



# LA FENICE

notiziario di informazione musicale e avvenimenti culturali

**PRESS RELEASE**

Venice, 2 July 2019

## **2019-2020 Opera and Ballet Season and Symphony Season**

The **2019-2020 Opera and Ballet Season and Symphony Season** of Fondazione Teatro La Fenice were presented Tuesday 2 July 2019 by the superintendent and artistic director Fortunato Ortombina, in the presence of the general director Andrea Erri, the artistic head of dance Franco Bolletta, the general director of Fondazione di Venezia Giovanni Dell'Olivo and the head of CTPS Direzione Regionale Veneto Friuli Giulia e Trentino Alto Adige Intesa Sanpaolo, Monica Cristanelli: since January 1, 2019 the group has been a supporting partner of the Venetian Opera House and has renewed its invaluable support of La Fenice's Opera and Symphony Seasons.

The **2019-2020 Opera and Ballet Season** will open with *Don Carlo*: in continuation with the previous openings, Myung-Whun Chung will carry on with his interpretation of Verdi's works. With direction by Robert Carsen, three interpreters will have their debut in the performance: Piero Pretti, Alex Esposito and Julian Kim. This will be followed by *Pinocchio* by the composer Pierangelo Valtinoni from Vicenza, one of the most frequently performed living composers worldwide, and the twentieth-century diptych *A Hand of Bridge* by Barber and *Bluebeard's Castle* by Bartók. In addition to the revivals of *La traviata* and *Il trovatore*, Verdi's so-called 'popular trilogy' will be completed with the Italian première of a production of *Rigoletto*, with production by Damiano Michieletto. The programme continues with Vivaldi's *Farnace*, conducted by Diego Fasolis. As regards the French repertory, Bizet's *Carmen* will be revived, conducted by Myung-Whun Chung, with Varduhi Abrahamyan and Francesco Meli. Two operas that have not been performed in La Fenice for years will also return: firstly, Händel's *Rinaldo* with the historic production by Pier Luigi Pizzi, which was reconstructed to pay homage to the maestro who, with this very production initiated the start of an important phase in the rediscovery of Baroque music in 1985; secondly, Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* with direction by Alfonso Antoniozzi. Another première is foreseen for the Venetian Opera House with the diptych including Salieri's *Prima la musica e poi le parole* and Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*, once again in collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts. The Opera Giovani foresees *La serva padrona* by Pergolesi and the first modern-day Italian performance of *Duse*, John Neumeier's choreographic fantasy. The programme is completed with the great repertory 'classics' that will be staged in their historical productions for the Fenice: *L'elisir d'amore* by Donizetti – with Celso Albelo as Nemorino –, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *La cambiale di matrimonio* by Rossini, and *Aida* by Verdi with Piero Pretti who debuts as Radamès.

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AUTORIZZAZIONE DEL TRIBUNALE DI VENEZIA, 10 APRILE 1997, ISCR. N. 1257 REGISTRO STAMPA  
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On the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven, it is his music that will be one of the key themes of the **2019-2020 Symphony Season**. A complete overview of the Bonn born composer's works will be guaranteed thanks to the performance at La Fenice and Malibran of almost all his symphonies, the *Choral Fantasy*, the *Coriolan* overture, *Le creature di Prometeo* and two Concertos for pianoforte and orchestra. Alongside the regulars invited to La Fenice, other important conductors will have their debut, including Alpesh Chauhan, who will conduct the opening concert, followed by Claus Peter Flor at La Fenice with the *Italiana* and *Riforma* Symphonies by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy; Daniel Cohen, with Beethoven's Fourth and Seventh Symphony; Hartmut Haenchen with Beethoven's Ninth; Rudolf Buchbinder in the double role of conductor and solo pianist; finally, Ton Koopman, who will link Beethoven's music with that of Johann Sebastian Bach, another key point of the new Season, marking the two hundred and seventieth anniversary of his death. Prestigious debuts rival those of much-awaited returns, first and foremost that of Myung-Whun Chung, with his multiyear project of interpreting Gustav Mahler's works: after the Fifth in 2017 and the Second in 2019, the maestro will now conduct the Ninth and Third Symphony. Other returning names include Federico Maria Sardelli with Beethoven, and Marco Angius with the *Pastoral*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony, and the Intermezzo for Mozart's *Idomeneo* by Richard Strauss. The programme includes the traditional date of the Christmas Concert in the Basilica of Saint Mark, with the Choir of the Cappella Marciana under the guidance of Marco Gemmani; the Fenice Choir will sing Alfred Schnittke's *Requiem* and the motet "Jesu, meine Freude" by Bach, conducted by Claudio Marino Moretti. The Dresden Staatskapelle – guests this Season – will perform Antonín Dvořák's Eighth Symphony and Johannes Brahms Fourth, conducted by Myung-Whun Chung. Chung will also conduct the orchestra and choir of Teatro La Fenice for the seventeenth edition of the New Year's Concert at Teatro La Fenice. Last but not least, the "Nuova musica alla Fenice" project will be renewed thanks to support from Fondazione Amici della Fenice; once again, three overtures by young composers will have their world première.

The 2019-2020 Opera and Ballet season comprises over one hundred and fifty performances, from 24 November 2019 to 20 October 2020, with twelve new productions and eight revivals. The symphony programme has increased, with thirteen concerts and eleven repeat performances, from 12 October 2019 to 15 June 2020.

The 2019-2020 Opera and Ballet Season will open with **Giuseppe Verdi's *Don Carlo***, which was last performed at Teatro La Fenice twenty-eight years ago. A grand opera to a libretto by François-Joseph Méry and Camille Du Locle, *Don Carlo* will be staged in the four-act version translated into Italian by Achille De Lauzières and Angelo Zanardini, which debuted at Teatro alla Scala in Milan on 10 January 1884. Exactly fifteen years after the debut of *La traviata*, which opened the Season after the reconstruction of the Opera House, Robert Carsen is returning as the director of the Italian première of the production by the Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg and Alto-Theater in Essen. Myung-Whun Chung will conduct the Orchestra and Choir of Teatro La Fenice with a cast that includes three prestigious debuts: the tenor Piero Pretti in the title role, Alex Esposito as the bass Philip II, and the baritone Julian Kim as Marquis of Posa. The soprano Maria Agresta is the female protagonist as queen Elisabeth of Valois. As is customary for the opening of the Season, the production is supported by Freundeskreis des Teatro La Fenice and will be staged on 24, 27, 30 November and 3 and 7 December 2019.

In the period before Christmas Teatro Malibran will stage ***Pinocchio* by the Vicenza-born composer Pierangelo Valtinoni**. Based on a libretto by Paolo Madron from Carlo Collodi's *Le avventure di Pinocchio*, since 2001 it has attracted both contemporary music lovers and the

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youngest generations in many countries worldwide. La Fenice will stage the 2006 two-act version in Italian, with a new production by the director Gianmaria Aliverta, with musical direction by Enrico Calesso. In the main roles the cast includes the soprano Silvia Frigato as Pinocchio and the baritone Omar Montanari as Geppetto. There will be a total of ten performances: five for the general public on 13, 15, 17, 19 and 21 December 2019 and five for the schools on 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 March 2020.

January will see the staging of *A Hand of Bridge* by **Samuel Barber** and *Bluebeard's Castle* (A kékszakállú herceg vára) by **Béla Bartók** with a new production with direction by Fabio Ceresa and musical direction by Diego Matheuz, with the soprano Aušrinė Stundytė and the bass-baritone Gidon Saks. *A Hand of Bridge* is a one-act opera with a libretto by Gian Carlo Menotti, which debuted at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto in 1959. It is probably the shortest opera that has ever been staged in an opera house as it actually only lasts nine minutes, the time needed for a hand of bridge 'sung' by two pairs of singers. The one-act opera *Bluebeard's Castle*, the libretto of which is by the poet Béla Balázs, is based on the character narrated in Charles Perrault's *La Barbe Bleue* (1967) and in the drama *Ariane et Barbe Bleue* (1901) by Maurice Maeterlinck. After having composed the music in 1911 to take part in a competition called by the Budapest Ministry of Fine Arts, it was not until 1918 that Bartók finally saw it debut at the Budapest Opera House. The diptych is of great interest not only because *A Hand of Bridge* is a complete novelty for the public at La Fenice, but also because deviating from tradition, it is combined with a comedy instead of a tragedy; it will be performed at Teatro La Fenice on 17, 19, 21, 23 and 25 January 2020.

**Alessandra Ferri** and the **Hamburg Ballett** will be the interpreters of *Duse*, the choreographic fantasy by John Neumeier – director of choreography, sets, costumes and light design, and is inspired by the figure of Eleonora Duse. Based on music by Benjamin Britten and Arvo Pärt, the production by the American dancer and choreographer draws inspiration from certain episodes from the life of the “divina”. Refusing any kind of documentary approach, choreographically Neumeier reveals the essence of this unique character and outstanding actress who, at the end of the nineteenth century, was able to revolutionise the models of the playhouse. After its première in Hamburg in 2016, there were numerous repeat performances of *Duse* all over Germany; its Italian première is at Teatro La Fenice on 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 February 2020.

Part of the so-called ‘popular trilogy’ by **Giuseppe Verdi**, La Fenice will stage *Rigoletto*, the three-act opera with libretto by Francesco Maria Piave based on Victor Hugo's work *Le Roi s'amuse* that premièred at none other than Teatro La Fenice in Venice on 11 March 1851. This highly popular opera from the great repertory will be staged for the first time in Venice with the production Damiano Michieletto created in 2017 for the Amsterdam National Opera. In this fascinating production, with the assistance of the set designer Paolo Fantin and costume designer Agostino Cavalca, the Venetian director sets the plot in a lunatic asylum, where the protagonist has been kept after going mad with pain because he involuntarily caused the death of his daughter. The baritone Luca Salsi is the protagonist in this interpretation, with Claudia Pavone as Gilda and Ivan Ayon Rivas as the Duke of Mantua; conducted by Daniele Callegari. It will be staged at Teatro La Fenice on 23, 26, 29 April and 2, 6, 8, 19, 21, 23, 27, 29 and 31 May 2020.

The new production of *Farnace* is another new, invaluable step in the fascinating journey to rediscover Vivaldi's operas. After *Orlando furioso* (2018) and *Dorilla in Tempe* (2019), La Fenice has programmed a new Vivaldi production by the director Christophe Gayral. Once again one of the greatest **Antonio Vivaldi** experts, Diego Fasolis, will conduct the orchestra whilst the cast includes the outstanding voices of Carlo Vistoli, Sonia Prina and Lucia Cirillo. A three-act opera with a libretto by Antonio Maria Lucchini, *Farnace* was composed during the same period as *Dorilla*. In

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fact, it premièred at Teatro Sant'Angelo in Venice during the same opera season, on 10 February 1727. It will be staged at Teatro Malibran on 30 April, 3, 5, 7, and 9 May 2020.

A renowned cornerstone of French opera, Charles Gounod's *Faust* will be staged in a new production with direction by Joan Anton Rechi, produced by La Fenice in collaboration with the Teatro Comunale of Bologna. The production of this title – which was last performed at La Fenice in 1993 – also marks the return to Venice of the conductor Frédéric Chaslin, coming back to La Fenice fourteen years after his last appearance (in 2005 when he conducted *La Juive*). The cast includes the tenor Antonio Poli, the soprano Carmela Remigio and the bass Alex Esposito. A five-act opera with a libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré based on the same-named poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* premièred at Théâtre Lyrique in Paris on 19 March 1859, with spoken dialogues. After various revivals in French and European theatres, and numerous changes to the score, it finally met with success at the Paris Opera on 3 March 1869, where it was presented in a new version that included the addition of a ballet and the *couplets* of Mefistofele's serenata in the fourth act. The five performances at Teatro La Fenice are on 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 May 2020.

In the month of June La Fenice will pay homage to Pier Luigi Pizzi, with the historical production of *Rinaldo di Georg Friedrich Händel*, created by Pier Luigi Pizzi in 1985 for Teatro Municipale in Reggio Emilia; it has been recreated thanks to the collaboration of La Fenice with Teatro dell'Opera in Florence. Offering some of the most representative and 'spectacular' pages of eighteenth-century Baroque opera, the musical direction of *Rinaldo* is by Andrea Marcon, who will guide a first-class vocal cast with the protagonist Teresa Iervolino and Carmela Remigio as Armida. A three-act opera with a libretto by Giacomo Rossi that is loosely based on Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, *Rinaldo* is the first opera Händel wrote for the London public, and it debuted at the Queen's Theatre on 24 February 1711. It is also the first Italian opera composed for an English theatre. It will be staged at Teatro La Fenice thirty-one years after its last performance, on 19, 21, 25, 27 June and 1 and 3 July 2020.

After forty-eight years *Roberto Devereux* will finally return to the stage of Teatro La Fenice with a new production by La Fenice, co-produced by Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa and Teatro Regio in Parma, with direction by Alfonso Antoniozzi. A three-act tragic opera with a libretto by Salvatore Cammarano based on Jacques Ancelot's *Elisabeth d'Angleterre*, *Roberto Devereux* is one of the most important and successful of Gaetano Donizetti's works. Premièring at Teatro San Carlo in Naples on 28 October 1837, it is the last of the successful opera trilogy by the Bergamo born composer inspired by the Tudor queens, after *Anna Bolena* (1830) and *Maria Stuarda* (1835). The conductor is Riccardo Frizza whilst the return to La Fenice of the soprano Roberta Mantegna is eagerly awaited as Queen Elizabeth, together with the tenor Enea Scala as Devereux, and the baritone Alessandro Luongo as the Duke of Nottingham. There will be five performances: on 26, 28, 30 June and 2 and 4 July 2020.

The parodic, meta-theatrical and highly amusing diptych comprising *Prima la musica e poi le parole* by Antonio Salieri and *Der Schauspieldirektor* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, neither of which have ever been performed in Venice, will be staged for the first time at Teatro Malibran. This is a new production created by Fondazione Teatro La Fenice together with the Academy of Fine arts, direction by Italo Nunziata and musical direction by Federico Maria Sardelli. The two one-acts, the first to a libretto in Italian by Giovanni Battista Casti, the second to one in German by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie, premièred as a 'diptych' on 7 February 1786 in Schönbrunn Castle, commissioned by Emperor Josef II; full of allusions and references that are more or less explicit, both works stage the preparations for the production of an opera, including all the arguments, jealousy, whims and inconveniences that were typical of an operatic enterprise in the second half of the eighteenth century. It will be staged on 9, 11, 15, 17 and 20 October 2020.



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During the Venice Carnival period there will be another date with **Opera Giovani**, a project by La Fenice in collaboration with the Venice Benedetto Marcello Conservatory aimed at schools, families and the younger generations. Two titles will be staged at Teatro Malibran: **Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*** (13, 14 and 15 February 2020) is considered to be the mother of comic theatre in music. It premièred on 28 August 1733 at Teatro San Bartolomeo in Naples in the form of two intermezzos, composed to a libretto by Gennarantonio Federico. The amusing subject – the enterprising astute servant who manages to make the wealthy bachelor marry her – had already appeared in earlier operas, including *Pimpinone* by **Tomaso Albinoni**, which was performed this year as part of the programme started by La Fenice in the 2017-2018 season of rediscovering and valorising the Venetian composer's work. And this is the context in which the same programme has added the second title of 'Opera Giovani': after *Il regno della luna*, *La Statira* and *Pimpinone*, this year we have the extremely rare ***Engelberta***, an opera by Albinoni to a libretto by Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Pariati, composed for Venice in 1709, and which will now have its first modern day première (26, 27 and 28 March 2020).

*La traviata*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *Il trovatore*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *La cambiale di matrimonio* are the great 'classics' that will be revived throughout the Season with the Fenice productions that have now become a must in the Venetian Opera House's programming. At the height of the Carnival period is **Gaetano Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*** with the successful production by Bepi Morassi, musical direction by Jader Bignamini and the participation of the renowned tenor Celso Albelo as Nemorino (15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 25 February 2020). Wyung-Whun Chung will conduct ***Carmen* by Georges Bizet** in the production by Calixto Bieito that will be revived thanks to the coproduction between Teatro La Fenice and Teatro Real in Madrid, Teatro Regio in Turin and Teatro Massimo in Palermo; the cast is outstanding with the mezzosoprano Varduhi Abrahamyan and the tenor Francesco Meli as the protagonists (25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31 March, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 April 2020). ***La traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi** with direction by Robert Carsen and set and costumes by Patrick Kinmonth will return to La Fenice, conducted by Stefano Ranzani at two different moments of the Season (4, 5, 18, 22, 24, 26, 28 and 29 January; 27, 29 August, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 19, 20, 24, 26 September and 2 October 2020). After *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata* the Verdian 'popular trilogy' will end with ***Il trovatore*** with direction by Lorenzo Mariani and conducted by Daniele Callegari (25, 27 September, 4, 10 and 13 October 2020). Following the success it had during the current Season, under Francesco Ivan Ciampa's musical direction ***Aida*** by Mauro Bolognini will return with sets by Mario Ceroli and costumes by Aldo Buti. After this year's triumph, Roberta Mantegna will once again be in the role of the Ethiopian slave, with the tenor Piero Pretti at her side, debuting in the role of Radamès (23, 28, 30 August 1, 2, 5, 9 and 13 September 2020). Finally, there will also be two operas from Rossini's production: ***Il barbiere di Siviglia*** with direction by Bepi Morassi and musical direction by Federico Maria Sardelli (3, 8, 14, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 27 October 2020) and ***La cambiale di matrimonio*** with the direction by Enzo Dara and conducted by Alvis Casellati (11, 15, 17 and 20 October 2020).