



Above and Below: Detail before treatment



Right: Cloak of the costume worn by Ternina in the role of Isolde after conservation



Opera costumes conserved

An exhibition about to open at the Royal Opera House in London should attract not only opera buffs but also enthusiasts for costume and its conservation. The Croatian soprano, Milka Ternina, is being honoured by the exhibition to mark the 100th anniversary of her last performance at Covent Garden. She sang there fifty six times and was the first ever Tosca in London and deemed the best ever by Puccini himself. The display, assembled by the Museum of the City of Zagreb, presents many exhibits of her life and work and most particularly, several of her costumes. These were designed in 1900 by Percy Anderson, an artist and well-respected stage and costume designer of the time, and they were made in his Covent Garden workshops. Some of them bear the embroidered name of the seamstress.

This is the first opportunity to see these costumes in London since Ternina wore them on stage between 1900 and 1906. They had suffered with the passage of time but four of them have now been painstakingly conserved. The costume, of which the cloak is depicted here, was worn by Ternina to sing Isolde in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The International Trust for Croatian Monuments has kindly donated to the Chantry Library a copy of the detailed conservation report on this particular costume. Although it is written in Croatian, the many illustrations of themselves tell the story of what was a 2000 hour treatment project.

The exhibition runs from 18 September to mid-January 2007 and can be visited free during the ROH's normal day-time opening hours. It can also be seen by ticket holders to performances.