



Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari

I GIOIELLI DELLA MADONNA

Natalia Ushakova
Kyungho Kim
Daniel Čapkovič
Susanne Bernhard

Slovak National Theatre Opera Chorus
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra

FRIEDRICH HAIDER

2 CDs



SANLAS HOLDING

Ermanno
WOLF-FERRARI
(1876-1948)

I gioielli della Madonna

Opera in Three Acts on Neapolitan Life
Plot and Music by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari

Libretto by Carlo Zangarini (1874-1943) and Enrico Golisciani (1848-1919)

Gennaro, a blacksmith Kyungho Kim, Tenor
Carmela, his mother Susanne Bernhard, Mezzo-soprano
Maliella Natalia Ushakova, Soprano
Rafaele, head of the Camorra Daniel Čapkovič, Baritone
Biaso, a scribe Igor Pasek, Buffo-tenor
Ciccillo, Camorrista Peter Malý, Tenor
Rocco, Camorrista František Ďuriač, Bass
Stella, a friend of the Camorristi Andrea Vizvári, Soprano
Concetta, a friend of the Camorristi Mária Rychlová, Soprano
Serena, a friend of the Camorristi Katarína Flórová, Mezzo-soprano
Totonno, a young man of the peasant class Maksym Kutsenko, Tenor
Flower Girl Katarína Polakovičová, Soprano
Water Seller Miriam Maťašová, Soprano
Vendor of Sacred Wares Michal Želonka, Tenor
Ice-Cream Man } Martin Klempár, Tenor
Sorbet Seller }
Macaroni Seller } Daniel Hlásny, Baritone
Pizza Seller }
Blind Man Martin Smolnický (Bass)
First Morra-Player Patrik Palík, Tenor

Second Morra-Player Martin Mikuš, Baritone
Fruit Seller Martin Klempár, Tenor
Three Pretty Girls (Nennelle) { Andrea Vizvári, Soprano
..... Mária Rychlová, Soprano
..... Katarína Flórová, Mezzo-soprano
First Monk Vladimír Horváth, Bass
Second Monk Milan Kľučár, Bass
Two Girls { Andrea Vizvári, Soprano
..... Mária Rychlová, Soprano
A Young Peasant-Girl Eva Rampáčková, Soprano
Toy-Balloon Man Ivan Rychlo, Tenor
Young Man Mário Tóth, Bass
Another Young Man Peter Hricák, Tenor
A Girl Katarína Flórová, Mezzo-soprano
Father Daniel Hlásny, Bass
A Young Nurse Katarína Ofúkaná, Mezzo-soprano
Camorristi { Attila Kovács, Tenor
..... Peter Kružliak, Bass
..... Ján Marták, Bass
..... Ján Keder, Tenor
A tenor voice (in Act II)..... Maksym Kutsenko
A bass voice (in Act II) Martin Smolnický

Bratislava Boys Choir (Choirmaster: Gabriel Rovňák Jr.) (CD1), 1, 7, 20, 22

Pressburg Singers (Choirmaster: Janka Rychlá) (CD1), 1, 7, 20, 22

Slovak National Theatre Opera Chorus (Choirmaster: Pavol Procházka)

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra

Friedrich Haider

CD 1		48:14	16 Ah! / Guai, se più fiati! / Suvvia, lasciami! / Sì, perché t'amo <i>(Biasco, Rocco, Ciccillo, Maliella, Rafaele, Chorus of Camorristi)</i>	2:37	8 Aprila, bella, la fenestrella! <i>(Rafaele, Chorus of Camorristi, Maliella)</i>	3:20	16 Alla mia bella / Lo volete saper? <i>(Rafaele, Camorristi, Chorus, Serena, Stella, Concetta)</i>	4:35
Act I		48:14	17 Ebben! Vi sfido! <i>(Maliella, Rafaele, Biasco, Chorus, Ciccillo, Rocco, Camorristi, Chorus of Camorristi)</i>	1:47	9 Maliella! – Voi a quest'ora? <i>(Raffaele, Maliella)</i>	1:35	17 Dance of the Camorristi <i>(Orchestra, Chorus)</i>	3:53
1 'O quadro d'a Madonna <i>(Vendor of sacred wares, Macaroni Seller, Flower Girl, Ice-Cream Man, Water Seller, Blind Man, Children, Chorus)</i>		0:50	18 Bacio di lama <i>(Rafaele, Ciccillo, Rocco, Chorus of Camorristi)</i>	2:45	10 Sono un demonio buono <i>(Raffaele, Maliella)</i>	6:56	18 Rafaele! Aiuto! Salvami! <i>(Rafaele, Maliella, Chorus, Ciccillo, Rocco, Stella, Concetta, Serena)</i>	3:41
2 Festa grande, gran baldoria! <i>(Chorus, Two Morra-Players, Ice-Cream Man, Fruit Seller)</i>	1:16		19 Eh! Sentite! Viene la processione! <i>(Ciccillo, Rocco, Chorus of Camorristi, Rafaele, Maliella)</i>	4:05	11 Gennaro! – Son io... / Guarda! Per te!... <i>(Maliella, Gennaro)</i>	1:23	19 Or va, queste tue lagrime lontan di qui a versare! <i>(Rafaele, Maliella)</i>	1:11
3 Per chi, primavera odorosa <i>(Three Girls, Totonno, Chorus)</i>	0:42		20 In nuvola bianca d'incenso <i>(Rafaele, Chorus, Children, Maliella, Ciccillo, Rocco, Chorus of Camorristi, Gennaro)</i>	2:45	12 Prostrato nella polvere... la nella chiesa <i>(Gennaro, Maliella)</i>	3:11	20 Gente, fuggite <i>(Gennaro, Rocco, Stella, Concetta, Serena, Chorus, Chorus of Camorristi, Ciccillo, Raffaele, Maliella)</i>	6:06
4 Festa grande, gran baldoria! <i>(Chorus, Totonno, Two Morra-Players, Sorbet Seller)</i>	1:08		21 Sa dire parole di fuoco <i>(Maliella, Gennaro, Rafaele, Ciccillo, Rocco, Choir of Camorristi, Chorus)</i>	1:08	Act III	32:33		
5 Ve'! Arriva il Pazzariello! <i>(Chorus, Totonno)</i>	0:47		22 Beatam me dicent omnes generationes! <i>(Chorus, Children)</i>	1:49	14 Intermezzo <i>(Orchestra)</i>	3:32	21 Madonna dei dolor! Miserere di me <i>(Gennaro)</i>	1:56
6 Largo gente! / O vergine bella di stelle vestita <i>(Chorus, Two Monks, A Young Peasant-Girl, Biasco)</i>	2:02				15 Compagni, evviva! <i>(Chorus, Ciccillo, Rocco, Stella, Concetta, Serena)</i>	4:47	22 Deh non piangere! <i>(Gennaro)</i>	2:53
7 Maledetti, la finite? / Eh! La banda! <i>(Pallonaro, Ragamuffins, Street Urchins, Chorus)</i>	0:38							
8 O Napoli bella dai mille colori <i>(Chorus, Young Man, 2 Girls, Another Young Man, A Girl, Father, Totonno, A Young Nurse)</i>	1:57							
9 Mastro Gennaro! / Non si legge nei cuori <i>(Totonno, Gennaro)</i>	1:47							
10 Madonna, con sospiri <i>(Gennaro)</i>	2:30							
11 No! Non voglio! <i>(Maliella, Carmela, Gennaro, Biasco)</i>	3:15							
12 Diceva Cannetella <i>(Maliella, Chorus, Gennaro, Biasco)</i>	6:28							
13 Figliuolo, abbi pazienza <i>(Carmela, Gennaro)</i>	2:07							
14 T'eri un giorno ammalato <i>(Carmela, Gennaro)</i>	2:41							
15 Benedicimi tu <i>(Carmela, Gennaro)</i>	3:11							
			CD 2	74:37				
			Act II	42:04				
			1 Intermezzo <i>(Orchestra)</i>	5:15				
			2 Eh tiritomba! / Questo vinetto di Tore <i>(A tenor voice, A Bass voice, Chorus, Carmela)</i>	4:07				
			3 Vuoi ascoltarmi? <i>(Gennaro, Maliella)</i>	1:15				
			4 E ndringhete, ndranghete! Voglio far la pazza! <i>(Maliella, Gennaro)</i>	1:25				
			5 Addio! / Sì, perché t'amo <i>(Maliella, Gennaro)</i>	6:44				
			6 No, no! <i>(Gennaro)</i>	2:17				
			7 Ajemmé! Che sciorta nera <i>(Chorus)</i>	1:53				

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876-1948): I gioielli della Madonna

IN THE NAME OF THE MADONNA

How is it possible that an operatic work, even after the most successful première, can vanish into the furthest corner of a library and sit gathering dust for an entire century? This was the strange fate of the opera *I gioielli della Madonna* (*The Jewels of the Madonna*) by the German-Italian composer, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876-1948). Following its first performance at the Kurfürsteneroper, Berlin in 1911, it was taken on a triumphant world tour only to be forgotten until its 1953 Italian première, since when it has received but a handful of performances, culminating in May 2015 with a highly acclaimed revival at the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava.

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari was born in Venice in 1876, and studied music with Josef Rheinberger at the Akademie der Tonkunst in Munich. His first completed opera, *La Cenerentola* (*Cinderella*) was premièred in Venice in 1900, but its Romantic musical idiom was poorly received by audiences; and it is notable that his subsequent operatic successes were in Germany, rather than in his own country. The comic opera *Le donne curiose* (*The Inquisitive Women*) was enthusiastically received at the Hofoper in Munich, followed by the equally triumphant *I Quattro Rusteghi* (*The Four Curmudgeons*) and the one-act *Il segreto di Susanna* (*Susanna's Secret*), which provided a highly successful and innovative kind of light, neo-classical *buffo* style – a welcome alternative to post-Wagnerian harmonies and violently dramatic, *verismo* storylines. But it was with his fifth opera that Wolf-Ferrari's dramatic style underwent a radical transformation.

I gioielli della Madonna took four years to complete, and Wolf-Ferrari undertook numerous revisions and reworkings of both the dramatic and musical material. Out of this lengthy struggle, he forged a new dramatic and expressive musical approach which was remarked upon – and praised – even at the work's première. His drawing together of Italian lyricism, the dramatic realism of *verismo*, the rich orchestral textures of the German tradition, and folk dances and melodies, was a revelation to audiences. However, some critics considered the opera to be simply an extension of *verismo*, and thus part of a tradition in decline – made all the worse by Wolf-Ferrari's inclusion of folk instruments, which was felt to contribute to a heavily clichéd depiction of Italy. Such local colour prompted

others to treat the work as lively and colourful but without depth; and later, the composer was accused of being anti-patriotic, anti-Italian and, by the Church, even blasphemous. But none of this could detract from the work's spectacular success.

It is clear, on close inspection of the score, that *The Jewels* is far from a simple *verismo* work. Although it does share some characteristics – a heightened sense of reality, a critical representation of the society and culture in which it is set – we are also provided with an unexpected glimpse into the psychological aspects of the characters, no doubt inspired by the emerging field of psychoanalysis at the turn of the twentieth century. Furthermore, there is a uniquely mystical quality to *The Jewels*. Grand orchestral effect is frequently avoided in favour of subtler, psychologically inflected musical depictions (for example, the unstable *pianissimo* chord marking Gennaro's suicide). And whilst the opera is through-composed, Wolf-Ferrari draws attention to the segmented presentation of arias and duets far more than is usual in *verismo*. It can therefore be considered as a reinvigoration and expansion of the genre.

And, for all its dramatic power, *The Jewels* contains many sensitive and sublime musical passages. Even in the seeming racket of Act 1, where we find ourselves in the midst of a tumultuous, southern Italian festival for Lady Day, the apparent musical "chaos" is skilfully organised. Cannon-fire and church bells, shouting crowd members, unconventional percussion such as the *triccheballacche* and *putipù* (specially made for this recording, based on images of the instruments) – all these sounds are deftly combined in a succession of miniature, overlapping scenes and events which provide us with a series of insights into the lives of the people before us. Little bursts of emotion, racy remarks and friends' disputes are all characteristic of this society, and all of Naples comes together for the celebration: the Church, the Camorra and the townspeople. It is a great opportunity for street traders to peddle their wares – 'in the name of the Madonna', naturally. Among the two dozen cameo appearances in this scene, two are of particular interest. The *Pazziariello*, a town crier-cum-jester, is introduced with a jazzy tarantella, a rather curious musical interlude. The character of the comic rôle of Biaso is a scribe; and Wolf-Ferrari's maternal grandfather was the last such scribe at the Doge's Palace in Venice. Meanwhile, two other characters play a game of *morra* and argue violently with each other (the game is still played today, but is forbidden

in many Italian regions, since it is intended to settle disputes and could be an incitement to commit murder!). A marching band enters, playing in entirely different keys from the main orchestra in a kind of competition. Meanwhile, traditional folk instruments such as guitars, mandolins and accordions are associated above all with the Camorra – the Mafia. Later, when Maliella so defiantly calls for freedom, harsh guitar chords are used to bring a sense of danger to the proceedings. Such attention to detail in characterisation and orchestration not only provides a broad-brush depiction of Neapolitan life – it also raises questions of cultural and religious passion and obsession.

The richness and lyricism of Wolf-Ferrari's melodies ensured its success in arrangements beyond the opera house. In the year of its première, 1911, several sections of the piece were published in piano and instrumental transcriptions. The breadth of the dramatic scenario is such that it allows for choruses in honour of the Virgin, seductive love songs, saucy serenades and orgiastic dances. Furthermore, the technique of leitmotifs is also used here to integrate the musical material and the dramatic action, with themes and motifs metamorphosing over the course of the story. At the conclusion of Act 1, the large-scale hymn to the Virgin, *Beatam me dicent*, is drawn from two pre-existing musical sources: a modified version of the chorale *Nun habet Dank und bringet Ehr* by Johann Crüger (1598-1662) and a bar from a chanson by Jacques Arcadelt (1507-1568), a Flemish Renaissance composer who worked in Italy. The first three notes of the chorale forms one of the basic elements of the opera, and these are heard throughout the work. Thus the Madonna is musically omnipresent: in the hymns sung by the people in her honour, as a harbinger of Gennaro's assault on Maliella, in Gennaro's delirium before his suicide, and in the transfiguring apotheosis of the work's closing bars.

Much of *Jewels* sounds folk-like – yet the majority of this music is Wolf-Ferrari's own, borrowing the idioms of folk melody to create such beautiful pieces as the men's chorus *O Napoli bella dai mille colori* [CD 1 [8]]. When he does draw on folk sources, it is in the form of a paraphrase, as in the distant, melancholy chorus *Ajemmé! Che sciorta nera* [CD 2 [7]] in Act 2 – and this old Neapolitan tune gradually evolves into a mystically prophetic far-off voice, in mourning for Gennaro's intentions. The composer's innovative approach to harmony throughout the work seamlessly unites a folksong-like simplicity with a more modernist musical language which remains mostly tonal, but includes tone-clusters and even pre-echoes of the harmonies of Shostakovich (Act 3).

The libretto of *Jewels*, by Enrico Golisciani and Carlo Zangarini, can seem rather conventional due to its utilitarian poetic approach. But the plot is highly suspenseful, thanks to its psychological depth and the very specific cultural context in which it takes place. And there are factual elements to the story: above all, the theft of the Madonna's jewels. The opera was composed during the so-called *Marianisches Jahrhundert* ('Marian Century', 1854-1950), a period during which there were two Papal pronouncements of Marian dogma, as well as reports of Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin. The hymns within *Jewels* are presented as beautiful, devout statements, but become increasingly frenzied as the opera progresses. The cultish, almost pathological devotion to the Virgin is considered from a psychoanalytical perspective within both the libretto and music: a loss of identity and an expression of a suppressed sex drive. It is the age-old tension between religion and eroticism on which the plot hinges, with Gennaro's love for the Mother of God and his own mother contrasted with the passionate longing he feels for his step-sister Maliella (whom he sees as resembling the Madonna). Maliella is also a Madonna-like figure for Rafaele, the leader of the Camorristi – but for him, it is her purity and innocence that is attractive, in contrast to the wild orgies he and his companions enjoy in Act 3, as the fresco of the Virgin is covered up. When Rafaele banishes Gennaro at the end of the opera 'in the name of the Madonna', the parallel again becomes clear: for him, the theft of the jewels is representative of the deflowering of Maliella, who should be reserved for him alone. 'We are honourable men!' he pronounces hypocritically before his departure, 'We venerate the holy Madonna!'

Ten years prior to the composition of *Jewels*, the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch created a series of images entitled *Madonna*, works in which the subject is depicted almost simultaneously as a woman, mother, seductress and religious figure. By the time Wolf-Ferrari completed his opera, he had become acquainted with the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, in whose analytical psychology the Mother of God played an important rôle as the manifestation of the matriarchal archetype. Marian influences were everywhere, in art, culture and science, and Wolf-Ferrari believed in his composition even as it fell into obscurity. 'I will take the prize when I am no longer around,' he wrote in the 1920s of *Jewels*. Now, at last, it is possible to hear his great operatic achievement once again.

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CD1

ACT 1

Naples, a small open square by the sea.

[1] Church-bells, ceremonial cannon-shots, a hubbub of voices, children singing a Hymn to the Virgin: the many voices and sounds are barely distinguishable one from another. The Festival of the Madonna is being celebrated, to great rejoicing. [2] "What a great feast-day! What revelry, songs and sounds beneath the smiling sun! Earth is glad and heaven rejoices", sing the men and women of Naples. The music gathers rhythmic momentum, interrupted by the boisterous cries of the morra-players and vendors selling iced sorbets, flowers, cold water and images of the Madonna. [3] Three pretty young women sing about love and laugh at the men flirting with them. [4] Their voices are lost in the noisy throng of the festival. Feelings are running high between the two morra-players, who get into a heated argument. They are separated and carted off by the crowd. [5] The Pazzariello, a roguish fool who disseminates news, and his musicians are greeted gleefully by the crowd. Boats festooned with flowers and carrying small altars appear by the quay-side. Two Franciscan monks make their way through the crowd, followed by the "Children of St John". [6] The first Hymn to the Virgin rings out, sung with great piety: "O beautiful Virgin, all starry your splendour. You shine amid the angels. You are the hope and comfort in life, the infinite sweetness of the world!" Meanwhile, a young peasant girl dictates a letter to Biaso, the town scribe. [7] Street urchins follow the toy-balloon man, untying his balloons and letting them float up into the sky. Then the next band arrives. The tumult is at its height. [8] To the accompaniment of mandolins, the men sing a song celebrating the beauty of Naples – "*O Napoli bella dai mille colori*" ("Oh beautiful Naples, with your thousand colours"). Young men resume flirting with pretty girls. Totonno, a young peasant, is accused by a wet-nurse of having pinched her for a second time – but he will have none of it [...]. The stage slowly empties, many people having followed the band off. [9] Gennaro, a young blacksmith, has stepped out of his workshop. He is holding an iron candelabrum he has made in honour of the Madonna. His soul is in torment, for he is in love with his stepsister Maliella, whom he worships as much as the Madonna herself. Totonno tries in vain to cheer Gennaro up with a facetious little song and goes off stage. [10] A bell (the Madonna-motif of the opera) accompanies Gennaro's prayer, in which he places his work at the feet of the Madonna,

beseeking her to keep him from harm. [11] Maliella storms out of the house, followed by her stepmother Carmela. Maliella is sick of being cooped up in the kitchen and the garden. Gennaro warns her not to accept the attentions of the louts in the courtyard. "Does that mean you are jealous?" Maliella retorts, laughing, and notices how he turns pale. [12] Spurred on by Biaso, Maliella sings Cannetella's *Song of Freedom*, about a young girl who fled to freedom from her domestic confinement. The refrain "*Oh, che piacere correre alla strada*" ("Oh, what joy to run through the streets") which the crowd joins in, is an original Neapolitan folk-song. Gennaro tries in vain to calm her down. The dance becomes ever faster, ever wilder, until she grabs hold of Biaso and runs off with him. Gennaro, distraught, bemoans Maliella's shameless behaviour. [13] Carmela tries to comfort her son, but he confesses to his feelings for his stepsister. [14] "*T'eri un giorno ammalato bambino*" ("When an infant, you languished in sickness"): Carmela explains to her son how he was once mortally ill as a child. In return for his recovery, she vowed to the Madonna that she would take in "an infant girl born in sin". After his recovery, she found a little girl abandoned in the street and took her in. God will now send a good husband for her. [15] "*Benedicimi tu*" ("Mother, give me your blessing"): Gennaro asks his mother to bless him, so that the Madonna might strengthen his faith and ease his suffering. Carmela blesses him and encourages him to pray to the Madonna. [16] The Camorristi, including Cicillo and Rocco, pursue Biaso; he begs for mercy and they let him escape into his house, still threatening him. Maliella appears, followed by Rafaele, the leader of the Camorristi. He confesses his love to her to the music of a joyous and passionate waltz. He demands a kiss; Maliella tries to get away, but she is surrounded by the Camorristi in such a way that she suddenly finds herself standing directly opposite Rafaele. [17] She pulls the "*spadella di Genova*" (a long dagger-like pin) out of her hair and challenges him to a "duel". Rafaele takes up the challenge haughtily, while a panic-stricken Biaso, who is looking out of the window, warns her of the danger. Urged on by the crowd, the two fight. Maliella stabs Rafaele in the hand. Suppressing his anger, he laughs disdainfully and passionately kisses the bleeding wound. [18] In the tiny arietta "*Bacio di lama*" ("The kiss of a blade"), which alternates subtly between a quicker and a slower ¾ time, Rafaele sings of a love sealed with blood. Finally he picks up the hat pin, chivalrously gives it back to Maliella, and repairs to an inn. [19] The tolling of bells announces the approach of the procession of the Madonna. The people come together from all quarters, the Pazzariello and the band cross the little town square and hymns to the Virgin

can be heard. Rafaele comes up once again to Maliella, who is sitting sulking in front of her house: "Let's make up". "No", she replies. [20] Rafaele now sings of love to woo Maliella, comparing her to the Madonna – "*In nuvola bianca d'incenso*" – "The Virgin descends to earth in a white cloud of incense. You are my Madonna, the queen in love's heaven!" From now on, this beautiful, melodically beguiling theme constitutes an important element of the opera. While the children's choir intones a Hymn to the Virgin, a conversation between Rafaele and Maliella takes place. "Tell me, what must I do for one of your kisses? Must I kneel at your feet? Must I steal for you? Must I kill?" Maliella tells him to be quiet. The procession appears, bearing the jewel-bedecked statue of the Madonna. "Look at those jewels!" he says. "Do you see how brilliantly they sparkle? The jewels of the Madonna! Shall I place them round your neck? Yes? Don't you believe me? For you!" He swings round to face the procession, then turns back, laughing. Maliella utters a cry. Gennaro warns her about Rafaele: he is "the most notorious blackguard in this district". "He's handsome and daring!" replies Maliella. "I ask nothing more!" [21] She takes up Rafaele's love-song, praising his allure and audacity. [22] In a blaze of C major the great Hymn to the Madonna brings down the curtain on Act 1.

CD 2

ACT 2

Carmela's garden

[1] Intermezzo.

[2] Act 2 gets under way with a jarring, dissonant chord in the orchestra. We are in the garden of Carmela's house. Maliella is staring out to sea, nervous and wistful, while Gennaro watches her forlornly. Singing and laughing can be heard far off, but the atmosphere is one of trepidation. The orchestra plays "Cannetella's freedom theme" from Act 1, but it is stiff and constrained. Carmela looks at the two young people with anxious foreboding. She tells them to please go to bed at last. [3] Gennaro comes up to Maliella and pleads with her to listen to him, but she snaps at him that she wants nothing but freedom and pleasure. [4] She runs to her room and, as she packs her bag, shouts out her desire for freedom in a *canzonaccia*, a popular tune: "*E ndringhete, ndranghete, voglio far la pazza*" – "I long for folly! Death to the one who wishes me ill, and to all like him! I want freedom! I want to be warmed by the fires of love!" [5] Gennaro passionately declares his love for Maliella: "You are my brother. I cannot!" she retorts brusquely. She again sings

Rafaele's love-song, going into raptures at the notion of his readiness to steal the Madonna's jewels and put them round her neck and in her hair, deliriously worshipping her like a saint. "This is sacrilege!" Gennaro cries, appalled, while Maliella, full of rebellion, repeats her popular song. Laughing hysterically, she throws back the door, leaving Gennaro in a state of shock. [6] The orchestra depicts Gennaro's inner struggle: "A dreadful temptation begins to lay hold of him, namely to give her the desperate proof of his passion." He grabs some of his tools, makes the sign of the cross, extinguishes the light and disappears "like a thief". [7] The stage is empty. The sea is gleaming in the moonlight. From afar, like the voice of fate, a choir sings an old Neapolitan folk-song, melancholy, bewailing fate and the bitterness of life. The sound of the instruments being tuned can be heard – mandolins, guitars, stringed instruments: the Camorristi have arrived. [8] Their leader Rafaele appears at the garden gate and sings a serenade to his adored Maliella. [9] Maliella is astonished by Rafaele's visit at so late an hour. Worried by Gennaro's absence, Rafaele assures her that if he should return, his friends will warn him by singing. Maliella complains to Rafaele that being in the house is like being locked up in a convent. Then she betrays her unease at the fact that she has heard so many bad things about him. "Are you some demon?" she asks anxiously. [10] "*Sono un demonio buono!*" – "I am a good demon!" Rafaele answers her in a rakishly daredevil way. "This life is worthless unless I call Maliella mine!" With the gate between them, they enjoy their first passionate display of affection. "Tomorrow will you come to my nest?" asks Rafaele. "Tomorrow!" Maliella reassures him. Rafaele's companions begin to sing – the sign that Gennaro is on his way back. After one last kiss, Rafaele disappears into the darkness. With dreadful foreboding Maliella sees Gennaro's toolbox, but he is already turning the key in the lock. [11] Gennaro places a bundle at Maliella's feet and opens it up, revealing the jewels of the Madonna. Maliella lets out a cry: "It is a terrible sin! I did not ask for this." [12] Gennaro explains to her that, before stealing the jewels, he prayed to the Madonna to forgive the sinful madness of his love, and that she forgave him. Lost in contemplation of the jewels, Maliella does not hear him. She picks up a necklace, kisses it and closes her eyes in ecstasy. "They smell of incense! They thrill me – they dazzle me." She places the tiara on her head and puts on a necklace and bracelet. Completely overcome by the memory of Rafaele, she murmurs as though in a trance: "Oh, why can I not stand like this before him? Oh, how beautiful he would find me if he could see me!" She is lost in a state of mystical ecstasy that

has robbed her of all self-control. ^[13] In a vision, Maliella sees the bejewelled Madonna walk past, wearing a white gown. She has by now completely lost any sense of reality and bares her shoulders and her breast: "I am yours... Rafaele!..." Gennaro clasps her knees and hips and kisses her arms. Maliella can resist no longer. Their lips meet and they both sink to the ground.

ACT 3

The refuge of the Camorra, outside Naples

^[14] Intermezzo.

^[15] The refuge of the Camorristi, on the outskirts of Naples. On the left wall, with a serviceable curtain, a rough fresco, representing the Madonna of Monte Vergine. In front of the painting is a sort of altar. It is still the night of the Festival of the Madonna, though dawn is near. The Camorristi Ciccillo, Rocco and Stella come boisterously and drunkenly through the door, waking up those who are sleeping. The beautiful Stella is embraced and kissed, but Concetta and Serena throw themselves among the group, wanting to take part in the love-play as well. Grazia, the little blonde who is the group's favourite, comes in too. Everyone is in a boisterous mood. The three Camorra girls sing in praise of the knife, the symbol of assault and conquest, and decry all cowards. They see Rafaele arrive, and in unison they all strike up the great seduction theme with which he had so successfully infatuated Maliella: "*Ben giunto, tiranno dei cuori, che ài tutte le donne per te!*" ("Welcome, you tyrant of hearts, who has all the women for himself!") ^[16] Rafaele raises his wine-glass and sings to his conquest. The Camorristi joke quietly among themselves that their leader seems to have got it really bad this time. Serena asks him mischievously how Maliella responded to his courtship. "Not today? Did she tell you tomorrow? How will you have the patience to wait? Do we need to console you? Come!" Laughing, Rafaele pushes her aside, but the girls are not going to back down: "But what on earth does this 'Signora' have, who has made him sigh for her?" Rafaele explains what it is that makes Maliella different from them all: she is a pristine rosebud – "I envy the man who plucks this rose!" Stella invites them all to dance: Rafaele needs to realise what he is disdainful here. ^[17] Ciccillo hastily draws the curtain across the fresco of the Madonna and a sensual, orgiastic dance begins, which becomes ever more turbulent and leads into a wild tarantella. ^[18] The climax of the dance is suddenly interrupted by Maliella's frantic shouts: "Help me!... Save me!" She rushes in; a few semi-naked girls run off, and Ciccillo draws back the curtain

that had covered the fresco of the Madonna. Gennaro is in pursuit of her; Rafaele must avenge her. "But what has he done to you?" Rafaele wants to know. "I don't know! I don't remember anything!" she replies and passes out in his arms. "Bring me Gennaro, dead or alive!" cries Rafaele. The Camorristi storm out of the cavern. Maliella comes round. Her voice breaking in desperation, she explains: "I was still dreaming of you, of your breath, intoxicated by you... and then he came and found me like this and..." Rafaele can hardly believe it: "Were you his?" To the same chord that rang out when Maliella stabbed Rafaele's hand in Act 1, the Camorristi men and girls burst out laughing – Rafaele has been wounded for a second time: "The rosebud! Poor Rafaele! What bad luck!" ^[19] Rafaele rejects Maliella, calling her a "shameless creature". From now on, he wants nothing to do with her. "*Il tuo fior voluto avrei!*" – he treasured her solely for her virginity. Imploringly Maliella declares that she loves only him. The waltz that accompanied their first meeting in Act 1 is heard, but now in the minor and with abrupt changes of tempo, followed by Rafaele's seduction theme, now also in a minor key: "Don't turn me away! I love you more than ever. Kill me first!" Rafaele throws her roughly to the ground. Maliella loses her shawl, revealing the jewels around her neck. ^[20] Gennaro's voice can be heard in the distance: "Spurn me and shun me! For my soul is unclean, accursed forever! ... And pray to God for the sinner's death!" The Camorristi push Gennaro in through the door. Full of hatred, Maliella calls to him: "Yours? You thief! Go away! I was never yours, not for one moment, not even when you held me in your arms! Tell him to his face how I was yours! Tell him, you thief!" She tears the jewels from her neck and throws them at his feet: "This fool thought he could get the better of you! Rafaele, do you know what jewels these are? He stole them – from the Madonna!" In a state of paralysis people mutter litanies. "And you dared to wear them?" Rafaele asks in an appalled, threatening voice, "and so... you sinned? *Scomunicata!* – Your soul is damned!" Maliella runs off to the sea to commit suicide. The crowd wants to attack Gennaro, but Rafaele holds them back: "Do not touch him. He is accursed. Let him remain alone, let him die like a dog. We will leave this accursed house! He has stolen the jewels of the Madonna!" Dawn breaks, and amidst the yelling of the people, the church bells can be heard sounding the alarm. The theft of the jewels has been discovered. Some are afraid that they will be blamed for the crime and make good their escape. Pointing at the image of the Madonna in a hypocritically pious way, Rafaele and the Camorristi withdraw: "We are honourable people! We respect the fair Madonna! Hail, Mary!" ^[21] Gennaro, who has remained

behind alone, kisses the jewels and puts them on the little altar beneath the image of the Madonna. Despairingly he calls on her: "Madonna of our pain! Take pity on me! A sign!" Gennaro waits for a sign of forgiveness. Then shafts of sunshine break through a window and illuminate the jewels. "Ah! You have heard me! You do not condemn me! Yes, you are giving me a sign that you forgive me!" Hallucinating, he thinks that he can hear organ music: "Here are the angels... the saints... Paradise!" With a shout of joy he discovers a knife on the ground and addresses his final thoughts to his mother: ^[22] "Ah, do not weep, mother!

The Blessed Virgin looks on me and pardons me; she is calling me to be with her in heaven! Dearest mother, farewell!" With mystical ardour Gennaro plunges the knife into his heart. He falls to the ground, sees Maliella's shawl, kisses it, presses it to his heart and dies.

The Italian libretto in the published authorized Weinberger edition, the piano reduction and the full score of the opera served as source for this précis. Quotations from the Italian text are shown in italics.

Natalia Ushakova

Natalia Ushakova studied at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in St Petersburg, at the University of Munich and at the Accademia di perfezionamento of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. In 2000 she won first prize at the Concorso Internazionale Riccardo Zandonai in Rovereto and the Concorso delle voci verdiane in Busseto where she made her opera debut as Violetta in *La traviata*. In the same year she sang the rôle of Mimi in Franco Zeffirelli's production of *La bohème* at La Scala in Milan. Her many rôles include operas by Puccini, Verdi, Janáček, Dvořák, Wagner and Bellini. She has appeared in guest performances at New York's Metropolitan Opera and at Carnegie Hall, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, the Hamburg State Opera, and in Amsterdam, Tokyo, Verona, Buenos Aires, and Madrid. In addition to several solo albums she has collaborated in recordings of Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa* (Mstislav Rostropovich), Strauss's *Zigeunerbaron*, Prokofiev's *Semyon Kotko* (Valery Gergiev) and Lehár's *Giuditta*. For more information visit www.ushakova.com



Photo: Maurizio Montani

Kyungho Kim

Kyungho Kim, a native of Korea and prize-winner of international competitions, studied singing in Seoul and at the Berlin Universität der Künste. His first appearances were as a member of the Opera Studio of the Berlin State Opera, followed by débuts at Theater Dortmund, Opera Bratislava, Leipzig Opera, Graz Opera, the Bregenz Festival, Stuttgart Opera House and Semperoper Dresden. His rôles include operas by Bellini, Puccini, Verdi and Richard Strauss. 2016 marks his début as Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Slovak National Theatre. In the concert hall he has sung in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* in Venice, Salzburg and Berlin.



Photo: Hwangki Min

Daniel Čapkovič

Daniel Čapkovič studied at the Conservatory in Bratislava, and at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, and graduated from the Faculty of Education at the Comenius University in Bratislava. He successfully participated in several vocal competitions in Slovakia and abroad. At present he works as a principal soloist at the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava, where he has sung Papageno in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Belcore in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, Tonio and Silvio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Marcello in Puccini's *La bohème*, Valentin in Gounod's *Faust*, Germont in Verdi's *La traviata*, Falke in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, and Lescault in Puccini's *Manon Lescault*, among others. He regularly performs at the Janáček Theatre in Brno, the Prague National Theatre and in many European countries, the United States and Canada. In 2013, he was on tour in Japan performing Papageno.



Photo: Lucia Mušáková, Vlado Anjel

Photo: Christine Schneider



Susanne Bernhard

Born in Munich, the soprano Susanne Bernhard has appeared in concert-halls with international orchestras and in festivals. She has worked with Enoch zu Guttenberg, Semyon Bychkov, Yutaka Sado, Eiji Oue, Neeme Järvi, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Ingo Metzmacher, Ralf Otto, Michael Sanderling, Jonathan Nott and Markus Poschner, and is a regular guest at the Herrenchiemsee Festival, the Menuhin Festival Gstaad, the Rheingau Musikfestival, and with the WDR Symphony Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Saarland Radio, and the NHK Tokyo Orchestra as well as with the Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra and the OSEP Orchestra of São Paulo. Operatic engagements have taken her to the Dresden Semperoper, the Kiel Opera House and Frankfurt Opera, where she sang Violetta in Verdi's *La traviata*. For more information visit www.susannebernhard.de

Photo: Alena Kienková



Igor Pasek

Igor Pasek studied singing in Bratislava under Vlasta Hudecová. He has appeared as a soloist with Vienna Chamber Opera, Prague Mozart Opera and the State Opera of Banská Bystrica. In 1994 he became a soloist with the Slovak National Theatre Opera. He also appears in the concert hall, particularly in Renaissance and Baroque repertoire. He has recorded for Slovak and Austrian Radio, Slovak Television and Opus, Supraphon and Naxos.

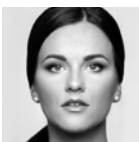
Photo: Valentin Lysenko



Maksym Kutsenko

A graduate of the Kiev National Music Academy, Maksym Kutsenko became a soloist with the National Music Academy Opera Studio and with the Kiev Opera and Ballet Theatre in 2010. In 2004 he won the Ukrainian New Names Competition and in 2011 the Alchevsk International Competition in Kharkov. Since 2014 he has appeared at the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava, with rôles including Tybalt in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, Beppe in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* and Totonno in Wolf-Ferrari's *I gioielli della Madonna*.

Photo: Martin Kryšáček



Andrea Vizvári

During her studies in Bratislava Andrea Vizvári made her début with the Vienna Volksoper and in Leipzig as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. As a soloist with the Slovak National Theatre her rôles have included Musetta, Elvira (*I Puritani*), Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Karolka (*Jenůfa*), and Violetta, among others. Guest appearances include engagements at the Paphos Aphrodite Festival in Cyprus, Carnegie Hall, the National Concert Hall, Dublin, the Musikverein, Vienna, the Atelier Lyrique Opéra de Montréal, and also in Holland, Ireland, Poland, the United States (Miami, Pittsburgh), Hungary (Budapest), Austria, and in the Czech Republic (Litomyšl, Prague).

Photo: Petr Ázová



Mária Rychlová

A student of Peter Mikuláš in Bratislava, Mária Rychlová was a prize-winner at the international Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský Singing Competition and went on to further study in Perugia with Cecile Valdenassi, and later at the Salzburg Summer Academy with Ildiko Raimondi. She has appeared as a guest soloist with Slovak National Theatre Opera in the rôles of Papagena, Prilepa in *Pique Dame*, the Little Shepherd and the Priestess of Morena in Suchoň's operas *Krútiava* and *Svätopluk*, and also as Mi in Lehár's *The Land of Smiles*. She has also appeared in Bucharest and in Japan.

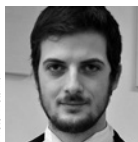
Photo: Alena Kienková



Katarína Flórová

Trained in opera and operetta at the Conservatoire and at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, Katarína Flórová has sung various rôles with Slovak National Theatre Opera, including Dilberová in Cikker's *Mister Scrooge*, Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, the Priestess of Morena in Suchoň's *Svätopluk*, Page in *Rigoletto*, Mascha in *Pique Dame*, Slave and Page in *Salome*, Lora in *The Land of Smiles* and Krista in Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair*.

Photo: Iveta Mal



Peter Malý

Peter Malý studied at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava under Professor Peter Mikuláš. He won first prize in the Opera category at the Antonín Dvořák International Singing Competition in Karlovy Vary in 2015. He has performed many roles in productions by the Slovak National Theatre including Duke Alba de Tormes in Roland Baumgartner's *Maria Theresia* and Nitabor in *Svätopluk* by Eugen Suchoň. As a guest soloist of the State Opera in Banská Bystrica he performed Nadir in Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* and Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.

Photo: Alena Kienková



František Ďuriáč

František Ďuriáč studied in Bratislava and was a prize-winner at the 1996 International Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský Competition. As a soloist with Slovak National Theatre Opera he has undertaken rôles in operas by Verdi, Puccini, Mussorgsky, Britten, and Richard Strauss, among others. He appeared in Pretoria, in South Africa, in Verdi's *Attila* and Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*. In October 2011 he sang Scarpia in performances of *Tosca* under the baton of Giorgio Croces with the Prague State Opera.

Photo: Vladimír Študa



Bratislava Boys Choir

The Bratislava Boys Choir was founded in 1982 by Magdaléna Rovňáková. Today it has an average complement of ninety boys and young men between the ages of seven and 25, has performed works by many composers, including Bach, Britten, Honegger, Orff, Suchoň and Stravinsky, and has been directed by world renowned conductors, amongst whom Ladislav Slovák, Libor Pešek, Andrew Parrott, Riccardo Muti and Jeffrey Tate. It has received awards at many festivals and has performed in France, Austria, Germany, Japan, the United States and Canada, Taiwan, Cyprus and elsewhere. The choir has been a guest on several occasions at the yearly Bratislava Music Celebrations (BHS) festival and appears regularly at Slovak National Theatre Opera.



Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra

The Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra was established in 1929 as the first professional symphony orchestra in Slovakia. The orchestra is currently led by conductor Mario Košík. It has made a large number of recordings for labels such as Opus, Supraphon, Naxos, Marco Polo and others. In addition to regular season concerts, which feature works by Slovak composers, many of them as premières, the orchestra has performed at concerts abroad, visiting Austria and Hungary, and touring in Europe, Japan and Korea. The orchestra has collaborated with renowned conductors such as Ľudovít Rajter, Ondrej Lenárd, Róbert Stankovský, Juraj Valčuha, Andrew Mogrelia, David Porcelijn, Vladimír Spivakov, Yordan Kamdzhaliyov and also with distinguished soloists. For more information visit www.sosr.rtvs.sk

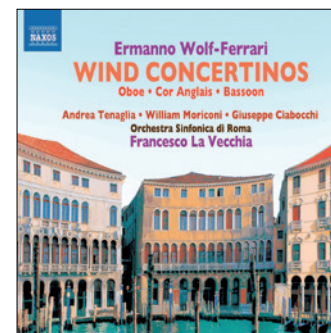


Friedrich Haider

Friedrich Haider, an Austrian conductor with Italian ancestry, was trained at the Vienna Music Academy. At the age of 29 he was appointed music director of the Strasbourg Opéra National du Rhin. With a repertoire of some sixty operas he has appeared at leading European opera houses, including Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Dresden, Barcelona, Amsterdam and Venice. In 2006 he made his début at the New York Metropolitan Opera with *Rigoletto*. He has conducted the Czech Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and Camerata Salzburg, among others. From 2004 to 2010 he was principal conductor of the Oviedo Filarmonía and from 2012 to 2016 music director of the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava. Friedrich Haider is an ardent champion of the music of Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari. He has programmed and recorded *Il segreto di Susanna* and made the first ever recording

of the composer's complete orchestral works, including the overtures and intermezzi from the operas, as well as the complete *a cappella* choral works and the *Geistliches Mysterium 'Tilitha Kumi'*. For more information: www.friedrichhaider.com

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Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari's *The Jewels of the Madonna* was a spectacular success in its day, yet after a triumphant world tour it gathered dust until its 1953 Italian première, since when it has received but a handful of performances, culminating in May 2015 with this highly acclaimed revival at the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava. Combining Italian lyricism with the dramatic realism of verismo and colourful folk-music, *The Jewels* brings mystical atmosphere and sublimely detailed musical effects to its highly suspenseful plot, delivering powerful choruses, seductive love songs, saucy serenades and orgiastic dances.

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(1876-1948)

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Opera in Three Acts on Neapolitan life • Plot and Music by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari
Libretto by Carlo Zangarini (1874-1943) and Enrico Golisciani (1848-1919)

Maliella **Natalia Ushakova, Soprano**
Gennaro, a blacksmith **Kyungho Kim, Tenor**
Rafaele, head of the Camorra **Daniel Čapkovič, Baritone**
Carmela, his mother **Susanne Bernhard, Mezzo-soprano**
Ciccillo, Camorrista **Peter Malý, Tenor**
Rocco, Camorrista **František Ďuriač, Bass**

Bratislava Boys Choir (Choirmaster: Gabriel Rovňák Jr.) • **Pressburg Singers** (Choirmaster: Janka Rychlá)

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Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra

Friedrich Haider



CD 1	1-22 Act I	48:14	CD 2	1-13 Act II	42:04
				14-22 Act III	32:33

Recorded during performances in the Great Concert Hall, Slovak Radio, Bratislava, 29th November and 2nd December, 2015

Producers: Emil Nižňanský and Mirko Krajčí • Engineers: Hubert Geschwandtner and Ľuboš Veselý • Booklet notes: Friedrich Haider

Cover photo: Jozef Barinka from a production of *I gioielli della Madonna* by the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava (2015)

Stage director: Manfred Schweigkofler • Stage design: Michele Olcese • Costumes: Concetta Nappi

A co-production with Radio and Television Slovakia (General Director: Václav Mika) **and the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava**

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