

Opera Handbook

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1. Faust

Title: Faust

Composer: Charles Gounod (1818-1893). Born in Paris, his father Francois Louis Gounod was a painter, while his mother Lemachois Victoire was a piano teacher. He received his first piano lessons from his mother. He entered the Paris Conservatoire as a student of Pierre Zimmerman and he later married his master's daughter Anne Marie Zimmerman. The fruit of their marriage were three children, two boys and a girl. In 1839 he won the prestigious Prix de Rome and left for Italy to study with Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. In 1847 he entered the Carmelite monastery as a novice but later he abandoned his religious quest. In 1852 he was appointed as Director General of the teaching of singing schools in Paris and director of the choral movement. In 1856 Charles Gounod wrote "Vive l'Empereur" in honor of Emperor Napoleon III, the official anthem of the Second Empire. His Pontifical Anthem has become in 1949 the official national anthem of Vatican City. In 1856 he was named Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur and in July 1888 he was made a Grand Officer of the Legion d'Honneur. Operas: Sapho (1851), La nonne sanglante (1854), Le medecin malgre lui (1858), Faust (1859), Philemon et Baucis (1860), La Colombe (1860), La reine de Saba (1862), Mireille (1864), Romeo et Juliette (1867), Cinq-Mars (1877), Polyeucte (1878), Le tribut de Zamora (1881). Ballet: Faust (1868), Romeo et Juliette (1888). His work also includes numerous oratorios, masses, motets (Te deum, Ave Maria, Ave verum), instrumental music and songs.

Libretto: Jules Barbier (1825-1901) and Michel Carre (1821-1872)). Paul Barbier was a French poet, writer and librettist who often wrote in collaboration with Michael Carre. For Charles Gounod he produced the following libretti: La Colombe, Faust, Le medecin malgre lui, Philemon et Baucis, Polyeucte, La reine de Saba, Romeo et Juliette. He also wrote for other composers, such as: Victor Masse (Galathee, Les Saisons), Giacomo Meyerbeer (Le padron de Ploermel), Jaques Offenbach (The Tales of Hoffmann), Camille Saint Saens (Le timbre d'argent), Ambroise Thomas (Hamlet, Mignon, Francoise de Rimini), Leo Delibes (Sylvia). Michel Carre was a prolific librettist. For Charles Gounod he produced the following libretti: Le medecin malgre lui, Faust, Philemon et Baucis, La colombe, La reine de Saba, Mireille, Romeo et Juliette, Polyeucte. He also wrote for: Georges Bizet (The Pearl Fishers), Amadeus Mozart (The Marriage of Figaro), Jaques Offenbach (The Tales of Hoffmann, La rose de Saint Flour, Le mariage aux lanternes), Camille Saint Saens (Le timbre d'argent), Victor Masse (Galathee, Les noces de Jeannette, Miss Fauvette, Les saisons, Paul et Virginie, Fior d'Alizia), Ambroise Thomas (Hamlet, Mignon, Psyche), Ernest Boulanger (Don Quichotte, Don Mucarade), Fromental Halevy (Valentine d'Aubigny), Aime Maillart (Les pecheurs de Catane, Lara), Giacomo Meyerbeer (Dinorah). This libretto was inspired by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragedy, considered the greatest work of German literature, first published in 1808 and very fashionable at that time.

Performance history: Premiere 19 March 1859 at Theatre Lyrique Paris. The publisher Antoine Choudens took the work together with the manager Leon Carvahlo and his wife Marie Miolan Carvalho (as Marguerite) on tour through Germany, Belgium, Italy and England. The show was revived in Paris in 1862 and the ballet has been inserted in 1869. Notable revivals of Faust took place in Paris in 1893 and in 1908. The Metropolitan Opera in New York City opened with Faust in 1883, with other 747 performances in New York in the next century. After 1950, the popularity has declined somehow due to expensive sets and costumes, but it is still one of the most performed operas worldwide. Up to the 2017/18 season, Faust was played in the world for 567 times, in 126 different productions, ranking 36 on Operabase list.

Roles: Faust (tenor), Mephistopheles (bass-baritone), Marguerite (soprano), Valentin (baritone), Wagner (baritone), Siebel (mezzo-soprano), Marthe Schertlein (mezzo-soprano or contralto), Chorus (soldiers, people, women, angels)



Story: Johann Georg Faust (1480-1541) was an itinerant alchemist, astrologer and magician of the German Renaissance. Doctor Faust became a subject of folk legend in the decades after his death, beginning with 1580 and the subject of a play written by the English playwright Christopher Marlowe in 1604. The legend was adapted again in 1808 by the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In 1846, Hector Berlioz premiered his musical composition *La damnation de Faust*. The legend has also inspired numerous other dramatic works of Nikolaus Lenau, Heinrich Heine, Gertrude Stein, Paul Valéry, Ivan Turgenev, Vaclav Havel and many others. Faust sells his soul to the devil in exchange for youth and wealth, but his final outcome is death and damnation.

Act 1 (Faust's cabinet)

Faust, an aging scholar, displeased with the result of his studies attempts to kill himself with poison, but fails (Nothing ! In vain I question my ardent vigil Nature and the Creator). He curses science and faith, asking for infernal guidance. Mephistopheles, a spirit from Hell, appears and offers his services in exchange for Faust's soul (Here I am ! ...sword at my side, feather in my hat, purse full, a rich coat on my shoulder). The goblet of poison is magically transformed into an elixir of youth, making the aged doctor a handsome young gentleman. Young Faust and his companions set out into the world. Ballet.

Act 2 (At the city gates)

A chorus of students, soldiers and villagers sing a drinking song (Wine or beer, beer or wine, may my glass be full !). Valentin, leaving for war with his friend Wagner, entrusts the care of his sister Marguerite to his friend Siebel (O, holy medal which comes to me from my sister ...stay on my heart). Mephistopheles appears, provides the crowd with wine and sings a rousing, irreverent song about the Golden Calf (The calf of gold is still standing ! One adulates his power). Mephistopheles defames Marguerite and Valentin tries to strike him with his sword, which shatters in the air. Valentin and friends use the cross shaped hilts of their swords to fend off what they now know is an infernal power (From hell who comes to blunt our arms, we can't push away the charms !). Mephistopheles is joined by Faust and the villagers in a waltz (Thus the light breeze lifts un thick swirling clouds the dust of the furrows). Marguerite appears and Faust declares his admiration, but she refuses Faust's arm out of modesty.

Act 3 (Marguerite's garden)

The lovesick boy Siebel leaves a bouquet on Marguerite's doorstep (Make her my confession, carry my wishes ! Blooming flowers near her...). Faust sings his love for Marguerite (I greet you, house chaste and pure ...of a soul, innocent and divine). He also leaves on Marguerite's doorstep a decorated box containing exquisite jewelry and a hand mirror, procured by Mephistopheles. Marguerite encounters Faust at the city gates and sings a balad (He was a king of Thule, who unto the tombe was faithful). Marguerite tries on the jewels, and pleased how they enhance her beauty she sings a famous aria (Ah, I laugh to see myself so beautiful in this mirror). Faust and Mephistopheles join her in the garden and Marguerite allows Faust to romance her (Let your hand forget itself in mine, let me, let me contemplate your face ...Speak again ! I belong to you !). Then she asks him to go. Marguerite sings longing at her window and Faust returns to continue the his parade of seduction.

Act 4 (Marguerite's room/ A public square/ A Cathedral)

Seduced, made pregnant and abandoned by Faust, Marguerite has given birth and now she is a social outcast.

She sings her sorrow at her spinning wheel (He does not come back! ... I'm affraid, I tremble) with Siebel at her side. Valentin returns from the war to a military march (Immortal glory to our heroes, be faithful to us, die like them !). While Siebel asks Valentin to forgive his sister, Faust and Mephistopheles appear to sing a serenade under her window (You who are sleeping, don't you hear my voice and my steps ?). Valentin comes out of the cottage and charges Faust with the sword, but Mephistopheles obstructs his sword allowing Faust to make the fatal thrust. With his dying breath, Valentin blames Marguerite for his death and condemns her to Hell, before the assembled townspeople (Listen to me Marguerite ! ...Death strikes us when it must). Marguerite enters the cathedral and tries to pray, but is stopped by Mephistopheles and a choir of devils. She finishes her prayer, but faints when cursed again by Mephistopheles.

Act 5 (A cavern/ The interior of a prison)

Faust and Mephistopheles are surrounded by witches (My heart is penetrated by dead ! O torture ! O source of regrets and eternal remorse !). Mephistophele promises Faust to provide him with the love of the most beautiful women in history. Ballet. Marguerite is being held in prison for killing her child. Mephistopheles helps Faust to enter the prison. Faust and Marguerite sing a sad love duet (Yes, it is I, I love you ...see, you are saved, you are saved ...The demon ...the demon ! Do you see him ? My God, protect me !). Faust offers to rescue her from execution, but Marguerite prefers to trust her fate to God and His angels (Pure angels, radiant angels, carry my soul to the bosom of Heaven !). As Marguerite deplores her lost child and falls down motionless, the chorus sings (Saved ! Christ is brought to life ! Christ has just been reborn !) and a chorus of angels sings (Christ est ressuscite !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Nothing ! In vain I question my ardent vigil Nature and the Creator (Faust), Here I am ! ...sword at my side, feather in my hat, purse full, a rich coat on my shoulder (Mephistopheles). Act 2 - Wine or beer, beer or wine, may my glass be full ! (chorus), O, holy medal which comes to me from my sister ...stay on my heart (Wagner), The calf of gold is still standing ! One adulates his power (Mephistopheles), From hell who comes to blunt our arms, we can't push away the charms ! (Chorus), Thus the light breeze lifts un thick swirling clouds the dust of the furrows (Chorus). Act 3 - Make her my confession, carry my wishes ! Blooming flowers near her... (Siebel), I greet you, house chaste and pure ...of a soul, innocent and divine (Faust), He was a king of Thule, who unto the tombe was faithful (Marguerite), Ah, I laugh to see myself so beautiful in this mirror (Marguerite), Let your hand forget itself in mine, let me, let me contemplate your face ...Speak again ! I belong to you ! (Faust, Marguerite). Act 4 - He does not come back! ... I'm affraid, I tremble (Marguerite), Immortal glory to our heroes, be faithful to us, die like them ! (Chorus), You who are sleeping, don't you hear my voice and my steps ? (Faust), Listen to me Marguerite ! ...Death strikes us when it must (Valentin). Act 5 - My heart is penetrated by dead ! O torture ! O source of regrets and eternal remorse ! (Faust and Mephistophele), Yes, it is I, I love you ...see, you are saved, you are saved ...The demon ...the demon ! Do you see him ? My God, protect me ! (Faust, Marguerite), Pure angels, radiant angels, carry my soul to the bosom of Heaven ! (Marguerite), Saved ! Christ is brought to life ! Christ has just been reborn ! (Chorus)

Ballet: Act 1 - The Walpurgis Night. Mephistopheles brings Faust to watch the traditional celebration on the eve of May Day when souls of the dead are released to wander at will. Act 5. Faust is transported to a cave of queens and courtesans, where Mephistopheles promises Faust to provide him with the love of the greatest and most beautiful women in history. An orgiastic ballet suggests the revelry that continues throughout the night.

Recordings: 1966 London Symphony Orchestra (Faust-Franco Corelli, Mephistophel-Nicolai Ghiaurov, Marguerite-Joan Sutherland), 1978 Theatre National de l'Opera de Paris (Faust-Placido Domingo, Mephistophel- Nicolai Ghiaurov, Marguerite- Mirella Freni), 1985 - Vienna State Opera (Faust-Francisco Araiza, Mephistopheles-Ruggero Raimondi, Marguerite-Gabriela Benackova), 2009 Vienna State Opera (Faust-Piotr Beczala, Mephistopheles-Kwangchul Youn, Marguerite-Soile Isokoski)

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2. Aida

Title: Aida

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). Born at Le Roncole (Parma, Italy), his father Carlo Giuseppe Verdi (1785-1867) was an innkeeper, while his mother Luigia Uttini (1787-1851) was a thread maker. Verdi received musical education playing the organ at the local church with the help of Pietro Baistrocchi, the local schoolmaster. At 12 years old, he began lessons with maestro di capella Ferdinando Provesi and Antonio Barezzi, the directors of the Società Filarmonica, and by the age of 17 Verdi established himself as a leader of the Philharmonic. At 4 May 1836 Verdi was married to Margherita Barezzi, the daughter of his master and director. Margherita died only four years later, leaving a devastated Verdi to find his peace in his work. Antonio Barezzi also introduced him to Vincenzo Lavigna, maestro concertatore at La Scala in Milan who encouraged Verdi to compose and to take a subscription to La Scala. In 1835 Verdi became director of the Busseto school and in 1837 he staged his first opera at La Scala. In 1859 he married Giuseppina Strepponi (1815-1897) an operatic soprano and an old friend. In 1861 Verdi was elected to the Parliament of Piedmont Sardinia and in 1874 he was appointed member of the Italian Senate. In 1895 he planned and built a hospital at Villanova sull'Arda and his famous Casa di Riposo per Musicisti in Milan, a rest home for retired musicians. **Operas:** Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (1839), Un giorno di regno (1840), Nabucco (1842), I Lombardi alla prima crociata (1843), Ernani (1844), I due Foscari (1844), Giovanna d'Arco (1845), Alzira (1845), Attila (1856), Macbeth (1847), I masnadieri (1847), Jerusalem (1847), Il corsaro (1848), La battaglia di Legnano (1849), Luisa Miller (1849), Stiffelio (1850), Rigoletto (1851), Il trovatore (1853), La traviata (1853), Les vêpres siciliennes (1855), Giovanna de Guzman (1855), Le trouvère (1856), Simon Boccanegra (1857), Aroldo (1857), La forza del destino (1862), Don Carlos (1867), Aida (1871), Otello (1887), Falstaff (1893). **Ballet music for:** Otello, Macbeth, Jerusalem, Don Carlo, Aida, Il trovatore, Il vespri siciliani. His work also includes sacred works, songs, instrumental, orchestral and chamber music.

Libretto: Antonio Ghislanzoni (1824-1893). A former baritone, Antonio Ghislanzoni was a journalist, a poet and a novelist who also wrote librettos. His work includes libretti for the following operas: Aida (for Giuseppe Verdi), Un capriccio di donna, Papa Martin, Il duca di Tapigilione (for Antonio Cagnoni), Frine (for Giovanni Carpaneto), I promessi Sposi, Giovanna di Napoli, Elena di Tolosa (for Errico Petrella), Edmea (for Alfredo Catalani), Valeria (for Edoardo Vercura), Due fidanzate (for Antonio Baur), Gli Avventurieri, Reginella, Caligola (for Gaetano Braga), Il Giardino dei Sorrisi (for Fillipo Panati), I Lituani (for Amilcare Ponchielli), Spartaco (for Pietro Platania), Fosca, Salvator Rosa (for Carlos Gomes), Turanda (for Antonio Bazzini), La Stella di Toledo (for Tommaso Benvenuti). The scenery and costumes, inspired by the Art of Ancient Egypt, were produced at the request of the Khedive Ismail Pasha to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal, by François Auguste Ferdinand Mariette (1821-1881), a French archaeologist and Egyptologist. The libretto was based on a prose libretto in French produced by Camille du Locle (1832-1903) a librettist and theatre manager at the Paris Opera.

Performance history: Premiere on 24 December 1871 at Khedivial Opera House in Cairo. Ismail Pasha, Khedive of Egypt, commissioned Verdi paying him 150 000 francs, to write an opera to celebrate the opening of his Opera House. At the premiere the audience consisted of invited dignitaries, politicians and critics, but no members of the general public. The Italian premiere, held on 8 February 1872 at La Scala, Milan, was received by the public with great enthusiasm. The opera was soon mounted throughout Italy: Teatro Regio di Parma (1872), Teatro di San Carlo (1873), Teatro Regio di Torino (1874), Teatro Comunale di Bologna (1877). Aida was a sudden success all over the world: Argentina (1873), United States (1873), Germany (1874), Spain (1874), Austria (1874), Hungary (1875), Poland (1875), Russia (1875), United Kingdom (1876), Georgia (1876), Australia (1877). Since 1886, at The Metropolitan Opera in New York Aida has been sung more than 1 100 times. Up to the 2017/18 season, Aida was played in the world for 1639 times, in 392 different productions, ranking 12 on Operabase list.

Roles: Aida (soprano), The Pharaoh of Egypt (bass), Amneris (mezzo-soprano), Radames (tenor), Amonastro King of Ethiopia (bass), Ramfis High Priest (Bass), A messenger (tenor), Voice of the High Priestess (soprano), Chorus (soldiers, slaves, Egyptians)



Story: A passionate love story, in ancient Egypt, where the Egyptians have captured Amonastro King of Ethiopia, who has invaded the country trying to save his enslaved daughter Aida. Radames, the military commander of the Egyptian army, in love with Aida, struggles between his love for her and his loyalty to the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh's daughter Amneris is secretly in love with Radames, although she can not express in public her feelings to a lower rank. Radames prepares to betray his Pharaoh and to run to the forest with Aida, but Amneris ruins his plan. Sentenced to death, Radames is followed in his tomb by his beloved slave Aida, who has hidden herself in the vault, to be with him till her last breath.

Act 1 (A hall in the Pharaoh's palace/ Inside the Temple of Vulcan)

Ramfis, the high priest of Egypt is announcing Radames the imminent war against the Ethiopians (Yes, it is rumored that the Ethiopians dare once again our power). Radames dreams of gaining victory on the battlefield, but his heart is with an Ethiopian slave Aida (Heavenly Aida, divine form, mystic garland of light and flowers). Aida is the daughter of King Amonastro, but the Egyptians are unaware of her true identity. Amneris enters the scene, only to remark a shadow in Radames's eyes (What rare joy shines on your face !). When the slave Aida enters the scene, Amneris notices that the Sun shines in the eyes of Radames (Come, my child, come near me). The Pharaoh along with the High Priest enters the scene and a messenger announces that Ethiopians are marching towards Thebes. The Pharaoh declares war and proclaims Radames the man chosen by the goddess Isis to lead the army (High reasons of state have led me to summon you). Radames proceeds to the temple of Vulcan to take up the sacred arms (Go Egyptian heroes, to the sacred banks of the Nile). Torn between her love for Radames and her love for her father and country, Aida chooses the first (Return victorious ! My lips have spoken the traitorous words !). Scene 2 - Ballet. Solemn ceremonies and dances by the priestesses take place (Mighty Fatha, Life giving spirit of the world, ah ! We invoke thee !). Radames is entrusted the office of commander-in-chief (O youth beloved of the gods, you hold in trust the destiny of Egypt). All present in the temple pray for the victory of Egypt (O god, custodian and avenger ...lift thy hand over the land of Egypt).

Act 2 (The chamber of Amneris/The grand gate of the city of Thebes)

Amneris celebrates the victory of Radames (O hero, who, to the sounds of hymns and praise set forth on the flight to glory). In doubt that her love for Radames will be rewarding, Amneris entertains her heart with a dance of Moorish slaves (Ah, come, my love, bring madness and blessed peace to my heart). Aida enters the room and Amneris tries her heart suspecting that Radames has died in the battle. In grief, Aida confesses that her heart belongs to Radames (The fortunes of war have gone against your people ! Poor Aida ! ...Yes, Radames was killed by your people). Outraged by the thought of a slave competitor, Amneris plans on taking revenge (My rival ! Then so be it ...You are happy ...war and death to the invader !). Scene 2 - Ballet. Radames returns victorious and the troops march into the city (Triumphal March) (Come, O conquering hero, come, rejoice with us). The Pharaoh declares that Radames may have anything he wishes on his triumphant day. King Amonastro enters the scene among the captured Ethiopians but he claims that the Ethiopian King has been slain in the battle and he is only an officer. Aida rushes to his arms and all the Ethiopians plead for mercy while the Egyptians call for their death (What do I see ? He ? My father ? ...In our power ! ...Put them to death !). Claiming the reward promised by the Pharaoh, Radames pleads with him to spare the lives of the prisoners and to set them free. The Pharaoh gladly accepts and declares Radames to be his successor and to be betrothed to his daughter Amneris (O king, you swore in the name of the gods to grant me my wish ... Glory to Egypt and to Isis protectress of the

sacred land). King Amonastro and Aida are retained as hostages, to seal the peace.

Act 3 (On the banks of the Nile, near the Temple of Isis)

On the eve of their wedding, prayers are said in the Temple of Isis for Amneris and Radames (O thou, eternal mother and spouse of Osiris). Outside the Temple, Aida waits to meet and run with Radames as planned (Radames will come here. What will he say ? I tremble.). King Amonastro appears and agrees with Aida to ask Radames to betray the location of the Egyptian army (Heaven ! My father ! ...I shall see again our fragrant forests and the golden temples). When Radames arrives King Amonastro hides behind a rock to listen to their conversation. Radames asks Aida to marry him and agrees to flee with her to the forest (At last I am with you, again, sweet Aida ...Ethiopia has awakened, eager for fierce new battles ...Let us flee from the scorching sun of this desert land ...There, in the virgin forests). When Radames reveals the route of his army, King Amonastro comes out of hiding and claims his true identity, but Radames feels deeply dishonored and betrayed. Amneris and Ramfis enter the scene calling the guards. King Amonastro and Aida escape, but Radames refuses to run and surrenders to the imperial guards.

Act 4 (In the Temple of Justice/The vault in the Temple of Vulcan -Ptah)

Amneris is angry because her rival has escaped (My aboriginal rival has escaped ...Radames awaits from the hands of the priests the traitor's punishment). When Radames is brought in front of her for justice, Amneris asks him to deny the accusations, but he refuses. Amneris implores him to renounce Aida forever, but Radames firmly refuses (If you renounce her you'll live ! ...Death is the greatest good if I may die for her). The official trial takes place offstage and Radames is condemned to death, while on stage Amneris is expressing her regrets. Sentenced to be buried alive, Radames is taken away and Amneris mourns her sorrow (Oh me ! I shall die ! Oh, who will save him ? And it was I who cast him into their hands !). Scene 2 - Radames is sealed in a dark vault. As he hopes that Aida is in a safer place he hears a sound and then he sees her. Aida has hidden herself in the vault to be buried with him, like in the old tradition (The fatal stone has closed above me. This is my tomb. ...Aida ! You in this tomb ?). Radames sorrows about her unfair fate (To die so pure, so lovely ! To die, for the love of me ! ...Above us heaven is opening ...and there begins the joy of immortal love). Above the vault, Amneris weeps and prays to Isis, while in the vault below Aida dies in the arms of Radames (Great Ftha, life giving spirit of the world, ah we invoke thee !).

Great moments and arias: Act1 - Yes, it is rumored that the Ethiop dares once again our power (Ramfis, Radames), Heavenly Aida, divine form, mystic garland of light and flowers (Radames), What rare joy shines on your face ! (Amneris), Come, my child, come near me (Amneris, Aida, Radames), High reasons of state have led me to summon you (The Pharaoh, Radames, Aida, Amneris, Chorus), Go Egyptian heroes, to the sacred banks of the Nile (Radames, The Pharaoh, Aida, Amneris, Chorus), Return victorious ! My lips have spoken the traitorous words ! (Aida), Mighty Ftha, Life giving spirit of the world, ah ! We invoke thee ! (High Priestess, Chorus, Radames), O youth beloved of the gods, you hold in trust the destiny of Egypt (Ramsis, Chorus, Radames), O god, custodian and avenger ...lift thy hand over the land of Egypt (everyone present in the temple). Act 2 - O hero, who, to the sounds of hymns and praise set forth on the flight to glory (Amneris, Chorus), Ah, come, my love, bring madness and blessed peace to my heart (Amneris, Chorus), The fortunes of war have gone against your people ! Poor Aida ! ...Yes, Radames was killed by your people (Amneris, Aida), My rival ! Then so be it ...You are happy ...war and death to the invader ! (Amneris, Aida, Chorus), Triumphal March - Come, O conquering hero, come, rejoice with us (Chorus), What do I see ? He ? My father ? ...In our power ! ...Put them to death ! (Aida, Amneris, Radames, King Amonastro), O king, you swore in the name of the gods to grant me my wish ... Glory to Egypt and to Isis protectress of the sacred land (The Pharaoh, Radames, Amneris, King Amonastro, Aida, Chorus). Act 3 - O thou, eternal mother and spouse of Osiris (Chorus, High Priestess, Ramfis, Amneris), Radames will come here. What will he say ? I tremble. (Aida), Heaven ! My father ! ...I shall see again our fragrant forests and the golden temples (Aida, Amonastro), At last I am with you, again, sweet Aida ...Ethiopia has awakened, eager for fierce new battles ...Let us flee from the scorching sun of this desert land ...There, in the virgin forests (Radames, Aida). Act 4 - My aboriginal rival has escaped ...Radames awaits from the hands of the priests the traitor's punishment (Amneris), If you renounce her you'll live ! ...Death is the greatest good if I may die for her (Amneris, Radames), Oh me ! I shall die ! Oh, who will save him ? And it was I who cast him into their hands ! (Amneris), The fatal stone has closed above me. This is my tomb. ...Aida ! You in this tomb ? (Radames, Aida), To die so pure, so lovely ! To die, for

the love of me ! ...Above us heaven is opening ...and there begins the joy of immortal love (Radames, Aida), Great Ftha, life giving spirit of the world, ah we invoke thee ! (Aida, Radames, Amneris, Chorus).

Ballet: Act 1 Scene 2 - The dance of the virgin priestesses, is mystical and ritualistic. According to the hypnotic music of Verdi, the dancers move like somnambulists as they perform their patterns and prostrations. Act 2 Scene 1 - Dance of the Moorish slaves. Scene 2 - The Triumphal March and Parade is a scene where legions of the victorious Egyptian army display the booty and slaves they have captured. Bedouin girls swathed voluminously in shades of pale and indigo blue, are followed by black women from Morocco, a band of Somalis from Southern Ethiopia, a band of Nubian warriors, slaves, hostages and concubines from across the Red Sea, all entering the scene for a grand celebration.

Recordings: 1906 La Scala, Milan (Amneris-Vittoria Colombati, Radames-Orazio Cosentino, Aida-Teresa Chelotti), 1951 Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City (Amneris-Oralia Dominguez, Radames-Mario del Monaco, Aida-Maria Callas), 1959 Vienna Philharmonic, Vienna (Amneris-Giulietta Simionato, Radames-Carlo Bergonzi, Aida-Renata Tebaldi), 1974 Royal Opera House, London (Amneris-Fiorenza Cossotto, Radames-Placido Domingo, Aida-Montserrat Caballe), 1986 La Scala, Milan (Amneris-Ghena Dimitrova, Radames-Luciano Pavarotti, Aida-Maria Chiara)

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3. Eugene Onegin

Title: Eugene Onegin (Yevgeny Onegin)

Composer: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Born in Votkinsk, in the Russian Empire to a family with a long line of military service, his father Ilya Petrovich Tchaikovsky has served as a lieutenant colonel in the Department of Mines, while his mother Alexandra Andreyevna had half French ancestry. Tchaikovsky began piano lessons at age five and at 10 he joined the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. In 1855 his father founded some private lessons with Rudolph Kunding. In 1861 Tchaikovsky attended Russian Musical Society and in 1862 he enrolled at the Conservatory where he studied music theory with Nikolai Zarembo and composition with Anton Rubinstein. He graduated in 1865 when he was offered a post of Professor of Music Theory at the Moscow Conservatory. Tchaikovsky lived as a bachelor for most of his life, except for a two months marriage with Antonina Miliukova, a former student. In 1884 Tsar Alexander III conferred upon him the Order of St. Vladimir, which included a title of hereditary nobility. In the 1889-90 season he served as director of the Russian Musical Society and since 1887 he also substituted as a conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1892 Pyotr Tchaikovsky was voted a member of the Academie des Beaux Arts in France and the following year he was awarded a honorary Doctor of Music degree at the University of Cambridge. Operas: The Voyevoda (1868), Undina (1869), The Oprichnik (1872), Vakula the Smith (1874), Eugene Onegin (1878), The Maid of Orleans (1879), Mazepa (1883), Cherevichki (1885), The Enchantress (1877), The Queen of Spades (1890), Iolanta (1891). Ballet: Swan Lake (1876), The Sleeping Beauty (1889), The Nutcracker (1892). Symphonies: Winter Daydreams, Little Russian, Polish, No 4, No 5, Manfred, Pathetique, Symphony in E-flat. Concertos: Piano Concerto No 1 to No 3, Cello Concerto, Violin Concerto, Concert Fantasia. His work also includes instrumental music, orchestral suites, serenades, chamber music, choral music and arrangements of the works of other composers.

Libretto: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky organised himself the libretto with the contribute in Act 2 Scene 1 of his friend Konstantin Shilovsky (1849-1893) a Russian boyar, librettist, author, actor and amateur sculptor. Most of the music of the opera was written during a four weeks visit of Tchaikovsky to Shilovsky's family estate in Glebovo during the summer of 1877, the same place where the composer had completed the music for Swan Lake, a year before. The libretto closely follows verses in Alexander Pushkin's Eugene Onegin, retaining much of his poetry. Pushkin's poetry written in iambic tetrameters has an unusual rhyme scheme: AbAbCCddEffEgg, where the uppercase letters represent feminine rhymes (two or more syllables, unstressed) while the lowercase letters represent masculine rhymes (only one syllable, stressed). This form has come to be known as the Onegin

stanza, or the Pushkin sonnet

Performance history: Premiere at 29 March 1879 at Maly Theatre, Moscow. The first production was entrusted to the students of the Moscow Conservatory, conducted by the pianist Nikolai Rubinstein (1835-1881) with set designs by stage designer Karl Valts (1846-1929). The first performance at Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow took place on 23 January 1881. The first performance outside Russia took place on 6 December 1888 in Prague, conducted by Tchaikovsky himself. The first performance in Hamburg, on 19 January 1892, was conducted by Gustav Mahler in composer's presence. In London, the first performance took place on 17 October 1892, at the Olympic Theatre in London, with Henry J. Wood as conductor. In Vienna the first performance was on 19 November 1897, conducted by Gustav Mahler. The United States, premiere was given on 24 March 1920, at The Metropolitan Opera in New York. Up to the 2017/18 season, Sergei Onegin was played in the world for 1522 times, in 347 different productions, ranking 16 on Operabase list.

Roles: Larina, lady of the manor (mezzo-soprano), Tatyana, her daughter (soprano), Olga, Tatyana's sister (contralto), Filippyevna, a nanny (mezzo-soprano), Lensky (tenor), Eugene Onegin (bariton), Prince Gremin (bass), Company Commander (bass), Zaretsky (bass), Triquet, a Frenchman (tenor), Guillot, Onegin's valet (silent), Chorus (peasants, fruit pickers, ball guests)



Story: The story concerns four young members of the Russian rural noble society, involved in a romantic carousel. Lensky is courting Olga and introduces his friend Onegin to Olga's sister Tatyana. Enslaved to High City fashionable manners, Onegin rudely refuses Tatyana's simple love, only to regret it. Invited to Tatyana's day celebration, Onegin flirts with Olga, than being chalanged to a duel by his best friend Lensky he unwillingly kills him. After years of resentment abroad, Onegin returns, to find Tatyana shining in the center of the Russian society, married to a prince. Obsessed to win her affection, Onegin becomes very importunate, only to be politely repudiated to a bitter destiny.

Act 1 (The garden of the Larin country estate/ Tatyana's room/ Another part of the estate)

Madame Larina and nurse Filippyevna are sitting in the garden, hearing her girls Olga and Tatyana singing a love song (Have you not heard ...the voice that sings of love and sings of sorrow). Madame Larina remembers her courtship and marriage. A group of peasants enter to celebrate the Harvest Day with songs and dances (My swift little feet ache from walking ...my ardent heart aches from caring). Tatyana reads a romantic novel while her sister joins the celebration (Ah, Tanya, Tanya ! You're always dreaming !). Lensky and Eugene Onegin enter the scene. Onegin and Tatyana are strongly attracted to each other. Lensky expresses his delight at seeing Olga (I love you, I love you, Olga, as only a poet's frantic heart can). Onegin presents himself to explain that he inharited a nearby estate and nurse Filippyevna notices that Onegin has had a profound effect on Tatyana. Scene 2 - Tatyana confesses to her nurse that she is in love. Left alone Tatyana writes a love letter to Onegin, begging him to understand and help her (I write to you, and then ? What more is there to say ? ...Who are you ? My guardian angel or a wily tempter ? ...your protection I implore). Tatyana persuades nurse Filippyevna to send her grandson with the letter to Onegin (Oh, nurse, be a darling... I'm old, my wits are dull don't be angry, dear heart !). Scene 3 - Servant girls pick fruit and sing as they work (Pretty maidens, dear companions, come on out to play, girls !). Tatyana waits anxiously. Onegin enters the scene to answer to her letter and explains

kindly that he is unsuited for marriage and unworthy of her love (...I was not made for wedded bliss, it is foreign to my soul, your perfections are vain ...I love you with a brother's love). Onegin warns Tatyana to be less open in the future, but she is unable to reply.

Act 2 (The ballroom of the Larin house/ On the banks of a wooded stream, early morning)

Ballet (Waltz). A ball is being given in honor of Tatyana, whose name day it is (Well, what a surprise ! ...A marvellous party, would you not all agree ?). Hearing some gossip about him and Tatyana, Onegin gets irritated and engages in flirting Olga. Lensky becomes extremely jealous, but Olga continues to dance with Onegin, as if to punish Lensky for his ridiculous jealousy. The elderly French tutor Triquet sings an aria in honour of Tatyana (Here is the queen this day, mesdames I will begin ...as guests, let us pay tribute). Dance (Mazurka). The quarrel between Lensky and Onegin becomes more intense. Lensky renounces his friendship with Onegin in front of all the guests, and challenges him to a duel (You've insulted me and I demand satisfaction). Tatyana collapses and the ball ends in confusion (I am stunned, I cannot understand Eugene, I am tormented by darts of jealousy). Scene 2 - Lensky is waiting for Onegin with his second Zaretsky revealing reflections on his life, his fear of death and his love for Olga (Where, oh where have you gone, golden days of my youth ? ...Oh, Olga, I loved you, to you alone I devoted). Onegin arrives with his manservant Guillot. Both Lensky and Onegin are reluctant to fight, but neither man has the courage to stop the duel (Oh, should we not burst out laughing before we stain our hands with blood, and should we not part as friends ?). Zaretsky gives the signal and Onegin shoots Lensky dead.

Act 3 (The house of a rich man in St Petersburg/A room in Prince Gremin's house)

Ballet (Polonaise). Onegin has travelled extensively around Europe during the last five years. Stranding alone at a ball, Onegin reflects on the emptiness of his life and sorrows over the death of his friend Lensky (I'm bored here too. ...without employment, wife or occupation ...travel was boring too !). Prince Gremin enters with Tatyana, his wife, now a grand aristocratic lady. She is greeted by many of the guests with great deference. Tatyana is overwhelmed with emotion when she recognizes Onegin, but holds her spirit (O God, help me to hide the dreadful tumult in my heart !). Gremin introduces Onegin to Tatyana, reinforcing his great happiness and his love for her (...she shines like a star in the night's darkest hour, in a pure, clear sky ...in the radiant nimbus of an angel !). Injected with new life, Onegin is determined to win back her affection and insists to arrange a meeting (Can this really be the same Tatyana ...Wherever I look, I see her !). Scene 2- Tatyana has left Onegin's letter unanswered and weeps, when Onegin enters the room. Tatyana remembers him his reaction to her letter and asks what could have changed his mind, maybe her new social position ? (Oneghin, I was younger then, and a better person, I think ! ...but what response did I find in your heart ?). Onegin denies any material motivation and claims that his passion is real and overwhelming (If you only knew how terrible is to suffer love's torments ...to long weeping at your feet). Tatyana recollects how close they were to happiness, but nevertheless asks him to leave (I am married, you must, I beg you, leave me !). Onegin asks for pity, while she admits that she still loves him (I cannot leave you, oh have pity ...Why hide it, why pretend ? Ah ! I love you !). Determined to remain faithful to her husband, despite her feelings, Tatyana bids him farewell forever, leaving him alone in despair (No, I must remember my vows ! ...sacred duty will triumph over the passion ! Farewell for ever !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Have you not heard ...the voice that sings of love and sings of sorrow (Tatyana, Olga), My swift little feet ache from walking ...my ardent heart aches from caring (Chorus), Ah, Tanya, Tanya ! You're always dreaming ! (Olga), I love you, I love you, Olga, as only a poet's frantic heart can (Lensky), I write to you, and then ? What more is there to say ? ...Who are you ? My guardian angel or a wily tempter ? ...your protection I implore (Tatyana), Oh, nurse, be a darling... I'm old, my wits are dull don't be angry, dear heart ! (Tatyana, Filipyevna), Pretty maidens, dear companions, come on out to play, girls ! (Chorus), ...I was not made for wedded bliss, it is foreign to my soul, your perfections are vain ...I love you with a brother's love (Oneghin) Act 2 - Well, what a surprise ! ...A marvellous party, would you not all agree ? (Chorus), Here is the queen this day, mesdames I will begin ...as guests, let us pay tribute (Triquet), You've insulted me and I demand satisfaction (Lensky), I am stunned, I cannot understand Eugene, I am tormented by darts of jealousy (Tatyana), Where, oh where have you gone, golden days of my youth ? ...Oh, Olga, I loved you, to you alone I devoted (Lensky), Oh, should we not burst out laughing before we stain our hands with blood, and should we not part as friends ? (Lensky, Oneghin) Act 3 - I'm bored here too. ...without employment, wife or occupation ...travel was boring too ! (Oneghin), O God, help me to hide the dreadful

tumult in my heart ! (Tatyana), ...she shines like a star in the night's darkest hour, in a pure, clear sky ...in the radiant nimbus of an angel ! (Gremlin), Can this really be the same Tatyana ...Wherever I look, I see her ! (Oneghin), Oneghin, I was younger then, and a better person, I think ! ...but what response did I find in your heart ? (Tatyana), If you only knew how terrible is to suffer love's torments ...to long weeping at your feet (Oneghin), I am married, you must, I beg you, leave me ! (Tatyana), I cannot leave you, oh have pity ...Why hide it, why pretend ? Ah ! I love you ! (Oneghin, Tatyana), No, I must remember my vows ! ...sacred duty will triumph over the passion ! Farewell for ever ! (Tatyana)

Ballet: Act 1 - Peasants dance at Harvest Day. Act 2 - Dance (Mazurka) Act 3 - Dance (Polonaise) There also exist an entire ballet Eugene Onegin that uses Tchaikovsky's music, but not from the opera. The first successful ballet adaptation of Eugene Onegin belongs to John Cranko and premiered in Stuttgart at 13 April 1965 with the libretto closely following the novel. Fifty years later, Onegin is considered Cranko's masterpiece and remains in the repertory of over 20 ballet companies around the world. The music arrangement belongs to Kurt-Heinze Stolze who has connected various Tchaikovskys compositions to create a dramatic structure. The basis of the score is formed by piano compositions, reserving the full orchestral power only for climaxes. Onegin is currently danced at: Hamburg, Tokyo, Boston, Sydney, Vienna, Rome, Toronto.

Recordings: 1936 Balshoi Theatre, Moscow (Lavira Zhukovskaya-Tatyana, Panteleimon Nortsov-Onegin, Aleksandr Pirogov-Gremin), 1956 Bolshoi Theatre Moscow (Galina Vishnevskaya-Tatyana, Yevgheny Belov-Onegin, Ivan Petrov-Gremin), 1974 Covent Garden The Royal Opera House London (Teresa Kubiak-Tatyana, Bernd Weikl-Onegin, Nicolai Ghiaurov-Gremin), 1987 Staatskapelle Dresden und Rundfunkchor Leipzig (Mirella Freni-Tatyana, Thomas Allen-Onegin, Paata Burchuladze-Gremin), 1993 Orchestre de Paris (Nuccia Focile-Tatyana, Dmitry Hvorostovsky-Onegin, Alexander Anisimov-Gremin), 2007 The Metropolitan Opera New York (Renee Fleming-Tatyana, Dmitry Hvorostovsky-Onegin, Sergei Aleksashkin-Gremin).

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4. Tannhauser

Title: Tannhauser

Composer: Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Born in Leipzig, his father Carl Friedrich Wagner was a clerk in the Leipzig police service while his mother Johanna Rosine Paez was of the daughter of a baker. One year later his mother remarried to Ludwig Geyer an actor and playwright. At the age of 7 he was enrolled at Pastor Wetzel's school at Possendorf, where he received piano instruction and by the age of 9 he joined the Dresdener Kreutzchor at the Kreuzschule. His first lessons of harmony were taken during 1828-1831 with composer Christian Gottlieb Muller (1800-1863). In 1831, Wagner enrolled at the Leipzig University to become a member of the Saxon student fraternity. He took composition lessons with Thomaskantor (music director) and composer Theodor Weinling (1780-1842). In 1836 he married the actress Christine Wilhemine Planer (1809-1866) for a 30 years of marriage with no offspring. In 1842 Wagner was appointed the Royal Saxon Court Conductor. From 1849 to 1858, due to his revolutionary activity he was exiled in Switzerland, to Zurich, for a very prolific period of his compositions. In 1862 he divorced his wife and remarried Francesca Cosima Liszt with three children as fruit of their marriage, two girls and a son. In 1871 the family moved to Bayreuth where he built the Bayreuth Festspielhouse and founded the Bayreuther Festival. Operas: Die Hochzeit (The Wedding-1832), Die Feen (The Fairies-1834), Das Liebsverbot (The Ban of Love-1836), Die hohe Braut (The High-born Bride -1842), Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen (Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes - 1840), Der fliegende Hollander (The Flying Dutchman - 1841), Tannhauser und der Sängerkrieg auf dem Wartburg (Tannhauser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg - 1845), Lohengrin (Lohengrin - 1848), Das Rheingold (The Rhine Gold - 1854), Die Walkure (The Valkyrie - 1856), Tristan und Isolde (Tristan and Isolde - 1859), Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg (The mastersingers of Nuremberg - 1867), Siegfried (Siegfried - 1871), Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods -1874), Parsifal (Parsifal - 1882).

Libretto: Richard Wagner wrote the libretto himself, as a combination of mythological elements of German Romantic Opera. According to his autobiography, he was inspired by a story in a Volksbuch (popular book) about Venusberg, combined with Amadeus Hoffman's story *Der Kampf der Sanger* (The Singer's Contest). The essay *Elementargeister* (Elemental spirits) of Heinrich Heine has also been inspirational for the lure of the grotto of Venus. Wagner wrote the libretto in April 1843, when he first saw the early rays of sun striking the Wartburg castle, and composed the music during a vacation in Teplitz in the summer of 1843. Wagner made a number of revisions of the opera throughout his life and was still unsatisfied with its format when he died.

Performance history: Premiere on 19 October 1845 at Konigliches Hoftheater in Dresden. At premiere, the part of Elisabeth was sung by Wagner's 19 years old niece Johanna Wagner and the performance was conducted by the composer. The next performance was in Dresden in 1847. Franz Liszt produced the opera at Weimar Court Theatre in 1849, followed by further performances in Schwerin, Kassel, Posen, Wiesbaden, Hanover, Munich, Berlin. The first production outside Germany was at Riga on 18 January 1853, followed by Prague on 25 November 1854 at Theatre of the Estates, New York at Bowery Amphitheatre in 1859 and London on 6 May 1876 at the Royal Opera House. Requested by Emperor Napoleon III, a substantially amended version of the opera was performed by the Paris Opera in 1861. For the Paris version of *Tannhauser* the composer had to insert a ballet into the score, according to the traditions of the house. The text was translated into French by Charles Louis Etienne Nuitter. Further performances of the Paris version were in Bologna at 7 November 1872 at the Teatro Comunale and in New York at the Metropolitan Opera on 30 January 1889. The last production supervised by Wagner himself was in 1875 for the Opera in Vienna. Since then, *Tannhauser* is a staple of major opera house repertoire. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Tannhauser* was played in the world for 433 times, in 102 different productions, ranking 49 on Operabase list.

Roles: Tannhauser (tenor), Princess Elisabeth (soprano), Venus (mezzo-soprano or soprano), Wolfram von Eschenbach (baritone), Hermann Landgrave of Thuringia (bass), Walther von der Vogelweide (tenor), Biterolf (bass), Heinrich der Schreiber (tenor), Reinmar von Zweter (bass), A young shepard (soprano), Four noble pages (soprano alto), Chorus (knights, nobleman, pilgrims, sirens, naiads, bacchantes)



Story: The story is based on two German legends: the legendary medieval German minnesinger and poet Tannhauser and the tale of Wartburg Song Contest. The story centers on the struggle between sacred and profane. Knights cross their words and song, instead of swords, to win the heart of the Princess Elisabeth, the Landgrave's daughter. Wolfram's song of courtly love is opposed by Tannhauser's indecent song of ecstatic love. Elisabeth falls in love for Tannhauser, but his attitude is unacceptable to God. He is sentenced to penitence for redemption. After a pilgrimage to Rome, Tannhauser returns in time only for the funeral of Elisabeth. He dies next to her to be finally absolved from his tournament. The pilgrims rejoice the miracle of salvation.

Act 1 (The Venusberg/ A valley between the Venusberg and Wartburg)

Scene 1 - Ballet (Come to the shore). Scene 2 - Tannhauser's desires are satiated and he longs for freedom hearing the sound of church bells. He takes up his harp and pays homage to the goddess in a passionate love song (Let your praises be heard). After the first song, he asks an earnest plea to be allowed to depart. At first, Venus becomes even more charming and tries to convince him to stay (Come, my love), but after repeated pleas she becomes angry and curses his desire for salvation. Tannhauser implores the help from Virgin Mary and

declares: My salvation rests in Mary ! These words break the spell and Venusberg disappears with Venus in it. Scene 3 - He finds himself in a beautiful valley, where a young shepard sings an ode to the pagan goddess Holda (Lady Holda, come forth from the hill). Pilgrims are seen approaching from Wartburg and a hymn can be heard (To thee I turn, my Jesus Christ). Tannhauser stands motionless, and then he sinks to his knees (Almighty God , to you be praise !) joining the pilgrims. Hunting horns can be heard, drawing ever nearer. Scene 4 - The Landgrave's hunting party appears. The minnesingers recognize Tannhauser, greet him and ask him to rejoin them, which he declines. Wolfram von Eschenbach persuades him to leave the pilgrims and return to Wartburg, where Princess Elisabeth is mourning, impassible to all songs (You are better than us in daring songs). Visibly moved, Tannhauser begs the hunting party to lead him to her, to try his luck (To her !, To her !).

Act 2 (A hall in the Wartburg castle)

Elisabeth enters joyfully and she sings of her hope that Tannhauser will revive her love for songs and music (Dear hall, I greet thee once again). Scene 2 - Tannhauser flings himself at Elisabeth's feet and she greets him joyfully, than they join in a duet (Praise be to this hour). Scene 3 - The Landgrave enters to embrace Elisabeth and to sing his joy (Do I find you in this hall) and to announce the upcoming song contest where Elisabeth will be the judge. Scene 4 - Elisabeth and Landgrave attend the guests who assemble to sing (With joy we greet the noble hall). The Landgrave announces that the theme of the song contest is the nature of love and the winner will have the right to name his price. Wolfram is the first to sing an ode praising the virtues of holy and righteous love (Looking around). Every one is pleased, except Tannhauser claiming the lack of passion. The knights draw their swords, but the Landgrave restores order. Tannhauser rises to sing a song of ecstatic love to Venus (To thee, Goddess of Love, my song be raised). Elisabeth is pale and shocked as everyone present realises that Tannhauser has spent his last year in Venusburg. Outraged the knights and the Landgrave gather to condemn Tannhauser to death. Elisabeth saves him, shielding him with her body. Tannhauser collapses as all hail Elisabeth as an angel (An angel comes to us from the realm of light). Exiled at the Landgrave's command, Tannhauser promises to seek atonement and joins a band of pilgrims to Rome (To Rome).

Act 3 (A valley of Wartburg)

Wolfram muses on Elisabeth's sorrow during Tannhauser's second absence (I knew well I might find her here in prayer). Pilgrims are approaching singing (Joyfully now my Homeland behold). Realising that Tannhauser has not returned Elisabeth sings sorrowfully and prays to the Virgin Mary for his redemption (He has not returned). She also prays that she may soon be freed from her unhappy life. Scene 2 - Wolfram, left alone sings an hymn to the evening star while, like a premonition of death, the twilights shrouds the earth...(O thou my fair evening star). Scene 3 - Tannhauser appears, ragged, walking feebly leaning on his staff. Wolfram challenges him, since he is exiled, but to Wolfram's horror Tannhauser explains that he is again seeking the company of Venus. With his heart in flames Tannhauser tells the story of his pilgrimage (Burst in heart). He has reached Rome and witnessed thousands of pilgrims being absolved, but he was cursed and told that salvation shall never bloom for him. Having completed his tale, Tannhauser calls out to Venus, to take him back (To you, Lady Venus, I return). Suddenly Venus appears and welcomes him back (Welcome, faithless man !). To change his joyful spirit, Wolfram invokes his dear Elisabeth. Tannhauser is frozen and repeats the name as torches are seen and a funeral hymn is heard approaching (Hail, the soul that now is flown). Wolfram realises that it must be Elisabeth's body that is being borne and that in her death Tannhauser has finally found his redemption (Heinrich, you are saved !). Saved from me ! replies Venus while she vanishes together with her kingdom. As the procession appears, Tannhauser bends over the innocent's girl body uttering (Holly Elisabeth ! pray for me !) and he dies near her. Growing light bathes the scene and the pilgrims proclame a miracle (Hail, Hail, To this miracle of grace, Hail) and the salvation (The Holy Grace of God is to the penitent given, who now enters into the joy of Heaven !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Come to the shore (chorus), Let your praises be heard (Tannhauser), Come my love (Venus), Lady Holda, come forth from the hill (young shepard), To thee I turn, my Jesus Christ (chorus), You are better than us in dearing songs (Wolfram). Act 2 - Dear hall, I greet thee once again (Elisabeth), Praise be to this hour (duet Elisabeth, Tannhauser), Do I find you in this hall (Landgrave), With joy we greet the noble hall (chorus), Blick'ich umher - Looking around (Wolfram), To thee, Goddess of Love, my song be raised (Tannhauser), An angel comes to us from the realm of ligh (chorus), To Rome ! (chorus). Act 3 - I knew well I might find her here in prayer (Wolfram), Joyfully now my Homeland behold (chorus), He has not

returned (Elisabeth), O thou my fair evening star (Wolfram), Burst in heart (Tannhauser), To you, Lady Venus, I return (Tannhauser), Welcome, faithless man ! (Venus), Hail, the soul that now is flown (chorus), Heinrich, you are saved ! (Wolfram), Holly Elisabeth ! pray for me ! (Tannhauser), Hail, Hail, To this miracle of grace, Hail (chorus), The Holy Grace of God is to the penitent given, who now enters into the joy of Heaven ! (chorus)

Ballet: The stage represents the interior of Venusberg. In the distant background is a bluish lake with bathing figures of naiades in it and sirens on its elevated banks. In the extreme left foreground lies Venus bearing the head of the half kneeling Tannhauser in her lap. The whole cave is illuminated in rosy light. A group of dancing nymphs appears, joined gradually by members of loving couples from the cave. A train of Bacchantes comes from the background in wild dance...The ever wilder dance answers as in echo to the Chorus of sirens (Come to the shore).

Recordings: 1954 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Ramon Vinay-Tannhauser, Margaret Harshaw- Elisabeth, George London-Wolfram), 1960 Berlin Sate Opera, Berlin (Hans Hopf-Tannhauser, Gre Brouwenstijn-Elisabeth, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau-Wolfram), 1970 Vienna Sate Opera, Vienna (Rene Kollo-Tannhauser, Helga Dernesch-Elisabeth, Victor Braun-Wolfram), 1985 Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Munich (Klaus Konig-Tannhauser, Lucia Popp-Elisabeth, Bernd Weikl-Wolfram), 1988 Royal Opera House Covent Garden Chorus, London (Placido Domingo-Tannhauser, Cheryl Studer- Elisabeth, Andreas Schmidt-Wolfram), 2014 Staatskapelle Berlin und Berlin State Opera, Berlin (Peter Seiffert-Tannhauser, Ann Petersen-Elisabeth, Peter Mattei-Wolfram).

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5. The Abduction from the Serail

Title: The Abduction from the Serail

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Born in Salzburg, his father Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) was a composer, kapellmeister and an experienced teacher, while his mother Ana Maria Pertl (1720-1778) was the daughter of Nicolaus Pertl, the deputy prefect of Hildenstein. He was the youngest of seven children, five of whom died in infancy. Together with his sister Maria Anna Mozart (1751-1829) both children were exhibited as musicians from the age of five. From 1762 to 1768 Mozart family made an European jurney concerting to the courts of Munich, Mannheim, Paris, London, Hague, Zurich, Vienna. From 1769 to 1773 Mozart has traveled to Italy to be accepted as a member of Academia Filarmonica in Bologna. In 1773 he was employed by Prince Achbishop Hieronymus Colloredo as a court musician in Salzburg. His career in Vienna began in 1781 under the patronage of Emperor Joseph II of Habsburg and he soon established himself as the finest keyboard player in Vienna. In 1777 he was honoured by Pope Clement XIV as Knight of the Order of the Golden Spur. In 1782 he married Constanze Weber (1762-1842), also a member of a family of musicians and the fruit of their marriage were six children of whom only two survived. In 1787 Emperor Joseph II appointed him as his chamber composer paying 800 florins a year. Operas: Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots (1767), Apollo et Hyacinthus (1767), Bastien und Bastienne (1768), La finta semplice (1768), Mitridate, re di Ponto (1770), Ascanio in Alba (1771), Il sogno di Scipione (1772), Lucio Silla (1772), La finta giardiniera (1774), Il re pastore (1775), Thamos, König in Agypten (1779), Zaide (1779), Idomeno, re di Creta (1781), Die Entführung aus dem Serail (1782), L'oca del Cairo (1784), Lo sposo deluso (1784), Der Schauspieldirektor (1786), Le Nozze di Figaro (1786), Don Giovanni (1787), Così fan Tutte (1790), Der Stein der Weisen (1790), La clemenza di Tito (1791), Die Zauberflöte (1791). His work include more than 600 compositions of symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic and choral music.

Libretto: Christoph Friedrich Bretzner (1748-1807). The libretto produced by Bretzner was a singspiel called Belmont and Constanze, oder Die Entführung aus dem Serail. In 1882 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart together with Johann Gottlieb Stephanie (1741-1800) have adapted the libretto for the opera. Gottlieb Stephanie was an Austrian playwright, director and libretist, appointed by Emperor Joseph II to head the National Singspiel.

Performance history: Premiere on 16 July 1782 at Burgtheater, Vienna. The performance was commissioned from Mozart by the Austrian Emperor Joseph II of Habsburg-Lorraine who was the founder of Nationalsingspiel, a project aimed to counterpart the German Singspiel. The opera was a huge succes. Mozart attended the first performance in Berlin in 1789. The abduction from the Seralio was Mozart's most popular work during his lifetime. The opera reached Paris in November 1801 at the Theatre de la Gaite, conducted by Frederic Blasius. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York the performance premiered in 1946 featuring Eleanor Steber as Konstanze. Up to the 2017/18 season, The Abduction from Serail was played in the world for 855 times, in 163 different productions, ranking 27 on Operabase list.

Roles: Belmonte a Spanish nobleman (tenor), Konstanze bethroted to Belmonte (soprano), Blonde an English maid (soprano), Pedrillo a Spanish servant (tenor), Osmin Turkish overseer (bass), Bassa Selim Turkish Pasha (spoken role), Klaas (spoken role), Chorus of Janissaires



Story: Two pairs of young European lovers, one noble couple and the other their servants are trying to escape form the Harem of a Turkish Pasha. All four escappes are quickly rounded up by the intervention of the Harem's overseer Osmin. While Pasha and Osmin discuss the best method of torture and death for the foreigners the young lovers reaffirm their love, eager to die in each other's hands. Finally, Selim Pasha decides to set free his prisoners arguing that it is far greater a pleasure to repay an injustice with a favour than an evil with an evil. The work uses spoken dialogue and separate musical numbers in the form of a sung play. Sublime love songs, moving laments and exoticism are the strong features of this performance.

Act 1 (The country house of Selim Pasha)

Ouverture. (Ballet). Belmonte enters the scene, looking for Konstanze who has fallen into the hands of pirates and has been sold to Selim Pasha (Here surely I must find her). In the garden, the servant Osmin tenders the figs, while Belmonte efforts to question him (You may think, you've found a maiden). Belmonte also tries to obtain some information about his servant, Pedrillo, captured with the women, bur Osmin replies with anger (The devil take you and your song, sir). As Belmonte leaves the scene, Pedrillo enters and Osmin rages at him that he will be tortured and killed in many different ways (These jounge men who go a-spying). Osmin leaves the scene and Belmonte enters to happily reunite with his servant. Together they plan to rescue Konstanze, together with her servant Blonde who is Pedrillo's fiancée (Konstanze, Konstanze, to see thee again...Oh what a trembling) leaving the scene. Pasha Selim enters the scene with Konstanze, accompanied by a chorus of Janissaires (Sing to the mighty Pasha Selim). Konstanze recollects her love for Belmonte (How I loved him). Pedrillo successfully suggests the Pasha to hire Belmonte as an architect. Osmin bars their way into the palace, but they hurry past him anyway (March ! March ! March ! Clear off !).

Act 2 (In the palace of Selim Pasha)

Blonde has been given by the Pasha to be Osmin's slave, however she defiantly rebuffs her master's lovmakig attempts (With smiles and kind caresses). Fearless, Blonde chases Osmin out of the room and he replies (I'm going, but mark what I say). Konstanze enters the scene and greets Blonde with her distress (Oh what sorrow overwhelms my spirit...). The Pasha enters the scene, looking for kind love words from Konstanze and threatens to use force, but she resolutely rejects him (Tortures unrelenting). Ballet. Left alone, The Pasha contemplates that her refusal only increases his desire. Pedrillo finds Blonde and informs her that Balmonte has

come and is planning to rescue them, to be responded with joy (Oh, the happy, happy day). Pedrillo sings a short song to boost his courage (Now Pedrillo, now for battle), than invites Osmin to drink with him (Here's to Bacchus, long live Bacchus). Osmin drinks heavily and falls asleep. Konstanze joins Belmonte and declares her happiness to see him (When tears of joy flow). The two couples reunites reinforce their hope and trust in Belmonte (Ah, Belmonte, ah my dear one). Tortured by jealousy Belmonte and Pedrillo question their fiancées if they have remained faithful, to be responded with indignation and dismay. Blonde slaps Pedrillo's face and the two men apologize for their lack of confidence.

Act 3 (A garden at the Selim Pasha Palace)

Belmonte and Pedrillo come to the garden with ladders (Love, only love, can now direct me). Pedrillo gets the attention of women by singing a serenade (In Moorish lands a maiden fair). Osmin, who was a muslim and has only pretended to drink the beverage, enters the scene breaking the spell and exulting in the prospect of seeing them all hanged (My triumphant hour is approaching). Pleading for their lives, Belmonte offers to pay a generous ransom, claiming to be son of Lostados, a Spanish Grandee Governor of Oran. Unfortunately, Lostados turns out to be a long lasting enemy of Selim Pasha. Selim Pasha leaves the two couples to bid farewell while he must decide together with Osmin a horrible death for them. Ballet. Konstanze and Belmonte reassure each other that being tortured to death will be a pleasure, as long as they are together (What dreadful fate conspire against us... Woe, will you die because of me). However, Selim Pasha sets them free proclaiming that it is far greater a pleasure to repay an injustice with a favour, than an evil with an evil. Much to the dismay of Osmin, the audience exults hailing the greatness of their sultan (Your noble mercy passes measure).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Here surely I must find he (Belmonte), You may think, you've found a maiden (Osmin), The devil take you and your song, sir (duet Osmin, Belmonte), These young men who go a-spying (Osmin), Konstanze, Konstanze, to see thee again...Oh what a trembling (Belmonte), Sing to the mighty Pasha Selim (chorus), How I loved him (Konstanze), March ! March ! March ! Clear off ! (Pedrillo). Act 2 - With smiles and kind caresses (Blonde), I'm going, but mark what I say (duet Blonde, Osmin)., Oh what sorrow overwhelms my spirit...(Konstanze), Tortures unrelenting (Konstanze), Oh, the happy, happy day (Blonde), Now Pedrillo, now for battle (Pedrillo), Here's to Bacchus, long live Bacchus (Pedrillo), When tears of joy flow (Konstanze), Ah, Belmonte, ah my dear one (quartet). Act 3 - Love, only love, can now direct me (Belmonte), In Moorish lands a maiden fair (Pedrillo), My triumphant hour is approaching (Osmin), What dreadful fate conspire against us... Woe, will you die because of me (Konstanze and Belmonte). Your noble mercy passes measure (chorus).

Ballet: Overture - During the overture, a noble woman Konstanze and her personal maid Blonde are abducted by pirates for Pasha Selim. Act 2 - During the aria in which Pasha Selim menaces Konstanze with the threat of torture, the dancers as servants of the prince, brandish various torture devices, including ropes, floggers and metal pincers. Act 3 - During the Konstanze and Belmonte duet, servants show weapons and percussive instruments in a series of dances which have been choreographed in the same lighthearted and energetic vein as the music. There is a new choreography for every opera where dancers react to the other characters and action onstage and may also have roles within the story.

Recordings: 1945 Wiener Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester (Elisabeth Schwartzkopf-Konstanze, Emmy Loose-Blonde, Anton Dermota-Belmonte, Peter Klein-Pedrillo, Herbert Alsen-Osmin), 1965 Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Erika Koth-Konstanze, Lotte Schadle-Blonde, Fritz Wunderlich-Belmonte, Friedrich Lenz-Pedrillo, Kurt Bohme-Osmin), 1973 Staatskapelle Dresden (Arleen Auger-Konstanze, Reri Grist-Blonde, Peter Schrierer-Belmonte, Harald Neukirch-Pedrillo, Kurt Moll-Osmin), 1990 Academy of Ancient Music, Cambridge (Lynne Dawson-Konstanze, Marianne Hirsti-Blonde, Uwe Heilmann-Belmonte, Wilfried Gahmlich-Pedrillo, Gunter von Kannen-Osmin), 1997 Les Arts Florissants Theatre de Caen (Christine Schafer-Konstanze, Patricia Petibon-Blonde, Ian Bostridge- Belmonte, Iain Paton-Pedrillo, Alan Ewing-Osmin), 2015 Chamber Orchestra of Europe London (Diana Damrau-Konstanze, Anna Prohaska-Blonde, Rolando Villazon-Belmonte, Paul Schweinester-Pedrillo, Franz Josef Selig-Osmin)

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6. Carmen

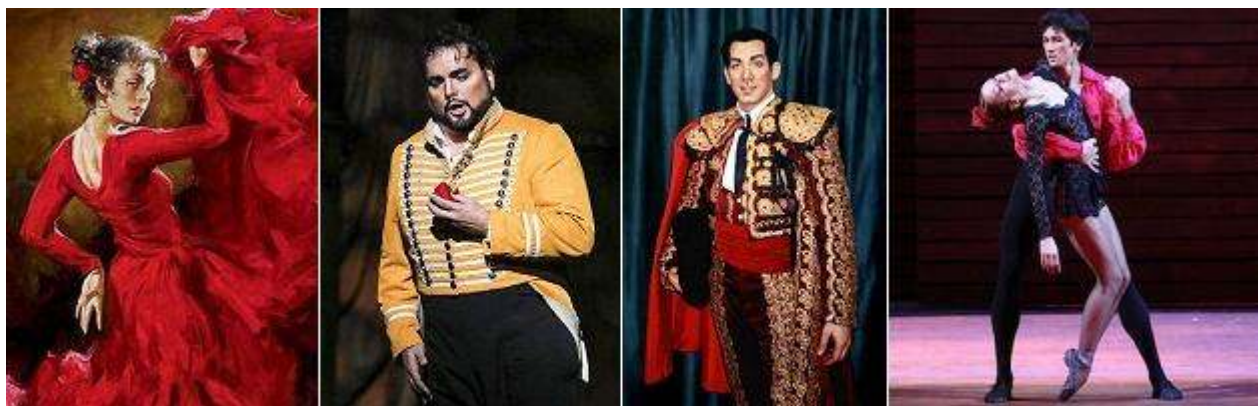
Title: Carmen

Composer: Georges Bizet (1838-1875). Born in Paris, his father Adolphe Bizet was a musician and a singing teacher, while his mother Aimee Delsarte was an accomplished pianist. After the first lessons with his mother, Bizet was admitted to the Conservatoire in Paris at the age of nine, to study with Pierre Zimmerman and his son in law Charles Gounod and to make friends with Camille Saint-Saens. His piano teacher was Antoine Francois Marmontel and his composition teacher was Fromental Halevy. In 1857 Bizet was awarded with the Prix de Rome and received a financial grant for five years, to study at the French Academie in Rome. He was married in 1869, to Genevieve Halevy, the daughter of the composer Jaques-Fromental Halevy and two years later they had a son. Without an employment he worked as a piano teacher, accompanist musician, transcriber and arranger and as a composer under contract with Opera directors such as Leon Carvahlo of the Theatre Lyrique and later Vaudeville Theatre. In the morning of 3 March 1875 he was appointed as Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and in the evening his opera Carmen premiered at the Opera Comique. Operas: Le docteur Miracle (1856), Don Procopio (1859), Ivan IV (1865), Les Pecheurs de perles (1863), La Jolie fille de Perth (1866), Djamileh (1871), Carmen (1875). His work also included orchestral works, choral works, songs, works for piano, transcriptions and completions of other's work.

Libretto: Henri Meilhac (1830-1897) and Ludovic Halevy (1834-1908). Henry Meilhac was a French librettist that worked in connection with the playwright Ludovic Halevy for twenty years, mostly for Jacques Offenbach: La Belle Helene (1864), Barbeblue (1866), La Vie parisienne (1866), La Grande-Duchesse de Gerolstein (1867), La Perichole (1868). The libretto for Carmen was also produced by their association, but they were best known for light sketches of Parisian life: Les Sonnettes, Madame attend Monsieur, Toto chez Tata, Le Roi Canduale. Henry Meilhac also worked for Herve (Mam'zelle Nitouche 1883), Jules Massenet (Manon 1884) and Robert Planquett (Rip Van Winkle 1884). Ludovic Halevy was also a cousin of Bizet's wife Genevieve. The story was based on a novella of the same title by Prosper Merimee (1803-1870) published in 1845 in the journal Revue des deux Mondes. It was Bizet who first proposed an adaptation of the novel he has first encountered during his stay in Rome.

Performance history: Premiere on 3 March 1875 at Opera-Comique, Paris. The premiere was conducted by Adolphe Deloffre and attended by leading musical figures, including Massenet, Offenbach, Delibes and Gounod. The general tone of the press reviews ranged from disappointment to outrage. After three months from the premiere Georges Bizet died of heart disease, at the age of 36. The first version of the opera at the Vienna Court Opera was on 23 October 1875 and it was a great success with the general public. Ernest Guiraud has reorchestrated music from Bizet's L'Arlesienne suite to provide a spectacular ballet for the second act. In 1876, Carmen began to run in Brussels at La Monnaie and on 17 June 1878 it was produced in London at Her Majesty's Theatre. In the same year the performance premiered in New York at the Academy of Music and then in Saint Petersburg. Numerous performances followed in American and European cities. The German Chancellor Otto von Bismark attended Carmen on 27 different occasions, while Friedrich Nietzsche used to say that he was a better man when listening to Bizet's music. In 1881 the Spanish premiere in Barcelona was yet another great success. The first performance at Metropolitan Opera in New York was on 9 January 1884. Up to the 2017/18 season, Carmen was played in the world for 3280 times, in 691 different productions, ranking 3 on Operabase list.

Roles: Carmen a young girl (mezzo-soprano), Don Jose corporal of Dragoons (tenor), Escamillo toreador (bass-baritone), Micaela a village maiden (soprano), Zuniga lieutenant of Dragoons (bass), Morales corporal of Dragoons (baritone), Frasquita companion of Carmen (soprano), Mercedes companion of Carmen (mezzo-soprano), Lillas Pastia (spoken), Le Dancaire smuggler (baritone), Le Remendado smuggler (tenor), A guide (spoken), Chorus (soldiers, girls, people)



Story: The action is set in Spain where Don Jose, a naive soldier is seduced by a native girl called Carmen. Found of her, Don Jose abandons his sweetheart and deserts from his military obligations, yet he loses her love to a glamorous matador called Escamillo. In a jealous rage, Don Jose kills Carmen than kneels and surrenders.

Act 1 (A square in Seville)

Prelude. A group of soldiers in the square comment on passers-by (On the square everyone comes by and goes). Micaela appears seeking Jose and Morales invites her to wait with them. Jose arrives with the new guard, greeted by a crowd of urchins (Right beside the relief guard here we come, here we are). As the bell rings, factory girls emerge and exchange looks with the young men in the crowd (The bell has rung). Carmen enters and sings a habanera (Love is a rebellious bird that no one can tame). The men plead with her to choose a lover and she throws a flower to Don Jose, annoyed by her insolence. As the girls go back to the factory, Micaela returns and gives Jose a letter from his mother (Tell me about my mother). He reads in the letter that his mother wants him to marry Michaela and declares that he is willing to fulfill her wish. The women steam from the factory in great agitation and Zuniga, the officer of the guard, learns that Carmen has attacked a girl with a knife. When challenged, Carmen answers defiantly (Tra la la la... cut me, burn me, I shall tell you nothing). Lieutenant Zuniga orders Jose to toe her hands while he prepares the prison warrant. Left alone with Jose, Carmen enchants him with a Castilian dance in which she sings of a night of dancing and passion with her lover in Lilla Pastia's tavern (By the ramparts of Seville). Confused and mesmerized, Jose agrees to free her hands and she runs off laughing. Jose is arrested in her place for neglecting his duty (Here's the order, off you go now).

Act 2 (Lillas Pastia's inn)

Two months have passed. Carmen, Frasquita and Mercedes are entertaining Zuniga and other officers (The sistrums' rods were jingling). Carmen is delighted to learn that Jose has been released from detention. Outside, a chorus announces the arrival in procession of the toreador Escamillo (Hurrah ! Hurrah for the Toreador). Invited inside, he presents himself singing (I can return your toast, gentleman). When the girls remain single, the smugglers Dancaire and Remendado arrive and reveal their plans to dispose some of the recently acquired contraband (We have a scheme in mind). Frasquita and Mercedes are keen to help them, while Carmen refuses waiting for Jose. Don Jose enters the scene and Carmen treats him with a private exotic dance (Softly, sir, softly. I am going to dance in your honour). Ballet (pas de deux). Hearing a call from the barracks, Jose excuses that he must return to duty, but Carmen dares him and he answers showing her the flower (The flower that you threw to me stayed with me in my prison). Flattered, Carmen dares him to desert with her but Jose refuses preparing to depart. Lieutenant Zuniga enters the room looking for Carmen and the two man engage in a duel for her, but are separated by the returning smugglers. Now a mutineer, Jose deserts his duty leaving with Carmen and the smugglers (Take to the country with us, come with us into the mountains).

Act 3 (A wild spot in the mountains)

Carmen and Jose enter with the smugglers and their booty (Listen, friends, listen). Don Jose is not happy with his new life, but Carmen teases him to go back to his mother. Frasquita and Mercedes are reading the cards for their fortune. Carmen joins them to find that the cards are foretelling her death, and Jose's. The girls depart to bribe the custom officers while Jose is left on guard duty. Micaela enters the scene with a guide, determined to rescue Don Jose from Carmen (I say that nothing frightens me). Hearing a gunshot Micaela hides in fear while

Escamillo enters the scene and declares his love for Carmen. Jose turns angry and the two men engage in a fight (I'm Escamillo, the Granada matador !). The fight ends as the girls and the smugglers enter the scene (Stop, Stop, Jose). Escamillo leaves the scene inviting everyone to his next bullfight in Seville. Micaela is discovered, exposing Jose to Carmen's mockery. Jose leaves with Micaela as she says that his mother is dying. As Jose leaves, Escamillo is heard in the distance singing the toreador's song.

Act 4 (A square in Seville, At the back, the walls of an ancient amphitheatre)

Lieutenant Zuniga, Frasquita and Mercedes are among the crowd awaiting the arrival of the bullfighters (Here they come ! Here's the quadrille ! the quadrille of toreadors). Escamillo enters with Carmen and they both express their love (If you love me, Carmen ...Ah ! I Love you, Escamillo). As Escamillo goes into the arena, Frasquita and Mercedes warn Carmen that Don Jose is nearby, but Carmen is unafraid. Left alone, Carmen is confronted by a desperate Jose (It's you ! ...Yes, me !). As cheers are heard from the arena, Don Jose pleads vainly for her return to him, but Carmen throws down the ring he gave her (Carmen, I love you, I adore you ! ...I'll stay a bandit, anything you like ...but do not leave me) . As Escamillo is acclaimed by the crowds in the arena, Don Jose stabs Carmen like a matador. Carmen dies and Jose kneels crying. The crowds exit the arena while Don Jose confesses to killing the girl (You can arrest me. I was the one who killed her !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - On the square everyone comes by and goes (chorus), Right beside the relief guard here we come, here we are (Chorus, Zuniga), The bell has rung (Chorus), Love is a rebellious bird that no one can tame (Carmen, Chorus), Tell me about my mother (Don Jose, Micaela), Tra la la la... cut me, burn me, I shall tell you nothing (Carmen, Zuniga, Chorus), By the ramparts of Seville (Carmen, Jose), Here's the order, off you go now (Zuniga, Carmen). Act 2 - The sistrums' rods were jingling (Carmen, Mercedes, Frasquita), Hurrah ! Hurrah for the Toreador (Chorus), I can return your toast, gentleman (Escamillo), We have a scheme in mind (Dancaire, Remendado), Softly, sir, softly. I am going to dance in your honour (Carmen, Don Jose), The flower that you threw to me stayed with me in my prison (Don Jose), Take to the country with us, come with us into the mountains (Jose, Carmen, smugglers). Act 3 - Listen, friends, listen (smugglers, the girls, Don Jose), I say that nothing frightens me (Micaela), I'm Escamillo, the Granada matador ! (Escamillo, Don Jose), Stop, Stop, Jose (Carmen, Chorus). Act 4 - Here they come ! Here's the quadrille ! the quadrille of toreadors (Zuniga, the girls, Chorus), If you love me, Carmen ...Ah ! I Love you, Escamillo (Escamillo, Carmen), It's you ! ...Yes, me ! (Carmen, Don Jose), Carmen, I love you, I adore you ! ...I'll stay a bandit, anything you like ...but do not leave me (Don Jose), You can arrest me. I was the one who killed her ! (Don Jose).

Ballet: In 1879, the composer Ernest Guiraud arranged Bizet's L'Arlesienne Suite No 2 to provide a spectacular ballet for the second act, to create a grand opera format. Carmen, for Ballets de Paris, was conceived in 1949 in five scenes to be the first choreographic work based on Bizet's score and Merimee's story. Carmen Suite is a one act ballet created in 1967 by Cuban choreographer Alberto Alonso to music by Russian composer Rodion Shchedrin for his wife, prima ballerina Maya Plisetskaya. The music was taken from the opera Carmen by Georges Bizet and arranged for strings and percussion. The premiere took place on 20 April 1967 at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow. In 1992, Carmen was created for Sweden's Cullberg Ballet using Shchedrin's suite.

Recordings: 1911 l'Opera Comique, Paris (Marguerite Merentie-Carmen, Karl Jorn-Don Jose, Minnie Nast-Micaela, Hermann Bachmann-Escamillo), 1931 Teatro alla Scala, Milano (Gabriella Besanzoni-Carmen, Piero Pauli-Don Jose, Marthe Carbone-Micaela, Ernesto Besanzoni-Escamillo), 1937 Metropoli Opera, New York (Rosa Ponselle-Carmen, Raymond Berthaud-Don Jose, Ginette Guillamat-Micaela, Lucien Lovano-Escamillo), 1952 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Vera Borisenko-Carmen, Georgi Nelepp-Don Jose, Elizaveta Shumskaya-Micaela, Alexei Ivanov-Escamillo), 1954 Wiener Symphoniker and Singerverein, Vienna (Giuletta Simionato-Carmen, Nicolai Gedda-Don Jose, Hilde Gueden-Micaela, Michel Roux-Escamillo), 1964 Theatre National de l'Opera, Paris (Maria Callas-Carmen, Nicolai Gedda-Don Jose, Andrea Guiot-Micaela, Robert Massard-Escamillo), 1977 London Symphony Orchestra, London (Tereza Berganza-Carmen, Placido Domingo-Don Jose, Ileana Cotrubas-Micaela, Sherrill Milnes-Escamillo), 2002 Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse, Toulouse (Angela Gheorghiu-Carmen, Roberto Alanga-Don Jose, Inva Mula-Micaela, Thomas Hampson-Escamillo), 2010 Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Paris (Marina Domashenko-Carmen, Andrea Bocelli-Don Jose, Eva Mei-Micaela, Bryn Terfel-Escamillo)

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7. William Tell

Title: William Tell (Guillaume Tell, Wilhelm Tell)

Composer: Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792-1868). Born in Pesaro, Italy, on the Adriatic coast, his father Giuseppe Rossini was a horn player and inspector of slaughterhouses while his mother Anna Rossini was a theatre singer and a baker's daughter. As a young boy, Rossini had three years of instruction from Giuseppe Prinetti, in playing the harpsichord. He learned to play the piano with Angelo Tesei and at the age of ten he played solo parts in the local church. He wrote his first opera at the age of 13. In 1806, Rossini became a cello student at the Conservatorio di Bologna and a year later he was admitted to the counterpoint class of Padre Stanislao Mattei (1750-1825). In 1815 he was appointed musical director of the Teatro del Fondo in Naples where he composed one opera each year. In 1822 Rossini married the renowned soprano Isabella Colbran (1785-1845) with no offspring. Roles such as: Elisabetta, Desdemona, Armida, Elcira, Zoraide, Ermione, Elena, Anna and Zelmira were written by Rossini especially for her. In 1824 he became musical director of the Theatre des Italiens in Paris at a salary of 800 pounds per year and he was contracted by King Charles Philippe himself. In 1839 he was appointed director of the Liceo Musicale di Bologna and in 1855 he settled in Paris again where he was named Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour. Operas: Demetrio e Polibio (1812), La cambiale di matrimonio (1810), L'equivoco stravagante (1811), L'inganno felice (1812), Ciro in Babilonia (1812), La scala di seta (1812), La pietra del paragone (1812), L'occasione fa il lardo (1812), Il signor Bruschino (1813), Tancredi (1813), L'italiana in Algeri (1813), Aureliano in Palmira (1813), Il turco in Italia (1814), Sigismondo (1814), Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra (1815), Torvaldo e Dorliska (1815), Il barbiere di Siviglia (1816), La gazzetta (1816), Otello (1816), La Cenerentola (1817), La gazza ladra (1817), Armida (1817), Adelaide di Borgogna (1817), Mose in Egitto (1818), Adina (1826), Ricciardo e Zoraide (1818), Ermione (1819), Eduardo e Cristina (1819), La donna del lago (1819), Bianca e Falliero (1819), Maometto II (1820), Matilde di Shabran (1821), Zelmira (1822), Semiramide (1823), Il viaggio a Reims (1825), Le siege de Corinthe (1826), Moise et Pharaon (1827), Le comte Ory (1828), Guillaume Tell (1829). His work also includes cantatas, instrumental music, chamber music, sacred music, secular vocal music.

Libretto: Victor Joseph Etienne de Jouy (1764-1846) was a French dramatist and librettist with a former military career. His collaboration with Rossini resulted in two operas: Moise et Pharaon (1827), Guillaume Tell (1829). He has also worked with the Italian composer Gaspare Spontini (1774-1851) for the operas: Milton (1804), La Vestale (1807), Fernand Cortez (1809) and with Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) for the opera Les Abencerages, ou L'etendard de Grenade (1813). For Guillaume Tell he has worked in collaboration with Hippolyte Louis Florent Bis (1789-1855), a French playwright and librettist also known for his theatre playwrights: Lothaire (1817), Attila (1822), Blanche d'Aquitaine (1827), Jeanne de Flandre (1845). The subject for their libretto was based on the play Wilhelm Tell written in 1804 by the German poet, philosopher and playwright Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805).

Performance history: Premiere on 3 August 1829 at Salle Le Peletier, Paris. Because the main character was a revolutionary figure, the opera encountered difficulties with the Italian censors. The Teatro San Carlo in Naples produced the opera in 1833, but the performance was interrupted for the next 50 years. The first production at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice was in 1856. In Vienna, at the Vienna Court Opera, over the years 1830 - 1907 Wilhelm Tell was performed 422 times. In London, the premiere was on 1 May 1830 at Drury Lane and in 1845 at Covent Garden. In New York, William Tell was first presented on 19 September 1831. In the 20th century, the major productions were in Florence (1972), Geneva (1979, 1991), Milan (1988), Paris (1989) and London (1990). Due to its length, roughly four hours of music, when performed the opera was often cut. Up to the 2017/18 season, William Tell was played in the world for 121 times, in 31 different productions, ranking 153 on Operabase list.

Roles: William Tell (baritone), Hedwige his wife (mezzo-soprano), Jemmy his son (soprano), Mathilde a Habsburg princess (soprano), Arnold Melchtal (tenor), Melchtal his father (bass), Gesler the Imperial Governor

(bass), Walter Furst (bass), Ruodi, a fisherman (tenor), Leuthold a shepherd (bass), Rodolphe Captain of Gesler's guard (tenor), A hunter (baritone), Chorus (peasants, shepherds, knights, ladies, soldiers, bridal couples)



Story: Wilhelm Tell (Will helm teller - soldier's bowl) is an old German legend about an expert archer who has killed the Imperial Governor to free his country. The song of the Apple Contest dates back to the years of 1200, written by the Dannish song writer Saxo Grammaticus (1149-1220) in his Gesta Danorum. The action takes place in the year 1307 in Switzerland, during the rule of Albert I King of the Romans, duke of Austria and count of Habsburg. After numerous chronicles and popular veneration for the legend, it was Antoine Martin Lemierre who wrote a play inspired by Wilhelm Tell in 1766. The drama written in 1804 by Friedrich Schiller focuses on Wilhelm Tell as a part of the Swiss struggle for independence from the Holy Roman Empire.

Act 1 (By the shore of Lake Lucerne)

Ouverture (Hunters chorus) Ballet. It is the day of the Shepherd Festival, in May, with the local peasants preparing chalets for three newly wedded couples, singing as they work. (What a serene day the sky foretells). The fisherman, Roudi, sings a gentle love song from his boat accompanied by harps and flutes. Apart from the the general merriment, William Tell is consumed with the liberty of his country (He sings, and Helvetia mourns her liberty). His wife Hedwige and his son Jemmy repeat their version of Rodi's love song. All activities are interrupted by cow bells, as the horns play a nostalgic song (ranz de vache) marking the cattle return from the pasture. Melchthal, a respected elder of the canton arrives with the cows and is persuaded by Hedwige to bless the couples to be married (Lett all celebrate, on this glorious day, work, marriage and love). Melchthal admonishes his son Arnold for his failure to marry while William Tell invites Melchthal into his chalet. Arnold recollects that he is serving in the Imperial Army and he has fallen in love with Mathilde, a Habsburg princess he has rescued from an avalanche, but his heart is torn apart between his love and his shame of beeing a servant. Horn fanfares as the Imperial Governor Gestler approaches with his entourage. Arnold moves to greet the arrival, expecting to see Mathilde, but William Tell stops him reminding him of the planned rebellion against the governor. Arnold responds tortured between his love and his country (Ah Mathilde, idol of my soul...O my fatherland, my heart sacrifices you...). The villagers then reassemble and Melchthal blesses the couples, followed by singing, dancing and an archery contest where Jemmy wins with his first shot. Leuthold enters the scene. He is an old wounded shepard who has killed one of the governor's soldiers while defending his daughter. Roudi refuses to take him in his boat while the soldiers calling for Leuthold's blood approach. William Tell takes Leuthold into the boat and depart from shore, while the guard arrives led by Rodolphe incensed by the villager's joy at the escape. Melchthal urges the villagers not to betrade who has aided Leuthold and is taken prisoner. Captain Rodolphe and the soldiers promise vengeance (What a rage, what a rob on this shore war has arrived). Tell's family and friends hold their hopes in William Tell's skills as an archer.

Act 2 (A meadow in the heights, overlooking the Lake and the Cantons)

A hunting party of ladies and gentleman, accompanied by soldiers, linger in the meadow waiting for their hunting price. Hearing the Governor's horns, Mathilde sings, believing she has glimpsed Arnold, the victim of her charms (Somber forest, sad and savage wilderness). As Arnold appears, each confess to the other the desire for this meeting (Yes, you wring from my soul). Arnold declares his love for her and Mathilda assures him of the eventual acceptability of his suit, as long as he will return to the field of glory to honor his duty as a

soldier. Mathilde departs, while William Tell arrives with Walter Furst, to question Arnold about his relation with Mathilde, who is a member of the oppressing class. Offended by their suspicion, Arnold declares that he loves Mathilda and he will fight to gain his glory in the Imperial Army, to win her heart. His spirit is soon reverted when Walter Furst brings him the news that his father Melchtal has been executed at the orders of Governor Gesler (What do I hear ? O crime ! ... to independence or to death.). The three men are soon joined by men from the canton Unterwalden (Here we are for bravery), followed by men from the Schwyz canton (Now in the times of trouble), and from men from the Uri canton (William, you want). As the men from all three cantons gather, the tone and tempo of the finale rises, together with their willingness to fight and to die for the freedom of Switzerland (Let us swear, let us swear by our dangers).

Act 3 (A deserted chapel / The main square at Altdorf)

Arnold has obtained a secret meeting with Mathilda. He tells her that Governor Gesler has executed his father and he is going for revenge, deserting the army and renouncing to both glory and her. Mathilde denounces the crime and mourns on the impossibility of their love (All hope for our love has gone). Anticipating his home sick and their both missing of each other, Mathilde and Arnold bid a fond farewell to each other (Though upon a foreign shore). Scene 2 - It is the hundreth anniversary day of the Imperial rule in Switzerland. Soldiers sing of the glories of the Emperor and gouvernor. A variety of dances and choruses follow. Ballet. William Tell is noticed by the soldiers in the crowd, together with his son and Captain Rodolphe recognises him as the man who assisted in Leuthold's escape. The soldiers express their hesitation in arresting the famed archer (It's that redoubtable archer), but Governor Gesler orders them to act. Eager to test William Tell's skill, Governor Gestler offers Tell a chance: - to shoot an arrow through an apple on his son's head in exchange for liberty. If his heart is true, his hand will not shake. William Tell retrieves his bow, but takes two arrows and hides one, than he sings to Jemmy instructing him (Stay completely still). William Tell shoots the target and Governor Gesler is enraged as the people acclaim his victory. Noticing the second arrow, Governor Gesler claims an assasination attempt, denounces the deal and orders that both William Tell and his son Jemmy are to be executed. Mathilde enters the scene and claims on behalf of Jemmy's life, in the name of the Emperor (You will not have him). Governor Gesler agrees to free Jemmy, but announces his intention to take William Tell across the Lake Lucerne, to feed the reptiles at fort Kussnacht. The journey on the lake is dangerous in the storm, but Goveronor Gesler intends to force William Tell to pilot the vessel himself. As they leave, the people cry "Anathema on Gesler", while the soldiers sing "Long Live Gesler".

Act 4 (Old Melchtal's house / The rocky shore of Lake Lucerne)

Alone in his father's home, Arnold sings a moving lament (Do not abandon me, hope of vengeance... Home of my forefathers). Men from all three cantons arrive, sharing and reinforcing his hope of venance. As the men behold their weapons, Arnold inflates the spirits demanding (Friends, friends, assist my vengeance) and they all leave to storm the city of Altdorf. Scene 2 - Among other women by the lake, Hedwige announces her intention to beg Governor Gesler for the life of her husband. Jemmy enters along with Mathilde singing (I return to your love a son worthy of you). Jemmy brings the news that Tell is no longer in Altdorf, but on the lake and Hedwige begins to mourn (Save William ! He dies a victim of his love for his country). Leuthold arrives with the news that the boat carrying WilliamTell, with his hands in chains, is being driven by a storm to the rocks. After some moments of tension, the boat pulls into view and William Tell jumps ashore, only to see his house burning in the distance. Jemmy tells him that he has accidentally set fire to their home, but he managed to rescue his father's bow and arrows. Governor Gesler enters the scene with the soldiers, but William Tell kills him with a single shot, crying "Let Switzerland breathe". Arnold and his band enter the scene, breaking the happy news: they have taken Altdorf. Mathilde declares her self disabused of false grandeur and readu to join Arnold in his fight for liberty. The Sun shines again on a pastoral scene. Gathered men and women sing to the magnificence of nature and the return of freedom (Liberty, descend again from heaven) as the rantz de vaches motif returns once again.

Great moments and arias: Ouverture (Hunters chorus) Act 1-What a serene day the sky foretells (chorus), He sings, and Helvetia mourns her liberty (William Tell), Lett all celebrate, on this glorious day, work, marriage and love (everyone on stage), Ah Mathilde, idol of my soul...O my fatherland, my heart sacrifices you...(Arnold, William Tell), What a rage, what a rob on this shore war has arrived (Rodolpho, chorus). Act 2 - Sombre forest, sad and savage wilderness (Mathilde), Yes, you wring from my soul (duet Mathilde, Arnold), What do I hear ? O

crime ! ... to independence ot to death (Arnold), Here we are for bravery (chorus), Now in the times of trouble (chorus), William, you want (chorus), Let us swear, let us swear by our dangers (William Tell, Walter, Arnold, everyone on scene). Act 3 - All hope for our love has gone (Mathilde), Though upon a foreign shore (Mathilde, Arnold), It's that redoubtable archer (chorus), Stay completely still (William Tell), You will not have him (Mathilde). Act 4 - Do not abandon me, hope of vengeance... Home of my forefathers (Arnold), Friends, friends, assist my vengeance (Arnold), I return to your love a son worthy of you (Mathilde), Save William ! He dies a victim of his love for his country (Hedwige), Liberty, descend again from heaven (Everyone on scene).

Ballet: Ouverture - The march of Swiss soldiers (pas de soldats). Different settings on different performances. Act 3 - Pas de trois. Imperial soldiers are dancing with local girls. The original music includes choral singing that does not appear in all modern performances. In 1868, August Bournoville (1805-18798) the Danish Ballet master and choreographer has directed a restaging of William Tell and he has choreographed to Rossini's music the charming pas de trois form Act 3.

Recordings: 1953 Leipzig Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Leipzig (Theodor Horand - William Tell, Gert Lutze - Arnold, Annaliese Schubert Heuhaus - Mathilde), 1956 Radio Italiana, Milan (Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - William Tell, Gianni Jaia - Arnold, Anita Cerquetti - Mathilde), 1972 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Gabriel Bacquier - William Tell, Nicolai Gedda - Arnold, Montserrat Caballe - Mathilde), 1978 National Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Sherrill Milnes - William Tell, Luciano Pavarotti - Arnold, Mirella Freni - Mathilda), 1998 Vienna State Opera, Vienna (Thomas Hampson - William Tell, Giuseppe Sabbatini - Arnold, Nancy Gustafson - Mathilde), 2011 Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome (Gerald Finley - William Tell, John Osborn - Arnold, Marie Nicole Lemieux - Mathilde), 2013 Virtuosi Brunensis, Bach Chamber Choir, Poznan (Andrew Foster Williams- William Tell, Michael Spyres - Arnold, Alessandra Volpe - Mathilde).

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8. Porgy and Bess

Title: Porgy and Bess

Composer: George Gershwin (1898-1937). Born in New York, on Brooklyn's Snediker Avenue, his father Moishe Gershowitz was a leather cutter for women shoes and his mother Roza Bruskina was the daughter of a furrier, both being Jewish immigrants from Imperial Russia. At ten years of age he started to play the piano and tried various piano teachers before Charles Hambitzer (1878-1918) from the Beethoven Symphony Orchestra. Later he studied with composer Rubin Goldmark (1872-1936) and with composer theorist Henry Cowell (1897-1965). Gershwin left school at the age of 15 to work as a song plugger for 15 dollars a week. In late 1910s Gershwin met music director William Daly to be involved in Broadway musicals. In 1916 he started working in recording and arranging for Aeolian Company and Standard Music Rolls in New York. His first major classical work, Rhapsody in Blue was produced in 1924. He later traveled to Paris where he contacted Nadia Boulanger and Maurice Ravel and produced his composition An American in Paris. In 1929 he was contracted by Fox Film Corporation to compose the score for the movie Delicious. In 1936 he moved to California where he was commissioned by RKO Radio Pictures to write the music for the film Shall We Dance, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. In 1937 George Gershwin received his sole Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song, at the 1937 Oscars, but the nomination was posthumous. Operas: Blue Monday (1922), Porgy and Bess (1935). Other classical works include: Lullaby (1919), Rhapsody in Blue (1924), Short Story (1925), Concerto in F (1925), An American in Paris (1928), Second Rhapsody (1931), Cuban Overture (1932), Shall We Dance (1937), also numerous works for piano, films and Broadway musicals.

Libretto: DuBose Heyward (1885-1940) and Ira Gershwin (1896-1983). Edwin DuBose Heyward was a descendent of Judge Thomas Heyward (1746-1809), signer of the United States Declaration of Independence, member of the planter elite in South Carolina. In 1925 he wrote a novel about a crippled street begger named Porgy that he later adapted as a play, together with his wife Dorothy Heyward, also a playwright. While working on that adaptation he was approached by composer George Gershwin who proposed collaborating on an opera. Ira Gershwin, the composer's brother and partner worked on the lyrics. Ira Gershwin, together with

George, wrote more than a dozen Broadway shows and numerous notable songs. Three of his songs were nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Song, though none won. In 1988, University of California Los Angeles established The George and Ira Gershwin Lifetime Musical Achievement Award in recognition to their contribution to music.

Performance history: Premiere on 30 September 1935 at Colonial Theatre, Boston. The New York first performance took place on 10 October 1935 at Alvin Theatre where it lasted for 124 performances. After the Broadway run, a tour started on January 27 in 1936, starting in Philadelphia, traveling to Pittsburgh and Chicago, before ending in Washington DC. On 7 May 1942 the WOR radio station in New York broadcast a live one hour version of the opera, transferred on tape in 1975. The opera had its European premiere on 27 March 1943 at the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen. Other productions in Europe include Zurich (1945) and Gothenburg (1948). The opera premiered in Charleston, South Carolina in 1970. A new staging of Porgy and Bess was produced by the Houston Grand Opera of Texas in 1976 under music director John DeMain. It was the first time to be accepted as an opera and not a Broadway show. The Houston Grand Opera production was the only opera ever to receive a Grammy Award (Gramophone Award). The Metropolitan Opera finally presented Porgy and Bess in 1985. Cape Town Opera in South Africa has frequently performed the opera most notably with the Welsh National Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin. Up to the 2017/18 season, Porgy and Bess was played in the world for 172 times, in 24 different productions, ranking 172 on Operabase list.

Roles: Porgy, a disabled beggar (bass-baritone), Bess, a young girl (soprano), Crown, a tough dockworker (baritone), Sportin' Life, a drug dealer (tenor), Robbins, an inhabitant of Catfish Row (tenor), Serena, Robbin's wife (soprano), Jake, a fisherman (baritone), Clara, Jake's wife (soprano), Maria, keeper of the cookshop (contralto), Mingo (tenor), Peter, the honeyman (tenor), Lily, Peter's wife (soprano), Frazier, a pretended lawyer (baritone), Annie (mezzo-soprano), Strawberry woman (mezzo-soprano), Jim, a cotton picker (baritone), Undertaker (baritone), Nelson (tenor), Crab man (tenor), Scipio, a small boy (boy soprano), Mr. Archdale, Lawyer (spoken), Detective (spoken), Policeman (spoken), Coroner (spoken), Chorus (fishermen, women, people).



Story: Porgy was a crippled beggar who got around in a goat cart. In an old Charleston newspaper article he was described as a vicious person who had killed three men. When he died, his grave was dug North to South because he died an unrepented sinner. Catfish Row is a dock neighbourhood where three outlaws, a docker, a beggar and a drugs dealer, are in love with a young girl. The docker kills a man and the girl finds her peace with the beggar, but not for long. A hurricane sinks a boat and some fishermen are killed. When the docker comes back for the girl, Porgy the beggar kills him and gets arrested, while the girl runs away with the drugs dealer. Freed from jail, Porgy adventures in his goat cart to find the girl and the little community of Catfish Row is freed from all four bad characters and their sinful romance.

Act 1 (Catfish Row, a summer evening / Serena's Room, the following night)

At Catfish Row, Jasbo Brown plays his piano, while Clara, a young mother sings a lullaby to her baby (Summertime). The working men prepare for a game of dice (Roll them Bones). On a Saturday night a man has the right to play. Fisherman Jake, tries his own lullaby (A Woman is a Sometime Thing), with little effect. As more people enter the scene, Porgy enters on his goat cart to organize the game. Peter an elderly honey man

returns singing a vendor's call. Crown and his girlfriend Bess enter the scene to buy whiskey and some Happy Dust from the local drug dealer. Bess is shunned by the women of the community, but Porgy softly defends her. The game begins and one by one players are eliminated leaving only Robbins and Crown, who has become extremely drunk. When Robbins wins, Crown stabs him with a cotton hook, killing him. Crown runs, leaving Bess to defend herself alone. Bess begins to pound on doors but is rejected by all the residents with the exception of Porgy. Scene 2 - The mourners sing a spiritual song to Robbins (Gone, Gone, Gone). To raise money for his burial, a saucer is placed on Robbins' chest for donations (Overflow). Bess enters with Porgy and attempts to donate but Serena rejects her money. A white detective enters and accuses Peter of the murder. Peter says that Crown is the murderer and is arrested as a material witness, to testify against Crown. Serena laments her loss (My Man's Gone Now). As the saucer holds only 15 dollars of the needed 25, the undertaker agrees to bury Robbins on debt. Bess begins to sing a gospel song and the chorus join in (Oh, the Train is at the Station).

Act 2 (Catfish Row, a month later, in the morning / Kittiwak Island, that evening / Catfish Row, a week later, just before dawn / Serena's Room, dawn of the next day)

Jake and other fishermen prepare for work (It takes a long pull to get there). It is time for annual storms, but they need the money. Porgy sings from his window (I got plenty o' nuttin'). Sportin' Life waltzes selling drugs, only to receive a vexation from Maria (I hate yo' struttin' style). Frazier, a self-imposed lawyer arrives to pronounce a pointless divorce of Bess from Crown. When he hears that Bess and Crown were not married he raises his fee from a dollar to a dollar and a half. Archdale, a white lawyer, informs Porgy that Peter will soon be released. The bad augury shadow of a turkey vulture flies over Catfish Row and Porgy invokes the shadow to leave, now that he finally has found happiness (Burrard keep on flyin' over). Sportin' Life offers to take Bess to New York with him, but she refuses and Porgy grabs his arm and scares him away. Left alone, Bess and Porgy express their love for each other (Bess, You Is My Woman Now). People on Catfish Row prepare to leave for picnic on nearby Kittiwah Island (Oh, I can't sit down). Bess is invited to the picnic and Porgy is left behind, due to his disability. Watching the boat leave, Porgy repeats (I got plenty o' nuttin'). Scene 2 - The chorus enjoys themselves on picnic (I ain't got no shame). Sportin' Life presents the chorus his personal views on the Bible (It Ain't Necessarily So), causing Serena to respond (Shame on all you sinners!). Everyone gets ready to leave. Left alone Bess is encountered by Crown emerging from the bushes. Bess claims to have a decent life now and attempts to leave him (Oh, what you want with Bess?), but Crown refuses to give up. He grabs her and the boat leaves without her. As her resistance fails he commands her into the woods. Scene 3 - Jake and his crew leave the bay for fishing although a storm is coming in. Peter returns from prison, unsure of his crime. Bess is lying in Porgy's room, delirious with fever, which she has had ever since returning from the picnic. Serena prays to heal her affliction (Oh, Doctor Jesus) before five o'clock. As the day passes, a strawberry woman, Peter the honey man and a crab man pass by with their merchandise (Vendor's Trio). As the clock chimes five, Bess recovers from her fever and admits that she has been with Crown and he has promised to return for her. Porgy tells her she is free to go, but Bess begs him to protect her (I Love You, Porgy). Women are afraid for their husbands and suddenly the hurricane bell begins to ring. Scene 4 - Residents are gathered in Serena's room for shelter from the hurricane. They raise their spirits with prayers and hymns (Oh, Doctor Jesus). Clara desperately sings her lullaby (Summertime). A knock at the door brings only fears (Oh there's somebody knocking at the door). Crown enters dramatically, having swum from the island in search of Bess. Claiming that he and God are friends, Crown dares them with a vulgar song (A Red Headed Woman). Jake's boat is seen from the window, upside down. Clara runs to try to save her husband. Bess asks for some men to help and Crown is the only one to volunteer.

Act 3 (Catfish Row, the next night / the next afternoon / a week later)

Clara and a group of women mourn Jake and all those killed in the storm (Clara, Clara, don't you be downhearted). Crown is also mourned with the dead, but Sportin' Life insinuates that Crown may have escaped, but there is no woman for him for the keeps. Bess is heard singing the lullaby to Clara's baby (Summertime). In the night, Crown stealthily enters to claim Bess, but is confronted by Porgy. The two men fight and Porgy kills Crown, singing to Bess (You've got a man now. You've got Porgy!). Scene 2 - The detective questions Serena and her friends about the murders of Crown and Robbins, but they all deny knowledge. Next the detective questions Porgy who admits of knowing Crown and is ordered to identify the body. Sportin' Life tells Porgy that corpses bleed in the presence of their murderers and Porgy refuses to identify the body, making him a suspect and resulting in his arrest. Left alone, Sportin' Life makes his move on Bess pointing that he is the only one left and offering her some Happy Dust. She takes a sniff, while Sportin' Life is picturing a happy life with him in

New York (There's a boat that's leavin' soon for New York). Bess retreats, slamming the door on his face, but he leaves the drug on her doorstep and settles down to wait. Scene 3 - On a beautiful morning, Porgy is released from jail, much richer after playing dices with his cellmates. He brings gifts to the residents and pulls out a beautiful red dress for Bess. Porgy does not understand why everyone is so uneasy with his return. He asks for Bess, only to find out that Bess has run off with Sportin' Life to New York (Oh Bess, Oh Where's my Bess). Porgy calls for his goat cart and resolves to leave Catfish Row to find her. He prays for strength and begins his journey (Oh, Lawd, I'm on my way).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Summertime (Clara), Roll them Bones (Chorus), A Woman is a Sometime Thing (Jake), Gone, Gone, Gone (Chorus), Overflow (Chorus), My Man's Gone Now (Serena), Oh, the Train is at the Station (Bess, chorus). Act 2 - It take a long pull to get there (Jack, Chorus), I got plenty o'nuttin (Porgy), I hates yo' sttrutin style (Maria), Buzzard keep on flyin' over (Porgy), Bess, You Is My Woman Now (Bess, Porgy), Oh, I can't sit down (chorus), I got plenty o' nuttin (Porgy), I ain't got no shame (Chorus), It Ain't Necessarily So (Sportin' Life), Shame on all you sinners ! (Serena), Oh, what you want wid Bess ? (Bess), Oh, Doctor Jesus (Serena), Vendor's Trio (strawberry woman, Peter, crab man), I Loves You, Porgy (Bess), Oh, Doctor Jesus (Serena, Chorus), Summertime (Clara), Oh there's somebody knocking at the door (Chorus), A red headed woman (Crown). Act 3 - Clara, Clara, don't you be downhearted (Clara, Chorus), Summertime (Bess), You've got a man now. You've got Porgy ! (Porgy), There's a boat that's leavin' soon for New York (Sportin' Life), Oh Bess, Oh Where's my Bess (Porgy), Oh, Lawd, I'm on my way (Porgy).

Ballet: In 1983, the Russian dancer and choreographer Mikhail Lavrovsky (born 1941) has choreographed for the Tbilisi Ballet a version of Porgy and Bess where he danced Porgy. In 1995, American dancer Hope Clarke (born 1941) was the first woman to direct and choreograph a major staging of the opera-musical Porgy and Bess for Houston Grand Opera. The ballet production toured not only major American cities but Japan and Europe as well.

Recordings: 1951 Columbia Masterworks, New York (Lawrance Winters - Porgy, Camilla Williams - Bess), 1956 Bethlehem Records, New York (Mel Torme - Porgy, Frances Faye - Bess), 1958 Studio album, Los Angeles (Louis Armstrong - Porgy, Ella Fitzgerald - Bess), 1976 Decca Records, London (Willard White - Porgy, Leona Mitchell - Bess), 1977 Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor), Huston Grand Opera (John DeMain - Porgy, Clamma Dale - Bess), 2010 Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor), Metropolitan Opera New York (Jonathan Lemalu - Porgy, Isabelle Kabatu - Bess), 2014 EuroArts Music, San Francisco Opera (Eric Owens - Porgy, Laquita Mitchell - Bess)

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9. Boris Godunov

Title: Boris Godunov (Boris Godunoff)

Composer: Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881). Born in Karevo, Pskov Governorate 400 km south of Saint Petersburg, in a noble family descending from boyar Roman Vasilyevich Monastyrkov and with a continuous genealogical lineage to King Rurik, the founder of the Russian state. His father Pyotr Alexeyevich Musirskoy was a landowner, while his mother Yulia Ivanovna Chirikova was an excelent pianist herself. At the age of six he began receiving piano lessons from her mother. Three years later he was able to perform a concerto. At 12 years old Mussorgsky published his first piano piece, a Polka. One year later he entered the Cadet School of the Guards in Saint Petersburg. In 1856, by now a lieutenant, Modest Mussorgsky joined the Preobrazhensky Guards, one of the most aristocratic regiments in Russia. Together with Alexander Borodin he served in a military hospital in Saint Petersburg. Since 1858 he devoted himself entirely to music. Member of the musical society, together with Mily Balakirev, Alexander Borodin, Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov and Cesar Cui, Modest Mussorgsky was a founder of the New Russian School, also known as Kuchka (The Five). He spent most of his life as a low rank boyar, living on his rent, with a strong attachment for music and composing. His civil service career in the Office of Government Control was treated with great clemency by his superior. Operas: Hans of

Icelad (1856), Oedipus in Athens (1858), Salammbo (1863), Marriage (1868), Boris Godunov (1868, 1871), Bobil (1870), Mlada (1872), Khovanshchina (1872), The Fair at Sorochyntsi (1874) but only Boris Godunov was a finished project. His work also includes orchestral works, piano works, choral works and numerous songs.

Libretto: Modest Mussorgsky. The libretto was written by the composer himself, based on the drama Boris Godunov by Aleksandr Pushkin and on Nikolay Karamzin's History of the Russian State. The play written by Alexander Pushkin was published in 1831, but not approved for performance by the censor until 1866. An Imperial ukaz of 1837 forbade the portrayal of Russian Tsars in public performances. Its subject is the Russian ruler Boris Godunov, who reigned as a Tsar from 1598 to 1605. The first performance of the play took place on 17 September 1870 at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg. Vladimir Nikolsky, his professor of Russian History and language, suggested Mussorgsky the idea of an opera inspired from Pushkin's play. The first libretto was rejected for its lack of an important female role. The revised version was finished in 1872.

Performance history: Premiere on 27 January 1874 at Mariinsky Theatre, Saint Petersburg. According to Cesar Cui, the success was enormous and complete, never had such ovations been given to a composer at the Mariinsky. The performance received its Moscow premiere on 16 December 1888 at the Bolshoy Theatre. In 1896 The Great Hall of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory premiered a version conducted by Nicolay Rimsky Korsakov. In 1898 at the Solodovnikov Theatre in Moscow bass Fyodor Shalyapin first appeared as Boris. The first performance outside Russia was at the Paris Opera on 19 May 1908. In the United States the premiere at the Metropolitan Opera took place on 19 March 1913. In London, Boris Godunov premiered at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane on 24 June 1913, the cast including Fyodor Shalyapin as Boris. The first performance with a reorchestration from Dmitri Shostakovich took place on 4 November 1959 at the Kierov Theatre in Leningrad. At present, the original version is valued for the harmonic style and orchestration while revisions have fallen out of fashion. Up to the 2017/18 season, Boris Godunov was played in the world for 409 times, in 109 different productions, ranking 52 on Operabase list.

Roles: Boris Godunov (baritone or bass), Fyodor, his son (mezzo-soprano), Kseniya, his daughter (soprano), Nurse (contralto), Prince Vasiliy Ivanovich Shuysky (Tenor), Andrey Shchelkalov, clerk of the Duma (baritone), Piman, chronicler hermit (bass), The Pretender Grigoriy (tenor), Marina Mniszech, the daughter of the Sandomierz Voyevoda (mezzo-soprano), Rangoni, a covert Jesuit (bass), Varlaam, a vagabond (bass), Misail, a vagabond (tenor), The Innkeeper (mezzo-soprano), The yurodiviy troglodyte (Tenor), Nikitich, a police officer (bass), Mityukha, a peasant (bass), The Boyar in Attendance (tenor), The Boyar Khruskchov (tenor), Lawicki, Jesuit (bass), Czernikowski, Jesuit (bass), Chorus (boyars, children, policemen, nobles, minstrels, people)



Story: Young Tsar Fyodor Ivanovich has died, shortly after the death of his younger brother Tsarevich Dmitriy in a monastery. There are rumors that Dmitriy has been killed. Boyar Boris Godunov, brother in law of the former Tsar, and regent, is elected for the throne, but his enemies spread some rumors. A novice monk, of the same age and looks with Dmitriy, has a dream of glory and decides to pretend that he is the Tsarevich Dmitriy, entitled to inherit the throne of Russia. With some help from Poland, the Pretender invades the Russian land, followed by beggars and all the abused or ill-treated during Boris Godunov's rule. Hearing the news, the suffering Tsar also hears of a legend that Prince Dmitriy has turned into an angel and dies of a stroke, with a broken heart. Russia enters The Time of Troubles and Civil War.

Prologue (The Courtyard of the Novodevichiy Monastery near Moscow / Square in the Moscow Kremlin)

Tsar Fyodor Ivanovich has died. People crowd in the courtyard of the monastery where regent Boris Godunov has retired. Nikitich, the police officer orders people to kneel and to clamor for Boris Godunov to accept the throne (To whom dost thou abandon us, our father ?). Andrey Shchelkalov, the Secretary of the Duma, appears to inform the people that Boris refuses the throne of Russia (Orthodox folk ! The boyar is implacable !). As the people pray, a procession of pilgrims sings a hymn (Glory to Thee, Creator on High) asking the people to take up icons and go to meet the Tsar. Nikitich interrupts all discussions ordering people to appear the next day at the Moscow Kremlin. Scene 2 - Bells are ringing. From the porch of the Cathedral of the Dormition, Prince Shuysky asks the people to glorify Tsar Boris Godunov. The people sing and pray (Like the beautiful sun in the sky, glory). A solemn procession of boyars exits the cathedral. Boris appears on the porch and the people kneel. Boris Godunov mourns his sorrow for his brother in law (My soul grieves) and he prays for God's blessing. He invites the people to feast in memory of the past Tsar while he proceeds to the Cathedral of the Archangel to kneel at his tomb. The people meet Boris Godunov with ovations (Glory ! Glory ! Glory !) while the police officers struggle to maintain order.

Act 1 (A cell in the Chudov Monastery / An Inn on the Lithuanian Border)

Pimen, a venerable monk, writes a chronicle (Yet one last tale) of Russian history. Young novice Grigoriy awakes from a prophetic dream in which, as he recollects, he climbed a high tower and fell, only to be mocked by the people of Moscow. Pimen advises him to fast and pray. Regretting to have become a monk so young of age, Grigoriy asks Pimen about his former life. Pimen recollects the times of adventure of Ivan the Terrible and his son Fyodor, who both exhibited great spiritual devotion, in contrast to the present Tsar Boris Godunov. Discovering the similarity of age with the dead Tsarevich Dmitriy Ivanovich, novice Grigoriy conceives the idea of posing as a Pretender to the throne. As Pimen departs, Grigoriy declares that Boris shall not escape the judgement of God. Scene 2 - The Hostess enters and sing (I have caught a gray drake). Varlaam and Misail, two tramps dressed as monks, together with Grigoriy dressed in a secular grab, enter the scene begging for donations. After exchanging greetings, Varlaam requests some wine and launches into a ferocious song (So it was in the city of Kazan) remembering the siege of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible. Grigoriy quietly obtains from the Hostess directions for a shortcut way to the Lithuanian border. Policemen enter the scene in search of a fugitive heretic monk who has run off from the Chudov Monastery. However, the policeman cannot read the ukaz so Grigoriy volunteers to read it. While reading, Grigoriy substitutes his description for that of Varlaam and the policemen quickly seize him. Varlaam who is barely literate and drunk protests his innocence and finally manages to read the true description of the suspect, while Grigoriy leaps out of the window waving a dagger. The men set off in pursuit.

Act 2 (The Interior of the Tsar's Terem in the Moscow Kremlin)

Ksenia mourns the death of her fiancée, Johan Prince of Schleswig-Holstein (Where are you, my bridegroom ?). Her brother Fyodor studies a great map of Russia and tries to console her together with her nurse (A gnat was chopping wood... A little tale of this and that). Boris enters the scene sending Ksenia and the nurse to their own quarters. Encouraging his son to resume his studies, Boris underlines his present fulfillment (I have attained supreme power). Then he recollects a vision of a bloody child begging for mercy. A boyar brings word of the arrival of Prince Shuysky and Boris advises Fyodor to be aware of cunning advisors when he will become Tsar (Our little parrot was sitting). Prince Shuysky enters the scene bringing the news that a Pretender has appeared in Lithuania. Boris demands to know his identity and Shuysky fears that the Pretender might act under the name of Tsarevich Dmitriy. Boris orders Shuysky to seal the border with Lithuania and threatens him, if he deceives, with gruesome execution. Prince Shuysky reassures the Tsar that Prince Dmitriy has died (In Uglich, in the Cathedral), but with divine intervention a miracle has delayed the decomposition of the body. Suffocated with self reproach and penitence, Boris gives a sign for Shuysky to depart and begins to hallucinate addressing to the dead Dmitriy (Begone, begone child ! I am not thy murderer... the will of the people !) while praying that God will have mercy on his soul.

Act 3 (The Budoir of Princess Marina Mniszech in Sandomierz / Mniszech Castle in Sandomierz. A Garden. A Fountain. A Moonlit night)

Maidens sing a sentimental song (On the blue Vistula) to entertain Princess Marina and her chambermaid.

Marina declares her preferences for songs of chivalry and dismisses everyone. Alone, she sings her boredom (How tediously and sluggishly), of Dmitry, of her thirst for adventure, power and glory. The Jesuit Rangoni enters, deplores the state of the church asking Marina to enchant the Pretender and when became Tsarina to convert the heretics of Moscow to Roman Catholicism. Marina wonders if she should do such thing, but Rangoni insists that she must sacrifice her honor for the benefit of the church. Stupefied by his insinuations, the young Marina demands Rangoni to leave, but he threatens her that she is under the spell of infernal forces and Marina collapses in fear. Rangoni demands her obedience. Scene 2 - Rangoni finds the Pretender dreaming in the castle's garden. Rangoni brings news that Marina has accepted a meeting but he advises the Pretender to accept him as a father, following his every step and thought. The Pretender hides as some Polish nobles emerge from the castle dancing a polonaise (Polonaise). Ballet. Marina flirts dancing with them. The Poles sing of taking the Muscovite throne, than they return to the castle. The Pretender comes out of hiding resolving with Rangoni to abandon the romance and focus on the military action, but Marina appears and he feels lovesick. However, Marina is not interested in romanceing and only wants to know when will he be a Tsar, because she can only be seduced with a throne and a crown. The Pretender kneels at her feet, only to be rejected once more. Ofended, the Pretender announces that he will depart the next day to lead his army to Moscow and in the future will take pleasure in watching her loosing her own throne. Civilized, Marina reverses course and begs her pardon telling him that she loves him (O Tsarevich, I implore you), while Rangoni rejoices his victory.

Act 4 (The Faceted Palace in the Moscow Kremlin / A Forest Glade near Kromi)

A session of the Duma is in progress. The assembled boyars listen as Shchelkalov reads the ukaz informing of the Pretender's claim to the throne of Russia and requests their judgement. After some arguments, the boyars agree to vote that the Pretender should be executed (Well, let's put it to a vote). Shuysky arrives with the news that Tsar Boris Godunov is fighting with the ghost of the dead Tsarevich. The boyars accuse Shuysky of spreading lies, but Tsar Boris Godunov enters the scene hallucinating (Begone, begone child). The boyars are horrified. When Boris Godunov comes to his senses, Shuysky informs him that a humbe man implores for an audience. Pimen enters the scene and tells the story of a blind man who heard the voice of Tsarevich in a dream (One day, at the evening hour). In his dream, Tsarevich Dmitry was an angel in Heaven and instructed him to go to Uglich and pray on his grave. The blind man did so and regained his sight. Impressed by the story, Boris Godunov suffers a heart attak and calls for his son (Farewell, my son, I am dying). The Tsar gives his son Fyodor final counsel and prays for the God's blessing on his children, than he dies dramatically (The bell, The funeral bell !). Scene 2 - A crowd of vagabonds have captured boyar Khrushchov and now are teasing and mocking him (Not a falcon flaying in the hravens). The yurodivy enters pursued by urchins and sings his son (The moon is flying, the kitten is crying). The yurodiviy has only one kopek which the urchins promptly steal while he groans pathetically. Varlaam and Misail are heard in the distance singing of the crimes (The sun and the Moon have gone dark). As they enter, the crowds gets agitated up to a frenzy (Our bold daring has broken free, gone on a rampage). Two Jesuits are heard in the distance chanting in Latin (Domine, Domine, salvum fac) praying that God will save Dmitriy. As they enter, at the instigation of Varlaam and Misail the crowd prepares to hang the Jesuits, who appeal to the Holy Virgin for aid. Pretender Dmitriy and his forces enter the scene glorified by the crowd (Glory to thee, Tsarevich). The Pretender frees Khrushchov and calls all those persecuted in Boris Godunov's time to march with him on Moscow. Everyone leave the scene, except the yurodiviy who sings a mournful song for the enemy and sorrow has arrived to Russia (Flow, flow, bitter tears !).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - To whom dost thou abandon us, our father ? (Chorus), Orthodox folk ! The boyar is implacable ! (Shchelkalov), Glory to Thee, Creator on High (Chorus), Like the beautiful sun in the sky, glory (Chorus), My soul grieves (Boris), Glory ! Glory ! Glory ! (Chorus). Act 1 - Yet one last tale (Pimen) Scene 2 - I have caught a gray drake (Hostess), So it was in the city of Kazan (Varlaam) Act 2 - Where are you, my bridegroom ? (Ksenia), A gnat was chopping wood... A little tale of this and that (Fyodor, Nurse), I have attained supreme power (Boris), Our little parrot was sitting (Boris), In Uglich, in the Cathedral (Shuysky), Begone, begone child ! I am not thy murderer... the will of the people ! (Boris). Act 3 - On the blue Vistula (Maidens), How tediously and sluggishly (Marina), Polonaise (Marina, Polish nobles), O Tsarevich, I implore you (Marina, The Pretender). Act 4 - Well, let's put it to a vote (Chorus), Begone, begone child (Boris), One day, at the evening hour (Pimen), Farewell, my son, I am dying (Boris), The bell, The funeral bell ! (Boris, Fyodor, Chorus), Not a falcon flaying in the hravens (Chorus), The moon is flying, the kitten is crying

(Yurodiviy), The sun and the Moon have gone dark (Varlaam, Misail), Our bold daring has broken free, gone on a rampage (Chorus), Domine, Domine, salvum fac (Jesuits), Glory to thee, Tsarevich (Chorus), Flow, flow, bitter tears ! (Yurodiviy).

Ballet: Act 3 - Polonaise dance. Marina Mniszech is flirting and dancing with Polish nobles. The polonaise is a processional dance, performed by couples who walk around the dance hall while the music is in triple meter and moderato tempo. The dance has been used in formal contexts during public ceremonies, particularly at weddings. Dancing requires straight upright posture, the man should display dignity and polite attentiveness not only to his partner but to others around. The woman should carry herself with grace and certain timidity.

Recordings: 1948 Bolshoy Theater, Moscow (Reyzen - Boris, Maksakova - Marina), 1952 Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Francaise, Paris (Christoff - Boris, Zareska - Marina), 1956 Bolshoy Theater, Moscow (Pirogov - Boris, Avdeyeva - Marina), 1962 Bolshoy Theater, Moscow (Petrov - Boris, Arkhipova - Marina), 1970 Wiener Philharmoniker, Vienna (Ghiaurov - Boris, Vishnevskaya - Marina), 1976 Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra, Krakow (Talvela - Boris, Kinasz - Marina), 1986 Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra (Haugland - Boris, Andersen - The Pretender), 1986 Sofia National Opera, Sofia (Ghiaurov - Boris, Mineva - Marina), 1987 National Symphony Orchestra and Choral Arts Society, Washington DC (Raimondi - Boris, Vishnevskaya - Marina), 1993 Berliner Philharmoniker and Slovak Philharmonic Chorus (Kotscherga - Boris, Lipovsek - Marina), 1997 Kirov Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Saint Petersburg (Vaneyev - Boris, Borodina - Marina)

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10. A Midsummer Night's Dream

Title: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Composer: Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). Born in the fishing port of Lowestof, in Suffolk England, he was the youngest of four children of Robert Victor Britten (1878-1934), a dentist and Edith Rhoda Hockey (1874-1937). An amateur musician, his mother Edith Britten was also a secretary of the Lowestoft Musical Society and guest for musical soirees at her house. Britten started his piano lessons at the age of 7 and three years later he began to play the viola. In 1928 he started to study composition with the conductor and composer Frank Bridge (1879-1941) and he produced his first String Quartet. In 1930 he won a composition scholarship at the Royal College of Music in London to study with the Australian composer Arthur Leslie Benjamin (1893-1960). He was honored with the Sullivan Prize for composition, the Cobbet Prize for chamber music and twice the Ernest Farrar Prize for composition. In February 1935 he was invited by Adrian Boult director of music at the British Broadcasting Corporation to write the score for a documentary film, The King's Stamp and Britten become a regular contributor. From 1935 to 1937 he wrote nearly 40 scores for theatre, cinema and radio. In 1967 the BBC commissioned Britten to write an opera, Owen Wingrave, specially for television. Operas: Paul Bunyan (1941), Peter Grimes (1945), The Rape of Lucretia (1946), Albert Herring (1948), Let's Make an Opera (1949), Billy Budd (1951), Gloriana (1953), The Turn of the Screw (1954), Noye's Fludde (1958), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1960), Owen Wingrave (1971), Death in Venice (1973). Ballets: Plymouth Town (1931), The Prince of the Pagodas (1956). His work also includes orchestral music, concertos, vocal and choral music, chamber music and instrumental music.

Libretto: Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears. Peter Pears (1910-1986) was an English tenor, who has studied music at Keble College Oxford and Royal College of Music in London. Since 1936 he started a forty years friendship and professional partnership with Benjamin Britten as he played numerous roles written by Britten especially for his voice. Both musicians were cofounders in 1948 of the Aldeburgh Festival of Music and Arts, devoted to classical music, and in 1977 of the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies, also in Aldenburgh the hometown of Benjamin Britten. In 1959, Britten decided to compose a full evening opera for the reopening of the refurbished Jubilee Hall in Aldenburgh. Together with Peter Pears he produced one of the most successful operatic adaptation of a Shakespeare play, completely faithful to the spirit of the original play. The

comedy written by William Shakespeare (1564-1616) in 1595 is a very popular work for the stage, widely performed across the world.

Performance history: Premiere at 11 June 1960 at the Jubilee Hall as part of the Aldeburg Festival, conducted by the composer, with a set of costume designs by Carl Toms (1927-1999) and directed by the South African choreographer John Cranko (1927-1973). The next year, the opera was performed at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in London where it was revived for several times. The English Music Theatre Company staged the opera at Snape Maltings in 1980, directed by Christopher Renshaw. In 2005 the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden produced a version directed by Olivia Fuchs at the Linbury Studio Theatre. English National Opera produced a version in 2011, directed by Christopher Alden where the opera was set in a mid 20th century school with Oberon and Tytania as teachers. The opera premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1996 and the production was revived in 2002. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Midsummer Night's Dream* was played in the world for 235 times, in 46 different productions, ranking 87 on Operabase list.

Roles: Oberon, King of the Fairies (countertenor), Tytania, Queen of the Fairies (coloratura soprano), Puck (speaking role), Cobweb (boy soprano), Mustardseed (boy soprano), Moth (boy soprano), Peaseblossom (boy soprano), Lysander (tenor), Demetrius (baritone), Hermia, in love with Lysander (mezzo-soprano), Helena, in love with Demetrius (soprano), Theseus, Duke of Athens (bass), Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons (contralto), Bottom, a weaver (bass-baritone), Quince, a carpenter (bass), Flute, a bellows-mender (tenor), Snug, a joiner (bass), Snout, a tinker (tenor), Starveling, a tailor (baritone)



Story: A typical comedy of errors invented by William Shakespeare to enjoy the audience, suited for both adults and children, with meanings according to spectator's age and heart. Gods, Fairies, Kings, young boys and girls are all mesmerized in a silly love courtship game, during a hot summer night with nothing else to do. After hilarious turnaround sets of circumstances everyone gets to be married to the proper mate and the performance ends with a happy end.

Act 1 (Night, in the woods outside Athens)

Faires enter the scene (Over hill, over dale). Oberon, King of the Fairies, is quarrelling with his queen Tytania over a young boy who is under her protection (Therefore the winds). Tytania refuses to give him up. Oberon sends his servant Puck to find a magic potion that will make Tytania to fall in love with the first creature she sees, planning to steal the boy while she is under the spell. Hermia, a young girl, has decided to elope in the woods with her lover Lysander, because her father wanted to force her into marriage with Demetrius (O cross ! Too high to be...I swear to thee). Demetrius chases after her, himself pursued by Helena, who is hopelessly in love with him (I love thee not....I am your spaniel). Oberon, who has witnessed their argument, orders Puck to use the potion on Demetrius to make him fall in love with Helena (I Know a bank where wild thyme blows). Other six working men, with Bottom the weaver among them, agree to meet later that night in the forest to rehearse a secret play they hope to perform at the wedding of Theseus, Duke of Athens, to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. Exhausted and lost, Lysander and Hermia have fallen asleep. Puck, who thinks he has found Demetrius and Helena sprinkles the potion on Lysander's eyes. Demetrius appears, followed by Helena but he angrily abandons her. Alone and in despair, Helena sees Lysander and wakes him. Under the effect of the spell, Lysander immediately declares love to her, but Helena runs off, thinking he is making fun of her, with Lysander

following her (...good sir awake...and run through fire I will for thy sweet sake). Hermia awakes from a terrible dream to find herself alone. Helped by the fairies, Tytania has also fallen asleep and Oberon uses some potion on her eyes, hoping she will fall for some ordinary thing.

Act 2 (Later that night in the forest)

The six men are rehearsing the play. Displeased with their performance, Puck decides to amuse himself by turning Bottom into an ass. Horrified by this strange transformation, the other five men run off. Bottom sings out loud to keep his courage up and wakes Tytania, who immediately falls in love with him (...that they shall hear I am not afraid....I pray thee, gentle mortal). Oberon is absolutely delighted to find Tytania in love with an ass, but when Demetrius enters the scene in pursuit of Hermia he realizes that Puck must have made a mistake. As Demetrius falls asleep, Oberon uses the potion on him and at the arrival of Helena and Lysander Demetrius wakes up to fall for Helena (O Helena, goddess, nymph....I see you all are bent to set against me). When Hermia appears she is rejected by Lysander. Convinced that the men have planned to mock her, Hermia gets angry and the four quarrel furiously. Oberon gives Puck an antidote and when the four fall asleep exhausted he uses the antidote on Lysander's eyes.

Act 3 (Shortly before dawn, in the forest / In Athens in the Palace of Theseus)

Oberon releases Tytania from the spell (And now I have the boy, I will undo....My Oberon ! what visions have I seen !). When daybreak rouses the four lovers are also finally reconciled, Demetrius with Helena and Lysander with Hermia. Restored to human shape, Bottom wakes from what he thinks was a strange dream (When my cue comes, call me and I will answer). He wanders off, until he reunites with his friends giving them the news that their performance has been chosen to be played at court. Scene 2 - Back in Athens, the four young lovers ask Theseus to exonerate their disobedience and bless their union. Theseus decides that they shall be married together with him and Hippolyta (Now, fair Hippolyta... This day will quickly dream). Bottom and his fellow players finally give their performance of their secret play called Pyramus and Thisbe. The small play inside the play is short version of Romeo and Juliet witnessed by nonhuman characters: Wall, Moon and Lion. Everyone retires after a long day. Oberon, Tytania and their fairies also give their divine blessing on the entire sleeping household, with Puck having the last word (Now the hungry lion roars).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Over hill, over dale (Fairies), Therefore the winds (Oberon, Tytania), O cross ! Too high to be...I swear to thee (Hermia, Lysander), I love thee not...I am your spaniel (Demetrius, Helena), I know a bank where wild thyme blows (Oberon), ...good sir awake...and run through fire I will for thy sweet sake (Helena, Lysander) Act 2 - ...that they shall hear I am not afraid....I pray thee, gentle mortal (Bottom, Tytania), O Helena, goddess, nymph....I see you all are bent to set against me (Demetrius, Helena). Act 3 - And now I have the boy, I will undo....My Oberon ! what visions have I seen ! (Oberon, Tytania), When my cue comes call me, and I will answer (Bottom), Now, fair Hippolyta... This day will quickly dream (Theseus, Hippolyta), Now the hungry lion roars (Fairies).

Ballet: The first performance of a full length ballet for the Shakespeare's play was choreographed in 1962 by George Balanchine (1904-1983) to Felix Mendelssohn's music. The performance premiered at New York City Ballet on 17 January 1962. The ballet employs a large children's corps de ballet. In 1977, choreographer John Neumeier has created his version of *Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Bavarian State Ballet using music composed by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and György Ligeti.

Recordings: 1966 Covent Garden, London (Janet Baker - Hermia, Elisabeth Robson - Helena, Alexander Young - Lysander, Delme Bryn Jones - Demetrius, Michael Langdon - Bottom), 1966 London Symphony Orchestra, London (Josephine Veasey - Hermia, Heather Harper - Helena, Peter Pears - Lysander, Thomas Hemsley - Demetrius, Owen Brannigan - Bottom), 1976 Covent Garden, London (Anne Howells - Hermia, Josephine Barstow - Helena, Ryland Davies - Lysander, Thomas Allen - Demetrius, Michael Langdon - Bottom), 1995 London Symphony Orchestra, London (Ruby Philogene - Hermia, Janice Watson - Helena, John Mark Ainsley - Lysander, Paul Whelan - Demetrius, Robert Lloyd - Bottom), 1996 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Jane Bunnell - Hermia, Nancy Gustafson - Helena, Kurt Streit - Lysander, Rodney Gilfry - Demetrius, Peter Rose - Bottom), 2004 English National Opera, London (Victoria Simmonds - Hermia, Lynda Richardson - Helena, Alfred Boe - Lysander, Leigh Melrose - Demetrius, Peter Rose - Bottom)

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11. Turandot

Title: Turandot

Composer: Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924). Born in Lucca, Italy, he was one of nine children of Michele Puccini and Albina Magi. His family, starting with his great-great grandfather has occupied the position of maestro di capella for 124 years and has composed music for the church. As a boy he was a member of the choir and played the organ. In 1880 he has got a diploma from the Pacini School of Music in Lucca and continued his studies at the Milan Conservatory with a grant from Italian Queen Margherita. He was married in 1904 to Elvira Gemignani (1860-1930) and they had a son, Antonio. By 1900, Puccini has acquired land and had built a villa on the lake, at Torre del Lago, now known as Villa Museo Puccini. An annual Festival Puccini is held at Torre del Lago to honor his memory. In 1923 the Prime Minister Benito Mussolini has named him member in the Italian Senate (senatore a vita). Centro di studi Giacomo Puccini was founded in 1996 in Lucca to approach the study of Puccini's work. Operas: *Le Villi* (1884), *Edgar* (1889), *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904), *La Fanciulla del West* (1910), *La rondine* (1917), *Il Trittico* (1918), *Turandot* (1926). His other work includes sacred music, songs, vocal and choral music, chamber music and instrumental music.

Libretto: Giuseppe Adami (1878-1946) and Renato Simoni. Giuseppe Adami worked with Puccini on the operas: *La rondine* (1917), *Il tabarro* (1918) and *Turandot* (1926). After the death of Puccini he published a collection of the composer's letters in *Epistolario* (1928) and his personal recollections in *Giacomo Puccini* (1935), which was one of the earliest biographies of the composer. Renato Simoni (1875-1952) was a journalist and theatrical critic also involved in the libretto. In 1952 Simoni donated 40 000 volumes of his writings and reviews to the Museum of La Scala. The libretto was based on the play *Turandot* written by Count Carlo Gozzi in 1762 and translated in 1801 by Friedrich Schiller to be reinterpreted in the Romantic style. The original story was based on one of the seven stories written in the 12th century by the Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi (1141-1209). Up to eight of the themes are based on traditional Chinese music and the melody of the Chinese song called *Jasmine* is included as a leitmotif for the princess.

Performance history: Premiere on 25 April 1926 at Teatro alla Scala, Milan, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. In the next two years, *Turandot* has premiered all over the world: Rome 29 April 1926, Buenos Aires 23 June 1926, Dresden 6 September 1926, Venice 9 September 1926, Vienna 14 October 1926, Berlin 8 November 1926, New York Metropolitan Opera 16 November 1926, Bruxelles 17 December 1926, Naples 17 January 1927, Parma 12 February 1927, Turin 17 March 1927, London Covent Garden 7 June 1927, San Francisco 19 September 1927, Bologna October 1927, Paris 29 March 1928, Australia 1928, Moscow Bolshoi Theatre 1931. In 1998 the opera was first performed in China for eight nights as *Turandot* at the Forbidden City. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Turandot* was played in the world for 1225 times, in 255 different productions, ranking 18 on Operabase list.

Roles: Princess Turandot (soprano), The Emperor Altoum, her father (tenor), Timur, the deposed King of Tartary (bass), The Unknown Prince Calaf, his son (tenor), Liu, a slave girl (soprano), Ping, Lord Chancellor (baritone), Pang, Majordomo (tenor), Pong, Head chef of the Imperial Kitchen (tenor), A Mandarin (baritone), The Prince of Persia (tenor), The Executioner (silent)



Story: The story is set in the legendary times, in China, and involves the prerequisites for a royal marriage. Beautiful Princess Turandot has set a condition for her suitors to solve her three riddles, but many have failed and lost their lives. Prince Calaf, son of Timur, falls in love with the Princess and finally passes the test, but Princess Turandot pleads for mercy. Prince Calaf offers her a second chance to win, if she will solve his riddle in finding his name. During the night, tortured by Princess Turandot, Liu refuses to reveal the name of her beloved Prince and kills herself in order to save his life. Sorrowed by her death, the Prince of Tartary willingly reveals his name, resigning from winning the contest, but Princess Turandot refuses to make use of the advantage and when asked if she has managed to solve the riddle, her answer is: Love !

Act 1 (In front of the Imperial Palace)

A Mandarin announces the law of the land (Popolo di Pechino ! - People of Peking !). Having failed to answer the three riddles of Princess Turandot the Prince of Persia is to be beheaded at the next moonrising. The people crowds towards the gates of the palace and the imperial guards repulse them, causing a blind old man to be knocked to the ground. Liu, the old man's slave cries out for help. A young man recognizes in the blind man his long lost father, Timur, the deposed king of Tartary. Overjoyed at seeing Timur alive, the young Prince of Tartary urges him not to speak his name, to protect their lives. The Prince finds out that Liu is the only servant who remained faithful to Timur, after he has lost his sight. When the Prince asks her why, she tells him that the Prince has once smiled at her, long ago in the palace (Indierto, cani ! - Back off, dogs !). The Moon rises and the doomed Prince of Persia is led before the crowd, to be executed. Young and handsome, the prisoner is making a strong impression and the Prince of Tartary together with the crowd are begging Princess Turandot for mercy (O giovinetto ! - O youth !). Princess Turandot appears and with an imperial gesture orders the execution to continue. Stupefied by her beauty, the Prince of Tartary who has never seen her before, falls in love with her instantly and cries her name for three times. A final scream and cry from the crowd and the Prince of Persia is beheaded. The Prince of Tartary is about to strike the gong and announce that he is willing to attempt to solve her riddles and to marry Princess Turandot, when the ministers Ping, Pang and Pong appear to stop him (Fermo, che fai ? - Stop, what are you doing ?). Timur urges his son to give up and Liu who is secretly in love with the Prince makes her move (Signore, ascolta - My Lord, hear me). Unperturbed, the Prince of Tartary begs Liu to take good care of Timur if he fails to answer the riddles (Non piangere Liu - Do not cry Liu). The three ministers, Timur and Liu try one more time to stop him (Ah ! Per l'ultima volta ! - Ah ! For the last time !). The Prince of Tartary strikes the gong for three times and calls the name of the princess, declaring himself to be a suitor, accompanied by lamentations from the crowd: You are digging your grave !. From the palace balcony, Princess Turandot accepts his challenge.

Act 2 (A pavilion in the Imperial Palace / The courtyard of the palace at sunrise)

Ping, Pang and Pong lament over endless documents and rituals as they prepare for either a wedding or a funeral (Ola, Pang). Ping recalls his house in Honan, with a small lake surrounded by bamboo, Pong remembers his grove of forests near Tsiang and Pang recollects his memory of his garden near Kiu (Ho una casa nell'Honan - I have a house in Honan). They also sorrow on how they have been accompanied so many young princes to their death. At the trumpet sound, the ministers are ready for yet another spectacle as they wait for the Emperor to arrive.

Scene 2 - Emperor Altoum is sitting on his grand throne in the palace. Uncomfortable to judge again his daughter's challenge, he urges the Prince of Tartary to withdraw before it is too late (Un giuramento atroce - An

atrocious oath). Turandot enters and explains her resistance to marriage (In questa reggia - In this palace). Her ancestor Princess Lou-Ling reigned her kingdom in silence and joy until she was ravished and murdered by an invading foreign prince. She claims that Princess Lou-Ling now lives in her and she has sworn not to let any man wed her. She warns the Prince of Tartary to withdraw, but he refuses. Princess Turandot presents her first riddle (Straniero, ascolta ! - What is born each night and dies each dawn ?). The prince replies correctly: Hope. Princess Turandot presents her second riddle (Guiza al pari di fiamma - What flickers red and warm like flame, but is not fire ?). After a short moment he answers: Blood. Princess Turandot is shaken while the crowd cheers the Prince. She presents her final riddle (Gelo che ti da foco - What is ice which gives you fire and which your fire freezes still more ?). The prince thinks for a while and answers: It is you Turnadot !, Turandot ! and the crowd cheers for the triumphant Prince. Turnadot throws herself at her father's feet and pleads for mercy, but the Emperor insists that an oath is sacred and Turandot must obey her duty to marry the Prince (Figlio del cielo - Daughter of the sky). Desperate, Princess Turandot asks the Prince for mercy (Mi porterai con la forza ? - Will you take me by force ?). Tenderhearted, the Prince of Tartary offers her a second chance, if she is to solve his riddle (Tre enigmi m'hai proposto - Tell me my name before sunrise and I will die). Turandot accepts, while the Emperor declares his hopes to declare him a son when the sun rises.

Act 3 (The palace gardens. Night / The courtyard of the palace. Dawn)

The heralds call the command from Turandot (Cosi comanda Turnadot - No one shall sleep in Peking this night !). Everyone is to die in the morning if the Prince's name is not revealed. In the meanwhile, the Prince of Tartary anticipates his victory (Nessun dorma - No one is asleep). Women and riches are offered to the Prince by the ministers Ping, Pang and Pong, only to give up (Tu che guardi le stelle - You who foresee the stars), but he refuses. A group of soldiers arrest Timur and Liu since they have been seen speaking to the Prince, so they must know his name. Princess Turandot enters the scene and orders Timur to speak, but she is refused. When the guards begin to treat Timur harshly, Liu declares that she alone knows the Prince's name, but she refuses to reveal it even under torture. It is her life against the life of her beloved Prince. Princess Turandot asks her what gave her such strength to resist and she answers (Principessa, amore ! It is love, Princess !). Princess Turandot orders that Liu should be tortured even more, but Liu answers that it is now the time for Princess Turandot to learn how it is to be guided by love (Tu che di gel sei cinta - You who are begirdled by ice). Having spoken these words, Liu seizes a dagger from a soldier and stabs herself and falls dead near the Prince. Since Timur is blind he must be told what happened and he cries in anguish. When Timur warns that the gods will be offended by Liu's death, the crowd becomes very afraid and ashamed, threatened with death from both sides. The grieving Timur is carried away with the crowd and Liu's body leaving the prince alone with Princess Turandot. He reproaches her for her cruelty (Principessa di morte - Princess of death), then he kisses her in spite of her resistance. Princess Turandot admits that she both hated and loved him and asks him to leave, taking his mystery with him. Affronted, the Prince reveals his name (Calaf, figlio di Timur - Calaf, son of Timur), offering her the chance to solve the riddle. Princess Turandot answers (Del primo pianto - From my first cry). Scene 2 - Princess Turandot and Prince of Tartary approach the Emperor's throne and she declares that she knows the Prince's name (Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore - Ten Thousands Years for our Emperor). His name is ... Love ! The crowds cheer and acclaim the two newly married couple (O sole ! Vita ! Eternita - Glory ! Life ! Eternity).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - People of Peking ! (Mandarin), Back off, dogs (Prince of Tartary, Timur, Liu), O youth ! (Prince of Tartary, chorus), Stop, what are you doing ? (Ping, Pang, Pong). Signore, ascolta - My Lord, hear me (Liu), Do not cry Liu (Prince of Tartary), Ah ! For the last time ! (The Ministers, Timur, Liu). Act 2 - Ola, Pang (Ping, Pang, Pong), I have a house in Honan (Ping, Pong, Pang), An atrocious oath (Emperor Altoum), In this palace (Turandot), What is born each night and dies each dawn ? (Turandot), What flickers red and warm like flame, but is not fire ? (Turnadot), What is ice which gives you fire and which your fire freezes still more ? (Turandot), Daughter of the sky (Emperor Altoum), Will you take me by force ? (Turandot), Tell me my name before sunrise and I will die (Prince of Tartary). Act 3 - No one shall sleep in Peking this night ! (Chorus), No one is asleep (Prince of Tartary), You who foresee the stars (Ping, Pang, Pong), It is love, Princess ! (Liu), You who are begirdled by ice (Liu), Princess of death (Prince of Tartary), Calaf, son of Timur (Prince of Tartary), From my first cry (Turandot, Prince of Tartary), Ten Thousands Years for our Emperor (Turandot), Glory ! Life ! Eternity (Chorus).

Ballet: In 1998 the performance of Turandot in the Forbidden City was performed for eight nights, directed and choreographed by Zhang Yimou and conducted by the Indian conductor Zubin Mehta. Flavoured with the true highlights of the Chinese traditions, the performance was a true oriental fairy tale. The performance was later documented in the film *The Turandot Project 2000*. In February 2015 a full dance performance on Turandot opera music was put to stage by the Hong Kong Ballet at the Grand Theatre Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Adapted from Puccini's Opera of the same name and accompanied by the original music, Australian choreographer Natalie Weir has transformed Turandot, a story of power, lust and revenge, into a visually stunning dramatic dance production.

Recordings: 1938 RAI Chorus and Orchestra, Turin (Gina Cigna - Turandot, Francesco Merli - Prince of Tartary, Magda Olivero - Liu), 1957, La Scala, Milan (Maria Callas - Turandot, Eugenio Fernandi - Prince of Tartary, Elisabeth Schwartzkopf - Liu), 1961 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Brigit Nilsson - Turandot, Franco Corelli - Prince of Tartary, Anna Moffo - Liu), 1970 Romanian Radio Television, Bucharest (Maria Slatinaru - Turandot, George Mircea - Prince of Tartary, Octav Enigarescu - Timur), 1972 London Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Joan Sutherland - Turandot, Luciano Pavarotti - Prince of Tartary, Monserrat Caballe - Liu, Nicolai Ghiaurov - Timur), 1977 San Francisco Opera (Monserrat Caballe - Turandot, Luciano Pavarotti - Prince of Persia, Leona Mitchell - Liu), 1981 Vienna State Opera, Vienna (Katia Ricciarelli - Turandot, Placido Domingo - Prince of Tartary, Barbara Hendricks - Liu, Ruggero Raimondi - Timur), 1984 Vienna Philharmonic, Vienna (Eva Marton - Turandot, Jose Carreras - Prince of Tartary, Katia Ricciarelli - Liu, Kurt Rydl - Timur), 2008 Orquestra de la Comunitat Valenciana (video), Valencia (Maria Guleghina - Turandot, Marco Berti - Prince of Tartary, Alexia Voulgaridou - Liu, Alexander Tsymbalyuk - Timur)

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12. Carmina Burana

Title: Carmina Burana

Composer: Carl Orff (1895-1982). Born in Munich, his father, Heinrich Orff, was an officer in the Imperial German Army and a good musician, while his mother, Paula Koestler, was a trained pianist. He started his piano lessons with his mother, at the age of 5 and his cello lessons two years later. At the Wittelsbach Gymnasium, in 1907 he was selected for the church choir and in 1911 he has published his first composition: *Also sprach Zarathustra*. In 1912 he left school to join Akademie der Tonkunst (Academy of Music) in Munich where he graduated in 1914. He worked as an assistant Kapellmeister and as a music teacher. In 1924, along with Dorothee Gunther he founded and headed the Gunther School for gymnastics, music and dance in Munich. He was married four times, his only child Godela was from his first marriage with Alice Solscher. Carl Orff received several music awards and he was honored with the Cross of Merit in 1959 and with the Great Cross of Merit in 1972. Works: *Orpheus* (1924), *Klage der Ariadne* (1925), *Tanz der Sproden* (1925), *Musik für Kinder* (1930-35), *Tanzstück* (1933), *Carmina Burana* (1937), *Catulli Carmina* (1943), *Trionfo di Afrodite* (1953), *Der Mond* (1939), *Die Kluge* (1943), *Ein Sommernachstraum* (1952), *Antigonae* (1949), *Oedipus der Tyrann* (1959), *Prometheus* (1968), *De temporum fine comoedia* (1973).

Libretto: Carl Orff. *Carmina Burana* is a scenic cantata, a vocal composition, with instrumental accompaniment and involving a choir, different from an opera only with the respect that the several movements must not follow a coherent story and the scenical settings are less cardinal. Sacred cantata, also called church cantata is for the use in the liturgy church and needs no settings at all. The text for the cantata was produced from the 1847 edition of *Carmina Burana*, a manuscript of 254 poems from the 11th and 12th century. Michel Hofmann, a young law student fluent in Latin and Greek has assisted Orff in the selection and organisation of 24 poems resulting in a libretto. Mostly in secular Latin, the text also includes some Middle High German, Old Provencal and Old French. The main topics of the moments cover most of the christian moral: love, pleasures and perils, bravery, the flickleness of fortune and wealth, the ephemeral nature of life, the joy of Spring and Nature.

Performance history: *Carmina Burana* was first staged in Frankfurt by Frankfurt Opera on 8 June 1937 under

conductor Bertil Wetselberger, with the Caecilienchor Frankfurt, staging by Oskar Walterlin and costumes by Ludwig Sievert. Carmina Burana became the most famous piece of music composed in modern Germany and the popularity continued to rise after the war. By 1960, Carmina Burana was well established as part of the international classic repertoire, played all over the world. Since 1937, the first movement of the cantata O Fortuna has been the most overused piece of music in film history. The composition has become a staple in popular culture and appears in numerous films, film trailers, television series, live radio, advertisements, television commercials, video games and different other performances. In 1956 composer Wilhelm Killmayer (1927-2017), Orff's disciple, has created a reduced version for soloists, mixed choir, children choir, two pianos and six percussion, a version authorised by Orff himself. Up to the 2017/18 season, Carmina Burana was played in the world for 252 times, in 76 different productions, ranking 81 on Operabase list.

Roles: Choir (1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 24, 25), Small choir (3, 8, 9), Boys Choir (15, 22), Double choir (20), Instrumental (6, 9), Baritone (4, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22), Tenor (12), Soprano (15, 17, 21, 22, 23), 3 Tenors (19), 2 Basses (19)



Story: 1. O fortuna velut luna statu variabilis, semper crescis aut descreciscis vita detestabilis ...(O Fortune, Moon is gleaming venerable your state is, always changing, ever rising than descending, the life detestable is ...)

Sors immanis et inanis rota tu volubilis, status malus vana salus semper dissolubilis... (Wretched fate and poor fate you are wheeling volubly, malus state or strongly good health brief dissolubility ...)

Hac in hora sine mora corde pulsum tangite; quod per sortem stenit fortem mecum omnes plangite (Dance revolving ever hurtling cordes of heart vibrating, standing up and fate confronting when the rest are mourning)

2. In Fortune solio sederam elatus, prosperitas vario flore coronatus (In Fortune's soil we have grown awesome, prosperity changes who's flowers blossom)

3. Zephyrus nectareo spirans in odore. Certatim pro bravio curramus in amore. (Scented nectar Zephyr breezes. For the brave love cure seizes.)

4. Omnia sol temperat purus et subtilis, novo mundo reserat faciem Aprilis (Every soul is tempered, subtle and gentle, the new world is nascent we are making April)

5. Gloriantur at letantur in melle dulcedinis, qui conantur, ut utantur premio Cupidinis (Sweet glory enjoys of prolonged lengthwise, he who knows and handles the Cupid's prize)

6. Dance (instrumental)

7. Floret silva nobilis floribus et foliis. Ubi est antiquus meus amicus ? (Blossom noble forest leaves and flowers too, My friend, good old days, where are you ?)

8. Chramer, gip die varwe mir, die min wengel roete (Taverner give war to me, I desire red to be)

9. Chume, chum, geselle min, Sezer rosenvarwer munt (Hurry, hurry sell for me, soon red roses war will be)

10. Were diu werlt alle min von deme mere unze an den Rin (All the world is made for me from the Rhine to the sea)

11. Feror ego veluti sine nauta navis, ut per vias aeris vaga fertur avis (A boat without a sail to sail I try, in air like a bird I fly)

12. Miser, miser ! mondo niger et ustus fortiter ! (Misery, misery ! black world revelry drought forgery)

13. Ego sum abbas Cucaniensis at consilium meum est cum bibulis (Cuckoo men I am your abbot and I'll

teach you how to drink)

14. In taberna quando sumus non curamus quid sit humus (When in taven, do not think, dust you are in dust you'll sink)

15. Amor volat undique captus est libidine (Love flies freely, libido perpetuates)

16. Dies, nox et omnia michi sunt contraria; virginum colloquia me fay planszer (Day, and night and everything for me is opposite thing; virginal colloquy forge me in tears)

17. Stetit puella rufa tunica; si quis eam tetigit tunica crepuit (She stays girlish dressed in her red robe, if only touched her robe is trembling)

18. Circa mea pectora multa sunt suspiria de tua pulchritudine que me ledunt misere (Around my heart are many sighs for your beauty leaves me in misery)

19. Si puer cum puellula moraretur in cellula felix coniunctio. (A boy and a girl to delay in a cell, a happy combination)

20. Rosa rubicundior, lilio candidior omnibus formosior semper in te glorior (Rosy rubicund, candid like a lily, everyone's better always to your glory)

21. In truitina mentis dubia fluctuant contraria lascivus amor et pudicitia. (In balance for truth judgement oscilates opposing lust and pudency)

22. Tempus es iocundum o virgines, mondo congaudete vos iuvenes. (It is time to marry, o virgines, the hole world celebrates your youth)

23. Dulcissime, totam tibi subdo me ! (My sweetest one, totally subdue to me !)

24. Ave formosissima gemma pretiosa, ave decum virginum virgo gloriosa (Hail the loveliest maiden like a precious stone and among the virgins hail the glorious one)

25. O fortuna velut luna statu variabilis, semper crescis aut decrescis vita detestabilis ... (O Fortune, Moon is gleaming venerable your state is, always changing, ever rising than descending, the life detestable is...)

Great moments and arias: 1. O Fortuna velut luna 2. Fortune plango vulnera 3. Veris leta facies 4. Omnia sol temperat 5. Ecce Gratum 6. Tanz 7. Floret silva nobilis 8. Chramer, gip die varwe mir 9. Swaz hie gat umbe 10. Were diu werlt alle min 11. Estuans interius 12. Olim lacus colueram 13. Ego sum abbas 14. In taberna quando sumus 15. Amor volat undique 16. Dies nox et omnia 17. Stetit puella 18. Circa mea pectora 19. Si puer cum puella 20. Veni, veni, venias 21. In truitina mentis dubia 22. Tempus es iocundum 23. Dulcisime 24. Ave formosissima 25 O Fortuna velut luna

Ballet: The performance is a staged work involving dance, choreography, visual design and other stage action. In 1974, William Christensen shocked and excited audiences by presenting the Utah premiere of Carmina Burana Ballet, and it quickly grew into one of the most popular ballets. In 1978, a danced version choreographed by Loyce Houlton for the Minnesota Dance Theatre was prepared in collaboration with Orff himself. In 1975, in honour of Orff's 80th birthday, an acted and choreographed film version was filmed, directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle for the German broadcaster ZDF. For it's 10th Anniversary The Washington Ballet has staged a post modern interpretation of Carmina Burana under the choreography of Septime Webre. In Cincinnati Carmina Burana ballet has premiered with a choreography from Nicolo Fonte with live music and voices of the May Festival Chorus.

Recordings: 1959 Huston Symphony, 1960 Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1966 New Philharmonia Orchestra, London, 1968 Deutsche Oper Berlin, 1973 Munich Radio Orchestra, 1974 Cleveland Orchestra, 1979 Philharmonia Orchestra, 1984 Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1988 New York Choral Society, 1997 Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, 2003 Deutsche Oper Berlin, 2005 Berlin Philharmonic, 2014 Collegium Vocale Gent

Discography: 1964 Studio der fruhen Musik (dir Thomas Binkley), 1968 Capella Antiqua Munchen (dir Konrad Rukland), 1975 Clemencic Consort (dir Rene Clemencic), 1988 Madrigalisti di Genova (dir Leopoldo Gamberini), 1990 Le Grand Mystere de la Passion (dir Marcel Peres), 1994 New London Consort (dir Philip Pickett), 1997 Medieval Poems and Songs (dir Michael Posch), 1998 Mondo Antiquo (dir Bettina Hoffmann), 2008 Medieval Songs from the Codex Buranus (dir Rene Clemencic), 2010 Obsidienne (dir Emmanuel Bonnardot)

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13. The Rake's Progress

Title: The Rake's Progress

Composer: Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). Born in Oranienbaum, a suburb of Saint Petersburg in the neighbourhood of the Royal Peterhof Palace, his father Fyodor Stravinsky (1843-1902) was a well known bass at the Kiev Opera and at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg while his mother, Anna Kholodovsky (1854-1939) was the daughter of a high ranking official in the Kiev Ministry of Estates. Igor Stravinsky began piano lessons as a young boy. In 1901 he enrolled at the University of Saint Petersburg to study law and in 1905 he began to take private composition lessons with Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov, the leading Russian composer at that time. In 1906 he married Katherine Gavrylivna Nosenko (1906-1939) and their marriage produced four children: Fyodor, Ludmila, Maria and Soulima. Operas: *The Nightingale* (1914), *Renard* (1916), *L'Histoire du soldat* (1918), *Mavra* (1922), *Oedipus Rex* (1927), *Persephone* (1933), *The Rake's Progress* (1951), *The Flood* (1962). Ballet: *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), *The Rite of Spring* (1913), *Les noces* (1917), *Pulcinella* (1920), *Apollo* (1928), *La baiser de la fee* (1928), *Jeu de carted* (1936), *Circus Polka* (1942), *Scenes de Ballet* (1944), *Orpheus* (1947), *Agon* (1957). His work also includes: orchestral music, concertante, choral music, chamber music, vocal and piano works. Other 17 ballet performances were produced to the music of Stravinsky.

Libretto: Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973) and Chester Kallman (1921-1975). The two American poets have wrote the libretto starting with 1949. Their collaboration also resulted in the libretto for the operas: *Elegy for Young Lovers* (1956) and *The Bassarids* (1961) for Hans Werner Henze. Auden alone has also produced the libretto for the operetta *Paul Bunyan* for Benjamin Britten and for the opera *Love's Labour's Lost* for Nicolas Nabokov, while Kallman alone has produced the libretto for the opera *The Tuscan Players* for Carlos Chaves. Auden was a prolific writer who has won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1947 for his poem *The Age of Anxiety*, best known for his love poems like *Funeral Blues* and *The Shield of Achilles*. His work includes 22 published books of poetry, prose and essays, film scripts and musical collaborations, such as the song cycle called *Our Hunting Fathers* written for Benjamin Britten. In 1961, David Hockney (born 1937) created his own print edition version of *The Rake's Progress* and he has also created stage designs for the Stravinsky Opera.

Performance history: The opera was first performed on 11 September 1951 in Venice, at the Teatro La Fenice, with Robert Rounseville as Tom Rakewell and Elisabeth Schwartzkopf as Anne Truelove. The opera premiered in Paris at the Opera Comique on 18 June 1952. The American premiere at the Metropolitan Opera in New York was on 14 February 1953, conducted by Fritz Reiner and produced by George Balanchine. The first staging in England opened on 19 December 1956 by the Cambridge University Opera Group. One year later the opera was produced by the Santa Fe Opera in New Mexico and in 1961 the Swedish director Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) produced the opera at the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm. A noteworthy production was the 1975 Glyndebourne Festival Opera directed by John Cox with sets and costumes designed by David Hockney. In the 2010 production at the Berlin Staatsoper, the action was set in the 20th century and transported from England to America. Up to the 2017/18 season, *The Rake's Progress* was played in the world for 257 times, in 52 different productions, ranking 79 on Operabase list.

Roles: Trulove (bass), Anne, his daughter (soprano), Tom Rakewell (tenor), Nick Shadow (baritone), Mother Goose (mezzo-soprano), Baba the Turk (mezzo-soprano), Sellem, auctioner (tenor), Keeper of the madhouse (bass)



Story: A burlesque tragic comedy of marriage a-la-mode, an English version of Eugene Onegin, the story is based loosely on the eight paintings and engravings called *A Rake's Progress* (1733-1735) of William Hogarth (1697-1764). The series of paintings shows the decline and fall of a young man called Tom Rakewell, heir of a rich merchant who proved to be a prodigiously spender and wasted all his money in London. As a consequence Tom Rakewell was imprisoned in the Fleet Prison and ultimately in the Bethlem Hospital (Bedlam), an infamous mental asylum. The moral of the story is: For idle hearts, or idle hands, or idle minds, the Devil finds work to do.

Act 1 (Garden of Trulove's house / Mother Goose's brothel, London / Garden of Trulove's house)

Tom Rakewell is courting Anne Trulove in her father's garden (Love tells no lies). Trulove enters the scene to propose Tom a decent job, but Tom is too vain to accept (Why should I labor). Tom is encountered by Nick and in the presence of Anne and her father, Nick brings the great news that Tom has inherited au uncle, long departed, and he is now a rich man. Advised by Mr. Trulove, Tom leaves with Nick for London to settle his estate. All four bid farewell (Dear Father Trulove). Scene 2 - Roaring boys and whores sing about their expertise in sinning (In triumph glorious). Reluctant to betrade his lover Tom shys his new friends and gets seriously drunk until Mother Goose claims the elder right for her prize to the joy of the audience (Lanterloo, lanterloo). Scene 3 - Meanwhile, back in the country, Anne wonders why she has not heard from Tom (Quietly night). She strengthen her spirit and decides to go to London to help Tom who is too weak, love cannot falter.

Act 2 (Tom's house in London / In front of Tom's house in London / Tom's house in London)

Sick at heart, Tom asks for a change in music (Vary the song, O London, change !). Nick enters the scene only to happy to oblige. He proposes that Tom should take Baba the Turk, a famous bearded lady from the circus, to be his wife, in order to free himself form his boreing destiny and to choose one of his will (My tale shall be told). Scene 2 - Anne finds Tom's house in London only to find Tom in the company of Baba the Turk whom he just married. Presentations made, Anne declares herself unworthy of his love while Tom implores her to go home (It is done, it is done) which she finally complies. Scene 3- Baba the Turk recollects some of her experiences traveling all around the world (As I was saying...). Unhappy, Tom starts a quarell, while Baba the Turk feels abused and neglected (Scorned ! Abused ! Neglected ! Baited !). Tom falls asleep and in his sleep he dreams of a machine that convertes stones to bread, only to be waked up by Nick presenting such a machine (Thanks to this excellent device). Obliging Nick hints that such a machine must be manufactured in great quantities requiring from his master to produce money, partners an reputation in the City. Excited by the new prospect, Tom refuses to consult his wife and declares her buried.

Act 3 (Tom's house in London covered in dust / A Churchyard. Tombs / Mental hospital)

The crowds sing of ruin and shame as the machine has turned out to be a scam (Ruin, Disaster, Shame). Tom's property is auctioned, including Baba the Turk's dowery. Seelem the auctioner is conducting the auction (Who hears me, knows me). Anne enters the scene just in time to hear Tom and Nick crying from the street the selling of his old wife. Anne and Baba the Turk share a ladies agreement about Tom (Not quite a gentelman). Scene 2 -

After a year of services Nick asks for his wages, not his money but his soul (How dark and dreadful is this place). Tom is reluctant and Nick gives him a second chance, a game of cards to decide his fate (My heart is wild with fear). Tom wins the game and Nick sinks into the grave while Tom sits smiling, putting grass on his head (With roses crowned). Scene 3 - Tom argues with a chorus of Madmen in a mental hospital (Prepare yourselves, heroic shades). Tom belives that he is Adonis and will answer to no other name while Anne enters the scene with

the Keeper. Tom wellcomes her (Venus, my Queen) and she tries to put him to sleep with a lullaby (Gently, little boat). Trulove enters the scene and together they bid farewell to Tom (God is merciful and just). Tom is left alone arguing with his Pantheon of Olympian Gods while the chorus is mourning him (Mourn for Adonis, ever young).

Epilogue (Before the curtain. House lights up)

Anne, Baba, Tom, Trulove, Nick and all togehter, take turns to present the moral (Since Eve went out with Adam, for idle hands and hearts and minds The Devil finds a work to do, a work dear Sir, Fair Madam, for you and you).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Love tells no lies (Tom, Anne), Why should I labor (Tom), Dear Father Trulove (Tom, Anne, Trulove, Nick), In triumph glorious (Chorus), Lanterloo, lanterloo (Chorus), Quietly night (Anne). Act 2 - Vary the song, O London, change ! (Tom), My tale shall be told (Tom, Nick), It is done, it is done (Anne, Tom, Baba the Turk), As I was saying...(Baba the Turk), Scorned ! Abused ! Neglected ! Baited ! (Baba the Turk), Thanks to this excellent device (Tom, Nick). Act 3 - Ruin, Disaster, Shame (Chorus), Who hears me, knows me (Seelem), Not quite a gentelman (Anne, Baba the Turk), How dark and dreadful is this place (Tom, Nick), My heart is wild with fear (Tom, Nick), With roses crowned (Tom). Prepare yourselves, heroic shades (Tom), Venus, my Queen (Tom), Gently, little boat (Anne), God is merciful and just (Anne, Trulove), Mourn for Adonis, ever young (Chorus). Since Eve went out with Adam...The Devil finds a work to do (Anne, Baba, Tom, Trulove, Nick).

Ballet: The Rake's Progress short ballet performance was produced in 1935 on the drawings of William Hoghart, with music by Gavin Gordon (1901-1970) and choreography by Ninette de Valois (1898-2001), the godmother of English and Irish ballet. The performance premiered in 1935 at the Sadler's Wells Theatre with costumes and scenery by Rex Whistler. The ballet consists of eight numbers strongly inspired by the eight paintings.

Recordings: 1953 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Eugene Conley - Tom, Hilde Gueden - Anne, Mack Harrell - Nick, Blanche Thebom - Baba), 1964 Sadler's Wells Opera, London (Alexander Young - Tom, Judith Raskin - Anne, John Reardon - Nick, Regina Sarfaty - Baba), 1985 London Sinfonietta, London (Philip Langridge - Tom, Cathryn Pope - Anne, Samuel Ramey - Nick, Sarah Walker - Baba), 1995 Lyon Opera, Lyon (Jerry Hadley - Tom, Dawn Upshaw - Ann, Samuel Ramey - Nick, Grace Bumbry - Baba), 1997 Tokyo Opera, Tokyo (Anthony Rolfe Johnson - Tom, Sylvia McNair - Anne, Paul Plishka - Nick, Jane Henschel - Baba), 1999 London Symphony Orchestra, London (Ian Bostridge - Tom, Deborah York - Anne, Bryn Terfel - Nick, Anne Sofie von Otter - Baba), 2010 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Paul Groves - Tom, Dawn Upshaw - Anne, Samuel Ramey - Nick, Stephanie Blythe - Baba)

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14. The Merry Widow

Title: The Merry Widow

Composer: Franz Lehar (1870-1948). Born in Komarom, in the Kingdom of Hungary (now in Slovakia), his father, Franz Lehar Polach (1838-1898) was an Austrian bandmaster in the Infantry Regiment No. 50 of the Austro-Hungarian Army, while his mother Christine Neubrandt (1849-1906) descended from a German family. He studied violin at the Prague Conservatory with conductor Antonin Bennewitz (1833-1926). After graduation in 1888 he joined his father's band in Vienna as assistant bandmaster, and two years later he became a bandmaster at Losoncz in Slovakia. In 1902, he became conductor in Vienna at the Theater an den Wien. In 1924 he married Sophie Paschkis (1878-1947). By 1935 he decided to form his own publishing house, Glocken-Verlag. Operettas: Kukuska / Tatjana (1896), Der Klavierstimmer (Wiener Frauen) (1902), Der Rastelbinder (1902), Der Gottergatte (1904), Die Juxherait (1904), Die lustige Witwe (The Merry Widow) (1905), Der Schlüssel zum Paradies (1906), Peter un Paul Schlaraffenland (1906), Mitislaw der Moderne (1907), Der Mann

mit den drei Frauen (1908), Das Fürstenkind (1909), Der Graf von Luxemburg (1909), Zigeunerliebe (Gipsy Love) (1910), Eva (Das Fabriksmadel) (1911), Die ideale Gattin (1913), Endlich allein (1914), Der Sterngucker (1916), Wo die Lerche singt (Where the Lark Sings) (1918), Die blaue Mazur (1920), Die Tangokonigin (1921), La danza delle libellule (1922), Frasquita (1922), Die gelbe Jacke (1923), CloClo (1924), Paganini (1925), Gigolette (1926), Der Zarewitsch (1927), Das Land des Lachelns (The Land of Smiles) (1929), Giuditta (1934), Garaboncias diak (The Wandering Scholar) (1943).

Libretto: Viktor Leon (1858-1940) and Leo Stein (1861-1921). Both librettists have collaborated with Franz Lehar for: Der Gottergatte (1904) and Die lustige Witwe (1905). Viktor Leon alone also wrote for Franz Lehar the libretto for: Der Rastelbinder and Die Gelbe Jacke. For other composers, Viktor Leon wrote: Der Doppelgänger (Alfred Zamara), Simplicius (Johan Strauss II), Der Streik der Schmiede (Max Josef Beer), Der Opernball (Richard Heuberger), Wiener Blut (Johann Strauss II), Die Schönen von Fogaras (Alfred Grünfeld), Barfussle (Richard Heuberger), Der fidele Bauer (Leo Fall), Die geschiedene Frau (Leo Fall), Gold gab ich für Eisen (Emerich Kalman), Wiener Volkssänger (Robert Mahler). Leo Stein also produced the libretto for: Der Graf von Luxemburg (Franz Lehar), Wiener Blut (Johan Strauss II) and Die Csardasfürstin (Emmerich Kalman).

Performance history: The opera was first performed at the Theater an der Wien on 30 December 1905 and it was a major success running for 483 performances. After the 400th performance Lehar wrote an overture, but it was rarely performed. In the next year, the production was toured all over Austria. In Germany the operetta premiered in Hamburg on 3 March 1906 at Neues Operetten Theater and in Berlin on 1 May 1906 at Berlin Theater. In Budapest The Merry Widow premiered on 27 November 1906 at Magyar Színház. In 1907, the operetta was produced in Buenos Aires in five productions, each in a different language. The first production in Paris was at the Theatre Apollo on 28 April 1909 as La Veuve joyeuse and it ran for 186 performances. The English adaptation by Basil Hood, with lyrics by Adrian Ross was first performed in London on 8 June 1907 at Daly's Theatre. The Merry Widow became a sensation and ran for 778 performances. The first American production opened on 21 October 1907 at the New Amsterdam Theatre on Broadway and ran for 416 performances. In 1943 the performance also saw a commercial revival on Broadway, staged by the New Opera Company. The operetta was first played in Australia in 1908. In 1910 the operetta was first played in Brussels. In Vienna, Die Lustige Witwe has been revived numerous times and remains a regular feature in the Vienna Volksoper's repertory. There are numerous film productions and several television appearances with several notable TV productions: 1955 (NBC), 1968 (British TV), 1977, 1996, 2002, 2015 (PBS). Up to the 2017/18 season, The Merry Widow was played in the world for 1202 times, in 223 different productions, ranking 19 on Operabase list.

Roles: Hanna Glawari, a wealthy widow (soprano), Count Danilo Danilovitch, the Embassy First Secretary (tenor or lyric baritone), Baron Mirko Zeta, the Ambassador (baritone), Valencienne, his wife (soprano), Camille, Conte de Rosillon (tenor), Njegus, the Embassy Secretary (spoken), Kromow, the Embassy counsellor (baritone), Olga, his wife (mezzo-soprano), Bogdanovitch, consul (baritone), Sylviane, his wife (soprano), Raoul de St Briche, French diplomat (tenor), Vicomte Cascada, Latin diplomat (baritone), Pritschitsch, Embassy consul (baritone), Praskowia, his wife (mezzo soprano), Chorus (musicians and servants).



Story: The story is based on a comedy play *L'attaché d'ambassade*, wrote in 1861 by Henry Meilhac (1830-

1897). The operetta explores some of the meandres of courtship and marriage in the aristocracy. In between three consecutive ball dancing parties, high officers and aristocratic ladies exchange faltering words, small gifts and proper manners. Attention is focused on a young, beautiful and very rich widow. The action is centered around a fan on which a young officer has written a message of love. As the fan is lost and passes from hand to hand, the message triggers different reactions and interpretations in every new owner. Finally, the fan reaches its rightful owner and everyone clears up. The young widow marries the First Secretary of the Embassy, a proper gentleman, and the performance ends with a Happy End. Only smiles and roses in the aristocratic world.

Act 1 (Embassy in Paris. Ball room)

An embassy in Paris is holding a ball to celebrate the birthday of the sovereign. Baron Zeta the Ambassador opens the ball (I am sovereign of the land by proxy). His wife Valencienne is flirting with the French attaché Camille (Ah, please be still !). Count Camille de Rosillon writes I love you on Valencienne's fan. Kromow finds the fan and thinks it belongs to his wife, Olga, but Baron Zeta in order to spare Olga the scandal declares that the fan belongs to his wife Valencienne. Hanna Glawari enters the scene to receive the homage of single men. Count Danilo Danilovitch can hardly wait his end of duty for the day (Oh fatherland...). Entering the ballroom Danilo meets the Ambassador who orders him to marry the rich widow Hanna, for the good of their fatherland. Everyone is dancing but Hanna refuses all invitations, until Danilo demands to buy a dance with her offering 10 000 francs for a charitable cause. Camille responds immediately offering to parry with his 10 000 francs. Hanna refuses both, but Danilo fights her until she flies into his arms and dances.

Act 2 (A garden party at Hanna's house / The small pavillion)

The next evening, celebrating the Grand Duke's birthday. Hanna entertains the guests with a song from her native land, the Vilja Song (I beg you now to linger here). Danilo joins her in a folk dance song (Maiden peers and maiden looks) and finally all present start singing. Baron Zeta asks Danilo to find the owner of the fan. When Hannah comes across the fan she assumes it is a gift for her because Danilo is too shy to declare his love. Scene 2 - Finally Valencienne finds the fan. In response to Camille's declaration, Valencienne writes on her fan that she is a respectable wife, but Camille insists to keep the fan as a keepsake. Valencienne insists that Camille should marry Hannah and Camille accepts but strictly to follow the good propriety (O believe me, it is difficult for me). In farewell, Camille asks for one last kiss and invites Valencienne in a little pavillion for a private moment. Scene 3 - Baron Zeta, who has peeked through the keyhole, has heard someone declaring love in the little pavillion and demands explanations. With the presence of spirit, Hanna declares that it was her in the pavillion where Camille declared love to her. Camille must play his role now and declares in public his love for Hanna (Just as a Rosebud). Danilo is left speechless (She really behaved beautifully !). Trying to make Danilo jealous, Hanna makes the announcement that Mr. de Rosillon has proposed to her. Instead of protesting Danilo gives them his blessing, explaining (Fall in love often, get engaged seldom, never marry !). To shame the shameless Danilo, Hanna sings what a marriage should be in a Parisian manner (A lively marriage). Sorrowed, Danilo sings the sad story of a prince who could not declare his love and lost his loved one (There were once two children of kings). Finally Danilo sings his farewell (You'll find me at Maxim's)

Act 3 (Chez Maxim)

At Maxim's showroom, Camille and Valencienne sneak off to one of the private rooms. When Baron Zeta arrives, Valencienne together with the can-can dancers (grisettes) are entertaining the guests (Yes, it is us, the Grisettes from Parisian cabarets). Scene 2 - Both Hanna and Danilo arrive at Maxim's. Danilo forbids Hannah to marry Camille and she explains that she was merely safeguarding another woman's reputation. Njegus produces the fan belonging to Valencienne and Zeta recognizes it as his wife. Zeta declares himself divorced and proposes to Hanna, but she informs him that according to her late husband's will she will lose all her fortune if she remarries. Hearing the news, all the potential suitors back off, including Baron Zeta. Only Danilo is not impressed and declares his love to Hanna. To everyone's joy, his love is accepted and they both sing the famous Merry Widow Waltz (Lips fall silent, whispering are violins Love me !). Hanna declares that upon remarrying her fortune will be lost, but it will pass to her new husband. To clear with her husband, Valencienne asks Zeta to read both sides of her fan where he finds the proof of her respectability. With the couples reunited, everyone on the scene agrees that the study of women is hard (Woman, woman, woman, woman).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - I am sovereign of the land by proxy (Zeta), Ah, please be still ! (Valemnciene, Camille), Oh Fatherland...(Danilo) Act 2 - I beg you now to linger here (Hanna, Chorus), Maiden peers and maiden looks (Hannah, Danilo), O believe me, it is difficult for me (Valencienne, Camille), Just as a Rosebud (Camille), She really behaved beautifully ! (Danilo), Fall in love often, get engaged seldom, never marry ! (Danilo), A lively marriage (Hanna), There were once two children of kings (Danilo), You'll find me at Maxim's (Danilo). Act 3 - Yes, it is us, the Grisettes from Parisian cabarets (Valencienne, Chorus), Lips fall silent, whispering are violins Love me ! (Danilo, Hanna), Woman, woman, woman, woman (All) .

Ballet: There have been several ballet versions of The Merry Widow, using re-arrangements of Lehar's melodies. The first, choreographed by Ruth Page, debuted in England as Vilia in 1953. Revised and retitled as The Merry Widow, it toured the US and came to Broadway in 1955 with prima ballerina Alicia Markova dancing the title role. In 1963 Maurice Bejart created his adaptation with a limited exposure. In 1975, John Lanchberry created another version for the Australian Ballet.

Recordings: 1907 Grammophon Streich Orchester, 1950 Sinfonieorchester des Nordwestdeutschen Rindfunks, Hamburg, 1950 Tonhalle Orchester Zurich, 1953 Orchestre Lamoureux, 1953 Philharmonia Orchestra London, 1955 Orquestra de Camera Madrid, 1957 Vienna Volksoper, 1958 Sadler's Wells Opera, 1960 Grosses Operetten Orchester, 1962 American Opera Society, 1964 Dresden Philharmonic, 1968 Vienna State Opera, 1972 Berlin Philharmonic, 1978 New York City Opera, 1986 Lyric Opera of Chicago, 2000 Metropolitan Opera, 2006 Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, 2007 Dallas Civic Opera Video Recordings: 1977 San Diego Opera, 1988 Sydney Elisabethan Orchestra, 1990 Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, 1993 Philharmonie Bratislava, 1997 Opera national de Paris, 2001 San Francisco Opera, 2003 Zurich Opera House, 2007 Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden.

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15. The Elixir of Love

Title: The Elixir of Love (L'elisir d'amore)

Composer: Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848). Born in Bergamo, Italy, his father Andrea Donizetti (1765-1835) was a rich merchant, the caretaker of the town pawnshop, while his mother Domenica Nava (1765-1836) was a steamstress. At the age of 9 he became a protege of the German composer Johann Simon Mayr (1763-1845), Maestro di Capella at the Cathedral of Bergamo. In 1810 at the age of 13 he was accepted to the local art school, Academia Carrara. In 1816 he was granted a two years scholarship at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna where he studied with Padre Stanislao Mattei (1750-1825) who was an Italian Franciscan friar, a composer, musicologist and music teacher. In 1828 he married Virginia Vasselli (1799-1837) and the fruit of their marriage were three children, none of whom survived. His brother Giuseppe Donizetti (1788-1856), from 1828 was Instructor General of the Imperial Ottoman Music at the court of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839). In 1897 the Teatro Nuovo in Bergamo changed its name to Teatro Gaetano Donizetti to celebrate the centenary of the composer's birth together with a Monument to Donizetti inaugurated in a public garden in Piazza Cavour, near the theatre. Operas: Il Pigmaliione (1816), Enrico di Porgogna (1818), Una follia (1818), Il falegname di Livornia (1819), Le nozze in villa (1820), Zoraida di Granata (1822), La zingara (1822), La lettera anonima (1822), Chiara e Serafina (1822), Alfredo il grande (1823), Il fortunato inganno (1823), Emilia di Liverpool (1824), Alahor in Granata (1826), Don Gregorio (1826), Elvida (1826), Gabriella di Vergy (1826), Olivo e Pasquale (1827), Otto mesi in due ore (1827), Il borgomastro di Saardam (1827), Le convenienze teatrali (1827), L'esule di Roma (1828), Alina, regina di Golconda (1828), Gianni di Calais (1828), Il peria (1829), Il giovedì grasso (1829), Elisabetta al castello di Kenilworth (1829), I pazzi per progetto (1830), Anna Bolena (1830), Gianni di Parigi (1831), Francesca di Foix (1831), Fausta (1832), Ugo, conte di Parigi (1832), L'elisir d'amore (1832), Sancia di Castiglia (1832), Il furioso all'isola di Dan Domingo (1833), Parisina (1833), Torquato Tasso (1833), Lucrezia Borgia (1833), Rosamonda d'Inghilterra (1834), Maria Stuarda (1834), Gemma di Vergy (1834), Marino Faliero (1835), Lucia di Lammermoor (1835), Belisario (1836), Il Campanello di Notte (1836), Betly, o La Papanna svizzera (1836), L'assedio di Calais (1836), Pia de'Tolomei (1837), Roberto Devereux (1837), Maria

de Rudenz (1838), Poliuto (1848), Le duc d'Albe (1839), L'ange de Nisida (1839), Les Martyrs (1840), La fille du regiment (1840), La favorite (1840), Adelia (1841), Rita (1841), Maria Padilla (1841), Linda di Chamounix (1842), Caterina Cornaro (1844), Don Pasquale (1843), Maria di Rohan (1843), Dom Sebastine (1843). His compositions also include: choral works (Ave Maria), orchestral works, concertos, chamber works, quartets for strings, piano works.

Libretto: Felice Romani (1788-1865). Felice Romani was an Italian poet and scholar in mythology who wrote librettos for Donizetti (Anna Bolena, L'elisir d'amore, Gianni di Parigi, La Regina di Golconda, Rosmonda, Ugo Conte di Parigi, Parisina, Lucretia Borgia), Rossini (Il turco in Italia, Bianca e Falliero) and Bellini (Il Pirata, La straniera, Zaira, I Capuleti e i Montecchi, La Sonnambula, Norma, Betarice di Tenda). He also wrote libretti for Simon Mayr (La rosa bianca e la rosa rossa, Medea in Corinto, Atar ossia Il serraglio di Ormus, Le due duchesse, Mennone e Zemira, Danao, Atalia) and numerous other composers including Giuseppe Verdi (Un giorno di regno). The libretto was inspired by the libretto of Eugene Scribe for Daniel Auber's opera *Le Philtre* (1831)

Performance history: Premiere on 12 May 1832 at the Teatro della Canobbiana, Milan. The opera was first staged in Barcelona on 5 August 1833 at Teatre de la Santa Creu and it premiered at the Gran Teatre del Liceu on 2 May 1848. In 1840, Richard Wagner arranged the work for solo piano and in 1866 Sir William Schwenk Gilbert wrote a burlesque adaptation of the opera. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York the first performance was at 23 January 1904. Other popular productions at the Metropolitan Opera premiered in 1960, 1973 and 1991. At the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg the opera was staged in the 19th century for only three times. Between 1838 and 1848 *L'elisir d'amore* was the most often performed opera in Italy and has remained continually in the international opera repertory. Among the star tenors to appear as Nemorino are: Enrico Caruso, Neri di Carmine, Ferruccio Tagliavini, Carlo Bergonzi, Luciano Pavarotti, Matthew Polenzani. Among the basso buffo to appear as Dulcamara are: Tito Gobi, Fernando Corena, Enzo Dara, Simone Alaimo, Salvatore Baccaloni, Luciano Miotto, David Ward. Up to the 2017/18 season, *L'elisir d'amore* was played in the world for 1574 times, in 378 different productions, ranking 14 on Operabase list.

Roles: Nemorino, a young peasant (tenor), Adina, rich and capricious (soprano), Belcore, a sergeant (baritone), Dulcamara, an itinerant medicine man (bass), Gianetta, Adina's friend (soprano), Chorus (peasants, soldiers)



Story: This opera is set in a small village in rural Italy, where everyone knows everyone and the sun ripens vine in grapes. Young Nemorino falls in love with capricious Adina, but the game of courtship is too much for him. Inspired by the legend of Tristan and Isolde, Nemorino buys a love potion from Dr Dulcamara, a traveling merchant only too pleased to serve him with some cheap wine. Confident in his magic power Nemorino finds courage to declare his love, but he is rejected since Adina was already proposed by sergeant Belcore. In order to buy more potion, Nemorino enrolls in the army, not knowing that he has inherited an uncle and has become very rich. Hearing the news, the girls in town become very friendly and Nemorino assumes it is the magic of his potion. Reconsidering her options, Adina changes her heart, frees Nemorino from his contract with the army and declares her eternal love, to the joy of the village. Dr. Dulcamara concludes that his potion makes magic not only in love affairs but also in finances. Indeed, a drop of wine may work its magic on a poor soul.

Act 1 (A farm in the countryside / A square in the village)

Nemorino is charmed by seeing Adina as she reads a book (Oh how Charming, oh how lovely). Adina reads the story of Tritsan and Isolde to Gianetta and other young girls (Love for the cruel Isolda in Tristan's heart was burning). Scene 2 - Belcore enters the scene to offer Adina the apple, like Paris to Aphrodite (Hansom Paris, in the story gave the apple for the beauty) and asks her hand in marriage. Adina is flattered but she is not conquered that easy. Scene 3 - Alone with Adina, Nemorino declares his love but he is not taken seriously (Hear me a moment Adina ...Again the same old story). Scene 4 - Peasants comment the arrival of doctor Dulcamara, well dressed in a golden carriage. Scene 5 - Dulcamara starts selling his merchandise (Attention, attention, oh villagers come listen). Scene 6 - Nemorino asks the foreign doctor about the love potion used by Queen Isolda and Dulcamara is happy to provide him with a small bottle at the cost of one sequin (a gold coin of 3.5 grams). The doctor also instructs Nemorino to wait a whole day for the full effect (Very gentle to begin it, tip the bottle lightly), time enough for Dulcamara to flee the town. Scene 7 - Nemorino drinks the potion thrilled with expectations (Potion of love ! I have you !). Scene 8 - Nemorino is alone with Adina tries to charm her (La ra, la ra, la lera) but no effects of the elixir are to be recorded. Scene 9 - Belcore enters the scene singing (Tran tran, tran tran, tran tran). He repeats his proposal only to be accepted to Nemorino's despair. Scene 10 - The wedding is scheduled for the same day since Belcore must leave for his service, but Nemorino begs Adina to wait one day, hoping the elixir will do its magic (At least postpone it until tomorrow. Adina just not today). Adina asks Belcore to bring his notary and Belcore invites everyone to the ball dance later in the evening.

Act 2 (The farm of Adina's family)

Waiting for the notary, Dulcamara sings a song to Adina trying to change her heart (I am rich and you are pretty, I have money you have charms). Scene 2 - The notary arrives and the desperate Nemorino asks Dulcamara for help but he has no more money to enhance the magic of the potion. Scene 3 - Missing Nemorino, Adina has postponed the wedding and Belcore is annoyed (The woman is a creature who defies understanding). Belcore meets Nemorino desperate for money and offers him 20 scudi (460 grams of silver) to enroll in the army and Nemorino signs the contract at once. Scene 4 - Giannetta brings the news that Nemorino has inherited a rich uncle (Now Nemorino great wealth possesses). Scene 5 - Nemorino is greeted by Giannetta and the peasants with a lot of respect believing the potion has started its magic. Scene 6 - Adina enters the scene with Dulcamara, astonished to find Nemorino surrounded by friendly girls, fighting one another for his attention. To change her fortune Dulcamara offers to sell some love potion to Adina too (Mercy upon us ! With every female ! Surely my liquor's unique, it's true). Adina refuses confident with her natural magic (...a smile, a gentle touch). Scene 7 - Not knowing that Adina has postponed the wedding Nemorino sings in tears about her, willing to forget her (Softly a furtive tear drop fell). Scene 8 - Adina finds Nemorino alone and asks him why did he join the army. Nemorino responds that he wanted to unify his destiny with her husband's one (...such an action may help my situation in some way). Adina responds that she is single and she has purchased back his military contract from Belcore (I bought the fatal contract). Nemorino refuses explaining that he wants to die as a soldier since he is not loved. Deeply impressed Adina declares him eternal love (...you must know you are beloved. I love you ! I love you !). Scene 9 - Everyone in the village is present. Belcore frees both Adina and Nemorino from his contract (There is a world of women who want Belcore). Dulcamara brings the young couple the news that Nemorino has inherited his uncle and is a rich man, proving that his potion works not only on charm but also on income (It will beautify the features, mother Nature has neglected). The cheerful audience bids farewell to doctor Dulcamara, in hope for his before long return (Long live doctor Dulcamara, here you'll always be well met).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Oh how charming, oh how lovely (Nemorino), Love for the cruel Isolda in Tristan's heart was burning (Adina), Hansom Paris, in the story gave the apple for the beauty (Belcore), Hear me a moment Adina ...Again the same old story (Adina, Nemorino), Attention, attention, oh villagers come listen (Dulcamara), Very gentle to begin it, tip the bottle lightly (Dulcamara), Potion of love ! I have you ! (Nemorino), La ra, la ra, la lera (Nemorino, Adina). Tran tran, tran tran, tran tran (Belcore). At least postpone it until tomorrow. Adina just not today (Nemorino). Act 2 - I am rich and you are pretty, I have money you have charms (Dulcamara), The woman is a creature who defies understanding (Belcore), Now Nemorino great wealth possesses (Chorus), Mercy upon us ! With every female ! Surely my liquor's unique, it's true (Dulcamara), ...a smile, a gentle touch (Adina), Softly a furtive tear drop fell (Nemorino), ...such an action may help my situation in some way (Nemorino), I bought the fatal contract (Adina), ...you must know you are beloved. I love you ! I love you ! (Adina), There is a world of women who want Belcore (Belcore), It will beautify the features, mother

Nature has neglectedi (Dulcamara), Long live doctor Dulcamara, here you'll always be well me (Chorus).

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1953 Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Roma (Margherita Carosio - Adina, Nicola Monti - Nemorino, Tito Gobbi - Dulcamara), 1966 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Roberta Peters - Adina, Carlo Bergonzi - Nemorino, Fernando Corena - Dulcamara), 1970 English Chamber Orchestra, London (Joan Sutherland - Adina, Luciano Pavarotti - Nemorino, Spiro Malas - Dulcamara), 1977 Royal Opera House (Ileana Cotrubas - Adina, Placido Domingo - Nemorino, Sir Geraint Evans - Dulcamara), 1982 Bavarian Radio Chorus, Munich (Lucia Popp - Adina, Peter Dvorsky - Nemorino, Yevgeny Nesterenko - Dulcamara), 1990 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Kathleen Battle - Adina, Luciano Pavarotti - Nemorino, Enzo Dara - Dulcamara), 1996 Hungarian State Opera, Budapest (Alessandra Ruffini - Adina, Vincenzo La Scola - Nemorino, Simone Alaimo - Dulcamara), 1997 Lyon Opera Orchestra (Angela Gheorghiu - Adina, Roberto Alagna - Nemorino, Simone Alaimo - Dulcamara), 2006 Vienna State Opera (Anna Netrebko - Adina, Rolando Villazon - Nemorino, Ildebrando D'Arcangelo - Dulcamara), 2007 Teatro Dinizetti, Bergamo (Silvia Dalla Benetta - Adina, Raul Hernandez - Nemorino, Damiano Salerno - Dulcamara)

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16. Die Fledermaus

Title: Die Fledermaus (The Flittermouse, The Bat)

Composer: Johann Strauss Jr. (1825-1899). Born in St. Ulrich near Vienna, Austria, his father was Johann Strauss Sr. (1804-1849) the famous composer of waltzes, best known for the Radetzky March while his mother was Maria Anna Streim (1801-1870). Johann Strauss Jr. was the first of seven children and studied the violin with Franz Amon, the first violinist in his father's orchestra. He studied counterpoint and harmony at the private school of Professor Joachim Hoffmann Vienna music. He also studied with composer Joseph Drechsler and Anton Kollmann the ballet repetiteur of the Vienna Court Opera. Johann Strauss Jr made his debut at the Dommayer's Casino in Hietzing, a suburb of Vienna. His first major appointment was as Kapellmeister of the Vienna Citizen's Regiment. Since 1863 he was appointed KK Hofballmusikdirektor (Music Director of the Royal Court Balls). In 1862 he Married Henrietta Treffz (1818-1878) a well known mezzo-soprano, with no offspring. After her death in 1878, Johann Strauss remarried actress Angelika Dittrich and after a quick divorce in 1887 he married Adele Deutsch. His residence in the Praterstrasse, where he lived in the 1860s is now part of the Vienna Museum. Operettas: Indigo und die vierzig Rauber (1871), Der Karneval in Rom (1873), Die Fladermaus (1874), Cagliostro in Wien (1875), Prinz Methusalem (1877), Blindekuh (1878), Das Spitzentuch der Konigin (1880), Der lustige Krieg (1881), Eine Nacht in Venedig (1883), Der Zigeunerbaron (1885), Simplicius (1887), Furstin Ninetta (1893), Jabuka (1894), Waldmeister (1895), Die Gottin der Vernunft (1897). Opera: Ritter Pazman (1892). Ballet: Aschenbrodel (Cinderella 1899). Other 10 operettas have been arranged by other composers using music by Johann Strauss Jr. His work also includes very numerous: waltzes, polkas, marches and quadrilles.

Libretto: Karl Haffner (1804-1876) and Richard Genée (1823-1895). Karl Haffner was a German playwright. His work include numerous playwrights such as: Das Marmor Herz (1841), Der wilde Jager oder: Das rothe Hauschen (1841), Der Tod und der Wunder Doctor (1841), Die Thranenquelle (1842), Die Wiener Stubenmadchen (1840), Peter Kranau (1843), Der Zeitgeist (1841) and novels: Scholz und Nestroy (1866), Nonne und Maitresse (1867), Die schonen Weiber von Wien (1867), Jungfernbrut (1869), Der verkaufte Schlaf (1870), Die Kinder von Neudorf (1871), Der Mann Ohne Herz (1871). Richard Gene was a librettist, playwright and composer. His work include librettes such as: Der Geiger aus Tirol (1857), Der Liebesring (1860), Ein Traurespiel (1860), Der Musikfeind (1862), Die Generalprobe (1862), Die Talismanner (1863), Rosita (1864), Der schwartze Prinz (1866), Eine Konzertprobe (1870), Der Seekadett (1876), Die Piraten (1886), Signora Vedetta (1892), Freund Felix (1893). The original literary source was a farce called Das Gefangnis by German

playwright Julius Roderich Benedix (1811-1873) that premiered in Berlin in 1851. *Das Gefangnis* inspired the French vaudeville *Le Reveillon* by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halevy that opened at Theatre du Palais Royal in Paris on 10 September 1872. Karl Haffner translated the French vaudeville into German for a non musical production in Vienna and his translation was used by Richard Genée to provide the lyrics for the final libretto.

Performance history: *Die Fledermaus* premiered on 5 April 1874 at the Theater an den Wien in Vienna. On 21 November 1874 the operetta was performed in New York at the Bowery Amphitheatre. The German premiere in Munich took place in 1875 at Gartnerplatztheater. At London, *Die Fledermaus* was first sung in English on 18 December 1876 at Alhambra Theatre, with its score modified by composer Hamilton Clarke (1840-1912). The operetta reached Paris in 1877 at the Theatre de la Renaissance, renamed as *La Tzigane*. The operetta was readapted to the original score in 1904, by Paul Ferrier (1843-1920). In Romania the operetta premiered on 20 March 1891 at the National Theatre Bucharest. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York the operetta premiered at 16 February 1905. Since 1930 the operetta is presented in Vienna on every New Year's Eve and is part of the regular repertoire. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Die Fledermaus* was played in the world for 2207 times, in 393 different productions, ranking 11 on Operabase list.

Roles: Gabriel von Eisenstein (tenor/baritone), Rosalinde, his wife (soprano), Adele, their maid (soprano), Ida, Adele's sister (soprano), Alfred, a singer teacher (tenor), Dr Falke, a notary (baritone), Dr Blind, a lawyer (tenor), Frank, a prison governor (baritone), Prince Orlofsky, a Russian prince (mezzo soprano en travesti), Yvan, the prince's valet (speaking role), Frosch, a jailer (speaking role), Chorus (party goers and servants)



Story: Based on a vaudeville, the story is a comedy of manners, a satire to the game of pretending only so common in well behaved people. Typical for a comedy of errors, everyone pretends to be someone else and the result is not quite rewarding. All mishappenings start after Mr. Eisenstein finds himself in contradiction with the authority and is sentenced to eight days in prison. At his house, everyone loses self-discipline and gets invited to a party at Prince Orlofsky's Palace, under disguise. After a night of drinking and dancing, they all meet in prison for a storm of reciprocal accusations. Finally, Dr. Falke the notary, offers the honorable solution to everyone announcing that all the confusion was only an innocent joke.

Act 1 (Eisenstein's House)

Alfred is singing a serenade (*Little dove who flew away*). Adele reads in a letter from her sister that she is welcomed at a ball dance at Prince Orlofsky's Palace if she can filch an outfit from her mistress (Here writes my sister). Scene 2 - Mr. Eisenstein returns at home with his lawyer Blind and his notary Falke. He explains that he was sentenced to eight days in prison (Just be patient!). Dr Blind offers his generous help (Petition, appeal, complain...exculpate, inculpate, calculate). Scene 3 - Dr Falke invites him to a supper-party with ballerinas (Come with me to supper-party). Mr. Eisenstein shows interest in such an invitation (...as a cat I'll creep out of the house) accepting to disguise himself as Marquis Renard. Scene 4 - Rosalinde sorrows about remaining alone for eight days (So I must remain alone) and Mr. Eisenstein plays stirred up and bids his farewell. Scene 5 - With Mr. Eisenstein gone, Alfred continues his serenade (Drink, darling, drink quickly) and Rosalinde responds shyly. Frank, the prison governor arrives for Mr. Eisenstein and Alfred pretends to be Rosalinde's husband in order not to compromise her (Sir, what would you think of me). With a farewell kiss, Alfred is taken to jail to serve the sentence (His nice big birdcage is quite near here).

Act 2 (Prince Orlofsky's Palace)

A supper like no other has been prepared in Orlofsky's Palace (A supper beckons us today). Orlofsky points out that everyone must be entertained in his house (I like to invite guests). Adele, dressed in an evening robe makes fun of Marquis Renard who has mistaken her with a maid, due to her accent (Isn't that laughable ?). Mr. Eisenstein starts courting one of the lady guests, not knowing that his wife Rosalinde hides under that mask (Oh, my lovely sir, I beg not so daring). Rosalinde claims that her heart beats are alarming and Eisenstein courteously offers his watch to count them (Let's count them, if you please !) only to be deprived of the object. Scene 2 - Rosalinde sings recalling with nostalgia her presumptive homeland in Hungary (Sounds of my homeland). In response, Prince Orlofsky sings about the sweetness of wines (The sweet juice of the vines). At Dr Falke's proposal, all guest drink the "Bruderschaft" glass of wine (...a great union of sisters and brothers) and start dancing. Mr. Eisenstein demands to unmask his partner, but Rosalinde pretends to have a pimple on her nose (I have a pimple on my nose) and Eisenstein departs to serve his sentence in prison.

Act 3 (In the prison)

Adele, who has coupled with Frank at the ball dance is presenting her skills as an actress, singing (When I play the innocent from the country). Mr. Eisenstein finds Alfred in his place in prison and demands a clarification pretending to be Dr Blind (Tell me in minutest detail). Alfred and Rosalinde explain that it was a confusion, but Mr Einstein-Blind is not buying it (Singularly odd, singularly odd !). Annoyed, Rosalinde explains that her husband has spent the night with young ladies and does not deserve to be defended (I will first scratch his eyes out). At this point Mr. Eisenstein reveals himself to be the one betrayed (Tremble, you crooks !). Both Rosalinde and Mr. Eisenstein claim for vengeance and everyone on scene sings (Oh Fledermaus, O Fledermaus, release your victim finally). Dr Falke enjoys the moment than explains (Everything that troubles you, was a joke, conceived by me !). Adele is offered by Frank to be trained for the stage, backed by Prince Orlofsky as a patron of the arts (Should you stay under arrest here). Delighted to have their honour restored, both Mr. Eisenstein and Rosalinde play happy (Champagne was to blame, Tra la la la la).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Little dove who flew away (Alfred), Here writes my sister (Adele), Just be patient ! (Eisenstein, Blind, Rosalinde), Petition, appeal, complain...exculpate, inculpate, calculate (Blind), Come with me to supper-party (Falke), ...as a cat I'll creep out of the house (Eisenstein), So I must remain alone (Rosalinde), Drink, darling, drink quickly (Alfred), Sir, what would you think of me (Rosalinde), His nice big birdcage is quite near here (Alfred). Act 2 - A supper beckons us today (Chorus), I like to invite guests (Orlofsky), Isn't that laughable ? (Adele), Oh, my lovely sir, I beg not so daring (Eisenstein, Rosalinde). Let's count them, if you please ! (Rosalinde, Eisenstein), Sounds of my homeland (Rosalinde), The sweet juice of the vines (Orlofsky) ...a great union of sisters and brothers (Falke, All), I have a pimple on my nose (Rosalinde, Chorus) Act 3 - When I play the innocent from the country (Adele), Tell me in minutest detail (Eisenstein), Singularly odd, singularly odd ! (Alfred, Rosalinde), I will first scratch his eyes out (Rosalinde), Tremble, you crooks ! (Eisenstein), Oh Fledermaus, O Fledermaus, release your victim finally (All), Everything that troubles you, was a joke, conceived by me ! (Falke), Should you stay under arrest here (Frank), Champagne was to blame, Tra la la la la (Rosalinde, Eisenstein, All)

Ballet: A ballet version of Die Fledermaus was staged in 1958 by the American dancer and choreographer Ruth Page (1899-1991). In 1986 the performance toured in USA with the scenery and costumes produced by Andre Delfau. The performance in Chicago at Joliet's Rialto Square Theatre was taped for broadcast by WTTW-TV and the public television network. The French company director, choreographer and dancer, Roland Petit (1924-2011) produced in 1979 his version called La Chauvre souris for the Ballet National de Marseiile, first presented in Monte Carlo.

Recordings: 1907 Grammophon-Orchester, Berlin (Robert Philipp - Eisenstein, Emilie Hoffmann - Rosalinde, Marie Dietrich - Adele), 1949 RIAS Sinfonieorchester Berlin (Peter Anders - Eisenstein, Anny Schlemm - Rosalinde, Rita Streich - Adele), 1955 Philharmonia Orchestra, London (Nicolai Gedda - Eisenstein, Elisabeth Schwartzkopf - Rosalinde, Rita Streich - Adele), 1960 Vienna Philharmonic, Vienna (Waldemar Kmentt - Eisenstein, Hilde Gueden - Rosalinde, Erika Koth - Adele), 1976 Bavarian State Orchestra (Hermann Prey - Eisenstein, Julia Varady - Rosalinde, Lucia Popp -Adele), 1987 Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam

(Wolfgang Brendel - Eisenstein, Edita Gruberova - Rosalinde, Barbara Bonney - Adele), 1991 Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (John Dickie - Eisenstein, Gabriele Fontana - Rosalinde, Brigitte Karwautz - Adele)
 Film adaptations: Germany (1917, 1923, 1931, 1937, 1945, 1955, 1959, 1972, 1986), France (1931, 2001), Great Britain (1933, 1955, 1984, 1990), Austria (1962), Denmark (1968), Russia (1979), Australia (1997), Ukraine (2004)

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17. Orpheus in the Underworld

Title: Orpheus in the Underworld (Orphee aux enfers)

Composer: Jacques Offenbach (1815-1880). Born in Cologne, Prussia, his father Isaac Juda Offenbach (1779-1850) was a bookbinder and synagogue cantor, while his mother was Marianne Rindskopf (1783-1840). He was the second son of ten children and started the study of violin with his father at the age of six. Within two years, the boy was composing songs and dances. At the age of 9 he started the study of cello with Bernhard Breuer (1808-1877) only seven years older than him. In 1833 he entered the Paris Conservatoire, with a letter of introduction from the municipal orchestra of Cologne to the director Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842). After one year he resumed his studies and in 1835 he was appointed as a cellist at the Opera Comique where he studied with cellist Louis Pierre Norblin and conductor Fromental Halevy. On 14 August 1844 he married Herminie d'Alcain (1827-1887) the daughter of a general. Together they enjoyed five children, one boy and four girls. He worked as a cellist, conductor at the Opera Comique and musical director of the Comedie Francaise. Since 1855 he directed his own theatre, the Salle Lacaze in the Champs-Elysees. At the beginning of 1861, by the personal command of Emperor Napoleon III he was appointed Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur. From 1873 to 1874 he also directed the Theatre de la Gaite. Operettas: L'alcove (1847), Pepito (1853), Le deux aveugles (1855), Madama Papillon (1855), Ba-ta-clan (1855), La rose de Saint Flour (1856), Orphee aux enfers (1858), Genevieve de Brabant (1859), Daphnis et Chloe (1860), Le pont des soupirs (1861), Le roman comique (1861), Les georgiennes (1864), La belle Helene (1864), Barbe Bleue (1866), La vie parisienne (1866), La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein (1867), Robinson Crusoe (1867), Le chateau a Toto (1868), Vert Vert (1869), Les brigands (1869), Le roi Carotte (1872), Fantasio (1872), Madame l'archiduc (1874), Le voyage dans la lune (1875), Le docteur Ox (1877), Madame Favart (1878), La fille du tambour major (1879). Operas: Les fees du Rhin (1864), Les contes d'Hoffmann (1881). Ballet: Le Papillon (1860). His work also includes vocal, cello and piano works.

Libretto: Ludovic Halevy (1834-1908) and Hector Cremieux (1828-1892). Ludovic Halevy was a French versatile writer, nephew of Fromental Halevy the former teacher of Jaques Offenbach while Hector Cremieux was a librettist and playwright. The two have collaborated with Offenbach for the following operettas: Orphee aux enfers (1858), La chanson de Fortunio (1861), Le pont des soupirs (1861), Le roman comique (1861). Ludovic Halevy in collaboration with Henri Meilhac has also produced for Offenbach the libretto for operettas such as: La belle Helene (1864), Barbe Bleue (1866), La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein (1867), La Perichole (1868), Le Reveillon (1872). Cremieux alone or in collaboration with other authors has produced another eight librettos for Offenbach. The subject is based on the myth of Orpheus, also inspired from the opera Orpheus and Euridice by Cristoph Gluck (1714-1787) that premiered in Vienna on 5 October 1762 and was produced by the Paris Opera in 1774 at the Salle du Palais-Royal with a French libretto by Pierre-Louis Moline. In 1859, Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) has produced an adaptation for the new Parisian diapason, that has changed from 820 to 896 cycles per second.

Performance history: The operetta premiered on 21 October 1858 at the Theatre des Bouffes-Parisiens and run for an initial 228 performances. For the Vienna production of 1860, the Austrian composer Carl Binder (1817-1860) provided an overture that became famous. The premiere at New York took place in March 1861 at the Stadt Theatre, played in German. The Czech premiere was in 1864 with Adolf Cech (1841-1903) as conductor. The London premiere was on 26 December 1865 at Her Majesty's Theatre, in an adaptation produced by James Robinson Planche (1796-1880). A four act version, designated as an opera feerie, was first performed at the

Opera Populaire on 7 February 1874. In modern times, an English version of the opera was produced at the English National Opera by Geoffrey Dunn, beginning with 16 May 1960. Up to the 2017/18 season, Orpheus in the Underworld was played in the world for 363 times, in 76 different productions, ranking 59 on Operabase list.

Roles: Cupidon, god of love (soprano, en travesti), Diana, goddess of chastity (soprano), Eurydice, wife of Orpheus (soprano), John Styx, servant of Pluton (baritone or tenor), Juno, wife of Jupiter (mezzo soprano), Jupiter, King of the gods (baritone), Public Opinion (mezzo soprano), Mars, god of war (bass), Mercury, messenger of the gods (tenor), Minerva, goddess of wisdom (soprano), Morpheus, god of sleep (tenor), Orpheus, a musician (tenor), Pluto, god of the underworld, disguised as the farmer Aristeus (tenor), Venus, goddess of beauty (contralto), Amour (mezzo soprano), Bacchus, god of wine (spoken), Cerberus (barked), Minos (baritone or tenor), Aeacus (tenor), Rhadamanthus (bass), Chorus



Story: The ancient legend of Orpheus and Eurydice has been the source of inspiration for some 30 music and ballet performances, produced by composers like: Monteverdi, Gluck, Stravinsky, Offenbach. Other tens of works in literature, film and drama, visual arts, video games or comics have employed this legend. The story is simple: Orpheus the famous singer, loses the love and the life of his wife Eurydice to a rustic worker. Praying to the gods for justice, backed by the Public Opinion, Orpheus travels to Mount Olympus and then to the Underworld to try and bring her back, but his love is not strong enough for such a deed.

Act 1 (Countryside of Thebes, grain field, house of Aristeus and house of Orpheus)

Avant-scene - Public Opinion explains who she is (I am Public Opinion, a symbolic character). Scene 1 - Eurydice sings about the flowers she will offer to the handsome honey maker living next to her (In her heart a woman dreams). Scene 2 - Orpheus is having an argument with Eurydice, he is dreaming of his nymph Maquilla, she is dreaming of her honey maker (Ah ! are you here ? Yes, my friend). The two oppose different views about the music composed by Orpheus (It's adorable, it's delectable.... it's deplorable, it's appalling) both asking the judgement of gods, Jupiter and Venus respectively. To end the quarrel, Orpheus declares himself enslaved by Public Opinion and warns Eurydice that the corn field has been poisoned, so no more honey. Scene 3 - Left alone, Eurydice worries about Aristeus who comes every day across the corn field to frolic with her. Scene 4 - Aristeus sings about his honey and his innocent pleasures (I am Aristeus, farmer in Arcadie). Eurydice can not stop Aristeus to enter the corn field, who is mocking the danger, and she enters the field to die with him. She gets poisoned and to her surprise Aristeus reveals himself to be Pluto, the god of the Underground, turning the day into night (The Death has smiled to me). Orpheus arrives, only to find a short note from Eurydice that she was poisoned and has departed with Pluto to the Underworld. Scene 5 - Orpheus is disturbed, mostly because the premature night has interrupted his musical production and he has not served his dinner, but he is thankful to Jupiter that he has called his wife by his side. Scene 6 - Public Opinion, with the torch of justice in her hand, demands that Orpheus should go to Mount Olympus to prostrate to Jupiter's feet and reclaim his adored wife (Come, it is honour that reclaims you !).

Act 2 (Mount Olympus)

All the gods are sleeping with Morpheus singing a lullaby (Ron, ron ...asleep we are). Awakening, Jupiter reminds Diana that he has changed Acteon (son of Aristeus) into a stag, to save the honor of mythology.

Meanwhile Venus and Cupidon complete a revolt. Scene 2 - Juno complains to Jupiter that the mortal Eurydice was kidnapped by the god of the Underworld. Scene 3 - Mercury reports to Jupiter that he has asked Pluto to come to Mount Olympus for the final judgement. Scene 4 - Pluto reports to Jupiter, trying to hide his deeds.

Scene 5 - The gods are revolting, asking for no more nectar and no more ambrosia (Hold your spears ! gods and demi-gods !) with Pluto as their leader. Defending Pluto, all the gods remind Jupiter of some of his love previous adventures (To seduce the fair Alcmena). Scene 6 - Orpheus arrives together with Public Opinion and Jupiter decides to hear their word. Scene 7 - Orpheus complains to the King of Heavens asking for justice (Il approche ! il s'avance !). Jupiter proclaims his abdication. He declares the coup d'etat victorious. Pluto is sentenced to be the new King of all gods, followed to the Underworld by Jupiter himself and all the Olympian gods (Plus de nectar, plus de ciel bleu !). If Orpheus is to find Eurydice in the Underworld, she will be returned to him.

Act 3 (Pluto's boudoir)

Eurydice sorrows alone in the bedroom. Scene 2 - Servant John Styx sing to her a song from his mother country Beotia (When I was a king in Beotia). Scene 3 - Pluto arrives with Jupiter to present the new residence of gods, while Eurydice is locked in a boudoir. Scene 4 - Pluto retires to prepare a feast while waiting for the rest of the gods. Scene 5 - Jupiter, transformed into a large fly, enters Eurydice's room and starts singing (My song is touching, I will sing my song). Eurydice is pleased with her new companion and begs the fly not to leave (I will keep you for your golden wings). Pleased with his first success, Jupiter reveals his true nature and declares his love, only to be accepted with ease (If God wants it, the woman wants it ! Jupiter ! ...yours for ever !). Scene 6 - Pluto figures out that Jupiter has played his fly trick and plans to sing himself the nice insect song to Eurydice, to win her heart.

Act 4 (The Underworld)

All the gods are feasting, with Eurydice dressed as a bacchante (Long live the wine, Long live Pluto !). Eurydice sings to the new King Pluto (Leave all the sorrow and nights unslept). Ballet - Menuet danced by Pluto, Jupiter, Venus, and Eurydice and galop infernal (French can-can) for all the rest of the gods. Scene 2 - Orpheus arrives together with Public Opinion. Jupiter declares that he is willing to keep his word of honor, returning Eurydice to her husband, with only one condition: Orpheus must cross the Styx in front of his wife without turning his head (Do not look back !). As Orpheus departs, followed by Eurydice hand in hand with John Styx, Jupiter releases a thunder and Orpheus turns his head, to find out that Eurydice has vanished. Pluto claims the prize, but Jupiter has already decided for Eurydice to be a bacchante and she starts singing the Bacchus song (On Earth unfulfilled love was the curse for us, now I have chosen to sing for god Bacchus).

Great moments and arias: Prelude - I am Public Opinion, a symbolic character (Public Opinion), Act 1 - In her heart a woman dreams (Eurydice), Ah ! are you here ? Yes, my friend (Orpheus, Eurydice), It's adorable, it's delectable.... it's deplorable, it's appalling (Orpheus, Eurydice), I am Aristaeus, farmer in Arcadia (Pluto), The Death has smiled to me (Eurydice), Come, it is honour that reclaims you ! (Public Opinion) Act 2 - Ron, ron ...asleep we are (All gods), Hold your spears ! gods and demi-gods ! (Chorus), To seduce the fair Alcmena (Minerva, Diane, Cupidon, Venus, Chorus), Il approche ! il s'avance ! (Jupiter, Pluto, Orpheus, Public Opinion), Plus de nectar, plus de ciel bleu ! (Jupiter, Chorus) Act 3 - When I was a king in Beotia (John Styx), My song is touching, I will sing my song (Jupiter), I will keep you for your golden wings (Eurydice, Jupiter). If God wants it, the woman wants it ! Jupiter ! ...yours for ever ! (Eurydice). Act 4 - Long live the wine, Long live Pluto ! (Chorus), Leave all the sorrow and nights unslept (Eurydice), Do not look back ! (Public Opinion), On Earth unfulfilled love was the curse for us, now I have chosen to sing for god Bacchus (Eurydice).

Ballet: Act 4 - Menuet danced by Pluto, Jupiter, Venus, and Eurydice and galop infernal (French can-can) for all the rest of the gods. Orpheus is a thirty minute neoclassical ballet in three tableaux, composed by Igor Stravinsky in collaboration with choreographer George Balanchine. The premiere took place on 28 April 1948, at the City Center of Music and Drama, New York. A ballet version on Christoph Gluck's opera was produced in 1975 by the German dancer and choreographer Pina Bausch (1940-2009).

Recordings: 1952 Paris Philharmonic, Paris (Claudine Collart - Eurydice, Bernard Demigny (Jupiter), Andre Dran (Pluto), Jean Mollien - Orpheus), 1978 Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse (Mady Mesple - Eurydice, Charles Burles - Jupiter, Michel Trempont - Pluto, Michel Senechal - Orpheus), 1987 The English National

Opera (Lilian Watson - Eurydice, Richard Angas - Jupiter, Emile Belcourt - Pluto, Stuart Kale - Orpheus), 1999
Orchestre de Paris (Natalie Dessay - Eurydice, Laurent Naouri - Jupiter, Jean Paul Fouchecourt - Orpheus)

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18. Pagliacci

Title: Pagliacci

Composer: Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857-1919). Born in Naples, he was the son of Vincenzo Leoncavallo, a police magistrate and judge while his mother was Virginia D'Auria. His musical education started at San Pietro a Majella Conservatory where he studied pianoforte with Beniamino Cesi and composition with Lauro Rossi. He also attended courses in literature at the University of Bologna with the Italian poet Giosue Carducci. In 1879, he was invited to Cairo, by his uncle Giuseppe a member of the Foreign Ministry in Egypt, where he worked as a piano teacher to the brother of the Khedive Tewfik Pasha (1852-1892). In 1882 he moved to Paris, where he married Berthe Rambaud (1863-1926) in 1895. Operas: Pagliacci (1892), I Medici (1893), Chatterton (1896), La bohème (1897), Zaza (1900), Der Roland von Berlin (1904), Maia (1910), Zingari (1912), Mimi Pinson (1913), Goffredo Mameli (1916). Operettas: La jeunesse de Figaro (1906), Malbrouk (1910), La reginetta delle rose (1912), Are You There ? (1913), La candidata (1915), Prestami tua moglie (1916), Goffredo Mameli (1916), A chi la giarrettiera ? (1919), Il primo bacio (1923), La maschera nuda (1925). His other work includes: poema sinfonico (La nuit de mai, Seraphitus Seraphita), romanza (Mattinata).

Libretto: Ruggero Leoncavallo. Leoncavallo based the story of Pagliacci on an incident from his childhood, the murder of his family servant Gaetano Scavello, as a result of romantic entanglements with a village girl. As a judge, Leoncavallo's father was the presiding magistrate over the criminal investigation and young Ruggero was deeply impressed. The story includes a play within the play, also present in numerous other performances. A similar story with a clown murdering his wife is present in the play La Femme de Tabarin, written in 1887 by the French author Catulle Mendès, but Leoncavallo was unaware of his play. Yet another similar play called Un Drama Nuevo was published and produced in 1867 in Madrid, by the Spanish playwright Manuel Tamayo y Baus alias Joaquín Estebanez (1829-1898)

Performance history: Pagliacci premiered at the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan, on 21 May 1892, conducted by Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957). The English premiere took place in London, at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on 19 May 1893. A month later, at 15 June, the opera premiered in the United States, at Grand Opera House in New York. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Pagliacci was first staged on 22 December 1893, as a double bill with Cavalleria rusticana by Pietro Mascagni. Antonio Paoli (1871-1946) was the first artist in the world to record the entire opera in 1907, at La Scala in Milan, with him singing the role of Canio. The first Italian film based on Pagliacci, called Love of a Clown was produced in 1948, directed by Mario Costa with Tito Gobi, Ornella Fineschi and Afro Poli singing the starring roles. At the performance staged on 10 June 1951 in Milan, Canio was played by Carlo Bergonzi. A great setting in Vienna, with Mario del Monaco singing Canio, took place on 21 February 1973. An Italian film of the opera Pagliacci, directed by Franco Zeffirelli was produced in 1982, including Plácido Domingo and Teresa Stratas in the starring roles of Canio and Nedda. Franco Zeffirelli also produced the opera at the Washington National Opera, in November 1997. Up to the 2017/18 season, Pagliacci was played in the world for 983 times, in 265 different productions, ranking 23 on Operabase list.

Roles: Canio, head of the troupe (tenor), Nedda, his wife (soprano), Tonio, the fool (baritone), Peppe, comedian (tenor), Silvio, a farmer (baritone), Chorus



Story: Pagliacci (the clowns) is a short dramatic tale of love and pretending, in the world of comedians. Speaking about the wolf, the wolf is at your door. A small ambulant theatre performs a short comedy about a young wife cheating on her husband. When playing the show in a small village, Canio finds reasons to believe that his wife is playing him for real. Blinded with jealousy, during the play, Canio stabs his wife for real, together with her presumed lover from the audience. Still it is not quite sure, if the lover was a true lover, or just another play inside the play, or an innocent flirt of Nedda with an unhappy ending.

Prologue: Tonio appears through the curtain to prepare the audience for false tears and violence (Please ? Will you allow me ? Ladies ! Gentlemen !)

Act 1 (A country cross-roads)

The farmers are welcoming an ambulant theatre (Hurrah ! Hurrah for the Prince of Clowns !) while Canio welcomes them for the great show, at eleven in the evening. The villagers invite the actors to a glass of wine, but only Canio and Peppe stand to the invitation. Nedda is left alone with Tonio to be teased by a villager and defended by Canio (It's better not to play such games). As the church bells ring the peasants leave for the evening pray (Ring, bells ! It is vespers calling). Scene 2 - Nedda sings of the beautiful midsummer day afraid of her secret thoughts (What a fire in his glance !). Tonio declares his true love to Nedda, only to be rejected and humiliated (I adore you and desire you... or must I pull your ears to cool your ardor ?). Scene 3 - Left alone, Nedda is encountered by Silvio, a local farmer who has fallen in love for her and is asking her to run away with him (Nedda, Nedda, answer me... Oh, do not tempt me !). Nedda is afraid for her life, but she can not resist the temptations and promises to run with him, late in the night (You will come ? ...Yes. Kiss me). Scene 4- Canio returns with Tonio, in time to see a man just leaving, but Nedda refuses to reveal his name (Speak ! ... My lips are sealed). Tortured by jealousy, Canio must still prepare for his clown appearance in the midnight show (Put on the costume, the powder and the paint ... laugh , Pagliaccio).

Act 2 (Same as before)

The show is ready to start as people crowd around the scene (On with the show !). Nedda collects their money and exchanges a word with Silvio. Scene 2 - The distribution of the play is such as follows: Nedda - Colombina, Peppe - Harlequin, Canio - Pagliaccio, Tonio - Taddeo. Harlequin is singing a serenade to Colombina, the wife of Pagliaccio (... your faithful and adoring Harlequin is near !). Taddeo enters the room with a chicken and tries to open his heart to Colombina but he is interrupted by Harlequin entering through the window (I know that you are chaste and pure as the snow !). Colombina invites Harlequin to dinner (True love adores the joys of food and wine !). Harlequin provides Colombina with a narcotic to put her husband to deep sleep while they will run away. Taddeo enters the room to warn Colombina that Pagliaccio has returned and he knows all. Harlequin climbs the window while Pagliaccio enters furious and Colombina denies everything (A man was here with you... What nonsense ! Are you drunk ?). Taddeo defends her (Believe her ! She is pure !) but Pagliaccio is not abandoning the subject that easily (No, I am not Pagliaccio ! Although my face is white...). Colombina admits that she was visited by the innocent Harlequin but Pagliaccio feels defied since he demands the name of the real man, as he seizes a knife (In your death spasm you'll tell me !). When Pagliaccio stabs her, Colombina asks for help from Silvio, but it is too late. Silvio enters the scene with a dagger but Canio stabs him too (The comedy is ended ! - La commedia e finita !).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - Please ? Will you allow me ? Ladies ! Gentlemen ! (Tonio) Act 1 - Hurrah ! Hurrah for the Prince of Clowns ! (Chorus), It's better not to play such games (Canio), Ring, bells ! It is vespers calling (Chorus), What a fire in his glance ! (Nedda), I adore you and desire you... or must I pull your ears to cool your ardor ? (Tonio, Nedda). Nedda, Nedda, answer me... Oh, do not tempt me ! (Silvio, Nedda). You will come ? ...Yes. Kiss me (Silvio, Nedda), Speak ! ... My lips are sealed (Canio, Nedda), Put on the costume, the powder and the paint ... laugh, Pagliaccio (Canio). Act 2 - On with the show ! (Chorus), ... your faithful and adoring Harlequin is near ! (Peppe), I know that you are chaste and pure as the snow ! (Tonio), True love adores the joys of food and wine ! (Colombine, Harlequin), A man was here with you ...What nonsense ! Are you drunk ? (Canio, Colombine), Believe her ! She is pure ! (Taddeo), No, I am not Pagliaccio ! Although my face is white... (Canio), In your death spasm you'll tell me ! (Canio, Nedda), The comedy is ended ! - La commedia e finita ! (Canio).

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1907 La Scala, Milan (Antonio Paoli - Canio, Giuseppina Huguet - Nedda, Francesco Cigada - Tonio), 1934 La Scala, Milan (Beniamino Gigli - Canio, Iva Pacetti - Nedda, Mario Basiola - Tonio), 1948 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Ramon Vinay - Canio, Lucine Amara - Nedda, Giuseppe Valdengo - Tonio), 1951 Italian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Carlo Bergonzi - Canio, Carla Petrella - Nedda, Carlo Tagliabue - Tonio), 1952 Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Mario del Monaco - Canio, Clara Petrella - Nedda, Afro Poli - Tonio), 1971 London Symphony Orchestra (Plácido Domingo - Canio, Monserat Caballé - Nedda, Sherrill Milnes - Tonio), 1976 National Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Luciano Pavarotti - Canio, Mirella Freni - Nedda, Ingvar Wixell - Tonio), 1984 Vienna State Opera (Plácido Domingo - Canio, Ileana Cotrubas - Nedda, Matteo Manuguerra - Tonio), 1999 Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam (Jose Cura - Canio, Barbara Frittoli - Nedda, Carlos Alvarez - Tonio).

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19. Cavalleria rusticana

Title: Cavalleria rusticana

Composer: Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945). Born in Livorno, Tuscany, his father Domenico Mascagni owned and operated a bakery and his mother was Emilia Mascagni. He began his musical studies at the age of 13 with Alfredo Soffredini, the founder of Istituto Musicale di Livorno. The premiere of his first cantata *In Filanda* took place at the Istituto Cherubini on 9 February 1881. One year later he was admitted to continue his studies at the Milan Conservatory where he studied with Antonio Bazzini, Amilcare Ponchielli and Stefano Ronchetti-Monteviti sharing a room for three years with Giacomo Puccini. On 3 February 1889 he married Argenide Marcellina Carbognani (1888-1945) and together they enjoyed two children, a boy and a girl. Operas:

Cavalleria rusticana (1890), *L'amico Fritz* (1891), *I Rantzau* (1892), *Guglielmo Ratcliff* (1895), *Silvano* (1895), *Zanetto* (1896), *Iris* (1898), *Le maschere* (1901), *Amica* (1905), *Isabeau* (1911), *Parisina* (1913), *Lodoletta* (1917), *Il piccolo Marat* (1921), *Pinotta* (1932), *Nerone* (1935). Operetta: *Si* (1919), Sacred music: *Messa di Gloria*. Orchestral music: *A Giacomo Leopardi* (1898), *Il re a Napoli* (1885).

Libretto: Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti (1863-1934) and Guido Menasci (1867-1925). Both Italian librettists were close friends to Mascagni and have collaborated for the operas: *Cavalleria rusticana*, *I Rantzau* and *Zanetto*. Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti alone has also produced the libretto for Mascagni's operas: *Silvano*, *Amica*, *Pinotta*, *Nerone*. The story was adapted from a short story written by Giovanni Verga (1840-1922) who was an Italian verismo writer focused on the rural life in Sicily. He has adapted his *Cavalleria rusticana* for theatre in 1880, later to constitute the story for Mascagni's opera.

Performance history: *Cavalleria rusticana* premiered on the evening of 19 May 1890 at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, with Queen Margherita of Savoy (1851-1926), a great music lover, in the audience. It was a success from its opening notes. During Mascagni's life, *Cavalleria rusticana* was played in Italy alone for more than 14 000 times. In 1890, the opera was produced throughout Italy: Florence, Turin, Bologna, Palermo, Milan, Genoa,

Naples, Venice, Trieste. The same year the opera premiered in Berlin followed by Budapest, Munich, Hamburg, St. Petersburg, Dresden and Buenos Aires. In March 1891 *Cavalleria rusticana* was sung in Vienna. The London it premiered at the Shaftesbury Theatre on 19 October 1891 and at Covent Garden it premiered on 16 May 1892. The American premiere took place in Philadelphia at the Grand Opera House on 9 September 1891, followed by a performance in Chicago on 30 September 1891 and New York on 1 October 1891. At the Metropolitan Opera, *Cavalleria rusticana* premiered on 30 December 1891. Since 1893, *Cavalleria rusticana* has often been performed as a double bill together with *Pagliacci*, by Ruggero Leoncavallo. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Cavalleria rusticana* was played in the world for 759 times, in 209 different productions, ranking 31 on Operabase list.

Roles: Santuzza, a peasant girl (soprano or mezzo-soprano), Turiddu, a young villager recently returned from the army (tenor), Lucia, his mother (contralto), Alfio, a carter (baritone), Lola, his wife (mezzo-soprano), Chorus (peasants and villagers), Chorus (behind the scene)



Story: It is a classical story about courtship, love and jealousy, in rural and austere Sicily. It is Easter time, when all sins must be confess and repentant. A young villager, Turridu has returned from military service to find that his fiancée Lola is married to another man, Alfio. Turridu falls in love with Santuzza, but Lola gets jealous on her and seduces Turridu on the Easter Night. Santuzza finds out, gets jealous on Lola and tells Alfio that he was horned. Alfio gets jealous on Turridu and kills him in a fight. The only one happy on that Easter Celebration ends dead, like the silent lamb.

Act 1 (A square in a village in Sicily)

Behind scene, Turridu sings to the beauty of Lola (O Lola ! your milky shirt and sweet cherry lips). Scene 1 - Peasants are singing to the beauty of Nature on Easter time (Oranges blossoming...mingle their fragrance).

Scene 2 - Santuzza is asking Lucia about her son Turridu confessing that he has thorned her heart. Scene 3 -

Alfio sings about his horses, carriage and his love for Lola, his wife (With my horses bounding). Within the church children's chorus is singing Aleluia (Regina coeli, laetare - Alleluia !). Scene 4 - Santuzza explains to Lucia that she is in love with her son, but before he went as a soldier he has sworn eternal love to Lola.

Returned, he found Lola married to Alfio but now, burning with jealousy on Santuzza's happiness and forgetful of her husband, Lola has entangled Turridu again (You well know, dearest mother). Scene 5 - In front of the church, Santuzza insists on having a word with Turridu, telling him that he was seen coming from Lola, but he responds distant and defensive (I must speak with you ! Not here, not here !). Scene 6 - Lola enters the scene singing (Dearest yellow flower !). Santuzza says sadly that it is Easter, the day Saviour sees all things, not a fortunate day for sinners, while Lola enters the church. Scene 7 - Santuzza continues her argument with Turridu, but he refuses to enter the church with her by his side (Do not abandon me ! ...Why do you follow me ?).

Scene 8 - Abandoned, Santuzza is encountered by Alfio and interpreting it as a sign from dear Saviour, she tells him that Lola has horned him with Turridu, badly (Oh ! the dear Saviour has sent you). Intermezzo. Scene 9 -

After the pray, Turridu invites everyone to a drink at his mother's wine house (See the wine as foaming whitely) and Lola responds with a toast. Scene 10 - Alfio enters the scene and refuses to share the wine with Turridu (Your cup of wine is not accepted !). With very few words, the two men agree on a duel beyond the orchard.

Scene 11 - Turridu bids farewell from his mother, asking her to be like a mother for Santuzza (Mother, ... that old wine ... is very heady). Scene 12 - Santuzza enters the scene with the bad news and falls senseless (They have

murdered Master Turridu !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - O Lola ! your milky shirt and sweet cherry lips (Turridu), Oranges blossoming...mingle their fragrance (Chorus), With my horses bounding (Alfio, Chorus), Regina coeli, laetare - Alleluia ! (Chorus), You well know, dearest mother (Santuzza), I must speak with you ! Not here, not here ! (Santuzza, Turridu), Dearest yellow flower ! (Lola), Do not abandon me ! ...Why do you follow me ? (Santuzza, Turridu), Oh ! the dear Saviour has sent you (Santuzza), Intermezzo (orchestra), See the wine as foaming whitely (Turridu), Your cup of wine is not accepted ! (Alfio). Mother, ... that old wine ... is very heady (Turridu), They have murdered Master Turridu ! (Chorus)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1927 British National Opera, London (May Blyth - Santuzza, Heddle Nash - Turridu), 1930 La Scala, Milan (Delia Sanzio - Santuzza, Giovanni Breviario - Turridu), 1934 La Scala, Milan (Iva Pacetti - Santuzza, Beniamino Gigli - Turridu), 1951 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Florence (Valentina Petrova - Santuzza, Eddy Ruhl - Turridu), 1953 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Margaret Harshaw - Santuzza, Richard Tucker - Turridu), 1953 La Scala, Milan (Maria Callas - Santuzza, Giuseppe Di Stefano - Turridu), 1954 Milan Symphony Orchestra (Elena Nicolai - Santuzza, Mario del Monaco - Turridu), 1960 Academia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Roma (Giuletta Simionato - Santuzza, Mario del Monaco - Turridu), 1965 La Scala, Milan (Fiorenza Cossotto - Santuzza, Carlo Bergonzi - Turridu), 1976 National Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Julia Varady - Santuzza, Luciano Pavarotti - Turridu), 1978 National Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Renata Scotto - Santuzza, Placido Domingo - Turridu), 1989 Philharmonia Orchestra, London (Agnes Baltsa - Santuzza, Placido Domingo - Turridu), 1992 Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Stefka Evstatieva - Santuzza, Giacomo Aragall - Turridu)

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20. The Gipsy Princess

Title: The Gypsy Princess (Die Csardasfurstin, The Csardas Princess)

Composer: Emmerich Kalman (1882-1953). Born in Siofok, Austria-Hungary, his father Karoly Koppstein was a grain trader and contractor while his mother, Paula Singer, was a sweet tempered artistic woman. By that time Siofok became a major bathing place with a station on the Franz Joseph Southeast Railway Budapest-Fiume. He started his piano lessons with his mother, at the age of five, and one year later with the violonist Ferenc Liedl (1856-1900). His first piano teacher was Mrs. Antalné Nemcsák in Siofok. He attended secondary school in Budapest in the Deák Square Lutheran School. At the age of 15 he enrolled at the Academy of Music to study with Janos Koessler and also studied law at the University in Budapest. His first major success was Tatarjara (The Mongol Invasion) in 1908. In 1929 he married a young Russian dancer, Vera Maria Makinszka (1907-1999) and together they enjoyed a boy and a girl. He was honored in his lifetime with the Kruckenkreuz (cross potent), a high profile Austrian decoration and with the French officer's cross of the Legion of Honor in 1953. Operettas: 1908 Tatarjara (The Mongol Invasion), 1910 Az obsitos (Soldier Boy), 1912 Der Zigeunerprimas (The Gypsy Band Leader), 1915 Zsuzsi Kisasszony (Miss Springtime), 1915 Die Csardasfurstin (The Gypsy Princess), 1916 Das Hollandweibchen (The Dutch Girl), 1921 Die Bajadere (The Yankee Princess), 1924 Gräfin Mariza (Countess Maritza), 1926 Die Zirkusprinzessin (The Circus Princess), 1927 Golden Dawn, 1928 Die Herzogin von Chicago (The Duchess of Chicago), 1930 Das Veilchen vom Montmartre (Paris in Spring), 1932 Der Teufelsreiter (The Devilrider), 1936 Kaiserin Josephine, 1945 Marinka, 1953 Arizona Lady.

Libretto: Leo Stein (1861-1921) and Bela Jenbach (1871-1943). Leo Stein was a well known Austrian playwright and librettist who has often collaborated with Viktor Leon for operettas composed by: Johann Strauss Jr, Franz Lehar, Emmerich Kalman and Oskar Nedbal. Among his best known works are: Wiener Blut (1899), Die lustige Witwe (1905), Der Graf von Luxemburg (1909) and Die Csardasfurstin (1915). Bela Jenbach was a Hungarian playwright (Der Herr ohne Wohnung) and librettist: Paganini, Csardasfurstin, Der Zarewitsch, The Lilac Domino, The World's in Love (Clo-Clo). In 1927 The Csardas Princess was made into a silent German

film directed by Hanns Schwartz and in 1944 it was made into a Soviet operetta film, *Silva*, directed by Aleksandr Ivanovsky. Later, in 1981 it was made in an operetta Soviet film directed by Yan Fried.

Performance history: The operetta premiered in Vienna on 17 November 1915 at the Johann Strauss Theater. The performance in Vienna created some sort of a scandal due to the mockery of aristocratic attitudes at the time when social order was under political commentary as the First World War in action. But the performance was repeated for 533 times until closing in May 1917. In Hungary, the operetta scored a similar great hit with 200 performances starting with the premiere on 15 May 1917 at the Kiraly Szinhaz. The *Gipsy Princess* premiered in New York on 24 September 1917 at the New Amsterdam Theatre, Broadway with lyrics by P.G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton. In London, the operetta premiered on 20 May 1921 at the Prince of Wales Theatre with book and lyrics by Arthur Miller and Arthur Stanley. In Paris, *Princesse Czardas* was mounted at the Trianon-Lyrique in 1930 and restaged at the Gaite-Lyrique on 7 August 1931. A major revival was produced in Berlin in 1930 at the Admiralspalast. A film version of the operetta was also produced in Berlin in 1930, starring Martha Eggerth and Hans Sohnker. The first Australian production was in Melbourne, on 17 October 1936, at Her Majesty's Theatre with Maria Elsner playing the Sylva. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Die Csardasfurstin* was played in the world for 816 times, in 165 different productions, ranking 28 on Operabase list.

Roles: Sylva Varescu, a singing star (soprano), Edwin Roland, a young Prince (tenor or baritone), Boni, Count Bonifacius Kancsianu (tenor), Feri, Baron Ferencz Kerekes of Felso-Mezotur (bass), Stasi, Countess Anastasia Eckenberg (soprano), Captain Eugen von Rohnsdorff (bass), Prince Leopold Maria von Weylesheim (bass), Princess Anhilde von Weylersheim (contralto), Chorus



Story: The story is a short Love Story in the Austro-Hungarian Empire involving a Prince and a famous cabaret girl. The operetta's premiere took place only some 15 years after the Mayerling incident has shocked the Austrian House of Habsburg-Lorraine. The milk and honey in the aristocratic world must come with sacrifices, corseted life and imposed manners. The apparatus of power is nothing but a convention. Unlike the Mayerling story, this operetta has a happy ending, meant to prevent such mishappenings in the future.

OVERTURE

Act 1 (The Orpheum Cabaret Theatre in Budapest)

Sylva sings and dances her eight's bis, to the great joy of the audience (In the lonely mountains is my home). With a warm word of thanks Sylva makes the announcement that she is leaving for a tour in America. Scene 2 - Well behaved boys, Boni and Feri coment on her performance, comparing her with a thoroughbred champion at the races. Scene 3 - The boys wander where is Edwin Lippert-Weylersheim, who is in love with Sylva but can not marry her since he is second cousin of the Emperor and she is but an actress. Scene 4 -The boys and their girlfriends sing (The ladies, the ladies, the ladies up on stage). Scene 5 - Just arrived, Edwin sends a note to Fraulein Sylva's dressing room. Scene 6 - While chatting with the boys, Edwin receives a telegram from his father: Affair with chorus girl must stop. Stop. Scene 7 - Edwin is begging Sylva to stay, for the sake of him and they both start singing (Sylva, my heart is yours ... Can you really be so certain ?). Scene 8 - Boni and Feri are singing with the 8 girl dancers from Sylva's troupe (Girls are the thing for the gents !) Scene 9 - Sylva enters the scene to drink a glass of champagne with her friends and sings a song for the ever lasting love (Give me

song and give me wine Love, just live for ever !). Scene 10 - Captain Baron von Rohnsdorff enter the scene with a report for duty in the morning, destined to Edwin. Scene 11 - Sylva bids fare well and Baron Rohnsdorff escorts her to the door. Scene 12 - Edwin finds out from Baron Rohnsdorff that his parents have already announced Edwin's engagement with his cousin, Countess Anastasia Eckenberg. Scene 13 - Edwin makes his move and asks Sylva's hand, right on the moment and they both sign a declaration of wedding in front of Kisch the lawyer (I solemnly declare... to be my lawful wedded wife). The happy couple and the audience sing (Now we're united !). Wedding dance. Scene 14 - Edwin leaves with Rohnsdorff to his duty. Boni enters the scene to show Sylva the formal announcement of Edwin's engagement with his cousin. Sylva sorrows and sings her stage song preparing for her trip, the marriage was just a charade (We ladies, we ladies).

Act 2 (A spacious hall in Prince Weylersheim's villa)

Young couples are singing and dancing in Prince Edwin's ballroom (The music is calling in accents sweet). Scene 2 - Edwin's parents enjoy the moment as Edwin is waltzing with his cousin Stasi. Scene 3 - Stasi enquires Edwin if his relation with Sylva is over and they both agree that the options for marriage are scarce for the people in their rank (Let us do what the swallows do when they build a nest). Scene 4 - Edwin's parents are distressed because their son has asked for a delay in the wedding. Scene 5 - Sylva enters the ballroom together with Boni, Count Bonifazius Kancsianu, announced as Count and Countess Kancsianu. Scene 6 - Prince Leopold von Weylersheim receives the new guests making the presentations. One of the guests is astonished of the Countess's resemblance with Sylva Varescu the Gipsy Princess. Scene 7 - Edwin enters the room but Sylva pretends not to recognize him, behaving civilized. Scene 8 - Edwin confronts Boni who explains that their marriage is only for convenience and has not been consumed, yet. Scene 9 - Sylva enters the scene sending Boni to have a word with the Prince, the father. Scene 10 - Left alone with Edwin, Sylva explains that she only wanted to wish him luck and to offer him a glimpse of his ex-fiancee. Edwin sings recalling the happy nights at Orpheum and Sylva joins his song (Where are they now, words so devoutly spoken ?). Scene 11 - Boni and Stasi share some flattering words as he is courting her. Scene 12 - Boni sings a love song, looking alternatively to both Sylva and Stasi (Music it fires me, music inspires me) to be joined by Edwin and the girls. Scene 13 - While dancing with Sylva, Prince Weylersheim the father confesses that Edwin is marrying only for convenience, with one of his sort. Scene 14 - Boni also confesses to Stasi that he is not actually married and sings a declaration of love (That fellow Cupid, He is not so stupid). Dance. Scene 15 - Edwin tries to win Sylva back with a kiss. Scene 16 - Edwin argues with Boni who is easily convinced to let go Sylva, a wife who starts being unfaithful before she starts to be faithful. Scene 17 - Merrily reunited Edwin and Sylva are singing and dancing (Let me dance and let me sing ... This is love). Scene 18 - Edwin explains to Sylva that her marriage to Boni was an absolute God-send for she is now a Countess, perfectly suitable for him to marry...otherwise it would have been very problematic. Scene 19 - Stasi asks for a moment alone with Edwin, while Sylva asks for her coat and prepares to leave but she is stopped by Prince Weylersheim for an announcement. Scene 20 - Edwin reveals that he can not marry Stasi because he loves another woman (Forgive me Father, Stasi forgive me !). Sylva also reveals that she is not married to Boni and she is not a Countess ...but a Princess and she presents the contract signed eight weeks before. Edwin declares before the whole audience that she is his lawful wife, but Sylva tears up the document saying that he was born too high and their worlds can not be united. Then Sylva leaves the scene together with Boni, leaving a perplexed audience (That fellow Cupid, He can be stupid).

Act 3 (A sitting-room of the Hotel Winkelbaum in Vienna)

Boni comments with Sylva that her performance was like the Mad Scene from Lucia de Lammermoor. Sylva is accusing Edwin for being ashamed of her, but Boni is defending his friend. Scene 2 - Feri enters the scene, declaring that he is an official protector of maidenly virtue and reveals his surprise: all the dancing girls from Orpheum. Scene 3 - Feri is offering Sylva a contract at Orpheum but she refuses declaring that she is marrying Boni. Feri and the girls sing to her trying to change her heart (We'll see what Uncle Feri can do about this). Accompanied by gipsy musicians they all sing and dance csardas (Strike up Zigeuner, Drive our sorrows away). Scene 4 - Edwin enters the scene looking for Sylva. Boni explains that now Sylva wants him to marry her, while she is married to a man who is engaged to the girl he wants to marry. Scene 5 - Prince Weylersheim enters looking for Edwin and Boni formally asks for the hand of Countess Anastasia, then he repeats the proposal on the phone, only to be accepted by Stasi. Scene 6 - Feri, formally Baron Ferencz Kerekes of Felso-Mezotur is introduced to Prince Lippert-Weylersheim as a close friend of Edwin. Scene 7 - While discussing Edwin's love for Sylva, Feri recalls his youth when he was passionately in love with High-Kicking Hilda, a girl from the Orpheum who

soon married General Palonay, than Count Geza Zentler. Surprised, Prince Weylersheim understands that High-Kicking Hilda is actually his wife Anhilte. Scene 8 - Princess Anhilte enters the scene to be introduced to Feri who pretends not to recognize her. Scene 9 - Prince and Princess von Weylersheim share just one word: Orpheum. Edwin is nothing but the victim of heredity. Scene 10 - Boni reinforces his proposal to Stasi (That fellow Cupid, He's not so stupid). Scene 11 - Feri enters the scene to be presented to Boni's future wife. Scene 12 - As Sylva enters the scene, Boni pretends to be speaking with Edwin who is about to commit suicide. Sylva whispers a declaration of love, to be heard of Edwin who has entered the scene from behind. The two couples: Boni and Stasi, Edwin and Sylva are happily reunited and all on scene sing with joy (In my heart the echo's ringing, This is Love).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - In the lonely mountains is my home (Sylva), The ladies, the ladies, the ladies up on stage (Feri, Boni, Chorus), Sylva, my heart is yours ... Can you really be so certain ? (Edwin, Sylva), Girls are the thing for the gents ! (Boni, Feri, Chorus), Give me song and give me wine Love, just live for ever ! (Sylva), I solemnly declare... to be my lawful wedded wife (Edwin), Now we're united ! (Edwin, Sylva, Chorus), We ladies, we ladies (Sylva) Act 2 - The music is calling in accents sweet (Chorus), Let us do what the swallows do when they build a nest (Edwin, Stasi), Where are they now, words so devoutly spoken ? (Edwin, Sylva), Music it fires me, music inspires me (Boni, Stasi, Sylva, Edwin), That fellow Cupid, He is not so stupid (Boni, Stasi), Let me dance and let me sing ... This is love (Edwin, Sylva), Forgive me Father, Stasi forgive me ! (Edwin), That fellow Cupid, He can be stupid (Boni). Act 3 - We'll see what Uncle Feri can do about this (Feri, Chorus), Strike up Zigeuner, Drive our sorrows away (Feri, Sylva, Boni), That fellow Cupid, He's not so stupid (Boni), In my heart the echo's ringing, This is Love

Ballet: Act 1 - Sylva dances and sings her song. The wedding dance. Act 2 - Young couples are dancing in Prince Edwin's ballroom. Edwin and Sylva are dancing a waltz. Boni is waltzing with Stasi. Edwin is dancing with Sylva. Act 3 - Csardas dance. In 2009, the Illo Tempore Ballet Company has staged in Salzburg a ballet performance of the operetta Die Csardasfusterin directed by Alexandru Fotescu, with a choreography produced by Monica Fotescu-Uta.

Recordings: 1930 Orchestermittgliedern der Staatsoper, Berlin (Felicie Huni Mihacsek - Sylva, Helge Roswaenge - Edwin, Waldemar Henke - Boni, Adele Kern - Stasi), 1953 Hamburger Rundfunkorchester, Hamburg (Colette Lorand - Sylva, Rudolf Schock - Edwin, Rupert Glawitsch - Boni, Anneliese Rothenberg - Stasi), 1965 Melodiya Radio Orchestra, USSR (Alexandra Yakovenko - Sylva, Georgi Nelepp - Edwin, Nikolai Osipovich Ruban - Boni, L. Kazanskaya - Stasi), 1958 Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna (Liselotte Maikl - Sylva, Hans Strohbauer - Edwin, Olaf Jensen - Boni), 1959 Grosses Operetten Orchester (Renate Holm - Sylva, Fritz Wunderlich - Edwin, Willy Hofmann - Boni, Herta Talmar - Stasi), 1965 A Fovaros Operettszinhaz Zenekara, Budapest (Marika Nemeth - Sylva, Arpad Baksai - Edwin, Robert Ratonyi - Boni, Magda Gyenes - Stasi), 1971 Graunke Symphony Orchestra (Anna Moffo - Sylva, Rene Kollo - Edwin, Sandor Nemeth - Boni, Dagmar Koller - Stasi), 1971 Orchestre Lyrique de l'O.R.T.F (Lina Dachary - Sylva, Bernard Plantey - Edwin, Aime Doniat - Boni, Christiane Chateau - Stasi), 1971 Symphonie Orchester Graunke (Anneliese Rothenberger - Sylva, Nicolai Gedda - Edwin, Willi Brokmeier - Boni, Olivera Miljakovic - Stasi), 1990 Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra (Deborah Riedel - Sylva, Anson Austin - Edwin, Roger Lemke - Boni, Roxane Hislop - Stasi), 2004 Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Yvonne Kenny - Sylva, Michael Roider - Edwin, Marko Kathol - Boni, Mojca Erdmann - Stasi)

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21. Alcina

Title: Alcina

Composer: Friedrich Handel (1685-1759). Born in Halle-upon-Saale, Prussia, his father Georg Handel (1622-1697) was an eminent barber surgeon who served at the court of Saxe-Weissenfels and his mother was Dorothea

Taust (1651-1730) the daughter of a Lutheran pastor in Giebichenstein. He began his musical education on a little clavichord and at nine years old he started to study composition and keyboard music with Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow (1663-1712), organist at the parish church. At the same time, young Handel continued to practice on the harpsichord, violin, organ and oboe. He completed his literate education at the Halle's Lutheran Gymnasium. In 1702 Handel was matriculated at the University of Halle to study law, philosophy and German literature with Christian Thomasius (1655-1728). In 1703 he was offered a position as violonist and harpsichordist in the orchestra of Oper am Gansemarkt in Hamburg. In 1710, Handel became Kapellmeister to Prince George I the Elector of Hanover, who later became King George I of Great Britain and Ireland (1660-1727). In 1712, Handel decided to settle permanently in England. Since 1719 Handel was appointed Master of the orchestra at the newly founded Royal Academy of Music. In 1734, Handel was named musical director at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Operas: *Almira* (1705), *Rodrigo* (1707), *Daphne* (1708), *Agrippina* (1709), *Rinaldo* (1711), *Il pastor fido* (1712), *Teseo* (1713), *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715), *Radamisto* (1720), *Muzio Scevola* (1721), *Floridante* (1721), *Ottone* (1723), *Flavio* (1723), *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Tamerlano* (1724), *Rodelina* (1725), *Scipione* (1726), *Alessandro* (1726), *Admeto* (1727), *Ricardo Primo* (1727), *Siroe* (1728), *Tolomeo* (1728), *Lotario* (1729), *Partenope* (1730), *Porro* (1731), *Ezio* (1732), *Sosanne* (1732), *Orlando* (1733), *Arianna in Creta* (1734), *Oreste* (1734), *Ariodante* (1735), *Alcina* (1735), *Atalanta* (1736), *Armindo* (1737), *Giustino* (1737), *Berenice* (1737), *Faramondo* (1738), *Alessandro Severo* (1738), *Serse* (1738), *Giove in Argo* (1739), *Imeneo* (1740), *Deidamia* (1741). His musical work also includes 29 oratorios, more than 120 cantatas, trios and duets, arias, chamber music, odes and serenades, 16 organ concerti. His best known compositions are: *Messiah*, *Water Music*, *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, *The Harmonious Blacksmith*, *Apollo e Daphne*, *Dixit Dominus*, *Salvate Regina*, *Concerti Grossi Op. 3* and *Op. 6*.

Libretto: Antonio Fanzaglia. The score used the libretto of *L'isola di Alcina*, an opera that was set in Rome in 1728 by Riccardo Broschi (1698-1756) an Italian composer brother of the opera singer Carlo Broschi known as Farinelli (1705-1782). The story was originally produced by Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) in his romance epic *Orlando Furioso* (1516). The story also shares some features with the Old French *Chanson de Roland*, a chivalric romance of the eleventh century. In the Baroque era, the poem was the basis of many operas produced by: Francesca Caccini, Luigi Rossi, Antonio Vivaldi, Giovanni Ristori, Friedrich Handel, Jean Baptiste Lully, Jean Philippe Rameau, followed in the classical era by: Niccolò Piccinni, Joseph Haydn, Étienne Mehul, Simon Mayr and Ambroise Thomas.

Performance history: *Alcina* premiered on 16 April 1735, in the first season of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, in London. After a revival in Brunswick in 1738, the opera was not performed again until the performance in Leipzig, in 1928. In 1960 a great performance produced by Franco Zeffirelli at Teatro la Venice in Venice, Italy marked the debut of the Australian soprano Joan Sutherland. In the same year, in November the opera was sung at the Dallas Operas in USA and then at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in London, in 1962. In 1969, the opera was part of the Ledland Nights festival in Scotland. Another major production directed by Robert Carsen was first staged for the Opera de Paris in 1999 and then repeated at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. On 10 October 2014, the opera was given a concert performance at the Barbican Centre in London. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Alcina* was played in the world for 303 times, in 62 different productions, ranking 68 on Operabase list.

Roles: Alcina, a sorceress (soprano), Morgana, her sister (soprano), Ruggiero, a knight (soprano), Oberto, the son of Paladin Astolfo (boy soprano), Bradamante, Ruggiero's betrothed (contralto), Oronte, a General from Alcina (tenor), Melisso, former tutor of Ruggiero (bass), Chorus (knights and ladies)



Story: The story is about war and love, mixed with the romantic ideal of chivalry. It combines realism and fantasy, humor and tragedy, soldiers and sorcerers. It is inspired from the legend of Odysseus, entrapped by the Sirens on the island of witch-goddess Circe, but with a determined Penelope who comes into rescue. Still, it is not the woman to break the spell, but a magic ring with a true inestimable Gem. In a knight's heart, greed is stronger than love. He is once again standing, in his fight for Duty, Love and Virtues.

Ouverture (Menuet)

Act 1 (A deserted place near some mountains / The Palace of Alcina)

Bradamante in travesti as her brother Riccardo, together with Melisso arrive in Alcina's kingdom where they meet Morgana and are greeted with a love song (Your Smile, your Words, Even your Silence). Scene 2 - In the Palace of Alcina, young Knights and ladies are singing (Here's the Seat of endless Preasure). Queen Alcina wellcomes the guests on her island and asks Ruggiero to entertain them and show them around (Tell, O tell, how much I lov'd thee). Scene 3 - Oberto enquires the guests about Paladin Astolfo (He is my Father, We, by good Chance, escaped the raging Sea). Scene 4 - Ruggiero did not recognize Bradamante, or Melisso and declares that he only serves the love for Alcina, his shield and sword and glorious Deeds are long forgotten (Away, you trouble me... Cupid I serve). Scene 5 - Oberto enters the scene furious, claiming that his sword shall do him right. Scene 6 - Bradamante explains that jealousy torments has flamed both their hearts, but for different reason (This Jealousy torments your Breast). Scene 7 - Oberto warns Ruggiero that the forest is full of Alcina's former lovers, turned into streams, wild beasts, trees or rocks (Can you a Woman thus belive ?). Scene 8 - Alone with Alcina, Ruggiero reproaches her warm welcome of the new guests and she plays both offended and pleased with his jealousy. Scene 9 - In the presence of Bradamante, Alcina claims that she is beeing faithful to Ruggiero (I am the same, though now no more). Scene 10 - Alone with Bradamante Ruggiero finds out that she is not Riccardo, but Bradamante her self. Scene 11 - Ruggiero declares that this is madness, Bradamante can not be dressed in full armor (Each Look, I Know, has pierced thy Heart). Scene 12 Melisso is warried of the dangers they are now exposed to Scene 13 - Morgana asks Riccardo (Bradamante) to flee the island, but he answers that his heart belongs to someone else than Alcina. Suspecting he meant her, Morgana declares her love to Riccardo (My Soul is full of you alone, my dearest Youth).

Act 2 (A rich splendid hall in Alcina's Palace /A place with the statue of Circe who changes Man to Beasts/ A Subterraneous Aparment of the Inchantresses)

Melisso remembers Ruggiero of his knight's duty to the Lord. With the help of a ring with a true inestimable Gem, Ruggiero finally sees the true and the splendid hall changes to a horrid desert place (Think of the Fair, who left by thee, sadly complains). Scene 2 - Ruggiero confesses to Riccardo his love to Bradamante but can not accept that it is truely her in thar armor (Could I revenge me of thy faithless Heart). Scene 3 - Alone, Ruggiero wanders between love and duty, feeling decieved (Love, ever ready with fond Views). Scene 4 - Alcina assisted by her sister prays to Circe, the Daughter of the Sun, to calm her jealousy Scene 5 - Ruggiero enters the scene to declare that his love for Alcina demands no more Scene 6 - Alcina is letting him go, but asking him to be quick to return. Ruggiero bids fare well (Joy and Treasure of my Heart, my Love is True). Scene 7 - Oberto is asking Alcina for help in finding his father (Now Hopes succeed my former Fears). Scene 8 - Orontes bring the news to his queen Alcina that Ruggiero has wronged her advised by the faithless Guests. Alcina vows a full revenge (You gentle Gods of Love ... Return, or feel the Misery I can inflict on Thee). Scene 9 - Orontes also

brings the news to Morgana that her lover has betrayed her. Scene 10 - Alone, Orontes fights to calm down his heart (This ill-placed Love, and foolish Airs). Scene 11 - Bradamante tells Oberto that she has found his father, turned into a lion, wandering disconsolate. Scene 12 - Ruggiero reunites with Bradamante for some tender moments to be busted on by an outraged Morgana (Verdant Meadows, pleasant Shade, all your Beauties soon shall fade). Scene 13 - Alcina is enraged by Ruggiero's disobedience throwing away her Magic Wand (You hear, I know, false airy Forms).

Act 3 (A court in Alcina's Palace / In the garden, an Urn which incloses the whole Power of the Enchantment))

Morgana declares her feelings for Orontes asking him to be the soldier of her revenge (For you I fight, of you I ask, kind Pity of my Pains). Scene 2 - Ruggiero meets Alcina and explains that Duty, Love and Virtue have forced him to abandon her while Alcina openly declares her hate (Than you may expect from me severest Rigour, justest Cruelty). Scene 3 - Melisso, Ruggiero and Bradamante prepare to fight the enchanted Monsters that make Alcina's Troops (But Nature for her Young strongly affails and Love at last prevails). Scene 4 - Melisso is trying to protect Bradamante, but she refuses to leave until the Magic Force is defeated (The Heavens promise Peace to all who much and truly love). Scene 5 - Orontes tells Alcina that all her lovers have been subdued and there is no one else to stand for her against Ruggiero but she is confident that the fear will hasten away her enemies (Still Fears I have, a needy Soul's best Arguments). Scene 6 - Oberto rejoices that he will soon be reunited with his father but Alcina asks him to kill the lion with a dart. Oberto refuses to subdue and turns the dart to Alcina, while the lion returns to the den (More savage than the brutal kind). Scene 7 - Alcina is confronted with Ruggiero and Bradamante for a nasty conversation and a memorable trio (Nor is this Love, nor Jealousy, but kindest Pity all). Scene 8 - Ruggiero gives his sword to Orontes, then he goes to break the Urn with his enchanted Ring. Scene 9 - Alcina fights Ruggiero and Bradamante goes to break the Urn herself but Morgana hinders her. Scene 10 - Melisso and Oberto enter the scene to outnumber the crew and finally Ruggiero throws down the Urn and breaks it. The splendid Palace disappears and many Stones are changed into Men. Astolfo among them embraces Oberto. They all sing in chorus (After the bitter Torments past, our Souls find Peace and smiling Joys at last).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Your Smile, your Words, Even your Silence (Morgana), Here's the Seat of endless Pleasure (Chorus), Tell, O tell, how much I lov'd thee (Alcina), He is my Father, We, by good Chance, escaped the raging Sea (Oberto), Away, you trouble me... Cupid I serve (Ruggiero), This Jealousy torments your Breast (Bradamante), Can you a Woman thus believe? (Oberto), I am the same, though now no more (Alcina), Each Look, I Know, has pierced thy Heart (Ruggiero), My Soul is full of you alone, my dearest Youth (Morgana). Act 2 - Think of the Fair, who left by thee, sadly complains (Melisso), Could I revenge me of thy faithless Heart (Bradamante), Love, ever ready with fond Views (Ruggiero), Joy and Treasure of my Heart, my Love is True (Ruggiero), Now Hopes succeed my former Fears (Oberto), You gentle Gods of Love ... Return, or feel the Misery I can inflict on Thee (Alcina), This ill-placed Love, and foolish Airs (Orontes), Verdant Meadows, pleasant Shade, all your Beauties soon shall fade (Morgana), You hear, I know, false airy Forms (Alcina). Act 3 - For you I fight, of you I ask, kind Pity of my Pains (Morgana), Than you may expect from me severest Rigour, justest Cruelty (Alcina), But Nature for her Young strongly affails and Love at last prevails (Ruggiero), The Heavens promise Peace to all who much and truly love (Bradamante), Still Fears I have, a needy Soul's best Arguments (Alcina), More savage than the brutal kind (Oberto), Nor is this Love, nor Jealousy, but kindest Pity all (Alcina, Bradamante, Ruggiero), After the bitter Torments past, our Souls find Peace and smiling Joys at last (Chorus).

Ballet: The opera contains several musical sequences with opportunity for dance that were composed for dancer Marie Salle (1707-1756), a French choreographer known for her expressive, dramatic performances. She was a pioneer woman dancer, on a male dominated scene of the 18-th century. She changed the costume from heavy long dress to muslin flowing material which caused shock and delight when performed without a skirt or bodice.

Recordings: 1962 London Symphony Orchestra (Joan Sutherland - Alcina, Teresa Berganza - Ruggiero, Graziella Sciutti - Morgana, Mirella Freni - Oberto), 1986 City of London Baroque Sinfonia Opera (Arleen Auger - Alcina, Della Jones - Ruggiero, Eiddwen Harrhy - Morgana, Patrizia Kwella - Oberto), 1999 Opera National de Paris (Renee Fleming - Alcina, Susan Graham - Ruggiero, Natalie Dessay - Morgana, Juanita

Lascarro - Oberto), 2005 Bayerisches Staatsorchester (Anja Harteros - Alcina, Vesselina Kasarova - Ruggiero, Veronica Cangemi - Morgana, Deborah York - Oberto), 2009 Chiesa di Sant'Agostino, Tuscania (Joyce DiDonato - Alcina, Maite Beaumont - Ruggiero, Karina Gauvin - Morgana, Laura Cherici - Oberto). Videography : 1990 Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (Arleen Auger - Alcina, Della Jones - Ruggiero, Donna Brown - Morgana, Martina Musacchio - Oberto), 1999 Staatsorchester Stuttgart (Catherine Naglestad - Alcina, Alice Coote - Ruggiero, Catriona Smith - Morgana, Claudia Mahnke - Oberto), 2011 Wiener Staatsoper (Anja Piaou - Alcina, Vesselina Kasarova - Ruggiero, Veronica Cangemi - Morgana, Chloe Briot - Oberto), 2015 TV France Televisions (Sandrine Piaou - Alcina, Maite Beaumont - Ruggiero, Sabina Puertolas - Morgana, Chloe Briot - Oberto), 2015 Freiburger Barockorchester (Patricia Petibon - Alcina, Philippe Jaruusky - Ruggiero, Katarina Bradic - Morgana, Elias Madler - Oberto)

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22. The Tale of Tsar Saltan

Title: The Tale of Tsar Saltan

Composer: Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908). Born in Tokhvin, some 200 kilometers East of Saint Petersburg, his father Andrei Petrovich Rimsky-Korsakov (1784-1862), member of a Russian noble family, was the vice-governor of Novgorod in the Volhynian Governorate, while his mother Sofya Vasilievna Rimskaya-Korsakova (1802-1890) was the daughter of Vasily Fedorovich Skaryatin, a wealthy landlord, member of a noble family. He started his piano lessons at the age of six with some local teachers and by the age of 12 he was admitted at the School for Mathematical and Navigational Sciences in Saint Petersburg where he graduated six years later. He first studied musical composition with Feodor Kanille (Theodore Canille) and in 1861 he was introduced to Mily Alexeyevich Balakirev (1837-1910) a Russian composer, pianist and conductor, friend of Pyotr Tchaikovsky. Balakirev introduced him to Cesar Cui and Modest Mussorgsky and he soon became a member of the musical circle of Saint Petersburg. In 1871, Rimsky-Korsakov became Professor of Practical Composition at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. One year later he married Nadezhda Purgold (1848-1919) a pianist and composer and the fruit of their marriage were seven children, including the musicologist Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov (1878-1940). In 1873 the Navy Department named him as Inspector of Naval Bands and since 1884 he was a deputy in the Court Chapel in Saint Petersburg. Operas: The Maid of Pskov (1872), Mlada (1872), May Night (1878), The Snow Maiden (1880), Mlada (1889), Christmas Eve (1894), Sadko (1895), Mozart and Salieri (1897), The Noblewoman Vera Sheloga (1898), The Tsar's Bride (1898), The Tale of Tsar Saltan (1900), Servilia (1901), Kashchey the Immortal (1902), Pan Voyevoda (1903), The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh (1904), The Golden Cockerel (1907). His musical compositions also included: sacred and secular choral music, orchestral and band music, songs, folksong collections, chamber music and piano music. He also edited and completed some works of the composers: Alexander Borodin, Cesar Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Mikhail Glinka, Alexander Dargomyzhsky.

Libretto: Vladimir Belsky (1866-1946). Vladimir Ivanovitch Belski was a Russian librettist who collaborated with Rimsky-Korsakov for three operas: The Tale of Tsar Saltan, The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and The Golden Cockerel. The story is based on the poem of the same name by Alexandr Pushkin (1799-1837) and was composed in 1899 with the aim to celebrate Pushkin's centenary. The poem written in 1831 is a fairy tale, including dancing water, a singing apple, a singing bumblebee and a speaking swan. Typical for Pushkin's poems the lines are written in couplets of trochaic tetrameter (four couples of long or stressed syllables followed by short unstressed ones).

Performance history: The opera premiered in Moscow on 3 November 1900, at the Solodovnikov Theatre, conducted by Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov with scenic design by Mikhail Vrubel. Two years later, the Saint Petersburg premiere took place at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. Other notable performances in Russia include: in 1906 at the Zimin Opera, Moscow, in 1913 at the Bolshoy Theatre, Moscow, conducted by Emil Cooper with scenic design by Konstantin Korovin, in 1915 at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg conducted by Albert Coates with scenic design by Konstantin Korovin and Alexandr Golovin. At the Kiev

Opera House, the opera premiered on 14 September 1911, in the presence of the Tsar and his family. In London the premiere took place on 11 October 1933 at Sadler's Wells Theatre. In 1937, on December 27, the New York Time announced the premiere at the Saint James Theatre of an opera for children called *The Bumble-Bee Prince*, a short version in English of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera. In Israel, the opera premiered on 4th of May 2018 in Tel Aviv performed by Stanislavsky and Nemirovich Danchenko Moscow Opera House. Up to the 2017/18 season, *The Tale of Tzar Saltan* was played in the world for 158 times, in 23 different productions, ranking 125 on Operabase list.

Roles: Tsar Saltan (bass), Tsaritsa Militrisa (soprano), Tkachikha, middle sister (mezzo-soprano), Povarikha, older sister (soprano), Babarikha, an old woman (contralto), Tsarevich Gvidon (tenor), Tsarevna Swan-Princess (soprano), Old man (tenor), Messenger (baritone), Skomorokh (bass), Three shipmen (tenor, baritone, bass), Chorus (boyars, courtiers, nurses, clerks, soldiers, astrologers, servants, people)



Story: The story is a fairy tale present in children's books all over the world. Beside the opera and ballet, there is an animated film directed by Brumberg sisters, a feature film directed by Aleksandr Ptushko and a traditionally animated film directed by Ivan Ivanov-Vano and Lev Milchin. A repudiated Tsaritsa has to grow up her son on an isolated island, in harsh conditions, but when her prince reaches adulthood he gets to be recognized by his father, Tsar Saltan, and marries a beautiful princess. Everyone dwelled happily ever after.

Prologue (A village near the city of Tmutarkan)

Three sisters are talking while spinning yarn, what would they do if they were Tsaritsa. The oldest says she would prepare a feast, the middle that she would weave a grand linen, while the youngest says she would bear a child, a bogatyr. As Tsar Saltan has listened to the conversation, he enters the door and chooses the youngest sister to be his bride (Greetings, beautiful girl !). The two sisters left behind are jealous, but an old woman called Babarikha offers her services for a revenge (Then listen well and do not interrupt). Together, the three women plan on how to deceive the Tsar while he is away at war.

Act 1 (In the Palace of Tmutarkan)

Orchestral introduction (The Tsar's Departure and Farewell) Scene 1 - The Tsaritsa has given birth to a son, to whom a chorus of nannies sings a lullaby (Bayushki, bayushki !). Tsaritsa sorrows since there is no reply from her husband to the news of the birth of his son. Her older sisters and Babarikha have followed her to the court, one as a Cook and the other one as a Weaver. The two sisters have secretly replaced the letter to the Tsar with a faked one saying that Tsaritsa has borne a monster. Now they are trying to entertain the Tsaritsa, helped by Skomorokh (a harlequin) and an old man (Your highness, queen, mother). The young Tsarevich baby awakens and runs about, accompanied by people's wishes for God's blessing upon him. A messenger enters the scene with a letter from the Tsar: the Tsaritsa and her progeny must be placed in a barrel and thrown into the sea (Your highness, do not punish me !). Reluctantly, the people carry out the Tsar's command.

Act 2 (On the island of Buyan)

Introduction - Tsaritsa Militrisa and her son Gvidon afloat in the barrel. Scene 1 - The barrel have landed on the island of Buyan and the Tsaritsa with her son have broken out of the barrel. Scene 2 - Gvidon, who has already grown into a young man, while searching for food he rescues a swan from being killed by an eagle. In

gratitude, the swan sings to him (You Prince, my Saviour). Tsaritsa Militrisa explains to the Swan Princess the story of her son, and in return the Swan Princess causes the city of Ledenets (Lollipop) to magically arise on the island. Gvidon is hailed by its inhabitants as a Prince.

Act 3 (On the island of Buyan / In the palace of Tmutarkan)

Scene 1 - By the shore, Gvidon laments having been separated from his father (The wind blows over the sea). Impressed by his song, the Swan Princess transforms him into a bumblebee so that he can visit his father incognito, traveling on a merchant ship. Interlude - Flight of the Bumblebee (Orchestra). Scene 2 - The merchants arrive at Tsar Saltan's Palace to tell him of the wonders they have seen on the Buyan island: a magic city, a singing squirrel and thirty three knights who rise from the sea. Tkachikha, Povarikha and Babarika try to prevent the Tsar from becoming interested in the Buyan island, but the bumble-bee Gvidon stings each of the sisters in the brow and Babarika in the eye and blinds her. Tsar Saltan decides to visit the island, but also commands that no bumblebee should ever enter again in his Palace.

Act 4 (On the island of Buyan)

Returned on the island of Buyan, Gvidon in his normal shape longs for a bride (Over the blue sea stars shine). As the Swan Princess appears, Gvidon tells her about the beautiful Princess of the Sea he have heard about in the Palace of Tmutarkan. The Swan Princess transforms herself into that very Princess and everyone on the island is blessing the prospect of their wedding. Interlude - Three Wonders (Orchestra). Scene 2 - Tsar Saltan arrives on the island in an Imperial ship. Gvidon greets him and questions him if he has a son to carry on his work. As Saltan has not recognized him as his son yet, he expresses his sorrow about his former wife and the son that he has never seen (Ah, mighty Prince Gvidon). Gvidon tries to cheer him up presenting him the Three Wonders of the island: a singing squirrel cracking golden nuts, thirty three knights rising out of the sea and a lovely princess, a beauty beyond compare. As the Swan Princess appears she also reveals to the Tsar the Tsaritsa Militrisa, his long-lost wife. Tkachikha and Povarikha beg forgiveness, which is granted, and everyone on the island joins the celebration of the upcoming wedding of Gvidon and the Swan Princess. And, they all lived in happiness ever after.

Great moments and arias: Prologue - Greetings, beautiful girl ! (Tsar Saltan), Then listen well and do not interrupt (Babarika) Act 1 - The Tsar's Departure and Farewell (Orchestra), Bayushki, bayushki ! (Chorus), Your highness, queen, mother (Tkachikha, Povarikha, Skomorok, old man). Your highness, do not punish me ! (Messenger). Act 2 -Tsarevna Militrisa and her son Gvidon afloat in the barrel (Orchestra), You Prince, my Saviour (The Swan). Act 3 - The wind blows over the sea (Gvidon), Flight of the Bumblebee (Orchestra). Act 4 - Over the blue sea stars shine (Gvidon), Three Wonders (Orchestra), Ah, mighty Prince Gvidon (Tsar Saltan).

Ballet: A ballet performance of The Tale of Tsar Saltan was produced at the Saint Petersburg Classical Ballet, in 2007, by Adrian Davies, Graham Woolnough and Kirill Melnikov, with a choreography by Dimitri Katunin and with an artistic director in Yelana Pankova.

Recordings: 1959 Bolshoy Theatre Orchestra and Chorus (Vladimir Ivanonvsky - Gvidon, Evgeniya Smolenskaya - Tsaritsa Militrisa, Ivan Petrov - Tsar Saltan, Galina Oleinichenko - Swan Princess, Larisa Nikitina - Tkachikha, Yelizaveta Shumilova - Povarikha, Evgeniya Verbitskaya - Babarika), 2016 Mariinsky Orchestra and Chorus Saint Petersburg (Mikhail Vekua - Gvidon, Irina Churilova - Tsaritsa Militrisa, Edward Tsanga - Tsar Saltan, Albina Shagimuratova - Swan Princess, Irina Vasilieva - Povarika , Varvara Solovyova - Tkachikha, Elena Vitman - Babarika). Audio disc with orchestral music from the opera: 1992 Philharmonia Orchestra London (Enrique Batiz), 1995 Philharmonia Orchestra, Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, Russian State Symphony Orchestra (Enrique Batiz, Anthony Bramall, Igor Golovschin)

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23. The Bartered Bride

Title: The Bartered Bride (Prodana Nevesta)

Composer: Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884). Born in Litomysl, East of Prague in the Habsburg Empire, his father Frantisek Smetana was brewer to Count Waldstein while his mother was Barbora Lynkova. Bedrich was the third child and the first son of ten children who also enjoyed five step sisters from an earlier marriage of his father Frantisek. He started his musical education with his father, who was a member of a string quartet, and by the age of 6 Bedrich gave his first public performance. After elementary school and gymnasium he was transferred to the Premonstratensian School and in 1839 he enrolled the Academic Grammar School in Prague. Beginning with 1843 Bedrich Smetana studied theory and composition with composer Joseph Proksch (1794-1864) at the Prague Music Institute. In 1848, Smetana started a Piano Institute in Prague with 12 students. In 1849 he married his former musical schoolmate Katerina Kolarova and in the next six years four daughters were born to the couple. Operas: The Brandenburger in Bohemia (1863), The Bartered Bride (1866), Dalibor (1867), The Two Widows (1874), The Kiss (1876), The Secret (1878), Libuse (1872), The Devil's Wall (1882), Viola (1884). His musical work also includes: orchestral music, chamber music, organ, piano, choral and vocal compositions.

Libretto: Karel Sabina (1813-1877). Karel Sabina was a Czech poet, writer and journalist who collaborated with Bedrich Smetana for the operas The Bartered Bride and The Branderburgers in Bohemia. He also collaborated with composers Karel Bendl and Vilem Blodek. His work also includes novels, poems, plays and tales. As a journalist he wrote mainly for publications such as: Wcela, Prazske noviny, Humorist, Moravsky Tydennik and Kvety. The libretto is one of the few in the Czech Language to be written in trochees (one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one). Sabina first produced an one act sketch in German and in 1863 he was approached by Smetana to provide a Czech translation. The original manuscript also shows additions with the handwritting of Smetana himself and his wife.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 30 May 1866 at the Provisional Theatre in Prague. The opera was not immediately successful and was revised and extended in the following four years. In it's final version it rapidly gained popularity and eventually became a worldwide success. The overture was often played as a concert piece independently from the opera. The opera achieved international recognition after the performance at the Vienna Music and Theatre Exhibition in 1892. The Bartered Bride premiered in Chicago in 1893, followed by London in 1895 and reached New York in 1909. Many of the international performances were in German, under the title *Die verkaufte Braut*. A significant production in Vienna was staged in 1972 starring soprano Lotte Rysanek (1923-2016) as Marenka. A major production at the Metropolitan Opera in New York was directed in November 1987 by Kirk Browning, starring Teresa Stratas as Marenka and Nikolai Gedda as Jenik. The latest Czech production of the original version was staged at the National Theatre in Prague, starting with 25 September 2008, with Magdalena Svecova as stage director, Ondrej Lenard as musical preparator and a choreography produced by Ladislava Kosikova. Up to the 2017/18 season, The Bartered Bride was played in the world for 377 times, in 73 different productions, ranking 57 on Operabase list.

Roles: Krusina, a peasant (baritone), Ludmila, his wife (soprano), Marenka, their daughter (soprano), Micha, a landowner (bass), Hata, his wife (mezzo-soprano), Vasek, their son (tenor), Jenik, Micha's son by a former marriage (tenor), Kecal, a matchmaker (bass), Ringmaster, the principal comedian (tenor), Indian, a comedian (bass), Esmeralda, dancer and comedienne (soprano), Chorus (Villagers, circus artists, boys)



Story: Bride or wife trading and selling has a long tradition in all parts of the world and is always a good subject for humoring and comedy. Set in the country village, with realistic characters, this rural Love Story is flavored with traditional Bohemian dance forms, such as polka, skocna and furiant, to be quintessentially in the Czech spirit. A first silent film of the story, caled *Prodana Nevesta* was produced in 1913 by Max Urban, with filming location in Prague and starring actors such as: Tadeus Dura, Marie Slechtova, Adolf Krossing and Emil Pollert. A German film of the opera was made in 1932 by Max Ophuls. A version was produced for the Australian television in 1960. A TV film of 129 min was produced in 1962, directed by Vaclav Kaslik followed by a film adaptation of the opera produced in 1976. In 1975 a Czechoslovak film was also produced starring Jopsef Kemr followed by a comedy in 1981 directed by Frantisek Filip.

Ouverture

Act 1 (A village and an inn. A fair is on in the village.)

The villagers are celebrating at the church fair (Let us rejoice, let's be merry). Marenka is worried about the arrival of a farmer, her bridegroom she has never met. Scene 2 - Jenik tries to confort her and Marenka asks him to swear that there is no other girl in his life (Should I ever happen to learn... Sad is my past, joyless and sorowful) and they both swear love to each other. Scene 3 - Kecal, the matchmaker presents himself to Marenka's parents (As I am saying, my dear fellow). The parents, Krusina and Ludmila, wonder who is the bridegroom Kecal has selected to find out with satisfaction that he is Vasek, the son of Tobias Micha (He's well brought up and decent). Scene 4 - Marenka enters the scene and she declares that she has declared love to another. Scene 5 - Kecal and Marenka's parents are planning to impose their bridegroom while the villagers start dancing. Polka (Come on girls, let's be merry).

Act 2 - (Interior of the inn with round tables, serving beer).

The men join for a drinking song (Beer's no doubt a gift from heaven). Jenik pleads for love and Kecal pleads for wisdom and money (Love tastes far better than wine or beer... only wisdom and money are the real forces in life). The others engage in a rapid dance. Furiant. Scene 2 - Vasek is stuttering about his forthcoming marriage (My...my...my mother dear sa... sa... said to me). Scene 3 - Marenka finds Vasek alone and she fools him of being a different girl eager to love him, if he only swears to give up Marenka (I know of a maiden fair whose love for you is boundless... O...o...o, my goodness !). Scene 4 - Kecal is offering Jenik to match him with sweet and lovely Bela, if he will renounce Marenka, only to be refused (As I say, she's lovely sweet... My heart would burst for sorrow !). Kecal presents Bela's dowry and also offers three hundred guldens if Marenka is to marry Tobias Micha's son, on which Jenik is suddenly eager to agree (I know a girl she's got the money ! ... Well then I agree ! Money is money !). Scene 5 - Left alone rejoices on how he fooled the matchmaker (How could they belive I would ever sell my Marenka). Scene 6 - Kecal invite all the villagers to listen to the contract he has just signed with Jenik, who has bartered Marenka for 300 guldens (Come inside, people, come and witness... We are all ears).

Act 3 (The same village and the same fair)

Vasek is expressing his confusion in a short, sad song (I... I can't get it of my...my mind). Scene 2 - The Ringmaster announces to the public a circus performance on the occasion of their fair. Dance. Scene 3 - Vasek is fond of Esmeralda and since the comedian playing the bear is heavily drunk Vasek is persuated to replace

him, in expectation of a sweet reward from Esmeralda (We shall make a graceful little bear of you). Scene 4 - Confronted with his parents and Kecal, Vasek confesses that he is afraid to marry Marenka, being warned by a pretty maiden (She ...she would po...poison me, de...deprive me o...of my life). Vasek leaves the scene to be replaced by Marenka and her parents. Marenka refuses to believe that Jenik has sold her and refuses to sign the marital contract (I'll never sign to marry him, I won't be Vasek's wife). Scene 5 - Vasek enters the scene to find out that Marenka is the girl that he wants, while Marenka is confused as everyone insists to make up her mind (Make up your mind, Marenka, take your time). Scene 6 - Left alone to think, Marenka sorrows about her fate (Oh, what a grief ! What burning pain when a loving heart's deceived). Scene 7 - Jenik enters the scene and tries to explain her but Marenka refuses to listen (I do not want to hear excuses ! Is it or not your signature ?). Marenka declares that she will marry Vasek while Jenik insists to explain her the contract (Are you really so stubborn, dear, that you won't learn the truth ?). Scene 8 - Matchmaker Kecal enters the scene and offers Jenik to collect the money, to Marenka's outrage (You're a scoundrel and a liar ! ... Calm down, calm down, dear). Scene 9 - As the four parents and villagers enter the scene it comes out that Jenik is Tobias Micha's son and he claims the contract to be respected (Well, father, I have long enough lived in a foreign country). Now Marenka has to choose out of two Micha's sons and Jenik is the one elected (Jenik mine, I'm yours, I'm yours !). Scene 10 - There is noise and a bear enters the scene, but it is only Vasek in the silly mask. All parents agree that Vasek is still a little child and they prepare for the true wedding (A good cause has carried the day and faithful love has triumphed !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Let us rejoice, let's be merry (Chorus), Should I ever happen to learn... Sad is my past, joyless and sorrowful (Marenka, Jenik), As I am saying, my dear fellow (Kecal), He's well brought up and decent (Kecal), Polka (dance), Come on girls, let's be merry (Chorus). Act 2 - Beer's no doubt a gift from heaven (Chorus), Love tastes far better than wine or beer... only wisdom and money are the real forces in life (Jenik, Kecal, Chorus), My...my...my mother dear sa... sa... said to me (Vasek), I know of a maiden fair whose love for you is boundless... O...o...o, my goodness ! (Marenka, Vasek), As I say, she's lovely sweet... My heart would burst for sorrow ! (Kecal, Jenik). I know a girl she's got the money ! ... Well then I agree ! Money is money ! (Kecal, Jenik), How could they believe I would ever sell my Marenka (Jenik), Come inside, people, come and witness... We are all ears (Kecal, Chorus) Act 3 - I... I can't get it of my...my mind (Vasek), We shall make a graceful little bear of you (Ringmaster, Esmeralda), She ...she would po...poison me, de...deprive me o...of my life (Vasek), I'll never sign to marry him, I won't be Vasek's wife (Marenka), Make up your mind, Marenka, take your time (All parents, Kecal), Oh, what a grief ! What burning pain when a loving heart's deceived (Marenka), I do not want to hear excuses ! Is it or not your signature ? (Jenik, Marenka), Are you really so stubborn, dear, that you won't learn the truth ? (Marenka, Jenik), You're a scoundrel and a liar ! ... Calm down, calm down, dear (Marenka, Jenik), Well, father, I have long enough lived in a foreign country (Jenik), Jenik mine, I'm yours, I'm yours ! (Marenka), A good cause has carried the day and faithful love has triumphed ! (All on scene).

Ballet: Act 1 - Polka - young villagers are dancing and singing. Act 2 - Furiant - a rapid dance in the pub. Act 3 - Skocna - dance of the comedians, a rapid folk-dance.

Recordings: 1933 Prague National Theatre (Ada Nordenova - Marenka, Vladimir Toms - Jenik, Jaroslav Gleich - Vasek, Emil Pollert - Kecal), 1937 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Hilda Burke - Marenka, Mario Chamlee - Jenik, George Rasley - Vasek, Louis d'Angelo - Kecal), 1939 Royal Opera House, London (Hilde Konetzni - Marenka, Richard Tauber - Jenik, Heinrich Tessmer - Vasek, Fritz Krenn - Kecal), 1949 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Elisabeta Shumilova - marenka, Georgi Nelepp - Janik, Anatole Orfenov - Vasek, Nicolai Shchelgolkov - Kecal), 1951 Städtische Oper, Berlin (Traute Richter - Marenka, Sebastian Hauser - Jenik, Ralf Peters - Vasek, Kurt Bohme - Kecal), 1956 Slovenian National Opera (Vilma Bukobetz - Marenka, Miro Banjnik - Jenik, Janec Lipushek - Vasek, Latko Koroshetz - Kecal), 1978 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Teresa Stratas - Marenka, Nicolai Gedda - Jenik, Jon Vickers - Vasek, Martti Talvela - Kecal), 2004 Royal Opera House, London (Susan Gritton - Marenka, Paul Charles Clarke - Jenik, Timothy Robinson - Vasek, Peter Rose - Kecal), 2008 L'Opera National, Paris (Christiane Oelze - marenka, Ales Briscein - Jenik, Christoph Homberger - Vasek, Franz Hawlata - Kecal) Videos: 1957 Victoria Symphony Orchestra Melbourne Singers, 1978 The Metropolitan Opera, 1982 Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, 1982 Wiener Staatsoper, 1998 Royal Opera House.

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24. Hansel and Gretel

Title: Hansel and Gretel (Hansel und Gretel)

Composer: Engelbert Humperdink (1854-1921). Born in Siegburg in the Rhine Province, his father Gustav Ferdinand Humperdink was a gymnasium Literature teacher while his mother Gertrud Helene Olivia was the daughter of Franz Xaver Hartmann, domcantor in Paderborner. He started his piano lessons at the age of 7 and his first singspiele was written when he was 13. In 1872 was enlisted at the Cologne Conservatory to study with Ferdinand Hiller and Isidor Seiss. In 1876 he won a Mozart-Preis and he used the money to study composition with Franz Lachner and Josef Rheinberger in Munich. In 1879 he won the first Mendelssohn Award in Berlin and he went to Italy to become acquainted with Richard Wagner where he served as music tutor for Wagner's son. In 1890 he was appointed professor at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt and four years later he was appointed head of Meister-Schule of composition in Berlin. He married Ehefrau Hedwig Taxer (1862-1916) and the fruit of their marriage were five children, among which Wolfram became an opera stage director. Musical works: Harzipere (1868), Perla (1868), Claudine von Villa Bella (1872), Fedelma (1883), Schneewittchen (1888), Hansel und Gretel (1890), Die sieben Geislein - The seven little goats (1895), Konigskinder - King's children (1897), Dornrochen - Sleeping Beauty (1902), Die Heirat wider Willen - The reluctant marriage (1905), Bubchens Weihnachtstraum - The Christmas Dream (1906), Die Marketenderin - The provisioner (1913), Gaudeamus (1919). His work also includes songs, orchestral music, cameral music and folk music.

Libretto: Adelheid Wette Humperdink (1858 - 1916). Adelheid Catharina Maria was one of the four children: Adelheid, Engelbert, Ernestine and Theodor in the Humperdink family. In 1881 on 20 September she married Herman Wilhelm Wette and the fruit of their marriage were seven children: Isolde, Helene, Erna, Gerda, Ada, Detmar and Eduard. She wrote the libretto based on the Grimm brothers fairy as a Christmas entertainment for her children and she asked her brother Engelbert to set it to music. He first composed four songs for a puppet show his nieces were giving at home. Then he composed a singspiel of 16 songs with piano accompaniment and connecting dialogue. By 1891 he begun working on a complete orchestration. In 1895 Adelheid collaborated with her brother once more on another Grimm fairy tale called Die sieben Geislein (The seven baby goats).

Performance history: The opera premiered at Hoftheater in Weimar on 23 December 1893, under the baton of Richard Strauss. Hansel and Gretel was an instant and overwhelming success. The Hamburg premiere followed on 25 September 1894, conducted by Gustav Mahler. Its first performance outside Germany was in Basel, Switzeland, on 16 November 1894. In England, the London premiere was on 26 December 1894 at Daly's Theatre followed by the New York premiere on 8 October 1895. In Australia the first performance took place on 6 April 1907 at the Princess's Theatre, Melbourne. In 1923 the Royal Opera House in London chose it for their first complete radio opera broadcast. Eight years later, in 1931 it was the first opera transmitted live from the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Up to the 2017/18 season, Hansel and Gretel was played in the world for 1737 times, in 310 different productions, ranking 12 on Operabase list.

Roles: Peter, broom-maker (baritone), Gertrud, his wife (mezzo-soprano), Hansel, their son (mezzo-soprano), Gretel, their daughter (soprano), The Gingerbread Witch (mezzo-soprano), Sandman, the Sleep Fairy (soprano), Dewman, the Dew Fairy (soprano), Chorus of echoes (three sopranos, two altos), Children's chorus, Ballet (14 angels)



Story: Hansel and Gretel is a well-known fairy tale of German origin, recorded by the Grimm brothers and published in 1812. Lost in the woods, while gathering strawberries, the children are encountered by fairies and an ugly witch that lives in a gingerbread house. Hansel wants to taste some of the gingerbread, but the old witch, like a nasty grandmother, scares them to eat them alive, like cookies. Smart Gretel turns the old witch's tricks against her and the children manage not only to escape, but to free some other children turned in gingerbread sweets. Powered by the fairy tale and flavoured with folk inspired themes, the performance was an instant success all over the world. Numerous film versions were produced, starting with the Technicolor production in 1954 with a screenplay by Padraic Colum. Other versions include an East German animated short film, an Israeli/American film, an Australian film, an American film, a Lithuanian film and a South Korean film... and many others.

Act 1 (A small, poor room, a fireplace, many brooms)

Hansel and Gretel are singing while working, he making a broom she stitching a stocking (Susy, little Susy, pray what is the news ?). Complaining of being hungry, the children stop working and start dancing (Brother, come and dance with me, both my hands I offer thee). Scene 2 - Mother enters the room in a bad mood, boxing their ears (Silence, idle and ill-behaved children !) and then she sends them to seek for strawberries (Off, off, to the wood !). Scene 3 - Peter, the children's father arrives home singing (Tralala, tralala ! Hunger is the poor man's curse !). As Peter has a basket full of food they both start singing (Tralala, tralala hip hurrah ! Won't we have a festive time !). Wandering where the children are, Peter finds out that they are in the Ilsestein wood, where evil dwells (Does thou not know the awful magic place ?). They both worry about the witches wandering near the Ilsestein rock (Up the chimney they fly, on a broomstick they hie) and serving the gingerbread children to ogres for dinner.

Act 2 - (In the forest at sunset)

Gretel weaves a garland of roses singing (There stands a little man in the wood alone). The children eat all the strawberries they gathered, playing (Cuckoo, cuckoo, where are you ?). As the cuckoo is heard near, it has become late in the evening, the children are afraid and can not find their way back home (O Hansel, some dreadful thing may come ! Gretel, come, don't be afraid !). Scene 2 - The children hear the sweet song of Sandman, the sleep fairy (I shut the children's peepers and guard the little sleepers !). The children say their evening prayer and they both fall asleep (When at night I go to sleep, fourteen angels watch do keep). Scene 3 - Ballet - Fourteen angels come out and arrange themselves around the children to protect them as they sleep.

Act 3 (In the forest, in the morning / The witch's house with gingerbread figures)

Dewman, the dawn Fairy sings as he shakes dewdrops over the sleeping children (I'm up with early dawning and know who loves the morning). First Gretel, then Hansel wake up singing (Tirelireli, it's getting late ! ... Kikeriki ! it's early yet !). As they wake up, they see the gingerbread house of the Ilsestein witch, with gingerbread figures that smell delicious (O Heaven, what wondrous place is this...O say, do I dream ?). Unable to resist temptation, Hansel breaks off a bit of cake from a corner of the house. Scene 3 - A voice is heard from the house (Nibble, nibble, mousekin, who's nibbling at my housekin ?). The witch throws a rope round Hansel's neck, pleased with her visitors (You've come to visit me, that is sweet ! You charming children, so nice to eat !). The witch invites the children to enter the house for a treat with delicious sweets (I'll give you sweetmeats delicious !) and promises to fatten Hansel, to make him tender and tasty. Next the children are bewitched with a

spell to stand still (Hocus pocus, witches' charm ! Move not, as you fear my arm !). The Gingerbread witch disenchant's Gretel to use her as a servant, asking her to prepare the table for dinner (Hocus pocus, elder-bush ! Rigid body loosen hush !). As Hansel is pretending to be sleeping, the witch decides that she will start her dinner with Gretel (Yes, Gretel mine, how well off you I'll dine !). While the witch is feeding Hansel, Gretel uses the elder branch to disenchant Hansel from the spell (Hocus pocus elder-bush rigid body loosen hush !). The witch asks Gretel to peep in the oven and see if the gingerbread is ready but Gretel pretends not to understand. As the witch bends over the oven to show her how, Hansel and Gretel give her a good push which sends her into the oven (One little push, bang goes the door, clang !). As the oven cracks and crushes all the gingerbread children turn into real children disenchant'd from the spell. Scene 4 - The disenchant'd children are singing but still sleeping and so Gretel makes use of her elder branch again to wake them up (Hocus pocus, elder-bush ! Rigid body loosen hush !). As the children bow to their saviors, Peter the father is heard behind the scene. Scene 5 - Father and mother are reunited with their children and the witch turned into a big gingerbread cake is placed in the middle of the stage (See the wander wrought, how the Witch herself was caught).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Susy, little Susy, pray what is the news ? (Gretel, Hansel), Brother, come and dance with me, both my hands I offer thee (Gretel, Hansel), Silence, idle and ill-behaved children ! ... Off, off, to the wood ! (Gertrud), Tralala, tralala ! Hunger is the poor man's curse ! (Peter). Tralala, tralala hip hurrah ! Won't we have a festive time ! (Peter, Gertrud), Does thou not know the awful magic place ? (Peter), Up the chimney they fly, on a broomstick they hie (Peter, Gertrud). Act 2 - There stands a little man in the wood alone (Gretel), Cuckoo, cuckoo, where are you ? (Gretel, Hansel), O Hansel, some dreadful thing may come ! Gretel, come, don't be afraid ! (Gretel, Hansel), I shut the children's peepers and guard the little sleepers ! (Sandman), When at night I go to sleep, fourteen angels watch do keep (Hansel, Gretel). Ballet. Act 3 - I'm up with early dawning and know who loves the morning (Dewman), Tirelireli, it's getting late ! ... Kikeriki ! it's early yet ! (Gretel and Hansel). O Heaven, what wondrous place is this...O say, do I dream ? (Hansel, Gretel), Nibble, nibble, mousekin, who's nibbling at my housekin ? (The witch), You've come to visit me, that is sweet ! You charming children, so nice to eat ! (The witch). I'll give you sweetmeats delicious ! (The witch), Hocus pocus, witches' charm ! Move not, as you fear my arm ! (The witch). Hocus pocus, elder-bush ! Rigid body loosen hush ! (The witch), Yes, Gretel mine, how well off you I'll dine ! (The witch), Hocus pocus elder-bush rigid body loosen hush ! (Gretel), One little push, bang goes the door, clang ! (Hansel, Gretel), Hocus pocus, elder-bush ! Rigid body loosen hush ! (Gretel), See the wander wrought, how the Witch herself was caught (All on scene).

Ballet: Act 2 - Fourteen angels come out and arrange themselves around the children to protect them as they sleep. A full ballet version of Hansel and Gretel with music from Engelbert Humperdink's opera was produced starting with 2013 directed by Christopher Hampton, with Richard Honner as principal conductor and Liam Scarlett as choreographer. Another children's ballet on the Hansel and Gretel story was produced in 2007 with the concept and choreography of Bruce Wells and music produced by the Czechoslovakian composer Oscar Nedbal (1874-1930).

Recordings: 1929 Columbia Records (The Manchester Children's Choir and Halle Orchestra), 1944 Berliner Rundfunk Sinfonie Orchester and Damenchor des Deutschen Opernhauses, 1947 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Rise Stevens - Hansel, Nadine Conner - Gretel), 1971 Munich Radio Orchestra (Anna Moffo - Hansel, Helen Donath - Gretel, Christa Ludwig - The witch), 1978 Vienna Philharmonic (Brigitte Fassbaender - Hansel, Lucia Popp - Gretel), 1993 Staatskapelle Dresden (Edita Gruberova - Hansel, Ann Murray - Gretel), 2007 Philharmonia Orchestra (Jennifer Larmore - Hansel, Rebecca Evans - Gretel), 2017 Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin (Katrin Windsam - Hansen, Alexandra Steiner - Gretel)

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25. Norma

Title: Norma

Composer: Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835). Born in Catania, Kingdom of Sicily, his father was Rosario Bellini while his mother was Donna Agata Ferlito. His grandfather, Vincenzo Tobia Bellini was an organist and an appreciated composer of oratorios and sacred music, also his first teacher. The eldest of seven children, Vincenzo started his first piano lessons at the age of three and three years later he was able to play the piano marvelously. In 1819 he obtained financial support to study for four years at the Real Collegio di Musica di San Sebastiano in Naples where he studied with Niccolò Zingarelli, Giacomo Tritto and Giovanni Furno. In 1824 he was selected to compose an opera for Collegio's teatrino and he produced *Adelson e Salvini*, an opera so popular among the Conservatory's students that it was performed every Sunday for a year. He earned his living as a music teacher. Operas: *Adelson e Salvini* (1825), *Bianca e Gernando* (1826), *Il Pirata* (1827), *La straniera* (1829), *Zaira* (1829), *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1830), *La sonnambula* (1831), *Norma* (1831), *Beatrice di Tenda* (1833), *I puritani* (1835). His musical work also includes: songs, eight symphonies, 40 sacred works, seven piano works and an organ sonata.

Libretto: Felice Romani (1788-1865). Felice Romani was an Italian poet and scholar of literature who collaborated with Bellini for all of his operas, excepting the very first two. He also produced the libretto for some Donizetti's operas such as *Anna Bolena* and *L'elisir d'amore* and for Rossini's operas *Il turco in Italia* and *Bianca e Falliero*. His work also includes other 90 librettos that have inspired almost every composer in Italy and have resulted in numerous less known compositions. *Norma* was produced for the voice of soprano Giuditta Pasta (1797-1865), at that time starring at La Scala Opera in Milan, who have demonstrated her extensive vocal and dramatic range. The story was inspired from the French tragedy *Norma*, written by the French poet Alexandre Soumet (1788-1845).

Performance history: The opera premiered on 26 December 1831 at La Scala in Milan and continued with 34 performances in the first season, followed by the next year premiere in Bergamo. Between 1831 and 1850, dozens of performances were given in numerous cities outside of Italy. In 1837, Richard Wagner conducted *Norma* at Riga and the British premiere in London was on 20 June 1833. In the United States, the first performance was staged at the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans on 1 April 1836. During the 20th century, soprano Maria Callas gave 89 stage performances with *Norma* at Teatro Comunale di Firenze, Teatro Colon Buenos Aires, Royal Opera House in London, Metropolitan Opera in New York and Ancient Theatre of Epidauros in Greece. Other famous singers with memorable appearances in *Norma* were Joan Sutherland (1952 as Clotilde, 1963 as Norma), Montserrat Caballé (1978 as Norma in Madrid) and Cecilia Bartoli (2013 as Norma). Up to the 2017/18 season, *Norma* was played in the world for 671 times, in 163 different productions, ranking 35 on Operabase list.

Roles: Norma, High-priestess (soprano), Adalgisa, priestess (mezzo-soprano), Pollione, Roman proconsul (tenor), Orovesto, Norma's father (bass), Clotilde, Norma's friend (soprano), Flavio, Pollione's companion (tenor), Chorus (druids, bards, priestesses, warriors)



Story: *Norma* is a classical tragedy about love and war, flavoured with the ancient commitment to sacred

castity. In the sacred forest of the Druids, the High Priestess of a barbaric tribe falls in love with a Roman Proconsul and breaks her castity vow to the Gods. In the secret of the Temple she grows their secret children. When war with the Romans is about to start she claims for peace, in the name of the Gods, to protect her lover and her children, but it soon turns out that her lover has fallen in love for a younger priestess in her Temple. Outraged with jealousy, Norma now asks in the name of the Gods for total war against the Romans and submits her self to be burned at the stake, to gratify the rage of Gods.

Ouverture (Sinfonia)

Act 1 (Sacred forest of the Druids)

Orovesto, chief of the Druids leads a procession in the forest to prepare the war against the invading Romans (To the hills, o Druids, to watch over the heavens). Scene 2 - Pollione confesses to his friend Flavio that he has fallen in love for young Adalgisa, but he is afraid of Norma, the mother of his children (Even recalling it, I tremble ! Adalgisa was with me, in Rome). While Norma joins the procession, Pollione finds his courage to confront her (A Power greater than they protects me, defends me... it is Love itself). Scene 3 - The Druids kneel as Norma approaches with the golden sickle in her hand (Norma comes now...and the star of Rome veils itself in terror). Scene 4 - Norma announces her vision that Rome will not be defeated through human efforts, the moment for vengeance has not come yet (The Roman spears are still stronger than the Druids axes). Norma also proclaims that Rome shall only die one day consumed by her own vices, then she cuts the sacred mistletoe and all the priestesses sing an incantation (Chaste goddess, who dost bathe in silver light). With a broken heart, Norma accepts the Druid's request to punish Pollione, the Proconsul of Rome, the secret father of her children (Yes he shall fall...but my heart can never do it). Scene 5 - Adalgisa prays in the temple recalling her feelings for Pollione (...for I am powerless before that force, my heart feeds on the sight of him). Scene 6 - Pollione enters the scene and they both reinforce their love declarations and decide to run away together, to Rome, the next day (...to you I shall be always faithful ..Your love gives me courage). Scene 7 - Norma asks Clotilde to take her children away (Many passions torture my soul. I love and yet I hate my children !). Scene 8 - Adalgisa confesses to Norma that she has fallen in love and has sworn to leave the temple of virgins (Secretly, alone at the temple I often waited for him). Scene 9 - As Pollione enters the scene Norma is surprised to find out that he is the object of Adalgisa's love and Adalgisa is shocked to find out that Norma is the mother of his children. The three engage in a nasty conversation (Wretched girl ! What have you done ? ...Tremble for your self, traitor ?...Go now, traitor !).

Act 2 - (In Norma's house / In the forest / In the Temple)

Near her sleeping children Norma considers to kill them both, to free them from slavery (To kill my children ! Tender babies, until now the joy of my life ?). Scene 2 - Norma sends Clotilde for Adalgisa. Scene 3 - After an affectionate conversation, Norma and Adalgisa decide to remain together in the temple, in the service of Gods (Or hide myself, with you, from God and man... As long as in our breasts our loving hearts shall beat...). Scene 4 - The warriors prepare to attack the Romans (Fulfillment of our mighty task). Scene 5 - Orovesto brings the bad news, their time has not come yet (Heaven is against us, we must pretend docility). Scene 6 - Clotilde tells Norma that Adalgisa wants to offer her vows to the Temple, but Pollione refused to repent and has sworn to abduct Adalgisa, even from the Temple (The traitor would go too far... And blood ? Roman blood ? shall flow like water !). Scene 7 - In the Temple, Norma rings the sacred gong of Irminsul to bring war, plunder and death to the Romans (And now to anger, to rage, to battle, to their death !). Scene 8 - Pollione is captured in the temple of the virgins. Scene 9 - Norma is conjured to kill him, but she can not raise her hand and asks to investigate him. Scene 10 - Norma offers Pollione to set him free if he will forget Adalgisa for ever, but Pollione responds that he prefers to die (...forever you will avoid Adalgisa...First I shall die). Scene 11 - Norma, as High Priestess announces who is the victim to be sacrificed to Irminsul before the war starts: it is her, the High Priestess who has broken her holy vows (The heart you betrayed, the heart you lost). Sorrowed with remorse, Pollione declares that they must be sacrificed together (Love is reborn, a madder, more desperate love, let us die together). With a last word, Norma asks her father Orovesto to forgive her and save her children, then she is submitted to fire together with Pollione, the outcome of their burning love (Have pity on my children... Love conquered me ...Ah, you forgive me !).

Great moments and arias: Act1 - To the hills, o Druids, to watch over the heavens (Orovesto), Even recalling it, I tremble ! Adalgisa was with me, in Rome (Pollione), A Power greater than they protects me, defends me... it is Love itself (Pollione), Norma comes now...and the star of Rome veils itself in terror (Chorus), The Roman spears are still stronger than the Druids axes (Norma), Chaste goddess, who dost bathe in silver light (Norma,Chorus), Yes he shall fall...but my heart can never do it (Norma), ...for I am powerless before that force, my heart feeds on the sight of him (Adalgisa), ...to you I shall be always faithful ..Your love gives me courage (Adalgisa, Pollione), Many passions torture my soul. I love and yet I hate my children (Norma), Secretly, alone at the temple I often waited for him (Adalgisa, Norma), Wretched girl ! What have you done ? ...Tremble for your self, traitor ?...Go now, traitor ! (Pollione, Norma, Adalgisa). Act 2 - To kill my children ! Tender babies, until now the joy of my life ? (Norma), Or hide myself, with you, from God and man...As long as in our breasts our loving hearts shall beat... (Norma, Adalgisa), Fulfillment of our mighty task (Chorus), Heaven is against us, we must pretend docility (Orovesto), The traitor would go too far... And blood ? Roman blood ? shal flow like water ! (Norma), And now to anger, to rage, to battle, to their death ! (Norma), ...forever you will avoid Adalgisa...First I shall die (Norma, Pollione), The heart you betrayed, the heart you lost (Norma), Love is reborn, a madder, more desperate love, let us die together (Pollione), Have pity on my children... Love conquered me ...Ah, you forgive me ! (Norma).

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1937 Orchestra e Coro EIAR Torino (Gina Cigna - Norma, Giovanni Breviario - Pollione, Ebe Stignani - Adalgisa, Tancredi Pasero - Oroveso), 1944 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Zinka Milanov - Norma, Frederick Jagel - Pollione, Jennie Tourel - Adalgisa, Norman Cordon - Oroveso), 1952 Royal Opera House, London (Maria Callas - Norma, Mirto Picchi - Pollione, Ebe Stignani - Adalgisa, Giacomo Vaghi - Oroveso), 1955 Orchestra Sinfonica e Coro di Roma (Maria Callas - Norma, Mario del Monaco - Pollione, Ebe Stignani - Adalgisa, Giuseppe Modesti - Oroveso), 1964 London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (Joan Sutherland - Norma, John Alexander - Pollione, Marilyn Horne - Adalgisa, Richard Cross - Oroveso), 1972 London Philharmonia Orchestra (Montserrat Caballe - Norma, Placido Domingo - Pollione, Fiorenza Cossotto - Adalgisa, Ruggero Raimondi - Oroveso), 1984 Orchestra and Chorus of the Welsh National Opera (Joan Sutherland - Norma, Luciano Pavarotti - Pollione, Montserrat Caballe - Adalgisa, Samuel Ramey - Orovesto), 1986 Orchestra and Chorus of the Bolshoi Theatre (Maria Bieshu - Norma, Gegam Grigoryan - Pollione, Ludmila Nam - Adalgisa, Georgi Seleznev (Oroveso), 2013 Orchestra La Scintilla, Zurich (Cecilia Bartoli - Norma, John Osborn - Pollione, Sumi Jo - Adalgisa, Michele Petrusi - Oroveso)

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26. Fidelio

Title: Fidelio

Composer: Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Born in Bonn, in the Holy Roman Empire, his father Johann van Beethoven (1739-1792) was a teacher and singer at the chapel of the Archbishop of Cologne, while his mother Maria Magdalena Keverich (1746-1787) was the daughter of Heinrich Keverich the head chef at the court of the Archbishopric of Tier. Ludwig was the second of seven children and the first boy in the family. He started to study music at the age of five, with his father and some family friends. In 1779 he started to study composition with Christian Gottlob Neefe the Court's Organist and by 1783 he published his first compositions, three piano sonatas (WoO 47) dedicated to the Elector Maximilian Friedrich (1708-1784). In 1792, with the Elector's help, Beethoven left Bonn for Vienna, where he studied with Joseph Haydn, Ignaz Schuppanzigh and Antonio Salieri and gained financial support from Viennese nobleman with his dedicated compositions. He earned his living as a piano player and teacher. His musical work includes: only one opera (Fidelio), 5 piano concertos, 1 violin concerto, 9 symphonies, 32 piano sonatas, 16 string quartets, a great mass (Missa solemnis), chamber music, vocal and choral music, songs and folksong arrangements, secular vocal works.

Libretto: Joseph Sonnleithner (1766-1835). Joseph Sonnleithner was an Austrian librettist and theatre director, a

personal friend of Ludwig van Beethoven. Among his librettos, the most known beside *Fidelio* are *Faniska* for Luigi Cherubini and *Agnes Sorel* for Adalbert Gyrowetz. The story for *Fidelio* was inspired from a play published in 1798 by Jean-Nicolas Bouilly (1763-1842). In 1806, another friend, Stephan von Breuning (1774-1827) revised the original text and shortened the work from three acts to two. At Beethoven's request, in 1814 the German librettist Georg Friedrich Treitsche (1776-1842) revised the libretto for a third and final version of the text. Georg Treitsche is best known for his entomological work: *Die Schmetterlinge von Europa* (The Butterflies from Europe).

Performance history: *Fidelio* was first performed at the Theater an der Wien on 20 November 1805. The second version, premiered at the same theatre on 10 April 1806 and resulted in a dispute between Beethoven and the theatre management. The third and final version premiered on 23 May 1814 at Karntnerortheater with Beethoven himself leading the performance. This version of the opera was a great success and *Fidelio* has been part of operatic repertory ever since. The full score was not published until 1826 and all three versions are known as Beethoven's Opus 72. The first performance outside Vienna took place in Prague, on 21 November 1814. In London, *Fidelio* premiered on 18 May 1832 at the King's Theatre and the New York premiere took place on 9 September 1839 at the Park Theatre. In modern times, the Metropolitan Opera produced in December 1944 by Arturo Toscanini was broadcasted over the NBC radio network. In September 1945, *Fidelio* was the first opera performed in Berlin after the end of World War II, with the Deutsche Oper, under the baton of Robert Heger (1886-1978). On 5 November 1955, the Vienna State Opera was re-opened with *Fidelio*, conducted by Karl Böhm (1894-1981) and the performance was the first live television broadcasted by Österreichischer Rundfunk for the about 800 television sets existing in Austria. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Fidelio* was played in the world for 617 times, in 120 different productions, ranking 37 on Operabase list.

Roles: Florestan, a prisoner (tenor), *Fidelio* a young boy / Leonora his wife in disguise (soprano), Rocco, guard (bass), Marzelline, his daughter (soprano), Jaquino, assistant to Rocco (tenor), Don Pizarro, governor of the prison (bass-baritone), Don Fernando, King's minister (bass), Two prisoners (tenor and bass), Chorus (soldiers, prisoners, townspeople)



Story: A typical romantic Love Story where a woman is stronger than the mightiest men, due to her love and faith in God. A brave wife fights to free her husband from prison, where he was illegally detained. With help from the Lord, she manages to enter in the service and in the heart of the prison's guard. In the last moment, when his husband was about to be executed secretly, she exposes the injustice and the King's ministry, miraculously present, grants her husband's liberty.

Ouverture (Opus 72 Leonore - there are four versions, the final one produced in 1814)

Act 1 (A Spanish state prison, near Seville)

Jaquino is proposing to Marzelline, but he is refused (His love, how sad does it make me... When will you give me your consent?). Scene 2 - Left alone, Marzelline is singing, expressing her feelings for *Fidelio*, the boy that has recently entered their house (I wish we were united yet and I could husband call you!). Scene 3 - Rocco enters the scene, followed by the young boy *Fidelio*. Scene 4 - All four express their feelings in an explanatory quartet (He loves me it is clear... How great the danger is... She loves him, it is clear... The father

will consent). Rocco proposes to Fidelio to become his son in law and sings an affectionate aria about gold (Unless there is gold to live on). In response, Fidelio asks him to be trusted to see the prisoners, and the three engage into a tertzetto (Good, my lad, good... Courage I possess ! ...Your kind heart will many a pain suffer in those vaults). March (change of guards). Scene 5 - Pizarro announces the visit from the Minister, who has learned that Florestan is illegally detained and he engages in an aria, asking Rocco to make his way with him (Revenge I'll take on him...the steel deep in his wound ...victory is mine). Rocco refuses to kill Florestan, not even for a fortune, than Pizarro orders him to dig the grave while he will do the killing himself, in disguise (A fortune will be yours... No, Sir, committing murder my duty this is not). Scene 6 - Fidelio who has heard the conversation, seeks for strength in faith (Strength I derive from faithfulness and love). Scene 7 - Jaquino is insisting on Marzelline. Scene 8 - Fidelio is asking Rocco to allow the poor prisoners into the garden. Scene 9 - The prisoners sing, happy with the joy of seeing the light (Oh what a joy, in the open air freely to breathe again). Scene 10 - Rocco asks Fidelio to help him dig the grave (We two, we only dig his grave... To dig perhaps the husband's grave). Scene 11 - Marzelline rushes in telling that Pizarro is raged because the prisoners have been allowed in the garden. Scene 12 - As Pizarro enters the scene, the prisoners are locked again, singing their farewell to the warm spring's sunshine (Farewell, warm sunshine, too quickly we must leave you).

Act 2 (In the prison)

In his cell, Florestan sings his sorrow (I'm living in a desert. Death only reigns here). Scene 2 - Rocco and Fidelio enter the scene and start digging the grave, near the cell (Be quick and let us dig the grave... You shall be satisfied with me). Florestan is grateful for a piece of bread offered by Fidelio (Oh thanks to you, Oh thanks ! Oh thanks !). Scene 3 - Pizarro enters the scene and sends Fidelio away. Before killing Florestan he reveals his identity and his reasons (Pizarro, whom you hoped to bring to fall... as avenger he faces you). At this moment, Fidelio reveals his true identity, Leonora Florestan's wife, and the four engage in a dramatic quartet (Oh God ! ... His wife ? ... My wife ? ... Yes, see here Leonora !). Scene 4 - Jaquino enters the scene with the soldiers to announce that the Minister has arrived. Scene 5 - Leonora and Florestan engage in a loving duet (My husband in my arms ! Leonora in my arms !). Scene 6 - Don Fernando enters the scene to reveal his mission (Our gracious Majesty has sent me here...). Scene 7 - Rocco speaks in favor of Don Florestan and Don Fernando orders that Leonore should have the privilege to make him free. Pizarro is sent away and all present praise the Lord for the wonder (Oh Lord ! - What a moment this ! Oh unspeakable happiness !). Florestan and Leonora engage a final duet, doubled by the chorus (Join in our song of joy !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - His love, how sad does it make me... When will you give me your consent ? (Marzelline, Jaquino), I wish we were united yet and I could husband call you ! (Marzelline), He loves me it is clear... How great the danger is... She loves him, it is clear... The father will consent (Marzelline, Fidelio, Rocco, Jaquino), Unless there is gold to live on (Rocco), Good, my lad, good... Courage I possess ! ...Your kind heart will many a pain suffer in those vaults (Rocco, Fidelio, Marzelline), Revenge I'll take on him...the steel deep in his wound ...victory is mine (Pizarro), A fortune will be yours... No, Sir, committing murder my duty this is not (Pizarro, Rocco), Strength I derive from faithfulness and love (Fidelio), Oh what a joy, in the open air freely to breathe again (Chorus), We two, we only dig his grave... To dig perhaps the husband's grave (Rocco, Fidelio), Farewell, warm sunshine, too quickly we must leave you (Chorus). Act 2 - I'm living in a desert. Death only reigns here (Florestan), Be quick and let us dig the grave... You shall be satisfied with me (Rocco, Fidelio), Oh thanks to you, Oh thanks ! Oh thanks ! (Florestan), Pizarro, whom you hoped to bring to fall... as avenger he faces you (Pizarro), Oh God ! ... His wife ? ... My wife ? ... Yes, see here Leonora ! (Pizarro, Rocco, Florestan, Leonora), My husband in my arms ! Leonora in my arms ! (Leonora, Florestan), Our gracious Majesty has sent me here... (Don Fernando), Oh Lord ! - What a moment this ! Oh unspeakable happiness ! (All on scene). Join in our song of joy ! (Florestan, Leonora, Chorus).

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1936 Salzburg Festspielchor, Vienna Philharmonic (Lotte Lehmann - Leonore, Anton Baumann - Rocco, Alfred Jeger - Pizarro), 1938 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Kirsten Flagstad - Leonore, Emanuel List - Rocco, Friedrich Schorr - Pizarro), 1944 NBC Symphony Orchestra (Rose Bampton - Leonore, Sid Belarsky - Rocco, Herbert Janssen - Pizarro), 1948 Hungarian State Opera (Anna Bathy - Leonore, Mihaly Szekely - Rocco, Oszkar Maleczky - Pizarro), 1957 Bavarian State Opera (Leonie Rysanek - Leonore, Gottlob Frick -

Rocco, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Pizarro), 1957 Vienna Philharmonic (Christel Goltz - Leonore, Otto Edelmann - Rocco, Paul Schoffler - Pizarro), 1960 Bolshoi Theatre (Galina Vishnevskaya - Leonore, Nikolai Schhelgolkov - Rocco, Aleksey Petrovich Ivanov - Pizarro), 1961 Royal Opera Covent Garden, London (Sena Jurinac - Leonore, Gottlob Frick - Rocco, Hans Hotter - Pizarro), 1969 Staatskapelle Dresden (Gwyneth Jones - Leonore, Franz Crass - Rocco, Theo Adam - Pizarro), 1999 Berlin Staatskapelle Orchestra (Waltraud Meier - Leonore, Plácido Domingo - Florestan, Rene Pape - Rocco, Falk Struckmann - Pizarro), 2006 London Symphony Orchestra (Christine Brewer - Leonore, Kristinn Sigmundsson - Rocco, Juha Uusitalo - Pizarro)

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27. Prince Igor

Title: Prince Igor (Knyaz Igor)

Composer: Alexander Borodin (1833-1887). Born in Saint Petersburg, his father was Porfiry Borodin and his mother was Evdokia Konstantinova Antonova, both serfs to a Georgian nobleman, Luka Stepanovich Gedenvanshveli. At the age of seven he was emancipated from serfdom and he received a good education through private tutors. In 1850 he entered the Medical-Surgical Academy in Saint Petersburg to become a surgeon in a military hospital. In 1862 he was named as professor in chemistry at the Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy. In the same year, he began taking lessons in composition from Mily Balakirev (1837-1910) and entered the musical circle. In 1863 he married Ekaterina Protopopova, a pianist and together they had a daughter named Gania. Operas: Bogatyri (1878), Prince Igor (1869), Mlada (1872). His musical work also includes: orchestral works (3 symphonies), chamber music, piano music, songs, vocal works, and transcriptions.

Libretto: Alexander Borodin (1833-1877). The composer adapted the libretto from the Ancient Russian epic The Lay of Igor's Host, which recounts the campaign of Prince Igor Svyatoslavich against the Cuman tribes in 1185. The only manuscript of the Tale was discovered in 1795 in the library of a monastery in Yaroslavl and was published in 1800. The opera was left unfinished upon the composer's death in 1887, but was completed and edited by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) and his student Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936). The scenario, piano sketches, verses, overture and large parts from the opera were found in Borodin's manuscripts, but there was still a lot of work to be done to finish the script.

Performance history: The opera was first performed on 23 October 1890 at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, directed by K.A. Kuchera and with Lev Ivanov as balletmaster. The Moscow premiere was given in 1892 by the Russian Opera Society, conducted by Iosif Pribik. The Bolshoi Theatre premiere was given in 1898 and conducted by Ulrikh Avranek. Other notable premiere was given in Prague in 1899. The 1909 Sergei Diaghilev production, in Paris, featured Feodor Chaliapin as Galitsky and Maria Kuznetsova as Yaroslavna. Both singers were also present in 1914 in the Thomas Beecham production in London. The Metropolitan Opera premiere took place in 1915, conducted by Giorgio Polacco and staged in the Italian language. The first performance in English was staged at the Covent Garden in London, at 26 July 1919. In recent times, a memorable performance was produced at the Aalto Theatre in Essen, directed by Andrejs Zagars. In 2012, a new edition based on 92 manuscripts by Borodin was completed and published by musicologist Anna Bulycheva. At the Metropolitan Opera, Prince Igor was sung in Russian for the first time in 2014. Up to the 2017/18 season, Prince Igor was played in the world for 318 times, in 96 different productions, ranking 66 on Operabase list.

Roles: Igor Svyatoslavich, Prince of Novgorod (baritone), Yaroslavna, his wife (soprano), Vladimir Igorevich, his son from a former marriage (tenor), Galitsky, Prince of Galicia (High bass), Konchak, Polovtsian khan (bass), Konchakovna, his daughter (contralto), Gzak, Polovtsian khan (silent), Ovlur, a Christian Polovtsian (tenor), Skula, a gudok-player (bass), Yeroshka, a gudok-player (tenor), Yaroslavna's nurse (soprano), A polovtsian maiden (soprano), Chorus (princes and princesses, boyars, elders, warriors, maidens, people, prisoners)



Story: Action takes place in the historic times when Khans ruled over the steps of Russia. Hay and horses, slaves and young girls were the most desired commodities to fight for. Hordes of warriors chased each other, for hundreds of kilometers, in a continuous struggle that lasted for centuries. One of such campaigns from the 12-th century, recorded in an epic poem, has been saved in a monastery, preserving the authentic medieval spirit of Old Russia. Alexander Borodin used the text from The Tale of Igor's Campaign to produce a Russian sung saga, comparable to the German Song of the Nibelungs or to the French Song of Roland.

Prologue: An eclipse takes place, a bad omen, as Prince Igor is about to start a military campaign. Unsuspecting that Prince Galitsky wants to usurp him, Igor entrusts him to care for his wife, who is also Galitsky's sister (To the sun in his glory, all hail !).

Act 1 (The fortress of Putivl in the Kievian Rus, in Galitsky's house)

Galitsky is hailed as a prince by the gudok-players (Long live Galitsky who keeps open house !). Galitsky makes them promises for a joyous life if he were to be chosen Prince (I carve for pleasure, princely luxury, a merry time on earth !). The maidens of the house are begging Galitsky to release one of them, taken by force, but the prince is obstinate and continues to feast with Skula and Yeroshka (Who seeks a generous master, come ye here). Scene 2 - Yaroslavna recalls her happier days with Igor, from the past (Where have you fled, ye happier days). The maidens of the house ask for her protection revealing that one of them was abducted (We come to thee, Princess, we come as to a mother). Prince Galitsky enters the scene and sends them away. Yaroslavna demands an explanation but her brother is not impressed and declares that he rules as a Prince (Do I not reign today as much a Prince as he ?). Under threat, the prince agrees to free the girl in exchange for another, more amenable. The Boyards bring the bad news: Khan Gzak and his hordes are at the gates of the fortress since Prince Igor has lost the battle and was wounded sore. Both Igor and his son Vladimir are in captivity (Fire ! The Outer city is in flames !).

Act 2 (Evening in the camp of the Polovtsy)

Polovtsian maidens are singing and dancing with joy, the wonder of love (We languish here in weariness until we know love's sweet caress). Princess Konchakovna calls for the lights out yearning for love (Now the day light dies, cease your songs and dances). Prince Vladimir Igorievich enters the scene singing his yearn for love (Slowly the sunset fires die out... my heart is consumed as by fire). As the two meet, the magic happens and they both declare love to each other (O, is it thou, my love ? ... May love unite me with you). As they part, Prince Igor enters the scene and sings his disgrace of being defeated, wounded and captive (No sleep, no rest, for my afflicted soul !). Ovlur proposes an escape by a secret flight, but Prince Igor refuses the dishonor. Khan Konchak enters the scene and tries to comfort his prisoner (No prisoner thou, most noble Prince, but my most honoured guest, I trust). Slaves with tambourines and musical enter the scene and the girls start singing and dancing (On the wings of the wind borne away).

Act 3 (In the Polovtsy camp)

Khan Gzak enters the scene to meet Khan Konchak, hailed by his soldiers (Our warriors come back triumphant and victorious). They prepare to share the spoils and feast all night (Like the sun is Khan Konchak, like a moon is Khan Gzak). Ovlur prepares the horses for a secret flight. Konchakova has heard the conversation and wildly agitated is begging Vladimir to stay (O I entreat thee love ! Thy plans to me are known). But with a

broken heart, Vladimir bids his farewell (For fate and duty tear me hence). Prince Igor tries to hasten his son but he lingers until Konchakovna strikes the alarm gong for several times. The Polovtsy engage in the pursue of Prince Igor, while Khan Konchak orders them not to harm Prince Vladimir and makes him an offer to marry his daughter.

Act 4 (In the public square of the fortress Poutivile)

Princess Yaroslavna sings a lamentation on her fate (Ah, still I grieve; ah still my tears flow on... Flow on thou Dnieper, broad and blue). Peasant women join her sorrow blaming Khan Gzak for the devastation (It was not a hungry wolf, so fierce and grey). Soon, Yaroslavna sees her husband approaching the fortress and he is most welcomed (It is he, my homing mate, my love ! ... Greetings, my joy, my love !). They both sing their joy of being reunited. Unaware of Prince Igor's return, Skula and Yeroshka, the two gudok-players, sing a moking song (For him we need not weep, the Khan will treat him well). As they see Prince Igor at the gate they both panic and sound the alarm (Prince, Prince, our Prince! Aye, ring the bells !). The Elders and Boyards are the first to welcome the prince to the citadel (Let all the people greet the Prince).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - To the sun in his glory, all hail ! (Chorus). Act 1 - Long live Galitsky who keeps open house ! (Chorus), I carve for pleasure, princely luxury, a merry time on earth ! (Galitsky), Who seeks a generous master, come ye here (Skula, Yeroshka, Chorus), Where have you fled, ye happier days (Yaroslavna), We come to thee, Princess, we come as to a mother (Chorus-the maidens), Do I not reign today as much a Prince as he ? (Galitsky), Fire ! The Outer city is in flames ! (Chorus - the boyards). Act 2 - We languish here in weariness until we know love's sweet caress (Chorus - maidens), Now the day light dies, cease your songs and dances (Konchakovna), Slowly the sunset fires die out... my heart is consumed as by fire (Vladimir), O, is it thou, my love ? ... May love unite me with you (Konchakovna, Vladimir), No sleep, no rest, for my afflicted soul ! (Prince Igor), No prisoner thou, most noble Prince, but my most honoured guest, I trust (Konchak), On the wings of the wind borne away (Chorus). Act 3 - Our warriors come back triumphant and victorious (Chorus - soldiers), Like the sun is Khan Konchak, like a moon is Khan Gzak (Chorus - the guards). O I entreat thee love ! Thy plans to me are known (Konchakova), For fate and duty tear me hence (Vladimir). Act 4 - Ah, still I grieve; ah still my tears flow on... Flow on thou Dnieper, broad and blue (Yaroslavna). Peasant women join her sorrow blaming Khan Gzak for the devastation (It was not a hungry wolf, so fierce and grey). It was not a hungry wolf, so fierce and grey (Chorus-peasants), It is he, my homing mate, my love ! ... Greetings, my joy, my love ! (Yaroslavna, Prince Igor), For him we need not weep, the Khan will treat him well (Skula, Yeroshka), Prince, Prince, our Prince! Aye, ring the bells ! (Chorus), Let all the people greet the Prince (Chorus - the people)

Ballet: Act 2 - Dance of the Polovtsian Maidens, Khan's slaves dance on the tambourine music, followed by a wild dance of young men. Act 3 - The dance of the drunken guards, they fall one by one. All ballet dances have incorporated the vigorous style and athletic steps of the Russian folk dances.

Recordings: 1836-38 Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra and Chorus (Alexander Baturin - Igor, Xenia Derzhinskaya - Yaroslavna, Ivan Kozlovsky-Vladimir, Aleksandr Pirogov - Galitsky, Maxim Mikhailov- Konchak), 1952 Bolshoy Theatre Orchestra and Chorus (Andrey Ivanov - Igor, Yelena Smolenskaya - Yaroslavna, Sergey Lemeshev - Vladimir, Aleksandr Pirogov - Galitsky, Mark Reyzen - Konchak, Vera Borisenko - Konchakovna), 1955 Belgrade National Opera (Dushan Popovich - Igor, Valeria Heybalova -Yaroslavna, Noni Zunec - Vladimir, Zarko Cvejic -Konchak), 1966 - National Opera Theatre of Sofia (Constantin Chekerliiski -Igor, Julia Wiener - Yaroslavna, Todor Todorov - Vladimir, Boris Christoff - Konchak), 1990 Sofia Festival Orchestra (Boris Martinovich - Igor, Stefka Evstatieva - Yaroslavna, Klaudi Kaludov - Vladimir, Nicola Ghiuselev - Galitsky, Nikolai Ghiurov - Konchak, Alexandrina Milcheva-Nonova -Konchakovna), 1993 Kirov Opera Orchestra and Chorus (Mikhail Kit - Igor, Galina Gorchakova - Yaroslavna, Gegham Grigoryan - Vladimir, Vladimir Ognovienko - Galitsky, Bulat Minjelkiev -Konchak, Olga Borodina - Konchakovna) Videos: 1981 Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra and Chorus and 1993 Kirov Opera and Ballet (Mariinsky Theatre).

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28. Werther

Title: Werther

Composer: Jules Massenet (1842-1912). Born in Montaud, now a part of the city of Saint-Etienne, his father Alexis Massenet (1788-1863) was a prosperous iron monger and his mother was Eleonore Royer de Marancour (1809-1875) an amateur musician and his first music teacher. Jules was the youngest of the four children in the family. By 1848 the family moved to Paris where he started his education at Lycee Saint Louis. In 1851 he was auditioned for the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied solfege with Augustin Savard, piano with Francois Laurent and composition with Ambroise Thomas. In 1863 he was awarded with the Prix de Rome, a three years scholarship at the French Academy in Rome. In 1866 he married Louise Constance de Gressy and the fruit of their marriage was a girl, Juliette. Operas: *La grand'tante* (1867), *Meduse* (1870), *Don Cesar de Bazan* (1872), *L'adorable Bel-Boul* (1874), *Le roi de Lahore* (1877), *Herodiade* (1881), *Manon* (1884), *Le Cid* (1885), *Cleopatre* (1885), *Esclarmonde* (1889), *Le mage* (1891), *Werther* (1892), *Thais* (1894), *Amadis* (1895), *Sapho* (1897), *Cendrillon* (1899), *Griselidis* (1901), *Le jongleur de Notre Dame* (1902), *Cherubin* (1905), *Ariane* (1906), *Therese* (1907), *Bacchus* (1909), *Don Quichotte* (1910), *Roma* (1912), *Panurge* (1913). Ballets: *Le carillon* (1892), *Cigale* (1904), *Espada* (1908), *L'histoire de Manon* (1884). His musical work also includes: oratorios and cantatas, orchestral compositions (7 suites, 1 piano concerto), incidental music and songs.

Libretto: Edouard Blau (1836-1906), Paul Milliet (1848-1924) and Georges Hartmann (1843-1900). Edouard Blau was a French dramatist and librettist who collaborated with Georges Bizet (*La coupe du roi de Thule*, *Don Rodrigue*), Jaques Offenbach (*La Marocaine*, *Belle Lurette*), Benjamin Godard (*Dante*), Edouard Lalo (*Le roi d'Ys*) and Jules Massenet (*Le Cid*, *Werther*). Paul Milliet was a French playwright and librettist who wrote 24 opera librettos for numerous composers such as: Edouard Lalo, Pietro Mascagni, Spyros Samaras, Isidore de Lara. With Jules Massenet he also collaborated for the opera *Herodiade*. Georges Hartmann was a French dramatist and librettist who published under the pen name Henri Gremont. He collaborated with composers such as: Jules Massenet (*Herodiade*, *Werther*), Andre Messager (*Madame Chrysantheme*), Reynaldo Hahn (*L'île du reve*). The libretto is loosely based on the German novel *The Sorrows of Young Werthner*, by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832).

Performance history: The performance premiered on 16 February 1892 at the Imperial Theatre Hofoper in Vienna. The first performance in French language was held in Geneva on 27 December 1872. Due to a fire disruption, the premiere at the Opera Comique in Paris was delayed until 16 January 1893. *Werther* entered the repertoire at the Opera Comique in 1903 and in the next half century the opera was performed over 1100 times. The Metropolitan Opera premiere took place on 29 March 1894, first in Chicago and than in the main house in New York. In London, the Covent Garden premiere took place on 11 June 1894. For the Saint Petersburg premiere in 1902, Massenet himself adjusted the role of Werthner from tenor to baritone, for Mattia Battistini (1856-1928) to play the starring role. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Werther* was played in the world for 446 times, in 105 different productions, ranking 48 on Operabase list.

Roles: Charlotte, aged 20 (mezzo-soprano), Sophie, her sister, aged 15 (soprano), Werther, a young poet, aged 23 (tenor), Albert, bethroted to Charlotte, aged 25 (baritone), Bailiff, Charlotte's father (bass), Schmidt, a friend of Bailiff (tenor), Johann, a friend of Bailiff (baritone), Bruhlmann, a young man (tenor), Kathchen, his fiancée (mezzo-soprano), Children of the Bailiff, Fritz, Max, Hans, Karl, Gretel, Clara (children voice), Chorus (local people, guests, servants, children)



Story: The story was the first novel published by Johann Goethe in 1774, when he was 25 years old and have just recovered from an unfulfilled romantic experience. The novel turned the author into a celebrated one, almost overnight, and started an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement in Europe known as Romanticism. Napoleon Bonaparte considered it one of the greatest works of European literature. A highly sensitive young man, regarding himself as a poet, falls in love for a local girl but the girl gets married to a previous engagement. Missinterpreting what love and marriage is, the young man percieves his affection in a tragic way and commits an exhibitionistic suicide.

Act 1 (The Bailiff family House)

The newly widowed Bailiff is teaching his children a song for Christmas, in the middfle of July (Jesus was just born, here is our divine master). Johann and Schmidt arrive to comment that it is a bit early for Christmas songs. Young Werther arrives to escort Charlotte to the ball of friends and relatives, given at Wetzlar (Well then, can this be the house of the bailiff ?). As Werther departs with Charlotte and Mr. Bailiff joins his friends at the inn, Sophie is left alone with her younger brothers. Albert arrives unexpected, after a six months of absence. Albert learns that Charlotte is rehearsing her dance, preparing for their wedding, and he is asked to return the next morning (She loves me !... she is thinking of me !). Returned from the ball, Werther makes a vivid declaration of love (My hope and my only joy... I love you and I admire you !). His declaration is interrupted by Mr. Bailiff, announcing that Albert has returned. Charlotte confesses to Werther thas she was swearer to Albert (Yes, he whom my mother made me swear to accept as a husband). Werther departs with a broken heart (To that oath, remain loyal ! ... But, I will die of it...).

Act 2 (In the village, under the linden)

Johann and Schmidt hail as the people gather to celebrate the pastor's fifty years of marriage (To bless the Lord, there are many ways ...Glory to him who gives us). As Charlotte appears with her newly wedded husband, Werther is tormented with bitterness and jealousy (Another is her husband !). Albert assures Werther that he has pardoned his mixed emotions while Werther reassures him that his feelings have turned to friendship (I know you to be with a loyal and strong heart... never find anything there except friendship). Sophie enters the scene, happy for she has pillaged the pastor's garden (Brother ! Look ! Look at the beautiful bouquet !). Sophie asks Werther for the pleasure of the first dance, but he excuses himself preparing to leave (It's too much shame and weakness ! I must, I want to leave !). As Charlotte enters the scene Werther reinforces his declaration of love but he is asked to leave (Albert loves you ! Who would not love you ? ... I no longer belong to myself...). Since Werther insists, Charlotte agrees to see him again...at Christmas, while Werther is deepening his remorse (Yes, what she orders of me for her peace of mind, I will do it). Young Sophie tries once more to attract Werther's attention to her, only to be refused once more (Ah, sister ! Mr. Werther has left !). Albert understands now that Werther was not true for him.

Act 3 (At the Bailiff family House, at Christmas)

Reading the letters received form Werther, Charlotte is confused and frightened (Werther ! Werther ! ...His letter ! His letters !). Sophie arrives and tries to cheer her up (Ah, laughter is blessed, joyous, light, hramonius, it has wings, it's a bird). Speaking about Werther, Charlotte looses control and starts to cry (Go ! Let flow my tears ! they do good, my darling !). Left alone, Charlotte is praying the Lord to let her see Werther again (Ah ! come back ! so that I can kiss you again !). Her prayer is heard and Werther enters the door (Yes, it is I !, I've come

back ! and yet, away from you...). Remembering the times when they played the piano and read poetry together, Werther becomes more and more insistent, while Charlotte finds it harder and harder to resist him (You love me ! You Love me !... Defend me against myself ! Defend me, Lord...). Resolute to resist, Charlotte finally leaves the room giving him a forever farewell. Desolated, Werther takes her departure the hard way (...your lover is going to die...My tomb may be opened !). As Albert returns at home, a servant brings him a letter from Werther, asking for his pistols. Albert agrees, asking Charlotte to hand herself the pistols to the servant.

Act 4 (Werther's room)

Entering Werther's room, Charlotte finds him covered in blood but alive (Werther ! ... Werther ! ... Nothing !). Werther is murmuring his last words (My soul blesses you for this death ... Which keeps you innocent... and saves me remorse). Deeply affected, Charlotte declares that she loves him too, and returns him a last kiss (In this kiss, may it forget forever all the sufferings, the sorrows). From another room, children are heard singing their song of Christmas (Noel ! Noel !, Noel !). Hearing the song of delivery, Werther claims that his his life is not over but only beginning. But he dies in her hands while she faints at his feet and the children continue their song (Noel !, Noel !, Noel !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Jesus was just born, here is our divine master (Children), Well then, can this be the house of the bailiff ? (Werther), She loves me !... she is thinking of me ! (Albert), My hope and my only joy... I love you and I admire you ! (Werther), Yes, he whom my mother made me swear to accept as a husband (Charlotte), To that oath, remain loyal ! ... But, I will die of it...(Werther) Act 2 - To bless the Lord, there are many ways ...Glory to him who gives us (Johann, Schmidt), Another is her husband ! (Werther), I know you to be with a loyal and strong heart... never find anything there except friendship (Albert, Werther). Brother ! Look ! Look at the beautiful bouquet ! (Sophie), It's too much shame and weakness ! I must, I want to leave ! (Werther), Albert loves you ! Who would not love you ? ... I no longer belong to myself... (Werther, Charlotte), Yes, what she orders of me for her peace of mind, I will do it (Werther), Ah, sister ! Mr. Werther has left ! (Sophie). Act 3 - Werther ! Werther ! ...His letter ! His letters ! (Charlotte), Ah, laughter is blessed, joyous, light, harmonious, it has wings, it's a bird (Sophie), Go ! Let flow my tears ! they do good, my darling ! (Charlotte), Ah ! come back ! so that I can kiss you again ! (Charlotte), Yes, it is I !, I've come back ! and yet, away from you... (Werther), You love me ! You Love me !... Defend me against myself ! Defend me, Lord... (Werther, Charlotte), ...your lover is going to die...My tomb may be opened ! (Werther). Act 4 - Werther ! ... Werther ! ... Nothing ! (Charlotte), My soul blesses you for this death ... Which keeps you innocent... and saves me remorse (Werther), In this kiss, may it forget forever all the sufferings, the sorrows (Charlotte), Noel ! Noel !, Noel ! (Children), Noel !, Noel !, Noel ! (Children)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1931 Opera Comique, Paris (Georges Thill - Werther, Ninon Vallin - Charlotte, Germaine Feraldy - Sophie), 1951 Coro di Voci Bianchi Orchestra Sinfonica, Torino (Ferruccio Tagliavini - Werther, Pia Tassinari - Charlotte, Vittoria Neviani - Sophie), 1964 Orchestra and Chorus of the Radiodiffusion-Television Francaise (Albert Lance - Werther, Rita Gorr - Charlotte, Mady Mesple - Sophie), 1969 Orchestre de Paris (Nicolai Gedda - Werther, Victoria de los Angeles - Charlotte, Mady Mesple - Sophie), 1979 London Philharmonic Orchestra (Alfredo Kraus - Werther, Tatiana Troyanos - Charlotte, Christine Barbaux - Sophie), 1980 Royal Opera House (Jose Carreras - Werther, Frederica von Stade - Charlotte, Isobel Buchanan - Sophie), 1985 Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra (Peter Dvorsky - Werther, Brigitte Fassbaender - Charlotte, Magdalena Hajosyova - Sophie), 1998 London Symphony Orchestra (Roberto Alagna - Werther, Angela Gheorghiu - Charlotte, Patricia Petibon - Sophie), 2018 Orchestra of the Zurich Opera House (Juan Diego Florez - Werther, Anna Stephany - Charlotte, Melissa Petit)

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29. Ball at the Savoy

Title: Ball at the Savoy (Ball im Savoy)

Composer: Paul Abraham (1892-1960). Born in Apatin (Serbia) in Austria-Hungary, his father was a business man and his mother was a piano teacher, his first music teacher. After his father died, in 1899 he moved to Budapest with his mother. He was admitted to the commercial school and also studied cello with Adolf Schiffer and composition with Viktor Herzfeld at the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music (from 1910 to 1916). His first cello concert and Hungarian Serenade were first performed in 1916. Beginning with 1927 he was appointed conductor at the Budapest Operetta Theatre and he married Sarolta (Charlotte) Feszelyni. In 1930 he moved to Berlin, as conductor at the Metropol Theatre with his opera *Viktoria und ihr Husar*. Operettas: *Zenebona* (1928), *Der Gatte des Frauleins* (1928), *Es geschehen noch Wunder* (1929), *Viktoria and her Husar* (1930), *The Flower of Hawai* (1931), *Ball at the Savoy* (1932), *Marchen im Grand-Hotel* (1934), *Viki* (1935), *Dschainah das Madchen aus dem Tanzhaus* (1935), *Roxy und ihr Wunderteam* (1937), *Julia* (1937), *The White Swan* (1938). Since 1930 to 1940 his music was also produced in 15 musical films, such as: *The Singing City*, *The Blue of Heaven*, *Gypsies of the Night*, *Temptation*, *Modern Girls*, *The Private Secretary*.

Libretto: Alfred Grunwald (1884-1951) and Fritz Lohner-Beda (1883-1942). Alfred Grunwald was an Austrian librettist and lyricist who wrote over 40 operetta librettos and collaborated with numerous famous composers such as: Franz Lehar, Emmerich Kalman, Oscar Straus, Robert Stolz and Paul Abraham. He was also a theater critic at the *Neue Wiener Journal* and a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. A number of his librettos were produced on Broadway: *Countess Maritza* (1926), *The Yankee Princess* (1922), *The Circus Princess* (1927), *The Duchess of Chicago* (1929). Since 1919 to 1958 numerous of his librettos were used in both silent and musical films. Fritz Beda, born Bedrich Lowy, was an Austrian librettist and lyricist, but also a dedicated football player. As a librettist he collaborated with Franz Lehar and Paul Abraham. He is also known as a screen writer, for his famous songs and for his filmography (14 musical films).

Performance history: The operetta premiered on 23 December 1932 at the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin. The premiere cast was as follows: Gitta Alpar as Madeleine, Arthur Schroder as Aristide, Oszkar Denes as Mustafa Bey, Trude Berliner as Tangelita and Rosy Barsony as Daisy. The English language premiere was on 8 September 1933 at the Drury Lane Theatre in London, with a libretto adapted by Oscar Hammerstein. In recent times, a memorable performance was put on stage in 2013 at Koblenz. On January 15, 2013 the operetta also premiered at the Estonian National Opera with Mart Sander as stage director and Ingmar Joela as choreographer. The premiere at the Chicago Folks Operetta took place in July 2014. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Ball at the Savoy* operetta was played in the world for 236 times, in 37 different productions, ranking 89 on Operabase list.

Roles: Marquis Aristide (tenor), Madeleine, his wife (soprano), Daisy Darlington, jazz composer (soprano), Mustafa Bey, Turkish embassy attache (tenor), Tangelita, Argentine dancer (contralto), Archibald, servant (baritone), Mizzi, Blanca, Lucia, Mercedes, Trude, Ilonka, former wives of Mustapha Bey (spoken roles), Celestin Formant, lawyer, Pomerol headwaiter, Monsieur Albert, Ernest Bennuet, Bebe (spoken roles), Chorus (guests, staff, dancers).



Story: A musical blend of Berlin jazz, Hungarian traditional music, Viennese melodies and Yiddish klezmer (Ashkenazi Jews musical tradition). *Ball at the Savoy* tells a bubbling story about a newly-married couple of

young diplomats whose loyalty is put to the test. The score is more modern than the libretto, using an abundance of foxtrots and Latin American dances like tango and pasodoble. However, the waltz is in its classic shape. All's well that ends well.

Act 1 (Hall in a villa in Nice)

Marquis Aristide and his wife Madeleine celebrate the return from their lengthy honeymoon. Aristide receives a telegram from dancer Tangolita, to whom he has promised in his turbulent past an intimate supper on a night of her choosing. Now she wants him to take her to the annual Grand Ball at the Hotel Savoy. With the help of his friend, Mustafa Bey, Aristide persuades his wife that he has to go to the Savoy to meet the famous jazz musician Jose Pasodoble. Madeleine can not join them because her suitcase with the ball gown has not arrived yet. The matter is that Pasodoble is only the pseudonym of Madeleine's cousin Daisy, so she knows that her husband is cheating on her.

Act 2 (Foyer to the Ballroom of the Savoy Hotel)

Aristide meets his old friends from his bachelor days. Yearning for revenge, Madeleine hides her face under a mask and flirts with Celestin Formant, a young lawyer looking for trouble. Mustafa Bey declares to be enchanted by Daisy, the famous composer Pasodoble. While Aristide and Tangolita withdraw for a private supper in a dining room, so does Madeleine and Celestin. During dinner, Aristide asks for the telephone and calls his wife and Pomerol the headwaiter delivers the call to Madeleine's dining room. Deeply disappointed with her husband, Madeleine decides to surrender to Celestin's persuasion and to play him a charade. Meanwhile Jose Pasodoble receives a price form the Savoy Hotel and reveals her true identity. In response, Madeleine also reveals her identity and she publicly announces to have betrayed her husband, having a lawyer to witness her.

Act 3 (Hall in a villa in Nice)

Madeleine's revenge receives general approval. Aristide is enraged in doubt: did she or did she not cheat on him? Since Madeleine continues to confirm the betrayal, the Marquis feels constrained to call a lawyer, in order to start the divorce proceedings. When the lawyer arrives, it turns to be Celestin Formant, the presumable lover, but Aristide can not obtain from him if anything did really happen. To cool down the atmosphere, Mustafa Bey proposes to Daisy, but with one condition, Madeleine and Aristide must be reconciled. Under the circumstances, Daisy reveals the whole story and both couples are happily reunited.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Are you true for me? / Bist du mir treu? (Madeleine), It is so nice to receive flowers in the evening / Es ist so schön, am Abend Blumen zu geh'n (Madeleine, Aristide). Act 2 - Tango dance and song of Tangolita (Tangolita), In my white arms / In meinen weissen Armen (Madeleine) Act 3 - Always Love / Toujours 'Amor (Madeleine), When we Turks do the kissing / Wenn wir Türken küssen (Mustafa Bey)

Ballet: Singing and dancing take place in the second act, as part of the show at the Grand Ball of the Savoy Hotel.

Recordings: Film and TV adaptations: 1935 Austria/Hungary (Director: Steve Sekely, Stars: Gitta Alpar, Hans Jaray, Rosy Barsony), 1936 British operetta film made at Elstree Studios (Director: Victor Hanbury, Stars: Marta Labarr, Conrad Nagel, Fred Conyngham), 1955 a German film directed by Paul Martin, 1964 Belgium film (Stars: Nand Buyl, Denise De Weerd, Yvonne Lex), 1971 West Germany film ZDF (Stars: Christiane Schroder, Grit Boettcher, Bert Fortell), 1978 USSR Melodii odnoy operetty (Stars: Natalya Zeinalova, Aleksey Sheynin, Tatyana Teterina, Leonid Serebrennikov, Irena Morozova), 1985 Estonia Tallinnfilm (Director: Ago-Endrik Kerge, Stars: Elle Kull, Aarne Ukskula, Merle Talvik, Juri Krjukov, Ulle Kaljuste), 2014 Chicago Folks Operetta (Director: Kristen Barrett, Conductor Anthony Barrese, Star: Alison Kelly).

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30. St. John's Passion

Title: Saint John's Passion (Passio secundum Joannem, Johannes Passion)

Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). Born in Eisenach, his father Johann Ambrosius Bach (1645-1695) was the court trumpeter and director of the town musicians, while his mother was Maria Elisabeth Lammerhirt (1644-1694) the daughter of a furrier and coachman. There were eight children in the family, four of whom became musicians. Johann was the youngest child and learned violin and music theory with his father. His uncles were also professional musicians, church organists, court chamber musicians and composers. One of them introduced him to organ and a second one introduced him to composition. Orphan at the age of 10 he moved with his older brother, organist at St. Michael's Church in Ohrdruf, where he studied and copied music. In 1700 he was enrolled at the prestigious St. Michael's School in Luneburg, where he was a member of the choir and studied organ and harpsichords with Georg Bohm. In 1703 he was appointed court musician in the chapel of Duke Johann Ernst III in Weimar and later as organist at the New Church in Arnsted. In 1707 he married Maria Barbara Bach (1684-1720) and the fruit of their marriage were four children. In 1721 he married Anna Magdalena Bach (1701-1760) and the fruit of this second marriage were another six children. From 1723 he was employed as Thomaskantor at St. Thomas School in Leipzig. Compositions: 225 cantatas, 6 motets, 12 masses, 6 oratorios, 188 choral works, 84 songs and arias, 246 works for organ, 222 keyboard compositions, 5 lute compositions, 39 chamber music works, 30 concertos and ouvertures, 6 canons, 14 contrapunctus (fugues). He is best known for his Brandenburg Concertos, Flute concertos, Goldberg Variations, The Well Tempered Clavier, Fugue and Toccata in D minor, Great Fugue in G minor, Christmas and Easter Oratorio, Mass in B minor.

Libretto: Anonymous. The Passio secundum Joannem was written in 1723-1724, in his first year as a director of church music in Leipzig. The libretto was based on previous existing works and is compiled from recitatives and choruses narrating the Passion of Christ as told in the Gospel of John. Ariosos and arias are using hymn tunes and texts familiar to the congregation of his contemporaries. Bach followed chapters 18 and 19 of the Gospel of John in the Luther Bible, and the tenor Evangelist follows exactly the words of that bible. The compiler of additional poetry is unknown. In the first part, the first scene is in the Kidron Valley one of the main burial grounds of Jerusalem and the second scene is in the palace of High Priest Caiaphas who organized the plot to kill Jesus. Part two shows three scenes, one with Pontius Pilate the fifth prefect of the Roman province of Judaea, one at the Golgotha, the site where Jesus was crucified and the third one at his burial place.

Performance history: The Passion was first performed on 7 April 1724, at the Good Friday Vespers (preceding Easter Sunday) at the St. Nicholas Church in Leipzig. The work is most often performed today in its original version, although Bach revised it in 1725, 1732 and 1749 adding several numbers. The Passion, close to Bach's heart, was an immediate dramatic success, performed every year at Easter, during his lifetime. In the summer of 1815, Bach's Passions began to be studied once again. Parts of the St. John Passion were being rehearsed and the St Matthew Passion was soon to follow in European musical communities. In the United States, the tradition of yearly performances began on 27 March 1900, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, due to the effort of Dr. Fred Wolle, the organist of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem. After 10 years of struggle, he amassed 80 singers and the Bethlehem Bach Choir was born. After another fourteen month of preparation, the premiere was a great success and took almost a mythical status. Fred Wolle and Bach Choir initiated the 1900 Bach Festival, with a tradition of more than 100 years in Pennsylvania. Up to the 2017/18 season, the Saint John's passion was performed in the world for 53 times, in 24 different productions, ranking 267 on Operabase list.

Roles: Evangelist (tenor), Vox Christi, Jesus (bass), Soloists (Maid - soprano, Servant - tenor, Peter - bass, Pilate - bass), Chorus (soprano, alto, tenor, bass - professional choir, or all male voices)



Story: The story follows the Bible in presenting the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. While writing it, the author intended to retain the congregational spirit of the worship service. Each year, the concert is played on Easter at the Good Friday Vespers together with the Pater noster and a lecture or a talk by a member of a religious institution. There is no applause, either at the beginning or at the end. During the performance, the congregation and the audience are to remain silent, as no one is supposed to sing along with the professionals.

Great moments and arias:

Part One - 1. Lord thou our master (Chorus) 2. Jesus went with his disciples (Evangelist) 3. O mighty love, O love beyond all measure (Chorus) 4. So that the word might be accomplished ... Shall I the cup not drink which my Father hath given me ? (Evangelist, Jesus) 5. Thy will be done, Lord God (Chorus) 6. The crowd, though, and their captain and the servants (Evangelist) 7. From the bondage of my errors Me to deliver is my Savior fettered (Aria-alto) 8. Simon Peter followed after Jesus (Evangelist) 9. I'll follow thee likewise with gladdening paces (Aria-soprano) 10. This same disciple was acquainted with the high priest ... Are you not also one of his disciples ? ... I am not ... If I have spoken ill (Evangelist, Maid, Peter, Jesus, Chorus) 11. Who hath thee now so stricken, My Savior (Chorus) 12. And Annas sent him in fetters unto Caiphas, the high priest ... Are thou not one of his disciples ... I am not ... Did I not see thee with him in the garden ? ... Peter once again denied (Evangelist, Chorus, Peter, Servant) 13. Ah, my mind, Where wouldst thou go at last ... For my evil deed, Since the servant hath denied his Lord (Aria-tenor) 14. Peter, when he fails to think, hath his God denied (Chorus)

Second Part - 15. Christ, who hath us blessed made, No wrong hath committed (Chorus) 16. Then they led away Jesus from Caiphas to the Praetorium... Art thou the King of the Jews ? ... My kingdom is not of this world (Evangelist, Pilate, Chorus, Jesus) 17. Ah King so mighty, mighty in all ages (Chorus) 18. Then Pilate said unto him: So art thou truly a king ? ... Thou say'st I am a king ... And Pilate then took Jesus and scourged him. (Evangelist, Pilate, Jesus) 19. ...For thee the thorns there which have pierced him As Keys to heaven's flowers bloom ! (Arioso - bass) 20. Consider how his back so stained with bleeding in every portion doth heaven imitate ... the world's most lovely rainbow (Aria - tenor) 21. And then the soldiers plaited him a crown out of thorns ... Take him away yourselves and crucify him, for I find no fault in him ... he should perish, for he hath proclaimed himself the Son of God ... he who did hand me over to thee hath the greater sin. (Evangelist, Chorus, Pilate, Jesus) 22. Through this thy prison, Son of God, must come to us our freedom (Chorus) 23. Behold, here is your King ! ... Off, off with him, crucify him ! ... We have no other king except the Caesar. (Evangelist, Pilate, Chorus) 24. Haste, ye, O sorely tempted spirits ... to Golgotha (Aria - bass) 25. And they crucified him there, and two others with him (Evangelist, Chorus) 26. How thou, Lord Christ, so gently didst give thy blood till death ! (Chorus) 27. But standing beside the cross of Jesus were his mother and the sister of his mother, and Mary, Cleophas' wife, and Mary Magdalen ... Look, woman, this is thy son ! (Evangelist, Chorus, Jesus) 28. He of all did well take heed in those final moments (Chorus) 29. When now Jesus accepted the vinegar he said: It is fulfilled ! 30. It is fulfilled ! (Aria - alto) 31. And he bowed his head and was dead (Evangelist) 32. My Precious Savior, let me ask thee ... Am I from dying been made free ? (Aria - bass, Chorus) 33. And the earth was filled with quaking, and the rocks split asunder, and the graves were opened wide, and there rose up the bodies of many saints (Evangelist) 34. The sun itself in mourning cladeth (Arioso - tenor) 35. O melt now, my bosom, in rivers of weeping (Aria- soprano) 36. It being the

Preparation, so that the body might not stay upon the cross on the sabbath (Evangelist) 37. O help, Christ, O Son of God, through thy bitter passion (Chorus) 38. Therein did they now lay Jesus ...since the tomb was nearby (Evangelist) 39. Rest well, ye holy bones and members (Chorus) 40. Ah Lord, let thine own angels dear at my last hour my spirit bear ...Lord Jesus Christ, give ear to me, I would thee praise enernally ! (Chorus)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1954 Berlin Classics (Conductor - Gunther Ramin, Thomanenchor choir, Gewandhausorchester, Soloists: Ernst Haeflinger, Franz Kelch, Agnes Giebel), 1955 Melodiya and Ars Nova (Conductor - Fritz Lehmann, Wiener Singakademie choir, Wiener Symphoniker orchestra, Soloists: Julius Patzak, Gerard Souzay, Marga Hoffgen), 1960 Golden Melodram (Conductor - Eugen Jochum, Bavarian Radio choir, Bavarian Radio Symphony orchestra, Soloists: John van Kesteren, Hans Hotter, Elisabeth Grummer), 1960 Decca Records (Conductor - David Willcocks, King's College of Cambridge choir, Philomusica of London orchestra, Soloists: Peter Pear, David Ward, Elisabeth Harwood), 1965 Teldec (Conductor - Nikolaus Harnocourt, Wiener Sangerknaben choir, Concertus Musicus Wien orchestra, Soloists: Kurt Equiluz, Max van Egmond, Jaques Villisech), 1984 Sony Classical (Conductor - Helmuth Rilling, Gachinger Kantorei choir, Bach Collegium Sruttgart orchestra, Soloists: Peter Schreier, Philippe Huttenlocher, Arleen Auger), 1987 Harmonia Mundi (Conductor - Philippe Herreweghe, Collegium Vocale Gent choir, La Chapelle Royale orchestra, Soloists: Howard Crook, Peter Lika, Barbara Schlick), 1990 EMI (Conductor - Andrew Parrot, Taverner Consort and Players choir and orchestra, Soloists: David Thomas, Rogers Covey Crump, Tessa Bonner), 1998 BIS (Conductor - Masaaki Suzuki, Bach Collegium Japan choir and orchestra, Soloists: Gerd Turk, Peter Kooy, Ingrid Schmithusen, Yoshikazu Mera), 2007 Rondeau Production (Conductor - Georg Christoph Biller, Thomanerchor, Gewandhausorchester, Soloists: Marcus Ullmann, Gotthold Schwartz, Ruth Holton)

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31. The Trojans

Title: The Trojans (Les Troyens)

Composer: Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). Born in La Cote Saint-Andre, near Grenoble, his father Louis Berlioz was a provincial physician, while his mother Marie Antoinette Marmion was a devout Roman Catholic. At the age of 12, he started his musical studies playing the guitar, flageolet and flute and learning harmony from textbooks alone. Although he was not formally trained, he succeeded in writing small compositions and arrangements. After the high school in Grenoble, in 1821 he was sent to Paris to study medicine. In 1826 he began attending the Conservatoire, to study composition under Jean-Francois Le Suer and Anton Reicha. In 1830 he won the Prix de Rome, a five year scholarship pension at the French Academy in Villa Medici. In 1833 he married Harriet Constance Smithson (1800-1854), a famous Shakespearean actress and the fruit of their marriage was a son. In 1854, after twenty years of relationship, he married Marie Recio Martin (1814-1862) an opera mezzo-soprano. In 1864, Hector Berlioz was made Officier de la Legion d'honneur. Operas: Les francs-juges (1826), Benvenuto Cellini (1838), La damnation de Faust (1856), L'enfance du Christ (1854) Les Troyenes (1858), Beatrice et Benedict (1862). Liturgical music: Messe solenelle (1824), Grande messe des morts (1837), Te Deum (1849). Symphonies: Symphonie fantastique (1830), Harold en Italie (1834), Romeo et Juliette (1839), Grande symphonie funebre et triomphale (1840). In 1844 he published a technical study of musical instruments Grand traite d'instrumentation et d'orchestration moderne.

Libretto: Hector Berlioz wrote himself the libretto from the ancient epic poem Aeneid, by Publius Vergilius Maro. The story is also present in another Ancient Greek tragedy, namely in The Trojan Women by Euripides. The first two acts revolves around the fall of Troy and the royal family who has lost the war, their lives or their freedom. Princess Cassandra leads a mass suicidal demonstration in front of their conquerors. The next three acts revolve around Dido, the Queen of Chartage who has hosted the fleet of Eneas, wandering the seas with the saved treasure of Troy. When Eneas bids her farewell and leaves for Rome, dishonored Dido commits suicide having a last vision: Carthage will be destroyed and Rome will be immortal. He completed the dramatic work in

one year and the musical score in another two.

Performance history: The performance premiered on 4 November 1863 at the Theatre Lyrique, followed by 21 repeat performances. This first performance was truncated to only two acts and presented under the name *Les Troyens a Chartage*. In the next years, parts of the opera were presented in concert form. In 1879, on 7 December two performances of the first part were given in Paris, one at Cirque d'Hiver and another at the Theatre du Chatelet. The concerto consisting of the first two acts, under the name *La prise de Troie*, was performed in English at the 7th Regiment Armory in New York on 6 May 1882. The first staged performance of the whole opera took place in Karlsruhe, Germany on 6 and 7 December 1890. The Austrian conductor, Felix Mottl (1856-1911), took the German production to Mannheim in 1899 and then to Munich in 1908. Another production of the full opera was mounted in Nice, in 1891. On 9 June 1892 the Paris Opera Comique staged *Les Troyens a Carthage* and witnessed a triumphant debut for the 17 year old Marie Delna (1875-1932) as Dido. In Brussels *Les Troyenes* premiered in December 1906. In the United Kingdom, concert performances of *Les Troyens a Carthage* took place in 1897, 1928 and 1935 followed by the London premiere in 1947 conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham and broadcasted at the BBC. In 1957 the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden production was conducted by Rafael Kubelik. The first American full production was conducted by Boris Gildovsky, at the New England Opera Theater, on 27 March 1955. The first Metropolitan Opera staging was in 1973. Up to the 2017/18 season, *The Trojans* was performed in the world for 67 times, in 10 different productions, ranking 224 on Operabase list.

Roles: Eneas, Trojan hero, son of Venus and Anchises (tenor), Dido, Queen of Chartage (mezzo-soprano), Anna, Dido's sister (contralto), Iopas, poet at Dido's court (tenor), Narbal, minister to Dido (bass), Cassandre, daughter of Priam, prophetess (mezzo-soprano), Coroebus, a young prince from Asia, betrothed to Cassandra (baritone), Panthus, Trojan priest, friend of Eneas (bass), Ascanie, the son of Eneas (soprano), Chorus (Trojans, Greeks, Tyrians, Carthaginians, Nymphs, Satyrs, Fauns and Sylvans, invisible spirits)

Supporting roles: Priam, King of Troy (bass), Hecube, Queen of Troy (soprano), Helenus, son of Priam, Trojan priest (tenor), Ghost of Hector, son of Priam (bass), Andromaque, Hector's widow (silent), Astyanax, her son 8 years old (silent), Polyxene, sister of Cassandra (soprano), Mercure, a God (baritone or bass), A Priest of Pluto (bass), Hylas, a young Phrygian sailor (tenor or contralto), A Greek chieftain (bass), Two Trojan soldiers (basses), Le Rapsode, narrator of the Prologue (spoken)



Story: On 3 May 1861, Hector Berlioz wrote in a letter to Emperor Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (Napoleon III) the following: "I am sure that I have written a great work, greater and nobler than anything done hitherto." The story is inspired from the first six books of Virgil's masterpiece *Aeneid*. Escaping the burning Troy with King Priam's treasure, hero Eneas is trusted by the Gods with the task of founding the city of Rome. On his way to Italy, his ship and his people are rescued from a storm by Queen Dido of Carthage. The two fall in love, but their love is against the will of gods, since the city of Rome must come into being. As Eneas leaves the shores of Carthage, Queen Dido stabs herself with Eneas sword upon a pyre of all of his gifts. It is a classical tragedy about love and fate, honor and duty, integrity and uprightness.

Act 1 (The Greek abandoned camp near Troy)

The Trojans are celebrating as the Greek army have departed after 10 years of siege (How joyful it is to

breathe the pure air of the fields). Scene 2 - Cassandra is the only one uncertain of their victory (The Greeks have disappeared ! ...but what fatal intention lies behind). Scene 3 - Coroebus, her lover, enters the scene and tries to comfort her, but Cassandra has only visions of ghosts, war and menace (The heavens are full of menace. Believe my voice ...the book of destiny ...Poor lost soul ! Return to your senses). As Cassandra can not persuade Coroebus to leave, she gives him the marital kiss (I will not leave you ... So be it ! Jealous death prepares our nuptial bed) Scene 4 - The Trojans begin their march of victory (Gods, protectors of the eternal city). Scene 5 - Dance of the wrestlers Scene 6 - The child of Andromaca, Hector's widow, is blessed by King Priam, Queen Hecuba and Princess Cassandra (Save your tears, Widow of Hector). Scene 7 - Eneas brings a terrible news. Laocoon has been devoured by two giant sea serpents when he hurled his javelin against the giant wooden horse left by the Greeks. Scene 8 - The Trojans are deeply impressed (Dreadful punishment ! Mysterious horror !). Scene 9 - In order to please goddess Pallas Athena, King Priam decides to move the giant horse into the city. Scene 10 - Left alone, Cassandra continues to mourn (No, I will not witness this deplorable party). Scene 11 - In a triumphant march, the Trojans drag the horse singing a pray (Oh beloved daughter of the king of the gods ... Make Ilion invincible, beautiful Pallas, protect us).

Act 2 (Eneas's Palace inside the city of Troy / Priam's Palace with an altar of goddess Kubileya)

The Ghost of Hector awakens Eneas and tells him to flee the city and search rescue in Italy (Ah ! ...flee, son of Venus ! The enemy holds our walls !). Scene 2 - The priest Panthus brings the news that the city is burning and Eneas rushes to lead the defence (The blood soaked city burns !). Scene 3 - Trojan women pray for the help of their gods (Mother of the unfortunate, render help to the Trojans). Scene 4 - Cassandra foresees that Eneas will lead some brave trojans to Italy, to build a new Troy (Priam's treasury is safe in Trojan hands). As for herself, Cassandra prophesizes that she will not be dishonored (For whom is this dagger and its silken bindings, if not for you, women of Troy ?). Scene 5 - Women of Troy sing together, determined to depart their lives together with their Princess (Let us, through our death, blight the victory of the Greeks). When a Greek Chieftain enters the room, Cassandra stabs herself, followed by Polyxena and numerous other women (Save our sons, Eneas ! Italy ! Italy !).

Act 3 (Queen Dido's Palace in Carthage)

People of Carthage celebrate their kingdom (The heavens of Carthage seem to bless the festival !). Scene 2 - Queen Dido enters the scene (Glory to Dido, our beloved queen !). Scene 3 - Dido sings her story, her husband was murdered and she had to abandon her country to build a new city (I had to flee with you, from Tyre to the African shore). And now, the Numidian king Iarbas has asked for her hand, but the people have sworn to defend her honour. Scene 4 -The procession of builders, sailors and farmers. Scene 5 - Anna, the queen's sister, tries to comfort her, her heart is still young, prepared for a new love (Queen of a budding empire ...You will love ... my people and the gods curse me, if I ever remove this sacred ring !). Scene 6 - Iopas brings the news that an unknown fleet is asking for assistance (Barely saved from the angry sea). Scene 7 - The Trojans march in bringing gifts. Scene 8 - Ascanius and Panthus recall the unfortunate fate of the Trojans and Queen Dido is willing to assist her former neighbors (May you all come, may you forget your misfortunes in my court). Scene 8 - Minister Narbal announces that King Iarbas troops are at the city gates. Eneas asks for Dido's permission to lead the alliance of Trojans and Carthaginians (Arms ! We need arms !).

Act 4 (An African forest, by morning / The gardens of Queen Dido, by the sea)

Pantomime and ballet of the Royal Hunt. Scene 2 - Minister Narbal confesses to Anna that he is worried, because ever since Eneas's victory against the Numidians Queen Dido spends her days hunting and parting, neglecting the public works (Are the Tyrians not victorious ? ... Public works are deferred, the workshops are empty). Scene 3 - Anna exults over the power of love (Our charming queen loves a victorious hero). Scene 4 - Ballet. Scene 5 - Iopas sings his pastoral poem (The shy bird, the playful lamb). Scene 6 - Asked by Queen Dido, Eneas recalls the last days of Troy when Hector's wife had to marry Pyrrhus, their worst enemy, for the sake of propriety (She loves her conqueror, the man who slew her father). Scene 7 - Eneas invites Dido for a walk under the moonlight. Scene 8 - Left alone, Eneas and Dido share some exultant moments (Endlessly intoxicating night of ecstasy ! Golden Phoebe...).

Act 5 (The seaside camp of the Trojans / Queen Dido's chambers / In the gardens by the sea)

Hylas, a young Phrygian sailor sings from the top of a ship (Resonant valley ...Humble cottage where I

received my mother's farewell). Scene 2 - Panthus and other chieftains are making the preparations for their freelt to depart for Italy (Prepare everything, we must leave at last). Scene 3 - Two of the Trojan guards are mournig their fate since they have found their love in Carthage. Scene 4 - Torn apart because of his love for Dido, Eneas must obey the will of his gods (Futile regrets ! ...I must leave Carthage ! Dido knows it...). Scene 5 - Ghosts of King Priam, Coroebus, Cassandra and Hector appear to Eneas urgim him to leave and conquer his new foundland. Scene 6 - Making up his mind, Eneas gives the command for departure (To sea ! To sea ! Italy ! Italy !). Scene 7 - Wandering in disbelief, Dido can see that some ships started to move off (Are you preparing to flee ? ...In my profound grief, dear Dido, spare me). The two share a bitter farewell (Nothing can stop you ...my shame, my love, our union just begun ...are you leaving ? ...to obey the gods I go only to my death....I love you !). Dido leaves the scene with a final curse (You monster of righteousness ! Go, then, go ! I curse both you and your gods !) Scene 8 - In her chamber, Dido is asking her sister for a desperate attempt to delay the departure, but it is to late. Scene 9 - Furious, Queen Dido commands her army to pursue the Trujans and burn their vessels and also to burn all the gifts received from the Trojans. Scene 10 - Left alone, Dido can hope for nothing more than death. Scene 11 - Dido sings her farewell aria to the city and her people (Farewell, proud city ... Farewell my people ...Farfewell beautiful African sky). Scene 12 - As the priests prepare the pyre for the Trojan gifts, Anna and Narbal course Eneas and his people, to die unrecognized as king. Scene 13 - As through a dream, Queen Dido climbs to the top of the pyre and fortells that one day her shame will be revenged (Hannibal ! Hannibal ! My soul is full of pride !). Scene 14 - Dido stabs herself with Eneas's sword and with her last words fortells the future (Ah ! The implacable anger of hostile fate ! Carthage will fall ! ...Rome ... eternal ...Rome !). With a final song from the priests and the people, her soul if made free for her body (O suffering soul, breathe your last...)

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - How joyful it is to breathe the pure air of the fields (Chorus), The Greeks have disappeared ! ...but what fatal intention lies behind (Cassandra), The heavens are full of menace. Belive my voice ...the book of destiny ...Poor lost soul ! Return to your senses (Cassandra, Coroebus), I will not leave you ... So be it ! Jealous death prepares our nuptial bed (Coroebus, Cassandra), Gods, protectors of the eternal city (Chorus), Save your tears, Widow of Hector (Cassandra), Dreadful punishment ! Mysterious horror ! (Chorus), No, I will not witness this deplorable party (Cassandra), Oh beloved daughter of the king of the gods ... Make Ilion invincible, beautiful Pallas, protect us (Chorus). Act 2 - Ah ! ...flee, son of Venus ! The enemy holds our walls ! (Ghost of Hector), The blood soaked city burns ! (Pantheus), Mother of the unfortunate, render help to the Trojans (Chorus), Priam's treasury is safe in Trojan hands (Cassandra), For whom is this dagger and its silken bindings, if not for you, women of Troy ? (Cassandra), Let us, through our death, blight the victory of the Greeks (Chorus), Save our sons, Eneas ! Italy ! Italy ! (Chorus). Act 3 - The heavens of Carthage seem to bless the festival ! (Chorus), Glory to Dido, our beloved queen ! (Chorus), I had to flee with you, from Tyre to the African shore (Dido), Queen of a budding empire ...You will love ... my people and the gods curse me, if I ever remove this sacred ring ! (Anna, Dido), Barely saved from the angry sea (Iopas), May you all come, may you forget your misfortunes in my court (Dido), Arms ! We need arms ! (Chorus). Act 4 - Ballet - Are the Tyrians not victoruiuos ? ... Public works are deferred, the workshops are empty (Anna, Narbal), Our charming queen loves a victorious hero (Anna), The shy bird, the playful lamb (Iopas), She loves her conqueror, the man who slew her father (Eneas). Endlessly intoxicating night of ectasy ! Golden Phoebe...(Eneas, Dido). Act 5 - Resonant valley ...Humble cottage where I received my mother's farewell (Hylas), Prepare everything, we maust leave at last (Panthus, Chorus), Futile regrets ! ...I must leave Carthage ! Dido knows it... (Eneas), To sea ! To sea ! Italy ! Italy ! (Eneas), Are you preparing to flee ? ...In my profound grief, dear Dido, spare me (Dido, Eneas), Nothing can stop you ...my shame, my love, our union just begun ...are you leaving ? ...to obey the gods I go only to my death....I love you ! (Dido, Eneas), You monster of righteousness ! Go, then, go ! I curse both you and your gods ! (Dido), Farewell, proud city ... Farewell my people ...Farfewell beautiful African sky (Dido), Hannibal ! Hannibal ! My soul is full of pride ! (Dido), Ah ! The implacable anger of hostile fate ! Carthage will fall ! ...Rome ... eternal ...Rome ! (Dido), O suffering soul, breathe your last... (Chorus)

Ballet: Act 1 - Scene 5 - Dance of the wrestlers (dances and popular games, pantomime). Act 3 - Scene 4 - Builders, sailors and farmers march in a processio to be blessed by their queen. Scene 7 - The Trojans march in bringing gifts. Act 4 - Scene 1 - The Royal Hunt. Naiads bath in a waterfall, only be frightened by hunters and a heavy storm. Satyrs, fauns and wood people dance grotesquely in the rain, while Queen Dido and Eneas find rescue in a cave. The satyrs and the fauns together with the naiads vanish into the forest as the storm

recedes. Scene 5 - Ballet of the Egyptian women, dance of the Slaves, ballet of the Nubian Slaves as part of the victory celebrations.

Recordings: 1947 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Marisa Ferrer - Dido, Jean Girardeau - Eneas, Marisa Ferrer - Cassandra), 1957 Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (Amy Shuard - Dido, Jon Vickers - Eneas, Blanche Thebom - Cassandra), 1960 American Opera Society Orchestra and Chorus (Eleanor Steber - Dido, Richard Cassilly - Eneas, Regina Resnik - Cassandra), 1965 Orchestre de l'Opera de Paris (Regine Crespin - Dido, Guy Chauvet - Eneas, Regine Crespin - Cassandra), 1969 Radiotelevisione Italiana (Marilyn Horne - Dido, Nicolai Gedda - Eneas, Shirley Verret - Cassandra), 1976 Vienna State Opera (Helga Dernesch - Dido, Guy Chauvet - Eneas, Christa Ludwig - Cassandra), 1983 Metropolitan Opera (Jessye Norman - Dido, Placido Domingo - Eneas, Tatiana Troyanos - Cassandra), 1994 Orchestre symphonique de Montreal (Deborah Voigt - Dido, Gary Lakes - Eneas, Francoise Pollet - Cassandra), 2003 Theatre du Chatelet, Monteverdi Choir (Anna Antonacci - Dido, Gregory Kunde - Eneas, Susan Graham - Cassandra), 2012 Royal Opera House (Anna Antonacci - Dido, Bryan Hymel - Eneas, Eva Maria Westbroek - Cassandra)

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32. Rusalka

Title: Rusalka

Composer: Antonin Leopold Dvorak (1841-1904). Born in Nelahozeves, near Prague in the Austrian Empire, his father Frantisek Dvorak (1814-1894) was an innkeeper and a professional zither (stringed instrument) player, while his mother Anna Zdenkova (1820-1882) was the daughter of bailiff Josef Zdenek. Antonin Leopold was the first of fourteen children, of whom only eight survived infancy. He started to play the violin at the age of 6, with his teacher Joseph Spitz. His first true music teacher was Anton Liehmann who taught him music theory and how to play organ, piano and the violin. At the age of 16 he leaved for Prague, to enter the Organ School where he studied with Josef Zvonar, Frantisek Blazek and Joseph Foerster. In 1858 he joined the professional orchestra conducted by Karel Komzak, to play at the Bohemian Provisional Theatre. In 1873 he married Anna Cermakova (1854-1931) and the fruit of their marriage were six children. In 1891 he was offered a position at the Prague Conservatory as professor of composition and instrumentation. From 1892 to 1895 he was named as director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. In 1901, Emperor Franz Joseph appointed him as member of the Austro-Hungarian House of Lords and he succeeded as director of the Prague Conservatory.

Operas: Alfred (1870), King and Charcoal Burner (1871), The Stubborn Lovers (1874), Vanda (1875), The Cunning Peasant (1877), Ballad of King Matthias (1881), Dimitrij (1882), The Jacobin (1888), Rusalka (1900), Armida (1903). His work also includes: chamber music, choral and vocal compositions, orchestral and piano compositions.

Libretto: Jaroslav Kvapil (1868-1950). Jaroslav Kvapil was a Czech poet, playwright and librettist, director at the National Theatre in Prague and author of six plays. The libretto for Rusalka was based on the Fairy Tales of Karel Jaromir Erben (1811-1870), a Czech folklorist known for his collection of 500 Folk Songs and Nursery Rhymes. Another source of inspiration was in the Fairy Tales and Legends of Bozena Nemcova (1820-1862) a popular Czech female writer. A "rusalka" is the slavic name for a mermaid, a female water spirit usually inhabiting a lake or a river. Some elements also appear in The Little Mermaid, by Hans Christian Andersen and in another fairy tale called Undine, by Friedrich de la Motte Fouque. Jaroslav Kvapil has finished the libretto before he had any contact with the composer. He has selected Antonin Dvorak after hearing his four symphonic poems inspired by folk ballads of Karel Erben.

Performance history: Rusalka premiered on 31 March 1901 at the National Theatre in Prague, with the Czech soprano Ruzena Maturova (1869-1938) in the title role and Bohumil Ptak singing the prince. It became an enormous seccess in Czech lands. The first performance outside Bohemia was in Ljubliana and the Vienna premiere was staged in 1910. The first performance in German language was produced in 1935 in Stuttgart. In London, Rusalka premiered in 1959 at Sadler's Wells Theatre with a production by English National Opera. In

the United States of America the opera premiered at the San Diego Opera in 1975, with Kathryn Bouleyn in the title role. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York Rusalka premiered in 1993 with a production from the Vienna State Opera directed by Otto Schenk. At the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg Rusalka premiered on 15 July 2009. Up to the 2017/18 season, Rusalka was performed in the world for 603 times, in 109 different productions, ranking 38 on Operabase list.

Roles: Rusalka, a water nymph (soprano), The Prince (tenor), Vodnik, the water goblin (bass), The foreign Princess (soprano), Jezibaba, a witch (mezzo-soprano), First nymph (soprano), Second nymph (soprano), Third nymph (contralto), Gamekeeper (tenor), Turnspit/Kitchen boy (soprano), Hunter (baritone), Chorus (wood nymphs, guests at the castle, the Prince's entourage)



Story: The story is a faity tale about a water nymph, Rusalka, who has fallen in love with a young Prince. By means of magic she is turned into a maid and she gets to know the human love in the arms of her Prince. But together with love, she also learns that humans are pretenders, hippocrites and deceiving snobbs. At the first ball, her Prince falls in love for a foreign Princess. Ashamed and rejected, Rusalka returns to her pond to become a deadly water spirit. When the Prince comes looking for her, she willingly gives him her deadly embrace. Ever since, boys get entangled in Rusalka's transparent water veil, when ever they bath in the lake under the Moon light.

Act 1 (A meadow by the lake. Moonlit night / In the cottage of Jezibaba)

The three nymphs are dancing and singing on the galde (Ho, ho, ho ! There's the moon above the lake ! ...Waterspirits wants to get married). The water goblin tries to catch one, to play with but fails, only to be teased (Waterspirite, ab heya, hey, try to catch us if you may !). Rusalka, the goblin's daughter, confesses that she has fallen in love with a human Prince bathing in the lake and wants to become a human (And into my arms plunges, yet I'm only a wave). Her father warns her that she will be doomed, but tells her to ask Jezibaba the witch for help (Night after night because of you, your sisters will shed tears !). Rusalka sings a beautiful song to her beloved Moon (Your light sees far away regions, you travel round the wide, wide world). As Jezibaba appears from her cottage, Rusalka asks her for help, she wants to become a human (Jezibaba, help me ! Your ancient wisdom knows everything). Jezibaba figures it out (Is that all ? Nothing more ? ...To be loved and to return love). Jezibaba offers to help in return of her transparent water veil. She also warns her that she will be mute, cursed by the undersea world and rejected should her love be wasted. While preparing the potion, Jezibaba sings her incantation (Abracadabra ! Frog is lifting in the glade ! Dragon's blood ? one droplet). The hunter and the Prince enter the scene hunting a deer (Rode a young hunter, rode and rode, he saw a white doe in the woods). Tired, the Prince cancels the hunt (The hunt just started, yet I have enough). Left alone, the Prince meets the mute, barefoot Rusalka in a gray garment of a destitute child (Beautiful vision, delightful, Are you a woman or a fairy tale ?). While her sister nymphs cry, Rusalka trembles but throws herself into his arms and the prince takes her away (Golden star shining in the night, Fairy tale mine, a, come with me !).

Act 2 (A park in the Prince's Castle)

A kitchen boy explains to his uncle, the Gamekeeper, who is the bride found by the Prince in the woods (Utters not a single word, does not have a drop of blood). The Gamekeeper suspects that there is some magic

involved (He who gets to see the dryads ... He is bound to lose his head). The castle is in preparation for new guests, and the turnspit is in hope for a better mistress (To a lovely foreign princess he began to turn his eyes !). The Prince enters the scene, followed by Rusalka and he wanders what ever may be in her heart (In vain do I search in your eyes to understand your mistery !). The foreign Princess enters the scene to introduce herself (Shall all your guests silently contemplate that happiness which you seem to enjoy ?). As the prince departs with the guest, Rusalka runs from the ball to the fishpond to meet her father, the water goblin (Father mine, watersprite, save me, save ... Another charm has captured him). Meanwhile the foreign Princess is charming the Prince (Strange fire in your eyes is burning, enchanted I listen to you). The Prince is entrapped and embraces his new love. Desperate, Rusalka throws herself into his arms, but the Prince pushes her away. Vodnik drags Rusalka into the pond mourning (Hasten into other's arms ! Rusalka's embrace you can't escape !).

Act 3 (The meadow by the lake. Night is descending)

Denied from both the worlds, Rusalka sings her sorrow (In vain do I seek my sisters, in vain long I for the world). Jezibaba comes out of her cottage to bring her comfort (Short has been your honeymooning, long will be your lamenting). Asked for help, Jezibaba answers that Rusalka will be happy again only if she kills the one who has seduced her (Only human blood can cleanse you). Rusalka throws the knife into the lake (I'll rather suffer anxietis... But he, he must, must happy be !). Jezibaba laughs on her (...you lack the strenght to spill a drop of human blood ! ...Mind you, man attains to manhood only when he has dipped his hands in blood ...you wished to be human). The nymphs are crying for their lost sister (You have left us for the world. You have fled from our games). Back at the castle, the Prince has lost his senses and the Gamekeeper with his nephew have come to Jezibaba to ask her for help (Our prince is gravely, gravely sick indeed). Vodnik emerges from the lake determined to revenge his daughter and Jezibaba vanishes to her cottage (You begetters of lies, it is he who betrayed her, subjected her to the curse !). The nymphs are again singing and dancing in the night (Watersprite, ah, heya, hey. Try to catch us if you may !). Like a madman, The Prince runs out of the woods, looking for his game (Where are you, my white doe ? Fairy tale ! My silent image !). Rusalka answers the call, with a sad voice (Now I'm but a lunar vision destined ever to torment you ...But if I give you a kiss now, you are lost for all time !). But the Prince is ready to die (Kiss me, just kiss me, give me peace ! Your kisses, I know, will redeem my sin). Rusalka gives him the kiss and he dies (Because you loved, because you were good...God have mercy on you, human soul !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Ho, ho, ho ! There's the moon above the lake ! ...Waterspirits wants to get married (The three nymphs), Watersprite, ab heya, hey, try to catch us if you may ! (The three nymphs), And into my arms plunges, yet I'm only a wave (Rusalka), Night after night because of you, your sisters will shed tears ! (Vodnik), Your light sees far away regions, you travel round the wide, wide world (Rusalka), Jezibaba, help me ! Your ancient wisdom knows everything (Rusalka), Is that all ? Nothing more ? ...To be loved and to return love (Jezibaba), Abracadabra ! Frog is lifting in the glade ! Dragon's blood ? one droplet (Jezibaba), Rode a young hunter, rode and rode, he saw a white doe in the woods (Hunter), The hunt just started, yet I have enough (The Prince), Beautiful vision, delightful, Are you a woman or a fairy tale ? (The Prince), Golden star shining in the night, Fairy tale mine, a, come with me ! (The Prince) Act 2 - Utters not a single word, does not have a drop of blood (The Turnspit), He who gets to see the dryads ... He is bound to lose his head (The Gamekeeper), To a lovely foreign princess he began to turn his eyes ! (The Turnspit), In vain do I search in your eyes to understand your mistery ! (The Prince), Shall all your guests silently contemplate that happiness which you seem to enjoy ? (The foreign Princess), Father mine, watersprite, save me, save ... Another charm has captured him (Rusalka), Strange fire in your eyes is burning, enchanted I listen to you (The foreign Princess), Hasten into other's arms ! Rusalka's embrace you can't escape ! (Vodnik). Act 3 - In vain do I seek my sisters, in vain long I for the world (Rusalka), Short has been your honeymooning, long will be your lamenting (Jezibaba), Only human blood can cleanse you (Jezibaba), I'll rather suffer anxietis... But he, he must, must happy be ! (Rusalka), ...you lack the strenght to spill a drop of human blood ! ...Mind you, man attains to manhood only when he has dipped his hands in blood ...you wished to be human (Jezibaba), You have left us for the world. You have fled from our games (The nymphs), Our prince is gravely, gravely sick indeed (The Gamekeeper), You begetters of lies, it is he who betrayed her, subjected her to the curse ! (Vodnik), Watersprite, ah, heya, hey. Try to catch us if you may ! (The three nymphs), Where are you, my white doe ? Fairy tale ! My silent image ! (The Prince), Now I'm but a lunar vision destined ever to torment you ...But if I give you a kiss now, you are lost for all time ! (Ruslaka), Kiss me, just kiss me, give me peace ! Your kisses, I know, will

redeem my sin (The Prince). Because you loved, because you were good...God have mercy on you, human soul ! (Rusalka)

Ballet: Act 1 - Dance of the wood fairies. As the curtain rises, playful forest nymphs dance alongside the Water Spirit's pond and then they run. Jezibaba's cast and incantation is also accompanied by an eerie waltz. Act 3 - The wood fairies dance once more singing: " She whom man has embraced is banned from our dance."

Recordings: 1952 Prague National Theatre (Ludmila Cervinkova - Rusalka, Beno Blachut - The Prince, Marta Krasova - Jezibaba), 1961 Prague National Theatre (Milada Subrtova - Rusalka, Ivo Zidek - The Prince, Marie Ovcacikova - Jezibaba), 1984 Czech Philharmonic (Gabriela Benackova - Rusalka, Wieslaw Ochman - The Prince, Vera Soukupova - Jezibaba), 1986 English National Opera (Eilene Hannan - Rusalka, John Treleaven - The Prince, Ann Howard - Jezibaba), 1997 Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra (Ursula Furi-Bernhard - Rusalka, Walter Copolla - The Prince, Nelly Boschova - Jezibaba), 1998 Czech Philharmonic (Renee Fleming - Rusalka, Ben Heppner - The Prince, Dolora Zajick - Jezibaba), 2002 Opera de Paris (Renee Fleming - Rusalka, Sergei Larin - The Prince, Larissa Diadkova - Jezibaba), 2007 Australian Opera (Cheryl Barker - Rusalka, Rosario La Spina - The Prince, Anne Marie Owens - Jezibaba), 2008 Cleveland Orchestra (Camilla Nylund - Rusalka, Piotr Beczala - The Prince, Brigit Remmert - Jezibaba), 2009 London Philharmonic Orchestra (Ana Maria Martinez - Rusalka, Brandon Jovanovich - The Prince, Larissa Diadkova - Jezibaba), 2014 La Monnaie Symphony and Chorus (Myrto Papatanasiu - Rusalka, Pavel Cernoch - The Prince, Renee Morloc - Jezibaba)

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33. The Love for Three Oranges

Title: The Love for Three Oranges (L'amour des trois oranges, Lyubov'k tryom apel'sinam, L'amore delle tre melerance)

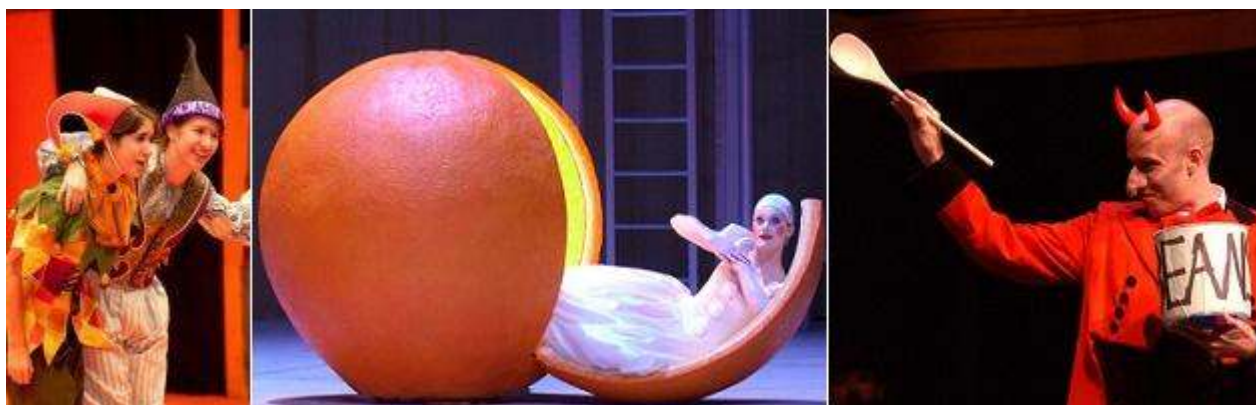
Composer: Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953). Born in Sontsovka, Donetsk Oblast in Ukraine, a rural estate of the Russian Empire, his father Sergei Alexeyevich Prokofiev was an agronomist, while his mother Maria Zhitkova was from a serf family on the estate of the Sheremetev Family, one of the wealthiest noble families in Russia. He took his first music lessons from his mother, who was a trained piano player. He produced his first piano song at the age of five. His first music teacher in composition was Reinhold Gliere. In 1904 he was admitted at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, where he studied: piano with Alexander Winkler, harmony and counterpoint with Anatoly Lyadov, conducting with Nikolai Tcherepnin and orchestration with Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov. In 1923 he married the Spanish singer Carolina Codina (1897-1989) and the fruit of their marriage were two boys: Sviatoslav and Oleg. During his life he was honoured with six Stalin Prizes, one Lenin Prize and the Order of the Red Banner of Labour. Operas: Undina (1904), The Gambler - Igrok (1915), The Love for Three Oranges (1919), The Fiery Angel (1919-27), Semyon Kotko (1939), Bethrotal in a Monastery (1941), War and Peace (1941-52), Khan Buzay (1942), The Story of a Real Man (1947), Distant Seas (1948 - unfinished). Ballets: Alla i Lolli (1914), Chout (1915), Trapeze (1924), The Steel Step (1925), The Prodigal Son (1928), On the Dnieper (1930), Romeo and Juliet (1936), Cinderella (1940-44), The Tale of the Stone Flower (1948-53). Film music: Lieutenant Kije (1934), The Queen of Spades (1936), Alexander Nevsky (1938), Lermontov (1941), Kotovsky (1942), Tonya (1942), The Partisans in the Ukrainian Steppes (1942), Ivan the Terrible (1942-45). His work also includes: 10 symphonies, 23 orchestral suites, 11 concertos for piano (6), violin (2) and cello (3), vocal, choral and orchestral music, chamber and instrumental music, numerous songs or incidental music.

Libretto: Sergei Prokofiev. The libretto was produced during his first visit in the USA in 1918, when Cleofonte Campanini, the director of the Chicago Opera Association, commissioned him to write an opera. Prokofiev based his libretto on Carlo Gozzi's play L'amore delle tre melerance, using a translation produced by Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940), a Russian theatre director and actor. The initial version of the libretto was in French, with the assistance of the Brazilian soprano Vera Janacoupoulos (1886-1955). The original story of the play was based on an Italian fairy tale, written by Giambattista Basile (1566-1632) a Neapolitan poet, courtier and fairy tale collector, author of the collection of fairy tales called Il Pentamerone. The story is about a Prince in search

of a proper bride. He finally finds one, as sensitive for water as an orange tree.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 30 December 1921 at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, conducted by Prokofiev himself. The first Russian production was staged in 1926 in Saint Petersburg and has since entered in the standard repertoire of many opera companies. In the United States the opera has not been performed again until 1949 when it was produced by the New York City Opera. In 1955, the Parisian production at Salle de la Mutualite was broadcasted by the Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Francaise. The 2005 production of the Nederlandse Opera, conducted by Stephane Deneve and directed by Laurent Pelly was recorded on DVD. In Belgrad, the opera premiered in 2011, directed by Jiri Menzel and conducted by David Porcelijn. The opera premiered at the Deutsche Opern Berlin on 9 December 2012, in French with German and English surtitles. At the Aix-en-Provence Festival of 2004 the opera was conducted by Tugan Sokholev and directed by Philippe Calvario. The London Symphony Orchestra production of 2015, conducted by Neville Marriner is present on YouTube (The Prologue). In Australia the opera was produced in 2016 at the Sydney Opera House, conducted by Anthony Legge and directed by Francesca Zambello. Up to the 2017/18 season, The Love for Three Oranges was performed in the world for 202 times, in 46 different productions, ranking 105 on Operabase list.

Roles: King of Clubs (bass), The Prince, his son (tenor), Princess Clarice, the king's niece (mezzo-soprano), Leandro, the prime minister (baritone), Truffaldino, clown (tenor), Pantalone, the king's advisor (baritone), Tchelio, a magician (bass), Fata Morgana, a witch (soprano), Princess Ninette, orange no 3 (soprano), Princess Nicolette, orange no 2 (mezzo-soprano), Princess Linette, orange no 1 (mezzo-soprano), Smeraldina, servant (mezzo-soprano), Farfarello, a demon (bass), Cook, female custodian of the three oranges (bass), Master of Ceremonies (tenor), Herald (bass), Chorus (advocates of Tragedy, Comedy, Lyric Drama and Farce, Ten Ridicules, little demons, courtiers, monsters, guards, servants, soldiers)



Story: A typical performance in the Commedia dell'arte tradition, spiced with numerous foolish or witty jokes and pantomime, under the strict supervision of a trained Harlequin. All the characters are exaggerated and everything revolves around the Lovers (Innamorati), in some regard. The young Prince is now at the proper age to discover the wonders of Nature. Adults at his Court are willing to play a masquerade, in order to free the young Prince from his black melancholy and hypochondry. By the use of some serious magic, he finds his Princess in the kitchen, among the servants. Everyone else, must work the magic to transform the rat into a real princess. All's well that ends well !

Prologue (before the curtain)

Advocates for Tragedy, Comedy, Lyric Drama and Farce prepare the public for what is about to come (Ultimate tragedy ! ... Comedy ! Comedy ! ...Love story ! ...Jokes ! Jokes !).

Act 1 (King of Clubs's Palace)

The King is listening for the medical report about his son's health (Pain in the liver, pain in the nose, pain in the neck ...black melancholy). It is a desperate case of hypochondria that only laughter can cure. Pantalone, the king adviser, comes with the solution (Why all the sorrow, why not some masquerade balls and games ?). The king calls his Prime Minister Leandro to command the masquerade and bacchanales. Scene 2 - Tchelio, the

magician, plays cards with Fata Morgana the witch, to the delight of some little demons. For three times in row, Tchelio plays the King of Clubs and Fata Morgana wins with the King of Spades. Scene 3 - Clarice plots with Leandro, the Prime Minister a possible succession to the throne (Do not forget, Leandro, if the Prince dies I follow to the throne and I will marry you). The advocates for Tragedy are delighted (Sorrow ! Mourning ! Assassination !). Smeraldina, has heard the conversation and reveals that she is in the service of Fata Morgana and that her Mistress is willing help them both.

Act 2 (The main bedroom of the hypochondriac Prince)

The Prince is bored with Truffaldino's jokes and funny stories (Ah ! Ah ! Ah ! Help me ! Help me ! I'm dying ! I'm dying !). Scene 2 - Fata Morgana enters the scene to introduce herself as the Queen of Hypochondria, but Truffaldino mocks her dirty clothes and knocks her down, revealing her underpants (Out ! Out ! Go away you dirt witch !). As the prince laughs from his heart, he is declared cured, but Fata Morgana is outraged and curses him for three times (You will fall in love for the three oranges ! ...and suffer the dishonour and tears ! Find them ! Find them !). Under the spell, the Prince keeps repeating (The three oranges ! The three oranges !). As the King of Clubs enters the scene, The Prince announces that he has fallen in love for the three oranges and must depart at once to find them.

Act 3 (A deserted land / The Castle of Creonta)

Tchelio is drawing magical circles to invoke Farfarello, the demon (Farfarello ! Farfarello !). Farfarello's presence is required in Hell, but he tells Tchelio to look for the three oranges at the Castle of Creonta. He also reveals that the oranges are guarded by a giant female Cook, who eventually may be charmed with a magic ribbon (Here is the magic ribbon, I can not guarantee it will work). Also, he underlines that the three oranges will require a lot of water. Scene 2 - Arrived at the castle, The Prince and Truffaldino the clown find the three oranges in the kitchen. While the Cook is probing the magic ribbon they get away with the oranges. Scene 3 - Back in the desert, Truffaldino is dying of thirst (How can you sleep with such a terrible thirst ?). Eager to try an orange the Prince cuts her with his sword. Princess Linetta reveals herself and asks for water (Give me something to drink, or I will die of thirst). The Prince cuts the second orange and Princess Nicolette reveals herself with the same request (Give me something to drink, or I will die of thirst). Without a drop of water, both princess die. From the third orange Princess Ninetta reveals herself and the scenario is repeated, but the servants bring a bucket of water and the princess is saved (Thank you, my prince, you have saved my life). Princess Ninette decides to wait there, until the Prince brings her a proper dress and his Father's approval for marriage (Go tell your Father and bring me proper clothes). By the use of a magic pin, Smeraldina transforms Ninette into a giant rat and replaces her. Late in the night, the Prince returns with courtiers and guards to escort his princess to his palace.

Act 4 (King of Clubs's Palace)

Tchelio and Fata Morgana argue about their right to exert their magic powers upon the Royal Family (Oh ! Disgusting witch, Filthy creature ! Ah, pompous magician, Narcissistic, vain magician !). Tchelio disagrees with the new Princess, but Fata Morgana reminds him that he has lost in the game of cards the fate of his proteges. (Sending a Moorish slave, that's really low ! ...They belong to me ! Trying to save them from me is a robbery ! A robbery ! A robbery !). Scene 2 - As the baldachin is lowered, the throne hall is revealed with the King's throne and two other thrones for the Prince and his Princess. On the Princesses throne sits a giant rat, it is Ninette transformed into a rat (A rat ! Oh ! A rat ! A rat !). By the use of some magic spells, Tchelio transforms the rat back into a princess (Become a Princess ! Obey my spell !). Smeraldina is revealed as a traitor, accomplice of Prime Minister Leander. The King of Clubs administers his Justice (This is my sentence: La Mora Smeraldina, Prime Minister Leandro and my niece Clarisa, they'll be hanged). Smeraldina flees, followed by Clarice and Leandro, with the guards running around the scene after them. Fata Morgana knocks down the tower door and the three jump in a hole of smoke and flames, with Fata Morgana following them (Curse ! Fast ! Come to me ! Come to my arms !). The Master of Ceremonies, Truffaldino, Pantalone and courtiers, they all hail their new Princess (Long live the King, the Prince and the Princess !).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - Ultimate tragedy ! ... Comedy ! Comedy ! ...Love story ! ...Jokes ! Jokes ! (Advocates). Act 1 - Pain in the liver, pain in the nose, pain in the neck ...black melancholy (The Doctors), Why all the sorrow, why not some mask and dancing balls with games ? (Pantalone), Do not forget,

Leandro, if the Prince dies I follow to the throne and I will marry you (Clarice), Sorrow ! Mourning ! Assassination ! (The advocates). Act 2 - Ah ! Ah ! Ah ! Help me ! Help me ! I'm dying ! I'm dying ! (The Prince), Out ! Out ! Go away you dirth witch ! (Truffaldino), You will fall in love for the three oranges ! ...and suffer the dishonour and tears ! Find them ! Find them ! (Fata Morgana), The three oranges ! The three oranges ! (The Prince) Act 3 - Farfarello ! Farfarello ! (Tchelio), Here is the magic ribbon, I can not guarantee it will work (Tchelio), How can you sleep with such a terrible thirst ? (Truffaldino), Give me something to drink, or I will die of thirst (Princess Linette), Give me something to drink, or I will die of thirst (Princess Nicolette). Go tell your Father and bring me proper clothes (Princess Ninette). Act 4 - Oh ! Disgusting witch, Filthy creature ! Ah, pompous magician, Narcissistic, vain magician ! (Tchelio, Fata Morgana), Sending a Moorish slave, that's really low ! ...They belong to me ! Trying to seve them from me is a robbery ! A robbery ! A robbery ! (Tchelio, Fata Morgana), A rat ! Oh ! A rat ! A rat ! (Chorus), Become a Princess ! Obey my spell ! (Tchelio), This is my sentence: La Mora Smeraldina, Prime Minister Leandro and my nice Clarisa, they'll be hanged (The King of Clubs), Curse ! Fast ! Come to me ! Come to my arms ! (Fata Morgana), Long live the King, the Prince and the Princess ! (Chorus).

Ballet: Act 1 - Scene 2 - The little demons dance every time Fata Morgana wins.

Recordings: Audio discs: 1989 Lyons Opera Orchestra (Jean-Luc Viala - The Prince, Gregory Reinhart - Tchelio, Michele Lagrange - Fata Morgana), 1998 Kirov Theater Orchestra and Chorus (Yevgeny Akimov - The Prince, Vladimir Vaneyev - Tchelio, Larissa Schevchenko - Fata Morgana), 2005 Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra (John MacMaster - The Prince, Jud Arthur - Tchelio, Elisabeth Withehouse - Fata Morgana)
Recordings: 1998 National Symphony Orchestra (Leonard Slatkin - Conductor), 1991 Orchestre National de France (Lorin Maazel - Conductor), 1989 Royal Scottish National Orchestra (Jarvi Neeme - Conductor)

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34. Akhnaten

Title: Akhnaten (Echnaton, Amenhotep)

Composer: Philip Glass (born 1937 -). Born in Baltimore, Maryland, his father Benjamin Charles Glass owned a record store, while his mother Ida Gouline was a librarian. As a child, he first studied the flute at the university-preparatory school of the Peabody Institute. At the age of 15 he entered an accelerated college program at the University of Chicago, where he studied mathematics and philosophy. He continued his musical training at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, where he studied composition with Vincent Persichetti and William Bergsma. In 1960 he also studied with Darius Milhaud at the summer school of the Aspen Music Festival and composed a violin concerto. In 1964 he received a Fulbright Scholarship and he studied composition in Paris with Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979). In 1965 he married Joanne Akalaitis (born 1937) a theatre director and writer and the fruit of their marriage were two children, Zachary and Juliet. After their divorce in 1980, he remarried for three times to produce two more children. Operas: Einstein on the Beach (1976), Satyagraha (1979), Akhnaten (1983), The Civil Wars (1984), The Making of the Representative for Planet 8 (1986), The Fall of the House of Usher (1988), The Voyage (1990), White Raven (1991), The marriages between zones three, four and five (1997), Galileo Galilei (2002), Waiting for the Barbarians (2005), Appomattox (2007), Kepler (2009), The Perfect American (2011), The Lost (2013). His musical work also includes: musical theatre works, 11 symphonies, 11 concertos, 7 string quartets, various chamber music and film scores. Three of his film scores have been nominated for Academy Awards: Kundun (1997), The Truman Show (1998), The Hours (2002).

Libretto: Philip Glass and Shalom Goldman. Shalom Goldman is Professor of Religion at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. He is employed as Professor of Hebrew and Middle Eastern Studies and also in Hebrew and Comparative Literature, with 6 books and numerous articles published. Robert Israel, Richard Riddell and Jerome Robbins have also contributed to the libretto with their expertise in scenography, design and

choreography. The text was taken from a poem of Amenhotep himself, the "Book of the Dead" and from some original Egyptian texts of the period, including letters and decrees from the Amarna period (Eighteenth Dynasty). The Book of the Dead is a funerary text used from the beginning of the New Kingdom (1550 BC) to around 50 BC. The Book is made up of 192 spells and their accompanying illustrations, to serve for a range of purposes: to give the deceased mystical knowledge in the afterlife, to reunite him with the gods, to give the deceased control over the world around him, to protect him from hostile forces, also to serve him in the final judgement of the weighing of the Heart. The Great Hymn to the Sun is attributed to Pharaoh Akhenaten himself, who radically changed traditional forms of Egyptian religion.

Performance history: The opera was commissioned by Württembergische Staatstheater in Stuttgart and had its world premiere on 24 March 1984 at the Stuttgart State Theatre under the German title Echnaton. The German director Achim Freyer staged the opera in an abstract style with highly ritualistic movements. The American premiere, directed by David Freeman, was staged on 12 October 1984, at the Houston Grand Opera. On 13 November 2016, the Los Angeles LA Opera mounted a superb Phelim McDermott's production of the opera. Akhaten was recently confirmed for the Metropolitan Opera in New York, to be produced in 2019. The United Kingdom premiere took place on 17 June 1985 at the London Coliseum produced by English National Opera. On 19 August 2014, the State Opera of South Australia in Adelaide has teamed with Leigh Warren Dancers to produce a trilogy of Philip Glass's portrait operas, beginning with Akhnaten. A new production in Germany, directed by Laura Scozzi, premiered at the Theater Bonn on 11 March 2018. Up to the 2017/18 season, Akhnaten was performed in the world for 60 times, in 11 different productions, ranking 239 on Operabase list.

Roles: Akhnaten, the Pharaoh (countertenor), Nefertiti, his wife (contralto), Queen Tye, his mother (soprano), Horemhab, his General (baritone), High Priest of Amon (tenor), Aye, father of Nefertiti (bass), Daughters of Akhnaten (3 sopranos, 3 contraltos), Amenhotep III (spoken), The Scribe (narrator), Young Tutankhamun (non-speaking), Two sisters (non-speaking), Chorus (Priests and people of Egypt)



Story: This opera is dedicated to the life and deeds of Pharaoh Akhnaten (Amenhotep IV) who abandoned the traditional Egyptian polytheism favouring a monotheistic cult of Aten, the disk of the sun and an aspect of the god Ra. He established his capital city in the newly built ensemble of Akhetaten (Amarna), on the East bank of the river Nile, some 312 Km South of Cairo and 400 km North of Luxor. Every word used in the libretto comes from original documents, inscriptions and stelae, producing a strong effect of authenticity. Also, the original libretto is in the ancient Egyptian language, aiming to preserve the sound and the musical resonance of the words sung from the Book of Dead. Still, in many productions the text was translated in the native language of the public, unprepared for too much Egyptian authenticity. Preparations for the eternal life of immortal souls may originate in a good subject of meditation, regardless the culture, language or geographic location.

Act 1 (In the city of Thebes. Year 1 of Akhnaten's Reign. Funeral of Amenhotep III.)

Prelude - The Scribe reads from the Pyramid Tablets (Clouds darken the sky The stars rain down ...This king flies away from you). Scene 1 - The funeral cortege enters the scene singing in Egyptian from the Book of the Dead (You are alive, you are not dead). Scene 2 - The Coronation of Akhnaten sung by the High Priest, Horemhab the General and Queen Aye. The Scribe reads the names and titles of the new Pharaoh (Live the

Horus...King of Upper and Lower Egypt). Scene 3 - The Pharaoh, his wife Nefertiti and his mother Aye salute the people from the Imperial Balcony (You Holy Creator of all things).

Act 2 (In the City of Thebes. Years 5 to 15 of Akhnaten's Reign.)

In the temple of Amon, the High Priest sings a pray (Oh ! Amon, creator of all things !). The Pharaoh and his soldiers attack and destroy the temple. Scene 2 - Akhnaten and Nefertiti sing in duet, a love poem, first recited by the Scribe (Give me the sweet breath of your lips ...Tell me the numbers of eternity for I shall never die).

Scene 3 - The Scribe reads the stelae from the foundation of Akhnaten's new city (You behold the City of the Horizon of the Aten). Dance to celebrate the inauguration of the new city. Scene 4 - The Pharaoh sings the Hymn to the Aten, the new and unique god (Thou dost appear beautiful on the horizon of heaven).

Act 3 (In the City of Thebe. Year 17 of Akhnaten's Reign. Present days.)

The Pharaoh sings a wordless song together with his wife and six daughters. Meanwhile, the Scribe reads to the crowds the letters that the Syrian Princes has sent to Pharaoh Akhnaten (I have written repeatedly for troops). Without military support, her land has been lost to invaders. Scene 2 - Horemhab, Aye and the High Priest are unable to stop a mob of shouting people, bursting through the doors, overwhelming Akhnaten and his family (But now Apiru take the king's cities, there is no Regent left for the King, my lord, they are all lost). Scene 3 - The Scribe appears to announce the end of Akhnaten's Reign (The sun of him who knew thee not has set, O Amon, but as for him who knows thee, He shines.). Scene 4 - In present days, the Scribe reads from a guide for several groups of tourists visiting Amarna (There is nothing left of this glorious city of temples and places ...but several stelae scattered around the plain). Epilogue - The Ghosts of Akhnaten and his entourage sing a wordless song and march in a funeral procession to the heavenly land of Ra.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Clouds darken the sky The stars rain down ...This king flies away from you (Scribe), You are alive, you are not dead (Chorus), Live the Horus...King of Upper and Lower Egypt (Scribe), You Holy Creator of all things (Akhnaten, Nefertiti, Aye). Act 2 - Oh ! Amon, creator of all things ! (High Priest), Give me the sweet breath of your lips ...Tell me the numbers of eternity for I shall never die (Akhnaten, Nefertiti), You behold the City of the Horizon of the Aten (Scribe), Thou dost appear beautiful on the horizon of heaven (Akhnaten). Act 3 - I have written repeatedly for troops (Scribe), But now Apiru take the king's cities, there is no Regent left for the King, my lord, they are all lost (High Priest, Ay, Horemhab, Chorus), The sun of him who knew thee not has set, O Amon, but as for him who knows thee, He shines. (Scribe), There is nothing left of this glorious city of temples and places ...but several stelae scattered around the plain (Scribe)

Ballet: Act 2 - Scene 3 - Akhnaten and the principal members of his entourage perform a ritual dance to celebrate the inauguration of the city of Akhetaten. Musicians, triangle instruments, wood blocks and tambourines appear on the stage with the dancers.

Recordings: 1984 Stuttgart State Opera, Orchestra and Chorus (Paul Esswood - Akhnaten, Milagro Vargas - Nefertiti, Maria Husmann - Queen Tye, Hildegard Wensch - The Scribe), 1985 English National Opera London (Christopher Robson - Akhnaten, Sally Burgess - Nefertiti, Marie Angel - Queen Tye, George Harewood - The Scribe), 1987 Columbia Broadcast System (Paul Esswood - Akhnaten, Milargo Vargas - Nefertiti, Melinda Lieberman - Queen Tye, David Warrilow - The Scribe), 2004 Oakland Opera Theater (Paul Flight - Akhnaten, Darla Wigginton - Nefertiti, Angela Dean-Baham - Queen Tye), 2016 English National Opera London (Anthony Roth Costanzo - Akhnaten, Emma Carrington - Nefertiti, Rebecca Bottone - Queen Tye, Zachary James - The Scribe), 2016 LA Opera Los Angeles (Anthony Roth Costanzo - Akhnaten, J'Nai Bridges - Nefertiti, Stacey Tappan - Queen Tye, Zachary James - The Scribe), 2018 Theater Bonn (Benno Schachtner - Akhnaten, Susanne Blattert - Nefertiti, Marie Heeschen - Queen Tye).

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35. Montezuma

Title: Montezuma

Composer: Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741). Born in Venice, his father Giovanni Battista Vivaldi was a barber and a professional violinist, while his mother was Camilla Calicchio. He enjoyed the presence of eight siblings, four boys and four girls. He learned to play the violin with his father. His first teacher in composition was Giovanni Legranzi, president of the Sovvegno dei musicisti di Santa Cecilia, an association of musicians in Venice. At the age of 15 he began studying to become a priest and ten years later he was ordained at the Ospedale della Pieta. Vivaldi spent his next 30 years of life at the orphanage where he became maestro di violino, then maestro di concerti and where he composed most of his major works. His first opera, *Ottone in villa*, was performed in Venice in 1713 and the following year he became impresario of the Teatro San Angelo. In between 1717 and 1721 Vivaldi was offered the position as Maestro di Cappella at the court of Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt, governor of Mantua. In 1728 the Holy Roman Emperor Charles offered Vivaldi the title of Knight, a gold medal and an invitation to Vienna, where he spent his last years of life. Operas: *Ottone in villa* (1713), *Orlando finto pazzo* (1714), *Nerone fatto Cesare* (1715), *Arsilda, regina di Ponto* (1716), *L'incoronazione di Dario* (1717), *Artabano, re dei Parti* (1718), *Scanderberg* (1718), *Tito Manlio* (1719), *La verita in cimento* (1720), *La Silvia* (1721), *Ercole su'l Termodonte* (1723), *Giustino* (1724), *La virtu trionfante* (1724), *Cunegonda* (1726), *Dorilla in Tempe* (1726), *Farnace* (1727), *Orlando furioso* (1727), *Atenaide* (1728), *Alvilda regina de'Goti* (1731), *Semiramide* (1731), *La fida ninfa* (1732), *Montezuma* (1733), *L'Olimpiade* (1734), *Il Tamerlano* (1735), *Griselda* (1735), *Aristide* (1735), *Catone in Utica* (1737), *L'oracolo in Messenia* (1737), *Rosmira* (1738), *Feraspe* (1739). His musical work also includes more than 300 concertos, 20 symphonies, 90 sonatas and other vocal or instrumental works, his best known being a series of violin concertos (*Four Seasons*).

Libretto: Alvise Giusti (1709-1766). Alvise Giusti was an Italian lawyer, poet and librettist who worked as an official at the Habsbourg court in Milan. The libretto is very loosely based on the real life of the Aztec ruler Montezuma, ruler of Tenochtitlan, reigning from 1502 to 1520. During his reign the first contact between Indigens and Europeans took place and he was killed during the initial stages of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. During Montezuma's reign, the Aztec Empire reached its greatest size. A genuine description of Montezuma comes from the letters of Hernan Cortez, who describes his encounter with the ruler. Some Aztec stories claim that the Aztecs believed Cortez to be the returned god Quetzalcoatl (The Feathered Serpent), the god of wind, air and learning, wearing a wind breastplate made of a conch shell. Hernan Cortez lived as a guest for several months at Montezuma's palace. A daughter of Montezuma, known as Isabel Montezuma was given a large estate by Hernan Cortez who also fathered her child Leonor Cortez Montezuma.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 14 November 1733 at the Teatro Sant'Angelo in Venice with the role of Mitrena sung by mezzo-soprano Anna Giraud, a prima donna and a protegee of Antonio Vivaldi. The title role was sung by the German bass Massimiliano Miler. The choreographer at the premiere was Giovanni Gallo and the sets were designed by Antonio Mauro. In the last century, the musical score was considered to be lost, until it was discovered in the music library of the Sing Akademie zu Berlin. A concert version of the opera was performed on 11 June 2005 in the Concert Hall De Doelen in Rotterdam and on 18 July 2005 a version of the opera was staged by the Opera Braga Festival in Italy, both conducted by Federico Maria Sardelli. Its first fully staged performance in modern times took place in Dusseldorf, on 21 September 2005 as part of the Altstadtherbst festival. The American premiere was held on 28 March 2009 in Long Beach California with musical accompaniment by Musica Angelica, directed by David Schweizer and conducted by Andreas Mitisek. In Canada, the opera premiered on 21 June 2013 at Theatre St-James in Montreal staged by Ensemble Caprice as part of the musique Montreal Baroque. Up to the 2017/18 season, Montezuma was performed in the world for 16 times, in 3 different productions, ranking 634 on Operabase list.

Roles: Montezuma, Emperor of Mexico (bass-baritone), Mitrena, his wife (contralto), Teutile, his daughter (soprano), Fernando, General for the Spanish armies (soprano castrato), Ramiro, his younger brother (mezzo soprano en travesti), Asprano, General of the Mexicans (soprano castrato), Chorus (spanish and mexican soldiers)



Story: One of the earliest opera to be based on a subject from the Americas, Montezuma evinces sympathy for the Mexican emperor and his Queen Mitrena. Love and war, honor and glory, royal duty and pride are the six piston engine for a carousel of stupefying events that accompanied the clash between two worlds and two civilizations. Alternating recitatives and arias with theatrical movements and effects were ahead of the time in 1733 when the performance premiered in a world still dominated by chamber music, when music was supposed to be destined only for the most distinguished ears. The plot is easy. Hernando Cortez conquers the Empire of Mexico ruled by Montezuma, but he sails back home leaving his brother and soldiers to marry the indigenous girls, giving birth to a new breed of people and a new Mexican Empire.

Act 1 (Mexico's lagoon that separates the Imperial Aztec Palace and the Spanish camp)

Montezuma mourns his loss of power and honor (Eternal days you now have come ! All the splendor of mexicans lost in one day). His wife Mitrena asks him to hold his spirit high as long as he lives (Restrain yourself, my dear husband, hold your funeral words). Scene 2 - Teutile reports that the Spanish invaders are looking for him and Montezuma gives her a knife to kill herself before becoming a prisoner (Don't be afraid, the wounds of destiny can be prevailed by death). Scene 3 - Alone with her mother, Teutile worries if Ramoro, her Spanish lover has betrayed her. Mitrena tells her that he is not a traitor, but she must obey her father's order (Before beeing your lover he is his contry's sun ...Now you must learn to die with honor). Scene 4 - Teutile mourns her fate when Fernando enters the scene with his soldiers and secures her as prisoner (The fate of Mexico is in my hands ...That's why I have to take you hostage !). From the lagoon Montezuma wounds Fernando with an arrow and vanishes. Scene 5 - Fernando orders his brother Ramiro to find and punish his oponent (Punish the traitor that shot the arrow). Scene 6 - Alone with Ramiro Teutile accuses him and demands from him to withdraw his soldiers (For me our troops have left their weapons ...You used me to reach the glory ...May the power of your weapons cease). As he refuses, she sings a sad aria (Barbarian ! I don't feel for you, No sorrow, and no love !). Scene 7 -Torn between duty and love, Ramiro chooses duty (In my heart they nest all the torments and all the pains). Scene 8 - Dressed as a Spanish soldier, Montezuma plans to kill Teutile who was too weak to kill herself (Here is my daughter ...who fears more to death than to slavery, be it the object of my vengeance). Scene 9 - Montezuma finds Teutile alone with Ramiro and raises his sword to kill her, but he is arrested by Ramiro. As Fernando is approaching, Ramires hides Montezuma behind a door. Scene 10 - Fernando orders his brother to find out where the Mexicans are (I have seen hundreds of boats furrow the waves). Scene 11 - Fernando suspects that Ramiro is not fair to him, but Teutile proves him wrong. Scene 12 - Ahead of a great fleet, Mitrena wishes to negotiate peace with Fernando. Scene 13 - Mitrena arrives guarded by Asprano the Mexican General (As you can see, I have not come alone as if I were a commener). Scene 14 - Montezuma rushes out with a sword but he is disarmed by Ramiro and arrested (You must learn to abide the victor's orders). Scene 15 - Recital of Montezuma mourning his fate (If he decides that I must die, beloved wife, fear not). Scene 16 - In return, Mitrena responds that she is willing to sacrifice a thousand innocent victims (We can die, we can fall, but our fate will be crowned for glory and honor). Scene 17 - Recital of Asprano, in command of two hundred canoes (These terrible events have strengthened my devotion, trust and love).

Act 2 (An audience room in the Spanish camp quarters)

Teutile is worried for both her father and Ramioro, while Asprano is raising her spirit (All hope is in vain ...

Be patient Teutile ...These stars fierce and bloody, in the future they will shine dim). Scene 2 - Fernando and Teutile have an argument (I don't take orders from you ... You will live to repent the hardness of your heart). Scene 3 - Ramiro disagrees with his brother's decision to put Montezuma in chains, like a commoner (I wish for the whole world to admire your piety and your courage). Scene 4 - Mitrena and Fernando have a final confrontation seeking for peace (A mysterious demigod, coming by the Infinite Sea, you'll disembark in this world ...If for some reason I declare war I do not waste the chance to increase my glory). Scene 5 - Fernando frees Montezuma from his chains in order to face him in a single duel (Blood, blood ! My sword, my anger and my honor are waiting for you !). Scene 6 - Both Ramiro and Asprano hail the probable victory of their leader. Scene 7 - Fernando commands his troops to prepare for combat and mocks on Asprano (You really think you are a warrior). Scene 8 - Filled with anger, Asprano responds (The enemy of this Kingdom ...they do not know the law). Scene 9 - Fernando is winning the duel, but he came close to the Mexican soldiers and is surrounded and captured. The Spanish soldiers fight with the Mexican warriors. Scene 10 - Teutile begs Ramiro to leave Mexico and save his life, but Ramiro is prone to his duty: the revenge, honor, glory and the throne (In the midst of the storm the boat is shaken ...but sails well). Scene 11 - Desperate, Teutile is willing to throw herself into the burning canoes. Scene 12 - Mitrena restrains her, since her royal destiny demands the happiness of seeing the revenge. Scene 13 - Asprano brings a terrible news from the Temple: only sacrificing Teutile and a Spanish warrior to their Gods can save the Empire (Oh ! look to my sorrow, oh, gods ! Oh, beloved mother !). Scene 14 - Recital of Mitrena for the revenge of her daughter's fate. She orders for the tower in which Fernando is imprisoned to be set on fire (My daughter and my spouse, I grieve and pain).

Act 3 (Part of the city with a tower. In the Temple of Uccilibos. Large square in the city of Mexico.)

Ramiro and his soldiers free Fernando and heads for the temple of the Mexican gods (The mighty Eagle sometimes falls prey). Scene 2 - Montezuma comes alone and discovers that Fernando has escaped. Ramiro and his soldiers follow him to close the door and clear all the traces (Even in the midst of joy my soul is in pain).

Scene 3 - Asprano arrives with his soldiers and set the tower on fire, finding too late that Fernando has been replaced with Montezuma (Wrong ! ...Has disappeared ...gods ! ...This is what deception ?). Scene 4 - From the distance, Mitrena looks at the fire announcing that Fernando is dead (During the warm season the sky threatens). Scene 5 - In the Temple of Uccilibos Teutile is guarded to the altar for sacrifices (Eternal Gods, just take the tears, the agony of my sad soul don't worry). Scene 6 - Asprano brings the news that it was Montezuma not Fernando in the burning tower. Scene 7 - Ramiro and his soldiers enters the scene in time to save Teutile. Scene 8 - Asprano fears that killing the Emperor is a sacrilege and the temple will collapse in an Earth Quake. Scene 9 - In her despair, Mitrena decides to kill herself, when Montezuma appears. He has escaped from the tower by a secret passage only known to him (Let the sky hide its rays ...The vengeance first and then death). Scene 10 - Montezuma mourns his fate (Where is my daughter ? Where is my throne ? I'm no longer a father, I'm no longer a King). Scene 11 - The people celebrate Fernando's victory (Long live the Spanish Monarch !). Montezuma and Mitrena attack the Spanish brothers but are disarmed by Asprano and Teutile. Instead of killing them, Fernando asks them to rule the country as his Regents and to bless Ramiro's marriage with Teutile. After debating, Montezuma and his wife give their consent (Their God reveals great wisdom, Mexico falls, is true, but is reborn again).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Eternal days you now have come ! All the splendor of Mexicans lost in one day (Montezuma), Restrain yourself, my dear husband, hold your funeral words (Mitrena), Don't be afraid, the wounds of destiny can be prevailed by death (Montezuma), Before being your lover he is his country's sun ...Now you must learn to die with honor (Mitrena), The fate of Mexico is in my hands ...That's why I have to take you hostage ! (Fernando), Punish the traitor that shot the arrow (Fernando), Barbarian ! I don't feel for you, No sorrow, and no love ! (Teutile), In my heart they nest all the torments and all the pains (Ramiro), Here is my daughter ...who fears more to death than to slavery, be it the object of my vengeance (Montezuma), I have seen hundreds of boats furrow the waves (Fernando), As you can see, I have not come alone as if I were a commoner (Mitrena), You must learn to abide the victor's orders (Fernando), If he decides that I must die, beloved wife, fear not (Montezuma), We can die, we can fall, but our fate will be crowned for glory and honor (Mitrena), These terrible events have strengthened my devotion, trust and love (Asprano)

Act 2 - All hope is in vain ... Be patient Teutile ...These stars fierce and bloody, in the future they will shine

dim (Teutile, Asprano), I don't take orders from you ... You will live to repent the hardness of your heart (Fernando, Teutile), I wish for the whole world to admire your piety and your courage (Ramiro), A mysterious demigod, coming by the Infinite Sea, you'll disembark in this world ...If for some reason I declare war I do not waste the chance to increase my glory (Mitrena, Fernando), Blood, blood ! My sword, my anger and my honor are waiting for you ! (Montezuma, Fernando), You really think you are a warrior (Fernando), The enemy of this Kingdom ...they do not know the law (Asprano), In the midst of the storm the boat is shaken ...but sails well (Ramiro), Oh ! look to my sorrow, oh, gods ! Oh, beloved mother ! (Teutile), My daughter and my spouse, I grieve and pain (Mitrena)

Act 3 - The mighty Eagle sometimes falls prey (Fernando), Even in the midst of joy my soul is in pain (Ramiro), Wrong ! ...Has disappeared ...gods ! ...This is what deception ? (Asprano), During the warm season the sky threatens (Mitrena), Eternal Gods, just take the tears, the agony of my sad soul don't worry (Teutile), Let the sky hide its rays ...The vengeance first and then death (Mitrena, Montezuma), Where is my daughter ? Where is my throne ? I'm no longer a father, I'm no longer a King (Montezuma), Long live the Spanish Monarch ! (Chorus), Their God reveals great wisdom, Mexico falls, is true, but is reborn again (Montezuma).

Ballet: -

Recordings: 2005 Deutsche Gramophon (Alan Curtis - Conductor, Vito Priante - Montezuma, Marijana Mijanovic - Mitrena, Roberta Invernizzi - Teutile, Romina Basso - Ramiro, Maite Beaumont - Fernando, Inga Kalna - Asprano)

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36. Medea

Title: Medea (Medee)

Composer: Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842). Born in Florence Italy, his father Bartolomeo Cherubini was a master of the harpsichord and an ensembe leader. He began his instruction in music at the age of six, with his father. By the time he was 13 he had composed several religious works and had his first opera staged in Fiesole. In 1780 he was awarded a scholarship by the Grand Duke of Tuscany to study in Bologna and Milan, where he studied composition with Giuseppe Sarti (1729-1802). In 1785 he traveled to Paris to be presented to Queen Marie Antoinette and received a commision to write Demophoon, a tragedie lyrique with a French libretto. He spent the rest of his life in France where he was initiated into the Masonic Lodge of Grand Orient de France. In 1794 he married Anne Cecile Tourette (1773-1864) and the fruit of their marriage were three children. In 1822 he was nominated director of the Conservatory in Paris where he wrote several treaties, including Cours de contrepoint et de fugue. In 1841 he was made Commandeur de la Legion d'honneur, the first musician to receive that title. Operas: Amore artigiano (1773), Il Quinto Fabio (1779), Armida abbandonata (1782), Adriano in Siria (1782), Olimpiade (1783), L'Allessandro nelle Indie (1784), Demetrio (1785), Ifigenia in Aulide (1788), Demophoon (1788), Lodoiska (1791), Le congers de rois (1794), Medea (1797), Les deux journees (1800), Epicure (1800), Pimmalione (1809), Le crescendo (1810), Blanche de Provence (1821), La marquise de Brinvilliers (1831), Ali Baba ou le quarante voloeurs (1833). His musical work also includes chamber and orchestral music, masses and sections of the mass.

Libretto: Francois Benoit Hoffman (1760-1828). Francois Hoffmann was a French playwright and critic, best known for his librettos such as: Phedre for Jean Baptiste Lemoyne, Adrien, Bion, Euphrosine, Stratonice and Ariodant for Etienne Mehul, Grimaldi and La mort d'Abel for Rodolphe Kreuzer and Medea for Luigi Cherubini. The story was based on Euripides tragedy and Pierre Corneille's play. Euripide's tragedy was first performed in 431 BC, as part of the City Dionysia festival in Athens but the audience din not react favorably. Still the tragedy made epoch and was readapted by numerous tragedians such as: Quintus Ennius, Lucius Accius, Ovidius Naso, Seneca the Younger. In 1635 Medea was Pierre Corneille's first tragedy also recived

resentful by the audience and resulting in Corneille's expulsion from the group of authors protected by Cardinal Armand de Richelieu. In modern times, there are numerous modern productions and adaptations of the story for opera, theatre and film. On the original score, Cherubini has blacked out the final aria, but in 2013 scientists from the University of Manchester and Stanford University have used X-ray equipment to restore the notes.

Performance history: The opera was premiered on 13 March 1797 at the Theatre Feydeau in Paris with an unenthusiastic reception. The first German translation by Karl Alexander Herklots premiered in Berlin on 17 February 1800, followed by a Georg Friedrich Treitschke translation premiered in Vienna on 6 November 1802. The United Kingdom premiere was given in Italian at Her Majesty's Theatre on 6 June 1865 with the original argument of the opera written by F.B. Hoffman and an English translation of the musical score. The Italian premiere at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan took place on 30 December 1909 with a version of the libretto translated by Carlo Zangarini. The most famous revival in the 20-th century was in 1953 in Florence with Maria Callas in the title role, conducted by Vittorio Gui. Maria Callas performed the role for several years with notable productions by: Dallas Opera (1958), Royal Opera House in London (1959), Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus and Greek National Opera (1961), La Scala (1961-62). Revivals of the French version were given at The Royal Opera House on 6 November 1989 and at the Valle d'Itria Festival in Italy on 4 August 1995. Up to the 2017/18 season, Medea was performed in the world for 141 times, in 37 different productions, ranking 133 on Operabase list.

Roles: Medea, Jason's divorced wife (soprano), Neris, her Attendant (soprano), Jason, chief of the Argonauts (tenor), Creon, King of Corinth (bass), Dirce, his daughter (soprano), Lamia and Clyte, two Attendants of Dirce (sopranos), Captain of the Guard (speaking role), The two children of Medea (silent roles), Chorus (servants of Dirce, Argonauts, priests, warriors, people of Corinth)



Story: In the past, Jason and his crew of Argonauts sailed to the kingdom Colchis to find the Golden Fleece. Medea, the king's daughter, has fallen in love with Jason and she has used her knowledge of herbs, enchantments and incantations to deliver him from all the dangers. Jason vowed eternal fidelity to her in the Temple of Hecate and they both sailed for Europe with the Golden Fleece. Her brother Absyrtus was sent to pursue the fugitives but Medea killed him and they fled to Corinth, where they lived in perfect union for ten years giving birth to two boys. In the times of the play, Dirce the daughter of the local King Creon has fallen in love for Jason and Medea was divorced in order to enable Jason to marry Dirce. Outraged and desperate, Medea revenges her self killing Dirce, her sons and herself, bringing the Hell on Earth.

Act 1 (Vestibule in Creon's Palace)

Lamia wanders if Jason would prove as false to Dirce as he has been to Medea (Why, when we are preparing for thee love and joy). Dirce shares her fear, but Clyte and the rest of the women plead to restore her courage (Drive from thy soul all such dreary foreboding). Released of fear, Dirce sings an aria of joy (Oh, Hymen, come, dispel all my vain foolish fears !). Scene 2 - In front of King Creon, Dirce expresses her fears about Medea, but Jason reassures her of his feelings (Now that once more I'm free from a spouse I detested). King Creon blesses their union placing his faith in heaven. At that moment Medea enters the scene to claim the sacred rights of wife and mother (Break off this fatal marriage, or, persisting, dread my utmost fury). King Creon sends Medea away with a threat, but she sings her last plea before her husband (At thy feet see me kneeling, thy children's

wretched mother ! ...Oh ! restore me thy love). Jason refuses her repentance and Medea leaves announcing a fearful revenge !

Act 2 (Inside Creon's Palace with the entrance to the Temple of Juno in the background)

King Creon sends Medea to exile while she refuses to depart from her children (To Medea, great monarch, accord an asylum ! To finish there my days, now is all I aspire to). Medea implores on her knees and King Creon accords her a one day delay, to spend with her children before her departure. Neris is prepared to share her fate (Yes, thy sorrow dividing with thee, In a friendship that's true I'll my fate join with thee), but she is affraid of the wild passion raging in Medea's heart. Scene 2 - Jason enters the scene to have a final argument with Medea about the love for their children. After his departure, Medea asks Neris to bring her the coronation crown and the mantle soaked in a fatal poison. Led by a military band a Procession appears singing (Oh, son of Bacchus, from heaven descent, thy crown immortal thy bright brow adorning ! ...Come, these lovers unite ! With thy presence bless them !) and Dirce gets crowned with the everlasting myrtle.

Act 3 (Inside Creon's Palace. The sky is dark. Continuous thunder. Temple of Juno in the background)

The children enter carrying the mantle and the crown prepared for Dirce. Medea drops her dagger and embraces her children singing her sorrow (Of that deep grief that now consumes me, Nothing the despair exceed ...Crimes so inhuman, ... pity have, never more permit). Neris enters the temple together with the children and the deadfull present while Medea is left alone to produce a dreadful monologue about her parricidal intentions. Medea picks up the dagger and enters the temple, while Jason and the people rushes out outraged by the atrocious death of Dirce. Neris asks Jason to defend his children, but it is too late. Medea appears from the temple, still holding the dagger (Stand ! and look upon thy outraged wife ! Their death has avenged my wrongs !). With a last word to Jason, Medea is rising in the air, in a car drawn by fiery dragons, while thunders are heard (To Avernus in time thou wilt also descent ! In the infernal abodes my spirit awaits thee, Jason !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1- Why, when we are preparing for thee love and joy (Lamia), Drive from thy soul all such dreary foreboding (Chorus), Oh, Hymen, come, dispel all my vain foolish fears ! (Dirce), Now that once more I'm free from a spouse I detested (Jason), Break off this fatal marriage, or, persisting, dread my utmost fury (Medea), At thy feet see me kneeling, thy children's wretched mother ! ...Oh ! restore me thy love (Medea). Act 2 - To Medea, great monarch, accord an asylum ! To finish there my days, now is all I aspire to (Medea), Yes, thy sorrow dividing with thee, In a friendship that's true I'll my fate join with thee (Neris), Oh, son of Bacchus, from heaven descent, thy crown immortal thy bright brow adorning ! ...Come, these lovers unite ! With thy presence bless them ! (Chorus). Act 3 - Of that deep grief that now consumes me, Nothing the despair exceed ...Crimes so inhuman, ... pity have, never more permit (Medea), Stand ! and look upon thy outraged wife ! Their death has avenged my wrongs ! (Medea), To Avernus in time thou wilt also descent ! In the infernal abodes my spirit awaits thee, Jason ! (Medea)

Ballet: Medea, Opus 23 (1946) is a ballet in nine sections by American composer Samuel Osborne Barber (1910-1981). It premiered on 10 May 1946 at Columbia University McMillin Theater, New York City. The mythical figures of Medea and Jason are caught in a net of jealousy, vengeance and destructive love ending with a final scene of their sun setting. The Suite was first performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy on 5 December 1947. In 2015 the Estonian National Ballet has produced a Gianluca Schiavoni ballet production of Medea with a Marco Gandini libretto and music by Igor Stravinski. Another production in 2015 was staged by the Hermitage Theatre of Classical Russian Ballet on music composed by Jean-Joseph Rodolphe and performed by St Petersburg State Governor's Symphony orchestra.

Recordings: 1953 Teatro alla Scala (Maria Callas - Medea, Gino Penno - Jason), 1957 Teatro alla Scala (Maria Callas - Medea, Mirto Picchi - Jason), 1959 Royal Opera House (Maria Callas - Medea, Jon Vickers - Jason), 1967 Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Gwyneth Jones - Medea, Bruno Prevedi - Jason), 1977 Hungarian Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (Sylvia Sass - Medea, Veriano Luchetti - Jason), 1995 Orchestra Internazionale d'Italia Opera (Iano Tamar - Medea, Luca Lombardo - Jason), 1997 Brewer Chamber Orchestra and the Chorus Quotannis (Phyllis Treigle - Medea, Carl Halvorson - Jason), 2009 Teatro Regio Turin (Anna Caterina Antonacci - Medea, Giuseppe Filianoti - Jason)

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37. The Knight of the Rose

Title: The Knight of the Rose (Der Rosenkavalier, The Rose-Bearer)

Composer: Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949). Born in Munich, his father Franz Strauss (1822-1905) was the principal horn player at the Court Opera in Munich and professor at the Royal School of Music, while his mother was Josephine Pschorr (1837-1910) the daughter of a wealthy brewer. He started his musical education with his father and he wrote his first song at the age of six. In 1872 he studied the violin with his uncle Benno Walter at the Royal School of Music. In 1882 he entered Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich where he studied philosophy and art history. A year later he was assistant conductor to Hans von Bulow to learn the art of conducting. In 1885/86 he was temporary named conductor of the Meiningen Court Orchestra. In 1894 Richard Strauss married the operatic soprano Pauline Maria de Ahna (1863 - 1950) and the fruit of their marriage was a son, Franz Strauss (1897-1980). During his life he received the Croix de Chevalier del la Legion d'honneur (1907), Commandeur de L'Ordre de la Couronne of Belgium (1939) and four Honoray Doctorate (Heidelberg 1903, Oxford 1914, Vienna 1924, Munich 1949). Operas: Guntram (1893), Feuersnot (1901), Salome (1905), Elektra (1908), Der Rosenkavalier (1911), Ariadne auf Naxos (1912), Die Frau ohne Schatten (1919), Intermezzo (1924), Die egyptische Helena (1928), Arabella (1932), Friedenstag (1936), Daphne (1937), Die Liebe der Danae (1940), Capriccio (1941). Ballet: Kythere (1900), Josephslegende (1914), Schlagobers (1922), Verklungene Feste (1941). His musical work includes 298 compositions including: chamber music, orchestral music and concerts, fanfare music, waltzes, lieds, vocal and choral music.

Libretto: Hugo Hofmann von Hofmannsthal (1874 - 1929). Hugo von Hofmannsthal was an Austrian poet, novelist, librettist, dramatist and essayist who wrote several librettos for Richard Strauss: Elektra, Der Rosenkavalier, Ariadne auf Naxos, Die Frau ohne Schatten, Die egyptische Helena, Arabella. His work also includes: 9 plays, 14 essays, 6 volumes of poetry, 10 novels and narrations. The story is losely adapted from the novel "Les amours du chevalier de Faublas" by Louvret de Couvrai and the comedy "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" by Moliere (Jean Baptiste Porquelin). Moliere's comedy was the source of inspiration for several other opera settings including those by: Castil and Blaze using music from Rossini and Weber (1826), Alberto Franchetii (1897) and Frank Martin (1962). Monsieur de Pourceaugnac was first presented on 6 October 1669 before the court of Louis XIV at the Chateau of Chambord, with music composed by Jean Baptiste Lully and choreography by Pierre Beauchamp, the inventor of dance notation (Beuchamp-Feuillet).

Performance history: Der Rosenkavalier premiered on 26 January 1911 in Dresden under the baton of Ernst von Schuch and directed by Max Reinhart. Margarethe Siems, Minnie Nast and Eva von der Osten sang the leading roles. From the start, Der Rosenkavalier was a financial boom for the house. Due to the use of waltz music the people embraced the opera unconditionally. Within two months the opera was translated in Italian and premiered at La Scala in Milan. The Austrian premiere was given on 8 April 1911 by the Vienna State Opera followed by the premiere at Teatro Costanzi in Rome, starring Hariclea Darclee, on 14 November 1911. The United Kingdom premiere occured at the Royal Opera House in London on 29 January 1913. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York the premiere took place on 9 December 1913. In Monaco, a French translation of the opera was performed on 21 March 1926 by the Opera de Monte Carlo at the Salle Garnier, followed by the French premiere on 11 February 1927 at the Palais Garnier in Paris. In Brussels the first performance was on 15 December 1927 at La Monnaie. On 12 August 1929 the Salzburg Festival mounted Der Rosenkavalier for the first time starring Lotte Lehmann and Marta Fuchs. Other notable productions were at: Teatro Massimo in Palermo (5 March 1932), San Francisco Opera (16 October 1940), Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (2 May 1942), Lyric Opera of Chicago (25 September 1970), Australian Opera in Melborne (1972), New York City Opera (19 November 1973). Up to the 2017/18 season, Der Rosenkavalier was performed in the world for 546 times, in 107 different productions, ranking 42 on Operabase list.

Roles: The Marschallin, Princess Marie Therese von Werdenberg (soprano), Octavian, Count Rofrano, her

young lover (mezzo soprano en travesti), Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau (bass), Sophie von Faninal (soprano), Herr von Faninal, her father (baritone), Marianne, her duenna (soprano), Valzacchi, an intriguer (tenor), Annina, his niece and partner (contralto), A notary (bass), An Italian singer (tenor), Three noble orphans (soprano, mezzo soprano, contralto), A milliner (soprano), A vendor of pets (tenor), Faninal's Major-Domo (tenor), Marchallin's Major-Domo (tenor), A police inspector (bass), An Inkeeper (tenor), Four Lackeys (tenors, basses), Four waiters (tenor, basses), Marchallin's black page (silent), A flautist, a cook, a hairdresser and his assistant, a scholar, a noble widow (all silent), Chorus (Servants, hired deceivers, children, constables)



Story: It is a showcase for female voices who share several duets as well as a trio, including the mezzo soprano Octavian in travesti. It is all about aristocratic manners. Sung by a girl soprano in travesti, Count Octavian is a young relative of the Marchallin Marie Therese, practicing with her his skills of pretending, in order to brighten her dull hours. In the old fashion manner of arranged marriages, Baron Lerchenau is asking his sovereign to help him marry a young and wealthy girl. Count Octavian, is entrusted to deliver the Silver Rose, a traditional engagement gift, but he finds the girl more suitable for his higher rank and lower age. With some help from Marchallin Marie Therese, he plays a masquerade to his opponent and gets to marry the girl.

Act 1 (In the boudoir of Princess von Werdenberg)

Octavian and the Marchallin share faltering words reclining in the bed (All thy soul, all thy heart their perfection who can measure ...Thou art my Boy. Thou art my love. I love thee so.). Octavian must conceal himself and his sword as the black page bring in breakfast and chocolate. Serving breakfast, they both chatter about Herr Field Marshal, her husband, hunting brown bears and boars in Croatia (But, let the Marshal be in peace ...This night you dreamed a dream of him ?). Octavian must conceal again as Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau, bursts in. Dressed in a skirt and short jacket, with a kerchief and a ribbon Octavian has metamorphosed himself in a chambermaid. Baron Lerchenau makes the announcement that he decided to marry a young girl. (Pray tell me who's the bride ? Young Mistress Faninal ...has half a score of houses in the city). Baron Lerchenau asks his sovereign to choose a trustee who would present a Silver Rose to his future bride, as the aristocratic custom calls (As a pledge of love a silver Rose). As the Marchallin's antechamber is now crowded with petitioners, Baron Lerchenau is making advances to the chambermaid (I dare be sworn, she has blue blood in her). Reluctant, the Marchallin finally accepts to help him and offers a Rose of Silver from her own set of jewelry. The Marchallin receives her usual morning audience of the people crowding in the antechamber. While Baron Lerchenau hires two Italian intriguers, Annina and Valzacchi, to investigate about the chambermaid, Octavian reappears, dressed as a man, to bid farewell from the Marchallin (Does it mean that never again I shall kiss you ? ...You will meet me in the Prater, riding and stay awhile beside my carriage). The Silver Rose is sent to Octavian with a note to perform the noble duty.

Act 2 (Herr Faninal's House)

Herr von Faninal is greeting his daughter in the morning of her engagement day (A solemn day, a day of note, a festal day, a sacred day). With half the town peeping at her door, Sophie is repeating her prayer (Lord, preserve me of the pomps and vanities ...my mother she is dead and all alone am I). All dressed in white, Octavian brings the Silver Rose on behalf of Baron Lerchenau (I am much honoured by my mission ...A celestial flower, not of earth it seems). Sophie, who has done her research on him in the Mirror of Nobility has found Count Octavian to be of her kinsfolk and age (17 and 1/4). When Baron Lerchenau arrives, Herr Faninal

presents him to his daughter, only to make a poor impression due to his attitude over her duenna (Tell yourself who he is, what he helps you to be). The Baron tries to kiss Sophie but she resists energetically (I pray you cease, we are but strangers yet !). As the Attonery and the Notary arrive, Herr Faninal and the Baron retire to sign the documents. Left alone with Octavian, Sophie begs him to help her out from such a marriage (O gracious Heaven, befriend me in my need ! ...To save you now must be my one endeavour). When Octavian is kissing Sophie, Valzacchi and Annina enter the room to secure them. As Baron Lercheanu enters the door, Octavian brings him the news (This lady, once for all now, will have none of you). Undisturbed, Baron Lerchenau invites Sophie to sign the marriage contract. Octavian dares him to duel and points him in the upper arm as soon as he draws his sword. Dropping his sword, Baron Lerchenau asks for a doctor (Help ! Help ! I Bleed ! A surgeron ! Murder ! Murder !). When Herr Faninal enters the room, Sophie tells him that she will never marry the Baron and Octavian is invited to leave, for ever. While serving one more glass of wine, Baron Lerchenau receives a letter with an invitation for a private meeting with the Marschalline' s chambermaid. Delighted, Baron Lerchenau answers positively to the letter (With me, with me, time will seem short always).

Act 3 (A private room in an inn with a bed separated by a curtain)

Valzacchi is arranging Annina's veil, when Octavian enters the room in female clothes and a cap, but wearing riding boots. The couple kiss his hands as Octavian throws them a purse. Valzacchi hides a witnessing men behind a trapdoor and escorts Annina, dressed like a lady, out of the room. Dinner is served as soon as Baron Lerchenau arrives (What do you think ? No wine I drink ...You see here nothing but a gentleman). Suddenly Annina appears with outstretched arms pointing to the Baron (My husband ! Yes, it is he ! This he ! ... Sounds, what was that ?). With a cold compress on his head, Baron Lerchenau stares suspicious as four children enter the room rushing towards him (They all have double faces ! All of them together ! ...Papa ! Papa ! Papa !). As the landlord of the inn is intrigued, Valzacchi adds some gas to the fire (For bigamy is not a trifle ...I counsel that your Lordship have care, the police in this town, it have no mercy Sir !). A Commissary of Police enters with two Constables. In response to an explanation required, Baron Lerchenau presents Octavian as his fiancée (This is young Mistress Faninal, born to the most noble Lord Faninal). At that moment Herr von Faninal forces his way through the crowd to ask for an explanation (I scarce expected you would need my presence ...to rescue you from gravest danger). Confronted with Octavian Herr Faninal fails to recognize him as his daughter and the Commissary gets even more confused. To clear the matter, Herr Faninal calls for his daughter who was waiting in the coach (You'll pay this dearly ! I will go to the law !). As everybody is shouting and Sophie steps in, Baron Lerchenau faints and is secured to an armchair. From behind the curtain Octavian throws his lady clothes, piece by piece when her Highness the Marchallin enters the room astonished. Understanding the situation the Marchallin clears out her judgement to Baron Lerchenau (Think of your dignity and take your leave ...it all has been just a diversion, nothing more ...a masquerade, as we in Vienna practice, nothing more). After Octavian and Sophie exchange some love declarations, gracefully the Marchallin invites both of them and Her Fanninal on her coach to escort them home (Marie Theresa, how good are you, Marie Theresa, I do not know ...There stands the boy, and here stand I ...he will have hapiness). Octavian and Sophie reinforce their commitment (This is a dream of heaven: it is true, that you love me and I love you).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - All thy soul, all thy heart their perfection who can measure ...Thou art my Boy. Thou art my love. I love thee so (Octavian, The Marchallin), But, let the Marshal be in peace ...This night you dreamed a dream of him ? (The Marchallin, Octavian), Pray tell me who's the bride ? Young Mistress Faninal ...has half a score of houses in the city (The Marschall, Baron Lerchenau), As a pledge of love a silver Rose (Baron Lerchenau), I dare be sworn, she has blue blood in her (Baron Lerchenau), Does it mean that never again I shall kiss you ? ...You will meet me in the Prater, riding and stay awhile beside my carriage (Octavian, The Marschall). Act 2 - A solemn day, a day of note, a festal day, a sacred day (Herr Faninal), Lord, preserve me of the pomps and vanities ...my mother she is dead and all alone am I (Sophie), I am much honoured by my mission ...A celestial flower, not of earth it seems (Octavian, Sophie), Tell yourself who he is, what he helps you to be (Marianne), I pray you cease, we are but strangers yet ! (Sophie), O gracious Heaven, befriend me in my need ! ...To save you now must be my one endeavour (Sophie, Octavian), This lady, once for all now, will have none of you (Octavian), Help ! Help ! I Bleed ! A surgeron ! Murder ! Murder ! (Baron Lerchenau), With me, with me, tome will seem short always (Baron Lerchenau). Act 3 - What do you think ? No wine I drink

...You see here nothing but a gentleman (Octavian, Baron Lerchenau), My husband ! Yes, it is he ! This he ! ... Sounds, what was that ? (Annina, Baron), They all have double faces ! All of them together ! ...Papa ! Papa ! Papa ! (Baron Lerchenau, The Children), For bigamy is not a trifle ...I counsel that your Lordship have care, the police in this town, it have no mercy Sir ! (Landlord, Valzacchi), This is young Mistress Faninal, born to the most noble Lord Faninal (Baron Lerchenau), I scarce expected you would need my presence ...to rescue you from gravest danger (Herr Faninal), You'll pay this dearly ! I will go to the law ! (Herr Faninal), Think of your dignity and take your leave ...it all has been just a diversion, nothing more ...a masquerade, as we in Vienna practice, nothing more (The Marschallin). Marie Theresa, how good are you, Marie Therea, I do not know ...There stands the boy, and here stand I ...he will have hapiness (Octavian, The Marschallin), This is a dream of heaven: it is true, that you love me and I love you (Octavian, Sophie).

Ballet: Vienna Waltzes is a ballet made by New York City Ballet to music by Johann Strauss, Franz Lehar and Richard Strauss that includes a sequence of five waltzes from Der Rosenkavalier. Choreographed by George Balanchine, the premiere took place on 23 June 1977 at the New York State Theater.

Recordings: Audio- 1933 Vienna Philharmonic (Lotte Lehmann - Marschallin, Maria Olszewska - Octavian, Elisabeth Schumann - Sophie), 1944 Munich State Opera (Viorica Ursuleac - Marschallin, Georgine von Milinkovic - Octavian, Adele Kern - Sophie), 1954 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Maria Reining - Marschallin, Sena Jurinac - Octavian, Hilde Gueden - Sophie), 1956 Philharmonia Orchestra (Elisabeth Schwartzkopf - Marschallin, Christa Ludwig - Octavian, Teresa Stich Randall - Sophie), 1971 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Christa Ludwig - Marschallin, Gwyneth Jones - Octavian, Lucia Popp - Sophie), 1976 Rotterdam Philharmonic (Evelyn Lear - Marschallin, Frederica von Stade - Octavian, Ruth Welting - Sophie), 1990 Staatskapelle Dresden (Kiri Te Kanawa - Marschallin, Anne Sofie von Otter - Octavian, Barbara Hendricks - Sophie), 2009 Munchener Philharmoniker (Renee Fleming - Marschallin, Sophie Koch - Octavian, Diana Damrau - Sophie) Video - 1960 Vienna Philharmonic (Herbert von Karajan - Conductor), 1979 Bayerische Staatsoper (Carlos Kleiber - Conductor), 1982 Metropolitan Opera (James Levine - Conductor), 1984 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Herbert von Karajan - Conductor), 1985 Royal Opera House (Georg Solti - Conductor), 1994 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Carlos Kleiber - Conductor), 2004 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Semyon Bychkov - Conductor), 2004 Zurich Opera House (Franz Welser Most - Conductor), 2009 Munchener Philharmoniker (Christian Thielemann - Conductor), 2012 Opera Australia (Andrew Litton - Conductor)

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38. Francesca da Rimini

Title: Francesca da Rimini

Composer: Serghei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943). Born in Novgorod Oblast, his father Vasily Arkadyevich Rachmaninoff (1841-1916) was an army officer while his mother Lyubov Petrovna Butakova (1853-1929) was the daughter of a wealthy general who gave her five estates as part of her dowry. Serghei was the fourth child, having three brothers and three sisters. He began piano and music lessons with his mother at the age of four. Later he began the formal education with Anna Ornatskaya and in 1883 his teacher enlisted him to study at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory for a year. In 1885 he was recommended for the Moscow Conservatory where he graduated in 1891. His first opera, Aleko, premiered in 1892 at the Bolshoi Theatre, starring singer Feodor Chaliapin who would become a lifelong friend. In 1902 he married Natalia Satina and the fruit of their marriage were two girls, Irina and Tatiana. Between 1904 and 1906 he was conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1917 he relocated his family to New York and spent the rest of his life touring, as a piano performer. Operas: Aleko (1892), The Miserly Knight (1904), Francesca da Rimini (1905). His musical compositions include: 4 piano concertos and a rhapsody, 10 orchestral compositions, chamber music, 24 piano compositions, 11 choral works, numerous solo voice and piano compositions, various transcriptions for piano.

Libretto: Modest Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1850-1916). Modest Ilyich Tchaikovsky was a Russian dramatist, librettist

and translator, the younger brother of the composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. He wrote librettos for operas composed by his brother (The Queen of Spades, Iolanta), but also for other composers, such as: Sergei Rachmaninoff, Eduard Napravnik, Arseny Koreshchenko, Anton Arensky. He also wrote three plays and translated sonnets from Shakespeare. The story was based on the fifth canto of Dante's poem *The Inferno* (part of the *Divine Comedy*). Francesca da Rimini was the daughter of Guido da Polenta, lord of Ravenna who was married to the crippled Giovanni Malatesta, son of the lord of Rimini. Her husband has surprised her in her bedroom with his younger brother and killed them both. During his visit to *Inferno*, Dante meets Francesca in the second circle of hell and faints out of pity when listening to her story. There are other 27 operas and 9 plays or tragedies, 7 musical and 8 art compositions, all inspired by the story of Francesca da Rimini

Performance history: The first performance was on 24 January 1906, at the Bolshoi Theatre, with the composer conducting himself on a double bill with his other opera *The Miserly Knight*. Due to the Russian Revolution and World War I the performance was banned in Russia and almost unknown in the West. Francesca da Rimini remained part of the Bolshoi Theatre repertoire into the 1960s to 1970s and was revived only at the beginning of present century. An American production was staged on 25 January 2002 by American Symphony Orchestra at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York. In February 2015 the opera was staged on a double bill with *Aleko* at the Opera National de Lorraine, Nancy. At the Theatre Royal de La Monnaie Bruxelles, Francesca da Rimini was staged starting with 16 June 2015, starring Anna Nechaeva as Francesca and Maxim Aksenov as Paolo. Curated by Music Director Stuart Stratford, the opera was staged by Scottish Opera on Theatre Royal Glasgow, together with *Aleko*, starting with 6 May 2018. Another remarkable performance was staged in 2018 by the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg with soloists of the Mariinsky Academy of Young Opera Singers. Up to the 2017/18 season, Francesca da Rimini was performed in the world for 29 times, in 8 different productions, ranking 400 on Operabase list.

Roles: Ghost of Virgil (baritone), Dante Alighieri (tenor), Lanciotto Malatesta (baritone), Francesca Malatesta, his wife (soprano), Paolo Malatesta, his younger brother (tenor), Cardinal (non spoken)



Story: It is the tragic story of two young adulterous lovers, immortalized in *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri in 1320. In an imaginative version of afterlife, the Christian view presents the afterworld divided in three parts: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. Out of the 9 concentric rings of *Inferno*, the first one is reserved to the virtual and unbaptized pagans, while the second is reserved to the victims of extramarital love. Led by Virgil, the poet is granted an imaginary trip to *Inferno*, where in the second circle he meets the almost innocent Francesca and Paolo. Aroused by reading a chivalry story, their sin was but a kiss. Enough for an enraged husband to kill them both and condemn them to eternal life in Hell.

Prologue - The ghost of Virgil leads Dante to the first circle of Hell (Limbo) where he and poets like Homer, Ovid and Horace reside as virtuous pagans (And now we enter the dark depth). Then they descend to the second circle of Hell (Lust) for those overcome by lust (Helen of Troy, Cleopatra, Achilles, Tristan). From the souls flying in the wind, Dante asks Francesca and Paolo to tell their story.

Act 1 (The Palace of Malatesta in Rimini)

Before the Cardinal and his entourage Lanciotto Malatesta prepares his departure to war (Here my decision,

Lanciotto Malatesta without delay the Pope's command he will obey). His speech is reinforced by the audience (Death ! also for the Ghibellines). Scene 2 - Lost in thoughts Lanciotto sorrows since his wife Francesca does not love him because he is crippled (Nothing punches the blaze of jealousy like the gasp once trumpets complain). He is also envious of his younger brother (And Paolo is handsome, is slender and stunning in handling tender and flattering words). Scene 3 - Francesca enters the scene obedient to his will but determined to spend her life in a convent (As you shall always offer to me but your will to happen, in monastery I will seek refuge). Lanciotto bids her a downhearted farewell (Francesca, o Francesca ! It's possible that your sweet words I'll never hear again). Francesca is willing to consent at his will, but Lanciotto is asking for more, he wants true Love (No, No, it's not submission that I want, but Love !). But Francesca is not willing to deceive him. She asks him when will he return. Not until the end of the battle, he responds.

Act 2 (One room in the Palace of Malatesta)

Paolo reads to Francesca the story of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere (The lovely Guinevere sat alone after she had released her entourage). Exuberant and horny with the reading, Paolo moves next to Francesca (Should I probably read was like he blessed her mouth with a kiss). Francesca tries to cool him down (O sigh not my Paolo, for we are not delighted and we are separated in a narrow space). Paolo is persistently asking for a kiss (Even the sky is willing for an instant kiss, a kiss of my lips on your lips). Francesca resists remaining faithful to Lanciotto (Woe to the woman of another ...We'll meet the Hell, for ever lasting). But Paolo is willing to take the risk, to love her in Heaven and in Hell. They share love words and tender engagements (An instant kiss, of lips to lips, unleash the bliss from Heaven). Lanciotto enters in the moment of the kiss and stabs them both in the heart (No ! Eternal damnation !).

Epilogue - Back in the second circle of Hell, Dante and Virgil listen to the end of their story (Oh, never since no one has ever heard us). The chorus of damned souls responds (What a great pity it could be, that the images of happiness in sorrow would now hover over us).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - And now we enter the dark depth (Virgil). Act 1 - Here my decision, Lanciotto Malatesta without delay the Pope's command he will obey (Lanciotto), Death ! also for the Ghibellines (Chorus), Nothing punches the blaze of jealousy like the gasp once trumpets complain (Lanciotto), And Paolo is handsome, is slender and stunning in handling tender and flattering words (Lanciotto), As you shall always offer to me but your will to happen, in monastery I will seek refuge (Francesca), Francesca, o Francesca ! It's possible that your sweet words I'll never hear again (Lanciotto). No, No, it's not submission that I want, but Love ! (Lanciotto). Act 2 - The lovely Guinevere sat alone after she had released her entourage (Paolo), Should I probably read was like he blessed her mouth with a kiss (Paolo), O sigh not my Paolo, for we are not delighted and we are separated in a narrow space (Francesca), Even the sky is willing for an instant kiss, a kiss of my lips on your lips (Paolo), Woe to the woman of another ...We'll meet the Hell, for ever lasting (Francesca), An instant kiss, of lips to lips, unleash the bliss from Heaven (Francesca, Paolo), No ! Eternal damnation ! (Lanciotto). Epilogue - Oh, never since no one has ever heard us (Paolo, Francesca), What a great pity it could be, that the images of happiness in sorrow would now hover over us (Chorus)

Ballet: A ballet performance of Francesca da Rimini premiered on 15 July 1937 at Royal Opera House, Covent Garden London, produced by Ballets Russes on a choreography by David Lichine and scenery design of Oliver Messel using the music composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. During their 2012 and 2013 seasons, San Francisco Ballet also choreographed a performance to Tchaikovsky's music from Francesca da Rimini. In 2017, San Francisco's dancers Maria Kochetkova and Joan Boada used a robotic programmed camera to follow their movements. Their video clip of Francesca da Rimini was posted on YouTube.

Recordings: 1977 Bolshoi Theater (Makvala Kasrashvili - Francesca, Vladimir Atlantov - Paolo, Yevgeny Nesterenko - Malatesta, Alexander Laptev - Dante, Mikhail Maslov - Virgil), 1997 Deutsche Grammophon - Gothenburg Opera Chorus (Maria Guleghina - Francesca, Sergej Larin - Paolo, Sergei Leiferkus - Malatesta, Ilya Levinsky - Dante, Sergei Aleksashkin - Virgil), Russian Season - Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra (Marina Lapina - Francesca, Vitaly Taraschenko - Paolo, Vladimir Matorin - Malatesta, Nikolai Vassiliev - Dante, Nikolai Rechetniak - Virgil), 2007 BBC Philharmonic and Chorus (Svetlana Vassileva - Francesca, Misha Didyk - Paolo, Sergey Murzaev - Malatesta, Evgeny Akimov - Dante, Gennady Bezzubnikov - Virgil)

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39. Jenufa

Title: Jenufa (Jeji pastorkyna)

Composer: Leo Eugen Janacek (1854-1928). Born in Hukvaldy, Austrian Empire, his father Jiri Janacek (1815-1866) was a schoolmaster, while his mother was Amalie Grulichova (1819-1884). As a child he was a member of the chorus at Abbey of St. Thomas in Brno where he also learned to play the organ. He wrote his first vocal compositions as choirmaster of the Svatopluk Artisan's Association (1873-1876). In 1874 he enrolled at the Prague organ school to learn with Frantisek Skuhersky and Frantisek Blazek. From 1876 he taught music at Brno's Teachers Institute. In 1881 he married Zdrenka Schulzova and the fruit of their marriage was a girl, Olga, who tragically died in 1903. In 1881 he founded and was appointed director of the organ school and held this post until 1919 when the school became Brno Conservatory. A great collector of folk songs, he was one of the organizers of the Czech-Slavic Folklore Exhibition. Operas: Sarka (1888), The Beginning of a Romance (1891), Jenufa (1903), Destiny (1905), The Excursions of Mr. Broucek (1916), Kata Kabanova (1921), The Cunning Little Vixen (1923), The Makropulos Affair (1925), From the House of the Dead (1928). Ballet: Rakos Rakoczy (1891). His musical compositions also include: orchestral music, chamber music, organ and piano music, choral and vocal compositions.

Libretto: Leo Janacek produced the libretto himself based on the play Jeji pastorkyna by Gabriela Preissova. Gabriela Preissova (1862-1946) was a Czech writer and playwright who wrote stories full of optimism and the joy of village life in Moravia. Most of her stories were about young lovers affairs and the obstacles to their consummation. Preissova's story was published in 1889, and Janacek read it to his daughter Olga and her friend Feodora Bartosova (1884-1941). Fourteen years later, during his work on Jenufa, the 19 years old Olga fell ill with typhoid fever and died six months later. Devastated, his father wrote a cantata for tenor solo: Elegy on the Death of Daughter Olga. He also dedicated his opera Jenufa: "To the memory of Olga Janackova".

Performance history: The opera was first performed at the National Theatre in Brno on 21 January 1904. After the premiere, the orchestral score was partly altered by Karel Kovarovich (1862-1920) also an opera composer, at that time conductor of the National Theatre in Prague. The altered version premiered in Prague and then in Vienna, earning an early popularity. Only 70 years later, the opera was heard again in its original version, as it is played in the present times. The United States premiere took place on 6 December 1924 at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. On 4 April 1988, Carnegie Hall in New York was the scene of a concert performance of Janacek's Jenufa, in which Leonie Rysanek's portrayal of the murderous Kostelnicka aroused the audience. In London, Jenufa was performed at the London Coliseum starting with the 2006/2007 season. An American production of the opera was staged by San Francisco Opera on 14 June 2016. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Jenufa was staged on 28 October 2016, starring Oksana Dya and Karita Mattia, conducted by David Robertson. In 2018, The Vienna Opera staged the opera with Ingo Metzmacher as conductor, Dorothea Roschmann as Jenufa and Christian Franz as Laca. At the Dutch National Opera, the 2018 production marks the debut of Annette Dasch as Jenufa, orchestrated by the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra. Up to the 2017/18 season, Jenufa was performed in the world for 361 times, in 180 different productions, ranking 60 on Operabase list.

Roles: Jenufa (soprano), Laca Klemen (tenor), Steva Buryja (tenor), Kostelnicka Burjovka (soprano), Starek, the Mill foreman (baritone), Captain (bass), Campesina, Captain's wife (mezzo-soprano), Alcaldesa, Karolka's, servant (Mezzosoprano), Grandmother of Jenufa (mezzosoprano), Jano, herder (soprano), Chorus (Recruits, servants, girls, villagers, musicians)



Story: Inspired from real rural life in Moravia, Jenůfa is also a medley of traditions, folk wedding customs and superstitions. A terrifying story of infanticide, unreciprocated love and redemption, this rural Love Story is an instructional tragedy for the community. The chaotic ordeal of stepmother Kostelnicka, trying to make the things right for all of her grandchildren, is deviant from the God's way of settling things and the results are soon to follow. There is a lot of pain for all those involved in the tragedy, but life must go on. The poor youngsters soon find out that all their substance is in reciprocal love.

Act 1 (In front of a lonely mill, wailing)

Jenufa is worried that Steva has recruited to the army and her wedding will be canceled (The evening is coming and Steva is not coming back ...O Virgin Mary, be gracious !). While her Grandmother foresees only bad things to come, Laca complains that he is never noticed (A little orphan I used to approach you ...you never notice me). Jenufa admonishes him (You always talk bad to Grandma, And then you pretend I love you !). While Jenufa is showing Jeno her writings, Captain offers to teach Laca to sharpen his knife. The Captain has noticed Laca's feelings for Jenufa (You change your color every time Jenufa appears). To everyone's relieve, except Laca, the Captain announces that Steva was not enlisted. The recruits sing (Everyone wants to get married ! They're afraid of the army ! But I'm not afraid, I'm not getting married). Heated, Steva is unhappy that he was not recruited (But, I must be a soldier...No More love !). Already drunk, with a flower from another girl, Steva reminds Jenufa that he is the owner of the mill and starts to sing (It's a long way to Novych Zamku). Kostelnicka interrupts the joy of her nephew to sing about her own love with her husband (He also had some golden curls). Done with Steva, Kostelnicka turns to Jenufa (If you do not obey me, Jenufa, God will have to punish you severely). Grandmother backed by the Captain clears out the audience (Go home now, musicians, do not tempt the boys !). Jenufa sings to Steva worried that her mother may discover her guilt (If you don't get married in time with me, I don't know what I'd do !). Steva answers that all the girls love him but she is the most beautiful, than he leaves (If only for your beautiful pink cheeks). With the flowers Steva has received from girls, Laca declares his love to Jenufa (I have loved you since I was a child). While fighting Jenufa for a kiss, with the knife in his hand, Laca cuts her face deeply. The Captain calls for the women to help the poor child (I know you did it on purpose !).

Act 2 (The Hall of Kostelnicka's house)

With a scar on her face Jenufa is listening to Kostelnicka's reason (And when you confessed to me your sin). When Jenufa goes to sleep Kostelnicka recolects how embarrassing the birth of her grandson was (There is nothing to do but humiliate me before Steva and give him to Jenufa to make him a wretch). When Steva comes to visit his aunt he is invited to meet his son, also called Steva, but he fails to assume full responsibility (I'm going to pay my fair share. But don't say it's mine). Kostelnicka tries once more to make things right (I'm begging you on my knees ! Steva, join them legally). Steva answers that he is now promised to Karolka, the mayor's daughter (When I saw her, her cheek cut, my love for her vanished altogether). As Steva leaves Laca enters the room and asks Kostelnicka to allow him to marry Jenufa (Oh, I would never, ever leave her !), Instead of an answer, Kostelnicka tells him the truth (A week ago she had a child ...a child of Steva). Impressed by Laca's sorrow Kostelnicka lies (The child no longer lives ! ... He's dead !). After Laca's departure, Kostelnicka is decided to dispose off the fruit of sin (Good God knows, how things are... So, I will return the creature to the arms of its creator). Excited she leaves with the child wrapped in a scarf. Jenufa wakes up alone and frightened and prays to Mother Virgin (Everything is dark ...Where is my little Stevuska ? ...It'll be cold, too cold !

God save you, Queen and mother of Mercy). When Kostelnicka returns, she tells that Jenufa has been delirious for two days and the little boy is dead. Desperate, Jenufa falls on her knees (So he's dead, now he's a little angel). Kostelnicka also tells her that Steva did not want to recognize the child and he is engaged to another girl. When Laca returns, Jenfa thanks him for his feelings (I often heard your voice ...now you can see the terrible state in which I find my self !). Laca asks Jenufa to marry him and she is reluctant but accepts (How could you marry me ? I have no property, no honor ...but I love you, be mine ! ...then we will live together, for good and for the bad). Kostelnicka is blessing both her nephews while a cold wind passes the room (May God grant you eternal health, bliss and prosperity ...As if death was lurking there !).

Act 3 (Kostelnicka' room)

Preparations are made in the day of the wedding, when Steva and Karolka come to visit (I don't know what to do first, to tie rosemary bouquets or to offer drinks to those present). Karolka's servant wanders why is Jenufa dressed in a black robe (I would never have gone to the altar, No crowns, no ties. Never, never, never). Laca tells Jenufa that it was he who invited his half-brother Steva at the wedding (I've invited Steva to our wedding, As God commands). Kostelnicka is making the honors of the house (May God give you happiness and bless you ! ...you want to save and you get married without the music). Steva announces that he will also marry Karolka in 15 days, and Jenufa wishes him luck (You've finally found love ! May God never, ever make you suffer !). Village boys and girls come uninvited to sing them a song (We wish you as many happy hours as the drops of the dew). They all must hurry to the church for the words of benediction. Grandmother also speaks (I bless you in the name of the Father, of the Son and the Holy Spirit). Noises are heard as the workers of the distillery have found under the ice a dead child... frozen (Wrapped in his diapers with a red hat ...What horror, what horror !). Jenufa recognizes her child (Oh, God, my God ! He's my little boy !). The peasants find her guilty and prepare to stone her but Laca stands for her (Let no one dare touch her !). Kostelnicka makes a terrible confession (Mine will be the Lord's punishment ! I was the one who killed the son of Jenufa). Outraged, Karolka breaks her marriage (Get me out ! ...I'm not marrying Steva !). The priest reinforces her decision (That will be his punishment. No girl will want to marry him anymore). Kostelnicka asks Jenufa for her forgiveness (I only implore your forgiveness, Jenufa, just yours). Jenufa answers that only God may give her consolations and Kostelnicka leaves with the Captain and the crowd. Left alone, Jenufa and Laca have nothing else but to reinforce their love words and commitment (Having cut my cheek...If you sinned it was for love ...I'll bear for you ! What do we care about the world ...Come to me, joins me now ...A love that God loves too).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - The evening is coming and Steva is not coming back ...O Virgin Mary, be gracious ! (Jenufa), A little orphan I used to approach you ...you never notice me (Laca), You always talk bad to Grandma, And then you pretend I love you ! (Jenufa), You change your color every time Jenufa appears (Captain), Everyone wants to get married ! They're afraid of the army ! But I'm not afraid, I'm not getting married (Chorus), But, I must be a soldier...No More love ! (Steva), It's a long way to Novych Zamku (Steva), He also had some golden curls (Kostelnicka), If you do not obey me, Jenufa, God will have to punish you severely (Kostelnicka), Go home now, musicians, do not tempt the boys ! (Grandmother, Captain), If you don't get married in time with me, I don't know what I'd do ! (Jenufa), If only for your beautiful pink cheeks (Steva), I have loved you since I was a child (Laca), I know you did it on purpose (Captain).

Act 2 - And when you confessed to me your sin (Kostelnicka), There is nothing to do but humiliate me before Steva and give him to Jenufa to make him a wretch (Kostelnicka), I'm going to pay my fair share. But don't say it's mine (Steva), I'm begging you on my knees ! Steva, join them legally (Kostelnicka), When I saw her, her cheek cut, my love for her vanished altogether (Steva), Oh, I would never, ever leave her ! (Laca), A week ago she had a child ...a child of Steva (Kostelnicka), The child no longer lives ! ... He's dead ! (Kostelnicka), Good God knows, how things are... So, I will return the creature to the arms of its creator (Kostelnicka), Everything is dark ...Where is my little Stevuska ? ...It'll be cold, too cold ! God save you, Queen and mother of Mercy (Jenufa), So he's dead, now he's a little angel (Jenufa), I often heard your voice ...now you can see the terrible state in which I find my self ! (Jenufa), How could you marry me ? I have no property, no honor ...but I love you, be mine ! ...then we will live together, for good and for the bad (Jenufa, Laca), May God grant you eternal health, bliss and prosperity ...As if death was lurking there ! (Kostelnicka).

Act 3 - I don't know what to do first, to tie rosemary bouquets or to offer drinks to those present (Campesina), I

would never have gone to the altar, No crowns, no ties. Never, never, never (Alcaldesa), I've invited Steva to our wedding, As God commands (Laca), May God give you happiness and bless you ! ...you want to save and you get married without the music (Kostelnicka), You've finally found love ! May God never, ever make you suffer ! (Jenufa), We wish you as many happy hours as the drops of the dew (Chorus), I bless you in the name of the Father, of the Son and the Holy Spirit (Grandmother), Wrapped in his diapers with a red hat ...What horror, what horror ! (Chorus), Oh, God, my God ! He's my little boy ! (Jenufa), Let no one dare touch her ! (Laca), Mine will be the Lord's punishment ! I was the one who killed the son of Jenufa (Kostelnicka), Get me out ! ...I'm not marrying Steva ! (Korolka), That will be his punishment. No girl will want to marry him anymore (Jeno), I only implore your forgiveness, Jenufa, just yours (Kostelnicka), Having cut my cheek...If you sinned it was for love ...I'll bear for you ! What do we care about the world ...Come to me, joins me now ...A love that God loves too (Jenufa, Laca)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1951 Prague National Theatre (Stepanka Jelinkova - Jenufa, Beno Blachut - Laco, Marta Krasova - Kostelnicka), 1974 La Scala Milano (Magda Olivero - Jenufa, Nicola Zaccaria - Laca, Margherita Benetti - Kostelnicka), 1980 War Memorial Opera House San Francisco (Sona Cervená - Jenufa, William Lewis - Laca, Sena Jurinac - Kostelnicka), 1983 - Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Elisabeth Soderstrom - Jenufa, Wieslaw Ochman - Laca, Eva Randova - Kostelnicka), 2009 Teatro Real Madrid (Amanda Roocroft - Jenufa, Miroslav Dvorsky - Laca, Deborah Polaski - Kostelnicka), 2014 Graz Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra (Gal James - Jenufa, Ales Briscein - Laca, Iris Vermillion - Kostelnicka)

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40. Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien

Title: The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian (Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien)

Composer: Claude Debussy (1862-1918). Born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris, his father Manuel Achille Debussy owned a china shop while his mother Victorine Manoury was a steamstress. Claude was the eldest of five children. He learned his first piano music at the age of 7, with Jean Cerutti and Antoinette Maute de Fleurville. In 1872, at the age of 10 he was admitted for the next 11 years to the Conservatoire de Paris where he studied with Antoine Francois Marmontel (piano), Albert Lavignac (solfeggio), Ernest Guiraud (composition), Emile Durand (harmony), Cesar Franck (organ). In 1884 he won the Prix de Rome for a two years study at the French Academy in Rome. In 1899 he married Marie Rosalie Texier (1873-1932). He remarried in 1908 to Emma Bardac (1862-1934) and the fruit of their marriage was a girl, Calude Emma. In the same year, Claude Debussy became a member of the governing council of the Conservatoire. Opera: Rodrigue et Chimene (1892), Pelleas et Melisande (1902), Le diable dans le beffroi (1911), La chute de la Maison Usher (1917), Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien (1911). Ballet: Khamma (1912), Jeux (1913), La Boite a joujoux (1913), Le palais du silence ou NO-JA-LI (1914). His musical compositions also include: orchestral and soloist compositions, chamber music, piano music, voice and piano music and vocal compositions.

Libretto: Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-1938). Prince of Montenevoso and Duke of Gallese, Gabriele D'Annunzio was an Italian writer, poet, journalist and playwright. By 1910 he was in Paris and he wrote the play specifically for the dancer Ida Rubinstein. The Vatican reacted by placing all of his works in the Index of Forbidden Books. The work was not a success, but it has been recorded and adapted for several times, notably by Pierre Montreux, Charles Munch, Leonard Bernstein and Michael Tilson Thomas. A film on the subject was produced in 1984 by Petr Weigl. The performance is not really an opera, but a musical mystery play, focused on the story of Saint Sebastian, a captain of the Pretorian Guards who became a Christian and died like a martyr. In the Roman Catholic Church, Sebastian is commemorated by an optional memorial on 20 January while Sebastian's feast day is on 18 December.

Performance history: The musical play premiered on 22 May 1911 at the Theatre du Chatelet. The producer was Gabriel Astruc, with sets and costumes designed by the Russian painter Leon Bakst (1866-1924), a member of the Serghei Diaghilev ansamble of Ballets Russes. The orchestra was conducted by Andre Caplet and Desire Emile Inghelbrecht directed the chorus. Adeline Dudlay sung La Mere douloureuse, Vera Sargine sang La Fille malade des fievres, Desjardins was the emperor and Henry Krauss was the prefect. The production was attended by scandal and did not enter the repertoire. In present times it is rarely performed in it's original form. Most often it is performed as a four movement orchestral suite subtitled Fragments Symphoniques. Edgard Varese conducted the first performance of the symphonic fragments in January 1914 in Prague. In Italy the play was published in 1911 translated by Ettore Janni. The year 2018 marks the centenary of the death of Claude Debussy and a musical album was produced by Philharmonia Orchestra and Pablo Heras Casado. Seldom played, Le Martyre de saint Sebastien is not present in Operabase list.

Roles: Saint Sebastian, narator, Mark and Marcellain, the twins, Virgin Erigone, Vox Coelestis, Musicians, The Women of Byblos, Vox Sola, Chorus (archers of Emesa, Seraphims, Syrians, Martyrs, Virgins, Apostles, Angels)



Story: Sebastian was a Roman soldier born in Gallia and educated in Mediolanum (Milan). As captain of the Pretorian Guard, under Diocletian Cezar Augustus, his duty was to assist the Christian martyrs. Two such Christians, Marcus and Marcellian, members of a distinguished family in Rome, refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods and were sentenced to death. During their execution, anathematized by their mother, Sebastian has the revelation of Jesus and turns himself against his emperor. Condemned to be executed by his own archers, Sebastian finds the strength to encourage them, convinced that in his pain he will be reunited with Jesus. His heroic death, opens the Gates of Heaven where his soul is welcomed by an army of angels.

Act 1 (The Court of Lilies)

In a Roman Palace, Christian twins Mark and Marcellain are chained to pillars (Brother, what will the world be like without my love). Sebastiaian, captain of the guard commands their execution with a broken heart (If I am worthy to serve your Son ...this stigmata of his pain in my strong hand ...by the iron of my last arrow ...I aim). Witnessing death, Sebastian has often heard the divine choir of heavens and has felt every arrow aimed burning his flesh (I hear the melody of holy combat, the divine choir of the seven scourges). Dancing on Live Coals, Sebastian has the revelation of Christ (I dance in the heat of the burning lilies. Glory, O Christ the King ! ...I hear the seven eternal lutes).

Act 2 (The Magic Chamber)

A mysterious place of fantasies, spells and weird apparitions where magicians, astrologers and necromancers are sealed behind huge bronze doors. From behind these doors, Sebastian hears the voice of Erigone, the Maid of the Golden Grain (I was mowing the ears of corn ...and I was the Virgin, faithful to my shadow and my song). When the gates between Earth and Heaven are wide opened, Sebastian identifies in his victims the martyrdom of Christ (Reveal the imprint of the Divine Body ...Lord Love, here is my life). His quest is answered by Vox Coelestis (Who cries for my child so sweet, my lily, born in pure flesh ?).

Act 3 (The Council of the False Gods)

In the court of Caesar Augustus, Sebastian is showing disrespect for the divinity of the Emperor and the old

gods (Cesar, I already have my crown, I don't fear iron). The Woman of Byblos is stupefied and outraged revenging the death of her children (See the beautiful adolescent lying in purple blood ...The god, there is the god ! He has arisen). Sebastian pronounces Cesar to be the evil one, finding relieve in Jesus (Jesus will glorify me, Christ and I we are one, Christ reigns ! You are only mud. Death is life.).

Act 4 (Sebastian's martyrdom)

Sentenced to death by arrows, tied to a laurel tree (the wood of Apollo), Sebastian is asking his men to shoot straight (Do not tremble, do not cry ! ...Be intoxicated with blood, like in battle ...I call forth your terrible love ...Blessed will be the first star !). After the strikes, the Chorus of Syrians answers (Ah ! Weep, o women of Syria ...All that is beautiful the gloomy Hades takes ...Lower the torches. Eros ! Weep ! Weep !).

Act 5 (Paradise)

There are no spoken words. The forest glows with a celestial radiance. From above, choruses of Martyrs, Virgins, Apostles and Angels sing a welcome to the saint (Who is coming ? ...You are praised ...You are a saint ... You are beautiful). The soul of Sebastian answers (I come, I rise, I have wings ...I am a soul Lord, a soul in your soul).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Brother, what will the world be like without my love (The Twins), If I am worthy to serve your Son ...this stigmata of his pain in my strong hand ...by the iron of my last arrow ...I aim (Narrator), I hear the melody of holy combat, the divine choir of the seven scourges (Narrator), I dance in the heat of the burning lilies. Glory, O Christ the King ! ...I hear the seven eternal lutes (Narrator) Act 2 - I was mowing the ears of corn ...and I was the Virgin, faithful to my shadow and my song (Erigone), Reveal the imprint of the Divine Body ...Lord Love, here is my life (Narrator), Who cries for my child so sweet, my lily, born in pure flesh ? (Vox Coelestis) Act 3 - Cesar, I already have my crown, I don't fear iron (Narrator), See the beautiful adolescent lying in purple blood ...The god, there is the god ! He has arisen (Woman of Byblos), Jesus will glorify me, Christ and I we are one, Christ reigns ! You are only mud. Death is life. (Narrator) Act 4 - Do not tremble, do not cry ! ...Be intoxicated with blood, like in battle ...I call forth your terrible love ...Blessed will be the first star ! (Narrator), Ah ! Weep, o women of Syria ...All that is beautiful the gloomy Hades takes ...Lower the torches. Eros ! Weep ! Weep ! (Chorus of Syrians) Act 5 - Who is coming ? ...You are praised ...You are a saint ... You are beautiful (Chorus), I come, I rise, I have wings ...I am a soul Lord, a soul in your soul (Sebastian).

Ballet: At the premiere, Saint Sebastian was played by the Russian dancer and actress Ida Lvovna Rubinstein (1883-1960), member of the Ballets Russes, with choreography produced by Michael Fokine (1880-1942). Her performance was both a triumph and a scandal. The Archbishop of Paris prohibited Catholics from attending because St. Sebastian was being played by a woman. But it was the specific will of it's creator (D'Annunzio) to present the soul of a woman in the carcass of a man (in Roman times only women were coward enough to be a Christian).

Recordings: 1953 Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra and Chorale (Victor Alessandro -Conductor, Frances Yeend and Miriam Stewart - Sopranos, Anna Kaska - Contralto) 1953 Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (Ernest Ansermet - Conductor, Robert Mermoud- Chorus master, Suzanne Danco, Nancy Waugh, Lise de Montmollin - Sopranos), 1960 The Choral Art Society (Leonard Bernstein - Conductor, Felicia Montealegre - St. Sebastian, Fritz Weaver - Narrator, Adele Addison, Virginia Babikian, Marlena Kleinman, Johanna Simon - Sopranos), 1991 London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (Michael Tilson Thomas - Conductor, Leslie Caron - Narrator, Ann Murray, Sylvia McNair, Nathalie Stutzmann - Sopranos), 2011 BBC National Chorus and Orchestra of Wales (Thierry Fisher - Conductor, Irene Jacob, Elisabeth Atherton - Sopranos, Jennifer Johnston - Contralto).

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41. Alceste

Title: Alceste

Composer: Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787). Born in Weidenwang, Upper Palatinate in Germany, his father Alexander Gluck was a forester and hunter in the service of Plankstetten Abbey, a monastery of the Benedictines, while his mother was Maria Walburga named after Saint Walburga the patroness of the nearby town of Eichstatt. His first music lessons were in elementary school, with some private lessons from his schoolmaster. In 1728 he went to Prague where he was matriculated in logic and mathematics in 1731, at the University of Prague. He also played violin, cello and organ at the Church of Our Lady before Tyn in the Old Town of Prague. In 1734 he was employed by Christian Lobkowitz in Vienna where he was a protege of Antonio Salieri. In 1737 Christoph Gluck arrived in Milan and was introduced to Giovanni Battista Sammartini. His first opera, *Artaserse*, was performed at the Teatro Regio Ducal. In 1745 he was invited to become house composer at London's King's Theatre, where he staged two operas. From 1747 to 1750 he traveled with Pietro Mongotti's troupe. In 1750 he married Marie Anna Bergin, the daughter of a wealthy merchant and banker, and the fruit of their marriage was a girl, Marianne. In 1752 he settled in Vienna as Kapellmeister. In 1756 he was made Knight of the Golden Spur by Pope Benedict XIV. In 1774, his former student Queen Marie Antoinette took him under her patronage in Paris, but in 1780 he returned to Vienna. Operas (47 operas among which): *Artaserse* (1741), *Artemene* (1743), *Fedra* (1745), *Antigono* (1756), *Il re pastore* (1756), *Orfeo et Euridice* (1762), *Alceste* (1767), *Le feste d'Apollo* (1769), *Paride et Elena* (1770), *Iphigenie en Aulide* (1774), *Armide* (1777), *Echo et Narcisse* (1779). Ballet: *L'Orfano della china* (1761), *Don Juan* (1761), *Semiramis* (1765). His musical work also includes: 9 symphonies, one flute concerto, one violin concerto, chamber music, sacred and vocal music.

Libretto: Ranieri de' Calzabigi (1714-1795). Ranieri de' Calzabigi was a poet and librettist from Italy. In Paris he was a close friend of the Italian adventurer Giacomo Cassanova. He produced an edition of the works of Pietro Domenico Metastasio (1698-1782) the most important writer of opera libretti at that time. In 1761 he settled in Vienna where he collaborated with Christian Gluck for: *Orpheo et Euridice* (1762), *Don Juan* (1764), *Alceste* (1767), *Paride et Elena* (1770). The text for the libretto is based on the play *Alcestis* by Euripides. First produced at the City Dionysia festival in 438 BC, Euripide's *Alcestis* is the oldest of his surviving Athenian tragedy, with some ambiguous tragicomic tone. Typical for the patriarchal ancient society, this satyr play won for Euripides the second prize of the festival. When Gluck published the score in 1769 he added a preface written by Calzabigi. Although *Alceste* has no role for the castrato voice, in 1770 Christoph Gluck has rewritten the tenor role of Admetus for his friend, the soprano castrato Giuseppe Millico.

Performance history: *Alceste* premiered on 26 December 1767 at the Burgtheater in Vienna. A revised version with a French libretto by Leblanc du Roullet premiered at the Paris Opera on 23 April 1776 in the second Salle du Palais Royal. Another revival of the opera, revised by Hector Berlioz was staged at the Paris Opera in 1861 and 1866. The first performance in the United Kingdom took place at the King's Theatre London in 1795. In modern times, Maria Callas starred as *Alceste* in a 1954 production at La Scala Milan. The opera premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on 24 January 1941, followed by another two productions staged in 1952 and 1960. The Scottish Opera staged two productions in 1972 and 1974. The Lyric Opera of Chicago opened its 1990 season with *Alceste*. At the Stuttgart State Opera Catherine Naglestad played *Alceste* for ten times between January and March 2006. In New Mexico, *Alceste* was part of the summer festival given by the Santa Fe Opera in 2009, with Christine Brewer in the title role. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Alceste* was performed in the world for 77 times, in 12 different productions, ranking 209 on Operabase list.

Roles: *Alceste*, Queen of Pherae in Thessaly (soprano), Admetus, King of Pherae in Thessaly (tenor), Eumelo and Aspasia, their children (boy soprano), Evander, confidant of Admetus (tenor), Ismene, confidante of *Alceste* (soprano), High Priest of Apollo (baritone), Apollo (baritone), Oracle (bass), Herald (baritone), Chorus (courtiers, citizens, maids of honour, priests of Apollo, Gods of the underworld)



Story: Exiled from Olympus, Apollo has spent nine years in the service of the Thessalian king Admetus, renowned for his hospitality. In order to payback for his hospitality, Apollo offers him eternal life on the condition to find someone to replace his soul when claimed by Death. His devoted wife Alceste is the only one willing to die for him, for the sake of their love and their children. On her death bed, Alceste requests in return of her sacrifice that Admetus will never again marry. As she dies, Admetus wants to kill himself, but he is prevented, reminded of his royal duty. Pleased with the sacrifice of the faithful wife, the gods have decided to let her live and god Apollo is the one to bring her back. In Euripide's play and in the French version of the opera, Admetus close friend Hercules was involved in the miraculous rebirth of Alceste.

Act 1 (The grand square in the city of Pherae / The Temple of Apollo)

Herald announces that the last days of their king are at hand (People who grieve at the fate of Admetus). Ismene and Evander, the Royal Family confidants mourn their fate (Ill fated palace that immersed in wailing ...vain is this weeping for him ...let us consult The Oracle). Scene 2 - The people weep the fate of the king's children (Who amid the laments of little children, innocent children). Alceste comes out of the palace for a long speech (I lose a dear husband and you your beloved king). Scene 3 - At the altar, the High Priest declaims his invocation (To you, God of Day, to you, Heaven's ornament and splendour these victims we sacrifice). Scene 4 - Alceste also sings her prayer at the altar (God, eternal, immortal ...accept in kindness my offerings, my prayers). The High Priest identifies signs that the gifts were accepted (...The altar sways, the tripod shakes, the ground trembles, the temple resounds !). The Oracle responds through the mouth of the statue (The King will die unless another dies for him). Scene 5 - Thrilled with such a perspective, Alceste decides to provide a generous example for faithful wives of the future days (I recognize the God, the God moves within me he inspires me to glorious sacrifice). Scene 6 - Evander and Ismene ask Alcestis to hurry and meet the king for one more last time (He asks for you, the king calls for you). Scene 7 - All the citizens weep in tragedy (And did no-one offer himself ? ...The hope is vain ...the throne is not the height of happiness).

Act 2 (Dark wood, sacred to the Gods of the Underworld / A room in the palace)

Scene 1 - Alceste enters the woods guarded by a reluctant Ismene (Stop. Why do you leave your dying husband, your children weeping, the realm in grief ?). Scene 2 - Left alone, Alceste calls for the final judgement (Help me, O gods, now is the moment ...I have no voice, I have no tears, I faint, I die). The Gods of the Underworld respond wandering her decision, but Alceste is insisting (To you, for my husband, I consecrate myself Then come, death receives you, and shows you the path of Lethe, the river of the dead). Scene 3 - Courtiers celebrate the unexpected recovery of Admetus. Ballet Scene 4 - King Admetus hears from Evander the condition for his recovery (From what lethargy, Evander I now awake ...one of your dear ones has fulfilled the oracle ...there was one, lord, who offered to die for you). Scene 5 - Asking for his wife, Alceste joins them but she is pale, unable to speak (Wife ! My beloved ! But why do you not embrace me ?). Hearing of her sacrifice, Admetus wants to refuse it, but it is too late (I shall not live, vain is the gift, I do not accept it ...Husband, there is no more time, my vows are written in heaven). Scene 6 - In her final moments, Alceste wants a grandiose scene when bidding adieu from her children (...bring me garlands, perfumes, let the gods have my final offerings).

Act 3 (The magnificent Hall of the palace)

Admetus complains to Evander the inexorable fate (The vow of Alceste cannot be revoked ...The God is

silent). In her agony, Alceste enters the scene supported by Ismene (I ask that our children do not see you take another wife in your arms). Admetus is happy to fulfil the task (Alceste ! My treasure ! I swear to the Gods, to you). The Gods of the Underworld request their price (Come, Alceste, remember your vow, never did fate so long delay her harsh, savage severity). Scene 3 - A symphony marks the death of Alceste (Weep, O country, O Thessaly, Alceste is dead !). The courtiers fight to prevent Admetus from taking his life (Alceste is dead and life is now a torture for me). Scene 4 - A light appears in the sky and Apollo enters with Alceste amid shining clouds (Your faithful wife's generous vow has pleased the gods. ...I give you back Alceste). Everyone on scene celebrates the happy moment (O dear children ! O beloved husband ! ...O merciful heaven ! O kindly god ! O happy day !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - People who grieve at the fate of Admetus (Herald), Ill fated palace that immersed in wailing ...vain is this weeping for him ...let us consult The Oracle (Ismene, Evander), Who amid the laments of little children, innocent children (Chorus), I lose a dear husband and you your beloved king (Alceste), To you, God of Day, to you, Heaven's ornament and splendour these victims we sacrifice (High Priest), God, eternal, immortal ...accept in kindness my offerings, my prayers (Alceste), ...The altar sways, the tripod shakes, the ground trembles, the temple resounds ! (High Priest), The King will die unless another dies for him (The Oracle), I recognize the God, the God moves within me he inspires me to glorious sacrifice (Alceste), He asks for you, the king calls for you (Ismene), And did no-one offer himself ? ...The hope is vain ...the throne is not the height of happiness (Chorus) Act 2 - Stop. Why do you leave your dying husband, your children weeping, the realm in grief ? (Ismene), Help me, O gods, now is the moment ...I have no voice, I have no tears, I faint, I die (Alceste), To you, for my husband, I consecrate myself Then come, death receives you, and shows you the path of Lethe (Alceste, Gods of the Underworld), From what lethargy, Evander I now awake ...one of your dear ones has fulfilled the oracle ...there was one, lord, who offered to die for you (Admetus, Evander), Wife ! My beloved ! But why do you not embrace me ? (Admetus), I shall not live, vain is the gift, I do not accept it ...Husband, there is no more time, my vows are written in heaven (Admetus, Alceste), ...bring me garlands, perfumes, let the gods have my final offerings (Alceste) Act 3 - The vow of Alcestis cannot be revoked ...The God is silent (Admetus, Evander), I ask that our children do not see you take another wife in your arms (Alceste), Alcestis ! My treasure ! I swear to the Gods, to you (Admetus), Come, Alceste, remember your vow, never did fate so long delay her harsh, savage severity (Gods of the Underworld), Weep, O country, O Thessaly, Alceste is dead ! (Chorus), Alceste is dead and life is now a torture for me (Admetus), Your faithful wife's generous vow has pleased the gods. ...I give you back Alceste (Apollo), O dear children ! O beloved husband ! ...O merciful heaven ! O kindly god ! O happy day ! (Alceste, Admetus)

Ballet: - Act 2 - Scene 3 - A dance of joy and happiness, to honor the recovery of their king. Act 3 - Scene 3 - Shadows encounter the soul of Alceste.

Recordings: 1952 Decca LP Geraint Jones Orchestra and singers 1957 and 1970 London Records (Kirsten Flagstad, Raoul Jobin, Alexander Young, Marion Lowe, Thomas Hemsley, Joan Clark, Rosemary Thayer), 1995 Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Jessye Norman, Nicolai Gedda, Peter Lika, Robert Gambill, Roland Bracht, Kurt Rydl, Brend Weikl), 2002 English Baroque Soloists and Monteverdi Choir (Anne Sofie von Otter, Dietrich Henschel, Paul Groves, Yann Beuron, Joanne Lunn, Katherine Fuge, Nicolas Teste, Ludovic Tezier), 2005 Royal Opera at Covent Garden (Elaine Mary Hall, Janet Baker, Janice Hooper Roe, John Shirley Quirk, Jonathan Summers, Mark Curtis, Matthew Best, Philip Gelling, Robert Tear)

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42. King Arthur

Title: King Arthur

Composer: Henry Purcell (1659-1695). Born in Westminster London, his father Henry Purcell Senior was a gentleman of the Chapel Royal while his mother was Elisabeth Purcell. He had two brothers, Edward and

Daniel. At his father's death, he was adopted by his uncle, Thomas Purcell who was also a gentleman for the Chapel Royal and arranged for Henry to be admitted in the childrens choir. As a chorister he studied with Henry Cooke and Pelham Humfrey. In 1673, he became assistant of the organ builder John Hingston, the keeper of wind instruments to the king. He attended Westminster School and in 1676 he was appointed copyist at Westminster Abbey. In 1679 he was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey where he devoted himself to the composition of sacred music and in 1682 he was also appointed organist at the Chapel Royal. He married Frances Peters in 1680 and the fruit of their marriage were six children, of whom four died in infancy. Together with Bach and Handel, Purcell is honoured with a feast day on the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church on 28 July. Operas: *Dido and Aeneas* (1688), *Prophetes or the History of Dioclesian* (1690), *King Arthur* (1691), *The Fairy Queen* (1692), *Timon of Athens* (1694), *The Indian Queen* (1695), *The Tempest or The Enchanted Island* (1695). Theatre incidental music: *Theodosius* (1680), *The Three Dukes of Dunstable* (1688), *Circe* (1690), *The Two Sosas* (1690), *The Gordian Knot Unty'd* (1691), *The Great Mogul* (1692), *Cleomenes, the Spartan Hero* (1692), *Sir Anthony Love* (1692), *Oedipus* (1692), *The Double Dealer* (1693), *Distresses Innocence* (1694), *The Married Beau* (1694), *Don Quixote* (1695/95), *Abdelazer* (1695), *The British Heroine* (1695). His work also includes: 65 anthems, 100 hymns and sacred songs, 50 canons, 30 odes and songs.

Libretto: John Dryden (1631-1700). John Dryden was an English poet, literary critic, translator and playwright who was made England's first Poet Laureate in 1668. He dominated the literary life to such an extent that his period came to be known in literary circles as the Age of Dryden. His work includes 29 dramatic works among which: *The Indian Queen*, *The Indian Emperor*, *An Evening's Love*, *Marriage a la Mode*, *The State of Innocence*, *All for Love*, *Oedipus*, *Albion and Albanus*, *Don Sebastian*, *Amphytrion*, *King Arthur*, *The Secular Masque*. Other of his works are poems, odes, satires, elegies or essays. The plot centers on Arthur's endeavours to recover his fiancée, abducted by the Saxon King Oswald of Kent. It is a semi-opera, since the principal characters do not sing, unless they are supernatural, pastoral or drunk. Secondary characters sing to them, usually as an entertainment. Dryden wrote the libretto in 1684 to mark the 25-th anniversary of King Charles Restoration, but the king died the next year and John Dryden had to change the libretto, due to political circumstances (he has lost his job as Poet Laureate of the Royal House). There are numerous other operas on the subject, such as: *Merlin* (Karl Goldmark), *Arthus* (Amadeu Vives), *Merlin* (Isaac Albeniz), *Le roi Arthus* (Ernest Chausson), *The Birth of Arthur* (Rutland Boughton).

Performance history: *King Arthur* was first performed at the Queen's Theatre, Dorset Garden, in London, and was advertised in the London Gazette from 4 to 8 of June 1691, suggesting a recent staging. The production proved to be the most financially success for the theatre. Thomas Betterton who was the leading English actor of the Restoration period took the role of King Arthur, while Charlotte Butler was singing the role of Cupid. The opera was revived at least twice during Purcell's lifetime and continued to be performed in the late 1690s. The first major revival in the 18-th century was staged in 1736 in London. Later revivals with varying degrees of revision were played in 1763 in Dublin, 1770 the David Garrick and Thomas Arne's version and in 1770 the John Tremble and Thomas Linley's version. In modern times, *King Arthur* was performed on February 1995 at Theatre du Chatelet, Paris, starring the sopranos Susannah Walters, Veronique Gens, Claron McFaddon, Sandrine Piau and the bass Jonathan Best. In New York, *King Arthur* premiered on 28 June 2004 at the Ziehfeld Theatre, with a secon production on 5 March 2008 at the State Theater. This English drama was translated into German with entirely German or Austrian actors for the 2004 Salzburg Festival. In Sidney Australia, Purcell's *King Arthur* was staged on 25 September 2010 at the City Recital Hall Angel Place, starring Penelope Mills, Christopher Saunders, Paul McMahon and Paul Goodwin Groen. Up to the 2017/18 season, *King Arthur* was performed in the world for 126 times, in 30 different productions, ranking 150 on Operabase list.

Roles: King Arthur, Oswald King of Kent, Conon Duke of Cornwall, Merlin inchanter, Osmond magician, Aurelius friend, Albanact captain of the guards, Guillamar saxon, Emmeline Ducess of Cornwall, Matilde attendant (all spoken roles), Cupid / Philidel an airy spirit (soprano), Grimbald an earthy spirit (bass or baritone), Saxon priests (bass and tenor), Two Valkyres (soprano and alto), British warrior (tenor), Shepherds and shepherdesses (tenor, sopranos, chorus), Cold genius (bass), Two sirens (sopranos), Three nymphs (sopranos), Aeolus (bass), Nereid (soprano), Pan (bass), Venus (soprano), He (bass), She (soprano), Comus (bass), Honour (soprano)



Story: There is a chivalry fight between two kings, King Arthur and King Oswald, for the hand of a princess and the land of Kent, in England. Each of the kings is backed by a wizard, or a magician, with the ability to invoke the power of gods and other supernatural creatures. As a result, an airy spirit Philidel and an earthy spirit Grimbald get involved in the combat, taking the kings as share holders of their will. In the final round, the party of King Arthur, Merlin and Philidel wins the fight, but the losing party is granted their life. And they all lived happily ever after. The original story, the legend of King Arthur, was invented in the 12-th century by a British cleric, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and recorded in his chronicle *De gestis Britonum*, which was very popular in its times. During time, more than 50 literary works have been produced based on the Legend of King Arthur, followed by film and television adaptations, animation, comics, games and musical productions.

Act 1 (An altar of the saxon gods Woden, Thor and Freya)

The Britons ruled by Christian Arthur prepare to battle against Saxon Oswald to secure the land of Kent. Scene 2 - Oswald and his magician Osmond have scarified horses on their god's altar and now are praying (We have sacrificed ...Honour prizing, death despising, fame acquiring by expiring) Scene 3 - A battle is given behind the scene with drums, trumpets and military shouts. After the battle the Britons express their joy for the victory (The fainting Saxons quit their ground, their trumpets languish in their sound, they fly, they fly, they fly,they fly)

Act 2 (In the forest, in pursue of the Saxons / A pavilion)

Philidel, an airy spirit, one of the fallen angels, warns Merlin that Grimbald the earthy spirit is planning to deceive the Britons by leading them to fall off cliffs or to drown in rivers and swamps (Trust not the malicious friend, those are false deluding lights wafed far and near by spiritres). Grimbald refuses to resign and is producing more and more false footprints (See, see the footsteps plain appearing. That way Oswald chose for flying). Finally, they all incline to Philidel and Grimbald sinks with a curse (We breathern of air you heroes will bear). Scene 2 - In a pavilion, Emmeline and Matilda are entertained by shepards form Kent while waiting for King Arthur to arrive (How blest are shepherds, how happy their lasses ...Here are marriage vows for signing). Left alone, Emmeline and Matilda are captured by Oswald and the Britons prepare to rescue them form the Saxon fortress.

Act 3 (A deep wood)

The Saxon fortress is protected by magic horrors produced by Grimbald, the earthy spirit. Philidel is captured by Grimbald but he casts a strong spell over the evil spirit. By the use of some magic drops sprinkled by Philidel over her eyes, Emmeline sees Arthur for some moments and tells him that not only Oswald but also Osmond desires her love. In the castle, Osmond has thrown Oswald in prison and now he woos Emmeline, only to be refused. Osmond is threatening her that he will use magic to bring the Thule' s frost from Iceland to Britain. As he strikes the ground with his wand the scene changes into frozen winter. Invoked, the Cold Genius is reluctant to perform his duties (What power art thou, who from below hast made me rise unwillingly and slow from beds of everlasting snow ?). His action is immediately counteracted by the intervention of Cupid, the god of Love and Spring (What dost you mean by freezing here ? At Love's appearing, all the sky clearing, Winter subdoing and Spring renewing). As Cupid waves his wand the ice melts and people start dancing. Dance (It is I, it is I, it is I that have warmed ye ...Love was made for a blessing and not for a pain). Hearing the cries from Grimbald

stunned in the dark forest, Osmond must interrupt his lustful advances to go and rescue his evil spirit.

Act 4 (In the woods)

Alone in the forest, Arthur hears soft music and finds a golden bridge spanning a silver stream. Two sirens emerge begging him to lay aside his sword and join them (Come bath with us an hour or two, come naked in, for we are so). Arthur resists and presses on to be encountered by nymphs and sylfens singing and dancing (How happy the lover, how easy his chain ...No joys are above the pleasures of love). In an attempt to break the spells, Arthur strikes a fine tree with his sword. A vision of Emmeline appears with her arm wounded but Philidel rushes in and reveals the vision to be Grimbald in disguise. Arthur fells the tree and opens a safe passage to the Saxon fortress.

Act 5 (The Saxon fortress)

With his spells broken and his evil spirit captured, Osmond decides to release Oswald from the prison. Scene 2 - The Britons march on the fortress but Oswald proposes a single fight: he against Arthur. With the help of his air spirit Arthur disarms Oswald but grants him his life. Oswald is commanded to return to Saxony, Emmeline is restored to Arthur, Osmond is imprisoned by Merlin and the triumph of British sovereignty, faith and love are proclaimed. God Aeolus and the Four Winds fly off leaving the island of Britannia in a calm sea. Nereids, Pan, fishermen and people, they all happily sing and dance (Foreign lands thy fish are tasting learn from thee luxurious fasting ...Harvest home, harvest home, and merily roar out our harvest home). Venus enters the scene pleased to join the happy peasants, together with Cupid praising the power of love (Fairest isle, all isles excelling, seat of pleasure and of love, Venus here will choose her dwelling). Victorious in their fight the knights are honored with the Order of the Garter (Our Sovereign high in awful state his honours shall bestow and see his sceptred subjects wait on his commands below).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - We have sacrificed ...Honour prizing, death despising, fame acquiring by expiring (Chorus), The fainting Saxons quit their ground, their trumpets languish in their sound, they fly, they fly, they fly, they fly (Chorus) Act 2 - Trust not the malicious friend, those are false deluding lights wafed far and near by spirits (Philidel), See, see the footsteps plain appearing. That way Oswald chose for flying (Grimbald), We breathe of air you heroes will bear (Chorus), How blest are shepherds, how happy their lasses ...Here are marriage vows for signing (Shepherd, Shepherdesses). Act 3 - What power art thou, who from below hast made me rise unwillingly and slow from beds of everlasting snow ? (Cold Genius), What dost you mean by freezing here ? At Love's appearing, all the sky clearing, Winter subduing and Spring renewing (Cupid), It is I, it is I, it is I that have warmed ye ...Love was made for a blessing and not for a pain (Cupid) Act 4 - Come bath with us an hour or two, come naked in, for we are so (Two Sirens), How happy the lover, how easy his chain ...No joys are above the pleasures of love (Chorus) Act 5 - Foreign lands thy fish are tasting learn from thee luxurious fasting ...Harvest home, harvest home, and merily roar out our harvest home (Chorus), Fairest isle, all isles excelling, seat of pleasure and of love, Venus here will choose her dwelling (Venus), Our Sovereign high in awful state his honours shall bestow and see his sceptred subjects wait on his commands below (Chorus)

Ballet: Mark Morris Dance Group with the English National Opera, at the London Coliseum, have engaged this baroque opera on 26 June 2006 with a choreography produced by the American dancer, choreographer and director Mark Morris. Act 3 - Singers and dancers, men and women dance to honor Cupid, the god of Love who has heated their hearts and brought them together in spite of the cold weather. Act 4 - Nymphs and sylfens dance for Arthur with green branches in their hands. Act 5 - Fishermen from the Britannia island sing and dance after the storm has calmed down. Their folk dances soon turn into a round country dance.

Recordings: 1958 Philomusica of London (Sir Anthony Lewis - Conductor), 1979 Harmonia Mundi, The Deller Consort and Choir (Alfred Deller - countertenor), 1985 Reato, English Baroque Soloists, Monteverdi Choir (John Eliot Gardiner - Conductor), 1995 Erato, Les Arts Florissants (William Christie - Conductor), 1999 Archiv, The English Concert and Choir (Trevor Pinnock - Conductor), 2004 Glossa, Le Concert Spirituel (Herve Niquet - Conductor) DVD: 2005 Euroarts (Nikolaus Harnoncourt - Conductor), 2009 Glossa, Le Concert Spirituel (Herve Niquet - Conductor).

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43. The Threepenny Opera

Title: The Threepenny Opera (Die Dreigroschenoper)

Composer: Kurt Weill (1900-1950). Born in Dessau Saxony, his father Albert Weill (1867-1950) was a hazzan (cantor) while his mother was Emma Ackermann (1872-1955). He was the third of four children and started taking piano lessons at the age of twelve. In 1915 he started taking private lessons of conducting, music theory and composition with Albert Bing, Kapellmeister at the Herzogliches Hoftheater in Dessau. He graduated the Oberrealschule of Dessau in 1918 and enrolled at the Berliner Hochschule für Musik where he studied composition with Engelbert Humperdinck, conducting with Rudolf Krasselt and counterpoint with Friedrich Koch. In 1919 he was employed répétiteur at the Friedrich Theater in Dessau and as Kapellmeister at the newly founded Stadttheater in Ludenscheid. In 1920 he was accepted at the Preussische Akademie der Künste in Berlin to study with Ferruccio Busoni. Out of financial need he taught private students and played the piano in a Bierkeller tavern. In 1926 he married the Austrian singer actress Lotte Lenya (1898-1981) with no offspring. In 1933 he left Berlin for Paris and in 1935 he and his wife moved to New York where his musical The Three Penny Opera was given its premiere on Broadway. Operas: Zaubernacht (1922), Der Protagonist (1926), Mahagonny Songspiel (1927), The Threepenny Opera (1928), Happy End (1929), Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny (1930), Der Jasager (1930), Die Burschenschaft (1932), Die sieben Todsünden (1933), Der Silbersee (1933), A kingdom for a Cow (1935), Johnny Johnson (1936), The Eternal Road (1937), Knickerbocker Holiday (1938), Lady in the Dark (1941), One Touch of Venus (1943), The Firebrand of Florence (1944), Street Scene (1947), Down in the Valley (1948), Love Life (1948), Lost in the Stars (1949), Huckleberry Finn (1950). His compositions also include: 12 orchestral works, 6 cantatas, chamber music, piano music, numerous lieder songs and chansons.

Libretto: Bertold Brecht (1898-1956). Bertold Brecht was a German playwright and poet. He authored 54 plays and screenplays among which: Drums in the Night, Lux in Tenebris, The life of Edward II of England, Little Mahagonny, The Threepenny Opera, Happy End, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, The Seven Deadly Sins, Life of Galileo, The Duchess of Malfi, Antigone, The Tutor, Coriolanus, Turandot, Don Juan, Trumpets and Drums. In 1927, his friend Elisabeth Hauptmann has translated parts of The Beggar's Opera of the English poet John Gay (1686-1732) and attracted the interest of the impresario Ernst Josef Aufricht for his company at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin. Bertold Brecht produced the libretto and also added four songs by the French poet Francois Villon translated by Karl Anton Klammer and one of his poems called Mack the Knife (Die Moritat von Mackie Messer). Kurt Weill produced the score using only one of the melodies composed by John Pepusch (1667-1752) for the original score of the Beggar's Opera. The title was decided only a week before the premiere.

Performance history: The opera was first performed at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin on 31 August 1928 with settings designed by Caspar Neher. It became a great success playing 400 times in the next two years with his wife Lotte Lenya playing Jenny. In 1931 a film version of the opera was produced by Georg Wilhelm Pabst (1885-1967), an Austrian theatre and film director. By 1933, the play has been translated into 18 languages and performed in Europe more than 10 000 times. In the United Kingdom there was a concert performance in 1933, but the fully staged premiere was given on 9 February 1956. In the United States the opera premiered on Broadway at the Empire Theatre, on April 13 1933 and closed after 12 performances. A French version produced by Gaston Baty was presented in October 1930 at the Theatre Montparnasse in Paris. In Russia, The Threepenny Opera premiered in Moscow in 1930, at the Kamerny Theatre, directed by Alexander Tairov, but it received a poor reception in the Izvestia newspaper. The Italian premiere took place at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan, on 27 February 1956, in the presence of Bertold Brecht. The performance was directed by Giorgio Strehler and conducted by Bruno Maderna. Up to the 2017/18 season, The Threepenny Opera was performed in the world for 190 times, in 36 different productions, ranking 112 on Operabase list.

Roles: Macheath, nicknamed Mackie the Knife (tenor/baritone), Jonathan Jeremiah Peachum, owner of the firm

"The beggar's friend" (baritone), Celia Peachum, his wife (mezzo-soprano), Polly Peachum, his daughter (soprano), Brown, chief of the Police (baritone), Lucy Brown, his daughter (soprano), Ginny Jenny, a tavern attendant (mezzo-soprano), Filch, a young beggar (tenor), The Reverend Kimball (baritone), Street Singer (baritone), Smith, a constable (baritone), Walter (tenor), Matthias (tenor), Jakob (tenor), Jimmie (tenor), Ede (tenor), Chorus (beggars, gangsters, tavern girls, constables)



Story: Both very serious and very comical (depends on which side you stand), this is the story of some "less fortunate" common people in London. A Mr. Macheath, the leader of a thief's gang marries the daughter of the king of the beggars. Outraged, the father in law wants to skin Macheath, but it turns out that he is an army comrade and a good friend to the Chief of the police. Threatening with the use of his political influence to spoil the Coronation Day, the king of the beggars obtains the hanging of his rival, but, as soon as the political context dissolves, Macheath is not only released but nominated for a permanent rank in the nobility. An anecdotal comedy, the story extracts its humor from the resemblance with the real life tricky relationship between the police officers and their clients.

Prologue (Market Day in Soho)

A street singer entertains the crowd with the illustrated murder ballad of Mackie the Knife (And Macheath has his knife but no one knows where it may be).

Act 1 (Inside the shop with professional clothing for the beggars / An empty stable in Soho)

Mr. Peachum prepares the audience (Human beings have the horrid capacity of being able to make themselves heartless at will). The young beggar Filch enters the shop seeking for an outfit, but Peachum explains that his licenses are only granted to professionals at a fifty per cent of the weekly takings. Filch agrees and exchanges his clothes with a professional outfit type C (Victim of the Industrial Boom). Left alone, Mr. and Mrs. Peachum sing the illumination song (I for one like to spend the night at home ...Such is the moon over Soho). Scene 2 - Macheath celebrates his wedding with Polly Peachum, daughter of the King of the beggars (We can have our marriage here safe enough ...But this is a stable !). Soon the stable is transformed into an over ornate living room with stolen things produced by gentleman robbers (Junk ! A rosewood harpsichord and a Renaissance sofa. That's unforgivable.). All the members of the gang pay their respect to the Captain (...to offer you our heartiest congratulations). As Reverend Kimball arrives all men sing a wedding song for poorer people (Bill Lawgen and Mary Syer, they were spliced last Tuesday night by law !). To entertain the audience, Polly sings the song of Pirate Jenny (Gentleman, today you see me washing up the glasses ...Will you sail off with me). Brown enters the room, in his private capacity, to be introduced to the bride and to recollect how he served together with Macheath as soldiers in India (John was a soldier and so was James). When all retire, the happy couple sing (For love lasts for ever -or not so long- in many a many a town). Scene 3 - Returned home Polly faces her parents with the news of her marriage (When I was a girl, and an innocent girl). Mr. and Mrs. Peachum are not at all delighted (So now she's become a crook's hussy ! ...why must it be a horse thief and a footpad ?). The parents must return to their business as five honorable beggar customers enter the shop. When alone, Mr. Peachum asks his daughter to divorce, but she refuses to comply, confident since the Sheriff himself was merry at her wedding (Leave it to me. Money rules the world.). Polly and her parents decide to go to the Sheriff's office (on different assumptions) and they start to sing (There's a thing I want to try: once in this my dark existence to reward a man's persistence).

Act 2 (The Stable / A Tavern in Wapping / Prison in the Old Bailey)

After seeing Mr. Brown, Polly brings the list of charges (for the last 18 months) to Macheath: killing two shopkeepers, 30 burglaries, 23 street robberies, attempted murders, forgeries, perjuries. Macheath must go in the hide, but he leaves Polly in charge with his business presenting her the account books: Hook-Finger five gold watches, Wally the Weeper to be reported, Jimmy the Second to be rised, Robert the Saw nothing, etc. ...and all profits must be send to a banking house in Manchester, since in four weeks he will hand the hole gaud to Brown and become a banker. When the gang enters the room they are presented the new boss and the two lovers must part. Scene 2 - Mr. Peachum bribes Ginny Jenny to report Macheath if she sees him. She sings the ballad of servitude (Now here's a man who fights old Satan's battle). Scene 3 - Macheath enters the tavern where Ginny Jenny reads his hand about a treacherous woman, her name beginning with J. Macheath sings the ballad of the fancy man and Ginny Jenny backs him for a duet (Once on a time - who knows how long ago ? ...At the same time - it's rather long ago). As the Police comes in, Macheath tries to jump out of the window but he is encountered by his mother in law (The greatest heroes in history have always tripped up over little obstacles) and the officers escort him to his new lodgings. Scene 4 - At the prison Mr. Brown is trying to excuse himself (I did everything I could). In his barred cage, Macheath sings about the secret of gracious living (Great prize is always lavished on great thinkers who think of books but do not think of dinner). When Lucy Brown enters the scene, Macheath denies being married to Polly Peachum, since he is committed to make Lucy a honest woman. But Polly enters the room and the two women engage in a jealousy duet (Come right out, Old Soho's beauty queen ! ...Polly loves Mac I actually adore him). In a gentlemanly fashion, Macheath manages to calm down the women reminding them that he is about to be hanged and Mrs' Peachum drags Polly off the fight boxing her ears. With a little help from Lucy, Macheath manages to escape. When Mr. Peachum comes to claim the reward for capturing the bandit, Macheath walks the street in front of his cage. In front of the curtain, Macheath and Ginny Jenny sing (What does a man live by ? ...Men live exclusively by mortal sin).

Act 3 (Wardrobe of Mr. Peachum's shop / A bedroom in Old Bailey / The Death Cell)

Mr. Peachum prepares a demonstration of misery of 1432 beggars, meaning to disorganize the coronation procession. Ginny Jenny and the tavern girls bursts into the room to collect the money for having Macheath nabbed. Since both Mr. and Mrs. Peachum strongly refuse to pay the ransom, Ginny Jenny brings to their attention the fact that Macheath, like a real gentleman, has pardoned her and has spent the night in her arms. Waiting for a cup of coffee and her money, Ginny Jenny sings again her servitude ballad (Now here's a man who toward the gallows races). As Mr. Brown and his constables enters the shop, he seems not to know Mr. Peachum and orders that all the patriotic gentleman in the room should be locked. Hearing a secret password, all the beggars begin to sing the song of the futility of all human endeavor (A man lives by his head. That head will not suffice). Mr. Peachum threatens Brown that thousands of other really poor people will avoid being arrested and will spoil with their presence the coronation day. Brown trades the quitting of the beggar's protest, against getting Macheath arrested, while Ginny Jenny provides the address of his hide. Happy with the turn of events, Mr. Peachum sings (Since man are just no good pick up a piece of wood and hit them in the head, then maybe they'll be good). In front of the curtain, Ginny Jenny sings the song of Solomon (King Solomon was very wise ...a man is better off without). Scene 2 - Polly has come to Lucy to beg pardon for her behavior and they both agree that men aren't worth it. When Macheath is caught again, Mr. Peachum is jubilant with his daughter (Your husband's going to be hanged. I've brought your widow's weeds). Scene 3 - The bells are ringing the coronation ceremony. The poor people of London have abandoned the coronation and are jamming the prison street to witness the execution. Macheath tries to bribe Brown with a thousand pounds and sings softly (Hark to the voice that pleads for pity, hark !). When Matthias comes to visit, Macheath asks him to bring four hundred pounds, before the execution, than he makes some calculation with Mr. Brown. As people are admitted to the execution, Macheath begs pardon of all singing a ballad (All you who will live long and die in bed ... prey to God that he may pardon me). When Macheath is standing on the gallows, Brown riding high reads a message from the Royal House (On the occasion of her Coronation, our Gracious Queen commands that one Captain Macheath shall at once be released, he is to be raised to permanent ranks of the nobility). All present sing the chorale of the poorest of the poor (Combat injustice but in moderation: such things will freeze to death if left alone).

Great moments and arias:

Prologue - And Mecheath has his knife but no one knows where it may be (Street Singer).

Act 1 - Human beings have the horrid capacity of being able to make themselves heartless at will (Peachum), I for one like to spend the night at home ...Such is the moon over Soho (Mr. and Mrs. Peachum), We can have our marriage here safe enough ...But this is a stable ! (Macheath, Polly), Junk ! A rosewood harpsichord and a Renaissance sofa. That's unforgivable (Macheath), ...to offer you our heartiest congratulations (Matthias), Bill Lawgen and Mary Syer, they were spliced last Tuesday night by law ! (Chorus), Gentleman, today you see me washing up the glasses ...Will you sail off with me (Polly), John was a soldier and so was James (Chorus), For love lasts for ever -or not so long- in many a many a town (Macheath, Polly), When I was a girl, and an innocent girl (Polly), So now she's become a crook's hussy ! ...why must it be a horse thief and a footpad ? (Mr. and Mrs. Peachum). Leave it to me. Money rules the world. (Mr. Peachum). There's a thing I want to try: once in this my dark existence to reward a man's persistence (Peachum family).

Act 2 - Now here's a man who fights old Satan's battle (Jenny), Once on a time - who knows how long ago ? ...At the same time - it's rather long ago (Macheath, Jenny), The greatest heroes in history have always tripped up over little obstacles (Mrs. Peachum), I did everything I could (Mr. Brown), Great prize is always lavished on great thinkers who think of books but do not think of dinner (Macheath), Come right out, Old Soho's beauty queen ! ...Polly loves Mac I actually adore him (Lucy, Poly), What does a man live by ? ...Men live exclusively by mortal sin (Macheath)

Act 3 - Now here's a man who toward the gallows races (Ginny Jenny), A man lives by his head. That head will not suffice (Chorus), Since man are just no good pick up a piece of wood and hit them in the head, then maybe they'll be good (Mr. Peachum), King Solomon was very wise ...a man is better off without (Jenny), Your husband's going to be hanged. I've brought your widow's weeds (Mr. Peachum), Hark to the voice that pleads for pity, hark ! (Macheath), All you who will live long and die in bed ...prey to God that he may pardon me (Macheath), On the occasion of her Coronation, our Gracious Queen commands that one Captain Macheath shall at once be released, he is to be raised to permanent ranks of the nobility (Brown), Combat injustice but in moderation: such things will freeze to death if left alone (Chorus).

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1930 Telefunken (Willy Trenk-Trebitsch - Macheath, Lotte Lenya - Jenny, Erika Hemke - Polly, Erich Ponto - Peachum), 1954 Decca Broadway (Scott Merrill - Macheath, Lotte Lenya - Jenny, Jo Sullivan - Polly, Martin Wolfson - Peachum), 1976 Columbia (Raul Julia - Macheath, Ellen Green - Jenny, Caroline Kava - Polly, C.K. Alexander - Peachum), 1988 Decca (Rene Kollo - Macheath, Maria Ilva Biolcati - Jenny, Ute Lemper - Polly, Mario Adorf - Peachum), 1990 Koch International Classics (Manfred Jung - Macheath, Anelia Schoumanova - Jenny, Stephanie Myszak - Polly, Herrmann Becht - Peachum), 1994 Donmar Warehouse (Tom Hollander - Macheath, Tara Hugo - Jenny, Sharon Small - Polly, Tom Mannion - Peachum), 1999 Ensemble Modern (Max Raabe - Macheath, Timna Brauer - Jenny, Sona MacDonald - Polly, Heinz Karl Gruber - Peachum)

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44. Falstaff

Title: Falstaff or The Three Jokes (Falstaff, ossia Le tre burle)

Composer: Antonio Salieri (1750-1825). Born in Legano, south of Verona, his father Antonio Salieri Senior was a wealthy agricultural merchant who fathered 11-12 children the composer being the eighth. He received his first musical lessons from Giuseppe Simoni, organist at the Legagno Cathedral. In 1763 both his parents have died and he was sent to live with his older brother, a monk in Padua. In 1766 he became a ward of a nobleman Giovanni Mocenigo and he gained the attention of the composer Leopold Gassmann who took the orphan boy to Vienna and paid for his musical education. His mentor introduced him to Emperor Joseph II and he was included in the chamber music performances held at the Royal Palace. At Gassmann's death in 1774 he succeeded as assistant director of the Italian opera in Vienna. On 10 October 1775 he married Countess Therese Helfferstorfer,

the daughter of a financier at the court treasury and the fruit of their marriage were four children. In 1778 he received the commission to compose the inaugural opera for La Scala in Milan and he produced *Europa riconosciuta* an opera in two acts that premiered at La Scala on 3 August 1778. Among his students in Vienna were famous musicians such as: Ludwig van Beethoven, Antonio Cartellieri, Franz Liszt, Franz Schubert, Maria Theresia von Paradis, Carl Czerny. Operas: *Le donne letterate* (1770), *L'amore innocente* (1770), *Armida* (1771), *La fiera di Venezia* (1772), *Il barone di Rocca antica* (1772), *La Locantiera* (1773), *La calamita de' cuori* (1774), *La finita scena* (1775), *Europa riconosciuta* (1778), *La scuola de' gelosi* (1779), *Il talismano* (1779), *Der Rauchfangkehrer* (1784), *Semiramide* (1782), *Les Danaïdes* (1784), *La grotta di Trofonio* (1785), *Prima la musica e poi le parole* (1786), *Les Horaces* (1786), *Tarare* (1787), *La cifra* (1789), *Palmira regina di Persia* (1795), *Falstaff* (1799), *Annibale in Capua* (1801), *Die Neger* (1804). Ballet: *L'Europa riconosciuta* (7 movements), Ballet in 16 movements, Ballet in 10 movements, Ballet in 8 movements. His compositions also include: 6 concertos, 9 symphonies, 5 marches, chamber music, sacred vocal music (oratorios, masses, graduals, psalms, litanies, hymns, motets, sacred arias) and numerous insertion arias and ensembles.

Libretto: Carlo Prospero Defranceschi. Sir John Falstaff is a fictional character invented by Shakespeare and present in five of his plays. In this opera inspired by Shakespeare's play *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff is a buffoonish suitor of two married women. The name Falstaff is probably derived from the name of the medieval knight Sir John Fastolf who fought at the Battle of Patay, and lost, against Joan of Arc. Although there is no evidence that he acted with cowardice, he was temporarily stripped of his knighthood. There are several other works about Falstaff inspired by Shakespeare's play: *Falstaff's Wedding* a drama by William Kenrick, *Falstaff* an opera by Michael William Balfe, *Falstaff* the last opera of Giuseppe Verdi, *Falstaff* a symphonic study by Edward Elgar. There are also 4 film production including one produced by Orson Welles and 9 printed books. The Italian librettist has changed the Elisabethan drama into an opera buffa (*divertimento giocoso*).

Performance history: The opera was first performed at the Karntnertheater in Vienna on the 3 January 1799. Twenty-six performances were given between then and 1802. Carlo Angrisani was in the leading role supported by the sopranos Milloch and Irene Tomeoni. The American premiere took place on 15 November 1974 at the National Theater of the Boston Center. The opera was revived in modern times after a memorable performance in 1995 at the Schwetzingen Festival produced by Michael Hampe. Recorded in DVD format the performance was produced by the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Choir of the Theater im Pfalzbad Ludwigshafen with John de Carlo singing Falstaff and the sopranos Teresa Ringholz, Delores Ziegler and Darla Brooks in leading roles. A recent version posted on Youtube can be heard with the following distribution: Pierre Yves Pruvot - Falstaff, Salome Haller - Mrs Ford, Simon Edwards - Mr Ford, Nigel Smith - Mr Slender, Hjordis Thebault - Mrs Slender, Jean Claude Malgoire - Conductor. Another notable performance was staged at the Theater an der Wien, starting with 12 October 2016, casting Rene Jacobs as conductor, Christoph Pohl as Falstaff, Anett Fritsch as Mrs Ford and Alex Penda as Mrs Slender. The accompaniment was provided by Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin Orchestra and Arnold Schoenberg Chor. Up to the 2017/18 season, Salieri's *Falstaff* was performed in the world for 7 times, in 2 different productions, ranking 1208 on Operabase list as compared to Verdi's *Falstaff* performed for 729 times in 155 different productions and ranking 33 on Operabase list.

Roles: Sir John Falstaff (bass), Bradolf, his servant (baritone), Mr. Ford (tenor), Mrs. Ford (soprano), Betty, her maid (soprano), Mr. Slender (baritone), Mrs Slender (soprano)



Story: In the game of hunting a deer, an unfortunate bachelor, old and fat (a Pantalone) finds himself in the position of being transformed from hunter into game. The Royal entertainment of hunting deer in pure aristocratic style, at the Windsor Castle, has been transformed into a *comedia buffa*. The two cherry ladies (deers) are not entirely innocent either. In pure Shakespeare's style, man and women shake their spears, not in iron but in cunning or scheming words.

Act 1 (A party at Slender's house / Falstaff's room at the inn).

Guests sing in honor of the Master of the house (Long live the common friend and your gracious consort). After the greetings they all enjoy the servings (Bravo indeed ! Jams and liquors ...Yes, let's drink and then dance ! ...Fill my cup to offer in honor of these two goddesses !). As the guests get involved in dancing the menuet, the chorus sings (So this is Falstaff ! It's a walking barrel ! He must eat for eight ! and drink like twelve !). At dawn, all the guests, including Falstaff must bid their farewell (Long Live the friendship !). Scene 2 - Waiting for his master, Bardolfo complains (I came to serve this soulless ! ...Or on the wall ...or in the prison !). Scene 3 - Sir Falstaff brings to his servant's attention that two of the most wealthy and beautiful women in Windsor have fallen for his charms (England Ornament and stupor of the world ..My great circumference and my air and manners ..had dazzled them, seduced). Then he writes love letters to both and sends Bardolfo to deliver. Scene 4 - Thoughtful Bardolfo decides to deliver the letters, but also to inform their husbands, expecting a little gift. Scene 5 - Mr. Ford returnig from the trip wanders if his wife was faithful (Who knows ?... The woman is an ugly mess). Scene 6 - Receiving the letter Mrs. Slender feels insulted and calls for venange (Oh, you walking jar ! ...Venange, yes, venange !). When she presents the letter to her friend, Mrs. Ford, she finds out they both have received a similar letter. Together they plan an excelent project for a great mockery. Scene 7 - Bardolfo informs both husbands about his master's intentions. Scene 8 - Confrunted with their husbands, the two ladies behave as if nothing has happened, maintaining their plan for venange. Scene 9 - Mr. Ford decides to pay a visit to Falstaff in disguise, while Mr. Slender laughs to himself what the fate of Falstaff may be (What a laugh ! If he comes to my wife ...knowing my wife, by Bacchus he will repent !). Scene 10 - Falstaff and Bardolfo (Lord, for you ask a muffled female entity ! ...Ah, I can't help being the idol of the female sex !). Scene 11 - Disguised as a German girl, Mrs Ford invites Falstaff to stand for the words in his letters, at Mrs Ford's house, when the bells ring 11 times (Oh, the boys know me well !). Scene 12 - Mr. Ford enters disguised as a Mr. Broch and offers Fallstaf a sack of money to help him express his feelinigs to Mrs. Ford and Falstaff is only to happy to comply (Falstaff, trust Falstaff, in the empire of Cupid I'm Caesar) Scene 13 - Mr. Ford sings the aria of jealousy (Ah, vile ! Oh, seductive ! ... So it's all true !). Scene 14 - Mrs. Ford prepares a laundry basket for her intruder and instructs her servants what to do. Scene 15 -When Falstaff arrives Mrs. Ford plays his game (You alone are my treasure ...Darling, I adore you too !) but Mrs Slender rushes in very agittated since Mr. Ford is comming with the guards intending to kill the unwelcomed lover. In an effort to save the situation, Mrs. Slender mentions the loundry basket and Falstaff hurries to fit in (Quick cover me !... I'm safe now !). Scene 16 - When Mr. Ford enters the room, the servants leave with the laundry basket. Pleased with the result of their joke, the two ladies decide to invite Falstaff to a second date.

Act 2 (The house of Mrs. Ford / Falstaff's room at the inn / In the forest near the Windsor Castle)

Betty informs her master on how the servants have dropped the basket in the water and Falstaff barely escaped (In the sea, a whale so much noise does not). Scene 2 - In his room Falstaff recovers form the adventure.

Scene 3 - Falstaff recollects his moments in the basket Scene 4 - Betty arrives with a new invitation from Mrs.

Ford (She's lost, poor thing ! is inconsolable, weep, sight). Scene 5 - Falstaff is wandering why Mr. Brock has not arrived. Scene 6 - When Mr. Brock arrives Falstaff is still in his underpants. Scene 7 - Falstaff informs his client that Mrs. Ford has invited him for a second date, so there is hope for him too, but Mr. Ford barely takes it (I don't know if lucky I should consider ...Hang on, my heart !). Scene 8 - Mr. Ford sings his second aria of jealousy (Star ! Do I sleep or am I awake ? ...To my righteous venance). Scene 9 - Mrs. Ford prepares with Betty for the second Mockery (Calm down ! Your handsome lover will come). Scene 10 - Falstaff arrives and he exchanges appreciative words with his host. Scene 11 - As Mrs. Slender rushes in, Falstaff must hide in the bedroom (Your husband has another attack of jealousy ...I'm glad that the fat boy isn't here !). With no place to hide, they decide to disguise Falstaff as a woman, dressed as a large cook. Scene 12 - They dress the fat boy while the servants prepare to repeat the scene with the basket. Scene 13 - Mr. Ford arrives together with Mr. Slender and friends. Mr. Ford warns to kill them both than he stubs and dumps the laundry basket, only to be laughed (Let the fools laugh, let the perfidious laugh, but I'm not defeated yet). Mrs. Ford asks the old cook (Falstaff) to make way for her husband to search the bedroom and Mr. Ford stiks her out (I'll break your neck if you come back again !). Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Slender enjoy the moment blessing the stick on the huge bottom. Scene 14 - Back in his room Falstaff complains his fate when Mr. Brock arrives (Ungrateful luck ! ...and to top it off: get beaten up !). Scene 15 - Falstaff is invited to a third date, this time in the forest and he brings the news to Mr. Brock (Stay hidden and next to the Lady you'll se me in Herne the Hunter transformed). Scene 16 - Now Mr. Slender sings his jealousy aria (Hide behind the hill ...Oh, what madness ! Jealousy is a terrible evil !). Scene 17 - Mrs Ford and all the rest prepare for the final game. Scene 18 - Falstaff enters the scene with a dear head, welcomed by the lady (Look now how love has transformed me into a deer cuckold ! ...Yes, I'm approaching my dear fawn !). Mrs. Slender appears pretending in a great terror and both the women disappear. Scene 19 - Mrs. Ford reappears with her servants, disguised as Queen of the Fairies and when they all prepare to dance around the Holm Oak they discover Falstaff. Beliving him to be a spirit of the forest, they all start to test him with their torches, and since he complains it is the signal that Vice corrupts him (It's impure ! ...Oh, Ouch ! ...Totally impure ! Dance around him). All are amazed by the power of evil desires (They pollute the inept man...Making him act like a beast). Hearing the horn honking, Mrs. Ford and her company are fleeing quickly. Scene 20 - Mr. Ford, Mr. Slender arrive with their friends demanding an explanation. Preparing to test again with fire the spirit of the forest, Falstaff uncovers his mask (So you knew ? ...Who am I ? ...You are a madman which in a single day has been left three times mocked). For the final moment, all present sing an aria while Falstaff recognizes his mistake (Now that you've been mocked three times ...I assure you, I swear ! ...Let me bolt).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Long live the common friend and your gracious consort (Chorus), Bravo indeed ! Jams and liquors ...Yes, let's drink and then dance ! ...Fill my cup to offer in honor of these two geddesses ! (Falstaff), So this is Falstaff ! It's a walking barrel ! He must eat for eight ! and drink like twelve ! (Chorus), Long Live the friendship ! (Chorus), I came to serve this soulless ! ...Or on the wall ...or in the prison ! (Bardolfo), England Ornament and stupor of the world ..My great circumference and my air and manners ...had dazzled them, seduced (Falstaff), Who knows ?... The woman is an ugly mess (Mr. Ford), Oh, you walking jar ! ...Venange, yes, venange ! (Mrs. Slender), What a laugh ! If he comes to my wife ...knowing my wife, by Bacchus he will repent ! (Mr. Slender), Lord, for you ask a muffled female entity ! ...Ah, I can't help being the idol of the female sex ! (Bardolfo, Falstaff), Oh, the boys know me well ! (Mrs. Ford), Falstaff, trust Falstaff, in the empire of Cupid I'm Caesar (Falstaff), Ah, vile ! Oh, seductive ! ... So it's all true ! (Mr. Ford), You alone are my treasure ...Darling, I adore you too ! (Falstaff, Mrs. Ford), Quick cover me !... I'm safe now ! (Falstaff),

Act 2 - In the sea, a whale so much noise does not (Betty), She's lost, poor thing ! is inconsolable, weep, sight (Betty), I don't know if lucky I should consider ...Hang on, my heart ! (Falstaff, Mr. Ford) , Star ! Do I sleep or am I awake ? ...To my righteous venance (Mr. Ford), Calm down ! Your handsome lover will come (Mrs. Ford), Your husband has another attack of jealousy ...I'm glad that the fat boy isn't here ! (Mrs. Slender), Let the fools laugh, let the perfidious laugh, but I'm not defeated yet (Mr. Ford), I'll break your neck if you come back again ! (Mr. Ford), Ungrateful luck ! ...and to top it off: get beaten up ! (Falstaff), Stay hidden and next to the Lady you'll se me in Herne the Hunter transformed (Falstaff), Hide behind the hill ...Oh, what madness ! Jealousy is a terrible evil ! (Mr. Slender), Look now how love has transformed me into a deer cuckold ! ...Yes, I'm approaching my dear fawn ! (Falstaff, Mrs. Ford), It's impure ! ...Oh, Ouch ! ...Totally impure ! Dance around

him (Mrs. Ford, Falstaff), They pollute the inept man...Making him act like a beast (Chorus), So you knew ? ...Who am I ? ...You are a madman which in a single day has been left three times mocked (Falstaff, Chorus), Now that you've been mocked three times ...I assure you, I swear ! ...Let me bolt (Chorus, Falstaff).

Ballet: Act 1 - Menuet

Recordings: 1998 Guido Cantelli Orchestra Milan (Romano Franceschetto, Fernando Luis Ciuffo, Filippo Bettoschi, Milan Madrigalists, Chiara Chialli), 2000 Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart (John Del Carlo, Teresa Ringholz, Richard Croft, Delores Ziegler, Jake Gardner), 2003 Chantres de la Chapelle de Versailles (Simon Edwards, Salome Haller, Liliana Faraon, Raimonds Spogis, Hjordis Thebauld), 2003 Hungaroton, Salieri Chamber Chorus, Salieri Chamber Orchestra (Jozsef Gregor, Maria Zempelini, Denes Gulyas, Istvan Gati, Eva Panczel).

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45. The World on the Moon

Title: The World on the Moon (Il mondo della luna)

Composer: Joseph Haydn (1732-1809). Born in Rohrau, Austria, his father Mathias Haydn was a wheelwright, while his mother Maria Koller was a previous cook in the palace of Count Graf Harrach. He started his musical education with Johann Matthias Frank the schoolmaster and choirmaster in Hainburg, learning to play both the harpsichord and the violin. In 1739 he was bought to the attention of Georg von Reuter, the director of music in St. Stephen's Cathedral and he moved to Vienna where he worked for the next nine years as a chorister. Starting with 1749 he worked as a professional musician and as a valet for the Italian composer Nicola Porpora. In 1757 he was employed by Count Franz Morzin as Kapellmeister in Unterlukawitz. In 1760 he married Maria Anna Theresia Keller (1730-1800) with no offspring. After 1761, he was employed for the next thirty years as Kapellmeister to Prince Paul Anton Esterhazy and he lived with the family, mostly at the Schloss Esterhazy in Eisenstad. Amadeus Mozart was among his friends in Vienna and the two occasionally played in string quartets together. Between 1791 to 1792 and 1794-1795 he concertated successfully in London. After 1795 he was a public figure in Vienna and he composed his two great oratorios The Creation and The Seasons. Operas: *Acide e Galatea* (1762), *La canterina* (1766), *Lo speziale* (1768), *Le pescatrici* (1770), *L'infedelta delusa* (1773), *Philemon und Baucis* (1773), *L'incontro improvviso* (1775), *Il mono della luna* (1777), *La vera costanza* (1779), *L'isola disabitata* (1779), *La fedelta premiata* (1781), *Orlando paladino* (1782), *Armida* (1784). His musical compositions also include: 40 concertos (for violin, violoncello, violone, horn, trumpet, flute, oboe, lire, harpsichord), 14 masses, 106 symphonies, 68 string quartets, 45 piano trios, 62 piano sonatas, two oratorios.

Libretto: Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793). Carlo Goldoni was an Italian playwright and librettist from the Republic of Venice. His work includes some of the most famous plays of Italy: *Il servitore di due padroni*, *Belisario*, *Don Giovanni Tenorio*, *La putta onorata*, *Il cavaliere e la dama*, *Il teatro comico*, *Il bugiardo*, *Il vero amico*, *La locandiera*, *Il feudatario*, *Gli innamorati*, *I rusteghi*, *Gustavo*, *Oronte*, *re de Sciti*, *Il mondo della luna*, *Il filozof di campagna*, *La buona figliola*, *Lo speziale*, *Le pescatrici*, *Le donne vendicate*. His work also includes cantatas and serenadas, poetry, books (*Nuovo teatro comico*) and translations. The libretto for *Il mondo della luna* was written in 1750 and staged in the carnival of Venice with music composed by Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785). Haydn composed his version of the opera as property of the Esterhazy family to be performed during the wedding celebrations of Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy with Countess Maria Anna Wissenwolf.

Performance history: The opera was first performed at the Esterhaza Palace in Fertod Hungary, on 3 August 1777. In recent times the opera was presented at the Holland Festival in 1959, conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. Another memorable production was staged in 2002 at the Berlin Staatsoper and also at the Innsbruck Festival, conducted by Rene Jacobs, followed in 2008 by the Drottningholm Festival. In England, Jeff Clark's *The English Players* staged the opera in 1992 and his version was revived in 2006 at the Ilford Opera Festival. In

Vienna, Nikolaus Harnoncourt conducted the performance in December 2009 starring Vivica Genaux in the leading role. In New York, the opera was presented by the Githam Chamber Opera, at the Hayden Planetarium in January 2010. Due to courtesy of NASA, the planetarium was transformed into an opera house, using the 180 degree dome for projections. Since December 2013, the opera is part of the repertoire of the Moscow Chamber Musical Theatre. On October/November 2014, English Touring Opera took a new production of the work on tour throughout England. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Il mondo della luna* was performed in the world for 97 times, in 27 different productions, ranking 175 on Operabase list

Roles: Ecclitico, an astrologer (tenor), Ernesto, a cavalier (contralto castrato), Buonafede (bass), Clarice, his daughter (soprano), Flaminia, his second daughter (soprano), Lisetta, maid (mezzo-soprano), Cecco, servant (tenor), Chorus (four scholars and noblemen)



Story: A rich man, Buonafede, is in search for proper suitors for his two girls. He gets invited to his neighbour Ecclitico to observe a Lunar eclipse through a telescope. While admiring the telescope, Ecclitico bluffs that it can see a whole world on the Moon, and Buonafede seems to buy it. Interested in Buonafede's daughter and money, Ecclitico decides to continue the masquerade. When returning the visit, he pretends to possess a liquor that transports you to the Moon. Buonafede buys it intending to impress the maid Lisetta, whom he wants to romance. They all find themselves transported to Ecclitico's garden, declared to be the World on the Moon. With one reason or another, they all enter the play. The maid Lisetta and a servant named Cecco are declared Emperor and Emperess of the Moon, while the two girls get married to Ecclitico and his friend Ernesto. Buonafede returns to his senses only when it comes to money, but he finally submits. Their journey to the Moon ends with three happy marriages, although it is not clear who was deceiving who.

Act 1 (Night sky with the Moon and stars. A tower observatory at the house of Ecclitico / The house of Buonafede)

Ecclitico and four disciples worship the Moon (Oh, bright moon, sister of Phoebus). Ecclitico invites them to observe an eclipse of the Moon (The Moon entering in conjunction with the sun). Scene 2 - Buonafede, a wealthy burgher, enters the scene to be informed that there is another world on the Moon, observable with the great telescope, that he is invited to see for himself. Scene 3 - While Buonafede looks into the telescope, the disciples move a light machine with moving figures in front of the lens (Happy and joyful who is friend of the moon). Fooled that he is really looking at some people on the Moon, Buonafede describes what he's seen and leaves (I've seen them ! I've seen them !). Scene 4 - Ecclitico explains that he is not interested in Buonafede's money but in the hand of his daughter Clarice. Since his friend Ernesto is interested in the other daughter, and his servant is interested in the maid, the three men gather their money to fool Buonafede even further (A little money and wit, is all that is required). Scene 5 - Ernesto sings in expectation of his reward (Beautiful sparkling eyes of my beloved idol). Scene 6 - Cecco the servant is a man of the Earth (They make me laugh those who believe that everything you see is true). Scene 7 - Clarice and Flaminia are eager to get married (Oh, sister, the husbands they're not that severe ! They love freedom as much as we do ...If you fight against love the king becomes a tyrant). Scene 8 - Buonafede wants to punish the girls for leaving the house, but Clarice fights back (I am a marriageable girl, and I want it, you know). Scene 9 - Alone with the maid, Buonafede is making her a proposal and offers to help her see the wonders of the Moon, but Lisette is only interested in his money (I am all love and fidelity, I'm all charity). Scene 10 - Ecclitico comes to say good by to Buonafede since the great

Emperor of the Moon has invited to be his citizen. Buonafede is very interested and Ecclitico is willing to share with him the liquor that will do the transportation (I'm invaded by the lunar spirit ...I want to go too ! ...I think is flying !). Both man fell asleep since the liquor is only a sleeping potion.

Act 2 (Ecclitico's garden transformed into the world on the Moon)

Ecclitico prepare with the boys the last details while the girls, except Lisetta, agreed to the plan (Today, each one of us will be happy). Scene 2 - As Buonafede wakes up he is impressed with the flowers and the good air on the Moon. Ballet. Buonafede is informed that he must wear proper clothing in order to meet the Emperor and he is provided such. Scene 3 - While beeing dressed with the new clothes Buonafede asks about his girls and Ecclitico answers that they will soon arrive (You know how they are: one moment sparkling, totally loving, stubborn and fiercely the first moment after). Scene 4 - Buonafede, alone, recalls that Lisetta is precisely like this. Scene 5 - Cecco enters in a triumphant chariot, dressed like an Emperor followed by Ernesto dressed like Hesperus with a star on the forehead. Buonafede bows to the Emperor but seems to recognize Ernesto. He is confused but he plays their game. The Emperor informs Bonafede that he is aware of his feelings for Lisette, but he wants her for himself (A saver sweats and sorrows, and then he dies and disapperas). Scene 6 - Hesperus entertains Buonafede revealing the means of women education in his world (We usually carry a string, and when they parody a faint, we turn them into lashes). Scene 7 - Left alone, Buonafede wanders about this new and beautiful world (What a kind world, what an unparalleled happiness !). Scene 8 - Ecclitico informs a reluctant and blindfolded Lisetta that she has arrived on the Moon to be married to the Emperor. Scene 9 - Alone with Lisette, Buonafede enters the spirit of the Moon world and romances Lisetta (Without malice I will hug you ...Throw the whip, if you want to catch me). Scene 10 - The Emperor interrupts the romance. Lisetta identifies Cecco but as both man insist, she plays their game and joins Cecco to the throne, to the exasperation of Buonafede (Master, what shall I be ? Empress ? ...What a beautiful thing is to be a lady). Scene 11 - Ballet. When Flaminia and Clarice arrive, Buonafede asks them to bow before the Emperor and the Emperess. The Emperor asks Hesperus to show Flaminia around and she is happy to comply (If my star is my guide, a more loyal escort I can't wait). Scene 12 - Clarice is ordered by the Emperor to take the arm of Ecclitico, his master of ceremonies (How many people are sighing to see what the Moon is). Scene 13 - The Emperor asks for the imperial insignia to start the wedding ceremony (I want to crown you and at the same time to marry). Scene 14 - Hesperus brings the sceptum and the ceremony begins (I want to crown this white, tender forehead, Luna, lena, lino, lana, lana, lino, lunala). Scene 15 - The two young couples, Ecclitico with Clarice and Ernest with Flaminia, aproach the throne to be united in a foolish wedding ceremony (Bachelor, unwedded, spinster, chaste, maiden and cuckoo). During the ceremony, Buonafede agrees to surrender his coins of the Sublunary world and provides the key to his cash box. Scene 16 - When the girls ask Buonafede for granting his real authorisation to their weddings, he becomes mad announcing retailatration (Ah, rascals ! Now I Understand ! I've been mocked by you all).

Act 3 (A room in Ecclitico's house)

Buonafede is restricted to the room until he grants forgiveness. Ecclitico recomands himself as a doctor, and Ernesto as the son of a baron. Ecclitico returns the key to the safe and Buonafede declares he is willing to forgive the girls (I want to behave like a Supralunar man). Scene 2 - Ecclitico and Clarice sing together their happyness (I feel so much pleasure that seems futile to say). Scene 3 - Bounafede agrees for a six thousand shields dowry for each of his girls and another one thousand shields for Lisetta. All six lovers sing with joy (From the Moon World we get the fortune and prosperity !). All things settled, they can now return back to Earth (Let's enjoy, my friends, this good fortune that today to Earth comes from the moon).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Oh, bright moon, sister of Phoebus (Chorus), The Moon entering in conjunction with the sun (Ecclitico), Happy and joyful who is friend of the moon (Chorus), I've seen them ! I've seen them ! (Buonafede), A little money and wit, is all that is required (Ecclitico), Beautiful sparkling eyes of my beloved idol (Ernesto), They make me laugh those who belive that everything you see is true (Cecco), Oh, sister, the husbands they're not that severe ! They love freedom as much as we do ...If you fight against love the king becomes a tyrant (Clarice, Flaminia), I am a marriageable girl, and I want it, you know (Clarice), I am all love and fidelity, I'm all charity (Lisetta), I'm invaded by the lunar spirit ...I want to go too ! ...I think is flying ! (Ecclitico, Buonafede). Act 2 - Today, each one of us will be happy (Ecclitico), You know how they are: one moment sparkling, totally loving, stubborn and fiercely the first moment after (Ecclitico), A saver

sweats and sorrows, and then he dies and disappears (Cecco), We usually carry a string, and when they parody a faint, we turn them into lashes (Ernesto), What a kind world, what an unparalleled happiness ! (Buonafede), Without malice I will hug you ...Throw the whip, if you want to catch me (Buonafede, Lisetta), Master, what shall I be ? Empress ? ...What a beautiful thing is to be a lady (Lisetta), If my star is my guide, a more loyal escort I can't wait (Lisetta), How many people are sighing to see what the Moon is (Clarice), I want to crown you and at the same time to marry (Cecco), I want to crown this white, tender forehead, Luna, lena, lino, lana, lana, lino, lunala (Cecco), Bachelor, unwedded, spinster, chaste, maiden and cuckoo (Chorus), Ah, rascals ! Now I Understand ! I've been mocked by you all (Buonafede). Act 3 - I want to behave like a Supralunar man (Buonafede), I feel so much pleasure that seems futile to say (Clarice, Ecclitico), From the Moon World we get the fortune and prosperity ! (All), Let's enjoy, my friends, this good fortune that today to Earth comes from the moon (All).

Ballet: Act 2 - Scene 2 - Gentle nymphs are dancing on the music of oboes and orchestra answered by the sound of hunting horns and bassoons located on the scene. Scene 11- Flamina and Clarice arrive in a car while the nymphs are dancing to the sound of music.

Recordings: 1978 Lausanne Chamber Orchestra and Suisse Romande Radio Chorus conducted by Antal Dorati (Domenico Trimarchi, Luigi Alva, Frederica von Stade, Arleen Auger, Edith Mathis, Lucia Valentini Terrani, Anthony Rolfe Johnson)

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46. Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

Title: Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District

Composer: Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975). Born in Saint Petersburg, Russia, his father Boleslavovich Shostakovich was an engineer at the Bureau of Weights and measures in Saint Petersburg, while his mother Sofiya Vasilievna Kokoulina was a Siberian native. He began piano lessons with his mother at the age of nine. In 1919 he entered the Saint Petersburg Conservatory to study under the patronage of Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936). In the next years he studied piano with Leonid Nikolayev and Elena Rozanova, composition with Maximilian Steinberg, counterpoint and fugue with Nikolay Sokolov, history of music with Alexander Ossovsky. After graduation he worked as a concert pianist and composer. He married Nina Varzar in 1932 and the fruit of their marriage were two children, Maxim and Galina. In September 1937 he began to teach composition at the Leningrad Conservatory. His wife died in 1954 and he remarried in 1962 with Irina Supinskaya, his thirty years younger. During his life he was awarded: Hero of Socialist Labor (1966), Order of Lenin (1946, 1956, 1966), People's Artist of the USSR (1954), International Peace Prize (1954), and many others. Operas: The Nose (1927), Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District (1930-34), The Great Lightning (1933), Moscow Cheryomushki (1957), Katerina Ismailova (1956-63). Ballet: The Golden Age (1930), The Bolt (1931), The Limpid Stream (1935), The Lady and the Hooligan (1962), The Dreamers (1975). His musical compositions also include: 15 symphonies, 6 concertos (piano, violin, cello), 28 suites, 15 string quartets, 21 piano compositions, chamber music, 36 film scores (The Second Waltz, The First Echelon, The Great Citizen, Zoya, Simple People, Katerina Ismailova, Hamlet, King Lear), incidental music, choral and vocal music, orchestrations.

Libretto: Alexander Preys (1905-1942). Alexander Preys was a Russian writer and librettist. For Shostakovich he wrote the librettos for the operas: The Nose and Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District. Part of the literary circle in Leningrad, Alexander Preys was praised by Shostakovich after his completion of a Gogol comedy "Saint Vladimir of the Third Grade". He worked together with the composer and the libretto was based on the novel of the same name by Nikolai Leskov (1831-1895) published in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's magazine "Epoch" in 1865. Nikolay Leskov's novel is an amalgam of love, hate and murder in the rural world, where a ruthless and determined woman terminates all her opponents, until her final breakdown. Beside Shostakovich's opera, the novel has also inspired the ballet Katerina Ismailova by composer Rudolf Brucci, a Polish film by Andrej Wajda

(Siberian Lady Macbeth), a Russian film by Roman Balayan (Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District) and a British film by William Oldroyd (Lady Macbeth). Definitely, the story extracts its subject from the original play "Macbeth" of William Shakespeare. The opera was dedicated to his first wife, Nina Varzar.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 22 January 1934 at the Leningrad Maly Operny (Mikhailovsky Theatre) and on 24 January 1934 the opera also premiered in Moscow. Due to unfavorable press the opera was banned in 1936, for almost thirty years. The composer revised the opera in 1962, renaming it Katerina Izmailova and assigning his Opus 114. The new version was first performed on 26 December 1962 in Moscow at the Stanislavsky Nemirovich Danchenko Musical Theatre and was first given a studio recording in 1964. The original version was performed again in Russia beginning with the year 2000. In Belgium, the Vlaamse Opera staged the opera in 2014 directed by Dmitry Jurowsky with Ausrine Stundyte playing Katerina. The performance from Het Muziektheater Amsterdam staged by De Nederlandse Opera can be heard on Youtube, with Eva Maria Westbroek singing Katerina. The Norwegian National Opera and Ballet Oslo staged the opera on 5 September 2014. In Berlin a recent version of the opera premiered at the Deutsche Oper on 25 January 2015. The English National Opera premiered a new production on 26 September 2015. A recent 2018 production at Vienna State Opera was conducted by Ingo Metzmacher with Eva Maria Westbroek singing Katerina. Up to the 2017/18 season, Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District was performed in the world for 241 times, in 50 different productions, ranking 84 on Operabase list.

Roles: Katerina Ismailova (soprano), Boris Ismailov (bass), Zinoviy Ismailov (tenor), Sergei (tenor), Mill-hand (baritone), Coachman (tenor), Aksinya (soprano), Shabby peasant (tenor), Porter (bass), Stewart (bass), Three Foremen (tenor), Priest (bass), Chief of police (baritone), Policeman (bass), Teacher (tenor), Drunken guest (tenor), Old convict (bass), Sentry (bass), Sonyetka (Contralto), Woman convict (soprano), Sergeant (bass), Chorus (workers, policemen, guests, convicts)



Story: In the small village of Mtsensk, where nothing ever happens, the young and neglected wife of a merchant, harassed by her father-in-law, finds herself in the position to start a shameless romance with a servant. Breaking the aristocratic rules she unconsciously enters the world of lust and indignity. When her nosy father-in-law discovers her affair, her lover gets beaten with the whip and she poisons her opponent. Soon, her husband returns unexpected to interrupt their romance, but the two strangle and bury the intruder in the cellar. Sentenced to life in prison, on their way to Siberia, the two quarrel while her lover begins to romance another woman convict, of poor condition. Devastated, the merchant's wife kills the girl and herself by drowning in a cold river. Two female exponents of two different worlds have clashed together, hands to neck, for the charms of a careless young man.

Act 1 (Mtsensk 1865, Ismailov's house / Katerina's bedroom)

Lying on her bed, Katerina is bored (The ant drags along its straw, the cow gives her milk ...but I am alone have nothing to do). Boris enters the room and they quarrel (Fine sort of a wife: over four years married and still not produced a child ... It's not my fault ... Zinoviy is incapable). Zinoviy enters with some servants to present his new worker, Sergey. As Zinoviy must leave to repair the dam at their mill, Boris asks Katerina to swear on the sacred icon that she'll be faithful (You never know...young wives are all the same). Katerina hears from Aksinya that Sergey is a dreadful woman-chaser who got fired for carrying on with the mistress. Scene 2 -

Servants are fooling around with Aksinya secured in an open barrel (Keep your hands off ...Just like a nightingale ...What a pretty voice !). Katerina enters to defend her servant, ending in a match of wrestling with Sergey (Well, I'll show you what a woman is good for). When Boris enters the scene, Katerina pretends that she felled and Sergey also felled trying to help her. Scene 3 - In the evening Katerina sings her sorrow (No one, no one will ever come to me). Sergey comes at the door asking to borrow a book, but Katerina can't read. Since they are both bored, they start a conversation and Sergey finds the courage to declare love to her (The old man will lock the doors ...To a lover windows can be a doorway, Come my Katya !).

Act 2 (Ismailov's house / Katerina's bedroom)

Walking around the courtyard with a lantern, Boris meditates about Katerina (...she's a young woman hot blooded too ...and no man around, no man, no man). Boris finds Katerina and Sergey bidding farewell and makes a scene out of it (Come here, everybody ! I've caught a thief !). Helped by the servants, Boris starts to beat Sergey with the whip, calling Katerina to enjoy the entertaining sight (Look, Katerina, I've drawn blood, I've drawn blood). Katerina jumps the window and hurls herself at Boris (Let go ...you monster, let go, let go). Tired and hungry, Boris asks for supper. Katerina brings him mushrooms stuffed with rat poison (They're delicious mushrooms, you're really an expert, Katerina). As Boris's viscera start to burn like fire, Boris calls for the priest, for his last confession (Father, my sins are many ...mine is not a natural death ...It was her ! It was her !). When asked, Katerina answered he had eaten mushrooms at night. Scene 2 - Katerina and Sergey are romancing (Kiss me so it hurts my lips ...Katerina Lvovna, Katenka). While they sleep, the Ghost of Boris frightens Katerina (Katerina, Katerina, curse on you forever). After a while, Katerina hears Zinoviy at the door. Finding Sergey's belt in the bed, Zinoviy is outraged with jealousy (We've heard a lot about your affairs ...We've heard it all). Responsible for the family's honour, Zinoviy demands the truth beating her with the belt. Katerina calls Sergey and after a short fight they both manage to strangle him. They bury Zinoviy's body in the cellar and reinforce their declarations (Kiss me, kiss me, kiss me ...Katya ...Now you are my husband).

Act 3 (Ismailov's house / At the police station)

In their wedding day Sergey and Katerina rise their spirit (Don't be afraid of the dead, it's the living you should fear ...Today is our day and tomorrow and always). A shabby peasant enters the cellar singing a drinking song (...summer, spring and winter deep I drink until I fall asleep). He finds Zinoviy's body and runs out in horror calling the police. Scene 2 - In the police station the sergeant is frustrated for not being invited to the wedding (I'll get even with her, for getting married without authorities). The shabby peasant enters to announce that at the Ismailov's there is a corpse in the cellar. The policemen hurry to take action (Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry then we'll have no cause to worry). Scene 3 - In the garden, Katerina and Sergey are celebrating the wedding with their guests (Long live the happy pair, Katerina and Sergey, long life to you !). Katerina finds out that someone has broken the lock to the cellar. They prepare to run with the money, but it is too late. The sergeant and the policemen enter the scene and both Katerina and Sergey are handcuffed (Let me go ! Let me go ! ...No you don't ! You won't get away !).

Act 4 (On the road to Siberia)

In the evening, the convicts in fetters prepare for the night singing (Verst after verst, one by one, creeps by in an endless procession). Katerina buys a guardian for a short meeting with Sergey (Everything's forgotten, once I'm with you, Seryozha, Seryozha ...Get out, you've ruined my life !). Katerina returns to her place to recollect her sorrow (It's hard when you're used to honour and respect). Sergey also buys the guardian for a meeting with Sonyetka (I love you, I love you ...Prove in then ...My stockings are torn, get me some others !). Sergey turns to Katerina and asks her for some stockings pretending that the fetters have rubbed his leg agonizingly. Sergey takes the stockings and quickly goes to Sonyetka and carries her off the stage. The rest of the women convicts sing (The merchant's wife still burns with passionate fire, but cold is now her lover's desire). Katerina remains motionless. After a while Sonyetka, proud of her stockings comes to thank Katerina for the gift (Thank you Katerina Lvovna, thank you for the stockings). The next day, when the convoy stops on a bridge, Katerina pushes Sonyetka into the river and throws herself in after her. The officer declares them dead and the convicts line up and march off singing (Ah, steppes, you are so endless, days and nights so countless).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - The ant drags along its straw, the cow gives her milk ...but I am alone have nothing to do (Katerina), Fine sort of a wife: over four years married and still not produced a child ... It's not my

fault ... Zinovy is incapable (Boris, Katerina), You never know...young wives are all the same (Boris), Keep your hands off ...Just like a nightingale ...What a pretty voice ! (Aksinya, Servants), Well, I'll show you what a woman is good for (Katerina), No one, no one will ever come to me (Katerina), The old man will lock the doors ...To a lover windows can be a doorway (Katerina, Sergey). Act 2 - ...she's a young woman hot blooded too ...and no man around, no man, no man (Boris), Come here, everybody ! I've caught a thief ! (Boris), Look, Katerina, I've drawn blood, I've drawn blood (Boris), Let go ...you monster, let go, let go (Katerina), They're delicious mushrooms, you're really an expert, Katerina (Boris), Father, my sins are many ...mine is not a natural death ...It was her ! It was her ! (Boris), Kiss me so it hurts my lips ...Katerina Lvovna, Katenka (Katerina, Sergey), Katerina, Katerina, curse on you forever (Boris), We've heard a lot about your affairs ...We've heard it all (Zinovy), Kiss me, kiss me, kiss me ...Katya ...Now you are my husband (Katerina, Sergey). Act 3 - Don't be afraid of the dead, it's the living you should fear ...Today is our day and tomorrow and always (Sergey, Katerina), ...summer, spring and winter deep I drink until I fall asleep (Peasant), I'll get even with her, for getting married without authorities (Sergeant). Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry then we'll have no cause to worry (Chorus), Long live the happy pair, Katerina and Sergey, long life to you ! (Chorus), Let me go ! Let me go ! ...No you don't ! You won't get away ! (Sergey, Policemen), Verst after verst, one by one, creeps by in an endless procession (Chorus), Everything's forgotten, once I'm with you, Seryozha, Seryozha ...Get out, you've ruined my life ! (Katerina, Sergey), It's hard when you're used to honour and respect (Katerina), I love you, I love you ...Prove in then ...My stockings are torn, get me some others ! (Sergey, Sonyetka), The merchant's wife still burns with passionate fire, but cold is now her lover's desire (Chorus), Thank you Katerina Lvovna, thank you for the stockings (Sonyetka), Ah, steppes, you are so endless, days and nights so countless (Chorus).

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1979 London Philharmonic Orchestra (Galina Vishnevskaya - Katerina, Nicolay Gedda - Sergey, Dimiter Petkov - Boris, Werner Krenn - Zinoviy, Taru Valjakka - Aksinya), 1992 Opera Bastille (Maria Ewing - Katerina, Sergei Larin - Sergey, Aage Haugland - Boris, Philip Langridge - Zinoviy, Kristine Ciesinski (Aksinya), 2006 Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Eva Maria Westbroek - Katerina, Christopher Ventris - Segey, Vladimir Vaneev - Boris, Ludovit Ludha - Zinoviy, Carole Wilson - Aksinya) Film adaptations: 1966 Lenfilm - Katerina Izmailova, directed by Mikhail Shapiro, starring Galina Vishnevskaya as Katerina, 1992 Lady Macbeth von Mzensk, directed by Petr Weigl, starring Marketa Hrubesova as Katerina but using recordings of Galina Vishnevskaya for the singing.

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47. Samson and Dalilah

Title: Samson and Dalilah (Samson et Dalila)

Composer: Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921). Born in Paris, his father Jaques Joseph Victor Saint-Saens was an official in the French Ministry of the Interior, while his mother was Francoise Clemence Collin, a descendant from an Haute Marne family. He received his first piano lessons from his great aunt and at the age of seven he became a pupil of Camille Marie Stamaty. Three years later he was introduced to the composition professor Pierre Maleden and the organ teacher Alexandre Pierre Francois Boely. In 1848, at the age of thirteen he was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire to study with Francois Benoist and Fromental Halevy. Five years later he was appointed organist at the church of Saint Merri and in 1958 he become organist of La Madeleine, the official church of the French Empire. In 1861 he accepted to be a teacher at the Ecole de Musique Classique et Religieuse in Paris. In 1871 he was founder and vice president of the Societe Nationale de Musique. He married Marie Laure Truffot in 1875 and the fruit of their marriage were two sons, both of whom died in infancy resulting in the broke their marriage. In 1881 he was elected to the Institut de France (The French Academy). Operas: Le timbre d'argent (1864), La princesse jaune (1872), Samson et Dalila (1877), Etienne Marcel (1879), Henry VIII (1881), Prosepine (1887), Ascanio (1887), Phryne (1893), Fredegonde (1895), Les barbares (1900), Helene (1903), L'ancetre (1905), Dejanire (1910). Ballet: Javotte (1896). His composition also include: incidental music, 27 orchestral compositions, 5 military band compositions, 34 concertante compositions, 42

music chamber compositions, very numerous keyboard compositions, 23 choral sacred music compositions, vocal and choral music.

Libretto: Ferdinand Lemaire (1832-1879). Ferdinand Lemaire was a French librettist and poet. Originally from Martinique, Lemaire has married a cousin of Saint-Saens. Two of his poems, "Souvenance" and "Tristesse" had previously been set by Saint-Saens for voice and piano. Approached by the composer to write an oratorio on the story of Samson and Dalila he agreed, but only if the work was to be an opera. The libretto is based on the Biblical tale of Samson and Dalilah from the Old Testament. Delilah is the first woman ever recorded in writing to spy on and betray a man. It is also the first recorded contest for power, in which the power of God was challenged among High Priests. In 1735 George Friedrich Handel has written his opera Samson, on the same subject, with a libretto by Newburgh Hamilton. An American film production directed by Cecil DeMille was released in 1949, starring Victor Mature and Hedy Lamarr. The production was nominated for 5 Academy Awards, winning two. More recent film productions of Samson and Delilah were produced in 1984, 1996 and 2018. The English version for was produced for the National Opera Company of Canada in 1893 by Frederic Lyster.

Performance history: The opera was first performed on 2 December 1877 in Weimar, at the Grossherzogliches Theatre (Staatskapelle Weimar) in a German translation. Franz Liszt, the former musical director of the Weimar court orchestra has persuaded the composer, offering to produce the opera in Weimar. Eduard Lassen was the producer and the mezzo soprano Auguste von Muller was singing the role of Dalila. The opera was first revived in Germany, at the Hamburg State Opera in 1882. Samson et Dalila premiered in France on 3 March 1890 at the Theatre des Artes in Rouen, with Carlotta Bossi as Dalila and Jean Alexandre Talazac as Samson. It was followed on 31 October 1890 by its Paris premiere at the Eden Theatre with Rosine Bloch as Dalila. Over the next two years, performances were given in Bordeaux, Geneva, Toulouse, Nantes, Dijon and Montpellier. The Paris Opera first staged the performance on 23 November 1892 with Blanche Deschamps Jehin as Dalila. The opera also debuted successfully in Monaco, at the Opera de Monte Carlo on 15 March 1892. The United States premiere at the Carnegie Hall took place on 25 March 1892. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York the opera premiered on 2 February 1895 with Eugenia Mantelli as Dalila. In Italy the first performance was on 26 March 1892 at the Teatro Pagliano in Florence, followed by La Scala in Milan on 17 January 1895. In England, the opera was first performed on 25 September 1893 at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden. Up to the 2017/18 season, Samson et Dalila was performed in the world for 178 times, in 48 different productions, ranking 115 on Operabase list.

Roles: Samson (tenor), Dalilah (mezzo-soprano), High Priest (baritone), Abimelech, satrap of Gaza (bass), First Philistine (tenor), Second Philistine (bass), Philistine Messenger (tenor), Old Hebrew (Bass), Chorus (Hebrews and Philistines)



Story: The action takes place in the City of Gaza, in Palestine, in the year 1150 BC. A man and a woman, backed by their Hebrew versus the Philistine gods, are competing for the grace of the people of Israel. At first, the man speaks the voice of his god and leads his people to victory, but soon after he falls in love to the daughter of the High Priest serving his rival god. Not resisting the girl's charm, the man finds himself caught in a trap and arrested by his enemies. Presented to be sacrificed to the altar of the Philistine's god, the man is challenged to

invoke the power of his Hebrew god, to spoil their feast. With faith in god, the man finds supernatural powers to break the pillars of the temple, collapsing the structure upon a horrified audience.

Act 1 (Public Place in the City of Gaza)

In the City of Gaza, people of Israel pray to their God (O ! God of Israel, thy gracious ear ...our great misery hear). Samson, is the first hebrew to stand for their pray (A voice in me calls the voice of God ...Let all the world rejoice). Scene 2 - Satrap Abimelech enters the scene to demand obedience and to defy their god (Let him now show the power to break your chains and set you free). Samson responds confident (I see in hands of angels the sword of flame flash forth). The people of Israel responds, eager to back him (O ! Israel, break thy fetters; arise now, in thy might). Satrap Abimelech tries to strike Samson down with his sword, but Samson kills him with ease. Scene 3 - The High Priest enters the scene to demand venange, but his soldiers are unable to comply (In vain I seize my arms ...my hand will not prevail). Scene 4 - A messenger brings the news that the troops led by Samson fill the land, no mortal can withstand them. The Philistines prepare to flee (Seek a refuge amongst strangers and, in shame, hide each his face). Scene 5 - The hebrews celebrate their victory (Hymns of triumph, hymns of joy, mount to the eternal throne). Scene 6 - Dalilah enters followed by Philistine women (The spring-time comes, we bring its flowers to wreath the conquering warrior's brows). Dalilah greets Samson with faltering words (I come to celebrate the fame of him who reigns within my heart). Samson is advised to resist the strange girl, but he is conquered at first sight (Her beauty fills my soul with fire, my senses faint in ecstasy). Scene -7 -Ballet. Not impressed, an old hebrew adverts (The spirit of evil has cast this fair devil).

Act 2 (Dalila's Home in the Valley of Soreck)

At her home, richly adorned, surrounded by Oriental plants, Dalilah waits for Samson in a reverie (Samson will seek my presence here ...O ! Love, lend me your poisoned dart). Scene 2 - Her father, the High Priest of the Great Dagon recons that Samson may be aware of her power and avoids her, but Dalilah is confident with her gift (I know he vainly struggles my yoke to escape). Her father places his trust in Dalilah to restore his pride (Samson must bend unto thy will and be thy slave and subject still). Scene 3 - Reluctant, fighting his feelings, Samson comes hesitating to Dalilah to be welcomed with gentle words (Is't thou, my best beloved ? I've waited long). Samson explains his torment (Jehovah's chosen servant I ! I live to do his will. From thee and happiness I fly, but I must love you still). Dalilah is quick to respond (I'm jealous of that God of thine ! That God who robs me of thy love). In order to free him from his torment, Dalilah asks him what was the secret of his immense power (Thy secret tell ...I dare not ! ...Thy secret ! That brings me all my woe !). As a storm has started, Samson hears a thunder and believes it to be the voice of his angry god, but Dalilah offers him protection under her roof and Samson can not resist the offer. Soon after Philistine soldiers enter Dalilah's house.

Act 3 (A Prison at Gazac / The Temple of Dagon)

At the prison, Samsom is blinded and chained, with his hair cut short, turning the mill like a horse (O Lord ! ...for thy grace I pray, blind and dishonored see me at thy feet). A chorus of Hebrew convicts also sing their sorrow (He sold us for a woman's smile). Scene 2 - In the Temple of Dagon the Philistines are celebrating their victory (...let us keep up the dancing, through day be advancing). Samson enters the temple led by a little child. The High Priest invites him to join the feast and asks Dalilah to serve him some nectar. Dalilah gives him the libation and takes him by the hand (Under the cloak of love I snatched thy secret power ...my people and my God were than avenged). The High Priest dares Samson to ask his god to bring sight back to his eyes. Laughing, the Philistines also scorn him preparing to slay their victim (For in thy bootless anger thou are blind, in body as in mind). As the prayer begins, Dalilah is conducting the sacrifice (Let all thy altars flow with victim's richest blood, offered here below as purifying flood). The Philistines join her prayer (Dagon, we bow to thee the knee, grant us thy grace and victory). The High Priest invites Samson to his last kneel and bow, the child leads him between the pillars and leaves the temple. For his last words, Samson invokes his god (Bethink thee of thy servant, Lord ! Grant that, a moment, at thy word, my pristine vigor be restored). A moment later, he breaks the pillars and the temple falls amid loud cries. The curtain falls.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - O ! God of Israel, thy gracious ear ...our great misery hear (Chorus), A voice in me calls the voice of God ...Let all the world rejoice (Samson), Let him now show the power to break your chains and set you free (Abimelech), I see in hands of angels the sword of flame flash forth (Samson), O ! Israel, break thy fetters; arise now, in thy might (Chorus), In vain I seize my arms ...my hand will not prevail (Chorus),

Seek a refuge amongst strangers and, in shame, hide each his face (Chorus), Hymns of triumph, hymns of joy, mount to the eternal throne (Chorus), The spring-time comes, we bring its flowers to wreath the conquering warrior's brows (Chorus), I come to celebrate the fame of him who reigns within my heart (Dalilah), Her beauty fills my soul with fire, my senses faint in ecstasy (Samson), The spirit of evil has cast this fair devil (Old Hebrew). Act 2 - Samson will seek my presence here ...O ! Love, lend me your poisoned dart (Dalilah), I know he vainly struggles my yoke to escape (Dalilah), Samson must bend unto thy will and be thy slave and subject still (High Priest), Is't thou, my best beloved ? I've waited long (Dalilah), Jehovah's chosen servant I ! I live to do his will. From thee and happiness I fly, but I must love you still (Samson), I'm jealous of that God of thine ! That God who robs me of thy love (Dalilah), Thy secret tell ...I dare not ! ...Thy secret ! That brings me all my woe ! (Dalilah, Samson). Act 3 - O Lord ! ...for thy grace I pray, blind and dishonored see me at thy feet (Samson), He sold us for a woman's smile (Chorus), ...let us keep up the dancing, through day be advancing (Chorus), Under the cloak of love I snatched thy secret power ...my people and my God were than avenged (Dalilah), For in thy bootless anger thou are blind, in body as in mind (Chorus), Let all thy altars flow with victim's richest blood, offered here below as purifying flood (Dalilah), Dagon, we bow to thee the knee, grant us thy grace and victory (Chorus), Bethink thee of thy servant, Lord ! Grant that, a moment, at thy word, my pristine vigor be restored (Samson).

Ballet: Act 1 - Scene 7 - Dance of the Priestess of Dagon. The young girls who accompany Dalilah dance and wave their garlands around the warrior, but he can not divert his eyes from Dalilah, who takes part in the dance. Act 3 - Scene 2 - The Philistine princesses and Dalilah engage in a bacchanalian dance.

Recordings: 1936 Metropolitan Opera (Rene Maison - Samson, Gertrud Palson - Dalilah, Enzo Pinza - High Priest), 1946 Paris Opera and Chorus (Jose Luccioni - Samson, Helene Bouvier - Dalilah, Paul Cabanel - High Priest), 1948 Orchester und Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks (Lorenz Fehenberger - Samson, Res Fischer - Dalilah, Fred Destal - High Priest), 1949 Metropolitan Opera (Ramon Vinay - Samson, Rise Stevens - Dalilah, Robert Merrill - High Priest), 1954 NBC Symphony Orchestra (Jan Peerce - Samson, Rise Stevens - Dalilah, Robert Merrill - High Priest), 1955 Teatro di San Carlo Orchestra and Chorus (Ramon Vinay - Samson, Ebe Stignani - Dalilah, Antonio Serra - High Priest), 1956 Royal Swedish Opera Orchestra and Chorus (Set Svanholm - Samson, Blanche Thebom - Dalilah, Sigurd Bjorling - High Priest), 1964 Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra (Jon Vickers - Samson, Oralia Dominguez - Dalilah, Ernest Blanc - High Priest), 1970 Teatro de la Scala (Richard Cassily - Samson, Shirly Verret - Dalilah, Robert Massard - High Priest), 1978 Orchestre et Choeur de Paris (Placido Domingo - Samson, Elena Obraztsova - Dalilah, Renato Bruson - High Priest), 1982 Royal Opera House (Jon Vickers - Samson, Shirley Verrett - Dalilah, Wolfgang Brendel - High Priest), 1989 Bavarian Radio Symphony (Jose Carreras - Samson, Agnes Baltsa - Dalilah, Honathan Summers - High Priest), 1998 Metropolitan Opera (Placido Domingo - Samson, Olga Borodina - Dalilah, Jean Philippe Lafont - High Priest), 2007 San Diego Symphony Orchestra (Clifton Forbis - Samson, Denyce Graves - Dalilah, Greer Grimsley - High Priest).

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48. Winterreise

Title: Winterreise

Composer: Franz Schubert (1797-1828). Born in Himmelpfortgrund, Vienna, his father Franz Theodor Schubert (1763-1830) was a well known schoolmaster in Lichtental (Vienna), while his mother Maria Elisabeth Vietz (1756-1812) was the daughter of a Silesian master locksmith. He was the twelfth child of the family, but out of the fourteen children nine died in infancy. His father gave him his first violin lessons at the age of eight, followed by lessons from Michael Holzer, organist and choirmaster in Lichtental. In 1804 he was noticed by Antonio Salieri and in 1808 he became a pupil at the Imperial Seminary (Stadtkonvikt) and he continued his private lessons in music theory with Antonio Salieri. In 1814 he entered his father's school as a teacher. He spent the rest of his life a music teacher and composer. One of his famous pupils was Countess Karoline Esterhazy.

Operas: Die Burgschaft (1816 unfinished), Sakuntala (1820 unfinished), Alfonso und Estrella (1821), Rudiger (1823), Fierabras (1823), Der Graf von Gleichen (1827). Oratorio: Lazarus (1820). Singspiel: Des Teufels Lustschloss (1814), Der vierjährige Posten (1815), Fernando (1815), Die Freunde von Salamanka (1815), Die Zwillingsbrüder (1819), Die Verschworenen (1823), Rosamunde (1823). Song cycles: Die Schöne Müllerin (1823), Fraulein am See (1925), Winterreise (1827), 13 Lieder nach Gedichten von Rellstab und Heine (1828). His musical compositions also include: 150 songs and lieder, 40 liturgical compositions, 10 symphonies, 12 overtures, 20 string quartets and other chamber music, piano compositions, vocal and chorus music.

Libretto: Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827). Wilhelm Müller was a German poet, a teacher of classical studies in the Gelehrtenschule at Dessau and a librarian to the ducal library. His lyrics is contained in four volumes of poems published between 1816 and 1827. Inspired by Muler's work, in 1823 Franz Schubert has composed a song cycle of 20 songs, called Die schone Mullerin, to be performed by a pianist and a solo singer. Winterreise is his second song cycle, a setting of 24 poems written for tenor voice, but frequently transposed to suit other vocal ranges. Schubert found the first 12 poems in an almanack (Urania 1823), then the full series of poems published in 1824 (Poems from the posthumous papers of a travelling horn-player) dedicated to the composer Carl Maria von Weber. Both song cycles were the result of the partnership of Franz Schubert with Johann Michael Vogl (1768-1840), an Austrian singer and composer who introduced Schubert and his songs into many musical households in their tours through Austria. Wilhelm Müller has died in 1826, probably never hearing the setting of his poems, to be soon followed by the composer himself. The performance is not merely a collection of songs upon a single theme but a single dramatic monologue, lasting over an hour.

Performance history: Composed in 1827, Winterreise was published on 14 January 1828 (first part) and 30 December 1828 (second part). Franz Schubert died on 19 November 1828 and the second part was published posthumous. A two man show, typical for chamber music, Winterreise was played in all the German and Austrian musical salons during the 19th century, or in private settings. Used in musical schools for training the students, the first reinterpretation of the work was produced by Franz Liszt, followed by a transcript of the first song produced by Leopold Godowsky. Hans Zender has produced an orchestrated version in 1993, while Jens Josef has created in 2001 a version for tenor and string quartet. Rood Adeo has produced the English version in 2002, while Normand Forget made a unique chamber version for accordion and wind quintet (oboe, clarinet, horn) in 2007. Several musical theatre production were performed in New York, London and Dublin. Several editions of Schubert's work were produced, including those of: Eusebius Mandyczewski, Max Friedlaender and Walther Durr. Up to the 2017/18 season, Winterreisen was performed in the world for 68 times, in 25 different productions, ranking 223 on Operabase list.

Roles: Tenor and piano player (or different other settings).



Story: This songs cycle was the swan song for both a romantic poet, and an ardent composer, the winter of their lives. Both the poet and the composer have died shortly after finishing the project, aged 33 years old. As romanticism was at it's peak, Winterreise must have been very fashionable in the middle of the 19th century. Many a tear of young maidens must have fallen when playing their score. Intense emotions alternating with deceptive thoughts about the futility of life and love are the main pistons, pushing the lyric engine working. As a hole, the cycle of songs constitutes the monodrama of a man with an exhausted heart, perceiving the proximity

of his death.

Great moments and arias:

1. Good Night (Gute Nacht) - " I came here a stranger as a stranger I depart ...A shadow of the moon travels with me as my companion ...Love loves to wander, God made it that way ...Good night ...I thought of you."
2. The Weathervane (Die Wetterfahne) - " The wind plays with the weathervane on my darling's house ...The wind plays with the hearts inside ...Why should they care about my grief ? Their child is a rich bride."
3. Frozen Tears (Gefror'ne Tranen) - "Frozen drops are falling down from my cheeks ...Yet you burst from the wellspring of my heart so burning hot, As if you wanted to melt the entire winter's ice !"
4. Numbness (Erstarrung) - " I search the snow in vain for the trace of her steps ...The flowers are all dead ...My heart is as if dead, Her image frozen within; If my heart ever thaws again Her image will melt away, too !"
5. The Linden Tree (Der Lindenbaum) - " There stands a linden tree I dreamed in its shadow many a sweet dream ...I carved in its bark many a word of love ...Come here to me, friend, Here you'll find peace !"
6. Flood Water (Wasserflut) - "Many a tear from my eyes has fallen in the snow ...If you just follow my tears ...In and out of the busy streets; When you feel my tears burning, there is my sweetheart's house."
7. On the River (Auf dem Flusse) - " You clear, untamed river, how quiet you have become ...With a hard stiff crust you have covered yourself ...In your covering I inscribe ...the name of my sweetheart and the hour and day, as well."
8. A Look Backward (Ruckblick) - "It's burning under both my feet, even though I walk on ice and snow ...The bushy linden trees bloomed and, oh, two maiden's eyes glowed ...Whenever that day enters my thoughts"
9. Fire fly (Irrlicht) - " In the deepest mountain chasms a fire fly lured me ...Our joys, our sorrows, are all a fire fly game ...Every river finds its way to the ocean, and every sorrow to its grave."
10. Rest (Rast) - " Now I first notice how tired I am as I lay myself down to rest ...You too, my heart, in fight and storm, so wild so bold, feel in the silence as your creep stirs with a burning sting !"
11. Dream of Spring (Frühlingstraum) - "I dreamed of many colored flowers, the way they bloom in May ...I dreamed of simple love fulfilled, from a pretty maiden received ...Now I sit here alone and reflect on the dream."
12. Solitude (Einsamkeit) - " So I travel my road onward with sluggish feet ...Lonely and unrecognized ...Oh, that the world should be so light ! When the storm still raged, I was not so miserable."
13. The Post (Die Post) - "The post does not bring any letter for you, why the strange compulsion, my heart ? ...Of course, the post comes from the town where I once had a sweetheart, my heart !"
14. The grey-haired Head (Der greise Kopf) - " The frost has spread a white sheen all over my hair ...but soon it melted away, so that I am horrified by my youth ...How long still to the grave ! "
15. The Crow (Die Krahe) - " A crow has accompanied me since I left the town, until today, as ever ...Well, I won't be much longer wandering on my road ...Crow, let me see loyalty unto the grave !"
16. Last Hope (Letzte Hoffnung) - " Here and there on the trees coloured leaves are to be seen ...all my hopes stick on one leaf ... if the wind plays with my leaf I tremble from head to feet."
17. In the Village (Im Dorfe) - "The people are sleeping in their beds dreaming of things they don't have ...I am finished with all my dreams, why should I linger among the sleepers ? "
18. The Stormy Morning (Der sturmische Morgen) - " How has the heavy storm the cloudy blanket torn apart My heart sees in the sky its own image painted, it's nothing but the winter, frozen and untamed."
19. Illusion (Tauschung) - " A light does a friendly dance before me ..I like the way it lures and wanders ... Ah, a man as wretched as I am ...Only illusions let me win !"
20. The Sign Post (Der Wegweiser) - "Why then do I avoid the highways where the other travelers go ...Before me I see a signpost standing ...I must travel a road from which no one ever returned."
21. The Inn (Das Wirtshaus) - " To a graveyard my way has led me ...Your green funeral garlands must be the sign that invites travellers inn ...What, all the rooms in this house are full ? ...Merciless inn, you turn me away ?"
22. Courage (Mut) - " When my heart speaks in my breast I sing loudly and gaily ...I don't hear what it says to me, I have no ears to listen ...When our God is not with us, we must be God to ourselves !"
23. Perihelion Suns (Die Nebensonnen) - " I saw three suns in the sky ...and they stayed there so stubbornly ...If only the third would also set ! I will feel better in the dark."
24. The Lyricist (Der Leiermann) - " Over there beyond the village, stands a lyrist ...No one listens to him, no one notices him ...Strange old man, shall I go with you ? Will you play your lyre to my songs ?"

Ballet: The first ballet version was produced by John Neumeier in 2001 for his Hamburg Ballet company. Choreographer Christian Spuck has prepared a ballet version of *Winterreise* to be performed by Ballett Zurich starting with 30 September 2018. In a mixture of large scale ensemble scenes and numerous solos, Christian Spuck embarks on a journey inside the human being, exploring timeless themes such as love, longing, estrangement and abandonment. He uses the medium of dance to offer a new perspective on one of the great masterpieces of classical music. The Swiss tenor Mauro Peter will be on stage, while the musical director is Emilio Pomarico and the costumes were produced by Emma Ryott. Another performance with a choreography produced by Angelin Preljocaj is scheduled for the next season at Teatro alla Scala in Milan.

Recordings: 1928 Hans Duhan's version with Ferdinand Foll and Lene Orthmann, 1942 Hans Hotter's version with pianist Michael Raucheisen for Deutsche Grammophon, 1955 Hans Hooter's version with pianist Gerald Moore, 1957 Josef Greindl recording with pianist Hertha Klust, 1972 Dietrich Fischer Dieskau recording with pianist Gerald Moore, 1983 Kurt Moll's version with pianist Cord Garben, 1989 Olaf Bar's recording with Geoffrey Parsons on EMI classics, 1998 Thomas Quasthoff recording with Charles Spencer, 2005 Thomas Quasthoff's version with pianist Daniel Barenboim filmed at the Berlin Philharmonie, 2008 Christian Gerhaher recording with Gerold Huber for RCA Sony BMG

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49. The Child and the Spells

Title: The Child and the Spells (*L'enfant et les sortilèges*)

Composer: Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). Born in Ciboure, near Biarritz in France, his father Pierre Joseph Ravel (1832-1908) was an engineer, inventor and manufacturer, a pioneer of the automobile industry, while his mother was Marie Delouart (1840-1917). In the same year, the family moved to Paris so he was practically a Parisian. He started his piano lessons at the age of seven with Henry Ghys and five years later he studied harmony, counterpoint and composition with Charles Rene, a pupil of Leo Delibes. Starting with 1889 his piano teacher was Emile Decombes and he enjoyed his first public performance. In the same year he entered the Conservatoire de Paris, to study with Charles Wilfrid de Beriot, Emile Pessard, Andre Gedalge and Gabriel Faure. In 1910 he was cofounder of the Societe Musicale Independente, with his teacher Gabriel Faure as president. In 1914 he joined the Army and in 1920 he was offered the Legion d'honneur, but he declined the decoration. In 1921 he moved to Montfort l'Amaury, 88 km West of Paris and he sustained concerts in Britain, Sweden, Denmark, US, Canada, Spain, Austria and Italy. **Operas:** *L'heure espagnole* (1911), *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (1926). **Ballet:** *Daphnis et Chloe* (1912), *Ma mere l'Oye* (1912), *La valse* (1920), *Fanfare*, in the collaborative work *L'éventail de Jeanne* (1927), *Bolero* (1928), *Morgiane* (1932). **Orchestral works:** *Sheherezade* (1898), *Rapsodie espagnole* (1907), *Pavane pour un infante defunte* (1910), *Le tombeau de Couperin* (1919), *Menuet antique* (1929). His compositions also include: chamber music, vocal and orchestral compositions, piano compositions, vocal and instrumental compositions, choral music.

Libretto: Sidonie Gabrielle Colette (1873-1954). Colette was a French novelist nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948. She was also a mime, an actress and a journalist. Colette was elected to the Belgian Royal Academy (1935), the Academie Goncourt (1945) and as Chevalier of the Legion d'honneur (1920). Her notable works include: the four Claudine stories, *La Vagabonde*, *Mitsou*, *Cheri*, *Le ble en herbe*, *La Fin de Cheri*, *La Chatte*, *Duo*, *Gigi*. In 1916, Jaques Rouché director at Opera de Paris asked Colette to provide the text for a fairy ballet and she chose Ravel to set the text to music. He began composing the music in 1920 and completed it in 1924, only after Raoul Gunsbourg, director of the Monte Carlo Opera compelled him to write a sequel to his first opera, offering to stage the performance.

Performance history: The first performance took place on 21 March 1925, in Monte Carlo, conducted by Victor de Sabata, with ballet sequences choreographed by George Balanchine. The first performance in Paris, at the Opera Comique, followed on 1 February 1926 with Marie Therese Gauley singing the part of the child. The

performance in Paris was conducted by Albert Wolff with a choreography produced by Louise Virard. The cast included: Germaine Feraldy, Mathilde Calvet, Madeleine Sibille, Roger Bourdin, Rene Herent and Louis Guenot. In Europe, the performance premiered as follows: Prague (17 February 1927), Leipzig (6 May 1927), Vienna (14 March 1929). The US premiere was given on 19 September 1930 by the San Francisco Opera. In Canada a film version was produced in 1950 by CBS Television, with conductor Wilfrid Pelletier. In the United Kingdom the performance premiered on 3 December 1958 at the Town Hall in Oxford. Up to the 2017/18 season, *L'enfant et les sortilèges* was performed in the world for 182 times, in 38 different productions, ranking 114 on Operabase list.

Roles: The Child (mezzo-soprano), Mother (contralto), The Armchair (bass), Bergere (soprano), The Clock (baritone), The Teapot (tenor), The Cup (mezzo-soprano), The Fire (coloratura soprano), The Shepherdess (soprano), The Princess (coloratura soprano), The Little Man (tenor), The Cat (baritone), The Tree (bass), The Dragonfly (mezzo-soprano), The Nightingale (coloratura soprano), The Bat (soprano), The Squirrel (mezzo soprano), The Frog (tenor), Chorus (the objects in the room, shepherd and shepherdesses, torn figures, the numbers, trees, animals)



Story: It is a child's nightmare, exhausted with his homework. Disciplined by his mother, the child has fallen asleep without dinner. He dreams of being admonished by all the objects he has harmed or destroyed. They all sing out the pain and misery that the child has inflicted upon them. The child escapes in his beloved garden, only to be reproached by all the plants and animals he has harmed. All the beasts fight him and also fight each other. In an act of kindness the child bandages a squirrel's wound revealing that he can cure the evil, he can be a good boy. Exhausted he faints, but the animals tender him until his mother comes to put an end to his nightmare. Written in times of war, the story is also an allegory for the nightmare of war, of adult men who abandoned all their commodities in order to fight other men. Finding the power to heal their wounds, men can also awake from their nightmare.

Act 1 (An antique country house opening on a garden)

A child seven years old writes his homework singing (I don't want to do my page, I don't want to go for walk...I want to pull the cat's tail and cut the squirrel's). His mother enters the scene (Oh ! You didn't do anything ! You splashed ink on the rug !). Punished, the boy gets only plain tea and no sugar for dinner. Left alone he mourns (I don't care ! I'm not hungry ! ...I'm very mean ! Wicked, wicked ! Nasty !). Angry he injures the squirrel in her cage and pulls the cat's tail (Hurrah ! No more lessons !). The child wants to fall into an armchair, but surprise, the armchair tricks him and he falls to the floor. Happy, the armchair starts to dance with a nearby large Louis XV fauteuil (Your humble servant, bergere ...so we got rid ever of that child bad heels ...The armchair will no longer want the child). Stupefied, the child can see The Clock advancing on him and reproaching (Ding, ding, ding, ding! I can't stop ringing ! He took away my pendulum !). With nasal voices, The Teapot and the Chinese Cup start singing and dancing (Black and beefy, black and chic ...I punch, Sir, I punch your nose ...Cas-ka-ra, harakiri, Sessue Hayakawa). Even the fire starts singing and dancing, leaping out of the chimney (I warm the good ones, but I burn the bad guys !). Then, torn shreds of the drapery are transformed in a procession of little characters: shepherd, and shepherdesses, sheep, a dog, a goat (We will no longer go on purple grass graze our Green sheep !). The child is crying. The Princess of his dreams appears singing (Yes, she's your enchanted princess ...But you tore the book, what's going to happen to me ?). An invisible force drags the

princess under the earth. Alone and sorry the child mourns (You, the heart of the Rose, you the scent of the White lily ...You have left me, like a moonbeam). The child pushes the books, but a little bearded old man comes out from an album, dressed in figures, holding a wooden book. He walks and dances reciting snippets of problems (Eleven and six twenty five ? ...Seven times nine thirty-three ? ...Centimeter, Decimeter ...Hectometre, Kilometre ...Millions, Trillions).

Act 2 (The garden illuminated by the full moon)

The child is happy to greet the new playground (What a joy to meet you, garden !). The Tree answers groaning (...my injury...my injury ...the one you made today on my flank, with the stolen knife...Alas !). A dragonfly passes looking for his mate (Where are you, dear ...your turquoises, your topazes, the air that loves you ...Give it back ! Where is she ?). The child is horrified (The dragonfly I took... Pierced with a pin ... Against the wall). A bat, followed by his youngsters comes searching for his companion (Give it back to me...Last night ...Your victory ...The full nest ...The Little ones ...without their mother). The squirrel also complains about her life in the cage (The prison...Uh, uh. The prison ...The free sky, the free wind, my free brothers). A frog sings her nonsense song (I don't know the cacage ...Ploc ! The bait comes, I leap, they take me, I escape, I came back, Ploc !). Looking at all that crowd, vibrating with life, the child cries (They love each other ...they forget me ...I'm alone ...Mom !). At his cry, all the beasts struggle to punish the child (It's the child with the knife ! It's the kid with the stick ! ...Should we run ? No ! We have to punish ...I have my claws ! I have my teeth !). At the height of their struggle, a small squirrel, wounded, comes to the child with a cry. With the ribbon from his neck, the child binds the wounded paw and then falls back without force. The animals are confused (He suffers... He is wounded ...He is bleeding ...He knows how to cure evil ...What should we do ?). In a single voice the animals call for Mommy and the child opens his eyes. A light appears in the windows of the house. All the animals withdraw singing (He is good the child, he is wise, very wise ...He bandaged the wound, sealed the blood ...It is wise... it is so sweet...). The child sits straight and bright, tending his arms to the one that the beasts have called "Mom".

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - I don't want to do my page, I don't want to go for walk...I want to pull the cat's tail and cut the squirrel's (The Child), Oh ! You didn't do anything ! You splashed ink on the rug ! (Mother), I don't care ! I'm not hungry ! ...I'm very mean ! Wicked, wicked ! Nasty ! (The Child), Hurrah ! No more lessons ! (The Child), Your humble servant, bergere so we got rid ever of that child bad heels The armchair will no longer want the child (The Armchair), Ding, ding, ding, ding! I can't stop ringing ! He took away my pendulum ! (The Clock), Black and beefy, black and chic ...I punch, Sir, I punch your nose ...Cas-ka-ra, harakiri, Sessue Hayakawa (The Teapot, The Cup), I warm the good ones, but I burn the bad guys ! (The Fire), We will no longer go on purple grass graze our Green sheep ! (The Shepherds), Yes, she's your enchanted princess ...But you tore the book, what's going to happen to me ? (The Princess), You, the heart of the Rose, you the scent of the White lily ...You have left me, like a moonbeam (The Child), Eleven and six twenty five ...Seven times nine thirty-three ? ...Centimeter, Decimeter ...Hectometre, Kilometre ...Millions, Trillions (The Little Man). Act 2 - What a joy to meet you, garden ! (The Child), ...my injury...my injury ...the one you made today on my flank, with the stolen knife...Alas ! (The Tree), Where are you, dear ...your turquoises, your topazes, the air that loves you ...Give it back ! Where is she ? (Dragonfly), The dragonfly I took... Pierced with a pin ... Against the wall (The Child), Give it back to me...Last night ...Your victory ...The full nest ...The Little ones ...without their mother (The Bat), The prison...Uh,uh. The prison ...The free sky, the free wind, my free brothers (The Squirrel), I don't know the cacage ...Ploc ! The bait comes, I leap, they take me, I escape, I came back, Ploc ! (The Frog), They love each other ...they forget me ...I'm alone ...Mom ! (The Child), It's the child with the knife ! It's the kid with the stick ! Should we run ? No ! We have to punish ...I have my claws ! I have my teeth ! (The Beasts), He suffers... He is wounded ...He is bleeding ...He knows how to cure evil ...What should we do ? (The Beasts), He is good the child, he is wise, very wise ...He bandaged the wound, sealed the blood ...It is wise... it is so sweet...(The Beasts).

Ballet: All the objects in the room are dancing. Ballet of the little characters, who express dancing the sorrow of no longer being able to join. They dance on the music of bagpipes and tambourines. A ballet version of the performance was choreographed by Jeroen Verbruggen with scenography from Yassen Samouilov and costumes by Livia Stoianova. The ballet version premiered on 21 July 2016 at Salle Garnier Opera de Monte Carlo. Another ballet version, present on Youtube was produced by Nederlands Das Theater with choreography

and staging by Jiri Kylian.

Recordings: 1947 French National Radio Orchestra (Nadine Sautereau, Denise Scharley, Solange Michel, Odette Turba Rabier, Martha Angelici), 1954 Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (Flore Wend, Marie Luise de Montmollin, Genevieve Touraine, Adrienne Migliette, Suzanne Danco), 1960 French National Radio Orchestra (Francoise Ogeas, Jeannine Collard, Jane Berbie, Sylvaine Gilma, Colette Herzog), 1981 London Symphony Orchestra (Susan Davenney Wyner, Jocelyne Taillon, Arleen Auger, Jane Berbie, Linda Finnie), 1992 Montreal Symphony Orchestra (Colette Alliot Lugaz, Claudine Carlson, Chaterine Dubosc, Marie Francoise Lefort, Georges Gautier), 1992 Bordeaux Aquitaine National Orchestra (Martine Mahe, Arlette Chedel, Elisabeth Vidal, Michele Lagrange, Leonardo Pezzino), 1997 London Symphony Orchestra (Pamela Helen Stephen, Anne Marie Owens, Elisabeth Futral, Juanita Lascarro, Mary Plazas), 2008 Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (Annik Massis, Francois le Roux, Jean Paul Fouchecourt, Jose Van Dam, Magdalena Kozena), 2015 Saito Kinen Orchestra (Isabel Leonard, Paul Gay, Yvonne Naef, Anna Christy, Marie Lenormand).

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50. Genoveva

Title: Genoveva

Composer: Robert Schumann (1810-1856). Born in Zwickau, Saxony, his father August Schumann (1773-1826) was a bookseller, publisher of the Lexicon of Saxony (18 volumes), while his mother was Johanna Christiane Schnabel. He was the fifth and the last child in the family. His musical instruction started at the age of seven with Johann Gottfried Kuntzsch, a teacher at the Zwickau high school. Since 1828 he started his studies in law at Leipzig and Heidelberg. In 1830 he started to take piano lessons from Friedrich Wieck a noted German piano teacher, owner of a piano store. Seven years later he proposed to Wieck's daughter Clara (1819-1896) a distinguished pianist of the Romantic era. Her father opposed strongly but the young couple finally married in 1840 and the fruit of their marriage were eight children, four girls and four boys. In 1850, Robert Schumann succeeded Ferdinand Hiller as musical director at Dusseldorf. Opera: Genoveva (1848). Oratorio: Das Paradies und die Peri (1841-43), Der Rose Pilgerfahrt (1851), Scenes from Goethe's Faust (1844-53). Overture: Manfred (1849), Julius Caesar (1851), The Bride From Messina (1851), Hermann und Dorothea (1851). His musical compositions also include 148 other compositions: numerous piano works, vocal works (lieder and songs), choral works, orchestral works (5 symphonies), works for solo instrument and orchestra (7 concertos), chamber music (20 quartets, quintets and sonatas).

Libretto: Robert Reinick (1805-1852) was a German poet and painter who graduated the Academy of Art from Berlin. In 1833 he contributed with illustrations to the book called Song Book for German Artists (Liederbuch für deutsche Künstler). His first edition of his Lieder appeared in 1844 and his Illustriertes ABC-Buch in 1845. From this year he came into regular contact with Robert Schumann and became a close family friend and godfather to their second son Ludwig. Robert Schumann has started to work on Genoveva in 1842 but he only completed his work after the family has moved to Dresden in 1844. In 1846 Schumann asked Robert Reinick as a collaborator to his project, based on a Medieval German legend and a play with the same title by Christian Friedrich Hebbel (1813-1863), published in 1840. Robert Reinick has produced two sketches for Schumann based on Ludwig Tieck's play "Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva", but when completed only two hundred lines of Reinick's work remained. The recently constructed Dresden Semperoper declined to stage his opera and the composer moved to Dusseldorf.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 25 June 1850 at the Stadttheater in Leipzig. Since Germany was troubled by the Märzrevolution, the opera did not benefit of an immediate success. The overture premiered at the New York Philharmonic on 16 March 1861, with Carl Bergmann as conductor and was in general played more often than the opera. In modern times, Genoveva was rediscovered and staged in 1995 by the Biefeld Opera in North Rhine Westphalia. Conducted by Geoffrey Moul and directed by Katja Czellnik the opera was

given several notable performances. The first British professional production was staged in 2000 at the Garsington Opera in Oxfordshire. The North American premiere, in a concert performance at Emmanuel Church in Boston ended with ovations on 2 April 2005. In February 2008, Genoveva was presented by the Zurich Opera, followed by the performance at the University College Opera in March 2010. The Czech premiere was staged on 27 February 2014 at the Antonin Dvorak Theatre. On 29 April 2017 Genoveva premiered at the Nationaltheater Mannheim. Up to the 2017/18 season, Genoveva was performed in the world for 22 times, in 5 different productions, ranking 481 on Operabase list.

Roles: Siegfried, Count Palatine (baritone), Genoveva of Brabant, his wife (soprano), Golo, his page boy (tenor), Balthasar, his servant (bass), Margaretha, a servant (soprano), Drago, an old steward (bass), Hidulfus, Bishop of Tier (baritone), Caspar, a hunter (baritone), Chorus (Christian knights, the servants)



Story: The medieval legend of Genoveva, is about the wife of the palatine Siegfried of Treves who was falsely accused of adultery by the majordomo Golo. Sentenced to death, she was spared by the executioner and lived for six years in the woods nourished by a roe deer. Finding out Golo's treachery, Siegfried has found her wife while chasing the deer and she was reinstated in her former honour. The true story of Marie de Brabant, wife of Louis II Count Palatine of the Rhine was less fortunate. Suspected of infidelity she was found guilty and beheaded on 18 January 1256. In this version of the story, in the trial on her Golgota Mountain, Genoveva was found innocent and the two lived happily for ever after. Trusted with both guarding and executing Genoveva, young and minless Golo has found his final judgement in the gorge.

Overture

Act 1 (Castle in Siegfried's town of Brabant)

Count Palatin Sigfried's supporter, Bishop Hidulfus, is summoning the Christian knights to join the war in the name of God (We are ready to battle and strife, for Christ the lord to death to give). Alone, Siegfried's servant Golo recollects that he wants to find his peace on the field of honour, but he is denied due to his young age (Peace, pull into my chest ... Siegfried, you are a second father to me, what are you doing to me ?). Scene 2 - Siegfried bids farewell from his wife Genoveva (You are a German woman, do not weep ... If you were not a knight, you were not Siegfried ... my dearest wife ... my dearest husband). As for Golo, Siegfried entrusts him with guarding his wife and entrusts the rest of the servants with guarding Golo (You better serve me here ... And you ... serve him as if I were myself !). As Genoveva is kissing her husband good by, Golo mourns to himself (O how she kisses ! Man feels it just by looking !). The knights begin their march singing (On, on to the fight ! ... Count Siegfried, our hero !). Scene 3 - Left alone Genoveva has fainted and Golo can't help kissing her (Against the Paradise, I want, I have to kiss her). After he escorts his dizzy lady to the castle he is encountered by Margaretha, who has seen the scene (... see how beautiful it all meets ! The count at war, you home- Perhaps he falls in battle, he even ordered you to inherit ! Good luck on it, good luck !). Golo is wise enough to ask her advice, and Margaretha offers to help him win the Queen's heart (What would you do in my place ? ... If I were a young gentleman I would fall in love with the Queen).

Act 2 (Genoveva's room)

Alone, Genoveva recalls her husband's farewell (Oh what a goodbye did he have, may all the joy and luck be with him). The servants, Margaretha among them, sing a daring drinking song (Fill the cups to the edge, come on

and drink). Golo enters with the good news that their army has won a great victory and is expected to return soon. Cheerful, Genoveva feels like singing and invites Golo to join her in a duet (If I were a bird and also had two wings, I'd fly to you !). Turned on by the song, Golo falls to her feet, declaring love and trying to impose (The blood, the flowing, the heart ...Remember who you speak to ! ...In my arms, woman ! ... Back !). Alarmed, Genoveva calls Drago for help and Golo vanishes. Scene 2 - Drago is alarmed because the servant have spread rumor that Lady Genoveva is having an affair with the young Kaplan, and Golo is eager to confirm (They say: with the young Kaplan she was seen intimate ...I know even more ...So believe, if you don't want to see). To provide the proof, Golo hides Drago in Genoveva's bedroom. Scene 3 - Margaretha informs Golo that Count Siegfried is in Strasbourg, wounded, and she intends to poison his wound (He is wounded there ...that shall rid him of his sufferings, and you from him). Scene 4 - At the window, Genoveva sings her loneliness (...O Lord, who likes to forgive, shield me in my great sorrow !). Called by Golo, the servants come and search Genoveva's bedroom. Drago is found, and without a word Balthasar stabs him. Outraged, the servants arrest Genoveva (To the tower with her, there she has time to repent !). Confused, Genoveva is crying, while Golo enjoys his victory (...O Lord in Heaven, what did I do, that's how hard you're testing me!).

Act 3 (Room in the fortress of Strassburg / Margaretha's room)

While Siegfried wants to hasten his return home, Margaretha is delaying him expecting her ointments to work (Nothing keeps me any more ...Only a few days will spare you !). Margaretha also proposes to help him see his wife (There's a magic mirror here, it will show a man everything he wants). Scene 2 - Siegfried orders Conrad to make all the preparations for their departure and sings a lied taking his arms from the wall (Soon I will look at you again my home castle). Scene 3 - Golo enters the room with a letter from Bishop Hidulfus explaining the fate of Genoveva. Dishonoured, Siegfried wants to kill himself and Genoveva, but at a second thoughts he wants to check first the magic mirror. Scene 4 - In Margaretha's room, Siegfried demands to see the mirror and his castle appears in a circle described by a magic wand (The Mirror ! The Mirror ! ...To serve you). In the first image the castle is floating in a sea of flowers and Genoveva speaks friendly with Dago (The mirror tells me nothing what I didn't know !). In the second picture the mirror shows the courtyard at night, with one flower sprouting when the stars sparkle (The bad I don't see yet ! ...Well, the one who trusts !). In the third and last picture Drago opens the door of Genoveva's bedroom and she offers him her hand. Furious, Siegfried smashes the mirror with his sword and plunges Golo. From the shattered mirror rises Drago's spirit crying at his Last Judgement (So it is destined, so it is fulfilled ! ...Lord of Heaven, have mercy ! Air ! Help ! Rescue ! Siegfried ! Siegfried !).

Act 4 (Rocky landscape / Castle in Siegfried's town of Brabant)

Escorted by Caspar and Balthasar, Genoveva is climbing the rocky mountain singing a sad song (Soon it will be over ! I must die so young, death of murderer's hand, disgraced !). When she sees the cross, she continues kneeling down (O Holy Virgin, look at me, give strength to bear bitterest !). Scene 2 - Golo enters the scene with the sword and ring received from Count Siegfried to restore his honor (Do you know the ring ? And this sword too ?). Before killing her, Golo tries his chance for the last time (I am too coward, this beautiful head to deliver it to the sword. Come and escape with me ! ...You speak in madness ! ...Back, wicked !). Scene 3 - Golo mounts his horse and flies away, ordering Caspar and Balthazar to proceed with the execution (I do not return to the castle at night, so do not seek me and tell the other). As her last wish, Genoveva asked Caspar to tell her husband that she forgave him for being hard on her. Genoveva also denounces Golo to be the cheat, but Caspar has seen Drago with his own eyes and refuses to believe her (Lead her away from the cross, on the cross I don't like murder !). As Genoveva praise her Savior, horns are heard behind the scene and Caspar drops his sword shaking (We are betrayed, let us flee !). Scene 4 - Siegfried appears led by Margaretha and the two reunite affectionately (Siegfried, it's you ! ...O let her rest thy eyes upon me !). The hunters have found Golo shattered in the gorge and now are singing for their Count Siegfried (Come all with him in the castle, for this day a feast shall he be, the bells are ringing for him and the priests shall sing the Mass). Scene 5 - In the castle, all the servants greet Genoveva and sing with joy (Gracious, Gracious ! Siegfried Heil, the glorious hero, Heil Genoveva, the High woman !)

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - We are ready to battle and strife, for Christ the lord to death to give (Hidulfus, Chorus), Peace, pull into my chest ... Siegfried, you are a second father to me, what are you doing to me ? (Golo), You are a German woman, do not weep ...If you were not a knight, you were not Siegfried ...my

dearest wife ...my dearest husband (Siegfried, Genoveva), You better serve me here ...And you ...serve him as if I were myself ! (Siegfried), On, on to the fight ! ...Count Siegfried, our hero ! (Chorus), Against the Paradise, I want, I have to kiss her (Golo), ...see how beautiful it all meets ! The count at war, you home- Perhaps he falls in battle, he even ordered you to inherit ! Good luck on it, good luck ! (Margaretha), What would you do in my place ? ...If I were a young gentleman I would fell in love with the Queen (Golo, Margaretha) Act 2 - Oh what a goodbye din he have, may all the joy and luck be with him (Genoveva), Fill the cups to the edge, come on and drink (Chorus), If I were a bird and also had two wings, I'd fly to you ! (Genoveva, Golo), The blood, the flowing, the heart ...Remember who you speak to ! ...In my arms, woman ! ... Back ! (Golo, Genoveva), They say: with the young Kaplan she was seen intimate ...I know even more ...So believe, if you don't want to see (Drago, Golo), He is wounded there ...that shall rid him of his sufferings, and you from him (Margaretha), ...O Lord, who likes to forgive, shield me in my great sorrow ! (Genoveva), To the tower with her, there she has time to repent ! (Chorus), ...O Lord in Heaven, what did I do, that's how hard you're testing me! (Genoveva) Act 3 - Nothing keeps me any more ...Only a few days will spare you ! (Siegfried, Margaretha), There's a magic mirror here, it will show a men everything he wants (Margaretha), Soon I will look at you again my home castle (Siegfried), The Mirror ! The Mirror ! ...To serve you (Siegfried, Margaretha), The mirror tells me nothing what I didn't know ! (Siegfried), The bad I don't see yet ! ...Well, the one who trusts ! (Siegfried, Golo), So it is destined, so it is fulfilled ! ...Lord of Heaven, have mercy ! Air ! Help ! Rescue ! Siegfired ! Siegfried ! (Drago). Act 4 - Soon it will be over ! I must die so young, death of murderer's hand, disgraced ! (Genoveva), O Holy Virgin, look at me, give strength to bear bitterest ! (Genoveva), Do you know the ring ? And this sword too ? (Golo), I am too coward, this beautiful head to deliver it to the sword. Come and escape with me ! ...You speak in madness ! ...Back, wicked ! (Golo, Genoveva), I do not return to the castle at night, so do not seek me and tell the other (Golo), Lead her away from the cross, on the cross I don't like murder ! (Caspar), We are betrayed, let us flee ! (Caspar), Siegfried, it's you ! ...O let her rest thy eyes upon me ! (Genoveva, Siegfired), Come all with him in the castle, for this day a feast shall he be, the bells are ringing for him and the priests shall sing the Mass (Chorus), Gracious, Gracious ! Siegfried Heil, the glorious hero, Heil Genoveva, the High woman ! (Chorus)

Ballet: The most famous setting of the legend was the drama by Ludwig Tieck *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva*. A ballet performance of the play was also produced in 1838 with music by Louis Huth.

Recordings: 2008 Orchestra and chorus of the Zurich Opera House (Juliane Banse - Genoveva, Martin Gantner - Siegfried, Shawn Mathey - Golo, Cornelia Kallisch - Margaretha), 2009 Chamber Orchestra of Europe (Ruth Ziesak, Marjana Lipovsek, Thomas Quasthoff, Rodney Gilfry), 2010 Schoenberg Choir (Ruth Ziesak, Marjana Lipovsek, Deon van der Walt, Rodney Gilfry, Oliver Widmer, Thomas Quasthoff), 2011 Hessisches Staatsorchester and Chorus Weisbaden (Annette Dasch - Genoveva, Morten Frank Larson - Siegfried, Michael König - Golo, Andrea Baker - Margaretha), 2012 Hamburg State Philharmonic Orchestra (Julie Faulkner - Genoveva, Alan Titus - Siegfried, Keith Lewis - Golo, Renate Behle - Margaretha), 2015 Rundfunkchor Berlin (Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Siegfried, Edda Moser - Genoveva, Siegfried Vogel - Drago, Gisela Schrotter - Margareta, Peter Schreier - Golo)

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51. Armide

Title: Armide

Composer: Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687). Born in Florence, Grand Duchy of Tuscany, his father Lorenzo Lully was a miller, while his mother Caterina del Sera was the daughter of a miller. He started his musical education playing the guitar and the violin supervised by a Franciscan friar. By 1646 he was already a minstrel, playing his violin in the streets during Mardi Gras, dressed as harlequin. Duke Roger de Lorraine Chevalier de Guise, was looking for a page boy and since the boy's mother has died recently the Duke was entrusted with his education. In Paris, the boy entered in the service of Anne-Marie Louise d'Orleans, a cousin of King Louis IV,

as garçon de chambre. In the royal entourage he learned music from musicians and composers of the court, such as: Nicolas Metru, Francois Roberday and Nicolas Gigault. In 1653 he attracted the attention of the 14 years old King Louis XIV, by dancing with him in the Ballet de la Nuit, a ballet performance where the king debuted as Apollo (Le Roi Soleil). In 1661, King Louis XIV made him a squire and named him superintendent of the royal music and music master of the royal family. The next year he married Madeleine Lambert (1643-1720), daughter of the renowned composer Michael Lambert and the fruit of their marriage were three sons. Since 1661 he began a fertile collaboration with the playwright Jean-Baptiste Porquelin (Moliere 1622-1673). In 1672 he was named director of the Academie Royale de Musique. Operas: Cadmus et Hermione (1673), Alceste (1674), Thesee (1675), Atys (1676), Isis (1677), Psyche (1678), Bellerophon (1679), Prosepine (1680), Persee (1682), Phaeton (1683), Amadis (1684), Roland (1685), Armide (1686), Achille et Polyxene (1687). His musical compositions also include: 31 ballets, 3 comedie ballets, 1 tragedie ballet, 3 pastorales, 8 comedies, divertissements, interludes, motets, numerous songs and marches.

Libretto: Philippe Quinault (1635-1688). Philippe Quinault was a French dramatist and librettist, elected to the Academie Francaise in 1670. Before 1670 he was the author of 16 comedies, tragedies and tragicomedies. In 1671 he produced the libretto for Psyche set to music by Jean-Baptiste Lully. From this time he confined himself to composing libretti for Lully and he received four thousand livres for each and the reputation as the master of a new style. In the next years he has produced the libretto for the operas: Cadmus et Hermione (1673), Alceste (1674), Thesee (1675), Atys (1676), Isis (1677), Psyche (1678), Bellerophon (1679), Prosepine (1680), Persee (1682), Phaeton (1683), Amadis (1684), Roland (1685), Armide (1686), Achille et Polyxene (1687) and for the ballet The Triumph of Love. The libretto for Armide was based on the poem *La Gerusalemme liberata* by Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), an imaginative version of the combat between Christians and Muslims during the First Crusade. In the poem, Princess Erminia (Armida) of Antioch falls in love with a Christian knight. Abandoned she attempts to commit suicide, but the knight prevents her and begs her to convert to Christianity which she heart softened consents. Other 40 operas were written based on Torquato Tasso's poem.

Performance history: Armide was first performed on 15 February 1686 by the Paris Opera at the Theatre du Palais-Royal, with a scenery by Jean Berain the Elder (1637-1711), in the presence of the Grand Dauphin. The opera was well received by the parisians and was revived in 1703, 1713-14, 1724, 1746-47, 1761 and 1764. Between 1686 and 1751 Armide was mounted in Marseilles, Brussels, Lyon, Luneville, Metz, Hague, Berlin and Rome. Critics in the 18th century regarded Armide as a masterpiece and it continues to be one of the best known French baroque opera, part of "l'age de la lumiere" of King Louis XIV. In modern times, the North American premiere of Lully's Armide took place in Canada in September 2005. In Toronto, Armide was staged by Opera Atelier on 19 April 2012 with Peggy Kriha Dye as Armide and Colin Ainsworth as Renaud. The performance was repeated on 22 October 2015 at the Elgrin Theatre. On 18 June 2016, Armide was staged at the Orangery Palace Sanssouci, Potsdam (Berlin) with musical direction from Patrick Cohen-Akenine and choreography by Deda Cristina Colonna. On the stage starred Emilie Renard as Armide, Rupert Charlesworth as Renaud and Pietro di Bianco as Hidraot. Up to the 2017/18 season, Armide was performed in the world for 33 times, in 10 different productions, ranking 352 on Operabase list.

Roles: Armide, niece of Hidraot (soprano), Hidraot, King of Damascus (bass-baritone), Renaud, a knight (tenor), Phenice, a confidante of Armide (soprano), Sidonie, a confidante of Armide (soprano), Aronte, head of Guard (bass), Artemidor, a knight (baritone), Ubalde, a knight (bass), Hatred (soprano), The Danish knight (tenor), Lucinde (soprano), Melisse (soprano), Water Nymph (soprano), Chorus (knights, nymphs, people of Damascus, demons, shepherds, shepherdesses)



Story: This is a knightly version of the eternal struggle between Love and War. Christian knights have invaded the Muslim country animated by a supposedly very honorable purpose. They bring Justice and the Love of Christ for the innocent. But the King of Damascus has invoked against them all the gods of Hatred and War. Armide, the niece of the King of Damascus has especially directed her hate against a young and handsome knight called Renaud, the only one with a frozen heart. Seduced by the girl's demons, Renaud falls in Armide's hands, while she spares his life and falls for him. She even fights the Hated godess for him, getting sentenced to eternal love (being converted to Christianity). Although in love with Armide, Renaud is rescued from her arms by his fellow knights, by the use of gold, diamonds and the lust for glory. Abandoned, Armide destroys her Enchanted Palace and her love for the foreigner. Since that day, Christians and Muslim have struggled in a passionate, endless war.

Prologue - In the palace of King Louis XIV the people are singing the "Sweetness of its laws" and its "glorious exploits" in order to express their love for their wise king. Then, the king is introduced to the subject of the tragedy: he is about to see how knight Renaud flies where Glory calls his courage.

Act 1 (A public square in the city of Damascus with a triumphal arch)

Armide, the niece of the King of Damascus, sings together with her confidantes Phenice and Sidonie (In a day of triumph, a thousand of pleasures ...You inspire a fatal flame that you never feel). Still, in the defeated army, Renaud's heart was not yet broken and Armide, being a magician, knows that and sings with extreme vexation (I do not triumph over the most valiant of all ! ...against this warrior our weapons will be in vain). Scene 2 - King Hidraot and his suite enters the scene to cheer his daughter (For you, when you please, all hell is armed. You are more learned in my art as myself). Asked if she will accept the bliss of a faithful lover, Armide responds (Renaud's winner, if anyone can be, will be worthy of me). Scene 3 - The people of Damascus are singing and dancing, led by their king (Armide is even more admirable than she is formidable: her triumph is glorious !). Scene 4 - Aronte, the head of the Guard enters the scene with a broken sword (Oh, heavens ! O cruel disgrace ! I drove your captives with care ...an indomitable warrior delivered them all).

Act 2 (A campaign where a river forms a pleasant island)

Artemidore, the knight, is grateful to Renaud (Invincible hero is by your courage that I escape the rigors of a deadly slavery). Even more knightly, Renaud responds (I claim to address my steps where Justice and Innocence will need the help of my arm). Scene 2 - King Hidraot and Armide invoke the magic power of their gods (Spirits of hatred and rage, demons, obey us ! Deliver to our Wrath the enemy who insults us !). Scene 3 - Left alone, at the edge of the river, Renaud sings the beauty of the place and falls asleep abandoning his weapons (The most lovable flowers and the sweetest zephyr scent the air we breathe). Scene 4 - A naiad comes out of the river, followed by nymphs, shepherds and shepherdesses singing (In the happy times when we know how to please, it is so sweet to love tenderly !). Scene 5 - Holding a dagger, Armide enjoys her victory (Finally, he is in my power, this deadly enemy, this superb winner). She wants to hit his heart but a force restrains her (What trouble seizes me, who makes me hesitate ? What does pity mean to me ?). Transformed into Zephyrs, demons kidnap Renaud and Armide.

Act 3 (In the desert)

Alone, Armide recollects her feelings (Is it up to you to be my winner ? ...How did you change my anger in

languor ?). Scene 2 - Phenice and Sidonie advice Armide to enchant Renaud with her presence, but Armide is afraid that her heart is too weak (Show yourself to his eyes ...It's my heart I'm afraid of ...Love came to surprise me when I least needed it). Scene 3 - Alone, Armide makes efforts to rouse herself (Come, come, implacable hatred ...save me from Love, nothing is so formidable). Scene 4 - The Hatred goddess answers her vows, coming out from the underworld, and begins the enchantment to destroy her love (Love, come out for ever, come out of a heart that's chasing you !). Horrified, Armide changes her mind begging Hatred to leave her under the spell of Love. The goddess fulfills her wish (I will not punish you for a harsher sentence then to give you up for ever to love). Scene 5 -Alone again, Armide prays that Love would have pity on her.

Act 4 (An abyss has opened in the desert, home for terrible monsters)

Ublade, the Danish knight, holding a sceptre of gold, comes to free Renaud and attacks the monsters (Monsters, go spit your useless rage in the deep chasms from where you came out). Scene 2 - A demon disguised as Lucinde keeps Renaud enchanted by the power of Love (Enjoy the extreme happiness to love and to be loved the same). The demons are dancing around him. Knight Ublade dissipates the power of love touching Lucinde with the Golden Scepter. Scene 3 - Ublade wakes the knight from his dream (What Love has of charming is only an illusion, that leaves after it but an eternal shame). Scene 4 - Another demon appears under the disguise of Melissa, a young girl loved by Ublade (Is that you, dear lover ? Am I seeing you ? ...Is that you, lovely Melissa ?). Now it is Renaud's turn to use the Golden Sceptre and disenchant the power of Love (What Love has of charming is only an illusion, that leaves after it but an eternal shame).

Act 5 (In the Enchanted Palace of Armide)

Renaud and Armide share their first moments of consciousness (Armide, you're going to leave me ! ...The pleasures will follow you constantly). Scene 2 - Lovers and Pleasures enter the scene singing and dancing (These places are charming for the Happy Lovers !). Scene 3 - Ublade and the Danish Knight enter the scene to rescue him presenting the diamond shield and the sword (Our general is calling you, only victory keeps your immortal glory). Snatching the garlands of flowers of which he is adorned Renaud gets the shield and the sword (Stay away from the cries of Armide, the only danger your soul you needs to be guaranteed). Scene 4 - Armide enters the scene shouting (Renaud ! Sky ! O Mortal Sorrow ! You're leaving ! Renaud ! Are you leaving ?). She continues her angry monologue (Barbarian, are you happy ? You enjoy, when you leave the pleasure of taking my life). She falls and faints and the knights leave the scene. Scene 5 - Left alone, Armide calls her demons to destroy the Enchanted Palace (Demons, destroy this palace ! Leave ! And, if it is possible, my doomed love will remain buried in these places for ever).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - In a day of triumph, a thousand of pleasures ...You inspire a fatal flame that you never feel (Phenice, Sidonie), I do not triumph over the most valiant of all ! ...against this warrior our weapons will be in vain (Armide), For you, when you please, all hell is armed. You are more learned in my art as myself (Hidraot), Renaud's winner, if anyone can be, will be worthy of me (Armide), Armide is even more admirable than she is formidable: her triumph is glorious ! (Chorus), Oh, heavens ! O cruel disgrace ! I drove your captives with care ...an indormitable warrior delivered them all (Aronte). Act 2 - Invincible hero is by your courage that I escape the rigors of a deadly slavery (Artemidore), I claim to address my steps where Justice and Innocence will need the help of my arm (Renaud), Spirits of hatred and rage, demons, obey us ! Deliver to our Wrath the enemy who insults us ! (Hidraot, Armide), The most lovable flowers and the sweetest zephyr scent the air we breathe (Renaud), In the happy times when we know how to please, it is so sweet to love tenderly ! (Chorus), Finally, he is in my power, this deadly enemy, this superb winner (Armide), What trouble seizes me, who makes me hesitate ? What does pity mean to me ? (Armide). Act 3 - Is it up to you to be my winner ? ...How did you change my anger in languor ? (Armide), Show yourself to his eyes ...It's my heart I'm afraid of ...Love came to surprise me when I least needed it (Sidonie, Armide), Come, come, implacable hatred ...save me from Love, nothing is so formidable (Armide), Love, come out for ever, come out of a heart that's chasing you ! (Hatred). I will not punish you for a harsher sentence then to give you up for ever to love (Hatred) Act 4 - Monsters, go spit your useless rage in the deep chasms from where you came out (Ublade), Enjoy the extreme happiness to love and to be loved the same (Lucinde, Renaud), What Love has of charming is only an illusion, that leaves after it but an eternal shame (Ublade), Is that you, dear lover ? Am I seeing you ? ...Is that you, lovely Melissa ? (Melissa, Ublade), What Love has of charming is only an illusion, that leaves after it but an eternal shame (Renaud). Act 5 - Armide, you're going to leave me ! ...The pleasures will

follow you constantly (Renaud, Armide), These places are charming for the Happy Lovers ! (Chorus), Our general is calling you, only victory keeps your immortal glory (Ublade), Stay away from the cries of Armide, the only danger your soul you needs to be guaranteed (Renaud), Renaud ! Sky ! O Mortal Sorrow ! You're leaving ! Renaud ! Are you leaving ? (Armide), Barbarian, are you happy ? You enjoy, when you leave the pleasure of taking my life (Armide), Demons, destroy this palace ! Leave ! And, if it is possible, my doomed love will remain buried in these places for ever (Armide).

Ballet: Act 1 - Scene 3 - People of Damascus is dancing to honour the victory of their army. Act 2 - Scene 4 - Demons, disguised as nymphs, shepherds and shepherdesses enchant Renaud and chain him during his sleep with garlands of flowers. Act 4 - Scene 2 - The demons are dancing around Renaud to maintain the enchantment of love. Act 5 - Scene 2 - Pleasures and lovers are singing and dancing for Renaud and Armide.

Recordings: 2007 Opera Lafayette/Ryan Brown (Stephanie Houtzeel-Armide, Robert Getchell-Renaud, Francoise Loup-Hidraot, Ann Monoyios-Phenice, Miriam Dubrow-Sidonie), 2011 Les Arts Florissants (William Christie-Conductor, Starring: Paul Agnew, Isabelle Druet, Bathan Berg, Marc Mauillon)

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52. Oedipe

Title: Oedipe (Oedip)

Composer: George Enescu (1881-1955). Born in Liveni-Dorohoi, Romania, his father Costache Enescu was a tenant farmer while his mother Maria Cosmovici was the daughter of the local priest. He was the eighth and the last child of the family, the only one to survive in adult life. He started to study the violin from the age of four with composer Eduard Caudella (1841-1924) director at the Conservatory in Iasi. In 1888, at the age of seven, he was the youngest student ever admitted to the Vienna Conservatory, where he studied with Joseph Hellmesberger Jr., Robert Fuchs and Sigismund Bachrich. In 1895 he continued his studies at the Conservatory in Paris where he studied violin with Martin Pierre Marsick, harmony with Andre Gedalge and composition with Jules Massenet and Gabriel Faure. He lived in Paris and in Bucuresti as a noted violin teacher. He was favoured by both Queen Elisabeth and Queen Marie of Romania, welcomed in the royal entourage. In 1937 he married Maria Rosetti-Tescanu (1879-1968), a member of a noble family from Queen Marie's entourage, with no offspring. Her memories were published postmortem under the name: "Shadows and lights. Memories of a Moldavian Princess". Until 1949 he was the chairman of the Romanian Composers Society. Opera: Oedipe (1931). His musical compositions also include: 6 orchestral works (Romanian Rhapsody, Poeme Roumain), 5 symphonies, 5 sonatas, 2 string quartets, 10 chamber music compositions, 5 piano works, 3 lieder written for Queen Elisabeth's poems, songs, choral and vocal music.

Libretto: Edmond Fleg (1874-1963). Edmond Fleg was a teacher of the German language, a writer and a playwright in Paris, born in Geneva. His work includes poetry, plays (Le Message, La Bête, Le Trouble-fête), translations (Faust, Julius Caesar, the Bible) and librettos (Macbeth for Ernest Bloch, Oedipe for George Enescu). Enescu had the idea in 1910 and Edmond Fleg produced the libretto in 1912. George Enescu completed the music in 1922 and the orchestration in 1931. The libretto is based on the mythological tale of King Oedipus of Thebes, a tragical hero in Greek mythology and the subject of the tragedy Oedipus Rex by Sophocles. Oedipus is the archetypal anathema of royal families, who raise their children under false identity in order to protect their lives. Horrified by a prophecy, Queen Jocasta has submitted her son to some shepherds and ended to be raised by the enemy King Polybus. Decades later Oedipus kills his natural father and marries his mother, fulfilling his inexorable fate. Finding the truth, his mother commits suicide. Oedipus blinds himself and finally, after years of wandering, he dies finding rest for his soul.

Performance history: The opera premiered in Paris at Opera Garnier, on 13 March 1936. The first Romanian production was conducted by Constantin Silvestri in Bucharest, on 22 September 1958, using a translation of the libretto produced by Emanoil Ciomac. The first German production was in Berlin in 1996, followed by a

production staged by Vienna State Opera in 1997. In the United States the opera premiered in 2005 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In Paris, Oedipe was revived at the Garnier Opera in 2010. Other notable production were staged at La Monnaie/De Munt in Brussels and at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London. In 2018 the Dutch Opera staged Enescu's work conducted by Marc Albrecht, with Johan Reuter in the role of Oedipe and Sophie Kock in the role of Jocaste. During the last decades at the National Opera in Bucharest Oedipe has been staged in several productions directed by: Jean Ranzescu (1958), Catalina Buzoianu (1991), Andrei Serban (1995), Petrica Ionescu (2003), Anda Tabacaru Hoge (2011), Valentina Carrasco (2015). At the Cluj Opera Oedipe was staged directed by Rares Trifan and at the Iasi National Opera the performance was directed by Eduard Sveatchevici. Up to the 2017/18 season, Oedipe was performed in the world for 27 times, in 9 different productions, ranking 418 on Operabase list.

Roles: Oedipe, son of Laius (baritone), Jocaste, Queen of Thebe (mezzo-soprano), Laios, King of Thebe (tenor), Merope, Queen of Corinth (soprano), Antigone, daughter of Oedipe (soprano), Theseus, King of Athens (baritone), Creaon, brother of Jocasta (bass), Tiresias, the prophet (baritone), Phorbas, chamberlaine of Merope (baritone), The Great Priest (bass), Shepherd (tenor), The Watchman (bass), The Sphinge (baritone) Chorus (Thebaines women and warriors, shepherds, people of Corinth)



Story: Cursed to a terrible destiny, Oedipe, a young man of royal blood decides to fight his Fate and heads for the World. On his way, he gets whiped by a stranger and he kills the man together with his company. He founds the city of Theba abused by a Sphinge and he kills the beast. Proclamed king, he shares his moment of glory in his new kingdom. Years later, a plague ravages the city of Theba and King Oedipe makes the mistake of asking the help from the gods. The Implacable Fate fights back and Oedipe finds out that the man he has killed was his father and the woman he married was his mother. Horrified, Oedipe binds himself and travels the world as a beggar, leaded by his daughter Antigone. In his old age, Oedipe arrives to Athens and finds his final resting place, granted by King Theseus, where he is finally released form the torment of his soul.

Act 1 (A room in the Palace of King Laius in Theba)

Prologue

Thebaines Women sing while their Qeen Jocasta is nursing her son (King Laius, in your house The child who awakens suks a milk made of rays within the sun). The Great Priest blesses the child (Spread the water of Dirce on the new born). The Virgins enter bringing from Delos the flame of Apollo. Tiresias darkens the day with a sad prophecy (Apollo ordered you to die without a child ! ...you made Jocasta a fertile woman ...this son will be the murderer of his father ...the husband of his mother). Unfitted to rule, King Laius ostracized the child handing him to a shepherd (In the gorges of Kitheron ...and that tomorrow...).

Act 2 (A room in the Palace of King Polybos in Corinth / A crossroads with the statue of Hecate / The ramparts of Thebes with a tower)

At dawn, Oedipe listens the people of Corinth singing (Adonis lying on the purple and the gold, with Aphrodite we bring you the Golden anemone where love lives). Phorbas invites him to the fete of Aphrodite but Oedipe refuses to join the party. Slowly, the procession carrying Adonis and Aphrodite moves away singing (We bring you the Golden anemone where love lives to celebrate you under the Golden Moon). Queen Merope is warried (Why tremble my son ? ...Since you came back from Delphi you're running away from joy). Oedipe

answers with sorrow (Apollo spoke to me face to face ! ...you who will be the murderer of your father ...your mother's husband). In order to defeat his fate, Oedipe decides to leave his home and travel the world (I'll leave, I'll leave ...I'll leave before the fatal hour). Scene 2 - In the crossroads a shepherd prays to the statue of Hecate (Hecate, Hecate with three faces ...divert the eyes from my pasture, save the shepherd and his flock). Oedipe arrives at the crossroads wandering (Three paths ... By which I might escape my destiny ?). King Laius enters the crossroads in a chariot and the coachman strikes Oedipe with his whip. Without a word, Oedipe kills the coachman, Laius and his warrior, to the amazement of the shepherd (The King ! ...Death ! ...Death ! Al three dead !). Scene 3 - At the top of the tower the watchman sings (From down to down, I watch, I watch: sleep, Thebans, sleep: the Sphinge sleeps). Approaching, Oedipe finds out that the Sphinge devours the Thebans with a cruel song and insoluble puzzles. If someone is to save the city from him, he will receive the crown and Queen Jocasta to his arms. Oedipe wakes the Sphinge who sings (I am the daughter of Destiny, your pale destiny). The Sphinge' question is what is greater than fate and Oedipe answers: the man. Sobbing and laughing the Sphinge dies saying (Weep for his defeat, or laugh at his victory !). The watchman wakes up the Thebans (Stand up ! stand up ! The City is saved ! Sound the Trumpet !). The people of Thebes wellcomes Oedipe from Corinth (Glory to the savior of the city ! ...Flowers ! Flowers ! Throw flowers ! ...The Crown ! The Crown ! ...Marriage ! Marriage !).

Act 3 (A public square in Thebes)

People mourn their dead as a plague with teeth of fire devours the city (The dead without a tomb see the living die, that is why we cry out to divinity). Oedipe has send Creon to Delphi to ask the gods and the answer is (The strain of a murder defiled our houses ...the murder of Laius). A shepherd has witnessed the murder and was now summoned to testify. Hailed by the people, Oedipe declares that the murderor will be ostracized (Let him be cursed ! Cursed ! Cursed !). Tiresias is asked to reveal the name of the murderor (You of whom Apollo made a subtle mind ...speak name and save the city). Tiresias answer comes as a surprise (The murderer of Laius is you ! ...You only have one enemy: Oedipe is his name). Jocasta recollects the curse of her son killing his father and the shepherd recollects the day of the murder. Phorbas enters the scene with a letter from Merope calling Oedipe to Corinth. Oedipe refuses due to the prophecy of the Oracle, but Phorbas reassures him (Follow me, O King ! and leave these torments: Merope and Polybos are not your parents). As Phorbas explains that he was found by a shepherd from Kitheron, Jocasta mourns and flies into the palace (In the name of the gods, I beg you...). Persuaded by Oedipe the shepherd testifies that the child was King Laius's child and the crowd mourns (Unhappy ! Unhappy Oedipe !). Oedipus shouts and rushes into the palace (You see my eyes for the last time !). A woman cries that Jocasta has killed herself and Oedipe appears with his eyes punctured, his face bloodied (See, Thebans, see ! My eyes are dripping on my cheeks !). Creon leads him to his exile (Oedipe, we must leave, purify the city, bring with you the plague with feverish teeth !). His daughter Antigone is the only one to follow him (Father, I'll follow you).

Act 4 (Near Athens, the edge of a sacred wood, a spring and an altar of marble)

Athenians lead by Theseus, dressed in purple, are praying and offering to the altar near the spring (Benevolent, Beneficial, Venerable ! Blessed is he whose soul is pure). Oedipe arrives lead by Antigone (I see in the distance the towers and columns of pious Athens, the stay of King Theseus). Oedipe asks Antigone to cool his forehead with water from the spring (Hey, you're watching my last asylum. I fear nothing under heaven ...Oedipe will find eternal rest). Creon with some Thebans enters the scene asking with emphasis (Come back, I'll put the sceptre in your hand, I will return your palace and the throne of the Thebans). Oedipe responds (Miserable Creon ! Hypocritical deceiver ! You drove me away abandoned to the four winds). The Thebans pray on him (Without you, they will pass newborns with flames ! They will kill the old men... Save us ! Save us ! ...I will not follow you !). Creon grabs Antigone by the hand, but King Theseus appears and Antigone falls at his feet (I beg on your knees the justice of a king ...Creon wants to rip me off from my father's night, to blind Oedipe a second time !). Creon accuses him of parricide and incest while Oedipe defends himself (Do I have a share to the crimes hatched by fate when I was not born ?). Oedipe asks Theseus for a last favor (A secret place that the good goddesses have in advance marked for my last rest ...to the winner of the fate give the victory again). Oedipe bids farewell to his daughter and walks slowly. Suddenly Oedipe disappears near a cave in conjunction with an immense dazzling light and an underground thunder. The Eumenides sing (Invisible, blessed is he whose soul is pure: Peace be upon him !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - King Laius, in your house The child who awakens suks a milk made of rays within the sun (Chorus), Spread the water of Dirce on the new born (The Great Priest), Apollo ordered you to die without a child ! ...you made Jocasta a fertile woman ...this son will be the murderer of his father ...the husband of his mother (Tiresias), In the gorges of Kitheron ...and that tomorrow... (Laios) Act 2 - Adonis lying on the purple and the gold, with Aphrodite we bring you the Golden anemone where love lives (Chorus), We bring you the Golden anemone where love lives to celebrate you under the Golden Moon (Chorus), Why tremble my son ? ...Since you came back from Delphi you're running away from joy (Merope), Apollo spoke to me face to face ! ...you who will be the murderer of your father ...your mother's husband (Oedipe), I'll leave, I'll leave ...I'll leave before the fatal hour (Oedipe), Hecate, Hecate with three faces ...divert the eyes from my pasture, save the shepherd and his flock (Shepherd), Three paths ... By which I might escape my destiny ? (Oedipe), The King ! ...Death ! ...Death ! Al three dead ! (Shepherd), From down to down, I watch, I watch: sleep, Thebans, sleep: the Sphinge sleeps (The Watchman), I am the daughter of Destiny, your pale destiny (The Sphinge), Weep for his defeat, or laugh at his victory ! (The Sphinge), Stand up ! stand up ! The City is saved ! Sound the Trumpet ! (The Watchman), Glory to the savior of the city ! ...Flowers ! Flowers ! Throw flowers ! ...The Crown ! The Crown ! ...Marriage ! Marriage ! (Chorus) Act 3 - The dead without a tomb see the living die, that is why we cry to out divinity (The Great Priest), The strain of a murder defiled our houses ...the murder of Laius (Creon), Let him be cursed ! Cursed ! Cursed ! (Chorus), You of whom Apollo made a subtle mind ...speak name and save the city (Oedipe), The murderer of Laius is you ! ...You only have one enemy: Oedipe is his name (Tiresias), Follow me, O King ! and leave these torments: Merope and Polybos are not your parents (Phorbas), In the name of the gods, I beg you... (Jocasta), Unhappy ! Unhappy Oedipe ! (Chorus), You see my eyes for the last time ! (Oedipe), See, Thebans, see ! My eyes are dripping on my cheeks ! (Oedipe), Oedipe, we must leave, purify the city, bring with you the plague with feverish teeth ! (Creon), Father, I'll follow you (Antigone) Act 4 - Benevolent, Beneficial, Venerable ! Blessed is he whose soul is pure (Chorus), I see in the distance the towers and columns of pious Athens, the stay of King Theseus (Antigone), Hey, you're watching my last asylum. I fear nothing under heaven ...Oedipe will find eternal rest (Oedipe), Come back, I'll put the sceptre in your hand, I will return your palace and the throne of the Thebans (Creon). Miserable Creon ! Hypocritical deceiver ! You drove me away abandoned to the four winds (Oedipe), Without you, they will pass newborns with flames ! They will kill the old men... Save us ! Save us ! ...I will not follow you ! (The Thebans, Oedipe), I beg on your knees the justice of a king ...Creon wants to rip me off from my father's night, to blind Oedipe a second time ! (Antigone), Do I have a share to the crimes hatched by fate when I was not born ? (Oedipe), A secret place that the good goddesses have in advance marked for my last rest ...to the winner of the fate give the victory again (Oedipe), Invisible, blessed is he whose soul is pure: Peace be upon him ! (Chorus)

Ballet: Act 1 - Shepherds, Theban women and warriors dance to the music of a shepherd's flute to celebrate the birth of the royal child. Act 2 - Scene 3 - Thebaines Virgines dance for Oedipe accompanied by flutes and zithers, throwing flowers.

Recordings: 1955 Institut National de L'Audiovisuel (Monmart, Moizan, Gorr, Lovano, Depraz, Vessieres, Vharles Bruck - conductor), 1964 Electrecord Bucuresti (Sindrilaru, Cernei, Pally, Iordachescu, Ohanesian, Hovorov, Brediceanu - conductor), 1989 EMI Classics (Jose van Dam, Gabriel Bacquier, Marjana Lipovsek, Brigitte Fassbaender, John Aler, Nicolai Gedda, Barbara Hendricks, Lawrence Foster - conductor), 1997 Naxos (Monte Pedersen, Marjana Lipovsek, Egil Silins, Yu Chen, Davide Damiani, Ruxandra Donose, Walter Fink, Mihaela Ungureanu, Michael Gielen - conductor), 2005 Albany Records (Stefan Ignat, Ricardo Hererra, Bradley Robinson, Harold Gray Meers, Michael York, Ben Jones, Ian Hobson - conductor), 2002 DVD video from La Monnaie/De Munt (Eerens, Petrinsky, Lemieux, Bork, Henschel, Rootering, Leo Hussain - conductor)

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53. Halka

Title: Halka

Composer: Stanislaw Moniuszko (1819-1872). Born in Ubiel near Minsk, Belarus, his father Czeslaw Moniuszko was a landowner member of the szlachta nobility, while his mother Elzbieta Madzarska had Polish-Hungarian roots. After a short education at home with his mother, at the age of 8 he started piano lessons with August Freyer and three years later he continued with Dominik Stefanowicz. Starting with 1837 he left for Berlin where he took private instruction in harmony, counterpoint and conducting from Carl Friedrich Rungenhagen, the director of the Singakademie Music Society. In 1840 he returned to Poland to marry Aleksandra Muller and the fruit of their marriage were ten children. In Vilnius he worked as organist at the St. John's church and also worked as a private piano tutor. In 1858 he was appointed principal conductor of the Polish Opera in the Grand Theatre in Warsaw. In 1864 he started lecturing in harmony, counterpoint and composition at the Music Institute in Warsaw. Operas: Halka (1848), Sielanka (1848), Betty (1852), Flis (The Raftsmen 1858), Rockiczana (The King of Peasants 1859), Hrabina (The Countess 1859), Jawnuta (1860), Verbum nobile (1860), Straszny Dwor (The Haunted Manor 1861), Paria (1859). Ballet: Monte Cristo (1866), Na Kwaterunku (On the Billet 1868), Figle szatana (Satan's Tricks 1870), Merry Wives of Windsor (1849). His musical compositions also include: 10 operettas, 7 cantatas, 12 masses and litanies, 5 psalms and requiems, more than 300 popular songs, 5 overtures, chamber music, organ and piano compositions.

Libretto: Wlodzimierz Wolski (1824-1882). Wlodzimierz Wolski was a Polish poet, novelist, translator and librettist. His work includes poetry, novels and the librettos for the operas: Halka, The Countess and Poloska gwinciarska. The libretto for the opera is based on the poem Halka written by the librettist earlier. The story is about the unfulfilled love of a highlander girl named Halka for a noble named Janusz who abandons her to wed a girl of his rank.

Performance history: The opera premiered as a concert performance in Vilnius on 1 January 1848. The staged premiere in Vilnius took place on 28 February 1854. The four acts version premiered in Warsaw on 1 January 1858. In the same year 1858, the composer met Bedrich Smetana in Prague who prepared the Prague premiere. It was soon staged in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. In the United States, the opera was originally performed by the Polonia Opera Company under its director Louis Kowalski. He staged the opera in cities with Polish populations such as New York, Detroit, Hartford and Chicago. He last staged Halka at Carnegie Hall on 24 May 1959. In more recent times, an American performance of Halka was staged in New York City by the Bel Canto Opera in the Robert Wagner School Theatre in June 1982. In 2010 a new English translation by Donald Pippin was performed by Pocket Opera in San Francisco and Berkeley. The first performance of Halka in Great Britain was presented at the Polish Social and Cultural Association in London on 30 October 2009 with Serenna Wagner in the role of Halka. In 2004 an outdoor performance with horses, fireworks and special effects attended by 6 000 viewers has been staged in the Krakow Zakrzówek Nature Park, produced by Krzysztof Jasinski under the musical direction of Wojciech Michniewski, with the ballet of the Opera Krakowska. The opera was also produced on stage of the Krakow Opera in December 2011 with sopranos Magdalena Barylak, Ewa Biegas and Ewa Vesin. Up to the 2017/18 season, Halka was performed in the world for 100 times, in 28 different productions, ranking 172 on Operabase list.

Roles: Stolnik, an aristocrat (bass), Sofia, his daughter (mezzo-soprano), Janusz, engaged to Sofia (soprano), Dziemba, majordomo (bass), Halka, a peasant girl (soprano), Jontek, a peasant, (tenor), Dudziat, a peasant (bass), Chorus (guests, peasants)



Story: In the romantic ages of Poland, in the middle of the 19th century, Halka, a poor orphan peasant girl, falls in love with with her young and handsome landlord and gets impregnated. Ignorant of her strong feeling, the young noble marries a girl of his kind and the poor peasant girl loses her mind. She keeps singing a sad song about the white dove and her falcon, but only Jontek, a young peasant in love with her, stands on her side. At the engagement ceremony, Sofia, the bride to be, asks the girl to step back, but she just can not let go. Emotions escalate even higher at the wedding ceremony when Halka wants to incendiate the church, but she ends up killing herself in the river nearby. She has sacrificed both her's and her son's life for the happiness of her falcon. The wedding goes on, as nothing happened.

Act 1 (Stolnik's house in town / In the garden)

Stolnik and guests celebrate the engagement of Sofia to Janusz (Let the young couple live ...eternal Love, eternal consent ...ancient emblem of virtue). Scene 2 - Janusz and Sofia share commitments and solemn vows (Bless the Lord ! Here's our whole request). In the garden, in the backstage, Halka sings her sorrow (He took me all Jasko, my falcon, took all my innocence...). Scene 3 Janusz recalls his feelings for Halka (Though I regret her so it hurts me, it hurts ...but it's too late, it has already happened). Scene 4 - Janusz enters the garden and shares a couple of moments with Halka alone. They engage in a love duet (You abandoned me ...Oh how I used to look at you, my light, my sun ...I did not abandon you, wait for me on the Vistula, where is a cross on the road ...we will return to our mountains ...happiness and paradise). Scene 5 - Returned to the party, Janusz entertains the guests. Scene 6 - Stolnik makes the honors of the house and gives the signal for the music (I am honored by your presence, you all give splendor to my party ...I invite you and encourage you to dance like old times !).

Act 2 (Stolnik's garden at night)

Alone among the trees, Halka sings like a dove (My falcon said goodbye but he will go back to the mountains with me). Scene 2 - Jontek enters the scene and proposes to her (And you believe him, poor girl ! You don't know what the love a rich man is ...Let me in ! Let me in ! There's my son's father !). Jontek insists and finally gets the approval (Let's flee this place ! ...Oh Jontek ! Take me before our Lord !). Scene 3 - Hearing the noise the guests enter the garden, Janusz ahead of the rest. Scene 4 - Janusz is angry with Halka for coming back, but Jontek defends her (...the poor orphan, cried before God ...her fate is very sad ! God will reward you for having mercy on the poor !). Scene 5 - Halka sings sadly (Oh, rotator ! Slowly, gently, you hypnotized the poor dove). Sofia makes her stand, in her garden (We don't want any sadness here ! Get out of here ! Go with the servants where you'll be fine).

Act 3 (In the village, a month later)

After the Sunday evening Mass the peasants sing (Tomorrow we will return to work ...today is a happy day !). Scene 2 - A woman sings (Our master's good woman, without pride, invites us all to the wedding !). Scene 3 - The villagers praise the Lord (Praise God ! Villagers forever be praised !). Scene 4 - Jontek and Halka return from town and explain that they were thrown out like dogs ! Halka sings with sorrow (The dove over the mountains flapped her wings, but no longer white, but red of her own blood). The villagers are quick to comfort her (How sad the fate of the poor girls ...it is not you who sinned, on another weighs your sin !).

Act 4 (A rural church surrounded by firs, adjoining the cemetery)

Jontek is desperate since Halka has left the mountains to attend the wedding (When she sees him with his wife, she's capable of dying ! Oh, merciful Jesus !). Scene 2 - Jontek sings a sad song for Halka (Oh, Halina ! Oh, my beloved ! ... I always brought you flowers with the aroma of the mountain). Scene 3 - Jontek begs Halka to leave but she insists to stay. Scene 4 - Dziemba is the first to salute the bride (Salute loud and joyfull the young woman, the beautiful lady !). Scene 5 - All guests are blessing the couple (God bless this wedding ! May they always have happiness !). Halka is noticed in the audience and Janusz is embarrassed miserably, but he pretends not to care (Come on, let's go to church ! It's dark now. It's getting late). Scene 6 - All except Jontek and Halka enter the church singing. Scene 7 - From the door of the church Jontek relates the events while Halka keeps singing her dove song (Where's my falcon ? Where's my Jasko ?). Scene 8 - From the church the chorus sings (Mighty God, Holy God, have mercy on your people !). Jontek has entered the church and Halka sings about her son without a father, preparing to set fire to the church (...but my child dies ! Oh, my little boy ! ...I'll avenge you ! I'll burn you Jasko !). After some moments she changes her mind and throws herself into the river (You, my falcon, my lord ...Live happily, even if not with me ! ...I forgive you and bless you !). Scene 9 - Jontek throws himself into the river to rescue Halka but (It's too late, too late, the poor thing has drowned !). Scene 10 - Dziemba gives the signal for the party to continue (Now is the time to cheer up the party ! ...Let's sing with joy !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Let the young couple live ...eternal Love, eternal consent ...ancient emblem of virtue (Stolnik, Chorus), Bless the Lord ! Here's our whole request (Janusz, Sofia), He took me all Jasko, my falcon, took all my innocence... (Halka), Though I regret her so it hurts me, it hurts ...but it's too late, it has already happened (Janusz), You abandoned me ...Oh how I used to look at you, my light, my sun ...I did not abandon you, wait for me on the Vistula, where is a cross on the road ...we will return to our mountains ...happiness and paradise (Halka, Janusz), I am honored by your presence, you all give splendor to my party ...I invite you and encourage you to dance like old times ! (Stolnik) Act 2 - My falcon said goodbye but he will go back to the mountains with me (Halka), And you believe him, poor girl ! You don't know what the love a rich man is ...Let me in ! Let me in ! There's my son's father ! (Jontek, Halka), Let's flee this place ! ...Oh Jontek ! Take me before our Lord ! (Jontek, Halka), ...the poor orphan, cried before God ...her fate is very sad ! God will reward you for having mercy on the poor ! (Jontek), Oh, rotator ! Slowly, gently, you hypnotized the poor dove (Halka), We don't want any sadness here ! Get out of here ! Go with the servants where you'll be fine (Sofia) Act 3 - Tomorrow we will return to work ...today is a happy day ! (Chorus), Our master's good woman, without pride, invites us all to the wedding ! (Chorus), Praise God ! Villagers forever be praised ! (Chorus), The dove over the mountains flapped her wings, but no longer white, but red of her own blood (Halka), How sad the fate of the poor girls ...it is not you who sinned, on another weights your sin ! (Chorus) Act 4 - When she sees him with his wife, she's capable of dying ! Oh, merciful Jesus ! (Jontek), Oh, Halina ! Oh, my beloved ! ... I always brought you flowers with the aroma of the mountain (Jontek), Salute loud and joyfull the young woman, the beautiful lady ! (Dziemba), God bless this wedding ! May the always have happiness ! (Chorus), Come on, let's go to church ! It's dark now. It's getting late (Janusz), Where's my falcon ? Where's my Jasko ? (Halka), Mighty God, Holy God, have mercy on your people ! (Chorus), ...but my child dies ! Oh, my little boy ! ...I'll avenge you ! I'll burn you Jasko ! (Halka), You, my falcon, my lord ...Live happily, even if not with me ! ...I forgive you and bless you ! (Halka), It's too late, too late, the poor thing has drowned ! (Chorus), Now is the time to cheer up the party ! ...Let's sing with joy ! (Dziemba, Chorus).

Ballet: Act 1 - At the end of the act, the guests are dancing a famous Mazurka (4 min). Act 3 - The dance of the villagers after the Sunday Mass - Tance goralskie (4 min 55 sec). In the fall of 1939, Catherine Littlefield choreographed an extracurricular ballet performance for Halka, danced at the Civic Opera House in Chicago on 11 December. Recently, at the Poznan Opera premiere of Halka in 2015 the choreography was produced by Weronika Pelczynvska and for the production at the Fischer Center for the Performing of Arts in New York the choreography was produced by Adam Cates .

Recordings: 1986 Orchestra and Choir of Theater Wielki Warsaw (Barbara Zagorzanka, Wieslaw Ochman, Jerzy Ostapiuk, Ryszarda Racewicz, Andrej Hiolski, Robert Satanowski), 1992 Polish National Opera (Andrzej Hiolski, Edmund Kossowski, Barbara Nieman, Halina Slonicka, Bohdan Paprocki, Zdizislaw Gorzynski), 1995 Polish National Opera (Andrzej Hiolski, Barbara Zagorzanka, Jerzy Ostapiuk, Ryszarda Racewicz, Wieslaw Ochman, Robert Satanowski), 1999 The Great Theatre National Opera in Warsaw (Tatiana Zacharczuk,

Wladimir Kuzminenko, Zbigniew Macias, Katarzyna Suska, Piotr Nowacki, Antoni Wicherek), 2007 Wroclaw Opera on DVD (Tatiana Borodina, Oleh Lykhach, Aleksandra Buczek, Mariusz Godlewski, Radoslaw Zukowski, Zbigniew Kryczka, Jacek Rys, Rafal Majzner, Andrzej Kalinin, Janusz Zawadzki, Ewa Michnik)

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54. Der Freischutz

Title: The Freeshooter (Der Freischutz)

Composer: Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826). Born in Eutin, Schleswig-Holstein in Germany, his father Franz Anton von Weber was the director of a theatrical company, while his mother Genovefa Brenner was a Viennese singer. He was the eldest of the three children of the family. He started his musical education with his father, a gifted violinist and beginning with 1796 he was instructed by the oboist Johann Peter Heuschkel. In 1798 he went to Salzburg to study with Joseph Haydn and later that year to Munich, where he studied with the singer Johann Evangelist Wallishäuser and organist Johann Nepomuk Kalcher. In 1802 he also studied in Vienna with Georg Joseph Vogler. From 1804 to 1807 he was recommended as Director at the Breslau Opera and from 1813 to 1816 he was the director at the Opera in Prague. From 1817 onwards he was director of the prestigious Opera in Dresden. On 4 November 1817 he married the singer Caroline Brandt (1792-1852) and the fruit of their marriage were a girl and two boys. Operas: *Silvana* (1810), *Abu Hassan* (1811), *Der Freischutz* (1817-21), *Die drei Pintos* (1820-21), *Euryanthe* (1822-23), *Oberon* (1825-26). Ballet: *Castor et Polux* (1804). The complete list of his musical work includes more than 300 compositions: incidental music, masses, cantatas, canons, chorlieds, hymns, songs and song cycles, canzonettas, waltzes, two piano concertos, symphonies, sonatas, fuguettes, piano compositions.

Libretto: Friedrich Kind (1768-1843). Friedrich Kind was a German dramatist and librettist with a practice in law. His best known librettos are: *Der Freischutz* for Weber and *Der Holzdieb* for Heinrich Marschner. Friedrich Kind was an industrious writer in many fields of literature, including sentimental poetry, and the editor of the *Abendzeitung* from 1817 to 1826. The plot in the libretto is based on the German folk legend of the Freischutz, a marksman who contracted with the devil to obtain certain bullets destined to hit the target without fail. According to the legend, six of the bullets were at the disposal of the shooter, while the seventh was at the absolute disposal of the devil himself. Stories about the Freischutz were common during the 14-th to the 16-th century but the tale widely circulated in 1811 when it was first published in the *Book of Ghosts* by Johann August Apel (1771-1816). Friedrich Kind used Apel's version as the main source of the story.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 18 June 1821 at the Schauspielhaus Berlin conducted by Carl Maria von Weber himself. In the distribution, Heinrich Stumer was singing Rodolph and Karoline Seidler-Wranitzky was singing Agnes. The reception of *Der Freischutz* was very warm and it became an international success, with productions in Vienna, Leipzig, Karlsruhe, Prague, Copenhagen. In 1824 there were four productions in four different London theaters as well as the French premiere at the Theatre de l'Odeon in Paris. At the Royal Theatre in London, on 22 July 1824 the opera premiered under the superintendence of Mr. Hawes, with Mr. Braham singing Rodolph and Miss Noel singing Agnes, on a scenery produced by Mr. Wilson. On 7 March 1838 soprano Jenny Lindl made her debut as Agnes at the Royal Swedish Opera. A version in French with recitatives was prepared in 1841 by Hector Berlioz including a ballet moment. In recent times the most notable performances were staged in: Vienna (1954), Köln (1955), Berlin (1959), München (1959), Berlin (1967), München (1969), Dresden (1973), München (1980), Dresden (1990), Zürich (1999), Paris (2011), London (2012). At the Metropolitan Opera in New York a rare performance was produced in 1972 with Sandor Konya as Rodolph and Pilar Lorengar as Agnes. At Teatro alla Scala in Milan *Der Freischutz* was staged on 10 October 2017, conducted by Myung-Whun Chung, casting Michael König as Rodolph and Julia Kleiter as Agnes. In 2018 a Viet Nam production at the HCM City featured tenor Pham Trang as Rodolph and soprano Cho Hae Ryong as Agnes, with a choreography produced by Tran Nhat Minh. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Der Freischutz* was performed in the world for 507 times, in 87 different productions, ranking 45 on Operabase list.

Roles: Ottocar, a Bohemian Prince (baritone), Kuno, the Ranger (bass), Caspar, a Huntsman (bass), Rodolph, a Huntsman (tenor), Rollo, a Huntsman (tenor), Killian, a Villager (baritone), Zamiel, the Black Huntsman (spoken), Agnes, Daughter of Kuno (soprano), Ann, Cousin of above (soprano), Chorus (Huntsmen, Villagers, Attendants, Invisible spirits)



Story: This story is about love, German tradition, folk superstitions, and the right to hunt the deer. Above all it is about the trust in God. About to be married, young Rodolph must pass the tradition of a price shooting, since the girl's father is the king's marksman. A day before the wedding he loses the target shooting contest and also his confidence in his rifle and skills. Caspar, an old and wicked hunter, who has sold his soul to the devil, offers him the alternative to cheat, using charmed bullets. Like Faust, Caspar tries to buy some luxurious time on the expense of the youth. To obtain the bullets, Caspar trades his life against that of Agnes, Rudolph's bride to be, and Zamiel (the devil) accepts to divert the charmed bullet. In the wedding day, Rodolph aims for the white dove but the bullet is diverted and claims Caspar's life. The God's justice was stronger than the Devil's and all the folk praise the God.

Act 1 (A dark thick forest / The place for the shooting contest with a starred target)

Caspar, attended by Rollo, calls for Zamiel, the spirit of the forest who has contracted to serve him for 7 prosperous years. They discuss the next day's contest where it will be decided who is the best marksman in the kingdom. Scene 2 - At the contest Rodolph misses the target but the star falls when Killian hits the target. The villagers sing (Victoria ! let fame to the master be given). Killian sings his victory (How this star and flower adorn me ! Now what huntsman dares to scorn me !). Kuno enters the scene, followed by Caspar and Rollo, to find out that Rodolph has missed the target. Kuno explains to the winner the nature of the trial-shoot, an old custom in the kingdom. Killian knows from his grandmother about the seven magic balls that Zamiel directs to the target and Kuno adds that the winner will be married to the most beautiful girl of the village. Rodolph sings with Rollo this last chance he has got (Oh, how dark and dreary will tomorrow over me rise ! ...Now in thy rifle future joy or sorrow lies). Left alone, Rodolph sings his sorrow and his love for Agnes (Oh ! I can bear my fate no longer ...what unknown guilt thus haunts my spirit). Caspar and Rollo enter the scene to invite Rodolph to drink in the Ranger's health. Warmed by the wine Rollo sings (Bless'd by Bacchus, rosy wine makes a mortal half divine). Rodolph is then asked to drink a second cup to Agnes's health and a third one for Caspar. Rodolph prepares to leave, but Caspar offers to help him with some occult powers of nature to make his chance a certainty. To prove his powers, he asks Rodolph to shoot an eagle in the dark sky, and the eagle falls dead while Zamiel laughs aloud. Caspar tells him that it was a charmed bullet and he may procure more such, at midnight, in the wolf's glen, during the Moon eclipse. Jealous on Rodolph, after his departure Rollo sings (Thy victim now is in thy power, Hell's darkening chains at length have found him).

Act 2 (Agnes's house in the forest / At the wolf's glen, the full moon is dimming)

Alone Agnes sings her love for Rodolph (Say, my heart, why, wildly beating, dost thou such emotion prove ?). Her cousin Ann enters the scene and sings to her a love song (If a youth should meet a maiden, need she run away with fright ?). In preparation for the wedding, Ann ornaments the balcony with roses while Agnes worries about Rudolph being late (Where, my Rudolph, dost thou love ? Oh, may Heaven's protection shelter him my heart must ever love !). Rodolph enters in a hurry and explains that he must go out again (Oh if thou still wilt leave me, my warning words obey ...Night now is fast approaching, I must, I must away). Rodolph lies that

he shot a large stag and must get it home, than he sings her good night (Now good night ! Round each hill, and tower, and tree). Scene 2 - Caspar is building a circle of black stones with a scull in center while invisible spirits are singing (Mist hath fallen from the moon, where tomorrow reaches noon ...death will wed another bride). At midnight Caspar invokes Zamiel who reminds him that his contract has ended. Caspar deals and achieves three more years of Zamiel's services, offering Agnes to be the next victim. On his way to the meeting Rodolph sings (The moon with blood hath stained her light !). Rodolph arrives, enters the circle and together with Caspar begins to bless the magic bullets (In mystic numbers bless the lead, three murderers, deep in blood alike, charm the bullets, that they strike). On the seventh bullet a thunder strikes and the storm begins.

Act 3 (In the forest / In Agnes's house prepared for the wedding / The tent of Prince Ottcar with a river and a forest in the distance)

The huntsmen sing their pleasure of hunting (What equals on earth the delight of the huntsman ?). Rodolph enters the scene and greets the huntsmen (A woodland life, amid the hills, we hunters sweetly pass away). Caspar enters the scene and claims to have only one magic bullet left. Rodolph has also spent three of his four bullets entertaining the Prince. Scene 2 - Agnes dressed as a bride sings (For though round mortals care my lover, over him in heaven it has no power). Ann enters to lift her spirit (Let no sorrow dare to borrow pleasure from the happy bride). Chorus joins for the bridal song (Love with myrtle leaves and rosy flowers now will strew thy future hours). Agnes responds singing with prudence (Though the gay path of life fairest flowers may adorn, every step should with caution be trod, for too often on our way we encounter the thorn). Scene 3 - Prince Ottcar asks where is the bride, but her father Kuno excuses her for she did not want to embarrass the shooters. When Agnes enters the scene with her bridesmaids the Prince congratulates Rodolph for his choice and passes Agnes to Rodolph. Agnes and Rodolph sing with hope (Oh fortune, we hail thee ! the trial attending, his efforts befriending). The target chosen by the Prince is a white dove. Rodolph fires, but the dove escapes while Caspar falls down wounded. Asked by the Prince, Rodolph explains that he has used the charmed bullet provided by Caspar. With a last word, Caspar takes the blame (No ! the guilt was mine. Zamiel has betrayed me ! ...to whom I saved my soul, await and beckon me). Zamiel rises in a fiery car and drags Caspar into the car (Six shall achieve, seven deceive). The Prince concludes that the ways of Heaven are just and the chorus praise the Lord (Now let us raise our hands and hearts to Heaven).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Victoria ! let fame to the master be given (Chorus), How this star and flower adorn me ! Now what huntsman dares to scorn me ! (Killian), Oh, how dark and dreary will tomorrow over me rise ! ...Now in thy rifle future joy or sorrow lies (Rodolph, Rollo), Oh ! I can bear my fate no longer ...what unknown guilt thus haunts my spirit (Rodolph), Bless'd by Bacchus, rosy wine makes a mortal half divine (Rollo), Thy victim now is in thy power, Hell's darkening chains at length have found him (Rollo) Act 2 - Say, my heart, why, wildly beating, dost thou such emotion prove ? (Agnes), If a youth should meet a maiden, need she run away with fright ? (Ann), Where, my Rudolph, dost thou love ? Oh, may Heaven's protection shelter him my heart must ever love ! (Agnes), Oh if thou still wilt leave me, my warning words obey ...Night now is fast approaching, I must, I must away (Agnes, Rodolph), Now good night ! Round each hill, and tower, and tree (Rodolph), The moon with blood hath stained her light ! (Rodolph), In mystic numbers bless the lead, three murderers, deep in blood alike, charm the bullets, that they strike (Caspar) Act 3 - What equals on earth the delight of the huntsman ? (Chorus), A woodland life, amid the hills, we hunters sweetly pass away. (Rodolph), For though round mortals care my lover, over him in heaven it has no power (Agnes), Let no sorrow dare to borrow pleasure from the happy bride (Ann), Love with myrtle leaves and rosy flowers now will strew thy future hours (Chorus), Though the gay path of life fairest flowers may adorn, every step should with caution be trod, for too often on our way we encounter the thorn (Agnes), Oh fortune, we hail thee ! the trial attending, his efforts befriending (Agnes, Rodolph), No ! the guilt was mine. Zamiel has betrayed me ! ...to whom I saved my soul, await and beckon me (Caspar), Six shall achieve, seven deceive (Zamiel), Now let us raise our hands and hearts to Heaven (Chorus).

Ballet: In 1841, Hector Berlioz added a ballet for a production of the Opera in Paris where dancing was a strict requirement. He orchestrated Weber's piano piece Invitation to the Dance for this purpose.

Recordings: 1954 Wiener Philharmoniker (Hans Hopf - Rudolph, Kurt Bohme - Caspar, Elisabeth Grumer - Agnes, Rita Streich - Ann), 1959 (Berliner Philharmoniker (Rudolf Schock - Rodolph, Karl Christian Kohn -

Caspar, Elisabeth Grummer - Agnes, Lisa Otto - Ann), 1969 Bayerischen Staatsoper Munchen (Nicolai Gedda - Caspar, Walter Berry - Rodolph, Brigit Nilsson - Agnes, Erika Koth - Ann), 1973 Staatskapelle Dresden (Peter Schreier - Rodolph, Theo Adam - Caspar, Gundula Janowitz - Agnes, Edith Mathis - Ann), 1980 Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Rene Kollo - Rodolph, Peter Meven - Caspar, Hildegard Behrens - Agnes, Helen Donath - Ann), 1990 Staatskapelle Dresden (Francisco Araiza - Rodolpho, Ekkehard Walschiha - Caspar, Karita Mattila - Agnes, Eva Lind - Ann), 1999 Zurich Opera (Peter Seiffert - Rodolpho, Matti Salminen - Caspar, Inga Nielsen - Agnes, Malin Hartelius - Ann), 2012 London Symphony Orchestra (Simon O'Neill - Rodolpho, Lars Woldt - Caspar, Christine Brewer - Agnes, Sally Matthews - Ann)

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55. Goyescas

Title: Goyescas

Composer: Enrique Granados (1867-1916). Born in Lleida, Spain, his father Calixto Granados was a Spanish army captain, while his mother was Enriqueta Campina. In his youth, he started to study piano in Barcelona with Francisco Jurnet and Joan Baptista Pujol. In 1887 he went to Paris where he studied with Charles-Wilfrid de Beriot and Felip Pedrell. In 1890, his opera Maria del Carmen pleased King Alfonso XIII and in 1916 he was invited in New York to perform a piano recital for President Woodrow Wilson. In 1893 he married Amparo Gal and in the next 8 years the fruit of their marriage were six children, four boys and two girls. In 1901 Granados founded the Granados Academy of Music, his own piano school which produced a number of distinguished plays. In France he was honored with: Cross of the Legion of Honor and Palms of the Academy. In Spain he was honored with: Plaque of the Comendador of the Civil Order of Alfonso XII and the Cross of the Knights of the Order of Carlos III. Operas: Maria del Carmen (1898), Petrarca (1899), Follet (1903), Goyescas (1915). His musical work also includes: incidental music for 8 shows, 10 orchestral compositions, 14 chamber music compositions, 106 piano works and compositions, voice and piano works, choral music, arrangements and transcriptions from Bach, Chopin, Scarlatti and Schubert, 7 books of pedagogical works.

Libretto: Fernando Periquet y Zuaznabar (1873-1940). Fernando Periquet y Zuaznabar was a Spanish writer and librettist. He worked for the newspaper El Clamor. His best known librettos are: Patria y Amor with music by Isaac Albeniz, El tio del gaban with music by Guillemrmo Cerceda, La conquista del marido with music by Foglietti and Goyescas with music by Enrique Granados. The music for the libretto used the melodies from the piano suite also called Goyescas produced by Granados in 1911. Goyescas, subtitled Los majos enamorados (The Gallants in Love) was inspired by the paintings of Francisco Goya (1746-1828) therefore the name. Impressed with Goya's palette, models and loves, Granados has produced a three scene work based on the themes from his previous work: Love and Death, The Maiden and the Nightingale, The Straw man, Dancing by the Candlelight, Conversation at the window, Compliments, Serenade to a Spectre.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 28 January 1916 at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. It was the first opera to be performed in Spanish and it was paired on a double bill with Leoncavallo's Pagliacci. The opera was conducted by Gaetano Bavagnoli, with soprano Anna Fitziu as Rosario, mezzo soprano Flora Perini as Pepa, tenor Giovanni Martinelli as Fernando and Giuseppe de Luca as Paquiro. The stage production was directed by Jules Spek and the costumes were produced by G.B. Santoni following Goya's paintings. In spite of the initial success the opera has not found a permanent place in the opera repertoire. A Spanish film adapted from the opera was made in 1942, directed by Benito Perojo, starring Imperio Argentina. At BBC, Goyescas was broadcasted on: 29 August 1950, 28 August 1992, 2 August 2002 and 25 July 2006. In recent years, Goyescas was presented at the Central City Opera of Colorado, in 2003. In 2007 an English version by Clara and Nidia Schumacher was produced by Brown Opera Productions at the Brown University of Rhode Island. Goyescas was also restaged in New York on 15 November 2015 with the Bare Opera at the Bat Haus in Bushwick. At Teatro Real in Madrid a recent production for the 2014/15 season was directed by Guillermo Garcia Calvo, starring Maria Bayo as Rosario, Andeka Gorrotxategi as Fernando, Ana Ibarra as Pepa and Cesar San Martin as Paquiro. Up to the 2017/18 season, Goyescas was performed in the world for 36 times, in 7 different productions,

ranking 336 on Operabase list.

Roles: Rosario, a highborn lady (soprano), Fernando, a young officer, her lover (tenor), Pepa, a young girl of the people (mezzo soprano), Paquiro, a toreador, her lover (baritone), Chorus (majos and majas)



Story: The story is a melodrama of love, honor, jealousy and violence. Wooing Rosario, the majos toreador Paquiro is opposed by Fernando her lover. The two men fight and stronger Paquiro, backed by his maja girlfriend Pepa, wins the fight. For Paquiro, Fernando was just another bull, but Rosario has lost the love of her life for a moment's caprice when she challenged Pepa, a maja girl. Main characters of the plot, the majos and majas of the 17th century Spain (frequent subjects of Goya's paintings) were rich members of the lower class, with elaborate handmade outfits and a cheeky behavior, who affected the elegant and carefree lifestyle of the true nobles. Any reason was cherished to pay their score. Pelele is an effigy doll made of straw and rags that the Spaniards would use to play games with, during Carnival. Baile de candil is a lantern, but also a low class party lighted only by a lamp, with folk music and dancing.

Tableau 1 (Florida meadow, a Church and a river, a picnic table)

Overture Scene 1 - Majas and majos are singing with joy, while jumping a pelele in a blanket (He who trusts in love with ease, will end up as a pelele ...only a majo will it please ...jump, pelele, jump pelele !). A soprano voice from the chorus continues (Knives and salt, majas and flowers, blessings are and they are ours ...jump pelele jump !). A tenor voice responds (Little joy the sun would give, if we did not love the woman ...jump pelele, jump !). An old voice from the chorus squares (Off you go ! Off you go ! ...How would Florida be called if it did not bloom the flowers ...women and meadows pleasures they are, this is plain and clear). Paquiro brings his compliments to the ladies (For it is your perfume, you blossoming rose, so thin, that intoxicates me). Such compliments are appreciated by the majas who respond (He enjoys such flirtation, from flower to flower to fly... what he does pleases us... jump pelele, jump ! ...Paquiro, don't play with love !). Pepa arrives in her carriage and the majas stop tossing the pelele. Scene 2 - The majos welcome Pepa cheering (This girl seems to carry more salt than the sea). Paquiro exchanges some words with Pepa (Your eyes demand slavery ...Yours give me life and health). The people exult around them (They are both charming, such a love was never seen). Scene 3 - Rosario enters the scene seeking Fernando and Paquiro approaches her chivalrously. When Fernando appears they exchange love declarations, while Paquiro invites Rosario to attend the lantern-lit ball at nine in the evening. Majas and majos sing (Let return to joy ...for in this day, as never before I delight in joy).

Intermezzo

Tableau 2 (The Lantern-lit Ball)

Majas and majos are singing (Lovely the feet that do the talk while you're dancing). When Rosario and Fernando appears an old voice wanders (I never have dreamed they'd dare enter here). Scene 2 - Paquiro alerts Fernando that every majo there will be offended if he is not there to dance with them, but Fernando responds (The invitation was but for the lady, but my love protected her as a precaution). The majas and the majos sing commenting (If two men want to conquer the same woman, a life must be wasted ! End this quarrel...Quiet !). Rosario gets anxious and wants to leave immediately (It is the love of a woman, cursed flower ...Dear God into

a trap I have fallen !). Fernando is excited and provokes the toreador (I thought I would find a man here, but there is none). Pepa is worried (He is not wise the captain, yet he speaks to us of honor). Paquiro is reluctant to accept the challenge (I do not accept here your chalange). A moment later Paquiro throws himself to Fernando and Rosario faints. The two agree to a duel, the next morning, in the meadow. Majas and majos begin to dance (Dancing makes one forget ! ...He who has not danced has not lived).

Interlude (Garden of a palace in Madrid with Rosario sitting on a bench)

Tableau 3 (Full moon in the garden of Rosario)

Scene 1 - Rosario sings while a nightingale is heard (Love ! Ah ! There is no singing without love. Ah ! Nightingale: you sing a hymn of love). Scene 2 - Fernando arrives and they exchange declarations (Were you waiting for me ? ...My nights and my days are for you). Paquiro appears followed by Pepa. Fernando wants to leave Rosario to encounter him but Rosario fights him to stay. Fernando breaks from Rosario's arms and meets Paquiro. Fernando is wounded by Paquiro and falls covered in blood while his oponent flees. Helped by Rosario, mortally wounded, Fernando manages to get sitted on the stone bench and they both sing (Fernando, my soul, return to me your eyes, please ! ...Already I feel death's struggle). With his last breath Fernando bids her goodbye and she collapses onto his body (Thus ...we two...My love !...Goodbye ! ...Dead ! Dead ! I have lost dear God, the only love I ever pursued ! ...Life is captivity ...more so death...).

Great moments and arias: Tableau 1 - He who trusts in love with ease, will end up as a pelele ...only a majo will it please ...jump, pelele, jump pelele ! (Chorus), Knives and salt, majas and flowers, blessings are and they are ours ...jump pelele jump ! (Chorus), Little joy the sun would give, if we did not love the woman ...jump pelele, jump ! (Chorus), Off you go ! Off you go ! ...How would Florida be called if it din not bloom the flowers ...women and meadows pleasures they are, this is plain and clear (Chorus), For it is your perfume, you blossoming rose, so thin, that intoxicates me (Paquiro), He enjoys such flirtation, from flower to flower to fly... what he does pleases us... jump pelele, jump ! ...Paquiro, don't play with love ! (Chorus), This girl seems to carry more salt than the sea (Chorus), Your eyes demand slavery ...Yours give me life and health (Paquero, Pepa), They are both charming, such a love was never seen (Chorus), Let return to joy ...for in this day, as never before I delight in joy (Chorus) Tableau 2 - Lovely the feet that do the talk while you're dancing (Chorus), I never have dreamed they'd dare enter here (Chorus) Scene 2 - The invitation was but for the lady, but my love protected her as a precaution (Fernando), If two men want to conquer the same woman, a life must be wasted ! End this quarrel...Quiet ! (Chorus), It is the love of a woman, cursed flower ...Dear God into a trap I have fallen ! (Rosario), I thought I would find a man here, but there is none (Fernando), He is not wise the captain, yet he speaks to us of honor (Pepa), I do not accept here your chalange (Paquiro), Dancing makes one forget ! ...He who has not danced has not lived (Chorus) Tableau 3 - Love ! Ah ! There is no singing without love. Ah ! Nightingale: you sing a hymn of love (Rosario), Were you waiting for me ? ...My nights and my days are for you (Fernando, Rosario), Fernando, my soul, return to me your eyes, please ! ...Already I feel death's struggle (Rosario, Fernando), Thus ...we two...My love !...Goodbye ! ...Dead ! Dead ! I have lost dear God, the only love I ever pursued ! ...Life is captivity ...more so death...(Fernando, Rosario).

Ballet: Tableau 2 - The majas and the majos are dancing the fandango. Fandango is a lively couples dance, usually in triple metre, accompanied by guitars, castanets and hand clapping. The meter is similar to that of bolero and seguidilla.

Recordings: 1955 Spanish National Orchestra (Consuelo Rubio-Rosario, Gines Torrano -Fernando, Ana-Maria Iriarte -Pepa, Manuel Ausensi - Paquiro), 1996 Orquestra Sinfonica de Madrid (Maria Bayo - Rosario, Ramon Vargas - Fernando, Lola Casariego - Pepa, Enrique Baquerizo - Paquiro), 2001 Coro ed Orchestra del Teatro Lirico di Cagliari (Rafaella Angeletti - Rosario- Yikun Chung - Fernando, Francesca Franci - Pepa, Davide Damiani - Paquiro)

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56. Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria

Title: The Return of Ulisse to his Homeland (Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria)

Composer: Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643). Born in Cremona, Italy, his father Baldassare Monteverdi was an apothecary while his mother was Maddalena Zignani. He was the first of the six children in the family. He started his musical training with Marc Antonio Ingegneri, maestro di capella at Cremona Cathedral. In 1590 he entered in the service of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga and continued with education with maestro di capella Giaches de Wert. In 1599 he married the court singer Claudia de Cattaneis and the fruit of their marriage were three children. In 1601 Claudio Monteverdi was confirmed maestro di Capella in Mantua. His protector died in 1612 and the next year he was appointed maestro at the basilica of San Marco in Venice. Operas: Arianna (1608), Le Nozze di Tetide (1616), Andromeda (1620), Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda (1624), Armida abbandonata (1626), La Finta pazza Licori (1627), Gli Argonauti (1628), Proserpina rapita (1630), Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria (1640), La nozze d'Enea e Lavinia (1640), L'incoronazione di Poppea (1643). Ballet: Endimione (1604), Orfeo (1607), De la bellezza le dovute lodi (1607), Mascherato dell'ingrate (1608), Tirsi e Clori (1616), Apollo (1620), Vittoria d'Amore (1641). His musical work also includes: 9 books of madrigal songs, sacred music (psalms, vespers, sacred concertos, motets).

Libretto: Giacomo Badoaro (1602-1654). Giacomo Badoaro was a Venetian nobleman and librettist, a member of an intellectual circle the Accademia degli Incogniti. Beside the libretto for Monteverdi's opera he also provided librettos for other operas such as: Ulisse errante by Francesco Saccati and Elena rapita da Teseo by Jacopo Melani. The text for *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* is an adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey*, Books 13-23. Badoaro may also have been influenced by the 1591 play *Penelope* by Giambattista della Porta. The libretto was produced with the express purpose of tempting Monteverdi to compose for the Venetian opera, since in 1637 the Teatro San Cassiano opened its doors in Venice as the first in the world specifically devoted to opera. Scholars have identified 12 versions of the published libretto among which those produced by: Robert Haas (Vienna 1922), Vincent d'Indy (Paris 1926), Gian Francesco Malipiero (Vienna 1930), Luigi Dallapiccola (Milan 1942), Ernst Krenek (Wuppertal 1959), Raymond Leppard (London 1972), Alan Curtis (London 2002).

Performance history: The opera was first staged during the 1639-1640 Venice carnival at Teatro Giovanni e Paolo owned by the Grimani family, by the theatrical company of Manelli and Ferrari. The opera was performed more than 10 times during its first season. In 1640 the opera was played at the Teatro Castrovallani in Bologna and again in Venice for the 1640/41 carnival season. The manuscript of the opera has arrived in Vienna in 1675, during the reign of Emperor Leopold I who was a considerable patron of arts. The first modern performance was in Paris, on 16 May 1925. The BBC radio broadcasted the opera on 16 January 1928. An Italian production prepared by Luigi Dallapiccola was staged in Florence in 1942 and a German version prepared by Ernst Krenek was staged in Wuppertal in 1959. The first British staging was produced at St. Pancras Town Hall, London, on 16 March 1965. The opera entered a wider repertory in 1970's with notable performances in: Vienna (1971), Glyndebourne (1972) and Edinburgh (1978). In January 1974, the opera received its United States premiere at Washington's Kennedy Center. A German production was staged on 11 August 1985 for the Salzburg Festival and a South African version prepared by William Kentridge was staged in Johannesburg in 1998. More recently, the opera has been performed in 2004 at the New York Lincoln Centre by the New York City Opera. In 2006 a Welsh National Production by David Alden changed the plot into a contemporary fantasy and in 2009 the opera was staged again by the Edinburgh Festival. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* was performed in the world for 140 times, in 38 different productions, ranking 134 on Operabase list.

Roles: Ulisse, King of Itaca (tenor), Penelope, his wife (mezzo-soprano), Telemaco, his son (tenor), Ericlea, Penelope's nurse (mezzo-soprano), Jupiter, supreme god (tenor), Juno, Jupiter's wife (soprano), Neptune, sea god (bass), Minerva, wisdom goddess (soprano), Melanto, attendant to Penelope (soprano), Eurimaco, a servant (tenor), Eumete, a shepherd (tenor), Iro, a stupid glutton (tenor), Antino, suitor to Penelope (bass), Pisandro, suitor to Penelope (tenor), Anfinomo, suitor to Penelope (alto), Human Fragility (mezzo-soprano), The Time (bass), Fortune (soprano), Love (soprano), Coro Fauci (alto, tenor, bass), Coro in Cielo (soprano, alto, tenor), Coro Marittimo (soprano, tenor, bass)



Story: The action takes place on the Island of Ithaca in legendary times. The second oldest extant work of Western literature, *Odyssey* was composed at the end of the 8th century BC when Ulysses has returned to Ithaca, years after the Trojan war. A portal to the ancient life and manners, the libretto connotes the actions of gods, kings and common people to judge the fate of a Greek kingdom, the kingdom of Ithaca. Three younger and richer kings have challenged their luck for gaining Penelope's heart, but the only one worthy of his kingdom is Ulysses himself, although old and impoverished. This performance is a poem of chastity, heroic man and the omnipresence of gods.

Prologue - Human Fragility makes her stand (I am part of human nature ...my fragile existence is a game of fortune). Time, Fortune and Love also share their view about human nature (For me fragile ...by me wretched ...by me confused ...This man will be).

Act 1 (The Royal Palace in Itaca / On the island shore)

Penelope mourns the long absence of her husband (You Ulysses ...you left your caste wife at the mercy of your rivals and enemies ...come back, come back). Scene 2 - Melanto and Eurimaco, in love with each other share sweet love words and the determination to convince Penelope to remarry (How delightfully you increase my beauty with your sweet lies ...the female contumacy it is not a little job). Scene 3 - Nereids and sirens whisper, worrying not to wake Ulysses from his deep sleep. Scene 4 - The Phoenicians disembark Ulysses near the cave of Naiads while he still sleeps. Scene 5 - Neptune is angry (Pride is the cause of man's sin ...man wars with destiny, fight against luck ...the Phoenicians have defied the supreme will of my decree ...the daring man offended and mocked to a deity). Jupiter is sensitive to his call (Let your order be fulfilled ...and those who sinned let them remain motionless like stones). Scene 6 - Neptune turns the ship into a block of stone (The Phoenicians will learn this day, that the human journey when it is contrary to heaven, there is no return). Scene 7 - Ulysses wakes up from his sleep (Lonely and alienated, disappointed and deceived). Scene 8 - Minerva dressed as a shepherdess reveals herself to Ulysses to give him a wise advice (You will travel incognito ...you can check for yourself the brazen audacities that rival princes have dared). In exchange Ulysses offers his belongings (Nymphs, protect the gems and the gold, dresses and treasures, protect everything, holy nymphs !). Scene 9 - The Naiads bless Ulysses's gift (May the beautiful Ithaca rejoice of Ulysses's return !). Minerva asks Ulysses to wait at Eumete's farm while she will bring his beloved son Telemachus. Hope blossoms in Ulysses's heart (Joys and Sorrows, peace and war. Hope does not disappear among mortals !).

Act 2 (The Royal Palace / Wooded area)

Melanto suggests that Penelope should fall in love again (...Love is a companion of beauty and your pain will soon yield to pleasure). Scene 2 - Shepherd Eumete reasons the power of Love (The Royal Sceptre knows the same tears as the shepherd's crook). Scene 3 - Insensitive to love, Iro shares a different opinion (I dwell among kings, you among animals ...I eat your companions and the fruit of your work). Scene 4 - When the two mention his name, Ulysses enters the scene with an old man's appearance to be wellcomed by Eumete (You'll be my guest ...Beggars are Friends of the Sky and protected by Jupiter). Scene 5 - Telemachus and Minerva arrive in a wagon. Scene 6 - Eumete hails Telemaco (O great son of Ulysses, ...this man dressed in rags assures me that the return of Ulysses is not far). Scene 7 - Ulysses enters the caves, then he reveals to his son his true identity (I am Ulysses, Minerva is my witness ...Oh, weeping Father ! Glorious Progenitor ! Greetings, dear Father !).

Act 3 (The Royal Palace)

Melanto informs Eurimaco that their plan did not work (The Queen neither loves nor desires to be loved).
 Scene 2 - Antino, Pisandro and Anfimono do their best but fail to charm the Queen (Open your heart to love for a single day ! ...I don't want to love, no, no, for loving I suffer !). Scene 3 - Dance of the guests, all present are singing (Ladies, beautiful and gentle lovers, Love is like the laughing April). Scene 4 - Eumete brings the news that Ulisse's arrival may not be far. Scene 5 - The suitors agree that Ulisse's arrival is a great danger and they must have the courage to take his life and to soften Penelope's heart (We believe in the justice of the Angry Sky ...let's try to soften the heart of the beautiful with nice gifts). Scene 6 - Minerva suggests a solution for Ulisse to overcome his enemies (I will make your faithful wife propose a game that will give you victory and glory). Scene 7 - Eumene arrives and informs Ulisse that his rivals were terrorized hearing that Ulisse has returned (They can't stop terror from invading their souls)

Act 4 (The Royal Palace)

Telemaco narrates to his mother his visit to Sparta where he encountered beautiful Helen of Troy, the priestess of the divination and omens (She announced me full of joy that Ulisse was not far away). Penelope cheers with hope (...inside my chest, a small seed give rise to great joy). Scene 2 - Antinous wants to send away Eumene, and the old beggar, but the two men stand their position. Iro finds his moment to prove himself and fights the old man, only to be beaten. Queen Penelope grants her asylum to the poor man (Valiant Beggar, in court you can stay with honor and security). Scene 3 - Suitor Pisandro is the first to offer his gifts, only to be refused (As proof of my love for you, this royal crown ...Well, he can not deserve more he who gives a kingdom). Anfinomo also offers his kingdom but Penelope remains reluctant. Antinous is the last to try his fortune (I want to call you a goddess, to cover you with incense of gold). With prudence Penelope responds (Who of you can stretch the arc of Ulisse will prove worthy to possess his woman and his Empire). All three suitors try and fail to tighten Ulisse's arc. Penelope concludes with a martial tone (He who does not possess the virtues of Ulisses is unworthy to inherit his treasures). The old man with a daring soul challenges the test renouncing the prize in case of success. Permission granted, the old man tightens the bow, to the stupor of the audience, and kills the suitors (A few raises and other debases, that's how it hurts the bow !).

Act 5 (The Royal Palace / Marine Landscape)

Iro sorrows his own fate (Iro, you lost the princes, your parents ! Let it run, unstoppable bitter and sad tears).
 Scene 2 - Melanto also cries the lost (How many disasters ! How many tragic loves ! Who dares to provoke a new war ?). Eumete is the only one with an answer (The Old Gray, the poor beggar, is Ulisse, I've seen Ulisse, I assure you !). Scene 3 - Telemaco reveals that the disguise was the work of Minerva and Penelope seems to agree (It is true that the humans are toys of the immortal gods). Scene 4 - In front of Juno Minerva pleads the cause of Ulisse. After a short judgement, Juno decides (I will seek peace and I will watch the rest of Ulisse, the glorious). Scene 5 - Juno pleads the cause of Ulisse in front of her husband, the mighty Jupiter (Give him back his peace, for it was divine the will that punished him). Scene 6 - Jupiter and Neptune also agree and Minerva is ordered to bring the peace among the Achaeans. Scene 7 - Ericlea, Penelope's nurse is confused about her rightful attitude to the new master. Scene 8 - Eumete and Telemaco, both welcome Ulisse with his true appearance. Scene 9 - Penelope is still reluctant to recognize Ulisse as her husband, when Ericlea decides to speak and reveals that she has recognized the scar of her master while bathing him. Husband and wife exchange their declarations of love and chastity (Enlighten you, Heavens ! Bloom Meadows ! ...Oh, my beloved sun ! Port of peace and rest !)

Great moments and arias: Prologue - I am part of human nature ...my fragile existence is a game of fortune (Human Fragility), For me fragile ...by me wretched ...by me confused ...This man will be (Time, Fortune, Love). Act 1 - You Ulisse ...you left your caste wife at the mercy of your rivals and enemies ...come back, come back (Penelope), How delightfully you increase my beauty with your sweet lies ...the female contumacy it is not a little job (Melanto, Eurimaco), Pride is the cause of man's sin ...man wars with destiny, fight against luck ...the Phoenicians have defied the supreme will of my decree ...the daring man offended and mocked to a deity (Neptune), Let your order be fulfilled ...and those who sinned let them remain motionless like stones (Jupiter), The Phoenicians will learn this day, that the human journey when it is contrary to heaven, there is no return (Neptune), Lonely and alienated, disappointed and deceived (Ulisse), You will travel incognito ...you can

check for yourself the brazen audacitys that rival princes have dared (Minerva), Nymphs, protect the gems and the gold, dresses and treasures, protect everything, holy nymphs ! (Minerva, Ulysse), May the beautiful Ithaca rejoice of Ulysse's return ! (Chorus), Joys and Sorrows, peace and war. Hope does not disappear among mortals ! (Ulysse) Act 2 - ...Love is a companion of beauty and your pain will soon yield to pleasure (Melanto), The Royal Sceptre knows the same tears as the shepherd's crook (Eumete), I dwell among kings ...I eat your companions and the fruit of your work (Iro), You'll be my guest ...Beggars are Friends of the Sky and protected by Jupiter (Eumete), O great son of Ulysse, ...this man dressed in rags assures me that the return of Ulysse is not far (Eumete), I am Ulysse, Minerva is my witness ...Oh, weeping Father ! Glorious Progenitor ! Greetings, dear Father ! (Ulysse, Telemaco) Act 3 - The Queen neither loves nor desires to be loved (Penelope), Open your heart to love for a single day ! ...I don't want to love, no, no, for loving I suffer ! (The Suitors, Penelope), Ladies, beautiful and gentle lovers, Love is like the laughing April (Chorus), We believe in the justice of the Angry Sky ...let's try to soften the heart of the beautiful with nice gifts (The Suitors), I will make your faithful wife propose a game that will give you victory and glory (Minerva), They can't stop terror from invading their souls (Eumene) Act 4 - She announced me full of joy that Ulysse was not far away (Telemaco), ...inside my chest, a small seed give rise to great joy (Penelope), Valiant Beggar, in court you can stay with honor and security (Penelope), As proof of my love for you, this royal crown ...Well, he can not deserve more he who gives a kingdom (Pisandro, Penelope), I want to call you a goddess, to cover you with incense of gold (Antinous), Who of you can stretch the arc of Ulysse will prove worthy to possess his woman and his Empire (Penelope), He who does not possess the virtues of Ulysses is unworthy to inherit his treasures (Penelope). A few raises and other debases, that's how it hurts the bow ! (Ulysse) Act 5 - Iro, you lost the princes, your parents ! Let it run, unstoppable bitter and sad tears (Iro), How many disasters ! How many tragic loves ! Who dares to provoke a new war ? (Melanto), The Old Gray, the poor beggar, is Ulysse, I've seen Ulysse, I assure you ! (Eumete), It is true that the humans are toys of the immortal gods (Penelope), I will seek peace and I will watch the rest of Ulysse, the glorious (Juno), Give him back his peace, for it was divine the will that punished him (Juno), Enlighten you, Heavens ! Bloom Meadows ! ...Oh, my beloved sun ! Port of peace and rest ! (Penelope, Ulysse)

Ballet: Act 3 - Scene 3 - All present are dancing, beautiful ladies and gentle lovers.

Recordings: 1964 Santini Kammerorchester Munster (Gerald English - Ulysse, Maureen Lehane - Penelope, Antonia Fahberg - Minerva, Helmut Kretschmar - Eumete), 1971 Concertus Musicus Wien (Sven Olof Eliasson - Ulysse, Norma Lerer - Penelope, Rotraud Hansmann - Minerva, Max von Egmond - Eumete), 1972 London Philharmonic Orchestra (Benjamin Luxon - Ulysse, Janet Baker - Penelope, Anne Howells - Minerva, Richard Lewis - Eumete), 1978 Monteverdi Ensemble der Zurich Oper (Werner Hollweg - Ulysse, Trudeliese Schmidt - Penelope, Helrun Gardow - Minerva, Philippe Httenlocher - Eumete), 1978 Kent Opera (Neil Jenkins - Ulysse, Sarah Walker - Penelope, Anne Pashley - Minerva, Wynford Evans - Eumete), 1985 ORF Symphonie Orchester Wien (Thomas Allen - Ulysse, Kathleen Kuhjmann - Penelope, Delores Ziegler - Minerva, Robert Tear - Eumete), 1991 Teatro dei Rinnovati Sienna (Leroy Villeneuve - Ulysse, Gloria Banditelli - Penelope, Guillemette Lauren - Minerva, Giovanni Battista Palmieri - Eumete), 1998 Ensemble Eufonia (Furio Zanasi - Ulysse, Gloria Banditelli - Penelope, Maria Christina Kiehr - Minerva, Roberto Abbondanza - Eumete), 2005 Instrumental ensemble (Loris Bertolo - Ulysse, Gabriella Martellacci - Penelope, Angela Bucci - Minerva, Giovanni Gregnanin - Eumete), 2009 Les Arts Florissants Teatro Real Madrid (Kobie van Rensburg - Ulysse, Christine Rice - Penelope, Claire Debono - Minerva, Robert Burt - Eumete)

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57. Les Indes galantes

Title: The Amorous Indies (Les Indes galantes)

Composer: Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764). Born in Dijon, France, his father Jean Rameau worked as an organist in several churches while his mother Claudine Demartinecourt was the daughter of a notary. Jean Philippe was the seventh of the eleven children in the family. He started his musical education with his father and continued his education at the Jesuit College in Godrans. At first he worked as a violinist in travelling

companies, than as an organist in provincial churches. Around 1700 he moved to Paris where he published his first compositions in 1706. His most important work of music theory is *Traite de l'harmonie* published in 1722, a work that won him a great reputation. In 1726 he married Marie Louise Mangot and the fruit of their marriage were four children. In 1731 Rameau became the conductor of La Poupeliniere's private orchestra, under the patronage of the powerful financier Alexandre Le Riche de la Poupeliniere, where he remained in service for another 22 years. Operas: *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733), *Samson* (1734), *Les Indes galantes* (1735), *Castor et Polux* (1737), *Les fetes d'Hebe* (1739), *Dardanus* (1739), *La princesse de Navarre* (1745), *Platee* (1745), *Les fetes de Polymnie* (1745), *Les dieux d'Egipte* (1747), *Zais* (1748), *Pigmalion* (1748), *Les surprises de l'Amour* (1748), *Nais* (1749), *Zoroastre* (1749), *La Sympathie* (1751), *Linus* (1752), *Anacreon* (1757), *Les Paladins* (1760), *Les Boreades* (1763). His musical work also includes: 12 works for clavecin, 4 motets, 7 canons, 4 songs, 7 cantatas, incidental music, 12 books on musical theory.

Libretto: Louis Fuzelier (1672-1752). Louis Fuzelier was a French playwright authoring more than 200 plays. Beside the libretto for *Les Indes galantes* he also produced the libretto for the heroic ballet *Les Fetes grecques et romaines* with music by Francois Colin de Blamont. For the Academie Royale de Musique he produced other 11 libretti for several composers. For the Comedie Italiene, 8 out of his 16 libretti were set on music by Jean-Joseph Mouret. Five of his plays were staged by the Comedie Francaise and another 28 were produced by Theatre de la Foire (Theatre of the Fair). Louis Fuzelier was also one of the principal editors of the *Mercure de France* from 1721 to 1752. Rameau composed his operas both for the entertainment of King Louis XV and for the public. *Les Indes galantes* was written for the public entertainment, with an exotic setting, sumptuous costumes and elaborate stage machinery, very popular during the Baroque period. An opera-ballet, rather than offering a single story the performance offers a sequence of similar tales set in distant locations. The idea for the last act, *Les Sauvages*, occurred when a delegation of Indian chiefs from Illinois performed in 1825 three kinds of dances at the Theatre - Italien for the personal entertainment of King Louis XV.

Performance history: The premiere was staged by the Academie Royale de Musique in its Theatre du Palais Royal, on 23 August 1735. The distribution included the leading singers of the Opera such as: Marie Antier, Marie Pelissier, Pierre Jelyott and the famous dancers Marie Salle and Louis Dupre on a choreography provided by Michel Blondy. *Les Indes galantes* performed more than 60 times in its first two years, yet Rameau made a series of revisions. Further revivals were held in 1743-44, 1751 and 1761. The prologue and individual entrees were often revived separately. In the twentieth century the Opera Comique produced the opera on 30 May 1925 with a new orchestration by Paul Dukas. The 1952 revival at the Palais Garnier conducted by Louis Fourestier enjoyed as many as 236 performances by 29 September 1961. The choreography was provided by Albert Aveline, Serge Lifar and Harald Lander. In the United States a well received production by the Arts Florissants was staged at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York on 3 March 1993. *Les Indes galantes* produced by the Arts Florissants visited London in 1990, 1999 and on 5 November 2008 at the Barbican Centre. In 2006, The Premier Menuet was used in the movie *Marie Antoinette*. Other notable performances were filmed and recorded in: Paris (2003), Vienna (2013), Bordeaux (2014), Munich (2016). On 27 February 2018 a co-production of Mupa Budapest and Centre de musique baroque de Versailles was staged in Budapest at the Bela Bartok National Concert Hall. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Les Indes galantes* was performed in the world for 31 times, in 13 different productions, ranking 378 on Operabase list.

Roles: Hebe (soprano), Bellone (baritone), Amor (soprano), Osman (bass), Emilia (soprano), Valere (tenor), Huscar (bass), Phani (soprano), Don Carlos (tenor), Tacmas (tenor), Ali (beritono), Zaira (soprano), Fatima (soprano), Adario (baritono), Damon (tenor), Don Alvaro (bass), Zima (soprano), Chorus (muses, warriors, lovers, sailors, odalisques, savages)



Story: In the Heavens, the gods Mars, Hebe and Venus dispute the hearts of their common worshipers. In the real world, there are four different love stories, with more than one pretender, located in remote settings. War, Youth and Love fight for precedence. Love (Venus) always seems to win the game, but at a second look, was it really love or was it the youth (Hebe) or the war (Mars) the one who won the game ?

Prologue (The gardens of Hebe's Palace)

Hebe, the goddess of youth invites the youngsters to sing and dance with her (You, who follow the laws of Hebe, come, gather, go to my voice). Scene 2 - French, Spanish, Italian and Polish youngsters join her party. Hebe sings the First Minuet (Gather under the shade to the murmur of streams). Scene 3 - Bellone enters in the sound of trumpets followed by soldiers holding flags (The Glory calls you, hear your trumpets !). Scene 4 - Hebe greets him (Come and prove your supreme power !). Scene 5 - Love descends from the sky (Why does Mars declare war on Love ? ...Love, let's walk to a hundred victories !).

Act 1 (The gardens of Osman Pacha on the seashore)

Emilia complains to the Pacha (I married a lover worthy of my constancy ...when some perfidious Raptors they advanced sword in hand). Osman Pacha responds (Do you reproach me your dull desires ? ...the pleasures that surround you are here to answer my desires, to satisfy my sights !). Scene 2 - Left alone Emilia sings her sorrow (Even if my eyes have lost him, my heart will always see him). In the background the sailors are troubled by the storm (Will we be hit by the Thunder fires ? Will we perish under the waves ?). Scene 3 - Valere, now Osman's slave enters the scene and meets Emilia (It's you dear Emilia ! ...Your Lord is mine). Scene 4 - Osman enters the scene (I condemn him by wanting to defend him). After a short moment, Osman's sentence is (Valere, receive from me Emilia and your freedom). Owing an explanations, Osman reveals that years ago he was Valere's slave and now he wants to prove to be better than him. To make it even clearer he adds a few ships loaded with gifts to his offer (I suffer too much... For you and myself I must absent myself...). Scene 5 - Valere is hopeful (I hope to achieve the most perfect happiness). Scene 6 - Valere and Emilia hearten each other to entrust their lives to the stormy sea (Hurry to embark, with this valiant fleet you never take to much fears). While waiting for the waves to calm down, Emilia and Valere dance a first and a second rigaudon. In the sound of the tambourins, Emilia encourages the sailors to sail, but she lingers on the shore (Row ! Beat the winds and storms ! Hope will guide you !). The sailors respond (Come on, we're languishing on the shore ! Tender hearts, embark !).

Act 2 (A desert of Peru with the mouth of a volcano)

Don Carlos reassures Phani of his love (You promised for me your Love, why have you changed ?). Phani, the indian princess, responds (Oh ! I'm terrified ! When you love, you always fear...). Scene 2 - Left alone Phani prays (Come Love, join me with the winner I love). Scene 3 - Huscar, her indian lover, tries his chance to win Phani's heart (The Sun takes care of you and our Empire and pretend, through my voice, for me to be your husband). Phani is reluctant to his offer defending her love for Don Carlos (Have you not seen, in the horror of war, his invincible arm to use lightning ?). Scene 4 - Alone, Huscar prepares his last chance (I'll flood these places with fire and blood). Scene 5 - During the feast of the Sun the incas sing their adoration of the Sun while Huscar prays (Bright sun, never our eyes, in your way, have seen Dark frost fall !). Huscar sings a rondo but the party is interrupted by an Earth Quake (Sun of our souls, you are the tenderness of love !). Scene 6 - During the Earth Quake the incas are dancing the First and the Second Gavotte (In the depths of the earth the

winds are declaring war !). Phani rejects Huscar once more and he prepares to take her life. Scene 7 - Don Carlos enters the scene to save her (On this mountains my soldiers already punish their accomplices). Phani and Carlos sing (Love will unite us forever ...My heart is blissful to be shared by you). Scene 8 - Huscar sings tortured by jealousy when the volcano erupts and he is crushed under igneous rocks (The Flames are revived ! ...Pour on me burning rocks !).

Act 3 (Flowers Festival in the Persian Palace of Ali)

Tacmas, disguised as a Saleswoman, confesses his love for Zaira, Prince Ali's slave (...in your gardens grows my love ...who is the lucky beauty ? ...the young Zaira). Tacmas explains his disguise: he wants to read her heart before she finds his true identity. Scene 2 - Alone, Zaira sorrows (Love, Love, How much I suffer the rigor of fate). The Saleswoman offers to brighten her day (Can you love being a slave ? ...You must love in slavery ...Pleasure compensates a Heart that fate Outrages). Zaira sighs when the woman presents her Tacmas's portrait, revealing her feelings for him. Scene 3 - Fatima disguised as a Polish slave encounters Tacmas disguised as a woman (To these gardens love calls me ...I'm here to declare my love to you). Scene 4 - Ali enters together with Zaira. Fatima throws herself at his feet and Ali recognizes her (O heavens, if you are the sweet Fatima). Tacmas declares his love to Zaira only to be well received. The two happy couples sing (Tender love, let your chain last forever !). Scene 5 - At the Festival of Flowers odalisques carry the most beautiful flowers while the Chorus sings (Flee, astro of the day, let the shadows reign ! ...Triumph sweet flowers ! Spread your perfumes and relive your colors !). Ballet.

Act 4 (In the forest of America the ceremony of the great pipe of the peace. Military marches of French trumpets are heard)

Adario gives the sign for the peace celebration (Our warriors, by my order, will unite with our victors). His only regret is for Zima, who seems to be wanted by two different officers. Scene 2 - Spanish officer Don Alvaro asks the French officer Damon if his feelings for Zima are dependable, and Damon responds (In these fortunate places...hearts don't follow the laws of the tyrannical constancy). Scene 3 - When Zima appears, they both propose to her. Zima recollects (Both aspire my love ...in this woods we follow the innocent nature and we want nothing more than a love without artifice). Scene 4 - Adario comes out from the forest and Zima gives him her hand (He is the lover that my heart has chosen). Don Alvaro is furious and wants to fight Adario, but Damon stops him for the sake of the peace. Scene 5 - Alone with Adario Zima explains her decision (In our land love flies and anticipates desires). They both sing (We join and we will be eternally grateful). Scene 6 - Dance of the great pipe while the savages sing (Let's bury the sad concerns ! Our victors give us back peace). Rondo (Peaceful forests, never a vain desire troubled our hearts).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - You, who follow the laws of Hebe, come, gather, go to my voice (Hebe), Gather under the shade to the murmur of streams (Hebe, Chorus), The Glory calls you, hear your trumpets ! (Bellone, Chorus), Come and prove your supreme power ! (Hebe), Why does Mars declare war on Love ? ...Love, let's walk to a hundred victories ! (Love, Chorus). Act 1 - I married a lover worthy of my constancy ...when some perfidious Raptors they advanced sword in hand (Emilia), Do you reproach me your dull desires ? ...the pleasures that surround you are here to answer my desires, to satisfy my sights ! (Osman Pacha), Even if my eyes have lost him, my heart will always see him (Emilia), Will we be hit by the Thunder fires ? Will we perish under the waves ? (Chorus), It's you dear Emilia ! ...Your Lord is mine (Valere, Emilia), I condemn him by wanting to defend him (Osman), Valere, receive from me Emilia and your freedom (Osman), I suffer too much... For you and myself I must absent myself... (Osman), I hope to achieve the most perfect happiness (Valere), Hurry to embark, with this valiant fleet you never take to much fears (Valere, Emilia), Row ! Beat the winds and storms ! Hope will guide you ! (Emilia), Come on, we're languishing on the shore ! Tender hearts, embark ! (Chorus). Act 2 - You promised for my Love, why have you changed ? (Don Carlos), Oh ! I'm terrified ! When you love, you always fear... (Phani), Come Love, join me with the winner I love (Phani), The Sun takes care of you and our Empire and pretend, through my voice, for me to be your husband (Huscar), Have you not seen, in the horror of war, his invincible arm to use lightning ? (Phani), I'll flood these places with fire and blood (Huscar), Bright sun, never our eyes, in your way, have seen Dark frost fall ! (Huscar, Chorus), Sun of our souls, you are the tenderness of love ! (Huscar), In the depths of the earth the winds are declaring war ! (Chorus), On this mountains my soldiers already punish their accomplices (Don Carlos), Love will unite us forever ...My heart is blissful to be shared by you (Phani, Carlos), The Flames are revived ! ...Pour on me

burning rocks ! (Huscar). Act 3 - ...in your gardens grows my love ...who is the lucky beauty ? ...the young Zaira (Tacmas, Ali), Love, Love, How much I suffer the rigor of fate (Zaira), Can you love being a slave ? ...You must love in slavery ...Pleasure compenstaes a Heart that fate Outrages (Zaira, Tacmas), To these gardens love calls me ...I'm here to declare my love to you (Fatima), O heavens, if you are the sweet Fatima (Ali), Tender love, let your chain last forever ! (All four), Flee, astro of the day, let the shadows reign ! ...Triumph sweet flowers ! Spread your perfumes and relive your colors ! (Chorus) Act 4 - Our warriors, by my order, will unite with our victors (Adario), In these fortunate places...hearts don't follow the laws of the tyrannical constancy (Damon), Both aspire my love ...in this woods we follow the innocent nature and we want nothing more than a love without artifice (Zima), He is the lover that my heart has chosen (Zima), In our land love flies and anticipates desires (Zima), We join and we will be eternally grateful (Zaira, Adario), Let's bury the sad concerns ! Our victors give us back peace (Chorus), Peaceful forests, never a vain desire troubled our hearts (Chorus).

Ballet: Prologue - Dance of the warriors holding the flags. Act 1 - The first Rigaudon is a French baroque dance in duple meter originated in a folk dance for couples. Traditionally this dance was associated with the provinces of Languedoc and Provence and become popular as a court dance of King Louis XIV. The second rigaudon. Act 2 - The incas dance a Peruvian dance while celebrating the feast of the Sun. The principal theme is alternated with contrasting themes to form a rondo. First and second gavotte, a folk dance notated in 4/4 or 2/2 time, usually of moderate tempo, popular at the court of King Louis XIV. The gavotte involves kissing or presentation of flowers. Act 3 - Ballet of the flowers. Different flowers of a garden are personified. At first the flowers dance together to form a different picture at every moment. The rose, the queen, dances alone. A storm brings Boreas but the rose resists with sweetness. Zephyr arrives with his new radiance and revives all the flowers. Act 4 - The dance of the great pipe to celebrate peace. All sauvages sing and dance. First minuet for warriors and Amazons, second minuet, rondo.

Recordings: 1973 CBS (Comercial Broadcasting Station New York) (Rachel Yakar, Janine Michaeau, Sonia Nigoghossian, Bruce Brewer, Jean Christophe Benoit), 1974 Ensemble Vocal a Coeur Joie de Valence (Gerda Hartman, Jennifer Smith, Louis Devos, John Elwes, Philippe Huttenlocher), 1991 (Miriam Ruggeri, Bernard Deletre, Howard Crook, Nicholas Rivenq, Noemi Rime, Sandrine Piau, Jean Paul Fouchecourt, Jerome Correras), 2003 Les Ars Florissants (Nathan Berg, Valerie Gabail, Nicolas Cavallier, Patricia Petibon, Paul Agnew, Jael Azzaretti, Danielle de Niese, Ana Maria Panzarella, Nicola Rivnenq, 2013 La Simphonie du Marais (Valerie Gabail, Stephanie Revidat, Reinoud Van Mechelen, Francois Nicolas Geslot, Aimery Lefevre, Sydney Fierro), 2014 Grand Theatre de Bordeaux (Amel Brahmin Djelloul, Benoit Arnould, Olivera Topalovic, Judith van Wanroij, Les Talens Lyriques), 2016 Prinzregententheater in Munich (Benoit Arnould, Lisette Oropesa, Anna Prohaska)

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58. Maria de Buenos Aires

Title: Maria de Buenos Aires

Composer: Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992). Born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, his father Vicente Piazzolla was a fisherman, while his mother was Assunta Mannetti, both his parents having an Italian ancestry. In 1925 his family moved to New York where he started to play the bandeon. Starting with 1930 he took his first music lessons with Bela Wilda, a student of Rachmaninoff. In 1934 he met Carlos Gadel and played a role as a paper boy in his movie El dia que me quieras. Since 1936 his family returned to Mar del Plata where he played in tango orchestras and in 1938 he joined the orchestra of the bandoneonist Anibal Troilo. By 1941 he studied with Alberto Ginastera, an eminent Argentine composer of classical music and in 1943 he started piano lessons with Raul Spivak. In the same year he married Dede Wolff, an artist, and the fruit of their marriage were two children, a boy and a girl. In 1944 he joined and leaded Francisco Florentino's orchestra and in 1946 he formed his own orchestra called Orquestra Tipica. In 1953 Piazzolla won a French Government grant to study in Paris with

Nadia Boulanger, at the Fointanebleau Conservatory. Back in Argentina, in 1955 he formed his Orquestra de Cuerdas and in 1958 he moved to New York to form the Jazz Tango Quintet. In 1960 he formed his first famous Quintet and in 1963 his Nuevo Octeto. In 1970 he founded Conjuncto 9, a chamber music formation, in 1975 his Electronic Octet, in 1978 his second Quintet, in 1979 the Quinteto Tango Nuevo. Opera: Maria de Buenos Aires (1968). His musical work includes music for 48 films and 72 recorded discs. His best known compositions are: Adios Nonino (1959), La Camorra (1988), Estaciones Portenas (1965-70), Histoire du Tango (1986), Libertango (1974), Milonga Del Angel (1965), Suite Punta del Este (1982).

Libretto: Horacio Ferrer (1933-2014). Horacio Ferrer was an Uruguayan-Argentine poet, broadcaster, reciter and tango lyricist. He is particularly known for the lyrics of the famous tangos Balada para un loco and Chiquilin de Bachin composed by Astor Piazzolla. For seven years he edited and illustrated the magazine Tanguendo and in 1959 he published his first book El Tango: su historia y evolucion. Together with Astor Piazzolla he wrote and composed a series of more than 60 tangos. In 1970 he published his second book called El Libro del Tango - Arte Popular de Buenos Aires. He also worked with numerous other Argentinian composers for other 50 compositions, mostly tangos. Since its foundation in 1990, he was president of the Academia Nacional de Tango in Argentina. The original idea for the story was developed from Milonga del Angel and it was conceived by the singer Egle Martin, who was expected to sing the leading role, but in the last moment she was replaced by Amelita Baltar. Since all the dancing in the performance is tango it is not an opera ballet but an opera tango, for which Piazzolla is famous.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 8 May 1968 at the Sala Planeta in Buenos Aires with Piazzolla conducting a ten piece orchestra. Amelita Baltar and Hector de Rosas were singing the leading roles and Horacio Ferrer was a reciter in the role of the Goblin (El Duende). For some years the performance was seldom staged. The opera had its United States Premiere at Huston Grand Opera in 1991, followed by the Pan American Symphony Orchestra in Washington DC in 1996 and 2001. The United Kingdom premiere took place on 2 June 2000 as part of the Covent Garden Festival in London. In Rome the performance was recorded on DVD in 2003 by Kultur Video. Other notable recent performances were at: Norwich Festival (2004), Teatro Nacional de Sao Joao (2006), Opera Sao Carols Lisbon (2007), Skirball Center New York (2008), National Multicultural Festival Canberra (2008), Hermitage Theatre Saint Petersburg (2009), Moscow Festival (2009), Edinburg Festival (2010), Brisbane Festival (2011), Acusticum in Pitea Sweden (2011), Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall Zagreb (2011), Long Beach Opera Los Angeles (2012), Opera Naples (2015). Up to the 2017/18 season, Maria de Buenos Aires was performed in the world for 163 times, in 41 different productions, ranking 124 on Operabase list.

Roles: Maria (soprano or mezzo-soprano), Maria's nany (soprano or mezzosoprano), Goblin (spoken), The Voice of an old man (tenor), The voice for the Sparrow with a Dream song (tenor), The Voice of an old thief (tenor), First analist (tenor), The Voice of Three Marionettes (spoken), A Voice from that Sunday (tenor), Chorus (men, analists, people of Buenos Aires)



Story: This is a Requiem Mass of a young dancer called Maria, who has died giving birth. Like a little sparrow, young Maria has taken her dreams to the skys. Since she was known to the people of Buenos Aires only as a sweet dancer, her requiem follows the music and the steps of an Argentinian tango, a strong, passionate and

desperate call for the Lord's blessing.

Act 1 (Buenos Aires at the beginning of XX-th century)

Goblin recites the poetic panegyric of a girl named Maria (Now that you are never again, Girl Maria ...crossing the borders of simple death, I have to bring your dark song). Scene 2 - Maria appears in her tango dress and the orchestra plays her favourite music (Tango is the language of Maria). Scene 3 - The voice of an old man recalls (The little girl was born one day ...with three black nails ... an insult in her voice !). The audience and Goblin also recall her story and the old man's voice concludes (Your cross has been named ! ...you will have two tangos per cross...). Scene 4 - Another voice also recalls (South winds have lifted her, only to my voice she returns her skin, her rose, her years). The voice of Maria is heard (Fly Sparrow with a Dream, you'll never catch up with me ...I'm the rose of I do not love you, you'll never catch up with me). And the voice continues (And a kiss, with a little of saffron and lust, opens a new page for it was an assault). Scene 5 - The orchestra plays the theme of fugue and mystery while Maria, hallucinated, is leaving her neighborhood and crosses the city. Scene 6 - With a bandoneon Maria sings a waltzed song (A bandoneon that my sadness has written ...gave me the trembling of Milonguita). Scene 7 - The Goblin duels with the bandoneon (They breathed and absorbed the taste of glycine your rotting robe exulted ...the little mystery that God have troubled). Scene 8 - The tango Canyengue of the impoverished people. The voice of an old thief sings (Because it was written with Tango, this day ...will give a black blood-rooster, three times, the passover Canyengue announcing to Maria).

Act 2 (Milonga to the funeral of Maria)

Scene 9 - The Goblin recites (Heading for the street with candles and magnolias ...Two restless Malenas ...they taught her how to die) Scene 10 - Tangata del Alba (Instrumental) Scene 11 - The Shadow of Mary bids her goodbye to the trees and chimneys, to the people (Buenos Aires, April of all my sorrows ...My pain has invented from the same root the pain of another cross). Scene 12 - The observers bid their farewell to Maria (Come and see, gentleman ! Things never ever seen we will bring to your attention this movable circus !). The First Analyst leads the prayer (Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires take your dreams out in the sun). Scene 13 - Romance of the Goblin. Bidding his farewell to Maria's shadow, the Goblin seeks for the company of three marionettes sick of all things (Here, in each bottle, there is a river ... a river that made me a goblin ...a thousand years ago !). Scene 14 - Allegro Tangabile (Instrumental) Scene 15 - The shadow of Maria sings to the marionettes (...and it is that no one wants me to be born anymore ...in my arms I will give to suckle a loot). The song of Maria (I am Maria of Buenos Aires ...Maria of the love of Buenos Aires it is me !) Scene 16 - A Voice from de Sunday's mass sings (Today it is Sunday, and still, until the end of the seventh tango, it will be the day of the oldest work). The same voice continues (The girl had another girl that is like herself, but no so much ...in the eyes of the girl Maria has been baptized). The song of Maria (I am Maria of Buenos Aires ...Maria of the love of Buenos Aires it is me !)

Great moments and arias: Act 1 -Now that you are never again, Girl Maria ...crossing the borders of simple death, I have to bring your dark song (Goblin), Tango is the language of Maria (orchestral), The little girl was born one day ...with three black nails ... an insult in her voice ! (Old man), Your cross has been named ! ...you will have two tangos per cross... (Old man), South winds have lifted her, only to my voice she returns her skin, her rose, her years (Sparrow song voice), Fly Sparrow with a Dream, you'll never catch up with me ...I'm the rose of I do not love you, you'll never catch up with me (Maria), And a kiss, with a little of saffron and lust, opens a new page for it was an assault (Sparrow song voice), A bandoneon that my sadness has written ...gave me the trembling of Milonguita (Maria), They breathed and absorbed the taste of glycine your rotting robe exulted ...the little mystery that God have troubled (Goblin), Because it was written with Tango, this day ...will give a black blood-rooster, three times, the passover Canyengue announcing to Maria (Old thief). Act 2 - Heading for the street with candles and magnolias ...Two restless Malenas ...they taught her how to die (Goblin), Buenos Aires, April of all my sorrows ...My pain has invented from the same root the pain of another cross (Maria), Come and see, gentleman ! Things never ever seen we will bring to your attention this movable circus ! (Chorus), Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires take your dreams out in the sun (First Analyst), Here, in each bottle, there is a river ... a river that made me a goblin ...a thousand years ago ! (Goblin, Marionettes), ...and it is that no one wants me to be born anymore ...in my arms I will give to suckle a loot (Maria), Today it is Sunday, and still, until the end of the seventh tango, it will be the day of the oldest work (Voice from Sunday), I

am Maria of Buenos Aires ...Maria of the love of Buenos Aires it is me ! (Maria), The girl had another girl that is like herself, but no so much ...in the eyes of the girl Maria has been baptized (Voice from Sunday), I am Maria of Buenos Aires ...Maria of the love of Buenos Aires it is me ! (Maria)

Ballet: Milonga is an event where Argentine tango is danced. People who frequently go to milongas may be called milongueros. The music played is mainly tango, vals and milonga. Milonga dance is an excited habanera (country dance) with a doubled tempo and all four notes turned strong. Over time, dance steps were added giving rise to the tango. Tango is a partner dance which originated in the 1880s along the River Plate, born in the impoverished port areas with European immigrant populations. The tango movement is like the pitch of a ship. The tango is a combination of waltz, polka, mazurka, habanera and the Argentinian milonga. Argentine tango is a musical genre and an accompanying social dance that originated in the suburbs of Buenos Aires and Montevideo. A distinctive air is given by a small accordion called the bandoneon. The dance elements are: embrace, walking, figures, codes and manners (codigos and yeta), vals and milonga alternating with the tango steps. There are different styles of tango, such as: tango canyengue (orquestras tipicas), tango orillero (by the ear), salon tango (in style), tango milonguero (chest to chest), tango nuevo (modern), tango traditional (walking rhythmically), tango con corte (with courtesy), tango de fantasia (with fancy music and dresses), show tango (theatrical).

Recordings: 1998 Kremerata Musica, Buenos Aires Lyric Chorus (Julia Zenko - Maria, Jairo - The Voices, Horacio Ferrer - Goblin, Gidon Kremer - conductor), 2011 KD Vatroslav Lisinski Zagreb Croatia (Sandra Rumolino - Maria, Jose Luis Barreto - The Voices, Jose Rodriguez - Goblin), 2015 Brown Opera Productions (Directed by Alejandro Jose Garcia Morales, Music Directed by Eleanor Siden), 2018 Mr. McFall's Chamber (Valentina Montoya Martinez - Maria, Juanjo Lopez Vidal - Goblin, Nicholas Mulroy - The Voices), 2018 YouTube Opera House of Gent (Directed by Rudolf Werthen, Sandra Rumolind - Maria, Hugo Hererea - Goblin), YouTube 1968 track (Amelita Baltar - Maria, Hector de Rosas - The Voices, Horacio Ferrer - Goblin)

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59. Rigoletto

Title: Rigoletto (The Curse, La maledizione)

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). Born at Le Roncole (Parma, Italy), his father Carlo Giuseppe Verdi (1785-1867) was an innkeeper, while his mother Luigia Uttini (1787-1851) was a thread maker. Verdi received musical education playing the organ at the local church with the help of Pietro Baistrocchi, the local schoolmaster. At 12 years old, he began lessons with maestro di capella Ferdinando Provesi and Antonio Barezzi, the directors of the Societa Filarmonica, and by the age of 17 Verdi established himself as a leader of the Philharmonic. At 4 May 1836 Verdi was married to Margherita Barezzi, the daughter of his master and director. Margherita died only four years later, leaving a devastated Verdi to find his peace in his work. Antoni Barezzi also introduced him to Vincenzo Lavigna, maestro concertatore at La Scala in Milan who encouraged Verdi to compose and to take a subscription to La Scala. In 1835 Verdi became director of the Busseto school and in 1837 he staged his first opera at La Scala. In 1859 he married Giuseppina Strepponi (1815-1897) an operatic soprano and an old friend. In 1861 Verdi was elected to the Parliament of Piedmont Sardinia and in 1874 he was appointed member of the Italian Senate. In 1895 he planned and built a hospital at Villanova sull'Arda and his famous Casa di Riposo per Musicisti in Milan, a rest home for retired musicians. Operas: Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (1839), Un giorno di regno (1840), Nabucco (1842), I Lombardi alla prima crociata (1843), Ernani (1844), I due Foscari (1844), Giovanna d'Arco (1845), Alzira (1845), Attila (1856), Macbeth (1847), I masnadieri (1847), Jerusalem (1847), Il corsaro (1848), La battaglia di Legnano (1849), Luisa Miller (1849), Stiffelio (1850), Rigoletto (1851), Il trovatore (1853), La traviata (1853), Les vepres siciliennes (1855), Giovanna de Guzman (1855), Le trouvère (1856), Simon Boccanegra (1857), Aroldo (1857), La forza del destino (1862), Don Carlos (1867), Aida (1871), Otello (1887), Falstaff (1893). Ballet music for: Otello, Macbeth, Jerusalem, Don Carlo, Aida, Il trovatore, Il vespri siciliani. His work also includes sacred works, songs, instrumental, orchestral and chamber music.

Libretto: Francesco Maria Piave (1810-1876). Francesco Piave was an Italian librettist born in Murano who wrote 10 librettos for Giuseppe Verdi, including: *Ernani*, *Attila*, *Macbeth*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*. He also produced 4 librettos for Giovanni Pacini and others for: Gaetano Braga, Achille Peri, Federico Ricci, Carlo Romani, Severio Mercadante, Antonio Buzzolla and Michael Balfe. His libretto was used in four *Rigoletto* films directed by: Carmine Gallone (1946), Flavio Calzavara (1956), Jean Pierre Ponnelle (1982), Gianfranco Fozzi (2005). The libretto was based on the play *Le roi s'amuse* by Victor Hugo (1802-1885) first performed in 1832 but banned for the next 50 years after only one evening. In his preface to the play, Victor Hugo notes that his main character Triboulet: "hates the king because he is a king, hates the nobles because they are nobles and hates all men because they don't have a humpback...". Due to censorship, the libretto for *Rigoletto* has moved the action from France to Mantua and all the characters have been renamed. In 1850 the opera La Fenice commissioned Verdi to compose a new opera and after long negotiations with the Austrian censor he obtained the permission for making *Le Roi s'amuse*.

Performance history: The opera enjoyed a triumphant premiere on 11 March 1851 at the opera house La Fenice in Venice. Gaetano Mares conducted the performance with baritone Felice Varesi as Rigoletto, tenor Raffaele Mirate as the Duke and soprano Teresa Brambilla as Gilda. After 13 performances the opera was revived in Venice in 1852 and again in 1854. By 1852 the opera premiered in all major cities of Italy, sometimes under different names. In 1854 the opera reached worldwide, from Alexandria and Constantinople to Montevideo and Havana. The UK premiere took place on 14 May 1853 at the Royal Opera House in London. In the United States, Max Maretzek Italian Opera Company first produced the opera on 19 February 1855 at the New York's Academy of Music. Other notable first performances were produced at: Vienna (1852), Budapest (1852), Brno (1853), Stuttgart (1853), Madrid (1853), Athens (1853), Lisbon (1854), Buenos Aires (1855), Paris (1857), Dublin (1857), Brussels (1858), Basel (1861), Stockholm (1861), Surabaya (1868), Copenhagen (1879), Tunis (1903), Helsinki (1917), Sofia (1920), Kaunas (1921), Jerusalem (1923). Several modern productions have radically changed the original settings with doubtful results. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Rigoletto* was performed in the world for 2288 times, in 519 different productions, ranking 9 on Operabase list.

Roles: Rigoletto, the Duke's buffon (baritone), Gilda, his daughter (soprano), Duke of Mantua (tenor), Sparafucile, a hired assassin (bass), Maddalena, his sister (contralto), Giovanna, Gilda's nurse (mezzo-soprano), Count Ceprano (bass), Countess Ceprano, his wife (mezzo-soprano), Matteo Borsa, a courtier (tenor), Count Monterone (baritone), Marullo (baritone), A Court Usher (bass), A Page (mezzo-soprano), Chorus (male courtiers and guests)



Story: Young Duke of Mantua is at the age of loving and his courtiers do their best to amuse him. Ahead of all, Rigoletto his buffon is the one with the most sharpened jokes. To make fun of the buffon, the courtiers abduct what they believe to be Rigoletto's mistress to make her a play doll for the Duke. As it turns out, the girl is not Rigoletto's mistress but his daughter and he is deeply hurt. Declaring vengeance, Rigoletto hires an assassin to kill the Duke, but Gilda finds out the plot and sacrifices herself to save the young Duke's life and her father's. Be it love, hate or desolation, a young life has been wasted due to adult jokes.

Act 1 (Magnificent Saloon in the Ducal Palace / The extremity of a street with a court yard)

The Duke, mentions a girl he has noticed in church then he insolently admits of being attracted to Count Ceprano's wife, like some vulture to a dove (Amid the fair throng that sparkle around me, not one over my heart, no ! ...not one over my heart holds sway). The duke escorts the Countess out, courting her. When the humped Rigoletto enters the scene, Sparafucile gossips with the courtiers and jokes that Rigoletto has taken a lover. In front of the Duke, Rigoletto jokes about cutting Count Ceprano's head to free the dove. Count Ceprano declares vengeance on both the Duke and Rigoletto. Count Montreone enters the scene to complain a great insult on his family but the Duke orders his arrest, received with resentment (Vile is he who hounds the dying lion, but vilest thou, O Duke, and thy serpent there). Scene 2 - Sparafucile approaches Rigoletto and offers him his services as an assassin. Rigoletto refuses but he recollects (How like we are ! -the tongue my weapon, the dagger his !). The girl that Rigoletto is visiting in secrecy is Gilda, his daughter, who knows nothing about her parents and tries to make him speak about her mother. Rigoletto responds with a touching aria (Her angel from me think I see, who lov'd me though deformed and poor ...she died may earth rest lightly on her). When Giovanna, the nanny, appears Rigoletto entrusts Gilda to her (Safely guard this tender blossom, which to thee I now confide). The Duke, in disguise, is witnessing their farewell. Left alone with Giovanna, Gilda admits she was followed from the church by a handsome youth and all her thoughts are for him. Satisfied, the Duke shows up and declares his love for her (The words repeat ! Such delicious accents open to me a heaven of enjoyment). To win her heart the Duke sings an aria (Love is the sun by which passion is lighted, happy the mortal who feels its power). Delighted by the song, Gilda asks his name and the Duke lies that he is Walter Malde, a poor student. The two must part, as Count Ceprano and Borsa are approaching. Alone, Gilda is overwhelmed with her new feelings (My love for thee confessed, no power can restrain). Count Ceprano and the courtiers are amazed by beautiful Gilda trusting her to be Rigoletto's mistress. When Rigoletto appears, the courtiers ask for his help in kidnapping Ceprano's wife. Trusting them Rigoletto accepts and puts a mask on his face. Instead of the Countess, the men abduct Gilda but her scarf falls and Rigoletto recognizes it when he snatches off the mask (Ah ! this is the Malediction !).

Act 2 (Saloon in the Duke's Palace)

The Duke is very agitated (She has been stolen from me, but how and by whom). Sorrowing he sings (Dear maid, each tear of thine that falls, each sad sight that bosom heaving). The courtiers enter with the news that Rigoletto's mistress was abducted and is waiting him in his palace (The one we sought we met, alone, mistrusting, beside the house in which we guessed the bird was caged). The Duke hurries to his pray (To her I love with rapture, I must speed away). When Rigoletto enters the courtiers are stupefied to find out that the girl abducted was Rigoletto's daughter (Minions, sycophants, panders, thieves, at what price have you my daughter sold ?). Gilda enters the scene to confess that she has fallen in love for a poor student when she was abducted and dishonored. Rigoletto becomes angry while Gilda tries to calm him down (Yes ! Vengeance, dire vengeance, awaits thee ! ...I dare not say how much I love him and pity him who none for me hath shown !).

Act 3 (A desolate place on the banks of the river and Sparafucile's inn)

Rigoletto and Gilda are arguing (How weak is the heart of woman ! ...Have pity on him, dear father !). Rigoletto and Gilda spy from the window as the Duke enters the inn dressed as a private soldier. The Duke sings with joy (How fickle women are, fleeting as falling star). Sparafucile brings a bottle of wine while Magdalena dances dressed like a gypsy. Sparafucile goes out to ask Rigoletto (Your man is there ! Is he to live or die ?). Meanwhile the Duke begins his seduction ritual with Magdalena (Ah ! of Venus the fairest daughter, the slave of your charms here behold). Gilda is outraged to hear the same words she has heard earlier. Rigoletto promises his vengeance and asks her to go home, then hasten to Verona with all her possessions where he shall join her. Rigoletto pays Sparafucile half of the reward but pretends to cast himself the body into the river. The Duke falls asleep while Sparafucile finishes the bottle preparing for the murder. Gilda approaches the inn, dressed as a young man and spies from the window. Inside Magdalena fights Sparafucile to spare the life of her Apollo and kill Rigoletto instead. Her brother refuses to betray a customer but he commits to kill the first customer in his place. Gilda takes a heroic decision (What ! that woman weep, and I not help him ! ...My life for his shall be the sacrifice !). Gilda enters the inn and after a short conversation all is buried in silence and darkness. At midnight, Rigoletto appears to the bank of the river to exchange the body for the rest of the reward (Here is the buffon ... and here is his master). A moment later, he hears the Duke's voice and when he opens the sack he finds Gilda inside, still alive. They both sing with desperation (In heavens above, at the side of my mother, there

shall my prayers be uplifted for thee ! ...Ah ! leave me not here alone, my only treasure, parted from thee, tender dove, all dark will be, all dark, all dark will be !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Amid the fair throng that sparkle around me, not one over my heart, no ! ...not one over my heart holds sway (The Duke), Vile is he who hounds the dying lion, but viler thou, O Duke, and thy serpent there (Monterone), How like we are ! -the tongue my weapon, the dagger his ! (Rigoletto), Her angel from me think I see, who lov'd me though deformed and poor ...she died may earth rest lightly on her (Rigoletto), Safely guard this tender blossom, which to thee I now confide (Rigoletto), The words repeat ! Such delicious accents open to me a heaven of enjoyment (The Duke), Love is the sun by which passion is lighted, happy the mortal who feels its power (The Duke), My love for thee confessed, no power can restrain (Gilda), Ah ! this is the Malediction ! (Rigoletto). Act 2 - She has been stolen from me, but how and by whom (The Duke), Dear maid, each tear of thine that falls, each sad sight that bosom heaving (The Duke), The one we sought we met, alone, mistrusting, beside the house in which we guessed the bird was caged (Chorus), To her I love with rapture, I must speed away (The Duke), Minions, sycophants, panders, thieves, at what price have you my daughter sold ? (Rigoletto), Yes ! Vengeance, dire vengeance, awaits thee ! ...I dare not say how much I love him and pity him who none for me hath shown ! (Rigoletto, Gilda) Act 3 - How weak is the heart of woman ! ...Have pity on him, dear father ! (Rigoletto, Gilda), How fickle women are, fleeting as falling star (The Duke), Your man is there ! Is he to live or die ? (Sparafucile), Ah ! of Venus the fairest daughter, the slave of your charms here behold (The Duke), What ! that woman weep, and I not help him ! ...My life for his shall be the sacrifice ! (Gilda), Here is the buffon ... and here is his master (Rigoletto), In heavens above, at the side of my mother, there shall my prayers be uplifted for thee ! ...Ah ! leave me not here alone, my only treasure, parted from thee, tender dove, all dark will be, all dark, all dark will be ! (Rigoletto, Gilda)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1915 San Carlo orchestra Naples (Antonio Anticorona - Rigoletto, Fernando de Lucia - The Duke, Angela de Angelis - Gilda), 1916 Teatro alla Scala Milan (Cesare Formichi - Rigoletto, Giuseppe Taccani - The Duke, Ines Maria Ferraris - Gilda), 1935 Metropolitan Opera New York (Lawrence Tibbet - Rigoletto, Frederik Jagel - The Duke, Lily Pons - Gilda), 1950 Deutsches Symphonie Orchester (Josef Metternich - Rigoletto, Rudolf Schock - The Duke, Rita Streich - Gilda), 1952 Palace of Arts Mexico City (Piero Campolonghi - Rigoletto, Giuseppe di Stefano - The Duke, Maria Callas - Gilda), 1955 Teatro alla Scala Milan (Tito Gobbi - Rigoletto, Giuseppe Di Stefanbo - The Duke, Maria Callas - Gilda), 1963 Romanian Opera Bucharest (Nicolae Herlea - Rigoletto, Ion Buzea - The Duke, Magda Ianculescu - Gilda), 1971 London Symphony Orchestra (Sherrill Milnes - Rigoletto, Luciano Pavarotti - The Duke, Joan Sutherland - Gilda), 1977 Metropolitan Opera (Cornell MacNeil - Rigoletto, Placido Domingo - The Duke, Ileana Cotrubas - Gilda), 1985 Bavarian Radio Symphony (Brend Weikl - Rigoletto, Giacomo Aragall - The Duke, Lucia Popp - Gilda), 1993 Metropolitan Opera New York (Vladimir Chernov - Rigoletto, Luciano Pavarotti - The Duke, Cheryl Studer - Gilda), 2004 Liceu orchestra (Carlos Alvarez - Rigoletto, Marcelo Alvares - The Duke, Inva Mula - Gilda), 2006 Zurich Opera (Leo Nucci - Rigoletto, Piotr Beczala - The Duke, Elena Mosuc - Gilda)

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60. The Marriage of Figaro

Title: The Marriage of Figaro (Le nozze di Figaro)

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Born in Salzburg, his father Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) was a composer, kapellmeister and an experienced teacher, while his mother Ana Maria Pertl (1720-1778) was the daughter of Nicolaus Pertl, the deputy prefect of Hildenstein. He was the youngest of seven children, five of whom died in infancy. Together with his sister Maria Anna Mozart (1751-1829) both children were exhibited as musicians from the age of five. From 1762 to 1768 Mozart family made an European journey concerting to the courts of Munich, Mannheim, Paris, London, Hague, Zurich, Vienna. From 1769 to 1773 Mozart has traveled to Italy to be accepted as a member of Academia Filarmonica in Bologna. In 1773 he was employed by Prince

Achbishop Hieronymus Colloredo as a court musician in Salzburg. His career in Vienna began in 1781 under the patronage of Emperor Joseph II of Habsburg and he soon established himself as the finest keyboard player in Vienna. In 1777 he was honoured by Pope Clement XIV as Knight of the Order of the Golden Spur. In 1782 he married Constanze Weber (1762-1842), also a member of a family of musicians and the fruit of their marriage were six children of whom only two survived. In 1787 Emperor Joseph II appointed him as his chamber composer paying 800 florins a year. Operas: *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots* (1767), *Apollo et Hyacinthus* (1767), *Bastien und Bastienne* (1768), *La finta semplice* (1768), *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (1770), *Ascanio in Alba* (1771), *Il sogno di Scipione* (1772), *Lucio Silla* (1772), *La finta giardiniera* (1774), *Il re pastore* (1775), *Thamos, König in Ägypten* (1779), *Zaide* (1779), *Idomeno, re di Creta* (1781), *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), *L'oca del Cairo* (1784), *Lo sposo deluso* (1784), *Der Schauspieldirektor* (1786), *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), *Così fan tutte* (1790), *Der Stein der Weisen* (1790), *La clemenza di Tito* (1791), *Die Zauberflöte* (1791). His work includes more than 600 compositions of symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic and choral music.

Libretto: Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749-1838). Lorenzo Da Ponte was an Italian librettist who wrote 3 libretti for Mozart: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*. He also produced another 25 libretti for other 10 composers, among which: Antonio Salieri (*La Scuola di gelosi*, *Il ricco d'un giorno*, *Il Talismano*, *Il Pastor fido*, *La cifra*), Vincente Martin Soler (*Il burbero di buon cuore*, *Una cosa rara*, *L'arbore di Diana*, *La Capricciosa corretta*), Francesco Bianchi (*Antigona*, *Il consiglio imprudente*, *Merope*, *Cinna*, *Armida*), Peter Winter (*La grotta di Calipso*, *Il trionfo dell'amor fraterno*, *Il ratto di Proserpina*). He also produced poetry, cantatas, oratorios, translations, books of elementary instruction. The libretto for this opera was based on a comedy by Pierre Beaumarchais (1732-1799) called *Le Mariage de Figaro*, written in 1778 and staged in 1784. Figaro and Count Almaviva were two characters conceived during Beaumarchais's visit to Spain, present in three of his plays: *Le Barbier de Seville*, *Le Mariage de Figaro* and *La Mère coupable*. The play was forbidden in Vienna due to the intervention of Emperor Joseph II, but Da Ponte managed to get official approval for an operatic version after he has changed Figaro's speech against inherited nobility with an angry aria against unfaithful wives. The Imperial Italian opera company paid Mozart 450 florins for the score, three times his yearly salary. Da Ponte was paid 200 florins.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 1 May 1786 at the Burgtheater in Vienna with Francesco Benvenuti as Figaro, Stefano Mandini as Count Almaviva and Nancy Storace as Susanna. Mozart conducted himself the first two performances. The Emperor Joseph II requested a special performance at his palace theater in Laxenburg (20 km South of Vienna). The opera was produced in Prague starting in December 1786, with a tremendous success. The UK premiere was staged in London in 1812 while the USA premiere at the Metropolitan Opera in New York was staged in 1894. In the XIX-th century, a notable production was staged in the spring of 1815 at Regio Teatro alla Scala in Milan with: Filippo Galli as Figaro, Giuseppe Ambrogetti as Count Almaviva and Carolina Bassi as Susanna. In the XX-th century notable recorded performances were staged in: Vienna (1942), New York (1943), Köln (1951), Salzburg (1953), Vienna (1953), Vienna (1956), Salzburg (1957), Vienna (1958), Berlin (1960), London (1963), Berlin (1968), London (1975), Vienna (1987), New York (1990), Paris (1993), Köln (2001), Salzburg (2006), Zürich (2007), Sydney (2011), Perm (2012), Vienna (2016), London (2016). Up to the 2017/18 season, *The Marriage of Figaro* was performed in the world for 2553 times, in 555 different productions, ranking 6 on Operabase list.

Roles: Count Almaviva (baritone), Countess Almaviva (soprano), Susanna, chambermaid (soprano), Figaro, servant (bass), Cherubino, a page (mezzo-soprano), Marcellina, housekeeper, ex-fiancee of Figaro (mezzo-soprano), Don Bartolo, guardian (bass), Don Basilio, music teacher (tenor), Don Curzio, judge (tenor), Barbarina, Susanna's cousin (soprano), Antonio, her father (bass), Two young girls, Chorus (peasants)



Story: It is an opera buffa, happening in the world of plenty, where love jokes and love games are highly appreciated. Figaro and Susanna, both servants of the Count, are about to be married. The plot is constructed round the "jus primae noctis" or the right of the first night, the feudal lords used to impose to their female servants. A page called Cherubino plays the role of Cupid producing hilarious moments. Everyone is pretending, mocking the aristocratic manners, while the Count, the higher in rank, seems to accept the game of pretending with benevolence. The game ends in the garden, with happy ending, with everyone having fulfilled his caprices.

Act 1 (A half furnished room with a large sofa and a table)

Figaro and Susanna are planing to get married. Figaro measures the room offered by his master planning to furinsh it while Susanna tries her selfmade hat. The servant's room came furnished with a bell (...when it happens that the Count wants me, dong - dong ...the devil should bring him here to my door). Susanna reveals to Figaro that her master intended to win from her certain little half-hours, the old feudal rights. When the bell rings, Figaro must part away. Scene 2 - Alone, Figaro sings a cavatina (If you want to dance, Signor Count, I'll play my guitar). Scene 3 - Marcellina is asking Bartolo to help her forcing Figaro to be her husband, as he promised and she presents a contract of engagement. Bartolo is pleased to be of help, since Figaro has helped Count Almaviva to win his dear Rosina from him (La vendetta, oh, la venedetta ! It is a pleasure reserved for the wise). Scene 4 - Marcellina mets Susanna at the door and they exchange long flattering words, eager for a fight (Do go first my dazzling lady ...I'm not in a hurry my spicy lady ...the new fiancee ...the lady of honor). Scene 5 - Susanna meets Cherubino who was cought by the Count courting Barbarina and is now on notice to be send away. In exchange for a ribbon that Susanna has stolen from the Countess, Cherubino offers her his song (I don't know what I am, what I do, now I'm on fire, now I'm freezing ...every woman makes my heart flutter). Scene 6 - The Count enters the room and informs Susanna that the King has appointed him ambassador to London and he plans to take Figaro with him. He also informs her that he loves her and prepared to pay for her favours. Scene 7 - Basilio approaches and the Count hides behind the sofa. Basilio presents to Susanna the Count's message of love and also warns her that Cherubino has long looks for the Countess. At that moment the Count emerges and orders Basilio to throw out the page. Recalling how he found the page in Barbarina's room, he looks under the table and finds Cherubino who has heard all the conversation (...and lifting, softly, very softly, the cover from the table I see the page ...). Scene 8 - Peasant girls and boys with flowers sing for the Count (Happy young maidens, scatter flowers before our noble lord). Figaro asks his master to place the white veil on the head of the maiden. The Count pretends to be generous enough to renounce his feudal right of the beeing the first serviced (I don't deserve either tributes or flowers, it's an unjust practice a have abolished on my estates). Susanna asks the Count to forgive Cherubino and he reluctantly accepts (He's still a child ! ...Less so than you think ...there's a spare place for an officer in my regiment ...leave immediately). Figaro sings an aria to honor the new Captain Cherubino (No more fly, butterfly amoroso).

Act 2 (Richly furnished room with an alcove and three doors)

Countess Almaviva hears Susanna's story (So he tried to seduce you ? ...it was merely a financial transation). Figaro enters the room with a solution (...the little Cherubino will be dressed as a woman and we will put him there in the Count's way). Scene 2 - Cherubino has arrived to be dressed by the ladies. Asked for, Cherubino sings his song for the Countess (You, ladies, who know what love is). Susanna sings while dressing Cherubino (Come here, kneel down, stay still there...). When the Count arrives, Cherubino must hide in the

cupboard. Scene 3 - The Count hears a sound in the cupboard and makes a scene, when Susanna enters the room unseen. Furious, the Count leaves together with his wife to bring his sword and to fetch some tools for the door. Scene 4 - Left alone, Susanna opens the cupboard. Cherubino jumps out of the window and Susanna takes his place in the cupboard. Scene 5 - Before opening the closet door the Countess confesses that inside is Cherubino. Scene 6 - The Countess also prepares her husband that the boy will be dressed like a woman. Scene 7 - When the Count opens the door, Susanna steps out (Take your sword, kill the page ! that same ill-born boy stands here before you). Scene 8 - The two ladies show no mercy (Your foolishness deserves no pity ...I'm humiliated, I repent). Scene 9 - Figaro enters the room and he denies any implication asking them to continue with the marriage ceremony. Scene 10 - Antonio enters furious that a man has jumped from the window ruining his carnations. Figaro admits that it was him jumping from the window, but Antonio produces the papers of Cherubino's commission, lost in the jump. Susanna helps Figaro remembering him that the papers needed the official seal. Scene 11 - Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo are now coming before the Count for judgement. Marcellina produces Figaro's contract to marry her and Bartolo acts as her lawyer while Basilio is there to testify the promised marriage (What a culpa, what a good case, everyone's nose has been quite elongated).

Act 3 (A rich room with two thrones, prepared for a wedding)

The Count recollects the last events (What a confusion ! An anonymous letter ...the maid in the closet ...my lady so agitated ...and my honor ...honor). Scene 2 - Susanna waits for the proper moment to tell the Count that she is interested in his offer (It's my duty and what His Excellency wants I want ...Cruel woman ! why did you let me languish so). The Count arranges to meet her in the garden. Scene 3 - When Figaro approaches Susanna dismisses him (Shut up, you've won your case, without a lawyer). Scene 4 - Left alone, The Count recollects (Shall I see, while I suffer, a servant of mine be happy ! ...Ah no, I can't leave this happy man undisturbed). Scene 5 - Before the court, Figaro hears his sentence from Don Curzio (The case is settled. Either pay her, or marry her, now hold your silence). Asked about his family, Figaro tells the Count that he was a lost child with a birthmark on his left arm. At that moment Marcellina recognizes him as her lost son Raphael (In this embrace, find once more your mother, my beloved son !). Susanna enters with money to pay for Figaro's debt and finding him embracing Marcellina she slaps him. Everyone present assures Susanna that Marcellina and Figaro are in their rights to do so (His mother ? Your mother ? ...His father ? Your father ?). Scene 6 - Susanna receives the receipt of Figaro's debt as a wedding gift, doubled by a purse from Bartolo. Scene 7 - Barbarina invites Cherubino (Come, come, brave page, in my house). Scene 8 - The Countess is anxious to know how the Count responded to Susanna's invitation (Changing my clothes with those of Susanna, and hers with mine... oh heavens, to what a humiliating state I am reduced by a cruel husband). Scene 9 - Antonio informs the Count that Cherubino is in his house. Scene 10 - The Countess and Susanna sing together while composing a letter to the Count (What a gentle zephyr ...zephyr ...will whisper this evening). Scene 11 - Barbarina, Cherubino dressed like a girl and peasant girls sing carrying flowers (Receive, oh gracious patroness, these roses and these flowers ...we give to you of our sweet heart). Recognizing Cherubino, the Countess takes his flowers and kisses him on the forehead. Scene 12 - The Count enters with Antonio and Antonio replaces the girl's hat with Cherubino's hat (There it is ! Here is your officer.). The Countess shows great surprise and the Count is prepared to punish him, but Barbarina stands for him (Your Lordship, your Lordship give me, lord, Cherubino as my husband). Scene 13 - Figaro enters and he asks for the wedding to proceed (Here's the march, let's go to your places, girls ...Here are two weddings, we must receive them). Scene 14 - The wedding ceremony proceeds. Secretly Susanna gives her letter to the Count. They all sing (We sing, we praise such a wise lord).

Act 4 (In the Garden of the Count's Palace)

Barbarina has lost something (I can't find it ...and my cousin ...and the Lord). Scene 2 - Figaro and Marcellina help her, to find out it was the pin of the letter that must be returned to Susanna from the Count. Scene 3 - Figaro is jealous and heads away to avenge all husbands. Scene 4 - Alone Marcellina sings (The billy and the nanny goat are always in accord). Scene 5 - Barbarina sings waiting for Cherubino (...the lord hates him, and I love him well, though he cost me a kiss). Scene 6 - Figaro has invited Basilio, Bartolo and some workers to surprise Susanna (...we will celebrate the party of my honest wife and His Feudal Lordship). Scene 7 - Basilio gossips with Bartolo (...if you meddle with the nobles: nine out of ten times you lose). Scene 8 - Figaro sings an aria about women (...they are thorny roses, poisoned foxes, they are amiable bears, malignant pigeons, masters of intrigue, friends of trouble, they feel no love, they feel no pity). Scene 9 - Susanna enters with the

Countess and Marcellina who prevents her that Figaro is hidden somewhere. Scene 10 - Susanna prepares to punish Figaro for doubting her (At last the moment approaches which I'll enjoy unhurried in my idol's arms). Scene 11 - Cherubino approaches the Countess and teases her, trusting her to be Susanna (Simpereing, malicious, I know why you're here !). Scene 12 - The Count appears just when Cherubino tries to kiss the girl and interferes receiving the kiss. The Count wants to slap Cherubino but the boy runs away and Figaro steps forward collecting the hit. Figaro draws back and the Count caresses the Countess, trusting her to be Susanna (Come nearer, my dear ! ...I am here for you, my lord ...Give me your little hand ! ...It is yours). The Count offers her a diamond ring gladly accepted. Scene 13 - Figaro meets Susanna to clear the matters and asks for her hand, but she slaps him well (As you wish, signor...and this, and this as well ...don't hit quite so fast ! ...and this, and this one too !). Scene 14 - When the Count appears Susanna plays the role of the Countess while Figaro is carressing her. The Count gets furious and calls everybody with lights, to expose the unfaitfull wife. Everyone shows up and the plot is discovered. They all ask for the Count's pardon and finally, when the Countess appears and shows her diamon ring, the pardon is granted (The day of torments, of caprice, of folly, in content and happiness only love can end it).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - ...when it happens that the Count wants me, dong - dong ...the devil should bring him here to my door (Figaro, Susanna), If you want to dance, Signor Count, I'll play my guitar (Figaro), La vendetta, oh, la venedetta ! It is a pleasure reserved for the wise (Bartolo), Do go first my dazzling lady ...I'm not in a hurry my spicy lady ...the new fiancee ...the lady of honor (Marcellina, Susanna), I don't know what I am, what I do, now I'm on fire, now I'm freezing ...every woman makes my heart flutter (Cherubino), ...and lifting, softly, very softly, the cover from the table I see the page ... (The Count), Happy young maidens, scatter flowers before our noble lord (Chorus), I don't deserve either tributes or flowers, it's an unjust practice a have abolished on my estates (The Duke), He's still a child ! ...Less so than you think ...there's a spare place for an officer in my regiment ...leave immediately (Susanna, The Count), No more fly, butterfly amoroso (Figaro) Act 2 - So he tried to seduce you ? ...it was merely a financial transation (Countess, Susanna), ...the little Cherubino will be dressed as a woman and we will put him there in the Count's way (Figaro), You, ladies, who know what love is (Cherubino), Come here, kneel down, stay still there... (Susanna), Take your sword, kill the page ! that same ill-born boy stands here before you (Susanna), Your foolishness deserves no pity ...I'm humiliated, I repent (All three), What a culpa, what a good case, everyone's nose has been quite elongated (Marcellina, Basilio, Bartolo). Act 3 - What a confusion ! An anonymous letter ...the maid in the closet ...my lady so agitated ...and my honor ...honor (The Count), It's my duty and what His Excellency wants I want ...Cruel woman ! why did you let me languish so (Susanna, The Count), The case is settled. Either pay her, or marry her, now hold your silence (Don Curzio), In this embrace, find once more your mother, my beloved son ! (Marcellina), His mother ? Your mother ? ...His father ? Your father ? (All present), Come, come, brave page, in my house (Barbarina), Changing my clothes with those of Susanna, and hers with mine... oh heavens, to what a humiliating state I am reduced by a cruel husband (The Countess), What a gentle zephyr ...zephyr ...will whisper this evening (The Countess, Susanna), Receive, oh gracious patroness, these roses and these flowers ...we give to you of our sweet heart (Chorus), There it is ! Here is your officer. (Antonio), Your Lordship, your Lordship give me, lord, Cherubino as my husband (Barbarina), Here's the march, let's go to your places, girls ...Here are two weddings, we must receive them (Figaro, The Countess), We sing, we praise such a wise lord (Chorus). Act 4 - I can't find it ...and my cousin ...and the Lord (Barbarina), The billy and the nanny goat are always in accord (Marcellina), ...the lord hates him, and I love him well, though he cost me a kiss (Barbarina), ...we will celebrate the party of my honest wife and His Feudal Lordship (Figaro), ...they are thorny roses, poisoned foxes, they are amiable bears, malignant pigeons, masters of intrigue, friends of trouble, they feel no love, they feel no pity (Figaro), At last the moment approaches which I'll enjoy unhurried in my idol's arms (Susanna), Simpereing, malicious, I know why you're here ! (Cherubino), Come nearer, my dear ! ...I am here for you, my lord ...Give me your little hand ! ...It is yours (The Count, The Countess), As you wish, signor...and this, and this as well ...don't hit quite so fast ! and this, and this one too ! (Susanna, Figaro), The day of torments, of caprice, of folly, in content and happiness only love can end it (All on scene).

Ballet: A ballet production of *Le nozze di Figaro* has been staged at the Opera de la Bastille in Paris, starting with 24 November 2010. With a choreography by Jean Guiserix, the ballet was produced by Humbert Camerlo, with settings by Ezio Frigerio and lightings by Giorgio Strehler. Starting with 26 April 2017, Victor Yaremenko

has produced with Ballet National d'Ukraine another version of The Marriage of Figaro in two acts and six scenes. In distribution: Oleksandr Stoianov and Mykyta Sukhorukov as Figaro, Kateryna Kuhar and Natalia Lazebnikova as Suzane and Igor Bulycev as Count Almaviva.

Recordings: 1942 Vienna Philharmonica Orchestra (Erich Kunz - Figaro, Irma Beilke - Susanna, Hans Hotter - The Count), 1943 Metropolitan Opera (Enzo Pinza - Figaro, Bidu Sayao - Susanna, John Brownlee - The Count), 1952 Northwest Deutschen Rundfunks Koln (Erich Kunz - Figaro, Hilde Guden - Susanna, Paul Schoffer - The Count), 1955 Aix en Provence Festival (Cesare Siepi - Figaro, Hilde Guden - Susanna, Alfred Poell - The Count), 1958 Vienna State Opera (Giorgio Tozzi - Figaro, Roberta Peters - Susanna, George London - The Count), 1963 Royal Opera House (Geraint Evans - Figaro, Mirella Freni - Susanna, Tito Gobi - The Count), 1968 Deutsche Oper Berlin (Hermann Prey - Figaro, Edith Mathis - Susanna, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - The Count), 1971 BBC Symphony Orchestra (Wladimiro Ganzarolli - Figaro, Mirella Freni - Susanna, Ingvar Wixell - The Count), 1990 Metropolitan Opera (Ferruccio Furlanetto - Figaro, Dawn Upshaw - Susanna, Thomas Hampson - The Count), 2001 Concerto Koln (Lorenzo Regazzo - Figaro, Patrizia Ciofi - Susanna, Simon Keenlyside - The Count), 2007 Zurich Opera (Erwin Schrott - Figaro, Martina Jankova - Susanna, Michael Volle - The Count), 2011 Opera Australia (Teddy Rhodes - Figaro, Taryn Fiebig - Susanna, Peter Coleman Wright - The Count), 2012 Perm Opera (Christian Van Horn - Figaro, Fanie Antonelou - Susanna, Simone Kermes - The Count)

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61. Madama Butterfly

Title: Madama Butterfly (Madam Butterfly)

Composer: Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924). Born in Lucca, Italy, he was one of nine children of Michele Puccini and Albina Magi. His family, starting with his great-great grandfather has occupied the position of maestro di capella for 124 years and has composed music for the church. As a boy he was a member of the choir and played the organ. In 1880 he has got a diploma from the Pacini School of Music in Lucca and continued his studies at the Milan Conservatory with a grant from Italian Queen Margherita. He was married in 1904 to Elvira Gemignani (1860-1930) and they had a son, Antonio. By 1900, Puccini has acquired land and had built a villa on the lake, at Torre del Lago, now known as Villa Museo Puccini. An annual Festival Puccini is held at Torre del Lago to honor his memory. In 1923 the Prime Minister Benito Mussolini has named him member in the Italian Senate (senatore a vita). Centro di studi Giacomo Puccini was founded in 1996 in Lucca to approach the study of Puccini's work. Operas: Le Villi (1884), Edgar (1889), Manon Lescaut (1893), La Boheme (1896), Tosca (1900), Madama Butterfly (1904), La Fanciulla del West (1910), La rondine (1917), Il Trittico (1918), Turandot (1926). His other work includes sacred music, songs, vocal and choral music, chamber music and instrumental music.

Libretto: Luigi Illica (1857-1919) and Giuseppe Giacosa (1847-1906). Luigi Illica was an Italian librettist who wrote for Puccini several libretti: Manon Lescaut (1893), La Boheme (1896), Tosca (1900), Madama Butterfly (1904). He also produced opera libretti for: Pietro Mascagni (Iris, Le Maschere, Isabeau), Alfredo Catalani (La Wally), Umberto Giordano (Andrea Chenier, Siberia, Giove a Pompei), Alberto Franchetti (Cristoforo Colombo, Germania), Antonio Smareglia (Il vassallo di Szegith, Cornelius Schutt, Nozze Istriane) and other important composers (Gaetano Luporini, Spyridon Samaras, Pietro Floridia, Cesare Galleotti, Ettore Panizza, Cesare Rossi, Franco Alfano). His stories were used in silent films and he was a considerable playwright. In 1961 the Luigi Illica International Prize was founded for opera singers, conductors, directors and authors. Giuseppe Giacosa was an Italian poet, playwright and librettist, with a degree in law at the University of Turin. Together with Luigi Illica he wrote the four libretti for Puccini. He is also remembered for some of his playwrights: Una Partita a Scacchi, La signora di Challant. The libretto for this opera was based on a short story by John Luther Long dramatised by David Belasco as a one act play, and also inspired by a French novel, Madame Chrysanthème, by Pierre Loti. Pierre Loti's novel presented the autobiographical journal of a naval officer who married a Japanese woman named Kiku.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 17 February 1904 at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, with soprano Rosina Storchio, tenor Giovanni Zenatello and baritone Giuseppe De Luca in the leading roles. It was followed by the premiere in Brescia on 28 May 1904 and at the Teatro de la Opera de Buenos Aires on 2 July 1904. Conducted by Arturo Toscanini, the first performance in London at the Royal Opera House took place on 10 July 1905 and the first production in the United States was staged in Washington, at the Columbia Theater on 15 October 1906. In New York, the opera premiered at the Garden Theatre on 12 November 1906. The first Metropolitan Opera production was staged on 11 February 1907, in the presence of the composer, with Geraldine Farrar, Enrico Caruso, Louise Homer and Antonio Scotti in the leading roles. The first Australian performance was presented at the Theatre Royal in Sidney, on 26 March 1910, starring Amy Eliza Castles. Other notable performances were staged and recorded in: Milan (1921), Rome (1939), Los Angeles (1948), New York (1949), Turin (1954), Milan (1955), Rome (1958), Vienna (1974), Barcelona (1976), Bratislava (1991), Bremen (1997), Rome (2009), New York (2011). Six silent films and 12 filmed musical drama were produced on the story. Up to the 2017/18 season, *Madama Butterfly* was performed in the world for 2428 times, in 631 different productions, ranking 7 on Operabase list.

Roles: Cio-Cio-san, Madamma Butterfly (soprano), Suzuki, her maid (mezzo-soprano), Mr. Pinkerton, liuetenant (tenor), Sharpless, Consul (baritone), Goro, matchmaker (tenor), Prince Yamadori (tenor), Bonze, Cio-cio-san's uncle (bass), Yakuside, Cio-Cio-san's uncle (bass), The Imperial Commissioner (bass), The Official Register (bass), Cio-Cio-san's mother (mezzo-soprano), The aunt (soprano), The cousin (soprano), Kate Pinkerton (mezzo-soprano), Dolore, child (silent), Chorus (Cio-Cio-san's relatives, friends, servants)



Story: Nagasaki, Japan, 1904. An account of love and devotion, betrayal, honor and ultimate sacrifice. A marine officer marries an orphan young girl from Japan and sales off, not to return for the following next three years. When he finally shows himself, he is accompanied by a new wife. Learning that he has a child, the officer fights for the child's future, but the girl, dishonored, commits the ritual suicide (harakiri). She lived but a butterfly's life.

Act 1 (A Japanese house, terrace and garden)

While waiting for the bride, Goro the matchmaker presents the servants to Mr. Pinkerton. Suzuki is the first to wellcome him (Your Honour deigns to smile ? Your smile if fair as flowers). When the Counsul arrive Mr. Pinlerton aknowledges him (I bought this house for nine hundred and ninety nine years ...and so I'm marrying in Japanese fashion, tied for nine hundred and ninety nine years !). Scene 2 - Butterfly is surrounded by girl friends (I am the happiest maiden, the happiest in Japan, in all the world !). When presented to the Consul, Butterfly stresses that here relatives were formerly wealthy (...but the strongest oak must fall, when the storm wind wreks the forest). Butterfly's mother entertains her relatives (I think him fine ! A finer man you never saw). Mr. Pinkerton responds (Ah she's a gem, a flower which in good faith I have gathered !). Secretly, Butterfly tells Mr. Pinkerton that she decided to share his faith (In the same little church, on my knees with you, I will pray to the same God). The Commissioner reads loud the marriage contract. After some toasts, Bonze, the bride's uncle is the first to be unhappy (In everlasting torment may your wicked soul perish ! ...You have renounced us all). The relatives start their ceremony of renouncing her, while Pinkerton is cheering her (...all the Bonzes in Japan are not worth a tear from your little almond eyes). Left alone, the newly married prepare for the night (I long to

be rid of this ponderous obi My heart is beating madly with passionate longing). Butterfly shares her fear (If a butterfly is caught by man, he'll pierce its heart with a needle ...see, I have caught you ...be mine ...yes, yours forever).

Act 2 (Inside Butterfly's House)

Mr. Pinkerton is missing for three years and Butterfly wanders (Suzuki, how soon shall we be starving ? ...This is all that is left us). Suzuki is reluctant (I never heard as yet of foreign husband who did return to his nest ... Ah ! Silence, or I'll kill you). Butterfly sings about her hope for seeing him soon. The Consul appears with a letter from Mr. Pinkerton and Butterfly assures him her husband will return when robin rebuild their nests. Butterfly also informs the Consul that Goro insists that she should remarry to Prince Yamadori (Now he offers me riches if I will wed an idiot). Speaking of him, Prince Yamadori interrupts their conversation for a short visit, but his offer is refused once more (You have had so many consorts ...Every one of them I married). Left alone with Butterfly Count Sharpless tries to prepare her for the truth (...what would you do...if he were never to return again ?). Butterfly responds (Two things I might do: ...go back and entertain the people with my songs ...or else ...better ...to die) and asks Suzuki to show his Honour to the door. The Consul notices a small child neither he or Mr. Pinkerton knew about. Shortly after the harbour cannon is heard and Butterfly uses the telescope to find out with excitement that it is her husband's ship (He is coming! He is coming ! He is coming !). Butterfly order Suzuki to ornate the house with every flower in the garden (Let us sow fair April here ...Bring me now my wedding garment).

Act 3 (Inside Butterfly's House)

Tired of waiting Butterfly needs some rest (Sweet, thou art sleeping, cradled on my heart). Mr. Pinkerton arrives together with the Consul and a woman he presents as his wife. The Consul tries to persuade Suzuki that the child's future welfare must be secured from trouble (This gentle lady, will give the child a mother's care !). Suzuki is asked to bring the news to Butterfly (Can you ask me to go and tell a mother...). Mr. Pinkerton is tortured with remorse (Farewell,o happy home, farewell, home of love...). Butterfly wakes up and she meets Mrs. Kate Pinkerton (Ah ! She is his wife. All is dead for me ! All is finished. Ah !). When asked to entrust her son to Kate she answers (His son I will give him if he will come to fetch him). Left alone, Butterfly takes a dagger, leaning near the image of Buddha (Death with honor is better than life with dishonor). Butterfly sings a farewell to her son (My son, sent to me from Heaven ...Farewell, my dearest heart ! Go, play, play). Butterfly stabs herself and falls near the child. Mr. Pinkerton and the Consul rush into the room, but it is too late.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Your Honour deigns to smile ? Your smile if fair as flowers (Suzuki), I bought this house for nine hundred and ninety nine years ...and so I'm marrying in Japanese fashion, tied for nine hundred and ninety nine years ! (Pinkerton). I am the happiest maiden, the happiest in Japan, in all the world ! (Butterfly), ...but the strongest oak must fall, when the storm wind wrecks the forest (Butterfly), I think him fine ! A finer man you never saw (Mother), Ah she's a gem, a flower which in good faith I have gathered ! (Pinkerton), In the same little church, on my knees with you, I will pray to the same God (Butterfly), In everlasting torment may your wicked soul perish ! ...You have renounced us all (Bonze), ...all the Bonzes in Japan are not worth a tear from your little almond eyes (Pinkerton), I long to be rid of this ponderous obi My heart is beating madly with passionate longing (Butterfly, Pinkerton), If a butterfly is caught bt man, he'll pierce its heart with a needle ...see, I have caught you ...be mine ...yes, yours forever (Butterfly, Pinkerton). Act 2 - Suzuki, how soon shall we be starving ? ...This is all that is left us (Butterfly, Suzuki), I never heard as yet of foreign husband who did return to his nest ... Ah ! Silence, or I'll kill you (Suzuki, Butterfly), Now he offers me riches if I will wed an idiot (Butterfly), You have had so many consorts ...Every one of them I married (Butterfly, Yamadori), ...what would you do...if he were never to return again ? (Sharpless), Two things I might do: ...go back and entertain the people with my songs ...or else ...better ...to die (Butterfly), He is coming! He is coming ! He is coming ! (Butterfly), Let us sow fair April here ...Bring me now my wedding garment (Butterfly). Act 3 - Sweet, thou art sleeping, cradled on my heart (Butterfly), This gentle lady, will give the child a mother's care ! (Sharpless), Can you ask me to go and tell a mother... (Suzuki), Farewell,o happy home, farewell, home of love... (Pinkerton), Ah ! She is his wife. All is dead for me ! All is finished. Ah ! (Butterfly), His son I will give him if he will come to fetch him (Butterfly), Death with honor is better than life with dishonor (Butterfly), My son, sent to me from Heaven ...Farewell, my dearest heart ! Go, play, play (Butterfly),

Ballet: In February 2002, David Nixon the Artistic Director at the Northern Ballet in London has produced his ballet version of *Madame Butterfly*. In November 2018, the Australian choreographer Stanton Welch has staged, at the Ballet West established in Salt Lake City, his ballet version of *Madama Butterfly*. Another remarkable performance was produced by the Israeli Ballet, by choreographer Marianna Ryzhkina with a scenery design by Anna Chruscheva, casting Tomoko Takahashi as *Butterfly* and Egor Menshchikov as *Pinkerton*.

Recordings: 1921 La Scala, Milan (Ottavia Giordano - *Butterfly*, Santo Antonocito - *Pinkerton*, Ginevra Amato - *Suzuki*, Adolfo Pacini - *Sharpless*), 1939 Rome Opera House (Toti Dal Monte - *Butterfly*, Beniamino Gigli - *Pinkerton*, Vittoria Palombini - *Suzuki*, Mario Basiola - *Sharpless*), 1949 Metropolitan Opera New York (Eleanor Steber - *Butterfly*, Jan Peerce - *Pinkerton*, Suzanne Carre - *Suzuki*, Richard Bonelli - *Sharpless*), 1954 Radiotelevisione Italiana Turin (Clara Petrella - *Butterfly*, Ferruccio Tagliavini - *Pinkerton*, Mafalda Massini - *Suzuki*, Giuseppe Taddei - *Sharpless*), 1955 La Scala Milan (Maria Callas - *Butterfly*, Nicolai Gedda - *Pinkerton*, Lucia Danieli - *Suzuki*, Mario Borriello - *Sharpless*), 1958 Santa Cecilia Academy Rome (Renata Tebaldi - *Butterfly*, Carlo Bergonzi - *Pinkerton*, Fiorenza Cossotto - *Suzuki*, Enzo Sordello - *Sharpless*), 1974 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Mirella Freni - *Butterfly*, Luciano Pavarotti - *Pinkerton*, Christa Ludwig - *Suzuki*, Robert Kerns - *Sharpless*), 1976 Barcelona Symphony Orchestra (Montserrat Caballé - *Butterfly*, Bernabe Marti - *Pinkerton*, Silvana Mazzieri - *Suzuki*, Franco Bordini - *Sharpless*), 1978 Philharmonia Orchestra (Renata Scotto - *Butterfly*, Plácido Domingo - *Pinkerton*, Gillian Knight - *Suzuki*, Ingvar Wixell - *Sharpless*), 1987 Philharmonia Orchestra (Mirella Freni - *Butterfly*, Jose Carreras - *Pinkerton*, Teresa Berganza - *Suzuki*, Juan Pons - *Sharpless*), 2009 Academia Nazionale Santa Cecilia Rome (Angela Gheorghiu - *Butterfly*, Jonas Kaufmann - *Pinkerton*, Enkelejda Shkosa - *Suzuki*, Fabio Capitanucci - *Sharpless*)

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62. Lohengrin

Title: Lohengrin

Composer: Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Born in Leipzig, his father Carl Friedrich Wagner was a clerk in the Leipzig police service while his mother Johanna Rosine Paez was of the daughter of a baker. One year later his mother remarried to Ludwig Geyer an actor and playwright. At the age of 7 he was enrolled at Pastor Wetzel's school at Possendorf, where he received piano instruction and by the age of 9 he joined the Dresdener Kreutzchor at the Kreuzschule. His first lessons of harmony were taken during 1828-1831 with composer Christian Gottlieb Müller (1800-1863). In 1831, Wagner enrolled at the Leipzig University to become a member of the Saxon student fraternity. He took composition lessons with Thomaskantor (music director) and composer Theodor Weinling (1780-1842). In 1836 he married the actress Christine Wilhemine Planer (1809-1866) for a 30 years of marriage with no offspring. In 1842 Wagner was appointed the Royal Saxon Court Conductor. From 1849 to 1858, due to his revolutionary activity he was exiled in Switzerland, to Zurich, for a very prolific period of his compositions. In 1862 he divorced his wife and remarried Francesca Cosima Liszt with three children as fruit of their marriage, two girls and a son. In 1871 the family moved to Bayreuth where he built the Bayreuth Festspielhouse and founded the Bayreuther Festival. Operas: *Die Hochzeit* (The Wedding-1832), *Die Feen* (The Fairies-1834), *Das Liebsverbot* (The Ban of Love-1836), *Die hohe Braut* (The High-born Bride -1842), *Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen* (Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes - 1840), *Der fliegende Holländer* (The Flying Dutchman - 1841), *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf dem Wartburg* (Tannhäuser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg - 1845), *Lohengrin* (Lohengrin - 1848), *Das Rheingold* (The Rhine Gold - 1854), *Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie - 1856), *Tristan und Isolde* (Tristan and Isolde - 1859), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (The mastersingers of Nuremberg - 1867), *Siegfried* (Siegfried - 1871), *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods -1874), *Parsifal* (Parsifal - 1882).

Libretto: Richard Wagner produced the libretto himself inspired by a medieval tale known as *The Knight of the Swan*, a mysterious knight who comes in a swan drawn boat to defend a damsel. There is a French version called

Le Chevalier au Cigne and a Middle English version called Cheuelere Assigne. At a later time, the German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach (1160-1220) incorporated the swan knight Loherangrin (lohe=fire, rang=rank) into his epic Parzival. His hero, Parzival fights for the good, but suffers from his alienation from God. Inspired by true love, the knight seeks acts of chivalry but against his heroism the word of God force him to humility and to the quest for spirituality. Lohengrin is the son of Parzival, knight of the Holy Grail charged with mystical powers that provide happiness, eternal youth and infinite abundance. The original guardian of the Holy Grail was the Fisher King or Mairmed King but he was severely wounded for philandering and Parzival replaced him as Grail King. Due to the code of chivalry, the Holy Grail's knight is sworn to secrecy, destined to protect families, women and cultivate land, to build castles and to fight the knights who do not live by the code. King Ludwig II of Bavaria was so impressed by Wagner's Lohengrin that he built a fairy tale castle called Neuschwanstein in the Alpine foothills, near Fussen.

Performance history: The first production of Lohengrin was in Weimar, on 28 August 1850 at the Staatskapelle Weimar under the direction of Franz Liszt, a close friend and supporter of Wagner. The opera was an immediate popular success. The first performance outside Germany was in Riga, on 5 February 1855. The Austrian premiere took place in Vienna at the Theater am Karntnertor on 19 August 1858 with Roza Csillag as Ortrud. In Munich the opera premiered at the National Theatre on 16 June 1867 with Heinrich Vogl in the title role and Mathilde Mallinger as Elsa and in Berlin the opera premiered on 6 April 1869 at the Berlin State Opera. In Saint Petersburg, the opera premiered at the Mariinsky Theatre on 16 October 1868. The Belgian premiere was given at La Monnaie on 22 March 1870. The United States premiere at the Stadt Theatre at the Bowery in New York took place on 3 April 1871. The first performance in Italy at the Teatro Comunale di Bologna was staged on 1 November 1871 with an Italian translation by operatic baritone Salvatore Marchesi. Angelo Mariani conducted the performance and Italo Campanini starred as Lohengrin. On 9 November 1871 Giuseppe Verdi annotated his first impressions, after his first exposure to Wagner's work. La Scala in Milan first produced the opera on 30 March 1873. In London the Royal House Opera premiere at the Covent Garden, on 8 May 1875 used the Italian translation by Marchesi. The first performance in Australia in Melbourne took place on 18 August 1877 at the Prince of Wales Theatre. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York the opera was first staged on 7 November 1893. Other notable performances in the XIX century were produced at: Eden Theatre Paris (30 April 1887), Vancouver Opera House (9 February 1891), Auditorium Building Chicago (9 November 1891), Palais Garnier Paris (16 September 1892), Bayreuth Festival (1894). Recorded performances were produced at: New York (1935), Bayreuth (1953, 1954, 1958, 1959, 1962, 2011), Cologne (1953, 1994), Milano (1959), Vienna (1963, 1986, 1991), Stockholm (1966), Boston (1966), Berlin (1981, 1998). From 2004 up to the end of 2018, Lohengrin was performed in the world for 987 times, in 210 different productions, ranking 49 on Operabase list.

Roles: Lohengrin (tenor), Elsa von Brabant (soprano), Friedrich von Telramund (baritone), Ortrud, his wife (mezzo-soprano), King Heinrich der Vogler (bass), The King's Herald (baritone), Four Noblemen of Brabant (tenors), Four Pages (2 sopranos, 2 contraltos), Duke Gottfried, Elsa's brother (silent), Chorus (Saxon, Thuringian and Brabantian counts and nobles, ladies of honor, pages, vassals, serfs)



Story: First half of the 10th century. It is all about chivalry and the love of God. A young boy of noble rank has entered as a squire in the service of a mysterious knight. Due his disappearance, his sister is accused of murder and she is brought to justice before the King. The mysterious knight appears to defend her honor before God, in a

tournament against her acuser. The princess is sworn to secrecy and the knight wins the fight, the land, and the noble rank. After the wedding, the princess insists to find out the true identity of her husband. Reluctant, the knight reveals his name and his sacred oath to the Holy Grail. Once recognized, the knight releases the boy from his service and abandons for ever his disobedient wife.

Act 1 (A meadow on the banks of a river near Antwerp)

King Heinrich has assembled his nobles to prepare for war (Now is the time to defend the kingdom's honour). Friedrich von Telramund comes before the king for judgement. On the Death of the Duke of Brabant he was trusted to protect his offspring, maiden Elsa and the boy Gottfried. One day Elsa took the boy to the woods and returned alone (Now I accuse Elsa von Brabant of her brother's murder and I claim this land for my own by right as the next of kin). Scene 2 - Elsa is facing the King's trial (Are you Elsa of Brabant ? ...Do you accept me as your judge ?). In her testimony Elsa tells about a knight she has dreamed of (Arrayed in shining armour ...that knight will defend me, he shall be my champion). Telramund also stands for his call (Here is my sword ! Which of you will venture to contest the price of my honour ?). The King decides to submit the cause to God's judgment expressed in a mortal combat. The trumpets call at the four points for the knight who will fight for Elsa. At the second call, Lohengrin arrives in a boat drawn by a swan and clears his position (I am sent to stand champion for a maid calumniated by a grievous charge). He solemnly asks for Elsa's hand but he comes with a curious condition (Elsa, if I am to be your husband and defend your land and people you must never ask me my name and lineage). Elsa responds (As you defend me in my need, so will I honour your command !). The Herald gives the rules for the combat (May God Judge you according to the right, trust in Him, not in your strength !). The King strikes his shield and after several violent passages Lohengrin blows his opponent and declares (By God's victory your life is forfeit to me, I grant you it, devote it to repentance !). All present hail the winner (Raise a song of victory loud in highest praise to the hero). Telramund falls unconscious at Ortrud's feet.

Act 2 (In the citadel of Antwerp)

On the steps of the cathedral Frederick and Ortrud are arguing (...my sword lies shattered, my escutcheon stained, my father's home accursed ! ...would you threaten me, a woman ? Coward !). Ortrud comes with a plan (...were he forced to disclose his name and race, all his power would be at an end). Scene 2 - Elsa appears in a white dress and emphasizes (I must gratefully tell you ...by you he was drifted here). Ortrud tries to undermine her trust (...have you never reflected that he of such mysterious lineage might leave you ?). Elsa responds (Poor woman, you can never measure how free of doubt is my heart !). Scene 3 - Preceded by trumpets nobles and soldiers arrive. Herald reads the King's decree (Friedrich von Telramund is banished and outlawed for faithlessly daring God's ordeal). By the same decree Lohengrin is named as Protector of Brabant. Four nobles, former adherents of Telramund are still doubting the new knight and Friedrich calls them to conspiracy. Scene 4 - Elsa, magnificently dressed appears in front of a procession of ladies (Hail, Elsa von Brabant, rich in virtue !). Suddenly, Ortrud walks in front (Stand back, Elsa ! At all times you owe me precedence and must humbly bow before me !) and explains (Can you name him ! Can you tell us whether his lineage, his nobility, is well attested). Elsa responds (Did not my dear hero, with God's help strike down your husband ...which can be innocent ?). Scene 5 - The King enters the scene, followed by Lohengrin (You evil woman, stand away from her ! Here you shall never triumph !). Telramund stands for his wife (He whom I see gleaming there before me I accuse of sorcery !). Lohengrin declares that Elsa is the only one entitled to ask him his rank and lineage. Telramund insists that even a small wound would break the spell but Elsa is firm (My love shall stand high above all the power of doubt !).

Act 3 (The bridal chamber / The meadow on the banks of the river)

Men and women sing the bridal song (Guided in faith, enter within, where may the blessing of love attend you !). Elsa is led to Lohengrin and the King embraces and blesses the couple. Scene 2 - Alone, Elsa and Lohengrin share words of love (I possess all heaven's bliss ! ...you bestow me heaven's bliss !). Elsa wants to be trusted with the truth (...make me proud by your confidence, let your secret be revealed to me). Lohengrin responds (Never will your charms fade while you remain free from doubt !). But Elsa insists (...save, though it cost my life, to know who you are !). At that moment, Telramund and his four nobles charge from a rear door. Lohengrin strikes Friedrich dead with one blow and the others sink to their knees. Lohengrin calls them all, to answer Elsa's question before the King. Scene 3 - Rosy dawn. The King and his nobles enter the scene (I thank you, my loving subjects of Brabant !). Lohengrin explains that he can no longer lead the army since his wife has

broken her oath and now he must reveal his name and rank. Lohengrin tells his story (In a distant land, unapproachable to your steps, lies a castle called Montsalvat ...I was sent here among you by the Grail, my father Parzival wears its crown, his knight am I and Lohengrin is my name). Then he turns to his wife (There is but one punishment for your offence ...We are to be separated and parted). Asked to join the army in battle Lohengrin responds (A knight of Grail, once recognised, would be deprived of all his manhood's strength !). The swan appears with an empty boat (The Grail has sent for its loitering knight !). Before leaving Lohengrin assures Elsa that her brother will return, freed from the Grail's might and leaves for him his horn, his sword and his ring (The horn will bring him aid in danger, the sword will bring him victory, the ring will remind him of me ...Farewell my sweetest wife !). A white dove unchains the swan who turns into Gottfried, Elsa's brother while Lohengrin departs. Gottfried is proclaimed the Duke of Brabant. Elsa slowly sinks lifeless to the ground in Gottfried's arms.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Now is the time to defend the kingdom's honour (The King), Now I accuse Elsa von Brabant of her brother's murder and I claim this land for my own by right as the next of kin (Telramund), Are you Elsa of Brabant ? ...Do you accept me as your judge ? (The King), Arrayed in shining armour ...that knight will defend me, he shall be my champion (Elsa), Here is my sword ! Which of you will venture to contest the price of my honour ? (Telramund), I am sent to stand champion for a maid calumniated by a grievous charge (Lohengrin), Elsa, if I am to be your husband and defend your land and people ...you must never ask me my name and lineage (Lohengrin), As you defend me in my need, so will I honour your command ! (Elsa), May God Judge you according to the right, trust in Him, not in your strength ! (Herald), By God's victory your life is forfeit to me, I grant you it, devote it to repentance ! (Lohengrin), Raise a song of victory loud in highest praise to the hero (Chorus). Act 2 - ...my sword lies shattered, my escutcheon stained, my father's home accursed ! ...would you threaten me, a woman ? Coward ! (Telramund, Ortrud), ...were he forced to disclose his name and race, all his power would be at an end (Ortrud), I must gratefully tell you ...by you he was drifted here (Elsa), ...have you never reflected that he of such mysterious lineage might leave you ? (Ortrud), Poor woman, you can never measure how free of doubt is my heart ! (Elsa), Frederick of Telramund is banished and outlawed for faithlessly daring God's ordeal (Herald), Hail, Elsa von Brabant, rich in virtue ! (Chorus), Stand back, Elsa ! At all times you owe me precedence and must humbly bow before me ! (Ortrud), Can you name him ! Can you tell us whether his lineage, his nobility, is well attested (Ortrud), Did not my dear hero, with God's help strike down your husband ...which can be innocent ? (Elsa), You evil woman, stand away from her ! Here you shall never triumph ! (Lohengrin), He whom I see gleaming there before me I accuse of sorcery ! (Telramund), My love shall stand high above all the power of doubt ! (Elsa) Act 3 - Guided in faith, enter within, where may the blessing of love attend you ! (Chorus), I possess all heaven's bliss ! ...you bestow me heaven's bliss ! (Elsa, Lohengrin), ...make me proud by your confidence, let your secret be revealed to me (Elsa), Never will your charms fade while you remain free from doubt ! (Lohengrin), ...save, though it cost my life, to know who you are ! (Elsa), I thank you, my loving subjects of Brabant ! (The King), In a distant land, unapproachable to your steps, lies a castle called Montsalvat ...I was sent here among you by the Grail, my father Parzival wears its crown, his knight am I and Lohengrin is my name (Lohengrin), There is but one punishment for your offence ...We are to be separated and parted (Lohengrin). A knight of Grail, once recognised, would be deprived of all his manhood's strength ! (Lohengrin), The Grail has sent for its loitering knight ! (Lohengrin), The horn will bring him aid in danger, the sword will bring him victory, the ring will remind him of me ...Farewell my sweetest wife ! (Lohengrin).

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1935 Metropolitan Opera New York (Lauritz Melchior - Lohengrin, Lotte Lehmann - Elsa, Majorie Lawrence - Ortrud, Friedrich Schorr - Telramund), 1941 Staatskapelle Berlin (Franz Volker - Lohengrin, Maria Muller - Elsa, Margarete Klose - Ortrud, Jaro Prohaska - Telramund), 1953 Bayreuth Festival (Wolfgang Wundgassen - Lohengrin, Eleonor Steber - Elsa, Astrid Varany - Ortrud, Hermann Uhde - Telramund), 1959 Orchestra Sinfonica e Coro de Milano (Sandor Konya - Lohengrin, Marcella Pobbe - Elsa, Laura Didier - Ortrud, Aldo Protti - Telramund), 1963 Vienna State Opera (Jess Thomas - Lohengrin, Elisabeth Grummer - Elsa, Christa Ludwig - Ortrud, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Telramund), 1966 Kungel Huvkapellet Stockholm (Nicolai Gedda - Lohengrin, Aase Nordmo Lovberg - Elsa, Barbro Ericson - Ortrud, Rolf Jupither - Telramund), 1985 Vienna State Opera (Placido Domingo - Lohengrin, Jessye Norman - Elsa, Eva Randova - Ortrud,

Siegmund Nimsgern - Telramund), 1998 Barlin Staatskapelle Orchestra (Peter Seiffert - Lohengrin, Emily Magee - Elsa, Deborah Polaski - Ortrud, Falk Struckmann - Telramund), 2011 Bayreuth Festival (Klaus Florian Vogt - Lohengrin, Annette Dasch - Elsa, Petra Lang - Ortrud, Jukka Rasilainen - Telramund)

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63. Traviata

Title: The Fallen Woman (La Traviata, Traviata)

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). Born at Le Roncole (Parma, Italy), his father Carlo Giuseppe Verdi (1785-1867) was an innkeeper, while his mother Luigia Uttini (1787-1851) was a thread maker. Verdi received musical education playing the organ at the local church with the help of Pietro Baistrocchi, the local schoolmaster. At 12 years old, he began lessons with maestro di capella Ferdinando Provesi and Antonio Barezzi, the directors of the Societa Filarmonica, and by the age of 17 Verdi established himself as a leader of the Philharmonic. At 4 May 1836 Verdi was married to Margherita Barezzi, the daughter of his master and director. Margherita died only four years later, leaving a devastated Verdi to find his peace in his work. Antonio Barezzi also introduced him to Vincenzo Lavigna, maestro concertatore at La Scala in Milan who encouraged Verdi to compose and to take a subscription to La Scala. In 1835 Verdi became director of the Busseto school and in 1837 he staged his first opera at La Scala. In 1859 he married Giuseppina Strepponi (1815-1897) an operatic soprano and an old friend. In 1861 Verdi was elected to the Parliament of Piedmont Sardinia and in 1874 he was appointed member of the Italian Senate. In 1895 he planned and built a hospital at Villanova sull'Arda and his famous Casa di Riposo per Musicisti in Milan, a rest home for retired musicians. Operas: Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (1839), Un giorno di regno (1840), Nabucco (1842), I Lombardi alla prima crociata (1843), Ernani (1844), I due Foscari (1844), Giovanna d'Arco (1845), Alzira (1845), Attila (1856), Macbeth (1847), I masnadieri (1847), Jerusalem (1847), Il corsaro (1848), La battaglia di Legnano (1849), Luisa Miller (1849), Stiffelio (1850), Rigoletto (1851), Il trovatore (1853), La traviata (1853), Les vepres siciliennes (1855), Giovanna de Guzman (1855), Le trouvère (1856), Simon Boccanegra (1857), Aroldo (1857), La forza del destino (1862), Don Carlos (1867), Aida (1871), Otello (1887), Falstaff (1893). Ballet music for: Otello, Macbeth, Jerusalem, Don Carlo, Aida, Il trovatore, Il vespri siciliani. His work also includes sacred works, songs, instrumental, orchestral and chamber music.

Libretto: Francesco Maria Piave (1810-1876). Francesco Piave was an Italian librettist born in Murano who wrote 10 librettos for Giuseppe Verdi, including: Ernani, Attila, Macbeth, Rigoletto, La traviata. He also produced 4 librettos for Giovanni Pacini and others for: Gaetano Braga, Achille Peri, Federico Ricci, Carlo Romani, Severio Mercadante, Antonio Buzzolla and Michael Balfe. His libretto was used in three La Traviata films directed by: Mario Lanfranchi (1967), Franco Zeffirelli (1983), Jean-Francois Sivadier (2012). The libretto was based on La Dame aux Camélias, a play adapted from the novel by Alexandre Dumas (1824-1895), first published in 1848. The play premiered at the Theatre du Vaudeville in Paris, where Verdi who was visiting Paris immediately started to compose music for his La Traviata. Francesco Maria Piave was selected to write the libretto and the two started to work at Verdi's new villa in Sant'Agata. La Dame aux Camélias was inspired from real life, from the author's feelings for a young courtesan in Paris, Marie Duplessis (1824-1847) who died of tuberculosis at the age of 23. Although she was married to Count Edouard de Perregaux, within weeks of her death her belongings were auctioned off to pay some of her debts.

Performance history: Originally titled Violetta, after the main character, the opera premiered on 6 March 1853 at the La Fenice Opera House in Venice. Gaetano Mares conducted the performance of soprano Fanny Salvini-Donatelli as Violetta, tenor Lodovico Graziani as Alfredo and baritone Francesco Dragone as Barone Douphol. The opera was reset on 6 May 1854 with Maria Spezia-Aldighieri singing Violetta. In the same distribution, the opera premiered in Madrid (1 February 1855 at Teatro Real), Vienna (4 May 1855) and Barcelona (25 October 1855 at Gran Theatre de Liceu). The London premiere at Her Majesty's Theatre took place on 24 May 1856. In the United States it was first performed by the Max Maretzek Italian Opera Company on 3 December

1856 at the Academy of Music in New York. The opera was first performed in France on 6 December 1856, at the Salle Ventadour in Paris and the first French version was produced on 27 October 1864 at the Theatre Lyrique, with Christina Nilsson in the title role. The first French adaptation libretto was published in 1865. Considered to be a good moral lesson, the opera become immensely popular and until now is the most frequently performed of all operas. Notable recorded performances in the 20th century were produced at: Paris (1912), Milan (1915, 1928, 1930, 1955), New York (1935, 1946, 1949, 1955, 1991, 2004), Rome (1946, 1956, 1960, 1967), Turin (1953), Lisbon (1958), Florence (1962, 1992), Bucharest (1968), Berlin (1968, 1973), London (1971, 1979, 1980, 1994), Munich (1976), Vienna (2005), Sydney (1012). Up to the 2017/18 season, La Traviata was performed in the world for 4162 times, in 889 different productions, ranking 1 on Operabase list.

Roles: Violetta Valery (soprano), Flora Bervoix (mezzo-soprano), Annina (soprano), Alfredo Germont (tenor), Giorgio Germont (baritone), Gastone, Viscomte de Letorieres (tenor), Baron Douphol (baritone), Marquis D'Obigny (bass), Doctor Grenvil (bass), Giuseppe, servant (tenor), Flora's servant (bass), Messenger (bass), Chorus (ladies and gentleman, friends of Violetta and Flora, matadors, picadors, gypsies, servants, masquers, dancers)



Story: At the beginning of the 19th century, Paris is the mirrage town for a young girl (15 years old) from provence. Without parental guidance, she falls in love with everyone in Paris and lives a life of lust. When she finally falls in love for a young and handsome boy, his family oppose her. Without means for existence, the two lovers must part. The boy fights a duel against aristocracy and the girl falls very sick, in misery. God's judgement is severe: the girl dies in her lover's arms while the boy is determined to follow her. Just another young life wasted.

Act 1 (A room in Violetta's house)

Violetta is wellcoming her guests (...let's raise our glasses and enjoy ourselves ...I put my faith in pleasure as a cure for all my ills). Vicomte Gaston introduces to her Alfredo Germont, his friend. Violetta opens the chat (...let's open our hearts to each other ...you say well, for wine is a friend). Alfredo admits that he is in love with Violetta and she pours him a glass of wine (I'll be Hebe, who pours the wine ...May you be as immortal as she). The two engage in a duet (Let's drink from the joyous chalice ...With you I would share my days of happiness). Alone with Violetta, Alfredo offers his services as her most watchful guardian, only to be mocked (One happy day you flashed lightly into my life ...If that is true, then leave me. Friendship is all I can offer you). After the guests have retired, alone, Violetta wonders (Would a true love bring me misfortune ? ...to love and to be loved !).

Act 2 (A country house near Paris / A richly furnished room in Flora's house)

Alfredo recollects (It's three month now since Violetta gave up for me her easy, luxurious life). Annina informs Alfredo that Violetta has send her to Paris to sell all her things, to cover for the costs of living. Alfredo is full of remorse and heads to Paris himself. Violetta receives from Flora an invitation to dance. Germond, Alfredo's father comes to visit (I'm the father of that headstrong boy who's rushing to his ruin ...I am a woman, Sir, and this is my house). Germond learns that she is willing to sacrifice everything for Alfredo (The past is over. I love Alfredo now, God has wiped out the past). Germond pleads for the sake of his daughter (God gave me a daughter, as pure as an angel). Violetta refuses to leave Alfred (Oh, no ! Never ! No, never ! ...I would

rather die). Germont insists until he finally obtains her approval (Soon he will be restored to you, but more unhappy than words can tell). When Alfredo arrives, Violetta is very agitated but pretends that nothing has happened and runs into the garden. Giuseppe enters to announce that Violetta has left for Paris and a messenger brings a letter from her (Alfredo, when you get this note ...). His father arrives and tries to calm him down (My son ! I know how much you suffer ! ...Hasten to console a father and a sister). Alfredo finds Flora's letter and he rushes out. Scene 2 - Girls with gypsy masks sing (We are gypsies, we come from a distant land). Gaston and boys masked as matadors respond (We are matadors from Madrid, the heroes of the bull). Alfredo is the first to reveal his face, when Violetta enters on the arm of Baron Duphol (I couldn't refuse such an invitation). Men start playing cards and Alfredo wins for several times. During supper, Violetta finds a moment with Alfredo and tries to prevent a duel (You must go, you're in danger ! ...So you think I'm a coward ?). Furious, Alfredo calls all the guest and throws his winnings at Violetta's feet (I call you all to witness here that I've paid her back !). All present are outraged, including Alfredo's father who has just arrived (A man who offends a woman, even in anger, merits nothing but scorn). The Baron provokes Alfredo to a duel while Violetta recollects to herself (Even after death I shall still love you).

Act 3 (Violetta's bedroom)

In her bed Violetta receives Dr. Grenvil's visit (How do you feel ? ...Weak in body, but tranquil of soul). At the door, the doctor let's Annina know that Violetta has only a few hours left. Alone, Violetta reads a letter from Alfredo's father (You kept your promise...the duel took place, the Baron was wounded ...Alfredo is abroad). Offstage, the people of Paris are heard singing during the Carnival (Make way for the gentlest of all horned beasts). Alfredo appears, pale with emotion (Oh, my Violetta ! How much to blame I am ...That you find me still alive means that sorrow cannot kill). Together they harden each other (We'll leave Paris, my dearest, together we'll go through life). Violetta falters and falls into a chair (It's the way the illness takes me ! I'm all right now. See ! I'm smiling). Annina runs for the Doctor. Violetta cries with Alfredo (Ah, God in Heaven ! that I should die so young ...let me mingle my tears with yours). Germont enters with Annina and the Doctor (I come as I promised, to embrace you as a daughter, most generous girl !). Violetta gives Alfredo a medallion (Take this picture of me ...If some gentle maiden should give you her heart, let her be your wife, for such is my wish ...give her this portrait of one who prays for her, in heaven among the angels). Annina, Germont and the Doctor join their pray for her (Fly to the regions of the blest, for God calls you to Him !). Alfredo is desperate (Live, or a single coffin shall enclose me with you !). Violetta falls on a sofa and dies.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 -...let's raise our glasses and enjoy ourselves ...I put my faith in pleasure as a cure for all my ills (Violetta), ...let's open our hearts to each other ...you say well, for wine is a friend (Violetta), I'll be Hebe, who pours the wine ...May you be as immortal as she (Violetta, Alfredo), Let's drink from the joyous chalice ...With you I would share my days of happiness (Alfredo, Violetta), One happy day you flashed lightly into my life ...If that is true, then leave me. Friendship is all I can offer you (Alfredo, Violetta), Would a true love bring me misfortune ? ...to love and to be loved ! (Violetta). Act 2 - It's three month now since Violetta gave up for me her easy, luxurious life (Alfredo), I'm the father of that headstrong boy who's rushing to his ruin ...I am a woman, Sir, and this is my house (Germont, Violetta), The past is over. I love Alfredo now, God has wiped out the past (Violetta), God gave me a daughter, as pure as an angel (Germont), Oh, no ! Never ! No, never ! ...I would rather die (Violetta), Soon he will be restored to you, but more unhappy than words can tell (Violetta), Alfredo, when you get this note ... (Alfredo), My son ! I know how much you suffer ! ...Hasten to console a father and a sister (Germont), We are gypsies, we come from a distant land (Chorus), We are matadors from Madrid, the heroes of the bull (Chorus), I couldn't refuse such an invitation (Violetta), You must go, you're in danger ! ...So you think I'm a coward ? (Violetta, Alfredo), I call you all to witness here that I've paid her back ! (Alfredo), A man who offends a woman, even in anger, merits nothing but scorn (Germont), Even after death I shall still love you (Violetta). Act 3 - How do you feel ? ...Weak in body, but tranquil of soul (Dr Grenvil, Violetta), You kept your promise...the duel took place, the Baron was wounded ...Alfredo is abroad (Violetta), Make way for the gentlest of all horned beasts (Chorus), Oh, my Violetta ! How much to blame I am ...That you find me still alive means that sorrow cannot kill (Alfredo, Violetta), We'll leave Paris, my dearest, together we'll go through life (Alfredo, Violetta), It's the way the illness takes me ! I'm all right now. See ! I'm smiling (Violetta), Ah, God in Heaven ! that I should die so young ...let me mingle my tears with yours (Violetta, Alfredo), I come as I promised, to embrace you as a daughter, most generous girl ! (Germont), Take this picture of me ...If some gentle maiden should give you her heart, let her be your wife, for such is

my wish ...give her this portrait of one who prays for her, in heaven among the angels (Violetta), Fly to the regions of the blest, for God calls you to Him ! (Annina, Germont, Dr Grenvil), Live, or a single coffin shall enclose me with you ! (Alfredo).

Ballet: In 2015, a complete ballet version of La Traviata was produced at the Ballet Nacional Danza de San Juan (Argentina), with a choreography by Eliana Figueroa and Inaki Urlezaga. At the Theatre of Russian Ballet Moscovia the art directors Stanislav Vlasov and Lilya Sabitova have produced a ballet version of La Traviata loaded on YouTube (3 min). Most opera production will include some ballet movements in Act 2 - Scene 2, when the gypsy girls dance with the matadors at Flora's ball.

Recordings: 1912 Opera Comique Paris (Jane Morlet - Violetta, Maurizio Troselli - Alfredo, Henri Alberts - Germont), 1915 La Scala Milan (Margherita Bevignani - Violetta, Franco Tumminello - Alfredo, Ernesto Badini - Germont), 1935 Metropolitan Opera (Rosa Ponselle - Violetta, Frederick Jagel - Alfredo, Lawrence Tibbet - Germont), 1946 Rome Opera (Adriana Guerini - Violetta, Luigi Infantino - Alfredo, Paolo Silveri - Germont), 1953 Italian Radio Symphony Orchestra Turin (Maria Callas - Violetta, Giuseppe Di Stefano - Alfredo, Ettore Bastianini - Germont), 1958 San Carlos National Theatre Lisbon (Maria Callas - Violetta, Alfredo Kraus - Alfredo, Mario Sereni - Germont), 1962 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Joan Sutherland - Violetta, Carlo Bergonzi - Alfredo, Robert Merrill - Germont), 1967 RCA Italiana Opera (Montserrat Caballe - Violetta, Carlo Bergonzi - Alfredo, Sherrill Milnes - Germont), 1976 Bavarian State Opera (Ileana Cotrubas - Violetta, Placido Domingo - Alfredo, Sherrill Milnes - Germont), 1979 National Philharmonic Orchestra London (Joan Sutherland - Violetta, Luciano Pavarotti - Alfredo, Matte Manuguerra - Germont), 1991 Metropolitan Opera (Cheryl Studer - Violetta, Luciano Pavarotti - Alfredo, Matteo Manuguerra - Germont), 1994 Royal Opera House (Angela Gheorghiu - Violetta, Frank Lopardo - Alfredo, Leo Nucci - Germont), 2005 Vienna Philharmonic (Anna Netrebko - Violetta, Rolando Villazon - Alfredo, Thomas Hampson - Germont), 2012 Opera Australia (Emma Matthews - Violetta, Gianluca Terranova - Alfredo, Jonathan Summers - Germont).

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64. The Barber of Seville

Title: The Barber of Seville (Il barbiere di Siviglia)

Composer: Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792-1868). Born in Pesaro, Italy, on the Adriatic coast, his father Giuseppe Rossini was a horn player and inspector of slaughterhouses while his mother Anna Rossini was a theatre singer and a baker's daughter. As a young boy, Rossini had three years of instruction from Giuseppe Prinetti, in playing the harpsichord. He learned to play the piano with Angelo Tesei and at the age of ten he played solo parts in the local church. He wrote his first opera at the age of 13. In 1806, Rossini became a cello student at the Conservatorio di Bologna and a year later he was admitted to the counterpoint class of Padre Stanislao Mattei (1750-1825). In 1815 he was appointed musical director of the Teatro del Fondo in Naples where he composed one opera each year. In 1822 Rossini married the renowned soprano Isabella Colbran (1785-1845) with no offspring. Roles such as: Elisabetta, Desdemona, Armida, Elcia, Zoraide, Ermione, Elena, Anna and Zelmira were written by Rossini especially for her. In 1824 he became musical director of the Theatre des Italiens in Paris at a salary of 800 pounds per year and he was contracted by King Charles Phillipe himself. In 1839 he was appointed director of the Liceo Musicale di Bologna and in since 1855 he settled in Paris again where he was named Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour. Operas: Demetrio e Polibio (1812), La cambiale di matrimonio (1810), L'equivoco stravagante (1811), L'inganno felice (1812), Ciro in Babilonia (1812), La scala di seta (1812), La pietra del paragone (1812), L'occasione fa il lardo (1812), Il signor Bruschino (1813), Tancredi (1813), L'italiana in Algeri (1813), Aureliano in Palmira (1813), Il turco in Italia (1814), Sigismondo (1814), Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra (1815), Torvaldo e Dorliska (1815), Il barbiere di Siviglia (1816), La gazzetta (1816), Otello (1816), La Cenerentola (1817), La gazza ladra (1817), Armida (1817), Adelaide di Borgogna (1817), Mose in Egitto (1818), Adina (1826), Ricciardo e Zoraide (1818), Ermione (1819), Eduardo e Cristina (1819), La donna del lago (1819), Bianca e Falliero (1819), Maometto II (1820), Matilde di Shabran

(1821), Zelmira (1822), Semiramide (1823), Il viaggio a Reims (1825), Le siege de Corinthe (1826), Moise et Pharaon (1827), Le comte Ory (1828), Guillaume Tell (1829). His work also includes cantatas, instrumental music, chamber music, sacred music, secular vocal music.

Libretto: Cesare Sterbini (1784-1831) was an Official in the Pontifical Administration, an amateur poet, writer and librettist, fluent in Greek, Latin, French and German. He produced libretti for: Gioachino Rossini (Torvaldo e Dorliska, The Barber of Seville), Vincenzo Migliorucci (Paolo e Virginia), Giovanni Tadolini (Il credulo deluso), Francesco Basili (Isaura e Ricciardo), Giacomo Cordella (Il contraccambio), Pietro Generali (Il gabbamondo). The libretto was based on Pierre Beaumarchais's comedy *Le Barbier de Seville* first performed in 1775 at the Comedie Francaise in Tuileries. Other less known operatic adaptation of the play were produced by: Giovanni Paisiello (1782), Nicolas Isouard (1796), Alexander Reinagle and Samuel Arnold (1794), Francesco Morlacchi (1816), Constantino Dall'Argine (1868), Giuseppe Graffigna (1879), Alberto Torazza (1924), but it was the music of Rossini that stood the test of time. Giovanni Paisiello considered Rossini's version to be an affront to his version and boycotted the premiere, mainly due to the use of "basso buffo" only common to comic opera. Rossini was only 24 years of age when he was commissioned by the impresario of the Teatro di Argentina to produce the opera.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 20 February 1816 at the Teatro Argentina in Rome, with designs by Angelo Toselli. Gioachino Rossini conducted the performance of baritone Luigi Zamboni as Figaro, tenor Manuel Garcia as Count Almaviva and contralto Geltrude Righetti as Rosina. The opera was first performed in England on 10 March 1818 at the King's Theatre in London, followed by an English version produced by John Fawcett and Daniel Terry, on 13 October 1818 at the Covent Garden Theatre. The American premiere followed on 3 May 1819 at the Park Theatre in New York. In New Orleans, a French version of the opera premiered at the Theatre d'Orleans on 4 March 1823. In the 20th century notable performances were recorded in: Milan (1919, 1950, 1972, 1982), Rome (1946, 1954), Paris (1947), Florence (1957), New York (1958), Glyndebourne (1963, 1982), Napoli (1964), Cologne (1988), London (1971, 1974, 1982, 1992, 1995), Bologna (1988), Munich (1959, 1997). Famous baritones singing Figaro were: Ernesto Badini, Giuseppe Taddei, Tito Gobbi, Leo Nucci, Placido Domingo, Vladimir Chernov. In the role of Rosina have starred sopranos such as: Gioletta Simionato, Maria Callas, Roberta Peters, Teresa Berganza, Agnes Baltsa. Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *The Barber of Seville* was performed in the world for 2398 times, in 557 different productions, ranking 8 on Operabase list.

Roles: Count Almaviva (tenor), Rosina, rich pupil (Contralto), Bartolo, Rosina's guardian (bass), Figaro (baritone), Basilio, music teacher (bass), Berta, old governess (soprano), Fiorello, servant (bass), Ambrogio, servant (bass), Police Sergeant (bass), A notary (silent), Chorus (officers, soldiers, street musicians)



Story: The story follows a traditional Commedia dell'arte structure with characters based on famous stock characters (Arlecchino, Il Dottore, Il Capitano, Innamorati, Pantalone, Colombina, Pierrot, Brighella). Who is fooling who? Everyone seems to be scheming someone else. A very young Earl, tries the heart of the girl he wants, disguised as a student, soldier or seminarist. Her grumpy ward interferes and the help of the police is requested, twice. With some help from the local barber, it all ends with the Earl marrying the girl. Who has fooled who? But again, who cares? It's a good laugh!

Act 1 (A small piazza in Seville. Dr Bartolo's house in center / A courtyard in Bartolo's house)

Fiorello and the musicians meet Count Almaviva (Piano, pianissimo, without a word ...Bravi, bravissimi, softly, softly). The Count starts to sing a cavatina (...are you not awake, are you still asleep ?), but with no result. Left alone the Count hides away. Figaro enters the scene to sing a song (A better lot for a barber, a nobler life does not exist ...Figaro here, Figaro there, Figaro up, Figaro down). Figaro walks to his shop when the Count comes out of hiding (Figaro ...Your Excellency ...I beheld a flower of beauty, a maiden ...In this house I am barber, surgeon, botanist, apothecary, veterinary...). Bartolo comes out of the door and Rosina is left alone. The Count tries his chance with another song (I am called Lindoro, who faithfully adores you, who wishes to marry you, your name is on my lips). Rosina responds (Continue, beloved, continue to sing). By the use of some gold, the Count asks Figaro to help him enter the house (At the idea of this metal portentious, omnipotent... let's some real demonstration of this volcano within you, yes). Figaro instructs the Count to disguise himself as a soldier and to return with a purse well filled (Oh, what a flame of love divine, of hope and joy ...Gold is coming, silver is coming, filling the pockets, already it's here). Scene 2 - With a letter in her hand Rosina sings (Yes, Lindoro shall be mine, I've sworn it ...I am docile, I am respectful, I am obedient ...I can be ruled). In order to conquer she has written a letter and Figaro is the best suited to deliver it, but Bartolo interrupts their discussion. Bartolo is furious on Figaro but Rosina defends him (What a rascal, what a villain ...Yes, I saw him, I spoke with him, I like him ...I find him handsome). When Basilio arrives, Bartolo plots with him (By force or by love, by tomorrow I must marry Rosina ...Eh, you speak wisely ...Count Almaviva has arrived). The two start to invent a story (Calumny is a little breeze, a gentle zephyr, which insensibly, subtly, lightly and sweetly ...) and to prepare the marriage contract. Figaro comes out from his hiding, followed by Rosina coming from her room. Figaro reveals the plot (...this fine guardian of yours plans to have you married by tomorrow ...What nonsense !). Outraged, Rosina starts to plot herself with Figaro, about that dear Lindoro (Then I am the fortunate girl ...You are, sweet Rosina, the object of Lindoro's love). Rosina gives Figaro her already written note. Alone with Rosina, Bartolo inquires her about the missing paper, sharpened pen and the ink stain on her finger, but Rosina lies gracefully (For a doctor of my standing ...I advise you ...to invent a little better Better ! Better ! Better !). Scene 3 - Berta opens the door for the Count, disguised as a soldier. Bartoldo is there to greet him (What an ugly face ! And drunk, too !) while the Count presents himself as the vet of the regiment looking for lodging. Rosina enters the scene and the Count is decided to fight for his stay (Silence now, donkey of a doctor, my lodging is fixed here and here I will remain). Bartolo fights with his walking stick but he is responded with the sword. Basilio enters the scene, followed by Figaro and finally the police bursts in (Stay where you are. Let no one move). The Count presents his document and the things settle (Silence here ! Silence there ! Silence, silence, everywhere !)

Act 2 (Musical room in Bartolo's house)

Bartolo is intrigued about that soldier (Nobody knows him all over regiment). The Count arrives disguised as a seminarian (May peace be with you ! ...Who are you ? ...Don Alonso, music teacher and a disciple of Don Basilio). The Seminarian shows a letter from Rosina addressed to an unknown. He offers to find the betrayer in his house (If I could talk with the girl... A slander ! Bravo ! ...I'll call the girl). Rosina pretends not to recognize her young admirer (I will sing, if you want, the rondo of the useless precaution). Rosina sings (Against a heart that ignites love, of veracious winning ardor). Bartolo feels inspired and contributes to the lesson singing an aria (When you're by my side, kind Rosina...). Bartolo starts to dance, but is interrupted by Figaro who has come to shave him (Because I have to shave all the officers of the new regiment ...I can't tomorrow). Bartolo gives Figaro the keys to bring the white linen, but instead he hears the sound of broken dishes and goes after him. Alone, the two exchange declarations (Would you be happy to unite your fate to mine ? ...Oh ! My Lindoro, another I don't care). Bartolo returns with Figaro when Don Basilio arrives. The Count secretly gives Don Basilio a purse of money and sends him away (With fever, Din Basilio, who taught you to walk around having a fever ?). Figaro and Rosina are eager to back him (He's shaking ! That's scarlet fever ! ...put yourself in bed). Basilio submits and leaves. Figaro starts shaving Bartolo while the music lesson continues. The Count prepares Rosina to be kidnapped at midnight but Bartolo hears some of the conversation (Scoundrel ! Rogue ! Ah, all of you ...come on, out, rascals, I want to kill you !). Everyone leaves the scene, except Bartolo. Ambrogio and Berta enter the scene. Bartolo sends Ambrogio after Don Basilio. Alone Berta recollects (What a suspicious old man ! ...Greedy and grumpy. Oh what a house ! ...and I, old desperate to die like this). Bartolo interrogates Basilio about Don Alonso suspecting the Count's interference (Don't you know him at all ? ...Not at all). Bartoldo wants to marry Rosina with Basilio, at instant, but Don Basilio explains that the notary is

committed by Figaro who marries his niece (A niece ? What niece ? The barber has no nieces...). Basilio flies for the notary. When Rosina arrives, Bartolo gives her the letter (The truth is that you have placed in good hands your affection ! ...To the arms of the Earl of Almaviva they want to drive you). Convinced, Rosina agrees to marry Basilio and reveals the kidnapping plot. Bartolo leaves to bring the guards. When Figaro and the Count come through the window, Rosina fights them (Back off, be mean ! ...what a Mistress have you lost ...you faked love to sell me to Conde de Almaviva). Given a chance to speak, the Count removes his disguise and reveals his true identity (Look at me precious, Almaviva am I myself, I'm not Lindoro !). They are both happy (My Lord ! ...but you ...but I ...The beautiful wife's name, my idol, is waiting for you). They start to go out the window, but the scale has disappeared. Basilio enters with the notary. Figaro heads toward (Mr. Notary: you should in my house stipulate the marriage contract between the Count Almaviva and my niece). Basilio wants to oppose but is silenced with a pistol. Rosina and the Count sign the contract, followed by Figaro and Basilio as witnesses. Bartolo enters with the Sergeant and guards (Everyone freeze ! There you have them). The Count reveals his name and rank (Calm down, in vain you strive, you resist in vain, of your wicked rigors the end has come). The chorus joins their joy (Unite two hearts that love each other). Bartolo is the only one intrigued but the Count calms him down (But what about the dowry ? I can't. ...We, I don't need any dowry ...Go, then, and Heaven Bless You). Everyone on scene (Love and eternal faith reign over you).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Piano, pianissimo, without a word ...Bravu, bravissimi, softly, softly (Fiorelli, Count), ...are you not awake, are you still asleep ? (Count), A better lot for a barber, a nobler life does not exist ...Figaro here, Figaro there, Figaro up, Figaro down (Figaro), Figaro ...Your Excellency ...I beheld a flower of beauty, a maiden ...In this house I am barber, surgeon, botanist, apothecary, veterinary... (Count, Figaro), I am called Lindoro, who faithfully adores you, who wishes to marry you, your name is on my lips (Count), Continue, beloved, continue to sing (Rosina), At the idea of this metal portentous, omnipotent... let's some real demonstration of this volcano within you, yes (Figaro, Count), Oh, what a flame of love divine, of hope and joy ...Gold is coming, silver is coming, filling the pockets, already it's here (Count, Figaro), Yes, Lindoro shall be mine, I've sworn it ...I am docile, I am respectful, I am obedient ...I can be ruled (Rosina), What a rascal, what a villain ...Yes, I saw him, I spoke with him, I like him ...I find him handsome (Bartolo, Rosina), By force or by love, by tomorrow I must marry Rosina ...Eh, you speak wisely ...Count Almaviva has arrived (Bartolo, Basilio), Calumny is a little breeze, a gentle zephyr, which insensibly, subtly, lightly and sweetly ... (Basilio), ...this fine guardian of yours plans to be your husband by tomorrow ...What nonsense ! (Figaro, Rosina), Then I am the fortunate girl ...You are, sweet Rosina, the object of Lindoro's love (Rosina, Figaro), For a doctor of my standing ...I advise you ...to invent a little better Better ! Better ! Better ! (Bartolo), What an ugly face ! And drunk, too ! (Bartolo), Silence now, donkey of a doctor, my lodging is fixed here and here I will remain (Count), Stay where you are. Let no one move (Chorus), Silence here ! Silence there ! Silence, silence, everywhere ! (All)

Act2 - Nobody knows him all over regiment (Bartolo), May peace be with you ! ...Who are you ? ...Don Alonso, music teacher and a disciple of Don Basilio (Count, Basilio), If I could talk with the girl... A slander ! Bravo ! ...I'll call the girl (Count, Bartolo), I will sing, if you want, the rondo of the useless precaution (Rosina), Against a heart that ignites love, of veracious winning ardor (Rosina), When you're by my side, kind Rosina... (Bartolo), Because I have to shave all the officers of the new regiment ...I can't tomorrow (Figaro), Would you be happy to unite your fate to mine ? ...Oh ! My Lindoro, another I don't care (Count, Rosina), With fever, Din Basilio, who taught you to walk around having a fever ? (Count), He's shaking ! That's scarlet fever ! ...put yourself in bed (Figaro, Rosina), Scoundrel ! Rogue ! Ah, all of you ...come on, out, rascals, I want to kill you ! (Bartolo), What a suspicious old man ! ...Greedy and grumpy. Oh what a house ! ...and I, old desperate to die like this (Berta), Don't you know him at all ? ...Not at all (Bartolo, Basilio), A niece ? What niece ? The barber has no nieces... (Bartolo), The truth is that you have placed in good hands your affection ! ...To the arms of the Earl of Almaviva they want to drive you (Bartolo), Back off, be mean ! ...what a Mistress have you lost ...you faked love to sell me to Conde de Almaviva (Rosina), Look at me precious, Almaviva am I myself, I'm not Lindoro ! (Count), My Lord ! ...but you ...but I ...The beautiful wife's name, my idol, is waiting for you (Rosina, Count). Mr. Notary: you should in my house stipulate the marriage contract between the Count Almaviva and my niece (Figaro), Everyone freeze ! There you have them (Bartolo), Calm down, in vain you strive, you resist in vain, of your wicked rigors the end has come (Count), Unite two hearts that love each other (Chorus), But what about the dowry ? I can't. ...We, I don't need any dowry ...Go, then, and Heaven bless you (Bartolo, Count), Love and eternal faith reign over you (All).

Ballet: Moments from the opera, such as the Barber of Seville's belief routine, have been used for choreographic movements, but no full ballet version has been produced yet.

Recordings: 1919 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Malvina Pereira - Rosina, Edoardo Taliani - Almaviva, Ernesto Badini - Figaro), 1950 Coro e Orchestra della RAI, Milan (Giuletta Simionato - Rosina, Luigi Infantino - Almaviva, Giuseppe Taddei - Figaro), 1957 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Giuletta Simionato - Rosina, Alvinio Misciano - Almaviva, Ettore Bastianini - Figaro), 1957 Philharmonia Orchestra London (Maria Callas - Rosina, Luigi Alva - Almaviva, Tito Gobi - Figaro), 1958 Metropolitan Opera New York (Roberta Peters - Rosina, Cesare Valetti - Almaviva, Robert Merrill - Figaro), 1964 Orchestra Rossini di Napoli (Teresa Berganza - Rosina, Luigi Alva - Almaviva, Hermann Prey - Figaro), 1974 London Symphony Orchestra (Beverly Sills - Rosina, Nicolai Gedda - Almaviva, Sherrill Milnes - Figaro), 1987 Teatro Regio di Torino (Luciana Serra - Rosina, Rockwell Blake - Almaviva, Bruno Pola - Figaro), 1989 Metropolitan Opera New York (Kathleen Battle - Rosina, Rockwell Blake - Almaviva, Leo Nucci - Figaro), 1992 Chamber Orchestra of Europe, London (Kathleen Battle - Rosina, Frank Lopardo - Almaviva, Plácido Domingo - Figaro), 1997 Munich Radio Orchestra (Edit Gruberova - Rosina, Juan Diego Florez - Almaviva, Vladimir Chernov - Figaro), 2010 Royal Opera House (Joyce DiDonato - Rosina, Juan Diego Florez - Almaviva, Pietro Spagnoli - Figaro).

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65. The Queen of Spades

Title: The Queen of Spades (Pikovaya dama, La Dame de Pique, Pique Dame)

Composer: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Born in Votkinsk, in the Russian Empire to a family with a long line of military service, his father Ilya Petrovich Tchaikovsky has served as a lieutenant colonel in the Department of Mines, while his mother Alexandra Andreyevna had half French ancestry. Tchaikovsky began piano lessons at age five and at 10 he joined the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. In 1855 his father founded some private lessons with Rudolph Kunding. In 1861 Tchaikovsky attended Russian Musical Society and in 1862 he enrolled at the Conservatory where he studied music theory with Nikolai Zarembo and composition with Anton Rubinstein. He graduated in 1865 when he was offered a post of Professor of Music Theory at the Moscow Conservatory. Tchaikovsky lived as a bachelor for most of his life, except for a two months marriage with Antonina Miliukova, a former student. In 1884 Tsar Alexander III conferred upon him the Order of St. Vladimir, which included a title of hereditary nobility. In the 1889-90 season he served as director of the Russian Musical Society and since 1887 he also substituted as a conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1892 Pyotr Tchaikovsky was voted a member of the Académie des Beaux Arts in France and the following year he was awarded a honorary Doctor of Music degree at the University of Cambridge. Operas: The Voyevoda (1868), Undina (1869), The Oprichnik (1872), Vakula the Smith (1874), Eugene Onegin (1878), The Maid of Orleans (1879), Mazepa (1883), Cherevichki (1885), The Enchantress (1877), The Queen of Spades (1890), Iolanta (1891). Ballet: Swan Lake (1876), The Sleeping Beauty (1889), The Nutcracker (1892). Symphonies: Winter Daydreams, Little Russian, Polish, No 4, No 5, Manfred, Pathétique, Symphony in E-flat. Concertos: Piano Concerto No 1 to No 3, Cello Concerto, Violin Concerto, Concert Fantasia. His work also includes instrumental music, orchestral suites, serenades, chamber music, choral music and arrangements of the works of other composers.

Libretto: Modest Tchaikovsky (1850-1916). Modest Tchaikovsky, the composer's younger brother, was a dramatist and librettist with a degree in law at the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. He wrote three plays (Predrassudki, Simfoniya, Den'v Peterburge) and six libretti: for his brother (The Queen of Spades, Iolanta), Sergei Rachmaninoff (Francesca da Rimini), Eduard Napravnik (Dubrovsky), Arseny Koreschenko (Ledyanoy dom), Anton Arensky (Nal'i Damayanty). He also translated sonnets by William Shakespeare and was the first biographer of his brother. This libretto was based on the short story of the same name by the Romantic poet Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837). Ivan Vsevolozhsky (1835-1890) the Director of the

Imperial Theatres in Russia has produced the plot sketch and has commissioned Piotr Tchaikovsky in 1889 to compose the music. He completed the full score in 44 days, in Florence. Two other operas were inspired by Pushkin's novel: *La dame de pique* (1850) by Fromental Halevy and *Pique Dame* (1864) by Franz von Suppe. The story has been adapted into multiple mediums: a short silent film by Pyotr Chardyn (1910), a silent film by Yakov Protazanov (1916), a British film by Thorold Dickinson (1949), a Soviet film by Roman Tikhomirov (1960), a Soviet film by Igor Maslennikov (1982) and two Radio programs (Peter Lorre 1947, BBC Radio 4 1997).

Performance history: The opera premiered on 19 December 1890 at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, conducted by Eduard Napravnik with tenor Nikolay Figner as Herman and his wife, soprano Medea Mei-Figner as Liza. The Kiev premiere followed on two weeks later, on 31 December 1890. In Moscow, the opera premiered on 4 November 1891 at the Bolshoi Theatre with Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov as ballet masters.

Outside Russia the opera premiered in Prague on 11 October 1892, conducted by Adolf Cech in the presence of the composer. In 1902, the first performance in Vienna was conducted by Gustav Mahler. Sergei Rachmaninoff conducted another notable performance in Moscow, in 1904. In the United States, the opera premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on 5 March 1910, conducted by Gustav Mahler. The first performance in England was held in London, on 29 May 1915, starring Vladimir Rosing. Other notable performances were recorded in the 20th century at: Milan 1961, Moscow (1966), Boston (1969), Moscow (1974), Berlin (1976), Kiev (1992), Amsterdam (1993), Munich (2015). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *The Queen of Spades* was performed in the world for 1197 times, in 272 different productions, ranking 41 on Operabase list.

Roles: Hermann (tenor), Count Tomskey (baritone), Prince Yeletsky (baritone), Tschekalinsky (tenor), Surin (basse), Tschaplinsky (tenor), Narumof (basse), The Countess (mezzo soprano), Liza, her daughter (soprano), Pauline, her friend (soprano alto), Governess (mezzo soprano), Macha, maid (soprano), Chorus (Children, Soldiers, Promenaders, Guests, Masks, Gamblers)



Story: Saint Petersburg, first half of the 19th century. It is a battle between good and evil, in the aristocratic world. A young officer falls in love for a young rich girl, about to be married to a Prince. With threats of suicide he wins her heart, but the Prince is willing to fight back. Evil hours are about to come. Threatened with a gun to reveal her secret winning cards, the girl's grandmother falls dead. The girl is willing to forget, but the power of evil is stronger than her love. She commits suicide. Confident that he has found the winning combination, the young officer bets all his money against the Prince. Instead of an ace, he receives the Queen of Spades and his game is lost. Remorsed, he commits suicide. The game of love and money must follow certain rules in the richman's world.

Act 1 (The Summer Garden in Saint Petersburg / Liza's room with a harpsichord)

Children, nannies and governesses are singing (Shine, sun, bright ! ...Enjoy yourself, pretty dears ! ...Thank heaven for a moment's peace). Soldiers and their commander march in singing (We are here to fight the enemies of Russia). Scene 2 - Chekalinsky and Surin discuss their last night at the Casino (Did you play all night again ? ...Yes I was so bored...). Herman enters together with Count Tomskey. The Count finds out why is Herman so gloomy (What is wrong with you ...I am in love ! in love ! ...I do not know her name and may never lean it). Tomskey tells him to propose for her hand, but Herman answers that she is of higher rank, he is not fitted for her

and suffers. The promenaders sing in joy (At last heaven has sent us a sunny day ! ...It could be May !). Hermann stresses again that his love is hopeless. Prince Yeletsky enters the scene to inform them that he is engaged to be married. He jubilates while Herman sorrows (Happy day, I bless you ! ...Wretched day, I curse you). The Countess enters with Liza and Yeletsky presents them his future bride while Herman grieves and Liza worries (There is the lady ! ...O God in Heaven ! ...He is here again !). The countess interrogates Tomsy about Herman (Who is that officer there ? What a fearful-looking man !). With the ladies left, Tomsy men comment on the Countess (What an old witch ...she was nicknamed the Queen of Spades). Tomsy sings her story (In Paris she was a famous beauty ...the Moscow Venus ...she spent her whole nights gambling ...had lost her last sol ...she won back her fortune ...she knew the three cards ...o cards, cards, cards !). The promenaders sing again (How quickly the storm came, who would have expect it ?). Herman decides thoughtfully (She shall be mine, mine or a I wil die !) Scene 3 - Liza at the harpsichord sings with Pauline (This evening ...the cloudly spaces darken ...My darling friends, playful and free from care). The governess enters to silence them (The young ladies of good society must know what is proper and right). Left alone Liza sorrows (My girlhood dreams, you have deceived me ! ...here I am wretched and fearful, trembling and weeping !). Herman appears at her balcony (Why are you here, mad man ? ...To say farewell ! ...A daying man implores you ...Let me die with blessings on my tongue for you). The Countess knocks at the door and Herman must hide. When alone Herman continues (I wish to live and die with you...Decide my fate !). Reluctant, Liza surrenders (No ! Live ! ...I love you ! I am yours !).

Act 2 (Fancy dress ball in the house of a government official)

Guests are singing and dancing (In joy, and merriment gather round to-day, friends). When Liza enters the ball room Prince Yeletsky declares to her his passionate love (I love you, love you beyond all measure ...I am ready to do anything for you). Herman reads a letter from Liza (...wait for me in the hall, I must see you). Chekalinsky and Surin wisper next to Herman (Are you not the third, who impelled by burning passion comes to learn from her the three winning cards ?). The party continues with shepherds and shepherdesses singing and dancing (To enjoy Nature's beauties and to make wreaths of flowers !). When Herman meets Liza, they exchange some love words. Liza gives him the key to the Countesses bedroom, leading to her bedroom (I am your slave ! Farewell). To everyone's excitement The Empress attends the ball (The Empress ! Her Majesty ! Here in person ! What an honor for the house). Scene 2 - In the Countess's bedroom Herman recollects (Am I perhaps afraid ? No, my mind is made up). Herman hides behind a curtain as the Countess breaks in (Enough of your lying flatteries ! I am tired...tired out). Herman reveals himself to ask for her secret (You can make the happiness of my whole life ! You know three cards... Confide in me ! Speak !). As Herman takes out his revolver to threaten her, the Countess falls dead. Liza enters the room alarmed (She is dead. And I never learned her secret ...So that is why you are here ! Not for me !)

Act 3 (A barrack at Herman's quarter / Beside a canal at night / The gaming tables at the Casino)

Herman reads a letter from Liza (I do not belive that you intended the Countess's death, I shall wait for you this evening...). Herman recollects his dreadfull thoughts (...The candles and the sobbing ...and in that coffin the old woman, motionless, lifeless...). While sorrowing, the ghost of the Countess pays him a visit (Save Liza, marry her ...three cards in succession will win ...Three ...seven ...ace !). Scene 2 - Beside the canal, Lisa waits for Herman (I know that he will come and clear away my suspicion. He is the victim of circumstance). Herman appears (Forgotten the groans and the tears, I am with you again !). But soon the love words turns into quarrel (Piles of gold are waiting there for me..I know the three cards ...Then it was true , I have linked my soul to a murderer, a monster !). Lisa fights for her last chance (Let us go, come with me and I will save you yet ! ...Who are you ? I do not know you ! Away ! Away !). Liza runs to the bank and thorows herself into the water.

Scene 3 - Guests are playing card (Drink and make merry ! Life is a game !). Prince Yeletsky appears for the first time to the gaming table (My engagement has been broken off. Don't ask me more. It is for vengeance that I have come here !). Tomsy sings a drinking song (If darling girls could fly, like birds ... I'll be a tree). Herman enters the room and wants to bid for forty thousands on one stake. Chekalinsky deals the cards. Herman gets a three and a seven and jubilates (What is our life ? A game ! Good and evil, no more than dreams ! Work and honour, old wife's tales !). Prince Yeletsky accepts the bet. Herman's third card is not an ace, but the Queen of Spades and his game is lost. Herman forsees the Countess's ghost (Old witch ! You ! You here ! ...What do you want ? My life ? Take it, then, take it !). In an impulse Herman stabs himself (Prince ! Prince, forgive me ! ...Liza ? Oh ! God ! How I love you, my angel ! My Goddess !). And he dies, may the Lord pardon him !

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Shine, sun, bright ! ...Enjoy yourself, pretty dears ! ...Thank heaven for a moment's peace (Chorus), We are here to fight the enemies of Russia (Chorus), Did you play all night again ? ...Yes I was so bored... (Chekalinsky, Surin), What is wrong with you ...I am in love ! in love ! ...I do not know her name and may never learn it (Tomsky, Herman), At last heaven has sent us a sunny day ! ...It could be May ! (Chorus), Happy day, I bless you ! ...Wretched day, I curse you (Yeletsky, Herman), There is the lady ! ...O God in Heaven ! ...He is here again ! (Yeletsky, Herman, Liza), Who is that officer there ? What a fearful-looking man ! (The Countess), What an old witch ...she was nicknamed the Queen of Spades (Surin, Tomsky), In Paris she was a famous beauty ...the Moscow Venus ...she spent her whole nights gambling ...had lost her last sol ...she won back her fortune ...she knew the three cards ...o cards, cards, cards ! (Tomsky), How quickly the storm came, who would have expected it ? (Chorus), She shall be mine, mine or a I will die ! (Herman), This evening ...the cloudy spaces darken ...My darling friends, playful and free from care (Liza, Pauline), The young ladies of good society must know what is proper and right (Governess), My girlhood dreams, you have deceived me ! ...here I am wretched and fearful, trembling and weeping ! (Liza), Why are you here, mad man ? ...To say farewell ! ...A daying man implores you ...Let me die with blessings on my tongue for you (Liza, Herman), I wish to live and die with you...Decide my fate ! (Herman), No ! Live ! ...I love you ! I am yours ! (Liza, Herman). Act 2 - In joy, and merriment gather round to-day, friends (Chorus), I love you, love you beyond all measure ...I am ready to do anything for you (Yeletsky), ...wait for me in the hall, I must see you (Herman), Are you not the third, who impelled by burning passion comes to learn from her the three winning cards ? (Chekalinsky, Surin), To enjoy Nature's beauties and to make wreaths of flowers ! (Chorus), I am your slave ! Farewell (Liza), The Empress ! Her Majesty ! Here in person ! What an honor for the house (Chorus), Am I perhaps afraid ? No, my mind is made up (Herman), Enough of your lying flatteries ! I am tired...tired out (The Countess), You can make the happiness of my whole life ! You know three cards... Confide in me ! Speak ! (Herman), She is dead. And I never learned her secret ...So that is why you are here ! Not for me ! (Herman, Liza), I do not believe that you intended the Countess's Death, I shall wait for you this evening... (Liza), ...The candles and the sobbing ...and in that coffin the old woman, motionless, lifeless... (Herman), Save Liza, marry her ...three cards in succession will win ...Three ...seven ...ace ! (The Countess), I know that he will come and clear away my suspicion. He is the victim of circumstance (Liza), Forgotten the groans and the tears, I am with you again ! (Herman), Piles of gold are waiting there for me..I know the three cards ...Then it was true , I have linked my soul to a murderer, a monster ! (Herman, Liza), Let us go, come with me and I will save you yet ! ...Who are you ? I do not know you ! Away ! Away ! (Liza, Herman), Drink and make merry ! Life is a game ! (Chorus), My engagement has been broken off. Don't ask me more. It is for vengeance that I have come here ! (Yeletsky), If darling girls could fly, like birds ... I'll be a tree (Tomsky), What is our life ? A game ! Good and evil, no more than dreams ! Work and honour, old wife's tales ! (Herman), Old witch ! You ! You here ! ...What do you want ? My life ? Take it, then, take it ! (Herman), Prince ! Prince, forgive me ! ...Liza ? Oh ! God ! How I love you, my angel ! My Goddess ! (Herman).

Ballet: Marius Petipa (1818-1910), a French ballet dancer, pedagogue and choreographer was the Ballet Master for the performance. In 1994, at the Capitol Theatre in Salt Lake City a full ballet version of The Queen of Spades has been produced by Andre Prokovsky, with music adapted by Guy Woolfenden from Tchaikovsky's opera. A ballet condensed version of the story (80 min long) was produced and recorded on disc in 2001 by Gabriel Thibaudeau with the Orchestre des Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal. In April 2018, Liam Scarlett from the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen has created a new grand ballet version of The Queen of Spades, based on Pushkin's novel and flavoured with Tchaikovsky's music.

Recordings: 1961 La Scala, Milan (Sanzogno Nino - conductor, Annaloro Antonio - Herman, Gencer Leyla - Liza, Bruscantini Sesto - Yeletsky, Radev Mariana - Countess), 1966 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Khaikin Boris - conductor, Anjaparidze Zurab - Herman, milashkina Tamara - Liza, Mazurok Yuri - Yeletsky, Levco Valentina - Countess), 1969 Boston Symphony Orchestra (Adler Peter Herman - conductor, Khanzandian Vahan - Herman, Mandac Evelyn - Liza), 1974 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Mark Ermler - conductor, Marusin Yuri - Herman, Gustafson Nancy - Liza), 1976 Deutsche Gramophon, Berlin (Mstislav Rostropovitch - conductor, Peter Gougloff - Herman, Galina Vishnevskaya - Liza, Brend Weikl - Yeletsky, Regina Resnik - Countess, Dan Iordachescu - Tomsky, Hanna Schwartz - Pauline), 1992 Kirov Theatre Orchestra, Saint Petersburg (Gergiev Valery - conductor, Grigorian Gegam - Herman, Gulegyna Mariya - Liza), 1993 Philips Records, Amsterdam

(Valery Gergiev - conductor, Gegam Grigorian - Herman, Mariya Guleghina - Liza, Vladimir Chernov - Yeletsy, Irina Arkhipova - Countess, Nikolai Putilin - Tomsy, Olga Borodina - Pauline), 2014 Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Munich (Mariss Jansons - conductor, Didyk Misha - Herman, Serjan Tatiana - Liza)

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66. The Magic Flute

Title: The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte)

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Born in Salzburg, his father Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) was a composer, kapellmeister and an experienced teacher, while his mother Ana Maria Pertl (1720-1778) was the daughter of Nicolaus Pertl, the deputy prefect of Hildenstein. He was the youngest of seven children, five of whom died in infancy. Together with his sister Maria Anna Mozart (1751-1829) both children were exhibited as musicians from the age of five. From 1762 to 1768 Mozart family made an European journey concerting to the courts of Munich, Mannheim, Paris, London, Hague, Zurich, Vienna. From 1769 to 1773 Mozart has traveled to Italy to be accepted as a member of Academia Filarmonica in Bologna. In 1773 he was employed by Prince Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo as a court musician in Salzburg. His career in Vienna began in 1781 under the patronage of Emperor Joseph II of Habsburg and he soon established himself as the finest keyboard player in Vienna. In 1777 he was honoured by Pope Clement XIV as Knight of the Order of the Golden Spur. In 1782 he married Constanze Weber (1762-1842), also a member of a family of musicians and the fruit of their marriage were six children of whom only two survived. In 1787 Emperor Joseph II appointed him as his chamber composer paying 800 florins a year. Operas: Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots (1767), Apollo et Hyacinthus (1767), Bastien und Bastienne (1768), La finta semplice (1768), Mitridate, re di Ponto (1770), Ascanio in Alba (1771), Il sogno di Scipione (1772), Lucio Silla (1772), La finta giardiniera (1774), Il re pastore (1775), Thamos, König in Ägypten (1779), Zaide (1779), Idomeno, re di Creta (1781), Die Entführung aus dem Serail (1782), L'oca del Cairo (1784), Lo sposo deluso (1784), Der Schauspieldirektor (1786), Le Nozze di Figaro (1786), Don Giovanni (1787), Così fan Tutte (1790), Der Stein der Weisen (1790), La clemenza di Tito (1791), Die Zauberflöte (1791). His work include more than 600 compositions of symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic and choral music.

Libretto: Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812). Born as Johann Schickender, Emanuel Schikaneder was a German actor, singer, composer, dramatist and impresario, the builder of the Theater an der Wien, one of the most prominent theatre men of his era. He produced: two complete operas (Die Lyranten, Das urianische Schloss), three plays (Das abgebrannte Haus, Der Fleischhauer von Odenburg, Die Fiaker in Wien) and 10 libretti, among which Die Zauberflöte, Der Stein der Weisen, Der Spiegel von Arkadien, Babylons Pyramiden, Das Labyrinth, Der Tiroler Wastel, Vestas Feuer. The Magic Flute has culminated a series of fairy tale operas at the Theater auf der Wieden and Schikaneder played himself the role of Papageno, a coarse comic figure, partly stupid. The work was based on a popular Singspiel, but also on some literary sources, such as: the medieval romance Yvain by Chretien de Troyes, the novel Life of Sethos by Jean Terrasson, an essay called On the mysteries of the Egyptians of Ignaz von Born, the book of fairy tales entitled Dschinnestan published by Christoph Martin Wieland. Some of the characters are also present in Schikaneder's previous plays Oberon and Der Stein der Wissen. The full score edition of the opera was published for the first time on 13 September 1815. There are several versions specially designed for children with settings and costumes selected accordingly.

Performance history: The opera premiered in Vienna on 30 September 1791 at the Theater auf der Wieden, located near Vienna. Mozart conducted the orchestra and his sister in law Josepha Hofer sung the Queen of the Night. Tenor Benedikt Schack was distributed in the leading role, while Emanuel Schikander played Papageno. Two months later, Mozart died of a severe miliary fever. In November 1792 the opera has allready celebrated its 100th performance. Outside Vienna the opera was first performed in Lemberg (Lviv, Ukraine) on 21 September 1792, then in Prague. It than made a triumphal progress through all opera houses in Germany. It was heard in at least 59 towns before 1800 and it reached New York in 1833. The Overture to The Magic Flute was one of the

supreme orchestral works during the 19th century. In the 20th century, notable performances were recorded on disk or video media at: Vienna (1937, 1941, 1949, 1950, 1955, 1959, 1960, 1964, 1969, 1982, 1990), Berlin (1937, 1954, 1964, 1980, 2009), New York (1942, 1956, 1991), Roma (1953), London (1960, 1978, 1989, 1990, 2003), Dresden (1968, 1970, 1984), Hamburg (1971), Munchen (1972, 1983), Stockholm (1975, 1989), Zurich (1987, 2000, 2007), Toronto (1990), Edinburgh (1991), Budapesta (1993), Caen (1995). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, The Magic Flute was performed in the world for 3318 times, in 552 different productions, ranking 3 on Operabase list.

Roles: Tamino (tenor), Papageno (baritone), Pamina (Soprano), The Queen of the Night (soprano coloratura), Sarastro (bass), Three ladies (2 sopranos, mezzo soprano), Monostatos (tenor), Three boys (tremble, alto, mezzo soprano), Speaker of the temple (bass baritone), Three priests (tenor, 2 basses), Papagena (soprano), Two armoured men (tenor, bass), Three slaves (2 tenors, bass), Chorus (priests, women, people, slaves)



Story: It is a young boy's dream. Fallen in love with a girl, but also with music, knowledge and religion, the boy is under the spell of the Queen of the Night, with her deceiving tricks. Light and darkness, men and women, right and wrong, are fighting each other. But when the Sun shines again, the Queen's power is shattered and the nightmare is over. Love overcomes all obstacles and the two lovers finally enjoy their sacred union. But when the night falls, the cycle will restart.

Ouverture

Act 1 (A rocky area with some trees, a round temple / A splendid chamber in the Egyptian style / Three temples: Temple of Wisdom, Temple of Reason, Temple of Nature)

Tamino faints, attacked by a cunning serpent. Three ladies from the temple come to rescue with silver spears (Die, monster, by our power ! ...Let us hasten to our Queen and report this news to her). As the ladies depart, Papageno enters the scene with a large birdcage on his back (The birdcatcher am I, and always merry, tra la la ! ...if all the girls were mine alone). The ladies return with the portrait of a girl and Tamino wanders (Oh, if only I might find her ! If only she stood before me !). The Queen appears to summon him (O tremble not, beloved son ...my daughter has been taken from me ...you shall go to set her free). The Queen disappears and the ladies give Tamino a flute (This magic flute will protect you ...will give you power to transform the sorrows of mankind). Papageno is informed that he was chosen to accompany the prince to Sarastro's castle and they give him some silver bells. The ladies depart telling that three boys will guide them to the castle. Scene 2 - Monostatos enters the room, followed by Pamina and her slaves (My fine little dove, step inside ...Oh, what suffering ! What pain !). Papageno enters the window and Monostatos flees. Papageno informs Pamina that a handsome prince sent by her mother will arrive to rescue her. They both sing (A man who can feel love must have a good heart ...Gladly we rejoice in love and live by love alone). Scene 3 - The three boys lead Tamino (This path will lead you to your goal ...be steadfast, patient and discreet). Tamino heartens his spirit (...my task is noble, straightforward and pure ...my duty is to save Pamina). He is encountered by a priest (What do you seek in this holy place ? ...Whatever belongs to Love and Virtue). The priest asks him (Has a woman so deceived you ? A woman does little, gossips much). But Tamino is firm (Where is she whom he stole from us ?). As Tamino starts to play his flute wild beasts come to listen and birds sing to his play (How powerful is your magic music, sweet flute ...even wild beasts feel joy). Tamino leaves. Alone with Pamina, Papageno plays his silver bells and Tamino answers from his flute. Monstrosos appear (Bring me swords and fetters, just you wait,

I'll teach you manners !). Papageno sings his bells and Monstratos with his slaves exit marching (That sounds so pretty, that sounds so fine ! La ra la la la la la ra). Sarastro appears hailed by his people (Arise, be of good cheer, beloved one ...you love another deeply). In vain, Pamina tries to defend herself (I am bound by filial duty, because my mother ...she is an arrogant woman. A man must guide your heart). As Tamino enters the scene, he embraces Pamina. Sarastro orders them secured (Take this two strangers into our temple of trial).

Act 2 (A palm grove. Silvery trees with golden leaves. A large black horn set with gold / Before the northern temple, at night / A garden / A hall / The interior of a pyramid / Two mountains with a waterfall)

Sarastro marches in front of a procesion of priests. Tamino has turned on his side and was rewarded with Pamina's hand (O Isis and Osiris, grant the spirit of wisdom to the new formed couple !). Scene 2 - Tamino and Papageno are released but they must take vows of silence before the priests (Guard yourself from women's tricks, this is the first duty of our Order). The priests leave. The Queen of Night appears with her ladies and they try to win them back (There are many rumours concerning the wicked ways of these priests !). But Tamino and Papageno are sworn not to speak with women. Scene 3 - Pamina lies sleeping on a couch, guarded by Monostratos who is sorrowing (Every creature feels the joy of love ...but me ...because a black man is ugly !). The Queen of the Night visits her daughter and offers her a dagger to kill Sarastro (If Sarastro dies not by your hand, you will be my daughter no more). Sarastro appears and the plot is dissolved (Within these sacred halls revenge has no place !). Scene 4 - Disguised as an ugly old woman, Papagena chats with Papageno. The three boys bring the magic flute and the bells (Welcome for the second time, you mortals, in Sarastro's realm !). Tamino plays the flute and Pamina is attracted by the sound (Ah, I feel that the joy of love has gone for ever !). Scene 5 - The priests sing as the sunrise is near (...soon will he be wholly dedicated to our Order ...soon will he be worthy of us). Pamina tries to speak to Tamino but he is resolute (Oh, if you loved as I love you ...Pamina, now I must be on my way ! How bitter separation is !). As they part, Papageno is left alone and he sings the bells (A sweet heart or a wife is what Papageno wants). The old woman dances for him and Papageno agrees to be faithful to her. The disguise falls and Papagena appears, feathered like him, but Papageno must prove to be worthy of her. The three boys chat about Pamina (The sorrow of rejected love torments her). Pamina appears with the dagger (I mean to die, for the man whom I could never, never hate). The boys lead her to Tamino. Scene 6 - Two men in black armor lead Tamino singing (...will be purified by fire, water, air and earth, he who overcomes his fear of death). When Pamina appears Tamino is permitted to speak to her (My Pamina ! Oh, what happiness ...Wherever you go, I shall be at your side). Papageno plays his bells (Little wife ! my dove ! my beauty ! ...Papagena, dearest dove !). Papagena appears and they are both happy. Scene 7 - Pamina and Tamino, Papageno and Papagena, the boys and the ladies, The Queen of the Night, Monostratos, they all enter the Temple. A bright light shines, Monostratos, the ladies and the Queen of the Night sink into the ground (Our power is shattered, we are all cast into eternal night). Sarastro leads the wedding ceremony (The rays of the sun chase night away Hail to the initiates ! ...Thanks to thee, Isis).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Die, monster, by our power ! ...Let us hasten to our Queen and report this news to her (Three ladies), The birdcatcher as I, and always merry, tra la la ! ...if all the girls were mine alone (Papageno), Oh, if only I might find her ! If only she stood before me ! (Tamino), O tremble not, beloved son ...my daughter has been taken from me ...you shall go to set her free (The Queen), This magic flute will protect you ...will give you power to transform the sorrows of mankind (Three ladies), My fine little dove, step inside ...Oh, what suffering ! What pain ! (Monostratos, Pamina), A man who can feel love must have a good heart ...Gladly we rejoice in love and live by love alone (Pamina, Papageno), This path will lead you to your goal ...be steadfast, patient and discreet (Three boys), ...my task is noble, straightforward and pure ...my duty is to save Pamina (Tamino), What do you seek in this holy place ? ...Whatever belongs to Love and Virtue (Priest, Tamino), Has a woman so deceived you ? A woman does little, gossips much (Priest), Where is she whom he stole from us ? (Tamino), How powerful is your magic music, sweet flute ...even wild beasts feel joy (Tamino), Bring me swords and fetters, just you wait, I'll teach you manners ! (Monostratos), That sounds so pretty, that sounds so fine ! La ra la la la la la ra (Monostratos), Arise, be of good cheer, beloved one ...you love another deeply (Sarastro), I am bound by filial duty, because my mother ...she is an arrogant woman. A man must guide your heart (Pamina, Sarastro), Take this two strangers into our temple of trial (Sarastro) Act 2 - O Isis and Osiris, grant the spirit of wisdom to the new formed couple ! (Sarastro), Guard yourself from women's tricks, this is the first duty of our Order (Priests), There are many rumours concerning the wicked ways of these priests ! (Three ladies), Every creature feels the joy of love ...but me ...because a black man is ugly !

(Monostratos), If Sarastro dies not by your hand, you will be my daughter no more (The Queen of the Night), Within these sacred halls revenge has no place ! (Sarastro), Welcome for the second time, you mortals, in Sarastro's realm ! (Three boys), Ah, I feel that the joy of love has gone for ever ! (Pamina), ...soon will he be wholly dedicated to our Order ...soon will he be worthy of us (Priests), Oh, if you loved as I love you ...Pamina, now I must be on my way ! How bitter separation is ! (Pamina, Tamino), A sweet heart or a wife is what Papageno wants (Papageno), The sorrow of rejected love torments her (Three boys), I mean to die, for the man whom I could never, never hate (Pamina), ...will be purified by fire, water, air and earth, he who overcomes his fear of death (Two armoured men), My Pamina ! Oh, what happiness ...Wherever you go, I shall be at your side (Tamino, Pamina), Little wife ! my dove ! my beauty ! ...Papagena, dearest dove ! (Papageno), Our power is shattered, we are all cast into eternal night (Chorus), The rays of the sun chase night away Hail to the initiates ! ...Thanks to thee, Isis (Chorus)

Ballet: A full ballet version for The Magic Flute with a reimagined score of Mozart's opera was produced by the choreographer Stephen Mills together with Donald Grantham, composer and music professor at the University of Texas. Transformed into a 90 min production the performance was staged at Austin Ballet, starting with May 2011. Another notable full ballet version of the opera was produced in 2018 at the Moscow Kremlin Theatre of Classical Russian Ballet by its artistic director and choreographer Andrey Petrov, using Mozart's music and Shikaneder's libretto with costumes produced by Olga Polyanskaya and leading soloist such as: Natalia Balahnicheva, Alexander Timofeev, Irina Ablitsova and Mikhail Martynyuk. Most operatic performances will also include some ballet movements, usually produced by Papageno and Papagena. A completely different ballet comique production with the same title, in one act, not related to the opera was choreographed and produced in 1893, by Lev Ivanov to the music of Riccardo Drigo, at the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre.

Recordings: 1937 Vienna Philharmonic (Helge Rosvaenge - Tamino, Jarmila Novotna - Pamina, Alexander Kipnis - Sarastro, Julia Osvath - Queen of the Night, Willi Domgraf - Papageno), 1953 RAI, Roma (Nicolai Gedda - Tamino, Elisabeth Schwartzkopf - Pamina, Mario Petri - Sarastro, Rita Streich - Queen of the Night, Giuseppe Taddei - Papageno), 1956 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Brian Sullivan - Tamino, Maria Stader - Pamina, Kim Borg - Sarastro, Rita Streich - Queen of the Night, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Papageno), 1964 Berliner Philharmoniker (Fritz Wunderlich - Tamino, Evelyn Lear - Pamina, Franz Crass - Sarastro, Roberta Peters - Queen of the Night, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Papageno), 1970 Staatskapelle Dresden (Peter Schreier - Tamino, Helen Donath - Pamina, Theo Adam - Sarastro, Sylvia Getzty - Queen of the Night, Gunther Leib - Papageno), 1980 Wiener Philharmoniker (Eric Tappy - Tamino, Ileana Cotrubas - Pamina, Martti Talvela - Sarastro, Zdzislawa Donath - Queen of the Night, Christian Boesch - Papageno), 1983 Bayerischer Staatsoper (Francesco Araiza - Tamino, Lucia Popp - Pamina, Kurt Moll - Sarastro, Edita Grubenova - Queen of the Night, Wolfgang Brendel - Papageno), 1987 Zurich Opera (Hans Peter Blochwitz - Tamino, Barbara Bonney - Pamina, Matti Salminen - Sarastro, Edita Grubenova - Queen of the Night, Anton Scharinger - Papageno), 1990 London Classical Players (Anthony Rolfe Johnson - Tamino, Dawn Upshaw - Pamina, Cornelius Hauptmann - Sarastro, Beverly Hoch - Queen of the Night, Andreas Schmidt - Papageno),

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67. Lucia di Lammermoor

Title: Lucia di Lammermoor

Composer: Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848). Born in Bergamo, Italy, his father Andrea Donizetti (1765-1835) was a rich merchant, the caretaker of the town pawnshop, while his mother Domenica Nava (1765-1836) was a steamstress. At the age of 9 he became a protegee of the German composer Johann Simon Mayr (1763-1845), Maestro di Capella at the Cathedral of Bergamo. In 1810 at the age of 13 he was accepted to the local art school, Academia Carrara. In 1816 he was granted a two years scholarship at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna where he studied with Padre Stanislao Mattei (1750-1825) who was an Italian Franciscan friar, a composer,

musicologist and music teacher. In 1928 he married Virginia Vasseli (1799-1837) and the fruit of their marriage were three children, none of whom survived. His brother Giuseppe Donizetti (1788-1856), from 1828 was Instructor General of the Imperial Ottoman Music at the court of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839). In 1897 the Teatro Nuovo in Bergamo changed its name to Teatro Gaetano Donizetti to celebrate the centenary of the composer's birth together with a Monument to Donizetti inaugurated in a public garden in Piazza Cavour, near the theatre. Operas: *Il Pigmaliione* (1816), *Enrico di Porgogna* (1818), *Una follia* (1818), *Il falegname di Livornia* (1819), *Le nozze in villa* (1820), *Zoraida di Granata* (1822), *La zingara* (1822), *La lettera anonima* (1822), *Chiara e Serafina* (1822), *Alfredo il grande* (1823), *Il fortunato inganno* (1823), *Emilia di Liverpool* (1824), *Alahor in Granata* (1826), *Don Gregorio* (1826), *Elvida* (1826), *Gabriella di Vergy* (1826), *Olivo e Pasquale* (1827), *Otto mesi in due ore* (1827), *Il borgomastro di Saardam* (1827), *Le convenienze teatrali* (1827), *L'esule di Roma* (1828), *Alina, regina di Golconda* (1828), *Gianni di Calais* (1828), *Il peria* (1829), *Il giovedì grasso* (1829), *Elisabetta al castello di Kenilworth* (1829), *I pazzi per progetto* (1830), *Anna Bolena* (1830), *Gianni di Parigi* (1831), *Francesca di Foix* (1831), *Fausta* (1832), *Ugo, conte di Parigi* (1832), *L'elisir d'amore* (1832), *Sancia di Castiglia* (1832), *Il furioso all'isola di Dan Domingo* (1833), *Parisina* (1833), *Torquato Tasso* (1833), *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833), *Rosamonda d'Inghilterra* (1834), *Maria Stuarda* (1834), *Gemma di Vergy* (1834), *Marino Faliero* (1835), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), *Belisario* (1836), *Il Campanello di Notte* (1836), *Betly, o La Papanna svizzera* (1836), *L'assedio di Calais* (1836), *Pia de'Tolomei* (1837), *Roberto Devereux* (1837), *Maria de Rudenz* (1838), *Poliuto* (1848), *Le duc d'Albe* (1839), *L'ange de Nisida* (1839), *Les Martyrs* (1840), *La fille du regiment* (1840), *La favorite* (1840), *Adelia* (1841), *Rita* (1841), *Maria Padilla* (1841), *Linda di Chamounix* (1842), *Caterina Cornaro* (1844), *Don Pasquale* (1843), *Maria di Rohan* (1843), *Dom Sebastine* (1843). His compositions also include: choral works (*Ave Maria*), orchestral works, concertos, chamber works, quartets for strings, piano works.

Libretto: Salvatore Cammarano (1801-1852). Salvatore Cammarano was an Italian librettist and playwright who produced for Donizetti 8 libretti: *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), *L'assedio di Calais* (1836), *Belisario* (1836), *Pia de' Tolomei* (1837), *Roberto Devereux* (1837), *Maria de Rudenz* (1838), *Poliuto* (1838), *Maria di Rohan* (1843). For Giuseppe Verdi he wrote four libretti (*Alzira*, *La Battaglia di Legano*, *Luisa Miller*, *Il trovatore* - unfinished). He also wrote several libretti for other composers, such as: Egisto Vignozzi, Giuseppe Persiani, Giuseppe Staffa, Felice Romani, Severio Mercadante, Luigi Cammarano, Giuseppe Lillo, Alessandro Nini, Giovanni Pacini, Federico Ricci, Achille Peri, Vincenzo Battista, Nicola De Giosa. The libretto for this opera was based on Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Lammermoor* published in 1819. The plot was based on an actual incident of a tragic love affair in South-East Scotland between the Dalrymple and the Rutherford families. Sir Walter Scott heard the story from his mother, Anne Rutherford, a descendant of the Rutherford family.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 26 September 1835 at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples. Coloratura soprano Fanny Tacchinardi Persiani played Lucia, tenor Gilbert Duprez played Sir Edgardo di Ravenswood and baritone Domenico Cosselli played Sir Enrico Ashton. In Naples there were another 18 performances in 1835, 4 in 1836, 16 in 1837 and so on. The opera premiered in London on 5 April 1838 and in Paris on 6 August 1839 at the Theatre de la Renaissance. In the United States the opera premiered on 28 December 1841. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the opera was present in every season from 1903 until 1972. Maria Callas sung a famous performance in 1952 at La Scala in Milan, while Joan Sutherland sung a famous performance in 1959 at the Royal Opera House in London. Other notable performances recorded in studio or filmed were produced at: Milan (1929, 1953, 1955, 1959, 1992), Mexico City (1952), Florence (1953, 1983), Rome (1957, 1961, 1965, 1971), London (1959, 1970, 1976, 1983), Tokyo (1967), New York (1982), Sydney (1986), Hanover (1997), Lyon (2002), Bergamo (2006). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, Lucia di Lammermoor was performed in the world for 1000 times, in 254 different productions, ranking 21 on Operabase list.

Roles: Lucia (soprano coloratura), Lord Enrico Ashton, her brother (baritone), Sir Edgardo of Ravenswood (tenor), Lord Arturo Bucklaw, Lucia's bridegroom (tenor), Raimondo Bidebent, a Calvinist chaplain (bass), Alisa, Lucia's handmaid (mezzo soprano), Normanno, huntsman (tenor), Chorus (knights, ladies, retainers and servants, wedding guests)



Story: Scotland late 16th century. A violent feudal war between two families. Romeo and Juliette with Scottish flavor. An iconic performance for all bel canto operas.

Act 1 (In the grounds of the castle / In the park)

Retainers are searching every corner of the garden. Normanno explains Enrico that his sister Lucia is seeing someone secretly. One morning she was attacked by a bull and that man saved her (A man who kept his name a secret ...and Lucia ? ...Fell in love with him). The retainers report that they have identified the man (...a falconer told us his name ...Edgardo). But Enrico wants Lucia to marry someone else in order to restore the financial status of their family (In vain your pity ...speak to me of revenge and I will hear you). Scene 2 - Lucia is waiting for Edgardo, together with Alicia (That fountain...A Ravenswood stabbed his sweetheart here ...Listen. At dead of night ...she seemed to beckon me to her). Alicia finds a bad omen in her dream, but Lucia is certain (He brings light into my days). Edgardo enters the scene with important news (I am to set sail for France, there I must work for Scotland's future). Before he leaves they exchange engagement rings (Here, pledge yourself eternally before Heaven to be my bride ...to your destiny I link mine, I am your betrothed ...and I yours). They must part (When you think of me ...then shed a bitter tear on this ring).

Act 2 (Enrico's apartments in the castle / The grand hall of the castle)

Enrico waits for his sister (I nervously await her to honour the distinguished marriage). Normanno reports that Edgardo's letters were intercepted and he produced a false report that Edgardo was in flame for another girl. Lucia enters with a mortal pallor on her face (May God forgive you for your inhuman cruelty). Enrico gives her the false report. Lucia is devastated (Oh, misery ! ...my hopes, my life, I pledged to one heart, the moment of death is upon me !). Enrico makes his move (From ruin Arturo can rescue me and only he... You must save me). With tearful eyes, Lucia appeals to Heaven (Take, Eternal God, this hopeless life of mine). Scene 2 - Enrico's court, knights and ladies welcome the guest (For you, all around we join in rousing jubilation). Arturo is benevolent (I come to you as friend, brother and protector). Enrico explains that Lucia is crushed with grief for she mourns her dead mother. When Lucia arrives, she and Arturo sign the marriage contract (I pray you accept the vows of my tender love for you). Aside, Lucia sorrows (I have signed my death warrant). A noise is heard and Edgardo enters wrapped in a cloak, drawing his sword (I shall die, but other blood shall flow with mine). Raimondo commands (Respect in me the awful majesty of God lay down your anger and your swords). Raimondo shows him the marriage contract and Lucia, sobbing, confirms her signature. Edgardo throws her ring to her (Then take back your ring, false heart ...and give me mine). Lucia falling to her knees (God, save him at this cruel moment, hear the plaint of an unhappy girl). All present pursue Edgardo to the door (Begone! go ! ...Ah ! Save yourself ! Unhappy man !).

Act 3 (The great hall of the castle / Cemetery of Ravenswood Castle)

Wedding festivities are in progress (Let us raise our voices in wild jubilation). Raimondo arrives pale as death (Arturo was lying on the floor, mute, cold, covered in blood ! And Lucia was clutching a dagger ...Where is my husband ?). Lucia enters dressed in white (Edgardo, I am yours again, Edgardo, ah, my Edgardo !). Enrico enters (Remorse will bring me days of bitter weeping). Scene 2 - Edgardo recollects himself near his family tombs (Tombs of my fathers, last son of an unhappy race, receive me, I implore you). A group of mourners comes from Lammermoor Castle (Lucia ...love robbed her of her reason ...she is near her last hour and moans and asks for you). Edgardo hurries to see her but is stopped by Raimondo (She is no longer on earth ...she is in

Heaven). Deeply sorrowed Edgardo stabs himself (...may God unite us in Heaven, o sweet, loving heart, may God unite us). Raimondo and all present kneel and give him the last word (God, forgive such a terrible deed).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - A man who kept his name a secret ...and Lucia ? ...Fell in love with him (Normanno, Enrico). ...a falconer told us his name ...Edgardo (Chorus), In vain your pity ...speak to me of revenge and I will hear you (Enrico), That fountain...A Ravenswood stabbed his sweetheart here ...Listen. At dead of night ...she seemed to beckon me to her (Lucia), He brings light into my days (Lucia), I am to set sail for France , there I must work for Scotland's future (Edgardo), Here, pledge yourself eternally before Heaven to be my bride ...to your destiny I link mine, I am your betrothed ...and I yours (Edgardo, Lucia), When you think of me ...then shed a bitter tear on this ring (Lucia), Act 2 - I nervously await her to honour the distinguished marriage (Enrico), May God forgive you for your inhuman cruelty (Lucia), Oh, misery ! ...my hopes, my life, I pledged to one heart, the moment of death is upon me ! (Lucia), From ruin Arturo can rescue me and only he... You must save me (Enrico), Take, Eternal God, this hopeless life of mine (Lucia), For you, all around we join in rousing jubilation (Chorus), I come to you as friend, brother and protector (Arturo), I pray you accept the vows of my tender love for you (Arturo), I have signed my death warrant (Lucia), I shall die, but other blood shall flow with mine (Edgardo), Respect in me the awful majesty of God lay down your anger and your swords (Raimondo), Then take back your ring, false heart ...and give me mine (Edgardo), God, save him at this cruel moment, hear the plaint of an unhappy girl (Lucia), Begone! go ! ...Ah ! Save yourself ! Unhappy man ! (Chorus) Act 3 - Let us raise our voices in wild jubilation (Chorus), Arturo was lying on the floor, mute, cold, covered in blood ! And Lucia was clutching a dagger ...Where is my husband ? (Raimondo), Edgardo, I am yours again, Edgardo, ah, my Edgardo ! (Lucia), Remorse will bring me days of bitter weeping (Enrico), Tombs of my fathers, last son of an unhappy race, receive me, I implore you (Edgardo), Lucia ...love robbed her of her reason ...she is near her last hour and moans and asks for you (Chorus), She is no longer on earth ...she is in Heaven (Raimondo), ...may God unite us in Heaven, o sweet, loving heart, may God unite us (Edgardo), God, forgive such a terrible deed (Raimondo, Chorus)

Ballet: On September 2012, at the Arts Ballet Theatre of Florida a ballet movement La Favorita with Music by Donizetti and choreography produced by Vladimir Issaev was inserted in their Lucia di Lammermoor performance.

Recordings: 1929 La Scala Milan (Mercedes Capsir - Lucia, Enzo de Muro Lomanto - Edgardo, Enrico Molinari - Enrico, SWalvatore Baccaloni - Raimondo), 1952 Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City (Maria Callas - Lucia, Giuseppe Di Stefano - Edgardo, Piero Campolonghi - Enrico, Roberto Silva - Raimondo), 1953 Florence Maggio Musicale (Maria Callas - Lucia, Giuseppe Di Stefano - Edgardo, Tito Gobi - Enrico, Raffaele Arie - Raimondo), 1959 Royal Opera House (Joan Sutherland - Lucia, Joao Gibin - Edgardo, John Shaw - Enrico, Joseph Rouleau - Raimondo), 1965 RCA Italiana Opera Chorus (Anna Moffo - Lucia, Carlo Bergonzi - Edgardo, Mario Sereni - Enrico, Ezio Flagello - Raimondo), 1971 Royal Opera House, London (Joan Sutherland - Lucia, Luciano Pavaroti - Edgardo, Sherill Milnes - Enrico, Nicolai Ghiaurov - Raimondo), 1976 New Philharmonia Orchestra (Montserrat Caballe - Lucia, Jose Carreras - Edgardo, Vicente Sardinero - Enrico, Samuel Ramey - Raimondo), 1990 London Symphony Orchestra (Cheryl Studer - Lucia, Placido Domingo - Edgardo, Juan Pons - Enrico, Samuel Ramey - Raimondo), 2006 Teatro Donizetti (Desiree Rancatore - Lucia, Roberto De Biasio - Edgardo, Luca Grassi - Enrico, Enrico Giuseppe Iori- Raimondo)

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68. La Boheme

Title: La Boheme

Composer: Composer: Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924). Born in Lucca, Italy, he was one of nine children of Michele Puccini and Albina Magi. His family, starting with his great-great grandfather has occupied the position of maestro di capella for 124 years and has composed music for the church. As a boy he was a member of the choir and played the organ. In 1880 he has got a diploma from the Pacini School of Music in Lucca and continued his studies at the Milan Conservatory with a grant from Italian Queen Margherita. He was married in 1904 to

Elvira Gemignani (1860-1930) and they had a son, Antonio. By 1900, Puccini has acquired land and had built a villa on the lake, at Torre del Lago, now known as Villa Museo Puccini. An annual Festival Puccini is held at Torre del Lago to honor his memory. In 1923 the Prime Minister Benito Mussolini has named him member in the Italian Senate (*senatore a vita*). Centro di studi Giacomo Puccini was founded in 1996 in Lucca to approach the study of Puccini's work. Operas: *Le Villi* (1884), *Edgar* (1889), *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904), *La Fanciulla del West* (1910), *La rondine* (1917), *Il Trittico* (1918), *Turandot* (1926). His other work includes sacred music, songs, vocal and choral music, chamber music and instrumental music.

Libretto: Luigi Illica (1857-1919) and Giuseppe Giacosa (1847-1906). Luigi Illica was an Italian librettist who wrote for Puccini several libretti: *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904). He also produced opera libretti for: Pietro Mascagni (*Iris*, *Le Maschere*, *Isabeau*), Alfredo Catalani (*La Wally*), Umberto Giordano (*Andrea Chenier*, *Siberia*, *Giove a Pompei*), Alberto Franchetti (*Cristoforo Colombo*, *Germania*), Antonio Smareglia (*Il vassallo di Szegith*, *Cornelius Schutt*, *Nozze Istriane*) and other important composers (Gaetano Luporini, Spyridon Samaras, Pietro Floridia, Cesare Galleotti, Ettore Panizza, Cesare Rossi, Franco Alfano). His stories were used in silent films and he was a considerable playwright. In 1961 the Luigi Illica International Prize was founded for opera singers, conductors, directors and authors. Giuseppe Giacosa was an Italian poet, playwright and librettist, with a degree in law at the University of Turin. Together with Luigi Illica he wrote the four libretti for Puccini. He is also remembered for some of his playwrights: *Una Partita a Scacchi*, *La signora di Challant*. The libretto for this opera was based on a collection of stories published in 1851 by the French novelist and poet Henri Murger (1822-1861) under the name of *Scenes de la vie de bohème*. Most of the stories were originally published individually in a local literary magazine, some of them are autobiographical. The same source have inspired Ruggero Leoncavallo for his version of *La bohème* (1897) and Emmerich Kalman for his operetta *Das Veilchen von Montmartre*. Seven silent or musical films were produced for *La Bohème*, directed by: Albert Capellani (1916), King Vidor (1926), Gertrude Lawrence (1935), Marcel L'Herbier (1945), Franci Zefirelli (1965), Aki Kaurismäki (1992), Konstantyn Seliverstov (2008).

Performance history: The world premiere of *La bohème* was in Turin, at the Teatro Regio, on 1 February 1896, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. Soprano Cesira Ferrani was singing Mimi, with tenor Evan Gorga singing Rodolfo and baritone Trieste Wilmant singing Marcello. The opera quickly became popular throughout Italy and premiered at: Teatro di San Carlo (14 March 1896), Teatro Comunale di Bologna (4 November 1896), Teatro Costanzi in Rome (17 November 1896), La Fenice in Venice (26 December 1897), Teatro Regio di Parma (29 January 1897), Teatro Donizetti di Bergamo (21 August 1898). The first performance outside Italy was at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, on 16 June 1896. Shortly, the opera arrived in the United States in Los Angeles on 14 October 1897. In Paris the opera premiered at the Paris Opera on 13 June 1898 and in the United Kingdom the opera premiered at the Theatre Royal in Manchester on 22 April 1897. The opera reached New York on 16 May 1898 at the Wallack's Theatre. At the Royal Opera House in London the opera premiered on 1 July 1899 with Nellie Melba as Mimi. The Metropolitan Opera staged the work for the first time on 26 December 1900. Other notable premieres in the 20th century are: Teatro da Pas in Belem (Brazil, 21 April 1900), Teatro Amazonas in Manaus (Brazil, 2 July 1901), Her Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne (13 July 1901), Opera de Monte Carlo (1 February 1902), Regio Teatro Metastasio in Prato (25 December 1902), Vienna State Opera (25 November 1903), Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm (19 May 1905). Notable performances were recorded in: Milan (1917, 1928, 1938, 1956, 1998), New York (1942, 1946, 1947, 1956), Rome (1952, 1961, 1963), New Orleans (1959), Paris (1960), Berlin (1972), London (1973, 1979, 1995), Munich (1983, 2008), Bologna (1990), Sydney (1994, 2012), Tel Aviv (1999), Vienna (2002), Madrid (2006). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *La Bohème* was performed in the world for 3118 times, in 637 different productions, ranking 4 on Operabase list.

Roles: Mimi (soprano), Rodolfo, a poet (tenor), Marcello, a painter (baritone), Colline, a philosopher (bass), Schaunard, a musician (baritone), Benoit, a landlord (bass), Musetta (soprano), Alcindoro, a state councillor (bass), Parpignol, an itinerant toy vendor (tenor), Custom-house sergeant (bass), Chorus (students, working girls, bourgeois, shopkeepers, soldiers, people)



Story: Paris, at the end of the 19th century. There is a lot of gayety and pathos in the life of young and poor artists, but there is no Paradise for the sinner. It is a cold winter and the stove fire does not burn for the unwedded couples. Poetry and affection alone can not beat an empty stomach. A young poets falls in love for a girl, but he is unable to bring the bread to the table. As they part, the girl is unable to support herself and she dies, deserted in the streets, with her friends wittnessing her last moments.

Act 1 (A mansard looking over Paris, at Christmas Eve)

While freezing, Marcello is painting and Rodolfo is philosophical (...that lazy old swindling stove living in idleness like a lord ...he hasn't received his lawful dues for a long while). Rodolfo decides to burn his drama to warm a little. Colline enters the scene and they discuss the play while burning it. Two boys enter carrying food, wine and some wood, followed by Schaunard (Christmas Eve ! ...Let's observe tradition, gentlemen: we'll drink at home, but let's eat out !). Benoit appears with the bill for three month's rent (I'm paying myself back now for my shy youth...). Marcello pays the rent and they all head for the Latin Quarter, except Rodolfo who has unfinished work. Mimi knocks at the door, enters and faints after a fit of coughing. When she recovers, while looking for her key his hand meets her hand (How cold your little hand is ! ...Who am I ? I'm a poet). Mimi responds (They call me Mimi ...I embroider silk and satin at home or outside). A short kiss and they exchange love words. Since his friends are calling Mimi decides to join them.

Act 2 (At the Cafe Momus at the tables outside)

Street vendors are shouting (Oranges, dates ! Hot Chestnuts ! Trinkets, crosses ! Nougat !). Two more chairs are added at the table and Rodolfo is introducing Mimi to his friends (Here we are. This is Mimi, merry flower ? girl). The toy vendor, Parpignol, passes by hailed by children (Parpignol, Parpignol, here comes Parpignol). Asked by Marcello, Mimi tells them that Rodolfo has given her a Christmas gift (A lace bonnet all embroidered in pink ...he who can see into a heart knows the ways of love). Rodolfo responds tenderly (The most divine poetry, my friend, is that which teaches us to love !). Musetta appears accompanied by her admirer Alcindoro (Come, Lulu ! ...What ! Here outside ? Here ?). Marcello introduces her (She eats hearts ! ...That's why I've none any more !). Musetta plays rough with the waiter preparing a scandal (When I walk out alone along the street, all the people stop and stare). Alcindoro tries but can not stop her. To get rid of her partner, Musetta pretends that her shoe is too tight and sends Alcindoro to buy another pair. Once alone she embraces Marcello passionately (Marcello ! ...Siren !). When the waiter comes with the bill, the boys are pennyless but Musetta is magnanimous (Quick, add that bill on to mine ! ...The gentleman wil pay). The soldiers enter the scene, preceded by a gigantic drum major (Here comes the drum major !). They all walk away with Musetta carried by Marcello. When Alcindoro returns, he is presented the two bills.

Act 3 (At the gate of Paris. Very early in the morning in February)

Street sweepers, milkmaids, carters, peasant girls are crowding to enter the gate. Mimi arrives, looking for Marcello who paints at the inn (I was hoping to find you here ...Is Rodolfo here ?). Mimi explains (...my Rodolfo is consumed with jealousy. A step, a word, a necklace, a flower...). Marcello wakes Rodolfo while Mimi hides away. Rodolfo is decided to leave Mimi (Mimi's a coquette who flirts with everybody ...I love her, but I'm afraid ! Mimi is so very ill !). Rodolfo hears Mimi sobbing and coughing (What ! Mimi ! You here ? ...Whence happily she came at your call of love, Mimi will return to her lonely nest). Marcello also breaks out with Musetta (...if I catch you flirting ! ...What are you about ? We're not married !).

Act 4 (The same mansard from Act 1)

Rodolfo and Marcello can not work, obsessed with recalls of Mimi and Musetta (O happy days, tiny hands ...brush works and slaps on colors against my will). Schaunard and Colline arrive bringing bread and herring. To make their dinner more appealing they all sing and dance as if banqueting. Suddenly Musetta enters, very agitated, followed by Mimi (...I saw her pass in the street hardly able to crawl ...Oh, how nice it is here ! ...I feel life again here). Musetta gives her earrings to Marcello to sell them and bring a doctor. Colline wants to help and decides to sell his coat (Dear old coat, listen, I stay here below but you must now ascend the mount of piety !). Mimi and Rodolfo are left alone, while all their friends run for help (You are my love an my whole life ...The swallow's returned to the nest and is chirping). Musetta and Marcello return with a muff and a small bottle of cordial, while the doctor is on his way (Blessed Virgin, grant thy grace to this poor soul that she may not die...). But Mimi is already dead, even though Rodolfo can not admit it (See ! She's quite peaceful ...Why are you looking at me like that ?).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - ...that lazy old swindling stove living in idleness like a lord ...he hasn't received his lawful dues for a long while (Rodolfo, Marcello), Christmas Eve ! ...Let's observe tradition, gentlemen: we'll drink at home, but let's eat out ! (Schaunard), I'm paying myself back now for my shy youth... (Benoit), How cold your little hand is ! ...Who am I ? I'm a poet (Rodolfo), They call me Mimi ...I embroider silk and satin at home or outside (Mimi) Act 2 - Oranges, dates ! Hot Chestnuts ! Trinkets, crosses ! Nougat ! (Chorus), Here we are. This is Mimi, merry flower ? girl (Rodolfo), Parpignol, Parpignol, here comes Parpignol (Chorus), A lace bonnet all embroidered in pink ...he who can see into a heart knows the ways of love (Mimi), The most divine poetry, my friend, is that which teaches us to love ! (Rodolfo), Come, Lulu ! ...What ! Here outside ? Here ? (Musetta, Alcindoro), She eats hearts ! ...That's why I've none any more ! (Marcello), When I walk out alone along the street, all the people stop and stare (Musetta), Marcello ! ...Siren ! (Musetta, Marcello), Quick, add that bill on to mine ! (Musetta), Here comes the drum major ! (Chorus), I was hoping to find you here ...Is Rodolfo here ? (Mimi), ...my Rodolfo is consumed with jealousy. A step, a word, a necklace, a flower... (Mimi), Mimi's a coquette who flirts with everybody ...I love her, but I'm afraid ! Mimi is so very ill ! (Rodolfo), What ! Mimi ! You here ? ...Whence happily she came at your call of love, Mimi will return to her lonely nest (Rodolfo, Mimi), ...if I catch you flirting ! ...What are you about ? We're not married ! (Marcello, Musetta). Act 4 - O happy days, tiny hands ...brush works and slaps on colors against my will (Rodolfo, Marcello), ...I saw her pass in the street hardly able to crawl ...Oh, how nice it is here ! ...I feel life again here (Musetta, Mimi), Dear old coat, listen, I stay here below but you must now ascend the mount of piety ! (Colline), You are my love an my whole life ...The swallow's returned to the nest and is chirping (Mimi, Rodolfo), Blessed Virgin, grant thy grace to this poor soul that she may not die... (Musetta), See ! She's quite peaceful ...Why are you looking at me like that ? (Rodolfo)

Ballet: A complete ballet version of La Boheme was produced on 2 November 2017 by Michael Pink, the artistic director of Milwaukee Ballet. Luz San Miguel and David Huvhannusyan were dancing the two lovers Mimi and Rodolfo, while the Cuban born Annia Hidalgo have danced the role of Musetta.

Recordings: 1917 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Gemma Bosini - Mimi, Adalgisa Giana - Musetta, Reno Andreini - Rodolfo, Ernesto Badini - Marcello), 1938 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Licia Albanese - Mimi, Tatiana Menotti - Musetta, Beniamino Gigli - Rodolfo, Afro Poli - Marcello), 1942 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Grace Moore - Mimi, Frances Geer - Musetta, Frederick Jagel - Rodolfo, Francesco Valentino - Marcello), 1951 Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Renata Tebaldi - Mimi, Hilde Guden - Musetta, Giacinto Prandelli - Rodolfo, Giovanni Inghilleri - Marcello), 1956 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Maria Callas - Mimi, Anna Moffo - Musetta, Giuseppe di Stefano - Rodolfo, Rolando Panerai - Marcello), 1962 Rome Opera (Mirella Freni - Mimi, Mariella Adani - Musetta, Nicolai Gedda - Rodolfo, Mario Sereni - Marcello), 1972 Berlin Philharmonic (Mirella Freni - Mimi, Elisabeth Harwood - Musetta, Luciano Pavarotti - Rodolfo, Rolando Panerai - Marcello), 1973 London Philharmonic Orchestra (Montserrat Caballe - Mimi, Judith Blegen - Musetta, Placido Domingo - Rodolfo, Sherill Milnes - Marcello), 1979 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Ileana Cotrubas - Mimi, Lucia Popp - Musetta, Luciano Pavarotti - Rodolfo, Lorenzo Saccomani - Marcello), 1994 Australian Opera (Cheryl Barker - Mimi, Christine Douglas - Musetta, David Hobson - Rodolfo, Roger Lemke - Marcello), 1999 Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Barbara Frittoli - Mimi, Eva Mei - Musetta, Andrea Bocelli - Rodolfo, Paolo Gavanelli - Marcello),

2002 Vienna Symphony (Alexia Voulgaridou - Mimi, Elena de la Merced - Musetta, Rolando Villazon - Rodolfo, Ludovic Tezier - Marcello), 2012 Opera Australia (Takesha Meshe Kizart - Mimi, Taryn Fiebig - Musetta, Ji Min Park - Rodolfo, Jose Carbo - Marcello)

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69. Romeo et Juliette

Title: Romeo and Juliet (Romeo et Juliette)

Composer: Charles Gounod (1818-1893). Born in Paris, his father Francois Louis Gounod was a painter, while his mother Lemachois Victoire was a piano teacher. He received his first piano lessons from his mother. He entered the Paris Conservatoire as a student of Pierre Zimmerman and he later married his master's daughter Anne Marie Zimmerman. The fruit of their marriage were three children, two boys and a girl. In 1839 he won the prestigious Prix de Rome and left for Italy to study with Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. In 1847 he entered the Carmelite monastery as a novice but later he abandoned his religious quest. In 1852 he was appointed as Director General of the teaching of singing schools in Paris and director of the choral movement. In 1856 Charles Gounod wrote "Vive l'Empereur" in honor of Emperor Napoleon III, the official anthem of the Second Empire. His Pontifical Anthem has become in 1949 the official national anthem of Vatican City. In 1856 he was named Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur and in July 1888 he was made a Grand Officer of the Legion d'Honneur. Operas: Sapho (1851), La nonne sanglante (1854), Le medecin malgre lui (1858), Faust (1859), Philemon et Baucis (1860), La Colombe (1860), La reine de Saba (1862), Mireille (1864), Romeo et Juliette (1867), Cinq-Mars (1877), Polyeucte (1878), Le tribut de Zamora (1881). Ballet: Faust (1868), Romeo et Juliette (1888). His work also includes numerous oratorios, masses, motets (Te deum, Ave Maria, Ave verum), instrumental music and songs.

Libretto: Jules Barbier (1825-1901) and Michel Carre (1821-1872)). Paul Barbier was a French poet, writer and librettist who often wrote in collaboration with Michael Carre. For Charles Gounod he produced the following libretti: La Colombe, Faust, Le medecin malgre lui, Philemon et Baucis, Polyeucte, La reine de Saba, Romeo et Juliette. He also wrote for other composers, such as: Victor Masse (Galathee, Les Saisons), Giacomo Meyerbeer (Le padron de Ploermel), Jaques Offenbach (The Tales of Hoffmann), Camille Saint Saens (Le timbre d'argent), Ambroise Thomas (Hamlet, Mignon, Françoise de Rimini), Leo Delibes (Sylvia). Michel Carre was a prolific librettist. For Charles Gounod he produced the following libretti: Le medecin malgre lui, Faust, Philemon et Baucis, La colombe, La reine de Saba, Mireille, Romeo et Juliette, Polyeucte. He also wrote for: Georges Bizet (The Pearl Fishers), Amadeus Mozart (The Marriage of Figaro), Jaques Offenbach (The Tales of Hoffmann, La rose de Saint Flour, Le mariage aux lanternes), Camille Saint Saens (Le timbre d'argent), Victor Masse (Galathee, Les noces de Jeannette, Miss Fauvette, Les saisons, Paul et Virginie, Fior d'Alizia), Ambroise Thomas (Hamlet, Mignon, Psyche), Ernest Boulanger (Don Quichotte, Don Mucarade), Fromental Halevy (Valentine d'Aubigny), Aime Maillart (Les pecheurs de Catane, Lara), Giacomo Meyerbeer (Dinorah). This libretto was based on the tragedy Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare (1591), but the plot originated in an Italian tale translated into English verse as The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet, by Arthur Brooke (1562). Regarded as an archetypal juvenile Love Story, Romeo and Juliet is the most filmed play of all time. Famous theatrical releases were produced by: George Cukor (1936), Franco Zeffirelli (1968), Baz Luhrmann (1996). Numerous films and TV adaptations were also produced. At least 24 operas have been based on the story, starting with a Singspiel in 1776 by Georg Benda and followed by works of: Vincenzo Bellini (I Capuleti e i Montecchi), Hector Berlioz (Romeo et Juliette), Piotr Tchaikovsky (Romeo and Juliet), Johan Svendsen (Romeo og Julie), Carl Stenhammar (Romeo och Julia), Dimitry Kabalevsky (Romeo et Juliet).

Performance history: The opera premiered at the Theatre Lyrique in Paris, on 27 April 1867. Conducted by Adolphe Deloffre the role for Juliet was sung by soprano Marie Miolan Carvalho (wife of the impresario and director of Theatre Lyrique, Leon Carvalho) while Romeo was sung by tenor Pierre Jules Michot. In the next ten years the opera was performed at the Theatre Lyrique for over 300 times and was part of the International Exposition of 1867 attended by numerous dignitaries in Paris. The opera entered the repertoire of the Opera

Comique on 20 January 1873. In Paris, the opera was transferred to the Paris Opera on 28 November 1888, with Adelina Patti and Jean Reszke in the leading roles. *Romeo and Juliet* premiered in London on 11 July 1867. In New York, the opera premiered at the Academy of Music on 15 November 1867. Notable performances in the 20th century were recorded at: Paris (1912, 1951, 1953, 1960, 1964, 1968, 1982), Milan (1934), New York (1935, 1946, 1947, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2006), Stockholm (1940), Moscow (1947), Philadelphia (1964, 1974, 1994), Amsterdam (1966, 2008), Connecticut (1967), Nice (1976), Chicago (1981, 1999, 2006), London (1981, 1994, 2000), Barcelona (1983, 2002), Toulouse (1983, 1995), Parma (1985), Munchen (1995, 2003), Buenos Aires (1996), Sydney (1999), Prague (2002), Vienna (2002, 2003, 2006, 2008), Los Angeles (2005), Pittsburg (2006), Leeds (2008), Baltimore (2008). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *Romeo and Juliet* was performed in the world for 955 times, in 235 different productions, ranking 56 on Operabase list.

Roles: Juliet (soprano), Romeo, son of Montague (tenor), Friar Laurent (bass), Mercutio, Romeo's friend (baritone), Stephano, page (soprano), Count Capulet (bass), Tybalt, Lady Capulet's nephew (tenor), Gertrude, Juliet's nurse (mezzo soprano), The Duke (bass), Paris, a young count (baritone), Gregorio, Capulet's servant (baritone), Benvolio, Montague's nephew (tenor), Friar John (bass), Chorus (retainers, kinsmen of Capulet and Montague Houses, servants, maskers)



Story: *Romeo and Juliet* are two noble teenagers from Verona, with feelings exceeding their reason. Adventurous Romeo ignores the hated relations between their families and dares to climb Juliet's balcony at night. Juliet is flattered by his attention, but she can not share his love, unless married. To overcome the opposition of their families, the two decide to get married in secrecy, by a friar. Their secret love results in a fight where two of their relatives are killed. Romeo is sentenced to exile and Juliet is sentenced to be urgently married to another young count. Advised by the friar, in order to flee from her second marriage Juliet fakes her death. Romeo does not know it to be a fake and kills himself. Juliet wakes up too late and kills herself near her lover. They both die embraced.

Prologue - The chorus sings an introduction (Verona, of old, saw two rival families, the Montagues and Capulets).

Act 1 (A masked ball in the house of the Capulets)

All the guests sing with joy (The hour flies past in wild merriment ...let us gather the roses that have bloomed for us ...everything reveals the charms !). Count Capulet enters leading Juliet by her hand (Be you welcome, friends, in my house ! ...This is my Juliet !). Juliette makes her entrance (...my delighted soul leaps forward into life as a bird wings off into the skies). Mercutio, Romeo and their friends appear. Romeo is warned not to cause trouble, but Mercutio shows bravery and sings the ballad of Queen Mab (Mab, queen of illusions, presides over dreams). Juliet appears attended by Gertrude who tells her that Paris would make a pearl among husbands. But Juliet is not interested in marriage (I want to live this intoxication of youth alas ! lasts but a day !). Gregorio invites Gertrude to supper and Romeo shares some moments with Juliet alone (Adorable angel, my guilty hand profanes, by daring to touch it ...even the saints, provided that he loves, have pardoned in advance). They are interrupted by Tybalt, who recognizes Romeo by his voice (It is he ! It is Romeo !). Romeo sorrows (My very name is a crime in her eyes ! Capulet is her father, and I love her !). Mercutio hurries Romeo away while Count Capulet quiets the guests (Let the festivities proceed ! Let us all drink and dance !).

Act 2 (Juliet's garden, her window with a balcony)

Helped by Stephano, Romeo scales the balustrade on a rope ladder (Love ! Love ! ...Ah arise ! Ah arise, Appear ! Appear, thou pure and enchanting star). Juliet appears on the balcony (Alas ! I to hate him ! Blind, cruel hatered ! O Romeo, where fore art thou Romeo ?). To her surprise, Romeo appears and they exchange love words (Tell me honestly I love you and I'll believe you, and my honour will entrust itself to yours ...Before God who hears me I pledge you my troth !). Gregorio and servants appear with lanterns (No one is here ! No one is here ! The page must have fled !). Gertrude appears and Juliet goes back into her apartments. Later she reappears in the doorway to bid him farewell (...if you want me as your wife send word to me ...then, o my lord, be my sole law !)

Act 3 (In Friar Laurence's cell / A street, on the left the Capulet's house)

Friar Laurence welcomes Romeo (What lover's care brings you ? ...You have guessed right, Father, it is love !). Juliet appears, followed by Gertrude (Father, this is my bridegroom ! ...unite us before Heaven !). Friar Laurence consents (May the ancient hatred between your houses be extinguished in your young love !). The ceremony is short (Lord, we promise to obey thy law ...Before God who reads into your hearts I unite you !). Scene 2 - Stephano has lost his patience waiting for his master and starts a serenade (With vultures, there must always be fighting). Gregorio appears with some other servants and so does Mercutio with Benvolio, followed by Tybalt, Paris and friends. They all draw their swords but Romeo comes and stops the fight (... your insult is useless ! I have in my heart reasons to love you). Mercutio can not stand the insult and starts a fight with Tybalt. As Mercutio gets hurt and dies, Romeo draws his sword and gives a mortal hit to Tybalt. Count Capulet appears and they are all repenting (A day of mourning ! O day of tears !). The Duke appears in the sound of trumpets (What is this ? Always blood ! ...According to our laws your crime has merited death. But you are not the aggressor ...I exile you !). Romeo repents but he must leave (Unjust decree which disarms us too late ...I see perish in blood and tears all the hopes and desires of my heart !).

Act 4 (Juliet's room / A gallery in the palace)

Juliet and Romeo reinforce their vows (Come, I have forgiven you ...I love you, o my husband ! ...O bridal night ! O sweet night of love !). In the morning the two lovers must part (Alas, we must part....Ah how much more cruel and barbarous than death is the fate which severs me from you !). With Romeo left, Gertrude rushes in agitated (Here is your father ! ...Friar Laurence is with him !). Count Capulet brings to her the last word of her cousin Tybalt (...receive from him the husband he named for you ...Count Paris !). And he continues (The altar is prepared, the groom hath approbation, be ye united now). Juliet shares a private moment with Friar Lawrence (Speak Father, else I am ready to die ! ...Then drink this potion ...in a false likeness of death ...your husband and myself will watch over your awakening ...till tomorrow !). Alone, Juliet wanders (What if this potion work not at all ? ...O Romeo I drink for you ! ...But if tomorrow morn I will awaken amid the lonely chill of the tomb ?). Ballet Scene 2 - The wedding procession hails the bride (Oh fairest Juliet ! Joyful hour ! My heart owns thy power and glows for thee ! ...joyful songs rend the air, wedding songs !). Paris steps forward with his wedding ring, but Juliet withdraws from her father's hand and falls senseless into the arms of those round about her (Let the grave be my wedding bed !)

Act 5 (An underground crypt / The Tomb)

Friar John informs friar Laurence (His page ...was wounded there ...failing to deliver your message). Scene 2 - Romeo breaks into Juliet's tomb (Hail, gloomy and silent tomb ...O my wife ! O my beloved !). Romeo kisses Juliet then he empties a little metal flask from his breast. Juliet awakes sighing (Romeo ! ...She lives ! Juliet is alive ! ...Come ! Let us flee to the ends of the earth !). But soon Romeo sobers (I thought you dead and I drank this poison ...console your self, poor heart, the dream was too beautiful !). As Romeo falls down, Juliet reveals a dagger she had hidden in her dress and stabs herself (O infinite, supreme joy of dying with you ! Come ! One kiss ! I love you). With a last effort they both pray (Lord, Lord, forgive us !).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - Verona, of old, saw two rival families, the Montagues and Capulets (Chorus) Act 1 - The hour files past in wild merriment ...let us gather the roses that have bloomed for us ...everything reveals the charms ! (Chorus), Be you welcome, friends, in my house ! ...This is my Juliet ! (Capulet), ...my delighted soul leaps forward into life as a bird wings off into the skies (Juliet), Mab, queen of

illusions, presides over dreams (Mercutio), I want to live this intoxication of youth alas ! lasts but a day (Juliet), Adorable angel, my guilty hand profanes, by daring to touch it ...even the saints, provided that he loves, have pardoned in advance (Romeo, Juliet), It is he ! It is Romeo ! (Thybalt), My very name is a crime in her eyes ! Capulet is her father, and I love her ! (Romeo), Let the festivities proceed ! Let us all drink and dance ! (Capulet). Act 2 - Love ! Love ! ...Ah arise ! Ah arise, Appear ! Appear, thou pure and enchanting star (Romeo), Alas ! I to hate him ! Blind, cruel hated ! O Romeo, where fore art thou Romeo ? (Juliet), Tell me honestly I love you and I'll believe you, and my honour will entrust itself to yours ...Before God who hears me I pledge you my troth ! (Juliet, Romeo), No one is here ! No one is here ! The page must have fled ! (Chorus), ...if you want me as your wife send word to me ...then, o my lord, be my sole law ! (Juliet). Act 3 - What lover's care brings you ? ...You have guessed right, Father, it is love ! (Friar, Romeo), Father, this is my bridegroom ! ...unite us before Heaven ! (Juliet), May the ancient hatred between your houses be extinguished in your young love ! (Friar), Lord, we promise to obey thy law ...Before God who reads into your hearts I unite you ! (Romeo, Juliet, Friar), With vultures, there must always be fighting (Stephano), ... your insult is useless ! I have in my heart reasons to love you (Romeo), A day of mourning ! O day of tears ! (Chorus), What is this ? Always blood ! ...According to our laws your crime has merited death. But you are not the aggressor ...I exile you ! (The Duke), Unjust decree which disarms us too late ...I see perish in blood and tears all the hopes and desires of my heart ! (Romeo) Act 4 - Come, I have forgiven you ...I love you, o my husband ! ...O bridal night ! O sweet night of love ! (Juliet, Romeo), Alas, we must part....Ah how much more cruel and barbarous than death is the fate which severs me from you ! (Juliet, Romeo), Here is your father ! ...Friar Laurence is with him ! (Gertrude), ...receive from him the husband he named for you ...Count Paris ! (Capulet), The altar is prepared, the groom hath approbation, be ye united now (Capulet), Speak Father, else I am ready to die ! ...Then drink this potion ...in a false likeness of death ...your husband and myself will watch over your awakening ...till tomorrow ! (Juliet, Friar), What if this potion work not at all ? ...O Romeo I drink for you ! ...But if tomorrow morn I will awaken amid the lonely chill of the tomb ? (Romeo), Oh fairest Juliet ! Joyful hour ! My heart owns thy power and glows for thee ! ...joyful songs rend the air, wedding songs ! (Chorus), Let the grave be my wedding bed ! (Juliet). Act 5 - His page ...was wounded there ...failing to deliver your message (John), Hail, gloomy and silent tomb ...O my wife ! O my beloved ! (Romeo), Romeo ! ...She lives ! Juliet is alive ! ...Come ! Let us flee to the ends of the earth ! (Juliet, Romeo), I thought you dead and I drank this poison ...console your self, poor heart, the dream was too beautiful ! (Romeo), O infinite, supreme joy of dying with you ! Come ! One kiss ! I love you ! (Juliet), Lord, Lord, forgive us ! (Romeo, Juliet)

Ballet: Act 4 - A short moment of ballet (requested for a Grand Opera) is inserted as the guests arrive for the wedding ceremony and festivities. A complete ballet version of Romeo and Juliet was produced in 1935 by Serguei Prokofiev, first staged on 30 December 1938, at Theatre Mahen in Brno, followed by the premiere at Kirov (1940) and Bolchoi Theatre (1946) with a choreography produced by Leonid Lavrovski. Galina Ulanova and Kinstantin Sergeyev played Juliet and Romeo in the original cast. Prokofiev's ballet was later revived by: Frederick Ashton (Royal Danish Ballet 1955), John Cranko (Stuttgart Ballet 1962), Kenneth MacMillan (Royal Ballet Covent Garden 1965), John Neumeier (Frankfurt Ballet 1971), Yuri Grigorovich (Bolshoi Theatre 1979), Laszlo Seregi (Hungarian National Ballet 1985), Peter Martins (New York City Ballet 2007), Alexei Ratmansky (National Ballet of Canada 2011).

Recordings: 1912 L'Opera Comique, Paris (Yvonne Gall - Juliet, Augustarello Affre - Romeo), 1934 La Scalla, Milan (Mafalda Favero - Juliet, Beniamino Gigli - Romeo), 1935 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Eide Norena - Juliet, Charles Hackett - Romeo), 1940 Royal Swedish Opera, Stockholm (Hjordis Schymberg - Juliet, Jussi Bjorling - Romeo), 1947 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Irina Maslennikova - Juliet, Sergei Lemeshev - Romeo), 1951 Orchestre Lyrique de Radio France (Lucienne Jourfier - Juliet, Georges Nore - Romeo), 1964 Philadelphia Opera (Gianna D'Angelo - Juliet, Franco Corelli - Romeo), 1966 Radio Philharmonisch Orkest, Amsterdam (Erna Spoorenberg - Juliet, Alain Vanzo - Romeo), 1968 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Mirella Freni - Juliet, Nicolai Gedda - Romeo), 1974 Metropolitan Opera (Judith Blegen - Juliet, Placido Domingo - Romeo), 1976 Opera de Nice (Andree Esposito - Juliet, Alain Vanzo - Romeo), 1981 English National Opera (Valerie Masterson - Juliet, John Brecknock - Romeo), 1983 Gran Teatro de Liceo, Barcelona (Patricia Wise - Juliet, Jose Carreras - Romeo), 1994 Opera Company of Philadelphia (Hei Kyung Hong - Juliet, Richard Leech - Romeo), 1995 Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse (Angela Gheorghiu - Juliet, Roberto Alanga - Romeo), 1999 Opera Australia, Sydney (Leanne Kenneally - Juliet, Julian Gavin - Romeo), 2002 Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna (

Stefania Bonfadelli - Juliet, Neil Shicoff - Romeo), 2003 Munchner Rundfunkorkester (Stefania Bonfadelli - Juliet, Giuseppe Sabbatini - Romeo), 2008 Radio Kamer Filharmonie, Amsterdam (Nino Machaidze - Juliet, Sebastien Gueze - Romeo), 2008 Baltimore Opera (Young Ok Shin - Juliet, Stephen Costello - Romeo).

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70. The Flying Dutchman

Title: The Flying Dutchman (Die fliegende Hollander, L'Olandese Dannato)

Composer: Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Born in Leipzig, his father Carl Friedrich Wagner was a clerk in the Leipzig police service while his mother Johanna Rosine Paez was of the daughter of a baker. One year later his mother remarried to Ludwig Geyer an actor and playwright. At the age of 7 he was enrolled at Pastor Wetzel's school at Possendorf, where he recieved piano instruction and by the age of 9 he joined the Dresdener Kreutzchor at the Kreuzschule. His first lessons of harmony were taken during 1828-1831 with composer Christian Gottlieb Muller (1800-1863). In 1831, Wagner enrolled at the Leipzig University to become a member of the Saxon student fraternity. He took composition lessons with Thomaskantor (music director) and composer Theodor Weinling (1780-1842). In 1836 he married the actress Christine Wilhemine Planer (1809-1866) for a 30 years of marriage with no offspring. In 1842 Wagner was appointed the Royal Saxon Court Conductor. From 1849 to 1858, due to his revolutionary activity he was exiled in Switzerland, to Zurich, for a very prolific period of his compositions. In 1862 he divorced his wife and remarried Francesca Cosima Liszt with three children as fruit of their marriage, two girls and a son. In 1871 the family moved to Bayreuth where he built the Bayreuth Festspielhouse and founded the Bayreuther Festival. Operas: Die Hochzeit (The Wedding-1832), Die Feen (The Fairies-1834), Das Liebsverbot (The Ban of Love-1836), Die hohe Braut (The High-born Bride -1842), Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen (Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes - 1840), Der fliegende Hollander (The Flying Dutchman - 1841), Tannhauser und der Sangerkrieg auf dem Wartburg (Tannhauser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg - 1845), Lohengrin (Lohengrin - 1848), Das Rheingold (The Rhine Gold - 1854), Die Walkure (The Valkyrie - 1856), Tristan und Isolde (Tristan and Isolde - 1859), Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg (The mastersingers of Nuremberg - 1867), Siegfried (Siegfried - 1871), Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods -1874), Parsifal (Parsifal - 1882).

Libretto: Richard Wagner. In his autobiography (Main Leben 1870), Wagner claimed that he has been inspired to write the opera following a stormy sea crossing he made from Riga to London in July and August 1839. The central theme is redemption through love. He was also inspired by Heinrich Heine's adaptation of a legend in his Memoirs of Mister Schnabelewopski, published in 1834. In Paris, Wagner began drafting an opera on this subject and his preliminary work earned him enough money to buy a piano. He actually sold the sketch to the Director of the Paris Opera, Leon Pillet (1803-1868), for 500 francs. After seven weeks, in mid November 1841 his first version was complete. In his original draft Wagner set the action in Scotland, but he changed the location to Norway shortly before the first production staged in Dresden. It was Wagner's fourth opera, clearly adopting the romantic style of that era. In 1851 Wagner claimed that The Flying Dutchman was a new start for him: "From here begins my career as a poet."

Performance history: The opera premiered on 2 January 1843 at the Konigliches Hoftheater in Dresden. Wagner conducted himself the performance and the famous Madame Schroeder Devrient made a great impresion as Senta. In the same year, the opera was staged in Cassel and Berlin but it failed to win the popular favour. The first performance of The Flying Dutchman in England was at Drury Lane in July 1870 presented in an Italian version (L'Olandese Dannato). The performance was conducted by Luigi Arditi (1822-1903) who wrote: "I remember the surprise of myself and Strauss when the Overture was vociferously encored". The first production in English by the Carl Rosa Company was staged at the London Lyceum in 1876. At the Theater an der Wien, in 1863 Wagner conducted himself scenes from Der fliegende Hollander. At the Bayreuth Festival The Flying Dutchman entered the repertoire in 1901 under the management of his wife Cosima, director of the festival. In the 20th century, notable performances were recorded at: Dresden (1936), Buenos Aires (1936), London (1937, 1960, 1968, 2004), Bayreuth (1942, 1955, 1956, 1959, 1961, 1971, 1985, 2013), Munich (1944, 1974, 1991),

New York (1950, 1963, 1994), Hamburg (1951), Berlin (1952, 1960, 1991, 2001), Milan (1966), Roma (1969), Chicago (1976), Vienna (1981, 1991, 1992), Savolinna (1989), Turku (2005). In 2013 numerous Wagner productions were staged to mark his 200th birth anniversary, including the Bolshoi Theatre version directed by Peter Konwitschny and Nina Gulsddorf. Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *The Flying Dutchman* was performed in the world for 984 times, in 229 different productions, ranking 22 on Operabase list.

Roles: The Dutchman (bass-baritone), Daland, a Norwegian sea captain (bass), Senta, his daughter (soprano), Erik, a huntsman (tenor), Mary, Senta's nurse (contralto), Darland's steerman (Tenor), Chorus (sailors, young women).



Story: As a punishment for his arrogance towards God, the flying Dutchman has been condemned to sail aimlessly around the seas, for all eternity. Once every seven years he is permitted to go ashore, to find redemption, if he finds a woman prepared to be faithful to him. When he finds a girl that truly loves him he suspects that she has been unfaithful to him and sails away. To prove him wrong, the girl plunges into the sea, after the departing ship. The ship sinks at instant and the two are seen rising into the sky. Who was this Flying Dutchman: Aegir, Ahti or Njord (Poseidon), Hyperion, the Devil himself, or maybe just an unhappy sailor ?

Overture

Act 1 (A steep rocky shore of Norwegian Coast)

Due to a violent storm, Darland's ship has anchored seven miles from the port. The steerman and the sailors sing (...Jollohohoho ! Hohoje ! ...In gale and storm from far off seas, my maiden, I am near you !

...Jollohohoho ! Hohoje !). Scene 2 - The Dutchman recollects (The time is up and seven more years have gone ...The grace I seek on land never shall I find ...Eternal destruction, take me !). Scene 3 - The Dutchman approaches Daland's ship (I come from far: would you deny me anchorage in this storm ? ...God forbid ! A sailor is always hospitable !). The Dutchman opens a chest loaded with pearls and precious stones (All my riches I offer you, if you give me a new home with your family ...Have you a daughter ? ...Let her be my wife !). Mesmerized by the riches Darland agrees (I give you my word ...The first fair wind will take us home). As the favourable wind starts the sailors sing sailing away (In gales and storm from far of seas, my maiden, I am near you !).

Act 2 (Room in Daland's house)

In Darland's house, Mary and the girls are singing and spinning while Senta contemplates a sailor's portrait on the wall (...My love is out at sea, he thinks of home and his true maid ...Tralaralalalala !). Harassed by the rest of girls, Senta starts to sing the Flying Dutchman's balad (Johohoe ! Johohohoe ! Have you met the ship at sea with blood red sails and black mast ? ...every seven years, a wife to woo he goes ashore). Seized with a sudden inspiration Senta declares (It is I who will save you with my true love !). Erik enters to room to announce that Daland's ship is approaching the shore. Scene 2 - Erik is proposing to Senta (Free me of my torment ! Or if you wish, oh then destroy me completely ! ...Can I ask for your hand as I am ?). As Senta is reluctant to accept, Erik foresees a reason for jealousy, pointing to the portrait (That sailor, he ... you fell at the stranger's feet, I saw you clasp his knees ...I saw you two sail away). Scene 3 - The Dutchman enters the room, looking exactly like the man in the portrait. Daland is presenting his company (A seaman he is, like me, he asks to be our guest ...agree with your father and tomorrow he is your husband). Left alone, both the Dutchman and Senta are

contemplating (...I dreamed of her for restless ages, I see her now before my eyes ...he stands before me, his face lined with suffering). The Dutchman dares to ask her (...Could you offer your hand to a stranger ? ...I shall always obey my father !). Their meeting continues (You are an angel ! An angel's love can comfort even a lost soul ! ...I well know a woman's sacred duty, take heart, then, unhappy man !). Darland reenters and Senta approves him to announce the betrothal fest (Here is my hand ! And without regret till death I vow to be true !). The Dutchman is euphoric (She gives her hand ! You are mocked, Hell, by her true love !).

Act 3 (A bay with a rocky shore, Daland's house in the foreground. Norwegian and Dutch ships in the night)

The Norwegian sailors are singing on the deck (We fear no wind nor treacherous coast, today we'll be right merry ! Each has a girl ashore ...). The girls arrive carrying baskets of food and drink (You have a taste for cool wine ?). The girls want to invite the Dutch sailors to have a drink, but no one answers to their call. The sailors noisily clink their cups (Steerman, leave your watch ! Steerman, join us ! Ho ! Hey ! Ye ! Ha !). As a storm wind whistles through the rigging the Dutch crew awakes (Yohohoe, Yohohohoe ! The storm sweeps ashore, Furl sails ! Anchor away ! ...Run for the bay !). Yet, everywhere else, the sea and sky are calm. Scene 2 - Senta exits her house followed by Erik in great agitation (...is it possible to offer your hand to a man who has hardly crossed your threshold ! ...No more ! Say no more ! I must, I must !). Erik reproaches her (...when you twined your arms around my neck, didn't you declare your love anew ?). The Dutchman has heard the last words and now rushes forward (Senta, farewell ! ...Wait, unhappy man ! ...To sea ! To sea ! For ever ! Your pledge is ended, and with your pledge, my hope for grace !). Senta insists to hold him back, but it is useless (Wait ! You shall never flee from here ! ...I doubt you just as I doubt God ! Dead, dead is all faith ! ...do you doubt my true love ? ...unhappy man, why are you so blind ? Stay !). The Dutchman bids his farewell (You did vow to be true but not solemnly before God: this saves you ! ...Countless victims have paid this penalty through me ! But you shall be saved ...The Flying Dutchman they call me !). As the Dutchman rushes aboard and heads to sea Senta leaps into the sea calling him (Praise your angel and his edict ! Here I stand, true to you unto death !). The Dutchman's ship sinks with all her crew. In the rising sun the Dutchman and Senta are seen in each other's arms, soaring into the sky.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - ...Jolohohoho ! Hohoe ! ...In gale and storm from far off seas, my maiden, I am near you ! ...Jolohohoho ! Hohoe ! (Steerman), The time is up and seven more years have gone ...The grace I seek on land never shall I find ...Eternal destruction, take me ! (Dutchman), I come from far: would you deny me anchorage in this storm ? ...God forbid ! A sailor is always hospitable ! (Dutchman, Darland), All my riches I offer you, if you give me a new home with your family ...Have you a daughter ? ...Let her be my wife ! (Dutchman), I give you my word ...The first fair wind will take us home (Darland), In gales and storm from far of seas, my maiden, I am near you ! (Chorus). Act 2 - ...My love is out at sea, he thinks of home and his true maid ...Tralaralalalala ! (Girls), Johohoe ! Johohohoe ! Have you met the ship at sea with blood red sails and black mast ? ...every seven years, a wife to woo he goes ashore (Senta), It is I who will save you with my true love ! (Senta), Free me of my torment ! Or if you wish, oh then destroy me completely ! ...Can I ask for your hand as I am ? (Erik), That sailor, he ... you fell at the stranger's feet, I saw you clasp his knees ...I saw you two sail away (Erik), A seaman he is, like me, he asks to be our guest ...agree with your father and tomorrow he is your husband (Darland), ...I dreamed of her for restless ages, I see her now before my eyes ...he stands before me, his face lined with suffering (Dutchman, Senta), ...Could you offer your hand to a stranger ? ...I shall always obey my father ! (Dutchman, Senta), You are an angel ! An angel's love can comfort even a lost soul ! ...I well know a woman's sacred duty, take heart, then, unhappy man ! (Dutchman, Senta), Here is my hand ! And without regret till death I vow to be true ! (Senta), She gives her hand ! You are mocked, Hell, by her true love ! (Dutchman) Act 3 - We fear no wind nor treacherous coast, today we'll be right merry ! Each has a girl ashore ... (Chorus), You have a taste for cool wine ? (Girls), Steerman, leave your watch ! Steerman, join us ! Ho ! Hey ! Ye ! Ha (Chorus), Yohohoe, Yohohohoe ! The storm sweeps ashore, Furl sails ! Anchor away ! ...Run for the bay ! (Chorus), ...is it possible to offer your hand to a man who has hardly crossed your threshold ! ...No more ! Say no more ! I must, I must ! (Erik, Senta), ...when you twined your arms around my neck, didn't you declare your love anew ? (Erik), Senta, farewell ! ...Wait, unhappy man ! ...To sea ! To sea ! For ever ! Your pledge is ended, and with your pledge, my hope for grace ! (Dutchman, Senta), Wait ! You shall never flee from here ! ...I doubt you just as I doubt God ! Dead, dead is all faith ! ...do you doubt my true love ? ...unhappy man, why are you so blind ? Stay ! (Dutchman, Senta), You did vow to be true but not solemnly before God: this saves you ! ...Countless victims have paid this penalty through me ! But you shall be

saved ...The Flying Dutchman they call me ! (Dutchman), Praise your angel and his edict ! Here I stand, true to you unto death ! (Senta)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1936 Sachsische Staatsoper Dresden (Hans Hermann Nissen - Der Hollander, Margarete Teschemacher - Senta, Ludwig Weber - Daland), 1937 Royal Opera House, London (Herbert Janssen - Der Hollander, Kristen Flagstad - Senta, Ludwig Weber - Daland), 1942 Bayreuth Festival (Joel Berglund - Der Hollander, Maria Muller - Senta, Ludwig Hofmann - Daland), 1950 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Hans Hotter - Der Hollander, Astrid Varnay - Senta, Sven Nilsson - Daland), 1952 Deutsches Symphonie Orchester, Berlin (Josef Metternich - Der Hollander, Annelies Kupper - Senta, Josef Greindtl - Daland), 1960 Berliner Staatskapelle (Dietrich Fisher Dieskau - Der Hollander, Marianne Schech - Senta, Gottlob Frick - Daland), 1963 Metropolitan Opera, New York (George London - Der Hollander, Leonie Rysanek - Senta, Giorgio Tozzi - Daland), 1966 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Franz Crass - Der Hollander, Leonie Rysanek - Senta, Karl Ridderbusch - Daland), 1976 Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Norman Bailet - Der Hollander, Janis Martin - Senta, Martti Talvela - Daland), 1985 Bayreuth Festival (Simon Estes - Der Hollander, Lisbeth Balslev - Senta, Matti Salminen - Daland), 1989 Savonlinna Opera Festival (Franz Grundheber - Der Hollander, Hildegard Behrens - Senta, Matti Salminen - Daland), 1991 Deutsches Oper Berlin (Berndt Weikl - Der Hollander, Cheryl Studer - Senta, Hans Sotin - Daland), 1991 Vienna Philharmonic (Robert Hale - Der Hollander, Hildegard Behrens - Senta, Kurt Rydl - Daland), 2004 London Philharmonic Orchestra (John Tomlinson - Der Hollander, Nina Stemme - Senta, Eric Halfvarson - Daland), 2005 Turku Philharmonic Orchestra (Juha Uusitalo - Der Hollander, Paivi Nisula - Senta, Matti Salminen - Daland).

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71. The Troubadour

Title: The Troubadour (Il trovatore)

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). Born at Le Roncole (Parma, Italy), his father Carlo Giuseppe Verdi (1785-1867) was an innkeeper, while his mother Luigia Uttini (1787-1851) was a thread maker. Verdi received musical education playing the organ at the local church with the help of Pietro Baistrocchi, the local schoolmaster. At 12 years old, he began lessons with maestro di capella Ferdinando Provesi and Antonio Barezzi, the directors of the Societa Filarmonica, and by the age of 17 Verdi established himself as a leader of the Philharmonic. At 4 May 1836 Verdi was married to Margherita Barezzi, the daughter of his master and director. Margherita died only four years later, leaving a devastated Verdi to find his peace in his work. Antonio Barezzi also introduced him to Vincenzo Lavigna, maestro concertatore at La Scala in Milan who encouraged Verdi to compose and to take a subscription to La Scala. In 1835 Verdi became director of the Busseto school and in 1837 he staged his first opera at La Scala. In 1859 he married Giuseppina Strepponi (1815-1897) an operatic soprano and an old friend. In 1861 Verdi was elected to the Parliament of Piedmont Sardinia and in 1874 he was appointed member of the Italian Senate. In 1895 he planned and built a hospital at Villanova sull'Arda and his famous Casa di Riposo per Musicisti in Milan, a rest home for retired musicians. Operas: Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (1839), Un giorno di regno (1840), Nabucco (1842), I Lombardi alla prima crociata (1843), Ernani (1844), I due Foscari (1844), Giovanna d'Arco (1845), Alzira (1845), Attila (1856), Macbeth (1847), I masnadieri (1847), Jerusalem (1847), Il corsaro (1848), La battaglia di Legnano (1849), Luisa Miller (1849), Stiffelio (1850), Rigoletto (1851), Il trovatore (1853), La traviata (1853), Les vepres siciliennes (1855), Giovanna de Guzman (1855), Le trouvère (1856), Simon Boccanegra (1857), Aroldo (1857), La forza del destino (1862), Don Carlos (1867), Aida (1871), Otello (1887), Falstaff (1893). Ballet music for: Otello, Macbeth, Jerusalem, Don Carlo, Aida, Il trovatore, Il vespri siciliani. His work also includes sacred works, songs, instrumental, orchestral and chamber music.

Libretto: Salvatore Cammarano (1801-1852). Salvatore Cammarano was a prolific Italian librettist and

playwright. For Giuseppe Verdi he wrote: *Alzira* (1845), *La battaglia di Legano* (1849) and *Luisa Miller* (1849). When he died in 1852 the libretto for *Il Trovatore* was unfinished but Verdi worked with the Italian poet Leone Emanuele Bardare (1820-1874) to complete it. For Gaetano Donizetti he produced 8 libretti: *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), *L'assedio di Calais* (1836), *Belisario* (1836), *Pia de' Tolomei* (1837), *Roberto Devereux* (1837), *Maria de Rudenz* (1838), *Poliuto* (1838), *Maria di Rohan* (1843). He also wrote numerous libretti for other composers, such as: Egisto Vignozzi, Giuseppe Persiani, Giuseppe Staffa, Felice Romani, Severio Mercadante, Luigi Cammarano, Giuseppe Lillo, Alessandro Nini, Giovanni Pacini, Federico Ricci, Achille Peri, Vincenzo Battista, Nicola De Giosa. The story for this libretto was based on the play *El trovador* (1836) by the Spanish poet and playwright Antonio Garcia Gutierrez (1813-1884). Verdi's wife, Giuseppina Strepponi has translated the play in 1849 and urged him to produce an operatic version. In January 1850 Verdi turned the work to Cammarano and their correspondence continued until May 1851 when Verdi concluded an agreement with the Rome Opera to present *Il Trovatore* for the winter Carnival. In July 1852 Cammarano died with the third act still unfinished. After a few more days of work with Leone Bardare the work was finished in December 1852.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 19 January 1853 at the Teatro Apollo in Rome. Conducted by Emilio Angelini, the performance starred tenor Carlo Baucarde as Manrico and mezzo soprano Emilia Goggi as Azucena. In the following three years there were 229 productions worldwide. The first performance in Paris of the Italian version was staged on 23 December 1854 by the Theatre Italien at the Salle Ventadour with Lodovico Graziani as Manrico. In the United States the first performance by the Italian Opera Company was staged on 2 May 1855 at the Academy of Music in New York. In London, the opera premiered on 10 May 1855 at the Covent Garden with Enrico Tamberlick as Manrico. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York the opera entered its repertoire on 26 October 1883. While Verdi was in Paris in 1855, the director of the Opera de Paris, Francois Louis Crosnier proposed him to revise his opera as a grand opera in French, including a ballet. Verdi agreed and the French version with a libretto translated by Emilien Pacini was first performed at La Monnaie in Brussels on 20 May 1856. In Paris, the French version was first produced on 12 January 1857 at the Paris Opera, with Louis Gueymard as Manrico and Adelaide Borghi Mamo as Azucena. In the 20th century more than 80 recordings were produced, among which those at: Milan (1930, 1953, 1956, 1963, 1964, 2000), Naples (1951), New York (1952, 1983, 1991, 2011), Florence (1956, 1990), Rome (1959, 1964, 1984), Vienna (1962, 1978), London (1969, 1976, 1980, 2001), Berlin (1977), Sydney (1988), Bratislava (1999), Catania (2001), Parma (2010), Ludwigsburg (2011). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *The Troubadour* was performed in the world for 1019 times, in 264 different productions, ranking 20 on Operabase list.

Roles: Count di Luna (baritone), Manrico, a troubadour and officer (tenor), Azucena, a gypsy woman (mezzo soprano), Leonora, a noble lady (soprano), Ferrando, officer (bass), Ines, Leonora's confidante (soprano), Ruiz, Manrico's soldier (tenor), An old gypsy (bass), A messenger (tenor), Chorus (Leonora's friends, nuns, servants, warriors, gypsies)



Story: Biscay and Aragon in the fifteenth century. The heart of a gypsy is not to play with. Even kings and nobles should be aware. In the capital of Aragon, in the midst of the Inquisition era, a gypsy woman was burned to the stake being accused that she has cursed a noble baby, just by looking at him. After the execution, the noble boy was missing, replaced by the remains of a burned child, and a young gypsy was spotted running with a baby. Many years later, Count Luna falls in love for a rich girl, but she loves an unknown troubadour.

The two knights fight, repeatedly, and the Count wins. The girl commits suicide, her lover is executed while the gypsy girl claims her revenge. It turns out that the mysterious troubadour was Count Luna's little brother, replaced for her own child. Definitely, the lives of nobels and gypsies are not to mix.

Act 1 (A hall in the Aliaferia palace, a door to apartments / The garden of the palace)

Ferrando informs his men that Count Luna is jealous on a troubadour, whose song rises near the house of his beloved. Asked by his soldiers Ferrando recalls the story of the Count's family (There lived a happy father of two sons ...a dark, despicable gypsy crone ! ...the child disappeared and they found ...a child's skeleton, half burnt, still smoking !). The witch was burned to the stake, but her cursed daughter survived and it is common belief that the witch's soul still lives and shows herself in various shapes (It's true ! It's true ! It's true ! ...On the edge of the rooftops). Scene 2 - Leonora waits for her lover and Ines wanders where did the first spark burst her (At the tourney. There appeared in black armour and black helmet ...an unknown warrior who won the honors of the arena). Leonora continues her story (The serene night was silent ...a troubadour sang some melancholy verses ...There he was, it was he !). Ines's advice is to try to forget him, but Leonora is resolute (Forget him ! ...my heart is intoxicated ...if I can't live for him, then for him I will die). As they enter their rooms, Count Luna appears (Ah, the flame of love burns my every fibre ! I must see you, you must hear me). A lute is heard and the voice of a troubadour (All alone on the earth, at war with his evil fate ...he's greater than any king, greater is the Troubadour). Leonora comes down in the garden and runs towards the Count. Manrico is outraged and comes out from his hide. Hearing his voice, Leonora throws herself at Manrico's feet (Ah, the darkness deceived me ! ...I love you, I swear it, love you with eternal, immense love !). The Count dares the troubadour to reveal his name and gets his answer (Know me then: I'm Manrico). The Count and Manrico agree to a duel while Leonora hopelessly tries to stop them (My spurned and jealous love burns in me with a terrible flame ! ...plunge your sword into this heart that cannot, will not love you ...Destiny has given to me her heart and your life !). Leonora falls senseless while the two men go off, swords in hand.

Act 2 (The slopes of a mountain, a camp fire / The cloister of a convent, at night)

A band of gypsies are singing by the fire (Who brightens the gypsy man's day ? The Gypsy maid). Azucena sings a sad gypsy song (The flame crackles ! ...Surrounded by killers ...The victim arrives, dressed in black, dishevelled, barefoot !). Manrico asks Azucena to tell the story from the song and she responds (This is the story of your grandmother ...A haughty Count accused her of witchcraft ...she was burned where that fire gleams !). And her story continues (I managed to steal the Count's son the fatal madness ...I had burned my own, my own son !). Manrico is astonished (I'm not your son ! Who am I ? ...Haven't I always been a mother, a tender mother to you ?). Manrico recalls his duel with Count Luna (The evil Count Luna fell upon me with his escort: I fell ! ...he had already fallen to the ground ...a cry came down from heaven that said to me: Don't strike !). A horn is heard and a messenger brings a letter (...the Prince's orders are that you shall supervise its defence ...deceived by the cry of your death in the nearby Holy Cross Convent, Leonora will take the veil). Azucena tries to stop him, but Manrico rushes down the hill. Scene 2 - The Count enters the convent with Fernando and his retainers (I've come in time ! ...My rival killed ...Leonora is mine ! ...In vain a rival God opposes my love). From the convent, voices of nuns are heard (Come, let the veil hide you from every human eye ...Turn to heaven and heaven will be disclosed to you). Leonora enters the scene followed by a train of women preparing to take the veil. Count Luna bursts in (No, never ! The only altar for you is the nuptial altar). Manrico enters the scene to everyone's surprise (This is a dream, an ecstasy, a supernatural enchantment ! ...So the dead can leave death's eternal realm !). The Count draws his sword but is disarmed by Manrico's followers. Manrico goes off with Leonora and the nuns take refuge in the convent.

Act 3 (A military camp with Count Luna's tent / A hall at Castellor with a balcony)

The soldiers are playing dices and singing (Let the warlike trumpet sound and echo, call to arms ...the glory awaits us). Fernando informs the Count that Azucena was caught spying near the camp. Interrogated Azucena responds (It's the gypsy custom to move her wandering steps without a plan, the sky is her roof). Count Luna asks her about the Count's son stolen from his castle, but Azucena denies knowledge. Still Fernando recognizes her (She's the one ! She's the one who burned the child !). Azucena cries for help, while Count Luna jubilates (Why don't you come, Manrico ? ...With your torture then I can wound his heart !). Scene 2 - Leonora warries hearing the sound of arms and Manrico explains (The danger is great. At dawn tomorrow we'll be attacked ...Let love, sublime love, at this moment speak to your heart). From the balcony, Manrico can see

Azucena in chains and the soldiers preparing a pyre (Unhappy mother, I hasten to save you, or at least, hasten to die with you !). Manrico, Ruiz and his men prepare for the fight.

Act 4 (A wing in the Aliaferia palace / A horrible dungeon)

Ruiz is leading Leonora to the prisoners tower (Moaning wind, you who blow here, ah, mercifully take my sights to him). Inside monks are heard praying. Manrico also prays (I'm paying with my blood for the love I bore you ! Don't forget, don't forget me). Leonora also prays to herself (Either to the cost of my life I shall save your life). Count Luna appears and Leonora dares to ask mercy for him (Mercy ! ...You're raving ! ...Triumph upon my corpse, but save the Troubadour ! ...The more you love him, the worse my fury flames up !). Finally the Count agrees to free Manrico in exchange for her love. Secretly, Leonora drinks the poison concealed in her ring (You'll have me ...but as a cold and lifeless corpse). Scene 2 - Manrico and Azucena can not sleep in the dungeon (The stake ! The stake ! The stake ! That horrible word ! ...If you love me still ...seek oblivion in sleep ...and rest and calm). Leonora comes in (You won't die, I've come to save you ! ...at what price ? You won't speak ? ...Oh, how unjust ! ...Sold a heart sworn to me !). Finally Leonora confesses (I have death in my breast ! ...Feel my hand is icy ...Heaven, what have you done !). The Count appears at the entrance (Ah ! she wanted to deceive me ! ...Rather than live as an other's I wanted to die yours ! ...And I like a madman dared to curse this angel). As Leonora dies, Manrico is dragged by the soldiers to the block. Count Luna draws Azucena to the window to see the execution (He was your brother ! ...He ! What horror ! ...Mother, you are avenged ! ...And I still live !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - There lived a happy father of two sons ...a dark, despicable gypsy crone ! ...the child disappeared and they found ...a child's skeleton, half burnt, still smoking ! (Ferrando), It's true ! It's true ! It's true ! ...On the edge of the rooftops (Chorus), At the tourney. There appeared in black armour and black helmet ...an unknown warrior who won the honors of the arena (Leonora), The serene night was silent ...a troubadour sang some melancholy verses ...There he was, it was he ! (Leonora), Forget him ! ...my heart is intoxicated ...if I can't live for him, then for him I will die (Leonora), Ah, the flame of love burns my every fibre ! I must see you, you must hear me (Count Luna), All alone on the earth, at war with his evil fate ...he's greater than any king, greater is the Troubadour (Manrico), Ah, the darkness deceived me ! ...I love you, I swear it, love you with eternal, immense love ! (Leonora), Know me then: I'm Manrico (Manrico), My spurned and jealous love burns in me with a terrible flame ! ...plunge your sword into this heart tah cannot, will not love you ...Destiny has given to me her heart and your life ! (Count Luna, Leonora, Manrico). Act 2 - Who brightens the gypsy man's day ? The Gypsy maid (Chorus), The flame crackles ! ...Surrounded by killers ...The victim arrives, dressed in black, dishevelled, barefoot ! (Azucena), This is the story of your grandmother ...A haughty Count accused her of witchcraft ...she was burned where that fire gleams ! (Azucena), I managed to steal the Count's son ...the fatal madness ...I had burned my own, my own son ! (Azucena), I'm not your son ! Who am I ? ...Haven't I always been a mother, a tender mother to you ? (Manrico, Azucena), The evil Count Luna fell upon me with his escort: I fell ! ...he had already fallen to the ground ...a cry came down from heaven that said to me: Don't strike ! (Manrico), ...the Prince's orders are that you shall supervise its defence ...deceived by the cry of your death in the nearby Holy Cross Convent, Leonora will take the veil (Manrico), I've come in time ! ...My rival killed ...Leonora is mine ! ...In vain a rival God opposes my love (Count Luna), Come, let the veil hide you from every human eye ...Turn to heaven and heaven will be disclosed to you (Nuns), No, never ! The only altar for you is the nuptial altar (Count Luna), This is a dream, an ecstasy, a supernatural enchantment ! ...So the dead can leave death's eternal realm ! (Leonora, Count Luna) Act 3 - Let the warlike trumpet sound and echo, call to arms ...the glory awaits us (Chorus), It's the gypsy custom to move her wandering steps without a plan, the sky is her roof (Azucena), She's the one ! She's the one who burned the child ! (Fernando), Why don't you come, Manrico ? ...With your torture then I can wound his heart ! (Azucena, Count Luna), The danger is great. At dawn tomorrow we'll be attacked ...Let love, sublime love, at this moment speak to your heart (Manrico), Unhappy mother, I hasten to save you, or at least, hasten to die with you ! (Manrico) Act 4 - Moaning wind, you who blow here, ah, mercifully take my sights to him (Leonora), I'm paying with my blood for the love I bore you ! Don't forget, don't forget me (Manrico), Either to the cost of my life I shall save your life (Leonora), Mercy ! ...You're raving ! ...Triumph upon my corpse, but save the Troubadour ! ...The more you love him, the worse my fury flames up ! (Leonora, Count Luna), You'll have me ...but as a cold and lifeless corpse (Leonora), The stake ! The stake ! The stake ! That horrible word ! ...If you love me still ...seek oblivion in sleep ...and rest and calm (Azucena, Manrico), You won't die, I've come to

save you ! ...at what price ? Tou won't speak ? ...Oh, how unjust ! ...Sold a heart sworn to me ! (Leonora, Manrico), I have death in my breast ! ...Feel my hand is icy ...Heaven, what have you done ! (Leonora, Manrico), Ah ! she wanted to deceive me ! ...Rather than live as an other's I wanted to die yours ! ..And I like a madman dared to curse this angel (Count Luna, Leonora, Manrico), He was your brother ! ...He ! What horror ! ...Mother, you are avenged ! ...And I still live ! (Azucena, Count Luna).

Ballet: In the French version a ballet movement was inserted in Act 3, following the soldiers chorus, with gypsy girls dancing to entertain them.

Recordings: 1930 La Scala, Milan (Aureliano Pertile - Manrico, Maria Carena - Leonora, Irene Minghini - Azucena, Apollo Granforte - Di Luna), 1951 Teatro di San Carlo, Naples (Giacomo Lauri Volpi - Manrico, Maria Callas - Leonora, Cloe Elmo - Azucena, Paolo Silveri - Di Luna), 1956 Grand Theatre Geneve (Mario del Monaco - Manrico, Renata Tebaldi - Leonora, Giuletta Simionato - Azucena, Ugo Savarese - Di Luna), 1962 Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux (Tony Poncet - Manrico, Michele Le Bris - Leonora, Elise Khan - Azucena, Louis Quilico - Di Luna), 1963 La Scala, Milan (Carlo Bergonzi - Manrico, Antonietta Stella - Leonora, Fiorenza Cossoto - Azucena, Ettore Bastianini - Di Luna), 1969 New Philharmonia Orchestra, London (Placido Domingo - Manrico, Leontyne Price - Leonora, Fiorenza Cossoto - Azucena, Sherrill Milnes - Di Luna), 1976 National Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Luciano Pavarotti - Manrico, Joan Sutherland - Leonora, Marilyn Horne - Azucena, Ingvar Wixel - Di Luna), 1980 Royal Opera House (Jose Carreras - Manrico, Katia Ricciarelli - Leonora, Stefania Toczyńska - Azucena, Yuri Mazurok - Di Luna), 1991 Metropolitan Opera (Placido Domingo - Manrico, Aprile Millo - Leonora, Dolores Zajak - Azucena, Vladimir Chernov - Di Luna), 2000 La Scala, Milan (Salvatore Licita - Manrico, Barbara Frittoli - Leonora, Violeta Urmana - Azucena, Leo Nucci - Di Luna), 2001 Teatro Massimo Bellini (Andrea Bocelli - Manrico, Veronica Villarroel - Leonora, Elena Zaremba - Azucena, Carlo Guelfi - Di Luna), She's the one ! She's the one who burned the child ! (Fernando), Why don't you come, Manrico ? ...With your torture then I can wound his heart ! (Azucena, Count Luna)

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72. Così fan tutte

Title: Così fan tutte (La scuola degli amanti, The School for Lovers)

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Born in Salzburg, his father Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) was a composer, kapellmeister and an experienced teacher, while his mother Ana Maria Pertl (1720-1778) was the daughter of Nicolaus Pertl, the deputy prefect of Hildenstein. He was the youngest of seven children, five of whom died in infancy. Together with his sister Maria Anna Mozart (1751-1829) both children were exhibited as musicians from the age of five. From 1762 to 1768 Mozart family made an European journey concerting to the courts of Munich, Mannheim, Paris, London, Hague, Zurich, Vienna. From 1769 to 1773 Mozart has traveled to Italy to be accepted as a member of Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna. In 1773 he was employed by Prince Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo as a court musician in Salzburg. His career in Vienna began in 1781 under the patronage of Emperor Joseph II of Habsburg and he soon established himself as the finest keyboard player in Vienna. In 1777 he was honoured by Pope Clement XIV as Knight of the Order of the Golden Spur. In 1782 he married Constanze Weber (1762-1842), also a member of a family of musicians and the fruit of their marriage were six children of whom only two survived. In 1787 Emperor Joseph II appointed him as his chamber composer paying 800 florins a year. Operas: Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots (1767), Apollo et Hyacinthus (1767), Bastien und Bastienne (1768), La finta semplice (1768), Mitridate, re di Ponto (1770), Ascanio in Alba (1771), Il sogno di Scipione (1772), Lucio Silla (1772), La finta giardiniera (1774), Il re pastore (1775), Thamos, König in Ägypten (1779), Zaide (1779), Idomeno, re di Creta (1781), Die Entführung aus dem Serail (1782), L'oca del Cairo (1784), Lo sposo deluso (1784), Der Schauspieldirektor (1786), Le Nozze di Figaro (1786), Don Giovanni (1787), Così fan Tutte (1790), Der Stein der Weisen (1790), La clemenza di Tito (1791), Die Zauberflöte (1791). His work include more than 600 compositions of symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic

and choral music.

Libretto: Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749-1838). Lorenzo Da Ponte was an Italian librettist who wrote 3 libretti for Mozart: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*. He also produced another 25 libretti for other 10 composers, among which: Antonio Salieri (*La Scuola di gelosi*, *Il ricco d'un giorno*, *Il Talismano*, *Il Pastor fido*, *La cifra*), Vicente Martin Soler (*Il burbero di buon cuore*, *Una cosa rara*, *L'arbore di Diana*, *La Capricciosa corretta*), Francesco Bianchi (*Antigona*, *Il consiglio imprudente*, *Merope*, *Cinna*, *Armida*), Peter Winter (*La grotta di Calipso*, *Il trionfo dell'amor fraterno*, *Il ratto di Proserpina*). He also produced poetry, cantatas, oratorios, translations, books of elementary instruction. The libretto for this opera was based on the theme of fiancée swapping in disguise, earlier found in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* and in William Shakespeare's play *Cymbeline*. It is commonly held that the opera was written and composed at the suggestion of the Emperor Joseph II, just like *The Abduction from Serail*, but researchers work does not support this idea. Still the Emperor was a lover and patron of arts and is remembered as such. Antonio Salieri tried to set the libretto but only two *terzetti* were uncovered in the Austrian National Library.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 26 January 1790 at the Burgtheater in Vienna. The composer conducted the performance of sopranos Adriana Ferrarese and Louise Villeneuve, versus tenor Vincenzo Calvesi and basses Francesco Nenucci and Francesco Bussani. After only five performances it was stopped by the death of Emperor Joseph II followed by a period of court mourning. The first British performance was in May 1811 at the King's Theatre, London. Severely condemned by the Victorian morality of the 19th century, the opera was destined to gather dust for several decades, due to the satire directed against the female sex. Beethoven himself recommended this opera to be avoided because it's blatant immorality. In the United States of America the opera was not performed until 1922 when it was staged by the Metropolitan Opera. In 1935, the German composer Fritz Busch offered a long delayed revival of the opera at the Glyndebourne Festival and since then *Così fan tutte* gradually gained its present popularity. Since 1935, notable performances were recorded at: Glyndebourne (1935, 2006), New York (1952), London (1954, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1986, 1989, 1994), Vienna (1955, 1968, 1974, 1982, 1988, 1990), Milan (1956, 1989), Strassbourg (1977), Berlin (1963, 1969, 1989), Drottningham (1984), Amsterdam (1991), Edinburgh (1995), Köln (1999), Madrid (2013). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *Così fan tutte* was performed in the world for 1489 times, in 340 different productions, ranking 16 on Operabase list.

Roles: Fiordiligi (soprano), Dorabella (mezzo soprano), Guglielmo, officer (baritone), Ferrando, officer (tenor), Despina, maid (soprano), Don Alfonso, old philosopher (bass)



Story: The motor that drives this opera buffa is the aristocratic game of pretending. In love with two sisters, two officers play a masquerade to test their hearts. Much to their surprise, the girls finally fall for the bait. Fortunately, they are grown up boys, willing to forgive the erratic hearts of women. In the comedy of life, "all's well that ends well".

Act 1 (A coffee house / A garden by the seashore / A room with three doors / In the garden)

Don Alfonso challenges the trust of Ferrando and Guglielmo in their girlfriends, Dorabella and Fiordiligi (Heaven made her as faithful as she is fair ...I believe her constancy equals her beauty ...My hair is already grey,

I speak with authority). Dared to defend his words with his sword, Don Alfonso is a peaceable man and responds kidding (Woman's constancy is like the Arabian Phoenix; everyswears it exists, but no one knows where). Don Alfonso also offers to instruct them how to secretly test their girlfriends. Scene 2 - Sisters Dorabella and Fiordiligi discuss their boyfriends (If one could ever find a nobler face ...See what fire is in his eye). Scene 3 - Don Alfonso is welcomed by the girls, but he sheds a tear (I would speak, but my courage fails ...The royal command has called them to the battlefield). Scene 4 - Both officers appear in travelling clothes. Both girls dare them in chorus (Now that we have heard the news ...be brave and plunge your blade into this heart). The all must bid farewell (Thus destiny confounds our mortal hopes). Scene 5 - A boat arrives at the shore and soldiers enter the scene singing (A soldier's life for me ! ...The sound of trumpets and fifes). Weeping the girls reassure the boys that they will remain faithful. Scene 6 - Left alone with Don Alfonso the girls moan (Heaven grant it a safe voyage ! ...May Heaven protect them too on the field of the battle !). When alone, Don Alfonso recalls (I'm not a bad actor ! ...Poor fools). Scene 8 - Despina is whipping chocolate (Oh dearest ladies, you have the substance and I only the smell !). Scene 9 - The sisters enter the room and Dorabella sings her sorrow threatening with suicide (If I remain alive I will furnish the Furies with a wretched example of tragic love). Hearing the news, Despina is cheering them (...you lose this two but all the rest are left ...The others have everything that these have). Since the girls are reluctant she must insist (You look for fidelity in men, in soldiers ...corcodile tears, lying looks, deceiving words, false endearments are the basis of their tricks). Scene 10 - Don Alfonso plans to prepare Despina for the events to follow (A tip works wonders with a ladies' maid). When Despina enters he offers her a gold coin in return for her help in replacing the like with like. Scene 11 - Ferrando and Guglielmo in disguise are double checked by Despina (To be quite frank, they're exceptional in their ugliness). When the girls enter the room, the boys try their luck, but they are rejected (Begone, bold creatures ! Leave this house ! ...Like a rock standing impervious to winds and tempest, so stands my heart). The boys are determined not to give up the fight (Make us happy and love with us, and we will make you in return the happiest of women). The girls leave the room without replay. Scene 12 - Ferrando and Guglielmo are laughing preparing to skip their lunch (A heart nourished on the hope of love has no need of greater inducement). Scene 13 - Don Alfonso and Despina reinforce their plan. Scene 14 - In the garden the sisters are mourning their grief. Scene 15 - Ferrando and Guglielmo appear and they both drink from a phial (May arsenic set me free from such cruelty !). Pitying them, the girls are comprehensive and send Despina for a doctor with an antidote. Scene 16 - Despina returns disguised as a doctor and treats the patients by the use of a magnet. The boys recover but are still under the effect of the poison (Are you Pallas or Cytherea ? No, you are my fair goddess !). They embrace the girls and kiss their hands asking for a kiss of kindness, but the girls remain firm (Despairing or poisoned, go to the devil, the lot of you).

Act 2 (A room / A garden by the seashore / A salon brilliantly lit)

Despina is instructing the girls how to act like women (Treat love lightly. Never neglect an opportunity ...flirt with charm ...have your cake and eat it too). And Despina continues (...till they return, act like the army: go recruiting !). Finally Despina concludes with an aria (At fifteen a woman should know the ways of the world).

Scene 2 - The two girls consider the idea (Follow her counsel ? ...Of course, if you stood everything upside down ...getting ourselves talked about !). Making up their mind they sing (I'll take the dark one ...I'll laugh and joke a bit with the fair one). Scene 3 - Don Alfonso invites the girls in the garden. Scene 4 - On a barge decorated with flowers Ferrando and Guglielmo sing together with singers and musicians (Ye friendly breezes ...carry my sights to the goddess of my heart). As the girls approach they engage in a quartet (Give me your hand ...give me your arm and sigh no more). Scene 5 - Exchanging tender words Guglielmo and Dorabella engage in a duet (This heart I give you, my adored one ...You've given it and I take it, but mine I cannot give). Scene 6 - Ferrando and Fiordiligi also exchange tender words. Scene 7 - Left alone, Ferrando recalls (I burn, and my ardor is no longer the outcome of a virtuous love). Scene 8 - The boys recollect their achievements (We've won, my boy ! ...Two of a kind ? ...She was keeping herself pure as a dove ...She gave me this little portrait). Guglielmo sings an aria of infidelity (A thousand times I've drawn my sword to defend your honour). Scene 9 - Ferrando reconsiders (So unusual and novel is my situation ...Betrayed and scorned by a faithless heart). With half of the work done, Don Alfonso prepares another experiment. Scene 10 - Fiordiligi is prepared to give up her resistance too (The devil is in me; let him take me). Her sister sings an encouraging aria (Love is a little thief, a little serpent is she). Scene 11 - Fiordiligi asks Despina to bring her from the wardrobe the swords, helmets and tunics of their lovers. Scene 12 - Fiordiligi meditates (Ferrando's uniform will fit me, Dorabella can take Guglielmo's). When Ferrando enters the two engage in a duet (In pity's name, what do you ask of me ?

...Your heart or my death ...Do with me what you will). Scene 13 - The boys argue regarding their double victory, but Don Alfonso comes with a solution (I know what to do: marry them ...Everyone blames women, but I forgive them). Scene 14 - Despina declares the outcome of the experiment (Victory, gentlemen ! The dear ladies are disposed to marry you). Scene 15 - Everything is set for the marriage of the two mistresses. Don Alfonso is satisfied (Well done ! Splendid ! What abundance ! What elegance !). Scene 16 - Everyone sings (Blessed be the two bridegrooms and their lovely brides !). Scene 17 - Disguised as a notary, in a nasal voice, Despina reads the contract (By this contract drawn up by me the following are joined in matrimony). Just after they sign, the sound of drums is heard and soldiers singing. The girls and boys hide in separate rooms. Scene 18 - Ferrando and Guglielmo enter in their military cloaks and caps. They are intrigued by the presence of a notary, but Despina reveals herself, much to the surprise of the girls (...it's not a notary; it's Despina in fancy dress). Finding the contract declare the treachery and Don Alfonso leads them to the room where the traitors have hidden. When they return, they are dressed half as officers, half in their disguise costumes. Stupefied, the girls are indicating Don Alfonso as the deceiver but he defends himself (I deceived you, but my deception undeceived your lovers Give me your hands, now you're united ...all four of you can laugh now). To everyone's content the pairs reinforce their oaths and they all sing (Happy is the man who looks at everything on the right side).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Heaven made her as faithful as she is fair ...I believe her constancy equals her beauty ...My hair is already grey, I speak with authority (Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso). Woman's constancy is like the Arabian Phoenix; everyswears it exists, but no one knows where (Don Alfonso), If one could ever find a nobler face ...See what fire is in his eye (Fiordiligi, Dorabella), I would speak, but my courage fails ...The royal command has called them to the battlefield (Don Alfonso), Now that we have heard the news ...be brave and plunge your blade into this heart (Fiordiligi, Dorabella), Thus destiny confounds our mortal hopes (All), A soldier's life for me ! ...The sound of trumpets and fifes (Chorus), Heaven grant it a safe voyage ! ...May Heaven protect them too on the field of the battle (Fiordiligi, Dorabella), I'm not a bad actor ! ...Poor fools (Don Alfonso), Oh dearest ladies, you have the substance and I only the smell (Despina), If I remain alive I will furnish the Furies with a wretched example of tragic love (Dorabella), ...you lose this two but all the rest are left ...The others have everything that these have (Despina), You look for fidelity in men, in soldiers ...crocodile tears, lying looks, deceiving words, false endearments are the basis of their tricks (Despina), A tip works wonders with a ladies' maid (Don Alfonso), To be quite frank, they're exceptional in their ugliness (Despina), Begone, bold creatures ! Leave this house ! ...Like a rock standing impervious to winds and tempest, so stands my heart (Fiordiligi), Make us happy and love with us, and we will make you in return the happiest of women (Guglielmo), A heart nourished on the hope of love has no need of greater inducement (Ferrando), May arsenic set me free from such cruelty ! (Ferrando, Guglielmo), Are you Pallas or Cytherea ? No, you are my fair goddess ! (Ferrando, Guglielmo), Despairing or poisoned, go to the devil, the lot of you (Fiordiligi, Dorabella). Act 2 - Treat love lightly. Never neglect an opportunity ...flirt with charm ...have your cake and eat it too (Despina), ...till they return, act like the army: go recruiting ! (Despina), At fifteen a woman should know the ways of the world (Despina), Follow her counsel ? ...Of course, if you stood everything upside down ...getting ourselves talked about ! (Fiordiligi, Dorabella), I'll take the dark one ...A'll laugh and joke a bit with the fair one (Fiordiligi, Dorabella), Ye friendly breezes ...carry my sighs to the goddess of my heart (Ferrando, Guglielmo, Chorus), Give me your hand ...give me your arm and sigh no more (Ferrando, Guglielmo, Don Alfonso, Despina), This heart I give you, my adored one ...You've given it and I take it, but mine I cannot give (Guglielmo, Dorabella), I burn, and my ardor is no longer the outcome of a virtuous love (Ferrando), We've won, my boy ! ...Two of a kind ? ...She was keeping herself pure as a dove ...She gave me this little picture (Fiordiligi, Dorabella), A thousand times I've drawn my sword to defend your honour (Guglielmo), So unusual and novel is my situation ...Betrayed and scorned by a faithless heart (Ferrando), The devil is in me; let him take me (Fiordiligi), Love is a little thief, a little serpent is she (Dorabella), Ferrando's uniform will fit me, Dorabella can take Guglielmo's (Fiordiligi), In pity's name, what do you ask of me ? ...Your heart or my death ...Do with me what you will (Fiordiligi, Ferrando), I know what to do: marry them ...Everyone blames women, but I forgive them (Don Alfonso), Victory, gentlemen ! The dear ladies are disposed to marry you (Despina), Well done ! Splendid ! What abundance ! What elegance ! (Don Alfonso), Blessed be the two bridegrooms and their lovely brides ! (Chorus), By this contract drawn up by me the following are joined in matrimony (Despina), ...it's not a notary; it's Despina in fancy dress (Despina), I deceived you, but my deception undeceived your lovers Give me your hands, now you're united ...all four of you can laugh now (Don Alfonso), Happy is the

man who looks at everything on the right side (All).

Ballet: In April 2017 at the Palace Opera in Paris director and choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker had produced a double version of music and ballet for Mozart's *Così fan tutti*, with six famous singers and six dancers of the Compagnie Rosas. The performance was conducted by Philippe Jordan, casting: Jacquelin Wagner (Fiordiligi), Michele Losier (Dorabella), Frederic Antoun (Ferrando), Philippe Sly (Guglielmo), Paulo Szot (Don Alfonso), Ginger Costa Jackson (Despina).

Recordings: 1935 Glyndebourne Festival Opera (Ina Souez - Fiordiligi, Luise Helletsgruber - Dorabella, Irene Eisinger - Despina, Heddle Nash - Ferrando, Willi Domgraf - Guglielmo, John Brownlee - Alfonso), 1952 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Eleanor Steber - Fiordiligi, Blanche Thebom - Dorabella, Roberta Peters - Despina, Richard Tucker - Ferrando, Frank Guarrera - Guglielmo, Lorenzo Alvary - Alfonso), 1968 Vienna State Opera (Gundula Janowitz - Fiordiligi, Christa Ludwig - Dorabella, Olivera Miljakovic - Despina, Adolf Dallapozza - Ferrando, Walter Berry - Guglielmo, Eberhard Wachter - Alfonso), 1974 Royal Opera House (Montserrat Caballe - Fiordiligi, Janet Baker - Dorabella, Ileana Cotrubas - Despina, Nicolai Gedda - Ferrando, Wladimiro Ganzarolli - Guglielmo, Richard Van Alan - Alfonso), 1989 Berlin Philharmonic (Lella Cuberli - Fiordiligi, Cecilia Bartoli - Dorabella, Joan Rodgers - Despina, Kurt Streit - Ferrando, Ferruccio Furlanetto - Guglielmo, John Tomlinson - Alfonso), 1999 Concerto Koln Dresdner Kammerchor (Veronique Gens - Fiordiligi, Bernarda Fink - Dorabella, Graciela Oddone - Despina, Werner Gura - Ferrando, Marcel Boone - Guglielmo, Pietro Spagnoli - Alfonso), 2013 Teatro Real, Madrid (Anett Fritsch - Fiordiligi, Paola Gardina - Dorabella, Kerstin Avemo - Despina, Juan Gatell - Ferrando, Andreas Wolf - Guglielmo, William Shimell - Alfonso)

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73. **Iolanta**

Title: Iolanta (Iolanda, Iolanthe)

Composer: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Born in Votkinsk, in the Russian Empire to a family with a long line of military service, his father Ilya Petrovich Tchaikovsky has served as a lieutenant colonel in the Department of Mines, while his mother Alexandra Andreyevna had half French ancestry. Tchaikovsky began piano lessons at age five and at 10 he joined the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. In 1855 his father founded some private lessons with Rudolph Kunding. In 1861 Tchaikovsky attended Russian Musical Society and in 1862 he enrolled at the Conservatory where he studied music theory with Nikolai Zarembo and composition with Anton Rubinstein. He graduated in 1865 when he was offered a post of Professor of Music Theory at the Moscow Conservatory. Tchaikovsky lived as a bachelor for most of his life, except for a two months marriage with Antonina Miliukova, a former student. In 1884 Tsar Alexander III conferred upon him the Order of St. Vladimir, which included a title of hereditary nobility. In the 1889-90 season he served as director of the Russian Musical Society and since 1887 he also substituted as a conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1892 Pyotr Tchaikovsky was voted a member of the Académie des Beaux Arts in France and the following year he was awarded a honorary Doctor of Music degree at the University of Cambridge.

Operas: *The Voyevoda* (1868), *Undina* (1869), *The Oprichnik* (1872), *Vakula the Smith* (1874), *Eugene Onegin* (1878), *The Maid of Orleans* (1879), *Mazepa* (1883), *Cherevichki* (1885), *The Enchantress* (1877), *The Queen of Spades* (1890), *Iolanta* (1891). **Ballet:** *Swan Lake* (1876), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1889), *The Nutcracker* (1892). **Symphonies:** *Winter Daydreams*, *Little Russian*, *Polish*, No 4, No 5, *Manfred*, *Pathétique*, *Symphony in E-flat*. **Concertos:** *Piano Concerto No 1 to No 3*, *Cello Concerto*, *Violin Concerto*, *Concert Fantasia*. His work also includes instrumental music, orchestral suites, serenades, chamber music, choral music and arrangements of the works of other composers.

Libretto: Modest Tchaikovsky (1850-1916). Modest Tchaikovsky, the composer's younger brother, was a dramatist and librettist with a degree in law at the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. He wrote three plays (*Prekrasnyy den v Peterburge*, *Simfoniya*, *Den v Peterburge*) and six libretti for: Pyotr Tchaikovsky (*The Queen of Spades*, *Iolanta*), Sergei Rachmaninoff (*Francesca da Rimini*), Eduard Napravnik (*Dubrovsky*), Arseny

Koreschenko (Ledyanoy dom), Anton Arensky (Nal'i Damayanty). He also translated sonets by William Shakespeare and was the first biographer of his brother. This libretto was based on the Danish play Kong Renes Datter (King Rene's Daughter) by the Danish poet and lawyer Henrik Hertz (1797-1870). The play presents a highly romanticised account of the life of Yolande, Duchess of Lorraine (1428-1483) and it was translated into almost every European language. In Henrik Hertz's play she is portrayed as a beautiful blind princess living in an isolated garden paradise, but there is no evidence that she was ever blind. The Russian translation by Fyodor Miller was adapted by Vladimir Zotov, whose version was used for the libretto. In fictional literature (The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail), Iolande de Bar was alleged to be the tenth Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, a fraternal organisation founded by crusader Godfrey of Bouillon in the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1099. Other supposed Grand Masters of the organisations were: Sandro Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, Victor Hugo, Claude Debussy, Jean Cocteau.

Performance history: The opera received its premiere on 18 December 1892 at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg. Conducted by Eduard Napravnik, with sets designed by Mikhail Bocharov the opera enjoyed a favorable public reception. Soprano Medea Mei Figner was distributed in the title role, bass Konstantin Serebryakov was King Rene and tenor Nikolay Figner was Count Vaudemont. The premiere shared a double bill with the composer's last ballet, The Nutcracker. The first performance outside Russia was in Hamburg, on 3 January 1893, with Gustav Mahler conducting the performance. Gustav Mahler also conducted the Vienna premiere on 22 March 1900. In 1947 Iolanta premiered at the Bayerische Staatsoper, together with the ballet The Nutcracker. A film version of the opera was produced in Riga in 1963 and released overseas in 1974. In the United States Iolanta was produced in 1997 and 2011 by the Dicapo Opera in New York. At the Metropolitan Opera the performance premiered in 2015, with Anna Netrebko in the title role. Memorable recordings of the opera were produced at: Moscow (1940, 1963, 1977, 2002), Stuttgart (1950), Paris (1984), Milano (1989), Warsaw (1993), Buenos Aires (1993), Kirov (1994), Novosibirsk (1996), Santa Cecilia (2001), Madrid (2012), Saint Petersburg (2012), Berlin (2015), Cologne (2015). From 2004 and up to the end of the 2017/18 season, Iolanta was performed in the world for 656 times, in 172 different productions, ranking 69 on the Operabase list.

Roles: Renato, King of Provence (bass), Iolanta, his daughter (soprano), Roberto, Duke of Burgundy (baritone), Vaudemond, Earl knight (tenor), Ibn-Hakia, Arab doctor (bass), Al'Meriq, squire of King Renato (tenor), Beltran, doorkeeper (bass), Marta, his wife, nursemaid (mezzo-soprano), Brigitta (soprano), Laura (soprano), Chorus (servant girls, friends, knights, soldiers)



Story: France, in Provence, in the middle of the 15th century. In the times of chivalry and dinastic marriage, a young princess named Iolanta has been engaged to a Duke, ever since she was born. Whent she turns fifteen, her groom is expected for the wedding, but the girl can not see the light (only in the spiritual way, because she can not see with her mind's eye, so she does not see the light of the sublime contemplation resulting from true faith). The Duke arrives accompanied by his man of honor, Earl Vaudemond. The girl falls in love for the Earl, while the Duke asks the king's permission to withdraw from his obligation. The king agrees. The Arab doctor works his miracle treatment. The mercy of God is without limits, the girl passes the test of spiritual initiation. Everyone praise the Almighty Lord when Iolanta declares that she has seen the light.

Scene 1 (A beautiful garden of a residence, with flowers and fruit trees)

Iolanta is collecting fruits, finding them by touch. Martha and the maids help her, impressed by her confusion (There's something you hide from me, something you don't want to tell me). Touching Martha's face, Iolanta feels her tears. Distressed, Iolanta sings an aria (Why, so far, I have not shed tears, neither known nostalgia nor sorrow). Scene 2 - Brigitta, Laura and other girls enter the scene carrying baskets full of flowers (Touch them, smell their perfume ! They are pure and fresh as maidens !). Scene 3 - Iolanta leans her head in Martha's lap and falls asleep, while the girls are singing (Sleep happily, dear child ! Sleep sweetly, radiant angel !). Scene 4 - A call is heard followed by a knock on the door. Beltran tries to stop Al'Meriq from entering (It is forbidden to enter under penalty of death ! Out !). But Al'Meriq has a letter with the royal seal with orders to replace Beltran (In an hour the king will come here along with a great Arab doctor ...who lives in this paradise ?). Beltran responds (The daughter of King Renato ! Blind Iolanta, Robert's fiancée, Duke of Burgundy ! ...the king does not want Roberto to know the misfortune of his daughter). Martha enters the scene to clear even more the situation (The poor girl completely ignores that she is blind ...No one should talk about light, about beauty, or anything else that our eyes see). After a second call, King Renato enters with the doctor. While the doctor is led to the girl the king sings an aria (Will Iolanta see the light, or I will be for ever tortured O Lord...why do you punish my angel ?). Scene 5 - Doctor Ibn-Hakia enters with the good news (Courage, Majesty, Allah is great ! ...healing is possible, but one thing ...she must be aware of her evil). Scene 6 - Roberto and Vaudemond enter the scene (I'd be glad to be lost, not to see my fiancée ! ...Perhaps the King agrees to cancel your promise of marriage). Roberto explains his reluctance (Nuns are a mystery to me with all their Benedictus and Amen ...my dear Matilde ...she's hot and delicious). Vaudemond responds with another aria (Do not tempt me, passion does not wake up in me because voluptuous looks...). Scene 7 - As they are heading to the terrace Vaudemond jumps in (Oh, what do I see ? ...Heavens ! How beautiful she is !). Roberto is disappointed (She's just a little girl !). But Vaudemond is mesmerized (Don't open your eyes ! Their light would blind me). When Iolanta wakes up, Vaudemond presents himself (A Gentleman of Burgundy ...My name is Vaudemond). Iolanta greets them offering some wine (I like to be in company I'm rarely alone). Vaudemond exchanges some tender words with the girl (It was I who woke you ...before my eyes, rose an angel from heaven ...I do not understand what you say ...and yet the sound of your words is nice). To seal their acquaintance Vaudemond asks for a red rose, but she offers him a white one (Which rose ? I don't understand you ...You're playing with me ... My god ! She's blind !). Afraid, Iolanta cries (Oh, gentleman, where are you ? I don't understand your silence). Willing to comfort her, Vaudemond explains her what seeing the light is like (Light is the first prodigy of Creation, the best gift from God to the World !). Iolanta is happy with his explanation, but she responds (To glorify God, eternally, gentleman, I don't need the light ! The goodness of God is infinite, has no limits). Vaudemond agrees, the goodness of the Lord is infinite. Scene 8 - The King, Martha and the maids enter the scene. Iolanta explains them that Vaudemond has brought light into her life (...he has told me many things, of which I knew nothing ...his words are full of kindness, tenderness and compassion). Ibn-Hakia declares that his treatment will not work any more, because of the intruder, and the king sentences him to die. Iolanta is frightened, but the doctor explains (All you need to do is to desire ardently to see the light). Iolanta declares her ardent wish to be treated while Vaudemond declares his love (Sufferings and sorrows ! For him I'll bear it all ...Bright angel ! Blessed maiden ...I swear on my honour as a gentleman that I am your, only...). Iolanta leaves the scene together with Ibn-Hakia. Scene 9 - King Renato approaches Vaudemond (Although you were condemned to death, you are now free). Vaudemond does not want to leave and in exchange asks for the permission to marry his daughter, but his request is denied since the girl is engaged to another. Roberto, Duke of Burgundy enters the scene (Majesty ! I'm here to fulfill the promise I made ...but I love Matilde, Countess of Lorraine). Vaudemond asks again for Iolanta's hand (Whether she sees the light or not, I will give her my life !). The king agrees (She is yours, my son !). Martha and the maids are heard from outside (Iolanta sees the light ! O happiness, o joy !). Iolanta enters the garden (O unbearable radiance ! ...I'm scared ! ...What is it ? God ? ...the spirit of God ?). Everyone on scene prays to God (God, accept the Prayer of your servant ! You gave her the sight ! You have sent her your mercy ! Glory to you, Lord Almighty !).

Great moments and arias: There's something you hide from me, something you don't want to tell me (Iolanta), Why, so far, I have not shed tears, neither known nostalgia nor sorrow (Iolanta), Touch them, smell their perfume ! They are pure and fresh as maidens ! (Chorus), Sleep happily, dear child ! Sleep sweetly, radiant angel ! (Chorus), It is forbidden to enter under penalty of death ! Out ! (Beltran), In an hour the king will come here along with a great Arab doctor ...who lives in this paradise (Al'Meriq), The daughter of King Renato ! Blind Iolanta, Robert's fiancée, Duke of Burgundy ! ...the king does not want Roberto to know the misfortune of his

daughter (Beltran), The poor girl completely ignores that she is blind ...No one should talk about light, about beauty, or anything else that our eyes see (Martha), Will Iolanta see the light, or I will be forever tortured O Lord...why do you punish my angel ? (King Renato), Courage, Majesty, Allah is great ! ...healing is possible, but one thing ...she must be aware of her evil (Ibn-Hakia), I'd be glad to be lost, not to see my fiancée !
 ...Perhaps the King agrees to cancel your promise of marriage (Roberto, Vaudemond), Nuns are a mystery to me with all their Benedictus and Amen ...my dear Matilde ...she's hot and delicious (Roberto), Do not tempt me, passion does not wake up in me because voluptuous looks...(Vaudemond), Oh, what do I see ? ...Heavens ! How beautiful she is ! (Vaudemond), She's just a little girl ! (Roberto), Don't open your eyes ! Their light would blind me (Vaudemond), A Gentleman of Burgundy ...My name is Vaudemond (Vaudemond), I like to be in company I'm rarely alone (Iolanta), It was I who woke you ...before my eyes, rose an angel from heaven ...I do not understand what you say ...and yet the sound of your words is nice (Vaudemond, Iolanta), Which rose ? I don't understand you ...You're playing with me ... My god ! She's blind ! (Iolanta, Vaudemond), Oh, gentleman, where are you ? I don't understand your silence (Iolanta), Light is the first prodigy of Creation, the best gift from God to the World ! (Vaudemond), ...he has told me many things, of which I knew nothing ...his words are full of kindness, tenderness and compassion (Iolanta), To glorify God, eternally, gentleman, I don't need the light ! The goodness of God is infinite, has no limits (Iolanta), All you need to do is to desire ardently to see the light (Ibn-Hakia), Sufferings and sorrows ! For him I'll bear it all ...Bright angel ! Blessed maiden ...I swear on my honour as a gentleman that I am your, only...(Iolanta, Vaudemond), Although you were condemned to death, you are now free (King Renato), Majesty ! I'm here to fulfill the promise I made ...but I love Matilde, Countess of Lorraine (Roberto), Whether she sees the light or not, I will give her my life ! (Vaudemond), She is yours, my son ! (King Renato), Iolanta sees the light ! O happiness, o joy ! (Chorus), O unbearable radiance ! ...I'm scared ! ...What is it ? God ? ...the spirit of God ? (Iolanta), God, accept the Prayer of your servant ! You gave her the sight ! You have sent her your mercy ! ...Glory to you, Lord Almighty ! (Chorus)

Ballet: Frequently, Iolanta was coupled on a double bill with the ballet The Nutcracker: the opera is the prelude to the ballet and the ballet is the resolution of the opera.

Recordings: 1940 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Glafira Zhukovskaya - Iolanta, Grigory Bolshakov- Vaudemond), 1977 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Tamara Sorokina - Iolanta, Vladimir Atlantov - Vaudemond), 1984 Paris Opera (Galina Vishinevskaya - Iolanta, Nicolai Gedda - Vaudemond), 1994 Kirov Theatre (Galina Gorchacova - Iolanta, Gegham Grigoryan - Vaudemond), 1996 Novosibirsk Opera (Tatiana Vorjdova - Iolanta, Vassili Gorshkov - Vaudemond), 2002 Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow Radio (Olga Mykytenko - Iolanta, Piotr Beczala - Vaudemond), 2015 Deutsche Grammophon (Anna Netrebko - Iolanta, Sergey Skorokhodov - Vaudemond), 2015 Cologne Opera (Olesya Golovneva - Iolanta, Dmitri Popov - Vaudemond).

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74. Tosca

Composer: Composer: Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924). Born in Lucca, Italy, he was one of nine children of Michele Puccini and Albina Magi. His family, starting with his great-great grandfather has occupied the position of maestro di capella for 124 years and has composed music for the church. As a boy he was a member of the choir and played the organ. In 1880 he has got a diploma from the Pacini School of Music in Lucca and continued his studies at the Milan Conservatory with a grant from Italian Queen Margherita. He was married in 1904 to Elvira Gemignani (1860-1930) and they had a son, Antonio. By 1900, Puccini has acquired land and had built a villa on the lake, at Torre del Lago, now known as Villa Museo Puccini. An annual Festival Puccini is held at Torre del Lago to honor his memory. In 1923 the Prime Minister Benito Mussolini has named him member in the Italian Senate (senatore a vita). Centro di studi Giacomo Puccini was founded in 1996 in Lucca to approach the study of Puccini's work. Operas: Le Villi (1884), Edgar (1889), Manon Lescaut (1893), La Bohème (1896), Tosca (1900), Madama Butterfly (1904), La Fanciulla del West (1910), La rondine (1917), Il Trittico (1918), Turandot (1926). His other work includes sacred music, songs, vocal and choral music, chamber music and instrumental music.

Libretto: Luigi Illica (1857-1919) and Giuseppe Giacosa (1847-1906). Luigi Illica was an Italian librettist who wrote for Puccini several libretti: *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904). He also produced opera libretti for: Pietro Mascagni (*Iris*, *Le Maschere*, *Isabeau*), Alfredo Catalani (*La Wally*), Umberto Giordano (*Andrea Chenier*, *Siberia*, *Giove a Pompei*), Alberto Franchetti (*Cristoforo Colombo*, *Germania*), Antonio Smareglia (*Il vassallo di Szegith*, *Cornelius Schutt*, *Nozze Istriane*) and other important composers (Gaetano Luporini, Spyridon Samaras, Pietro Floridia, Cesare Galleotti, Ettore Panizza, Cesare Rossi, Franco Alfano). His stories were used in silent films and he was a considerable playwright. In 1961 the Luigi Illica International Prize was founded for opera singers, conductors, directors and authors. Giuseppe Giacosa was an Italian poet, playwright and librettist, with a degree in law at the University of Turin. Together with Luigi Illica he wrote the four libretti for Puccini. He is also remembered for some of his playwrights: *Una Partita a Scacchi*, *La signora di Challant*. The libretto for this opera is based on the five act dramatic play *La Tosca*, written by French dramatist Victorien Sardou (1831-1908). *La Tosca* premiered in Paris in 1887 with famous Sarah Bernhardt in the title role. Starting with 1906 there were four silent film adaptations for the play and four film adaptations of the opera produced by: Carl Coch (1941), Carmine Gallone (1956), Luigi Magni (1973), Benoit Jacquot (2001). Puccini has obtained the rights for the play in 1895 and it took four years to turn it into an Italian Opera.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 14 January 1900 at the Teatro Costanzi, in Rome with soprano Hariclea Darclee as Tosca, tenor Emilio De Marchi as Cavaradossi and baritone Eugenio Giraldoni as Baron Scarpia. The premiere was a national event, attended by Queen Margherita of Savoy, Prime Minister Luigi Pelloux and several members of the cabinet. The performance was not quite a triumph but it was a success, with numerous encores. The Milan premiere at La Scala followed on 17 March 1900, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. On 12 July 1900 the opera premiered in London at the Royal Opera House with soprano Milka Ternina as Tosca and the composer in the audience. In the United States, the premiere at the Metropolitan Opera in New York was held on 4 February 1901, in the same distribution. In Paris, on 13 October 1903, Victorien Sardou took charge himself of all the action on stage at Opera Comique. Subsequent premieres followed in Europe, Americas, Australia and the Far East. By the end of the year 1914 *Tosca* has been performed in more than 50 cities worldwide. Among the prominent singers in distribution were: Enrico Caruso, Maria Jeritza, Maria Callas, Tito Gobi, Angela Gheorghiu, Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti. Notable performances were recorded at: Milan (1918, 1920, 1929, 1930, 1953, 1957, 2000), Rome (1938, 1957, 1959), New York (1946, 1956, 1957, 1962, 1978, 1985), Mexico City (1950, 1952), Vienna (1951, 1962), Turin (1951, 1955), Florence (1951, 2001), London (1957, 1976, 1978, 1990, 1996, 2000), Naples (1957), Paris (1960, 1964), Berlin (1960, 1979), Moscow (1976), Bucharest (1977), Budapest (1988), Cardiff (1990), Amsterdam (1998), Madrid (2004), Verona (2006). Up to the 2017/18 season, *Tosca* was performed in the world for 2727 times, in 555 different productions, ranking 5 on Operabase list.

Roles: Floria Tosca, a celebrated singer (soprano), Mario Cavaradossi, a painter (tenor), Baron Scarpia, chief of police (baritone), Marquis Cesare Angelotti, former Consul (bass), A Sacristan (baritone), Spoletta, a police agent (tenor), Sciarrone, a gendarme (bass), A Jailer (bass), A Shepherd boy (soprano alto), Chorus (soldiers, police agents, altar boys, nobleman and women, townfolk, artisans)



Story: Dramatic events are happening in Rome, in June 1800, following the French victory in the Battle of

Marengo. It is about love, law and order, in times of war. An escaped political prisoner, Marquis Angelotti is helped by two of his friends, a painter and his lover, an opera singer. Consequences soon follow, because Baron Scarpia, the chief of the police, is on their trail. In a matter of hours, all four heroes are dead. The law has been reinforced, at the cost of four young and noble lives.

Act 1 (The Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle)

Angelotti enters the church and finds the key to the chapel under the Madonna icon. He enters the chapel door. Sacristan enters the scene looking for Cavaradossi. Cavaradossi enters holding the unfinished picture of a girl, a fervent prayer of the church. To the sacristan's outrage, the painter compares the girl with Madonna (And you, mysterious beauty... crowned with blond locks. Your eyes are blue and Tosca's black ! ...These various women in rivalry with the Madonna smell of the devil). With Sacristan gone, Angelotti appears from his hide and Cavaradossi recognizes him, but he must hide again as Tosca calls from outside the door. Tosca asks Cavaradossi to wait for her after the evening performance (Do you not long for our little house that is waiting for us ...Tosca burns with a mad love !). Cavaradossi must reassure Tosca of his love, since the girl is jealous on the girl from the portrait (My life, my troubled one, beloved, I shall always say: I love you, Floria). When alone, Cavaradossi opens the door for Angelotti, to find out that the marquis has escaped from prison and is now hunted by Baron Scarpia, the policeman. Willing to help, Cavaradossi offers him the key to his villa. As they leave, the sacristan enters followed by pupils and singers of the chapel. Sacristan announces that Bonaparte has been defeated and they all pray (Te Deum ...Gloria ! Long live the King ! Let's celebrate the victory !). Baron Scarpia enters followed by his men, to search for Angelotti (A prisoner of State has just escaped from Castel Sant'Angelo. He took refuge here). Scarpia finds the chapel of Angelotti's sister half opened and a fan inside (The Marchesa Attavanti ! It's her crest... Her Portrait ! Who painted that picture ?). Scarpia has a sudden revelation (He ! Tosca's lover ! A suspect character ! A revolutionary !). As Tosca returns, Baron Scarpia makes his advances on her (Divine Tosca, my hand awaits your delicate hand. Not out of idle gallantry but to offer Holy Water). Speaking about pious women, Scarpia shows her the fan found near the painter's tools and Tosca recognizes the marks (The crown ! The crest ! It's the Attavanti's ! Oh, prophetic doubt !). Overwhelmed with jealousy Tosca can not hold her tears (Here I am heartbroken, while he, in another's arms, mocks at my anguish ...Double lovers now nest inside this villa). As Tosca leaves, Scarpia's men follow her discretely. The people in church start their prayer (Te Deum laudamus: Te Dominum confitemur !).

Act 2 (Scarpia's apartment in the Farnese Palace)

Baron Scarpia jubilates (Tosca is a good falcon ! ...my hounds have fallen on their double prey !). Agent Spoletta arrives with news (We kept on the lady's trail ...I sniff ...I scratch ...I rummage ...the painter was there ...I arrested him). When Cavaradossi is brought in, Baron Scarpia interrogates him about Angelotti (...it is reported that you sheltered him, gave him food and clothing). Cavaradossi denies all charges. As Tosca arrives, Cavaradossi is led to the torture room. Alone with Tosca, Baron Scarpia is resolute (...an extremely painful hour for him... The law must be enforced ...It is up to you to save him). Forced to witness the torture, Tosca is eager to collaborate, but there is no valuable information that she can provide. Finally Tosca breaks down and admits that Angelotti is hidden in the well. Spoletta brings Cavaradossi covered in blood, but bitterly reproachful (Ah, you have betrayed me ! Accursed Woman !). Sciarrone brings the news that Napoleon Bonaparte has won the battle at Marengo. Cavaradossi rejoices (Victory ! Victory ...And liberty returns, the scourge of tyrants !). But Baron Scarpia cuts his wings (Go, for you die, the hangman's noose awaits you). Alone with Tosca the Baron continues his supper (Come, my fair lady. Shall we try to find together a way to save him ?). Offered money, Baron Scarpia responds (...it is not for money that I will sell myself to beautiful women). Tosca moans her sorrow (I lived for art, I lived for love ...why, why, oh Lord, why dost Thou repay me thus ?). Spoletta brings the news that Angelotti has killed himself when the police arrived. As Tosca gives her consent, Baron Scarpia orders that Cavaradossi should not be hanged, but he should be executed like Count Palmieri (a faked execution). He also signs the papers for a safe conduct so Tosca and Cavaradossi can flee the State together. While he writes the papers Tosca reaches a knife on the table. When the Baron wants to embrace her she strikes him full in the chest (Tosca, now you are mine at last ! ...This is the kiss of Tosca !).

Act 3 (The Platform of Castel Sant'Angelo)

Cavaradossi asks the jailer for a last favour, to write a few lines for someone dear (And the stars shone and the earth was perfumed ...and never before have I loved life so much !). Tosca arrives with the documents for safe

passage and Cavaradossi wanders (This is his first act of clemency... And his last ! ...That pointed blade I planted in his heart). Tosca instructs him about her escape plan (A carriage is waiting ...First you will be shot, in plat and pretence ...Fall dawn at the shot, the soldiers leave, and we are safe !). They both sing ecstatically (Together in exile ...Triumphant, the soul trembles with new hope in heavenly increasing ardor). When the time comes, Cavaradossi departs reassuring to fall like Tosca on stage. Soon after, the platoon fires and Cavaradossi falls and Tosca is content (There ! Die ! Ah, what an actor !). As the soldiers have gone, Tosca kneels and removes the cloak, pale and terrified (Oh, Mario, dead ? You ? Like this ? Dead like this ?). Sciarrone appears with the news that Scarpia was stabbed and Spoletta is charging towards Tosca (Ah, Tosca, you will pay for his life most dearly !). Tosca responds and hurls herself over the edge of the castle (With my own ! Oh, Scarpia ! Before God !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - And you, mysterious beauty... crowned with blond locks. Your eyes are blue and Tosca's black ! ...These various women in rivalry with the Madonna smell of the devil (Cavaradossi, Sacristan), Do you not long for our little house that is waiting for us ...Tosca burns with a mad love ! (Tosca), My life, my troubled one, beloved, I shall always say: I love you, Floria (Cavaradossi), Te Deum ...Gloria ! Long live the King ! Let's celebrate the victory ! (Chorus), A prisoner of State has just escaped from Castel Sant'Angelo. He took refuge here (Scarpia), The Marchesa Attavanti ! It's her crest... Her Portrait ! Who painted that picture ? (Scarpia), He ! Tosca's lover ! A suspect character ! A revolutionary ! (Scarpia), Divine Tosca, my hand awaits your delicate hand. Not out of idle gallantry but to offer Holy Water (Scarpia), The crown ! The crest ! It's the Attavanti's ! Oh, prophetic doubt ! (Tosca), Here I am heartbroken, while he, in another's arms, mocks at my anguish ...Double lovers now nest inside this villa (Tosca), Te Deum laudamus: Te Dominum confitemur ! (Chorus). Act 2 - Tosca is a good falcon ! ...my hounds have fallen on their double prey ! (Scarpia), We kept on the lady's trail ...I sniff ...I scratch ...I rummage ...the painter was there ...I arrested him (Spoletta), ...it is reported that you sheltered him, gave him food and clothing (Scarpia), ...an extremely painful hour for him... The law must be enforced ...It is up to you to save him (Scarpia), Ah, you have betrayed me ! Accursed Woman ! (Cavaradossi), Victory ! Victory ...And liberty returns, the scourage of tyrants ! (Cavaradossi), Go, for you die, the hangman's noose awaits you (Scarpia), Come, my fair lady. Shall we try to find together a way to save him ? (Scarpia), ...it is not for money that I will sell myself to beautiful women (Scarpia), I lived for art, I lived for love ...why, why, oh Lord, why dost Thou repay my thus ? (Tosca), Tosca, now you are mine at last ! ...This is the kiss of Tosca ! (Scarpia, Tosca). Act 3 - And the stars shone and the earth was perfumed ...and never before have I loved life so much ! (Cavaradossi), This is his first act of clemency... And his last ! ...That pointed blade I planted in his heart ...Then it was in you, made strong by love, that justice has placed her sacred weapons (Cavaradossi, Tosca), A carriage is waiting ...First you will be shot, in plat and pretence ...Fall dawn at the shot, the soldiers leave, and we are safe ! (Tosca), Together in exile ...Triumphant, the soul trembles with new hope in heavenly increasing ardor (Cavaradossi, Tosca), There ! Die ! Ah, what an actor ! (Tosca), Oh, Mario, dead ? You ? Like this ? Dead like this ? (Tosca), Ah, Tosca, you will pay for his life most dearly ! (Spoletta), With my own ! Oh, Scarpia ! Before God ! (Tosca)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1918 La Scala, Milan (Lya Remondini -Tosca, Carlo Broccardi - Cavaradossi, Dario Zani - Scarpia), 1938 Rome Opera House (Maria Caniglia -Tosca, Beniamino Gigli - Cavaradossi, Armando Borgioli - Scarpia), 1946 Metropolitan Opera (Grace Moore -Tosca, Jan Peerce - Cavaradossi, Lawrence Tibbet - Scarpia), 1950 Mexico City (Maria Callas -Tosca, Mario Filippeschi- Cavaradossi, Robert Weede - Scarpia), 1951 Santa Cecilia Academy (Renata Tebaldi -Tosca, Giuseppe Campora - Cavaradossi, Enzo Mascherini - Scarpia), 1957 Royal Opera House (Zinka Milanov -Tosca, Franco Corelli - Cavaradossi, Giangiacomo Guelfi - Scarpia), 1959 La Scala, Milan (Renata Tebaldi -Tosca, Giuseppe Di Stefano - Cavaradossi, Tito Gobi- Scarpia), 1964 Paris Conservatory (Maria Callas -Tosca, Carlo Bergonzi - Cavaradossi, Tito Gobi - Scarpia), 1976 Royal Opera House (Montserrat Caballe -Tosca, Jose Carrera - Cavaradossi, Ingvar Wixell - Scarpia), 1976 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Tamara Milaskkina -Tosca, Vladimir Atlantov - Cavaradossi, Yuri Mazurok - Scarpia), 1978 National Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Mirella Freni -Tosca, Luciano Pavarotti - Cavaradossi, Sherrill Milnes - Scarpia), 1980 Philharmonia Orchestra (Renata Scotto -Tosca, Placido Domingo - Cavaradossi, Renato Bruson - Scarpia), 2000 Royal Opera House (Angela Gheorghiu -Tosca, Roberto Alagna - Cavaradossi, Ruggero Raimondi - Scarpia), 2004 Teatro Real, Madrid (Daniela Dessi -Tosca, Fabio Armiliato - Cavaradossi, Ruggero

Raimondi - Scarpia).

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75. Cinderella

Title: Cinderella, or Goodness Triumphant (La Cenerentola, ossia La bontà in trionfo)

Composer: Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792-1868). Born in Pesaro, Italy, on the Adriatic coast, his father Giuseppe Rossini was a horn player and inspector of slaughterhouses while his mother Anna Rossini was a theatre singer and a baker's daughter. As a young boy, Rossini had three years of instruction from Giuseppe Prinetti, in playing the harpsichord. He learned to play the piano with Angelo Tesei and at the age of ten he played solo parts in the local church. He wrote his first opera at the age of 13. In 1806, Rossini became a cello student at the Conservatorio di Bologna and a year later he was admitted to the counterpoint class of Padre Stanislao Mattei (1750-1825). In 1815 he was appointed musical director of the Teatro del Fondo in Naples where he composed one opera each year. In 1822 Rossini married the renowned soprano Isabella Colbran (1785-1845) with no offspring. Roles such as: Elisabetta, Desdemona, Armida, Elcia, Zoraide, Ermione, Elena, Anna and Zelmira were written by Rossini especially for her. In 1824 he became musical director of the Theatre des Italiens in Paris at a salary of 800 pounds per year and he was contracted by King Charles Philippe himself. In 1839 he was appointed director of the Liceo Musicale di Bologna and in 1855 he settled in Paris again where he was named Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour. Operas: Demetrio e Polibio (1812), La cambiale di matrimonio (1810), L'equivoco stravagante (1811), L'inganno felice (1812), Ciro in Babilonia (1812), La scala di seta (1812), La pietra del paragone (1812), L'occasione fa il lardo (1812), Il signor Bruschino (1813), Tancredi (1813), L'italiana in Algeri (1813), Aureliano in Palmira (1813), Il turco in Italia (1814), Sigismondo (1814), Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra (1815), Torvaldo e Dorliska (1815), Il barbiere di Siviglia (1816), La gazza ladra (1817), Armida (1817), Adelaide di Borgogna (1817), Mosè in Egitto (1818), Adina (1826), Ricciardo e Zoraide (1818), Ermione (1819), Eduardo e Cristina (1819), La donna del lago (1819), Bianca e Falliero (1819), Maometto II (1820), Matilde di Shabran (1821), Zelmira (1822), Semiramide (1823), Il viaggio a Reims (1825), Le siège de Corinthe (1826), Moïse et Pharaon (1827), Le comte Ory (1828), Guillaume Tell (1829). His work also includes cantatas, instrumental music, chamber music, sacred music, secular vocal music.

Libretto: Jacopo Ferretti (1784-1852). Jacopo Ferretti was an Italian writer, poet and opera librettist, famous for the two librettos produced for Rossini (La Cenerentola, Mathilde di Shabran) and the five librettos produced for Donizetti (Zoraide di Granata, L'ajo nell'imbarazzo, Olivo e Pasquale, Torquato Tasso, Il furioso all'isola di San Domingo). But his work is much more extensive including 60 librettos for other composers such as: Cesare Jannoni, Francesco Morlacchi, Valentino Fioravanti 2, Niccolò Zingarelli 2, Antonio del Fante, Pietro Guglielmi, Carlo Coccia, Ferdinando Rutini 2, Saverio Mercadante 2, Antonio Pauselli, Filippo Grazioli 2, Michele Carafa 2, Giovanni Pacini 3, Felice Celli 2, Antonio Sapienza, Francesco Ciampi, Giuseppe Balducci, Vittorio Trento, Luigi Gambale 3, Luigi Ricci 4, Federico Ricci 3, Luigi Savi 2, Lauro Rossi, Pietro Antonio Coppola 2, Michele Simeoni, Giuseppe Gerli, Mario Aspa, Luigi Badia, Lauro Rossi, Giuseppe Lillo. Some of his best stories are: La Didone, Baldovino, Berenice, Polissena, Scipione in Cartagine, Cesare in Egitto, Gli amici di Siracusa, Il Cid, Paolo e Virginia, La figlia di Figaro. The story for this opera was based on the fairy tale Cendrillon (Cinderella) by Charles Perrault (1628-1703). Thousands of variants of the story are known throughout the world. Other 17 opera and ballet versions of Cinderella were produced by various other composers, among which: Jules Massenet, Johann Strauss, Sergei Prokofiev. Numerous other theatre, film and television productions have been produced, including the Walt Disney's animated feature in 1950.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 25 January 1817, at Teatro Valle in Rome. The composer himself conducted the performance, contralto Geltrude Righetti was distributed as Cinderella and tenor Giacomo Guglielmi was Don Ramiro the prince. At the premiere the opera was noisily received but it soon gained popularity, both in Italy and internationally and it soon overshadowed The Barber of Seville. In the autumn of 1817

the opera premiered at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. The opera premiered in Barcelona in 1818, in Lisbon in 1819, followed by London in 1820 and New York in 1826. The first production in German language was staged in Vienna in 1822, followed by Berlin in 1825. Other notable premieres were at Buenos Aires in 1825, Moscow in 1826 and the first performance in Australia was staged in 1844. In the 20th century, recorded performances were produced in: Florence (1963), London (1971, 1987), Milan (1976, 1981), Berlin (1977), New York (1980, 2009), Glyndebourne (1983), Vienna (1988), Bologna (1993), Huston (1995), Paris (1996), Prague (2004), Barcelona (2007). Up to the 2017/18 season, *La Cenerentola* was performed in the world for 2167 times, in 432 different productions, ranking 24 on Operabase list.

Roles: Cinderella (contralto or mezzo-soprano), Don Ramiro, Prince of Salerno (tenor), Dandini, his valet (baritone), Don Magnifico, Baron of Montefiascone (bass), Clorinda, his elder daughter (soprano), Thisbe, his younger daughter (mezzo-soprano), Alidoro, philosopher (bass), Chorus (courtiers from Prince Ramiro's palace)



Story: The life of a young and beautiful girl, living in the shadow of her relatives, suddenly changes to a remarkable fortune when she is noticed by a young prince. Gioachino Rossini was only 25 years old when working at his *La Cenerentola* and he was still courting his wife to be, the Spanish soprano Isabella Angela Colbran (1785-1845). The story has ancient roots originating in the Greek legend produced by Rhodopis (a hataera and a great fabulist, disciple of Esop): While goddess Fortuna was bathing an eagle seized one of her sandals and bore it to King Psameticus. The king searched all Egypt for the person who fitted the shoe, and when he found her as one of the slaves, he married her. Aren't we all looking for a young and beautiful girl, fitted to wear the shoes of a goddess ?

Act 1 (An antique Hall in the Castle of the Baron / Cabinet in the Casino of Don Ramiro / In the garden at the Country Seat of Don Ramiro)

Clorinda and Thisbe are working to enhance their beauty. Cinderella sings while blowing the fire to make a coffee-pot boil (Once on a time there was a King, who grew weary, finding lonely single life). A knocking is heard and Alidoro appears dressed as a poor man. The two sisters hush the beggar, but Cinderella pours him a cup of coffee. Cavaliers enter the scene singing (Oh, daughters, high and fair, of Don Magnifico, Ramiro comes, our Prince, to whom all bow). The girls are invited to a ball where the Prince will choose the most beautiful as his bride. Cinderella is urged by her sisters to make all the preparations for them to glow (Cinderella, quick ! haste, Cinderella, prepare ribbons, laces and the mantels, Quick ! the cosmetics, the perfumes !). Scene 2 - Don Magnifico enters the scene to reveal his magnificent, rare dream (I dreamt that at twilight hour I was an ass, a most beautiful ass !). Cinderella is urged to bring his breakfast. Scene 3 - Don Ramiro enters dressed as a Squire looking for the girl Alidoro has prepared him to find. Scene 4 - Cinderella enters the room and drops the cup and saucer astonished by the intruder. They both engage in a duet (A sweet, a nameless charm, in those eyes shines mildly ...What means this fond alarm, why beats my heart so wildly ?). Asked, Cinderella explains that she is the half sister of the two girls and both her parents are dead. As the sisters are calling Cinderella must part to serve them. Scene 5 - Ramiro recollects that he was wise enough to exchange places with Dandini, who will act for him as the Prince. As Don Magnifico enters the scene Ramiro assures him that the Prince will arrive in three minutes. Scene 6 - Dandini arrives with his attendants and he sings an aria (As a bee in a day of young April goes ...To seek a sweet flower for himself ...From the many to choose to my mind). Clorinda and Thisbe are presented by Don Magnifico to Dandini. Dandini reveals to them the king's death bed wish (I should

marry, or be dishonoured, disinherited). Meanwhile Ramires is interested in Cinderella (How my heart palpites, my trembling heart !). Cinderella begs her stepfather to admit her too at the ball, for only one hour, or a half of an hour ...but she is menacingly refused. As Don Magnifico is raising his stick, Alidoro speaks on her behalf, but Don Magnifico is resolute and Cinderella must retire to her room. Scene 7 - Alidoro arrives dressed as a Pilgrim and calls for Cinderella. A splendid carriage, costly dresses and jewels have been sent for her to attend the Princes's ball (Is this some wild, impossible romance ? ...My daughter, joy and grief are but a drama !).

Scene 8 - Dandini enters with Clorinda and Thisbe, one at each arm (I praise your learning and I prize your talent, one sees with half an eye that you have studied). Scene 9 - At Ramiro's request, Dandini continues to examine the sister's hearts (Have mercy, you will tear me quite to pieces ! Do not indulge one titillating doubt).

Scene 10 - Attendants bring the embroidered mantle to Don Magnifico who has indulged too much drinking (Provided always ! since thirty bottles he's tasted now and has drank enough for three, firmly standing scorns to bow). Don Magnifico dictates the engagement advertisement to be printed and posted on every wall throughout the town (We, Don Magnifico, Duke and Baron, let you know ...Grand Grandissimo Intendente, further Grandissimo Presidente... In wine, belov'd by youth and nymph). Scene 11 - Ramiro inquires Dandini about the result of his investigation on the two sisters (Gently, gently, softly, softly, softly stealing no noise alarming). Dandini responds (A greater gander can't be found, they are two real weathercocks). Scene 12 - Clorinda and Thisbe are looking for the prince. Dandini propose to them that he should marry one of them and Ramiro the other, but both of them strongly refuse to marry a Squire. Scene 13 - Alidoro announces the entrance of an unknown lady, with a veil concealing her face. Scene 14 - Ramiro recognizes her voice (...that witching tone, to my heart is not unknown !). Dandini asks her to unveil resulting in the enchantment of men and the deception of her sisters. Scene 15 - Dandinini gives the signal for the party to begin (Let's to the table make our ways, and then we'll go and dance the Hayes).

Act 2 (An apartment in the Palace of Prince Ramiro / A room in the House of Don Magnifico / A Hall with a Throne)

Ramiro conceals himself as Dandini enters with Cinderella. As Dandini tries to declare love to her, Cinderella confesses that she loves another one, his Squire. Ramiro reveals himself, but Cinderella asks for some time of adjourn (Seek me out, know me truly, watch, observe me, examine well what fortune has been dealt me). As she leaves she gives him a bracelet while she retains the pair. Ramiro sings with the chorus (Once more to find her, I swear now, by love, by love urged wholly). Scene 2 - Dandini is summoned by Don Magnifico to reveal his choice. Dandini responds with an aria (Don, a secret of importance, yes, a mystery most interesting, I'll reveal, yes a story most romantic Tell me, tell me, tell me true). Don Magnifico lists his expected outcome of the marriage (Two grooms, six coachman, two Maids of Honour, one hundred and sixteen blood horses mounted, Dukes, Counts and Marshals, too, all well appointed) but Dandini must disappoint him (I answer you without the slightest mystery, we're very far from such a prosperous history, I've but a little bed, a little room). Finally, Dandini confesses that he was only masquerading the Prince, him being a lackey. Scene 3 - Alidoro recalls his goal regarding Cinderella. Scene 4 - Cinderella alone recalls her preference for the Squire. Scene 5 - Don Magnifico and the sisters arrive claiming that a witch resembling Cinderella has appeared to the ball (Simpleton, go along ! prepare the supper). Scene 6 - Ramiro appears accompanied by Dandini who presents him to be the Prince. Don Magnifico mocks him convinced that he is only the Squire (Quick, quick ! Cinderella, Cinderella, bring heither girl, the chair of state). Scene 7 - As Cinderella enters she recognizes him and the Prince recognizes the paired bracelet on her arm. Clorinda and her father are outraged (Jade unworthy, base soul of kennel, what here seeking ? Amongst great persons condescending). Taking Cinderella by the hand, Ramiro proclaims (This lovely one shall be my bride !). Scene 8 - The sisters claim that they have been made a jest of. Alidoro reminds their attitude towards him and recommends (Either terminate your days in misery, or ...ask for grace, humbly entreat for pardon). Scene 9 - In the Hall of Throne all hail the couple (Hail, of unstable fortune famed, the swift revolving changeable wheel !). Faced with Cinderella's judgement, Don Magnifico and his girls hear her verdict (My only vengeance shall be this - their pardon). Accompanied by the audience Cinderella sings a final aria (By the hearth no longer sighing, mirth will now the hours employ ah ! ...Welcome joy and revelry !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Once on a time there was a King, who grew weary, finding lonely single life (Cinderella), Oh, daughters, high and fair, of Don Magnifico, Ramiro comes, our Prince, to whom all bow (Chorus), Cinderella, quick ! haste, Cinderella, prepare ribbons, laces and the mantels, Quick ! the cosmetics, the perfumes ! (The sisters), I dreamt that at twilight hour I was an ass, a most beautiful ass ! (Don Magnifico), A

sweet, a nameless charm, in those eyes shines mildly ...What means this fond alarm, why beats my heart so wildly ? (Ramiro, Cinderella), As a bee in a day of young April goes ...To seek a sweet flower for himself ...From the many to choose to my mind (Dandini), I should marry, or be dishonoured, disinherited (Dandini), How my heart palpites, my trembling heart ! (Ramires), Is this some wild, impossible romance ? My daughter, joy and grief are but a drama ! (Cinderella, Alidoro), I praise your learning and I prize your talent, one sees with half an eye that you have studied (Dandini), Have mercy, you will tear me quite to pieces ! Do not indulge one titillating doubt (Dandini), Provided always ! since thirty bottles he's tasted now and has drank enough for three, firmly standing scorns to bow (Chorus), We, Don Magnifico, Duke and Baron, let you know ...Grand Grandissimo Intendente, further Grandissimo Presidente... In wine, belov'd by youth and nymph (Don Magnifico), Gently, gently, softly, softly, softly stealing no noise alarming (Ramiro), A greater gander can't be found, they are two real weathercocks (Dandini), ...that witching tone, to my heart is not unknown ! (Ramiro), Let's to the table make our ways, and then we'll go and dance the Hayes (Dandini). Act 2 - Seek me out, know me truly, watch, observe me, examine well what fortune has been dealt me (Cinderella), Once more to find her, I swear now, by love, by love urged wholly (Ramiro, Chorus), Don, a secret of importance, yes, a mystery most interesting, I'll reveal, yes a story most romantic Tell me, tell me, tell me true (Dandini, Don Magnifico), Two grooms, six coachman, two Maids of Honour, one hundred and sixteen blood horses mounted, Dukes, Counts and Marshals, too, all well appointed (Don Magnifico), ...without the slightest mystery, we're very far from such a prosperous history, I've but a little bed, a little room (Dandini), Simpleton, go along ! prepare the supper (Don Magnifico), Quick, quick ! Cinderella, Cinderella, bring heither girl, the chair of state (Don Magnifico), Jade unworthy, base soul of kennel, what here seeking ? Amongst great persons condescending (Clorinda, Don Magnifico), This lovely one shall be my bride ! (Ramiro), Either terminate your days in misery, or ...ask for grace, humbly entreat for pardon (Alidoro), Hail, of unstable fortune famed, the swift revolving changeeful wheel ! (Chorus), My only venange shall be this - their pardon (Cinderella), By the hearth no longer sighing, mirth will now the hours employ ah ! ...Welcome joy and revelry ! (Cinderella, Chorus).

Ballet: A ballet version of Rossini's Cinderella was produced on 1 May 1935 by the Royal Opera House in London at the Covent Garden. Choreographer Antony Tudor designed the dances and Jacopo Ferretti designed the settings and the costumes. In 1995 at the Vienna Festival ballet, renowned conductor Chris Nicolls rearranged the score from Rossini's opera for a new ballet version of the opera with a choreography produced by Sheila Styles. Another ballet version of Cinderella composed by Sergei Prokofiev premiered on 21 November 1945 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. The performance includes three acts and 50 numbers. Her step father is replaced by a step mother and Alidoro is replaced by a Fairy godmother. The choreography was produced by Rostislav Zakharov and Galina Ulanova starred in the title role.

Recordings: 1963 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Giuletta Simionato - Cinderella, Ugo Benelli - Don Ramiro, Sesto Bruscantini - Dandini, Paolo Montarsolo - Don Magnifico), 1971 Scottish Opera Chorus (Teresa Berganza - Cinderella, Luigi Alva - Don Ramiro, Renato Capecchi - Dandini, Paolo Montarsolo - Don Magnifico), 1976 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Lucia Valentini Terrani - Cinderella, Luigi Alva - Don Ramiro, Enzo Dara - Dandini, Paolo Montarsolo - Don Magnifico), 1977 Staatoper Berlin (Bianca Maria Casoni - Cinderella, Ugo Benelli - Don Ramiro, Sesto Bruscantini - Dandini, Alfredo Mariotti - Don Magnifico), 1983 Glyndenbourne Festival (Kathleen Kuhlmann - Cinderella, Laurence Dale - Don Ramiro, Alberto Rinaldi - Dandini, Claudio Desderi - Don Magnifico), 1988 Vienna State Opera (Ann Muray - Cinderella, Francisco Araiza - Don Ramiro, Gino Quilico - Dandini, Walter Berry - Don Magnifico), 1995 Royal Opera House (Jennifer Larmore - Cinderella, Rockwell Blake - Don Ramiro, Alessandro Corbelli - Dandini, Carlos Chausson - Don Magnifico), 2004 Orchester des Sedwestfuns Kaiserslautern (Joyce DiDonato - Cinderella, Jose Manuel Zapata - Don Ramiro, Paolo Bardogna - Dandini, Bruno Pratico - Don Magnifico), 2007 Teatro Liceu, Barcelona (Joyce DiDonato - Cinderella, Juan Diego Florez - Don Ramiro, David Menendez - Dandini, Bruno De Simone - Don Magnifico), 2009 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Elina Garanca - Cinderella, Lawrence Brownlee - Don Ramiro, Simone Alberghini - Dandini, Alessandro Corbelli - Don Magnifico).

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76. The Tales of Hoffmann

Title: The Tales of Hoffmann (Les contes d'Hoffman)

Composer: Jacques Offenbach (1815-1880). Born in Cologne, Prussia, his father Isaac Juda Offenbach (1779-1850) was a bookbinder and synagogue cantor, while his mother was Marianne Rindskopf (1783-1840). He was the second son of ten children and started the study of violin with his father at the age of six. Within two years, the boy was composing songs and dances. At the age of 9 he started the study of cello with Bernhard Breuer (1808-1877) only seven years older than him. In 1833 he entered the Paris Conservatoire, with a letter of introduction from the municipal orchestra of Cologne to the director Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842). After one year he resumed his studies and in 1835 he was appointed as a cellist at the Opera Comique where he studied with cellist Louis Pierre Norblin and conductor Fromental Halevy. On 14 August 1844 he married Herminie d'Alcain (1827-1887) the daughter of a general. Together they enjoyed five children, one boy and four girls. He worked as a cellist, conductor at the Opera Comique and musical director of the Comedie Francaise. Since 1855 he directed his own theatre, the Salle Lacaze in the Champs-Elysees. At the beginning of 1861, by the personal command of Emperor Napoleon III he was appointed Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur. From 1873 to 1874 he also directed the Theatre de la Gaité. Operettas: L'alcove (1847), Pepito (1853), Le deux aveugles (1855), Madama Papillon (1855), Ba-ta-clan (1855), La rose de Saint Flour (1856), Orphee aux enfers (1858), Genevieve de Brabant (1859), Daphnis et Chloe (1860), Le pont des soupirs (1861), Le roman comique (1861), Les georgiennes (1864), La belle Helene (1864), Barbe Bleue (1866), La vie parisienne (1866), La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein (1867), Robinson Crusoe (1867), Le chateau a Toto (1868), Vert Vert (1869), Les brigands (1869), Le roi Carotte (1872), Fantasio (1872), Madame l'archiduc (1874), Le voyage dans la lune (1875), Le docteur Ox (1877), Madame Favart (1878), La fille du tambour major (1879). Operas: Les fees du Rhin (1864), Les contes d'Hoffmann (1881). Ballet: Le Papillon (1860). His work also includes vocal, cello and piano works.

Libretto: Jules Barbier (1825-1901). Jules Barbier was a French poet, writer and opera librettist who often wrote in collaboration with Michel Carre. Their collaboration resulted in the following libretti: for Charles Gounod (Faust, Le medecin malgre lui, Romeo et Juliette), for Ambroise Thomas (Hamlet, Mignon, Françoise de Rimini), for Victor Masse (Les Saisons). Alone he produced the following libretti: The Tales of Hoffman for Jaques Offenbach, Le timbre d'argent for Camille Saint Sanes, Le pardon de Ploermel for Giacomo Meyerbeer, Galathee for Victor Masse, La Guzla de l'Emir for Georges Bizet and the scenario for the Ballet Sylvia for Leo Delibes. The story for this libretto was based on three short stories by Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffman (1776-1822) who is the protagonist of the story. The three Hoffman's stories were: The Sandman, Rath Krespler and The Lost Reflection. Writer, playwright, composer, caricaturist, theatre manager, music critic, stagehand and decorator, Hoffman was quite a character, a pioneer of the fantasy genre with a taste for the macabre combined with realism. His interest in the machine culture of his time and in the conflict between science and magic resulted in some kind of mesmerizing science fiction, unique and ahead of his times. Jules Barbier and Michel Carre had previously written a play with the same title, staged at the Odeon Theatre in Paris in 1851. In 1876 Barbier has adapted the play to a libretto, set to music by Hector Salomon (1838-1906). Salomon handed the project to Offenbach, but the work proceeded slowly and on 5 October 1880 the composer died with the manuscript in his hands, one year before the premiere.

Performance history: The opera was first performed at the Opera Comique on 10 February 1881, without the third act. Conducted by Jules Danbe, the performance included in the distribution soprano Adele Isaac, tenor Jean Alexandre Talazac and baritone Emilie Alexandre Taskin. Produced by director Franz von Jauner, a four act version with recitatives was staged at the Ringtheater in Vienna, on 7 December 1881, conducted by Joseph Hellmesberger. Another one hundred performances followed at the Salle Favart in Paris. In 1887, at the Opera Comique, a fire destroyed the orchestral parts and the opera was not staged in Paris until 1893, at the Salle de la Renaissance du Theatre Lyrique. A new production was mounted at the Opera Comique in 1911. In the next thirty years the opera received 700 performances. Outside France, in 1882 the opera premiered in Geneva, Budapest, Hamburg, New York and Mexico, followed by Prague and Antwerp (1883), Lvov and Berlin (1884), Buenos Aires (1894), Saint Petersburg (1899), Barcelona (1905), London (1910). In the 20th century the opera was recorded in: New York (1937, 1955), Paris (1948, 1958, 1964, 1986, 2002), London (1950, 1972, 1974,

1981), Munich (1956), Lausanne (1971), Leipzig (1987), Parma (1988), Brussels (1988), Lyon (1994), Geneve (2009). Up to the 2017/18 season, *Les contes d'Hoffman* was performed in the world for 1968 times, in 355 different productions, ranking 28 on Operabase list.

Roles: Hoffman, a poet (tenor), Antonia (soprano), Olympia (soprano), Giulietta (soprano), Nicklausse, his friend and muse (mezzo-soprano), Crespel, Antonia's father (bass), Frantz, his servant (tenor), Dr Miracle (bass baritone), Lindorf, a councillor (bass baritone), Stela, an opera star (soprano), Andres, servant (tenor), Luther, host (bass), Coppeliuss, an eye-glass salesman (bass baritone), Spalanzini, a physicist (tenor), Cochenille, his servant (tenor), Schlemihl, a man without a shadow (baritone), Pitichinaccio (tenor), Dappertutto, a sorcerer (bass baritone), Hermann, Nathanel, Wilhelm, students (tenor, baritone), Chorus (invisible spirits, students, waiters, guests of Spalanzani, guests of Giulietta)



Story: An experienced former student, Hoffman, now a poet and a philosopher, does all the talking in a tavern, for the delightment of the young students. As an experienced Tomcat, Hoffman feels responsible to share with his younger friends his experience with girls. Lectured in spiritism and spiritualism, Hoffman has attended some circles of people involved in spiritist practice. For three times he has fallen in love, with three different girls, but his mesmerization didn't work quite well. Confident that vinegar is more enjoyable than the truth, Hoffman has become a leader of the tavern, working hard to drown his feelings in wine.

Prologue (Luther's Tavern at night)

Nathanael, Hermann and students are singing (Drig, drig, drig, drig, drig, Master Luther ! Appear ! Appear ! Bring on your wine ...We'll drink till morning !). Hoffman enters the scene together with Nicklausse. Hoffman sings the old legend of Kleinzach (O, once upon a time at the Court of Eisenach, There dwelt a little dwarf who was known as Kleinzach !). Heated by the wine, Hoffman wants to tell the story of all his sweethearts.

Act 1 (A physicist's study)

Spalanzani looks at Olympia lifting a drape (Yes, sleep my child ! My child, how I adore and love her !). Hoffman enters the room, welcomed by his teacher. Looking behind the drapes Hoffman is extatic (Olympia ! to stand before her ...She is so lovely, I adore her ...Love me, as I would love you, let love be our guiding love). Nicklausse enters the room and finding out about Hoffman's love he sings a little song (Fancy a doll with eyes of glass, waving a fan, the pretty lass). Coppeliuss enters the room presenting his collection of miracle eyeglasses (Yes, my eyes can read the heart, and even the hearts of those who never had one from the start !). Spalanzani enters the room and he shares a private conversation with Coppeliuss, about Olympia's eyes. Cochenille is announcing the guests to the ball (Everyone who's some one in the world of fashion ! ...Wealth, but without ostentation, style and moderation). Spalanzani is introducing Olympia to his honored guests to everyone's admiration (A treasure ! Enchanting ! She simply is divine !). Cochenille brings the harp and Olympia starts singing (When the birds begin their singing, when the stars light up above). Hoffman is enchanted and remains with her, while the others retire for supper. Nicklausse asks what is the spring noise heard every time he touches Olympias shoulder and Spalanzani answers (That ? Faulty wiring. Leave it all to ray science !). Alone with Olympia, Hoffman dares to declare his love for her and touches her shoulder timidly. When he presses her hand,

Olympia leaves the room. Nicklausse tries to tell him that Olympia is not alive and never was, but Hoffman is reluctant (What nonsense ! I'm loved by an angel). As all the guests return, Spanalzani trusts Olympia to dance with Hoffman and they start waltzing, faster and faster until her father touches her shoulder. As Coppelius is leading Olympia to the other room a sound of breaking springs is heard, off stage. Hoffman rushes to see her and returns pale with horror, while the audience laughs (A lifeless puppet, that's what Olympia was ...Love can be a fool's undoing, it's a doll he has been wooing !).

Act 2 (Venice. A palace on the Grand Canal)

Giulietta is entertaining the guests: Hoffman, Nicklausse and Pitichnaccio (Dream of love enchanted night, a night for sweet embraces). Hoffman braves his heart (No ! You want her to love you ? then forget about sighing ! No one conquers by crying). Schlemihl enters and Giulietta presents him to Hoffman. As they start a game of cards, Hoffman leaves together with Nicklausse. Dappertutto is not satisfied with the result and uses his enchanting diamond ring in order that Hoffman should be bewitched by Giulietta (Shine and glitter magic stone, respond to the art of your master, win her for me !). A mesmerized Giulietta appears and Dappertutto puts the ring on her finger (What is your wish ? tell it to your servant). Dappertutto asks her to break his heart. Hoffman returns and he soon declares his love (Ah, I love you ! Command and I'll obey to you). Giulietta responds (If you scorn Schlemihl he will destroy you tonight ...go ! tomorrow I'll be yours). As a sign for his love and admiration, Giulietta asks him to let her remove his reflection, as seen in her mirror. Hoffman is astonished but he agrees (I will give you, for your consolation, my life, my own reflection, and all my heart). All the guests enter the room and Nicklausse remarks that Hoffman has no reflection in the mirror. Hoffman refuses to leave and Giulietta declares that she is under the spell of the magic ring (This diamond is a temptation and I have only love to sell ...It's a poet's fate: to end in hell). Schlemihl swears to send Hoffman on the road to Hell, by the use of his sword, while Giulietta leaves the scene. Hoffman fights Schlemihl for the key that controls the magic spelled on Giulietta. Schlemihl falls mortally wounded and Hoffman storms for Giulietta with the key. But Giulietta is seen departing in a gondola taking Pitichnaccio in her arms (I leave him to you !).

Act 3 (Venice. The house of Crespel)

At the clavichord, Antonia sings a romanza (She has flown, my pretty turtle-dove !). Crespel, her father is worrying because he can recognize in her voice the voice of her lost mother. Crespel is exasperated (Ah, that Hoffman ! It is he who has fired all her heart with his madness !). Frantz enters the room, while Crespel leaves furious. Alone Frantz sings (Night and day I must go and come, obey his orders and be dumb). Hoffman enters the room, followed by Nicklausse. As he plays the clavichord Antonia enters the room and they both sing (O, I was always sure you loved me well and truly ...Now there is joy in my life ! Tomorrow will see you my wife !). Antonia complains that her father forbids her to sing. Hoffman comforts her and they start singing together a sweet love song (Fly to the angels above with our tale of love and folly. Joy and woe and melancholy, fly, o fly as the dove). While singing, Antonia puts her hand to her heart and seems to faint. Crespel enters the room, followed by Dr. Miracle (Does she suffer like her good mother ? Now take me to see her). While Antonia is in another room, Dr. Miracle extends his hands and makes passes invoking Antonia's spirit to consultation. Dr. Miracle presents his phials with wonderful medicine but Crespel is reluctant (With the phials, poor father, you will be surely content ! ...You will lose her, though by Satan you are sent !). Dr. Miracle gets pushed out the door but he continues his recommendations through the wall. As Antonia returns, Hoffman tries to persuade her to give up singing (Ah, my Antonia ! If you love me, forget your dreams of glory ...In love alone we'll find our pleasure). Antonia agrees (So be it ! An here is my hand !). As Hoffman departs, Dr. Miracle reappears (You will not sing again ? ...your beauty and your art and your grace and your charm ...shall your gift be buried on your hearth ?). Looking at her mother's portrait Antonia hears her voice (Daughter mine ! O, my dear, I'm calling to thee ! ...Obey ! Obey me ! Obey me !). Dr. Miracle plays his violin frenziedly and Antonia sings panting (I burn with flame unforgiving, ah the fire of frenzy fills my eyes ...my poor soul will seek the skies !). Antonia falls on the sofa dying while the voice continues to order (Obey my voice ! Sing on, sing on once more !). Hoffman arrives followed by Nicklausse, only to find Antonia dead and her desperate father trying to strike him with a knife (He shall pay with his life ! ...Antonia ! ...Dead ! ...O, my child ! My daughter !).

Epilogue (Luther's Tavern)

The student are still listening to Hoffman (And this ends the tales of Hoffmann, mad as a dream, I shall always cherish those loves, strange though it may seem). Nathanael sees all three girls united in Stella and Nicklausse

declares a toast to Stella. They all sing in chorus (Let's hope that the punch will keep us from thinking ! ...and when we see that moon and stars are sinking ...vinegar has more flavor ...you can believe it, that is the truth !).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - Drig, drig, drig, drig, drig, Master Luther ! Appear ! Appear ! Bring on your wine ...We'll drink till morning ! (Chorus), O, once upon a time at the Court of Eisenach, There dwelt a little dwarf who was known as Kleinzach ! (Hoffman, Students)

Act 1 - Yes, sleep my child ! My child, how I adore and love her ! (Spalanzani), Olympia ! to stand before her ...She is so lovely, I adore her ...Love me, as I would love you, let love be our guiding love (Hoffman), Fancy a doll with eyes of glass, waving a fan, the pretty lass (Nicklausse), Yes, my eyes can read the heart, and even the hearts of those who never had one from the start ! (Coppelius), Everyone who's some one in the world of fashion ! ...Wealth, but without ostentation, style and moderation (Cochenille), A treasure ! Enchanting ! She simply is divine ! (Chorus), When the birds begin their singing, when the stars light up above (Olympia), That ? Faulty wiring. Leave it all to ray science ! (Spalanzani), What nonsense ! I'm loved by an angel (Hoffman), A lifeless puppet, that's what Olympia was ...Love can be a fool's undoing, it's a doll he has been wooing ! (Hoffman, Chorus).

Act 2- Dream of love enchanted night, a night for sweet embraces (Giulietta), No ! You want her to love you ? then forget about sighing ! No one conquers by crying (Hoffman), Shine and glitter magic stone, respond to the art of your master, win her for me ! (Dappertutto), What is your wish ? tell it to your servant (Giulietta), Ah, I love you ! Command and I'll obey to you (Hoffman), If you scorn Schlemihl he will destroy you tonight ...go ! tomorrow I'll be yours (Giulietta), I will give you, for your consolation, my life, my own reflection, and all my heart (Hoffman), This diamond is a temptation and I have only love to sell ...It's a poet's fate: to end in hell (Giulietta), I leave him to you ! (Giulietta)

Act 3 - She has flown, my pretty turtle-dove ! (Antonia), Ah, that Hoffman ! It is he who has fired all her heart with his madness ! (Crespel), Night and day I must go and come, obey his orders and be dumb (Frantz), O, I was always sure you loved me well and truly ...Now there is joy in my life ! Tomorrow will see you my wife ! (Antonia, Hoffman), Fly to the angels above with our tale of love and folly. Joy and woe and melancholy, fly, o fly as the dove (Antonia, Hoffman), Does she suffer like her good mother ? Now take me to see her (Dr. Miracle), With the phials, poor father, you will be surely content ! ...You will lose her, though by Satan you are sent ! (Dr Miracle, Crespel), Ah, my Antonia ! If you love me, forget your dreams of glory ...In love alone we'll find our pleasure (Hoffman), So be it ! An here is my hand ! (Antonia), You will not sing again ? ...your beauty and your art and your grace and your charm ...shall your gift be buried on your hearth ? (Dr Miracle), Daughter mine ! O, my dear, I'm calling to thee ! ...Obey ! Obey me ! Obey me ! (Voice), I burn with flame unforgiving, ah the fire of frenzy fills my eyes ...my poor soul will seek the skies ! (Antonia), Obey my voice ! Sing on, sing on once more ! (Voice), He shall pay with his life ! ...Antonia ! ...Dead ! ...O, my child ! My daughter ! (Crespel)

Epilogue - And this ends the tales of Hoffmann, mad as a dream, I shall always cherish those loves, strange though it may seem (Hoffman), Let's hope that the punch will keep us from thinking ! ...and when we see that moon and stars are sinking ...vinegar has more flavor ...you can believe it, that is the truth ! (Chorus)

Ballet: In 1951, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger have produced a film version for the Talles of Hoffman, fusing cinema, opera and ballet. At 6 April 1972, the Scottish Theatre Ballet premiered a ballet version with a choreography produced by Peter Darrel, scenery and costumes by Peter Docherty. The performance reached New York in July 1973 at the American Ballet Theatre (ABT). In November 2015 The National Ballet of Japan presented a new production of Peter Darell, a complete performance with three acts, prologue and epilogue. The designs were produced by Naoji Kawaguchi with magical lighting produced by Yuji Sawada. In November 2018, The National Opera of Russia in Orleans have presented a new choreographic version of Offenbach's opera. Among the essential pieces is the inimitable Barcarole (Belle nuit, o nuit d'amour...), a traditional folk song sung by Venetian gondoliers.

Recordings: 1937 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Rene Maison - Hoffman, Vina Bovy - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, Lawrence Tibbett - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 1950 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London (Robert Rounseville - Hoffman, Dorothy Bond, Margherita Grandi, Ann Ayars - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, Bruce Dargevel - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 1955 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Richard Tucker - Hoffman, Roberta Peters, Rise Stevens, Lucine Amara - Olympia, Giulietta

and Antonia, Martial Singher - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 1956 Bavarian Radio (Waldemar Kmentt - Hoffman, Rita Streich, Anny Schlemm, Teresa Stich Randall - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, Heinz Rehfuss - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 1964 Paris Conservatoire Orchestra (Nicolai Gedda - Hoffman, Gianna D'Angelo, Elisabeth Schwartzkopf, Victoria de los Angeles - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, George London, Ernest Blanc, Nicola Ghiuselev - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 1971 Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (Placido Domingo - Hoffman, Joan Sutherland - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, Gabriel Bacquier - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 1986 Radio France (Placido Domingo - Hoffman, Edita Gruberova - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, Gabriel Bacquier, Justino Diaz, Andreas Schmidt, James Morris- Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 1988 Teatro Regio, Parma (Alfredo Kraus - Hoffman, Ruth Welting, Jolanta Omilian, Barbara Hendricks - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, Nicola Ghiuselev - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 1988 Theatre Royal de la Monnaie, Brussels (Neil Shicoff- Hoffman, Luciana Serra, Jessye Norman, Rosalind Plowwright - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, Jose van Dam - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf), 2009 Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (Marc Laho - Hoffman, Patricia Petibon, Maria Wesseling, Rachel Harnish - Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia, Nicola Cavallier - Coppelius, Dapertutto, Dr Miracle and Lindorf).

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77. Tristan and Isolde

Title: Tristan and Isolde (Tristan und Isolde, Tristran and Ysolt)

Composer: Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Born in Leipzig, his father Carl Friedrich Wagner was a clerk in the Leipzig police service while his mother Johanna Rosine Paez was of the daughter of a baker. One year later his mother remarried to Ludwig Geyer an actor and playwright. At the age of 7 he was enrolled at Pastor Wetzel's school at Possendorf, where he recieved piano instruction and by the age of 9 he joined the Dresdener Kreutzchor at the Kreuzeschule. His first lessons of harmony were taken during 1828-1831 with composer Christian Gottlieb Muller (1800-1863). In 1831, Wagner enrolled at the Leipzig University to become a member of the Saxon student fraternity. He took composition lessons with Thomaskantor (music director) and composer Theodor Weinling (1780-1842). In 1836 he married the actress Christine Wilhemine Planer (1809-1866) for a 30 years of marriage with no offspring. In 1842 Wagner was appointed the Royal Saxon Court Conductor. From 1849 to 1858, due to his revolutionary activity he was exiled in Switzerland, to Zurich, for a very prolific period of his compositions. In 1862 he divorced his wife and remarried Francesca Cosima Liszt with three children as fruit of their marriage, two girls and a son. In 1871 the family moved to Bayreuth where he built the Bayreuth Festspielhouse and founded the Bayreuther Festival. Operas: Die Hochzeit (The Wedding-1832), Die Feen (The Fairies-1834), Das Liebsverbot (The Ban of Love-1836), Die hohe Braut (The High-born Bride -1842), Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen (Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes - 1840), Der fliegende Hollander (The Flying Dutchman - 1841), Tannhauser und der Sangerkrieg auf dem Wartburg (Tannhauser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg - 1845), Lohengrin (Lohengrin - 1848), Das Rheingold (The Rhine Gold - 1854), Die Walkure (The Valkyrie - 1856), Tristan und Isolde (Tristan and Isolde - 1859), Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg (The mastersingers of Nuremberg - 1867), Siegfried (Siegfried - 1871), Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods -1874), Parsifal (Parsifal - 1882).

Libretto: Richard Wagner. The composer based the libretto on the 12th century legend of Tristan and Iseult, two young noble characters entangled by a potion to fall madly in love with each other. There are numerous versions of the legend in different cultures, including: Persian, French, Nordic, Dutch, Welsh, Spanish, Czech, Italia or Belarusian. Very numerous modern works in literature, music, theatre and film have been produced on the subject. In the German culture it was Gottfried von Strassburg 12th century adaptation of the legend that made history and became the source of inspiration for Richard Wagner. His romance, called Tristan, is 19 548 lines long, written in rhyming couplets. There are 29 known manuscripts of Gottfried's Tristan, dating from the 13th to the 15th century. Richard Wagner started to produce the music and the libretto in 1854, while he was exiled in Switzerland, separated from his wife, overwhelmed with personal affective discomfort. The libretto was completed in 1856 and the music have been completed by August 1859.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 10 June 1865 at the Konigliches Nationaltheater in Munich. It was young King Ludwig II of Bavaria (1864-1886), a great admiror of Wagner's work, who patroned and sponsored the production. Hans von Bulow was chosen to conduct the performance with Malvina and Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld as Isolda and Tristan. After only four performances, Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld died suddenly and it was speculated that singing the part of Tristan has killed him. The intense dramatic moments in the opera has also claimed the lives of conductors Felix Mottl in 1911 and Joseph Keilberth in 1968. Malvina Schnorr collapsed into a depresion and never sang again. Afterwords the roles were sung by Therese and Heinrich Vogl. The next production of the opera was in 1874 in Weimar, followed by the Berlin production in 1876. Ten years later, after Wagner's death, the opera was widely acclaimed at the Bayreuth Festival. The first production outside Germany was given at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, in London, in 1882, followed by the first Covent Garden production two years later. In Viena, the opera premiered in 1883 with tenor Hermann Winkelmann singing the role of Tristan. The first American performance at the Metropolitan Opera was held in December 1886, conducted by Anton Seidl. The best recorded performances of the 20th century were produced at: Bayeruth Festival (1928, 1952, 1958, 1966, 1976), Metropolitan Opera (1935, 1937, 1943), Royal Opera House Covent Garden (1936, 1937, 1952, 2004), Berlin State Opera (1943), Buenos Aires Opera (1948, 1971), Bavarian State Opera (1950, 1981), La Scalla (1951, 1959), Vienna State Opera (1961, 2003). Up to the 2017/18 season, Tristan and Isolda was performed in the world for 1217 times, in 290 different productions, ranking 38 on Operabase list.

Roles: Tristan (tenor), Isolda (soprano), King Mark (bass), Kurwenal (baritone), Melot (tenor), Brangane (soprano), A young Saylor (tenor), A Shepherd - (tenor), A Steersman (baritone), Chorus (saylors, knights, squires)



Story: Defeated and dishonored, the Queen of Ireland, Isolda, has sworn revenge. In the power of her conquerer, Lord Tristan, she is escorted as a gift to Mark, King of Cornwall. Reluctant to submit, Isolda activates her last resort, her power of seduction. A glass of wine serves as a vehicle for the potion of love and the two fall passionately in love. A royal hunt finds in their unlawful love a proper prey for the king. Caught in the act, Tristan is mortally wounded and sent back to his home castle. Isolada is brought to heal his wound, but it is too late, Tristan falls dead in her arms. Both sweet and bitter, Isolda's venange also prooves to be fatal for her. When king Mark comes for her, she succumbs over her lover's body.

Act 1 (On the deck of Tristan's ship)

Brangane announces Isolda that the ship will safely reach the coast of Cornwall. Isolda is outraged (Never ! Not today, not tomorrow ! ...Degenerate race ! Unworthy of your ancestors !). Brangane is warried (O telll me now what troubles you ! Let me know what is tormenting you !). Scene 2 - Isolda is mad on Tristan (Who timidly flees from the blow whenever he can, because he has won a corpse as a bride for his master !). Brangane is sent to announce Tristan that Isolda wishes to see him. Tristan is reluctant to see her and as Brangane insists for three times, the answer comes from Kurwnal and the crew (Hail to our hero, Tristan, he knows how to exact tribute !). Scene 3 - Refused, Isolda is deeply displeased (For this vassal prince of Cornish to suit for the crown of Ireland ! Ah, I am lost ! ...Now I am in the vassal's bondage !). As she recalls the past events, Isolda gets mad (Venange ! Death ! Death for us both !). Brangane tries to confort her (Dearest ! Beautiful one ! Golden mistress

! ...how better could he repay you than with the most splendid of crowns ?). Isolda confesses her real sorrow (Unloved, always seeing near me that splendid man ! How could I bear the torment ?). Brangane is confident that every man will love her, but Isolda is stubborn (My mother's advice ...Vengeance for the treachery !). Isolda fetches from a small golden chest a flask with the potion of death. Scene 4 - Kurwenal enters the scene (Up ! Up, you ladies ...I am to say from Tristan the hero, my lord ...He therefore requests Lady Isolda to hurry and to prepare for landing). Isolda responds forcefully (...he must first seek forgiveness and forgetting, according to the propriety and custom, for unatoned guilt). Isolda asks Brangane to pour the death poison in the reconciliation wine. When Tristan enters the scene, Isolda is making friendly (Since you are so mannerly my Lord Tristan, let me remind you of more manners; to be reconciled with an enemy he must regard you as a friend). Isolda also reminds him that she swore an oath to revenge the death of her betrothed Morold (...if a man did not atone for his murder, I the maid, would venture to do so). Tristan is brave and offers her his sword (If Morold meant so much to you, now take the sword ...wield it sure so that it does not fall from your hand). Isolda refuses to kill him and instead offers him a drink for reconciliation. She also proposes that he would ask permission from his uncle for the maid's hand and her land. Tristan drinks half of the goblet responding that he knows there is poison in it. Feeling betrayed, Isolda drinks the other half. But instead of dying, their eyes give way to the glow of love and they embrace (How all our senses pulsate with bliss !). As King Mark is approaching, Isolda finds herself desperate to be alive, while Brangane confirms that the potion was not the death potion but the potion of love.

Act 2 (King Mark's royal castle in Cornwall)

The men are hunting. Isolda and Brangane can still hear the horns calling (Those who decided today on this night hunt ...have a nobler quarry than you imagine as the target of their huntsmen's cunning). Isolda is impatient (The signal, Brangane ! Extinguish the light's last glimmer ...Let my beloved come). Brangane shuts the lights blaming the love potion. Scene 2 - Tristan and Isolda embrace passionately (Not a dream ? ...o sweet, most sublime, boldest, loveliest, most blessed joy !). The two exchange ardent words of love (Descend, o Night of love ...take me up into your bosom release me from the world !). From the tower, as the night melts away, Brangane is urging them to wake. Both lovers are blaming the light (Must Day then awaken Tristan ? ...Let Day give way before death !). Solemnly promising to die together, they both praise the power of Night (O eternal Night, sweet Night ! Gloriously sublime Night of love !) Scene 3 - King Mark and his courtiers appear and stop in horror at the sight of the lovers. Isolda faints and Tristan conceals her under his cloak. King Mark is disappointed (This to me ? This, Tristan, to me ? What price now honor and honesty ...This glorious woman ...She whom I could never dare approach ...why this hell for me ? ...why this disgrace ?). Tristan responds that he is prepared for the land where the sun's light does not shine and Isolda commits to follow him in grace and faith. Tristan dares Melot to fight him with the sword, but he lowers his and falls wounded.

Act 3 (Tristan's castle in Brittany)

A shepherd is singing while Kurwenal is watching his master sleeping under a lime tree (Still no ship out at sea ? ...A different tune would you hear then). Tristan wakes up to find out that he is safe (Kurwenal ? You ? Where am I ? ...In peace, safe and free ...do you not recognise the castle of your fathers ?). Instead of rejoicing Tristan is sorrowing (In the shimmer of Day still Isolda ! What longing ! What fearing ! To see her, what desire !). Kurwenal responds that Isolda will soon come to cure his wound (...to Cornwall I have sent word, a faithful man is bringing Isolda here across the sea). At such words, Tristan comes to life and embraces Kurwenal (Isolda is coming ! Oh faith ! Bold, sweet faith !). As Tristan falls back unconscious, Kurwenal sorrows (Dreadful Magic ! Love's deception ! Here he lies the splendid man, loved and adored as no other. See now what thanks Love has won for him). When Tristan awakes a ship is spotted with the festive flag at the masthead and soon Isolda is seen leaping ashore. Scene 2 - When they finally meet, Tristan sinks slowly to the ground in her arms and dies. Isolda is completely demolished (Isolda has come faithfully to die with Tristan. Will you not answer me ? Just for one hour, just for one hour stay awake for me !). Isolda collapses unconscious over his body.

Scene 3 - A second ship is spotted carrying King Mark and his men. Kurwenal tries to bare their way and strikes Melot to the ground. Brangane tries to find Isolda, followed by her king, but Kurwenal is sturdy (Here death rages ! Nothing else, King, is to be had here, if that is what you want, come on !). Badly wounded, Kurwenal falls at Tristan's feet, while King Mark becomes impatient (All dead then ! My hero, my Tristan ! Awake ! Awake ! Awake to my wailing !). Isolda wakes up staring upon Tristan's body (How softly and gently he smiles, how sweetly his eyes open ...how he glows ever brighter ...unconscious, utmost rapture !). Transfigured, Isolda

sinks in Brangane's arms, on to Tristan's body and King Mark blesses the bodies.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Never ! Not today, not tomorrow ! ...Degenerate race ! Unworthy of your ancestors ! (Isolda), O tell me now what troubles you ! Let me know what is tormenting you ! (Brangane), Who timidly flees from the blow whenever he can, because he has won a corpse as a bride for his master ! (Isolda), Hail to our hero, Tristan, he knows how to exact tribute ! (Chorus), For this vassal prince of Cornish to suit for the crown of Ireland ! Ah, I am lost ! ...Now I am in the vassal's bondage ! (Isolda), Vengeance ! Death ! Death for us both ! (Isolda), Dearest ! Beautiful one ! Golden mistress ! ...how better could he repay you than with the most splendid of crowns ? (Brangane), Unloved, always seeing near me that splendid man ! How could I bear the torment ? (Isolda), My mother's advice ...Vengeance for the treachery ! (Isolda), Up ! Up, you ladies ...I am to say from Tristan the hero, my lord ...He therefore requests Lady Isolda to hurry and to prepare for landing (Tristan), ...he must first seek forgiveness and forgetting, according to the proprietary and custom, for unatoned guilt (Isolda), Since you are so mannerly my lord Tristan, let me remind you of more manners; to be reconciliated with an enemy he must regard you as a friend (Isolda), ...if a man did not atone for his murder, I the maid, would venture to do so (Isolda), If Morold meant so much to you, now take the sword ...wield it sure so that it does not fall from your hand (Tristan), How all our senses pulsate with bliss ! (Tristan, Isolda) Act 2 - Those who decided today on this night hunt ...have a nobler quarry than you imagine as the target of their huntsmen's cunning (Brangane), The signal, Brangane ! Extinguish the light's last glimmer ...Let my beloved come (Isolda), Not a dream ? ...o sweet, most sublime, bold, loveliest, most blessed joy ! (Tristan, Isolda), Descend, o Night of love ...take me up into your bosom release me from the world ! (Tristan, Isolda), Must Day then waken Tristan ? ...Let Day give way before death ! (Isolda, Tristan), O eternal Night, sweet Night ! Gloriously sublime Night of love ! (Tristan, Isolda), This to me ? This, Tristan, to me ? What price now honor and honesty ...This glorious woman ...She whom I could never dare approach ...why this hell for me ? ..why this disgrace ? (King Mark). Act 3 - Still no ship out at sea ? ...A different tune would you hear then (Kurwenal, Shepherd), Kurwenal ? You ? Where am I ? ...In peace, safe and free ...do you not recognise the castle of your fathers ? (Tristan, Kurwenal), In the shimmer of Day still Isolda ! What longing ! What fearing ! To see her, what desire ! (Tristan), ...to Cornwall I have sent word, a faithful man is bringing Isolda here across the sea (Kurwenal), Isolda is coming ! Oh faith ! Bold, sweet faith ! (Tristan), Dreadful Magic ! Love's deception ! Here he lies the splendid man, loved and adored as no other. See now what thanks Love has won for him (Kurwenal), Isolda has come faithfully to die with Tristan. Will you not answer me ? Just for one hour, just for one hour stay awake for me ! (Isolda), Here death rages ! Nothing else, King, is to be had here, if that is what you want, come on ! (Kurwenal), All dead then ! My hero, my Tristan ! Awake ! Awake ! Awake to my wailing ! (King Mark), How softly and gently he smiles, how sweetly his eyes open ...how he glows ever brighter ...unconscious, utmost rapture ! (Isolda)

Ballet: In 2013, devoted to the 200th anniversary of Richard Wagner's death, choreographer Regis Obadia has produced with the Theatre Ballet Moscow 8 dances on the composers music, together with fragments from the opera sung by soprano Maria Gulik. On 28 December 2014 the Opera of Florence has produced a ballet version of Wagner's opera. The choreography was produced by Giorgio Mancini for the dancers Garnier Dorothee Gilbert and Mathieu Ganio, with costumes designed by Yiqing Yin. Choreographer David Dawson has produced a full ballet version of Tristan and Isolda, for the Richard's Wagner libretto, with music composed by Szymon Brozoska and sets designed by Enzo Henze. The performance premiered on 15 February 2015 at the Semperoper Ballet, Saxon State Opera in Germany. A new co-production of David Dawson's ballet with Theatre des Champs Elysees and Teatro dell Opera di Roma has reached the Dutch National Opera in January 2018.

Recordings: 1928 Bayreuth Festival (Gunnar Graarud - Tristan, Nanny Larsen Todsén - Isolda), 1935 Metropolitan Opera (Lauritz Melchior - Tristan, Kirsten Flagstad - Isolda), 1943 Metropolitan Opera (Lauritz Melchior - Tristan, Helen Traubel - Isolda), 1943 Berlin State Opera (Max Lorenz - Tristan, Paula Buchner - Isolda), 1950 Bavarian State Opera (Gunther Treptow - Tristan, Helena Braun - Isolda), 1951 La Scala Milan (Max Lorenz - Tristan, Gertrude Grob Prandl - Isolda), 1958 Bayreuth Festival (Wolfgang Windgassen - Tristan, Brigit Nilsson - Isolda), 1980 Welsh National Opera (John Mitchinson - Tristan, Linda Esther Gray - Isolda), 1981 Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Peter Hoffmann - Tristan, Hildegard Behrens - Isolda), 2003 Vienna State Opera (Thomas Moser - Tristan, Deborah Voigt - Isolda), 2004 Royal Opera House Covent Garden (Plácido Domingo - Tristan, Nina Stemme - Isolda),

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78. Nabucco

Title: Nabucco (Nabucodonosor)

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). Born at Le Roncole (Parma, Italy), his father Carlo Giuseppe Verdi (1785-1867) was an innkeeper, while his mother Luigia Uttini (1787-1851) was a thread maker. Verdi received musical education playing the organ at the local church with the help of Pietro Baistrocchi, the local schoolmaster. At 12 years old, he began lessons with maestro di capella Ferdinando Provesi and Antonio Barezzi, the directors of the Societa Filarmonica, and by the age of 17 Verdi established himself as a leader of the Philharmonic. At 4 May 1836 Verdi was married to Margherita Barezzi, the daughter of his master and director. Margherita died only four years later, leaving a devastated Verdi to find his peace in his work. Antonio Barezzi also introduced him to Vincenzo Lavigna, maestro concertatore at La Scala in Milan who encouraged Verdi to compose and to take a subscription to La Scala. In 1835 Verdi became director of the Busseto school and in 1837 he staged his first opera at La Scala. In 1859 he married Giuseppina Strepponi (1815-1897) an operatic soprano and an old friend. In 1861 Verdi was elected to the Parliament of Piedmont Sardinia and in 1874 he was appointed member of the Italian Senate. In 1895 he planned and built a hospital at Villanova sull'Arda and his famous Casa di Riposo per Musicisti in Milan, a rest home for retired musicians. Operas: Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (1839), Un giorno di regno (1840), Nabucco (1842), I Lombardi alla prima crociata (1843), Ernani (1844), I due Foscari (1844), Giovanna d'Arco (1845), Alzira (1845), Attila (1856), Macbeth (1847), I masnadieri (1847), Jerusalem (1847), Il corsaro (1848), La battaglia di Legnano (1849), Luisa Miller (1849), Stiffelio (1850), Rigoletto (1851), Il trovatore (1853), La traviata (1853), Les vepres siciliennes (1855), Giovanna de Guzman (1855), Le trouvère (1856), Simon Boccanegra (1857), Aroldo (1857), La forza del destino (1862), Don Carlos (1867), Aida (1871), Otello (1887), Falstaff (1893). Ballet music for: Otello, Macbeth, Jerusalem, Don Carlo, Aida, Il trovatore, Il vespri siciliani. His work also includes sacred works, songs, instrumental, orchestral and chamber music.

Libretto: Temistocle Solera (1815-1878). Temistocle Solera was an Italian opera composer and librettist. His collaboration with Giuseppe Verdi resulted in 5 operas: Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (1839), Nabucco (1842), I Lombardi alla prima crociata (1843), Giovanna d'Arco (1845), Attila (1846). For other 8 less known composers he wrote 9 more libretti. As a composer he produced 4 operas: Ildegonda (1840), Il contadino d'Agleiate (1841), Genio e sventura (1843), La hermana de Pelayo (1845). The libretto for this opera was based on the biblical books of Jeremiah and Daniel and the play Nabuchodonosor by Francis Cornu and Auguste Burgeois. Nabu was the ancient Mesopotamian patron god of literacy, rational arts, scribes and wisdom, while Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon (605-562 BC) whose reign was the longest and the most powerful of his times. His reign is depicted in the Book of Jeremiah (Kings 24-25) as follows: "Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. He spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon." . The king is also present in chapters 2-4 of the 2nd century BC historical fiction Book of Daniel, where the king dreams of a giant gold statue and a huge tree. Giuseppe Verdi was persuaded to compose the music by Bartolomeo Merelli the manager and impresario of La Scala opera house between 1829 and 1850.

Performance history: Under its original name of Nabucodonosor, the opera was first performed at La Scala in Milan on 9 March 1842, conducted by Eugenio Cavallini. Baritone Giorgio Ronconi was distributed in the title role and soprano Giuseppina Strepponi sung Abigail. The opera was a colossal success, followed by 70 more performances that year. The opera also premiered at La Fenice in Venice in 1842, followed by Vienna, Lisbon and Cagliari in 1843. With the actual name of Nabucco the opera was first performed in 1844 at the San Giacomo Theatre in Corfu. In London the opera was first staged on 3 March 1846 at Her Majesty's Theatre. In the United States of America, Nabucco was first performed at the Astor Opera House in New York, on 4 April 1848. In the 20th and 21st centuries, notable performances were: Teatro di San Carlo (1949, 2004), RAI (1951), Metropolitan Opera (1960, 2002), Vienna State Opera (1965, 2001), Abrosian Opera (1977), Arena di Verona

(1981, 2007), Deutsche Oper Berlin (1982), San Francisco Opera (1982), La Scala Milan (1987), Opera Australia (1996), London Royal Opera House (1996), Lyric Opera of Chicago (1997, 2016), Tokyo Opera (1999), Teatro Colon (2000), Genoa Teatro Carlo Felice (2004), Baltimore Opera (2006), Teatro Regio di Parma (2009), San Diego Opera (2009), Israeli Opera (2010), Seattle Opera (2015). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, Nabucco was performed in the world for 1197 times, in 298 different productions, ranking 19 on Operabase list.

Roles: Nabucco, King of Babylon (baritone), Ismaele, prince of Jerusalem (tenor), Zaccaria, high priest of the Jews (bass), Abigail, Nabucco's elder daughter (soprano), Fenena, her sister (soprano), High Priest of Baal (bass), Abdallo, soldier (tenor), Anna, Zaccaria's sister (soprano), Chorus (soldiers, women, magi, people)



Story: The great King of Babylon, conqueror of the known world, is torn apart between his two daughters, Abigail and Fenena, both of them in love with Ismaele, the prince of Jerusalem. Betrayed by his High Priest, King Nabucco proclaims himself God, but his soldier's faith in Baal is stronger than his authority and Abigail takes his crown. When the Hebrew slaves are to be executed, a thunder changes the odds. Nabucco swears to the god of Hebrews and he regains his power. He and his people will pray to a new god, and a new High Priest, while his other daughter, Fenena, will seal the peace with the Hebrews.

Act 1 (587 BC. Jerusalem, in the Temple of Solomon)

Hebrews, Levites and Hebrew Virgins are mourning and praying (Minister of an angry God's wrath, the King of Assyria has fallen on us now !). High Priest Zaccaria enters, leading by the hand a girl, Fenena, the offspring of the enemy king. Ismaele enters the temple, followed by Hebrew soldiers. Left alone with Fenena, Ismaele mourns (Unhappy girl ! Oh, how much more beautiful you appear to my eyes now). While Ismaele tries to open a secret door, Abigail enters the temple, sword in hand, followed by her soldiers. Abigail is reproaching him (Valiant soldier ! ...I loved you ! I would have given my kingdom and my heart for your heart !). Ismaele is shortened between the two loving sisters (Ah no ! I will render my life, but my heart I cannot give ...let my tears speak for my people). Babylonian soldiers invade the Temple and King Nabucco appears. Zaccaria is defending his temple raising his dagger to Fenena (Before you shall profane the Temple, this dagger shall slay your daughter !). While all the Hebrews are praying, King Nabucco is resolute (Down on your knees, defeated slaves ! I am the conqueror). Ismaele wrests the dagger from Zaccaria and frees Fenena (Unhappy girl, love will save you !). King Nabucco decides (Plunder and burn the Temple, mercy will be a crime !).

Act 2 (An apartment in the royal palace of Babylon / A hall in the palace)

Abigail has discovered a document that proves she is not the King's daughter but a slave (Upon everyone you will see my fury fall ! Ah yes ! Let Fenena fall... my pretended father ...oh fatal anger !). The High Priest of Baal is warning Abigail that Fenena has released the Hebrews free. The High Priest offers Abigail the throne, while his men are spreading the rumor that the King has fallen in battle (And the vengeance of Baal will thunder alongside yours !). Scene 2 - Zaccaria enters carrying the Tables of the Law (The Lord wishes me to be the agent of a new miracle ...to tear apart the darkness of an unbeliever). Ismaele is accused by his people of being a traitor (You are accursed of the Lord ! He who is accursed has no brethren). Anna, Zaccaria's sister defends Ismaele telling them that Fenena, the girl he has saved, was now a Hebrew maid. Abdallo, a soldier, announces the death of King Nabucco. Abigail enters followed by the High Priest of Baal and followers (Glory be to

Abigail ! Death to the Hebrews !). When the girls fight for the crown, King Nabucco enters the scene and sets it upon his own head (Hear me now ! Babylonians, I throw your god to the ground ! He has rendered you traitors ...There is only one god ...your King !). The soldiers hail him, but Zaccaria dares his insane pride and all the Hebrews are condemned to death. Fenena proclaims that she has embraced the Hebrew faith and wants to die with them. Nabucco is bursted by a thunderbolt and the crown falls from his head (Who is it that takes my royal sceptre from me ? ...I am surrounded by phantoms ...I am fainting). Abigail picks up the crown (But the greatness of the people of Baal shall not be eclipsed !).

Act 3 (The Hanging Gardens of Babylon / The banks of the Euphrates)

Nobles and people are hailing Abigail on the throne (Assyria is a queen as powerful as Baal upon Earth). The High Priest of Baal presents a decree for the Queen's signature (...that woman, whom I dare not call your sister...she has betrayed Baal). Poorly dressed Nabucco appears and all loyal subjects are ordered to withdraw. Accused of being coward, Nabucco signs the decree, but he soon sorrows (Oh ! ...but what of Fenena ? ...she is my flash and blood !). Abigail tears in front of him, in little pieces, the document that proved her low origin (Thus do I return, miserable creature, the lying document to you !). As the guards present themselves to take Nabucco as prisoner, he begs her (Then let the people of Assyria call you lady and queen ! This old man asks nothing of you but the life of his heart's delight !). Abigail is unmoved by his tears. Scene 3 - Hebrews in chains are singing (Fly, thought, on wings of gold, go settle upon the slopes and the hills). Zaccaria raises his voice to dare them break their fetters ...in their death to break free to heaven (Oh, rise up, brothers in anguish, the Lord speaks from my lips).

Act 4 (An apartment in the Royal Palace)

Nabucco is mourning Fenena as he sees her in chains (From the lips of my faithful subjects my daughter's name falls ! See, she comes running between ranks of soldiers ! Alas ! Am I dreaming ?). A thunder is heard and Nabucco takes a new expression falling to his knees (God of the Hebrews, forgive me ! ...I will worship Thee from henceforth always). Abdallo appears and serves his king with the sword. Soldiers hail their king regaining his throne (Through you shall see the sun shine upon Assyria again !). Scene 2 - Fenena kneels before Zaccaria to be blessed as a martyr (My soul longs for the Lord ...God floods me with His holy light !). King Nabucco comes running, sword in hand, and the statue of Baal is shattered at his command (Let a new Temple be raised to thy God ...He alone is great, mighty is He alone !). All Hebrews hail their god and Zaccaria jubilates (Almighty Jehovah, who has not felt Thy might ? Who is not as dust in Thy sight ?). Abigail is begging her exoneration (Who will now relieve me of the iron burden of my crime ?). Abigail collapses and dies. Zaccaria proclaims (Servant of Jehovah, you shall be King of Kings).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Minister of an angry God's wrath, the King of Assyria has fallen on us now ! (Chorus), Unhappy girl ! Oh, how much more beautiful you appear to my eyes now (Ismaele), Valiant soldier ! ...I loved you ! I would have given my kingdom and my heart for your heart ! (Abigail), Ah no ! I will render my life, but my heart I cannot give ...let my tears speak for my people (Ismaele), Before you shall profane the Temple, this dagger shall slay your daughter ! (Zaccaria), Down on your knees, defeated slaves ! I am the conqueror (Nabucco), Unhappy girl, love will save you ! (Ismaele), Plunder and burn the Temple, mercy will be a crime ! (Nabucco). Act 2 - Upon everyone you will see my fury fall ! Ah yes ! Let Fenena fall... my pretended father ...oh fatal anger ! (Abigail), And the venance of Baal will thunder alongside yours ! (High Priest of Baal), The Lord wishes me to be the agent of a new miracle ...to tear apart the darkness of an unbeliever (Zaccaria), You are accursed of the Lord ! He who is accursed has no brethren (Chorus), Glory be to Abigail ! Death to the Hebrews ! (High Priest of Baal), Hear me now ! Babylonians, I throw your god to the ground ! He has rendered you traitors ...There is only one god ...your King ! (Nabucco), Who is it that takes my royal sceptre from me ? ...I am surrounded by phantoms ...I am fainting (Nabucco), But the greatness of the people of Baal shall not be eclipsed ! (Abigail) Act 3 - Assyria is a queen as powerful as Baal upon Earth (Chorus), ...that woman, whom I dare not call your sister...she has betrayed Baal (High Priest of Baal), Oh ! ...but what of Fenena ? ...she is my flash and blood ! (Nabucco), Thus do I return, miserable creature, the lying document to you ! (Abigail), Then let the people of Assyria call you lady and queen ! This old man asks nothing of you but the life of his heart's delight ! (Nabucco), Fly, thought, on wings of gold, go settle upon the slopes and the hills (Chorus), Oh, rise up, brothers in anguish, the Lord speaks from my lips (Zaccaria), Act 4 - From the lips of my faithful subjects my daughter's name falls ! See, she comes running between ranks of soldiers !

Alas ! Am I dreaming ? (Nabucco), God of the Hebrews, forgive me ! ...I will worship Thee from henceforth always (Nabucco), Through you shall see the sun shine upon Assyria again ! (Chorus), My soul longs for the Lord ...God floods me with His holy light ! (Fenena), Let a new Temple be raised to thy God ...He alone is great, mighty is He alone ! (Nabucco), Almighty Jehovah, who has not felt Thy might ? Who is not as dust in Thy sight ? (Zaccaria), Who will now relive me of the iron burden of my crime ? (Abigail), Servant of Jehovah, you shall be King of Kings (Zaccaria)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1949 Teatro di San Carlo (Gino Bechi - Nabucco, Maria Callas - Abigaille, Luciano Neroni - Zaccaria, Gino Sinimberghi - Ismaele, Amalia Pini - Fenena), 1965 Vienna State Opera (Tito Gobi - Nabucco, Elena Souliotis - Abigaille, Carlo Cava - Zaccaria, Bruno Prevedi - Ismaele, Dora Caral - Fenena), 1982 Deutsche Oper Berlin (Piero Cappuccilli - Nabucco, Ghena Dimitrova - Abigaille, Yevgheny Nesterenko - Zaccaria, Placido Domingo - Ismaele, Lucia Valentini Terrani - Fenena), 1987 La Scala Milan (Renato Bruson - Nabucco, Ghena Dimitrova - Abigaille, Paata Burchuladze - Zaccaria, Bruno Beccaria - Ismaele, Raquel Pierotti - Fenena), 1999 Tokyo Opera (Renato Bruson - Nabucco, Maria Guleghina - Abigaille, Ferruccio Furlanetto - Zaccaria, Fabio Armiliato - Ismaele, Elena Zaremba - Fenena), 2002 Metropolitan Opera (Juan Pons - Nabucco, Maria Guleghina - Abigaille, Samuel Ramey - Zaccaria, Gwyn Hughes Jones - Ismaele, Wendy White - Fenena), 2004 Teatro San Carlo Naples (Renato Bruson - Nabucco, Lauren Flanigan - Abigaille, Maurizio Frusoni - Zaccaria, Carlo Colombara - Ismaele, Monica Bacelli - Fenena), 2009 Teatro Regio di Parma (Leo Nucci - Nabucco, Dimitra Theodossiou - Abigaille, Riccardo Zanellato - Zaccaria, Bruno Ribeiro - Ismaele, Annamaria Chiuri - Fenena),

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79. Don Giovanni

Title: Don Giovanni (Il dissoluto punito, The Libertine Punished)

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Born in Salzburg, his father Leopold Mozart (1719-1787) was a composer, kapellmeister and an experienced teacher, while his mother Ana Maria Pertl (1720-1778) was the daughter of Nicolaus Pertl, the deputy prefect of Hildenstein. He was the youngest of seven children, five of whom died in infancy. Together with his sister Maria Anna Mozart (1751-1829) both children were exhibited as musicians from the age of five. From 1762 to 1768 Mozart family made an European journey concerting to the courts of Munich, Mannheim, Paris, London, Hague, Zurich, Vienna. From 1769 to 1773 Mozart has traveled to Italy to be accepted as a member of Academia Filarmonica in Bologna. In 1773 he was employed by Prince Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo as a court musician in Salzburg. His career in Vienna began in 1781 under the patronage of Emperor Joseph II of Habsburg and he soon established himself as the finest keyboard player in Vienna. In 1777 he was honoured by Pope Clement XIV as Knight of the Order of the Golden Spur. In 1782 he married Constanze Weber (1762-1842), also a member of a family of musicians and the fruit of their marriage were six children of whom only two survived. In 1787 Emperor Joseph II appointed him as his chamber composer paying 800 florins a year. Operas: Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots (1767), Apollo et Hyacinthus (1767), Bastien und Bastienne (1768), La finta semplice (1768), Mitridate, re di Ponto (1770), Ascanio in Alba (1771), Il sogno di Scipione (1772), Lucio Silla (1772), La finta giardiniera (1774), Il re pastore (1775), Thamos, König in Ägypten (1779), Zaide (1779), Idomeno, re di Creta (1781), Die Entführung aus dem Serail (1782), L'oca del Cairo (1784), Lo sposo deluso (1784), Der Schauspieldirektor (1786), Le Nozze di Figaro (1786), Don Giovanni (1787), Così fan Tutte (1790), Der Stein der Weisen (1790), La clemenza di Tito (1791), Die Zauberflöte (1791). His work include more than 600 compositions of symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic and choral music.

Libretto: Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749-1838). Lorenzo Da Ponte was an Italian librettist who wrote 3 libretti for Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni and Così fan tutte. He also produced another 25 libretti for other

10 composers, among which: Antonio Salieri (*La Scuola di gelosi*, *Il ricco d'un giorno*, *Il Talismano*, *Il Pastor fido*, *La cifra*), Vincente Martin Soler (*Il burbero di buon cuore*, *Una cosa rara*, *L'arbore di Diana*, *La Capricciosa corretta*), Francesco Bianchi (*Antigona*, *Il consiglio imprudente*, *Merope*, *Cinna*, *Armida*), Peter Winter (*La grotta di Calipso*, *Il trionfo dell'amor fraterno*, *Il ratto di Proserpina*). He also produced poetry, cantatas, oratorios, translations, books of elementary instruction. The libretto for this opera was based on the legends of Don Juan, a wealthy libertine, a womanizer. The first version of the story was the play *El burlador de Sevilla*, by Triso de Molina, published in Spain in 1630. Other remarkable versions of the story were produced by: Jean Baptiste Moliere (*Dom Juan ou le Festin de pierre*), Carlo Osvaldo Goldoni (*Don Giovanni Tenorio*), Lord George Byron, Ernst Hoffman, Alexander Pushkin, George Bernard Shaw or Albert Camus. The libretto is also closely related to the libretto produced by Giovanni Bertati for the opera *Don Giovanni Tenorio* with music composed by Giuseppe Gazzaniga. Both operas premiered in 1787, but Gazzaniga's work is much shorter, a *dramma giocoso* in one act.

Performance history: The opera premiered in Prague at the Estates Theatre on 29 October 1787. Originally it was prepared to premiere two weeks earlier, to celebrate a visit to Prague of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria, but in the last moment it was substituted with *Le nozze di Figaro*, considered to be more appropriate. The composer conducted the performance himself, with baritone Luigi Bassi in the title role and soprano Teresa Saporiti as Donna Anna. The work was generously received with a favourable press. The Vienna premiere took place on 7 May 1788 with some minor modifications. In Paris the first performance was adapted in 1805 by composer Francois Guillaume Kalkbrenner. The London premiere took place on 12 April 1817 and the United States premiere followed on 23 May 1826 at the Park Theatre. At New York, Manuel Garcia played the title role of this semi-serious opera. At the Metropolitan Opera the opera premiered on 27 December 1899 with baritone Antonio Scotti in the leading role. In the 20th century notable performances were recorded at: New York (1934, 1942, 1944, 1947, 1959), Glyndebourne Festival (1936), Vienna (1937, 1950, 1954, 1955, 1960, 1970, 1977), Rome (1955, 1970), Aix en Provence (1956), London (1959, 1966, 1968, 1973, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1997, 1998, 2000), Berlin (1961, 1985), Munich (1962, 1985), Prague (1967), Paris (1985), Amsterdam (1988), Stockholm (1989), Edinburgh (1995), Ferrara (1999, 2012), Budapest (2000), Freiburg (2006). Up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *Don Giovanni* was performed in the world for 2175 times, in 474 different productions, ranking 10 on Operabase list.

Roles: Don Giovanni (baritone), Donna Anna, Commendatore's daughter (soprano), Don Ottavio (tenor), Il Commendatore (bass), Donna Elvira, a lady (soprano), Leporello, servant (bass), Masetto, peasant (bass), Zerlina, his fiancée (soprano), Chorus (peasants, servants, young ladies, musicians, demons)



Story: As a well behaved man of the world, Don Giovanni finds all women irresistible. The problems arise only when he wants to leave them, or when too many of them gather at one place. On one such occasion, a father becomes anxious and Don Giovanni accidentally kills him in a duel. As he must hide, more women and more problems arise. For a theatrical disappearance from this world, his loyal servant Leporello is the only one to witness how a man made out of stone has administered justice, dragging his master to Hell. Rumours are that the story has repeated, for several times, in several towns of Europe, ... and outside Europe.

Act 1 (The garden of the Commendatore's house. At night / A street near an inn / Open country near Don

Giovanni's house / Ballroom in Don Giovanni's house)

Leporello meditates (I want to be a gentleman and give up my servitude). Don Giovanni enters with Donna Anna clinging to his arm. As he wants to abandon her, Donna Anna cries for help and Il Commendatore comes to defend her. He dares Don Giovanni to a duel and is mortally wounded (Help ! I've been betrayed ! The assassin has wounded me !). Don Giovanni flees with Leporello and Donna Anna enters the scene with Don Ottavio and servants. Finding her father dead Donna Anna faints. Don Ottavio offers his help (Your father ? Banish, my dear, this bitter memory. You have a husband and a father in me). They both swear revenge. Scene 2 - Seconded by Leporello, Don Giovanni sniffs another woman (My, what a perfect sense of smell ! ...I think she's attractive). Donna Elvira enters the scene (Ah, who is there who will tell me where the rascal is ...whom, to my shame, I loved and who betrayed me ?). When Don Giovanni is prepared to console her grief, Donna Elvira complains (You sneaked into my house ...you succeeded in seducing me ...after three days you abandoned me). Don Giovanni asks Leporello to come with the proper explanation and flees away. Instead, Leporello produces to the lady a list of his master's affairs (My dear lady, this is a list of the beauties my master has loved ...In Italy six hundred and forty, in Germany two hundred and thirty one ...In Spain already one thousand and three). Donna Elvira swears revenge. Scene 3 - Servants and peasants are singing and dancing (You girls who trifle with love, do not let the time pass you by !). Don Giovanni welcomes their joy to find out that it is Zerlina's wedding to Masetto. Noble Don Giovanni offers his protection. Masetto is invited to his house to be served with chocolate and wines while Zerlina is to be guarded by her new cavalier protector. Masetto is outraged but pretends to be content (After all you are a cavalier, and I really must not doubt you). Alone with the girl, Don Giovanni makes his move (You were not made to be a peasant girl ...let's not waste time. I want to marry you on the spot). Zerlina is reluctant, but she finally agrees, when Donna Elvira appears to save her (Ah, flee the traitor ! Don't listen to what he says ! His lips are lying ones, his eyes deceiving). To make things even worst, Donna Anna appears accompanied by Don Ottavio (Ah now, beloved, that tears are in vain, let us talk of vengeance). Don Giovanni reassures Donna Anna of his friendship presenting condolences (At your service, My relatives, my parents, this arm, this sword, my possessions, my blood, all I will give to serve you). Donna Anna does not buy his trick and calls for venange (Now you know who tried to steal my honour from me, who was the betrayer who took my fathers's life). Meanwhile, Leporello appears with the news that Zelina and Donna Elvira have inflamed the spirits of the intoxicated peasants, but Don Giovanni seems to be content (So that the wine may set their heads whirling, go and prepare a wonderful party). Scene 4 - Jealous Masetto is making a scene to Zerlina, who is trying to comfort him (Beat me, beat me, my Masetto ..I'll stay here like a lamb). Don Giovanni appears and invites them to the party. Donna Evira, Donna Anna and Don Ottavio arrive to the party wearing masks, prepared to uncover Don Giovanni's misdeeds. Scene 5 - Everyone is partying and dancing. Leporello dances with Masetto while Don Giovanni is dancing with Zerlina. Soon, Zerlina is asking for help from another room. Don Giovanni appears, with his sword and pistol in his hands, blaming Leporello. No one present believes him (Tremble, tremble, scoundrel ! ...Listen to the sound of venange as it thunders all around you). Don Giovanni exits the scene untouched (If the world itself should end, nothing could make me afraid).

Act 2 (A street near an inn. At night / A dark courtyard of Donna Anna's house / A graveyard / A room in Donna Anna's house / A room in Don Giovanni's house)

Leporello wants to leave but Don Giovanni buys his confidence with four pistols. In order to try his luck with Zerlina disguised as a commoner, Don Giovanni exchanges clothes with his servant. As Donna Elvira appears at the window Don Giovanni makes his move, speaking for Leporello (Elvira, my beloved ..it is I, and I beg for your mercy). When Donna Elvira approaches, Leporello embraces her imitating his master's voice (Will you be mine for ever ? ..For ever. My treasure ! ...My Venus !). When alone, Don Giovanni begins a serenade (Come to the window, my treasure, come to console my lament). Instead, Masetto enters the scene with a group of peasants. Pretending to be Leporello he finds out that they want to kill him and he offers to help (Some of you go this way, the rest of you go that way). Left alone with Masetto, Don Giovanni disarms and beats him and leaves. Zerlina comes to comfort Masetto (You'll see, my darling, if you are good, what a fine cure I will give you). Scene 2 - In the courtyard of Donna Anna's house Leporello tries to escape Donna Elvira but Donna Anna with Don Ottavio enter the scene, followed by Zerlina and Masetto. In great confusion the six of them engage in a severe quarell (A thousand strange thoughts are whirling in my head). As they all want to punish him, Leporello begs (Mercy, dear people ! Have mercy on me !) and runs out. Don Ottavio demands his right to avenge Donna Anna's father (I shall not return except with tidings of death). Donna Elvira is the only one merciful (He betrayed and abandoned me, but I still would forgive him). Scene 3 - Don Giovanni tries to hide

in the graveyard, near Il Commendatore's statue. Leporello appears and they change their clothes. On the base of the statue Leporello reads (Upon the base one who sent me to my death I here await venange). In response, Don Giovanni sends Leporello with an invitation to dinner (O most noble statue, although you're made of marble ...). To his astonishment, the statue agrees. Scene 4 - Donna Anna complains to Don Ottavio (You know well how much I love you, you know to whom I am pledged). Scene 5 - Don Giovanni is dinning with musicians (The dinner is prepared. Play, my dear friends !). As Donna Elvira appears, Don Giovanni invites her to dine with him (Hurray for the women, hurray for the wine !). Donna Elvira exits the room and screams, as the statue enters (...you invited me to dinner and I have come !). The statue insists that Don Giovanni must repent but he stubbornly refuses. Flames appear on all sides, the statue disappears and the earth begin to tremble under Don Giovanni's feet (What lacerates my soul ? Who torments my body ? ...No horror is too dreadful).

Epilogue

Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Zerlina, Don Ottavio and Masetto listen as Leporello recalls how the man of stone dragged his master to Hell. Donna Anna asks her betrothed to respect her a year of mourning, Donna Elvira prepares to retire to a convent and Zerlina prepares to go home with her husband, while Leporello heads for the tavern to find a better master. As for Don Giovanni, they all sing (So the wretch can stay down there with Prosepine and Pluto ...in this life scoundrels always receive their just deserts !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - I want to be a gentleman and give up my servitude (Leporello), Help ! I've been betrayed ! The assassin has wounded me ! (Il Commendatore), Your father ? Banish, my dear, this bitter memory. You have a husband and a father in me (Don Ottavio), My, what a perfect sense of smell ! ...I think she's attractive (Leporello, Don Giovanni), Ah, who is there who will tell me where the rascal is ...whom, to my shame, I loved and who betrayed me ? (Donna Elvira), You sneaked into my house ...you succeeded in seducing me ...after three days you abandoned me (Donna Elvira), My dear lady, this is a list of the beauties my master has loved ...In Italy six hundred and forty, in Germany two hundred and thirty one ...In Spain already one thousand and three (Leporello), You girls who trifle with love, do not let the time pass you by ! (Chorus), After all you are a cavalier, and I really must not doubt you (Masetto), You were not made to be a peasant girl ...let's not waste time. I want to marry you on the spot (Don Giovanni), Ah, flee the traitor ! Don't listen to what he says ! His lips are lying ones, his eyes deceiving (Donna Elvira), Ah now, beloved, that tears are in vain, let us talk of vengeance (Don Ottavio), At your service, My relatives, my parents, this arm, this sword, my possessions, my blood, all I will give to serve you (Don Giovanni), Now you know who tried to steal my honour from me, who was the betrayer who took my fathers's life (Donna Anna), So that the wine may set their heads whirling, go and prepare a wonderful party (Don Giovanni), Beat me, beat me, my Masetto ..I'll stay here like a lamb (Zerlina), Tremble, tremble, scoundrel ! ...Listen to the sound of venange as it thunders all around you (Chorus), If the world itself should end, nothing could make me afraid (Don Giovanni)

Act 2 - Elvira, my beloved ..it is I, and I beg for your mercy (Don Giovanni), Will you be mine for ever ? ..For ever. My treasure ! ...My Venus ! (Donna Elvira, Leporello), Come to the window, my treasure, come to console my lament (Don Giovanni), Some of you go this way, the rest of you go that way (Don Giovanni), You'll see, my darling, if you are good, what a fine cure I will give you (Zerlina), A thousand strange thoughts are whirling in my head (Sextet), Mercy, dear people ! Have mercy on me ! (Leporello), I shall not return except with tidings of death (Don Ottavio), He betrayed and abandoned me, but I still would forgive him (Donna Elvira), Upon the base one who sent me to my death I here await venange (Leporello), O most noble statue, although you're made of marble ... (Leporello), You know well how much I love you, you know to whom I am pledged (Donna Anna), The dinner is prepared. Play, my dear friends ! (Don Giovanni), Hurray for the women, hurray for the wine ! (Don Giovanni), ...you invited me to dinner and I have come ! (The Statue), What lacerates my soul ? Who torments my body ? ...No horror is too dreadful (Don Giovanni, Chorus) Epilogue - So the wretch can stay down there with Prosepine and Pluto ...in this life scoundrels always receive their just deserts ! (All)

Ballet: The story of Don Giovanni resulted in a ballet performance called Don Juan, with a libretto by Ranieri de Calzabigi, music by Christoph Willibald von Gluck and choreography by Gasparo Angiolini. The ballet's first performance was in Vienna on 17 October 1761 at the Theater am Karntnertor, 16 years earlier than Mozart's opera. At the end of the ballet version, Don Juan (Giovanni) also sinks to Hell, but we do not know if it is the

Hell of the earthly lust, or the Hell of the afterworld.

Recordings: 1934 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Enzio Pinza - Don Giovanni, Virgilio Lazzari - Leporello, Rosa Ponselle - Donna Anna, Tito Schipa - Don Ottavio, Maria Muller - Donna Elvira), 1950 Vienna Philharmonic (Tito Gobbi - Don Giovanni, Erich Kunz - Leporello, Ljuba Welitsch - Donna Anna, Anton Dermota - Don Ottavio, Elisabeth Schwartzkopf - Donna Elvira), 1955 RAI, Rome (Giuseppe Taddei - Don Giovanni, Italo Tajo - Leporello, Mary Curtis Verna - Donna Anna, Cesare Valetti - Don Ottavio, Carla Gavazzi - Donna Elvira), 1961 Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin (Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Don Giovanni, Karl Christian Kohn - Leporello, Sena Jurinac - Donna Anna, Ernst Haefliger - Don Ottavio, Maria Stader - Donna Elvira), 1966 Philharmonia Orchestra London (Nicolai Ghiaurov - Don Giovanni, Walter Berry - Leporello, Claire Watson - Donna Anna, Nicolai Gedda - Don Ottavio, Christa Ludwig - Donna Elvira), 1985 Berlin Philharmonic (Samuel Ramey - Don Giovanni, Ferruccio Furlanetto - Leporello, Anna Tomowa Sintow - Donna Anna, Gosta Winberh - Don Ottavio, Agnes Baltsa - Donna Elvira), 1988 Dutch National Opera (Thomas Hampson - Don Giovanni, Laszlo Polgar - Leporello, Edit Gruberova - Donna Anna, Hans Peter Blochwitz - Don Ottavio, Roberta Alexander - Donna Elvira), 1995 Scottish Chamber Orchestra (Bo Skovhus - Don Giovanni, Alessandro Corbelli - Leporello, Christine Brewer - Donna Anna, Jerry Hadley - Don Ottavio, Felicity Lott - Donna Elvira), 2006 Freiburger Barockorchester (Johannes Weisser - Don Giovanni, Lorenzo Regazzo - Leporello, Olga Pasichnyk - Donna Anna, Kenneth Tarver - Don Ottavio, Alex Penda - Donna Elvira), 2012 Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Ferrara (Ildebrando D'Arcangelo - Don Giovanni, Luca Pisaroni - Leporello, Diana Damrau - Donna Anna, Rolando Villazon - Don Ottavio, Joyce DiDonato- Donna Elvira).

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80. Swan Lake

Title: Swan Lake (Lebedinoye ozero)

Composer: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Born in Votkinsk, in the Russian Empire to a family with a long line of military service, his father Ilya Petrovich Tchaikovsky has served as a lieutenant colonel in the Department of Mines, while his mother Alexandra Andreyevna had half French ancestry. Tchaikovsky began piano lessons at age five and at 10 he joined the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. In 1855 his father founded some private lessons with Rudolph Kunding. In 1861 Tchaikovsky attended Russian Musical Society and in 1862 he enrolled at the Conservatory where he studied music theory with Nikolai Zarembo and composition with Anton Rubinstein. He graduated in 1865 when he was offered a post of Professor of Music Theory at the Moscow Conservatory. Tchaikovsky lived as a bachelor for most of his life, except for a two months marriage with Antonina Miliukova, a former student. In 1884 Tsar Alexander III conferred upon him the Order of St. Vladimir, which included a title of hereditary nobility. In the 1889-90 season he served as director of the Russian Musical Society and since 1887 he also substituted as a conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1892 Pyotr Tchaikovsky was voted a member of the Academie des Beaux Arts in France and the following year he was awarded a honorary Doctor of Music degree at the University of Cambridge. Operas: The Voyevoda (1868), Undina (1869), The Oprichnik (1872), Vakula the Smith (1874), Eugene Onegin (1878), The Maid of Orleans (1879), Mazepa (1883), Cherevichki (1885), The Enchantress (1877), The Queen of Spades (1890), Iolanta (1891). Ballet: Swan Lake (1876), The Sleeping Beauty (1889), The Nutcracker (1892). Symphonies: Winter Daydreams, Little Russian, Polish, No 4, No 5, Manfred, Pathetique, Symphony in E-flat. Concertos: Piano Concerto No 1 to No 3, Cello Concerto, Violin Concerto, Concert Fantasia. His work also includes instrumental music, orchestral suites, serenades, chamber music, choral music and arrangements of the works of other composers.

Libretto: Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Julius Reisinger (1828-1892). Julius Reisinger (born Vaclav), was a Czech dancer and choreographer, director of the Nove Mesto Theatre in Prague (1860-1864), director of the Leipzig Ballet Company (1864-1872) and ballet master at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow (1873-1878). With various European ballet companies he staged more than twenty works, among which the first production of

Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* for the opening of the Prague National Theatre in 1884. Other notable performances directed by Reisinger include: *Saltarello*, *Interrupted Solitude*, *The Crystal Slipper* (Cinderella), *Kastchei*. In 1871, the composer has created a little ballet called *The Lake of the Swans* featuring the famous leitmotif known as the *Swan's Theme* (Song of the Swans). In May 1875, Vladimir Petrovich Begichev, director of the Moscow Imperial Theatres at the time commissioned the score for 800 rubles. From that day, Pyotr Tchaikovsky worked together with Julius Reisinger for the requirements of each dance. There is no evidence who wrote the original libretto, but the story may have originated in the Russian fairy tale of *The White Duck*, collected by Alexander Afanasyev in the *Narodnye russkie skazki*. From various letters to friends results that the composer was emotionally involved in the next two years of work, expressing a longstanding desire for this type of music.

Performance history: The ballet performance premiered on 4 March 1877 at the Bolshoi Theatre, conducted by Stepan Ryabov with settings by Karl Valts, Ivan Shangin and Karl Groppius. Ballerina Polina Karpakova performed the role of Odette and premier danseur Victor Gillert performed the role of Prince Siegfried. Since 26 April 1877 the prima ballerina Anna Sobeshchanskaya replaced Polina for the role of Odette. The first performane in London was staged at the Alhambra Theatre on 1 December 1884 by balletmaster Joseph Peter Hansen. On 21 February 1884 balletmaster August Berger presented *Swan Lake* in Prague, by the Ballet of The National Theatre, during two concerts conducted by Pyotr Cheaikovsky himself. The composer noted in his diary that he experienced "a moment of absolute happiness". In February 1894 the second act was performed at the Mariinsky Theatre as part of the memorial concerts dedicated to the composer. The Saint Petersburg's premiere at the Mariinsky Theatre took place at 27 January 1895 with Marius Petipa as Balletmaster, Riccardo Drigo as conductor and settings produced by Ivan Andreyev, Mikhail Bocharov and Heinrich Levogt. Italian ballerina Pierina Legnani performed the role of Odette and premier danseur Pavel Gerdt performed the role of Prince Siegfried. Other notable performances in Moscow were staged at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1880, 1882 and 1901. In the United States *Swan Lake* made it's American debut in 1940 with a performance by the San Francisco Ballet. Musical audio scores of the performance were recorded at: Minneapolis (1954), Geneva (1959), Hilversum (1974), London (1976, 1977, 1982, 1990), Boston (1979), Moscow (1988), Montreal (1992), Saint Petersburg (2006), Bergen (2013). Great video recordings of the performance were produced by: Bolshoi Ballet (1957, 1976, 1984, 1989, 2015), Vienna State Opera Ballet (1966, 2014), Kirov Ballet (1968, 1986, 1990), The Royal Ballet (1980, 2009), English National Ballet (1988), Perm Theatre Ballet (1992), Paris Opera Ballet (1992, 2006), Royal Swedish Ballet (1996), Berlin State Ballet (1998), La Scalla Theatre Ballet (2004), American Ballet Theatre (2005), Mariinsky Ballet (2007), Zurich Ballet (2009). Only in the 2017/2018 season, there were 13 different productions of *Swan Lake* performed in: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Cuba, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Slovakia, Thailand, United States.

Roles: The Queen, Prince Siegfried, Princess Odette, Benno, Siegfried's friend, Wolfgang, Siegfried's tutor, Baron von Rothbart, ab evil sorcerer, Odile, his daughter, The Baroness, his wife, Freiherr von Schwarzfels and his wife, A herald, A footman, Court (gentleman and ladies, friends of the prince, heralds, guests, pages, villagers, servants, swans, cygnets)



Story: It is a faity tale with a Prince and Princesses, magic and sorcery, love and beauty. Mortal love is not fitted for the crowned heads. Turning adult, a young prince finds his match in a Swan Qeen (Queen of Sweden ?), but she can not be revealed to the mortal eyes. In order to find their happiness, the two supranatural beeing must

evade to a different world of their own, where their subjects can neither see nor reach them.

Act 1- Prince Siegfried celebrates his birthday. Royal family and townspeople are dancing. All eyes are captivated by the young girls. His mother, the queen, brings him a crossbow since he is allowed now to hunt like men do. Not satisfied with the girls in the audience, the prince takes his crossbow and runs to the woods, followed by his hunting buddies.

Act 2 - Separated from his friends, Prince Siegfried finds an enchanted lake where swans gently float across its surface. He spots the most beautiful of them, with a crown on her head, the Swan Queen. As the dusk falls, the swan turns into a beautiful girl called Odette. Prince Siegfried learns from her that all the swans are young girls, enchanted by sorcerer Rothbart, and the enchanted lake was created by their tears. The spell can only be broken if one who never loved falls in love with her. Rothbart himself interrupts her pledges. Prince Siegfried wants to kill him, but if Rothbart dies before the spell is broken, it can never be undone. Prince Siegfried breaks his crossbow and swears his love, but as the dawn arrives the girls are turned into swans again.

Act 3 - The next day, in the Royal Hall, Prince Siegfried is presented six prospective princesses from: Hungary, Russia, Spain, France, Italy and Poland. Dancing with the girls, the prince cannot stop thinking about the Swan Queen. In the sound of trumpets, Baron von Rothbart arrives disguised as a foreign king. He brings his daughter, Odile, dressed like a black swan, strongly resembling Odette. As Prince Siegfried is more and more captivated by Odile, Odette appears at the window to witness the marriage proposal. As Odette flees into the night, Prince Siegfried sees the real Odile and quickly leaves the party.

Act 4 - As their queen is sorrowing the swan maidens dance trying to comfort her. Prince Siegfried appears near the lake and makes a passionate apology. Since Prince Siegfried has committed to another girl Odette is sentenced to remain a swan forever. Baron von Rothbart arrives with Odile and they both try to vanquish the swan thing from the prince's mind but they fail. Siegfried chooses to remain with Odette and they both leap into the lake. As he drowns for Odette, the spell is broken and all the swans turn into young girls. Odette also drowns, hand in hand with him, and the astonished maidens watch as Siegfried and Odette ascend into the Heavens, forever united.

Great moments and arias: -

Ballet: Act 1 - No 1 Allegro giusto No 2. Tempo di valse (Waltz) No 3. Allegro moderato No 4. Pas de trois No 5. Pas de deux No 6. Andantino quasi moderato No 7. Sujet (psychical secret dimension) No 8. Tempo di polacca (Dance with Goblets) No 9. Sujet, Andante Act 2 - No. 10 Moderato No 11. Allegro moderato, Moderato, Allegro vivo No 12. Allegro, Moderato quasi andante No 13. Tempo di valse, Moderato, Allegro vivo (Dances of the Swans) No 14. Moderato Act 3 - No 15. Allegro giusto (March) No 16. Moderato, Allegro vivo (Dance of the Corps de Ballet) No 17. Allegro, Tempo di valse (Entrance of the Guests) No 18. Allegro, Allegro giusto No 19. Allegro, Moderato, Andante (Pas de six) No 20. Moderato, Allegro, Vivace (Czardas) No 20a. Moderato, Andante, Allegro, Presto (Danse russe) No 21. Allegro non troppo (Bolero) No 22. Allegro moderato, Andantino, Presto (Danse Napolitaine) No 23 Tempo di mazurka (Mazurka) No 24 Allegro, Tempo di valse, Allegro vivo Act 4 - No 25. Moderato (Entr'acte) No 26. Allegro non troppo No 27. Moderato (Dance of the Little Swans) No 28. Allegro agitato, Molto meno mosso, Allegro vivace No 29. Andante, Allegro, Alla breve, Moderato e maestoso, Moderato (Finale)

Recordings: (Video): 1957 Bolshoi Ballet (Nikolai Fadeychev - Siegfried, Maya Plisetskaya - Odette), 1966 Vienna State Opera Ballet (Rudolf Nureyev - Siegfried, Margot Fonteyn - Odette), 1976 Bolshoi Ballet (Alexander Bogatirev - Siegfried, Maya Plisetskaya - Odette), 1980 The Royal Ballet (Anthony Dowell - Siegfried, Natalia Makarova - Odette), 1986 Kirov Ballet (Konstantin Zaklinsky - Siegfried, Galina Mezentseva - Odette), 1992 Paris Opera Ballet (Patrik Dupond - Siegfried, Marie Claude Pietragalla - Odette), 1996 Royal Swedish Ballet (Anders Nordstrom - Siegfried, Nathalie Nordquist - Odette), 1998 Berlin State Ballet (Oliver Matz - Siegfried, Steffi Scherzer- Odette), 2004 La Scala Theatre Ballet (Roberto Bolle - Siegfried, Svetlana Zakharova - Odette), 2005 American Ballet Theatre (Angel Corella - Siegfried, Gillian Murphy - Odette), 2007 Mariinsky Ballet (Danila Korsuntsev - Siegfried, Ulyana Lopatkina - Odette), 2009 Zurich Ballet (Stanislav Jermakov - Siegfried, Polina Semionova - Odette), 2015 Bolshoi Ballet (Denis Rodkin - Siegfried, Svetlana Zakharova - Odette),

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81. The Gipsy Baron

Title: The Gypsy Baron (Der Zigeunerbaron)

Composer: Johann Strauss Jr. (1825-1899). Born in St. Ulrich near Vienna, Austria, his father was Johann Strauss Sr. (1804-1849) the famous composer of waltzes, best known for the Radetzky March while his mother was Maria Anna Streim (1801-1870). Johann Strauss Jr. was the first of seven children and studied the violin with Franz Amon, the first violinist in his father's orchestra. He studied counterpoint and harmony at the private school of Professor Joachim Hoffmann Vienna music. He also studied with composer Joseph Drechsler and Anton Kollmann the ballet repetiteur of the Vienna Court Opera. Johann Strauss Jr made his debut at the Dommayer's Casino in Hietzing, a suburb of Vienna. His first major appointment was as Kapellmeister of the Vienna Citizen's Regiment. Since 1863 he was appointed KK Hofballmusikdirektor (Music Director of the Royal Court Balls). In 1862 he Married Henrietta Treffz (1818-1878) a well known mezzo-soprano, with no offspring. After her death in 1878, Johann Strauss remarried actress Angelika Dittrich and after a quick divorce in 1887 he married Adele Deutsch. His residence in the Praterstrasse, where he lived in the 1860s is now part of the Vienna Museum. Operettas: Indigo und die vierzig Rauber (1871), Der Karneval in Rom (1873), Die Fladermaus (1874), Cagliostro in Wien (1875), Prinz Methusalem (1877), Blindekuh (1878), Das Spitzentuch der Konigin (1880), Der lustige Krieg (1881), Eine Nacht in Venedig (1883), Der Zigeunerbaron (1885), Simplicius (1887), Furstin Ninetta (1893), Jabuka (1894), Waldmeister (1895), Die Gottin der Vernunft (1897). Opera: Ritter Pazman (1892). Ballet: Aschenbrodel (Cinderella 1899). Other 10 operettas have been arranged by other composers using music by Johann Strauss Jr. His work also includes very numerous: waltzes, polkas, marches and quadrilles.

Libretto: Ignaz Schnitzer (1839-1921) was a writer, journalist, poet and librettist from Austria. His important works are: Joglei (for Wilhelm Taubert), Der Goldmensch (for Adolf Muller), Der Zigeunerbaron (for Johann Strauss), Rafaela (for Max Wolf), Das Orakel (for Joseph Hellmesberger), Die Konigsbraut (for Robert Fuchs), Paris in Wien (for Josef Bayer), Husarenblut (for Hugo Felix), Kaspar (for Josef Bayer), Bruder Straubinger (for Edmund Eysler), Pufferl (for Edmund Eysler), Der Elektriker (for Josef Fromm), Tip Top (for Josef Stritzko) and Kreolenblut (for Heinrich Berte). Two of his libretti have not been to music as yet (Venus von Muran, Die Salzburger Gloken). Ignaz Schnitzer also published two books regarding the lives of Emperor Franz Joseph I (1898) and Maister Johann Strauss (1920). The subject for this libretto was inspired by a novel called "A ciganybaro", published by Jokai Mor (1825-1904). Since 1915, The Gypsy Baron resulted in 13 film productions among which 4 film productions of the operetta (1927 by Frederic Zelnic, 1935 by Karl Hartl, 1954 by Arthur Maria Rabenalt, 1962 by Kurt Wilhelm). The work was originally intended as an opera, but further revisions were made and it resulted in a comic opera.

Performance history: The operetta premiered on 24 October 1885 at the Theatre an der Wien. The composer himself conducted the performance with the tenor buffo Alexander Girardi playing the role of Kalman Zsupan. The United States premiere soon followed on 15 February 1886. In Russia the first performance of The Gypsy Baron with a Roma troupe (Shishkin's troupe) took place on 13 April 1887 at the Maly Theatre in Moscow. In Romania the operetta was first performed on 9 January 1890 at the National Theatre in Bucharest. On 17 December 1890, the Grand Opera House in Meridian Mississippi (Riley Center) opened with Johann Strauss's opereta performed by a German language company from New York. In Hungary the operetta was first performed at Nepszinhaz (National Theatre) in 1902, with tenor Kenedich Kalman singing the role of Sandor Barinkay. At the New York Philharmonic the Overture to The Gypsy Baron premiered on 6 August 1933, conducted by Willem van Hoogstraten. In the United Kingdom, the premiere took place on 10 March 1938 at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham, as part of the Carl Rosa Opera Company spring season there. In London the operetta premiered at the Sadlers Wells on 9 June 1964. In September 1975 a remarkable version of the operetta was filmed in Hungary and Germany with music performed by Stuttgart's Sinfonieorchester. Since 2004 to the end of

the stage 2017/2018, *The Gypsy Baron* was performed in the world for 854 times, in 128 different productions, ranking 64 on Operabase list.

Roles: Graf Peter Homonay (baritone), Count Carnero, Royal Commissioner (tenor), Baron Sandor Barinkay (tenor), Kalman Zsupan, a pig farmer (tenor buffo), Arsena, his daughter (soprano), Mirabella, governess (mezzo soprano), Ottokar, her son (tenor), Czipra, gypsy woman (soprano alto), Saffi, her daughter (soprano), Pali, an old gypsy (bass or baritone), The Mayor of Vienna, Seppl, Miska, Istvan (speaking roles), Chorus (sailors, gypsy man and gypsy women, gypsy children, soldiers, husars, marketers, ladies and gentleman, people)



Story: Returned from exile, Baron Barinkay is assisted by Count Carnero in his request to establish a propriety on the land of his fathers. He is looking for a wife and workers. Arsena, the daughter of a pig farmer seems to be suitable, but she laughs on him, being promised to another, to Ottokar. Impressed by her beauty, Baron Barinkay settles for a young and poor gypsy girl, Saffi, and he is proclaimed King of the Gypsies. Pleased with his affection, Saffi turns out to be the daughter of the last Turkish Pasha in Temesvar and she reveals to him a hidden treasure. Where is gold, there is the devil. Ottokar claims the treasure, war is declared. All men respond to the call of duty. Barinkay returns victorious, nothing is heard about Ottokar. You can trust a gypsy's heart.

Act 1 (A riverside near the town of Temesvar)

The sailors sing (There is no proper sailor who is afraid of water). Ottokar is digging for a hidden treasure, with no luck. Czipra make fun of his efforts, he will end penniless and never marry. Sandor Barinkay arrives together with Count Carnero to inquire the stars about his future (Factotum I was first in a huge menagerie ...the lions crawl in front of me ...A great magician I was, in card arts I am master !). Czipra agrees to read the cards for Barinkay's future (Soon you will be courted a lot, rich treasures shall you inherit, a woman that loves you is there for you, and in her dream you'll find the treasure). Laughing, Carnero asks her to read his future too. Czipra responds that he will also recover a treasure that disappeared from him, but he will find it slim and long as a hop stick. Barinkay has come to buy for his use a gypsy bride and Czipra is asked to sign with her toe as a witness. Zsupan arrives and he is asked to sing as a second witness, although there is a little problem (Writing and reading has never been my subject ...I deal with pigs, I never was a poet). Mirabella, the governess, appears and presents herself as an ex-prisoner of a Turkish Pasha, after the Battle of Belgrad (There are twenty-four years since the battle of Belgrad). It turns out that she is Count Carnero's wife (his lost treasure). As Arsena arrives she is proposed as a bride, but she refuses to lift the veil and reveal her face. All the girls stand to her wish (To the old custom we are faithful ...Trallala, trallala, trallala ...the cake has to come first !). Arsena also does not want to renounce Ottokar. Not helping, Zsupan presents her as his very image (What fills you with wonder is my faithful image). Arsena is stubborn and says a ten times no to the proposal, while Barinkay insists that he must see her face. Mean while Saffi is heard singing (No one on Earth is as poor or as true as a Gypsy). Also Ottokar is heard calling for Arsena (O don't let your heart remain silent, how does the night load up to lust for love). Both Arsena and Ottokar laugh on the ridiculous suitor and reinforce their commitment. Saffi repeats her lied accompanied by the chorus. Czipra offers Barinkay a place to rest for the night and meet some gypsy girls. Barinkay eagerly accepts (Praised be the hour I appeared in here). He also underlines that he is a Baron, and since he has returned the Gypsy Throne is meant for him. Saffi is the first to welcome his claim (We contract you blindly, because we are yours). The newly elected King of the Gypsies repeats his offer to Zsupan, but his offer is denied. Affronted, Barinkay turns to Saffi (With you I find a faithful heart, to which I save

myself). Lifted to the shoulders by the Gypsies, Barinkay takes the new oath (That's my Throne, because I'm the Baron of the Gypsy).

Act 2 (The castle at dawn, the following day)

Barinkay sings what a wonderful night it was (A fairy tale it seems and yet true ...I want to love you faithfully and true). Impressed, Saffi reveals to him her dream, where she was approached by an old man, his father, who showed her the place for the hidden treasure (Only lift a marble stone, and rich as Crassus he will be). Finding the treasure, Czipra, Saffi and Barinkay prepare to celebrate with extensive shopping, Tokay wine, festivals and masquerades (See here the gold, it rolls so hold ! What we want was accomplished !). The peasants return from the field singing (Ha, the iron has been plated ...boilers, scythes, plows ... knives, sickles, locks !). Count Carnero doubts that Saffi's marriage to Barinkay is legal, since it was not witnessed in church, the stars and the Moon won't do. Mirabella also speaks on Carnero's side followed by Zupan's moral reasoning (A girl can not just fall like a fly, a man must look if she didn't break the ice). Graf Homonay enters the scene proposing to all young man to leave their sweethearts and join the Hussars (Come to the Hussars ...high the military ...brother join the military). Inflamed with the wine Graf Homonay sings a csardas (How does a Hussar love). All the boys head for Vienna. Since Ottokar seems interested in the perspective, Arsena backs him with a valse (No city, like the Vienna city, none so fine). Zsupan, Mirabella and Arsena claim that Barinkay is not entitled to own such a treasure and Carnero offers to bring the matter to the judge. Czipra can not remain silent any more and reveals a document attesting that Saffi is a Princess (Her father was The Last Pasha in Hungary). Every one is pleased, except Barinkay whose rank is insufficient to marry a Princess and so he must join the Hussars (My life a leave for love, love let it be for Fatherland !). Soldiers and peasants unite their voices to hail their country (No city like the Imperial City, none so fine). Everyone, including Count Carnero, Zsupan and Ottokar join the army.

Act 3 (In Vienna, after the war)

Everyone sings with joy (Rejoice, rejoice ...As the victors they return). Arsena sings, joined by Czipra and Saffi (Yes, this and that and something more ...brings us to marriage fun !). Zsupan tells his story about the war (With the enemy, I didn't care ...stranger hero, greet God watch and money ...greet God). Zsupan also recalls his encounter with a Spanish lady (Three feet in beat I said to her ...Yet I advertised tender love, since I showed me again as a genius !). The soldiers arrive marching and singing (Hurrah the battle ! ...some enemy, who means well, Oh, how easily do you conquer !). Saffi is resolute (In the background I have held him fists, trust the Gypsy girl, where he appears he will be friendly met). Barinkay is exultant (Everything succeeded, the enemies conquered, my wife spotted, the drums singing ...all for honor and more, when men knows the danger it is not hard, it is not hard).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - There is no proper sailor who is afraid of water (Chorus), Factotum I was first in a huge menagerie ...the lions crawl in front of me ...A great magician I was, in card arts I am master ! (Barinkay), Soon you will be courted a lot, rich treasures shall you inherit, a woman that loves you is there for you, and in her dream you'll find the treasure (Czipra), Writing and reading has never been my subject ...I deal with pigs, I never was a poet (Zsupan), There are twenty-four years since the battle of Belgrad (Mirabella), To the old custom we are faithful ...Trallala, trallala, trallala ...the cake has to come first ! (Chorus), What fills you with wonder is my faithful image (Zsupan), No one on Earth is as poor or as true as a Gypsy (Saffi), O don't let your heart remain silent, how does the night load up to lust for love (Ottokar), Praised be the hour I appeared in here (Barinkay), We contract you blindly, because we are yours (Saffi), With you I find a faithful heart, to which I save myself (Barinkay), That's my Throne, because I'm the Baron of the Gypsy (Barinkay) Act 2 - A fairy tale it seems and yet true ...I want to love you faithfully and true (Barinkay), Only lift a marble stone, and rich as Crassus he will be (Saffi), See here the gold, it rolls so hold ! What we want was accomplished ! (Czipra, Saffi, Barinkay), Ha, the iron has been plated ...boilers, scythes, plows ... knives, sickles, locks ! (Chorus), A girl can not just fall like a fly, a man must look if she didn't break the ice (Zsupan), Come to the Hussars ...high the military ...brother join the military (Graf Homonay), How does a Hussar love (Graf Homonay), No city, like the Vienna city, none so fine (Arsena), Her father was The Last Pasha in Hungary (Czipra), My life a leave for love, love let it be for Fatherland ! (Barinkay), No city like the Imperial City, none so fine (Chorus) Act 3 - Rejoice, rejoice ...As the victors they return (Chorus), Yes, this and that and something more ...brings us to marriage fun ! (Arsena, Czipra, Saffi), With the enemy, I didn't care ...stranger hero, greet God watch and

money ...greet God (Zsupan), Three feet in beat I said to her ...Yet I advertised tender love, since I showed me again as a genius ! (Zsupan). Hurrah the battle ! ...some enemy, who means well, Oh, how easily do you conquer ! (Chorus), In the background I have hold him fists, trust the Gypsy girl, where he appears he will be friendly met (Saffi), Everything succeeded, the enemies conquered, my wife spotted, the drums singing ...all for honor and more, when men knows the danger it is not hard, it is not hard (Barinkay)

Ballet: Most performances include several czardas and waltzes with contagious rythms. Optional there are some ballet movements, but all performances require some kind of choreography. Walts is a three steps in cadence dance, for spinning partners, extremely popular in the 19th century. In the opera Zsupan mentions his "three feet in a beat" as the way of persuading the Spanish woman to obey his orders.

Recordings: 1975 Radio- Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart (Siegfried Jerusalem - Sandor Barinkay, Ellen Shade - Saffi, Ivan Refroff - Kalman Zsupan, Wolfgang Brendel - Graf Peter Homonay, Janet Perry - Arsena, Biserka Cvejic - Czipra), 1986 Munchner Rundfunkorchester (Josef Protschka - Sandor Barinkay, Julia Varady - Saffi, Walter Berry- Kalman Zsupan, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Graf Peter Homonay, Brigitte Linder - Arsena, Hanna Schwartz - Czipra), 2004 Orchestre National de France (Zoran Todorovich - Sandor Barinkay, Natalia Ushakova - Saffi, Rudolf Wassrelof - Kalman Zsupan, Bela Porencz - Graf Peter Homonay, Jeannette Fischer - Arsena, Ewa Wolak - Czipra), 2016 German Radio Orchester in Hamburg (Nikolai Schukoff - Sandor Barinkay, Renate Pitscheider -Saffi, Markus Bruck - Kalman Zsupan, Jochen Schmeckenbecher - Graf Peter Homonay, Claudia Barainsky -Arsena, Khatuna Mikaberidze - Czipra)

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82. Pelleas and Melisande

Title: Pelleas and Melisande (Pelleas et Melisande)

Composer: Claude Debussy (1862-1918). Born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris, his father Manuel Achille Debussy owned a china shop while his mother Victorine Manoury was a steamstress. Claude was the eldest of five children. He learned his first piano music at the age of 7, with Jean Cerutti and Antoinette Maute de Fleurville. In 1872, at the age of 10 he was admitted for the next 11 years to the Conservatoire de Paris where he studied with Antoine Francois Marmontel (piano), Albert Lavignac (solfegio), Ernest Guiraud (composition), Emile Durand (harmony), Cesar Franck (organ). In 1884 he won the Prix de Rome for a two years study at the French Academy in Rome. In 1899 he married Marie Rosalie Texier (1873-1932). He remarried in 1908 to Emma Bardac (1862-1934) and the fruit of their marriage was a girl, Calude Emma. In the same year, Claude Debussy became a member of the governing council of the Conservatoire. Opera: Rodrigue et Chimene (1892), Pelleas et Melisande (1902), Le diable dans le beffroi (1911), La chute de la Maison Usher (1917), Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien (1911). Ballet: Khamma (1912), Jeux (1913), La Boite a joujoux (1913), Le palais du silence ou NO-JA-LI (1914). His musical compositions also include: orchestral and soloist compositions, chamber music, piano music, voice and piano music and vocal compositions.

Libretto: Claude Debussy, as an adaptation of the play Pelleas et Melisande by Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949). Count Maeterlinck was a Belgian playwright, poet and essayist awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1911 for his wealth of imagination and the poetic atmosphere that he created around his favourite themes: death and the meaning of life. He was made Count by Albert I King of the Belgians in 1932. His works have inspired several composers to produce opera performances: Pelleas et Melissande (Claude Debussy), Aladina et Palomid (Burghauser, Osvald Chlubna, Frantisek Burian), Ariane et Barbe-bleu (Paul Dukas), Les aveugles (Beat Furrer, Lera Auerbach), La Mort de Tintagiles (Lawrence Collingwood), Monna Vanna (Henry Fevrier, Sergei Rachmaninoff), L'oiseau bleu (Albert Wolff), Princess Maleine (Lili Boulanger), Les Sept Princesses (Vassili Netchaiev), Soeur Beatrice (Alexander Grechaninov, Dmitri Mitropulos), Interieur (Giedrius Kuprevicius). Maeterlinck's work also include several other dramatic works, essays, poetry, memoires (Bulles bleues) and

translations. The play premiered on 17 May 1893 at the Bouffes Parisiens in the presence of Claude Debussy, who was deeply impressed by its dream like atmosphere and decided to set it to music. He obtained the permission via his friend, the poet Henri de Regnier, and made a trip to Belgium to visit Maeterlinck at his home in Ghent. Debussy finished the short score in 1895 and completed it in 1898, when the Opera Comique accepted to produce it. The final version went into rehearsals in January 1902.

Performance history: *Pelleas et Melisande* received its first performance at the Opera Comique in Paris, on 30 April 1902, conducted by Andre Massager. Soprano Mary Garden was distributed as Melisande and baritone Jean Perier was distributed as Pelleas. The premiere was not a triumph with a mixed reaction from the critics, but the attenders grew day by day. The first foreign production was staged on 9 January 1907 at the Theatre de la Monnaie, in Brussels., followed by the premiere in Frankfurt on 19 April 1907. The Manhattan Opera House in New York produced the opera on 19 February 1908 followed by the premiere at La Scala in Milan, on 2 April 1908, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. In the United Kingdom, the opera premiered at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on 21 May 1909. The Australian premiere was a student production at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in June 1950, with a professional staging in June 1977 at the Victorian State Opera. A great production was performed in Marseille, in 1963, with set designs by Jean Cocteau, conducted by Pierre Boulez. Notable productions in the 20th century were recorded at: Paris (1927, 1928, 1942, 1953, 1956, 1962, 2000), New York (1934, 1945), London (1951, 1970, 2017), Geneve (1951, 1969), Roma (1954, 1969), Buenos Aires (1962), Gent (1964), Munich (1971), Berlin (1978), Lyon (1978, 1987), Monte Carlo (1979), Milan (1986), Nice (1988), Montreal (1990), Vienna (1991, 2009), Cardiff (1992), Lille (1996), Glyndebourne (1998), Boston (2003), Zurich (2004), Essen (2013). Since 2004, to the end of the stage 2017/2018, *Pelleas et Melisande* was performed in the world for 660 times, in 143 different productions, ranking 76 on Operabase list.

Roles: Arkel, king of Allemonde (bass), Genevieve, his queen (contralto), Golaud, his older son (baritone), Pelleas, his younger son (baritone), Melisande (soprano), Yniold, Golaud's son (boy soprano), The Doctor (bass), The Shepherd (baritone), Chorus (sailors, serving women, three paupere)



Story: Hunting for the boursin, Prince Golaud catches a different prey, a girl with golden hair, Melisande. As he marries her, she is accepted to the palace, giving birth to a son, Yniold. Golaud's younger brother, Pelleas feels strongly attracted by the girl's hair, and he finally falls in love for her. Tortured with jealousy, Golaud gets harsher and harsher with his wife, while Pelleas gets warmer and warmer. King Arkel intends to put an end to the story and sends Pelleas away, but at their farewell meeting Pelleas and Melisande share hot kisses of true love. Golaud appears with the sword and strikes his brother. Melisande plays innocent, as nothing has happened, but it does not work. The king decides that she must sleep, leaving a mourning son and husband. Or maybe, the story has started with the end of the story, and wounded Melisande has escaped in the forest.

Act 1 (A forest / An apartment in the castle / In front of the castle)

Lost in the forest, while hunting, Golaud finds a girl crying near the water (Has anyone hurt you ? ...Oh ! Yes ! Yes ! Yes ! ...All ! All !). In the water Golaud notices a crown, shining, but the girl does not want it (It's the crown he gave me ...I do not want it anymore). Golaud presents himself as the son of Arkel, king of Allemonde, and he gently persuades the girl to follow him. He finds her name, Melisande. Scene 2 - Queen Genevieve

reads to her husband a letter from Golaud to his brother Pelleas. He has married the unknown girl and wants to come back, but he does not know if the king will welcome his mate. His brother should signal the answer with a candle in the tower. Pelleas asks permission to visit a friend, but his mother urges him to give the signal (Be careful to light the lamp this evening Pelleas). Scene 3 - Queen Genevieve walks with Melisande in the gardens, when Pelleas arrives. They are waiting for Golaud's returning from the sea. Pelleas walks her home (Will you give me your hand ? ...See, see, my hands are full of flowers).

Act 2 (A fountain in the park / An apartment in the castle / In front of a cave)

Pelleas leads Melisande to an abandoned fountain (It seems that it was a miraculous fountain, it opened the eyes of the blind, it is still called the fountain of the blind). Melisande wants to see the bottom of the water and her hair touches the water. Playing with her wedding ring she drops it in the fountain (I had already closed my hands, and she fell anyway... I threw it too high on the sun side). Scene 2 - Golaud lies in bed with Melisande at his bedside (I was hunting quietly in the forest ...I fell, the horse have fallen on me, I thought I had the whole forest on my chest). Melisande tells him that she is unhappy and Golaud admits the castle is very old and very dark (...we never see the sky here, I saw it the first time this morning). Golaud notices her missing the ring and finding out where it is he hastens to find it (Now, right now, in the darkness ...I would rather have lost all but this ring ...You do not know what it is). Since he is sick, Golaud asks her to go with Pelleas and recover the ring at instant (I will not sleep until I have the ring). Scene 3 - Pelleas leads Melisande to a cave near the sea shore where she pretended to have lost the ring (You have to be able to describe where you lost the ring). In the cave they found three poor people sleeping, providential suspects for the missing ring.

Act 3 (One of the castle towers / In the undergrounds of the castle / A terrace coming out of the undergrounds / In front of the castle)

Melisande sings in one tower combing her hair (My hair is waiting for you all along the tower, All day long). Pelleas is flooded by her hair (I hold it my hands, I hold it in my mouth...I hold it in my arm, I put it around my neck...You're my prisoner tonight, all night, all night). Pelleas ties her hair to the branches of a willow so she would not escape. White doves fly away from her window and Melisande is desperate (They will be lost in the darkness ...Leave me ! le me raise my head). Golaud appears astonished (What are you doing here ? You are childish ...What childish !). Scene 2 - Golaud leads Pelleas to the undergrounds of the castle for a perspective on the Inferno (Do you feel the smell of death rising ...do you see the chasm ...Yes, I think I see the bottom of the abyss !). Scene 3 - Back on the terrace, Golaud asks Pelleas to avoid Melisande, especially now as she will soon be mother. Scene 4 - Golaud is playing with his little son, Yniold. He finds out that Melisande is seeing Pelleas, every time he is not there. He also finds that the child has once seen them kissing (But how, how did they kiss each other ? ...Like that, little father, like that).

Act 4 (An apartment in the castle / Near the fountain)

Pelleas informs Melisande that his father is getting better and has send him away. He wants to see her in the evening near the fountain of the blind (You will not see me anymore ...I'll always see you, I'll always look at you). Scene 2 - King Arkel is feeling better and shares a tender moment with Melisande (...sometimes, the old men needs to touch a woman's forehead or the cheek of a child, to believe in the freshness of life). Golaud enters the scene stained with blood (Pelleas is leaving tonight ...You have blood on your forehead. What did you do ?). He explains to his father that a hungry peasant wanted to die. Asking for his sword, Golaud speaks full of bitter and jealousy, grabbing Melisande's hair and forcing her to her knees (A great innocence ! ...I know those eyes ! I saw them at work ! Close them ! Close them ! Or I will close them for a long time !). Scene 3 - Yniold is playing near the fountain when a heard of sheeps emerge, afraid and shaking. The Shepherd explains him why (Because it's not the way to the barn...). Scene 4 - Alone, Pelleas recollects his feelings (I played in a dream, around the traps of destiny ...I'd better go away without seeing her again). As Melisande appears they share love words (I love you too...Do you love me ? you love me too ? Since when do you love me ? ...Since always ...Since I saw you). They hear the castle gates locking and Golaud appears with the sword (He saw everything... He will kill us ! ...All the better ! all the better !). As they kiss wildly Golaud rushes and strikes Pelleas who falls to the edge of the fountain while Melisande flees to the woods (I do not have courage ! I do not have courage !).

Act 5 (A room in the castle)

Melisande is lying on the bed. The Doctor gives his verdict (This is a little wound, a bird would not be dead, it was not you who killed her, my good lord, do not be sorry...). Golaud is sorrowing (I killed without reason ! ...They had kissed like little children...They were brother and sister...). Melisande wakes up in confusion (Is it the sun setting ? ...Golaud is here ? ...Why does he not come near me ? ...Have we seen each other for a long time ?). Left alone with Melisande, Golaud insists to know if she did love Pelleas with a forbidden love (Have you been coupables ? Say, Say ? yes, yes, yes ...No, no, we have not been guilty. Why do you ask that ?). As the king returns, Melisande feels colder and colder (Is it true that winter begins ? ...It's cold and there are no more leaves...I'm so scared of the cold). Little by little the room is invaded by the weaners. King Arkel commands (Do not talk too hard ... she's going to sleep ...her eyes are full of tears, now her soul is crying ...the human soul likes to go away alone). All present fall to their knees.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Has anyone hurt you ? ...Oh ! Yes ! Yes ! Yes ! ...All ! All ! (Golaud, Melisande), It's the crown he gave me ...I do not want it anymore (Melisande), Be careful to light the lamp this evening Pelleas (Genevieve), Will you give me your hand ? ...See, see, my hands are full of flowers (Pelleas, Melisande) Act 2 - It seems that it was a miraculous fountain, it opened the eyes of the blind, it is still called the fountain of the blind (Pelleas), I had already closed my hands, and she fell anyway... I threw it too high on the sun side (Melisande), I was hunting quietly in the forest ...I fell, the horse have fallen on me, I thought I had the whole forest on my chest (Golaud), ...we never see the sky here, I saw it the first time this morning (Melisande), Now, right now, in the darkness ...I would rather have lost all but this ring ...You do not know what it is (Golaud), I will not sleep until I have the ring (Golaud), You have to be able to describe where you lost the ring (Pelleas) Act 3 - My hair is waiting for you all along the tower, All day long (Melisande), I hold it my hands, I hold it in my mouth...I hold it in my arm, I put it around my neck...You're my prisoner tonight, all night, all night (Pelleas), They will be lost in the darkness ...Leave me ! le me raise my head (Melisande), What are you doing here ? You are childish ...What childish ! (Golaud), Do you feel the smell of death rising ...do you see the chasm ...Yes, I think I see the bottom of the abyss ! (Golaud, Pelleas), But how, how did they kiss each other ? ...Like that, little father, like that (Golaud, Yniold). Act 4 - You will not see me anymore ...I'll always see you, I'll always look at you (Pelleas, Melisande), ...sometimes, the old men needs to touch a woman's forehead or the cheek of a child, to belive in the freshness of life (King Arkel), Pelleas is leaving tonight ...You have blood on your forehead. What did you do ? (Golaud, Melisande), A great innocence ! ...I know those eyes ! I saw them at work ! Close them ! Close them ! Or I will close them for a long time ! (Golaud), Because it's not the way to the barn... (Shepherd), I played in a dream, around the traps of destiny ...I'd better go away without seeing her again (Pelleas), I love you too...Do you love me ? you love me too ? Since when do you love me ? ...Since always ...Since I saw you (Melisande, Pelleas), He saw everything... He will kill us ! ...All the better ! all the better ! (Pelleas, Melisande), I do not have courage ! I do not have courage ! (Melisande) Act 5 - This is a little wound, a bird would not be dead, it was not you who killed her, my good lord, do not be sorry... (The Doctor), I killed without reason ! ...They had kissed like little children...They were brother and sister... (Golaud), Is it the sun setting ? ...Golaud is here ? ...Why does he not come near me ? ...Have we seen each other for a long time ? (Melisande), Have you been coupables ? Say, Say ? yes, yes, yes ...No, no, we have not been guilty. Why do you ask that ? (Golaud, Melisande), Is it true that winter begins ? ...It's cold and there are no more leaves...I'm so scared of the cold (Melisande), Do not talk too hard ... she's going to sleep ...her eyes are full of tears, now her soul is crying ...the human soul likes to go away alone (King Arkel)

Ballet: The Estonian National Tiit Harm Ballet Theatre in Tallinn have produced on 5 November 2017 a one act ballet performance of Pelleas and Melisande, with music by Arnold Schoenberg and a libretto by Tiit Harm.

Recordings: 1934 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Edward Johnson - Pelleas, Lucrezia Mori - Melisande, Enzo Pinza - Goulaud), 1953 Orchestre Lamoureux, Paris (Camille Maurane - Pelleas, Janine Micheau - Melisande, Michel Roux - Goulaud), 1956 Orchestre National de France (Jaques Jansen - Pelleas, Victoria de los Angeles - Melisande, Gerard Souzay - Goulaud), 1962 Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires (Pierre Mollet - Pelleas, Victoria de los Angeles - Melisande, Joseph Rouleaus - Goulaud), 1969 Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma (Henri Gui - Pelleas, Jeanette Pilou - Melisande, Gabriel Bacquier - Goulaud), 1970 Royal Opera House, London (George Shirley - Pelleas, Elisabeth Soderstrom - Melisande, Donald McIntyre - Goulaud), 1971 Symphonieorchester des Bayerischer Rundfunks (Nicolai Gedda - Pelleas, Helen Donath - Melisande, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Goulaud), 1986 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Kurt Ollmann - Pelleas, Frederica von Stade -

Melisande, John Brocheler - Goulaud), 1990 Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal (Didier Henry - Pelleas, Colette Alliot Lugat - Melisande, Gilles Cachemaille - Goulaud), 1991 Vienna State Opera (Francois Le Roux - Pelleas, Maria Ewing - Melisande, Jose van Dam - Goulaud), 2000 Orchestre National d'Ile de France (Wolfgang Holzmair - Pelleas, Anne Sofie von Otter - Melisande, Laurent Naouri - Goulaud), Zusatzchor Opernhaus Zurich (Rodney Gilfry - Pelleas, Isabel Rey - Melisande, Michael Volle - Goulaud), 2017 London Symphony Orchestra (Christian Gerhaher - Pelleas, Magdalena Kozena - Melisande, Gerald Finley - Goulaud)

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83. Albert Herring

Title: Albert Herring

Composer: Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). Born in the fishing port of Lowestoft, in Suffolk England, he was the youngest of four children of Robert Victor Britten (1878-1934), a dentist and Edith Rhoda Hockey (1874-1937). An amateur musician, his mother Edith Britten was also a secretary of the Lowestoft Musical Society and guest for musical soirees at her house. Britten started his piano lessons at the age of 7 and three years later he began to play the viola. In 1928 he started to study composition with the conductor and composer Frank Bridge (1879-1941) and he produced his first String Quartet. In 1930 he won a composition scholarship at the Royal College of Music in London to study with the Australian composer Arthur Leslie Benjamin (1893-1960). He was honored with the Sullivan Prize for composition, the Cobbet Prize for chamber music and twice the Ernest Farrar Prize for composition. In February 1935 he was invited by Adrian Boult director of music at the British Broadcasting Corporation to write the score for a documentary film, *The King's Stamp* and Britten become a regular contributor. From 1935 to 1937 he wrote nearly 40 scores for theatre, cinema and radio. In 1967 the BBC commissioned Britten to write an opera, *Owen Wingrave*, specially for television. Operas: *Paul Bunyan* (1941), *Peter Grimes* (1945), *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946), *Albert Herring* (1948), *Let's Make an Opera* (1949), *Billy Budd* (1951), *Gloriana* (1953), *The Turn of the Screw* (1954), *Noye's Fludde* (1958), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960), *Owen Wingrave* (1971), *Death in Venice* (1973). Ballets: *Plymouth Town* (1931), *The Prince of the Pagodas* (1956). His work also includes orchestral music, concertos, vocal and choral music, chamber music and instrumental music.

Libretto: Eric Crozier (1914-1994). Eric Crozier was a British theatrical director and opera librettist associated with Benjamin Britten. After some experience with the Sadlers Wells Opera Company he founded the English Opera Group in 1947 and cofounded the Aldenburgh Festival in 1948. In 1991 he was appointed the Order of the British Empire, a British order of chivalry established in 1917 by King George the 5th. For Benjamin Britten he produced several libretti: *Albert Herring*, *Billy Budd*, *The Little Sweep*, *Saint Nicolas*. The story for this opera was based on novella *Le Rosier de Madame Husson*, published in 1887 by the French writer Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893). In short, in search for a girl of virtue to be promoted as the Rose Queen of the small town of Gisors the committee has crowned the town's greenhorn as the Rose King. There were 4 film adaptations of the novela produced, among which the one in 1931 with Fernandel (Fernard Contandin) playing the Rose King. As Britten has decided to attempt a comedy, Eric Crozier suggested an adaptation of the novella, transplanting it to Suffolk, with English settings. Benjamin Britten produced the score in the winter of 1946 and the spring of 1947.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 20 June 1947 at Glyndebourne, conducted by the composer. Tenor Peter Pears was distributed as Albert Herring and soprano Joan Cross played the role of Lady Billows, while mezzo soprano Nancy Evans, Eric Crozier's future wife, played the role for Nancy. The members of the first audience disliked the story arguing: "This isn't our kind of thing, you know.". A year later, in June 1948, the Aldeburgh Festival was set and *Albert Herring* was the first opera to be performed in the Jubilee Hall. Some 40 years later another Glyndebourne production was received as "one of the most successful the opera has ever had". The opera received its United States premiere on 8 August 1949 at the Tanglewood Music Festival. In 1949 the English Opera Group toured in Scandinavia giving ten performances in Copenhagen and Oslo. In South America, the opera was first performed in 1972 at Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. In 1983 *Albert Herring* was staged in Moscow at the Pushkin Museum as part of the December Nights Festival where the famous pianist

Sviatoslav Richter called it "the greatest comic opera of the century". A notable performance was staged in 2008 at the Bayerischen Staatsoper in Munich. In 2008-2010 over 55 performances were presented at the Portland Opera in Oregon, followed by the 2011 production at the Los Angeles Opera and the Vancouver Opera production in 2013. Since the year 2004, up to the end of the season 2017/18, in the United Kingdom, Albert Herring was performed for 72 times in 17 different productions, ranking 30 on the Opera List (in UK).

Roles: Lady Billows (soprano), Florence Pike, her housekeeper (contralto), Miss Wordsworth, a schoolteacher (soprano), Mr. Gedge, the vicar (baritone), Mr. Upfold, the mayor (tenor), Superintendent Budd (bass), Sid, a butcher's assistant (baritone), Albert Herring, greengrocer (tenor), Nancy, from the bakery (mezzo soprano), Mrs. Herring, Albert's mother (mezzo soprano), Emmie (soprano), Cis (soprano), Harry (boy soprano)



Story: April and May of 1900 in Loxford, a small market town in Suffolk, England. No girl seems to be virtuous enough to be elected as Queen of the May, for the spring festival. In the shortage of options, the superintendent comes with a rather peculiar solution: why not a King of May. Virtuous Albert Herring, a hard working boy is selected, elected and crowned. Together with the crown comes a purse of otterskin with 25 pounds in it and the new king knows how to use it. The next morning the King is declared missing but after some moments of tension he appears drunk and disordered after a night in a pub. So long, Good and Virtuous King Albert !

Act 1 (Lady Billow's house in Loxford / Mrs Herring's greengrocery in Little Street)

Lady Billows is instructing her maid, Florence. The maid is overwhelmed (One brain, one pair of hands, are all too few for Lady B). Guests arrive at the door. Lady Billow appears, greeting her male visitors (Stuffy ! Tabaco stink ! Nasty masculine smell ! Good morning). And she continues (Only one item on today's agenda to choose a Queen of the May ...I'm putting a prize this year, Twentyfive sovereigns, twentyfive ! Consider it my duty). As the guests present their suggestions, Florence bans each one of the girls since they were seen in the company of boys, or they have exposed their ankles. Lady Billows rises in anger (Is this all you can bring ? Each single name reeking impurities, exuding moral blame ?). After long hours, the superintendent comes with an idea (Begging your pardon I'd like to say, has anyone heard of a King of May ?). Since Lady Billow agrees, he continues suggesting Albert Herring as a winner (...Works for his mother ...has a greengrocer's shop ...strong as a horse ..works until he drops ...but simple, of course). Florence is backing the proposal (Country virgins, if there be such, think too little and see too much). They all celebrate the decision (Virtue has signaled forth her champion and defender !). Scene 2 - Three children sing as they play the ball (Bounce me slow, bounce me quick, bounce me to arithmetic !). As the ball enters the shop, Harry climbs the window and recuperates the ball, together with some apples. Sid arrives in time to empty their packets and throw Harry out of the door. Albert arrives carrying a large sack of turnips and Sid teases him (For your kind of a boy, courting a girl is the King of all sports, where there aren't any rules so long as she's caught). As Nancy arrives, Sid is diligent in serving her with two peaches (sixpence each !) and they both engage in a duet (Meet me at quarter past eight ...Yes if you promise to wait) and leave together. Albert wonders (...is he right when he says I miss all the fun because of Mum ?). He is interrupted by Emmie who acquires some herbs, followed by Florence and the Festival Committee (We bring great news to you upon this happy day ! ...Declaring you Loxford King of the May !). Mrs Herring is quite content with the 25 pounds reward, while Albert is reluctant to be dressed like a swan.

Act 2 (A marquee set up in the Vicarage garden / Inside the greengrocery shop)

Nancy and Florence are waiting for Sid, to bring the meat (Surely you know that the meat's indispensable ?). Sid arrives with the meat and news from the church (The Vicar is preaching on Living Chaste for the Hereafter ...And Albert ! ...He's in the mood to escape if he could). The Ladies arrange the food and seedy cakes with the children messing around. Miss Wordsworth begins the rehearsal (Glory to our new May King, try to make the welkin ring !). Nancy pours lemonade into all glasses round the table and Sid adds some rum in Albert's cup. The guests arrive, including Albert, all dressed in white, hailed by the children (Hail, Albert ! Albert ! we cry welcome to your majesty. Hail !). The Vicar introduces Lady Billows for a short speech (Dear children ! You, you, the rising generation ! Never forget the meaning of this day !). Finally Albert receives the purse of otterskin ...with five and twenty sovereigns inside. The mayor reads his speech mechanically (As representing our local Council ...Now Loxford leads again by being first, yes ! First in crowning a May King). Miss Wordsworth presents the gift from the teachers, from the school (Foxes' Book of Martyrs in two fine volumes, illustrated). Budd the superintendent also makes his speech (...It's chaps like young Albert keep the British Empire on top of the world). Now everyone is expecting the King's speech, but he loses his nerve and sits abruptly (Er...er... Thank you very much). The Vicar comes in help (Now lift your glasses, everyone, and join me in a toast ! Albert the Good ! Long may he reign !). After three refreshing glasses of lemonade Albert is quite heated (I feel brisk like a rocket, going up with a whoosh !). Scene 2 - In a hilarious excitement and cheerfulness, Albert sings banging the door and tingling the bell (Albert the Good ! Long may he reign...). Nancy and Sid appear for a passionate kiss. With them left, Albert emerges from the shadow with embarrassment (Enjoy your evening as you will ! Kiss and hug your fill !). The coins clink in his pocket and he heads whistling down the street.

Act 3 (The following afternoon, in the shop)

Nancy regrets joking on Albert, giving him rum to drink (Now he's vanished overnight, disappeared without trace ...Bring him back ! Oh, bring him back !). As Sid appears, Nancy is reproaching him (I'm sorry I helped you, in future, I'll leave you to yourself). Bill the superintendent is conducting the manhunt (...God preserve me from these disappearing cases, where everyone from the baker to the Nonconformist parson turns Sherlock Holmes). Albert's mum presents his only photograph to be sent round the stations for identification (It is all that I have to remember him by, all that remains of my darling boy !). Albert's orange blossom crown has been found in a well and Mrs Herring starts screaming (Let me die too, now you are gone !). As they all mourn, Albert comes in dirty, stained with mud. In small voice he confesses his sins (I thought it was time I ought to try a taste of certain things ...I found a pub ...beer tasted queer so my next idea was rum). Everyone is outraged (Impossible ! Drunk and disorderly ? Our May King ?). Nancy is the only one to throw her arms round him giving him a kiss. As the children approach shyly, Albert picks up the basket of peaches and gives them away (Help yourselves, there's plenty for everyone ! Put some more in your pockets ! It's nice to be home again).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - One brain, one pair of hands, are all too few for Lady B (Florence), Stuffy ! Tabaco stink ! Nasty masculine smell ! Good morning (Lady Billows), Only one item on today's agenda to choose a Queen of the May ...I'm putting a prize this year, Twentyfive sovereigns, twentyfive ! Consider it my duty (Lady Billows), Is this all you can bring ? Each single name reeking impurities, exuding moral blame ? (Lady Billows), Begging your pardon I'd like to say, has anyone heard of a King of May ? (Superintendent), ..Works for his mother ...has a greengrocer's shop ...strong as a horse ..works until he drops ...but simple, of course (Superintendent), Country virgins, if there be such, think too little and see too much (Florence), Virtue has signaled forth her champion and defender ! (All), Bounce me slow, bounce me quick, bounce me to arithmetic ! (The Children), For your kind of a boy, courting a girl is the King of all sports, where there aren't any rules so long as she's caught (Sid), Meet me at quarter past eight ...Yes if you promise to wait (Sid, Nancy), ...is he wright when he says I miss all the fun because of Mum ? (Albert), We bring great news to you upon this happy day ! ...Declaring you Loxford King of the May ! (All) Act 2 - Surely you know that the meat's indispensable ? (Florence), The Vicar is preaching on Living Chaste for the Hereafter ...And Albert ! ...He's in the mood to escape if he could (Sid), Glory to our new May King, try to make the welkin ring ! (Miss Wordsworth), Hail, Albert ! Albert ! we cry welcome to your majesty. Hail ! (Children), Dear children ! You, you, the rising generation ! Never forget the meaning of this day ! (Lady Billows), As representing our local Council ...Now Loxford leads again by being first, yes ! First in crowning a May King (The Mayor), Foxes' Book of Martyrs in two fine volumes, illustrated (Miss Wordsworth), ...It's chaps like young Albert keep the British Empire on top of the world (Superintendent), Er...er... Thank you very much (Albert), Now lift your glasses, everyone, and join me in a toast ! Albert the Good ! Long may he reign ! (The Vicar), I feel brisk like a

rocket, going up with a whoosh ! (Albert), Albert the Good ! Long may he reign... (Albert), Enjoy your evening as you will ! Kiss and hug your fill ! (Albert) Act 3 - Now he's vanished overnight, disappeared without trace ...Bring him back ! Oh, bring him back ! (Nancy), I'm sorry I helped you, in future, I'll leave you to yourself (Nancy), ...God preserve me from these disappearing cases, where everyone from the baker to the Nonconformist parson turns Sherlock Holmes (Superintendent), It is all that I have to remember him by, all that remains of my darling boy ! (Mrs Herring), Let me die too, now you are gone ! (Mrs Herring), I thought it was time I ought to try a taste of certain things ...I found a pub ...beer tasted queer sm my next idea was rum (Albert), Impossible ! Drunk and disorderly ? Our May King ? (All), Help yourselves, there's plenty for everyone ! Put some more in your pockets ! It's nice to be home again (Albert)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1949 English Opera Group, Copengahen (Peter Pears - Albert, Joan Cross - Lady Billows, Denis Dowling - Sid, Nancy Evans - Nancy), 1964 English Chamber Orchestra, London (Peter Pears - Albert, Sylvia Fisher - Lady Billows, Joseph Ward - Sid, Catherine Wilson - Nancy), 1985 London Philharmonic Orchestra (John Graham Hall - Albert, Patricia Johnson - Lady Billows, Alan Opie - Sid, Jean Rigby - Nancy), 1996 Northern Sinfonia, Newcastle (Christopher Gillett - Albert, Josephine Barstow - Lady Billows, Gerald Finley - Sid, Ann Taylor - Nancy), Manhattan School of Music, New York (Christopher Pfund - Albert, Kristen Dickerson - Lady Billows, Samuel Helper - Sid, Nancy Maria Balach - Nancy), 2001 City of London Sinfonia (James Gilchrist - Albert, Susan Bullock - Lady Billows, Roderick Williams - Sid, Pamela Helen Stephen - Nancy)

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84. War and Peace

Title: War and Peace (Voyna i mir)

Composer: Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953). Born in Sontsovka, Donetsk Oblast in Ukraine, a rural estate of the Russian Empire, his father Sergei Alexeyevich Prokofiev was an agronomist, while his mother Maria Zhitkova was from a serf family on the estate of the Sheremetev Family, one of the wealthiest noble families in Russia. He took his first music lessons from his mother, who was a trained piano player. He produced his first piano song at the age of five. His first music teacher in composition was Reinhold Gliere. In 1904 he was admitted at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, where he studied: piano with Alexander Winkler, harmony and counterpoint with Anatoly Lyadov, conducting with Nikolai Tcherepnin and orchestration with Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov. In 1923 he married the Spanish singer Carolina Codina (1897-1989) and the fruit of their marriage were two boys: Sviatoslav and Oleg. During his life he was honoured with six Stalin Prizes, one Lenin Prize and the Order of the Red Banner of Labour. Operas: Undina (1904), The Gambler - Igrok (1915), The Love for Three Oranges (1919), The Fiery Angel (1919-27), Semyon Kotko (1939), Betrothal in a Monastery (1941), War and Peace (1941-52), Khan Buzay (1942), The Story of a Real Man (1947), Distant Seas (1948 - unfinished). Ballets: Alla i Lolli (1914), Chout (1915), Trapeze (1924), The Steel Step (1925), The Prodigal Son (1928), On the Dnieper (1930), Romeo and Juliet (1936), Cinderella (1940-44), The Tale of the Stone Flower (1948-53). Film music: Lieutenant Kije (1934), The Queen of Spades (1936), Alexander Nevsky (1938), Lermontov (1941), Kotovsky (1942), Tonya (1942), The Partisans in the Ukrainian Steppes (1942), Ivan the Terrible (1942-45). His work also includes: 10 symphonies, 23 orchestral suites, 11 concertos for piano (6), violin (2) and cello (3), vocal, choral and orchestral music, chamber and instrumental music, numerous songs or incidental music.

Libretto: Sergei Prokofiev and Mira Abramovna Mendelsshon (1915-1968). Mira Mendelsshon was Serghei Prokofiev's secretary with studies in literature at the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow. Since her advice proved to be useful, the composer named her co-author to several of his libretti: Betrothal in a Monastery (1940), War and Peace (1942), The Story of a Real Man (1947), The Tale of the Stone Flower (1953). Their collaboration also resulted in marriage, in 1948, and the composer spend with her his last five years of life

(1948-1953), while Carolina Prokofiev was arrested and sentenced to eight years in a labor camp (1948-1956). The libretto was based on the novel *War and Peace*, published in 1869 by Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828-1910). The story is about aristocratic love in times of war, where wealth and social security mingle with social conventions, restrictions and personal feelings. The novel is considered to be one of the best portraits of the Russian Aristocracy of the 19-th century, while Leo Tolstoy was named as the true lion of the Russian literature. Three film adaptations were produced in: 1915 by Vladimir Gardin, 1956 by King Vidor (starring Audrey Hepburn and Henry Fonda) and 1966 by Sergei Bondarchuk (starring Lyudmila Savelyeva and Vyacheslav Tikhonov). Five television productions were produced in: 1972 by BBC, 2000 by French TV, 2007 by the Italian Lux Vide, 2015 by the Russian television channel Russia-K, and in 2016 again by BBC. Notable adaptation for the theatrical stage were also produced: 1942 by Alfred Neumann and Erwin Piscator, 1996 by Helen Edmundson, 2012 by Dave Mallory.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 12 June 1946 at the Maly Theatre in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg). Soprano Tatiana Lavrova was distributed as Natasha, tenor Oles Chishko was Count Pyotr Bezukhov and baritone Sergei Shappshnikov was distributed for the role of Prince Andrei Bolkonsky. In 1948 Prokofiev produced a revised version, first performed on 26 May 1953 at the Teatro Comunale in Florence, conducted by Artur Rodzinski. The first United States performance was staged on 13 January 1957 by Peter Herman Adler for an NBC telecast production. The first Bolshoi Theatre production in Moscow was on 15 December 1959. The first British performance was on 19 April 1967 at Leeds Town Hall, as part of the Leeds Festival, followed by a Sadlers Wells Opera production on 11 October 1972. In Europe, notable performances were staged in: Bonn (1957), Sofia (1957), Belgrade (1958), Zagreb (1961), Liberec (1962), Paris (1967), Vienna (1971), Barcelona (1977), Amsterdam (1991). Over the seas, notable productions were performed in Canada (Montreal 1967), Australia (Sydney Opera House 1973) and Argentina (Teatro Colon 1973). In the last two years there were four notable productions: 2016 China (National Centre for the Performing Arts), 2018 Germany (Staatstheater Nurnberg), 2018 Russia (Stanislavsky Opera), 2018 United Kingdom (Welsh National Opera)

Roles: Natasha Rostova (soprano), Count Pyotr Bezukhov (tenor), Prince Andrei Bolkonsky (baritone), Field Marshal Prince Mikhail Kutuzov (bass), Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (baritone), Count Ilya Rostov (bass), Helene Bezukhova (mezzo soprano), Prince Anatole Kuragin (tenor), Sonia (mezzo soprano), Lieutenant Dolokhov (baritone), Prince Nikolay Bolkonsky (bass), Maria Dimitrievna (soprano alto), Colonel Vasska Denisov (bass), Marshal Davout (bass) ...and many other minor roles ... Chorus (nobles at the party, the Russian people, Volunteers, Cossacks, French soldiers, the Muscovites)



Story: Thirteen year old Natasha, the young daughter of Count Ilya Rostov has reached the age of marriage and all her relatives are looking for a suitable groom. Her most decided suitors are Prince Andrei Bolkonsky and Count Pyotr Bezukhov, both unhappily married, with both of their wives dying under tragic circumstances. Since Moscow is under attack, all men are involved in battle. Prince Andrei Bolkonsky is mortally wounded and dies in Natasha's hands while Count Pyotr Bezukov escapes the battle as a prisoner. With the French Army retreating, the people hail the Free Russia. There is also hope for Count Pyotr Bezukov, who has been liberated by partisans.

Act 1 (In Count Rostov's garden / 1809, New Year's Eve party in St. Petersburg / End of January 1811, in Prince

Bolkonsky's house / In Bezukhov's house / In Dolokhov's study / At Maria Dimitrievna's house / In Bezukhov's house)

Prince Andrei is reading poetry at candle light (Spring, love, bliss, everything is vain illusion). From a top floor window Natasha is heard singing with her cousin Sonia (How beautiful the sun is when he lays down on the mountain). Andrei has a feeling of peace and energy (We must believe in spring and joy, to find happiness) Scene 2 - At the New Year's Eve party the chorus sings (Dear friends, are you here ...with goblets of gold in your hands and pleasing words on your lips ?). The Rostov family arrives and Natasha is introduced to Count Bezukhov and his wife. As Tsar Alexander enters the hall, everyone sings (May the stars move in harmony, let the rivers slide sweetly...). Natasha is invited to waltz by Lieutenant Dolokhov, but Prince Andrei requests the honor of her first dance (What a cheerful dance ! And what elegant people ! Everything is so bright !). Scene 3 - Count Rostov and Natasha are visiting Prince Andrei Bolkonsky's parents to perfect their engagement, where Prince Nikolay Bolkonsky is rather rude (Good family ? ...Nobles ? ...Rich ? ...illustrious ?, he can make his life what he wants ...and I'll marry Burienka, the housekeeper, yes !). Offended, the Rostov family must retreat.

Scene 4 - Visiting Moscow, The Rostov family is visiting the Bezukhovs where Anatol declares his feelings (Since I saw you for the first time, you occupy all my thoughts). Anatol also presents her an ardent letter of love (Decide my destiny: will it be Love or Death. Decide ?). Natasha is impressed, but Sonia averts her that Anatol is a womanizer scoundrel. Scene 5 - Anatol with Dolokhov are planning to kidnap Natasha (...before sunrise, we will be married. Tomorrow to Warsaw and then abroad...she's beautiful, isn't she, Dolokhov ?). With the ten thousand rubles from Dolokhov all the preparations are done. Scene 6 - Natasha is waiting for Anatol at Maria Dimitrievna's house, but Sonia has revealed her plan (But who do you think you are ? Dating your lovers in my own house ?). Count Pyotr Bezukhov arrives conveniently to reveal Natasha that Anatol is already married, a long time. Natasha entrusts him to tell Prince Andrei that she has broken the engagement (All life ahead ...is married ...Word of Honor ...I am detestable). Scene 7 - Count Bezukhov is having a consequential conversation with Anatole (...you must forget everything related to the Countess ...the honour of that lady demands it). Meanwhile news arrive that Emperor Napoleon is at the border with his troops. The Russian people sing (Holy Mother Russia is large and its children numerous ...Our beloved Russia will triumph).

Act 2 (In the Rayevsky stronghold / In the French camp / In the Russian camp / In the deserted Moscow / A cabin in Mytishi / The French troops withdrawing)

Colonel Denisov wants to ambush Napoleon's supply lines (I want to propose the creation of a guerrilla ...I only need five hundred men). Peasants from Smolensk present themselves as volunteers (Mother Russia calls their children to combat ...we will offer our lives in battle). Prince Andrei recalls his memories of Natasha (I only dreamed of a world full of poetry and sublime love, how innocent I was !). As Count Bezukhov appears the two men bid farewell (I can assure you that one way or another, we will win ...we will never see each other again). Field Marshal Kutuzov encourages his officers (The Russian people are big and courageous ...Glory to the Glorious riflemen !). Marshal Kutuzov is offering Prince Andrei a position in his staff, but he refuses bravely (I love my regiment. Between my soldiers and I a strong bond has been established). The Cossacks and the Volunteer soldiers sing in chorus and the battle starts (We walk to the fight to save the holy Russia ...He, our Father Kutuzov, will lead us to victory). Scene 2 - Emperor Napoleon makes his speech (Today I will toast with a good wine for my victory ...Moscow will fall into my power). A cavalcade of reports and orders follow with Napoleon handling the pieces of the chessboard. Scene 3 - After consulting all his generals, Field Marshal Kutuzov orders his decision (...in the name of the Tsar, I order the withdrawal from Moscow). Since the soldiers are hailing that they want to fight, he continues (The Golden Moscow, bathed in the sun ...even if the enemy takes your white walls, he will not be able to subdue you, for you were born free). Scene 4 - Emperor Napoleon is offended since no one has greeted him with the keys of the city. The French soldiers are singing (Tac-Tac, Tac-Tac, my heart beats ! My beloved has gone to war). As the soldiers start looting, the Muscovites sing in chorus (Moscow won't capitulate with impunity ...Burn the city ! ...The enemy will find no rest in Moscow). Count Bezukhov hears from someone that the Rostovs have retreated and Prince Andrei is with them, badly injured. He takes a heroic decision (I must kill Napoleon ...I'll do it even if it costs me my life). The peasants, even women, are attacking the French soldiers with scythes, burning their houses and singing (Burn the food you can't carry ...Burn everything ! Burn !). Count Bezukhov surrenders to Marshal Devout as a volunteer officer. As the fire spreads the Muscovites are singing (Lord God, have mercy on us, sinners !). Scene 5 - Delirious Prince Andrei spots Natasha (You ? You ? You ? You are alive !). They both share words of love (I love you more than everything in the world ...But now, we'll never separate again). The Prince is silenced while the chorus iterates

pity. Scene 6 - The French officers are sorrowing (Half our soldiers have fallen, no artillery, no food ...the Crows and Wolves harass us). Count Bezukhov is among the prisoners. Partisans arrive and free the Russian prisoners. Colonel Denisov is encouraging his men (The French are much worse than the most miserable of us....). Partisans and liberated prisoners join in chorus (But the vodka made miracles with the wound !). Already knowing that his wife has died and Anatol has lost a leg in battle, Count Berzukhov hears from Colonel Denisov that Prince Andrei has died in Natasha's hands. The people sing (Everyone, young and old, has been avenged ! Winter has woven a white shroud for the invaders). Field Marshal Kutuzov enters to give thanks to the heroic Army and the people hail (Hurrah, Russia is safe ! Glory to Russia ! Glory to our Marshal !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Spring, love, bliss, everything is vain illusion (Andrei), How beautiful the sun is when he lays down on the mountain (Natasha, Sonia), We must believe in spring and joy, to find happiness (Andrei), Dear friends, are you here ...with goblets of gold in your hands and pleasing words on your lips ? (Chorus), May the stars move in harmony, let the rivers slide sweetly... (Chorus), What a cheerful dance ! And what elegant people ! Everything is so bright ! (Natasha), Good family ? ...Nobles ? ...Rich ? ...illustrious ?, he can make his life what he wants ...and I'll marry Burienka, the housekeeper, yes ! (Nikolay Bolkonsky), Since I saw you for the first time, you occupy all my thoughts (Anatol), Decide my destiny: will it be Love or Death. Decide ? (Natasha), ...before sunrise, we will be married. Tomorrow to Warsaw and then abroad...she's beautiful, isn't she, Dolokhov ? (Anatol), But who do you think you are ? Dating your lovers in my own house ? (Maria Dimitrievna), All life ahead ...is married ...Word of Honor ...I am detestable (Natasha), ...you must forget everything related to the Countess ...the honour of that lady demands it (Pyotr Bezukhov), Holy Mother Russia is large and its children numerous ...Our beloved Russia will triumph (Chorus)

Act 2 - I want to propose the creation of a guerrilla ...I only need five hundred men (Denisov), Mother Russia calls their children to combat ...we will offer our lives in battle (Volunteers), I only dreamed of a world full of poetry and sublime love, how innocent I was ! (Prince Andrei), I can assure you that one way or another, we will win ...we will never see each other again (Prince Andrei, Count Bezukhov), The Russian people are big and courageous ...Glory to the Glorious riflemen ! (Field Marshal Kutuzov), I love my regiment. Between my soldiers and I a strong bond has been established (Prince Andrei), We walk to the fight to save the holy Russia ...He, our Father Kutuzov, will lead us to victory (Chorus), Today I will toast with a good wine for my victory ...Moscow will fall into my power (Emperor Napoleon), ...in the name of the Tsar, I order the withdrawal from Moscow (Marshal Kutuzov), The Golden Moscow, bathed in the sun ...even if the enemy takes your white walls, he will not be able to subdue you, for you were born free (Marshal Kutuzov), Tac-Tac, Tac-Tac, my heart beats ! My beloved has gone to war (French soldiers), Moscow won't capitulate with impunity ...Burn the city ! ...The enemy will find no rest in Moscow (Chorus), I must kill Napoleon ...I'll do it even if it costs me my life (Count Bezukhov), Burn the food you can't carry ...Burn everything ! Burn ! (Chorus), Lord God, have mercy on us, sinners ! (Chorus), You ? You ? You ? You are alive ! (Prince Andrei), I love you more than everything in the world ...But now, we'll never separate again (Prince Andrei, Natasha), Half our soldiers have fallen, no artillery, no food ...the Crows and Wolves harass us (French officers), The French are much worse than the most miserable of us....(Colonel Denisov), But the vodka made miracles with the wound !(Chorus), Everyone, young and old, has been avenged ! Winter has woven a white shroud for the invaders (Chorus), Hurrah, Russia is safe ! Glory to Russia ! Glory to our Marshal ! (Chorus)

Ballet: Dancing is involved in all the ball scenes and a choreographer is important for all the productions of War and Peace. It is a grand opera involving about 60 roles, a huge chorus and ballet movements. It is also a very long opera, with four and a half hours of performance. As yet, no complete ballet version of the opera has been produced.

Recordings: 1953 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Rosanna Carteri - Natasha, Franco Corelli - Pyotr, Ettore Bastianini - Andrei, Italo Tajo - Kutuzov), 1961 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Galina Vishnevskaya - Natasha, Vladimir Petrov - Pyotr, Yevgeny Kibkalo - Andrei, Alexei Krivchenya - Kutuzov), 1982 Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (Galina Kalinina - Natasha, Evgeni Raikov - Pyotr, Yury Masurok - Andrei, Alexander Vedernikov - Kutuzov), 1986 Orchestre National de France, Paris (Galina Vishnevskaya - Natasha, Wieslaw Ochman - Pyotr, Lajos Miller - Andrei, Nicola Ghiuselev - Kutuzov), 1991 Kirov Theatre, Saint Petersburg (Yelena Prokina - Natasha, Gegam Grigorian - Pyotr, Alexandr Gaganov - Andrei, Nikolai Okhotnikov - Kutuzov), 1999 Spoleto Festival (Ekaterina Morozova - Natasha, Justin Lavender - Pyotr, Oleg Balachov - Andrei, Roderick Williams -

Kutuzov), 2000 Paris Opera (Olga Gouriakova - Natasha, Robert Brubaker - Pyotr, Nathan Gunn - Andrei, Anatoli Kotchergera - Kutuzov)

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85. Don Pasquale

Title: Don Pasquale

Composer: Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848). Born in Bergamo, Italy, his father Andrea Donizetti (1765-1835) was a rich merchant, the caretaker of the town pawnshop, while his mother Domenica Nava (1765-1836) was a steamstress. At the age of 9 he became a protege of the German composer Johann Simon Mayr (1763-1845), Maestro di Capella at the Cathedral of Bergamo. In 1810 at the age of 13 he was accepted to the local art school, Academia Carrara. In 1816 he was granted a two years scholarship at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna where he studied with Padre Stanislao Mattei (1750-1825) who was an Italian Franciscan friar, a composer, musicologist and music teacher. In 1828 he married Virginia Vasseli (1799-1837) and the fruit of their marriage were three children, none of whom survived. His brother Giuseppe Donizetti (1788-1856), from 1828 was Instructor General of the Imperial Ottoman Music at the court of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839). In 1897 the Teatro Nuovo in Bergamo changed its name to Teatro Gaetano Donizetti to celebrate the centenary of the composer's birth together with a Monument to Donizetti inaugurated in a public garden in Piazza Cavour, near the theatre. Operas: *Il Pigmaliione* (1816), *Enrico di Porgogna* (1818), *Una follia* (1818), *Il falegname di Livornia* (1819), *Le nozze in villa* (1820), *Zoraida di Granata* (1822), *La zingara* (1822), *La lettera anonima* (1822), *Chiara e Serafina* (1822), *Alfredo il grande* (1823), *Il fortunato inganno* (1823), *Emilia di Liverpool* (1824), *Alahor in Granata* (1826), *Don Gregorio* (1826), *Elvida* (1826), *Gabriella di Vergy* (1826), *Olivo e Pasquale* (1827), *Otto mesi in due ore* (1827), *Il borgomastro di Saardam* (1827), *Le convenienze teatrali* (1827), *L'esule di Roma* (1828), *Alina, regina di Golconda* (1828), *Gianni di Calais* (1828), *Il peria* (1829), *Il giovedì grasso* (1829), *Elisabetta al castello di Kenilworth* (1829), *I pazzi per progetto* (1830), *Anna Bolena* (1830), *Gianni di Parigi* (1831), *Francesca di Foix* (1831), *Fausta* (1832), *Ugo, conte di Parigi* (1832), *L'elisir d'amore* (1832), *Sancia di Castiglia* (1832), *Il furioso all'isola di Dan Domingo* (1833), *Parisina* (1833), *Torquato Tasso* (1833), *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833), *Rosamonda d'Inghilterra* (1834), *Maria Stuarda* (1834), *Gemma di Vergy* (1834), *Marino Faliero* (1835), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), *Belisario* (1836), *Il Campanello di Notte* (1836), *Betly, o La Papanna svizzera* (1836), *L'assedio di Calais* (1836), *Pia de'Tolomei* (1837), *Roberto Devereux* (1837), *Maria de Rudenz* (1838), *Poliuto* (1848), *Le duc d'Albe* (1839), *L'ange de Nisida* (1839), *Les Martyrs* (1840), *La fille du regiment* (1840), *La favorite* (1840), *Adelia* (1841), *Rita* (1841), *Maria Padilla* (1841), *Linda di Chamounix* (1842), *Caterina Cornaro* (1844), *Don Pasquale* (1843), *Maria di Rohan* (1843), *Dom Sebastine* (1843). His compositions also include: choral works (*Ave Maria*), orchestral works, concertos, chamber works, quartets for strings, piano works.

Libretto: Gaetano Donizetti and Giovanni Ruffini (1807-1881). Giovanni Ruffini was an Italian poet living in exile, in Paris. After his translation for the opera *Don Sebastien*, in 1842 Donizetti paid him 500 francs for this project and he produced the draft libretto using as source the libretto by Angelo Anelli, for Stefano Pavesi's opera *Ser Mercantonio*, published in 1810. The opera *Ser Mercantonio* premiered in Paris at the Italian Theatre on 26 September 1808 and was a major success with 54 representations. In 1842 Jules Janin, director at the Italian Theatre in Paris decided to revive the opera buffa and contracted Gaetano Donizetti for the work, who on his term contracted Giovanni Ruffini for the libretto. Donizetti changed so much of Ruffini's version that the librettist refused to be mentioned in the programme for the premiere. The libretto was finally published by Casa Ricordi using the initials M.A for the author, since the juridic curator Michele Accursi aquired the rights form Ruffini. In the old tradition of *commedia dell'arte*, *Don Pasquale* is just another representation of *Pantalone* (the money bag). Giovanni Ruffini also produced: the novels *Lorenzo Benoni* (1853) and *Il Dottor Antonio* (1855), memories, translations (*Lavinia*) and other stories. Since 1948 he returned in Italy to become involved in politics.

Performance history: The opera premiered in Paris on 3 January 1843 at the Italian Theatre, performed by four

of the most celebrated singers of that day: bass Luigi Lablache (Don Pasquale), baritone Antonio Tamburini (Malatesta), tenor Giovanni Mario (Ernesto) and soprano Giulia Grisi (Norina). The opera was an immediate success and to this day it is considered the best of Donizetti's 66 operas and one of the most popular Italian opera. The first performance in Italy was in Milan, at La Scala, on 17 April 1843, performed by: Napoleone Rossi (Don Pasquale), Achille De Bassini (Malatesta), Leone Corelli (Ernesto) and Ottavia Malvani (Norina). One month later, on 14 May 1843 Donizetti was present for the first performance in Vienna at the Kartnertortheater. Another month later, on 29 June 1843 the opera also premiered in London, at Her Majesty's Theatre. The first French version of the opera was staged in Bruxelles, on 11 August 1843 with a libretto translated by Gustave Vaez and Alphonse Royer. Still in 1843 there was another premiere, in Lille, on 9 November 1843. In the United States of America the opera premiered in New Orleans, on 7 January 1845 at the Theatre d'Orleans. In Australia the first performance was staged in Sydney, on 12 October 1854, at the Royal Victoria Theatre. In the 20th century notable performances were recorded at: Teatro alla Scala (1931, 1932, 1951, 1973), Metropolitan Opera (1940, 1946, 1956, 2010), RAI (1952), Opera di Roma (1952, 1954), Teatro San Carlo Naples (1955), Edinburgh Festival (1963), Vienna State Opera (1964), Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (1964, 1967), Staatkapelle Dresden (1971), Salzburg Festival (1971), Lyric Opera Chicago (1974), London Symphony Orchestra (1978), Munich Radio Symphony (1979, 1993), Hungaroton (1981), Teatro Regio Turin (1988), Lyon Opera (1990), Zurich Opera (2006), Teatro Municipale di Piacenza (2007). Up to the 2017/18 season, Don Pasquale was performed in the world for 1556 times, in 326 different productions, ranking 34 on Operabase list.

Roles: Don Pasquale (bass), Ernesto, his nephew (tenor), Doctor Malatesta (baritone), Norina, a young widow (soprano), Notary (bass), Chorus (servants, valets, chambermaids, butler, milliner, hair-dresser)



Story: An old gentleman, Don Pasquale, has tried different tricks to persuade his nephew Ernesto to accept a proper marriage, but Ernesto is in love with Norina, rated unsuitable. He nows thinks that personal example will be the best lesson and he decides to marry himself, disenheriting the obstinent nephew. A certain Doctor Malatesta supplies him with the proper bride, who proves to be quite a nasty wife. Eager to escape from such a marriage, Don Pasquale agrees to Ernesto marrying Norina, only to find out that his marriage was a fake and his bride was Norina herself. The trick did work, after all, but not exactly as planed.

Act 1 (Room in the House of Don Pasquale / An apartment in Norina's house)

Don Pasquale is lovesick, waiting for his doctor. Scene 2 - As Doctor Malatesta arrives, he describes the cure, the bride he found for his patient (Beauteous as an angel born ! Walking softly on the earth ! Fresh as the lily at its birth...). Finding out that the beauty is Malatesta's sister, Don Pasquale is impatient to see her (Ah, a fire so new to me, burns in my heart's core ...Yes, I am born again !). Scene 3 - Since his nephew Ernesto is refusing the wife he proposed, Don Pasquale considers himself free of any obligations and prepared to marry the lady himself (For strength and sprightliness be sure, sir, I have enough, and some to spare, As for you, sir, you'll leave my house). Finding out that he was disinherited, Ernesto sorrows thinking of his secret girl friend (A begar's fate is waiting me now that I've lost my adored one !). Scene 4 - Reading a scene of proposal from a chivalry book, Norina starts singing (I know the magic virtues, of seeing time and places, I also know how to enchant). She sighs when she receives a letter. Scene 5 - Malatesta arrives and Norina reads him from Ernesto's letter (I shall leave Rome today, and, soon as posible, quit Europe too. Adieu, be happy !). Malatesta prepares

her to foul the old man pretending to be his sister from the convent (...my trusty cousin will play the notary ...and for the rest, well all the rest will rest with you ...he then will be completely at our mercy). When asked about the best strategy, Malatesta instructs her (Listen, and you'll all be told, you must play simplicity).

Act 2 (A magnificent furnished Sallon)

All by himself, turned out and abandoned, Ernesto sorrows (I shall seek for a far off land where no one shares my greif, then I will cherish but one thought, deploring the goods that I've lost). Don Pasquale enters the room and hears the guests arriveing (They're here ! To thee I yield myself, oh, Love !). Scene 2 - Led by her brother, Norina is presented to the bridegroom (Newly coming from a convent ...she's a little shy, you will mould her, by and by...). When asked about theatre and monden life, Norina responds (I don't know what that is, and don't desire ...in sewing and embroidery, knitting stockings time passes quickly). Scene 2 - Since the notary is in the other room, the marriage contract is soon dictated (And willing and consenting, a marriage legal, valid ...Moveables and immoveables ...to his beloved wife delectable, from this time, an equal half). As they both sign the contract Ernesto's voice is heard. Scene 3 - Ernesto enters the room to bid adieu. He is invited to sing as a witness but he can not belive his eyes. Malatesta clears the facts (This lady is the bride. Sophronia, sister dear, my pride !). As soon as the marriage is proclaimed, the best party must commence and Norina asks for a young man's arm, choosing Ernest (He shall be my cavalier !). Don Pasquale tries to regain the command of the house, but Norina is resolute (Silence, buffoon ! peace, instantly ! Be quiet ! I have tried with you, gentle means, sir, hitherto ...I will have the household here !). Full in charge, she first orders a new set of servants, two carriages and horses, new furniture. The arguing continues (You are a clown, a clodpole, sir ! ...That's very true, I've married you !). While Norina makes peace with Ernesto, Malatesta is counseling his dear brother-in-law (You're a little heated, really, do go to bed, dear Don Pasquale).

Act 3 (A room in Don Pasquale's house / In the garden)

Surrounded by female articles, bills and new servants, Don Pasquale reflects (This is a house enough to drive one mad). Norina is going to the theatre. Don Pasquale tries to stop her, but she boxes his ears and starts singing (My dear little hubby, now don't you be so snubby). Scene 2 - With her left he founds a letter (Adored Sophronia, Halloa ! halloa ! Between the hours of nine and ten this evening I shall be in the bottom of the garden). Scene 3 - The servants are gossiping their masters (The little wife will conquer in the end ...It seems she don't account her husband much). Scene 4 - Malatesta and Ernesto plot their next moves. Scene 5 - Don Pasquale complains to Malatesta (Half the hole income of one year in caps and ribbons ...and there is worse behind. Read !). After reading the letter, Don Pasquale calls for venange while Malatesta recomands prudence, with rigorous degradation (Wait, wait, dear little wife I soon revenged will be ...Oh, the poor fellow ! Venange he's prating !). Scene 6 - In the evening, Ernesto sings in the garden (How gentle it is, the warm mid night of April). Norina comes from the house and they sing in duet (Come to me and say you love me, tell me dear that thou are mine). Don Pasquale and Malatesta are entering softly with lanterns as Ernest returns towards the house. Scene 7 - Not finding the gentleman lover, Don Pasquale is stupefied, but Malatesta comes with the solution (Tomorrow, in this house enters the new made bride ...The bride of whom ? ...Of Ernest-his Norina !). As Don Pasquale agrees, Malatesta calls Ernesto and instructs him that his uncle now grants him Norina's hand and an allowance, yearly, of four thousand crowns. To his release, Don Pasquale now finds out that Sophronia in not Sophronia, but Norina (My marriage, then ...was an idea of mine to bind you by a tie of no effect). With Ernesto kneeling, Don Pasquale offers his benevolent blessing (I everything forgive. May you be happy, as I unite you ! - so unite you, Heaven !). Norina sings out loud the moral of the play (He must surely be demented he who marries when he's old, Soon his folly is repented, and his pasion soon grows cold).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Beauteous as an angel born ! Walking softly on the earth ! Fresh as the lily at its birth... (Malatesta), Ah, a fire so new to me, burns in my heart's core ...Yes, I am born again ! (Don Pasquale), For strength and sprightliness be sure, sir, I have enough, and some to spare, As for you, sir, you'll leave my house (Don Pasquale), A begar's fate is waiting me now that I've lost my adored one ! (Ernesto), I know the magic virtues, of seeing time and places, I also know how to enchant (Norina), I shall leave Rome today, and, soon as posible, quit Europe too. Adieu, be happy ! (Norina), ...my trusty cousin will play the notary ...and for the rest, well all the rest will rest with you ...he then will be completely at our mercy (Malatesta), Listen, and you'll all be told, you must play simplicity (Malatesta) Act 2 - I shall seek for a far off land where no one shares my greif, then I will cherish but one thought, deploring the goods that I've lost (Ernesto), They're

here ! To thee I yield myself, oh, Love ! (Don Pasquale), Newly coming from a convent ...she's a little shy, you will mould her, by and by...(Malatesta), I don't know what that is, and don't desire ...in sewing and embroidery, knitting stockings time passes quickly (Norina), And willing and consenting, a marriage legal, valid ...Moveables and immoveables ...to his beloved wife delectable, from this time, an equal half (Malatesta, Don Pasquale), This lady is the bride. Sophronia, sister dear, my pride ! (Malatesta), He shall be my cavalier ! (Norina), Silence, buffoon ! peace, instantly ! Be quiet ! I have tried with you, gentle means, sir, hitherto ...I will have the household here ! (Norina), You are a clown, a clodpole, sir ! ...That's very true, I've married you ! (Norina, Don Pasquale), You're a little heated, really, do go to bed, dear Don Pasquale (Malatesta) Act 3 - This is a house enough to drive one mad (Don Pasquale), My dear little hubby, now don't you be so snubby (Norina), Adored Sophronia, Halloa ! halloa ! Between the hours of nine and ten this evening I shall be in the bottom of the garden (Don Pasquale), The little wife will conquer in the end ...It seems she don't account her husband much (Servants), Half the hole income of one year in caps and ribbons ...and there is worse behind. Read ! (Don Pasquale), Wait, wait, dear little wife I soon revenged will be ...Oh, the poor fellow ! Venange he's prating ! (Don Pasquale, Malatesta), How gentle it is, the warm mid night of April (Ernesto), Come to me and say you love me, tell me dear that thou are mine (Ernesto, Norina), Tomorrow, in this house enters the new made bride ...The bride of whom ? ...Of Ernest-his Norina ! (Malatesta, Norina), My marriage, then ...was an idea of mine to bind you by a tie of no effect (Don Pasquale, Malatesta), I everything forgive. May you be happy, as I unite you ! - so unite you, Heaven ! (Don Pasquale), He must surely be demented he who marries when he's old, Soon his folly is repented, and his passion soon grows cold (Norina)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1931 Teatro alla Scala (Attilio Giuliani - Don Pasquale, Ines Alfani Tellini - Norina, Lorenzo Conati - Malatesta, Christy Solari - Ernesto), 1940 Metropolitan Opera (Salvatore Baccaloni - Don Pasquale, Bidu Sayo - Norina, Frank Valentino - Malatesta, Nino Martini - Ernesto), 1952 Staatoper Wien (Melchior Luise - Don Pasquale, Lina Aimaro - Norina, Scipio Colombo - Malatesta, Juan Oncina - Ernesto), 1952 Orchestra RAI Turin (Sesto Bruscatini - Don Pasquale, Alda Noni - Norina, Mario Borriello - Malatesta, Cesare Valletti - Ernesto), 1955 Teatro San Carlo Naples (Renato Capecchi - Don Pasquale, Bruna Rizzoli - Norina, Giuseppe Valdengo - Malatesta, Petre Munteanu - Ernesto), 1974 Chicago Lyric Opera (Wladimiro Granzarolli - Don Pasquale, Ileana Cotrubas - Norina, Vicente Sardinero - Malatesta, Alfredo Kraus - Ernesto), 1978 London Symphony Orchestra (Donald Gramm - Don Pasquale, Beverly Sills - Norina, Alan Titus - Malatesta, Alfredo Kraus - Ernesto), 1990 Lyon Opera (Gabriel Baquier - Don Pasquale, Barbara Hendricks - Norina, Gino Quilico - Malatesta, Luca Canonici - Ernesto), 1994 Teatro alla Scala (Ferruccio Furlanetto - Don Pasquale, Nuccia Focile - Norina, Lucio Gallo - Malatesta, Gregory Kunde - Ernesto), 2006 Zurich Opera (Ruggero Raimondi - Don Pasquale, Isabel Rey - Norina, Oliver Widmer - Malatesta, Juan Diego Florez - Ernesto), 2010 Metropolitan Opera (John del Carlo - Don Pasquale, Anna Netrebko- Norina, Mariusz Kwiecien - Malatesta, Matthew Polenzani - Ernesto)

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86. Das Rheingold

Title: The Rhinegold (Das Rheingold)

Composer: Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Born in Leipzig, his father Carl Friedrich Wagner was a clerk in the Leipzig police service while his mother Johanna Rosine Paez was of the daughter of a baker. One year later his mother remarried to Ludwig Geyer an actor and playwright. At the age of 7 he was enrolled at Pastor Wetzel's school at Possendorf, where he recieved piano instruction and by the age of 9 he joined the Dresdener Kreutzchor at the Kreuzeschule. His first lessons of harmony were taken during 1828-1831 with composer Christian Gottlieb Muller (1800-1863). In 1831, Wagner enrolled at the Leipzig University to become a member of the Saxon student fraternity. He took composition lessons with Thomaskantor (music director) and composer

Theodor Weinling (1780-1842). In 1836 he married the actress Christine Wilhemine Planer (1809-1866) for a 30 years of marriage with no offspring. In 1842 Wagner was appointed the Royal Saxon Court Conductor. From 1849 to 1858, due to his revolutionary activity he was exiled in Switzerland, to Zurich, for a very prolific period of his compositions. In 1862 he divorced his wife and remarried Francesca Cosima Liszt with three children as fruit of their marriage, two girls and a son. In 1871 the family moved to Bayreuth where he built the Bayreuth Festspielhouse and founded the Bayreuther Festival. Operas: *Die Hochzeit* (The Wedding-1832), *Die Feen* (The Fairies-1834), *Das Liebsverbot* (The Ban of Love-1836), *Die hohe Braut* (The High-born Bride -1842), *Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen* (Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes - 1840), *Der fliegende Hollander* (The Flying Dutchman - 1841), *Tannhauser und der Sängerkrieg auf dem Wartburg* (Tannhauser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg - 1845), *Lohengrin* (Lohengrin - 1848), *Das Rheingold* (The Rhine Gold - 1854), *Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie - 1856), *Tristan und Isolde* (Tristan and Isolde - 1859), *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* (The mastersingers of Nuremberg - 1867), *Siegfried* (Siegfried - 1871), *Gotterdammerung* (Twilight of the Gods -1874), *Parsifal* (Parsifal - 1882).

Libretto: The Rhinegold is the first of the four music dramas that constitute the Ring cycle (The Ring of the Nibelung). Richard Wagner wrote the librettos for the four operas in reverse order but he composed the music in the wright order, strating with The Rhinegold in 1854. It took twenty years of labor until the cylce was finished in an acceptable format. His work started in 1848 when he imagined the story of Siegfried's Death, the legendary hero of a Germanic myth. He than continued to expand the project and decided that Siegfried's death must be a culmination of a series of musical dramas incorporating numerous chilvaric myths. In the begining, the composer wanted to produce an opera on the life of Roman Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa, the crusade hero that ended his life in a barrel. While researching he found some historical links between the Hofenstaufen's dynasty and the legendary Nibelungs, which resulted in the plot for the hole cycle. The title may suggest "the gold of the river Rhine", but it may also mean "the gold of the reign", leaving room for multiple interpretations of the myths. The principal source for the work were some poems and texts from the 12-th and 13th century Iceland collected under the name of Poetic Edda. All the characters and the story originated from the Eddas, with the exception of the three Rhinemaidens, a pure Wangerian invention. The ring of power belongs to theese maidens, and in the end of the cycle the ring is returned to the them, waiting there for the rise of a new hero. The music socre was completed in 1854 but the composer did not want to present it until the hole cycle was completed. Pressed by his financial sponsor, King Ludwig of Bavaria, the opera was presented in advance, in accordance with the king's tastes.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 22 September 1869 at the National Theatre in Munich, conducted by Franz Wullner. Baritone Karl Fischer was distributed as Alberich (the king of the Nibelungs) while the bass baritone August Kindermann impersonated Wotan (the god of battle). Accounts of the premiere varied in between an artistic disaster and a success d'estime, as for the public's reaction the most interest was in the scenery and stage effects. The complete Ring cycle was first produced on 13 August 1876 at the Bayreuth Festival, after months of preparations. In this production, tenor Georg Unger (famous for playing Siegfried) was distributed as Froh, baritone Karl Hill was Alberich, while bass baritone Franz Betz impersonated Wotan and the sisters Marie and Lilli Lehmann togehter with Minna Lammert were the Rhinemaidens. Among audience were: Kaiser Wilhelm I of Hohenzollern, Emperor Pedro II of Brazil, various representatives of royal houses and numerous composers such as: Tchaikovsky, Gounod, Brukner, Grieg, Saint-Saens and Franz Listt. The cycle was revived 20 years later for the 1896 Bayreuth Festival. Meanwhile other European production were mounted in Vienna (24 January 1878), Leipzig (April 1878), London (May 1878), Budapest (26 January 1889). The Metropolitan Opera premiere was given in January 1889 with The Rhinegold, followed on 4 March 1889 by the first production of the hole Ring cycle. After 1896 the opera was played at the Bayreuth Festival on a regular basis. In the 20th century, notable performances were recorded at: New York (1937, 1988), Vienna (1948, 1958), Milan (1950), Bayreuth (1952, 1953, 1955, 1963, 1966, 1974, 1980, 1991, 2009), Hamburg (1952), Rome (1953), London (1959), Cologne (1962), Berlin (1967, 2013), Dresden (1983), Cleveland (1993), Stuttgart (2002), Barcelona (2004), Valencia (2007). Up to the 2017/18 season, Das Rheingold was performed in the world for 1000 times, in 317 different productions, ranking 47 on Operabase list.

Roles: Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde, Rhine maidens (soprano, mezzo soprano), Alberich, king of Niebelungs (bass baritone), Wotan, king of the Gods (bass baritone), Fricka, goddess of marriage (mezzo

soprano), Freia, goddess of youth (soprano), Fasolt and Fafner, giants (baritone, bass), Froth, the fair god (tenor), Donner, god of thunder (baritone), Loge, half-god of fire, Mime, brother of Alberich (tenor), Erda, the mother of earth (contralto)



Story: Based on an old Norse saga, the story has everything: emphatic gods, naiads and giants, magic items and spells, a king and the half-god of fire ...and lots of gold. And where is gold, there is the Devil. Stealing and murder soon follow, but with a wise move from Wotan, the king of the gods, the situation comes to a stalemate. Still, not everything is restful again, since the Rhine maidens have not been returned their stolen gold.

Prelude and Scene 1 (At the bottom of the Rhine, under the water)

The Rhine maidens are on duty (How safe is thy watch ? ...Safe from thy wiles ! ...The sleeping gold badly we guard !). Alberich watches them and then calls them (How bright and fair in the light you shine ! ...My sweetheart be, you loveliest child !). The maidens are laughing on him playing the cat and mouse (O, the sting of thy glance and the prick of thy beard, for ever to see and to feel !). Incited, Alberich struggles but he can not catch any of them (...floating around, with dancing and singing, we joyously dive to thy bed !). Cheered with their game, Woglinde tells him their secret (He who the sway of love forswears, he who delight of love forbears, alone the magic can master that forces the gold to a ring). Instantly, Alberich denies love and start to chase them with anger (My hand quenches your light, I wrest from the rock the gold, fashion the ring of revenge).

Scene 2 (An open space on a mountain height)

Frika awakes her husband Wotan (Manhood's honor, might without bound, rise now to endless renown !). Freia is asking for their help (Help me, sister ! shelter me, brother ! From yonder mountain threatened me Fasolt, he comes now hither to take me). Fasolt appears pointing to the castle (There stands what we built, shining bright in daylight's beams: wend ye in, pay us our wage !). Wotan is trying to buy some time (Ask for other wage !). Donner the god of thunder is backing him. The giants are prepared to fight for their deal when Loge appears with the news (The Nibelung Night-Alberich ...the Rhine gold the robber has stollen ...he deems it now the holiest good, greater than woman's grace). Donner and Wotan decide (Slaves should we be all to the dwarf, were not the ring from him wrested ...The ring I must win me !). Since only the curse of love can result in winning the ring, the giants are quick to step in (Hear, Wotan, our word as we wait ! Free with you leave we Freia ...for us rude giants enough were Nibelheim's ruddy gold). Wotan pretends to be reluctant (For you shall I deal with the Nibelung ? ...Insolent and greedy, you dullards, are you made by my debt !). In response, the giants seize Freia, and she only can be ransomed with the ring, until midnight. Wotan is left with no other option (Up, Loge ! descend with me ! To Nibelheim go we together, for I will win me the gold). Freia, the fair one, needs to be ransomed.

Scene 3 (Nibelheim)

Alberich is examining the new metal work produced by his brother Mime (All has been forged as I gave my command, finished and fit). Making use of his magic Tarnhelm Alberich continues to kick his brother (Hoho ! Hoho ! Nibelungs all, bow ye to Alberich ! Everywhere over you he waits and watches, peace and rest now have departed). With Alberich gone, Wotan and Loge appear. Mime complains to them (...for him alone we ever must toil ...to melt the booty, to forge him the gold). Alberich appears whipping the Nibelungs to pile more gold (Indolent folk ! Down with the treasure ...tremble in terror, ye vanquished host ! All obey the ring's great lord !). When Wotan and Lige approach, Alberich is insolent (Led hither by envy ye came: such gallant guests, belive, well I know !). Asked how is he prepared to defend all that treasures, Alberich responds that he can use

his helmet to change in any shape at his will. Dared to prove it, Alberich transforms into a dragon (Dragon dread, wind thee and coil thee !). Loge pretends to be in terror and asks in a trembling voice (...can you also shape thee quite small and slender ?). Proud of his power, Alberich now transforms into a creepy toad. Quickly, Wotan places his foot on the toad, and Loge removes his Tarnhelm, reclaiming Alberich in his own visible form. They both seize the prisoner binding his hands with a rope.

Scene 4 (An open space on a mountain height)

On the top of the world, Alberich finds out that he can be ransomed, but only for his hoard of gleaming gold (Infamous robber ! ...Loosen the rope, let me go free ...But if only I keep the ring, the hoard I may lightly let go). Touching the ring, Alberich summons the Nibelungs who ascend from the valley and pile up the hoard. The magic helmet is added to the pile and Alberich is asked for his ring (To the maidens hie thee, ask thou of them if their gold for thine own have they given). Alberich puts on the ring and Wotan sets him free. Alberich responds with a curse (As by curse came it to me, accurst be aye this ring ! ...Its wealth shall yield pleasure to none yet be murder drawn in its wake !). The giants appear leading Freia between them. Freia's weight in gold is paid as ransom, then the magic helmet is added and finally the ring, but only after the intervention of Erda, the mother of earth (A darksome day dawns for your godhood: be counseled, give up the ring !). The giants let Freia go, but they start fighting for the ring and Fasolt is killed while the gods stand horrified. Wotan concludes (Fearful now, appeareth the curse's power !). With a stroke of his hammer, Donner collects all the mist (Heda ! Heda ! Hedo ! To me, all ye mists ! Ye vapors, to me ! Donner, your lord, calleth his hosts !). Wotan turns to Fricka (Follow me, wife ! In Walhall dwell now with me). From the valley, unseen, the Rhine maidens are heard (Rhine gold ! Rhine gold ! ...O give us its glory again ...O would that thy treasure were glittering yet in the deep ...false and base are all who revel above !)

Great moments and arias: Scene 1 - How safe is thy watch ? ...Safe from thy wiles ! ...The sleeping gold badly we guard ! (Rhine maidens), How bright and fair in the light you shine ! ...My sweetheart be, you loveliest child ! (Alberich), O, the sting of thy glance and the prick of thy beard, for ever to see and to feel ! (Flosshilde), ...floating around, with dancing and singing, we joyously dive to thy bed ! (Rhine maidens), He who the sway of love forswears, he who delight of love forbears, alone the magic can master that forces the gold to a ring (Woglinde), My hand quenches your light, I wrest from the rock the gold, fashion the ring of revenge (Alberich) Scene 2 - Manhood's honor, might without bound, rise now to endless renown ! (Fricka), Help me, sister ! shelter me, brother ! From yonder mountain threatened me Fasolt, he comes now hither to take me (Freia), There stands what we builded, shining bright in daylight's beams: wend ye in, pay us our wage ! (Fasolt), Ask for other wage ! (Wotan), The Nibelung Night-Alberich ...the Rhine gold the robber has stolen ...he deems it now the holiest good, greater than woman's grace (Loge), Slaves should we be all to the dwarf, were not the ring from him wrested ...The ring I must win me ! (Donner, Wotan), Hear, Wotan, our word as we wait ! Free with you leave we Freia ...for us rude giants enough were Nibelheim's ruddy gold (Fafner), For you shall I deal with the Nibelung ? ...Insolent and greedy, you dullards, are you made by my debt ! (Wotan), Up, Loge ! descend with me ! To Nibelheim go we together, for I will win me the gold (Wotan) Scene 3 - All has been forged as I gave my command, finished and fit (Alberich), Hoho ! Hoho ! Nibelungs all, bow ye to Alberich ! Everywhere over you he waits and watches, peace and rest now have departed (Alberich), ...for him alone we ever must toil ...to melt the booty, to forge him the gold (Mime), Indolent folk ! Down with the treasure ...tremble in terror, ye vanquished host ! All obey the ring's great lord ! (Alberich), Led hither by envy ye came: such gallant guests, believe, well I know ! (Alberich), Dragon dread, wind thee and coil thee ! (Alberich), ...can you also shape thee quite small and slender ? (Loge) Scene 4 - Infamous robber ! ...Loosen the rope, let me go free ...But if only I keep the ring, the hoard I may lightly let go (Alberich), To the maidens hie thee, ask thou of them if their gold for thine own have they given (Wotan), As by curse came it to me, accurst be aye this ring ! ...Its wealth shall yield pleasure to none yet be murder drawn in its wake ! (Alberich), A darksome day dawns for your godhood: be counseled, give up the ring ! (Erda), Fearful now, appeareth the curse's power ! (Wotan), Heda ! Heda ! Hedo ! To me, all ye mists ! Ye vapors, to me ! Donner, your lord, calleth his hosts ! (Donner), Follow me, wife ! In Walhall dwell now with me (Wotan), Rhine gold ! Rhine gold ! ...O give us its glory again ...O would that thy treasure were glittering yet in the deep ...false and base are all who revel above ! (Rhine maidens)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1937 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Eduard Habich - Alberich, Freidrich Schorr - Wotan, Karin Branzell - Fricka, Dorothee Manski - Freia, Hans Clemens - Froh), 1952 Bayreuth Festival (Gustav Neidlinger - Alberich, Ferdinand Franz - Wotan, Elisabeth Hongen - Fricka, Walburga Wegner - Freia, Gunther Treptow - Froh), 1957 Royal Opera House, London (Otakar Kraus - Alberich, Hans Hotter - Wotan, Georgine von Milinkovic - Fricka, Elisabeth Lindermeier - Freia, Erich Witte - Froh), 1958 Vienna Philharmonic (Gustav Neidlinger - Alberich, George London - Wotan, Kirsten Flagstad - Fricka, Claire Watson - Freia, Waldemar Kmentt - Froh), 1983 Staatskapelle Dresden (Siegmund Nimsgern - Alberich, Theo Adam - Wotan, Yvonne Minton - Fricka, Marita Napier - Freia, Eberhard Buchner - Froh), 2002 Staatoper Stuttgart (Esa Ruuttunen - Alberich, Wolfgang Probst - Wotan, Michaela Schuster - Fricka, Helga Ros- Freia, Bernhard Schneider - Froh), 2009 Bayreuth Festival (Andrew Shore - Alberich, Albert Dohmen - Wotan, Michelle Breet - Fricka, Edith Haller - Freia, Clemens Biber - Froh), 2013 Berlin Radio (Jochen Schmeckenbecher - Alberich, Tomasz Konieczny - Wotan, Iris Vermillion - Fricka, Ricarda Merbeth - Freia, Kor-Jan Dusseljee - Froh)

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87. Die Walkure

Title: The Valkyrie (Die Walkure)

Composer: Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Born in Leipzig, his father Carl Friedrich Wagner was a clerk in the Leipzig police service while his mother Johanna Rosine Paez was of the daughter of a baker. One year later his mother remarried to Ludwig Geyer an actor and playwright. At the age of 7 he was enrolled at Pastor Wetzels school at Possendorf, where he received piano instruction and by the age of 9 he joined the Dresdener Kreutzchor at the Kreuzschule. His first lessons of harmony were taken during 1828-1831 with composer Christian Gottlieb Muller (1800-1863). In 1831, Wagner enrolled at the Leipzig University to become a member of the Saxon student fraternity. He took composition lessons with Thomaskantor (music director) and composer Theodor Weinling (1780-1842). In 1836 he married the actress Christine Wilhemine Planer (1809-1866) for a 30 years of marriage with no offspring. In 1842 Wagner was appointed the Royal Saxon Court Conductor. From 1849 to 1858, due to his revolutionary activity he was exiled in Switzerland, to Zurich, for a very prolific period of his compositions. In 1862 he divorced his wife and remarried Francesca Cosima Liszt with three children as fruit of their marriage, two girls and a son. In 1871 the family moved to Bayreuth where he built the Bayreuth Festspielhouse and founded the Bayreuther Festival. Operas: Die Hochzeit (The Wedding-1832), Die Feen (The Fairies-1834), Das Liebsverbot (The Ban of Love-1836), Die hohe Braut (The High-born Bride -1842), Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen (Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes - 1840), Der fliegende Hollander (The Flying Dutchman - 1841), Tannhauser und der Sangerkrieg auf dem Wartburg (Tannhauser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg - 1845), Lohengrin (Lohengrin - 1848), Das Rheingold (The Rhine Gold - 1854), Die Walkure (The Valkyrie - 1856), Tristan und Isolde (Tristan and Isolde - 1859), Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg (The mastersingers of Nuremberg - 1867), Siegfried (Siegfried - 1871), Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods -1874), Parsifal (Parsifal - 1882).

Libretto: As the second of the four dramas that constitute The Ring of the Nibelung, Richard Wagner completed the text by July 1852 and the music by March 1856. The story is based on the mythological recounts from the Volsunga Saga, a legendary poetic tale regarding the decline of the Volsung clan. Volsung was the great grandson of Odin himself, and his parents were the king and queen of Hunaland. Proclaimed king, he married a giantess, Hljod, and together they had ten sons and one daughter named Signy. Their most courageous son was Sigmund, the one who earned Odin's sword. Signy was proposed and married by Siggeir, the king of the Getas, who was jealous on Sigmund's sword and swore revenge. Three months later, Volsung and his sons sailed to Siggeir's land where they were all taken captive and killed, with the exception of Sigmund. In this version of the legend, Signy fell in love with her brother Sigmund and their union angers the gods, who demand that Sigmund must die. Signy and her unborn child are saved by Wotan's daughter Brunhilde, who as a result faces the god's retribution. The Valkyries are Wotan's daughters whose task is to recover heroes fallen in battle and to bring

them to Valhalla. Richard Wagner has renamed all the characters and also some parts of the story are his invention. In Germanic tradition, brother and sister also refers to fellow country man or friend (bruderschaft), similar with the English tradition where all nobles are addressing each other with the appellation cousin. It is also in the Germanic tradition to marry only their kind. The Nibelung cycle includes 36 leitmotifs, including the well known Valkyrie motif.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 26 June 1870 at the Konigliches Hoftheater in Munich, conducted by Franz Wullner. Heinrich and Therese Vogl were distributed to sing Siegmund and Sieglinde, while bass baritone August Kindermann played Wotan. Soprano Sophie Stehle was singing the part of Brunhilde. Leading musicians, including Liszt, Brahms, Saint-Saens attended the premiere. For the Bayreuth Festival premiere of the whole cycle, on 14 August 1876, Richard Wagner was personally involved in months of rehearsals, demonstrating himself how the parts should be sung. Hans Richter conducted the performance with tenor Albert Niemann as Siegmund and soprano Josephine Schefsky as Sieglinde while Franz Betz was playing Wotan. Austrian soprano Amalie Materna was distributed as Brunnhilde. The next year, the New York performance at the Academy of Music on 2 April 1877, was followed eight years later by the Metropolitan Opera premiere. The Vienna premiere was in 1877 and the Rotterdam premiere was held in 1878. In London, the whole cycle was performed on 6 May 1882 at Her Majesty's Theatre, conducted by Anton Seidl. Many other European premieres followed: Bruxelles (1883), Venice (1883), Strasbourg (1883), Budapest (1883), Prague (1885), St. Petersburg (1889), Copenhagen (1891), Stockholm (1895). Outside Europe notable performances were staged in: Mexico (1891), Argentina (1899), Australia (1907), South Africa (1912), Brazil (1913). In the 20th century, notable performances were recorded at: Vienna (1935, 1954, 1965, 2011), New York (1940, 1941, 1944, 1987), Milan (1950), Geneva (1951), Bayreuth (1953, 1954, 1955, 1967, 1980, 1992, 2009), Rome (1953), London (1957, 1961), Berlin (1966, 2013), Dresden (1981), Munich (1988, 1989), Cleveland (1992), Stuttgart (2003), Barcelona (2004), Adelaide (2004), Saint Petersburg (2013), Seattle (2014). Up to the 2017/18 season, Die Walkure was performed in the world for 960 times, in 312 different productions, ranking 52 on Operabase list.

Roles: Siegmund, mortal son of Wotan (tenor), Sieglinde, alike to his twin sister (soprano), Hunding, husband of Sieglinde (bass), Wotan, king of the gods (bass baritone), Brunhilde, a Valkyrie (soprano), Fricka, Wotan's wife (soprano), Gerhilde, Ortlinde, Waltraute, Schwerleite, Helmwig, Siegrune, Grimgerde, Rossweisse (Valkyries) (soprano or mezzo soprano)



Story: It is a Nordic version for the Abduction from the Serail, spiced with numerous Norse myths. A young mortal falls in love for a married woman and they flee together in hope for happiness. But the gods can not allow such deeds. The horned husband calls for vengeance and god Wotan is there to help him with his spear. Touched by the power of love, Brunhilde, one of the Valkyries stands against her father. She is sentenced to a mortal life, to find the power of love on her behalf.

Act 1 (A wooden house built around an ash tree)

Exhausted Siegmund enters the house and falls asleep. Sieglinde finds him (A stranger here ? ...Valiant is he, me seems, though so worn he lies). When he wakes up, Siegmund prepares to leave, but Sieglinde asks him to stay (Who pursues thee, that thou must fly ? ...Ill-fate pursues me where ever I wander ...here ill-fate has made its home). Scene 2 - Hunding appears, armed with shield and spear. Sieglinde explains (...need drove him

to us ...I welcomed him as guest !). Hunding agrees, surprised how much they two were alike (...sacred hold thou my house ...how like to a woman ! The serpent's deceit glistens, too, in his glances). Asked about his name Siegmund tells his story (Wolfe, I called my father, alone was I not born, for a sister twinned with me, soon lost were both mother and maid). And he continues (But torn from my father was I ...ill fate lay on me ...Whatever right thing I wrought, others counted it ill, what seemed evil to me, others greeted as good). Asked about his sword, Siegmund also recalls (A sorrowful child cried for my help ...help against wrong gladly I gave ...vengeance they vowed on me ...till spear and shield were hewn from my hand). Since Hunding was one of the vengancers that have disarmed him, he decides (My house holds thee, Wolfing, today ...with trusty weapon defend thee tomorrow). Scene 3 - Left alone Siegmund feels defenseless. Sieglinde appears in a white garment to save his life. She tells him about a sword that has been struck in the ash tree, buried to the hilt (...no one the weapon could win ...O might I today find here the friend come from afar to the saddest wife). Siegmund embraces her with ardor. They both exchange words of love (...joyfully greet now the loving pair, made one are love and spring ...O let me closer to thee still press me and see more clearly the holy light). Encouraged by her, with a powerful effort Siegmund pulls the sword from the tree (Struck was for thee the sword in the stem Siegmund, so name I thee ! ...Siegmund call me for Siegmund am I ! Be witness this sword I hold now undaunted !). They embrace with passionate fervor (Sieglinde am I, who for thee longed, thine own twin sister thou winnest at once with the sword ! ...Bride and sister be to thy brother, then flourish the Walsungs far aye !).

Act 2 (A wild rocky place)

Wotan summons Brunhilde to help her half-brother (Brunhilde, haste to the fray to shield the Walsung in fight !). Brunhilde responds (In strife like this I take no delight, sweet though to me are the fights of men). Fricka appears and she speaks on behalf of Hunding (...for vengeance called he on me ...I made oath to punish the deed of this infamous pair). Wotan is not sensible to her demand (I rule not where love doth reign). Fricka becomes angry (O why wail I over wedlocks and vows which thyself thou first hast profaned ...Then finish thy work ! ...The betrayed one trample beneath thee !). Fricka insists that Siegmund should not be shielded against his avenger and Wotan takes the oath. Scene 2 - Summoned by Brunhilde, Wotan tells her the Ring of the Nibelung's story, and that Erda has blessed him with nine girls, the Valkyries, that have filled the Walhall with heroes. Now Walhall is in danger (...for to him alone, who love forswore, it is given to use the runes of the ring to the endless shame of the gods). Now the ring is guarded by Fafner, the giant, and Wotan is sworn not to fight him. Ever since he has touched the ring, Wotan was also touched by its curse (What I love best, must I surrender, slay him whom most I cherish). Now Wotan is asking her to help Hunding against Siegmund, but Brunhilde is reluctant to take his advice (Siegmund strike thou ! Such be the Valkyrie's task ! ...Woe ! my Walsung ! In sores sorrow the true one must falsely forsake thee !). Scene 3 - Near a rock pass, Siegmund and Sieglinde are resting from their run (Farther ! Farther ! ...No farther now ! Take now thy rest: speak but a word !). Scene 4 - Brunhilde appears in front of Siegmund (Death doomed is he who looks upon me ...to Walhall wend with me). Since Sieglinde is not invited, Siegmund refuses her (Then greet for me Walhal, greet for me Wotan ...I follow thee not !). Brunhilde insists that his death had been decreed but he still refuses the everlasting bliss (If I must fall then, to Walhall I fare not: Hella hold me her own !). Impressed with his determination, Brunhilde rushes away. Scene 5 - Hunding arrives for the fight (Stand there and fight, else with the hounds must I hold thee ! ...I drew undaunted the sword and its edge right soon shalt thou taste !). Brunhilde is shielding Siegmund, but Wotan appears and strikes Siegmund with his spear. Siegmund falls dead to the ground while Brunhilde lifts Sieglinde and disappears with her.

Act 3 (On the summit of a rocky mountain)

The Valkyries are welcoming each other for their meeting (Hojotoho ! Hojotoho ! Heiha ! Heiha !). Brunhilde also appears leading Sieglinde (Shield me and help in direst need ! ...Warfather follows close !). Her sisters are alarmed (What madness urged you this deed to do ? Lost one ! Brunhilde, lost one !). Sieglinde herself does not want to be saved (Far from Siegmund ...thrust thou thy sword into my heart !). Brunhilde guides her to run in the forest where Fafner is guarding the ring of the Nibelungs (...from Wotan's wrath shelter safe were the wood: our father feareth and shunneth the place). Brunhilde also gives her the pieces of Siegmund's broken sword (...who once shall swing the sword new wrought, his name from me let him take-Siegfried). With Sieglinde gone, Wotan appears. Scene 2 - The Valkyries are defending Brunhilde, but Wotan is determined (...against me she lifted the spear that by Wotan's will she bore !). Braved by Brunhilde, Wotan pronounces his sentence (Wish-maid art thou no more ...No more shall I send thee from Walhall ...no more

bring'st thou heroes to fill my halls). Wotan also curses her to be mastered by the first man who shall find her and wake her from her sleep. All the Valkyries cry (Recall the curse ! O father ! Shall the maiden pale and be withered by man ?). Wotan is unmoved (...her maidenhood's flower will fade away, a husband will gain all her womanly grace). Scene 3 - Left alone with Wotan, Brunhilde is firm (As Fricka ensnared thy will to her service ...foe were thou to thyself). Wotan bids his farewell (...together no more may we ever whisper counsel ...may the god never give thee his greeting !). Brunhilde also bids her farewell (Must I then go from Walhall, no more to have part in thy working ...not all unworthy be he who wins !). Brunhilde also underlines (She who turned from thee rescued the race ...Sieglinde bears the holiest fruit). As Brunhilde hopes that the most fearless of heroes will be the one to find her, Wotan sorrows (...must I abandon thee, whom I loved so, thou laughing delight of my eyes ?). Finally he puts her to sleep, kissing her long on the eyes (For so turns the god now from thee, so kisses thy godhood away !). Before he leaves, Wotan encircles Brunhilde with a circle of eternal fire.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - A stranger here ? ...Valiant is he, me seems, though so worn he lies (Sieglinde), Who pursues thee, that thou must fly ? ...Ill-fate pursues me where ever I wander ...here ill-fate has made its home (Siegmond, Sieglinde), ...need drove him to us ...I welcomed him as guest !(Sieglinde), ...sacred hold thou my house ...how like to a woman ! The serpent's deceit glistens, too, in his glances (Hunding), Wolfe, I called my father, alone was I not born, for a sister twinned with me, soon lost were both mother and maid (Siegmond), But torn from my father was I ...ill fate lay on me ...Whatever right thing I wrought, others counted it ill, what seemed evil to me, others greeted as good (Siegmond), A sorrowful child cried for my help ...help against wrong gladly I gave ...vengeance they vowed on me ...till spear and shield were hewn from my hand (Siegmond), My house holds thee, Wolfing, today ...with trusty weapon defend thee tomorrow (Hunding), ...no one the weapon could win ...O might I today find here the friend come from afar to the saddest wife (Sieglinde), ...joyfully greet now the loving pair, made one are love and spring ...O let me closer to thee still press me and see more clearly the holy light (Siegmond, Sieglinde), Struck was for thee the sword in the stem Siegmond, so name I thee ! ...Siegmond call me for Siegmond am I ! Be witness this sword I hold now undaunted ! (Sieglinde, Siegmond), Sieglinde am I, who for thee longed, thine own twin sister thou winnest at once with the sword ! ...Bride and sister be to thy brother, then flourish the Walsungs far aye ! (Sieglinde, Siegmond) Act 2 - Brunhilde, haste to the fray to shield the Walsung in fight ! (Wotan), In strife like this I take no delight, sweet though to me are the fights of men (Brunhilde), ...for vengeance called he on me ...I made oath to punish the deed of this infamous pair (Fricka), I rule not where love doth reign (Wotan), O why wail I over wedlocks and vows which thyself thou first hast profaned ...Then finish thy work ! ...The betrayed one trample beneath thee ! (Fricka), ...for to him alone, who love forswore, it is it given to use the runes of the ring to the endless shame of the gods (Wotan), What I love best, must I surrender, slay him whom most I cherish (Wotan), Siegmond strike thou ! Such be the Valkyrie's task ! ...Woe ! my Walsung ! In sores sorrow the true one must falsely forsake thee ! (Wotan, Brunhilde), Farther ! Farther ! ...No farther now ! Take now thy rest: speak but a word ! (Siegmond, Sieglinde), Death doomed is he who looks upon me ...to Walhall wend with me (Brunhilde), Then greet for me Walhal, greet for me Wotan ...I follow thee not ! (Siegmond), If I must fall then, to Walhall I fare not: Hella hold me her own ! (Siegmond), Stand there and fight, else with the hounds must I hold thee ! ...I drew undaunted the sword and its edge right soon shalt thou taste ! (Hunding, Siegmond) Act 3 - Hojotoho ! Hojotoho ! Heiha ! Heiha ! (Valkyries), Shield me and help in direst need ! ...Warfather follows close ! (Brunhilde), What madness urged you this deed to do ? Lost one ! Brunhilde, lost one ! (Valkyries), Far from Siegmond ...thrust thou thy sword into my heart ! (Sieglinde), ...from Wotan's wrath shelter safe were the wood: our father feareth and shunneth the place (Brunhilde), ...who once shall swing the sword new wrought, his name form me let him take- Siegfried (Brunhilde), ...against me she lifted the spear that by Wotan's will she bore ! (Wotan), Wish-maid art thou no more ...No more shall I send thee from Walhall ...no more bring'st thou heroes to fill my halls (Wotan), Recall the curse ! O father ! Shall the maiden pale and be withered by man ? (Valkyries), ...her maidenhood's flower will fade away, a husband will gain all her womanly grace (Wotan), As Fricka ensnared thy will to her service ...foe were thou to thyself (Brunhilde), ...together no more may we ever whisper counsel ...may the god never give thee his greeting ! (Wotan), Must I then go from Walhall, no more to have part in thy working ...not all unworthy be he who wins ! (Brunhilde), She who turned from thee rescued the race ...Sieglinde bears the holiest fruit (Brunhilde), ...must I abandon thee, whom I loved so, thou laughing delight of my eyes ? (Wotan), For so turns the god now from thee, so kisses thy godhood away ! (Wotan).

Ballet: In 1860, composer Johan Peter Emilius Hartmann (1805-1900) has produced the music for a complete

ballet performance called The Valkyries. It has never been performed in modern times.

Recordings: 1935 Vienna Philharmonic (Lauritz Melchior - Siegmund, Lotte Lehmann - Sieglinde, Emmanuel List - Wotan), 1940 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Lauritz Melchior - Siegmund, Marjorie Lawrence - Sieglinde, Julius Hugen - Wotan, Kristen Flagstad - Brunhilde), 1950 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Gunther Treptow - Siegmund, Hilde Konetzni - Sieglinde, Ferdinand Frantz - Wotan, Kristen Flagstad - Brunhilde), 1954 Bayreuth Festival (Max Lorenz - Siegmund, Martha Modl - Sieglinde, Hans Hotter - Wotan, Astrid Varnay - Brunhilde), 1966 Berlin Philharmonic (Jon Vickers - Siegmund, Gundula Janowitz - Sieglinde, Thomas Stewart - Wotan, Regine Crespin - Brunhilde), 1980 Bayreuth Festival (Peter Hofmann - Siegmund, Jeannine Altmeyer - Sieglinde, Donald McIntyre - Wotan, Gwyneth Jones - Brunhilde), 1989 Bavarian State Opera (Robert Schunk - Siegmund, Julia Varady - Sieglinde, Robert Hale - Wotan, Hildegard Behrens - Brunhilde), 2004 Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (Stuart Skelton - Siegmund, Deborah Riedel - Sieglinde, John Brocheler - Wotan, Lisa Gasteen - Brunhilde), 2013 Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra (Jonas Kaufmann - Siegmund, Anja Kampe - Sieglinde, Rene Pape - Wotan, Nina Stemme - Brunhilde), 2014 Seattle Symphony Orchestra (Stuart Skelton - Siegmund, Margaret Jane Wray - Sieglinde, Greer Grimsley - Wotan, Alwyn Mellor - Brunhilde)

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88. Siegfried

Title: Siegfried

Composer: Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Born in Leipzig, his father Carl Friedrich Wagner was a clerk in the Leipzig police service while his mother Johanna Rosine Paez was of the daughter of a baker. One year later his mother remarried to Ludwig Geyer an actor and playwright. At the age of 7 he was enrolled at Pastor Wetzel's school at Possendorf, where he received piano instruction and by the age of 9 he joined the Dresdener Kreutzchor at the Kreuzschule. His first lessons of harmony were taken during 1828-1831 with composer Christian Gottlieb Muller (1800-1863). In 1831, Wagner enrolled at the Leipzig University to become a member of the Saxon student fraternity. He took composition lessons with Thomaskantor (music director) and composer Theodor Weinling (1780-1842). In 1836 he married the actress Christine Wilhemine Planer (1809-1866) for a 30 years of marriage with no offspring. In 1842 Wagner was appointed the Royal Saxon Court Conductor. From 1849 to 1858, due to his revolutionary activity he was exiled in Switzerland, to Zurich, for a very prolific period of his compositions. In 1862 he divorced his wife and remarried Francesca Cosima Liszt with three children as fruit of their marriage, two girls and a son. In 1871 the family moved to Bayreuth where he built the Bayreuth Festspielhouse and founded the Bayreuther Festival. Operas: Die Hochzeit (The Wedding-1832), Die Feen (The Fairies-1834), Das Liebsverbot (The Ban of Love-1836), Die hohe Braut (The High-born Bride -1842), Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen (Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes - 1840), Der fliegende Hollander (The Flying Dutchman - 1841), Tannhauser und der Sangerkrieg auf dem Wartburg (Tannhauser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg - 1845), Lohengrin (Lohengrin - 1848), Das Rheingold (The Rhine Gold - 1854), Die Walkure (The Valkyrie - 1856), Tristan und Isolde (Tristan and Isolde - 1859), Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg (The mastersingers of Nuremberg - 1867), Siegfried (Siegfried - 1871), Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods -1874), Parsifal (Parsifal - 1882).

Libretto: The third musical drama in The Ring of the Nibelung, the libretto of Siegfried was finished by the composer in 1852, based on an earlier version entitled Young Siegfried. The musical score proved to be much more laborious since he started to work in 1856 to be finally completed in 1871. The story was meant to complete Siegfried's death, the last drama that has already been written. As the composer recounted in a letter the plot for Siegfried originated in a fairy tale of the Brothers Grimm entitled The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was and from the story of Sir Lancelot du Lac, one of the Knights of the Round Table. Some other elements were derived from the legends of Sigurd, the hero present in both the Nibelungenlied and in the Volsunga saga. Sigurd was a legendary hero who killed a dragon and was later murdered. As the legend

says: "...no man now living or ever, would be equal to him in strength, courage and in all sorts of courtesy, as well as in boldness and generosity that he had above all men". The name Siegfried is a combination of the words Sieg for victory and Friede for peace probably meant as "the peace maker". Unlike many other Germanic heroes, Siegfried can not be identified with a single historical figure but it is strongly related with Saint George the dragon slayer, a martyr especially venerated by the Crusaders. In 1863 the texts for all four libretti were published for the first time

Performance history: The opera premiered on 16 August 1876 at the Bayreuth Festival, as part of the whole cycle, conducted by Hans Richter. Tenor Georg Unger was singing Siegfried while soprano Amalie Materna was Brunhilde and bass baritone Franz Betz was distributed as Wotan. The sequence of first performances were as follows: Vienna (9 November 1878), London (8 May 1882), Wroclaw (September 1882), Amsterdam (5 January 1883), Brussels (26 January 1883), Basel (29 March 1883), Venice (17 April 1883), Budapest (26 May 1883), Prague (January 1887), New York (9 November 1887), Saint Petersburg (14 March 1889), Riga (28 March 1898), Rouen (17 February 1900), Barcelona (15 November 1900), Copenhagen (22 April 1905), Stockholm (11 December 1905), Lvov (21 February 1907), Buenos Aires (29 August 1908), Monte Carlo (29 January 1909), Lisbon (February 1909), Edinburgh (3 March 1910), Johannesburg (1913), Rio de Janeiro (21 September 1922), Bucharest (1 May 1938), Zagreb (26 May 1938), Sofia (13 November 1938), Athens (30 November 1938).

Notable performances were recorded at: Metropolitan Opera (1937), Vienna Opera (1949, 1962), Teatro alla Scala (1950), Bayreuth Festival (1953, 1955, 1965, 1966, 1992, 2009), RAI in Rome (1953, 1968), Royal Opera House (1957), Berlin Opera (1969, 2013), Staatskapelle Dresden (1982), Bavarian State Opera (1989), Staatsoper Stuttgart (2002), Gran Teatre del Liceu (2003). Up to the 2017/18 season, Siegfried was performed in the world for 754 times, in 245 different productions, ranking 65 on Operabase list.

Roles: Siegfried (tenor), Brunhilde (soprano), The Wanderer, Wotan in disguise (bass baritone), Mime (tenor), Alberich (bass baritone), Fafner (bass), Erda (contralto), The Woodbird (soprano)



Story: From the forbidden love of Siegmund and Sieglinde, a hero was born, Siegfried. With both his parents dead, he was raised by Mime the blacksmith, king Alberich's brother. Young, innocent and cocky, Siegfried is now a young boy, old enough to find his sword and old enough to learn the fears of man, including his worst fears, the girls. After killing Fafner, the giant, Siegfried comes into possession of the Nibelung's ring, useless to him since he has not sworn love. His adventure continues wakening Brunhilde, the Valkyrie, also finding the thrills of his first love.

Act 1 (A rocky cavern with a naturally formed smith's forge)

Mime is hammering a sword (The strongest sword that I ever forged ...made for the insolent boy there). Siegfried arrives to ask for the sword. He is followed by his bear but he releases the rope (Today then goest thou free). Splinters fly about when Siegfried is testing the sword on the anvil (This paltry pin call'st thou a sword ?). Mime is wailing (This is my love's most grievous wage ! ...a Whimpering babe, brought I thee up). But Siegfried is unforgiving (All the beasts to me are dearer than you ...truly I love them far better than thee). When Siegfried asks about his mother, Mime responds (I am thy father and mother in one). Coerced, Mime confesses that his mother died giving birth (To my charge she gave over the child, I galdly sheltered thee). Mime only remembers that her name was Sieglinde and she has named him Siegfried. When Mime offers him the broken

sword of his father, Siegfried becomes enthusiastic (And now these fragments straight shalt thou forge me...my rightful sword !). Scene 2 - The Wanderer enters Mime's cave offering his wisdom, but Mime is reluctant (I know enough for myself ...so, wise one, wend now thy way). Exhibiting his wisdom, Wotan tells Mime where do the the Nibelungs, the Giants and the Gods live, and their story. In return, Mime tells the Wanderer the story of Siegfried and that of his broken sword called Nothung. From the Wanderer Mime finds out how the sword can be forged (He who the force of fear never felt Nothung shall he forge). Scene 3 - Siegfried returns anxious to see the sword forged. Since Siegfried is the fearless child, he is the one to forge the sword, and he starts working (Now I am as old as cave and wood, yet aught like this I have never saw !). When finished, the sword must be named (Nothung ! Nothung ! conquering sword ! ...Belloes blow ! Brighten the glow !). Mime is rubbing his hands with delight (Siegfried the dragon will slay ...and mine will be the ring and the hoard). When trying the sword, the anvil splits in two pieces, from top to bottom.

Act 2 (A deep forest. At night)

Alberich is watching Fafner's cave (What light glittereth there ? ...Cometh the dragon slayer ? ...neareth now Fafner's fate ?). The Wanderer appears but Alberich is reluctant to meet him (Hie onward, shameless thief ! ...Beware ! all thy willes know I full well). The Wanderer responds (...eternal runes of treaties ...by might it bends thy will to mine). Speaking about the ring and the golden horde, The Wanderer mentions Siegfried (...he stands or he falls, his lord is he ...help to me comes but from heroes). The Wanderer and Alberich wake Fafner (Here standeth a friend to warn thee of danger ...A valian hero comes). Scene 2 - Siegfried and Mime enter Fafner's cave (Here shall then this fear be taught me ?). Left alone, Siegfried recollects (No son of Mime am I ! That fills all my heart with joy). When Siegfried blows his silver hunting horn, Fafner appears (Drink I came for, now too I find food !). After a short fight, Siegfried thrusts his sword into Fafner's heart. Fafner has his last word (Fafner, the last of the giants, falls by the hand of a boy). Touched by the dragon's blood, Siegfried hears the Woodbird (Siegfried now owns all the Nibelung's hoard ...but could he discover the ring, it would make him the lord of the world !). Scene 3 - Both brothers, Alberich and Mime arrive at the same time (Accursed brother, I want thee not ! ...Tell me, thou rogue, wouldst rob my gold ?). As they quarell, Siegfried appears with the ring and the magic Tarnhelm, while the Woodbird sings (Let but Siegfried now hearken to Mime's treacherous tongue !). When Mime appears he speaks tenderly (Thee and all thy kind from my heart I ever hated ...the gold alone I worked to win ...now thy life must you yield me). Siegfried is intrigued but Mime kindly offers him a poisoned drink. Instead of drinking, Siegfried siezes him and Mime falls dead. Siegfried pushed the body of the dragon in front of the cave, to guard the hoard and sorrows (But I am so alone, have nor brother nor sister, my mother died, my father fell, never seen by their son). But the Woodbird is there to comfort him (I know for him a glorious bride, on rocky fastness she sleeps ...gladsome in grief, I sing of love). The bird flies in one direction and Siegfried follows.

Act 3 (A wild spot at the foot of a rocky mountain. At night, stormming / On the summit of a rocky mountain)

The Wanderer approaches Erda's cave (With song I rouse thee, arise and answer, thy slumbering wisdom must I awake). Erda tell him that he shoul consult Brunhilde, the goddess of wisdom but The Wanderer responds (Warfather punished the maid, he closed her eyes in sleep). Hearing such deed Erda is outraged (Hold me longer not here ! Sleep enfold now my wisdom !). But The Wanderer is insisting (...a boy has won the Nibelung's ring ...Brunnhild will the hero wake, then thy wisdom's child will achieve a deed to set free the world). Erda falls asleep again. Scene 2 - Siegfried approaches the cave. When asked, about his aim, Siegfried responds to The Wanderer (It was a singing woodbirdling who gave me goodly counsel). Examining him Siegfried wanders (Why wearest thou such a monstrous hat ? ...But an eye beneath it thou lackest !). The Wanderer responds (Long have I loved thy radiant race, though from my fury it shrank in dismay). Asked about the stonned maid The Wanderer responds pointing toward the rocky heights (...he who should wake her, he who should win her, mightless would make me forever). The Wanderer tries to stop him, but Siegfried breaks his spear in two and starts to acend the mountain. Scene 3 - Finding a statue dressed in armor, Siegfried removes the helmet and breastplate exclaiming seized with terror (That is no man ! ...How waken the maid, to see her eyelids unclosing ...a woman lieth asleep and now she has taught me to fear !). Thrilled with unknown feelings, Siegfried kisses her lips and Brunhilde opens her eyes (Sun, I hail thee ! Long was my sleep, I am awake, Tell me what hero wakens the maid). Brunhilde is glad to find her horse and weapons (I see there Grane, may sacred stted ...I see there the shield that sheltered heroes). Siegfried responds fairly (A glorious maid has vanquished my heart I came without shield and helm). Than he declares his love (I love thee: didst thou but love me ! Mine am I no

more: oh ! would thou wert mine ! ...Be mine ! Be mine ! Be mine !). Brunhilde responds (Thine ever will I be !). They embrace impetuously. Brunhilde exclaims (Farewell, Walhall's light giving world ! ...Now streams toward me Siegfried's star ...my wealth and world, my one and all). And Siegfried responds (Brunhilde lives, Brunhilde laughs ...she is forever, is for aye, my wealth and world, my one and all !).

Great moments and arias: The strongest sword that I ever forged ...made for the insolent boy there (Mime), Today then goest thou free (Siegfried), This paltry pin call'st thou a sword ? (Siegfried), This is my love's most grievous wage ! ...a Whimpering babe, brought I thee up (Mime), All the beasts to me are dearer than you ...truly I love them far better than thee (Siegfried), I am thy father and mother in one (Mime), To my charge she gave over the child, I galdly sheltered thee (Mime), And now these fragments straight shalt thou forge me...my rightful sword ! (Siegfried), I know enough for myself ...so, wise one, wend now thy way (Mime), He who the force of fear never felt Nothung shall he forge (The Wanderer), Now I am as old as cave and wood, yet aught like this I have never saw ! (Mime), Nothung ! Nothung ! conquering sword ! ...Belloes blow ! Brighten the glow ! (Siegfried), Siegfried the dragon will slay ...and mine will be the ring and the hoard (Mime). Act 2 - What light glittereth there ? ...Cometh the dragon slayer ? ...neareth now Fafner's fate ? (Alberich), Hie onward, shameless thief ! ...Beware ! all thy wiles know I full well (Alberich), ...eternal runes of treaties ...by might it bends thy will to mine (The Wanderer), ...he stands or he falls, his lord is he ...help to me comes but from heroes (The Wanderer), Here standeth a friend to warn thee of danger ...A valian hero comes (The Wanderer, Alberich), Here shall then this fear be taught me ? (Siegfried), No son of Mime am I ! That fills all my heart with joy (Siegfried), Drink I came for, now too I find food ! (Fafner), Fafner, the last of the giants, falls by the hand of a boy (Fafner), Siegfried now owns all the Nibelung's hoard ...but could he discover the ring, it would make him the lord of the world ! (Woodbird), Accursed brother, I want thee not ! ...Tell me, thou rogue, wouldst rob my gold ? (Mime, Alberich), Let but Siegfried now hearken to Mime's treacherous tongue ! (Woodbird), Thee an all thy kind from my heart I ever hated ...the gold alone I worked to win ...now thy life must you yield me (Mime), But I am so alone, have nor brother nor sister, my mother died, my father fell, never seen by their son (Siegfried), I know for him a glorious bride, on rocky fastness she sleeps ...gladsome in grief, I sing of love (Woodbird) Act 3 - With song I rouse thee, arise and answer, thy slumbering wisdom must I awake (The Wanderer), Warfather punished the maid, he closed her eyes in sleep (The Wanderer), Hold me longer not here ! Sleep enfold now my wisdom ! (Erda), ...a boy has won the Nibelung's ring ...Brunnhild will the hero wake, then thy wisdom's child will achieve a deed to set free the world (The Wanderer), It was a singing woodbirdling who gave me goodly counsel (Siegfried), Why wearest thou such a monstrous hat ? ...But an eye beneath it thou lackest ! (Siegfried), Long have I loved thy radiant race, though from my fury it shrank in dismay (The Wanderer), ...he who should wake her, he who should win her, mightless would make me forever (The Wanderer), That is no man ! ...How waken the maid, to see her eyelids unclosing ...a woman lieth asleep and now she has taught me to fear ! (Siegfried), Sun, I hail thee ! ...Long was my sleep, I am awake, Tell me what hero wakens the maid (Brunhilde), I see there Grane, may sacred stted ...I see there the shield that sheltered heroes (Brunhilde), A glorious maid has vanquished my heart I came without shield and helm (Siegfried), I love thee: didst thou but love me ! Mine am I no more: oh ! would thou wert mine ! ...Be mine ! Be mine ! Be mine ! (Siegfried), Thine ever will I be ! (Brunnhilde), Farewell, Walhall's light giving world ! ...Now streams toward me Siegfried's star ...my wealth and world, my one and all (Brunhilde), Brunhilde lives, Brunhilde laughs ...she is forever, is for aye, my wealth and world, my one and all ! (Siegfried)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1937 Metropolitan Opera (Lauritz Melchior - Siegfried, Kristen Flagstad - Brunhilde, Karl Laufkrotter - Mime, Friedrich Schorr - Wanderer, Emanuel List - Fafner), Vienna Symphony (Gunther Treptow - Siegfried, Gertrude Grob Prandl - Brunhilde, William Wernigk - Mime, Ferdinand Tranz - Wanderer, Herbert Alsen - Fafner), 1957 Royal Opera House (Wolfgang Windgassen - Siegfried, Brigit Nilsson - Brunhilde, Peter Klein - Mime, Hans Hotter - Wanderer, Friedrich Dalberg - Fafner), 1969 Berlin Philharmonic (Jess Thomas - Siegfried, Helga Dernesch- Brunhilde, Gerhard Stolze - Mime, Thomas Stewart - Wanderer, Karl Ridderbusch - Fafner), 1982 Staatskapelle Dresden (Rene Kollo - Siegfried, Jeannine Altmeyer - Brunhilde, Peter Schreier - Mime, Theo Adam - Wanderer, Matti Salminen - Fafner), 1988 Metropolitan Opera (Reiner Goldberg - Siegfried, Hildegard Behrens - Brunhilde, Heinz Zednik - Mime, James Morris - Wanderer, Kurt Moll - Fafner), 2009 Bayreuth Festival (Stephen Gould - Siegfried, Linda Watson - Brunhilde, Gerhart Siegel - Mime, Albert

Dohmen - Wanderer, Hans Peter Konig - Fafner), 2013 Berlin Opera (Stephen Gould - Siegfried, Violeta Urmana - Brunhilde, Chriestian Elsner - Mime, Tomasz Konieczny - Wanderer, Matti Salminen - Fafner)

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89. Gotterdammerung

Title: Twilight of the Gods (Gotterdammerung)

Composer: Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Born in Leipzig, his father Carl Friedrich Wagner was a clerk in the Leipzig police service while his mother Johanna Rosine Paez was of the daughter of a baker. One year later his mother remarried to Ludwig Geyer an actor and playwright. At the age of 7 he was enrolled at Pastor Wetzel's school at Possendorf, where he recieved piano instruction and by the age of 9 he joined the Dresdener Kreutzchor at the Kreuzeschule. His first lessons of harmony were taken during 1828-1831 with composer Christian Gottlieb Muller (1800-1863). In 1831, Wagner enrolled at the Leipzig University to become a member of the Saxon student fraternity. He took composition lessons with Thomaskantor (music director) and composer Theodor Weinling (1780-1842). In 1836 he married the actress Christine Wilhemine Planer (1809-1866) for a 30 years of marriage with no offspring. In 1842 Wagner was appointed the Royal Saxon Court Conductor. From 1849 to 1858, due to his revolutionary activity he was exiled in Switzerland, to Zurich, for a very prolific period of his compositions. In 1862 he divorced his wife and remarried Francesca Cosima Liszt with three children as fruit of their marriage, two girls and a son. In 1871 the family moved to Bayreuth where he built the Bayreuth Festspielhouse and founded the Bayreuther Festival. Operas: Die Hochzeit (The Wedding-1832), Die Feen (The Fairies-1834), Das Liebsverbot (The Ban of Love-1836), Die hohe Braut (The High-born Bride -1842), Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen (Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes - 1840), Der fliegende Hollander (The Flying Dutchman - 1841), Tannhauser und der Sangerkrieg auf dem Wartburg (Tannhauser and the Song Contest on the Wartburg - 1845), Lohengrin (Lohengrin - 1848), Das Rheingold (The Rhine Gold - 1854), Die Walkure (The Valkyrie - 1856), Tristan und Isolde (Tristan and Isolde - 1859), Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg (The mastersingers of Nuremberg - 1867), Siegfried (Siegfried - 1871), Gotterdammerung (Twilight of the Gods -1874), Parsifal (Parsifal - 1882).

Libretto: It is the fourth and the last musical drama in The Ring of the Nibelung cycle. The title is a German version of the Old Norse concept of Ragnarok, a series of events, battles and disasters ending with the submersion of the world in water and fire, followed by the reborn of a new and fertile world to be repopulated by two human survivors. According to the poem: "Brothers will fight and kill each other ...no man will have mercy on another.". For the subject for this libretto, Richard Wagner found inspiration in the Niebelungenlied, an epic poem from around 1200, where the hero named also Siegfried is beeing killed as a result of a quarrel between two queens. The revenge of Siegfried's wife results in the death of many Burgundians and the destruction of her kingdom and herself. In another version, Brunhilde herself kills Siegfried, diguised as Hagen, by the use of the Tarnhelm helmet. The first version, called The Saga of the Nibelungs, was produced in October 1848, revised and renamed in the following year as Siegfried's Death. Starting with 1852 he decided to expand the project with three more introductory dramas. The entirely text was privately published in 1853 in fifty copies, distributed to his friends. It was in 1856 when Richard Wagner changed the titles for the final form and started to work on the music. He began to work on the preliminary draft of Gotterdammerung on 2 October 1869 and the work was completed on 22 July 1872. On 28 April 1873 he moved into his new mansion in Bayreuth and started to prepare the Festival. The full score for Gotterdammerung was completed on 21 November 1874.

Performance history: The opera premiered as part of The Ring of the Nibelung on 17 August 1876 at the Bayreuth Festival. Austrian conductor Hand Richter was at the pupitre, tenor Georg Unger played Siegfried and soprano Amalie Materna was Brunhilde. Baritone Eugen Gura was distributed to sing Gunther and bass Gustav Siehr was Hagen. The opera premiered alone as follows: Vienna (1879), Prague (1887), New York (1888), Strasbourg (1894), Barcelona (1901), Riga (1902), Copenhagen (1905), Stockholm (1907), Buenos Aires (1910), Rio de Janeiro (1922), Helsinki (1935). As part of The Nibelung Ring, the opera premiered as follows: London

(1882), Wroclaw (1882), Amsterdam (1883), Brussels (1883), Basel (1883), Venice (1883), Budapest (1883), St. Petersburg (1889), Monte Carlo (1909), Lisbon (1909), Edinburgh (1910), Lvov (1911), Bucharest (1938), Sofia (1938). In the United States, the first performance at the Metropolitan Opera was staged on 25 January 1888, followed by the San Francisco Opera on 9 November 1935. In the 20th century, notable performances were recorded at: Bayreuth Festival (1942, 1951, 1952, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2009), Vienna Opera (1949, 1964), Teatro alla Scala (1950), RAI in Rome (1953), Norwegian Radio (1956), Royal Opera House (1957), Deutsche Oper Berlin (1969), Staatsoper Dresden (1983), Metropolitan Opera (1989), Bavarian State Opera (1991), Staatoper Stuttgart (2002), Gran Teatre del Liceu (2003), Valencia Opera (2010). Since 2004 and up to the end of the 2017/18 season, *Gotterdammerung* was performed in the world for 700 times, in 242 different productions, ranking 72 on Operabase list.

Roles: Siegfried (tenor), Brunhilde (soprano), Waltraute, a Valkyrie (mezzo soprano), Gunther, Gibichung's clan leader (baritone), Guttrune, his sister (soprano), Alberich (bass baritone), Hagen, Gunther's half brother (bass), First Norn (contralto), Second Norn (mezzo soprano), Third Norn (soprano), Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde, the Rhine maidens (soprano, mezzo, contralto), Chorus (The Vassals, women, nobles, the Gibichung clan)



Story: Finally, the chilvaric sequence of adventures in the land of the Nibelungs are coming to an end, since all the main characters are now dead. Acts of falsehood and betrayal, murder and vengeance, the gold had brought to the land of men. Brunhilde, the Valkyrie, follows her beloved human mate even in his death, the gold returns to where it belongs. The burning love ended in a pyre of fire. Will Brunhilde lead her hero to Walhall, will Wotan forgive her? We can only hope.

Prelude (On the Valkyrie's rock. At night)

Three tall women, the Norns, are spinning and singing (Be good or ill the song, winding the rope thus sing I ...Sing, o sister, wind the rope, knowest thou what will happen? ...the end of all godhood dawneth then forever and aye). Still spinning the rope of time, the Nones recall the past, present and future story of the Nibelungs. They vanish as Siegfried and Brunhilde appear. Brunhilde bids farewell to him (Beloved hero, forth must I send thee ...In wisdom weak, but strong in will, in love so rich, so poor in power ...Forget not the shield hidden maid). As parting gifts they exchange his ring and her stallion (Then through thy virtue alone will shine my deeds of valor! ...O were but Brunhilde thy spirit!).

Act 1 (The hall of the Gibichungs on the Rhine)

When asked what bride can enhance Gunther's fame on the Rhine, his brother Hagen responds that Brunhilde is the noblest in the world. As for his sister Guttrune, Hagen advocates (Siegfried, the Walsung son ...Strong and bold he grew in the woods, him would I Guttrun should wed). In order to achieve this goal, Hagen is trusting his magic potion (Let now but Siegfried come and taste of the magical draught). Soon after, Siegfried's horn is heard and he is welcomed as guest. Scene 2 - Siegfried makes his entrance (Far on the Rhine thy fame hath spread; now fight with me, or be my friend!). Asked about the gold hoard, Siegfried responds that he only took the helmet and a ring, now belonging to Brunhilde. When Guttrune serves him with the magic drink, Siegfried is instantly inflamed with passion (Ha, fairest maid! Veil thy look, the heart in my breast burns in its beams). When Gunther complains that he can not win Brunhilde as a mate, Siegfried is happy to oblige (...for thee I will win the bride, for thy man I am ...if Guttrun thou givest me to wife). With his request granted, Siegfried offers to

use the his magic helmet and win Brunhilde's heart disguised as Gunther. They both settle the deal (Blood brotherhood bound be by oath !). With them gone, Hagen is jubilating (His rightful bride he brings to the Rhine, with her he brings me the ring !). Scene 3 - Brunhilde receives the visit of her sister Waltraute (...may I then hope Wotan's thought is changed ?). But Waltraute responds (Walhall's heroes no more may meet Warfather ...holding the spear shaft's splinters ...so sits him, speaks no word ...if ever the river maidens win from her hand again the ring ...released were god and the world). Waltraute pleads for her to return the ring but Brunhilde is obstinate (The Rhine daughters ...I ...the ring ? Siegfried's love pledge ? Lost are thy senses ?). Waltraute rushes away in anger as Siegfried appears in Gunther's form (Thee seek I now for wife, wilt freely follow me ?). Brunhilde fights, but Siegfried is stronger and he secures the bride.

Act 2 (On the shore in front of Gibichung's hall)

Alberich is preparing Hagen, to be worthy of the ring (Hagen, my son ! Hate thou the happy ! ...Those whom with weapons of darkness we fight ...I and you ! The world will be ours). Siegfried is no longer a threat (Laughing in ardor of love burns his life aye away). Hagen swears to gain the ring. Scene 2 - Siegfried appears and asks for Gutrune and she welcomes him (Freia greeteth thee in name of woman's honor !). After hearing Siegfried's story Gutrune concludes (...call the men for the wedding ...our merriment fain they should share !).

Scene 3 - Hagen blows his horn calling for help (Ye Gibich vassals, gather ye here. Arm ye ! Arm ye ! Weapons ! Weapons !). As the vassals arrive Hagen explains his call (Arm yourself well and loiter not ! Welcome give to your lord: a wife Gunther has won). Blood must be poured on the altars of gods and men must drink to onor the marriage. As Brunhilde approaches the shore, all the vassals hail (Hail ! Be welcome ! Be welcome !). Scene 4 - Gunther presents his bride (By man never was won a nobler woman on Gibich's glorious race). Brunhilde is astonished when she spots Siegfried, near Gutrune (Siegfried ? here ? Gutrune ? Light fades from my eyes). Brunhilde perceives the ring on Siegfried's finger (Ha ! He it was who from me did rob the ring. Siegfried ! the traitor and thief ! ...He forced delight and love from me). Siegfried tries to defend his honour (Blood brotherhood have I plighted to Gunther, Nothung, my goodly sword guarded the holy vow). Acused to be a traitor, Siegfried prepares to defend his honor with the sword and Hagen responds with his spear. On the point of Hagen's spear Siegfried makes his oath (If weapon ever shall pierce me, thine be the point ...if this her tale be true, if to my friend I am false !). In exuberant merriment, Siegfried call for the weddings to continue and he draws Gutrune away into the hall. Scene 5 - Since Brunhilde sorrows about loosing all her wisdom to Sigefried, Hagen is happy to oblige (Give me thy trust, betrayed wife ! I will avenge thy wrong on him). Brunhilde gives him the secret, Siegfried is vulnerable only for a strike from his back. Brunhilde, Hagen and Gunther, together decide (So shall it be ! Perish Siegfried ! So shall he fall, the hero so famed !).

Act 3 (A woody and rocky valley on the Rhine)

The three Rhine maidens are singing (Rhine gold, shining gold, how bright was once thy luster). As Siegfried arives the maidens ask for his ring, but he is reluctant (On you if I waste my goods, belike then my wife will scold). But the maidens have evil fate to foresee (As thou slew'st the dragon shalt thou be slain ...and here, today ...if thou the ring wilt not yield). But Siegfried is not impressed, he is now a grown up man (Alike on land and water women's ways I now have learned; the man who defies their smiles they seek by threats to frighten). Scene 2 - Hagen appears, followed by Gunther and vassals (Here rest we now, make redy the meal ! ...The game from us he hunted). Siegfried responds (For wood game went I forth, but waterfowl only I found). Drinking their wine, asked if it is true that he can undestand the birds singing, Siegfried responds (Since women their songs have sung me, the birds have I clean forgot). He continues with the hole story of his boyhood. He finally recalls his first meeting with Brunhilde (...then like flames of fire enfolded me beauteous Brunhilde's arms !). At that moment two ravens circled over Siegfried and Hagen exclaimed, while thrusting his spear into Siegfired's back (Those raven's speech ! canst thou read it aright ? Vengeance is their decree !). Asked by his vasals what his deed was, Hagen responds (Falesehood's payment !). With his last breath Siegfried calls (Brunhilde ! Holiest bride ! Awake ! Lift up thine eyelids !). Scene 3 - Gutrune is waiting for her husband (Was that his horn ? ...Would but Siegfried return !). Instead, Hagen arrives with the bad news (Tis a boar's ill fated victim: Siegfried, thy husband, slain). Since Gutrune does not believe it, Hagen steps forward (Yes then ! It is I that did slay him ...Therefore I claim here this ring). Gunther does not agree, but Hagen kills him after a short fight. Brunhilde appears from the background decreting (Whom ye all have betrayed, for vengeance cometh his wife ...his manhood's bride am I). At Brunhilde's command, the men raise a huge funeral pyre of logs near the bank of the Rhine (...let the noblest hero's corpse in flames be consumed). Brunhilde draws the ring from

Siegfried's finger and meditates (Accursed charm ! Terrible ring ! My hand grasps thee, and gives thee away). Grane, her horse is brought to her and Brunhilde rides him into the fire (To follow thy master ...Siegfried ! Siegfried ! See ! Brunhild' greets thee in bliss). While they blaze in fire, the Rhine river overflows and the Rhine maidens swim forward. Hagen fights them for the ring, but Woglinde and Wellgunde draw him to the depths while Flosshilde recovers the ring joyously.

Great moments and arias: Prelude - Be good or ill the song, winding the rope thus sing I ...Sing, o sister, wind the rope, knowest thou what will happen ? ...the end of all godhood dawneth then forever and aye (Nons), Beloved hero, forth must I send thee ...In wisdom weak, but strong in will, in love so rich, so poor in power ...Forget not the shield hidden maid (Brunhilde), Then through thy virtue alone will shine my deeds of valor ! ...O were but Brunhilde thy spirit ! (Siegfried, Brunhilde), Act 1 -Siegfried, the Walsung son ...Strong and bold he grew in the woods, him would I Gutrun should wed (Hagen), Let now but Siegfried come an taste of the magical draught (Hagen), Far on the Rhine thy fame hath spread; now fight with me, or be my friend ! (Siegfried), Ha, fairest maid ! Veil thy look, the heart in my breast burns in its beams (Siegfried), ...for thee I will win the bride, for thy man I am ...if Gutrun thou givest me to wife (Siegfried), Blood brotherhood bound be by oath ! (Siegfried), His rightful bride he brings to the Rhine, with her he brings me the ring ! (Hagen), ...may I then hope Wotan's thought is changed ? (Brunhilde), Walhall's heroes no more may meet Warfather ...holding the spear shaft's splinters ...so sits him, speaks no word ...if ever the river maidens win from her hand again the ring ...released were god and the world (Waltraute), The Rhine daughters ...I ...the ring ? Siegfried's love pledge ? Lost are thy senses ? (Brunhilde), Thee seek I now for wife, wilt freely follow me ? (Siegfried) Act 2 - Hagen, my son ! Hate thou the happy ! ...Those whom with weapons of darkness we fight ...I and you ! The world will be ours (Alberich), Laughing in ardor of love burns his life aye away (Alberich), Freia greeteth thee in name of woman's honor ! (Gutrune), ...call the men for the wedding ...our merriment fain they should share ! (Gutrune), Ye Gibich vassals, gather ye here. Arm ye ! Arm ye ! Weapons ! Weapons ! (Hagen), Arm yourself well and loiter not ! Welcome give to your lord: a wife Gunther has won (Hagen), Hail ! Be welcome ! Be welcome ! (The Vassals), By man never was won a nobler woman on Gibich's glorious race (Gunther), Siegfried ? here ? Gutrune ? Light fades from my eyes (Brunhilde), Ha ! He it was who from me did rob the ring. Siegfried ! the traitor and thief ! ...He forced delight and love from me (Brunhilde), Blood brotherhood have I plighted to Gunther, Nothung, my goodly sword guarded the holy vow (Siegfried), If weapon ever shall pierce me, thine be the point ...if this her tale be true, if to my friend I am false ! (Siegfried), Give me thy trust, betrayed wife ! I will avenge thy wrong on him (Hagen), So shall it be ! Perish Siegfried ! So shall he fall, the hero so famed ! (Brunhilde, Hagen, Gunther) Act 3 - Rhine gold, shining gold, how bright was once thy luster (Rhine maidens), On you if I waste my goods, belike then my wife will scold (Siegfried), As thou slew'st the dragon shalt thou be slain ...and here, today ...if thou the ring wilt not yield (Rhine maidens), Alike on land and water women's ways I now have learned; the man who defies their smiles they seek by threats to frighten (Siegfried), Here rest we now, make redy the meal ! ...The game from us he hunted (Hagen), For wood game went I forth, but waterfowl only I found (Siegfried), Since women their songs have sung me, the birds have I clean forgot (Siegfried), ...then like flames of fire enfolded me beauteous Brunhilde's arms ! (Siegfried), Those raven's speech ! canst thou read it aright ? ...Vengeance is their decree ! (Hagen), Falesehood's payment ! (Hagen), Brunhilde ! Holiest bride ! Awake ! Lift up thine eyelids ! (Siegfried), Was that his horn ? ...Would but Siegfried return ! (Gutrune), Tis a boar's ill fated victim: Siegfried, thy husband, slain (Hagen), Yes then ! It is I that did slay him ...Therefore I claim here this ring (Hagen), Whom ye all have betrayed, for vengeance cometh his wife ...his manhood's bride am I (Brunhilde), ...let the noblest hero's corpse in flames be consumed (Brunhilde), Accursed charm ! Terrible ring ! My hand grasps thee, and gives thee away (Brunhilde), To follow thy master ...Siegfried ! Siegfried ! See ! Brunhild' greets thee in bliss (Brunhilde)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1942 Bayreuth Festival (Set Svenholm - Siegfried, Marta Fuchs - Brunhilde, Friedrich Dalberg - Hagen, Egmond Koch - Gunther), 1949 Vienna Opera (Gunther Treptow - Siegfried, Gertrude Grob Prandl - Brunhilde, Ludwig Weber - Hagen, Karl Kamann - Gunther), 1957 Royal Opera House (Wolfgang Windgassen - Siegfried, Brigit Nilson - Brunhilde, Kurt Bohme - Hagen, Hermann Uhde - Gunther), 1964 Vienna Opera (Wolfgang Windgassen - Siegfried, Brigit Nilsson - Brunhilde, Gottlob Frick - Hagen, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Gunther), 1969 Berlin Oper (Helge Brilioth - Siegfried, Helga Dernesch - Brunhilde, Karl Ridderbusch -

Hagen, Thomas Stewart - Gunther), 1983 Staatsoper Dresden (Rene Kollo - Siegfried, Jeannine Altmeyer - Brunhilde, Matti Salminen - Hagen, Hans Gunter Nocker- Gunther), 1989 Metropolitan Opera (Reiner Goldberg - Siegfried, Hildegard Behrens - Brunhilde, Matti Salminen - Hagen, Bernd Weikl - Gunther), 2002 Staatsoper Stuttgart (Albert Bonnema - Siegfried, Luana DeVol - Brunhilde, Roland Bracht - Hagen, Hernan Iturralde - Gunther), 2009 Bayreuth Festival (Stephen Gould - Siegfried, Linda Watson - Brunhilde, Hans Peter Konig - Hagen, Ralf Lukas - Gunther)

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90. Otello

Title: Otello

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). Born at Le Roncole (Parma, Italy), his father Carlo Giuseppe Verdi (1785-1867) was an innkeeper, while his mother Luigia Uttini (1787-1851) was a thread maker. Verdi received musical education playing the organ at the local church with the help of Pietro Baistrocchi, the local schoolmaster. At 12 years old, he began lessons with maestro di capella Ferdinando Provesi and Antonio Barezzi, the directors of the Societa Filarmonica, and by the age of 17 Verdi established himself as a leader of the Philharmonic. At 4 May 1836 Verdi was married to Margherita Barezzi, the daughter of his master and director. Margherita died only four years later, leaving a devastated Verdi to find his peace in his work. Antoni Barezzi also introduced him to Vincenzo Lavigna, maestro concertatore at La Scala in Milan who encouraged Verdi to compose and to take a subscription to La Scala. In 1835 Verdi became director of the Busseto school and in 1837 he staged his first opera at La Scala. In 1859 he married Giuseppina Strepponi (1815-1897) an operatic soprano and an old friend. In 1861 Verdi was elected to the Parliament of Piedmont Sardinia and in 1874 he was appointed member of the Italian Senate. In 1895 he planned and built a hospital at Villanova sull'Arda and his famous Casa di Riposo per Musicisti in Milan, a rest home for retired musicians. Operas: Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (1839), Un giorno di regno (1840), Nabucco (1842), I Lombardi alla prima crociata (1843), Ernani (1844), I due Foscari (1844), Giovanna d'Arco (1845), Alzira (1845), Attila (1856), Macbeth (1847), I masnadieri (1847), Jerusalem (1847), Il corsaro (1848), La battaglia di Legnano (1849), Luisa Miller (1849), Stiffelio (1850), Rigoletto (1851), Il trovatore (1853), La traviata (1853), Les vepres siciliennes (1855), Giovanna de Guzman (1855), Le trouvère (1856), Simon Boccanegra (1857), Aroldo (1857), La forza del destino (1862), Don Carlos (1867), Aida (1871), Otello (1887), Falstaff (1893). Ballet music for: Otello, Macbeth, Jerusalem, Don Carlo, Aida, Il trovatore, Il vespri siciliani. His work also includes sacred works, songs, instrumental, orchestral and chamber music.

Libretto: Arrigo Boito (1842-1918). Arrigo Boito was an Italian poet, journalist, novelist, librettist and composer who also published under the pseudonym of Tobia Gorrino. He is best known for his collaboration with Giuseppe Verdi with the libretti for the operas Simon Boccanegra (1881), Otello (1887) and Falstaff (1893) and for his complete opera Mefistofele (1875). He also produced libretti for other composers: Amleto (for Franco Faccio), Un tramonto (for Gaetano Coronaro), La falce (for Alfredo Catalani), La Gioconda (for Amilcare Ponchielli), Ero e Leandro (for Giovanni Bottesini), Basi e bote (for Riccardo Mangiagalli), Nerone (unfinished). Since 1889 he was director of the Parma Conservatory and in 1893 he received a honorary degree of doctor of music from the University of Cambridge. It was Verdi's publisher, Giulio Ricordi, who came with the idea of an opera based on Shakespeare's play. Arrigo Boito was interested in producing the libretto and the text was finished in 1879. After four complete revisions, in 1884 Verdi started to work on the musical score. On 1 November 1886, Verdi wrote to his librettist: " Dear Boito, It is finished ! All honour to us !". The complete score has been entrusted to Casa Ricordi to be produced at La Scala.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 5 February 1887 at Teatro alla Scala, in Milan, conducted by Franco Faccio. Tenor Francesco Tamagno was distributed as Otello, soprano Romilda Pantaleoni as Desdemona and baritone Victor Maurel as Iago. The premiere was a resounding success with 20 curtain calls. The sequence of first performances followed, all over the world: 1887 (Mexico City, Saint Petersburg, Budapest), 1888 (Prague, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Vienna, New York, Buenos Aires), 1889 (Havana, Lisbon, London), 1890

(Stockholm, Madrid), 1893 Warsaw, 1894 (Rio de Janeiro, Paris), 1898 Copenhagen, 1899 Zagreb, 1901 Melbourne, 1902 Brussels, 1921 Oslo, 1922 Sofia, 1923 Helsinki, 1925 Jerusalem, 1929 Tallin, 1937 Bucharest. The first performance at the Metropolitan Opera was staged on 11 January 1892, and for the first Parisian production Verdi had composed a short ballet as part of the ambassadors welcome in the 3rd act finale. In the 20th century, notable performances were recorded at: La Scala (1932, 1976, 1986, 2001), NBC Symphony (1947), Accademia di Santa Cecilia (1954), Rome Opera (1960), Vienna Opera (1961, 1977, 1987), London Opera (1968, 1978, 1992, 2018), Deutsche Oper Berlin (1973), Metropolitan Opera (1978, 1995), Chicago Opera (1991), Opera Bastille, Paris (1994), Salzburg Festival (2008). Up to the 2017/18 season, Otello was performed in the world for 970 times, in 288 different productions, ranking 24 on Operabase list.

Roles: Otello, a Moorish general (tenor), Desdemona, his wife (soprano), Iago, Otello's ensign (baritone), Emilia, Iago's wife (mezzo soprano), Cassio, Otello's captain (tenor), Roderigo, a gentleman of Venice (tenor), Lodovico, ambassador of the Venetian Republic (bass), Montano, former Governor of Cyprus (bass), A herald (bass), Chorus (soldiers, sailors, tawnfolks, children)



Story: The story is based on an actual incident that occurred in Venice in the year of 1508. Eager to be promoted, an ensign is very laborious in discrediting his rival with wine, scandal and a false accusation of flirting with Desdemona, the commander's wife. Although innocent, Desdemona is unwise to interfere with her husband's command, asking forgiveness for the captain. Blinded with jealousy, the Moorish general is easily fooled to believe that he was betrayed and he kills his wife in an access of wrath. Finding out the truth, his repentance comes too late and he stabs himself over his wife. Guns and swords are not the only enemies of a warrior.

Act 1 (A castle in Cyprus, the sea in the background)

The general's ship is spotted (Air and water shake together, shaken is the ocean floor !). Otello enters victorious (Ours and heaven's is the glory). Iago is promising to Roderigo (...the beautiful Desdemona ... I promise that the woman shall be yours ...I hate the Moor). Iago hates Otello since Cassio has been promoted captain, usurping his expected position. The soldiers are drinking and talking (The fire of rejoicing flames but a moment !). Iago persuades Cassio to drink honoring the marriage of Otello and Desdemona (Drink, drink, drink with me !). It does not take long before Cassio and Montano start fighting with their swords. Otello enters followed by torchbearers (How comes it, Cassio, you forgot your rank ?). Cassio is demoted and Iago is promoted in his place. Desdemona appears for a short love scene with Otello (The night is far advanced ...Come ...Venus is radiant !).

Act 2 (A large chamber in the castle)

Iago is comforting Cassio (Don't torment yourself ...soon you'll be restored ...proud captain with your golden hilt and decorated sword belt). He also offers his help (...Desdemona is now our general's general ...the way to your salvation ...go to it). A little later, Otello appears just in time to see Cassio parting from Desdemona. When asked, Iago is happy to be supportive (Beware, my lord, of jealousy ! It is a spiteful monster, livid, blind, with her own venom self poisoned). Desdemona approaches surrounded by women and children (...The April air the bride's golden hair doth in a shimmering aura of dew, sunlit, surround). When close, Desdemona opens Cassio's cause (For him I intercede, for him I plead. Forgive him). Since Otello is heated, Desdemona offers her handkerchief but he throws it to the ground. Emilia picks it up. Iago fights his wife for the

handkerchief (You resist in vain when I command ! ...Your wicked envy well I know). As Desdemona and Emilia depart, Otello confesses to Iago (...on her lying lips Cassio's ardent kisses ...farewell, shining battalions and victories ...bring me sure, the ocular proof !). Iago is quick to confess that he has seen Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's hand. Otello is outraged (O, blood, blood, blood ! ...In fury and dire compulsion shall thunder bolts soon rain).

Act 3 (A great hall of the castle)

The Venetian ambassador are coming to Cyprus. Desdemona asks again her husband to forgive Cassio and Otello turns mad (Hasten to your damnation, swear that you are chaste ...I am chaste ...The Eternal sees my innocence !). Left alone, Otello is sobering (Let her first confess her crime, then die ! Confession ! Confession !). Iago enters and asks Otello to hide after a colonnade to hear his conversation with Cassio. In their conversation Cassio mentions a fine embroidered handkerchief and shows it to Iago (Fair miracle, wrought by the needle, which caught rays of light). In his hide Otello is outraged (Betrayal, betrayal, betrayal, the proof, the terrifying proof thou displayest to the sun !). As the Venetian ambassador arrives he asks about Cassio. Desdemona hopes again that Cassio will be restored to favour, but Otello is resolute (Restrain your babbling tongue... Devil, be silent !). Cassio is called to report. Otello reads a document (The Duke has recalled me to Venice ...and as my successor in Cyprus elects he who stood by my standard - Cassio). Everyone on scene is singing revealing his thoughts regarding the news.

Act 4 (Desdemona's bedroom)

Helped by Emilia, Desdemona prepares to face her husband. She asks for her wedding nightgown (If I should die before you, lay me to rest in one of those veils). Feeling sad Desdemona sings o song about an abandoned maid (She wept as she sang on the lonely heath, the poor girl wept, O willow, willow, willow !). When Otello enters he threatens to kill her (That handkerchief which I gave you you gave to him ...I saw it in his hand). Desdemona is hopeless (It is not true ! ...I am not guilty !). Desdemona claims Cassio to speak on her behalf, but Otello is obvious (His mouth is stopped for ever ...What ! ..is he dead ? ...Dead). Scared, Desdemona is begging (...let me live longer ...Let me live tonight No ! ...one hour No ! ..an Instant No! ...But while I say a prayer ...It is too late !). As Otello is strangling Desdemona Emilia is knocking at the door (Open ! Open ! ...Cassio has killed Roderigo ! ...And Cassio ? ...Cassio lives !). For a moment Desdemona regains conscience (Unrighteous killed ...innocent I die), than she dies. As the door opens everyone enters the scene in horror. Emilia reveals that Iago has smuggled the handkerchief by force from her, and Montano confirms thar Roderigo as he died has revealed Iago's devilish machinations. Iago flees, while Otello is bidding farewell from Desdemona (Ah thou ...how pale thou art !... And weary, and mute, and beautiful, pious creature, born beneath an evil star). Producing a dagger from his robe Otello stabs himself and dies kissing her (...a kiss ...another kiss ...ah ! ...another kiss).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Air and water shake together, shaken is the ocean floor ! (Chorus), Ours and heaven's is the glory (Otello), ...the beautiful Desdemona ... I promise that the woman shall be yours ...I hate the Moor (Iago), The fire of rejoicing flames but a moment ! (Chorus), Drink, drink, drink with me ! (Iago and Chorus), How comes it, Cassio, you forgot your rank ? (Otello), The night is far advanced ...Come ...Venus is radiant ! (Desdemona, Otello) Act 2- Don't torment yourself ...soon you'll be restored ...proud captain with your golden hilt and decorated sword belt (Iago), ...Desdemona is now our general's general ...the way to your salvation ...go to it (Iago), Beware, my lord, of jealousy ! It is a spiteful monster, livid, blind, with her own venom self poisoned (Iago), ...The April air the bride's golden hair doth in a shimmering aura of dew, sunlit, surround (Chorus), For him I intercede, for him I plead. Forgive him (Desdemona), You resist in vain when I command ! ...Your wicked envy well I know (Iago, Emilia), ...on her lying lips Cassio's ardent kisses ...farewell, shining battalions and victories ...bring me sure, the ocular proof ! (Otello), O, blood, blood, blood ! ...In fury and dire compulsion shall thunder bolts soon rain (Otello) Act 3 - Hasten to your damnation, swear that you are chaste ...I am chaste ...The Eternal sees my inn ocence ! (Otello, Desdemona), Let her first confess her crime, then die ! Confession ! Confession ! (Otello), Fair miracle, wrought by the needle, which caught rays of light (Cassio), Betrayal, betrayal, betrayal, the proof, the terrifying proof thou displayest to the sun ! (Otello), Restrain your babbling tongue... Devil, be silent ! (Otello), The Duke has recalled me to Venice ...and as my successor in Cyprus elects he who stood by my standard - Cassio (Otello) Act 4 - If I should die before you, lay me to rest in one of those veils (Desdemona), She wept as she sang on the lonely heath, the poor girl wept, O

willow, willow, willow ! (Desdemona), That handkerchief which I gave you you gave to him ...I saw it in his hand (Otello), It is not true ! ...I am not guilty ! (Desdemona), His mouth is stopped for ever ...What ! ..is he dead ? ...Dead (Otello, Desdemona), ...let me live longer ...Let me live tonight No ! ...one hour No ! ..an Instant No! ...But while I say a prayer ...It is too late ! (Desdemona, Otello), Open ! Open ! ...Cassio has killed Roderigo ! ...And Cassio ? ...Cassio lives ! (Emilia, Otello), Unrighteous killed ...innocent I die (Desdemona), Ah thou ...how pale thou art !... And weary, and mute, and beautiful, pious creature, born beneath an evil star (Otello), ...a kiss ...another kiss ...ah ! ...another kiss (Otello)

Ballet: In 1894 Verdi composed for the French production a short ballet that precedes the entrance of Lodovico in the 3rd act. The ballet is comprised of seven dances (Ballabili) timed at six minutes. It is rarely performed. In 1961 there was a film production directed by Vakhtang Chabukiani, produced in the Soviet Union and released in Finland, known as The Ballet of Othello, starring Vakhtang Chabukiani, Vera Tsignadze and Zura Kikaleishvili. A complete ballet performance based on Shakespeare's play was choreographed in 1997 by Lar Lubovitch to an orchestral score composed by Elliot Goldenhal and produced by the American Ballet Theatre at the San Francisco Ballet.

Recordings: 1932 La Scalla, Milan (Nicola Fusati - Otello, Maria Carbone - Desdemona, Apollo Granforte - Iago), 1954 Academia Nazionale de Santa Cecilia (Mario Del Monaco - Otello, Renata Tebaldi - Desdemona, Aldo Protti - Iago), 1960 Rome Opera (Jon Vickers - Otello, Leonie Rysanek - Desdemona, Tito Gobbi - Iago), 1973 Deutsche Oper Berlin (Jon Vickers - Otello, Mirella Freni - Desdemona, Peter Glossop - Iago), 1976 La Scala, Milan (Placido Domingo - Otello, Mirella Freni - Desdemona, Piero Cappuccilli - Iago), 1978 Metropolitan Opera (Jon Vickers - Otello, Renata Scotto - Desdemona, Cornell MacNeil- Iago), 1991 Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Luciano Pavarotti - Otello, Kiri Te Kanawa - Desdemona, Leo Nucci - Iago), 1994 Opera Bastille, Paris (Placido Domingo - Otello, Cheryl Studer - Desdemona, Sergei Leiferkus - Iago), 2008 Salzburg Festival (Aleksandrs Antonenko - Otello, Marina Poplavskaya - Desdemona, Carlos Alavarez - Iago), 2018 Royal Opera House (Jonas Kaufmann - Otello, Marco Vratogna - Desdemona, Maria Agresta - Iago)

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91. The Sleeping Beauty

Title: The Sleeping Beauty (Spyashaya krasavitsa)

Composer: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Born in Votkinsk, in the Russian Empire to a family with a long line of military service, his father Ilya Petrovich Tchaikovsky has served as a lieutenant colonel in the Department of Mines, while his mother Alexandra Andreyevna had half French ancestry. Tchaikovsky began piano lessons at age five and at 10 he joined the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. In 1855 his father founded some private lessons with Rudolph Kunding. In 1861 Tchaikovsky attended Russian Musical Society and in 1862 he enrolled at the Conservatory where he studied music theory with Nikolai Zarembo and composition with Anton Rubinstein. He graduated in 1865 when he was offered a post of Professor of Music Theory at the Moscow Conservatory. Tchaikovsky lived as a bachelor for most of his life, except for a two months marriage with Antonina Miliukova, a former student. In 1884 Tsar Alexander III conferred upon him the Order of St. Vladimir, which included a title of hereditary nobility. In the 1889-90 season he served as director of the Russian Musical Society and since 1887 he also substituted as a conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1892 Pyotr Tchaikovsky was voted a member of the Academie des Beaux Arts in France and the following year he was awarded a honorary Doctor of Music degree at the University of Cambridge.

Operas: The Voyevoda (1868), Undina (1869), The Oprichnik (1872), Vakula the Smith (1874), Eugene Onegin (1878), The Maid of Orleans (1879), Mazepa (1883), Cherevichki (1885), The Enchantress (1877), The Queen of Spades (1890), Iolanta (1891). **Ballet:** Swan Lake (1876), The Sleeping Beauty (1889), The Nutcracker (1892). **Symphonies:** Winter Daydreams, Little Russian, Polish, No 4, No 5, Manfred, Pathetique, Symphony in E-flat. **Concertos:** Piano Concerto No 1 to No 3, Cello Concerto, Violin Concerto, Concert Fantazia. His work also includes instrumental music, orchestral suites, serenades, chamber music, choral music and

arrangements of the works of other composers.

Libretto: Ivan Vsevolozhsky (1835-1909). Ivan Vsevolozhsky was the Director of the Imperial Theatres in Russia from 1881 to 1898 and director of the Hermitage Museum from 1899 to his death. In 1886 he initiated the relocation of the Imperial Ballet and Opera from the Bolshoi Kamenny Theatre to the Mariinsky Theatre. Descendant of the Rurik Dynasty he graduated the University of Saint Petersburg and worked in the Department of International Affairs. He was also a playwright, an essayist, a librettist and a talented artist, capable of designing costumes for the theater. He wrote the libretto himself and ordered Pyotr Tchaikovsky with the musical score. The Sleeping Beauty ballet in 1890 have had the most expensive and elaborate scenery and costumes ever seen. The French Ballet Master Marius Petipa (1818-1910) was entrusted with the choreography. Ivan Vsevolozhsky has also produced more than 1087 drawings as costume sketches, for more than 25 ballet productions. The story is based on Charles Perrault's fairy tale *La Belle au bois dormant*, published in 1697, in the *Histoires au contes du temps passe*. In music, the story also inspired an opera by Michele Carafa (1825), a ballet in four acts by Eugene Scribe (1829), an opera by Engelbert Humperdink (1902) and a movement by Maurice Ravel (1910). Numerous film and television productions and literary works were also produced on the subject. A famous adaptation of Tchaikovsky's music that made epoch was the 1959 musical animated film production of Walt Disney produced by Buena Vista Distribution.

Performance history: The premiere took place at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg on 15 January 1890, conducted by Riccardo Drigo. The premiere was received by the press more favorable than the *Swan Lake*. The Moscow premiere followed on 17 January 1899 at the Imperial Bolshoi Theatre, with a choreography produced by Ballet Master Alexandr Gorsky and the orchestra conducted by Andrey Arends. Other notable productions were: 1896 at La Scala, Milan, 1921 at Alhambra Theatre in London produced by Sergei Diaghilev, 1937 Philadelphia, staged by Catherine Littlefield, 1946 at the Royal Opera House in London produced by Monica Mason and Christopher Newton, 1968 with the London Festival Ballet at the Royal Festival Hall, 1990 San Francisco choreographed by Helgi Tomasson, 1992 at the Theater Basel, reworked by Youri Vámos. Since 1990 the most relevant recordings of the music and ballet were produced by: Spectrum Classical (1991), Naxos (1991, 1994), Philips (1993, 1995), Royal Opera House (1996), Angel Records (1999), Decca (1999, 2000, 2009, 2012), Deutsche Grammophon (2000, 2015), Audiophile Records (2001), BBC Legends (2002), RCA Red Seal (2003), EMI Classics (2004, 2005, 2007, 2010), Kultur (2007, 2008), Belair Classiques (2007), Brilliant Classics (2010, 2014), Denon Records (2010), Classical Records (2010, 2018), Melodiya (2014), Warner Classics (2016), Chandos (2017), ICA Classics (2017), Berlin Classics (2018). The *Sleeping Beauty* has entered in the classical repertoire of all of the famous ballet companies. In the 20th century more than 150 different video recordings were produced for notable productions all over the world.

Roles: King Florestan XXIV, Queen, his wife, Princess Aurora, their daughter, Prince Desire (Florimund), Lilac Fairy, Carabosse, the wicked fairy, Bluebird, Princess Florine, Four suitors, Courtiers, Fairies, Fairy Tale Characters



Story: This is a story about love and marriage, in high standards (a fairy tale). After her presentation ball, a young Princess is "put to sleep", under the custody of an older and austere relative, until a proper match is found. Princess Aurora would rather sleep than work the spindle. On the other hand, a young Prince from the

neighbouring kingdom is not satisfied with the offer in marquises, comtesses, baronesses and duchesses of his kingdom. The Lilac Fairy is the one to match their destinies, for the well beeing of both their kingdoms.

Prologue - A baby is born in the royal family, Princess Aurora. All the guests and every of the six fairy are bringing gifts and virtues, except Carabosse, who states that the girl will prick her finger and fall asleep. To reverse the curse, Lilac Fairy states that the girl will only be woken by the kiss of a handsome prince.

Act 1 - It is the sixteenth birthday of Princess Aurora. Celebrations are underway. Aurora performs the Danse de demoiselle with her four suitors. A cloaked stranger (Carabosse in disguise) appears with a strange gift: a spindle. As she examines the object, Aurora pricks her finger and she soon collapses. Lilac Fairy casts a spell and the entire kingdom falls asleep together with the Princess.

Act 2 - Prince Desire is hunting. He is attending Danses des demoiselles nobles, but he does not set his eyes on any a pray. Unhappy, he is eventually left alone. He is met by the Lilac Fairy who shows him a vision with the prospect of a beautiful Princess and he shows immediate interest. The Lilac Fairy leads his steps to the sleeping kingdom where he finds the girl. Carabosse fights to defend her pray, but the Prince's will is stronger and he awakens Aurora with a kiss.

Act 3 - The royal wedding is underway. All the guests are presenting the wedding gifts: Silver, Gold, Diamond, Sapphire. In response, giving thanks to the guests the married couple respond with a grand Pas de Deux. All the courtiers and vassals, Turcs, Ethiopiens, Africains and Americains engage in dancing resulting a general Sarabanda. Helios himself, in the costume of King Louis XIV is closing the ball with a dance.

Great moments and arias: -

Ballet: Prologue - 1. Introduction 1b. March 2. Entrance of the fairies 2b. Dance 3. Pas de six (dance of all six fairies) 4. Entrance of Carabosse

Act 1 - 5. Introduction 5. The spinners 6. The Garland Waltz 7. Entrance of Aurora 8. Dance with the suitors 8b. Dance of the maidens and boys 9. Dance with the spindle 9b. The cast of the Lilac Fairy

Act 2 - 10. The royal hunt 11. Blind man's buff 12. Dance of the noble girls 13. Farandole popular dance 14. Entrance of the Lilac Fairy 15. The vision of Aurora 16-19. The chase 20. The weakening of Aurora

Act 3 - 21. March 22. The Procession of the Fairy Tales 23. Pas de quatre (Gold, Silver, Saphir, Diamant) 24. The Cats dance 25. Pas de deux (The bridal dance) 26-28 Dance de guests 29. Sarabanda 30. Apotheosis

Recordings: 1952 Paris Conservatoire Orchestra in Paris, 1955 Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in Minneapolis, 1959 Swiss Romande Orchestra in Geneva, 1977 National Philharmonic Orchestra in London, 1979 Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, 1979 BBC Symphony Orchestra in London, 1982 Leningrad Symphony Orchestra/Kirov Ballet in Leningrad, 1984 Elisabethan Trust Melbourne Orchestra in Melbourne, 1989 Royal Opera House Orchestra Covent Garden in London, 1989 Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra in Moscow, 1990 Boston Symphony Orchestra in Boston, 1991 Kosice State Philharmonic in Kosice, 1992 Kirov Theatre Orchestra in Saint Petersburg, 1999 National Philharmonic orchestra in Edinburgh, 2013 Russian State Symphony Orchestra in Moscow, 2015 Orchestra of the German Opera in Berlin

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92. Elektra

Title: Elektra

Composer: Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949). Born in Munich, his father Franz Strauss (1822-1905) was the principal horn player at the Court Opera in Munich and professor at the Royal School of Music, while his mother was Josephine Pschorr (1837-1910) the daughter of a wealthy brewer. He started his musical education with his father and he wrote his first song at the age of six. In 1872 he studied the violin with his uncle Benno

Walter at the Royal School of Music. In 1882 he entered Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich where he studied philosophy and art history. A year later he was assistant conductor to Hans von Bulow to learn the art of conducting. In 1885/86 he was temporary named conductor of the Meiningen Court Orchestra. In 1894 Richard Strauss married the operatic soprano Pauline Maria de Ahna (1863 - 1950) and the fruit of their marriage was a son, Franz Strauss (1897-1980). During his life he received the Croix de Chevalier del la Legion d'honneur (1907), Commandeur de L'Ordre de la Couronne of Belgium (1939) and four Honoray Doctorate (Heidelberg 1903, Oxford 1914, Vienna 1924, Munich 1949). Operas: Guntram (1893), Feuersnot (1901), Salome (1905), Elektra (1908), Der Rosenkavalier (1911), Ariadne auf Naxos (1912), Die Frau ohne Schatten (1919), Intermezzo (1924), Die ägyptische Helena (1928), Arabella (1932), Friedenstag (1936), Daphne (1937), Die Liebe der Danae (1940), Capriccio (1941). Ballet: Kythere (1900), Josephslegende (1914), Schlagobers (1922), Verklungene Feste (1941). His musical work includes 298 compositions including: chamber music, orchestral music and concerts, fanfare music, waltzes, lieds, vocal and choral music.

Libretto: Hugo Hofmann von Hofmannsthal (1874 - 1929). Hugo von Hofmannsthal was an Austrian poet, novelist, librettist, dramatist and essayist who wrote several librettos for Richard Strauss: Elektra, Der Rosenkavalier, Ariadne auf Naxos, Die Frau ohne Schatten, Die ägyptische Helena, Arabella. His work also includes: 9 plays, 14 essays, 6 volumes of poetry, 10 novels and narrations. In 1920 Hugo Hofmannsthal was among the founders of the Salzburg Festival. The libretto for this opera was adapted from his own drama named Elektra, published in 1903. In Greek mythology Elektra was the daughter of King Agamemnon and Queen Clytemnestra who, together with her brother Orestes, had killed her mother and step father, in revenge for the murder of their natural father. Two Greek tragedies, by Sophocles and Euripides have asserted her name to eternity. Elektra is also a central figure in plays produced by Aeschylus, Alfieri, Voltaire, and Eugene O'Neill. In Sophocle's version, Orestes returns secretly from exile and kills his mother and stepfather. In Euripide's version, Orestes kills his step father and together with Elektra they both kill their mother. There are other 15 other plays on the same subject including: Orestia (by Aeschylus), Orestes (by Euripides), Electra (by Quintus Tullius Cicero), Electra (by Benito Perez Galdos), Electra (by Jean Giraudoux), The Flies (by Jean Paul Sartre). Also there are four more operas on the subject: Electra (by Mikis Theodorakis), Mourning Becomes Electra (by David Levy), Idomeno (by Amadeus Mozart) and Electra (by Johann Christian Haefner).

Performance history: The opera was first performed on 25 January 1909 at the Konigliches Opernhaus in Dresden. Conductor Ernst von Schuch directed the performance with Annie Krull (Elektra), Karl Perron (Orestes) and Ernestine Schumann Heink (Clytemnestra) in distribution. The Austrian production soon followed, in the same year, at the Vienna Court Opera, with Anna von Midlenburg as Clytemnestra. The next year, in 1910, Elektra received its United Kingdom premiere at the Royal Opera House at the Covent Garden with Edyth Walker in the title role and Thomas Beecham conducting the orchestra. The first United States performance was given in German, on 29 October 1931 at the Academy of Music, with Margarete Matzenauer as Clytemnestra and Nelson Eddy as Orestes. The Metropolitan Opera premiere was staged on 3 December 1932 with Artur Bodanzky conducting and Gertrude Kappel in the title role. Up to present times there are more than 80 recordings of Elektra. most of them produced for notable live stage representations: 1944 Hamburgische Staatoper, 1947 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Chorus, 1949 New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 1950 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, 1952 Metropolitan Opera, 1957, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1995 Wiener Staatsoper, 1957, 1971 RAI Roma, 1960 Dresdner Oper, 1977 Bayerische Staatoper, 1977 London Royal Operahouse at Covent Garden, 1988 Tanglewood Festival in Boston, 1990 Grand Theatre de Geneve, 1995 Berliner Staatsoper, 2004 Orchester des Westdeutschen Rundfunks, 2006 Zurich Opera House, 2010 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, 2014 NorrlandsOperan. Since 2004 to the end of the stage 2017/2018, Elektra was performed in the world for 932 times, in 209 different productions, ranking 61 on Operabase list.

Roles: Elektra, Agamemnon's daughter (soprano), Chrysothemis, her sister (soprano), Clytemnestra, their mother (contralto, mezzo soprano), Orestes (baritone), Aegisthus, Clytemnestra's paramour (tenor), Confidante (soprano), Trainbearer (soprano), Young servant (tenor), Old servant (bass), Orestes's tutor (bass), Overseer (soprano), First maid (contralto), Second maid (soprano), Third maid (mezzo soprano), Fourth maid (soprano), Fifth maid (soprano), Silent roles (men and women of the household)



Story: Queen Clytemnestra has never forgiven her husband Agamemnon for the sacrifice of her youngest daughter, Iphigenia. The city of Troy came at a very high price. Now she has killed her husband, and remarried. Her three remaining children are hating her. She is tortured with nightmares, and so are her daughters, Elektra and Chrysothemis. The stains of blood can only be cleared with blood. News arrive that Orestes, the third child, has died while in exile. After a short talk with Elektra, the man bringing the news pretends to be Orestes himself. He kills both Clytemnestra and her husband. The triumphant joy is too much to stand for Elektra and she falls dead. The city of Troy has called it's revenge.

Act 1 (Mykene. The inner courtyard of the palace)

Servant maids are commenting their Master Elektra (Always when the sun is sinking she lies and groans ...It maddens her to know we watch her). Elektra refuses to wash. Water can not wash the everlasting stain of murder from the palace. Elektra appears mourning (Alone ! Woe ! Quite alone ! My father gone ...Agamemnon ! Agamemnon !). Chrysothemis, her sister, shares her grief (They have resolved a dreadful deed to do). Elektra is merciless (That pair of women ? ...First my own mother and next that other she, the craven, yea Aegisthus, the intrepid warrior). Chrysothemis is asking for pity (I cannot sit here, into darkness peering as you ...I seem to hear strange voices, and when I seek them, see I bare rooms staring at me). In a broad window appears Clytemnestra, covered in jewelry, leaning on her Confidante and she addresses her daughter (How she defies me with her neck outstretched ...Ye everlasting gods, why thus afflict me ?). Elektra responds calmly (The gods ! And art thou not thyself a goddess ? Art as they are !). Clytemnestra leaves the window to speak to her daughter (In the other ear, thou hast seen visions, foul demon shapes ...And give I not heed, and slaughter, slaughter, slaughter victims, more victims ?). When alone with Elektra she continues (Who so grows old must dream. There must be fitting rites for all things. Therefore am I thus laden with jewels, for in each one dwelleth most surely magic power). She asks Elektra's council against her dreams, her demons. Elektra responds with the simple cure (The axe the appointed victims bleeds, then dreamst thou no longer). Clytemnestra becomes angry (What rites are needed ? ...The victim's name, come, quickly tell !). Elektra mentions the name of her brother, Orestes and her mother mourns (I have forbidden that his name be spoken). The tension grows among the two women and Elektra concludes (That cry from out the bottom of some well for death, as for a friend that saves ...At last I see thee dying, then dreamst thou no more). The Confidante comes running from the palace with the news. Chrysothemis enters howling (Orestes is dead ! ...Orestes amid strangers dead !). Elektra mourns to her sister (Now must we, you and I arise, and seek out her, her and her husband, and slay them). Her sister is afraid and asks for help (Thou art so wise: help us to flee this house. Elektra, help us to freedom !). Orestes appears at the gate of the courtyard, but no one recognizes him. When asked he responds that he must see the Queen (We have been sent to her because we can witness that her son Orestes is dead indeed). After a short conversation with Elektra, Orestes reveals his true identity, and so do his attendants. He decides that he must fulfill the revenge (The gods, will not forsake me in my peril, I will do it !). Elektra is bursted with energy (Blessed is he who can his deed accomplish !). As Orestes enters the house to kill Aegisthus, the servants who hated Aegisthus (the Trojans) fight those who defend him (the Greeks). Elektra is encouraging her sister (We, we who accomplish, we are with the gods). Orestes stands in the great hall with all the crowd round him struggling to embrace him. Elektra makes a few steps of uncontrolled triumph (Say naught and dance on. All must come to my side ! Who happy is as we, can do but this: Say naught and dance on !) and she falls lifeless.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Always when the sun is sinking she lies and groans ...It maddens her to

know we watch her (The maids), Alone ! Woe ! Quite alone ! My father gone ...Agamemnon ! Agamemnon ! (Elektra), They have resolved a dreadful deed to do (Chrysothemis), That pair of women ? ...First my own mother and next that other she, the craven, yea Aegisthus, the intrepid warrior (Elektra), I cannot sit here, into darkness peering as you ...I seem to hear strange voices, and when I seek them, see I bare rooms staring at me (Chrysothemis), How she defies me with her neck outstretched ...Ye everlasting gods, why thus afflict me ? (Clytemnestra), The gods ! And art thou not thyself a goddess ? Art as they are ! (Elektra), In the other ear, thou hast seen visions, foul demon shapes ...And give I not heed, and slaughter, slaughter, slaughter victims, more victims ? (Clytemnestra), Who so grows old must dream. There must be fitting rites for all things. Therefore am I thus laden with jewels, for in each one dwelleth most surely magic power (Clytemnestra), The axe the appointed victims bleeds, then dreamst thou no longer (Elektra), What rites are needed ? ...The victim's name, come, quickly tell ! (Clytemnestra), I have forbidden that his name be spoken (Clytemnestra), That cry from out the bottom of some well for death, as for a friend that saves ...At last I see thee dying, then dreamst thou no more (Elektra), Orestes is dead ! ...Orestes amid strangers dead ! (Chrysothemis), Now must we, you and I arise, and seek out her, her and her husband, and slay them (Elektra), Thou art so wise: help us to flee this house. Elektra, help us to freedom ! (Chrysothemis), We have been sent to her because we can witness that her son Orestes is dead indeed (Orestes), The gods, will not forsake me in my peril, I will do it ! (Orestes), Blessed is he who can his deed accomplish ! (Elektra), We, we who accomplish, we are with the gods (Elektra), Say naught and dance on. All must come to my side ! Who happy is as we, can do but this: Say naught and dance on ! (Elektra)

Ballet: In 1963 the Royal Ballet of the Royal Opera House has produced a ballet version for Elektra with dancer Nadina Nerina in the leading role, Monica Mason as Clytemnestra and David Blair as Orestes. In 1967 the performance was revised by Sir Robert Helpmann for the Australian Ballet. The Krasnoyarsk State Theatre of Opera and Ballet has produced a ballet version for Elektra in a choreography composed by Sergey Bobrov with a libretto by Yuri Grigorovich and music adapted by Dmitry Kotov, based on Richard Strauss's opera and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's text. Six clowns are adding color to the atmosphere. Another complete ballet version was produced in 2017 by choreographer Antonio Ruz at the Ballet Nacional de Espana, with music produced by Pablo Caminero, Diego Losada and Moises Sanchez.

Recordings: 1944 Hamburgische Staatsoper (Erna Schluter - Elektra, Annelis Kupper - Chrysothemis, Gusta Hammer - Clytemnestra, Robert Hager - Orestes), 1947 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Chorus (Erna Schluter - Elektra, Ljuba Welitsch - Chrysothemis, Elisabeth Hongen - Clytemnestra, Paul Schoffer - Orestes), 1949 New York Philharmonic Orchestra (Astrid Varnay - Elektra, Irene Jessner - Chrysothemis, Elena Nikolaidi - Clytemnestra, Herbert Janssen - Orestes), 1950 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Anny Konetzni - Elektra, Daniza Ilitsch - Chrysothemis, Martha Modl - Clytemnestra, Hans Braun - Orestes), 1952 Metropolitan Opera, (Astrid Varnay - Elektra, Walburga Weger - Chrysothemis, Elisabeth Hongen - Clytemnestra, Paul Schoffer - Orestes), 1957 Wiener Staatsoper (Inge Borkh - Elektra, Lisa Della Cassa - Chrysothemis, Jean Madeira - Clytemnestra, Kurt Bohme - Orestes), 1971 RAI Roma (Brigit Nilsson - Elektra, Ingrid Bjorner - Chrysothemis, Vioerica Cortez - Clytemnestra, Thomas Stewart - Orestes), 1988 Tanglewood Festival in Boston (Hildegard Behrens - Elektra, Nadine Secunde - Chrysothemis, Christa Ludwig - Clytemnestra, Jorma Hynninen - Orestes), 2004 Orchester des Westdeutschen Rundfunks (Deborah Polaski - Elektra, Anne Schwanewilms - Chrysothemis, Felicity Palmer - Clytemnestra, Franz Grundheber - Orestes), 2014 NorrlandsOperan (Ingela Nrimberg - Elektra, Susanna Levonen - Chrysothemis, Ingrid Tobiasson - Clytemnestra, Thomas Lander - Orestes)

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93. Manon Lescaut

Title: Manon Lescaut

Composer: Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924). Born in Lucca, Italy, he was one of nine children of Michele Puccini and Albina Magi. His family, starting with his great-great grandfather has occupied the position of maestro di

capella for 124 years and has composed music for the church. As a boy he was a member of the choir and played the organ. In 1880 he has got a diploma from the Pacini School of Music in Lucca and continued his studies at the Milan Conservatory with a grant from Italian Queen Margherita. He was married in 1904 to Elvira Gemignani (1860-1930) and they had a son, Antonio. By 1900, Puccini has acquired land and had built a villa on the lake, at Torre del Lago, now known as Villa Museo Puccini. An annual Festival Puccini is held at Torre del Lago to honor his memory. In 1923 the Prime Minister Benito Mussolini has named him member in the Italian Senate (senatore a vita). Centro di studi Giacomo Puccini was founded in 1996 in Lucca to approach the study of Puccini's work. Operas: *Le Villi* (1884), *Edgar* (1889), *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904), *La Fanciulla del West* (1910), *La rondine* (1917), *Il Trittico* (1918), *Turandot* (1926). His other work includes sacred music, songs, vocal and choral music, chamber music and instrumental music.

Libretto: Ruggero Leoncavallo, Marco Praga, Giuseppe Giacosa, Domenico Oliva and Luigi Illica. The five librettists were employed by Giacomo Puccini to collaborate in producing the libretto. As a result, the authorship of the libretto was so confused that no one was credited on the title page of the original score. The author and the publisher, Giulio Ricordi, also contributed to the text. However, most of the contribution was completed by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa who completed the libretto in its original form. The story is based on a novel published in 1731 by the French novelist Antoine François Prevost (1697-1763). At its time, the novel was quite a scandal and it was banned due to moral issues, but despite this it became very popular and pirated. Before Puccini's version, there was a ballet produced in 1830 by Jean Louis Aumer and two operas composed by Daniel Auber (1856) and Jules Massenet (1884). Massenet's version was quite a success in its time and in 1974 a ballet version was produced with Massenet's music and a choreography by Kenneth MacMillan. Giulio Ricordi has argued that Massenet's *Manon* was already a successful opera, but Puccini had replied: "Why shouldn't there be two operas about *Manon* ?". His version stood the test of time and nowadays both operas share the fame. Other 7 film productions shared the same subject. The plot is around the sad love story of an unmarried couple, with adventures in France and Louisiana.

Performance history: The first performance of *Manon Lescaut* took place on 1 February 1893 at the Teatro Regio in Turin, conducted by Alessandro Pome. The first performance at La Scala in Milan followed on 7 February 1894. Soprano Cesira Ferrani was distributed as *Manon Lescaut* and tenor Giuseppe Cremonini was the Chevalier Renato des Grieux. Other important premieres were registered in: Buenos Aires (1893), Rio de Janeiro (1893), Saint Petersburg (1893), Madrid (1893), Hamburg (1893), Lisbon (1894), Budapest (1894), Prague (1894), London (1894), Montevideo (1894), Philadelphia (1894), Mexico City (1894), Warsaw (1895), Alexandria (1895), Santiago de Chile (1897), Athens (1898), Amsterdam (1898), Tunis (1903), Nice (1906). A famous performance was staged on 18 January 1907 at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, in the presence of the composer, with Enrico Caruso as Chevalier des Grieux. Other notable premieres followed: Antwerp (1907), Vienna (1908), Montreal (1912), Geneva (1913), Ljubljana (1924), Zagreb (1926), Göteborg (1926), Copenhagen (1930), Helsinki (1931). Since 1931, notable performances were recorded at: Teatro alla Scala in Milan (1931, 1957, 1998), RAI Rome (1953), Rome Opera (1954), Accademia di Santa Cecilia (1954), New Philharmonia Orchestra (1971), Metropolitan Opera (1980, 1993), Royal Opera House (1984), Brussels Philharmonic (1992), Orquestra de la Comunitat Valenciana (2014). Since the beginning of the year 2004 to the end of the stage 2017/2018, *Manon Lescaut* was performed in the world for 1293 times, in 258 different productions, ranking 42 on Operabase list.

Roles: *Manon Lescaut* (soprano), *Lescaut*, her brother (baritone), Chevalier Renato des Grieux, a student (tenor), Geronte di Revoir, treasurer (bass), Edmondo, a student (tenor), Innkeeper (bass), Singer (mezzo soprano), Dance Master (tenor), Lamplighter (tenor), Sergeant of the Royal Archers (bass), Naval Captain (bass), Hairdresser (silent), Chorus (singers, old beaux and abbess, girls, townsfolk, students, courtesans, archers, sailors)



Story: The story is another version of Traviata. Manon Lescaut is nothing else but a version of Violetta. A teenager without parental guidance, falls for the miracles of love and wealthy people. Her love for a young student is stronger than her love for welfare and jewels and she ends up her life in misery, destituted and abandoned. As always, the power of love is nothing but a curse.

Act 1 (A large square near the Paris Gate)

Edmondo is leading the students chorus singing for some girls (I'll devise a madrigal, artful and merry, and may my Muse excel in gallantry !). Des Grieux joins the students (Love ? Love ? Of that tragedy, or rather farce, I know nothing !). Monon Lesacaut appears in a fancy coach, guarded by her brother. Des Grieux instantly makes his move (Pardon my words, but I am drawn to you by some mysterious fascination). Manon is not insensitive to his words (So much pity lies in your words ! I want to remember you ! What is your name ?). Introducing made, she promises to return when darkness falls. The students are singing (Come, sweet maids ! Bring us good fortune !). From Lescaut, Geronte finds out that Manon is taking the veil and he invites the pair to join him for supper. While the student are playing cards, Geronte pays the inkeeper for a coach, to sent Lescaut and his sister back to Paris. Edmondo had heard the conversation and offers his assistance. Manon appears for a moment (You see ? I am true to my word). They soon exchange love words (I love you ! I love you ! Make this moment eternal and infinite ! ...I am but a poor girl ...my destiny is ruled by sorrow). As Edmondo appears with a coach, the two flee to Paris. As Geronte appears Edmondo comforts him (Excellency, look there ! She has slipped away with a student). Geronte is desperate, but Lescaut is there to contract him (Manon does not want poverty, Manon will gratefully accept a palace and quit her student ...and I, sir, will complete the family).

Act 2 (An elegant room in Geronte's house)

Manon is speeding her hairdresser (The curlin-tongs, quickly ! ...Now the powder ! ...An now a beuty-spot !). Her brother enters and rejoices (Ah, what a delightful ensemble ! ...Mine is the glory for saving you from the love of a student). Manon begs him for some news of Des Grieux (I left him without a word of farewell, without a kiss !). Lescaut responds that he keeps asking about her, and now he is mending a fortune, by gambling. Manon is admiring herself (...doesn't this gown suit me marvellously ? ...And my wig ?). A group of singers enter to present Geronte's last madrigal (...your lips are two blossoms ...you loosen the wander of your hair to the wind). As Manon is entrusted to the hands of the Dancing Master, Geronte mourns (You make me lovesick, you make me delirious !). Left alone for a moment, Manon meets Des Grieux at the door (You ? Ah, my supreme love ! Oh, heaven ! ...I can struggle no longer ! I am defeated !). Thier love scene is interrupted by Geronte who behaves like a gentleman (I know my duty, I must leave here ! O gallant chevalier, o charming young lady, au revoir). Soon after Lescaut appears (He has denounced you ! ...Guards and archers are on their way here !). Without hesitation the three of them prepare to run for exile, emptying all the jewellery from the drawers. Before they leave, Geronte appears with a sergeant and all the jewels are spilled on the floor (Nobody move !).

Intermezzo (The imprisonment) - Des Grieux is determined to follow her destiny (How I love her ! ...Wherever she may go ! ...Even to the ends of the earth !).

Act 3 (Le Havre. A square near the harbor)

Manon is escorted to a barrack together with other imprisoned. Lescaut has bribed an archer to let Des Grieux

Speak with Manon (In my shame you have not deserted me ? ...Desert you ? Never !). Nearby, the Lamplighter is singing during his watch (The Lord made me beautiful for husband ! The King laughed, then gave her jewels and gold and a husband who won her heart). Soon the guards are alerted with a gunshot and Des Grieux must withdraw. The townspeople are attracted to the square (What's happened ? What was it ? An abduction ? A revolt ? A woman escaping ?). While the girls are boarded the ship the people are curious (Who can she be ? ...She's really lovely ? ...Seduced ? Betrayed ? ...My lady is sad !). Lescaut is eager to offer information (For the pleasure of a day of an old gentleman ...What infamy ! Horrible ! Pitiful !). Desperate, Des Grieux begs to his knees the Captain of the ship to take him as a cabin boy (How I weep and implore you ...how I plead for pity ! ...Please take me !). And the Naval Captain it there to serve (Ah ! So you want to populate America, do you, young man ? Well then, so be it !).

Act 4 (A desert plain on the borders of New Orleans)

Manon and Des Grieux are ragged and destitute (I am finished ! Forgive me ! You are strong, I envy you; a woman weak, I give up ...Oh beloved ! Oh Manon !). They face a barren land, not a trace of water, there is no one to help. Manon is left alone, while Des Grieux pushes forward to find some help. Manon is desperate (...abandoned in this desolate land ! Oh, horror ! ...Oh, I do not want to die !). Des Grieux returns finding nothing of help. Manon is bidding farewell (...night is descending upon me ...I love you so much ...and I am dying ! ...kiss me !). Des Grieux responds (Without you ...I am lost ...I will follow you). With a last effort Manon fights him (I forbid it ! Farewell ...I'm cold ...My faults will be forgotten, but my love will never die). Manon dies and Des Grieux falls senseless over her body.

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - I'll devise a madrigal, artful and merry, and may my Muse excel in gallantry ! (Edmondo), Love ? Love ? Of that tragedy, or rather farce, I know nothing ! (Des Grieux), Pardon my words, but I am drawn to you by some mysterious fascination (Des Grieux), So much pity lies in your words ! I want to remember you ! What is your name ? (Manon), Come, sweet maids ! Bring us good fortune ! (Students), You see ? I am true to my word (Manon), I love you ! I love you ! Make this moment eternal and infinite ! ...I am but a poor girl ...my destiny is ruled by sorrow (Des Grieux, Manon), Excellency, look there ! She has slipped away with a student (Edmondo), Manon does not want poverty, Manon will gratefully accept a palace and quit her student ...and I, sir, will complete the family (Lescaut) Act 2 - The curlin-tongs, quickly ! ...Now the powder ! ...An now a beauty-spot ! (Manon), Ah, what a delightful ensemble ! ...Mine is the glory for saving you from the love of a student (Lescaut), I left him without a word of farewell, without a kiss ! (Manon), ...doesn't this gown suit me marvellously ? ...And my wig ? (Manon), ...your lips are two blossoms ...you loosen the wander of your hair to the wind (Singers), You make me lovesick, you make me delirious ! (Geronte), You ? Ah, my supreme love ! Oh, heaven ! ...I can struggle no longer ! I am defeated ! (Manon, Des Grieux), I know my duty, I must leave here ! O gallant chevalier, o charming young lady, au revoir (Geronte), He has denounced you ! ...Guards and archers are on their way here ! (Lescaut), Nobody move ! (Sergeant) Intermezzo - How I love her ! ...Wherever she may go ! ...Even to the ends of the earth ! (Des Grieux) Act 3 - In my shame you have not deserted me ? ...Desert you ? Never ! (Manon, Des Grieux), The Lord made me beautiful for husband ! The King laughed, then gave her jewels and gold and a husband who won her heart (Lamplighter), What's happened ? What was it ? An abduction ? A revolt ? A woman escaping ? (Townspeople), Who can she be ? ...She's really lovely ? ...Seduced ? Betrayed ? ...My lady is sad ! (Townspeople), For the pleasure of a day of an old gentleman ...What infamy ! Horrible ! Pitiful ! (Lescaut, People), How I weep and implore you ...how I plead for pity ! ...Please take me ! (Des Grieux), Ah ! So you want to populate America, do you, young man ? Well then, so be it ! (Naval Captain) Act 4 - I am finished ! Forgive me ! You are strong, I envy you; a woman weak, I give up ...Oh beloved ! Oh Manon ! (Manon, Des Grieux), ...abandoned in this desolate land ! Oh, horror ! ...Oh, I do not want to die ! (Manon), ...night is descending upon me ...I love you so much ...and I am dying ! ...kiss me ! (Manon), Without you ...I am lost ...I will follow you (Des Grieux), I forbid it ! Farewell ...I'm cold ...My faults will be forgotten, but my love will never die (Manon).

Ballet: The first ballet version of the story was produced by the Paris Opera Ballet in 1930. It was the last performance staged by the French danseur and choreographer Jean Louis Aumer (1774-1833). In 1974 a ballet version for Manon Lescaut was first performed by The Royal Ballet in London with a choreography produced by Kenneth MacMillan to music by Jules Massenet (1842-1912). It continues to be performed and recognized internationally. A recent performance of the Royal Ballet was staged in 2004, starring Ramara Rojo and Carlos

Acosta as Manon and Des Grieux. Another great performance was produced for the Royal Opera House, in March 2005, by Sylvie Guillem and Jonathan Cope.

Recordings: 1931 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Maria Zambboni - Manon Lescaut, Francesco Merli - Grioux, Enrico Molinari - Lescaut), 1954 Rome Opera (Licia Albanese - Manon Lescaut, Jussi Bjorling - Grioux, Robert Merrill - Lescaut), 1954 Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Renata Tebaldi - Manon Lescaut, Mario Del Monaco - Grioux, Mario Boriello - Lescaut), 1957 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Maria Callas - Manon Lescaut, Giuseppe Di Stefano - Grioux, Giulio Fioravanti - Lescaut), 1971 Ambrosian Opera (Monserrat Caballe - Manon Lescaut, Placido Domingo - Grioux, Vicente Sardinero - Lescaut), 1980 Metropolitan Opera (Renata Scotto - Manon Lescaut, Placido Domingo - Grioux, Pablo Elvira - Lescaut), 1993 Metropolitan Opera (Mirella Freni - Manon Lescaut, Luciano Pavarotti - Grioux, Dwayne Croft - Lescaut), 1998 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Maria Guleghina - Manon Lescaut, Jose Cura - Grioux, Lucio Gallo - Lescaut), 2014 Orchestra de la Comunitat Valenciana (Ana Maria Martinez - Manon Lescaut, Andrea Boccelli - Grioux, Javier Arrey - Lescaut)

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94. The Snow Maiden

Title: The Snow Maiden (Snegurochka-Vesennyya Shazka)

Composer: Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908). Born in Tokhvin, some 200 kilometers East of Saint Petersburg, his father Andrei Petrovich Rimsky-Korsakov (1784-1862), member of a Russian noble family, was the vice-governor of Novgorod in the Volhynian Governorate, while his mother Sofya Vasilievna Rimskaya-Korsakova (1802-1890) was the daughter of Vasily Fedorovich Skaryatin, a wealthy landlord, member of a noble family. He started his piano lessons at the age of six with some local teachers and by the age of 12 he was admitted at the School for Mathematical and Navigational Sciences in Saint Petersburg where he graduated six years later. He first studied musical composition with Feodor Kanille (Theodore Canille) and in 1861 he was introduced to Mily Alexeyevich Balakirev (1837-1910) a Russian composer, pianist and conductor, friend of Pyotr Tchaikovsky. Balakirev introduced him to Cesar Cui and Modest Mussorgsky and he soon became a member of the musical circle of Saint Petersburg. In 1871, Rimsky-Korsakov became Professor of Practical Composition at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. One year later he married Nadezhda Purgold (1848-1919) a pianist and composer and the fruit of their marriage were seven children, including the musicologist Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov (1878-1940). In 1873 the Navy Department named him as Inspector of Naval Bands and since 1884 he was a deputy in the Court Chapel in Saint Petersburg. Operas: The Maid of Pskov (1872), Mlada (1872), May Night (1878), The Snow Maiden (1880), Mlada (1889), Christmas Eve (1894), Sadko (1895), Mozart and Salieri (1897), The Noblewoman Vera Sheloga (1898), The Tsar's Bride (1898), The Tale of Tsar Saltan (1900), Servilia (1901), Kashchey the Immortal (1902), Pan Voyevoda (1903), The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh (1904), The Golden Cockerel (1907). His musical compositions also included: sacred and secular choral music, orchestral and band music, songs, folksong collections, chamber music and piano music. He also edited and completed some works of the composers: Alexander Borodin, Cesar Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Mikhail Glinka, Alexander Dargomyzhsky.

Libretto: The composer produced the libretto himself, using the text of the play Snegurochka, by Alexander Ostrovsky (1823-1886), first published in 1873. Alexander Ostrovsky was the greatest representative playwright of that period, authoring 47 original plays, such as: Poverty Is No Crime, The Bankrupt, Wolves and Sheep, Mad Money, Forest, The Last Sacrifice, The Dowry, The Snow Maiden, Poor Bride, The Heart is Not a Stone, Wise Man, The Thunderstorm. Alexander Ostrovsky has based his play on a fairy tale published by Alexander Afanasyev in 1867. In the fairy tale, Snegurochka, or the Snow child is a snow doll which came to life. As soon as she falls in love, her heart warms and she melts. In the late Russian Empire, Snegurochka was part of the Christmas celebrations, decorating the fir tree as a fairy tale character. Alexander Ostrovsky wrote the play at his estate in Shchelykovo, a country wanderland saturated with legends of heroic warriors and benevolent tsars. Alexander Ostrovsky's play premiered on 1873 at the Bolshoy Theatre in Moscow with music produced by Pyotr

Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 29 January 1882 at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, conducted by Eduard Napravnik. Bass Fyodor Stravinsky was Grandfather Frost and soprano Feodosiya Velinskaya was The Snow Maiden. Three years later, the opera premiered in Moscow at the Russian Private Opera under the patronage of Savva Mamontov (1841-1918) industrialist and director of the Moscow Yaroslavl railway. The Moscow premiere was conducted by Enrico Bevignani, starring Nadejda Salina as The Snow Maiden and Vera Gnucheva as The Spring Beauty. At the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow the opera premiered in 1893, conducted by Enrico Bevignani with Margarita Eykhenvald as The Snow Maiden. The best loved composition of Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov was rarely performed outside Russia. The best recordings in the 20th century were produced by: Bolshoy Theatre in Moscow (1943, 1956, 1987), Orchestre National de France in Paris (1955), Belgrade National Opera (1956), Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra (1976), Bulgarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (1985), Wexford Festival Orchestra (2008). Since the beginning of the year 2004 to the end of the stage 2017/2018, Snegurochka was performed in Russia for 139 times, in 52 different productions, ranking 21 in the statistics for Russia on Operabase list.

Roles: Snegurochka (soprano), Fairy Spring (mezzo soprano), King Winter (bass), Boblicka (mezzo soprano), Bobyl (tenor), Lel (contralto), Mizguir (baritone), Koupava (soprano), Tzar Berendey (tenor), Bermiate (bass), The Faun (spoken), Chorus (the birds, the flower spirits, boys and maidens, blind gusli players, boyars and wives, shepherds, people of Berendey)



Story: This story is about the fascinating wedding traditions of the people living in the Russian forests. Singing and dancing, crowned with flowers, are part of the celebrations where the songs are to be rewarded with a kiss. The Tzar is to judge if the hearts of the couple are fair, than he is to bless the union, if found so. Snegurochka, a girl raised in the woods, literally melts down when her time comes to proclame her vows in front of the Tzar. Another virgin is lost, another woman is arised.

Prologue (In winter, in the Red Mountains, near Tzar Berenedeyoff's capital)

Fairy Spring sings longing the sunny days (A land of cold, a land of winters long, a silent land). Speaking to the Birds, the Fairy Spring mourns (I coquetted with old Winter here ...I am his slave ...A girl was born to us and is in his power ...my cherished Snegurochka). Scene 2 - King Winter appears (Beneath the breath of the wind, I freeze of a sudden ...and hold it suspended ...How I enjoy it !). Fairy Spring tell him that the girl yearns for liberty, but King Winter replays (Well do I know the sun would gladly slay our darling child ...as long as she is pure and innocent, need never fear the burning sun !). Scene 3 - When asked, Snegurochka responds that she would be happy to live among men (Oh yes, oh yes, dear mother ! ...I will sing, I'll sing the gayest of the songs I know). The girl also admits that she has fallen for the song of a young shepard called Lel (Yes, I love best the songs of Lel, and day and night ...and feel my whole heart melt). When hearing the word melt, King Winter orders the Faun to defend the Snow Maiden from this Lel, by any means. After a short farewell the girl is freed by her mother to join the carnival of Spring (Come now, let winter cease ! Go swiftly).

Scene 4 - As they are celebrating the Carnival of Spring, Bobyl finds Snegurochka and invites her (...come step into my palace ...and I, who am not proud, will smile on you).

Act 1 (A suburb of Berendey with Bobyl's house and Koupava's house facing each other)

Lel agrees to sing for Snegurochka asking for a kiss, but he only gets a flower (The sun shines radiantly ...Ah, how sweet it is to live !). Scene 2 - Snegurochka sings alone (The other girls know how to charm him ...I stay alone here and I weep). Scene 3 - Koupava asks Snegurochka to share her happiness (A handsome youth with long and curly hair ...Before the tzar he'd crown my brow with flowers and make me his wife). Scene 4 - Mizguir must pay ransom to the young maidens if he wants to marry Koupava (Here, take this gold, you handsome maidens ...Accept them, pray !). Snegurochka is invited to the dance. Scene 5 - Mizguir refuses to invite Lel to the dance, instead he declares love to Snegurochka. Koupava is burning in tears (Oh, Snegurochka, cruel one. Return to me my well-beloved !). Scene 6 - Mizguir repeats his declaration before all the people. The people counsel Koupava to ask for justice from the tzar (His cowardly betrayal insults us all ! O shame we all must suffer !).

Act 2 (An open anteroom in the palace of Berendey)

The chorus of blind beggars is singing (O tzar of ours, thy grandeur and thy glory ! ...Glory, glory through the ages, to the wise tzar). Scene 2 - A page claims that a girl in tears asks for an audience. Scene 3 - Koupava states her case (O tzar, my father ! ...Treacherous Snegurochka ...Than he rushed up, forgets me, mocks me and insults me, too). Scene 4 - Two haralds are sent to bring Mizguir to the tzar. Scene 5 - In front of the Imperial Assembly Mizguir admits his fault. The Tzar administers justice (Therefore do I, his judge, condemn Mizguir to exile from his native land, let him live with the wolves). Scene 6 - Snegurochka is brought in front of the tzar. The Tzar is impressed by her beauty (My heart rejoicing worships all the wondrous gifts you give to us ...So choose the bridegroom whom you may desire !). But Snegurochka's candid heart has not known love yet. The Wives of the boyards propose a contest of singing and dancing where Mizguir or Lel should win the virgin's heart. The Tzar agrees to the merriment of the people (Honor and glory be thine ...O father of thy people).

Act 3 (A vast glade in the forest)

Young boys and maidens are singing and dancing wearing crowns of flowers (For whom is the crown ? Happy the youth who wears it !). Bobyl is singing and dancing the beaver dance (A beaver bathes in the water and ducks about). The Tzar welcomes the dance of the buffons. Lel also sings his song (The maidens they shall gather strawberries, and the young men shall follow them). When the Tzar asks him to pick out a girl, Lel passes Snegurochka and chooses Koupava to kiss him before the tzar, as a reward for his song. Scene 2 - Snegurochka is sorrowing (My handsome Lel, listen to me ! The daughter of the snow will love you too, some day !). Mizguir appears with love words and jewels, but Snegurochka is rejecting him (Yet it is not for sale, my heart it only craves a little bit of love, but not your love, Mizguir). Mizguir tries to master her, but The Faun appears to save her. Scene 4 - Koupava is thanking Lel (...for you have saved me ...you have restored to me my pride in life ...your kiss made me the equal of the happiest !). Watching them, Snegurochka makes a desperate call for her mother (I weep and I implore you ...I want to love ! ...mother, O Fairy Spring !).

Act 4 (The valley of the god Yarilo, near the lake)

While Snegurochka is crying, the Fairy Spring rises from the lake surrounded by Flower Spirits to grant her the gift of love. The Flower Spirits are singing (Flower of dreams, black poppy bloom, you magic flower, lull her and enchant her thoughts !) Scene 2 - When Mizguir appears, Snegurochka welcomes him (My heart knows fear no longer ...Dear one, I am your own ! ...Take me in your arms and carry me away !). The Tzar appears followed by his suit and his people. Scene 3 - The boys are dancing with the maidens (We have sown the millet in the plain ...We will give you a young maiden). The Tzar is blessing the couples (May your marriage be blessed ! Live lovingly, live happily. And in abundance). Mizguir leads Snegurochka before the Tzar to proclaim her commitment (The love I feel, and given him my life ! ...What fire penetrates all my being ! ...Oh love of mine, I am all yours). A sun ray pierces the clouds and Snegurochka sinks to earth. All present are astounded (...as the snow melts in the sun's clear fire ...she has perished - Snegurochka is no more ...Glory to thee, god Yarilo !).

Great moments and arias: Prologue - A land of cold, a land of winters long, a silent land (Fairy Spring), I coquetted with old Winter here ...I am his slave ...A girl was born to us and is in his power ...my cherished Snegurochka (Fairy Spring), Beneath the breath of the wind, I freeze of a sudden ...and hold it suspended ...How I enjoy it ! (King Winter), Well do I know the sun would gladly slay our darling child ...as long as she is pure and innocent, need never fear the burning sun ! (King Frost), Oh yes, oh yes, dear mother ! ...I will sing, I'll sing the gayest of the songs I know (Snegurochka), Yes, I love best the songs of Lel, and day and night ...and feel my whole heart melt (Snegurochka), Come now, let winter cease ! Go swiftly (Fairy Spring), ...come step into my palace ...and I, who am not proud, will smile on you (Bobyl). Act 1 - The sun shines radiantly

...Ah, how sweet it is to live ! (Lel), The other girls know how to charm him ...I stay alone here and I weep (Snegorotchka), A handsome youth with long and curly hair ...Before the tzar he'd crown my brow with flowers and make me his wife (Koupava), Here, take this gold, you handsome maidens ...Accept them, pray ! (Mizguir), Oh, Snegurochka, cruel one. Return to me my well-beloved ! (Koupava), His cowardly betrayal insults us all ! O shame we all must suffer ! (Chorus) Act 2 - O tzar of ours, thy grandeur and thy glory ! ...Glory, glory through the ages, to the wise tzar (Chorus), O tzar, my father ! ...Treacherous Snegurochka ...Than he rushed up, forgets me, mocks me and insults me, too (Koupava), Therefore do I, his judge, condemn Mizguir to exile from his native land, let him live with the wolves (The Tzar), My heart rejoicing worships all the wondrous gifts you give to us ...So choose the bridegroom whom you may desire ! (The Tzar), Honor and glory be thine ...O father of thy people (Chorus) Act 3 - For whom is the crown ? Happy the youth who wears it ! (Chorus), A beaver bathes in the water and ducks about (Boby), The maidens they shall gather strawberries, and the young men shall follow them (Lel), My handsome Lel, listen to me ! The daughter of the snow will love you too, some day ! (Snegurochka), Yet it is not for sale, my heart it only craves a little bit of love, but not your love, Mizguir (Snegurochka), ...for you have saved me ...you have restored to me my pride in life ...your kiss made me the equal of the happiest ! (Koupava), I weep and I implore you ...I want to love ! ...mother, O Fairy Spring ! (Snegurochka) Act 4 - Flower of dreams, black poppy bloom, you magic flower, lull her and enchant her thoughts ! (Flower Spirits), My heart knows fear no longer ...Dear one, I am your own ! ...Take me in your arms and carry me away ! (Snegurochka). We have sown the millet in the plain ...We will give you a young maiden (Chorus), May your marriage be blessed ! Live lovingly, live happily. And in abundance (The Tzar), The love I feel, and given him my life ! ...What fire penetrates all my being ! ...Oh love of mine, I am all yours (Snegurochka), ...as the snow melts in the sun's clear fire ...she has perished - Snegurochka is no more ...Glory to thee, god Yarilo ! (Chorus)

Ballet: In 2006, The Russian National Ballet Foundation has produced a version of The Snow Maiden with music composed by Vladimir Sokolov and choreography directed by Ivan Fadeyev of the Novaya Opera Theatre. In June 2015, a ballet in 2 acts was produced by choreographer Mark Peretokin, with music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and a libretto according to the play of Alexander Ostrovsky, at the Krasnoyarsk State Opera.

Recordings: 1943 Bolshoi Theatre (Nadezhda Obukhova - Snow Maiden, Sergei Lemeshev - Tsar Berendey, Irina Maslenikova - Lel, Sofia Panova - Kupava), 1955 Orchestre National de France (Janine Micheau - Snow Maiden, Jean Girardeau - Tsar Berendey, Rita Gor - Lel, Genevieve Moizan - Kupava), 1956 Belgrade National Opera (Sofiya Jankovic - Snow Maiden, Stephan Andrashevich - Tsar Berendey, Mil Miladinovich - Lel, Valeria Heybalova - Kupava), 1956 Bolshoi Theatre (Vera Firsova - Snow Maiden, Ivan Kozlovsky - Tsar Berendey, Larissa Avdeyeva - Lel, Galina Vishnevskaya - Kupava), 1976 Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra (Valentina Sokolik - Snow Maiden, Anton Grigoriev - Tsar Berendey, Irina Arkipova - Lel, Lidiya Zakharenko - Kupava), 1985 Bulgarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Elena Zemenkova - Snow Maiden, Avram Andreev - Tsar Berendey, Stefka Minerva - Lel, Stefka Evstatieva - Kupava), 1987 Bolshoi Theatre (Irina Zhurina - Snow Maiden, Igor Morozov - Mizguir, Tatyana Erastova - Lel, Lyudmila Sergienko - Kupava), 2008 Wexford Festival Orchestra (Irina Samolyova - Snow Maiden, Bryan Hymel - Tsar Berendey, Katerina Jalovcova - Lel, Lina Tetrushvili - Kupava)

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95. The Pearl Fishers

Title: The Pearl Fishers (Les pecheurs de perles)

Composer: Georges Bizet (1838-1875). Born in Paris, his father Adolphe Bizet was a musician and a singing teacher, while his mother Aimee Delsarte was an accomplished pianist. After the first lessons with his mother, Bizet was admitted to the Conservatoire in Paris at the age of nine, to study with Pierre Zimmerman and his son in law Charles Gounod and to make friends with Camille Saint-Saens. His piano teacher was Antoine Francois Marmontel and his composition teacher was Fromental Halevy. In 1857 Bizet was awarded with the Prix de

Rome and received a financial grant for five years, to study at the French Academie in Rome. He was married in 1869, to Genevieve Haley, the daughter of the composer Jaques-Fromental Halevy and two years later they had a son. Without an employment he worked as a piano teacher, accompanist musician, transcriber and arranger and as a composer under contract with Opera directors such as Leon Carvahlo of the Theatre Lyrique and later Vaudeville Theatre. In the morning of 3 March 1875 he was appointed as Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and in the evening his opera Carmen premiered at the Opera Comique. Operas: *Le docteur Miracle* (1856), *Don Procopio* (1859), *Ivan IV* (1865), *Les Pecheurs de perles* (1863), *La Jolie fille de Perth* (1866), *Djamileh* (1871), *Carmen* (1875). His work also included orchestral works, choral works, songs, works for piano, transcriptions and completions of other's work.

Libretto: Eugene Cormon (1810-1903) and Michel Carre (1821-1872). Eugen Cormon was a French dramatist and librettist and administrator of the Theatre du Vaudeville. He wrote several libretti, all of them in collaboration with several other librettists: *Les dragons de Villars*, *Gastibelza*, *Les pecheurs de Catane*, *Les pecheurs de perles*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Les Bleuets*, *Le Chateau Trompette*, *Eine Nacht in Venedig*. As a dramatist he produced several dramas: *Philippe II Roi d'Espagne*, *Les Crochets du pere Martin*, *Les Deux Orphelines*, *Une Cause celebre*. Michel Carre was a prolific French librettist, the majority of them completed in tandem with Jules Barbier. His best known libretti were produced for: Charles Gounod (*Faust*, *Romeo et Juliet*, *Le medecin malgre lui*, *Philemon et Baucis*, *La colombe*, *La reine de Saba*, *Mireille*, *Polyeucte*), Jaques Offenbach (*The Tales of Hoffman*, *La rose de Saint Flour*, *Le mariage aux lanterns*), Camille Saint Sanes (*Le timbre d'argent*), Ambroise Thomas (*Hamlet*, *Mignon*, *Psyche*), Amadeus Mozart (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Victor Masse (*Galathee*, *Les noces de Jeannette*, *Miss Fauvette*, *Les saisons*, *Paul et Virginei*, *Fior d'Alizia*), Georges Bizet (*Les pecheurs de perles*). In April 1862, as a recent Prix de Rome winner, Georges Bizet was approached by Leon Carvahlo, manager of the Theatre Lyrique and offered the libretto for the opera. Bizet accepted the commission and produced the score in a couple of months.

Performance history: The opera premiered on 30 September 1863 at the Theatre Lyrique in Paris, and was given 18 performances. Adolphe Deloffre conducted the orchestra, with soprano Leontine de Maesen as Leila, tenor Francois Morini as Nadir and baritone Jean Vital Jammes (Ismael) as Zurga. The first night audience received the work well. Hector Berlioz in his review of the work in *Journal des Debats* wrote: "The score of *Les pecheurs de perles* does Mr. Bizet the greatest honour". The opera was not performed again until 20 March 1886 when it was staged at Teatro alla Scala in Milan. Afterwards, the opera received regular stagings in European cities. The British premiere followed on 22 April 1887 at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden. Next year the opera returned to Paris, on 20 April 1889 at the Theatre de la Gaite, with Emma Calve and Jean Alexandre Talazac in the distribution. At Opera Comique the first performance was staged on 24 April 1893. The American premiere was on 25 August 1893 in Philadelphia, followed by the Metropolitan Opera premiere on 11 January 1896. Twenty years later, a great performance at the Metropolitan Opera included Enrico Caruso, Frieda Hempel and Giuseppe De Luca in the cast. In Germany, the opera was revived at Nuremberg and Berlin State Opera, in 1930. In Vienna the opera was first performed in 1994 at Vienna Volksoper. In 2008 the opera received its first performance in Sri Lanka, the land of its setting. Great recordings of the opera were produced in: Berlin (1950), Moscow (1950), Paris (1951, 1954, 1959, 1961, 1977), Naples (1959), Toulouse (1989), Rome (1991), Venice (2004), London (2008). Since the beginning of the year 2004 to the end of the stage 2017/2018, *Les pecheurs de perles* was performed in France for 55 times, in 22 different productions, ranking 54 in the statistics for France on Operabase list.

Roles: Zurga, head fisherman (baritone), Nadir, a fisherman (tenor), Leila, priestess of Brahma (soprano), Nourabad, high priest of Brahma (bass), Chorus (pearlfishers, virgins, priests and priestesses of Brahma)



Story: In ancient times, two men, good old friends, fall in love for a woman who has sworn to chastity. As she responds to the love of the youngest one, the sacrilege is discovered and they are both sentenced to death on a pyre. The older lover finds out the the girl has once saved his life. In debt to both of them, he fakes the execution and saves both of their lives, although he feels abandoned and betrayed. This time, love has conquered.

Act 1 (A wild beach on the island of Ceylon)

The Pearl Fishers are singing (On the burning sand where the blue sea sleeps ...we find the yellow pearl). Zurga claims that it is time to choose a leader and he gets to be elected (Yes, yes, be our leader, we accept your rule). Nadir appears and asks to join them (...let my happiness revive among you, comrades !). Zurga accepts and they both recollect their memory of a beautiful woman from the temple of Candi (Yes, it is she, it is she the goddess, more charming and more beautiful). But the woman can not stand between them (Let us swear to remain friends ...close as brothers we shall be !). An unknown woman appears in a canoe, welcomed by the fishers (Be welcome unknown friend, please accept our gifts). Zurga asks the woman, Leila, to keep her veil and live friendless among them, without a husband or a lover (If you remain loyal and obey my law, we shall keep for you the finest pearl). Leila responds (I shall stay, my friends, my life is yours !). Left alone, Nadir is dreaming of Leila (Under the light of the stars I can almost see her slightly opening her long veils). On a rock overhanging the sea, Leila sings (O hole Brahma ...O fair Siva ! ...my eyes, yes, my eyes follow you).

Act 2 (The ruins of an Indian temple)

In the evening Leila prepares for the night. Nourabad is encouraging. She remembers from her childhood (...a man, a fugitive, begging for my help, took refuge in our humble dwelling ...I have saved his life and kept my promise). Left alone, Leila is thinking of Nadir and soon hears him singing (My beloved is locked away in a palace of gold and azure). Leila begs him to leave, but Nadir wouldn't listen (...the might of love is fatal, how could I have fled from the beautiful eyes I loved ?). Nadir only leaves after she promises to see him the next day. A storm approaches and some shots are heard since Nourabad is in pursuit of Nadir. The fishers are singing (O dreadful night, night of horror ...Brahma, have mercy, have mercy !). The guards return with Nadir and threaten the two culprits (No mercy for them, no ! Death, death, death ! No mercy for them !). Zurga appears and when Nourabad is tearing Leila's veil Zurga recognizes her (It was she ! O fury ! ...Woe unto them, woe ! ...Neither pity, nor mercy ! They must both die !). Leila and Nadir make their last appeal (Brahma, holy Brahma, let your hand protect us !).

Act 3 (An Indian tent, closed by drapes)

In front of his tent Zurga sorrows (O Nadir, tender friend of my youth ...O remorse, O regrets ! ...Ah ! what have I done !). When Leila is brought before him, she swears that they were innocent (...by your hands I am kissing ! ...For myself, I have no fear, Zurga, but I tremble for his sake ! ...Grant me his life and so help me to die !). But Zurga is merciless (I am jealous ! ...may a dual sacrifice avenge me and unite your guilty loves !). Leila defies him (Let the sentence be carried out ...let a dual sacrifice unite for ever in heaven our tender hearts). As her last wish, Leila hands her necklace to a fisherman, to be returned to her mother. Scene 2 - The fishermen are singing while Nadir is seated on a pyre (As soon as the sun pours out its flame in the rosy sky ...we shall shed their foul blood). Leila is brought by Nourabad and the fakirs and she rushes into Nadir's hands (Nadir, I have come to die by your side !). They both sing (O sacred light, my fearless heart defies their anger and laughs at Death ...Farewell Leila ...Farewell Nadir!). Zurga appears with an axe and sends all the people to

the village where a fire was set by a thunder. Left alone with Nadir and Leila he breaks them free (Leila, remember, once you saved my life ! ...Now I shall save you both ! ...go away, go away !). As Leila and Nadir are departing, Zurga lights the pyre (I have done my duty, I have kept my promise ! He is alive, she is safe ! Farewell, dreams of love !).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - On the burning sand where the blue sea sleeps ...we find the yellow pearl (Chorus), Yes, yes, be our leader, we accept your rule (Chorus), ...let my happiness revive among you, comrades ! (Nadir), Yes, it is she, it is she the goddess, more charming and more beautiful (Zurga, Nadir), Let us swear to remain friends ...close as brothers we shall be ! (Zurga, Nadir), Be welcome unknown friend, please accept our gifts (Chorus), If you remain loyal and obey my law, we shall keep for you the finest pearl (Zurga), I shall stay, my friends, my life is yours ! (Leila), Under the light of the stars I can almost see her slightly opening her long veils (Nadir), O hole Brahma ...O fair Siva ! ...my eyes, yes, my eyes follow you (Leila) Act 2 - ...a man, a fugitive, begging for my help, took refuge in our humble dwelling ...I have saved his life and kept my promise (Leila), My beloved is locked away in a palace of gold and azure (Nadir), ...the might of love is fatal, how could I have fled from the beautiful eyes I loved ? (Nadir), O dreadful night, night of horror ...Brahma, have mercy, have mercy ! (Chorus), No mercy for them, no ! Death, death, death ! No mercy for them ! (Chorus), It was she ! O fury ! ...Woe unto them, woe ! ...Neither pity, nor mercy ! They must both die ! (Zurga), Brahma, holy Brahma, let your hand protect us ! (Nadir, Leila) Act 3 - O Nadir, tender friend of my youth ...O remorse, O regrets ! ...Ah ! what have I done ! (Zurga), ...by your hands I am kissing ! ...For myself, I have no fear, Zurga, but I tremble for his sake ! ...Grant me his life and so help me to die ! (Leila), I am jealous ! ...may a dual sacrifice avenge me and unite your guilty loves ! (Zurga), Let the sentence be carried out ...let a dula sacrifice unite for ever in heaven our tender hearts (Leila), As soon as the sun pours out its flame in the rosy sky ...we shall shed their foul blood (Chorus), Nadir, I have come to die by your side ! (Leila), O sacred light, my fearless heart defies their anger and laughs at Death ...Farewell Liela ...Farewell Nadir!(Nadir, Leila), Leila, remember, once you saved my life ! ...Now I shall save you both ! ...go away, go away ! (Zurga), I have done my duty, I have kept my promise ! He is alive, she is safe ! Farewell, dreams of love ! (Zurga)

Ballet: At the begining of the first act there is a ballet of the pearl fishers (2 min). The French Opera has featured ballet movement since the very begining. The ritual dances add to the orientalism of the atmosphere. As for now, there is no complete ballet version of the performance.

Recordings: 1950 Deutsches Symphonie Orchester (Rita Streich - Leila, Jean Lohe - Nadir, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau - Zurga), 1950 Moscow Radio Symphony (Nadezda Kazantseva - Leila, Sergei Lemeshev - Nadir, Vladimir Zakharov - Zurga), 1951 Orchestre det Choeur Philharmonique Paris (Mattiwilda Dobbs - Leila, Enzo Seri - Nadir, Jean Borthayre - Zurga), 1954 L'Opera Comique Paris (Martha Angelici - Leila, Henri Legay - Nadir, Michel Dens - Zurga), 1959 Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli (Marcella Pobbe - Leila, Ferruccio Tagliavini - Nadir, Ugo Savarese - Zurga), 1977 Paris Opera (Ileana Cotrubas - Leila, Alain Vanzo - Nadir, Guillermo Sarabia - Zurga), 1989 Orchestra and Chorus of Capitole de Toulouse (Barbara Hendricks - Leila, John Aler - Nadir, Gino Quilico - Zurga), 2004 Teatro La Fenice Venice (Annick Massis - Leila, Yasu Nakajima - Nadir, Luca grassi - Zurga), 2008 London Philharmonic Orchestra (Rebecca Evans - Leila, Barry Banks - Nadir, Simon Keenlyside - Zurga)

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96. A Masked Ball

Title: A Masked Ball (Un ballo in maschera)

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). Born at Le Roncole (Parma, Italy), his father Carlo Giuseppe Verdi (1785-1867) was an innkeeper, while his mother Luigia Uttini (1787-1851) was a thread maker. Verdi received musical education playing the orga at the local church with the help of Pietro Baistrocchi, the local schoolmaster. At 12 years old, he began lessons with maestro di capella Ferdinando Provesi and Antonio Barezzi, the directors of the Societa Filarmonica, and by the age of 17 Verdi establisshed himself as a leader of the Philharmonic. At 4

May 1836 Verdi was married to Margherita Barezzi, the daughter of his master and director. Margherita died only four years later, leaving a devastated Verdi to find his peace in his work. Antoni Barezzi also introduced him to Vincenzo Lavigna, maestro concertatore at La Scala in Milan who encouraged Verdi to compose and to take a subscription to La Scala. In 1835 Verdi became director of the Busseto school and in 1837 he staged his first opera at La Scala. In 1859 he married Giuseppina Strepponi (1815-1897) an operatic soprano and an old friend. In 1861 Verdi was elected to the Parliament of Piedmont Sardinia and in 1874 he was appointed member of the Italian Senate. In 1895 he planned and built a hospital at Villanova sull'Arda and his famous Casa di Riposo per Musicisti in Milan, a rest home for retired musicians. Operas: *Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio* (1839), *Un giorno di regno* (1840), *Nabucco* (1842), *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (1843), *Ernani* (1844), *I due Foscari* (1844), *Giovanna d'Arco* (1845), *Alzira* (1845), *Attila* (1856), *Macbeth* (1847), *I masnadieri* (1847), *Jerusalem* (1847), *Il corsaro* (1848), *La battaglia di Legnano* (1849), *Luisa Miller* (1849), *Stiffelio* (1850), *Rigoletto* (1851), *Il trovatore* (1853), *La traviata* (1853), *Les vepres siciliennes* (1855), *Giovanna de Guzman* (1855), *Le trouvère* (1856), *Simon Boccanegra* (1857), *Aroldo* (1857), *La forza del destino* (1862), *Don Carlos* (1867), *Aida* (1871), *Otello* (1887), *Falstaff* (1893). Ballet music for: *Otello*, *Macbeth*, *Jerusalem*, *Don Carlo*, *Aida*, *Il trovatore*, *Il vespri siciliani*. His work also includes sacred works, songs, instrumental, orchestral and chamber music.

Libretto: Antonio Somma (1809-1864). Antonio Somma was an Italian playwright who also produced for Giuseppe Verdi the libretto for *Re Lear*, an opera that remained unfinished. The source for the libretto was Eugene Scribe's libretto for Daniel Auber's opera *Gustave III, ou Le bal Masque*, a grand opera that premiered in 1833 and was a major success with 168 performances in the first twenty years. The opera concerns some aspects of the real life assassination of Gustavus III (1746-1792) King of Sweden who has died in a coup attempt, in 1792. The assassination of the king took place at a masked ball at the Royal Opera House in Stockholm. King Gustav was an active playwright, credited with creating the Royal Theatre where his own historical dramas were performed. In 1773 he also founded the Royal Swedish Opera and the Royal Swedish Ballet and the new opera house was built in 1775. Scribe had retained some of the names of the historical figures but he invented the rest of the action. Due to censorship, in Sommas version the real characters were replaced with fictional ones and the whole action was relocated to Boston Massachusetts, to produce an Italian vendetta story. With several other transformations and changes in title, the musical score and orchestrations were finally produced in 1859.

Performance history: The opera received its premiere on 17 February 1859 at the Teatro Apollo in Rome, starring tenor Gaetano Fraschini, soprano Eugenia Julienne Dejean and baritone Leone Giraldoni. The opera was immediately successful and the American premiere soon followed, on 11 February 1861, in New York at the Academy of Music. In the first years the opera premiered as follows: 1860 (Lisbon), 1861 (Paris, Barcelona, New York, London, Dublin, Berlin, Saint Petersburg) 1863 (Lima, Budapest), 1864 (Vienna, Bruxelles, Mexico City), 1865 (Warsaw), 1866 (Prague), 1867 (Copenhagen), 1868 (Sydney), 1870 (Cairo), 1871 (Rio de Janeiro), 1872 (Havana), 1873 (Geneva), 1877 (Zagreb), 1880 (Ljubljana), 1879 (Helsinki), 1923 (Bucharest), 1926 (Sofia, Kaunas), 1928 (Tallin). At the Metropolitan Opera in New York the opera premiered on 11 December 1889 and at the San Francisco Opera on 19 September 1931. In the 20th century, great recordings were produced at: Metropolitan Opera (1940, 1944, 1980, 1991, 2012), WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne (1951), NBC New York (1954), Teatro alla Scala (1957, 1975, 1985), Academia di Santa Cecilia (1960, 1970), Royal Opera House (1975, 1979), Vienna State Opera (1989), Leipzig Opera (2005). Up to the 2017/18 season, *Un ballo in maschera* was performed in the world for 962 times, in 245 different productions, ranking 25 on Operabase list.

Roles: Riccardo, Earl of Warwick, governor of Boston (tenor), Renato, his secretary (baritone), Amelia, wife of Renato (soprano), Oscar, Riccardo's page (soprano coloratura), Ulrica (contralto), A judge (tenor), Silvano (bass), Amelia's servant (tenor), Samuel (bass), Tom (bass), Chorus (officers and gentleman, women and children)



Story: Riccardo, Earl of Warwick and Governor of Baston has fallen in love for Amelia, his secretary's wife. He tries his luck but he is rejected and the affair is revealed, not only to the husband, but to the two conspirators that are threatening his life. The husband swears revenge. Although he gets to be warned, Riccardo prefers to take the hit, and the blame. Found guilty as charged, his honor can not be restored in a cowardly escape.

Act 1 (A room in the governor's mansion / Ulrica's cavern)

Gentleman and townsfolk are waiting for Riccardo who is making his entrance (Friends, soldiers - and you who are equally dear to me ! ...I must protect my children, satisfying every just desire). Riccardo is pleased finding Amelia's name on the list of people invited to the ball. Renato is warning him (An evil plot is being contrived against you; your life is threatened). Riccardo refuses to consider the threat, but Renato insists (If you are lost, what of our country, what of its splendid future ?). When the judge arrives, Riccardo is interested only by Ulrica's case (She can foretell the future ...she is suspected of every evil counsel. She deserves exile; pray do not veto my decision). Oscar is also presenting her (Whoever touches her prophetic gown ...it is with Lucifer himself she has a pact !). Riccardo wants to observe the case with his eyes (I shall expect you in disguise, at three o'clock, in the oracle's cavern). Scene 2 - Surrounded by women and children, Ulrica is at work (King of the depths, make haste ...enter into my house, three times the owl). Dressed as a fisherman, Riccardo wants to be the first client, but Silvano breaks the crowd. Ulrica reads his hand (Be of good cheer, soon you will have gold and rank). As Amelia arrives, Riccardo hides in a second room and the rest are sent away (Before I can answer you, I first must join with Satan). Amelia asks for peace in her heart, now ruled by the power of love. But the secret potion must be prepared from a magic herb that Amelia must pick herself (...the herb which grows at the foot of the stones of infamy where crime is expiated in the last sigh !). With Amelia gone it is Riccardo's turn (Tell me whether the sea awaits me ...what the future will bring). Reading his hand, Ulrica sends him away, but since he insists she responds (Very well then; soon you will die ...by the hand of a friend ...the first to touch your hand today). Renato appears and shakes his hand. As he is recognized, Riccardo throws her a purse.

Act 2 (A deserted field near Boston, at the foot of a rocky hill)

Amelia appears (Here is the horrid field where crime and death are joined together ! ...Ah, help me, give me strength, o Lord). Riccardo appears but Amelia sends him away (Save at least my name - or shame and suffering will kill me). But Riccardo is resolute (I cannot, because within my breast an eternal love burns for you). Amelia resists (I belong to him who would give his life for you). Riccardo is insisting but Amelia resists (My life, the world for one word ...Yes I love you. But you, in your nobility, protect me from my heart). Renato appears, claiming to defend Riccardo from the conspirators. Amelia covers herself with the veil and Riccardo conjures Renato not to unveil her. Amelia bids farewell from Riccardo (Do you hear the sombre tones of death sounding in the night ? ...Go, flee, go !). With Riccardo gone, Samuel and Tom appear and they want to see the goddess's face. Renato defends her with his sword, but Amelia lets her veil fail (What ! Amelia ! ...Oh, heaven ! Mercy !). Samuel and Tom are laughing (See how the tragedy changed to farce. Ha, ha, ha ! What gossiping there'll be).

Act 3 (The library of Renato's house / A luxurious room in Riccardo's house / A spacious ballroom)

Renato is facing his wife (For such an offence, tears are useless ...Blood must flow, and you shall die). Amelia is defending herself (God knows this, that in my breast no unworthy passion ever burned). Amelia asks for a last favor, to embrace her child. Left alone, Renato is reconsidering his priorities (Another's blood must wash away the sin !). When Tom and Samuel enter the room, Renato asks to join them in the conspiracy against

Riccardo and fights them for the right to kill him. The winner must be decided by lot. Amelia enters in, and, not knowing, extracts Renato's name from the urn (My name ! O just fate, vengeance is granted to me !). Oscar brings an invitation from Riccardo to a masked ball (Ah ! what brilliance, what music will fill the mansion). Amelia reckons (If I only could warn him - without betraying my husband !). Scene 2 - Signing the document Riccardo sorrows (Renato will return to England - and his wife with him). Oscar brings a letter that warns him about an attempt of murder at the ball. Scene 3 - The ballroom glows with richness and gaiety (Love and the dance go on in these joyous halls). Renato can not find Riccardo and he is asking Oscar, but Oscar will not tell (You want to know how he is dressed, while that is a thing he doesn't want knows). Finally Oscar reveals that Riccardo is wearing a black cape with a pink ribbon on his chest. When Riccardo appears Amelia warns him (Here you are surrounded by death ...I love you, yes, I love you ...tomorrow you will be dead). But Riccardo responds (Tomorrow, with Renato, you will go ...to your native land ...My heart is breaking, but you will leave ...Farewell !). At that moment Renato appears and stabs Riccardo. All the guests turn to Renato (Death, death to the traitor !). With a last effort, Riccardo gives Renato the document (No, no, leave him. ...I who loved your wife, respected her purity ...Advanced to a new post you were to leave with her ...I still am ruler here, any my pardon absolves everyone). And he dies (Farewell, forever my children, farewell beloved America).

Great moments and arias: Act 1 - Friends, soldiers - and you who are equally dear to me ! ...I must protect my children, satisfying every just desire (Riccardo), An evil plot is being contrived against you; your life is threatened (Renato), If you are lost, what of our country, what of its splendid future ? (Renato), She can foretell the future ...she is suspected of every evil counsel. She deserves exile; pray do not veto my decision (The judge), Whoever touches her prophetic gown ...it is with Lucifer himself she has a pact ! (Oscar), I shall expect you in disguise, at three o'clock, in the oracle's cavern (Riccardo), King of the depths, make haste ...enter into my house, three times the owl (Ulrica), Be of good cheer, soon you will have gold and rank (Ulrica), Before I can answer you, I first must join with Satan (Ulrica), ...the herb which grows at the foot of the stones of infamy where crime is expiated in the last sigh ! (Ulrica), Tell me whether the sea awaits me ...what the future will bring (Riccardo), Very well then; soon you will die ...by the hand of a friend ...the first to touch your hand today (Ulrica) Act 2 - Here is the horrid field where crime and death are joined together ! ...Ah, help me, give me strength, o Lord (Amelia), Save at least my name - or shame and suffering will kill me (Amelia), I cannot, because within my breast an eternal love burns for you (Riccardo), I belong to him who would give his life for you (Amelia), My life, the world for one word ...Yes I love you. But you, in your nobility, protect me from my hear (Riccardo, Amelia), Do you hear the sombre tones of death sounding in the night ? ...Go, flee, go ! (Amelia), What ! Amelia ! ...Oh, heaven ! Mercy ! (Renato, Amelia), See how the tragedy changed to farce. Ha, ha, ha ! What gossiping there'll be (Tom, Samuel) Act 3 - For such an offence, tears are useless ...Blood must flow, and you shall die (Renato), God knows this, that in my breast no unworthy passion ever burned (Amelia), Another's blood must wash away the sin ! (Renato), My name ! O just fate, vengeance is granted to me ! (Renato), Ah ! what brilliance, what music will fill the mansion (Oscar), If I only could warn him - without betraying my husband ! (Amelia), Renato will return to England - and his wife with him (Riccardo), Love and the dance go on in these joyous halls (Chorus), You want to know how he is dressed, while that is a thing he doesn't want knows (Oscar), Here you are surrounded by death ...I love you, yes, I love you ...tomorrow you will be dead (Amelia), Tomorrow, with Renato, you will go ...to your native land ...My heart is breaking, but you will leave ...Farewell ! (Riccardo), Death, death to the traitor ! (Chorus), No, no, leave him. ...I who loved your wife, respected her purity ...Advanced to a new post you were to leave with her ...I still am ruler here, any my pardon absolves everyone (Riccardo), Farewell, forever my children, farewell beloved America (Riccardo)

Ballet: -

Recordings: 1940 Metropolitan Opera, New York (Jussi Bjorling - Riccardo, Zinka Milanov - Amelia, Alexander Sved - Renato, Stella Andreva - Oscar), 1956 Teatro alla Scala, Milan (Giuseppe di Stefano - Riccardo, Maria Callas - Amelia, Tito Gobi - Renato, Eugenia Ratti - Oscar), 1960 Academia di Santa Cecilia (Carlo Bergonzi - Riccardo, Brigit Nilsson - Amelia, Cornel MacNeil - Renato, Sylvia Stahlman - Oscar), 1970 Academia di Santa Cecilia (Luciano Pavarotti - Riccardo, Renata Tebaldi - Amelia, Sherrill Milnes - Renato, Helen Donath - Oscar), 1975 Royal Opera House (Placido Domingo - Riccardo, Martina Arroyo - Amelia, Piero Cappuccilli - Renato, Reri Grist - Oscar), 1979 Royal Opera House (Jose Carreras - Riccardo, Montserrat

Caballe - Amelia, Ingvar Wixell - Renato, Sona Ghazarian - Oscar), 1989 Vienna State Opera (Placido Domingo - Riccardo, Josephine Barstow - Amelia, Leo Nucci - Renato, Sumi Jo - Oscar), 2005 Leipzig Opera (Massimiliano Pisapia - Riccardo, Chiara Tagi - Amelia, Franco Vassallo - Renato, Anna Maria Chiuri - Oscar), 2012 Metropolitan Opera (Marcelo Alvarez - Riccardo, Sopndra Radvanovsky - Amelia, Dmitri Hvorostovsky - Renato, Kathleen Kim - Oscar)

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97. The Nutcracker

Title: The Nutcracker (Shchelkunchick, Balet feyeriya, Casse-Noisette)

Composer: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Born in Votkinsk, in the Russian Empire to a family with a long line of military service, his father Ilya Petrovich Tchaikovsky has served as a lieutenant colonel in the Department of Mines, while his mother Alexandra Andreyevna had half French ancestry. Tchaikovsky began piano lessons at age five and at 10 he joined the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in Saint Petersburg. In 1855 his father founded some private lessons with Rudolph Kunding. In 1861 Tchaikovsky attended Russian Musical Society and in 1862 he enrolled at the Conservatory where he studied music theory with Nikolai Zarembo and composition with Anton Rubinstein. He graduated in 1865 when he was offered a post of Professor of Music Theory at the Moscow Conservatory. Tchaikovsky lived as a bachelor for most of his life, except for a two months marriage with Antonina Miliukova, a former student. In 1884 Tsar Alexander III conferred upon him the Order of St. Vladimir, which included a title of hereditary nobility. In the 1889-90 season he served as director of the Russian Musical Society and since 1887 he also substituted as a conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre. In 1892 Pyotr Tchaikovsky was voted a member of the Academie des Beaux Arts in France and the following year he was awarded a honorary Doctor of Music degree at the University of Cambridge. Operas: The Voyevoda (1868), Undina (1869), The Oprichnik (1872), Vakula the Smith (1874), Eugene Onegin (1878), The Maid of Orleans (1879), Mazepa (1883), Cherevichki (1885), The Enchantress (1877), The Queen of Spades (1890), Iolanta (1891). Ballet: Swan Lake (1876), The Sleeping Beauty (1889), The Nutcracker (1892). Symphonies: Winter Daydreams, Little Russian, Polish, No 4, No 5, Manfred, Pathetique, Symphony in E-flat. Concertos: Piano Concerto No 1 to No 3, Cello Concerto, Violin Concerto, Concert Fantasia. His work also includes instrumental music, orchestral suites, serenades, chamber music, choral music and arrangements of the works of other composers.

Libretto: Marius Petipa (1818-1910). Marius Petipa was a French ballet dancer, pedagogue and choreographer, one of the most influential ballet masters. In 1847 he accepted the position of premier danseur to the Imperial Theatres in Saint Petersburg where in 1869 he was named as First Ballet Master, a position he held until 1903. Over fifty ballet performances were produced under his supervision, including: The Pharaoh's Daughter (1862), Don Quixote (1869), La Bayadere (1877), Le Talisman (1889), The Sleeping Beauty (1890), The Nutcracker (1892), Le Reveil de Flore (1894), La Halte de cavalerie (1896), Raymonda (1898), Les Saisons (1900), Les Millions d'Arlequin (1900). Starting with 1891 the choreographic movements created by Marius Petipa began to be noted in the method of dance notation created by Vladimir Stepanov. As a result, his work is periodically revived in modern performances. In the work for The Nutcracker Marius Petipa was seconded by Lev Ivanov (1834-1901) a Russian ballet dancer, choreographer and later Second Balletmaster of the Imperial Ballet. Alongside Marius Petipa he was involved in the production of great performances such as: Swan Lake, Cinderella, The Nutcracker, The Magic Flute, Sylvia. The libretto was adapted from Ernst T.A. Hoffman's story The Nutcracker and the Mouse King written in 1816. A version of the story was produced in 1844 by Alexandre Dumas pere and the ballet version was produced based on this version.

Performance history: The Nutcracker premiered on 18 December 1892, at the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre as a double premiere together with the opera Iolanta. The performance was conducted by Riccardo Drigo with Stanislava Belinskaya as Clara and Sergei Legat as the Nutcracker Prince. The children's roles were performed by real children, students of the Imperial Ballet School in Saint Petersburg. A new version was staged in 1919 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow with a choreography by Alexander Gorsky, followed by another version produced in 1934 at the Mariinsky Theatre by choreographer Vasily Vainonen. Another version was staged in

1934 in England by Nicholas Sergeyev using the original choreography. In the United States the first performance was staged in New York in 1940, by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, followed by a San Francisco Ballet production on 24 December 1944. The most notable revival was produced on 2 February 1954 for the New York City Ballet by choreographer George Balanchine, starring Alberta Grant and Paul Nickel. In London, the Nutcracker was produced by the Royal Ballet in 1967, with a choreography by Rudolf Nureyev. Other notable productions were recorded at: Bolshoi Theatre (1966 - Yuri Grigorovich), America Ballet Theatre (1976 - Mikhail Baryshnikov), Pacific Northwest Ballet (1983 - Kent Stowell), Royal Ballet (1984, 1990 - Peter Wright), Mark Morris Dance Group (1991 - Mark Morris), Edinburgh Festival (1992 - Matthew Bourne), Mariinsky Ballet (2001 - Kirill Simonov), San Francisco Ballet (2004 - Helgi Tomasson), Gelsey Kirkland Ballet (2013 - Gelsey Kirkland). In present days it is one of the most popular ballets in the world. The New York City Ballet presents around 50 performances each year. For the year 2017 The Nutcracker was the most played ballet with 361 different productions all over the world.

Roles: Her Strahlbaum, His wife, Clara, Fritz, Louise, Children, Her Drosselmeyer, Dolls, Nutcracker, Mouse King, Mother Ginger, Others (gifts, soldiers, snowflakes, angels, dancers, flowers, incredibles, wanders, members of the court)



Story: It is the Christmas dream of a young girl. In a family with numerous children, Santa Claus was not that generous to her. Inspired by a broken nutcracker, she dreams of getting married to a sergeant and getting all the nuts she can crack and all the sweets she may want. We can only presume if her dream did or did not come true.

Act 1 - It is the magic night of Christmas Eve. The children receive presents including dancing dolls. Clara is fascinated by a wooden soldier serving as a nutcracker, but Fritz breaks it. At midnight, Clara checks her toy and she falls asleep dreaming that she is the size of the nutcracker. Her sergeant nutcracker is the leader of a band of gingerbread soldiers, threatened by mice and their Mouse King. Tin soldiers and dolls are coming to help and finally the nutcracker stabs the Mouse King. The mouse retreats and the nutcracker leads Clara into an enchanted forest where snowflakes dance around them.

Act 2 - Clara and her sergeant nutcracker travel to the Land of Sweets to meet the Sugar Plum Fairy and his family. A great ball follows where Clara and her sergeant are celebrated by various sweet shapes, led by Mother Ginger and her children. To conclude the night, Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier perform a dance, followed by a final waltz performed by all the sweets. Clara and her sergeant leave the wedding party in a reindeer drawn sleigh. There are various alternative endings. Frequently Clara awakes from her dream and puts the nutcracker back in the closet.

Great moments and arias: -

Ballet: Act 1 - Overture 1. Christmas Tree 2. March of the Toy Soldiers 3. Dance of Incredibles and Wanders 4. Arrival of Drosselmeyer 5. Dance of the gifts: Soldat and Vivandiere, Arlequin and Colombine, The Nutcracker Polka 6. The Grandfather Waltz 7. The Battle 8. The Pine Forest in Winter 9. The waltz of the Snowflakes

Act 2 - 10. The Magic Castle in the Land of Sweets 11. Clara and the Nutcracker 12. Dance of the

sweets: Chocolate (Spanish Dance), Coffee (Arabian Dance), Tea (Chinese Dance), Bouffons (Russian Dance), Dance of the Red Pipes (Folkloric Dance), Mother Ginger and children (Children's Dance) 13. Waltz of the flowers 14. Pas de Deux: Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier, tarantela, coda 15. Final Waltz and Apotheosis

Recordings: 1909 London Palace Orchestra (conductor Herman Fink), 1954 Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (conductor Antal Dorati), 1956 Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (conductor Arthur Rodsinski), 1959 Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (conductor Ernest Ansermet), 1960 Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra (conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky), 1977 National Philharmonic Orchestra (conductor Kenneth Schermerhorn), 1985 Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra (conductor Leonard Slatkin) Films: 1940 (Disney's The Nutcracker Suite), 1950 (The Spirit of Christmas), 1973 (The Nutcracker), 1979 (Nutcracker Fantasy), 1990 (Waren Brother's The Nutcracker Prince), 2007 (Tom and Jerry: A Nutcracker Tale), 2018 (Disney's The Nutcracker and the Four Realms)

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98. Giselle

Title: Giselle (Giselle, ou les Wilis)

Composer: Adolphe Adam (1803-1856). Born in Paris, his father Jean Louis Adam (1758-1848) was a prominent Alsatian composer and a professor at the Paris Conservatoire, while his mother Elisabeth Charlotte Coste was the daughter of a doctor. As a child he studied the piano with his father, together with composer Louis Joseph Herold (1791-1833) his twelve years senior. In 1817, at the age of 14 he entered the Paris Conservatoire to study organ and harmonium with composer Francois Adrien Boieldieu. In the evenings he played the timpani in the orchestra of the Conservatoire. In 1825 he won the second prize in the competition for the Prix de Rome. Four years later he married the actress Sara Lescot and the fruit of their marriage was a son. In his twenties he became the chorus master at the Gymnasie Dramatique where he also played in the orchestra and he was writing songs for Paris vaudeville houses. His first important succes came in 1834 with his opera comique Le Chalet and ten years later he was nominated member of the Academie des Beaux-Arts. In 1847 he opened with borrowed money an opera house called Opera National performing at the Cirque Olympique with a capacity of 2400 seats. Due to financial difficulties, the opera was closed in the following year. From 1849 to his death he taught composition at the Paris Conservatory. His work includes 46 operas, 14 ballets, numerous songs, piano works, orchestrations and two published books. Selective operas: Pierre et Marie (1824), Le hussard de Felsheim (1827), Monsieur Botte (1827), La reine de seize ans (1828), Les trois cantons (1828), Isaure (1829), Les Trois Catherine (1830), Casimir (1831), Le Chalet (1834), Le fidele berger (1838), Le reine d'un jour (1839), Richard en Palestine (1844), Le toreador (1849), Si j'etais roi (1852), La faridondaine (1852), Le muletier de Toleda (1854), Mam'zelle Genevieve (1856). Selective ballets: Faust (1833), La Fille du Danube (1836), Les Mohicans (1837), Giselle (1841), La Fille de marbre (1845), Griseldis (1848), Orfa (1852), Le Corsaire (1856).

Libretto: Jules Vernoy de Saint Georges (1799-1875) and Theophile Gautier (1811-1872). Jules Vernoy de Saint Georges was a French playwright and a prolific librettist who produced 68 libretti, 33 plays and 5 novels. Beside six libretti produced for Adolphe Adam he also wrote for other important composers such as: Jaques Fromental Halevy (L'artisan, L'Eclair), Gaetano Donizetti (La Fille du regiment), Daniel Auber (Zanetta), Francois Benoit (Le Diable amoureux), Carl Maria von Weber (Euryanthe), Jacques Offenbach (Le papillon), Georges Bizet (La Jolie fille de Perth). Theophile Gautier was a French poet, dramatist, novelist, journalist and literary critic. His work includes 7 poetry books, 9 plays, 3 novels, 2 short stories, 1 travel book and 4 ballet stories: Giselle (1841), La Peri (1843), Paquerette (1851), Gemma (1851). Theophile Gautier found inspiration for the description of the Wilis in Heinrich Heine's history of religion De l'Allemagne and in a poem called Fantomes by Victor Hugo. In 1841 he published an article announcing the first performance of Giselle. Vernoy de Saint Georges adapted the story for Ballet in only three days and sent it to Leon Pillet, the director of the Paris Opera. The choreography was produced by choreographers Jean Coralli (1779-1854) and Jules Perrot (1810-1892).

Performance history: Giselle was first performed on 28 June 1841 at the Salle Le Peletier in Paris, by the Ballet du Theatre de l'Academie Royale de Musique. Giselle was played by the Italian ballerina Carlotta Grisi, trained at the ballet school of Teatro alla Scala in Milan and sister-in-law to Theophile Gautier. The part of Albrecht was

danced by Lucien Petipa the older brother of Marius Petipa and the part of Myrtha was danced by Adele Dumilatre. Giselle was performed in Paris from 1841 to 1849 where Grisi's salary grew from 5000 francs to 20 000 francs. Almost immediately after the premiere ballet companies in Europe and America mounted the performance. In London Giselle premiered on 12 March 1842 at Her Majesty's Theatre. The first performance in Russia, at the Bolshoi Theatre, on 18 December 1842 with ballerina Yelena Andreyanova playing Giselle. In Saint Petersburg Giselle premiered in 1851 when Jules Perrot was appointed ballet master at the Imperial Bolshoi Kamenny Theatre and Charlotta Grisi followed him as Prima Ballerina. In Italy, Giselle premiered at Teatro alla Scala on 17 January 1843 reorchestrated by Niccolò Bajetti. In the United States Giselle premiered on 1 January 1846 in Boston at the Howard Atheneum with ballerina Mary Ann Lee playing the title role. The same performance was mounted in New York on 13 April 1846 at the Park Theatre. In the 20th century a remarkable performance was mounted in 1911 at the Mariinsky Theater with Tamara Karsavina and Vaslav Nijinsky in the leading roles, later followed by the same performance mounted at the Royal Opera Covent Garden. Alicia Markova in 1934 and Margot Fonteyn in 1937 also starred as Giselle for the ballet in London. In present times Giselle is still in the top ten ballet works with 162 different productions in 2015, 260 productions in 2016 and 248 productions in 2017, ranking 5 as the most performed in the world.

Roles: Giselle, a peasant girl, Albrecht, Duke of Silesie and also a peasant named Loys, Hilarion, a gamekeeper, suitor of Giselle, Myrtha, the queen of the Wilis, Duke of Courlande, Princess Bathilde, his daughter, Berthe, Giselle's mother, Wilfried, Albrecht's guardian, A hunter, Two Wilis, Other (nobles, peasants, boys and girls, Wilis)



Story: It is the simple story of a girl who falls in love with a man out of her rank. Aristocratic conventions are stronger than her love and she dies consumed by remorse. Repentance comes too late for her lover. He is sentenced to be hunted by ghosts for the rest of his life.

Act 1 - Giselle, a peasant girl falls in love for a young peasant called Loys, in fact Duke Albrecht of Silesia in disguise. The Duke is betrothed to Bathilde, daughter to the Duke of Courland. Loys romances Giselle at the harvest festivities, while Hilarion who is in love with her is very suspicious. Her mother, Berthe also tries to discourage the relationship. Albrecht hurries away as Bathilde arrives in the village together with a party of noblemen. Pleased with Giselle, Bathilde offers her a necklace, as a gift and departs. Albrecht returns to dance with Giselle, who is nominated as the Harvest Queen. Hilarion blows Albrecht's hunting horn and the party of nobles return in time to find the Duke. As Albrecht is greeting Bathilde, Giselle flies into a madness of sorrow and begins to dance wildly, until she dies in Albrecht's arms. Albrecht flees in misery while Berthe weeps over her daughter's body. In the original version, Giselle stabs herself with Albrecht's sword.

Act 2 - Hilarion mourns at Giselle's grave, where he awakens the Wilis, the ghostly spirits of maidens betrayed by their lovers. Led by their queen Myrtha, the merciless Wilis haunt and dance to exhaustion any young man they find in the forest. Myrtha summons Giselle to join them. When Albrecht appears to her grave, Giselle gently forgives him, then she joins the rest of the Wilis. Meanwhile, Hilarion was exhausted dancing with the ghosts and now he has drawn in the nearby lake. The ghosts turn their attention on Albrecht and he is forced to dance until sunrise when the spirits must return to their graves. After bidding a tender farewell, Giselle returns to her grave.

Great moments and arias: -

Ballet: Recent ballet companies and choreographers involved in a Giselle project were: 1984 Dance Theatre of Harlem (Frederick Franklin), 2008 Australian Dance Theatre (Garry Stewart), 2018 The Dance Factory Johannesburg (Dada Masilo)

Recordings: 1959 Symphonique Orchestra, London (conductor Anatole Fistoulari), 1967 Opera Monte Carlo (conductor Richard Bonyngue), 1972 London Festival Ballet Orchestra (conductor Terence Kurn), 1975 Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra (conductor Alghis Jouraitis), 1986 Royal Opera House Orchestra (conductor Richard Bonyngue), 1987 Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra (conductor Alexandre Kopylov), 1994 Slovakia Radio Orchestra (conductor Andrew Mogreila)

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99. Coppelia

Title: Coppelia (La fille aux yeux d'email)

Composer: Clement Leo Delibes (1836-1891). Born in Saint Germanin du-Val, his father Charles Auguste Delibes (1783-1847) was a postman while his mother, Elisabeth Batiste (1807-1886) was a talented amateur musician. His grandfather had been an opera singer. Starting in 1847 he studied composition with Adolphe Adam, at the Paris Conservatorie and in 1850 he was awarded with the first price in solfege. He worked as an organ player and as a rehearsal accompanist at the Theatre Lyrique. His first works performed in public were his five operettas. He gained notoriety in 1870 with his ballet Coppelia, followed six years later by Sylvia ou la Nympe de Diane. In 1871 he married Leontine Estelle Denain, daughter of the French actress Mademoiselle Denain (Pauline Desiree Masnage 1823-1891), with no offspring. In 1877 he was made Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur and in 1884 he was nominated member of the Academie des beaux-arts. Operas: Monsieur de Bonne-Etoile (1860), La Cour du roi Petaud (1860), Le Roi l'a dit (1873), Jean de Nivelle (1880), Lakme (1883), Kassya (1893). Operettes: Deux sous de charbon (1856), Deux vieilles gardes (1859), L'Omelette a la Follembuche (1859), Le Serpent a plumes (1864), L'Ecosais de Chatou (1869). Ballets: La Source (1866), Coppelia (1870), Sylvia (1876). His work also includes songs, orchestrations and vocal music.

Libretto: Louis Etienne Nuitter (1828-1899). Louis Nuitter was a French librettist, translator, writer and librarian with a licence in law. His work includes libretti for vaudevilles and operas comique, operas bouffes, operettas and ballets. He was co-author in more than 500 theatrical performances, of which more than 100 were staged. Among other translations, he had helped translate four Wagner's operas and four Verdi's operas into French and both composers esteemed highly the quality of his translations. He also produced several libretti for Offenbach's operas. Starting in 1863 he became the official archivist of the Paris Opera ending his career in law. As an archivist he expanded the collection of libretti and books from 1076 in 1862 to 7807 in 1882. The plot for the libretto was inspired by two stories published by Ernst T.A. Hoffman: The Sandman and The Doll. The name Coppelia originates from Greek, meaning young lady. Coppelia is a mechanical doll brought to life by Dr Coppelius, a lonely alchemist and sorcerer who conducts exorcistic experiments in his laboratory. Arthur Saint Leon (1821-1870), the Ballet Master of the Saint Petersburg Imperial Ballet is famous for creating the choreography for Coppelia, the costumes were produced by Paul Lormier and Alfred Albert and the scenery was produced by Antoine Cambon, Edouard Desplechin and Jean Baptiste Lavastre.

Performance history: Coppelia premiered on 25 May 1870 at the Theatre Imperial l'Opera (Lepeletier) in Paris. The 16 year old Italian ballerina Giuseppina Bozzacchi was distribute as Swanilda while ballerina Eugenie Fiocre had played the part of Frantz en travestie. In 1884 Ballet Master Marius Petipa at the Imperial Theatre in Saint Petersburg has produced a new version for the Russian audience with a pas de deux incorporated in the third act. Coppelia was the first ballet to feature national dances such as the czardas and the mazurka. Notable performances with Coppelia were produced in the 20th century, such as follows: 1933 Royal Ballet (choreograph Nicholas Sergeyev, Dame Ninette as Swailda), 1939 San Francisco Ballet (choreograph Willam

Christensen, Janet Reed as Swanilda), 1974 New York City Ballet (Choreograph George Balanchine, Patricia McBride as Swanilda), 1975 Paris Opera (choreograph Roland Petit), 1996 Paris Opera Ballet (choreograph Patrice Bart), 2009 Bloshoi Theatre Moscow (choreograph Sergei Vikharev), 2011 Cluj Napoca (director Vasile Solomon), 2013 Ballet Victor Ullate Comunidad de Madrid (choreograph Eduardo Lao), 2019 Bayerischen Staatsballet (choreograph Roland Petit), 2018 Maghiar Opera Cluj Napoca (Popa Andreea as Swanilda, Munteanu Mircea as Frantz). In modern times Coppelia is in the top ten most played ballet performances with 163 different productions in the year 2016.

Roles: Swanilda, Franz, Dr. Coppelius, Coppelia, The Burgmeister, The Chinese doll, The Arab doll, The Arlequin, The Spanish, The Scottish, Others (villagers, children)



Story: It is time for Franz to mature, from the love for a doll, to the love for a real doll. At the local festival, Franz fails to respond to the "hay fever" custom and Swanilda is desolated. Opportunity arise when the children obtain the key to the house of Dr. Coppelius. Replacing his favourite doll, Swanilda manages to populate Franz's dream, and the miracle happens, while Dr. Coppelius somehow belives that his magic has worked the other way around. The story ends with a happy ending ...and with a happy wedding.

Act 1 - Swanilda likes Franz, but he is yet to childish. He is fascinated only by a doll he sees on the balcony of Dr. Coppelius, the local toy maker. His fiancée, Swanilda, is annoyed of the fact that the doll seems to be more attractive to Franz. But most of the children in the village are mesmerized by the toy shop. The villagers are involved in a Festival rich in folclloric dances. Dowery is to be offered for all the girls bethroted during the fesitival. Swanilda shakes the shaft of wheat, but Frank does not respond to the custom and Swanilda fears the worst. The festivities end with a czardas. Dr. Coppelius is teased by some boys and drops the key to his house. Swanilda and her friends find the key and decide to explore the mesmerising workshop. Franz also decides to investigate the house, using the balcony window.

Act 2 - Swanilda enters the room and she is astonished to find out that Coppelia is a mechanical doll. She sets other dolls in motion and starts to dance with them. Dr. Coppelius returns and drives all the children out, but Swanilda hides in Coppelia's room, taking her place. Finding Franz, Dr. Coppelius threatens to punish him but he changes his mind. In order to bring his dolls to life he needs the dreams of a boy and so he offers Franz a sleeping potion. Franz soon falls asleep. When Dr. Coppelius tries to bring Coppelia to life, Swanilda starts to move, acting as the doll. The toy maker overjoys with his accomplishment, while Swanilda plays along dancing and winding all the dolls in the shop. The magic has worked. Finally, Swanilda wakes up Franz and they escape the workshop together.

Act 3 - The party is full of swing as the celebration has reached the dawn of the day. On their wedding day, Swanilda and Franz receive a purse of gold from the Burgmeister. Dr. Coppelius arrives and complains about his mischievous adventures from the previous day. The Burgmeister gives him a purse of gold as well. The method has worked and is now patented. The village dances ensue and all the townspeople join in the wedding festivities.

Great moments and arias: -

Ballet: Act 1 - 1. Prelude and Mazurka 2. Waltz and jealousy 3. Scene 4. Mazurka 5. Scene 6. The shake of the wheat 7. Russian dance 8. Csardas 9. Finale

Act 2 - 10. Introduction 11. Dance with the dolls 12. Franz and Dr. Coppelius 13. Coppelia's dance 14. The playful Coppelia 15. Bolero 16. Gigue (Scottish dance) 17. Final scene

Act 3 - 18. Wedding march 19. Waltz of the heroes 20. The dawn 21. The pray 22. The work 23. The chastity 24. The quarrel and the war 25. The peace 26. The festival 27. Finale, galop (all on stage)

Recordings: 1949 Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden (Constant Lambert), 1950 Orchestre De La Societe Des Concerts Du Conservatoire De Paris (Roger Desormiere), 1955 Boston Symphony Orchestra (Pierre Monteux), 1956 Orchestra Of The Royal Opera House Covent Garden (Robert Irving), 1958 L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande, 1958 Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (Antal Dorati), 1973 Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra (Ino Savini), 1977 Paris Opera Orchestra (Jean Baptiste Mari), 1979 Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra (David Zinman), 1986 National Philharmonic Orchestra (Richard Bonyng), 2003 Orchestre De L'Opera De Lyon (Kent Nagano) Videos: The Royal Ballet (Leanne Benjamin - Swanhilda, Carlos Acosta - Franz), 2010 Pacific Northwest Ballet (Mara Vonston - Swanhilda), Paris Opera (Dorothee Gilbert - Swanhilda)

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100. The Afternoon of a Faun

Title: The Afternoon of a Faun (L'Apres-midi d'un faune)

Composer: Claude Debussy (1862-1918). Born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris, his father Manuel Achille Debussy owned a china shop while his mother Victorine Manoury was a steamstress. Claude was the eldest of five children. He learned his first piano music at the age of 7, with Jean Cerutti and Antoinette Maute de Fleurville. In 1872, at the age of 10 he was admitted for the next 11 years to the Conservatoire de Paris where he studied with Antoine Francois Marmontel (piano), Albert Lavignac (solfegio), Ernest Guiraud (composition), Emile Durand (harmony), Cesar Franck (organ). In 1884 he won the Prix de Rome for a two years study at the French Academy in Rome. In 1899 he married Marie Rosalie Texier (1873-1932). He remarried in 1908 to Emma Bardac (1862-1934) and the fruit of their marriage was a girl, Calude Emma. In the same year, Claude Debussy became a member of the governing council of the Conservatoire. Opera: Rodrigue et Chimene (1892), Pelleas et Melisande (1902), Le diable dans le beffroi (1911), La chute de la Maison Usher (1917), Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien (1911). Ballet: Khamma (1912), Jeux (1913), La Boite a joujoux (1913), Le palais du silence ou NO-JA-LI (1914). His musical compositions also include: orchestral and soloist compositions, chamber music, piano music, voice and piano music and vocal compositions.

Libretto: Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929), Michel Fokine (1880-1942) and Vaslav Nijinsky (1889-1950). Sergei Diaghilev was a Russian patron, ballet impresario and art critic, founder of the Ballet Russes. With a licence in law and studies at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory of Music he was among the founders of the journal Mir iskusstava (World of Art) and a special assistant to Prince Sergei Volkonsky, director of all Imperial Theatres. Michel Fokine was a Russian choreographer and dancer. His works include the choreography for several performances such as: Acis and Galatea (1905), The Dying Swan (1907), Chopiniana (1907), Les Sylphides (1909), Scheherazade (1910), The Firebird (1910), Petrushka (1912), Daphnis et Chloe (1912), The Golden Cockerel (1914), Cendrillon (1938). Vaslav Nijinsky was a ballet dancer and choreographer born in Kiev to Polish parents, but he grew up in Russia. In 1909 he joined the Ballets Russes where his early works include: Giselle (1910), L'apres-midi d'un faune (1912), Jeux (1913), Till Eulenspiegel (1916), Le Sacre Printemps (1913). The stage settings were designed and produced by Leon Bakst (1866-1924) a Russian painter, scene and costume designer working for the Ballets Russes. The story for both the music and the ballet was inspired by the poem L'Apres-midi d'un faune by Stephane Mallarme. Jean Cocteau explained the poem to Nijinsky who spoke little French, and helped him to develop an outline for the story. Nijinsky's sister, dancer Bronislava Nijinska, also helped him with the choreograpy and they both presented their work to Diaghilev who organised the production.

Performance history: The Afternoon of a Faun premiered on 29 May 1912 in Paris, at the Theatre du Chatelet. Vaslav Nijinsky danced the faun and his sister Bronislava Nijinska danced the 6th nymph. The conductor was Pierre Monteux. The next production was at the New Royal Opera House in Berlin, on 11 December 1912, with Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Albert (1859-1941) in the audience. This showing was a huge success with ten encores. In spring 1913 the ballet was performed in Vienna, where it enjoyed a cooler reception, followed by London where the ballet was well received. After Diaghilev's death in 1931 some of his dancers settled in London and the ballet entered in the repertoire of Rambert Ballet for several years. On 14 May 1953 at the City Center of Music Drama in New York premiered Jerome Robbins's version with scenery by Jean Rosenthal and costumes by Irene Sharaff. In 1983, Rudolf Nureyev danced the faun as part of the Nureyev Festival at the London Coliseum. In the late 1980s, dance notation specialist Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke reconstructed the ballet from Nijinsky's notebooks and Baron Adolph Meyer produced a reconstructed version of the original ballet. In modern times, Danish Dance Theatre produced a version of the performance with balletmaster Tim Rushton in charge with the choreography. The premiere took place in February 2006 at the New York City Center as part of the King of Dance gala. In recent years the music of Claude Debussy is ascending, ranking 12 among the classical music composers, with 671 performances in 2014, 744 performances in 2015, 840 performances in 2016 and 950 performances in 2017.

Roles: Faun, Nymph one, Nymph two, Nymph three, Nymph four, Nymph five, Nymph six, Nymph seven



Story: Paul Valéry considered Mallarmé's poem to be the greatest poem in French literature. It describes the sensual encounter of a faun with several nymphs, bathing, not in water but in waves of flute and harp music. It is nothing but a young boy's dream. Wonderful attitudes, of the young female bodies, expressing the happiness of youth, a quintessence for what a ballet performance is about. Did he love his dream or was it but a torture? But who cares!

Action: In the sound of flutes and harp a faun is eating fruits to be joined by a group of three nymphs, then two more nymphs. They perform a long dance (arabesque). One more nymph appears and finally the seventh. Clarinet, oboe and violins join the party while the nymphs dance is suggesting bathing. Left alone with the faun, the last nymph dances with him, around each other, then she breaks away leaving him with her discarded veil. Laughing he takes the veil. Challenged by a group of three nymphs the faun falls back, and the scene repeats with another group of three nymphs. When left alone, the faun returns to his mound. He spreads the veil on the ground and lowering his body onto it he falls asleep again. It was but a dream, a shadow of what the splendor of his youth have become.

Great moments and arias: -

Ballet: Two other ballet performances for Afternoon of a Faun were produced by Jerome Robbins (1953) and Tim Rushton (2006). In Jerome Robbins's version the setting is replaced for a ballet studio, where the faun dreams of dancing with all the nymphs. In Tim Rushton's version the nymphs are bathing in three pools of light, as if they were holograms.

Recordings: Musical disks - 1927 Stokowski, Academy of Music Philadelphie, 1929 Wolff, Concerts

Lamoureux, 1936 Toscanini, New York, 1946 Celibidache, Berlin, 1950 Enescu, Silverstone, 1950 Monteux, Amsterdam, 1951 Ansermet, Suisse Romande, Geneve, 1954 Barbirolli, Halle, 1958 Silvestri, Societe Concertos Conservatoire, 1959 Paray, Detroit, 1960 Bernstein, New York, 1962 Munch, Boston, 1964 Karajan, Jesus Christus Kirche, Berlin, 1966 Baudo, Tcheque Supraphon, 1971 Ormandy, Scottish Rite Cathedral, Philadelphie, 1972 Boulez, Theatre de l'Opera Nice, 1975 Fournet, Radio Neerlandaise, 1979 Celibidache, Royal Festival Hall, London, 1982 Barenboim, Paris, 1986 Ashkernazy, Masonic Auditorium, Cleveland, 1986 Abbado, London, 1989 Bernstein, Academie de Saint Cecile, 1990 Horvat, Vienne, 1992 Pretre, Vienna, 1989, Dutoit, Montreal, 1996 Masur, 1996 Salonen, Los Angeles, New York, 1998 Gasparini, Paris, 2000 Steinberg, Theatre des Champs Elysees, 2001 Soustrot, Beethovenhalle Bonn Video: 2003 Paris Opera (Maya Plisetskaya, Charles Jude), 2011 Australian Dance, 2018 American Repertory Ballet

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