

## Maestro Myung-Whun Chung talks about Verdi's Otello



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**O**tello, I have a long history nearly 40 years. It is quite astonishing that his last two operas are so different. One is so full of passion and physical strength, which was astonishing because **Verdi** wrote this in his 70s. In its own way, it is also a sort of a mountain top of opera music, and of course what links them in a way is the **Shakespeare** and Verdi's love for Shakespeare.

**I**n that way, Verdi always needed to be inspired by the libretto and the text, and it is example how in an opera so many elements must come together to produce something special. And I think combination of Shakespeare and Verdi is pretty special.

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The 988th Orchard Hall Subscription Concert

**Sun. July 23, 2023, 15:00 at Bunkamura Orchard Hall**

The 156th Tokyo Opera City Subscription Concert

**Thu. July 27, 2023, 19:00 at Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall**

The 989th Suntory Subscription Concert

**Mon. July 31, 2023, 19:00 at Suntory Hall**

## Myung-Whun Chung, conductor

Gregory Kunde, Otello (tenor)

Atsuko Kobayashi, Desdemona (soprano)

Dalibor Jeniš, Iago (baritone)

Hajime Aizawa, Lodovico (bass)

Francesco Marsiglia, Cassio (tenor)

Ikuko Nakajima, Emilia (mezzo-soprano)

Toshiaki Murakami, Roderigo (tenor)

Takashi Aoyama, Montano (baritone)

Junbo Tang, A Herald (bass)

New National Theatre Chorus (Kyohei Tomihira, chorusmaster)

Kaoru Kondo, concertmaster

Jun Kabakura (Art Creation), stage manager

Mai Isaka / Aino Oda / Naaya Miura, assistant stage managers

Naoto Inaba (A.S.G.), lighting

Hisashi Aoki (Figaro sound works), sound

Art Creation / Tokyo Isho, properties & costume

Asako Honya, surtitles

Ayaka Fujiwara (Zimaku Plus), surtitles operation

Hiroka Yamashita, cover cast

Tetsuya Kawahara, assistant conductor

Yasuko Furuse / Marin Yamanaka, musical preparation

# Verdi: Opera *Otello* (Ricordi version)

Concert-Style Opera in four acts with Japanese surtitles

Libretto by Arrigo Boïto

from William Shakespeare's *Othello*

**Act I** Outside the castle (ca. 35 min)

**Act II** A room on the castle's ground floor (ca. 40 min)

— intermission (ca. 15 min) —

**Act III** The great hall of the castle (ca. 40 min)

**Act IV** Desdemona's bed-chamber (ca. 35 min)

Performance time: ca. 2 hours and 50 minutes (including intermission)

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Presented by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra  
Subsidized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan |  
Japan Arts Council (31, July),  
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Affinis Arts Foundation



Supported by the Verdi Society of Japan, the Shakespeare Society of Japan  
In Association with **Bunkamura** (23, July)

- ♪ All seats are reserved. Late admittance will be refused during the live performance. If you enter or reenter just before the concert or between movements, we may escort you to a seat different from the one to which you were originally assigned.
- ♪ Exiting during the performance will be tolerated. If you do not feel well, please exit or enter as you need. However, please mind the other listeners so that they will be minimally disturbed.
- ♪ Please refrain from using your cellphone or other electronic devices during performance.
- ♪ Please cherish the "afterglow" at the end of each piece for a moment before your applause.

## Artists Profile



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### Myung-Whun Chung, conductor

Honorary Music Director of  
the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra

Born in Seoul, Myung-Whun Chung won the silver medal at the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in 1974. After completing conducting studies at the Juilliard School, he served as assistant and subsequently associate conductor to Carlo Maria Giulini at the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Since his appointment as Music Director of the Paris Opera (L'Opéra Bastille) in 1989, Maestro Chung has conducted many prominent orchestras, including the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, and la Filarmonica della Scala. He served as the Music Director of l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France (2000- 2015), the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra (2006-2015) and the Asia Philharmonic Orchestra, which he founded in 1997. Since 2012, he has been Principal Guest Conductor of the Staatskapelle Dresden. In June 2022, he received the title of Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy for his contributions to Italian cultural development over the years. In March 2023, he became the first-ever Conductor Emeritus of the Filarmonica della Scala in Milan.

For the TPO, Maestro Chung was Special Artistic Advisor (2001- 2010), its Honorary Conductor Laureate (2010-2016). Starting September 2016, he was appointed as Honorary Music Director. He is active in education for the younger generations and in promotion of peace especially in Asia through a variety of musical activities and serving as UNICEF Ambassador.



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## Gregory Kunde, *Otello* (tenor)

Regarded as one of the most accomplished singers on the international opera stage today, the American tenor Gregory Kunde appears regularly at the most prestigious opera houses around the world, working with conductors and orchestras of the highest caliber. Kunde's achievements have been recognized with a number of awards, including 'Male Singer of the Year' at the 2016 International Opera Awards. Recent highlights include the title role *Otello* at the Wiener Staatsoper, the Bayerische Staatsoper, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Opéra National de Paris and Opéra de Monte Carlo, *Turandot* Calaf for Hamburg State Opera, the Gran Teatre del Liceu, *Samson et Dalila* Samson at the Metropolitan Opera, and Manrico *Il Trovatore* for LA Opera. Acclaimed throughout his earlier career for his performances in French and Italian bel canto roles, Kunde has now established himself as a leading exponent of many of the Verdi roles and other such dramatic repertoire. Kunde earned the unique distinction of being the only tenor in recorded history to perform both Rossini *Otello* and Verdi *Otello* in the same season.

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## Atsuko Kobayashi, *Desdemona* (soprano)

Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts, at Tokyo University of the Arts. Completed the training program of Master Class Opera Singers at The Japan Opera Foundation. She moved to Italy as a trainee by the Japanese government, the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Since her debut at The Fujiwara Opera in 2000 as Giannetta from *L'elisir d'amore*, she has made her title role debut in *Madama Butterfly*. She has received high praise for Anita in *La Navarraise* in 2018. She has played the title roles in *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca* at Opera Appreciation Class for high school students held in the New National Theatre. She has played Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, the title role in *Aida*. Also, she has sung for many concerts, such as Beethoven's Symphony No.9 & *Missa Solemnis*, Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*, Mahler's Symphony No.2 "Resurrection". It is fresh in our memory that she substituted the title role in the New National Theatre Opera *Tosca* in 2018 and received high praise. Member of The Fujiwara Opera.



## Dalibor Jenis, Iago (baritone)

A compelling performer, acclaimed for his “deep and rich voice” (Los Angeles Times), Slovak baritone Dalibor Jenis has sung the leading roles in operas by Bellini, Rossini, Mozart and Verdi in some among the world’s major theaters including Teatro alla Scala, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in London, Opéra National de Paris, Wiener Staatsoper, Theater an der Wien, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Edinburgh International Festival, Los Angeles Opera, New National Theatre Tokyo, Opera Australia in Sydney, Arena di Verona, Opera di Roma, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in Florence, Teatro Regio di Torino, Teatro Massimo di Palermo.

He has worked with such conductors as James Conlon, Myung-Whun Chung, Asher Fisch, Daniele Gatti, Gianandrea Noseda, Renato Palumbo, Alberto Zedda and others.



## Hajime Aizawa, Lodovico (bass)

Hajime Aizawa graduated from the National Music University and completed the 23rd class of the Opera Singer Training Division of the Japan Opera Foundation. He completed the Kontaktstudium Department at the State University of Music and Performing Arts Stuttgart. Aizawa received the Special Jury Prize at the International Vocal Competition in Ercolano, Italy, in 2009. In 2014 he was awarded the Europe Summer Fest Prize (highest prize) at the Belgium Verviers International Vocal Competition. Aizawa placed 3rd in the 2nd Margherita Guglielmi Vocal Competition. He studied under Naka Moriya, Kazuhiro Tsunoda, S. Schmidt, F. Alaisa, and Shigeo Ishino. From 2008 to 2013, he worked as a resident vocalist for the Biwako Hall Vocal Ensemble, appearing in roles including Mandarin in the opera *Turandot*, produced/conducted by Ryusuke Numajiri. With the Fujiwara Opera Company, Aizawa made his debut as a messenger in *La Traviata* and subsequently appeared in productions such as *Le nozze di Figaro* as Bartolo, *La Bohème* as Benoit, *Madama Butterfly* as Yamadori, and *Il Trovatore* as Ferrando. He is a member of the Fujiwara Opera Company.



## Francesco Marsiglia, Cassio (tenor)

Born in Naples, Francesco Marsiglia graduated with honor at the Conservatory in Salerno, after that he specialized in Modena with Magiera, Desderi, Bruson, Kabaivanska, Pavarotti, and Freni. As a winner of the Teatro Belli in Spoleto Lyric International Contests, he began a brilliant career that brought him in important theatres all around the world. He has worked with important conductors such as: Myung-Whun Chung; Daniele Callegari; Nicola Luisotti; Riccardo Muti; Gianandrea Nosedà; Daniele Rustioni. Among his recent and future engagements: *I due Foscari* (Barbaigo) at the Verdi Festival in Parma; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Count of Almaviva) at the Carlo Felice Theater in Genoa; *Falstaff* (Fenton) at the Petruzzelli Theater in Bari; *I vespri siciliani* (Manfredo) at Teatro Comunale di Bologna.

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## Ikuko Nakajima, Emilia (mezzo-soprano)

Ikuko Nakajima graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts undergraduate and graduate school, and then went to Italy to further her studies. She has won numerous prizes, including the 2nd prize at the Rocca delle Macie International Voice Competition, and the 3rd prize at the Gian Battista Viotti International Music Competition (both in Italy). Nakajima has performed many opera roles to great acclaim, including Azucena in *Il Trovatore* and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* for the Nikikai Opera, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for NISSAY Opera. Recently, she distinguished herself singing Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana* at New National Theater Tokyo (NNTT), as well as Quickly in *Falstaff* for Nikikai Opera, Biwako Hall and the Tokyo Phil's subscription concerts. In March 2023, Nakajima participated in Maestro Muti's "Italian Opera Academy in Tokyo" at the Tokyo Spring Festival, where she received rave reviews for her expressive performance in Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera* and in May for her performance as Nerys in *Medea* at the NISSAY Theater. In concerts, she has been highly acclaimed as a leading soloist for Beethoven's 9th, Mozart and Verdi's Requiems, and Mahler's 3rd. She is a member of Nikikai.



## Toshiaki Murakami, Roderigo (tenor)

Toshiaki Murakami graduated from Kunitachi College of Music, and completed the 17th class of the Opera Singer Training Division of the Japan Opera Foundation. He studied in Bologna, Italy, for two years from 2001 as an overseas trainee for the Program of Overseas Study for Upcoming Artists awarded by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and returned to Italy in 2004 as a scholarship student of the Gotoh Memorial Foundation, returning to Japan in 2007. Murakami won the top prizes for 15 other competitions including the Grand Prix at the 9th Madame Butterfly International Competition. Also in Japan, he has received numerous awards, including the First Prize at the 40th Italy-Japan Vocal Music Concorso and the Siena Grand Prize at the 35th Italian Vocal Music Concorso. While studying abroad, Murakami made his Italian debut in *Rigoletto* at the Teatro Mancinelli in Orvieto as Duke of Mantova, followed by many performances. In 2010, at the invitation of the Spoleto Festival, he starred in the world premiere of Henze's *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace With the Sea*, which was broadcast by RAI, the Italian national broadcasting company, to great acclaim. He received the 15th Gotoh Memorial Culture Award for Newcomers to Opera. Murakami is a member of Fujiwara Opera Company.



## Takashi Aoyama, Montano (baritone)

Aoyama graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts graduate school, and completed the Nikikai Opera studio and New National Theater Opera Studio. He also studied in Italy. He has appeared as Scarpia in *Tosca* and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* in New National Theatre Tokyo's performances for students, and as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Nissay Theatre, among others. In addition to the title roles in *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Falstaff* at Biwako Hall, he also succeeded in performing the roles of Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and the Wanderer in *Siegfried* at the Biwako Ring Cycle. Aoyama also sang the role of Hans Sachs of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Biwako Hall and participated in the "Italian Opera Academy in Tokyo" of Maestro Muti at the Tokyo Spring Festival, where he received high acclaim for his performance of Renato in *Un ballo in maschera*. He has also appeared in concerts including Beethoven's 9th and Brahms' German Requiem. He is highly valued by many conductors. He won the first prize at the Carlos Gomez International Competition in Italy and received the 19th Gotoh Memorial Culture Award for Newcomers to Opera. A member of Nikikai.





## Junbo Tang, A Herald (bass)

Born in Nanking, China. Studied lyric bass at Nanking University of Arts. Studied at Indiana University Music Department from 1992-1994. While studying in the school has played Figaro in the *Marriage of Figaro*. From 1995-2000, as chorus member at the Metropolitan Opera. In 2000 selected as a finals for the 12th Japan Vocal Competition. At the

New National Theater has appeared in *Il Trovatore*, *Otello*, and *La Forza Del Destino*. Now is a member of New National Theater Chorus.

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## New National Theatre Chorus, Chorus (Kyohei Tomihira, chorusmaster)

New National Theatre, Tokyo, has opened in October 1997 as the only national theatre for the modern performing arts of Opera, Ballet, Contemporary Dance and Play. Meanwhile, New National Theatre Chorus has started its career and plays a central role in many Opera performances all through the seasons. Their ensemble ability and rich voices achieved acclaim from costarred singers, conductors, directors, stage staffs as well as domestic and foreign media.

# Program Notes

Text by Robert Markow

## Verdi: Opera *Otello*

*Otello*, Verdi's penultimate work for the stage, is an opera of superlatives. It is generally regarded as one of the most perfect operas ever composed, the greatest based on any of Shakespeare's tragedies, and, along with the same composer's *Falstaff*, the greatest built on Shakespeare. It is one of those few operas in which everything is in perfect balance: music and drama, voice and orchestra, set number and arioso or recitative. It has held the stage ever since its premiere at La Scala in Milan on February 5, 1887. Nine months later it was already being staged in Mexico, and the following year in New York. The libretto, by Arrigo Boïto, is worthy to stand on its own without music – a nearly unique case in nineteenth-century Italian opera.

In 1850, after having written more than a dozen operas, Verdi announced that he planned to write further operas to all of Shakespeare's major plays. It was of course an absurdly ambitious claim, and operaphiles know well that Verdi did not henceforth set a Shakespeare play until he wrote *Otello* and *Falstaff* (based on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *King Henry IV*) at the very end of his career. His only previous Shakespeare opera had been *Macbeth* in 1847. Nevertheless, this announcement serves to demonstrate the composer's lifelong love of the Bard of Avon. (He owned two complete sets of Shakespeare's works.) But it was in large part due to the difficulty of finding a librettist capable of turning Shakespeare's blank verse into singable Italian, and of successfully adapting Shakespeare's long, complex storylines into compact plots feasible for the operatic stage, that prevented him from setting more of Shakespeare's dramas. In collaboration with the librettist Antonio Somma, with whom Verdi later produced *Un Ballo in maschera*, he worked extensively on a *King Lear* opera, but in the end burned the effort as unworthy.

Following the huge success of *Aida*, in 1871, Verdi fully intended to retire from the operatic stage and live the rest of his life in comfort and ease. For fifteen years he wrote no new opera, though he did revise *Simon Boccanegra* and turned the French *Don Carlos* into the Italian *Don Carlo*. During this time he also penned the magnificent *Requiem*. But no new opera.

Enter Arrigo Boïto. Boïto (1842-1918) – composer, librettist, poet, critic – had entertained the idea of writing an *Otello* opera himself. As the composer of the highly successful *Mefistofele* (1868/1875) and as librettist for a Hamlet opera by Franco Faccio (*Amleto*, 1865), Boïto felt fully qualified to do so. Nevertheless, in collusion with the publisher Giulio Ricordi and Verdi's conductor-composer-friend Franco Faccio, he instead offered the opportunity to Verdi. For five years the composer stubbornly resisted, but finally agreed to write the opera after he was convinced Boïto could provide him with a proper libretto.

Naturally Boïto had to shorten the play. Shakespeare's *Othello* runs to about 3,500 lines; Verdi's *Otello* (Italian spelling) is under 800. He cut out the entire first act, omitted Cassio's lover Bianca as well as some other minor characters, and pared down the roles of Roderigo and Montano. Iago's wife Emilia is not killed, nor do we learn of the fate of Iago once his treachery is exposed. On the other hand, Boïto added the big choral scenes (beginning of Act I, end of Act III) and some text not in Shakespeare, including Iago's great Credo in Act II. Also in the opera, but not in Shakespeare, is the love scene that ends Act I. In fact, Boïto shifted the focus from Othello as noble statesman in Shakespeare to Otello as devoted but deceived lover in the opera.

Boïto had to rewrite many of Shakespeare's lines that would not have survived direct translation, yet in doing so he nevertheless managed to preserve, writes George Marek in *Opera as Theater*, "the essential characteristics of the three principal protagonists: Othello's immense capacity to love and loathe, Iago's fanatic drive, Desdemona's obtuse

unawareness. The cruelty of the conflict, the deep damnation of Othello's downfall, the relentlessness of the destruction, the simple nobility of the retribution – all these remain in the opera as they are in the play.”

Verdi's accomplishment in *Otello* marks a giant step in the development of opera as theater. Much as Wagner had done in Germany, Verdi did in Italy, namely, coalescing vocal music, orchestral music, dramatic credibility and character development into a continuous, unified whole. There are few, if any opportunities for an audience to clap before the end of an act. The music emerges directly from the drama, and characters are clearly drawn by the music Verdi writes for them.

The premiere of *Otello* generated a fury of anticipation such as Milan had rarely, if ever, seen. Here is how Blanche Roosevelt, an American singer who attended the event, described the scene: “[My] carriage had to be sent off long before we reached the door, as the horses could not make their way through the crowd. ... I managed to get in whole, and once there the sight was indescribable. La Scala has never before held such an audience, and although it was fully an hour before the time to commence, every seat was occupied.” In the orchestra that night was a young cellist named Arturo Toscanini, who would go on to conduct searing accounts of this opera. Also in the pit were two Barbirollis, father and grandfather of another great conductor, Sir John, who years later also led memorable performances of *Otello*.

Following that momentous first performance, Verdi was recalled to the stage twenty times. “The emotion was something indescribable, and many wept,” recounted Blanche Roosevelt. “At five in the morning I had not closed my eyes in sleep for the crowds still singing and shrieking ‘Viva Verdi! viva Verdi!’ Who shall say that this cry will not reecho all over the world?” How true her words!

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I Outside the castle

The scene is Cyprus, late fifteenth century. A violent storm is raging

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as citizens throng the port, praying that the ship bearing Otello, General of the Venetian army, will make it safely to shore. Otello's ship does land safely, and he steps ashore with news that the enemy fleet he had engaged in combat is now at the bottom of the sea. All rejoice. The storm abates, and conversation ensues between Otello's ensign Iago and Roderigo, a Venetian nobleman in love with Otello's wife Desdemona. Iago expresses his hatred of Otello, as he (Iago) has been passed over for a promotion that went to Cassio instead. Their conversation is interrupted by the Fire Chorus, as Cypriots describe the flashing, sparkling bonfire that lights up the night sky. Cassio joins the conversation. Iago craftily gets the crowd into a drinking mood, the purpose of which is to get Cassio so drunk that he loses control of himself and provokes Otello into demoting him from his new rank of captain. When the tumult subsides, it is time for the great love duet. The orchestration is pared down to chamber music proportions, images of storm and war are replaced by those of a starry night sky. The dialog between Otello and Desdemona embraces words not only of love, but of trust, contentment, sincerity, and tenderness. The "kiss" (*bacio*) motif floats serenely through the orchestra.

## **ACT II A room on the castle's ground floor**

Iago, posing as a friend, advises the disgraced Cassio to ask Desdemona to intercede on his behalf with Otello. Then comes Iago's famous Credo, a frightening portrayal of nihilism and evil incarnate. It is one of the most electrifying moments in all Verdi. Upon its conclusion Desdemona is seen walking through the nearby garden. Cassio approaches her and presents his case. With perfect timing for Iago's plot, Otello enters and Iago, ever so subtly, proceeds to sow the seeds of doubt in Otello's mind, suggesting that Desdemona might not be as faithful to him as he might think. Passing Cypriots sing a song of praise to Desdemona while Otello struggles with the awful notion that Iago just might be right about his wife. Desdemona chooses this absolutely wrong moment to plead Cassio's case with Otello, causing him to react violently. At the same time, Iago's wife Emilia retrieves the handkerchief Desdemona has just dropped, whereupon Iago forces it from her hand with the intention of planting it in Cassio's home as "proof" that Desdemona is having an affair with him. With the quartet

over, the ladies leave, and Otello remains on stage with Iago. Mad with doubt and suspicion, he fumes and rages over the apparent illusion of his happy marriage. When Iago tells Otello he saw Cassio with Desdemona's handkerchief (the first token of love between him and Desdemona), Otello breaks out in fury and cries for blood. The act ends with Otello and Iago singing the magnificent Vengeance Duet. Iago's poison has thoroughly rotted Otello's mind.

### **ACT III The great hall of the castle**

The first part of Act III is taken up with a long dialog between Otello and Desdemona. It starts calmly enough, but when Desdemona mentions the word "Cassio," Otello erupts. Desdemona attempts to wipe his perspiring brow with a handkerchief, but Otello furiously demands to see the special one (now in Iago's possession). Desdemona, all sweetness and innocence, cannot understand her husband's frame of mind, and becomes totally distraught when he challenges her fidelity and even calls her a "filthy whore." Emotions are at a boiling point. It is at this moment that Otello first thinks of murdering his wife. Cassio enters for a chat with Iago while Otello eavesdrops from behind a pillar. To lightly bantering music, Iago tricks Cassio into describing his relation with his lover Bianca, thereby duping Otello into thinking it is Desdemona Cassio is talking about. Adding fuel to the fire, Iago lures Cassio into describing – and showing him – the handkerchief Iago had planted in Cassio's dwelling. Otello is now absolutely certain of Desdemona's treachery. He and Iago plot her death. A ship bearing Venetian dignitaries arrives in port, the occasion for a magnificent choral passage with brass fanfares. Virtually the entire cast is now onstage. Over the course of a complex ensemble scene, we see Otello in the final stages of mental collapse, Desdemona in utter despair over her husband's incomprehensible behavior, and Iago exulting in triumph. Otello abuses Desdemona verbally, then strikes her violently before an aghast crowd. He commands the crowd to leave, and collapses on the floor in abject misery as Iago, standing over the fallen hero, mocks "the Lion of Venice" while, with consummate irony, the crowd outside sings his praises ("Long live Otello!").

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## ACT IV Desdemona's bed-chamber

Act IV belongs mostly to Desdemona. Still having no idea why her husband has been behaving so vilely toward her, she prepares for bed, thoroughly confused and distraught. The act opens with an orchestral introduction featuring the poignant, melancholic sound of the English horn. Sitting before a mirror as her maid Emilia combs her hair, Desdemona sings a song she recalls from years ago when her mother's maid sang it, a despondent account of a girl who was jilted by her lover and died singing the song of the willow tree (*salce*). After Emilia leaves, Desdemona seeks comfort in the image of the Madonna at her prayer desk. Kneeling before it, she sings the *Ave Maria*, her simple but profoundly moving prayer to the Madonna. She goes to bed. Otello enters. Again he accuses her of infidelity, which she vehemently denies. A moment after killing her, Emilia runs in with the startling news that Cassio has survived Roderigo's attempt to assassinate him. The latter revealed all of Iago's treacherous scheming before dying, and Emilia reveals further truths regarding the handkerchief. Otello, in a fit of unbearable grief, stabs himself and dies. The opera ends quietly, with a bittersweet memory of the kiss motif that ended Act I.

**GIUSEPPE VERDI:** Born in Le Roncole, October 10, 1813; died in Milan, January 27, 1901

**Original work:** William Shakespeare's *Othello*

**Libretto:** Arrigo Boïto **Work composed:** 1881-1886

**World premiere:** February 5, 1887 at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan

**Instrumentation:** 3 flutes (3rd doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 cornets, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, cimbasso, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam), harp, guitar, mandolin, organ, strings

[banda] 2 oboes, 6 trumpets, 4 trombones

\* Our conductor has decided to omit guitar, mandolin, organ, and children's chorus in this production.

Formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, **Robert Markow** now writes program notes for orchestras as well as for numerous other musical organizations in North America and Asia. He taught at Montreal's McGill University for many years, has led music tours to several countries, and writes for numerous leading classical music journals.