

Vincenzo Bellini

LA SONNAMBULA

Saturday, March 21

Conductor
Evelino Pidò

Production
Mary Zimmerman

Set Designer
Daniel Ostling

Costume Designer
Mara Blumenfeld

Lighting Designer
T.J. Gerckens

Choreographer
Daniel Pelzig

AMINA **Natalie Dessay**
ELVINO **Juan Diego Flórez**
COUNT RODOLFO **Michele Pertusi**
LISA **Jennifer Black**
TERESA **Jane Bunnell**
NOTARY **Bernard Fitch**
ALESSIO **Jeremy Galyon**

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Mary Zimmerman's new production is set in a contemporary rehearsal room, where a traditional production of *La Sonnambula*, set in a Swiss village, is being prepared. In that rehearsal space, all the events and relations that Bellini's characters experience also happen to the rehearsing performers in their own "real" lives. In this staging, Amina and Elvino are played by two singers (also named Amina and Elvino) who are, like their fictional counterparts, lovers. The chorus constitutes the population of the Swiss village, and Lisa, the innkeeper of *La Sonnambula*, is the stage manager.

ACT I The story of Bellini's *La Sonnambula* takes place in a Swiss village. In the village square, preparations are under way for the wedding of Elvino and Amina. Only Lisa, who was once engaged to Elvino herself, is unhappy. The attentions of an earnest suitor, Alessio, only annoy her. Amina, everybody's favorite, enters. She expresses her joy and gratitude to all and especially to Teresa, her adoptive mother ("Come per me sereno"). Elvino rushes in late for the contract-signing, then gives Amina a ring that belonged to his mother ("Prendi, l'anel ti dono").

Suddenly, a mysterious stranger arrives (Count Rodolfo). Lisa offers to arrange accommodations for him for the night. To the puzzlement of all, he declares his love for this place that he has not seen in years ("Vi ravviso, o luoghi ameni"). Noticing Amina, he is struck by her resemblance to a great love of his youth. As it grows dark, the villagers become apprehensive and Teresa explains to the stranger that the place is haunted. Amused, the stranger says he'd like to see the ghost, then departs along with everyone save Elvino and Amina. The lovers quarrel over the stranger's attentions to Amina, but Elvino soon apologizes for his jealousy ("Son geloso del zeffiro errante").

That night at the inn, Lisa identifies the stranger as Count Rodolfo, the lost heir of the former local count. The two of them flirt, when suddenly there is a noise and Lisa hides in the cabinet, dropping her scarf. Amina enters where she is least expected, walking in her sleep. Rodolfo realizes that she must be the local "ghost." Lisa, however, doesn't understand that Amina is sleepwalking and assumes she is coming to meet Rodolfo as a lover. Lisa slips away. Moved by Amina's unconscious expressions of love for Elvino, Rodolfo leaves Amina innocently asleep on the bed. Unfortunately, the ever-inquisitive villagers come sneaking in to get another look at the stranger. Lisa appears with Elvino and Teresa, and everyone is shocked to find Amina in Count Rodolfo's bed. Awakened by the commotion, the girl protests her innocence ("D'un pensiero e d'un accento"). For a moment, the entire village is paralyzed with heartbreak over Amina's seeming betrayal. Unnoticed by the others, Teresa discovers and takes up Lisa's scarf. Finally, Elvino, along with everyone else, turns on Amina and calls off the wedding ("Non pi nozze").

ACT II The next day, feeling repentant, the villagers decide to visit Count Rodolfo and ask him directly about Amina's case. They hurry off. Amina and Teresa enter and overhear Elvino lamenting ("Tutto sciolto"). When he sees Amina, he reproaches her again and takes his ring from her. The villagers return to say that Rodolfo has confirmed Amina's innocence. He is on his way, but Elvino refuses to see his "rival" and leaves in despair. Amina is led away by Teresa.

Back in the village square, Alessio tries to convince Lisa that Elvino will never marry her, but at that moment the villagers appear, announcing Elvino's intentions to do just that. Lisa is overjoyed. Elvino enters to lead her to church, but they are interrupted by the arrival of Rodolfo, who again proclaims Amina's innocence, explaining to the incredulous crowd that she was only sleepwalking. Teresa appears, asking for quiet, as Amina has fallen asleep from exhaustion. She is shocked to see that Elvino is about to marry Lisa. Lisa declares that at least she was not found in another man's room. When Teresa produces the scarf, Elvino realizes that Lisa has lied to him.

Suddenly Amina appears, sleepwalking. In her sleep, she mourns the loss of Elvino, remembering the flowers he gave her that have since faded, and searches for her lost ring ("Ah! non credea mirarti"). Convinced of her innocence and unable to watch her suffer any longer, Elvino places the ring back on her finger. Waking, Amina's embarrassment turns to joy when she realizes that her dream has come true.