



2011-2012 OPERA SEASON

# FIDELIO

The Opera Season Begins

A new production written by Martone and directed by Nosedà

Teatro Regio, Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2011 at 20:00

The new production of *Fidelio* by Ludwig van Beethoven will open the opera season at the Teatro Regio on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December at 20:00.

Gianandrea Nosedà, who conducts the Orchestra and Chorus of the Teatro Regio, is the one continuing the journey of Beethoven's compositional universe which began with the resounding success of the nine *symphonies* performed between September and October. The new layout has been written by the director Mario Martone, author of films such as *Morte di un matematico napoletano*, *L'amore Molesto* and his latest *Noi credevamo*. Martone will make his debut at the Teatro Regio with *Fidelio*. The Opéra Royal de Wallonie in Liège co-produced the scenes by Sergio Tramonti; the costumes are by Ursula Patzak and the lighting by Nicolas Bovey.

Loyalty, courage, honour and hope. A personal tragedy – an unjust imprisonment that, miraculously, finds a solution which turns out to be a passionate exaltation of freedom against all the "chains" imposed on mankind. Art lives, as it has never done before Beethoven, in the essence of the passions, of enthusiasm itself, of the ideals of its own time, and is directly involved, - as pointed out by Massimo Mila – as the movement of ideas, of spiritual work and simultaneously becomes a leader of its own age. Hence, 'Il Regio', chooses this purposefully, to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unification of Italy.

Staged for the first time under the title of *Fidelio o l'amor coniugale* in 1805 at the Theater and der Wien with libretto by Joseph Ferdinand Sonnleithner. However, it was not successful. So much so that Beethoven returned to the score, reduced it to two acts and then, four months later, presented it again at the same theatre under the title of *Leonore o il trionfo dell'amor coniugale*, but due to disagreements with the theatre director, the opera was withdrawn from scene almost immediately. It was only in May 1814 that the opera, the only one written by Beethoven, makes its final appearance (with a revised libretto by Georg Friedrich Treitschke) proving then to be a great success. «The initial failure - highlights Nosedà - forced Beethoven to deeply revise all the material, giving us a masterpiece which is the balanced and effective version of 1814», and it is based on this masterpiece that Martone and Nosedà have worked. The director explains that: «*Fidelio* is, under a theatrical profile, an elusive piece of work. The original idea is almost lost in the maze of different editions, forcing one to reflect on what should be kept and what can be simply ignored [...], a work that remains a 'work in progress' open to various interpretations». Maestro Nosedà added: «Martone brings out the most relevant parts of the opera: the simultaneous presence of two distinct levels of existence which, like a loop, explains and reinforces each other, both intrinsically linked to one another. On one hand, the everyday, middle class life, of Marzelline, Jaquino, Rocco, and on the other the heroic life; Florestan, Leonore and Pizarro [...]. Deeply inside, it is as if *Fidelio's* heroism comes from his own married life, from a domestic dimension. It is like saying that to change the story one must live a normal life».

«Working with Nosedà, says Martone, we have focused on the levels of depth of action. I opted for a fixed scene that alludes to the dungeons of Pizarro. The orchestra moves into the room, the singers act in the vicinity of the public, creating thus simultaneous plans of action. The theatrical flow is then created, the exterior and the interior of the prison, the singers and chorus moving around being all interwoven, where characters exist within characters». In the first act for instance, we see the prisoners, walking into the courtyard and finally seeing the light, singing the poignant *O Welche Lust*.

*Fidelio*, is created from Beethoven's fascination with *Leonora* by Jean-Nicolas Bouilly, a book which tells a real story of a woman who lived in Tours, at the time of the Terror, whose husband escaped from prison. This is a classic example of *opéra à sauvetage* where the heroes and symbols of what is good, triumph over unjust persecution and romantic adventures. The woman then saves herself from a situation of great danger, thanks to a providential turn of events, which is not simply a theatrical effect, but a positive affirmation of confidence in the values of justice and reason. These values are played by Leonore, who disguises herself as a man hiding under the name of Fidelio to search for her husband Florestan, who had been unjustly imprisoned by the terrible governor Don Pizarro. The action takes place in a prison near Seville, in the late eighteenth century. Leonore manages to get a job as assistant to the jailer Rocco. Due to the impending inspection of prisons minister of Spain, Don Fernando, the governor decides to kill Florestan, a prisoner, in the dungeon. Rocco, the man who should kill the prisoner, refuses, however, he agrees to dig the pit and, convinced by Fidelio/Leonore, let the prisoners have an hour of fresh air in the courtyard. Don Pizarro, however, locks them in again. Meanwhile Fidelio/Leonore, as she was helping Rocco to dig, recognizes the mysterious prisoner, her own husband, Florestan, who is about to be stabbed by Don Pizarro. Fidelio/Leonore throws herself between the two revealing herself and at the same time threatening the wicked Pizarro with a gun, who manages to escape though. In the castle's square, Don Fernando announces the immediate release of all prisoners and among them, he recognises Florestan, a friend he thought long dead. Don Pizarro is sentenced and imprisoned. Leonore frees her beloved from the chains and everybody sings praises to her and to the power of love.

Leonore, the main role, is played by the soprano **Ricarda Merbeth**, who has already been Leonore this year both in Vienna and in Zurich. The role of Florestan is played by tenor **Ian Storey**, who returns to the Regio after being one of the protagonists of *Boris Godunov*. **Lucio Gallo** - one of the few Italian baritones to have deepened his German repertoire - is the evil Don Pizarro. The ambiguous prison guard is played by the bass **Franz Hawlata**, while his daughter's role, Marzeline, is played by the Israeli soprano **Talia Or**. The tenor is Alexander Kaimbacher (Jaquino); the bass Robert Holzer (Don Fernando), and the tenor Matthew Pena (a prisoner). The choir Master is Claudio Fenoglio.

Throughout the **eight performances, from 9<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of December**, the protagonists role will change as follows: Miranda Keys (Leonore/Fidelio), Kor-Jan Dusseljee (Florestan), Thomas Gazheli (Don Pizarro), Steven Humes (Rocco) and Barbara Bargnesi (Marzeline).

At the 'Premier Night' on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December, the audience of the Teatro Regio will be able to enjoy a glass of wine offered by the **Cantine Manfredi** as well as a choice of panettone and pandoro by the famous panettone company based in Milan: **Tre Marie**.

*Fidelio* will be **broadcast live** by **RAI-Radio 3** on **9<sup>th</sup> December at 20:00** and the transmission of Rai *Prima della Prima* will dedicate a new episode, which will be broadcast on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> January at 01:35 and on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 12.55.

The work will be presented to the public by **Giorgio Pestelli** in the *Incontro* which will be held at the Piccolo Regio Puccini on **Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> November at 17.30**.

Tickets can be purchased from the ticket office of the Teatro Regio, Piazza Castello 215 - Tel 011.8815.241/242. For more information please call 011.8815.557 or go to our website: [www.teatroregio.torino.it](http://www.teatroregio.torino.it).

Thanks to a **new agreement** between **Teatro Regio** and the State Professional Institute "**Albe Steiner**" in Turin, *Fidelio* will start a collaboration with a twofold purpose: to train and to document. The students will video record all the works on the bill and produce, thanks to the active involvement of teachers, a multimedia piece of work that will embody the best of the Final Season of Opera, in addition to acquiring a complete record of production. This is a further commitment of the Teatro Regio to the schools, as evidenced by the activities for children and young people, and a sign of great availability and dynamism of an Institute that offers its students extracurricular activities that can be extremely useful for a future profession.

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