



Metropolitan Maestro

Carlo Rizzi's 2018-19 season includes *Tosca* and *Mefistofele* at the Met, *Falstaff* in Tokyo, a new production of *Un ballo in maschera* at Welsh National Opera and symphonic concerts in Japan, Italy and Spain

'Carlo Rizzi knows exactly what Puccini needs and he draws wonderful colours from Welsh National Opera's orchestra. The pacing is precise, the playing supple and gripping,' *The Times*, review of *Tosca*, February 2018

Mature masterworks by Puccini and Verdi are set to occupy Carlo Rizzi over the 2018-19 season. The Italian conductor's schedule includes engagements with the Metropolitan Opera in New York and at his home base in Cardiff for Welsh National Opera's new production of *Un ballo in maschera*. It also contains debut dates with the New National Theatre in Tokyo and the New Japan Philharmonic, and a return to his native Milan for four concerts with the Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali. Maestro Rizzi, who made his Metropolitan Opera debut 25 years ago with Puccini's *La bohème*, will lead the company in the first revival of Sir David McVicar's lavish new staging of *Tosca*, with Sondra Radvanovsky in the title role and Joseph Calleja as Cavaradossi, and in Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele*.

Carlo Rizzi has become a regular guest at the Met in recent years. He opened its 2017-18 season with Bellini's *Norma*, receiving critical acclaim for his eloquent interpretation. 'If there was a gimmick [about the production],' wrote the *Washington Post*, 'it was the gimmick of putting the opera in the hands of someone who actually knew how it was supposed to go.' Rizzi's conducting, the review continued, 'had the taut, light, forward drive that this music calls for'. His meticulous preparation and free-flowing performances of Bellini's opera reinforced his close rapport with the Met's musicians.

"It's always a joy to perform with such a terrific orchestra and chorus in one of the world's greatest opera houses," comments Carlo Rizzi. "It was a delight for me to work with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in *Norma* and in such a wonderfully flexible way. *Tosca* and *La bohème* come out of the *bel canto* tradition, but with the difference that Puccini wrote everything into the score. That's why it's so important to pay full attention to every detail. Puccini had an incredibly precise idea of the textures he wanted from his music. It's not about accompanying the singers; rather, it's about making this fine blend between instruments and voices. When you have forces like those at the Met, you can obtain the rich range of sounds and textures that Puccini wanted. I'm really looking forward to performing *Tosca* there. It's one of my favourite operas, where drama and music mix together with high-octane power."

Tosca opens at the Met on Thursday 25 October and is scheduled to receive twelve further performances from Monday 29 October to Saturday 6 April. Carlo Rizzi will also conduct three performances of Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele* for the company, including the production's opening night on Thursday 8 November. "I first performed *Mefistofele* with Dutch National Opera fourteen years ago," he recalls. "I'm so happy to be able to revisit it in the first revival of Robert Carsen's staging at the Met since 2000."

Boito's name will also be on the bill when Rizzi travels to Japan to conduct *Falstaff*. The composer of *Mefistofele* turned to Shakespeare to craft a compelling comic libretto for Verdi's late masterwork. Rizzi, who learned *Falstaff* while working as a répétiteur at La Scala, Milan, will perform the work at Tokyo's New National Theatre in a revival of Sir Jonathan Miller's critically acclaimed production (6, 9, 12 & 15 December). "Verdi was nearly 80 when he wrote *Falstaff*," he notes. "That is nothing short of a miracle. The sharpness and clarity of mind he had to conceive something that was so new is quite amazing. *Falstaff* is a feast for a conductor in every way. It's demanding but always a pleasure to perform. It will be fascinating to do this in Japan and explore this fantastic masterpiece with local forces."

Verdi's innate ability to portray human responses to great drama stands behind Welsh National Opera's unfolding trilogy of operas staged for the company by its artistic director David Pountney. Carlo Rizzi, WNO's Conductor Laureate, launched the project in February 2018 with an acclaimed account of *La forza del destino*. He returns in the coming season to conduct *Un ballo in maschera*, opening its run at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff on Saturday 9 February 2019. Rizzi performed Verdi's eternally popular work for the first time with WNO in 1994: "That was my *Ballo* debut," he recalls. "There are still some WNO orchestra players and

chorus members who took part in those performances, so it will be fascinating to revisit the work with them after all these years. They're an amazing company and do Verdi so well."

Carlo Rizzi remains with WNO to conduct the revival of *Roberto Devereux*. Donizetti's lyric tragedy, a Romantic interpretation of the love affair between Elizabeth I and the Earl of Essex, will become the latest addition to the conductor's large operatic repertoire, lifting his tally to 103 different works. "We have a very good cast," he notes, "with Barry Banks in the title-role, Joyce El-Khoury as Elizabetta and Justina Gringyté, who has a great career ahead of her, as Sara. Although the opera is a tragedy, I expect we will have great fun with it."

Following a return to New York for further performances of *Tosca* at the Met and for the company's National Council Grand Finals concert on Sunday 31 March, Carlo Rizzi travels to Milan for four dates with the Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali at the Teatro Dal Verme. His first programme comprises works by members of the Mendelssohn and Schumann families (Thursday 2 & Saturday 4 May). Its first half presents Robert Schumann's early Symphony in G minor 'Zwickau' and Clara Schumann's Konzertsatz in F minor, while Fanny Mendelssohn's Overture in C and Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No.3 'Scottish' occupy the concert's second half. Rizzi's second programme (Thursday 9 & Saturday 11 May) presents a Brahms double bill, opening with the Violin Concerto, with soloist Sergej Krylov, and concluding with the composer's Fourth Symphony. In the summer, Rizzi returns to the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro to conduct *L'equivoco stravagante* in a new production directed by Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier, as well as a gala concert.

Carlo Rizzi's season also includes concerts in Tokyo with the New Japan Philharmonic (Friday 17 & Saturday 18 May) and with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia (Friday 30, Saturday 31 May). "The coming season is ideally balanced," he comments. "It includes sufficient time for me to enjoy the experience with each opera company and orchestra and take pleasure in exploring these great works."

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PERFORMANCE DATES

25, 29 October, 2, 5, 9, 13, 17 November 2018, 18, 23, 26, 29 March, 2, 6, April 2019
The Metropolitan Opera, New York

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Sondra Radvanovsky / Jennifer Rowley** *Tosca* | **Joseph Calleja** Cavaradossi | **Wolfgang Koch / Claudio Sgura** *Scarpia* | **Patrick Carfizzi / Philip Cokorinos** Sacristan | **Sir David McVicar** director | **Jonathon Loy** revival stage director | **The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra**

Puccini *Tosca*

8, 12, 16 November 2018
The Metropolitan Opera, New York

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Angela Meade** *Margherita* | **Jennifer Check** *Helen of Troy* | **Michael Fabiano** *Faust* | **Christian van Horn** *Mefistofele* | **Robert Carsen** production | **Paula Suozzi** revival stage director | **The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra**

Boito *Mefistofele*

6, 9, 12, 15 December 2018
New National Theatre, Tokyo

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Robert de Candia** Falstaff | **Mattia Olivieri** Ford | **Kota Murakami** Fenton | **Yojiro Oyama** Dr Cajus | **Shuhei Itoga** Bardolfo | **Hidekazu Tsumaya** Pistola | **Eva Mei** Alice Ford | **Hiroko Kouda** Nannetta | **Enkelejda Shkoza** Mrs Quickly | **Yayoi Toriki** Meg Page | **Jonathan Miller** director | **New National Theatre Chorus** | **Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra**

Verdi *Falstaff*

9, 16, 23 February 2019, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff
6 March 2019, Birmingham Hippodrome
Welsh National Opera

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Gwyn Hughes Jones** Riccardo | **Mary Elizabeth Williams** Amelia | **Roland Wood** Renato | **Julie Martin du Theil** Oscar | **Sara Fulgoni** Ulrica | **Jihoon Kim** Samuel | **David Pountney** director | **WNO Orchestra**

Verdi *Un ballo in maschera* - NEW PRODUCTION

28 February, 2 March 2019, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff
8 March 2019, Birmingham Hippodrome
Welsh National Opera

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Barry Banks** Roberto Devereux | **Joyce El-Khoury** Elisabetta | **Justina Gringytė** Sara | **Robyn Lyn Evans** Lord Cecil | **Wyn Pencarreg** Walter Radleigh | | **Gary Griffiths** Nottingham | **Alessandro Talevi** director | **WNO Orchestra**

Donizetti *Roberto Devereux*

Thursday 2, Saturday 4 May 2019
Teatro Dal Verme, Milan, 8pm (Thursday) & 5pm (Saturday)

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Viviana Lasaracina** piano | **Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali**

Robert Schumann Symphony in G minor 'Zwickau'
Clara Schumann Konzertsatz in F minor
Fanny Mendelssohn Overture for orchestra in C major
Felix Mendelssohn Symphony No.3 in A minor, Op.56 'Scottish'

Thursday 9 & Saturday 11 May 2019
Teatro Dal Verme, Milan, 8pm (Thursday) & 5pm (Saturday)

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Sergej Krylov** violin | **Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali**

Brahms Violin Concerto in D major, Op.77
Brahms Symphony No.4 in E minor, Op.98

Friday 17 & Saturday 18 May 2019
Sumida Triphony Hall, Tokyo, 2pm

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **New Japan Philharmonic**

Berlioz *Le carnaval romain* Overture
Respighi *Feste Romane*
Strauss *Aus Italien*

Friday 30 May 2019 Palacio de la Ópera, A Coruña
Saturday 31 May 2019 Auditorio Mar de Vigo, Vigo, 8.30pm

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia**

Pizzetti Tre Preludi sinfonici per l'*Edipo Re* di Sofocle

Debussy *Iberia*

Strauss *Aus Italien*

ROSSINI OPERA FESTIVAL

August 2019, dates TBA

Carlo Rizzi conductor | **Moshe Leiser, Patrice Caurier** directors | cast TBA | **Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai**

Rossini *L'equivoco stravagante*