

Poorhouse

INTERNATIONAL

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MARGOT FONTEYN ==

It's a bizarre story,
the stuff of fiction -
except that it is true.



RONNIE WOOD == THE DARKNESS MICHAEL FRAYN ==

New titles from the
South Bank Show





== MARGOT FONTEYN

Directed by Tony Palmer
Running time: 120'

Margot Fonteyn was the greatest dancer England has ever produced. In her life, she transcended the world of dance and became a tabloid darling second to none, a true celebrity. She remains, fourteen years after her death, the most famous ballerina of our time. And when, already in her 40s, she teamed up with Nureyev, one of the most brilliant and magical partnerships in all of ballet history was born.

This birth was celebrated 40 years ago with a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, choreographed by Kenneth MacMillan, with music by Prokofiev, and those who saw the performances will tell you that nothing like it had been seen before – or since. The artistic and sexual frenzy between Fonteyn and Nureyev electrified all those who were lucky enough to be present. Fortunately, there is film of those performances, as there is film of many of Fonteyn's greatest roles. The archive, rarely seen, is a treasure house.

But what of the woman? Born Margaret (Peggy) Hookham, in Reigate; her childhood in China; joined Sadler's Wells Ballet in 1934 and became the mistress of the then director, Constant Lambert, also co-founder of the Royal Ballet; conquest of America in 1949; married to the Panamanian Ambassador and then involved in an attempted coup as a result of which her husband was paralysed and confined to a wheelchair; the lover of innumerable, often homosexual, public figures; a cultural icon of the Swinging Sixties; her retirement as a total recluse to a farm in Central America; her death, more or less penniless, from cancer in 1991; above all, a dancer of extraordinary physical eloquence and purity – "stainless", is how one of her stage partners described her. It's a bizarre story, the stuff of fiction – except that it's true.

And that's only the beginning. Her mother tried everything possible to abort the unborn child. Her lovers were often violent and beat her up. She herself had at least two abortions. After a performance, she would eat an enormous dinner, apparently have sex with whoever was around, and then eat another enormous dinner. She was voracious and pagan in all her appetites. And yet her public image was utterly different, of ladylike, fastidious primness – she always refused (for instance) to wear trousers in public. To the end she never believed she had any special talent – or so she told Ninette de Valois, the formidable 'Madame' of the Royal Ballet. To the end she was desperately lonely, clinging on to acquaintances in other circumstances not worthy of her attention. The last photographs of her are some of the most tragic portraits you are likely to see – of anyone, but especially of a fragile beauty that has no equal.

2005 is the 40th anniversary of that Nureyev/Fonteyn *Romeo and Juliet*. There is a mountain of archive material, and enough people still alive who danced with her, knew her, loved her, and were her lovers. Without in any way diminishing her greatness, this 2-hour film, commissioned by Melvyn Bragg and *The South Bank Show* from the prize-winning director Tony Palmer, will be the first to try and understand the real woman, and the terrible sacrifices she made to achieve what she did - her "duty", as she called it.

It will also be a film about a beautiful woman who still, for most people, is ballet, with music (Prokofiev/Tchaikovsky) which for most people is music.

A popular film (hopefully) about a popular woman, but with a dark story to tell.

'There's nothing else like us around. And that's really sad. What's happened to this sweet nation if we haven't got two decent rock bands? There's no-one anywhere near us, and that's what people find amusing about it'.

Justin Hawkins, *Q Magazine*

THE DARKNESS

Directed by Susan Shaw
Running time: 49'

The Darkness is one of the UK's most popular rock bands – they've sold millions of records and last year they picked up an Ivor Novello Songwriting Award as well as a handful of Brits and Kerrang! awards. For a band who were dismissed as a joke in the early stages of their career by the music press and ignored by the music industry, their success is both remarkable and phenomenal. Sheer determination, shared ambition and a DIY philosophy got them past these hurdles – they funded the recording of their album *Permission to Land* themselves and it became a smash hit. Three members of the band, brothers Justin and Dan Hawkins and drummer Ed Graham grew up together in Lowestoft in Suffolk; the bassist Frankie Poullain met Dan Hawkins when he moved to London at nineteen to pursue his dream of becoming a rock star. Right from the start, The Darkness refused to see themselves as anything other than a stadium sized band in waiting.

What makes the story of The Darkness so remarkable is the fact that they achieved their success without the benefit of a record deal in





RONNIE WOOD: THE LIFE AND WORK OF A ROCK ICON AND ARTIST

Produced and directed by Daniel Wiles
Running time: 50'

This South Bank Show takes an exclusive look behind the public image of rock icon Ronnie Wood to see how he deals with fame by combining his two passions music and painting.

On a tour of his homes and private music and art studios, Ronnie talks candidly about his life and ongoing battle with alcohol, his work and the drug fuelled lifestyle of the 60's and 70's, and the importance of his hobbies and how he balances his riotous rock world with the solitary pastime of painting.

"There is such an adrenaline that comes from playing live to people and then when you get the feedback, it's hard to drop it" says Ronnie. "Painting to me is very important because it's something I can do on my own and the music is a group effort. It's very interesting and quite an eye opener to see what people do actually like of my art".

Ronnie has been a rock star for over forty years. He shot to fame with Rod Stewart and The Faces in the 60's and hits such as *Maggie May* before joining what many consider the greatest rock n' roll band in the world – The Rolling Stones. Since then, he has been swept up in the roller coaster success and substance spree of the classic rock superstar.

"I never used to like the needle", says Ronnie. "I think if I had been a needle person, I probably wouldn't be around to tell the story today. The amount of people you just saw dropping like flies... it was very hard to survive that time. I enjoyed myself but I always knew my limits... I think".

Ronnie's artistic flair was unearthed at an early age and he promptly followed his two elder brothers, Ted and Art, to Ealing Art School. The three boys, who were also passionate about music, formed separate bands – Ted played traditional jazz, Art favoured rhythm and blues and Ronnie was seduced by rock n' roll. His ambition to be a Rolling Stone stems from his college days when as a student he vowed "I'm going to be in that band".

Now, most famous for his dexterity with a guitar, on every tour he takes a travel case of painting and drawing equipment and sketches as much as possible. He thrives on capturing moments in others' lives. Ronnie's portfolio contains an impressive array of portraits and figurative works, including countless studies of the great and the good from the music world. Today prints of his most popular work sell for thousands of pounds with the original selling for significantly more, qualifying this rock legend as an accomplished painter in his own right.

Additional contributions include his brother Art Wood, wife Jo Wood, Rod Stewart, Jools Holland, Keith Richards and Jimmy White.

'There is such an adrenaline that comes from playing live to people and then when you get the feedback, it's hard to drop it'.

Ronnie Wood

under 3 years. Yet before they came together as The Darkness all of the members had laboured on in different bands with little or no success. They made it their mission to bring classic rock into the 21st century – and they took their inspiration from unfashionable bands like Whitesnake, Queen, Thin Lizzy and Van Halen. With the memory of *Spinal Tap* still fresh in the public's psyche, they were dismissed by many record companies as a pastiche band. This however, was to disregard not only the quality of their song writing but the sheer entertainment value of The Darkness – who brought humour, showmanship and musical flair to classic rock – in refreshing contrast to earnest, shoe-gazing bands like The Stereophonics and Coldplay.



MICHAEL FRAYN

Produced and directed by David Thomas
Running time: 50'

At the age of 71, playwright and novelist Michael Frayn is at the peak of his powers, possessing the rare quality of being equally at ease writing for the page or the stage.

Frayn began his career as a journalist writing the now legendary humorous columns for *The Guardian* and *The Observer*. In the '60's, he took up fiction and a string of comedy novels followed including *The Tin Men* and *Towards the End of the Morning*. In 1982, Frayn's play *Noises Off* - a classic farce in which the backstage high jinks are revealed as being as funny and chaotic as those front-of-stage - became one of the great hits of recent times and by the 90's, Frayn had earned the reputation as creator of perfect comedies.

Yet there has always been another side to Michael Frayn. He read philosophy at Cambridge and has always regarded his own philosophical enquiries as centrally important, both in themselves and to his work. Fluent in Russian, he has translated all of Chekov's plays – his are the dominant modern translations. His most recent novels *Headlong* and *Spies* and plays *Copenhagen* and *Democracy* have seen another Michael Frayn emerging; *Spies* is concerned with questions of memory and identity and *Democracy* with the sheer complexity of human beings and their affairs. *Spies* won the Whitbread prize for best novel of the year 2002 and *Democracy* has received every accolade the West End can garner - from The South Bank Show Award for best play 2003 to the Oliviers. He has never written better in either genre.

The South Bank Show explores how this sometimes overlooked and self-effacing writer has emerged as one of Britain's best, and most serious, artists.

In an interview with Melvyn Bragg, Frayn defines one of his lifelong drives as being able "to capture oneself or a character in the instant of making a decision", for he believes that the process is far less rational than we acknowledge. With his recent work he shows that there is far more chaos in our world and its mechanisms than we care to believe.

The Darkness built up their fan base over two relentless years spent playing the back room of any pub that would have them; they then released a single through a very minor independent record label. By the end of 2002 they had created such a buzz around themselves that the music industry finally began to take notice. In fact, when they eventually did sign to a major record company, East West Records (a division of Warner Music), not only did they spark off one of the fiercest bidding wars between rival record companies in the history of the music industry, they had already completed their debut album. *Permission to Land* was released by Warner Music untouched and in its original form – which was again unorthodox.

The South Bank Show followed The Darkness on the roller coaster ride that was 2004 – beginning with their triumph at The Brits (where they won three awards), then on an exhausting and exhilarating tour of America, and finally on a fleeting visit back home to Suffolk. The film is an intimate profile of the band but also includes some thrilling performances.

== CABERET DADA

Directed by Hopi Lebel
Running Time: ca. 52'
Co-produced by FR2

A major exhibition devoted to an ongoing phenomenon called Dada will open at the Centre Georges Pompidou on October 4th 2005 and later transfer to the National Gallery in Washington and to the MOMA in New York. Hopi Lebel, who directed the very successful Matisse-Picasso documentary, takes the opportunity to revisit this most chaotic movement which surfaced in 1916 and petered out around 1922. What interest do we have today in Dada? "To kill Art seems to be the most urgent but we can not operate openly", said André Breton in a letter to Tristan Tzara on April 4th 1919. Dada did not kill Art but has indeed changed the world and, what is more important, our perception of it. By putting Art itself in question, Dada has sharpened our minds and prepared many of the post-Second World War trends. It lives on in happenings and installations and is arguably the most serious attempt at communicating something more than a conventional work of Art could do.

Hopi Lebel does not opt for straight conventional narration but invents a fictitious place, the Cabaret Dada, from where he spreads out to cover the whole of the historical movement and it's repercussions which are still felt today.

Footage of famous Dada manifestations is available and so are artefacts and even a sound recording of Schwitters performing his 'Ur-Sonate'. Major works of the Dadaists will be shown, interviews used, stills and correspondence incorporated. Furthermore Hopi Lebel will reconstitute certain Dada performances with living artists. Specialists of the movement will put it into perspective while archive footage of the First World War, the Russian Revolution and so forth is used to illustrate the environment in which Dada thrived.

Exhibitions:

Centre Georges Pompidou

4.10.05 – 9.1.06

National Gallery Washington

19.2.06 – 14.5.06

MOMA New York

16.6.06 – 11.9.06

'To kill Art seems to be the most urgent but we can not operate openly'.

André Breton



A RADIANT VOICE

Directed by Agnes Gerhards & Amalia Escriva
Running time: 50'
16:9 Digibeta

Agnes Gerhards and Amalia Escriva fell in love with Gregorian Chant, and this documentary is the result of their voyage into the medieval world of music. In order to give us as complete a picture of Gregorian Chant as possible the film makers use the differing approaches of Marie-Noël Colette and Marcel Pérez. Marie-Noël Colette is professor at the 'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes'. She has spent more than 30 years on unearthing, studying and publishing the earliest manuscripts from the 9th and 10th century. Marcel Pérez has created a research centre at L'Abbaye de Royaumont and successfully revived Gregorian Chant with his ensemble 'Organum'. He is now director of the research centre at Moissac and appears as singer and organist.

Through their contrasting views we will get a good idea of the wealth of material, the beauty of this almost forgotten music and the problems of its interpretation. Performances in spectacular venues are made to coincide with the seven daily services and are performed by a variety of ensembles. They include:

The Monks of L'Abbaye de Kergonan and d'Argentan
Dominique Vellard at Cathédrale de Laon
Brigitte Lesne and the Choir Discantus at Saint-Pierre de Montmartre
The Children's Choir of Notre-Dame



QUAI BRANLY

Directed by Frédéric Compain
Running Time: 52'
16:9 Digibeta

French rulers have always revelled in representational architecture, and President Chirac of France is no exception. After his predecessors assured eternal glory with buildings like the Centre Pompidou, La Pyramide and La Bibliothèque Nationale Paris will now be endowed with a new museum designed by star architect Jean Nouvel.

Frédéric Compain's film beginning on February 14th 2005 and aiming for completion on February 14th 2006 follows the events as they happen over four seasons (Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn) and in six locations (a parking lot, a work shop, a laboratory, a forest, a city, a building site) with dozens of recurring figures who's job titles make for quite interesting characters despite of the disorder and provisional anonymity: an architect, a gardener, a curator, an exterminating angel, a swindling aesthete, a president of the republic, a caster of spells, a head-hunter, a mason from Mali, an aboriginal painter, a ghost ethnologist and even female magicians in green rubber boots and with hard hats.

This is the scenario for a particular year with its high points, a cinematic countdown before the launch of what could be the last big museum to be built within Paris intra muros. Back and forth between the tide of objects, archives, teams, the atmosphere of waiting or turmoil, of concentration or fever, moments of tension or of grace, every piece of the jigsaw coming apart as they all converge towards one unique site: Quai Branly where hopefully on time the New Museum of Ethnology will be unveiled.

ORIENT BLUES

Directed by Florence Strauss
Running Time: 90'
16:9 Digibeta

Film maker Florence Strauss goes in this feature length documentary on a trip in search of her past.

Cairo, Alexandria, Tel Aviv, Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Palmyra ... in a troubled world, these cities share a common inheritance, that of classical Arab music. Florence leaves Paris for the Middle East to discover an unknown and hidden part of her past. Her journey and quest are transformed by the people that she meets along the way, musicians mainly, who are also poets and visionaries of this history of the Middle East that they have carried and passed on in the sound of their voices, the melodies of their songs and the rhythm of their hands.



photo: © Javier del Real

== BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA IN POST-PRODUCTION

Running time of the Opera: 155'

Running time of the Documentary: 52'

HD and Surround Sound

Emilio Sagi's stylish Spanish production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* has had its run at Teatro Real in Madrid, and the HD recording by Opus Arte is well under way. RTVE did a live broadcast, and Arte showed the opera live deferred.

The pairing of Juan Diego Flórez and Maria Bayo turned out to be quite a coup. Rarely has one heard such convincing singing of *Ecco ridente in cielo* or *Una voce poco fa*. Ruggero Raimondi brought all his experience and passion to Don Basilio's famous *La Calunnia è un venticello*, and even smaller parts such as Berta's wonderfully witty *Che vecchio sospettoso* brought the house down.

Under the baton of Rossini pro Gian Luigi Gelmetti the musical texture became crystal clear and the words understandable. This is due to slightly reduced tempi, proper playing and excellent articulation, often forgotten in routine performances. 'Rossini is precision', says Gelmetti. This was borne out in particular in Figaro's famous aria *Largo al factotum della città!*

Rossini's masterpiece is more than mere entertainment and opera buffa. References to music old and new style abound. Rosina for example is fond of the latest fashionable opera *L'inutile precauzione* which happen to be Rossini's subtitle for this very opera. Bartolo at the end needs to admit that all precaution was useless as he realizes, the Count, Figaro and Rosina have caught him out.

Decca will release this *Barbiere* on DVD, and RM Creative is currently working on an introductory documentary with in-depth interviews. This will be available for television and also serve as bonus material on the DVD.



photo: © Javier del Real



photo: © Javier del Real



photo: © Javier del Real

photo: © Javier del Real

== NORAH AMSELLEM'S TRAVIATA A STAR IN THE MAKING

Directed by Angel Luis Ramirez

Running time: 125'

Opus Arte Productions

in association with RTVE

For the debut of Jesús López Cobos as music director of the Teatro Real in Madrid, Pier Luigi Pizzi staged Verdi's *Traviata* with Angela Gheorghiu as Violetta. She did turn up but decreed after attending rehearsals for barely an hour that Pizzi's stage production was "with no class ... full of lechery and sexual references". Pizzi had sat his *Traviata* in Nazi-occupied Paris to create a feeling of tension and insecurity.

After the Diva had slammed the door, Nohra Amsellem from the second cast took over, immediately brought the audience under her spell with a stunning "Sempre libera" which she finished on a high and long held e-flat and made this *Traviata* a memorable evening, not unlike Gheorghiu herself when she first appeared in the role of Violetta at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden with George Solti in the pit. José Bros as Alfredo and Renato Bruson as Germont père added to the production's success.

This was at the opening of the 2003/2004 season. No wonder that Opus Arte decided to go in for recording when Teatro Real brought Pizzi's wonderful production back with the same cast. Nohra Amsellem is undoubtedly a World Star in the Making and Pizzi's production ever so much more interesting than the many *Traviatas* around.

Coproducer RTVE provides television director Angel Luis Ramirez who records in High Definition and with 5.1 surround sound.



photo: © Javier del Real

LA TRAVIATA

Giuseppe Verdi

(1813 - 1901)

From Teatro Real de Madrid

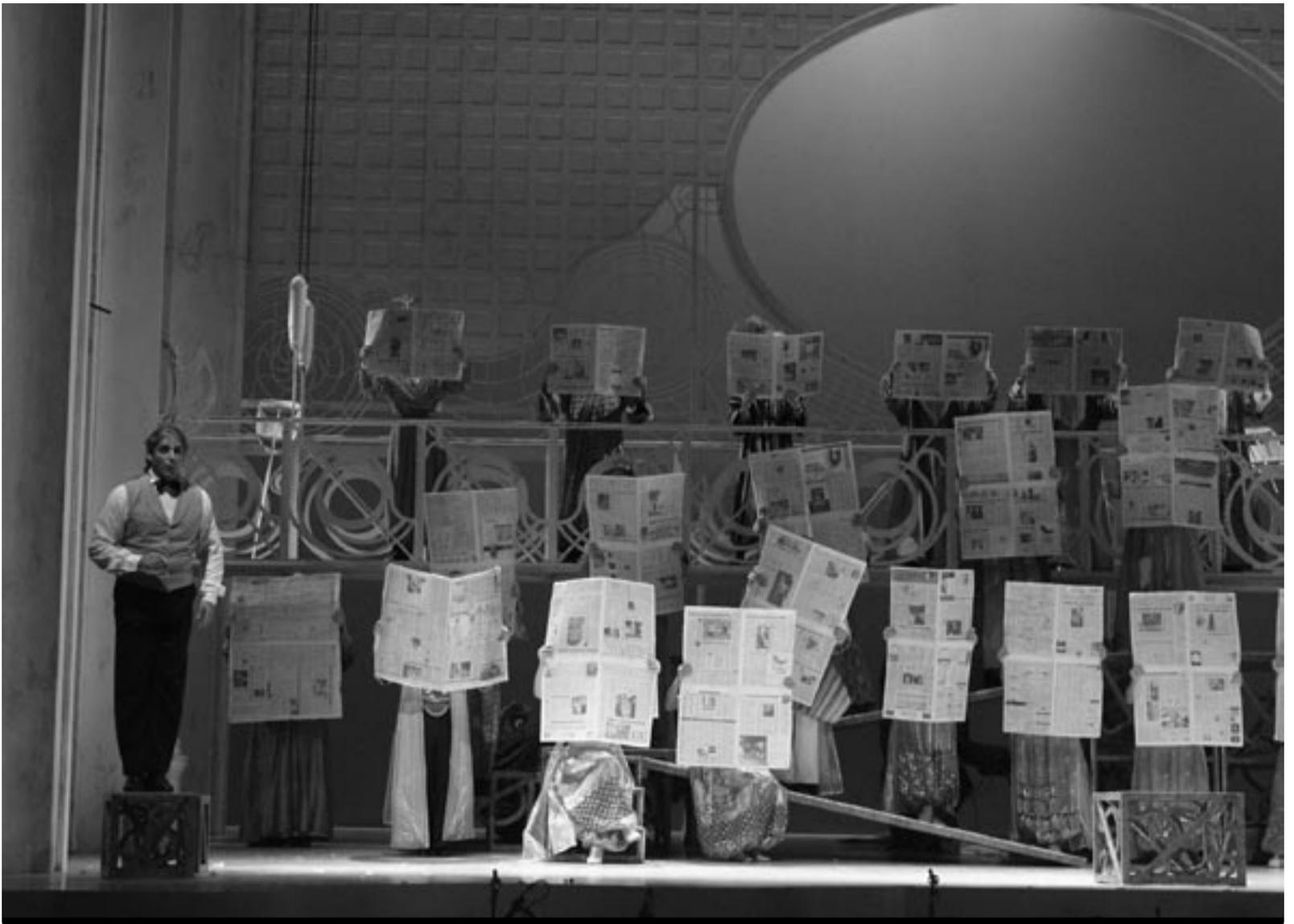
Musical Director **Jesús López Cobos**
 Director **Pier Luigi Pizzi**
 Set Design **Pier Luigi Pizzi**
 Costume Design **Pier Luigi Pizzi**
 Production **Teatro Real de Madrid**
Gran Teatre del Liceu
ABAO (Bilbao)

Orchestra Titular del Teatro Real
Coro y Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid

Cast

Violetta Valery **Norah Amsellem**
 Alfredo Germont **José Bros**
 Giorgio Germont **Renato Bruson**
 Flora Bervoix **Itxaro Mentxaka**
 Gastone **Angel Rodríguez**
 Alfredo Germont **Senor Germont**

Running time: 125'



== LA GAZZETTA

Running time: 140'
Opus Arte Productions
in association with RTVE

One quite reasonably asks how it is possible that so little is known about this 'Dramma giocoso' which Rossini composed within months after *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and shortly before *La Cenerentola*. *La Gazzetta* is a splendid work based on a highly ironic text by Goldoni about social habits in France and Italy at a period when the emerging middle classes were at the height of their development. In all likelihood this opera disappeared from the repertoire because it is very difficult to cast and it has no fewer than three great Rossini finales throughout which the characters contemplate – with obvious satisfaction – the chaos they have caused.

Rossini drew heavily on earlier works and used the most popular bits of music in order to create a new piece full of hits for a more than difficult Neapolitan audience which enjoyed 'Opera buffa' more than anything else. In fact the work was premiered on September 26th 1816 at Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples and not at the San Carlo where his associate, the impresario Barbaia, was in command. This was due to the fact that the San Carlo had burnt down while Rossini was briefly released from his contract to work in Rome.

Knowing his audience Rossini wrote the main buffo role, Don Pomponio, in Neapolitan dialect which was brilliantly delivered by Carlo Casaccia. Making fun at people and playing with words is one of the many talents of Dario Fo who chose this opera for his debut at the Gran Teatro del Liceu. He proposes his own brilliant imaginative solution to each of the problems this opera poses. He adapted the basic situations to provide a counterpoint

to the repetitive finale, thus making his collage move at a dizzying speed. For the recitatives he has transposed all the dialogue into Neapolitan 'tamurriata' style, and he asks the singers to act at the same pace as Rossini's music is delivered.



LA GAZZETTA

Gioachino Rossini
 (1792 - 1868)

From Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona

Musical Director **Maurizio Barbacini**
 Director **Dario Fo**
 Set Design **Dario Fo**
Francesco Calcagnini
 Costume Design **Dario Fo**
Paola Mariani
 Production **Rossini Opera Festival Pesaro**

Orquestra Simfònica de l'Acadèmia del Gran Teatre del Liceu

Cast

Lisetta **Stefania Bonfadelli**
 Don Pomponio **Bruno Praticò**
 Filippo **Pietro Spagnoli**
 Alberto **Charles Workman**
 Mme de la Rose **Agata Bienkowska**
 Doralice **Marisa Martins**

Running time: 140'





LUCIANO BERIO SEQUENZAS

Directed by Thomas Grimm
Sequenza 8 running time: 13'
16:9 DigiBeta



LGM is trying to undertake the mammoth task of recording and visualising over a period of time the complete set of Berio's 14 Sequenzas for varying instruments. This year LGM will try to develop Sequenza 8 for Violin solo into a pilot

which will be recorded by Thomas Grimm under studio conditions. This piece for Violin solo is highly virtuosic, and LGM was lucky to contract Carolin Widmann, winner of many competitions including the 'Georg Kulenkampff Prize' in Cologne 1999.

Thomas Grimm intends to use a black studio and surround the artist with screens on which a variety of information will show up such as fragments of archive footage from the year the piece was composed (1976), material with the composer and shots of the musician the piece was written for.

Over the next few years LGM will complete the cycle. Given the adventurous nature of this project each Sequenza has a stand-alone value, and LGM would be happy for coproducers to join in on this highly imaginative exploitation of musical virtuosity.

MARTIN SCORSESE EMOTIONS THROUGH MUSIC

Directed by Robert Kuperberg
Running time: 52'
Produced by LGM

Very few directors are so deeply influenced by music and work their films so much around a certain musical feeling as Martin Scorsese who has just had another success with *The Aviator*.

Scorsese was born in Little Italy, New York, and is one of the successful film directors who got most of his inspiration from Big Apple. Here he was brought up in a completely Italian surrounding with all different kinds of music poring out of open windows, mixing together bits of Jazz, Funk, Pop and *Cavalleria Rusticana* to a soundscape which not surprisingly we find in many of his movies.

Scorsese talks with great affection of Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and the use he makes of it in his films, the way Bach's *Matthew Passion* gave him the idea for an introductory music, the sounds of Wagner's *Tristan* and Gounod's *Faust* which you find at key moments in his films.

He fondly remembers Bernard Herrmann's polite refusal "I don't write music for taxi drivers" when Scorsese asked him to do the score for this very important movie of his and tells in detail how Herrmann finally was won around and did compose what the director expected of him.

Footage from many of Scorsese's famous films such as *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, *New York New York*, *Raging Bull*, *The Age of Innocence*, *Casino* and *The Aviator* are intercut with background material and, in particular time and again footage from Scorsese's New York.

In a few instances such as *Casablanca*, *The Big Sleep* and *Vertigo* footage of other directors is used to illustrate a point Scorsese makes.

Film lovers will find interesting material and meet a director who is fully aware of the many parallels between film and opera and the use of music to whip up emotions.





as if there were something dangerous about the notes themselves, which offended the State and unleashed emotions undermining its authority. Paradoxically, to the end, he regarded himself as a good Russian and a good Communist, whose primary function as a musician was to serve the people.

Testimony based on his own Memoirs, as related to and edited by his colleague, Solomon Volkov, is not just the story of a composer. In fact, the musical aspect of his life is only the sub-plot to a far greater drama, the relationship between Shostakovich and Stalin. *Testimony* is about Russia during the reign of Stalin. While politicians, generals, peasants, poets, Church leaders were being purged and destroyed – in all 31 million of them – Shostakovich somehow survived. How? Why? At what cost, personal as well as public? It is an amazing and awesome tale. It is also true.

== TESTiMONY

Directed by Tony Palmer
Running time: 157'
Black & White and Colour
Isolde Films

Dmitri Shostakovich BEN KINGSLEY
Nina Shostakovich SHERRY BAINES
Galya MAGDALEN ASQUITH

Screenplay by DAVID RUDKIN
From the MEMOIRS of DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
EDITED by SOLOMON VOLKOV

Music conducted by RUDOLF BARSHAI
with The London Philharmonic Orchestra
(leader David Nolan)
and The Golden Age Singers
Chorus Master SIMON PRESTON



Testimony bears witness to an unconquerable human spirit. The story of Dmitri Shostakovich, great Russian patriot and musician, confronts us all by its heroism, its courage and its dignity. The most decorated Soviet civilian ever, the only composer to appear on the front cover of *TIME* magazine, Shostakovich lived through Stalin's terror while most, if not all, of his friends were shot. His music is an eloquent and passionate description of his times; but it is his life, with its drama and its bravery, which remains his true *Testimony*.

2006 will be the 100th anniversary of the birth of Shostakovich, in St. Petersburg. He survived the Russian Revolution, and soon became, before he was twenty, wildly successful and popular. He began working with all the famous Russian artists of his day, Meyerhold, Mayakovsky and Eisenstein. His symphonies and his operas were performed throughout the land, to great acclaim. Then, the fall. Stalin disliked the opera *Lady Macbeth*; PRAVDA wrote that Shostakovich's music was chaos. He was denounced and humiliated, and he apologised.

But at least he was not shot and lived on, writing music to inspire a besieged Leningrad in the Second World War. No composer before him can have been held in such public esteem. Yet, once again, after the War, Stalin chose to denigrate him, even to the extent of sending Shostakovich to an International Peace Congress in New York and forcing him to castigate those of his fellow musicians who had fled Russia. Shostakovich never forgave himself for this betrayal of his friends.

Stalin died, and again Shostakovich survived, now pouring out his agony and his frustration in a series of heart-rending works. But his public humiliation continued. The KGB providing him with a permanent guard, so terrified was the Politburo that their most famous son would defect.

His heart failed in August 1975. But, even today, his music is regarded with suspicion,

'A masterpiece ... exceptional; an undoubted hit'.

The Sunday Times

'Exciting and deeply moving piece of cinema'.

The Independent

'A triumph'.

The Observer

'Dazzles the eye as well as the ear'.

Evening Standard

'The best British film of the year'.

Films & Filming

Testimony



photo © Liu Chen-hsiang

== CLOUDGATE DANCE THEATRE OF TAIWAN

CURSIVE II

Directed by Ross McGibbon in HD
Running Time: 70'

Choreography: Lin Hwai-min
Music: John Cage
Set Design: Austin Wang
Lighting Design: Lin Hwai-min
Costumes: Lin Jing-ru

Lin Hwai-min's *Cursive* (2001 work) picked up the energy with which old calligraphy masters set black ink on matt-white paper and transformed this energy into dance.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the founding of his company, Lin picked up on this theme again and choreographed, ...*Cursive II*: a sequel with a different approach. Experts differentiate between five different shades of the dark ink used in calligraphy drawing. While *Cursive* explored the darker tones, *Cursive II* shimmers in the lighter shades.

Projections of calligraphic masterpieces are completely foregone this time. Support from the old masters is extraneous and, now fully autonomous, Lin Hwai-min defines his own concept of danced beauty, ... in place of classical calligraphy, Lin and his set designer, Austin Wang, project cropped and blown-up images of precious, eggshell-white porcelain created around 900 AD in the Sung Dynasty on to the white backdrop. The soft glow of the porcelain, with its hair-fine and lilac colored cracks on its surface, further highlights the poetic character of the dance.

Since the choreography of *Moon Water* in 1998, Lin has used *tai chi* techniques – in which Cloud Gate dancers are regularly taught and trained in – next to western modern dance movement and movement phrases from Chinese kung-fu in his dance pieces. *Cursive II* largely owes itself to *tai chi*.

Cursive II consists of ten sections in which most of the sections appear to flow into one another without any visible or audible pause. Almost like Hans van Manen, so too by Lin do the groups of dancers appear to suck the next group of dancers from the side curtains; a permanent movement flow that never breaks off is the consequence.

The movement is delicate and introverted: in a far-eastern manner, this deconstruction of the body mirrors that which the West is familiar with

in William Forsythe's work – complete individuality. Parallel motions are seldom and only of short duration; in each ensemble, there is at least one dancer that works again synchronicity. Partnering and providing support are reduced to a minimum, even in the pas de deux. At the same time, there is an impression of greater harmony. *Cursive II*, if it were a western ballet, would be a continuation of the "White" Classical and Romantic choreography.

Instead, *Cursive II* defines the beauty and poesy of dance in a far-eastern perspective. It is of a disturbing, almost achingly painful beauty.
Jochen Schmidt

This new RM Creative ballet production will be complemented by Reiner E. Moritz' profile of choreographer Lin Hwai-min, currently in production with the title *Floating on the Ground*.



photo © Liu Chen-hsiang

CLC PRODUCTIONS

It is with great pleasure that PHI announces a distribution deal with CLC Productions of Lyon who are known for high quality dance productions. Initially we will be handling two selected titles of which we hope that they are doing well in the market place.



SYLVIA

Directed for Television by Thomas Grimm
in HDTV

Running Time: 100'

Ballet in Two Parts
Choreographed by John Neumeier
Music: Léo Delibes
Sets and Costumes: Yannis Kokkos
Dancers and Orchestra of
L'Opéra National de Paris
Conductor: Paul Connelly

Cast:

Sylvia: Aurélie Dupont
Aminta: Manuel Legris
Amour/Orion: Nicolas Leriche
Diane: Marie Agnès Gillot
Andimion: José Martinez

In 1876 Louis Mérante's *Sylvia* enjoyed the privilege of being the first ballet to be performed at the newly constructed Palais Garnier. That opening heralded several innovations: the ballet alone accounted for the entire evening's entertainment – a rare event in an era when the public tended more to favour opera – but it also marked an evolution in the relationship between dance and music itself. Léo Delibes's score, while resembling a 'mimed symphony', adopted Jules Barbier's storyline without reducing itself to the mere role of an accompaniment to the dancers. Moreover, *Sylvia* brought back a taste for the traditional themes of classic mythology but in a novel way. The amorous adventures of the nymph Sylvia with the shepherd Aminta and Orion the hunter, overseen by the gods Eros and Diana, were stripped of their pastoral dimension in favour of a more powerful style. Furthermore, the work was presented in the sumptuous costumes of Eugène Lacoste, which worked to give the performance the air of a vast and authentic fresco. The Italian dancer, Rita Sangalli, crowned the production with a bold performance that was both rapid and forceful, and for which she would be promoted to the rank of Etoile, helping to give the work a particular lustre at a time when dance had forsaken romanticism without yet reaching the horizons of modernity.

A new Sylvia

More rarely performed than *Coppélia*, Léo Delibes' other great ballet, *Sylvia* or *La Nymphe de Diane* has nevertheless played an important role in the history of dance. First performed in 1876 at the Paris Opéra in Louis Mérante's choreography, *Sylvia* broke with Romantic ballet and the ethereal image of the fairy or sylphide which gave way to the maiden warrior, a distant sister of Penthesilea. But the true rupture with the past only came about at the beginning of the 20th century with a project which saw the light of day in St- Petersburg. Invited in 1900 by the Maryinsky Theatre to supervise a revival of *Sylvia*, which had first come to Russia in 1891, Diaghilev suggested entrusting the production to his 'dream team', the painters Bakst and Benois. Tensions flared between Diaghilev and the management, and he was dismissed. It was to be a turning point. From then on, Diaghilev never ceased searching for other opportunities and places to realise his theatrical ambitions. Would he ever have gone abroad had it not been for this quarrel? Would he ever have created the 'Ballets Russes' in Paris in 1909 without this disappointment? For this reason *Sylvia* turned out, indirectly, to be the key which opened the door to modernity. However, *Sylvia*'s interest lies less in its historical and cultural aspects and original choreography than in its music. The score betrays Wagner's influence and, even though it does not shrink from the worst clichés of 19th century ballet, it is still full of poetry and sensuality. Do we have to tell a story? And in this case which one? Torquato Tasso's pastoral drama *Aminta* which is the source of the story? One thing is for sure, the rather "twee" version by Jules Barbier and the Baron de Reinach is today outmoded. Why not do things more simply? Danced sequences depicting an Amazon at that fragile moment between adolescence and womanhood. Torn between strength and vulnerability, she has difficulty in finding a balance between aggressiveness and tenderness, between denial and self abandon, and only succeeds in discovering true love with the awakening of her own sensuality. On rereading Tasso, I realised that the myth was worthier of interest than the anecdote. It is therefore normal to keep a certain distance from the music and rid the work of its "operetta" elements which have seduced certain choreographers. In any case, scenes, movements and emotional situations all maintain a sometimes surprising dialogue with the music. Although not wanting to recreate the Ancient world, I was delighted to collaborate with the great Greek painter, Yannis Kokkos, whose blue tree standing before a green wall is reminiscent of Eluard's *la terre est bleue comme une orange*. In this inversion of colours lies all the poetry of Kokkos, all the poetry of *Sylvia*.

John Neumeier

= TRICODEX

Directed for television by Philippe Decouflé
and Emmanuel Pampuri in HD
Running Time: 50 Minutes

Choreographed by Philippe Decouflé
for the Ballet de l'Opéra National de Lyon
Music: Sébastien Libolt
and Hugues de Courson
Sets: Jean Rabasse
Costumes: Philippe Guillotel
Special Effects: Pierre-Jean Verbraecken

Philippe Decouflé has choreographed many events and is probably best known to a large audience through the opening and the closing ceremonies of the Winter Olympics at Albertville in 1992 which he staged single handedly.

Tricodex is the fourth step in a process going back almost 20 years. The trigger was the *Codes Seraphinus*, an encyclopaedia of an imaginary world, written in an unknown language but, fortunately, copiously illustrated.

Philippe Decouflé created *Codex*, his first choreographic version, for seven dancers in 1986, following up a year later with a film bearing the same title. Some years later he felt compelled to rework the theme, the outcome being *Decodex*, for 12 dancers. The most recent manifestation of this recurring urge is today's *Tricodex*, for 30 members of the Lyon Ballet troupe.

Like Picasso, who sometimes produced fresh versions of the same subject years apart, Decouflé likes to run the original idea through the filter of his current concerns.

The agenda, however, remains unchanged: a meticulous, probing, zanely poetic exploration of this imaginary world that draws on many facets of a vast choreographic vocabulary.



LES ARTS FLORISSANTS

The Documentary on 25 Years of Les Arts Florissants entitled *Bill's Band* is nearing completion. Some part of it will be devoted to their educational programme which is organised by William Christie and Les Arts Florissants under the title *Le Jardin des Voix*. Over 600 applications were received, about 200 Singers auditioned and seven invited to work between 13th and 28th of February 2005 with Baroque experts in Caen. Besides learning about ornamentation, pronunciation, phrasing and stage presence a programme was put in place for the following European and American tour. We filmed highlights at Geneva where the press gave *Le Jardin des Voix* an enthusiastic reception. This is what the *New York Times* had to say under the heading 'Nurturing Young Plants into a Garden'.



Members of William Christie's Les Arts Florissants performing at the Tully Hall on Wednesday night.

Nurturing Young Plants Into a Garden

By ANNE MURPHY

William Christie has built his ensemble, Les Arts Florissants, into a finely tuned organization that produces the best performances of Baroque opera - particularly, but not exclusively, by French composers - to be found anywhere today.

One thing the program showed was the singers' versatility: they produced a stream of operatic excerpts in an array of national styles and languages, as well as different eras, from Domenico Mazzacchi and Purcell, through Rameau, Charpentier, Handel and early Mozart.

Judith van Wanroij, a soprano, gave a deftly ornamented and dynamically shapely account of the Sheperdess's plaint from Charpentier's "Venus et Adonis." In several of the dialogues, Claire Debono, also a soprano, acted nimbly and produced a lovely, focused sound that conveyed a clear sense of the text.

Names of the seven singers to be remembered: **Amel Brahim-Djelloul, Claire Debono, Judith van Wanroij, Xavier Sabata, Andrew Tortise, André Morsch and Konstantin Wolff.**

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GIANNI SCHICCHI or THE MEANS JUSTIFY THE END

Directed by Reiner E. Moritz
Running Time: 42'

José van Dam once called Gianni Schicchi Puccini's small scale Falstaff.. Conductor Seiji Ozawa shares his opinion and discusses this late masterpiece of the composer in an introductory documentary to the complete production of the opera from Palais Garnier. Laurent Pelly explains how he was inspired by the Italian cinema of the 1950s for this much acclaimed stage production. Alessandro Corbelli, the outstanding Schicchi, talks about the opera and his part in particular. Patrizia Ciofi discusses the one and only famous aria of the whole piece 'O mio babbino caro' and explains the twisted plot.

Opera-goers usually buy the programme shortly before curtain time. Whether they ever have the time to read it is a different question. Our introductory documentaries are designed to give TV audiences as much background information as possible to enhance their understanding and thus make opera on television more enjoyable.

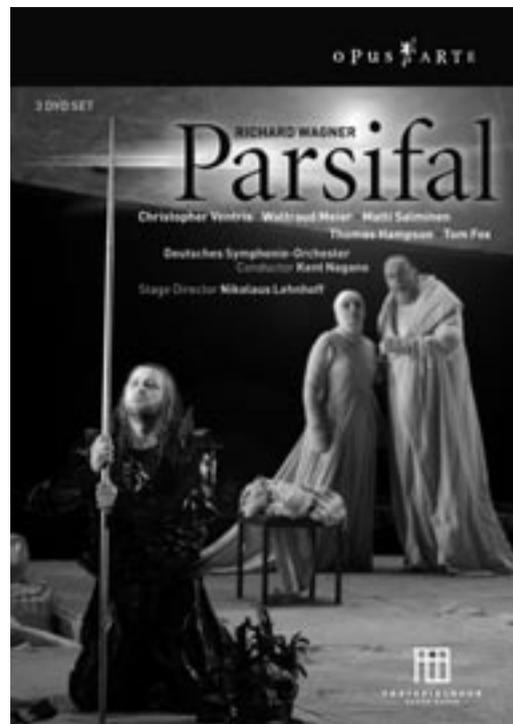


L'HEURE ESPAGNOLE or WHO LAUGHS LAST...

Directed by Reiner E. Moritz
Running Time: 42'

Conductor Seiji Ozawa says in one of his rare interviews about Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole*: "I'm sure Ravel wanted to do like operetta". Stage director Laurent Pelly took his cue from Ozawa and produced a wonderfully light-hearted version of this mini-opera which deals with the story of a bored housewife who's husband is the town's clockmaker and in charge of all the municipal clocks. Once a week he does the rounds to control each one, and this 'Spanish Hour' is the moment when his wife Concepcion has her lovers come round. Sophie Koch is a wonderful Concepcion in this recording from Palais Garnier.

In order to create a better understanding for this gem of the operatic repertoire we produced a 42-minute introductory film in which conductor, stage director and the singers comment on the piece and their respective parts. They answer all the questions an interested public might want to ask.



PARSIFAL ON DVD

Opus Arte is releasing the third title distributed by PHI following the successful launches of *THE TROJANS* and *LES BORÉADES*. After the great success of the stage production at Festspielhaus BadenBaden the German distributor Naxos has organised a press launch at the well known cultural department store Dussmann in Berlin. Stage director Nikolaus Lehnhoff and singer Waltraud Meier will meet the press who are going to see extracts of the opera on a big screen. Dussmann will distribute posters and flyers through Berlin and specially decorate a *PARSIFAL* window. Hans Petri and Reiner Moritz will answer questions.

This is part of a specially designed campaign for *PARSIFAL* and the first ever DVD launch at Dussmann's. Opus Arte is using all possible means of attracting attention to their premium launches and have had very good press for presentation and bonus material.

This event will take place on Tuesday, April 26th 2005 at 3pm

PRIZES

★ **LES TROYENS** received "Prix Cecilia 2005" (highest Belgium music award)

★ **PLATEE** received at **MiDEM** the **Cannes Classical Award 2005** in the category Opera and Ballet

★ **LES PALADINS** was nominated for this year's **Olivier Awards**

★ **iVRY GiTLIS** - **Finalist Award at the New York Film Festival 2004** in the **Biography** category

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