

Press Office

19/04/2018

GREAT CASTS FOR THE 96th OPERA FESTIVAL 2018 AT THE ARENA DI VERONA FROM 22ND JUNE TO 1ST SEPTEMBER

Important conductors, internationally famous directors, opera stars and new rising stars distinguish the 96th edition of the Arena di Verona Opera Festival, which will open on 22nd June and run until 1st September 2018, with 47 evenings under the banner of great music and under the stars in the world's largest opera theatre.

As always, the Arena artists and technicians are committed, with their great professionalism, to staging a different opera every evening, for a unique Festival that for over a hundred years continues to astonish and excite audiences.

The 2018 Arena di Verona Opera Festival is inaugurating with a **new production** of Georges Bizet's ***Carmen***, one of the world's most performed operas, alongside other true "pièces de resistance" of the "shrine of opera", always acclaimed by the public: ***Aida*** by Giuseppe Verdi, ***Turandot*** by Giacomo Puccini, ***Nabucco*** by Giuseppe Verdi and ***Il Barbiere di Siviglia*** by Gioachino Rossini.

Completing the operas proposed, the program is further enriched by the unmissable appointment with dance, ***Roberto Bolle and Friends***, and the special evening entitled ***Verdi Opera Night*** dedicated to the famous Busseto composer, who has dominated Arena summers for over a century.

The Mayor of Verona and President of Fondazione Arena, Federico Sboarina, invites the public to participate in the 2018 Festival, expressing his appreciation for the rich undisputedly interesting program, worthy of a historic prestigious Festival that for over a century has borne witness to the cultural excellence of the city of Verona and Italy: *"Thanks to great teamwork and the professionalism of General Manager Gasdia, it has been possible to organize a truly unique program. On-stage there will be extremely high level international artists and directors, who will highlight the Arena festival, famous and appreciated worldwide. Space will also be dedicated to young talents who have already distinguished themselves on the opera scene and will be on their Arena debut. The opera program will also be enriched by two great events, with the addition of*

Major Partner



Special Partner



Automotive Partner



Official Sponsor



Mobility Partner



Media Partner





Fondazione
ARENA DI VERONA®

Arena di Verona

96° Opera Festival 2018

concerts and shows. Operatic and non-operatic music must complement one another, the two cores of the Fondazione, which contribute to achieve the same aim: making the Arena the shrine of opera and world-level music par excellence."

General Manager and Artistic Director Cecilia Gasdia is proud to present the protagonists of this season, high-profile artistic casts resulting from the work she carried out personally: *"Every year the Arena di Verona undertakes to realize shows that are increasingly unique and refined, and the casts engaged this year will be the feather in the cap of Arena excellence. I wanted great artists alongside young talents to be highlighted. In fact, the Arena has traditionally launched countless great careers and I intend reviving and strengthening this tradition, so that our Theatre can be a true hotbed of new voices. As I previously announced, I therefore called great international stars and young artists, many of whom – and this is the big news – will be singing for the first time at the Arena. The season's doyen is 76 years old and the 'mascot' 21."*

THE PROGRAM

The 2018 Opera Festival will be inaugurated on Friday 22nd June by *Carmen*, the masterpiece by Georges Bizet that transports the audience to an arena in the Arena to experience the drama of love and death of the beautiful Spanish cigar maker. The opera will be staged on 13 evenings until the 31st August with a **new production by the famous Argentinean director Hugo de Ana**, responsible for its direction, scenery and costumes. The production is completed by the choreography of **Leda Lojodice** and the lighting created by the Arena's Lighting Designer **Paolo Mazzon**. The new production intends to offer a new slant on the opera, aware of the important heritage left in the history of the Verona amphitheatre by Franco Zeffirelli's memorable production, performed in numerous Festivals from 1995 onwards. De Ana sets his *Carmen* a century later than the libretto, in the 1930's, an important historical period to emphasize the protagonist's incessant search for her independence and freedom, which will lead her, as a torero in the Plaza de Toros, to face, until her death, male arrogance and a society hostile to the fact that she is a gypsy and therefore different.

On the Arena podium for the first time we shall see the young conductor **Francesco Ivan Ciampa**, following the excellent response from critics and audiences alike for the recent performances with the Fondazione Arena at the Teatro Filarmonico. Important voices will bring the opera's heroine to life: **Anna Goryachova**, who with the inauguration of the Festival will debut at the Arena, and **Carmen Topciu**, an acclaimed *Fenena* last year in *Nabucco*, a role she will also perform this season, as well as *Amneris* in *Aida*. Alongside them, the passionate *Don José* will be performed by four

Major Partner



Special Partner



Automotive Partner



Official Sponsor



Mobility Partner



Media Partner





Fondazione
ARENA DI VERONA®

Arena di Verona

96° Opera Festival 2018

tenors of international importance: **Brian Jagde**, facing the amphitheatre for the first time, as are **Marcelo Puente** and **Luciano Ganci**, as well as the return of **Francesco Meli**. In the role of the handsome *Escamillo* there are **Alexander Vinogradov**, **Erwin Schrott** and **Alberto Gazale** and for the first time at the Arena the sweet resolute *Micaela* will be performed by **Mariangela Sicilia**, alternating with **Ruth Iniesta**, **Eleonora Buratto** and **Serena Gamberoni**.

Further performances: 29 June (9:00 pm) - 6, 11, 17, 21 July (9:00 pm) - 3, 9, 12, 22, 25, 28, 31 August (8:45 pm)

As is the tradition, on the following evening (**Saturday 23rd June**), Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, the opera which is a symbol of the summer season, will be performed. The opera will be staged for 16 dates, until it closes the Festival on the 1st of September, with the impressive production created in 2002 by the genius of **Franco Zeffirelli**, enriched by the iconic costumes of **Anna Anni** and the choreography of **Vladimir Vasiliev** who, conferred with the title of "Commendatore" of the Order of the Star of Italy, in 2018 celebrates 60 years of artistic activity, 50 of which have been closely related to Italy, where he has worked since 1968.

From the podium conductors **Jordi Bernàcer**, **Daniel Oren** and **Andrea Battistoni** will conduct a cast of protagonists featuring the appreciated return of **Anna Pirozzi**, **Kristin Lewis**, **Maria José Siri**, **Susanna Branchini** and **Hui He** as the character from whom the opera takes its title, alongside the *Amneris* of **Violeta Urmana**, **Carmen Topciu**, **Judit Kutasi** on her Arena debut and **Anita Rachvelishvili**. In the tenor role of *Radamès*, **Yusif Eyvazov**, **Marco Berti**, **Carlo Ventre**, **Gregory Kunde** and **Walter Fraccaro** alternate, whereas that of the baritone *Amonasro* is performed by **Luca Salsi**, **Sebastian Catana**, **Ambrogio Maestri**, **Amartuvshin Enkhbat**, **Federico Longhi** and **Gocha Abuladze**, another new voice on the 2018 cast.

Further performances: 28 June 9:00 pm - 8, 10, 14, 19, 22, 27 July 9:00 pm - 2, 5, 7, 11, 19, 23, 29 August 8:45 pm - 1 September 8:45 pm

From Saturday 30th June for 5 performances until 26th July, the program features another colossal opera: Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot*, once again staged in the spectacular 2010 production with direction and set design by **Franco Zeffirelli** and the very refined precious costumes of Academy Award winner **Emi Wada**. The atmosphere of imperial China is completed by the sedate choreographic movements of **Maria Grazia Garofoli** and the lighting designed by **Paolo Mazzon**.

Once again conducting the orchestra are **Daniel Oren** and **Francesco Ivan Ciampa** and in the leading roles **Anna Pirozzi**, who alternates with **Rebeka Lokar** as the icy princess, alongside *Calaf* performed by **Gregory Kunde** and **Murat Karahan**. In the part of *Liù*, on their Arena debuts, the young stars **Vittoria Yeo**, **Ruth Iniesta** and **Eleonora Buratto**.

Further performances: 5, 13, 18, 26 July - 9:00 pm

Major Partner



Special Partner



Automotive Partner



Official Sponsor



Mobility Partner



Media Partner





Fondazione
ARENA DI VERONA®

Arena di Verona

96° Opera Festival 2018

For 6 appointments, **from Saturday 7th July** until 18th August, the fourth monumental opera of this summer season, ***Nabucco*** by Giuseppe Verdi, is re-proposed in the production that successfully inaugurated the 2017 Opera Festival, with direction and costumes by **Arnaud Bernard**, set design by **Alessandro Camera** and lighting by **Paolo Mazzon**. **Jordi Bernàcer** returns to conduct this Verdi drama, which successfully distinguished his debut in Verona last year. The leading role is performed by two baritones with established international careers: **Amartuvshin Enkhbat** and **Luca Salsi**, involved during the entire Festival in other important roles, as has already been seen with the first operas announced. As the stepdaughter ***Abigaille*** we will be able to once again appreciate **Susanna Branchini** and **Rebeka Lokar**, both highly acclaimed last year in the same role, alongside ***Fenena*** by **Géraldine Chauvet** and **Carmen Topciu**. The leading roles are completed by the new voices of **Luciano Ganci** and **Vincenzo Costanzo** as ***Ismaele***, alongside the well-known **Rafał Siwek** and **Riccardo Zanellato** as ***Zaccaria***.

Further performances: 12, 20, 28 July (9:00 pm) – 10, 18 August (8:45 pm).

On Wednesday 25th July at 9:00 pm, for the fifth consecutive year the Arena program features the eagerly awaited unmissable appointment with great international ballet and dance: **Roberto Bolle and Friends**, organized and desired personally by the great dancer, a worldwide symbol of his art, Étoile of Milan's Teatro alla Scala and Principal Dancer of the American Ballet Theatre of New York.

On the year that commemorates the 150th anniversary of the death of Gioachino Rossini, ***Il Barbiere di Siviglia*** is a must; it will be on stage **from Saturday 4th August** in the successful production that will transform the amphitheatre into the fable-like garden of wonders for 5 evenings until 30th August. This production as created in 2007 by **Hugo de Ana** and features an entertaining choreography by **Leda Lojodice**. For the occasion, **Daniel Oren** and **Andrea Battistoni** will conduct an exceptional cast, which features two opera legends performing together for the first time, writing a page of Arena history: ***Figaro*** performed by **Leo Nucci**, alternating with **Mario Cassi**, and ***Basilio*** by **Ferruccio Furlanetto**, who alternates with **Roberto Tagliavini**, with ***Rosina*** by **Nino Machaidze**, ***Count Almaviva*** by **Dmitry Korchak** and **Leonardo Ferrando**, both on their Arena debut, and ***Bartolo*** performed by **Ambrogio Maestri** and **Luca Dall'Amico**.

Further performances: 8, 17, 24, 30 August – 8:45 pm.

Lastly, the **Verdi Opera Night** will highlight the 96th edition of the Festival on **Sunday 26th August at 9:30 pm**. The magic special event dedicated to the "Swan of Busseto" pays tribute to great opera with a true "parade of stars" conducted by **Andrea Battistoni**, with direction and set design by **Stefano Trespidi** and lighting by **Paolo Mazzon**. **Lisette Oropesa**, **Maria Mudryak**, **Serena Gamberoni**, **Violeta Urmana**, **Rame Lahaj**, **Francesco Meli**, **Luciano Ganci**, **Luca Salsi** and **Simone Piazzola**, with the Arena's Orchestra, Chorus, Dance Company and Technicians, will present, with

Major Partner



Special Partner



Automotive Partner



Official Sponsor



Mobility Partner



Media Partner





Fondazione
ARENA DI VERONA®

Arena di Verona

96° Opera Festival 2018

evocative settings and refined costumes, the most significant acts of Verdi's famous popular trilogy – ***Rigoletto***, ***Il Trovatore*** and ***La Traviata*** – introduced by the **Symphony from *La Forza del destino*** interpreted by the Festival's dancers with the choreographic creations of **Gheorghe Iancu**, for a true "feast of Opera".

Thanks go to all the sponsors of the Arena di Verona Opera Festival, who, with their valuable and unfailing contribution, are supporting the organization of the 2018 edition, and in particular **UniCredit**, leading European banking group, **Major Partner of the Opera Festival for over twenty years**, **Special Partner AGSM**, **Official Sponsor Intimissimi**, **Automotive Partner Volkswagen Group Italia**, **Mobility Partner DB Bahn Italia** and **Media Partner RTL 102.5**, which returns to support the *mission* of Fondazione Arena and its prestigious Festival.

For information and tickets: www.arena.it and on the Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube channels.

INFORMATION

Fondazione Arena di Verona Press Office – Via Roma 7/D, 37121 Verona

tel. (+39) 045 805.1861-1905-1891 - fax (+39) 045 803.1443

ufficio.stampa@arenadiverona.it – www.arena.it

Ticket Office – Via Dietro Anfiteatro 6/B, 37121 Verona

tel. (+39) 045 59.65.17 – fax (+39) 045 801.3287 – e-mail biglietteria@arenadiverona.it

Call center (+39) 045 800.51.51 - www.arena.it - Advance ticket sales Geticket

Prices from € 16.00 to € 226.00

Major Partner



Special Partner



Automotive Partner



Official Sponsor



Mobility Partner



Media Partner





Fondazione
ARENA DI VERONA®

Arena di Verona

96° Opera Festival 2018

ARENA DI VERONA

96th OPERA FESTIVAL 2018

FROM 22ND JUNE TO 1ST SEPTEMBER

22, 29 June - 9:00 pm
6, 11, 17, 21 July - 9:00 pm
3, 9, 12, 22, 25, 28, 31 August - 8:45 pm

CARMEN

Georges Bizet
Conductor: Francesco Ivan Ciampa
Director: Hugo de Ana
New production

23, 28 June - 9:00 pm
8, 10, 14, 19, 22, 27 July - 9:00 pm
2, 5, 7, 11, 19, 23, 29 August - 8:45 pm
1 September - 8:45 pm

AIDA

Giuseppe Verdi
Conductors: Jordi Bernàcer, Daniel Oren
and Andrea Battistoni
Director: Franco Zeffirelli

30 June - 9:00 pm
5, 13, 18, 26 July - 9:00 pm

TURANDOT

Giacomo Puccini
Conductors: Daniel Oren
and Francesco Ivan Ciampa
Director: Franco Zeffirelli

7, 12, 20, 28 July - 9:00 pm
10, 18 August - 8:45 pm

NABUCCO

Giuseppe Verdi
Conductor: Jordi Bernàcer
Director: Arnaud Bernard

25 July - 9:00 pm

ROBERTO BOLLE AND FRIENDS

4, 8, 17, 24, 30 August - 8:45 pm

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Gioachino Rossini
Conductors: Daniel Oren and Andrea
Battistoni
Director: Hugo de Ana

26 August - 9:30 pm

VERDI OPERA NIGHT

Conductor: Andrea Battistoni
Director: Stefano Trespidi

Fondazione Arena di Verona reserves the right to make changes to the current programme.

Major Partner



Special Partner



Automotive Partner
VOLKSWAGEN
GROUP ITALIA S.p.A.

Official Sponsor
FALCONERI
Consulenza e filati naturali

Mobility Partner



Media Partner



OUR THANKS GO TO ALL THE SUPPORTERS OF THE 2018 ARENA DI VERONA OPERA FESTIVAL

Founding Members



Major Partner



Special Partner



Automotive Partner



Official Sponsor



Mobility Partner



Media Partner



Official Partners

