

La couleur du temps – The Colour of Time

Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1821 – 1910)



Photo: Uli Weber - Decca

Salzburg Whitsun Festival **29 May – 1 June 2020**

(SF, 30 December 2019) The life of Pauline Viardot-Garcia – singer, musical ambassador of Europe, outstanding pianist and composer – is the focus of the 2020 programme of the Salzburg Whitsun Festival.

“The uncanny instinct Cecilia Bartoli has for the themes of our times is proven once again by her programme for the 2020 Salzburg Whitsun Festival, which focuses on Pauline Viardot. Orlando Figes has just written a bestseller about this woman. Using Viardot as an example, he describes the importance of art within the idea of Europe,” says Festival President Helga Rabl-Stadler.



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Künstlerische Leitung: Cecilia Bartoli

Pauline Viardot not only made a name for herself as a singer, composer and pianist, but her happy marriage with the French theatre manager, author and art critic Louis Viardot furthered her career and enabled her to act as a great patron of the arts. Thus, she made unique efforts to save the autograph of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* for posterity.

Don Giovanni was among the manuscripts Constanze Mozart had sold to Johann Anton André in Offenbach in 1799. After his death in 1842, his daughter inherited the autograph and offered it to libraries in Vienna, Berlin and London – without success. In 1855 her cousin, the pianist Ernst Pauer, took out an advertisement in the London-based journal *Musical World*. Thereupon, Pauline Viardot-García bought the manuscript for 180 pounds. In 1889 she bequeathed the autograph to the Conservatoire in Paris, keeping it in her possession until 1892. In 1935 it was transferred to the Bibliothèque nationale. She insisted that the autograph remain in its original state: she had a wooden case made of arbor vitae wood with brass fittings in the English neogothic style to keep the notebooks, now bound in soft bordeaux leather, together. The singer enjoyed showing visitors the manuscript; Rossini is said to have kissed it with the words: “It is God himself!”. She also permitted the manuscript to be exhibited on the occasion of the opera’s centenary in 1887. (In: *Mozart. Bilder und Klänge*. Catalogue of the Salzburg State Exhibition at Schloß Kleßheim in Salzburg, 1991, p. 305)

Ms. Bartoli, while castrato voices were the thematic focus of the Salzburg Whitsun Festival in 2019, this year it is a woman who also influenced social life of her times. How did you come upon the idea of exploring the life and work of Pauline Viardot?

For many years, I have been studying the García family of vocalists and their three most famous protagonists Manuel García, the father, and his two daughters María Malibran and Pauline Viardot. It is absolutely fascinating how, in three lives, so to say, this family experienced and influenced an incredible range of 150 years of music history!

Imagine: when Manuel García performed *Don Giovanni* for the first time in New York in 1826 with his family, it was most likely none other than Lorenzo Da Ponte, who was living in New York at the time, who asked García to do so. The poet had written the libretto for Mozart in 1787 and had also provided the texts for *Così fan tutte* and *Le nozze di Figaro*. Pauline, four years old at the time, had also travelled to New York. Therefore, there is an indirect contact with Mozart here. Later, Pauline Viardot worked not only with Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner, Liszt, Chopin, Gounod, and Saint-Saëns, but she was also the teacher of the famous opera singer Désirée Artôt.

In this context, I started considering how the “divo” had slowly been transformed into a “diva” at the turn from the 18th to the 19th century, even though in many ways his – and eventually her – function had remained the same: an outstanding artist personality around whom most of the musical and social life of a certain period revolved. Italy, England and Spain in the 1730s were largely focussed on one bright star: Farinelli. He was a symbol for the glamorous castratos whose magnificent art – no less than their noisy tantrums – determined what went on in European opera houses during the heyday of baroque music. But as the rays of Enlightenment shone into a different-minded 19th century, aficionados began to turn from those



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extravagant young men, who had been pampered at the courts of absolutist monarchs, to a different kind of deity: the prima donna. Henceforward, they laid their hearts at the feet of outstanding female singers, wonderful artists who represented the values of a post-revolutionary and bourgeois society better than castratos, whose artificiality, so admired by members of the highest classes, was now suddenly considered unnatural. Women were the new muses for emerging composers, exerting control over what actually ended up in a score, as well as repertoire policy in theatres, casts and fees, some of them attaining great social influence. There were venerable personalities such as Isabella Colbran and Giuditta Pasta – or Maria Malibran, who embodied the free and impulsive spirit of Romanticism. Apart from her exceptional musical talent and her novel, intense way of acting, Malibran acquired the status of a 19th-century Marilyn Monroe due to her publicly exposed private life and untimely death.

“She unites unquenchable, enthralling, overwhelming
passion with profound sensibility and an almost
lamentable ability to express incredible pain.”

Hector Berlioz about Pauline Viardot

It was Malibran’s younger sister, Pauline Viardot-Garcia, however, who left a sustainable trace on European culture. Like the rest of her family, Pauline had outstanding musical talents. She was applauded in leading opera houses and, with her affability and command of foreign languages, she was a welcome guest in elegant salons from Paris to St Petersburg. Due to a long life — from 1821 to 1910 — and biographical connections with France and Germany, she championed incredibly varied music, including by Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Brahms, Wagner, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Massenet, even Gabriel Fauré, who almost became her son-in-law. A student of Franz Liszt and Anton Reicha and a duet partner of Chopin, Pauline was an excellent pianist and composer. Her impeccable singing technique, which she passed on to successful students, allowed her to work in her profession for decades. Her felicitous marriage to the French theatre manager, author and art critic Louis Viardot advanced her career as a respected singer and established her role as a great patron of the arts, clear-sighted enough to bridge the years of fundamental change in culture from early Romanticism to impressionism and early modernism.

Why have you chosen *Don Pasquale* for the centenary of the Salzburg Festival?

Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* is a great fit for the centenary of the Salzburg Festival, which is commonly associated with Mozart and Strauss. Yet *Don Pasquale* was the third opera ever to be performed in Salzburg, under none lesser than Bruno Walter and with a brilliant cast including Maria Ivogün, Karl Erb, Hermann Wiedemann and the famous bass Richard Mayr, a native of Salzburg. And of course this opera is also a natural fit for our Viardot programme, as the role was also part of her repertoire.



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The production will be directed by Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier, with whom you already presented *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (2012), *Norma* (2013) and *Iphigénie en Tauride* (2015), and most recently *L'italiana in Algeri* (2018) in Salzburg. What is special about their work as directors?

Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier are two wonderful artists. Their work is incredibly precise and sensitive. They already proved their special talent for comedy in 2018 with *L'italiana in Algeri*. They portray their figures as they would in spoken theatre, making us performers start long before the actual scene, never giving up until even the smallest gesture is perfect and feels natural. Furthermore, their musical preparation is impeccable. The scenes are never developed only from the libretto, but also from the music, so that the result has this double impact of text and music.

Gianluca Capuano, who most recently conducted *Alcina* in 2019, also returns in 2020. What do you like about working with him?

Gianluca Capuano and Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco in Salzburg, that is an incredible, absolutely unique constellation! We only founded this orchestra, which plays historical instruments, in 2016, and as its artistic director I have been able to assemble a close-knit group of the best musicians of their kind. Together, we are exploring not only the baroque but also the belcanto repertoire step by step, and this is an intense, interesting journey which opens up ever-new manners of interpretation to us.

When we presented Bellini's *Norma* in Salzburg in 2013 and Rossini's *Cenerentola* in 2014 with ensembles playing historical instruments, this was hailed as a new era in performance practice. Thus, I do feel like a pioneer in this regard and am proud to continue this journey of discovery now with Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*.

For our Whitsun production, we will establish our own critical edition of the score, and I am already looking forward to this new and fascinating reading of Donizetti which Les Musiciens du Prince under Gianluca Capuano will present. Surely there will be occasional surprises!

„One of her most delightful roles from the opera buffa was that of Norina in *Don Pasquale*, where Viardot-García unfolded an incomparable grace in her singing and acting. The inserted waltz by Balfe at the end always made an adorable impression and had to be repeated every time.“

Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung, No. 25, June 1847



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Are you looking forward to the role of Norina? How would you characterize this woman?

I am delighted to make my debut in *Don Pasquale*, an opera I love dearly. I will sing the part of Norina in a version containing variations, cadenzas and additions going back to a series of performances in St Petersburg in 1845, where Pauline Viardot took the role of Norina.

After the serious Alcina we had last year, Norina once again gives me an opportunity to dedicate myself to a more cheerful role, even though the opera does have a melancholy note as well.

In addition to the new production of *Don Pasquale*, the audience may look forward to another staged production, a ballet opera – John Neumeier, artistic director and chief choreographer of the Hamburg Ballet, transfers the mythological tale of Berlioz' *Orphée* to today's ballet world in his stage version. Pauline Viardot appeared as the first female *Orphée* 138 times and enjoyed triumphant success in this role. What do you value about John Neumeier's work?

I admire and value John Neumeier's work tremendously. He brought his Hamburg Ballet to the Whitsun Festival once before, in 2015, and this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was highly successful. Apart from this year's guest appearance, it would be a dream of mine to create a completely new work with John for the Whitsun Festival.

I always wanted to present ballet productions regularly at the Whitsun Festival – alongside opera and drama, ballet is one of the pillars of theatrical work in many places, and in my opinion, rightfully so!



John Neumeier and Cecilia Bartoli © SF/wildbild

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Wherever Pauline Viardot appeared, she also tried to include her own compositions in the programmes. Her main goals in doing so were lightness, wit and vivacity. Are these attributes reflected in the concert programme of the 2020 Salzburg Whitsun Festival?

Yes, absolutely.

Especially for the gala concert, it was important to me to revive a concert form which was quite common in the 19th century: contemporary programmes often contained diverse and – for our taste – wild combinations of repertoire. Thus, a symphony might stand next to a scene or an individual act of an opera; symphonic movements might be followed by solo performances with piano accompaniment... This is the spirit I wanted to invoke with the concert “Une Affaire de Famille”. So I invited various artists to perform a concert together: Khatia Buniatishvili will play a Liszt Piano Concerto, Varduhi Abrahamyan, Javier Camarena and I will sing works ranging from Rossini to Glinka, the solo dancer Anna Laudere will dance Saint-Saëns’ *Dying Swan*, accompanied by the cellist Julia Hagen. The fantastic violinist Maxim Vengerov and the orchestra of the Teatro di San Carlo from Naples are also part of the programme.



Cecilia Bartoli sings „Hai luli“, composed by **Pauline Viardot**, released on „Chant d’amour“

<https://umusic.box.com/s/5bvtg40mx9e3lxb0q51xe4wrhab9b>

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Pauline Viardot-Garcia (1821 – 1910)



Apart from personalities such as Isabella Colbran, Giuditta Pasta and Maria Malibran, who was stylized to the point of becoming an icon, it was her younger sister Pauline Viardot-García who had a lasting influence on European culture.

Pauline Viardot-García was born in Paris in 1821 as the daughter of two singers. Both she and her two considerably older siblings were taught by their father. At the age of seven, Pauline was at the beginning of a career as a pianist – taking lessons from Franz Liszt, among others. In 1832, however, this career ended abruptly when her father died and she was expected to continue the family's vocal tradition. In 1837 she made her singing debut in a concert in Brussels. While initially she remained the “sister of the famous Malibran”, she soon conquered the European stages. In her early years, she was a successful Mozart, Rossini and Donizetti performer. Thanks to her affability and command of foreign languages, she was a welcome guest in elegant salons from Paris to St Petersburg. During the course of her life, Pauline Viardot-García championed a wide variety of musical styles, promoting the works of Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Brahms, Wagner, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Massenet and even Gabriel Fauré. Her impeccable singing technique, which she passed on to successful students, allowed her to work in her profession for decades. Her felicitous marriage to the French theatre manager, author and art critic Louis Viardot advanced her career as a respected singer and established her role as a great patron of the arts, clear-sighted enough to bridge the years of fundamental change in culture from early Romanticism to impressionism and early modernism.

Photo: Pauline Viardot-Garcia © André Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, *Pauline Viardot*, 1862, albumin print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles





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ROLEX

Rolex's commitment to the arts dates back to the 1970s when New Zealand soprano Dame Kiri Te Kanawa became the first cultural Testimonee. This commitment has developed to include many other leading artists, prestigious institutions and festivals. Among its brand ambassadors are Cecilia Bartoli, Jonas Kaufmann and Plácido Domingo. In 2012 Rolex became a partner of the Salzburg Festival, enabling the Whitsun Festival to present staged opera productions again. The Festival is particularly grateful to Rolex for its additional financing of a presence in prestigious media such as *The Financial Times* London and *The New York Times*. The partnership has been extended through 2027.

Cecilia Bartoli at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival

Since 2012 Cecilia Bartoli has been the Artistic Director of the Salzburg Whitsun Festival; ever since, she has been planning programmes focusing on female figures.

In 2012 the theme was **Cleopatra** – Cecilia Bartoli sang the role of the Egyptian Queen in Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*.



The motto of the 2013 Whitsun Festival was **Sacrifice – Opfer – Victim**. The staged new production of Vincenzo Bellini's *Norma* won an International Opera Award in London in 2014 for the best new production.



The 2014 festival was a veritable Rossini feast – **Rossinissimo** was the motto, and Cecilia Bartoli sang the title role in the new production of *La Cenerentola*.

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Thus Do I Call Upon all the Gods was the motto of the 2015 Whitsun Festival, and Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* was celebrated with standing ovations from the audience after each performance.



In 2016 the story of **Romeo and Juliet** ran through the Whitsun Festival's programme like a red thread, starting with a new production of *West Side Story*.



Joy of Grief – this was the title under which George Frideric Handel's *Ariodante* was performed in 2017. Cecilia Bartoli starred in the trouser role, which transformed her from Ariodante as a knight in armour to a woman over the course of three acts.

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2018 saw the 150th anniversary of the death of Gioachino Rossini. The 2018 Salzburg Whitsun Festival was dedicated to his memory under the motto **1868 – Year of Ruptures**. In the musical comedy *L'italiana in Algeri*, Cecilia Bartoli embodied Isabella.



In 2019 the focus was on **Voci celesti – Heavenly Voices**, and George Frideric Handel's *Alcina* was the featured opera of the Salzburg Whitsun Festival, which commemorated the great castrato voices.





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THE 2020 SALZBURG WHITSUN FESTIVAL

Friday, 29 May

19:00 | Haus für Mozart

OPERA

GAETANO DONIZETTI

DON PASQUALE

Gianluca Capuano · Moshe Leiser / Patrice Caurier

Cecilia Bartoli · Peter Kálmán · Nicola Alaimo ·

Javier Camarena

Les Musiciens du Prince — Monaco

Philharmonia Chorus Vienna

Saturday, 30 May

15:00 | Mozarteum Foundation — Main Auditorium

ARIA CONCERT

ÉCOLE CLASSIQUE

GIOACHINO ROSSINI · GIACOMO MEYERBEER ·

CHARLES GOUNOD · GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Gianluca Capuano

Varduhi Abrahamyan · Cecilia Bartoli

Les Musiciens du Prince — Monaco

19:30 | Felsenreitschule

SACRED CONCERT

FAURÉ-REQUIEM

GABRIEL FAURÉ · JOHANNES BRAHMS

John Eliot Gardiner

Ann Hallenberg · Stéphane Degout

Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique

Monteverdi Choir

Sunday, 31 May

11:00 | Mozarteum Foundation — Main Auditorium

SONG MATINEE

JEUX D'ESPRIT — “VIVICA & VIARDOT”

PAULINE VIARDOT · GIOACHINO ROSSINI ·

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK · ROBERT SCHUMANN ·

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Vivica Genaux · Carlos Aragón



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18:00 | Großes Festspielhaus

BALLET OPERA

CHRISTOPH W. GLUCK / HECTOR BERLIOZ

ORPHÉE

John Neumeier · Gianluca Capuano

Marianne Crebassa · Edvin Revazov ·

Andriana Chuchman · Anna Laudere ·

Marie-Sophie Pollak

Hamburg Ballet John Neumeier

Camerata Salzburg · Bach Choir Salzburg

Monday, 1 June

15:00 | Haus für Mozart

DON PASQUALE see 29 May

20:00 | Großes Festspielhaus

GALA CONCERT

UNE AFFAIRE DE FAMILLE

GIOACHINO ROSSINI · FELIX MENDELSSOHN ·

MIKHAIL IVANOVICH GLINKA · FRANZ LISZT ·

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Marco Armiliato

Cecilia Bartoli · Varduhi Abrahamyan · Javier Camarena ·

Julia Hagen · Khatia Buniatishvili · Anna Laudere

Orchestra del Teatro di San Carlo