



EVENT DATE: Sunday, February 27, 2011

L.A. Opera music director James Conlon will conduct Rossini's zaniest comedy, which has been described as *The Barber of Seville* meets *Così fan tutte*. Nino Machaidze stars as Fiorilla, a woman determined to rid herself of the two men in her life—her exasperated husband and a tedious admirer—in favor of a more exotic suitor, a pompously beguiling Turk. The great Thomas Allen returns in the part of the poet Prodocimo.

ROSS SCIMECA of the **USC LIBRARIES** has selected the following resources to help you learn more about Rossini and his operas.

Introduction

Rossini composed nearly forty operas. *Il Turco in Italia* was composed in 1814 for La Scala in Milan. The libretto was written by Felice Romani. Both the composer and librettist were influenced by Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. The Los Angeles Opera's production by Christof Loy and Axel Weidaur sets this ever-fresh opera to present times.

Synopsis

An excellent synopsis, reproduced below, is provided by Bryce Westervelt of www.suite101.com.

ACT I

In a gypsy campy outside of Naples, Zaida (a Turk) is unhappily thinking of her fiancé, Selim, whom she has left behind and she may never see again. Prodocimo, a poet, has come to town in search of inspiration for a new comedy that he is writing about Don Geronio and his flighty and flirtatious wife Fiorilla. Just then, Geronio enters town seeking a gypsy to tell him his fortune about his wife, and whether or not he can change her ways. The news from the gypsy is bad as the stars are not in his favor. At the docks, Selim has arrived. While getting off of his boat, he sees Fiorilla and the two begin to flirt. Narciso, Fiorilla's past (and current) lover is upset by the flirtation. Selim decides that he is going to take Fiorilla back to Turkey and gets ready to leave. As they are about to leave, Zaida turns up and recognizes Selim. The two are reunited. Geronio and Narciso then arrive and a lovers' quarrel ensues. Prodocimo continues to observe and gain material.

ACT II

Selim offers to purchase Fiorilla from her husband, Geronio, but he refuses. Fiorilla then asks Selim to choose between her and Zaida. Selim hesitates and Zaida angrily leaves. Fiorilla then threatens to leave herself and Selim chooses her. Selim decides that he is going to abduct Fiorilla (since Geronio won't sell her) at this evening's masked ball. Prodocimo tips off Geronio of Selim's intentions. Zaida and Narciso arrive at the ball dressed identically to Fiorilla and Selim. Now everyone is confused because there are two Fiorillas and two Selims. The poet recommends to Geronio that the only way to win his wife's love again is to press for a divorce. Selim and Zaida leave for Italy together. Fiorilla is upset by Selim's departure and her husband's wanting a divorce. She asks for forgiveness and Geronio grants it. Geronio and Fiorilla are reunited. Prodocimo has the material he was seeking.

Books about Rossini and His Operas

The Operas of Rossini: Problems of Textual Criticism in Nineteenth Century Opera

By Philip Gossett

Music Library: **MT100.R67G8 1970a**

Rossini

By Richard Osborne

Music Library: **ML410.R809 1986**

The Cambridge Companion to Rossini

By Emanuele Senici

Music Library: **ML410.R8C17 2004**

Rossini

By Gaia Servadio

Music Library: **ML410.R8S26 2003**

Rossini: A Study in Tragi-Comedy

By Francis Toye

Music Library: **ML410.R8T73 1954**

Recordings of *Il Turco in Italia*

The Music Library has one excellent DVD from Arthaus Musik of the 2002 Zurich Opera production with Cecilia Bartoli and Ruggero Raimondi, conducted by Franz Welser-Most (**Call Number MUSDVD 295**).

With regard to CDs, the Music Library has three outstanding performances. The classic Maria Callas/La Scala performance on EMI from the mid-1950s with Nicoli Gedda is a must-listen (**Call Number 9549mus**). Sumi Jo's Philips performance from 1992, conducted by Neville Marriner with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Field, is very good (**Call Number 16312mus**). Also outstanding is a modern recording on Decca from 1998 with Cecilia Bartoli and the La Scala forces conducted by Riccardo Chailly (**Call Number 9102mus**).