

Teatro Lirico D'Europa
Giorgio Lalov, Artistic Director
Giuseppe Verdi's RIGOLETTO

Teatro Lirico D'Europa, the European opera touring company formed in 1988 by Giorgio Lalov, a former Bulgarian opera singer, has completed over 4,000 performances worldwide and 10 US tours. The well received company embarks on its 11th season of touring the US in fall 2009 and winter/spring 2010 with over 75 performances of several different full-scale operas, including a traditional version of Verdi's RIGOLETTO. The tour will travel to the most outstanding venues across the country as well as to the Island of Martinique! Soloists for the productions were chosen from auditions held in major cities around the world. They are all professionals in the midst of major operatic careers. Teatro Lirico holds the important distinction of being the only European opera touring company to present an annual season of opera in a U.S. theatre with its own subscription series. Since winter 2000, the popular company has presented over 16 different opera productions at the historic Majestic Theatre in Boston. The company currently performs there 9 times per year to many sold out audiences. Visit the web site representing Teatro Lirico D'Europa for an in-depth history of Teatro including hundreds of U.S. reviews, video clips, and a large photo gallery - www.jennykellyproductions.com

RIGOLETTO
by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
based on Victor Hugo's drama: LE ROI S'AMUSE
TEATRO LIRICO D'EUROPA
SOFIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

Artistic Director/Stage Director.....Giorgio LALOV
Conductor.....Krassimir TOPOLOV
Sets and Costumes.....Giorgio LALOV
Light designer.....Giorgio BAJUKLIEV
Super Titles.....MAESTRO INTERNATIONALE

Distribution

Artists are subject to change without notice

THE DUKE OF MANTUA.....	Igor BORKO
Tenor	
RIGOLETTO, the Duke's jester, a hunchback.....	Peter DANAILOV
Baritone	Nelson MAARTINEZ
GILDA.....	Melody ALESI
Soprano	Snejana DRAMCHEVA
	Larissa YUDINA
SPARAFUCILE, an assassin.....	Mikhail KOLELISHVILI
Basso	
MADDALENA, sister of Sparafucile.....	Viara ZHELEZOVA
MARULLO, a courtier.....	Hristo SARAFOV
Baritone	

Courtiers, ladies and gentlemen of the court, servants
Place and Time: 16th Century Mantua, Italy

THE ARTSISTS

Baritone, Peter DANAILOV: RIGOLETTO

Bulgarian baritone, Peter Danailov, graduated from the Vladiguerov State Music Academy in Bulgaria in 1995 and made his first stage appearances in Varna and Burgas, Bulgaria. Since then, he has become a regular soloist at the Sofia National Opera House. In 2000, he won first prize at the Boris Christoff International Competition. From 2003 to 2005, Mr. Danailov was a leading baritone soloist at the Opera Theatre in Bonn, where he sang the title role of MACBETH. He was also featured there in Janacek's FROM THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD, Verdi's LA FORZA DEL DESTINO and Tchaikovsky's EUGENE ONEGIN. Before that, he was in a production of Rossini's THE BARBER OF SEVILLE directed by Dario Fo in Munich and London.

Recently, Mr. Danailov has sung Germont in LA TRAVIATA and Sharpless in MADAMA BUTTERFLY at the Staatsoper in Hamburg. For seven consecutive seasons, he has been a guest soloist in Klagenfurt, Austria, singing Rodrigo in DON CARLO, Marcello in LA BOHÈME, Taddeo in L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI, Ashton in LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR, and Germont in LA TRAVIATA. At the Toscana Festival in Italy, he took part in LA TRAVIATA, PAGLIACCI, CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA, IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA AND CARMEN. He is also a frequent guest artist at the Auditorium of Palma de Mallorca. Last September, Mr. Danailov sang the role of Baron

Scarpia in TOSCA at the National Opera House of Kishnau, Moldova, and the title role in Verdi's RIGOLETTO at the Asta Opera Theatre in Malta.

Mr. Danailov's concert repertoire includes Orff's CARMINA BURANA, Bach's ST. MATTHEW PASSION and BRAHMS' REQUIEM. He has recorded with Bulgarian National Radio and Television

Baritone, Nelson MARTÍNEZ (Rigoletto)

Young Verdi baritone Nelson Martínez began his professional career in Cuba as principal soloist with the Rodrigo Prats Lyric Theater, and later with Cuban National Opera. At Cuban National Opera, Mr. Nelson performed the main principal roles of the Italian repertoire, Figaro, Enrico, Germont, Rigoletto, Alfio, Tonio, Silvio and Marcello. In zarzuela, Mr. Martínez has performed the roles of Mario, Vidal, Germán, Joaquín, J. de Eguía, Juan Pedro, Juan en Los Gavilanes, Lázaro in EL CAFETAL, José Dolores Pimienta in CECILIA VALDÉS and José Inocente in MARÍA LA O. Abroad, Mr. Martínez has performed in opera and concert in Russia, Korea, China, France, Portugal and Spain on tour with the National Cuban Opera. He also appeared in Bogotá and Mexico City.

Mr. Martínez has been the recipient of many awards and prizes, among them the Grand Prize in the Ernesto Lecuona International Competition for Young Singers and the Grand Prize in the Fourth National Rodrigo Prats in Memoriam Competition in Havana. He was also a winner in the Belle Voci Competition in Eugene, Oregon in 2004.

In the United States, Mr. Martínez has been heard as Figaro and Rigoletto with Miami Lyric Opera and with Sociedad Pro Arte Grateli, the leading zarzuela company in the United States, as Juan Pedro in LA ROSA DEL AZAFRÁN. In the summer of 2008, he sang Escamillo with Metro Lyric conducted by Maestro Anton Coppola. In September, he appeared with Opera Company of North Carolina as Tonio in I PAGLIACCI. In December 2008, Mr. Martínez participated in a gala concert with the Miami Concert Association in the title role in RIGOLETTO, reprising the character with Knoxville Opera in February 2009. In April 2009, he appeared with Teatro Grattacielo at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in the role of Il Capitano in Mascagni's IL PICCOLO MARAT. In February 2010, Mr. Martínez will take on the role of Enrico with Knoxville Opera, followed by RIGOLETTO in Baltimore.

Tenor, Igor BORKO: DUKE OF MANTUA

The lyrical colors of the young, Ukrainian tenor's voice and his passionate singing are well known in Europe. He always impresses the audience with clean diction, a sure technique, and stylistic phrasing. A gifted actor and first-class singer, he was educated at the Tschaikovsky Conservatory in Kiev, Ukraine. He has participated in master-classes there and at La Scala in Milan, Italy. Borko is currently a principal soloist at the State-Opera in Kiev and makes numerous guest-appearances with opera companies throughout Russia, Poland, Romania, The Czech Republic, Netherlands, France and Spain. His repertoire includes leading roles in the Italian, French and Russian operas. In 2006, Borko performed Alfredo in LA TRAVIATA and Rodolfo in LA BOHEME. with Teatro Lirico

on its winter US tour. He returns this season as Edgardo in LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR and he again sings Rodolfo IN LA BOHEME and the Duke in RIGOLETTO.

Bass, Mikhail KOLELISHVILI (Sparafucile)

Kolelishvili is a member of the Kirov Opera. He was born in Moscow and graduated from the State Conservatory of Tbilisi, Georgia, with a master's degree in vocal performance. In 1997, he became a soloist at the Tbilisi State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet. Two years later, he was a Laureate of the Republic Vocal Competition "Georgia-Tbilisi" and the next year he joined the Young Opera Singers' Academy of the Mariinski Theater. He won first prize at the Rimski-Korsakov Fifth International Competition for Young Opera Singers in 2002 and was a top prize-winner in the Third International Obratzova Competition for Young Opera Singers in 2003. In 2004, he won the Moniuszko Competition in Warsaw, Poland, as well as the Adamo Didur Prize for Bass. The following year he was a finalist in the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition in the United Kingdom. His repertoire includes all the bass roles in the Mozart and Verdi operas as well as Khan Koncha in Borodin's PRINCE IGOR, King Rene in Tchaikovsky's IOLANTA and the Tsar in Rimski-Korsakov's THE TALE OF TSAR SALTAN. He made his American debut with Teatro Lirico D'Europa and Mozart Festival Opera on their 2006-2007 US tours singing: Sparafucile in RIGOLETTO, The Commendatore in DON GIOVANNI, Raimondo in LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR, and Sarastro in THE MAGIC FLUTE.

Soprano, Larissa YUDINA (Gilda)

Possessed with lightning fast and accurate coloratura, soprano Larissa Yudina has been an audience favorite since her arrival at the Mariinsky Theatre in 1998. Ms. Yudina is a prizewinner of the Diaghilev Opera competition (1998), the Rimsky-Korsakov competition (1998, 2000) and the Elena Orbratzova competition (2005). She was also a diploma recipient from the Russian Ministry of Culture for performances at the Mariinsky Theatre. In 2006, Ms. Yudina was nominated for a Golden Mask (for best female role), Russia's most important theatre prize for Contessa di Folleville in IL VIAGGIO A REIMS.

Ms. Yudina has been a soloist of the Mariinsky Theatre since 1998. Her repertoire includes Rosina in IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA, Olympia in LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN, Queen of Shemakha in THE GOLDEN COCKEREL, the Nightingale in LE ROSSIGNOL, Gilda in RIGOLETTO and the Bird in SIEGFRIED. Ms. Yudina's roles also include Zerbinetta in ADRIANE AUF NAXOS, Amina in LA SONNAMBULA, the Queen of the Night in DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE, Konstanze in DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL, Nornia in DON PASQUALE and Musetta in LA BOHÈME.

In 2006, Ms. Yudina appeared in a DVD production of the Bastille Opera's (Paris) IL VIAGGIO A REIMS. In January 2009 she sang three performances of Leila in LES PÊCHEURS DE PERLES at Seattle Opera and is currently touring with the Mariinsky Theatre throughout the world in Il VIAGGIO A REIMS.

Soprano, Melody ALESI: GILDA

American soprano Melody Alesi is a native New Yorker who studied primarily with her mother, Sandra Alesi Giambalvo. An opera critic as recently described her "possessing a distinctive voice, she is an artist who takes the stage with style and intelligence and possesses the charisma of a world class opera star." Ms. Alesi is a lyric coloratura, specializing in the Bel Canto repertoire of Verdi, Donizetti, and Bellini. She recently triumphed with the Hong Kong Opera as Marguerite in FAUST. Equally at home in contemporary opera, 2007 marked her debut in Anton Coppola's opera SACCO AND VANZETTI with the Tampa Opera. Ms. Alesi was presented at the prestigious Bel Canto at Caramoor Festival where she sang the role of Luisa Miller under Maestro Will Crutchfield as well as numerous recitals with Composer/pianist Joseph Turrin. In 2003, she made her debut with Teatro Lirico D'Europa in the role of Gilda in Verdi's RIGOLETTO. She performed the role of Violetta with Teatro Lirico on their winter 2004 U.S. tour to outstanding acclaim and recently performed the role of Violetta for Teatro Lirico at L'Atrium Theatre on the island of Martinique. She will perform more Gilda's with the company during the 2009-2010 season.

Soprano, Snejana DRAMCHEVA: GILDA

Born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, Dramcheva graduated from the Dobrin Petkov Music School of Plovdiv where she studied voice with Ivanka Michaylova. She also graduated from Pancho Vladigerov Music Academy in Sofia where she studied Prof. Karnobatlova-Dobrevva. She made her artistic debut with the Plovdiv Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dobrin Petkov. In 1990, she made her first appearance on the operatic stage in Mozart's DIE ENTFUHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL (THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO) with the Sofia National Opera and Ballet's Opera Studio. During 1991-1993 she completed several European tours with the German touring company "Schlotte" as Gilda in RIGOLETTO, Violetta in LA TRAVIATA and Musetta in LA BOHEME. Awards include the second place prize at the Francesco Vignas competition in Barcelona, Spain, the Grand-Prix in Pamplona, Spain, the first-prize in Pavia, Italy, and the Audience-Grand-Prix at the Giuseppe Verdi Competition in Parma, Italy. She was a finalist in the Belvedere International Opera Competition in Vienna, Austria and has participated in the program of a numerous international festivals and concerts. Snejana Dramtcheva has made recordings for the Bulgarian National Radio and for companies in other countries. Her repertoire includes soprano roles in operas by Verdi, Bellini, Donizetti, Mozart, Puccini and others. In recent years she has been a frequent guest artist at opera stages in Milan, Barcelona, Bilbao, Lille, Madrid, Amsterdam, Paris, Munich, Tokyo, Valencia, Zurich, and other major European cities. Recently, in the US, she performed the role of Valencienne in MERRY WIDOW with Czech Opera Prague and Violetta in LA TRAVIATA with Teatro Lirico. During season 2008-2009 she performed the role of Pamina in DIE ZAUBERFLOTE with Mozart Festival Opera as well as Musetta in LA BOHEME and Lola in Cavalleria Rusticana with Teatro Lirico.

Mezzo-soprano, Viara ZHELEZOVA: MADDALENA

Zhelezova graduated from the National Conservatory of Music and joined the roster of the Bulgarian National Opera where she has performed leading mezzo soprano roles alongside such singers as Ghena Dimitrova, Nicolai Giuselev, Anna Tomova-Sintov and

others. She has appeared as a guest artist with opera companies throughout Eastern Europe and has been a principal soloist with Teatro Lirico D'Europa since 1992. She has enjoyed a huge success with Teatro Lirico on tour in the U.S. as Rosina in IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA and with the Czech Opera Prague as Prince Orlofsky in its lavish DIE FLEDERMAUS production.

Baritone, Hristo SARAFOV: MARULLO

Mr. Sarafov has been active on the stage for his entire adult life as a soloist in operetta, opera and as an actor. The talented baritone graduated from the National Academy of Music in Sofia and was immediately engaged by the Sofia National Opera for the role of Bartolo in Rossini's IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA. He has performed for many years with the Sofia National Opera and has staged hundreds of performances for Teatro Lirico D'Europa.

Conductor: Krassimir TOPOLOV

Although Topolov was born in Bulgaria, he received his musical education in Vienna, Austria. In addition to conducting hundreds of performances for Teatro Lirico D'Europa on tour in central Europe, he is a frequent guest conductor with opera companies in Bulgaria and other Eastern European opera countries.

Artistic Director/Stage Director: Giorgio LALOV

Co Founder of Teatro Lirico D'Europa and current General Manager/Artistic Director, Gueorgui Lalov (Giorgio) was born in Telesh, Bulgaria, in June, 1958. His father, "Lalo", a doctor, and his mother, Stoiyanka, an elementary school teacher and Bulgarian folk singer, were educated patrons of the arts. When Lalo Lalov died, Giorgio was only 9 years old, but because he was an excellent student, he had the good fortune to be accepted at an elite boarding school in the capital city of Bulgaria where all the lessons were taught in French. When he graduated from high school, he was fluent in French and English. That fall he entered the Bulgarian National Academy of Music and went on tour throughout Italy with a choir from the University. While in Milan, he auditioned for the famous International School for Young Opera Singers at La Scala. He was accepted, and went on to make his operatic debut at La Scala at the age of 25. After living in Italy for a short time, Lalov, became fluent in Italian. In 1986, while on tour with an opera company in France, he met his future business partner, Yves Josse, a former ballet dancer who was booking opera and ballet tours. The two hit it off. Giorgio had many resources. He spoke several languages, he was able to organize the creation of sets and costumes in Bulgaria and he put together an excellent orchestra and chorus. He also knew many fine opera singers in Bulgaria, central Europe, and the USA. By 1988 Josse and Lalov were collaborating on what was to become the most successful opera touring company in Europe. At the time of Josse's death in 1995, Teatro Lirico was averaging over 250 performances a season throughout Europe. In 1990 Lalov established the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. Since that time, it has been the orchestra and chorus for all of Teatro Lirico D'Europa's productions worldwide. Winter 2000 marked Teatro's first major American tour. The rest is history. The reviews from the 10 consecutive tours Teatro Lirico D'Europa has completed thus far in the U.S. speak for the high quality and consistency of the company. The fact that the company is able to tour with many different productions is

an indication of the very hard work, excellent organizational skills and unfailing dedication to the art of opera of Mr. Lalov. In May 2009 Mr. Lalov became the Artistic Director of the new BALTIMORE OPERA THEATRE, Inc. that will make it's home at the historic Hippodrome Theatre.

"I'm not alone in hoping that Giorgio Lalov, the talented opera singer turned creator of Teatro Lirico D'Europa stays happy and healthy and continues to bring us such magnificent productions. We can only hope to see more from this company in years to come." ILLINOIS TIMES - Ann Kerr

Synopsis of the Opera

Act I

Scene 1

At a ball at the ducal court of Mantua, the hunchbacked jester Rigoletto mocks the courtiers cuckolded by the profligate Duke, stirring them to plans of vengeance. Count Monterone appeals to the Duke for the return of his dishonored daughter, but is cruelly mocked by Rigoletto. Enraged, Monterone calls down a father's curse on the terrified jester.

Scene 2

Outside his house, Rigoletto encounters Sparafucile, a professional assassin, but has no need of his services. Rigoletto warns his daughter Gilda to remain concealed in their home. She does not reveal to him that she has fallen in love with a handsome young man she has encountered on her way to church. The object of her affections is the Duke, who appears as soon as Rigoletto has left, bribing Gilda's nurse to admit him and to speak well of him to Gilda. He tells her he is a poor student. After he leaves, the courtiers come to abduct Gilda, believing her to be Rigoletto's mistress. They trick Rigoletto into assisting them, assuring him that it is the Countess Ceprano they are abducting from the neighboring house. When he realizes what has happened, he is distraught. He remembers the curse.

20-minute intermission

Act II

The courtiers describe their abduction of Gilda to the Duke. He is delighted to discover that she has been brought to his palace and awaits him in his bedroom. Rigoletto now enters, feigning indifference but desperately seeking signs of the whereabouts of his daughter. When he realizes what has happened he first curses, then pleads with the courtiers for her return, but to no avail. Gilda appears en deshabille, and Rigoletto swears vengeance on the Duke.

Act III

Sparafucile's sister Maddalena has lured the Duke to a remote inn. Rigoletto has paid Sparafucile to kill the Duke and to deliver his body in a sack so that he may himself throw it into the Mincio. Rigoletto brings Gilda with him to spy on the inn, hoping to

reinforce the notion that the Duke is not a man of honor in affairs of the heart. Gilda is unimpressed. Rigoletto sends her home to change into men's clothing for their flight to Verona. Infatuated with the Duke herself, Maddalena begs her brother to spare him and to murder the jester instead. His sense of professional responsibility offended, Sparafucile refuses, but does go so far as to agree that if anyone else should happen to show up at the inn on this wild and stormy night, he will murder them instead. Gilda, returning and hearing all this, sees her chance to help the man she loves. She boldly walks up to the door of the inn, knocks, is admitted and promptly stabbed and stuffed into the sack for Rigoletto. Rigoletto is just about to throw the sack in the river when he hears the Duke still singing in the inn. Wildly he opens the sack to find his dying daughter, who with her last breath assures him that she will pray for him with her mother in heaven. Again, Rigoletto recalls Monterone's curse.

Understanding Verdi's RIGOLETTO by Jenny L. Kelly

Giuseppe Verdi produced RIGOLETTO in 1851. It was a work of profound majesty and visceral strength that began the great middle period of his career. In his early operas, Verdi honored the conventions of Italian opera. With RIGOLETTO he transformed them. The characters are all drawn with insight and compassion and maintain their musical individuality in ensembles as well as solos, nowhere more imaginatively than in the magnificent last act quartet that captured four voices in a blend of contradictory emotions.

In order to escape Austrian Censorship which was wide spread in Italy at the time Verdi composed RIGOLETTO, he used the play of Victor Hugo entitled 'The King Amuses Himself.' By changing the names of Francis I to the Duke of Mantua and Tribouletto to Rigoletto, Verdi was able to disguise frank commentary on a decadent society that would otherwise have been considered a scandal.

Before the opera begins, the Duke of Mantua, an absolute ruler who seduces women as he pleases, and his hunchback court jester, Rigoletto, his accomplice and henchman, have abducted Count Monterone's daughter and the unfortunate woman has committed suicide.

As the curtain is raised on Act I, in the court of Mantua, cruel and foolish men and women of pleasure flatter the Duke while dancing. They gossip about Rigoletto, whom they wrongfully suspect is secretly keeping a young lover in his home. The young woman in Rigoletto's house is in fact his daughter, Gilda whom he dearly loves. The relationship between father and daughter is at the heart of RIGOLETTO, a motif often revisited in the operas of Verdi, a man who sadly never achieved an estate of happy fatherhood in his own life. The courtiers conspire with the Duke to play a joke on Rigoletto. Believing that Gilda is Rigoletto's lover, the womanizing Duke disguises himself and takes advantage of her. Tragically, the naive Gilda falls in love with him. After realizing the Duke has seduced his daughter, Rigoletto tries to cover his despair and anger with jokes, but determines to take revenge and hires Sparafucile; an assassin, to kill the Duke. [Rigoletto loses his sense of life. Gilda was for him the only beam of light among the low passions

of his work, which he was forced by nature to do. This dilemma is the "curse" of Rigoletto. Verdi had first intended to entitle the opera THE CURSE, but later decided upon RIGOLETTO. The character of Rigoletto stands at the center of the opera in all his complexity and inconsistency. Deformed in outward appearance, he nonetheless cherishes a secret that makes up the better half of his nature; his emotions as an anxious, loving father. The original play has passages where the spoken word is inadequate to do justice to his feelings. In the opera, the eloquence of song and the intensity of the orchestral sound are essential in projecting the portrayal of the broken hearted father's suffering and the complex depiction of his mental conflict. In his notes Verdi wrote " For my part, I would like to see the character shown as deformed and ridiculous in outward appearance, but passionate and full of love within. It is for these qualities that I chose the subject." When Gilda understands that her father has hired an assassin to kill the Duke, she decides to die in his place. Disguised as a man, she replaces the Duke. To the play of Victor Hugo, Verdi adds the theme of predestination. Rigoletto is punished first by fate, by his physical deformity, and secondly because of his disgraceful position of "fool" in society. His conspiracy with the criminal Sparafucile and desire for revenge secure his tragic destiny. His beloved daughter dies because of his own assassination order. The story is a work of art presenting an excellent balance between the light and shadows of human emotions, between drama and comedy, between honesty and deception. As the drama gradually unfolds against this backdrop of contrasts, the truth emerges and the opera concludes with the (predestined) destruction of the unhappy heroes - Rigoletto and Gilda, who symbolically represent mans' relationship to his eternal soul. Rigoletto's deformity mirrors his internal spiritual crisis and imbalance. He betrays his own heart, resulting in the dissolution of his personality and the loss of his soul.
