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CLASSICS

Surrender

Voices of Persephone

Ilona Domnich soprano

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Southbank Sinfonia
Simon Over conductor



SURRENDER

VOICES OF PERSEPHONE

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|------|--|-------------------------------------|--------|
| [1] | <i>Ah! tardai troppo ... Oh luce di quest'anima</i> Linda • Linda di Chamounix Act I, Scene III | Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) | [5.35] |
| [2] | <i>Tu as raison. Si, je t'écoute ...</i> Elle • La voix humaine | Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) | [6.01] |
| [3] | <i>Tout est sombre ... Lorsque je n'étais qu'une enfant</i> Jacqueline • Fortunio Act III | André Messager (1853-1929) | [5.49] |
| [4] | <i>Denaro! Nient'altro che denaro ...</i> Magda • La rondine Act I | Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) | [6.05] |
| [5] | <i>Je marche sur tous les chemins</i> Obéissons quand leurs voix appelle (Gavotte) Manon • Manon Act III, Scene 1 | Jules Massenet (1842-1912) | [5.13] |
| [6] | <i>Snegurochka's Aria</i> Snow Maiden • The Snow Maiden Prologue | Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) | [3.44] |
| [7] | <i>Gualtier Maldè ... caro nome</i> Gilda • Rigoletto Act I, Scene 2 | Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) | [4.54] |
| [8] | <i>Mio padre!... (aria)</i> | Giuseppe Verdi | [1.47] |
| [9] | <i>Tutte le feste al tempio... (duet)</i> | | [3.53] |
| [10] | <i>Piangi, fanciulla ... Sì, vendetta</i> Gilda & Rigoletto • Rigoletto Act II | | [5.38] |

[11] *E Susanna non vien*
Dove sono i bei momenti
Countess Rosina Almaviva • **Le nozze di Figaro Act III** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) [6.17]

[12] *Una voce poco fa*
Rosina • **Il barbiere di Siviglia Act I, Scene I** Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) [6.09]

[13] *Chi e mai, chi e qui in sua vece? ... Lassu in ciel*
Gilda & Rigoletto • **Rigoletto Act III** Giuseppe Verdi [5.57]

Total timings: [67.04]

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SURRENDER

Notes by Ilona Domnich

'Man cannot discover new oceans until he has courage to lose sight of the shore'

André Gide

I see the word 'surrender' as an active/dynamic rendering force. I have an image of someone who climbs the mountain, who surrenders to

listen to his body and to connect with nature in order to progress. To 'surrender' is to fully engage with our own self. For me 'surrender' is not letting go in a passive way and floating in a spiritual blissful peace, but a force that one needs courage to consciously tap into, in order to prosper.

The word prosper shares its root with Proserpine or Persephone, the goddess of the underworld.

Persephone's story is a complex Greek myth of abduction into the underworld. But perhaps in the words of modern psychology, Persephone accesses the ruins of her female underworld in search of the inner balance between the dark and light, the underworld and the earth. When she finds it she reaches a stage where she can draw on vast experience and see things as they are, neither a meadow of flowers nor a vale of tears. Not so much robbed of innocence as awakened to complexity, to the cycle of life and death.

For me 'surrender' is also a journey of choices, the courage of listening to the inner voice and connection to myself, to the deepest resources of hope, energy, confidence, trust and love. I guess it is part of growing for me and the beauty of facing the wilder and innately instinctual self. One of the most blissful spiritual surrenders for me is in singing.

The process of recording this CD was also a journey of surrender, discovering the freedom together with huge strengths. 'To surrender makes you feel how music is, life is, beauty is, nature is.'

Inspiration

'For a tree to become tall it must grow tough roots among the rocks'

Friedrich Nietzsche

When I was 8-10 years old my parents went through an excruciatingly painful separation, which made me want to escape and I escaped into the world of literature. I managed to miss a year of school, and in that year I discovered a lot of Russian literature including Chekhov, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Pushkin, together with Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. My greatest fascination was Greek mythology (I memorised almost word by word all the Greek myths — in Russian).

Like all children I loved stories. Now I can recognise that stories are like medicine: they have such power, they do not require you to do anything, only listen, for the healing remedies are contained in the stories. They awaken excitement, sadness, questions, longing and understanding — just like music! In a sense I continue to be a child, being fascinated each time I encounter the stories of my operatic heroines. It is through them that the human race's vitality is restored. My parents have

come full circle to talk to each other after 20 years and here I am returning to my fascination, through the story of Persephone — the goddess of the underworld and rebirth. I am investigating a universal story of the ages of woman, illustrated through the great operatic heroines.

Myth

Persephone was the beautiful daughter of Demeter, the goddess of the harvest. But her father, Zeus, allowed his brother Hades, the god of the underworld, to carry her off to his kingdom. Demeter was distraught, and searched the earth for Persephone, until the sun god Helios told her where she had been taken. In her grief, Demeter brought about a famine across the earth, until Zeus sent Hermes to intervene. He told her Persephone could be returned, provided she had not tasted the food of the dead. Hermes entered the world of the dead and Hades agreed to release his bride. But one of the gardeners shouted out that Persephone had eaten pomegranate seeds, so she would have to stay with Hades. Persephone became the queen of the underworld, dividing her time between her mother and Hades.

The myth of Persephone has been interpreted in many ways, one of which mirrors the Edvard Munch painting showing the stages of a woman's life. The picture shows an innocent maiden in a long gown, a mature naked woman openly displaying her sexuality, and a shadowy figure of an older woman, dressed in black. Munch originally displayed the painting under the title *Sphinx*, a reference to the riddle of the Sphinx whose solution — the three ages of man — was deduced by Oedipus. Munch's own notes read: 'Woman in all her diversity is a mystery to man — Woman is at one and the same time saint, whore and an unhappy devoted one'.

Journey of the CD

What intrigues me is how different women find the balance between darkness and light, and what their journeys are into the Renaissance: women's initiations through cycles. I am going beyond the simple trichotomy of virgin/whore/mother or lover that afflicts women in patriarchies. Each stage has complex archetypes: each woman has within herself myriad variations. My operatic women and their voices help me examine their journeys and choices.

I think of the third stage as wisdom. Wiser woman — not necessary older — but with experience and knowledge, is taking responsibility for her actions, making her own choices, growing roots and wings to fly. She has faith in love, in herself and she has inner confidence and contentment. Just as Persephone achieves balance, there can be found a profound love, especially if it is rooted in the seeking of one's own self, to learn the deepest aspects of the human soul, to hold on to what we have learnt, to speak out for what we stand for. It takes boundless endurance, which all my operatic woman have; when woman comes from the underworld she is definitely no longer tame.

Through me, my operatic women live the questions, starting with the young girl who is hungry for experience, trusting, ready to open her heart. Gilda, Rosina and the Snowmaiden set the scene. Next the woman who has tasted life, loved, known disappointment and loss, exploring life and taking chances, playing with fire – Manon and Elle from *La voix humaine*, and Linda di Chamounix help to tell the story. Finally, the wise, courageous and responsible woman, ready to choose between dark and light or to blend the two.

This strong, free woman, reborn from the ruins of her own underworld is illustrated by Contessa from *Figaro*, Magda from *La Rondine* and the final duet of Gilda and Rigoletto. She surrenders to life, to love and to her own voice. Although I have allocated arias to illustrate each stage, within each aria my women go through changes. Very often I watch my heroine go through all three stages in one aria. Some of my heroines do not reach a certain stage, but it is still their choice.

The three stages

1. The pure, innocent, stage of discovery, curiosity, belief and full trust.

[6] Snowmaiden's aria from *The Snowmaiden* by Rimsky-Korsakov.

[7] Gilda's aria 'Caro nome' from *Rigoletto* by Verdi.

[12] Rosina aria 'Una voce poco fa' from *Il barbiere di Siviglia* by Rossini.

[1] Linda's aria 'O luce di quest'anima' from *Linda di Chamounix* by Donizetti.

2. Maturity, tasting life, passion, playing with fire, experiencing love, loss, disappointment, betrayal, suffering and pain.

[5] Manon's aria 'Je marche...obeisson' from *Manon* by Massenet.

[9] Gilda's duet with *Rigoletto* 'Tutte le feste... Piangi' from *Rigoletto* by Verdi.

[2] Elle's aria 'Tu as raison..je t'aime' from *La voix humaine* by Poulenc.

[3] Jacqueline's aria 'Je n'a voix rien...lorsque je n'ete' from *Fortunio* by Messager.

3. Wiser woman who has lived, making her own choices. She is simply free.

[11] The Contessa's aria 'Dove sono' from *Le nozze di Figaro* by Mozart

[4] Magda's aria 'Ore dolci e divine' from *La rondine* by Puccini

[13] Gilda's final duet with Rigoletto by Verdi



ABOUT THE ARIAS

- 1 *Oh luce di quest'anima*
Linda di Chamounix Linda
Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)

This is such a fun aria to sing, a brilliant show piece full of elegance and charm. Linda believes she is in love with Carlo, who she thinks is a painter, while he is in reality a nobleman. She goes to live with him in Paris and is found by her father in these compromising circumstances. He curses her, causing her to lose her sanity. Her loyal Pierotto brings her back home and into the arms of the man she loves, and she is revived to the delight of everyone on stage and in the audience. Her journey is full of light and she never loses hope. Her suffering is internal and overwhelms her mind; the symbol of this is that she herself is lost, unable to comprehend reality. She goes into a state of somnambulism, she gives up her passionate, creative and instinctive life. She is suspended in this state until she sees the light in the eyes of her beloved to whom she was always constant. I adore singing Donizetti and can't wait to be singing Linda, Adina, Norina, Lucia and eventually the Queens.

- 2 *Tu as raison. Si, je t'écoute ...*
La voix humaine Elle
Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Every time I sing Elle I plunge into the nightmare world of a fragile woman, whose only link with reality is the telephone voice of her ex-lover. In most productions, including the ones I have sung, Elle kills herself by taking pills, hanging herself on the telephone cord or slitting her throat with a knife, symbolically cutting the human voice. I have sung it in three different productions and in the most recent my daring Elle didn't die. On the last chord, she cut the telephone wire, never to speak to this man again, never to hear his voice, never to let herself suffer because of him. It was the most satisfying experience to set her free, to end her suffering. The orchestra was caressing my voice, gently caring for it, surrounding and cushioning it through the ups and downs of her suffering. I felt that the audience were listening to every word and being touched deeply by it. I was so happy at the end: the extraordinary effort of concentration during the performance, the constancy of being true to the character filled my heart with endless joy. After her suffering I let her go and wanted to dance, jump and fly — that is how joyous I was.

- 3 *Tout est sombre ... Lorsque je n'étais qu'une enfant*
Fortunio Jacqueline
André Messager (1853-1929)

Jacqueline is in her 20s, one year into marriage with M. Andre, a wealthy lawyer in his 60s. It's a marriage of convenience, to improve her social status, like many other young girls of her time. Her life is limited to his public appearances, listening to him, with no real chance to express herself. But she loves him like a father: they don't share a bedroom. The arrival of an attractive officer shakes her pleasant, boring existence. Clavaroch charms her, she gives in to his forceful advances, perhaps out of curiosity, and he awakens her sexual freedom. She discovers that she can have excitement, be physically satisfied. However this doesn't last long. Clavaroch is extremely vain — apart from his looks and sex appeal, there is not much depth to him. Soon she realises that he is using her and doesn't really love her, but he opens the door for her to search for fuller, deeper love. First she is touched by the simplicity and honesty of Fortunio's poetic expression. The beauty of raw emotion touches her and she is moved by his honest view of life. She wants to spend

more time with him, he makes her dream, he makes her realise that the world she is living in is fake, and she falls for him. Clavaroch is planning to kill Fortunio, as he senses the change in Jacqueline. Fortunio is ready to die for the woman of his dreams. Even if Jacqueline was finding it hard to trust in true and tender love, she is finally convinced and gives her heart to Fortunio. She loves how Fortunio makes her feel but, even more, she loves the change his love has made in her. Jacqueline is three-dimensional, unlike her husband or Clavaroch, who are static *commedia dell'arte* characters. She has a sense of humor, but it is not a comic role: she and Fortunio are serious lovers, who experience deep emotions and go through dramatic changes. She changes and learns from her mistakes.

- 4 *Denaro! Nient'altro che denaro ... Ore dolci e divine*
La rondine Magda
Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

I imagine Magda as a sensuous, elegant woman full of mystery and conspiratorial charm. She has a magnetic presence, yet her soul is a complex combination of passion and lyricism. She is a character with a rich

internal life living out her ultimate fantasy, with the energy of a consummate actress who almost fools herself into believing her assumed role. An expert seducer consciously allowing herself to be seduced, Magda uses Ruggero to fall in love with love again. She is playing with fire, the way she pursues Ruggero is both touchingly desperate and coldly deliberate; yet when her fantasy threatens to become real, the complexity of her sorrow is truly moving.

Magda goes through pain and heartbreak; I both love and pity her. Magda is an enigma and I long to understand her joys, pains, what excites her, what is important to her. What is she dreaming of, searching for? Is she bored or has she been hurt so much that she no longer trusts herself or other people? And does she find temporary healing in constant entertainment? Perhaps her desperation comes from her one-dimensional relationship with Rambaldo, with her soul urging her to look for a deeper human connection that brings real joy and freedom in togetherness. Yet until she meets Ruggero she doesn't know how to get there and is locked in the same pattern. I admire her decision to tell him the truth and let him

go. Through the pain of separation, she grows up, and on the other side of her pain is the realisation that she can't live this life of deceit and must take a new path. I am not convinced that she goes back to Rambaldo. I feel that for her it is a new beginning, a rebirth. But of course many *La rondine* lovers will disagree!

5] *Je marche sur tous les chemins*
Obéissons quand leurs voix appelle (Gavotte)
Manon Manon
Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Manon starts as a fragile and confused young woman, on her way to the convent when she meets des Grieux. In an instant they fall in love and flee together. Already there are hints of incompatibility, he aspires to create a family and she yearns for the excitement of Paris. While they are together she is still hungry for adventure and changes her heart to go with Bretigny. This aria "Obéissons quand leur voix appelle" ("Let us obey when their voice calls us") comes in Act Three. Her impulsive nature pushes her to live in the moment and play with fire. She is admired and loved — or so she thinks. Her driving force is to enjoy youth fully before it passes her by.

Her journey continues, she craves for des Grieux's love and returns to him. For me her final moments always pose a question. Does she regret anything, is she reconciled to everything, and does she ever find balance in the depths of her unsettled soul? Does she really want to find it or does she simply follow the different inner voices of each moment until she dies? She is definitely an enigma for me. I love how Massenet's music is full of vitality and charm, and the story is most endearing and heartwarming.

6] Snegurochka's Aria
The Snow Maiden Snow Maiden
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

The daughter of Spring and Father Frost yearns for the companionship of mortal humans. She likes Lel, but her heart is unable to love. She is asking for a loving heart and as soon as she falls in love she melts in the first rays of the sun. There is a parallel in melting and surrendering for me in the Snowmaiden's journey, her courage and determination; it is her choice. I don't see it as the story of a naïve girl, melted by the sun, but as a story of courage, wanting to break free, curious and passionate about life

and experiences and then letting go, surrendering herself to life and the beauty of nature; becoming a part of nature herself. I love the pagan tales of ancient Russia: there is something so beautiful in worshipping nature, it makes you appreciate and be grateful for the beauty that we are surrounded by. The tales are filled with wisdom and teach us about the circles of life and human relationships.

7] *Gualtier Maldè... caro nome*
Rigoletto Gilda
Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Gilda is my favorite heroine, who journeys through the three stages.

Is Gilda innocent? Gilda is innocent in her lack of experience or knowledge, curious about love and life. But she has the mental capacity to understand everything on the deepest level, to love fully, to forgive generously, to take responsibility for her actions, and to make her own choices about her life.

How does Gilda develop? It is a journey of extreme psychological change. Locked up, longing to escape her father's house, falling in love with the Duca, abducted to his

palace, making love to him, explaining to her father, witnessing the Duca's betrayal, yet continuing to love him and have faith in his love. She overhears the assassination plot against the Duca or her father, decides to sacrifice her life and is killed. As she dies, she begs her father to forgive and promises to pray for his soul. Here is the parallel with Persephone, abducted into the underworld and returned reborn. Gilda is the only character in the opera who undergoes change; she grows up very quickly and finds strength in herself to escape all the weak men around her. For a woman of her status, death is probably her only option. Was abduction secretly desirable to Persephone/Gilda? Were they destined to go through such dramatic changes?

[8] - [10] *Mio padre!...* (aria)
Tutte le feste al tempio... (duet)
Piangi, fanciulla ... Sì, vendetta
Giuseppe Verdi
Rigoletto Gilda and Rigoletto

Does Gilda really love the Duca?

Gilda's initial longing is to escape from her father, to find her identity. When she meets the Duca, he is the first man to tell her his name

(even though it is false). Verdi gives her a whole aria to contemplate, fantasize, and discover her sensuality, all on the dearest name of her heart. She is ready to fall for the Duca. She believes him and trusts him, and perhaps sees in him the potential to change, to love deeply. Perhaps if he was with her, she could heal him, help him find contentment so that he will finally love both her and himself: deeply, not selfishly like he does now. This is the first age of woman. But he is a pathetic coward; he betrays her and essentially himself; her heart is wounded. She continues to love him and to have faith in him despite him not giving anything in return. Here is the second age of woman: she chooses to sacrifice her life.

Her choice to save him from death can be interpreted in many ways. I think it has more to do with her own journey than her love for him. Here is the third age of woman: there is nothing she can do for her father or for the Duca, because they are not prepared to change, so she frees herself from them. Gilda understands that in life there is always a choice, even in the most difficult situation. In *Rigoletto*, there is a theme of destiny, curse, inevitable fate ... yet Gilda's death can be seen as a symbol of freedom, rebirth,

new beginning and happiness, and this is her destiny.

[11] *E Susanna non vien ...*
Dove sono i bei momenti
Le nozze di Figaro Countess Rosina Almaviva
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Of course the opera is called *The Marriage of Figaro* and is about Figaro and Susanna, but I really like it when La Contessa is given a chance to be the centre of attention. She goes on an incredible journey: after marrying the Count she finds that her marriage is limiting; she was locked in with Bartolo and will not be locked in again. Yet my Rosina is not naïve, not waiting for things to come her way: she decides to take control of her life, to let go of negative feelings and surrender to her own voice. This inner voice tells her to keep faith, to find a solution. *'If love is the answer, can you rephrase the question.'* She turns her world upside down to make this change happen.

'Dove sono' is probably the most difficult aria and the most satisfying. There is not a single emotion that can escape from Mozart's sensitive score. The three stages of the Countess in one aria. The recitative is full of

doubt and pain, her inner turmoil and questions. Then the memory of how it was when they first met and how much she wants that back, and finally the vision of a clear path. Her own choice of what to do with her life and how to do it. It is the most beautiful example of a woman finding her inner balance and unafraid to act to make her life better, happier.

[12] *Una voce poco fa*
Il barbiere di Siviglia Rosina
Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868)

This aria establishes Rosina's character: she is gentle, she is sweet, but if you step on her you must beware. The opening chords show the beauty and nobility of her character, and the many coloratura runs are there to express emotion: joy, sadness, laughter, happiness. Every note is there for a reason. I think you have to have experienced life to understand what Rosina is all about, where she is going to and why, before you can sing this role. She is shapely and very witty, hair in ringlets, cheeks like summer roses, eyes full of laughter and the daintiest little fingers. Rosina knows what she wants and is full of confidence, but this opera is not all about fun and laughter for her. She faces the trial of losing trust in Almaviva.

So even comic heroines dive into the ruins of their own underworld to search for balance.

I love singing *bel canto*, everything is in the music. Not only the emotions, but one can also hear the way the characters look and walk. It is fantastic. And I love singing this music because I can demonstrate the acrobatics of a lyric soprano coloratura voice. After all *bel canto* is not so much about the beautiful voice, but about what this voice can do.

[13] *Chi e mai, chi e qui in sua vece? ...*

Lassu in ciel

Rigoletto Gilda & Rigoletto
Giuseppe Verdi

Why is she so forgiving, and why does she ask everyone to forgive?

When Gilda talks about forgiveness she is not saying that what they did to her was acceptable, but that she is not going to let it ruin her happiness forever: her happiness is freedom. She is begging her father to let go of revenge, to break free of weak people who cause pain and to find inner peace. Gilda is begging all the men around her to change, to face the truth, to look deep into

their hearts and into her own heart. But she is losing the battle; no one is prepared to change. They are fearful, weak men, locked in repeated patterns of behaviour. Rigoletto blames everything and everyone: Destiny for his being a hunchback and for losing his wife; the Duca for his being a jester; a curse for what happens to him and Gilda. He never takes responsibility for his actions, he is never honest with himself or with Gilda. Even Gilda's death doesn't make him understand anything. The Duca is locked into a different pattern. He is a womaniser, which he thinks will get him closer to happiness and help him find peace and contentment. He is in denial, always after the next woman for temporary salvation instead of looking courageously into his own heart. He takes no responsibility for the pain he is causing all these women.

Experience of recording and performing

For a few days before the recording, I sat quietly and thought about all the heroines I was about to sing. I created an image for each of them as if they were standing in front of me, as if I was looking into their eyes. Incredible warmth spread through my body and I realised they are all bursting to speak, wanting their voices to be heard; through me their stories will be sung.

The recording lasted 3 days, after 2 days of rehearsals. Each day was as different as the phases of my women; I am grateful for each one of them. I discovered freedom, surrender, I discovered huge new strengths and how good it feels to really connect to myself, listen to my own voice, to what I need and want. The recording presented challenges and tested my stamina. It stretched my vocal ability as far as I have ever gone, mainly because of the intense and demanding schedule. I discovered that in many cases giving less yielded greater results: that some emotions are better put aside, as they stand in the way and block the freedom of your mind and soul: the more complex the situation, the simpler the solution. All I had to do was to listen to my body and

my voice and understand what they needed. The process of this recording and the results took me by surprise and brought great joy. This is my journey and this CD reflects that. I was taking inspiration from people around me, young musicians, who were there with me and for me. I hope this CD becomes one of many, all different, presenting a phase or a fascination in my own life. But I will always remember this first opera CD, the youngest orchestra I have ever sung with, and the discovery of surrender. The dance with many partners: your soul, the words, the music, the conductor and orchestra. This recording was an exhilarating dance of many voices.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

1 Linda di Chamounix Linda

Act I, Scene 3

Ah! tardai troppo ... Oh luce di quest'anima

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)

Ah! tardai troppo,
e al nostro favorito convegno
io non trovai il mio diletto Carlo;
e chi sa mai quant'egli avrà sofferto!
Ma non al par di me!
Pegno d'amore questi fior mi lasciò!
Tenero core!
E per quel core io l'amo,
unico di lui bene.
Poveri entrambi siamo,
viviam d'amor, di speme;
pittore ignoto ancora
egli s'innalzerà co' suoi talenti!
Sarà sua sposo allora.
Oh noi contenti!

O luce di quest'anima,
delizia, amore e vita,
unita la nostra sorte
in terra, in ciel sarà.
Deh! vieni a me, riposati
su questo cor che t'ama,

Ah! I delayed too long
and did not find my beloved Carlo
at our favourite meeting place!
Who will ever know how much he has suffered!
But not compared with me!
He left me these flowers as a pledge of his love!
Tender heart!
And for that I love him,
it is the one thing he has to his name.
Both of us are poor,
We live upon love, upon hope;
A painter as yet unknown,
He will exalt himself by dint of his talents!
I shall then be his bride.
O how happy we shall be!

O my soul's delight,
My joy, my love and my life,
Our destiny will be linked
Both on earth and in heaven.
Ah! come to me: lay your head
Upon this heart that loves you,

che te sospira e brama,
che per te sol vivrà.

2 La voix humaine Elle

Tu as raison. Si, je t'écoute ...

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Tu as raison ... Si, je t'écoute ... Je serai sage ...
Je répondrai à tout, je te jure ... Ici ... Je n'ai rien
mangé ... Je ne pouvais pas ... J'ai été très malade
... Hier soir, j'ai voulu prendre un comprimé pour
dormir; je me suis dit que si j'en prenais plus, je
dormirais sans rêves, sans réveil, je serais morte.
(*Elle pleure.*) ... J'en ai avalé douze ... Dans de
l'eau chaude ... Comme une masse. Et j'ai eu
un rêve. J'ai revé ce qui est. Je me suis réveillée
toute contente parce que c'était un rêve, et quand
j'ai su que c'était vrai, que j'étais seule, que je
n'avais pas la tête sur ton cou, j'ai senti que je
ne pouvais pas vivre ... Légère, légère et froide
et je ne sentais plus mon coeur battre et la mort
était longue à venir et comme j'avais une angoisse
épouvantable, au bout d'une heure j'ai téléphoné
à Marthe. Je n'avais plus le courage de mourir
seule ...

...Chéri ... Chéri ..

That sighs for you and desires you,
Which will live for you alone.

You are so right ... Yes, I am listening ... I shan't
be foolish ... and I will keep my head, I promise
... Right here ... I didn't eat a thing ... I simply
couldn't ... Last night I meant to take a pill that
would put me to sleep. I thought that if I took
more than one, I'd sleep so much better. I thought
that if I took them all I'd sleep without a dream
and never wake – I'd sleep forever! (*She weeps.*)
... And so I swallowed twelve ... In hot water ... All
in a lump ... Then I was dreaming. You were going
away. And then when I awoke I felt so happy,
because it was just a dream. But when I knew it
was true, that I was alone, that my head was not
against your shoulder, then I knew I could not go
on living ... My body felt cold and light, and my
heart was no longer beating, and death was slow
in coming. Since I was in terrible pain, after
an hour I managed to phone Martha, I lacked the
courage to die alone

... *Chéri ... Chéri ...*

Non ... non ... A Marseille? ... Ecoute, chéri,
puisque vous serez à Marseille aprèsdemain soir,
je voudrais ... enfin j'aimerais ... j'aimerais que tu
ne descendes pas à l'holet où nous descendons
d'habitude. Tu n'es pas fâché? ... Parce que les
choses que je n'imagine pas n'existent pas, ou
bien elles existent dans une espèce de lieu très
vague et qui fait moins de mal ... tu comprends?
... Merci ... merci. Tu es bon. Je t'aime ... (*Elle
se lève et se dirige vers le lit avec l'appareil à la
main.*) Alors, voilà ... j'allais dire machinalement:
à tout de suite ... J'en doute ... Oh! ... C'est mieux
... Beaucoup mieux ... (*Elle se couche sur le lit et
serre l'appareil dans ses bras.*)

... Mon chéri ... mon beau chéri ... Je suis forte.
Dépêche-toi. Vas-y. Coupe! Coupe vite! Je t'aime,
je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime ... t'aime . . .
(*Le récepteur tombe par terre.*)

3 Fortunio Jacqueline

Act IV, Scene 1

Tout est sombre ...

Lorsque je n'étais qu'une enfant

André Messager (1853-1929)

Tout est sombre.

Pourvu que Madelon l'ai prévenu...

No ... no ... To Marseilles? , .. Oh listen, *chéri*.
Since you will be in Marseilles at least for a week,
may I ask ... I really would like ... I would like it if
you did not go to that little hotel where we always
stayed together. You are not angry? ... Because
the things I don't have to imagine do not exist.
Or let's say that they exist in some very vague
kind of place that does not hurt so much ... You
understand? ... Thank you ... thank you. You are
good. I love you (*She gets up and walks towards
the bed with the telephone in her hand.*) ... So
here we are ... I was about to say, out of habit,
"I'll see you soon" ... I doubt it ... Oh! ... It's better
... Much better ...(*She lies down on the bed and
clasps the telephone in her arms.*)

... Oh darling ... my sweet darling ... I'll be brave.
Let's make an end. Go on. Hang up! Hang up
quickly! I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you
... love you ...(*The telephone falls to the ground.*)

All is dark.

As long as Madelon has giving warning ...

Que ce billet qu'il a reçu n'est pas de moi ...
Que c'est un piège, un piège tendu par
Clavaroche.
Que faire pour le sauver? ...
S'il vient tout est perdu!
Hélas, je fus cruelle
Et faible, et lâche; et je me fis un jeu
De son amour ... mais, mon Dieu,
Ne me faites pas criminelle.

Lorsque je n'étais qu'une enfant,
Je courais au matin riant,
Dans mon jardin plein de rosée,
Je savais choisir en jouant
Le plus blanc d'entre les lis blancs
Et des roses, la plus rosée.

Je savais trouver le plus clair
Des beaux oeillets couleur de chair,
La plus odorante verveine,
Des iris le mieux irisés,
Et je rentrais les yeux grisés
Les mains de parfums toutes pleines.

Et maintenant que me voici
Une femme au coeur indécis,
Je n'ai pas su dans ma faiblesse
Choisir l'amour le plus aimant,
Le plus noble et le plus charmant
Et la plus pure des tendresses.

He did not receive the message from me ...
Whether it is a trap, a trap set by
Clavaroche.
What to do to stop it? ...
If he comes all is lost!
Alas, I was cruel
And weak and cowardly; I made myself a game
of lovers ... but, my God,
Do not make me a criminal.

When I was a child,
I ran laughing at morning
To my garden full of dew,
I could choose,
The whitest of white lilies
And of roses, the pinkest.

I could find the lightest,
The beautiful skin-coloured carnations,
The fragrant vervena,
The most iridescent irises,
I came home with my eyes dimmed
And my hands full of fragrances.

And now here I am
A woman of undecided heart,
I have not known my weakness
To chose the most loving love,
The noblest and most charming
And the most pure and tender.

4 **La rondine** Magda

Denaro! Nient'altro che denaro ...

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Denaro! Nient'altro che denaro! Ma via!
Siate sincere!
Son persuasa che voi m'assomigliate e spesso
rimpiangerete a piccola "grisetto" felice del suo
innamorato!
Può darsi! Ma che non si dimenticano più!
Ah, quella sera che son scappata alla mia vecchiaia!
Mi pare ieri!
Perchè non potrebbe essere ancora domani?
Perchè? Ore dolci e divine di lieta barabanda
fra studenti e sartine d'una notte
a Bullier!
Come andai? Non lo so!
Come uscii? Non lo so!
Cantava una lenta canzone la musica strana, e
una voce lontana diceva così:
"Fanciulla, è sbocciato l'amore! Difendi, difendi il
tuo cuore! Dei baci e sorrisi l'incanto si paga con
stille di pianto!"
Quando ci sedemmo, stanchi, estenuati
dalla danza, la gola arsa, ma l'anima piena
d'allegrezza, mi parve che si schiudesse tutta una
nuova esistenza!
"Due bocks," egli disse al garzone! Stupita
fissavo quel grande scialone! Gettò venti soldi.
Aggiunse: "Tenete!"

Money! Is there nothing else but money! Come
now! Be truthful!
I'm convinced that you are like me and often
regret not being that little "grisetto" who is happy
with her lover!
Maybe! But I can never forget those dreams.
Ah! That evening that I escaped from my old aunt.
It seems like yesterday!
Why could it not happen again tomorrow?
Why not? Sweet, divine hours of happy bedlam
among students and seamstresses one night at
Bullier!
How did I get there? I don't know!
How did I leave? I don't know!
The strange music sang a slow song and a
distant voice was saying,
"Young lady, love has blossomed. Watch out
that your heart is not broken! The enchantment
of kisses and smiles must be paid for with
teardrops!" When we sat down, tired, exhausted
from dancing, our throats were parched, but our
souls were filled with happiness, it seemed that a
whole new existence had opened up for me!
"Two beers," he said to the waiter. I stared
amazed at that great spendthrift! He threw down
20 and added "Keep the change!"

"Piccola adorata mia, il tuo nome vuoi dir?"
Io sul marmo scrissi; egli accanto il nome suo
tracciò.

E là, fra la mattana di tutta quella gente,
ci siamo guardati ma senza dir niente.
M'impaurii? Non lo so!
Poi fuggi! Più non so!
Cantava una triste canzone la musica strana,
e una voce lontana diceva così:
"Fanciulla, è sbocciato l'amore!
Difendi, difendi il tuo cuore!
Dei baci e sorrisi l'incanto
si paga con stille di pianto!"
Potessi rivivere ancora la gioia d'un ora!

5 **Manon** Manon

Je marche sur tous les chemins

Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Je marche sur tous les chemins
Aussi bien qu'une souveraine;
On s'incline, on baise ma mains,
Car par la beauté je suis reine!
Mes chevaux courent a grands pas;
Devant ma vie aventureuse
Les grands s'avancent chapeau bas;
Je suis belle, je suis hereuse!
Autour de moi, tout doit chanter, fleurir!
Je vais à tout ce qui charme et m'attire

"My little darling, what is your name?"
I scribbled on the marble, and he wrote his name
alongside mine.
And there, among the chatter of all those people,
we looked at our names without saying anything.
Did I become frightened? I do not know!
Did I run off? I do not know!
He sang a sad song such strange music,
and a distant voice went like this:
"Little girl, love has blossomed!
Defend, defend your heart!
Of kisses and smiles the charm
you pay with drops of tears!"
I wish I could still feel the joy of that time!

I walk on every street
just like a sovereign.
They bow to me, they kiss my hand,
because thanks to my beauty, I am queen!
My horses run fast.
The powerful approach, hat in hand,
before my thrilling life.
I am beautiful, I am happy!
Everything around me must flower!
I go to whatever attracts me!

Et, si Manon devait jamais mourir,
Ce serait, mes amis, dans un éclat de rire!

Obéissons quand leur voix appelle
Aux tendres amours,
Toujours, toujours, toujours,
Tant que vous êtes belle, usez sans les compter
vos jours, tous vos jours!
Profitons bien de la jeunesse,
Des jours qu'amène le printemps;
Aimons, rions, chantons sans cesse,
Nous n'avons encor que vingt ans!

Le coeur, Mias! le plus fidele,
oublie en un jour l'amour,
l'amour, et la jeunesse
ouvrant son aile a disparu
sans retour, sans retour.
Profitons bien de la jeunesse,
bien courte, hélas! est le printemps!
Aimons, chantons, rions sans cesse,
nous n'aurons pas toujours vingt ans!

6 The Snow Maiden

Snegurochka's Aria
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

Translation

To go a'strawberrying in the woods,

And should Manon ever have to die,
It will be, my friends, in a burst of laughter!

Obey when their voices are calling,
beckoning us to tender loves,
always, always, always;
as long as you are beautiful, use up your days
without counting them, all of your days!
Let's take advantage of youth,
days that spring provides;
let's love, laugh, and sing without stopping,
while we're still only twenty!

Even the most faithful heart,
alas, forgets love in a day,
love, and youth, spreading its wings
to flyaway, disappears, never
to return, never to return.
Let's take full advantage of our youth,
the springtime season, alas, is very short!
Let's love, sing, and laugh without stopping,
we won't be twenty forever!

Replying to merry-voiced companions,
A'ou, A'ou !
To sing in chorus, after Lel repeats
The joyous songs that celebrate the spring,
Oi, Lado Lel!
Such is my dream, were my delight;
For without song
I cannot live.
Consent, dear father,
and when you return.
With Winter to deep forest fastnesses.
At fall of night then I will sing,
I'll sing. To lend our loneliness a needed cheer.
The gayest of the songs I know.
'Tis handsome Lei who'll teach me them.
And I'll be quick to learn.

7 Rigoletto Gilda

Gualtier Maldè ... caro nome
Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

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 dêi sempre rammentar!
Col pensier il mio desir
a te sempre volerà,

Gualtier Maldè...name of the man I love,
be thou engraved upon my lovesick heart!
Beloved name, who made my heart
throb for the first time,
thou shalt remind me ever
of the delights of love!
In my thoughts, my desire
will ever fly to thee,

e fin l'ultimo mio sospir,
caro nome, tuo sarà.
Gaultier Maldè!

8 **Rigoletto** Gilda & Rigoletto
Mio padre!... (aria)
Tutte le feste al tempio... (duet)
Piangi, fanciulla ... Sì, vendetta
Giuseppe Verdi

GILDA
Mio padre!

RIGOLETTO
Dio! mia Gilda!
Signori, in essa è tutta
la mia famiglia.
Non temer più nulla, angelo mio...
Fu scherzo, non è vero?
Io, che pur piansi, or rido.
E tu a che piangi?

GILDA
Ah, l'onta, padre mio!

RIGOLETTO
Cielo! che dici?

and my last breath of life
shall be, beloved name, of thee.
Gaultier Maldè!

GILDA
Father!

RIGOLETTO
Oh, God! My Gilda!
Sirs, she is all
the family I have.
Don't be afraid now, my angel child...
It was only a joke wasn't it?
I, though I wept before, now laugh.
Why do you still weep?

GILDA
The shame, father!

RIGOLETTO
Good God! What do you mean?

GILDA
Arrossir voglio innanzi a voi soltanto...

RIGOLETTO
Ite di qua voi tutti!
Se il Duca vostro d'appressarsi osasse,
ch'ei non entri, gli dite, e ch'io qui sono.

RIGOLETTO
Parla...siam soli.

9 GILDA
Ciel! dammi coraggio!
Tutte le feste al tempio
mentre pregava Iddio,
bello e fatale un giovine
offriasi al guardo mio...
Se i labbri nostri tacquero,
dagli occhi il cor parlò.
Furtivo fra le tenebre
sol ieri a me giungeva...
"Sono studente e povero",
commosso mi diceva,
e con ardente palpito
amor mi protestò.
Partì ... il mio core aprivasi
a speme più gradita,
quando improvvisi apparvero
color che m'han rapita,

GILDA
To you alone I confess...

RIGOLETTO
Off with you, all of you!
And if your Duke should dare approach,
tell him not to enter, tell him I am here.

RIGOLETTO
Speak...we are alone.

GILDA
O Heaven, give me courage!
Each holy day, in church,
as I prayed to God,
a fatally handsome young man
stood where I could see him...
Though our lips were silent,
our hearts spoke through our eyes.
Furtively, only last night he came
to meet me for the first time.
"I am a student and poor,"
he said so tenderly,
and with passionate fervour
told me of his love.
He went ... my heart was rapt
in the sweetest dreams,
when suddenly the men broke in
who carried me away;

e a forza qui m'addussero
nell'ansia più crudel.

RIGOLETTO

Ah! Solo per me l'infamia
a te chiedeva, o Dio...
ch'ella potesse ascendere
quanto caduto er'io.
Ah, presso del patibolo
bisogna ben l'altare!
Ma tutto ora scompare,
l'altar si rovesciò!

10 Piangi, fanciulla, piangi ...

GILDA
Padre!

RIGOLETTO

... scorrer fa il pianto sul mio cor.

GILDA

Padre, in voi parla un angiol
per me consolator.

RIGOLETTO

No, vecchio, t'inganni ... un vindice avrai.
Sì, vendetta, tremenda vendetta

they brought me here by force,
cruelly afraid.

RIGOLETTO

Ah! I asked infamy, O God,
only for myself,
so that she might be raised
as high as I had fallen.
Ah, beside the gallows
one must raise an altar!
But all is now lost,
the altar is cast down!

Weep, my child, weep ...

GILDA
Father!

RIGOLETTO

... and let your tears fall upon my breast.

GILDA

Father, an angel speaks through you
and consoles me.

RIGOLETTO

No, old man, you're wrong ... you shall be
avenged.

di quest'anima è solo desio.
Di punirti già l'ora s'affretta,
che fatale per te suonerà.
Come fulmin scagliato da Dio,
te colpire il buffone saprà.

GILDA

O mio padre, qual gioia feroce
balenarvi negli occhi vegg'io!

RIGOLETTO

Vendetta!

GILDA

Perdonate: a noi pure una voce
di perdono dal cielo verrà.

RIGOLETTO

Vendetta!

GILDA

Perdonate...

RIGOLETTO

No!

GILDA

Mi tradiva, pur l'amo; gran Dio,
per l'ingrato ti chiedo pietà!

Yes, revenge, terrible revenge
is all that my heart desires.
The hour of your punishment hastens on,
that hour which will be your last.
Like a thunderbolt from the hand of God,
the jester's revenge shall strike you down.

GILDA

O my father, what a fierce joy
flashes in your eyes!

RIGOLETTO

Revenge!

GILDA

Forgive him: and then we too may hear
the voice of pardon from Heaven.

RIGOLETTO

Revenge!

GILDA

Forgive him!

RIGOLETTO

No!

GILDA

He betrayed me, yet I love him; great God,
I ask for pity on this faithless man!

11 **Le nozze di Figaro** Countess Rosina
E Susanna non vien ...
Dove sono I bei momenti
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

E Susanna non vien! Sono ansiosa
di saper come il Conte
accolse la proposta. Alquanto ardito
il progetto mi par, e ad uno sposo
sì vivace, e geloso!
Ma che mal c'è? Cangiando i miei vestiti
con quelli di Susanna, e i suoi co' miei...
al favor della notte... oh cielo, a quale
umil stato fatale io son ridotta
da un consorte crudel, che dopo avermi
con un misto inaudito
d'infedeltà, di gelosia, di sdegni,
prima amata, indi offesa, e alfin tradita,
fammi or cercar da una mia serva aita!

Dove sono i bei momenti,
Di dolcezza e di piacer?
Dove andaro i giuramenti
Di quel labbro menzogner?
Perchè mai, se in pianti e in pen
Per me tutto si cangiò,
La memoria di quel bene Dal miosen non
trappasò?

And Susanna doesn't come! I'm anxious
to know how the Count took her proposition.
The scheme seems
too bold to me, and to a husband
so wild and jealous!
But what harm is there? Changing my clothes
with those of Susanna, and hers with mine ...
shielded by the night's face ... oh heavens,
to what a humiliating state I am reduced
by a cruel husband, who, after marrying me,
with an unheard of mixture
of infidelity, jealousy and scorn,
first loved, then offended and at last betrayed me,
now makes me turn to one of my servants for
help!

Where are those lovely moments,
Of sweetness and pleasure?
Where have the promises gone
That came from those lying lips?
Why, if all is changed to sorrows
And to tears, for my poor heart
The remembrance of my happiness
Is not departed with them?

Ah! se almen la mia costanza,
Nel languire amando ognor,
Mi portasse una speranza

Di cangiar l'ingrato cor!

12 **Il barbiere di Siviglia** Rosina
Una voce poco fa
Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Una voce poco fa
qui nel cor mi risuono'
il mio cor ferito e' gia',
e Lindor fu che il piago'.
Si', Lindoro mio sara'
lo giurai, la vincerò'.
Il tutor ricusera',
io l'ingegno aguzzerò'.
Alla fin s'acchetera'
e contenta io restero'
Si', Lindoro mio sara'
lo giurai, la vincerò'.
Io sono docile, son rispettosa,
sono obbediente, dolce, amorosa
mi lascio reggere, mi fo guidar.
Ma se mi toccano dov'e' il mio debole
sarò una vipera e cento trappole
prima di cedere farò giocar.

Ah! if only my faithfulness,
Which still loves amidst its suffering,
Could bring me the hope

Of changing that ungrateful heart

A voice has just
echoed here into my heart
my heart is already wounded
and it was Lindoro who shot.
Yes, Lindoro will be mine
I've sworn it, I'll win.
The tutor will refuse,
I'll sharpen my mind
finally he'll accept,
and happy I'll rest.
Yes, Lindoro will be mine
I've sworn it, I'll win.
I'm gentle, respectful
I'm obedient, sweet, loving
I let be ruled, I let be guided
But if they touch where my weak spot is
I'll be a viper and a hundred traps
before giving up I'll make them fall

13 **Rigoletto** Gilda & Rigoletto
Chi è mai, chi e qui in sua vece?
Lassu in cielo
Giuseppe Verdi

RIGOLETTO
Chi è mai, chi è qui in sua vece?
(lampeggia)
Io tremo ... È umano corpo!
Mia figlia! ... Dio! ... mia figlia!
Ah no...è impossibil!
Per Verona è in via!
(inginocchiandosi)
Fu vision ... È dessa!
O mia Gilda: fanciulla, a me rispondi!

L'assassino mi svela...Olà?...
Nessuno?
(Picchia disperatamente alla porta.)
Nessun!...
(tornando presso Gilda)
Mia figlia? Mia Gilda? ... Oh, mia figlia!

GILDA
Chi mi chiama?

RIGOLETTO
Ella parla! ... si muove! ...
È viva! ... oh Dio!

RIGOLETTO
Who can this be, here in his stead?
(lightning)
I tremble ... It's a human body!
My daughter! ... O God! ... My daughter!
Ah, no, it cannot be!
She has left for Verona!
(kneeling)
It was a spectre ... It is she!
Oh, my Gilda, child, answer me!

Tell me the murderer's name! Hello ...
Is no one there?
(knocking desperately at the door)
No one!...
(returning to Gilda)
My daughter? My Gilda? ... Oh, my daughter!

GILDA
Who calls me?

RIGOLETTO
She speaks!... She moves! ...
She is alive! Oh, God!

Ah, mio ben solo in terra ...
Mi guarda ... mi conosci ...

GILDA
Ah, padre mio!

RIGOLETTO
Qual mistero! ... Che fu? ...
Sei tu ferita? ... Dimmi ...

GILDA *(indicando al core)*
L'acciar qui mi piagò.

RIGOLETTO
Chi t'ha colpita?

GILDA
V'ho ingannato ... colpevole fui ...
L'amai troppo ... ora muoio per lui!

RIGOLETTO *(da sé)*
Dio tremendo! Ella stessa fu colta
dallo stral di mia giusta vendetta!
(a Gilda)
Angiol caro! mi guarda, m'ascolta!
Parla, parlami, figlia diletta.

GILDA
Ah, ch'io taccia! a me, a lui perdonate.

Ah, my only joy on earth ...
look at me ... say who I am ...

GILDA
Ah, my father!

RIGOLETTO
I'm mystified! ... What happened? ...
Are you wounded? Tell me ...

GILDA *(pointing to her heart)*
The dagger wounded me here.

RIGOLETTO
Who struck you?

GILDA
I deceived you ... I was guilty ...
I loved him too much ... now I die for him!

RIGOLETTO *(to himself)*
Great God in heaven! She was struck by the bolt
that I, in righteous vengeance, loosed!
(to Gilda)
Beloved angel! Look at me, listen to me!
Speak, speak to me, dearest child.

GILDA
Let me be silent! Forgive me, and him.

Benedite alla figlia, o mio padre ...
Lassù in cielo, vicina alla madre,
in eterno per voi pregherò.

RIGOLETTO
Non morire, mio tesoro, pietade!
Mia colomba, lasciarmi non dêi!

GILDA
Lassù in cielo, ecc.

RIGOLETTO
Oh, mia figlia!
No, lasciarmi non dêi, non morir.
Se t'involi, qui sol rimarrei.
Non morire, o ch'io teco morirò!

GILDA
Non più...a lui perdonate.
Mio padre...Addio!
Lassù in ciel, ecc.

RIGOLETTO
Oh mia figlia! Oh mia Gilda!
No, lasciarmi non dêi, non morir!
(Gilda muore.)

RIGOLETTO
Gilda! mia Gilda!...È morta!

Bless your daughter, O my father ...
in heaven above, near my mother,
I shall pray for you evermore.

RIGOLETTO
Do not die, my treasure, have pity!
Oh, my dove, you must not leave me!

GILDA
In heaven above, etc.

RIGOLETTO
Oh my daughter!
No, you must not leave me, do not die.
If you go away, I shall be alone!
Do not die, or I shall die beside you!

GILDA
No more...Forgive him.
My father ... Farewell!
In heaven above, etc.

RIGOLETTO
Oh my daughter, my Gilda!
No, you must not leave me, do not die!
(She dies.)

RIGOLETTO
Gilda! My Gilda! She is dead!

Ah, la maledizione!
(Strappandosi i capelli, cade sul cadavere della figlia.)

Ah, the curse!
(Tearing his hair in anguish, he falls senseless upon his daughter's body.)

ILONA DOMNICH

Ilona Domnich is a rising opera star described by critics as a memorable voice of silken beauty with a luminous edge to the tone, a sensitive musician and an actress of magnetic presence. She was chosen by Opera Now as one of its Top 10 high flyers, a new generation of sopranos who are destined to have impressive careers.

Originally a pianist, Ilona was plucked by a legendary singing teacher Vera Rosza during one of her masterclasses. She went on to win the prestigious Wingate Scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music. Her career is growing steadily worldwide.

Operatic highlights include Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Jacqueline (*Fortunio*), Elle (*La voix humaine*), Mélisande (*Pelléase et Mélisande*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Magda (*La Rondine*), Tatyana



(*Onegin*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Eurydice (*Der neue Orpheus*), Venus (*Judgement of Paris*), Mimi (*La Bohème*), Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Madam Herz (*Der Schauspieldirektor*). She also covered the roles of Gilda, Olympia, Antonia, Gulietta for English National Opera.

Ilona has appeared with English National Opera, BBC Concert Orchestra, Grange Park Opera, Buxton Opera Festival, English Touring Opera, London Concert Orchestra, Bury Court Opera, Iford Arts Festival and Bampton Classical Opera as well as Festival de Musique de Menton, Trasimeno, Anghiari and Ischia festivals in Italy, Chopin Festival in Mallorca, Wotton House music Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Corbridge Festival, North Norfolk festival, London Song Festival, Jersey international Festival. Ilona has appeared in concerts in London at Queen Elizabeth Hall, Westminster Cathedral, St. Johns' Smith square, St. Martin in the Fields and internationally in Paris, Jerusalem, Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka.

Ilona's fruitful collaboration with Southbank Sinfonia and Simon Over, with whom she has performed the Brahms Requiem, Mendelssohn

'Lobgesang', Ravel Shéhérazade and the roles of Tatyana and Gilda, led to the creation of this CD. Other symphonic repertoire includes Mahler's Symphony 2 and 4, Mozart's C minor Mass, Shostakovich's Symphony 14, and Dvorák's Te Deum.

"The most compelling performance of the piece I've ever witnessed: not big in gesture... but minutely observed, utterly credible, and sang with disarming, jewel-like beauty." Opera Now

"Rosina (Domnich) simpers and sulks, delivering sublime lyricism, superb staccati and ease of coloratura." Theatre Critics

"Ilona Domnich's radiant, childlike Mélisande, the most mesmerising, tender and idiomatic impersonation of this role that I have seen." Evening Standard

"It was all so touching, so delicate, as complex as a woman's soul ... a dreamlike interpretation: a secure, firm voice of attractive colour; her performance at times like a frightened animal, at times like a comforting mother." The Guardian

"Ilona Domnich looked the part in spades from the moment she sauntered onstage: elegant,

slightly aloof, beautifully costumed and moving like a panther...her voice with occasional moments of lyrical power absolutely soared over the orchestral texture that underpins her." The Financial Times

LEO NUCCI

Leo Nucci was born in Castiglione dei Pepoli (Bologna) in 1942 and lives in Lodi, hometown of his wife, Adriana. After winning several competitions, in 1967 he made his debut at Teatro Sperimentale (A. Belli) of Spoleto as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

He studied with Maestro Mario Bigazzi before completing his studies in Bologna with Maestro Giuseppe Marchesi. After a brief interruption to his career in 1970, he was persuaded to continue by Maestro Ottaviano Bizzarri. Since his performance 1977 with *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, he has regularly performed at Teatro alla Scala in Milan.

For Teatro alla Scala he has recorded *Don Carlo*, two editions of *Aida*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Il trovatore*, *Otello*, *Tosca* and *Gianni Schicchi* with conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Chailly,



Riccardo Muti, Lorin Maazel and Sir Georg Solti. In 2007 he performed a historic concert to celebrate 30 years of performance at Teatro alla Scala, an event that has been released on DVD (*Leo Nucci: Trent'anni alla Scala, produced by C major*).

In 1979 he made his debut at the Staatsoper in Vienna with *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. In this theater he has made nearly 300 performances and several recordings, receiving the honor of "Kammersänger" and "Ehrenmitglied". At the Metropolitan in New York he made his debut in 1980 with *Un ballo in maschera*. He participated in several new productions, recording *Un ballo in maschera*, *La forza del destino*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and several Gala concerts. He made his debut at London's Covent Garden in 1978 with *Luisa Miller* and since then has maintained an enduring collaboration through performances and recordings. He has performed in Arena di Verona for 31 years, performing in more than 100 performances, singing the role of Rigoletto for nine editions and recording numerous DVDs.

Leo Nucci may be the only baritone in history to have sung *Rigoletto* in all the most

important theatres in the world – on April 4th, 2014 he celebrated his five hundredth performance at the Wiener Staatsoper.

He has recorded under the direction of Herbert von Karajan, Sir Georg Solti, Riccardo Muti, Claudio Abbado, Lorin Maazel, Riccardo Chailly, James Levine, Zubin Mehta, Carlo Maria Giulini, Giuseppe Patanè, Nello Santi, Bruno Bartoletti and Daniel Oren, collaborating with colleagues from the world of opera. He starred in two opera films: *Macbeth* by Claude D'Anna presented at Cannes in 1987, and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

A book has recently been released, dedicated to him: "Leo Nucci, un baritone per caso" written by Achille Mascheroni, Azzali edition of Parma.

Recent highlights include a critically lauded performance of *Nabucco* at Teatro alla Scala, which he also performed at Covent Garden in London and Florence, as well performances of *Rigoletto* in Seville and on tour in Japan with Teatro alla Scala and in Bilbao. Future engagements include *La traviata* in Madrid and Berlin, *Nabucco* in Valencia, *Simon Boccanegra* in Vienna, *Rigoletto* in

Liege and Madrid and *I due Foscari* in Piacenza and Marseille. After the success of *Luisa Miller* in Busseto, in 2014 Leo Nucci continued his work there as stage director, as well as training young singers of the Academy in Piacenza, where he recently staged *L'elisir d'amore*: both productions have been very

successful in Italy and will land tour abroad in the future.

Nucci will continue his international tour with concerts together with the Italian Opera Chamber Ensemble, with whom he recently recorded an album dedicated to Giuseppe Verdi.

SOUTHBANK SINFONIA *CD recording session with Ilona Domnich and Southbank Sinfonia*



Violin I

Maria Fiore Mazzarini
 Marc Charles-Montesinos
 Tam Mott
 Douglas Harrison
 Joan Martinez
 Joana Ly
 Eugene Lee
 Ksenia Berezina
 Julia Loucks
 Nuno Carapina

Violin II

Emily Bouwhuis
 Stefano D'Ermenegildo
 Heloisa Gaspar Ribeiro
 Avril Freemantle
 Harriet Murray
 Minsi Yang
 Zanete Uskane
 Matthew Bethel

Viola

Jennifer MacCallum
 Charley Lake
 Victoria Stephenson
 Cameron Campbell
 Tegen McGrahan
 Jennifer Coombes

Cello

Svetlana Mochalova
 Guðný Jónasdóttir
 Thomas Wraith
 Alice Murray

Bass

Mark Lipski
 David Cousins
 Jakub Cywinski

Flute

Nicola Crowe / Nicola Smedley
 Holly Melia / Simon Gilliver

Oboe

Clara Pérez Sedano
 Julia Hantschel
 Amy Turner

Clarinet

Som Howie
 Daniel Broncano
 Thomas Caldecote

Bassoon

Kylie Nesbit
 Holly Reardon
 Ruth Rosales

Horn

Jonathan Maloney
 Kirsty Howe
 Charles Hutchinson
 David Horwich

Trumpet

Rebecca Crawshaw
 Richard Blake

Trombone

William Yates
 Rupert Whitehead
 Hilary Belsey
 James Buckle

Tuba

Mike Poyser

Percussion

Timothy Brigden
 Craig Apps

Harp

Daniel de Fry

Celeste

Helen Nicholas

Southbank Sinfonia is an orchestra of young professionals described by The Times as 'a dashing ensemble who play with exhilarating fizz, exactness and stamina'. It is internationally recognised as a leading orchestral academy, providing graduate musicians from all over the world with a much-needed springboard into the profession.

Every year its players, each supported by a bursary, undertake an intensive and wide-ranging nine month programme of performance and professional development. This comprises performances across Britain and Europe involving orchestral repertoire, chamber music, opera, dance and theatre, alongside development sessions embracing leadership and teamwork, and opportunities to be role-models, inspiring many younger musicians on London's Southbank and beyond.

A distinctive and integral part of the programme is the orchestra's creative partnerships with leading performing arts organisations including the Royal Opera, National Theatre, BBC Concert Orchestra, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and acclaimed artists such as Patrons Vladimir Ashkenazy and Edward Gardner. The orchestra is proud to be based at St

John's Waterloo, in the heart of London, where its regular free Rush Hour concerts give many people their first ever experience of live orchestral music.

Southbank Sinfonia receives no public funding and is indebted to its many individual donors, trusts and foundations, and corporate supporters who believe in the potential of its young musicians. To find out how you can support the orchestra and discover more about its next exciting performances, visit www.southbanksinfonia.co.uk.

'In such lively bands as Southbank Sinfonia, bright, open-minded young players are redefining everything about classical music concerts, from where they take place, to what you hear and how you behave. If you haven't been to an orchestral concert for a while – or ever – give this brilliant new breed of bands a try. You may be watching a revolution.'

Richard Morrison, The Times



Principal Partner of Southbank Sinfonia

SIMON OVER

Simon Over studied at the Amsterdam Conservatoire, the Royal Academy of Music and Oxford University. From 1992 to 2002 Simon was a member of the music staff of Westminster Abbey, and Director of Music at both St Margaret's Church and in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft in the Palace of Westminster. He is the Founder-Conductor of the UK Parliament Choir and has conducted all the choir's performances in conjunction with the City of London Sinfonia, La Serenissima, the London Festival Orchestra and Southbank Sinfonia.

Simon founded Southbank Sinfonia in 2002 and has conducted many of its concerts throughout the UK and Europe at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle; St James's Palace; the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Westminster Abbey; the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. He has conducted Southbank Sinfonia in recordings with cellist Raphael Wallfisch, tenor Andrew Kennedy and pianist Alessio Bax. In 2009 and 2010 he conducted the orchestra in 71 performances of *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (Tom Stoppard/André Previn) at the National Theatre,



while in 2011 Simon received, on behalf of Southbank Sinfonia, the Japan Art Association Praemium Imperiale Grant for Young Artists in the presence of Prince and Princess Hitachi and HM the Queen.

In 2006, Simon was appointed Conductor of the Malcolm Sargent Festival Choir and has been associated with the Samling - working with young professional singers - since its inception. He is also Artistic Director of the Music Festival in Anghiari (Tuscany) and, since 2010, Music Director of Bury Court Opera for whom he has conducted *Dido and Aeneas*, *Rigoletto*, *La Cenerentola*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Fairy Queen* and *The Rake's Progress*. Further credits include Guest Conductor of the City Chamber Orchestra (Hong Kong), the Goyang Philharmonic Orchestra (Korea) and directing Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne* for the 2011 Vestfold International Festival in Norway. Recently appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Southern Sinfonia, New Zealand, in 2013, he conducted a joint concert with the Yamagata Symphony Orchestra and the Southern Sinfonia, representing Australia and New Zealand in Tokyo's Asia Orchestra Week.

Simon has worked both as conductor and accompanist with many internationally-acclaimed artists, including Sir Thomas Allen, Sir James and Lady Galway, Dame Emma Kirkby, Dame Felicity Lott, Sir Willard White, Dame Edna Everage, Alessio Bax, Emma Johnson, Simon Keenlyside, Malcolm Martineau, and Amanda Roocroft.

As a pianist, his performances with American violinist Miriam Kramer at the Wigmore Hall and Lincoln Center, New York – as well as on several recordings – have received high critical acclaim.

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The Henri Moerel Foundation (HMF) supports young musicians and singers in fulfilling their potential. The Foundation was established by Henri Moerel (1920-2012) in memory of his father Salomon Maurits Moerel. Salomon Moerel, an esteemed physician, perished in Auschwitz in 1944, together with his wife, and daughter Carla, Henri's younger sister.

The aim of the Foundation is to enrich lives by giving beauty, to offset some of the darkness of the past.

Music was very important to the Moerel family. Emotions invoked and conveyed by music are a universal language, and the importance of such a universal language in today's world is more urgent than ever. We are very proud to be the main sponsor of "Surrender" by Ilona Domnich and Southbank Sinfonia. We hope you will be touched by the beauty of the music performed by one of the most promising sopranos of today, supported by an orchestra consisting of some of the most promising young musicians from all over the world.

www.henrimoerelfoundation.org

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