

Pina Magri to perform two shows at Majestic Theater

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By Clifton Noble Jr.

A remarkable vocalist who is equally at home singing Erroll Garner's "Misty," Mozart's "Queen of the Night" arias, the latest Disney ballad, or hottest Broadway show-stopper, Pina Magri brings her talents to the Majestic Theater in West Springfield on Oct. 10 and 11.

"From Italy, With Love" blends the melodic beauty of Italian and American cultures.

A graduate of Smith College in Northampton, the Holyoke native divides her time between Rome, Italy and New York City and works with leading lights in music, theater, and film on both sides of the Atlantic.

Speaking by telephone from New York, Magri gave a preview of her performance and reflected on her life and art.

"It's an interesting mix," she said of her program, which ranges from Puccini's "O mio babbino caro" to selections from "West Side Story" and "My Fair Lady."

Magri will also perform some of her own compositions, including "L'Infinito in me," (The Infinite in Me) and "Nell' Anima," (In the Soul) her lyrical elaboration of J. S. Bach's timeless "Air" from the "Overture No. 3 in D major," BWV 1068, more popularly known as "Air on the G String."

Magri loved music from her earliest youth.

"I can remember at age three hiding during a thunderstorm under the piano, because I felt so safe there," she laughed.



Pina Magri photo courtesy of Dale Johnston

A Magna cum laude graduate of Smith College and Phi Beta Kappa member, Magri also studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, at New York University, and at conservatories in both Florence and Rome, gleaning technique and pedagogical philosophy from teachers as diverse as Broadway coach Ron Clairmont (the original pianist for "The Fantasticks") and Maestro Ettore Campogalliani, the voice teacher of Pavarotti, Tebaldi, Freni,...

Magri's own teaching is a synthesis of the many styles and approaches from which she has benefited in her travels and her study. In her concerts, she often refers to a monologue from the Terence McNally play "The Master Class," with its survey of operatic diva Maria Callas' sometimes unorthodox teaching strategies, and her own respect for the diva's procedures.

"Callas was teaching what it means as a singer to research what you're doing – to know all about what you are singing, all about the character, all the interpretations that are available, to write down everything you've learned."

In addition to her numerous recitals and orchestral collaborations, Magri's voice appears on several film soundtracks, among them Zeffirelli's "Hamlet," Dario Argento's "Phenomena," and the 20th Century Fox hit "Ice Age 2." She has appeared on Italian and French television, and in theatrical productions from New York to Rome.

She is a studio recording artist for Disney productions, and has acted and sung in several musicals including Jacques Brel's French adaptation of "Man of La Mancha" at the Theatre Marigny in Paris, in which she portrayed Aldonza/Dulcinea.

Her recording of Academy Award-winning composer Ennio Morricone's theme song from the film "Il Principe del deserto" is in the Gold and Platinum collections of the Morricone's music. She recalled how she first came to the maestro's attention.

"One day I was singing as part of a selection of sopranos for Morricone. They called me in to do a publicity spot along with another woman, who happened to be sick that day, and did not come to the audition. I heard them discussing what they were going to do about finding a soloist, and I started doing my vocalizing, and left the door to the warm-up room open – and it worked! Maestro Morricone heard me vocalizing and said 'Why don't we ask her?'"

Magri has also been honored to serve as Psalm soloist at the Vatican, singing for Pope John Paul II.

Asked why she pursues so many different avenues of musical artistry, all the way from Renaissance madrigals to modern dance-pop, Magri replied, "My father loved Robert Frost, and his fantastic poem 'The Road Not Taken.' I guess this is what directs me – partially because it is a less trodden path, and certainly because I am following my dreams and my passions."

"We are all like prisms," Magri said, "depending on what light strikes one part of you, that part of

you becomes shiny and beautiful. I think all of us have many qualities – the more that are revealed, the better."

"There are many dreams and possibilities within each of us. The music that I hear, just like the dreams I have, or that others have – my hope is that they will resonate, no matter what, because they live in the soul, and because the soul lasts forever!"

Event: "From Italy, With Love"
Pina Magri in Concert
When: Oct. 10-11, 7 p.m.
Where: The Majestic Theater,
131 Elm St., West Springfield
Cost: \$23 and \$21
For more info:
Call (413) 747-7797
www.majestictheater.com
also visit www.pinamagri.com