

LO SPEZIALE



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**Dramma giocoso/opera buffa in three acts by
Franz Joseph Haydn, libretto by Carlo Goldoni.
First performed in 1768.**



Musical director: Jan Willem de Vriend

Stage Director: Eva Buchmann

Set design: Eva Buchmann

Executive set designer: Pieter Veenhof/Atelier "man met de hamer"

Costumes: Jorine van Beek

Dramaturgy: Ben Hurkmans

Light design: Marc Heinz

Producer: Jeannette Elsenburg

Sempronio, an old apothecary bass

Grilletta, Sempronio's ward soprano

Mengone, Sempronio's apprentice tenor

Volpino, a young rich dandy mezzo-soprano

Orchestra 23 musicians

SYNOPSIS



A typical piazza in Venice, on it a pharmacy. Like all tutors the old apothecary Sempronio has set his mind to marrying his young and attractive pupil Grilletta. But she is courted as well by two other suitors: the poor Mengone, who only works for the apothecary to be near her, and the rich and self-conscious dandy Volpino.

In accordance with the genre there is a fine lieto, a happy ending. Mengone gets Grilletta. Or to put it more accurately: Grilletta gets the man she wants, Mengone.

This little treasure, one of Haydn's 16 Italian opera's, is rarely performed.

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ARTISTIC CONCEPT

In this production by Eva Buchmann, director, and Jan Willem de Vriend, musical director, we leave Venice. The action takes place 'on the road'. The pharmacy literally has become ambulant. It is built-in into a Fiat 500. The cinque cento - the world famous fifties icon of the Italian car industry. This triumphant car is a perfect vehicle in the hands of the director to enhance the comic effect of the eternal fight of several men over one woman.

Jan Willem de Vriend is a great expert in 18th century music and opera performance practice. Since Haydn's work is not complete, he has revised it by adding a selection of surprising music from Haydn and his time.

In their longstanding collaboration Buchmann and De Vriend have developed an opera style that enthusiastically involves the audience. They know how to create an intelligent interaction between the singers/performers and the musicians, which in turn invites the audience to freely react to or 'interact' with the performance.

That is why they not only work in the traditional venues with a proscenium stage, but also site specific, in a hotel or church or in the open, all fresco. Wherever they perform their show they adapt the set in such a way that they realise

their goal: the audience close to the singers/performers and musicians, sharing the same space, in which one freely switches from the most intense concentration to sharing a drink, as the action unfolds.

This intimacy is essential in their work and it requires great performance qualities from the singers. Their closeness to the spectators does not allow anything but authenticity.

The informal atmosphere, thus created, most certainly resembles the 18th century performance practice more than the practice of most big opera houses today.

But there is a big difference as well: a spectator of today is not addressed well when the performers' histrionic capacity consists of stylistic gestures alone, as in the time of Esterhazy and Haydn. The audience has internalised Freud and all the psychological insights of last century. Spectators today can only experience authenticity in a stage character when it has the complexity, the inner contradictions, that they experience in themselves and in others every day.

Eva Buchmann has the way with singers to become authentic in this more complex approach. At the same time she never loses her sense of entertainment.

[read more?]



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THE PRESS ABOUT LO SPEZIALE

EL PUNT AVUI/IMMA MERINO

Lo speciale is the ultimate proof that to stage an opera one needs almost nothing if done with creativity, intelligence and talent.

ZÜRCHER TAGESANZEIGER/ SUSANNE KÜBLER

'The conductor Jan Willem de Vriend and the Tonhalle Orchester already in the overture show how sparkling and colourful this music is. And then director Eva Buchmann has a white Fiat 500 drive onto the stage. In what follows the little car proves to be a surprise packet. Whatever one needs in the performance, which is as original as it is charitable, one will find in that packet. For example a complete pharmacy, all necessary herbs, a washing machine and a functioning shower. And not least important: clothes on a line, behind which one can eavesdrop and lovers can kiss.'

NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG/ THOMAS SCHACHER

Fortune from the Netherlands During the action this car proves to be a sensational multipurpose-object: the roof can be transformed into a shop counter, in the back there is a built-in washing machine, on a broomstick you can attach a shower - and it works. And the white curtains hide the tête- a-tête of the loving couple from the spectator's eyes.

The Dutch conductor, a specialist in 17th and 18th century music, in the course of the evening turns out to be a fortunate choice for the performance. Of course the Tonhalle Orchester is not an Old Music Ensemble, but what this conductor inspires the musicians to do in terms of variation, colourfulness and dramatic tension, is remarkable. The problem of the partly lost music

of the third act, De Vriend solves by inserting other fitting music of Haydn.

The Swiss director Eva Buchmann succeeds with the main prop, the Fiat 500, at the same time to master the restricted playing area - on the left the action takes place, the orchestra is on the right - and merge the lines of action. Having studied cello as well as psychology and having worked as a music therapist, she clearly approaches the work from that angle.

KÖLNISCHE RUNDSCHAU/ JOHANNES ZINK

Imaginative direction with Haydn's Lo Speciale The orchestra played Haydn's music at the very edge of their chairs, juicy and powerful. Showing what lovely aria's there are to be found in this sour sweet and solid work. Every second of it one sensed that the musicians and their



conductor had an eagerness and lust in performing it.

For the rich costumer Volpino (m) Haydn still cast a soprano, in accordance with the Baroque. Virpi Raisanen knows her way with the role and in one aria also performs as a violinist. The object of all the longing and lust, Grilletta, was enacted by the soprano Marina Zyatkova. All four singers had to bend over backwards, but they always tastefully kept in tune. Micinski with grandiose wit mimically steals the show, but also vocally attracts the attention in the overall fine quartet of singers.

PLACE DE L' OPERA/ MARTIN TOET

At a semi scenic opera one does not expect a car on the stage, still there was a vintage Fiat 500 at the centre of the performance of Lo Speciale. A choice well thought of, as modest and touching as the work itself which with

disarming simplicity came to the fore. Buchmann used the little car with the same resourcefulness as Haydn put into this pretence less trifle.

Zyatkova and Sambrano turned out to be irresistible, vocally and in natural acting. Volpino is a 'hosen rolle' and in this case the 'hose' was a dowdy short pants with matching hat and golf bag. Well done by Virpi Raisanen who with her slender soprano gave a masculine touch to the character from her chest register. This certainly was in place with Haydn's parody of a classical revenge aria, where De Vriend had his strings growl to the fullest. With about twenty musicians

the formation was reasonably substantial, but that did not hinder the playfulness and transparency at all. At the same time these enchanting moments showed us what we miss by the continuous neglect of Haydn's theatre work. May young

conductors take up the gauntlet of Harnoncourt and De Vriend!

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PLAYING

LIST

2017/2018

Dutch Tour

Kölner Philharmonie

Luxemburg

with Kölner Kammerorchester

Zürcher Tonhalle, with Zürcher

Tonhalle Orchester on the celebration

of 150-year anniversary

Barcelona

with Orchester Nacional dy Catalunya

2019/2020

5/6 December: Frankfurt, Orchester

des Hessischen Rundfunks



LO SPECIALE



PRODUCT INFO

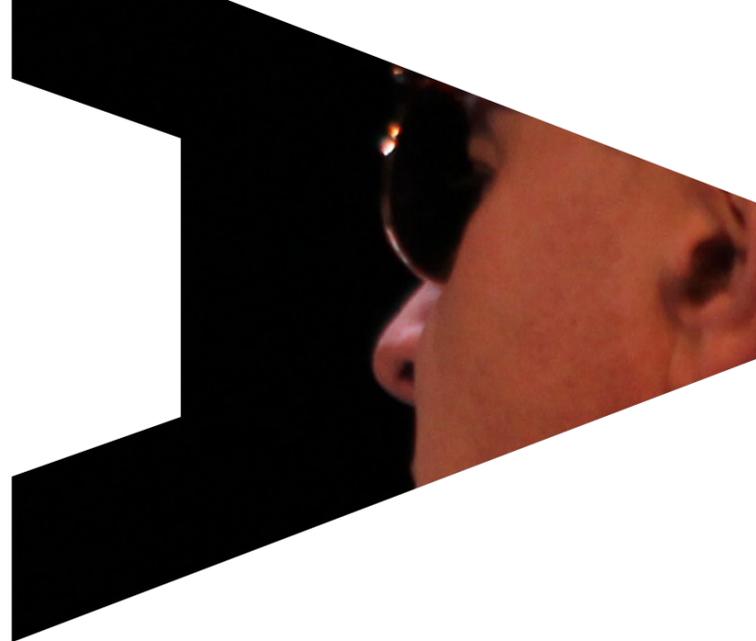
Punto Arte brings in the
conductor,
director,
stage manager,
1 technician,
1 light designer,
light design,
transport.

Specifications concerning
FIAT 500 LO SPEZIALE
Netto weight: 500kg
Additional weight fluids (lemonade,
showering water): max 30kg
Width: 1.323 CM
Length: 2.970 CM
Height: 1.525 CM

Electrics:
Car battery 12volt max 50ah
Plug and play 220v max 16 ampere

Not accounted for:
Additional weight props and
additional weight persons





MORE INFO?

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READ MORE

The first to rediscover Lo Speciale for our time was Gustav Mahler, as musical director at the opera of Vienna in 1899. Carlo Goldoni originally wrote Lo Speciale for two now completely forgotten composers as a *dramma giocoso* to be performed during the Venetian Carnival in 1755.

Haydn wrote his music on a strongly abbreviated version of this original, but fortunately all the elements typical of the opera buffa were saved. The libretto has all the freshness of Goldoni, his fine drawing of the four (out of seven) remaining characters, his lively dialogues, his great and unmistakable sense of the comic. And there are the dress up parties as notaries and as Turks, and the *Schadenfreude* about Sempronio's manic reaction to travelling.

The music by Haydn counterpoints every part of the action; it changes time and again in rhythm, tempo and dynamics, and it is very demanding for the singers, who must be very good performers as well, to deliver the quality of this little treasure to the fullest.



The idea for the travelling pharmacy stems, as the audience may guess, from Grilletta. But Mengone has executed it very cleverly for reasons of his own, because he is clearly more interested in medicines, perfumes and the lot. Sempronio has gone along with and invested in Grilletta's idea, not out

of genuine interest, but simply because he can't refuse her anything. He would rather have stayed afoot on his piazza in Venice to read his daily paper more comfortably.

The *cinque cento*, tiny as it is, under Mengone's able hands has turned into a miracle on wheels. Amongst many other utilities, he has managed to create a bathtub in it and a herb garden - he certainly knows how to please his secret fiancée Grilletta!

It gradually becomes clear that the *cinque cento* is no less than a 5th character in the performance, a creation by Grilletta, helping her to get what she wants: a life on her own without her tutor and with Mengone.

No wonder that Volpino, the suitor/dandy, angry at finding out he has definitely lost this fight, attacks the innocent little car, wanting to destroy it.

Grilletta is a strong woman indeed. She pulls the strings. And off she goes with Mengone, in their home and business on wheels.

The prince of Esterhazy would be much entertained.