



Teatro Grattacielo
presents
Maria Callas: the 100th birth Anniversary

GASPARE SPONTINI

LA VESTALE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28TH 2023, 6:30PM
Gerald Lynch Theater, 524 W 59th St, New York, NY
10019



At Teatro Grattacielo, we are driven by a fundamental mission: to promote and preserve the performances of rare operatic masterpieces. This season, we are thrilled to align ourselves with the global celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the legendary soprano, Maria Callas. These momentous celebrations are graciously supported by UNESCO.

We invite you to embark on a journey into history as we revive the remarkable opera, *La Vestale*, composed by Gaspare Spontini. This particular opera holds special significance in Callas' career, as she mesmerized audiences during its performance on Teatro Alla Scala's opening night in 1954, brilliantly directed by the renowned Italian film director Luchino Visconti, has only graced the stage of the Metropolitan Opera once, way back in 1926.



Now, almost a century later, Teatro Grattacielo proudly brings the historic 1954 version of *La Vestale* back to the vibrant city of New York and the world through a captivating live streaming experience. Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 28th, 2023, as the esteemed Gerald Lynch Theater on West 57th Street becomes the stage for this momentous occasion. This exclusive performance will be presented in Italian with English subtitles, ensuring accessibility and immersion for all.

For this grand endeavor, we have assembled an extraordinary international cast: American soprano Indra Thomas, Irish tenor Thomas Kinch, and Sri Lankan mezzo Tahanee Alluwihare. Guiding this remarkable production will be the gifted Italian conductor, Christian Capocaccia. Sets and costumes are designed by Greek Artist Lydia Venieri.



Beyond the captivating performance itself, Teatro Grattacielo is committed to enriching the community through educational outreach initiatives. We have meticulously curated a series of engaging events both in the city and online, designed to illuminate the rich Italian libretto and the historical significance of *La Vestale*. These educational offerings aim to foster a deeper appreciation for the art form, ensuring its enduring legacy.

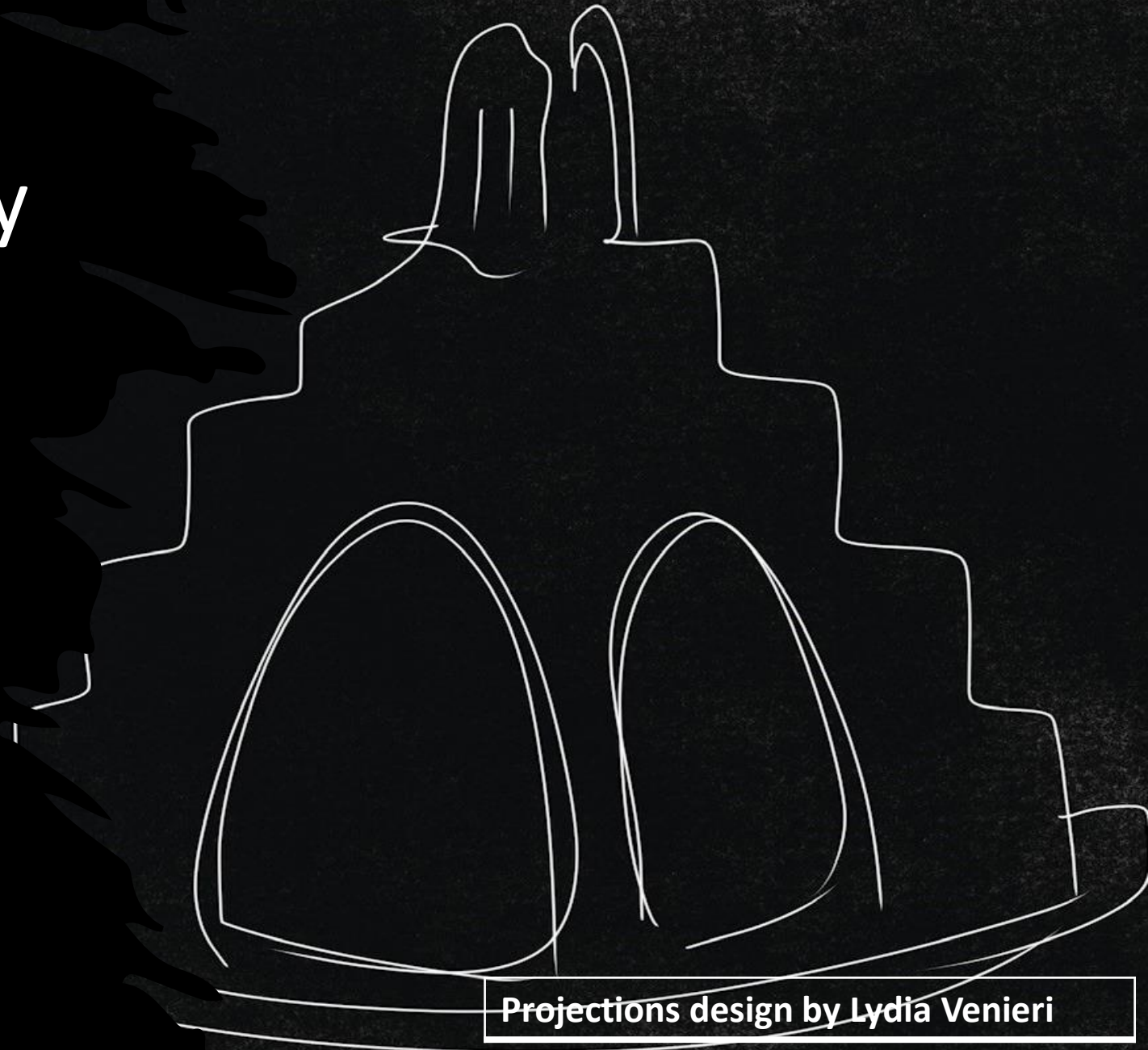
Join us in our pursuit of preserving rare operatic treasures and celebrating the immortal talent of Maria Callas. Your support and partnership will enable us to continue our mission and share these transcendent experiences with audiences far and wide. Together, let us keep the spirit of opera alive and flourishing.

Teatro Grattacielo: Illuminating the Past, Enchanting the Present, Shaping the Future

Composer & Performance History

LA VESTALE (The Vestal Virgin) is an opera composed by Gaspare Spontini to libretto by Étienne de Jouy. It takes the form of a tragédie lyrique in three acts. It was first performed on 15 December 1807 by the Académie Impériale de Musique (Paris Opera) at the Salle Montansier and is regarded as Spontini's masterpiece.[1] The musical style shows the influence of Gluck and anticipates the works of Berlioz, Wagner, and French Grand opera.

Important 20th-century revivals include those for Rosa Ponselle at the Met in 1925-26 and the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in 1933, for Maria Caniglia in Rome, 1942, and the 1954 production at La Scala with Maria Callas in the title role, which was the first opera staging by the film director Luchino Visconti. There followed other revivals for leading sopranos; Leyla Gencer in Palermo, 1969 and Rome, 1973; Renata Scottò in Florence, 1970; Montserrat Caballé in Barcelona in 1982; and Raina Kabaivanska in Genoa in 1984. Muti reproduced the original version at La Scala in 1993, and English National Opera mounted the opera in London in 2002.



Projections design by Lydia Venieri

Creative Team

- CHRISTIAN CAPOCACCIA | Conductor
- STEFANOS KORONEOS | Director
- JASON TRAMM | Chorus Master
- LYDIA VENIERI | Multidisciplinary Artist | Sets and Costumes
- ALLA MILCHTEIN | Rehearsal pianist & Assistant Conductor
- RICARDO MONGE | Poster designer



Artist: Lydia Venieri

STEFANOS KORONEOS, Director Artistic Director Teatro Grattacielo

Stefanos Koroneos, General Director and Artistic Director of Teatro Grattacielo, is a passionate advocate for multidisciplinary arts and creative direction. With a broad background as a performer, he possesses a deep understanding of the singer's perspective, enabling him to extract excellence from those he collaborates with. Koroneos focuses on consensus-building, whether in his directorial, collaborative, or administrative roles.

Noteworthy achievements include his highly acclaimed curation and direction of Mozart's *Idomeneo* and *Don Giovanni* in both Greece and the United States. Additionally, his visually captivating interpretation of Zandonai's *Giulietta e Romeo* in Battery Park City, NY garnered critical acclaim and earned him awards. Koroneos's upcoming projects feature two reprisals of *Don Giovanni*, as well as *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, and *La Vestale*, scheduled at esteemed venues such as Light Opera of New Jersey, La Tech in Monterrey, Mexico, the Cultural Center of Crete, the Megaron Thessaloniki, and Teatro Grattacielo.

Throughout his career, Koroneos has collaborated with opera's renowned directors and conductors, including Franco Zeffirelli, Fabrizio Melano, Moisés Kaufman, and Richard Bonyngé. Building upon their expertise and vision, he has developed a distinctive directorial style of his own.



LYDIA VENIERI, multidisciplinary artist SETS AND COSTUMES

Venieri is well known for her evocative sculpture installations which bridge mythology with current events, and for her ability to combine humor with self-reflection on human conditions in our times, through her characters that are taken from mythology, history, fairy tales and daily life. In her stories dreams reinforce reality and reality reinforce dreams.

The provocative visualizations of the universe of Venieri's work offer a Potnian statement about the world in flux in which we live.

She has had many exhibitions around the world.

She has been noted as;

"Lydia Venieri erects entire mythologies and symbolic systems from the already phantasmagoric world of news media. Her stories are played out using dolls and childlike imagery to counter media dementia, in painting, drawing, photography, video and the internet. Theogony explicates Venieri's universe surveying two decades of work; work of one of the most celebrated and visionary Greek artists of our time.



CHRISTIAN CAPOCACCIA CONDUCTOR

Recognized as an “energetic” performer by The New York Times, Italian conductor Christian Capocaccia has distinguished himself as an artist of keen insight and musicianship. His ease on the podium and comfortable coaching style with musicians and singers have made him a favorite with orchestras, opera companies, and vocalists.

The 2022-2023 season is Maestro Capocaccia’s first season as Artistic and Music Director of both Syracuse Opera and Tri-Cities Opera. He leads performances of *The Medium* and *Le nozze di Figaro*. In the summer of 2023, he debuts *Pagliacci* at the Pittsburgh Festival Opera, followed by the rarely performed *La Vestale* with Teatro Grattacielo, where he also conducted Zandonai’s *Giulietta e Romeo* in 2022. He made a company debut conducting the inaugural production of *L’Orfeo* by Monteverdi with Orpheus PDX.

The 2021-2022 season saw Maestro Capocaccia guiding Syracuse Opera out of the pandemic into a strategic partnership with Tri-Cities Opera in *La Cenerentola*. Under his baton Syracuse Opera presented *Der Schauspieldirektor* and *The Ballad of the Brown King*.

Christian Capocaccia’s 2019-2022 seasons as Artistic and Music Director of Syracuse Opera was interrupted by the pandemic after he conducted *Così fan tutte*, and *Candide*. Other credits include a new production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the Curtis Institute of Music and his debut with The Württembergische Philharmonie conducting in both Stuttgart and Reutlingen. He returned to Italy for a production of *L’elisir d’amore* with performances throughout Tuscany.



Cast

- INDRA THOMAS | Giulia
- TAHANEE ALUWIHARE | La Gran Vestale
- KYLE OLIVER | Cinna
- ERIC LINDSEY | Il Sommo Sacerdote
- RICK AGSTER | Un Aruspice
- HYUNSOON KIM | Un Console



Costume design by Lydia Venieri

INDRA THOMAS

soprano –JULIA

Considered one of the foremost Aida's in the world today, Ms. Thomas has performed at many of the world class opera houses and venues, such as the Metropolitan Opera and the Vienna State Opera; she has performed at prominent venues here in the US, France, Germany, Spain and England, including the Royal Albert Hall and Carnegie Hall. Among numerous top orchestras with which she has appeared are the New York Philharmonic, the London Symphony and Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra – as well as leading orchestras in Paris, Spain, Brazil, the Netherlands, Japan, Finland, South Korea, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi, Boston, Cleveland and Detroit. Ms. Thomas has graced several famous music festivals such as the Bregenz Festspiele in Bregenz, Austria, Chorégies , d'Orange in France and the Proms Summer Festival in London.



TAHANNE ALUWIHARE

mezzo-soprano

LA GRAN VESTALE

Hailed as “impeccable” and praised for her “dusky instrument”, Sri Lankan-American mezzo soprano Tahanne Aluwihare is regularly sought out for her unique vocal timbre and vibrant stage presence.

In the 2020-2021 season, Ms. Aluwihare made her Tri-cities Opera debut in Kamala Sankaram’s live streamed virtual-reality opera, *Miranda*, where she played the role of Anjana. She also sang Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* with Boston Camerata, in a filmed version of the opera, and returned to Opera Idaho for their 2021-2022 season premier gala concert, *Opera in the Park*. In the same season, she made her debut with Cambridge Chamber Ensemble in the title role of Holst’s seldom performed opera, *Savitri*.

In the 2022-2023 season, she makes her debut with Opera San Jose and returns to Opera Idaho and Boston Camerata.

In previous seasons, Ms. Aluwihare has worked with Opera Memphis, Charlottesville Opera, Opera Idaho, and City Lyric Opera, among others.



THOMAS KIRCH

tenor – LICINIO

Tenor Thomas Kinch is a 2022 Associate Artist for Welsh National Opera and a recent graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. In 2021 he participated in Dolora Zajick's Institute for Young Dramatic Voices as an Emerging Artist, working with renowned teachers from the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, and Deutsch Oper Berlin. He will return to the Institute this year. He was also a 2021 New Generation Artist with Iford Arts and performed Canio in *Cavalleria rusticana*/ *Pagliacci*.

This year, he will return to Opera Bohemia to sing Pinkerton in *Madam Butterfly* and in May, will travel to Sicily to work with renowned tenor Salvatore Fisichella.

Other recent engagements have included Turiddu in *Cav & Pag* with Edinburgh Grand Opera, Alfredo in *La traviata* and Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* with Opera Bohemia, and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with North Wales Opera.

While studying at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Opera School, Thomas performed Father Grenville (*Dead Man Walking*), Gerrardo (*Gianni Schicchi*), Sam Kaplan (*Street Scene*) and Satyavan (*Savitri*). Oratorio and concert appearances have included singing the role of Walter Widdup in Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* and performing the Verdi Requiem *Ingemisco* for the International Holocaust Memorial Service.



KYLE OLIVER

baritone- CINNA

Heralded as a “ripe baritone that makes one sit up and wish for more,” Kyle Oliver has enchanted listeners time and again over the course of his career. Recent performances include Zurga in Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers* with Sarasota Opera as well as a concert preview of American one act operas with Little Opera Theater of New York at NYC’s Merkin Hall. Previous operatic roles include Junius in Britten’s *The Rape of Lucretia* with Loft Opera in New York City and Lincoln Center’s reopening as Fiorello in Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Teatro Nuovo. Oliver frequently performs with Pittsburgh Opera, most recently creating the role of Dave Hoskins in the world premiere of *The Summer King*, a story detailing the life of legendary Negro League baseball star Josh Gibson.

In 2023 the baritone joined Opera Theatre of St. Louis for their New Works Collective, sang Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* with White Snake Projects, debuted two roles with Little Opera Theatre of New York’s production of *American One Acts* as Bob in *Highway 1 USA* and Brack in *Down In The Valley*. This autumn he will make a role and company debut as Cinna in Spontini’s rarely performed verismo gem, *La Vestale* with Teatro Grattacielo. In 2024 he performs Lord Ashton in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with St. Petersburg Opera, and Belcore in *L’Elisir d’amore* with Annapolis Opera.

Kyle’s 2022 engagements include *Méphistophélès* and Ramiro in *Faust et Hélène* and *L’heure Espagnol* with New Camerata Opera, and company and role debuts as Johannes Zegner in *Proving Up* by composer Missy Mazzoli and Bob in *Highway 1 USA*, by William Grant Still at the Opera Ithaca Festival. He also appeared with the Glacier Symphony as bass soloist in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.



LOCATION

Gerald Lynch Theater, 524 W
59th street, New York, NY 10019

Since opening its doors in 1988, the Gerald W. Lynch Theater has been an invaluable cultural resource for John Jay College and the larger New York City community. The Theater is dedicated to the creation and presentation of performing arts programming of all disciplines with a special focus on how the artistic imagination can shed light on the many perceptions of justice in our society. The Theater is also a member of CUNY Stages, a consortium of 16 performing arts center located on CUNY campuses across New York City.

The Gerald W. Lynch Theater hosts a broad spectrum of events including television events such as Comedy Central Presents, Premium Blend and Live by Request, theater and dance including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater/Ailey II, Lincoln Center Festival, The Actors Fund and private events including tapings for television and film, conferences and corporate meetings.

