

DONIZETTI

La Favorite

Stroppa • Camarena • Sempey
Stavinsky • Milletti • Di Tonno

Coro dell'Accademia Teatro alla Scala
Orchestra e Coro Donizetti Opera

Riccardo Frizza

Gaetano
DONIZETTI
(1797–1848)
La Favorite

Opera in four acts (1840)

Libretto by Alphonse Royer (1803–1875) and Gustave Vaëz (1812–1862)

First performance: 2 December 1840 at the Académie Royal de Musique, Paris, France

Léonor de Guzman

Fernand

Alphonse XI

Balthazar

Don Gaspar

Inès

Un seigneur

Annalisa Stroppa, Mezzo-soprano

Javier Camarena, Tenor

Florian Sempey, Baritone

Evgeny Stavinsky, Bass

Edoardo Milletti, Tenor

Caterina Di Tonno, Soprano

Alessandro Barbaglia, Tenor

Coro Donizetti Opera

Coro dell'Accademia Teatro alla Scala

(Salvo Sgrò, Chorus master)

Orchestra Donizetti Opera

Riccardo Frizza

The French libretto and an English translation
may be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/660549.htm

1	Prélude	6:06	ACT II		
	ACT I		No. 6. Entr'acte, Récitatif et Air		
	No. 1. Introduction: Chœur, Romance et Duo		11	Entr'acte – Récitatif: Jardins de l'Alcazar <i>(Alphonse, Don Gaspar)</i>	4:09
2	Introduction: Pieux monastère! – <i>(Chorus)</i> Ne vas-tu pas prier avec eux? <i>(Balthazar, Fernand)</i>	3:40	12	Air: Léonor! Viens, j'abandonne <i>(Alphonse)</i>	3:24
3	Romance: Parle, mon fils – Un ange, une femme inconnue <i>(Balthazar, Fernand)</i>	5:05	13	Air: Léonor! Mon amour brave <i>(Alphonse)</i>	3:30
4	Duo: Sais-tu que devant la tiare <i>(Balthazar, Fernand)</i>	5:42		No. 7. Duo [et Cabaletta]	
	No. 2. Air et Chœur		14	Ainsi donc on raconte <i>(Léonor, Inès, Alphonse)</i>	2:40
5	Air: Rayons dorés, tiède zéphyr <i>(Inès, Chorus)</i>	3:31	15	Duo: Dans ce palais règnent pour te séduire <i>(Alphonse, Léonor)</i>	4:55
	No. 3. Air avec Chœur		16	Bientôt j'aurai brisé – <i>(Alphonse, Léonor)</i> Cabaletta: Je l'ai juré par mon sceptre et l'épée <i>(Alphonse, Léonor)</i>	4:51
6	Air: Silence! Silence! – Doux zéphyr, sois-lui fidèle <i>(Inès, Chorus)</i>	2:19		No. 8. Airs de Danses	
	No. 4. Récitatif et Duo		17	Introduction [de la Danse]	1:05
7	Récitatif: Gentille messagère – <i>(Fernand, Inès)</i> Duo: Mon idole! <i>(Léonor, Fernand)</i>	5:44	18	Pas de trois	7:59
8	Duo: Toi, ma seule amie <i>(Fernand, Léonor, Inès)</i>	5:12	19	Pas de six	7:43
	No. 5. Récitatif et Air		20	[Finale de la danse]	3:43
9	Récitatif: Celui qui vient la chercher <i>(Fernand, Inès)</i>	1:14		No. 9. Final	
10	Air: Oui, ta voix m'inspire <i>(Fernand)</i>	3:13	21	Récitatif: Ah! Sire! – Qu'est-ce donc? <i>(Don Gaspar, Alphonse, Léonor, Balthazar, Chorus)</i>	3:41
			22	Redoutez la fureur <i>(Balthazar, Léonor, Alphonse, Don Gaspar, Chorus)</i>	3:06
			23	Vous tous qui m'écoutez <i>(Balthazar, Léonor, Alphonse, Chorus, Don Gaspar, Inès)</i>	2:35
			24	Oui du Seigneur la clémence est lassée <i>(Balthazar, Alphonse, Léonor, Inès, Don Gaspar, Chorus)</i>	3:30

ACT III**No. 10. Prélude, Récitatif et Trio**

- 25 Prélude 1:16
 26 Récitatif: Me voici donc près d'elle! 4:11
(Fernand, Don Gaspar, Alphonse, Léonor)
 27 Trio: Pour tant d'amour ne soyez pas ingrate 4:36
(Alphonse, Léonor, Fernand)

No. 11. Récitatif et Air

- 28 Récitatif: L'ai-je bien entendu! 1:19
(Léonor)
 29 Air: O mon Fernand, tous les biens de la terre 4:05
(Léonor)
 30 Air: Mon arrêt descend du Ciel 3:37
(Léonor)

No. 12. Récitatif et Chœur

- 31 Récitatif: Inès, viens 1:46
(Léonor, Inès, Don Gaspar)
 32 Déjà dans la chapelle 4:37
(Chorus, Fernand, Alphonse, Don Gaspar, Un seigneur, Léonor)

No. 13. Final

- 33 Quel marché de bassesse! 1:42
(Don Gaspar, Chorus)
 34 Ah! Que du moins notre mépris qu'il brave 1:12
(Don Gaspar, Chorus)
 35 Pour moi du Ciel la faveur se déploie 4:51
(Fernand, Don Gaspar, Chorus, Balthazar)
 36 O Ciel! ... De son âme 4:07
(Alphonse, Don Gaspar, Balthazar, Chorus, Fernand, Léonor)
 37 Écoutez-moi, Fernand 4:08
(Alphonse, Fernand, Léonor, Don Gaspar, Chorus, Balthazar)

ACT IV

- 38 Prélude 2:16

No. 14. Chœur, Récitatif et Romance

- 39 Frères, creusons l'asile où la douleur s'endort 5:47
(Chorus, Balthazar)
 40 Récitatif: Dans un instant, mon frère 3:39
(Balthazar, Fernand)
 41 Romance: Ange si pur, que dans un songe 4:26
(Fernand)

No. 15. Final

- 42 Récitatif: Es-tu prêt? Viens – 3:42
(Balthazar, Fernand)
 Fernand! Fernand!
(Léonor)
 43 Que du Très-Haut la faveur t'accompagne – 4:50
(Chorus, Léonor, Fernand)
 Mes vœux sont prononcés
(Fernand, Léonor)
 44 Va-t'en d'ici! 4:17
(Fernand, Léonor)
 45 Ses pleurs, sa voix jadis si chère 3:23
(Fernand, Léonor)
 46 Viens! Je cède éperdu 4:51
(Fernand, Léonor, Chorus)
 47 Léonor, Léonor! 2:11
(Fernand, Balthazar)

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

La Favorite

A native of Bergamo, Donizetti was, for nearly a decade after the early death of Bellini in 1835, the leading composer of Italian opera. He had his first success with *Zoraida di Granata* in 1822. There followed a series of nearly 60 more operas and a move to Paris, where Rossini had been induced to settle to his profit. Donizetti's final illness confined him to a hospital in France for some 17 months before his return to Bergamo, where he died in 1848. He was not exclusively a composer of opera; he wrote music of all kinds – songs, chamber music, piano music and a quantity of music for the church.

The opera *Anna Bolena*, which won considerable success when it was first staged in Milan in 1830, provides a popular soprano aria in its final *Piangete voi?*, while *Deserto in terra*, from the last opera, *Dom Sébastien*, staged in Paris in 1843, has been a favourite with operatic tenors from Caruso to Pavarotti. The comedy *Don Pasquale*, staged in Paris in 1843, is a well-loved part of standard operatic repertoire, as is *L'elisir d'amore* ('The Elixir of Love'), from which the tenor aria *Una furtiva lagrima* ('A hidden tear') is particularly well known. Mention should be made of *La Fille du régiment* ('The Daughter of the Regiment'), staged first in Paris in 1840, and revised for Milan under the title *La figlia del reggimento*. *Lucia di Lammermoor*, based on a novel by Sir Walter Scott, provides intense musical drama for tenors in the last act with *Tomba degl'avei miei* ('Tomb of my forebears'), and for the heroine in her famous mad scene. As with *La Fille du régiment*, *La Favorite* was first staged in Paris in 1840, and was the source of further operatic recital arias.

A Theatre of Voices

Alberto Mattioli in conversation with Riccardo Frizza

Mattioli: Maestro Riccardo Frizza, at the Festival you conducted *La Favorite*, with a final 'e', because Donizetti's opera was performed in the critical edition and in French. Why is it so important to perform the opera in the language in which it was written?

Frizza: I would say that it is always important, but in this case even more so. In conquering Paris – a particularly important opera 'venue' because the city was, according to Walter Benjamin's famous definition, 'the capital of the 19th century' – Donizetti did a thorough job of mastering the French language and prosody. Moreover, the version of the opera translated into Italian was severely criticised by censors, which was inevitable in pre-unification Italy for a subject that portrays a monk who leaves the priesthood and a king who has a mistress. If you read the Italian libretto, you really struggle to understand what the opera is about, and some dramatic turning points are still incomprehensible or at least nebulous. I would also say that the translation becomes a betrayal when, in order to adapt the notes to words they were not written for, the music is also changed.

Mattioli: Although being rather atypical from a dramaturgical and structural point of view, *La Favorite* certainly belongs to the genre of Rossini's and Meyerbeer's *grand opéra*. How does Donizetti interpret it?

Frizza: From the musical point of view, the most relevant innovations are in the orchestra. Think of the writing

for the strings. In his Italian operas, Donizetti writes for four parts, the classic string quartet, first and second violins, viola and cello, to which the bassline is usually entrusted. In *La Favorite*, the writing is for five parts, with the double bass playing the bassline and the cello taking on a new prominence. One can clearly see a different musical thought behind it.

Mattioli: In contrast, which typically Donizettian elements does this opera have?

Frizza: I would say the construction of the melody which, despite Donizetti's adherence to the dramaturgical and musical rules of the Opéra, is still 'Italian' and, I think, very 'Donizettian'. Luckily, Donizetti is immediately recognisable as a melodist, even with the simple means he employs. Just think of Fernand's aria *Ange si pur*, which becomes the famous *Spirto gentil* in Italian: it is an apparently simple phrase, whose musical value and theatrical sense are given by a kaleidoscopic and refined harmonic construction. I would like to add that Donizetti's craftsmanship can also be seen in the skill with which he composed recitatives in a language that, in the end, was not his own.

Mattioli: Let us also talk about vocal style: *La Favorite* is not really an easy opera to sing.

Frizza: Certainly, the most interesting vocality is that of the protagonist. Mezzo-soprano, we usually say. But the mezzo-soprano, in the Verdian sense of the word, did not yet exist in 1840. Before *La Favorite* in Bergamo, I conducted *Il trovatore* at the Liceu in Barcelona: well, Azucena seems to me to be the first real mezzo role but, at the time of *La Favorite*, *Il trovatore* was still 13 years away. Léonor is actually a 'soprano-Falcon', from Cornélie Falcon, the legendary first interpreter of Meyerbeer's *Huguenots* and Halévy's *La Juive*, in between a soprano and a mezzo. Rosina Stolz, for whom Donizetti wrote this part, certainly belonged to this very special vocal category, typical of the transalpine repertoire and not present in the Italian one at the time. Another of the French characteristics of this opera that demand it to be performed in the original language.

Mattioli: And, of course, in the critical edition by Rebecca Harris-Warrick, and in its entirety.

Frizza: This rule actually applies to the entire repertoire. *La Favorite* must not be cut, just as, let's say, *Semiramide* or *La traviata* must not be cut. It is certainly a question of structure, which in the case of *La Favorite* becomes particularly important because here Donizetti, in his musical and dramaturgical maturity, and writing for the Paris Opéra, sought to overcome the stereotypical forms of contemporary Italian opera, to break out of the repetition of *recitative-cantabile-tempo di mezzo-cabaletta*. This is particularly evident in the recitatives, which are unusually long and developed, culminating in the 'scene' that would later become an essential feature of Verdi's theatre. Respecting the integrity of the score does not only mean respecting the writing and thus the author's will. It means better to understand the thought behind it, to enter Donizetti's 'workshop' where few times have music and dramaturgy been conceived and 'weighed' with a view of theatre as infallible.

Mattioli: The opera, in its entirety, also includes the cabaletta of the duet between Léonor and Alphonse, which, in Paris, was cut after the first performances, as one can read in the editions' critical notes.

Frizza: This piece is included in the appendix of the critical edition. It was cut after the first performances but not for musical or theatrical reasons, nor even for its length, but only for political reasons. Here Alphonse rages against the Church with expressions that sounded rather 'strong' at the time and would have accordingly been unacceptable to Louis Philippe's regime, albeit liberal and bourgeois. The authors preferred not to take any risks and cut this piece. In Bergamo, the cabaletta will finally receive its – presumably – first modern performance.

Mattioli: And, of course, we will also hear the elaborate dance divertissement that always accompanied every operatic title at the Opéra since Lully's time, that is, since its foundation ...

Frizza: Donizetti's model is clearly the brilliant music of the ballets of Rossini's French operas. Here Donizetti's writing is very charged, to exploit all the possibilities offered by the Opéra orchestra, and particularly elaborate. The effect is very interesting: this music sounds good and 'rich', if I may say so. Of course, to be honest, not everything is equally good. Some numbers are truly remarkable, whereas others, like the *Pas de deux*, are a bit mannered. We see that in this case Donizetti's intention was to give prominence to the excellent étoiles of the Académie Royale de Musique, a theatre where ballet has always been considered equally or perhaps more important than opera.

Mattioli: We know very well how most of Donizetti's operas, as well as the entire Italian Romantic repertoire, disappeared from theatre programmes between the end of the 19th and the mid-20th century. And yet *La Favorite*, or rather *La Favorita*, albeit defaced by the translation and cuts, has always remained in the repertoire. Why?

Frizza: Because it is one of Donizetti's operas with the highest number of famous pieces. They may have missed the overall meaning of the opera and certainly its stylistic peculiarities, but the audience was sensitive to the charm of some of the most renowned and enthralling arias written by Donizetti. In this sense, we must be grateful to the great singers who fell in love with this opera and made the audience fall in love with it too. If *La Favorita* was one of the most cherished operas by Kraus or Pavarotti, Simionato or Cossotto, Bruscantini or Bruson, theatres would clearly programme it for them. We should be shocked: Donizetti's theatre is also (beware: also, not only) a theatre 'of voices'. Just think of the newfound fortune in recent years of *La Fille du régiment*, an opera that had somewhat disappeared, since it became the signature title of a tenor like Juan Diego Flórez. If these interpretations allow the audience also to discover the musical and theatrical greatness of Gaetano Donizetti, so much the better.

English translation: Michela Compagnoni

Synopsis

Act I

In the monastery of Santiago de Compostela.

The monks are entering the chapel, followed by the Father Superior Balthazar and the novice Fernand, who is about to take his vows. Balthazar notices that the young man is hesitating and asks the reason for it. Fernand replies that his faith has been wavering ever since, in church, a woman as lovely as an angel kneeled to pray beside him. Since then, whenever he prays to God, he sees the woman's image and dreams of a destiny outside of the monastery walls. In vain does Balthazar try to dissuade him, revealing that he was considering him as his successor and warning him of the dangers of the outside world. Fernand insists that he must abandon religious life because he's in love with the mysterious woman, of whom he knows neither name nor status. At this Balthazar refuses to bless him and predicts that one day he will return repented and hopes that God will not curse him. Fernand puts his trust in the woman he loves to watch over him and leaves the monastery.

On the beach of the island of Léon.

Inès, confidante of Léonor, the favourite of the King, sings and dances with her friends while awaiting the boat that will bring Fernand ashore. The youth, who has been blindfolded, asks Inès to reveal the name of her mistress, but she replies that 'it's a secret of the Lady'. Léonor arrives, and the two exchange words of love. Upon Fernand's request to know her name, Léonor implies that he shouldn't ask, and when he asks her to marry him, she tells him that although she desires it, she cannot accept. She then hands Fernand a document; he will have a glorious future but in return must renounce her. Inès enters to announce the arrival of the King of Castile, Alphonse XI. Now Fernand believes he knows why she cannot marry him: she is a lady of high rank while he is just a young stranger. When he reads the document, however, he realises that he has been nominated captain, and feels hopeful that he will be able to gain his beloved's hand after he returns triumphantly from the war.

Act II

In the Alcazar Palace in Seville.

Alphonse and his officer Don Gaspar are discussing their great victory in the war against the Moors, in particular the heroic deeds of Fernand, whom the King plans to honour before the entire court.

Gaspar announces the arrival of an important message from the Pope, but the King is lost in his thoughts. The courtiers, instigated by Rome, are conspiring against Léonor, but he is determined to defend his mistress at all costs. Gaspar is ordered to prepare a grand feast. Léonor enters: she has learned from Inès of Fernand's victories and tells the King her shame and pain for the court's contempt of her as his mistress; she can no longer bear this condition. Alphonse urges her to have patience: she will soon know what her King has planned for her and invites her to be at his side at the party. As the ceremony begins, Gaspar delivers to the King a note addressed to Léonor. In anger Alphonse turns to her, and she confesses that she loves another, without revealing his name. Their conversation is brusquely interrupted by the arrival of Balthazar, the Pope's

messenger, who curses the adulterous couple and threatens to excommunicate the King if he repudiates the Queen for his 'favourite'. Alphonse refuses to give in, claiming his royal power, while Léonor asks him to revenge her honour. Balthazar exhibits the papal bull ordering the excommunication of the King; Léonor must be banished immediately. Upon hearing these words, the court urges the King to send her away.

Act III

In the Alcazar Palace in Seville.

Alphonse praises and thanks Fernand for his valour in battle and asks him what he would like as a reward. The young man replies that he is in love with a noblewoman and asks the King to consent to their marriage. Alphonse agrees and wants to know who the young woman is: just then Léonor enters the room and Fernand indicates her. Alphonse is stunned but immediately makes cynical political calculations and grants his assent to their marriage, with the dual purpose of taking revenge on Léonor and ending his controversies with the Pope. He urges the young woman to return Fernand's love and declares that they will be wed within the hour. Fernand, unaware of his beloved's past, is overjoyed, while Léonor is filled with anguish: she cannot accept that her betrothed is to be disgraced in the eyes of the court because of her relationship with the King. Even though she loves Fernand with all her heart, she cannot bear to burden him with her dishonour. She instructs Inès to reveal to the young man that she has been the King's mistress and that she will understand if he rejects her, but should he forgive her, she will love him to death. However, before she can speak to Fernand, Inès is arrested by Don Gaspar. The wedding ceremony begins. The King gives Fernand the title of Marquis along with the collar of a noble order. When Léonor arrives, he welcomes her with affectionate words, leading her to believe that he has forgiven her. The marriage is concluded among the sarcastic comments of the courtiers, convinced that the young man has agreed to marry the King's mistress for his own advantage, thus saving the King from excommunication. Fernand invites the court to share his happiness, but they respond with disdain and refuse to shake his hand. He rushes at them violently to revenge the offense but is stopped by the sudden arrival of Balthazar who, informed of the marriage, reveals to Fernand that he has married King Alphonse's mistress. The young man is shocked by the unexpected news and turns to Alphonse with words of pride and indignation, accusing him of deceiving him and condemning him to a life of dishonour. He refuses the title of Marquis, throws the noble collar to the ground and breaks his sword at the King's feet. Alphonse considers punishing his insolence but, aware of his own guilt, he lets Fernand leave with Balthazar.

Act IV

In the monastery of Santiago de Compostela.

The monks are busy digging graves, while Balthazar urges some pilgrims to pray. He then turns to Fernand, who is once again about to take his vows, having returned to the monastery to find inner peace. Balthazar invites him to turn his thoughts only to God, then leaves him: he must rush to a gravely-ill young novice who has just arrived at the monastery. Left alone, Fernand's thoughts return to Léonor: he loved an angel whom he believed to be pure, but his dream of happiness dissolved in a fatal lie. He prays to God to help him forget the past and goes into the chapel to take his vows. Léonor enters disguised as a novice: she is dying and seeks Fernand to receive his forgiveness but overhears his voice as he consecrates himself to God. She tries to flee but is too weak and collapses to the ground. Fernand exits the church and, recognising her, angrily tells her

to go back to the King, where she can cover herself with gold and shame. She defends herself: she didn't mean to deceive him, she thought Inès had accomplished her mission and that he had married her in spite of her past. She asks his forgiveness, wishing to die free from his contempt. Fernand feels love reawakening and begs her to leave with him, but she dies in his arms. Balthazar asks the monks to pray for the novice, and Fernand asks them to pray for his soul when he too will leave this earth.

Courtesy of the Fondazione Teatro Donizetti



Photo: © Michele Monasta

Annalisa Stroppa

Acclaimed Italian mezzo-soprano Annalisa Stroppa's career began in 2011 when she made her debut as Cherubino in Mercadante's *I due Figaro* conducted by Riccardo Muti at the Salzburger Festspiele. She has subsequently performed in major theatres around the world, including Teatro alla Scala, Wiener Staatsoper, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and the Teatro Real in Madrid, collaborating with conductors such as Roberto Abbado, Marco Armiliato, Zubin Mehta and Teodor Currentzis in operas, concerts and recitals. Recent engagements include *Madama Butterfly* at the Bregenzer Festspiele and Bayerische Staatsoper and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the theatres of Treviso and Padua.

www.annalisastroppa.it



Photo: © J. Cornajo

Javier Camarena

Award-winning Mexican tenor Javier Camarena is a *bel canto* specialist, and regularly appears in leading roles alongside today's foremost stars at the world's top opera houses. Recent highlights include Elvino in *La sonnambula* at the Vienna State Opera, his signature role of Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* at the Staatsoper Munich alongside Pretty Yende, and Tonio in *La Fille du régiment* at the Opéra de Monte-Carlo. Camarena's discography includes three solo titles for Sony and the acclaimed album *Contrabandista* for Decca. He also appears on numerous operatic audio-visual releases, including *Falstaff* (C Major) and Rossini's *Le Comte Ory* with Cecilia Bartoli (Decca). In 2021 he was recognised as 'Male Singer of the Year' by the International Opera Awards.

www.javiercamarena.com

Photo: © Eduoard Brane



Florian Sempey

A highly sought-after lyric artist with a thriving international career, baritone Florian Sempey has appeared at the Opéra National de Paris, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, with orchestral collaborations including the Berliner Philharmoniker and the Orchestre National de France. Sempey studied under Maryse Castets at the Bordeaux Conservatoire and debuted as Papageno at the Opéra National de Bordeaux. In 2022 he was honoured with formal recognition for his contribution to opera when the French Government awarded him the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. www.floriansempey.com

Photo: © Emil Matveev



Evgeny Stavinsky

Russian bass Evgeny Stavinsky completed his studies at the Academy of Choral Art and the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. He later joined the ensemble of the Novaya Opera where roles have included Thoas (*Iphigénie en Tauride*), Ruslan (*Ruslan and Lyudmila*) and Pimen (*Boris Godunov*). Other appearances include Monk in *L'Ange de Nisida* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, concert performance), Zaccaria in *Nabucco* (Ravenna, Ferrara, Nice, Toulon), Colline in *La Bohème* and Count Walter in *Luisa Miller* (Glyndebourne Festival). Concert performances include Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (Athens, Ravenna), Mozart's *Requiem* (Baden-Baden, Paris, Moscow, St Petersburg) and Verdi's *Requiem* (Berliner Philharmoniker, New York).



Edoardo Milletti

The tenor Edoardo Milletti was born in Assisi in 1987. He began his studies at the Francesco Morlacchi Conservatoire in Perugia and has received further guidance from Renato Bruson, Luciana d'Intino, Luciana Serra, Luigi Alva and Lella Cuberli. He has won numerous competitions and sang some of the most famous *bel canto* roles in theatres such as the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Festival dei due Mondi in Spoleto, Teatro Donizetti in Bergamo, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, as well as the Estonian National Opera, Montpellier Opera House and the Hong Kong National Theatre.

www.edoardomilletti.com



Caterina Di Tonno

Caterina Di Tonno studied at the Pescara Conservatory and the Accademia Musicale Chigiana. The recipient of numerous international prizes, in 2007 she won the Toti Dal Monte international opera competition and was awarded the role of Despina in *Così fan tutte*, which launched her operatic career. A Mozart specialist, she has appeared in various roles in the Mozart/Da Ponte trilogy at Teatro La Fenice since 2011. In 2010 she performed in *Rigoletto* alongside Plácido Domingo and Zubin Mehta, under whose baton she also appeared in *Aida* at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in 2011. In 2021 and 2022 she was a guest at the Donizetti Opera Festival, performing in *Medea* and the 2022 Abbiati Prize-winning *La Favorite*.



Riccardo Frizza

Riccardo Frizza is music director of the Donizetti Opera Festival in Bergamo. He is one of the most highly acclaimed conductors of his generation and a regular guest at Italian and international theatres and festivals such as the Opéra de Paris, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Metropolitan Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Teatro alla Scala, Teatro Real, Rossini Opera Festival, Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Parma Verdi Festival, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and the Dresden Sächsische Staatskapelle. In March 2022, his appointment as chief conductor of the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Choir was announced during their concert in which he conducted Mahler's *Symphony No. 2 'Resurrection'*. He returned to the Hungarian podium in 2023 to conduct works by Puccini, Fauré, Rossini, Debussy, Rodrigo and Prokofiev.

www.riccardofrizza.com

Written for the Opéra in Paris, Gaetano Donizetti's *La Favorite* contains some of his most famously enthralling arias. While its much-reduced Italian version has continued in popularity, this superb production from the Donizetti Opera Festival in his birthplace of Bergamo returns the work to its rarely heard 1840 French grand opera origins. Set in 14th-century Spain, the tragic story is of a pious novice (Fernand) who falls in love with a noble lady and abandons the cloister, meeting her in secret. He becomes a war hero and asks the King for her hand, later finding out to his horror that she is Léonor de Guzman, the King's beloved mistress.



FONDAZIONE
TEATRO
DONIZETTI

Gaetano
DONIZETTI

(1797–1848)

DONIZETTI OPERA

La Favorite

Opera in four acts (1840)

Libretto by Alphonse Royer (1803–1875) and Gustave Vaëz (1812–1862)

Léonor de Guzman..... Annalisa Stroppa, Mezzo-soprano
Fernand Javier Camarena, Tenor
Alphonse XI Florian Sempey, Baritone
Balthazar Evgeny Stavinsky, Bass
Don Gaspar Edoardo Milletti, Tenor
Inès Caterina Di Tonno, Soprano
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Coro Donizetti Opera • Coro dell'Accademia Teatro alla Scala

(Salvo Sgrò, Chorus master)

Orchestra Donizetti Opera

Riccardo Frizza

1	Prélude	6:06	25–37	Act III	41:31
2–10	Act I	35:40	38–47	Act IV	39:29
11–24	Act II	56:51	Playing Time		2:59:46

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet

The French libretto and an English translation may be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/660549.htm
 Recorded: 15 and 18 November 2022 during the Donizetti Opera Festival, Teatro Donizetti, Bergamo, Italy
 Producer: Alberto Dellepiane • Engineers: Rino Trasi, Vera Zanotti • Editor: Rino Trasi

Booklet notes: Courtesy of the Fondazione Teatro Donizetti

Publisher: Critical Edition by Rebecca Harris-Warrick © Casa Ricordi, Milano with the collaboration and contribution of the Comune di Bergamo and the Fondazione Teatro Donizetti • New production of the Fondazione Teatro Donizetti, a co-production with the Opéra National de Bordeaux • Cover photo: Gianfranco Rota

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