

WHAT'S ON

New Kitezh will be seen in Moscow and in Cagliari as well



Teatro Lirico di Cagliari.

The 2008 opera season in the city of Cagliari opens with the premiere of a Bolshoi Theatre and Teatro Lirico di Cagliari co-production of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and of the Maiden Fevronia*. This date also marks the start of the 8th Sant'Efisio Music Festival (organized

by the Theatre during the week that virtually the whole of the island of Sardinia celebrates the holiday of its capital's patron saint).

Director is Eimuntas Nekrosius, with sets by Marius Nekrosius and costumes by Nadezhda Gulyaeva, the team responsible for the Bolshoi Theatre productions of Verdi's *Macbeth* and Leonid Desyatnikov's *The Children of Rosenthal*. Music director is Alexander Vedernikov.

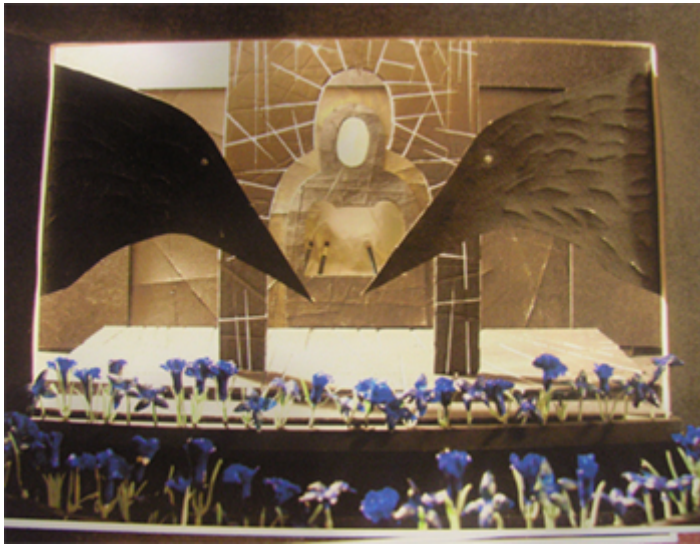
Cagliari's Teatro Lirico is one of Italy's main opera houses. Among the outstanding conductors and directors who have worked there are Riccardo Muti, Zubin Mehta, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Lorin Maazel, Mstislav Rostropovich, Gennadi Rozhdestvensky and Luca Ronconi, Pier Luigi Pizzi and Graham Vick. The Theatre has a relatively recent but already established tradition (this tradition is only ten years old), of opening its season with an opera never performed before in Cagliari. Thus Cagliari music lovers have heard Tchaikovsky's *The Oprichnik* and *Cherevichki* or *The Little Slippers*, Wagner's *Die Feen*, Smetana's *Dalibor*, Richard Strauss's *Die agyptische Helena*, Walter Braunfels' *Die Vogel*. And now the Theatre has turned its attention to Rimsky-Korsakov's great opera and Bolshoi and Teatro Lirico plans have coincided.

Alexander Vedernikov, incidentally, is not a bit surprised at the Teatro Lirico's choice: "This is one of the few epic operas in the Russian repertoire. And, its own dramatic conflict apart, an epic opera touches on issues which are of significance for the whole of humanity. Herein lies its strength and topicality.

Here two basic issues are raised: that of man's relations with nature and the issue of moral choice, subjects which are talking points today both in our country and beyond. Since we live in an age of major ecological upheavals and of moral relativism, when fundamental principles are made subservient to political expediency, it is vital we listen all ears to the message of *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*.

I am very much in sympathy with Eimuntas Nekrosius' creative method. He has a marvelous grasp of generalization: his productions are not concerned with the everyday, they are invested with a symbolic significance which, it seems to me, is of far greater interest".

It is Italian workshops which will make the scenography and costumes for the opera's personages. But, in so doing, they will have in mind the specific characteristics of the Bolshoi Theatre stage where, at the start of the next Moscow theatre season, the production will transfer. And so technicians from the Bolshoi's workshops are also taking part in the project.



Scale model.

The music of the invisible Kitezh will be performed by the Teatro Lirico orchestra and chorus (chorus master Fulvio Foliazza) and an international cast of singers (Bolshoi Theatre and Italian soloists).

But it is the Bolshoi soloists who will sing

the lead roles - Mikhail Kazakov, Igor Matyukhin (Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich), Roman Muravitsky, Vitaly Panfilov (Prince Vsevolod Yurievich), Tatiana Monogarova, Tatiana Smirnova (Fevronia), Mikhail Gubsky, Vitaly Tarashchenko (Grishka Kuterma), Valery Gilmanov (Bedyay) Alexander Naumenko (Burunday), Yelena Manistina (Alkonost).

Working with the soloists will be Bolshoi Theatre opera accompanist Margarita Petrosyan, who will also double as Russian language coach to the Italian soloists. The bells of the city of Kitezh will be reproduced by a recording of real church bells - the same technique of working from recordings will be used as was adopted for the recent Bolshoi Theatre production of *Boris Godunov*.

Alexander Vedernikov: "*Kitezh* is a very complex work to perform, to present to the public, since - as is typical of an epic work - it has few subject lines. It is not so much action, as a state of mind, that is in the foreground here. This is an opera which has an almost liturgical, mystery-play character, it is not for nothing it is compared to Wagner's *Parsifal*. The basic difficulty is that as, in our age, people are always in a hurry, one can't have more than one interval, and this is an opera that needs to be absorbed at a fairly leisurely pace. Added to which, it is virtually impossible to make any cuts: the music fabric is arranged in such a way that everything is logical and part of a pattern.

But we hope our production will be of interest and draw the audience's attention both here (Russia) and there (Italy) to the very important issues the opera raises".

There will be seven performances in Italy of *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* - on 24,26,27, 29, 30 April and 2 and 4 May; the Moscow premiere will be on 10 October.