

Daniel Catán

Il Postino

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Daniel Catán's lyrical, romantic style lends itself particularly well to the human voice, which features in the majority of his works. Lush orchestrations reminiscent of Debussy and Strauss along with Latin American instruments and rhythms are regularly heard in his music. His opera *Florencia en el Amazonas* has the distinction of being the first opera in Spanish commissioned by a major American company. The success of this opera led to the commission of

Salsipuedes for Houston Grand Opera. His fourth opera *Il Postino* was commissioned by Los Angeles Opera and premiered in September 2010, featuring Plácido Domingo and Charles Castronovo.

Born in Mexico, Catán studied philosophy at the University of Sussex in England before enrolling in Princeton as a PhD student in composition. His music is published by Associated Music Publishers.

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“Delivers in a way few modern operas do.”
— The San Francisco Examiner



Il Postino

Commissioned by the Los Angeles Opera

Opera in Three Acts Music and libretto by Daniel Catán

Libretto in Spanish, based on the novel by Antonio Skármeta and the film by Michael Radford.

DURATION: 2 hours, 5 minutes

WORLD PREMIERE

September 23, 2010
Los Angeles Opera
Grant Gershon, conductor
Ron Daniels, director
Riccardo Hernandez, set and costume design
Jennifer Tipton, lighting design
Philip Bussman, projections

PREMIERE CAST

Pablo Neruda: Plácido Domingo
Matilde Neruda: Cristina Gallardo-Domas
Mario Ruoppolo: Charles Castronovo
Beatrice: Amanda Squitieri
Donna Rosa: Nancy Fabiola Herrera

CAST

MARIO RUOPPOLO: Tenor
MARIO'S FATHER: Character Tenor
PABLO NERUDA: Tenor
MATILDE NERUDA: Soprano
GIORGIO: Bass-baritone
BEATRICE: Soprano
DI COSIMO: Baritone
PRIEST: Character Tenor
DONNA ROSA: Mezzo-soprano
PABLITO (son of Mario and Beatrice): Silent
4 THUGS: 2 Tenors, 2 Baritone
5 PATRONS: 3 Tenors, 2 Basses
Chorus: TB

ORCHESTRA

3(pic).2(obda).2+bcl.2/4.3.2+btbn.1/timp.2perc.pf.hp/str
Onstage band: soprano saxophone, trumpet, sousaphone, percussion, riq, accordion

SUBSEQUENT PERFORMANCES

December 2010
Theater an der Wien, Vienna

April 2011
University of Houston, TX

June 2011
Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris



ACCLAIM

"Undeniably beautiful, and it packs an emotional punch."
— Joshua Kosman, *The San Francisco Chronicle*

"You've got something with considerable crowd appeal, which brought the opening night audience to its feet."
— Anne Midgette, *The Washington Post*

"Restores a small taste of the politics, sex and Skármeta's wonderful dry humor, as well as Neruda's poetry."
— Mark Swed, *The Los Angeles Times*

"Entices the ear without pandering. It may be just what the doctor ordered for an opera company trying to survive a rough economy without sacrificing its spirit of adventure....the loudest cheers from the season's opening-night-gala crowd went to the composer."
— Richard S. Ginell, *MusicalAmerica.com*



SYNOPSIS

(The action takes place on a small Italian island in the 1950's)

Mario Ruoppolo is a gentle young man in an insular Italian fishing village where time moves slowly. Since Mario's seasickness doesn't allow him to fish, he takes the job of postman, delivering mail on a bicycle to only a single customer, the famous Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Neruda has been exiled to Italy because of his communist views. After a while, the two become good friends. In the meantime, Mario meets and becomes smitten with a beautiful young lady, Beatrice Russo, in the village's only cafe. Mario has no idea how to pursue the longings of his heart. With the help of Neruda, Mario is able to better communicate his love to Beatrice through the use of poetic metaphors. Soon, Mario is composing poetry of his own, with hopes of not only attracting Beatrice's attention, but of winning her heart. Mario and Beatrice are later married, and at the same time Neruda and his wife Matilde learn that they are allowed to return to Chile. Months after Neruda's departure and subsequent lack of contact, Mario makes a nostalgic recording of island sounds for Neruda, including the heartbeat of his unborn son. Several years later, Neruda comes back to the island and finds Beatrice and her son in the same old cafe. She tells him that Mario was killed just before the birth of their son, at a communist rally in Naples. He was selected to read his poetry (dedicated to Neruda) for the crowd, but police stormed the rally before he could reach the stage. Beatrice gives Neruda a letter that Mario left for him.

