



Teatro Nuovo announces
2024 Bel Canto Season



*A modern premiere and an overdue revival
at Rose Theater (Jazz at Lincoln Center)
and Kasser Theater (Montclair State University)
July 21-25, 2024*

*Featuring the first modern performance of **Anna di Resburgo** by Carolina Uccelli, the only female composer to reach a major theater in Bel Canto Italy and Bellini's classic **I Capuleti e i Montecchi**, in its first*

NYC performance since 2001

*This season marks return engagements of Teatro Nuovo stars **Chelsea Lehnea, Simone McIntosh, Alina Tamborini, Santiago Ballerini, Ricardo José Rivera, and a debut for Elisa Citterio***

January 5, 2024 — New York City — Teatro Nuovo, the innovative young company at the leading edge of the Bel Canto revival, today announced its 2024 summer season. ***Anna di Resburgo (Anne of Roxburgh)*** marks the modern restoration of a forgotten milestone: Carolina Uccelli was the only female composer to reach the stage of a major Italian theater in romantic-era Italy. It is followed by Bellini's classic setting of the Romeo and Juliet story, ***I Capuleti e i Montecchi***, in what is apparently its first local production in over twenty years. The pair of operas will be performed July 20 and 21 at Montclair State University (New Jersey) and July 24 and 25 at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater.

The announcement follows the conclusion of Teatro Nuovo's most impactful season to date. "In a few brief seasons," wrote Oussama Zahr of *The New York Times* this past July, "Teatro Nuovo has staked out a singular place for itself by marrying the thrill of discovery with a shared sense of purpose." That purpose was on display in the summer productions of *Poliuto* and *Crispino e la Comare*, reviewed by 21 publications with unanimously positive results. As Fred Cohn wrote in *Musical America*, "Teatro Nuovo isn't just an outlier: for fans of bel canto, it's a godsend."

Teatro Nuovo's 2023 season concluded with a day-long celebration of Maria Callas's 100th birthday on Dec. 2, including a public master class at which "it was hard not to be in awe" (David Shengold, *Classical*

Voice of North America) as the young singers tackled lessons derived from the great singer's example. Bouncing back at last from pandemic interruptions, TN reached its largest audiences since its founding ("Both operas were deservedly greeted with long rousing ovations," reported Christopher Corwin in *The Observer*), and also had its strongest season for philanthropic support, capped by a half-million-dollar grant from the John and Patricia Klingenstein Fund in November.

Anna di Resburgo

Carolina Uccelli was born to a noble Florentine family in 1810, and earned a reputation in private circles for her compositions and keyboard improvisations while still in her teens. For a brief time in her early twenties, she aspired to break convention by pursuing a public career as a theater composer. This was frowned upon for aristocrats and simply unheard-of for women. "To get as far as she did in the man's world of Italian theater composition, she had to be remarkable," said TN's General Director Will Crutchfield in announcing the season, "and it turns out that she had the gifts to stand beside the best of her contemporaries." ***Anna di Resburgo*** was performed in 1835 in both the main theaters of Naples, the jointly-managed Teatro del Fondo and San Carlo, by an all-star cast including the first Lucia and the first Nabucco (Fanny Tacchinardi-Persiani and Giorgio Ronconi). "It is a gem, a Romantic thriller with a compelling dramatic through-line and gorgeous vocal opportunities," said Crutchfield.

Unfortunately for Uccelli, the opera was overshadowed by the premiere of another Scottish story (Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*) by the same company in the same season. The barriers to acceptance for a female composer were already high, as we know from extensive correspondence between Uccelli and the Naples impresario, and after Anna she retreated from the theater and concentrated on chamber composition. "We missed out on a talent that might have gone on to produce masterpieces," said Crutchfield, "but luckily the score

survived—in one precious manuscript copy—and it can speak for itself two centuries later.”

The cast of TN’s acclaimed 2023 *Poliuto* (“an evening of wonderful, dramatic, and unexaggerated singing” according to Robert Levine in *Classics Today*) returns to embody the three principal roles: soprano **Chelsea Lehnea** as Anna, tenor **Santiago Ballerini** as her exiled husband Edemondo, and baritone **Ricardo José Rivera** as the usurper Norcesto. They are joined by soprano **Elisse Alban** and tenor **Lucas Levy**, both alums of TN’s renowned training program, as Etelia and Olfredo.

Musical direction is shared by keyboardist **Lucy Tucker Yates**, returning to the role she filled in *Maometto Secondo* in 2022, and violinist **Elisa Citterio**, making her TN debut. Yates, who is also the company’s Director of Language Studies, was recently appointed Italian instructor to the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Program. Citterio, following a 15-year career in the first violins of La Scala (Milan), has established herself as a star of the period-instrument movement, and served as music director of Toronto’s renowned Tafelmusik ensemble from 2017 to 2021.

I Capuleti e i Montecchi

Bellini’s opera is the pure essence of Bel Canto, culminating in a tragic death scene that the great Philip Gossett called “the most moving finale of any Italian opera.” Composed in 1830 for the Teatro la Fenice in Venice, it was one of the last operas to follow the tradition of using a high voice for the hero’s role, a practice that reflected the long era of the *castrati* on the Italian stage, which had only recently come to an end. The original Romeo was Giuditta Grisi, followed in the part by other still-legendary names: Giuditta Pasta, Maria Malibran, and Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient. Richard Wagner said that he first conceived his ideas for *Tristan und Isolde* while listening (from the conductor’s podium) to Schröder-Devrient’s Romeo.

When the opera began to return in the 20th century Bel Canto revival, the names of Giulietta Simionato, Janet Baker, Fiorenza Cossotto, and Agnes Baltsa were added to that list; at Teatro Nuovo they will be joined by **Simone McIntosh**, hailed by audience and press for her Anna in TN's *Maometto Secondo*. As her Juliet, **Alina Tamborini** returns after charming our public as Isoletta in *La Straniera* and Berta in the Damrosch Park production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* that brought New York its first full opera performances after the pandemic shutdown. They are joined by **Robert Kleinertz**, **Kyle Oliver**, and **Michael Leyte-Vidal** as Tybalt, Friar Laurence, and Capulet.

Musical direction will be shared by Associate Artistic Director **Jakob Lehmann** on violin and **Will Crutchfield** on fortepiano, both familiar to TN audiences from their collaborations in *Tancredi*, *La Straniera*, and *Il Barbiere*. Lehmann has also directed or co-directed *Medea in Corinto*, *La Gazza Ladra*, *Maometto Secondo*, and *Poliuto* for the company, establishing himself as one of the most important interpreters of Bel Canto in the rising generation.

Teatro Nuovo presents its operas fully acted on stage with projections of period-style scenery in lieu of sets and costumes. For 2024, **Marco Nisticò** joins the team to supervise this semi-staging. Nisticò, a longtime collaborator of Crutchfield at the Caramoor Festival, includes among his singing credits appearances at Metropolitan Opera, the Opera di Roma, Cincinnati Opera, San Diego Opera and many others, and currently serves as Artistic Administrator of Sarasota Opera.

Singers and Orchestra

The company will also resume its renowned training program, giving an immersive course in Bel Canto style and technique to 30 elite young singers who will serve as the understudies and chorus of the two operas. As before, the performances will be accompanied by Teatro

Nuovo's own hand-picked orchestra of period-instrument players, with its groundbreaking restoration of the performance setup used in the Bel Canto era. The seating plan, based on the one used in Naples from Rossini's time there through the time of *Anna di Resburgo*, is radically different from the normal modern layout, enabling almost everyone in the band to see the singers they accompany as well as the musical directors, and creating entirely different internal balances as well.

Audiences and critics have been quick to recognize what a difference this makes. At Teatro Nuovo's debut in 2018 Heidi Waleson reported in *The Wall Street Journal* that "the effect is transformative." The following year she returned to observe "an unusually flexible sense of pacing...remarkably different from conventional performances of these operas."

In 2019 James Jorden in *The Observer* called it "revelatory...the orchestra seemed to beat with a single heart." In 2021 Anthony Tommasini in *The New York Times* wrote of "a fresh, lively performance full of ideas and rich in subtleties" by performers emboldened "to start from scratch and think for themselves." And in 2022 George Loomis in *Musical America* added accolades for the "felicities of its splendid period orchestra," the "impressively robust" onstage military band, the "consistently stylish" vocal performance and "the respect and inquisitive spirit Teatro Nuovo brings" to its renewal of the Bel Canto repertory.

Tickets for *Anna di Resburgo* and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* will go on sale early in April. Other events, including a seminar on the reconstruction of *Anna di Resburgo* and recitals of other works by Carolina Uccelli, will be announced in the coming months.

Listing Information 2024

Carolina Uccelli - *Anna di Resburgo*

July 20, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Kasser Theater - Montclair State University

July 24, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Rose Theater - Jazz at Lincoln Center

Cast:

Anna	Chelsea Lehnea
Edemondo	Santiago Ballerini
Norcesto	Ricardo José Rivera
Etelia	Elisse Alban
Olfredo	Lucas Levy

Teatro Nuovo Orchestra and Chorus

Elisa Cittero and Lucy Tucker Yates, musical direction

Bellini - *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*

July 21, 2024 at 3 PM

Kasser Theater - Montclair State University

July 25, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Rose Theater - Jazz at Lincoln Center

Cast:

Romeo	Simone McIntosh
Juliet	Alina Tamborini
Tybalt	Robert Kleinertz
Friar Laurence	Kyle Oliver
Capulet	Michael Leyte-Vidal

The Teatro Nuovo Chorus and Orchestra

Jakob Lehmann and Will Crutchfield, musical direction

Relevant Links

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About Teatro Nuovo

Teatro Nuovo is a new American opera company specializing in Italian opera of the Romantic or “Bel Canto” period. Launched in 2018 with performances of *Tancredi* and *Medea in Corinto*, it was quickly hailed as “the way it should be done” (*The Financial Times*) and “stupendous” (*Opera News*) for its innovative restoration of period performing style. Its second season saw a move to the ideally suited Rose Theater for Bellini’s *La straniera* and Rossini’s *La gazza ladra*. After losing 2020 to the pandemic shutdown, Teatro Nuovo restored opera to New York City with performances of *The Barber of Seville* at Lincoln Center’s Damrosch Park, rapturously welcomed as “fresh, lively, full of ideas and rich in subtleties” (*New York Times*). For complete information and further press coverage: teatronuovo.org/about-teatro-nuovo and teatronuovo.org/press