



LAWRENCE BROWNLEE

Allegro io son
Donizetti | Bellini

CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN
Kaunas City Symphony
Kaunas State Choir

DE 3515



LAWRENCE BROWNLEE

Allegro io son BEL CANTO ARIAS

DONIZETTI: *RITA* - Allegro io son • *LA FAVORITE* - Ange si pur • *DON PASQUALE* - Com'è gentil, Cercherò lontana • *DOM SÉBASTIEN* - Seul sur la terre • *L'ÉLISIR D'AMORE* - Quanto è bella; Una furtiva lagrima • *LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT* - Pour me rapprocher de Marie; Ah! mes amis

BELLINI: *I PURITANI* - A te, o cara; Son salvo

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ALLEGRO IO SON BEL CANTO ARIAS

GAETANO DONIZETTI

1. **Rita** – “Allegro io son” (4:03)
2. **La Favorite** – “Ange si pur” (5:00)
3. **Don Pasquale** – “Com’ è gentil ” (4:05)
4. **Don Pasquale** – “Cercherò lontana terra” (9:42)
5. **Dom Sébastien** – “Seul sur la terre ” (5:09)

VICENZO BELLINI

6. **I Puritani** – “A te, o cara” (6:56)
7. **I Puritani** – “Son salvo” (8:16)

DONIZETTI

8. **L’elisir d’amore** – “Quanto è bella” (2:46)
9. **L’elisir d’amore** – “Una furtiva lagrima” (4:59)
10. **La fille du régiment** – “Pour me rapprocher de Marie” (4:05)
11. **La fille du régiment** – “Ah! Mes amis, quel jour de fête” (7:11)

LAWRENCE BROWNLEE, TENOR

CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN, CONDUCTOR

KAUNAS CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

KAUNAS STATE CHOIR

WITH VIKTORIJA MISKUNAITE (6, 7), LIUDAS MIKALAUSKAS (6, 11) ANDRIUS APSEGA (6)

Total Playing Time: 62:15

Lawrence Brownlee's first solo CD with orchestra, *Virtuoso Rossini Arias*, a 2014 Grammy nominee, offers technically daunting arias from operas he had not yet performed in public.

His new disc of Donizetti arias—plus two by Bellini—mixes tried and true favorites from his performances with exciting new selections. In the first category are arias from four of Mr. Brownlee's roles whose sterling portrayals have inspired many connoisseurs to regard him as the preeminent tenor in the bel canto repertoire today.

Three of these roles come from Donizetti's most popular comedies: Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* (1832), Tonio in *La fille du régiment* (1840) and Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* (1843). The three operas are very different from each other. *La fille du régiment*, as an *opéra comique*, stands apart from the two Italian works, but each of those two has a quite different character, in keeping with its setting. *L'elisir*, set in or near the young widow Adina's farmhouse, is rural, while *Don Pasquale*, which takes place mainly in Pasquale's Roman villa, is urban.

The rural nature of *L'elisir* may be partly responsible for the popular impression of the peasant Nemorino as a country bumpkin. But Mr. Brownlee thinks otherwise: "He is simple but not unintelligent." In the cavatina "Quanto è bella" we hear Nemorino for the first time, with no preliminary recitative or other vocal material, singing lyrically of the beauty and charm of

Adina – who, he says, fails to notice him. Later, he sees a hopeful sign when Adina sheds a revealing tear after seeing him pursued by village girls. You might think that Nemorino would respond with overtly joyful music, but instead Donizetti ingeniously allows him to reveal the depth of his feelings poignantly in the famous aria "Una furtiva lagrima."

Mr. Brownlee has observed that "Nemorino is onstage all night – the most complete of the opera's characters." By contrast, Ernesto stands somewhat apart from the core action of *Don Pasquale*, which centers on the surprise decision of the elderly title character (Ernesto's uncle) to marry Ernesto's beloved, Norina – as well as on a scheme involving her in convincing Pasquale of the folly of that idea. But as Mr. Brownlee points out, Ernesto is important by virtue of the beauty of his music and his crucial portrayal of the opera's serious side. In Ernesto's double aria with trumpet introduction, "Cercherò lontana terra," sung without knowledge of Norina's scheme, he laments his consequences from Pasquale's plans. In the opera's final scene, Ernesto sings longingly of Norina in the infectious serenade "Com'è gentil" with the accompaniment of guitar and tambourine.

In *La fille du régiment*, Tonio has enlisted in order to marry Marie, the adoptive daughter of a French regiment. He sings of his joy in "Ah! mes amis, quel jour de fête . . . Pour mon âme," an aria replete with military swagger and numerous high C's. Matters take a turn for the worse when a noblewoman purporting to be Marie's

aunt insists that she leave the regiment for an upperclass life. In the heartfelt romance, "Pour me rapprocher de Marie," Tonio pleads with the woman, explaining that Marie is more important to him than life itself. According to Mr. Brownlee, "This aria is actually harder than "Ah, mes amis" – which you can sing if you have a solid high C – because it lies high overall and demands expressive phrasing."

Another role Mr. Brownlee has performed to great acclaim is Arturo in *I Puritani* (1835), Bellini's final opera and the only one he wrote for Paris; like *Don Pasquale*, it had its premiere at the Théâtre-Italien, the city's Italian opera house. The heroine Elvira's fragile mental state fluctuates depending upon her proximity to her beloved Arturo, a royalist during the English Civil War, who leaves her without explanation to rescue the widow of King Charles I. Mr. Brownlee explains that Arturo faced a classic operatic dilemma – deciding between love and duty – and could hardly ignore the queen's plight. Earlier, Arturo declared his love in "A te, o cara, amor talora" – a touchstone of bel canto melodic elegance – which, like Nemorino's "Quanto è bella," constitutes the tenor's very first words. With the queen safe, Arturo shows his devotion by risking his life to return to Elvira. When he reaches the garden of her house, he hears her singing a song about a troubadour and takes up the tune himself.

Also represented here – among the relatively seldom-heard of Donizetti's 75 completed operas – is *Rita*: a one-act comic opera that contains the

album's title piece "Allegro io son" ("Happy am I"). The opera's farcical plot line revolves around the title character: the domineering and downright abusive wife of the unhappy and gutless Beppe. Rita's previous husband, long thought to be dead, reappears, and the rivals compete to see who will remain her husband. But Beppe, at first overjoyed at the prospect of liberation from his wife's torments, gives voice in this aria to his well-justified elation.

Two other lesser-known gems for tenor from Donizetti's extensive oeuvre are also heard here: from his French grand operas *La Favorite* and *Dom Sébastien*. The former tells the convoluted tale of a love triangle between a Moorish invasions-era Spanish king, his mistress Léonor, and Fernand, her true love. In "Ange si pur," Fernand expresses his conflicted perception about the nature of their true relationship. In the latter opera – described by one critic as a "funeral in five acts" – Portuguese King Sébastien's desolation upon his defeat at the hands of Moorish invaders (and Portugal's doom) is palpable in "Seul sur la terre."

— George Loomis

Donizetti: *Rita* – “Allegro io son”

Tra la la la...
Allegro io son, come un fringuel,
che spiega il vol, libero al ciel! Ah!
Sorridente a me lieta stagion, torno garzon!
Tra la la la...
Tra la la la...
Allegro io son, come un fringuel,
che spiega il vol, libero al ciel!
Vedovo io son! etc...
Per molti sposi a una cuccagna
aver in cielo la lor compagna!
Io non le pago il funeral,
e non isto perciò più mal!
E il caso mio più original, più original!
Tra la la la...
Allegro io son, come un fringuel,
torno garzon!
Sirena, o Dea, non han virtù
Ne' lacci loro pigliarmi più!
Se l'amo un dì giunse a schivar,
il pesciolino è il re del mar!
è il re del mar, è il re del mar!
Allegro io son come un fringuel,
libero son, torno garzon!
Per molti sposi a una cuccagna
aver in cielo la lor compagna!
Io non le pago il funeral,
e non isto perciò più mal!
Tra la la la...
Allegro io son, allegro io son, ah!
Se l'amo un dì giunse a schivar,
il pesciolino è il re del mar! e il re del mar!
Se l'amo un dì giunse a schivar,
il pesciolino è il re del mar!

Tra la la la...
Glad as a finch, happy am I,
Bursting into flight, free through the sky! Ah!
Smile on me, season of joy, I am a lad once more!
Tra la la la...
Tra la la la...
Glad as a finch, happy am I,
Bursting into flight, free through the sky!
A widower am I!
A host of husbands high up in heaven
All have their sweethearts!
I won't be paying for the funeral.
And I'm no worse for that!
That's my best quirk, oh yes, it is.
Tra la la la...
Like a finch, happy am I,
I am a lad once more.
Sirens or goddesses have lost the power
To catch me in their snares!
Dangle the bait and I'll dodge it,
The minnow is the king of the sea!
King of the sea! Yes, king of the sea!
I'm happy, I'm happy!
I'm free! A lad once more!
A host of husbands high up in heaven
All have their sweethearts!
I won't be paying for the funeral.
And I'm no worse for that!
Tra la la la...
Happy am I! Happy am I! Ah!
Dangle the bait and I'll dodge it,
The minnow is the king of the sea!
King of the sea! Dangle the bait
and I'll dodge it,

il pesciolino è il re del mar!
è il re del mar!
Allegro io son, allegro io son,
libero son, torno garzon!
La la la la...

The minnow is the king of the sea!
King of the sea! Happy am I!
Happy am I!
Free am I! A lad once more!
Tra la la la...

Donizetti: *La Favorite* – “Ange si pur”

La maîtresse du roi!... Dans l’abîme creusé,
Sous un piège infernal ma gloire est engloutie,
et de mon triste coeur l’espérance est sortie

The king’s mistress!...
Caught in a hellish trap, a gaping abyss
has devoured my glory and my broken heart.

Ange si pur, que dans un songe
j’ai cru trouver, vous que j’aimais!
Avec l’espoir, triste mensonge,
envolez-vous, et pour jamais!
En moi, pour l’amour d’une femme
de Dieu l’amour avait faibli;
Pitié! je t’ai rendu mon âme,
Pitié! Seigneur, rends-moi l’oubli!
Ange si pur, que dans un songe
j’ai cru trouver, vous que j’aimais!
Avec l’espoir, triste mensonge,
envolez-vous et pour jamais!

Purest angel, it was in a dream
I thought I found you, whom I once loved.
Take my hopes with you, bitter deception,
fly away now, away forever!!
My love for God grew faint
for the love of a woman.
Have mercy! I offered you my soul.
Have mercy! Let me forget!
Purest angel, it was in a dream
I thought I found you, whom I once loved.
Take my hopes with you, bitter deception,
fly away now, away forever!!

Donizetti: *Don Pasquale* – “Com’ è gentil”

Com’è gentil la notte a mezzo april!
È azzurro il ciel, la luna è senza vel,
tutt’è languor, pace, mistero, amor,
ben mio perchè ancor non vieni a me?
Formano l’aure d’amore accenti,
Del rio nel mormore sospiri senti.
Poi quando sarò morto, piangerai,

How soft the mid-April night is!
The sky is blue, the moon shines clear.
Everything is languor, peace, mystery, love.
My love, why won’t you come to me?
You hear words of love in the breezes
and sighing in the stream’s murmur.
Your faithful lover melts with yearning.

Ma richiamarmi in vita, non potrai!
Il tuo fedel si strugge di desir,
Nina crudele, mi vuoi veder morir.

Cruel Nina, you want to see me die!
Then, once I'm dead, you'll weep,
But you won't be able to bring me life again!

"Cercherò lontana terra"

Cercherò lontana terra,
dove gemer sconosciuto,
là vivrò col cuore in guerra,
deplorando il ben perduto!
Ma, nè sorte a me nemica,
nè frapposti monti, e mar,
ti potranno, dolce amica,
dal mio core cancellar,
non ti potranno dal mio core cancellar!
E se fia che ad altro oggetto
tu rivolga un giorno il core,
se mai fia che un nuovo affetto
spenga in te l'antico ardore,
non temer che un infelice,
te spergiura accusi, al ciel,
se tu sei, ben mio felice,
sarà pago il tuo fedel!

I will seek a distant land
where I can groan, unknown;
there I will live with a war-torn heart,
mourning my lost love.
But neither hostile fate,
nor the obstacles of mountain and sea,
could abolish you, O sweet friend,
from my heart.
And if someday your heart turns
to some other object of affection;
if ever a new love should
quench your old passion,
never fear that a desolate man
will accuse you before Heaven.
If you, my love, are happy,
your devoted lover
will be satisfied.

Donizetti: *Dom Sébastien* – "Seul sur la terre"

Seul sur la terre,
dans ma misère,
je n'ai plus rien!
Amour céleste,
qui seul me reste,
est mon soutien!
Oui, lui seul ranime mon âme;
dans le destin qui m'accable et m'abat,

Alone upon earth,
in my misery
I have nothing!
The love of Heaven –
all that remains to me –
will be my support!
Yes, only He revives my soul
from overwhelming, fatal fate.

il ne me reste rien que l'amour d'une femme,
et le coeur d'un soldat!

But I'm left with only a woman's love
And a soldier's heart!

Bellini: *I Puritani* – "A te, o cara"

ARTURO

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

ARTURO

To you, oh beloved,
love once led me furtively and in tears;
now, in joy and exultation,
it guides me to your side

ELVIRA

O contento!

ELVIRA

Oh happiness!

ARTURO

Ah, mio bene!

ARTURO

Ah, my beloved!

ELVIRA

Ah! mio Arturo! Or son tua!

ELVIRA

Ah! My Arturo! Now I am yours!

ARTURO

Ah, Elvira mia, sì, mia tu sei!

ARTURO

Ah, my Elvira, yes, you are mine!

GIORGIO, VALTON

Senza occaso quest'aurora
mai null'ombra, o duol vi dia,
santa in voi la fiamma sia,
pace ogno v'allieti il cor!

GIORGIO, WALTON

May this dawn with no sunset
never bring you pain or darkness;
may the sacred fire flame be within you,
and peace ever lighten your heart!

CASTELLANI, CASTELLANE

Cielo arridi a voti miei,
benedici a tanto amor.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CASTLE

May Heaven smile on our good wishes,
and bless such a great love.

ARTURO

Al brillar di sì bell'ora,

ARTURO

In the brilliance of such a happy hour,

se rammento il mio tormento
si raddoppia il mio contento,
m'è più caro il palpar d'amor.

"Son salvo"

ARTURO

Son salvo, alfin son salvo. I miei nemici
falliro il colpo, e mi smarrir di traccia.
O patria ... o amore, onnipossenti nomi!
ad ogni passo
Mi balza il cor nel seno, e benedico
ogni fronda, ogni sasso.
O! come dolce è un esule infelice,
vedere il suo Tesoro.
E, dopo tanto errar di riva in riva,
Baciar alfin la terra sua nativa!
Qual suon!

ELVIRA

(di dentro)

A una fonte afflitto e solo,
s'assideva un trovator.
E a sfogar l'immenso duolo
sciolsi un cantico d'amor.
Ah!

ARTURO

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

if I recall my sufferings
my happiness is redoubled,
and love's heartbeats all the dearer.

ARTURO

I am safe, safe at last. My foes
have missed their mark and lost my trail.
O homeland ... O love, all-powerful names!
With every step my heart leaps in my chest,
as I bless every bough, every stone.
O! How sweet is an unhappy exile,
to behold your treasure.
And, after endless roaming from shore
to shore.
to kiss at last your native land!
What is that sound?

ELVIRA

(from within)

By a fountain, all alone,
a troubadour sat grieving.
And to release his boundless woe,
he sang out a song of love...
Ah!

ARTURO

My love song! O Elvira! O Elvira,
where do you roam? No one answers, no one.
I used to sing just that to you
about these forests, through the dense branches,
and then you echoed the song I sang!
I pray that if you listened to that amorous song ...
hear now this one, of exile,

odi il mio pianto.
A una fonte afflitto e solo,
s'assideva un trovator;
toccò l'arpa e suonò duolo,
sciolsè un canto, e fu dolor.
Brama il sol allor ch'è sera,
brama sera allor ch'è sol.
Gli par verno primavera,
ogni gioia gli par duol!
Qual suon!
Alcun s'appressa!

**Donizetti: *L'elisir d'amore* –
"Quanto è bella"**

Quanto è bella, quanto è cara!
Più la vedo, e più mi piace...
ma in quel cor non son capace
lieve affetto ad inspirar.
Essa legge, studia, impara...
non vi ha cosa ad essa ignota...
Io son sempre un idiota,
io non so che sospirar.
Chi la mente mi rischiara?
Chi m'insegna a farmi amar?

"Una furtiva lagrima"

Una furtiva lagrima
negli occhi suoi spuntò:
Quelle festose giovani
invidiar sembrò.
Che più cercando io vo?
Che più cercando io vo?

hear my distress.
By a fountain, all alone,
A troubadour sat grieving;
He played his harp and out rang sorrow.
He sang out a song, which told of pain.
Yearn for the sun when it is evening,
yearn for the evening in shining sun.
Springtime seems as cold as winter,
every joy as dark as grief!
What is that sound!
Someone is coming!

How beautiful she is, how dear she is
the more I see her, the more I like her
but in that heart I'm not capable
of inspiring such dearness.
That one reads, studies, learns...
I don't see her ignoring anything
I'm always an idiot;
All I know how to do is sigh.
Who will clear my mind?
Who will show me how to be loved?

A single furtive tear
sprang from her eye:
as if she envied all the youths
that laughing, passed her by.
What more searching need I do?
What more searching need I do?

M'ama! Sì, m'ama, lo vedo. Lo vedo.
Un solo instante i palpiti
del suo bel cor sentir!
I miei sospir, confondere
per poco a' suoi sospir!
I palpiti, i palpiti sentir,
confondere i miei coi suoi sospir...
Cielo! Si può morir!
Di più non chiedo, non chiedo.
Ah, cielo! Si può! Sì, può morir!
Di più non chiedo, non chiedo.
Si può morire! Si può morir d'amor.

**Donizetti: *La fille du régiment* –
"Pour me rapprocher de Marie"**

Pour me rapprocher de Marie,
je m'enrôlai, pauvre soldat,
J'ai pour elle risqué ma vie,
Et je disais dans les combats:
si, jamais la grandeur enivre,
cet ange qui m'a su charmer, ah!
Il me faudrait cesser de vivre,
s'il me fallait cesser d'aimer!
Tout en tremblant, je viens, Madame,
réclamer mon unique bien!
Si j'ai su lire dans son âme,
mon bonheur est aussi le sien!
Lorsqu'à l'espoir mon cœur se livre;
sa voix saura vous désarmer.
Il me faudrait cesser de vivre,
s'il me fallait cesser d'aimer!

She loves me! Yes, she loves me, I see it. I see it.
For just an instant I could feel
the beating of her beautiful heart!
As if my sighs were hers,
and her sighs were mine!
I could feel the beating, the beating of her heart;
to merge my sighs with hers...
Heavens! Yes, I could die!
I could ask for nothing more, nothing more.
Oh, heavens! Yes, I could, I could die!
I could ask for nothing more, nothing more.
Yes, I could die! Yes, I could die of love.

To get closer to Marie
I signed up as a poor soldier.
I have risked my life for her
and I would say as battle raged:
if ever grandeur could enchant
this angel who has stolen my heart, ah!
I would as soon stop living
as to stop loving her!
Trembling I come, Madame,
to claim my dearest treasure!
If I can read in her soul,
both my happiness and her own!
When I give my heart up to love;
her voice will disarm you more.
I would as soon stop living
As to stop loving her!

"Ah! Mes amis, quel jour de fête"

TONIO

Ah! mes amis, quel jour de fête!
Je vais marcher sous vos drapeaux.
L'amour, qui m'a tourné la tête,
désormais me rend un héros.
Ah! quel bonheur, oui, mes amis,
Je vais marcher sous vos drapeaux!
Qui, celle pour qui je respire,
a mes vœux a daigné sourire
et ce doux espoir de bonheur
trouble ma raison et mon cœur! Ah!

LE CAPORAL

Le camarade est amoureux!

TONIO

Et c'est vous seuls que j'espère.

CAPORAL, SOLDATS

Quoi! c'est notre enfant que tu veux!

TONIO

Écoutez-moi, écoutez-moi.
Messieurs son père, écoutez-moi,
car je sais qu'il dépend de vous
de me rendre ici son époux.

CAPORAL, SOLDATS

Notre fille qui nous est chère
n'est pas, n'est pas pour un ennemi.
Non! Il lui faut un meilleur parti,
telle est la volonté d'un père.

TONIO

Ah! my friends, what a day to celebrate!
I shall march beneath your banners.
Love, which has turned my head,
from now on makes me a hero.
Ah! What happiness, yes, my friends,
I shall march beneath your banners!
Yes, she whom I sigh for,
has consented to smile upon my suit
and this sweet hope of happiness
troubles my reason and my heart!

CORPORAL

Our comrade's in love!

TONIO

And it is in you alone that I hope.

CORPORAL, SOLDIERS

What? It's our child you want!

TONIO

Hear me, listen.
Fathers all, hear me,
for to become her husband here,
I depend entirely on you.

CORPORAL, SOLDIERS

Our daughter, whom we cherish,
is not, no not, for an enemy.
No! She must make a better choice,
such is a father's wish.

TONIO
Vous refusez?

CAPORAL, SOLDATS
Complètement. D'ailleurs, elle est promise...
à notre régiment...

TONIO
Mais j'en suis, puisqu'en cet instant.
Je viens de m'engager, pour cela seulement!

CAPORAL, SOLDATS
Tant pis pour toi!

TONIO
Messieurs son père...

LES SOLDATS
Tant pis pour toi!

TONIO
... écoutez-moi!

CAPORAL, SOLDATS
Tant pis pour toi!

TONIO
Ma votre fille m'aime!

CAPORAL, SOLDATS
Se pourrait-il! quoi! notre enfant!

TONIO
Elle m'aime, vous dis-je, j'en fais serment!

TONIO
You refuse?

CORPORAL, SOLDIERS
Completely. In any case,
she's promised to our regiment.

TONIO
But I'm newly in it. I joined up
for that purpose alone!

CORPORAL, SOLDIERS
So much the worse for you!

TONIO
Fathers all...

SOLDIERS
So much the worse for you!

TONIO
... listen to me! Corporal,

SOLDIERS
So much the worse for you!

TONIO
But listen! Your daughter loves me!

Corporal, Soldiers
Could it be? what! our child!

TONIO
She loves me, I tell you, I swear it!

CAPORAL, SOLDATS
Eh! quoi... notre Marie...

TONIO
Elle m'aime, j'en fais serment!

CAPORAL, SOLDATS
Que dire, que faire?
Puisqu'il a su plaire, Il faut,
en bon père ici, consentir.
Mais pourtant j'enrage,
car c'est grand dommage
de l'unir avec un pareil blanc-bec!
Oui, c'est un grand dommage!

TONIO
Eh! bien?

LE CAPORAL
Si tu dis vrai, son père en ce moment
te promet son consentement

CAPORAL, SOLDATS
Oui, te promet son consentement

TONIO
Pour mon âme,
quel destin!
J'ai sa flamme,
et j'ai sa main!
Jour prospère!
Me voici,
militaire et mari!

CORPORAL, SOLDIERS
Agh! What the... our Marie ...

TONIO
She loves me, I swear it!

CORPORAL, SOLDIERS
What can we say, what can we do?
Since he has pleased her,
as a good father we must consent.
But we're enraged anyhow,
as it's too bad we have to match her
to such a rookie!
Yes, it's a shame!

TONIO
Well then?

CORPORAL
If you're telling the truth,
her father gives his consent, right now.

CORPORAL, SOLDIERS
Yes, we give our consent.

TONIO
What a destiny
for my soul!
I have her heart,
and I have her hand!
Lucky day!
Here I stand,
soldier and husband!

Hailed by the *Associated Press* as one of “the world’s leading bel canto tenors,” American-born **Lawrence Brownlee** captivates audiences and critics around the world. His voice, praised by *NPR* as “an instrument of great beauty and expression...perfectly suited to the early nineteenth century operas of Rossini and Donizetti,” has brought him to the top of the opera world, ushering in “a new golden age in high male voices” (*The New York Times*). His most recent recording of *Virtuoso Rossini Arias* was nominated for a Grammy Award and prompted *New Yorker* critic Alex Ross to ask, “Is there a finer Rossini tenor than Lawrence Brownlee?”

One of the most in-demand singers around the world, Brownlee was recently nominated for “Male Singer of the Year” by the International Opera Awards. He has performed with nearly every leading international opera house and festival, as well as major orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Academia di Santa Cecilia, Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and the Bayerische Rundfunk Orchestra.

In addition, Brownlee has appeared on the stages of the top opera companies around the globe, including the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, the Bavarian State Opera, Royal Opera Covent Garden, The Vienna State Opera, Opera National de Paris, Opernhaus Zürich, the Berlin State Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, and the festivals

of Salzburg and Baden Baden. Broadcasts of his operas and concerts – including his 2014 Bastille Day performance in Paris, attended by the French President and Prime Minister — have been enjoyed by millions.

His critically acclaimed discography and videography, which includes Grammy-nominated *Virtuoso Rossini Arias*, is a testament to his broad impact across the classical music scene. His opera and concert recordings include *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the Bayerische Rundfunk Orchestra, *Armida* at the Metropolitan Opera, Rossini’s *Stabat Mater* with Academia di Santa Cecilia, and *Carmina Burana* with the Berlin Philharmonic. He also released a disc of African-American spirituals entitled *Spiritual Sketches* with pianist Damien Sneed, which the pair performed at Lincoln Center’s American Songbook series, and which *NPR* praised as an album of “soulful singing” that “sounds like it’s coming straight from his heart to yours.”

Brownlee is the fourth of six children and first discovered music when he learned to play bass, drums, and piano at his family’s church in Youngstown, Ohio. He was awarded a Masters of Music from Indiana University and went on to win a Grand Prize in the 2001 Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions. Alongside his singing career, Brownlee is an avid salsa dancer and an accomplished photographer, specializing in artist portraits of his on-stage colleagues. A die-hard Pittsburgh Steelers and Ohio State football fan, Brownlee has sung the National Anthem at numerous NFL games. He



is a champion for autism awareness through the organization Autism Speaks, and he is a lifetime member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity Inc., a historically black fraternity committed to social action and empowerment.

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. In June of 2016, Orbelian was named artistic director of Armenia’s National Academic Opera and Ballet in Yerevan.

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.



Lithuanian-born soprano **Viktorija Miskunaite** was selected as the Best Opera Singer of the Year in 2015 by the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, which awarded her the prestigious Golden Cross of the Stage for her remarkable debut as Manon Lescaut in Jules Massenet's opera *Manon*. In 2013, she was awarded a special Letter of Gratitude by the

President of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaite, for her creativity and international achievements as a promising young opera singer. For this recording, she sings the soprano roles in both the "A te, o cara" and "Son salvo" arias from Vincenzo Bellini's *I Puritani*.

Baritone **Andrius Apsega**, born in Pandelys, Lithuania, graduated with a magister degree from the Academy of Music at Vytautas Magnus University in 2013. He has won first places and grand prizes in a number of international competitions, and has sung in festivals and concerts in Lithuania and abroad, including the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Ukraine, Germany, Russia, Poland, and Belarus. He has also



performed with the Kaunas City Symphony, the Kaunas State Musical Theatre, and the Moscow State Academic National Orchestra. Among his many operatic roles are Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Tobias Mill in Rossini's *La cambiale di matrimonio*, Rambaldo in Puccini's *La Rondine*, Betto di Sinja in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Raich in Nicolai's *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*. In addition, he has sung the roles of Homonai in Johann Strauss's operetta *Der Zigeunerbaron* and Falke in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, as well as Tasilo in Kalman's operetta *Grafen Mariza*. For this recording, he is heard in the aria "A te, o cara" from Bellini's *I Puritani*

Bass **Liudas Mikalauskas** is a soloist with the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre and teaches at Vytautas Magnus University Music Academy. In 2011 he completed his studies at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in Kaunas as well as at Vytautas Magnus University Music Academy, where he studied with professor Sabina Martinaitytė. Liudas has won Grand Prix and first prizes at twelve international singing competitions and received the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture Prize for the Best Professional Arts Debut in 2006. In 2007 he was granted an internship at the United Kingdom's Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Liudas' current repertoire includes roles in twenty-five operatic productions, most notably Figaro in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Raimondo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Mephistopheles in Gounod's *Faust*, Don Basilio and Don Bartolo in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, and Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'elisir*



d'amore. He has also participated in international festivals in Lithuania, Poland, Estonia, Ukraine, Russia, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Slovakia, Sweden and the United States. In this recording, he is heard in the aria "A te, o cara" from Bellini's *I Puritani* as well as in the sequence linking sections of the aria "Ah! mes amis" from Donizetti's *La fille du régiment*.

The **Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra** grew from the Kaunas Chamber Orchestra, which was founded in 1988 and since 2000 has been managed by Algimantas Treikauskas. 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.





Founded in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 1969, the **Kaunas State Choir** has been led ever since by its founder, Petras Bingelis, a professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and winner of the Lithuanian National Prize. Under his direction, the chorus has developed an extensive repertoire ranging from medieval to modern music and including more than 150 large-scale compositions: oratorios, cantatas, Masses and Passions, as well as staged and concert versions of operas.

After Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, the choir's concert life became extremely active and eventful, especially when it began collaborating with the legendary violinist and conductor Yehudi Menuhin. In 1992, with Menuhin on the conductor's podium, the chorus took part in theatrical performances of Handel's *Messiah* during the New and Old Ways to India Festival (Spain), dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America,

and began extensive concert tours to France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Egypt, and Russia, among other countries. Collaborating with the renowned German pianist and conductor Justus Frantz, cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich, and Krzysztof Penderecki, the chorus also performed a concert version of *The Messiah* in Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Santiago (Chile).

Over the many years since its founding, The Kaunas State Choir has given more than three thousand concerts in Lithuania and abroad and has been led by such maestri as Dmitri Kitaenko, Yan Pascal Tortelier, John Axelrod, Vladimir Spivakov, and Valery Gergiev. While performing most of its concerts with the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, the choir has also collaborated with a number of other orchestras from London, Paris, Bordeaux, Dresden, Leipzig, Moscow and St. Petersburg, among many others.

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 <p>Lawrence Brownlee</p> <p> Virtuoso Rossini Arias CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN KAUNAS CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA</p>	<p>Also Available</p> <p>Grammy nomination, 2014</p> <p>Lawrence Brownlee Virtuoso Rossini Arias</p> <p>DE 3455</p>
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