

# Nicola Luisotti

Music Director, San Francisco Opera  
Principal Guest Conductor, Tokyo Symphony

## CRITICAL ACCLAIM

### **On *Attila* at Teatro alla Scala**

“Conductor Luisotti splendidly drew out the difficult balance between lyricism and larger-than-life epic poetry which made the orchestra play in way that rarely happens at La Scala.”

-Carlo Lanfossi, *Il Giornale della Musica*

“*Attila* came back last night to La Scala with the pleasant surprise, finally, of a conductor fit to lead this early Verdi. Maestro Nicola Luisotti is not the usual emerging young conductor but someone who has gained significant experience abroad and now debuts at La Scala as Music Director of the San Francisco Opera. Fearless of the raw and rough present in this music, he is also willing to express its substance and its dramatic violence with a theatrical rhythm of a fullness that does not leave room for stasis or hesitation.”

-Enrico Girardi, *Corriere della Sera*

“Maestro Nicola Luisotti, after climbing through the ranks and having lots of successes abroad, demonstrates that he has a steady hand and sensibility in the guidance of an orchestra and highlights, between many thunderous roars, expressive finesse and dramatic lacerations. He deserved all the enthusiastic applause.”

-Piero Gelli, *delteatro.it*

### **On *Mefistófeles* at Palau de Les Arts**

“The musical direction was Italian Nicola Luisotti’s, who offered a spectacular reading of the work and proved once again that in the Italian repertoire he is a real benchmark. He is a conductor in his prime, with astonishing energy and an absolute control of all the forces under his command...in a word a superb performance from one of the best conductors of his generation in this repertoire...Nicola Luisotti, the real hero of the evening.”

- José M<sup>a</sup> Irurzun, *Seen and Heard International*

“Luisotti’s reading of *Mefistofele* was truly magnificent, bringing to Arrigo Boito’s complex score both grandness of form and attention to detail... He gave his all to the orchestra, which responded with perfectly crafted sonorities.”

- Ana Galindo, *El Mundo Valencia*

“Success was due mostly to Nicola Luisotti, one of today’s best opera conductors. His conducting style is both spectacular and revelatory.”

- Francisco García Rosado, *La Gaceta*

“Most of the credit, as evidenced by the reaction of the near-capacity crowd, has to go to Nicola Luisotti. His excellent conducting—filled with precision, a wide range of gesture, and intensely focused on the attacks of every phrase—succeeded in getting the most out of each one of the musicians of the orchestra and chorus....The impressive chorus—singing with extreme precision not only in the expansive full-voiced passages but also in the most delicate pianissimo moments, likewise attributable to Luisotti’s direction—and an orchestra having a great night resulted in a reading of Boito’s work that will not soon be forgotten.”

- Joaquín Guzmán, *ABC Comunidad Valenciana*

### **On *La fanciulla del West* at Metropolitan Opera**

“Thanks in large part to the stylish, nuanced and sensitive conducting of Nicola Luisotti, the score emerged as arguably Puccini’s most subtly written and boldly modern music... Every time I wanted a little more urgency from Mr. Luisotti, he drew my attention to the textural richness and piercing harmonic complexities of the music. This was a distinguished performance.”

-Anthony Tommasini, *New York Times*

“Credit music director Nicola Luisotti for shaping the music with uncommonly lustrous results while underlining every detail in the narrative and occasionally testing his singers.”

-Allan Ulrich, *Financial Times*

“Maestro Luisotti found all the passion in Puccini's score... *Fanciulla* is, in its own way, a marvel, and it's great to have it back in the repertory in such good hands.”

-Howard Kissel, *New York Daily News*

“Conductor Nicola Luisotti, who led Voigt's first Minnie in San Francisco last June, created a wonderful ebb and flow that drove the action thrillingly.”

-Ronald Blum, *Associated Press*

“Puccini's melodies are in no shortage in *Fanciulla*, and they were sensitively conveyed by conductor Nicola Luisotti and the Met orchestra.”

-James C. Taylor, *Los Angeles Times*

“Everywhere and in everything was the incredible tapestry of sound Luisotti wove from this score. He got, as in his last appearance, amazingly sensitive playing and texturing from the Met Orchestra, but this time outdid himself in a proportioned control of phrase, line, and ensemble that seemed to hold every performer infallibly in the flow of Puccini's magic.”

-*An Unamplified Voice (blog)*

“Nicola Luisotti's conducting brought out the delicate details that make up the sweeping whole of the score, with an attention to dramatic and emotional nuance.”

-*Opera Obsession (blog)*

### **On *Madame Butterfly* at Gran Teatro La Fenice**

“...his return to the theatre elicited a performance of striking Puccinian authority and also tingling vitality in which every part was encouraged to contribute to the forward movement of the whole...This was masterly conducting...Thanks above all to Luisotti, the performance parts added up to an uncommon powerful whole.”

-Max Loppert, *Opera Magazine*

### **On *Madama Butterfly* at San Francisco Opera**

“Thanks especially to Nicola Luisotti, who fused the orchestra and secondary singers into a brilliant ensemble, the emotional virtuosity of the *Butterfly* machine was on full display. The orchestra sang, sighed, soared, and sounded its recurring notes of doom with an urgency and transparency of tone that structured the whole show. We heard every nuance of this colorfully pictorial score.”

-John Bender, *San Francisco Classical Voice*

“Finally, the orchestra, led by music director Nicola Luisotti, gave one of the finest performances I've heard at War Memorial. It was perfection: gorgeous, invisibly setting the tone for 21/2 hours, driving the drama. In the final moments, the low strings and timpani sounded like death itself.”

-Richard Scheinin, *San Jose Mercury News*

### **On *Le nozze di Figaro* at San Francisco Opera**

“The look of this production and the detailed ensemble acting never get in the way of the glorious score, and conductor Nicola Luisotti, who also supplies some masterful and witty harpsichord continuo, elicits sumptuous and vibrant playing from the orchestra. Luisotti raised the level of the orchestra pit two feet above normal, allowing the players to be closer to the sight of the audience. It is in keeping with the practice of the 18th century, and lent a subtle immediacy to the stage picture and overall texture of the sound.”

-Philip Campbell, *Bay Area Reporter*

“The performance benefited enormously by Nicola Luisotti's terrific conducting. The SFO music director is a supremely stylish Mozartian, and drew lithe yet full-bodied playing from the orchestra while giving spacious room for his singers' freely expressive arias. Conducting from the harpsichord, Luisotti also managed to provide clever and imaginative continuo work. Try to catch all the musical quotations he manages to seamlessly work in.”

-Lawrence Johnson, *The Classical Review*

### **On *Aida* at San Francisco Opera**

“The orchestra, conducted by Nicola Luisotti, was excellent, especially in those many delicate and effervescent moments when solo instrumentalists came to the fore.”

-Richard Scheinin, *San Jose Mercury News*

“From Row P in the orchestra, Luisotti’s strings shimmered like silk in the opening, then assumed a supportive role beneath the singers.”

-Jason Serinus, *San Francisco Classical Voice*

### **On *La Fanciulla del West* at the San Francisco Opera**

“The major hero of the night did not appear on stage until the curtain calls: the company's music director, Nicola Luisotti, who did wonders conducting the orchestra. The humor and the suspense, the turmoil and the tenderness that Puccini poured into this rhythmically and harmonically daring score all emerged in a seamless flow under his energetic baton.”

-Mike Silverman, *Associated Press*

“Credit music director Nicola Luisotti for shaping the music with uncommonly lustrous results while underlining every detail in the narrative...”

-Allan Ulrich, *Financial Times*

“Music director Nicola Luisotti audibly loves the score, and he gets ravishing playing from the orchestra.”

-Scott Cantrell, *Dallas Morning News*

“The main sweeper at the premiere was Music Director Nicola Luisotti, a certified Italian, a great Puccini fiend and a conductor who gets and sustains a relentless storm from the orchestra.”

-Janos Gereben, *San Francisco Examiner*

“Music director Nicola Luisotti's conducting brought to life every nuance of Puccini's score, while unobtrusively and expertly enhancing the vocalists' efforts.”

-Emily Hilligoss, *SF Weekly*

“The major asset of this particular evening, though, was the San Francisco Opera orchestra under music director Nicola Luisotti. He reportedly is a big advocate of this piece and he led a performance that was Wagnerian in proportions. Not that it was overly serious or Germanic by any means, but it was played with a real Romantic flair and care that made an excellent case for the depth and complexity of Puccini’s score.”

-*Out West Arts (blog)*

### **On *Aida*, Royal Opera House**

“Where the Royal Opera scores is in its choice of conductor, Nicola Luisotti, music director of San Francisco Opera. His command of the subtleties of Verdi’s masterly late orchestral style was the chief pleasure of the performance....If only this superb Verdi conductor lived in an age of great Verdi voices.”

-Hugh Canning, *The Sunday Times*

“(The) new production is conducted by Nicola Luisotti, a natural Verdian. He has an unforced sense of line, noticeable from the opening bars of the prelude and especially in the scene between Aida and Amonasro in Act Three. He also has a knack of drawing the choral tableaux to a

cathartic climax. There is finely drilled playing from the orchestra and excellent singing from the chorus.”

-Andrew Clark, *Financial Times*

“The Royal Opera orchestra and chorus were electrifying in the crowd scenes of the second act and always responsive to Nicola Luisotti’s stylish conducting.”

-Barry Millington, *Evening Standard*

“Production aside, the opera would be nothing without its music, and Nicola Luisotti did a superb job with the orchestra. Their playing was well matched with what was happening on stage, and just to take one example, the cellos sang with enormous suppressed energy in Act III as the priests, dressed in greyish beige robes with enormous grey headdresses, paraded slowly across the stage. It’s just a small vignette, but there are many more such things, all very carefully thought out. With a production of such integrity, along with excellent singing and superb musicianship from the orchestra pit, this is arguably the finest *Aida* I’ve seen.”

-Mark Ronan, *Theatre Blog*

### **On *Così fan tutte*, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra (staged performance/Suntory Hall)**

“It has been a while since I have last seen such a spontaneous performance of a Mozart opera—and conductor Nicola Luisotti is a central piece of this concept. He obviously loves the score and lovingly conducts it: all rhythms flow naturally, all dramatic effects are played without tampering with forward movement, clarity abounds, and the woodwinds blend with the soloists beautifully. This was exemplary Mozart conducting and Tokyoites were lucky to have all three Da Ponte operas conducted by Mr. Luisotti.”

-*I Hear Voices* (blog)

### **On *Otello*, San Francisco Opera**

“Luisotti seems to have been born to conduct *Otello*. Through the storms, waves of sound, orchestra and chorus joining in raging passages, he maintains flawless momentum and exemplary balance.”

-Janos Gereben, *San Francisco Examiner*

“Much of the glory derived from the pit, where Nicola Luisotti was concluding his debut stint as music director. The conductor has been a source of distinction this autumn, the principal agent of general director David Gockley’s plan to restore the Italian repertoire to its primacy. Luisotti’s *Otello* abounded in brilliant playing, thrust and much savoring of orchestral detail.”

-Allan Ulrich, *Financial Times*

“Music Director Nicola Luisotti conducted with his trademark impetuosity, bringing thrilling dynamism to the opening storm scene and translucent textures to the more intimate passages (the woodwind playing at the beginning of Act 4 was particularly gorgeous).”

-Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*

“It was left to Luisotti to sweep away the cobwebs. The conductor led a propulsive performance...Luisotti certainly doesn't confine himself to the Italian repertoire — his thrilling

performances of *Salome* last month proved that — but, as the company continues to explore the Italian masterworks, it's clear he's going to be a first-rate guide.”

-Georgia Rowe, *Contra Costa Times*

“All the performers seem to be having a love affair with their new maestro, Nicola Luisotti. Under his baton, the chorus bristles with a new vocal vitality. The dynamic orchestral playing, from everyone in the pit, conveys a fresh commitment. Thanks to the joyous Luisotti’s contagious love of music, suddenly everyone is getting high on Verdi. They are giving everything they’ve got to the performance. The opening thunderstorm and chorus scenes were hair-raising; the third-act concertato was overwhelming, as was the final death scene. All were swept up into the grand passion of Italian opera by Luisotti’s electrifying musical force.”

-Olivia Stapp, *San Francisco Classical Voice*

### **On *Salome*, San Francisco Opera**

“And the opera orchestra, under Mr. Luisotti’s baton, seems unusually and entertainingly attuned to the overwrought emotions of the onstage tale. Indeed, perhaps the chief pleasure of the production is that the music shares the spotlight equally with the tale being spun onstage; and the singers, for their part, are fine actors.”

-Bruce Weber, *The New York Times (Arts Beat)*

### **On *Il trovatore*, San Francisco Opera (Inaugural Production as San Francisco Opera Music Director)**

“[San Francisco Opera] has found an ideal new maestro in Nicola Luisotti, who inaugurated his tenure as music director with an elegant performance of Verdi’s *Trovatore* at the ornate Beaux Arts War Memorial Opera House on Friday. . . . The loudest applause was reserved for Mr. Luisotti, given a warm welcome by his new hometown audience.”

-Vivien Schweitzer, *The New York Times*

“There’s been a big buzz about Luisotti, 47, leading up to this, his first performance in his new role. He didn’t push things. His *Trovatore* was an exercise in anticipation and control, with tempos rising and falling in emotional counterpoint to the singers—great ones—onstage. Little by little, the tragic story of a mother’s vengeance got under the skin of the listener. It was opera as soul music.”

-Richard Scheinin, *San Jose Mercury News*

“Luisotti’s *Trovatore* was exceptional.”

Jason Serinus, *American Record Guide*

“He and General Director David Gockley assembled a cast of big voices for Verdi’s *Il trovatore* the likes of which hasn’t been heard since the days of Kurt Herbert Adler, general director from 1953 to 1981.”

-Janos Gereben, *San Francisco Examiner*

### **On *La Damnation de Faust*, Teatro Real Madrid**

“The triumphant success of the present performance is down to Italian conductor Nicola Luisotti returning to Teatro Real after his success in *Il Trovatore* some two years ago. It is incredible that this is the first time that Luisotti has conducted the work, so impressive is his command of the score in all its aspects. This artist breathes music through all his pores. I confess that I had doubts as to his aptitude outside the sphere of Italian opera. I have them no more. The results here are magnificent and simply unsurpassable. This man is a MUSICIAN (in capital letters) and transmits such energy that one’s attention is held in an unwavering magnetic grip. The sound he drew from the orchestra of Teatro Real was surprising; indeed miraculous. That this orchestra was the same one that interpreted Schumann’s *Faust Szenes* two weeks ago is astonishing. I had never before heard them on such good form. They must believe in this conductor to offer their best and to be open to establishing such a deeply impressive communion. After such an extraordinary performance it was all the more significant that the orchestra shouted bravos to Mr. Luisotti. San Francisco is very fortunate to have him as musical director. I can only hope that he returns to Spain soon. Bravo Maestro Luisotti!”

-José M. Irurzun, *Seen and Heard International*

### **On *Don Giovanni* with Tokyo Symphony at Suntory Hall**

“Maestro Luisotti, who had already earned high acclaim in Japan, once again captured the attention of the singers and the audience with his flexible yet sharp conducting throughout the work. His brilliance and liveliness was truly befitting of an Italian comedy. I must give credit to the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra that responded to his baton and delivered a crisp performance throughout the evening.”

-Tadashi Isoyama, *Mainichi Daily News*

“What was especially enjoyable was the vibrant music under the baton of Nicola Luisotti, who even played the fortepiano himself. He was able to react immediately to support the quick movements and the various nuances of the singers. He would interject interludes with the sudden falling scales and dissonant chords, and played a fragment of a concerto with the appearance of the stone statue. The Tokyo Symphony Orchestra followed well the maestro’s circling baton that demanded sudden acceleration at times.”

-Miyuki Shiraishi, *Asahi Shimbun*

### **On Concerts with the San Francisco Symphony**

“Appearing in Davies Symphony Hall before taking the reins in September as the San Francisco Opera’s music director, Luisotti shaped Brahms’ potentially lumbering work into a fleet and profoundly compelling drama. He laid out his premises with care and craft, then directed the follow-through as though it were a four-act theatrical opus.”

-Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*

“Make no mistake: Luisotti’s full-body conducting technique is not an ‘act.’ He is truly and sincerely a man totally alive and joyous on the podium, with myriad expressions, most of them varieties of laughter.”

-Janos Gereben, *San Francisco Examiner*  
(Advance feature prior to concerts)

## ***La bohème*, San Francisco Opera**

“The wonderful and terrible thing about opera is that it’s all or nothing—every one of a performance’s 100 elements must work, and work together. When everything clicks, there is nothing like it. The San Francisco Opera’s new production of Puccini’s *La bohème*, which opened Sunday, is one of those rare, happy occasions. It’s a great, beloved work firing on all cylinders. The opera, whose 200 performances make it the company’s most popular selection, sounds even to grizzled veterans as if it’s being heard for the first time. The chief magician is conductor Nicola Luisotti, the company’s music director-elect, or “designate.” Under his baton, the San Francisco Opera Orchestra sparkles, shimmers, storms, and, most importantly, sings the music as this listener has rarely heard it over several decades.”

-Janos Gereben, *San Francisco Examiner*

“Luisotti's way with Puccini enraptured all present at the production's opening performance. At one with the sweep of the music, romantic outpourings swelled with sentiment one minute, only to become caressingly sweet and tender the next. The orchestra played as if possessed, carried along by a baton whose beat reflected the heart of Puccini's score. In Luisotti, who conducts all but two performances in the current *Bohème* run before assuming Music Directorship next season, SFO General Director David Gockley has found a conductor whose gestures serve not the grandeur of ego, but the greatness of music.”

-Jason Serinus, *Bay Area Reporter*

## **On Concerts with the Philharmonia Orchestra, London**

“Nicola Luisotti (who will succeed Donald Runnicles as Music Director of San Francisco Opera in September this year) and who, at the time of this Philharmonia Orchestra concert, was on the eve of finishing a run of *Turandot* for The Royal Opera, opened with the overture to Verdi’s opera *La forza del destino*. He was on home-ground and led a performance of dramatic summonses and impetus, dignity too and an agreeable through-line. With some electrifying playing, and incisive detailing, what I assume was Luisotti’s debut with the Philharmonia (at least in London) could not have been better launched.”

-Colin Anderson, *ClassicalMusicHomepage.com*

## **On *Turandot* with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden**

“Conductor Nicola Luisotti had the sweep and swoon and shimmer of a score that makes love and death almost indistinguishable.”

-Edward Seckerson, *The Independent*

“The other stars of the night? Conducting, Nicola Luisotti lavishes care on Puccini’s still-startling sonorities—the curdled piccolo, the death-rattle percussion—and binds the score together with superb assurance.”

-Neil Fisher, *The Times*

“Paata Burchuladze’s gravelly Timur is also impressive, as is Luisotti’s propelled yet finely detailed conducting.”

-Barry Millington, *The Evening Standard*

“First to be said is that this revival of *Turandot* boasts some exceptional conducting by Nicola Luisotti who is the music director designate of San Francisco Opera. Together with The Royal Opera Orchestra on absolutely blistering form he delivered a taut, theatrical and thrilling interpretation of Puccini’s wonderfully colourful score.”

-Alexander Campbell, *Classical Source.com*

“Conductor Nicola Luisotti galvanised the superbly augmented chorus and orchestra to give a rip-roaring performance. Never before have I heard so much orchestral detail and what a score! Dissonances vie with highly original takes on Eastern music to make this not only Puccini's greatest score, but one of the most original of the twentieth century.”

-Keith McDonnell, *MusicOMH.com*

“Every detail was illuminated by Nicola Luisotti’s exuberant conducting which perfectly blended brash dissonances with textural power and thrilling climaxes... I cannot remember hearing the Covent Garden orchestra perform this music better.”

-Jim Pritchard, *Seen and Heard International*

### **On *Macbeth* at Bayerische Staatsoper**

“On the podium, Nicola Luisotti keeps the pace brisk and the mood thrilling. He also shapes the melodic lines with care and listens to his singers. Choir and orchestra are excellent. In all, if you can overlook Kusej's lapses in taste, this is one of the best *Macbeth* productions on the circuit.”

Rating: \*\*\*\*

-Shirley Apthorp, *Bloomberg News*

### **On *La bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera**

“The perfect sound coaxed by Maestro Luisotti from the Metropolitan Orchestra was at moments heavenly. His mastery of Puccini's well-known score was a stellar interpretation, his idiosyncrasies insanely sexy and elegantly succinct, picking-up passages that can easily delve into sentimentality and sappiness. After all, it was Italian Maestro Nicola Luisotti's grandpappy that duck hunted with Puccini himself, so we expected a lot from the legacy of Puccini's circle of friends.”

-*Opera Chic*

“Nicola Luisotti, who will become music director of the San Francisco Opera in 2009, led a comfortably paced, thoughtfully balanced performance.”

-Allan Kozinn. *The New York Times*

### **At Festival del Sole (Napa Valley, California)**

“Luisotti’s shaping of this work [Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major]—which at times reflects the anguish of war—with his most responsive orchestra gave just the right glitter and hardness to the score that made it truly convincing.”

-L. Pierce Carson, *Napa Valley Register*

“Leading the Russian National Orchestra...Luisotti filled Yountville's Lincoln Theater on Wednesday night with energy, dynamism, wit and emotion—all the qualities that opera thrives on. No one hearing a concert this exciting could fail to be struck by the brilliance of Luisotti's orchestral conducting or to be infused with optimism about what he may achieve at the War Memorial Opera House in seasons to come. There is a rhythmic buoyancy to Luisotti's work that speaks of high drama, as well as a gift for bringing both humor and ripe expressiveness to a high boil... And Luisotti is a blast to watch in action...Throughout the concert, he cued phrases with whatever body part seemed appropriate—wrist, elbow, shoulder, hip—and did it in a way that seemed not only natural but also illuminating.”

-Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*

### **On *Il trovatore* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden**

“The opening was a wake-up call. Raymond Aceto sang Ferrando's narration vividly, the men's chorus was vigorous to a man, and the conductor Nicola Luisotti set off into the opera as though every note was going to matter. It is a coincidence that the Royal Opera has hired Luisotti for a pair of operas—this second revival of Elijah Moshinsky's production of *Il trovatore* and a *Madam Butterfly*—just after he has been appointed music director of the San Francisco Opera. “

-Richard Fairman, *The Financial Times*

“The main reason for the revival's success, however, is the utterly gripping conducting of Royal Opera debutant Nicola Luisotti (who returns in February for *Madama Butterfly*). Rarely in recent times have the chorus and orchestra of the Royal Opera House sounded so well rehearsed or so decided in their performances; I don't think I've heard such an outstandingly conducted Verdi production since Edward Downes led the company in *Rigoletto* in 2005. This young conductor is a marvel: let's have him back soon.”

-Dominic McHugh, *MusicOMH.com*

“Nicola Luisotti (Donald Runnicles's successor as music director of San Francisco Opera) conducts one of Verdi's most elemental scores with a Muti-like combination of brilliance and precision. Tempi are swift, the phrasing is keenly edged.”

-Rupert Christiansen, *The Daily Telegraph*

### **On *Tosca* at the Metropolitan Opera**

“But the biggest news may have been the company debut of Nicola Luisotti, a fast-rising young conductor whose name the rumor mill is currently linking to the post of music director at San Francisco Opera. Evaluating him on this performance, an opera house would be lucky to have him. It wasn't just his passion or his ability to bring out every detail of the score and deal with the singers' sometimes willful phrasing; it was that he conducted *Tosca* as if it really mattered.”

-Anne Midgette, *New York Times*

“The story of the night, though, may well have been in the orchestra pit with the excellent leadership of debut conductor Nicola Luisotti, who grabbed our attention from the first notes and kept up an intensity rare for a non-Levine performance at the Met. Having three such prodigious singers allowed him to let loose the forces of his magnificent instrumental ensemble without worrying about drowning out the stars. He made the most of his opportunity.”

-Fred Kirshnit, *The New York Sun*

### **On *Macbeth* at Seattle Opera**

“He [Luisotti] is a conductor who understands the sweep and dimensions of Verdi, propelling the orchestra—which played very well for him—to cut into phrases, to deliver a long-limbed line, to take a breath when you least expect it, to shine, to threaten. He is a major, major talent.”

-R.M. Campbell, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

“A big part of this opera's success rests with conductor Nicola Luisotti, making his Seattle Opera debut in *Macbeth*. The Italian knows his Verdi, and he conducted the score with an enthusiasm, warmth and understanding that swept everyone into the glories of the Verdi score.”

-Mike Murray, *The Herald*

“Thanks to remarkable restraint from conductor Nicola Luisotti and orchestra, Zelenskaya and Otey were able to perform the duet, ‘Fatal mia donna! un murmure,’ in astonishingly subdued tones, just the terror-inducing pianos that Verdi intended.”

-Michael J. Vaughn, *TheOperaCritic.com*

### **On *La forza del destino* at San Francisco Opera:**

“In the pit, Nicola Luisotti, making his S.F. Opera debut, led a vigorous, atmospheric performance of Verdi's music. The conductor is sympathetic to the singers, yet he remained a driving force throughout, from the opera's boisterous overture to its quietly touching finale.”

-*San Jose Mercury News*

“Thank the opera gods for conductor Nicola Luisotti... Luisotti set the tone right from the first pages of the overture, driving the orchestra hard through the coiled opening melody and then opening things out for the more expansive sections... The orchestra played magnificently all night long—the strings rich and edgy, the brass well-blended.”

-Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*

“Presiding magisterially in his local debut, Nicola Luisotti confirmed earlier impressions that he is a conductor with uncommon dedication to the sweep, lyricism and subtle detail in the best of Verdi.”

-Allan Ulrich, *Financial Times*

### **On *Pagliacci* at Los Angeles Opera:**

“In the opera's most famous moment, Nicola Luisotti's orchestra whipped up a fine emotional storm under the famous outcry of ‘Ridi, Pagliaccio.’”

-Alan Rich, *Daily Variety*

“In the pit, Nicola Luisotti brings out warm instrumental details, phrases with a measured lyricism, shadows his singers knowingly and never lets the intensity flag. What more could you ask for?”

-Timothy Mangan, *The Orange County Register*

“It takes strong performers to make an impression on such a stage, stronger than those L.A. Opera has assembled. But that hardly hinders the conductor, Nicola Luisotti. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of Sunday's performance was the physically imposing playing he got from the orchestra. He is of the school of conductors who believe the foundation of the orchestra is the bass instruments, and he coaxes from them deep, rich, expressive playing.”

-Mark Swed, *Los Angeles Times*

“Nicola Luisotti conducted the score with a conviction presumably only native Italians can muster. His ability to engage the orchestra to share his enthusiasm should be noted, for too often such music trudges when it should rage.”

-*Los Angeles Daily News*

### **On *Un ballo in maschera* at Canadian Opera:**

“As for the music, fortunately this marvellous 23rd opera of Verdi can depend enormously on its rich and beautiful orchestral and choral fabric, well served Friday by the COC orchestra and chorus under Nicola Luisotti.”

-Ken Winters, *The Globe and Mail*

### ***Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio***

“*Spronati da Nicola Luisotti, direttore d'indubbio talento drammatico, questi ultimi hanno dato vita a un'esecuzione virile, accesa, persino un po' sopra le righe*”.

“Spurred on by Nicola Luisotti, a conductor of great dramatic talent, this piece is given life by his strong, lively, even boundary-pushing, interpretation”.

-Enrico Girardi, *Corriere della Sera*

“*[Il maestro]...ha eseguito con estrema voluttà strumentale e varietà espressiva una lettura dinamica e scorrevole, talvolta vantaggiosamente precipitosa e sommaria nelle tinte: soppesata sui tratti d'una scrittura d'autore non raffinata ma volitiva*”.

“The maestro inspired a performance of varying expressiveness and voluptuousness with his dynamic and flowing reading, sometimes advantageously hasty and concise in his interpretation of the musical colors: weighing in on the writings of an unrefined, yet strong-willed, author”.

-Angelo Foletto, *La Repubblica*

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Contact Karen Ames/PR Worldwide/Karen@karenames.com