

OKSANA  
VOLKOVA

CONSTANTINE  
ORBELIAN  
conductor

Kaunas City  
Symphony Orchestra

POISON  
D'AMOUR



DE 3584



# POISON D'AMOUR

Oksana Volkova sings famous mezzo-soprano arias

**GOUNOD:** *Sapho*—“O ma lyre immortelle” • **SAINT-SAËNS:** *Samson et Dalila*—  
“Printemps qui commence”—“Mon cœur s’ouvre à ta voix” • **SMOLSKI:** *The  
Gray Legend*—“Ti pripomni jak lotaz kalisti u lugah mi zbirali” • **THOMAS:**  
*Mignon*—“Connais-tu le pays” • **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Sadko*—“Vsyu noch zhdala  
ego ya ponaprasnu” • **MASSENET:** *Werther*—“Va! Laisse couler mes larmes”  
• **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *The Maid of Orleans*—“Prostitute vi, kholomi, polia rodniye”  
• **BIZET:** *Carmen*—“Seguidilla” • **MUSSORGSKY:** *Khovanshchina*—“Sily potainye”  
• **MASCAGNI:** *Cavalleria Rusticana*—“Voi lo sapete o mamma” • **MASSENET:** *Le  
Cid*—“Pleurez! pleurez mes yeux” • **CILEA:** *Adrianna Lecouvreur*—“Acerba voluttà”

**OKSANA VOLKOVA**, mezzo-soprano

**CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN**, conductor • **KAUNAS CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Total Playing Time: 63:50

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1. **CHARLES GOUNOD:** *Sapho* — "O ma lyre immortelle" (8:01)
2. **CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS:** *Samson et Dalila* — "Printemps qui commence" (4:58)
3. **SAINT-SAËNS:** *Samson et Dalila* — "Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix" (6:15)
4. **DMITRY SMOLSKI:** *The Gray Legend* — "Ti pripomni jak lotaz kalisti u lugah mi zbirali" (Remember how we once plucked marigolds in the meadows) (3:15)
5. **AMBROISE THOMAS:** *Mignon* — "Connais-tu le pays" (5:05)
6. **NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Sadko* — "Vsyu noch zhdala ego ya ponaprasnu" (5:09)
7. **MASSENET:** *Werther* — "Va! Laisse couler mes larmes" (2:34)
8. **PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY:** *The Maid of Orleans* — "Prostitue vi, kholomi, polia rodniye" (7:02)
9. **GEORGES BIZET:** *Carmen* — "Seguidilla" (2:08)
10. **MODEST MUSSORGSKY:** *Khovanshchina* — "Sily potainye" (5:18)
11. **PIETRO MASCAGNI:** *Cavalleria Rusticana* — "Voi lo sapete o mamma" (4:12)
12. **JULES MASSENET:** *Le Cid* — "Pleurez! pleurez mes yeux" (5:33)
13. **FRANCESCO CILEA:** *Adrianna Lecouvreur* — "Acerba voluttà" (4:20)

**OKSANA VOLKOVA, mezzo-soprano**

**KAUNAS CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
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## 1. O ma lyre immortelle

**Charles Gounod's** first opera, *Sapho*, was composed at the behest of the famous French mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, whose influence in Parisian musical circles (and her unfulfilled wish to sing the title role) resulted in its premiere at the prestigious Paris Opéra in April 1851. Set in ancient Greece—at the Olympic games on the island of Lesbos—the poet Sappho wins both the Olympiad's poetry competition and the love of Phaon, a revolutionary involved in a plot to overthrow the tyrant Pittacus. Phaon, after Sappho refuses to leave Lesbos with him, turns to Glycère, Sappho's rival. In Act III, Phaon and his fellow conspirators are about to depart from Lesbos after their plot has failed. Sappho appears to say goodbye to them, whereupon Phaon curses her. But Sappho forgives him, lamenting her loss in the aria "**O ma lyre immortelle**" before committing suicide by throwing herself from the top of a cliff into the sea.

Où suis-je?  
Ah! oui je me rappelle.  
Tout ce qui m'attachait à la vie est brisé.  
Il ne me reste plus que la nuit éternelle,  
pour reposer mon coeur, de  
douleur épuisé.  
O ma lyre immortelle,  
qui dans les tristes jours

a tous mes maux fidèle  
les consolait toujours!  
En vain ton doux murmure  
veut m'aider à souffrir,  
non, tu ne peux guérir  
ma dernière blessure;  
ma blessure est au coeur  
seul le trépas peut finir ma douleur.  
Adieu, flambeau du monde,  
descends au sein des flots,  
moi, je descends sous l'onde,  
dans l'éternel repos.  
Le jour qui doit éclore,  
Phaon, luira pour toi,  
mais, sans penser à moi,  
tu reverras l'aurore.  
Ouvre-toi gouffre amer  
je vais dormir pour toujours dans la mer.



Where am I?  
Ah! yes, I remember.  
All that bound me to life is broken.  
All that remains for me is eternal darkness,  
where my heart, exhausted by grief,  
can rest.  
O my immortal lyre  
to you, in sad days,  
I confided the ills  
that you always consoled!  
In vain your gentle whisper  
wants to help me suffer.  
No, you cannot heal my latest injury;  
The wound is in my heart.

Only death can end my pain.  
Goodbye, torch of the world,  
come down into the waves.  
I go down under the waves  
to eternal rest.  
In the day that will dawn,  
Phaon will shine for you.  
But without thinking of me,  
you will again see the dawn.  
Open up, bitter chasm;  
I will sleep forever in the sea.

## 2. **Printemps qui commence, and** 3. **Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix**

**Camille Saint-Saëns**, like his French compatriot Georges Bizet, chose to associate the mezzo voice with blatant seduction, as vividly revealed in ***Samson et Dalila***: the only one of his twelve operas that remains in the mainstream operatic repertoire today. It was first performed in Weimar in a German translation at the behest of Franz Liszt on December 2, 1877. The opera is based on the biblical tale of Samson and Delilah from the Book of Judges, recounting how Samson has led the cruelly oppressed Hebrews in an uprising against their Philistine conquerors. In act I, the flamboyant Delilah seeks to draw Samson away from his leadership role in the uprising. In her aria "**Printemps qui commence**," she sings of the beautiful

blooming of spring, but in her heart, she feels winter's desolation. After the High Priest of Dagon stirs up a thirst for vengeance in her, she urges Samson to join her at her dwelling. In Act II, Samson arrives to bid her a final farewell, but he cannot resist her wiles and gradually falls victim to her plot. His eventual confession of love leads to Delilah's famous "**Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix**," with its bewitching refrain, in which she inspires further declarations of his love before prying from him the secret of his strength: his long hair, which she proceeds to cut off. In the final act, the now-powerless Samson's eyes have been gouged out and he is imprisoned. He prays to the God of Israel, promising that he will sacrifice his own life in exchange for the freedom of his enslaved people. After a boy leads him to the temple, in which the Philistines are celebrating a depraved festival, Samson suddenly regains his strength and pulls down the temple's pillars—crushing himself, Delilah and the tyrannical Philistines.

## 2. **Printemps qui commence.**

Portant l'espérance  
aux cœurs amoureux,  
ton souffle qui passe  
de la terre efface  
les jours malheureux.  
Tout brûle en notre âme,  
et ta douce flamme

vient sécher nos pleurs;  
tu rends à la terre,  
par un doux mystère,  
les fruits et les fleurs.  
En vain je suis belle!  
Mon cœur plein d'amour,  
pleurant l'infidèle,  
attend son retour!  
Vivant d'espérance,  
mon cœur désolé  
garde souvenance  
du bonheur passé!  
A la nuit tombante  
j'irai, triste amante,  
m'asseoir au torrent,  
l'attendre en pleurant  
chassant ma tristesse,  
s'il revient un jour,  
à lui ma tendresse  
et la douce ivresse,  
qu'un brûlant amour  
garde à son retour!



Spring begins,  
bringing hope  
to loving hearts.  
Your passing breath  
erases from the earth  
unhappy days.  
Everything is burning in our souls  
and your sweet flame  
comes to dry our tears;  
you restore to the earth,

by a sweet mystery,  
the fruits and the flowers.  
In vain I am beautiful!  
My heart, full of love,  
weeping for the unfaithful one,  
awaits his return!  
Living in hope,  
my grieving heart  
cherishes the memory  
of past happiness!  
At nightfall  
I will go, a despondent lover,  
to sit by the stream,  
to await him, weeping!  
Casting off my sadness.  
If he returns one day,  
his is my tenderness  
and the sweet ecstasy  
which a burning love  
keeps for his return!

3. Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix,  
comme s'ouvrent les fleurs  
aux baisers de l'aurore!  
Mais, ô mon bienaimé,  
pour mieux sécher mes pleurs,  
que ta voix parle encore!  
Dis-moi qu'à Dalila  
tu reviens pour jamais.  
Redis à ma tendresse  
les serments d'autrefois,  
ces serments que j'aimais!  
Ah! réponds à ma tendresse!  
Verse-moi, verse-moi l'ivresse!

Ainsi qu'on voit des blés  
les épis onduler  
sous la brise légère,  
ainsi frémit mon coeur,  
prêt à se consoler,  
à ta voix qui m'est chère!  
La flèche est moins rapide  
à porter le trépas,  
que ne l'est ton amante  
à voler dans tes bras!  
Ah! réponds à ma tendresse!  
Verse-moi, verse-moi l'ivresse!



My heart opens to your voice  
like flowers open to dawn's kisses!  
But, oh my beloved,  
to dry my tears better,  
let me hear your voice again!  
Tell me that you have come back  
to Delilah forever!  
Repeat to my tender love,  
your first promises to me,  
those promises that I loved!  
Ah! Respond to my tender love!  
Fill me with ecstasy!

Just as one sees the blades  
of wheat waving  
in the gentle wind,  
so trembles my heart,  
ready to be consoled  
by your dear voice!  
The arrow is slower

in bringing death,  
than is your lover,  
flying into your arms!  
Ah! respond to my tender love!  
Fill me with ecstasy!

#### **4. Ti pripomni jak lotaz kalisti u lugah mi zbirali**

*The Gray Legend* (Sedaya Legenda), an opera in two acts by 20th-century Belarusian composer **Dmitry Smolsky**, was written in 1978; it is almost completely unknown outside of Belarus. Set in 17th-century Belarus, it was first staged in September 2012 at the Bolshoi Theater of Belarus in Minsk, five years before the composer's death. Following the marriage of the ruling nobles Kizgalia and Lyubka, a hunt has been organized in their honor. The hunters are served refreshments by Lyubka's peasants, including Irina, with whom the nobleman Raman is madly in love. When Raman asks permission for them to marry, Kizgalia refuses angrily, since nobles aren't allowed to marry commoners. Lyubka is secretly in love with Raman, and orders Irina imprisoned because she can't bear the idea of a serf getting the man she wants. Infuriated, Raman leads the serfs in an uprising, in which Kizgalia is defeated and Raman kills him in a duel. In Act II, Raman encounters

Lyubka in Kizgاليا's plundered castle, where, in her aria, **"Ti pripomni jak lotaz kalisti u lugah mi zbirali"** (Remember how we once plucked marigolds in the meadows), she pours out her passionate love for him and begs Raman to impregnate her with a son so that her line won't die out. He refuses, and Lyubka angrily incites her fellow aristocrats to meet Raman's forces in battle. After Raman is defeated and imprisoned, Lyubka then threatens to cut out Irina's eyes unless she renounces her love for Raman, which she refuses to do. In the final scene, Irina is duly blinded and Raman's hands are chopped off, though that doesn't keep them from singing in the bloody final scene! But in the end, both appear destined to become martyrs in the eternal fight against tyranny.

Ti pripomni jak lotaz kalisti u lugah mi zbirali,  
ti pripomni jak lotaz kalisti u lugah zalazela!  
Kon tvoi beli jak hmarka liazey,  
i jak snejnai zavei paveu,  
nibi pesnia bes slow, nibi mari bes snow  
jak liubou.  
Ja tadi za ziabe bi paishla na  
niazmernia muki  
o jakia u ziabe bili dobria moznia ruki  
kali ti miane brau da siadla  
kali zolatam lotaz zvila  
kali podih I krou addala b za tvau ia liubou  
mne ne treba niabesau, ni pekla, no  
svetlaga raiu

ja ziabe I ziaper tak biazmerna, tak  
gorka kahaiu  
shto takoga kahannia nidze  
ne znaiszi ni y bagou, ni u liudzei  
addala b znou I znou I jizze ia, i  
krou za liubou.  
Ia ziabe tak liubliu!  
Ia ziabe tak kahaiu!  
Shchasze maio, radasz maja, ia ziabe  
tak liubliu....



Remember how we once plucked  
marigolds in the meadows,  
remember how they gilded  
the meadows!  
Your white horse flew like a cloud, like a  
blizzard of snow,  
he raced like a song without words,  
like a dream without dreams, like love...  
then I would have suffered great  
torments for you.  
Oh, how strong and kind your hands were  
when you sat me on your saddle,  
when marsh-marigolds bloomed with gold!  
I would have given my breath and blood  
for your love.  
I need no heaven, no hell or paradise,  
I still love you so strongly and bitterly  
that such love cannot be found among  
either gods or men.  
Again and again, I'd give my life and my  
blood for your love!  
I love you so!

I adore you so!  
My happiness, my joy,  
I love you so much!

## 5. Connais-tu le pays

The first performance of *Mignon*, by **Am-broise Thomas**, took place at Paris's Opéra-Comique theater in November 1866. Based loosely on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's popular novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* (Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship), *Mignon* was originally composed in the so-called "Opéra comique" form; the rough French equivalent of the Viennese operetta: a comparatively light-themed work, with spoken dialogue often interspersed between musical numbers. But a later revision of the score substituted recitatives in lieu of the original version's spoken dialogue. Thus there is still some controversy as to whether the work is truly an Opéra comique, or a conventional "grand opera." In this tale of jealousy and lost identity, Mignon—who has been raised by gypsies—meets Wilhelm and the minstrel Lothario, who have saved her from a beating in a German tavern for her refusal to perform a gypsy dance. In Act I, Mignon sings the aria "**Connais-tu le pays,**" giving voice to her dream of living in "the land where the orange blossoms bloom." From there, the plot unfolds into a tale of jealousy

between Mignon and the actress Philene, her rival for the love of Wilhelm. As the story nears its happy ending in a splendid castle, Wilhelm and Mignon declare their love for each other, and Lothario turns out to be not only the castle's owner, but also his long-lost daughter Mignon's father, who had been driven mad by grief when gypsies had abducted her—but has regained his sanity now that she has returned.

Connais-tu le pays où fleurit l'oranger?  
Le pays des fruits d'or et des  
roses vermeilles,  
où la brise est plus douce et l'oiseau  
plus léger,  
où dans toute saison butinent les abeilles,  
où rayonne et sourit, comme un bienfait  
de Dieu,  
un éternel printemps sous un ciel  
toujours bleu!  
Hélas! Que ne puis-je te suivre  
vers ce rivage heureux d'où le  
sort m'exila!  
C'est là ! c'est là que je voudrais vivre,  
aimer, aimer et mourir!

Connais-tu la maison où l'on m'attend  
là -bas?  
La salle aux lambris d'or, où des hommes  
de marbre  
m'appellent dans la nuit en me tendant  
les bras?  
Et la cour où l'on danse à l'ombre d'un

grand arbre?  
Et le lac transparent où glissent sur les eaux  
mille bateaux légers parés à des oiseaux!  
Hélas! Que ne puis-je te suivre  
vers ce pays lointain d'où le sort m'exila!  
C'est là ! c'est là que je voudrais vivre,  
aimer, aimer et mourir!



Do you know the land where the orange  
flowers bloom?  
The land of golden fruit and crimson roses,  
where the breeze is fresh and the birds fly  
in the light,  
where in any season bees are  
seen foraging,  
where radiant smiles are a blessing  
from God,  
an eternal spring under a deep blue sky!  
Alas! Why can I not follow you  
to this happy shore, here the fates have  
exiled me!  
There it is! This is where I want to live,  
love, and die!

Do you know the house is there waiting  
for me?  
The room with gold paneling, where men  
of marble  
call me at night, holding my arms?  
And the courtyard where they dance in  
the shade of a large tree?  
And the transparent lake where on the  
water slide

thousands of birds like weightless boats!  
Alas! Why can I not follow you  
to this happy shore, here the fates have  
exiled me!  
There it is! This is where I want to live,  
love, love and die!

## 6. **Vsyu noch zhdala ego ya ponaprasnu (AKA Lyubava's aria)**

Premiered in Moscow in January 1898, **Sadko** is one of **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's** seven so-called "fairy tale" operas (among a total of 16 operas) that were intended to portray the cultural flavors of Russia via their unique national myths and ancient stories. It avoids the usual act-driven operatic structure in favor of seven successive scenes, or "tableaux." Sadko, the opera's male protagonist, is an accomplished minstrel and player of the gusli: the traditional Russian-style zither. In the third scene, his young wife Lyubava yearns for her wandering husband, singing **Vsyu noch zhdala ego ya ponaprasnu** (also often called "**Lyubava's aria**"). Sadko returns to her soon afterwards, but—having learned of a magical quest to gain riches and fame—departs immediately, undertaking an adventure that takes him to the underwater realm of the mythical sea-king before finally returning in triumph to his home (and Lyubava), laden with great wealth and glory.

Vsju noč' ždala ego ja ponaprasnu.  
Kuda Sadko devalsja, zapropal?

Už i k obednjam otzvonili,  
da tol'ko net Sadka. Toskuet serdce.  
Och, znaju ja, Sadko menja ne ljubit,  
menja ne žal' pokinut' mužen'ku:  
nesetsja mysl'ju on, čto belyj krečet,  
v čuži kraja, na sinie morja.  
O podvigach bol'sich,  
o slave bogatyrskoj  
vse dumaet on dumu,  
povsjudu reč' vedet odnu.  
Davno li nazyval menja svoeju ladoj  
časami ne svodil s menja svoich očej?  
Davno li govoril ljubovny sladki reči,  
vo gusel'ki igral i zvonki pesni pel?  
Davno l'?  
Teper' odna... Sadko menja ne ljubit.  
Uvjala, znat', moja krasa!  
Menja ne ljubit milyj moj,  
emu postyla, vidno, ja.  
Do kryl'ca idet, slovno sil'nyj dožd',  
v teremu svoem pokažetsja Gromom,  
molniej sverkučeju.  
To idet muženek, mil-nadežda moj!  
po ulice svetit zareju,  
ko dvoru prichodit tučeju,  
udarjaet v vorota on bureju,  
a i zdravstvuj že, moj želannyj muž!



All night I have waited for him in vain.  
Where has Sadko gone?

They have already called for the mass,  
but Sadko isn't here.  
My heart is grieving.  
Oh! I know Sadko doesn't love me.  
My husband doesn't feel pity for me  
and leaves with no thought of me.  
His thoughts are as fast as a white gerfalcon.  
Sadko is thinking of foreign lands and  
distant seas.  
He keeps thinking of great victories  
and heroic glory!  
Had he not called me his beloved not  
so long ago,  
and stared at me for hours?  
Didn't he tell me sweet loving words,  
playing his gusli and singing his  
songs to me?  
Now I'm alone. Sadko doesn't love me!  
My beauty must have faded.  
My beloved doesn't love me.  
His love for me must have grown cold!

## 7. Va! Laisse couler mes larmes

**Werther**, by **Jules Massenet**, is based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's wildly popular first novel, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Young Werther). It was premiered in Vienna in a German translation of the libretto in February of 1893, with the first French-language performance coming nearly a year later in Geneva. Werther, a young poet, is an

outwardly platonic partner to Charlotte at a ball, in the absence of her travelling fiancé Albert, who returns following the ball. But Werther has fallen in love with Charlotte, and he declares his feelings to her. Charlotte, remembering her promise to wed Albert, remains faithful to him. The second act transpires after Charlotte and Albert have been married for three months. Werther—while inwardly suffering pain and bitterness—assures the young couple that he remains their friend. Even as he privately entertains notions of suicide, Charlotte advises him to go elsewhere for awhile. When he returns, his despair has grown, even though he realizes that Charlotte loves him. In Act III, she gives voice to her conflicting emotions in the aria “**Va! laisse couler mes larmes.**” Werther then asks Albert to lend him his pistols, saying that he needs them for a long journey he is planning. In the final act, Charlotte finds Werther dying from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. As Charlotte holds him in her arms, he dies.

Va! laisse couler mes larmes  
elles font du bien, ma chérie!  
Les larmes qu'on ne pleure pas,  
dans notre âme retombent toutes,  
et de leurs patientes gouttes  
martèlent le coeur triste et las!  
Sa résistance enfin s'épuise; le coeur se  
creuse...

et s'affaiblit: il est trop grand, rien ne l'emplit;  
et trop fragile, tout le brise! Tout le brise!



Go! Let my tears flow  
they do good, darling!  
All of the tears we do not cry,  
fall into our souls,  
and with their patient drops  
they hammer the sad and weary heart!  
Resistance is finally exhausted; the heart  
digs ...  
and weakens: it is too big, nothing fills it;  
and too fragile, all the breeze! All  
the breeze!

## 8. Prostitute vi, kholomi, polia rodniye

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** had hoped that his opera *Maid of Orleans*—first staged at St. Petersburg’s Marinsky theater in February 1881—would turn out to be the masterpiece among his 11 operas, though history has proven otherwise. Set in France during the medieval era’s Hundred Years’ War, the teenage girl who is remembered in history as Joan of Arc, is urged by her skeptical father in Act I to settle down in such troubled times as news of an impending English attack is heard. Believing that she serves a sacred calling, Joan predicts that the English commander will die. Intent upon leading the French forces,

she says goodbye to her birthplace in the aria, “**Prostite vi, kholomi, polia rodniye**” (Farewell, you native hills and fields). As the opera unfolds, France’s Dauphin (prince) Charles hears of her victory in battle, and proclaims her a prophet. Joan continues her victorious campaign, soon leading Charles to his royal coronation in Rheims. Her father then turns public sentiment against her, and she is banished. In the final act, Joan is distraught, but then she hears a chorus of angels telling her that the only way she can be redeemed is to suffer martyrdom. Captured by English soldiers, she is sentenced to death for sorcery, and is led to be burned at the stake, even as she maintains sacred serenity and calm bearing.

Da, chas nastal!  
Dolzhna povinovatsa nebesnomu velen  
‘yu Ioanna.  
No otchevo zakralsia v dushu strakh?  
Muchite’no i bol’nonoyet serdse.

Prostite vi, kholomi, polia rodniye,  
priyutno-mirny dol, prosti!  
S Ioannoy vam uzh bol’she ne vidatsa,  
navek ona, navek vam govorit: prosti!  
Druz’ya-luga, dreva — moi pitomsi,  
akh, vam bez menia i tsvest’ i ottsvetat’!  
Prokhladniy grot, potok moy  
bistrotechniy,  
idu ot vas i ne pridu k vam vечно.

Mesta gde fsio bivalo mne usladoy,  
otnine vi so mnoy razlucheni;  
moi stada, ne budu vam ogradoy,  
bez pasturia brodit vi suzhdeni.  
Dostalos’ mne pasti inoye stado  
na pazhitiakh ubiystvennoy voyni.  
Tak vishneye naznachilo izbran’ye,  
menia vlechet nesnuetnikh zhelan’ye;  
o Bozhe, Tebe moyo otkrito serdtse!  
Ono toskuyet, ono stradaet,  
ono toskuyet i stradayet.  
Prostite vi navek, kholmi, polia rodniye,  
priyutno-mirniy dol, prosti!  
S Iannoy vam uzh bol’she ne vidatsa,  
navek ona, navek vam govorit: prosti!  
Druz’ya moi — luga, dreva — moi pitomtsi,  
vam bez menia i tsvest’ i ottsvetat’!  
Prokhladniy, tikhiy grot, potok moy  
bistrotechniy,  
idu ot vas, idu ot vas, idu ot vas  
i ne pridu k vam vечно, vечно!



Yes, the hour has come!  
Joan must obey heaven’s decree.  
But why does fear creep into my soul?  
My heart is painfully distressed.

Farewell, you hills and fields of home,  
farewell, you peaceful groves!  
No more will Joan visit you,  
forever she says to you, farewell!  
My friends — you meadows, trees —  
my children,

ah, without me you shall bloom and wither!  
The coolness of my cave, my swiftly  
flowing stream,  
I leave you now, and shall no longer return.  
The places where everything was sweet  
to me,  
from now on we shall be parted;  
my flocks, I shall no longer guard you;  
lacking a shepherdess, you will have  
to roam.  
I have now been given another flock to  
care for,  
upon the ramparts of a deadly war.  
Thus it has been decreed from heaven,  
as I am led by ethereal desires;  
O God, I open my heart to you!  
My heart grieves and suffers,  
it grieves and suffers.  
Farewell, you hills and fields of home,  
farewell, you peaceful grove!  
No more will Joan visit you,  
forever she says to you, farewell!  
My friends—you meadows, trees—  
my children,  
Without me you shall bloom and wither!  
The cave's coolness, my  
swiftly-flowing stream,  
I leave you now, I leave you now, I leave  
you now,  
and shall no longer return to you,  
ever, ever!

## 9. Seguidilla

**Georges Bizet** also chose the mezzo range for the title character in his wildly popular opera ***Carmen***, rightly believing that a mezzo's lower tessitura expressed her uninhibited sexuality more effectively. Such overt, smoldering sensuality had no operatic precedent when the opera was first performed at Paris's *Opéra Comique* in March of 1875. Soon after the curtain rises, Carmen makes her first appearance when she emerges with a group of young women employed in a cigarette factory to sing the famous "Habañera," warning that anyone in love with her should beware. After assaulting a coworker, Carmen is sentenced to prison and placed in the custody of an army corporal, Don José. She taunts him with a "**Seguidilla**"—a lively Spanish dance in triple meter, in which she sings of her desire to take on a new lover. Hopelessly smitten, José allows her to escape, later deserting the military to join her and a band of smugglers, but she loses interest in him after the glamorous toreador Escamillo has found their mountain hideaway. She looks to cards to tell her fortune, and learns that both she and José will die. In the end, after José murders her in a fit of jealous rage, it is presumed that he will be executed for his crime.

Près des remparts de Séville,  
chez mon ami Lillas Pastia,  
j'irai danser la séguedille  
et boire du Manzanilla!  
J'irai chez mon ami Lillas Pastia.  
Oui, mais toute seule on s'ennuie,  
et les vrais plaisirs sont à deux.  
Donc pour me tenir compagnie,  
j'emmènerai mon amoureux,  
mon amoureux! ... Il est au diable  
je l'ai mis à la porte hier.  
Mon pauvre coeur très consolable,  
mon coeur 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'aimer 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.  
Près des remparts de Séville.  
Chez mon ami Lillas Pastia,  
j'irai danser la séguedille  
et boire du Manzanilla.  
Oui, j'irai chez mon ami  
Lillas Pastia.



Near the ramparts of Seville,  
at my friend Lillas Pastia's house,  
I will dance the seguidilla  
and drink Manzanilla!  
I'll go to my friend Lillas Pastia's house.

Yes, but to be all alone is boring,  
and the real pleasures come as a couple.  
So to keep me company,  
I will take a new lover!  
My old lover, may the devil take him;  
I kicked him out yesterday.  
But my poor heart is easily consoled,  
my heart is free as the air.  
I have dozens of suitors,  
But they are not to my liking.  
The weekend is here,  
Who wants to love me? I will love him.  
Who desires my soul? It's here for the taking.  
You've arrived at the right moment,  
I do not have time to wait,  
because with my new lover,  
near the walls of Seville.  
At my friend Lillas Pastia's,  
I will dance the seguidilla  
And drink Manzanilla.  
Yes, I will go to my friend  
Lillas Pastia's house.

## 10. Sily potainye

**Modest Mussorgsky** created one of the most unfathomable of mezzo characters in all of the operatic canon: Marfa in ***Khovanshchina***, his great political tragedy of seventeenth-century Czar Peter the Great as he worked to unify Russia, consolidate his far-reaching power and bring Russia into the fold of Western European nations.

The opera was left unfinished at the time of Mussorgsky's death in 1881, and was first heard in a completed version by Rimsky-Korsakov five years later in St. Petersburg. As the betrothed of the Streltsky militiaman Andrey Khovansky, Marfa is clearly meant to have feminine appeal, though it is transcended by her somber, intimidating and mystery-laced spiritual demeanor. In the aria "**Sily potainye**" (Mysterious forces), she foretells the destiny of Prince Vasily Golitsin, an ally (and lover) of Peter's half-sister Sophia as she struggles to gain the Russian throne and its attendant influence. After a dramatic invocation of mysterious powers, Marfa delivers her dire prophecy to the strains of mournful and subdued music: Golitsin's fate is to face exile and the loss of all influence, power and wealth.

Sily potainye,  
sily velikie,  
dusi, otbyvsie  
v mir nevedomyj,  
k vam vzyvaju!  
Dusi utopsie,  
dusi pogibsie,  
tajny poznavsie  
mira podvodnogo,  
zdes' li vy?  
Strachom tomimomu,  
knjazju-bojarinu  
tajnu sud'by ego,

v mrake sokrytuju,  
orkroete l?  
Ticho i cisto  
v podnebes'i.  
Svetom volvebnym  
vse ozareno.  
Sily potainye  
zov moj uslysali.  
Knjaze, sud'by tvoej tajna  
orkryvaetsja.  
S kovarnoj usmeskoju  
liki zlobnye  
vkrug tebjja, knjaze.  
Plotno somknulisja;  
liki, tebe znakomye.  
Put' ukazujut kuda-to dalece.  
Vizu, svetlo,  
pravda skazalas'!

Knyazhe,  
tebe ugrozhaet opala b zatochenye  
v dalnem krayu;  
otnumetsya vlast i bogatstvo,  
i znatnost navek ot tebya.  
Ni slava v minufshem, ni doblest,  
ni znanie,  
nishto ne spasyot tebya  
sudba tak reshila!  
Uznaesh, moi knyazhe,  
nuzhdu I lishenya,  
velikuyu stradu, pechal v toi strane,  
v goruchikh slezakh poznaesh ty  
vsu pravdu zemli ...



Mysterious forces,  
great powers,  
souls departed  
to worlds unknown,  
I call to you!  
Lost souls of the drowned,  
who know the secrets  
of the depths, are you there?  
To the noble prince,  
worn with fears,  
will you now reveal  
the secret of his fate  
hidden in darkness?  
In the heavens, all is silent and clear,  
everything glows with magic light.  
The mysterious powers have heard my call.  
Prince, the secret of your fate is revealed:  
faces wreathed in sly and malevolent smiles  
surround you, they press tightly  
around you, Prince.  
Faces that you know,  
all pointing somewhere far away.  
I see clearly; the truth is revealed.

Prince!  
I see you imperiled by the threat of disgrace  
and exile to a faraway land;  
forever stripped of power,  
wealth and fame.  
Neither past glory nor bravery,  
not even your great learning;  
nothing will help you.

Fate has thus proclaimed it.  
You will know great suffering, sadness,  
and hardship, prince,  
yet from this agony and bitter tears  
you will know all truth on earth.

### 11. **Voi lo sapete o mamma**

In the space of only two months, **Pietro Mascagni** composed his smash-hit one-act opera, ***Cavalleria Rusticana***, as his last-minute entry into an opera competition for young composers in 1888. Among the 73 operas submitted, Mascagni's was selected as one of the final three. After its sensational May 17 premiere performance in Rome, Mascagni was declared the winner. Turridu, the male protagonist, has just returned from military service to his native Sicilian village—and finds that Lola, his beloved, has married another man while he was away. A classic operatic love triangle develops when Turridu consoles himself for his loss by having an affair with Santuzza, but then abandons and dishonors her by going back to Lola. In the aria "**Voi lo sapete o mamma**," Santuzza bitterly bewails her abandonment and humiliation to Lucia, Turridu's mother. A duel ensues, in which Alfio, Lola's husband, kills Turridu.

Voi lo sapete, o mamma,  
prima d'andar soldato,

Turiddu aveva a Lola  
eterna fè giurato.  
Tornò, la seppe sposa;  
e con un nuovo amore  
volle spegner la fiamma  
che gli bruciava il core:  
m'amò, l'amai.  
Quell'invidia d'ogni delizia mia,  
del suo sposo dimentica,  
arse di gelosia  
Me l'ha rapito.  
Priva dell'onor mio rimango:  
Lola e Turiddu s'amano,  
Io piango, io piango!



O mother, you know  
that before he became a soldier,  
Turiddu had sworn to be  
eternally faithful to Lola.  
He returned to find her married to  
another,  
and sought with a new love  
to quench the flame  
that burned in his heart:  
He loved me, I loved him.  
But she, envious of my only joy  
and forgetting her husband,  
burned with jealousy.  
She stole him from me,  
and I am left disgraced;  
Lola and Turiddu are now lovers,  
and I am left to weep.

## 12. Pleurez! pleurez mes yeux

*Le Cid*, by **Jules Massenet**, was first staged at the Paris Opéra in November 1885. Set in ancient Spain at the time of the Moorish invasions, the young commander Rodrigue has returned victorious from a battle against the Moors, and is knighted by King Ferdinand. Chimène, daughter of the Count of Gormas, is in love with Rodrigue. However, Rodrigue kills her father in a duel because her father insulted Rodrigue's father, the elderly Count Don Diègue. Now too old to fight, Diègue demands that his son take his place in the duel. Rodrigue defeats Count Gormas, then learns to his horror that he has just killed his beloved Chimène's father. Upon learning that Rodrigue has slain her father, she demands vengeance, even though she still loves him. Torn between the loves she bears for both of them, she realizes that there is no outcome that can avoid sorrow and heartache. As Act III begins, she bewails her conflicting emotions in the aria "**Pleurez! pleurez mes yeux.**" In the end, Rodrigue has again defeated the Moors in battle and returns in triumph. Encountering Chimène, he is about to atone for the death of her father by drawing his sword to kill himself, but she pardons him with her fervent declaration of love, as all rejoice.

De cet affreux combat je sors l'âme brisée!  
Mais enfin je suis libre et je pourrai du moins  
sourir sans contrainte et souffrir  
sans témoins.

Pleurez! pleurez mes yeux! Tombez triste  
rosée  
qu'un rayon de soleil ne doit jamais tarir!  
S'il me reste un espoir, c'est de  
bientôt mourir!  
Pleurez mes yeux, pleurez toutes vos  
larmes! pleurez mes yeux!  
Mais qui donc a voulu l'éternité des pleurs?  
O chers ensevelis, trouvez-vous tant  
de charmes  
à léguer aux vivants d'implacables douleurs?  
Hélas! je me souviens, il me disait:  
avec ton doux sourire  
Tu ne saurais jamais conduire  
qu'aux chemins glorieux ou qu'aux  
sentiers bénis!  
Ah! mon père! Hélas!  
Pleurez! pleurez mes yeux!  
Tombez triste rosée  
qu'un rayon de soleil ne doit jamais tarir!  
Pleurez mes yeux!  
Ah! pleurez toutes vos larmes! pleurez  
mes yeux!  
Ah! pleurez!



I go to this terrible battle with a  
broken soul!  
But finally I'm free and I can at least

sigh unconstrained and suffer without  
being seen.

I Weep! I cry my eyes out! Sad dew falls.  
A sunbeam should never be quenched!  
My hope is about to die!  
I cry; my eyes shed endless tears!  
But does anyone want to cry forever?  
O dear buried father, is your bequest  
to me  
that I must live in constant pain?  
Alas! I remember what he told me  
with his sweet smile:  
You never know how to lead  
as glorious or as blessed a life along  
such paths!  
Ah! My father! Alas, I weep!  
I cry my eyes out! Sad dew falls.  
A sunbeam should never be quenched!  
I cry; my eyes drip endless tears.  
Ah! I cry for all your tears!  
Ah! I weep!

### 13. **Acerba voluttà**

Often derided for its impossibly complex  
and confusing plot as well as for the  
title character's preposterous "death-by-  
poisoned-violets" demise, **Francesco  
Cilea's *Adrianna Lecouvreur*** is still cher-  
ished by opera fans for its beautiful and  
impassioned arias. First staged in Milan  
in November 1902, it has since become a

favorite of sopranos with big voices who are capable of bringing exceptional dramatic intensity to their interpretations. The heroine Adrianna—a character loosely based on an actual 18th-century French actress—and Maurizio, the Count of Saxony, are lovers. But the Princess de Bouillon is her rival for Maurizio's affections. Act II begins with the Princess's aria "**Acerba voluttà**," wherein—in anticipation of a tryst with Maurizio—she sings of her love for him. When he arrives, he presents the Princess with a bouquet of violets that Adrianna had given him, but says he no longer loves her. This, among other affronts, inspires her to plot revenge against her rival...which finally transpires in the final act when Adrianna receives a casket containing the now-shriveled (and poisoned) violets that she had originally given Maurizio, whereupon she kisses the now-poisoned violets and dies.

Acerba voluttà, dolce turtura,  
lentissima agonia, rapida offesa,  
vampa, gelo, tromor, smania,  
paura, ad amoroso sen torna l'attesa!  
Ogni eco, ogni ombra nella notte incesa  
contro la impaziente alma congiura:  
fra dubbiezza e disìo tutta sospesa,  
l'eternità nell'attimo misura...  
Verrà? m'oblia? s'affretta? o pur si pente?  
Ecco, egli giunge!  
No, del fiume è il verso,

misto al sospir d'un arbore dormente...  
O vagabonda stella d'Oriente,  
non tramontar, non tramontar :  
sorridi all'universo,  
e s'egli non mente, scorta il mio amor!



Bitter pleasure, sweet torture,  
slow agony, rapid offense,  
fire, frost, tremor, restlessness, fear,  
assails the lover who waits expectantly!  
Every echo, every shadow in the  
flickering night  
conspires to thwart the impatient soul:  
between doubt and desire, all is  
suspended;  
every moment an eternity...  
Will he come? Or has he forgotten me?  
Will he hurry to me? Or will he turn back?  
Here he comes! No, it is the river's voice,  
mixed with a sleeping tree's sighs.  
O wandering eastern star,  
don't set, but smile on the universe,  
and protect my love, unless his path  
is troubled!



Belarusian mezzo-soprano **Oksana Volkova** was born in Minsk. She studied at the Belarusian State Academy of Music. Her many awards include first prizes at the Glinka and Antonín Dvořák competitions.

In 2002 she was invited to join the opera company of the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of the Republic of Belarus, where she sang the roles of Carmen, Amneris (*Aida*), Marina (*Boris Godunov*), Konchakovna (*Prince Igor*), Marfa (*Khovanschina*) and others.

She made her first appearance as a guest soloist at the Bolshoi Theatre in 2010.

Her roles there have included Carmen, Lyubasha (*The Tsar's Bride*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Fenena (*Nabucco*), Laura (*The Stone Guest*), and Boy (*The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevroniya*).

Her international engagements include Olga (*Eugene Onegin*) for Teatro Real, Madrid, and the Metropolitan Opera, New York; Carmen for Teatro Colon, Latvian National Opera, the Salzburg Landestheater, and Savona, Tallinn, Tokyo and Beijing; Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) and Sonetka (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*) for the Met; Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*) for Teatro di San Carlo, Naples; Laura (*La Gioconda*) in Palermo; Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust*) for Opera de Nice; Maddalena for the Bavarian State Opera; and Dalila (*Samson et Dalila*) in Beijing; Jane Seymour (*Anna Bolena*) for the Estonian National Opera; Olga (*Eugene Onegin*) at the Royal Opera House in London and Hamburg Staatsoper.

Volkova's concert appearances include a tour with the chamber orchestra Moscow Virtuoso, *La Damnation de Faust* and *May Night* in concert with the Russian National Orchestra, the *Moscow Cantata* (Tchaikovsky) in Copenhagen, the *Moscow Cantata* and *Aleksander Nevsky* (Prokofiev) with Dublin Symphony Orchestra, *The*

*Queen of Spades* in concert at the Munich Gasteig, Verdi's *Requiem* with Opéra de Nice, and Marina (*Boris Godunov*) with the Russian State Academic Symphony Orchestra.

Grammy-nominated conductor **Constantine Orbelian** "stands astride two great societies, and finds and promotes synergistic harmony from the best of each." (Fanfare)

For over 25 years the brilliant American pianist and conductor has been a central figure in Russia's and Eastern Europe's musical life—first as Music Director of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and the Philharmonia of Russia. He is the founder of the annual Palaces of St. Petersburg International Music Festival and is the Chief Conductor of the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra in Lithuania. In 2016 he also became Artistic Director of the State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater in Yerevan, Armenia. In all of these music centers, Orbelian leads concerts and recordings with some of the world's greatest singers and instrumentalists.

*Opera News* calls Constantine 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 re-

records with American stars such as Sondra Radvanovsky and Lawrence Brownlee, and made numerous celebrated recordings for Delos with Dmitri Hvorostovsky before the legendary singer's untimely death.

"Orbelian has star quality, and his orchestras play with passion and precision," *The Audio Critic* wrote of his acclaimed series of over 50 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 Hvorostovsky included 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*. Orbelian has conducted historic live telecasts from Moscow's Red Square, with such artists as Hvorostovsky and Anna Netrebko.

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 The Juilliard School, 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 the "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, setting the stage for Russia's hosting of the Olympic Games in 2014. In 2012 the 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 Celebrations 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 United States. 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** (KCSO) evolved from the Kaunas Chamber Orchestra, which was founded in 1988. Since 2000, the orchestra has been managed by Algimantas Treikauskas; Constantine Orbelian is its principal conductor.

A prestigious Grammy Awards nominee, the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra is an integral part of the cultural life of Lithuania and the entire Baltic region.

The orchestra performs more than 60 concerts a year. It has appeared at Lithuanian music festivals—the International Young Musicians festival, the festivals of composers M. K. Čiurlionis and Edvard

Grieg, the Pažaislis Music Festival, the international contemporary music festival “Iš arti”—as well as the “Fjord Cadenza” in Norway—and “Murten Classics” in Switzerland. The Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra has also given concerts in other foreign countries such as Latvia, Estonia, Croatia, Italy, Germany and Finland.

2020 marks the orchestra’s 15-year anniversary; during those years, a number of major and significant projects have taken place. Memorable concerts—not only of classical but also popular music—have been added to the KCSO’s biography. The orchestra has also collaborated in performances with legendary bands and world

artists such as The Scorpions, Electric Light Orchestra, Smokie, Bonnie Tyler, Chris Norman, Robert Wells and Maggie Reilly.

The orchestra has made a remarkable series of recordings, produced tremendously successful projects and had the honor of performing with some of the world's most famous vocal soloists. Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Lawrence Brownlee, Charles Castronovo, Stephen Costello, John Osborn, José Carreras, Ildar Abdrazakov, Nadine Sierra, Elīna Garanča, Sarah Coburn, Asmik Grigorian, Sarah Brightman and

Barbara Frittoli are some of the greats who have performed with the Kaunas City Symphony Orchestra.

The orchestra's discography consists of more than twenty recordings with Maestro Orbelian on the Delos label.

These recordings have received great critical acclaim, and have been nominated for prestigious international classical music awards such as the *Grammy Awards*, the *International Classical Music Awards (ICMA)* and others.

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(707) 996-3844 • (800) 364-0645  
[contactus@delosmusic.com](mailto:contactus@delosmusic.com) • [www.delosmusic.com](http://www.delosmusic.com)