

Opera Rara's mission
is to rediscover,
restore, record and
perform the lost
operatic heritage of
the 19th century

‘It is so important that someone keeps us in touch with these extraordinary works; I urge you to help us’

Sir Mark Elder CH, CBE

Artistic Director, Opera Rara



Sir Mark Elder Recording *Les Martyrs*, winner of the International Opera Award for Best Recording, 2016



For over 40 years, Opera Rara has been bringing neglected operatic masterpieces back to life through our acclaimed concerts and award-winning recordings – building an ever-growing musical archive available to audiences all over the world.

In recent years we have achieved unprecedented artistic success under the expert guidance of renowned conductor and Opera Rara Artistic Director, Sir Mark Elder. This has been publically recognized through major awards, notably **Best Opera Recording at the International Opera Awards** for Offenbach's *Fantasio* (2015) and Donizetti's *Les Martyrs* (2016). Other critical works produced by Sir Mark during his tenure have included: Donizetti's *Belisario*, *Le Duc d'Albe*, *Linda di Chamounix*, *Maria di Rohan* and *Rita*; and Gounod's *La Colombe*.

This has also been a period of significant artistic collaborations. The first in 2015 for Leoncavallo's masterpiece *Zaza*, conducted by Maurizio Benini and starring Ermonela Jaho, this was again nominated for the IOA's Best Opera Recording. The second in 2016 for Bellini's first opera *Adelson e Salvini*, delivered by rising young Italian conductor Daniele Rustioni with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Sir Mark is supported by a strong team led by Opera Rara Chief Executive Henry Little, repertoire-expert Professor Roger Parker (Thurston Dart Professor of Music at Kings College London) and casting consultant Jesús Iglesias Noriega. In addition, Chairman Charles Alexander heads a committed Board of Trustees, all of whom contribute their time, expertise and investment to support our mission.

Opera Rara is proud to have created a permanent archive of over 100 recordings, including:

- **60 full-length operas**
- **24 by Donizetti and 9 by Rossini**
- **13 Il Salotto (song) series**
- **24 compilations and 13 artist collections**

This body of work has led to a fundamental revaluation of the reputation and output of Donizetti, Pacini, Mercadante and Offenbach, changing the way in which these composers are perceived internationally.

Opera Rara believes in the 'creation of excellence', achieved through its total commitment to the highest musical standards. Rigorous musical and stylistic preparation is undertaken with singers well in advance of all recordings and performances, as well as an intensive rehearsal period prior to each event.

Opera Rara has fostered the careers of some of modern opera's greatest names. Our rich casts represent both established artists and the best young singers. Renée Fleming made one of her first recordings for Opera Rara, Nelly Miricioiu has made 13 recordings and tenor Bruce Ford a countless number over the course of his career. Other star performers have included Colin Lee, Daniela Barcellona, Della Jones, Jennifer Larmore, Ildebrando D'Arcangelo and Christopher Purves.

We have also facilitated debut studio recordings for some of the most exciting emerging international singers, including: Carmen Giannattasio, Joyce El-Khoury, Ermonela Jaho, Angela Meade, Erin Morley, Brenda Rae and Michael Spyres.

Our Current and Future Plans



Espoir by Michael Spyres, 2017



Echo by Joyce El-Khoury, 2017

Michael Spyres and Joyce El-Khoury, The Hallé, Carlo Rizzi

Recording Release and Concert, Cadogan Hall (Friday 14 July 2017)

Opera Rara's sole public concert in 2017 was a major performance at London's Cadogan Hall, launching *Espoir* and *Écho*, two recital recordings by two of the 21st century's foremost bel canto singers – American tenor Michael Spyres and Canadian/Lebanese soprano Joyce El-Khoury.

Recorded in Manchester in February 2017 in collaboration with the Hallé and Italian conductor Carlo Rizzi, they were inspired by two of the 19th century's greatest singers, Gilbert-Louis Duprez and Julie Dorus-Gras, featuring arias and duets curated by Professor Roger Parker especially for Spyres and El-Khoury. Creating an artistic bridge between the operatic excellence of the past and present, the recital programme offers a mixture of well-known bel canto material alongside work which has seldom, if ever, been recorded or performed.

"Rare repertoire, polished orchestral playing, thrilling singing – it's no wonder London's operatic cognoscenti were out in force. They were amply rewarded" – Mark Pullinger, bachtrack on the July 2017 concert performance at London's Cadogan Hall



Semiramide

New Studio Recording (Spring 2018)

We are planning a major launch event for our new studio recording of *Semiramide*, hosted by Sir Mark Elder. This exceptional recording will be released following a run of performances at the Royal Opera House.

First performed in 1823, *Semiramide* was Rossini's last Italian opera, written at the height of his creative powers. Hugely successful in its early years, it was performed by some of the greatest singers of the day. It was also at the forefront of the revival of Rossini's "serious" operas in the 1960's and 1970's, during which period a famous *Semiramide* Decca recording was released starring Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne.

Opera Rara's approach to this operatic masterpiece aims to make the opera speak in a different way to new audiences. The work has been re-styled with comparatively lighter, more agile and expressive voices, conducted by Sir Mark Elder and accompanied by the superlative players of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Uniquely, it

includes all of the lost passages traditionally cut by modern revival versions – sung by star artists Albina Shagimuratova, Daniela Barcellona, Barry Banks and Mirco Palazzi.

Immediately following the recording last summer, Opera Rara was engaged by the BBC to give a concert performance of the work at the BBC Proms, Royal Albert Hall. This was an outstanding success, as shown by the *Spectator*'s glowing review:

'Rossini's Semiramide is a challenge to even the world's top opera houses. Running at well over four hours and demanding at least three singers of superhuman vocal strength and agility, it's not a work you tackle lightly. Enter Opera Rara, the little record label who could. Canny repertoire choices and superb casting have helped this enterprising outfit return many a work to the popular canon, and if this concert preview of its latest release is anything to go by, it's done it again.' **The Spectator**



L'Ange de Nisida

World Premiere Concert
Performances and Live Recording
Royal Opera House
(18 and 21 July 2018)

L'Ange de Nisida was planned as one of Donizetti's first Parisian operas, but the theatre that was to stage it went bankrupt before it could be shown. Never one to waste his compositions, Donizetti then incorporated some of the music into his grand opéra, *La favorite*. In this ground-breaking project, Opera Rara will collaborate with the Royal Opera House to perform the world premiere of the original *L'Ange de Nisida* – in a new performing edition commissioned by us from Italian musicologist and researcher Dr Candida Mantica. Building on our reputation for repositioning the great operatic masters, the piece will show the Parisian Donizetti in a completely new light.

This is a fascinating and passionate drama, full of exciting vocal writing and distinctive orchestral colours, composed by Donizetti near the end of his life. We are delighted to be able to present the first ever performance 179 years after it was completed. Sir Mark Elder will conduct the Orchestra and Chorus of the Royal Opera House and a cast that includes Joyce El-Khoury, the dazzling young Korean tenor David Junghoon Kim, Laurent Naouri and Russian bass, Evgeny Stavinsky.



Le Villi

Studio Recording and Concert Performance, Royal Festival Hall (Wednesday 21 November 2018)
First performance of a new critical edition

Opera Rara's recording will give audiences the chance to hear Giacomo Puccini's first opera as it has not been heard for more than 120 years. It is based on the short story *Les Willis* by Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr. Karr's story was in turn based in the legend of the vila, also used in the ballet *Giselle*. Composed in 1883, the opera was first performed in Milan in 1884 and was subsequently revised as a two act opera. Opera Rara will record and perform the original one act version in a new critical edition.

Sir Mark Elder will conduct the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Opera Rara Chorus and a star cast that brings the great soprano Ermonela Jaho back for her second Opera Rara recording, following her outstanding success in Leoncavallo's *Zazá*. Ermonela will sing alongside two of the leading Italian singers of today, baritone Luca Salsi and tenor Fabio Sartori¹.



Il Paria

Studio Recording and Concert Performance
Barbican (Friday 8 June 2019)
First performance of a new critical edition

Donizetti composed *Il Paria* in 1828 and it was first performed in Naples in January 1829. This was clearly an important moment in Donizetti's career (it was a grand gala night at the San Carlo) and a work to which he gave special attention. But Gala nights had their own problems – no one was allowed to applaud until the King did – and the opera was sadly not a success.

Hardly performed in the last 150 years, it is one of the composer's most innovative and daring scores, bringing a new exotic colour to Italian opera of the period, inspired by its setting in ancient India. In subsequent years, Donizetti plundered parts of the piece to furnish ideas for other works including *Torquato Tasso*, *Anna Bolena*, *L'elisir* and *Le Duc d'Albe*. But he went on record as saying that he was especially proud of *Il Paria*.

Sir Mark Elder will conduct the Britten Sinfonia. Albina Shagimuratova will return for her second recording with us, alongside a cast of the quality for which Opera Rara has become known.

¹Artists and repertoire correct as at 10 April 2017

Why we need your support

For decades, Opera Rara has been bringing operas once threatened with extinction vividly back to life through acclaimed, award-winning recordings and concerts. In a word in which opera companies find it increasingly difficult to survive, let alone expand their activities, the achievement of Opera Rara is a remarkable story.

We need your support to ensure our future. Opera Rara is not grant funded, nor do we have substantial reserves – every pound that we spend on our recordings and concerts has to be raised from private donations. It takes over half a million pounds per year to create two full length opera recordings and concert performances, not to mention the additional costs of maintaining our archive. With a particularly ambitious programme for the coming years, we need your help more than ever to build this indelible legacy of rare and glorious music for current and future generations to enjoy.

Every member of our Board of Trustees has already donated personally to support our work. We ask you to join them, facilitating the recording and performance of neglected operatic masterpieces by world class artists, orchestras and conductors. Together, we will lay the foundations for Opera Rara's future and bring the wonderful operatic heritage of the 19th century to audiences worldwide.

To discuss joining the Opera Rara family of supporters, please contact:

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henry@opera-rara.com

or Aoife Daly, Fundraising and Events Manager:

aoife@opera-rara.com

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Photo: Jonathan Tichler

‘Any lover of opera should be grateful for the existence of Opera Rara. I know the value of this work from my own experience recording Donizetti’s **Rosmonda d’Inghilterra** with them. Without Opera Rara, recordings like that just wouldn’t be made and countless musical treasures would remain essentially lost, unheard and unappreciated by contemporary and future audiences.’

Renée Fleming, Patron, Opera Rara

Opera Rara Friends and Patrons

Become a **Friend** or **Patron** of Opera Rara and support our mission to create a globally-accessible legacy of rare and glorious music.

Opera Rara’s **Friends** and **Patrons** contribute vital funds to the cost of our work, facilitating our ambitious annual programme of archival scholarship, recordings, concert performances and events. They are at the very heart of our commitment to rediscover, restore, record and perform the lost operatic heritage of the 19th century for audiences across the world. As an independent charity, we rely on the generosity of our supporters.

As our closest contributors, you will enjoy a range of exclusive benefits including:

- Seasonal newsletters with the latest Opera Rara developments
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Join Opera Rara today. Help us to restore, record and perform the lost operatic heritage of the 19th century.

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To find out more about these upper tiers, please contact the Development Team at info@opera-rara.com

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Luciano Pavarotti



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recording and performing
the forgotten operatic
heritage of the 19th century*

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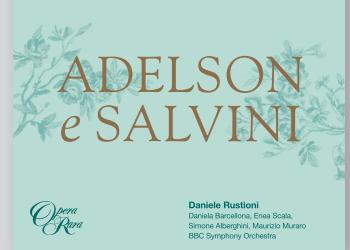
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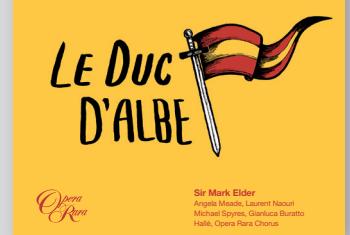
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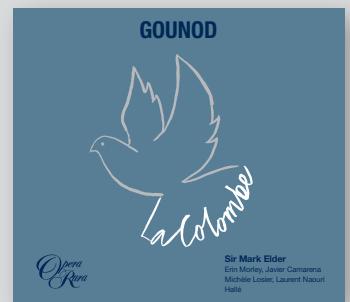
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