

Italian dream team **Daniela Dessì** and **Fabio Armiliato**
opens the 2015 Puccini Festival with a
new production of *Tosca* by Vivien Hewitt

24 & 31 July, 15 & 21 August 2015
Puccini Festival - Torre del Lago



Tosca at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa 2010

Daniela Dessì Floria Tosca
Fabio Armiliato Mario Cavaradossi
Giovanni Meoni Barone Scarpia
Orchestra and Chorus of Puccini Festival

Valerio Galli Conductor | **Vivien Hewitt** Director
Daniele Spisa Set Designer | **Cesare Accetta** Light design
Stefano Visconti Chorus master | **Sara Matteucci** Chorus Master Youth choir

“They’re a *cannonata*,’ says De Plano [artistic director of the Puccini Festival],
describing the couple as a force-of-nature knockout. ‘They always give their
maximum - vocally, artis- tically and dramatically.’”

- Classical Music Magazine -

Premio Puccini award holders **Daniela Dessì** and **Fabio Armiliato** return to the picturesque stage of the Puccini Festival this summer in Torre del Lago to star in a new production of *Tosca*. Both specialists of Puccini, Verdi and the verismo repertoire recently excelled in a new production of the seldom-performed opera *Fedora* at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa to critical acclaim. The young Italian conductor **Valerio Galli**, who conducted *Fedora*, will lead Italy’s most remarkable opera couple once again in this new production of *Tosca*, which is directed by Belfast-born **Vivien Hewitt**.

The careers of Dessì and Armiliato as one of the most significant artistic couples in the recent opera history, have grown with the Puccini Festival. In 2004 the festival celebrated its 50th anniversary with a new production of *Madama Butterfly* to mark the centenary of its premiere in Brescia on 28 May 1904, featuring Daniela Dessì and Fabio Armiliato in the leading roles conducted by Placido Domingo. They have both been awarded the Premio Puccini for their international singing careers performing Puccini operas worldwide as well as at the festival, Dessì in 2000 and Armiliato was

awarded with the “Giacomo Puccini” last year for his interpretation of Rodolfo in *La Bohème*.

Fabio Armiliato, who acted as opera singer Giancarlo in Woody Allen’s film “To Rome with Love” in 2012, is more than familiar with the role of Mario Cavaradossi, having interpreted the painter’s character over 150 performances worldwide. He has especially been acclaimed for his performances in this role at La Scala in Milan conducted by Lorin Maazel and for his performance at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden under the baton of Antonio Pappano in 2006.

Dessì has sung Puccini's impassioned verismo heroine at the most leading opera houses including Berlin, Munich and Verona. Last year, she made her debut as a director at the Teatro Carlo Felice, directing and additionally performing Cio-Cio San in *Madama Butterfly* alongside her stage love Fabio Armiliato in the role of Pinkerton. With her recent performances of *Fedora*, Dessì followed in the footsteps of emblematic opera divas who sung the title role in the twilight of their careers including Renata Tebaldi, Magda Olivero and Renata Scotto.

“Dessì honored her own dictum that Tosca should be sung, not screamed, a lyrical rather than a dramatic vocal performance, culminating in a sensitively sung “Vissi d’arte”

- Chicago Tribune -

On stage, Dessì and Armiliato share memorable triumphs performing together in *Manon Lescaut* in Seville, Barcelona, Vienna, Parma and Berlin, *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Naples, Palermo, Milan and Barcelona, in *Aida* and *Simon Boccanegra* at the Verdi Festival in Parma. They premiered as a couple in *Tosca* in 2001 under Bruno Bartoletti in Chicago and their most recent mutual appearance as Floria and Cavaradossi was at Torre del Lago in 2006 in a production of Igor Mitoraj.

Puccini Festival

The *Puccini Festival* takes place every summer at Torre del Lago nearby the Italian city of Lucca, the birthplace of Maestro Puccini, since 1930 to celebrate and stage all of his operas. Within the spectacular natural surroundings of the Massaciuccoli Lake in the background the open air theatre seats 3400 spectators, within walking distance of the theatre lies the villa where Puccini lived and composed. Today the Villa houses a museum with momentous that surrounded and accompanied the artistic career of the composer. Aside from *Tosca*, this year’s 61st festival stages also *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*.



“On stage, you sing in full view of Puccini’s house, which brings an incredible emotion and positive energy - she says.” - Opera Now -

Daniela Dessì



Italian Daniela Dessì is one of the world's leading sopranos interpreting Verdi, Puccini and the Verismo repertoire. Her versatile voice and strong technique has allowed her to perform in more than seventy different operas, ranging from Monteverdi to Prokofiev. In 2011 Dessì was recognized as an "absolute soprano" and awarded with the Celletti Belcanto Prize.

Born in Genoa, she graduated in singing and in piano from the Conservatory of Parma, later specializing in chamber singing at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. Since her debut in *La Serva Padrona* by Pergolesi in Genoa, her career started taking wing. Requested in the world major opera houses and festivals, she has collaborated with great conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Chailly, Daniele Gatti, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Carlo Maria Giulini, Carlos Kleiber, James Levine, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Giuseppe Sinopoli. She has also collaborated with the most famous directors, including Roberto De Simone, Pier Luigi Pizzi, Luca Ronconi, Giorgio Strehler, Franco Zeffirelli.

Dessì's repertoire ranges from Baroque and Eighteenth Century music (with the great interpretations of *Don Giovanni*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte* and *La Clemenza di Tito* by Mozart with Riccardo Muti conducting) to the works of the early Twentieth Century, mainly focusing on the glorious Nineteenth Century Italian operatic composers (Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi). She has been the first Italian singer to perform in her country the three roles of Puccini's *Trittico* (Giorgetta, Suor Angelica and Lauretta) in the same evening. Recent appearances with her partner in life and art Fabio Armiliato on stage include *La Forza del Destino* in Liège, *Aida* at the Arena in Verona, a Verdi Gala at the Theatre Madlenianum in Beograd.

In 2008 her debut in Bologna in *Norma* was awarded with Premio Abbiati of Italian Music Critics. In 2011 she performed for the first time in her career *La Gioconda* by Amilcare Ponchielli at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and *Vier letzte Lieder* by Richard Strauss with the Symphony Orchestra of Rome. In 2012 she made her debut in the role of Paolina in *Poliuto* by Donizetti in Marseille and, just one month after, she performed the title role in *Turandot* by Giacomo Puccini at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, receiving unanimous critical acclaim. In 2013, she triumphed debuting Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Taormina Festival.

In February 2014, Dessì successfully dealt with her first opera direction, in addition to performing as the protagonist in *Madama Butterfly* at Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa alongside Fabio Armiliato. Further future engagements in 2016 include *Forza del Destino* at the Carlo Felice Theatre in Genoa and recital at Carnegie Hall, New York.

"Italy's last true prima donna - her soprano voice is highly structured, voluminous and truly dramatic with lots of body and a dramatic impact."

- Concerti -

Fabio Armiliato



Internationally renowned tenor **Fabio Armiliato** is acclaimed by the public thanks to his unique vocal style, his impressive upper register and his dramatic abilities and charisma that infuses in his characters.

He made his opera debut as Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* in his hometown Genoa, where he graduated at the Conservatory Niccolò Paganini, after which his career set off leading him to address many important roles for his register in the most prestigious theatres in the world. In 1993 debuted at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York with *Il Trovatore*, followed by *Aida*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Don Carlo*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Tosca*, *Fedora*, *Madama Butterfly*. Especially his performance of

Andrea Chénier at the Met is considered one of his most iconic roles, receiving the proclamation from the critics of “best Chénier of our times”.

Equally importance Fabio Armiliato gave to the role of Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, sung amongst others at La Scala in Milan, at the Gran Teatre del Liceu and the New National Theatre in Tokyo. During the period from 1990 to 1996, he performed in the Opera of Antwerp on a cycle dedicated to Giacomo Puccini, in production directed by Robert Carsen interpreting *Tosca*, *Don Carlo* and *Manon Lescaut*.

Armiliato is a refined interpreter of Mario Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with more than 150 performances of the title, he has been acclaimed in this role in the most prestigious Opera Houses including La Scala in Milan, conducted by Lorin Maazel, and the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden in London under the baton of Antonio Pappano in 2006.

He starred as opera singer Giancarlo, one of the main characters, in Woody Allen’s film “To Rome with Love” released in 2012. For this appearance he has been awarded with the special “Oscar della Lirica 2012” during the “International Opera Awards” in Torre del Lago Puccini.

More recent successes include *La forza del Destino* at the Opera de Wallonie Liège, *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Greek theatre of Taormina and at the Wiener Staatsoper and performances of *Madama Butterfly* and *Carmen* both in Genoa. In 2013 he gave his first Wigmore Hall recital in the Rosenblatt series with pianist Marco Boemi. For his performance in *La Bohème* at last year’s Festival Puccini in Torre del Lago, directed by the master of cinema Ettore Scola and starring also Daniela Dessì, Armiliato received the 2014 Giacomo Puccini Prize.

“With his dark and dramatic countenance and a voice as compelling in quiet expressivity as it is at high volume, he seems the real deal.”

- The Independent, Jessica Duchon -

Upcoming performances

Daniela Dessì

21 May
Adriana Lecouvreur
Macedonian Opera, Skopje
May Opera Evening Festival

24 July - 21 August
Tosca - Puccini
Puccini Festival, Torre del Lago

30 June
Verdi Concert with the Toscanini
Orchestra of Parma

24 October
Recital with Fabio Armiliato at the
Teatro Comunale, Bologna

Fabio Armiliato

24 July - 21 August
Tosca - Puccini
Puccini Festival, Torre del Lago

4 June
Concert with the Toscanini Orchestra of
Parma

24 October
Recital with Daniela Dessì at the Teatro
Comunale, Bologna

<http://www.puccinifestival.it>

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