

## October 8, 2020 - Fromental Halévy's *La Juive*

On this week's Thursday Night Opera House, we observe the end of the Jewish High Holy Days with Fromental Halévy's *La Juive* (*The Jewess*). With a libretto by Eugène Scribe, it became one of the most popular and admired works of the 19th century. Through the story of an impossible love between a Christian man and a Jewish woman, *La Juive* can be seen as a plea for religious tolerance. The work premiered on February 23, 1835, at the Paris Opéra, and the role of Eléazar became a favorite for dramatic tenors such as **Enrico Caruso** and **Richard Tucker**.

In 15th-century Konstanz, Rachel (soprano **Julia Varady**), daughter of the Jewish goldsmith Eléazar (tenor **José Carreras**), discovers that her lover, whom she knows as "Samuel," is actually Prince Léopold (tenor **Dalmacio Gonzales**), and married to Princess Eudoxie (soprano **June Anderson**). Rachel exposes the relationship to the court and Cardinal Brogni (bass **Ferruccio Furlanetto**) condemns her, Leopold and Eléazar to death. Léopold's sentence is commuted to banishment, and Brogni offers to spare Rachel if Eléazar will accept Christianity. When he refuses, Rachel is thrown into a vat of boiling water, while Eléazar reveals that she was the Cardinal's own long-lost daughter.

**Antonio de Almeida** conducts the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Ambrosian Opera Chorus in this 2006 Philips Classics recording.

**Neil Schicoff** sings the great aria "Rachel, quand du Seigneur" in a 2003 performance at New York's Metropolitan Opera: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrr0WJnL-GQ>.

Please join us next Thursday, October 15th, for an encore broadcast of Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, hosted by the late **Al Ruocchio** (1937-2007). **Joan Sutherland** sings the title role, **Giacomo Aragall** is her son Gennaro, **Marilyn Horne** sings the "trouser" role of Orsini, and **Ingvar Wixell** is Alfonso. **Jonel Perlea** conducts this 1965 RCA/BMC recording.

The Thursday Night Opera House is heard at 7:00 p.m. Eastern on 89.7 FM in central North Carolina. We're also streamed online, and you can listen as well on WCPE's Android or iPhone apps.

*Bob Chapman*

**W. Robert Chapman, Host of the Thursday Night Opera House**