

Press Release

Debut on 6 August: George Petrou as conductor and stage director with Vivaldi's "Il Giustino" at Drottningholms Slottsteater

It is like a feast with exquisite ingredients: On 6 August, Greek conductor and director George Petrou will make his debut at Sweden's Drottningholms Slottsteater. Antonio Vivaldi's opera "Il Giustino" will be staged in the historical ambience of the Unesco World Heritage Site with an international star cast. Further performances will follow between 8 and 20 August.

"Il Giustino" was one of Vivaldi's greatest operatic successes and will be the first Vivaldi opera to be staged in Sweden. Drottningholms Slottsteater offers a special setting for the trials and tribulations of the peasant Giustino, who made it to co-ruler of the Byzantine emperor: Not only has the building been perfectly preserved in its original Baroque state, but even the entire theatre machinery is as it was when it was built in 1766 and is run by muscle power. Ideal conditions for Vivaldi's opera, which brings all kinds of theatre magic on the stage, including a ghost, a sea monster and spectacular set changes. George Petrou gives the stage action a special reference to the setting:

"When I arrived at Drottningholms Slottsteater for the 1st time, I felt the history of the place overpowering me. The glory of its past is evident in every corner of this theatre. Even the spirit of Gustav the 3rd, the "Theatre King" as is known in Sweden is still extremely present. (...) Inspired by the sparkling personality of Gustav the 3rd, we decided to move the action of our "Giustino" to the Gustavian times, creating a fictional baroque fantasy and allowing the Drottningholm Theatre to again play its role as a "companion" to the King's everyday life. All 17th century court elements are there in Vivaldi's opera: ambition, intrigue, love, sex, politics, wars, vanity and lots of rococo lightness and humour, all happening in this unique theatre which works its magic in the lives of the people."

George Petrou, internationally renowned as a Grammy nominee and ECHO Klassik award winner, is one of the leading specialists in the field of baroque opera. He is active both as a conductor as well as a director. Since 2022, he has been artistic director of the Göttingen International Handel Festival and his production of Handel's "Cesare in Egitto" was enthusiastically received internationally. In addition, he is the director of the Athens based orchestra Armonia Atenea. Future highlights include productions at Oper Köln, Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, Oper Zurich, Komische Oper Berlin, and concert appearances at La Scala Milan, Teatro la Fenice Venice, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Theater an der Wien (Vienna). To Sweden, he is no stranger either: In 2015, he conducted Handel's "Serse" at the Royal Opera House in Stockholm.

For the Drottningholm production of "Giustino", George Petrou has assembled an impressive cast of singers from international stars of the baroque scene such as Yuri Mynenko, Raffaele Pe and Juan Sancho, together with the outstanding young Swedish singers Johanna Wallroth and Sofie Asplund. He will conduct the Drottningholm Theatre Orchestra on period instruments, with Vivaldi's rich instrumentation including a rare psaltery. What Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung wrote about "Cesare in Egitto", seems to also apply here: "What distinguishes Petrou's music-making (...) can also be experienced on stage: A spirited approach, a balance between the joy of detail and a wide breath, and finally a delight in stylistic freedom."

About the programme:

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)
Il Giustino (1724)

Drottningholms Slottsteater

Premiere: Saturday, 06 August 2022, 16.00, further performances see below

Conductor | **George Petrou**

Director | **George Petrou**

Costumes and stage design | **Paris Mexis**

Light | **Stella Kaltsou**

Mask and wigs | **Rebecka Andersson**

Cast:

Anastasio | **Raffaele Pe**

Arianna | **Sofie Asplund**

Giustino | **Yuriy Mynenko**

Leocasta | **Johanna Wallroth**

Vitaliano | **Juan Sancho**

Andronico | **Linnea Andreassen**

Amanzio | **Federico Fiorio**

Polidarte | **Jihan Shin**

Fortuna, Ghost | **Elin Skorup**

Dancers | **Stacey Aung, Pontus Sundset**

Statisticians | **Felix Hägg, Ruben Lundström, Mawlawi Rahem**

The Drottningholm Theatre Orchestra

Further performances: Monday, 8 August ; Wednesday, 10 August ; Friday, 12 August, 7.00 p.m. each day.

Sunday, 14 August, 4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 16 August ; Thursday, 18 August, 7.00 p.m. each day

Saturday, 20 August, 4.00 p.m.

Introductory events with theatre and music scholar Sophie Helsing one hour before the performance in the Déjeuner Salon.

Information and interesting facts about George Petrou and Drottningholms Slottsteater can be found on the following websites:

<https://georgepetrou.com/>

<https://dtm.se/il-giustino>

Picture material for download can be found under the following link. Use for media purposes with mention of the photographer's name is free.

https://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/drottningholms-slottsteater/latest_media/tag/il-giustino

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