



Opera Opens Up

Carlo Rizzi's 2019-20 season includes rare Rossini in Pesaro, landmark new production of *L'amore dei tre re* at La Scala, *Turandot* and *Simon Boccanegra* at the Metropolitan Opera and *Les vêpres siciliennes* for Welsh National Opera

Conductor looks forward to innovative projects as Opera Rara's new Artistic Director

'Italian colour and dramatic gusto are vouchsafed by WNO's former music director, now conductor laureate, Carlo Rizzi, who inspires the company's orchestra and chorus to thrilling heights. On this form, they are the finest Verdians this side of the Alps,' *Sunday Times*, review of *Un ballo in maschera*, February 2019

Exploration and adventure have been among the defining qualities of Carlo Rizzi's work over four decades. The Italian conductor is set to step into fresh artistic territory in the coming season, both in the opera house and as the new Artistic Director of Opera Rara. His forthcoming schedule includes a new production of Rossini's *L'equivoco stravagante* in Pesaro, part of the Rossini Opera Festival's fortieth anniversary programme (13-22 August 2019), and the final instalment of Welsh National Opera's critically acclaimed Verdi Trilogy with David Pountney's new production of *Les vêpres siciliennes* (8 February-14 March 2020). Maestro Rizzi adds another title to his hundred-plus tally of operas when he returns to his native Milan next year to conduct Italo Montemezzi's rarely staged *L'amore dei tre re* at the Teatro alla Scala (17 May-10 June).

Carlo Rizzi's 2019-20 season spans everything from Robert Wilson's new staging of Puccini's *Turandot* for Canadian Opera Company (28 September-27 October 2019) to *Turandot* (9-25 April 2020) and *Simon Boccanegra* (10-25 April) at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He will also conduct six performances of *Rigoletto* in a new production by Ole Anders Tandberg for the Norwegian Opera Company (19 December 2019-10 January 2020), the revival of Tobias Richter's staging of *Le nozze di Figaro* for Welsh National Opera (16 February-12 March), and concerts with the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra (9 November 2019) and the Hallé (11, 12 & 15 December 2019). His symphonic outings begin in Antwerp with Wagner's 'Faust' Overture, the Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde* and Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, and continue with performances at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall of scenes and dances from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Act II of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*.

"I am so happy to have such a strong mix of mainstream repertoire and little-known operas in the coming season," comments Carlo Rizzi. "It's so pleasing to be able to go deeper into compositions that I have conducted many times while also exploring new pieces. This combination opens up fresh ways of thinking about even the most familiar works. So often when we turn to rare pieces from the past, people want to know why they're not done more often. Part of the answer is that they need to be supported. Before the Rossini Opera Festival began, the fingers of one hand were too many to count the number of Rossini operas in the repertoire. That changed because conductors of the calibre of Claudio Abbado and adventurous promoters brought so many fine works back into the spotlight."

A glance at Carlo Rizzi's repertoire reveals his own distinguished contribution to the restoration of opera's forgotten treasures. He intends to make fresh discoveries as Artistic Director of Opera Rara, the pioneering record company devoted to the revival of neglected works and the art of *bel canto*. His tenure begins in September, on the eve of the label's fiftieth anniversary year, and marks a new era in its history. Future plans include the first-ever studio recording of Donizetti's *Il furioso all'isola di San Domingo*, to be prefaced by a performance at London's Barbican Centre on 22 June 2020, and new recordings of Offenbach's *La Princesse de Trébizonde*, Halévy's *Guido et Ginévrà* and Leoncavallo's *Zingari*.

"My conducting career began with 'opera rara', with Donizetti's *L'ajo nell'imbarazzo*, and I have returned to rare operas so many times since," Rizzi recalls. "I made my international debut at the Buxton Festival in 1988 with Donizetti's *Torquato Tasso*, and have conducted rarities by Paisiello, Piccinni and Salieri, as well as little-known operas by Donizetti and Rossini. I have also explored neglected *verismo* operas, starting three years ago at La Scala with Giordano's *La cena delle beffe*, the first time it had been performed there since Toscanini conducted it between the two world wars. And next year I go back to my home city for *L'amore dei tre re*, another 'opera rara'. So many of these forgotten works were very successful in their day but fell out of favour over time. I believe it's important to recreate the feeling of novelty and excitement that inspired their early audiences and discover why they once moved people so strongly. One of the great things, as I near my sixtieth birthday next year, is the sense of freedom I have in the way I approach music now. I think that only comes with time and I'm really enjoying the experience."

Rossini's *L'equivoco stravagante* ('The Curious Misunderstanding'), notes Carlo Rizzi, offended public taste and was banned by the Bologna police after only three performances in 1811. The Rossini Opera Festival's new production, staged by Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier at Pesaro's Vitrifrigo Arena, will allow today's audience to discover the two-act opera's magnificent ensemble writing, inventive plot and showpiece arias. Rizzi will also conduct *Gala ROF XL*, the festival's fortieth anniversary gala concert on Wednesday 21 August. "Both *L'equivoco stravagante* and the gala are a celebration of the festival's forty years," he comments. "So many singers who have been part of the festival will be there for the gala, which is sure to be a terrific occasion."

Carlo Rizzi is adamant that musical quality must always lead the quest for neglected repertoire. The best 'forgotten' operas, he continues, carry none of the baggage of tradition attached to household-name works, a bonus for casts and conductors coming fresh to them today. "Tradition can be a very good thing, but it can also get in the way," he says. "I love the fact that rehearsing *L'equivoco stravagante* is like shared research; it's not about me telling singers what to do or how the piece should go. I look forward to doing much more of this research with Opera Rara, to continue this process of discovery. Recording gives you the chance to build an interpretation, to work with the singers and allow the music to breathe."

Opera Rara earned its reputation in the 1970s with concert performances of *bel canto* operas, many of them presented for the first time in the modern era. The recording label's catalogue reflects the tastes of its co-founders, Patric Schmid and Don White, passionate devotees of *bel canto*. "There was so much for them to discover," notes Carlo Rizzi. "Now we want to expand the horizons to include more French repertoire and *verismo* opera. Of course, we will continue to explore Donizetti and other *bel canto* composers. But I believe it's very important for us to show the public just how rich this medium is. Opera is for everyone. When I was young, it made me dream; when I left the theatre after a performance, I was a changed person, even if it was only for a short time. This possibility to see the world in a different way, to be transported – this is the miracle of classical music and of opera in particular!"

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PERFORMANCE DATES

ROSSINI OPERA FESTIVAL

13, 16, 19 & 22 August 2019

Vitrifrigo Arena, Pesaro, 8pm

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Teresa Iervolino** Ernestina | **Paolo Bordogna** Gamberotto | **Davide Luciano** Buralicchio | **Pavel Kolgatin** Ermanno | **Claudia Muschio** Rosalia | **Manuel Amati** Frontino | **Moshe Leiser**, **Patrice Caurier** directors | **Coro del Teatro Ventidio Basso** | **Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai**

Rossini *L'equivoco stravagante* - NEW PRODUCTION

GALA ROF XL

Wednesday 21 August

Vitrifrigo Arena, Pesaro, 8.30pm

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Valeria Girardello** | **Anna Goryachova** | **Angela Meade** | **Claudia Muschio** | **Nicola Alaimo** | **Paolo Bordogna** | **Lawrence Brownlee** | **Juan Diego Flórez** | **Ruzil Gatin** | **Alessandro Luciano** | **Mirco Palazzi** | **Michele Pertusi** | **Sergey Romanovsky** | **Franco Vassallo** | **Coro del Teatro Ventidio Basso** | **Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai**

Rossini Programme TBA

28 September, 4, 9, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25, 27 October 2019

Canadian Opera Company, Toronto

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Tamara Wilson/Marjorie Owens** Turandot | **Sergey Skorokhodov/Kamen Chaney** Calaf | **Joyce El-Khoury/Vanessa Vasquez Liù** | **Stefan Kocan Timur** | **Adrian Timpau Ping** | **Julius Ahn Pang** | **Joseph Hu Pong** | **Robert Wilson** director | **Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and Chorus**

Puccini *Turandot* - **NEW PRODUCTION**

Saturday 9 November 2019

Queen Elizabeth Hall, Antwerp, 3pm

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Alwyn Mellor** soprano | **Antwerp Symphony Orchestra**

Wagner 'Faust' Overture

Wagner Vorspiel und Liebestod (*Tristan und Isolde*)

Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*

Wednesday 11, Thursday 12, Sunday 15 December 2019

Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, 2.15pm (Wednesday), 7.30pm (Thursday) & 4pm (Sunday)

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Hallé**

Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet*: scenes and dances

Tchaikovsky *The Nutcracker*: Act II

19, 28, 30 December 2019, 5, 7, 10 January 2020

Norwegian Opera, Oslo

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Atalla Ayan** Duca di Mantova | **Yngve Søbørg/Fredrik Zetterström** Rigoletto | **Sofie Asplund** Gilda | **Jens-Erik Aasbø/Günes Gürle** Sparafucile | **Tone Kummervold/Astrid Nordstad** Maddalena | **Olga Sliepnova** Giovanna | **Ole Anders Tandberg** director | **Norwegian Opera Orchestra and Chorus**

Verdi *Rigoletto* - **NEW PRODUCTION**

8, 15, 22 February 2020 Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff, 6.30pm

7 March 2020 Venue Cymru, Llandudno, 6.30pm

14 March 2020 The Bristol Hippodrome, 6.30pm

Welsh National Opera

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Jung Soo Yun** Henri | **Anush Hovhannisyan** La Duchesse Hélène | **Giorgio Caoduro** Guy De Montfort | **Wojtek Gierlach** Jean Procida | **Wyn Pencarreg** Le Sire De Béthune | **Christine Byrne** Ninette | **Robyn Lyn Evans** Daniéli / Mainfroid | **Gareth Brynmor John** Robert | **David Pountney** director | **WNO Orchestra and Chorus**

Verdi *Vêpres siciliennes* - **NEW PRODUCTION**

16, 21, 23, 28 February 2020, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

4, 6 March 2020, Venue Cymru, Llandudno, 7pm

12 March 2020, The Bristol Hippodrome, 7pm

Welsh National Opera

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Jonathan McGovern** Conte d'Almaviva | **David Ireland** Figaro | **Richard Roberts** Don Basilio / Don Curzio | **Anna Harvey** Cherubino | **Anita Watson** Countess d'Almaviva | **Soraya Mafi** Susanna | **Leah-Marian Jones** Marcellina | **Harriet Eyley** Barbarina | **Tobias Richter** director | **Max Hoehn** revival director | **WNO Orchestra and Chorus**

Mozart *Le nozze di Figaro*

9, 13, 17, 21, 25 April 2020

The Metropolitan Opera, New York

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Nina Stemme** Turandot | **Hibla Gerzmava** Liù | **Marco Berti** Calaf | **James Morris** Timur | **Gianfranco Zeffirelli** director | **The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus**

Puccini *Turandot*

10, 14, 18, 22, 25 April 2020

The Metropolitan Opera, New York

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Ailyn Pérez** Amelia Grimaldi | **Joseph Calleja** Gabriele Adorno | **Carlos Álvarez** Simon Boccanegra | **Elchin Azizov** Paolo | **Dmitry Belosselskiy** Jacopo Fiesco | **Giancarlo del Monaco** director | **The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus**

Verdi *Simon Boccanegra*

17, 20, 23, 26, 29 May, 4, 10 June 2020

Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 8pm

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Feruccio Furlanetto** Archibaldo | **Roberto Frontali** Manfredo | **Giorgio Berrugi** Avito | **Federica Lombardi** Fiora | **Giorgio Misseri** Flaminio | **Àlex Ollé / La Fura dels Baus** director | **Teatro alla Scala Chorus and Orchestra**

Montemezzi *L'amore dei tre re* – NEW PRODUCTION

Monday 22 June 2020

Barbican Centre, London

OPERA RARA

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Britten** *Sinfonia*
Cast to be announced

Donizetti *Il furioso all'isola di San Domingo*