

NEWSLETTER 07

AUTUMN WINTER 2012

GEORG
SOLTI
ACCADEMIA

ANGELA GHEORGHIU BECOMES
AN HONORARY ARTISTIC PATRON
OF THE GEORG SOLTI ACCADEMIA



A golden summer for the Georg Solti Accademia started in Caserta in June with two concerts generously hosted by Patsy and David Maude-Roxby the Duke and Duchess of Fragnito, performed by alumni Teresa Gevorgyan (soprano, 2011), Matilda Paulsson (mezzo-soprano, 2006), Florian Cafiero (tenor, 2012) and Ross Ramgobin (baritone, 2012). The first concert was held in the exquisite baroque interior of the Teatro Reggia, part of the town's magnificent palace. The performance was followed by a dinner in the spectacular ballroom. On the second evening there followed another concert in the magical environment of the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale in Fragnito.

Though the weeks preceding these concerts had brought hail and snow to southern Italy, we were blessed with fine weather as well as much enthusiastic praise for the Solti singers, particularly from a strong Australian contingent, who are hoping to hold a following event "down under" for the benefit of the Accademia.

Next year we plan to repeat another weekend at Caserta. One of the concerts, with baritone Roderick Williams singing with the alumni of the Solti Accademia, will take place in the palace's beautiful English gardens.

At the end of June two weeks after the Caserta weekend, we welcomed in Castiglione the new students for the 2012 Accademia masterclasses. The three master coaches were Angela Gheorghiu, Richard Bonyngue and Dennis O'Neill, who generously shared with the students their wealth of singing technique, experience and knowledge over the ensuing three weeks. This was Ms Gheorghiu's first visit to the Accademia, we were especially delighted that as a mark of her gratitude for the part Solti played in her own early career and her respect for the work of the Accademia, she has accepted becoming an honorary artistic patron of the GSA. She will also sing with the World Orchestra for Peace this October in two concerts; one in New York and the second in Chicago on what would have been Sir Georg's 100th birthday October 21st.

We are very pleased with our "Solti Centennial" CD of Italian Songs which was recorded earlier this year in London's Henry Wood Hall. My thanks go to all the alumni and the musicians who made this possible – particularly Richard Bonyngue, who coached the singers during the sessions; Pepi Ferrari, who translated many of the songs with her customary meticulousness; and our Artistic Director Jonathan Papp, for his flawless and sensitive piano accompaniment.

We are very much looking forward to the release of Decca's tribute to Solti 100, the proceeds of which are being dedicated to the Solti Accademia. I would like to express special gratitude to all those involved in this project especially our board members, Paul Findlay and Jack Mastroianni, Jon Tolansky who wrote the illuminating booklet notes and Raymond McGill from Decca, for their dedication and patience which made the release possible. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Clive Barda for so generously allowing us to use his wonderful photographs of the Accademia.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank all our sponsors, in particular Mr and Mrs John Whittaker, The Rolex Institute in Geneva and the Nando Peretti Foundation, each of whom have believed and continue to believe in the mission of the Accademia.

Candice Wood

Executive Director of the Georg Solti Accademia



REPORT ON OUR ACTIVITIES FROM JONATHAN PAPP, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



The concerts and the dramatic preparation leading up to them, courtesy of our wonderful director, Alexander Zeldin, were even more of a spectacle than previously. Alexander had also lifted the presentation still further by bringing in a lighting designer, Marc Williams, from the National Theatre in London. The Solti Piazza has never looked so splendid as it did for the first of the Solti 100th Birthday concerts that will take place around the world. Both the final concerts culminated with the most rousing performance of the Easter Hymn from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, with the massed choir of the GSA, a four-hand piano arrangement, organ, and all conducted by one of our student répétiteurs.

Jonathan Papp

Artistic Director of the Georg Solti Accademia

Angela Gheorghiu becomes honorary board member of the GSA

Final concert in Piazza Solti Castiglione della Pescaia

In this centenary year of the birth of Sir Georg Solti, we celebrated in style. Two of our past stars revisited us: Richard Bonyngé and Dennis O'Neill, but we also had to add something extra to the equation. Who better to celebrate such an important marker for the Accademia than one of his most famous protégées: the soprano Angela Gheorghiu? All of this was capped off with a return to our original title: the Georg Solti Accademia.

The course began 'gently', with myself and Pepi Ferrari preparing the students for the demands we knew would be made of them by our visiting stars. Richard Bonyngé was the first to join us. Everyone was on their mettle, but rose to the occasion, and Richard remarked that he had never taken part in master classes where all twelve singers were of such a consistently high standard, and he would be so interested to know of their progress and future activities. The students capitalised on his vast knowledge of bel canto by bringing a wide range of repertoire, including - for the first time at the GSA - Bellini's *Il Pirata*.

Dennis O'Neill arrived with a fantastic energy, galvanising all the students and helping them with his precise technical know-how and musical suggestions. The students gave their all, but we could see that they were going to need their final day off before the arrival of Ms Gheorghiu.

These were the first master classes that Angela had ever led and all of us at the GSA were greatly honoured and flattered that this was the place at which she chose to begin. Her visit made for a very intense three days, culminating in the filming of a master class for BBC4, for which Angela had hand-picked five singers for the limited time available. Each of the three days was filled with fascinating lessons, the repertoire rapidly being swapped, sung, pushed aside, and changed.

The students struggled to keep pace, but succeeded. One even managed to move Angela to tears with her singing, for positive reasons! Angela pulled no punches, but could not have been kinder to all the singers, and she always had something constructive to say.





THE STUDENTS TALK ABOUT THE 2011 ACCADEMIA

FLORIAN CAFIERO

Learning about bel canto style alongside its best specialists, surrounded by the sound of the Italian language, was a chance you only get once in a lifetime. The course also offered the opportunity to work with vibrant and talented individuals from all over the world, seeing them work together as a group and as excellent role models, motivating and inspiring each other. Being immersed in such a friendly yet challenging environment has certainly offered an exciting academic and professional experience.

CHRISTINA GANSCH

I was a bit nervous in the first days of the course because I realized how many excellent singers were attending. But this fear disappeared when I got to know all these wonderful people and I am glad to say that during those three weeks I made some very good friends.

The master classes and all the musical work were at the highest level! It was great to have a vocal coach like Paolo and the two wonderful language teachers Pepi and Corradina. Jonathan Papp is such a great person and musician: he was there to help me whenever I was in trouble, both musically and personally, and I am really glad to have had the chance to get to know him closer during the course. It was an honour for me to have the opportunity to work with Angela Gheorghiu, Richard Bonyngé and Dennis O'Neill. The work with Dennis especially was just amazing - he seems to know the answer to every vocal or technical question!

LUIS GOMES

The opportunity of spending three weeks with eleven other singers and seeing how they live and work provided an impressive lesson in what you can lose or gain depending on your attitude towards the course. It was a very good opportunity to understand what you need to do to succeed in this profession. The course has given me an understanding of what good bel canto singing is meant to be, taking into consideration the importance of the words, the details of the score and, even more important, the heart, passion and charisma that you have to infuse into your singing so that you 'make people dream through your performing'.

GÜLBIN GUNAY

Three fantastic weeks at the GSA brought me one step ahead towards a life as a professional artist. The faculty offered a three-week intensive programme 'customized' for my personal development and thereby contributed to the development of my career. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who made GSA a 'place where dreams come true'.

LUKASZ HAJDUCZENIA

It was very helpful to witness the process of creation and interpretation not only during my lessons but also those of the other singers. This kind of experience developed my musicality and vocal technique, showed me different points

of view. For sure, the memory of my lessons with such a conducting legend as Richard Bonyngé will stay in my mind for a long time. His way of working is a compilation of all the basics of music: phrasing, articulation, the colour of the sound. Unforgettably exciting were the master classes with stars such as Angela Gheorghiu and Dennis O'Neill: these sessions led me to discover new aspects of vocal technique.

ARSHAK KUZIKYAN

I have learnt and discovered some crucial things about bel canto thanks to amazing coaches working with me at the Accademia. Each of them has had a big influence on my technique. I have found myself an utterly different person after these three fascinating weeks. I had a thrilling opportunity to attend master classes with Dennis O'Neill, Angela Gheorghiu and Richard Bonyngé, as well as spending some time with them, sharing ideas and enjoying their inspiring company. That was a big step forward in my career and personal development.

SARAH-JANE LEWIS

Master classes, individual voice and language coaching proved to be challenging at times but this is all necessary training for the young professional. The GSA course really shows young singers how to work under pressure.

I enjoyed every element of the course, particularly the master classes and concerts. I also feel I have gained a new insight into bel canto style and singing in Italian because of the thorough language coaching I received. I wish I could join the course again next year - and the year after that!

ROSS RAMGOBIN

The intensive three-week course was a hugely rewarding experience that focused on many aspects of Italian singing: conventions, vocal technique, and interpretation of text, Italian pronunciation and stagecraft. It complemented my conservatoire study perfectly and it was a privilege to work on the bel canto repertory in such detail with some of the world's greatest artists. Particular highlights for me were working with Dennis O'Neill, Paolo Specca, Pepi Ferrari and Jonathan Papp.

The course not only exposed lots of areas to improve upon, but also built on my strengths as a performer. What a challenging few weeks! Last, but not least - Castiglione della Pescaia is the ideal setting for the course: a place that Georg Solti loved so much.

GULNARA SHAFIGULLINA

The bel canto repertory is my favourite - a sphere where my voice feels most comfortable and expressive. I learnt a lot at the Accademia about Italian diction and pronunciation, as well as many detailed ways to express the music through every syllable of a word. Our two brilliant Italian coaches Pepi and Corradina did a great job! Jonathan and Paolo checked every single sound and made me sing bel canto at my best. As a singer, I felt very safe at each class. Last but not least, within just two days amazing



Alexander Zeldin set up a beautiful staging for our final concert. I'd like to add that I was also impressed by all the singers on our course: they are all truly talented people.

JENNY STAFFORD

Gaining a place on this amazing course gave me the opportunity to work in an intense and focused yet at the same time, friendly and supportive environment, which is ideal for learning and I feel that I absorbed a lot of information in a very short time. I have come out of the experience with a new way of looking at Italian music, learning new techniques and tools that I will be working on and using for a long time. It has transformed certain aspects of my vocal technique and further cemented others.

ANNA STARUSHKEVYCH

Every day at the Academy was special! I learnt so much through working with amazing coaches and famous musicians such as Richard Bonyngé, Dennis O'Neill and Angela Gheorghiu. These great people gave me the inspiration to develop. The environment itself was unforgettable: Italian language, culture and the beauty of Castiglione della Pescaia helped me to understand the great style of bel canto. Everybody on the course was very friendly and helpful; I really felt an individual approach to each student. I started the course with some idea about the bel canto style and the Italian language, but left it with a completely different understanding. I cannot wait to start learning music using my new knowledge.

JOHANNA WILL

I especially liked the international atmosphere with the opportunity to get to know so many amazing people from different countries. As the youngest in the course, I particularly benefited from the exchange of knowledge and experience with the older participants. The solidarity and support among the participants contributed to improve and build up one's skills. The language and diction lessons with Pepi and Corradina were extremely enlightening for me because of their concentration on what I find to be one of the most important foundations of bel canto repertory: the Italian language. It was astonishing how much a little suggestion of theirs could make to the overall approach to and outcome of a piece, and how this could even help to solve technical difficulties.



NEWS FROM GRADUATES
OF THE GEORG SOLTI ACCADEMIA
AND THE SOLTI-PERETTI
REPETITEURS' COURSE



VIKTOR RUD (GSA 2004, 2005) has a very eventful season in Hamburg, where he is on contract to the Staatsoper. His roles in the coming months include Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and Henry Cuffe in *Gloriana*.

JEAN-YVES CORNET (SPRC 2011) reports that the course has proved a 'fantastic starting-point for me'. Subsequently, he has spent a year at the National Opera Studio in London and been involved in a production of *The Magic Flute* at Longborough Festival Opera. He is currently chef de chant for a production of *La Traviata*, conducted by Adam Fischer, at the Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS



2012

19 October Carnegie Hall, New York
21 October Chicago Symphony Center

GSA alumni

TERESA GEVORGYAN (soprano, 2011),
MATILDA PAULSSON (mezzo-soprano, 2006),
ROBERTO ORTIZ (tenor, 2009)
and ROSS RAMGOBIN (baritone, 2012)
will be performing the Quartet from
Verdi's *Rigoletto* at both concerts,
conducted by VALERY GERGIEV

2013

23-24 January

Auditions for the 2013 Georg Solti
Accademia at Castiglione della Pescaia,
Royal Academy of Music in London

2-10 April

Solti-Peretti Repetiteurs' Course,
venue to be confirmed

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