

UNITEL and CLASSICA present

Giuseppe
Verdi

I Lombardi

alla
prima
crociata





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I Lombardi

alla prima crociata

From the Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli

Music by **Giuseppe Verdi**

Conductor **Pier Giorgio Morandi**

Orchestra **Orchestra del
Teatro di San Carlo**

Chorus **Coro del Teatro di San Carlo**
Chorus Master **Marco Ozbic**

Arvino **Tito Beltran**
Pagano/Hermit **Ruggero Raimondi**
Vielinda **Maria Cioppi**
Giselda **Dimitra Theodossiou**

Prior of Milan **Luca Casalin**
Oronte **Fabio Sartori**
Sofia **Adelina Scarabelli**

Staged by **Giancarlo Cobelli**

Directed by **Tiziano Mancini**

Length **140'**

**A Production of UNITEL and Teatro di San Carlo
in co-production with CLASSICA**

shot in HDTV 1080

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Giuseppe Verdi made his breakthrough as an opera composer with "Nabucco" in 1842; eager to follow it up with another stroke of genius, he produced "I Lombardi alla prima crociata" the following year and again scored a notable success. But while the work's musical qualities were unanimously acclaimed, its libretto offended the clerical authorities. The opera relates the conflict between Christians and Muslims at the time of the Crusades, but treats both sides with a certain ambivalence and features a romance between the Christian Giselda and the Muslim Oronte. In spite of the work's powerful choruses interspersed with solo arias and ensembles, "I Lombardi" has never achieved the prominence of Verdi's most popular operas.

The production from the Teatro di San Carlo of Naples is dominated by the formidable voices of Ruggero Raimondi as Pagano, a Muslim who helps the Crusaders, and Dimitra Theodossiou as Giselda, the Christian maiden captured by the Sultan of Antioch, and who falls in love with his son Oronte. Raimondi, an internationally celebrated bass-baritone even before his immortal turn as Don Giovanni in Joseph Losey's 1979 film, imbues his voice with a rich melancholy that humanizes his ambiguous role. The young Greek-German soprano Theodossiou has been hailed as one of the most exciting new Verdi and bel canto voices ever since her success in Verdi's "Attila" in Bologna and Parma in 1999. Completing the quartet of leading characters are Tito Beltran as Pagano's brother Arvino and Fabio Sartori as Oronte.

With his credible direction of the soloists and his mastery of the choral masses, stage director Giancarlo Cobelli highlights the dramatic force of the opera, which ends without victors or vanquished – an irreconcilable confrontation of hearts and religions that is just as topical today as it was in the 11th century, the period in which "I Lombardi" is set.



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