Roberto Iarussi: Even his name sounds like singing. His tenor can
blaze, caress, thrill, enrapture. He is a singing actor who reveals
with depth and finesse every aspect of the masculine experience.
His sensibility is as at home in the grandeur of opera as in the
bittersweet intimacy of Neapolitan song. No less is he a cross-over
and pop interpreter who accords vernacular music the nuance and
respect more frequently accorded only the classics.

As a very young man, Iarussi placed first in the prestigious Puccini
Foundation International Vocal Competition, The Gerda Lissner
Foundation competition and was the first recipient of the Andrea
Bocelli Vocal Fellowship Award. He has sung internationally,
earning kudos for Don José in Carmen and Calaf in Turandot,
roles that require the daring of the matador, the endurance of the
Navy Seal and a treasure chest of vocal resource. His voice and
artistry have been appreciated by Opera News and The New York
Sun. His collaborations with such maestri as Kent Nagano and
Anton Guadagno and illustrious stage directors like William
Friedkin and Tito Capobianco testify to the level of his gifts.

Temperamentally and vocally, Roberto Iarussi is something of a
maverick. His life has not been conventional—but neither is his
voice. Although he studied at the Juilliard School of Music and
has been taught, coached and lauded by Licia Albanese, one of
conductor Arturo Toscanini’s favorite sopranos, and by tenor
Franco Corelli, the Met idol of the 1960s, Roberto Iarussi’s voice puzzled many during his student days and early professional life. His is a “long” voice. Despite his ease above the staff, for a time he believed he was a baritone. Once he was convinced he was a tenor, some thought his satiny line and vocal plush made him a lyric; Corelli himself pronounced him a dramatic, like himself. Choice of
repertoire and then career management and marketing hinge upon getting one’s vocal category right. Embarking upon the dramatic roles prematurely can destroy a voice, so Iarussi was wise to start cautiously. Otello, the Italian tenor’s triathlon, is in preparation.

Of Roberto Iarussi’s numerous charitable interests, paramount are the welfare of children, the ill and human and animal rights. His gala benefit performances have raised substantial sums for the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society and The Knights of Columbus. The tenor has received accolades and medals from General David Petraeus and Admiral Mike Mullen for contributing to the well-being of military personnel and their families; these include his performances for the USO. Charity figures in Roberto Iarussi’s life because he is a man of faith. His CD, I Believe, to be released early in 2014, is his paean to faith’s saving grace. Conducted and arranged by multi-Grammy Award musical polymath Jorge Calandrelli and played by the world class London Symphony Orchestra, the CD’s synthesis of the dignity of classical expression with the immediacy of the pop idiom makes for an album of immediate returns to any fan of the tenor voice regardless of level of sophistication. In his upcoming concerts, Roberto Iarussi offers numbers from I Believe in addition to full-throated operatic arias. Whatever he sings, he sings not to be the center of attention but to center attention on the divine source wherefrom comes the impulsion to sing and song itself.

—James Kuslan