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presents

NABUCCO

(concert version)

by

GIUSEPPE VERDI

orchestra leader

MARIO BISAZZA

conductor

JOSEPH VELLA

14th APRIL 1982

NABUCCO

Sinfonia

PARTE PRIMA. *Gerusalemme*

Coro d'introduzione e cavatina *Sperate, o figli! Iddio* Zaccaria

Recitativo e terzettino Abigaille, Fenena, Ismaele

Coro *Prode guerrier! ... d'amore ...*

Finale primo *Lo vedeste? ... Fulminando*

INTERVAL

PARTE SECONDO. *L'Empio*

Scena ed aria *Anch'io dischiuso un giorno* Abigaille

Preghiera *Tu sul labbro de' veggenti* Zaccaria

Coro di Leviti *Il maledetto non ha fratelli*

Scena — Finale secondo *Deh fratelli, perdonate!*

PARTE TERZA. *La profezia*

Coro d'introduzione *E l'Assiria una regina*

Duetto *Donna, chi sei?* Abigaille e Nabucco

Coro di schiavi ebrei *Va pensiero, sull'ali dorate*

Profezia — Finale terzo *Del futuro nel buio discerno* Zaccaria

SOLOISTS

| | | |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| NABUCCO | BRIAN DONLAN | Baritone |
| ABIGAILLE | PAMELA SMITH | Soprano |
| ZACCARIA | BRIAN HOLMES | Bass |
| FENENA | PHYLLIS BAJADA ABRAM | Soprano |
| ISMAELE | ELIA CASSAR | Tenor |
| GRAN SACERDOTE | PAUL PORTELLI | Bass |

After the ephemeral success of "Oberto" (1839) and the downright disaster of "Un Giorno di Regno" (1840), Verdi's artistic fortunes were at a low ebb. From the personal aspect a nadir had been reached with the death of his first wife Margherita Barezzi and their two infant children within the space of a few weeks.

"Nabucco" (1842) marks a turning point in Verdi's career, namely the emergence of the composer's individual style. All the essential characteristics of the later Verdi are present in "Nabucco". While the opera has a far more vague structure than "Oberto" the music often restores stability and plausibility, even when the dramatic situation is rather static and monotonous. The drama is in four parts which should be regarded as self-contained tableaux rather than phases of a developing drama in which each element grows from the last. They are bound together by their contrasts.

This evening's performance consists of the sinfonia followed by parts one to three. The opening chorus number "Gli arredi festivi" is followed by a fine cavatina for bass "Sperate o figli". The influence of Bellini can be detected in the following recitative and terzettino "Prode guerrieri" between Abigaille, Fenena and Ismaele. The chorus "Lo vedesti fulminando" is redolent with mysterious impending danger. This section moves farthest away from conventional language and clearly displays Verdi's audacious self-confidence. The finale is just remarkable for its enormous noise.

Abigaille opens part two with the scena and aria "Anch'io dischiusi un giorno". It is followed by Zaccaria's prayer "Tu sul labbro dei veggenti". The Levites' chorus follows, somewhat restrained in order to place greater emphasis on the tenor's short interjection "Per amor del Dio vivente". This in fact constitutes Ismaele's only opportunity for display. Part two concludes with an ensemble for vocal quintet and chorus particularly effective in its earlier stages.

The chorus introduces part three, singing Abigaille's praises "E l'Assiria la regina". The usurping queen confronts her demented presumed father Nabucco in an extended dramatic duet "Donna chi sei?" Clarity of form, brilliant material and open sincerity in expressing the sorrows of a downtrodden people mark the opera's highlight. This is the chorus "Va pensiero" after which follows the bass's "Profezia". From the previous chorus's hope, the transformation is one of lively, aggressive certainty. Emphasised by the addition of the chorus "O qual foco nel veglio balena", this is the natural complement of "Va pensiero". The latter's greatness would not be fully comprehensible without it.

Er 100. Cassar.

W. P. Portelli

BRIAN DONLAN

Studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, The London Opera Centre, and with Christo Brumbarov in Sofia, with a Bulgarian State Scholarship.

He has sung in numerous operas at Glyndebourne, especially in works by Richard Strauss and Mozart. Also with Glyndebourne from the Verdi repertoire he has sung Macbeth in "Macbeth", Ford in "Falstaff", and most recently in October last year the title role of Falstaff.

Mr. Donlan first sang at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden in 1976. He has sung there several times since, the latest being as Benoit in Puccini's "La Boheme". This was televised and video-taped for world-wide distribution in February this year.

Over the years Mr. Donlan has sung under the baton of many of the world's leading conductors and has also sung extensively in Ireland, particularly in Dublin and at the Wexford Festival.

PAMELA SMITH

Pamela Smith was born in Derby and studied piano, violin and singing at Trinity College of Music, London. On leaving college she joined the B.B.C. Singers and has since worked as a freelance singer.

Her experience in the recital and oratorio field ranges from Baroque to Avant Garde and includes appearances at Aldeburgh, Brighton, Edinburgh, Cheltenham and Flanders Festivals, as well as South Bank concerts and frequent radio broadcasts.

She has considerable operatic experience and has understudied Helmwige in "Die Walküre" and the title role in "Therese" by John Tavener at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Pamela Smith has appeared in various T.V. productions and made several recordings.

BRIAN HOLMES

Brian Holmes was awarded a Senior City Scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music with Michael Raphael, the renowned Lieder singer and teacher. He was the first singer to be awarded the Leslie Woodgate Prize for Oratorio, also gaining a Dame Clara Butt award and winning a musical Exhibition award.

He joined Sadler's Wells Opera, but shortly after left to join the Royal Opera Covent Garden. He sang as a soloist with the English Opera Group in most of the major cities in Europe, Canada and America. In 1967 he was an Award winner in the Count Cinzano Operatic Competition.

Mr. Holmes has sung regularly for Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Opera, and companies in France and Malta, at the Aldeburgh and Camden Festivals: also in television in Britain and abroad. He regularly sings Oratorio at home and abroad.

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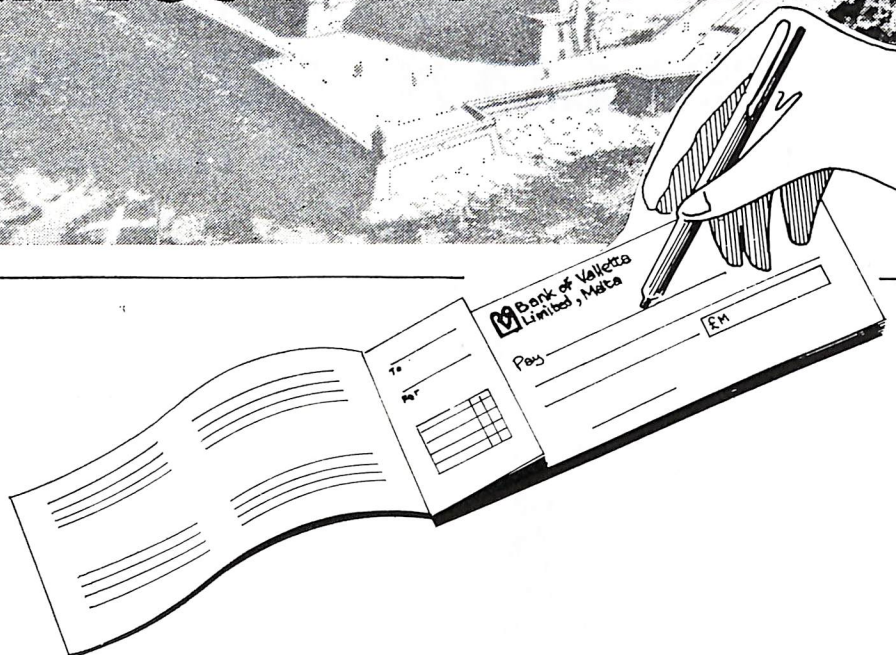


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