

C R E S C E N D O

STEFANO SECCO, TENOR

Puccini
Verdi
Bizet
Boito
Halévy
Gounod
Donizetti



Constantine Orbelian, conductor
Kaunas City Symphony

DE 3482



crescendo

Stefano Secco, tenor

Arias from

PUCCINI: Tosca • Madama Butterfly
La Bohème

VERDI: Un ballo in maschera • I Lombardi
Rigoletto • Luisa Miller • Il Trovatore

BIZET: Carmen • BOITO: Mefistofele

HALÉVY: La Juive • GOUNOD: Faust

DONIZETTI: Lucia di Lammermoor
L'elisir d'amore

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C R E S C E N D O

STEFANO SECCO, tenor

1. **Puccini: *Tosca*** – E lucevan le stelle* (2:53)
2. **Puccini: *La Bohème*** – Che gelida manina (5:08)
3. **Puccini: *Madama Butterfly*** – Addio, fiorito asil (2:08)
4. **Verdi: *Un ballo in maschera*** – Forse la soglia attinse (5:26)
5. **Verdi: *I Lombardi*** – La mia letizia in fondere (2:06)
6. **Bizet: *Carmen*** – La fleur que tu m'avais jetée (4:13)
7. **Halévy: *La Juive*** – Rachel, quand du Seigneur (5:56)
8. **Donizetti: *L'elisir d'amore*** – Una furtiva lagrima (4:42)
9. **Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor*** – Fra poco a me ricovero (7:15)
10. **Boito: *Mefistofele*** – Giunto sul passo estremo (3:18)
11. **Gounod: *Faust*** – Salut, demeure chaste et pure (6:26)
12. **Verdi: *Rigoletto*** – La donna è mobile (2:22)
13. **Verdi: *Luisa Miller*** – Oh! fede negar potessi (5:20)
14. **Verdi: *Il Trovatore*** – Ah, sì ben mio, coll'essere (3:18)
15. **Verdi: *Il Trovatore*** – Di quella pira (2:23)

CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN, conductor
Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra
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*Clarinet solo: Andrius Bernotaitis

Total playing time: 63:05

Giacomo Puccini's **Tosca** (premiered in 1900) is perhaps the most intensely melodramatic and (in its day) politically controversial of his great masterpieces. Set in Rome at a time of political upheaval, it contains graphic scenes depicting murder, torture, and suicide in an atmosphere of unchecked police brutality. In the third act, Cavaradossi, the title heroine's lover (and political dissident), has been imprisoned and is awaiting his execution. As dawn breaks over his prison, he surrenders to his despair, singing of a passionate tryst with his beloved and dashed hopes in the famous romanza **E lucevan le stelle**, introduced by a plaintive clarinet solo: the same theme (in more dramatic guise) that precedes Tosca's climactic suicide, leaping to her death from the prison's ramparts after she realizes that Cavaradossi is dead.

Puccini's **La Bohème** premiered in Turin in 1896 and has since become one of opera's most beloved works in its passionate portrayal of the lives of young and impoverished bohemians living in Paris. **Che gelida manina** is heard in the opera's first act, after Rodolfo and Mimì touch hands while the two are looking for her room key, which she has dropped on the floor. The aria begins with Rodolfo's observation that Mimì's hands are chilly – and, as he attempts to warm them with his own, Rodolfo introduces himself, declaring "Who am I? A poet." He goes on to declare his dreams and aspirations before asking Mimì to tell him about herself. This deservedly famous piece is a high point of musical romanticism, with thickly scored lyrical

outpourings tempered by tender moments of confession.

In Puccini's **Madama Butterfly**, first performed in 1904, the young Japanese geisha Cio-cio-san has married the US naval officer Pinkerton, who then sails for home, leaving her behind in Japan. She believes the arrangement is permanent, and – for three years – patiently awaits his return. Pinkerton, after learning that she has borne him a son, reappears with his American wife, who has agreed to raise the child as her own. Unable to face Cio-cio-san, Pinkerton sings of his shame and regret in **Addio, fiorito asil**, before the young mother – knowing she will lose both her beloved and her son – commits ritual suicide.

Giuseppe Verdi's **Un ballo in maschera**, composed in 1857-58, is based on the true story of the 1792 assassination of Sweden's King Gustav III at a masked ball. At the time, Italian censors balked at the work's story of a murdered monarch, forcing delays in the opera's premiere and a more politically acceptable revision. The revised libretto recounts the ill-fated Count Riccardo's secret love for Amelia, the wife of his friend and advisor Renato, who comes to the false conclusion that Amelia and Riccardo are having an adulterous affair and plots murderous revenge. In Act 3, Riccardo, torn between love and duty, decides – in the aria **Forse la soglia attinse** – to renounce his feelings for Amelia and send the couple away to England and out of temptation's way. Then he attends the masked ball, where he is fatally stabbed, but pardons the conspirators before he dies.

I Lombardi – premiered in 1843 – is Verdi's epic tale of a fictional Italian family's participation in the Crusades. The convoluted plot line centers around a noble family's two feuding brothers, Arvino and Pagano. As the Crusade – led by Arvino – unfolds, his daughter Giselda is captured by Acciano, ruler of Antioch, and imprisoned in his harem. Acciano's son Oronte and Giselda fall in love, and – in Act 2 – Oronte gives passionate voice to his devotion in his aria **La mia letizia infondere**.

Cast in a musically authentic Spanish setting, Georges Bizet's ever-popular ***Carmen*** (first performed in 1875) was perhaps the most controversial opera of its day. It spins the sultry tale of the wanton gypsy seductress Carmen and her ultimately fatal affair with the hapless soldier Don José. In the second act, after he has been released from a month in detention for disobeying an order to arrest her, he meets with Carmen after hours at a tavern, where she dances for him. As he is about to return to the barracks, she mocks him. He responds by pulling out the wilted flower she had tossed to him before his detention, and sings of how its undying fragrance sustained him during his imprisonment – and of his tormented love for her – in his famous **La fleur que tu m'avais jetée** ("Flower Song"), one of the loveliest tenor arias in all of opera.

Fromental Halévy's ***La Juive*** ("The Jewess" – 1835) was one of the nineteenth century's most admired operas, widely considered an early plea for religious tolerance. Loosely based on

actual medieval history, it tells the tale of Eléazar, a Jewish goldsmith who had been banished by his nemesis, Count Brogni. By an ironic twist of fate, Eléazar had found and raised the Count's lost infant daughter as Rachel, his own child. Brogni – now a cardinal – has unknowingly had her imprisoned and condemned to death for her affair with a Christian nobleman. In his Act 4 aria, **Rachel, quand du Seigneur**, Eléazar laments that he has wanted only Rachel's happiness, but has instead caused her condemnation – before giving voice to his determination to save her by revealing her true identity.

The exquisitely crafted **Una furtiva lagrima** is the standout aria sung by Nemorino in Gaetano Donizetti's ***L'elisir d'amore***, which premiered in Milan in 1832. In this aria, from the opera's second act, Nemorino finds his beloved Adina weeping after he has given her what he believes to be a love potion, and he assumes that the potion has successfully won her heart. Observing Adina's apparent "enchantment," Nemorino becomes increasingly intoxicated by his love, and his singing builds in romantic fervor. The aria remains one of the most excerpted works for tenor from one of Donizetti's most popular operas.

Donizetti's ***Lucia di Lammermoor*** premiered in Naples in 1835. The opera conveys the tale of Lucia, sister to the Lord of Lammermoor, and her star-crossed love for Edgardo of the Ravenwoods: a family with whom Lucia's own has been embroiled in a generations-long

dispute. The aria **Fra poco a me ricovero** is sung by Edgardo in the opera's third act. The aria embodies Edgardo's utter despair at the thought of his own doom amid the "tombs of my ancestors." Edgardo, thinking that Lucia is alive and newly married to his rival, gives voice to his wish that she will never visit his tomb with her new husband. When he learns that Lucia has died, his grief is tempered by his resolve to reunite with her in the afterlife. After Lucia's bier passes by, Edgardo stabs himself and joins her in death.

Among the many romantic-era musical treatments of Goethe's immortal two-part drama *Faust*, the composer-librettist Arrigo Boito's **Me-fistofele** (first performed in 1868) and Gounod's like-titled *Faust* (see following selection) are the two best-known operatic versions. Boito's sprawling score – encompassing a Prologue, an Epilogue, and four acts in between – is performed much less frequently than Gounod's, but its plot covers more details of the original story. The devil Mefistofele – after transforming the old scholar Faust into a young gentleman – has exposed him to repeated worldly temptations. But the Epilogue finds Faust restored to his original elderly self and facing imminent death. Amid the devil's further attempts at unholy distractions, Faust-sings of a redeeming vision in **Giunto sul passo estremo** before seizing his bible and finding salvation as he dies.

Gounod's treatment of the **Faust** story is somewhat simpler, revolving mainly around the hero's affair with the beautiful and innocent maiden

Marguerite. After having been demurely turned away by her in Act 2, Faust and Méphistophélès enter the garden adjoining Marguerite's house, and Faust sends the tempter away to find her a gift. He then sings the lovely romance **Salut, demeure chaste et pure**, in which he rhapsodizes about the home of such a pure and chaste child of nature.

La donna è mobile is one of the foremost workhorses in any operatic tenor's repertoire. Featured twice in the third act of Giuseppe Verdi's 1851 opera **Rigoletto**, the aria is sung by the Duke of Mantua as he recounts the fickle nature of women. The opera's title character serves as court jester to the Duke and suffers numerous humiliations at the Duke's hands. Knowing the Duke's nature, Rigoletto hopes to keep Gilda, his daughter, hidden from the Duke's philandering eye. The Duke's jolly and light-hearted aria is then all the more chilling in its reprise at the end of the third act, when it is overheard by Rigoletto, signaling that the Duke – whom he had plotted to kill – still lives. Spurred by this discovery, Rigoletto searches the bag he believed to contain the Duke's lifeless body – only to find, to his horror, that it contains the body of his beloved Gilda.

Based on a famous Schiller play, **Luisa Miller** tells of the ill-fated love between the young nobleman Rodolfo and Luisa, a village girl. In the opera's complex course of villainous deceit and intrigue, Luisa – believing that her father's life is at stake – is coerced by his villainous rival into writing a letter to Rodolfo declaring her

love for another. As the second act draws to a close, Rodolfo reads the letter and – in **Oh! fede negar potessi** – he bitterly laments her apparent treachery, recalling their happy times together. But he ultimately takes his revenge by poisoning them both.

One of Verdi's most captivating operatic heroes is Manrico, the knight-troubador protagonist of **Il Trovatore**. As he meets his doom, he emerges in the end as the long-lost brother of the villainous Count di Luna, whose amorous designs upon the heroine Leonora (also Manrico's beloved) also lead to her demise. In his aria **Ah, sì ben mio, coll'essere** – sung in Act 3 as he and Leonora are about to take their marriage vows – he sings tenderly of his love for her, knowing that he is about to die as well.

Upon being told that Azucena, his mother, is about to be burned at the stake, Manrico sings **Di quella pira** – a stirring call-to-arms – declaring that he and his soldiers will rescue her, or perish in the attempt.

–Lindsay Koob

E lucevan le stelle

ed olezzava la terra,
stridea l'uscio dell'orto,
e un passo sfiorava la rena...
Entrava ella, fragrante,
mi cadea fra le braccia...
O dolci baci, o languide carezze,
mentr'io fremente
le belle forme disciogliea dai veli!
Svani per sempre
il sogno mio d'amore...
L'ora è fuggita...
E muoio disperato!
E muoio disperato...
E non ho amato mai tanto la vita.
tanto la vita!

The stars were shining,
and the earth was sweetly scented.
The garden gate creaked
and a footstep touched the ground...
Fragrant, she entered,
and fell into my embrace.
Oh! Amid sweet kisses and languid caresses,
madly, I stripped the beautiful form of its veils!
My dream of love has forever vanished.
That moment is past, and, in desperation, I die.
I perish in desperation! Yet never before
have I loved life so much, so very much.



Che gelida manina, se la lasci riscaldar.

Cercar che giova? Al buio non si trova.
Ma per fortuna è una notte di luna,
e qui la luna l'abbiamo vicina.
Aspetti, signorina, le dirò con due parole

chi son, e che faccio, come vivo. Vuole?
Chi son? Sono un poeta.
Che cosa faccio? Scrivo.
E come vivo? Vivo.
In povertà mia lieta scialo da gran signore
rime ed inni d'amore.
Per sogni e per chimere e per castelli in aria,
l'anima ho milionaria.
Talor dal mio forziere ruban tutti i gioelli
due ladri, gli occhi belli.
V'entrar con voi pur ora, ed i miei sogni usati
e i bei sogni miei, tosto si dileguar!
Ma il furto non m'accora,
poichè, poichè v'ha preso stanza la speranza!
Or che mi conoscete,
parlate voi, deh! Parlate. Chi siete?
Vi piaccia dir!

How cold your little hand is; here, let me warm
it for you.
It's no use looking for it here in the dark.
But what luck ... it is a moonlit night,
and here, the moon is near to us.
Wait, Miss – if you like, I will tell you in two
words:
Who I am, what I do, and how I live.
Who am I? A poet.
What do I do? I write.
How do I live? I live.
Though poor, I happily squander
rhymes and songs of love like a prince.
For dreams and visions and castles in the air,
I have the soul of a millionaire.
But two thieves – eyes of such beauty –
now rob the jewels in my safe.
They entered with you just now,

and my lovely dreams of habit
have suddenly vanished.
But the theft does not anger me,
for hope has been left in their place.
Now that you know me, you speak –
Ah, speak! Who are you?
Say you will!



Addio, fiorito asil di letizia e d'amor!

Sempre il mite tuo sembiante
con strazio atroce vedrò.
Addio, fiorito asil...
Non reggo al tuo squallor!
Ah, non reggo al tuo squallor.
Fuggo, fuggo, ah, son vil!
Addio, non reggo al tuo squallor,
Ah! son vil, ah son vil!

Farewell, flowery haven
of happiness and love!
I shall always be tormented
by visions of your sweet face.
Farewell, flowery haven,
I cannot bear your misery!
Ah, I cannot bear your misery.
I must go, I must go, ah, how I hate myself!
Farewell, I cannot bear your misery.
Ah, how I hate myself,
ah, how I despise myself!



Forse la soglia attinse,

e posa alfin. L'onore
ed il dover nei nostri petti han rotto

l'abisso. Ah sì, Renato,
rivedrà l'Inghilterra – e la sua sposa
lo seguirà. Senza un addio, l'immenso
oceàn ne sepàri – e taccia il core.
Esito ancor? ma, oh ciel, non lo degg'io?
Ah, l'ho segnato il sacrificio mio!
Ma se m'è forza perderti
per sempre, o luce mia,
a te verrà il mio palpito
Sotto qual ciel tu sia,
chiusa la tua memoria
nell'intimo del cor.
Ed or qual reo presagio
Lo spirito m'assale,
Che il rivederti annunzia
quasi un desio fatale –
Come se fosse l'ultima
ora del nostro amor?

Ah! dessa è là – potrei vederla –
ancora, Riparlarle potrei –
Ma no: ché tutto or mi strappa da lei.

Perhaps she's back home now
and finally safe.
Honor and duty have removed the chasm
between us. Ah yes,
Renato will return to England –
and with him, his wife.
Let the great ocean stand between us,
with no farewell –
and let the heart keep silent.

Do I still vacillate?
But O heaven, mustn't I?
Ah, I have signed my sacrifice!

But, O light of my life,
if you are lost to me forever,
wherever you are, my love will follow you
once the memories of you
are locked within my heart.
And what dark doubts
now storm my heart,
with the deadly desire
to see you once again –
as if this were our love's last hour?

Ah! She is there – Could I see her, speak to her
one last time? But no: because now,
everything has wrenched us apart.



La mia letizia infondere vorrei

nel suo bel core!
Vorrei destar co' palpiti
del mio beato amore
tante armonie nell'etere
quanti pianeti egli ha:
Ah! Ir seco al cielo, ed ergermi
dove mortal, mortal non va!
Ir seco al cielo, ed ergermi
dove mortal, mortal non va!

I wish I could instill my joy
into your lovely heart.
I wish to awaken to the throbbing
of my blessed love
with as much harmony in the heavens
As it has planets
Ah! To go with her to heaven,
to rise up where no mortal goes!



La fleur que tu m'avais jetée,
dans ma prison m'était restée.
Flétrie et sèche, cette fleur
gardait toujours sa douce odeur;
et pendant des heures entières,
sur mes yeux, fermant mes paupières,
de cette odeur je m'enivrais
et dans la nuit je te voyais!
Je me prenais à te maudire,
à te détester, à me dire:
Pourquoi faut-il que le destin
l'ait mise là sur mon chemin?
Puis je m'accusais de blasphème,
et je ne sentais en moi-même,
je ne sentais qu'un seul désir,
un seul désir, un seul espoir:
Te revoir, ô Carmen, ou, te revoir!

Car tu n'avais eu qu'à paraître,
qu'à jeter un regard sur moi,
pour t'emparer de tout mon être,
Ô ma Carmen!
Et j'étais une chose à toi
Carmen, je t'aime!

I kept the flower that you tossed to me
with me during my imprisonment.
Though withered and dried,
it never lost its sweet fragrance,
and during all of the hours
I spent with my eyes closed,
its odor intoxicated me,
and visions of you
came to me in the night!
I got used to cursing you,

to detesting you, to saying to myself:
Why did destiny have to
put you there on my path?
But then I blamed myself for blasphemy
and I felt only one desire:
The single hope of seeing you again;
Oh Carmen, just to see you again!
For you had only to appear,
only to toss a glance at me
to grab my whole being!
And, oh my Carmen, I was yours...
Carmen, I love you!



Rachel, quand du Seigneur

la grâce tutélaire
à mes tremblantes mains confia
ton berceau,
j'avais à ton bonheur
voué ma vie entière.
Et c'est moi qui te livre au bourreau!
J'avais à ton bonheur
voué ma vie entière,
et c'est moi qui te livre au bourreau.

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

Rachel, when the Lord's saving grace
entrusted your cradle into my hands,
I made your happiness

the avowed aim of my whole life –
and it is I who am now sending you
to your execution!

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



Una furtiva lagrima

negli occhi suoi spunto:
Quelle festose giovani
invidiar sembro.
Che piu ceracando io vo?
M'ama, lo vedo.

Un solo instante i palpiti
del suo bel cor sentir!
I miei sospir, confondere
per poco a' suoi sospir!
Cielo, si puo morir!
Di piu non chiedo.

I see a furtive tear in her eye;
she seems envious of those
festive youths.
Need I search further?
She loves me – I see it!

Oh, to feel her heartbeat,
if only for an instant!
Oh, to feel my sighs
as if they were her own!
Heavens, I could die;
I cannot ask for more.



Tombe degli avi miei, l'ultimo avanzo
d'una stirpe infelice.-deh! raccogliete voi.
Cessò dell'ira-il breve foco;
sul nemico acciaro abbandonar mi vo'.
Per me la vita - è orrendo peso!
L'universo intero è un deserto per me –
senza Lucia!...

Di faci tuttavia-splende il castello!
Ah! Scarsa fu la notte al tripudio!
Ingrata donna!
Mentre io me struggo - in disperato pianto,
tu ridi, esulti accanto - al felice consorte!
Tu delle gioie in seno, - Io della morte!

Fra poco a me ricovero-darà negletto avello...

una pietosa lagrima-non scenderà su quello!
Ah! Fin degli estinti, ahi, misero!
Manca il conforto a me!
Tu pur, tu pur dimentica-que marmo dispregiato:
Mai non passarvi, o barbara,-del tuo consorte
a lato;
Ah! Rispetta almen le ceneri-di chi moria per te.
Mai non passarvi, tu lo dimentica,
rispetta almeno chi muore per te.
O barbara! Io moro per te.

Ah, ancestral tombs, receive me:
the last of an ill-fated lineage.
My anger's flash is extinguished;
I now abandon myself to the enemy's sword.
Life is a horrendous burden.
Without Lucia, the entire universe is a desert,
though the torches still shine as they light the castle.

Ah, ungrateful woman, how fleeting
was the night of jubilation.
While I languish in tearful desperation,
you laugh merrily at the side
of your lucky husband
as your very joy kills me.

Shelter me soon, neglected tomb.
No tear of pity will fall on you!
Ah, misery! Not even in death
will I find comfort.
As you, oh cruel one, forget this lowly marble,
never pass by it at your husband's side.
Respect, at least, the remains
of he who gave his life for you.
Oh, savage one, I die for you!



Giunto sul passo estremo

Della più estrema, età,
In un sogno supremo
Sì bea l'anima già,

Re d'un placido mondo,
D'una landa infinita,
A un popola fecondo
Voglio donar la vita
Sotto una savia legge
Vo'che surgano a mille
A mille e genti e gregge
E case e campi e ville.

Ah! Voglio
Che questo sogno
Sia la santa poesia
E l'ultimo bisogno

Dell'esistenza mia.
Voglio che questo sogno
Sia la santa poesia
Dell'esistenza!

Nearing the utmost limit
of life's most extreme goal,
my soul wandered forth
into a delightful vision.

King of a placid world,
unknown to care and strife,
I found a faithful people —
and wished to improve their lives.
Under wise administration,
I saw new towns arising;
a happy, prosperous nation,
with a thousand homes
and fields and villas.

Ah! If only this fair vision
could be my final dream;
the ultimate earthly mission
of life's most sacred purpose.



Quel trouble inconnu me pénètre?
Je sens l'amour s'emparer de mon être!
Ô Marguerite, à tes pieds me voici!

Salut, demeure chaste et pure;

salut, demeure chaste et pure,
où se devine la présence
d'une âme innocente et divine!
Que de richesse en cette pauvreté!
En ce réduit, que de félicité

que de richesse
que de richesse en cette pauvreté
en ce réduit, que de félicité!
O Nature,
c'est là que tu la fis si belle!
c'est là que cette enfant
a dormi sous ton aile,
a grandi sous tes yeux.
Là que de ton haleine
enveloppant son âme,
tu fis avec amour
épanouir la femme
en cet ange des cieux.
C'est là ! Oui ! C'est là!
Salut, demeure chaste et pure;
Salut, demeure chaste et pure,
où se devine la présence
d'une âme innocente et divine!
Salut !

What strange trouble assails me?
I feel love taking hold of me!
O Marguerite, here – at your feet – I stand!

I greet you, O home chaste and pure,
where is revealed the presence
of a divinely innocent soul!
How rich is this poverty!
How happy is this retreat!
How precious,
how rich is this poverty!
Here, O nature – it is here
that you made her so beautiful!
It is here that this child
slept under your wing, and
grew up under your gaze.

It is here that your breath
enveloped her soul,
lovingly making the woman blossom
into such a heavenly angel!
It's here! Yes, it is here!
Greetings, O home chaste and pure,
where is revealed the presence
of a divinely innocent soul!



La donna è mobile

qual piuma al vento,
muta d'accento
e di pensiero.
Sempre un amabile,
leggiadro viso,
In pianto o in riso,
è menzognero.

La donna è mobile , ecc.

È sempre misero
chi a lei s'affida,
chi le confida
mal cauto il cuore!
Pur mai non sentesi
felice appieno
chi su quel seno
non liba amore!

La donna è mobile, ecc.

Woman moves
like a feather in the wind.
She changes her accents
and her thoughts.

Always sweet,
pretty face,
In tears or in laughter,
she is always lying.

Woman moves, etc.

Always miserable
is he who trusts her,
he who confides
his unwary heart!
Yet one never feels
fully happy
who on that bosom
does not drink love!

Woman moves, etc.



Oh! fede negar potessi agl'occhi miei!

Se cielo e terra, se mortali ed angeli
attestarmi volesser ch'ella non è rea...
Mentite! Io risponder dovrei,
tutti mentite...Son cifre sue!
Tanta perfidia! Un'alma sì nera!
Si mendace! Ben la conobbe il padre!
Ma dunque i giuri, le speranze la gioja,
le lagrime, l'affano?
Tutto è menzogna, tradimento inganno!

Quando le sere al placido
chiaror d'un ciel stellato
meco figgea nell'etere
lo sguardo innamorato,
e questa mano stringermi
dalla sua man sentia...

Ah! mi tradia!
Allor, ch'io muto, estatico
da'labbri suoi pendea,
ed ella in suon angelico
amo te sol, dicea,
tal che sembrò l'empireo
aprirsi all'alma mia!
Ah! mi tradia!

Oh! If only I could doubt
the evidence my own eyes reveal!
Should heaven and earth,
mortals and angels alike,
assure me that she's innocent,
lies! I would have to answer: You all lie!
This is her writing! Such treachery! A soul
so black, so deceitful!
My father knew her well!
But what of the vows, the hopes,
the joy, the tears, the suffering?
All lies, perfidy, deceit!

When under the serene
light of night's starry sky
we gazed lovingly together
into the heavens,
and I held her hand
warmly in mine...
And I held her hand
warmly in mine...
Ah! she betrayed me!

Then as I ecstatically
listened in silence to her words
as she, with an angel's voice,
said "I love only you,"

it seemed that paradise
opened to my soul!
With an angel's voice,
she said "I love only you."
Ah! she betrayed me!



Ah, sì ben mio, coll' essere

Io tuo, tu mia consorte,
avrò più l' alma intrepida,
il braccio avrò più forte;
ma pur se nella pagina
de' miei destini è scritto
ch' io resti fra le vittime

dal ferro ostil trafitto,
fra quegli estremi aneliti
a te il pensier verrà
e solo in ciel precederti
la morte a me parrà!

Oh, my love! When I am yours
and you're my bride,
my soul will be fearless,
my arm will be stronger;
but if it is my fate
that I should fall victim

to enemy swords,
then in my final moments
my thoughts will fly to you
and my death will only seem
to go before you to Heaven!



Di quella pira l' orrendo foco

tutte le fibre m' arse, avvampò!...
Empi spegnetela, od io fra poco
col sangue vostro la spegnerò...
Era già figlio prima d' amarti,
non può frenarmi il tuo martir.
Madre infelice, corro a salvarti,
o teco almeno corro a morir!

That terrible pyre's flames
set me afire and consumed all my being...
Merciless men, put it out,
or I will soon
quench it with your own blood...
I was your son
before I began to love you;
your torments won't stop me.
Unhappy mother, I run to
save you, or I shall die with you!

-

"Secco's voice soared beautifully...moreover, he played the first act with charm – which any Pinkerton must have to entrance Butterfly. *Chicago Tribune*

Stefano Secco began his singing and piano studies with Alberto Soresina, worked privately with such maestri as Franco Corelli and Franca Mattiucci, and attended master classes led by Leyla Gencer and Renata Scotto, among others. Following his debut, he sang the role of Fenton in *Falstaff* at Teatro Verdi in Sassari and was engaged by Teatro dell'Opera in Rome as the tenor soloist for Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* and Berlioz's *Te Deum*. He also sang the role of Rodolfo in Teatro dell'Opera's production of *La Bohème*.

In the following years, Secco was then cast in important roles on major opera stages across the globe, including the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* at Teatro Regio in Turin, the Vienna State Opera, Theatre of Toulouse, Oper Frankfurt, Teatro Massimo in Palermo, Venezia, Baltimore, Coruna, Arena of Avenches, Stockholm and Opéra Bastille in Paris; Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at Teatro Regio in Parma, Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, Opéra Bastille in Paris, as well as at the Puccini Festival in Torre Del Lago and with Angela Gheorghiu in a Gala in Wiesbaden; Alfredo in *La Traviata* in Venice, Tokyo, Barcelona, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Florence, and under the baton of Riccardo Muti at La Scala in Milan; Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, at the Puccini Festival

in Torre Del Lago, and at Teatro Comunale in Florence; Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and in Liège; *Roberto Devereux* in Oviedo and at the Vienna State Opera; Arturo in *I Puritani* at Teatro Bellini in Catania (conducted by maestro Kuhn and recorded by BMG); Gualtiero in *Il Pirata* in Amsterdam, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Teatre Liceu in Barcelona and at Royal Opera House in London; De Grieux in Massenet's *Manon* at Grand Theatre of Geneve and at Liceu in Barcelona; and Gabriele in *Simon Boccanegra* at Opéra Bastille in Paris, at La Scala and in Cagliari. Of special note was his performance in the difficult role of Osiride in Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* at Teatro Filarmonico in Verona – a role for which he received particular acclaim.

Other notable appearances on the world stage have included Rossini's *Stabat Mater* at Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* at the Auditorium Parco della Musica (in a live radio broadcast under Myung-whun Chung), *La Bohème* at Teatro Regio in Parma, *Rigoletto* and the role of *Don Carlo* at Opéra Bastille (a production directed by Graham Vick), *La Traviata* in Tokyo, *Luisa Miller* – in an acclaimed debut – at the Staatsoper in Munich, *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Teatro Comunale in Florence, *Macbeth* at Opéra Bastille in Paris, and *Werther* at Oper Frankfurt.

He has also performed in *La Traviata* at La Fenice in Venice and at Teatro Regio in Turin, in *Madama Butterfly* (as Pinkerton) for San Francisco Opera, in *La Bohème* in Munich and



Rome, in *I due Foscari* in Trieste, in *Macbeth* and *Simon Boccanegra* in Bilbao, in *Rigoletto* at Montecarlo Opera, in Verdi's *Requiem* in Frankfurt, in *Un ballo in maschera* at Macerata Festival, in *Roméo et Juliette* at Arena di Verona, and in *Roberto Devereux* in Marseille.

Secco has earned praise from both critics and audiences for his singing in Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* in Moscow with La Scala on the occasion of the Bolshoi Theatre's opening and in St. Petersburg with Teatro Regio di Parma, in *Simon Boccanegra* with Plácido Domingo in the title role in Los Angeles, in *I Masnadieri* in Naples, *Madama Butterfly* in Seattle and Berlin, *Carmen* in Venice, *Roméo et Juliette* at Arena di Verona, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at Opéra Bastille, *Macbeth* in Madrid and at La Scala, *Don Carlo* in Oviedo, and *La Bohème* in Zürich and Bilbao, as well as at Festival Pucciniano in Torre del Lago.

More recently, he has appeared in *Nabucco*, *Roméo et Juliette*, and *Un ballo in maschera* at Arena di Verona; in *Madama Butterfly* in Barcelona, Dresden, Chicago, Tokyo, and Florence; *Carmen* in Venice and Seoul; *Simon Boccanegra* at the Vienna State Opera; *La Traviata* in Palermo; *La Bohème* at Opéra Bastille; and *Simon Boccanegra* in Munich.

His current plans include *Madama Butterfly* in Hamburg and Toronto, *Tosca* in Seattle and Palermo, *Un ballo in maschera* at La Monnaie in Brussels, and *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Vienna State Opera.

Grammy-nominated conductor **Constantine Orbelian** "stands astride two great societies, and finds and promotes synergistic harmony from the best of each." (*Fanfare*) For over 20 years the brilliant American pianist /conductor has been a central figure in Russia's musical life — first as Music Director of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and the Philharmonia of Russia, and more recently as guest conductor with a number of illustrious Russian orchestras. Currently Chief Conductor of the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra in Lithuania, Orbelian leads concerts and recordings there with some of the world's greatest singers, in projects such as a recording of *Simon Boccanegra*, with Dmitri Hvorostovsky in the title role.

Opera News calls Orbelian "the singer's dream collaborator," and commented that he conducts vocal repertoire "with the sensitivity of a lieder pianist." The California-based conductor tours and records with American stars such as Sondra Radvanovsky and Lawrence Brownlee, and with Hvorostovsky and other renowned Russian singers in European, North American, and Russian music centers, extending these splendid collaborations to tours in Japan, Korea, and other international music destinations.

"Orbelian has star quality, and his orchestra plays with passion and precision," *The Audio Critic* wrote of his acclaimed series of over 30 recordings on Delos. Among his concert and televised appearances are collaborations with stars Renée Fleming and Dmitri Hvorostovsky, and with Van Cliburn in Cliburn's sentimental



return to Moscow, the great pianist's last performance. Orbelian's frequent collaborations with Hovorostovsky include repertoire from their Delos recordings of universal sentimental songs *Where Are You, My Brothers?* and *Moscow Nights*, as well as their 2015 recording in the same series, *Wait for Me*. On several occasions Orbelian has conducted historic live telecasts from Moscow's Red Square, the most recent of which took place in 2013, with Hovorostovsky and Anna Netrebko.

Recently Orbelian has turned to film to create more of his unique American/Russian collaborations. His first such production, "Renée Fleming and Dmitri Hovorostovsky: *An Odyssey in St. Petersburg*," was filmed in St. Petersburg's most glorious palaces, and stars Fleming and Hovorostovsky in opera scenes and arias. The production is in some ways a culmination of Orbelian's efforts in St. Petersburg, since he is founder and Music Director of the annual Palaces of St. Petersburg International Music Festival.

Born in San Francisco to Russian and Armenian emigré parents, Constantine Orbelian made his debut as a piano prodigy with the San Francisco Symphony at the age of 11. After graduating from Juilliard in New York, he embarked on a career as a piano virtuoso that included appearances with major symphony orchestras throughout the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, and Russia. His recording of the Khachaturian piano concerto with conductor Neeme Järvi won Best Concerto Recording of the Year award in the United Kingdom.

Orbelian's appointment in 1991 as Music Director of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra was a breakthrough event: he is the first American ever to become music director of an ensemble in Russia. A tireless champion of Russian-American cultural exchange and international ambassadorship through his worldwide tours, he was awarded the coveted title "Honored Artist of Russia" in 2004, a title never before bestowed on a non-Russian citizen. In May 2010, Orbelian led the opening Ceremonial Concert for the Cultural Olympics in Sochi — the first event setting the stage for Russia's hosting of the Olympic Games in 2014. In 2012 the Russian Consulate in San Francisco awarded him the Russian Order of Friendship Medal, whose illustrious ranks include pianist Van Cliburn and conductor Riccardo Muti, and which singles out non-Russians whose work contributes to the betterment of international relations with the Russian Federation and its people.

From his 1995 performance at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the United Nations in San Francisco, to his 2004 performance at the U.S. State Department commemorating 70 years of diplomatic relations between Washington and Moscow, and a repeat State Department appearance in 2007, all with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Orbelian continues to use his artistic eminence in the cause of international goodwill. He and his orchestras have also participated in cultural enrichment programs for young people, both in Russia and the U.S. In 2001 Orbelian was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, an award given to immigrants,

or children of immigrants, who have made outstanding contributions to the United States.

The **Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra** grew from the Kaunas Chamber Orchestra, which was founded in 1988 and since 2000 has been managed by Algimantas Treikuskas. Its previous principal conductors were Pavel Berman, Modestas Pitrenas, and Imants Resnis; the position now belongs to American maestro Constantine Orbelian.

The Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra gives concerts at home in Lithuania and abroad – including Latvia, Estonia, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, and Italy. It appears regularly at various international festivals, presents special concert projects, and gives theme-

oriented concerts. Many famous Lithuanian as well as foreign soloists and conductors have collaborated with the orchestra – which organizes and appears in around 50 concerts per year. A highly versatile ensemble, the orchestra specializes in various genres of classical and contemporary music, including cross-over projects with such groups as The Scorpions, Smokie, and the Electric Light Orchestra, to name a few.

The orchestra also appeared at the opera contest show *Arc of Triumph* for two years on Lithuanian National Television. Among the group's prominent highlights in the 2012/2013 season were its collaboration with famous baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Maestro Orbelian, as well as its appearance at the



Murten Classics festival in Switzerland under the baton of Kaspar Zehnder. The orchestra's discography includes several CDs. A number of recent projects were recorded for Delos with several of today's most famous voices, conducted by Maestro Orbelian. The complete *Simon Boccanegra*, with Dmitri Hvorostovsky in the title role (DE 3457), was released by Delos in 2015. Tenor Lawrence Brownlee stars in a Delos 2014 release showcasing Rossini arias (DE 3455), which received a Grammy nomination.

The **Kaunas State Choir** was founded in 1969 by Petras Bingelis, a graduate of the Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy. Having successfully appeared in Lithuania, the choir met with international success very quickly. It began giving concerts in the major cities of Russia and soon was invited to participate in famous festivals, such as Russian Winter and Moscow Stars, and to give concerts in the prestigious concert halls of Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Its performances have also won



acclaim in Hungary, Germany, Spain, Italy, France, Norway, and elsewhere.

Since 1989 the Kaunas State Choir has been regularly invited to important international music festivals, including the Turku Music Festival (Finland); the Bordeaux Spring and Mediterranean Sea festivals, Reims (France); the New and Old Ways to India (Spain); the Schleswig-Holstein Festival and the Festival of Middle European Countries (Germany). The choir has delivered concerts in many of the world's most famous concert venues – including Notre Dame Cathedral and Pleyel Hall in Paris and the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome. It has appeared successfully at Buenos Aires' Colón Theater and the opera houses of Santiago, Cairo, Genoa, Bologna, Munich, and Warsaw.

The ensemble's excellent reputation has prompted invitations to perform with many of the finest symphony orchestras: the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Colón Theatre Orchestra, the orchestras of Paris and Bordeaux, the Moscow and Saint Petersburg Philharmonic orchestras, and the Philharmonia of the Nations. Together with the latter orchestra, the Kaunas State Choir took part in a gala concert celebrating the UNESCO decision to include the manuscript of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in the catalogue of documentary heritage *Memory of the World*.

Following Lithuania's restoration of independence – and particularly after the choir began its collaboration with the legendary 20th-century

violinist and conductor Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999) – the Kaunas State Choir's concert life became particularly active and purposeful. Conducted by the maestro, the choir toured many countries and recorded a number of CDs. The choir also developed an especially meaningful artistic friendship with revered cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich (1927–2007), who had a high regard for the choir's professional mastery – calling it one of the finest musical ensembles with which he had worked.

The Kaunas State Choir has given over 3,000 concerts, including a memorable concert at the Berlin Stadium, where, upon performing Carl Orff's cantata *Carmina Burana*, it was heartily applauded by an audience of 75,000. The choir often performs in honor of distinguished visitors to Lithuania. Such occasions have included Pope John Paul II's apostolic visit and the opening ceremony of the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, where the choir sang for the gathering of monarchs and political leaders of nations across Europe.

The Kaunas State Choir has a vast repertoire that includes more than 150 classical vocal-instrumental compositions: oratorios, cantatas, masses, passions, and operas.

Recorded at Kaunas Philharmonic in December 2014 (Kaunas, Lithuania)

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Special thanks to Algimantas Treikauskas — General Director of the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra — for his invaluable help in producing this recording.

Also Available



DE 3457

Critic's Choice, *Opera News*

"Constantine Orbelian leads Dmitri Hvorostovsky and a stellar cast in Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*... captures the intimacy and grandeur... Hvorostovsky's authority and dramatic maturity are out in full force."