

PRIMA CLASSIC PRESENTS

M A R I N A R E B E K A

Elle

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FRENCH OPERA ARIAS
MICHAEL BALKÉ
SINFONIEORCHESTER ST. GALLEN

Catalog PRIMA004

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Elle is Marina Rebeka's fourth solo album, celebrating the diversity of the female roles in some of the greatest French Opera Arias of the canon.

From a sweet recounting of the pleasures of love in Charpentier's Louise, to the steely determination of Juliette in Gounod's last scene, passing through the new-found piety of Thaïs, Carmen's indomitably wild character, Chimène's extreme sadness in Le Cid, and Marguerite's transformation from an innocent girl in love into a woman longing for a man who will not return, these and the many more arias that fill this recording explore the emotional spectrum of the female roles in French Opera.

A perfect modern introduction to French Opera for the new listener as well as a valuable addition to the library of the connoisseur, *Elle* showcases the extraordinary art of Marina Rebeka, one of the most complete sopranos of our times, with not only a unique vocal prowess and range but with unusually deep interpretative powers, making each aria come to life in a new way.

Elle is a studio recording featuring the Sinfonieorchester St. Gallen (Switzerland) conducted by Michael Balke.

Marina Rebeka, soprano

Latvian soprano Marina Rebeka is one of the leading opera singers of our time. She has gained a wide reputation as one of the greatest Verdi, Rossini, and Mozart singers in the world.

Since her international breakthrough at the Salzburg Festival in 2009 under the baton of Riccardo Muti, Rebeka has been a regular guest at the world's most prestigious concert halls and opera houses, such as the Teatro alla Scala (Milan), the Opéra National de Paris, the Metropolitan Opera and Carnegie Hall (New York), the Royal Opera House Covent Garden (London), the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), the Bavarian State Opera (Munich), the Vienna State Opera and the Musikverein (Vienna), and the Zurich Opera House, among others.

She collaborates with leading conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Zubin Mehta, Antonio Pappano, Valery Gergiev, Fabio Luisi, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Daniele Gatti, Marco Armiliato, Thomas Hengelbrock, Paolo Carignani, Myung-whun Chung, Kent Nagano, Ottavio Dantone, and Dan Ettinger. The variety of her repertoire is outstanding and ranges from Baroque (Händel), bel canto (Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti), and Verdi (La Traviata, Simon Boccanegra, Il Trovatore) to Tchaikovsky (Eugene Onegin) and Britten (War Requiem).

Her first solo CD, Mozart Arias with Speranza Scappucci and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, was released by EMI (Warner Classics) in November 2013. Her next album, Amor fatale – Rossini arias with Marco Armiliato and the Münchner Rundfunkorchester – was released in the autumn of 2017 by BR-Klassik. A recording of Verdi's Luisa Miller with Rebeka in the title role was released by BR-Klassik in spring 2018, and in summer 2018 Deutsche Grammophon released a recording of Mozart's La Clemenza di Tito conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and featuring Rebeka in the role of Vitellia. Her third solo album, Spirito, which includes the best-known scenes and arias of the dramatic bel canto repertoire, was released to critical acclaim under her own record label, Prima Classic, in November 2018. In 2019, also with Prima Classic, Rebeka recorded the role of Violetta Valéry on the complete (in its uncut version) studio production of La Traviata, along with Charles Castronovo, George Petean, the Latvian Festival Orchestra, and the State Choir Latvija under Michael Balke.

Born in Riga, Rebeka began her musical studies in Latvia and continued in Italy, where she graduated from the Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia in Rome (2007). During her studies she also attended the Mozarteum International Summer Academy in Salzburg and the Rossini Academy in Pesaro. In the 2017/18 season, she was named the first-ever artist in residence by the Münchner Rundfunkorchester. In December 2016, Rebeka was granted the Order of the Three Stars, the highest award of the Republic of Latvia, for her cultural achievements.

Michael Balke, conductor

Equally at home in the symphonic and opera repertoire, the young German conductor Michael Balke is quickly gaining international attention for his performances.

He regularly accepts invitations to many European countries as well as Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the United States. Balke was born in Braunschweig and received a full scholarship for his musical education at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, where he studied piano with James Tocco, conducting with Christopher Zimmerman, and chamber music with the Tokyo String Quartet, the LaSalle Quartet, and Menahem Pressler.

Balke lived in Italy from 2007 to 2011, where he assisted Riccardo Frizza at the Maggio Musicale in Florence and in Verona. In 2011 he became the principal conductor of the Magdeburg Opera, where he conducted a broad repertoire of new productions from Mozart, Rossini, and Donizetti to Verdi, Stravinsky, Korngold, and Richard Strauss as well as numerous symphony concerts. Highlights of this period include *Der Rosenkavalier* and a new production of Richard Strauss' *Elektra*.

At the same time, Balke accepted international invitations as a guest conductor: Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at the Teatro Grande in Brescia and in Como, Cremona, and Pavia; *Hänsel und Gretel* at the Staatstheater Kassel; *La Traviata* at the Nationaltheater Mannheim; *La Bohème* at the Danish National Opera; and *L'Heure Espagnole* / Gianni Schicchi for the 2016 season opening at the Opéra National de Lorraine in Nancy.

Balke regularly collaborates with singers such as Ludovic Tézier, Lawrence Brownlee, Ian Bostridge, and Marina Rebeka, with whom he gave concerts in Zagreb with the Croatian Radio Orchestra, in Munich with the Munich Radio Orchestra, and at the Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow. Balke was recently named principal guest conductor of the St. Gallen Theater and Symphony Orchestra (Switzerland), starting his tenure in the 2018/19 season.

In 2019, Balke conducted Prima Classic's complete (uncut version) studio production of Verdi's opera *La Traviata*, with the main roles sang by Marina Rebeka, Charles Castronovo, and George Petean, along with the Latvian Festival Orchestra and the State Choir Latvija.

www.michaelbalke.com

Sinfonieorchester St. Gallen

Seventy musicians from more than twenty different countries make up the St. Gallen Symphony Orchestra. Its highly successful concert series is housed in one of the finest concert halls in the Lake Constance region - the art nouveau Tonhalle St Gallen, built in 1909 and recently given a complete acoustic overhaul.

The orchestra also features prominently in St Gallen's Theatre, playing a vital part in opera, operetta, and musical productions, and in the St. Gallen Festival. Wide-ranging chamber music is a significant part of the musicians' artistic output; besides two in-house concert series, the orchestra runs the «Meisterzyklus» concerts with high-profile guests from the international chamber music scene. Additionally, the orchestra champions education and outreach projects in order to promote music to audiences and musicians of tomorrow.

The history of the orchestra stretches back to the middle of the nineteenth century taking up a tradition of subscription concerts as early as 1877. For a remarkable thirty-seven year period at the turn of the century, the renowned Swiss composer and conductor Othmar Schoeck directed the orchestra, marking a new era in the refinement of orchestral sound and introducing innovative concert programming. In the post-war period, the baton was passed to major conductors such as Carl Schuricht and André Cluytens. More recently the Chief Conductor was the Czech Jiří Kout, who was succeeded first by the American David Stern and then the Dutch conductor Otto Tausk.

The season 2018/2019 has seen the arrival of the internationally acclaimed Lithuanian conductor Modestas Pitrenas, with whom the orchestra already enjoys a long-standing artistic relationship. In the same season German conductor Michael Balke has joined the artistic staff as the St Gallen Theatre's Principal Guest Conductor. Besides numerous live appearances in the Tonhalle and Theatre St Gallen, the orchestra has also recently released several recordings, which have been well-received internationally, and it appears regularly on Swiss radio SRF2.

M A R I N A R E B E K A

Elle

FRENCH OPERA ARIAS

M I C H A E L B A L K E

SINFONIEORCHESTER ST. GALLEN

- 1 CHARPENTIER • Louise • Act 3 • *Depuis le jour où je me suis donnée* (5:27)
- 2 MASSENET • Hérodiade • Act 1 • *Celui dont la parole... Il est doux, il est bon* (5:39)
- 3 MASSENET • Le Cid • Act 3 • *De cet affreux combat... Pleurez, pleurez mes yeux* (6:25)
- 4 GOUNOD • Faust • Act 3 • *Les grands seigneurs... Ah! Je ris de me voir si belle* (6:16)
- 5 BIZET • Carmen • Act 1 • *Quand je vous aimerai?... L'amour est un oiseau rebelle* (5:09)
- 6 BIZET • Les pêcheurs de perles • Act 2 • *Me voilà seule dans la nuit... Comme autrefois* (7:26)
- 7 MASSENET • Manon • Act 2 • *Allons! Il le faut!... Adieu, notre petite table* (4:29)
- 8 GOUNOD • Roméo et Juliette • Act 1 • *Ah! Je veux vivre* (3:45)
- 9 MASSENET • Thaïs • Act 2 • *Ah! Je suis seule ... Dis-moi que je suis belle* (7:03)
- 10 GOUNOD • Faust • Act 4 • *Elles ne sont plus là... Il ne revient pas* (7:17)
- 11 MASSENET • Thaïs • Act 3 • *O messenger de Dieu* (2:35)
- 12 DEBUSSY • L'enfant prodigue • *L'année, en vain chasse l'année... Azaël! Azaël!* (5:30)
- 13 GOUNOD • Roméo et Juliette • Act 4 • *Dieu! Quel frisson... Amour ranime mon courage* (5:34)

Total time: 72:35

Credits:

Marina Rebeka, soprano
Michael Balke, conductor
Sinfonieorchester St. Gallen, Switzerland

Produced by Mathieu Pordoy and Marina Rebeka
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