

# RISING STAR Great artists of tomorrow

## Francesca Dego violinist

'When I was about six or seven my parents took me to the Verbier Festival,' says Francesca Dego. 'I was already quite serious about the violin, but when I saw these amazing female violinists performing in these beautiful, glamorous dresses, I could see myself in their place.' The Italian-American violinist first started playing when she was just three and a half years old, and by the age of six was practising an hour every day.

'My parents aren't professional musicians, but they are both in love with music. They always have been.' The onus, however, was on Dego to practise. 'My mum used to say I could stop playing whenever I wished, but if I wanted to become a great violinist, I had to take it seriously. My pride meant I wanted to show I could do it,' she says. And she did. After graduating from the Milan Conservatoire at just 16, she became the

first female finalist in the Paganini competition, completed a masters degree at London's Royal College of Music and landed her first recording contract at 23 with DG. So, what's next?

'I'm currently re-learning Brahms's Violin Concerto,' she says. Re-learning, because she's working with period performance specialist Sir Roger Norrington. 'I love his approach to music, though it's very different to the Italian-Russian school I grew up with,' says Dego. 'I won't end up playing the same way all my life, so any experience like this is incredibly enriching.'

Dego also has ambitions to bring new life to overlooked Italian composers. 'There are so many 20th-century composers who, because they were working in fascist Italy, were deliberately sidelined after the war. Some, like Casella, had links to the government, but others like Wolf-Ferrari had nothing to do with it. They simply represented the old sound.' Dego will give Wolf-Ferrari's Violin Concerto its UK premiere with the CBSO next March. 'The only recording I can find is

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**PREMIERE PLANS:**  
Dego performs  
Wolf-Ferrari next year

played by the lady it was dedicated to – she was playing it around Europe during the Second World War. That's how long it has been since it was played! It's a piece I'm very passionate about, and I hope the audience love it, too,' *Interview by Elinor Cooper; Dego performs with the CBSO in Birmingham on 8 March 2017*