

Comunicato Stampa, Palermo 13 gennaio 2023

Seven operas, four ballets and fourteen concerts performed by distinguished conductors, ranging from Wellber to Muti.

Damiano Michieletto directs Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, an international co-production with Royal Opera House Covent Garden, London, and Opéra national de Paris. Riccardo Muti conducts Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. International star Soprano Asmik Grigorian debuts at Teatro Massimo.

The season opens on 8 November with *Kaiserrequiem*, a brand new joint creation by Omer Meir Wellber and Marco Gandini, which combines Viktor Ullman's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* and Mozart's *Requiem*.

***Requiem for the Victims of the Mafia* performs on November 12, thirty years after its première.**

The 2022-2023 subscription season for opera, ballets and concerts starts on October 10.

Roberto Lagalla, President of Fondazione Teatro Massimo and Mayor of Palermo, and **Marco Betta**, Teatro Massimo Chief Executive and Art Director, have presented in the theatre foyer the 2022-2023 opera, ballet and concert season, which shall open with two opera-concerts strongly characterized by the themes of requiem and memory, marking a continuity with the 2022 season where the victims of Mafia attacks were commemorated.

The season opens on **November 8 2022** with *Kaiserrequiem*, a new creation by Teatro Massimo Music Director **Omer Meir Wellber** and director **Marco Gandini**, which involves the **Orchestra**, the **Chorus** and the **Corps de Ballet**. This work combines *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, composed by **Viktor Ullman** in the concentration camp of Theresienstadt – where he was interned from 1942 to 1944 before dying in the gas chambers at Auschwitz – with **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Requiem Mass**, the composer's unfinished masterpiece. These two works, created a century and a half apart from one another, are joined together thanks to **Wellber's** conduction and **Gandini's** direction, a creative partnership that in September 2020 had already staged Mozart's *Coronation Mass* alongside Schönberg's *A survivor from Warsaw*.

On November 12, thirty years after its first performance in Palermo Cathedral, the Teatro Massimo presents *Requiem for the Victims of the Mafia*, in collaboration with **Associazione Nazionale Magistrati**. Written in 1993 by seven composers – Lorenzo Ferrero, Carlo Galante, Paolo Arcà, Matteo D'Amico, Giovanni Sollima, Marco Betta and Marco Tutino – and inspired by a text by **Vincenzo Consolo**, the *Requiem* was first performed on 27 March 1993 in Palermo Cathedral by the Teatro Massimo Chorus with the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, under the baton of **Gabriele Ferro**. On November 12, the *Requiem* will be conducted by **Alessandro Cadario** and broadcast **live** on a large screen in the Church of San Domenico, the pantheon of illustrious Sicilians, which also houses Giovanni Falcone's tomb. The cast includes soprano **Desirée Rancatore**, mezzo-soprano **Raffaella Lupinacci**, tenor **Giulio Pelligra**, and bass singer **Roberto Scandiuzzi**.

In the words of **Roberto Lagalla, Mayor of Palermo and President of the Fondazione's Board of Counselors**, "The Fondazione Teatro Massimo represents an outstanding cultural landmark that,

together with other cultural institutions, aims to build up a network of exchanges and stimuli beneficial to the city's future. I believe that Palermo needs to get back on track starting from culture and the beauty that is intrinsic to it. Beauty acts on people's behaviours, which, in turn, affect community decisions. Palermo has to get past ugliness. The city needs a boost of beauty, which can come from culture and art. The duty of the city government is to ensure support and sustainability to its cultural institutions. Funding promises for 2022 will be kept so to guarantee job continuity to the people working in the theatre. Finally, I would like to congratulate with Chief Executive Marco Betta for the 2022-2023 Teatro Massimo season in the thirtieth anniversary of the Mafia attacks: the theatre offerings combine tradition, experimentation and memory, featuring distinguished names along with young artists".

"I like to imagine that a theatrical season is not just an assortment of titles and concerts –adds the **Chief Executive and Art Director Marco Betta** – but a kind of a possible diary recording our present time, a diary-like-symphony such as Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. To paraphrase the symphony's title, I could say that this season tells *Épisodes de la vie d'un théâtre*. Art awakens the mind, which is why, in addition to the concerts and works by great artists and Sicilian artists that we will be have the pleasure to host at Teatro Massimo, we are working on a parallel season of social theatre, for the city, in the city".

The Christmas season, which runs **from December 16 to 23**, sees the return of one of the most beloved ballets, with eight performances of Pyotr Il'ich Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* produced by Teatro Massimo. The **Corps de Ballet** will perform the magic of Christmas Eve, the battle with the Mouse King and the young protagonist's fantastic journey to the land of the Sugar Plume Fairy, accompanied by Prince Nutcracker. The stage choreography is by **Jean-Sébastien Colau**, recently appointed Director of the Ballet Company, and **Vincenzo Veneruso**. **Ido Arad** will lead the orchestra.

From January 17 to 24, the immortal love story of Violetta and Alfredo returns for *La traviata*, which Teatro Massimo will also tour to Japan in June alongside *La bohème*. Verdi's opera will be staged by **Mario Pontiggia** and **Francesco Zito** for Teatro Massimo. **Carlo Goldstein** will conduct the seven performances. The international cast includes soprano **Nino Machaidze** in the title role, who will alternate with Palermo-born **Jessica Nuccio**, tenor **Saimir Pirgu** in the role of Alfredo, and baritone **Nicola Alaimo** as Germont.

Gaetano Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* will be presented in an international co-production with London's Royal Opera House Covent Garden and Paris Opéra **from February 17 to 23**.

Damiano Michieletto directs the story of wealthy old Don Pasquale (Michele Pertusi), who decides to marry in order to disinherit his nephew Ernesto (René Barbera), but is tricked by Dr. Malatesta (Markus Werba), who arranges a sham marriage with Norina (Giuliana Gianfaldoni), who is actually Ernesto's fiancée. **Michele Spotti**, an outstanding young conductor who has been a frequent guest of the Teatro Massimo in recent years, will lead a top-notch cast.

From 15 to 19 March a new dance event will see the Corps de Ballet of Teatro Massimo perform the Romantic repertoire with *Le corsaire* to music by Adolphe Adam, Cesare Pugni, Léo Delibes and Riccardo Drigo. The story, inspired by Byron, features a staging by Teatro dell'Opera di Roma with sets and costumes by **Francesco Zito**. Among the most important ballets of the repertoire, *Le corsaire* will be performed in Palermo in a production that won the Danza&Danza 2020 award for "Best Classical Performance of the Year".

From April 16 to 23 returns **Vincenzo Bellini's Norma**, under the direction of **Ugo Giacomazzi** and **Luigi Di Gangi**, an acclaimed co-production of Teatro Massimo and Macerata Arena



Sferisterio, which premiered in 2017 and has since toured the world, including Morocco in 2022. **Lorenzo Passerini** will lead the orchestra.

Originally scheduled to open the 2021 season, **Pyotr Il'i Tchaikovsky's *Evgenij Onegin*** will finally arrive on stage **from 19 to 25 May**, directed by **Johannes Erath** and conducted by **Omer Meir Wellber**. After creating *The Twilight of Dreams*, a show that opened the Teatro Massimo 2021 season and was broadcast live, Erath and Wellber return to offer a romantic, decadent, and contemporary version of Pushkin's hero.

From 13 to 18 June the third ballet of the season will be staged: ***Carmen***, a new production by the Teatro Massimo Ballet Company, choreographed by **Leo Mujić** and dedicated to the symbol of women's freedom created by Prosper Merimée.

The **Japan tour**, which had been postponed due to pandemic-related issues, is also scheduled for June 2023. The Fondazione's artistic ensembles and theatre crews will be on tour with an ad hoc staging of Puccini's *La bohème* and Verdi's *La traviata*, directed by **Mario Pontiggia**.

From 19 to 26 September, the Orchestra and Chorus will perform Christoph Willibald Gluck's ***Orpheus and Eurydice***, a seminal title in the repertoire that embodies Gluck's theories of musical theatre reform, which leads to the transition from Baroque opera to Mozart. The orchestra will be conducted by **Gabriele Ferro**, Honorary Music Director of the Teatro Massimo.

A fourth ballet is scheduled **from 30 September to 1 October**: ***L'ultimo bacio di Anna***, choreographed by **Vincenzo Veneruso** for the Teatro Massimo Corps de Ballet, to the powerful music by Italian composer **Paolo Buonvino**.

The season concludes with Mozart, just as it began, with **Riccardo Muti** conducting an opera at the Teatro Massimo for the first time. ***Don Giovanni*** returns to the stage from **October 24 to November 1** in a new stage setting co-produced with Turin Teatro Regio, directed by **Chiara Muti** and conducted by Riccardo Muti. After the spring 2021 live streaming shows with the Cherubini Youth Orchestra and the Teatro Massimo Orchestra and Chorus, this will be the conductor's return to Palermo, finally in front of an audience.

The prestigious **coordinated graphic design** of the 2022-2023 visual communication project has been entrusted to the internationally renowned artist **Elisabeth Scherffig**, whose classically-inspired works interact with the contemporary city and the forms of ancient architecture. The theatre's relationship with the artist was established following the collaboration agreement recently signed with **Fondazione Palazzo Butera** with which a joint-ticket for guided tours has already been introduced.

OTHER EVENTS

Between October and December 2022, the Fondazione Teatro Massimo will also be involved in other **high social value projects**, such as **concerts by Ukrainian pianists**, a project under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, and the project **Opera City 2022: Instant Opera**, to be held in the **Sperone-Roccella-Brancaccio** neighborhoods and supported by the "Call for live performance projects in the suburbs" issued by Palermo Municipality and the Metropolitan City.



For the soon-to-be-announced **Educational Season** there will also be performances for young people and *operine* to be held in the Sala ONU, while in March it will be staged *L'altro* a work by **Gery Palazzotto** with **Gigi Borruso**. The music is by **Fabio Lannino** and **Diego Spitaleri**, while the choreography is created and performed by **Alessandro Cascioli**, **Gaetano La Mantia**, **Yuriko Nishihara**. The Teatro Massimo **youth ensembles** are also involved in the project.

Teatro Massimo continues its collaboration with some of the local leading musical institutions and organisations: Palermo Conservatory, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, The Brass Group, Palermo association "Amici della musica", Liceo Musicale Regina Margherita, Piano City Palermo, the University of Palermo, Fondazione Palazzo Butera, Fondazione Merz, ZACentrale, Palermo Academy of Fine Arts, association Blitz (for the *Diverse Visions* project), and association "Acrobazie. Are, impresa e sociale" (for projects in the Ucciardone and Malaspina detention centres).

CONCERTS

Following the double opening with the *Requiems*, two concerts with Orchestra and Chorus are scheduled for November, both featuring tenor **Enea Scala**, presently one of the most highly regarded Rossini tenors. The first concert will be conducted by **Ben Glassberg** and the second by **Manuela Ranno** for an Opera Gala also featuring soprano **Federica Guida**.

Omer Meir Wellber will be starring in two early-December concerts: on 2 December with the Teatro Massimo Orchestra for **Edward Elgar's** Cello Concerto, featuring soloist cellist **Steven Isserlis**, and Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony. Two days later, Wellber will perform with piano and accordion in a completely different atmosphere for *Cabaret!*, where, together with soprano **Hila Baggio** and performer **Ernesto Tomasini**, he will tackle a "non-classic" repertoire that holds more than one surprise.

The year 2023 will open on **January 1** with the now-traditional **New Year's Concert** (off subscription). The Teatro Massimo Orchestra and Chorus will be led by violinist **Julian Rachlin**, who was praised for his performance of Tchaikovsky's Concerto at Teatro Massimo of few months ago. **Salvatore Greco**, concertmaster of the Teatro Massimo Orchestra, will perform as a soloist in the concert conducted by **Salvatore Di Vittorio** on **5 January**.

On January 29, conductor **Marc Albrecht** returns to the podium to lead the Teatro Massimo Orchestra in two of Gustav Mahler's most popular works, the Lieder cycle *Kindertotenlieder*, with mezzo-soprano **Wiebke Lehmkuhl**, and the Fifth Symphony. **On 4 March**, Music Director **Omer Meir Wellber** will conduct the Orchestra in **Hector Berlioz's** *Harold en Italie*, a symphony with viola obbligato inspired by Byron and emblematic of the French composer's romantic poetics. Honorary Music Director Gabriele Ferro, who has previously performed with the Teatro Massimo Orchestra and Chorus in cycles dedicated to Gustav Mahler and Johannes Brahms, will conduct the **26 March** concert. The collaboration with **Palermo Conservatory** and the **Brass Group** continues, with concerts featuring the **Ochestra Nazionale dei Conservatori Barocchi** (26 April) and the **Orchestra Jazz Siciliana** (9 September).

The internationally acclaimed violinist **Pavel Berman** and young conductor **Alessandro Bonato** will make special guest appearances on **May 5**. The Teatro Massimo Orchestra will be led by conductor **Henrik Nánási** on **June 1** in a program featuring the international star soprano **Asmik Grigorian**, who will be making her Teatro Massimo debut.



The concert season ends with *Stabat Mater* for orchestra, choir, theremin and countertenor by **Giovanni Sollima**, who will conduct the Teatro Massimo Orchestra and Chorus.

Ufficio Stampa
Fondazione Teatro Massimo
Giovannella Brancato
+39 340 8334979
stampa@teatromassimo.it