



## LA GIOCONDA

Amilcare Ponchielli

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Logos for this production: **Rising Alternative + Gran Teatre del Liceu + CNC + Jack Febus + Mezzo**

Libretto by Arrigo Boito

Opera in four acts

Sung in Italian

### LIVE April 10, 2019 at 8pm (Barcelona time)

From the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona

Approximately running time 3h55

### CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Guillermo García Calvo
Director	Pier Luigi Pizzi
Set and Costume Design	Pier Luigi Pizzi
Choreography	Gheorge Iancu
Lighting	Massimo Gasparon
Chorus Master	Conxita Garcia

Coproduction: Gran Teatre del Liceu, Teatro Real (Madrid) and Arena di Verona

### ARTISTIC TEAM

Gioconda	Saïoa Hernández
Laura Adorno	Dolora Zajick
Alvise Badoero	Ildebrando D'Arcangelo
La Cieca	María José Montiel
Enzo Grimaldi	Brian Jagde
Barnaba	Gabriele Viviani
Zuane/A voice	Carlos Daza
Isepo / A voice	Beñat Egiarte
Barnabotto/ A pilot / A singer	Marc Pujol
Guest Dancer	Alessandro Riga (CND)
Guest Dancer	Letizia Giuliani

Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of the Gran Teatre del Liceu

### PRESENTATION

In 17th-century Venice, Enzo Grimaldo has abandoned the unfortunate Gioconda – whose mother, La Cieca, is accused of witchcraft – and is now in love with Laura, the wife of Alvise. This emblematic work, from the period between Verdi's heyday and the dawn of Verismo, is the best known of Amilcare Ponchielli's operas. In addition to the famous "Dance of the Hours" and Gioconda's suicide aria, La Gioconda contains many other superbly lyrical examples of post-Romantic sensibility. The masterful orchestration and the vocal writing of roles such as Laura, La Cieca, Enzo Grimaldo and Barnaba, are other key facets. The distinguished cast will be headed by Irène Theorin, hailed as one of the best dramatic sopranos of our times, who has earned long ovations at the Liceu for her performances in Wagnerian roles. Now she appears in Barcelona once more to give us her long-awaited Gioconda.

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **ACT I**

We are introduced to the leading characters, the dispute between them and their conflicting feelings in the courtyard of the Doges' magnificent palace at carnival time. Barnaba, a cruel and influential spy for the Venetian Council of Ten, now dressed as a ballad singer, is in love with Gioconda, a Street singer, who does not return his feelings. Gioconda is herself in love with Enzo Grimaldo, a noble from Genoa who, though banned from Venice, is present in the city in the guise of a Dalmatian sailor. Barnaba carries out a series of stratagems in a bid to obtain Gioconda's favours. First he convinces a boatman that his defeat in the regatta of gondolas was caused by a spell cast by Cieca, Gioconda's blind mother. He easily arouses the evil instincts of the crowd, who call for the presumed witch be burnt. Cieca is defended first by her daughter and then by Enzo, who goes to fetch help. Finally Laura Adorno, who is convinced of Cieca's innocence, persuades her husband Alvise Badoero, the Inquisitor of the Republic, to spare the old woman. As a token of her gratitude, Cieca gives Laura a rosary which, she claims, will bring her good fortune. When Enzo returns to the square he recognizes Laura, with whom he was passionately in love in Genoa, from her voice, but conceals the fact. Laura, who has been forced to marry Alvise, also recognizes him. Barnaba becomes aware of the situation arising out of the ill-fated love affair between the two Genoese and hatches another plot. When left alone with Enzo, he tells him he knows everything and that Enzo is at his mercy. To destroy Gioconda's illusions about Enzo, he offers to bring Laura to his ship that same night so that they can flee from Venice. Enzo admits that his affair with Gioconda was superficial and he has never been able to forget Laura. He joyfully accepts the offer. Gioconda, who has also returned to the square, listens, in hiding, while Barnaba dictates to the public scribe an anonymous note to the Inquisitor revealing Enzo and Laura's planned elopement. He deposits it in the sinister post box known as the «lion's mouth», where the people of Venice can make anonymous accusations. The spy sings of the grandeur and misery of the Venetian government, masked revellers fill the square once more, and Gioconda, in the company of her mother, bemoans her fate.

### **ACT II**

Barnaba, now in fisherman's costume, arrives at Enzo's brig to assess the size of the crew, send the information to Alvise, and observe developments. Enzo, who is keeping watch, sings the well-known romance «Cielo! E mar!». Then Barnaba brings Laura to the ship and the lovers sing of their happiness and love. They wait for nightfall, when they will make their escape. Laura remains alone and sings to the Madonna, begging her protection. Gioconda arrives and there is a violent clash between the two rivals during which Gioconda, beside herself with rage, tries to stab Laura. Then it occurs to her that handing her over to her husband, who is on his way, would be even crueller than killing her. But Laura shows her the rosary Cieca gave her and Gioconda, feeling incapable of causing the downfall of the woman who saved her mother, helps her to flee in her boat. Gioconda now confronts Enzo. She tries in vain to win back his love, claiming that Laura has left because she no longer loves him, and offers him a new life, but Enzo, overcome by hatred, rejects her. She warns him that Alvise has been tipped off by Barnaba and the ships sent to destroy him are about to arrive. Enzo sets fire to his brig and leaps into the water while the sailors flee.

### **ACT III**

Alvise has organized a great feast at his palace, the «Ca d'Oro». In a side room, however, before the guests arrive, he vindictively accuses his wife of disloyalty. He gives her a poison that will cause instant death and orders her to take it. But Gioconda has slipped into the palace unseen and, motivated by love

for Enzo and gratitude to Laura for saving Oieca, she persuades Laura, after Alvisè has left, to drink the powerful sleeping draught she has brought instead of the poison. The highlight of the feast, which is attended by many noble guests, is the performance of the famous masked ballet, the «Dance of the Hours», in the great hall. After the ballet, Barnaba arrives with Cieca and again accuses her of witchcraft. The old woman says she was merely praying for someone who is dying. Barnaba tells Enzo, who is among the guests but in disguise, that the dying person is Laura. Enzo, in despair, reveals his identity and defies Alvisè. Gioconda decides to strike a deal with Barnaba: she will be his if he helps Enzo to flee from Venice. Then Alvisè, in a dramatic gesture which horrifies all those present, opens the room where Laura is lying, apparently dead. Enzo rushes at Alvisè intending to take revenge but is taken away by the guards. Barnaba seizes Cieca.

#### **ACT IV**

Gioconda, who has hidden the still unconscious Laura in a half-ruined palace on La Giudeoaa, laments her mother's disappearance. So deep is her despair that she contemplates taking her own life -the famous aria «Suicidio»- but she feels responsible for Laura and Enzo's fate. Enzo, who has been released by Barnaba, comes in. He is convinced Laura is dead and wants to die too. When Gioconda tries to make him realize that she has saved his life and restored his freedom, he responds with hatred and resentment and even threatens her with his dagger. Then Laura appears, having awoken from her deep slumber. Gioconda and her companions help the lovers to escape. They acknowledge her generosity and bless her. Barnaba arrives to claim his reward. Gioconda agrees to surrender to him but asks for a few moments to adorn herself. She seizes the opportunity to grab the dagger and plunge it into her heart. Barnaba, humiliated and furious, announces that he murdered Cieca the evening before, but Gioconda can no longer hear him for she too is dead.