

CHANDOS

ITALIAN OPERA ARIAS

Linda Richardson



SINFONIA OF LONDON
John Wilson



Portrait by unknown photographer, now at the Villa Museo Puccini, Torre del Lago /
© A. Dagli Orti / De Agostini Picture Library / Bridgeman Images

Giacomo Puccini, left, with his librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Pace, pace, mio Dio! from 'La forza del destino' (1862) 5:49
Allegro agitato –
'Pace, pace, mio Dio!'. Andante –
'Oh Dio, Dio, fa ch'io muoia'. Un poco stringendo –
'Ma chi giunge?'. Allegro
Sally Pryce harp |
| 2 | Ah, fors'è lui and Sempre libera from 'La traviata' (1853) 6:46
'È strano! è strano!'. Allegro –
'Ah, fors'è lui'. Andantino –
'Follie! follie!'. Allegro – 4:59 |
| 3 | 'Sempre libera'. Allegro brillante 1:47 |

Giacomo Puccini (1858 – 1924)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | D'onde lieta uscì from 'La bohème' (1896) 3:28
'D'onde lieta uscì'. Lento molto –
'Mimi al solitario nido'. Andantino –
'Ascolta, ascolta'. Andantino mosso |
| 5 | Vissi d'arte from 'Tosca' (1900) 3:25
Andante lento appassionato |

Gaetano Donizetti (1797 – 1848)

Piangete voi? and Al dolce guidami from

'Anna Bolena' (1830)

9:33

Peter Facer cor anglais

6

Andante – Calando –

'Piangete voi?'. Recitativo –

'Che Percy non lo sappia'. Allegro – Moderato – Cantabile –

'Ch'io m'asconda'. Allegro –

'Togliami a questa miseria estrema...'. Andante –

'Tu sorridi?'. Allegretto –

'Non fia, non fia'. Mosso –

4:56

7

'Al dolce guidami'. Cantabile – Presto

4:36

Giuseppe Verdi

- | | | |
|-----------|--|------|
| 8 | Morrò, ma prima in grazia from ‘Un ballo in maschera’ (1859)
Andante
David Cohen cello | 4:53 |
| 9 | Caro nome from ‘Rigoletto’ (1851)
‘Gualtier Maldè...’. Allegro assai moderato –
‘Caro nome’. Allegro moderato | 6:39 |
| 10 | Addio, del passato from ‘La traviata’
“‘Teneste la promessa...’”. Andantino –
‘Addio, del passato’. Andante mosso | 6:35 |

Vincenzo Bellini (1801 – 1835)

- | | | |
|-----------|---|------|
| 11 | Casta Diva from ‘Norma’ (1831)
Andante sostenuto assai
Adam Walker flute | 7:32 |
|-----------|---|------|

Giacomo Puccini

- 12 **Senza mamma** from 'Suor Angelica' (1918) 4:59
Andante desolato –
'Senza mamma'. Lento grave –
'Oh! dolce fine'. Un poco meno, sostenendo –
'Dillo alla mamma'. Calmo
- 13 **Un bel dì, vedremo** from 'Madama Butterfly' (1904) 4:33
'Un bel dì, vedremo'. Andante molto calmo –
'Chi sarà? chi sarà?'. Sostenendo molto –
'Chiamerà Butterfly dalla lontana'. Lento –
'e un po' per non morire al primo incontro'. Andante come prima –
Largamente – Sostenuto
- 14 **Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio!** from 'Madama Butterfly' 5:02
"Con onor muore". [] – Allegro vivace –
'Piccolo Iddio!'. Andante agitato –
'O a me, sceso dal trono'. Andante sostenuto – Sostenendo –
Più largo – Sostenendo – Andante energico
Jung Soo Yun tenor

TT 70:13

Linda Richardson soprano
Sinfonia of London
Andrew Haveron leader
John Wilson

Italian Opera Arias

Introduction

Operatic singing underwent fundamental changes throughout the nineteenth century that threaten any idea of a unified Italian singing tradition. Already by the 1840s, complaints were being made about the decline of Italian *bel canto* singing as composers demanded more forceful approaches. The florid vocal styles associated with Rossini, for example, were initially challenged by the more declamatory writing of Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi in works such as *Norma*. By the later nineteenth century, expanding orchestras, more aggressive orchestration, larger theatres, and changing musical styles had all placed even greater physical demands on the voice. Yet regardless of composer or style, the ability to deliver a sustained *cantabile* line and to give detailed attention to the text remained constant requirements throughout the century. Whether in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* or in Puccini's *Tosca*, the soprano's greatest task remains to convey character through the voice – making technical challenges an aspect of sheer vocal expression.

Donizetti: 'Piangete voi?' – 'Al dolce guidami'

With *Anna Bolena* (Milan, 1830) Gaetano Donizetti (1797 – 1848) achieved his breakout success as a composer. Composed for the legendary soprano Giuditta Pasta – who later would premiere Bellini's *Norma* – the opera established Donizetti as the most significant Italian musical figure in the generation after Rossini. It also helped to create a fashion for operas composed on Tudor subjects, Donizetti himself soon producing both *Maria Stuarda* (1835) and *Roberto Devereux* (1837); Rossini had previously premiered *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* (1815). The Tudor queens offered rich opportunities for staging versions of female authority that reflected a fascination within Italy around the nature of political power, as well as tapping into contemporary interest in the figure of the 'diva'. In *Anna Bolena*, the heroine has been falsely accused of adultery and sentenced to death; Henry is eager to marry Jane Seymour, Anna's lady-in-waiting. In 'Piangete voi?' – 'Al dolce guidami', Anna bids her maids not to weep and instead, driven mad by fear and betrayal,

thinks back nostalgically to the peace of her youth. As in the final act of *La traviata* (see below), woodwind accompaniment offers support to the abandoned heroine, while the highly decorated vocal line repeatedly circles back upon itself, mirroring Anna's obsessive thoughts – a lament, surprisingly set in F major, that will soon erupt into a violent cabaletta railing against the bridal couple.

Bellini: 'Casta Diva'

'Casta Diva', from *Norma* (Milan, 1831) by Vincenzo Bellini (1801 – 1835), has become the epitome of a soprano *bel canto* aria for many listeners: a cruelly difficult (but exquisitely beautiful) test of a singer's command of vocal line. Premiered at Teatro alla Scala, in Milan, *Norma* followed Bellini's earlier success at the theatre, with *Il pirata*, and capitalised on Giuditta Pasta's extraordinary vocal skills. As the opera opens, we learn from the Roman general Pollione that he has been having an affair with the druid priestess Norma but is now in love with the young Adalgisa. Pollione's aria prepares a demonic vision of Norma, whose revenge for his adultery Pollione bitterly fears. When Norma finally enters the stage, however, she bids her audience to be silent and to delay their battle with the Romans, before she begins the sacred rite. In

'Casta Diva', she calls upon the moon to bring peace to those upon earth, in one of Bellini's characteristically long melodies broken up by repetitions and sighs. Norma's ornate, elastic vocal line eventually leads up to a series of repeated high As and a B flat before circling back down to the lower register – as though Norma's voice were itself a medium between the earthly and the sublime.

Verdi: 'Caro nome'

The role of Gilda in *Rigoletto* (Venice, 1851) offers one of the vocally lightest, yet dramatically richest heroines of Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901). Indeed, the character of Gilda undergoes a remarkable transformation across the opera: from the delicate-voiced *ingénue* of the opening scenes to the fiery determination in display in the Storm Scene of Act III. Kept hidden by her father, Rigoletto, Gilda has secretly fallen in love with a man whom she has seen at church, who unbeknown to her is the duplicitous Duke of Mantua. In the second scene of Act I, the Duke has found Gilda's home and he overhears Gilda tell her maid that she wishes he were a poor student; the Duke declares his name to be Gualtier Maldè. In her subsequent aria, Gilda expresses her growing love for the Duke in a breathless melody made up of a series of descending phrases, in

which trills and *staccati* convey her excitement and nerves. Verdi's exquisite woodwind accompaniment adds further delicacy to the scene, before a more agile final section displays the soprano's coloratura skills as well as Gilda's growing romantic and sexual passion.

Verdi: 'Ah, fors'è lui' – 'Sempre libera' / 'Addio, del passato'

Of all Verdi's soprano roles, perhaps none is as multifaceted as Violetta in *La traviata* (Venice, 1853). Building on the domestic drama of *Luisa Miller*, Verdi aspired to set his adaptation of Alexandre Dumas's *La Dame aux camélias* in the present day, before censorship forced him to relocate the action a century earlier. But even moving the drama into the eighteenth century can only partly mute the scandalous nature of the opera's plot, which frames the courtesan Violetta as a figure of moral purity, and the bourgeois Germont in the morally ambiguous position of both father and villain. In her great Act I scene, Violetta first reflects on Alfredo's declaration of love, considering whether she should abandon her life of pleasure— one already overshadowed by illness — and pursue a dream of romantic love. 'Ah, fors'è lui' has a harmonic structure apparently modelled on Isabelle's aria 'Robert, toi que j'aime' from Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable*, a work which Verdi would

have encountered in Paris: a pathetic F minor lament that gradually opens up into the major as the vocal line rises higher, here also repeating the melody from Violetta and Alfredo's duet. Dismissing this dream as sheer folly, Violetta then launches into a frenetic cabaletta in 6/8 time ('Sempre libera') that functions almost as a mad scene. With no fewer than ten top Cs and D flats, and rapid scales that would tax many a lyric coloratura, Violetta here is literally willing herself to return to an earlier, more carefree vocal mode.

In 'Addio, del passato' from the opera's final act, Violetta instead bids farewell to dreams of happiness and acknowledges her imminent death, fated to be buried outside consecrated ground. In its triple-time rhythms, the aria evokes the carefree dance music of Violetta in her earlier life, while a poignant oboe accompaniment shadows her loneliness — at times even taking over where Violetta's breath fails.

Verdi: 'Morrò, ma prima in grazia'

A very different vocal profile is on display in *Un ballo in maschera* (Rome, 1859), in the role of Amelia who laments her misfortune in 'Morrò, ma prima in grazia'. Married to Renato, Amelia is secretly in love with his best friend, Riccardo, who is the governor of colonial Boston (a location changed for reasons of

ensorship from the original setting in the Swedish royal court). Renato has discovered her feelings for Riccardo by spying on Amelia during a meeting of hers with the fortune-teller Ulrica, and he now threatens to kill her for her betrayal. In her Act III aria, she accepts her death but begs to see her child one last time, in a halting movement that demonstrates Verdi's skill at building up an aria from the development and intensification of small melodic motives. A cello solo adds further poignancy to the scene, underscoring Amelia's maturity as well as the soprano's rich lower tones. One of Verdi's most challenging soprano roles, Amelia finally reveals the extent of her torment in a notorious cadenza that takes her from a high C flat down to a low A in the alto register – the despair of a mother who will never see her children again.

Verdi: 'Pace, pace, mio Dio!'

Leonora in *La forza del destino* (St Petersburg, 1862) is one of Verdi's most mistreated heroines, but the role demands remarkable vocal stamina and force. One of several victims of a tragic accident in which her father was unintentionally killed by her lover, Don Alvaro, Leonora has taken shelter in a monastery to live out her final days in peace while her brother, Don Carlo, seeks his

revenge. In her celebrated fourth Act aria, the aged and worn-out Leonora begs heaven for mercy, declaring that the image of Alvaro remains in her heart but that she will never see him again. Accompanied by harp, the movement's arching phrases showcase the singer's breath control and *legato* singing, while a famously exposed high B flat offers a similar challenge to that in Amelia's aria: a disembodied plea for mercy. In the final section, Leonora reveals her suppressed anger as she hears an intruder enter (in fact her lover, Alvaro) and curses anyone who disturbs her desire for death.

Puccini: 'D'onde lieta usci'

Verdi's *La traviata* hovers in the background of *La bohème* (Turin, 1896) by Giacomo Puccini (1858 – 1924) as it does of so many other verismo operas: the story of a good-hearted but compromised young woman who dies a premature death. Puccini was not unique in being attracted to Henri Murger's novel *Scènes de la vie de bohème* (1851): his compatriot Leoncavallo would premiere his own adaptation of the book a year later. But it failed to achieve the same success in the repertoire as the version by Puccini, no doubt in part because of the particular genius which Puccini possessed in evoking place and character through specific

musical means. In the third act of his *La bohème*, Mimì and Rodolfo's relationship is breaking down. Initially Mimì believes that Rodolfo is merely jealous, but on overhearing him share his fears with their friend Marcello, she learns that he is terrified of her failing health and his inability to help, and wishes that she would choose a wealthier lover. In 'D'onde lieta usci' she bids him farewell without bitterness and asks him to gather together the items which she has left in his flat: sentimental objects that reflect her attention to small details, and indeed the aesthetic behind literary realism writ large. In an impassioned outburst, she suggests that he keep her pink bonnet as a memento, the kind of affection for material objects that re-emerges in the opera's final scenes.

Puccini: 'Vissi d'arte'

Tosca (Rome, 1900) places the image of Italian opera itself centre stage, in the figure of its heroine, Tosca, a celebrated diva in Rome. Threatened by Baron Scarpia (the chief of police) during the Napoleonic Wars, Tosca has revealed the location of the political prisoner Cesare Angelotti; her lover, Mario Cavaradossi, has also been sentenced to be executed. Offered the chance to save Mario's life, but only if she submit herself sexually to Scarpia, Tosca is in a crisis – one which she expresses in a quasi-

operatic moment of reflection. 'Vissi d'arte' is essentially a prayer in which she pleads with God to help her, emphasising that she has always dedicated herself to him with her work (and with her voice). But the aria is also something of a dramatic hiatus. By singing, Tosca clears a space for herself within the opera's accelerated timeframe and makes a statement about the power of the operatic voice to change human behaviour. Building up to a climax on 'Signor', the aria mixes grief, rage, and incomprehension into its brief span, the stunned opening section shifting to a purposeful second half as Tosca warms to her own frustration and performance.

Puccini: 'Un bel dì, vedremo' / 'Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio!'

Madama Butterfly (Milan, 1904) was a notorious failure at its world première, loudly booed by audience members most likely recruited by a rival publisher. Following a series of revisions, however, the opera soon entered the international repertoire – even in Japan where it generated a rich local performance tradition. The story of a Japanese geisha who is abandoned by her American husband, Pinkerton, *Madama Butterfly* mixes problematic instances of orientalism with a deeply sympathetic portrayal of Cio-Cio San, who desperately seeks to transition from a Japanese culture to a

Western one while awaiting the return of her husband. In 'Un bel di, vedremo' she tells her maid, Suzuki, that those who doubt his return are mistaken, and she narrates his arrival in Nagasaki as she imagines it: the sounds and sights of the ship eventually followed by the erotic tones of his voice. In the climactic return of the melody, however, she expresses her hope not to die from emotion in that moment, 'morir' bursting forth on her lips like a repressed thought that cannot be contained. Cio-Cio San already knows what will happen if she is wrong.

In her final scene, her desire for the return of Pinkerton has been fulfilled, but only for her to discover that he is married. Rather than inflict further shame on herself, she decides to commit suicide. In 'Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio!' she bids farewell to her son and begs him to preserve the memory of her face, in some of the most demanding phrases that Puccini ever composed for the soprano voice. Even when the operatic soprano is humiliated, then, her voice can remain strong. Though she is denied agency through her actions, her vocal power still suggests the strength beneath.

Puccini: 'Senza mamma'

No farewell in Puccini's works is more poignant, perhaps, than 'Senza mamma' in *Suor Angelica* (New York, 1918). Yet it is a

farewell to a loved one who has already died, a statement of regret that a true farewell was never possible. Sent to live in a convent by her family after falling pregnant out of wedlock, Angelica has spent years desperate to hear news of her child. One day her aunt, the Zia Principessa, finally calls. But rather than bringing cheerful news, she eventually reveals that the boy has died of an illness; all her reasons for living crumble away before Angelica. In 'Senza mamma' the nun registers her shock in an almost modal melody, the equal length of the note values in it conveying her stunned experience of grief. As the aria progresses, however, Angelica begins to imagine her child as an angel in heaven, her expansive melody growing increasingly passionate. She finally begs to know when she will see him again. It is a conclusion that hints at her impending suicide, the metronomic rhythms suggesting the inevitability of her fate.

© 2021 Ditlev Rindom

A personal introduction

Growing up on a farm in a family of eight is a world away from the life of an opera singer. So what happened? What gave my life this direction? How, and why?

It began with my local church choir, at St Oswald's Lower Peover. A persistent headmaster, who was a member of the church choir, advised and then persuaded my parents that I should have my voice trained; so began the journey that would shape my life. Along the way, a relatively shy, quiet girl, discovered that through singing, rather than speaking, she was able to communicate and express herself. She found that people were moved by her ability to sing, and she realised that she could be seen.

Many inspirational moments followed. As a young girl she watched opera and was moved to tears by a small touring opera group performing *La bohème* in the local cinema. Later, on a visit to English National Opera, she was entranced by *Rigoletto* and mesmerised by the role of Gilda, desperately wanting to sing that role – in that production.

Having become a company principal at ENO some years later, she eventually got the chance to do just that – in the same production, in that same blue dress – many times. It was a dream come true.

I have had the privilege of performing many of the great leading soprano roles in the operatic repertoire, but as my career progressed, I found a special love and

affinity for the roles that stood as pillars in Italian opera. The beautiful melodic lines, dramatic language, and the overall musical craftsmanship of these Italian composers make their characters especially thrilling.

I look back and feel very fortunate to have had so many wonderful opportunities in the art form that I love most. The chance to create a CD of arias, and to trace the many roles that I have loved and performed, is a highlight of my career. I chose these particular arias because they show the huge variety of heroines that can be found in the greatest Italian operas. Although most of the arias are expressions of love and loss it is the individual emotional journey of each character which I find so compelling.

The making of this CD gave me the opportunity to work with some wonderful musicians: under the fabulous and generous conductor John Wilson, the Sinfonia of London performed with brilliance and integrity, and our time together is one I shall forever treasure.

Enormous thanks must go also to the producer, Brian Pidgeon, to Chandos Records, and to Sasha French, Steven Maughan, Rosemary Walton, and Robin Humphreys for their support.

It is important for me to say a particularly special thank you to Sir James and Lady Deirdre Dyson, without whose persistent persuasion

and incredible support none of this would have been possible. I cannot thank you enough for enabling me to realise my dream and put together this very personal compilation.

Finally, to my mother, Iris, and to my father, Jim, who to my great sadness passed away without having the chance to see my career flourish, to my husband, Richard, and to family and friends, thank you. In particular, to my wonderful son, James: I hope you here have something to cherish.

© 2021 Linda Richardson

Born in Cheshire, the soprano **Linda Richardson** trained at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she was a Peter Moores Foundation Scholar and winner of the Frederic Cox Award. She completed her studies at the National Opera Studio, and has since performed with orchestras across the UK and the European continent under conductors such as Bernard Haitink, Edo de Waart, Sir Mark Elder, Daniele Rustioni, Libor Pešek, Carlo Rizzi, Martin André, Paul Daniel, David Parry, and Mark Shanahan. Among recent highlights on the operatic stage are performances as Violetta (*La traviata*), Cio-Cio San (*Madama Butterfly*), the title role in *Anna Bolena*, Amaltea (*Mosè in Egitto*),

and Elvira (*Ipuritani*) at Welsh National Opera and Anna Bolena at Longborough Festival Opera. An English National Opera Company Principal between 1997 and 2005, she sang roles such as Virtue (*The Coronation of Poppea*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Micaëla (*Carmen*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Zerlina and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Mimi (*La bohème*), the title roles in *The Fairy Queen* and *Alcina*, Violetta, Woglinde (*The Rhinegold*), and Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*).

She has sung Karolka (*Jenůfa*), Mimi, Nannetta (*Falstaff*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Violetta, and Gilda at Opera North, Lisetta (Haydn's *La vera costanza*) at Garsington Opera, Norina (*Don Pasquale*) at Clonter Opera Theatre, the Fairy Queen in Barcelona, First Niece (*Peter Grimes*) at De Nationale Opera, Amina (*La sonnambula*) and Alice (*Falstaff*) at Opera Holland Park, the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*) throughout the UK and in France, Katya Kabanova with English Touring Opera, Alice and Cio-Cio San at Longborough Festival Opera, and Mrs Coyle (*Owen Wingrave*) at the Nuremberg International Chamber Music Festival. Performing extensively on the oratorio and concert platform and as a

recitalist, she has sung at the Newbury, Three Choirs, and Arundel festivals, was a regular soloist with the English Haydn Festival, and has appeared as soloist in Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Handel's *Messiah* with the English Chamber Orchestra, Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the Radio Kamer Orkest in The Netherlands, and Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the Royal Festival Hall. Linda Richardson has appeared on both radio and television, gives master-classes, serves as adjudicator on various audition and performance panels, and can be heard as Oscar in *A Masked Ball* on Chandos.

John Wilson is in demand at the highest level across the globe, working with some of the finest orchestras and opera houses. In the UK, he performs regularly at festivals such as the Aldeburgh Festival, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and BBC Proms and with orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra,

and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra with which he held the title of Associate Guest Conductor between 2016 and 2019. Elsewhere, his guest conducting takes him to the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, and Danish National Symphony Orchestra, among others, and he looks forward to making his debut with The Metropolitan Opera, New York, in the 2020/21 season.

He studied composition and conducting at the Royal College of Music, where in 2011 he was made a Fellow. John Wilson has assembled a large and varied discography which includes critically acclaimed recordings with the Sinfonia of London, numerous recordings with the John Wilson Orchestra (which he founded in 1994), and series of discs with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, exploring works by Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, and BBC Philharmonic, devoted to the symphonic works of Aaron Copland and orchestral works of Eric Coates.

Italienische Opernarien

Einführung

Der Operngesang erfuhr im Laufe des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts grundlegende Veränderungen, die alle Gedanken an eine homogene italienische Gesangstradition in Frage stellen. Bereits in den vierziger Jahren hatte man den Niedergang des italienischen Belcanto-Gesangs beklagt, als Komponisten energischere Ansätze forderten. Blumige Vortragsweisen, wie man sie beispielsweise von Rossini kannte, wurden zunächst von Bellini, Donizetti und Verdi in Werken wie *Norma* deklamatorisch herausgefordert. Im weiteren Verlauf des Jahrhunderts wurde die Stimme durch wachsende Orchester, aggressivere Instrumentierung, größere Theater und die Entwicklung des Musikgeschmacks noch stärkeren physischen Ansprüchen unterworfen. Doch ganz gleich von wem oder wie – über das ganze Jahrhundert hinweg war auf eines immer wieder nicht zu verzichten: die Fähigkeit, eine getragene Cantabile-Linie hervorzubringen und dem Text detaillierte Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken. Ob in Donizettis *Anna Bolena* oder in Puccinis *Tosca*, die größte Aufgabe der Sopranistin bleibt es, mit ihrer Stimme

Charakter zu vermitteln – technische Herausforderungen werden dabei zu einem Aspekt des reinen vokalen Ausdrucks.

Donizetti: “Piangete voi?” – “Al dolce guidami”

Mit *Anna Bolena* (Mailand, 1830) gelang Gaetano Donizetti (1797 – 1848) der Durchbruch als Komponist. Diese Oper – entstanden für die legendäre Sopranistin Giuditta Pasta, die später Bellinis *Norma* uraufführen sollte – etablierte ihn als bedeutendsten Vertreter des italienischen Musiklebens in der Generation nach Rossini. Zugleich leitete er damit eine neue Mode ein: Opern nach Tudor-Themen. Donizetti selbst schuf bald danach *Maria Stuarda* (1835) und *Roberto Devereux* (1837); Rossini hatte zuvor bereits mit *Elisabetta, regina d’Inghilterra* (1815) Zeichen gesetzt. Die Tudor-Königinnen boten reichhaltige Möglichkeiten zur Inszenierung von Variationen weiblicher Autorität, die nicht nur die Faszination Italiens für die Natur politischer Macht widerspiegelte, sondern auch das zeitgenössische Interesse an der Figur der “Diva” zu nutzen wusste.

In *Anna Bolena* ist die Heldin fälschlich des Ehebruchs beschuldigt und zum Tode verurteilt worden; Enrico hat es sich in den Kopf gesetzt, Giovanna di Seymour, Annas Kammerfrau, zu heiraten. In "Piangete voi?" – "Al dolce guidami" bittet Anna ihre Dienstmädchen, nicht zu weinen, und denkt, von Angst und Verrat gemartert, sehnsüchtig an ihre unbeschwerte Jugend zurück. Wie im letzten Akt von *La traviata* (siehe unten) geben die begleitenden Holzbläser der denunzierten Heldin Unterstützung, während die hochverzierte Gesangslinie im Teufelskreis von Annas Zwangsgedanken immer wieder auf sich selbst zurückkommt – eine Klage (überraschenderweise in F-Dur gesetzt), die bald in eine stürmische Cabaletta gegen das Brautpaar überwallen wird.

Bellini: "Casta Diva"

"Casta Diva" aus *Norma* (Mailand, 1831) von Vincenzo Bellini (1801 – 1835) ist für viele Musikfreunde zum Inbegriff einer Belcanto-Sopranarie geworden: eine grausam schwierige (aber zauberhaft schöne) Prüfung der Stimmbeherrschung. *Norma* wurde am Teatro alla Scala in Mailand uraufgeführt, wo die Oper einem vorherigen Bühnenerfolg Bellinis mit *Il pirata* folgte und die außergewöhnlichen stimmlichen Fähigkeiten von Giuditta

Pasta zur Geltung bringen konnte. Zu Beginn erfahren wir von dem römischen Prokonsul Pollione, dass er eine Affäre mit der Druidenpriesterin Norma hatte, nun aber in die junge Adalgisa verliebt ist. Pollione setzt den Ton für eine dämonische Vision von Norma, deren Rache für seine Treulosigkeit er bitter fürchtet. Als Norma schließlich auftritt, mahnt sie ihr Gefolge, sich zu beherrschen und nicht vorschnell den Kampf gegen die Römer aufzunehmen. Danach beginnt sie den heiligen Ritus. In "Casta Diva" ruft sie die Mondgöttin an, den Menschen auf Erden Frieden zu bringen, wobei die für Bellini typisch lange Melodie durch Wiederholungen und Seufzer unterbrochen wird. Normas reich verzierte, elastische Gesangslinie gipfelt schließlich in einer Reihe von wiederholten hohen As und einem B, bevor sie wieder in das tiefere Register zurückkehrt – so als ob Normas Stimme selbst ein Medium zwischen dem Irdischen und dem Erhabenen wäre.

Verdi: "Caro nome"

Die Rolle der Gilda in *Rigoletto* (Venedig, 1851) gibt uns eine der stimmlich leichtesten und doch dramatischsten Heldinnen von Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901). So erfährt sie im Verlauf der Handlung eine bemerkenswerte Transformation: von der zarten Stimme

einer Naiven in den Eröffnungsszenen bis zu der feurigen Entschlossenheit, die in der Sturmszene des dritten Akts zu erleben ist. Gilda wird von ihrem Vater Rigoletto versteckt gehalten, hat sich aber heimlich in einen Unbekannten verliebt, dem sie in der Kirche begegnet ist, den verlogenen Herzog von Mantua. In der zweiten Szene des ersten Akts hat sich der Herzog in Rigolettos Haus geschlichen und hört, wie Gilda ihrer Gesellschafterin Giovanna bekennt, dass sie ihn sich als armen Studenten vorstellt. Der Herzog gibt sich als Gualtier Maldè aus. In ihrer nachfolgenden Arie gesteht Gilda ihre wachsende Liebe zum Herzog in einer atemlosen Melodie aus einer Reihe absteigender Phrasen, in denen Triller und Staccati ihre nervöse Erregung vermitteln. Begleitet von exquisiten Holzbläsern gewinnt die Szene weiteres Feingefühl, bevor ein lebhafterer letzter Abschnitt sowohl die Koloraturkunst der Sopranistin als auch Gildas wachsende romantische und sexuelle Leidenschaft zur Geltung bringt.

Verdi: “Ah, fors’è lui” – “Sempre libera” / “Addio, del passato”

Von allen Sopranrollen Verdis ist wohl keine so facettenreich wie Violetta in *La traviata* (Venedig, 1853). Auf dem häuslichen

Drama von *Luisa Miller* aufbauend, wollte Verdi die Handlung von Alexandre Dumas’ *La Dame aux camélias* eigentlich in die Gegenwart versetzen, bevor ihn die Zensur zwang, ein Jahrhundert zurückzugehen. Aber selbst diese historische Distanz kann nur ansatzweise die skandalöse Natur des Sujets kaschieren: Die Kurtisane Violetta erscheint in moralischer Reinheit, während der bourgeoise Giorgio Germont als Vater und Schuft eine moralisch zwiespältige Position einnimmt. In ihrer großartigen Szene zum Abschluss des ersten Akts setzt sich Violetta mit der Liebeserklärung Alfredos auseinander und überlegt zunächst, ob sie ihr ausschweifendes Leben, das bereits von Krankheit überschattet ist, aufgeben und einen Traum von romantischer Liebe verfolgen soll. “Ah, fors’è lui” hat eine harmonische Struktur, die offenbar Isabelles Arie “Robert, toi que j’aime” aus der Meyerbeer-Oper *Robert le diable* (der Verdi in Paris begegnet sein dürfte) nachempfunden ist: eine ergreifende Klage, die in f-Moll beginnt, dann aber bei steigender Gesangslinie allmählich nach Dur übergeht und hier bei Verdi auch die Melodie von Violettas und Alfredos Duett aufgreift. Violetta verwirft diesen Traum vom Glück reiner Liebe als Aberwitz und wirft sich in eine frenetische Cabaletta im

6/8-Takt ("Sempre libera"), die fast wie eine Wahnsinnsszene wirkt. Mit nicht weniger als zehn Ausflügen zum hohen C und Des und rasanten Tonleitern, die so manchen lyrischen Koloratursopran ernsthaft herausfordern würden, zwingt sich Violetta hier regelrecht, zu einer früheren, sorgloseren Gesangsart zurückzufinden.

In "Addio, del passato" aus dem Schlussakt der Oper gibt Violetta jedoch alle Glücksträume auf und findet sich mit ihrem baldigen Tod ab – wohlwissend, dass sie ihre letzte Ruhe nicht in geweihtem Boden finden wird. Im Dreiertakt erinnert die Arie an die unbeschwerte Tanzmusik der Violetta von früher, während eine rührende Oboe sie in ihrer Einsamkeit wie ein Schatten begleitet – manchmal sogar dort einspringt, wo Violettas Atem versagt.

Verdi: "Morrò, ma prima in grazia"

Ein ganz anderes Stimmprofil erleben wir in *Un ballo in maschera* (Rom, 1859), wo Amelia in "Morrò, ma prima in grazia" ihr Unglück beklagt. Amelia ist mit Renato verheiratet, aber heimlich verliebt in dessen besten Freund Riccardo, den Gouverneur von Boston (der Schauplatz wurde unter dem Druck der Zensur vom schwedischen Königshof nach Nordamerika verlegt). Renato hat Amelia

bei einem Besuch der Wahrsagerin Ulrica belauscht und dabei ihre Liebe zu Riccardo entdeckt. Nun droht er, sie wegen ihrer Untreue zu töten. Im dritten Akt akzeptiert Amelia ihren Tod, bittet aber flehentlich darum, ein letztes Mal noch ihr Kind sehen zu dürfen. Diese stockende musikalische Erklärung demonstriert die Fähigkeit Verdis, aus der Entwicklung und Intensivierung kleiner melodischer Motive geschickt eine Arie aufzubauen. Ein Cello-Solo verleiht der Szene weitere Wehmut und unterstreicht Amelias Reife sowie die satten tieferen Töne der Sopranistin. Amelia, eine der anspruchvollsten Sopranpartien Verdis, offenbart schließlich das Ausmaß ihrer Qual in einer notorischen Kadenz, die sie von einem hohen Ces bis zu einem tiefen A im Altregister stürzt – die Verzweiflung einer Mutter, die ihre Kinder nie wieder sehen wird.

Verdi: "Pace, pace, mio Dio!"

Leonora in *La forza del destino* (St. Petersburg, 1862) ist eine der am tiefsten leidenden Heldinnen Verdis, deren Rolle außergewöhnliche stimmliche Ausdauer und Kraft erfordert. Bei einem tragischen Unfall ist ihr Vater durch einen Schuss aus der Pistole ihres Geliebten Don Alvaro getötet worden, und Leonora hat Zuflucht

in einem Kloster gesucht, um Frieden zu finden, während ihr Bruder Don Carlo den Tod des Vaters rächen will. In ihrer gefeierten Arie aus dem vierten Akt fleht die gealterte, gebrochene Leonora den Himmel an, sie friedlich sterben zu lassen. Sie wird das Bild von Alvaro nie aus ihrem Herzen reißen können, ihn aber auch nie wieder sehen. Begleitet von einer Harfe lassen die gewölbten Phrasen der Arie die Atemkontrolle und den Legato-Gesang der Sopranistin glänzen, während ein notorisch exponiertes hohes B eine ähnliche Herausforderung darstellt wie in der Arie Amelias: ein entkörperlichtes Flehen um Erlösung. Im letzten Abschnitt entlädt sich der unterdrückte Zorn Leonoras, als sie einen Eindringling hört und (ohne zu ahnen, dass es ihr Geliebter Alvaro ist) den verflucht, der den heiligen Ort zu entweihen droht.

Puccini: “D’onde lieta usci”

Wie bei so vielen anderen Verismo-Opern schwebt Verdis *La traviata* im Hintergrund von *La bohème* (Turin, 1896) von Giacomo Puccini (1858 – 1924): die Geschichte einer gutherzigen, aber kompromittierten jungen Frau, die viel zu früh stirbt. Puccini war nicht der einzige, den Henri Murgers Roman *Scènes de la vie de bohème* (1851) ansprach: Sein Landsmann Ruggero Leoncavallo brachte

ein Jahr später ebenfalls eine Bearbeitung des Stoffes auf die Bühne, der allerdings der Erfolg der Puccini-Fassung versagt blieb – wohl nicht zuletzt aufgrund des besonderen Genies, mit dem Puccini durch ganz eigene musikalische Mittel den Charakter von Akteuren und die Atmosphäre von Schauplätzen vermitteln konnte. Im dritten Akt seiner *Bohème* ist die Beziehung zwischen Mimì und Rodolfo zerrüttet. Anfangs glaubt Mimì, dass Rodolfo nur eifersüchtig ist, aber als sie hört, wie er seine Ängste mit ihrem Freund Marcello teilt, erfährt sie, dass er um ihre Gesundheit bangt, ihr nicht helfen kann und darauf hofft, dass sie einen reicheren Liebhaber finden wird. In “D’onde lieta usci” willigt sie ohne Groll in eine Trennung ein und bittet ihn nur, für sie zusammenzulegen, was sie in seiner Wohnung zurückgelassen hat: sentimentale Dinge, die ihre Beachtung von kleinen Details widerspiegeln, aber auch die grundlegende Ästhetik des Realismus zur Geltung bringen. In kaum unterdrückter Leidenschaft redet sie ihm zu, dass er zum Angedenken ihr rosa Häubchen behalten soll – ein Ausdruck jener Zuneigung zu materiellen Objekten, der sich in den letzten Szenen der Oper noch einmal manifestiert.

Puccini: “Vissi d’arte”

Tosca (Rom, 1900) rückt die italienische Oper

selbst in den Mittelpunkt, in Gestalt einer gefeierten römischen Diva als Titelfigur. Tosca ist vor dem Hintergrund der Napoleonischen Kriege von Baron Scarpia (dem Polizeichef) bedroht worden und hat das Versteck des geflüchteten politischen Häftlings Cesare Angelotti preisgegeben. Ihr Geliebter Mario Cavaradossi ist ebenfalls zum Tode verurteilt worden. Tosca bekommt eine Chance, das Leben Cavaradossis zu retten, soll sich dafür aber Scarpia hingeben. Dieses Dilemma bringt sie in einer besinnlichen Arie zum Ausdruck. "Vissi d'arte" ist im Prinzip ein Gebet, in dem sie Gott um Hilfe bittet und darauf verweist, dass sie immer in aufrichtigem Glauben und zu seinen Ehren gelebt (und gesungen) hat. Die Arie bildet aber auch eine Art dramatische Auszeit. Mit ihrem Gesang verschafft sich Tosca innerhalb des beschleunigten Zeitrahmens der Oper eine Atempause, die sie zu einer Aussage über die Kraft der Opernstimme nutzt, menschliches Verhalten zu ändern. Die Arie gipfelt in "Signor" und ballt Schmerz, Wut und Unverständnis in wenigen Augenblicken, wobei der fassungslose Eröffnungsabschnitt in eine zielgerichtete zweite Hälfte übergeht, als sich Tosca in ihre Frustration und in ihren Gesang einlebt.

Puccini: "Un bel dì, vedremo" / "Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio!"

Madama Butterfly (Mailand, 1904) war ein berühmter Misserfolg bei der Welturaufführung, laut ausgebuht von Zuschauern, die höchstwahrscheinlich von einem konkurrierenden Verleger organisiert worden waren. Nach einer Reihe von Überarbeitungen trat die Oper jedoch bald in das internationale Repertoire ein – sogar in Japan, wo sich eine reiche Aufführungstradition entwickelte. Die Geschichte einer japanischen Geisha, die von ihrem amerikanischen "Ehemann" Pinkerton verlassen wird, kombiniert problematische Beispiele von Orientalismus mit einer zutiefst sympathischen Darstellung der Heldin, Cio-Cio San, die verzweifelt auf eine Befreiung aus der japanischen Kultur in ein westliches Leben hofft, während sie auf die Rückkehr ihres Mannes nach Nagasaki wartet. In "Un bel dì, vedremo" erklärt sie ihrer Dienerin Suzuki, dass alle Zweifel an seinem Kommen unbegründet sind, und malt sich die Wiederbegegnung aus: den Anblick des nahenden Schiffes, den Salutschuss und schließlich den erotischen Klang seiner Stimme. Doch sie befürchtet, beim ersten Wiedersehen zu vergehen, und das Orchester stimmt mit der Melodie genau in dem Moment wieder ein, als ihr das

Wort "morir" von den Lippen birst, wie ein gefährlicher Gedanke, der sich nicht länger unterdrücken lässt. Cio-Cio San weiß bereits, was geschehen wird, wenn sie sich irrt.

Am Ende hat sich ihr Wunsch nach der Rückkehr von Pinkerton erfüllt, aber nur mit der fatalen Entdeckung, dass er verheiratet ist. Anstatt in noch größerer Schande zu leben, beschließt sie, in den Tod zu gehen. In "Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio!" nimmt sie Abschied von ihrem Sohn und fleht ihn an, das Antlitz seiner Mutter nie zu vergessen. Nicht oft hat Puccini einer Sopranstimme so viel abverlangt, doch selbst wenn die Operngestalt gedemütigt wird, kann ihre Stimme stark bleiben. Obwohl ihr die Handlungsfähigkeit genommen ist, lässt ihre Gesangkraft doch die Charakterstärke erkennen.

Puccini: "Senza mamma"

Kein Abschied in Puccinis Werken dürfte ergreifender sein als "Senza mamma" in *Suor Angelica* (New York, 1918). Dabei ist es ein Abschied von einem geliebten Menschen, der bereits gestorben ist, eine Erklärung des Bedauerns, dass ein wahrer Abschied

niemals möglich war. In außerehelicher Schwangerschaft ist Angelica von ihrer Familie in ein Kloster eingewiesen worden. Jahrelang hat sie verzweifelt auf Nachricht von ihrem Kind gehofft. Eines Tages wird sie endlich von ihrer Tante, der Zia Principessa, aufgesucht. Aber anstatt frohe Kunde zu bringen, enthüllt sie, dass der Junge einer Krankheit erlegen ist, und Angelica bricht zusammen, als ihr klar wird, dass sie alles verloren hat, was ihrem Leben Sinn gibt. In "Senza mamma" bringt die Nonne in einer fast modalen Melodie, die Notenwerte in gleicher Länge, ihre fassungslose Erschütterung zum Ausdruck. Doch dann vermeint Angelica, ihren Sohn als Engel im Himmel gesehen zu haben, und ihre bedeutungsschwere Melodie wird immer leidenschaftlicher. Wann kann sie ihn dort wiedersehen? Es ist ein Abschluss, der ihren bevorstehenden Selbstmord erwarten lässt, wobei die metronomischen Rhythmen auf die Unvermeidlichkeit ihres Schicksals deuten.

© 2021 Ditlev Rindom
Übersetzung: Andreas Klatt

Les Arias dans l'opéra italien

Introduction

Tout au long du dix-neuvième siècle, le chant lyrique a subi des changements fondamentaux, allant à l'encontre de toute idée d'une tradition italienne homogène. Vers 1840 déjà, des plaintes s'élevaient au sujet du déclin du *bel canto* italien, les compositeurs demandant une approche plus dynamique. Les styles vocaux ornements associés à Rossini, par exemple, furent initialement mis au défi par l'écriture plus déclamatoire de Bellini, Donizetti et Verdi dans des œuvres telles *Norma*. Et en fin de siècle, les orchestres devenant plus amples, l'orchestration plus audacieuse, les théâtres plus spacieux et les styles musicaux se renouvelant, le chant se trouva confronté à des exigences physiques plus importantes encore. Cependant, indépendamment du compositeur ou du style, chanter une ligne *cantabile* soutenue et prêter attention aux moindres détails du texte ne cessèrent d'être des exigences pendant tout le siècle. Que ce soit dans *Anna Bolena* de Donizetti ou dans la *Tosca* de Puccini, la soprano a essentiellement pour tâche de donner du caractère à son interprétation – les

défis techniques devenant purement une question d'expression vocale.

Donizetti: "Piangete voi?" – "Al dolce guidami"

Le remarquable succès que fut *Anna Bolena* (Milan, 1830) de Gaetano Donizetti (1797 – 1848) marqua le début de sa carrière de compositeur. Composé pour la soprano légendaire Giuditta Pasta – qui plus tard chanta dans la création de la *Norma* –, l'opéra fit de Donizetti la personnalité musicale italienne la plus significative de la génération qui suivit Rossini. Cette œuvre contribua aussi à faire naître la mode des opéras sur des sujets relatifs à la maison royale Tudor, Donizetti lui-même produisant bientôt tant *Maria Stuarda* (1835) que *Roberto Devereux* (1837); Rossini avait créé un peu plus tôt *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* (1815). Les reines Tudor offraient de riches opportunités de mise en scène de l'autorité féminine – ceci reflétant la fascination que suscitait en Italie la nature de la puissance politique – tout en tirant profit de l'intérêt du moment pour le personnage de la "diva". Dans *Anna Bolena*,

l'héroïne est faussement accusée d'adultère et condamnée à mort; Henry voudrait épouser Jane Seymour, la dame d'honneur d'Anna. Dans "Piangete voi?" – "Al dolce guidami", Anna prie ses servantes de ne pas pleurer tandis qu'elle-même, rendue folle par la peur et la trahison, repense plutôt avec nostalgie à sa jeunesse paisible. Comme dans l'acte final de *La traviata* (voir ci-dessous), l'accompagnement par les bois offre un soutien à l'héroïne abandonnée, et en même temps la ligne vocale richement ornementée ne cesse de décrire une boucle, illustrant les pensées obsessionnelles d'Anna – une lamentation, écrite étonnamment en fa majeur, qui bientôt explosera en une violente cabalette critiquant le jeune couple.

Bellini: "Casta Diva"

"Casta Diva", dans *Norma* (Milan, 1831) de Vincenzo Bellini (1801 – 1835), est devenu, pour beaucoup d'auditeurs, l'illustration même d'une aria *bel canto* pour soprano: c'est un test cruellement difficile (mais d'une exquise beauté) de la maîtrise par une chanteuse de la ligne vocale. Créée au Teatro alla Scala, à Milan, *Norma* suivit une œuvre de Bellini qui fut antérieurement un succès au théâtre, *Il pirata*, et capitalisa sur le talent vocal extraordinaire de Giuditta

Pasta. Au début de l'opéra, le général romain Pollione nous dit qu'il a eu une relation avec la druidesse Norma, mais qu'il est maintenant amoureux de la jeune Adalgisa. L'aria de Pollione prépare à une vision démoniaque de Norma dont Pollione redoute terriblement la vengeance pour l'adultère qu'il a commis. Toutefois, quand Norma entre finalement en scène, elle prie l'auditoire de garder le silence et de reporter l'affrontement avec les Romains, avant de commencer la célébration du rite sacré. Dans "Casta Diva", elle implore la lune d'apporter la paix aux habitants de la terre, dans une de ces longues mélodies caractéristiques de Bellini entrecoupées de répétitions et de soupirs. La ligne vocale ornementée et tout en souplesse conduit finalement à une série de répétitions d'un la aigu, puis à un si bémol, avant de se réorienter par un mouvement circulaire vers le registre grave – comme si la voix de Norma était elle-même un lien entre le terrestre et le sublime.

Verdi: "Caro nome"

Gilda dans *Rigoletto* (Venise, 1851) est l'une des héroïnes les plus légères, sur le plan vocal, et cependant l'une des plus riches sur le plan dramatique, de Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901). En effet, le caractère de Gilda subit une transformation remarquable

tout au long de l'opéra: l'ingénue à la voix délicate dans les premières scènes acquiert une détermination féroce dans la Scène de l'orage dans l'Acte III. Cachée par son père, Rigoletto, Gilda est tombée secrètement amoureuse d'un homme qu'elle a vu à l'église et qui n'est autre, mais elle l'ignore, que le fourbe duc de Mantoue. Dans la seconde scène de l'Acte I, le duc a trouvé la maison de Gilda et il l'entend dire à sa servante qu'elle souhaiterait qu'il soit un pauvre étudiant; le duc s'annonce comme Gualtier Maldè. Dans l'aria qui suit, Gilda exprime la force grandissante de ses sentiments pour le duc dans une mélodie saccadée faite d'une série de phrases descendantes, des trilles et des *staccati* illustrant son excitation et sa nervosité. L'accompagnement exquis aux bois de Verdi rend la scène plus délicate encore, puis dans une vive section finale se déploient les talents de la soprano coloratura tandis que s'exprime la passion de plus en plus intense de Gilda tant romantique que sexuelle.

Verdi: "Ah, fors'è lui" – "Sempre libera" / "Addio, del passato"

Aucun des rôles de soprano de Verdi n'a sans doute autant de facettes que celui de Violetta dans *La traviata* (Venise, 1853). Partant du drame domestique de *Luisa Miller*, Verdi

aspirait à placer l'action de son adaptation de *La Dame aux camélias* d'Alexandre Dumas dans le présent, avant que la censure ne l'oblige à la resituer un siècle plutôt. Mais le fait que le drame se déroule au dix-huitième siècle ne dissimule qu'en partie la nature scandaleuse de l'intrigue de l'opéra qui met en scène la courtisane Violetta, d'une pureté morale exemplaire, et le bourgeois Germont qui se trouve dans la position morale ambiguë de père et anti-héros à la fois. Dans sa grande scène de l'Acte I, Violetta pense tout d'abord à la déclaration d'amour d'Alfredo, et se demande si elle devrait abandonner sa vie de plaisirs – déjà assombrie par la maladie – et poursuivre son rêve d'un amour romantique. "Ah, fors'è lui" a une structure harmonique modelée apparemment sur l'aria d'Isabelle "Robert, toi que j'aime" de Meyerbeer dans *Robert le diable*, une œuvre que Verdi aurait découverte à Paris: une lamentation pathétique en fa mineur qui se déploie progressivement en majeur quand la ligne vocale monte dans l'aigu, répétant ici aussi la mélodie du duo de Violetta et Alfredo. Rejetant ce rêve qu'elle considère comme une pure folie, Violetta se lance alors dans une cabalette en 6/8 ("Sempre libera") qui est presque une scène de démence. Avec les notes ut et ré répétées non moins de

dix fois dans l'aigu s'ajoutant aux gammes rapides qui mettraient à l'épreuve plus d'une soprano coloratura, Violetta, ici, voudrait littéralement retourner à un mode vocal antérieur, plus insouciant.

Dans "Addio, del passato" de l'acte final de l'opéra, Violetta semble plutôt dire adieu à ses rêves de bonheur et accepte sa mort imminente, consciente du fait qu'elle est destinée à être inhumée en dehors des terres consacrées. Par ses rythmes ternaires, l'aria évoque la musique de danse insouciant de Violetta quelques années auparavant, tandis qu'un accompagnement poignant au hautbois assombrit sa solitude – prenant même le relais quand Violetta s'essouffle.

Verdi: "Morrò, ma prima in grazia"

Un profil vocal très différent apparaît dans *Un ballo in maschera* (Rome, 1859), avec le rôle d'Amelia qui déplore sa malchance dans "Morrò, ma prima in grazia". Mariée à Renato, Amelia est secrètement amoureuse de son meilleur ami, Riccardo, qui est gouverneur de la ville coloniale de Boston (un lieu modifié pour satisfaire aux exigences de la censure, l'action se déroulant originellement à la cour royale de Suède). Renato a découvert ses sentiments pour Riccardo en épiant Amelia lors de sa rencontre avec la diseuse de bonne

aventure, Ulrica, et il la menace maintenant de la tuer pour l'avoir trahi. Dans l'Acte III, elle accepte sa mort, mais supplie de revoir son enfant une dernière fois dans un mouvement saccadé qui témoigne de l'habileté de Verdi à construire une aria à partir du développement et de l'intensification de petits motifs mélodiques. Un solo de violoncelle rend la scène plus poignante encore, mettant en relief la maturité d'Amelia ainsi que la richesse des notes graves de la soprano. Dans ce rôle qui est l'un des plus grands défis pour une soprano, Amelia révèle finalement l'ampleur de son tourment dans une cadence célèbre qui la mène d'un ut bémol aigu vers un la grave dans le registre alto – le désespoir d'une mère qui ne reverra plus jamais ses enfants.

Verdi: "Pace, pace, mio Dio!"

Leonora dans *La forza del destino* (Saint-Pétersbourg, 1862) est l'une des héroïnes les plus malmenées de Verdi, et le rôle demande une endurance et une force vocales remarquables. Leonora qui est indirectement l'une des victimes du tragique accident lors duquel son père a été tué par son bien-aimé, Don Alvaro, s'est réfugiée dans un monastère pour y finir ses jours en paix tandis que son frère, Don Carlo, cherche à venger la mort de leur père. Dans la célèbre aria de

l'Acte IV, Leonora qui est âgée et usée, implore miséricorde, déclarant que l'image d'Alvaro reste dans son cœur, mais qu'elle ne le reverra jamais. Accompagnées par la harpe, les phrases arquées du mouvement mettent en valeur la maîtrise par l'interprète de la respiration et du *legato* tandis qu'un si bémol aigu célèbre et sublime présente un défi similaire à celui de l'aria d'Amelia: un plaidoyer désincarné pour obtenir miséricorde. Dans la section finale, Leonora dit avoir dompté sa colère et lorsqu'elle entend quelqu'un faire intrusion (son bien-aimé Alvaro en l'occurrence), elle maudit tous ceux qui entravent son désir de mourir.

Puccini: "D'onde lieta usci"

La traviata de Verdi se profile en toile de fond de *La bohème* (Turin, 1896) de Giacomo Puccini (1858 – 1924) – comme c'est le cas pour tant d'autres opéras véristes – qui raconte l'histoire d'une jeune femme pleine de cœur, mais compromise, décédée prématurément. Puccini ne fut pas le seul à être attiré par le roman d'Henri Murger *Scènes de la vie de bohème* (1851); en effet, son compatriote Leoncavallo créa sa propre adaptation du livre un an plus tard. Mais elle n'eut pas le même succès que la version de Puccini, du fait sans doute du génie extraordinaire qu'avait ce

dernier d'évoquer lieux et caractères par des procédés musicaux spécifiques. Dans le troisième acte de *La bohème*, la relation de Mimì et Rodolfo est compromise. Initialement Mimì pense que Rodolfo est tout simplement jaloux, mais en l'entendant parler à leur ami Marcello de ses craintes, elle apprend qu'il est terrifié par sa mauvaise santé et par son incapacité à l'aider, et souhaiterait qu'elle choisisse un homme plus fortuné. Dans "D'onde lieta usci", elle lui dit adieu sans amertume et lui demande de rassembler les affaires qu'elle a laissées dans son appartement: des objets à valeur sentimentale qui reflètent l'attention qu'elle porte aux moindres détails, et certes, l'esthétisme en toile de fond du réalisme littéraire poussé à l'extrême. Dans une flambée passionnée, elle suggère qu'il conserve son bonnet rose comme souvenir, une forme d'attachement à des objets matériels qui refait son apparition dans les dernières scènes de l'opéra.

Puccini: "Vissi d'arte"

La *Tosca* (Rome, 1900) place l'illustration de l'opéra italien au centre de la scène en la personne de son héroïne, Tosca, une célèbre diva à Rome. Menacée par le baron Scarpia (le chef de la police) pendant les guerres napoléoniennes, Tosca a révélé l'endroit où

se trouvait le prisonnier politique Cesare Angelotti; son amant, Mario Cavaradossi, a aussi été condamné à mort. Une chance lui étant offerte de sauver Mario, mais seulement si elle se soumet sexuellement à Scarpia, Tosca est en crise – et elle l’exprime en un moment de réflexion quasi opératique. “Vissi d’arte” est essentiellement une prière qu’elle adresse à Dieu pour implorer son aide, et dans laquelle elle insiste sur le fait qu’elle s’est toujours consacrée à lui par son travail (et sa voix). Mais l’aria marque aussi une pause dramatique en quelque sorte. En chantant, Tosca dégage un espace pour elle-même dans le déroulement impétueux de l’opéra et fait une déclaration sur la puissance de la voix opératique dont l’impact peut modifier le comportement humain. L’aria qui atteint un climax sur “Signor” mêle douleur, rage et incompréhension dans sa brève durée, l’étourdissante section introductive s’orientant vers une seconde moitié éloquente, Tosca se laissant entraîner par sa propre frustration et son interprétation.

Puccini: “Un bel dì, vedremo” / “Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio!”

Madama Butterfly (Milan, 1904) fut un échec retentissant lors de sa création mondiale qui fut bruyamment huée par

une partie du public, probablement recruté par un éditeur concurrent. Toutefois, après une série de révisions, l’opéra entra dans le répertoire international – même au Japon où une riche tradition d’exécution locale naquit. *Madama Butterfly*, l’histoire d’une geisha japonaise abandonnée par son mari américain, Pinkerton, mêle des touches incongrues d’orientalisme à un portrait profondément sympathique de Cio-Cio San qui cherche désespérément à passer de la culture japonaise à la culture occidentale en attendant le retour de son époux. Dans “Un bel dì, vedremo”, elle dit à sa servante, Suzuki, que ceux qui pensent qu’il ne reviendra pas se trompent et elle raconte son arrivée à Nagasaki comme elle l’imagine: les bruits puis les premières images du navire, et enfin le son érotique de sa voix. Mais dans le retour sous forme de climax de la mélodie, elle exprime son espoir de ne pas mourir d’émotion à cet instant, “morir” explosant sur ses lèvres comme une pensée réprimée qui ne peut plus être contenue. Cio-Cio sait déjà ce qui se passera si elle se trompe.

Dans la scène finale, le désir qu’elle a de voir revenir Pinkerton est satisfait, mais elle découvre qu’il est marié. Plutôt que d’accepter cette autre honte, elle décide de se suicider. Dans “Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio!”, elle dit adieu à son fils et le supplie de garder son visage en

mémoire en chantant les phrases les plus exigeantes que Puccini ait jamais composées pour une voix de soprano. Même quand la soprano opératique est humiliée, sa voix peut rester puissante. Et bien qu'elle ne puisse intervenir en rien, son intensité vocale exprime sa force sous-jacente.

Puccini: "Senza mamma"

Aucun adieu dans l'œuvre de Puccini n'est plus poignant sans doute que "Senza mamma" dans *Suor Angelica* (New York, 1918). Mais c'est un adieu à un être cher déjà disparu et l'expression du regret qu'un véritable adieu n'ait jamais été possible. Envoyée au couvent par sa famille pour s'être retrouvée enceinte sans être mariée, Angelica a passé des années à attendre désespérément des nouvelles de son enfant. Un jour, sa tante, la Zia Principessa, lui donne finalement

des nouvelles de son enfant, mais elles ne sont pas joyeuses, car le jeune garçon est mort de maladie. Toutes les raisons de vivre d'Angelica s'évanouissent. Dans "Senza mamma", la religieuse exprime le choc qu'elle ressent en une mélodie presque modale, la longueur identique de chacune des notes restituant sa stupéfiante expérience de la douleur. Et tandis que progresse l'aria, Angelica commence à voir son enfant comme un ange dans les cieux, son ample mélodie devenant de plus en plus passionnée. Elle exprime enfin son profond désir de savoir quand elle le reverra. Cette conclusion évoque son imminent suicide, la régularité métronomique des rythmes suggérant le caractère inévitable de son destin.

© 2021 Ditlev Rindom

Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs

1 “Pace, pace, mio Dio!”

Leonora

Pace, pace, mio Dio!
Cruda sventura
M' astringe, ahimé, a languir;
Come il dì primo
Da tant' anni dura
Profondo il mio soffrir.
L' amai, gli è ver!
Ma di beltà e valore
Cotanto Iddio l' ornò.
Che l' amo ancor.
Né togliermi dal core
L' immagin sua saprò.
Fatalità! Fatalità! Fatalità!
Un delitto disgiunti n' ha quaggiù!
Alvaro, io t' amo.
E su nel cielo è scritto:
Non ti vedrò mai più!
Oh Dio, Dio, fa ch' io muoia;
Che la calma può darmi morte sol.
Invan la pace qui sperò quest' alma
In preda a tanto duol.
Misero pane, a prolungarmi vieni
La sconsolata vita... Ma chi giunge?
Chi profanare ardisce il sacro loco?
Maledizione! Maledizione! Maledizione!

from *La forza del destino* (St Petersburg, 1862),
Act IV, Scene 2
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave (1810 – 1876)

‘Peace, peace, my Lord!’

Leonora

Peace, peace, my Lord!
My harsh misfortune
compels me, alas, to languish;
as on the first day,
for years, unchanged,
my grief has endured.
I did love him, 'tis true!
But with beauty and valour
God had so adorned him
that I love him still.
Nor from my heart shall I
tear away his image.
What tragedy! What tragedy! What tragedy!
A crime divided us on this Earth!
Alvaro, I love you.
And in Heaven above it is written:
I shall never see you again!
Oh God, God, let me die;
for only death can give me respite.
In vain this soul of mine hoped for peace
in the grip of such pain.
Wretched bread, you come to prolong
my disconsolate life... But who is coming?
Who dares defile this holy place?
Curse him! Curse him! Curse him!

“Ah, fors’è lui” – “Sempre libera”

Violetta

È strano! è strano! in core
Scolpiti ho quegli accenti!
Saria per me sventura un serio amore?
Che risolvi, o turbata anima mia?
Null’uomo ancora t’accendeva.
O gioia
Ch’io non conobbi,
Esser amata amando!
E sdegnarla poss’io
Per l’aride follie del viver mio?

Ah, fors’è lui che l’anima
Solinga ne’ tumulti
Godea sovente pingere
De’ suoi colori occulti!
Lui che modesto e vigile
All’egre soglie accese,
E nuova febbre accese,
Destandomi all’amor.
A quell’amore ch’è palpito
Dell’universo intero,
Misterioso, altero,
Croce e delizia al cor.

Follie! follie! delirio vano è questo!
Povera donna, sola,
Abbandonata in questo
Popoloso deserto
Che appellano Parigi,
Che spero or più?

‘Ah, perhaps he is the one’ – ‘Forever free’

Violetta

How strange! How strange! Into my heart
I have carved his words!
Could true love be my undoing?
What do you decide, my agitated soul?
No man ever ignited you, my soul.
Oh joy
which I have never known,
loving, being loved!
And can I refuse it
in favour of the arid folly of my present life?

Ah, perhaps he is the one whom my soul,
lonely at parties,
often loved to paint
in secret colours!
He who, modest and watchful,
came here as I lay ill,
awakening a new fever,
awakening me to love.
That love which is the very breath
of the entire universe,
mysterious and noble,
both cross and ecstasy of the heart.

Madness! All madness! This is vain delirium!
A poor woman, alone,
lost in this
crowded desert
that people call Paris,
what now can I hope for?

Che far degg'io!
Gioire,
Di voluttà ne' vortici perir!

3 Sempre libera degg'io
Folleggiare di gioia in gioia,
Vo' che scorra il viver mio
Pei sentieri del piacer.
Nasca il giorno, o il giorno muoia,
Sempre lieta ne' ritrovi,
Ah a dilette sempre nuovi
Dee volare il mio pensier.

from *La traviata* (Venice, 1853), Act I
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

4 “D'onde lieta uscì”
Mimi
D'onde lieta uscì
al tuo grido d'amore,
torna sola Mimi
al solitario nido.
Ritorna un'altra volta
a intesser finti fior.
Addio, senza rancor.
– Ascolta, ascolta.
Le poche robe aduna che lasciai
sparse. Nel mio cassetto
stan chiusi quel cerchietto
d'or e il libro di preghiere.
Involgi tutto quanto in un grembiale
e manderò il portiere...

What should I do?
Revel,
lose myself in the whirlpool of earthly pleasures!

Forever free, I must
fly from joy to joy,
for my life's course must forever be
in the paths of pleasure.
Whether it be daybreak or dusk,
I shall always be happy at gatherings;
Ah, to pleasures ever renewing
may my thoughts fly.

‘From the place she happily left’
Mimi
From the place she happily left,
following the cry of your love,
Mimi returns alone
to her solitary nest.
Back once more
to embroidering fake flowers.
Farewell, without bitterness.
– Listen, listen.
Gather the few scattered clothes
I had left. In my drawer
I kept that ring of
gold and my prayer book.
Wrap them all in an apron
and I shall send the caretaker...

– Bada, sotto il guanciale
c'è la cuffietta rosa.
Se... vuoi... serbarla a ricordo d'amor!...
Addio, senza rancor.

from *La bohème* (Turin, 1896), Act III
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa (1847 – 1906)
and Luigi Illica (1857 – 1919)

5 “Vissi d'arte”

Tosca
Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore,
non feci mai male ad anima viva!...
Con man furtiva
quante miserie conobbi, aiutai...
Sempre con fe' sincera,
la mia preghiera
ai santi tabernacoli sali.
Sempre con fe' sincera
diedi fiori agli altar.
Nell'ora del dolore
perché, perché, Signore,
perché me ne rimunerì così?
Diedi gioielli
della Madonna al manto,
e diedi il canto
agli astri, al ciel, che ne ridean più belli.
Nell'ora del dolor,
perché, perché, Signor,
perché me ne rimunerì così?

from *Tosca* (Rome, 1900), Act II
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa
and Luigi Illica

– Mind, under the pillow
there is my pink bonnet.
If... you like... keep it as a memory of our love!...
Farewell, without bitterness.

‘Art was my life’

Tosca
Art was my life, love was my life,
I never hurt a living soul!...
Secretly,
how many times did I help the unhappy...
Ever with sincere faith
did my prayer
rise to the holy altars.
Ever with sincere faith
did I lay flowers upon the altars.
In my hour of grief
why, oh why, Lord,
why must this be my reward?
I gave jewels
for Mary's cloak,
and gave my song
to the stars, to the sky, making them more
beautiful.
In my hour of grief
why, oh why, Lord,
why must this be my reward?

“Piangete voi?” – “Al dolce guidami”

Anna

6 Piangete voi? D'onde tal pianto?... È questo
Giorno di nozze. Il Re m'aspetta... l'altare,
Infiorato. – Datemi tosto
Il mio candido ammanto; il crin m'ornate
Del mio sero di rose...

Che Percy non lo sappia – il Re l'impose.

Oh! chi si duole?
Chi parlò di Percy?... Ch'io non lo vegga;
Ch'io m'asconda a' suoi sguardi. – È vano – Ei
viene...
Ei m'accusa... ei mi sgrida. Ah! mi perdona...
Infelice son io. Togliami a questa
Miseria estrema... Tu sorridi?... Oh gioia!...
Non fia, non fia che qui deserta io muoia!

7 Al dolce guidami
Castel natio,
Ai verdi platani,
Al quieto rio
Che i nostri mormora
Sospiri ancor.
Ah! colà, dimentico
De' scorsi affanni.
Un giorno rendimi
De' miei prim' anni.
Un giorno rendimi
Del nostro amor,

'Are you crying?' – 'Lead me to the sweet'

Anna

Are you crying? Wherefore those tears?... This is
A wedding day. The King awaits me... the altar,
is adorned with flowers. – Give me at once
my white robes; adorn my hair
with my rose crown...

Percy must not know – the King commanded it.

Oh! Who is lamenting?
Who mentioned Percy?... I must not see him;
I must hide from his sight. – It is useless – He is
coming...
He accuses me... scolds me. Ah! Forgive me...
I am unhappy. Take me away from this
immense sorrow... Do you smile?... What joy!...
Let me not, let me not die here forlorn!

Lead me to the sweet
castle of my birth,
to the green planes,
to the quiet stream
which breathes
our sighs still.
Ah! There, I forget
our sufferings past.
Give me back one day
from my younger years.
Give me back one day
of our love,

Ah! un giorno solo
Del nostro amor.

from *Anna Bolena* (Milan, 1830),
Act II, Scene 3
Libretto by Felice Romani
(1788 – 1865)

8 “Morrò, ma prima in grazia”

Amelia

Morrò, ma prima in grazia
deh! mi consenti almeno
l'unico figlio mio
avvincere al mio seno.
E se alla moglie nieghi
quest'ultimo favor,
non rifiutarlo ai prieghi
del mio materno cor.

Morrò, ma queste viscere
consolino i suoi baci,
or che l'estrema è giunta
dell'ore mie fugaci.
Spenta per man del padre,
la man ci stenderà
su gl'occhi d'una madre
che mai più non vedrà!

from *Un ballo in maschera*
(Rome, 1859),
Act III, Scene 1
Libretto by Antonio Somma (1809 – 1864)

Ah! Just one day
of our love.

‘I shall die, but I beg you’

Amelia

I shall die, but I beg you,
let me at least
clasp my only son
to my breast.
You may deny your wife
this last favour,
but do not refuse the prayer
of a mother's heart.

I shall die but into the beyond
may his kisses comfort me,
now that the last of my
fleeting hours arrives.
To me, struck down by the hand of his father,
he will extend his hand
to close the eyes of a mother
whom he will never see again!

9 “Caro nome”

Gilda

Gualtier Maldè... nome di lui sì amato,
Ti scolpisci nel core innamorato!

Caro nome che il mio cor
Festi primo palpitar,
Le delizie dell'amor
Mi dei sempre rammentar!
Col pensier il mio desir
A te sempre volerà,
E fin l'ultimo sospir,
Caro nome, tuo sarà.
Col pensier il mio desir
A te sempre / ogn'ora volerà,
E fin l'ultimo mio sospir,
Caro nome, tuo sarà.
Gualtier Maldè!
Caro nome, *ecc.*

from *Rigoletto* (Venice, 1851), Act I, Scene 2
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

10 “Addio, del passato”

Violetta

“Teneste la promessa... la disfida
Ebbe luogo! il barone fu ferito,
Però migliora... Alfredo
È in stranio suolo; il vostro sacrificio
Io stesso gli ho svelato;
Egli a voi tornerà pel suo perdono;
Io pur verrò. Curatevi... meritate

‘Dear name’

Gilda

Gualtier Maldè... name of my beloved,
carve yourself into my lovestruck heart!

Beloved name, that first
made my heart tremble,
of the pleasures of love
you must always remind me!
In my thoughts, my desire
will always fly to you,
and up to my last breath,
your name will be my love.
In my thoughts, my desire
will always / every hour fly to you,
and up to my last breath,
your name will be my love.
Gualtier Maldè!
Beloved name, *etc.*

‘Farewell, my past’

Violetta

‘You kept your promise... the duel
took place! The Baron was wounded,
but is recovering... Alfredo
is abroad; your sacrifice
I myself revealed to him;
he shall come back to ask your forgiveness;
I shall also come. Look after yourself... you
deserve

Un avenir migliore. –
Giorgio Germont.”

È tardi!
Attendo, attendo né a me giungon mai!...
Oh, come son mutata!
Ma il dottore a sperar pure m' esortal!
Ah, con tal morbo ogni speranza è morta.

Addio, del passato bei sogni ridenti,
Le rose del volto già sono pallenti;
L' amore d' Alfredo perfino mi manca,
Conforto, sostegno dell' anima stanca.
Ah! della traviata sorridi al desio;
A lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglila, o Dio!
Ah! tutto finì, or tutto finì.
Le gioie, i dolori tra poco avran fine,
La tomba ai mortali di tutto è confine!
Non lacrima o fiore avrà la mia fossa,
Non croce col nome che copra quest' ossa!
Ah! della traviata sorridi al desio;
A lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglila, o Dio!
Ah! tutto finì, or tutto finì.

from *La traviata* (Venice, 1853), Act III
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

11 “Casta Diva”

Norma
Casta Diva, che inargentì
Queste sacre antiche piante,
A noi volgi il bel sembiante,
Senza nube e senza vel!

a better future. –
Giorgio Germont.’

Too late!
I keep waiting, waiting, but they never come!...
Oh, how I have changed!
Yet, the doctor urges me to hope!
Ah, such a disease kills all hope.

Farewell, my past and its happy dreams,
the colour fades from my face;
I miss Alfredo's love,
comfort, succour of my ailing soul.
Ah! smile on the fallen woman's wish;
forgive her; welcome her, O God!
Ah! All is over, now all is over.
Pleasures, sorrows will soon end,
for mortals the tomb is the boundary of all!
No tears nor flowers will grace my grave,
nor a cross with a name over these bones of mine!
Ah! smile on the fallen woman's wish;
forgive her; welcome her, O God!
Ah! All is over, now all is over.

“Pure Goddess”

Norma
Pure Goddess, who cover with silver
these ancient, sacred trees,
towards us turn your beautiful face,
cloudless and unveiled!

Tempra, o Diva,
Tempra tu de' cori ardenti,
Tempra ancora lo zelo audace.
Spargi in terra, ah! quella pace
Che regnar tu fai nel ciel.

from *Norma* (Milan, 1831),
Act I, Scene 1
Libretto by Felice Romani

12 “Senza mamma”

Suor Angelica
Senza mamma,
o bimbo, tu sei morto!
Le tue labbra,
senza i baci miei,
scoloriron
fredde, fredde!
E chiudesti,
o bimbo, gli occhi belli!
Non potendo
carezzarmi,
le manine
componesti in croce!
E tu sei morto
senza sapere
quanto t' amava
questa tua mamma!

Ora che sei un angelo del cielo,
ora tu puoi vederla la tua mamma,
tu puoi scendere giù pel firmamento
ed aleggiare intorno a me... ti sento...

Bolster, O Goddess,
bolster our passionate hearts,
bolster once more our daring zeal.
Spread on our Earth, ah! the peace
which you will see reign in the sky.

‘Without mother’

Suor Angelica
Without mother,
O child, you died!
Your lips,
without my kisses,
faded,
icy cold!
And you closed,
O child, your pretty eyes!
You could not
caress me,
your little hands
you shaped as a cross!
And you died
without knowing
how much she loved you,
this mother of yours!

Now that you are an angel in Heaven,
now you can see your mother,
you can descend from Heaven
and hover around me... I can feel you...

Sei qui... sei qui... mi baci... e m'accarezzi.
Ah! dimmi, quando in ciel potrò vederti?
Quando potrò baciarti!...
Oh! dolce fine d'ogni mio dolore!
Quando in cielo con te potrò salire?...
Quando potrò morire?...
Dillo alla mamma, creatura bella,
con un leggero scintillar di stella.
Parlami, amore, amore!...

from *Suor Angelica* (New York, 1918)

Libretto by Giovacchino Forzano (1884–1970)

© Casa Ricordi, Milan, Italy

All rights reserved. International copyright secured.

Reproduced by kind permission of

Hal Leonard Europe Srl, Italy

You are here... you are here... you kiss me... and
stroke me.

Ah! Tell me, when may I see you in Heaven?

When may I kiss you!...

Oh! Sweet ending of all my sorrows!

When may I ascend to Heaven with you?...

When may I die?...

Tell your mummy, dear baby,

with a little starry twinkle.

Talk to me, my love, my love!...

13 “Un bel dì, vedremo”

Butterfly

Un bel dì, vedremo
levarsi un fil di fumo
sull'estremo confin del mare.

E poi la nave appare.

Poi la nave bianca

entra nel porto,

romba il suo saluto.

Vedi? È venuto!

Io non gli scendo incontro. Io no.

Mi metto là sul ciglio del colle e aspetto,

e aspetto gran tempo e non mi pesa,

la lunga attesa.

‘One fine day we shall see’

Butterfly

One fine day we shall see
a smoke strand rise
on the furthest border of the sea.

Then the ship will appear.

Then the white ship

will enter the harbour,

make resound its greeting.

See? He has come!

I do not go down to meet him. Not I.

I sit there, at the bottom of the hill and wait,

and wait for a long time, and it does not bother me,

that long wait.

E uscito dalla folla cittadina
un uomo, un picciol punto
s'avvia per la collina.
Chi sarà? chi sarà?
E come sarà giunto
che dirà? che dirà?
Chiamerà Butterfly dalla lontana.
Io senza dar risposta
me ne starò nascosta
un po' per celia...
e un po' per non morire al primo incontro,
ed egli alquanto in pena chiamerà,
chiamerà: Piccina mogliettina
olezzo di verbena,
i nomi che mi dava al suo venire.
Tutto questo avverrà, te lo prometto.
Tienti la tua paura,
io con sicura fede l'aspetto.

*from Madama Butterfly (Milan, 1904),
Act II, Part 1
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa
and Luigi Illica*

14 “**Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio!**”
Butterfly
“Con onor muore
chi non può serbar vita
con onore.”

Tu? Tu? Tu? Tu?
Piccolo Iddio!
Amore, amore mio.

And out from the city's crowd
a man, a tiny dot
heads towards the hill.
Who might he be? Who might he be?
And how did he arrive,
what will he say? What will he say?
He shall call Butterfly from afar.
I shall not answer,
I shall stay hidden
almost as a joke...
and also so as not to die at the first meeting,
and he, somewhat distraught, shall call,
shall call: Little one, little wife,
sweet flower,
the names he gave me when he first came.
All this shall happen, I promise you.
You may keep your fear,
with firm faith I shall wait for him.

‘You? You? Little God!’
Butterfly
‘He shall die with honour,
who cannot keep life
with honour.’

You? You? You? You?
Little God!
Darling, my love.

Fior di giglio e di rosa.
Non saperlo mai... per te,
pei tuoi puri occhi,
muore Butterfly...
Perché tu possa andar
di là dal mare
senza che ti rimorda
ai dì maturi,
il materno abbandono.
O a me, sceso dal trono
dell'alto Paradiso,
guarda ben fiso, fiso,
di tua madre la faccia!
Che te'n resti una traccia,
guarda ben!
Amore, addio, addio!
Piccolo amor!
Va', gioca, gioca!

Pinkerton
Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

from *Madama Butterfly* (Milan, 1904),
Act II, Part 2
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa
and Luigi Illica

Blossom of the lily and the rose.
May you never learn... for you,
for your pure eyes,
dies Butterfly...
So that you can go
over the sea
without resenting
when you are grown,
your mother's abandonment.
You, who came down from the throne
of high Heaven,
look well, straight
at your mother's face!
May a trace linger in you,
look well!
My love, goodbye, goodbye!
Little love!
Go, play, play!

Pinkerton
Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

Translation: Emanuela Guastella

You can purchase Chandos CDs or download MP3s online at our website: www.chandos.net

For requests to license tracks from this CD or any other Chandos discs please find application forms on the Chandos website or contact the Royalties Director, Chandos Records Ltd, direct at the address below or via e-mail at bhallis@chandos.net.

Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House, 1 Commerce Park, Commerce Way, Colchester,
Essex CO2 8HX, UK.

E-mail: enquiries@chandos.net Telephone: + 44 (0)1206 225 200 Fax: + 44 (0)1206 225 201



www.facebook.com/chandosrecords



www.twitter.com/chandosrecords

Chandos 24-bit / 96 kHz recording

The Chandos policy of being at the forefront of technology is now further advanced by the use of 24-bit / 96 kHz recording. In order to reproduce the original waveform as closely as possible we use 24-bit, as it has a dynamic range that is up to 48 dB greater and up to 256 times the resolution of standard 16-bit recordings. Recording at the 44.1 kHz sample rate, the highest frequencies generated will be around 22 kHz. That is 2 kHz higher than can be heard by the typical human with excellent hearing. However, we use the 96 kHz sample rate, which will translate into the potentially highest frequency of 48 kHz. The theory is that, even though we do not hear it, audio energy exists, and it has an effect on the lower frequencies which we do hear, the higher sample rate thereby reproducing a better sound.

Microphones

Thuresson: CM 402 (main sound)

Schoeps: MK22 / MK4 / MK6

DPA: 4006 & 4011

Neumann: U89

CM 402 microphones are hand built by the designer, Jörgen Thuresson, in Sweden.

Recording producer Brian Pidgeon
Sound engineer Ralph Couzens
Assistant engineers Alex James and Jonathan Cooper
Editor Alex James
A & R administrator Sue Shortridge
Recording venue Church of S. Augustine, Kilburn, London; 2–7 September 2019
Front cover Photograph of Linda Richardson © Victoria Cadisch Photography
Back cover Photograph of John Wilson by Sim Canetty-Clarke
Inner inlay card Photograph of Linda Richardson © Victoria Cadisch Photography
Design and typesetting Cap & Anchor Design Co. (www.capandanchor.com)
Booklet editor Finn S. Gundersen
© 2021 Chandos Records Ltd
© 2021 Chandos Records Ltd
Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England
Country of origin UK

ITALIAN OPERA ARIAS – Richardson/Sinfonia of London/Wilson

CHANDOS
CHAN 20155

CHANDOS DIGITAL

CHAN 20155

ITALIAN OPERA ARIAS

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813–1901)

- | | | |
|-----|--|------|
| 1 | Pace, pace, mio Dio! from 'La forza del destino' (1862) | 5:49 |
| 2-3 | Ah, fors'è lui and Sempre libera from 'La traviata' (1853) | 6:46 |

GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858–1924)

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 4 | D'onde lieta uscì from 'La bohème' (1896) | 3:28 |
| 5 | Vissi d'arte from 'Tosca' (1900) | 3:25 |

GAETANO DONIZETTI (1797–1848)

- | | | |
|-----|--|------|
| 6-7 | Piangete voi? and Al dolce guidami from 'Anna Bolena' (1830) | 9:33 |
|-----|--|------|

GIUSEPPE VERDI

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 8 | Morrò, ma prima in grazia from 'Un ballo in maschera' (1859) | 4:53 |
| 9 | Caro nome from 'Rigoletto' (1851) | 6:39 |
| 10 | Addio, del passato from 'La traviata' | 6:35 |

VINCENZO BELLINI (1801–1835)

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|------|
| 11 | Casta Diva from 'Norma' (1831) | 7:32 |
|----|--------------------------------|------|

GIACOMO PUCCINI

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 12 | Senza mamma from 'Suor Angelica' (1918) | 4:59 |
| 13 | Un bel dì, vedremo from 'Madama Butterfly' (1904) | 4:33 |
| 14 | Tu? Tu? Piccolo Iddio! from 'Madama Butterfly' | 5:02 |

TT 70:13

© 2021 Chandos Records Ltd
© 2021 Chandos Records Ltd
Chandos Records Ltd
Colchester • Essex
England

Linda Richardson
soprano

Sinfonia of London
Andrew Haveron leader

John Wilson

ITALIAN OPERA ARIAS – Richardson/Sinfonia of London/Wilson

CHANDOS
CHAN 20155