



Anna Bolena by Gaetano Donizetti

Opera opens the 2023/24 season at the LAC

From September 4 to 10, 2023
LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura

Press Release

Lugano, Tuesday May 2, 2023

Anna Bolena, a lyric tragedy in two acts by **Gaetano Donizetti based on the libretto by Felice Romani**, will open the **2023/24 season at the LAC**.

Monday, September 4 (with performances on Wednesday 6, Friday 8 and Sunday 10) the LAC will once again embrace the challenge of producing an opera. *Anna Bolena* will be performed by the ensemble *I Barocchisti* conducted by Maestro Diego Fasolis, with stage direction by Carmelo Rifici. Andrea Marchiol will lead the Choir of the Radiotelevisione svizzera.

The opera will be produced by LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura in coproduction with the Associazione *I Barocchisti*, RSI Radiotelevisione svizzera, Fondazione I Teatri di Reggio Emilia, Fondazione Teatri di Piacenza, and Fondazione Teatro Comunale di Modena, in collaboration with LuganoMusica.

After premiering at the LAC, the opera will begin touring the towns in which the theatres participating in the coproduction are located. Performances are scheduled for the following dates: February 9 and 11, 2024, in Reggio Emilia, February 16 and 18, in Piacenza, and February 23 and 25, in Modena.

Maestro Diego Fasolis, who was recently awarded the Premio Doron for his outstanding work with *I Barocchisti* and the Choir of the Radiotelevisione svizzera, will be back conducting an opera at the LAC some five years after the premiere of *The Barber of Seville* (September 3-9, 2018).

I Barocchisti, who play on period instruments, often perform operas from the nineteenth century repertoire, in collaboration with the Choir of the Radiotelevisione svizzera. For *Anna Bolena*, Diego Fasolis will conduct the two ensembles using the standard 430 Hz pitch of the period which makes the singing sound softer and smoother.

Carmelo Rifici is directing the stage production backed by the same creative team he has been working with for years: set designer Guido Buganza, costume designer Margherita Baldoni, light designer Alessandro Verazzi, and choreographer Alessio Maria Romano.

The cast features Carmela Remigio (*Anna Bolena*) – a role which in 2016 won her the prestigious Premio Abbiati for best singer at the Festival Donizetti Opera -, Marco Bussi (*Enrico VIII – Henry Tudor*), Arianna Vendittelli (*Giovanna Seymour – Jane Seymour*), Ruzil Gatin (*Lord Riccardo Percy – Richard Percy*), Paola Gardina (*Smeton – Mark Smeaton*), and Marcello Nardis (*Hervey*). The selection of other cast members is still being finalized.

Anna Bolena represents one of the high points of Donizetti's artistic career and of romantic opera in general. Based on the play *Henri VIII* by Marie-Joseph Blaise de Chénier, it premiered on December 26, 1830, at the Teatro Carcano in Milan and obtained an extraordinary success, overshadowing the rival program on at La Scala. Donizetti composed feverishly completing the

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score in just thirty days. The cast featured lead soprano Giuditta Pasta, for whom the theatre in her hometown of Saronno is named – and tenor Giovanni Battista Rubini, both legendary stars of the early nineteenth century opera. Despite its initial success, *Anna Bolena* gradually disappeared from the repertoire until it was revived in 1957 at La Scala by Maria Callas' unforgettable performance which breathed new life into the work in a production conducted by Gianandrea Gavazzeni under the direction of Luchino Visconti.

In the words of Carmelo Rifici: "The beauty of this opera, what charms and seduces me about it, is its lofty dramatic power. Felice Romani's libretto isn't just a support for Donizetti's masterly score, but for the first time contributes to creating a thoroughly tragic character: Anna, around whom the whole opera revolves, radiates an expressive power that Romani had never before managed to achieve. The sharp psychological portrayal of the characters, the dramatic scope of the duets, the text's inwardly directed gaze, along the inexorable path that leads Anna to the scaffold, thanks to the surprising *cabaletta*, all make the work unique. This was certainly a turning point for Donizetti himself. *Anna Bolena* poses an interesting challenge for the director. Not one of those operas "familiar" to the wider public, with no famous arias, Anna's trajectory of suffering unfolds before our eyes in all its "objective dramatic coherence". Here *Bel Canto* and interpretation come together in magical fusion".

Anna Bolena at the Opera

Marking this production of *Anna Bolena*, the LAC's cultural mediation service, as part of LAC edu, will be presenting a program of meetings, seminars and screenings in order to help the public get a better understanding of the musical, historical and dramaturgical aspects of Gaetano Donizetti's opera.

This will be a unique opportunity to dive into the world of the sixteenth century English monarchy and discover unique features of Donizetti's score thanks to the voices of the project's protagonists along with the help of musical scholars and educators. There will also be more informal activities for families and children, a series of films on the figure of Anne Boleyn and the Tudor dynasty.

More details are available at www.luganolac.ch

Information and presales

The performance will have supertitles in Italian

The premiere on Monday, September 4 (7:30pm) will be followed by performances on Wednesday 6, Friday 8 (7:30pm) and Sunday 10 (3pm).

Presales are open at luganolac.ch and at the LAC's ticket office.

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