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NAXOS

2 CDs

VERDI

Complete Ballet Music from the Operas

Bournemouth
Symphony Orchestra

José Serebrier



Giuseppe
VERDI
(1813-1901)

Complete Ballet Music from the Operas

CD 1

54:09

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | Otello: Act III, Scene 7 – Ballabili (Allegro vivace [Danza turca] – Canzone araba – Invocazione ad Allah – Canzone greca – Danza – Muranese – Canto guerriero) | 5:37 |
| 2 | Macbeth: Act III, Scene 1 – Ballo I | 2:27 |
| 3 | Macbeth: Act III, Scene 1 – Ballo II | 4:38 |
| 4 | Macbeth: Act III, Scene 1 – Ballo III | 3:11 |
| 5 | Jérusalem: Act III, Scene 1 – No. 1: Pas de quatre | 7:40 |
| 6 | Jérusalem: Act III, Scene 1 – No. 2: Pas de deux | 5:33 |
| 7 | Jérusalem: Act III, Scene 1 – No. 3: Pas de solo | 5:49 |
| 8 | Jérusalem: Act III, Scene 1 – No. 4: Pas d'ensemble | 2:34 |
| 9 | Don Carlo: Act III, Scene 2 – Ballo della regina (La Peregrina) | 16:41 |

CD 2

61:13

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1 | Aida: Act I, Scene 2 – Dance No. 3: Danza sacra delle sacerdotesse | 2:30 |
| 2 | Aida: Act II, Scene 1 – Dance No. 4: Danza dei piccoli schiavi mori | 1:38 |
| 3 | Aida: Act II, Scene 2 – Dance No. 5: Ballabile | 4:44 |
| 4 | Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 1 – No. 1: Pas des Bohémiens – | 1:54 |
| 5 | Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 1 – No. 1: Gitanilla – | 2:30 |
| 6 | Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 1 – No. 1: Ensemble | 1:34 |
| 7 | Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 2 – No. 2: Sevillana – | 4:05 |
| 8 | Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 2 – No. 2: Echo du soldat | 2:58 |
| 9 | Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 2 – No. 3: La Bohémienne | 7:20 |
| 10 | Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 2 – No. 4: Galop | 2:31 |
| 11 | I vespri siciliani: Act III, Scene 2 – Le quattro stagioni: L'inverno | 6:36 |
| 12 | I vespri siciliani: Act III, Scene 2 – Le quattro stagioni: La primavera | 7:51 |
| 13 | I vespri siciliani: Act III, Scene 2 – Le quattro stagioni: L'estate | 5:41 |
| 14 | I vespri siciliani: Act III, Scene 2 – Le quattro stagioni: L'autunno | 9:22 |

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Complete Ballet Music from the Operas

Whenever I conduct Verdi operas I find myself having to insist on including the ballet scenes, most of which have been left out of the published scores or included as an optional addendum. Since Verdi, like most opera composers, wrote so little concert music, I thought that making these vibrant pieces more available would be of interest. Some of it is regularly performed on its own, or as part of ballets by famous choreographers. *The Four Seasons* ballet, from the opera *I vespri siciliani* has a life of its own. *Otello's* short ballet score used to make regular appearances in concert programmes in the twentieth century, and the *Aida* ballet scenes are easily recognizable as accompaniments for other media. But some of the others, *Jérusalem* in particular, remain practically unknown. We searched the basements of operas houses in Europe to find this and some of the other long-forgotten ballet scores.

A couple of months before *Otello* had its première in France in 1894, shortly before the deadline, Verdi composed the obligatory third act ballet music demanded by the Paris Opéra. The seven short sections are *Allegro vivace; Arabian Song; Invocation to Allah; Greek Song; Dance; Muranese and The Warrior's Song*. Verdi asked his publisher to include the following detailed description: "*Looking at the splendid scene of the Third Act, I decided to make the music go as follows: At the beginning, a group of Turkish slave-girls dance with reluctance because they are slaves. Then, hearing the strains of the Arab Song, they grow livelier and at the end dance quite wildly. At the invocation of Allah, they fall to the ground. Several beautiful Greek girls then appear, and four measures later another similar group; at the thirteenth measure these two groups join in a quiet, aristocratic, classical dance. The next motif is that of La Muranese: another group of Venetians enters and at the eighteenth measure these two groups meet and dance at the front of the stage. After a fortissimo there is a passage of very light music in F sharp, which should be danced by couples. This motif is repeated louder, and then all the*

Venetians dance together. The 6/8 motif reappears, and here I should like to see another group of Venetians come forward. The War Song should be danced by men alone. At the recurrence of the first motif, all the Venetians dance again, then at the più mosso, Venetians, Turks, Greeks, and the rest all dance together... Amen."

Some of the sections described above are only a few bars long. The entire ballet lasts less than six minutes. These days, the ballet is often omitted from performances of the opera. Verdi himself eventually insisted that his publisher should not include the ballet in the final printing of the score because "it breaks the continuity of the action". The ballet music is included in the Ricordi score as an appendix. Verdi composed this brilliant ballet score, his last stage music, at the age of 81, specifically for the Paris production. He was very concerned that it should make stylistic sense, and asked for help from his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, and from his librettist Arrigo Boito. They sent him songs by Bizet, and numerous Greek songs, but Verdi did not find any of them useful. Eventually he found inspiration in symphonic works by Félicien David, which surprised everyone involved in the search. The *Otello* ballet became a favourite concert work of Arturo Toscanini, and it has taken on a life of its own as a concert piece.

Macbeth was the first of the Shakespeare plays adapted by Verdi for the operatic stage, and was completed in 1847 while Verdi was still in his thirties. With a libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, it was the product of Verdi's self-assurance after the success of *Attila* in 1846. Shakespeare was a constant inspiration to Verdi, and adapting *King Lear* was one of his dreams, but it never came to be. His two last operas were based on Shakespeare plays, *Otello* in 1887, based on *Othello*, and *Falstaff* in 1893, based on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In 1865 Verdi was asked to make a new version for the Paris Opéra in French, and with the obligatory ballet. This revised version was not successful, and the opera received only a few performances for almost a century.

Today it is performed by all major opera houses and there are many recordings of it.

Jérusalem / *I Lombardi* is based on an epic poem by Tommaso Grossi, adapted for the opera stage with a libretto by Temistocle Solera. It had its première at La Scala, Milan, in 1843 as *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (The Lombards on the First Crusade), its original incarnation. In 1847 the opera received extensive revisions and changes for the Paris performances and it became *Jérusalem*, with a new libretto by Alphonse Royer and Gustav Vaez. It was the first of Verdi's operas to be staged in New York, also in 1847. These days it receives very few performances in either version, and the Paris version is seldom staged. In 2011 it received a historic first staging in Jerusalem, conducted by David Stern. When Verdi received the commission from the Paris Opéra, he only had a couple of months' notice, so he opted to adapt *I Lombardi*. Royer and Vaèz moved the action from Milan to Toulouse, but essentially it remained the same work, while changing the names of the characters, simplifying the plot, and adding the long ballet scene, a pre-requisite of the Paris commission.

Don Carlos was the original title of the five act 1866 opera written with a French libretto by Camille du Locle and Joseph Méry, based on the play *Don Carlos, Infante of Spain* by Friedrich Schiller, which recounts the dramatic life of Carlos, the Prince of Asturias (1545-1568). The opera was first heard in Paris in 1867. It has had more cuts, additions and changes than any other Verdi opera, and it survives in several versions. With the long ballet and without cuts, *Don Carlos* is Verdi's longest opera. During the Paris rehearsals it became apparent that the opera would end after midnight, and thus many listeners who lived in the suburbs of Paris would have missed their last train. That resulted in even more cuts, all reluctantly authorized by the composer. The published score was printed with the cuts, but included the ballet. In 1866 the opera was translated into Italian and became known as *Don Carlo*, performed first in London and subsequently in Bologna and other Italian cities. In the twentieth century, very few performances of the full five-act version were staged around the world, but presentations of the

shortened four-act version without the original first act and without the ballet were more frequent. More recently, the original five-act version has been staged in various countries, and a number of important recordings have appeared.

When Cairo inaugurated its new opera house in 1869 with Verdi's *Rigoletto*, it was felt that there should be a newly-commissioned opera from Verdi. After several delays, *Aida* was finally given its première in Cairo in December 1871. It was a great success from the start. The ballet scenes, as well as the *Triumphal March*, are an integral part of the plot, not just a necessary addition for the Paris performances. Verdi included the ballet music in the publication of the score.

Il trovatore, first staged in 1853, is one of Verdi's most traditional operas. The original play by Gutiérrez was adapted by librettist Salvatore Cammarano and completed by Leone Bardare when Cammarano died before completing it. Originally entitled *Azucena*, it was finally named *Il trovatore* and the title was changed again in 1856, when Verdi was commissioned to adapt it for the Paris Opéra. It was translated into *Le trouvère*, with the addition of the mandatory third-act ballet, and other changes for the Paris production, including the rewriting of the final scene. The substantial ballet is in two scenes, sub-divided into three and four sections respectively. These days the opera is more often performed in the Italian version, without the ballet.

After *La traviata* was given its première in 1853, Verdi began gradually to slow down the creation of new operas. There were many reasons for this, including recurring disagreements with the directors of La Scala, and Verdi did not go to Milan for twenty years. More interested in Paris after the success of *Jérusalem* in 1847 at the Paris Opéra, Verdi decided to compose a new opera especially for that house, rather than adapting previous operas. With a libretto by Eugène Scribe (Meyerbeer's famed librettist), an adaptation of an existing libretto by Charles Duveyrier and Eugène Scribe for an unwritten opera to be titled *Le duc d'Albe* by Halévy, Verdi started the five-act grand opera, *Les vêpres siciliennes*. Donizetti had used part of the same libretto in 1839, but did not finish it. In spite of

this checkered history, this story was the one chosen by Verdi after a long search of available ready-made librettos. This time the ballet became an integral part of the opera from its inception. In the third act, the long ballet, *Les quatre saisons*, was originally a combination of dance and mime. The Paris première took

place in 1855. Today it is mostly performed in the Italian version, *I vespri siciliani*, which uses mostly a revised text by Eugenio Caimi.

© José Serebrier

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra



Photo: Chris Zuidyk

Founded in 1893, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra has worked with many famous composers, conductors and musicians including Elgar, Sibelius, Holst, Stravinsky, Vaughan Williams and Thomas Beecham; and more recently with Michael Tippett, John Tavener and Peter Maxwell Davies. Principal conductors since the founder Sir Dan Godfrey have included Charles Groves, Constantin Silvestri, Andrew Litton, Marin Alsop and now by Kirill Karabits. The BSO has toured worldwide, performing at Carnegie Hall, New York, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Vienna Musikverein, and Berlin Philharmonie, as well as regular British appearances at

the Royal Festival Hall and Royal Albert Hall in London, the Symphony Hall in Birmingham and the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. The BSO is known internationally through over three hundred recordings, and continues to release numerous CDs each year with Naxos. Recent critically acclaimed recordings have included CDs of Bernstein, Bartók, Sibelius, Glass, Adams and Elgar, and three discs featuring arrangements of Mussorgsky, Bach and Wagner by Stokowski were nominated for GRAMMY® awards in 2004, 2005 and 2006.



GRAMMY®-winner conductor and composer José Serebrier is one of today's most recorded classical artists. He has received 39 GRAMMY® nominations in recent years. When José Serebrier was 21 years old, Leopold Stokowski hailed him as 'the greatest master of orchestral balance'. After five years as Stokowski's Associate Conductor at New York's Carnegie Hall, Serebrier accepted an invitation from George Szell to become the Composer-in-Residence of the Cleveland Orchestra for Szell's last two seasons. Szell discovered Serebrier when he won the Ford Foundation American Conductors Competition (together with James Levine). Serebrier was music director of America's oldest music festival, in Worcester, Massachusetts, until he organized Festival Miami, and served as its artistic director for many years. In that capacity, Serebrier commissioned many works, including Elliot Carter's *String Quartet No. 4*, and conducted many American and world premières. Serebrier has made international tours with The Juilliard Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Toulouse Chamber Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of Spain, Russian National Orchestra and others. Serebrier's first recording, Ives's *Fourth Symphony* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, won a GRAMMY® nomination. His recording of the Mendelssohn symphonies won the UK Music Retailers Association Award for Best Orchestral Recording, and his series of Shostakovich *Film Suites* won the Deutsche Schallplatten Award for Best Orchestral Recording. *Soundstage* magazine selected Serebrier's recording of *Scheherazade* with the LPO as the Best Audiophile Recording of 2001. He has recorded with most major orchestras. *Serebrier Conducts Prokofiev, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky*, filmed at the Sydney Opera, has been shown over 50 times on U.S. television. Serebrier conducted at the 2004 GRAMMY® Awards ceremony in Los Angeles, telecast live to 175 countries. Serebrier presently records for Naxos, BIS, Warner Classics, RPO Records and Sony/BMG. His *First Symphony* was premièred by Leopold Stokowski (who premièred several of his works) when Serebrier was 17, as a last-minute replacement for the then still unplayable Ives *Fourth Symphony*. His music has been recorded by conductors such as John Eliot Gardiner, among others. Serebrier made his US conducting début at 19 with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, performing his *Symphony No. 2 'Partita'*. His new *Third Symphony, Symphonie Mystique*, received a GRAMMY® nomination for the Best New Composition of 2004. It was premièred at Carnegie Hall, NY in 2005. His *Carmen Symphony* CD, with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, won the Latin GRAMMY® for Best Classical Album of 2004. The French music critic Michel Faure has written a new book about José Serebrier, published last year in France by L'Harmattan. Serebrier's first recording with the New York Philharmonic, on Warner Classics, was released in 2006, and his new recording with the London Symphony Orchestra, for Sony Classical was released in 2007.

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 Playing Time
 1:55:24


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Booklet notes in English

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This unique programme is the first time that all the ballet music from Verdi's operas has been brought together in a single recording. Although *The Four Seasons* from *I vespri siciliani* (The Sicilian Vespers) and the ballet scenes from *Aida* and *Otello* have survived, substantial pieces from *Il trovatore* and *Don Carlo* are more often cut, while the ballet from *Jérusalem* is all but unknown. José Serebrier's recordings with the Bournemouth Symphony have resulted in some great successes with unusual repertoire. This release will be of interest both to opera enthusiasts and to those eager to explore Verdi's neglected and relatively small body of concert music.


 Giuseppe
VERDI
 (1813-1901)

Complete Ballet Music from the Operas

CD 1

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| 1 | From Otello: Act III, Scene 7 | 5:37 |
| 2-4 | From Macbeth: Act III, Scene 1 | 10:16 |
| 5-8 | From Jérusalem: Act III, Scene 1 | 21:36 |
| 9 | From Don Carlo: Act III, Scene 2 | 16:41 |

CD 2

61:13

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------|
| 1 | From Aida: Act I, Scene 2 | 2:30 |
| 2 | From Aida: Act II, Scene 1 | 1:38 |
| 3 | From Aida: Act II, Scene 2 | 4:44 |
| 4-6 | From Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 1 | 5:58 |
| 7-10 | From Il trovatore: Act III, Scene 2 | 16:54 |
| 11-14 | From I vespri siciliani: Act III, Scene 2 | 29:30 |

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
José Serebrier

A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet

Recorded at The Lighthouse, Poole, Dorset, UK, from 15th to 17th May, 2011

Produced, engineered and edited by Phil Rowlands • Assistant engineer: Patrick Phillips

Booklet notes: José Serebrier • Cover: Set design for Verdi's *Aida* by Alfred Roller (1864-1935)

With many thanks to Mr Paul Underwood for supporting this recording