



All the beauty of music

First solo album by Latvian opera diva Marina Rebeka

Marina Rebeka's electrifying renditions of 16 classic opera arias by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart display surprising contrasts in tone, range and in the characters represented. The soprano's voice rings out in all of its glory – all the beauty of Mozart! In the CD, Marina portrays a wide range of heroines from five Mozart operas: *Idomeneo*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and of course, *Don Giovanni*, in which she sings the role of the spurned lover Donna Anna. It is as Donna Anna and as Violetta in Giuseppe Verdi's *The Fallen Woman (La Traviata)* that she has wowed audiences in Europe and North America.

Critics often describe Marina's voice as being clear, powerful and resonant. I would add another word: velvety, as when I listen to her voice, I get a feeling that is similar to stroking a piece of warm, soft velvet. Perhaps that is not a comparison used by most professional critics, but her voice is very enchanting in the execution of both high coloraturas and lower notes.

A couple of months ago, Marina was singing the role of Donna Anna at the Zurich Opera House. Not long after, I accompanied her to a showing of Vincenzo Bellini's *The Stranger*. As we watched the performance, I asked her if there is anything in particular that one should pay attention to when listening to opera music. Marina gave me some very valuable advice and

answered: "Nothing! The main thing is to feel comfortable with the voice and its sound."

Whenever Marina is on stage, she performs with a heightened sense of responsibility, for there will always be people in the audience who are witnessing their first ever opera performance. "I can either



draw people in and give them a sense of the magic of opera music, or I can turn them off and make them swear that they will never attend another opera showing. I certainly don't want to do the latter," she explains.

It's quite possible that this new CD might even make converts of those who aren't particularly fond of opera music, as the combination Marina's extraordinary vocal timbre with some of Mozart's most beautiful works makes for a wonderful album.

The thought of releasing a solo CD had been with Marina for the past couple of years, and came to fruition this Easter, when the opera singer teamed up with conductor Speranza Scappucci and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra to make the recording. It took five days, which is considered to be a relatively short time. It was recorded in the former church of St. Mary of the Angels, which has since been converted into a rehearsal and recording venue and is now known as Liverpool Philharmonic at the Friary.

"I really wanted to record this disc with Mozart's arias, because Mozart was a very special person. I feel such a great degree of respect for him that it was impossible for me to record his works together with those of any other composers. Mozart's music is so unique, so different and so fulfilling all in itself," says Marina.

Marina says she is surprised that it took only five years for her to be singing at such prestigious venues as the Metropolitan in New York, La Scala in Milan, and the State Opera in Vienna. "I thought that it might take maybe ten years for me to advance to this level, but it all happened so quickly!" With her magical voice, boundless energy and sheer determination, it actually couldn't be any other way. If you do catch Marina on an *airBaltic* flight, then don't be surprised to see her eating marmalade while studying the musical score for an upcoming performance. **BO**