

Next year, Luca Pisaroni returns to the Festival in our new production of Handel's *Rinaldo*. Many will remember his sensational performance as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* in 2010 and his sparkling house debut as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* in 2006. We asked Luca, was it good to be back at Glyndebourne this summer?

# FROM A SERVANT TO A KING

It was fantastic to be back. Singing Mozart in Glyndebourne is always special and I feel honored to be part of this long tradition. I was really looking forward to working with Vladimir Jurowski and I found our exploration of the piece intellectually inspiring. We also spent a lot of time working on the recitatives to make them as conversational as possible. It was a pleasure to collaborate with Jonathan Kent again, too. We did *Figaro* together in Santa Fe in 2008. He is someone who gives you direction and stylistic guidance while leaving you plenty of space to bring your own ideas and inspiration to the piece.

## Were there any particular challenges?

*Don Giovanni* is always a challenge. It's a complicated, dark piece with some very funny moments. Paul Brown conceived a phenomenal set, one of the best sets I have worked with. It was like one big "machina" – always in transformation, always moving. The second act set was steeply raked and some scenes were quite dark. You really had to watch your steps and make sure that your timing was perfect. Perhaps the most difficult scene in that regard was the second act finale – the final supper. I had a lot of things to do in a short time and had to make sure that *Don Giovanni* had the things he needed at the exact moment he needed them. I take pride in being the perfect servant!

## Do you enjoy the local area around Glyndebourne?

I enjoy the countryside and I have to say I was very surprised to find out how fantastic English pub food has become! Being an opera singer with a very full schedule I spend the vast majority of my time in large cities. I love the energy of places like New York but once in a while it's great to get away from all the noise, breathe some fresh air and take a walk surrounded by nature. We have two dogs, Lenny – a Golden Retriever – and Tristan – a blonde miniature Dachshund. They go everywhere I go and we always walk for about 2 hours a day. The Glyndebourne walks are especially beautiful. It's fun to travel with two dogs - they keep me sane, grounded and physically fit. After a long day of rehearsals you open the door and there are two very happy faces welcoming you – how can anyone be in a bad mood when you see that? If you spend 10-11 months a year on the road, you need to create a sense of home everywhere you go.

## Are you looking forward to *Rinaldo*?

Very much. Argante will be a role debut for me. He is the Saracen King of Jerusalem plotting with Armida against *Rinaldo*. He is a classic antihero. One of the fascinating aspects of being a stage performer is that you are able to "walk in someone else's shoes" for a couple of hours. There are two kinds of roles; the ones close to your own personality (in my case that could be Figaro or

Guglielmo) and the characters that are completely different than you. I love to play the crazy, evil and broken characters. In the summer of 2008 I had the chance to play both Figaro and Tiridate (in Händel's *Radamisto*) at Santa Fe Opera. While Figaro is fun, lively and in love, Tiridate is abusive, controlling and violent. It was great fun to simultaneously explore such different personalities. When asked if it's more fun to play the good or the bad guy, I would say definitely the bad guy - in life you never get away with being the bad guy! On stage you do and everyone loves it. So, I am really looking forward to being the "evil" King of Jerusalem at Glyndebourne next summer...

■ *Rinaldo* runs from 2 July to 22 August 2011

