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# A new opera/crossover star is born

By Alfredo Carreras  
Carreras@3a  
For the Herald

The photograph of a young, attractive, black leather clad, dishevelled, grinning devil obviously enjoying herself graces the cover of a record that looks far more appropriate for a pop, even rock item than for one with *Artas & Lyrical Songs*. Which is most of the reason why this CD's packaging provides. The rest is the girl's name, Gabriela Pochinki, the list of songs she sings and the name of the orchestra, the Radio Symphony of Buenos Aires (RA). The booklet's other pages show fragments of Ms Pochinki's head, torso, arm and legs.

Who is she? Although hardly a household name here yet, by now this gifted singer has got quite her share of attention from the local media. After all, it's not every day that a native Argentine singer traps one reviewer singing the leading female role in *West Side Story* in the U.S. And she will soon make her debut stage debut as soprano in the forthcoming production of *Letter to the Navy* in the Teatro Colón. She had already made her mark there in 1998, in a concert version of Off's *Anna Karenina*, when her singing of the Finnish soprano part and unexpected costume changes delighted and amazed the audience.

It all started a couple of decades ago when little Gabriela, a member of a very musical family, decided she would venture to other lands. So she got the best possible training and flew to New York, where she graduated from the Manhattan School of Music. If that wasn't tough enough, she also investigated the whys and hows of the voice by studying voice training at the Medical School of Universidad del Salvador. A Fulbright scholarship later enabled her to attend several workshops in Europe and Israel, not to speak of master classes



Soprano Gabriela Pochinki

Gabriela Pochinki has been getting raves for her performance in *West Side Story* as well as countless operas.

in conducted by Elizabeth Schwarzkopf and Emma Scova. She also took singing lessons with other distinguished named performers: soprano Fathilde Blach, bass Federico David, and baritone Romeo Capovilla and acting with Saino Visconti. Not to speak of prizes in several competitions in Europe and the U.S. Fewer still will compliment her on the beauty of her contralto.

A silvery, well produced voice, impeccable enunciation, fluency in languages (Spanish, Italian, French, English, Italian, German), and a natural acting talent soon landed her in several, mostly unknown roles which soon brought her engagements in opera houses in

Europe, the U.S. and Israel. The shows in *Don Pasquale*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *Cost Fan Tan*, *The Impresario*, *The Fiddlers*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Die Ballerina*, *La Maccheta*, *The Gypsy's Bride*, *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *The Magic Flute* (in Parma).

Future engagements include *Adriano* in *Les Anglaises* with Patricia Donnelly, *West Side Story* and *The Old Maid and the Thief in Venice*, a live recital by *The Classic Club*, a special celebration for NHK, the Japanese network. She hopes to tackle *Voletta*, *Erna*, *Anna* and so on then *Zerkowka* in the near future. For Pochinki also happens to be that rarity, a suitable opera singer, too which too soon is simply not for her.

*Artas and Lyrical Songs* is the

first of three arts recital CDs (she has also recorded a pop album produced by Joe Jackson, Michael's father), distributed here by MusicMundo. It includes Schubert's *Ann Marie* in Spanish, a swelling rendition of Kaldich, the Jewish (except for the most, plus some from *The Magic Flute*, *Figaro's* Wedding, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *The Puritan*, *Falstaff* (it's a pity she wasn't engaged by the Colón to sing *Narrina* in this year's production); *Giacca* - Schubert, *Die Fledermaus*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *West Side Story*, *Camille* (Berlioz), *The Telephone* (Massenet), and *The Fiddlers* (Humperdinck). They are all enjoyable but the shows stand in the sparkling live stage arena and the *West Side Story* excerpt, in one of which (*I Feel Pretty*) she clearly characterizes all the participants,