

OPUS ARTE



JESÚS LEÓN BEL CANTO

ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA · TOBY PURSER

Bel Canto

- Gaetano Donizetti** 1797–1848
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- 7 A te, o cara (*I puritani*) 2.54
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55.32

Jesús León *tenor*

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Toby Purser

Jesús León

Mexican tenor Jesús León is one of the most acclaimed 'bel canto' tenors of his generation. His vocal studies began with the Cuban tenor Jesús Li, followed by attendance at the UCLA Opera Studio, the Solti Accademia di Bel Canto, the Boston University Opera Institute and the Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program at Los Angeles Opera. He also trained in Italy under the direction of legendary soprano Mirella Freni, who granted him the Nicolai Ghiaurov scholarship.

His numerous performances have included Alfredo in *La traviata* at Scottish Opera, the Opéra de Dijon, the Théâtre de Caen and Teatro del Bicentenario (León, Mexico); Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at Garsington Opera and the Birgitta Festival; Riccardo in Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan* in Berlin; Tebaldi in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania; Elvino in *La sonnambula* at Teatro Comunale Mario Del Monaco in Treviso; Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de perles* at Teatro Regio in Parma and Teatro Luciano Pavarotti in Modena; the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* at the Bregenz Landestheater; Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* at the Innsbruck Landestheater; and Arturo in *I puritani* at Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Florence).

His concert activities have taken him to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Birmingham Symphony Hall, Barbican Hall, Wigmore Hall, Orchestra Verdi in Milan and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería.

Performances planned for 2015 include Arturo in *I puritani* at Teatro Bellini in Catania, Elvino in *La sonnambula* at the Ravenna Festival and Teatro Comunale Ferrara, and Percy in *Anna Bolena* in Cagliari.

Jésus León

Le ténor mexicain Jesús León est l'un des belcantistes les plus acclamés de sa génération. Il a commencé ses études vocales avec le ténor cubain Jesús Li, puis s'est formé à l'Opera Studio de l'UCLA, à l'Accademia di Bel Canto George Solti, l'Opera Institute de l'Université de Boston et le programme pour les jeunes artistes Domingo-Thornton de l'Opéra de Los Angeles. Il a aussi étudié en Italie sous la direction de la légendaire soprano Mirella Freni, qui lui a accordé la bourse Nicolai Ghiaurov.

Parmi ses nombreuses exécutions figurent les rôles d'Alfredo dans *La traviata* au Scottish Opera, à l'Opéra de Dijon, au Théâtre de Caen et au Teatro del Bicentenario ; de Don Ottavio dans *Don Giovanni* au Garsington Opera et au Birgitta Festival ; de Riccardo dans *Maria di Rohan* de Donizetti à Berlin ; de Tebaldi dans *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* au Teatro Massimo Bellini de Catane ; d'Elvino dans *La sonnambula* au Teatro Comunale Mario del Monaco de Trévis ; de Nadir dans *Les Pêcheurs de perles* au Teatro Regio de Parme et au Teatro Luciano Pavarotti de Modène ; du duc de Mantoue dans *Rigoletto* au Théâtre national de Bregenz ; d'Ernesto dans *Don Pasquale* au Théâtre national d'Innsbruck ; et d'Arturo dans *I puritani* au Mai musical florentin.

Ses concerts l'ont amené à se produire avec le Royal Philharmonic Orchestra au Royal Albert Hall, avec le Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, au Symphony Hall de Birmingham, au Barbican Hall, au Wigmore Hall, avec l'Orchestra Verdi à Milan, et avec l'Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería.

Eu 2015, il incarnera Arturo dans *I puritani* au Teatro Bellini de Catane, Elvino dans *La sonnambula* au Festival de Ravenne et au Teatro Comunale Ferrara, et Percy dans *Anna Bolena* à Cagliari.

Jesús León

Der mexikanische Sänger Jesús León ist einer der beliebtesten Belcanto-Tenöre seiner Generation. Er begann seine Gesangsstudien beim kubanischen Tenor Jesús Li, woraufhin er das UCLA Opera Studio, die Solti Accademia di Bel Canto, das Boston University Opera Institute und das Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program der Oper von Los Angeles besuchte. Er vertiefte seine Kenntnisse in Italien unter Anleitung der legendären Sopranistin Mirella Freni, die ihm das Nicolai-Ghiaurov-Stipendium verlieh.

Bei seinen vielen Auftritten verkörperte er unter anderem Alfredo in *La traviata* an der Scottish Opera, der Opéra de Dijon, dem Théâtre de Caen und dem Teatro del Bicentenario; Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* an der Garsington Opera und beim Birgitta Festival; Riccardo in Donizettis *Maria di Rohan* in Berlin; Tebaldi in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* am Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania; Elvino in *La sonnambula* am Teatro Comunale Mario Del Monaco in Treviso; Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de perles* am Teatro Regio in Parma und am Teatro Luciano Pavarotti in Modena; den Herzog von Mantua in *Rigoletto* am Vorarlberger Landestheater Bregenz; Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* am Tiroler Landestheater Innsbruck; und Arturo in *I puritani* beim Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Florenz).

Seine Konzerte haben ihn mit dem Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in die Royal Albert Hall geführt; außerdem sang er gemeinsam mit dem Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; er trat in der Birmingham Symphony Hall, der Barbican Hall und der Wigmore Hall auf; er sang mit dem Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería sowie mit dem Orchestra Verdi in Mailand.

Zu seinen anstehenden Engagements 2015 zählen Arturo in *I puritani* am Teatro Bellini in Catania, Elvino (*La sonnambula*) beim Ravenna Festival und am Teatro Comunale Ferrara sowie Percy in *Anna Bolena* in Cagliari.

The Music

The operas of Verdi and his immediate predecessors Donizetti and Bellini provide numerous opportunities for the art of the lyric tenor, of which the young Mexican Jesús León is such a distinguished contemporary exponent. Charm is regularly part of the essence of the character, as in the case of Nemorino, the shy hero of *L'elisir d'amore* (1832), who in 'Una furtiva lagrima' finally realises that his feelings of love for the proud Adina may indeed be returned.

The hero of Bellini's *I puritani* (1835), which is set during the English Civil War, Arturo is a cavalier whose love for the heroine Elvira – daughter of a Puritan family – has become mired in the political situation of the day. In the opera's last act, he returns, an enemy to the Puritan cause, to the house where Elvira lives, and hears her sing 'their' love song – a moment that will eventually lead to a happy ending for the pair. Earlier on in the opera, in the famous extract 'A te, o cara', Arturo is delightedly preparing to wed his beloved Elvira, despite the differences between his and her family's political views.

Don Pasquale (1843) is Donizetti's best-known comedy, a piece in which Ernesto's uncle Pasquale is tricked into marrying the young man's girlfriend Norina to teach him a lesson. But at one point, Ernesto, thrown out by his uncle and apparently betrayed by his best friend, believes he must leave both Norina and his country behind, voicing his lamentations in the graceful aria 'Cercherò lontana terra'.

Charming but libidinous is the Duke of Mantua in Verdi's *Rigoletto* (1851) – a seducer of women, who in the opera takes advantage without compunction of the innocent Gilda, daughter of his court jester. But when he finds that Gilda is missing, he has at least one moment of emotional reflection ('Ella mi fu rapita! ... Parmi veder le lagrime') in which he imagines his feelings for the girl to be those

of true love rather than merely the desire for sexual gratification.

One of several Donizetti operas set in and around the Tudor court, *Roberto Devereux* (1837) concerns the fate of the Earl of Essex – one of Elizabeth I's historical favourites, who dramatically falls from favour, both for his political activities and on account of his love for another woman – Sara, Duchess of Nottingham. Placed in the Tower of London, Roberto longs to achieve freedom, or at least to clear the name of the woman he loves; and when he realises that all is lost, he still hopes to plead her cause in heaven ('Come uno spirto angelico ... Bagnato il sen di lagrime').

Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1830) is a version of the *Romeo and Juliet* story in which the tenor sings not the role of the young lover but that of his rival Tebaldo, sworn enemy to Romeo and indeed of all the Montagues. His eagerness to exact revenge for Romeo's killing of Capulet's son and to marry Juliet is forcefully stated in his double aria in the opera's first scene, 'È serbata a questo acciaio ... L'amo tanto, e m'è sì cara'.

Lucia di Lammermoor (1835) is arguably Donizetti's greatest tragedy, the story of an ancient feud between two old Scottish families that has terrible consequences for the youngest generation. The love between Lucia (Lucy Ashton) and Edgardo (Edgar of Ravenswood) has been sundered by trickery on the part of her brother, and Lucia has married another – a man she murders on her wedding night. In the final scene Edgardo makes his way to the graves of his ancestors, intending to fling himself upon the sword of his enemy, Ashton, whom he has agreed to fight in a duel ('Tombe degli avi miei ... Fra poco a me ricovero').

Verdi's final opera, *Falstaff* (1893), centres on the outrageous behaviour of the celebrated fat knight, but finds room, too, for the charming young love of Ford's daughter, Nannetta, and her admirer, Fenton. In the final act, set in Windsor Forest at night, Fenton voices for Nannetta's ears 'Dal labbro il canto estasiato vola', a brief but magical moonlit serenade.

Finally we return to Donizetti, to his opera *La Fille du régiment* – or rather to his own Italian version of the piece, *La figlia del reggimento*, produced in the same year of 1840. Tonio, a young Tyrolean, has fallen for the charms of the daughter of the regiment of the title, and in order to be close to her has joined the very same regiment. Extremely pleased with himself, he boasts of his new position and the happiness it will bring him in the celebrated showpiece aria 'Amici miei, che allegro giorno!'.

George Hall

La musique

Les opéras de Verdi et de ses prédécesseurs immédiats, Donizetti et Bellini, donnent matière à l'art du ténor lyrique dont le jeune Mexicain Jesús León est aujourd'hui un remarquable représentant. Le charme participe souvent à l'essence du personnage, comme dans le cas de Nemorino, le timide héros de *L'elisir d'amore* (1832) qui, dans l'air « Una furtiva lagrima », se rend finalement compte que ses sentiments pour la fière Adina sont en fait réciproques.

Arturo, héros de *I puritani* (1835) de Bellini dont l'intrigue se déroule pendant la guerre civile anglaise, est un cavalier royaliste épris de l'héroïne Elvira, fille d'une famille de puritains. Son amour se retrouve assujéti aux circonstances politiques d'alors. Dans le dernier acte de l'opéra, Arturo, ennemi de la cause puritaine, rejoint la maison où vit Elvira et l'entend chanter « leur » chant d'amour – moment qui mènera finalement à un heureux dénouement pour le couple. Plus tôt dans l'opéra, dans le célèbre air « A te, o cara », Arturo au comble

du bonheur se prépare à épouser Elvira malgré ses divergences d'opinions politiques avec la famille de sa bien-aimée.

Don Pasquale (1843) est la comédie la plus célèbre de Donizetti, œuvre où l'oncle Pasquale d'Ernesto est poussé par la ruse à épouser Norina, la promise du jeune homme, pour lui donner une leçon. Mais, à un certain point, Ernesto, jeté à la rue par son oncle et apparemment trahi par son meilleur ami, croit qu'il doit quitter à la fois Norina et le pays ; il exprime son désespoir dans le gracieux air « Cercherò lontana terra ».

Le duc de Mantoue dans *Rigoletto* (1851) de Verdi est un homme charmant mais libidineux, un séducteur qui abuse sans scrupule de l'innocente Gilda, la fille du bouffon de sa cour. Mais, lorsqu'il découvre que Gilda a disparu, il s'interroge un instant sur ce qu'il ressent (« Ella mi fu rapita ! ... Parmi veder le lagrime ») et imagine que ses sentiments pour la jeune fille tiennent de l'amour véritable plutôt que de la simple envie d'assouvir ses appétits sexuels.

Roberto Devereux (1937), un des divers opéras de Donizetti dont l'intrigue se déroule à la cour des Tudors ou dans ses environs, porte sur le destin du comte d'Essex – personnage historique qui comptait parmi les favoris d'Elizabeth I^{ère} mais perdit malheureusement ses faveurs, à la fois pour des motifs politiques et en raison de son amour pour Sara, la duchesse de Nottingham. Emprisonné dans la Tour de Londres, Roberto se languit de retrouver sa liberté, ou du moins de blanchir la réputation de celle qu'il aime ; et, lorsqu'il se rend compte que tout est perdu, il espère encore plaider la cause de Sara au paradis (« Come uno spirito angelico ... Bagnato il sen di lagrime »).

I Capuleti e i Montecchi (1830) de Bellini est une version de l'histoire de Roméo et Juliette dans laquelle le ténor n'interprète pas le rôle du jeune amant mais celui de son rival Tebaldo – ennemi juré de Roméo et, naturellement, de tous les Montaigu. Son vif désir de venger le fils de Capulet, mort de la main de Roméo, et d'épouser Juliette s'exprime avec force dans son double air de la première scène de l'opéra, « È serbata a questo acciario ... L'amo tanto, e m'è sì cara ».

Lucia di Lammermoor (1835) est certainement la plus grande tragédie de Donizetti, l'histoire d'une ancienne querelle entre deux vieilles familles écossaises et ses terribles conséquences sur la jeune génération. L'amour entre Lucia (Lucy Ashton) et Edgardo (Edgar of Ravenswood) a été déchiré par le mensonge du frère de Lucia, et celle-ci s'est mariée avec un autre homme – qu'elle assassine pendant sa nuit de noces. Dans la dernière scène, Edgardo se rend sur la tombe de ses ancêtres, avec l'intention de se jeter sur l'épée de son ennemi, Ashton, qu'il a accepté d'affronter en duel (« Tombe degli avi miei ... Fra poco a me ricovero »).

L'ultime opéra de Verdi, *Falstaff* (1893), s'articule autour de l'attitude éhontée du célèbre chevalier ventripotent, tout en laissant une place à l'amour jeune et charmant de la fille de Ford, Nannetta, et de son admirateur, Fenton. Au dernier acte, qui se déroule dans la forêt de Windsor pendant la nuit, Fenton entonne pour Nannetta l'air « Dal labbro il canto estasiato vola », une sérénade courte mais magique chantée au clair de lune.

Pour finir, revenons à Donizetti et son opéra *La Fille du régiment* – ou plutôt à sa propre version italienne de la pièce, *La figlia del reggimento*, produite la même année, en 1840. Tonio, un jeune Tyrolien, est tombé sous le charme de la fille du régiment éponyme, et afin d'être plus proche d'elle, il s'engage dans le même régiment. Très content de lui, il fanfaronne au sujet de sa nouvelle position et du bonheur que cela va lui apporter dans le célèbre air virtuose « Amici miei, che allegro giorno ! ».

George Hall

Die Musik

Die Opern Verdis und seiner unmittelbaren Vorläufer Donizetti und Bellini bieten eine Vielzahl von Einsatzmöglichkeiten für die Kunst des lyrischen Tenors – ein Stimmfach, das in dem jungen Mexikaner Jesús León einen herausragenden zeitgenössischen Vertreter gefunden hat. Die Figuren zeichnen sich häufig ganz wesentlich durch ihren Charme aus, so etwa im Falle von Nemorino, dem schüchternen Helden aus *L'elisir d'amore* (1832), dem in „Una furtiva lagrima“ endlich bewusst wird, dass die stolze Adina seine Liebe wohl tatsächlich erwidert.

Arturo, der Held Bellinis während des englischen Bürgerkrieges spielenden Werkes *I puritani* (1835), ist ein Kavalier, dessen Liebe zur aus puritanischem Elternhaus stammenden Heldin Elvira in den Strudel der vorherrschenden politischen Situation gerissen wird. Im letzten Akt der Oper kehrt er als Gegner des Puritanismus zu dem Haus zurück, in dem Elvira lebt. Dort hört er sie „ihr“ Liebeslied singen – ein Moment, der schließlich zum Happy End für das Paar führen wird. An einer früheren Stelle der Oper bereitet sich Arturo im berühmten Ausschnitt „A te, o cara“ voller Vorfriede auf die Hochzeit mit seiner geliebten Elvira vor, trotz der unterschiedlichen politischen Ansichten seiner und ihrer Familie.

Don Pasquale (1843) ist Donizettis bekannteste Komödie. In diesem Werk wird der reiche Don Pasquale durch einen Trick dazu gebracht, Norina, die Freundin seines jungen Neffen Ernesto, zu heiraten, und lernt dadurch eine Lektion. An einer Stelle der Oper glaubt Ernesto, der von seinem Onkel vor die Tür gesetzt und allem Anschein nach von seinem besten Freund hintergangen wurde, er müsse sowohl Norina als auch sein Vaterland verlassen. Sein Wehklagen kommt in der anmutigen Arie „Cercherò lontana terra“ zum Ausdruck.

Charmant, doch triebgesteuert zeigt sich der Herzog von Mantua in Verdis *Rigoletto* (1851) – er ist ein Verführer, der sich in der Oper ohne Schuldgefühle an der unschuldigen Gilda vergeht, der Tochter seines Hofnarren. Doch als er feststellen muss, dass Gilda verschwunden ist, bildet er sich in einem Moment emotionaler Reflektion („Ella mi fu rapita! ... Parmi veder le lagrime“) ein, seine Gefühle für das Mädchen seien wahre Liebe, nicht lediglich der Wunsch nach sexueller Befriedigung.

Roberto Devereux (1837), eine von mehreren Donizetti-Opern, die am Hof der Tudors und in dessen Umfeld spielen, befasst sich mit dem Schicksal des Grafen von Essex – einem der Favoriten der historischen Elisabeth I., der auf dramatische Weise in Ungnade fällt, sowohl aufgrund seiner politischen Aktivitäten als auch aufgrund seiner Liebe zu einer anderen Frau, Sara, der Herzogin von Nottingham. Roberto wird in den Londoner Tower verbracht und sehnt sich nach Freiheit, oder zumindest danach, den Namen der Frau, die er liebt, reinzuwaschen; als er feststellen muss, dass alles verloren ist, hofft er, sich zumindest im Himmel für sie einsetzen zu können („Come uno spirito angelico ... Bagnato il sen di lagrime“).

Bellinis *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1830) ist eine Fassung der Geschichte von Romeo und Julia, in der der Tenor nicht etwa die Rolle des jugendlichen Liebhabers sondern die seines Rivalen Tebaldo singt, dem eingeschworenen Gegner Romeos und aller Montagues. Sein Streben nach Rache für den von Romeo getöteten Capulet-Sohn und seine feste Absicht, Julia zu heiraten, wird in seiner Doppelparie „È serbata a questo acciario ... L'amo tanto, e m'è sì cara“ in der ersten Szene der Oper überaus deutlich.

Lucia di Lammermoor (1835) ist vielleicht Donizettis größte Tragödie; es handelt sich um die Geschichte einer uralten Fehde zwischen zwei schottischen Familien, die schreckliche Konsequenzen für die jüngste Generation hat. Die Liebe zwischen Lucia (Lucy Ashton) und

Edgardo (Edgar of Ravenswood) wird durch das Ränkespiel ihres Bruders im Keim erstickt, und Lucia heiratet einen anderen – einen Mann, den sie in ihrer Hochzeitsnacht ermordet. In der letzten Szene macht sich Edgardo auf den Weg zu den Gräbern seiner Ahnen: Er hat vor, sich in das Schwert seines Feindes Ashton zu stürzen, mit dem er sich zum Duell verabredet hat („Tombe degli avi miei ... Fra poco a me ricovero“).

Verdis letzte Oper *Falstaff* (1893) handelt hauptsächlich vom unerhörten Verhalten des berühmten fettleibigen Ritters, doch es bleibt auch noch Platz für die charmante Geschichte der jungen Liebe zwischen Fords Tochter Nannetta und ihrem Bewunderer Fenton. Im letzten Akt, der nachts in Windsor Forest spielt, stimmt Fenton für Nannetta „Dal labbro il canto estasiato vola“ an, eine kurze, doch magische mondbeschiedene Serenade.

Schließlich kehren wir wieder zu Donizetti zurück – diesmal zu seiner Oper *La Fille du régiment*, besser gesagt seiner italienischen Version des Werkes, *La figlia del reggimento*, die im gleichen Jahr 1840 uraufgeführt wurde. Tonio, ein junger Tiroler, ist dem Charme der titelgebenden Tochter des Regiments verfallen, und um ihr nahe zu sein, ist er eben diesem Regiment beigetreten. Er ist überaus zufrieden mit sich und schwärmt in dem berühmten Arien-Paradestück „Amici miei, che allegro giorno!“ von seinem neuen Posten und dem Glück, das ihm dieser bringen wird.

George Hall



1 Una furtiva lagrima (Nemorino)

Una furtiva lagrima
negl'occhi suoi spuntò...
Quelle festose giovani
invidiar sembrò...
Che più cercando io vo'?
M'ama, sì m'ama, lo vedo.
Un solo istante i palpiti
del suo bel cor sentir!...
I miei sospir confondere
per poco a' suoi sospir!...
I palpiti, i palpiti sentir!
Confondere i miei co' suoi sospir!
Cielo, si può morir;
di più non chiedo.
Si può morir d'amor.

Felice Romani 1788–1865

2 La mia canzon d'amore

ARTURO
La mia canzon d'amore!... O Elvira, o Elvira!
Ove t'aggiri tu?... Nessun risponde...
A te così cantava
di queste selve tra le dense fronde,
e tu allor eco facevi al canto mio!
Deh! se ascoltasti l'amoroso canto...
odi quel dell'esiglio, odi il mio pianto.

A una fonte afflito e solo
s'assideva un trovator,
toccò l'arpa e suonò duolo,
sciolsè un canto, e fu dolor.

Brama il Sol allor ch'è sera,
brama sera allor ch'è Sol.
Gli par verno primavera,
ogni gioia gli par duol!

Qual son! Alcun s'appressa.

CORO
Agli spalti, alle torri andiam.

ARTURO
Ancor di me in traccia.

CORO
Si cercherà... Si troverà.

ARTURO
Oh Dio! Ove m'ascondo?

CORO
No, non fuggirà. Si troverà.
Si cercherà... non sfuggirà...

A single furtive tear

A single furtive tear
started in her eye...
She seemed to envy
those happy girls...
What more do I want?
She loves me, yes loves me, I've seen it.
Just for a moment to feel
the beating of her heart!...
To mix a single moment
all my sighs with hers!...
To feel, to feel the beating!
To mingle my sighs with hers!
Ah! heaven above! to die...
Then I'd ask no more.
To die of love.

My love song

ARTURO
My love song! O Elvira, o Elvira!
Where are you?... No one answers...
So I used to sing to you
among these woods' thick branches,
and your song would echo mine!
Ah, if you once heard my song of love,
hear now of my exile and my tears.

By a fountain, sad, alone,
a troubadour sat,
strumming his harp to voice his grief,
and express his distress in song.

He seeks the sun at eventide,
and in the evening longs for the sun.
Spring feels to him like winter,
and every joy seems like pain.

A noise! Someone's coming.

CHORUS
To the battlements! To the towers!

ARTURO
They're still tracking me.

CHORUS
We'll seek and find him.

ARTURO
God! where can I hide?

CHORUS
He cannot escape. We'll find him.
We'll seek. He cannot flee.

ARTURO

Ad altro lato vanno i furenti.
Son già lontani! Perché mai non posso
porre il piede entro l'adorate soglie?
Dire a Elvira il mio duol, la fede mia?
Ah! no... perder potrei me stesso e lei.
Or si ripigli il canto. Forse a me verrà
se al cor le suona come nei dì felici,
quando uniti dicemmo: "Io t'amo!"

Corre a valle, corre a monte
l'esiliato pellegrin;
ma il dolor gli è sempre a fronte,
gli è compagno nel cammin.
Cerca il sonno a notte scura
l'esiliato pellegrin,
sogna e il desta la sciagura
della patria e il suo destin.

Sempre uguali ha i luoghi e l'ore
l'infelice trovator.
L'esiliato allor che muore
ha sol possa al suo dolor, ecc.

Conte Carlo Pepoli 1796–1881

3 Povero Ernesto! (Ernesto)

Povero Ernesto!
Dallo zio cacciato,
da tutti abbandonato,
mi restava un amico
e un coperto nemico
discopro in lui,
che a' danni miei congiura.
Perder Norina, oh Dio!
Ben feci a lei
d'esprimere in un foglio
i sensi miei.
Ora in altra contrada
i giorni grammi a trascinar si vada.

Cercherò lontana terra
dove gemer sconosciuto,
là vivrò col cuore in guerra
deplorando il ben perduto, ecc.
Ma né sorte a me nemica,
né frapposti monti e mar,
ti potranno, dolce amica,
dal mio core cancellar, ecc.

E se fia che ad altro oggetto
tu rivolga un giorno il core,
se mai fia
che un altro affetto
spenga in te l'antico ardore,
non temer che un infelice
te spergiura accusi al ciel;
se tu sei, ben mio, felice,
sarà pago il tuo fedel, ecc.

*Giovanni Ruffini 1807–1881 /
Gaetano Donizetti 1797–1848*

ARTURO

The raging soldiers have gone away.
They've passed. Why can I not
set my foot on the beloved threshold?
Tell Elvira my grief, my faithfulness?
No... I could condemn myself and her.
I'll sing again. Perhaps she'll come to me
if her heart hears it as in our happy days,
when united we said: 'I love you!'

He hastens to valley, to mountain,
the exiled wanderer;
but grief goes before him ever,
his travelling companion.
When night is dark he seeks to sleep,
the exiled wanderer,
he dreams until he wakes with grief
at his own, his country's fate.

Ever unchanged are the places and hours
of the hapless troubadour.
All that the dying exile has
is the potency of pain...

Poor Ernesto!

Poor Ernesto!
Thrown out by my uncle,
deserted by all,
one friend remained to me
and I find in him
an enemy in disguise
who is conspiring to do me down.
Lose Norina, oh heaven!
How right I was
to make her party
to my sentiments in a letter.
In some other region now
let me drag out my wretched days.

I will seek some far-off land
where I can sigh unknown,
there I shall live, with my heart at war,
lamenting my lost beloved, etc.
But neither unkind fate,
nor seas and mountains in between,
will be able, sweetest friend,
to efface your image from my heart, etc.

And if it should befall that your heart
should turn some day towards another,
if it should ever come about
that some new affection
should extinguish the old flame,
never fear that your unhappy swain
will accuse you before heaven for being untrue;
if, my precious, you are happy,
your faithful lover will be satisfied, etc.

4 **Ella mi fu rapita!** (Duke of Mantua)

Ella mi fu rapita!
E quando, o ciel?... ne' brevi istanti,
prima che il mio presagio interno
sull'orma corsa ancora mi spingesse!
Schiuso era l'uscio! E la magion deserta!
E dove ora sarà quell'angiol caro?
Colei che prima potè in questo core
destar la fiamma di costanti affetti?
Colei sì pura, al cui modesto sguardo
quasi spinto a virtù talor mi credo!
Ella mi fu rapita!
E chi l'ardiva?... ma ne avrò vendetta.
Lo chiede il pianto della mia diletta.

Parmi veder le lagrime
scorrenti da quel ciglio,
quando fra il dubbio e l'ansia
del subito periglio,
dell'amor nostro memore
il suo Gualtier chiamò.
Ned ei potea soccorrerli,
cara fanciulla amata;
ei che vorria coll'anima
farti quaggiù beata;
ei che le sfere agli angeli
per te non invidiò.
Ei che le sfere, ecc.

Francesco Maria Piave 1810–1876

5 **La donna è mobile** (Duke of Mantua)

La donna è mobile
qual piuma al vento,
muta d'accento
e di pensiero.
Sempre un amabile
leggiadro viso,
in pianto o in riso
è menzognero.
La donna è mobile, ecc.
È sempre misero
chi a lei s'affida,
chi le confida
mal cauto il core!
Pur mai non sentesi
felice appieno
chi su quel seno
non liba amor!
La donna è mobile, ecc.

Francesco Maria Piave

6 **Come uno spirito angelico** (Roberto)

Io ti dirò, fra gli ultimi
singhiozzi, in braccio a morte:
come uno spirito angelico
pura è la tua consorte... ecc.
Lo giuro, e il giuramento
col sangue mio suggello...

She has been stolen from me!

She has been stolen from me!
When, o heaven? In those few moments,
before some inner voice
made me hastily retrace my steps!
The gate was open, the house deserted!
And where is she now, that dear angel?
She who first kindled my heart
with the flame of a constant affection?
So pure that her modest demeanour
almost convinced me to lead a virtuous life!
She has been stolen from me!
And who dared do this?... But I shall be avenged.
The tears of my beloved demand it.

I seem to see the tears
coursing from her eyes
as, bewildered and afraid
at the surprise attack,
remembering our love,
she called her Walter's name.
But he could not defend you,
sweet, beloved maid;
he who would pledge his very soul
to bring you happiness;
he who, in loving you, envied
not even the angels.
He who, in loving you, etc.

Women are as fickle

Women are as fickle
as feathers in the wind,
simple in speech,
and simple in mind.
Always the lovable,
sweet, laughing face,
but laughing or crying,
the face is false for sure.
Women are as fickle, etc.
If you rely on her
you will regret it,
and if you trust her
you are undone!
Yet none can call himself
fully contented
who has not tasted
love in her arms!
Women are as fickle, etc.

Like an angelic spirit

I shall tell you, amid my last
gasping sighs, in the arms of death:
like that of an angelic spirit
is the purity of your spouse...etc.
I vow, and seal this oath
with my very blood...

Credi all'estremo accento
che il labbro mio parlò.
Chi scende nell'avello
sai che mentir non può.

Bagnato il sen di lagrime,
tinto del sangue mio
io corro, io volo a chiedere
per te soccorso a Dio...
Impietositi gli angeli
eco al mio duol faranno...
si piangerà d'affanno
la prima volta in ciel! ecc.

Salvadore Cammarano 1801–1852

7 **A te, o cara** (Arturo)

A te, o cara, amor talora
mi guidò furtivo e in pianto,
or mi guida a te d'accanto
tra la gioia e l'esultar.

Al brillar di sì bell'ora,
se rammento il mio tormento,
si raddoppia il mio contento,
m'è più caro il palpitar.

Conte Carlo Pepoli

8 **È serbata a questo acciaio**

TEBALDO
È serbata a questo acciaio
del tuo sangue la vendetta:
l'ho giurato per Giulietta:
tutta Italia, il Cielo lo sa.
Tu d'un nodo a me sì caro
solo affretta il dolce istante:
ed il voto dell'amante
il consorte adempirà.

L'amo tanto, e m'è sì cara,
più del sol che mi rischiara;
è riposta, è viva in lei
ogni gioia del mio cor.
Ma se avesse il mio contento
a costarle un sol lamento,
ah! piuttosto io sceglierei
mille giorni di dolor,
sì, di dolor, ah mille
giorni di dolor, ecc.

PARTIGIANI DI CAPULET
Nostro duce e nostro scampo,
snuda il ferro ed esci in campo:
di Giulietta sia la mano
degno premio al tuo valor, ecc.

Felice Romani

Believe the last words
to issue from my mouth.
He who descends to his tomb
you know he'll not dissemble.

My breast is soaked in tears,
stained with my own blood
I run, I fly to beseech
God for help for you...
Moved to pity, the angels
will echo my grief with theirs...
for the first time the heavens
will weep for adversity! etc.

To you, beloved

To you, beloved, once before
love led me, furtive, weeping;
now it brings me to your side
in triumph and in joy.

In this shining, lovely hour,
if I recall my old torment,
my happiness is doubled then,
even my joy becomes more dear.

It remains to this sword

TEBALDO
It remains to this sword
to exact vengeance for your blood:
I have sworn it for Juliet:
all Italy, Heaven knows it.
You only have to hasten the sweet
moment of a union so dear to me
and the husband will fulfil
the vow of the lover.

I love her so and she is so dear to me,
more than the sun which shines upon me;
in her lies hidden but alive
all the joy of my heart.
But if my happiness were
to cost her a single lament,
oh, rather would I choose
a thousand days of grief,
yes, a thousand days
of grief, etc.

CAPULETS
Our leader and our refuge,
draw your sword and go forth to the battlefield:
and let Juliet's hand
be worthy reward for your valour, etc.

9 Tombe degli avi miei (Edgardo)

Tombe degli avi miei, l'ultimo avanzo
d'una stirpe infelice,
deh, raccogliete voi. Cessò dell'ira
il breve foco... sul nemico acciaro
abbandonar mi vo'. Per me la vita
è orrendo peso! L'universo intero
è un deserto per me senza Lucia!
Di faci tuttavia
splende il castello... Ah, scarsa
fu la notte al tripudio! Ingrata donna!
Mentr'io mi struggo in disperato pianto,
tu ridi, esulti accanto
al felice consorte!
Tu delle gioie in seno, io della morte!

Fra poco a me ricovero
darà negletto avello.
Una pietosa lagrima
non scenderà su quello!...
Ah! Fin degli estinti, ah! misero,
manca il conforto a me.
Tu pur, tu pur dimentica
quel marmo dispregiato!
Mai non passarvi, o barbara,
del tuo consorte a lato.
Ah! rispetta almen le ceneri
di chi moria per te, rispetta, ecc.
Mai non passarvi,
tu lo dimentica,
rispetta almeno chi muore per te, ecc.
Oh, barbara! Rispetta, ecc.

Salvadore Cammarano

10 Dal labbro il canto estasiato vola (Fenton)

Dal labbro il canto estasiato vola
dei silenzi notturni, e va lontano
e alfin ritrova un altro labbro umano
che gli risponde colla sua parola.
Allor la nota che non è più sola
vibra di gioia in un accordo arcano,
e innamorando l'aer antelucano
con altra voce al suo fonte rivola.
Quivi ripiglia suon, ma la sua cura
tende sempre ad unir chi lo disuna.
Così bacia la disgiata bocca!
Bocca baciata non perde ventura...
Anzi rinnova come fa la luna.

Arrigo Boito 1842-1918

Tombs of my fathers

Tombs of my fathers,
last son of an unhappy race,
receive me, I implore you. My anger's
brief fire is quenched... I will fall on
my foe's sword. For me, life
is a horrible burden! The whole universe
is a desert for me without Lucia!
Yet the castle
gleams with torches... Ah, the night
was too short for the revels! Heartless jade!
While I pine away in hopeless tears,
you laugh and gloat
by your happy consort's side!
You amid joys, I near to death!

Soon this neglected tomb
will give me refuge.
A compassionate tear
will not fall upon it... ah!
Alas, for wretched me not even
the solace of the dead.
You too, forget
that despised marble tombstone!
Never visit it, o cruel one,
by your husband's side.
Ah, respect at least the ashes
of him who dies for you, etc.
Never visit it,
forget it exists,
respect at least the one who died for you, etc.
Oh, cruel one! Respect, etc.

From the lover's lips, the love song flies

From the lover's lips, the love song flies
far off in the silence of the night,
until it finds an answering voice,
singing the same sweet song.
Then the note, no longer alone,
vibrates joyously in a secret harmony
and, enamouring the dawn-fresh air,
with the other voice it comes home again.
The double song goes forth again, with no care
but to join the two who have divided it.
Thus did I kiss the beloved lips!
Lips which are kissed lose none of their charm...
But enter a new phase, like the moon.

11 Amici miei, che allegro giorno (Tonio)

Amici miei, che allegro giorno!
Le vostre insegne seguirò.
Sol per amore a voi ritorno,
un grand eroe diventerò.

Ah sì! colei ond'io sospiro
ebbe pietade del mio martiro,
e questa speme desiata ognor
altera i sensi ed il mio cor.

Ah! Amici miei, ecc.

Qual destino! qual favor!
la sua mano ed il suo cor!
Ah, finito è il mio penar;
son marito, e militar, ecc.

Qual destin! qual favor! ecc.

*Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges 1799-1875 /
Jean-François Alfred Bayard 1796-1853
trans. Calisto Bassi ?-1860*

My friends, how glad is the day!

My friends, how glad is the day!
Your ensign I shall follow.
For love alone I return to you,
a great hero shall I become.


Ah yes! She for whom I sigh
had pity on my martyrdom,
and this hope still desired
changes my senses and my heart.

Ah! My friends...

What destiny! What blessing!
Her hand and indeed her heart!
Ah, my suffering is finished;
I am husband, and soldier...

What destiny! What blessing!...

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