

NAXOS

# ROSSINI

3 CDs

## Maometto II

(1822 Venice version)

Sedov • Gemmabella • Islam-Ali-Zade • de Gobbi  
Barbolini • Ruta • Czech Philharmonic Choir, Brno  
Czech Chamber Soloists, Brno • Cohen



**Gioachino  
ROSSINI**

**(1792-1868)**

**Maometto II**

**Melodramma eroico**

**(1822 Venice version)**

**Libretto after Cesare Della Valle**

**Maometto. . . . . Denis Sedov, Bass**  
**Calbo, a Venetian general. . . . . Anna-Rita Gemmabella, Contralto**  
**Anna Erisso. . . . . Luisa Islam-Ali-Zade, Mezzo-soprano**  
**Paolo Erisso, her father . . . . . Massimiliano Barbolini, Tenor**  
**Condulmiero, another Venetian general . . . . Antonio de Gobbi, Bass**  
**Selimo, Maometto's confidant . . . . . Cesare Ruta, Tenor**

**Czech Philharmonic Choir, Brno • Jan Ocetek, Chorus-master**

**Czech Chamber Soloists, Brno • Ivan Matyáš, Artistic Director**

**Musical assistance: Stefano Seghedoni**

**Brad Cohen**

**The Italian libretto may be accessed at  
[www.naxos.com/libretti/maomettosecondo.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/maomettosecondo.htm)**

**CD 1** **71:58** **CD 3** **68:30**

**1** Sinfonia: Maestoso - Allegro 10:11

**Act I**

**2** No. 1 Introduzione: *Al tuo cenno, Erisso* 12:13  
(Chorus, Erisso, Condulmiero, Calbo)

**3** No. 2 Coro di Donne: *Restate, amici* 4:23  
(Chorus, Calbo, Erisso, Condulmiero)

**4** No. 3 Scena e Quartetto con Coro:  
*Ilarità! ... Per me? ... Speranza!* 14:15  
(Anna, Erisso, Calbo, Condulmiero, Chorus)

**5** No. 4 Scena e Terzetto: *Che sento! Oh Dio!* 4:05  
(Condulmiero, Chorus, Anna)

**6** No. 4 (continued):  
*Giusto Cielo, in tal periglio* 8:45  
(Anna, Chorus, Erisso)

**7** No. 4 (continued): *Mira, Signor, quel pianto* 8:01  
(Calbo, Anna, Erisso)

**8** No. 5 Coro e Cavatina: *Dal ferro, dal foco* 10:05  
(Chorus, Maometto)

**CD 2** **26:12**

**Act I** (continued)

**1** No. 6 Finale: *Compiuta ancor del tutto* 8:21  
(Maometto, Selimo, Chorus, Erisso)

**2** No. 6 (continued):  
*Giusto ciel, che strazio è questo!* 5:42  
(Erisso, Calbo, Maometto)

**3** No. 6 (continued):  
*Guardie, olà, costor si traggano* 12:09  
(Maometto, Anna, Erisso, Calbo, Chorus, Selimo)

**Act II**

**1** No. 7 Introduzione:  
*È follia sul fior degli anni* 4:50  
(Chorus)

**2** No. 8 Scena:  
*Tacete. - Ahimè! quai detti iniqui ascolto!* 3:52  
(Anna, Maometto)

**3** No. 8 (continued): *Anna ... tu piangi?* 12:42  
(Maometto, Anna)

**4** No. 9 Scena: *Oh! come un cieco affetto* 4:33  
(Selimo, Calbo, Erisso)

**5** No. 9 (continued):  
*Non temer: d'un basso affetto* 7:52  
(Calbo)

**6** No. 10 Scena: *Oh! come al cor soavi* 1:31  
(Erisso, Maometto)

**7** No. 10 (continued):  
*Pria svenar con ferme ciglia* 12:51  
(Erisso, Maometto, Calbo)

**8** No. 11 Gran Scena ed Aria:  
*Alfin compiuta è un a metà* 9:06  
(Anna, Chorus)

**9** No. 12 Scena e Rondo finale:  
*I puri voti accogli* 11:13  
(Anna, Chorus, Erisso, Calbo)

## Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

### Maometto II (Venice version)

'At least', Rossini in his later years told his fellow-composer Ferdinand Hiller, 'I was always extremely dependent on external influences. The various cities in which I wrote stimulated me in different ways; I also accommodated myself to the various tastes that prevailed in one or another audience. In Venice, therefore, my crescendo could never be enough. I gave them plenty of it, although I myself was already satisfied. In Naples I could leave it aside, it was never once wanted there.'

With these words Rossini alluded to the progressive public of Naples, distinguished from the broadly traditional attitude of other Italian theatre-goers. In Naples, thanks to the best orchestra, the permanent mixed chorus and the outstanding singers, Rossini could allow himself experiments and reforms in his operatic style, particularly because of the open-mindedness of the public. His first appearance in Naples in 1815 with *Elisabetta* brought an approach to the style there and the tradition of composed recitatives, anticipating a degree of modernity in his *Otello* in 1816 with its murder and suicide on the open stage, something unthinkable in the rest of Italy. Among the nine serious operas written between 1815 and 1822 in Naples *Maometto II* is the most important reform opera in Rossini's career. The choice of librettist is striking. Cesare della Valle, Duke of Ventignano, not least through his loyalty to the royal house, was very influential in theatrical circles in Naples. He had won a respectable reputation as a poet with several classical works. That he now adapted his tragedy *Anna Erizo* as an opera was through the urging of Rossini, to whom Della Valle gave way, without ever being enthusiastic about the 'lower' art form of libretto-writing. Already in May 1820 the poet and composer were busy with the material. At the beginning of July revolutionary intrigues forced the king to agree to a constitution. It appears that Della Valle added some patriotic passages, taking into account the current political climate. The libretto was approved by the censors at the end of July. Planned for September, then announced for the middle of November, the opera was finally first performed on 3rd December 1820, with a delay attributed to a creative crisis on the part

of Rossini, something to which he was always subject with his innovative works. The opera was praised by the press, but received by the public with a measure of indifference for no clear reason.

Earlier operas such as *Ermione* (1819) had tended towards putting into question the traditional number opera with large, closed structures. In *Maometto II* there was an attempt to do away with the usual closed structure of scenes. Among the most important things here is what Rossini himself called the *Terzettone* that takes up a good third of the first act and includes not less than five numbers, namely a scene, a *terzetto*, a prayer, another scene and a further final *terzetto*. Between the *terzetto* and the prayer there is a complete change of scene and scenery, while the music continues.

In addition to this the plot deviates from the usual dilemma of the heroine between love and duty. In the well enough known situation the girl rebels against the tyranny of her father, since she, usually secretly, loves another man, who may not be suitable in some way. Often the couple have married in secret, like Desdemona and Othello, or even have a child, like Cristina and Eduardo. Anna's situation is different. She loves a man whom she first believes to be an ally of her country and a friend of her father. In the decisive moment she does not hide her feelings, but openly reveals it to her father, Erisso, and to her new suitor, Calbo. At first, then, there is no recognition that it is a matter of the worst enemy of her people that creates her inner conflict. Rather her love dies in the moment when she realises that the one she loved had betrayed her with a false identity. This betrayal is followed by the fascination this man exercises over her, something that is no reason for her to respond. The rest of the plot deals with the feeling for her father and her country. Her sacrifice is more sacred duty than a way out of a conflict that really is no such thing. Her final willing betrothal to Calbo before her definitive departure is no act of blind obedience but of loyalty to her family. Rossini succeeds in showing her inner unity of character in leit-motifs through her thoughts of her dead mother, and that to her last breath. Anna's vow of

loyalty to her father and her death before the eyes of Maometto are accompanied by that melody heard before when Erisso was by his wife's tomb. It is no surprise, then, that Rossini shows no interest in the contemporary political implication of the text that the librettist had introduced into the final scene and unswervingly completes his drama as one of a character showing love of parents and loyalty.

In his printed libretto Della Valle writes:

**Anna:** (*appoggiandosi al sepolcro della madre*)

E tu che Italia conquistar presumi  
impara or tu da un'itala donzella  
che ancora degli eroi la patria è quella  
(*cade morta appiè del sepolcro*)

**Anna:** (*supporting herself on her mother's tomb*)

And you who dare to conquer Italy  
learn now from an Italian girl  
that this is still the country of heroes.  
(*She falls dead by the tomb.*)

In the score Rossini has:

**Anna:** (*mostrando il sepolcro della madre*)

Sul cenere materno  
io porsi a lui la mano  
il cenere materno  
abbia il mio sangue ancor.  
(*si ferisce col pugnale che teneva celato*)

**Anna:** (*indicating her mother's tomb*)

Over my mother's ashes  
I stretch forth my hand.  
My mother's ashes  
now receives my blood.  
(*She strikes herself with the dagger that she has held hidden.*)

This shows once more the coherence and careful attention with which Rossini treated his material. One theme is pre-eminent, while subsidiary scenes are consequently eliminated.

It is possible that soon afterwards Rossini thought of reworking this opera for Paris, when he gained a foothold

there, in the same way that he found *Mosè in Egitto* (1818-1819) suitable for the Parisian stage. The opportunity for an Italian reworking seemed quite unexpected. In fact his agreement with La Fenice in Venice, beside the composition of a new opera (*Semiramide*), did not schedule *Maometto II* for the opening of the 1822-23 season, but *Zelmira* (1822), which had had great success in Naples and in Vienna. It turned out, however, that this opera, in spite of Rossini's attempts to keep his score out of the hands of others, had been appropriated by the smaller San Benedetto Theatre, where it was performed on 21st September 1822. For the opening of the La Fenice season an opera never previously heard in Venice had to be provided. For this purpose only *Maometto II* was in question, a work eminently suitable for the singers engaged and for its plot drawn from the colonial history of Venice. What was not suitable was the formal and contextual modernism of the Naples opera, and so Rossini was compelled to undertake at least two alterations: an overture and a happy ending were essential. In addition he made a number of other changes, pointing already to the revision of the opera for Paris as *Le siège de Corinthe* (The Siege of Corinth) (1826) and altogether amounting to an undoing of the large structural forms designed for Naples. In this more conventional form the opera had its first performance on 26th December 1822. The overture opened with the long, moving *Maestoso* that originally introduced the scene of Erisso and Calbo in the catacombs. It proceeded with an exposition of the themes, drawn from the opera, and with the *crescendo* so much prized by the Venetians, continuing in the general style of Rossini's early overtures, but showing strongly extended structures that make it one of his longest and most fascinating overtures.

The *Introduction* (No.1), which, with its first sounds, establishes the atmosphere of the opera, corresponds absolutely to the Naples version. There is one difference: Condulmiero, the general, who at first expresses an opposing view, is not sung, as originally, by a tenor but given to a bass. This is clear not from the surviving musical sources but from the cast-list, which specifies this rôle as for Signor Luciano Mariani, who in the same season created the bass rôle of Oroë in *Semiramide*.

In the following scene Erisso goes with the generals

Calbo and Condulmiero, and not only with Calbo, as in the first version, to Anna's chamber. There, in a scene taken from the opera *Ermione*, girls try to cheer her up (No.2). Anna's *cavatina* is cut. This was not so much for dramatic as for practical reasons. In *Elisabetta* in 1815 Rossini had composed a classical entrance aria for Isabella Colbran, and avoided in all his following operas taxing entrances so that the prima donna could keep her voice for the final scene. In *Otello* she sings a *duettino*, and in *Maometto II* the aforementioned *cavatina*, which only consists of a slow section, with no *cabaletta*. At the Vienna performance of *Elisabetta* in 1822 Rossini replaced the entrance aria with a number that here for the first time was a less revealing opening for the prima donna; the famous quartet from *Bianca e Falliero*, 'Cielo, il tuo labbro ispira', which follows here as an expression of what is unspoken, indicates that Anna loves a liar. For this quartet (No.3) the tenor, soprano and contralto are joined by a bass, for musical reasons, with Condulmiero now allotted to a bass, present at Erisso's planned betrothal of Calbo and Anna. At the same time the following scene in the first version is eliminated, where General Condulmiero turns out to be the traitor who, after having spoken at the assembly for the surrender of weapons, opens the gates of Negroponte to the Turks. Through his presence during the alarms and excursions of war this stain on the honourable Venetian is removed. With this we are plunged into the following scene that was originally part of the grand *terzettone* and now offers no more than a change of scene. The opening *terzetto* 'Conquista l'anima', eliminated through the aforementioned quartet, is now moved with newly arranged earlier themes to the conclusion. After the change of scene from Anna's chamber to the city square there follow scene, chorus, prayer, scene and *terzetto* (No.4) from the former *terzettone* of the original with the heart-rending dialogue between Anna and Erisso and the effective conclusion provided by Calbo and the chorus, still a very complex number, which, however, with the omission of the introductory *terzetto* no longer shows the original tonal unity. The final entrance of the Turks and Maometto's *cavatina* (No.5) correspond completely with the Naples version. This is true of the whole finale, with the exception of a small stroke, a new theme for the *cabaletta* and a rhythmic simplification of the

final choral *crescendo*.

The second act shows greater changes than the first, although the announcement that the composer had taken on the task of completely rewriting the second act is not strictly true. The opening chorus of Turkish girls (No.7) is identical with the Naples version. The interventions in the following scene and duet (No.8) are complicated; as here the directly concluding aria of Maometto with chorus is omitted, the dramatic events included there, the urging by the Turks for Maometto to counterattack and his handing over of the imperial ring to Anna, have to be integrated with the duet. This takes place through the introduction of martial music and the complete reworking of the *cabaletta*, with the introduction of a new final cadenza with thematic borrowings from the omitted aria of Maometto, which brings the number to an end. To make clear the following change of scene from Maometto's tent to a deserted part of Negroponte near the city walls, a dramatically irrelevant recitative is inserted for Selim. The scene and aria of Calbo (No.9) show three more or less substantial cuts from the Naples version, but remain otherwise identical in form. The handing over of the imperial ring has already happened, and Erisso and Calbo have been able to gain their freedom, in Turkish disguise. In spite of their rescue by Anna, Erisso still doubts her loyalty, while Calbo in his great aria gives strong expression to the opposite view. The *testitura* of Calbo's vocal line lies lower than in Naples and is less embellished. This is followed by a completely new dramatic situation: Maometto and Erisso confront each other, leading to a newly composed *terzetto* (No.10) in which Calbo enters, explaining that he is not Anna's brother but her betrothed: both leave to fight in single combat.

A new change of scene leads now to the catacombs, where Anna has had to remain and awaits her death. The introductory *Maestoso* comes from the original catacomb scene, which in Naples preceded Calbo's aria and has already been heard in the overture (whereby Rossini established the connection, important to him, between the overture and the opera, something always denied him in the related literature). The rest of the scene and chorus (No.11) make use of parts of the extended finale of the Naples version. Anna's scene 'Alfin compiuta è una metà dell'opera' remains largely intact and the final chorus of

women 'Nume cui l' sole à trono' is shortened.

The final scene is newly composed. In the battle the walls of the church are broken open, with no entry of avenging Turks but of victorious Venetians crying 'Vittoria! Vittoria! Il Veneto valor trionfò'. Clearly Calbo has defeated Maometto in combat and the Venetians have won the upper hand over the Turks. United with her father and her betrothed, to whom she now reaches out her hand, Anna has now only to sing the happy *Rondò finale* (No.12), that comes, with the words 'Fra il padre, e fra l'amante', from *La donna del lago*.

The question remains what good the whole exercise was. In the first place the tragic ending had to give way to a happy conclusion. This meant a whole range of dramatic changes, namely in the second act, so that the new *dénouement* might seem fairly plausible. Through the omission of the suicide scene by her mother's tomb Rossini had to sacrifice the leitmotifs associated with the identity of Anna, losing something of its compelling nature. The change of fortune was brought about by a conventional duel scene.

At the same time Rossini took the opportunity to reduce the demands on the three principal soloists (no entrance aria and a decidedly shorter final scene for Anna, only one aria for Maometto, a less demanding aria for Calbo and less taxing ensembles for all). In fact he met the demands not only of star singers, who soon took part in a major performance with *Semiramide*, but also made it possible for later stagings of the opera with less bravura singers. Finally Rossini reworked the structure of the opera in more conventional forms, which could be accepted by the public as separate numbers, facilitating the entrance of the opera into the repertoire of provincial opera houses. For all these requirements Rossini mercilessly sacrificed the formal advances achieved in Naples and the parental motif that was so important to him. With his usual pragmatism he set out for total functionalism, where continuing ambitions were impossible or made no sense.

Success of the work in this form remained limited and reflections on its quality as in other failures are out of place. One reason could be in the total rejection by the public of Isabella Colbran, who was no longer at the height of her powers. After this Rossini did nothing to promote the work

further and waited for the opportunity to rework it in a new form as reforms took place in Venetian opera, a thing he achieved in Paris with *Le siège de Corinthe*, and the final exclusion of *Maometto II* from the stage. Today we have the opportunity to test the effectiveness of the Venice version, following the example of the pragmatic Rossini, not drawing comparisons with the earlier and later versions but judging the present version on its own merits.

**Reto Müller**

## The Venice Version

The Wildbad edition of *Maometto II* cannot and is not intended to anticipate the long-awaited Fondazione Rossini Pesaro edition. Our performance-oriented practical version is based, in so far as is clear, on the tolerably complete manuscript of the piece, preserved in Bologna. In this manuscript there are contradictions stemming from its origins to be explained, as, for example, the notation for Condulmiero as a tenor in the Introduction and as a bass in the Quartet, to explain which it is necessary to go back to the Venice conducting score and if possible to the autograph. This problem, missing bars and some details, and a number of copyist's mistakes, have to be solved editorially. The final aria *Tanti affetti* from *La donna del lago*, only indicated in the manuscript, follows a Modena manuscript, but is in the Venice libretto. Calbo's aria is not simplified or shortened in the Bologna manuscript, perhaps a pointer that the simplification sketched in the Pesaro autograph and edited by Alberto Zedda for a recording with Marilyn Horne, is maybe to be seen as a temporary reduction (possibly in view of the heavy burden on the singer in Venice with the performance of *Semiramide*?). As the aria in the manuscript is notated in E, but for the performance is marked at the beginning a tone lower, we have taken the liberty here of choosing the higher key, in view of the *tessitura* of our Calbo.

**Jochen Schönleber**

*English versions by Keith Anderson*

## Synopsis

### CD 1

#### 1 Sinfonia

### Act I

#### Scene 1

##### 2 No. 1: Introduction

The Venetian colony of Negroponte is under siege by the Turks. The scene is set in a room in the palace, lit by various lamps. The Governor sits in silence at a table, with other captains around him, including the generals Calbo and Condulmiero. The officers ask the Governor why he remains silent, wondering what is to become of the colony. He reminds them that Negroponte has been under siege by the conquerors of Byzantium for some two months. Now they are threatened by disease, hunger, with fire and death from Maometto (Mehmet II), who demands that the gates should be opened to him.

Condulmiero advises capitulation, claiming that resistance would now be folly, but Calbo advises a struggle to the death. Erisso agrees and the officers all swear on their swords to fight to the death. They go about their business, leaving Condulmiero and Calbo with Erisso.

##### 3 No. 2: Chorus of Women

Erisso tells them of his anxieties for his daughter, whom Calbo loves, telling them to follow him.

#### Scene 2

In another room Anna, Erisso's daughter, is seated on a sofa. Day is dawning. Her women sing of the dawn and the hope of coming happiness.

##### 4 No. 3: Scene and Quartet with Chorus

Anna, however, can see no chance of happiness. Erisso enters, with Calbo and Condulmiero, and she is alarmed at his concern for the danger that confronts her, if he can no longer protect her. He wants to entrust her to Calbo, whom she must marry. Anna is dismayed and Calbo sees that she is opposed to the match. In tears she admits that she has met another, when her father had left her in Corinth, a man called Uberto. Erisso assures her that the man was not Uberto and that she has been deceived. They are warned that the enemy is at hand and the sound of cannons is heard, as they leave.

##### 5 No. 4: Scene and Terzetto

Condulmiero lingers for a moment, fearing the worst.

#### Scene 3

The scene is now a square in Negroponte, to the right is a church, in the background a road leading away. The sound of distant battle can be heard. Some of the women run in, terrified. Anna asks them what is happening, and they tell her that a traitor has opened the gates to the enemy. Anna in terror kneels before the church in prayer, begging for mercy, and joined in her prayers by the women. A drum is heard and some of the garrison file past. Erisso is with them. He tells Anna that all is lost but honour, and that Maometto, suspecting a trick, has held off his forces, awaiting the new day. Erisso makes to leave and Anna would follow him, but he forbids her. Calbo appears, with some soldiers, and asks Erisso to change his plan, but the latter leaves, unwilling to give way to the dictates of his heart, giving Anna a dagger, to kill herself, if she has to. Erisso embraces his daughter, Calbo kneels before her, some of the women embrace their sons, soldiers of the garrison. Anna and her women withdraw into the church.

#### Scene 4

A band of Moslems enters, seeking the fugitives, but



soon return, following Erisso. The sound of a Turkish band is heard in the distance. Other Moslem soldiers enter.

**6** No. 5: Chorus and Cavatina

They sing of the capture of the city and of slaughter and their own valour. Some of them make to set fire to the buildings and to the church, but are stopped by a sign from their leader, Maometto. He is followed by his vizier Selim and other officers. They prostrate themselves and await his orders. He tells them to rise and celebrate their victory.

**CD 2**

**1** No. 6: Finale

Maometto gives orders to his men to complete their task, telling them where to go. The vizier Selim asks him how he knows the place, and he explains how he has visited the place in disguise, as he had Corinth. Of the latter he has happy memories. Soldiers appear, giving news of the slaughter or capture of their enemies. Maometto is overjoyed at his triumph over the proud enemy.

**Scene 5**

Omar enters, leading in Calbo and Erisso in chains. Maometto tells them that their duty is over, now his begins, to have them tortured for their temerity in refusing terms. Erisso recognises Maometto, who realises that this was the man who commanded in Corinth. He asks Erisso if he has a child. He offers mercy, if Erisso will talk to the soldiers who are still resisting in the citadel; in return he swears to allow them to go, if they will open the gates.

**2** Erisso is faced with a dilemma, but Calbo is steadfast. Maometto threatens them, but they are bound by honour.

**3** He orders them to be led to torture.

**Scene 6**

The guards are about to lead their prisoners away, when Anna rushes in, followed by other women. She is distressed at her father's plight, but Maometto recognises her as Anna, and she him, as Uberto, to general astonishment. Anna has found her lover again, but as an enemy. Erisso is appalled, and there is general consternation. Anna pleads for her father and Calbo, whom she names as her brother, threatening to kill herself. Maometto relents, himself releasing Erisso and Calbo from their chains, promising Anna happiness with him but presenting her with her own dilemma, in view of her father's opposition and her own conscience.

**CD 3**

**Act II**

**Scene 1**

**1** No. 7: Introduction

The scene is set in the luxurious pavilion of Maometto. Anna is seated on a divan, in sorrow, covering her face with her hands. Moslem women, splendidly dressed, surround her, some kneeling before her, offering rich gifts, others bearing vessels of perfume. They sing of the joys of love, a sweet slavery proper to youth, to end in old age.

No. 8: Scene and Duet

**2** Anna tells them to be silent, distressed at her situation.

**Scene 2**

They are joined by Maometto, who tells Anna that the time has come for her to change her mind. He will make her his queen and allow her brother and father to live

with her. Anna tells him that she had loved Uberto, but hates the man who lied to her; she would be ashamed to betray her own country. She is in tears.

**[3]** Maometto sees here a sign of the pain of love. Anna, however, tells him not to deceive himself, her mind wandering in her grief, now death alone is left to her. He is distressed at her plight, but insists that she loves him and will be his, trying to embrace her, and threatening her in his desperation. The sound of soldiers is heard, as a trumpet seems to sound the alarm. Anna fears for the safety of her father, and he offers her a ring, a token of her submission, if her father is to be saved. Soldiers call on Maometto for action, and seizing the imperial standard, he leaves.

### Scene 3

No. 9: Scene and Aria

**[4]** The vizier Selim laments the state to which love has reduced the unconquered Maometto, leading him, perhaps, to ruin, the conqueror of Asia and terror of Europe forgetting his glory in the madness of love.

### Scene 4

The scene is now a remote part of Negroponte. Erisso and Calbo are disguised as Moslems, wearing turbans and advancing cautiously, having sought safety through a secret underground passage from the church. Erisso casts off his disguise, and Calbo swears revenge and the rescue of Anna, whose honour he defends, against the doubts of her father.

**[5]** Calbo continues in praise of Anna's virtue, before withdrawing.

### Scene 5

No. 10: Scene and Terzetto

**[6]** Erisso, alone, laments the loss of his daughter.

### Scene 6

Maometto enters, with his guard, challenged by Erisso. He protests his love for Anna, having dared to offer her his hand in marriage. Erisso interrupts, with indignation.

**[7]** Erisso would rather kill his daughter than tolerate such treachery, but Maometto declares that none can challenge him, only to be challenged immediately by Calbo, who now emerges. Maometto would not kill Anna's brother, but Erisso reveals Calbo as her betrothed. Maometto challenges his rival, and both leave, inspired by love.

### Scene 7

No. 11: Grand Scene and Aria

The scene is the burial vaults of the church, with the tomb of Erisso's wife. Anna is seen, silent by the tomb. She has now completed half her plan, and now she must sacrifice herself. All that is left to her is the silent grave, and she would be happy to lie with her mother, ready to welcome death. She bids the women with her to pray, and they call for victory.

**[8]** The sound of battle is heard and of cannons. Anna fears for her father and for Calbo, joined in her fears by the women. The cannonade continues, laying open part of the church, while Anna resolves to die rather than yield.

### Final Scene

No. 12: Scene and Rondo Finale

**[9]** Venetian soldiers enter in triumph, followed by their officers, and by Calbo and Erisso. Erisso runs to Anna, who falls into his arms, while Calbo takes her hand. Erisso explains their debt to Calbo's courage. Anna is overwhelmed by her feelings and her new happiness, in which the others join.

## Denis Sedov

Of Russian extraction, the young Israeli bass Denis Sedov is a graduate of the New York Metropolitan Opera studio and has sung in many major international opera houses, including the rôle of Figaro at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and his début at La Scala, Milan, as Leporello. He has appeared at festivals including Aix-en-Provence, Aspen and Spoleto, and has won a reputation for himself also in Lieder and in oratorio. He has collaborated with leading conductors, including Seiji Ozawa, Charles Dutoit, Mark Minkowski and Riccardo Muti, and with Pierre Boulez and others in recordings. His Rossini rôles include those of Assur and of Maometto II, the latter also undertaken at the National Opera of the Rhine in Strasbourg.

## Luisa Islam-Ali-Zade

The mezzo-soprano Luisa Islam-Ali-Zade is a prize-winner from the Belvedere, ARD and Robert Stolz Competition, and of others, including the Concours International de Musique de Montréal, the Erika Köth Competition, Neustadt, and the International Coloratura Competition in Stuttgart. With an astonishing vocal range of more than three octaves, she has no difficulty in also tackling high soprano rôles. Her interests lie particularly in Mozart and in Rossini, and in French and Russian repertoire. She has appeared in Vienna, Toulouse, Stuttgart, Salzburg, Nantes, Avignon, Hamburg, Geneva, Liège, Bregenz, and Gothenburg. At Wildbad she has sung the rôles of Isolier in *Le Comte d'Ory* and of Amira in *Ciro in Babilonia*.

## Anna-Rita Gemmabella

Born in Salerno, the mezzo-soprano Anna-Rita Gemmabella had her training at the Naples San Pietro a Majella Conservatory, studying with Elisabetta Fusco and graduating with distinction. She participated in various bel canto master-courses, among others with Leone Magiera, Raina Kabaivanska, Gabriella Tucci, Giovanna Canetti and Elio Battaglia. Since 1996 she has continued to develop her art with Marco Boemi and Antonetta Stella. She has been a finalist and prize-winner in various international competitions, including the 1996 Naples Caruso - De Lucia, the 1997 Palermo Reggio Calabria, the 1998 Eboli, Vissi d'Arte' and the 1999 Trapani G. Di Stefano Competitions. She has appeared in major Italian opera houses and in recitals with José Cura, Maria Dragoni and Carlo Bergonzi. Her career has also brought appearances in opera buffa, including *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in Lisbon, *La Cenerentola* in Las Palmas and Palermo, as well as in the rôle of Romeo in *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi*. In 2003 she made her début at La Scala in Milan in *Moïse et Pharaon*. In Lecce, Reggio and Genoa she sang Melbea in *Il viaggio a Reims*, and in Bologna Ragonde in *Comte d'Ory*. She made her Rossini in Wildbad début in 2001 as Carlotta in Pucitta's *Verter*, with Rossini's *Torvaldo e Dorliska* in 2003 and the title rôle of *Ciro in Babilonia* in 2004.

## Massimiliano Barbolini

The tenor Massimiliano Barbolini was born in Modena and made his début in 1998 as Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. In the same year he appeared as Florville in Rossini's *Il Signor Bruschino* under Claudio Desderi. He has since then specialised in Rossini and has appeared as a guest-artist at the Paris Opéra Comique, the Teatro Ariosto at Reggio Emilia, the Vienna Konzerthaus and the Festival of Martina Franca, among other engagements. He studied singing with Tito Turtura and works regularly with William Matteuzzi.

## Antonio de Gobbi

The Venetian bass Antonio de Gobbi has appeared under very distinguished conductors, including Semyon Bychkov, Valery Gergiev and Riccardo Muti. He has appeared at major Italian theatres, among them La Fenice, La Scala, the Florence Teatro Comunale and the Arena in Verona. His repertoire covers the broad range of lyric bass rôles, including parts in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, as well as in Puccini's *La Bohème* and *Turandot*.

## Cesare Ruta

The tenor Cesare Ruta completed his vocal training at the Chopin Academy in Warsaw in 1992. Based in Rome, he has participated in master-classes with, among others, Peter Schreier, Renata Scotto and Rockwell Blake, and works regularly with William Matteuzzi. He has appeared in a number of Italian theatres, singing rôles including those of Pollicino's father in Henze's *Pollicino*, Belmonte in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Alfredo in *La traviata* and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*.

## Stefano Seghedoni

Born in Modena, Stefano Seghedoni studied conducting with Giancarlo Andretta, Pietro Veneri and Paolo Arrivabeni and composition with Cristina Landuzzi and Nicola Evangelisti at the Conservatories of Modena and of Bologna. He has served as répétiteur at various theatres, collaborating with artists such as Mirella Freni, Plácido Domingo, Frans Brüggen, Massimo de Bernart and Richard Bonyngé, while as a composer he has won recognition in a number of international competitions, including the Premio Valentino Bucchi. His chamber opera *La corista*, based on Chekhov, has been staged in Marseille and in Modena. Stefano Seghedoni has appeared as a conductor throughout Northern Italy and is founder of the Este Philharmonic Orchestra.

## Czech Philharmonic Choir, Brno

The Czech Philharmonic Choir, Brno, was established in 1990 and is now the only professional chorus in Moravia, with a regular concert schedule at home and abroad and a number of recordings for leading international companies. The chorus has won awards in major international competitions, including competitions in Tours, Arezzo, Limburg and Middlesborough, and has appeared in festivals in the Czech Republic, Vienna, Lucerne, Passau, Schleswig-Holstein and Rheingau. The ensemble enjoys a repertoire also of sacred music and works regularly with the Czech Chamber Soloists. The chorus is directed by Peter Fiala, the conductor and artistic director, a composer and professor at Brno Conservatory.

## Czech Chamber Soloists, Brno

The Czech Chamber Soloists, Brno, a chamber ensemble of the Brno State Philharmonic, can look back on artistic successes over some thirty years. Now under the direction of Ivan Matyás, son of the former artistic director, the ensemble specialises in the Baroque, with interests in composers of the Vienna classical school and in lesser known and often outstanding works by Czech masters of the eighteenth century. The Czech Chamber Soloists, Brno, have undertaken concert tours throughout Europe and to the United States and Canada, their success well documented in broadcasts, television appearances and recordings, and as the opera orchestra for Rossini in Wildbad.

## Brad Cohen

The Australian conductor Brad Cohen graduated at St John's College, Oxford, thereafter spending a year studying with Sergiu Celibidache and Leonard Bernstein. He made his début in London in 1992 at the Almeida Festival, and in 1994 won first prize at the Leeds Conductors' Competition, subsequently appearing at concerts with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, the Orchestra of St John's Smith Square, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted at the festivals of Edinburgh, Hong Kong, Cheltenham and Oxford. As an opera conductor he has a wide repertoire, appearing in London and Australia, with a particular interest in Italian repertoire. He is also closely concerned with contemporary music, directing ensemble pieces by Frank Zappa and collaborating with contemporary composers, including Georges Lentz and Ross Edwards. For Rossini in Wildbad he has conducted *Armida*, *Tancredi* and *Le Comte d'Ory*.

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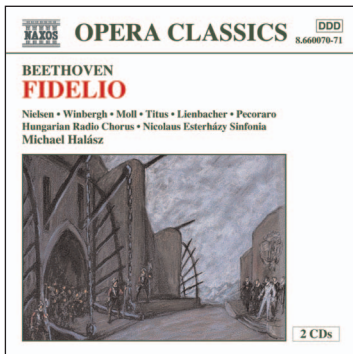


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Rossini's opera *Maometto II* is probably better known in its French adaptation as *Le siège de Corinthe*. It is a tragic story of love and betrayal, in which the Venetian Anna Erisso falls in love with a man she supposes to be an ally of her father, but who is in fact the Turkish Sultan Mehmed II in disguise. In this version, revised for Venice in 1822, Rossini adapted the opera to the more conventional tastes of the Venetian public, who demanded a happy ending. The tragic suicide of Anna is replaced by the victory of the Venetians over the forces of the Sultan, and she survives to marry her father's lieutenant, who is loyal to her father and country.

**SWR** >>  
SÜDWESTRUNDFUNK

WORLD PREMIERE  
RECORDING

Gioachino  
**ROSSINI**

(1792-1868)

**Maometto II**  
(1822 Venice version)

Libretto after Cesare Della Valle

ROSSINI  
IN WILDBAD

Belcanto Opera Festival

**Maometto** ..... Denis Sedov, Bass  
**Calbo, a Venetian general** ..... Anna-Rita Gemmabella, Contralto  
**Anna Erisso** ..... Luisa Islam-Ali-Zade, Mezzo-soprano  
**Paolo Erisso, her father** ..... Massimiliano Barbolini, Tenor  
**Condulmiero, another Venetian general** ..... Antonio de Gobbi, Bass  
**Selimo, Maometto's friend** ..... Cesare Ruta, Tenor

Czech Philharmonic Choir, Brno • Jan Ocetek, Chorus-master

Czech Chamber Soloists, Brno • Ivan Matyás, Artistic Director • Brad Cohen

CD 1	71:58	CD 2	26:12	CD 3	68:30
1 Sinfonia	10:11	1-3 Act I cont.	26:12	1-9 Act II	68:30
2-8 Act I	61:47				

Recorded live on 15th, 17th and 20th July 2002 in Kurhaus Bad Wildbad, during the ROSSINI IN WILDBAD Festival (Artistic Director: Jochen Schönleber)

World première recording of the 1822 Venice version

Producer: Siegbert Ernst • Engineer: Wolfgang Rein • Editor: Dr Max Forster (SWR)

Booklet Notes: Reto Müller and Jochen Schönleber • A co-production with SWR

New edition based on the Bologna manuscript by Till Weibel and Brad Cohen © O.F.L. Medienverlag, Calmbach

A full track list can be found on page 3 of the booklet

The Italian libretto may be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/maomettosecondo.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/maomettosecondo.htm)

Cover picture: Stage design for *Maometto II*, Act I, Scene I, by Sanquirico, for a production at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan in 1824

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Playing Time  
2:46:40



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