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MUSIC DIRECTOR: MARCIO DA SILVA

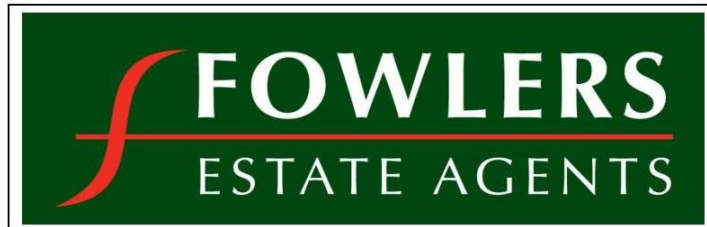
OPERA GALA

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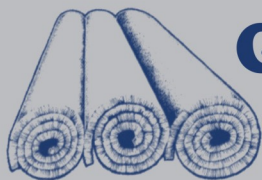
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TONIGHT'S CONCERT



OVERTURE - *Marriage of Figaro*, Mozart
CHORUS OF WEDDING GUESTS - *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Donizetti
DELLA CRUDELE ISOTTA - *L'elisir d'amore*, Donizetti
ANVIL CHORUS - *Il Trovatore*, Verdi
HUMMING CHORUS - *Madame Butterfly*, Puccini
THE CORONATION SCENE - *Boris Godunov*, Mussorgsky
SALE, ASCENDE L'UMAN CANTICO - *Tosca*, Puccini
VA, TOSCA/TE DEUM - *Tosca*, Puccini

~~INTERVAL~~

LA VERGINE DEGLI ANGELI - *La Forza del Destino*, Verdi
VESTI LA GIUBBA - *Pagliacci*, Leoncavallo
SUMMERTIME - *Porgy and Bess*, Gershwin
IL LACERATO SPIRITO - *Simon Boccanegra*, Verdi
INTERMEZZO - *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Mascagni
EASTER CHORUS - *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Mascagni
O ISIS UND OSIRIS - *Magic Flute*, Mozart
VILJA - *The Merry Widow*, Lehár
NESSUN DORMA - *Turandot*, Puccini
VA, PENSIERO - *Nabucco*, Verdi
BRINDISI - *La Traviata*, Verdi



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MARCIO DA SILVA

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Marcio was born in Brazil in 1983 and began his music studies at the age of 9 with piano lessons and choral singing. He travelled to the United States where he studied in Arizona for six months, graduating from the renowned Phoenix Boys Choir in 1998. In 2006 Marcio received his Diplôme d'études Musicales in voice from the Conservatoire de Toulouse, France. He moved to Germany in April 2008 to join the Musikhochschule, Freiburg, where he studied choral and orchestral conducting under Professor Scott Sandmeier. He obtained his Bachelor of Music in July 2011 and, moving to London, secured his Master's degree in July 2013 at the Royal College of Music.



In 2014 Marcio founded Ensemble OrQuesta Opera Academy and has organised a number of highly regarded opera academies in venues across the UK each year. These have given many singers from across the world the opportunity to study and perform an operatic work at a high artistic level. During these intensive courses, Marcio and his team offer coaching in languages, vocal technique, style, interpretation and staging. Marcio himself is fluent in seven languages.

In recent years Marcio has conducted and directed over 30 fully staged productions of operas, ranging from less regularly performed works such as Lully's *Armide*, to popular works such as *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute* and *La Bohème* with a significant focus on Baroque opera repertoire. In these productions, Marcio usually serves as music and stage director, but he also acts as lighting designer and choreographer, and plays a central role as continuo and Baroque guitar player. Together with lutenist Cédric Meyer, Marcio has also undertaken a number of new editions of rarely performed Baroque operas including: *Xerse* (Cavalli), *Céphale et Procris* (Jacquet de La Guerre), *Euridice* (Caccini) and *L'Egisto* (Cavalli). In these editions, Marcio not only reviews the material from the manuscripts, but re-works the entire piece, producing a unique new version of each opera.

Marcio is the founder and artistic director of the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra and Ensemble OrQuesta. He took up the baton for BCS in 2021 and also conducts the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra Singers and the Hastings Philharmonic. He works extensively as a vocal coach and continues to enjoy performing professionally both as baritone and countertenor. Marcio will be performing as baritone in this evening's concert.



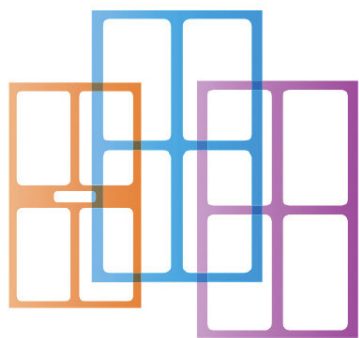
HELEN MAY

SOPRANO

Helen holds a Master's in Vocal Performance with Distinction from the Royal Academy of Music, where she was awarded a DipRAM for an outstanding final recital. She studied on the Royal Academy of Music's prestigious Preparatory Opera Course under the tutelage of Nuccia Focile, Iain Ledingham and Philip Sunderland. Her studies were generously supported by the William Gibbs Trust and the Josephine Baker Trust.

Helen's undergraduate studies in music took place at Cardiff University, where she held the David Lloyd Vocal Scholarship and was awarded the Geraint Evans Prize for outstanding recital performance. Helen is an alumna of Wells Cathedral School, one of the UK's five specialist music schools, where she was awarded a sixth-form place as a 'Special Provisions' musician. Helen has enjoyed public masterclasses with renowned singers such as Nelly Miricioiu, Toby Spence and Isobel Buchanan. She continues to benefit from private coaching with Nuccia Focile.

Helen is married to Marcio da Silva and is a member of the Ensemble OrQuesta Company. She is also the Company Manager of Ensemble OrQuesta and the General Manager of Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra. Through both organisations, Helen is active in developing a range of community based Outreach projects.



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LEONEL PINHEIRO

TENOR

Leonel Pinheiro was born in Braga, Portugal. He completed his Degree in Music at the University of Aveiro under the tuition of António Salgado and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Concert Singing at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama with Peter Alexander Wilson.

Leonel graduated with distinction from the Opera Course at Guildhall School of Music & Drama where he studied with Susan McCulloch. His full scholarship was kindly supported by the Worshipful Company of Saddlers, the Roseberry Scholarship, the Blanch Gertrude Lynch Memorial Scholarship and the Music Students' Hostel Trust. Through his Guildhall Artist Fellowship, Leonel was a guest teacher of singing at the City University of London and a Learning Repertoire Coach at Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

Operatic engagements include: **Don José** *Carmen* for Mid Wales Opera, **Turidu** *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Coliseu Micaelense, **Cavaradossi** *Tosca* for Charles Court Opera/Musique Cordiale Festival in Provence, and Regents Opera/Wimbledon International Music Festival, **Lucio** *Otello* for Buxton Festival Opera, **Alfredo** *La Traviata* for European Chamber Opera/Bangkok Grand Opera, Bermuda Festival/Regents Opera, **Gherardo** *Gianni Schicchi* at Opera Holland Park Christine Collins Young Artists, **Luigi** *Il Tabarro*, and **Samson** *Samson et Dalila* for Grimeborn Opera Festival.



VEDAT DALGIRAN

BASS

Vedat Dalgiran studied at Ankara State Conservatory in Turkey and at the Welsh International Academy of Voice in Cardiff. He studied singing with Murat Göksu, Robert Lloyd, Graeme Broadbent and Dennis O'Neill.

His operatic roles include **Sarastro** in *Die Zauberflöte* for Woodhouse Opera Festival in 2014, **Bartolo** in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Ensemble OrQuesta, Hastings in 2016, **Commendatore** in *Don Giovanni* with Ensemble OrQuesta, Hastings in 2017, Opera Holland Park London in 2017 and Teatro Francesco Cilea Italy in 2018, **Ramfis** in *Aida* for Aspendos Opera Festival Turkey in 2018, and Istanbul State Opera in 2021, **Sparafucile** in *Rigoletto* for Oper im Berg Festival, Salzburg in 2019, **Osmín** in *Entführung aus dem Serail* for Ankara State Opera in 2021 and **Tom** in *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Ankara State Opera in 2022.

Vedat was awarded an Extraordinary Prize at the 54th Tenor Vinas International Opera Competition in Barcelona 2017. He continues his singing at Ankara State Opera in Turkey.



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WHAT IS OPERA ANYWAY?

BCS is proud to present our *Opera Gala* tonight, but what exactly is *opera* and what are its origins?

An *opera* is a drama which combines soliloquy (speaking one's thoughts out loud), dialogue, scenery, action and continuous (or almost uninterrupted) music. The word *opera* comes from the Italian word for 'work' and it is a visual as well as an audible art.

Throughout its history, *opera* has reflected trends current in the several arts of which it is composed. Developments in architecture and painting have manifest themselves on the operatic stage in the design of the sets and costumes for specific performances, and *opera* has also affected the visual arts beyond the stage in such domains as the design and decoration of *opera* houses and the portraiture of singers and composers. However, it is the power of the music, written for the several registers of the human voice, which makes *opera* so unique.

Although the earliest works which we now call *operas* date only from the very end of the 16th century, the association of music with drama can be traced back to ancient times. The choruses, at least, in the plays of Euripides and Sophocles were sung, and so perhaps was the dialogue. The medieval liturgical dramas were sung, and music was used, mainly incidentally, in the religious mystery and miracle plays of the late Middle Ages.

In the development of *opera* there have been several styles. Baroque *opera*'s characteristic is a great vocal virtuosity, which became a purpose in itself. There was also a special kind of singing known as castrato. Reaction to this were Gluck's Reform (1750s) and Classicism.

During the 19th century, *opera* was characterised by the Romanticism of Bellini, Bizet, Donizetti and Verdi, as well as the *operas* of national romanticists such as Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky and Smetana.

Simply speaking, *opera* has transformed throughout time from 'melodic reciting' into the most complex musical, dramatic and stage form. For the performance of one *opera* work, composed at the end of the 19th or at the beginning of the 20th century, an extensive orchestra is required, a certain number of vocal soloists, a large choir, a big stage and often a ballet ensemble, too. It is the job of the conductor to unite all of these elements musically, with help from the director, a choreographer, a scenographer and a costumier.

This evening is led by our Music Director, Marcio da Silva, and accompanied by professional guest soloists and members of Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra. BCS is delighted to perform a selection of opera highlights taken from the works of Donizetti, Gershwin, Lehár, Leoncavallo, Mascagni, Mozart, Mussorgsky, Puccini and Verdi. Thank you all for joining us this evening.



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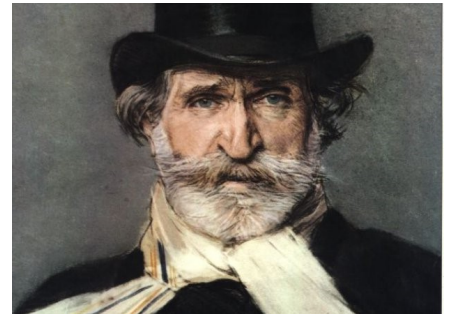
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GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813 - 1901)



Giuseppe Verdi enjoyed a long, prolific and extremely successful career. Whilst his catalogue of work contains a variety of songs, sacred works, and instrumental pieces, the vast majority of his life was dedicated to opera composition; he wrote nearly 30 operas over the course of 54 years.

In *Nabucco*, we catch a glimpse of the composer at the unpromising beginning of his career. The year was 1842. His first two operas had been dismal failures and he had vowed never to write another note. The impresario Bartolomeo Merelli, however, persuaded the young Verdi to take home a libretto for Nabucodonosor. When the composer angrily threw the manuscript on the table, the book fell open. “Without knowing how, I gazed at the page that lay before me, and read this line: ‘Va, pensiero, sull’ali dorate’. I ran through the verses that followed and was much moved.”

The opera follows the plight of the Jews as they are assaulted, conquered and subsequently exiled from their homeland by the Babylonian king Nabucco (Nebuchadnezzar II). The historical events are used as a background for a romantic and political plot. At the time, Verdi was mourning the untimely death of his first wife and two young children, and in Act III he poured his sense of longing and pain into *Va, pensiero, sull’ali dorate* (Fly, thought, on golden wings) - **The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves**. The slaves are at work on the banks of the river Euphrates under the eye of their Babylonian oppressors and sing longingly of their homeland. This chorus not only became an instant sensation, but also became the ‘theme song’ for the Risorgimento (the uprising for the unification of Italy). It is recounted that all the stage-hands at the first run of performances would gather every night in the wings to listen to this, one of the composer’s greatest and simplest choruses.

The opening performance of *La Traviata*, on 6 March 1853 at La Fenice Opera House in Venice, was, according to Verdi himself, a “fiasco”. In a letter, Verdi described how the audience laughed, finding the vocalism of the male soloists inadequate and the soprano’s very large figure implausible for a character suffering from tuberculosis. Other theatres were willing to give *La Traviata* a second production, but Verdi did not want to take this risk unless he could get a suitable cast. So it was not until 6 May 1854, that *La Traviata* was next performed - again, in Venice, but this time at the Teatro San Benedetto. On this occasion the opera was a triumph!

The story is set in late 19th century Paris and opens with a party at the house of Violetta Valery, a high-class courtesan and the most celebrated figure of a glamorous social scene. Enter Alfredo, a poet who adores Violetta. Alfredo’s friend Gastone states that Alfredo loves Violetta and called on her daily while she was ill. This angers Baron Douphol, Violetta’s current enthusiast, who subsequently refuses the crowd’s invitation to propose a toast. Alfredo, however, accepts it and sings a drinking song famously known as the **Brindisi** entitled *Libiamo ne’ lieti calici* (*Let’s drink from the joyful cups*).

Verdi wrote *Il Trovatore* (*The Troubadour*) between 1850 and 1853, whilst simultaneously writing *La Traviata*. The stunning success following its premiere at the Teatro Apollo in Rome on 19 January 1853, cemented its place as one of the most popular operas of all time. The complicated plot, full of duels, battles and deceptions, is set in 15th century Spain near the Bay of Biscay. Manrico, who was raised by gypsies, has fallen in love with a woman named Leonore, who in turn is loved by a powerful count. The invigorating **Anvil Chorus** is heard at the opening of Act II, as a band of Spanish gypsies strike their anvils at dawn and sing the praises of hard work, good wine and gypsy women.

While Verdi’s early and middle period operas all premiered in Italy, he began to receive important commissions from beyond the borders, especially from the Paris Opera. Two singers on tour from Russia brought about the composer’s first and only Russian commission. Based on a contemporary Spanish play, *La fuerza del sino* by Angel Pérez de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas. *La forza del destino* (*The Force of Destiny*) premiered in St. Petersburg in 1862

This opera follows the tragic story of Don Alvaro and Donna Leonora. They are in love and plan to elope, despite the objections of Leonora’s family. In a confrontation early in Act I, Leonora’s father is accidentally shot by Alvaro’s pistol - when it fires upon striking the ground as he throws it away. The lovers flee, pursued by Leonora’s brother, Don Carlo, who intends to kill them both in order to avenge his father’s death and restore the family honour.

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Sometime between Act I and Act II, Alvaro and Leonora are separated, each believing the other to have died. Unable to return home, Leonora decides to seek sanctuary and solitary atonement at the monastery of Madonna degli Angeli, intending to live the rest of her life as a hermit. After questioning her on the matter, the abbot Padre Guardiano agrees to direct her to a secret cave in the mountains, where he alone will bring her food and instructs his brother monks never to speak to her or reveal her presence. In a magnificent set-piece that concludes Act II, *La Vergine degli Angeli*, the monks join in prayer as she is formally accepted into the monastery.

Simon Boccanegra is based on the play *Simón Bocanegra* (1843) by Antonio García Gutiérrez, whose play *El Trovador* had been the basis for Verdi's 1853 opera, *Il Trovatore*. *Simon Boccanegra* was first performed at Teatro La Fenice in Venice on 12 March 1857. Given the complications of the original plot and the generally poor response, the opera dropped out of favour after 1866. Twenty three years later, Verdi's publisher persuaded the composer to revise the opera, with text changes by Arrigo Boito. The revised version was first performed at La Scala in Milan on 24 March 1881 and is the most frequently performed today.

Set in Genoa in the 14th century, Paolo and Pietro are conspiring to overthrow the aristocracy. They name the popular Simon Boccanegra as their candidate for the office of *doge*, the chief magistrate of the republic. Boccanegra accepts, hoping that his new position will enable him to marry Maria, the daughter of the patrician Fiesco, who keeps her hidden away because she bore Boccanegra an illegitimate child. Fiesco appears alone, mourning Maria's sudden death. Unaware she has died, Boccanegra tries to make peace with him, but Fiesco demands that he first be given his granddaughter. Boccanegra explains that the little girl has mysteriously disappeared and Fiesco therefore declares that there can be no peace between them. Fiesco sings sorrowfully that Maria has died - *a te l'estremo addio*. He rages against Boccanegra and then accuses the Virgin Mary of not protecting his daughter. After realizing that he has committed blasphemy, he prays to her, hoping that she will forgive him.



GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858 - 1924)

Giacomo Puccini was an Italian composer known primarily for his operas and was regarded as the greatest and most successful champion of Italian opera after Verdi.

Puccini saw Victorien Sardou's play, *La Tosca*, when it was touring Italy in 1889 and, after some indecision, obtained the rights to the work in 1895. Turning the wordy French play into a succinct Italian opera took four years, during which time, the composer repeatedly argued with his librettists and publisher.



Tosca premiered at a time of unrest in Rome, and its first performance was delayed for a day for fear of disturbances. However, despite indifferent reviews from the critics, the opera was an immediate success with the public.

Tosca is an opera in three acts by Giacomo Puccini to an Italian libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa. It premiered at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome on 14 January 1900. The work is set in Rome in June 1800, with the Kingdom of Naples' control of Rome threatened by Napoleon's invasion of Italy. It contains some of Puccini's best-known lyrical arias.

The plot centres around three main characters - Rome's diva Floria Tosca, her lover Mario Cavaradossi (a painter and republican) and the corrupt Chief of Police, Baron Scarpia. Scarpia has long lusted after Tosca, and when he suspects Cavaradossi of assisting an escaped political prisoner, he seizes the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. He will manipulate Tosca into revealing the prisoner's hiding place and Cavaradossi's involvement, and have her for himself. *Va Tosca/Te Deum* ends the opera's first act - Scarpia lets Tosca go, knowing that his spies will follow her and she will lead him to Cavaradossi. While the congregation intones the Te Deum, Scarpia declares that he will bend Tosca to his will. When writing *Te Deum*, Puccini researched the melodies to which the hymn was set in Roman churches, and adapted the music to the exact pitch of the great bell of St Peter's Basilica. At the beginning of Act II, Cavaradossi has been found and is brought in to be questioned. Scarpia interrogates the defiant painter while Tosca sings at a royal gala in the palace courtyard - *Sale, ascende l'uman cantico*.

In the autumn of 1900, Puccini sat in a London theatre, mesmerized by a play entitled *Madame Butterfly: A Tragedy of Japan*. In the play, Butterfly, a Japanese geisha abandoned by her American naval officer husband, Pinkerton, awaits his return. Puccini immediately grasped the operatic potential in the play's doomed love story and clash of cultures. One scene in particular inspired him most of all - Butterfly sits in the centre of the stage, holding an overnight vigil. For several long minutes, she does not speak. Time passes. The sun sets, the stars come out, fade, and then the sun rises again. In the audience, Puccini and those around him truly empathized with Butterfly, all distractions were eliminated, allowing them to focus solely on her emotional plight. It was at that moment that Puccini not only resolved to make *Butterfly* his next opera, but he also decided to make Butterfly's vigil an arresting musical moment. Such a long stretch of silence had never been explored in opera and he was determined to see it come to life on the operatic stage.

Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* premiered in 1904. In the opera, Butterfly's vigil became *The Humming Chorus*. It is one of the most compelling moments in the opera, when the audience sees Butterfly's optimism for the last time, before it is utterly shattered by the arrival of Pinkerton with his new American wife. The emotional effect Belasco achieved through silence, Puccini achieved through the exquisitely beautiful melody sung by the wordless, offstage chorus.

Nessun dorma (*Let no one sleep*) is an aria from the final act of Puccini's opera *Turandot* and is one of the best known tenor arias in all opera. It is sung by Calaf, *il principe ignoto* (the unknown prince), who falls in love at first sight with the beautiful, but cold Princess Turandot. Any man who wishes to wed Turandot must first answer her three riddles; if he fails, he will be beheaded. In the aria, Calaf expresses his triumphant assurance that he will win the princess. Just before the climactic end of the aria, a chorus of women is heard singing in the distance.

Calaf passes the test, but Turandot refuses to marry him. He offers her a way out: if she is able to guess his name before dawn the next day, he will accept death.

Puccini left the opera unfinished at the time of his death in 1924 and it was completed by Franco Alfano in 1926.



GAETANO DONIZETTI (1797 - 1848)

Four of Donizetti's works stand out in particular: Along with *La fille du regiment*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore* (The Elixir of Love) is among Donizetti's triumphs and is one of the great musical comedies in opera history. The opera was written in haste over a six week period using a libretto by Romani, which was taken from an existing French story by the writer Eugen Scribe. The premiere of *L'elisir d'amore* took place at the Teatro della Canobbiana, Milan, on 12 May 1832. The ovations of the audience were gigantic, the reviews of the newspapers were overwhelming and it became the most often performed opera in Italy between 1838 and 1848. Today it is one of the most frequently performed of all Donizetti's operas.



L'elisir d'amore is set in Italy in 1836. Nemorino, a poor peasant, is in love with Adina, a beautiful landowner, who torments him with her indifference. During a break from their work, the peasants ask Adina what her book is about, and she tells them the story of how Tristan won the heart of Isolde by drinking a magic love potion - *Della Crudel Isotta*. Nemorino listens with interest from a distance and is convinced that a magic potion will help him to gain Adina's love.

Lucia di Lammermoor is a tragic opera loosely based upon Sir Walter Scott's 1819 historical novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*. Scott's novels exerted an enormous influence on European culture in the early 19th century. The story concerns the emotionally fragile Lucy Ashton (Lucia) who is caught in a feud between her own family and that of the Ravenswoods. The setting is the Lammermuir Hills of Scotland (Lammermoor) in the 17th century. Lucia has been promised in marriage to the wealthy Arturo by her impoverished brother Enrico, Lord of Lammermoor. However, she is secretly in love with a rival peer, Edgardo, who is travelling in France on a diplomatic mission. Enrico produces a forged letter implying that Edgardo has been unfaithful, so Lucia agrees reluctantly to the wedding. *Per te d'immenso giubilo* introduces the signing of the marriage contract.

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898 - 1937)

Porgy and Bess is probably the most famous and most successful American opera from the twentieth century and at times has been the most controversial. Based on DuBose Heyward's novel, *Porgy*, and the play that was adapted from it by Heyward and his wife Dorothy, it has long been considered the crowning achievement in the careers of all of the authors. Since its debut in 1935, the story has been performed all over the world and in 1959 the opera was filmed by Samuel Goldwyn.

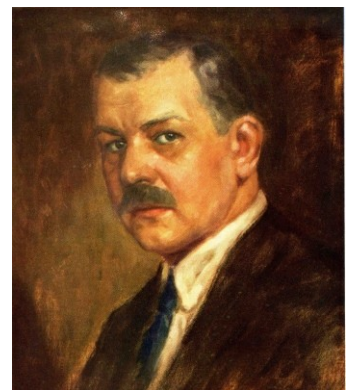


Set in the 1930s in a run-down Charleston neighbourhood known as Catfish Row, *Porgy and Bess* centres on the tragic love story of the crippled beggar Porgy, and beautiful Bess, who longs to turn away from her former life as a prostitute and cocaine addict. *Summertime* is one of the most beautiful songs Gershwin ever composed and he uses it in three different scenes. It appears for the first time prominently at the very beginning of the opera when Clara, the wife of a fisherman, sings a lullaby to her little son.



FRANZ LEHÁR (1870 - 1948)

Hungarian composer Franz Lehár is remembered today for his operettas, which were extremely popular at the beginning of the 20th century. The best known of these is *The Merry Widow*, which premiered in Vienna in 1905. The term operetta means "light opera" - a genre characterized as comic in nature, having some spoken dialogue, and usually a happy ending. Written in 1905, using a libretto by Viktor Leon and Leo Stein, *The Merry Widow*'s enduring appeal is astonishing and includes productions in nearly every European language along with four film versions. The most famous of these is the 1934 film starring Jeanette McDonald and Maurice Chevalier.



The story takes place at the Pontevedrian Embassy in Paris. Ambassador Baron Mirko Zeta is giving a ball, hoping their Parisian guests will help them raise money for their impoverished country. The wealthy widow Hanna Glawari is there, looking for a new husband. Zeta is scheming to ensure she marries one of her countrymen in order to save Pontevedro from bankruptcy. The man he has in mind is Danilo Danilovitsch, but it soon turns out that the two were former lovers. Danilo is too proud to marry Hanna for her wealth, but he does agree to sabotage the efforts of the other bachelors at a party that evening. The next day, Hanna hosts a party at her Parisian Villa in celebration of the Grand Duke's birthday, where she entertains the guests by singing the sentimental ballad *Es lebt' eine Vilja, ein Waldmägdelein* (There was a Vilja, a little forest maiden). After much misunderstanding and comic intrigue, she reveals that her late husband's will states that she will lose her fortune if she remarries, leaving Danilo free to propose with his pride intact. She accepts and reveals a final twist - she does indeed lose her fortune...to her new husband.



MODEST PETROVITCH MUSSORGSKY (1839 - 1881)

The original version of *Boris Godunov*, composed in 1869, was rejected for production by the Imperial Theatres, so Mussorgsky completely revised the work in 1872 and the opera premiered in 1874 in Saint Petersburg.

Set near Moscow in 1598 during the Time of Troubles, Russia has been left without a tsar. The people, oppressed and apathetic, have been herded into the courtyard and ordered to beg Boris to consent to become tsar. As he continues to seem reluctant the crowd is ordered to reassemble the next day in the Kremlin. The following morning

Boris has agreed and the coronation takes place. In *The Coronation Scene* he is acclaimed first by Prince Shuisky and the nobles and then by the people. Filled with foreboding, Boris prays for a blessing on his reign.

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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 - 1791)

The Marriage of Figaro (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) is a comic opera comprising four acts. It was written in 1786 to an Italian libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte which in turn was based on a stage comedy titled *The Mad Day* or *The Marriage of Figaro* by Pierre Beaumarchais. The premiere was held on the 1st of May 1786, at the Burgtheater in Vienna, Austria.

Mozart's chaotic whirlwind of mistaken identities, twists and turns, is a comedy that takes place on a single crazy day - the wedding day of Figaro and Susanna. They are filled with excitement but there is a hitch: their employer, the Count Almaviva, has dishonourable intentions of his own towards the bride-to-be. From the first notes of the famous **Overture** through to the Count's lesson in marital fidelity, Mozart's musical invention conveys a story in which the women are portrayed as wiser, shrewder and more civilised than the men.

The Magic Flute is an opera in two acts to a German libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder. The work is in the form of a *Singspiel*, a popular form during the time that included both singing and spoken dialogue. The work premiered on 30 September 1791 at Schikaneder's theatre, the Freihaus-Theater auf der Wieden, in Vienna, just two months before the composer's premature death.

The fantastical plot was influenced by Schikaneder and Mozart's interest in Freemasonry and concerns the initiation of Prince Tamino. Enlisted by the Queen of the Night to rescue her daughter Pamina from the high priest Sarastro, Tamino comes to admire the high ideals of the latter and he and Pamina both join Sarastro's community, while the Queen and her allies are vanquished. In Act II, Scene 1, the council of priests of Isis and Osiris, headed by Sarastro, enters to the sound of a solemn march. Sarastro tells the priests that Tamino is ready to undergo the ordeals that will lead to enlightenment. He invokes the gods **O Isis and Osiris**, asking them to protect Tamino and Pamina.



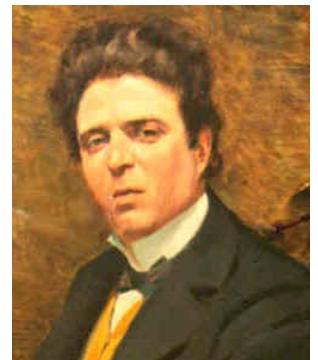
PIETRO MASCAGNI (1863 - 1945)

Although Mascagni wrote and produced 15 other operas, none came close to matching the spectacular success of *Cavalleria Rusticana* (*Rustic Chivalry*).

Mascagni had been conducting for several seasons when he decided to enter a competition in 1888 for new one-act operas. He had seen Giovanni Verga's hit play *Cavalleria Rusticana* shortly after it had opened in 1884, and Mascagni now commissioned a libretto based on the play. Six months later his opera was completed. One of 73 entries and almost being discarded after a crisis of confidence, it won the competition and was first staged in Rome in May 1890. It was a sensation with Mascagni taking over 40 curtain calls!

The plot includes an adulterous love triangle between Santuzza (a peasant girl), Turridu (an army recruit recently returned to his village) and Lola (Turridu's former fiancée), jealousy, betrayal and a duel to the death. The opera begins peacefully on Easter morning in a 19th century Italian village. The villagers are entering the church for their Easter service and sing the famous **Easter Hymn**.

The **Intermezzo** opens the final scene, as the people are still in church, just before the fatal duel.



RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO (1857 - 1919)

Pagliacci (Clowns) is an Italian opera in a prologue and two acts, with music and libretto by Leoncavallo. The opera tells the tale of Canio, actor and leader of a commedia dell'arte theatrical company, who murders his wife Nedda and her lover Silvio on stage during a performance. *Pagliacci* premiered at the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan in May 1892. *Pagliacci* is the composer's only opera that is still widely performed. It is often staged with *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a double bill known

colloquially as *Cav/Pag*. *Vesti la giubba* is sung at the conclusion of the first act, when Canio discovers his wife's infidelity, but must nevertheless prepare for his performance as Pagliaccio the clown because "the show must go on".

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