

The Palazzetto Bru Zane presents

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PALAZZETTO
BRU ZANE
CENTRE
DE MUSIQUE
ROMANTIQUE
FRANÇAISE

ROBERT LE DIABLE

GIACOMO MEYERBEER (1791-1864)

Opéra in five acts by Giacomo Meyerbeer. Libretto by Eugène Scribe and Germain Delavigne. Premiered at the Opéra de Paris on 21 November 1831.

Recording at the Auditorium of the Opéra National de Bordeaux, from 20 to 27 September 2021.
Éditions Ricordi

Release date: 8 October 2022



Marc Minkowski, *direction*

ORCHESTRE NATIONAL BORDEAUX AQUITAINE
CHŒUR DE L'OPÉRA NATIONAL DE BORDEAUX

John Osborn, Nicolas Courjal, Amina Edris, Erin Morley,
Nico Darmanin, Joel Allison, Paco Garcia

3 CDs / 168 pages (texts and libretto)

Essays by Alexandre Dratwicky, Robert Ignatius Letellier
and Pierre Sérié

Bilingual libretto and sung texts in French and in English

Bru Zane Label

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Recording available for download and streaming on digital platforms
with libretto available for download online

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French *Grand Opéra* specialist Marc Minkowski has at last recorded *Robert le Diable*, a jewel of the genre. A triumph at its premiere in November 1831, it captivated contemporaries, and its influence stretched as far as Verdi and Wagner. An imposing international cast brings this repertory cornerstone to life: John Osborn portrays a Robert at once valiant and tender, Amina Edris reveals her full resources in the perilous role of Alice, while idiomatic performances by Nicolas Courjal, Erin Morley and Nico Darmanin complete a line-up offering the most vivid contrasts of *tessitura*. Against the backdrop of a medieval legend, this fantastical work depicts a confrontation between Good and Evil, pitting against each other a group of protagonists torn between desire and duty. A foundational score of musical Romanticism – performed more than 750 times in the nineteenth century at the Paris Opéra alone – is now gradually emerging from oblivion.

A devil of a hit

The Palazzetto Bru Zane's series of CD-books has already made several incursions into the French repertory of *Grand Opéra*, viewed in a broad perspective. With *Robert le Diable*, the series opened its doors to a monument of the genre that is internationally known even though it has not been often recorded. This work encapsulated the taste of an entire era and was the model adulated (or sometimes endured in spite of themselves) by at least two generations of composers. This new volume will undoubtedly be followed by other recordings of famous works, but rarities will continue to feature regularly in this series by Bru Zane Label, which celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2022.



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THREE QUESTIONS TO MARC MINKOWSKI

How would you explain your interest in French Grand Opéra?

The first *Grand Opéra* I ever conducted was... *Phaëton*, by Lully. There are key elements in opera, from *Cadmus* and *Padmâvatî*: declamation, dance, grandiose performances. When Berlin invited me to conduct *Robert le Diable* in the year 2000, it didn't feel like a stretch. Lully – Rameau – Gluck – Meyerbeer: I was amazed by the path I was taking.

What is your relationship with *Robert le Diable* ?

Robert le Diable was the first Grand Opéra as well as the first opera by Meyerbeer that I studied. Twenty years ago, in order to conduct it I gave up... *Tristan*! I love the ritual it implies, the yieldedness theatre requires, its cinematic aspect, fantasy literature, heroic action, singing, storytelling, sound experience: Robert has it all. In Berlin, we performed the opera without cuts, which was somehow utopic since this genre does not require to sing a text that would be cast in stone. For the CD-book we searched for the ideal text, and decided to contract two transition scenes allowing to include Robert's aria that was added in Act II in 1838 for the tenor Mario.

What are your upcoming projects in relation to this repertoire?

This year I will conduct *La Juive* by Halévy that I have been preparing for years, and soon – I hope – *Don Carlos*, the ultimate masterpiece of this genre. I would like to record *Les Huguenots* for which I think that I have both the necessary rage and the hindsight. *Grand Opéra* requires stamina and mastering conducting large ensembles; it requires a vision, an interpretation that embrace the work as a whole even if it may seem a bit incoherent at times – what Wagner labelled “effects without causes”. I, on the other hand, perceive a well-organized cosmos from the first to the last note. To share this vision would be my main goal.

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