

Verona Arena runs 103rd opera season, longest yet

Posted on July 20, 2026 by Angelica Peruzzi

VERONA — The 103rd Arena di Verona Opera Festival runs 53 evenings of opera, concerts and dance, the longest season in its history, built around six full opera productions and two special event nights.

More than 1,300 people work across artistic, technical and administrative teams this summer, and more than 80 conductors and singers rotate through the season, according to Fondazione Arena, the foundation that runs the festival. Most performances take place inside the Roman amphitheater itself, with two dance evenings staged at Verona's smaller Teatro Romano.

The festival dates to August 10, 1913, when an inaugural *Aida* marked the centenary of Giuseppe Verdi's birth in the same amphitheater.

"An evening at the Arena, as the sunset fades into night, immerses you in a suspended, evocative dimension," said Cesare Cunaccia, an Italian writer and journalist, "starting with the stones of that magical Roman *cavea* (the tiered stone seating)."

On stage

The season pairs a new production of *La Traviata* with two stagings of *Aida*, one Stefano Poda's crystal set first seen at the festival's 100th edition, the other Franco Zeffirelli's classic version. *Turandot* marks 100 years since Puccini's final opera had its posthumous premiere in 1926, and recent productions of *Nabucco* and *La Bohème* complete the six.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/verona-arena-runs-103rd-opera-season-longest-yet/

Conductors James Conlon, Sebastiano Rolli and Francesco Lanzillotta make their Arena podium debuts.



La Boheme at Arena di Verona (*Credits: FotoEnnevi*)

What's on stage this year

The season pairs a new production of La Traviata with two different stagings of Aida, one Stefano Poda's crystal set first seen at the festival's 100th edition and the other Franco Zeffirelli's classic staging, alongside the most recent productions of Nabucco and La Bohème, and Turandot, marking 100 years since Puccini's final opera had its posthumous premiere in 1926. Conductors James Conlon, Sebastiano Rolli and Francesco Lanzillotta are all making their Arena podium debuts this season.

Cunaccia sees a lineage of the Arena's history as a host to some of the most influential musicians to have ever existed. "Frames of memory parade before your eyes, a crowd of luminous, pivotal figures who belong to this story, like Maria Callas and Tullio Serafin," he said.

Opening night on June 5, Campioni del Mondo, Italia Loves Unesco, broadcast live on Rai 1, celebrated Italy's record number of Unesco World Heritage Sites and launched a campaign to add Neapolitan song to the same list.

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Roberto Bolle and Friends brings the dancer back to the amphitheater on July 21 in a ballet evening produced with ArteDanza. Two multimedia concerts developed with Balich Wonder Studio, Paganini Paradise and Viva Vivaldi, follow.

New faces

Debut roles include soprano Martina Russomanno in the title role of the new *Traviata* and baritone Mihai Damian, winner of Operalia 2025, as Germont.

The season closes on September 12 with that *Traviata*'s final performance. Tickets remain available through Vivaticket and the Arena box office.

At 103 editions, the Arena measures itself less by anniversaries than by how many nights it can fit under an open sky.

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