How to Listen to and Understand Opera
Part I
Professor Robert Greenberg

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Robert Greenberg, Ph.D.
Chairman, Department of Music History and Literature
San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Robert Greenberg has composed over 40 works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of Greenberg’s work have taken place in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, England, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and The Netherlands, where his “Child’s Play” for String Quartet was performed at the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam in 1993.

Dr. Greenberg holds degrees from Princeton University and the University of California at Berkeley, where he received a Ph.D. in music composition in 1984. His principal teachers were Edward Cone, Claudio Spies, Andrew Imbrie, and Olly Wilson. His awards include three Nicola De Lorenzo Prizes in composition, three Meet the Composer grants, and commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation of the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, XTET, and the Dancer’s Stage Ballet Company.

He is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he is chair of the Department of Music History and Literature and director of curriculum of the Adult Extension Division. He is creator, host, and lecturer for the San Francisco Symphony’s “Discovery Series.”

He has taught and lectured extensively across North America and Europe, speaking to such corporations and musical institutions as the Van Cliburn Foundation, Arthur Andersen, Bechtel Investments, the Shaklee Corporation, the University of California/Haas School of Business Executive Seminar, the Association of California Symphony Orchestras, the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras, and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco.

His work as a teacher and lecturer has been profiled in the Wall Street Journal, Inc. magazine, and the San Francisco Chronicle. He is an artistic co-director and board member of COMPOSERS INC. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the Innova label.

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How to Listen to and Understand Opera

Scope: This course is designed as a methodology, a guide to listening and understanding opera. For this reason it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the entire operatic repertory. Armed with the knowledge of opera gained from this course, however, the listener will be able to explore in greater depth the extraordinary and compelling world of opera for himself or herself. The listener will come to appreciate how music has the power to reveal truths beyond the spoken word; how opera is a unique marriage of words and music in which the whole is far greater than its parts.

He or she will learn the reasons for opera’s enduring popularity. The history of opera is traced from its beginning in the early seventeenth century to around 1924, with references to landmark operas, musical, cultural, and social developments, and historical events that influenced opera’s growth. We learn how operatic style and form have changed continuously throughout the history of European music, as they were influenced by political, social and cultural developments, and how different national languages and cultures have shaped their own types of opera and operatic style.

The course opens with one of the most powerful moments in opera: the dramatically loaded aria “Nessun dorma” (“No one shall sleep”) from Giacomo Puccini’s Turandot. We are exposed to opera’s unique incorporation of soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous music into an incredibly expressive and exciting whole that is far greater than the sum of its parts. This famous aria shows us the power of the composer in creating music that goes beyond the words of the libretto to evoke unspoken thoughts and feelings—that which cannot be said in words alone.

The study continues with a discussion of how music can flesh out a dramatic character and evoke the unconscious state. We are introduced to operatic archetypes such as Figaro and Carmen. We learn that the ancient Greeks revered music as a microcosm of all creation, believing music can change the face of nature and alter souls. The monophonic and, later, polyphonic music of the Middle Ages is examined. We see how the end of the absolute authority of the Roman Church encouraged the rise of secular and instrumental music. We examine the Renaissance, its rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman culture and the evolution of the madrigal, ultimately rejected in favor of a more expressive vocal medium: early opera. The renaissance intermezzo is discussed as the precursor of modern opera. The reforms of the Florentine Camerata are examined as they relate to the earliest operas. Part I of the course concludes with an analysis of the first successful attempt to combine words and music into musical drama, Monteverdi’s Orfeo of 1607.

In Part II we see how recitative, the essence of Monteverdi’s style, made music subservient to words and how, because of its forward-driving nature, recitative cannot express personal reflection. We learn how the invention of aria gave opera composers a powerful tool to stop the dramatic action for moments of self-reflection. Gluck’s reforms and his Orfeo ed Euridice of 1762 are addressed as the starting point for the modern opera repertory. The explosion of operas in the Golden Age/Dark Age of opera is discussed, along with the formulaic reforms of Pietro Metastasio (including his da capo structure for arias) and the vocal abuses that those reforms provoked. We learn how different voice types are assigned different roles. The rise of opera seria and its characteristics are discussed, along with an analysis of the second act of Mozart’s Idomeneo—opera seria transcendent.

The second part of this study continues with the development of opera buffa, from its origins in the popular folklore of the commedia dell’arte to its eventual replacement of opera seria. The role of Enlightenment progressives in this development is addressed and Mozart’s brilliant The Marriage of Figaro is discussed as one of the greatest contributions to the opera buffa genre.

Part III opens with a discussion of the bel canto style of opera. We see how the nature of the Italian language and culture gave rise to this type of opera, with its comic, predictable plots, one-dimensional characters, appealing melodies, and florid melodic embellishments. The highly pressurized business of opera in the 18th century is revealed, and we are introduced to Rossini’s The Barber of Seville of 1816 as the quintessential bel canto opera.

Giuseppe Verdi is the focus of Lectures 19 through 22 of Part III. His career is summarized, and his operatic inheritance is reviewed. We learn how Verdi broke the bel canto mold; how he dominated Italian opera for over half a century by virtue of his lyricism, his emphasis on human emotions and psychological insight, and his use of the...
orchestra and parlante to drive the dramatic action and maintain musical continuity. Verdi’s Otello is discussed as one of the greatest operas of all time.

Part III of this course concludes with an examination of French opera. We learn how it developed as a distinctly different genre from Italian opera, shaped as it was by the French language, culture and political history. We learn how Jean-Baptiste Lully set the foundation for a French language operatic tradition, and how his greatest contribution was the design of a recitative style suited to the French language. The reforms of Jean-Philippe Rameau are discussed, along with the influence of Enlightenment progressives such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who championed a more natural operatic style. Christoph Willibald von Gluck’s position as the model for the next generation of French composers is reviewed. Finally, the subject of 19th-century French opera is addressed. Grand opera, opéra comique and lyric opera are examined as distinctive French genres and Act Two of Bizet’s dramatically powerful Carmen is analyzed.

Part IV opens with an examination of the rise of German opera, with its roots in German folklore. We discover how German singspiel grew from humble origins as a lower class entertainment to high art with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s The Rescue from the Harem (1782) and The Magic Flute of 1791. We learn how 19th-century German opera grew out of the tradition of singspiel and how Carl Maria von Weber’s Der Freischütz established 19th-century German opera.

The discussion of German opera continues with an examination of Richard Wagner: the man, his personal beliefs, musical theories, and operatic innovations. We see how Wagner went back to the ancient Greek ideal for inspiration and how he conceived the idea of an all-encompassing art work, or music drama, in which the role of the orchestra is that of a purveyor of unspoken truths. We are introduced to Wagner’s concept of leitmotif and his revolutionary use of dissonance. Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde is discussed as the most influential composition of the 19th century, aside from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

The subject of late romantic German opera is addressed and exemplified by Richard Strauss and his controversial opera Salome. We go on to an overview of Russian opera and the concept of nationalism. The late development of Russian opera is outlined from Mikhail Glinka’s Ruslan and Lyudmila to Modest Mussorgsky’s Boris Godunov. We see how the Russian language shaped the syllabic vocal style of Russian opera and how Russian rhythms, with their asymmetrical groupings of accents, are distinct from Italian, German and French rhythms.

The course draws to its conclusion with an overview of opera verismo, a 19th/20th century genre that favors depictions of the darker side of the human condition. The pivotal second act of Giacomo Puccini’s Tosca is discussed as a transcendent example of opera verismo. Finally, we hear part of a scene from Richard Strauss’s Capriccio in which the essence of opera is debated. Is it words or is it music? It is neither. It is an indefinable combination of both, with the whole greater than the parts.
Lectures One and Two
Introduction and Words and Music

Scope:
In the first two lectures we begin to learn how to develop a methodology for listening to and understanding opera. We are introduced to the concept of opera as a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts in its combination of soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous (or nearly continuous) music. We see how music can evoke what words cannot express; the composer is the dramatist. This combination of words and music endows opera with a unique dramatic power. We are introduced to the concept of opera characters as archetypes, and we study the reasons for the lasting popularity of opera.

Outline
I. Introduction.
   A. Giacomo Puccini’s opera Turandot (1924).
      1. The scene is set in the city of Beijing in ancient China.
      2. Turandot, the daughter of the Chinese emperor, has promised to marry the man who can solve three riddles.
      3. So far no one has succeeded in answering these riddles.
      4. Calaf, the young Tartar prince, falls in love at first sight with Turandot and promptly announces his challenge to the riddles.
      5. Calaf solves the riddles and then volunteers that if Turandot can discover his name before dawn, she will be freed from her vow to marry him and he will die.
      6. Turandot commands that no one shall sleep until the stranger’s name and identity are discovered.
      7. Calaf sings a magnificent aria reflecting his love for Turandot and his confidence that his identity will remain a secret until morning.
      8. Musical example: “Nessun dorma” (“No one shall sleep”) is one of opera’s most dramatic and emotionally powerful moments.
      9. Puccini could have set this aria in a variety of different ways. For dramatic reasons, he chose to set it as a love song. It is significant for its sense of joy and redemption not seen in the opera up until this point. Does this feeling come from the words or the music? This question forces us to examine the nature of opera.

II. Derivations and generalizations about opera.
   A. An opera is a drama that combines soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action and continuous music, the whole greater than the parts.
   B. Literally, opera means musical work or composition.
   C. The repertory we call opera is a diverse one.
   D. In its four hundred-year history opera has run the gamut from aristocratic to popular entertainment.
   E. Throughout its history, operatic singing style has changed constantly, depending upon the language being sung, the size of the room being sung in, the ability and taste of the singers, and the expectation of the audience.
   F. For most of its history, opera was the single greatest spectacle available to its audiences.
   G. Opera is the oldest continuously active musical genre.

III. Words and music.
   A. To what might we attribute the popularity of opera?
      1. Opera is posited on the idea that music has the power to distill, crystallize, and intensify the meaning of words.
      2. Children at play, who sing-song their words to themselves and their toys, exemplify the operatic ideal.
   B. The primary reason for opera’s lasting popularity is the expressive power of the musical experience.
      1. T.S. Eliot said that music “evokes the fringe of indefinite feeling which we can only detect out of the corner of the eye.”
      2. Music has the power to evoke the ineffable, moods and states of consciousness that other arts cannot.
C. The composer as dramatist.
   It is music that creates the character. Musical examples:
   1. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart chills us with Electra’s crazed fury as she sings “Of Orestes and Ajax” from *Idomeneo* (1780).
   2. Gustav Mahler hits us off guard with the bitter-sweet feeling of lost love in “As I Walked through the Field this Morning” from his *Songs of a Wayfarer* (1884).
   3. Georges Bizet intrigues us with his revelation of Carmen’s power of sexual manipulation in the “Seguidilla” from *Carmen* (1875).
   4. Gioacchino Antonio Rossini warms our hearts with Figaro’s upbeat personality in the famous “Largo al factotum” from *The Barber of Seville* (1816).

D. These arias exemplify the reasons for the enduring popularity of opera.
   1. The sheer beauty of the vocal music, along with the excitement of the theater, is an irresistible force.
   2. There is an incredible intensification of feeling and meaning when words and music are combined and this is the essence of opera. The music rounds out the character. It begins where words leave off. The combination of the self-reflective nature of words with the emotionally reflective nature of music packs a powerful appeal.
   3. Married to words, music has the ability to evoke symbolic meaning and universally-appealing character archetypes.
      a. Bizet’s Carmen is the archetypal, street-smart, seductress.
      b. Rossini’s Figaro is a comic, clever, fast-talking servant archetype, whose predecessors date back to Roman comedy.

IV. Goals of the course.
   A. The course will provide an outline of the history of opera from 1600 to 1924, or so.
   B. We will observe the development of national schools of opera.
   C. We will develop a methodology for listening to and understanding opera.
   D. Ultimately, we will celebrate the power of words joined to music!
Lectures Three and Four  
A Brief History of Vocal Expression in Music

Scope:
In Lectures Three and Four we learn that, throughout the history of European music, style and form have changed constantly. Beginning with a discussion of the music of ancient Greece, we trace the history of vocal music, and the historical conditions influencing it, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The main compositional developments discussed include monophony, polyphony, and homophony. We focus on the rise of popular secular music in a world hitherto dominated by the music of the Roman Catholic Church. We see how Renaissance composers turned increasingly to the ancient Greek ideal for inspiration: that music has the power to change nature and souls. We learn that the madrigal, the major musical form of the renaissance, eventually came to be rejected in favor of a vehicle that better expressed this ideal. This was the beginning of opera.

Outline

I. Music as a mirror.
   A. Musical style in the West (European sphere) has changed constantly in order to adapt to the societal and cultural realities of an ever-changing world.
   B. The four tenets of music as a mirror.
      1. Western music has exhibited ongoing stylistic change since the High Middle Ages.
      2. Since the High Middle Ages composers have sought to express something of themselves or their world in their music.
      3. That which is considered expressive changes from era to era.
      4. The rate of change has increased exponentially as we move toward the present day.

II. Music in the ancient Greek world.
   A. The association of music with drama dates back to ancient times.
   B. The composers, poets, philosophers, and historians who invented opera believed they were recreating the environment and techniques of ancient Greek drama.
   C. The ancient Greeks believed music to be a microcosm of all creation.
      1. Music was present everywhere in ancient Greece. It was played throughout sporting events. Probably most, if not all, ancient Greek drama was sung with accompaniment.
      2. Only about forty fragments of ancient (pre-Christian) music have survived.
      3. Musical example: Stasimon Chorus from the drama *Orestes*, possibly composed by Euripides himself (408 B.C.E.). (A stasimon was the lip between the stage and the audience, where the chorus sat. This area today is called the “orchestra.”) There are two essential elements in this style of music.
         a. A single voice is accompanied by a double reed instrument.
         b. The setting is syllabic: there is a single pitch for each syllable. This ensures clear articulation. The music is subservient to clarity of speech.
      4. The Greek view of music was humanistic. Ancient Greeks believed that music represented the true heart of humankind and the order of the cosmos; music can change the face of nature and alter the souls of people and animals. This view of music will last for about 1000 years.

III. The Middle Ages.
   A. By 600 C.E. or so, Roman municipal authority had collapsed, leaving the Rome-based Christian church as one of the few bastions against encroaching barbarity.
      1. The Rome-based Christian church was founded by Emperor Constantine in the fourth century.
      2. The survival of the Church provided a framework for the reemergence of European civilization around the years 900–1000.
   B. The Middle Ages (600–1400) were dominated by the church; thus the era is often called the Theocratic Age or the Age of Theocracy.
   C. During the first part of the Middle Ages—the Dark Ages (600–1000)—the great bulk of the music created was for use in worship. The predominant style was monophonic vocal music, as, for example, Gregorian chant. It has only one, unaccompanied melody. Instrumental music was discouraged, even outlawed by the
church. Its earthy nature was not considered conducive to worship. Musical example: *Mass for Christmas Day*, Introit, “Puer natus est nobis.”

**D. The High Middle Ages (1000–1400) saw the rebirth of Europe.**

1. Populations and food production grew.
2. Cities developed.
3. Universities were founded.
4. Romanesque and Gothic architecture developed.
5. Vernacular literature developed.
6. The power of secular rulers grew.
7. Trade and alliances formed ever-larger political units.

**E. Music of the High Middle Ages.**

1. This era saw the creation of several musical innovations.
   a. Polyphony was a major development in the 12th through 14th centuries.
   b. Composers became named and known, in contrast to the anonymous, itinerant composers of previous eras.
   c. A system of musical notation began to develop.
   d. A new class of professional performers began to grow.
   e. A new, secular audience began to spring up.
   f. A new ritual of respectful listening begun.
   g. Increasingly complex modes of musical expression mirror an increasingly complex world.

2. A new type of organum was developed at the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, France. Organum is an early type of polyphony. The new type of organum is illustrated by Leonin’s “Alleluia pascha nostrum” and “Gaudeat devotio fidelium” (circa 1190). The poet-composer Leonin raised the art of polyphony to a new level. He combined different styles in one piece of music: the old form of plainchant is combined with a new florid organum in which a sustained plainchant in the lower voice is accompanied by faster-moving embellishments in the upper voice. He also added a very new type of dance-like rhythm (musical example).


4. The 14th century saw an end to the absolute authority of the Church as a result of a series of events:
   a. The Babylonian Captivity refers to period when the entire papal court settled in Avignon, France, between 1305 and 1378.
   b. The Great Schism was the result of this move. Between 1378 and 1417 there were two, even three claimants to the papacy at any one time. People grew tired of this chaos.
   c. The behavior of some high clergy became increasingly corrupt and scandalous.
   d. The Black Death of 1348–50 caused widespread devastation and soul-searching.
   e. The Hundred Years’ War caused enormous havoc.
   f. Rulers became increasingly powerful.
   g. The world is in transition from one dominated by the Church with its immutable rules to a new world of increasing secularism, humanistic pursuit, and doubt.
   h. Secular music became high art. Much of it exhibits a structural complexity not equaled again until the 1950s.
   i. Musical example: Guillaume de Machaut’s “Rose, liz” (circa 1350) is a spiky, complex, and beautiful piece by one of the great poet/composers of the 14th century. The essence of this music is the control of emotion and polyphonic structure.

**IV. The Renaissance (1400–1600).**

**A. The Renaissance saw the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman culture.**

**B. Artists, architects, poets, dramatists, philosophers, and composers turned increasingly to pre-Christian models for their inspiration and guidance.**

**C. Renaissance composers wanted their music to have the same impact on their listeners as that which the Greeks attributed to their music.**

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D. By the mid-Renaissance an entirely new view of vocal articulation and system of harmony had come into place to accommodate the new, more humanistic, expressive aims of composers. This was homophony in which one melody predominates with all other musical material heard as accompaniment.

E. Josquin des Prez (circa 1440–1521), the preeminent composer of the mid-Renaissance, was a master of sacred and secular music. Musical examples:
1. “El Grillo” (circa 1480) exemplifies Josquin’s use of homophony and word painting. Unlike the music of Machaut one hundred years before, this music serves the words.
2. “Je me complains” (circa 1480) is a polyphonic piece in which five voices weave in and out of each other. The clarity of the words is not the issue here. Two or three words are being sung simultaneously. The essence of this music lies in its expressive power. It is focused on a depiction of romantic malaise.

F. The madrigal.
1. The most important genre of secular music in the late Renaissance is the madrigal, a work for four to six singers, based on high art poetry, that freely mixes homophony and polyphony and focuses on word painting. Madrigals were sung at aristocratic gatherings at European courts, especially in Italy.
2. Thomas Weelkes “As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending” (1601) is a lighthearted madrigal of the late Renaissance in which word painting is taken to extremes. Note that “maiden Queen” and Oriana refer to the “Virgin Queen” Elizabeth I. Diana was the Roman goddess of virginity and Vesta was a virgin goddess. Musical example: “As Vesta was from “Latmos Hill descending.”
Lectures Five–Eight
The Invention of Opera and Monteverdi’s Orfeo

Scope:
In Lectures Five through Eight we review the Greek idea of music as it related to music of the Renaissance. We see
the evolution of intermezzo as a precursor to the first real opera. We look at the role of the Florentine Camerata in
the development of opera, and we examine in depth the first real opera, Monteverdi’s Orfeo of 1607.

Outline

I. Review.
   A. The Greek ideal of music posited that music is a force that can move nature and change the hearts and souls
      of people.
   B. The Renaissance saw a growing awareness of the Greek ideal of music.
   C. The madrigal is a late-Renaissance experimental genre in which “expression” is based on word painting.
      Carlo Gesualdo’s madrigal “Io parto e non piu dissi” (circa 1595) is expressive of a lovers’ quarrel. It is full
      of unbelievable harmonic complexity. Major amounts of unresolved dissonance (known as chromaticism)
      correspond to the dissonance felt by the lovers (musical example).

II. Intermezzo/intermedio.
   A. The intermezzo/intermedio developed alongside the madrigal.
   B. It was presented between the acts of spoken plays.
   C. Many intermezzi/intermedi became more interesting than the plays in which they were inserted.
   D. The intermezzo/intermedio is an important forerunner of opera for two reasons.
      1. It kept alive the idea of close collaboration between drama and music.
      2. It already has the external components of opera in its splendid stage effects, its spectacular scenery and
         its dancing.

III. The pastorale.
   A. The style of dramatic poetry that dominated Italian theater in the late 16th and early 17th centuries was the
      pastorale.
   B. Pastorales feature sylvan settings and mild love adventures, usually ending happily.

IV. The Florentine Camerata.
   A. A ridotto was a private academy or intellectual club.
   B. The Florentine Camerata was a ridotto that met in the home of Giovanni Bardi di Vernio from 1573 to
      1592.
   C. Of special interest to the Florentine Camerata was the nature of musical and dramatic expression.
   D. Among the members of the Florentine Camerata was Vincenzo Galilei, who wrote a scathing attack on the
      artificiality of expression in madrigals.
   E. Based largely on the ideas of scholar Girolamo Mei, the Florentine Camerata decreed that true musical
      expression could only be achieved by a single singer employing an actor’s dramatic and oratorical skills.
   F. The Florentine Camerata developed a new theory of music, based on the Greek expressive ideal.
      1. The text must be sung by one singer, accompanied as simply as possible so that the words are clearly
         understood.
      2. The words must be sung the way they are spoken (natural declamation). No dance rhythms can be
         imposed upon the words.
      3. The music must depict the feelings and emotions of the character singing.
   G. The first works that we today call operas were created by members of the Florentine Camerata.
      1. Daphne was created by the poet Ottavio Rinuccini and the composer Jacopo Peri in 1598. The music is
         lost.
      2. Euridice was created by Rinuccini and Peri in 1600.
      3. A second version of Euridice was produced by Rinuccini and Giulio Caccini in 1600.
V. Jacopo Peri’s *Euridice* of 1600.
   A. This work was first performed on October 6, 1600 in Florence, Italy.
   B. A fully staged production with alternating choruses, rhyming pop-type songs and early recitative (*stile rappresentativo*), Peri’s *Euridice* is a play set to music, not a play conceived musically.
   C. The character of Orfeo (Orpheus), with his ability to change souls and the very face of nature with his music, personifies both opera and the Greek view of music.

VI. Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643).
   A. Monteverdi was the first great composer of opera. He did not invent opera, but was inspired to create a new operatic ideal. Born in Cremona, Italy, he rose to the pinnacle of the musical profession in the 17th century as choirmaster at St. Mark’s cathedral in Venice.
   B. Of his nineteen stage works only six have survived intact, including his first opera *Orfeo*.
   C. *Orfeo* represents the first completely successful attempt to apply the full resources of musical and dramatic art to the new genre of opera.

VII. Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* (1607).
   A. This work is an extraordinary synthesis of the musical genres and compositional techniques available in 1607.
   B. The toccata (overture) demonstrates the large instrumental ensemble (around forty players) Monteverdi calls for in *Orfeo*. Musical example: toccata.
   C. The character of Orpheus lies at the heart of the drama, as the personification of dramatic musical art. Orpheus symbolizes the power of music. Yet while he can control external forces with his music, he cannot control his own emotions. Musical example: prologue.
   D. Act 1: happiness and joy in arcadia.
      1. Eurydice has finally agreed to marry Orpheus. They celebrate with friends.
      2. Monteverdi’s style of recitative (half sung, half spoken music) is known as arioso, closer to actual song than Peri’s. Musical example: “In questo lieto.”
      3. Musical example: ballet/chorus, “Lasciate i monti” This chorus is full of sexual symbolism. The excitement builds up to the entrance of the star couple.
      4. Orpheus, appropriately, sings a richer arioso than the other characters. Musical example: “Rosa del ciel.”
      5. Conclusions: Act One, like most first operatic first acts, is dramatically static. It represents an incredible synthesis of various musical forms:
         a. Toccata (opening music, or overture).
         b. Ritornello (orchestral refrain).
         c. Recitative (in Monteverdi’s inimitable style).
         d. Symbolic chorus (“Vieni, Imeneo”).
         e. Ballet.
         f. Popular song (“Lasciate i monti”).
         g. Religious-type music (“Ma se il nostro”).
         h. Final, celebratory music.
   E. Act 2: grief comes to paradise.
      1. Musical example: Orpheus sings his last bit of joy, “Vi ricorda.”
      2. The celebrations are cut short with the news of Eurydice’s death. The messenger’s story is a brilliant, masterful composition. The messenger begins slowly, almost monotone, and builds up to a powerful climax as she tells her tragic tale. Then, exhausted, she concludes on a bleak note. Musical example: “Ahi, caso acerbo.”
      3. Orpheus’s response, “Tu se’ morta,” is a profoundly moving and brilliantly written moment (musical example).
      4. It is followed by a madrigal-style chorus replete with word painting: “Ahi, caso acerbo” (musical example).
      5. Monteverdi employs a stunning stroke. He brings back the ritornello heard at the beginning of the opera. Now it takes on a whole new dimension as it reflects both the tragic events of the act as well as
Orpheus’s determination to rescue Eurydice from death itself, armed with a single weapon—the power of music itself.

F. Act 3: the journey to Hades in search of Eurydice.
   1. The opening sinfonia is dominated by brass instruments, which were associated with the underworld.
   2. Charon, the boatman who takes souls to the underworld, is a deep bass, accompanied by a regal (reed organ). He sings “O tu, ch’innanzi morte” (musical example).
   3. Orpheus’s plea, “Possente spirito” is—as it should be—the crown jewel of the opera (musical example).
   4. While Orpheus does not succeed in softening Charon’s heart and gaining entry to Hades, his music does have a beneficial effect on the formidable boatman. It puts him to sleep! A firm comment on the nature of opera audiences everywhere! Musical example: Orpheus’s “Ei dorme.”

G. Act 4: Pluto’s challenge and Orpheus’s downfall.
   1. Pluto, king of the underworld, agrees to allow Eurydice to follow.
   2. Orpheus back up to the world of mortals as long as he does not look back at her. Orpheus disobeys and Eurydice is forced back to Hades.
   3. Her “Ahi, vista troppo” is memorable for its extraordinarily dissonant harmonies.

H. Act 5: Orpheus’s despair and Apollo’s divine intervention.

I. Conclusions.
   1. Monteverdi succeeds on every level.
   2. Orfeo synthesizes all the different genres.
   3. Orfeo is a brilliant example of the power of recitative to embody and magnify the power of words.
   4. Orfeo represents the marriage of drama and music. The whole is greater than the parts.
   5. In Orfeo the Greek ideal of the power of music to “calm every troubled heart and … kindle the most icy souls”, as described in the prologue, has been redefined and reinvented.
Turandot
(1924)
Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni

Calaf
Nessun dorma!
Nessun dorma!
Tu pure, o Principessa,
nella tua fredda stanz
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!

Women
(off stage; distant)
Nobody will know his name . . .
And we will have to die, alas! Die!

Calaf
Dilegua, o notte! Tramontate, stelle!
Tramontate, stelle! All’alba vincero!
Vincerò! Vincerò!

No one shall sleep!
No one shall sleep!
You too, o Princess,
in your cold room
are watching the stars which
tremble with love and hope!
But my secret lies hidden within me,
no one will know my name!
No, no, I will reveal it
only on your lips,
when daylight breaks forth
and my kiss will break the silence
which makes you mine!

Le donne
(interno; lontana)
Il nome suo nessun saprà . . .
E noi dovrem, ahimè! Morir! Morir!

Calaf
Dilegua, o notte! Tramontate, stelle!
Tramontate, stelle! All’alba vincero!
Vincerò! Vincerò!
Idomeneo
(1780)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by G.B. Varesco

Elettra
A
D'Oreste, d'Ajax ho in seno
i tormenti,
d'Aletto la face già morte mi dà.

B
Squarciatemi il core, ceraste,
serpenti, o un ferro il dolore
in me finirà.

A'
[A varied reprise of verse 1]

B'
[A varied reprise of verse 1]

('Alecto: one of the three Furies)

---

"Songs of a Wayfarer"
(1884)
Gustav Mahler
Poem by the composer

2. GING HEUT MORGEN ÜBERS FELD

As I walked through the field this morning.

tau noch aus den Gräsern hing;
the dew still hung upon the grass;
sprach zu mir der lustige Fink;
the merry finch called out to me,
"Ei, du! Gelt! Guten Morgen!
"Hey, you there! Good day to you!
Ei gelt! Du!

Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Isn't this a splendid world?
Schöne Welt?
Splendid world?
Zink! Zink! Schön und flink!
Tweet! Tweet! Fine and bright!
Wie mir doch die welt gefällt?
O how I love the world!"
Auch die Glockenblum am Feld
hat mir lustig, guter Ding
mit den Glöckchen klinge, klang,
Ihrer Morgengruß gesellschaft
"Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Schöne Welt?
Kling! Kling! Schöner Ding!
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!
Hei-a"

Und da fing im Sonnenschein
Gleich die Welt zu funkeln an;
Alles, alles, Ton und Farbe gewann
im Sonnenschein!
Blum und Vogel, groß
und klein!
Guten Tag, guten Tag!
Ist's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Ei, du! Gelt! Schöne Welt?

Nun fängt auch mein Glück wohl
an? Nein! Nein! Das ist mein,
mir nimmer bluhen kann!

And the bluebell in the field
told of good cheer
with its bell, ting-a-ling,
as it rang its morning greeting:
"Isn't this a splendid world,
splendid world?
Ding, ding! Beautiful thing!
O how I love the world!
Hurrah!"

And all the world began to glow
in the sunshine; in the sunshine
all things took on color and sound!

Flower and bird, things great
and small!
Good day, good day!
Isn't this a splendid world?
Hey, you there! Lovely world?

Will my happiness now flower
too? No, no! I know that it can
never bloom for me!

——

Carmen
(1875)

Georges Bizet

Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

NO. 10 SÉQUEDILLA AND DUET

Carmen

Près des remparts de Séville,
chez mon ami Lillas Pastia
j'iraï danser la séquedilla
et boire du manzanilla.
Oui, mais toute seule on s'ennuie,
et les vrais plaisirs sont à deux;
donc, pour me tenir compagnie,

Carmen

By the ramparts of Sevilla,
at the place of Lillas Pastia,
I'll go dance the seguidilla
and take a glass of manzanilla.
Yes, but by myself I'm bored,
the only pleasure's one you share;
so I'll take along my man,
j'emmènerai mon amoureux!
Mon amoureux . . . il est au diable,
je l'ai mis à la porte hier!
Mon pauvre cœur très consolable,
mon cœur est libre comme l'air!
J'ai des galants à la douzaine,
mais ils ne sont pas à mon gré.
Voici la fin de la semaine:
Qui veut m'aider? Je l'aimerai!
Qui veut mon âme?
Elle est à prendre!
Vous arrivez au bon moment!
Je n'ai guère le temps d'attendre,
car avec mon nouvel amant . . .

and then we'll make a cozy pair!
But my lover's . . . gone to hell!
Last night he went out . . . on his ear!
My poor heart's longing to forget,
my heart is ever free as air!
I count my beaux by dozens,
but I'll have none of them.
Here it is the end of the week:
Who'll love me? I'll love him!
Who'll take my soul?
It's up for bids!
You've come at the right time!
I can't wait a minute longer,
for once I've got a brand-new lover . . .

Don José
'Tais-toi! Je t'avais dit de
ne pas me parler!

Carmen
Je ne te parle pas,
je chante pour moi-même!
Et je penser!
Il n'est pas défendu de penser!
Je pense à certain officier
qui m'aime
et qu'à mon tour, je pourrai
bien aimer!

Don José
Carmen!

Carmen
Mon officier n'est pas un capitaine:
pas même un lieutenant,
il n'est que brigadier; mais
cest assez pour une Bohémienne et
je daigne m'en contenter!

My officer's not a captain:
not even a lieutenant,
his is only a corporal; but
that's good enough for a gypsy and
I'm ready to make do with that!
Don José
Carmen, je suis comme un homme ivre, si je cède, si je me livre, ta promesse, tu la tiendras, Ah! si je t'aime, Carmen, Carmen, tu m'aimeras!

Carmen
Oui.
(Don José unites the rope holding Carmen's hands.)

Il barbiere di Siviglia
The Barber of Seville (1816)
Gioacchino Rossini
Libretto by Cesare Sterbini
CAVATINA: "Largo al Factotum"

Figaro
Ah, la ran la le ra la ran la la.
Largo al factotum della città.
La ran la la, etc.
Presto a barbiere che l'alba è già
La ran la la, etc.
Ah, che bel vivere, che bel piacere, per un barbiere di qualità
Ah, bravo Figaro.
Bravo, bravissimo, bravo!
La ran la la, etc.
Fortunatissimo per verità. Bravo!

Figaro
Ah, la ran la le ra la ran la la.
Make way for the factotum of the city.
La ran la la, etc.
Rushing to his shop for dawn is here.
La ran la la, etc.
What a merry life, what gay pleasures for a barber of quality.
Ah, bravo Figaro.
Bravo, bravissimo, bravo!
La ran la la, etc.
Most fortunate of men, indeed you are!
La ran la la, etc.

Ready for everything
by night or by day,
always in bustle,
in constant motion.
A better lot
for a barber,
a nobler life
does not exist.
La la ran la la ran la, etc.

Razors and combs,
lancets and scissors,
at my command
everything’s ready.
Then there are “extras,”
part of my trade
business for ladies
and cavaliers.

Ah what a merry life,
what gay pleasures,
for a barber of quality.

All call for me,
all want me.
Ladies and children.
Old men and maidens.
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
leeches to bleed me,
here, take this note.
All call for me,
all want me,
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
here, take this note.

Ho, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, etc.
Ahimè! che furia!
Ahimè! che folla!
Uno alla volta,
per carità.

C’
Ehi, Figaro: son qual
Figaro qua, Figaro là,
Figaro su, Figaro giù.
Pronto, prontissimo
son come il fulmine,
sono il
factorum della città.

C”
Ah, bravo, Figaro,
bravo, bravissimo,
a te la fortuna
non mancherà.
La la ran la, etc.
Sono il factorum della città.

Heavens! What a commotion!
Heavens! What a crowd!
One at a time,
For pity’s sake.

C’
Ho, Figaro! I am here!
Figaro here, Figaro there,
Figaro up, Figaro down.
Quicker and quicker
I go like greased lightning.
Make way for the
factorum of the city.

C”
Ah, bravo, Figaro,
bravo, bravissimo,
on you good fortune
will always smile.
La la ran la, etc.
I am the factorum of the city.

Orestes
(ca. 408 BCE)
Euripides

STASMON CHORUS
You wild goddesses who dart across the skies seeking
vengeance for murder, we beg you to free
Agamemnon’s son from his raging fury. . . . We grieve
for this boy. Happiness is brief among mortals. Sorrow
and anguish sweep down on it like a swift gust of wind
on a sail-ship, and it sinks under the tossing seas.
Mass for Christmas Day

INTROIT

"Puer natus est nobis"

Puer natus est nobis, et filius datus
est nobis: cujus imperium super
humerum ejus;
et vocabitur nomen ejus,
magni consili Angelus.

A child is born to us, and a Son is
given to us; whose government is
upon His shoulder;
and His Name shall be called the
Angel of great counsel.

"Alleluia pascha nostrum" and "Gaudeat devotio fidelium"
(cent. 1190)

Leonin

Alleluia pascha nostrum

Gaudeat devotio
fidelium;
verbum patris incarnatur,
nova profes nobis datur
et nobis cum conversatur
salus gentium.
Vite pandit ostium,
dum mortis supplificacion,
pie tolerat.

Hallelujah our Passover

Let the devotion of the faithful
be raised in rejoicing;
the word of the father is made flesh,
and a new child is given to us, and
He has bestowed Himself upon us.
The salvation of the people
has opened the gateway of life,
for he in devotion has borne
the punishment of death.
“Can vei la lauzeta mover”
“When I see the lark beating” (ca. 1175)

Bernard de Ventadorn
Poem by the composer

Can vei la lauzeta mover
‘de joi sas alsas central rai,
que s’oblidi’ e’s laisa chazer
per la doussor c’al cor il vai,
Aïl tan grans enveya m’en ve
de cui qu’eu veyá jauzion,
meravilhas ai, car desse
lo cor de dezirer no’m fon.

When I see the lark beating its wings
joyfully against the sun’s rays,
which then swoons and swoops
down because of the joy in its heart,
Oh! I feel such jealousy
for all those who have the joy of love,
that I am astonished
that my heart does not
immediately melt with desire!

Ai, lasl tan cuidava saber
d’amor, e tan petit en sai,
car cu d’amar no’m posc tener
celeis don ja pro non aurai.
Tout m’a mo cor, e tout m’a me,
e se mezeis e tot lo mon;

e can se*m tolc, no’m laisset re
mas dezirer e cor volon.

Alas! I thought I knew so much
of love, and I know so little; for
I cannot help loving a lady from
whom I shall never obtain any favor.
She has taken away my heart and,
myself and herself and the whole
world;
and when she left me, I had nothing
left but desire and a yearning heart.
"Rose, liz"
"Rose, Lily" (ca. 1350)
Guillaume de Machaut
Poem by the composer

Rose, liz, printemps, verdure,
fleur, baume et tres douce
odour, belle,
passes en doucour,
et tous les biens de Nature,
avez dont je vous aour.
Rose, liz, printemps, verdure,
fleur, baume et tres douce
odour.

Et quant toute creature
seurmonte vostre valour,
bien puis dire et par honnour:
rose, liz, printemps, verdure,
fleur, baume et tres douce
odour, belle,
passes en doucour.

Rose, lily, spring, greenery,
flower, balm, and the sweetest
fragrance, beautiful lady,
you surpass them all in sweetness.
And all the gifts of nature
you possess, for which I adore you.
Rose, lily, spring, greenery,
flower, balm, and the sweetest
fragrance.

And, since behind all creatures
your virtue excels,
I can honestly say:
rose, lily, spring, greenery,
flower, balm, and very sweet
fragrance, beautiful lady,
you surpass them all in sweetness.

---

"El Grillo"
"The Cricket" (ca. 1480)
Josquin des Prez

El grillo è buon cantore
che tiene longo verso.
Dale, beve grillo, canta.
Ma non fa come gli altri uccelli,
come li han canto un poco,
avan' de fatto in alto loco,
sempre el grillo sta pur saldo.
Quando la maggior el caldo
alhor canto sol per amore.

The cricket is a good singer
who holds a long note.
Go ahead, drink and sing, cricket.
But he is not like the other birds,
who sing a little
and then fly away,
the cricket always stands firm.
When it is hottest,
he sings alone for love.
"Je me complains"
"I complain" (ca. 1480)
Josquin des Prez

Je me complains de mon amy,
qui me vouloit tant venir voir
la freshe matinée,
or est il prime,
et c’est midi,
et si n’oy nouvelle de luy,
s’approche le vespére.
La tricotin, la belle tricotée.

I complain about my friend,
who usually comes to see me
in the early morning,
but now it’s mid-morning,
and now it’s afternoon,
and if I don’t have news of him,
Vespers will be approaching.
The knitting, the lovely knitting girl.

"As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending"
(1601)
Thomas Weelkes

As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending
she spied a maiden Queen the same ascending,
attended on by all the shepherds’ swain;
to whom Diana’s darlings came running down amain
first two by two, then three by three together
leaving their Goddess all alone, hasted thither;
and mingling with the shepherds of her train,
with mirthful tunes her presence did entertain.
Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana:
long live fair Oriana!
"Io parto"

"I am leaving" (ca. 1595, pub. 1611)

Carlo Gesualdo

"Io parto" e non più dissì che il dolore privò di vita il core.

Allor proruppe in pianto e dissì
Clori con interroti ombre: "dunque
a i dolori io resto. Ah, non fia mai
ch'io non languisca in dolorosi lai."

Morto fui, vivo son che i spiriti
spenìi tonaro in vita a sì pietosi
acenti.

“I am leaving” and said no more,
for grief had robbed my heart of
life.

Then Clori began to weep, and
said, with interrupted cries of
"Alas: therefore, with my agony
I remain. Ah, may I never cease to
languish in such pain."

I was dead, and now am I alive, for
my dead spirits return to life at the
sound of such pathetic accents.

Furidice

(1600)

Jacopo Peri

Libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini

Dafne

Per quel vago boschetto,
ove, regando i fiori, lento
trascorre il fonte degl'allori,
prende dolce dilettò con le
compagne sue la bella sposa,
chi violetta o rosa
per far ghirland' al crine
toglie dal prato o dall'acute
spine, e qual posand' il fianco
su la fiorita sponda
dolce cantava al mormorar
dell' onda; ma la bella Eurydice
movea danzando il piè sul
verde prato quand'ahì ria sorte
acerba, angue crudo e spietato
che celato giecea tra fiori e l'erba

Dafne

In the beautiful thicket,
where, watering the flowers, slowly
courses the spring of the laurel,
she took sweet delight with her
companions—the beautiful bride—
as some picked violets, others roses,
to make garlands for their hair,
in the meadow or among the sharp
thorns. Another, lying on her side
on the flowered bank,
sang sweetly to the murmur of the
waves. But the lovely Eurydice
dancingly moved her feet on the
green grass when—a bitter, angry
fate—a snake, cruel and merciless,
that lay hidden among flowers and
punsele il piè con si maligno dente,  
ch'impalidi repente come raggio  
di sol che nube adombri.  
El dal profondo core,  
con un sospiro mortale,  
si spaventoso chime risonse suore,  
che, quasi avesse l'ale,  
giunse ogni Ninfa al doloroso  
suono. E' ella in abbandonar tutta  
lasciarsi all'or nell'altrui braccia.  
Sparse il bel volto  
e le dorate chiome un sudor viè  
più fredd'assai che giaccio.  
Indi s'udìo 'l tuo nome tra le  
labbra sonar fredd'e' tremanti  
e voltì gli occhi al cielo, scolorito  
il bel volto e' bei sembianti,  
restò tanta bellezza immobile gielo.

**Arcetro**

Che narrì, ohimè,  
che sento? Misera Ninfa,  
e più misero amante, spettacol  
di miseria e di tormento!

**Orfeo**

Non piango e non sospiro,  
o mia cara Euridice, ché sospirar,  
ché lacrimar non posso.  
Cadavero infelice, O mio core,  
o mia speme, o pace, o vita!  
Ohimè, chi me t'ha tolto,  
chi mi t'ha tolto, ohimè!  
dove sei gia?  
Tosto vedrai ch'in vano  
non chiaraste morendo il tuo  
consorte. Non am,  
non son lontano: io vengo,  
o cara vita, o cara morte.

glass bit her foot with such an evil  
_tooth that she suddenly became  
pale like a ray of sunshine that a  
cloud darkens. And from the  
depths of her heart, a mortal sigh,  
so frightful, alas, flew forth,  
almost as if it had wings;  
every nymph rushed to the painful  
sound. And she, fainting,  
let herself fall in another's arms.  
Then spread o'er her beautiful face  
and her golden tresses  
a sweat colder by far than ice.  
And then was heard your name,  
sounding between her lips, cold and  
trembling, and her eyes turned to  
heaven, her beautiful face and mien  
discolored, this great beauty was  
transformed to motionless ice.

**Arcetro**

What do you relate, alas,  
what do I hear? Wretched nymph,  
and more unhappy lover,  
spectacle of sorrow and of torment!

**Orfeo**

I do not weep, nor do I sigh,  
o my dear Eurydice,  
for I am unable to sigh, to weep.  
Unhappy corpse, o my heart,  
o my hope, o peace, o life!  
Alas, who has taken you from me?  
Who has taken you away, alas?  
Where have you gone?  
Soon you will see that not in vain  
did you, dying, call your  
spouse. I am not  
far away; I come,  
o dear life, o dear death.
Orfeo
(1607)

Claudio Monteverdi

Libretto by Alessandro Striggio

PROLOGUE

Ritornello

La musica

Dal mio Parnasso amato
a voi ne vegno, incliti eroi,
sangue gentil de’ regi, di cui narra
la fama eccelsi pregi, né giunge al
ver, perch’è tropp’alto il segno.

Music

From my beloved Parnassus I
come to you, illustrious heroes of
noble royal blood, whose glorious
virtues are proclaimed by fame
only incompletely, for they are
too many to number.

Ritornello

Io la Musica son, ch’ai dolci accenti
so far tranquillo ogni turbato core,
ed or di nobil ira ed or d’amore
posso infiammar le più gelate menti.

I am Music who, with sweet
sounds, knows how to calm every
troubled heart, and
now to noble anger, now to love,
can kindle the most icy souls.

Ritornello

Io, su cetera d’or, cantando soglio
mortal orecchio lusingar talora,
e in questa guisa a l’armonia sonora
de la lira del ciel piti l’alma invoglio.

Singing to the golden lyre I am
accustomed sometimes to delight
mortal ears and I thus inspire the
soul at the sonorous harmony of
the lyre of Heaven.

Ritornello

Quinci a dirvi d’Orfeo desio mi
sprona, d’Orfeo che traste al suo
cantar le fere e servo fe’ l’inferno a
sue preghiere, gloria immortal
di Pindo a d’Elicona.

My desire now is to tell you of
Orpheus, of Orpheus who held
the wild beasts spellbound with his
song, who even subdues Hell with
his pleading, and won the immortal
fame of Pindos and Helicon.
Ritornello

Or mentre i canti alterno, or lieti or mesti, non si mova augellin gra queste piane, né s’oda in queste rive onda sonante, ed ogni autretta in suo cammin s’arresti.

Now during my songs, now gay, now sad, may the birds be silent on these trees, no waves be heard on these shores, and every breeze cease to blow.

Ritornello

ACT ONE

Pastore

A
In questo lieto e fortunato giorno ch’ha posto finc’a gli amorosi affanni del nostro semideo, cantiam, pastori, in sì soavi accenti, che sian degni d’Orfeo nostri concenti.

B
Oggi fatta è pietosa l’alma già sì sdagnosa della bella Euridice. Oggi fatto è felice Orfeo nel sen di lei, per cui già tanto per queste selve ha sospirato e pianto.

A’
Dunque in sì lieto e fortunato giorno, etc.

Shepherd

A
On this happy, auspicious day which has put an end to the lovesickness of our demi-god, let us sing, shepherds, in such gentle accents that our strains will be worthy of Orpheus.

B
Today pity has stirred the soul, till now so disdainful, of the lovely Eurydice. Today Orpheus has been made happy on her breast, for whose sake he has already sighed and wept so much in these woods.

A’
Therefore on such a happy, auspicious day, etc.

Coro di ninfe e pastori

Vieni, Imeneo, deh, vieni, e la tua face ardente sia quasi un sol nascente ch’apporti a questi amanti i di sereni; e lunge omai disgombre de gli affanni e del duol gli orrori e l’ombre.

Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds

Come, Hymen, o come, and let thy blazing torch be like a rising sun that brings days of serenity to these lovers; and drive far away the horrors and the shadows of anguish and grief.
Balletto

Coro di ninfe e pastori

Part 1
Lasciate i monti, lasciate i fonti, ninfevezzose a liete,
e in questi prati ai balli usati

vago il bel pié rendete.

Part 2
Qui miri il sole vostre carole
più vaghe assai di quelle
ond'à la luna la notte bruna
danzan in ciel le stelle.

Part 3

Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds

Part 1
Leave the mountains, leave the fountains, fair, happy nymphs,
and in these meadows, with your usual dances,
bestir your beautiful feet.

Part 2
Here let the sun watch your dances that are much lovelier than
those which the stars in the sky perform around the moon in the
dark night.

Part 3

Ritornello

Pastore primo

Ma tu, gentil cantor, s'a tuoi
lamenti già festi lagrimar
queste campagne, Perch'ora
al suon de la famosa cetra
no fai teco gior le valli e i poggi?
Sia testimon del core qualche
lieta canzon che detti Amore.

First Shepherd

But you, gentle singer, whose
laments once made this
countryside weep why do you not
now delight the valleys and hills
with the sound of the famous lyre?
May the testimony of your heart be
some happy song that speaks of lovi

Orfeo

Rosa del ciel, vita del mondo e

Orpheus

Rose of the day, life of the earth
degna prole di lui che
l'universo affrena,
Sol, che'l tutto circondi e'l tutto
miri, da gli stellanti giri,
dimmi, vedesti mai
di me più lieto e fortunato
amante? Fu ben felice il giorno,
mio ben, che prìa ti vidi,
e più felice l'ora
che per to sospirai,
poiché al mio sospirar to sospirasti;
felicissimo il punto
che la candida mano,
pegno di pura fede, a me porgesti.
Se tanti cori avessi
quanti occhi ha il ciel eterno e
quante chiome han questi colli
ameni il verde muggio, tutti
colmi sariento e traboccanti di
quel piacer ch'oggi mi fa contento.

Euridice
Io non dirò qual sia nel tuo gioir,
Orfeo, la gioia mia, che non ho
meco il core, ma teco stassi in
compagnia d'amore; chiedi lo
dunque a lui s'intender brami
quanto lieto gioisca e quanto
t'ammi.

Coro de ninfe e pastorì
Lasciate i monti, lasciate i
fonti, etc.

Vieni, Imeneo, deh, vieni,
e la tua face ardente
sia quasi un sol nascente
ch'apporti a questi amanti i
di sereni; etc.

and noble offspring of him who
guides the universe,
Sun, who surrounds and sees all
from your path among the stars,
tell me, did you ever see
a happier, more fortunate lover
than I? Blessed was the day,
my beloved, on which I first saw
you, and happier still the hour
when I sighed for you,
since you did return my sighs,
happy the moment when
you gave me your white hand
as a pledge of pure faithfulness.
Had I as many hearts as
the eternal heavens eyes and these
pleasant hills leaves in green May,
all would be full and overflowing
with the joy that has made me
happy today.

Euridice
I'll not say how great is my bliss,
Orpheus, at your bliss: I do not
bear my heart within me, it
remains with you together with
my love; ask it if you would hear
how it rejoices and how much it
loves you.

Balletto
Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds
Leave the mountains, leave the
fountains, etc.

Ritornello
Come, Hymen, o come,
and let thy blazing torch
be like a rising sun
that brings days of serenity to
these lovers, etc.
Pastore secondo
Ma se il nostro gioir dal ciel deriva,
com’è dal ciel ciò che quaggiù
s’incontra, giusto è ben che devoti
gli offriamo incensi e voti. Dunque
al tempio ciascun rivolga i passi a
pregar lui ne la cui destra è il
mondo, che lungamente il nostro
ben conservi.

Second Shepherd
But if our rejoicing comes from
Heaven, like everything around us
here, it is proper that we reverently
offer it incense and sacrifices. Let
each therefore turn his steps to the
temple to pray to him in whose right
hand the world rears, that he may
long preserve for us this happiness.

Pastore secondo e terzo
Alcun non sia che disperato in
preda si doni al duel, benchè talor
n’assaglia possente se che
nostra vita inforsa.

Second and Third Shepherds
Let nobody fall prey to despair,
surrender to grief, even though it
assails us so powerfully that it
endangers our life.

Ninfa, pastore primo e quarto
Chè, poi che nembo rio, gradito
il seno d’altra tempesta, inorridido
ha il mondo, dispiega il sol più
chiaro i rai lucenti.

Nymph, First and Fourth Shepherds
For after the terrible clouds, laden
with dark storms, have frightened
the world, the sun shines all the
more brightly.

Pastore primo e secondo
E dopo l’aspro gel del verno ignudo
veste di fior la primavera i campi.

First and Second Shepherds
And after the bitter frost of bare
winter the spring clothes the fields
with flowers.

Coro di nife e pastori
Ecco Orfeo, cui pur dianzi furon
cibo i sospiri, bevanda il pianto.
Oggi felice è tanto che nulla
è più che da bmar gli avanzi.

Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds
Here is Orpheus, for whom sighs
were once food and weeping was
drink. Today he is so happy that
nothing more remains for him to
desire.
ACT TWO

**Sinfonia**

**Orfeo**
Ecco pur ch’è voi ritorno, 
care selve e piagge amate, 
da quel sol fatte beate 
per cui sol mie notti han giorno.

**Pastore secondo**
Mira ch’è sè n’alletra 
lorbura, Orfeo, di que’ faggi, 
or che infocati raggi 
Febo dal riel saetta.

**Pastore terzo**
Su quell’erbose sponde 
posiamci, e in vari modi 
ciascun sua voce snodi 
al mormorio de l’onde.

**Pastore secondo e terzo**
In questo prato adornno 
egni selvaggio nume 
solente ha per costume 
di far lieto suggiorno.

Qui Pan, dio dei pastori, 
s’id tarol dolente 
rimembrar dolcemente 
suoi scendurati amori.

**Ritornello**

**Orfeus**
Behold, I return to you, 
dear woods and beloved hills, 
made blessed by that sun 
through which alone my nights turn to day.

**Second Shepherd**
See how the shade of these beeches allure us, Orpheus, 
now that Phoebus sends 
fier rays from the sky.

**Ritornello**

**Third Shepherd**
On these grassy banks let us rest, 
and in our various ways 
let each join his voice 
with the murmur of the waves.

**Ritornello**

**Second and Third Shepherds**
On this adorned meadow 
every god of the woods has 
frequently been accustomed 
to spend happy hours.

**Ritornello**

Here Pan, god of shepherds, 
was sometimes heard sadly 
and gently recalling 
his unhappy loves.
Qui la Napaeae vezzose,
schiera sempre fiorita,
con le candide dita
fur viste a coglier rose.

**Coro di ninfe e pastori**
Dunque fa’ degni, Orfeo,
del suon della tua lira
questi campi ove spira
aura d’odor saboe.

**Orfeo**
Vi ricorda, o boschi umbrati,
de’ miei lunghi aspri tormenti,
quando i sassi ai miei lamenti
rispondean fatti pietosi?

Dite, allor non vi sembrai
più d’ogni altro sconsolato?
Or fortuna ha stil cangiato
ed ha volto in festa i guai.

**Ritornello**
Vissi già mesto e dolente:
or gioisco e quegli affanni
che sofferti ho per tant’anni
fan più caro il ben presente.

**Orfeo**
Do you remember, o shady
woods, my long, bitter torments,
when the stones responded
to my laments compassionately?

**Ritornello**
Say, did I not then appear to you
more disconsolate than any other?
Now fortune has smiled on me and
has turned my woes into a feast.

**Ritornello**
I used to live sadly and woefully;
now I rejoice, and those sufferings
that I bore for so many years
make my present joy all the more
precious.

**Ritornello**
Only for you, lovely Eurydice,
do I bless my former torments;
after grief one is more content,
after pain one is happier.
Pastore secondo
Mira, deh mira, Orfeo, 
che d’ogni intorno ride il bosco 
e ride il prato; segue pur col 
plettro aurato d’addolcirt’aria 
in al beato giorno.

La messaggera
Ahi, caso acerbo, ahi, fato 
empio e crudele, ahi, stelle 
ingiuriose, ahi, cielo avaro!

Pastore secondo
Qual suon dolente il 
lieto di perturbo?

La messaggera
Lassa, dunque debb’io, mentre 
Orfeo con sue note il ciel consola, 
con le parole mia passargli il core?

Pastore primo
Questa è Silvia gentile, dolcissima 
compagnia de la bella Euridice; 
ch’, quanto è in vista dolorosa; 
or che fia? Deh, sommi dei, 
non torcete da noi benigno il 
guardo.

La messaggera
Pastor, lasciate il canto, 
ch’ogni nostra allegrezza in 
doglia è volta.

Orfeo
Dondr vieni? 
Ove vai? 
Ninfa, che porti?

Second Shepherd
Look, Orpheus, o look 
how all around laughs the wood 
and laughs the meadow; so continue 
with thy golden plectrum to sweeten 
the air on such a happy day.

The Messenger
Ah, bitter occurrence, ah, wicked 
and cruel fate, ah, 
unjust stars, ah miserly Heaven!

Second Shepherd
What sound of sorrow disturbs 
this happy day?

The Messenger
I am wretched, for while Orpheus 
soothes the heavens with his notes, 
with my words I must pierce his 
heart.

First Shepherd
This is the lovely Sylvia, sweetest 
companion of the fair Eurydice; 
o how full of grief is her 
appearance; what has happened? 
O mighty gods, do not turn away 
from us your benign glances.

The Messenger
Shepherd, cease your singing, 
for all our joy has turned to 
grief.

Orpheus
From where do you come? 
Where are you going? 
Nymph, what bring you?
La messaggera
A te ne vengo, Orfeo, messaggera infelice
di caso più infelice e più funesto.
La tua bella Euridice...

Orfeo
Ohimè, che odo?

La messaggera
La tua dilettà sposa è morta.

Orfeo
Ohimè!

The Messenger
To you I come, Orpheus, unhappy messenger
of the most unhappy and most tragic happening.
Your beautiful Eurydice...

Orpheus
Woe is me, what do I hear?

The Messenger
Your beloved wife is dead.

Orpheus
Woe is me!

La messaggera
In un fiorito prato
con l'altre sue compagne
giva cogliendo fiori
per farne una ghirlanda a le sue
chiome, quand'angue insidioso,
ch'era fra l'erbe ascoso,
le punse un piè con velenoso dente.
Ed ecco immanimente scolorirsi il
bel viso e ne' suoi lumi spari qu'è
lampi ond'ella al sol fea scorno.
Allor noi tutte sbigottite e meste
le fummi intorno, richiamar
tentando gli spiriti in lei smarriti
con l'onda fresca e con possenti
carmi; ma nulla valse, ah! lassa,
ch'ella i languidi lumi alquanto
aprendo e te chiamando, Orfeo,
dopo un grave sospiro
spirò fra queste braccia; ed io rimasi

The Messenger
In a flowery meadow
with her other companions
she was collecting flowers
to make a wreath for her hair,
when a treacherous serpent,
hidden in the grass, bit her foot
with its poisonous fangs.
And behold, all at once
her beautiful face turned pale,
and her eyes lost that brilliance for
which the sun envied them. And
now we, all horrified and woeful,
stood around her and tried to re-
awaken the spirit that had fled
with fresh water and powerful spells;
but all in vain, ah, wretched am I,
for she briefly opened again her
dying eyes and calling you, Orpheus,
after a deep sigh expired
piena il cor di pietade e di spavento.

Pastore secondo
Ahi, caso acerbo, ahi, fatto empio
e crudele, ahi, stelle in ingiuriose,
ahi, cielo avaro.

Pastore terzo e secondo
A l'amata novella rassembrà
l'infelice un muto sasso che per
troppa dolor non può dolersi.

Ahi, ben avrebbe un cor di tigre o
d'una chi non sentisse del tuo
mal pietade, privo d'ogni tuo ben,
misero amante.

Orfeo
Tu se' morta, mia vita, ed io
respiro? Tu se' da me partita per
mai più non tornare, ed io rimango?
No, che se i versi alcuna cosa
oppano, n'andrà sicuro a più
profondi abissi, e, inteneriti il cor
del re de l'ombre, meco trarròti a
riveder le stelle; o, se ciò
gobernammi empio destino,
rimarrò teco in compagnia di
morte.
Addio terra, addio cielo e sole,
addio.

in these arms; and I remained with
my heart full of anguish and fear.

Second Shepherd
Ah, bitter occurrence, ah wicked
and cruel fate, ah, unjust stars,
ah, miserly Heaven.

Third and Second Shepherds
At this bitter news the unhappy
one resembles a lifeless boulder, so
overcome by grief that he cannot
lament.
Ah, he would have the heart of a
tiger or a bear who did not feel
pity for your pain, deprived of all
thy happiness, wretched lover.

Orpheus
You are dead, my life, and I am
breathing! You have left me,
evermore to return, and I remain?
No, no, if my verses have any
power at all, I will surely go down
to the deepest abysses, and, having
softened the heart of the King of
Shadows; lead you back with me
to see the stars; or, if impious fate
denies me this, I shall remain with
you in the company of death.
Farewell earth, farewell sky and
sun, farewell.
Coro di ninfe e pastori
Ah! caso acerbo, ah! fato empio e crudele, ah! stelle ingiuriose, ah! cielo avaro. Non sì fidi uom mortale de ben caduco e fraile, che costa fugge, e spesso a gran salita il precipizio è presso.

Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds
Ah, bitter occurrence, ah wicked and cruel fate, ah, unjust stars, ah miserly Heaven. Do not trust, o mortal man, the perishable and frail happiness which soon vanishes, and often in a great ascent the precipice is near.

La speranza
Ecco l’altra palude, ecco il nocchiero che trae gli ignudi spiriti a l’altra riva, dove ha Pluton de l’ombre il vasto impero. Oltre quel nero stagno, oltre quel fiume, in quei campi di pianto e di dolore, destin crudele ognu tuo ben t’asconde. Or d’uopo è d’un gran core e d’un bel canto. Io sin qui t’ho condotto, or più non lice tecro venir, ch’è amara legge il vieta, legge iscritta col ferro in duro sasso de l’ima reggia in su l’orribil soglia, che in queste note il fiero senso

Hope
Here is the dark swamp, here the boatman who bears the naked spirits to the other bank, where Pluto has his vast empire of the shadows. Beyond this black bog, beyond this river, in those fields of lamentation and grief, cruel fate hides your dearest possession. Now you need a great heart and a beautiful song. I have conducted you as far as here, no further am I permitted to accompany you, since a stern law forbids it, a law inscribed with iron in hard stone of the gateway to the deepest kingdom of terror, express-
esprime: Lasciate ogni speranza voi che entrate.

Dunque, se stabilito hai pur nel core di porre il piè nella città dolente, da te men fuggo e torno a l’usato soggiorno.

Therefore, if your heart be truly steadfast and your feet able to enter the city of sorrow, I will flee from you and return to my usual abode.

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**Caronte**

O tu, ch’innanzi morte a queste rive temerario ten’ vieni, arresta i passi: solcar quest’onde ad uom mortal non darsi, nè può co’ morti abbrigo aver chi vive.

Che vuoi forse, nemico al mio signore, Cerbero trar de le tartaree porte?
O rapir brami sua cara consorte, d’impudico desirè acceso il core?

Bon freno al folle ardir, ch’entr’al mio legno non accorrò più mai corporea salma, sì de gli antichi oltraggi ancor ne l’alma serbo acerba memoria e giusto sdegno.

**Orfeo**

Possente spirto e formidabil nume, senza cui far passaggio a l’altra riva alma da corpo sciolta in van presume.

**Sinfonia**

**Orpheus**

Mighty spirit and awesome divinity, without whom the souls freed from their bodies hope in vain to cross over to the other bank.

---

**Charon**

O you, who dare before death to approach these shores, halt your steps: to cross these waters is allowed to no mortal, neither can he who lives dwell with the dead.

Will you, perhaps, hostile to my lord, drag Cerberus from Tartarus’s gates?
Or do you, your heart aflush with shameless desire, want to steal his beloved wife?
Give up thy foolish intention, into my boat will I never admit a bodily being, for the ancient outrages again awaken in my soul bitter memories and just anger.
Ritornello (2 violins)

Non viv’io, no, che poi di vita è priva mia cara sposa, il cor non è più meco, e senza cor com’esser può ch’io viva?

I am not alive, no, since of life is deprived my beloved wife, my heart is no longer with me, and without a heart how can it be that I live?

Ritornello (2 cornets)

A lei volto ho il cammin per l’air cieco, a l’inferno non già, ch’ovunque stassi tanta bellezza il paradiso ha seco.

To her I have turned my steps through the dark air, not towards Hell, for whoever has so much beauty has Paradise.

Ritornello (2 harps)

Orfeo son io, che d’Euridice i passi segue per queste tenebrose arene, ove già mai per uom mortal non vassi.

O de le luci mie luci serene, s’un vostro sguardo può tornarmi in vita, ah!, chi nega il conforto a le mie pene?

Sol tu, nobile dio, puoi darmi aiuto, né tener dei, ch’è sopra un’aurea cetra sol di corde soavi armo le dita contra cui rigida alma in van s’impesta.

I am Orpheus, who follows the steps of Eurydice through these gloomy plains, to which mortal man never has access.

O serene lights of my eyes, if only one glance from you can restore me to life, ah, who can deny me comfort in my torment? Only you, noble god, can aid me, fear not, for it is only the sweet strings of a golden lyre I use as a weapon against which rigid souls implore in vain.

Caronte

Ben mi lusinga alquanto dilettandomi il core, sconsolato cantore, il tuo pianto e’l tuo canto.

Ma lungo, ah, lungo sia da questo petto pietà, di mio valor non degno effetto.

Charon

Much am I flattered by such delight to my heart, disconsolate singer, by thy lament and thy song. But far, ah, far from my breast be pity, which is beneath my dignity.

Orfeo

Ah, sventurato amante! Sperar

Orpheus

Ah, unhappy lover! Am I then not
dunque non lice ch’odan
mici prieghi i citradin d’Averno?

Onde, qual ombra errante
d’impeto caduta e infelice,
privo sarò del cielo e
de l’inferno?

Così vuol empia sorte
che in quest’orrore di morte
da te, cor mio, lontano
chiami tuo nome in vano
e pregando e piangendo io mi
consumi?
Rendetemi il mio ben, tartarei
numi!

allowed to hope that
the citizens of Hades will hear my
pleas?
Must I therefore, like a wandering
shadow of an unburied and
unhappy corpse, be deprived of
Heaven and of Hell?

Does impious fate thus will it
that I, in this horror of death,
far from you, my beloved,
call your name in vain
and waste away in imploring
and weeping?
Give me back my love, gods of
Hell!

Sinfonia

Ei dorme, e la mia cetera,
se pietà non impetra
ne l’indurato core, almen il sonno
fuggir al mio cantar gli occhi non
ponno.
Su, duque, a che più tardo?
Tempo è ben d’approdar su l’altra
sponda, s’alcun non è ch’il nieghi.
Vaglia l’ardir se foran
vani i prieghi.
E vago fior del tempo
l’occasione, ch’esser dee colta a
tempo.

Mentre versan quest’occhi amari
fiumi, rendetemi il mio ben,
tartarei numi!

He sleeps, and even if my lyre
stirs no compassion
in the heart of stone, at least his
eyes cannot escape sleep at the
sound of my singing.
Up, then, why do I delay?
The time is right to cross to the
other bank if nobody is there to
prevent me. Let boldness prevail
where entreaties were vain.
A short-lived flower of time is
opportunity, which must be
plucked at the right moment.

While these eyes shed floods of
tears, give me back my love, gods
of Hell!
ACT FOUR

Proserpina
Signor, quell’infelice
che per queste di morte ampie
campagne va chiamando Euridice,
ch’udito hai tu pur dianzi
cosi soave mente lamentarsi,
mossa ha tanta pietà dentro al
mio core ch’un’altra volta io
torno a porger pieghi perché il
tuo nume al suo pregar si pieghi.

Proserpine
My lord, this unhappy man
who over the wide fields of death
calls for Eurydice,
whom you have just now heard
lamenting so sweetly,
has awakened so much pity within
my heart that I return again
to entreat you
to yield to his imploring.

Plutone
Benché severo ed immutabil fato
contrasti, amata sposa, i tuoi
desiri, pur nulla omai si nieghi
a tal beltà congiunta a tanti
pieghi.
La sua cara Euridice contra l’ordin
fatale Orfeo ritrovi;
ma pria che tragga il piē da questi
abissi non mai volga ver lei gli
avidì lumi, ché di perdita eterna
gli fia certa cagion un solo
sguardo.

Pluto
Although stern and immutable
fate opposes your wishes, beloved
wife, nothing indeed shall now
refuse such beauty joined with
such entreaties.
His beloved Eurydice
Orpheus shall find again, contrary
to the decrees of fate;
but before his feet have borne
him from these abysses,
he may not turn round to look
at her, for eternal loss
will result from a single
glance.

Io così stabilisco. Or nel mio
regnò fate, o ministri, il mio voler
palese, sì che l’intenda Orfeo
e l’intenda Euridice, né di
cangiarlo altrui sperar più lice.

Coro di spiriti
Pietade, oggi, e amore
trionfan ne l’inferno.

Chorus of Spirits
Pity and love today
have triumphed in Hades.
Spirito primo
Ecco il gentil cantore che sua sposa conduce al ciel supremo.

Orfeo
Quale onor di te sia degno, mia cetra omnipotente, s'hai nel tartareo regno piegar potuto ogni indurata mente?
Luogo avrai fra le più belle immagini celesti, ond'al tuo suon le stelle danzeranno in giri or tardi or presti.

First Spirit
Here is the gentle singer, who leads his wife to the skies above.

Orpheus
What honor is worthy of thee, my omnipotent lyre, that you have, in the infernal realm, been able to overcome every hardened spirit?
You will find a place among the most beautiful images of Heaven, and to your sound the stars will dance in circles, now slowly, now quickly.

Io per te felice appiano
vedrò l'amato volto,
e nel candido seno de la mia donna oggi sarò raccolto.

Ma mentre io canto, ohimè, chi m'assicura ch'ella mi segua?
Ohimè, chi m'asconde
de l'amate pupille il dolce lume?
Forse d'invidia punte
le deità d'Averno,
perch'io non sia quest'infelice appieno, mi tolgo il mirarvi,
luci beate e lirè, che sol col guardo altrui bear potete?

Ma che temi, mio core?
Cioè che vieta Pluton, comanda
Amore. A nume più possente,
che vince uomini e dei,
ben ubbidir dovrai.

Ritornello
I, made perfectly happy through you, will see the beloved brow.
On the white breast of my lady I shall rest today.

Ritornello
But while I am singing, alas, who will assure me that she is following? Who keeps the beloved eyes hidden from me?
Perhaps pierced by envy the gods of Avernus forbid me, so that my happiness will not be complete, to look at you, blessed happy lights that can make others blessed with one glance alone.

What do you fear, my heart?
What Pluto forbids, Cupid commands. A more powerful divinity, who conquers men and gods, I must obey.
Ma che odo, ohimè lasco?  
O dolcissimi lumi, io pur vi veggo, io pur: ma quale eclissi, ohimè, v'ossa tu?  

**Spirito terzo**
Rott'hai la legge e se'di grazia indegno.

**Euridice**
Ah! vista troppo dolce e troppo amara; così per troppo amor dunque mi perdi? Ed io, misera, perdo il poter più godere di luce e di vita e perdo insieme te, d'ogni ben più caro, o mio consorte.

**Spirito primo**
Torna a l'ombra di morte, infelice Euridice, né più sperar di riveder le stelle, ch'ormai fa sordo a' prieghi tuoi l'inferno.

**Orfeo**
Dove ten'val, mia vita? Ecco, io ti seguo, ma chi me' l'ha, ohimè? Sogno o vaneggio? Qual occulto poter di questi orrori, da questi amati orrori mal mio grado mi tragge e mi conduce a l'odiosa luce!

---

(There is a noise behind him.)

But what do I hear, alas? Do the Furies arm themselves to hurt me, madly desiring with such frenzy to rob me of my beloved? And I allow it?

**Third Spirit**
You have broken the law and are unworthy of mercy.

**Euridice**
Ah, sight too sweet and too bitter; so by too much love you thus lose me? And I, poor one, lose the happiness of returning to light and life, and lose at the same time you, dearest of all possessions, my husband.

**First Spirit**
Return to the shades of death, unhappy Euridice, and henceforth to thy pleas Hell will be deaf.

**Orpheus**
Where are you going, my life? Behold, I follow you, but who, alas, prevents me? Is it a dream? What hidden power of these horrors drags me from these beloved horrors against my will, and leads me to the hateful light?

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Coro di spiriti
E la virtute un raggio di celeste bellezza, pregio dell’alma,
ond’ella sol s’apprezza.
Questa di tempo oltraggio non teme, anzi maggiore ne l’uom rendono gli anni il suo splendore.
Orfeo vince l’inferno e vinto poi fu da gli affetti suoi.
Degno d’eterna gloria
fia sol colui ch’avrà di sé vittoria.

Chorus of Spirits
Virtue is a ray of heavenly beauty, prize of the soul,
where alone it is valued.
The devastation of time
it does not fear; in man the years
make its splendor brighter.
Orpheus overcame Hell and was
overcome by his passions. Eternal
fame is deserved only by him
who will have victory over himself.

Sinfonia

ACT FIVE

Orfeo
Questi i campi di Tracia, e quest’è il loco dove passommi il core per l’amara novella il mio dolore.
Poi che non ho più speme de ricovrar pregando, piangendo e sospirando il perduto mio bene, che poss’io più se non volgerti a voi, selve soavi, un tempo conforto a’ miei martir, mentre al ciel piacque per farvi per pieta meco languire al mio languire? Voi vi doleste, o monti, e lagrimaste, voi, sassi, al dipartir del nostro sole, ed io con voi lagrimerò mai sempre e mai sempre daronni, ah doglia, ah pianto!

Echo
Hai pianto!

Orfeus
These are the fields of Thrace, and
this is the spot where my heart was
pierced by sorrow at the bitter news.
Now that I have no longer any
hope of recovering by praying,
weeping or sighing,
my lost happiness, what else remains for me but to turn to you,
gentle woods, once comfort to
my torments, as Heaven in pity
for me let you languish at my
languishing? You have mourned, o
mountains, and wept, o stones, at
the departure of our sun, and I will
weep with you forever, forever
make myself suffer and lament.
Orfeo
Cortese Ego amorosa, che
sconsolata sei e consolati vuoi
ne’ dolori miei,
benchè queste mie luci sien già per
lagrime fatte due fonti,
in così grave ma fera avventura
non ho pianto però tanto che basti.

Orpheus
Kind, loving Echo, who are
disconsolate and wish to console me
in my grief, although these eyes of
mine through so much weeping are
made two fountains, in my serious
misfortune I have not yet
wept enough, not yet enough.

Apollo
Perché a lo sdegno ed al dolor in
preda così ti doni, o figlio?
Non è, non è consiglio
di generoso petto servir al proprio
affetto: quinci biasimo e periglio
già sovrastar ti veggio, onde m'huo
dal ciel per darti alita. Or tu
m’ascolta e n’avrai lode e vita.

Apollo
Why to rage and to grief do you
give yourself as prey like this, o son?
It is not the counsel of a great heart
to be servant to one’s own passions;
by shame and peril I already see you
threatened wherefore I hasten from
Heaven to help you. Now listen to
me, and you will have fame and life.

Orfeo
Padre cortese, al maggior uopo
arrivì, ch’aveva disperato fine con
estremo dolore m’avea condotto
già sdegno ed amore. Eccomi
dunque attento a tue ragioni,
celeste padre: or ciò che vuoi
m’imponi.

Orpheus
Kind father, you find me in greatest
distress, anger and love have led me
already, with extreme grief, to a
bitter end. Behold me then,
attentive to your reasoning,
heavenly father: command what
you will.

Apollo
Troppo, troppo gioisti di tua lieta
ventura; or troppo piani tua sorte
acerba e dura. Ancor non sai
come nulla quaggiù dilettà e dura?

Dunque se goder brami immortale
vita viente meco al ciel,
ch’a sé t’invita.

Apollo
Too soon did you rejoice at your
happy lot; now you weep too
much at your hard and bitter fate.
Do you not yet know that no
delight is lasting here below?
Therefore if you desire to enjoy
immortal life, come with me to
Heaven, which beckons you.
Orfeo
Sì non vedrò più mai
de l’amata Euridice i
dolci rai?

Apollo
Nel sole e ne le stelle
vagheggarai le sue sembianze
delle.

Orpheus
So shall I never again see
the sweet eyes of my beloved
Eurydice?

Apollo
In the sun and the stars
you shall recognize her beautiful
likeness.

Apollo e Orfeo
(attendono al ciel cantando)
Saliam cantando al cielo,
dove ha virtù verace degno
 premio di sé, diletto e pace.

Apollo and Orpheus
(rise singing to Heaven)
Let us rise, singing, to Heaven,
where true virtue
has its own reward: joy and peace.
# How to Listen to and Understand Opera

## Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. 1440</td>
<td>Josquin des Prez born (d. 1521)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. 1546</td>
<td>Giulio Caccini born (d. 1618)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1561</td>
<td>Jacopo Peri born (d. c.1633)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1562</td>
<td>Ottavio Rinuccini born (d. 1621)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1567</td>
<td>Claudio Monteverdi born (d. 1643)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1573–1592</td>
<td>Florentine Camerata</td>
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<tr>
<td>1588</td>
<td>English defeat Spanish Armada</td>
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<tr>
<td>1598</td>
<td>Daphne, considered first opera, by Peri and Corsi</td>
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<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>Peri’s Euridice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>Shakespeare’s Othello</td>
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<td>1607</td>
<td>Monteverdi’s Orfeo</td>
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<tr>
<td>1618</td>
<td>Beginning of Thirty Years’ War</td>
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<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td>Boston founded by Puritans</td>
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<tr>
<td>1632</td>
<td>Jean-Baptiste Lully born (d. 1687)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1649</td>
<td>King Charles I of England beheaded</td>
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<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td>Alessandro Scarlatti born (d. 1725)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1661</td>
<td>Louis XIV becomes King of France</td>
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<tr>
<td>1675</td>
<td>Antonio Vivaldi born (d. 1741)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>Jean-Philippe Rameau born (d. 1764)</td>
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<td>1685</td>
<td>Revocation of Edict of Nantes in France</td>
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<td>1687</td>
<td>Isaac Newton’s Principia Mathematica</td>
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<td>1688</td>
<td>England’s Glorious Revolution</td>
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<td>1698</td>
<td>Pietro Metastasio born (d. 1782)</td>
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<td>1712</td>
<td>Jean-Jacques Rousseau born (d. 1778)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1710</td>
<td>Giovanni Battista Pergolesi born (d. 1736)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1714</td>
<td>Christoph Willibald von Gluck born (d. 1787)</td>
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<td>1715</td>
<td>Scarlatti’s Tigrane</td>
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<td>1733</td>
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<td>1751</td>
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<td>1756</td>
<td>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart born (d. 1791)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1776</td>
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<td>1781</td>
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<td>1786</td>
<td>Mozart’s Marriage of Figaro</td>
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<td>1786</td>
<td>Carl Maria von Weber born (d. 1826)</td>
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</table>
1788 ................................................ Arthur Schopenhauer born (d. 1860)
1789 ................................................ French Revolution begins
1791 ................................................ Mozart’s The Magic Flute
1791 ................................................ Giacomo Meyerbeer born (d. 1864)
1792 ................................................ Gioacchino Antonio Rossini born (d. 1868)
1797 ................................................ Gaetano Donizetti born (d. 1848)
1801 ................................................ Vincenzo Bellini born (d. 1835)
1804 ................................................ Mikhail Glinka born (d. 1857)
1808 ................................................ Goethe’s Faust
1813 ................................................ Giuseppe Verdi born (d. 1901)
1813 ................................................ Richard Wagner born (d. 1883)
1815 ................................................ Battle of Waterloo
1833 ................................................ Aleksandr Borodin born (d. 1887)
1835 ................................................ Cesar Cui born (d. 1918)
1837 ................................................ Mili Balakirev born (d. 1910)
1838 ................................................ Queen Victoria crowned
1838 ................................................ George Bizet born (d. 1875)
1839 ................................................ Modest Mussorgsky born (d. 1881)
1841 ................................................ Saxophone invented
1842 ................................................ Glinka’s Russlan and Lyudmila
1844 ................................................ Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov born (d. 1908)
1848 ................................................ Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels
1853 ................................................ Crimean War begins
1858 ................................................ Giacomo Puccini born (d. 1924)
1859 ................................................ Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde
1861 ................................................ Russian serfs emancipated
1863 ................................................ Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address
1864 ................................................ Richard Strauss born (d. 1949)
1868–69 ........................................... Mussorgsky’s Boris Godunov
1869 ................................................ Opening of Suez Canal
1870 ................................................ Franco-Prussian War
1877 ................................................ Invention of phonograph
1900 ................................................ Freud’s The Interpretation of Dreams
1900 ................................................ Puccini’s Tosca
1901 ................................................ Boer War
1905 ................................................ Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity
1918 ................................................ Armistice ending First World War
1920 ................................................ League of Nations formed
1939 ................................................ Beginning of World War II
1941 ................................................... Strauss’s *Capriccio*
Glossary

**Aria:** The general term for an extended solo in opera—the equivalent of a soliloquy—which brings the action and “real time” to a temporary halt, and in which the character expresses his or her feelings about the action and events just described. Arias generally have a high melodic profile and are typically accompanied by the full orchestra.

**Aria da capo:** A baroque aria form schematized as A-B-A’. An initial musical phrase (A) is followed by a contrasting passage (B). The initial phrase is then recapitulated but now embellished and ornamented by the singer.

**Arioso:** A sung passage with enough melodic contour to sound aria-like, but which has a syllabic sort of setting and the narrative quality of a recitative.

**Baritone:** The middle category of male voice, higher in range and lighter in timbre than bass, but lower and heavier than tenor.

**Bass:** The lowest category male voice—rich, dark, heavy, and powerful.

**Basso profundo:** An unusually deep bass voice.

**Bel canto opera:** A style of early-19th-century Italian opera that stresses simple, songlike melodies and harmonic accompaniment and that cultivates a highly decorous style of singing.

**Cadenza:** A florid, improvised passage to be performed by singers before the final bars of an aria or movement.

**Castrato:** A male soprano whose soprano voice has been preserved by castration prior to puberty.

**Cavatina:** A slow and lyric aria meant to display the singer’s breath control, line, and beauty of tone.

**Coloratura:** Literally, “coloration” or “coloring.” As used in music, the term refers to brilliantly ornamented writing for the voice, or to the type of voice agile enough to specialize in such music.

**Coloratura soprano:** The highest of the soprano voices, characterized by broad range, clear quality, and exceptional agility.

**Comic opera:** An expression sometimes used in English either as a translation of the French opéra comique or the Italian opera buffa.

**Commedia dell’arte:** Traveling musical companies that originated in 16th-century Italy. Their performances led eventually to comic opera.

**Contralto:** The lowest category of female voice.

**Countertenor:** An exceptionally high male voice, comparable to the female contralto.

**Dramatic voice:** A heavier, darker, and more forceful voice than a lyric voice; used in reference to soprano, tenor, and baritone voices.

**Ensemble:** Continuously sung passages in which any number of singers may participate. Ensembles were typically used to end acts. They reached their highest state of development in opera buffa.

**Gesamtkunstwerk:** “The all-inclusive art form,” Richard Wagner’s term for his all-encompassing music dramas.

**Grand opera:** A spectacular and dramatic genre of opera, developed in early-19th-century France and designed to appeal especially to the middle class. This term is often used to refer to 19th-century opera in general.

**Homophony:** A melodic texture in which one melody line predominates with all other musical material heard as secondary or as accompaniment.

**Intermezzo:** A comic interlude inserted between the acts of Italian opera seria during the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century.

**Intermezzo/Intermedio:** Musical prologues and interludes inserted into the spoken Italian dramas of the late 16th century.

**Leitmotif:** A theme or motive associated with a particular person, thing, or dramatic idea.

**Libretto:** Literally “little book.” The verbal text of an opera, written for the composer to set to music.
Lyric opera: An operatic genre that combines opéra comique’s use of spoken dialogue and direct, appealing melodies with grand opera’s tendency toward numerous performers and grandiose singing.

Lyric voice: A fairly light, warm, clear, and flexible voice; used in reference to soprano, tenor, and baritone voices.

Madrigal: A work for four to six voices that freely mixes polyphonic and homophonic textures and uses word-painting.

Melodrama: A genre of musical theater that combines spoken dialogue with background music.

Mezzo-soprano: The middle category of female voice, between contralto and soprano.

Monophony: A melodic texture consisting of a single unaccompanied melody line.

Music drama: An operatic form created by Richard Wagner. Refers to a through-composed operatic work which stresses dramatic and psychological content and in which voices and orchestra are completely intertwined and of equal importance.

Opera: A drama which combines soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous (or nearly continuous) music, the whole greater than the parts.

Opera buffa: A general designation for Italian operas of the middle and late 18th century that do not come under the heading of opera seria. These productions were melodically simpler and more “popular” than Baroque opera seria.

Opéra comique: A popular French operatic genre that developed concurrently with grand opera in the early 19th century but employed spoken dialogue rather than recitative and featured somewhat less pretentious productions than grand opera.

Opera seria: “Serious” opera of the Baroque era—elaborate and grandiose productions typically based on subjects from ancient history and/or mythology.

Operetta: Literally, “little opera.” During the 19th century, the term came to mean a lighter type of opera, usually with spoken dialogue separating the musical numbers.

Overture: An instrumental prelude to an opera.

Parlante: Literally, “talking”; a compositional technique used by Giuseppe Verdi and other late-19th-century operatic composers in which recitative-like vocal lines were underlaid with continuous thematic music played by the orchestra.

Pastorale: The style of dramatic poetry that dominated Italian theater in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, featuring sylvan settings and mild love adventures and usually ending happily.

Polyphony: A melodic texture consisting of two or more simultaneous melody lines of equal importance.

Recitative: A style of writing for the voice in which the rhythms and inflections of speech are retained. In opera, it is used for action, dialogue, and narrative. Recitatives are most typically secco or “dry” (i.e., accompanied only by basso continuo).

Ritornello: An instrumental refrain.

Sinfonia: An independent musical piece that acts as an introduction or a postllude.

Singspiel: German for “sing-play.” Refers to a partly sung, partly spoken German theatrical genre with its roots in popular culture.

Soprano: The highest category of female voice.

Spinto soprano: The soprano voice lying between the lyric and dramatic soprano voices and having qualities of both.

Tenor: The highest category of male voice.

Tone poem: A purely instrumental work that tells a specific story and invokes explicit imagery; a term created by Richard Strauss.
**Verismo opera:** A genre of opera characterized by dramatic and expressive realism and naturalism, especially in the portrayal of people, events, and emotions. This genre was popular among Italian and French opera composers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Voci bianchi:** Literally, “white voices,” referring to those of the *castrati*.

**Word-painting:** A compositional technique that seeks to form an expressive syntax by matching literary descriptions with corresponding musical events; this technique is characteristic of madrigals.
Biographical Notes


Bizet, Georges (1838–75). French opera composer famous for Carmen, his greatest work and the most popular opera of all time. A master dramatist, Bizet deftly establishes character and mood through his music.

Boito, Arrigo (1842–1918). Italian librettist and composer. Boito’s libretti for Verdi’s Otello and Falstaff are considered among the greatest in all Italian opera.

Da Ponte, Lorenzo (1749–1838). Italian librettist and poet. Da Ponte rose to the peak of his achievement with his libretti for Mozart’s operas The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni and Così fan tutte.

Caccini, Giulio (1551–1618). One of the earliest Italian opera composers and a member of the Florentine Camerata.

Gesualdo, Carlo, Prince of Venosa (circa 1560–1613). Italian lutenist and composer, famous for his innovations of harmonic progressions and dissonance.

Glinka, Mikhail (1804–57). Russian composer regarded as the founder of Russian musical nationalism. His operatic masterpiece is Ruslan and Lyudmila of 1836.

Gluck, Christoph Willibald (1714–87). Major composer who effected a synthesis of elements of Italian opera and traditional French opera. Essential features of his operatic style include melodically simple and emotionally direct arias; recitatives that demonstrate a high melodic content; the use of dance as integral to the dramatic action; strong reliance on choruses, and a high degree of integration of dance, chorus and solos.

Hofmannsthal, Hugo von (1874–1929). Great Austrian librettist who wrote the libretti for many of Richard Strauss’s operas.

Josquin des Prez (circa 1440–1521). Preeminent composer of the Renaissance who used both polyphonic and homophonic styles. His madrigals represent the Renaissance ideal of emotional and character expressivity.

Leonin (Magister Leoninus) (circa 1135–circa 1201). Composer and poet of the Notre Dame school and greatest exponent of florid organum.

Lully, Jean-Baptiste (1632–87). Major French composer, who laid the foundation for the French operatic tradition. Lully created a national style that focused on magnificence, tragic drama and dance. He designed a type of recitative that was modeled on spoken drama, using one pitch per syllable and reflecting the flexibility of the French language, with its continuous changes of meter. His arias tend to be short and limited in vocal range, with an emphasis on clear enunciation.

Machaut, Guillaume de (circa 1300–77). Important composer of sacred and secular music; master of polyphonic technique and musical eloquence.

Mahler, Gustav (1860–1911). Great Austrian composer and opera conductor of the late romantic era. Although he never wrote an opera, Mahler was a master of smaller-scale vocal music and his orchestral music has deep affinities with vocal music in its expressive content.

Metastasio, Pietro (1698–1782). Greatest librettist of the first half of the 18th century. Metastasio standardized his libretti into a formulaic dramatic procedure and formalized arias into a structure known as the “da capo” aria. His reforms influenced the development of opera seria.

Meyerbeer, Giacomo (1791–1864). German-born composer who almost single-handedly established French grand opera. Meyerbeer was famous for his ability to manage enormous forces on stage. His most famous opera is Les Huguenots of 1836. His operas have fallen into obscurity because they lack musical and dramatic substance.

Monteverdi, Claudio (1567–1643). Italian composer credited with the creation of the first opera, Orfeo of 1607. Monteverdi did not invent opera, but elevated it to a level of artistic viability and substance it had not previously enjoyed. His most important contribution to the genre was an elevated form of recitative: arioso. He was the first composer to use purely instrumental passages in ensemble numbers in opera. He was in advance of his time in his use of dissonance and chromatic harmonies and in his ability to express fundamental emotions through music. Many of his operas are still performed today.
Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus (1756–91). Great Austrian composer of the classical era. His operas are widely regarded as his greatest contribution to musical history. A major aspect of Mozart’s significance as an opera composer is his unprecedented genius for musical characterization and dramatic momentum. He is a consummate master of complex and subtle vocal and orchestral manipulation. Mozart’s music does not just decorate the libretto. It creates a whole new drama, revealing subtleties and truths that go beyond the libretto. It energizes the dramatic action and fleshes out his characters, imbuing them with an extraordinary range of moods, emotions, subtlety, unconscious motivation and humanity.

Mussorgsky, Modest (1839–81). Great Russian composer and member of the so-called Russian Five, a group of composers who established the Russian national style of the mid to late 19th century. His opera Boris Godunov is the pinnacle of Russian opera.

Pergolesi, Giovanni (1710–36). Italian composer of La serva padrona (1733), the first important opera buffa that laid the foundation for subsequent contributions to the genre.

Peri, Jacopo (1561–1633). One of the earliest Italian opera composers and member of the Florentine Camerata. Peri is known for his operas Daphne and Euridice.

Puccini, Giacomo (1858–1924). Great Italian composer of universally popular operas. Puccini was the greatest exponent of the opera verismo style, which found inspiration in the dark side of human nature. He was a superb lyricist and consummate dramatist. Among his best-loved and renowned operas are Madam Butterfly, Tosca and La Bohème.

Rameau, Jean-Philippe (1683–1764). Foremost French composer of the 18th century. Rameau’s operas display much less contrast between aria and recitative than contemporary Italian operas. Although Rameau’s operas are rarely heard outside France because they are tailored to particular French tastes, they are worth seeking out for their musical value.

Rinuccini, Ottavio (1562–1621). Italian poet/librettist and member of the Florentine Camerata. Rinuccini wrote the libretti for the earliest operas: Caccini’s Euridice and Peri’s Daphne.

Rossini, Gioacchino (1792–1868). Greatest Italian composer of the bel canto style. Rossini had a great gift for wit, comedy and compositional innovation. He pioneered the use of strings instead of harpsichord or piano to accompany recitative. He invented the long, orchestral type of crescendo known as the “Rossini crescendo.” He was a master of orchestral color and musical characterization. His opera, The Barber of Seville remains one of the best-loved and greatest comic operas of all time. Its most famous aria, “Largo al factotum,” introduces the character of Figaro and is a brilliant example of musical characterization.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712–78). Swiss-born French philosopher and composer who embraced the Italian opera buffa genre as an example of opera appropriate to the Enlightenment. His Le Devin du village (1752) is very close to the popular French tradition of opéra comique.

Scarlatti, Alessandro (1660–1725). Founder of the Neapolitan school of opera, Scarlatti’s operas exerted substantial influence on other opera composers.


Verdi, Giuseppe (1813–1901). Greatest Italian opera composer of the second half of the 19th century. Verdi’s operas endure because of their use of well-written libretti, their melodic beauty, their focus on human emotions, their psychological insight, and their unsurpassed dramatic power. Among Verdi’s greatest operas are Rigoletto, La Traviata and Otello.

Wagner, Richard (1813–83). Great German composer whose operas revolutionized music and whose opera, Tristan and Isolde is considered, along with Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, the most influential composition of the 19th century. Wagner developed the concept of the music drama (Gesamtkunstwerk) as an artistic genre that encompasses all types of art: drama, music, poetry, dance, etc. He created the leitmotif whereby musical motives are assigned to characters, things or concepts and he gave the orchestra unprecedented power as the purveyor of inner meanings and unspoken truths.
Weber, Carl Maria von (1786–1826). German composer whose opera Der Freischütz became the definitive work that established 19th-century German opera, characterized by the use of spoken dialogue, and plots that hinge on the supernatural as found in German medieval legend.

Weelkes, Thomas (circa 1575–1623). One of the great English madrigal composers. Weelkes was a master of word painting.
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General Sources

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How to Listen to and Understand Opera
Part II

Professor Robert Greenberg
Robert Greenberg, Ph.D.
Chairman, Department of Music History and Literature
San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Robert Greenberg has composed over 40 works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of Greenberg’s work have taken place in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, England, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and The Netherlands, where his “Child’s Play” for String Quartet was performed at the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam in 1993.

Dr. Greenberg holds degrees from Princeton University and the University of California at Berkeley, where he received a Ph.D. in music composition in 1984. His principal teachers were Edward Cone, Claudio Spies, Andrew Imbrie, and Olly Wilson. His awards include three Nicola De Lorenzo Prizes in composition, three Meet the Composer grants, and commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation of the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, XTET, and the Dancer’s Stage Ballet Company.

He is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he is chair of the Department of Music History and Literature and director of curriculum of the Adult Extension Division. He is creator, host, and lecturer for the San Francisco Symphony’s “Discovery Series.”

He has taught and lectured extensively across North America and Europe, speaking to such corporations and musical institutions as the Van Cliburn Foundation, Arthur Andersen, Bechtel Investments, the Shaklee Corporation, the University of California/Haas School of Business Executive Seminar, the Association of California Symphony Orchestras, the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras, and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco.

His work as a teacher and lecturer has been profiled in the Wall Street Journal, Inc. magazine, and the San Francisco Chronicle. He is an artistic co-director and board member of COMPOSERS INC. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the Innova label.

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How to Listen to and Understand Opera

**Scope:** This course is designed as a methodology, a guide to listening and understanding opera. For this reason it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the entire operatic repertory. Armed with the knowledge of opera gained from this course, however, the listener will be able to explore in greater depth the extraordinary and compelling world of opera for himself or herself. The listener will come to appreciate how music has the power to reveal truths beyond the spoken word; how opera is a unique marriage of words and music in which the whole is far greater than its parts. He or she will learn the reasons for opera’s enduring popularity.

The history of opera is traced from its beginning in the early 17th century to around 1924, with references to landmark operas, musical, cultural, and social developments, and historical events that influenced opera’s growth. We learn how operatic style and form have changed continuously throughout the history of European music, as they were influenced by political, social and cultural developments, and how different national languages and cultures have shaped their own types of opera and operatic style.

The course opens with one of the most powerful moments in opera: the dramatically loaded aria “Nessun dorma” (“No one shall sleep”) from Giacomo Puccini’s Turandot. We are exposed to opera’s unique incorporation of soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous music into an incredibly expressive and exciting whole that is far greater than the sum of its parts. This famous aria shows us the power of the composer in creating music that goes beyond the words of the libretto to evoke unspoken thoughts and feelings—that which cannot be said in words alone.

The study continues with a discussion of how music can flesh out a dramatic character and evoke the unconscious state. We are introduced to operatic archetypes such as Figaro and Carmen. We learn that the ancient Greeks revered music as a microcosm of all creation, believing music can change the face of nature and alter souls. The monophonic and, later, polyphonic music of the Middle Ages is examined. We see how the end of the absolute authority of the Roman Church encouraged the rise of secular and instrumental music. We examine the Renaissance, its rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman culture and the evolution of the madrigal, ultimately rejected in favor of a more expressive vocal medium: early opera. The renaissance intermezzo is discussed as the precursor of modern opera. The reforms of the Florentine Camerata are examined as they relate to the earliest operas. Part I of the course concludes with an analysis of the first successful attempt to combine words and music into musical drama, Monteverdi’s Orfeo of 1607.

In Part II we see how recitative, the essence of Monteverdi’s style, made music subservient to words and how, because of its forward-driving nature, recitative cannot express personal reflection. We learn how the invention of aria gave opera composers a powerful tool to stop the dramatic action for moments of self-reflection. Gluck’s reforms and his Orfeo ed Euridice of 1762 are addressed as the starting point for the modern opera repertory. The explosion of operas in the Golden Age/Dark Age of opera is discussed, along with the formulaic reforms of Pietro Metastasio (including his da capo structure for arias) and the vocal abuses that those reforms provoked. We learn how different voice types are assigned different roles. The rise of opera seria and its characteristics are discussed, along with an analysis of the second act of Mozart’s Idomeneo—opera seria transcendent.

The second part of this study continues with the development of opera buffa, from its origins in the popular folklore of the commedia dell’arte to its eventual replacement of opera seria. The role of Enlightenment progressives in this development is addressed and Mozart’s brilliant The Marriage of Figaro is discussed as one of the greatest contributions to the opera buffa genre.

Part III opens with a discussion of the bel canto style of opera. We see how the nature of the Italian language and culture gave rise to this type of opera, with its comic, predictable plots, one-dimensional characters, appealing melodies, and florid melodic embellishments. The highly pressurized business of opera in the 18th century is revealed, and we are introduced to Rossini’s The Barber of Seville of 1816 as the quintessential bel canto opera.

Giuseppe Verdi is the focus of Lectures 19 through 22 of Part III. His career is summarized, and his operatic inheritance is reviewed. We learn how Verdi broke the bel canto mold; how he dominated Italian opera for over half a century by virtue of his lyricism, his emphasis on human emotions and psychological insight, and his use of the orchestra and parlante to drive the dramatic action and maintain musical continuity. Verdi’s Otello is discussed as one of the greatest operas of all time.

Part III of this course concludes with an examination of French opera. We learn how it developed as a distinctly different genre from Italian opera, shaped as it was by the French language, culture and political history. We learn...
how Jean-Baptiste Lully set the foundation for a French language operatic tradition, and how his greatest contribution was the design of a recitative style suited to the French language. The reforms of Jean-Philippe Rameau are discussed, along with the influence of Enlightenment progressives such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who championed a more natural operatic style. Christoph Willibald von Gluck’s position as the model for the next generation of French composers is reviewed. Finally, the subject of 19th-century French opera is addressed. Grand opera, opéra comique and lyric opera are examined as distinctive French genres and Act 2 of Bizet’s dramatically powerful Carmen is analyzed.

Part IV opens with an examination of the rise of German opera, with its roots in German folklore. We discover how German singspiel grew from humble origins as a lower class entertainment to high art with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s The Rescue from the Harem (1782) and The Magic Flute of 1791. We learn how 19th-century German opera grew out of the tradition of singspiel and how Carl Maria von Weber’s Der Freischütz established 19th-century German opera.

The discussion of German opera continues with an examination of Richard Wagner: the man, his personal beliefs, musical theories, and operatic innovations. We see how Wagner went back to the ancient Greek ideal for inspiration and how he conceived the idea of an all-encompassing art work, or music drama, in which the role of the orchestra is that of a purveyor of unspoken truths. We are introduced to Wagner’s concept of leitmotif and his revolutionary use of dissonance. Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde is discussed as the most influential composition of the 19th century, aside from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

The subject of late romantic German opera is addressed and exemplified by Richard Strauss and his controversial opera Salome. We go on to an overview of Russian opera and the concept of nationalism. The late development of Russian opera is outlined from Mikhail Glinka’s Ruslan and Lyudmila to Modest Mussorgsky’s Boris Godunov. We see how the Russian language shaped the syllabic vocal style of Russian opera and how Russian rhythms, with their asymmetrical groupings of accents, are distinct from Italian, German and French rhythms.

The course draws to its conclusion with an overview of opera verismo, a 19th/20th century genre that favors depictions of the darker side of the human condition. The pivotal second act of Giacomo Puccini’s Tosca is discussed as a transcendent example of opera verismo. Finally, we hear part of a scene from Richard Strauss’s Capriccio in which the essence of opera is debated. Is it words or is it music? It is neither. It is an indefinable combination of both, with the whole greater than the parts.
Lectures Nine–Twelve
The Growth of Opera, the Development of Italian Opera Seria, and Mozart’s Idomeneo

Scope:
Lectures Nine through 12 review the main features of early opera and trace its growth from the early 17th century up to Mozart’s Idomeneo of 1781. We learn how and why the Baroque period (approximately 1640–1760) became known as the “golden age/dark age” of opera. As opera became a public entertainment, its literary and dramatic substance gradually deteriorated. Metastasio’s reforms and the rise of opera seria are discussed, along with a review of voice types. We learn how the formulaic rigidity of opera seria led to vocal abuses, and how Gluck represented a new wave of reform, ultimately creating the model for the next generation of opera composers. Finally, we look at Mozart’s Idomeneo, the transcendent opera seria.

Outline
I. Review and the invention of the aria.
   A. The earliest operas were a synthesis of old and new musical and dramatic genres and compositional techniques. Of the following, the first four elements were inherited from the renaissance. Recitative is new.
      1. Stage scenery and machinery
      2. Dance/ballet episodes
      3. Popular songs/ballads
      4. Madrigal-style choruses
      5. Recitative
   B. Monteverdi’s Orfeo was the first successful work to combine all these elements into a singularity greater than the parts.
   C. Recitative was the essence of Monteverdi’s operatic art. It was used for everything: action, narrative, dialogue and description of feelings. Monteverdi’s opera Orfeo was the first successful work to combine all of these elements into a singularity greater than the parts; however, because of the non-reflective and ever forward-moving nature of recitative, time cannot stop for consideration and reflection. An example of recitative is Orfeo’s reaction to Euridice’s death. This is action music. Orfeo does not stop to reflect. There is little emotional depth in this genre. The concept of aria, in which music is divorced from words and creates a whole expressive world of its own, has not yet been realized. Moreover, recitative focuses on words, not music. Musical example: Orpheus’ response from Monteverdi’s Orfeo (1607).
   D. Aria.
      Musical example: “Chiamo il mio ben cosi” from Christoph Willibald von Gluck’s Orfeo ed Euridice (1762).
      1. The words and music are on an equal footing.
      2. Real time stops. Orpheus can experience and express in music a depth of feeling far beyond that of words alone.
      3. The use of music as an expressive vehicle is revolutionary.
      4. Gluck’s operas mark the starting point for the modern opera repertory.
II. The Golden Age/Dark Age of Opera (1640–1750).
   A. The period between Monteverdi (1567–1643) and Gluck (1714–87) is sometimes called both the golden age of opera and the dark age of opera. The period was very secular in terms of philosophy and science. It saw logical thought as transcendent. This development influenced music, resulting in a hugely expanded musical language. The harmonic system came into its own. Instrumental music became as popular as vocal music, and with the development of instrumental music there came a self-sufficient, pure, abstract musical language. This was Gluck’s inheritance: a musical language that could create what could not be expressed in words alone.
      1. The first public opera houses were opened.
      2. Opera quickly became a ubiquitous public entertainment in Italy. Huge numbers of operas were created and produced. The popularity of opera during this era can be compared with the popularity of television for modern audiences.
3. Singing style and stage design developed rapidly.
4. Opera captured the exuberant, expressive spirit of the Baroque.
5. The quality of libretti declined in order to meet the growing public demand for spectacle, situation, and virtuosic singing (a situation comparable with much contemporary television programming).
6. Opera pulled further away from the Greek ideal. Choruses were used less and less as the demand for virtuoso soloists grew.
7. Despite their number and fame, however, Baroque operas are seldom produced, due to their dramatic stupidity and strange, often bizarre content; thus the dark age of opera.

C. The golden/dark age of opera: phase two (1700–60).
1. By the late 17th and early 18th centuries, literary devotees of opera were determined to reform the medium and return to it a degree of literary and dramatic substance.
2. Chief among these reformers was Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782).
   a. He was the great librettist of the first half of the 18th century.
   b. He standardized his libretti into a formulaic dramatic procedure (comparable with today’s television sitcoms).
      1. Dry recitative (accompanied only by a harpsichord and, sometimes, a cello) alternated with arias.
      2. The principal characters had to sing one or two arias in each act. Subsidiary singers were only permitted one or two arias in the course of the entire opera.
      3. Every opera had three acts.
      4. No two successive arias could use the same singer, same mood or same orchestration.
      5. Choruses, duets and other ensembles were very rare, except for the final number, when all principal singers had to line up for an ensemble in block harmony.
      a. This is the formula for Italian opera seria.
      b. Metastasio formulized arias into a structure called the da capo aria: A-B-A form. Musical example: “Mi rivedi” from Alessandro Scarlatti’s La Griselda (1721).
      c. Arias became classified into standard types. There are many different types, including the following five.
         1. The aria cantabile showcases all the singer’s lyrical ability.
         2. The aria di portamento is a dignified aria designed to show off the singer’s breath and tone control.
         3. The aria di mezzo carattere is a compromise between the aria cantabile and the aria di bravura.
         4. The aria parlante (patter aria) demonstrates the singer’s agility.
         5. The aria di bravura (or aria d’agilità) is highly florid and designed to show off the singer’s agility and extraordinary vocal compass.
     d. As a result of the predictability of the Metastasian operatic formula, singers and vocal virtuosity increasingly became the focal points of reform opera.
     e. Singers embellished the written notes and improvised solo passages at the ends of arias. These embellished and extended cadences became known as cadenzas.
     f. The greatest vocal abuses were promulgated by the castrati. Musical example: “Siam navi all’onde” from Antonio Vivaldi’s L’Olimpiade of 1734.

III. Voice types.
A. Basic voice classifications include soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.
B. The soprano is the highest female voice.
   1. The coloratura soprano is the highest of the soprano voices.
      a. The term coloratura refers to virtuosic singing, not vocal range.
      b. Coloratura sopranos are distinguished by their range, clarity, and agility as exemplified in the Queen of the Night’s aria, “Der Hölle Rache” from Mozart’s The Magic Flute of 1791 (musical example).
   2. The lyric soprano is a fairly light, warm, and flexible voice.
   3. The dramatic soprano is a heavier, darker, and larger voice than lyric.
   4. The spinto soprano is a voice lying between a lyric and a dramatic soprano.
5. The mezzo-soprano is heavier, darker, and lower than a true soprano, approaching the alto voice.

C. The contralto (alto) is a female voice of exceptionally low focus.

D. The tenor is the highest male voice.
   1. The lyric tenor is a light, clear, and flexible voice.
   2. The dramatic tenor is a more forceful, powerful voice, capable of greater volume and endurance.
      Musical example: Otello’s entrance from Act 1 of Verdi’s Otello (1886).

E. The baritone is slightly lower in range, heavier, and fuller in sound than the tenor.

F. The bass is the lowest male voice. It is a rich, dark, heavy, and powerful voice that is not particularly agile.
   Musical example: Charon’s song from Monteverdi’s Orfeo, Act 3 (1607).

IV. The reforms of Gluck (1714–87).

A. Brief biography.
   1. Gluck was Bohemian by birth.
   2. He was a brilliant composer of Italian-style operas.
   3. He split his mature career between Vienna and Paris.

B. Gluck’s operas.
   1. They were along the lines of traditional opera seria.
   2. They distinguished themselves, however, in their dramatic viability. Gluck believed strongly in telling a good story.
      a. He used his orchestra much more flexibly.
      b. He simplified and streamlined his arias. His objective was to reduce singers’ abuses and to restore the dramatic integrity of his operas.
   3. Gluck’s operas became models for the next generation of opera composers.

V. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91) and Idomeneo.

A. Mozart’s Idomeneo, Re di Creta (Idomeneo, King of Crete) is the greatest opera seria. The libretto is by G.B. Varesco.

B. Mozart is one of the few great opera composers not to have been an opera specialist.

C. Mozart wrote operas in all the styles popular in his time: opera seria, Gluck’s reform-style opera, opera buffa, and Singspiel.

D. Mozart’s first opera was La finta semplice (The Pretended Simpleton) of 1768.

VI. Idomeneo is the transcendent opera seria.

A. Characters and story.
   1. Ilia (lyric soprano) is the daughter of Priam, King of Troy. She is in love with Idamante.
   2. Idamante (soprano or tenor; the part was originally written for a castrato) is the prince and heir to the Cretan throne. He is in love with Ilia.
   3. Elektra is a half-mad Greek princess, also in love with Idamante.
   4. Idomeneo is the King of Crete and father of Idamante.
   5. The action takes place on Crete, ten years after the end of the Trojan War. Idomeneo, in order to survive a shipwreck, promises to sacrifice to Neptune the first person he sees on landing in Crete. This turns out to be Idamante, his son and heir. Idomeneo desperately tries to find a way to avoid keeping his oath to Neptune.

B. Act 2.
   1. The momentum of this act is tremendous as Mozart employs every device he can to avoid the formulaic and predictable dramatic action typical of opera seria. Each vocal number merges with the next. The use of a trio was rare in Mozart’s day. He uses one in this act to break the predictable pattern. He also uses recitative for Idomeneo’s monologue “Eccoti in me, barbaro Nume!” He knew that an aria at this point would have slowed the pace and killed the dramatic momentum. Musical examples:
      2. Elektra’s recitative, “Parto, e l’unico” and no. 14 (march)
      3. Elektra’s recitative, “Sidonie sponde”
      5. No. 16 (trio) from “Deh cessi il scompiglio”
6. No. 17 (chorus), “Qual nuovo terrore!”
7. Idomeneo’s recitative, “Eccoti in me, barbaro nume!”
8. No. 18 (chorus), “Corriamo, fuggiamo”

C. Conclusions.
1. The seamlessness of this music takes Idomeneo out of the category of traditional opera seria.
2. The non-seria elements are as follows:
   a. The recitatives are accompanied.
   b. Recitatives and arias do not automatically alternate.
   c. The use of a trio is unusual.
   d. Flexible use is made of the chorus.
   e. The orchestra transitions smoothly from one section to the next.
Lectures Thirteen–Sixteen
The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro

Scope:
In this study of comic opera (opera buffa) we see how comic opera, with its roots in popular folklore, developed quite separately from the opera seria of the aristocracy. We learn how the more accessible, populist opera buffa, with its everyday characters and dramatic situations, was championed by Enlightenment progressives such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Opera buffa character types and conventions are discussed, and one of the greatest examples of opera buffa, Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro (1786), is examined in detail.

Outline
I. The birth of comic opera/Italian opera seria.
   A. Introductory statements.
      1. Comic opera developed quite separately from opera seria, which was an entertainment of the aristocracy.
      2. Comic opera had its roots in popular entertainment.
      3. Traveling musicians had staged comic musical entertainment since the Middle Ages.
      4. In 16th-century Italy, these developed into a tradition of traveling companies called commedia dell’arte.
      5. During the second half of the 18th century comic interludes, drawn from the situations and characters of commedia dell’arte, were inserted between the acts of serious operas.
      6. By the end of the 18th century the once lowbrow comic intermezzi had developed into the dominant operatic genre of opera buffa.
   B. Comic opera/opera buffa developed as a result of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on popular, nonelitist art and spirit of dramatic and musical naturalism.
   C. The melodic content of the new opera buffa reflected the more natural, populist, melodic spirit of Classical-era Enlightenment music.
   D. Musical comparison: “Siam navi all’onde algenti” from Vivaldi’s L’Olimpiade (1734) is compared with “Non più andrai” from Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro (1786). Vivaldi’s music is highly artificial and extreme in its use of embellishments and in its sentiments. Mozart’s music is far more natural-sounding.
   E. This new, Enlightenment-inspired music, with its focus on accessible melodies, is known as the Classical style. It is classical in the ancient Greek sense because of its clarity of line, balanced structures, emotional restraint and elegance.
   F. Opera and politics: the rise of opera buffa.
      1. By the mid-18th century, Baroque opera seria came to represent the old, elite, aristocratic order. Its main elements were:
         a. Formulaic use of recitative and aria—they followed one another predictably.
         b. Grandiose and expensive productions.
         c. Libretti based on ancient history and mythology.
         d. Stiff, overblown characters.
         e. Da capo arias, with very few ensembles and almost no choruses.
      2. The predictability of the arias led to abuses by the singers.
      3. Enlightenment philosophers and artists saw opera buffa—with its accessible melodies, small casts, and everyday dramatic situations—as the ideal opera for the new spirit of the Enlightenment.
      4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) took the lead in this rejection of Baroque opera seria. He and his followers embraced Giovanni Pergolesi’s La serva padrona as the new ideal for opera.
   G. Giovanni Pergolesi (1710–36) and La serva padrona (1733).
      1. La serva padrona began its life as an intermezzo, although it was later performed as an opera.
      2. Typical of early Italian opera buffa, La serva padrona features lively, catchy music in which no particular formulas are followed.
      3. La serva padrona features a cast of only three characters: Serpina (soprano), Uberto (bass) and Vespone (mute). The plot involves a simple ruse by which a servant (Serpina) tricks an old bachelor (Uberto) into marriage. Musical example: recitative and aria, “Son imbrogliato io già”.

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H. Opera buffa character types and conventions.
   1. Even as it evolved, opera buffa continued to use commedia dell’arte character archetypes.
   2. The most significant character division in opera buffa is between savvy, street-smart servants and
      members of the lower class, on the one hand, and blundering, pompous aristocrats, merchants, doctors
      and lawyers, on the other.
   3. Almost by their nature, then, opera buffa plots were politicized in an era when class distinctions
      underwent profound reexamination.

II. Mozart’s opera buffa.
   A. Juvenalia.
      1. La finta semplice (1768).
      2. La finta giardiniera (1775).
   B. The “biggies” with Lorenzo da Ponte as librettist.
      1. The Marriage of Figaro (1786).
      2. Don Giovanni (1787).
      3. Così fan tutte (1789).
   C. Lorenzo da Ponte was a brilliant and controversial figure. He remains, along with Metastasio, Boito and
      Hofmannsthal, one of the great librettists in opera history.

III. The Marriage of Figaro.
   A. Story/background.
      1. The basic story line is adapted from two plays by the French dramatist Pierre de Beaumarchais (1732–
         99): The Barber of Seville (1772) and The Marriage of Figaro (1784).
      2. In The Barber of Seville we meet a young Count Almaviva, who, with the help of his former valet
         Figaro, wins and weds the young and cunning Rosina. This play concludes with the count’s
         renunciation of his feudal right to deflower any maiden in his service on her wedding night.
      3. The Marriage of Figaro takes place three years later. The count has become a shameless philanderer.
         Rosina (the countess) is wise beyond her years. Figaro is to marry Susanna, whom the count intends to
         bed before her marriage. The action of the play (and opera) revolves around the count’s determination
         to seduce Susanna, and Figaro and Susanna’s determination to marry before he can force the issue.
   B. Politics.
      1. Beaumarchais’ play was a clear attack on the French aristocracy.
      2. The play was initially banned in France and permanently banned in Austria.
      3. Da Ponte’s libretto removed much of what was politically offensive (although Mozart’s music puts
         much of it back in!).
   C. Game plan.
      1. We will meet the main characters and observe Mozart’s incredible musical portraiture.
      2. We will observe the quintessence of Mozart’s dramatic craft by examining the Act 2 finale.

IV. The Marriage of Figaro, Act 1.
   A. Musical examples:
      1. Overture: this is a perfect combination of great musical substance with great musical beauty.
      2. The opera opens with a duet for Figaro and Susanna, “Cinque, dieci, venti,” that is memorable for the
         way Mozart conveys perfect harmony between Susanna and Figaro by writing their music in thirds and
         sixths.
      3. Susanna tells her fiancé Figaro that Count Almaviva is planning to seduce her: no. 2 (duet), “Se a caso
         madama.”
      4. In his recitative, “Bravo, signor padrone!” and his cavatina, “Se vuol ballare,” Figaro shows his
         determination to outwit the count.
   B. Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina are introduced. Dr. Bartolo is the former guardian of Rosina. He had planned to
      marry Rosina himself, but was thwarted by Figaro and Count Almaviva. (The role of Dr. Bartolo is sung by
      a bass, in the Italian tradition of assigning the bass voice to older men and villains.) Marcellina is Bartolo’s
      former maid. She once lent Figaro money and this loan has now come due. Figaro promised to marry
      Marcellina if he could not repay the loan. Figaro and Susanna are planning to repay the loan with the dowry
to be given them by the count. For their own personal reasons, Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina want Figaro to fail to repay the loan. Musical example: no. 4 (aria), “La vendetta”.

C. Archetypes of commedia dell’arte.
1. The inspiration for Dr. Bartolo comes from Pantalone, a character who prides himself on being an expert on many subjects, but one who actually knows very little and is always being caught out.
2. The character of Figaro is based on harlequin, an athletic, graceful, cunning valet and ladies’ man, who claims noble birth.
3. Rosina’s character comes from Colombina, a pretty, young girl with a sharp wit and an acid tongue.
4. Marcellina is the only character not based on commedia dell’arte. She is an old, rapacious spinster, inspired by a character in classic Roman comedies.

D. Cherubino, an oversexed adolescent, is introduced. Mozart’s depicts his character in an aria brilliantly evocative of a breathless, love-sick adolescent. Musical example: no. 6 (aria), “Non so più cosa son”.

E. The predatory and unscrupulous Count Almaviva is introduced. Musical example: “Ah, no Susanna”.

F. The count decides that Cherubino is getting in his way and tries to pack him off to the army. Figaro sings a satirical farewell to Cherubino. He paints a dire picture of life in the army in the hope of dissuading Cherubino from leaving. He needs the boy as an ally in his plan to thwart the count’s designs on Susanna. Figaro’s aria, “Non più andrai,” (in rondo form) is what first made this opera a success (musical example).

V. The Marriage of Figaro, Act 2.
A. The countess (Rosina) is introduced. Still very young, and wise beyond her years, she prays for the return of her philandering husband’s affections in one of Mozart’s most beautiful and moving arias, “Porgi amor” (musical example).

B. As a result of various intrigues, the count becomes convinced that the countess is having an affair. He is incensed and determined to learn the truth.

C. Finale.
1. An opera buffa finale is itself conceived as a miniature comedy.
2. Mozart’s Act 2 finale is in eight distinct parts, 20 minutes (or so) of continuous music.
   a. Part 1: The count is convinced that Cherubino and the countess have been having an affair and that Cherubino is hiding in the countess’s closet. At this point there are two characters onstage: the count and countess.
   b. Part 2: To the count’s surprise he discovers, not Cherubino, but Susanna in the closet.
   c. Part 3: The mood completely changes. The count calms down and asks for his wife’s forgiveness.
   d. Parts 4 and 5: Figaro enters and there are now four characters onstage. The mood grows quieter as the count tries to figure out what is going on. He questions Figaro about an anonymous note he received, but Figaro refuses to answer.
   e. Part 6: Antonio, the gardener, enters the scene. We now have a quintet. Antonio unwittingly stirs up more trouble when he complains that someone jumped out of a window and ruined his flowerbed.
   f. Parts 7 and 8: The comic confusion increases and the dramatic and musical tension comes to a climax with the entrance of Don Basilio, Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina, who has come to claim Figaro as her husband! We now have seven characters onstage singing their own lines simultaneously in a variety of ensembles and solos.
   g. The Act 2 finale is a brilliant continuous sequence of ensembles of increasingly long, separate musical lines, all coming together. Only a great writer of symphonies or string quartets could have written this finale, which is equally remarkable for its dramatic power. Mozart’s music enhances dramatic momentum and creates a whole new drama of underlying subtleties and truths not revealed in the libretto.

VI. Concluding remarks.
A. Mozart’s operas are not “easy-listening.” They require our total involvement.
B. Nor were they considered easy to listen to in Mozart’s own time.
C. Mozart’s characters live and breathe; his music imbues them with an extraordinary range of moods, emotions, subtlety, unconscious motivation, and humanity.
Orfeo

(1607)

Claudio Monteverdi

Libretto by Alessandro Striggio

ACT TWO

Orfeo

Tu sc’ morta, mia vita, ed io respiro? Tu sc’ da me partita per mai più non tornare, ed io rimango?
No, che se i versi alcuna cosa ponno, n’andrò sicuro a’ più profondi abissi, e, intenerito il cor del re de l’ombre, meco trarrotti a riveder le stelle; o, se ciò negherammo empio destino, rimarrò teco in compagnia de morte.
Addio terra, addio cielo e sole, addio.

Orfeus

You are dead, my life, and I am breathing? You have left me, nevermore to return, and I remain?
No, no, if my verses have any power at all, I will surely go down to the deepest abysses, and, having softened the heart of the King of Shadows; lead you back with me to see the stars; or, if impious fate denies me this, I shall remain with you in the company of death.
Farewell earth, farewell sky and sun, farewell.

Orfeo ed Euridice

(1762)

Christoph Willibald von Gluck

Libretto by Raniero da Calzabigi

ACT ONE

Orfeo

Chiamo il mio ben così quando si mostra il di, quando s’asconde.
Ma, oh vano mio dolor!
l’idolo del mio cor

Orfeus

Thus I call upon my love at break of day and at its fading.
But—alas, how vain my sorrow!—my heart’s idol
Euridice! Euridice! ombra cara, ah, dove sei nascosta?
Affannato il tuo sposo fedele
invano sempre ti chiazza,
agli dei ti ridomanda,
e sparge ai venti
con le lagrime sue invan
i suoi lamenti.
Cerco il mio ben così
in queste, ove mori,
funeste sponde.
Ma sola al mio dolor
perché conobbe amor,
l’eco risponde.
Euridice! Euridice!
Ah! questo nome sanno le spiagge,
e le selve l’appresero da me!
Per ogni valle risuona:
in ogni tronco scrisse il miser
Orfeo de mano
trcolante. Euridice non è più, ed
io vivo ancora!
Dei, date nuova vita,
uccidetemi!
Piango il mio ben così
se il sole indora il
dì, se va nell’onde.
Pieno al pianto mio
va mormorando il rio,
e mi risponde.

Numil barbari numi,
d’Acheronte e d’Averno
pallido abitator,
la di cui mano
avidà delle morti
mai disarmò mai trattener non
seppe beltà nè gioventù,

answers me not.
Eurydice, Eurydice, beloved shade,
 alas, where are you hidden?
Your faithful spouse in anguish
 calls you ceaselessly in vain,
 begs your return of the gods
 and vainly scatters
 to the winds his tears
 and lamentations.
Thus I seek my love
 upon these sad shores
 where, alas, she died!
But to my grief
 Echo alone replies,
 for she knew love.
Eurydice! Eurydice!
Oh, our shores know that name
 and the woods have learned it of
 me! Through every valley it re-echos:
 on every treetrunk the wretched
 Orpheus has writ with trembling
 hand: Eurydice is no more, whilst
 I yet live!
Give her new life, you gods,
 kill me!
Thus do I weep for my love,
 whether the sun makes golden the
day, whether it sinks into the sea.
Touched by my tears
 the river murmurs
 and answers me.

Gods, barbarous gods,
of Acheron and Avernum
wan inhabitant,
whose hand,
greedy for deaths,
nor youth nor beauty has ever
 known how to subdue or restrain.
voi mi rapiste
la mia bella Euridice—
oh memoria crudel!—
sul fior degli anni!
La rivoglio da voi,
numi tiranni!
Ho core anch'io
per ricercar sull'orme
de' più intrepidi eroi,
nel vostro orrore
la mia sposa, il mio ben!

you have carried off
my fair Eurydice from me—
oh cruel remembrance!—
in the flower of her youth!
I want her back from you,
tyrant gods!
I, too, have the courage,
following in the footsteps
of the bravest heroes,
to seek my wife, my sole delight,
in your horrid realm!

——

La Griselda
(1721)
Alessandro Scarlatti

Libretto by Apostolo Zeno

Griselda

A
Mi rivedi o selva ombrosa,
Ma non più Regina e sposa.
Sventurata, disprezzata
Pastorella.

B
E' pur quello il patrio monte,
Quanto a pur l'amica fonte,
Quello è il prato e questo è il rio;
E sol io non son più quella.

A' (da capo)
Mi rivedi o selva ombrosa,
etc.

Griselda

A
You see me again, o shady forest,
but no longer queen and bride:
unfortunate, disdained,
a shepherdess.

B
Yet there is my homeland's
mountain and here is still the
friendly fountain; there is the
meadow and this is the river;
And only I am not the same.

A' (da capo)
You see me again, o shady forest,
etc.
L'Olimpiade
(1734)
Antonio Vivaldi
Libretto by Pietro Metastasio

Recitative

Tra le follie diverse de quai ripieno
è il mondo chi pto negar, che la
follia maggiore in ciascuno non sia
quella d'amore.

Off all the many follies of which
the world is full, who can deny
that the greatest folly in
anyone is that of love.

Aria

A
Siam navi all'onde algenti
lasciate in impetuosi
venti i nostri affetti sono,
ogni dilettò è scoglio,
tutta la vita un mar.

B
Ben qual nocchiero in noi
veglia ragion ma poi
pur dal'ondoso orgoglio
si lascia trasportar.
A' (da capo)
Siam navi all'onde algenti,
etc.

A
We are like ships on the silver
waves, drifting out of control;
like capricious winds are our
affections, every pleasure is a rock,
the whole of life a sea.

B
Like a steersman reason
keeps good watch over us, but then
on the swell of pride
we let ourselves be carried away.
A' (da capo)
We are like ships on the silver waves,
etc.
Die Zauberflöte
The Magic Flute (1791)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

NO. 14 ARIA "Der Hölle Rache"

Königin
Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen, Tod und Verzweiflung flammt um mich her! Fühlt nicht durch dich Sarastro Todeschmerzen, so bist du meine Tochter zimmermehr.

Queen
The wrath of hell within my breast I cherish; death, desperation prompt the oath I swore. If by your hand Sarastro does not perish, then as my child I shall know you nevermore.

Verstossen sei auf ewig, verlassen sie auf ewig. Zertrümmert sein auf ewig alle Bande der Natur, wenn nicht durch dich Sarastro wird erblassen! Hört! Rachegöttin! Hört der Mutter Schwur!
(Exit.)

Abandoned be forever, forsaken be forever, and shattered be forever all the force of nature's tie, if not through you Sarastro's life be taken! Hark! Gods of vengeance, hear a mother's cry!
(Exit.)

Otello
(1886)
Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Arrigo Boito

ACT ONE

Otello
Esultate! L'orgoglio musulmano sepolto è in mar; nostra e del ciel è gloria! Dop'armi lo vinse l'uragano.

Othello
Rejoice! The Musulman's pride is buried in the sea; ours and heaven's is the glory! After our arms the storm defeated him.
Idomeneo
(1780)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by G.B. Varesco

ACT TWO

Recitative (accompained)

**Elettra**

Parto, e l’unico oggetto ch’amo ed adoro, o Dei! meco s’en vien?
Ah, troppo angusto è il mio cor a tanta gioia!
Lunge della rivale farò ben io, con vezzì, e con lusinghe, che quel foco, che pria spegnere non potèi, a quei lumi s’estingua, e avvampi ai miei.
Scaccierà vicino ardore dal tuo sen l’ardor lontano; più la mano può d’amore s’è vicin l’amante cor.

**Electra**

I leave, but will the one object I love and adore, o gods, come with me?
Ah, there is not room in my heart for such great joy!
Away from my rival, I shall well succeed, with cunning and with flattery, so that the fire, which once I could not extinguish, will no longer burn for her, but instead will flame for me.
Love that is close at hand will prove stronger than passion at a distance; love is more effective when one is near the beloved.

**No. 14**

Odo da lunge armonioso suono, che mi chiana all’imbarco, ostú si vada.
*(She exits.)*

**Recitative (secco)**

**Elettra**

Sidonie sponda, o voi per me di pianto e duol, d’amor!
Nemico crudo ricetto,
or ch’astro più clemente a voi me togli, io vi perdono, e in pace allieto partir mio alfin vi lascio e do l’estremo addio.

**Electra**

Shores of Sidon, you were the cause of my tears of sorrow and of love!
Oh cruel, inhimal place, now that a more compassionate star takes me from you, I forgive you, and, departing in peace and gladness, I leave you finally, and bid you my last farewell.
NO. 15 CHORUS

Coro

A
Placido è il mar;  
andiamo, tutto ci rassicura,  
felice avrem ventura,  
sù, sù, partiamo or' or!

Elettra

A
Soavi Zeffiri, soli spirate,  
del freddo borea l'ira calmate,  
d'àura piacevole cortesi siate,  
se da voi spargesi per tutto amor.

Coro

A'
Chorus sings a varied repetition of 1st verse

Recitative (secco)

Idomeneo

Vatene prenci.

Idamante

O ciel!

Idomeneo

Troppo t'arresti.  
Parti, e non dibbia fama,  
di mille eroiche  
imprese il tuo  
ritorno prevenga:  
di regnare se l'arte  
apprender vuoi, ora  
incomincia a renderì  
de'miserì il sostegno,  
del padre, e di te stesso  
ognor più degno.

Idomeneo

Go, prince.

Idamante

O heavens!

Idomeneo

You linger too long.  
Leave now, and let a  
thousand of your heroic  
exploits announce your  
return and your fame:  
If you wish to learn the art  
of ruling, begin  
by helping the  
unfortunate, and become more  
worthy of your father and  
of yourself.
Idamante
Priam of Troy, o God, allow me to place a kiss on the paternal hand.

Eletttra
Soften, let a grateful farewell on my lips express the gratitude my heart is filled with: farewell, noble king.

Idomeneo
You shall be happy, son; this is your destiny. Fulfill our wishes, o heavens!

Idomeneo, Idamante, Eletttra
Fulfill our wishes, o heavens!

Eletttra
How great are my hopes!

Idamante
I go, but my heart remains here.

Idamante, Idomeneo
Adieu!

Idamante, Idomeneo
Cruel destiny!

Idamante
(aside)
O Ilia! O father! O departure!

Idomeneo, Idamante, Eletttra
O gods! What will happen?
Let this turbulence cease, Heaven's compassion will lend its hand.
ORCHESTRAL INTRODUCTION

NO. 17 CHORUS

Coro
Qual nuovo terrore!
Qual rauco mugitor!
De' Numi il furore ha il
mar inferito. Nettuno, mercé!
Qual'odio, qual' ira nettuno ci
mostra, se il cielo s'adira, qual
colpa è la nostra?
Il reo qual' è?

Chorus
What new terror is this!
What harsh roaring!
The anger of the gods has made
the sea violent. Neptune, have pity!
What hatred, what anger Neptune
shows us; what is our fault, that
the heavens become angry?
Who is the guilty one?

Recitative (accompagned)

Idomeneo
Eccoti in me, barbaro Nume!
Il reo Io solo errai,
me sol punisci,
E cada sopra di me il tuo sdegno.
La mia morte ti sazi alfin;
Ma se altra aver pretendi
vittima al fallo mio.
Una innocente darti io non posso,
e se pur tu la vuoi . . . ih giusto sei,
prenderla non puoi.

Idomeneo
You are after me, o cruel God!
The guilty one! I alone sinned,
punish me only,
and let your anger fall on me.
Let my death appease you;
but if you insist on having
a victim for my failing,
I cannot give you an innocent one;
you are unjust if you want him . . .
you have no claim upon him.

NO. 18 CHORUS

Coro
Corriamo, fuggiamo quel mostro
spietato! Ah, preda gia siamo!
Chi, perfido fato,
più crudo è di te?

Chorus
Let us run, let us flee from that
pitiless monster! Ah, we are
already prey! Who, treacherous
fate, is more cruel than you?
L'Olimpiade
(1734)
Antonio Vivaldi
Libretto by Pietro Metastasio

Aria
Siam navi all'onde algenti
lasciate in impetuosì venti
i nostri affetti sono,
ogni diletto è scoglio,
tutta la vita un mar.
We are like ships on the silver
waves, drifting out of control; like
capricious winds are our
affections, every pleasure is a rock,
the whole of life a sea.

Le nozze di Figaro
The Marriage of Figaro (1786)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

No. 9 Aria

Figaro
A
Non più andrai,
farfallone amoroso,
notte e giorno d'intorno girando,
delle belle turbando il riposo,
Narcisetto, Adoncino d'amor.
B
Non più avrai questi bei pennacchini,
quell cappello leggero e galante,
quella chioma, quell'aria brillante,
quell'ermiglio d'oro color!
Non più avrai, etc.
A
Non più andrai, etc.

Figaro
A
You'll go no more,
amorous butterfly,
flitting about, night and day,
disturbing ladies' rest,
little Narcissus, Adonis of love.
B
You'll wear no more these plumes,
that smart and jaunty cap,
those curls, that dashing air,
that pink, effeminate complexion!
You'll wear no more, etc.
A
You'll go no more, etc.
La serva padrona

*The Maid Mistress (1733)*

**Giovanni Pergolesi**

Libretto by Gennaro Antonio Federico

**Uberto**

Or indovino, chi sarà costui!
Forse la penitenza farà così.
Di quant'ella
ha fatto al padrone;
s'è ver, come mi dice,
un tal marito la terrà fra
la terra ed il bastone.
Ah, poveretta lei!
Per altro io penserei...
ma ella è serva...
ma il primo non saresti...
Dunque, la sposeresti?
Basta... oh! no, no, non sia.
Su, pensierì ribaldi, andate via!
Piano, io me l'ho allevata:
 gì poi com'ella è nata...
Eh! Che sei matto!
Piano di grazia,
eh non pensare affatto.
Ma io ci ho passione, e pur...
quella meschina...
Eh torna...
Oh Dio!... e siam da capo...
Oh... che confusione!

Son imbrogliato io già,
ho un certo chè nel core,
che dir per me non so,
s'è amore o sè pietà.
Sent'un che poi mi dice:
Uberto, pensa a te.
Io sto fra il sì e l'no,

**Uberto**

Now I can guess who it will be!
Perhaps this will be her penance.
He will do to her what
she's done to me.
If what she told me is true,
a husband like him will keep her
between the earth and a stick.
Poor thing, she is!
Otherwise I might think of...
but she is a servant...
but I would not be the first...
Would you marry her, then?
Enough... oh no, no it can't be.
Irresponsible thoughts, get lost!
Control yourself, I raised her myself.
I know how she was born...
How crazy you are!
Easy now, please,
think no more about it.
Still, I feel a passion for her...
that rotten creature...
And yet...
Oh God!... here I go again...
Oh... what confusion!

I am all mixed up.
I have a certain ache in my heart.
Honestly, I cannot tell
whether it's love or pity.
Common sense tells me:
Uberto, think of yourself.
I am between yes and no, between
A half-furnished room with a large armchair center. Figaro is measuring the floor; Susanna is tugging on a hat in front of a mirror.

**Figaro**

Cinque... dieci... venti

trenta... trentasei... quarantatre.

**Susanna**

Ora è, ch’io son contenta,

sembra fatto inver per me.

**Figaro**

Cinque...

**Susanna**

Guarda un po’, mio caro Figaro...

**Figaro**

... dieci...

**Susanna**

... Guarda un po’, etc.

---

**Le nozze di Figaro**

*The Marriage of Figaro (1786)*

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

**ACT ONE**

**NO. 1 DUETTO**

wanting her and not wanting her,

and I get more confused

all the time, miserable fellow.

What ever will become of me!
Figaro
... twenty, etc.

Susanna
Look at my hat now, ...

Figaro
... forty-three.

Susanna
Take a look, my dear Figaro, look at my hat, now.

Figaro
Yes, sweetheart, now it's much prettier, it seems made just for you.

Susanna
Take a look, ...

Figaro
Yes, sweetheart, etc.

Susanna
... Now I'm pleased with it, yes, etc.

Figaro
Yes, sweetheart, etc.

Susanna, Figaro
Ah! The wedding morn is nigh, how dear to my/your tender bridegroom is this charming little hat which Susanna made herself.
Recitative

Susanna
Cosa stai misurando, caro il mio Figaretto?

Figaro
Io guardo se quel letto, che ci destina il Conte, farà buona figura in questo loco.

Susanna
In questa stanza?

Figaro
Certo, a noi la ceda generoso il padrone.

Susanna
Io per me te la do no.

Figaro
E la ragione?

Susanna
La ragione l’ho qui.

Figaro
Perché non puoi far, che passi un po’ qui!

Susanna
Perché non voglio, sei tu mio servo, o no?

Figaro
Ma non capisco perché tanto ti spiaccia, la più comoda stanza del palazzo.

Susanna
What are you measuring, my darling Figaro?

Figaro
I’m seeing if that bed which the Count is giving us will look well in this corner.

Susanna
In this room?

Figaro
Of course, the master has generously given it to us.

Susanna
Then you may have it all to yourself.

Figaro
What’s your objection?

Susanna
I have my reasons.

Figaro
Why won’t you share them with me?

Susanna
Because I don’t wish to. You are my humble servant, aren’t you?

Figaro
But I don’t understand why you turn up your nose at the most comfortable room in the castle.
Susanna
Perch'io son la Susanna, 
c'è tu sci pazzo.

Figaro
Grazie, non tanti elogi; 
guarda un poco, se potria 
meglio stare in altro loco.

Susanna
Because I am Susanna 
and you are an idiot!

Figaro
Thank you—you're too kind; 
tell me now, do you know of any 
other room to suit us better?

Figaro
Se a caso madama 
la notte ti chiama 
din, din, din, din, 
in due passi da quella puoi gir. 
Vien poi l'occasione 
che vuolmi il padrone, 
don, don, don, don, 
in tre salti lo vado a servir.

Susanna
Così se il mattino 
il caro Contino 
Din, din, din, din, 
e ti manda 
tre miglia lontan 
din, din, don, don, 
a mia porta il diavol lo porta 
ed ecco in tre salti . . .

Figaro
Susanna, pian, pian, . . .

Susanna
Ed ecco, . . .

Figaro
. . . pian, pian, . . .

Figaro
Supposing one night 
my lady should call you 
ing, ting, ting, ting, 
you can go to her in a trice. 
Then it may happen 
that the master wants me 
dong, dong, dong, dong, and I'm 
with him in a hop, skip and jump.

Susanna
Suppose some morning 
your precious Count 
ing, ting, ting, ting, 
should send you on an errand 
three miles away 
ing, ting, dong, dong, 
the devil brings him to my door 
and in a hop, skip and jump . . .

Figaro
Susanna, softly, I pray you, . . .

Susanna
And in . . .

Figaro
. . . softly, softly, . . .
Susanna
... in tre salti ...

Figaro
... pian, pian, ...

Susanna
... din, din, ...

Figaro
... pian, pian, ...

Susanna
... don, don!

Figaro
... pian, pian.

Susanna
Ascolta!

Figaro
Fa presto!

Susanna
Se udir brami il resto,
discaccia i sospetti,
che torto mi fan.

Figaro
Udir bramo il resto,
I dubbi, i sospetti
gelare mi fan.

Susanna
Discaccia i sospetti, etc.

Figaro
I dubbi, i sospetti, etc.

Susanna
... a hop, skip and jump ...

Figaro
... softly, softly, ...

Susanna
... ting, ting, ...

Figaro
... softly, softly, ...

Susanna
... dong, dong!

Figaro
... softly, softly.

Susanna
Listen to me!

Figaro
Quickly, then!

Susanna
If you wish to hear the rest,
dismiss your suspicions
which do me wrong.

Figaro
I must hear the rest,
though I am chilled with
doubts and suspicion.

Susanna
Dismiss your suspicions, etc.

Figaro
Though I am chilled, etc.
Susanna
Or bene, ascolta e taci.

Figaro
Parla, che c'è di nuovo?

Susanna
Il signor Conte,
stanco d'andar cacciando
le straniere bellezze forestiere,
vuole ancor nel castello,
ritentar la sua sorte;
n'è già di sua Consorte,
bada bene, appetito gli viene.

Figaro
E di chi dunque?

Susanna
Della tua Susannetta.

Figaro
Di te?

Susanna
Di me medesma, ed ha speranza
ch'al nobil suo progetto
utilissima sia tal vicinanza.

Figaro
Bravo! Tiriamo avanti.

Susanna
Queste le grazie son,
questa la cura ch'egli prende di te,
della tua sposa.

Figaro
O guarda un po',

Susanna
Now listen quietly.

Figaro
Tell me what is happening.

Susanna
My lord,
weary of pursuing
beauties from far and near
wishes to try his luck
once again in the castle.
But his appetite is not whetted
by his wife, make no mistake.

Figaro
Who is it, then?

Susanna
Your little Susanna.

Figaro
You?

Susanna
Myself, and he hopes
to further his noble plan
by having us near him.

Figaro
Bravo! Tell me more.

Susanna
Hence the gracious concern
which he lavishes on you
and your bride-to-be.

Figaro
Well, well,
che carità pelosa.

Susanna
Chetati, or viene il meglio;
don Basilio, mio maestro di canto
e suo factotum, nel darmi la lezione
mi ripete ogni di questa canzone.

Figaro
Chi! Basilio? oh bibrante!

Susanna
E tu credevi,
che fosse la mia dote
merito del tuo bel muso?

Figaro
Me n'era lusingato.

Susanna
Ei la destina per ottener da me
certe mezz'ore
che il diritto feudale . . .

Figaro
Come! ne' i feudi suoi
non l'ha il Conte abolito?

Susanna
Ebben, ora è pentito,
e par che tenti riscattarlo
da me.

Figaro
Bravo! mi piace;
che tanto signori Conte!
Ci vogliamo divertir,
trovato avete . . .
(A bell rings.)

a sprat to catch a mackerel!

Susanna
Hush, now comes the best part;
Don Basilio, my singing teacher and
his factotum, during lessons informs
me daily of the Count's desire.

Figaro
Who! Basilio? The rogue!

Susanna
And did you believe
that my dowry was the
reward for your handsome face?

Figaro
I flattered myself I deserved it.

Susanna
His object is to claim from me
those half-hours of pleasure
which feudal privilege . . .

Figaro
What! Has not my lord
abolished such rights on his estates?

Susanna
He regrets it now, it seems,
and is trying to redeem his right
from me.

Figaro
Bravo! I like that!
How kind of my lord!
We'll have some fun out of this!
You've found . . .
(A bell rings.)
Figaro
Chi suona? la Contessa.

Susanna
Addio, addio, Figaro bello.

Figaro
Coraggio, mio tesoro.

Susanna
E tu, cervello.
(Susanna kisses him and goes off.)

Figaro
Bravo, signor padrone!
Ora incomincio a capire
il mistero, e a veder schietto
tutto il vostro progetto.
A Londra, è vero?
Voi ministro, io
corrispet, e la Susanna,
segreta ambasciatrice.
Non sarà, Figaro il dice.

Susanna
Goodbye, goodbye, sweet Figaro.

Figaro
Courage, my treasure.

Susanna
And you, use your brains.
(Susanna kisses him and goes off.)

Figaro
Bravo, my master!
Now I’m beginning to understand
the mystery, and see your plan
quite plainly.
We’re off to London, are we?
You as ambassador, I as
your courier, and Susanna
as “secret attaché.”
Never, says Figaro here and now.

A
Se vuol ballare, signor Contino,
Il chitarrino le suonerò, sl.
Se vuol venire nella mia scuola,
La capriola le insegnèrò, sl.
Saprò, ma piano piano
Meglio ogni arcano
Dissimulando scoprir potrò.

B
L’arte schermendo,
L’arte adorando,

A
If you wish to dance, my dear Count
I’ll play the guitar, oh yes!
If you’ll come to my school
I’ll teach you to scheme
I’ll deal with you . . . but softly . . .
by pretense I shall be better able
to discover every secret.

B
But parrying artfulness
with artfulness,
Di qua punendo, di là scherzando,
Tutte le macchine, rovesciò.

A'
Se vuol ballare, etc.
(He goes off.)

now pricking, now feinting jokingly
I shall upset all his intrigues.

A'
If you wish to dance, etc.
(He goes off.)

---

(Bartolo and Marcellina enter.)

Recitative

Bartolo
Ed aspettaste il giorno
fissato per le nozze,
a parlarmi di questo?

Marcellina
Io non mi perdo, dottor mio,
di coraggio, per romper de' sponsali
più avanzati di questo.
bastò spesso un pretesto; ed egli
ha meco, oltre questo contratto
certi impegni... so io... basta!
Conviene la Susanna attenir,
convien con arte impuntigliarla
a rifiutare il Conte;
egli per vendicarsi
prenderà il mio partito,
e Figaro così fa mio marito.

Bartolo
Bene, io tutto farò.
Senza riserve, tutto a me palesate.
(Aside)
Avrei pur gusto di dar in moglie
la mia serva antica,
a chi mi fece un di
rapir l'amica.
NO. 4 ARIA

La vendetta, oh, la vendetta e un piacer servato ai savi. L’obliar l’onte, gli oltraggi è bassezza, è ognor viltà. Coll’astuzia, coll’arguzia col giudizio, col criterio si potrebbe, il fatto è serio; ma credete si farà. Se tutto il codice dovessi volgere, se tutto l’indice dovessi leggere, con un equivoco, con un sinonimo, qualche garbuglio si troverà. Tutta Siviglia conosce Bartolo, il birbo Figaro vinto sarà.
(Bartolo goes off.)

Vengeance, ah, vengeance is a pleasure reserved for the wise; to forget affronts and outrage is ever baseness and cowardice. With cunning and acumen, with common sense and discretion, it can be satisfied. A difficult matter. But believe me, it shall be done. If I have to turn inside out the legal code, if I have to read the whole index with some ambiguity, some synonym, I’ll find a way to confound him. All Seville knows Bartolo. That knave Figaro shall be outwitted.
(Bartolo goes off.)

(Cherubino enters.)

Cherubino
Susanetta, sei tu?

Susanna
Son io, cosa volete?

Cherubino
Ah, cor mio, che accidente!

Susanna
Cor vostro? Cosa avvenne?

Cherubino
Il Conte ieri, perché

(Cherubino enters.)

Cherubino
Dear Susanna, is it you?

Susanna
"I‘is I. What do you want?

Cherubino
Ah, my sweetheart, what a misfortune!

Susanna
Your sweetheart? What’s happened?

Cherubino
Yesterday, because the Count
trovommi sol con Barbarina, 
il congedo mi diece; 
e se la Contessa, 
la mia bella commare, 
grazia non m’intercede, 
io vado via, io non ti vedo più, 
Susanna mia.

Susanna 
Non vedete piú me? Bravo! 
Ma dunque non piú per la Contessa 
secreamente il vostro cor sospira?

Cherubino 
Ah, che troppo rispetto 
ella m’ispira! 
Felice te, che puoi 
vederla quando vuoi, 
che la vesti il mattino, 
che la sera la spogli, 
che le metti gli spilloni, 
i merletti . . . 
a! se in tuo loco . . .

Non so piú cosa son, 
cosa faccio, or di foco, 
or sono di ghiaccio, ogni 
donna cangiare di colore, 
ogni donna mi fa palpitare. 
Solo ai nomi d’amore di dilettro, 
mi si turbà, mi s’altera il petto, 
e a parlare mi sforza d’amore 
un desio ch’io non posso spiegar.
Non so piú, etc. 
Parlo d’amor vegliando, 
parlo d’amore sognando, all’acqua, 
all’ombra, ai monti, 
ai fiori, all’erbe, ai fonti, 
all’eco, all’aria, ai venti,

found me alone with Barbarina, 
he decided to send me away; 
and if my beautiful godmother 
the Countess does not 
intercede on my behalf 
I shall go away and never 
see you again, my Susanna.

Susanna 
You won’t see me again. Bravo! 
But does your heart sigh no more 
in secret for the Countess?

Cherubino 
Ah, she inspires me with 
too much respect! 
Happy you, who can 
see her when you wish, 
you dress her in the morning, 
help her to undress at night, 
busy yourself with her pins 
and her lace . . . 
a! If I were in your place . . .

NO. 6 ARIA 
I no longer know what I am, 
what I’m doing, now I’m 
feverish, now I’m chilled; every 
woman makes me change color, 
or makes me tremble with emotion. 
The very words “love” and “delight” 
excite me and make my heart race. 
And I am forced to speak of love 
by a desire that I cannot explain. 
I no longer know, etc. 
I speak of love waking, 
I speak of love dreaming, to the 
water, the shadow, the mountains, to 
the flowers, the grass, the fountains, 
to the echo, the air, the winds.
che il suon de' vani accenti
portano via con se . . .
Parlo d'amor, etc.
E se non ho chi m'oda,
parlo d'amor con me.

which waft away with them
the sound of my fruitless words . . .
I speak of love, etc.
And if no one is there to listen,
I speak of love to myself.

---

Recitative

Cherubino
Ah, son perduto . . . il Conte!

Susanna
Oh, me meschina!
(The Count comes in as Cherubino hides behind the chair.)

Count Almaviva
Susanna, come sembri agitata e confusa.

Susanna
Signor, io chiedo scusa, ma,
se mai qui sorpresa . . .
per carità partite.

Count
Un momento e ti lascio.
Odi.

Susanna
Non odo nulla.

Count
Due parole: tu sai che ambasciatore
a Londre il Re mi dichiarò.

Di condur meco Figaro destinai.
Susanna
Signor, se osassi...

Count
Parla, mia cara, e con quel dritto ch'oggi prendi su me, finché tu vivi chiedi, imponi, prescrivi.

Susanna
Lasciatemi, Signor, dritti non prendo, non ne vo', non ne intendo. Oh, me infelice!

Count
Ah, no, Susanna, io ti vo' far felice! Tu ben sai quant'io t'amo; a te Basilio tutto già disse. Or senti, se per pochi momenti meco in giardin, sull'imbrunir del giorno... Ah, per questo favore io pagherei.

Susanna
My lord, if I dared...

Count
Speak, my dear, and with that right which you have from me, while you live, ask, command and dispose of me.

Susanna
Leave me, my lord, I claim no rights, nor wish nor understand them. How unhappy I am!

Count
Ah, non, Susanna, I want to make you happy! You know how much I love you, Basilio has already told you. If you would only, for a few moments meet me in the garden at dusk, Oh, I would pay for such a favor.

Cherubino
Perdono, mio Signor!

Count
Nol meritate.

Susanna
Egli è ancora fanciullo.

Count
Men di quel che tu credi.

Cherubino
Forgive me, my lord.

Count
You don't deserve it.

Susanna
He's only a child.

Count
Less so than you think.
Cherubino
È ver, manca;
ma dal mio labbro affine . . .

Count
(Hastily interrupting him)
Ben, bene; io vi perdono;
anzi farò di più: vacante è un posto
d'uffizial nel reggimento mio;
io scelgo voi, partite tosto,
addio.

Susanna, Figaro
Ah, fin domani sol.

Count
No, parta tosto.

Cherubino
A ubbidirvi, Signor,
on già disposto.

Count
Via, per l'ultima volta
la Susanna abbracciate.
(Aside)
Inaspettato è il colpo.
(The Count goes off.)

Figaro
Ehi, capitano, a me pure la mano.
(Aside to Cherubino)
Io vo' parlarti prìa che tu parta.
(Aloud)
Addio piccolo Cherubino!
Come cangia in un punto
il tuo destino!

Cherubino
I was at fault;
but never from my lips . . .

Count
(Hastily interrupting him)
All right, all right, I pardon you;
I'll do more: there is a vacancy
for an officer in my regiment:
it is yours. You leave at once.
Goodbye.

Susanna, Figaro
Oh, let him stay until tomorrow.

Count
No, he leaves at once.

Cherubino
My lord, I am ready
to obey your command.

Count
Come, for the last time:
kiss Susanna.
(Aside)
An unexpected blow for them.
(The Count goes off.)

Figaro
Well, captain, give me your hand.
(Aside to Cherubino)
I want to speak to you before you go.
(Aloud)
Goodbye little Cherubino!
How your destiny changes
in a mere moment!
NO. 9 ARIA

A
Non più andrai,
farfallone amoroso,
notte e giorno d’intorno girando,
delle belle turbando il riposo,
Narcisotto, Adonis d’amor.

B
Non più avrai questi bei pennacchini,
quel cappello leggero e galante,
quella chioma, quell’aria brillante,
quell’ermiglio donnesco color!
Non più avrai, etc.

A
Non più andrai, etc.

C
Fra guerrieri, professi Bacch! 
Gran mustacchi, stretto sacco,
schioppo in spalla, sciabola al fianco,
collo dritto, muso franco,
o un gran casco o un gran turbante,
molto onor, poco contante.
Ed in vece del fandango,
una marcia per il fango,
per montagne, per valloni,
colle nevi e i solfioni,
al concerto di tromboni,
di bombardiere, di cannoni,
che le palle in tutti i tuoni,
all’orecchio fan fischiare.
Non più avrai, etc.

A
Non più andrai, etc.

C’ (coda)
Cherubino alla vittoria,
All gloria militare!

A
You’ll go no more,
amorous butterfly,
flitting about, night and day,
disturbing ladies’ rest,
little Narcissus, Adonis of love.

B
You’ll wear no more these plumes,
that smart and jaunty cap,
those curls, that dashing air,
that pink, effeminate complexion!
You’ll wear no more, etc.

A
You’ll go no more, etc.

C
Among warriors, by Jingo!
Bushy mustaches, tight tunic,
shoulder arms, saber at your side,
neck straight, serious-faced,
a big helmet or a big turban,
much honor, but little money.
And instead of the fandango,
a forced march through the mud,
over hill and dale,
in snow and scorching sun,
to the accompaniment of
trombones, mortars and cannons,
and cannonballs whistling
and whining in your ears.
You’ll wear no more, etc.

A
You’ll go no more, etc.

C’ (coda)
Cherubino, march to victory
and military glory!

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

NO. 10 CAVATINA

Countess
Porgi amor, qualche ristoro,
al mio duolo, a' miei sospiri!
O mi rendi il mio tesoro,
o mi lascia almen morir!
Porgi amor, etc.

Countess
Grant, o Love, a cure
for my grief and sighing!
Bring my darling back to me,
or at least let me die.
Grant, o Love, etc.

Recitative

Countess
Vieni, cara Susanna,
finiscimi l’istoria.

Susanna
È già finita.

Countess
Dunque volle sedurri?

Susanna
Oh, il signor Conte non fa tali
complimenti colle
donne mie pari;
egli venne a contratto di danari.

Countess
Ah! il crudele
più non m’ama.

Susanna
E come poi è geloso di voi?

Countess
Come lo sono i moderni mariti,
per sistema infedeli,

Countess
Come, dear Susanna,
finish your story.

Susanna
It’s already finished.

Countess
So he wanted to seduce you?

Susanna
Oh, my lord does not pay such
compliments to
women of my station;
he made a business proposition.

Countess
Ah! The cruel wretch
no longer loves me.

Susanna
Why, then, is he jealous of you?

Countess
He is like all modern husbands,
willfully unfaithful,
per genio capricciosi, e per orgoglio
poi tutti gelosi. Ma se
Figaro t'ama, ei sol potria . . .

(Enter Figaro singing)

Figaro
La la la la la . . .

Susanna
Eccolo.

naturally capricious and yet
proudly jealous. But if Figaro
loves you, he alone could . . .

(Enter Figaro singing)

Figaro
La la la la la la . . .

Susanna
Here he is.

NO. 11 CANZONA

Cherubino

Voi che sapete
che cosa è amor,
Donne, vedete s'io l'ho nel cor.
Quello ch'io provo vi ridirò,
è per me nuovo,
capir non so.
Sento un affetto pien di desir,
ch'ora è diletto,
ch'ora è martir.
Gelo, e poi sento
l'alma avvampar
e in un momento torno a gelar;
ricerco un bene fuori di me,
non so ch'il tiene,
non so cos'è, sospiro
e gemo senza voler,
palpitò e tremo senza saper.
Non trovo pace notte nè di,
ma pur mi piace languir cosi.
Voi che sapete, etc.

Cherubino

You ladies who are acquainted
with love,
tell me if I have it in my heart.
What I experience, I repeat,
is something new to me which
I cannot understand.
I feel a strange desire
which in turn delights
and tortures me.
One moment I freeze,
the next I'm all aflame
then in a second I'm freezing again.
I seek a pleasure outside of me
I know not who can give it
or what it is, I sigh
and mourn for no good reason,
I shiver and shake, I know not why
I know no peace, night and day,
and yet I love my languishing.
You ladies who are acquainted, etc.
Countess
Bravo, che bella voce, io non sapea che cantaste sì bene.

Susanna
Oh, in verità, egli fa tutto ben quello che fa. Presto a noi, bel soldato; Figaro v'informò . . .

Cherubino
Tutto mi disse.

Susanna
(measuring herself by him)
Lasciatemi veder; andrò benissimo: siamo d'uguaie statura—giù quel manto.

Countess
(to Susanna)
Che fai?

Susanna
Niente paura.

Countess
E se qualcuno entrasse . . .

Susanna
Entrì, che mal facciamo?
La porta chiuderò, ma come poi acconciargli i capelli?

Countess
Una mia cuffia prendi nel gabinetto, presto!
(Susanna goes out.)
Che carra è quella?

Countess
Bravo, you've an attractive voice, I never knew you could sing so well.

Susanna
Oh, truly, everything he attempts he does well. Come, brave soldier, I imagine Figaro told you . . .

Cherubino
He told me all.

Susanna
(measuring herself by him)
Let me see; it will be just right: we're exactly the same height off with that coat.

Countess
(to Susanna)
What are you doing?

Susanna
No need to worry.

Countess
But if someone should come in . . .

Susanna
Let them, what harm are we doing? I'll close the door. But what can we do about his hair?

Countess
Fetch one of my bonnets from my closet. Quickly!
(Susanna goes out.)
What is that document?
Cherubino
La patente.

Countess
Che sollecita gentile!

Cherubino
L’ebbi or da Basilio.

Countess
Della fretta obblato hanno il sigillo!

Susanna
(returning)
Il sigillo di che?

Countess
Della patente.

Susanna
Cospetto! Che premura!
Ecco la cuffia.

Countess
Spiccianti; va bene;
miserabili noi se il Conte viene!

Susanna
Venite inginocchiatevi,
restate fermo li.
Pian piano or via giratevi.
Bravo! va ben coa.
La faccia ora volgetemi
Oli, quelgli occhi a me.

Cherubino
My commission.

Countess
They’re in a great hurry!

Cherubino
I received it just now from Basilio.

Countess
In their hurry, they’ve forgotten the seal.

Susanna
(returning)
What seal?

Countess
On the commission.

Susanna
Mercy! What haste!
Here is the bonnet.

Countess
Hurry; yes, that’s right,
what a plight we should be in if my lord came in now!

Susanna
Come, kneel down
and keep quite still
Now turn slowly round.
Bravo! That’s it.
Now turn your face towards me.
No, look at me.

etc.

NO. 12 ARIA
Cherubino
La parente.

Countess
Che sollecita gentile!

Cherubino
L’ebbi or da Basilio.

Countess
Della fretta obblato hanno il sigillo!

Susanna
(returning)
Il sigillo di che?

Countess
Della patente.

Susanna
Cospetto! Che premura!
Ecco la cuffia.

Countess
Spicciti; va bene;
miserabili noi se il Conte viene!

Cherubino
My commission.

Countess
They’re in a great hurry!

Cherubino
I received it just now from Basilio.

Countess
In their hurry, they’ve forgotten the seal.

Susanna
(returning)
What seal?

Countess
On the commission.

Susanna
Mercy! What haste!
Here is the bonnet.

Countess
Hurry; yes, that’s right,
what a plight we should be in if
my lord came in now!

Susanna
Venite inginocchiati,
restate fermo li.
Pian piano or via giratevi.
Bravo! va ben coa.
La faccia ora volgetemi
Ola, quelgli occhi a me.

Susanna
Come, kneel down
and keep quite still
Now turn slowly round.
Bravo! That’s it.
Now turn your face towards me.
No, look at me.

etc.
Susanna, Cherubino
... Le porte, son serate,
Che mai sarà?

Cherubino
Qui perder sì non giova.

Susanna
V'uccide, se vi trova.

Cherubino
Veggiamo un po' qui fuori:
Dà proprio nel giardino.

Susanna
Fermate Cherubino, fermate,
per pietà!

Cherubino
Qui perder sì non giova.

Susanna
Fermate, Cherubino!

Cherubino
M'uccide, se mi trova.

Susanna
Tropp'alto per un salto, ...

Cherubino
Lasciami, ...

Susanna
... fermate, per pietà!

Cherubino
... lasciami!
Pria di nuocerle
nel foco volerei.

Susanna, Cherubino
... The doors are locked,
whatever is to be done?

Cherubino
I must find a way out.

Susanna
He'll kill you if he finds you.

Cherubino
What about the window?
It looks on to the garden.

Susanna
Stop, Cherubino, stop,
for pity's sake.

Cherubino
I must find a way out.

Susanna
Stop, Cherubino!

Cherubino
He'll kill me if he finds me.

Susanna
It's too high to jump, ...

Cherubino
Leave me alone, ...

Susanna
... stop, for pity's sake!

Cherubino
... leave me alone!
Before I'd harm her,
I'd leap into the fire.
Abbraccio te per lei.  
Addio!
(He kisses Susanna.)
Cos’è si fa.
(He jumps out of the window.)

Susanna
Ei va a perire, o Dei!
Fermate, per pietà!
Fermate, fermate!
(She runs to the window and looks out after Cherubino)
Oh, guarda il demonietto
come fugge!
È già un miglio lontano; ma non
perdiamci invano;
entriam nel gabinetto;
venga poi lo smargiasso,
io qui l’aspetto.

Give her this kiss from me.
Goodbye!
(He kisses Susanna.)
This is how to do it.
(He jumps out of the window.)

Susanna
He’ll kill himself, O heavens!
Stop for pity’s sake!
Stop, stop!
(She runs to the window and looks out after Cherubino)
O, look at the little rogue,
how he runs!
He’s a mile off already; but there’s
no time to lose;
into the closet;
then let the braggart come,
I’m waiting here for him.

ACT TWO

NO. 15 FINALE

Part I: Allegro, E-flat Major

Count
(screaming at the closet door)
Esci ormai, garzon malnato!
Sciacurato, non tardar!

Countess
Ah! signore, quel furore
per lui fammi il cor tremar.

Count
E d’opporvi ancor osate?

Count
(screaming at the closet door)
Out you come, you ill-bred brat,
quickly now, you little wretch!

Countess
Ah, my lord, your rage
makes my heart tremble for him.

Count
And do you still dare to oppose me?
Countess
No, sentite.

Count
Via parlate.

Countess
Giuro al ciel ch’ogni
sospetto e lo stato
in che il trovate,
sciolto il collo, nudo il petto...

Count
Scoalto il collo! nudo il petto!
Seguitate.

Countess
Per vestir
femminice spoglie...

Count
Ah! comprendo, indegna moglie,
mi vo’ tosto vendicar.

Countess
Mi fa torto quel trasporto, ...

Count
Ah! compiendo, indegna moglie, ...

Countess
... M’oltraggiate
a dubitar;

Count
... Mi vo’ tosto vendicar; ...

Countess
Mi fa torto quel trasporto, etc.

Countess
No, but hear me.

Count
Speak and quickly.

Countess
I swear before heaven that any
suspicion and the state
in which you find him, his
collar undone and his chest bare...

Count
Collar undone! Chest bare!
Go on.

Countess
To dress him up as a
young woman...

Count
Ah, I understand, unworthy wife,
I will soon be revenged.

Countess
This fury does me wrong...

Count
Ah! I understand, unworthy wife, ...

Countess
... you outrage me
by your doubting.

Count
... I will soon be revenged.

Countess
This fury does me wrong, etc.
Count
Ah, comprendo
indegna moglie, etc.
... Qua la chiave.

Countess
Egli è innocente!

Count
Qua la chiave!

Countess
Egli è innocente!
Voi sapete.

Count
Non so niente!
Va lontan dagli occhi miei.
Un'infida, un'empia sei,
e mi cerchi d'infamarmi.

Countess
Vado, sì, ma . . .

Count
Non ascolto.

Countess
Ma . . .

Count
Non ascolto.

Countess
Non son rea!

Count
Vel leggo in volto!
Mora, mora!

Count
Ah! I understand,
unworthy wife, etc. . . .
... Give me the key.

Countess
He is innocent!

Count
Give me the key!

Countess
He is innocent!
You know he is.

Count
I know nothing of the sort!
Away out of my sight.
You are faithless and wicked,
and seek to disgrace me.

Countess
I'll go, yes, but . . .

Count
I'll not hear you.

Countess
But . . .

Count
I'll not hear you.

Countess
I'm not guilty!

Count
I can read it in your face!
Die, die!
Countess
ah! la cieca gelosia . . .

Count
Mora, mora!

Countess
. . . qualche eccesso gli fa far.

Count
Mora, mora e più non sia, . . .

Countess
Ah! la cieca gelosia, . . .

Count
. . . ria cagion, . . .

Countess
. . . qualche eccesso gli fa far!

Count
. . . ria cagion del mio penar! . . .
. . . Ah! comprendo! . . .

Countess
Mi fa torto . . .

Count
. . . Indegna moglie, . . .

Countess
. . . quel trasporto!

Count
. . . mora, etc.

Countess
Ah! Blind jealousy . . .

Count
Die, die!

Countess
. . . will goad him to some desperate deed.

Count
Die, die and be no more, . . .

Countess
Oh, blind jealousy . . .

Count
. . . deceitful cause, . . .

Countess
. . . will goad him to some desperate deed!

Count
. . . deceitful cause of my suffering! . . .
. . . Ah! I understand! . . .

Countess
This fury, . . .

Count
. . . Unworthy wife, . . .

Countess
. . . wrongs me!

Count
. . . die, etc.
Countess

Ah! la cieca gelosia, etc.
(The Count draws his sword, opens the door . . . and finds Susanna standing there.)

Count

(astonished)
Susanna!

Countess

(equally astonished)
Susanna!

Count

(astonished)
Susanna!

Countess

(equally astonished)
Susanna!

Part II: Molto Andante, B-flat Major

Susanna

Signore!
Cos'è quel stupore?
Il brando prendete,
il paggio uccidete,
quel paggio malnato,
vedetelo qua.

Count

(aside)
Che scola!

Countess

(aside)
Che storia è . . .
. . . mai questa, . . .

Count

La testa . . .

Susanna

My lord!
Why so dumbfounded?
Take your sword,
and put the page to death,
that ill-bred page,
you see him here before you.

Count

(aside)
What sly minxes!

Countess

(aside)
What fantasy . . .
. . . can this be, . . .

Count

My head . . .
Susanna

(aside)
Confusa han la testa,
non sa' come va. . . .

Countess

. . . Susanna v'è là . . .

Count

. . . girando mi v'ag. . .
. . . Sei sola?

Susanna

Guardate! Qui accosso sarà.

Count

Guardiamo!

Count, Susanna

Guardate/Guardiamo!
Qui accosso sarà.

Susanna

(aside)
They are so bewildered,
they're quite at a loss. . . .

Countess

. . . Susanna is there! . . .

Count

. . . is reeling . . .
. . . Are you alone?

Susanna

Look! Perhaps he's hidden here.

Count

Let us see!

Count, Susanna

Look!/Let us see!
Perhaps he's hidden here.

Part III: Allegro, B-flat Major

Countess

(aside to Susanna)
Susanna, son morta,
il fiato mi manca.

Susanna

(aside to Countess)
Più lieta, più franca,
in salvo è di già.

Count

(to Countess)
Che sbaglio mai presi.
Appena lo credo.

Countess

(aside to Susanna)
Susanna, I'm half dead,
I can hardly breathe.

Susanna

(aside to Countess)
Put your mind at ease and be gay,
he's safe by now.

Count

(to Countess)
To think I made such a mistake.
I can scarcely believe it.
Se a torto v'offesi,
perdoni vi chiedo,
ma far burda simile
è poi crudeità.

**Countess, Susanna**
Le vostre follie
non m'ertan piétà.

**Count**
Io v'amò!

**Countess**
Nol dite!

**Count**
Vel giuro!

**Countess**
Menite!
Son l'empia, l'infida
che ognora v'inganna.

**Count**
Quell'ira, Susanna,
m'aira a calmar.

**Susanna**
Così si condanna
chi può sospettar.

**Countess**
Adunque la fede
D'un anima amante
si fiera mercede
doveva sperar?

**Count**
Quell'ira, Susanna, *etc.*

---

If I wronged you,
I ask you pardon,
but to play such a trick
was cruel.

**Countess, Susanna**
Your follies
do not deserve forgiveness.

**Count**
I love you!

**Countess**
Do not say it!

**Count**
I swear it!

**Countess**
You are lying!
I am the faithless, wicked wife
who is always deceiving you.

**Count**
Susanna, help me
to calm her anger.

**Susanna**
Thus are punished
those who are suspicious.

**Countess**
Must the constancy
of a loving heart
such harsh reward
expect?

**Count**
Susanna, help me, *etc.*
**Susanna**
Così si condanna, etc.  
*(to Countess)*  
Signora!

**Count**
Rosina!

**Countess**
Crudele!  
*l'in quella non sono.*  
Ma il miser o oggetto  
del vostro abbandono  
che avete diletto  
di far disperar.

**Susanna, Count**
Confuso, pentito, è son  
troppo punito, . . .

**Countess**
Crudele! crudele! soffrir a  
gran torto, . . .

**Susanna, Count**
. . . abbiate pietà, abbiate pietà!

**Countess**
. . . quest' alma non sa, ah, no,  
quest' alma non sal!

**Count**
Ma il paggio rinchiuso?

**Countess**
Fu sol per provarvi.

**Count**
Ma i tremiti, i palpiti?

**Susanna**
Thus are punished, etc.  
*(to Countess)*  
My lady!

**Count**
Rosina!

**Countess**
Cruel one!  
*I'm no longer your Rosina,*  
*but the miserable object*  
of your abandon  
*whom you have been pleased*  
to make suffer.

**Susanna, Count**
Confused, repentent, I've/ he's  
been punished enough, . . .

**Countess**
Cruel one, my heart  
cannot bear . . .

**Susanna, Count**
. . . have pity, have pity!

**Countess**
. . . the great wrong you  
do me!

**Count**
But you said the page was  
shut in there?

**Countess**
It was only to test you.

**Count**
But your trembling, your anxiety?
Countess
Fu sol per burlarvi.

Count
Ma un foglio à barbaro?

Susanna, Countess
Di Figaro è il foglio,
e a voi per Basilio.

Count
Ah, perfidi. Io voglio . . .

Susanna, Countess
Perdono non merita
chi agli altri nool dà.

Count
Ebben se vi piace,
comune è la pace.
Rosina inflessibile
con me non sanò.

Countess
Ah, quanto Susanna,
son dolce di core!
Di donne al furor
chi può crederà?

Susanna
Cogli uman, signora,
girate, volgete,
vedrete che ognora
si cade poi là.

Count
Guardtemil!

Countess
Ingrato!

Countess
It was only a joke.

Count
But such a heartless note?

Susanna, Countess
The note was from Figaro,
and Basilio delivered it.

Count
Ah, the villains. I'll . . .

Susanna, Countess
He deserves not forgiveness
who forgives not others.

Count
Well then, if you wish,
let us make peace all round.
Rosina will not be adamant
with me.

Countess
Ah, Susanna, how
soft-hearted I am!
How can a woman's wrath
ever be taken seriously?

Susanna
With men, my lady,
whatever you do, and wherever you
turn, you will see that always
you end up like that.

Count
Look at me!

Countess
For shame, sir!
Count
Guardatemi, ho torto,
e mi pento.

Susanna, Countess, Count
Da questo momento,
quest’alma a conoscere la/mi/vi
apprender potrà, etc.

Count
Look at me, I was wrong,
and I am sorry.

Susanna, Countess, Count
From this moment,
he/I will be able to learn
to appreciate her/me/you, etc.

Part IV: Allegro, G Major

(Figaro enters.)

Figaro
Signore, di fuori
son già i suonatori:
le trombe sentite,
i pifferi udite;
tra canti, tra balli
de’ vostri vassalli,
corriamo, voliamo
le nozze a compir.

Count
Pian, piano, men fretta.

(Figaro enters.)

Figaro
La turba m’aspetta.

Count
Pian, piano, men fretta,
un dubbio toglietemi
in prìa di partir.

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
La cosa è scabrosa, . . .

Figaro
My lord, the musicians
are already outside:
hear the trumpets
and the pipes.
Mid the singing and dancing
of your retainers,
let us run, let us haste
to the wedding.

Count
Hush, hush, less hurry.

Figaro
The crowd awaits me.

Count
Hush, hush, less hurry;
relieve me of a doubt
before you go.

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
A delicate situation, . . .
Count
Con arte...

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
... Com'ha da finir? etc.

Count
... le carte convien qui scopir, etc.

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
... how will it end? etc.

Count
... play my cards carefully, etc.

Part V: Andante, C Major

Count
Conoscete, Signor Figaro, questo foglio chi vergò?

Figaro
No! non conosco!

Susanna
No! non conosci?

Figaro
No!

Countess
No! non conosci?

Figaro
No!

Count
No! non conosci?

Figaro
No!

Susanna, Countess, Count
No! non conosci?

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
Do you know, Master Figaro, who wrote this letter?

Figaro
I do not.

Susanna
You do not know?

Figaro
No!

Countess
You do not know?

Figaro
No!

Count
You do not know?

Figaro
No!

Susanna, Countess, Count
You do not know?
Figaro
No! No! No!

Susanna
E non desti a Don Basilio?

Countess
Per recarlo.

Count
Tu c’intendi?

Figaro
Oibò, oibò!

Susanna
E non sai del damerino . . .

Countess
. . . Che staserà nel giardino . . . ?

Count
Già capisci?

Figaro
Io non lo so.

Count
Cerchi invan difesa
e scusa,
il tuo ceffo già t’accusa,
vedo ben che vuoi mentir.

Figaro
Mente il ceffo, io già non mento.

Susanna, Countess
Il talento aguzzi invano, . . .
. . . Palesato abbiam l’arcano, . . .

Count
Do you understand now?

Figaro
No, I don’t.

Count
You look in vain for defense and excuse,
your face is giving you away,
I can see you are lying.

Figaro
My face, then, is lying, I am not.

Susanna, Countess
In vain you sharpen your wits, . . .
. . . we’ve told everything, . . .
Figaro
Mente il ceffo, io già non mento.

Susanna, Countess
... Non v'è nulla da ridir.

Count
Che rispondi?

Figaro
Niente, niente!

Count
Dunque accordi?

Figaro
Non accordo!

---

Figaro
My face, then, is lying, I am not.

Susanna, Countess
... You've nothing left to repeat.

Count
What's your answer?

Figaro
Nothing, nothing!

Count
You confess, then?

Figaro
No, I don't!
Part VII: Andante, B-flat Major

**Antonio**
Vostre dunque saran queste carte che perdete.

**Count**
Olà, porgile a me.

**Figaro**
Sono in trappola.

**Susanna, Countess**
Figaro, all'erta!

**Count**
Dite un po', questo foglio cos'è?

**Figaro**
Tosto, tosto, n'ho tante, aspettate.

**Antonio**
Sarà forse il sommario dei debiti?

**Figaro**
No, la lista degli osti.

**Count**
(to Figaro)
Parlate.
(to Antonio)
E tu lascialo.

**Susanna, Countess**
Lascialo e parti, etc.

**Figaro**
Lasciami e parti . . .

**Antonio**
These, then, will be your papers you lost.

**Count**
Here, give them to me.

**Figaro**
I'm trapped.

**Susanna, Countess**
Figaro, beware!

**Count**
Tell me, what is this paper?

**Figaro**
Just a moment, just a moment, I have so many, wait.

**Antonio**
Perhaps it's a list of your debts.

**Figaro**
No, a list of innkeepers, more likely.

**Count**
(to Figaro)
Speak up!
(to Antonio)
And you leave him alone.

**Susanna**
Leave him alone and go! etc.

**Figaro**
Leave me alone and go! . . .
Antonio
Parto sì, ma se torno a trovarvi, etc.

Figaro
... Vanne,
non temo di tel, etc.
(Antonio goes off.)

Count
(opening the papers)
Dunque?

Countess
(aside to Susanna)
Oh ciel, la patente del paggio!

Count
Dunque?

Susanna
(aside to Figaro)
Giusti Dci, la patente!

Count
Coraggio!

Figaro
O che testa!
Queste la patente
che poc'anzi il fanciullo
mi diede.

Count
Per che fare?

Figaro
Vi manca...

Count
Vi manca...

Antonio
I'll go, but if I catch you again, etc.

Figaro
... Be off with you,
I'm not afraid of you! etc.
(Antonio goes off.)

Count
(opening the papers)
Well?

Countess
(aside to Susanna)
Heavens, the page's commission!

Count
Well?

Susanna
(aside to Figaro)
Heavens, the commission!

Count
Come now!

Figaro
Oh, what a head!
It's the commission
which the boy gave me a
little while ago.

Count
What for?

Figaro
It needs...

Count
It needs...
Countess  
(aside to Susanna)  
Il suggello.  

Susanna  
(aside to Figaro)  
Il suggello.  

Count  
Rispondi!  

Figaro  
È l'usanza...  

Count  
Su via ti confondi?  

Figaro  
È l'usanza di porvi il suggello.  

Count  
Questo birbo mi toglie...  

Susanna  
Se mi salvo da...  

Count  
... il cervello...  

Susanna  
... questa tempesta, ...  

Countess  
Se mi salvo da...  

Figaro  
Shuffa invano e...  

Countess  
... questa tempesta, può non havvi naufragio per me, ...  

Countess  
(aside to Susanna)  
The seal.  

Susanna  
(aside to Figaro)  
The seal.  

Count  
Answer!  

Figaro  
It's usual...  

Count  
Come... you're confused?  

Figaro  
It's usual to seal the document.  

Count  
This knave will turn...  

Susanna  
If I weather...  

Count  
... my head...  

Susanna  
... this storm...  

Countess  
If I weather...  

Figaro  
He blusters in vain and...  

Countess  
... this storm, there will be no more shipwreck for me...  

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Count
... Tutto, tutto è un mistero per me, ...

Figaro
... la terro calpestu! Poverino, ne sa men di me, ...

Susanna, Countess
... Se mi salvo, etc.

Count
... questo birbo, etc.

Figaro
... Sbuffa invano, etc.
(Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo enter.)

Susanna, Countess
... If I weather, etc.

Count
... This knave, etc.

Figaro
... He blusters in vain, etc.
(Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo enter.)

---

Part VIII: Allegro Assai, E-flat Major

Marcellina, Basilio, Bartolo
Voi signor, che giusto siete, ci dovete ascoltar.

Countess, Susanna, Figaro
Son venuti a sconvorrmi, ...

Count
Son venuti a vendicarri, ...

Countess, Susanna, Figaro
... qual rimedio a ritrovati?

Count
... io mi sento a consolar.

Figaro
(to Count)
Son tre stolidi,

Marcellina, Basilio, Bartolo
You, my lord, who are just, must listen to us now.

Countess, Susanna, Figaro
They've come to thwart my plan, ...

Count
They've come to avenge me ... 

Countess, Susanna, Figaro
... what solution is there to be found?

Count
... How relieved I feel.

Figaro
(to Count)
These are three blockheads,
tre pazzi,  
cosa mai vengono a far?

**Count**  
Pian, pianin senza schiamazzi,  
dica ognun quel che gli par.

**Marcellina**  
Un impegno nuziale  
*(indicating Figaro)*  
ha costui con me contratto,  
e pretendendo che il contratto  
deva meco effettuar.

**Susanna, Countess, Figaro**  
Come? Come?

**Count**  
Olà, silenzio, silenzio, silenzio!  
Io son qui per giudicar.

**Bartolo**  
Io da lei scelto avvocato,  
vengo a far le sue difese,  
le legittime pretese,  
iø vi vengo a palesar.

**Susanna, Countess, Figaro**  
È un birbante!

**Count**  
Olà, silenzio!  
Io son qui per giudicar.

**Basilio**  
Io, com'uomo al mondo cognito,  
vengo qui per testimonio  
del promesso matrimonio  
con prezzina di danar.

three fools,  
whatever have they come to do?

**Count**  
Gently, gently, stop this fearful din!  
Let each state his case.

**Marcellina**  
This man has promised  
*(indicating Figaro)*  
to marry me  
and I claim that he must  
honor the contract.

**Susanna, Countess, Figaro**  
What? What?

**Count**  
Ho, silence, silence, silence!  
I'm here to judge.

**Bartolo**  
I, her chosen counsel,  
am here to defend her interests.  
Her legitimate claims  
I come to lay before you.

**Susanna, Countess, Figaro**  
He's a scoundrel!

**Count**  
Ho, silence!  
I'm here to judge.

**Basilio**  
I, as a man known in society,  
come here to testify  
to the promise of marriage,  
made against a loan of money.
How to Listen to and Understand Opera
Selective Bibliography

General Sources

Italian Opera

Mozart

Puccini

Strauss

Verdi

Wagner
Robert Greenberg, Ph.D.
Chairman, Department of Music History and Literature
San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Robert Greenberg has composed over 40 works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of Greenberg’s work have taken place in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, England, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and The Netherlands, where his “Child’s Play” for String Quartet was performed at the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam in 1993.

Dr. Greenberg holds degrees from Princeton University and the University of California at Berkeley, where he received a Ph.D. in music composition in 1984. His principal teachers were Edward Cone, Claudio Spies, Andrew Imbrie, and Olly Wilson. His awards include three Nicola De Lorenzo Prizes in composition, three Meet the Composer grants, and commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation of the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, XTET, and the Dancer’s Stage Ballet Company.

He is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he is chair of the Department of Music History and Literature and director of curriculum of the Adult Extension Division. He is creator, host, and lecturer for the San Francisco Symphony’s “Discovery Series.”

He has taught and lectured extensively across North America and Europe, speaking to such corporations and musical institutions as the Van Cliburn Foundation, Arthur Andersen, Bechtel Investments, the Shaklee Corporation, the University of California/Haas School of Business Executive Seminar, the Association of California Symphony Orchestras, the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras, and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco.

His work as a teacher and lecturer has been profiled in the Wall Street Journal, Inc. magazine, and the San Francisco Chronicle. He is an artistic co-director and board member of COMPOSERS INC. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the Innova label.

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How to Listen to and Understand Opera

Scope: This course is designed as a methodology, a guide to listening and understanding opera. For this reason it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the entire operatic repertory. Armed with the knowledge of opera gained from this course, however, the listener will be able to explore in greater depth the extraordinary and compelling world of opera for himself or herself. The listener will come to appreciate how music has the power to reveal truths beyond the spoken word; how opera is a unique marriage of words and music in which the whole is far greater than its parts. He or she will learn the reasons for opera’s enduring popularity.

The history of opera is traced from its beginning in the early 17th century to around 1924, with references to landmark operas, musical, cultural, and social developments, and historical events that influenced opera’s growth. We learn how operatic style and form have changed continuously throughout the history of European music, as they were influenced by political, social and cultural developments, and how different national languages and cultures have shaped their own types of opera and operatic style.

The course opens with one of the most powerful moments in opera: the dramatically loaded aria “Nessun dorma” (“No one shall sleep”) from Giacomo Puccini’s Turandot. We are exposed to opera’s unique incorporation of soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous music into an incredibly expressive and exciting whole that is far greater than the sum of its parts. This famous aria shows us the power of the composer in creating music that goes beyond the words of the libretto to evoke unspoken thoughts and feelings—that which cannot be said in words alone.

The study continues with a discussion of how music can flesh out a dramatic character and evoke the unconscious state. We are introduced to operatic archetypes such as Figaro and Carmen. We learn that the ancient Greeks revered music as a microcosm of all creation, believing music can change the face of nature and alter souls. The monophonic and, later, polyphonic music of the Middle Ages is examined. We see how the end of the absolute authority of the Roman Church encouraged the rise of secular and instrumental music. We examine the Renaissance, its rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman culture and the evolution of the madrigal, ultimately rejected in favor of a more expressive vocal medium: early opera. The renaissance intermezzo is discussed as the precursor of modern opera. The reforms of the Florentine Camerata are examined as they relate to the earliest operas. Part I of the course concludes with an analysis of the first successful attempt to combine words and music into musical drama, Monteverdi’s Orfeo of 1607.

In Part II we see how recitative, the essence of Monteverdi’s style, made music subservient to words and how, because of its forward-driving nature, recitative cannot express personal reflection. We learn how the invention of aria gave opera composers a powerful tool to stop the dramatic action for moments of self-reflection. Gluck’s reforms and his Orfeo ed Euridice of 1762 are addressed as the starting point for the modern opera repertory. The explosion of operas in the Golden Age/Dark Age of opera is discussed, along with the formulaic reforms of Pietro Metastasio (including his da capo structure for arias) and the vocal abuses that those reforms provoked. We learn how different voice types are assigned different roles. The rise of opera seria and its characteristics are discussed, along with an analysis of the second act of Mozart’s Idomeneo—opera seria transcendent.

The second part of this study continues with the development of opera buffa, from its origins in the popular folklore of the commedia dell’arte to its eventual replacement of opera seria. The role of Enlightenment progressives in this development is addressed and Mozart’s brilliant The Marriage of Figaro is discussed as one of the greatest contributions to the opera buffa genre.

Part III opens with a discussion of the bel canto style of opera. We see how the nature of the Italian language and culture gave rise to this type of opera, with its comic, predictable plots, one-dimensional characters, appealing melodies, and florid melodic embellishments. The highly pressurized business of opera in the 18th century is revealed, and we are introduced to Rossini’s The Barber of Seville of 1816 as the quintessential bel canto opera.

Giuseppe Verdi is the focus of Lectures 19 through 22 of Part III. His career is summarized, and his operatic inheritance is reviewed. We learn how Verdi broke the bel canto mold; how he dominated Italian opera for over half a century by virtue of his lyricism, his emphasis on human emotions and psychological insight, and his use of the orchestra and parlante to drive the dramatic action and maintain musical continuity. Verdi’s Otello is discussed as one of the greatest operas of all time.

Part III of this course concludes with an examination of French opera. We learn how it developed as a distinctly different genre from Italian opera, shaped as it was by the French language, culture and political history. We learn
how Jean-Baptiste Lully set the foundation for a French language operatic tradition, and how his greatest contribution was the design of a recitative style suited to the French language. The reforms of Jean-Philippe Rameau are discussed, along with the influence of Enlightenment progressives such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who championed a more natural operatic style. Christoph Willibald von Gluck’s position as the model for the next generation of French composers is reviewed. Finally, the subject of 19th-century French opera is addressed. Grand opera, opéra comique and lyric opera are examined as distinctive French genres and Act 2 of Bizet’s dramatically powerful *Carmen* is analyzed.

Part IV opens with an examination of the rise of German opera, with its roots in German folklore. We discover how German singspiel grew from humble origins as a lower class entertainment to high art with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *The Rescue from the Harem* (1782) and *The Magic Flute* of 1791. We learn how 19th-century German opera grew out of the tradition of singspiel and how Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz* established 19th-century German opera.

The discussion of German opera continues with an examination of Richard Wagner: the man, his personal beliefs, musical theories, and operatic innovations. We see how Wagner went back to the ancient Greek ideal for inspiration and how he conceived the idea of an all-encompassing art work, or music drama, in which the role of the orchestra is that of a purveyor of unspoken truths. We are introduced to Wagner’s concept of leitmotif and his revolutionary use of dissonance. Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* is discussed as the most influential composition of the 19th century, aside from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

The subject of late romantic German opera is addressed and exemplified by Richard Strauss and his controversial opera *Salome*. We go on to an overview of Russian opera and the concept of nationalism. The late development of Russian opera is outlined from Mikhail Glinka’s *Ruslan and Lyudmila* to Modest Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*. We see how the Russian language shaped the syllabic vocal style of Russian opera and how Russian rhythms, with their asymmetrical groupings of accents, are distinct from Italian, German and French rhythms.

The course draws to its conclusion with an overview of opera verismo, a 19th/20th century genre that favors depictions of the darker side of the human condition. The pivotal second act of Giacomo Puccini’s *Tosca* is discussed as a transcendent example of opera verismo. Finally, we hear part of a scene from Richard Strauss’s *Capriccio* in which the essence of opera is debated. Is it words or is it music? It is neither. It is an indefinable combination of both, with the whole greater than the parts.
Lectures Seventeen and Eighteen
The Bel Canto Style and Rossini’s
The Barber of Seville

Scope:

Lectures 17 and 18 discuss bel canto, the dominant style of 19th century Italian opera. We learn that its essential features of directly appealing melodies and florid melodic embellishments are suited to the Italian language. We also discover that bel canto operas are based on comic, predictable plots and one-dimensional characters to indulge the contemporary Italian taste for pure entertainment. Our frame of reference is the landmark bel canto opera, The Barber of Seville, by the most important Italian composer of bel canto operas, Gioacchino Rossini.

Outline

I. The nature of early 19th century Italian opera.
   A. By the early 19th century, opera in Italy was widely popular.
   B. The popularity of Italian opera led it to become a conservative, highly profitable commercial enterprise. Italian composers were not so susceptible to the romanticism sweeping the rest of Europe. Instead, they focused more attention on opera, often to the exclusion of other musical forms. They did not experiment to the extent that their French and German neighbors did. All of this led to a conservative type of opera.
   C. The type of opera in favor was the opera buffa, or comic opera.
   D. The melodic style of these predominantly comic, early-19th-century Italian operas was direct, tuneful, and, in every sense of the word, popular. It is known as the bel canto style.
   E. The bel canto opera also favored directness and simplicity of harmonic language and character development and a predictable comic and dramatic set up.
   F. The principal composers of bel canto operas:
      2. Vincenzo Bellini (1801–'35).
   G. The business of early 19th century bel canto opera.
      1. Composers and librettists traveled from city to city creating operas in as little as two weeks before moving on.
      2. In order to meet their deadlines, composers would often reuse in newly commissioned operas music written for earlier ones.
      3. Operas could be written quickly and in profusion thanks to widely accepted formulas for composing stock material.

II. Rossini’s The Barber of Seville: gestation and performance background.
   A. The Barber has been a favorite since its composition in 1816.
   B. Rossini’s contract for The Barber was typical for the time.
      1. The libretto was chosen by the local impresario.
      2. Rossini had to agree to any and all modifications requested by the singers.
      3. He had to room with the baritone so that the impresario could keep an eye on him.
      4. He had to be present for rehearsals and the first three performances.
      5. Dates were specified for completion of the first act and for opening night.
      6. Compensation was the equivalent of two hundred dollars plus a coat with gold buttons.
   C. The libretto was written by Cesare Sterbini and based on a play by Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais.
   D. Though written by a French dramatist, The Barber of Seville is based on character archetypes drawn from the Italian commedia dell’arte.
   E. The Barber of Seville was first turned into an opera by composer Giovanni Paisello and librettist Giuseppe Petrosellini in 1782. Paisello’s Barber was considered a classic, and there was considerable audience resistance to another opera based on the same story.
   F. Despite opening night problems with Paisello’s clique, Rossini’s Barber was almost immediately recognized as the superior work.
III. *The Barber of Seville*: characters and story.

A. Game plan.
1. We will meet the main characters.
2. The music lesson scene will be discussed as an example of Rossini’s superb comedic craft.
3. We will address elements that make this a bel canto opera.

B. Characters.
1. Rosina, a witty, vivacious sixteen-year-old, is the ward of Dr. Bartolo.
2. Dr. Bartolo, Rosina’s guardian, is a ponderous, pompous, nasty old fogy who intends to marry Rosina for her inheritance.
3. Count Almaviva, a young nobleman desperately in love with Rosina, is posing as a love-struck soldier named Lindoro.
4. Figaro, Almaviva’s former valet, is now a jack-of-all-trades (factotum) living in Seville, where the opera takes place.

C. Count Almaviva.
Musical example: “Ecco, redente in cielo”
1. What does this aria tell us about the count?
   a. He is a lovesick sap.
   b. The simple, direct and sentimental nature of the music mirrors the count himself.
2. The count’s serenade draws no response, and he is crestfallen.

D. Figaro.
Musical example: “Largo al factotum”
1. What does this “patter-style” aria tell us about Figaro?
   a. He is a man of irrepressible spirit and energy.
   b. He is clever and street-smart.
   c. He is much more interesting and complex than the count.
   d. He has genuine self-knowledge; he knows who and what he is, and he likes himself.
2. The count hears this aria and recognizes his old employee. He hires Figaro on the spot to assist him in winning Rosina.

E. Rosina.
1. Rosina drops a note to Figaro and Count Almaviva. In it she says she wants to know who Almaviva is. The note makes it clear that Rosin is a strong young woman with a mind of her own. Indeed she will prove to be the brains of the plot. This is already hinted at in the instrumental introduction to her entrance aria.
2. Musical example: “Una voce poco fa”
   What does this aria tell us about Rosina?
   a. She is filled with youthful energy and optimism.
   b. She can be flirtatious and romantic.
   c. She cannot and will not be controlled by anyone.
   d. She is, indeed, in control and the mistress of her own fate.
3. Rosina’s aria is an entrance aria, serving to introduce the character of Rosina, as did Figaro’s “Largo al factotum” and Almaviva’s “Ecco, redente in cielo.”
4. Rosina begins with recitative and then goes into a cavatina. A cavatina is an aria that shows off a singer’s ability to hold line. This particular cavatina is an example of Rossini at his best. It is virtuosic and pure bel canto, full of coloratura melismas. A melisma is an embellishment of the vocal line, when an ornamental group of different pitches are assigned to a single syllable.
5. In bel canto opera singers were expected to embellish their arias. Female singers who could do this well became superstar divas. Because they attracted large audiences, they won immense control: they could demand autonomy, huge fees, and a freedom not generally enjoyed by women at that time.
6. The bel canto style is characterized by highly embellished arias requiring an unusual vocal flexibility and the ability to reach very high notes.

F. Dr. Bartolo.
Musical example: “A un dottor della mia sorte”
1. What does this aria tell us about Bartolo?
   a. He is a pompous, condescending blowhard.
b. He hasn’t a chance against the combined forces of Almaviva, Figaro, and Rosina.

2. Bartolo has a single ally in his intrigue to marry Rosina.

G. Don Basilio.

**Musical example:** “La calunia è un venticello”
1. What does this aria tell us about Basilio?
   a. He makes Bartolo look like a saint!
   b. Basilio’s brand of intrigue is the lowest of the low and is bound to fail.
2. Basilio’s aria contains an example of a “Rossini crescendo.”

IV. *The Barber of Seville*, the music lesson from Act 2.
A. The count, disguised as a music teacher, gains access to Bartolo’s house.
B. The music lesson commences with Rosina singing an incredibly ornate aria in the bel canto style.
C. Bartolo, true to form, falls asleep in an armchair.
D. Upon awaking, Bartolo regrets the passing of his musical era and proceeds to sing a light, opera seria-type aria in the style of the castrato Caffariello. Musical example: the music lesson.

V. Concluding remarks.
A. The bel canto style is based on a deep-rooted Italian conviction that opera is essentially the highest manifestation of song and that its purpose is to delight and entertain its listeners with unsentimental, melodious and spontaneous music.
B. Characteristics of bel canto.
   1. The melodic lines of arias are embellished.
   2. The melodies are tuneful and popular.
   3. There is no in-depth characterization. All the characters are one-dimensional caricatures.
   4. Bel canto dialogue is witty and sparkling.
   5. Bel canto operas are always comic.
      The dramatic set-up is predictable.
C. Very few composers have equaled Rossini for sheer tunefulness.
D. Rossini was advised by Beethoven to stick with opera buffa.
E. Beethoven’s advice notwithstanding, Rossini increasingly composed grand and serious operas.
   1. By the 1840s opera buffa fell out of favor in Italy, to be replaced by serious, grand opera; however,
   2. Rossini’s buffa operas never lost their popularity.
Lectures Nineteen–Twenty-Two
Verdi and *Otello*

Scope:
The Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi and opera seria is the focus of Lectures 19 through 22. Verdi’s career is summarized, and his operatic inheritance is reviewed. We learn how Verdi dominated the operatic scene in Italy for over half a century by the power of his beautiful melodies and his focus on human emotions and psychological insight. We see how Verdi gave the orchestra an increasingly important role in the dramatic action, and how he used the new parlante technique to endow his operas with musical continuity and maintain the dramatic momentum. Verdi’s style is discussed with references to *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, and *Otello*.

Outline

I. Introduction.
   A. The career of Giuseppe Verdi practically constitutes the history of Italian opera from 1850 to 1900.

II. Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901).
   A. Verdi composed 26 operas.
   B. He was not an innovator or reformer. Rather, his operatic craft slowly evolved across the span of his long compositional career.
   C. Brief biography.
      1. Verdi was born near Parma, Italy, to a middle-class family.
      2. His musical education was sponsored by a rich local merchant, Antonio Barezzi of Busseto.
      3. At Barezzi’s expense, Verdi moved at the age of eighteen to Milan to study music. He was not considered sufficiently accomplished to be accepted into the Milan conservatory! He studied privately.
      4. While in Milan, Verdi began his first opera, *Oberto*.
      5. Verdi eventually returned to Busseto and married Barezzi’s daughter Margherita.
      6. *Oberto* was performed at La Scala, and Verdi was commissioned to write three more operas.
      7. While Verdi was working on this commission, his wife and two children died within a span of 22 months.
      8. Verdi, distraught, completed the comic opera *Un Giorno de Regno*, which failed miserably at its premiere in 1840.
      9. His contempt for any sort of criticism, musical or personal, stems from these events.
      10. Verdi’s third opera, *Nabucco*, was his first big hit.
      11. From the start he was more interested in human drama and emotions than in writing pretty, popular bel canto-style music.
      12. Verdi reached a creative plateau between 1851 and 1853 with the composition of *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, and *Il Trovatore*.

III. Bel Canto opera: Verdi’s inheritance.
   A. Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini were the great triumvirate of bel canto opera.
   B. The bel canto era was not unlike that which immediately preceded the reforms of Metastasio, marked by a notable lack of dramatic integration of words and music.
   C. Summary of bel canto characteristics
      1. Compositional formulas permit the rapid production of operas.
      2. The opera is segmented into the traditional divisions of recitative, aria, and ensemble.
   D. By the time of the operas of 1851–’53, Verdi had gone a long way toward breaking the mold. Despite the fact that he was a brilliant tunesmith in the Italian tradition, Verdi’s operas are not formulaic, nor do they clearly reflect the divisions of recitative, aria, and ensemble. Arias and vocal ensembles are intermingled and move smoothly from one to the other in Verdi’s operas. The variety of vocal forms and singing techniques is extraordinary. Musical example: the opening of Act 1 from *La Traviata*.
      1. Although we can identify individual sections, the overall effect in *La Traviata* is one of continuous forward motion in terms of both music and dramatic action. Verdi does not stop the action for dry recitative. The orchestra plays continuously, providing accompaniment here, background there,
whatever is needed. The characters and chorus interact with each other with stunning flexibility. In this way *La Traviata* is much closer to what we now call music drama.

2. Verdi has not completely broken with the bel canto style, however. In terms of its vocal usage and the direct, popular nature of its melodies, *La Traviata* is still bel canto. By improving on bel canto, rather than completely discarding it, Verdi became the undisputed king of Italian opera.

3. Verdi used the technique known as parlante to eliminate the difference between aria and recitative. He reduced the length of the traditional recitative and blended it into a more continuous texture with the use of the orchestra.

IV. Verdi’s evolving style.
   A. The 19th century was a literary age.
   B. Verdi, as a dramatist, sought ever-greater dramatic continuity in his operas.
   C. He began to use the new parlante technique by which recitative-like vocal parts are underlaid by a memorable and tuneful orchestral accompaniment. This allows musical continuity. The musical interest is in the orchestra. The dramatic interest is in the voices. Musical example: *Rigoletto*, Act 1, scene 7.
   D. Lyricism is the key to Verdi’s art. Verdi’s melodies never lost their direct and popular touch and they are molded to the characters who sing them. An example of this is “La donna è mobile,” the Duke of Mantua’s aria from Act 4 of *Rigoletto*.
   E. Verdi was an admirer of Beethoven’s use of motivic development and uses the same technique in his operas. He also used what is known as a hinge theme. This is a theme that becomes associated with some element in the dramatic action and reappears in the course of the opera to connect large areas of the drama.
   F. The characteristics of Verdi’s mature operas.
      1. Human emotions and psychological insight provide the basis for the story lines.
      2. The bel canto divisions of recitative and aria are increasingly de-emphasized in favor of musical continuity.
      3. The orchestra plays a key dramatic role.
      4. Verdi uses good libretti based on good literature.

V. *Otello* (1886): gestation.
   A. Following the premiere of *Aida* in 1871, Verdi retired from the opera.
   B. Four people close to Verdi (his wife, his publisher, a conductor and composer/librettist Arrigo Boito) conspired to bring him out of retirement.
   C. In July 1879 Verdi received a proposal to write an opera based on Shakespeare’s *Othello*, with Boito as librettist.
   D. *Otello* was completed in 1886.

VI. *Otello*: the libretto.
   A. The 19th century, and Verdi in particular, was fascinated by the plays of Shakespeare.
   B. Shakespeare’s extraordinary insights into the human condition and relationships appealed tremendously to the emotional and literary spirit of the 19th century.
   C. Boito’s libretto of *Otello* is a masterpiece of reduction and distillation.
   D. Ultimately, as in any opera, it was up to Verdi to flesh out the characters and dramatic situations that Boito, as librettist, had to abbreviate.
   E. The libretto/ opera is in four acts.
      1. Act 1 presents Otello as a hero.
      2. Act 2 presents Otello in doubt.
      3. Act 3 reveals Otello’s degradation.
      4. Act 4 brings about Otello’s destruction.
   F. Main characters.
      1. Two of the three main characters are polar opposites.
         a. Desdemona, Otello’s wife, is good incarnate.
         b. Iago, Otello’s sergeant, is evil incarnate.
2. Otello is the man in the middle, whose journey from good to evil, from control to chaos, is the essential dramatic line of the play/opera.

VII. Otello, Act 1: Otello as hero.

A. The orchestra plays an extraordinary role in setting the stormy, symbolic opening scene. Otello’s entrance is one of the most magnificent in all opera. Verdi manages a huge number of musical forces in this unique scene. We hear a wide variety of choruses along with solos, all interacting with each other. Musical example: the opening of Act 1.

B. Iago and Roderigo are introduced.

Iago’s music, with its sing-song, mocking character, is descriptive of his derision of women. Verdi’s music establishes the characters of Iago and Roderigo. Musical example: introduction of Iago and Roderigo.

C. Iago begins to hatch part one of his plot, the downfall of Cassio. He makes sure Cassio has too much to drink. Cassio, as Iago plans, provokes a fight. Otello enters and strips Cassio of his rank. Otello has restored order but has lost his friend in doing so. Musical example: “Va al porto …” through Iago’s explanation.

D. The transcendent love of Otello and Desdemona is revealed in a duet.

1. The love duet establishes Desdemona’s character.
2. The “kiss” theme at the conclusion of this duet becomes a hinge theme that will return with a powerful impact at the end of the opera. Musical example: excerpts from the love duet.

VIII. Act 2: Otello in doubt.

A. Act 2 truly belongs to Iago.

B. The opening orchestral prelude begins with a violent, slimy figure that characterizes Iago. Iago persuades Cassio to ask Desdemona to intercede for him in obtaining Otello’s pardon. Musical example: prelude opening.

C. Iago’s credo is the most amazing aria in the whole opera.

1. The orchestral introduction in F minor sets the mood of evil.
2. Orchestral “infernal” dances play between Iago’s verses.
3. Iago’s credo is almost a huge recitative, rather than an aria, which would be out of character for him.
4. Iago is the archetype of evil incarnate. We know now that Otello does not have a chance against him. Iago is in control.

Musical example: Iago’s credo

D. Iago goes to work on Otello. He sows the seeds of jealous suspicion in Otello as they watch Cassio and Desdemona talking together. Musical example: “Ciò m’accorà” through “può affermate il sospetto”

E. Iago’s poison spreads. Why is Otello reacting so quickly? Otello is an outsider, thirty years older than his bride and of a different race. As a result, it does not take much to unnerve him. Iago goads Otello to increased fury with lies about Cassio talking in his sleep about his love for Desdemona. The orchestra reflects Otello’s fury. Otello demands proof, and Iago tells him it exists in the form of the handkerchief that Otello once gave Desdemona. Iago assures Otello that Cassio now possesses this handkerchief. Otello is now completely blind with jealousy and rage. Musical example: “Pace, signor” through “Ah! sangue! sangue! sangue!”

F. Iago and Otello join forces. Their duet of revenge ends Act 2. The orchestra plays a chilling passage evocative of a descent into hell. Musical example: “Si, pel ciel”

IX. Act 3 is about Iago’s careful machinations to convince Otello beyond a shadow of a doubt that Desdemona is unfaithful to him. Otello’s rage is murderous and uncontrollable.

X. Act 4 is about Desdemona.

A. Desdemona is sixteen or seventeen years old and living in a land far from her home. Her husband has gone quite mad for reasons she does not understand. Her character is fleshed out in these moments before her death. She sings of lost love. Musical example: The Willow Song.

B. Otello’s enters Desdemona’s bedroom. From this moment on, the opera moves very swiftly to the final catastrophe. Musical example: Otello’s entrance.
C. Otello realizes too late that Desdemona was innocent. He kills himself. The kiss theme returns to heighten
the pathos. Musical example: conclusion of the opera from “Pria d’ucciderti”

XI. Concluding remarks.
A. Verdi conceived Otello as an intimate drama, not as a spectacle.
B. The premiere of Otello was probably the greatest operatic triumph of all time.
Lectures Twenty-Three and Twenty-Four
French Opera

Scope:
The purpose of this study of French Opera is to give an overview of the circumstances surrounding the evolution of a distinctly French style; to explain why and how French opera is different from Italian opera, and to emphasize that operatic content, both musical and dramatic, is most often a function of the language being set and the politics and economic class of its consumers. French opera composers discussed include Jean-Baptiste Lully, Jean-Philippe Rameau, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Christoph Willibald Gluck, Giacomo Meyerbeer, and Georges Bizet.

Outline

I. French opera at its beginning.
   A. French-language opera came into being in 1669.
   B. This seems a late start compared to that of Italian opera.
   C. The comparatively late development of French opera has much to do with the nature of the French language and the French spirit.
      1. The French language is not as well suited to a melismatic operatic singing style as the Italian language.
      2. The French preferred their drama pure, in the theater, and unsullied by music.
      3. The French regarded theatrical music as an accompaniment to their favorite stage spectacle, ballet.
   D. Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–’87).
      1. Lully is almost singularly responsible for creating a French language operatic tradition.
      2. Italian by birth, Lully was a dancer and musician by training.
      3. He came to Paris at the age of fourteen.
      4. He quickly developed into a first-rate conductor and composer.
      5. Through equal parts talent and scheming, Lully eventually became master of all music at the court of Louis XIV.
      6. Lully’s operas incorporated elements from musical and dramatic genres already popular in France:
         a. French classical dramatic literature.
         b. Huge, dramatic stage sets and machinery.
         c. Ballet.
            1. Staged professional dance had been popular entertainment in France since the 16\textsuperscript{th} century.
            2. Louis XIV fancied himself a dancer and was a tremendous patron of dance.
            3. Lully realized from the start that if opera was to become popular in France, it must contain a great amount of dance.
      7. Lully created a French national style of opera that encompassed magnificence, tragic drama, and dance.
         a. Lully’s operas are in five acts with a prologue devoted to the glorification of Louis XIV.
         b. The action unrolls with majestic indifference to realism. It presents all kinds of improbable adventures. Characters discourse at length on love and honor.
         c. There are rarely any comic characters. Everything is stately, formal, and detached from reality.
      8. Lully’s greatest operatic contribution was his design of a recitative style suited to the long vowels and soft consonants of the French language.
         a. Lully claimed his model was spoken drama.
         b. Lully’s recitatives are syllabic: one pitch per syllable.
         c. The flexibility of the French language is reflected in the continuous changes of meter in these recitatives.
         d. Lully’s recitatives fall into melodic patterns. (Italian recitatives do not have melodic patterns. They just keep on developing; they are “through composed.”)
      9. Lully’s arias are very different from Italian arias.
         a. They tend to be short and limited in vocal range.
         b. They emphasize clear enunciation and textural clarity over vocal acrobatics.
         c. They generally do not stand alone as musical numbers, but tend to be merged with longer musical sequences.
         d. They are not the essential events in the opera.
They do not use coloratura effects.

This vocal style demanded less virtuosity from singers than the more florid style of Italian opera. 

**Musical example:** Recitative/monologue from Lully’s *Armide* (1686)

**E. Conclusions.**

1. Lully established opera as an institution of the state.
2. The dignified, formal splendor of Lully’s operas embodied the glorious age of Louis XIV.
3. Their disadvantage is that once the age of Louis XIV passed, these operas sounded empty and pompous.
4. Their advantage is that they provided the foundation for generations of French and French-based opera composers.

**II. Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764).**

A. Rameau was the foremost French musician of the 18th century.

B. Rameau saw himself as the inheritor of a great and majestic tradition.

C. *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733).

1. This is Rameau’s first opera.
2. Typical of Lully and other French composers, Rameau’s operas display much less contrast between aria and recitative than contemporary Italian operas. **Musical example:** “Ah! faut-il” from Act 4, scene 1 of *Hippolyte et Aricie*.

D. Rameau’s operas were controversial.

1. The operatic traditionalists, or Lullists, found Rameau’s operas too Italian and, as such, musically subversive.
2. The operatic progressives felt that Rameau was the savior of an operatic tradition that had grown tired and stale with age.
3. French opera is, unfortunately, rarely heard outside France, because it is tailored to particular French tastes. Rameau’s music is, however, first rate and worth seeking out.

**III. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–’78) and the War of the Buffoons.**

A. Within twenty years the controversy over Rameau’s music had shifted 180 degrees.

1. Rousseau and his followers rejected traditional French opera and embraced the new Italian comic genre as an example of opera appropriate to the Enlightenment.
2. Rameau’s operas became the tradition against which the new Enlightenment progressives rebelled.

B. Rousseau and *Le Devin du village*.

1. Rousseau, among his other talents, was a composer (of sorts).
2. In 1752, inspired by Italian opera buffa, he wrote *Le Devin du village* (**The Village Soothsayer**).
3. *Le Devin du village* is very close to the popular French tradition of opéra comique. **Musical example:** excerpt from *Le Devin du village*.

**IV. Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–’87).**

A. Gluck was by nature a reformer; he effected a synthesis of elements of the new Italian opera and of traditional French opera.

B. Though he worked across Europe, Gluck’s greatest fame was achieved in Paris under the patronage of the Austrian-born French queen Marie Antoinette. **Musical example:** *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Act 2, scene 1.

C. There were two major influences on Gluck’s work:

1. His growing familiarity with traditional French opera;
2. The spirit of the Enlightenment. In operatic terms this translated into an artistic goal of a non-formulaic, simple, unaffected expression of human feelings. In practical terms this meant that Gluck had to reign in his singers!

D. Gluck’s version of the story of Orpheus: *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

1. The arias are melodically simple and emotionally direct.
2. The recitatives have a very high melodic content, irregular phrase structures and rhythmic flexibility. Everything is accompanied.
3. Dance, hitherto a secondary element, is now integral to the action.
4. Gluck relies heavily on a chorus. This is uniquely French.
5. The high degree of integration of dance, chorus and solos is noteworthy. Musical example: Act 2, scene 1 of *Orfeo ed Euridice*

E. Gluck’s operas became a model for the next generation of French composers. They proved that it was possible to maintain the great tradition of French operatic pomp and magnificence while adhering to the spirit and new melodic naturalness of the Enlightenment.

V. French opera in the 19th century.

A. Paris became the operatic capital of Europe during the first half of the 19th century.


C. Grand opera.

1. By the 1820s French grand opera had come into being.
2. As royal patronage dwindled, opera increasingly became a middle-class entertainment to which the spectacular and dramatically obvious grand operas were designed to appeal.
3. These operas indulged the French taste for grand spectacles and crowd scenes with lots of characters all singing at the same time.
   a. Meyerbeer almost singlehandedly established French grand opera.
   b. He was born in Berlin as Jakob Liebmann Beer.
   c. He composed operas in both German and Italian before moving to France, where he earned fame and fortune.
   d. His operas have fallen into almost total obscurity. They were intended as popular entertainment and lack the musical and dramatic substance necessary to remain in the repertory.
   e. Nevertheless, Meyerbeer was particularly famous (and imitated widely) for his ability to manage large numbers of singers, dancers and choristers on stage. **Musical example:** conclusion of Act 2 from *Les Huguenots*

D. Opéra comique.

1. Opéra comique developed alongside grand opera.
2. Opéra comique employed spoken dialogue rather than recitative, and it featured somewhat less pretentious productions than grand opera.
3. Composers of opéra comique include Jacques Offenbach, whose operas are still performed today.

E. Lyric opera.

1. Lyric opera represents a sort of halfway point between grand opera and opéra comique. Like opéra comique, lyric opera often uses spoken dialogue and directly appealing melodies. Like grand opera, lyric opera tends toward grandiosity.
2. Included in this classification are Charles Gounod’s *Faust*, and *Romeo and Juliet*; Camille Saint-Saëns’ *Samson and Delilah*, and Georges Bizet’s *Carmen*.

F. Georges Bizet (1838–’75) and *Carmen* (1875).

1. *Carmen* remains one of the most beloved and frequently performed and adapted operas in the repertory.
2. Bizet lived a short and unhappy life. He died nearly penniless three months after the premiere of *Carmen*.
3. *Carmen* is about two very different people and their mutual destruction. It is a frank and powerful look at the brutal and transformational power of sex and desire, violence and fate.
   a. Carmen is the embodiment of temptation and primal, destructive sexuality.
   b. Don Jose is destroyed by his own sexuality, unleashed and set aflame by Carmen.
4. The card scene in Act 2 of *Carmen* is an example of operatic drama at its most powerful. In this scene Carmen no longer finds Don Jose sexually appealing and tells him so. She makes it clear that she has no intention of being dominated by any man. Two of Carmen’s friends are telling each other’s fortunes with a deck of cards. Carmen joins them. She reads death in the cards. The musical motive associated with Carmen’s ultimate fate is heard as she turns over the cards. While her two friends sing their cheerful refrains, Carmen sings her fatalistic aria. Her acceptance of her fate imbues her with tragic beauty. **Musical example:** the card trio from Act Two of *Carmen*
Il barbiere di Siviglia

The Barber of Seville (1816)

Gioacchino Rossini

Libretto by Cesare Sterbini

ACT ONE

Scene One

Just before sunrise. A small piazza in Seville with narrow streets running off in all directions. Dr. Bartolo’s house is centerstage; it has a small balcony overlooking the piazza, above the front door.

INTRODUCTION

(Fiorello, servant to Count Almaviva, enters slowly, surveying the scene, urging his hired musicians to follow him. The musicians tune their instruments, and the Count sings, accompanied by them)

CAVATINA: “Ecco, ridente in cielo”

Conte

Ecco, ridente in cielo
spunta la bella aurora,
e tu non sorgi ancora
e puoi dormir così?
Sorgi, mia dolce speme,
vieni, bell’idol mio,
rendi men crude, oh Dio,
lo stral che mi feri.

Count

Lo, in the smiling sky,
the lovely dawn is breaking
and you are not awake,
and you are still asleep?
Arise, my sweetest love,
oh come, my treasured one,
soften the pain, oh God,
of the dart which pierces me.

Conte

Che a quest’ora io tutti giorni qui vengo per lei dev’essersi avveduta.
Oh, vedi, amore a un uomo del mio rango come l’ha fatta bella!
Eppure, eppure! oh! dev’esser mia sposa . . .

Count

She must have noticed that I come here every day at this time to see her. Oh, just see what love has done to a man of my rank!
Yet, yet . . . oh, she must be my bride . . .
**Figaro**  
*(Figaro offstage)*  
La la la la la la la la la.

**Conte**
Che è mai quest’importuno?  
Lasciamolo passar;  
sotto quegli archi non veduto  
vadrò quanto bianca.  
Già l’alba appare  
e amor non si vergogna.  
*(He hides.)*

**Count**
Who is this coming now?  
I’ll let him go by;  
unseen, under this archway,  
I can see what I want.  
Dawn is already here  
but love is not shy.  
*(He hides.)*

*(Figaro enters with a guitar around his neck.)*

**CAVATINA: “Largo al factotum”**

**Figaro**

\[\begin{align*}
A & \\
La ran la le ra la ran la la. \\
Largo al factotum \\
della città. \\
La ran la, etc. \\
Presto a bottega \\
che l’alba è già \\
La ran la la, etc. \\
Ah, che bel vivere, \\
che bel piacere, \\
per un barbiere di qualità \\
A’ \\
Ah, bravissimo Figaro. \\
Bravo, bravissimo, bravol \\
La ran la la, etc. \\
Fortunatissimo \\
per verità. Bravol \\
La ran la la, etc. \\
A \\
Pronto a far tutto \\
la notte, il giorno,
\end{align*}\]

**Figaro**

\[\begin{align*}
A & \\
La ran la le ra la ran la la. \\
Make way for the factotum \\
of the city. \\
La ran la, etc. \\
Rushing to his shop \\
for dawn is here. \\
La ran la la, etc. \\
What a merry life, \\
what gay pleasures \\
for a barber of quality. \\
A’ \\
Ah, bravissimo Figaro. \\
Bravo, bravissimo, bravol \\
La ran la la, etc. \\
Most fortunate of men, \\
indeed you are! \\
La ran la la, etc. \\
G \\
Ready for everything \\
by night or by day,
\end{align*}\]
sempre d’intorno
in giro sta.
Miglior cuccagna
per un barbiere,
via più nobile,
no, non si dà.
La la ran la la ran la, etc.

Rasori e pettini,
lancette e forbici.
Al mio comando
tutto qui sta.
V’è la risorsa
poi del mestiere,
colla donnetta,
col cavaliere . . .
La la ran la . . . la . . . la.
Ah, che bel vivere,
che bel piacere,
per un barbiere di qualità.

C
Tutti mi chiedono,
tutti mi vogliono,
donne ragazzi,
vecchi fanciulle.
Qua la parrucca,
presto la barba,
qua la sanguigna,
presto il biglietto.
Tutti mi chiedono,
tutti mi vogliono.
Qua la parrucca
presto la barba,
presto il biglietto.

Ehi, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, etc.

Ahimè! che furia!
Ahimè! che folla!
Uno alla volta, per carità.

always in bustle,
in constant motion.
A better lot
for a barber,
a nobler life
does not exist.
La la ran la la ran la, etc.

Razors and combs,
lancets and scissors,
at my command
everything’s ready.
Then there are “extras,”
part of my trade
business for ladies
and cavaliers . . .
La la ran la . . . la . . . la.
Ah what a merry life,
what gay pleasures,
for a barber of quality.

C
All call for me,
all want me,
ladies and children,
old men and maidens.
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
leeches to bleed me,
here, take this note.
All call for me,
all want me,
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
here, take this note.

Ho, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, etc.

Heavens! What a commotion!
Heavens! What a crowd!
One at a time, for pity’s sake.
C'
Ehi, Figaro: son qua!
Figaro qua, Figaro là,
Figaro su, Figaro giú.
Pronto, prontissimo
son come il fulmine,
sono il factotum
della città.

C'
Ah, bravo, Figaro,
bravo, bravissimo.
a te la fortuna
non mancherà.
La la ran la, etc.
Sono il factotum della città.

———

Figaro
(reading aloud the note from Rosina)
"Le vostre assidue premure hanno eccitata la mia curiosità. Il mio
tutore è per uscir di casa; appena si
sarà allontanato, procurate con qualche mezzo ingegnoso
d'indicarmi il vostro nome, il vostro
stato e le vostre intenzioni. Io non
posso giarnmai comparire al
balcone, senza l'indivisibile
compagnia del mio tiranno. Siate
però certo, che tutto è disposta a
fare, per rompere le sue catene, la
sventurata Rosina..."

———

Figaro
(reading aloud the note from Rosina)
"Your constant attentions have
aroused my curiosity. My guardian
is just leaving; as soon as he's gone,
find some ingenious means to tell
me your name, your rank and your
intentions. I can never appear on
the balcony except in the strict
company of my tyrant. Rest assured,
however, that unfortunate Rosina is
prepared to do anything to break
her chains."
Conte
Il nome mio non le vo' dir
ne il grado: assicurarmi
vo' pria ch'ella ami me,
me solo al mondo,
non le richiezioni e i titoli
del conte Almaviva.

Count
I don't want to tell her my name
or my rank. I first
want to be sure that she loves me
and me alone in all the world,
not the wealth and titles
of Count Almaviva.

Scene Two
A courtyard in Bartolo's house.
cavatina: "Una voce poco fa"

Rosina
(a letter in her hand)
Una voce poco fa
qui nel cor mi risuonò.
Il mio cor ferito è gia
e Lindoro fu che
il piagò.
Sì, Lindoro mio sarà,
io giurai, la vincerò.
Il t’onor ricuserò,
io l'ingeugno augerò,
alla fin s'accheterà,
e contenta io resterò.
Sì, Lindoro etc.

Rosina
(a letter in her hand)
The voice I heard just now
has thrilled my very heart.
My heart already is pierced
and it was Lindoro who
hurled the dart.
Yes, Lindoro shall be mine,
I've sworn it, I'll succeed.
My guardian won't consent,
but I will sharpen my wits.
and at last, he will relent,
and I shall be content.
Yes, Lindoro, etc.

I am docile,
I am respectful,
I am obedient,
sweet and loving.
I can be ruled,
I can be guided.
But if crossed in love,
I can be a viper,
and a hundred tricks
I shall play
before they have their way.

I am docile, etc.
**Figaro**

E' un vecchio indemoniato, 
avaro, sospettoso, brontolone, 
avrà cent'anni indosso 
e vuol fare il galante: 
indovinate? Per mangiare 
a Rosina tutta l'eredità s'è 
fitto in capo di volerla sposare. 
Aiuto!

**Rosina**

Qual biglietto?

**Bartolo**

Che serve! 
L'arietta dell'Inutil Precauzione 
che ti cadde stamattin giù dal balcone. 
Vi fate rossa? 
(Avessi indovinato!) 
Che vuol dir questo dito 
(*He seizes Rosina's finger*) 
cosi sporco d'inchiostro?

**Rosina**

Sporco? Oh! Nulla. 
Io me l'avea scottato 
e coll'inchiostro 
or l'ho medicato.

**Bartolo**

(Diavolo! 
(*He counts the sheets of paper on the table.*) 
È questi fogli . . . 
or son cinque, eran sei.

**Rosina**

Que' fogli? È vero.

**Figaro**

He's an old devil, 
miserly, suspicious, crabbed, 
he must be a hundred 
but wants to play the gallant: 
and just imagine, so as to enjoy 
Rosina's entire legacy he's 
taken it into his head to marry her. 
Help!

**Rosina**

What note?

**Bartolo**

Oh, what's the use? 
The note which you dropped this 
morning from the balcony. 
You're blushing, eh? 
(If only I'd guessed!) 
What is the meaning 
(*He seizes Rosina's finger*) 
of your ink-stained finger?

**Rosina**

Stained? Oh! Nothing, 
I burned myself 
and I used the ink, 
as a medicine.

**Bartolo**

(The devil! 
(*He counts the sheets of paper on the table.*) 
And these sheets of paper . . . 
there are five now, there were six.

**Rosina**

The note paper? You are right.
D'uno mi son servita a mandar de' confetti a Marcellina.

Bartolo
Bravissima!
(He picks up the pen)
E la penna, perché fu temperata?

Rosina
(Maladetto!) La penna!
Per disegnare un fiore sul tamburo.

Bartolo
Un fiore!

Rosina
Un fiore.

Bartolo
Un fiore! Ah! Fraschetta!

Rosina
Davver.

Bartolo
Zitto.

Rosina
Credete . . .

Bartolo
Basta così.

Rosina
Signor . . .

Bartolo
Non più . . . tacete.

I used one to wrap the sweets
I sent to Marcellina.

Bartolo
Bravissima!
(He picks up the pen)
And the pen, why was it sharpened?

Rosina
(Heaven!) The pen!
To draw a flower to embroider.

Bartolo
A flower!

Rosina
A flower.

Bartolo
A flower! Oh! You minx!

Rosina
It is the truth.

Bartolo
Silence.

Rosina
Believe me . . .

Bartolo
Enough of this.

Rosina
Sir . . .

Bartolo
No more . . . be quiet.
**Bartolo**

A un dottor della mia sorte
queste scuse, signorina,
vi consiglio, mia carina,
un po' meglio a imposturar.
Meglio! Meglio! Meglio! Meglio!
I confetti alla ragazza
il ricamo sul tamburo!
Vi ascoltaste, eh vial
Ci vuol altro, figlia mia,
per potermi corbellar.
Altro! Altro! Altro! Altro!
Perché manca là quel foglio?
Vo' saper cotesto imbroglio.
Sono inutili le smorfie;
ferma là, non mi toccate.
Figlia mia, non lo sperate
ch’io mi lasci infinocchiar.
A un dottor della mia sorte
queste scuse, signorina,
vi consiglio, mia carina
un po' meglio a imposturar.
Via carina, confessare.
Son disposto a perdonar.
Non parlate? Vi ostate?
Sì ben in quel che ho da far.

Signorina, un’altra volta
quando Bartolo andrà fuori
la consegna ai servitori
a suo modo far saprà.
Ah! non servono le smorfie
faccia pur la gatta morta.
Cospetto! per quella porta,
nemmeno l’aria entrerà potrà.

E Rosina innocente,
sconsolata, disperata,

**Bartolo**

For a doctor of my standing
these excuses, Signorina,
I advise you, my dear child,
to invent a little better.
Better! Better! Better! Better!
Sweets for Marcellina!
A design for your embroidery!
And the scalding of your finger!
It takes more than that, my girl,
to deceive me with success.
More! More! More! More!
Why is that sheet of paper missing?
I mean to find out what’s going on.
No, coaxing is useless.
Keep away, don’t touch me.
No my dear girl, give up all hope
that I’ll let myself be fooled.
For a doctor of my standing
these excuses, Signorina,
I advise you, my dear child,
to invent a little better.
Come, dear child, confess it all.
I am prepared to pardon you.
You don’t answer? You are stubborn?
Then I know well what I’ll do.

Signorina, another time
when Bartolo must leave the house
he’ll give orders to the servants
who will see you stay inside.
Now your pouting will not help you
nor your injured innocence.
I here assure you, through that door
the very air itself won’t enter.

And little innocent Rosina,
disconsolate and in despair,
Eh! non servono le smorfie,
faccia pur la gatta morta.
Cospetto! per quella porta
nemmen l’aria entrar potrà.
E Rosina innocentina,
sconsolata, disperata,
in sua camera serrata;
fin ch’io voglio star dovrà.

Un dottor della mia sorte
non si lascia infinocchiare.
E Rosina innocentina, etc.
(Exit)

Figaro
È un solenne imbroglio
di matrimonii,
un collo torto, un vero disperato,
sempre senza un quattrino . . .
Già, è maestro di musica,
insegnà alla ragazza.

Don Basilio
Così, con buona grazia,
bisogna principiare
a inventar qualche favola che al
pubblico lo metta in mala vista,
che comparir lo faccia un
tuo man infame, un’anima perduta . . .
oi, io vi servirò;
frà quattro giorni, credete a me,
Basilio ve lo giura,
noli lo farem doggiar
da queste mura.

now your pouting will not help you,
not your injured innocence.
I here assure you, through that door
the very air itself won’t enter.
And little innocent Rosina,
disconsolate and in despair,
in her chamber shall be locked
so long as I see fit.

For a doctor of my standing
does not let himself be fooled.
And little innocent Rosina, etc.
(Exit)

Figaro
A famous intriguing
matchmaker,
a hypocrite, a good-for-nothing,
with never a penny in his pocket . . .
He has lately turned music-maker,
and teaches this girl.

Don Basilio
Just this, that plausibly,
we must begin
to invent a story which will
put him in a bad light with
the public, making him seem a
man of infamy, a doomed soul . . .
I shall attend to this;
within four days,
on the word of Basilio,
he’ll be thrown out
of this town.
Don Basilio

La calunnia è un venticello
un'auretta assai gentile
che insensibile, sottile,
leggermente, dolcemente,
incomincia a susurrar.
Piano piano, terra terra,
sottovoce, sibilando,
va scorrendo, va ronzando.
Nell'orecchie della gente,
s'introduce destramente
e le teste ed i cervelli
fa stordere e fa gonfiar.
Dalla bocca fuori uscendo
lo schiamazzo va crescendo,
prende forza a poco a poco,
volà già di loco in loco,
sembra il tuono, la tempesta
che nel sen della foresta
va fischianto, brontolando,
E ti fa d'orror gelat.
Alla fin trabocca e scoppia,
si propaga, si raddoppia,
e produce un'esplosione
come un colpo di cannone,
un tremuoto, un temporale,
un tumulto generale,
che fa l'aria rimbombar.
È il meschino calunniatore,
avvilito, calpestatore,
sotto il pubblico flagello,
per gran sorte va a crepar.

Don Basilio

Slander is a little breeze,
a gentle zephyr,
which insensibly, subtly,
lightly and sweetly,
commences to whisper.
Softly softly, here and there,
sottovoce, sibilant,
it goes gliding, it goes rambling.
Into the ears of the people,
it penetrates slyly
and the head and the brains
it stuns and it swells;
From the mouth re-emerging
the noise grows crescendo,
gathers force little by little.
runs its course from place to place,
seems the thunder of the tempest
which from the depths of the forest
comes whistling, muttering,
freezing everyone in horror.
Finally with crack and crash,
it spreads afield, its force redoubled,
and produces an explosion
like the outburst of a cannon,
an earthquake, a whirlwind,
a general uproar,
which makes the air resound.
And the poor slandered wretch,
vilified, trampled down,
sunk beneath the public lash,
by good fortune, falls to death.
ACT TWO

Music lesson

Rosina
Cara immagine ridente,
dolce idea d'un fico amor,
tu m'accendi in petto, il core.
Tu mi porti a delirar! etc.
Caro, a te mi raccomando,
tu mi salva, per pietà!
tu mi porti a delirar!

Rosina
Dear smiling image,
sweet thought of happy love,
you burn in my breast, in my heart.
I am delirious with joy! etc.
Dearest, in you I put my trust,
please, come save me, for pity's sake!
I am delirious with joy!

Recitative

Conte
Bella voce! Bravissima!

Rosina
Oh! Mille grazie!

Bartolo
(waking up and crossing to harpsichord)
Certo, bella voce!
Ma cospetto, quest'aria!
è assai noiosa.
La musica a miei tempi
era altra cosa.
Ah! Quando, per esempio, cantava
Caffarilò quell'aria portentosa
La ra la la la . . . sentite,
Don Alonso, ccola qua.

Bartolo
(waking up and crossing to harpsichord)
Truly, a beautiful voice!
But this aria, damnation!
It is rather tiresome.
Music in my day,
was quite another thing.
Ah! When, for instance,
Caffarilò sang that wonderful aria
La ra la la la . . . listen,
Don Alonso, here it is.

Arietta

"Quando mi sei vicina,
amabile Rosina . . ."

Conte
L'aria dicea "Giannina"
(Figaro enters and hides behind Bartolo.)

Count
The aria says "Giannina"
(Figaro enters and hides behind Bartolo.)
Bartolo
L'aria dicea "Giannina,"
ma io dico "Rosina ..."
"Quando mi sei vicina
amabile Rosina,
il cor mi brilla in petto.
Mi balla il minueto ..."
*(he dances a courtly step; Figaro imitates him behind his back.)*

Bartolo
The aria says "Giannina,"
but I say "Rosina . . ."
"When you are near me,
sweet Rosina,
my heart glows in my breast.
it dances a minuet . . ."
*(he dances a courtly step; Figaro imitates him behind his back.)*

Recitative

Bartolo
*(catching sight of Figaro)*
Bravo, signor barbiere, ma bravo!

Figaro
Eh, niente affatto, scusi,
son debolezze . . .

Bartolo
Ebben, guidone,
che vieni a fare?

Figaro
Oh, bella! Vengo a farvi la barba!
Oggi vi tocca.

Bartolo
Oggi non voglio.

Figaro
Oggi non vuol?
Domani non potrò io.

Bartolo
Perché?
Figaro

(consulting his notebook)
Perché ho da fare.
A tutti gli Uffiziali
del nuovo reggimento
barba e testa,
alla Marchesa Andronica
il biondo parrucchin
coi maronè . . .
Al Contino Bombè
il ciuffo a campanile . . .
purgante all'avvocato
Bernardone che terl
s'ammalò d'indigestione.
E poi . . . e poi . . .
che serve?
Doman non posso.

Bartolo

Orsù, meno parole.
Oggi non vo' far barba.

Figaro

(consulting his notebook)
Because I shall be busy.
For all the officers
of the new regiment,
shave and haircut,
for the Marquise Andronica
her blonde wig
tinted brown . . .
For the young Count Bombè
forelock to curl . . .
A purge for the lawyer
Bernardone who yesterday
fell ill with indigestion.
And then . . . and then . . .
but why continue?
Tomorrow I cannot come.

Bartolo

Come, less chatter.
Today I do not want to be shaved.
La Traviata
(1853)

Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

ACT ONE

A salon in Violetta's house.

(Violetta is conversing with her doctor and several friends. Other guests arrive, among them the Baron Douphol, and Flora Bervoix, who is escorted by the Marquis d'Obigny.)

Guests
Dell'invito trascorsa è già l'ora, 
voi tardaste.
Giocammo da Flora, 
è giocando quell'ore volar.

Violetta
(greeting the entering guests)
Flora, amici, la notte che resta 
d'altre gioie qui fate brillar. 
Fra le tazze più viva è la festa.

Flora and Marquis
E goder voi potrete?

Violetta
Lo voglio; 
al piacere m'affido, 
ed io soglio con tal farmaco 
i mali sopir.

Flora, Baron, Marquis, Doctor, Guests
Si, la vita s'addoppia al gioir. 
(Gastone, Viscount of Lesurieres, enters with Alfredo Germont and goes to Violetta.)

Guests
It's already past invitation time, 
you're late. 
We were gambling at Flora's, 
and when we gamble, time flies.

Violetta
(greeting the entering guests)
Flora, dear friends, let's make joyful 
and bright what is left of the night. 
When wine flows, the party is gayer.

Flora and Marquis
Are you well enough to have a good 
time?

Violetta
I want to. 
I make a habit of pleasure. 
It's the best medicine 
for my illness.

Flora, Baron, Marquis, Doctor, Guests
Yes, life is made for pleasure. 
(Gastone, Viscount of Lesurieres, enters 
with Alfredo Germont and goes to Violetta.)
Gastone
In Alfredo Germont, o signora, 
ecco un altro che molto v'onor;
pochi amici a lui simili sono.

Violetta
(giving her hand to Alfredo, who kisses it) Mio visconte, mercè di tal dono.

Marquis
Caro Alfredo.

Alfredo
Marchese.

Gastone
(to Alfredo)
T'ho detto. L'amistà qui s'intreccia al diletto.

Violetta
(to servants, busy at the dinner table)
Pronto è il tutto?
(as a servant gestures yes)
Miei cari, sedete; 
è al convito che s'apre ogni cor.

Guests
Ben diceste.
Le cure segrete fuga 
sempre l'amico lico.

(THEY seat themselves at the table; 
Violetta is with Alfredo and Gastone; 
Flora is between the Marquis and the Baron.)

All
È al convito che s'apre ogni cor.

Gastone
Here is Alfredo Germont, dear lady; 
he is another of your admirers; 
few friends are like him.

Violetta
(giving her hand to Alfredo, who kisses it)
I thank you, Viscount, for such a favor.

Marquis
Dear Alfredo.

Alfredo
Marquis.

Gastone
(to Alfredo)
You see, I told you so. Here friendship 
is entwined with pleasure.

Violetta
(to servants, busy at the dinner table)
Is everything ready? 
(as a servant gestures yes)
My dear ones, be seated; 
it's at feasting that hearts swell.

Guests
Well said.
Wine is ever a friend 
who banishes secret cares. 

(THEY seat themselves at the table; 
Violetta is with Alfredo and Gastone; 
Flora is between the Marquis and the Baron.)

All
And it's at feasting that all hearts swell.
Gastone  
*(whispering to Violetta)*  
Sempre Alfredo a voi pensa.

Violetta  
Scherzate!

Gastone  
Egra foste, e ogni di con affanno qui volò, di voi chiese.

Violetta  
Cessate. Nulla son io per lui.

Gastone  
Non v’inganno.

Violetta  
*(to Alfredo)*  

Alfredo  
*(sighing)*  
Si, egli è ver.

Violetta  
*(to Alfredo)*  
Le mie grazie vi rendo.
*(to the Baron)*  
Voi, barone, non feste altrettanto.

Baron  
Vi conosco da un anno soltanto.

Violetta  
Ed è solo da qualche minuto.
Flora
(safely to the Baron)
Meglio fora se aveste tacuto.

Baron
(safely)
M'è incresciuso quel giovine.

Flora
Perché?
A me invece simpatico egli è.

Gastone
(to Alfredo)
E tu dunque non apri più bocca?

Marquis
(to Violetta)
È a madama che scuoterlo tocca.

Violetta
(pouring wine for Alfredo)
Sarò l’Ebe che versa.

Alfredo
E ch’io bramo immortal
come quella.

All
Beviamo. Beviamo, beviam!

Gastone
(to the Baron)
O barone, nè un verso, nè un viva
troverete in quest’ora giuliva?
(at the Baron declines. Gastone turns to
Alfredo)
Dunque a te.

Flora
(safely to the Baron)
It would have been better to keep still.

Baron
(safely)
I’ve taken a dislike to that young man.

Flora
Why?
On the contrary, I find him attractive.

Gastone
(to Alfredo)
And aren’t you going to open your
mouth?

Marquis
(to Violetta)
It’s up to the lady to prompt him.

Violetta
(pouring wine for Alfredo)
I’ll be Hebe, the Cupbearer.

Alfredo
And what I long for is that you,
like her, should be immortal.

All
Let’s drink. Let’s drink, drink!

Gastone
(to the Baron)
Eh, Baron, haven’t you a rhyme
or a toast for this merry hour?
(at the Baron declines, Gastone turns to
Alfredo)
Now it’s up to you.
The Others
(except Alfredo and the Baron)
Si, sì, un brindisi.

Alfredo
L'estro non m'arride.

Gastone
E non sei tu maestro?

Alfredo
(to Violetta)
Vi fia grato?

Violetta
Si.

Alfredo
Si? L'ho già in cor.

Marquis
Dunque attenti, attenti al cantor!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Si, attenti al cantor!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Yes, a toast.

Alfredo
I'm not in the right spirit.

Gastone
Can't you conquer your mood?

Alfredo
(to Violetta)
Would that please you?

Violetta
Yes.

Alfredo
Really? Then it's already in my heart.

Marquis
Now listen, listen to the singer!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Yes, listen to the singer!

Alfredo
Let us drink from festive cups that with beauty are adorned, and the fleeting hour with sensuous pleasure will be replete. Let us drink with sweet excitement arising out of love;

Alfredo
Libiamo ne' liete calici, che la bellezza infiora, e la fuggevol ora s'inebrii a voluttà. Libiam ne' dolci fremiti che suscita l'amore.

Alfredo
(turning toward Violetta)
poiché quell’occhio al core
onnipotente va.
Libiamo, amore, amor fra i calici
più caldi baci avrà.
—etc.—
because of a glance that reigns
supreme, after having pierced the
heart. Let us drink, love, for within
the cup lie the warmest kisses of love.
—etc.—

Violetta
Non gradireste ora le danze?

The Others
Oh, il gentil pensier!
Tutti accettiamo.

Violetta
Usciamo dunque?
(suddenly turning pale)
Ohimé!

The Others
Che avete?

Violetta
Nulla, nulla.

The Others
Che mai v’arresta?

Violetta
Usciamo—
(as she takes a few steps but is forced to
halt and sit down)
Oh, Dio!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Ancora!

Violetta
And now shall we dance?

The Others
Oh, what a happy idea!
We all accept.

Violetta
Then let’s go.
(suddenly turning pale)
Oh!

The Others
What ails you?

Violetta
Nothing, nothing.

The Others
But what stopped you?

Violetta
Let us go—
(as she takes a few steps but is forced to
halt and sit down)
Oh, my God!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Again!
Alfredo
Voi soffrite.

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Oh, ciel, ch'è questo?

Violetta
Un tremito che provo.
Or là passate; fra poco anch'io sarò.

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Come bramate.
(All the guests except Alfredo go to the other room.)

Violetta
(studying herself in the mirror)
Oh, qual pallor!
(turning and seeing Alfredo)
Voi qui!

Alfredo
Cessata é l'ansia che vi turbò?

Violetta
Sto meglio.

Alfredo
Ah, in tuel guisa v'ucciderete.
Aver v'è d'usuru cura dell'esser vostro.

Violetta
E lo potrei?

Alfredo
Oh, se mia foste,

Alfredo
You're in pain.

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Oh, heavens, what's this?

Violetta
A faintness that will pass.
Go ahead; I'll join you in a little while.

The Others
(except Alfredo)
As you wish.
(All the guests except Alfredo go to the other room.)

Violetta
(studying herself in the mirror)
Oh, how pale I am!
(turning and seeing Alfredo)
You here?

Alfredo
Is that pain still bothering you?

Violetta
I feel better.

Alfredo
Ah, this life you're leading will kill you
You must take care of yourself.

Violetta
How could I?

Alfredo
Oh, if you were mine,
custode veglierei pe’ vostri soavi di.

Violetta
Che dite?
Ha forse alcuno cura di me?

Alfredo
Perché nessuno al mondo v’ama?

Violetta
Nessun!

Alfredo
Tranne sol io.

Violetta
Gli è vero!
Si grande amor dimenticato avea.

Alfredo
Ridete! E in voi v’ha un core?

Violetta
Un cor? Sì, forse—
e a che lo richiedete?

Alfredo
Ah, se ciò fosse,
non potreste allora celiar.

Violetta
Dite davvero?

Alfredo
Io non v’inganno.

Violetta
Da molto è che mi amate?

I’d watch over your gentle existence.

Violetta
What did you say?
Is there one who cares about me?

Alfredo
Does no one in the world love you?

Violetta
No one!

Alfredo
Except me.

Violetta
That’s true!
I’d forgotten about that great love.

Alfredo
Laugh, then! And have you a heart?

Violetta
A heart? Yes, perhaps—
why do you ask?

Alfredo
Ah, if that were true,
you wouldn’t be able to make light of it.

Violetta
Are you sincere?

Alfredo
I’m not deceiving you.

Violetta
Have you loved me for long?
Alfredo
Ah, sì, da un anno!
Un di felice eterea
mi balenaste innante,
e da quel di tremante.
vissi d’ignoto amor.
Di quell’amor ch’è palpito,
dell’universo intero,
croce e delizia al cor.

Alfredo
Ah, yes, for a year!
One happy, heavenly day
your beauty shone before me,
and since that day, so momentous,
I have adored you in secret.
Out of such a love so tremulous,
out of the universe so heavenly,
mysteriously, sorrow and gladness
come to the heart.

Rigoletto

(1851)

Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

ACT ONE
Scene Seven

Rigoletto
(Quel vecchio maledivami!)
Sparafucile
Signor...

Rigoletto
Va, non ho niente.

Sparafucile
Né il chiesi...a voi presente
un uom di spada sta.

Rigoletto
Un ladro?

Sparafucile
Un uom che libera
per poco da un rivale.
E voi ne avete...

Rigoletto
(That old man cursed me!)
Sparafucile
Sir?

Rigoletto
I have no money.

Sparafucile
I asked for none. Before you
stands a man who lives by his sword.

Rigoletto
A robber?

Sparafucile
A man who for a modest fee
would rid you of a rival.
You must have one.
Rigoletto
Quale?

Sparafucile
La vostra donna è là.

Rigoletto
(Che sento!) È quanto spendere per un signor dovrei?

Sparafucile
Prezzo maggior vorrei...

Rigoletto
Com'usasi pagar?

Sparafucile
Una megà s'anticipa, il resto si dà poi...

Rigoletto
(Demonio!) E come puoi tanto securu oprer?

Sparafucile
Soglio in ciride uccidere, oppure nel mio tettu. L'uomo di sera aspetto: Una stoccata e muor.

Rigoletto
(Demonio!) E come in casa?

Sparafucile
È facile... M'aiuta mia sorella... Per le vie danza... è bella... Chi voglio attira... e allor...

Rigoletto
Who?

Sparafucile
Your lady lives here.

Rigoletto
(What does he know?) How much would you charge for a nobleman?

Sparafucile
That would be more expensive...

Rigoletto
How are you paid?

Sparafucile
Half in advance, the rest afterwards.

Rigoletto
(The demon!) And how can you work so securely?

Sparafucile
I kill my man in the town or under my own roof; I wait for him at night. One thrust, and he's dead.

Rigoletto
And in your own house?

Sparafucile
That's easy; my sister helps me. She dances by the roadside, she's lovely, she lures the man I want, and then...
Rigoletto  
Comprendo.

Sparafucile  
Senza strepito…  
È questo il mio strumento.  
(shows his sword)  
Vi serve?

Rigoletto  
No… al momento.

Sparafucile  
Peggio per voi…

Rigoletto  
Chi sa?…

Sparafucile  
Sparafucil mi nomino…

Rigoletto  
Straniero?

Sparafucile  
Borgognone…

Rigoletto  
E dove all’occasione?…

Sparafucile  
Qui sempre a sera.

Rigoletto  
Va.

Sparafucile  
Sparafucil.  
(Sparafucile exits.)

Rigoletto  
I understand.

Sparafucile  
Not a sound.  
And here’s my instrument.  
(shows his sword)  
Can I serve you?

Rigoletto  
Not at the moment.

Sparafucile  
So much the worse.

Rigoletto  
Who knows when?

Sparafucile  
Sparafucile’s my name.

Rigoletto  
A foreigner?

Sparafucile  
From Burgundy.

Rigoletto  
And where, if I need you?

Sparafucile  
Here, every evening.

Rigoletto  
Go.

Sparafucile  
Sparafucil.  
(Sparafucile exits.)
ACT FOUR

Duca
La donna è mobile
qual piuma al vento,
muta d’accento
e di pensiero.
Sempre un amabile
leggiadro viso,
in pianto o in riso,
è mensognero.

Duke
Woman is wayward
as a feather in the breeze,
capricious in word
and in thought.
Always a lovable
pretty face,
but deceitful
whether weeping or smiling.

Otello
(1886)
Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Arrigo Boito

ACT ONE

A town in Cyprus. Outside the castle. An inn with a trellised arbor. In the background the quayside and sea. It is evening. A thunderstorm rages.

Cypriots
Una vela! Una vela! Un vessillo! Un vessillo!

Montano
È l’alato Leon!

Cassio
Or la fulgor lo svela.

Newcomers
Uno squillo! Uno squillo.

All
Ha tuonato il cannon!

Cypriots
A sail! A sail! A standard! A standard!

Montano
‘Tis the winged lion.

Cassio
Now the lightning flash reveals it.

Newcomers
A fanfare! A fanfare!

All
The cannon roared.
Cassio
È la nave del Duce...

Montano
Or s'affonda, or s'inciela.

Cassio
Erecto il rostro dall'onda.

Some Cypriots
Nelle nube si cela e nel mar,  
e alla luce dei lampi ne appar.

All
Lampi! Tuoni! Gorghi!  
Turbis tempestosi e fulmini!  
Treman l'onde, treman l'aure,  
tremen basi e culmini!  
Fende l'età un torvo e cieco  
spirito di vertigine.  
Addio scate il ciel biceo,  
come un tetto vel.  
Tutto è fumo! Tutto è fuoco!  
L'orrida caligine si fa incendio,  
poi si spegne più funesta.  
Spasima l'universo,  
accorre a valchi l'aquilon fantasia,  
i titanici oricalchi squillano nel ciel.

(Trumpets are heard.  Women of the island come running in and look towards the quay with gestures of terror and supplication.)

Dio, fulgor della furbera!  
Dio, sorriso della duna!  
Salva l'arca e la bandiera della veneta  
fortuna!  
Tu, che reggi gli astri e il Fato!  
Tu, che impieri al mondo e al ciel!  
Fa che in fondo al mar placato  
 posi l'ancora fedel.

Cassio
'Tis the General's ship!

Montano
Now she is engulfed, now tossed skywards.

Cassio
Her prow rises from out the waves.

Some Cypriots
She is shrouded in the clouds and the sea  
and anon appears in the lightning flash.

All
Lightning! Thunder! Whirlpools!  
Tempestuous storms and thunderbolts!  
The waves quake, the winds quake,  
the depths and the heights quake!  
A grim and blind spirit, dizzyly  
plunging, cleaves the air.  
God shakes the wild heaven,  
dark as a pall. All is smoke!  
All is fire! The horrid darkness  
becomes a conflagration,  
then dies out more baleful still.  
The universe is smitten,  
the spectral north wind comes rushing,  
titanic trumpets resound in the sky.
Iago
È infranto l’artimon!

Roderigo
Il rostro piomba su quello scoglio!

Cypriots
Aita! aita!

Iago
(aside to Roderigo)
L’alvo frenetico del mar sia la sua tomba!

Cypriots
È salvo! è salvo!

Voices off-stage
Gittate i palischermi!
Mano alle funi! Fermi!

Cypriots
Forza ai remi! Alla riva!

Voices off-stage
All’approdo! allo sbarco!

Cypriots
Evivai! Evivai! Evivai!
(Othello enters, ascending the steps from the shore to the quay, followed by Venetian soldiers and sailors.)

Othello
Esultate! L’orgoglio musulmano sepoltò è in mar; nostra è del ciel è gloria!
Dopo l’armi lo vinse l’uragano.

Iago
Her mainsail’s burst!

Roderigo
Her bow is rushing full on that rock!

Cypriots
Help! Help!

Iago
(aside to Roderigo)
May the raging belly of the sea be her tomb!

Cypriots
She is saved! She is saved!

Voices off-stage
Lower the boats!
All hands to the ropes! Make fast!

Cypriots
Pull together! To the shore!

Voices off-stage
To the landing! Disembark!

Cypriots
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!
(Othello enters, ascending the steps from the shore to the quay, followed by Venetian soldiers and sailors.)

Othello
Rejoice! The Mussulman’s pride is buried in the sea; ours and heaven’s is the glory!
After our arms the storm defeated him.
Cypriots
Evviva Othello! Evviva! Evviva! Evviva!
Vittoria, vittoria!
(Othello enters the castle, followed by Cassio, Montano and soldiers.)
Vittoria! Stermini!
Dispersi, distrutti, sepolti nell'orrido tumulto piombâr.
Avvîanno per requie la sferza dei flutti, la ridda dei turbinî, l'abisso del mar.
Vittoria! Vittoria! Vittoria! Vittoria!
Dispersi, distrutti, sepolti nell'orrido tumulto piombâr.
Vittoria! Evviva!
(The storm begins to die away.)
Si calma la bufera.

Cypriots
Long live Othello! Hurrah! Hurrah!
Hurrah!
Victory, victory!
(Othello enters the castle, followed by Cassio, Montano and soldiers.)
Victory! They are defeated!
Dispersed, destroyed, engulfed, buried in the terrible depths.
For requiem they will have the lash of the breakers, the brawl of the whirlwind, the abyss of the seas.
Victory! Victory! Victory! Victory!
Dispersed, destroyed, engulfed, buried in the terrible depths.
Victory! Victory!
(The storm begins to die away.)
The storm is subsiding.

Iago
(aside to Roderigo)
Roderigo, ebben, che pensi?

Roderigo
D'affogarmi.

Iago
Stolto è chi s'affoga per amor di donna.

Roderigo
Vincer odi so.
(Some of the people start to build a woodpile. The rest crowd 'round, turbulent and curious.)

Iago
(aside to Roderigo)
Well, Roderigo, what are you thinking?

Roderigo
Of drowning myself.

Iago
Fool is he who drowns himself for love of woman.

Roderigo
How to win I know not.
(Some of the people start to build a woodpile. The rest crowd 'round, turbulent and curious.)
Iago

Suvvia, fa sento, aspetta l'opra del tempo. A Desdemona bella, che nel segreto de' tuoi sogni adori, presto in uggia verranno i freschi baci di quel selvaggio dalle gonfie labbra. Buon Rodrigo, amico tuo sincero mi ti professo, nè in più forte ambascia soccorrerai potrei.
Se un fragil voto di femmina non è tropp'arduo nodo pel genio mio nè per l'inferno, giuro ch'ella donna sarà tua.
M'ascolta—benchè finga d'amarlo, odio quel Moro.

(Count re-enters and joins the soldiers. Iago points to Cassio and continues speaking.)
E una ragion dell'ira, eccola, guarda. Quell'azzimato capitano usurpa il grado mio, il grado mio che in cento ben pugnate battaglie ho meritato. Tal fu il voler d'Ottello, ed io rimango di sua Moreasca Signoria... l'alciere! Ma, com'è ver che tu Rodrigo sei, così è pur vero che se il Moro io fossi vedermi non vorrei d'attorno un Iago. Se tu m'ascolti...

Iago

(aside to Rodrigo)
Va al porto, con quanta più possa ti resta, gridando: sommossa! sommossa!
Va! spargi il tumulto, l’orrore. Le campane risuonino a storno.
(Roderigo runs off; Iago turns to the two fighting men.)
Fratelli! L’immancabile cessate!

Cypriot Women
Fuggiam!

Iago
Cieli! gia gronda di sangue Montano!
Tenzon furibondo!

Women
Fuggiam, fuggiam!

Iago
Tregua!

Men
Tregua!

Women
S’accidono!

Men
Pace!

Iago
Nessun piu raffrena quel nembo pugnace!
Si gridi l’allarme! Satana g’inviade!

Cypriotics
All’armi! All’armi! Soccorso! Soccorso!
(Enter Othello, followed by people with torches.)

Go! Spread confusion and horror. Let the bells sound the alarm.
(Roderigo runs off; Iago turns to the two fighting men.)
Brothers, stop this cruel fight!

Cypriot Women
Let’s fly!

Iago
Heavens! Montano’s dripping with blood! What a furious fight!

Women
Let’s fly, let’s fly!

Iago
Truce!

Men
Truce!

Women
They are killing one another!

Men
Peace!

Iago
No one can longer restrain this fighting fury!
Raise the alarm! Satan possesses them!

Cypriotics
To arms! To arms! Help! Help!
(Enter Othello, followed by people with torches.)
Othello
Abbasso le spade!
(The combatants stop.)
Olâ! che avvenire? Son io fra i Saraceni? O la turchesa rabbia è in voi trasfusa da sbananari l’un l’altro?
Onesto Iago, per quell’amor che tu mi porti, parla.

Iago
Non so...qui tutti eran cortesi amici, dianzi, e giocondi...ma ad un tratto, come se un pianeta maligno avesse a quelli smagato il senno, sguainando l’arme, s'avventano furenti...Avessi io prima stroncati i pie’ che qui m’addusser!

Othello
Down with your swords!
(The combatants stop.)
How now! What is happening? Am I among Saracens? Have you turned Turk to tear one another to pieces? Honest Iago, by that love which you bear me, speak.

Iago
I know not...E’en now all here were friends, civil and merry...but on a sudden, as if some malign star had bewitched their judgment, unsheathing their swords, they fell upon one another... Would I had lost my legs ere they had borne me hither.

Love Duet

Othello
Ingentilia di lagrime la storia il tuo bel viso e il labbro di sospiro; scendean sulle mie tenebre la gloria, il paradiso e gli astri a benedir.

Desdemona
Ed io vedea fra le tue tempie oscure splender del genio l'eterea belta.

Othello
Your lovely face ennobled the story with tears, and your lips with sighs; on my darkness glory descended, paradise and the stars to bless.

Desdemona
And from your dusky temples I saw the eternal beauty of your spirit shine.

Othello
E tu m'amavi per le mie sventure ed io t'amavo per la tua pieta.

Desdemona
Ed io t'amavo per le tue sventure e tu m'amavi per la mia pieta.

Othello
And you loved me for the dangers I had passed and I loved you that you did pity them.

Desdemona
And I loved you for the dangers you had passed and you loved me that I did pity them.
**Othello**
E tu m'amavi...

**Desdemona**
E tu m'amavi...

**Othello**
Ed io t'amavo...

**Othello, Desdemona**
... per la tua/mia pietà.

And you loved me...

**Desdemona**
And you loved me...

**Othello**
And I loved you...

**Othello, Desdemona**
... that you/I did pity them.

---

**Othello**
Un bacio...

**Desdemona**
Othello!

**Othello**
Un bacio... ancora un bacio.
Già la pleiade ardente in mar discende.

**Desdemona**
Tarda è la notte.

**Othello**
Vien... Venere splende.

**Desdemona**
Othello!
*(They go slowly towards the castle, clapsed in each other's arms.)*

**Othello**
A kiss...

**Desdemona**
Othello!

**Othello**
A kiss... and yet another kiss.
The burning Pleiades already sink into the sea.

**Desdemona**
Late is the night.

**Othello**
Come... Venus shines on high.

**Desdemona**
Othello!
*(They go slowly towards the castle, clapsed in each other's arms.)*
“Credo”

lago
(alone, paying no further heed to Cassio)
Credo in un Dio crudele che m'ha
creato simile a sé e che nell'irs io
nomo. Dalla viltà d’un germo o
d’un amato vile son nato.
Son scellerato perché son uomo;
esento il fango originario in me.
St! questa è la mia fè!
Credo con fermo cuor, siccome
credè la vedovella al tempio,
che il mal ch'io pensai e che da me
procede, per il mio destino adempio.
Credo che il giusto è un istrion
beffardo, e nel viso e nel cuor,
che tutto è in lui bugiardo:
lagrima, bacio, sguardo,
sacrificio ed onor.
E credo l’uom gioco d’iniqua sorte
dal germe della culla
al verme dell’avel.
Vien dopo tanta irrisión la Morte.
E poi? E poi? La Morte è il Nulla.
È vecchia folia il Ciel.
Iago
(pretending not to have seen Othello, who has drawn near; as if to himself)
Gìò m’accora.

Othello
Che parli?

Iago
Nulla . . . voi qui? una vana voce m’uscì dal labbro . . .

Othello
Colui che s’allontana dalla mia sposa, è Cassio?

Iago
Cassio? No . . . quei ei scosse come un reo nel vedervi.

Othello
Credo che Cassio ci fosse.

Iago
Mio signore . . .

Othello
Che brami?

Iago
Cassio, nei primi dì del vostro amor, Desdemona non conosceva?

Othello
Si.
Perchè fai tale inchiesta?

Iago
Il mio pensiero è vago d’ubbie, non di malizia.

Iago
(pretending not to have seen Othello, who has drawn near; as if to himself)
I like not that.

Othello
What do you say?

Iago
Nothing . . . you here? . . . an idle word fell from my lips.

Othello
Was not that Cassio parting from my wife?

Iago
Cassio? No . . . that man shook like one guilty, seeing you coming.

Othello
I do believe it was Cassio.

Iago
My lord . . .

Othello
What would you?

Iago
In the first days of your love, did Cassio know Desdemona?

Othello
Yes.
Why do you ask such a question?

Iago
My thought reflects vague fear, not malice.
Othello
Di' il tuo pensiero, Iago.

Iago
Vi confidaste a Cassio?

Othello
Spesso un mio dono o un cenno portava alla mia sposa.

Iago
Dassenno?

Othello
Sì, dasseno.
Nol credi onesto?

Iago
(imitating Othello)
Onesto?

Othello
Che ascondi nel tuo core?

Iago
Che ascondo in cor, signore?

Othello
"Che ascondo in cor, signore?"
Pel cielo, tu sei l'eco die detti miei,
nel chiostro dell'anima ricetti qualche terribil mostro.
Si, ben t'udii poc'anzi mormorar:
"Ciò m'accora."
Ma di che t'accoravi?
Nomini Cassio e allora tu corrughi la fronte. Suvvia, parla, se m'ami.

Iago
Voi sapete ch'io v'amó.
Iago
S'anco teneste in mano tutta l'anima mia non sapreste.

Iago
Temete, signor, la gelosia!
E un'Idra fosca, livida, cieca, col suo veleno sè stessa attosca, vivida piaga le squarcia il seno.

Othello
Miseria mia! No! il vano sospettar nulla giova.
Pria del dubbio l'indagine, dopo il dubbio la prova, dopo la prova (Othello ha sue leggi supreme), amore e gelosia vadan dispersi insieme!

Iago
Un tal proposito spezza di mie labbra il suggello.
(Voices are heard offstage, singing.)
Non parlo ancor di prova, pur, generoso Othello, vigilate... sovente le oneste e ben create coscienze non vedono la frode: vigilate. Scrutate le parole di Desdemona, un detto può ricondur la fede, può affermara il sospetto.

Othello
Dunque senza velami t'esprimi, e senza ambagi.
T'esca fuor dalla gola il tuo più rio pensiero colla più ria parola.

Iago
Then speak out without subterfuge, hiding nothing.
Spew forth from your throat your worst thoughts in your worst words!

Iago
Had you my very soul in your hands, you should not know it.

Iago
Beware, my lord, of jealousy!
'Tis a dark hydra, malignant, blind, it poisons itself with its own venom, its breast is ripped by an open wound.

Othello
Oh, misery! No! Vain suspicion profits nothing.
Before doubt the inquiry, after doubt the proof. After proof (Othello has his supreme laws), love and jealousy together shall be resolved!

Iago
Such a proposition removes the seal from my lips.
(Voices are heard offstage, singing.)
I speak not yet of proof, but, generous Othello, be on guard... often honest and noble natures do not suspect deceit: be on your guard. Observe Desdemona's words, a single one can restore faith, can confirm suspicion.
Othello

Più orrendo d’ogni orrenda ingiuria
dell’ingiuria è il sospetto.
Nell’ore arcana della sua lussuria
(e a me furate!) m’agitava il petto
forse un presagio? Ero baldo, giulivo.
Nulla sapevo ancor; io non sentivo
sul suo corpo divin che m’innamora
e sui labbra mendaci
gli ardentí baci
di Cassio! Ed ora ed ora . . .
addio, sublimi incanti del pensier!
Addio schiere fulgenti, addio vittorie,
dardi volanti e volanti corsier!
Addio, vessillo trionfale e pio,
e diane squillanti in sul mattin!
Clamori e canci di battaglia, addio!
Della gloria d’Othello è questo il fin.

Iago

Pace, signor.

Othello

Sciagurato! mi trova una prova secura
di Desdemona è impura . . .
Non sfugger nulla ti giova!
Voi una secura, una visibil prova!
O sulla tua testa
s’accenda e precipiti il fulmine
del mio spaventoso furore che si desta!
(He seizes Iago by the throat and throws him to the ground.)

Iago

(rising)
Divina grazia difendimi! Il cielo

Othello

More dreadful than the most dreadful
injury of injuries is suspicion.
In the secret hours of her lust
(stolen from me!) did a presentiment
ever stir in my breast? I was bold,
happy. As yet I knew nothing; I did
not feel on the divine body I adored
and on the lying lips
the burning kisses
of Cassio! And now! And now . . .
farewell, sublime content of the mind!
Farewell, brave troops, farewell,
victories,
 flying shafts and racing steeds!
Farewell, triumphant sacred banner,
and the reveille ringing in the morn!
Sound and songs of battle, farewell!
Othello’s glory is gone.

Iago

Peace, my lord.

Othello

Villain! Find me sure proof
that Desdemona is impure . . .
Do not fly! ‘Twill avail you nothing!
I want sure and ocular proof!
Or upon your head will fall
the fiery thunderbolt
of my wakened and fearful fury!
(He seizes Iago by the throat and throws him to the ground.)

Iago

(rising)
Divine grace defend me! Heaven

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vi protegga. Non son più vostro affiere.  
Voglio che il mondo testimon mi sia 
che l'onestà è periglio.  
(He makes as if to go.)

Othello  
No . . . rimani. Forse onesto tu sei.

Iago  
Meglio vrebbe ch'io fossi un 
ciurmandor.

Othello  
Per l'universo!  
Credo leale Desdemona e credo 
che non lo sia. Te credo onesto e 
credo disleale . . . La prova io voglio!  
Voglio la certezza!

Iago  
Signor, frenate l'ansia.  
E qual certezza v'abbisogna?  
Avvinti verderli forse?

Othello  
Ah, morte e dannazione!

Iago  
Ardua impresa sarebbe; e qual certezza 
sognate voi se quell' immondo fatto 
sempre vi sfuggirà? Ma pur se guida 
è la ragione al vero, una si forte 
congettura riscontro che per poco alla 
certezza vi conduce. Udite.  
Era la notte, Cassio dormia, 
gli stavo accanto.  
Con interrotte voci tradia 
l'intimo incanto.  
Le labbra lente, lente moveva, 
nell' abbandono

Othello  
I am no more your 
ensign. I want the world to be my 
wisdom that honesty is not safe.  
(He makes as if to go.)

Othello  
No . . . stay. Perhaps you are honest.

Iago  
'Twere better were I a swindler.

Othello  
The world be witness!  
I believe Desdemona true and I believe 
she is not. I believe you honest and 
I believe you disloyal . . . I want proof!  
I want certainty!

Iago  
My lord, curb your agitation.  
And what certainty would you have?  
To see them perhaps embracing?

Othello  
Death and damnation!

Iago  
It would be a difficult task; and 
what certainty do you have if this 
monstrous deed forever eludes you?  
But if reason be guide to truth, I 
have a strong conjecture which soon 
should bring you certainty. Listen. 
It was night, Cassio was sleeping, 
I lay beside him.  
In halting accents he betrayed 
his inmost capture.  
His lips moved slowly, slowly, 
in the abandon
del sogno ardente, e allor dicea,
con flebil suono:
"Desdemona soave! Il nostro amor
s'asconda. Cauti vegliamo! L'estasi
del ciel tutto m'innonda."
Seguìa più vago l'incubo blando;
con molle angoscia
l'interna imago quasi baciando,
ei disce poscia:
"Il rio destino impreco
che al Moro ti donò."
E allor il sogno in cieco
letargo si mutò.

Othello
Oh! mostruosa colpa!

Iago
Io non narrai che un sogno.

Othello
Un sogno che rivela un fatto.

Iago
Un sogno che può dar forma di
prova ad altro indizio.

Othello
E qual?

Iago
Talor vedeste in mano di
Desdemona un tessuto
trapunto a fior e più sottil
d'un velo?

Othello
È il fazzoletto ch'io le diedi,
pegno primo d'amor.

do his burning dream, and then
he said, in mournful tone:
"Sweet Desdemona! We must hide
our love. Let us be wary! I am
drowning in heavenly ecstasy."
The nightmare grew ever more
passionate; with soft anguish
he seemed to kiss his fancy's image,
then said:
"I curse the fate
that gave you to the Moor."
And then the dream subsided
into blind oblivion.

Othello
Oh, monstrous guilt!

Iago
I have but related a dream.

Othello
A dream reveals a fact.

Iago
A dream that can give proof
of other evidence.

Othello
Of what?

Iago
Have you sometimes seen in
Desdemona's hand a tissue
embroidered with flowers and
finer than gauze?

Othello
'Tis the handkerchief I gave her,
first pledge of love.
lago

Que! fazzoletto ieri (certo ne son)
lò vidi in man di Cassio.

Othello

Ah! Mille v'è gli donasse Iddio!
Una è povera preda al furor mio!
Jago, ho il cor di gelo.
Lungi da me le pietose larve!
Tutto il mio vano amor esalo al cielo, guardami, ei sparve. Nelle sue spire d'angue l'idra m'avvince!
Ah! sangue! sangue! sangue!

Othello

Ha! God grant him a thousand lives!
One is a poor prey to my fury,
Jago, I have a heart of ice.
Away from me piteous illusions!
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven, see, 'tis gone. The hydra entwines me in its snaky coils.
Oh, blood! Blood! Blood!

Othello

(kneeling)

Sì, pel ciel marmoreo giuro!
Per le attorte folgori! Per la Morte
e per l'oscuro mar sterminatore!
D'irà e d'impeto tremendo presto
fia che sfogori
questa man ch'io levo e stendo!
(He lift his hand to the sky and is about to rise when lago prevents him, and kneels beside him.)

Othello

(kneeling)

Yes, I swear by the marble heaven!
By the forked lightning! By death
and by the dark destroying sea!
Let this hand which I raise and stretch forth
soon blaze in wild transport of rage!
(He lift his hand to the sky and is about to rise when lago prevents him, and kneels beside him.)

lago

Non v'alzate ancor!
'Testimon è il Sol ch'io miro,
che m'iradia e inanima
l'ampia terra e il vasto spiro
del Creato inter,
che ad Othello io sacro ardenti,
core, braccio ed anima
s'anco ad opere cruenti
s'armi il suo voler!

lago

Do not rise yet!
Witness is the sun that I behold,
that shines on me and animates
the broad earth and the vast soul
of all Creation,
witness that to Othello I solemnly
dedicate heart, hand and soul,
if he will also arm his will
for the bloody work!
Iago, Othello

(raising their hands to heaven as in a solemn oath)
Sì, pel ciel marmoreo giuro!
Per le attorte folgori! Per la Morte
e per l'oscur o mar sterminator!
D'ira e d'impo tremendo prezzo
fia che sfolgori
questa man ch'io levo e stendo!
Dio vendicador!

Iago, Othello

(raising their hands to heaven as in a solemn oath)
Yes, I swear by the marble heaven!
By the forked lightning! By death
and by the dark destroying sea!
Let this hand which I raise
and stretch forth
soon blaze in wild transport of rage!
God of vengeance!

ACT FOUR

Desdemona’s bedroom. A bed, a prayer desk, a table, a mirror, some chairs. A light burns before a picture of the Madonna which hangs above the prie-dieu.
On the table a candle. It is night.

Emilia
Era più calmo?

Desdemona
Mi parea. M’inginse
di coricarmi e d’attendarlo. Emilia,
te ne prego, distendi sul mio letto
la mia candida veste nuziale.
Senti. Se pria di te morir dovessi
mi seppellisci con un di quei veli.

Emilia
Scacciate queste idee.

Desdemona
Son inesita, tanto, tanto.
(sitting down mechanically before the mirror)
Mia madre aveva una povera ancella,
innamorata e bella.

Desdemona
So it seemed to me. He bade me
go to bed and wait for him. Emilia,
I pray you lay on my bed
my white bridal robe.
Hark. If I should die before you
shroud me in its veils.

Emilia
Dismiss such fancies.

Desdemona
I am sad, so very sad.
(sitting down mechanically before the mirror)
My mother had a poor maid,
she was pretty and in love.
Era il suo nome
Barbara. Amava
un nome che poi l’abbandonò; cantava
un canzone: la canzon del Salice.

(speaking to Emilia)
Mi discioglì le chiome . . .
Jo questa sera ho la memoria piena
di quella cantilena.

Her name was Barbara.
She was in love with a man who then
forsook her; she used to sing a song:
The Willow Song.

(speaking to Emilia)
Undo my hair . . .
That song tonight will not go
from my mind . . .

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"Willow Song"

Desdemona
Piangea cantando
nell’erba landa,
piangea la mesta . . .
O Salce! Salce! Salce!
Sedea chinando
sul sen la testa!
Salce! Salce! Salce!
Cantiamo! Cantiamo!
Il Salce funebre
sarà la mia ghirlanda.

Desdemona
Singing, she wept
on the lonely heath,
the poor soul wept . . .
Oh, willow, willow, willow!
She sat, her head
bent on her breast!
Willow, willow, willow!
Come sing! Come sing!
The weeping willow
shall be my garland.

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(Othello enters by a secret door. He places a scimitar on the table. He stands
before the candle undecided whether to extinguish it or not. He looks at
Desdemona, then puts out the light. The room is now illuminated only by the
candle burning above the prie-dieu. He draws near to the bed and looks down on
the sleeping Desdemona. He kisses her three times. On the third kiss she awakens.)

Desdemona
Chi è là? Othello?

Desdemona
Who’s there? Othello?

Othello
Sil!

Othello
Yes!
Othello

Prior d'ucciderri . . . sposa . . .
ti baciai.
Ora morendo . . . nell'ombra . . .
in cui mi giacio . . .
Un bacio . . . un bacio ancora . . .
ah! . . . un altro bacio . . .
(He falls on the bed and dies.)

Othello

Ere I killed you . . . wife . . .
I kissed you.
Now dying . . . in the shadow . . .
where I lie . . .
A kiss . . . another kiss . . .
ah . . . and yet another kiss . . .
(He falls on the bed and dies.)
Armide
(1686)
Jean-Baptiste Lully
Libretto by Philippe Quinault

Recitative/Monologue

Armide
Enfin il est en ma puissance,
ce fatal ennemi, ce superbe
vainqueur.
Le charme du sommeil livre à ma
vengeance;
Je vais percer son invincible coeur.
Par lui tous mes captifs sont sortis
d’esclavage;
Qu’il éprouve toute ma rage.
Quel trouble me saisit qui me fait
hésiter?
Qu’est-ce qu’en sa faveur le pitié me
veut dire?
Frappons... Ciel! Qui peut
m’arrêter?
Achevons... je frémis!
Vengeons-nous... je soupirer!
Est-ce ainsi que je dois me venger
aujourd’hui?
Ma colère s’éteint quand j’approche
de lui.
Plus je le voi, plus ma vengeance est
vaine;
Mon bras tremblant se refuse à ma
haine.
Ah! quelle cruauté de lui ravir le jour!
A ce jeune héros tout cède sur la
terre.
Qui croirait qu’il fut né seulement
pour la guerre?
Il semble être fait pour l’Amour.

Armide
Finally he is in my power,
this fatal enemy, this superb warrior.
The charm of sleep delivers him to
my vengeance;
I will pierce his invincible heart.
Through him all my captives have
escaped from slavery.
Let him feel all my anger.
What fear grips me? what makes me
hesitate?
What in his favor does pity want to
tell me?
Let us strike... Heavens! Who can
stop me?
Let us get on with it... I tremble!
Let us avenge... I sigh!
Is it thus that I must avenge myself
today?
My rage is extinguished when I
approach him.
The more I see of him, the more my
vengeance is ineffectual.
My trembling arm denies my hate.
Ah! What cruelty, to rob him of the
light of day!
To this young hero everything on
earth surrenders.
Who would believe that he was born
only for war?
He seems to be made for love.
Could I not avenge myself unless he
Ne puis-je me venger à moins qu'il ne périsse?
Hé! ne suffit-il pas que l'amour le punisse?
Puisqu'il n'a pu trouver mes yeux assez charmants,
Qu'il m'aime au moins par mes enchantements.
Que, s'il se peut, je le haïsse.

dies?
Oh, is it not enough that Love should punish him?
Since he could not find my eyes charming enough,
let him love me at least through my sorcery,
so that, if it's possible, I may hate him.

Aria

Venez, venez, seconder mes désirs,
Démons, transformez-vous en d'aimables zéphirs.
Je crie à ce vainqueur, la pitié me surmonte.
Cachez ma faiblesse et ma honte
Dans les plus reculés déserts.
Voici, voici, conduisez nous au bout de l'univers.

Come, come support my desires,
demons; transform yourselves into friendly zephyrs.
I give in to this conqueror; pity overwhelms me.
Conceal my weakness and my shame in the most remote desert.
Fly, fly, lead us to the end of the universe.

— Hippolyte —

Hippolyte et Aricie

(1733)

Jean-Philippe Rameau
Libretto by Simon-Joseph Pellegrin

ACT FOUR

Scene One

Hippolyte

Ah! faut-il, en un jour, perdre tout ce que j'aime?
Et les maux que je crains, et les biens que je perds,
Tout accable mon cœur d'une douleur extrême.
Sous le nuage affreux dont mes jours

Hippolyte

Ah, must I, in a day lose all that I love?
And the troubles I fear, and the riches I lose,
All overwhelm my heart with extreme pain.
Under the terrible cloud that darkens
sont couverts,
que deviendra ma gloire aux yeux de
l'univers?
Ah! faut-il, en un jour, perdre tout ce
que j'aime?
Mon père pour jamais me bannit de
ces lieux
Si chers de Diane même.
Je ne verrai plus beaux yeux
Qui faisaient mon bonheur suprême.

my days,
What will become of my glory in the
eyes of the world?
Ah, must I, in a day, lose all that I
love?
My father is banishing me forever
from these parts
So dear to Diane herself.
I shall see no more the beautiful eyes
which made me supremely happy.

Le Devin du village
The Village Soothsayer (I/52)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Libretto by the composer

Colette
J'ai perdu tout mon bonheur.
J'ai perdu mon serviteur.
Colin me délaisse.
Hélas! il a pu changer!
Je voudrais n'y plus songer.
J'y songe sans cesse.

Colette
I have lost all my happiness.
I have lost my servant.
Colin forsakes me.
Alas, he could have changed.
I would rather stop dreaming about it.
Yet I dream about it incessantly.

Récit
Il m'aimait autrefois, et ce fut mon
malheur . . .
Mais quelle est donc celle qu'il me
préfère?
Elle est donc bien charmante!
Impudente bergère,
Ne crains tu point les maux
Que j'éprouve en ce jour?
Colin a pu changer; tu peux avoir
ton tour . . .
que me sert d'y rêver sans cesse?

He loved me once, and this was my
bad luck . . .
But who, then, is she whom he
prefers?
She must be very charming!
Impudent shepherdess,
do you not fear at all the misfortunes
that I am experiencing today?
Colin could have changed; you may
have your turn . . .
What good does it do to dream
Rien ne peut guérir mon amour
Et tout augmente ma tristesse.
J'ai perdu mon serviteur... etc.
Je veux le haïr; je le dois...
Peut-être il m'aime encore...
Pourquoi me fuir sans cesse?
Il me cherchait tant à travers.
Le devin du canton fait ici sa demeure:
Il sait tout; il saura le sort de mon amour.
Je le vois et je veux m'éclaircir en ce jour.

about it incessantly!
Nothing can cure my love
and everything increases my sorrow.
I have lost my servant... etc.
I want to hate him: I must do it...
Perhaps he loves me still...
Why does he shun me incessantly?
He used to look for me once.
The soothsayer of the canton makes his home here.
He knows all; he will know the face of my love.
I see him, and I want this clarified today.

Orfeo ed Euridice
(1762)
Christoph Willibald von Gluck
Libretto by Raniero de' Calzabigi

ACT TWO
Scene One

Chorus
Chi mai dell'Erebo
Fralle caligini
Sull'orme d'Erecol
E di Piriteo
Conduce il pié?
D'orror l'ingombrino
Le fere Eumenidi,
E lo spaventino
Gli urlì di Cerbero,
Se un dio non è.

Orpheus
Deh, placatevi con me.

Chorus
Who from Erebus
through the dark mists,
in the footsteps of Hercules
and of Peirithous
would ever set forth?
He would be blocked with horror
by the fierce Eumenides
and frightened by
the shrieks of Cerberus,
unless he were a god.

Orpheus
Please, be gentle with me.
Furies, specters, scornful phantoms!

Chorus
No!...No!...  

Orpheus
Vi renda almen pietose  
Il mio barbaro dolor!

Let it at least make you merciful,  
my cruel pain!

Les Huguenots  
(1836)  
Giacomo Meyerbeer  
Libretto by Eugène Scribe

Recitative

Marguerite
Et maintenant je dois offrir à votre  
vue votre charmante prétendue,  
qui rendra vos serments faciles à  
tenir!  
(St.-Bris reappears, leading Valentine  
toward Raoul.)

Raoul
(with muffled voice)  
Ah! grand Dieu! qu’ai-je vu?

Marguerite
Qu’avez-vous?

Raoul
(barely able to speak)  
Quoi!... c’est elle!  
Que m’offraient en ce jour...

Marguerite
And now I must offer to your sight  
your charming fiancée,  
who will make your oath easy to  
keep.  
(St.-Bris reappears, leading Valentine  
toward Raoul.)

Raoul
(with muffled voice)  
Ah! Great God! What do I see?

Marguerite
What’s wrong with you?

Raoul
(barely able to speak)  
What!... It is she! She  
whom they offer to me today.
Marguerite
Et l’hymne et l’amour!

Raoul
Trahison! Perfidie!
Moi, son époux? jamais! jamais!

All
Ciel!

Marguerite, Urbain, Valentine, A Lady of Honor
O transport! ô dénecel et d’où vient cet outrage?
A briser de tels noeuds quel délire l’engage?

Raoul
A ce point l’on m’outrage!
Je repousse à jamais un honteux mariage!

Nevers, St. Bris
Ah! je tremble et frémis et de honte et de rage!
C’est à moi d’immoler l’ennemi qui m’outrage!

Marcel
Oui, mon coeur applaudit, cher Raoul, ton courage!

Chorus
Et pourquoi rompre ainsi le serment qui l’engage?

Marguerite, Urbain, Valentine, A Lady of Honor
D’un penchant inconnu le pouvoir seducteur

Marguerite
Marriage and love, together!

Raoul
Treason! Treachery!
I, her spouse? Never! Never!

All
Heavens!

Marguerite, Urbain, Valentine, A Lady of Honor
O rapture! O madness! Whence comes this outrage?
To break these knots, what delirium inspires him?

Raoul
At this point I am outraged!
I reject forever this shameful marriage!

Nevers, St. Bris
Ah! I shake and shiver from shame and anger.
It is up to me to sacrifice the enemy who insults me!

Marcel
Yes, my heart applauds, dear Raoul, your courage!

Chorus
And why break thus the oath that he swore?

Marguerite, Urbain, Valentine, A Lady of Honor
Has an unknown impulse, its seductive power,
Viendrait-il tout à coup s'emparer de son cœur?

Raoul

Plus d'hymen, je l'ai dit; et, fidèle à l'honneur, je me ris désormais de leurs cris de fureur!

Nevers, St. Bris

C'est son sang qu'il me faut pour calmer ma fureur,
Pour punir cet affront, pour venger mon honneur!

Marcel

Chevalier et chrétien, écoutant seul l'honneur, il se rit désormais de leurs cris de fureur!

Chorus

Cet affront veut du sang; dans ce jour sa fureur
Doit punir l'offenseur et venger son honneur!

Valentine

(with pained expression)

Et comment ai-je donc mérité tant d'outrage? Dans mon cœur éperdu s'est glacié mon courage.

Raoul

O douleur! triste sort!
A ce point l'on m'outrage!

Nevers, St. Bris

Frémissant et tremblant,
Plein de honte et de rage, . . .

all of a sudden taken possession of his heart?

Raoul

No marriage, as I said. Loyal to my honor, I laugh now at their cries of fury.

Nevers, St. Bris

It is his blood that I need to calm my fury.
To punish this affront, to avenge my honor!

Marcel

Knight and Christian, listening only to his conscience, he laughs now at their cries of fury.

Chorus

This affront calls for blood. On this day his fury must punish the offender and avenge his honor.

Valentine

(with pained expression)

How did I deserve such an insult?
In my desolate heart has frozen my courage.

Raoul

O misery! Sad destiny!
To such a point they insult me!

Nevers, St. Bris

Shuddering and trembling, full of shame and anger, . . .
Marcel
(aside, in an outpouring of joy)
Seigneur, rempart et seul soutien du faible qui t'adore!

Marguerite
Un semblable refus... 

Raoul
N'est que trop légitime!

Marguerite
Dites-m'en la raison.

Raoul
Je ne le puis sans crime,
mais cet hymen, jamais!

Marguerite
Ô transport! ô démence! et pourquoi cet outrage?
A briser de tels noeuds quel délire l'engage?

Nevers, St. Bris
(to Raoul)
Sortons! Qu'il tombe sous nos coups!

Raoul
D'un tel honneur mon cœur est plus jaloux!

Marguerite
Arrêtes! Devant moi quelle insulte nouvelle!
(signaling an officer to disarm Raoul)
Vous, Raoul, votre épée!
(to St. Bris) Et vous, oubliez-vous

Marcel
(aside, in an outpouring of joy)
Lord, rampart and only support of the feeble who adore you!

Marguerite
Such a refusal...

Raoul
Is only right!

Marguerite
Give me a reason.

Raoul
I cannot without incriminating myself; but this marriage, never!

Marguerite
Ô rapture, ô madness! And why this outrage?
To undo these knots what delirium inspires him?

Nevers, St. Bris
(to Raoul)
Let's go. Let him fall beneath our blows.

Raoul
Of such an honor my heart is too eager.

Marguerite
Halt! In my presence, what new insult?
(signaling an officer to disarm Raoul)
You, Raoul, your sword.
(to St. Bris) And you, do you forget
Qu'à l'instant près de lui votre roi vous rappelle?

Raoul
Je les suivrai!

Marguerite
Non pas; près de moi dans ces lieux Vous restez!

St. Bris
Le lâche est trop heureux Que cette main royale ait un tel privilège! C'est en vain qu'on pretend enchaîner mon courage;

Raoul
(in a muffled voice, to St. Bris) C'est vous qu'elle protège en désarmant mon bras, Et bientôt je serai près de vous!

Marguerite
Téméraires! Tous les deux redoutez ma colère!

Nevers, St. Bris
Je saurai retrouver l'ennemi, l'offenseur!

Marcel
Oui! mon coeur applaudit Raoul de son noble courage!

Chorus
C'est en vain qu'on prétend enchaîner son courage; Il saura retrouver l'ennemi qui l'outrage!

that at this moment your king summons you to his side?

Raoul
I shall follow them.

Marguerite
No. Near me in this place You will remain.

St. Bris
The coward is too happy that this royal hand have such a privilege. It's in vain that they claim they can enchain my courage.

Raoul
(in a muffled voice, to St. Bris) It is you she protects in disarming my hand, and soon I shall be close to you.

Marguerite
Fools! Both of you better dread my anger.

Nevers, St. Bris
I shall know how to find the enemy, the offender.

Marcel
Yes, my heart applauds Raoul for his noble courage.

Chorus
It's in vain that they claim they can enchain his courage. He will know how to find the enemy that offends.
Ah! partons, éloignons-nous!
Allons, partons, éloignons-nous!
Rien ne pourra sauver Raoul!

Marcel
(aside, joyfully)
Tu nous défends encore, mon Dieu!

(St. Bris and Nevers drag Valentine, half fainting, and exit, defying Raoul, who wants to follow but is restrained by the Queen’s soldiers.)

Carmen
(1875)
Georges Bizet
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

NO. 20

Mercédès
Mélons!

Frasquita
Coupons!

Frasquita
Bien, c’est cela.

Mercédès
Trois cartes ici . . .

Frasquita
Quatre là.

Mercédès, Frasquita
Et maintenant, parlez, mes belles
De l’avenir, donnez-nous des nouvelles; dites-nous qui nous trahira,
Dites-nous qui aimera.
Parlez!

Ah! let’s go, let’s get away.
Let’s go, let’s leave, let’s get away.
Nothing can save Raoul.

Marcel
(aside, joyfully)
You defend us still, my God!

Mercédès
Shuffle!

Frasquita
Cut!

Frasquita
Right, that’s it.

Mercédès
Three cards here . . .

Frasquita
Four cards here . . .

Mercédès, Frasquita
And now my beauties tell us all
The future, tell us all that’s new;
Tell us who will play us false,
Tell us who will love us true —
Tell!
Frasquita
Moi, je vois un jeune amoureux
qui m’aime on ne peut davantage.

Mercédès
Le mien est très riche et très vieux
mais il parle de mariage.

Frasquita
Je me campe sur son cheval, et dans la
montagne il m’entraîne.

Mercédès
Dans un château presque royal,
le mien m’installe en souveraine.

Frasquita
De l’amour à n’en plus finir,
tous les jours nouvelles folies.

Mercédès
De l’or tant que j’en puis tenir,
des diamants . . . des pierreries.

Frasquita
Le mien devient un chef fameux,
cent hommes marchent à la suite.

Mercédès
Le mien, en croirai-je mes yeux . . .
Oui, Il meurt Ah! je suis veuve et
hérite.

Frasquita, Mercédès
Parlez encore, parlez mes belles,
de l’avenir donnez-nous des
nouvelles; dites-nous qui nous trahira,
dites-nous qui nous aimera.
Parlez!

Frasquita
What I see is a young man courting,
And he’s madly in love with me.

Mercédès
Mine’s very rich and very old,
But he wants to marry me.

Frasquita
He plumps me on his horse and
carries me off into the mountains.

Mercédès
Mine sets me up like a queen
In a princely castle.

Frasquita
Love that goes on and on.
New madness every day.

Mercédès
More gold than I can hold,
Diamonds . . . all kinds of gems.

Frasquita
Mine becomes a famous leader,
With a hundred men at his back.

Mercédès
Mine, can I believe my eyes . . .
Yes, he dies. Hah! I’m a rich widow.

Frasquita, Mercédès
Again, my beauties, tell us all
The future, tell us all that’s new;
Tell us who will play us false,
Tell us who will love us true,
Tell!
Frasquita
Fortune!

Mercédès
Amour!

Carmen
Voyons, que j’essaie à mon tour.
(Shes starts turning the cards over.)
Carreau, pique! . . . la mort!
J’ai bien lu ... moi d’abord,
(pointing to the sleeping Don José)
Ensuite lui ... pour tous les deux, la mort!
(pointing to herself, as she continues turning cards)
En vain pour éviter les réponses amères, en vain tu mèleras,
Cela ne sert à rien, les cartes sont sincères et ne mentiront pas!
Dans le livre d’en haut, si ta page est est heureuse, mèlle et couche sans peur,
La carte sous tes doigts se tournera joyeuse, t’annonçant le bonheur!
Mais si tu dois Mourir, si le mot redoutable est écrit par le sort,
Recommence vingt fois, la carte impitoyable répètera: la mort!
Oui, si tu dois Mourir, recommence vingt fois,
La carte impitoyable répétera: la mort!
Encore encore! toujours la mort!

Frasquita, Mercédès
Parlez encore, parlez mes belles,
De l’avenir donnez-nous des nouvelles, dites-nous qui nous traîna,
Dites-nous qui nous aimera...

Now then, let me try my turn.
(Shes starts turning the cards over.)
Diamonds, spades! . . . death!
I saw it no doubt ... first me,
(pointing to the sleeping Don José)
Then him ... for both of us, death!
(pointing to herself, as she continues turning cards)
You may shuffle them over again and again to avoid an unwelcome reply;
The cards are too honest, you shuffle in vain, the cards will never lie!
If you’re destined for joy in the book up on high, then shuffle and cut without fear;
As the card you hold turns, then you will desery that happiness it will declare. But if you must die, if that terrible word is inscribed in the book as your fate, twenty-fold though you do it, the pitiless card nought but “Death!” will ever repeat. Yes, if you must die, though you turn twenty times, the card nought but “Death!” will repeat. “Death!” again and again will repeat!

Frasquita, Mercédès
Again, my beauties, tell us all
The future, tell us all that’s new;
Tell us who will play us false,
Tell us who will love us true...
How to Listen to and Understand Opera
Selective Bibliography

General Sources

Italian Opera

Mozart

Puccini

Strauss

Verdi

Wagner
Robert Greenberg, Ph.D.

Chairman, Department of Music History and Literature
San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Robert Greenberg has composed over 40 works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of Greenberg’s work have taken place in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, England, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and The Netherlands, where his “Child’s Play” for String Quartet was performed at the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam in 1993.

Dr. Greenberg holds degrees from Princeton University and the University of California at Berkeley, where he received a Ph.D. in music composition in 1984. His principal teachers were Edward Cone, Claudio Spies, Andrew Imbrie, and Olly Wilson. His awards include three Nicola De Lorenzo Prizes in composition, three Meet the Composer grants, and commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation of the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, XTET, and the Dancer’s Stage Ballet Company.

He is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he is chair of the Department of Music History and Literature and director of curriculum of the Adult Extension Division. He is creator, host, and lecturer for the San Francisco Symphony’s “Discovery Series.”

He has taught and lectured extensively across North America and Europe, speaking to such corporations and musical institutions as the Van Cliburn Foundation, Arthur Andersen, Bechtel Investments, the Shaklee Corporation, the University of California/Haas School of Business Executive Seminar, the Association of California Symphony Orchestras, the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras, and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco.

His work as a teacher and lecturer has been profiled in the Wall Street Journal, Inc. magazine, and the San Francisco Chronicle. He is an artistic co-director and board member of COMPOSERS INC. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the Innova label.

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How to Listen to and Understand Opera

Scope: This course is designed as a methodology, a guide to listening and understanding opera. For this reason it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the entire operatic repertory. Armed with the knowledge of opera gained from this course, however, the listener will be able to explore in greater depth the extraordinary and compelling world of opera for himself or herself. The listener will come to appreciate how music has the power to reveal truths beyond the spoken word; how opera is a unique marriage of words and music in which the whole is far greater than its parts. He or she will learn the reasons for opera’s enduring popularity.

The history of opera is traced from its beginning in the early 17th century to around 1924, with references to landmark operas, musical, cultural, and social developments, and historical events that influenced opera’s growth. We learn how operatic style and form have changed continuously throughout the history of European music, as they were influenced by political, social and cultural developments, and how different national languages and cultures have shaped their own types of opera and operatic style.

The course opens with one of the most powerful moments in opera: the dramatically loaded aria “Nessun dorma” (“No one shall sleep”) from Giacomo Puccini’s Turandot. We are exposed to opera’s unique incorporation of soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous music into an incredibly expressive and exciting whole that is far greater than the sum of its parts. This famous aria shows us the power of the composer in creating music that goes beyond the words of the libretto to evoke unspoken thoughts and feelings—that which cannot be said in words alone.

The study continues with a discussion of how music can flesh out a dramatic character and evoke the unconscious state. We are introduced to operatic archetypes such as Figaro and Carmen. We learn that the ancient Greeks revered music as a microcosm of all creation, believing music can change the face of nature and alter souls. The monophonic and, later, polyphonic music of the Middle Ages is examined. We see how the end of the absolute authority of the Roman Church encouraged the rise of secular and instrumental music. We examine the Renaissance, its rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman culture and the evolution of the madrigal, ultimately rejected in favor of a more expressive vocal medium: early opera. The renaissance intermezzo is discussed as the precursor of modern opera. The reforms of the Florentine Camerata are examined as they relate to the earliest operas. Part I of the course concludes with an analysis of the first successful attempt to combine words and music into musical drama, Monteverdi’s Orfeo of 1607.

In Part II we see how recitative, the essence of Monteverdi’s style, made music subservient to words and how, because of its forward-driving nature, recitative cannot express personal reflection. We learn how the invention of aria gave opera composers a powerful tool to stop the dramatic action for moments of self-reflection. Gluck’s reforms and his Orfeo ed Euridice of 1762 are addressed as the starting point for the modern opera repertory. The explosion of operas in the Golden Age/Dark Age of opera is discussed, along with the formulaic reforms of Pietro Metastasio (including his da capo structure for arias) and the vocal abuses that those reforms provoked. We learn how different voice types are assigned different roles. The rise of opera seria and its characteristics are discussed, along with an analysis of the second act of Mozart’s Idomeneo—opera seria transcendent.

The second part of this study continues with the development of opera buffa, from its origins in the popular folklore of the commedia dell’arte to its eventual replacement of opera seria. The role of Enlightenment progressives in this development is addressed and Mozart’s brilliant The Marriage of Figaro is discussed as one of the greatest contributions to the opera buffa genre.

Part III opens with a discussion of the bel canto style of opera. We see how the nature of the Italian language and culture gave rise to this type of opera, with its comic, predictable plots, one-dimensional characters, appealing melodies, and florid melodic embellishments. The highly pressurized business of opera in the 18th century is revealed, and we are introduced to Rossini’s The Barber of Seville of 1816 as the quintessential bel canto opera.

Giuseppe Verdi is the focus of Lectures 19 through 22 of Part III. His career is summarized, and his operatic inheritance is reviewed. We learn how Verdi broke the bel canto mold; how he dominated Italian opera for over half a century by virtue of his lyricism, his emphasis on human emotions and psychological insight, and his use of the orchestra and parlante to drive the dramatic action and maintain musical continuity. Verdi’s Otello is discussed as one of the greatest operas of all time.

Part III of this course concludes with an examination of French opera. We learn how it developed as a distinctly different genre from Italian opera, shaped as it was by the French language, culture and political history. We learn
how Jean-Baptiste Lully set the foundation for a French language operatic tradition, and how his greatest
collection was the design of a recitative style suited to the French language. The reforms of Jean-Philippe Rameau
are discussed, along with the influence of Enlightenment progressives such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who
championed a more natural operatic style. Christoph Willibald von Gluck’s position as the model for the next
generation of French composers is reviewed. Finally, the subject of 19th-century French opera is addressed. Grand
opera, opéra comique and lyric opera are examined as distinctive French genres and Act Two of Bizet’s dramatically
powerful Carmen is analyzed.

Part IV opens with an examination of the rise of German opera, with its roots in German folklore. We discover how
German singspiel grew from humble origins as a lower class entertainment to high art with Wolfgang Amadeus
Mozart’s The Rescue from the Harem (1782) and The Magic Flute of 1791. We learn how 19th-century German
opera grew out of the tradition of singspiel and how Carl Maria von Weber’s Der Freischütz established 19th-century
German opera.

The discussion of German opera continues with an examination of Richard Wagner: the man, his personal beliefs,
musical theories, and operatic innovations. We see how Wagner went back to the ancient Greek ideal for inspiration
and how he conceived the idea of an all-encompassing art work, or music drama, in which the role of the orchestra is
that of a purveyor of unspoken truths. We are introduced to Wagner’s concept of leitmotif and his revolutionary use
of dissonance. Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde is discussed as the most influential composition of the 19th century,
aside from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

The subject of late romantic German opera is addressed and exemplified by Richard Strauss and his controversial
opera Salome. We go on to an overview of Russian opera and the concept of nationalism. The late development of
Russian opera is outlined from Mikhail Glinka’s Ruslan and Lyudmila to Modest Mussorgsky’s Boris Godunov. We
see how the Russian language shaped the syllabic vocal style of Russian opera and how Russian rhythms, with their
asymmetrical groupings of accents, are distinct from Italian, German and French rhythms.

The course draws to its conclusion with an overview of opera verismo, a 19th/20th century genre that favors
depictions of the darker side of the human condition. The pivotal second act of Giacomo Puccini’s Tosca is
discussed as a transcendent example of opera verismo. Finally, we hear part of a scene from Richard Strauss’s
Capriccio in which the essence of opera is debated. Is it words or is it music? It is neither. It is an indefinable
combination of both, with the whole greater than the parts.
Lecture Twenty-Five
German Opera Comes of Age

Scope:
In this study we learn how German opera owed its evolution to German folklore and the specific requirements of the German language. We see how it came into being with Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* of 1791, and how it was indebted to the traditional German entertainment of singspiel. Weber’s *Der Freischütz* is examined as the work that established 19th-century German opera.

Outline

I. German-language opera came into being with Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*.
   A. The late development of German opera had much to do with both the nature of the German artistic/intellectual class and the nature of the German language arias.
   B. True German opera—in terms of singing style and the type of stories set to music—evolved from native German roots.

II. Language as a definer of style.
   A. The Italian language lends itself to song. It is full of long, round vowels evenly interspersed with clean consonants that perfectly suit the melismatic/coloratura character of traditional Italian opera.
   B. The French language does not have the clean consonants of Italian. Much less suited to coloratura style, French lends itself better to the declamatory style developed by Lully.
   C. German is a language dominated by consonants. The melismatic, vowel-dominated Italian singing style is not suited to German. Rather, German lends itself to syllabic style: one syllable per pitch.

III. Singspiel literally means “sing-play” or “play with singing.”
   A. Singspiel as understood today is a partly sung, partly spoken German theatrical genre that had its roots in popular culture.
   B. The equivalent type of genre is England is called a ballad opera or operetta; in France it is opéra comique; in the U.S.A. it is a musical; in Italy there is no equivalent since all opera is sung.
   C. Mozart’s singspiel, *The Rescue from the Harem* (1782) elevated a popular genre to the level of high art at a single stroke.

IV. *The Magic Flute* (1791) was the last major work Mozart completed before his death. It was commissioned by librettist/director/actor Emanuel Schikaneder for performance at a *burgtheater*, a type of music hall, offering lower-middle-class entertainment. Mozart was working within a German tradition, but the tradition becomes operatic in his hands.
   A. *The Magic Flute* is half fairy-tale, filled with strange exotic people, beings, events and locales, and half morality play about Masonic initiation ritual and Enlightenment ideals.
   B. Its music is brilliant and popular, with folk-like directness and memorableness. Musical example: “Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja”

V. A German operatic tradition is born.
   A. German opera grew out of the popular tradition of singspiel.
      1. Melodies are well suited to the characteristics of the German language, and spoken dialogue replaces dry recitative. Arias are simple in form; melodies are repeated and non-melismatic.
      2. Plots and story lines draw on German folktales with their supernatural characters and situations.
   B. Lacking a long, commercially profitable tradition, 19th-century German opera became an experimental genre.

VI. Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz* (1821) is the definitive work that established 19th-century German opera.
   A. The characteristics of 19th-century German opera are exemplified by *Der Freischütz*.
      1. Plots are drawn from medieval history, legend or fairy-tale.
      2. Stories typically include supernatural beings and happenings.
3. They stress wild, mysterious, and uncontrolled nature.
4. Supernatural incidents are essential plot elements.
5. Human characters often become the agents of supernatural forces.
6. The triumph of good over evil is often interpreted in terms of salvation or redemption.

B. Der Freischütz is one of the most influential operas of the nineteenth century. The famous Wolf’s Glen Scene is a brilliant depiction of supernatural horror, completely different from contemporary Italian bel canto opera and French grand and lyric opera in terms of the pervasive use of spoken dialogue, expressive content, and compositional technique. The content of background music is very strong and essential to the drama. Musical example: excerpts from the Wolf’s Glen Scene.
Lectures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven
Richard Wagner and *Tristan und Isolde*

Scope:

Lectures 26 and 27 examine the contribution of the paradoxical Richard Wagner to operatic history. Wagner’s life and career is summarized. We look at Wagner’s theories, his admiration for ancient Greek drama, and his invention of leitmotif. Schopenhauer’s philosophy and its influence on Wagner’s concept of music drama are also discussed. Finally, we examine Wagner’s landmark opera *Tristan und Isolde* as the quintessence of his mature style, and as the most influential composition of the 19th century.

Outline

   A. Wagner was the single most influential and controversial composer of the second half of the 19th century.
   B. Ordinarily we associate his sort of artistic originality and power with the free thinker, someone whose artistic liberalism conveys to other aspects of his life.
   C. Not so with Wagner. He was, overall, a repulsive human being: megalomaniacal, ruthless, hedonistic, arrogant, and racist.
   D. Wagner’s anti-Semitism and cries for racial purity approached madness.
   E. Many writers have speculated that Wagner’s meanness sprang from an extraordinary insecurity based, in part, on his own unclear paternity.
   F. Wagner demanded from society an unprecedented level of attention and luxury, to the point that one modern critic, Harold Schonberg, states that Wagner actually thought himself a god.

II. Richard Wagner: brief biography.
   A. Early life.
      1. He was born in Leipzig in 1813.
      2. His legal father was Carl Friedrich Wagner, although his biological father may have been Ludwig Geyer, an actor and painter with whom his mother was having an affair and who was rumored to have been Jewish.
      3. Wagner was obsessed with the question of his paternity.
      4. Carl Wagner died when Richard was seven months old. Within a year his mother married Ludwig Geyer, who himself died seven years later.
      5. At fourteen Richard stopped calling himself Geyer and began using the name Wagner.
      6. At fifteen Richard decided to become a composer, despite the fact that he could hardly play an instrument and knew next to nothing about the mechanics of music.
   B. Wagner’s musical training and operas.
      1. Wagner was an extraordinarily late bloomer.
      2. His two great musical influences were Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and Weber’s *Der Freischütz*.
      3. Almost from the beginning, Wagner wanted to write operas.
      4. He wrote his own libretti and controlled every aspect of his operas from stage design to direction.
      5. He wrote/composed thirteen complete operas. His early works were based on Italian, French and German models.

III. Wagner’s theories.
   A. Wagner’s revolutionary political activism in Germany in 1848 and 1849 drove him into Swiss exile for nearly 10 years.
   B. While in Switzerland Wagner took a six-year break from composing during which he reevaluated his career and the nature of the music he wanted to write.
      1. He had already concluded that both Italian and French opera were degenerate art forms.
      2. He wrote a series of treatises and essays that laid out his beliefs and new aesthetic doctrines.
      3. Like the Florentine Camerata, Wagner went back to ancient Greek drama for inspiration. He believed that Greek drama was superior for five reasons.
         a. It represented a successful combination of the arts.
b. It took its subject matter from myth that illuminates human experience to the depths and in universal terms.
c. Both the content and the occasion of the performance had religious significance.
d. It was a religion of the purely human.
e. The entire community took part.
4. Wagner was convinced that an artistic revolution was called for, in which all the resources of drama poetry, instrumental music, song, acting, gesture, costume, and scenery would be combined in the theatrical presentation of myth.
5. Wagner called his projected, all-encompassing music dramas Gesamtkunstwerk, the all-inclusive art form.
6. A key to the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk was the orchestra, which had to perform for Wagner the same function as the chorus in a Greek drama. To achieve this orchestral/instrumental independence, Wagner invented the concept of leitmotif.

C. Leitmotif.
1. A leitmotif is a musical motive associated with a particular person, thing, or dramatic idea. Musical examples: drink/death and desire leitmotifs from Tristan und Isolde
2. Leitmotifs are repeated, altered, fragmented, and developed, often in the voices, but more often in the orchestra. Each permutation offers some new and subtle twist on its meaning; it services to underpin the truth.
3. In Wagner’s music dramas the orchestra is no longer just an accompaniment to the voices. It becomes a full partner with everything onstage.
4. Wagner would not have formulated many of his theories about music drama if he had not studied Arthur Schopenhauer’s book The World as Will and Representation.

IV. Arthur Schopenhauer and The World as Will and Representation.
A. Schopenhauer (1788–1860) was a German philosopher who wrote The World as Will and Representation in 1818.
B. Wagner discovered Schopenhauer and his book around 1854. It was the most important intellectual event of Wagner’s life.
C. Schopenhauer wrote that instrumental music alone was capable of expressing the deepest, most primal human thoughts and emotions.
   1. This was the inspiration for Wagner’s development of the concept of leitmotif. A Wagnerian music drama unfolds on two different levels. The singers onstage present the world of human emotions, replete with the half-truths, delusions, and dishonesty that characterize conscious interaction. The orchestra reveals the unspoken truth.
   2. Wagner was also deeply affected by Schopenhauer’s view that only through total negation and death could salvation and transcendence be achieved.

V. Tristan und Isolde (1859).
A. This opera exemplifies the quintessence of Wagner’s mature style.
B. Aside from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Tristan und Isolde is the most influential composition (not just opera) of the 19th century.
C. Tristan und Isolde is a musical expression of Schopenhauer’s doctrine that existence is an inherently insatiable web of longings, willings, and strivings from which the only permanent liberation is the cessation of being.
D. The opera’s prelude (overture) predicts the action to come.
   1. It is based on the drink/death and desire leitmotifs. The drink/death leitmotif is composed of an upward motive representing the physical action of raising the goblet of wine and a descending motive symbolic of death. It is performed together with a rising motive that does not resolve, symbolic of unfulfilled desire. The two leitmotifs are mirror images of each other: love/death and death/love, the underlying meaning being that, for Tristan and Isolde, love and death are connected.
   2. The prelude is slow. It has no tonal center. It consists of one deceptive (unresolved) cadence after another, interspersed with long, pregnant pauses. All of this creates tension, and in doing so it prepares us for a story of unfulfilled emotional and sexual passion. The whole opera is, in many ways, one gigantic deceptive cadence after another! Musical example: opening of the prelude
E.  *Tristan und Isolde* is in three acts.
   1.  Act 1 centers on the drinking of the love potion. Musical example: Act 1, scene 5
   2.  Act 2 centers on the mortal wounding of Tristan.
   3.  Act 3 centers the deaths of Tristan and Isolde.
      a.  Isolde holds the dying Tristan in her arms and sings her transcendent liebestod (love/death) aria. It represents the moment at which Tristan and Isolde’s unconsummated passion transcends to realization at a higher plane.
      b.  With the liebestod aria Wagner’s music must be, and is, as transcendent as the new reality that Isolde is already seeing as she approaches her death. Musical example: liebestod

VI. Concluding remarks.
   A.  Wagner was a paradox representing the best and worst of human attributes.
   B.  His music provoked huge controversy and created pro and anti-Wagnerian cults.
   C.  He changed music forever.
Lecture Twenty-Eight  
Late Romantic German Opera—  
Richard Strauss and Salome

Scope:
In this lecture, Richard Strauss’s opera Salome is discussed as an example of late romantic German opera. After an overview of Strauss’s early life, we examine his psychopathological and erotic Salome and the reasons why it is one of the most controversial operas of all time.

Outline

I. Introduction.  
   A. In his time Richard Strauss (1864–1949) was hailed as Wagner’s successor.  
   B. Strauss came to opera relatively late in his compositional career.  
      1. His early works were instrumental tone poems—works that function like operas without words.  
      2. His three greatest operas are Salome (1905), Elektra (1909), and Der Rosenkavalier (1911).

II. Brief biography of Richard Strauss.  
   A. Early life.  
      1. He was born in Munich in 1864.  
      2. His father, Franz Strauss, was the most famous French horn player in Germany.  
         a. Franz Strauss was a musical archconservative and anti-Wagnerian, who gave his son the best and  
            most conservative musical education his money and connections could buy.  
         b. Franz saw to it that Richard received training as a pianist, violinist, conductor, and composer.  
      3. Richard’s classically oriented compositional technique disintegrated with his eventual (and inevitable)  
         exposure to the music of Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, and Richard Wagner.  
   B. Fame came rapidly to Strauss. For a fascinated and star-hungry public, he inherited the mantle of Liszt and  
      Wagner as a shocking modern composer and performer.  
   C. The Strauss craze reached its peak in 1905 with the premiere of Salome, one of the most controversial  
      operas of all time.

III. Salome: adaptation and libretto.  
   A. Matthew 14:6–11 tells of the execution of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas at the request of Herod’s  
      stepdaughter, the princess Salome.  
   B. Oscar Wilde and Salome  
      1. Wilde was fascinated by the story of Salome.  
      2. Wilde’s play of 1892, Salome, is filled with a degree of eroticism, intrigue, and sexuality light years  
         beyond the biblical account.  
      3. Strauss sliced and diced a German translation of Wilde’s play to his own specifications, completing his  
         opera in 1905.

IV. Salome.  
   A. The opera takes place on a terrace next to the banquet hall in the palace of Herod, circa 30–31 C.E.  
   B. Salome is a beautiful, sexually aware vixen of sixteen. Her character is depicted in her music. Musical  
      example: Salome’s entrance  
   C. Salome is intrigued by the voice of John the Baptist, who is being held prisoner in a cistern next to the  
      terrace. She has John brought out. His music is almost heroic and lacks the harmonic complexities that fill  
      Salome’s music. Musical example: John’s entrance, “Wo ist er …”  
   D. Salome is both repelled and profoundly attracted to John. Her attempts to ingratiate herself to him are met  
      with scorn.  
   E. A drunken Herod, dangerously enamored of his stepdaughter, asks Salome to dance for him, and he  
      promises her anything if she does. Musical example: Herod’s request and the opening of Salome’s dance of  
      the seven veils.  
   F. Salome’s price for the dance is the head of John the Baptist. Terrified, Herod finally agrees to her demand.
G. Salome embraces and kisses the severed head of John the Baptist. In horror Herod orders Salome killed. Musical example: conclusion of the opera from “Sie ist ein Ungeheuer, deine Tochter” (“She is a monster, your daughter”)

V. Concluding remarks.
   A. *Salome* is a veritable textbook of psychopathology.
   B. Within two years of its premiere, *Salome* had been performed in over fifty cities.
   C. Though many considered it pornographic, *Salome* is first and foremost an opera representative of the experimental, post-Victorian turn of the century.
Lectures Twenty-Nine and Thirty
Russian Opera

Scope:
This study of Russian opera traces the causes, history, and character of Russian musical nationalism. Glinka and his opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila* are discussed as the foundation of Russian opera leading the way for The Russian Five and the pinnacle of Russian nationalist opera, Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*.

Outline

I. The rise of cultivated Russian music had much to do with the rise of nationalism in the 19th century.
   A. The French Revolution of 1789 was a highly exportable model in an increasingly enlightened, middle-class Europe.
   B. In 1848 insurrections broke out across Europe, all of them eventually quelled by the ruling powers.
   C. Art replaced outlawed political activism as a mode of nationalistic self-expression.
   D. An example is the rise of musical nationalism, which characteristically incorporated actual folk music or folk-like music into the concert works and operas of Italian/non-German composers.

II. Russian musical nationalism was a reaction less to the events of 1848 than to Russia’s fear of foreign influences.
   A. The development of concert music in Russia was dependent on the tastes of the aristocracy living in St. Petersburg.
   B. Until the 19th century, cultivated music in St. Petersburg consisted of Italian opera, light Viennese and Italian instrumental music, and aristocratic amateur concerts.
   C. Russia “emerged” and became part of the greater European community as a result of Napoleon’s defeat in 1812 and the Decembrist Revolt of 1825.
   D. The spirit of individual freedom and nationalism that powered the Decembrist Revolt was felt throughout the intellectual and artistic classes.
   E. In and around 1825 certain Russian writers, poets, and musicians tried to cultivate a uniquely Russian artistic tradition. Preeminent among these Russian nationalists was the poet and author Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837).
      1. Pushkin was a Lord Byron-inspired individualistic/nationalistic rabble-rouser.
      2. He elevated the literary perception of the Russian language through the model of his own works.
      3. Among his works that were turned into operas are:
         a. Eugene Onegin (Tchaikovsky).
         b. Queen of Spades (Tchaikovsky).
         c. Boris Godunov (Mussorgsky).
         d. Ruslan and Lyudmila (Glinka).

III. The history of Russian musical nationalism and opera began with Mikhail Glinka (1804–’57).
   A. Glinka was born into a wealthy family and received the piano and violin lessons typical for someone of his class. At age 20 he became a civil servant, working in the Ministry of Ways and Communication in St. Petersburg.
   B. In 1834, inspired by Pushkin and Gogol, Glinka decided to compose an opera in the Russian language on a Russian subject—*A Life for the Czar*.
   C. *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842) is generally considered Glinka’s masterpiece.
      1. Glinka’s score is filled with the sort of folk-inspired melodies, orientalisms, rhythmic irregularities, and orchestral effects that we have since come to associate with Russian music. Musical example: Overture to *Ruslan and Lyudmila*
      2. Story and music
         a. The story is a fairy-tale about Ruslan and Lyudmila, two young aristocrats who are in love, and the sinister forces that separate them.
         b. Near the beginning of the opera, a chorus predicts the dramatic action. This choral music exemplifies the Russian style. Its main features are as follows.
1. Melodies are clearly folk-like and Slavic-sounding.
2. Dance rhythms are asymmetrical. The accents are not grouped in twos or threes as they are in Western music. They fall into unequal groupings, with accents falling all over the place. In this chorus we have groupings of five (so-called additive meter, where groupings of two and three beats are played in succession to add up to five).
3. The chorus sings in unison harmonies.
4. The word setting is syllabic. Musical example: Act 1, chorus
c. Among Lyudmila’s three suitors is the evil Farlaf, a sort of opera buffa bad guy. Musical example: Farlaf’s patter aria (in rondo form)
d. Ruslan, typical of Russian heroes, is a low voice, in this case a bass/baritone. His grief at finding his beloved Lyudmila in a coma-like sleep is expressed in the aria “O love of my life” (musical example).

D. After his death in 1857 Glinka was canonized and deified as the father of Russian music.

IV. Balakirev and The Five.

A. Following the death of Glinka, composer and teacher Mili Balakirev (1837–1910) quickly became the czar of Russian music. He gathered around him four young amateur composers (they all had other quite different professions). They came to be known, along with Balakirev, as The Five.
1. Cesar Cui, an army engineer (1835–1918).
2. Modest Mussorgsky, an army officer (1839–’81).
4. Aleksander Borodin, a scientist (1833–’87).

B. To a great degree The Five were self-taught. Essential to their musical development was the belief that their duty was to create a Russian national music based on the characteristics of Russian folk music and the Russian language.

C. A characteristically Russian music emerged from The Five.
1. It utilizes Russian folk melodies or folk-like melodies as the essential thematic material.
2. It is essentially thematic, with minimal development in the German sense.
3. It is expressively powerful, lyric music that is often, to the Western ears, emotionally unrefined.

V. Modest Mussorgsky and Boris Godunov.

A. Mussorgsky was the first of The Five to mature compositionally.

B. He was known for only a handful of works, including his masterwork, the opera Boris Godunov.

C. Depression and alcohol led to Mussorgsky’s early death.

D. The story of Boris Godunov takes place between 1598 and 1605 and is based on historical events. There are six different versions of the opera. The most commonly heard version is one prepared by Mussorgsky’s friend Rimsky-Korsakov after Mussorgsky’s death.
1. Boris Godunov consists of a prologue plus four acts.
2. It is actually a series of set pieces, or tableaus.

E. Boris Godunov is based on a dramatic chronicle by Pushkin. Mussorgsky himself wrote the libretto, central to which are two issues:
1. The relationship between ruler and ruled.
2. The corrupting influence of power.

F. No composer ever portrayed the peasant class as sympathetically as Mussorgsky does in Boris Godunov. Critical to this sympathetic portrayal is Mussorgsky’s extraordinary reproduction of Russian speech patterns in music.

G. Musical example: prologue to Boris Godunov, scene 2, Boris’ ascension to the throne.

H. We are introduced to Varlaam, a drunken priest, whose language and manner is only a step removed from the peasant class. Musical example: Varlaam’s song.

I. The death of Boris is as profound and moving as any moment in opera. The old divisions of recitative and aria are virtually nonexistent. Recitative-like music is always accompanied by the orchestra. Musical example: death of Boris, Act 4, scene 2.
J. *Boris Godunov* is to 19th-century Russian opera what *Otello*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Carmen* are to 19th-century Italian, German and French opera respectively: the pinnacle and a difficult, if not impossible act to follow.
Scope:
The finale lectures in this study of opera examine opera verismo: its origins, character, and greatest exponent—Giacomo Puccini. Puccini’s virtues and faults are discussed—especially his marvelous power of lyricism, sometimes pursued at the expense of dramatic reality. The second act of his masterpiece, Tosca, is analyzed as a leading example of Puccini’s style and as one of the most powerful acts in all opera. The study concludes with a musical illustration of the nature of opera, scene 9 from Richard Strauss’s Capriccio. In essence opera is a whole that is greater than the parts.

Outline

I. Verismo opera.
A. Verismo (truth) opera grew out of the 19th-century philosophical movements of positivism and naturalism.
   1. Positivism posits that the only reality that humankind should concern itself with is observable fact; there are no mysteries left in the world that science cannot explain.
   2. An offshoot of positivism is naturalism: the study of human relations.
   3. Realist/verismo authors and composers tend to depict the worlds of the criminal, the dispossessed, and the demoralized for their emotional extremes and for their absence of pose and artifice.

II. Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924).
A. Puccini was the greatest composer of verismo operas. He was primarily a man of the theater. He wrote twelve operas, three of which remain among the most popular in the repertory: Tosca, La Bohème, and Madame Butterfly.
B. Puccini was born in Lucca in 1858, the last in a five-generation line of respected musicians.
   1. He studied at the Milan Conservatory with Amilcare Ponchielli.
   2. His first huge success was La Bohème of 1896.
   3. Puccini was not an innovator. As a composer he was not controversial. Unlike Verdi, Puccini did not constantly evolve, seeking ever-greater drama and movement in his operas. He was, however, a superb and sympathetic melodist, whose other compositional skills were brought to bear directly on the dramatic materials before him: stage action, impulsive feeling, and truth in expression—often exaggerated expression.

III. The Puccinian dilemma.
A. Many important critics, composers, and music historians of today have dismissed Puccini as an artless hack. They have backed up their criticisms with sound arguments regarding Puccini’s compositional technique and the content and nature of his librettis.
B. Opera in Italy has almost always been a popular entertainment. Puccini’s operas are very much part of this tradition.

IV. Tosca (1900).
A. The large outline of the story is based on historical events surrounding the “liberation” of Rome by Napoleonic forces around 1800.
B. Act 1 introduces us to the characters.
   1. Mario Cavaradossi (tenor) is the hero and lover of
   2. Floria Tosca, a hot-blooded, beautiful opera singer.
   3. Cesare Angelotti is a nationalist and freedom-fighter who has just escaped from prison.
   4. Vitello Scarpia is the evil and sadistic chief of the secret police.
C. Act 2 is one of the greatest of all Puccini’s operatic acts and the focal point in this opera.
   1. Scarpia desires Tosca and will use her to find Angelotti. Scarpia’s aria (“Ella verrà …”) demonstrates effortless vocal lyricism at the expense of dramatic reality. Scarpia could sound more evil than he does. This is the kind of thing that has put Tosca under fire from critics. Also noteworthy is Puccini’s melding of parlando, arias, etc. into a continuous flow of music. Musical example: Act 2 from Scarpia’s “Tosca è un buon falco!” to the end of Scarpia’s aria, “Ella verrà …”
2. Scarpia tries to discover where Angelotti is hiding by questioning Cavaradossi, who resists him. Musical example: “Ov’è Angelotti?”

3. The questioning turns ugly.

4. Tosca enters. In her presence, Scarpia has Cavaradossi tortured in an adjoining room. This scene of brutal torture is unique in opera. Puccini piles on the agony to a climax of unbearable tension. Its depiction of the worst of human behavior is typical of verismo.

5. Tosca cannot bear her psychological torture any longer. She tells Scarpia where Angelotti is hiding. Scarpia orders the end of Cavaradossi’s torture. Musical example: torture scene from Scarpia’s “Orsù, Tosca, parlate” to his “Portatelo qui”

6. Cavaradossi learns of Napoleon’s victory at Marengo. He revives and sings a victory song. Scarpia orders him to the gallows and forbids Tosca to accompany him. Puccini continues to pile one climactic moment upon the next. Musical example: Cavaradossi’s “Vittorìa!” to Scarpia’s “Voi noi”

7. Tosca tries to negotiate for Cavaradossi’s life. Scarpia reveals that the price is Tosca herself. Musical example: Tosca’s “Quanto?” through Scarpia’s “Già. Mi dicon venal”

8. Tosca is repelled and feels that God has abandoned her. She sings one of Puccini’s most beloved and famous arias, “Vissi d’arte” (musical example).

9. Tosca agrees to yield to Scarpia in exchange for Cavaradossi’s life and a safe-conduct pass. Scarpia appears to agree to her request. He writes the pass, but when he tries to embrace her, she plunges a knife into him and kills him. Musical example: Scarpia’s “Io tenni la promessa” to the end of the scene

D. Puccini’s operas exhibit a wonderful balance of words and music. His stories are dramatically compelling, and his balance of words and music heightens and deepens the dramatic meaning and expressive content.

V. Course conclusion.

A. Richard Strauss’s last opera, Capriccio (1941), has the last word.
   1. Capriccio takes place outside Paris around 1775, at a time when Gluck’s operatic reforms were raising a storm of discussion and controversy.
   2. Capriccio is an opera about opera, particularly about the relationship between words and music.
   3. In one scene a poet, composer and a stage director argue the relative merits of their respective crafts. Musical example: scene 9 from Capriccio

B. Is opera words or music? It is neither. It is an undefinable combination of both. The whole is always greater than the parts.
Die Zauberflöte
The Magic Flute (1791)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

Tamino
(regains consciousness, looks around. frightened)
Wo bin ich?
Ist's Phantasie, dass ich noch lebe?
(rises and looks around)
Die Schlange tot?
(The sound of a panpipe is heard.)
Was hör ich?
(Withdraws, observing. Papageno, dressed in a suit of feathers, hurries by, carrying a large birdcage on his back and a panpipe in his hands.)

Papageno
A
Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja,
stets lustig, heiss, hopsassa!
Ich Vogelfänger bin bekannt
bei alt und jung im ganzen Land.
Weiss mit dem Locken umzugehn
und mich aufs Pfeifen zu verstehn.
Drum kann ich froh und lustig sein,
denn alle Vögel sind ja mein.
(He whistles and then removes the cage from his back.)
A'
Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja,
stets lustig, heiss, hopsassa!
Ich Vogelfänger bin bekannt
bei alt und jung im ganzen Land.
Ein Netz für Mädchen möchte ich,
ich fing sie durzendweis für mich;
dann sperre ich sie bei mir ein,
und alle Mädchen wären mein.

Tamino
(regains consciousness, looks around. frightened)
Where am I?
Is it fantasy that I am still alive?
(rises and looks around)
That awful snake dead at my feet?
(The sound of a panpipe is heard.)
What do I hear?

Papageno
A
I am a man of widespread fame,
and Papageno is my name.
To tell you all in simple words:
I make my living catching birds.
The moment they attract my eye
I spread my net and in they fly.
I whistle on my pipe of Pan.
In short, I am a happy man.
(He whistles and then removes the cage from his back.)
A'
Although I am a happy man,
I also have a future plan.
I dearly love my feathered friends,
but that's not where my interest ends.
To tell the truth, I'd like to find
a pretty girl of my own kind.
In fact, I'd like to fill my net
with all the pretty girls I met.
Wenn alle Mädchen wären mein,
so rauschte ich brav Zucker ein;
Die, welche mir am liebsten wär,
der gab ich gleich den Zucker her,
und küßte sie mich zärtlich dann,
wär sie mein Weib und ich ihr Mann.
Sie schlief an meiner Seite ein,
ich wiegte wie ein Kind sie ein.
(He whistles and turns to leave.)

Tamino
(steps in his way)
Hey there!

Papageno
Was da?

Tamino
Sag' mir, du lustiger Freund, wer bist du?

Papageno
Wer ich bin?
(to himself)
Dumme Frage!
(to Tamino)
Ein Mensch wie du!

Once all the girls were in my net
I'd keep the fairest for my pet,
my sweetheart and my bride-to-be,
to love and cherish tenderly.
I'd bring her cake and sugar plums,
and be content to eat the crumbs.
She'd share my little nest with me —
a happier pair could never be!
(He whistles and turns to leave.)

Tamino
(steps in his way)
Hey there!

Papageno
Who's there?

Tamino
Tell me who you are, my jolly friend.

Papageno
Who I am?
(to himself)
Silly question!
(to Tamino)
A man, like you.
Der Freischütz
The Magic Bullets (1821)
Carl Maria von Weber
Libretto by Johann Friedrich Kind
Wolf’s Glen Scene

A frightful glen with a waterfall. A pallid full moon. A storm is brewing. In the foreground a withered tree shattered by lightning seems to glow. In other trees, owls, ravens, and other wild birds. Caspar, without a hat or coat, but with hunting pouch and knife, is laying out a circle of black fieldstones, in the center of which lies a skull. A few steps away a hacked-off eagle wing, a ladle, and bullet moulds.

Chorus of Invisible Spirits
Milch des Mondes fiel auf’s Kraut
Uhui! Uhui!
Spinnweb’ ist mit Blut behaucht!
Eh’ noch wieder Abend graut,
Uhui! Uhui!
Ist sie tot, die zarte Braut!
Eh’ noch wieder sinkt die Nacht,
ist das Opfer dargebracht!
(A clock in the distance strikes twelve.
The circle of stones is completed.)

Caspar
Samiel! Samiel erschein!
Bei deh Zaub’reer Hirngelwein!
Samiel! Samiel erschein!

Samiel
(step out of a rock)
Was ruft du mich?

Caspar
(step throws himself at Samiel’s feet)
Du weisst, dass meine Frist
Schier abgelaufen ist.

Chorus of Invisible Spirits
The milk of the moon fell on the herbs. Uhui! Uhui!
Spiderwebs dabbed with blood.
Before another evening darkens,
Uhui! Uhui!
will she die, the lovely bride.
Before another night falls,
will the sacrifice be offered.
(A clock in the distance strikes twelve.
The circle of stones is completed.)

Caspar
Samiel! Samiel appear!
By the wizard’s skull-bone,
Samiel! Samiel appear!

Samiel
(step out of a rock)
Why do you call me?

Caspar
(step throws himself at Samiel’s feet)
You know that my days of grace
are coming to an end.

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Samuel
Morgen!

Caspar
Verlänger' sie noch einmal mit!

Samuel
No!

Caspar
Ich bringe neue Opfer dir.

Samuel
Welche?

Caspar
Mein Jagdgesell,
er naht, er, der
noch nie dein dunkles Reich betrat.

Samuel
Was sein Begehrt?

Caspar
Freikugeln sind's, auf die er
Hoffnung baut.

Samuel
Sechst treffen, seiben äffen!

Caspar
Die siebente sei dein!
Aus seinem Rohr lenk' sie nach
seiner Braut!
Dies wird ihm der Verzweiflung
weih'n, ihn, und den Vater.

Samuel
Noch hab' ich keinen Teil an ihr.

Samuel
Tomorrow!

Caspar
Will you extend them once more?

Samuel
No!

Caspar
I bring you new sacrifices.

Samuel
Which ones?

Caspar
My hunting companion,
he approaches, who has never before
set foot in your dark kingdom.

Samuel
What does he want?

Caspar
Magic bullets, in which he puts his
hope.

Samuel
Six strike, seven deceive!

Caspar
The seventh is yours!
From his own gun it will aim at his
bride.
That will drive him to despair,
both he and his father.

Samuel
I side with neither party.
Caspar

(afraid)
Genügt er dir allein?

Samiel

Das findet sich!

Caspar

Doch schenkst du Frist,
und wieder auf drei Jahr,
bring ich ihn dir zu Beute das!

Samiel

Es sei! Bei den Pforten der Hölle!
Morgen, Er oder Du!

(He disappears amidst thunder. Also the skull and knife disappear. In their place
a small stove with glowing coals is seen.)

Caspar

(He takes the ingredients from his
pouch and throws them in one by one.)
Hier erst das Blei. Etwas gestossenes
Glas von zerbrochenen
Kirchenfenstern,
das findet sich. Etwas Quecksilber,
Drei Kugeln, die schon einmal
getroffen. Das rechte Auge eines
Wiedehopfs, das linke eines Luchses.
Probatum est! Und nun den
Kugelsegen!

Caspar

(afraid)
Will he be sufficient for you?

Samiel

Perhaps.

Caspar

If you will grant me grace
for another three years,
I will bring him to you as prey.

Samiel

So be it. By the gates of hell,
Tomorrow: he or you!

(He disappears amidst thunder. Also the skull and knife disappear. In their place
a small stove with glowing coals is seen.)

Caspar

(He takes the ingredients from his
pouch and throws them in one by one.)
First, then, the lead. Then this
piece of glass from a
broken church
window, some mercury,
three balls that have already hit the
mark. The right eye of a
lapwing, and the left of a lynx.
Probatum est! Now to bless the
bullets.)
Melodrama

Caspar

(pausung three times, bowing to the earth)
Schütze, der im Dunkel wacht.
Samml! Samml! Hab' acht!
Steh mir bei in dieser Nacht,
Bis der Zauber ist vollbracht!
Salbe mir so Kruft als Blei,
Segn' es sieben, neun und drei,
Dass die Kugel tüchtig sei!
Samml! Samml! Herbei!

Caspar

(pausung three times, bowing to the earth)
Hunter, who watches in the darkness,
Samml! Samml! Pay attention!
Stay with me through this night
until the magic is achieved.
Anoint for me the herbs and lead.
Bless the seven, nine and three,
so that the bullet will be fit.
Samml! Samml! Come to me!

(The material in the crucible begins to hiss and bubble, sending forth a greenish flame. A cloud passes over the moon, obscuring the light. He casts the first bullet, which drops in the pan.)

EINS!

(The echo repeats: EINS! Nightbirds crowd around the fire.)

ZWEI!

(The echo repeats: ZWEI! A block boar passes. Startled, he counts.)

DREI!

(The echo repeats: DREI! A storm starts to rage. He continues to count anxiously.)

VIER!

(The echo repeats: VIER! Cracking of whips and the sound of galloping horses is heard. Caspar is more and more alarmed.)

FUNF!

(The echo repeats: FUNF! Dogs barking and horses neighing are heard: the devil's hunt.)

Wehe! Das wilde Heer!

Woe is me! The wild chase!

Chorus

Durch Berg und Thal,
durch Schlucht und Schacht,
durch Thau und Wolken,
Sturm und Nacht!
Durch Hölle, Stumpf und Erdenkuft,

Chorus

Through hill and dale,
through glen and mire,
through dew and night!
storm and night!
Through marsh, swamp and chasm,
durch Feuer, Erde, See und Luft,
Jo ho! Wau wau! Jo ho! Wau wau!
Ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho!

Caspar
SECHS!
(Echo: SECHS! Deepest darkness. The storm lashes with terrific force.)

Samiel! Samiel! Samiel! Hilfe!
(Samiel appears.)

Samiel
Hier bin ich!
(Caspar is hurled to the ground)

Max
(nearly losing his balance from the impact of the storm; he jumps out of the magic circle and grips a dead branch, shouting)

Samiel
(Max makes the sign of the cross as he is thrown to the ground. The clock strikes one. Dead silence. Samiel has disappeared. Caspar remains motionless, face to the ground. Max rises convulsively.)

Samiel
Hier bin ich!

Samiel
Here I am.
Tristan und Isolde
(1859)
Richard Wagner
Libretto by the composer

ACT ONE

Scene Five

Sailors
(outside)
Auf das Tau!
Anker ab!

Tristan
(starting wildly)
Los den Anker!
Das Steuer dem Strom!
Den Winden Segel und Mast!
(He takes the cup from Isolde)
Wohl kenn’ ich Irlands Königin,
und ihrer Künste Wunderkraft:
den Balsam nützt’ ich, den sie bot;
den Becher nehm’ ich nun,
dass ganz ich heut’ genese.
Und achte auch des Sünne eid’s,
den ich zum Dank dir sage.
Tristans Ehre, höchste Treu!
Tristane Elend, kühnster Trotz!
Trug des Herzens!
Traum der Ahnung:
ew’ger Trauer einz’ger Trost:
Vergessens gür’ger Trank,
dich trink’ ich sonder Wank.
(He sits and drinks)

Isolde
Betrag auch hier?
Mein die Hälfte!
(She wrests the cup from his hand)

Verräter! Ich trink's dir!

(She drinks, and then throws away the cup. Both, seized with shuddering, gaze at each other with deepest agitation, still with stiff demeanor, as the expression of defiance of death fades into a glow of passion. Trembling grips them. They convulsively clutch their hearts and pass their hands over their brows. Then they seek each other with their eyes, sink into confusion, and once more turn with renewed longing toward each other.)

**Isolde**

(with wavering voice)

Tristan!

**Tristan**

(overwhelmed)

Isolde!

**Isolde**

(sinking on his chest)

Treacherous lover!

**Tristan**

Seligste Frau!

(He embraces her with ardor. They remain in silent embrace.)

**All the Men**

(outside)

Hail! Hail!

König Mark!

König Mark, Hail!

**Brangäne**

(who, with averted face, full of confusion and horror, had leaned over the side, turns to see the pair sunk into a love embrace, and bars herself, wringing her hands, into the foreground)

Wehe! Weh!

Unabwehnrbar ew'ge Not für kurzen Tod!

Woe's me! Woe's me!

Inevitable, endless distress, instead of quick death!
Törger Treue trugvolles Werk
Blüht nun jämmernd empor!
(They break from their embrace.)

Tristan
(bewildered)
Was träumte mir
von Tristan's Ehre?

Isolde
Was träumte mir
von Isoldes Schmach?

Tristan
Du mir verloren?

Isolde
Du mich verstoßen?

Tristan
Trügenden Zaubers Tückische List!

Isolde
Törigen ZürnEs Eitles Dräu'n!

Tristan
Isolde! Süßeste Maid!

Isolde
Tristan! Trauener Mann!

Both
Wie sich die Herzen wogend
erheben,
wie alle Sinne wonnig erheben!
Sehnder Minne
schwellendes Blühen,
schmachtender Liebe seliges Glühen!
Jach in der Brust
jauchzende Lust!

Misleading truth, deceitful work
now blossoms pitifully upward.
(They break from their embrace.)

Tristan
(bewildered)
What did I dream
of Tristan's honor?

Isolde
What did I dream
of Isolde's disgrace?

Tristan
Are you lost to me?

Isolde
Have you repulsed me?

Tristan
False magic's nasty trick!

Isolde
Foolish wrath's vain menace!

Tristan
Isolde, Sweetest maiden!

Isolde
Tristan; most beloved man!

Both
How, heaving, our hearts are
uplifted!
How all our senses blissfully quiver!
Longing, passion,
swelling blooms,
languishing love, blessed glow!
Precipitate in the breast
exulting desire!
Isolde! Tristan!
Tristan! Isolde!
Wetten entronnen
du mir gewonnen!
Du mir einzig bewusst,
höchste Liebeslust!
(Is The curtains are now drawn wide apart. The entire ship is filled with knights and sailors, who joyfully signal the shore from aboard. Nearby is seen a cliff crowned by a castle. Tristan and Isolde remain lost in mutual contemplation, unaware of what is taking place.)

Brangäne
(to the women, who at her bidding ascend from below)
Schnell den Mantel,
den Königsschmuck!
(rushing between Tristan and Isolde)
Uns'ge! Auf!
Hört, wo wir sind.
(She puts the royal cloak on Isolde, who does not notice anything.)

All the Men
Heil! Heil!
König Marke!
König Marke, Heil!

Kurwenal
(advancing cheerfully)
Heil Tristan!
glücklicher Held!
Mit reichem Hofgesinde
dort auf Nachen Naht Herr Mark.
Heil! wie die Fahrt ihn freut,
dass er die Braut sich freit!

Tristan
(looking up, bewildered)
Wer naht?
Kurwenal

Der König!

Tristan

Welcher König?

(Kurwenal points over the side. Tristan stares stupefied at the shore.)

All the Men

(waving their hats)
Heil! König Mark!

Isolde

(confused)
Mark! Was will er?
Was ist, Brangäne?
Welcher Ruß?

Brangäne

Isolde! Herrin! Fassung nur heut!

Isolde

Wo bin ich? Leb' ich?
Ha! Welcher Trank?

Brangäne

(despairingly)
Der Liebestrank!

Isolde

(stares, frightened, at Tristan)
Tristan!

Tristan

Isolde!

Isolde

(She falls, fainting, upon his chest.)
Muss ich leben?

Kurwenal

The King.

Tristan

Which King?

(Kurwenal points over the side. Tristan stares stupefied at the shore.)

All the Men

(waving their hats)
Hail, King Mark!

Isolde

(confused)
Mark! What does he want?
What is that, Brangäne?
What is the shouting?

Brangäne

Isolde! Mistress, get hold of yourself.

Isolde

Where am I? Am I alive?
Oh, what drink was it?

Brangäne

(despairingly)
The love potion.

Isolde

(stares, frightened, at Tristan)
Tristan!

Tristan

Isolde!

Isolde

(She falls, fainting, upon his chest.)
Must I live?
Brangäne
(to the women)
Helft der Herrin!

Tristan
O Wonne voller Tückel!
O Truggeweihtes Glückel!

All the Men
(in a general acclamation)
Heil dem König Kornwall, Heil!
(People have climbed over the ship's side, others have extended a bridge, and the atmosphere is one of expectation of the arrival of those that have been awaited, as the curtain falls.)

ACT THREE

Scene Three

Isolde
(unconscious of all around her, turning her eyes on Tristan's body with rising inspiration)
Mild und leise wie er lächelt,
wie das Auge hold er öffnet—
seht ihr's, Freunde? Seht ihr's nicht?
Immer lichter wie er leuchtet,
stern-umstrahlet hoch sich hebt?
Seht ihr's nicht?
Wie das Herz ihm mutig schwillt,
voll und lehr im Busen ihm quillt?
Wie den Lippen, wonig mild,
 süßer Atem sanft entweht—
Freunde! Seht!
Fühlt und seht ihr's nicht?
Hör' ich nur diese Weise,
die so wundervoll und leise,
Wonne klagend, alles sagend,
mild versöhnend aus ihm tönd,
in mich dringet, auf sich schwinget,
hold erhallend um mich klinget?
Heller schallend, mich umwallend,
sind es Wellen sanfter Lüfte?
Sind es Wogen
woniger Düfte?
Wie sie schwellen, mich umrauschen,
soll ich atmen, soll ich lauschen?
Soll ich schlürfen, untertauchen?
Stüß in Düften mich verhauchen?
In dem wogenden Schwall,
in dem törenden Schall,
in des Welt-Atens wehendem All,
verdrinken, verrincken—
unbewußt—höchste Lust!

(reconciling, sounding from him,
piercing through me, rising upward,
echoes fondly round me ringing?
Ever clearer, wafting round me,
are they waves or gentle breezes?
Are they clouds of
gladdening perfumes?
As they swell and murmur round me,
shall I breathe them, shall I listen?
Shall I sip them, plunge beneath them,
breathe my last amid their fragrance?
In the billowy surge,
in the ocean of sound,
in the World Spirit’s infinite All,
to drown now, descending,
void of thought—highest bliss!

(lolde sinks, as if transfigured, in Brangéne’s arms upon Tristan’s body. Profound emotion and grief of the bystanders. Mark invokes a blessing on the dead.)
Salome
(1905)
Richard Strauss
Libretto by Hedwig Lachmann

Narraboth
Die Prinzessin erhebt sich! Sie verlässt die Tafel. Sie ist sehr erregt. Sie kommt hierher.

Page der Herodias
Sich sie nicht an!

Narraboth
Ja, sie kommt auf uns zu.

Page der Herodias
Ich bitte dich, sieh sie nicht an!

Narraboth
Sie ist wie eine verirrte Taube.

Narraboth
The Princess rises! She is leaving the table! She looks very troubled. She is coming this way.

Page of Herodias
Do not look at her.

Narraboth
Yes, she is coming towards us.

Page of Herodias
I pray you not to look at her.

Narraboth
She is like a dove that has strayed.

(Salome enters, very excited.)

Salome

(Salome enters, very excited.)

Salome
I will not stay. I cannot stay. Why does the Tetrarch look at me all the while with his mole’s eyes under his shaking eyelids? It is strange that the husband of my mother looks at me like that. How sweet the air is here. I can breathe here. Within there are Jews from Jerusalem who are tearing each other in pieces over their foolish ceremonies.
Schweigame, listge Egypter und brutale, ungeschlachte Römer mit ihrer plumpen Sprache.
O, wie ich diese Römer hasse!

Page der Herodias
Schreckliches wird geschehn. Warum siehst du sie so an?

Salome
Wie gut ist's, in den Mond zu seh'n.
Er ist wie eine silberne Blume, kühn und keusch. Ja, wie die Schönheit einer Jungfrau, die rein geblieben ist.

Stimme des Jokanaan
Siehe, der Herr is gekommen, des Menschen Sohn ist nahe.

Salome
Wer war das, der hier gerufen hat?

Zweiter Soldat
Der Prophet, Prinzessin.

Salome
Ach, der Prophet. Der, vor dem der Tetrarch Angst hat?

Zweiter Soldat
Wir wissen davon nichts, Prinzessin. Es war der Prophet Jokanaan der hier rief.

Narraboth

Silent subtle Egyptians and brutal, coarse Romans with their uncouth jargon.
Ah, how I loathe the Romans!

Page of Herodias
Something terrible will happen. Why do you look at her?

Salome
How good to see the moon! She is like a silver flower, cold and chaste. Yes, I am sure she is a virgin, she has a virgin's beauty.

Voice of John
The lord hath come. The son of man hath come.

Salome
Who was that who cried out?

Second Soldier
The prophet, Princess.

Salome
Ah, the prophet! He of whom the Tetrarch is afraid?

Second Soldier
We know nothing of that, Princess. It was the prophet Jokanaan who cried out.

Narraboth
Is it your pleasure that I bid them bring your litter, Princess? The night is fair in the garden.
Salome
Er sagt schreckliche Dinge über meine Mutter, nicht wahr?

Salome
He says terrible things about my mother, does he not?

(Prophet comes out of the cistern. Salome looks at him and steps slowly back.)

Jokanaan
Wo ist er, dessen Sturzendebecher jetzt voll ist? Wo ist er, der eines Tages im Augesich, alles Volkes in einem Silbermantel sterben wird?
Heisst ihn herkommen, auf dass er die Stimme Dessen höre, der in der Wüste und in den Hauern der Könige gekündet hat.

John
Where is he whose cup of abomina-
tions is now full? Where is he, who in a robe of silver shall one day die in the face of all the people? Bid him come forth, that he may hear the voice of him who hath cried in the waste places and in the houses of kings.

Salome
(Rising)
Willst du mir wirklich alles geben, was ich von dir begehre, Tetrarch?

Salome
(Rising)
Will you indeed give me whatsoever I shall ask, Tetrarch?

Herodias
Tanz nicht, meine Tochter.

Herodias
Do not dance, my daughter.

Herodes
Alles, alles, was du von mir begehren wirst; und wäs die Hälfte meines Königreichs.

Herodes
Everything, whatsoever you desire I will give it you, even to the half of my kingdom.

Salome
Du schworst es, Tetrarch?

Salome
You swear it, Tetrarch?

Herodes
Ich schwör' es, Salome.

Herod
I swear it, Salome.

Salome
Wobei willst du das beschwören, Tetrarch?

Salome
By what will you swear, Tetrarch?
Herodes
Bei meinem Leben, bei meiner Krone, bei meinen Göttern.

Herodias
Tanz nicht, meine Tochter!

Herodes
O Salome, Salome, tanz für mich!

Salome
Du hast einen Eid geschworen, Tetrarch.

Herodes
Ich habe einen Eid geschworen.

Herodias
Meine Tochter, tanze nicht.

Herodes

Herod
By my life, by my crown, by my gods.

Herodias
Do not dance, my daughter.

Herodes
O Salome, Salome, dance for me!

Salome
You have sworn, Tetrarch.

Herod
I have sworn, Salome.

Herodias
My daughter, do not dance.

Herod
Even to the half of my kingdom. Thou wilt be passing fair as a queen. Ah! it is cold here. There is an icy wind, and I hear ... wherefore do I hear in the air this beating of wings? Ah! one might fancy a huge black bird hovers over the terrace.

Why can I not see it. this bird? The beat of its wings is terrible. It is a chill wind. Nay, but it is not cold, it is hot. Pour water on my hands. Give me snow to eat. Loosen my mantle.

Quick, quick, loosen my mantle. Nay, but leave it. It is my garland of roses that hurts me. The flowers are like fire.
(He tears the wreath from his head and throws it on the table.)

Ah! Jetzt kann ich atmen.
Jetzt bin ich glücklich.
Willst du für mich tanzen, Salome?

Herodias
Ich will nicht haben, dass sie tanze!

Salome
Ich will für dich tanzen.

(Stimme des Jokanaan)

Wer ist Der, der von Edom kommt,
wer ist Der, der von Bosta kommt,
dessen Kleid mit Purpur gefärbt ist,
der in der Schönheit seiner
Gewänder leuchtet, der mächtig in
seiner Grösse wandelt, warum ist
dein Kleid mit Scharlach gefleckt?

Herodias
Wir wollen hineingehn. Die Stimme
dieses Menschen macht mich
wahnsinnig. Ich will nicht haben,
dass meine Tochter tanzt, während
er immer dazwischen schreit. Ich
will nicht haben, dass sie tanzt,
während du sie auf solche Art
ansiehst. Mit einem Wort: ich will
nicht haben, dass sie tanzt.

Herodes
Steh nicht auf, mein Weib, meine
Königin. Es wird dir nichts helfen,
ich gehe nicht hinein, bevor sie
getauscht hat. Tanze Salome, tanz für
mich!

(He tears the wreath from his head and throws it on the table.)

Ah! I can breathe now.
Now I am happy.
Will you not dance for me, Salome?

Herodias
I will not have her dance.

Salome
I will dance for you.

(Stimme des Jokanaan)

Who is this cometh from Edom,
who is this who cometh from Bozra,
whose raiment is dyed with purple,
who shineth in the beauty of his
garments, who walketh mighty in his
greatness? Wherefore is thy raiment
stained with scarlet?

Herodias
Let us go within. The voice of that
man maddens me. I will not have
my daughter dance while he is
continually crying out. I will not
have her dance while you look at her
in this fashion. In a word, I will not
have her dance.

Herod
Do not rise, my wife, my queen. It
will avail thee nothing. I will not go
within till she hath danced. Dance,
Salome, dance for me!
Herodias
Tanze nicht, meine Tochter!

Herodias
Do not dance, my daughter!

Salome
Ich bin bereit, Tetrarch.
(Salome dances the dance of the seven veils.)

Salome
I am ready, Tetrarch.

Herodes
Sie ist ein Ungeheuer, deine Tochter. Ich sage dir, sie ist ein Ungeheuer!

Herod
She is a monster, your daughter. I tell you, she is a monster!
Herodias
Meine Tochter hat recht getan. Ich möchte jetzt hier bleiben.

Herodes
(Rising)

(The slaves put out the torches. The stars disappear. A great black cloud crosses the moon and conceals it completely. The stage becomes very dark. The Tetrarch begins to climb the staircase.)

Salome

(A moonbeam falls on Salome, covering her with light.)

Herodes
(Turning round and seeing Salome.)
Man töte dieses Weib!
(The soldiers rush forward and crush beneath their shields Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judaea.)

Herodias
I approve of what my daughter has done. And I will stay here now.

Herod
(Rising)
Ah! There speaks the incestuous wife! Come! I will not stay here. Come! I tell thee. Surely some terrible thing will befall. Let us hide ourselves in our palace, Herodias, I begin to be afraid. Mannassah, Issachar, Ozias, put out the torches. Hide the moon! Hide the stars! Some terrible thing will befall.
Ruslan and Lyudmilla

(1842)

Mikhail Glinka

Libretto by Valerian Shirkov and the composer

ACT ONE

Chor

Le’ tainstvennyj! Upoitel’nyj!
Ty vostorg! I’es v serdce nam.
Slavim vlast’ tvoju i mogućestvo,
Neizbeznjy na zemle!
Oj Dido Lado! Le’!
Ty pecal nyj mir prevrascaes’ nam
V nebo
Radostej i utech.
V noc’ glubokuju,
Crecz body i strach,
K lozu roskosi nas vedes.
I volnues grud’ sladostrastiem,
I ulybku sles’ na usta.
Oj Dido Lado! Le’!
No, cudesnyj Le’!
Ty bog revnosti:
Ty vliwae v nas meren’ja zar.
I prestupnika ty na loze neg
Predaes vragu bez meca.
’Jak ravnjas’ ty skorb’ i radosti,
Ctoby neba nam ne zabyt’.
Dido Lado! Le’!
Vse velikoe, vse prestupnoe
Smertiyj vedaet crez tebja:
Ty za rodinu
V bitvu strasnuju,
Kak na svetyj pir nas vedes;
Ucelevshemu ty vekuy klades’
Lavra vecnogo na glavu.
A kto pal v boju zu oteccestvo,
Triznoj slavnoj usladis’!

Chorus

O, mysterious wonderful god of love!
You pour ecstasy into our hearts;
We glorify your power and strength,
which cannot be avoided on earth!
O, god of love, god of love!
You transform our sad world
into a heaven
of happiness and pleasure.
In the depths of night,
through disasters and fear,
you lead us to a bed of luxury.
You fill our souls with passion
and send a smile to our lips.
O, god of love, god of love!
But miraculous god of love,
you are also the god of jealousy,
who pours the fever of revenge into us.
And on his bed of languor
you betray the unarmed criminal to his
enemy. Thus you even out sorrow and
joy, so that we do not forget the gods.
O, god of love!
All that is great, all that is criminal
mortals learn from you.
You lead us into the terrible battle
to protect our land,
as if leading us to a wonderful feast.
You place a garland of laurels
on the brows of the survivors,
and you prepare a wake for those
who fell in the battle for the fatherland.
Leť tainstvenýj, usladitel'nyj,
Ty vostorgi v serdece nam!

(A short but loud thunderclap is heard.
The stage darkens.)

O, mysterious wonderful god of love!
You pour ecstasy into our hearts!

(A short but loud thunderclap is heard.
The stage darkens.)

---

Rondo

Farlaf
Blizok uz cas torzestva moego:
Nenavistnyj sopernik ujdet daleko
ot nas!
Vujac', naprashno
Ty isces' kniazhu,
Do nee ne dopustit volsebnicy vlast'
tebja.

Ljudmila, naprashno ty places' i
stones', i milogo scrdcu naprashno ty
zdes': Ni vopli, ni sleyz, nicio ne
pomozet! Smiris'ja pred vlast'ju
Nainy, kniazha!

Blizok uz cas torzestva moego, etc.

Farlaf
The hour of my triumph approaches.
My hated rival will go far away
from us.
O, knight, you are wasting your time
in search of the princess.
The witch's power will not let you get
to her!

Lyudmila, your tears and groans are a
waste of time, and you wait for your
dear one in vain! Neither howls nor
tears will do any good! Submit to
Naina's power, princess!

The hour of my triumph approaches,
ext.

Ruslan, zabud' ty o Ljudmile!
Ljudmila, zenicha zabud'!
Pri myli obladat' kniaznej
Serdce radost' oscuscaet
I zarance vkusaet
Sladost' merti i ljubvi.

Blizok uz cas torzestva moego, etc.

Ruslan, forget about Lyudmila.
Lyudmila, forget your fiancee.
At the very thought of possessing the
princess my heart leaps with happiness,
and I am already beginning to feel
the sweetness of revenge and love.

The hour of my triumph approaches,
ext.

V zabolotach, v trevoge, dosade i
grusti

In travail, in anguish, annoyance, and
sadness
Skitajša po svetu, moj hrabryj sopernik! Bejšja s vragami, vlazaj na tverdym!

wander the world, my brave rival!
Fight enemies, storm fortresses!

Ne trudjos' i ne zaborjas,
Ja na namerenju dostignu,
V zamku dedov ozidaja poveljenja
Nainy. Ne daleck zelannyj den',
Den' vostorga i ljubvi!

Without working or worrying,
sitting in the castle of my forefathers,
awaiting the commands of Naina
the desired day approaches.
The day of ecstasy and love!

Ljudmila, naprasno, etc.
Lyudmila, your tears, etc.

Blizok uz cas torzestva moego, etc.
The hour of my triumph approaches,
etc.

V zaborac, v trevog, etc.
In travail, in anguish, etc.

Blizok uz cas torzestva moego, etc.
The hour of my triumph approaches,
etc.

\[\text{\underline{\text{Aria}}}\]

\textbf{Ruslan}

O, zizni otrada mladaja supruga!
Ulje' ty ne slysas'
Stenanija druga?
No serdce ee trepeset i b'etsja,
Ulybka porchaet
Na miykh ustach.
Nevedomyj strach
Mne dusu terzaet!
O drug! kot znaet,
Ko mne li ulyanka letit,
I serdce po mne li drozhit?

O love of my life, young wife!
Can you really not hear
the groans of your beloved?
But her heart beats and flutters,
and a smile plays
on her beautiful lips.
An unknown fear
torments my soul!
O, friends! Who knows
whether her smile is for me,
whether the heart beats for me!
Boris Godunov
(1874)

Modest Mussorgsky
Libretto by the composer

Bojare
Da zdravstvuet car' Boris
Feodorovic!

Narod
Da zdravstvuet!
Uz kak na nebe solncu krasnomu
Slava, slava!
Uz kak na Rusi karju Borisu
Slava, Slava, Carju Slava!
Slava! Slava! Slava! Slava!

Bojars
Long live Tsar Boris
Feodorovich!

The People
Long may he live!
Like the radiant sun in the sky,
Glory, glory!
Glory, glory, glory to the Tsar,
To Boris, the Tsar of Russia!
Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory!

Boris
(from the porch)
My soul is sad.
Some sort of involuntary fear
has gripped my heart
with a sense of evil foreboding.
O, Righteous One, oh sovereign
Father of mine!
Look down from heaven on the
tears of your faithful servants
and send me a holy blessing
for my rule:
Let me be good and righteous
as you are;
may I rule my people in glory...
Now let us pay our respects
to the past rulers of Russia now
deceased.

(from majestically)
And now invite the people to the
feast, all from boyar
Do niczego slepca,  
Vsem vol'nyj vchod,  
Vse, gosti sutogie!  
to blind beggar,  
let everyone enter,  
you are all welcome!

---

Vaalam's Song

Vaalam
Kak vo gorode bylo,  
vo Kazani,  
Groznyj car' piroval,  
Da veselisja.  
On tatar'j bil  
escadno.  
Ctoj im bylo da ne povadno  
'Vdol' po Rusi gulyat'.  
Car' podchodom podchodiil  
Da pod Kazan' gorodok;  
On podkopy podkopal,  
Da, pod Kazanku reku.  
Kak tatar' to po gorodu pochazivajut,  
Na cactical Ivana-to pogljadyvayut,  
Zli tatarov'!  
Groznyj car' ot zakruzinilsja,  
On povesil golovusku  
Na prawoe pleco.  
Uz kak stal car' puskar' szyvat',  
Puskar' vse zazidal'scikov,  
Zazidal'scikov  
Zadymilasja svecka vosku jarova,  
Podchodiil molodoj puskar'.  
Ot k bocecke.  
A i s porochom-to bocka  
Zakruzilasja.  
Oj! Po podkopam pokatilasja,  
Da i chlopnula.  
Zavopili, zagal'deli zli tatarove,  
Here's what happened at the  
town of Kazan,  
Ivan the Terrible was feasting  
and making merry.  
He had given the Tatars  
a ruthless beating  
to teach them a lesson not to  
go wandering over Russia again.  
The Tsar came close,  
to the little town of Kazan.  
He dug some trenches  
under the river of Kazan.  
As the Tatars strolled about town  
they stole glances at Tsar Ivan,  
those evil Tatars!  
Ivan the Terrible became sad,  
hung his head  
on his right shoulder.  
The Tsar sent for the gunners,  
the gunners with all their guns,  
the gunners with all their guns!  
A bright wax taper started smoking,  
a young gunner  
went up to the barrel.  
And the barrel of gunpowder  
started rolling.  
Help! It rolled along the trenches  
until it exploded.  
The evil Tatars shrieked and
Blagim matom zalivlja.
Poleglo tatarovej čina t'muscaja,
Poleglo ich sorok tysiacej dat'ri tysiaci.
Tak-to, vo gorede bylo,
bo Kazani... E!
screamed, cursing in foul language.
Hordes of Tatars fell,
Forty-three thousand Tatars fell.
That's what happened
in Kazan... Hey!

ACT FOUR

Scene Two

Boris

Proscaj, moj syn, umiraju...
Sejcas' ty carstvovat' na'nez'.
Ne sprasivaj, kakim putem
Ja carstvo pristrel...
'Tebe ne ruzno znat'..
'Ty carstvovat' po pravu budes',
Kak moj naslednik,
Kak syn moj pervorodnyj...
Syn moj! Dizja moe rodnoe!
Ne vveraj'sja navetam
Bojar kramol'nych,
Zorko sledi za ich snoes'jami
Tajnymi s Litvoju,
Izmeno karaj bez poscady,
Bez milosti karaj;
Strogo vnjak v sud narodnyj,
Sud nelicernernyj;
Stoj na straze borcom
Za veru pravuju,
Sojata ciri svayrych ugodnikov
boz'ich.
Sestru tvoju, carevnu,
Sberegi, moj syn,
'Ty ej odin chranitel' ostaes'ja...
Nasej Ksenii, golubke cistoj.
(almost spoken)

Boris

Farewell, my son, I am dying...
Now you will begin your reign.
Do not ask me by what means
I obtained the crown...
You need not to know.
You will be a lawful ruler,
as my successor,
as my firstborn son...
My son! My dear child!
Don't believe the slander
of the seditious boyars,
keep a sharp watch on their secret
dealings with Lithuania.
Punish treason harshly,
punish without mercy;
closely follow the judgment of
the people, they are impartial;
defend and guard
the righteous faith,
honour and respect the holy saints
of the Lord.
Look after your sister,
the Taareva, my son,
you are now her only guardian...
Our Xenia, the innocent dove
(almost spoken)
Gospodi! Gospodi!
Vozzi, molju,
Na sele gresnog otsa;
Ne za sebja molju,
Ne za sebja, moj Boze!
S gorenej nepristupnej vysoty prolej
Ty blagodatnyj zvet na cad moich,
Nevinnych... kronchik, cistych...

Sily nebesnye!
Strazhi trona prevrecnogo...
*(he embraces his son)*
Krylni svetlymi vy ochranite
Moe dija rodnoe ot bed
i zol... ot iskusenij...
*(He hugs his son and kisses him. Long-sustained chime of a bell and death knell.)*

**Boris**

Zvon! Pogrebal'nyj zvon!

**Pevcie (Monachi)**

*(offstage)*
Plac'ce, plac'ce ludie,
Net' bo zizni u nem
I nemy usta ego
I ne dast otveta.
Plac'ce. Alliluj!
*(The boyars and the chorus come onto the stage.)*

**Boris**

Nadgrobnij vopl', schima...
Svjataja schima...
V monachi car' idet.

**Feodor**

Gosudar', uspokojitsja!
Gospod' pomozet...

**Oh Lord! Oh Lord!**
Look down, I pray,
upon the tears of a sinful father;
I am not praying for myself,
not for myself, my Lord!
From your inaccessible height
pour down your blessed light
upon my children, my innocent...
sweet... pure children...
Oh, heavenly powers!
Guardians of the eternal throne...
*(he embraces his son)*
With your bright wings protect
my dear child from all evils and
calamity... from temptation...
*(He hugs his son and kisses him. Long-sustained chime of a bell and death knell.)*

**Boris**

A bell! A knell!

**Chorus (Monks)**

*(offstage)*
Weep, weep, oh people,
there is no life in him any more,
his lips are silent
and he will never give an answer.
Weep. Alleluia!
*(The boyars and the chorus come onto the stage.)*

**Boris**

Funeral wails, the monastic order...
The holy monastic order...
The Tsar is joining the monks.

**Feodor**

Your Majesty, calm down!
The Lord will help...
**Boris**

Net! Net, syn moj,
Cas moj probil . . .

**Pevce**

Vizu mladenca umirajusca
I rydaju, placu,
Mjatjesja, trepesec on i k
pomosći vzyvaet
I net enu spasen'ja . . .
(they stop)

**Boris**

Boz! Boz! Tjazko mne!
Uze l' greha
Ne zamolju!
O, zlaja smert'!
Kak mucis' ty zestroko!
(he jumps up)
Povremenite . . . ja car' esce!
(by seizing his heart and falls into a chair)
Ja car' esce . . . Boz! Smert'!
(speaken)
Prosti menja!
(to the boyars, pointing to his son)
Vot, vot car' vas . . .
car' . . .
Prostitie . . .
(in a whisper)
Prostitie . . .

**Bojare**

(in a whisper)
Uspiel!

**Boris**

No! No, my son,
my time has come . . .

**Chorus**

I can see the dying child,
and I weep and sob,
he tosses and turns and
calls for help,
but nothing can save him . . .
(they stop)

**Boris**

Oh Lord! Oh Lord! I feel terrible!
There is nothing I can do now
to atone for my sin!
Oh evil death!
How cruel are your torments!
(he jumps up)
Wait a minute . . . I am still Tsar!
(by seizing his heart and falls into a chair)
I am still Tsar . . . Oh Lord! Death!
(speaken)
Forgive me!
(to the boyars, pointing to his son)
Here, here is your Tsar . . .
your Tsar . . .
Forgive me . . .
(in a whisper)
Forgive me . . .

**Boyars**

(in a whisper)
He has died!
Tosca
(1900)
Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

ACT TWO

In the Farnese Palace. Scarpia’s room on the upper floor. The table is laid for supper. A large window gives onto the courtyard of the Palace. It is night.

Scarpia
(He is sitting at the table, having supper. From time to time he interrupts his meal to reflect. He takes a watch from his pocket, and in his restless demeanor he betrays a feverish anxiety.)

Tosca è un buon falco!
Certo a quest’ora
i miei segugi le
due prede azzannano!
Doman sul palco vedrà l’aurora
Angelotti e il bel Mario
al laccio pendere.
(He rings a handbell. Sciarrone appears.)
Tosca è a palazzo?

Sciarone
Un ciambellan ne uscia pur ora in traccia.

Scarpia
(pointing to the window)
Apri. Tarda è la notte.
(From the lower floor, where the Queen of Naples, Maria Carolina, is giving a great entertainment in honor of General Melas, is heard the sound of an orchestra.)
Alla cantata ancor manca
la Diva,
e strimpellan gavotte.

Scarpia
Tosca is a good decoy!
By now my bloodhounds must have sunk their teeth into their two quarries!
Tomorrow’s dawn will see Angelotti and the handsome Mario hanging on the gallows.
(He rings a handbell. Sciarrone appears.)
Is Tosca in the Palace?

Sciarone
A footman has just gone to fetch her.

Scarpia
(pointing to the window)
Open it. The hour is late.
The diva is not here yet for the cantata, and they’re filling in with gavottes.
(to Sciarone)
Tu aspetterai la Tosca in
sull’entrata;
le dirai ch’io l’aspetto
finita la cantata . . .
o meglio . . .
(He rises and hurriedly writes a note.)
le darai questo biglietto.
(Sciarone goes out. Scarpia returns to
the table and pours himself a drink.)
Ella verrà . . .
per amor del suo Mario!
Per amor del suo Mario
al piacer mio s’arrenderà.
Tal dei profondi amorì è la
profonda miseria. Ha più forte
sapere la conquista violenta
che il mellifluo consenso.
Io di sospiro e di lattiginose
albe lunari poco m’appago.
Non so trarre accordi
di chitarra, né oroscopo di
fior, né far l’occhio di pesce,
o tubar come tortore!
Framo. La cosa biamata
perseguito, me ne sazio e via la
getto volio a nuova
esca.
Dio creò diverse belità,
vini diversi. Io vo’ gustar
quanto più posso dell’opra divina!
(He drinks.)

(www.Sciarone)
You will wait for Tosca at
the entrance
and tell her that I expect her
when the cantata is over . . .
or still better . . .
(He rises and hurriedly writes a note.)
you will give her this note.
(Sciarone goes out. Scarpia returns to
the table and pours himself a drink.)
She will come . . .
for love of her Mario!
For love of her Mario
she will submit to my pleasur.
The depth of her misery
will match the depth of her love.
A forcible conquest has a keener
relish than a willing surrender.
I find no delight in sights and
sentimental moonlight serenades.
I cannot thrum chords on a
guitar, nor tell fortunes from
flower petals, nor make sheep’s-
eyes or coo like a turtledove!
I have strong desires. I pursue
what I desire, glut myself with it
and discard it, turning to a new
diversion.
God created different beauties
and different wines. I wish to savor
all I can of what heaven produces!
(He drinks.)
Scarpia
Ov’è Angelotti?

Cavaradossi
Non lo so.

Scarpia
Negate d’avergli date cibo?

Cavaradossi
Nego!

Scarpia
E vesti?

Cavaradossi
Nego!

Scarpia
E asilo nella villa?
È che là sia nascosto?

Cavaradossi
Nego! nego!

Scarpia
Via, Cavaliere, riflettete: saggià non è cotesta otrinatezza vostra. Angoscia grande, pronta confessione evitarà! Io vi consiglio, dite: dov’è dunque Angelotti?

Cavaradossi
Non lo so.

Scarpia
Ancor l’ultima volta. Dov’è?
Cavaradossi
Non lo so!

Spoletta
(aside)
O bei tratti di corda!
(Enter Tosca, anxiously)

Scarpia
Eccola!

Tosca
(seeing Cavaradossi, runs to embrace him)
Mario, tu qui?!

Cavaradossi
(under his breath to Tosca, who gives a sign that she has understood)
Di quanto la vedesti, tacii,
o m’uccidi!

Scarpia
Mario Cavaradossi, qual
testimone il Giudice v’aspetta.
(to Roberti)
Pria le forme ordinarie. Indi . . .
ai miei cenni.
(The Judge goes into the torture chamber; the others follow, leaving Tosca and Scarpia alone. Spoletta withdraws to the door at the back of the room.)

Cavaradossi
I don’t know!

Spoletta
(aside)
Now the cords will be tightened!
(Enter Tosca, anxiously)

Scarpia
Ah, there she is!

Tosca
(seeing Cavaradossi, runs to embrace him)
Mario, you here?

Cavaradossi
(under his breath to Tosca, who gives a sign that she has understood)
Say nothing of what you have seen there, or it will mean my death!

Scarpia
Mario Cavaradossi, the judge
is waiting to take your deposition.
(to Roberti)
First the usual way. Afterwards...
as I indicate.
Scarpia
Orsù, Tosca, parlate.

Tosca
Non so nulla!

Scarpia
Non vale quella prova?
Roberti, ripigliamo . . .

Tosca
No! Fermate! . . .

Scarpia
Voi parlerete?

Tosca
No . . . mostro!
lo strazi . . . l'uccidi!

Scarpia
Lo strazia quel vostro silenzio assai più.

Scarpia
And now, Tosca, speak out.

Tosca
I know nothing!

Scarpia
That test was not enough?
Roberti, repeat the treatment . . .

Tosca
No! Stop!

Scarpia
Will you speak?

Tosca
No . . . you monster!
You are torturing him, killing him!

Scarpia
That silence of yours
is harming him far more.
**Tosca**

*Tu ridi . . . tu ridi all'orrida pena?*

**Scarpia**

*Mai Tosca sulla scena più tragica fu. Apri le porte che n'oda i lamenti.*

*(Spoletta opens the door, placing himself directly before it.)*

**La voce di Cavaradossi**

*Vi sfido!*

**Scarpia**

*Più forte, più forte!*

**La voce di Cavaradossi**

*Vi sfido!*

**Scarpia**

*Parlate!*

**Tosca**

*Che dire?*

**Scarpia**

*Su, via!*

**Tosca**

*Ah! non so nulla! Ah! dovrei mentir?*

**Scarpia**

*Dite dov'è Angelotti? Parlate, su, via dove celato sta?*

**Tosca**

*Ah! più non posso! Ah!*

---

**Tosca**

*You laugh . . . at this terrible suffering?*

**Scarpia**

*Tosca was never more tragic on the stage! Open the doors so that she can hear his cries!* *(Spoletta opens the door, placing himself directly before it.)*

**Cavaradossi's voice**

*I defy you!*

**Scarpia**

*Harder, harder!* 

**Cavaradossi's voice**

*I defy you!*

**Scarpia**

*Speak!*

**Tosca**

*What can I say?*

**Scarpia**

*Come, quickly!* 

**Tosca**

*Ah! I know nothing! Must I tell lies?*

**Scarpia**

*Say where Angelotti is! Speak out now! Where is he hidden?*

**Tosca**

*Ah! I cannot bear it!*
cessate il martir!  
È troppo soffir!  
Ah! non posso più!

La voce di Cavaradossi  
Ahimè!

(Tosca again turns imploringly to Scarpia, who signs to Spoletta to let her approach. She goes to the open door and, terrified at the sight of the dreadful scene, addresses Cavaradossi.)

Tosca  
Mario, consenti ch’io parli? . . .

La voce di Cavaradossi  
No, no!

Tosca  
Ascolta. non posso più . . .

La voce di Cavaradossi  
Stolta, che sai?  
che puni dir?

Scarpia  
(inspired by Cavaradossi’s words,  
shows at Spoletta)  
Ma fateo tacere!

(Spoletta enters the torture-chamber and comes out again shortly after, while  
Tosca, overcome by fearful agitation, falls prostrate on a settee and, her voice  
broken by sobs, appeals to Scarpia, who stands impassively in silence.)

Tosca  
Che v’ho fatto in vita mia?  
Son io  
che così torturate! . . . Torturate  
l’anima . . . Si, mi torturate l’anima!

Cease this torment!  
It is too much to suffer!  
Ah! I cannot bear it!

Cavaradossi’s voice  
Ah!

Tosca  
Mario, will you let me speak?

Cavaradossi’s voice  
No, no!

Tosca  
Listen! I can bear no more . . .

Cavaradossi’s voice  
Don’t be silly! What do you know?  
What can you say?

Scarpia  
(inspired by Cavaradossi’s words,  
shows at Spoletta)  
Make him be quiet!

Tosca  
What harm have I ever done you?  
It is I whom you are torturing so!  
You are torturing my soul . . .

Tosca  
Yes, it is my soul you are torturing!
Spoletta

(muttering a prayer)
Judex ergo cum sedebit
Quidquid latet apparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit.

(Scarpia, profiting by Tosca's prostration, goes to the torture-chamber and signals for the torture to recommence.)

La voce di Cavaradossi
Ah!

Tosca
(At Cavaradossi's cry she leaps up and in a stifled voice hurriedly says to Scarpia.)
Nel pozzo . . . nel giardino . . .

Scarpia
Là è l'Angelotti?

Tosca
Si . . .

Scarpia
Basta, Roberti.

Sciarrone
(apparing at the door)
È svenuto!

Tosca
(to Scarpia)
Assassino! . . . Voglio vederlo . . .

Scarpia
Portatelo qui.

Cavaradossi's voice
Ah!

Tosca
(At Cavaradossi's cry she leaps up and in a stifled voice hurriedly says to Scarpia.)
In the well . . . in the garden . . .

Scarpia
Angelotti is there?

Tosca
Yes . . .

Scarpia
That will do, Roberti.

Sciarrone
(appering at the door)
He has fainted!

Tosca
(to Scarpia)
Murderer! . . . I want to see him . . .

Scarpia
Carry him in.
(Cavaradossi, who has been listening with growing anxiety to Sciarone’s words, in his enthusiasm finds the strength to rise and confront Scarpia menacingly.)

Cavaradossi
Vittoria! Vittoria!
L’alba vindice appar
trema!
Libertà sorge, crollan
tirannidi!

Tosca
(in despair, holding Cavaradossi close, trying to calm him)
Mario, taci, pietà di me!

Cavaradossi
Del sofferto martir
me vedrai qui gioir . . .
il tuo cuor trema, o Scarpia,
carnifici!

Scarpia
Braveggia, urla! T’affretta
a palesarmi il fondo
dell’alma mia!
Va! Moribondo,
il capretto t’aspetta!
(Shouts to the police)
Portatemi via!

(Tosca tries to oppose them with all her strength, clinging to Mario.)

Cavaradossi
Victory! Victory
Let the dawn of vengeance appear
to strike terror into our foes!
Let freedom arise
and tyrants be overthrown!

Tosca
(in despair, holding Cavaradossi close, trying to calm him)
Hush, Mario, for my sake!

Cavaradossi
You shall see me rejoice
for the anguish I have suffered . . .
Let your heart falter,
O Scarpia, you butcher!

Scarpia
Bluster and bawl!
Hasten to reveal to me
the depths of your infamous soul!
Go! The gallows awaits you,
half dead as you already are.
(Shouts to the police)
Take him out of here!

(Tosca and the police-agents seize Cavaradossi and drag him towards the door.)

Tosca
Ah . . . Mario, Mario . . .
con te . . .

Cavaradossi
Ah . . . Mario, Mario . . .
I will go with you . . .

Scarpia
Not you!
Tosca
(sits facing Scarpia, looking him straight in the eye)
Quanto?

Scarpia
Quanto?

Tosca
Il prezzo!

Scarpia
Già. Mi dicon venal,
ma a donna bella non mi vendo
a prezzo di moneta.
Se la giurata fede devo
tradir, ne voglio
altra mercede.
Quest'ora io l'attendeva.
Già mi struggia
l'amor della diva!...
Ma poc'anzi ti mirai
qual non ti vidi mai!
Quel tuo pianto era lava ai sensi
miei e il tuo sguardo
che odio in me dardeggiava,
mi brame inf ecociva!
Agil qual leopardo t'avvinghiasti
all'amante, ah, in quell'istante
r'ho giurata mia!

(He advances upon Tosca with open arms; she, who had been listening motionless, petrified, to his lascivious words, suddenly rises and takes refuge behind the settee.)

Tosca
Ah!

Scarpia
Ah! They call me venal,
but I don’t sell myself
to lovely ladies for mere money.
If I have to betray my sworn
loyalty, I choose
a different payment.
I've been waiting for this moment.
Love of the diva
has long consumed me!...
But a while ago I saw you
as I had never seen you before!
Your tears flowed like lava
on my senses, and your eyes,
which darted hatred at me,
made my desire all the fiercer!
When, supple as a leopard, you
clung to your lover, ah, in that mo-
ment I swore you should be mine!
"Vissi d’Arte"

**Tosca**

*(Overcome by grief, she falls onto the settee. Scarpia coldly continues to gaze at her.)*

Vissi d’arte,  
visi d’amore,  
non feci mai male ad anima viva!  
Con man furtiva quante  
misericordie conobbi, aiutai.  
Sempre con fe’ sincera  
la mia preghiera  
ai santi tabernacoli sali,  
sempre con fe’ sincera  
diedi fiori agli altar.  
Nell’ora del dolore  
perché, perché, Signore,  
perché mi ne rimuneri così?  
Diedi gioielli della Madonna  
al manto, e diedi il canto agli  
astri, al ciel, che ne ridean  
pìù belli.  
Nell’ora del dolor  
perché, perché, Signore,  
perché mi ne rimuneri così?

**Scarpia**

Io tenni la promessa...  

**Tosca**

Non ancora.  
Voglio un salvacondotto, onde  
fuggir dallo Stato con lui.

**Scarpia**

Partir dunque volete?

**Tosca**

*(Overcome by grief, she falls onto the settee. Scarpia coldly continues to gaze at her.)*

I have lived for art,  
I have lived for love,  
and never harmed a living soul!  
In secret I have given aid to as  
many unfortunates as I have  
known. Always a true believer,  
I have offered up my prayers  
at the holy shrines;  
always a true believer,  
I have laid flowers on the altar.  
In my hour of tribulation  
why, O Lord, why  
hast Thou repaid me thus?  
In my hour of tribulation  
why, O Lord, why  
hast Thou repaid me thus?  
In my hour of tribulation  
why, O Lord, why  
hast Thou repaid me thus?  
In my hour of tribulation  
why, O Lord, why  
hast Thou repaid me thus?

**Scarpia**

I have kept my promise...  

**Tosca**

Not yet.  
I want a safe-conduct so  
that I can flee the State with him.

**Scarpia**

Then you want to leave?
Tosca
Si, per sempre!

Scarpia
Si adempia il voler vostro.
(He goes to a desk and begins to write, breaking off to ask Tosca)
E qual via scegliete?

Tosca
La più breve!

Scarpia
Civitavecchia?

Tosca
Si.
(While Scarpia is writing, Tosca approaches the table and with a trembling hand takes the glass of Spanish wine poured out by Scarpia; but as she raises it to her lips she perceives on the table a sharp-pointed knife. She casts a rapid glance at Scarpia who at that moment is busy writing, and with infinite caution succeeds in taking possession of the knife. She hides it behind her, leaning on the table and watching Scarpia. Having finished writing the safe-conduct and put his seal to it, he folds the paper; then opening his arms, he advances on Tosca to embrace her.)

Scarpia
Tosca, finalmente mia! . . .
(But his tone of rapture changes to a terrible cry: Tosca has stabbed him to the heart.)
Maledetto!!!

Tosca
Questo è il bacio di Tosca!
(Scarpia, staggering, tries to clutch at Tosca, who recoils in terror.)

Scarpia
Aiuto . . . muoio . . .

Tosca
Yes, for good!

Scarpia
You shall have your way.
(He goes to a desk and begins to write, breaking off to ask Tosca)
Which road will you take?

Tosca
The shortest!

Scarpia
Civitavecchia?

Tosca
Yes.

Scarpia
Tosca, at last you are mine!
(But his tone of rapture changes to a terrible cry: Tosca has stabbed him to the heart.)
A curse on you!

Tosca
That was Tosca's kiss!
(Scarpia, staggering, tries to clutch at Tosca, who recoils in terror.)

Scarpia
Help! . . . I'm dying! . . .
soscorso . . . muoio . . .

**Tosca**
It soffoca il sangue? Ah!
E ucciso da una donna . . .
M'hai assai
torturata Odi a ancora? Parla!
Guardami!
Son Tosca, o Scarpia!

**Scarpia**
Soscorso! . . . aiuto!

**Tosca**
Ti soffoca il
sangue? . . .
Muori, dannato! muori!! muori!!!
È morto . . .
Ogli perdono! . . .

(Without taking her eyes off Scarpia's body, she goes to the table, takes a bottle of
water and, dipping a napkin in it, washes her fingers: then she rearranges her
hair in front of the mirror. Remembering the safe-conduct, she looks for it on the
desk but cannot find it: she searches elsewhere and finally sees it clutched in
Scarpia's stiffening hand. She lifts his arm, then lets it fall inert after having
taken the safe-conduct, which she hides in her bosom.)

E avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma!

**Tosca**
Are you choking in your own
blood? . . .
Die you fiend! Die! Die!!
He is dead! . . .
Now I forgive him . . .

(On the point of leaving, she changes her mind; she goes and takes the two candles
from the wall-bracket on the left and lights them from the candlesticks on the
table, which she then extinguishes. She places one candle to the right of Scarpia's
head, the other to the left. She looks round again and, seeing a crucifix, takes it
from the wall and, carrying it reverently, kneels down and places it on Scarpia's
breast. She rises and very cautiously goes out, closing the door behind her.)
Capriccio
(1941)
Richard Strauss
Libretto by Clemens Krauss and the composer

Olivier
Tanz und Musik stehen im Bann des Rhythmus, ihm unterworfen seit ewiger Zeit.

Flamand
Deiner Verse Mass ist ein weit stärkerer Zwang.

Olivier
Frei schaltet in ihm des Dichters Gedanke! Wer zieht da die Grenze zwischen Form und Gehalt?

Flamand
In irischer Form ein Unfaßbar-Höheres: Musik! Sie erhebt sich in Sphären, in die der Gedanke nicht dringt.

Olivier

Flamand
Mein Gedanke is die Melodie. Sie kündet Tieferes, ein Unaussprechliches! In einem Akkord erlebst du eine Welt.

Direktor
Sie streiten um eine Rangordnung

Olivier (Poet)
Music and dance are the slaves of rhythm, they have served it since the beginning of time.

Flamand (Composer)
There is more constraint in the restrictions of verse.

Olivier
Freedom of ideas is given to poets. Who sees any boundary between content and form?

Flamand
Music is in every respect more full of meaning, it ascends in spheres which you cannot invade with the mind.

Olivier
Not in musical abstraction but in the clearest language can I express what I'm thinking. This is what your music can never achieve.

Flamand
My ideas exist as melodies, and what they mean to me is inexpressible. In one single chord you feel all the world.

La Roche (Director)
They are fighting; each one claims
Graf
Schon sind wir inmitten der Diskussion über das Streit-Thema unserer Tage.

Flamand
Musik ist eine erhabene Kunst! Nur unwillig dient sie dem Trug des Theaters.

Gräfin

Direktor

Clairon
Jawohl, ganz recht!

Direktor
Ihr überschätzt euren Schreibtisch!

more importance for his art. I could spare them the trouble! In the realm of my stage they are nothing but servants.

Count
Again we arrive at the argument, always a topic for wide discussion.

Flamand
I find in music exalted art, reluctant to serve the domain of the theatre.

Countess
My friend! The theatre unveils for us the secrets of reality. Ever in its magic mirror we discover ourselves. The theatre moves us because it is reality’s symbol.

La Roche
It is ruled by the goddess of invention. All the arts are her servants: be it poetry, be it painting, sculpture or music. What would become of your language, and what of your music if no actors were there to perform? Lacking the art of the actor, his magic personality, lacking all these where would you be? Eh? Or without his costume?

Clairon (Actress)
Indeed!

La Roche
You overvalue your labors.
Olivier
Der dichtende Geist ist der Spiegel
der Welt. Poesie ist die Mutter aller Künste!

Flamand
Musik ist die Wurzel, der allesentquillt. Die Klingen der Natur
singen das Wiegenlied allen Künsten!

Olivier
Die sprache des Menschen allein ist
der Boden, dem sie entspriessen.

Flamand
Der Schmerzensschrei ging der
Sprache voraus!

Olivier
Doch das Leid zu deuten vermag sie
allein. Der wirklichen Tiefe des
Tragischen kann nur die Dichtkunst
Ausdruck verleihen. Nie kann sie sich
in Tönen offenbaren!

Gräfin
Das sagt Ihr jetzt, in dem Augenblick,
wo ein Genie uns lehrt, daß es eine
musikalische Tragödie gibt?

Graf
Halt! Noch einen Schritt und wir
stehen vor dem Abgrund! Schon
stehen wir der "Opie" Aug in Aug
gegenüber.

Gräfin
Ein schöner Anblick,
ich wag' es zu sagen.

Olivier
The poet's idea is the mirror of life.
All the arts must call poecy their
mother!

Flamand
But music is the root from which
everything springs. And Nature's
voices sing all other arts to sleep in
their cradles.

Olivier
The language of mankind alone is
the soil where art can be nourished.

Flamand
The cry of pain preceded all speech!

Olivier
But in language only can pain be
defined. Tragedy finds its expression
only when a poet puts it into words.
Music has not the power to reveal it.

Countess
How can you say such a thing today
just when a genius proves it is
possible to write a musical tragedy?

Count
Stop! One more step and we stand
before the abyss. I fear that we are
standing face to face with an opera.

Countess
A charming vision,
I venture to say.
Clairon
Etwas absonderlich, dieses Geschöpf aus Tönen und Worten.

Graf
(interupting her)
Und Rezitaten! Und Rezitaten!

Olivier
Komponist und Dichter, einer vom andern schrecklich behindert verschwenden unsägliche Mühen, um es zur Welt zu bringen.

Graf
Eine Oper ist ein absurdes Ding. Befehle werden singend erteilt, über Politik im Duett verhandelt. Man tanzt um ein Grab, und Dolchstiche werden melodisch verabschied.

Clairon
Somewhat peculiar, this combination of music and language.

Count
(interupting her)
And recitatives! And recitatives!

Olivier
The composer and poet, dreadfully hampered each by the other, are wasting unspeakable labor in giving birth to opera and acting as its midwives.

Count
Every opera is in itself absurd: a murder plot is hatched in a song; all affairs of state are discussed in chorus; they dance round a grave and suicide takes place to music.
How to Listen to and Understand Opera
Selective Bibliography

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