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Press Book

A rich patrimony to be defended

There does not exist on earth any human community, however limited its material resources might be, that appears to be without any expression of *symbolic thought*, without music, without visual arts, without tales and memories transfigured into poetry and myth. The musical theatre is one of these manifestations. There are people who think, especially today, that this is nothing but an old-fashioned rite of entertainment or the survival of useless social habits. How silly. Opera is the theatrical form that best illustrates the deeper meaning of human actions, the most faithful and complete metaphorical narration of the world that Western culture has produced and handed down from generation to generation. For this first and decisive reason it makes a significant contribution to the moral and civil uplift of a population: a reason that would be good enough in itself. And yet it must be remembered that Opera is the only occasion on which music is mingled with all the other art forms (poetry, theatre, literature, painting, sculpture, dance) within one show, for this very reason particularly complex and expensive, because of which so-called low-cost productions are possible only within certain structural limitations difficult to overcome. For this reason, since Opera is considered to be the undisputed canon of our national identity, it follows that it has the right to be defended, watched over and subsidized like all the other artistical and historical treasures and museums that make up the true wealth of our country, and also its main resource in matters of tourism, economy and public image.

Today we are witnessing the crisis of a model of production, the major opera houses, gigantic structures penalized by unrestrictable labour costs. They do not have the elasticity necessary to develop together with the worrying developments in reality. On the one side it is clear to everyone (or nearly everyone) that this gordian knot cannot be cut with the sword, for obvious reasons connected with people's right to work. A reasonable *deregulation* must however spring from the conception that an excessive financial burden arising from production necessities cannot continue to weigh down culture exclusively, but must seek for some kind of social shock-absorber involving other ministries. In other words, cultural initiatives are capable of *actively* creating jobs, but cannot become a *passive* container for full occupation.

It is interesting to note how, parallel to the crisis of the opera houses, a new reality has grown up in our country, a widespread web of lighter structures, made up of festivals, traditional theatres and historical theatres, better able to adapt themselves to necessity, and all of them to reach (and sometimes to supersede) the same high quality of the large opera houses. All of

this produces in the area such an economic and occupational input as to radically shift the terms of the problem. If we just limit ourselves to this, our region of the Marche, here one single year has seen the realization of a number of new productions and shows of high quality, offering work to large numbers of people, a higher number than in many other regions in which a major opera house is working, although enjoying the granting of a much smaller amount of public funding.

Perhaps we are not talking about a format to be regarded as a necessary alternative, but it is certainly a phenomenon which it would be impossible to ignore. All the sector has acquired its equal dignity in the field, which makes the economical and ideological sub-division of funds within the FUS (Fondo Unico Spettacolo) out of date and meaningless today.

As for ourselves, we are, in a sense, a case apart. The ROF is an ideological festival, running on well-tried lines, and with an aim, the restitution of Rossini's scores, supported by the state. Our artistic strategy is conditioned and our audiences are motivated in a particular manner: we do not, therefore, constitute a good example. However, we too absolutely belong to that system of theatrical folk whose activities are based on a relationship between fixed costs and costs of production which is precisely the opposite of that of the major opera houses. And so we too, like so many others, suffer from a paradoxical situation that ought to be progressively remedied.

A reform in this field cannot but start from the evaluation of merit and quality. The charitable principle that puts all the subjects on the same level, leading to indiscriminating financing, is not only harmful to the public debt, but, inevitably producing a host of *prodigal sons*, trusting that someone will pay their debts, mocks the efforts of those who do not waste money and keep their books balanced.

It may be banal to bring this up, but the encouragement of merit and quality is one of the criteria on which the level of civilization of a country is judged.

Gianfranco Mariotti
Sovrintendente

The programme

The XXXII edition of the Rossini Opera Festival opens with a new production of *Adelaide di Borgogna*, one of the very few scores that were still missing to complete the staging of the long list of all Rossini's operas. The critical edition that marks it, edited by Gabriele Gravagna and Alberto Zedda for the Fondazione Rossini, constitutes a substantial step forward with respect to the version presented in concert performance at the ROF a few years ago. The further sources obtained have convinced us, for example, to choose a female voice for the travesty role of Iroldo, instead of the tenor employed on the former occasion. The opera, which pleased immensely then, is a perfect model of authentic Rossini, based on limpid and inspired song which is entrusted with the task of developing a theatricality far removed from any kind of realism, rather like the diaphanous theatricality of fable. Throughout the whole score we detect an aroma of remembrance of times past, reminding us of the world of chivalry summoned up by the odes of the troubadours, in which the grace of courtly love cancels out the egotism of power-play, and high-minded noble feelings ease the discomfort of sword-thrust on armour. The poetic lightness of the singing bathes even deceit and betrayal with its suffused light and reminds us of the wondrous youthful work *Tancredi*. The Pesaro performances, produced by Pier'Alli after his success in Rome with the *Moïse et Pharaon* conducted by Riccardo Muti and in Valencia with *Fidelio* conducted by Zubin Mehta, will introduce valued young singers who will be heard for the first time at the ROF: the conductor Dmitri Jurowski, the soprano Jessica Pratt, the tenor Bogdan Mihai, besides the already well-known Nicola Ulivieri, Jeannette Fischer, Francesca Pierpaoli and Clemente Antonio Daliotti, who will support the great artist Daniela Barcellona.

The other new production of this year's Pesaro Festival will feature one of the most valued of masterpieces, *Mosè in Egitto* (*Moses in Egypt*), so dear to Rossini as to lead him to revise it more than once. There are four versions of it: two concern the original Neapolitan setting, repeated one year later with the same title and with a few, though important additions (including the famous Prayer); two are a radical transformation of the above: the *Moïse et Pharaon* (*Moses and Pharaoh*) prepared for the Paris opera house, the Académie Royale, and its subsequent translation into Italian by Calisto Bassi under the new title of *Mosè*, which did not meet with Rossini's approval. The differences between the Neapolitan version, chosen for this year's revival, and the French version are conspicuous. The former, composed by the young Rossini at the height of his creative powers, is notable for the stark unfolding of a plot keeping in balance the classical beauty of an abstract *bel canto* singing style and the passionate urgency of tensions anticipating the effects of a

theatre still in the future. Artificial virtuosity does not impair the grandeur of the charismatic appearances of Moses; nor does it lessen the horror of supernatural events such as those appearing in the masterly *plague of darkness scene* that opens the opera, or the vehemence of passions when earthly power and religion, loyalty and honour, state convenience and love clash cruelly. The French revision, aiming at pleasing a demanding and critical audience, slackens the formal dimensions of the opera and introduces the usual ballet, in accordance with the new taste for *grandeur* that would lead to the delirium of *Grand Opéra*. The opera enlarges the arena of the action and acquires magniloquence, but loses the moving quality of intimate feelings and the fascination of simplicity: Moses rises up powerfully to lead his people to freedom, but the love story of Anaï and Aménophis seems alienated and out of place in comparison with that of Elcia and Osiride. This *azione tragico-sacra* (*sacred tragic piece*) (a description invented by Italian hypocrisy to allow the performance of operas during Lent) will be directed by Graham Vick, who also directed the memorable staging of *Moïse et Pharaon* at the ROF in 1997. He will have to respond to the challenge of inventing a show that captures the profound difference between texts that none the less have many features of words and music in common. He will be assisted by a cast of the highest quality, in which the main protagonists – Mosè and Faraone (Riccardo Zanellato and Alex Esposito), Osiride and Aronne (Dmitry Korchak and Yijie Shi), Elcia and Amaltea (Sonia Ganassi and Marina Rebeka) all have rôles of equal weight and importance. Here, in fact, Rossini seems to have followed the rules applied to true oratorio, in which arias and duets were distributed equally between the principals, rather than the rules of opera, in which the star singers received preferential treatment. In *Mosè in Egitto* there is no difference either in difficulty or importance in the vocal demands of the two soprano or the two tenor rôles, which become practically interchangeable. Only the rôle of Elcia contains certain passages that switch ambiguously from the soprano to the mezzo-soprano range, as always happens in the rôles created for Isabella Colbran, which the ROF naturally gives to coloratura mezzo-sopranos or to sopranos of wide range. Roberto Abbado, the charismatic conductor of the happy revivals of *Ermione* and *Zelmira*, returns to Pesaro to lead them all to triumph.

A revival of *La scala di seta* (*The silken ladder*) will follow, which returns after an unusually short lapse of time thanks to the success of a show already considered of *cult* status because of the merit of the stage direction by Damiano Michieletto, the young star whose talent came into notice at the ROF. He will direct a group of brilliant Rossinians, some of them new to Pesaro, such as the soprano Hila Baggio (recently acclaimed as the *Daughter of the Regiment* in Tel Aviv) and the successful tenor Juan Francisco Gatell (who will also sing Almaviva in the *Barbiere di Siviglia* that will close the Festival), and other regular visitors to the Festival such as Paolo Bordogna (a Germano so extraordinary as to lead us to ignore the rule never to invite an artist to repeat the same rôle), Simone Alberghini (whose rôle has been enriched by the addition of a very difficult aria for a first-class Blansac), Josè Maria Lo Monaco (as pretty as she is skilled), John Zuckerman (zealous pupil of the Accademia Rossiniana). Sets and costumes are by Paolo Fantin (the recent winner of

an Abbiati Prize for the scenery and costumes of *Sigismondo*, last year's striking novelty). The conductor will be José Miguel Pérez-Sierra, who returns to Pesaro after his success with *Il viaggio a Reims* in 2006.

Instead of the usual choral and symphonic concert we have programmed a concert performance of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, which will be transmitted in video to the main square, as the culmination of the presentation of the new critical edition of the opera, edited by Alberto Zedda, and printed last year by the Fondazione Rossini and the Ricordi publishing house. This new edition will replace the historic one, also edited by Zedda, that Claudio Abbado used at La Scala in 1969 with triumphant success, and collects together the results of forty years of study and research, of comparisons and discussions, besides the verification in the field derived by the editor from having conducted this opera all over the world. The new edition corrects a few mistakes in the earlier one and changes some textual decisions, influenced at the time by an old-established and illustrious performance practice. The opera will be conducted by Alberto Zedda and sung by Mario Cassi, Juan Francisco Gatell, Marianna Pizzolato, Nicola Alaimo, Nicola Ulivieri, Jeannette Fischer, Francesca Pierpaoli, Clemente Antonio Daliotti.

The 2011 Festival programme will be completed by the traditional revival of Emilio Sagi's production of *Il viaggio a Reims*, rehearsed by Elisabetta Courir, conducted by a young Chinese musician, Yi-Chen Lin and sung by the finalists of the Accademia Rossiniana courses; four Bel Canto concerts sung by Marianna Pizzolato, Dmitri Korchak, Nicola Alaimo - Mario Cassi, Marina Rebeka: the third part of our ambitious project of recovering the entire *corpus* of the *Péchés de vieillesse*, in collaboration with the Enti Concerti di Pesaro, the Accademia Musicale Napoletana and the Fondazione Rossini, with the pianists Stefan Irmer, Bruno Canino, Marco Sollini and Giovanni Bellucci.

The Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro Comunale, Bologna will take part in: *Mosè in Egitto*, *Adelaide di Borgogna* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; the Orchestra Sinfonica G. Rossini will play for *La scala di seta* and *Il viaggio a Reims*.

Alberto Zedda
Artistic Director

Accademia Rossiniana 2011

A seminar dedicated to problems of interpretation in Rossini's works, directed by **Alberto Zedda**.

The seminar, held every year in Pesaro during the Festival period, deals with the problems arising from modern interpretation of the vocal and dramatic requirements of the restoration of Rossini's operas to the repertoire, and the gradual publication of the Critical Edition; it is open to professional singers and researchers.

The 2011 Accademia Rossiniana will be held from 7 to 22 July. It is possible to take part in the course either as a full participant or as an observer.

Attendance at the course is free of charge, but limited to those chosen with a decision which must be regarded as final.

The study plan includes a theoretical seminar, access to the Festival rehearsals and a course in vocal interpretation, concentrating mainly on the opera ***Il viaggio a Reims***.

Alberto Zedda will be assisted by maestros Lanfranco Marcelletti and Anna Bigliardi.

Full participants are to perfectly learn by heart the assigned role/s, according to the indications given by the Accademia itself, which will also see to the supplying of score, cadenzas and vocal variations.

Qualified participants will then take part in the **Concluding Concert of the Accademia**, which will be held on 22 July 2011.

Furthermore, a selected number of participants will be involved in the production of *Il viaggio a Reims*, which is to take place on 14 and 17 August 2011, rehearsals starting from 24 July, as part of the "Festival Giovane".

A grant will be provided only for those who take part in the production.

A certificate of participation in the Accademia will be given to all at the end of the course.

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PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

Outline of the Festival

The Rossini Opera Festival is an autonomous body (*ente autonomo*) promoting international opera festival performances, going under the same name, entirely devoted to Gioachino Rossini. It aims to revive, to study and to perform on stage a musical heritage that still remains partly unknown: Rossini's works. The composer died in 1868, leaving his entire fortune to the Town Council of Pesaro; this legacy gave birth to the Conservatory and the Foundation that bear his name today.

The Rossini Opera Festival was founded in 1980 by the Town Council of Pesaro with the intention of backing up and developing the scientific work of the Rossini Foundation by means of theatrical performances; the outcome has been what can best be described as a multi-disciplinary workshop of applied musicology, aiming at the revival of all Rossini's little-known works through musicological research, theatrical performance and publication.

If the Festival has been able to grow and develop this is also due to the support of public and private institutions such as the Ministry for the Arts, the Regional Government of the Marche, the Provincial Government of Pesaro and Urbino, the Cassa di Risparmio di Pesaro (now the Banca Marche), the Banca Popolare Pesarese e Ravennate (now the Banca dell'Adriatico), and also the Pesaro-based Scavolini Company, a contributor since 1982 and today the official sponsor of the Festival.

For the first five years of its life the Rossini Opera Festival was directly administered by the Town Council of Pesaro, then, in 1985, it became an autonomous body supported by the town council of Pesaro and the provincial governments of the surrounding districts.

As from April 1994 the Festival is legally constituted as a Foundation, maintaining its original name. The new organization is supported by the town council of Pesaro, the provincial government of Pesaro and Urbino, the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Pesaro, the Banca dell'Adriatico and the Scavolini Foundation. Under the terms of the new organization of the Festival an assembly of founder members nominates the board of administration, whose president is the Mayor of Pesaro.

Responsibility for artistic decisions is vested in the General Manager (Sovrintendente), who is appointed by the assembly: he is able to avail himself of the services of the Artistic Director. For questions of musicological research the Festival relies on the Rossini Foundation, which guarantees the accuracy of the musical scores to be performed. On 13 August 1993 the Italian Parliament voted unanimously in favour of the special law n. 319 «Regulations in support of the Rossini Opera Festival», which firmly places the revival of Rossini's works among the cultural events that are considered to enrich the national heritage: it is significant that the state's financial contribution – the continuity of which has afterwards been confirmed by a decision of Parliament with the

law n. 237/12 July 1999 – comes from the coffers of the Ministry responsible for the national cultural patrimony.

The Rossini Opera Festival is a member of the European Festival Association, and enjoys the patronage of the President of the Italian Republic.

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