

Media Contacts:

Sony Music Masterworks: Angela Barkan / Larissa Slezak,
angela.barkan@sonymusic.com; Larissa.Slezak@sonymusic.com 212-833-8575 / 6075

Christina Jensen PR
646.536.7864, christina@christinajensenpr.com



SONYA YONCHEVA'S NEW ALBUM *HANDEL* INSPIRED BY HIS BAROQUE HEROINES

Available February 3, 2017

Performing the Role of Violetta in *La Traviata* at The Metropolitan Opera
February and March 2017



Telling fully and uncompromisingly the story of her character is what fuels **Sonya Yoncheva's** extraordinary power. Her spectacular portrayals of iconic roles have received tremendous acclaim from critics and audiences alike. "I do not think about being a singer, I think about being a storyteller," the soprano confided in an interview after her triumphantly role debut of Bellini's *Norma* at the Royal Opera House this year. The young Bulgarian soprano replaced Anna Netrebko and opened a new chapter in the history of her roles. Performances of bel canto repertoire as *Norma*, *La Bohème* or *La Traviata* (Staatsoper Berlin, Opéra de Paris, the Metropolitan Opera and the Bayerische Staatsoper) amazed audiences and press lauded the soprano as "the finest Violetta since Maria Callas" and "possibly the best *Traviata* in the world at present." (*Die Welt*, Germany). The

artist's extraordinary vocal and dramatic brilliance and involvement make each role she touches her own.

Just as she is "cornering the market in bel canto brilliance" (*The Sunday Times*), Sonya Yoncheva shows another facet of her wide-ranging repertoire in her **second solo album** on Sony Classical available **February 3**, devoted to the musical genius of *Handel*. A return to the sources of sorts for this multiply gifted artist, since the Baroque era shaped her musical conception at an early stage as an alumna of William Christie's *Le jardin des voix* and later on with the interpretations of Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) in Reims and Versailles; *Poppea (L'incoronazione di Poppea)* and *Poppea (Agrippina)* in Lille and Dijon under the baton of Emmanuelle Haïm.

The versatility of Sonya Yoncheva's vocal expression allows her to bring into life the baroque heroines such as Cleopatra, Alcina or Agrippina with great empathy like no other singer. For her, Handel's heroines stand out as strong and independent women inspiring many generations throughout history. It

takes a fine artistic sensibility such as hers to bring out the complex, and sometimes contradictory features that carve out the force and irresistible charm of Handel's female characters. Among the album's highlights are the arias of Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) conveying the incendiary ambition of the Egyptian queen together with her surprising and touching fragility. We catch a glimpse of the scheming Agrippina in the innermost intimacy of her feelings in breathtaking melismas deploying the entire soprano range. Like a true magician, Sonya Yoncheva's voice unveils the double face of Alcina, delving in the depths of amorous passion or swaying in the rich emotional nuances between hope and despair. The soprano's musical curiosity finds a true jewel in Handel's favorite Theodora, left sadly unappreciated at the time of the oratorio's creation and now brought to life in all of her sensuous, crystalline depth.

Her artistic and vocal versatility is such that each character takes a distinctive life on her own as we are guided through an enchanted gallery of portraits, delving magically into each individual story. All of them strong, independent women determining their own destiny – just as Sonya Yoncheva does, being a successful artist, loving mother and wife.

This album, following in the trail of her debut recording *Paris, mon amour*, nominated for a 2016 International Opera Award in the Best CD (Operatic Recital) category, augurs a new exciting set of artistic brilliance. Among these is a concert tour with Baroque repertoire as well as her forthcoming appearances as Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* and Mimì in *La Bohème* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin this season. The latter she will also perform at La Scala Milan in June/July 2017. Further engagements include *Manon* in Monte Carlo, *Violetta* in *La Traviata* at the Metropolitan Opera at the beginning of 2017 as well as *Vitellia* in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden in summer 2017. Sonya Yoncheva is also featured soloist in a Gala Concert at the Wiener Staatsoper, with Plácido Domingo in May.

For more information on Sonya Yoncheva, please visit website, <http://www.sonyayoncheva.com>.

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Handel Tracklist:

George Frideric Handel

1. Giulio Cesare in Egitto, HWV 17, Act II, Scene 8: Se pietà di me non senti
2. Alcina, HWV 34, Act II, Scene 8: Ah! mio cor! schernito sei!
3. Theodora, HWV 68, Act II, Scene 2: With darkness deep
4. Alcina, HWV 34, Act I, Scene 15: Tornami a vagheggiar
5. Rodelinda, regina de' Langobardi, HWV 19, Act II, Scene 7: Io t'abbraccio
6. Agrippina, HWV 6, Act II, Scene 13: Pensieri, voi mi tormentate!
7. Giulio Cesare in Egitto, HWV 17, Act I, Scene 5: Non disperar, chi sa?
8. Agrippina, HWV 6, Act II, Scene 21: Ogni vento ch'al porto lo spinga
9. Theodora, HWV 68, Act II, Scene 5: To thee, thou glorious son
10. Rinaldo, HWV 7, Act II, Scene 4: Lascia ch'io pianga

Henry Purcell

11. Dido and Aeneas, Z. 626, Act III: Thy hand, Belinda...When I am laid in earth (Bonus Track)

VIDEOS

Sonya Yoncheva – “Lascia Ch'io Pianga” Music Video – [Watch here](#)
Sonya Yoncheva - Handel Official Trailer – [Watch here](#)