

# Italian Tenor Arias

Donizetti Leoncavallo Mascagni Puccini Verdi

**Azer Zada**

Kiev Virtuosi Symphony Orchestra

**Dmitry Yablonsky**

## Italian Tenor Arias

- Pietro Mascagni** (1863–1945)  
**Amica** (1905)  
 Libretto: Paul Bércl [de Choudens] (1850–1925)
- 1 Act I: Intermezzo ..... 9:49
- Giacomo Puccini** (1858–1924)  
**Madama Butterfly** (1904)  
 Libretto: Luigi Illica (1857–1919) and Giuseppe Giacosa (1847–1906)
- 2 Act III: Addio, fiorito asil ..... 1:52
- Pietro Mascagni**  
**Cavalleria rusticana** (1890)  
 Libretto: Guido Menasci (1867–1925) and Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti (1863–1934)
- 3 Intermezzo ..... 3:53
- Gaetano Donizetti** (1797–1848)  
**L'elisir d'amore** (1832)  
 Libretto: Felice Romani (1788–1865)
- 4 Act II: Una furtiva lagrima ..... 4:52
- Pietro Mascagni**  
**L'amico Fritz** (1891)  
 Libretto: Nicola Daspuro (1853–1941)
- 5 Act II: Intermezzo ..... 4:02
- Pietro Mascagni**  
**Iris** (1898)  
 Libretto: L. Illica
- 6 Act I: Apri la tua finestra ..... 2:15
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- 7 Mamma, quel vino è generoso, 'Addio alla madre' ..... 3:56

- Ruggero Leoncavallo** (1857–1919)  
**Pagliacci** (1892)  
 Libretto: Ruggero Leoncavallo
- 8 Act I: Recitar! Mentre preso dal delirio – Vesti la giubba ..... 2:29
- Giacomo Puccini**  
**Turandot** (1926)  
 Libretto: Giuseppe Adami (1878–1946) and Renato Simoni (1875–1952)
- 9 Act III: Nessun dorma! ..... 3:01
- 10 Act I: Non piangere, Liù! ..... 2:25
- Giacomo Puccini**  
**Tosca** (1895–99)  
 Libretto: L. Illica and G. Giacosa
- 11 Act III: E lucevan le stelle ..... 2:50
- 12 Act I: Recondita armonia ..... 2:41
- Giuseppe Verdi** (1813–1901)  
**Macbeth** (1847)  
 Libretto: Andrea Maffei (1798–1885) and Francesco Maria Piave (1810–1876)
- 13 Act IV: O figli, O figli miei! – Ah, la paterna mano ..... 3:22
- Giuseppe Verdi**  
**Messa da Requiem** (1874)  
 Text: Ordinary of the Latin Mass
- 14 Dies irae: Ingemisco ..... 3:40



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**Azer Zada, Tenor** 2 4 6–14  
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## Italian Tenor Arias

**Pietro Mascagni** (1863–1945)

**Amica** (1905)

**Act I: Intermezzo**

Pietro Mascagni remains best known for his opera *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890). The two-act *dramma lirico*, *Amica*, his only opera with a French libretto, received its premiere at the Casino, Monte Carlo in 1905. With its Arcadian setting it marked a change to the Japanese exoticism of *Iris* and the comedy of *Le maschere*, returning now to the *verismo* ('realism') of *Cavalleria rusticana*.

The opening scene is set in a farmyard in the foothills of the French Alps, around 1900. As the sun rises, distant cowbells are heard and the voices of shepherds and cowherds. The farmer, Camoine, enters, proclaiming a general holiday and offering wine to all; his niece Amica is to marry Giorgio. She, however, prefers Giorgio's shepherd brother Rinaldo, in spite of her uncle's insistence. Distant thunder is heard as she agrees to elope with Rinaldo. They are seen by Camoine's mistress Magdelone, who tells Giorgio that Amica has run away with an unknown man. Giorgio pursues them, resolved on revenge. After an *Intermezzo*, the second act opens in rocky mountain terrain. Giorgio finds the couple and is amazed to see his brother Rinaldo, who now reproaches and rejects Amica, in spite of her pleas. While Rinaldo tends his brother, who has fainted, Amica leaves them, making her precarious way through the rocks. She slips and falls to her death, leaving the brothers to lament the fatal outcome

**Giacomo Puccini** (1858–1924)

**Madama Butterfly** (1904)

**Act III: Addio, fiorito asil**

**('Farewell, flowery haven')**

Puccini's Japanese tragedy, *Madama Butterfly*, with

a libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, is based on David Belasco's play *Madame Butterfly*, itself drawing on John Luther Long's story, derived from a work by Pierre Loti, *Madame Chrysanthème*. It had its premiere at La Scala, Milan, in 1904.

Set in Nagasaki, the story presents a contrast, in this exotic setting, between the American Lieutenant Pinkerton and his Japanese geisha wife Cio-Cio-San. For her, their marriage is a serious matter but for him it is nothing more than a flirtation. As he explains on his wedding day, the arrangement of renting a house, for himself and his bride, is no more permanent than a marriage: to be ended at his will. The marriage ceremony reveals a contrast between Pinkerton's intentions, confided to Sharpless, the American consul in Nagasaki, and the sincerity of Cio-Cio-San, the behaviour of her relatives and, particularly, the hostility of her uncle, the Bonze. Pinkerton leaves Nagasaki and Cio-Cio-San is left to await his return. When he does come back, he brings with him his new American wife, willing to adopt Cio-Cio-San's child by Pinkerton. For Cio-Cio-San the only end is suicide.

In *Addio, fiorito asil*, Pinkerton returns to his former home, provoked to remorse by his companion, the Consul Sharpless. The final parting with Butterfly is too much for him, and he leaves others to see to his child. Finally, he is heard again, returning, but Butterfly is dead.

*Madama Butterfly* is one of Puccini's most moving operas, its drama centred on Cio-Cio-San, whose childish innocence at her marriage and continued ingenuous faith are contrasted with the callousness of Pinkerton. Japanese melodies are used to provide an element of authenticity, with American musical references to mark Pinkerton's primary loyalties.

**Pietro Mascagni**

**Cavalleria rusticana** (1890)

**Intermezzo**

A *melodramma* in one act, the libretto based on a story by Giovanni Verga, *Cavalleria rusticana* ('Rustic Chivalry') was first staged in 1890. In a Sicilian village it is Easter Sunday. Santuzza's former lover, the young soldier Turiddu, is in love with Lola, wife of Alfio, the village teamster. Seeking revenge, Santuzza tells Alfio of Lola's unfaithfulness to him and Alfio, after leaving Santuzza in the charge of his mother, Mamma Lucia, he kills Turiddu in a fight.

The *Intermezzo* finds the stage empty. Santuzza has betrayed Turiddu, and Alfio is in pursuit of revenge. The scene represents a moment of strong dramatic tension, with the death of Alfio or Turiddu the unavoidable outcome.

An example of *verismo*, Mascagni's opera is a concentrated study of love and jealousy, unified in its music and offering a strong contrast between normal village life, with its church celebration of Easter, and the strong feelings of the principal characters.

**Gaetano Donizetti** (1797–1848)

**L'elisir d'amore** (1832)

**Act II: Una furtiva lagrima**

**('A hidden tear')**

First performed in 1822, Donizetti's *melodramma* *L'elisir d'amore* ('The Elixir of Love') has a libretto by Felice Romani, after Eugène Scribe's French text written for the composer Daniel Auber.

Nemorino, a simple-minded young man, is in love with Adina, a rich landowner, who is impressed by the Sergeant Belcore, a man of overwhelming confidence in his own charms. The travelling quack doctor Dulcamara arrives in the village, offering panaceas of his own fraudulent concoction. Nemorino seeks a love potion and this Dulcamara happily provides, in fact in the form of claret. Adina, meanwhile, has

agreed to marry Belcore, forcing Nemorino to seek more elixir from Dulcamara, which he can only pay for by enlisting in Belcore's troop. Rumour reaches the village that Nemorino has inherited a fortune, and he now finds himself immensely popular among the girls, arousing Adina's jealousy. When Dulcamara tells her that Nemorino has enlisted in order to find a way to her heart, she relents, dismisses Belcore and agrees to marry Nemorino, after buying him out of the regiment.

One of the best of comic operas, *L'elisir d'amore* provides Nemorino with his admiring *Quanto è bella* ('How lovely she is') and, best known of all, with *Una furtiva lagrima*, when he sees that his enlistment has aroused Adina's pity.

**Pietro Mascagni**

**L'amico Fritz** (1891)

**Act II: Intermezzo**

Based on a story by Erckmann-Chatrian, *L'amico Fritz* ('Friend Fritz') was first performed in 1891.

Fritz Kobus is a confirmed bachelor, but his friend David, the rabbi, tells him that within a year he will be married. Fritz is ready to stake his vineyard on the matter since he is content as he is. Suzel, the daughter of his steward, eventually becomes his bride, when Fritz seeks to save her from a supposed marriage that she does not want. Fritz is happy to give his young bride his vineyard, lost in his wager. The dramatic *Intermezzo* marks Fritz's realisation that he is in love with Suzel.

**Pietro Mascagni**

**Iris** (1898)

**Act I: Apri la tua finestra**

**('Open your window')**

A *melodramma* in three acts, Mascagni's *Iris* had its first performance in 1898.

Iris is the only support for her blind father. She

is desired by Osaka, and Kyoto, who runs a geisha house, plans to obtain her for him. Abducted, she awakens in Kyoto's Green House. There she is wooed by Osaka, but she does not understand him, mistaking him for the sun god. Giving up his pursuit, Osaka leaves the house, and Kyoto tries to lure him back by dressing Iris in fine clothes and letting her be seen on the balcony. Her father, understanding she is there and thinking that this is of her own free will, curses her. In the third act the body of Iris is found by rag-pickers. When she shows signs of life, they stop taking her jewels and run away. The sun rises, and Iris is able, in death, to rise above the selfishness of Osaka, Kyoto and her father.

Set in 19th-century Japan, *Iris* provided Mascagni with an opportunity for exoticism. The orchestration includes the *shamisen* (the Japanese three-string lute) and tam-tams, notably in the theatrical performance that covers the abduction of Iris. The opera may be seen as a precursor of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in its attempted combination of realism and the exotic. Well-known excerpts from the opera must include the tenor serenade *Apri la tua finestra*, as Osaka, representing the sun god in the marionette show before the abduction of Iris, serenades her.

**Pietro Mascagni**

**Cavalleria rusticana**

**Mamma, quel vino è generoso,**

**'Addio alla madre'**

**('Mamma, the wine is flowing', "Farewell to his mother")**

The opera moves forward to its inevitable end. At Mamma Lucia's tavern, Turiddu confronts Alfio, admits his guilt and offers him wine. Alfio refuses and a duel to the death is inevitable. Turiddu bids his mother farewell and asks her to look after Santuzza, and leaves to meet his fate.

**Ruggero Leoncavallo** (1857–1919)

**Pagliacci** (1892)

**Act I: Recitar! Mentre preso dal delirio – Vesti la giubba**

**('Am I to act?! While I'm so maddened – On with your costume')**

First performed in 1892, Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* ('Actors') has a prologue and two acts. The composer based his realistic opera on an incident in the Calabrian village of Montalto, where the subsequent trial had taken place before his father as magistrate. Often performed in a double bill with Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*, another story of love and jealousy, *Pagliacci* remains one of the best-known operas in the repertory.

Canio is the leader of a group of travelling actors, appearing with his wife, Nedda. Tonio, a clown, makes advances at Nedda, who indignantly rejects him, striking him with a whip. Seeking revenge, Tonio arouses Canio's jealousy, while Nedda herself has resolved to run away with Silvio, a villager. The action on stage reflects elements of reality, with its inevitable final disaster. Canio kills his wife and her lover. Canio's *Vesti la giubba* comes at the end of the first act, as he contrasts his stage role with the real tragedy of his life.

**Giacomo Puccini**

**Turandot** (1826)

**Act III: Nessun dorma! ('None shall sleep!')**

Puccini's opera *Turandot*, based on a work by Carlo Gozzi, remained incomplete at the time of the composer's death, to be finished by others, notably by Franco Alfano, whose version was staged at La Scala, Milan in 1926.

By imperial decree, Princess Turandot is to marry the first royal suitor able to answer her three riddles, with failure leading to execution. Calàf, son of the exiled King of Tartary, is successful in solving

Turandot's test, but gives her a chance to escape if, before morning, she can discover his name. Turandot makes every effort to discover the stranger's name, which is finally revealed as Love.

**Giacomo Puccini**

**Turandot**

**Act I: Non piangere, Liù**

**('Do not cry, Liù')**

Turandot's struggle to succeed in her rejection of Calàf leads her to seek help from his loyal follower, the slave-girl Liù, who has, in the first act of the opera, done her best dissuade Calàf from competing in the quest for Turandot's hand. Calàf, however, remains determined.

**Giacomo Puccini**

**Tosca** (1895–99)

**Act III: E lucevan le stelle**

**('And the stars were gleaming')**

Puccini's three-act *melodramma* was completed in 1899. The action centres on Tosca, a famous singer, and her lover, the painter Cavaradossi, with evil interventions by the chief of police, Baron Scarpia. In the third act, at Castel Sant'Angelo, Cavaradossi, imprisoned by Scarpia as a suspected revolutionary, prepares for death, as dawn draws near. In his aria *E lucevan le stelle* he remembers times of happiness with his beloved Tosca. Having killed Scarpia, his death still undetected by the authorities, Tosca is brought in and, left alone with Cavaradossi, explains how there is to be a mock-execution, after which they can escape together. In the event Scarpia has his revenge. His orders did not countermand the execution and Cavaradossi is shot. When Tosca realises that he is dead, she leaps from the battlements to her own death, while Scarpia's men draw threateningly near, having discovered their master's body.

**Giacomo Puccini**

**Tosca**

**Act I, Recondita armonia**

**('Strange harmony')**

In the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, the fugitive Angelotti takes refuge in a private chapel. The painter Cavaradossi returns to the canvas he is painting, a picture of Mary Magdalene, influenced by the features of his beloved Tosca and by a woman he has often seen in the church, in fact Angelotti's sister. In *Recondita armonia*, Cavaradossi compares the fair complexion of Angelotti's sister and the darker features of Tosca, their beauty to be brought together in his painting. Angelotti emerges from hiding, explaining that he has escaped from imprisonment in the Castel Sant'Angelo.

**Giuseppe Verdi** (1813–1901)

**Macbeth** (1847)

**Act IV: O figli, O figli miei! – Ah, la paterna mano ('Children, O my children! – Your father's hand')**

Verdi's four-act opera *Macbeth* is based on the play by Shakespeare, with a libretto by Francesco Maria Plave. It was first performed in 1847.

Macduff, a Scottish nobleman, has joined the forces attacking Macbeth, who, in revenge, has had Macduff's wife and children killed. In *O figli, O figli miei!* Macduff laments his cruel loss, for which he will take final revenge in the death of the tyrant.

**Giuseppe Verdi**

**Messa da Requiem** (1874)

**Dies irae: Ingemisco**

Verdi completed his *Requiem Mass* in April 1874 and it was first performed in May that year at the Church of San Marco in Milan. The origin of the work may be found in Verdi's suggested composite Requiem for Rossini, who had died in 1868. He proposed that a number of composers should join together to offer

a national tribute and this was duly organised, with Verdi himself providing the *Libera me*. In the end, however, the project came to nothing, although the composers who had agreed to contribute had completed their tasks. Verdi had stipulated that the work should make no commercial profit and that the music should not be performed again, a gesture that he himself could now well afford. It was the death of the writer Alessandro Manzoni in 1873 that prompted Verdi to the completion of the task of setting the Requiem, urged on by his publisher.

**Keith Anderson**

#### **Azer Zada**

Born in Baku, Azerbaijan, Azer Zada began his singing career as a soloist with the Azerbaijani State Opera. In Italy he entered the Accademia d'Arte Lirica Osimo where he attended the masterclasses of Magda Olivero, Raina Kabaivanska, Renata Scotto and Renato Bruson. He is a laureate of the Concorso Lirico Internazionale di Portofino and Concorso Voci Verdiane, where he won First Prize. After studying at the Accademia Teatro alla Scala he appeared at Teatro alla Scala as the Prince of Persia in *Turandot*, Borsa in *Rigoletto* and The Messenger in *Aida*, and in *Don Carlos*, *La traviata* and *I due Foscari* under Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Chailly, Nello Santi and Myung-Whun Chung. Other roles include Macduff in *Macbeth*, Don José in *Carmen*, Rodolfo in *La bohème* and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. He has sung Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* under Jader Benjamini and performed at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. Recent highlights include singing *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* under Riccardo Muti and his house debut at Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in *La Wally*.

**[www.azerzada.com](http://www.azerzada.com)**



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**Kiev Virtuosi Symphony Orchestra**  
**Artistic Director and Chief Conductor:**  
**Dmitry Yablonsky**

Based in the capital of Ukraine, the Kiev Virtuosi Symphony Orchestra has gained national and international recognition from listeners and critics as one of the country's leading orchestras. With an average age of 30, this youthful ensemble unites talented musicians from all over Ukraine, most of whom are competition winners. The Orchestra built its reputation by bringing Western music to Ukrainian audiences and has also become known for its collaborations with outstanding contemporary

composers such as Krzysztof Penderecki, Valentin Silvestrov and Myroslav Skoryk. Many internationally acclaimed soloists and conductors have performed with the ensemble over the years. Under current artistic and musical director Dmitry Yablonsky, the Kiev Virtuosi Symphony Orchestra continues to bring Ukrainian musical talent to audiences the world over, most recently to Switzerland, France, Spain and Azerbaijan, among other countries.



Photo © Sergei Ilyin

**Dmitry Yablonsky**

Born in Moscow, GRAMMY Award-nominated cellist and conductor Dmitry Yablonsky's career has taken him to Carnegie Hall, Teatro alla Scala and Théâtre Mogador, among other such celebrated venues. As a conductor he has worked with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra and Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM, Mexico. In 2010 he received the Diploma of Honorary Academician at the Independent Academy of Liberal Arts at the Russian Academy of Sciences. He has transcribed and edited works for cello which have been published by the International Music Company and Dover Publications. In 2008 Naxos released his recording of Popper's *Forty Études* for solo cello (8.557718-19) to critical acclaim. He is a professor at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University and has served as artistic director of the Wandering Stars Music Festival in Israel since 2019. The 2021-22 season marks his debut conducting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. He plays two cellos, a Joseph Guarnerius, filius Andrea and a Matteo Goffriller. [www.dmitryablonsky.com](http://www.dmitryablonsky.com)



The Italian operatic repertoire offers some of the most passionate and much-loved music in the classical canon. In this outstanding collection, Azer Zada has selected music of moving intensity, dramatic power and spiritual resolve in works by Donizetti, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Puccini and Verdi. Favourite tenor arias such as *Nessun dorma!*, *Una furtiva lagrima*, *Recondita armonia* and *E lucevan le stelle* are included, as well as three essential intermezzi by Mascagni.

## ITALIAN TENOR ARIAS

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| <b>1</b> <b>Pietro Mascagni (1863–1945): Amica (1905)</b><br>Act I: Intermezzo 9:49                                  | <b>7</b> <b>Pietro Mascagni: Cavalleria rusticana (1890):</b><br>Mamma, quel vino è generoso (Addio alla madre) 3:56                    |
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**Azer Zada, Tenor [2] [4] [6]–[14]**  
**Kiev Virtuosi Symphony Orchestra**  
**Dmitry Yablonsky**

**Playing Time**  
**51:32**

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

The Italian and Latin sung texts with English translations can be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti//573499.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti//573499.htm)

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