



NABUCCO

Giuseppe Verdi

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Logos for this production: **Rising Alternative + Oxymore + Opéra Royal de Wallonie, Liège**

Libretto by Temistocle Solera

Opera in four acts

Sung in Italian

From Opéra royal de Wallonie, Liège

Recorded in 2016

Running Time: 2h41

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Paolo Arrivabeni
Director	Stefano Mazzonis di Pralafra
Set designs	Alexandre Heyraud
Costume designs	Fernand Ruiz
Lighting designs	Franco Marri
Chorus master	Pierre Iodice

ARTISTIC TEAM

Nabucco	Leo Nucci
Abigaille	Virginia Tola
Zaccaria	Enrico Ior
Ismaele	Giulio Pelligra
Fenena	Na'ama Goldman
Il Gran Sacerdote di Belo	Roger Joakim
Anna	Anne Renouprez
Abdallo	Papuna Tchuradze

Orchestra and Choirs: Opéra Royal de Wallonie-Liège

PRESENTATION

The genius of Giuseppe Verdi resides in the wonderful dramatic tension that subtends his operas and in the irresistible beauty of his melodies. *Nabucco*, narrating a famous biblical episode, contains in its heart the claims to independence of the Italian people, subjected for too long to foreign domination. Found amid the human passions expressed by the superb arias is a superb chorus, as the Jewish population sings its nostalgia for its homeland. "Va pensiero", a simple and pure melody par excellence became, right from the opera's premiere, a symbol of unity of the Italian population. Today, this alternative national anthem has crossed the borders and expresses the pain of all systems of oppression. The great Leo Nucci stars in the title role, alongside soprano Virginia Tola as Abigaille.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Scene 1: Interior of the Temple of Jerusalem

The Jews are being defeated and Nabucco is poised to enter Jerusalem. The High Priest Zaccaria tells the people not to despair but to trust in God. The presence of a hostage, Fenena, younger daughter of Nabucco, may yet secure peace. Zaccaria entrusts Fenena's safety to Ismaele, nephew of the King of Jerusalem and a former envoy to Babylon. Although Fenena and Ismaele love each other, when they are left alone, Ismaele urges her to escape rather than risk her life. Nabucco's elder daughter, Abigaille, storms into the temple with soldiers in disguise. She, too, loves Ismaele. Discovering the lovers, she threatens Ismaele: if he does not give up Fenena, Abigaille will accuse her of treason. The King himself enters. Zaccaria defies him, threatening to kill Fenena with a dagger. Ismaele intervenes to save her. Nabucco responds by ordering the destruction of the temple, and the Jews curse Ismaele as a traitor.

ACT II

Scene 1: The Palace in Babylon

Nabucco is away at the wars and has appointed Fenena as regent. Abigaille has discovered a document that proves she is not Nabucco's real daughter, but a slave. The High Priest of Baal, accompanied by the Magi, comes to tell Abigaille that Fenena has released the Jewish captives. Their response is to launch a coup to put Abigaille on the throne, while spreading a rumour that Nabucco has died in battle. Abigaille is ready to ascend the throne.

Scene 2: A hall in the Palace in Babylon

Accompanied by a cello sextet, Zacharia awaits Fenena. She converts to the Jewish religion, and Ismaele is reconciled to the Jews. However, it is announced that the King is dead and Abigaille and the High Priest of Baal demand the crown from Fenena. Unexpectedly, Nabucco himself enters, scorning both sides, both Baal and the Hebrew god that he has defeated. He declares himself God. When Zaccaria objects, Nabucco orders the Jews to be put to death. Fenena says that she will share their fate. Repeating that he is now god, Nabucco is promptly hit by a thunderbolt and loses his senses. The crown falls and is picked up by Abigaille.

ACT III

Scene 1: The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

The High Priest of Baal presents Abigaille with the death decree for the Jews and Fenena. Nabucco enters looking like a mad man, claiming his throne. Abigaille persuades him to seal the decree, but he asks that Fenena be saved. He tells Abigaille that she is not his true daughter but a slave. Abigaille mocks him, destroying the document with the evidence of her true origins. Understanding that he is now a prisoner, he pleads for Fenena's life. Abigaille exults.

Scene 2: Banks of the River Euphrates

The Jews long for their homeland. Zaccaria once again exhorts them to have faith: God will destroy Babylon.

ACT IV

Scene 1: The Palace in Babylon

Nabucco awakens, his strength and his reason fully regained. He sees Fenena in chains being taken to her death. Asking forgiveness of the God of the Jews, he promises to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and follow the true faith. Joined by loyal soldiers, he resolves to punish the traitors and rescue Fenena.

Scene 2: The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

As Zaccaria leads Fenena and the Jews towards death on the sacrificial altar of Baal, Nabucco rushes in, sword in hand. At his word the Idol of Baal shatters into pieces. Nabucco tells the Jews they are free and a new Temple will be raised to their God. Abigail enters. She has poisoned herself. She expresses her remorse, asks the forgiveness of Fenena and dies. Zaccaria acclaims Nabucco as the servant of God and the King of Kings.