

## POSTCARD



## A BRAVURA PERFORMANCE

The opening of La Scala's 2007-2008 opera season in Milan was a grand affair, and offered a few lucky opera and carpet lovers a rare opportunity for indulgence.

**THE FIRST NIGHT OF LA SCALA'S** opera season on 7 December is perhaps the most glittering social event in Milan's calendar, and draws VIPs from around the world. This year, distinguished guests were entertained at a gala dinner by the Municipality of Milan in the Palazzo Marino, Milan's City Hall, facing La Scala across the Piazza Della Scala. The architects, Roberto Peregalli and Laura Sartori Rimini, were commissioned to design the setting for the dinner held in the courtyard of this residential palace that was designed by Galeazzo Alessi in the 16th century. They wanted to pay homage to the Renaissance atmosphere of the opening opera, Richard Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, and conceived the inspired idea of decorating the balconies with carpets that were contemporaneous to the building, echoing the well-documented practice seen in 15th-16th century paintings by artists such as Giovanni Bellini and Vittore Carpaccio.

Peregalli approached Moshe Tabibnia, who lent twelve 15th-17th century carpets to hang in the courtyard. As the images show, the centrepiece, much as it was in the gallery's 'Milestones' exhibition in 2006 (HALI 149, pp.95-97), was the 16th century Karapinar lobed-medallion carpet, seen here flanked by two Star Ushak carpets and a Small Pattern-Holbein design carpet. Not all of the carpets displayed were seen in the 'Milestones' exhibition, the event therefore offered the eight hundred or so invited dignitaries a unique view of previously unexhibited material.

The event also allowed Moshe Tabibnia to announce publicly his well advanced plans to open a private carpet museum in Milan in 2011 and that the museum already owns several of the exhibited carpets.

