

About Viva La Ópera

Viva La Ópera was formed as recently as 1999. It all came about after a visit to Fontilles in 1998, when we were very impressed with what Careline Theatre managed had managed to achieve here.

We realised that the combination of a beautiful and fully functional theatre together with the lovely setting of Fontilles, provided an ideal venue for an opera gala based on the Glyndebourne theme in UK. Glyndebourne may be to opera what Royal Ascot is to horse racing and Henley Regatta is to rowing. It combines high quality entertainment with a chance for the aficionados to dress for the occasion and to take along their picnic and enjoy a very special occasion. Such has been the continued success of Glyndebourne over the years that the biggest stars of opera worldwide are attracted to perform and several, similar galas have become established, bringing the genre to a much wider audience.

Viva La Ópera is basically a small group of opera singers and specialists, keen to be involved in their art, but without a permanent base from which to operate. We discussed the idea with Careline Theatre and they were quick to see the potential for an area with many opera fans who had very little opportunity to see opera live on stage. A first opera gala was planned for September 1999.

Two remarkable things happened in the build up period. Firstly, we managed to attract the attention of Lord and Lady Harewood and they very kindly signified their intention to attend. Lord Harewood is a very keen supporter of opera in UK and has been deeply involved in opera administration over the years, so their visit was particularly welcome. The second development was that, when the tickets went on sale, they were all sold within one week and there was a clamour for more. At that stage it was decided to repeat the gala the following week and, again, all the tickets sold out in a remarkably short space of time.

The two occasions both proved to be a great success. Despite the inevitable limitations, what was presented on stage was extremely well received, particularly by those who really know their opera. Equally, those for whom opera was something of a new experience were pleased to find that many of the arias and melodies were not totally unfamiliar after all. The weather was kind and Fontilles generously supplied many tables and chairs for those who had not brought their own, enabling the midshow picnic to be most enjoyable for everyone.

With the success of 1999 we have been encouraged to work towards making the opera gala an annual event, with every chance of it growing in stature in future years. Since music is an international language we thought it an excellent idea to bring all nationalities together under the same roof to enjoy the one thing we all have in common. We have moved the date to May this year to allow the best chance of ideal weather and we have increased the number of

performances to three. We also have a larger cast and a specially recruited chorus.

We will be looking to make even more progress in 2001 and, with that in mind, one step we would like to take would be to create a permanent chorus. We sincerely hope that you enjoy Opera Gala 2000 and we thank you for your support.

Cast List Part One

Act I of `La Traviata'

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|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Violetta | Abigail Horro (soprano) |
| Alfredo | John Brecknock tenor) |
| Flora | Linda Morell-Vessey (soprano) |
| Gastone | Peter Wittmann (tenor) |
| Marquis | Julian Moyle (baritone) |
| Baron | Manfred Braden (bass) |
| Servant | Peter Clague (baritone) |

Chorus Geraldine van Rhyn (soprano) Janny van Dooren (mezzo soprano) Simone van Roy (mezzo soprano) Wilhelmina Strougje (mezzo soprano) Waldemar Huber (tenor) Peter Wittmann (tenor) Stan Soetwey (tenor) Aired Runz (bass) Manfred Braden (bass)

Act I of `La Boheme'

| | |
|---------|--------------------------------|
| Mimi | Manuela Muñoz (soprano) |
| Rodolfo | John Brecknock |

Act I of `Lakme'

| | |
|---------|----------------------|
| Lakme | Abigail Horro |
| Mallika | Linda Morrell-Vessey |

Act III of `Rigoletto'

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|-------------|----------------------|
| Gilda | Abigail Horro |
| Maddalena | Linda Morrell-Vessey |
| Duke | John Brecknock |
| Rigoletto | Julian Moyle |
| Sparafucile | Peter Clague |

Part Two

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|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Da Geh'Ich Ins Maxim (Lehar) | Julian Moyle |
| The Laughing Song (Strauss) | Linda Morrell-Vessey |

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| Dein Ist mein Ganzes Herz (Lehar) | John Brecknock |
| Audition Aria (Strauss) | Abigail Horro |
| Anna What's Wrong With You? (Pall) | Linda/John/Julian |
| Love's A Game (Lehar) | Peter Clague |
| Let Me Dance (Kalman) | Linda/John |
| Wiener Fiakerlied (Pick) | Julian Moyle |
| Gern Hab Ich Die Frau'n Gekusst (Lehar) | John Brecknock |
| Vilia (Lehar) | Manuela Muñoz |
| Sommernacht (Lehar) | Abigail/John |
| Dui Du. Finale. Fledermaus [Strauss] | Abigail/Linda/ John/Julian |

OPERA GALA 2000

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|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>Production Director</i> | John Brecknock |
| <i>Stage Director</i> | John Bennetts |
| <i>Chorus Mistress</i> | Siân Carlin |
| <i>Stage Manager</i> | John A. Booth |
| <i>Scenic Artists</i> | John Bennetts, Tats Taylor, Brian Denton |
| <i>Scenery & Properties</i> | Viva La Ópera and Careline Theatre |
| <i>Wardrobe by</i> | Maureen Elizabeth |
| <i>Backstage Crew</i> | Bill Parsons, Roy Martin |
| <i>Lights</i> | Ray Davis |
| <i>Sound</i> | Brian Hight |
| <i>Follow Spot Operators</i> | Terry Farrow, Charlie Lennon |
| <i>Bar Management</i> | Elaine Farrow |
| <i>Bar Operators</i> | Ray Baker, Michael Banks, Peter Hosking, Terry Kent, Vi Skinner, Hazel Worrall |
| <i>Front of House Manager</i> | Alan Brett |
| <i>Front of House Staff</i> | Jean Barber, Ray Barber, Shirley Barrett, Murray Brett, Rita Brett, Linda Chadwick, Graham Chadwick, Sue Dearson, Sylvia Hight, Ann Hosking, Sylvia Kent, Angela McAdam, Richard McEnery, Sylvia McEnery, Vida Pearce, Betty Pitt, Pamela Simon, Vicente Simon. |

***Box Office Ticket Sales
Programme***

**John A. Booth, Sue Holly
Graham B. Chadwick**

JOHN BRECKNOCK Tenor