

Auguri Rossini!

**Inauguration Academic Year 2020-2021 of the Rossini Conservatoire in Pesaro
Rossini Week 2021**

Teatro Rossini in Pesaro

Sunday 28th February, 2021, at 5 p.m.

live streaming on both Rossini Conservatoire and Rossini Opera Festival Facebook pages

Rossini Conservatoire orchestra and singers

with the participation of Rossini Opera Festival singers

Luca Ferrara, conductor

Giuliana Gianfaldoni, soprano

Pietro Adaini, tenor

Music by Gioachino Rossini

Programme

from *Cenerentola*, Sinfonia

from *Cenerentola*, “Siete voi ... Questo è un nodo avviluppato” (sextet, II act, VIII scene)

from *Cenerentola*, “Sì, ritrovarla io giuro” (aria, II act, II scene)

from *Guillaume Tell*, “Je rends à votre amour” (trio, IV act, IV scene)

from *Guillaume Tell*, “Sombre forêt” (aria, II act, II scene)

from *Otello ossia Il Moro di Venezia*, “Che ascolto! Ahimè!” (aria, II act, I scene)

from *La scala di seta*, “Ma se mai... Il mio ben sospiro e chiamo” (recitative and aria, XII scene)

from *Tancredi*, “Oh qual scegliesti... L’aura che intorno spiri” (recitative and duet, I act, VIII scene)

from *La donna del lago*, “Ma son sorpreso” (duet, I act, VI scene)

Thinking of an idea for a music party, a sort of birthday or unbirthday (Rossini was born on 29th February), and to be performed in such a difficult period, is good for our soul. It is with this spirit that the Rossini Conservatoire and Rossini Opera Festival have produced a musical event which, overcoming limits imposed during this period, is available on streaming, reaching all those who intend to participate with the love for music and recognize its high educational value, as well as its spiritual nourishment.

In addition to celebrating Rossini’s birthday, we inaugurate the academic year 2020-2021 of the Rossini Conservatoire in Pesaro, which exists today thanks to the Maestro’s generosity.

What tribute could be more appropriate than a concert dedicated to his music, through a path that touches both the extremes of his creative activity in the operatic field and embraces all the genres he composed until 1829, year of his withdrawal from the stage!

From the farce *La scala di seta* (1812) to the prototype of the romantic opera *Guillaume Tell* (1829), passing through the serious operas *Tancredi* (1813) and *Otello* (1816), the dramma giocoso *La Cenerentola* (1817), the mysterious *La donna del lago* (1819), only one feeling stands out from this plurality of texts: love. Worlds which are culturally, historically and geographically distant from one another are all moved by the same driving force: love in all its meanings, set by Rossini in the variety of closed numbers (aria, duet, trio, sextet).

The soloistic arias show different forms and styles. Giulia (protagonist of *La scala di seta*) is portrayed in the moment in which she cautiously lowers the ladder leading Dorvil, whom she has secretly married, to her room (“Ma se mai... Il mio ben sospiro e chiamo”, XII scene). In a tender dialogue with the orchestra, whereby she repeats the melodic statement, the girl in love lets herself be led to a sort of lyrical enchantment (*Andante affettato*), which she will rapidly

leave in order to come back into action (*Allegro - Un pochetto più mossarello*). At this point the plot becomes full of misunderstandings, characteristic of the farce genre, in which female protagonists often resolve problems.

A contrasting attitude is the *romance* of Princess Mathilde (*Guillaume Tell*, II act, II scene) who, living in Switzerland in the XIV Century, falls in love with Arnaldo, follower of Guglielmo Tell and of the conspirators who will upset the Hapsburg supremacy of which she is the symbol. In “Sombre forêt” (“Sombre wood”) the battle is still afar; under the moonlight, in the desert moorland, Mathilde is simply a woman who confesses her love for the enemy in free singing, similar to the models of the French intonation without forgetting the echoes of the Italian tradition.

If love enters the male heart, the lyrical breath can transform itself into a violent singing when he is betrayed: so Rodrigo in *Otello* (“Che ascolto! Ahimé!”, II act, I scene) who, discovering Desdemona’s betrayal, after a cantabile in pained accents with which he implores pity, reacts with a cabaletta in front of his unmoving lover. Rich in coloraturas, the voice reaches higher sounds, chosen by Rossini as a sign of homage to the wide vocal range of tenor Giovanni David, first interpreter of this role at the theatre Teatro del Fondo in Naples. Not less demanding and virtuosic is Ramiro’s singing (“Sì, ritrovarla io giuro”, *Cenerentola*, II act, II scene). After finally meeting the bride he had dreamt of, he sees her fleeing away: but here is the ardour of the lover, who, on the fanfare of the orchestra, manages to find her and, after the tender inflection in his memory of her, wants to go and find her in a driving rhythm.

The duets from *Tancredi* (“L’aura che intorno spiri”, I act, VIII scene) and from *La donna del lago* (“Ma son sorpreso”, I act, VI scene) could not be more distant from each other for their plot ending and also the vocal traits shown. Amenaide and Tancredi (*en travesti* role interpreted by an alto) vibrate with the same desire that tunes their voices on the verse «tremar mi fai».

Different is the destiny of Knight Uberto’s loving feeling (actually King Giacomo V of Scotland, under false pretences), whose «dear surge» is directed to Elena (the lady of the lake); while Elena is consumed with passionate Malcolm in an impulse which, musically, turns on in an impetuous crescendo: as the dynamics become more intense, several instrumental groups are gradually inserted into the whole orchestra. In 1823 Giacomo Leopardi, after participating in a representation of *La donna del lago*, wrote that this opera returned him «the gift of tears», a gift he believed he had lost.

The sextet from *Cenerentola* “Questo è un nodo avviluppato” (II act, VIII scene) is one of the most famous ensemble pieces written by Rossini. We are at the final part of the fairy tale by Perrault, transformed into a witty, funny libretto by Jacopo Ferretti. Don Magnifico (male substitute of Perrault’s stepmother) is almost at the end of his tether; in the confusion of events he can say nothing but (addio cervello), and the six characters begin a dismayed singing: in imitation, on the pizzicato of the string instruments, they perform separated syllables whose phonetic play emphasizes almost nonsense verses (chi sviluppa, più involuppa // chi più sgruppa, più raggruppa) – with an effect of mechanicalness, such as to reduce them to puppets. But love has multiple forms and if in *La donna del lago* Uberto, for the love of his country, renounces Elena and his revenge desire against those who have betrayed him, in *Guillaume Tell* Mathilde sacrifices herself and saves Jemmy, son of the enemy Tell, to prove a supreme moral which denies power and wealth in the name of a higher ideal of humanity (“Je rends à votre amour”, IV act, IV scene).

And, as requested in each opera, the curtain rises to a Symphony, in this case a fairy tale, in order to let us all be distracted from the present time, watching the world through the detachment of the artist, and then coming back reinvigorated thanks to the immutable healthy action of such art.

Mariateresa Storino
translation by Silvia Feliciani