

Nights at the opera



Renato Zanella



Peter Tiboris



The Apollo Theater

The International Festival of the Aegean has become a fixture on the annual summer events calendar of the Cyclades—and one of the driving forces in the revival of the Apollo Theater since its reopening a decade ago. Launched in 2000 and now presenting its seventh consecutive season, the festival continues to extend its embrace beyond opera to theater and dance.

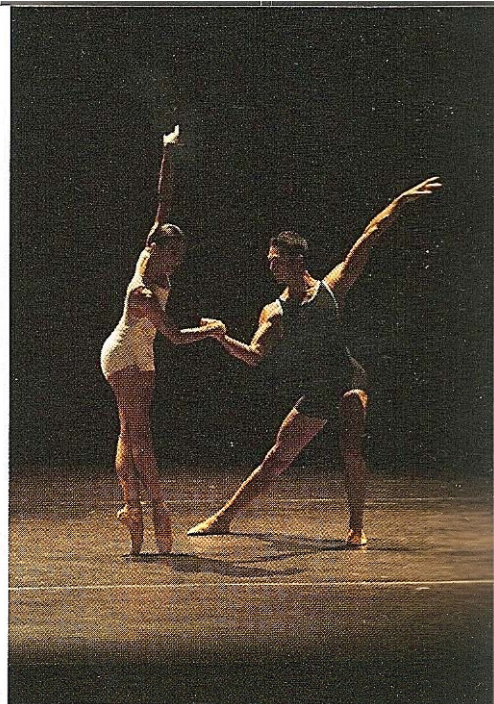
“The first Festival in 2005 included two performances of *Barbieri di Seville*—the first opera performance in the Apollo Theater in 105 years—and two concerts involving eighty-four performing artists and staff,” says festival founder and director Peter Tiboris. “In six short years it has gradually evolved to two full weeks of opera, oratorio, symphonic, theater, and ballet. In 2008 we will move to three weeks of performances.”

This year’s fully-staged opera will be *Verdi’s La Traviata*, with Tiboris conducting the Pan-European Philharmonia, from Warsaw, Poland, and a cast of singers including Natalia Ushakova, soprano (Violetta Valery); Marissia Papalexiou, mezzo-soprano (Flora Bervoix); Josephine Delledera, soprano (Annina); Israel Lozano, tenor (Alfredo Germont); Frederick Burchinal, baritone (Giorgio Germont); Joseph Brent, tenor (Gastone); Brent Davis, baritone (Il Barone Douphol); Benjamin Dawkins, bass (Il Marchese D’Obigny); Richard Block, bass (Il Dottor Grenvil); Bradley Trammel, tenor (Giuseppe, servo di Violetta); and Theodore Moraitis, bass (Domestico di Flora and Commissionario). Director and choreographer, Renato Zanella, will stage the work and Vinicio Chieli will create the lighting design. The performances will take place at the festival’s primary venue, the Apollo Theater, which is modeled on the Teatro de la Scala in Milan.

La Traviata, says Tiboris, was chosen because of “the genius of Verdi.”

“The unifying theme of this and all of our festivals is ‘variety’ and ‘international artistic excellence,’” adds Tiboris. “From year to year, I am seeking only the best, world-class artists to appear in this idyllic setting. Although in this particular season one could combine the tragedies of *La Traviata* and *Rose* and *Medea’s Choice*.”

Olympia Dukakis will perform a staged reading of *Rose* on July 19 and 20. It is about a woman whose life began in a tiny Russian village and moved to Warsaw’s ghettos and a ship called *The Exodus*, and finally to the boardwalks of Atlantic City, the Arizona Canyons, and Miami Beach. The award-winning work was written by Martin Sher-



man, directed by Nancy Meckler, with lighting design by David Lander. *Medea’s Choice*, a world premiere ballet presentation based on Mikis Theodorakis’s 1991 opera score, has been choreographed by Renato Zanella. It features Maria Kousouni of the Greek National Ballet in the title role, with Danilo Zeka, Franziska Hollinek and Enno Peci of the Vienna State Opera, and Sofia Pintzou of the Deutsche Opera Berlin.

“The company of performing artists and staff—production, publicity, management—is 538 and most will be in Syros from a minimum of two weeks. They come from twenty-four different countries,” says Tiboris, commenting on the size, as well as the artistic scope, of the festival.

An evening of all choral music will feature guest conductor Janet Galván leading children’s groups from the United States, Canada, and Greece; guest conductor Earl Rivers conducting music for women’s chorus; principal guest conductor Tim Sharp conducting John Rutter’s *Requiem*; and a special finale of Greek music conducted by guest conductor Irene Messoloras.

Choirs from California, Oklahoma, and Texas will perform a “Sunset Concert” of a cappella sacred music at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. Tiboris will lead an evening of music by Mahler and Dvořák, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the death of Gustav Mahler in 1911. He will conduct Schubert’s *Unfinished Symphony*, Dvořák’s *New World Symphony*, Mahler’s *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and selections from Mahler’s *Symphonies No. 4* and *No. 5 with* soprano Eilana Lappalainen.

Orff’s *Carmina Burana* and highlights from Theodorakis’s *Zorba* suite will be performed “Under the Stars” at Miaouli Plaza with Tiboris conducting Myrsini Margariti, soprano; Paul Zachariades, male mezzo-soprano; and Frederick

Burchinal, baritone. Marissia Papalexiou, mezzo-soprano, is performing in the *Zorba Suite*. Approximately 350 choral singers from the U.S., Canada, and Greece, from 28 choirs, will be represented in this event.

Rounding out the festival program will be the Second Annual Greek Opera Studio Gala Concert, a program founded by the soprano Eilana Lapalainen. The singers will perform opera scenes as well as Act I from Puccini's *La rondine*.

A glance at the program is a temptation to book a two-week stay on Syros. Even Tiboris would have a hard time signalling out performances to attend.

"Highlight? Which of your children do you love the most? There are many highlights—too many to count but certainly the first-ever move to the Miaoulli Plateia for a 400-voice *Carmia Burana* is the most interesting new addition and, of course, the world-premiere ballet of *Medea's Choice*," he says.

7th Annual International Festival of the Aegean

Syros, Greece

July 12, 14, 16 at 9 p.m.

Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*

July 13 at 9 p.m.

Choral Gala

July 15 at 6 p.m.

Sunset Concert at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

July 15 at 9 p.m.

An Evening of Schubert, Mahler, and Dvořák commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Gustav Mahler's death in 1911

July 17 at 10 p.m.

Carmina Burana "Under the Stars" at Miaouli Plateia

July 19, 20 at 9 p.m.

Academy Award-winner Olympia Dukakis in a staged reading of *Rose*

July 22, 23, 24 at 9 p.m.

Medea's Choice (World Premiere Ballet Presentation)

July 25 at 9 p.m.

Second Annual Greek Opera Studio Gala Concert