

Giuseppe Filianoti

Respect for your own nature

(English Translation by: Sibylle Seyser)

Some years ago Orpheus had already interviewed you on the occasion of your big success with Gounod's *Faust* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Which were the most important steps in your career in the time that followed?

There were my debuts and subsequent appearances at the Met as Edgardo, Nemorino, Duca and Ruggero in *La Rondine*, as well as Fenton in *Falstaff* with Muti, Idomeneo with Chung, Werther in *Las Palmas*, Edgardo at La Scala with Mariella Devia, Ottavio with Mehta, Hoffmann in Hamburg, Tom in *Rake's Progress* in Palermo, Don Carlo in Zurich, Edgardo with Anna Netrebko in Vienna.

After doing Gounod's *Faust* you have since also sung the same character in *Mefistofele* by Boito. Which are the differences between these two roles, also in the vocal structure?

***Mefistofele* by Boito claims to be not only a musical piece but also a literary work. With this the composer intended to create a synthesis of the arts, which becomes apparent in the extensive text, in the sophisticated musical script and in the attempt to give the characters a psychological depth, which can keep up with Goethe's original. The result is a difficultly achieved work, rich with fascinating melodies in word and music and in parts very demanding of the singers. It is unique and incomparable. *Faust* by Gounod, on the other hand, fits smoothly into the tradition of French opera. Formal and melodic elegance, perfectly tailored to the needs of theatres, and all in service of an easily manageable and efficient dramaturgy. These are two operas which are only connected by the subject matter they have in common. But there is a world of difference between them regarding the result and the vocal requirements.**

You sing a widely diversified repertoire in five languages. Apart from Italian - in which language do you like best to sing and which is the easiest for you?

French. It is the closest to Italian, can be easily projected into the mask and makes elegant phrasing possible.

You also frequently sing Mozart, for example Don Ottavio and soon you'll do Idomeneo at La Scala. On the other hand, you are also known as a Rossini singer and have often performed in Pesaro. Is there a difference in the technical requirements between the coloratura writing in Mozart's and Rossini's operas?

All roles by Rossini which I have sung so far belong to the genre *opera seria*. So the coloratura is very sonorous in order to express paternal or solemn feelings, and not any of ecstasy or happiness. Likewise the coloratura passages of Mozart for Idomeneo, Don Ottavio or Tito are *di forza*, absolutely expressive and intended to show feelings which cannot be described in words.

In German language you have sung *Zauberflöte* and *Capriccio*. Will there be more German roles?

Unfortunately there are no further plans for the German repertoire. But I hope to have the chance to sing more often these two excellent masterpieces.

Do you see yourself solely as a singer of "serious" roles, apart from Nemorino? Or would you like to sing more often in *opera buffa*?

I would be pleased if I could have some fun more often on stage by appearing in a comic opera. In *opere serie* usually there is a tragic end for the tenor. In the past I have enjoyed very much singing Rinuccio and Fenton - and also the audience obviously liked my funny side. I hope to embody in the future Albert Herring, a very exhilarating role.

Together with two other tenors you have won the Concorso Operalia, one of the most important competitions. All three, you, Rolando Villazón and Joseph Calleja are having a major career, the one of Rolando Villazón being very special. Do you feel a little bit of envy or satisfaction when comparing your and his artistic development?

No artistic career can be compared to that of another colleague. Each artist is unique as a person and as a singer. As a consequence of this, the career of each musician mirrors his personal way of thinking, his special physique, his own way of understanding music, and most of all, his character. I have a great respect for my own nature and for the gift I have received with my birth. I hope that I am an "ottimo" Filianoti.

In your repertoire there is not much Puccini. When will you sing Rodolfo and Cavaradossi, and will there be more Verdi debuts?

My repertoire is lyric and will remain like this for a long time. Much of Puccini is for heavier voices than mine. However, I hope to sing my first Rodolfo soon. Regarding Verdi, the only new role I'm currently targeting is Riccardo in *Un ballo in maschera* - but there is no hurry.

The record companies hardly produce any more operas in studios, only live performances. But are there plans for a recital by you?

I'm going to do a recital with Mariella Devia in Japan and hope that this will be recorded for DVD release. Apart from several live DVDs which will be made from future performances, I plan to produce a CD focusing on vocal chamber music.

How do you see the future of the Italian theatres in these times of crisis?

Very bad.

Which are your next plans for the future? Will you soon sing again in Germany?

I'll sing *Faust* in Toulouse, *Nemorino* in London and Los Angeles, also in Munich in a new production and in Chicago. Germany will see me as protagonist of *Faust* in Hamburg, and there are also plans for Munich.