

NAXOS

WOLF-FERRARI

2 CDs

La vedova scaltra

Sollied • Muraro • D'Aguanno • Milhofer
Zanellato • Rossi • Esposito • Zancopè
Favaron • Casagrande



Orchestra and Chorus of the Teatro La Fenice, Venice
Karl Martin



Ermanno
WOLF-FERRARI
(1876–1948)

La vedova scaltra
(**The Cunning Widow**)

Commedia lirica in Three Acts

Libretto by Mario Ghisalberti after the play by Carlo Goldoni

Rosaura	Anne-Lise Sollied
Milord Runebif	Maurizio Muraro
Monsieur Le Bleau	Emanuele D'Aguanno
Il Conte di Bosco Nero	Mark Milhofer
Don Alvaro di Castiglia	Riccardo Zanellato
Marionette	Elena Rossi
Arlecchino	Alex Esposito
Birif	Claudio Zancopè
Folletto	Luca Favaron
Un servo di Don Alvaro	Antonio Casagrande

Orchestra and Chorus of the Teatro La Fenice, Venice

Karl Martin, Conductor

Chorus Master: Emanuela Di Pietro

CD 1	75:25	CD 2	66:17
Act 1		Act 2 continued	
<i>Scene 1</i>		<i>Scene 3</i>	
1 Damigella, bruna e bella (<i>Monsieur, Conte, Milord, Don Alvaro, Arlecchino</i>)	7:51	1 E non vuole parlare! (<i>Conte, Milord, Birif, Folletto</i>)	4:56
2 Et comme ça (<i>Marionette, Rosaura</i>)	6:26	2 O Rosaura non sa le convenienze (<i>Don Alvaro, Arlecchino</i>)	6:18
3 Con grazia, se pol entrar? (<i>Arlecchino, Rosaura, Marionette, Milord</i>)	7:13	3 Questa parrucca, però (<i>Monsieur, Arlecchino</i>)	6:28
4 I miei complimenti, Signora Rosaura (<i>Conte, Rosaura, Milord, Marionette</i>)	6:22	4 Monsieur Arlecchino, che fate voi? (<i>Marionette, Arlecchino, Chorus</i>)	7:18
<i>Scene 3</i>		Act 3	
5 Oh, Marionette! (<i>Monsieur, Marionette</i>)	2:49	<i>Scenes 1 and 2</i>	
<i>Scene 4</i>		5 Ascolta, Marionette, il mio progetto (<i>Rosaura, Marionette, Monsieur, Don Alvaro</i>)	5:15
6 Ma ... Monsieur (<i>Rosaura, Monsieur</i>)	6:57	6 Caffè (<i>Conte, Milford, Rosaura</i>)	6:08
7 Ma che son questi suoni? (<i>Rosaura, Chorus, Marionette, Don Alvaro, A Servant of Don Alvara</i>)	5:13	7 Monsieur Le Bleu è fuggito (<i>Don Alvaro, Arlecchino, Monsieur, Rosaura</i>)	13:00
Act 2		8 Che vai dicendo, che non t'intendo? (<i>Conte, Arlecchino, Rosaura, Marionette</i>)	5:19
<i>Scene 1</i>		<i>Last Scene</i>	
8 Arlecchino – Monsù? (<i>Monsieur, Arlecchino, Conte, Folletto, Milord, Birif, Don Alvaro</i>)	9:21	9 Nel palazzo di Rosaura (<i>Chorus, Marionette</i>)	4:16
<i>Scene 2</i>		10 Signori miei, vo' farvi un discorsetto (<i>Rosaura, Marionette, Chorus, Conte, Don Alvaro, Milord, Monsieur, Arlecchino</i>)	7:16
9 Nella notturna selva (<i>Rosaura</i>)	5:09		
10 Signora, c'è un valletto di Monsieur (<i>Marionette, Rosaura, Arlecchino, Folletto</i>)	9:21		
11 Giusto cielo! Chi è questo? (<i>Birif, Rosaura, Marionette, Arlecchino</i>)	8:38		

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876–1948)

La vedova scaltra

Venice was where Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari was born and where he died, and it was Venice that provided the setting for many of his operas; but Wolf-Ferrari spent most of his working life in German-speaking countries, and his music did not make much of an impression in Italy until quite late in his life. Born to a German father and a Venetian mother, he had much in common with his older contemporary, Ferruccio Busoni, who was only one-quarter German but who regarded Berlin as his home. During the First World War both composers took refuge in Zürich (as did, those who have seen Tom Stoppard's *Travesties* will recall, Lenin, James Joyce, and Tristan Tzara).

Ermanno Wolf was born in 1876, one of seven children and the eldest of five sons. His father, August Wolf, was a painter well known for his copies of old Italian paintings made for Count Adolf Friedrich von Schack; his mother, Emilia Ferrari, came from a family of small-time traders. August wanted his son to follow in his footsteps, and the teenaged Ermanno did study art for a while in Rome and Munich; but he soon abandoned art, to the despair of his father, to become a pupil of Joseph Rheinberger at the Munich Academy of Music. He had already seen his first operas which, being by Rossini and Wagner, neatly counterpointed his mixed racial background. At about the time he left the Academy he emphasized this duality by adding his mother's maiden name to his own.

In the winter of 1895 Wolf-Ferrari was in Milan, where he was looking for a publisher for his first opera, *Irene*. Nothing came of this, but he attended a performance of Verdi's *Falstaff*, less than three years after its première. He was introduced to the master, who received him kindly, but Wolf-Ferrari was too tongue-tied to profit by the conversation. He did, however, profit greatly from seeing *Falstaff*, the fleet, conversational manner of which subsequently informed his own comedies. His marriage in 1897 produced a son the following year.

The first of his operas to be staged, *Cenerentola*, was a failure in Venice but a success when, duly revised, it was put on in Bremen. He enjoyed another success with the first performance, in Munich, of his cantata *La vita nuova*. Soon after this, he was appointed director of the Liceo Musicale in Venice. It was during this period that he composed the first two of his five operas based on Goldoni. Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) was a prolific Venetian playwright and librettist, whose collaboration with the composer Baldassare Galuppi produced some of the most popular operas of the mid-eighteenth century. Wolf-Ferrari did not make use of Goldoni's librettos, but chose instead to set adaptations of his plays. *Le donne curiose* (*Die neugierigen Frauen*, Munich, 1903), regarded by Hans Pfitzner as 'the best comic opera since Lortzing', was followed by *I quattro rusteghi* (*Die vier Grobiane*, Munich, 1906).

By December 1909, when *Il segreto di Susanna* (*Susannens Geheimnis*) had its première, Wolf-Ferrari had resigned from his Venetian post and moved to Schwabing, a suburb of Munich. Like *Il segreto*, the works that followed were not based on Goldoni. *I gioielli della Madonna* (*Der Schmuck der Madonna*, Berlin, 1911) ventured into *verismo* territory, while *L'amore medico* (*Der Liebhaber als Arzt*, Dresden, 1913) is an adaptation of Molière. During his self-imposed wartime exile in Switzerland, when Germany and Italy were on opposite sides, Wolf-Ferrari suffered from depression and was unable to compose. In the 1920s, now divorced and remarried, he completed *Gli amanti sposi*, a Goldoni piece that at last had its première in Venice (1925), and his favourite, *Das Himmelskleid* (Munich again, 1927). *Sly*, a serious opera only loosely connected with *The Taming of the Shrew*, followed (Milan, 1927).

In the 1930s Wolf-Ferrari returned to Goldoni with *La vedova scaltra* (Rome, 1931) and *Il campiello* (Milan, 1936). His last operas were *La dama boba* (Milan, 1939)

and *Gli dei a Tebe* (*Der Kuckuck von Theben*, Hanover, 1943).

Wolf-Ferrari became professor of composition at the Salzburg Mozarteum in 1939, commuting from his home at Planegg near Munich for two days a week. From Planegg he moved into Munich itself, but the Allied bombing forced him and his wife to flee to Alt Aussee in the Salzkammergut, where they lived in a single room. After the war Swiss friends came to the rescue by inviting

them to stay in Zürich; and in April 1947 Wolf-Ferrari returned to Venice, where he died in January 1948.

La vedova scaltra (The Cunning Widow) is a straightforward comedy about Rosaura and her four suitors from, respectively, France, England, Italy and Spain. Of the servants, Arlecchino (Harlequin) is a *commedia dell'arte* character who employs a mixture of Venetian dialect and comprehensible Italian.

Synopsis

CD 1

Act 1

Scene 1

[1] Milord Runebif, Monsieur Le Bleu, Don Alvaro and the Count di Bosco Nero are at dinner. Led by the Frenchman, they sing a drinking-song 'alla francese' before discussing Rosaura, the beautiful widow. Milord Runebif gives the waiter, Arlecchino, a ring to deliver to the lady as a prelude to his visiting her. The Count insists that she does not welcome visitors, while Don Alvaro believes that Spanish doubloons will win her.

Scene 2

[2] Rosaura's French maid, Marionette, is applying the finishing touches to her mistress's make-up. Although only recently widowed, Rosaura already finds the Count not displeasing. Marionette advises her to choose a Frenchman, as French husbands are not jealous, and she continues to sing their praises even while Rosaura, to the tune of a waltz, is making it clear that she is looking only for love and fidelity.

[3] Arlecchino enters with the ring: he is astounded when Rosaura refuses it. As Milord Runebif approaches, Rosaura reflects that the Englishman is too serious ... but who knows? Marionette serves chocolate. In the course of

conversation, Milord Runebif admits to Rosaura that he is interested in taking a mistress rather than a wife. Marionette announces the Count ...

[4] ... who, to the disdain of Runebif, is furiously jealous to find Rosaura entertaining another man. Runebif makes a dignified exit, whereupon the Count pours out his passion. Rosaura confesses that she loves him, but vigorously asserts her right to behave as she pleases.

Scene 3

[5] Monsieur Le Bleu and Marionette, old friends from Paris, are surprised and delighted to run into each other. He is looking for Rosaura: this distresses Marionette, but she is happy to disclose her mistress's whereabouts when Monsieur Le Bleu offers to pay her. The money is not immediately forthcoming, however, and Marionette contrasts his behaviour with the English custom of paying on the nail.

Scene 4

[6] Rosaura is in the garden. To the accompaniment of a flute, Monsieur Le Bleu woos her in extravagant terms. He does his cause no good, however, by regretting that Rosaura was not born in Paris.

[7] Guitars and an off-stage chorus of servants signal the entry of Don Alvaro in a gondola. Rosaura leaves it to

Marionette to welcome him. The grandee is so grand that he disdains to retrieve the gold watch that he drops by accident. Marionette goes to call her mistress.

Act 2

Scene 1

8 Monsieur Le Bleu instructs Arlecchino to deliver his portrait and a sonnet to Rosaura. One by one, the other suitors also arrange for the despatch of valuable items to the widow. The Count's offering is a letter of apology which he gives to his lackey, Folletto. Milord Runebif sends jewels via his servant, Birif; while Arlecchino's second task is to present Rosaura with Don Alvaro's family tree, together with a poem.

Scene 2

9 To a keyboard accompaniment Rosaura sings a set-piece about two separated lovers, Daphne and Amaryllis.

10 Arlecchino arrives with the portrait and sonnet from Monsieur Le Bleu. Though dressed as a French valet, he still speaks in Venetian dialect and he is immediately recognised by Marionette. While Rosaura composes her reply, the servants engage in an exaggerated flirtation. As Arlecchino leaves, Folletto comes in with the Count's letter. The situation is repeated, Folletto seeking an assignation with Marionette while Rosaura is busy with her reply. She is touched by the letter, but she knows how a lover can dissemble.

11 Birif then enters with Milord Runebif's present of jewels, their glitter illustrated in the orchestra. Jewels are better than a love letter or a portrait, opine the women; but all the same, Rosaura is not to be bought. Arlecchino is seen approaching, this time dressed as a Spaniard. Arlecchino presents Don Alvaro's family tree and the poem; Rosaura writes yet another letter. Once Arlecchino has gone, she tells her maid that she likes all four suitors, but is not dismayed at the prospect of making a choice. The scene ends with a reprise of the waltz tune from Act I, Scene 1.

CD 2

Scene 3

1 In a small square, a *campiello*, Milord rebuffs the Count's attempts at conversation. Birif and Folletto arrive hotfoot from Rosaura's house. There is a letter for the Count. He reads it with delight, and sings of his happiness: Rosaura loves him, and life is beautiful.

2 Don Alvaro is waiting for Arlecchino. When the servant arrives, he assures Alvaro that he sang the poem to Rosaura 'like a swan'. (Don Alvaro evidently does not know that swans are mute.) When he produces the widow's reply to Monsieur Le Bleu by mistake he improvises hastily, to Don Alvaro's eventual satisfaction; but his reward is merely a certificate. Arlecchino makes himself scarce as the Frenchman enters.

3 Monsieur Le Bleu is not happy with his Venetian wig and shoes, but he forgets his woes when Arlecchino reenters, having changed out of his Spanish clothes. Handing over the letter meant for Don Alvaro, Arlecchino again has to talk his way out of trouble. His reward is a piece of 'the most precious thing in the world': Rosaura's letter.

4 When Marionette asks for a share of Arlecchino's tip from Monsieur Le Bleu, the servant duly gives her the scrap of paper, quoting the Frenchman's words. Marionette is furious: Arlecchino mocks her from the kitchen roof before making his escape.

Act 3

Scene 1

5 Rosaura tells Marionette of her plan. She will appear to each suitor in turn in the guise of a temptress from his own country. She will marry the one who resists. The ball to which she is issuing invitations is a pretext for getting all four together.

Scene 2

Monsieur Le Bleau and Don Alvaro are, separately, having doubts about Rosaura's reply. When Arlecchino changes the letters over, they realise the situation and prepare for a duel; but, before it can begin, Monsieur Le Bleau is distracted by Rosaura's pretty maidservants.

8 Milord Runebif and the Count do fight, and the latter is wounded. Alone, Runebif responds to the approaches of a beautiful English lady in a mask. She says that they will meet at the ball, and requests a token so that he will know her unmasked.

9 Don Alvaro, already irritated by Monsieur Le Bleau's disappearance, is infuriated by Arlecchino. When Le Bleau reappears, the Spaniard draws his sword; but they are prevented from fighting by a beautiful French lady in a mask. Le Bleau immediately responds to her advances and gives her a token, as she asks. After she has left, he has second thoughts and tells Don Alvaro that he will not give her up. As they fight, a beautiful Spanish lady in a mask enters. She snubs Le Bleau, and turns her attention to Don Alvaro. He soon succumbs and he, too, gives her a token.

8 Arlecchino and the Count enter, in mid-conversation: Rosaura has invited the guests of the inn to a ball. The Count notices a beautiful Venetian lady in a mask looking at him tenderly. He speaks to her, making it clear that his love is reserved for 'madama Rosaura'. As he leaves, he gives her, at her request, something to remember him by: his handkerchief. To the accompaniment of her waltz tune, Rosaura now has confirmation of the love and faithfulness that she has been looking for.

Last scene

9 The guests assemble for the ball. Marionette appears as Eros, and addresses Rosaura as the Rose of Arcady.

10 Rosaura says that she will choose her husband in public. In turn, Milord Runebif, Monsieur Le Bleau and Don Alvaro are confronted with the damning evidence of the tokens they gave to the mysterious masked beauty: Rosaura herself, of course. She will marry the Count, who alone passed the test. In Venetian dialect, all agree that the love of a fellow countryman – and of Goldoni – is a fine thing, and that the heart cannot be commanded. With a last flourish of the waltz tune in the orchestra, the opera is over.

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Anne-Lise Sollied. The Norwegian soprano Anne-Lise Sollied took first prize at the Mozart Invites Young European Musicians Competition at the Vienna Opera and the Mozart Prize of the Vercelli Viotti Singing Competition. She made her début in 1995 as Musetta in *La Bohème* at the Norwegian National Opera, thereafter appearing in leading European opera houses and festivals, with rôles including Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Handel's *Theodora*, Atamira in Malani's *L'empio punito*, Alceste in Handel's *Arianna*, Arbate in Mozart's *Mitridate rè di Ponto*, Amour in Rameau's *Anacréon*, Daphne in Handel's *Apollo e Daphne*, Venus in Cavalli's *La Didone*, Titania and Hippolyta in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, Alceste in Handel's *Admeto*, Nitocris in Handel's *Belshazzar* and Alphise in Rameau's *Les boréades*. In the concert hall she has appeared as a soloist in Mahler's *Fourth Symphony*, Haydn's *Creation*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*.



Maurizio Muraro. The bass Maurizio Muraro has won important international prizes, including the 1990 Katia Ricciarelli International Competition, the 1994 A. Belli Competition in Spoleto, and the E. Waechter Prize as the best opera singer of the season at the Vienna State Opera 1999-2000. He has sung in major opera houses working with conductors including Muti, Mehta, Levine, Ozawa, Abbado, Colin Davis, Oren, Thielemann, Pappano, Bolton, Decalote, and Soltes. He has also sung under the direction of Viotti, Delman and Sinopoli. He favours in particular all the Mozart rôles in which he can express his innate gifts for comedy, such as Figaro and Leporello. A versatile singer, he also performs dramatic rôles, including Verdi's Fiesco, Banco, and Filippo II. His repertoire encompasses also Wagner, Rossini, Puccini, and Bellini. He has collaborated with the New York Metropolitan Opera, the Tokyo National Theatre, the Berlin Deutsche Oper, the Munich and Hamburg State Operas, the Brussels Théâtre Royal, the Ravenna Festival, the Verona Arena, La Fenice and La Scala. His films include *Tosca* with the Covent Garden Orchestra under Pappano and a DVD of *Le nozze di Figaro* at La Scala, and his recordings include *Carmen* with Sinopoli, *Tosca* with Pappano, and *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* with De Billy.

Elena Rossi. The soprano Elena Rossi, studied singing at the Bologna Accademia Filarmonica, thereafter appearing in major Italian and international theatres and distinguished festivals with major operatic rôles. In December 2004 she sang Anne in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste. In 2005 she sang Thérèse in Poulenc's *Les mamelles de Tirésias* at the Macerata Festival. At the Pisa Teatro Verdi she sang Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and at the Teatro Comunale in Modena made her début as Bella in the world première of Marco Tutino's *La bella e la bestia*. In 2006 she appeared as Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata* in major Spanish theatres, winning very great personal success, and she sang in *Die Zauberflöte* (directed by Pier Luigi Pizzi) and *Aida* at the Macerata Sferisterio.



Emanuele D'Aguanno. The tenor Emanuele D'Aguanno, who sings the rôle of Monsieur Le Bleu, graduated in 2001 at the Vicenza Conservatorio and studied with William Matteucci and Vincenzo Bello. After distinguishing himself at the Milan Caruso Competition and the Treviso Toti dal Monte, he made his début in 2002 at the Teatro Bibiena in Mantua in Paisiello's *Fanatico in berlina* under the stage direction of Enzo Dara. This marked the beginning of a career that has taken him to various theatres, among them La Fenice in Venice and in Pisa, Lucca and Leghorn. A finalist in the 2004 As.Li.Co. Competition, he sang in *L'elisir d'amore* in theatres on the Lombardy circuit, returning in 2005 to sing Truffaldino in Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges* under Dimitri Jurovski. He has appeared at the Verona Teatro Filarmonico, the Valle d'Istria Festival and the Bologna Teatro Comunale. Other engagements have included Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut* at the Turin Teatro Regio, Filipeto in *I quattro rusteghi* at La Fenice, and his début as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Vicenza Teatro Olimpico and in *Così fan tutte* at Piacenza, and *L'elisir d'amore* at the Stadttheater of Klagenfurt.



Photo: Private source

Mark Milhofer. The tenor Mark Milhofer sings the rôle of the Count di Bosco Nero. Graduating at Oxford University, he then studied singing at the London Guildhall School of Music, taking the rôle, among others, of the Madwoman in *Curlw River*. After his début with the British Youth Opera as Giannetto in Rossini's *La gazza ladra*, he went on to study for two years with Renata Scotto and Leyla Gencer at As.Li.Co. in Milan. In baroque repertoire he has sung in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* with English National Opera, Purcell's *Indian Queen* with the King's Consort, Pergolesi's *L'Olimpiade* in Ravenna, and Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto* in Turin. He has also appeared as Arbace in *Idomeneo* and Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (with Dantone) in Bari, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* (directed by Strehler) in Athens and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*. His *bel canto* repertoire includes works by Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. Acclaimed as an interpreter of Britten, he has also taken part in performances of Maderna's *Satyricon*, Panni's *The Banquet*, and in the European première of *The Woodlanders* by Stephen Paulus.

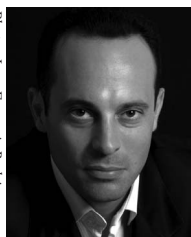


Photo: Jean-François Rodriguez

Riccardo Zanellato. The bass Riccardo Zanellato sings the rôle of Don Alvaro di Castiglia. He took his diploma in singing and guitar at the Adria Liceo Musicale in 1995, has won the Iris Adami Corradetti and Spoleto Adriano Belli Competitions, and made his début in Gounod's *Faust*. In 1996 he was victorious in Plácido Domingo's Operalia Competition in Tokyo, thereafter embarking on an international career that has brought appearances in major rôles, especially in Verdi repertoire, in major theatres in Italy and abroad. These include the Bologna Comunale, the Parma Teatro Regio, the Piacenza Municipale, the Politeama di Lecce, the Catania Bellini, the Teatro di Busseto, the Donizetti Festival in Bergamo, the Trieste Teatro Verdi, the Teatro Regio of Turin, the Genoa Carlo Felice, the Lirico di Cagliari, the Berlin Staatsoper, the Rome Opera, the Sferisterio of Macerata, Verona, the Puccini Festival of Torre del Lago, and La Fenice in Venice. In 2006 he made his début at La Scala with *Rigoletto*, sang *Nabucco* in Bologna and at the Savonlinna Festival and in *Norma* at the Palermo Teatro Massimo. In 2007 he was seen in Japan in *Anna Bolena*.



Photo: Roberto Ricci (Parma)

Alex Esposito. Born in Bergamo in 1975, Alex Esposito was awarded the Premio Abbiati by Italian music critics in 2007. His performances include *Don Giovanni* (La Scala, Milan; Maggio Musicale, Florence, with Zubin Mehta), *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Rossini Opera Festival, Pesaro), *Idomeneo* (Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome, with Myung-Whun Chung), *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Pulcinella* (Aix-en-Provence Festival with Daniele Gatti), *Die Zauberflöte* (La Fenice, Venice) and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with Antonio Pappano. Other performances include Fernando in *La gazza ladra* (Rossini Opera Festival, Pesaro), Haydn's *Stabat Mater* (Concertgebouw, Amsterdam with Frans Brüggen), Walter in *Guillaume Tell* with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Antonio Pappano and *La Cenerentola* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.



Claudio Zancopè. The baritone Claudio Zancopè is a chorus member of the Teatro La Fenice. He completed his studies at the Padua Conservatorio under the guidance of A. Rognoni, with further training under Ferrari, King and Vaglieri. His operatic activity finds him appearing in a number of Italian theatres, including the Donizetti at Bergamo, the Brescia Teatro Grande, the Treviso Comunale, Rovigo Teatro Sociale and La Fenice in Venice. Winner in the 1985 Milan As.Li.Co. Competition and the Bologna Stracciari Competition, he made his debut in *Don Giovanni* under the artistic direction of Leyla Gencer and in *Le nozze di Figaro* under Graziella Sciutti. He has participated in a successful tour of Germany and his repertoire ranges from eighteenth-century melodrama to the contemporary, from opera to *Lieder*. In 1999 he took the rôle of the king in Galuppi's *Il re alla caccia*.



Luca Favaron. The tenor Luca Favaron is a chorus member of La Fenice. He took his diploma at the Venice Conservatorio, furthering his studies with Althoff, Billard, King, Lowe, O'Neill, Ravazzi, Marcon and Ansermet. He has participated in many concerts at La Fenice and other venues in Italy and abroad. In the operatic field he made his debut in leading tenor rôles in Verdi's *La traviata* and *Un ballo in maschera*, Mozart's *Bastien and Bastienne*, *La finta giardiniera*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *Die Zauberflöte*, Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Haydn's *L'isola disabitata*, and in the first modern performance of Cimarosa's *Cleopatra* and Galuppi's *La partenza e il ritorno de' marinai* and *L'inimico delle donne*.

Antonio Casagrande. The bass Antonio Casagrande, a member of the chorus of La Fenice, took his diploma with R. Lippi at the Rovigo Conservatorio, continuing his training at the Adria Centro Lirico and Milan As.Li.Co. Winner in 1995 of the Toti dal Monte Competition, he made his debut at the Treviso Teatro Comunale in Bizet's *Carmen* with Maag and De Ana. In 2000 he was victorious in the Sarzana Argiris Competition. He has covered principal and comprimario rôles at La Fenice, the Rovigo Teatro Sociale and theatres on the Lombardy operatic circuit. He made his debuts in Venetian and Friulian theatres with the rôles of Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Don Pasquale, Colline in *La Bohème*, Ferrando in *Il trovatore* and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*.

Orchestra of the Teatro La Fenice. The history of the orchestra of the Teatro La Fenice is associated with that of the theatre, which held such an important place in opera in the nineteenth century, with premières of operas including *Semiramide*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Rigoletto*, and *La traviata*. The second half of the century brought an internationalisation of repertory, broadened also by symphony concerts and collaboration with leading instrumental soloists. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the orchestra was directed by leading conductors and composers, including Lorenzo Perosi, Giuseppe Martucci, Antonio Guarnieri, Richard Strauss, Pietro Mascagni, Giorgio Ghedini, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Goffredo Petrassi, Alfredo Casella, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Willy Ferrero, Leopold Stokowski, Fritz Reiner, Vittorio Gui, Tullio Serafin, Giuseppe Del Campo, Nino Sanzognò, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari, Carlo Zecchi, John Barbiroli, Herbert Albert, Bruno Walter, Franco Ferrara, Guido Cantelli, Thomas Schippers, and Dimitri Mitropoulos. In 1938 the Teatro La Fenice became an autonomous entity and the orchestra was developed further with active participation in the Festival of Contemporary Music of the Biennale. In the 1940s and 1950s under the guidance of Toscanini, Scherchen, Bernstein, and Celibidache (with a complete cycle of Beethoven symphonies), Kolwitschny (with Wagner's *Ring* cycle), and Stravinsky, the orchestra presented a series of historic concerts. In the following years the most distinguished conductors worked with the orchestra, among them Bruno Maderna, Herbert von Karajan, Karl Böhm, Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti, Georges Prêtre, Eliahu Inbal, Seiji Ozawa, and Lorin Maazel. Contemporary operas in the 1950s included Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, and in more recent years the first Italian production of *Aus Deutschland* and the world première of Mauricio Kagel's *Einführung im Konzertsaal*, and of Adriano Guarnieri's *Medea*. In concerts the orchestra has undertaken cycles, including those dedicated to Berg and to Mahler, under the direction of conductors such as Sinopoli, Kakhidze, Masur, Barshai, Tate, Ahronovitch, Kitaenko, Inbal, and Temirkanov. The orchestra tours regularly in Italy and abroad. Principal conductors have included Eliahu Inbal, Vjekoslav Sutej, and Isaac Karabchevsky, and among guest conductors Jeffrey Tate. From 2002 to 2004 the Musical Director was Marcello Viotti.

Chorus of the Teatro La Fenice. The chorus of the Teatro La Fenice is a permanent body of singers selected by international audition. Engaged in the operatic performances of the house at home and abroad, the chorus has a growing involvement with sacred, symphonic and chamber repertoire. It holds an important position in the concert work of La Fenice in Italy and elsewhere, with the orchestra of La Fenice and other orchestras. Chorus-masters since the war have included Sante Zanon, Corrado Mirandola, Aldo Danieli, Ferruccio Lozer, Marco Ghiglione, Vittorio Sicuri, Giulio Bertola, Giovanni Andreoli, Guillaume Tourniaire, Piero Monti and the present incumbent, Emanuela Di Pietro. The chorus has collaborated with distinguished conductors, including Abbado, Ahronovitch, Arena, Bertini, Campori, Clemencic, Ferro, Fournier, Gavazzeni, Gelmetti, Horvat, Inbal, Kakhidze, Kitaenko, Maazel, Marriner, Melles, Muti, Oren, Peskö, Prêtre, Santi, Semkov, Sinopoli, Tate, Temirkanov, and Thielemann. Its repertoire ranges from the sixteenth century to the present. Among its recordings are *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Claudio Abbado and, most recently, Massenet's *Thaïs* with Marcello Viotti.

Karl Martin. The conductor Karl Martin was born in Zurich and studied at the Geneva Conservatoire, in Paris and with Hans Swarowsky at the Vienna Musikhochschule. His repertoire ranges from the contemporary to Handel, Beethoven, Wagner, Debussy and Ravel, from the eighteenth century to the Second Viennese School. He has presented Brahms and Rachmaninov on tour with the Tokyo NHK Symphony Orchestra, the music of Hindemith at the Paul Hindemith Festival of São Paulo, and more varied programmes with major Swiss, Italian, German and Scandinavian orchestras. From 1980 to 1997 he was principal conductor of the orchestra of the Palermo Teatro Massimo, where, in addition to traditional operatic and symphonic repertoire, he directed lesser known masterpieces, among them Honegger's *Antigone*,

Szymanowski's *Król Roger*, Křenek's *Jonny spielt auf*, Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgöрге* (Premio Abbiati 1995) and, in 2004 Delibes's *Lakmé*. From 1996 to 1999 he was principal conductor of the Bolzano Haydn Orchestra, and from 2006 musical director and principal conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica di Campinas, São Paulo. He teaches at Showa University in Tokyo.

Emanuela Di Pietro. Chorus-master of the Teatro La Fenice from autumn 2004, Emanuela Di Pietro graduated *magna cum laude* in Gregorian chant and sacred music at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome. From 1992 she taught choral conducting at the Naples Conservatorio and from 2001 has taken the vocal course and direction of the choir at the University of Naples (SICSI). From 1981 she served as chorus-master in important opera and concert seasons in Italy and abroad with a repertoire ranging from Gregorian chant and polyphony to opera and contemporary music. She became chorus-master at the Bari Teatro Petruzzelli in 1991, for the opera seasons of the Provincia di Lecce from 1992 to 2003 and for the Cosenza Teatro Rendano season from 1987, participating in the Premio Abbiati in 1997 and in the television production of Lecce's *Puccini Heroines*, conceived and presented by Pippo Baudo. In 1994 she founded the Solisti Cantori, and in 1998-99 prepared and directed the chorus in the American tour of *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* and *Otello* produced by Living Arts of New York. In 2000 Zubin Mehta entrusted her with the preparation and direction of the chorus for *La traviata* in Paris, transmitted to 125 countries. In 2001 she conducted the Orchestra Regionale Campania Scarlatti, the chorus Solisti Cantori and various soloists at the Royal Festival Hall in London and in major venues in England in the concert *Viva Verdi! From Nabucco to Falstaff*. In the 2003-04 season she was chorus-master at the Trieste Teatro Verdi. She has collaborated in various recordings.



Anne-Lise Sollied, Alex Esposito and Elena Rossi (*Michele Crosera*)

Wolf-Ferrari's comic opera *La vedova scaltra* (The Cunning Widow), is among the works he based on plays by Goldoni. It matches closely the conventions of 18th-century *opera buffa* in its witty if sceptical look at the mechanisms governing the interplay of human relations. Four hopeful suitors, English, French, Spanish and Italian, vie for the hand of Rosaura, the cunning widow of the title, who disguises herself to meet each wooer, eventually choosing the only one who can demonstrate his sincerity. This production was recorded live at the Teatro La Fenice in February 2007 in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Goldoni in Venice in 1707.



REGIONE DEL VENETO



Ermanno
WOLF-FERRARI
(1876–1948)

La vedova scaltra

Rosaura Anne-Lise Sollied
Milord Runebif Maurizio Muraro
Monsieur Le Bleau Emanuele D'Aguanno
Il Conte di Bosco Nero Mark Milhofer
Don Alvaro di Castiglia Riccardo Zanellato
Marionette Elena Rossi
Arlecchino Alex Esposito
Birif Claudio Zancopè
Folletto Luca Favaron
Un servo di Don Alvaro Antonio Casagrande

Orchestra and Chorus of the Teatro La Fenice, Venice

Karl Martin

Chorus Master: Emanuela Di Pietro

CD 1 **1-7** Act 1 / **8-11** Act 2 i-ii 75:25 • CD 2 **1-4** Act 2 iii / **5-10** Act 3 66:17

A full track list can be found on pages 3–4 of the booklet
The Italian libretto may be accessed at www.naxos/libretti/660225.htm
Includes free downloadable bonus track from the Naxos catalogue available
at www.classiconline.com. Please see booklet for full details.

Recorded live at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice, Italy, 13 & 15 February 2007 • Booklet notes: Richard Lawrence
Producer: Alberto Dellepiane • Engineer & Editor: Rino Trasi • Cover photo: Michele Crosera

This recording is also available on Naxos DVD 2.110234–35

8.660225-26

DDD

Playing Time
141:42



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