

Riccardo Frizza

Conductor

Award-winning Italian maestro Riccardo Frizza is a galvanic presence on the podium, inspiring performances as exhilarating as they are expressive. Championed by Alberto Zedda, Bruno Cagli, and Gian Carlo Menotti, he is a leading exponent of *bel canto* repertoire, collaborating with a who's who of today's most iconic singers at opera houses from Milan's Teatro alla Scala to the Metropolitan Opera in New York. In the concert hall, he graces the podiums of such world-class ensembles as the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Rome's Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, London's Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Tokyo Symphony, while his extensive discography includes Decca's *Una furtiva lagrima*, winner of the 2004 Cannes Classical Award.

Frizza maintains a strong international presence in 2015-16. To launch the new season, he leads back-to-back productions of *La traviata* and *Tosca* at Italy's Teatro la Fenice. After premiering Stéphane Braunschweig's new staging of Bellini's *Norma* at the Theatre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, he returns to the Metropolitan Opera for Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*, with Sondra Radvanovsky in the title role. Also in Bellini, he concludes the season at the Gran Teatre del Liceu, conducting Elina Garanca and Patrizia Ciofi in the Vincent Boussard/Christian Lacroix production of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* that he debuted and recorded at San Francisco Opera. These engagements follow a festival-opening run in *Nabucco* at Italy's Arena di Verona, bookended by two new Spanish productions of *Otello* at Ópera de Bilbao and the Festival de Peralada respectively.

In 2014-15, Frizza made his Dallas Opera debut conducting *La bohème*, which was also the vehicle for warmly received returns to the Met and the Semperoper Dresden. He took the podium for Linda Brovsky's staging of *Rigoletto* at Seattle Opera, and led Bayerische Staatsoper productions of *I Capuleti e Montecchi* and Rossini's *Cenerentola* with Lawrence Brownlee. Besides helming a revival of Rossini's *L'italiana in Algeri* at the Paris Opera, Frizza joined Roberto Alagna and Dmitri Hvorostovsky for a concert performance of Verdi's *Otello* with the Orchestre Nationale d'Ile de France at the French capital's Salle Pleyel.

After serving as Music Director to the Symphonic Orchestra of Brescia from 1994 to 2000, it was in 2001 that the conductor launched his international career with breakthrough performances at two Italian festivals. At the centennial Verdi Festival in Parma, the composer's birthplace, he conducted *Rigoletto*, his first major production, while his appearance at Pesaro's star-studded Rossini Opera Festival drew the notice of Juan Diego Flórez and many other singers with whom he would forge key connections. Under Menotti's mentorship, Frizza led an award-winning *Macbeth* at Italy's Spoleto Festival in 2002, prompting Italian daily *Il Sole 24 Ore* to hail him as "the new Verdi conductor of his generation." After his triumphant return to the Rossini Opera Festival for *Matilde di Shabran* two years later, there followed a succession of important debuts. In 2009, he led *Rigoletto* at the Met and *Don Giovanni* at the Theater an der Wien, with Erwin Schrott in the title role. Two years later, he conducted Renée Fleming in Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* at San Francisco Opera, followed by *La Cenerentola* at the Paris Opera (2012) and Verdi's *Oberto* at La Scala (2013). As the first staging of Verdi's operatic debut in 35 years, this last marked a major career milestone for the conductor and proved a notable critical success. Subsequent landmarks include his leadership of the Met's *La bohème*, featuring Bryan Hymal (2014) and of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and a host of operatic luminaries in 2013's centennial Richard Tucker gala at Lincoln Center, which later aired on PBS as *Richard Tucker at 100: An Opera Celebration*.

Beyond the opera house, Frizza followed his Brescia directorship with a number of significant international orchestral collaborations. Under Menotti's guidance, he made his acclaimed debut with New York's Juilliard Orchestra in 2001, and led his first full symphonic concert with the Philharmonia Orchestra at London's Royal Festival Hall the following year. He gave first performances with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in 2005 and the legendary Leipzig Gewandhaus two years later, besides appearing with a host of high-profile ensembles, including the Staatskapelle Dresden, Bayerische Staatsorchester of Munich, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre National de Belgique, Tokyo Symphony, Kyoto Symphony, and Russian National Orchestra. Over the course of his concert career, the conductor has undertaken concerto collaborations with many of today's foremost instrumentalists, violinists Joshua Bell and Ray Chen, cellist Steven Isserlis, and pianists Hélène Grimaud and Simon Trpceski among them.

Frizza's distinguished discography includes numerous live opera recordings on DVD and Blu-Ray. Most recently, San Francisco Opera released *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, starring Joyce DiDonato (2014), and *Lucrezia Borgia* (2013). Other notable DVD issues include *Don Giovanni* with Ildebrando D'Arcangelo at Teatro la Fenice (Unitel Classica, 2013), Rossini's *Armida* with Renée Fleming and Lawrence Brownlee at the Met (Decca 2010), and *La fille du regiment* starring Juan Diego Flórez and Patrizia Ciofi at Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice (Decca, 2006). Frizza's output also includes live recordings of *L'Italiana in Algeri* with Olga Borodina and Ildar Abdrazakov at Washington National Opera (2009) and *Matilde di Shabran* from Rossini Opera Festival (Decca, 2006), a finalist for the 2007 Gramophone Award. He has recorded orchestral aria albums with Ramon Vargas (Capriccio, 2013), Erwin Schrott (Decca, 2009), and Juan Diego Flórez, the title track of whose award-winning compilation *Una furtiva lagrima* (Decca, 2003) has since been anthologized numerous times.

A passionate educator, Frizza has given masterclasses at the Milano Music Master School, Bologna's School of Italian Opera, and Barcelona's Third "Eduard Toldrà" Orchestral Conducting Course. Several of his former students, including Michael Balke and Diego Martin Etxebarria, have gone on to launch professional careers.

After learning harmony and counterpoint with Elisabetta Brusa at the Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi in Milan, Riccardo Frizza studied conducting with Gilberto Serembe at the Music Academy of Pescara and Gianluigi Gelmetti at Siena's Chigiana Academy. He made his first professional appearance with the Soloists of Prague in 1993, five years before taking first prize in the Czech Republic's International Competition of South Bohemia State-Philharmonic Conductors. With his wife, Spanish soprano Davinia Rodriguez, he currently lives in Brescia, Italy.