

José Cura the Singer in Concert

Then comes José Cura and the stage explodes. He's a real professional with remarkably constant contact with the audience. The audience gave thanks with a standing ovation.

Súgópéldány, February 2015

José Cura's early years as a singer followed the normal trajectory of young, talented artists: working to acquire experience, refining stagecraft and gaining exposure. The hustle required to "make it" in theaters and open air venues often prove over-whelming but Cura thrived under the intensity, the pressure, the public gaze. No matter the size of the crowd, he pressed on, giving his all, willing his all, to reach each member of the audience, to sell himself and his potential. The struggle to succeed strengthened his resolve and honed his instincts as an entertainer, allowing the emerging showman to gain confidence, to burnish his charisma. Cura careened from opportunity to opportunity, from stage to stage, city to city, developing his unique style of delivery and spreading his charm, inevitably creating the trajectory needed to launch a legendary career.

Recitals with reduced piano scores are a starting point in the development of a young vocalist. Cura learned quickly: performances of highlights from *Cavalleria rusticana* at the Teatro dell'Arca in Milan, *La fanciulla del west* for the Circle Dordoni in Brescia, *Il trovatore* at Teatro Rosetum in Milan. Cura also secured his first appearance outside Italy in 1992, in Breisgau, Germany, with an evening of Italian opera favorites. Small roles in operas (Le remendado in *Carmen* and Il capitano dei ballestrieri in *Simon Boccanegra*) led to bigger roles (Albert Gregor in *Il caso Makropulos*, Lt Niki in *Sogno di un valzer*, Jan in *La signorina Julie*) and a first recording (*Le villi*, live from Martina Franca). International success followed as Cura

traveled to Chicago, London, Paris, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vienna. Available time for concert-making became limited as performances in staged operas filled his calendar: Cura appeared in concert only three times in the period between 1993 and 1996. Cura's international opera career had grown at such astonishing speed that it was suddenly difficult for the young tenor to carve time in his schedule for concerts—and the concerts he did appear in were becoming increasingly important events.

In 1996, he was on stage in Paris with legendary conductor Colin Davis to sing in Berlioz's *Te Deum* and in Dublin for an opera gala before traveling to Melbourne and Sydney to take part in the *Puccini Spectacular*, a show specifically developed for Cura's Australian debut.

Puccini Spectacular, Sydney and Melbourne: By popular acclaim the night belonged to José Cura, the audience roaring its approval of the personable young tenor at the curtain calls. He is highly impressive in straight-from-the-shoulder passages. The powerful timbre and vigorous delivery in such sections tends to outshine his equally effective interpretations of "E lucevan le stelle" and ardent, non-hysterical "Nessun dorma." The Age, May 1996.

In December, he starred in the Puccini segment of the *BBC Great Composers* documentary.

In 1997 Cura returned to Ireland for a three city concert tour, leaving some critics searching for superlatives:

Concert, Cork: José Cura, at the height of his vocal powers, confirmed at the City Hall on Saturday night that he is the greatest dramatic tenor in the world. The thunderous stamping of feet on Cork's City Hall floor, the roars of approval, said it all: everyone had been touched by the excitement and tangible sense that here was greatness. Cura was stunning from the first off-stage rendering of

“Deserto sulla terra” from ‘Il trovatore’ and then his swaggeringly confident “Tutta pareva sorridere” from ‘Il corsaro,’ both by Verdi. He strode up the center aisle to send a current through the audience for his scene from Act II of ‘Le villi,’ Puccini’s first opera. Here, he threw himself on his back on stage and delivered one of the most haunting and disquieting arias heard in this 12 year series. The best was yet to come, with his aria “Cielo e mar” from ‘La Gioconda,’ bringing the proverbial house down. Cork Examiner, July 1997

Cura headlined in a *Night of the Stars Gala* in London and concluded the year with a series of six back-to-back, sensational concerts in Germany.

London: ***Appropriately, he took over Andrea Chénier's “Improvviso,” and in Giordano's opera provided the most stirring singing of the evening. Cura, bold in his vocal attack and ready to flood the music with emotion, is a natural in this part. He was also the star, carrying the personality and the volume to take on the wastes of the Albert Hall. He got proceedings off to a fine start with “Cielo e mar” from ‘La Gioconda’ and closed them in equally ringing style with “Tu qui, Santuzza” from ‘Cavalleria.’ Opera Gala, November 1997***

In December, the young tenor paid tribute to the legendary tenor Franco Corelli in a concert celebrating both his career and his legacy. Cura wowed the knowledgeable Viennese audience with his nuanced reading, explosive dynamics, and charming stage presence. Posing between Corelli and Gedda for an iconographic picture, there seemed a moment of palpable recognition: the older generation was giving way to a worthy new generation of singers.

Cura managed only a handful of concerts in his busy year of 1998 but they were exceptional: an extraordinary evening of songs and opera arias in Rome and the rollicking, frolicking

open-air Prinsengracht concert in Amsterdam (available for viewing on YouTube).

Rome: *With warm applause and unanimous murmurs of approval from the large audience, the Argentinian tenor José Cura, one of the most notable young figures in the current opera field, appeared Sunday evening in the Theatre Ghione in Rome. José Cura approached his successful Roman performance with a diverse program, with works of Argentine composers like Carlos Guastavino, Carlos Lopez Buchardo and songs of Maria Elena Walsh, Neapolitan songs by Paolo Tosti and lyrical pieces by Ottorino Respighi and Gabriel Fauré. In the second half of the concert, the part that created delirium among the audience for a good part of the presentation, was dedicated to opera arias: “Un dí all azzurro spazio,” from the first act of the opera ‘Andrea Chénier,’ by Umberto Giordano, “Donna non vidi mai,” from ‘Manon Lescaut’ by Puccini, and especially “Vesti la giubba,” from ‘Pagliacci,’ by Ruggiero Leoncavallo. Cura communicated with the enthusiastic audience in the Italian capital up to the point of translating into Italian the texts of several songs, especially those of Argentine origin, and also in his interpretation of “Somewhere,” from Leonard Bernstein’s ‘West Side Story,’ with which he had the audience eating out of his hand. The triumphant performance of José Cura culminated in an endless ovation.* Clarins, 1998

Amsterdam: *The Argentinian tenor José Cura, in Amsterdam on Saturday night as the soloist for the seventeenth Prinsengracht concert, is a composer, arranger, conductor, guitarist; he is also widely considered to be the most promising tenor of our time. In addition, he is a born actor with a flaming temperament, great theatrical sense, a relaxed and playful air and lots of flair. Before the break Cura persuasively sang Argentine repertoire from his new CD ‘Anhelo.’ After, Cura sang opera arias, impressing with his highly variable and colorful voice. And “Come un bel di*

Maggio" from Giordano's 'Andrea Chénier' showcased Cura's unexpectedly charming lyricism. NRC, August 1998

In 1999, Cura fit his concert appearances into available space between opera commitments: in the spring, he appeared in London, Dublin, and Paris; in the summer in Dalhalla and Martina Franca and in the fall in Frankfurt and Hannover. Perhaps the most meaningful to Cura, however, was his concert at the Monument to the Flag when he offered a concert to his countrymen in his hometown of Rosario, Argentina.

London: Doomed heroes galore from Verdi, Puccini and company were paraded before the Festival Hall audience, bewailing their lot, hearts breaking, facing death in recitative and aria. Though [José] Cura's ringing voice, pin-up looks, leonine profile and CD releases have already whipped up a large fan following, it took only a few notes of Don Alvaro's Act III lament from the 'Force of Destiny' for the man's magic to work: the tone clear as a bell, color-coded chocolate brown. Individual words throbbed with feeling: "Piango!" he cried in "Sento avvampar nell'anima" from 'Simon Boccanegra,' a hand briefly clutching his throat, shading with all the rainbow's darker hues; the voice was mellifluous. A promising voice.... The Times, March 1999

Dublin: The Argentinian tenor's stentorian delivery served him best in verismo pieces: he declaimed Andrea Chenier's "Improvviso" with ringing ardour and went on to give exemplary performances of show-stoppers from 'Pagliacci,' 'La fanciulla del west,' 'Tosca' and 'Madame Butterfly,' all given with scrupulous attention to phrasing and without a hint of a gulp or sob. The bonus in this feast of macho tenor singing was a truly stunning account of "Nessun dorma" from 'Turandot.' The Irish Times, March 1999

Rosario: It was ten past eight in the evening and a breeze was coming from the river. With his back to the Monument to the Flag, José Cura, the Rosarino tenor who is now a star

on the world stage, stepped out in a black velvet jacket, white shirt, gray pants. The people of Rosario received him with applause, with cheers, with shouts, like those welcoming home a triumphant hero. Cura happily announced that there are more than 40,000 people in attendance. Then, baton in hand, he started the concert with the overture of 'La forza del destino' by Giuseppe Verdi. Silence, music, applause, the emotion of simply being here, the excitement of seeing it unfold here—that's how the night went. Cura offered something for all tastes: he accompanied himself on the guitar, singing "Yesterday" by the Beatles between opera arias. At times, the emotion could not be overcome. In the end it rained petals of roses. Clarin, April 1999

2000 - 2001

José Cura entered the new century as a true international singing star, in demand by opera companies around the globe, with a growing body of recordings and increasing prestige. Much of the summer of 2000 was spent in promoting a newly released CD, with promotional concerts in Oberhausen, Wiesbaden, Vienna, Munich, Mannheim, Hamburg, Stuttgart, and Zurich. Of special note is the concert in Budapest in July. Performing with the Failoni Orchestra of the Hungarian State Opera Budapest, Cura sang works by Puccini, Verdi, Leoncavallo, and Cilea; the concert is available on DVD.

In 2000, José Cura headlined a superb concert at Royal Albert Hall, London, in September before heading to Ireland for a two-city concert tour.

London: *Cura is the real tenor article, with that Italianate ring that is so rare. He enjoys filling his chest for the big crescendos, which he manages with no apparent difficulty,*

and there were moments, in Don José's "La fleur que tu m'avais jetée" from 'Carmen,' for example, when the timbre lightened, the head voice bringing a delicacy of colour. The Independent, September 2000

Cura also appeared in the Basilica Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rome in a concert commissioned by Pope John Paul in celebration of Palm Sunday of the Jubilee 2000. A DVD of the performance (*In Passione Domini Concerto*) is available.

2001 added conducting to the Cura portfolio, with tenor Cura sharing stage time with maestro Cura: he received a three-year appointment as principle guest conductor for Sinfonia Varsovia, the great Polish chamber orchestra previously helmed by Yehudi Menuhin. The initial concert of the collaboration took place in November in Warsaw.

Cura's vocal concerts were primarily scheduled in spring and summer.

Leipzig: Gewandhaus welcomed the tenor, celebrated in the opera houses of Milan, Vienna, London, and New York, into their hearts, right from the first aria from Verdi's seldom heard opera 'Il corsaro.' This was in part due also to his casually self-confident way of presenting the highlights of Puccini and Giordano operas. And naturally above all, it was because of his voice, with its dark timbre and velvety middle. After "Nessun dorma," which was an encore, there seemed to be no end to the applause. Leipziger Vokszeitung, May 2001

In 2001 José Cura appeared in numerous special performances and opera productions honoring the Centenary of Verdi's death, notably two concerts with soprano Daniela Dessi celebrating Verdi's art at the Barbican Centre in London (available on DVD); he was also on the concert stage with Renato Brunson in Parma for an evening of Verdi arias and duets.

Barbican: *Cura wins hands down on musical talent alone. The sound is dark and thrilling, his delivery ballsy and impactive. He's a fine vocal actor, colouring his voice to suit each character. The first half of the concert focused on Verdi's flamboyant heroes—dangerously glamorous figures. Each of them was rawly, thrillingly portrayed, though it wasn't until after the interval that we were able to appreciate the full depth and range of Cura's singing.* The Guardian, March 2001

Parma, Verdi Gala: *Dear Verdi, this is how they sing in paradise [...] A triumph for a mega-concert with all-stars. A Las Vegas-like atmosphere, a show of billion-dollar vocal cords: on the stage were the living legends—like Mehta, Carreras, Devia, Nucci, Raimondi—and rising legends like José Cura: that is to say, the best of today's opera singers. In some cases the same character was interpreted by different singers, such as Otello, sung forcefully by José Cura, and with the proverbial passion by Domingo. Everyone gave their all. In short, a luxury without precedent. At the end, the expected triumph: for one night Parma dreamed. Pity that dreams vanish at dawn.* Gazzetta di Parma, March 2001

Another highlight of 2001 was Cura's unforgettable stop in Berlin for the *Open Air Classic* concert series; the inimitable talent took the venue by storm, leading to long-ringing applause and rapturous critical acclaim:

Berlin: *Now he has finally been in Berlin, José Cura, the new star in the Tenor sky, the Latin lover with the power voice, the singing hope of the 21st century. The Three Tenors are dead. Long Live José Cura!* Berliner Morgenpost, July 2001

Berlin: *Cura, like his Three Tenor colleagues, has one of the most important requirements for success: an attractive and distinctive voice, with an erotic kick like that of the young Carreras, and as powerful as Domingo, crisp in the heights*

and surprisingly dark in its depths. Berliner Morgenpost, July 2001

Cura completed his 2001 performance year in Japan, where he presented four concerts (three in Tokyo and one in Osaka).

2002

As a concert performer, José Cura has successfully integrated the roles of singer and conductor as demonstrated in his groundbreaking performance in the Vienna Konzerthaus in November 2002. Seamlessly moving from singing arias from his new album, *Aurora*, to conducting the Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2*, his performance led to critical accolades.

Vienna: The evening at the Great Hall of the Vienna Konzerthaus showed Cura's janus-faced talents. In the Italian arias of the first half of the program, Cura demonstrated his boisterous temper, powerful and metal timbre as well as secure and spectacular high notes. After the intermission, Cura proved his first-class innate abilities with a breathtaking interpretation of Rachmaninov's vigorous 'Symphony No. 2.' To summarize this enthusiastically received evening: a highly talented conductor who also sings opera for his own pleasure. Die Press, December 2002

Vienna: José Cura performed for the first time in Vienna in a concert which presented him as a singer and conductor a few days before his 40th birthday. Cura concluded the first part of the concert with an excellent rendition of a Spanish aria from Héctor Panizza's 'Aurora.' Prior to this piece, the tenor had already landed the highlight of the recital singing as Corrado ("Ah, sì ben dite... Tutto pareva sorridere...") from Verdi's 'Il corsaro,' which electrified the theater. Cura the

tenor was in demand again for the second encore, an impressive "Nessun dorma," crowned by a very long fermata. With this concert, José Cura once again confirmed his status as an interesting artist, one who doesn't leave anyone indifferent. Der Neue Merker, Jan. 2003

Other important concerts in 2002 included four outdoor venues: Dalhalla, Sweden; Lodz, Poland; Herod Atticus, Athens, Greece; and Hyde Park, London, where Cura entertained an audience estimated at 40,000. Notable venues included the National Concert Hall in Taipei, the Pavilhao Atlantico in Lisbon, and the Kremlin in Moscow.

Sweden: Nine out of ten artists would have cancelled: José Cura was that ill yesterday. But he sang. And Cura triumphed. He sang a very fine interpretation of Corrado's recitative and aria from Verdi's 'Il corsaro'. "Cielo e mar" was brilliant but he was too ill to do justice to "O Paradiso." Nevertheless, it is important to point out that it is doubtful if a finer version will ever be heard in Dalhalla. Cura is really in a class of his own. After the intermission, the concert became more than just a good concert with a brave tenor - it was something much larger than that. His flower aria was a wonder of nuances and credibility. The audience gave a standing ovation after the 'Carmen' medley. In spite of his illness, he found the strength for 'Nessun Dorma.' I have never before witnessed such generosity and respect towards an audience. Falun Kuriren June 2002

Sweden: Pouring rain from morning until evening and an opera star with fever and a cold: there wasn't much going to make the concert on Friday evening a success. Most artists probably would have cancelled. Not José Cura. Throughout the evening, José Cura appeared relaxed and easy-going, chatting and joking with the audience and, most of all, singing like a god. When José Cura sang Enzo's aria from Ponchielli's 'La Gioconda,' they gave him a standing ovation. The air was raw and damp but nevertheless José Cura's

voice lasted even though he had to keep a handkerchief in his hand and cough during the pauses. "Ojojoj" could be heard from the audience after the "Intermezzi épico" from 'Aurora' and it was certainly movingly beautiful with the combined strings and harp. Men have made me cry before but never because they've sung so beautifully. To hear "Nessun dorma" sung live by a handsome man with a lovely voice, well... The audience paid their tribute with a standing ovation and bravos. Thank you, José Cura, for a remarkable evening! Dala-Demokraten, July 2002

Athens: As the music filled the night sky, accompanied by the light evening breeze, Cura demonstrated that his world, for many an impenetrable universe, is as accessible as any other form of musical expression, provided it comes straight from the soul. Kathimerini, July 2002

Lisbon: A genius in communicating with the public, many time setting the mood, José Cura showed himself as a conductor, tenor, pianist, and guitarist as required by the moment, and left the crowd in a standing ovation. Correio da Manhã, October 2002

Aalborg: José Cura is multi-talented, something fully realized in the concert from the very first number. He conducted the overture to Verdi's 'Forza del destino.' I have never heard the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra play more beautifully. Here was precision, poetry, and intense involvement. The whole concert was like this. It is a large voice, the one that resides in Cura's bodybuilder's breast. And it resides there good and safely, the sound flowing from him as effortlessly as crystal clear water flows from its source: sometimes gentle, sometimes swelling but always perfect, breathtaking, natural. BT on Line, November 2002

2003

From the concert in January in Prague to stops in Vienna as the honored guest at the Vienna Opera ball and in Sydney for the opening ceremonies of the Rugby World Cup to the final concert in Zurich for students, 2003 witnessed Cura in non-stop performance mode. In May, Cura completed a series of concerts in Busseto, Verdi's hometown, where he sang every tenor aria written by composer and conducted all Verdi symphonic overtures. In July, he dashed between Verona, where he was fully engaged in the summer opera season, to Regensburg and Munich. He ended the season with a unique outdoor concert in Budapest in August.

Busseto: *That José Cura owns the magic formula for sending an audience into a state of rapture was proven all too clearly the other evening in the tiny Teatro Verdi of Busseto, which was literally brimming with enthusiasm.* Parma Gazette, May 2003

Regensburg: *José Cura, a 'tenore robusto,' – or is he a 'tenore di forza'? Hard to tell, especially since the lines that mark the different kinds of repertoire are fluid. Cura sings Alfredo along with Otello: he obviously mixes repertoire—a phenomenon. Even at the beginning of his career there were no roles such as Nemorino or Alaviva; instead he started out with Turiddu, a lirico-spinto role. And the development of his voice led him right on to José, Alvaro, Alfredo, Don Carlo—and time and time again Verdi. Now he has added Puccini's Calaf to his repertoire in Verona. The voice is controlled effortlessly, ranging from piani, diminuendi, crescendi to powerfully produced high notes. The velvet baritone timbre, consciously covered notes, everything is carried expertly through all registers. It is interesting how Cura almost literally 'bites' into the notes. The vocal interpretation of the various roles is doubtlessly dominated*

by singing technique, but never to the extent where uniform sound and sheer display of vocal power predominate. Well-deserved applause. Telezeitung, July 2003

Regensburg: *Tenor José Cura infatuated his audience at the First Regensburger Thurn und Taxis Schlossfestspiele. And can he sing! His magnificent voice has become more mature, fuller, bigger—in short, better. His vocal expressiveness is captivating and goes straight to the heart. He started with the recitative and aria of Alvaro from 'La forza del destino,' then sang his unrivalled "Vesti la giubba" from 'Pagliacci,' and bewitched the audience with a stirringly rendered "O Paradiso" from Meyerbeer's 'L'Africaine.' After the interval came Puccini's "E lucevan le stelle," and "Addio fiorito asil." And who had heard "La tregenda" from 'Le Villi' before? Then followed "Non piangere Liu" and as a climax of the official program the "Intermezzo epico" from Héctor Panizza's 'Aurora.' Frenetically cheered also were the two encores, "Tra voi belle" from 'Manon Lescaut' and "Nessun dorma," the triumphant closure to a triumphant evening.* Der Neue Merker, Aug/Sept 2003

Munich: *No tenorial sighs and no sentimental super lows—everything had format and was done with class. Cura kept his baritone-colored voice masterfully under control up to the highest height. Even in Puccini's crowd pleasers from 'Tosca,' 'Madame Butterfly' and 'Turandot,' he proved his stylistic firmness. Moreover, he topped all this with a vocally brilliant highlight, the "Intermezzo epico" from 'Aurora' by his fellow countryman Hector Panizza.* Sueddeutsche Zeitung, July 2003

In October, he returned to Prague for a standing-room-only concert featuring an inspired selection of Puccini arias coupled with the Symphony No. 9 in E minor, *From the New World*, from the Czech Republic's most famous composer, Antonin Dvorák.

Prague: *On Thursday evening tenor and conductor José Cura once more filled the Smetana Hall to bursting. Any doubts about whether he had something to offer or if Cura twice in one year was too much for Prague were immediately dispelled. [And] for the second time José Cura showed his musical versatility, his intelligence and taste. No medley for tenor, but a subtle journey through Puccini: Ramerrez, Edgar, Roberto and Luigi are characters that most of us have not seen on the stage, quality tenor parts to whom Puccini gives arias full of dramatic feeling and tension. We could count on the fingers of one hand those who could follow the [Italian] words but nevertheless the whole auditorium understood what he was singing. And that is because Cura understands his heroes and knows how to extract the truth of an experience, a feeling and an expression. For some people Cura's concert is a well-made show, others are taken by his attractive, masculine tenor. For me the precious thing is how he sings and acts Puccini. Cura is not just a singer accompanied by an orchestra; his interpretation is a compact, dramatic expression of action, feeling and thought. José Cura is a strategist, supervisor, working master and sovereign lord of his evening. He knows how to apply his musical imagination. He works flat out, without vanity, but rather with the good humor and grace of an entertainer. Let an artist with such an arsenal of ideas continue to come to Prague.* Lidové noviny, October 2003

Concert, Prague: *For the second time in ten months Argentinian singer and conductor Jose Cura has sold out the Smetana Hall in Prague. The artist turned the evening into a true show, which after several encores culminated in "Nessun dorma" the world-famous song from 'Turandot.' In all, he sang 8 arias. As he sang, he walked freely about the stage, expressed his appreciation for the Prague Chamber Philharmonic, kissed the young lady violinist who is the concert master of the ensemble, and scattered flowers from ladies in the audience. He made an early connection with his*

audience and at the end had his enthusiastic public on their feet. Ceske noviny, October 2003

Prague: Without doubt the highlight of the evening remained the first half, in which José Cura performed simply as an outstanding exponent of Puccini. The arias from 'Fanciulla del west,' 'Edgar,' 'Le Villi,' 'Il Tabarro,' 'Manon Lescaut' and 'Tosca,' from which he performed Cavaradossi's immortal "Recondita armonia," were truly magnificent and once more confirmed Cura's exceptional mastery and God-given talent. Deníky Bohemia, October 2003

Prague: Cura comes onto the stage not with the conductor, but only when the music has started, walking around the stage, singing while sitting down, turning his face to the orchestra and watching them play, professing his love to a lady violinist and leading the public in their applause. But when this showman, who is perhaps driven by a motor that is a little too powerful, concentrates and pays attention, then in his rush of emotion, sadness and melancholy, he is thrilling. It is no surprise that on the opera stage, Cura is dazzling. We are glad we have him. IDNES, October 2003

2004

José Cura's first concert of 2004 was in Seoul, South Korea, with a playbill of great Italian arias. A summer of acclaimed concerts followed. Of special note was the Berlin Open Air Classic with Monserrat Caballé and the one in Ekaterinburg, where José Cura first offered an impromptu master class for students and teachers at the music conservatory, then an evening of concert pieces and operatic arias, some of which had never before been heard in the city. The public responded to the irrepressible maestro with an outpouring of affection,

jamming all roads leading to the theater and rewarding Cura with a long ovation.

In Moscow, he was acclaimed ***“A great actor, whose versions of operatic arias were as sinewy and spectacular as their executor himself”*** and in Henley, ***“His personality warmed the crowd on a chilly night”***.

Berlin: ***With his dark timbre, Cura was altogether the tenor pop star; behind her music stand, Monserrat Caballé lifted her soprano into treble spheres. By the end, the little Spanish “grande dame” and the mighty Argentinian star tenor were in each other’s arms. But by then, the adoring crowd had already been lying at their feet for a long time—nothing unexpected here.*** Berlin Morgenpost, July 2004

Ekaterinburg: ***There are some less-talented artists who may sing more beautifully but none more brilliantly. The glory of this singer is in the original interpretation of the characters he brings to life.*** Nakanune, June 2004

Ekaterinburg: ***The Ekaterinburg concert proved to be a huge success for the brilliant José Cura. The star displayed a splendid voice, one rich with nuances and passion, effortless. The end came with the aria “Nessun dorma,” during which the orchestra held on for an enormous time to allow the singer to complete an infinitely long B, eliciting a roar of approval from the hall.*** Regions RU, June 2004

Henley: ***I have no inhibitions about Friday’s entertainment with the colorful Argentinian tenor José Cura. He looks like a pirate and rightly concluded this was an evening for swashbuckling, not finesse. He sang with vigor, wiggled his bottom as he conducted and even played the guitar. The entire audience was seduced by his raffish charms.*** Daily Mail, July 2004

In July, Cura ran the Olympic flame to the stage of the Oinousses amphitheater and sang the Olympic Anthem and

“Nessun dorma.” He finished the summer with outdoor concerts in Veszprem and Gyula, Hungary.

Veszprém: ***José Cura created an atmosphere with a Latinist mentality, passion and singing, radiant personality, and quickly entered the heart of the Hungarian audience.*** Bekes Megyei Hírlap, August 2004

Cura returned to Lisbon at the end of October to headline a special evening of music for the Associação Portuguesa contra a Leucemia. Combining artistic excellence and charismatic stage presence, Cura enchanted the enthusiastic audience of thousands with his eclectic mix of American Spirituals, operatic favorites and Argentine songs, as well as his inspired conducting of Orff, Rachmaninov, and Borodin. Switching hats for the second act, Cura became the consummate pop star, sharing the stage with some of the nation's most recognizable singers in duets of familiar Portuguese songs.

Lisbon: ***In the case of the ill tenor, José Cura was, of course, worried about saving his vocal cords and divided his time between delivering body and soul and trying to last until the end of the more than three hour spectacle. It was therefore noteworthy that the Argentinian tenor filled the enormous room with his extraordinary voice while singing the aria “Nessun dorma” from Puccini’s ‘Turandot.’ There were magical moments, with special notice going to the delivery of “Feiticeira” by Represas and Cura and in the irreproachable execution of the music.*** Diariodigital, October 2004

José Cura's star shone bright on 2 November when he hosted the *Night of Ten Tenors* at the Royal Festival Hall. Always a champion of emerging talent, Cura did double-duty as tenor and maestro: he demonstrated why he is considered one of the finest singers in the world by delivering some of opera's most spectacular arias in his unmistakable style, then he stepped to the podium to display not only his superb conducting skills but

also his innate sensitivity to the needs of his nine young soloists.

London: *You wait years for a nice young tenor and then 10 come along at once. Sadly, though, they're not all as dashing and gifted as José Cura. Cura made light work of the Leoncavallo and Puccini standards. The dashing Argentinian then proved himself a stylish and sympathetic master of ceremonies, giving all nine wannabes the time and space to display their wares in the shiniest possible light. Cura elegantly demonstrated [that] the tenor's art is as much to do with expressiveness, communication skills and body language as with the voice.* The Observer, November 2004.

Cura ended 2004 with a series of highly acclaimed, sold-out concerts in Switzerland that brought audiences to their feet in thunderous applause and left critics enthusiastic:

Geneva: *There isn't a soul who can resist the impression that he has the privilege of taking part in a dialog, of being taken by the hand with warmth to be lead down the paths of all musical genres.* Tribune de Genève, December 2004

Berne: *Cura is an interpreter, a performer equipped with a dramatic, fascinatingly heroic voice: his tenor sparkles, shines radiantly and irresistibly in the Forte and the Fortissimo. In the first part of the concert, Cura delighted and charmed the audience with Verdi, Ponchielli and Puccini arias, driving folks to bouts of frenetic, wildly ecstatic applause. In the second part, Cura took up the baton himself and conducted Dvorak's 'Symphony No. 9.'* Berner Zeitung, December 2004

2005

Cura's first concert of 2005 was a sizzling affair featuring the tenor with star soprano Anna Netrebko before an enthusiastic crowd of 8,000 at the Cologne arena.

Concert with Anna Netrebko, Cologne: ***Cura threw himself into his roles; he hurled himself at the hearts of his audience, he slips into his characters totally and completely. Cura's voice explodes like a volcano. If this, his indisputably God-given gift, which he uses lavishly, were ever to give out, Cura has the ability to conduct, compose, or become an opera house director. The man possesses many talents.*** Kölnische Rundschau, April 2005

Concert with Anna Netrebko, Cologne: ***Netrebko and Cura were able to captivate and win over the audience and reap standing ovations. On one occasion, the charismatic Argentinian even stole the show from the almost too unassuming Russian with his tenor vocal explosiveness.*** Yahoo Nachrichten, April 2005

Concert with Anna Netrebko, Cologne: ***José Cura's voice oozes sensuality. With glowing baritonal coloring, fantastically secure height and personal nonchalance, and with 'fire-crackers' like the 'Pagliacci' aria or Puccini's "Nessun dorma," he threatened to upstage the Russian.*** Aachener-Zeitung, April 2005

In July, Cura shone at the opening ceremonies of the World Games in Duisburg, Germany. His participation in this international gathering of athletes was confirmation of Cura's deep and abiding commitment to youths and to his belief in the power of the positive. Employing his rich tenor voice in both classical and contemporary music, Cura celebrated the beginning of ten days of peaceful competition between athletes of various nationalities.

World Games, Duisburg: ***With the classical aria "Nessum dorma" from Puccini's 'Turandot,' the world-famous Argentinian tenor won the hearts of the audience.***
Westdeutsche Allgemeine, July 2005

World Games, Duisburg: ***Star tenor José Cura earned the first ovation. With the Duisburger Philhamonic as sympathetic accompanist, Cura touched the hearts of the audience with his classical delivery and contemporary sound.*** NRZ, July 2005.

In November, Cura headlined a concert in Killarney and in December performed for a charity in Piacenza.

2006

In mid-July, Cura traveled to Rijeka, Croatia, for a summer night of remarkable music making. Taking the outdoor stage at Trsat, Cura cast a spell over the audience with his display of vocal fireworks, incisive conducting and sterling stagecraft.

Rijeka, Croatia: ***It is now clear how José Cura wins the hearts of audiences around the world. His charisma? Certainly. His wonderful and strong voice? Even more so. But above all, it is his complete absorption in the music that makes the characters he sings come alive. I have never had such a deep operatic experience as I did during this concert performance. It is impossible to find on our opera stages such dramatic feeling, in both singing and acting, as the famous Argentinian was able to achieve on the Trsat stage.***

Jutarnji List July 2006

In October, Cura was in Belfast headlining the Belfast Festival with his usual style, grace, and vigor.

Belfast: *The starry opening concert brought a Belfast début with the Ulster Orchestra for Argentinian tenor José Cura, one of those singers whose voice so fits him like a glove it gives him the freedom of movement of any well-fitting garment. He conducts, too, and not without skill.* Irish Times, October 2006

Belfast: *Without a doubt, this weekend's concert at the Belfast Festival, featuring José Cura, will be discussed for a long time to come. On Friday night he entertained the crowd with his sheer excellence. When he entered, he radiated warmth, magnetism and great sense of enthusiasm which won the audience over straight away. In his chosen selection of songs, which included Leoncavallo's "Aria di Canio" from 'Pagliacci' and Verdi's "Morte di Otello" from 'Otello,' Cura displayed his complete mastery of vocal technique. His phrasing was always perfect and his seemingly inexhaustible voice just floated up to one stunningly brilliant top B after another. His strong voice could be heard clearly throughout the auditorium from any point that he moved to on stage, even when his back was to the audience as he faced the choir stalls. Cura seems to surrender himself totally to the characterization of each role and his disciplined singing and passionate expression were supreme. Cura returned to the stage to perform several encores and received a standing ovation from a very appreciative audience. This was a very memorable occasion. Well done, Belfast Festival!* Irish News, October 2006

Belfast: *In an age when everyone seems to be labelled a star, each one bigger than the next, it was nice to see and hear a performer of genuine quality and surprising humility. As it happens, José Cura's voice is pretty wonderful: strong, accurate and well-supported. As a performer, he's entirely at ease on stage, moving about and interacting with the orchestra. We were also given a glimpse of Cura's acting ability as he inhabited the role of each piece he sang. Death*

of Otello by Verdi was especially heartfelt, as was the spectre of the broken-hearted clown Canio leaving the stage after the famous aria from 'Pagliacci' which ended the first half of the concert. Inevitably, there were encores, one of which, "Soneto IV" by Gustavino, was an Argentine song for harp and voice only. The ever-charming Cura planted a kiss on the harpist's cheek afterwards, and I'm sure the entire hall sighed as one. Newsletter, October 2006

Belfast: José Cura is a rare find. As well as being a talented vocal actor that has the physicality to add a sense of realism to popular operatic roles, he is also a skilled conductor. Cura began his performance offstage, later casually strutting around to envelop the audience with his powerful presence as he performed "Cielo a mar" from Ponchielli's 'La Gioconda.' The charismatic performer next switched roles to conduct Giordano's "Prelude" to Act 2 from 'Siberia.' Cura's relationship with the orchestra blossomed as he interpreted Giordano's "Come un bel di Maggio" from 'Andrea Chenier' and the short but sweet "Amor ti vieta" from 'Fedora.' Puccini's touching "E lucevan le stelle" from 'Tosca,' and the crowd-pleasing "Nessun dorma" from 'Turandot,' signaled the end of the programmed concert. However, Cura was far from finished. Three encores later, this international star was met with a standing ovation. Belfast Telegraph, October 2006

Cura returned to the United States at the end of October for a series of performances at the Metropolitan Opera and two very different concerts. Flying to Miami as special guest of the Orchestra de Sao Paulo for a night of Latin-accented music, José Cura's first U.S. concert was a great success:

Miami: At a time when the opera world is searching for replacements for the beloved Three Tenors, Cura has the vocal resources and charisma to make his presence felt. In two arias from Puccini's 'Tosca', Cura's impassioned vocalism and sensuous, dulcet soft tones held the house

enthralled. In two boleros ("Somos novios" and "Esta tarde vi llover"), Cura sang with the casual ease of Frank Sinatra or Tony Bennett. For encores Cura offered a lovely, surprisingly understated Spanish love song (with exquisite harp accompaniment) and a ringing, stentorian version of "Nessun dorma" from 'Turandot.' By sheer force of voice and personality, Cura came and conquered. Miami Herald, November 2006

Miami: The Argentinian tenor José Cura captivated the Miami public with his voice and his affection. The applause given, without a doubt, was a measurement of the degree to which the public was taken with this singer, and in this case that applause became delirious when he gave as the last encore the famous aria from 'Turandot,' "Nessun dorma." It has been a long time since we have listened to a heroic voice such as Cura's, which unites a temperament that knows how to imprint each passage with the required emotion. Diario Las Americas, November 2006

Miami: Argentine tenor José Cura's dramatic flair showed up early in his performance at the new Carnival Center for the Performing Arts. As the Orquesta de Sao Paulo played the prelude to the famous "Vesti la giubba" from 'Pagliacci,' an imposing, dark-haired man entered, carrying an ordinary black chair over his shoulder, unsmiling and ignoring the audience. He sat down and put a hand over his eyes. "Recitar!" he began, and launched into a dramatic and powerful expression of the clown Canio's grief over the betrayal by his wife. The glittering crowd was wowed. Cura has a powerful voice. His tone and phrasing weren't always polished but like Maria Callas, who also possessed uneven vocal equipment, he moved the audience through the sheer dramatic force of his voice and manner. The wildly applauding audience was rewarded with three encores. He launched into Puccini's "Nessun dorma," literally ending on a high note as the roar of approval from the audience

drowned out the orchestra. South Florida Sun-Sentinel,
November 2006

José Cura also took part in the *Tucker Gala*, a prestigious annual event that features outstanding opera singers performing arias and scenes. Cura worked his magic in front of the standing room only audience with an electrifyingly offering from Verdi's early opera *Il corsaro* and as the increasingly dangerous Moor in an Act III scene from *Otello*.

Tucker Gala, New York: ***The high points were thrillingly high: José Cura exploded with fiery energy when he took the stage for 'Il corsaro's' "Tutto pareva sorridere... Sì! De Corsari il fulmine."*** Opera News, February 2007

Cura ended the year in grand style in the Christmas in Vienna concert.

2007

Following his fund-raising gala in Lisbon for the Associação Portuguesa contra a Leucemia, Cura took time out in London to hold an extensive master class for a select group of international singers and a follow-up concert in Devon in his role of Patron to the New Devon Opera.

In July, José Cura made his triumphant return to Argentina. Beginning with Cura's participation in the rededication of the Monument to the Flag in his hometown (where he was introduced as one of the 50 extraordinary Rosarinos), through a series of semi-staged, rapturously received performances of *Samson et Dalila* in Buenos Aires and an unforgettable, intimate concert in front of family and friends where he unveiled new compositions based on the poetry of Pablo Neruda, and ending with a final, fascinating master class held for aspiring local

singers at Rosario's University, the time spent in his homeland was extraordinary.

Monument to the Flag Celebration, Rosario: ***Then José Cura made his appearance on the stage and called together once more all the Rosarinos who have illuminated the world for a collective rendition of "Song to the Flag" and the aria "Nessun dorma" by Puccini offered sufficient evidence of Cura's remarkable interpretive skills.*** Notife, June 2007

Master Class, Rosario: ***If there is a pinnacle for artists, that is, a higher level where the chosen few live, then yesterday, Friday, 27 July 2007, between 10 AM and 8 PM, José Cura's place remained empty, because during that time he descended with humility to the lower level to connect with the youths who attended his master class, as much with those who sang as with those who listened. (Yes, you read correctly, with humility, words which, according to "critics" cannot be applied to this Rosarino who is so passionate about his work).*** EntreNotas, July 2007

José Cura ended the summer months in Cortona, Italy, with two concerts at the prestigious *Tuscan Sun Festival*; Cura led the Russian National Orchestra in an evening full of gems from the Russian orchestral repertoire and followed up with a vocal concert featuring some of the most popular pieces from Leoncavallo, Puccini, Verdi, and Bizet. His next concert was an equally sizzling performance in Halle, where he shared the stage with soprano Anna Netrebko in an evening of arias and duets in front of a sold-out audience of over 8,000 cheering fans.

Concert with Anna Netrebko, Halle: ***The audience of more than 8000 in the sold-out Gerry Weber Stadium responded enthusiastically Wednesday evening to Anna Netrebko and José Cura. The Argentinian, who is not only a singer but also a composer, conductor, and a photographer, convinced with his very expressive voice and his appealing manner,***

particularly apparent in his interaction with Netrebko. From this evening on we can speak of a "new" dream couple.
Mindener Tageblatt, August 2007

Concert with Anna Netrebko, Halle: ***Argentinian tenor José Cura was an equal partner to say the least. Dream-pair-partner Rolando Villazón has cancelled all performances until the end of the year in the hopes of regaining his voice. As a result, replacements had to be found for the tour and while Marcelo Álvarez in Cologne paled somewhat next to Anna Netrebko, Cura filled the stadium with an imposing appearance and a strong tenor voice rich in nuance. So convincing was he that he even received more applause than the Russian diva for his solos from 'Andrea Chénier' and the "Recitar" from Leoncavallo's 'Pagliacci.'*** Osnabrucker Zeitung, August 2007

Concert with Anna Netrebko, Halle: ***A beautiful evening, a brilliant concert experience—and a new dream couple for classical music?*** Mindener Tageblatt, August 2007

The new season started in September with a master class in Nancy, France, where Maestro Cura added to his growing reputation as teacher and mentor:

Masterclass and Concert, Nancy: ***We discovered the measure of this artist: the exceptional cream and quality of the timbre, combined with perfect control of vocal emission and a warmly Latin vibration and an interpreter who obviously "lives" what he sings. We also had the measure of this chef-d'orchestre in opera: José Cura let the orchestra breathe.***
Forum Opéra, September 2007

Following another gala concert in Lisbon in support of Associação Portuguesa Contra a Leucemia, Cura traveled to Cologne to headline in the famous verismo double-bill. Between performances in Cologne, Cura presented two concerts in Eindhoven (the second added by popular demand):

Eindhoven: *There are tenors and TENORS. With tenor we refer to a singer, whereas TENOR refers to a way of life. TENORS play on an audience, not to them. They mould the music, they work their way towards that one high note and hold it for as long as possible. All this is accomplished with the unconditional approval of the audience that wishes for nothing but the unabashed TENOR attitude. And exactly this is what the Eindhoven audience got last weekend with José Cura, ranking with Pavarotti, but in better shape and with less ado around his person.* Eindhovens Dagblad, November 2007

2008

After conducting a symphonic concert at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin in March, Cura offered a gala concert in Dusseldorf and then rounded out the summer months with performances in concert at the *Festival of Toledo* and at the *Tuscan Sun Festival* in Cortona, where he also presented an exhibition of his photography in conjunction with the release of *Esponéneas: Photography by José Cura*, published by Verlag Scheidegger and Spiess.

Düsseldorf: *José Cura prowls the stage as softly as a lurking tiger. The 45 year-old Argentinian wipes his medium long curls, dripping in sweat, from his face as he engages in his sport of singing. The audience responds with frenzied ovations. Bravos urge him on again. The testosterone tenor unleashes one thousand volts. Especially in the middle range he shines, carrying a glowing power, rather baritonal in weight and brilliantly dramatic. Immediately you see a figure of suffering—flesh, blood, tendons, and muscles. He stormed the summit of bel canto with baritone Boris Statsenko in the Libertá duet between Don Carlos and*

Marquis Posa. Here, Cura demonstrates how he works, with passion and pathos. Opera needs this Latin American for such spectacles. NRZ, April 2008

The start of the 2008/2009 season saw Cura presenting a master class for the New Devon Opera, for which he is Patron.

Cura followed his run of *La fanciulla del west* performances with two notable concerts, one in Zagreb and the second in Nancy. The Nancy performance came a year after his celebrated master class for Nancy Opera Passion and in advance of his 2010 masterclass in the same city, certainly the beginnings of a great love affair between maestro and public.

Nancy: ***It must be said that José Cura has an unusual and very broad range. It passes from the chest voice to the head with ease and elegance. And, most importantly, he manages to stay completely within his character, despite the difficulty of a concert when he goes from one role to another, almost without transition.*** Le Républicain Lorrain, October 2008

Nancy: ***José Cura enchanted the Nancy opera Friday evening. What a night! With him, opera sounds simple, natural, instinctive. Joyful, even! It was his clear and conversational celebration that won over the hall, where he appeared with the young soprano, Julija Samsonov. The evening was like a dream, better even than that enchantment. All the talent of José Cura, who appears to enjoy Nancy so much that he promises to return next year, lives in the generosity of the character whose voice reaches its fullness with disarming ease. Sometimes he takes the baton of a conductor, sometimes he leads the young Julija into a corner of the stage, asks for a pair of glasses from a spectator to improvise the singing of an aria from the 'Marriage of Figaro.' Do not be deceived by the appearance of ease; it is rather certainly the mark of greatness. But beyond the volubility, beyond the ease to create an intimacy with the public, there are hours and hours of work. Welcomed on the***

biggest stages, Cura does not hide his pleasure in Nancy, and the audience returns the feelings. He received a standing ovation without end, which he shared by holding Julija's hand and sending kisses to the orchestra. We ask for more. Le Républicain Lorrain, October 2008

2009

2009 was a year in which symphonic concerts took precedence over vocal concerts but summer was especially rewarding. Starting with an opera gala in Oviedo where he teamed with mezzo Elina Garanca, followed with a quick stop in Italy for a concert at the Emilia Romania Festival and ending in Santander with a program of South American songs (including those Cura composed on poems written by Pablo Neruda), Cura offered evidence of his wide-ranging talents, effective showmanship, and gloriously managed voice.

Oviedo: One of the best opera galas, if not the best, to have been heard in Oviedo in decades. José Cura sang a shattering "Dio! mi potevi scagliar." The Argentinian singer transmits the dramatic quality like few others. Add to this his beautiful timbre and good muscle and it all suggests a winning value beyond market invention. La Nueva España, June 2009

Oviedo: The opera gala to benefit the Fundación Banco de Alimentos that united Elina Garanca and José Cura on the stage of the Campoamor won the hearts of the audience. Cura's strong dramatic energy gave life to Verdi's Otello and the clown in "Vesti la giubba." He offered a passionate interpretation of Don José in Bizet's "La fleur que tu m'avais jetée." After three rounds of bows and having presenting works not often heard at Campoamor, Cura offered a

“Nessun dorma” that finished conquering the audience.
Diario Independiente de Asturias, June 2009

Rocca San Casciano: With the last poignant note from the encore “Nessun dorma” from Puccini’s ‘Turandot’ and marked by ten minutes of shouts and thunderous applause, the opera concert offered in the Piazza Garibaldi at Rocca San Casciano by the Fondazione Ugo Becattini came to a triumphant conclusion at midnight with the Romagna public in delirium, bewitched by the eclectic Argentinian-Madrilenian tenor José Cura and the Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini. The generosity of the orchestra, skillfully conducted twice by José Cura, whose entire body was like a true matador of the stage, pulling out all the artistic energy of the instruments as a Madrilenian toreador in the arena, the superbly skill and appealing actor and tenor José Cura offered such a harmonic show that it satisfied a thousand people. Il Resto del Carlino, July 2009

Peralada: The tenor shone his lyrical and dramatic power in the closing of Peralada. Cura applied his stage presence and appealing acting skills in the service of a repertoire of works by Leoncavallo, Verdi, and Puccini and demonstrated a pure tenor timbre tinged with dark tones and an ability to recreate the pathos of the character. He ended the opera gala with an impressive “Nessun dorma” that brought the audience to its feet. El Periódico, June 2009

Peralada: The Peralada Festival ended its 23rd season with a solo recital, the first of its kind in Spain, by the Argentinian tenor José Cura. The male verismo arias are strong and manly; it needs a seasoned tenor who does not shrink from high notes, who can project strongly over the orchestral accompaniment and who conveys wholesale emotions. Cura gives the full measures of all these aspects and had no problem in completing with brilliance the terribly demanding program. In the end, the tenor José Cura was both the lover and the beloved, sated in love, seen off with a

standing ovation and a conviction that if verismo had not been invented by the Italians, it would have been by the Argentinians. El País, July 2009

Peralada: José Cura closed the Festival of Peralada yesterday with a memorable concert. The big voice of the tenor does not leave anyone indifferent; neither does the way he gives all his energy and vitality in the firm commitment to portraying the characters he plays. Cura is a wild stage animal. He demonstrated that from his first appearance, an imposing presence walking among the musicians as he offered the declaration of principles that is the prolog to Leoncavallo's 'Pagliacci,' a verismo piece written for a baritone. The tenor then put on a sad face for the celebrated "Vesti la giubba," a high risk change of character and tessitura. The quick flip brought the first sustained applause. The singer, conductor, composer and stage director knows that a concert is not simply singing one aria after another but an opportunity to create character and climax. After the public cheered their idol, in the encore he offered an intense "Nessun dorma," an ideal close to the soiree and the Festival. Avue, August 2009

Peralada: Through operatic records and publications, we already knew that José Cura is one of the most outstanding tenors today. Yesterday, in a performance of arias, he offered confirmation. He gave a recital without barriers, coming and going naturally, avoiding applause and understanding it. Cura showed a powerful voice and expressive approach that prevailed over all. The applause was intense and passionate, and we were rewarded with the expected "Nessun dorma" from 'Turandot.' His "vincerò" was heroic, strong, and striking. An artistic success to close the Festival of Peralada. El Punt, August 2009

Santander: *Much was expected tonight, with Argentinian tenor José Cura and the compositions on poems by Pablo Neruda which he has set to music debuting in our country. How could it be otherwise that the recital, which demonstrated Cura's stunning singing ability, turned into something intimate and close? It is possible to say that Cura's transition for the 58th edition of the FIS was very positive and allowed him to demonstrate that he has the capacity to do almost anything if the voice is involved. The Argenta room rewarded him with bravos and ovations. In short, it was a nice evening that brought us the phenomenon of Cura in all his dimensions.* Culture, August 2009

Santander: *In Santander, Spain, the Argentinian tenor José Cura offered a recital of Argentinian songs, intimate and sotto voce. In premiering his own music, he proved that he is not satisfied with being an opera star. The Argentinian tenor gave his emotional all in order to champion his music before an audience, which reacted with "bravos" and lively applause.* EFE, August 2009

Cura started the new performance year teaching a master class for young singers in Nancy, followed by a concert with full orchestra to provide the complete opera experience for these artists. As one participant, Florent Mbia, remarked, *"I was not at all expecting this and I am sublimated by this personality, and I'm telling to myself that we're having an enormous chance to have this fellow who is all at once a singer like us, a conductor and a very very great musician. That is luck. There are not many singers who will get the same chance. There are plenty of things that I've learnt, enormously, I assure you; it's not to flatter anybody or to do small talk, I assure you. Especially when it comes to the way of acting on stage, and living the music, transcending the music and then conveying something to the public, thanks to him for this."*

Cura ended 2009 on a high note in both Zurich and Vienna.

Zurich [175th anniversary of the Zurich Opera]: ***José Cura had the most rewarding task with “Nessun dorma,” and after this year’s highly acclaimed performances of ‘Turandot’ was cheered like a home match. But how he transforms the stage with his Calaf, and while the choir sings, veers off into that final ‘vincero’ – that rocked! (A term not usually associated with opera, but the only appropriate one.) José Cura is an actor, he is totally narcissistic, but he is also one of the few rock stars in opera.*** Student Magazine, November 2009

Zurich [175th anniversary of the Zurich Opera]: ***A favorite of the Zurich audience, José Cura, blasted the hit “Nessun dorma” into the hall. He did this with the charm of the Latin lover and with humorous asides.*** Oper-aktuell, November 2009

Vienna [Christmas in Vienna Series]: ***A celebration for “José Cura and Friends” could have been the name of this year’s traditional Viennese concert, ‘Christmas in Vienna.’ The highlight of the big Christmas Gala was undoubtedly the appearance of Los Calchakis, a four member folk music troupe from Argentina who, together with José Cura and the Vienna Academy of Music, performed the unconventional “Navidad Nuestra” so spontaneously that one forgot the rest of the splendid framework and opulence of the program completely. José Cura should come back again and be again in such a ‘giver’s mood’ – Christmas in Vienna in 2009 stood under a very bright star!*** Der Neue Merker, December 2009

2010

In February, Cura was invited to the Budapest Opera ball, where he sang and conducted.

Budapest Opera Ball: *Budapest bested the Viennese in having a star of truly international stature on stage. Argentinian tenor José Cura, who is well-established in all the important opera houses of the world, presented two songs after he conducted the Opera Ball Orchestra. Cura, charming and gracious, cut a good Opera Ball figure.* Pester Lloyd, February 2010

Cura capped off his season with a series of gala concerts in Kazakhstan, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Germany. So popular is Cura in these regions that a second concert had to be added in Cesky Krumlov due to overwhelming demand.

Dresden: *A well thought-out sequence of famous and popular hits from operas, operettas and musicals by Verdi, Puccini, Bernstein, Arditi and Léhar resounded in good quality, as well as—very much to the delight of the audience—McCartney's "Yesterday." José Cura, who belted out his famous, well-proven highlights effortlessly, was cheerfully chatty between the musical parts. His voice and his abilities and accomplishments as actor are legendary, but on this evening, he showed himself to be more laid-back and yet, for the sake of the audience that listened seriously and devoutly, he intensified from time to time to his usual high-quality artistic performance as well. The audience, rapt and listening reverently, expressed their gratitude for this very high-class popular concert with much applause.* Ingrid Gerk, August 2010

2011

A series of concerts brought the performance year to a successful conclusion.

Berlin: *José Cura performs the first vocal number here, the "Prologue" from Ruggiero Leoncavallo's opera 'Pagliacci,' with a charismatic voice that is instantly appealing and memorable. The audience delights in this and in the midst of this splendid setting feels momentarily transferred into a Mediterranean landscape. Pleasantly relaxed, easy-going, casual, that's the way José Cura deals with the texts and also with the audience, for he leaves the stage area and goes into the stalls of block A in order to flirt a little and spread a mix of Argentinian fire and Italian charm. Perhaps it is exactly this blend of fire and passion-in-action that allowed José Cura to become one of the most sought-after singers at the world's opera houses within just a few years. This was a grandiose evening celebrated in midst of a magnificent setting.* Das Unabhängige Musikmagazin, July 2011

Savonlinna: *The Argentinian tenor José Cura raised such a storm of applause at St. Olaf's Castle on Sunday evening such as never before experienced. Cura offered an uncomplicated and warm stage presence as well as touching way with songs that melted the audience. The encore, "Nessun dorma", was cheered with the whole audience on their feet and yelling.* Itä-Savosta, July 2011

Savonlinna: *Star tenor José Cura succeeded handsomely at the Savonlinna Opera Festival. The star was at his best in the opera arias and demonstrated the reason for his world-wide reputation. As an entertainer, he was an unabashed communicator who made the audience feel comfortable, ran around the stage, flirted with the Philharmonic Orchestra's concert master, played guitar while singing Paul McCartney's "Yesterday;" the classically educated singer even stayed in the groove when singing with Tarja Turunen, formerly of Nightwish. A wonderfully handsome rendition of Puccini's "Nessun dorma" left the audience truly excited. The star has finally come to Finland and his is a rare natural*

tenor voice the sound of which we want to listen to more often. HS, July 2013

Savonlinna: *José Cura charmed the audience from the beginning. Cura sang both the "Prologue" and the great aria from 'Pagliacci.' They required baritone and tenor singing but Cura had no problem with either. Always pleasing, the powerful voice operated steadily through the whole scale. The "Prologue" calls for us to follow the destinies of life: the loves, the hates, the deaths. Cura gave the words meaning, whispered them, sighed, cried, beguiled. The aria from 'Pagliacci' exudes the despair of an aging artist. Big emotions rose as he immediately involved the audience. Cura took to the Puccini arias as naturally as breathing, as living. "Lucevan le stelle," the aria from 'Tosca,' was riveting, the interpretation dripping with intense despair. The sound was fresh and strong, an impressive package. The audience was spellbound, they loved José Cura. A storm of applause went up with the opening notes of "Nessun dorma" and it ended with an even greater roar. A terrible storm seemed to cry out that José Cura had the hearts of the audience. He is a great singer with great class and a perfectly charming stage presence.* Itä-Savosta, July 2011

Saaremaa Opera Days: *Not only a talented singer and conductor but also skillful in interacting with the audience and partnering with the orchestra and chorus, José Cura's presence placed the small island more prominently on the world's opera map. Cura flirted with his partner and with the audience and made jokes, but the schedule was drawn up without discounting Italian opera classic, and in so doing was effectively done. José Cura left a high bar to match. Frenzied clapping, foot stomping and a standing ovation showed the elation caused by this singer. José Cura tossed a beautiful bouquet to the audience, which by now had become opera fans.* Meiemaa, July 2011

Saaremaa Opera Days: *For the first time in his career, one of the top tenors in the world came to the 'Saaremaa Opera Days.'* José Cura has broad reach; in particular we know him as a world-class tenor who can also sing the high baritone roles. In Saaremaa, the program was imaginative and atypical. It would be difficult to pick out a specific aria—the entire program was perfect and emotional. José Cura's concert was unquestionably the concert of the year and one of our most important cultural events. Ekspress, August 2011

2012

Cura entered the summer months of 2012 with a series of spectacular concerts.

Moscow: *Last Thursday the Rosario artist shone in a concert he gave at the Kremlin.* La Capital, July 2012

Moscow: *To his credit, José Cura constructed the evening so that even the most determined opponents of non-acoustic concerts took pleasure: the colorful timbre, the ability to move from velvet dramatic notes to delicate lyrical ones, the tenor and baritone repertoire and the charm and artistry could be assessed even through the speakers. The program was compiled with a bang—in general, the repertoire where the singer, known for his ability to project his feelings, was able to show off his skill. And then he picked up the guitar, called for the interpreter, and told the touching story of how the first song he learned was "Yesterday." He sang it—very romantically—to his own accompaniment, and brought to their feet the nearly six thousand who quite densely populated the Kremlin hall.* Nezavisimaya Gazeta, June 2012

Moscow: *In terms of accomplishment he really has no equal. Tenor, baritone, conductor, composer, guitarist, opera director and producer and published author—in short, the type of Renaissance man that cause people to smoke nervously in the corner when he's around. His is a strong and passionate tenor not only of good timbre but also wonderfully equipped with all the killer techniques of the Italian school.* Izvestia, June 2012

Moscow: *José Cura sang "Yesterday," accompanying himself on the guitar; soon the symphonic orchestra began to play along. And while this definitely violated the "canons" of a classical opera concert, it sounded very sincere and appropriate. After all, during the concert the singer's charm and empathy had reduced the huge space of the Kremlin to the size of a cozy chamber where there had simply been a friendly chat between musicians and listeners.* Journal Star Teatral, June 2012

Moscow: *José Cura bravely struggled with air conditioner and microphones—and won. In addition to a voice he handles masterfully, he dazzled the audience with his magic personality. At the end of the show he came out with a guitar to play "Yesterday." The six thousand spectators in the sold-out hall are probably still clapping even now.* Český rozhlas, July 2012

Istanbul: *The venue was completely filled, and with people of all ages who roared their approval of Cura as if he were a rock star. Cura brought his bold stage charisma to İstanbul and, by all accounts that night, won hundreds more fans. His off-hand charm, spontaneous theatrics and selection of eight of the world's most popular tenor arias proved a winning formula for Cura and this sold-out audience. His radiant voice sounded absolutely glorious in that large venue. His conducting was clear and direct, eliciting the essentials from the score with no excessive actions. Throughout his singing, he tends to darken his upper notes*

by changing the vowel shape and placement; as a result, clarity and brilliance is sacrificed. But Cura, the tenor, the personality, the conductor, the composer, the actor and stage director, loomed large and certainly lit up İstanbul that night as the sparkling centerpiece of the 2012 Opera Festival. Today's Zaman, July 2012

2013

As a special treat for fans of quality singing and charismatic performers, Cura was able to sprinkle his busy performance year with a series of must-see concerts (Vienna, Budapest, Soria, Antalya, Catania and Moscow) highlighted with a bravura return to Paris and the introduction of his highly-regarded recitals featuring Spanish language songs.

Vienna: This was an evening of a different kind, offered by the tenor who was born in Argentina, and it was obviously very important for him to show himself in a different way from a different point of view from the usual dramatic stage roles. José Cura was restrained in his singing, offering soft voice, as he sought to maintain musically the high literary standards of the texts. Soulful, emotionally intense are probably the terms to apply. In the second half, Cura promised to have a little bit more fun with songs centered on flowers [and ended] with "Canción a la bandera" from Héctor Panizza's 'Aurora' sung with full force, volume and high notes. In short, he gave everything his fans hoped for from him. With a lot of applause and warmth, there were three more encores. Der Neue Merker, September 2013

Paris: Like fine wine, José Cura's singing has improved; he has returned with renewed energy. The silhouette has thickened but the wider vibrato of his timbre has retained its black velvet, especially when the voice is released. The

high notes which were effortful are [now] emitted more naturally. Facing an enthusiastic audience, expressing his pleasure from the start, the tenor emphasized nuance. Good for him! Cura is never more exciting than when he lightens his tone and dares muted colors. The interpreter has expanded his range of expressions. Pagliaccio, Dick Johnson, even more Otello, while deprived of the theatrical artifice, are presented in their theatrical truth, irrefutably. This is a generous artist. Forum Opera, October 2013

Paris: We could fault José Cura for a voice that now has the patina of age and sometimes has difficulties negotiating the higher notes. But what a commitment in a concert performance in which he was successively Tonio, Otello, Canio and Dick Johnson! The state of tension in which he completed Act IV of 'Otello' commands respect and was literally stunning. The tears he paid to the standing Parisian audience and its ovation made this concert one of those that you mark and remember for a long time. Those who did not attend missed the boat. ODB-Opera, October 2013

Budapest: José Cura's charity concert in Budapest was a memorable evening. He arrived at the Palace of Arts with a quiet, intimate chamber program, full of Argentine songs; he also brought one of his compositions. This song, which Cura composed for a poem by Pablo Neruda, had an unusually strong impact at the end of a melancholy, bittersweet, inspired and poetic song-recital on death based on Argentine folklore. José Cura could be a composer of high caliber, if he could find more time to composing. I didn't know the face of the chamber musician José Cura until now. It is much more difficult to present the message of a song lasting only a few minutes to the audience; however José Cura does this so well that we almost understand the message without the translator. In the second part of the concert we listened to the 'Misa Criolla' and the Christmas

songs of 'Navidad Nuestra.' It was a beautiful conclusion, worthy of the first part of the concert and it also creating the right spirit of Christmas in the period of Advent. Magyar Nemzet, December 2013

Budapest: Tickets were sold out within moments when word got out that José Cura would perform in Budapest [offering] a special Argentine evening in the Palace of Arts for the Salva Vita Foundation. It was roaring success. In José Cura's voice the world's softest and most virile male voice is heard. It is robust, gentle and caring. There were beautiful songs written for poems from such poet as Pablo Neruda. There was pain in them [mingled] with the magic of soft sounds. In the second part of the concert we listened to two sacred music pieces from Ariel Ramirez: 'Misa Criolla' and 'Navidad Nuestra' with the Budapest Monteverdi Choir, the Argentine group Los Calchakis and José Cura. These were Indian and Latin melodies with the sounds of flying Andean birds performed with devotion, passion and increasing happiness. José Cura sang and also conducted the choir and musicians standing with his back to them. His fingers were speaking. By the end of the concert everyone was filled by happiness. Infovilág, December 2013

2014

José Cura started the year with a triumph in Stockholm as Andrea Chénier, then moved from strength to strength as he portrayed Mario Cavaradossi, one of Cura's very best roles, Otello, and Dick Johnson, all while offering a generous number of enticing concerts between acclaimed opera performances.

A series of South American concerts delighted fans in Berlin, where he entertained the audience vocally and with his magnetic personality.

Berlin: *José Cura arrives. He removes (or puts on) his glasses suggestively, finessing the connection with the texts, and the emotions rise. It is not just the voice, which is fantastic. Cura told the charming story of the school children singing Hector Panizza's "Canción de la bandera," a difficult tenor aria, every morning. Everything should be sung so gorgeously!* Kulturradio, February 2014

Berlin: *Argentinian José Cura, one of the most celebrated tenors in the world, thrilled the Berlin audience with his interpretation of songs by composers from his country. The concert program consisted of songs for tenor and orchestra by three of the major composers of Argentine classical music: Alberto Ginastera, Carlos Guastavino, and Héctor Panizza. Cura embroidered the repertoire with his voice and on-stage acting magnetism that has made him one of the great figures in the opera world.* Deutsche Welle, February 2014

Berlin: *Rosario tenor José Cura was showcased at the "Festival of South American" in Berlin, moving the audience with a program consisting of works by Ginastera, Guastavino and Panizza [to become] one of the most acclaimed artists at the two week Festival.* Terra, February 2014

Cura stopped in Bratislava and Ostrava for two evenings full of opera arias, thrilling audiences eager for the sort of spectacular evening of music making only Cura can provide.

Bratislava: *A remarkable number of visitors were attracted to the monstrous hall of the National Tennis Centre for the cultural event of the year 2014 in Bratislava: José Cura, a first rate singer at the zenith of his career. The voice*

mesmerizes with dark color and metallic luster [and] he still has a feeling for drama, psychological dimension and subtle shades of each character which is reflected in most arias.
Opera Slovakia, March 2014

The summer concert season featured Cura in Düsseldorf, as part of the Musique en fête at Théâtre Antique d'Orange in front of 8300 opera enthusiasts in June, and in Bodrum, Turkey, where the city "***heard the voice of God***" in Cura's performance.

Düsseldorf: ***Ultimately you forgive this fantastic singer-actor everything. A trumpet-like smashing "Esultate" and the appropriately restrained voice in the love duet as well as the absolutely stylistically stunning rendition of Cavaradossi's "E lucevan le stelle" offered all what is to be expected from him. As an encore, he sang a "Nessun dorma" in front of the complete ensemble gathered on the stage and fascinated again with his incredible self-awareness. While other tenors tremble with fear facing the last phrase with its tricky heights, he interacted with his partner, the conductor and even the orchestra, wandered across the stage and finally sang a "Vincerò" that caused the audience to almost go out of control with enthusiasm. With Cura, the actually impressive thing is the overall package: a great voice, secure top notes, striking acting potential and the already mentioned unshaken confidence in his own skills.*** Der Neue Merker, June 2014

Düsseldorf: ***The role of the fervently melancholy hero was confidently assumed by José Cura. With his considerable stage presence and his full radiant tenor voice, he produced the required bloom—the Italian way—from the first moment. Translucent moments piled up.*** RP Online, June 2014

Düsseldorf: ***José Cura was vocally at his best in his encore, "Nessun dorma" from Puccini's 'Turandot.' His timbre was***

warm and round, his voice free and flexible as it unfolded in all its glory. WestDeutsche Zeitung, June 2014

Düsseldorf: ***José Cura won the hearts of the spectators but not only with his radiant tenor. "Singin' in the Rain," he suggested to conductor Alex Kober, grinning mischievously. And after the love duet from Puccini's 'Tosca,' he kissed colleague Magee smack on the nose.*** Express, June 2014

Bodrum: ***Where do I begin to speak about this concert? I swear I do not know. The repertoire was obviously meticulously selected, with Argentine songs and beautiful arias from the world of opera. Leoncavallo's famous aria from 'Pagliacci' opened, and the large audience eagerly awaited José Cura's arrival, eyes searching left and right to the side of the stage. Then, from the back row of the arena a magical voice could be heard... Cura sang as if the singer could sense the infinity of nature. Until the end of the concert, artistic desire, ambition, joy, peace, grabbed the reins as we watched. All I'm saying is our village sounded with the "voice of God."*** Sanattanyansimalar, August 2014

The year ended with a series of sensational events, including a gala performance at Arena di Verona, participation in the celebration in honor of Elena Obraztsova at the Bolshoi, the premiere presentation of Cura's *Stabat Mater* (conducted by fellow Argentinian Mario de Rose) in České Budějovice, a recital in Monte Carlo featuring Argentine songs and a New Year's Eve concert in Vilnius.

Zabrze: ***José Cura, returning to Poland after a long absence, arrived onstage in the Domu Muzyki i Tańca in Zabrze showing great artistic form. Every time he stood in front of a microphone he confirmed his great vocal state. The concert ended with a long standing ovation that made clear the audience did not want the artist to leave the stage. One thing is certain: José Cura confirmed that he is a great artist and succeeded in creating a completely relaxed atmosphere***

for both orchestra and audience through his personality. To Maestro José Cura: thank you for this musical feast. Presto, November 2014

Monte Carlo: With two good hours of 'Argentine Songs' the former student from the choir at the Colón Theater of Buenos Aires literally cast a spell on the audience. No need to understand José Cura; it was enough to let his affects carry you away in the poetic universe of the Argentinian tenor. This recital closed beautifully with a brilliant and overwhelmingly heartfelt interpretation of the "Cancion de la Bandera," the "Song to the Flag" by Hector Panizza. Two encores were welcomed by the standing ovations of a conquered audience. Musicologie, December 2014

Vilnius: The famous Argentinian tenor José Cura New Year's concert at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theater was full of the unexpected. After the orchestral introduction to Ruggero Leoncavallo's opera 'Pagliacci,' the famous tenor voice was heard coming...from the stalls. He began to sing as the clown Canio from his seat among the audience. After a few phrases he stood up to go to the stage, but even here he improvised when he took the hand of a little girl who led him from the audience, an unexpected but important role with which the star began the concert. From the start, the so-called fourth wall separating the actor from the audience was broken, with the famous tenor and even cleverer director delicately creating an informal atmosphere equal to a rock or jazz concert. Even the most demanding tastes of music fans could not be found wanting considering the selection and quality of the programmed works, which met the highest classical standards. Calaf's fabulous aria "Nessun dorma" from Puccini's 'Turandot' completed the fantastic evening. José Cura's inspirational arch, charisma and human warmth radiated and created a New Year's evening atmosphere that was free, sincere, and

extraordinary. A postmodern New Year's Opera Party.
Lrytas, January 2015

2015

Performance year 2015 was marked by a truly international footprint as José Cura traveled from Europe to South American and on to Asia to bring his artistry to a world-wide audience.

It takes supreme confidence and artistic flexibility to step off the opera stage and leave behind the formal technique necessary to navigate the classical repertoire, to adapt seamlessly to a world as different from structured classical music as eclectic pop and emotive musical theater and still claim victory. José Cura did just that at the Budapest Arena for an evening of music making that transcended labels and ended in an ecstatic jam session that had the audience on its feet. Cura followed his Budapest concert with a recital in Lisbon before returning to Hungary for a sensational classical music concert in Gyor.

Budapest: José Cura appears and surprise! Close your eyes and he sings the Beatles and John Lennon and all sorts of enchanting duets with Andrea Mahó and the heart fills. The Argentinian opera singer easily enchants. The tears flow. And a fantastic, humorous personality is on display as well—once he talks about the key needed to leave the hotel, another he asks Andrea how many times she will change her clothes. He is like no one else. This is what I expected from the evening, wonderful moments that make you forget all of your troubles and problems. SikerAdo, February 2015

Budapest: José Cura's main field is classical music yet within this crossover performance he harvested a complete success. The program consisted of well-known parts of such

musicals as 'Phantom of the Opera,' 'West Side Story,' 'Miss Saigon,' but they performed Beatles songs, too, declaring them to be classics. Cura greatly enjoyed himself in this world of the lighter genre. He toured and dominated the stage with a microphone in his hands; walking among the rows of the orchestra while he wondered on the musicians' performance and held the microphone to them emphasizing the individual achievements, which he acknowledged with applause, and so did the audience. Cura also grabbed the guitar and brought the orchestra under his control in such a way that the conductor joined the musicians, too. Cura took part in the joint realization of the concert with humility, sharing the success with all participants. In addition to the excellent production, the audience could enjoy Cura's humor, polite gestures, directness and the charisma of his impressive personality. We will never know how much was improvised and how many of the elements were directed in advance, but it is certain that spontaneity also had a major role in it. Thus José Cura conquered the audience.

Hetedhethatar, February 2015

Budapest: It was amazing to see that there is an artist with versatile abilities among opera singers, often imagined as stiff performers. This time José Cura showed the Hungarian audience how the popular music of our time could be interpreted by an opera singer who possesses a classical musical education. Cura beautifully sang not only Puccini's "Nessun dorma" but he picked up his guitar with great confidence to evoke the popular songs of Beatles. "Yesterday" and "Imagine" brought tears to the eyes of many people. The same happened with the duet for the song "Tonight" from 'West Side Story.' The encore came, despite the fact that only minutes earlier Cura had pulled the cable from his guitar and carried the instrument on his shoulder while he left the stage—of course he did all this for the sake of the show, because humor was also a constant guest during the evening. Those who were there were not

disappointed. You could see smiling people leaving the concert, older and younger ones equally who had one thing in common: each of them had been in love once, so they all could feel what this unforgettable compilation was about.

Vivalamusical, February 2015

Budapest: The star guest of the night, José Cura, appeared. His voice rang out first in a solo, "Eternal Flames," a song by the Bangles sung with a funny English accent and then he sang the duet "Tonight" from 'West Side Story' with Andrea Mahó. The Argentinian opera singer proved his directness and professionalism within the very first minutes. Songs sung with Cura's tenor voice won new interpretations; in his performance these songs were put in a different light than those which we already knew. Cura also sang three songs in Spanish, his own language: thus he brought that specific, genuine southern temperament to Hungary, lifting the audience out of our typical pessimistic attitude. Cura lived on the stage with a guitar and for a while with a drum, too, when he later performed three "classic" songs, as he called them: "Yesterday," "Let It Be," and "Imagine" from the Beatles and John Lennon. With "Nessun dorma," the audience heard what José Cura is widely known for. His performance was easy, relaxed, and free from any mannerism, and what is more important: he made the opera genre accessible and enjoyable for everyone. The Mahó-Cura Crossover evening—the Concert of Faith as Cura called it—was spent in the spirit of internationality and multilingualism, passion and love, which—even if for a brief hour and a half—noticeably made the audience think and removed the audience from their apathetic, self-centered view of life. Prae, March 2015

Budapest: Then comes José Cura and the stage explodes. He's a real professional with remarkably constant contact with viewers. The audience gave thanks with a standing ovation. Sógópéldány, February 2015

Recital, Lisbon: *Tenor José Cura interpreted "E lucevan le stelle" by Puccini and also recited and sang Pablo Neruda with "Pensé morir" and Carlos Guastavino with "La rosa y el sauce". And he ended with the exciting "Song to the Flag" by Hector Panizza. The audience enthusiastically applauded the artist.* Fundación Prodis, April 2015

Gyor: *José Cura, who is always able to get close to the audience from the first moment, walked into the arena from the side while singing the 'Pagliacci' Prologue. Once on the stage he sang and also conducted the the Győr Philharmonic Orchestra—as Cura conducted, the orchestra soared. Whatever José Cura did, whatever he sang, it was always honest and heartfelt. Otello's deep pain passed over us as did Alfred's conquest when he won Violetta (Andrea Rost) in 'Traviata.' And of course there was brilliant singing and music.* InfoVilág, May 2015

Cura ended the year as Canio in Bratislava and Mario in Mannheim, but perhaps most exciting of all was the concert in Prague, where he had just been announced as Artist in Residence, in which he debuted the song cycle he composed on a series of poems by Pablo Neruda.

Prague: *There was a great success this evening at the Prague Municipal House with the musical-literary drama "If I die, Survive me!" whose author is the famous Argentinian tenor José Cura. The songs were composed on themes from the life of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Cura sang the poet's voice in Spanish while the role of the writer's wife, Matilda, was recited by Zlata Adamovská. Cura and Adamovská both had colds. Even so, both artists fulfilled the assigned role and harvested appreciative applause and expansive bravos at the end of the twenty-minute long song cycle.* Ceske Noviny, October 2015

2016

Through the first half of the year Cura balanced singing opportunities with a host of other skills. In February, he took on the role of conductor, chorus master, and composer in Prague as Artist in Residence in an ambitious program featuring his *Magnificat* (**“extraordinary success,”** Novinky) as well as Rachmaninov’s *Vigil for mixed choir a capella op. 37* (**“literally an experience... unusually lively and plastic,”** OperaPlus) before ending with the towering *Symphony No 2 in E Minor, Op 27*, again by Rachmaninov (**“beautiful integrity with a natural and pure musicality rarely heard,”** OperaPlus). He followed the extraordinary concert with a master class for young Czech singers (a concert featuring several of the students took place in October). In March, he paired his *Magnificat* with Bach’s in an extraordinary concert in České Budějovice. In April, Cura conducted *Otello* in a semi-stage production (set and direction also by Cura) in Győr, Hungary, in the 5500 seat Audi Auditorium; Cura finished the first half of the year at the 67th Dubrovnik Summer Festival, performing at the opening ceremony as a conductor and singer and then the next day appearing in front of St. Blaise in full glory as tenor and finally presenting his book of photography, *Espontáneas*, as part of the festival program.

In October, Cura returned to Prague for two special concerts in his role as Artist in Residence—he joined select students from his February masterclass to perform with him on stage in the Smetana Concert Hall. He traveled to Dresden to reprise his role as Mario Cavaradossi in a limited run, then to Saarbrücken for a sold-out concert featuring South American music, and on to Luxemburg for yet another night of music making.

Saarbrücken: ***The Matinee Concert of the German Radiophilharmonie in the Congresshalle Saarbrücken was sold out but one would never have expected to experience***

the international star José Cura, and even more beautiful was that the DRP managed to obligate this exceptional tenor for a concert of South American music, including works by (the artist) himself. José Cura, acclaimed as an operatic tenor on the major stages of the world, is not only a singer but has also studied composition and conducting. And he has the talent to be able to talk with his audience in a very personable manner, which he demonstrated at the Saarbrücken concert. His great voice unfolded in rarely heard sounds of beauty and intensity in piano, then blossomed into room-filling expressiveness (marvel at the aria "Alta en el cielo" from Panizza Opera 'Aurora') which wowed the audience. Cura bid farewell to the audience with a much applauded encore. Kultur und Sport, November 2016

2017

Calendar year 2017 spotlighted Cura as composer, conductor, and tenor when he returned to Prague. After conducting a program which included Erik Satie's *Gymnopédie* and Ottorino Respighi's *Church Windows*, he then stepped from the podium for the world premiere of his oratorio *Ecce Homo*, in which he sang the central role of Christ.

Prague: *The Argentinian singer, conductor and composer José Cura selected Prague as the site of the world premiere of his oratorio 'Ecce Homo.' It's not so surprising since Cura is this season's artist in residence with the Symphony Orchestra, plus the Prague audience has adored him since his first singing concerts here years ago. On Wednesday and Thursday the audience in the sold-out Smetana Hall at the Municipal House witnessed two evenings where Cura excelled in all areas of his activity. Not only in the first half of the program when he conducted the Prague Symphony*

but also in the second half with his oratorio when he stepped out with the other soloists, two choirs and the recorded voice of a reciter. The audience response was tremendous and especially for Cura. Novinsky, March 2017

Returning to Prague for his second concert of the year, Cura conducted the first half of the evening ('Modus,' a work composed by Cura for the Prague Symphony Choir, and Joaquin Rodrigo's 'Concierto de Aranjuez') and then stepped from the podium to serve as soloist for his symphonic adaptations of Ariel Ramirez's 'Misa Criolla' and 'Navidad Nuestra.'

Prague: ***Argentinian singer, conductor, and composer José Cura twice offered a program made up of listening gems—two masses from the Argentine composer Ariel Ramirez. 'Misa Criolla' and 'Navidad Nuestra' were featured in the premier of Cura's symphonic adaption and with Cura serving as soloist. The audience's response was great and the performers repeatedly celebrated. Novinky, October 2017***

Prague: ***I approached the symphonic version of 'Misa Criolla' and 'Navidad Nuestra' with skepticism; José Cura, however, orchestrated the two works with extraordinary respect for the original, without significant interventions in the composition, and the symphonic version supported everything that was most important. The solo part was taken by José Cura. Voice and technique permitted the soloist to create the finest nuances on his side. Thus, the work could breathe the whole range of moods from immediate joy (Gloria), through relentless insistence (Credo) or pain (Kyrie) to ultimate peace (Agnus dei). Cura never slipped with an inexperienced pen (as a composer), and his performance remained earnest and sincere. A Christmas story set in an Argentine environment—such is the narrative of "Navidad Nuestra." It has six parts (the Annunciation, Nativity, Shepherds, Wandering, Three kings, Escape) which, like the previous number, correspond to***

Argentine dance. Again, it was a vigorous and soulful performance in which the choir, the soloist and the orchestra were well understood. And José Cura's performance proved that a better soloist, in which the necessary singing qualities and natural spontaneity came together, would be hard to find. There was nothing else to expect from the Argentinian tenor of the world level. Opera Plus, October 2017

In late October, José Cura took part in a Charity Concert in St Petersburg, receiving the Onegin Award based on his career-spanning creative collaborative relationship with Russia. Cura is the first non-Russian artist to receive the statuette of "Onegin," this one with the motto "From Russia with love."

2018

José Cura started 2018 in concert, starring in a sold-out gala New Year's Concert in Warsaw featuring a finely curated program of arias, Spanish songs, and modern pop classics which ended in a standing ovation.

Warsaw: The audience gathered in the National Philharmonic did not hide their admiration with the New Year's Concert organized by the Mazovian Musical Theater in Warsaw; before the start of the concert outside the Philharmonic there were numerous people with cards: "I will buy a ticket for José Cura." The star of the evening, the Argentinian tenor José Cura, was awarded a standing ovation for the outstanding performance of the aria "Nessun dorma." Known mainly for the classical repertoire, Cura surprised the audience by singing Paul McCartney's hit "Yesterday" and very important Spanish songs. The New Year's Concert exceeded the boldest expectations of the organizer. E-teatr, January 2018

Cura also completed two conducting gigs in March. In Prague he offered a colorful, impressionistic evening with music of Debussy and Ravel and in Budapest he presented a full slate of his compositions, including *Modus*, *Magnificat*, and *Ecce Homo*. In Dresden, he offered a matinee performance of South American lieder.

Dresden: *Welcome to Germany! José Cura shakes his head in amazement. "Here we work on Sunday at 11 clock." Even if the time is unusual for him, he is immediately fully there, in the music. The Argentinian tenor, in demand worldwide, is in the Semperoper with his "wonderful friends," the Dresdner Kapellsolisten, in an acclaimed matinee. Cura leads the performance, gives sensitive performances and then rolls out the sound carpet as a conductor himself. He sings of pampas grass and mother of pearl in the wind, becomes a flower gardener out of love, yearns for water lilies and purple fuchsia. With charisma and impressive stage presence, he comments in English throughout the morning. His voice can do anything: it whispers and revels, is full of longing and drama, is tender and melancholy, bold and cheerful. Cura sings self-composed songs to his beloved, following the poetic lyrics by Pablo Neruda. They tell of the gentleness of a love, the happiness of loyalty and the grief of abandonment. Cura boasts of the richness of Argentine folk and art music. What for Germans is Schubert or Schumann are for him are compositions by Hilde Herrera or Carlos Gustavino. He sees himself as a cultural ambassador of his homeland.* SZ-Online, May 2018

Dresden: *The Semperoper was virtually full to welcome José Cura who was singing, conducting and had arranged the songs so this certainly felt like a one-man show. For the concert Cura chose some thirty songs from the pens of seven Argentine composers working in the twentieth-century. Cura also included three of his own compositions. After living in Europe for nearly thirty years this is music to which*

Cura feels inexorably connected, which serves as a tribute to the legacy of his Argentine heritage and he sings it with noticeable love, tenderness and passion that all feels so authentic. My highlight was the tender Guastavino song 'Se equivoco la palomo' beautifully performed with a sure sense of longing. Striking, too, was Maria Elena Walsh's 'Postal de guerra' with its light, delicate string writing and stronger wind accompaniment. Here Cura was in striking voice with a song that required a range from very soft to his high register all negotiated with comparative ease. As an artist of rare talent, the multi-talented José Cura didn't disappoint. Seen and Heard International, May 2018

For the summer season, in addition to conducting concerts in Prague (and his staging of 'Nabucco'), Cura appeared in three important music festivals: Zagreb, Veszprém, and Tokaj.

Zagreb: He is a 55 year-old tenor, conductor, director, writer, photographer, humanitarian... a respected, world famous rarity, a dramatic tenor. José Cura is an undoubted showman who turns the orchestra space into a stage through which he moves nonchalantly. He reigns with a very beautiful voice and ultimately wins the evening with the inevitable Calaf aria; he is at his best as the cowboy in Puccini's Fanciulla del west and, of course, as the incurably romantic Calaf in the heavenly heights of Turandot. Jutarnjim, July 2018

Vesprem: A complete, perfect, generous, entertaining, rich, and uplifting evening... Veol, July 2018

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