



Handel Serse

concert performance

Friday 26 October 2018 6.30pm, Hall

Il Pomod'Oro

Maxim Emelyanychev director/harpsichord

Franco Fagioli Serse

Vivica Genaux Arsamene

Delphine Galou Amastre

Inga Kalna Romilda

Francesca Aspromonte Atalanta

Biagio Pizzuti Elviro

Andreas Wolf Ariodate

There will be one interval of 20 minutes following Act 2 scene 4 ('Se bramate')

Part of Barbican Presents 2018–19

Programme produced by Harriet Smith; printed by Trade Winds Colour Printers Ltd; advertising by Cabbell (tel 020 3603 7930)

Please turn off watch alarms, phones, pagers etc during the performance. Taking photographs, capturing images or using recording devices during a performance is strictly prohibited.

Please remember that to use our induction loop you should switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall. If your hearing aid is not correctly set to T it may cause high-pitched feedback which can spoil the enjoyment of your fellow audience members.

We appreciate that it's not always possible to prevent coughing during a performance. But, for the sake of other audience members and the artists, if you feel the need to cough or sneeze, please stifle it with a handkerchief.

If anything limits your enjoyment please let us know during your visit. Additional feedback can be given online, as well as via feedback forms or the pods located around the foyers.

barbican



The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre

Welcome

Tonight marks the first of four performances given this season by Il Pomo d'Oro.

Tomorrow the musicians return for a programme of Bach and Handel with violinist Shunske Sato, while next year they present Handel's *Agrippina* with Joyce DiDonato (31 May) and a concert of Baroque cello music with Edgar Moreau (1 June).

This Italian period-instrument ensemble made an indelible impression on its Barbican debut in 2015, with a highly dramatic reading of Handel's *Tamerlano* led by its inspirational young director Maxim Emelyanychev.

Serse was one of Handel's last operas and initially it failed to capture the attention of audiences, running for a mere five performances. But today we see it for the masterpiece it is, full of memorable characters and colourful arias, its often sardonic tone masking something altogether more profound.

In the title-role this evening is countertenor Franco Fagioli, joined by an international cast of the highest quality.

It promises to be a captivating evening. I hope you enjoy it.

Huw Humphreys,
Head of Music

Serse: synopsis

The 'Argument' printed at the head of the original libretto immediately suggests the opera's comic-ironic tone:

'The contexture of this Drama is so very easy, that it wou'd be troubling the reader to give him a long argument to explain it. Some imbicillities, and the temerity of Xerxes (such as his being deeply enamour'd with a plane tree, and the building of a bridge over the Hellespont to unite Asia to Europe) are the basis of the story, the rest is fiction.'

Act 1

The action is set at the time of the expedition mounted by the Persian King Serse (Xerxes) against the Greeks (c470 BCE). Serse, self-willed and self-indulgent, sings raptly to a plane tree. His brother Arsamene appears with his servant Elviro in search of his beloved Romilda, daughter of the army commander Ariodate. Hearing Romilda's singing, Serse immediately falls in love with her and orders his brother to woo her on his behalf. Arsamene warns Romilda of the king's intentions, thereby giving hope to Romilda's sister Atalanta, in love with Arsamene. Romilda rebuffs Serse.

Enter Amastre, an Egyptian princess betrothed to Serse. Disguised as a soldier, she vows revenge when she discovers Serse loves Romilda. Ariodate returns victorious from battle, and Serse promises him a royal husband for his daughter. Arsamene gives Elviro a letter for Romilda assuring her of his love. Atalanta tells Romilda that Arsamene has a new lover. Romilda dismisses her sister's words as a lie. Atalanta is confident that she will win Arsamene with her feminine wiles.

Act 2

In the city square Amastre learns from Elviro, disguised as a flower seller, that Serse is to marry Romilda. Elviro reveals his identity to

Atalanta, who tells him that Romilda now loves Serse. Atalanta extracts the letter from him and says she will deliver it herself. She then shows Serse the letter, saying that it was addressed to her, and proves that Arsamene loves her. When Serse shows the letter to Romilda she insists she will always be true to Arsamene. Serse, predictably, is incensed.

interval 20 minutes

Arsamene is in a state of suicidal despair. Serse reviews his army at the bridge across the Hellespont and announces that he will advance into Europe. Serse again attempts to woo Romilda but the disguised Amastre intervenes with a drawn sword. Amastre is arrested but released on Romilda's orders. Romilda sings in praise of true love.

Act 3

Arsamene and Romilda quarrel over the letter, but are reconciled when Atalanta reveals her deception. Serse, now more menacing, presses Romilda to marry him. She says that he must first secure her father's consent. Arsamene overhears their conversation, and accuses Romilda of betraying him. She replies that death, not marriage, awaits her. She tells Serse that Arsamene is her lover, and that they have kissed. Serse instantly orders his brother's execution. Arsamene and Romilda sing a duet of mutual reproach.

In the final scene Ariodate, mistakenly believing he is carrying out Serse's wishes, gives Romilda in marriage to Arsamene. Serse, unreflective as ever, orders Arsamene to kill Romilda. Like a human *dea ex machina*, Amastre bursts forward, seizes Serse's sword, and reveals her true identity. Humiliated, Serse repents. He and Amastre embrace, he vows to renew his love for her, and blesses the marriage of Romilda and Arsamene. All join in praise of love.

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Serse, HWV40 (1738)

An opera in three acts, based on an anonymous libretto

‘One of the worst that Handel ever set to music’ was the verdict of 18th-century music historian Charles Burney on the libretto of *Serse*, premiered at the King’s Theatre, Haymarket, on 15 April 1738. What Burney dubbed the opera’s ‘mixture of tragic-comedy and buffoonery’ evidently fazed London audiences weaned on full-blown opera *seria*. Liking it to a ‘ballad opera’, one of Handel’s supporters, the fourth Earl of Shaftesbury, wrote to the philosopher James Harris that *Serse* was ‘beyond all doubt a fine composition’, adding that ‘the airs ... fall without any recitativ’ intervening from one into another that tis difficult to understand till it comes by frequent hearing to be well known’. It didn’t help that, in the Earl’s words, ‘the singers perform it very indifferently’. The possibility of frequent hearing never materialised. *Serse* was taken off after just five performances and never revived. After the failure of *Deidamia* three years later, Handel abandoned opera for good.

History, of course, has had its revenge. Today the very qualities that seem to have displeased Handel’s public – the ironic, occasionally farcical, tone, the fluid structure (many short *ariosos*, sometimes broken with recitative, relatively few full-dress *da capo* arias) – have helped make *Serse* a Handelian favourite. There are episodes of potential tragedy from the middle of Act 2 onwards. The sufferings and frustrations of Arsamene, Amastre and Romilda are never in doubt. But no other Handel opera moves with such mercurial swiftness through a gamut of changing moods and emotions. Throughout the score, too, we sense the composer poking fun at the formal conventions of opera *seria*, as John Gay had done, more blatantly, in *The Beggar’s Opera* a decade earlier.

Serse’s subtle, ambivalent mix of comedy, irony and high seriousness has provoked inevitable comparisons with Mozart’s *Da Ponte* comedies. The two contrasting sisters, Romilda and Atalanta, have been likened to Fiordiligi and Dorabella,

and Arsamene’s long-suffering servant Elviro viewed as a proto-Leporello. As in Mozart, the lightly bantering tone is often a mask for deeper emotions. Yet for all its Mozartian parallels, *Serse* belongs to the tradition of 17th-century Venetian opera, with its flexible structures and mix of comic and serious characters (think of Monteverdi’s *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* and *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, and Handel’s own early Venice opera *Agrippina*). Handel’s anonymous librettist took as his source Silvio Stampiglia’s libretto set by Handel’s future rival Bononcini in 1694, which was in turn adapted from a mid-17th-century Venetian libretto. True to form, Handel liberally ‘borrowed’ ideas from Bononcini. Equally typically, he invariably improved and enriched them. As the eminent Handel scholar the late Winton Dean put it, ‘Handel seems to have passed Bononcini’s score through his imagination and transfigured it’.

The star draws in the King’s Theatre company assembled by Handel and impresario John Heidegger for the 1738 season were the high-castrato-from-hell Caffarelli as *Serse* and the more amenable French soprano Elisabeth Duparc, dubbed ‘La Francesina’, in the role of Romilda. Even by the unappetising standards of his ilk, Caffarelli was notoriously arrogant, a selfish and unreliable colleague likely to explode at the slightest provocation. He even served a spell in prison for assault. Yet all were agreed on the beauty and refinement of his singing. Caffarelli’s speciality seems to have been spinning a liquid *cantabile*, duly exploited by Handel. The wilful, self-important Persian king is both dangerous and intermittently a figure of fun, as in his opening ‘*Ombra mai fu*’, where he eulogises a plane tree as if addressing a lover. Handel’s serene, exquisitely shaped melody – slowed to a dirge by the Victorians as ‘Handel’s Largo’ – takes the germ of an idea from Bononcini and develops it out of all recognition. The situation is inherently ridiculous. But, as so often with Mozart (above all in *Così fan tutte*), amusement blurs into sheer enchantment at the music’s surpassing beauty.

This 'charming slow cavatina ... out of the reach of time and fashion' (Burney) initiates a scene that typifies the opera in its wayward mingling of short arias and recitative. Serse's brother Arsamene and his sleep-deprived servant Elviro overhear 'sweet music' for recorders and muted strings wafting from a summer house. This turns out to be the introduction to the offstage Romilda's gently mocking song (another fusion of humour and sensuous beauty), quickly interrupted by Serse when he hears his name. Romilda ends the scene with a teasing, throwaway *arioso*, shorn of an orchestral introduction. The following solos are likewise brief and to the point. The first fully fledged aria is Serse's 'Più che penso', whose orchestral introduction suggests a strutting French Baroque overture – a dig, perhaps, at the king's pomposity. Even here, formality is broken by two stretches marked *ad libitum* as Serse reflects on his growing passion for Romilda. We can guess that Caffarelli improvised elaborate cadenzas here.

Serse is at his most formidable, but also most human, in his aria 'Se bramate', placed tonight at the end of the first half. Even as he rages against Romilda, he cannot bring himself to reject her; and he gives vent to his conflicting emotions in music that alternates vehement coloratura with *adagio* episodes, each one differently harmonised, that reveal his underlying anguish. The king is likewise a sympathetic figure in 'Il core spera e teme', music of mingled tenderness and nobility (a typical Handelian combination), richly scored for strings. Towards the end, after his insouciant love song 'Per rendermi beato', Serse erupts, absurdly, in 'Crude furie', an over-the-top parody of an opera *seria* invocation to the furies, complete with seething, scything violins. As Winton Dean has remarked, the major key here (such invocations were traditionally in the minor) only enhances the impotence of Serse's outrage.

The other characters are all drawn with Handel's trademark human sympathy. None of their roles

demands the kind of vocal virtuosity celebrated in Handel's heroic operas of the 1720s. Romilda, in love with Arsamene while forever fending off Serse's lust, immediately announces herself as a woman of spirit, with a sense of humour rare in Baroque opera heroines. She then expresses her love in the cavatina 'Nemmen con l'ombre', an etherealised minuet marked *Larghetto e pianissimo*. Romilda later reveals her inner strength: in the aria 'Chi cede al furore', a paean to enduring love on one of those supple Handelian melodies that seems to expand infinitely; in her duet of misunderstanding with Arsamene; and, after the dénouement, in the gently syncopated 'Caro voi siete' which is taken up as a final *coro*: an unusually serene and pensive end to a Handel opera.

'Gay and pleasing, but in a comic style' was Burney's summary of Atalanta's tripping, trilling 'Un cenno leggiadretto'. The aria epitomises the blithe sexual confidence of a woman who will stop at nothing to ensnare her man. In her jaunty final *arioso* ('No, no, se tu mi sprezzì') she shrugs her shoulders and goes off to find a new lover. Yet, typically, Handel makes Atalanta more than just a manipulative flirt, whether in her opening 'Sì, sì, mio ben', a bittersweet siciliano that hints at her true feelings for Arsamene, or in her dulcet minuet aria 'Voi me dite'.

Serse's sorely tried, ultimately vindicated brother Arsamene was played in 1738 by the Lucca-born mezzo-soprano Maria Antonia Marchesini, nicknamed 'La Lucchesina'. From the resigned fatalism of 'Meglio in voi' (another piece developed from Bononcini), his music is predominantly slow(ish), soulful and in the minor key. Arsamene's most moving solo is 'Quella che tutta fé' in Act 2, a siciliano that underlines his desolation with restless shifts of key. He then locates his inner alpha male in the explosive 'Sì, la voglio', proclaiming his resolve to win Romilda at all costs.

Handel fashioned the role of the Egyptian Princess Amastre, betrothed to Serse, then jilted by him, for the Bolognese alto Antonia Merighi, described with delightful frankness by the composer's friend Mary Pendarves: '... her voice is not extraordinarily good or bad, she is tall and has a very graceful person, with a tolerable face; she sings easily and agreeably'. Another writer called her voice 'A Counter Tenor'. As a wronged woman in male disguise, Amastre sings aptly 'masculine' music. She is emphatically someone not to be messed with, whether in the stalking octave unions of 'Se cangio', the bellicose swagger of 'Saprà delle mie offese', or the splenetic 'Anima infida', bursting in without an orchestral introduction. The depth of her feelings emerges in her 'love duet' with Serse 'Gran pena', which transmutes irony (Amastre is thinking of Serse, he of Romilda) into intense poignancy, and in the tenderness and candour of her final cavatina 'Cagion son io'.

Unusually in Handel, the cast of *Serse* included two basses, both in secondary roles. Serse's general and Romilda's father Ariodate, dutiful but not over-bright, was sung in 1738 by the Venetian

Antonio Montagnana, a true bass famed for his depth and power. His two brief arias are in sturdy, no-nonsense vein, with bouts of rugged coloratura: apt for a man without a scintilla of self-doubt.

In the opera's most overtly comic scene, the servant Elviro (played by the intermezzo singer Antonio Lottini) opens Act 2 disguised as a flower seller. Handel's friend Lady Luxborough later recalled that he 'told me that the hints of his very best songs have several of them been owing to the sounds in his ears of cries in the street'. Elviro's simple ditties, unaccompanied or sketchily harmonised, surely originated on the streets of London. In modern stagings Elviro can steal the show. For London's beau monde, perplexed by the intrusion of farce into *opera seria*, the servant's antics may have been one reason why the opera flopped in 1738. Except for a few popular songs, *Serse* quickly disappeared from view, not to resurface until the first twitchings of the Handel opera renaissance in the 1920s.

Programme note and synopsis © Richard Wigmore

About the performers



Maxim Emelyanychev

Maxim Emelyanychev director/harpsichord

Maxim Emelyanychev is an outstanding representative of the rising generation of young conductors. He was born in 1988 to a family of musicians and first studied conducting at the Nizhny Novgorod Music School, continuing his education in the conducting class of Gennady Rozhdestvensky at the Moscow Conservatory and studying fortepiano and harpsichord with Maria Uspenskaya. He has been a prize-winner at many international keyboard competitions.

He made his conducting debut at the age of 12 and has since conducted both Baroque and symphony orchestras.

He has collaborated with such renowned artists as Riccardo Minasi, Max Emanuel Cencic, Xavier Sabata, Julia Lezhneva, Sophie Karthäuser, Franco Fagioli, Dmitry Sinkovsky, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Alexei Lubimov, Theodor Currentzis, Patrizia Ciofi, Katia and Marielle Labèque and Joyce DiDonato.

His many projects with Il Pomo d'Oro include *Tamerlano* at Versailles and in Hamburg, Vienna, Cologne, Amsterdam and London; *Rodelinda* at Versailles; *Partenope* in Paris, Amsterdam and Madrid; Pergolesi's *Stabat mater* at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw; a Haydn–Mozart programme with the Labèque sisters; an Italian programme with cellist Edgar Moreau; a recital of Baroque arias with Cencic; and 'In War

and Peace' with Joyce DiDonato, which toured worldwide and was also recorded.

His career as a conductor of symphony orchestras started in Russia, with ensembles such as the National Philharmonic of Russia, Soloists of Nizhny Novgorod and the Nizhny Novgorod Philharmonic, before moving into the international arena with orchestras such as the Sofia Sinfonietta, Sinfonia Varsovia, Orquesta Nacional de España, Real Filharmonía de Galicia and the Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla, conducting *Don Giovanni* with the last of these in 2014.

In the 2016–17 season he made debuts with the Zurich Opera, conducting a new production of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse in a concert of Beethoven and Brahms.

Highlights last season included a return to Toulouse and Seville, to which he was reinvited for concerts in the current season; his debut with the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano; and invitations to conduct the Orchestre National de Lyon, Belgian National Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Bordeaux and the St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra.

Highlights this season include concerts with the Netherlands, Royal and St Petersburg Philharmonic orchestras, Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Glyndebourne Festival.

Maxim Emelyanychev has been awarded Russian theatre's highest award, the Golden Mask. He has also received a Gramophone award and earned critical acclaim for his album *Arie Napolitane* with Cencic and an album of Haydn in which he appears as conductor and harpsichordist with Riccardo Minasi. His latest disc is of Mozart's piano sonatas.



Franco Fagioli

Franco Fagioli Serse

Franco Fagioli is the leading virtuoso countertenor of our time, renowned for his artistry and technique as well as the beauty of his voice. He has an exclusive contract with DG, making his solo debut recording with the label with *Rossini*, with Armonia Atenea and George Petrou; he followed this with an album of Handel arias with *Il Pomo d'Oro* released earlier this year.

This season he sings the title-role in *Serse* at the Staatstheater Karlsruhe and in the current European concert tour with *Il Pomo d'Oro*; he also tours Asia with the Venice Baroque Orchestra; and makes debuts at the Hamburg State Opera as Ruggiero (*Alcina*) and at the Bavarian State Opera as Nerone in a new production of *Agrippina*.

Highlights last season include his debut at La Scala, Milan, as Andronico (*Tamerlano*) and his debut for Dutch National Opera in the title-role of Cavalli's *Eliogabalo*. He also undertook concert tours with the Basle Chamber Orchestra, *Il Pomo d'Oro* and the Venice Baroque Orchestra.

Roles on the stage include *Eliogabalo* for the Opéra National de Paris; *Arsace* (*Semiramide*) for the Opéra National de Lorraine; *Idamante* (*Idomeneo*) for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; *Piacere* (*Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*) for the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Opéra de Lille and the Théâtre de Caen; and the title-role in *Giulio Cesare* for the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and Zurich Opera.

Future seasons see him return to the Royal Opera and make his debut at the Teatro Real in Madrid.

He has also achieved distinction as a concert artist, appearing at the Halle, Ludwigsburg, Innsbruck and Salzburg festivals, collaborating

regularly with such conductors as Rinaldo Alessandrini, Alan Curtis, Gabriel Garrido, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, René Jacobs, José Manuel Quintana, Marc Minkowski, Riccardo Muti and Christophe Rousset.

His award-winning discography includes the title-roles in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and *Ezio*, Pergolesi's *Adriano in Siria*, Handel's *Berenice* and *Teseo*, Vinci's *Artaserse* and *Catone in Utica*, Caldara's *La Concordia de' pianeti*, Hasse's *Siroe, re di Persia* and the solo albums *Arias for Caffarelli* and *Il maestro Porpora*.



Vivica Genaux

Vivica Genaux Arsamene

Mezzo-soprano Vivica Genaux hails from Fairbanks, Alaska, and was the recipient of the City of Halle's Handel Prize in 2017. In the course of her two-decade career, she has performed at many of the world's leading venues, including Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts, Chicago Symphony Center, the Barbican Centre, the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Prague's Rudolfinum, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris and the Wiener Staatsoper.

Last year marked several milestones in her career. In addition to role debuts as Lepido (*Handel's Silla*) at the Wiener Konzerthaus, Arsamene (*Serse*) at Versailles and Eternità and Diana (*La Calisto*) at Opéra national du Rhin, she also reprised the role of Malcolm (*La donna del lago*) at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival and founded the V/vox Academy, supervising its inaugural course.

She also appeared in concert in Bucharest, Chicago and Istanbul, as well as joining Concerto Köln in Sisteron for a programme of music by Castrucci, Galuppi and Vivaldi and appearing with regular collaborators Fabio Biondi and

Europa Galante for an all-Vivaldi concert at the George Enescu Festival and Vivaldi's *La Gloria e Imeneo* at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. She also performed a programme of Handel, Hasse and Vivaldi with Les Musiciens du Louvre in Barcelona and Grenoble.

Engagements this year have included 'Deux Génies en Italie' – a presentation of music by Handel and Alessandro Scarlatti – at Paris's Salle Gaveau and additional performances of her Pauline Viardot-themed multimedia show, 'Vivica & Viardot', in Spain. She has also sung the title-role in *Rodrigo* at Beaune's Baroque Opera Festival and *Arsamene* in the current European tour. In December she travels to Australia to make her role debut as *Mandane* (Hasse's *Artaserse*) and gives a concert with Pinchgut Opera.

In April Vivica Genaux will return to Washington, DC, for her role debut as *Emma* (Rossini's *Zelmira*) with Washington Concert Opera.

Her operatic repertoire spans four centuries and extends to 65 roles, including 42 travesti parts. Particularly celebrated for her interpretations of Baroque and *bel canto* music, she has garnered praise for her bravura technique and the dramatic intensity of her portrayals. She has been honoured with numerous awards, and her career is documented in an array of critically acclaimed CD and DVD/Blu-ray recordings. Her advocacy of Hasse has contributed greatly to the revival of this unjustly neglected composer, and her enthusiasm for sharing her experience and expertise with young singers has led to her giving masterclasses around the world.



Delphine Galou

Delphine Galou Amastre

Contralto Delphine Galou was born in Paris and studied piano and singing alongside philosophy

at the Sorbonne. Her striking vocal qualities and musicianship quickly brought her to the attention of the professional world. She is now particularly associated with Baroque repertoire and enjoys regular collaborations with prestigious early music ensembles.

She has appeared at leading international venues, singing the title-role in Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris; Steffani's *Niobe* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Disinganno (*Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*) at the Berlin Staatsoper; Bradamante (*Alcina*) at Opéra de Lausanne; Penelope (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) at the Theater an der Wien; and the title-role in *Rinaldo* in Reggio Emilia and Ferrara.

Delphine Galou's extensive discography includes a number of instalments in Naïve's Vivaldi opera project: *Teuzzone* under Jordi Savall, *Orlando 1714* under Federico Maria Sardelli and *L'incoronazione di Dario* under Ottavio Dantone. Other notable releases include Rossini's *Petite Messe solennelle* under Dantone, a DVD of *Niobe* with the Balthasar-Neumann Ensemble under Thomas Hengelbrock, *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with the Orchestre National de Lyon under Leonard Slatkin and Bach's *St John Passion* conducted by Marc Minkowski. Her latest disc, *Agitata*, with Accademia Bizantina under Dantone, has been critically acclaimed.



Junis Šilcs

Inga Kalna

Inga Kalna Romilda

Soprano Inga Kalna, born in Riga, studied singing and musicology at the Latvian Music Academy. After her first engagements with the Latvian National Opera she continued her studies at the Royal Academy of Music. She has won the Latvian Theatre Award twice and is one of the very few singers to have been awarded the

Great Music Award of Latvia five times. In the UK she has received the Goldberg Operatic Prize and the Bruce Millar Memorial Trust Award.

In 1999 she joined the Hamburg State Opera, where she still regularly appears as a guest artist. She has also appeared at the Netherlands Opera, Vlaamse Opera, Tampere Opera, Opéra de Lausanne, the Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse, Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, and the Salzburg Festival.

She is particularly associated with the role of Alcina, with which she made her debut at the Opéra National de Paris, La Scala, Milan, and the Wiener Staatsoper.

She also enjoys a close musical relationship with Marc Minkowski and René Jacobs. Under the former she has sung Alcina (Wiener Staatsoper), *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (Berlin Staatsoper) and *Lucio Silla* (Salzburg); under the latter she has appeared frequently at the Dresden, Innsbruck and Aix-en-Provence festivals and the Berlin Staatsoper.

Her roles include Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Desdemona (*Otello*), Elettra (*Idomeneo*), Violetta (*La traviata*), Donna Fiorilla (*Il turco in Italia*) and the title-roles in *Maria Stuarda*, *Alcina* and *Agrippina*. She has sung *Lucio Silla* at the Salzburg Festival, La Scala, the Teatro del Liceu, Barcelona, Teatro Real, Madrid, Staatsoper Berlin, and in Toronto.

This year's highlights have included *Piacere* (*Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*) with Emmanuelle Haïm in Stockholm and *Vitellia* (*La clemenza di Tito*) under Minkowski at Prague's National Theatre and *Romilda* on the current European tour with *Il Pomo d'Oro*. At Riga Opera House she sings *Elvira* (*Ernani*) and the title-role in *Norma*.

In addition to her opera activities Inga Kalna is also in high demand in the concert hall and as a Lieder singer. She has worked with conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Ingo Metzmacher, Andrea Marcon, Stefan Soltesz, Gerd Albrecht, Marc Soustrot and Simone Young.

Her discography includes *Rinaldo* under Jacobs, Vivaldi's *Moteczuma* under Alan Curtis, Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* under Young and *Serse* under Maxim Emelyanychev.



Rebelle Luce Studio

Francesca Aspromonte

Francesca Aspromonte Atalanta

Soprano Francesca Aspromonte initially studied piano and harpsichord, before switching to singing, studying at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Renata Scottò and graduating from the Mozarteum in Salzburg. She is currently working with Fernando Cordeiro Opa.

She has performed at such venues as Carnegie Hall, New York, Opéra Royal de Versailles, Wigmore Hall, Wiener Konzerthaus, Venice's Teatro La Fenice, Wiener Musikverein, Royal Albert Hall, Grand Théâtre du Luxembourg, Opéra de Nancy, BOZAR in Brussels and Opéra National de Montpellier, as well as at the Ambronay, Aix-en-Provence and Bremen festivals.

Recent engagements include Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and *Vespers* conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner; Rossi's *L'Orfeo* on tour in France, also issued on DVD; the title-role in Cavalli's *Erismena* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival and at Versailles; Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) in Nancy and Luxembourg; Caldara's *La Maddalena ai piedi di Cristo* in Prague and Dresden; Cavalli's *Il Giasone* in Geneva and at Versailles; Bach's *St John Passion* at the Wiener Konzerthaus; and Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso* at La Fenice.

Current and future engagements include the title-role in Hesse's *Semele* at the Innsbruck Festival; the title-role in Porpora's *La Iole* at the Bremen Festival; European tours of *Serse* and *Arianna in Creta* with *Il Pomo d'Oro*; *Rinaldo* in Cremona and on tour with Accademia Bizantina; Mozart's *Mass in C minor* at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome; and Cavalli's *L'Ercole amante* at the Opéra Comique in Paris.

Francesca Aspromonte has just recorded her first solo album – *Prologue* – with Enrico Onofri and *Il Pomo d'Oro*.



Biagio Pizzuti

Biagio Pizzuti Elviro

Biagio Pizzuti was born in Salerno and began his piano studies at the age of 8, graduating with the highest honours in piano and vocal studies from the conservatory of his home city.

He then studied with Rolando Panerai, Renato Bruson and Alessandro Corbelli and attended the Opera Studio of Rome's Santa Cecilia Academy under the guidance of Renata Scottò. He subsequently joined the ensemble of the Carlo Felice Theatre in Genova, appearing as Marcello and Schaunard (*La bohème*) and Grégorio (*Roméo et Juliette*), recording the latter for Decca.

He recently won the 47th Toti dal Monte Competition and sang the role of Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*). Other operatic appearances include the role of Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) in Canada and Maribor; Massenet's *Cléopâtre* at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival; Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*) in Spoleto; Betto (*Gianni Schicchi*) at the Theater an der Wien and the Teatro Comunale in Florence; the title-role in *Don Giovanni* in Ferrara; Don Bartolo (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) at Palermo's Teatro Massimo; and Fabrizio and Pacuvio (*La pietra del paragone*) at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris. He has also sung in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the Bellini Theatre in Catania.

Among recent and future highlights are Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) in Liverpool; Don Prudenzio in a new production of *Il viaggio a Reims* in Amsterdam; Schaunard at the Teatro San Carlo, Naples; Taddeo (*L'italiana in Algeri*) and Belcore (*L'elisir d'amore*) in Florence; Fauré's Requiem in Verona; Macrobio (*La pietra del paragone*) in Cagliari; Leporello in Basle; Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) in Treviso and Ferrara; and Dr Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo. He made his debut at

Verona's Arena Opera Festival as Moralès and Le Dancaïre (*Carmen*) last summer.

He has recorded *Serse* and *Agrippina* for DG.



Andreas Wolf

Andreas Wolf Ariodate

The young German bass-baritone Andreas Wolf is a regular guest at major opera houses and concert halls, working with conductors such as William Christie, Marcus Creed, Helmut Rilling, Jérémie Rhorer, Raphaël Pichon, Peter Dijkstra, Jean-Christophe Spinosi, Alessandro De Marchi, Jordi Savall, Eduardo López Banzo, Andreas Sperring, Paul Goodwin, Bertrand de Billy and Sylvain Cambreling.

Recent highlights include Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) at the Teatro Real in Madrid, La Monnaie and at the Vienna Festival; his return to La Monnaie as Leporello (*Don Giovanni*); and to Madrid in the title-role of *The Marriage of Figaro*, as well as a series of productions at the Bavarian State Opera.

Other opera appearances include Papageno (*The Magic Flute*) in Geneva; Falke (*Die Fledermaus*) and Jupiter (Rameau's *Platée*) at Stuttgart Opera; Elviro (*Serse*) and Littore and Tribuno (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) at the Theater an der Wien; Zoroastre (Handel's *Orlando*) at Scottish Opera and the Komische Oper Berlin; Man and Ephraïmite in a concert performance of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* at the Teatro Real and the Berlin Philharmonie; Curio (*Giulio Cesare*) at the Salle Pleyel in Paris; Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*) in New York and Moscow; Clito (Handel's *Poro*) at the Beaune Festival; and Nanni (Haydn's *L'infedeltà delusa*) for the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

He is also sought after in the concert hall and has performed Mozart's Requiem, Mass in C minor and 'Coronation' Mass, Bach cantatas, Christmas

Oratorio and *St Matthew Passion*, J C Bach's Requiem, Haydn's *Stabat mater* and Handel's *Apollo e Dafne*, *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, *Alexander's Feast* and *Messiah*.

Highlights of last season included the title-role in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Opéra national du Rhin; a return to the Bavarian State Opera for Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* and to Stuttgart Opera as Leporello, a role he also sang in Moscow; *Apollo (Apollo e Dafne)*, conducted by Rinaldo Alessandrini; Handel's *Dixit Dominus* with Holland Baroque; and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*.

Il Pomo d'Oro

Il Pomo d'Oro is an orchestra founded in 2012 with a special focus on opera, but equally committed to instrumental performance in various formations. Its musicians are among the finest period-instrumentalists to be found worldwide. Together with its young Russian director Maxim Emelyanychev they form an ensemble that combines stylistic knowledge, the highest technical skill and artistic integrity.

The group's collaboration with violinist and conductor Riccardo Minasi led to an award-winning first recording (Vivaldi violin concertos, 'L'imperatore'). A second recording of Vivaldi's violin concertos 'per Pisendel' with Dmitry Sinkovsky as soloist and conductor, won a *Diapason d'Or*. In 2012, Il Pomo d'Oro also recorded three solo CDs with three countertenors – Max Emanuel Cencic (*Venezia*), Xavier Sabata (*Bad Guys*) and Franco Fagioli (*Arias for Caffarelli*) – under Minasi's direction. The last of these was awarded the 'Choc de l'année 2013' by the

French magazine *Classica*. A further contribution to Naïve's Vivaldi Edition was a recording of concertos for two violins with Minasi and Sinkovsky, which was released in October 2013. The ensemble has also recorded a collection of ancient Venetian *barcarole*, sung by Vincenzo Capezzuto, as well as two discs with the Swedish mezzo-soprano Ann Hallenberg. In 2015 it recorded *Arie Napoletane* with Max Emanuel Cencic and the following year made its first CD with mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, *In War & Peace*, both directed by Maxim Emelyanychev. Additionally, it has worked with violinist Alina Ibragimova, countertenor Jakub Józef Orliński and soprano Eموke Baráth.

Il Pomo d'Oro has released five operas: Handel's *Tamerlano*, *Partenope* and *Ottone*, Vinci's *Catone in Utica* and Stradella's *La Doriclea*. Handel's *Seerse* will be released next month. It has also released instrumental works by Haydn, Boccherini, Platti, Graziani, Vivaldi, Locatelli, Tartini, Leclair and Pisendel. Earlier this year it recorded a disc of Bach's violin concertos with Shunsuke Sato.

Il Pomo d'Oro has performed at all the major European venues and festivals, including the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Wigmore Hall, Theater an der Wien, Berlin Philharmonie and Munich's Herkulesaal. This season it is ensemble-in-residence at the Barbican Centre and at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon.

In 2016 it became an ambassador of El Sistema Greece, a humanitarian project which aims to combat refugee children's loss of home and identity by offering them musical education and encouraging creativity, as well as giving concerts, workshops and music lessons.

Il Pomo d'Oro

Director/ Harpsichord

Maxim Emelyanychev

Violin 1

Evgeny Sviridov
Chiharu Abe
Daniela Nuzzoli
Lucia Giraudo
Veronica Bohm

Violin 2

Dimitris Karakantas
Giacomo Catana
Ha-Na Lee
Alessia Pazzaglia

Viola

Giulio D'Alessio
Lola Fernández

Cello

Leonhard Bartussek
Cristina Vidoni

Double Bass

Grigory Krotenko

Oboe/Flute

Christopher Palameta
Petra Ambrosi

Bassoon/Flute

Katrin Lazar

Theorbo

Daniel Zapico