

The Verdi Cycle Grand Finale Concert PROGRAM

Sunday, March 20, 2016

Conductor, Victor DeRenzi

Chorus Master, Roger L. Bingaman

Aida (1871)

Overture

Sarasota Opera Orchestra

Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (1841)

Act I, Scene and Duet: "Guardami! sul mio ciglio"
Transposed for Raffaele Ferlotti with a new cabaletta

Michelle Johnson, *Leonora*
Marco Nisticò, *Oberto*

I Lombardi alla prima crociata (1843)

Act III, Trio: "Qual voluttà trascorrere"

Jennifer Townshend, *Giselda*
Heath Huberg, *Oronte*
Young Bok Kim, *Hermit*

Attila (1846)

Prologue, Duet: "Tardo per gli anni, e tremolo"

Sean Anderson, *Ezio*
Young Bok Kim, *Attila*

Macbeth (1846)

Act I, Cavatina: "Vieni! t'affretta!"

Kara Shay Thomson, *Lady Macbeth*
Hans Tashjian*, *Servant*

Rigoletto (1841)

Act III, Quartet: "Bella figlia dell'amore"

Jennifer Townshend, *Gilda*
Leann Sandel-Pantaleo, *Maddalena*
Matthew Vickers**, *The Duke*
Eric Lindsey**, *Rigoletto*

INTERMISSION

Il trovatore (1853)

Act II, Gypsy Chorus and Song: "Vedi, le fosche notturne spoglie" "Stride la vampa"

Leann Sandel-Pantaleo, *Azucena*
Vincent Grana*, *An old Gypsy*
Sarasota Opera Chorus

Un ballo in maschera (1859)

Act II, Duet: "Non sai tu che se l'anima mia"

Kara Shay Thomson, *Amelia*
Jonathan Burton, *Riccardo*

La forza del destino (1862)

Act III, Duet: "Solenne in quest'ora giurarmi dovete"

Michael Robert Hendrick, *Don Alvaro*
Sean Anderson, *Don Carlo*

Otello (1887)

Act I, Brindisi: "Inaffia l'ugola! trinca, tracana"

Sean Anderson, *Iago*
Heath Huberg, *Cassio*
Lucas Levy*, *Roderigo*

Te Deum (1898)

Sarasota Opera Orchestra and Chorus

* Apprentice Artist

** Studio Artist

The Verdi Grand Finale Concert is sponsored by Toby and Noel Siegel
in loving memory of Dr. Steven and Judith Woodrow
whose love of opera gave them so much pleasure.

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Aida

Overture (Sinfonia)

Aida was premiered in Cairo, Egypt on December 24, 1871, but Verdi did not attend that performance. For him the important production of the opera was the first European staging, which took place at La Scala in Milano on February 8, 1872.

Verdi wrote a simple prelude for the opera, but at the end of December, 1871 he decided to write a full scale overture, similar to the one he had written for *La forza del destino*. After hearing a rehearsal of the overture, he came to the conclusion that his original intention was the better of the two.

The overture was stored away in Verdi's home and not heard again until Arturo Toscanini gave its first public performance with the NBC Symphony Orchestra on March 30, 1940. The autograph score remained with Verdi's heirs and was not performed again until recently.

This is the third performance of the overture during our Verdi Cycle.

Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio

Act I Scene and Duet Guardami! sul mio ciglio

Early Verdi biographers often repeated Verdi's comments that after the failure of his second opera, *Un giorno di regno*, he lost interest in composing and did little beyond reading romance novels. However, the facts indicate otherwise. *Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio*, his first opera, was revived at La Scala on October 17, 1840 to fill the gap left by the fiasco of *Un giorno di regno*. For that revival, Verdi wrote two new pieces and also changed some notes so a baritone could perform the title role that was originally written for a lower voice. For a Genoa production of *Oberto* in January of 1841, he also made other changes to the opera.

The duet we are performing this evening was written for that Genoa production. The music is located in a manuscript score at the Naples Conservatory in Italy, and to my knowledge has not been performed since the early 1840s.

Sarasota Opera produced *Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio* in 2001 as part of our season commemorating the 100th anniversary of Verdi's death.

I Lombardi alla prima crociata

Act III Trio Pagano Qual voluttà trascorrere

I Lombardi alla prima crociata was premiered immediately after *Nabucco*. Verdi has been accused of trying to repeat the success of *Nabucco* by writing an opera from the same mold. I find *Lombardi* different in many ways, including having a strong love interest with music expressing emotions not found in Verdi's previous operas.

It has been said that Verdi's operas were influenced by the early death of his wife and two children, in that he wrote about father and daughter relationships (*Luisa Miller*, *Rigoletto*, *Aida*). I don't really think that is why he chose those stories as subjects, but without delving too much into amateur psychology, what I do find is that many of Verdi's most heartfelt moments have to do with saying a final farewell before death. These include this trio, as well as other similar situations throughout his operas, such as *I masnadieri*, *Luisa Miller*, and *La forza del destino*.

On March 3, 1847, *I Lombardi* was the first Verdi opera to be performed complete in the United States. Sections of it were sung earlier than that performance, including on a program of the New York Philharmonic that featured the American premiere of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Sarasota Opera produced *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* in 2011.

Attila

Prologue Duet Tardo per gli anni e tremulo

Verdi's musical energy appealed to Italians of the 1840s who wished to have a united country that was free of foreign rule. The only opera Verdi wrote that was intended to directly reflect the events of the Italian Unification was *La battaglia di Legnano*. But many moments from his operas were taken up by the people as cries for freedom. One of them was this duet with its line: "You can have the universe, but let Italy be mine."

Sarasota Opera produced *Attila* in 2007.

Macbeth

Act I Cavatina *Vieni, t'affretta!*

Verdi wrote three operas based on Shakespeare: *Macbeth*, *Otello* and *Falstaff*. He had a great love for Shakespeare throughout his life and expressed interest in turning all of Shakespeare's major plays into operas. *King Lear* was a play that Verdi held in very high esteem, and he seriously considered turning it into an opera on more than one occasion. With the bard as his guide, *Macbeth* marked an important step forward in Verdi's development.

In 2003, Sarasota Opera produced Verdi's original version of *Macbeth* (1847) as well as his revised version (1865).

Rigoletto

Act III Quartet *Bella figlia dell'amore*

Rigoletto began the Verdi Cycle in 1989. In 2008, we chose it to open the renovated Opera House, and we also produced it in 2012.

Il trovatore

Act II Gypsy Chorus and Song *Vedi, le fosche notturne spoglie* *Stride la vampa*

Sarasota Opera produced *Il trovatore* in 1993 and 2014.

Un ballo in maschera

Act II Duet *Non sai tu che se l'anima mia*

Sarasota produced *Un ballo in maschera* in 1990.

Forza

Act III Duet *Solenne in quest'ora giurarmi dovete*

In 1996, Sarasota Opera produced Verdi's original version of *La forza del destino* (1861) as well as his revised version (1869).

Otello

Act I Brindisi *Inaffia l'ugola! trinca, tracana*

Sarasota Opera produced *Otello* in 2012.

Te Deum

In his later years, Verdi composed works that were published together and are often performed as *The Four Sacred Pieces*. These works are programmed on symphony orchestra concerts, sometimes to fill an evening that includes Verdi's *Manzoni Requiem*. Tonight we close our program, as well as complete our Verdi Cycle, with one of those pieces, his *Te Deum*. This was Verdi's next to last composition, which he wrote when he was 83 years old.

The work begins with the men singing unaccompanied chant. Verdi wrote an introduction, suggesting that it could be used to assist the chorus entrance. Normally it is not performed at the start of the *Te Deum*, but as part of our Cycle, you will hear it tonight.

As of the end of this evening's concert, Sarasota Opera is the only organization in the world to have performed all of Verdi's music that is known to still exist and is available.

Victor DeRenzi