

"Opera Holland Park has become the most exciting and adventurous company in the UK."
Bloomberg

LONDON'S 'THIRD' HOUSE CONTINUES TO PUSH THE OPERATIC 'ENVELOPE' WITH NEW PRODUCTION OF *FRANCESCA DA RIMINI*

Opera Holland Park 2010 season runs from 1st June to until 14th August

Opera Holland Park (OHP), owned and managed by The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, has enjoyed escalating critical acclaim since its first production in 1996. A major part of that acclaim has come for the hugely challenging repertory choices made over the years.

Now Opera Holland Park is preparing to unleash the latest offering from this rich musical stable; Riccardo Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*; a glorious, magnificent 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 such as Kirstin Sharpin and Anna Leese, OHP's *Francesca* is a rare treat and a significant operatic event.

Michael Volpe, General Manager of Opera Holland Park says:

"In my view, there are countless sections in *Francesca* which audiences love - they find themselves pinned to their seats by passages of music that are more beautiful than anything they may have already heard. It is a terribly exciting thing to see thousands of people discovering this for the first time!"

Francesca da Rimini is based on a Gabriele D'Annunzio poem which was itself extracted from a section of Dante's *Inferno*. It is all about war, love, duplicity and murder on a grand scale (typical of these composers) and brings to the stage a potent, shimmering soundscape with magical writing for the orchestra and chorus.

OHP have always chosen to present works whose in-built accessibility and beauty appeals to so many people. This, coupled with their artistic bravery and exciting repertoire choice, has resulted in people coming from all over the world to see their productions and lead to great acclaim from both national and international critics. It also highlights the significant appetite in the UK for these rich and sumptuous melodramas.

Francesca da Rimini is not for aficionados alone - it is also a perfect first time opera. It is vital that opera in the UK continues to explore and develop the repertoire in the way that Opera Holland Park. They are proud to offer yet another major new production that will do just that.

Please click [here](#) for a podcast by Michael Volpe on the opera or visit www.operahollandpark.com for more information.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

In recent years the company has produced new productions of Montemezzi's masterpiece of late, symbolist verismo *L'amore dei tre Re*, Cilea's *L'arlesiana* (twice) and *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Mascagni's *Iris* and *L'amico Fritz*, Giordano's *Fedora* and *Andrea Chenier* and Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*. The significant factor joining all of these works is the late Italian *giovane scuola* movement that flourished in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These composers, many of them influenced by Wagner, Strauss, Debussy and others 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.

BOOKING INFORMATION:

Francesca da Rimini (Zandonai)

July 30, August 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13

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

Tickets, £10, £41, 49, £55

Free tickets for 9-18 year olds and 60 plus. Please contact the box office to apply.

For more information or full details of the Opera Holland Park season, please contact Claire Richman at Midas Public Relations on claire.richman@midaspr.co.uk or 020 7361 7862