his story in Arabic, and his words survived slavery and centuries. I debuted the role at Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston in 2022. During a rehearsal, we had to stop during the slave ship scene because it caused real distress for the chorus. The role placed me on the world stage and led directly to my debut as Siegmund in *Die Walküre* at Santa Fe Opera in 2025."

In Rome, you will sing Siegmund; what are your Wagnerian roles?

"Before Siegmund, I sang Froh in concert with the Dallas Symphony and covered Siegmund for the full Ring cycle. In Rome, I sing Siegmund in concert with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in October 2025. The role suits me because it fits my voice solidly and allows me to add color to a part often treated merely as a test of volume. The beauty of the sound is my first priority. I started as a baritone, so volume was never an issue, but it is not the goal. From Froh to Siegmund, with Erik and Parsifal in my repertoire, this is a healthy Wagnerian path with the long-term aim of performing Siegfried when the time is right."

What is a Heldenentenor?

"It is a heroic tenor who tackles roles with broad lyrical lines over a large orchestra without losing color. The voice has a baritonal core with a beautiful high register. The middle voice has depth, and the high notes shine. Sound quality comes first: then projection, legato, diction. Siegmund suits me, as do Parsifal, Erik, Florestan, and Bacchus."

What are Siegmund's vocal characteristics?

"Siegmund lives in wonder and amazement. When he finds Sieglinde, the world opens, and the sound must float so the audience feels the lift. Even with the weight of his past, a glimmer returns every time he turns to her. 'Wälse' is not a battle cry but a call to courage and belonging. 'Winterstürme' unfolds as a hymn to spring and to Sieglinde, culminating in the drawing of the sword from the tree."

Who is Siegmund?

"Siegmund is a man on the margins of society. He is the mortal son of Wotan, raised in flight. In his first-act story to Hunding, he calls himself Wehwalt and describes a desolate life: a burned house, a murdered mother, a twin sister taken, years of wandering with his father Wälse, and a failed attempt to rescue a bride that left him weaponless. He enters exhausted but not broken. Meeting Sieglinde awakens his courage and tenderness, and at night's end, he claims the sword promised by his father and fully embraces his name. He is a man whose heroism is rooted in compassion and choice. He believes in love, steps forward when it counts, and moves toward his destiny with clarity rather than bravado."





SOFIA OPERA AND BALLET

2025 / 2026

PRE-SEASON PERFORMANCES

Guest performance by
the Croatian National Theatre, Zagreb in Sofia, Bulgaria

5.09

Ivo Josipović

LENNON

Guest performance by
the Sofia Opera in Zagreb, Croatia

15.09

Richard Wagner

DIE WALKÜRE

SEASON OPENING

26, 28.09

Giacomo Puccini

TOSCA

PREMIERES

Opera

11, 12, 17, 18, 19.10

Pietro Mascagni

**CAVALLERIA
RUSTICANA**

and

Ruggero Leoncavallo

PAGLIACCI

25, 26, 27, 28.02 and 1.03

Giuseppe Verdi

MACBETH

Ballet

21, 22, 24, 25.03

**PRIDE and
PREJUDICE**

Based on idea by Leo Mujčić

14.11

ASMIK GRIGORIAN – GALA CONCERT

conductor **DANIEL OREN**

SOFIA OPERA **WAGNER** FESTIVAL

Der Ring des Nibelungen

26.05

DAS RHEINGOLD

27.05

DIE WALKÜRE

29.05

SIEGFRIED

31.05

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

12.06

LOHENGRIN

14.06

TANNHÄUSER

www.operasofia.bg

Silver Anniversary for the Verdi Festival

By **Giancarlo Landini**

25 years. The first turning point of the Verdi Festival in Parma (and surroundings). Does a Verdi Festival serve a purpose? This is the question we asked ourselves at the moment of its first edition. It is the question we ask ourselves as we set about writing this reflection. It is the question we put to the Superintendent and to the Artistic Director, whose interviews you will be able to read in the October issue. We give our own answer, and we do so in the light of personal experience (25 years of listening and presence) and of documentation (the precious chronology, made available to us by the theater), which was fundamental in drawing a comprehensive picture of the event.

At first glance one would be tempted to answer that it is not needed. Verdi is performed all over the world. His operas—even the most neglected ones—have never disappeared from the repertoire, and since the Verdi Renaissance (which began in Germany, see *Alzira* in German with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf), dating from the 1930s onwards, the very concept of minor work and masterpiece has been powerfully shaken. Not only is Verdi performed everywhere, but he is performed with the greatest conductors, the greatest voices, the greatest stage directors, and the greatest orchestras. When it comes to recordings, even those orchestras that rarely approach opera enter the field: one for all, the Berliner Philharmoniker. If this is the case, then a Verdi Festival would have no reason to exist. In reality, the exact opposite is true, and it is so beyond the fascinations that may gather around the event.

Parma: the city of Verdi. Parma and Busseto: Verdi's lands. These are debatable statements from a historical point of view. The ties between Verdi and Parma were circumstantial. His relations with Busseto were terrible, and in the theater named after him the Composer (he was not a pliable man) never set foot. And yet, over time the bond has become deep, to the point of being considered an established truth. The people of Busseto continue to celebrate their great son, who never wanted to come to that theater and who, at the time of its inauguration, went instead to Salsomaggiore. Teatro Regio, for its part, has chosen with stubborn determination to be Verdi's theater. The reason for the Festival lies precisely in this will to create a bond, in the continuity of a relationship which over twenty-five years has built a point of reference and has seen pass a river of music and cultural events that have made Teatro Regio a privileged place and, at least for a period of the year, a place of international encounter.

The Festival has transformed a traditional theater (the Regio is not part of the Autonomous Entities), famous for the relentlessness of its loggione, where opera lovers do not forgive, into a theater that has an international outlook. Even at the cost of offending susceptibilities and traditions. In the meantime, it found the most suitable season. After the 2001 edition, which was actually a Verdi season proclaimed on the centenary of his death, the Festival used to take place at the beginning of summer, which was becoming more and more



torrid in a Po Valley fatally inhospitable. Then in 2007 the event was moved to October: it was a winning choice that found full support in that international public, increasingly important for the life of a festival, which must also take into account the return in terms of image (and not only) that it offers to the territory that hosts it.

Nor is this all: the Festival knew how to overcome the risks of an ill-calibrated start, which misunderstood the nature of an event modeled on international gatherings such as Salzburg, but for this very reason unaware of its own possibilities and aims. Before focusing our attention on some of the productions that have characterized the Festival, it would deserve (but space does not allow it) a glance at the mass (I cannot find a better word) of events, initiatives (exhibitions, meetings, study days, tributes to interpreters) collateral to the Festival that open up a broader horizon. Verdi Off (whose first edition dates back to 2016) falls within this dimension. In the same way, the ramifications introduced by the current Artistic Director, Alessio Vlad, are an updated reproposal of those initiatives that, for example, in 2001 responded to the presence of the New City Ballet, with a program that from the Queen's Ballet in Don Carlos faded into other non-Verdi titles. Or Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in 2003, at the opening of the events. Or *Il tempo sospeso del volo* by Nicola Sani. In the early editions, which took place in an economic and political situation very different for our country and for Europe as a whole, the calendar of appointments was truly impressive, with the presence of prestigious guest ensembles. Suffice it to mention, for *Un ballo in maschera* in 2001, the Orchestra and Chorus of the Mariinsky Theatre of St. Petersburg.

If we focus on the titles, we could immediately observe that the Festival has consistently repropounded what was once called the "minor Verdi," with *Alzira* (2002), *I Lombardi alla prima Crociata* (2003, 2023), *Il Corsaro* (2004), with a concert dedicated to Pacini's *Il Corsaro*, Luisa Miller (2007, 2019) and *Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio* (2007), *I due Foscari* (2009, 2019), *La battaglia di Legnano* (2012,



Verdi, *Il Corsaro*, 2008
(Photo Roberto Ricci)



Verdi, *I Vespri siciliani*, 2010
(Photo Roberto Ricci)

2024), *I Masnadieri* (2013), *Giovanna d'Arco* (2016), *Jérusalem* (2017), *Stiffelio* (2017), *Macbeth* (1847 edition, 2018), *Un giorno di regno* (2018), *Le trouvère* (2018), *Attila* (2018), *Nabucco* (2019), *Macbeth* (2020, French edition, 2024), *Ernani* (2020). While the more popular titles return less frequently. I think of *Aida* or *La traviata*, although both were conducted by important names: one by Bruno Bartoletti and the other by Yuri Temirkanov, for a production that, if I am not mistaken, was awarded the Abbiati Prize.

If we focus on the voices, the Festival would offer a curious picture. On one side we have the presence of some great voices, especially Italian ones; on the other, the corresponding international names are missing, whether because of budget reasons or because of the difficulty of engaging artists tied to long-term programming. On the other hand, the Festival offers a wide array of emerging voices, some destined to establish themselves, while others remain at a standstill or sink into oblivion. To the first group belong a series of great baritones, such as Leo Nucci, who in the early editions of the Festival wrote important pages, reaffirming his centrality in the history of Verdi interpretation; among others we can recall the *Nabucco* of 2003 and the *Macbeth* of 2006, both conducted by Bruno Bartoletti. We recall, in *Alzira* of 2002, the Russian Vladimir Chernov, then at the height of his career. Or Renato Bruson in *Il Corsaro* of 2004 and, remaining with baritones, Vladimir Stoyanov, an artist of quality, a coherent and correct professional who at the Festival wrote fine pages, over a broad span of time, from *Un ballo in maschera* in 2011 to *Ernani* in concert form in 2020, to Ludovic Tézier, called in the same year for the recovery of the French version of *Macbeth*, staged in the Ducal Palace Park at the crucial moment of the Covid epidemic. But—again speaking of baritones—there was also room for emerging young singers, two of whom, Luca Salsi (we recall *Il Corsaro* in 2008, but also ten years later *Macbeth*, 1847 version), and Amartuvshin Enkhbat (from *Luisa Miller* in 2019, to *Un ballo in maschera* in 2021), are today reference points on the international scene. The list could be very long and offer interesting effects of cross-fading. In the case of Luca Salsi, the Festival—and more generally Teatro Regio—has known how to give space to a genuine Parmigiano, today an indispensable artist for the Italian repertoire in general and for Verdi's in particular. The same applies to Michele Pertusi, who precisely at the Festival grew to become one of the most complete Verdi singers of the postwar period, an example of an artist who, through incessant work, has reached as far as Filippo

Il and left his mark on this great character, coveted by all the great basses of opera. Just one example, remaining among soprano voices: *Il trovatore* in 2006, which reminds us of Fiorenza Cedolins, then one of the most beautiful Italian voices of recent decades, with a lively artistic temperament; or *I Vespri siciliani* in 2010, with the much-mourned Daniela Dessi; or *I due Foscari* in 2009 with Tatjana Serjan, then a leading voice for the dramatic coloratura soprano repertoire, the same in which today, also at the Festival, Maria Teresa Torbidoni is emerging, with Abigail in *Nabucco* and Odabella in *Attila*. To the second group of young hopefuls (too many to be named) belong singers that the Festival promoted in operas realized at the Verdi Festival, building casts from the winners of the Giuseppe Verdi Singing Competition.

Let us not forget that the Festival began its journey on the stage of Teatro Regio in Parma, but then also opened itself to other stages. In the early editions, productions and performances took place in the theaters of Modena, Reggio Emilia, Bologna. Then the Festival looked to, and continues to use, Teatro Verdi in Busseto to present productions entrusted to young singers or directors, up to the 2024 *Un ballo in maschera* with the staging by Daniele Menghini. More recently the Festival has also used the Magnani Theater in Fidenza, focusing, however, on concert performances. For a certain period it also made use of Teatro Farnese in Parma, though the experiment was halted by the Superintendence, justifiably concerned about the use of a space not born for opera and—in all frankness—quite unsuitable for performance. But it was precisely at the Farnese that the bizarre *Le trouvère* was staged, conducted by Roberto Abbado with Giuseppe Gipali as Manrico, Roberta Mantegna as Leonora, Franco Vassallo as Count di Luna, in Bob Wilson's production, provocative by commission, including the at least questionable choreography of the ballets, present in the French edition. And it was the Farnese that in 2017 hosted *Stiffelio* in the staging of the late Graham Vick. That production made free use of the cavea space, within which singers and audience mingled during an action conceived in a decentralized way, fragmented into many corners. If the experiment was significant in itself, the result was completely wrong, with serious misunderstandings in the reading of Verdi's dramaturgy in *Stiffelio* and gratuitous superimpositions, which of course delighted that nouvelle vague of criticism that mistakes for genius everything that is often only bizarre or gratuitous with respect to the text. This same flaw was not avoided in *Un ballo in maschera* of 2021—with Piero Pretti,

Verdi Off. Inventare Verdi

Inventing the impossible and making possible what would seem unlikely. Creating encounters between distant and opposite worlds. Bringing Verdi out of the theater, to make the Theater and Music a driver of social connection. Barbara Minghetti, a cultural operator, has been entrusted by the Reggio for several years with the task of creating Verdi Off.

"Verdi Off was born with the idea of bringing the Maestro into everyday places, in a simpler and more accessible way than the large productions of the Festival, which are not accessible to everyone due to cost and cultural barriers. It's a way to break down barriers, to be for everyone, including opera lovers."

Where does this exuberance of imagination, which allowed you to shape such an extraordinary festival, come from?

"It comes from Verdi's own productions, with their formidable theatricality, which we aim to present in a contemporary way. The artists, coming from diverse backgrounds and experiences, get deeply involved and often propose original solutions. Verdi Off means daring, being courageous."

Was it easy?

"No; it wasn't easy at the beginning. Some told me it was irreverent to bring Verdi outside the theater, where every element of the performance could be controlled. Strett Parade, which effectively inaugurates the Festival, takes over the city for a day and involves people who become curious and engaged; who approach Verdi, of whom they had heard, but felt distant. This also applies to the

artists, especially the more alternative and irreverent ones, who get involved in creating truly extraordinary performances."

What prejudices had to be overcome?

"We had to overcome initial reluctance; we dismantled it by showing that our initiatives are the result of careful and complex planning. They are not haphazard, occasional, or episodic; they are different, but backed by a year-round process of planning and dialogue among all the participants. Strett Parade involves about 100 actors

and attracts 15,000 people, who share these experiences with us and come into contact with Verdi and his music. This seriousness of purpose has attracted many companies to work with us. For example, Onda d'urto will this year present a very special performance in Parma's Waste Management Company, whose structure requires a very particular approach. It's proof that Verdi Off evolves and, after ten years, is a very different reality from when we started."

What are its core elements?

"First, contemporaneity; then experimentation; then the desire to engage with other arts. What holds it all together is the power of Verdi's music as a tool to help Parma, which has changed profoundly like all cities, to rediscover moments and reasons for social gathering, to avoid leaving out ever-larger segments of the population, including those from abroad, who are now a significant part of the city. Hence, it is necessary not to reduce Verdi Off to the 300 events we organize in a month, but to create year-round workshops."



A moment of the Verdi-Off
(Photo Roberto Ricci)

Anna Pirozzi, Amartuvshin Enkhbat—which, after the dramatic and premature death of Vick, was completed by Spirei, in a production that at times winked at Jean Genet's *Querelle de Brest*.

Nevertheless, the contribution of the Verdi Festival to stage direction can count on productions less showy but certainly more incisive. I think of *Il Corsaro* in the staging of Lamberto Puggelli in 2004, which worked on the concept of full and empty, to narrate one of Verdi's most controversial youthful works, playing between realism and stylization. Not to be forgotten are *I Vespri siciliani* of 2010 by Pier Luigi Pizzi, who with his customary elegance, faithful to his style and poetics, narrated Verdi, paying homage to Luchino Visconti's *Senso*, relying on the charm of Daniela Dessì, who evoked Alida Valli of the famous film. The Festival gave space to Leo Muscato, who left his mark in a stylized edition of *I Masnadieri*, while it also hosted courageous experiments such as *Il trovatore* by Elisabetta Courir, who tried—perhaps without fully succeeding—to solve the difficulties of a decidedly problematic opera, stripping it of all naturalistic temptation with a result more interesting than the 2023 edition by Davide Livermore, faithful to his clichés (projections, special



Verdi, Luisa Miller, 2010
(Photo Roberto Ricci)

effects, etc.). The Festival has not failed to turn toward decidedly provocative solutions, as in the latest edition of *Nabucco*, set in a strange environmental situation, where the protagonists were closed inside a sort of floating ship in a world grappling with a kind of "day after." Of course, these were small provocations compared

What is the broader goal of these activities?

"To reach those who are more distant, working with third-sector associations: centers addressing youth violence, school dropouts, etc. Each brings its expertise, and we contribute our artistic proposals, in a city like Parma, where the Administration invests heavily in this sector. Going to certain places isn't easy without the support of an administration that prioritizes a social pact. We believe Verdi and musical theater can be an important part of a city's social and cultural engagement."

Do you believe in the future of opera as presented by theaters according to traditional standards?

"No, absolutely not. I don't believe in programming that simply strings one title after another, without exploring spaces for original invention that engage audiences who would otherwise not attend. However, a barrier to innovative programming comes from the way FUS funds are allocated, which does not recognize shows of a different nature, such as a youth-oriented thriller built around *Rigoletto*. I experienced this in Como, another city where I work; it was very popular, but could not circulate because it didn't meet ministerial criteria and could not receive funding."

Beyond the two main focuses, what are the special contexts in which Verdi Off takes place?

"Challenging neighborhoods. This year, in a location called Oltre Tormente, inhabited by people from non-EU countries who have no communal spaces, we set up a yurt where, every Saturday and Sunday, we hold free performances open to all. We will also work in a particularly difficult area beyond the train station, in a structure hosting performances by young, not-yet-graduated artists, as well as emerging professionals trying new experiences. This year, Davide Garattini Raimondi will participate; last year it was Gianmaria Aliverta.

Another key initiative is involving unique sectors of the city. Parma has an industrial zone where 15,000 people live daily. With the help

of an entrepreneur who believes in Verdi Off, we brought Verdi into a factory on Saturdays as a socializing tool. It was very successful and attracted audiences from across the city. Last year, we performed *Don Carlo* in a logistics company, using boxes, forklifts, and work materials for the set."

For those unfamiliar, what strikes people most about Verdi's operas?

"I would say the stories first, and then the music; Verdi's stories are deeply relevant to contemporary life."

What is the most difficult aspect to convey?

"Overcoming a series of prejudices—that in the theater you must arrive on time, stay silent, follow the plot—at a time when audiences, in general (not speaking of young people), don't even read the ten lines of the synopsis found on Wikipedia."

What will be the highlights of this year's Verdi Off?

"First, we are revisiting 10 performances that have been particularly significant over the years. There will be an installation inside San Ludovico, a deconsecrated church. The subject is *Macbeth*, and the creators are Damiano Michieletto and Paolo Fanin, to whom we requested an idea; we provoked them, asking what they would do to bring audiences closer to opera in the spirit of Verdi Off. It will be titled *Il sonno uccidesti*."

Does Verdi Off extend beyond Parma? How does the wider region respond?

"Very well, especially since we can use wonderful locations, including castles and small theaters, which come alive within a broader program starting from the Regio. This year, we will perform on the river using a motorboat, usually employed for Sunday trips. The ideas come precisely from looking at everything around us with curiosity.

with what European Regietheater has been doing for decades, but in Parma they seemed profanations, with exaggerated reactions from both detractors and supporters. Among the most pathetic things of that edition I recall the pointless protests, but also the jubilation of the young man behind me in the stalls who praised the dust finally removed from Verdi. Among the productions we should record the presence of Valentina Carrasco for the staging of the first version of *Simon Boccanegra*, set among dockside brawls and beef quarters. The Festival also faced with courage the terrible year of the pandemic, resolving it with a concert performance of *Macbeth* (French version) in the Park of Palazzo Ducale, later revived in staged form in 2024, but with Piero Pretti in place of Ludovic Tézier.

There is also the chapter of conductors, some very illustrious, who have linked their names to the *Messa da Requiem*, a work that year after year returns in the Festival editions, which give all the space this masterpiece deserves. Conducting it have been Riccardo Muti, Zubin Mehta, Lorin Maazel, Daniele Gatti (twice), Roberto Abbado, Oksana Lyniv, Michele Mariotti. To the young conductor—today one

of the most important figures on the international scene—the Festival offered important opportunities, as in 2020 with the concert performance of *Ernani* with Piero Pretti in the title role, Eleonora Buratto as Elvira, Vladimir Stoyanov as Carlo V. Nor should we overlook the work of Roberto Abbado, carried forward with consistency, with punctuality in realizing some of the most beautiful pages of the Festival, starting from *La forza del destino*.

As can be seen from these few data, the Verdi Festival has built a history, which is something different from magnificent performances that remain isolated within the programs of the greatest theaters in the world. And it is a history so particular that the Festival has decided to live it also in a different and decidedly new form, that of Verdi Off, which for some years now has been entrusted with the task of inaugurating the event.

Italia

ANCONA

Fondazione Teatro delle Muse "Franco Corelli"

Piazza della Repubblica
60121 Ancona
Tel. 071 52525
biglietteria@teatrodellemuse.org
www.fondazionemuse.org

October 25, 27
NABUCCO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by
Temistocle Solera
Conductor Gyorgy Gyorivany Rath –
Director Mariano Bauduin – Sets Lucio
Diana – Costumes Stefania Cempini – New
production
Performers Ernesto Petti, Rebeka Lear,
Nicola Ulivieri, Alessandro Scotto Di Luzio,
Irene Savignano

BARI

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

September 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25
GIULIO CESARE

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel
Conductor Stefano Montanari – Director
Damiano Michieletto – Sets Paolo Fantin –
Costumes Agostino Cavalca
Performers Raffaele Pe/Nicholas Tamagna,
Sandrine Piau/Lilit Davtyan, Giuseppina
Bridelli/Loriana Castellano, Sara Mingardo/
Valeria Girardello, Filippo Mineccia, Davide
Giangregorio, Domenico Apollonio

October 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16
DON CARLO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by

Camille de Lauzieres and Achille Du Locle
Conductor Diego Matheuz – Director
Joseph Franconi-Lee – Sets and
Costumes Alessandro Ciammarughi
Performers Simone Lim/Shi Zhong, Pavel
Cernoch/Giuseppe Cipali, Chiara Isotton/
Renata Campanella, Vladimir Stoyanov/
Anickbayar Enkhbold, Marco Spotti, Sara
Rossini, Alexandra Ionis/Nozomi Kato,
Massimiliano Chiarolla

FLORENCE

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

September 16, 19, 21, 23
LES PECHEURS DE PERLES

Music by George Bizet – Libretto by
Conductor Jérémie Rhorer – Director Win
Wenders – Sets David Regehr – Costumes
Montserrat Casanova
Performers Pretty Yende, Javier Camarena,
Lucas Meachen, Huigang Liu

JESI

Fondazione Teatro Pergolesi Spontini
Piazza della Repubblica 9
60035 JESI (Ancona)
Tel. + 39 0731 206888
biglietteria@fpsjesi.com
www.fondazionepergolesispontini.com

October 17, 19
DON GIOVANNI

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte
Conductor Arthur Fagen – Director Paul-
Emile Fourny – Sets Benito Leonori –
Costumes Giovanna Fiorentini
Performers Christian Federici, Luca
Dall'Amico, Maria Mudryak, Valerio
Borgioni, Louise Guenter, Stefano
Marchisio, Gianluca Failla, Eleonora
Buratto

November 21, 23
L'OLIMPIADE

Music by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi –

Libretto by Pietro Metastasio
Conductor Giulio Prandi – Director Fabio
Ceresa – Sets Bruno Antonetti – Costumes
Giulia Negrin
Performers Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani,
Carlotta Colombo, Silvia Frigato, Josè
Maria Lo Monaco, Theodora Raftis, Matteo
Straffi, Francesca Ascioti

MILAN

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

September 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19
LA CENERENTOLA

Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto
by Jacopo Ferretti
Conductor Gianluca Capuano – Director,
Sets and Costumes Jean-Pierre Ponnelle
Performers Solisti dell'Accademia del
Teatro alla Scala

October 7, 10, 13, 16, 22, 25, 28
RIGOLETTO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by
Francesco Maria Piave
Conductor Marco Armiliato – Director
Mario Martone - Sets Margherita Palli -
Costumes Usula Patzak
Performers Vittorio Grigolo, Dmitry
Korchak, Amartuvshin Enkhbat, Regula
Mühlemann, Francesca Pia Vitale,
Gianluca Buratto, Martina Belli, Fabrizio
Beggi

October 17, 24, 29, 31 November 4, 7
LA FILLE DU REGIMENT

Music by Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by
Jean-François-Alfred Bayard and Jules-
Henry Vernoy de Saint-Georges
Conductor Evelino Pidò – Director and
Costumes Laurent Pelly - Sets Chantal
Thomas
Performers Julie Fuchs, Juan Diego
Flórez, Pietro Spagnoli, Géraldine Chauvet,
Pierre Doyen, Barbara Frittoli

NAPLES

Teatro di San Carlo

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

September 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 23

TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini - Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica
Conductor Dan Ettinger - Director Edoardo De Angelis - Sets Mimmo Paladino - Costumes Massimo Cantini Parrini
Performers Sondra Radvanovsky, Anna Pirozzi, Carmen Giannattasio, Jonas Kaufmann, Francesco Meli, Luca Salsi, Claudio Sgura, Lorenzo Mazzucchelli, Pietro Di Bianco, Francesco Domenico Doto, Vsevolod Ishchenko, Giuseppe Todisco, Ville Lignell, Giuseppe Scarico

October 4, 5, 8, 10, 11
UN BALLO IN MASCHERA

Music by Giuseppe Verdi - Libretto by Antonio Somma
Conductor Pinchas Steinberg - Director Massimo Gasparon - Sets and Costumes Pierluigi Samaritani
Performers Piero Pretti, Vincenzo Costanzo, Ludovic Tézier, Ernesto Petti, Ernesto Petti, Cassandre Berthon, Maurizio Bove, Romano Dal Zovo, Adriano Gramigni, Massimo Sirigu

October 24, 25, 26
PICTURE A DAY LIKE THIS

Music by George Benjamin - Libretto by Martin Crimp
Conductor Corinna Niemeyer - Director and Sets Daniel Jeanneteau and Marie-Christine Soma - Costumes Marie La Rocca
Performers Marianne Crebassa, Anna Prohaska, Beate Mordal, Cameron Shahbazi, John Brancy, Lisa Grandmottet, Eulalie Rambaud, Matthieu Baquey

NOVARA

Teatro Coccia
Via Fratelli Rosselli, 47
28100 NOVARA
Tel. 0321 233201
www.fondazioneteatroccia.it

September 26, 27, 28, 30

LA TRAVIATA

Music by Giuseppe Verdi - Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
Conductor Alessandro Cadario - Director Giorgio Pasotti - Sets Italo Grassi - Costumes Anna Biagiotti
Performers Francesca Sassu/Alessandra Grigoras, Anna Malavasi/Mariateresa Federico, Martina Malavolti, Francesco Castoro/Carlo Raffaelli, Mario Cassi/Marcello Rosiello, Matteo Mollica, Ranyi Jiang, Omar Cepparoli

October 24, 26

DON GIOVANNI

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart - Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte
Conductor Arthur Fagen - Director Paul-Emile Fourny - Sets Benito Leonori - Costumes Giovanna Fiorentini
Performers Christian Federici, Luca Dall'Amico, Maria Mudryak, Valerio Borgioni, Louise Guenter, Stefano Marchisio, Gianluca Failla, Eleonora Boaretto

PALERMO

Teatro Massimo
Piazza Verdi, 90138 Palermo PA
Tel. (+39) 091 6053580
biglietteria@teatromassimo.it

September 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Music by Gioachino Rossini - Libretto by Cesare Sterbini
Conductor Riccardo Bisatti - Director Stefania Bonfadelli - Sets Serena Rocco - Costumes Valeria Donata Bettella
Performers Ruzil Gatin/Giorgio Misseri, Vincenzo Taormina/Giuseppe Toia, Maria Kataeva/Laura Verrecchia, Mattia Olivieri/Matteo Mancini, Simon Orfila, Noemi Muschetti, Italo Proferisce

October 5, 7, 9, 12

MITRIDATE EUPATORE

Music by Alessandro Scarlatti - Libretto by Girolamo Frigimelica Roberti
Conductor Giulio Prandi - Director Cecilia

Ligorio - Sets Gregorio Zurla - Costumes Vera Pierantoni Giua
Performers Tim Mead, Francesca Ascioti, Carmela Remigio, Renato Dolcini, Konstantin Derri, Arianna Vanvittelli, Martina Licari

October 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23

LA SONNAMBULA

Music by Vincenzo Bellini - Libretto by Felice Romani
Conductor Giuseppe Mengoli - Director Barbara Lluch - Sets Christof Hetzer - Costumes Clara Peluffo Valentini
Performers Jessica Pratt/Vittoriana De Amicis, Francesco Demuro/César Cortés, Carlo Lepore/Gabriele Sagona, Ilaria Monteverdi/Noemi Muschetti, Mariano Orozco, Daniela Pini

PARMA

Teatro Regio di Parma
Via Garibaldi 16/A - 43100 Parma
Tel.: (+39) 0521/20 39 93
www.teatroregioparma.it

Festival Verdi 2025

September 20, 22, 26 - October 5, 11, 19, 20

OTELLO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi - Libretto by Arrigo Boito
Conductor Roberto Abbado - Director Federico Tiezzi - Sets Margherita Palli - Costumes Giovanna Buzzi
Performers Fabio Sartori, Ariunbaatar Ganbaatar, Davide Tuscano, Francesco Pittari, Emanuele Cordaro, Alessio Vierna, Mariangela Sicilia, Natalia Gavrilan

September 25, 27 - October 4, 9, 17
MACBETH

Music by Giuseppe Verdi - Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
Conductor Francesco Lanzillotta - Director Manuel Renga - Sets and Costumes Aurelio Colombo
Performers Davide Luciano, Adolfo Corrado, Marily Santoro/Maria Cristina Bellantuono, Melissa D'Ottavi, Matteo Roma, Francesco Congiu, Emil Adbullaier,

Matteo Pietrapiana

October 3, 12, 16

FALSTAFF

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Arrigo Boito Conductor Michele Spotti – Director Jacopo Spirei – Sets Nikolaus Webern – Costumes Silvia Aymonino Performers Misha Kiria, Roberta Mantegna, Alessandro Luongo, Giuliana Gianfaldoni, Teresa Iervolino, Dave Monaco, Caterina Piva, Roberto Covatta, Eugenio Di Lieto, Gregory Bonfatti

October 18

MESSA DA REQUIEM

Music by Giuseppe Verdi Conductor Robert Trevino Performers Marta Torbidoni, Michele Pertusi, Valentina Pernozzoli, Galeano Salas

PIACENZA

Teatro Municipale

Via Giuseppe Verdi 41
29100 Piacenza
Tel.: (+39)0523/49 22 51
biglietteria@teatripiacenza.it
www.teatripiacenza.it

Trilogia Verdiana

October 29 – November 5

RIGOLETTO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave Conductor Francesco Lanzillotta – Director Roberta Catalano – Sets Mariana Moreira – Costumes Veronica Pattuelli – New production Performers Francesco Meli, Luca Salsi/Ernesto Petti, Maria Novella, Adolfo Corrado, Irene Savignano, Ester Ferraro, Omar Cepparo, Nicola Zambon, Simone Fenotti, Davide Maria Sabatino, Giulia Alletto, Eugenio Maria Degiacomi

October 31 – November 7

IL TROVATORE

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Salvatore Cammarano Conductor Francesco Lanzillotta – Director Roberta Catalano – Sets Mariana Moreira – Costumes Veronica Pattuelli

Performers Francesco Meli, Maria Novella Malfatti, Luca Salsi/Ernesto Petti, Teresa Romano, Adolfo Corrado, Greta Carlino, Simone Fenotti, Omar Cepparoli, Eugenio Maria Degiacomi

November 2, 9

LA TRAVIATA

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave Conductor Francesco Lanzillotta – Director Roberta Catalano – Sets Mariana Moreira – Costumes Veronica Pattuelli Performers Francesco Meli, Maria Novella Malfatti, Luca Salsi/Ernesto Petti, Irene Savignano, Simone Fenotti, Davide Maria Sabatino, Omar Cepparoli, Nicola Zambon, Eugenio Maria De Giacomi

ROME

Teatro dell'Opera

Piazza Beniamino Gigli 7
00184 Roma
Tel.: (+39)06/48 16 0255
www.operaroma.it

September 19, 23, 25, 27, 28

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

Music by Benjamin Britten – Libretto by Myfanwy Piper Conductor Henrik Nánási – Director Deborah Warner – Sets Justin Nardella Performers Ian Bostridge, Christine Rice

October 9, 11, 12, 14, 16

ADRIANA MATER

Musica Kaija Saariaho – Libretto by Amin Maalouf Conductor Ernest Martínez Izquierdo – Director Peter Sellars – Costumes Camille Assaf Performers Fleur Barron, Axelle Fanyo, Nicholas Phan, Christopher Purves

October 26, 28, 29, 30, 31

STABAT MATER

Music by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi and Giacinto Scelsi Conductor Michele Mariotti – Director, Sets, Costumes Romeo Castellucci

RAVENNA

Teatro Alighieri

Via Mariani, 2 – 48121 Ravenna
Tel. (+39) 0544 249244
Fax (+39) 0544 36303
E-mail: info@teatroalighieri.org

Trilogia d'Autunno 2025

Novembre 12, 14

ORLANDO

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel – Libretto by Carlo Sigismondo Capece Conductor Ottavio Dantone – Director, Sets and Costumes Pier Luigi Pizzi Performers Elmar Hauser, Christian Senn, Francesca Pia Vitale, Giuseppina Bridelli, Filippo Mineccia

November 13, 15

ALCINA

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel Conductor Ottavio Dantone – Director, Sets Costumes Pier Luigi Pizzi Performers Sophie Rennert, Elmar Hauser, Martina Licari, Delphine Galou, Ziga Copi, Christian Senn

November 16

MESSIAH

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel Conductor Ottavio Dantone Performers Alysia Hanshaw, Delphine Falou, Ziga Copi, Christian Senn

SASSARI

Ente Concerti "Marialisa Decarolis"

Viale Trieste, 5 – 07100 Sassari
Tel. 079 232468 – Biglietteria
079 290881 – 3514603357 -
3514142798
www.marialisadecarolis.it

November 7, 9

SALOME

Music by Oscar Wilde – Libretto by Carl Haffner and Hedwig Lachmann Conductor Beatrice Venezi – Director, Sets and Costumes Hugo de Ana Performers

December 12, 14, 16

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Music by Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by

Salvatore Cammarano
Conductor Fabrizio Maria Carminati –
Libretto by Renato Bonajuto
Performers

TURIN

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

October 9, 10, 12, 14, 19, 21, 23
FRANCESCA DA RIMINI
Music by Riccardo Zandonai – Libretto by
Tito Il Ricordi
Conductor Andrea Battistoni – Director
Andrea Bernard – Sets Alberto Beltrame –
Costumes Elena Beccaro
Performers Barno Şismatullaeva/Ekaterina
Snnikova, Roberto Alagna/Marcelo
Puente, George Gagnidze/Sebastian
Catana, Valentina Boi, David Cecconi,
Matteo Mezzaro, Valentina Mastrangelo,
Albina Tonkikh, Martina Myskohlid, Sofia
Koberidze, Silvia Beltrami, Enzo Peroni,
Janusz Nosek, Daniel Umbelino, Eduardo
Martinez

November 5, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16
IL RATTO DAL SERRAGLIO
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –
Libretto by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie
Conductor Gianluca Capuano – Director
Michel Fau – Sets Antoine Fontaine –
Costumes David Belogou
Performers Olga Pudova/Sofia Fomina,
Alasdair Kent/Anthony Leon, Leonor
Bonilla/Eleonora Bellocchi, Patrick
Vogel/Manuel Gunther, Wilhelm
Schwinghammer/Patrick Guetti, Florian
Carove

TRIESTE

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

November 28, 30 – December 5, 7, 11,
13
IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA
Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by

Cesare Sterbini
Conductor Enrico Calesio – Director, Sets
and Costumes Pier Luigi Pizzi
Performers Alessandro Luongo, Annalisa
Stroppa, Marco Ciaponi, Marco Filippo
Romano

November 29 – December 4, 6, 10, 12
LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte
Conductor Enrico Calesio – Director, Sets
and Costumes di Pier Luigi Pizzi
Performers Simone Alberghini, Carolina
Lippo, Giorgio Caoduro, Ekaterina
Bakanova, Anna Maria Chiuri,

VENICE

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

August 29, 31 September 2, 4, 7
TOSCA
Musica Giacomo Puccini - Libretto by
Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica
Conductor Daniele Rustioni – Director
Joan Anton Rechi – Sets Gabriel
Insignares – Costumes Giuseppe Palella
Performers Chiara Isotton, Riccardo Massi,
Roberto Frontali, Mattia Denti, Matteo
Peirone, Cristiano Olivieri, Armando Gabba

November, 20, 23
LA CLEMENZA DI TITO
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –
Libretto by Giambattista Varesco
Conductor Ivor Bolton – Director Paul
Curran
Performers Daniel Behle, Anastasia Bartoli,
Francesca Aspromonte, Cecilia Molinari,
Nicolò alducci, Domenico Apollonio

Estero

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

September 20, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30
LA PICCOLA VOLPE ASTUTA
Musica and Libretto by Leos Janacek
Conductor Josep Pons – Director Barrie
Kosky – Sets Michael Levine – Costumes
Victoria Behr
Performers Peter Mattei, Anais
Masllorns, David Alegret, Alejandro Lopez,
Milan Perisic, Casper Singh, Sara Baneras,
Elena Tsallagova, Paula Murrihy, Mireia
Pintò, Roger Padulles, Mercedes Gancedo

October 16, 19, 22, 27, 29, 31 – No-
vember 3
AKHNATEN
Music by Philip Glass
Conductor Karen Kamensek – Director
Phelim McDermott – Sets Tom Pye –
Costumes Kevin Pollard
Performers Anthony Roth Costanzo, Rihab
Chaieb, Katerina Estrada Tretyakova, Joan
Martin-Royo, Toni Marsol, José Manuel
Montero, Zachary James, Alba Valdivieso,
Carmen Buendia, Mar Esteve, Carol
Garcia, Marina Pinchuk, Anna Tobella

BERLIN

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

September 27, 28 – October 1, 3, 5, 7,
10, 12

DER RING DES NIBELINGEN

Musica and Libretto by Richard Wagner
Conductor Christian Thielemann – Director
Dmitri Tcherniakov
Performers Anja Kampe, Andreas Schager,
Michael Volle, Claudia Mahnke

November 16, 19, 21, 26 – March 5, 8, 12,
14, 20, 22

LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN

Music by Jacques Offenbach – Libretto by
Michel Carré and Eugene Scribe
Conductor Bertrand de Billy – Director
Lydia Steier
Performers Pene Pati, Nina Minasyan,
Julia Kleiter

LONDON

Royal Opera House
Covent Garden
Bow St. London – Londra
Tel. +44 20 7240 1200
www.roh.org.uk

September 11, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 29 –
October 2, 5, 7

TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by
Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica
Conductor Jakub Hrusa – Director Oliver
Mears – Sets Simon Lima Holdsworth –
Costumes Ilona Karas
Performers Anna Netrebko/Aleksandra
Kurzak, Freddie De Tommaso, Gerald
Finley, Carlo Bosi, Ossian Huskinson

September 19, 23, 26, 30 – October 3,
6

I VESPRI SICILIANI

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by
Eugene Scribe and Charle Duveyrier
Conductor Speranza Scappucci – Director
Stefan Herheim – Sets Philipp Furhofer –
Costumes Gesine Vollm
Performers Marina Rebecka, Seokjong
Baek, Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, Quimm
Kelsey, Vartan Gabrielian

MADRID

Teatro Real
Plaza de Oriente s/n - 28013 Madrid

Tel.: (+34) 91/ 516 06 60

September 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28,
29 – October 2, 3, 5, 6

OTELLO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by
Arrigo Boito
Conductor Nicola Luisotti/Giuseppe
Mentuccia – Director David Alden – Sets
and Costumes Jon Morrell
Performers Brian Jadge/Jorge de
Leon/Angelo Villari, Igor Golovatenko/
Artur Rucinski/Gabriele Viviani, Aïram
Hernandez, Albert Casals, Insung Sim,
Fernando Radò, Asmik Grigorian/Maria
Agresta, Enkelejda Shkosa

September 27

FARNACE

Music by Antonio Vivaldi – Libretto by
Antonio Maria Lucchini
Conductor Emiliano Gonzales Toro –
Director Mathilde Etienne
Performers Emiliano Gonzales Toro,
Key'mon W. Murrah, Adèle Charvet, Deniz
Şuzun, Juan Sancho, Daria Proszek, Alvaro
Zambrano

October 4, 7

IRIS

Music by Pietro Mascagni – Libretto by
Luigi Illica
Conductor Daniele Callegari – Versione in
forma di concerto
Performers Jongmin Park, Ermonela Jaho,
Gregory Kunde, Gabriele Viviani, Carmen
Solis, Pablo Garcia-Lopez

November 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

IL MANDARINO MERAVIGLIOSO / IL CASTELLO DI BARBABLÙ

Music by Béla Bartók – Libretto by Béla
Balázs
Conductor Gustavo Gimeno – Director
Christof Loy – Sets Marton Agh –
Costumes Barbara Drosihn
Performers (Il mandarino meraviglioso)
Gorka Culebras, Carla Pérez Mora, Nicky
van Cleef, Jaroslav Kruczeck, Joni
Osterlund, Nicolas Franciscus, Mario
Branco; (Il castello di Barbablù) Christoph
Fischesser, Evelyn Herlitzius, Nicolas
Franciscus

NEW YORK

The Metropolitan Opera
Lincoln Center - New York,
New York State 10023
Tel.: (+1) 212 362 6000
www.metopera.org

September 21, 26, , 29 – October 2, 4,
8, 11

LE FANTASTICHE AVVENTURE DI KAVALIER and CLAY

Music by Mason Bates – Libretto by Gene
Scheer
Conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin
– Director Bartlett Sher – Sets Rick
Jacobsohn – Costumes Jennifer Moeller
Performers Lauren Snouffer, Sun-Ly
Pierce, Miles Mykkanen, Andrzej Filonczyk,
Edoardo Nelson, Patrick Carfizzi, Craig
Colclough

September 23, 27, 30 – October 3, 9,
13, 18 – May 19, 21, 23, 24, 27, 29, 30
– June 2, 4, 6

TURANDOT

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by
Giuseppe Adami and Targioni Tozzetti
Conductor Carlo Rizzi
Performers Roberto Alagna, Carlo Bosi,
David Crawford, Julian Grigoryan, Brian
Jadge, Vitalij Kowaliow, Oksana Lyniv,
Angela Meade/Anna Pirozzi, Liudmyla
Monastyrskaya, Rebecca Nash, John Relyea,
Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha, Le Bu,
Jeongcheol Cha, Peixin Chen, Michele
Fabiano, Joo Won Kang, Tony Stevenson,
Angel Blue

September 24, 27 – October 1, 4, 7, 10,
15, 20, 25 – November 6, 11, 15, 19,
22

DON GIOVANNI

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte
Conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin/Daniele
Rustioni
Performers Tommaso Barea, Ben Bliss,
Janai Brugger, Andrea Carroll, Brandon
Cedel, Anita Hartig, Solomon Howard, Kyle
Ketelsen, Federica Lombardi, Adam Palka,
Hera Hyesang Park, Adam Plachetka,
William Guanbo Su, Guanqun Yu

October 6, 11, 14, 18, 24, 29 – Novem-

ber 1

LA SONNAMBULA

Music by Vincenzo Bellini – Libretto by Felice Romani

Conductor Riccardo Frizza

Performers Xabier Anduaga, Sydney Mancasola, Deborah Nansteel, Scott Scully, Nadine Sierra, Alexander Vinogradov

October 17, 23, 26, 31 – November 3, 8, 12,

LA FILLE DU REGIMENT

Music by Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by Jean-Francois-Alfred Bayard and Jules-Henry Vernoy de Saint-Georges

Conductor Giacomo Sagripanti

Performers Lawrence Brownlee, Alice Coote, Peter Kalman, Erin Morley,

October 21, 25, 30 – November 4, 8, 30 – December 4, 6, 12 – April 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 24, 25, 27 – May 1, 2

LA BOHEME

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Conductor Karel Mark Chichon/Daniele Rustioni

Performers David Bizic, Angel Blue, Stephen Costello, Amina Edris, Alexander Birch Elliott, Anthony Clark Evans, Mané Galoyan, Juliana Grigoryan, John Hancock, Roberto Kalb, Alexander Kopeczi, Aleksandra Kurzak, Davide Luciano, Long Long, Giorgi Manoshvili, Donald Maxwell, Lucas Meachem, Jongmin Park, Edward Parks, Sean Michael Plumb, Iurii Samoilov, Tyler Simpson, Adam Smith, Alexandros Stavrakakis, Heidi Stober, Freddie De Tommaso, Keri-Lynn Wilson

October 28 – November 1, 5, 7, 14, 17, 21, 29 – January 11, 14, 17, 20, 23

CARMEN

Music by George Bizet – Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halevy

Conductor Fabian Gabel/Derrick Inouye/Piergiorgio Morandi

Performers Michael Adams, Aigul Akhmetshina, Aaron Blake, Richard Bernstein, Janai Brugger, Scott Conner, Christian Van Horn, Isabel Leonard, Kristina Mkhitarvan, Adam Plachetka

PARIS OPERA NATIONAL**Opéra National de Paris**

120 rue de Lyon - 75012 Paris

(Francia)

Tel.: (+33) 1 /71 25 24 23

www.operadeparis.fr**Opéra Bastille**

September 12, 17, 19, 23, 27, 30 – October 2, 5, 8, 11, 14

LA BOHEME

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by

Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Conductor Domingo Hindoyan – Director

Claus Guth – Sets Etienne Pluss – Cotumi

Eva Dessecker

Performers Nicole Car/Yaritza Véliz,

Charles Cstronovo/Joshua Guerrero,

Andrea Carroll, Etienne Dupuis, Xiaomeng

Zhang, Alexandros Stavrakakis, Frank

Leguérinel, Hyun-Jong Roh, Andrés

Prunell-Vulcano, Olivier Ayault, Ook Chung

Palais Garnier

September 16, 18, 21, 24, 26, 29 – October 1, 3, 7, 9, 12

ARIODANTE

Music by Georg Friedrich Haendel

Conductor Raphael Pichon – Director

Robert Carsen – Sets and Costumes Luis

F. Carvalho

Performers Cecilia Molinari, Luca Tittoto,

Jacquelyn Stucker, Sabine Devieilh, Ru

Charlesworth, Christophe Dumaux, Enrico

Casari

Opéra Bastille

September 20, 24, 28 – October 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22 – November 1, 4

AIDA

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by

Antonio Ghislanzoni

Conductor Michele Mariotti/Dmitrij

Matvienko – Director Shirin Neshat – Sets

Cristiano Schmidt – Costumes Tatiana van

Walsum

Performers Saioa Hernandez/Ewa Plonka,

Piotr Beczala/Gregory Kunde, Eve-Maud

Hubeaux/Judit Kutasi, Roman Burdenko/

Enkhbat Amartuvshin

VIENNA**Wiener Staatsoper**

Opern-Ring - A-1015 Wien (Austria)

Bundestheaterkassen, Hanuschgasse

3, A-1010 Wien

Tel.: (+43)1/514 44 2960

www.wiener-staatsoper.at

September 3, 5, 9, 12

DIE ZAUBERFLOTE

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart –

Libretto by Emmanuel Schikaneder

Conductor Patrick Lange – Director

Barbora Horakova – Sets Falko Herold –

Costumes Eva Butzkies

Performers Christof Fischesser, Julian

Prégardien, Clemens Unterreiner, Adrian

Autard, Serena Saenz, Kathrin Zukowski,

Anna Bondarenko, Alma Neuhaus,

Stephanie Maitland, Michael Nagl, Ilia

Staple, Matthias Schmidlechner, Lukas

Schmidt, Evgeny Solodovnikov

September 4, 8, 11

OTELLO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi – Libretto by

Arrigo Boito

Conductor Bertrand de Billy – Director

Adrian Noble – Sets and Costumes Dick

Bird

Performers Arsen Soghomonyan, Ludovic

Tézier, Carlo Osuna, , Devin Eatmon,

Dan Paul Dumitrescu, Stefan Astakhov,

Alejandro Pizarro-Entiquez, Malin Bystrom,

Daria Sushkova

September 6, 10, 13, 16

IOLANTA

Music by Piotr Illic Tchaikovsky

Conductor Timur Zangiev – 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, Teresa Sales Rebordao

September 14, 17, 21, 24

TANNHAUSER

Musica and Libretto by Richard Wagner

Conductor Axel Kober – Director Lydia Steier – Sets Momme Hinriks – Costumes Alfred Mayerhofer
Performers Georg Zeppenfeld, Clay Hilley, Ludovic Tézier, Jorg Schneider, Matheus Franca, Lukas Schmidt, Marcus Pelz, Camilla Nylund, Ekaterina Gubanova, Ileana Tonca

September 20, 25, 27, 29
TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica
Conductor Piergiorgio Morandi – Director Margarethe Wallmann – Sets and Costumes Nicola Benois
Performers Elena Stikhina, Jonathan Tetelman, Ludovic Tézier, Jusung Gabriel Park, Wolfgang Bankl, Devin Eatmon, Hans Peter Kammerer, Dan Paul Dumitrescu

September 25, 28 – October 5, 8, 11, 13 – March 23, 26, 29, 31
LA SPOSA VENDUTA

Music by Bedrich Smetana – Libretto by Karel Sabina
Conductor Tomas Hanus – Director Dirk Schmeding – Sets Robert Schweer – Costumes Alfred Mayerhofer
Performers Franz Xaver Schlecht, Margaret Plummer, Slavka Zamecnikova, Ivo Stanchev, Monika Bohinec, Pavol Breslik, Michael Laurenz, Peter Kellner

September 26 – October 4, 9
IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by Cesare Sterbini
Conductor Gianluca Capuano – Director and Sets Herbert Fritsch – Costumes Victoria Behr
Performers Liparit Avetisyan, Paolo Bordogna, Vasilisa Berzhanskaya, Erwin Schrott, Davide Luciano, Andrei Maksimov, Sebastian Wendelin, Jenni Hietala

September 30 – October 6, 10
FIN DE PARTIE

Musica and Libretto by Gyorgy Kurtag
Conductor Simone Youg – Director, Sets and Costumes Herbert Fritsch
Performers Charles Workman, Hilary Summers, Philippe Sly, Georg Nigl

October 10, 15, 17, 21, 24

DIE ENTFUHRUNG DEM SERAIL

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie
Conductor Ivor Bolton – Director Hans Neuenfels – Sets Christian Schmidt – Costumes Bettina Merz
Performers Marcus Bluhm, Serena Saenz, Katharina Pichler, Florina Ilie, Stella Roberts, Ante Jerkunica, Andreas Grotzinger, Sebastian Kohlhepp, Christian Natter, Lukas Schmidt, Ludwig Blochberger

October 16, 18, 23, 25 – June 13, 15, 17, 19

COSI FAN TUTTE

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte
Conductor Adam Fischer – Director Barrie Kosky – Sets and Costumes Gianluca Falaschi
Performers Ruzan Mantashyan, Alma Neuhaus, Markus Werba, Dovlet Nurgeldiyev, Isabel Signoret, Luca Pisaroni

October 27, 30 – November 2, 5

PELLEAS ET MOLISANDE

Musica and Libretto by Claude Debussy
Conductor Alain Altinoglu – Director, Sets and Costumes Marco Arturo Marelli
Performers Jean Teitgen, Monika Bohinec, Rolando Villazon, Simon Keenlyside, Kate Lindsey, Hannah-Theres Weigl, Dohoon Lee

Groissbock, Angela Brower, Bo Skovhus, Emily Pogorelc, Christiane Kohl, Nathan Haller, Irène Friedli

September 24, 27 – October 3, 7, 10
MANON

Music by Jules Massenet – Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Philippe Gille
Conductor Sesto Quattrini – Director Floris Visser – Sets and Costumes Dieuweke van Reijj
Performers Lisette Oropesa, Benjamin Bernheim, Yannick Debus, Nicolas Testé, Daniel Norman, Andrew Moore, Yewon Han, Rebeca Olvera

September 25, 28 – October 19, 24
LA SCALA DI SETA

Music by Gioachino Rossini – Libretto by Giuseppe Maria Foppa
Conductor Leonardo Sini – Director Damiano Michiello – Sets Paolo Fantin
Performers Olga Peretyatko, Siena Licht Miller, Andrew Owens, Guram Margvelashvili, Nahuel Di Pierro, Martin Zysset

September 28 – October 2, 8, 11, 15, 19
TOSCA

Music by Giacomo Puccini – Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica
Conductor Marco Armiliato/Leonardo Sini – Director Robert Carsen – Sets Anthony Ward
Performers Sonya Yoncheva, Jonas Kaufmann, Bryn Terfel, Brent Michael Smith, Valeriy Murga, Johan Krogus, Steffan Lloyd Owen Evan Grazy

ZÜRICH

Opernhaus

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

September 21, 26 – October 1, 5, 14, 17, 21, 26

DER ROSENKAVALIER

Music by Richard Strauss – Libretto by Hugo von Hoffmannsthal
Conductor Joana Mallwitz – Director Lydia Steier – Sets and Costumes Dieter Eisenmann
Performers Diana Damrau, Gunther

NEL CUORE

TEATRO ALLA SCALA



25/26

Campagna
Abbonamenti

DI MILANO

Sponsor Principale della Stagione

INTESA  SANPAOLO

Scopri tutti gli spettacoli
su teatroallascala.org

Visit our website:
operarealities.com