



Press Release

Rossini Opera Festival 2024: record attendance in a pivotal year

This evening at the Auditorium Scavolini, a concert performance of *Il viaggio a Reims* will close the 45th Rossini Opera Festival. The event commemorates the 40th anniversary of the opera's modern world premiere, which first took place in Pesaro in August 1984. The ROF 2024, whose founding institutions include the Municipality of Pesaro, Intesa Sanpaolo and Fondazione Scavolini, was supported by the Ministry of Culture, the Municipality of Pesaro, the Marche Region, Intesa Sanpaolo, EBWorld and Fondazione Meuccia Severi. It was realised within the context of Pesaro's year as the Italian Capital of Culture.

This year's programme was broader than ever, spanning 17 days, four more than usual. Five operas were performed: two new productions (*Bianca e Falliero* and *Ermione*) and three revivals (*L'equivoco stravagante*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Il viaggio a Reims* by the young artists of the Accademia Rossiniana "Alberto Zedda"). The concert programme included the world premiere of the *Messa di Ravenna* in a new critical edition, the cantata *Il vero omaggio*, two opera-symphonic concerts, five Belcanto concerts and the latest edition of the *Rossinimania* series. The students of the Accademia Rossiniana also starred in the concerts at the Museo Nazionale Rossini and in the *Salons Rossini*, events held in historic villages across the province.

The festival recorded 21,473 attendees – the highest number in its history – and a revenue of €1,366,000. Particularly significant was the presence of Italian spectators, who made up 54% of the total, a reflection of Pesaro's status as the Italian Capital of Culture this year. International attendees came from 46 countries, with France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Japan, the USA, Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands among the most represented nations. Other countries included China, Scandinavia, the Balkans, Russia, Israel, Australia, Canada, South Korea, Hong Kong, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, the Ivory Coast and Taiwan.

The media coverage also saw record numbers, with 184 accredited journalists – the highest in the event's history – representing publications from 29 countries, including Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Greece,

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Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, the United Kingdom, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, the USA, Sweden and Switzerland. Reporters from major national newspapers and leading national and international specialist magazines were present. Among the numerous foreign publications covering ROF 2024 were renowned newspapers such as the *Financial Times* (UK), *Die Welt* (Germany) and *Mainichi Shimbun* (Japan), one of the world's best-selling newspapers, as well as the *Jewish Chronicle* (the oldest Jewish newspaper).

Il viaggio a Reims on 16th and 19th August was streamed on the ROF's YouTube channel and website. As part of the Next Generation project, the first performance of *Il Viaggio a Reims* was also streamed on OperaVision.eu, the free platform managed by Opera Europa and co-funded by the Creative Europe programme. Both performances will be available for six months on OperaVision, along with a dedicated podcast and a behind-the-scenes video.

The festival also strengthened its relationship with Rai, represented in Pesaro by its National Symphony Orchestra, which has been a key participant in the event for years. Rai Cultura broadcast a delayed live transmission of the premiere of *Bianca e Falliero* on Wednesday 7th August at 21:15. Rai Radio 3 aired the first performances of *Bianca e Falliero*, *L'equivoco stravagante*, *Ermione* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, with the first also broadcast on the Euroradio network.

Thanks to collaboration with the Pesaro branch of the Unione Italiana Ciechi e Ipovedenti (Italian Union for the Blind and Visually Impaired), the performance of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* on 15th August was made fully accessible to visually impaired people for the first time. A professional narrator guided the audience through the set design, costumes and non-sung, non-musical actions, with inserts prepared by technicians during rehearsals.

The 46th ROF will be held in Pesaro from 10th to 22nd August 2025. Four opera productions are scheduled. The Festival will open with a new production of *Zelmira*, conducted by Giacomo Sagripanti and directed by Calixto Bieito, making his festival debut. The opera has not been performed at ROF since 2009. This will be followed by another new production, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, conducted by Dmitry Korchak and directed by Rosetta Cucchi, which was last presented at the Festival in 2013.

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Two revivals will also be staged: *Il Turco in Italia*, originally conceived for ROF 2016 by Davide Livermore and conducted by Diego Ceretta and *Il viaggio a Reims* in the customary version by Emilio Sagi, performed by the students of the Accademia Rossiniana "Alberto Zedda". The 2025 edition will close with the rare *Messa per Rossini*, composed by various authors (including Giuseppe Verdi, Lauro Rossi, Carlo Pedrotti and Carlo Coccia) to mark the anniversary of Rossini's death.

Pesaro's Mayor Andrea Biancani, commented: "We are very pleased with this year's results, particularly with the many Italians who came to Pesaro. In the coming years, now that the Auditorium Scavolini has opened, we must aim to offer even better hospitality to our visitors, exploring new solutions regarding performance schedules and restaurant opening hours."

ROF Superintendent Ernesto Palacio said: "We took on a challenging task this year, staging a festival longer and more demanding than ever before. The results speak for themselves: record attendance and great enthusiasm every night. This edition saw two significant developments: a new Italian audience, attracted partly by Pesaro 2024 and many young people, drawn by very attractive ticket prices."

General Manager Cristian Della Chiara added: "With 21,473 attendees, we achieved record numbers and succeeded in attracting new audiences, including nearly 2,000 spectators under 30 and under 14, thanks to special rates and agreements with conservatories across Italy. This summer, 738 people, both local and from elsewhere, worked at ROF, further highlighting the economic impact the festival has on the city."

Deputy Mayor Daniele Vimini, President of ROF, concluded: "This year, the festival took the risk of staging an extra-large edition in a year when all eyes, both nationally and internationally, were on Pesaro as the Capital of Culture. The results, as we have shown, confirm the capabilities of the management team and everyone who worked to make ROF 2024 a memorable edition."

Pesaro, 23th August 2024

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