

Armida e Rinaldo

The Jerusalem Opera, Chorus and Dancers
The Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra
The Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance

Opera by **Giuseppe Sarti**
Libretto: **Marco Coltellini**

Conductor:
Omer Arieli
Stage Director:
Miriam Camerini

Annibale Carracci (Bologna 1560–Rome 1609): Rinaldo and Armida, c. 1601

Greetings from Adv. Yosi Havalio, Deputy Mayor, in charge of the Culture Department

Culture and art in my eyes, are part and parcel of the freedom of expression, one of the important basic rights of a democratic society. In addition, I see culture and art as an important component in keeping the diverse public of Jerusalem in the city.

It is imperative that also those who came out today will continue to enjoy more performances of this kind.

The Jerusalem Opera was established 12 years ago and since then, has brought high-quality and impressive opera productions to the stage, despite the financial difficulties that are the bane of all cultural institutions. I congratulate the entire team for its efforts in bringing this production to the stage.

The City of Jerusalem has funded the Jerusalem Opera since its establishment. I hope that my appointment as the one in charge of Culture in the City of Jerusalem, I will succeed in increasing this support and more importantly, in finding a home for the Opera which would provide it with a fitting and suitable space for its rehearsals and productions.

At this time, we cannot forget our soldiers and those kidnapped and wish for their speedy and safe return home.

Wishing good news for one and all!

**The Jerusalem Opera, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra
and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance
are delighted to present the opera "Armida and Rinaldo" by Giuseppe Sarti**

"Armida e Rinaldo" is based on Torquato Tasso's epic poem "Gerusalemme liberata" (Jerusalem Delivered), which includes the story of Armida and Rinaldo. Sarti's opera was first performed in 1771 in Vienna, and it features a libretto by Marco Coltellini.

The opera tells the story of the Saracen sorceress Armida, who falls in love with the Christian knight Rinaldo. Armida uses her magical powers to try to seduce Rinaldo and distract him from his Christian duties. The opera explores themes of love, war, and the struggle between duty and desire.

"Armida e Rinaldo" was popular in its time and was praised for its lyrical beauty and dramatic intensity. Sarti's music is characterized by its elegant melodies and expressive harmonies. "Armida e Rinaldo" provides a musical interpretation of the timeless story of Rinaldo and Armida's ill-fated love and is an interesting example of late 18th-century opera.



Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge our appreciation over the years to:

Our patrons and the friends of the Jerusalem Opera: Julie and Jacob Schorr (Gold Sponsors), Murray Newman and Harry Koster, Arnold and Victoria Kisch, Haya and Jaakov Zerem, Susan and Jacques Gorlin, Yehuda and Nurit Rosenberg, Yaacov and Ora Ringel, Adina and Jonathan Halevy, Leah and Moshe Felber, Rocky and Heshie Billet, Dina Avni, Peter Kals, Willy S. Kals, Deborah Goldstein, Yair and Ayala Marocco, Anat Shabo-Perlmutter, Adv. Ephraim Abramsohn, Zakai Ben Chaim, Zvi and Yehudith Ohrbach.

Our volunteers: Debbie Azran, Francoise Cafri, Gulie Chamiel, Shlomo Fox, Pnina Yaish, Joe Weizman, Tuvia Blubstein, Yehuda Armoni, Peter Kals.

All the opera lovers, patrons and friends of the Jerusalem Opera, who prefer to remain anonymous, whose generous donations and constant support have enabled us to realize the dream of creating and sustaining opera performances in Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Opera was first established in November 2011 with the main goals of presenting opera productions of the highest quality in Jerusalem and promoting Israeli artists.

The Jerusalem Opera's main productions are: the operas by W.A Mozart "Don Giovanni", "The Marriage of Figaro", "The Magic Flute", "Così fan tutte", as well as the operas by G. Puccini "Madame Butterfly" and "Il tabarro", G. Rossini "The Barber of Seville", E. Humperdinck "Hansel and Gretel", J. Haydn "La Canterina", C. Gounod "La Colombe" in an Israeli premiere, G. Verdi "Rigoletto" and "La Traviata", G. Donizetti "L'elisir d'amore", the French operettas "Le mariage aux lanternes" by Jacques Offenbach and "Une éducation manquée" by Emmanuel Chabrier, both Israeli premieres, "The Diary of Anne Frank" by G. Frid, "La Contadina" by J. Hasse, an Israeli premiere, "Thérèse Raquin" by Aharon Harlap.

The productions of the Jerusalem Opera are staged to highly professional standards and enjoy enthusiastic response from both public and critics.

The Jerusalem Opera receives financial support from the Jerusalem Municipality and from the Israel Ministry of Culture and Sport. However, the future of this inspirational and important initiative depends on the generosity of supporters of culture and others who regard opera as an important piece in the cultural mosaic of Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel.

The Executive Committee:

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Synopsis

Preface

Jerusalem at the time of the first Crusade. The sorceress Armida, queen of Damascus, uses her magical powers to protect Jerusalem from the invading Crusaders. She bewitches Rinaldo, the brave knight of the French Crusaders, brings him to her enchanted island and causes him to fall in love with her. To her surprise, she realizes that she has also fallen in love with him and is afraid to lose him.

Act I

Beautiful young women, dancing, singing of the transience of youthful beauty. The singing and dancing are interrupted by the arrival of Ismene, Armida's confidante, who warns them that an unknown ship has come to the island and the monsters guarding it have been defeated. All are alarmed, but when Ubaldo appears they hide their fear and urge him to lay down his arms and join in their pleasures. He rejects their welcome and Ismene summons demons to punish him, but the knight puts them to flight with the aid of his magic shield. Thanking Providence, he meditates on Rinaldo's fate and prays for help in bringing him back to his senses.

In Armida's enchanted pleasure gardens, she and Rinaldo celebrate their love. Armida fears they may be parted. Wishing to test the powers of her magic, she leaves. Alone, Rinaldo declares once again that he cannot live without her; in her absence, he wishes to see her image in his dreams. Ubaldo arrives. Seeing Rinaldo asleep, he ties his magic shield to a nearby tree. When Rinaldo awakens, he sees himself reflected in the shield and remembers who he is. Unaware of the shield's magic powers, he is surprised when Armida runs away at the sight of it. He is about to go after her when Ubaldo returns and reminds him of his duties as a Christian; he decides to return to the Crusade.

Act II

Armida still fears the magic shield. In "a subterranean chamber used for magic spells", in the presence of her acolytes, she appeals in vain to the infernal gods. Interrupting the proceedings, Ismene arrives to tell her that Rinaldo has been set free and is about to leave the island with Ubaldo. To her followers' astonishment, Armida resorts to tears in an attempt to make Rinaldo change his mind. Though freed from the spell and no longer lovesick, Rinaldo is still reluctant to abandon her; Ubaldo reproaches him for this. The arrival of Armida, who beseeches him to stay or else kill her, is the Crusader's final test. Unable to move Rinaldo by her grief, Armida faints. On regaining consciousness, she finds that Rinaldo has left. She laments her fate, orders the Inferno's goddesses of vengeance to destroy the island, to hide the light of day from it forever, to pour rivers of poison on Rinaldo and to tear his heart out of his chest – all this as an eternal sign to all the ingrates.

“Jerusalem Delivered” by Torquato Tasso

“Jerusalem Delivered” (Italian: Gerusalemme liberata), published in Venice in 1581 by the Italian poet Torquato Tasso, is an epic poem which took place in the First Crusade (1096-1099), in which French Christian knights led by Godfrey de Bouillon fought the Muslims to conquer Jerusalem.

The subject chosen by Tasso is an actual historical conflict (albeit with elements of fantasy) between Christians and Muslims.

Like other contemporary works about the conflict between Christians and Muslims, the subject had a resonance for readers during the period of the Ottoman Empire's expansion into Eastern Europe.

The poem was a huge success, and has inspired many operatic works. Parts and moments of the story were used in works in other media throughout Europe, combining love, violence and exotic backdrops, especially in the period before the French Revolution and the Romantic movement.

The work belongs to the Italian Renaissance tradition of romantic epic poetry, with Tasso often borrowing plot elements and character types directly from Ludovico Ariosto's “Orlando Furioso”. Tasso's poetry also contains elements inspired by the classical epics of Homer and Virgil (especially the parts of their works that talk about sieges and wars). One of the most distinctive literary twists of Tasso's poetry is the emotional challenge endured by characters torn between heart and duty. The depiction of love as opposed to valor and honor is the central source of the poem's lyrical passion.

The story of Armida and Rinaldo, a suggestive tale of love and magic, occupies a well-defined space within Torquato Tasso's poem.

The character of Rinaldo is a famous Paladin from the French medieval epic, the protagonist of ancient legends and tales of arms, whose adventures have been passed down and expanded upon by poets and writers from the Carolingian era onwards.

Armida, a poetic invention of Torquato Tasso, is a beautiful enchantress who embodies the magical and sinful seduction that leads to the abandonment of rationality, somewhat like the enchantress Circe in the Odyssey.

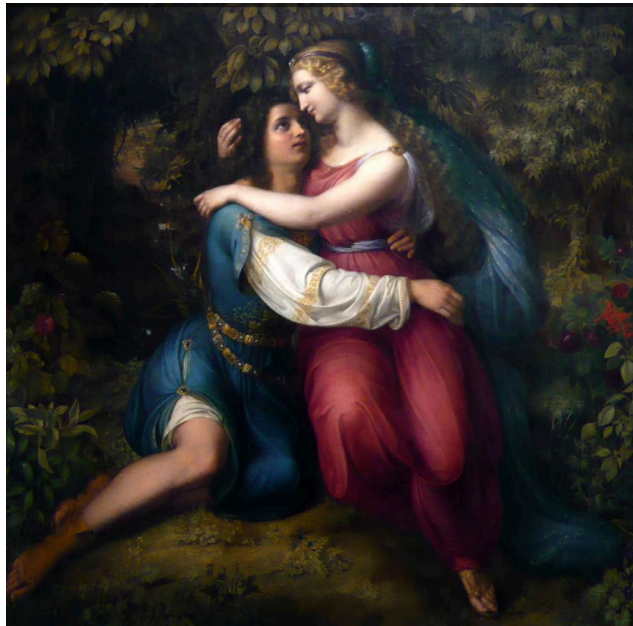
The story of Armida and Rinaldo has provided the basis for more than two hundred operas, as well as many literary adaptations and paintings, and a few ballets and films. The subject lent itself to sumptuous staging, and music and dance that captivated an audience forever eager to hear new variations on a theme that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had become iconic for theatre-goers. In addition to its immediate appeal and the transgressive aspect of a love affair between a Christian Crusader and a Saracen sorceress, the story found an immediate echo in Vienna, which twice in the past (in 1529 and 1683) had been besieged by the Ottomans. After 1733 and the Italian composer Antonio Caldara's version of the story, half a dozen operas on that theme were performed in Vienna.

Director's Note

Eros vs. Thanatos: in Greek, love and death; these are the two directions that lead the story of Armida and Rinaldo, Ubaldo, Ismene and all the nymphs, demons, and other creatures that accompany the short and tragic, eternal, and maybe inevitable plot with its deadly outcome. Passion can lead to life and to death, to war and to peace: “For love is fierce as death; passion is mighty as Sheol”, says King Solomon, someone who knew war, in The Song of Songs (8:6).

Staging Armida in such a difficult time and place means to confront the sensitive issues of war and peace: the creatures torn between heaven and earth, godly and animalesque, angels and demons, in other words: humans. At any given moment we are called to choose between life and death, war and love, freedom and peace. “Armida and Rinaldo” is an unconventional and relatively unknown opera by Giuseppe Sarti. Sarti was born in Faenza, a small Italian city very dear to me and not far from where my own family is from. He died in Berlin, where I have been listening to his music, writing about it, and reflecting on it. Although Sarti met Mozart, his music sounds much more ancient than that of the genius from Salzburg, possessing a unique and mysterious charm.

At the end of the opera we'll be left with the question: why choose death over life? Why can't we just live and love? Is there a way to overcome the forces that lead to war?



Karl Ferdinand Sohn (1805-1867):
Rinaldo und Armida

The Participants

Omer Arieli Musical Director and Conductor

Miriam Camerini Stage Director

The Singers

Maria Mel Soprano - Armida

Noa Sion Mezzo Soprano - Rinaldo

Marc Shaimer Tenor - Ubaldo

Shlomit Lea Kovalsky Soprano – Ismene

Choir Members:

Shani Glick

Angelina Tolstikova

Hedva Schenkolewski

Alexia Jubran

Anna Sukhova

Maria Jubran

Bar Sharlin

Herut Ishlach

Sergey Bartenev

David Kovensky

Grigory Zorokhovitch

Dancers:

Ofek Moshe

Ariel Cosen (dancer-choreographer)

Raz Naveh

The Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra

Ofer Amsalem Director General

Slava Kozodoi Production Manager

Leah Frenkel Director, Marketing and Sales

Sarit Barashi Marketing and Sales

Yaniv Kuris Site and Media

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Prof. **Bella Brover-Lubovsky**

Vice President for Academic Affairs

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Assistant Director

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Udi Alfasi

Tranquilo Productions

Elad Zagman

Revital Toren

Eran Sachs

Golan Rise, Bimot Digital

Liora Nachmani,

Fern Braniss,

Omer Arieli

Daniel Lasry

עומר אריאלי מנהל מוסיקלי ומנצח

ניצח על הפילהרמונית של דורטמונד, ה"אמריקן סימפוני", תזמורת מדרנה ועל רוב התזמורות הישראליות. עבד כמדריך זמרים ומנצח בבתי אופרה ופסטיבלים רבים באוסטריה, גרמניה ואיטליה.

זכה בפרס הראשון בתחרות "בלוודר" בווינה (2002), ובקרן EAJC פריס (2005).

נמנה על סגל האקדמיה למוסיקה ומחול בירושלים, בה הוא מרצה בקורסים שונים.

מנצחן של תזמורת "חובבי המוסיקה" ושל "מקהלת אורטוריו ירושלים".

OMER ARIELI MUSICAL DIRECTOR, CONDUCTOR

Conducted the Dortmunder Philharmoniker, the "American Symphony Orchestra", the Orchestra Maderna and most Israeli orchestras.

Worked as coach and conductor in many theatres and festivals in Austria, Germany and Italy.

The winner of first prize in international competitions ("Belvedere" – Vienna, EAJC – Paris).

Lecturer at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, where he teaches various courses.

Conductor of the "Jerusalem Amateur Orchestra" and the "Jerusalem Oratorio Choir".



Eliad Zagman

MIRIAM CAMERINI STAGE DIRECTOR

Miriam Camerini is a theatre director, Jewish scholar, writer, singer, and actress.

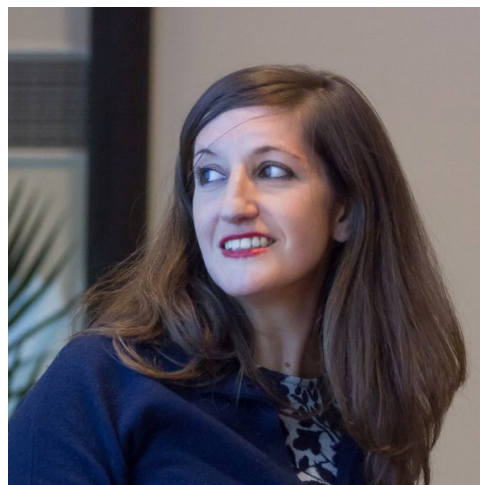
She is the founder and artistic director of "Benhashmashot" – Jewish Theatre in Milan, which tours all over the world.

Among her shows are "Golem," "Caffe Odessa," "Chouchani," "Di Megile fun Vaymar," "Il Mare in valigia" (by Else Lasker-Schüler), "Miriam and the others," "Messiah," and "Revolution."

Her opera work as a director includes "L'Incoronazione di Poppea" at Teatro La Fenice in Venice in 2013, "Le Nozze di Figaro" (2014), and "The Magic Flute" (2015) at Sarmato Valtidone Festival.

She staged shows on S. An-sky's anthropological expedition at Mantova-Festivaletteratura in Italy 2022 and at "Fun dor tsu dor" Festival in Ligoure, France, 2023.

Miriam holds a BA in Linguistics and Literature from the University of Milan and is presently a rabbinical student at Beit Midrash Harel, one of the first orthodox institutions to ordain women rabbis. She published a book (Giuntina, Firenze 2019) about food and religions ("Ricette e Precetti"), translated into German.



Andreas Mayer

מרים קמריני במאית

מרים קמריני היא במאית, מחברת, זמרת, שחקנית, ועוסקת במדעי היהדות.

המנהלת האמנותית של "בין השמשות" – תיאטרון יהודי במילנו, שעמו ערכה סיורים בעולם. בין ההופעות: "הגולם", "קפה אודסה", "קוצ'אני", "המגילה מויימאר", "הים במזודה" (מאת אלזה לסקר-שילר), "מרים והאחרות", "משיח", "מהפכה" ועוד.

עבודותיה כבמאית אופרה כוללות בין השאר את: "הכתרתה של פופאה" בתיאטרון לה פניצ'ה בונציה (2013), "נישואי פיגורו" (2014) ו"חליל הקסם" (2015) בפסטיבל סרמטו ולטידונה.

היא מביימת הופעות במשלחת האנתרופולוגית ס. אן-סקיי בפסטיבל הספרותי במנטובה, איטליה, ובפסטיבל "דלת אל דלת" בליגור, צרפת 2023.

מרים היא בעלת תואר ראשון בבלשנות וספרות מאוניברסיטת מילנו. היא תלמידה להכשרת רבנים בבית מדרש "הראל", אחד המוסדות האורתודוקסים הראשונים המסמיכים נשים לרבנות. פרסמה ספר על אוכל ודתות בשם "מתכונים וכללים" בהוצאת ג'ונטינה, פירנצה 2019, אשר תורגם גם לגרמנית.



חיים לזר

נועה שיאון מצו סופרן

בוגרת האקדמיה למוסיקה ולמחול בירושלים. זכתה במלגת הצטיינות להמשך לימודי תואר שני בשיתוף עם מיתר אופרה סטודיו של האופרה הישראלית. זכתה בתחרויות שירה רבות. מופיעה כסולנית באופרה הישראלית ובקונצרטים רבים ברחבי הארץ. הרפרטואר שלה כולל את באבא ב"המדיום" מאת מנוטי, רוזינה ב"הספר מסביליה" מאת רוסיני, סוזוקי ב"מאדאם בטרפליי" ו-פרוגולה ב"האדרת" מאת פוצ'יני, כרובינו ב"נישואי פיגרו" מאת מוצרט ועוד. משתתפת בהפקות רבות של האופרה הירושלמית וכן בהפקות של האופרה הישראלית.

NOA SION MEZZO SOPRANO

Noa graduated from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and was awarded a scholarship for excellence towards her MA degree from the JAMD, in collaboration with the Meitar Opera Studio and the Israel Opera. She has won numerous singing competitions, performed as a soloist with the Israel Opera, and appeared in solo roles in productions and concerts throughout Israel. Her repertoire includes *Baba* in Menotti's "The Medium", *Rosina* in Rossini's "Il barbiere di Siviglia", *Suzuki* in "Madama Butterfly" and *Frugola* in "Il tabarro" by Puccini, *Cherubino* in Mozart's "Le nozze di Figaro", and others. She has appeared in numerous productions of the Jerusalem Opera and the Israeli Opera.



מריה מל סופרן ליריקו-לגירו

נולדה באוקראינה. בעלת תואר שני מהאקדמיה למוסיקה ולמחול בירושלים בשיתוף עם מיתר אופרה סטודיו של האופרה הישראלית. זוכת תחרות שניידר, זוכה בגמר בתחרויות הבינלאומיות בליטא, פולין, אוקראינה וישראל. הייתה שחקנית ב"תיאטרון ערב" באוקראינה וממשיכה לשחק במספר תיאטראות. בין תפקידיה האופראיים: אדלה ב"העטלף" מאת שטראוס, סרפינה ב"המשרתת הגבירה" מאת פרגולזי, קלורינדה ב"סינדרלה" מאת רוסיני, פפגנה ב"חליל הקסם" ו-ברברינה ב"נישואי פיגארו" מאת מוצרט ועוד.

MARIA MEL SOPRANO LIRICO-LEGGERO

Born in Ukraine, Maria is a graduate of the M. Mus. program at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance in cooperation with the Israel Meitar Opera Studio. She is the winner of the Schneider Singing Competition and a finalist in international competitions in Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, and Israel. Maria began her acting career as an actress at the "Evening Theater" in Ukraine and continues to act in several other theaters. Among her operatic roles are: *Adele* in "The Bat" by Strauss, *Serpina* in "La Serva Padrona" by Pergolesi, *Clorinda* in "La Cenerentola" by Rossini, *Papagena* in "The Magic Flute" and *Barbarina* in "The Marriage of Figaro" by Mozart and others.



שלומית לאה קובלסקי סופרן

ילידת ישראל. בוגרת האקדמיה למוסיקה ומחול בירושלים. זכתה בתחרויות שירה שונות, ביניהן: במקום הראשון וחביבת קהל בתחרות השירה האומנותית ע"ש עדה ברודסקי, ובמקום הראשון בתחרות של התזמורת הסימפונית ע"ש מנדי רודן. שרה עם התזמורת הסימפונית ירושלים, וכן עם סימפונט רעננה באירועים שונים. הרפרטואר שלה כולל, בין השאר, את: *הרוזנת אלמה ויוה* ב"נישואי פיגרו" מאת מוצרט, *רוזלינדה* ב"העטלף" מאת י. שטראוס, *שרה* ב"אמהות" מאת ד. זבה, *האמא* ב"הנזל וגרטל" מאת הומפרדינק ועוד. חברה במיתר אופרה סטודיו של האופרה הישראלית. זוהי הופעתה הראשונה באופרה הישראלית.

SHLOMIT LEA KOVALSKY SOPRANO

A graduate of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, she has won various singing competitions, including first place and audience favorite in the Ada Brodsky Art Song Competition, and first place in the competition with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. She has performed with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra and the Ra'anana Symphonette in various events. Her repertoire includes, among others, the roles of *Elvira* and *Zerlina* in Mozart's "Don Giovanni", *Rosalinde* in J. Strauss's "Die Fledermaus," and the *Mother* in Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel." She is a member of the Meitar Opera Studio of the Israeli Opera. This is her debut with the Jerusalem Opera.



Yossi Zwickler

מרק שיימר טנור

נולד ברוסיה ועלה לארץ בשנת 1990. במשך שנים רבות היה חבר קבוע באופרה הישראלית, שבה הופיע כחבר מקהלה וגם כסולן. הופיע במספר הפקות של האופרה הישראלית. הופיע כסולן עם תזמורות רבות בארץ ביניהן התזמורת הפילהרמונית הישראלית ותזמורת חיפה, ועוד. הרפרטואר שלו כולל תפקידים כמו *הדוכס* ב"ריגולטו" מאת ורדי, *רודולפו* ב"לה בוהם" מאת פוצ'יני, *טוניו* ב"בת הגדוד" מאת דוניצטי ועוד.

MARC SHAIMER TENOR

Born in Russia and made Aliya in 1990. For many years, he was a regular member of the Israeli Opera, where he appeared as a chorus member and also as a soloist. He has appeared with the Jerusalem Opera in several productions. Marc has also performed many roles with various opera projects and orchestras, including the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, the Haifa Symphonic Orchestra, and others. His repertoire includes: *Il Duca* in Verdi's "Rigoletto", *Rodolfo* in Puccini's "La Bohème", *Tonio* in Donizetti's "La Fille du Regiment" and others.