



## Salzburg Whitsun Festival

22 - 25 May 2026

### "Bon Voyage" with Gianluca Capuano

(SF, 25 March 2026) Only recently, Gianluca Capuano received the OPER! Award for "Best Conductor of the Year" for his musical leadership of last year's Salzburg Whitsun Festival production.

Gioachino Rossini's opera *Il viaggio a Reims* will be performed for the first time in Salzburg at Whitsun, and Gianluca Capuano dedicates himself to this score for the first time.

In conversation, he discusses his understanding of Rossini and his fruitful collaboration with Cecilia Bartoli.



Gianluca Capuano © Marco Borrelli

#### How would you describe *Il viaggio a Reims* as a work?

After the great success of the Vivaldi pasticcio *Hotel Metamorphosis*, Barrie Kosky and I are now dedicating ourselves to *Il viaggio a Reims*, a completely independent work. This is not a "pastiche" or "pasticcio" in the narrow sense, even though it is rich in self-quotation. Its nine scenes are modular, meaning they are potentially interchangeable. A principle Rossini also applied to his subsequent French opera *Le Comte Ory* (1828), incorporating significant amounts of material from *Il viaggio*.

*Il viaggio a Reims* was the first opera Rossini composed for Paris, and on this occasion he was testing a new compositional style, which was meant to adapt to the local audience's taste as best he could. At the same time, some of the numbers are his most experimental, perhaps the culmination of Rossini's entire output, especially the sextet and the "gran pezzo concertato" – an ensemble for 14 voices.

The modern rediscovery of *Il Viaggio*, which had long been believed lost, resembles an espionage story: thanks to vague tip-offs and sensational manuscript discoveries in Paris

and Rome, the Rossini expert Philip Gossett and later Janet Johnson – the editor of the critical Rossini edition – were able to reconstruct the work in the late 1970s by comparing the extant sources. After the world premiere in June 1825, a meagre three further performances and revised versions for Paris and Vienna, all traces of *Il viaggio a Reims* were lost. Not until 1984 did Claudio Abbado and Luca Ronconi present this purportedly missing jewel to the world in Pesaro. This decisively altered widely-held notions about Rossini's development as a composer.

**You are considered an expert on interpretations reconstructing the original sound of works. How would you describe the current state of historically informed performance practice – also with regard to Rossini's music?**

Comprehensive research on the sources and performance practice of Rossini's music has been done by the Fondazione Rossini in Pesaro, which has published the critical editions of the works – an essential starting point for all those performing Rossini today.

**What role has Rossini's music played for your own development as an artist?**

After I had first worked with Cecilia Bartoli as a conductor on *Norma* in Edinburgh in 2016, we undertook a lengthy tour together with *La Cenerentola*. For me, it was an extraordinary debut to conduct one of Rossini's most famous operas with true icons of this repertoire such as Cecilia Bartoli, Alessandro Corbelli and Carlos Chausson. Ever since, Rossini has been a constant presence in my repertoire, all the way to my debut at the Teatro alla Scala di Milano, where I also conducted *La Cenerentola* in September 2025. Since I had studied mainly the early music repertoire, before Rossini, and did not arrive at his oeuvre – like many other conductors – via Verdi, I have developed a clear idea of how I wish to interpret his music. Some critics have credited me with bringing some fresh air to the understanding of this musical world. What I am still looking for is a chance to conduct "Rossini serio", his tragic operas, more frequently, but I am convinced that the coming years will bring such opportunities.



A staged journey through time and the musical cosmos of Cecilia Bartoli © Davide Livermore

**What makes your artistic collaboration with Cecilia Bartoli so special to you?**

My encounter with Cecilia has certainly changed the course of my career. The extraordinary element of our collaboration, to me, is not least the opportunity to exchange thoughts on interpretation with one of the pre-eminent performers of our time. We certainly share a similar way of feeling about musical theatre, but also a strong awareness of philology and

intense curiosity about less-frequently performed repertoire.

Furthermore, the involvement of the orchestra Cecilia Bartoli founded in 2016 especially for our projects, Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco, ensures that all those involved in a performance are oriented towards the same goal. And that is something the audience has noticed increasingly over recent years. The greatest compliment I can receive after a performance of a frequently-performed work is that people had never heard it like this before. I am certain our Salzburg interpretation of *Il viaggio a Reims* will cause a splash.



Gianluca Capuano and Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco © Marco Borrelli

**Short biography:** Gianluca Capuano won the 2022 Premio Abbiati as Best Conductor of the Year. He has been chief conductor of Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco since 2019. He studied organ, composition and conducting at the Conservatory of his native city of Milan and then specialized in early music at Milan's Scuola Civica. He also holds a degree in theoretical philosophy from the University of Milan.

As a soloist and conductor, he has performed all over Europe, the USA, Russia and Japan. In 2005, he founded the instrumental and vocal ensemble Il Canto di Orfeo, with which he dedicates himself to a broad baroque repertoire, collaborating with some of the best instrumentalists and singers from the field of historically informed performance practice. With his vocal ensemble, he has also appeared in Vacchi's *Teneke*, Raskatov's *A Dog's Heart* and Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten* at La Scala in Milan.

In August 2016, Gianluca Capuano came to international attention when he stepped in at short notice to conduct *Norma* featuring Cecilia Bartoli for the opening of the Edinburgh Festival. She thereupon invited him to conduct further performances of *Norma* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and in Baden-Baden.

Since then, he has collaborated with Bartoli and Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco in numerous opera productions and concerts. At the Salzburg Festival, he has appeared with them since 2017 in staged productions of *Ariodante*, *Alcina*, *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *La clemenza di Tito* and the Vivaldi opera pasticcio *Hotel Metamorphosis*, in concert performances of *La donna del lago*, *La clemenza di Tito* and Haydn's *L'anima del filosofo* as well as in several concerts. In 2023, he conducted Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco here in a marionette production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, in 2024 of Mozart's Mass in C minor and in 2025 of Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine*.



Costume designs (figurines) by Victoria Behr for the opera *Il viaggio a Reims*, directed by Barrie Kosky at the 2026 Salzburg Whitsun Festival

The editors of *BR Klassik* recently paid homage to Gianluca Capuano in their 2025 retrospective of musical theatre:

“The conductor **Gianluca Capuano** compels listeners with his historically informed interpretations. For several years, he has been surprising the classical music world – both as the leader of *Il Canto di Orfeo*, the vocal ensemble he founded, and as a conductor – with outstanding historically informed interpretations. In 2025, he was the first to convincingly perform Richard Wagner’s *Rheingold* in this manner at the rather small opera house in Monte Carlo, to the astonishment of Wagnerians.

An authentic orchestral sound, the intelligibility of the sung text and the differentiation between declamation and vocal line were the focus of this musical interpretation. The reviews were rhapsodic. Then he moved on to Salzburg, where the next sensation awaited in the form of *Hotel Metamorphosis* at the Whitsun Festival: the concept for this opera pasticcio featuring compositions by Antonio Vivaldi was the director Barrie Kosky’s, while Capuano was responsible for the music. Another series of adoring accolades rained down upon him. Thus, Capuano set new standards in 2025 with his orchestral sound and his discerning repertoire choices. A journey of discovery to a little-known Vivaldi, a journey into the sounds and colours of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Venice.”

OPER! Award as Best Conductor of the Year

A winner of multiple awards, on 23 February, the conductor and philosopher **Gianluca Capuano** received the OPER! Award for “Best Conductor of the Year” for his musical leadership of last year’s Salzburg Whitsun Festival production *Hotel Metamorphosis*: the immensely successful opera pasticcio featuring music by Antonio Vivaldi also won “Production of the Year” at the OPER! Awards.

**The 2026 Salzburger Whitsun Festival takes place from 22 to 25 May.**

Under the title „Bon Voyage“, Artistic Director Cecilia Bartoli invites the audience to Gioachino Rossini’s *Il Viaggio a Reims*. This journey is staged by Barrie Kosky.

The further performances of this Whitsun weekend (ballet, concerts, gala) can be viewed by visiting [www.salzburgerfestspiele.at](http://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at) .

Starting immediately, please direct requests for press tickets to the email address [presse.karten@salzburgfestival.at](mailto:presse.karten@salzburgfestival.at) .

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