

A portrait of Kristian Benedikt, a tenor with long, wavy brown hair and a beard, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a black shirt and a light-colored, patterned vest. The background is dark with warm, out-of-focus lights.

*Tenore di forza*

**Kristian Benedikt**

sings favorite tenor arias

Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra  
Modestas Pitrenas, conductor



DE 3571



# TENORE DI FORZA

Kristian Benedikt Sings Favorite Tenor Arias

Arias from:

Giuseppe Verdi: ***Otello*** • Camille Saint-Saëns: ***Samson et Dalila*** •  
Umberto Giordano: ***Andrea Chénier*** • Fromental Halévy: ***La Juive*** •  
Giacomo Puccini: ***La Fanciulla del West; Turandot*** • Richard Wagner:  
***Die Walküre*** • Ruggero Leoncavallo: ***Pagliacci*** • P. I. Tchaikovsky:  
***Queen of Spades*** • Jules Massenet: ***Le Cid*** • Amilcare Ponchielli:  
***I Lituani*** • Vytautas Klova: ***Pilėnai***

**Kristian Benedikt, tenor**

**Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra**

**Modestas Pitrenas, conductor**

**Lithuanian National Opera Chorus**

**Česlovas Radžiūnas, chorus master**

Total playing time: 68:10

# Tenore di forza

Kristian Benedikt sings favorite tenor arias

- 1. GIUSEPPE VERDI:** *Otello* ... Datemi ancor l'eburnea mano—Dio mi potevi scagliar (5:36)
- 2. CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS:** *Samson et Dalila* ... Arrêtez, ô mes frères! (6:45)
- 3. UMBERTO GIORDANO:** *Andrea Chénier* ... Colpito qui m'avvete—Un di all'azzurro spazio (5:01)
- 4. FROMENTAL HALÉVY:** *La Juive* ... Va, prononcer ma mort—Rachel, quand du Seigneur (8:54)
- 5. GIACOMO PUCCINI:** *La Fanciulla del West* ... Una parola sola—Or son sei mesi (3:31)
- 6. RICHARD WAGNER:** *Die Walküre* ... Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater (6:22)
- 7. RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO:** *Pagliacci* ... Recitar!—Vesti la giubba (3:44)
- 8. PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Queen of Spades* ... Chto nasha zhizn? Igra! (3:03)
- 9. JULES MASSENET:** *Le Cid* ... Ah! Tout est bien fini—Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père (5:04)
- 10. GIACOMO PUCCINI:** *Turandot* ... Nessun dorma (3:34)
- 11. CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS:** *Samson et Dalila* ... Vois ma misère, hélas! (9:05)
- 12. AMILCARE PONCHIELLI:** *I Lituani* ... Esultiamo nel nome del Signor (3:39)
- 13. VYTAUTAS KLOVA:** *Pilėnai* ... Aš papuošiu žirgo galvą pinavijom (3:50)

Total Playing Time: 68:10

**Kristian Benedikt**, tenor

**Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra**

**Modestas Pitrenas**, conductor

**Lithuanian National Opera Chorus**

**Česlovas Radžiūnas**, chorus master

1. **Datemi ancor l'eburnea mano—  
Dio mi potevi scagliar**

**Otello** — Giuseppe Verdi's next-to-last opera—is a tragic tale of jealousy and treachery, and stands as his greatest dramatic masterpiece. The title character, a brilliant Moorish general, has falsely been led to believe by Iago—his traitorous standard-bearer—that his wife, Desdemona, has been having an affair with Cassio, his captain. In Act III, Otello confronts Desdemona about her relationship to Cassio, and—not believing her answer—commands her to leave. Otello then—in “Datemi ancor l'eburnea mano—Dio mi potevi scagliar”—asks God why he has afflicted him in such a way. The tragedy comes full circle in the end, when Otello murders Desdemona in a fit of jealous rage.

Datemi ancor l'eburnea mano,  
vo' fare ammenda.  
Vi credea (perdonate  
se il mio pensiero è fello)  
quella vil cortigian  
che è la sposa d'Otello.

Dio! mi potevi scagliar tutti i mali  
della miseria, della vergogna,  
far de' miei baldi trofei trionfali  
una maceria, una menzogna...  
E avrei portato la croce crudel

d'angoscie e d'onte  
con calma fronte  
e rassegnato al volere del ciel.  
Ma, o pianto, o duol! m'han rapito  
il mirraggio  
dov'io, giulivo, l'anima acqueto.  
Spento è quel sol, quel sorriso,  
quel raggio  
che mi fa vivo, che mi fa lieto!  
Tu alfin, Clemenza, pio genio immortal  
dal roseo riso,  
copri il tuo viso  
santo coll'orrida larva infernal!



Give me your ivory hand again,  
I would make amends.  
I took you (forgive me  
if my thought displeases you)  
for that common courtesan  
that married with Othello.

God! You could have rained upon my head  
every affliction of poverty and shame,  
made of my heroic honors in battle  
a heap of ruination and a lie . . .  
and I would have borne the cross  
of torment and disgrace gladly  
and resigned to the will of heaven.  
But—O tears and pain! –  
to rob me of that vision  
in which my soul was joyfully wedded!  
That sun has been snuffed out,  
that smile, that ray

which gives me life and happiness!  
That sun has been snuffed out, etc.  
Mercy, thou immortal  
rose-lipped angel,  
cover your holy face  
with the terrible mask of hell!

## 2. **Arrêtez, ô mes frères!**

Based on the biblical tale of Samson and Delilah from the Book of Judges, Camille Saint-Saëns originally sought to retell the story as an oratorio—but was persuaded to cast it in operatic form (***Samson et Dalila***) instead. It has remained one of the handful of most beloved French operas ever since. The Philistines have enslaved and brutally oppressed the Hebrews. As Act I begins, Samson addresses his dispirited fellow Hebrews, and—seeking to revive their faith and spirit of resistance—he exhorts them to rise up against their oppressors in his aria “Arrêtez, ô mes frères!” Attacked by the Philistine Satrap Abimélech, the preternaturally strong Samson wrests the sword from him and kills him. The high priest of the Philistine god Dagon then resolves to enlist the aid of the beautiful Delilah to learn the secret of his strength.

SAMSON  
Arrêtez, ô mes frères!  
Et bénissez le nom  
du Dieu saint de nos pères!  
Car l’heure du pardon  
est peut-être arrivée!  
Ou, j’entends dans mon coeur  
une voix élevée!  
C’est la voix du Seigneur  
qui parle par ma bouche.  
Ce Dieu plein de bonté,  
que la prière touche,  
promet la liberté!  
Frères, brisons nos chaînes,  
et relevons l’autel  
du seul Dieu d’Israël!

LE CHOEUR  
Hélas ! Paroles vaines !  
Pour marcher aux combats,  
où donc trouver des armes?  
Comment armer nos bras?  
Nous n’avons que nos larmes!

SAMSON  
L’as-tu donc oublié,  
celui dont la puissance  
Se fit ton allié?  
Lui qui, plein de clémence,  
a si souvent pour toi  
fait parler ses oracles,  
et rallumé ta foi  
au feu de ses miracles?  
Lui qui, dans l’Océan,

Sut frayer un passage  
a non pères fuyant  
un honteux esclavage?  
LE CHOEUR

Ils ne sont plus, ces temps  
où le Dieu de nos pères  
protégeait ses enfants,  
entendait leurs prières.

SAMSON

Malheureux, taisez-vous!  
Le doute est un blasphème!  
Implorons à genoux,  
le Seigneur qui nous aime!  
Remettons dans ses mains  
le soin notre gloire,  
et puis ceignons nos reins  
certains de la victoire!  
C'est le Dieu des combats!  
C'est le Dieu des armées!  
In armera vos bras d'invincibles épées!

LE CHOEUR

Le souffle du Seigneur  
a passé dans son âme!  
Chassons de notre coeur  
une terreur infame,  
et marchons avec lui  
pour notre délivrance.  
Jéhovah le conduit  
et nous rend l'espérance!



SAMSON

O my brothers, cease!  
and bless the name  
Of the holy God of our fathers!  
For perhaps the hour  
of our pardon has come!  
Yes, I hear a most high  
voice in my heart!  
It is the voice of the Lord  
speaking through me.  
This God, full of goodness,  
moved by prayer,  
promises our freedom!  
Brothers, break our chains,  
and restore the altar  
of the One God of Israel!

CHORUS

Alas, empty words!  
To march to combat,  
where are we to find any weapons?  
How do we take up arms?  
All we have is our tears!

SAMSON

Can you have forgotten  
him who joined  
his force to yours?  
He, quick to forbear,  
Who has so often blessed  
you in his oracles,  
and rekindled your faith  
in the fire of his miracles?  
He who in the Ocean

did open a passage  
to our fathers as they fled  
a shameful bondage?

CHORUS

Those days are no more,  
when the God of our fathers  
protected his children  
and listened to their prayers.

SAMSON

Silence, you wretches!  
Doubt is blasphemy!  
Let us kneel and implore  
the Lord who loves us!  
once more let us entrust  
our glory to his hands,  
and then shall we gird our loins,  
sure of victory!  
He is the God of battles!  
He is the God of armies!  
He will put invincible weapons  
into your hands!

CHORUS

The breath of the Lord  
has passed into his soul!  
Let us chase from our hearts  
a coward's fear,  
and march with him  
for our deliverance.  
Jehovah leads him  
and restores our hope.

### 3. **Colpito qui m'avete — Un di all'azzurro spazio**

After several unsuccessful earlier operatic efforts, Umberto Giordano finally produced his first smash hit, **Andrea Chénier**, in 1896. One reason the opera has remained in the repertoire is that it is a vocal showcase for the finest tenors. The libretto was adapted from the actual life story of the noted French poet André Chénier, who was executed during the French Revolution. The convoluted plot ends as the title hero and his beloved Maddalena, a deposed woman of the aristocracy, face the guillotine together. The aria "Un di all'azzurro spazio" (also known as "L'improvviso") comes in Act I, when Maddalena—during a lavish ball—pesters a reluctant Andrea to recite a poem. Finally, angered, he improvises an impassioned poem about the true nature of love and the misery of the poor, before lashing out at the aristocratic establishment.

Colpito qui m'avete  
ov'io geloso  
celo il più puro palpitar dell'anima.  
Or vedrete, fanciulla, qual poema  
è la parola "Amor,"  
qui causa di scherno!

Un di all'azzurro spazio  
guardai profondo,

e ai prati col mi di viole,  
piove va l'oro il sole,  
e folgorava d'oro il mondo;  
parea la Terra un immane tesor,  
e a lei serviva di scrigno,  
il firmamento.  
Su dalla terra a la mia fronte  
veniva una ca'rezza viva, un bacio.  
Gridai, vinto d'amor:  
T'amo, tù che mi baci,  
divinamente bella,  
o patria mia!  
E volli pien d'amore pregar!  
Varcai d'una chiesa la soglia;  
là un prete nelle nicchie dei santi  
e de la Vergine, accumulava doni...  
e al sordo orecchio  
un tremulo vegliardo invano  
chiedeva pane,  
e invan stenddea la mano!  
Varcai degli abituri l'uscio;  
un uom vi calunniava bestemmiando  
il suolo  
che l'erario a pena sazia  
e contro a Dio scagliava,  
e contro a li uomini  
le lagrime dei gli,  
in cotanta miseria. La patrizia prole,  
che fa?  
Sol l'occhio vostro  
esprime umanamente qui,  
un guardo di pietà,  
ond' io guardato ho a voi sì  
come a un angelo.

E dissi:  
Ecco la bellezza della vita!  
Ma, poi, alle vostre parole,  
un novello dolor,  
m'ha còlto in pieno petto.  
O giovinetta bella,  
d'un poeta non disprezzate il detto:  
Udite!  
Non conoscete amor,  
amor, divino dono, no lo schernir,  
del mondo anima e vita è l'amor!



You have struck me here,  
where I, jealous,  
hide my soul's purest pulse.  
Now, young Lady, you will see  
what a poem the word "Love" is:

Here, a cause for ridicule  
One day, deep in thought,  
I looked to the blue spaces,  
And to the violet-strewn fields,  
the sun's gold rained down—  
illuminating the gold of the earth;  
the Earth seemed a vast treasure,  
and the skies served as a coffin to her.  
To my face there came from the earth,  
a vibrant caress, a kiss.  
Overwhelmed by love, I shouted,  
I love you who kisses me:  
My divinely beautiful homeland!  
And I wanted to pray with great love!  
I passed through a church's door,

where a priest, in the alcove of the saints  
and of the Virgin, was gathering gifts.  
And to his deaf ear,  
a trembling old man begged  
in vain for bread,  
and in vain reached out his hand.  
I entered a workman's hovel,  
where a man was blaspheming:  
swearing at the earth  
that barely fills the treasury,  
swearing against God  
and against men;  
at the tears of his children  
in such misery; the patrician offspring;  
what can they do?  
Here, only your eye  
expresses humanely.  
A look of pity, as I looked at you;  
you, like an angel.  
And I said:  
Here's life's beauty!  
But then, at your words,  
A new sadness  
has seized my heart.  
Oh beautiful young lady,  
don't demean a poet's words.  
Listen!  
You don't know love.  
Love's a divine gift; don't ridicule it;  
the life and soul of the world is love!

#### 4. **Va, prononcer ma mort—Rachel, quand du Seigneur**

Fromental Halévy's *La Juive* (The Jewess) was one of the nineteenth century's most admired operas, widely considered as an early plea for religious tolerance. Loosely based on actual medieval history, it tells the tale of Eléazar, a Jewish goldsmith who had been banished by his nemesis, Count Brogni. By an ironic twist of fate, Eléazar had found the Count's lost infant daughter and raised her as Rachel, his own child. The unaware Brogni—now a cardinal—had her imprisoned and condemned to death for her affair with a Christian nobleman. In his Act IV aria, "Va, prononcer ma mort—Rachel, quand du Seigneur," Eléazar laments that he has wanted only Rachel's happiness, but has instead caused her condemnation—before giving voice to his (unsuccessful) determination to save her by revealing her true identity.

Va, prononcer ma mort, ma vengeance  
est certaine!  
C'est moi qui pour jamais te condamne  
à gémir!  
J'ai fait peser sur toi mon éternelle haine  
et maintenant je puis mourir!  
Mais ma fille!...  
O Rachel!... quelle horrible pensée.  
Vient déchirer mon cœur

délire affreux rage insensée  
pour me venger c'est toi qu'immole  
ma fureur!

Rachel, quand du Seigneur la grace tutélaire  
à mes tremblantes mains confia  
ton berceau,  
j'avais à ton bonheur voué ma vie entière  
et c'est moi qui te livre au bourreau!

Mais j'entends une voix qui me crie:  
sauvez-moi de la mort qui m'attend!  
Je suis jeune et je tiens à la vie,  
ô mon père, épargnez votre enfant!  
Ah! Rachel, quand ... ecc.



Go ahead and announce my death,  
my revenge is assured!  
It is I who will condemn you to grief!  
I pretended my eternal hatred,  
and now I can die!  
But my daughter! ...  
O Rachel! What a horrible thought.  
Just tear apart my heart  
in frightful, mad rage.  
To avenge me it is you that ignites my fury!

Rachel, when the Lord's saving grace  
entrusted your cradle into my hands,  
I made your happiness  
the avowed aim of my whole life—  
and it is I who am now sending you  
to your execution!

But I can hear a voice calling to me:  
save me from the death which awaits me!  
I am young and I cling to life!  
O my father, spare your child!

### 5. **Una parola sola — Or son sei mesi**

In Giacomo Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*, his beautifully crafted operatic "spaghetti western," Minnie is a saloon owner at a miners' camp during California's gold rush. A stranger arrives, introducing himself as Dick Johnson—who is actually Ramerrez, the leader of a gang of bandits. Johnson is left alone with Minnie in the saloon, so that he can rob the miners' gold stashed there. He learns where the gold is hidden, but swears to protect both her and the treasure. She then invites him to her nearby cabin. In Act II, he arrives at the cabin, where they declare their mutual love. Minnie then learns that Johnson is in fact the bandit Ramerrez and confronts him. He tells her that he came to rob her, but couldn't go through with it after meeting her. In his aria, "Una parola sola — Or son sei mesi," he tells her of his sordid life; but that now he no longer wants to live the life of a criminal. In the end, the pair rides off to begin a new life together.

Una parola sola.  
Non mi difenderò: sono un dannato!

Lo so, lo so! Ma non vi avrei rubato!  
Sono Ramerrez: nacqui vagabondo  
era ladro il mio nome  
da quando venni al mondo.  
Ma fino a che fu vivo  
mio padre, io non sapevo.

Or son sei mesi che mio padre morì...  
Sola ricchezza mia,  
per la madre e pei fratelli, alla dimane,  
veredità paterna:  
Una masnada di banditi da strada!  
L'accettai. Era quello il mio destino!  
Ma un giorno v'ho incontrata  
ho sognato d'andarmene con voi  
tanto lontano  
e redimermi tutto in una vita  
di lavoro e d'amore...  
E il labbro mio mormorò  
un'ardente preghiera:  
Oh Dio! Ch'ella non sappia mai la  
mia vergogna!  
Il sogno è stato vano! Ahimè! Ora ho finito.



Let me just say one word.  
But not in self-defense:  
I am accursed. I know! I know!  
But I would not have robbed you!  
I am Ramerrez, vagabond by birth:  
From the day of my birth I was raised on  
stolen money.  
But while my father was living I didn't  
know it.

Now it's been six months since my  
father's death ...  
And then I knew!  
My only means of supporting  
my mother and brothers,  
the only thing he left us,  
was a gang of highway robbers  
and bandits!  
I accepted it—that was my fate!  
But then one day I met you,  
and I dreamed of going far  
away together  
to make amends with a new life  
of honest work and love ...  
And my lips mouthed  
a fervent prayer:  
Oh God! May she never know my shame!  
But that prayer was in vain.  
Alas! Now I'm finished.

## 6. **Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater**

In ***Die Walküre***—the second of the four operas comprising Richard Wagner's massive *Ring of the Niebelungs* quadrilogy, the hero Siegmund—as he is being pursued by his enemies—stumbles upon a house built around a huge ash-tree. Wounded and weaponless, he enters and faints from exhaustion. Sieglinde—the unwilling wife of the property's owner, Hunding—rouses him and gives him refreshment. Hunding arrives, asking for

the stranger's story—and soon realizes that Siegmund is his enemy. Nonetheless, he allows Siegmund to stay the night, but warns that they must fight to the death in the morning. After Hunding retires for the night, Siegmund—who has fallen in love with Sieglinde (actually his long-lost twin sister)—sings in “Ein Schwert verhieß mir der Vater”—that his father Wälse (a.k.a. Wotan, the king of the gods) had promised him a sword in his hour of greatest need. Then, in the dwelling's dim light, he spies a gleaming sword buried to the hilt in the ash-tree's trunk. Later, Sieglinde—having drugged Hunding into a deep sleep—returns and tells Siegmund how the sword came to be there. Siegmund then rapturously pulls the sword from the tree, swearing to protect his “bride and sister” with it before they run off together into the night.

Ein Schwert verhieß mir der Vater,  
ich fänd' es in höchster Not.  
Waffenlos fiel ich in Feindes Haus;  
seiner Rache Pfand, raste ich hier: -  
ein Weib sah ich, wonnig und hehr:  
entzückend Bangen zehrt mein Herz.  
Zu der mich nun Sehnsucht zieht,  
die mit süßem Zauber mich sehrt,  
im Zwange hält sie der Mann,  
der mich Wehrlosen höhnt!  
Wälse! Wälse! Wo ist dein Schwert?  
Das starke Schwert,  
das im Sturm ich schwänge,

bricht mir hervor aus der Brust,  
was wütend das Herz noch hegt?

Was gleißt dort hell im Glimmerschein?  
Welch ein Strahl bricht aus der  
Esche Stamm?

Des Blinden Auge leuchtet ein Blitz:  
lustig lacht da der Blick.

Wie der Schein so hehr das Herz  
mir sengt!

Ist es der Blick der blühenden Frau,  
den dort haftend sie hinter sich ließ,  
als aus dem Saal sie schied?

Nächtiges Dunkel deckte mein Aug',  
ihres Blickes Strahl streifte mich da:  
Wärme gewann ich und Tag.  
Selig schien mir der Sonne Licht;  
den Scheitel umgleiß mir ihr  
wonniger Glanz —  
bis hinter Bergen sie sank.

Noch einmal, da sie schied,  
traf mich abends ihr Schein;  
selbst der alten Esche Stamm  
erglänzte in goldner Glut:  
da bleicht die Blüte, das Licht verlischt;  
nächtiges Dunkel deckt mir das Auge:  
tief in des Busens Berge  
glimmt nur noch lichtlose Glut.



My father promised me  
that I would find a sword

to serve me in my hour of direst need.  
I came to my enemy's house;  
where I now lie, a helpless hostage.  
I saw a woman, wondrous and fair,  
who made my heart tremble with bliss.  
The woman who has captivated me  
with wounds of sweet enchantment,  
is held in thrall by the man  
who mocks his unarmed foe.  
Wälse! Wälse! Where is your sword?  
The mighty sword,  
that will serve me in battle,  
when the fury in my heart  
Breaks forth from my bosom?

What gleams there so brightly in  
the dimness?  
What ray shines forth from the ash  
tree's trunk?  
A bolt of lightning strikes the blind eye,  
and the vision laughs merrily.  
How the sublime light scalds my heart!  
Is it the blooming woman's glance  
that remained behind  
when she left the room?

Night's darkness had covered my eyes,  
but as the beam of her gaze  
stroked them,  
warmth and daylight came upon me.  
The sun's light shone blessedly upon me;  
in parting, her loving glance glowed  
until it sank behind the mountains.

And again, as she departed,  
her visage shone upon me as at sunset;  
even the ash tree's ancient trunk  
gleamed in its golden radiance:  
the blossoms grow pale as the light dims;  
The darkness of night covers my vision:  
deep in the mountains of my bosom,  
only the embers' soft glow remains.

### 7. **Recitar—Vesti la giubba**

Ruggero Leoncavallo's *La Bohème* may have fallen into neglect, but **Pagliacci**, his dramatically gripping "play within a play," has kept his name alive. Cast in two brief acts, the work is usually paired with another short opera, most often Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*: a pairing popularly known as "Cav-and-Pag." Canio, directing an itinerant troupe of actors, suspects that his wife, Nedda, is having an affair. In "Recitar—Vesti la giubba," one of the most iconic of tenor arias, is Canio's heart-rending outpouring as he sings that he must don his clown's costume and make his audience laugh—even though he is weeping within at his wife's infidelity. Finally, the actual betrayal plays itself out before an unsuspecting audience, ending when Canio murders both Nedda and her lover onstage.

Recitar!  
Mentre preso dal delirio,  
non so più quel che dico,  
e quel che faccio!  
Eppur è d'uopo, sforzati! Bah!  
Sei tu forse un uom?  
Tu se' Pagliaccio!

Vesti la giubba e la faccia infarina.  
La gente paga, e rider vuole qua.  
E se Arlecchin t'invola Colombina,  
ridi, Pagliaccio,  
e ognun applaudirà!  
Tramuta in lazzi lo spasmo ed il pianto  
in una smor a il singhiozzo il dolor,  
Ah!  
Ridi, Pagliaccio,  
sul tuo amore infranto!  
Ridi del duol, che t'avvelena il cor!



Act!  
Though in such delirium,  
I no longer know what I'm saying,  
or what I'm doing!  
And yet I must make the effort! Bah!  
Aren't you a man?  
You're a clown!

So don your costume and powder  
your face.  
People pay to come here,  
and they want to laugh.  
And if Harlequin steals your Columbina,

laugh, clown, so the crowd will cheer!  
Turn your anguish and tears into jest,  
your agony and sobs into a funny  
face—Ah!  
Laugh, clown,  
at your broken love!  
Laugh at the misery that poisons  
your heart!

## 8. **Chto nasha zhizn? Igra!**

P. I. Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* is set in eighteenth-century Russia. The army officer Hermann has become obsessed with gambling. He falls in love with Liza, the granddaughter of the elderly countess known as the "Queen of Spades," who allegedly has a secret formula for winning at cards. Hermann sneaks into the countess's chambers to compel her to reveal her secret, but she dies of fright as he threatens her with a pistol. Early in Act III, the ghost of the countess appears, revealing to him her three-card winning formula. As the act draws to a close, Hermann bets extravagantly in a game and wins with the first two cards, prompting the aria "Chto nasha zhizn? Igra!" But when he loses everything upon playing the third card—which turns out to be the queen of spades—the countess's ghost reappears, laughing at him, driving him to suicide.

Chto nosy povesili?  
Vam strashno? Vam strashno?  
Vina! Vina!

Chto nasha zhizn? Igra!  
Dobro I zlo—odni mechty!  
Trud, chestnost—skazki dlya babya!  
Kto prav, kto schastliv zdes, druzya?  
Segodnya ty, a zavtra ya!  
Tak broste zhe borbu, lovite mig udachi!  
Pust neudachnik plachet, klyanya, klyanya  
svoyu sudbu!  
Chto verno! Smert odna!  
Kak bereg morya suyeti, nam vsem pribezhische ona.  
Kto zh yei milei iz nas, druzya?  
Segodnya ty, a zavtra ya!  
Tak broste zhe borbu, lovite mig udachi!  
Pust neudachnik plachet, klyanya  
svoyu sudbu!  
Idyot yescho?



Why are you so gloomy?)  
Are you scared? Are you scared?  
Give me wine! wine!

What is life? A game!  
Good and evil—only dreams!  
Work and honesty—old wives' tales!  
Which of you is right or happy, friends?  
Today, you—and tomorrow, me!  
Give up the struggle, grasp the moment  
of success!

Let the loser weep, cursing his fate!  
What is the truth? Only death!  
Like the shore in a sea of torment, it is a  
haven for us all.  
Which of us is the favored ones,  
my friends?  
Today you—and tomorrow, me!  
Give up the struggle, seize the moment  
of good fortune!  
Let the loser weep, and curse his destiny!  
Let's go again?

### 9. **Ah! tout est bien fini—Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père**

The remarkably prolific Jules Massenet was a prominent and highly influential figure on the French late-Romantic scene. Quite a few of his nearly three dozen operas enjoyed widespread initial success, though only *Werther* and *Manon* have retained a consistent toehold in the modern repertory. Some interest in ***Le Cid***, first staged in 1885, has lately been revived, with several notable productions in recent seasons after nearly a century of neglect. Set in eleventh-century Spain, during the height of the Moorish wars, "O Souverain, o Juge, o Père" is the hero Rodrigues' fervent Act III prayer on the eve of battle against an overwhelming Moorish army, before leading his forces to victory.

Ah! tout est bien fini.  
Mon beau rêve de gloire,  
mes rêves de bonheur  
s'envolent à jamais!  
Tu m'as pris mon amour,  
tu me prends la victoire,  
Seigneur, je me soumets!

Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père,  
toujour viole, present toujours  
Je t'adorais au temps prospere,  
et te benis aux sombres jours.  
Je vais ou ta loi me reclame  
libre de tous regrets humains.

Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père,  
ta seul image est dans mon ame  
que je remet entre tes mains.

O firmament, azur, lumiere,  
esprits d'en haut penche sur moi  
c'est le soldat qui desespere  
mais la chretien garde sa foi.

Tu peux venir, tu peux paraitre  
aurore du jour eternal.

Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père,  
le serviteur d'un juste maitre  
répond sans crainte a ton appel.  
Ô Souverain, ô Juge, ô Père!



Ah, so it is now finally done,  
my sweet dream of glory  
and my dream of happiness  
have gone away forever.  
You take away my love,  
you take away my victory.  
Lord, I submit myself to you

Oh sovereign Lord, my Judge, my Father;  
ever veiled, but always present.  
I've loved you in good times,  
and I even bless you on sad days.  
I will follow your law,  
free of human remorse.

Oh sovereign Lord, my Judge, my Father;  
none but your image  
will I place in your hands

Oh heaven above, so blue, so bright.  
Oh bright spirits soaring above me,  
this soldier may be in anguish,  
but this Christian's faith will endure.

You may come, you may appear to me  
on that eternal day.

Oh sovereign Lord, my Judge, my Father;  
as a servant of a just master,  
fearless, I will obey your call.

Oh sovereign Lord, my Judge, my Father!

## 10. **Nessun dorma**

One of the most popular tenor arias in all of opera, "Nessun dorma" comes in Act III of Puccini's *Turandot*, after its hero, Calàf, has avoided execution by correctly answering all three of Princess Turandot's riddles, thereby winning her hand in marriage. Turandot, however, reneges on her promise to marry the successful suitor and resolves to execute him anyway, unless she fails to discover his true name by dawn the next day. Calàf—confident that nobody will reveal his identity to her—sings ecstatically of his imminent victory. Listeners are reminded that Puccini left *Turandot* unfinished at the time of his death, but the lesser composer Franco Alfano was commissioned to complete it. In this recording, the performers have chosen the very unusual extra step of attaching Alfano's choral finale (reprising the "Nessun dorma" tune) to the aria itself.

Nessun dorma! Nessun dorma!  
Tu pure, O Principessa,  
nella tua fredda stanza,  
guardi le stelle  
che tremano d'amore  
e di speranza.  
Ma il mio mistero è chiuso in me,  
il nome mio nessun saprà!  
No, no, sulla tua bocca lo  
dirò quando la luce splenderà!

Ed il mio bacio scioglierà il silenzio  
che ti fa mia!

(le donne)  
Il nome suo nessun saprà  
E noi dovrem, ahimè, morir, morir...

Dilegua, o notte!  
Tramontate, stelle!  
Tramontate, stelle!  
All'alba vincerò!  
Vincerò, vincerò!



(choral reprise—see notes above)

Nobody will sleep!  
Nobody will sleep!  
Even you, o Princess,  
in your frigid chamber,  
gaze at the stars,  
that shiver with love and with hope.  
But I hide my secret within me,  
and no one shall know my name.  
No, no,  
I will tell it upon your mouth  
when the light shines.  
And my kiss will melt  
the silence that makes you mine!

(women)  
His name no one will know...  
And we shall have, alas, to die, to die...!

Vanish, o night!  
Fade, stars! Fade, stars!  
At sunrise, I will win!  
I will win! I will win!

(Choral reprise)

### 11. **Vois ma misère, hélas!**

In the second of this program's arias from Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*, the high priest of the Philistine god Dagon has enlisted the beautiful Delilah to ensure Samson's downfall by discovering the secret of his massive physical strength. Upon learning (and reporting to the high priest) that his long hair is his secret, Samson is arrested. His hair is then shorn and his eyes are gouged out. In Act III, imprisoned, he prays to God for forgiveness and the liberation of his people in the aria "Vois ma misère, hélas!" God then—after Samson is brought to the Philistine temple—restores his full strength, and he tears down the edifice's supporting columns, killing himself, Delilah and his enemies.

SAMSON

Vois ma misère, hélas! Vois ma détresse!  
Pitié! Seigneur! pitié pour ma faiblesse!  
J'ai détourné mes pas de ton chemin:  
bientôt de moi tu retireras ta main.  
Je t'offre, ô Dieu, ma pauvre âme brisée.

Je ne suis plus qu'un objet de risée.  
Ils m'ont ravi la lumière du ciel;  
ils m'ont versé l'amertume et le fiel!

CHOEUR DES HÉBREUX

Samson, qu'as-tu fait de tes frères?  
Qu'as-tu fait du Dieu de tes pères?

SAMSON

Hélas! Israël dans les fers,  
du ciel attirant la vengeance,  
a perdu jusqu'à l'espérance  
par tous les maux qu'il a soufferts!  
Que nos tribus à tes yeux trouvent grâce!  
Daigne à ton peuple épargner la douleur!  
Apaise-toi devant leurs maux, Seigneur,  
toi, dont jamais la pitié ne se lasse!

LES HÉBREUX

Dieu nous confiait à ton bras  
pour nous guider dans les combats;  
Samson, qu'as-tu fait de tes frères?  
Qu'as-tu fait du Dieu de tes pères?

SAMSON

Frères! votre chant douloureux,  
pénétrant dans ma nuit profonde,  
d'une angoisse mortelle inonde  
mon cour coupable et malheureux.  
Dieu! prends ma vie en sacrifice  
pour satisfaire ton courroux!

LES HÉBREUX

Pour une femme il nous vendait,  
de Dalila payant les charmes.

SAMSON

D'Israël détourne tes coups,  
Et je proclame ta justice!

LES HÉBREUX

Pour une femme il nous vendait,  
de Dalila payant les charmes.

SAMSON

A tes pieds, brisé, mais soumis,  
je bénis la main qui me frappe.  
Fais, Seigneur, que ton peuple échappe  
à la fureur des ennemis!

LES HÉBREUX

Samson, qu'as-tu fait de tes frères?  
Qu'as-tu fait du Dieu de tes pères?



SAMSON

See my misery, alas! See my distress!  
Take pity, Lord! Pity on my weakness!  
My steps have strayed from your path:  
Soon afterwards you held back  
your hand.  
I offer you, o God, my poor broken soul!  
Now I am just an object of derision!  
They took from me the light of heaven;  
they have poured their bitter bile upon me.

CHORUS OF HEBREWS

Samson, what have you done with the  
God of your fathers?  
What have you done with your brothers?

SAMSON

Alas! Israel locked in irons,  
drawing the vengeance of heaven,  
has lost its last hopes  
with all the evils it has suffered.  
May our offerings find favor in your eyes.  
Deign to spare your people from suffering!  
Let their misfortunes appease you, Lord.  
You, whose mercy never fails!

HEBREWS

God entrusted us to your arms, to lead us  
in battle.  
Samson, what have you done with  
your brothers?  
What have you done with the God of  
your fathers?

SAMSON

Brothers! Your desolate song,  
piercing the darkness of my night,  
floods my guilty, wretched heart  
with a fatal grief.  
O God! Take my life as a sacrifice  
to quench your anger!

HEBREWS

For a woman he sold us,  
as payment for Delilah's charms

SAMSON

Turn your blows away from Israel,  
and I will proclaim your justice!

HEBREWS

For a woman he sold us,  
as payment for Delilah's charms

SAMSON

At your feet, broken but obedient,  
I bless the hand that strikes me.  
Let your people, Lord,  
escape the furor of our foes!

HEBREWS

Samson, what have you done with the  
God of your fathers?  
What have you done with your brothers?

## 12. **Esultiamo nel nome del Signor**

Amilcare Ponchielli's unfairly neglected *I Lituani*—premiered in 1874—is set in the fourteenth century, during the invasion of Lithuania by the Teutonic Knights. Walter, the Lithuanian patriot and leader, has infiltrated the Teutonic Order—and, under the name of Corrado, is secretly working to ensure the Lithuanians' victory. As Act II opens, Walter/Corrado—who has been appointed as the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order—is leading the resulting celebration. In his aria "Esultiamo

nel nome del Signor," he prompts the celebrants to dance and sing. In the end, after the Lithuanians have decisively beaten the Teutons, his true identity is revealed to them, and he is sentenced to death. Rather than fall into the enemy's hands, he takes poison—and dies, exulting in his peoples' triumph.

WALTER (CORRADO), CORO:  
Esultiamo nel nome del signor!  
E il nappo allegri i cor!

PARTE DEL CORO  
Ombrata ha la fronte  
di foschi pensier..  
sfavillano i lampi  
dall'occhio sever..

WALTER (CORRADO), CORO  
Esultiam nel signor!...  
Pur, io non odo  
che un mormorio sinistro  
di fioche voci—a funebre corteggio  
adunati non siam... No! Per iddio!...  
Monaci fummo del tempio ai riti,  
qui siam guerrier..

Dal letargo vi destate,  
menestrelli e trovatori!  
Su! cantate ~ su, danzate,  
vaghe figlie dei re mori!  
Nel fragor dell'orge insane  
mille affanni il core oblia...

E una notte di follia  
di alti eventi affretta il dì!



WALTER (CONRAD), CHORUS  
Let us rejoice in the name of the Lord!  
And may the chalice cheer our hearts!

PART OF THE CHORUS  
Dark thoughts  
shade our brows...  
Lightning sparks  
From stern eyes...

WALTER (CONRAD), CHORUS  
Let us rejoice in the Lord!  
And yet, I hear only  
the sinister murmur  
Of feeble voices—Let us not gather  
In a mournful cortege... No! By God!  
Once we were monks of the temple rites,  
but here we are warriors...

Rouse yourselves,  
Minstrels and troubadors!  
Come sing! Come dance,  
alluring daughters of Moorish kings!  
In the rush of insane orgies,  
the heart forgets a thousand cares...  
And a night of madness  
hastens a day of noble deeds!

### 13. **Aš papuošiu žirgo galvą pinavijom**

Vytautas Klova's opera *Pilėnai*, composed in 1955, has become a cherished cultural treasure in Lithuania, though it is all but unknown in the West. While grounded in historical fact, the story has become the stuff of legend. In 1336, the hill fort of Pilėnai in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was attacked by a massive army of Teutonic knights during one of their northern crusades. When—vastly outnumbered—the defenders' defeat was assured, Duke Margiris, the fort's commander, ordered his troops to commit suicide after burning all of their belongings. This event (at around 4,000 dead) remains history's largest-ever mass suicide. The aria "Aš papuošiu žirgo galvą pinavijom," is heard as the attack is about to begin. Udryš, a youthful soldier, ardently implores Duke Margiris to let him fight their Teutonic foe. Kristian Benedikt has told us that the aria was originally written for high baritone, but that he has recorded it here in a slightly higher tenor range.

Aš papuošiu žirgo galvą pinavijom,  
apkaišysiu pavadėlj žaliom rūtom.  
Ir valdovui tartum tėvui,  
nusiėmėš kepurėlę,  
nusilenksiu.  
Ir valdovui tartum tėvui,  
nusiėmėš kepurėlę,  
nusilenksiu, nusilenksiu.

Duok, valdove, kilpinėlį eiklų, taiklų,  
kalaviją kieta plieno kalvėj lieta,  
kirvį aštrų, ilgakotį,  
kuoką sunkią pakyloti,  
duok, valdove!  
Kirvį aštrų, ilgakotį,  
kuoką sunkią pakyloti,  
duok, valdove! Duok, valdove!

Nusibodo girioj stumbrą varinėti,  
nusibodo tavo sakalus penėti.  
Jei medžioti, tai medžioti  
nuožmų vanagą kryžiuotį  
priešo žemėj.  
Aš papuošiu žirgo galvą pinavijom,  
apkaišysiu pavadėlį žaliom rūtom.  
Kad skrajūno mano žirgo  
vis' bijotų  
piktos širdys pikto priešo.  
Kad skrajūno mano žirgo  
vis' bijotų  
Piktos širdys pikto priešo,  
pikto priešo, pikto priešo...



I will dress my steed's head in  
flower garlands,  
I will adorn his reins with greenest rue.  
And to my lord, as to my father,  
upon taking off my cap,  
I will bow.  
And to my lord, as to my father,  
upon taking off my cap,  
I will bow, I will bow.

Give me, my lord, a bow that's lithe  
and swift,  
a hard steel sword straight from the forge,  
a sharpened axe equipped with the  
longest handle,  
a heavy bludgeon that I can barely hold.  
Give me, my lord!  
A sharpened axe equipped with the  
longest handle,  
a heavy bludgeon that I can barely hold.  
Give me, my lord! Give me, my lord...

I can no longer chase bison in the woods,  
I can no longer feed your falcons.  
If we're to hunt, then we shall hunt  
the fiercest hawk—the crusader -  
in the land of the enemy.

I will dress my steed's head in  
flower garlands,  
I will adorn his reins with greenest rue.  
So that my nimble steed  
will sow great terror  
in the bitter hearts of wicked foes.  
So that my nimble steed  
will sow great terror  
in the bitter hearts of wicked foes,  
of wicked foes, of wicked foes...

Notes by Lindsay Koob



Considered one of the finest singers of the title role in Verdi's *Otello*, Lithuanian tenor **Kristian Benedikt** has performed it more than 120 times in Europe's capital cities as well as in North and South America.

He made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 2018 in the role of Samson in Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*. 2019 sees him again at the Met as Herman in *The Queen of Spades* and as Erik in *The Flying Dutchman* along with Bryn Terfel and Irene Theorin.

He began his career as a lyric tenor at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre where he performed more than 20 different roles. In his first international appearance, he sang with Plácido Domingo in Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*.

He has gone on to perform at the Vienna State Opera, at Covent Garden in London, at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, at the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre, in Barcelona, Dresden, Vilnius, and other European capitals, as well as in Beijing and Santiago, Chile.

Kristian Benedikt has a repertoire of over forty roles, including Don Jose (*Carmen*), Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), Calaf (*Turandot*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Canio (*Pagliacci*), Dick Johnson (*La fanciulla del West*), Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Hoffmann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), and

the title roles in *Andrea Chénier*, *Ernani*, *Rienzi* and *Lohengrin*.

**Tenore di forza** is Kristian Benedikt's debut recording.

For more about Kristian Benedikt, see [www.kristianbenedikt.com](http://www.kristianbenedikt.com)

The **Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra** was founded in 1940 by composer, conductor and pianist Balys Dvarionas. In 2015, Modestas Pitrenas was appointed as the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor. In addition to performances in Lithuania, the orchestra tours throughout Europe, appearing in concert venues such as the Musikverein in Vienna, philharmonic halls in Cologne and Berlin, the Barbican Centre in London, the Alte Oper in Frankfurt and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, to name but a few. The orchestra has also performed in Japan, South Korea, South Africa and South America.

The Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra has been led by celebrated guest conductors including Kurt Masur, Neeme Järvi, Mstislav Rostropovich, Krzysztof Penderecki and Christoph Eschenbach. Illustrious soloists such as Montserrat Caballé, Jessye Norman, Emil Gilels, Daniel Pollack, Sergio Tiempo, Gidon Kremer,



Leonid Kogan, Mischa Maisky, David Ger-  
ingas, Yuri Bashmet and many others have  
appeared with the orchestra.

The orchestra has recorded for the Melodi-  
ya, Marco Polo, Col legno, Ella, Naxos, and  
Avie labels. **Tenore di forza** is the orchestra's  
first recording for Delos.

**Modestas Pitrenas** is one of the most  
successful Lithuanian conductors of the  
younger generation. He has established  
himself internationally through his exten-

sive activity as both orchestra and opera  
conductor. He made his debut with Mo-  
zart's *Magic Flute* at the Cologne Opera,  
and he has conducted opera performan-  
ces at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, the  
Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, the National  
Opera in Warsaw, the Aalto Theater Essen,  
the Stuttgart Opera, the Finnish National  
Opera Helsinki and the Theater Basel.

Former Chief Conductor of the Kaunas City  
Symphony Orchestra in Lithuania and Na-  
tional Music Director of the Latvian National  
Opera in Riga, Modestas Pitrenas is currently





Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra in Vilnius and principal conductor of the Symphony Orchestra and Theater St. Gallen, a performing arts center in Switzerland.

The **Lithuanian National Opera Chorus** was founded in 1920 and has become the most important professional chorus in Lithuania. The chorus is comprised of eighty active members, consisting of 40 female and 40 male voices. With its sizable repertoire, the chorus performs in all current opera and in several ballet productions of the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre. The chorus has collaborated with many of Lithuania's distinguished conductors and has appeared

with the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre in international tours.

Chief Chorus Master of the Lithuanian National Opera Chorus since 1989, **Česlovas Radžiūnas** graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music in 1977 and completed the postgraduate course in opera conducting at the Moscow Conservatory in 1984. He has taught at the Lithuanian Academy of Music since 1985 and now holds the position of Professor. The press has consistently praised the high professional standard that the Lithuanian Opera Chorus has achieved under his artistic leadership. Česlovas Radžiūnas has been awarded many prizes including the Lithuanian order of Merit-Knight Grand Cross and the Culture and Art Prize given by the Lithuanian government.

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From left to right:  
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**Kristian Benedikt**, tenor; **Alytis Peseckas**, concertmaster

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