



COMUNICATO STAMPA

THE 2010/2011 SEASON

by Stéphane Lissner

The 2009/2010 season was heralded as a significant turning point in La Scala's history, marking the redefining of the theatre's artistic expression through new approaches to the existing repertory and new productions. So far, the results have been promising.

In the **2010/2011 Season** we aim to **consolidate** this process by establishing an artistic equilibrium through the continued presence of leading international operatic and orchestral performers.

GREAT SINGERS. Alongside the growing number of conductors and directors who have become involved with the project since its inception five years ago, the 2010/2011 programme will feature a vast number of **the world's most prominent singers**.

Although every singer dreams of making their La Scala debut, it has taken five years of constant work to create a climate of trust, secure optimum conditions for singers and persuade them to tread the boards at La Scala for their first time or to return, overcoming their resistance, their concerns and their apprehension in the face of an ever-demanding public.

For this reason, we will present our season overview from the standpoint of La Scala's singers, an important group not only because of the high-profile names among them but also because of their particular suitability for the works they will be performing.

Kicking off the season are the imposing cast of *Die Walküre* in a new production of the second opera in Wagner's complex *Ring* cycle, the first instalment of which (the introductory opera *Das Rheingold*) is currently in performance. The production brings together the **most distinguished Wagnerian performers of today**: the two great mezzo-sopranos **Waltraud Meier** and **Ekaterina Gubanova**, soprano **Nina Stemme**, basses **René Pape** and **John Tomlinson** and tenor **Simon O'Neill** in his La Scala debut, directed by **Guy Cassiers** and conducted by **Daniel Barenboim**.

The culmination of the *Ring* project will be a production of *Götterdämmerung* followed immediately by two complete *Ring* cycles in 2013, the bicentenary of Wagner's birth.

In the **second** of the **new productions** comes a “Verismo” manifesto in the form of a *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* double bill, a tribute to the leading exponents of this much-loved movement in Italian operatic history, Mascagni and Leoncavallo. The superlative cast, each hand-picked for their vocal agility in the Verismo style, features **José Cura, Salvatore Licitra, Ambrogio Maestri, Luciana D’Intino** and **Marianne Cornetti**, under conductor **Daniel Harding** and director **Mario Martone**.

AN ITALIAN AFFAIR. *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci* are the first in a long line of Italian works punctuating the 2010/2011 programme.

The **two great Puccini offerings** of the season, *Tosca* and *Turandot*, will feature artists renowned for their work in the genre. *Tosca* – a **New York Metropolitan Opera** and **Bavarian State Opera co-production** – will include appearances from **Jonas Kaufmann**, fresh from his critically acclaimed performance in *Carmen*, alternating with **Marco Berti**; two celebrated *Toscas*, **Martina Serafin** and **Oksana Dyka**; and the notable return after twelve years of **Bryn Terfel**, who shares the role of Scarpia with another great baritone, **Zeljko Lucic**.

Tosca also marks the La Scala debut of the young Israeli conductor and successor of Lorin Maazel as musical director of Valencia’s Palau **Omer Meir Wellber** who, having attracted the attention of Italian critics in two Verdi operas, has been dubbed a true revelation in the Italian repertory. Luc Bondy directs, with costumes by the Oscar-winning Milena Canonero.

Appearing under the baton of **Valery Gergiev** are the two great **Turandots** of our time, **Maria Guleghina** and **Lise Lindstrom**, opposite **Marco Berti** and **Stuart Neill** as **Calaf**. A **new La Scala production**, *Turandot* marks another noteworthy Italian debut: that of director **Giorgio Barberio Corsetti**, recipient of the Italian “Premio Abbiati” critics’ prize in 2006.

Still in the Italian repertory, *Attila* – **the season’s fourth new production, with direction, staging and costumes by Hugo de Ana** – calls for major Verdian singers such as the La Scala regulars **Leo Nucci, Ferruccio Furlanetto** and **Micaela Carosi**, and marks the much-anticipated return of tenor **Marcelo Alvarez**, who will debut the role of Foresto. The Italian repertory is matched by an Italian rostrum, with music director of the San Francisco Opera **Nicola Luisotti** making his La Scala debut.

After Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Puccini and Verdi comes the *bel canto* of Rossini. Concluding the season in its first La Scala performance in almost twenty years is *La Donna del Lago*, in co-

production with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and the Paris Opera and **directed by Lluís Pasqual**, featuring the exceptional tenor **Juan Diego Florez**, fresh from his *Barbiere* this autumn, alongside **Joyce Di Donato** and **Daniela Barcellona**. At the helm is another celebrated Italian conductor, **Roberto Abbado**.

A second Rossini opera, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, in Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's historic La Scala production, has been selected by the Teatro alla Scala Academy young artists for their annual project on the theatre's main stage. **Antonello Allemandi** conducts his La Scala debut.

Fittingly, the season's Italian theme is strengthened by an exploration of the origins of Italian musical drama. *Il ritorno di Ulisse in Patria* – **La Scala's fifth new production** – marks the next phase in the **Monteverdi trilogy**, which began to great acclaim with *Orfeo* in 2009 and culminates with *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in 2014. The stage is set to welcome appearances from two Italian early repertoire specialists, **Monica Bacelli** and **Sara Mingardo**, a recent recipient of the **Premio Abbiati** for her performance in the *Orfeo* of 2009. It also celebrates the continued efforts of Italian opera specialist **Rinaldo Alessandrini**, editor of the Bärenreiter edition, in this field. **Robert Wilson** directs.

Far from being limited to these mainstays of the Italian operatic tradition, the season gives a nod to the future with a **new La Scala commission** by one of Italy's foremost young composers, **Luca Francesconi**. Under the baton of **Susanna Mälkki**, director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain, and directed by **Alex Ollé** of La Fura dels Baus, the **sixth new production, Quartett**, in which Francesconi sets one of the most significant texts in contemporary theatre – Heiner Müller's *Quartett*, inspired by Laclos' famous eighteenth-century epistolary novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* – to music, receives its world premiere. The two protagonists will be played by two young talents who have already won La Scala plaudits: **Kristine Opolais** (praised for her role in Prokofiev's *Il Giocatore*, conducted by Barenboim) and **Georg Nigl**, who enjoyed enormous success in the title role in *Orfeo* and before that in *Wozzeck*, under Daniele Gatti.

NON-ITALIAN REPERTORY AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY WORKS. In a season dominated by Italian composers and artists there is a natural space for popular and significant works from the other great European repertoires, such as the French *Roméo et Juliette* by **Gounod** (**directed by Bartlett Sher; a Salzburg Festival production**). In the lead roles are **Nino Machaidze** (a La Scala Academy graduate who now has an international career thanks to a sensational debut at the Salzburg Festival) and **Vittorio Grigolo**, supported by a cast that includes

Alexander Vinogradov and **Franck Ferrari**. On the rostrum is the French-Canadian conductor **Yannick Nezet-Seguin**.

Our focus on twentieth-century composers brings us to the next stage in our **Britten cycle** with *Death in Venice*, an opera that is always evocative of the Visconti film and sees the La Scala debut of one of today's greatest operatic tenors, **Ian Bostridge**, in the role of the main character, Gustav von Aschenbach. This **English National Opera production** marks two other important La Scala debuts: that of **Deborah Warner**, one of the most renowned theatre directors of today, and the young conductor **Edward Gardner**, music director of ENO.

Also a feature is the continued presence in our seasons of one of the twentieth century greats, **Richard Strauss**, as part of a multi-year project. Next year will see performances of *Der Rosenkavalier* using the staging of the late **Herbert Wernicke (in co-production with the Madrid Teatro Real)** under the baton of the new music director of the Opéra National de Paris, Swiss-born **Philippe Jordan**. Standing out among the lead roles are **Anne Schwanewilms** and **Joyce di Donato**, not forgetting a special appearance by **Marcelo Alvarez in the role of the Italian tenor**.

Completing the Strauss theme are two performances of *Arabella* in early September 2011, scheduled as part of the **exchange project** with the **Wiener Staatsoper**, which brings another fine internationally-renowned singer to the title role, **Adrienne Pieczonka**. The production will be directed by **Sven-Eric Bechtolf** and conducted by **Franz Welser-Möst**, music director of the Staatsoper.

During the visit of *Arabella*, La Scala will take Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* to the Vienna Opera House, with **Plácido Domingo in the title role**, and his *Requiem*, with a quartet of exceptional soloists: **Violeta Urmana, Ekaterina Gubanova, Rolando Villazon and Kwangchul Youn**.

Rounding off the programme's perfect balance between Italian and non-Italian repertory is **Mozart's** most celebrated German opera *Die Zauberflöte*, in the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie (Brussels) production by acclaimed director **William Kentridge**, which has already enjoyed highly-praised runs in Europe. Conducted by German maestro **Roland Boer**, leading talents among the cast include bass **Gunther Groissböck** and tenors **Samir Pirgu** and **Steve Davislim** as Tamino.

In the concert season, after the great success of the Pollini Project and the Chopin-Schumann cycle, a similar series has been scheduled for 2010/2011, this time in a different vein. **Lang Lang** presents

a **journey through time and genre**, as a soloist and in various contexts, backed by chamber musicians and orchestras (conducted by Semyon Bychkov and John Axelrod), not forgetting a mini Foyer masterclass/concert and an improvisation session with **jazz pianist Herbie Hancock** from the last **Miles Davis Quintet**.

Helping to distinguish 2010/2011 as a season of great vocal talent are **Song Recitals** by some of the finest performers of Lieder and other song repertoire, including sopranos **Anja Harteros**, **Diana Damrau** and **Aleksandra Kurzak**, mezzo-soprano **Angelika Kirchschlager**, tenor **Juan Diego Florez** and baritones **Matthias Goerne** and **Thomas Hampson**.

TWENTY PRODUCTIONS. With **nine Italian operas out of a possible fourteen – ten of fifteen** if we include La Scala's exchange with the Wiener Staatsoper – the 2010/2011 season looks to be ideally balanced to meet the expectations of the public and ensure a programme that is sufficiently international, both in terms of repertoire and in terms of the public itself.

Six ballets bring the total number of productions in 2010/2011 to twenty, La Scala's most extensive programme in twenty years.

The 2010/2011 season features appearances from some of the world's finest singers, as a natural complement of our work to date.

We continue to make new inroads in staging and contemporary theatre. Above all, our great conductors are still prominent in our programme. This is reflected perfectly in our **Symphonic Season**, where there are appearances from **Gustavo Dudamel**, **Daniel Barenboim**, **Valery Gergiev**, **Yuri Termirkanov**, **Nicola Luisotti** and **Daniele Gatti**, who will conduct the traditional Christmas Concert with a programme of choruses, symphonies and dance arias from Verdi operas. All of these conducting greats ensure the excellence, variety in terms of schools and repertoires, the quality and above all the continuity of the work of our Orchestra, our Chorus and our artists.