

‘OPERA CHALLENGE’ - TRY BEFORE YOU BUY AT OPERA HOLLAND PARK!

Opera Holland Park (OHP), owned and managed by The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, are giving people the chance to ‘try before you buy’ in their new ‘Opera Challenge’. As part of the company’s new **Inspire Project**, they are making one hundred tickets per night available to opera goers in a bid to get opera aficionados to expand their repertoire and to encourage absolute newcomers to enjoy a slice of late Italian opera.

The ‘Opera Challenge’ is allowing 700 people to watch this season’s OHP signature piece, *Francesca da Rimini*, to see if they like it or not: if they do they are invited to make a donation to the Friends of OHP charity who help fund the Inspire Project. If not, they can walk away and pay nothing.

Michael Volpe, General Manager of Opera Holland Park says:

“The ‘Opera Challenge’ innovative is a way to introduce new audiences to opera, a major aim of our **Inspire Project**. *Francesca da Rimini* is not for opera enthusiasts alone - it is, in reality, a perfect first time opera too and appeals to those who either don’t know or who listen to opera rarely.”

The OHP ‘Opera Challenge’ is part of their ongoing audience development and education programme, the **Inspire Project**, which is a comprehensive outreach, community and education scheme. The OHP ‘Opera Challenge’ will rely on an ‘honesty’ system, in order to provide enough donations from this initiative, to enable them to carry on the work of introducing the art form to young and old alike in the community.

Volpe continues:

“We understand that people may simply decide not to make a donation, but this is genuinely about encouraging people to try something different - and we are so confident that people will enjoy the piece that we are happy to offer the opportunity to so many.”

For further information about the ‘Opera Challenge’ visit
www.inspire.operahollandpark.com

Notes to editors:

Opera Holland Park has made a reputation over the years for producing some of the most exciting operas of the late Italian repertoire; *L’amore dei Tre Re* (Montemezzi), *Iris* (Mascagni) *Fedora* and *Andrea Chenier* (Giordano) *L’arlesiana* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* (Cilea) et al. These composers were trying to create a new Italian age of opera that sought to blend the new ‘sounds’ coming from Germany with the innate Italian sentiments of the time. The soundscape they created referred heavily to the work of Wagner and in particular his *Tristan*; some of the most inventive operatic writing in Italian history emerged from this movement.

OHP have especially made a success of producing works from this movement - the 'giovane scuola' composers - and their latest offering, the magnificent *Francesca da Rimini* by Riccardo Zandonai, opens on July 30th at the spectacular covered theatre in Holland Park. *Francesca* is an opera of mesmerising beauty and accomplishment. Starring international soprano Cheryl Barker and Julian Gavin (who recently excelled in ENO's *Tosca*) and a host of exciting emergent talent, OHP's *Francesca* is a rare treat and a significant operatic event this year.

Booking Information:

Patrons will be given a donation form with their tickets and are invited to make a minimum donation of £30 up to a maximum of the value of the tickets they have occupied. To apply, they simply need to telephone the box office and book their preferred date - tickets are strictly limited to 100 per performance (1,000 seat auditorium) so it is subject to availability. They will then receive tickets and an information pack. This challenge is not bookable online. Quote '**Opera Challenge**'

Francesca da Rimini (Zandonai)
July 30, August 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 at 7.30pm

Conductor **Phillip Thomas** with The city of London Sinfonia

Director **Martin Lloyd-Evans**

Designer **Jamie Vartan**

Lighting Designer **Mark Jonathan**

Francesca **Cheryl Barker**

Paolo Il Bello **Julian Gavin**

Samaritana **Kirstin Sharpin**

Giancotto **Jeffrey Black**

Maletestino **Jeffrey Lloyd Roberts**

Ostasio **George von Bergen**

Il giullare **Stephen Richardson**

Adonella **Madeleine Shaw**

Altichiara **Emma Carrington**

Biancofiore **Anna Leese**

Garsenda **Gail Pearson**

Ser Toldo Berardengo **Aled Hall**

Smaragdi **Clare Shearer**

La voce del prigioniero **Aled Hall**

Il torrigiano **William Robert Allenby**

Box office **0845 230 9769**

www.operahollandpark.com

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