

New 'Adventures' with Fred Plotkin

Julian Sachs (September 30, 2010)



As the classical music scene in New York picks up where it left off three months ago, opera expert Fred Plotkin leads the fourth season of talks, Adventures in Italian Opera, at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò of New York University.

It is the end of September and opera is in the air. New York's many companies are raising their curtains, offering a huge variety of productions to the city's different audiences. Subway stations are covered with posters advertising [The Metropolitan Opera](#) [2]'s new production of Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, the first of the German composer's four-piece mythological saga about the twilight of the Norse gods and the series of events that led to such a dramatic climax. Comprising approximately 15 hours of music altogether, this season will unveil only the first two of the four operas, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*.



Other highlights of the Met season will be new productions of Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov, Verdi's Don Carlo and La Traviata, Rossini's Le Comte Ory and Adams' Nixon in China, together with other twenty-one productions from past years. As usual, an almost endless list of opera superstars will be taking the stage at [Lincoln Center](#) [3].

For the fourth consecutive year, opera expert [Fred Plotkin](#) [4] will be helping New Yorkers to not lose themselves in this overwhelming maze by hosting a new season of talks at New York University's [Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [5], entitled Adventures in Italian Opera. Fred has treated his public for years by introducing stars from the past, present and future of the Met in the cozy 94-seat auditorium situated at 24 West 12th Street, in the heart of Greenwich Village.

The familiar and friendly environment of Casa

Italiana is ideal for these conversations. Fred and his guest (or guests) are able to discuss freely anything from personal history and anecdotes to fascinating immersions into the difficulties and stress of operatic training. The artists may comment on video and audio excerpts and help to decipher the codes of music, staging and production, while the public takes part in the discussion as well. And of course – as all [events](#) [6] at Casa Italiana – these appointments are all free and open to everyone.

In just a few days Fred will host the first special Adventure of this season by celebrating one of the greatest sopranos of the 20th century, [Renata Tebaldi](#) [7], who died in 2004 at age 82, after a 32-year-long career and 1,262 performances. Joining him on stage will be Mezzo-soprano [Mignon Dunn](#) [8], who sang with Tebaldi, artist manager and consultant [Ken Benson](#) [9], and Vice President & Managing Director of Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation **Robert Marx. October 7, 2010, 6:30pm.**

The second event of this year's series is also special, for – after having remembered an icon of the past – Fred will introduce on stage three upcoming artists on the occasion of their Met debuts in Puccini's La Bohème. Maestro [Roberto Rizzi Brignoli](#) [10] will be conducting all 17 performances of the opera, while soprano [Takesha Meshé Kizart](#) [11] and baritone **Fabio Capitanucci** will be singing the roles of Musetta and Marcello respectively. **October 29, 2010, 6:30pm.**

World famous bass [Ferruccio Furlanetto](#) [12] will join Fred

on stage while in town to sing the role of Philip II in Verdi's Don Carlo. He will also be singing the role of Fiesco in Verdi's Simon Boccanegra starting in January 2011. Born in Sacile, Italy, the 61-year-old singer made his debut at La Scala in 1979 and at the Met in 1980-81. Since then, he has sung in all the major opera houses of the world and is seen regularly in the States both at the Met and at the San Diego Opera. **November 30, 2010, 6:30pm.**

The first guest of 2011 will be [Aprile Millo](#) [13], one of the foremost exponents of the Italian soprano repertory. Millo, an Italian-American and a New Yorker, has spent most of her career at the Metropolitan Opera, although also appearing all over the world. Last year Fred hosted a conversation with another great Italian-American soprano from New York, [Catherine Malfitano](#) [14], as can be seen in the trailer **i-Italy** has put together for this season. **February 22, 2011, 6:30pm.**

Irish-American Mezzo-soprano [Joyce DiDonato](#) [15] doesn't

really need an introduction. Every Met-goer or Rossini fan in general has seen her star in the Bel Canto repertoire and will have the opportunity to see her this year alongside [Juan Diego Flórez](#) [16] in **Bartlett Sher's** new production of Rossini's Le Comte Ory, never performed before at the Metropolitan, as well as singing the role of the Composer in Richard Strauss' Ariadne auf Naxos. **March 30, 2011, 6:30pm.**

The title role of Ariadne will be sung by the sixth and final guest of Adventures in Italian Opera, Lithuanian soprano [Violeta Urmana](#) [17], who is a very well known interpreter of some of the towering roles of the Italian dramatic repertory. She will be also singing Tosca in March, alongside



Italian tenor [Salvatore Licitra](#) [18] and conducted by Met regular [Marco Armiliato](#) [19], another one of Fred's guests from last season, who, together with his brother – tenor [Fabio Armiliato](#) [20] - and sister-in-law – soprano [Daniela Dessi](#) [21] – constitutes the clips that were used in **i-Italy's** trailer. **April 13, 2011, 6:30pm.**

Such a list of important personalities present at free events is remarkable and could only be possible inside an institution like [New York University](#) [22]. Both opera lovers and those who are curious about the spectacular world of opera should save these dates and come witness these memorable events.

[Remembering Renata Tebaldi – October 7, 2010, 6:30pm](#) [23]

[A conversation with R. Rizzi Brignoli, T.M. Kizart and F. Capitanucci – October 29, 2010, 6.30pm](#) [24]

[A conversation with Ferruccio Furlanetto – November 30, 2010, 6.30pm](#) [25]

[A conversation with Aprile Millo – February 22, 2011, 6:30pm](#) [26]

A conversation with Joyce DiDonato – March 30, 2011, 6:30pm

A conversation with Violeta Urmana – April 13, 2011, 6:30pm

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