



Set and Costume Designer opportunity

We are currently seeking a Set and Costume Designer for our Halloween 2024 production, *Maria de Rudenz* by Donizetti. It will be fully staged, with a new arrangement for chamber orchestra, at Battersea Arts Centre, London. It will be double cast, and will be sung in Italian. The Stage Director is Lysanne van Overbeek.

About the opera:

Although there have been occasional concert performances, this production will be the first time *Maria de Rudenz* has been staged in the UK. The work is inspired by Matthew Gregory Lewis's gothic novel *The Monk*, and tells a gory story of deceit, murder, betrayal, and resurrection from the dead. It premiered in 1838 in Venice.

Links to *Maria de Rudenz*:

1. Recording on Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/album/70whZpfsckz0HhR2zEmK9L>
2. Resources and scores on the Milan Conservatoire website:
<https://search.bibliotecadigitale.consmilano.it/simple-search?query=maria+de+rudenz&location=global>
3. Libretto and its English translation:
<https://docplayer.net/18035886-Gaetano-donizetti-maria-de-rudenz.html>

Please note: we have created a new vocal score that will be used for this production.

About us:

Gothic Opera was founded in 2019 by Béatrice de Larragoiti, Charlotte Osborn and Alice Usher, and became a registered charity in 2020. The company specialises in productions of rarely-seen operatic works that take inspiration from the uncanny atmosphere of the Gothic and supernatural. Working with a wide range of artists, Gothic Opera produces high-quality fringe performances in characterful venues in London.

Gothic Opera's critically-acclaimed and award-winning productions to date are: *Der Vampyr* (2019), *Bluebeard's Castle* (2021), *La Nonne sanglante* (2021), *Le Loup-garou + Le dernier sorcier* (2022) and *Rip Van Winkle* (2023). The company also performs recitals and concerts on Gothic themes. Gothic Opera has built up an audience of regular attendees, and we also attract a large proportion of first-time opera-goers drawn to unusual, atmospheric activities at Halloween.

Since its inception, Gothic Opera has continued to grow. Our ambitions are to continue to produce high-quality performances that celebrate neglected repertoire, and to appeal to a wide, varied audience.

Appointment: ASAP - 2nd November 2024

Pay: Project fee of £2500, on a freelance basis

Working hours: Variable and flexible. Can include evenings and weekends. Attendance at ad hoc meetings is required at mutually agreed times. This role is designed to fit alongside other projects.

Key dates: (subject to change)

8th August: seating plan/room layout to be confirmed with Battersea Arts Centre

28th October: Get-in and tech

29th October: Stage and Piano / Stage and Orchestra

30th October: Dress rehearsal

31st October evening: Show 1

1st November evening: Show 2

2nd November matinee: Show 3

2nd November evening: Show 4

The role:

We are seeking a reliable team player with a flexible, enthusiastic attitude. The successful candidate will collaborate with the Stage Director to create:

- an adaptable production in keeping with the spirit of the opera
- a production which celebrates the nineteenth century Gothic aesthetic but shows awareness of modern themes.

From the Director:

For this production, I have looked to familiar gothic novels for inspiration, and would like to invoke the atmosphere of them on stage; settings such as Thornfield Hall and Satis House in particular. I am also really interested in looking at the way lighting design and set come together. Drawing inspiration from work of the Golden Age painters, such as Rembrandt, where light and shadow are used very specifically to highlight the story, but there are also layers of darkness masking all sorts of unknown things lurking in the background.

Battersea Arts Centre is a very exciting space, and the flexibility of the venue is something that I would like to explore, looking at the layout of audience and the interaction between them and the performers and orchestra. I am keen to have certain moments in a traditional, front on setting but also have immersive moments interspersed throughout, keeping the audience on their toes and adding a ghostly feeling to the piece. I am keen to ensure that the orchestra is integrated into the design and is carefully considered, ensuring that there is still an optimal eyeline from the conductor to singers.

It is also important to us that the design maintains environmental awareness and reduces waste. The Designer will create a production that is budget- and environmentally-conscious, re-using Gothic Opera's existing props and costumes, borrowing where possible, and hiring if needed. The budget for sets, costumes and props is approx £2000 (the final budget number will be determined by the Production Manager). The lighting budget is separate.

The successful candidate will be an experienced designer able to work with emotional intelligence, sensitivity, kindness and mutual respect. They will be highly pro-active, organised, able to hit the ground running, and confident to work independently. All candidates must have the right to work in the UK.

To apply, please send us a CV, any relevant links, and a short cover letter that responds to the Director's ideas and tells us what drew you to this project. The email address is info@gothicopera.co.uk.

We're very happy to answer any questions you have about the project at any stage. The deadline for expressions of interest is **6pm on Wednesday 15th May**, and interviews for successful candidates will be held over Zoom on the morning of **Friday 24th May**. We'd love to hear from you!