

# OPERA NEWS

PUBLISHED BY  
THE METROPOLITAN  
OPERA GUILD

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August 2023



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STAR SOPRANO  
**MARINA REBEKA**  
HAS HER OWN  
RECORD LABEL.

BY A. J. GOLDMANN

PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY TATYANA VLASOVA

Marina Rebeka,  
soprano and  
recording label  
exec

MODERN &  
PRESENT

**A FEW YEARS AGO**, Latvian soprano Marina Rebeka had an inspiration. "I thought, 'Why don't we use the tools that pop music has to make opera sound modern, beautiful and really present?'" she says. It didn't hurt that her romantic partner (now husband), Edgardo Vertanessian, was a sound engineer with decades of recording experience in both pop and classical.

Together, they founded Prima Classic, a small independent record label, in 2018. To date, it has released more than forty albums, including four solo recordings for the soprano, starting with *Spirito* (2018), which features Rebeka in arias by Bellini, Donizetti and Spontini. Her most recent album on the label is *Voyage* (2022). Pianist Mathieu Pordey delicately paces her in an eclectic assortment of polyglot songs by nineteenth-century French composers. The disc brings Saint-Saëns, Fauré and Gounod together with their lesser-known female contemporaries Marie Jaëll and Pauline Viardot.

Also in Prima's catalogue are full studio recordings of *La Traviata* (2019) and *Il Pirata* (2020), both featuring Rebeka heading starry casts. The soprano's recent turn to record producing is a daring and unexpected chapter in the career of an artist who has become a fixture at the world's leading opera houses.

I've caught Rebeka onstage in Europe at regular intervals over the past fifteen years; every encounter with her has shown her to be a shrewd and distinctive singer who makes every role, and every performance, count. I first heard her at the Komische Oper Berlin in 2008, in *Teseo*, one of Rebeka's rare Baroque out-

**“EVERYBODY HAS CALLAS IN HIS EARS.  
BUT THAT DOESN’T MEAN  
THAT YOU HAVE TO SING IT LIKE CALLAS SANG IT.”**

