

Arrigo  
**BOITO**

# NERONE

**Sheshaberidze • Vassallo • Frontali • Boi • Uzun**

Orchestra e Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari

**Francesco Cilluffo** Conductor

Arrigo  
**BOITO**  
(1842–1918)  
**Nerone**

*Tragedia* in four acts

Performance edition prepared by Antonio Smareglia (1854–1929) and Vincenzo Tommasini (1878–1950)  
under the supervision of Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957)

First performance: 1 May 1924 at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan

<b>Nerone</b> .....	<b>Mikheil Sheshaberidze, Tenor</b>
<b>Simon Mago</b> .....	<b>Franco Vassallo, Baritone</b>
<b>Fanuèl</b> .....	<b>Roberto Frontali, Baritone</b>
<b>Asteria</b> .....	<b>Valentina Boi, Soprano</b>
<b>Rubria</b> .....	<b>Deniz Uzun, Mezzo-soprano</b>
<b>Tigellino</b> .....	<b>Dongho Kim, Bass</b>
<b>Gobrias</b> .....	<b>Vassily Solodkyy, Tenor</b>
<b>Dositèo / Oracle</b> .....	<b>Antonino Giacobbe, Baritone</b>
<b>Perside / Cerinto / First Woman's Voice</b> .....	<b>Natalia Gavrilan, Mezzo-soprano</b>
<b>A Temple Slave / First Wayfarer / A Tenor Voice</b> .....	<b>Fiorenzo Tornincasa, Tenor *</b>
<b>Second Wayfarer / The Slave-admonisher / A Bass Voice</b> .....	<b>Nicola Ebau, Baritone</b>
<b>Second Woman's Voice</b> .....	<b>Francesca Zanatta, Soprano *</b>
<b>Third Woman's Voice</b> .....	<b>Luana Spinola, Mezzo-soprano *</b>

\*members of the Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari

**Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari**  
(Giovanni Andreoli, Chorus Master)

**Orchestra del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari**  
**Francesco Cilluffo, Conductor**

**Act I***La via appia ('On the Via Appia')*

- 1** Canto d'amore vola col vento  
(*Three Women's Voices, Chorus, Simon Mago, Tigellino, A Bass Voice, Nerone, A Tenor Voice*)
- 2** Queste ad un lido fatal  
(*Nerone, Simon Mago, Tigellino, Two Wayfarers, Asteria*)
- 3** Sei còlta – Chi ama la morte  
(*Simon Mago, Asteria*)
- 4** Dove ancor lo scontrasti?  
(*Simon Mago, Asteria*)
- 5** Padre nostro che sei ne' cieli  
(*Rubria, Asteria*)
- 6** Fanuèl! – Non t'alzar  
(*Rubria, Fanuèl, Simon Mago*)
- 7** Gloria al tuo Dio dall'alto di queste tombe!  
(*Simon Mago, Fanuèl*)
- 8** Nessun ci segue?  
(*Nerone, Tigellino*)
- 9** Egli è là, s'appressa, s'appressa,  
s'ode il clamor!  
(*Chorus, Tigellino, Nerone, Dositèo, Gobrias, The Slave-admonisher*)

**Act II***Il tempio di Simon Mago  
(‘The Temple of Simon Magus’)*

- 10** Stupor! Portento!  
(*Chorus, Gobrias, Dositèo, Simon Mago, Cerinto, A Temple Slave*)
- 11** Non cantan più  
(*Simon Mago, Gobrias, Asteria, Nerone*)
- 12** Sparisci! No... no. Sei del miraglio l'illusion  
(*Nerone, Asteria, Voice of Oracle*)
- 13** Cieca la salma nell'orror ripiomba...  
(*Asteria, Nerone, Voice of Oracle, Dositèo*)
- 14** Pretoriani! Accorrete! Mirate!  
(*Nerone, Gobrias, Chorus, Simon Mago, Asteria*)

**Act III***L'orto ('The Garden')*

- 15** E vedendo le turbe ad udir pronte  
(*Fanuèl, Chorus, Rubria, Perside*) 5:09
- 16** A te i ligustri – A te l'allor 4:17  
(*Rubria, Perside, Chorus, Asteria*)
- 17** Di pace... una dolente... 3:41  
(*Asteria, Rubria*)
- 18** Fanuèl... Fanuèl... 4:56  
(*Rubria, Fanuèl, Gobrias*)
- 19** Va' guardingo, attento esplora 2:31  
(*Simon Mago, Gobrias, Rubria, Fanuèl*)
- 20** Furar tentai ciò che negasti 2:22  
(*Simon Mago, Fanuèl, Chorus, Rubria*)
- 21** Vivete in pace 7:26  
(*Fanuèl, Chorus, Rubria, Perside*)

**Act IV***Il Circo Massimo ('The Circus Maximus')***Parte prima – L'oppidum ('The Oppidum')**

- 22** Vittoria! 2:18  
(*Chorus*)
- 23** I Verdi han vinto... è salva Roma 3:08  
(*Gobrias, Simon Mago*)
- 24** Che vuoi dir? 6:04  
(*Nerone, Tigellino, Chorus, Gobrias, Simon Mago, Fanuèl*)
- 25** Una Vestale! – Sien salvi! 6:32  
(*Chorus, Nerone, Rubria, Simon Mago, Fanuèl, Gobrias, Tigellino*)
- 26** L'incendio è nelle fornici 3:12  
(*Gobrias, Chorus*)

**Parte seconda – Lo spoliarium ('The Spoliarium')**

- 27** Scendi. Cerchiam tra i morti 2:53  
(*Asteria, Fanuèl*)
- 28** Ciell... Respira!... Vivrà! 2:59  
(*Fanuèl, Asteria, Rubria*)
- 29** Una mano pia ti ricoperse colla bianca stola 3:16  
(*Fanuèl, Rubria*)
- 30** M'odi... la morte a ogni attimo mi strugge... 4:26  
(*Rubria, Fanuèl*)
- 31** Sento che ascende l'ombra 3:24  
d'un vespero strano  
(*Rubria, Fanuèl*)
- 32** Rubria – L'incendio ne avvolge! 3:15  
(*Fanuèl, Asteria*)

# Arrigo Boito (1842–1918)

## Nerone

### Boito and his *Nerone*: the opera of a lifetime

*A conversation with Francesco Cilluffo*

**Stefano Valanzuolo:** We had left Francesco Cilluffo in Cagliari on the mellow notes of *Gloria*. And here, now, we have *Nerone*, another seldom performed Italian title.

**Francesco Cilluffo:** Different worlds, operas far apart in form and substance. With *Nerone* I'm living a truly exciting experience. I've been meticulously studying every aspect of it for one year now, and it keeps surprising me.

**SV** What is so special about this Boito work?

**FC** I believe it's the closest thing, in music, to Joyce's *Ulysses*. Just as that literary work is not simply a book, *Nerone* cannot simply be defined an opera; it is a series of experiences, a hypertext in which the suggestions are even too many, a huge number of cultured references. It is the summa of 60 years of life as an artist.

**SV** An unfinished work, in your opinion?

**FC** I wouldn't say so. In 1911 – the year of Mahler's death: a symbolic coincidence – Boito informed his editor that he had completed his long and laborious enterprise. Indeed, he wrote: 'The opera has been finished.' Why not believe him?

**SV** And what about Act V, which is, in one version, in prose?

**FC** Act V – which is mainly meta-theatrical – would risk negating the work itself as it is structured up to that point. The story in four acts has a consistent development and ending, the collapse of the Circus Maximus, described in musical detail. The vocal score also consists of four acts.

**SV** A far too 'erudite' work, the author admitted; to the point of becoming 'burdensome'.

**FC** Boito envied Shakespeare (whose prose he knew very well) because from half a page of Plutarch – he used to say – he could draw incredible masterpieces. The author of *Nerone*, instead, felt crushed by the weight of his own research. It is clearly a question of approach and style.

**SV** Let us talk of style, then: that of *Nerone* cannot but be influenced by its very long gestational period.

**FC** We're used to imagining a stylistic path in linear and positivistic terms. We think, in other words, that an author must always proceed in a single direction, inevitably, almost by inertia. As a matter of fact, in the case of *Nerone*, we don't know what was written first and what last. What I mean is: there are pages in this opera that, if composed around 1890, would truly sound futuristic. If composed 20 years later, instead, they would have a completely different significance. Different visual angles, different weights.

**SV** Apart from that, however, the opera's music writing has a strong distinctive character.

**FC** It certainly does. *Nerone* is an opera sustained by a harmonic imagination that I would define unique, without any direct precedent but also destined to have no equals in the future. Except, perhaps, for *Œdipe* by Enescu, composed in 1931. The many intuitions on the harmonic level are then developed through masterful and congenial orchestration.



**SV** Orchestration that, as we know, is not all by Boito.

**FC** Again, we do not know exactly on what parts Smareglia and Tommasini worked. Undoubtedly, for the first three acts they could rely on Boito's precise indications. A few orchestral solutions are quite modern, making you think of the 1920s and of a type of writing that has already absorbed the lessons of Debussy and Respighi.

**SV** The theatrical core of the opera, perhaps, is in Act II.

**FC** Well, it is there that the harmonic writing becomes sleek and fully original. In studying the score, I found several elements in common with the music of Sibelius. In any case, there is no doubt that Boito, on the European scene, was recognised. When in 1893 Verdi declined to attend the gala for the Cambridge Musical Society's 50th anniversary, the English organisers invited Boito, without a moment's hesitation. That is meaningful.

**SV** Verdi, who – as we know – had time to appreciate Boito's poetry, was not only a reference from which to keep one's distance.

**FC** Verdi's lesson, for what concerns Boito, has an effective impact especially regarding tone colour. I'm thinking of a character like Fanuèl, who can be ascribed, for various reasons, to the noble tradition of baritones made protagonists by Verdi.

**SV** Another reference model, speaking of *Nerone*, would be Wagner.

**FC** I'd say that Wagner is the main model or, at least, a dominant source of inspiration. We mustn't forget that Boito translated *Rienzi*, *Tristan und Isolde* and the *Wesendonck Lieder*. The characters of Asteria and Simon the Magician, if we want, could be considered the Italian equivalent of Kundry and Parsifal, with the former transforming from sinner to redeemed. Moreover, Act III of *Nerone*, the Christian act, opens with an introduction that clearly hints at *Parsifal*. And let's not forget the recurrent echoes of *Die Walküre*. Wagner, in that historical moment was an unavoidable reference point for a European composer such as Boito. He became even more so for a work that draws energy from the contrast between the Christian and pagan worlds.

**SV** *Nerone*, however, has no moralistic intents, he does not dispense judgements or life lessons.

**FC** No, that's true. The Christian element of the story is not treated as a spiritual message to be conveyed but, above all, musically contributes to define a narrative hue against the backdrop of the conflict between symbol and history.

**SV** In the sumptuous mass of historiographical details, which are at the base of the opera, can the magic not get a little lost?

**FC** Boito's writing is erudite, but never devoted to realism. After all, even Verdi, speaking of illustrious masters, had the same approach. *Nerone* has the taste of a reflection on the meaning of life, tactful and informed yet poetically reinterpreted. It speaks of the dizziness of man suspended over the abyss, creating an alienating and beautiful atmosphere.

**SV** Let us continue, for now, with the multi-quotation game.

**FC** Yes, for Boito was a cultured and happily curious author. In *Nerone* there are no passive quotations, but creative hints drawn from different artistic landscapes. Take Dante and Shakespeare, besides Wagner and Verdi. For the chorus of priests, for example, Boito cannot fail to refer to *Aida*. The duet of Simon the Magician and Fanuèl, instead, takes us to the atmosphere of *Boccanegra*, it truly does. As for the vocal writing, overall, it is very personal: most of the times it is declamatory, without conventional arias, yet there are fascinating melodic passages.

**SV** A word on the orchestral forces.

**FC** They are huge, with woodwinds in groups of four, various percussion instruments, and offstage band. For a conductor, it is an unusual experience, it is material that cannot be truly and completely mastered, so subtle is the formal work. The score appears fragmentary, but the single segments reassemble in a consistent way and lend unity to the path. As, indeed, in Joyce's *Ulysses*.

**SV** For the audience, however, it is not a difficult listening experience, compared to other contemporary titles.

**FC** No, the language of *Nerone* is far from hermetic, although, in some aspects, it is experimental, crossed by a significant yearning for the new. Even when the style seems to look back, the chosen perspective is far from a consolidated one.

**SV** There is still no real listening tradition, for what concerns *Nerone* and Boito.

**FC** I believe that, in time, the aesthetic musical thought will end up connecting with Boito's output, overcoming preconception and prejudice. Even Mahler's *oeuvre* had to wait for a long time before the taste of the public tuned into it and discovered its important depth. We live in times when, finally, the coexistence of various styles is considered a virtue, and fruition is no longer one-way. Fragmentation itself, which I mentioned before, now seems to be appreciated by a public that has tight attention spans.

**SV** They say that some operas, like *Nerone*, are not staged for lack of the proper voices.

**FC** I don't agree. The problem is that too many theatres, for a long time, did not even propose some titles to singers for they were afraid they'd be a flop. Today things are changing, there is a new interest in rarer titles, often from the 1900s. And the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari is a happy island in all respects, virtuously contributing to fuelling this trend.

**Stefano Valanzuolo**

## Synopsis

### Act I

*On a dark night, on the Via Appia.*

After murdering his own mother, Nero has fled from Rome, believing he is being pursued by an Erinys, a goddess avenger of blood crimes. Bringing with him the funerary urn containing his mother's ashes and accompanied by the trusted Tigellino, Nero turns to the witchcraft of Simon Magus, who, among the graves of the Via Appia, celebrates the burial rite in honour of Agrippina's Manes. But a new vision appears during the rite, and Nero withdraws in terror [1]–[2]. Questioned by the magician, the apparition reveals her identity: she is Asteria, a young woman who has fallen in love with Nero [3]–[4]. Dawn is rising, and Rubria, a Christian girl praying before a tomb, hears Asteria sigh; she offers her some flowers and invites her to join her in prayer. Despite the attraction that Rubria's words exercise on her, the pagan Asteria runs off towards Rome, to return to her god, Nero [5]. Along the Via Appia now comes Fanuèl, the Christian leader, who, perceiving Rubria's inner torment, invites her to tell him what troubles her. She reveals that she has sinned, but their dialogue is brusquely interrupted by the unexpected sight of Simon Magus emerging from the Christians' underground burial site [6]. Fanuèl goes to face his greatest enemy: while in the distance the sound of military trumpets can be heard pealing in honour of the matricide, Simon offers Fanuèl gold in return for his miracles. The Christian vehemently refuses, cursing his rival, and the two part declaring war on each other [7]. Meanwhile, Nero and Tigellino return from the fields to Agrippina's grave [8]. A large crowd of people is heading their way. The emperor fears for his life, but his trusted commander reassures him: the Romans only wish to carry him in triumph [9].

### Act II

*In the underground temple of Simon Magus.*

Some worshippers attend the rites celebrated by the young disciple Gobrias and the old priest Dositèò. Simon has organised a plan to bend Nero to his will: he will have Asteria appear immobile on the altar, in the guise of a goddess. After a fake mysterious rite aimed at awing the onlookers, in which some blood is seen to overflow from a cup, the people are driven out, before Nero's arrival [10]. When the emperor enters, he is led by Simon near the altar [11]. Seeing the image of the goddess reflected in a magic mirror, Nero, who had already committed sacrilege when he had violated the Virgin Rubria on the altar of Vesta, is overwhelmed by lust and reaches out, trying to kiss her [12]. Realising she is no goddess but a mortal woman, he understands he has been deceived and orders his Praetorian Guards to seize Simon Magus, while Asteria is to be thrown into the snake pit. Then he picks up a cithara, sits on the altar posing as Apollo, and begins to play [13]–[14].

### Act III

*In a garden in the suburb of Rome.*

The Christians are gathered in prayer around Fanuèl [15]–[16], when Asteria arrives, having escaped from the snake pit. Succoured by Fanuèl and Rubria, the exhausted young Roman warns them that Simon Magus is on their tracks on the order of Nero, who is thirsty for Christian blood [17]. Asteria then rushes off, leaving Fanuèl and Rubria alone. The girl insists that they immediately run to safety, but the young man asks her once again to reveal her sin to him [18]. Simon Magus, Gobrias, and the Praetorians, however, have already arrived [19]. Fanuèl stops the Christians, who would rush against them, and asks them to pray for him, before delivering himself to the Guards [20]–[21].

### Act IV

#### Part One

*At the Circus Maximus.*

While the crowds cheer and shout as they watch the chariots race and the gladiators fight [22], Gobrias tells Simon Magus that their conspiracy is ready to be put into action: Rome will be set on fire and Asteria, who wants to free the Christians, is willing to start the flames. Thus, Simon Magus will also be able to save himself [23]. Tigellino informs Nero that Simon's priests are about to start a fire in the city to save the magician from death, but the emperor replies that he does not intend to stop the conspirators: Rome shall be destroyed, and then it will resurrect from its ashes thanks to Nero's power. Preceded by Fanuèl, a group of Christian women enter the Circus, and Simon Magus and his supporters lash out at the man [24]. While Nero awaits with anticipation the transit of the victims, and the crowds call for the prisoners' death, a Vestal Virgin appears on the podium: it is Rubria, hidden behind a veil, who asks for clemency for the condemned. Simon Magus, however, tears the veil from her face, revealing her identity: Fanuèl rushes towards her, and she faints in his arms, while the magician and the crowds call for her death. Nero orders that Rubria be carried into the arena with the other Christians, and Simon Magus be thrown from the Oppidum's tower [25]. Suddenly, there are cries of terror: the fire has started, the Circus Maximus is burning [26].

#### Part Two

*In the Spoliarium of the Circus, where the dead are brought.*

Asteria and Fanuèl are looking for Rubria. As they wander around the dark place, they bump into the corpse of Simon Magus, and then, not far away, they see Rubria's body, laid out on a funeral bed [27]. To their surprise, she is still alive [28]. The young woman, who is severely wounded, confesses her love for Fanuèl [29] and finally reveals her sin to him, which she committed when she professed to be a Christian but at the same time celebrated the pagan cult in honour of Vesta. As Rubria gives out her last breath, Fanuèl blesses her and declares her his wife [30]–[31]. Meanwhile the fire has engulfed the Circus Maximus, and Fanuèl, urged by Asteria, flees. In a fit of rage, the young woman retraces her steps and goes to Rubria's body, angry against the virgin Nero had violated, whom she sees as a former rival. But then, seized by sudden pity, Asteria prays for the hapless girl's soul, before rushing off to safety [32].

English translation by Daniela Pilarz  
*Courtesy of Teatro Lirico di Cagliari*



### **Mikheil Sheshaberidze**

Born in Kaspi, Georgia, Mikheil Sheshaberidze studied at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire and the Academy Città di Pesaro, as well as with Lella Cuberli. He currently trains with Gianfranca Ostini. He won Third Prize in the Gaetano Fraschini (Pavia) and La Città Sonora (Milan) competitions, and participated in the AsLiCo project *Nabucco, c'era una volta la figlia di un re* at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste and the Teatro Duni in Matera. He has sung at the Arena di Verona, Teatro Lirico di Cagliari and Teatro di San Carlo (Naples), and has collaborated with conductors such as Daniel Oren and Christopher Franklin.



Photo: © Alberto Terrie

### **Franco Vassallo**

Franco Vassallo has performed on the stages of the most important theatres in Italy and abroad, including Teatro alla Scala, The Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Staatsoper Wien and the Staatsoper and Deutsche Oper in Berlin. He has enjoyed a versatile career, specialising in the bel canto repertoire of Donizetti and Bellini before devoting himself in more recent years to Verdi's baritone roles. Recent highlights include *Il trovatore* and *Falstaff* at Festival Verdi in Parma, *Il pirata* at Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and *Ernani* at the Bregenzer Festspiele and the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía in Valencia. [www.francovassallo.com](http://www.francovassallo.com)



### **Roberto Frontali**

Winner of the International Singing Competition of Teatro Lirico Sperimentale, Roberto Frontali made his debut at the Teatro Nuovo Gian Carlo Menotti (Spoleto) in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. After devoting himself to bel canto roles, he turned to the repertoire of Verdi, Puccini and verismo roles. He has collaborated with Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti, Zubin Mehta and Myung-Whun Chung, among others, and has sung in prestigious theatres and festivals such as The Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala and the Wiener Staatsoper. He also appeared in *Gianni Schicchi*, which was shown at the Torino Film Festival and broadcast on Rai 1. [www.robertofrontali.it](http://www.robertofrontali.it)



### **Valentina Boi**

Born in Livorno, Valentina Boi studied viola and piano before graduating with honours in singing from the Luigi Boccherini Conservatory in Lucca. She made her debut at the Teatro Goldoni in Livorno as Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and has since appeared at Teatro alla Scala, as well as theatres across Italy and in Skopje. She has also performed in *Aida* and *Nabucco* at the Arena di Verona under the baton of Daniel Oren. Recent highlights include *Tosca* in Chieti, *Aida* in Montevideo and *Cavalleria rusticana* in Livorno.





Photo: © Silvana Brauer

### Deniz Uzun

After graduating from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University Bloomington, Deniz Uzun attended the Bayerische Opernakademie where she won the Elizabeth Connell and Eva Marton awards. She recently made her debut in *Götterdämmerung* in Budapest, *Viva la mamma!* in Zurich, *Die Fledermaus* in Genoa and *Intolleranza 1960* in Berlin. She has also been a member of the choral ensembles of Opernhaus Zürich and Komische Oper Berlin. Active in the concert field, she recently appeared at the Festival de Música dos Capuchos in Portugal. She has collaborated with conductors such as Adam Fischer, Kirill Petrenko and Vladimir Jurowski. [www.uzundeniz.com](http://www.uzundeniz.com)



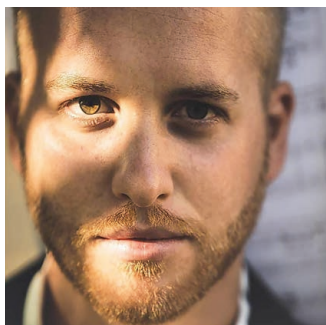
### Dongho Kim

Dongho Kim studied at the Korea National University of Arts, the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin and the Accademia Teatro alla Scala. He has won numerous opera competitions, including Magda Olivero, Piero Cappuccilli, Zandonai and Spiros Argiris. After debuts in Korea and Germany, he made his debut at Teatro alla Scala in *Don Carlos*, subsequently appearing in numerous productions at the theatre. He has also performed in productions across Italy and Korea. Active in the concert field, recent highlights include Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with Christoph Eschenbach in Rome, and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* conducted by Fabio Luisi.



### Vassily Solodkyy

Born in Ternopil, Ukraine, Vassily Solodkyy studied piano as a child, later devoting himself to opera singing under the guidance of Valeria Esposito. He perfected his skills at the Accademia Verdiana, and was awarded Third Prize at the Renata Tebaldi International Voice Competition. Solodkyy regularly collaborates with Fondazione Luciano Pavarotti. Since his debut in *The Merry Widow*, with performances in theatres across Tuscany, he has appeared at the Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Rossini Opera Festival and Wexford Festival Opera, among others. Recent highlights include *Marin Faliero* at the Donizetti Opera Festival conducted by Riccardo Frizza, and *Boris Godunov* at Teatro alla Scala conducted by Riccardo Chailly.



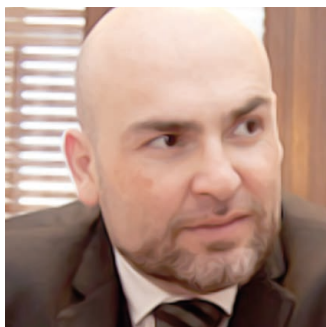
### Antonino Giacobbe

Born in Soverato, Antonino Giacobbe studied at the Conservatorio di Musica 'Stanislao Giacomantonio' in Cosenza and the Università di Catania. He has excelled in opera competitions such as Fausto Ricci, Spazio Musica, Giancarlo Aliverta and Scuola dell'Opera Italiana. Giacobbe has performed in concerts and operas across Italy and abroad, singing roles such as Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) and Masetto (*Don Giovanni*). Most recently, he took part in the Puccini celebrations at the Teatro del Giglio in Lucca, in the role of Betto di Signa (*Gianni Schicchi*) with the Budapest Festival Orchestra conducted by Iván Fischer.



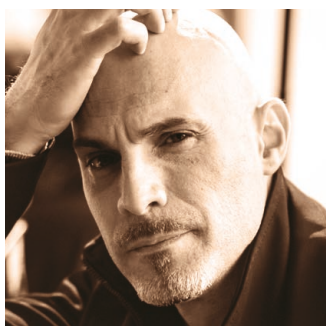
### **Natalia Gavrilan**

Born in Moldova but a naturalised Italian, Natalia Gavrilan trained at the Accademia Teatro alla Scala with Leyla Gencer, Luciana Serra and Luigi Alva. She has taken part in numerous opera and concert productions in theatres and festivals in Italy and abroad, including Teatro alla Scala, Festival Verdi (Parma) and The Metropolitan Opera, and has worked with conductors such as Roberto Abbado, Riccardo Muti and Alberto Zedda. Performances include *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *La donna del lago*, *Le Comte Ory*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and *Petite Messe solennelle*, and Prokofiev's cantata *Alexander Nevsky*. [www.nataliagavrilan.com](http://www.nataliagavrilan.com)



### **Fiorenzo Tornincasa**

After studying cello, Fiorenzo Tornincasa devoted himself to singing under the guidance of Aldo Protti in Cremona and Paolo Specca in Pescara. He attended masterclasses with Kiri Te Kanawa, Gianni Raimondi and Gianni Ovidio Mastino, and academies such as Ateneo Internazionale della lirica and Georg Solti Accademia. On the concert stage, he has performed with symphony and chamber orchestras in Italy and abroad. He is also a member of the Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari. His repertoire ranges from vocal chamber music to contemporary music, and his discography includes an album of sacred music by Cesare Tudini and *I Compagnacci* (Bongiovanni).



### **Nicola Ebau**

Originally from Cagliari, baritone Nicola Ebau studied at the conservatory in his home city with Elisabetta Scano. In 2004 he made his stage debut in *Hans Heiling*, conducted by Renato Palumbo and directed by Pier Luigi Pizzi, at the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, where he subsequently performed several roles including *Le Comte* in *Chérubin* and *Peter* in *Hänsel und Gretel*. He has sung in the Teatro Regio Torino, Teatro Filarmonico di Verona and Teatro di San Carlo, among others, and worked with conductors such as Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and Daniel Oren.



### **Francesca Zanatta**

Born in Treviso, Francesca Zanatta studied at the Conservatorio di Cagliari. In 2000, she joined the Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, appearing in several solo roles, including in *Suor Angelica* and *The Merry Widow*. She was also Aretta in *L'oca del Cairo* as part of the Serate Mozartiane organised by the Associazione Mozart Italia. In the concert hall, she has sung works by Schubert, Mozart, Vivaldi and Bach, and in 2021 appeared in Holst's *A Choral Fantasia* as part of the Classicalparco festival.





### Luana Spinola

Luana Spinola studied with Giuseppe Gismondo before perfecting her repertoire with Renato Palumbo. In 2000 she won Il Concorso Musicale Internazionale 'Città di Fasano'. She then began her collaboration with the Teatro alla Scala chorus, and has since appeared at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Teatro La Fenice in Venice and the Arena di Verona, among many others. She is currently a member of the Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari. Concert repertoire includes Mozart's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Schubert's *Ständchen*, and in 2021 she appeared in *L'elisir d'amore* and *The Merry Widow* as part of the Classicalparco festival



### Orchestra e Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari

Founded in 1933, the Orchestra del Teatro Lirico has cultivated an international reputation since its inception, collaborating with leading Italian conductors including Tullio Serafin, Vittorio Gui and Antonino Votto, and composers such as Ottorino Respighi, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari and Alfredo Casella. The orchestra has been led by Lovro von Matačić, Claudio Abbado, Sergiu Celibidache, Riccardo Muti, Gérard Korsten and George Pehlivanian. It has also collaborated with conductors such as Mstislav Rostropovich, Ton Koopman, Iván Fischer, Carlo Maria Giulini, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Neville Marriner and Christopher Hogwood, among others, and regularly collaborated with Lorin Maazel, touring Europe in 1999. The Coro del Teatro Lirico has appeared in over one hundred operatic productions, and has a wide symphonic repertoire. It is currently led by Giovanni Andreoli. The choir has collaborated with numerous conductors including Ton Koopman, Frans Brüggen and Georges Prêtre, and directors such as Dario Fo, Luca Ronconi and Denis Krief. In 2003, the choir performed excerpts from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with the New York Philharmonic and Lorin Maazel, and in 2004 appeared in Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Together, the orchestra and choir have undertaken numerous recordings, including for the Naxos and Unitel labels, and in 1998 were featured on a recording of *La Bohème* for Rai, with Andrea Bocelli as Rodolfo, which was broadcast worldwide. They appeared at the 2002 *Italianische Nacht in Munich*, which was broadcast by Bayerischer Rundfunk, and in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the 2010 Wiesbaden

festival. The choir and orchestra also undertook a tour to New York in 2018, conducted by Donato Renzetti, where they appeared alongside L'ape musicale at Columbia University, and performed *Oratorio for the Benefit of the Orphan Asylum* in the Basilica of St Patrick's Old Cathedral. Recent highlights include a performance of *L'elisir d'amore* at the Royal Opera House Muscat conducted by Jordi Bernàcer, and the concert *Opera Hits!* conducted by Gaetano Lo Coco. [www.teatroiricodicagliari.it](http://www.teatroiricodicagliari.it)



Photo © Rballucastudio

### **Francesco Cilluffo**

Principal conductor of the Wexford Festival Opera, Francesco Cilluffo was born in Turin, where he graduated in conducting and composition from the conservatory, and music history from the university (DAMS). He holds a Master's degree from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, and a PhD from King's College London. He later collaborated as an assistant with Michael Tilson Thomas, John Eliot Gardiner, Asher Fisch, John Mauceri and Lothar Zagrosek. Performances include *L'Arlesiana* in Jesi (recorded for Dynamic); the world premieres of Marco Tutino's operas *Le braci* in Florence and Martina Franca, and *Miseria e nobiltà* in Genoa; *Tosca* in Tulsa; *Macbeth*, *Falstaff*, Verdi's *Requiem* and *Manon Lescaut* at The Grange Festival with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; numerous opera productions for OperaLombardia, Opera Holland Park as well as in Tel Aviv; symphonic concerts with the Bremer Philharmoniker, the orchestras of the Arena di Verona and the Teatro Lirico di Cagliari; and the first Italian performance of *Absolute Jest* by John Adams with the Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini of Parma. [www.francescocilluffo.com](http://www.francescocilluffo.com)

Arrigo Boito is remembered today for his only completed opera *Mefistofele*. The score for *Nerone* was left unfinished at the composer's death – a performing version was completed by the composers Vincenzo Tommasini and Antonio Smareglia, along with Arturo Toscanini who conducted the world premiere at Teatro alla Scala in 1924. The narrative focuses on Emperor Nero during a time of conflict between beliefs in Imperial Roman gods and Christianity, and ends with tragic dramas amidst the Great Fire of Rome. With influences that include Wagner and Sibelius, Boito's rarely performed *Nerone* uses a truly exciting harmonic palette delivered through a masterly handling of huge orchestral forces.



TEATRO LIRICO DI CAGLIARI  
FONDAZIONE

Arrigo  
**BOITO**  
(1842–1918)  
**Nerone**

*Tragedia in four acts*

ed. Antonio Smareglia and Vincenzo Tommasini under the supervision of Arturo Toscanini (1924)

**Nerone** ..... Mikheil Sheshaberidze, Tenor  
**Simon Mago** ..... Franco Vassallo, Baritone  
**Fanuèl** ..... Roberto Frontali, Baritone  
**Asteria** ..... Valentina Boi, Soprano  
**Rubria** ..... Deniz Uzun, Mezzo-soprano  
**Tigellino** ..... Dongho Kim, Bass  
**Gobrias** ..... Vassily Solodkyy, Tenor

**Coro del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari**

(Giovanni Andreoli, Chorus Master)

**Orchestra del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari**

**Francesco Cilluffo, Conductor**

**Playing Time**  
2:26:11

<b>1–9</b>	<b>Act I</b>	<b>44:03</b>	<b>15–21</b>	<b>Act III</b>	<b>30:22</b>
<b>10–14</b>	<b>Act II</b>	<b>30:16</b>	<b>22–32</b>	<b>Act IV</b>	<b>41:27</b>
<b>Playing Time</b>					<b>2:26:11</b>

**A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.**

The Italian libretto and an English translation can be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/660582.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/660582.htm)

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