MANON LESCAUT

Puccini began to compose *Manon Lescaut* in 1889. It was an act of supreme bravado as only five years previously Massenet had premiered *Manon*, based on the same novel by the Abbé Prévost. The story is set in France and Louisiana in the early 18th century and focuses on - in a way different to Massenet - the fortunes and tragedy of the hero, the Chevalier des Grieux, and his lover, Manon. Its ceaseless melodic beauty and drama were recognised immediately and the first night was an overwhelming triumph, with Puccini effectively anointed as Verdi's successor and Italy's greatest operatic composer.

Ninety years after its 1893 premiere in Turin, the work was staged by the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The 1983 production was conducted by Giuseppe Sinopoli, making his British operatic debut to such remarkable effect that *The Times* referred to him as 'Europe's most spectacular new opera star'. The cast included three of the greatest exponents of their roles: Plácido Domingo as the romantic hero whose performance 'was a cause for drop-jawed wonder' (*The Spectator*), the radiant Kiri Te Kanawa as Manon and Thomas Allen as her brother, Lescaut. Director Götz Friedrich's largely traditional staging proved a major theatrical success.



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THE ROYAL OPERA

EDMONDO ROBIN LEGGATE THE INNKEEPER GEORGE MACPHERSON CHEVALIER DES GRIEUX PLÁCIDO DOMINGO LESCAUT THOMAS ALLEN MANON LESCAUT KIRI TE KANAWA GERONTE DI RAVOIR FORBES ROBINSON MADRIGAL SINGER ANNA COOPER

SERGEANT OF ARCHER HANDEL THOMAS

LAMPLIGHTER MARK CURTIS SERGEANT PASCHAL ALLEN A NAVAL CAPTAIN RODERICK EARLE

ROYAL OPERA CHORUS CHORUS MASTER JOHN MCCARTHY

DANCING MASTER JOHN FRYATT

ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

LEADER JOHN BROWN

CONDUCTOR GIUSEPPE SINOPOLI DIRECTOR GÖTZ FRIEDRICH DESIGNER GÜNTER SCHNEIDER-SIEMSSEN COSTUMES ALIUTE MECZIES STAGE LIGHTING ROBERT BRYAN

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OPUS ARTE

THE ROYAL OPERA

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

PUCCINI MANON LESCAUT

ROYAL OPERA CHORUS | ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE DIRECTOR GÖTZ FRIEDRICH | CONDUCTOR GIUSEPPE SINOPOLI

PLÁCIDO DOMINGO | KIRI TE KANAWA | THOMAS ALLEN