

JULIA MIGENES

Biography

Julia Migenes was born on the Lower East Side of New York into a family made up of a passionate mixture of Greek and Irish-Puerto-Rican descent. Despite a difficult and violent childhood, she discovered her calling upon engagement of the child role in "Madame Butterfly" where she first experienced the power and the emotion of music linked to a stage setting.

A few years later, while studying at the New York School for Performing Arts, she was chosen by Leonard Bernstein to be a soloist in his "Young People's Concerts".

Julia then began her Broadway career: she was part of the original casting of "Fiddler on the Roof" with Zero Mostel and she interpreted Maria in "West Side Story".

However, she understood that her real calling was to sing, leading her to a cover contract at the New York Metropolitan Opera. While substituting for the leading role of Alban Berg's, renowned for its technical difficulty, she was cheered and acclaimed by the public, launching her opera career.

Word of this new star crossed the Atlantic where Maurice Béjart was desperately searching for his Salomé to be staged in Geneva. Julia Migenes embodied the ideal combination for this role: a world-class opera singer and a graceful dancer.

While on stage in Geneva as Salomé, the Italian film director Francesco Rosi was casting for his up and coming film: Carmen. The lead role required not only an opera singer and dancer but also an actress sensual enough to personify the burning passion of Bizet's character. The result was Julia Migenes immortalized in a motion picture that has since become a reference in the filmed opera genre. The soundtrack not only brought her a Grammy Award but even more worldwide notoriety that allowed her to access the greatest theatres in the world.

To this day, Julia Migenes has recorded more than 20 albums. Among the most recent : "Vienna" conducted by Lalo Schifrin, a Gold record six months after its release ; in 1996, "Man of la Mancha" ("L'homme de la Mancha"), conducted and arranged by Paul Gemignani, with Placido Domingo, Samuel Ramey, Mandy Patinkin ; in 1999, "Robert Stolz" and "The music of Franz Lehar" for BBC and in 2000, Donizetti's "Catarina Cornaro".

In 1998, Julia Migenes wrote "Diva on the Verge", a one-woman-show mingling monologue and opera often mocking its rigid world, revealing her daring wit and sense of humor. In 1999, she performed this show in French in Paris and throughout France and French-speaking countries. She is preparing a Spanish version of this show for a tour in Spain and Latin America. She continues to present the English version in a tour throughout the US.

In 2000 Julia Migenes appeared in the "Seven Deadly Sins" and "Happy End" in Madrid (at the Zarzuela Theatre).

In May 2001 Julia Migenes created "Passions Latines", a choreographed recital in which she interprets a repertoire of Latin music, both classical and traditional, from Granados, Villa Lobos, to flamenco, tango and the great contemporary salsa songs.

She presented this show at the Paris Olympia in March 2002 followed by several international summer festivals.

In July 2002, she created for the Festival d'Avignon "La Argentina", a tribute to tango accompanied by the Argentinian quintet Tiempo Sur. An international tour is currently taking place and included a stop at the prestigious Paris Théâtre du Châtelet in November 2003.

In June 2003 Julia Migenes put together a program dedicated to sacred songs which premiered at the Fès Festival of Sacred Music (Morocco).

She was also part of the cast together with Barbara Hendricks of a new opera, "Angels in America" by Peter Eötvös. It was performed for the first time at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris in November 2004.

In 2005 Julia Migenes recorded her new jazz album "Alter Ego" (release early 2006). Also the first rehearsals for Pierrot Lunaire (by A. Schönberg) took place before Hans Peter Cloos staged the work in New York early 2006. For "Alter Ego" she worked again with Philippe Calvario. The recital was based on great jazz titles and American pop music and was first presented on stage in 2006.

In 2006 Julia Migenes' first biography was published by the Editions du Rocher in France: "Mémoires d'un oiseau rebelle". In November 2006 she premiered her show "Alter Ego" staged by Philippe Calvario at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris and toured throughout Europe until the end of 2007.

For the 7th edition of the "Open Air Operas" in France, Julia Migenes directed the staging of Rossini's "The Barber of Seville". Amongst others, performances took place at the Jardin du Sénat, the Château du Champ de Bataille in Evreux and the Château de Vaux le Vicomte.

In autumn 2007, Julia Migenes toured with a series of classical recitals for which she was accompanied by Janine Reiss (who was Maria Callas' vocal coach during many years and who also coached Julia Migenes for the "Carmen" film).

In 2008, Julia appeared in "L'Heure Espagnole" in Clermont-Ferrand (France) also staged by Janine Reiss. She also created a new theme show about Schubert for which she shared the stage with Philippe Calvario.

In July 2008, Julia Migenes gave a triumphant concert with Plácido Domingo and the Cairo National Orchestra at the Jordan Festival in Amman.

Also in 2008, Julia Migenes recorded a new album (AZ/Universal) dedicated to Hollywood Divas under the direction of Christophe Julien (release 2009).

In February 2009, Julia plays the role of Aldonza in "Man of la Mancha" in Los Angeles. She has already sung this role for a recording with Plácido Domingo and the London Symphonic Orchestra.

In spring 2009, Julia Migenes presents "Diva on the verge" in Porto Rico, New York and Lyon.