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G. PUCCINI

Manon Lescaut

2024.9.5 19:30

2024.9.6 19:30

2024.9.7 14:30

2024.9.8 14:30

Weiwuying Opera House

Duration is 165 minutes with a 20-minute intermission.
Performed in Italian with both English and Mandarin surtitles.



National Kaohsiung
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEIWUYING

衛武營 國家藝術文化中心
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

Synopsis

Translated from the Article by CHE Yen-chiang

ACT I

A spacious square in Amiens, nearly dusk

In the evening, a crowd gathers in the square, where male students court young girls singing love songs. Edmondo, clever and lively, leads the serenade, inviting his classmate, Chevalier Des Grieux, to join. Passing through, Des Grieux remains unmoved, provoking laughter from the group. To quell their jests, Des Grieux sings a love song, declaring his pursuit of true love. Amidst the laughter, a carriage from Arras arrives in the square, carrying the soldier Lescaut and his young, beautiful sister, Manon, accompanied by the treasurer-general, Geronte di Ravoire. As Lescaut and Geronte request the innkeeper to handle their luggage and prepare dinner, Des Grieux falls in love instantly with Manon and approaches her to inquire about her name. Touched by Des Grieux's passionate words, Manon reveals her name and confides in him her reluctant obedience to her father's wishes to enter a convent. Des Grieux urges Manon to escape her fate and elope with him. Lescaut flatters Geronte, hoping to marry off his sister to this wealthy old man to secure a share of the fortune for himself and Manon. However, Geronte discreetly instructs the innkeeper to prepare a carriage, planning to take Manon to Paris. Edmondo learns of Geronte's scheme and immediately informs Des Grieux, successfully persuading Manon to elope and boarding the carriage prepared by Geronte. Only then does Geronte realize the situation, leaving Lescaut equally surprised. With the deed done, the students on the sidelines tease the two men. Geronte and Lescaut believe that Manon, accompanying a penniless student, cannot sustain a long-term relationship; they suspect they are headed for Paris. They decide to follow and retrieve Manon.

ACT II

The elegant living room in Geronte's house in Paris

Manon chooses to leave the poor student and become the mistress of a wealthy gentleman, indulging in a luxurious lifestyle of extravagance. However, deep down, she still reminisces about the brief but immensely joyful time spent in poverty. She confides her feelings to her brother and attempts to find out about Des Grieux's whereabouts, only to realize that he is attempting to win her back by winning money from gambling. A musician performs Geronte's original song for Manon while she is in the middle of a dancing lesson under the dancing master. Manon responds indifferently to Geronte's sweet words, then dismisses everyone, claiming that she is not done dressing up. Seizing the opportunity, Manon's astute brother brings Des Grieux into the living room through a secret passage to let the two meet. Des Grieux, though still in love with Manon, resents her previous betrayal. Manon kneels and begs for forgiveness. Her sincerity and charm eventually melt Des Grieux's heart. At that moment, Geronte returns to the room and sees them together, calling Manon a promiscuous woman. Manon turns and holds up a mirror for Geronte to take a look at himself. Enraged, Geronte curses and leaves. Manon expresses her desire to stay with Des Grieux, but she also feels reluctant to leave behind the luxurious lifestyle. Suddenly, Lescaut returns, urging them to flee immediately as Geronte is bringing in the guards and sergeants to arrest them. Manon delays their escape to take more jewelry, resulting in their arrest by the police on charges of theft and prostitution. Des Grieux attempts to draw his sword to save Manon, but her brother stops him, reasoning that only if he remains free can Manon be free.

ACT III

In the square near Le Havre, an anchored ship by the harbor. Just before dawn.

Following their unsuccessful attempts to secure Manon's release, Des Grieux and Lescaut are unable to prevent her from being sent aboard a prisoner ship, along with other prostitutes, destined for penal servitude in the colonies. Lescaut bribes a guard to let Des Grieux meet with Manon. Through the iron bars, Des Grieux assures Manon that he will never leave her and has devised an escape plan. A lamplighter extinguishes the beacon of the lighthouse while humming a cynical song about the world. Just as Manon is about to follow the plan, a gunshot shatters the quiet dawn, prompting Lescaut to rush to Des Grieux. He informs him of the failed deal and urges him to leave the scene. The sergeant and the captain lead a large contingent of troops to surround all the prisoners and begin calling the roll. As they do so, the bystanders whisper among themselves, making harsh comments on the female prisoners while appreciating Manon's beauty and Des Grieux's genuine love. Manon softly bids farewell to Des Grieux, but he, unable to bear the pain of parting, impulsively tries to reclaim her. Ultimately, alone and desperate, he kneels before the captain, begging to be allowed aboard as a sailor so he can follow the woman he loves.

ACT IV

A vast plain on the borders of New Orleans in America

In America, after Des Grieux severely wounds the Frenchman who coveted Manon's beauty in a duel, they are forced to flee New Orleans together. After a long journey, they become exhausted and thirsty, wandering across endless plains. Manon, weakened by fever, implores Des Grieux to seek help. As night falls, Manon is left alone in the dark wilderness, reminiscing silently in fear. Unable to find water or signs of civilization, Des Grieux returns to Manon in despair. At this moment, Manon senses the approach of death. She clings tightly to Des Grieux, begs for his forgiveness for her past mistakes, then shares with him one final kiss. After the kiss, Manon dies, leaving Des Grieux in profound grief, causing him to faint beside her.

About the Artists



Conductor: CHIEN Wen-pin

CHIEN Wen-pin, General and Artistic Director of National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying), was born in 1967, graduated from National Taiwan Academy of Arts and was awarded with a Master's degree at National University for Music and Performing Arts Vienna. CHIEN joined Deutsche Oper am Rhein(Dusseldorf/Duisburg, Germany) in 1996 and had served as "Kapellmeister" for 22 years. 1998-2004 he was Resident Conductor of Pacific Music Festival (Sapporo, Japan); 2001-2007 he was Music Director of National Symphony Orchestra (Taiwan Philharmonic); 2014-2016 CHIEN was Artistic Advisor of National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra. In September 2018, he became the first General and Artistic Director of National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying). In 2014, CHIEN was winner of the "National Award for Arts."



Stage Director: Pier Francesco MAESTRINI

Born in Florence, Pier Francesco MAESTRINI started his career in 1993 with ROSSINI's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Tokyo Bunkamura Orchard Hall. Since then, he has directed over 150 opera productions worldwide; his works focus on the stage interaction between the live action and virtual sets or animation. In that direction stands out his production of RESPIGHI's *La Campana Sommersa* for Teatro Lirico di Cagliari (2016), revived in Lincoln Center Hall and also available on DVD. Similar paths but different approaches can be seen in his productions mixing cartoon and live performance by the singers; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the first version of which with Companhia de Ópera Brasileira (2010), having toured the entire Brazil with over 100 performances, is still being revived on stages all over the world; *Il Viaggio a Reims* (2017) produced by Theater Kiel and Theater Lübeck, continued by the cooperation of *The Jungle Book*, for which MAESTRINI wrote the libretto with cartoon characters matched by puppets animated by singers. Active among several universities, where performances followed his teaching, such as *Orphée aux Enfers* (2007) with Yale University (USA), *La Sonnambula* (2000/2001) with Showa University (Japan), and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (2020) with Shanghai University (China).

In 2018, MAESTRINI became the Artistic Director of Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro. In 2021, he staged a new production of *Madama Butterfly* for Slovene National Theatre Maribor and Opera Hong Kong. His latest productions include *La Fille du Regiment* for Theater Lübeck, *Le Villi* for Teatro Regio Torino, and *Tosca* for Slovene National Theatre of Maribor in 2023.



Assistant Director: Tim RIBIČ

Tim RIBIČ, opera singer (tenor) and assistant director of opera productions from Slovenia, graduated with honors at Graz University of Music and Performing Arts under the mentorship of Professor Ulf BÄSTLEIN. His singing opus comprises 20 solo parts in which he masterfully perfected the performance and singing in operas and operettas. He has performed in many renowned opera houses and concert halls in Slovenia, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Spain, Italy, and Japan.

Following a period of solo performances, RIBIČ immersed himself into the role of the assistant director at Slovene National Theatre Maribor. His creative work collaborations include working with opera directors Pier Francesco MAESTRINI, Arnaud BERNARD, Filippo TONNON, Krešimir DOLENČIČ, and others, in acclaimed productions of *Aida*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, *Troubadour*, *Nabucco*, *La Sonnambula*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *Glorious*, *Das Rheingold*, *Don Pasquale*, *Samson and Delilah*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Lady Macbeth*, and *La Traviata*, which give ample evidence of the rich and successful works in the field of opera direction. Tim RIBIČ's well-tuned collaborations with the aforementioned opera directors result in his own staging of their productions in opera houses and theaters around the world.



Set Designer: Nicolás BONI

Nicolás BONI holds a PhD in History of Art and a degree in Fine Arts from the National University of Rosario (Argentina). He also studied music at the same university.

He has a distinguished international career, having worked for prestigious opera houses in Europe, the United States, China and Latin America. He is the author of over sixty set designs including operas, ballets, zarzuelas and musicals, and has been awarded by specialized critics on several occasions.

His latest works include *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Rigoletto* and *Madama Butterfly* for Teatro Colon Buenos Aires; *Andrea Chénier* for the Teatro Comunale di Bologna and the Opera of Montecarlo; *La Rosa del Azafrán* and *La Verbena de la Paloma* for the theater of La Zarzuela in Madrid. He also worked for the Opera Ballet Vlaanderen (Belgium) in *RASA*, a ballet based on *La Bayadère*, and *Madama Butterfly* for Hong Kong Opera and Slovene National Theatre Maribor.



Costume Designer: Luca DALL'ALPI

Luca DALL'ALPI was born in Faenza, Italy, in 1965. He is proficient in all aspects of theatrical costumes, handling everything from sketching to tailoring and garment production. He collaborates with major European theaters to organize tours, leveraging his extensive experience in designing and creating stage costumes for operas, ballets, and musicals. Since 2020, DALL'ALPI has been teaching costume design at Teatro Regio di Parma Academy. He has participated in many remarkable productions, including the musical *My Fair Lady* (2015) and the operas *Aida* (2014), *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (2019), *Madama Butterfly* (2021), and *Rigoletto* (2023) at Slovene National Theatre Maribor, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Verona Philharmonic Theater (2015), *Don Carlo* at Oper Burg Gars, Austria (2015), *L'elisir d'amore* at Teatro Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (2016), *Tosca* at Grand Théâtre de Tours, France (2017), *Don Pasquale* at Teatro Regio di Parma (2020), and *Giselle* at Teatro Regio Torino (2024). Notable ballet works for which he has designed costumes include *Le Corsaire* at Slovene National Theatre Maribor (2016), *Giselle* at Slovak National Theatre (2017), and *Le Corsaire* at Croatian National Theatre Split (2020).



Assistant to Costume Designer: Suzana RENGEO

Suzana RENGEO was born in Slovenia and works at Slovene National Theatre Maribor as the head of the men's tailoring workshop and costume designer. She has already done several costume designs at Slovene National Theatre Maribor: the operas *Eugene Onegin* and *The Dresser*, drama *Gulliver's Travels*; costume design assistance for the opera *Carmen*, the ballet *Grk Zorba*, the opera *Manon Lescaut* in collaboration with Luca DALL'ALPI and many more.

Artistic and Production Team

Conductor | CHIEN Wen-pin

Stage Director | Pier Francesco MAESTRINI

Assistant Director | Tim RIBIČ

Set Designer | Nicolás BONI

Costume Designer | Luca DALL'ALPI

Lighting Designer | Pier Francesco MAESTRINI, Nicolás BONI, Sašo BEKAFIGO

Manon Lescaut | KENG Li (Sep. 5 & 7), LIN Ling-hui (Sep. 6 & 8)

Lescaut | CHEN Han-wei (Sep. 5 & 7), CHAO Fang-hao (Sep. 6 & 8)

Il Cavaliere Renato des Grieux | Angelos SAMARTZIS (Sep. 5 & 7),
CHOI Seung-jin (Sep. 6 & 8)

Geronte di Rivoir / Un Comandante di Marina | Taihwan PARK

Edmondo / Il Maestro di Ballo / Un Lampionaio | Claude LIN

L'oste / Sergente degli Arcieri | TSENG Wen-i

Un Musico | WANG Yu-hsin

Orchestra | Evergreen Symphony Orchestra

Chorus | Planetesimal Vocal Art Studio

Extras | LEE Dai-yun, CHOU Yi-hsuan, LIN Ting-chu, HU Zi-you, CHANG Yin-yin,
ZENG Zi-yin, HUANG Ya-chin, LIAO En-jia, PAN Ya-rou, HSIEH Yung-chun,
CHANG CHIEN Chia-ling, SHIH Yu-jen, LI Heng-yi, CHEN Yan-lin, CHAN Yu-min,
LIU Cheng-en, LIU Jun-de, CHENG Yu-chen, CHENG Yen-feng, YEN Kai-hsi

Assistant Conductor | CHANG Yin-fang

Chorus Master | LIANG Sheng-kai

Vocal Coach & Rehearsal Pianist | TSENG Ching-i, Vincent KAO

Producer | Jack KUO

Artistic Planning | Joanna WANG, Emily YEH, Jessica YANG, HSUEH Hsin-ying,
Rhett HSIEH

Artistic Planning Assistant | Daisy CHEN, TSAI Mi-syuan, Joyce CHEN

Production Manager | CHEN Mei-lin, LEE Hui-ling

Production Collaboration | Liyang Culture Limited Liability Company

Production Coordinator | Emma LIAO

Extras Casting & Manager | Double & Cross Theater Group

Stage Manager | Regin LEE

Assistant Stage Manager | Annie JHU

Assistant to Stage Manager | CHANG Chia-chen, WANG Hung

Assistant & Interpreter to Director | Hegel TSAI

Artist Receptionist & Interpreter | Nolwenn CHIU, May WONG, Yupi CHEN

Technical Director | Jože ŠNUDERL

Technical Coordination | TSENG Hung-wei

Head of Stage | ZENG Jia-sheng

Stage Crew | CHEN Ju-lun, HSIEH Ming-ting, LIN Hsin-hsuan, LU Chung,
CHANG Hung-ta, TING Yen-ming, HSIEH Chen-i, CHANG Wen-hsin
LEE Chen-wei, LIN Li-kuei, LEE Hung-chan, WANG Kuang-chung
CHANG Hsuan-chiao, CHEN Ying-tzu, TUAN Yu-ting, LEE Pei-hsuan

Scenic Painting Repair | RUAN Tzu-hua

Assistant to Scenic Painting Repair | CHEN Liang-ju

Assistant to Costume Designer | Suzana RENGEO

Wardrobe Supervisor | CHEAH Kian-thye

Assistant to Wardrobe Supervisor | HUANG Tzu-en

Wardrobe | CHIU Yi-hui, Fei CHEN, KUO Hsuan, LIN Man-ping, CHAO Tian-cheng
CHANG Chia-shan, WU Pei-hsuan, LI Lu, PAO I-yun, LIN Pei-chun
LIN Hsin-yi, HUANG Wen-ling, HU Wen-ning

Hair & Makeup Supervisor | YANG Yu-jen

Hair & Makeup | CHEN Yi-fan, SUN Hsiao-ting, TANG Yu-chen, WENG Chia-lin
TANG Juei-mao, NI Ting-yun, CHANG Yo-tzu, CHENG Yi-chin
ZHEN Wei-kai, WANG Yu-ling, CHEN Yu-wei, KUO I-chen
LU Ya-wen, LIN Yi-xuan, CHEN Hui-ling, LI Yu-han

Assistant Lighting Designer & Production Electrician | Faye HUANG

Lighting Programmer | Wayan CHEN

Lighting Crew | LEE I-fang, CHEN Tsung-jen, ZHANG Ya-han, Weini JING
YEH Hao-wei, HSIAO Feng-ming

Projection Operator | XU Hui-ting

Audio | Sounder Pro Audio Co., Ltd

Props | HUANG Shin-yuan, TSAI Si-han

Special Effects | Bruce Movie Special Effects CO., LTD

Surtitler | WANG Tzu-chein, HUANG Hsi-man

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Proofreader | Romy WU

Translator | Romy WU, HSIEH Leidi, Liitrans Translation

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