

Great Operatic
ARIAS

CHANDOS

OPERA IN
ENGLISH

ANDREW
SHORE

baritone

Paul Daniel
David Parry

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

Great
Operatic
Arias

with

Andrew Shore

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Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)		
<i>from The Elixir of Love</i>		
Dulcamara's Cavatina		
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'Attention! Attention! You country folk!'		
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'Good doctor, beg your pardon' –		
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with Barry Banks (Nemorino)		
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'How he loved me!' —		
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7	'Look here: this not so little volume' – 'Pretty lady, I have something to show you' (Madamina, il catalogo è questo) from CHAN 3057(3) <i>Don Giovanni</i>	5:54 [p. 68]

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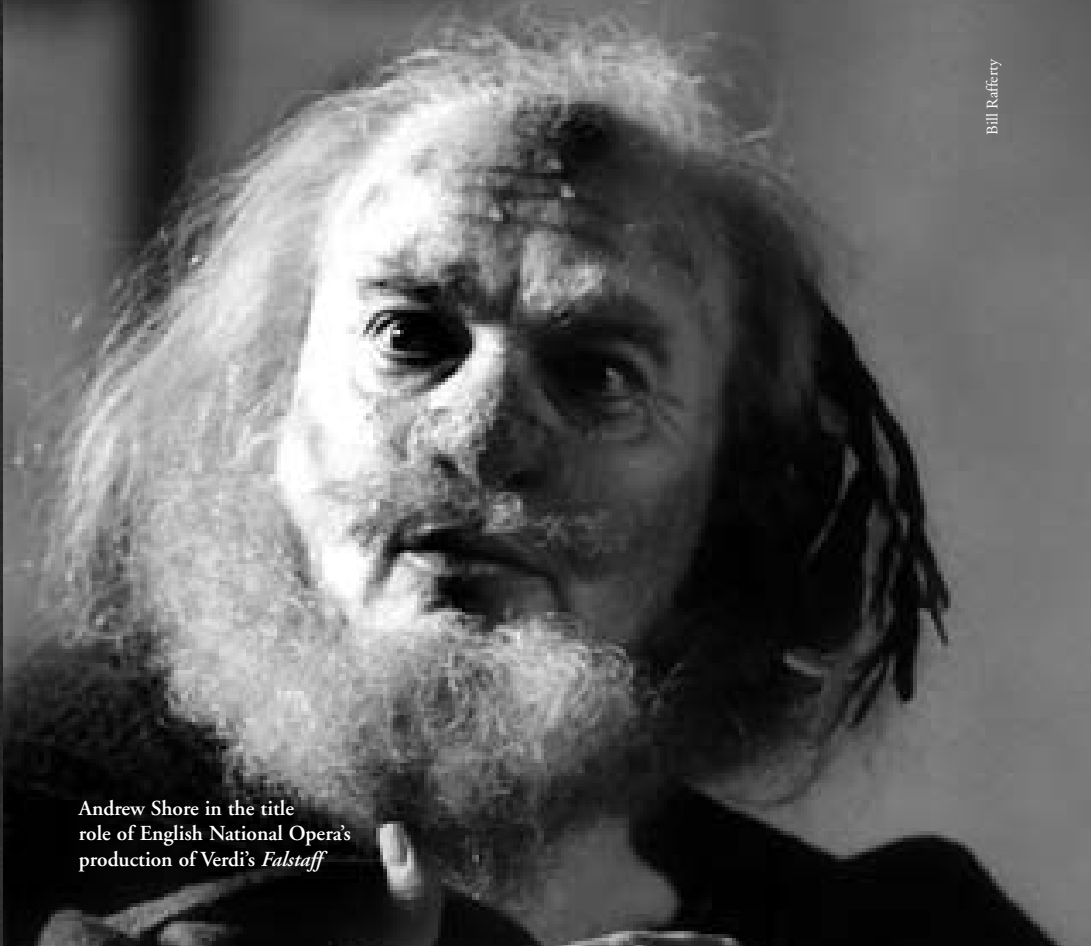
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Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)		
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Philharmonia Orchestra (tracks 1–4 & 7)
London Philharmonic Orchestra (tracks 6 & 8–10)
David Parry (tracks 1–4 & 6–10)

English National Opera Orchestra (tracks 5 & 11)
Gabriele Bellini (track 5)
Paul Daniel (track 11)

Andrew Shore in the title
role of Opera North's
production of Berg's *Wozzeck*





Bill Kafery

Andrew Shore in the title role of English National Opera's production of Verdi's *Falstaff*

Great Operatic Arias

The old arguments about ‘opera in the original language’ versus ‘opera in the language of the listeners’ never cease. Nor should they: there is too much to be said on both sides. It was not opera as such but, specifically, Italian opera in London that Dr Johnson famously described as ‘an exotic and irrational entertainment’. And in a 1711 *Spectator* Joseph Addison wrote:

There is no question but that our great Grand-Children will be very curious to know the Reason why their Forefathers used to sit together like an Audience of Foreigners in their own Country, and to hear whole Plays acted before them in a Tongue which they did not understand.

But nearly three hundred years later people are doing it still. During the second half of the twentieth century, opera in the original – what the great American baritone David Bispham called ‘the foreign-language fad’ – gained new impetus. And in the great houses of Milan, Munich, Paris, Vienna, where foreign operas used regularly to be presented in the language of the audience, and in many of the smaller houses too, ‘original language’ became the

norm, even for operas in Russian or in Czech. Covent Garden – where in the postwar years Kirsten Flagstad and Hans Hotter relearned *The Valkyrie* and Ljuba Welitsch relearned *Salome* in English, and *Boris Godunov*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Jenůfa* were as a matter of course translated – has become a foreign-language, ‘exotic’ house, its performances distanced from its audiences. Meanwhile English National Opera, at the Coliseum, has sustained the ideals of the men who invented opera: drama directly understood, and given new force by music’s power. Wagner and Verdi were well aware of, and complained about, the distortions introduced by translation, yet they welcomed it, enjoined it, believing that the gains outweighed the losses. But they wanted the translations to be good.

Enough! On this disc Andrew Shore sings comic opera. (The rather special case of *Don Giovanni* is discussed below.) The arguments pro and con change somewhat when comedy’s in question. *Incominciate!* – or, as the standard English translation of *Pagliacci* puts it, ‘Ring up the curtain!’ – on scenes from some of the greatest comic operas.

Donizetti: The Elixir of Love

We were told in book after book that *The Elixir of Love* was an opera written at speed; the manager of the Canobbiana Theatre in Milan, at his wits' end when a commissioned composer suddenly failed to produce, begged Donizetti to revamp one of his own old operas to fill the gap. And Donizetti replied: 'Are you joking? I'm not in the habit of touching up my works, or anyone else's. Let's see whether I can write a new opera for you. Send for Romani!' And to Felice Romani, Donizetti then said: 'A new opera is due from us in a fortnight's time; I'll give you a week to prepare the libretto.'

Be that as it may, a gem of comic opera appeared at the Canobbiana on 12 May 1832. The Canobbiana, built at the same time as La Scala, by the same architect, was for much of the nineteenth century La Scala's 'second house'. It specialised in comic operas but also had a reputation for introducing interesting novelties from abroad, such as *Le Comte Ory*, *Robert le Diable*, *Martha*. *The Elixir of Love* was revived there the following two seasons – by which time it had already been widely and internationally performed.

Romani took his plot from 'Scribe's latest', the libretto for *Le Philtre*, an Auber opera that

was staged at the Paris Opéra in 1831. (The dashing sergeant in both works was created by the same singer, Henri-Bernard Dabadie.) A good deal of Romani's work is straight translation. (Compare the hero's opening cavatina: 'Qu'elle est jolie!... Elle sait lire... Moi, je ne suis qu'un ignorant' and 'Quanto è bella!... Essa legge... Io son sempre un idiota'.) But to the Scribe comedy Romani added a vein of *semiseria* romance. The parallels with Bellini's *Sonnambula* are deliberate, I believe. (*La sonnambula*, which also has a Romani libretto after Scribe, had appeared in Milan in 1831.) The tender duets 'Son geloso del zefiro errante... Son, mio bene, del zefiro amante' (in *La sonnambula*) and 'Chiedi all'aura lusinghiera... Chiedi al rio perchè gemente' (in *L'elisir*) are in similar vein, and similarly placed. *Le Philtre* had no 'Una furtiva lagrima'.

The heroine's first words in *L'elisir* are 'È la storia del Tristano'. She reads the story to the company. (Wagner's version of it was still way in the future.) When the travelling charlatan Dulcamara arrives in the village, 'Attention! Attention!' (track [1](#)) is his lively sales-patter as he peddles his wondrous 'elixir' – a specific against every ill that flesh is heir to. The lovelorn Nemorino approaches him: does he

by any chance stock the potion that aroused the passions of Queen Isolda? ‘Why, I brewed it myself’ Dulcamara replies (in the original Italian), and sells Nemorino a bottle of cheap wine. Nemorino is delighted: soon the disdainful Adina is bound to find him irresistible (track [2]).

The potion doesn’t act fast enough. Nemorino needs more, but has no more money. He enlists in the army, and with twenty scudi of sign-on money thus earned he buys more elixir. Soon every girl in the village is flocking round him: *they* know that his rich uncle has died and that he is now a millionaire. He doesn’t know; he thinks it’s the potion at work. Adina’s heart is touched, at last, when she learns that in an endeavour to win her, Nemorino has sacrificed his liberty (track [3]). Dulcamara urges her to buy some of his potion, to make sure of detaching Nemorino from his flock of new admirers, but Adina knows a surer way: ‘I need no magic potion... For my eyes will work the spell.’

She redeems Nemorino’s enlistment papers, and all ends happily (track [4]). Dulcamara departs, acclaimed by everyone – except Sergeant Belcore, who had hoped to have Adina for himself.

The Elixir of Love *was first performed in English at the Surrey Theatre and then Drury Lane, in 1839. The translator was T.H. Reynoldson. The Arthur Jacobs translation used here was first performed by the Maidstone Opera Group, in 1964. Arthur Jacobs (1922–1986) translated many operas, including works by Handel, Tchaikovsky, Richard Strauss (The Silent Woman), Schoenberg (Erwartung), and Berg (Lulu). Also Rossini’s Cenerentola and (see track [6]) The Italian Girl in Algiers.*

Rossini: The Barber of Seville

Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* was one of the operas that – unaccountably, it now seems – flopped at its premiere (at the Teatro Argentina, in Rome, on 20 February 1816). *Madam Butterfly* was another. But *The Barber* was a success at its second performance, and a success it has remained ever since. Rossini, who loved Mozart’s music, responded to the challenge of setting the Beaumarchais play to which *The Marriage of Figaro* had been a successor. There was already a famous *Barber* opera, Giovanni Paisiello’s (1782), and Paisiello was still alive. (He died three months after the premiere of Rossini’s version). Rossini wrote to him in advance, apologetically, and received the elderly composer’s blessing; but at

its premiere the opera was deferentially entitled *Almaviva, or The Useless Precaution*; only later that year, in Bologna, was it billed with Paisiello's title.

Dr Bartolo tries to keep his lively young ward, Rosina, whom he hopes to marry, securely under lock and key. But she's been serenaded by a young man who calls himself Lindoro (he's really count Almaviva), has fallen for him, and has written to him a letter to be smuggled out by Figaro, the barber.

Dr Bartolo notices an ink-blot on Rosina's finger: 'That's where I burned my finger and I put some ink on it.' He counts the sheets of writing paper on the desk: only five, when before there'd been six: 'I used one of them to wrap up some chocolates for Marcellina'. Then why's the quill inky?: 'The pen... I used to draw a flower on my sewing.' Dr Bartolo isn't taken in, and bursts into his splendidly, comically pompous aria (track 5).

It proved difficult for its early performers. It was replaced, after a few performances, by a simpler number, 'Manca un foglio' ('There's a sheet missing'), composed by Pietro Romani. The substitution became general: in the nineteenth-century Boosey score of *The Barber*, edited by Arthur Sullivan, both arias appear, 'for the convenience of those using this

edition as a handbook, since "Manca un foglio" is now very generally substituted for "A un dottor".' But 'Manca un foglio' is now the rarity.

The first English performance of The Barber of Seville, in a translation by John Fawcett and Daniel Terry, was performed at Covent Garden in 1818. The translation here used is by Amanda and Anthony Holden.

Rossini: The Italian Girl in Algiers

In 1813, in Venice, young Rossini had his first two big hits: *Tancredi*, at the Fenice on 6 February, established him as the master of opera seria; and *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, at the Teatro San Benedetto on 22 May, established him as the master of comic opera. *The Italian Girl*, like Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*, was composed when another composer failed to produce. To save time, an old libretto was brought into service: Angelo Anelli's, set by Luigi Mosca for La Scala in 1808. It was somewhat revised. It lacks the shapeliness of *The Barber*, the Pirandellian by-play of *The Turk in Italy*, the moral truths that make *Cenerentola* moving as well as entertaining. Yet the slightly ramshackle action is clad in number after number of such invention, vivacity, and beauty that the score transcends

its source, producing, in Stendhal's famous phrases, 'a sweeping enchantment, a kind of musical frenzy that takes hold of orchestra and audience alike, sweeping one and all away on waves of uncontrollable delight.'

Isabella, sparkling, resourceful, intrepid, has sailed from Leghorn in search of her beloved Lindoro. (He has been captured and is a slave of the Bey of Algiers.) Travelling with her is her elderly admirer and ciccisbeo, Taddeo. Shipwrecked on the shores of Algiers, they are captured by pirates. Taddeo is to be sold as a slave. Isabella will become a prize piece in the Bey's seraglio; he's been wanting an Italian woman. They pretend to be uncle and daughter, inseparable. They quarrel, and then make up again (track [8](#)).

The Italian Girl in Algiers *was first sung in English at the Princess's Theatre, London, in 1836, the translator unnamed. The translation by Arthur Jacobs heard here was first sung by English National Opera at the Coliseum in 1968. For a note on Arthur Jacobs see The Elixir of Love, above.*

Mozart: Don Giovanni

All the items on this disc, I said, come from comic operas. *Don Giovanni*? Well, it defies classification. On the playbill of the first

performance, at the Prague National Theatre on 29 October 1787, it was called a *dramma giocoso*, a jolly drama. Winthrop Sargeant, my predecessor on *The New Yorker*, called it 'a profound essay on the subject of mortality', its protagonist 'not a character but an archetype'. His essay concludes: 'The celebration of a myth is a rite, not a performance, and when I go to a performance of *Don Giovanni* I feel I am in the presence of a rite.' Gounod declared that the harmonic progressions after the opening chords of the overture 'freeze one's soul with terror'. Edward J. Dent, striving to provide a corrective to the nineteenth century's romantic awe, stressed the *buffo* aspects in his influential *Mozart's Operas*.

The scenes with Donna Elvira – the burlesque serenade, her sudden arrivals at inopportune moments, her last-plea appearance at Don Giovanni's supper – mingle mirth and heart-break. Yes, she is rather ridiculous. She's also poignant, tragic. Leporello's catalogue aria, (track [7](#)), is another scene with Elvira. His part of it is a *buffo* aria, its text close-modelled on Giovanni Bertati's *Don Giovanni* for Giuseppe Gazzaniga (which appeared in Venice eight months before Mozart's opera, and was da Ponte's main source). Elvira's part in it is mute, but

her reactions to what she hears are, in the theatre, an important element of the scene. Is Leporello in this account of his master's 'scores' simply being amusingly and brutally frank? Or is he being intricately, sympathetically brutal in a deliberate endeavour to persuade poor Elvira to shed her illusions? In other scenes he expresses *sotto voce* sympathy for her plight, and open disapproval of Giovanni's way of life. Is he perhaps deliberately exaggerating the totals? Should there be reproof, rather than gusto, in his recalling of the many conquests? Or maybe a touch of both? About *Don Giovanni* questions never cease.

Don Giovanni was first sung in English at Covent Garden, in 1817; the translator was Isaac Pocock. Amanda Holden's translation, here used, has been used by many British companies, and was specially revised for the Chandos recording. For a note on Amanda Holden, see Falstaff, below.

Donizetti: Don Pasquale

I have a friend of about Don Pasquale's age who finds Donizetti's *dramma buffo* – about young people ganging up and duping the old boy – not at all funny. Well, he's exaggerating, and knows it; but *Don Pasquale* is far from being just foolery. The opera was first

performed at the Théâtre Italien, in Paris, on 3 January 1843, during those fevered last years of activity when the composer poured out one fine opera after another. Donizetti has been called a Shakespeare of the lyric stage. His identification with his characters, his ability to share their plights, to express their feelings, was great. The libretto of *Don Pasquale* was based on *Ser Marc'Antonio* by Angelo Anelli – the same man whose *Italiana* had served Rossini – which had been set for La Scala thirty years before by Stefano Pavesi. It's a new version of the amorous-old-man-outwitted plot; others versions are *The Barber* and Strauss's *The Silent Woman* (based on Ben Jonson); Lorca's oft-set *Don Perlimplin* is a tragi-comic variant.

Don Pasquale has elected his nephew Ernesto as his heir, but when he learns of Ernesto's choice of bride, the impoverished Norina, Pasquale decides to get married and raise a family of his own. His doctor, Malatesta, proposes as bride his demure little sister, Sophronia; and (track [\[5\]](#)) the old boy is delighted. 'Sophronia', of course, is really Norina, Ernesto's beloved, who is all shyness and sweetness before a (mock) marriage ceremony, but becomes a virago once the contract has been signed. She runs up some

stupendous bills. And on the wedding night Don Pasquale (track [9]) finds her dressed to go out to the theatre. In the first part of a three-movement duet, he tries in vain to assert his authority. She smacks his face. In a touching central section, Pasquale feels that his world has come to an end, while the ‘real’ Norina, in asides, feels sorry for him. In the third section (omitted here) she reassumes her vixen role. Sweeping out, she carefully drops – for him to find – a letter arranging an assignation that night in the garden. The shattered Don Pasquale summons Malatesta (track [10]) and tells him what has happened. Malatesta proposes that together they should catch ‘Sophronia’ with her lover. If she’s really guilty, he’ll take his ‘sister’ away.

Need one add that all ends happily? In a final twist of the stratagem, ‘Sophronia’ declares that she will leave the house if another woman, Norina, dare enter it. So Pasquale orders Ernesto to marry Norina at once. When he learns the truth, he’s also learned a lesson. He blesses the young couple.

Don Pasquale *was first performed in English at the Princess’s Theatre, London, in 1843; the translator, as of The Elixir of Love four years earlier, was T.H. Reynoldson. The translation here used is by David Parry.*

Verdi: Falstaff

In his last opera, produced at La Scala on 9 February 1893, when he was eighty, Verdi brought together strands that had run through his long career: among them his lifelong devotion to Shakespeare, his mistrust of the fickle public, his generous love of humanity, his tenderness toward young love, his respect for craftsmanship, his instinctive feeling for theatrical effect. And now there is a mellow acceptance – no longer bitter, but joyful – that new young men have risen to take the centre of the stage, even while the old man can still show them a trick or two. The score is a miracle of grace, beauty, mercurial invention, and fine but never intrusive detail. High spirits and poetic refinement go hand in hand. Often recitative and aria seem to have become one. The vocal line moves freely in response to Boito’s polished text, but there are glimpses along the way of the old, regular forms. Within the space of a few bars the composer catches the essence of a number that might have spread over pages in an earlier opera. Alice’s reading of Falstaff’s letter, ‘Come una stella’, is at once parody of a high romantic aria and a beautiful melody in itself. A second ‘aria’ for her, complete with cabaletta, is woven into the first scene of Act III. Falstaff’s eight

bars beginning 'So che se andiam, la notte' is a buffo aria in miniature. Falstaff's Honour Monologue, here recorded (track [11](#)), has several 'sections' (Boito fashioned its text from three different Shakespeare scenes), yet it flows as a whole. The composer Stanford, who went to Milan to hear the premiere of *Falstaff*, and wrote two eloquent essays on the work, called it the smiling counterpart of Iago's Credo in *Otello*. It begins like accompanied recitative, moves into more regular periods, grows free again, but with subtle motivic underpinning. A 'cabaletta', beginning 'Quickly! Quickly!', lasts (counting the orchestral close) just twenty-two bars. It's all scored in wonderfully subtle colours.

Falstaff was published with Italian, English, German, and French texts. The first performance in English (translation by W. Beatty Kingston, revised by Fritz Hart) was given by students of the Royal College of Music, at the London Lyceum in 1896. Stanford conducted. Amanda Holden, whose translation is heard here, has translated more than fifty operas. Falstaff was the first of them. It was first performed by the City of Birmingham Touring Opera, in 1987.

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Andrew Shore is acknowledged as Britain's premier *buffo* baritone and an outstanding singer/actor. He has worked with English National Opera, The Royal Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Scottish



Opera and Welsh National Opera, and has appeared abroad with San Diego Opera, New Israeli Opera, Opéra Nationale de Paris-Bastille, Opéra Comique, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, as

well as in Lyon, Nantes, Santa Fe, Montpellier, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Vancouver and Ottawa.

His many engagements have included the title roles in *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff*, *King Priam*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *Don Pasquale*, as well as Dulcamara (*The Elixir of Love*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), King Dodon (*Le Coq d'or*), Leandro (*The Love for Three Oranges*), Dikoy (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Dr Kolenaty (*The Makropulos Affair*), Shishkov

(*From the House of the Dead*), Frank (*Die Fledermaus*), Baron (*La Vie parisienne*), Baron Trombonok (*Il viaggio a Reims*), George Wilson (*The Great Gatsby*), Alberich in concert performances of *Das Rheingold*, Varlaam (*Boris Godunov*) and Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*).

Recordings include the title roles in *Falstaff* and *Don Pasquale*, Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Dr Bartolo (*The Barber of Seville*), Dulcamara (*The Elixir of Love*), the Sacristan in *Tosca*, Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier* (highlights), and *La Bohème*, all for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation.

Sarah Pring as Despina and Andrew Shore as Don Alfonso in Glyndebourne Festival Opera's production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*



Andrew Shore as Dulcamara in English National Opera's production of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*

Bill Rafferty

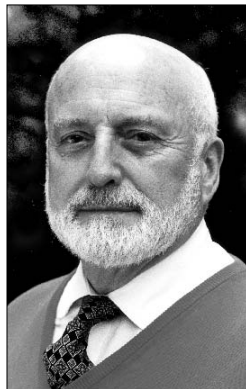


PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire, the son of Sir John Moores, founder of the giant Littlewoods mail order, chain store and football pools group. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, where he read modern languages – he was already fluent in German and Italian. It was opera, however, which was his great love. He had worked at Glyndebourne Festival Opera before going up to university, and after Oxford he became a production student at the Vienna State Opera, combining this with a three-year course at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year at the Academy Moores had produced the Vienna premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and Rome Opera, and seemed set for a successful operatic career. At this point he received a letter from his father asking him to come home as he was needed in the firm. Family loyalty being paramount, he returned to Liverpool.

From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985; from 1988 to 1992 he was a director of Scottish Opera. He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In May 1992 he became Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, and in the New Year's Honours List for 1991, he was made a CBE for his charitable services to the Arts.



Bill Cooper/PMIF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL

Whilst still in his early twenties, Peter Moores had started giving financial support to various young artists, several of whom – Joan Sutherland, Colin Davis and the late Geraint Evans amongst them – were to become world-famous. In 1964 he set aside a substantial part of his inheritance to establish the Peter Moores Foundation, a charity designed to support those causes dear to his heart: to make music and the arts more accessible to more people; to give encouragement to the young and to improve race relations.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

In the field of music, the main areas supported by the Peter Moores Foundation are:

the recording of operas from the core repertoire sung in English translation; the recording or staging of rare Italian opera from the *bel canto* era of the early nineteenth century (repertoire which would otherwise only be accessible to scholars); the nurturing of promising young opera singers; new operatic work.

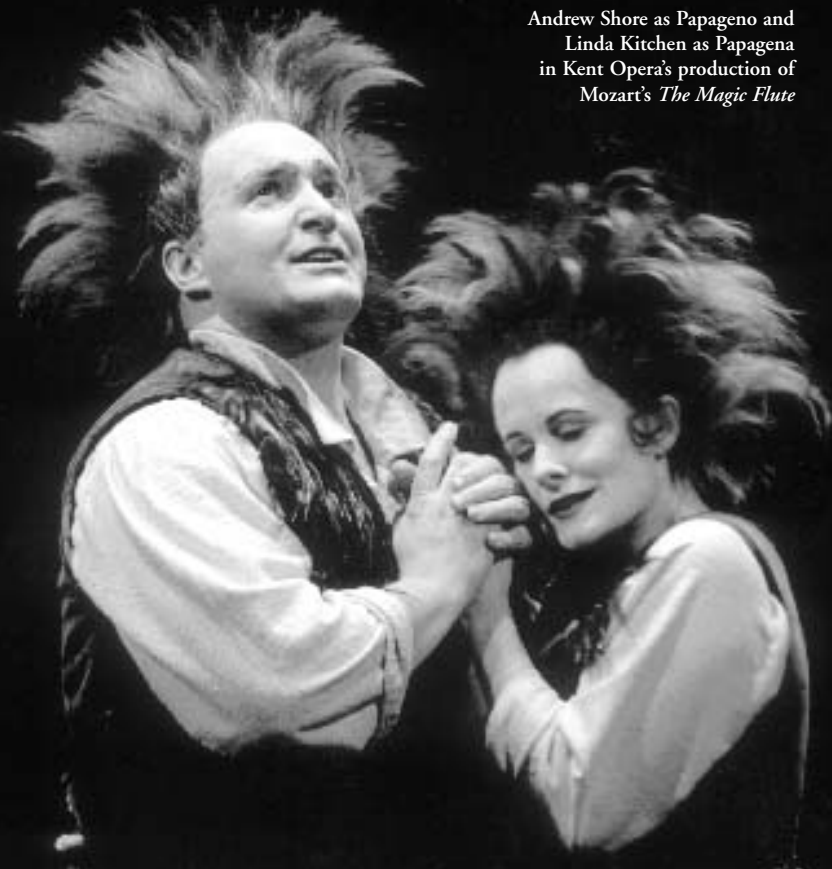
The Foundation awards scholarships annually to students and post-graduates for furthering their vocal studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. In addition, project awards may be given to facilitate language tuition in the appropriate country, attendance at masterclasses or summer courses, specialised repertoire study with an acknowledged expert in the field, or post-graduate performance training.

The Foundation encourages new operatic work by contributing to recordings, the publication of scores and stage productions.

Since 1964 the Foundation has supported the recording of more than forty operas, many of these sung in English, in translation. It has always been Peter Moores's belief that to enjoy opera to the full, there must be no language barrier, particularly for newcomers and particularly in the popular repertoire – hence the *Opera in English* series launched with Chandos in 1995. This includes many of the English language recordings funded by the Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s, and is now the largest recorded collection of operas sung in English.

Andrew Shore as Papageno and
Linda Kitchen as Papagena
in Kent Opera's production of
Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

Reger de Wolf





Andrew Shore as Dr Bartolo in Kent Opera's production of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*

Große Opernarien

Die Diskussion darüber, ob Oper in der Originalsprache gesungen werden sollte oder in der Sprache des Hörers, wird nie enden. Wir brauchen sie auch, denn für beide Seiten lässt sich viel sagen. Der viel zitierte englische Schriftsteller Samuel Johnson bezog sich spezifisch auf die italienische Oper in London, als er sie als “eine exotische und irrationale Unterhaltung” bezeichnete. Bereits 1711 hatte Joseph Addison im *Spectator* geschrieben:

Fraglos werden unsere Enkelkinder sich sehr darüber wundern, warum ihre Vorväter pflegten, in ihrem eigenen Land wie eine Gruppe von Ausländern zusammensitzen und Schauspiele zu erleben, die in einer ihnen unverständlichen Sprache dargeboten wurden.

Fast dreihundert Jahre später hat sich daran nichts geändert. In der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts verstärkte sich neuerlich der Wunsch nach Oper im Original – etwas, was der berühmte amerikanische Bariton David Bispham den “Fremdsprachenfimmel” nannte. An den großen Bühnen von Mailand, München, Paris und Wien, wo regelmäßig Oper in der Heimatsprache inszeniert wurde, und auch in vielen kleineren Häusern wurde

die “Originalsprache” zur Norm, selbst bei russischen oder tschechischen Werken. Aus Covent Garden – wo Kirsten Flagstad und Hans Hotter in den Nachkriegsjahren *The Valkyrie* neu einstudieren mussten und Ljuba Welitsch *Salome* auf Englisch zu lernen hatte, wo *Boris Godunov*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Jentifa* selbstverständlich in englischer Übersetzung inszeniert wurden – ist ein fremdsprachiger, “exotischer” Tempel geworden, an dessen Aufführungen das Publikum nur distanziert teilzuhaben vermag. Die English National Opera, um die Ecke im Coliseum beheimatet, hat unterdessen die Ideale jener Männer gewahrt, von denen die Oper einmal ausgegangen ist: unmittelbar verständliches Drama, gesteigert durch die Macht der Musik. Wagner und Verdi wussten sehr wohl über die im Zuge der Übersetzung eingeführten Verzerrungen und waren darüber entrüstet, und doch befürworteten sie die Praxis, riefen sogar dazu auf, weil sie darin das kleinere Übel sahen. Nur gut sollten die Übersetzungen sein.

Damit genug! Auf dieser CD singt Andrew Shore in zeitgemäßer Übersetzung für ein Englisch sprechendes Publikum komische

Oper. (Auf den Sonderfall *Don Giovanni* gehen wir weiter unten ein.) Wenn es um Humor geht, verschiebt sich das Für und Wider etwas. *Incominciate!* – oder um in deutscher Übersetzung aus *I Pagliacci* zu zitieren: Den Vorhang auf! – zu Szenen aus einigen der großartigsten komischen Opern!

Donizetti: The Elixir of Love

In vielen Büchern ist zu lesen, dass *L'elisir d'amore* in größter Eile entstand; der Leiter des Canobbiana-Theaters in Mailand, durch die Unzuverlässigkeit eines anderen Komponisten in Verlegenheit gebracht, bedrängte Donizetti mit dem Wunsch, er möge eine seiner eigenen, älteren Opern als Notlösung umschreiben. Worauf Donizetti erwiderte: “Belieben Sie zu scherzen? Ich pflege nicht, meine Werke – oder die anderer – aufzufrischen. Sehen wir, ob ich nicht eine neue Oper für Sie schreiben kann. Schicken Sie nach Romani!” Diesem wiederum erklärte Donizetti: “In vierzehn Tagen haben wir eine neue Oper abzuliefern; ich gebe Ihnen eine Woche für die Erstellung des Librettos.”

Wie dem auch immer gewesen sein mag, am 12. Mai 1832 wurde am Canobbiana ein Juwel von einer komischen Oper gegeben. Das Canobbiana, das etwa zur gleichen Zeit wie

La Scala und von demselben Architekten gebaut worden war, galt über weite Strecken des 19. Jahrhunderts als die “Nebenbühne” der Scala. Man war dort auf komische Opern spezialisiert, hatte aber ebenfalls einen Ruf für den Import interessanter Novitäten aus dem Ausland, wie etwa *Le Comte Ory*, *Robert le Diable* und *Martha*. *L'elisir* wurde dort in den nächsten beiden Spielzeiten erneut aufgeführt – und mittlerweile hatte die Oper auch ihren internationalen Siegeszug angetreten.

Romani lehnte sich bei seiner Handlung an “das Neueste von Scribe” an, das Libretto für *Le Philtre*, eine Oper von Auber, die 1831 an der Pariser Opéra uraufgeführt worden war. (Den feschen Sergeanten sang in beiden Werken Henri-Bernard Dabadie.) Viel übernahm Romani in direkter Übersetzung. (Man vergleiche die einleitende Kavatine der Heldin: “Qu’elle est jolie!... Elle sait lire... Moi, je ne suis qu’un ignorant” mit “Quanto è bella!... Essa legge... Io son sempre un idiota.”) Doch Romani bereicherte die Komödie von Scribe um eine *semiseria* Romanze. Die Parallelen zu Bellinis *La sonnambula* sind meiner Meinung nach beabsichtigt. (*La sonnambula*, ebenfalls mit einem Libretto Romanis nach Scribe, war 1831 in Mailand inszeniert worden.) Die

zärtlichen Duette “Son geloso del zefiro errante... Son, mio bene, del zefiro amante” (in *La sonnambula*) und “Chiedi all’aura lusinghiera... Chiedi al rio perchè gemente” (in *L’elisir*) sind ähnlich geartet und plaziert. In *Le Philtre* gab es keine Arie wie “Una furtiva lagrima”.

Adina, die Heldin in *L’elisir*, stellt sich dem Publikum mit der “storia del Tristano” vor, die sie den Erntearbeitern verliert. (Wagners Fassung lag noch weit in der Zukunft.) Als der reisende Quacksalber Dulcamara im Dorf erscheint, versucht er mit “Attention! Attention!” (Band [1]) lebhaft, sein als Allheilmittel gepriesenes “Elixir” unter die Leute zu bringen. Der liebeskranke Nemorino geht auf ihn ein: Hat er vielleicht auch den Liebestrank der Königin Isolda? “Na, ich destilliere ihn selbst”, erwidert Dulcamara und verkauft ihm eine Flasche billigen Wein. Nemorino ist begeistert: Bald wird ihm die hochmütige Adina nicht widerstehen können (Band [2]).

Der Liebestrank wirkt nicht schnell genug. Nemorino benötigt mehr davon, doch fehlt ihm das Geld. Er verdingt sich als Soldat, und mit den zwanzig Scudi Werbegeld kauft er mehr Elixir. Bald sind alle jungen Mädchen des Dorfes nett zu ihm: *Sie* wissen, dass sein

reicher Onkel gestorben ist und ihm alles vermacht hat. Er weiß es nicht und glaubt, dass hier der Liebestrank am Werke ist. Adina geht schließlich in sich, als sie erfährt, dass Nemorino aus Liebeskummer seine Freiheit geopfert hat (Band [3]). Dulcamara drängt sie, von seinem Elixir zu kaufen, damit sich Nemorino auch wirklich von seinen neuen Bewunderinnen trennt, doch weiß Adina einen besseren Weg: “I need no magic potion... For my eyes will work the spell.”

Sie kauft dem Sergeanten Nemorinos Werbeschein wieder ab, und alles endet in Glückseligkeit (Band [4]). Dulcamara wird freudig verabschiedet – nur nicht von Sergeant Belcore, der Adina für sich selbst erhofft hatte.

The Elixir of Love wurde 1839 in englischer Sprache zuerst am Surrey Theatre und dann Drury Lane Theatre inszeniert. Die Übersetzung stammte von T.H. Reynoldson. Die der vorliegenden Aufnahme zugrundeliegende Textfassung von Arthur Jacobs wurde 1964 zum erstenmal von der Maidstone Opera Group aufgeführt. Arthur Jacobs (1922–1986) übersetzte zahlreiche Opern, darunter Werke von Händel, Tschaikowski, Strauss (The Silent Woman), Schönberg (Erwartung) und Berg (Lulu), sowie Rossinis Cenerentola und (siehe Band [5]) The Italian Girl in Algiers.

Rossini: *The Barber of Seville*

Rossinis *The Barber of Seville* gehört zu jenen Opern, die aus heute unerklärlich scheinenden Gründen bei der Premiere (am 20. Februar 1816 am Teatro Argentina in Rom) eklatant durchfielen. *Madam Butterfly* wäre ein anderes Beispiel. Doch die zweite Aufführung des *Barbiere* war ein Erfolg, und ein Erfolg ist die Oper seitdem geblieben. Rossini, ein großer Verehrer der Musik Mozarts, nahm die Herausforderung an, jenes Schauspiel von Beaumarchais zu vertonen, an das sich *Die Hochzeit des Figaro* angeschlossen hatte. Eine sehr erfolgreiche *Barbiere*-Oper, von Giovanni Paisiello (1782), existierte bereits, und Paisiello lebte noch (er starb drei Monate nach der Uraufführung der Rossini-Version). Rossini wandte sich vorsorglich mit einem Entschuldigungsschreiben an den greisen Komponisten, der ihm daraufhin sein Wohlwollen ausdrückte; mit Rücksicht auf Paisiello nannte Rossini das Werk zunächst *Almaviva, oder die unnütze Vorsicht*, bevor es dann im weiteren Verlauf des Jahres in Bologna unter dem Titel Paisiellos im Programm erschien.

Dr. Bartolo gedenkt, sein eifersüchtig gehütetes Mündel Rosina zu heiraten. Doch ein junger Mann namens Lindoro (in

Wirklichkeit Almaviva) hat ihr ein Ständchen gebracht, und sie ist ihm zugeneigt; sie hat ihm heimlich einen Brief geschrieben, den Figaro, der Barbier, aus dem Haus schmuggeln soll. Dr. Bartolo bemerkt einen Tintenfleck an Rosinas Finger: "Ich habe mich verbrannt, und mit der Tinte wollte ich es kühlen." Er zählt die Blätter Schreibpapier auf dem Tisch – fünf, wo es doch sechs waren: "Ich brauchte eins, um Konfekt zu Barbarina zu schicken." Warum ist dann die Feder feucht? "Ich wollte eine Blume auf meine Sticktrommel zeichnen." Dr. Bartolo lässt sich davon nicht überzeugen und stimmt seine glänzende, komisch-pompöse Arie an (Band 5).

Sie sollte sich für die ersten Interpreten als schwierige Aufgabe erweisen. Schon nach wenigen Aufführungen wurde sie durch eine einfacherere Nummer, "Manca un foglio" ("Da fehlt ein Blatt"), des Komponisten Pietro Romani ersetzt. Die Substitution setzte sich allgemein durch: In der von Boosey im 19. Jahrhundert veröffentlichten Partitur des *Barbiere*, editiert von Arthur Sullivan, erscheinen beide Arien, "im Sinne jener, die diese Ausgabe als Handbuch benutzen, da 'Manca un foglio' heute generell an die Stelle von 'A un dottor' tritt." Inzwischen ist jedoch "Manca un foglio" eher die Ausnahme.

Die erste englische Aufführung von *The Barber of Seville*, in einer Übersetzung von John Fawcett und Daniel Terry, fand 1818 in Covent Garden statt. Der hier verwendete Text stammt von Amanda und Anthony Holden.

Rossini: The Italian Girl in Algiers

1813 feierte der junge Rossini in Venedig seine ersten beiden großen Erfolge: *Tancredi*, am 6. Februar am Fenice uraufgeführt, etablierte ihn als Meister der Opera seria, während *L'Italiana in Algeri* (22. Mai, Teatro San Benedetto) ihm den gleichen Rang in der Opera buffa verschaffte. *L'Italiana in Algeri* entstand, ebenso wie Donizettis *L'elisir d'amore*, als Verlegenheitswerk beim Ausfall einer anderen Auftragsarbeit. Um Zeit zu sparen, griff man auf ein altes Libretto zurück: eine Vorlage von Angelo Anelli, die 1808 von Luigi Mosca für die Scala vertont worden war und nur geringfügig überarbeitet wurde. Man vermisst die ansprechende Form des *Barbiere*, die pirandellische Nebenhandlung von *Il turco in Italia*, die moralischen Wahrheiten, die *La Cenerentola* ebenso rührend wie unterhaltsam machen. Doch die eher chaotische Handlung entwickelt sich mit einer Nummer nach der anderen in derartiger Phantasie, Lebhaftigkeit und Schönheit, dass die Partitur über ihre

Vorlage hinauswächst. Das Ergebnis ist – um mit Stendhal zu sprechen – “eine mitreißende Verzauberung, eine Art musikalisches Fieber, das Orchester und Publikum gleichermaßen erfasst und allesamt auf Wellen unzählbaren Vergnügens hinfort trägt.”

Isabella – feurig, findig, furchtlos – hat sich von Leghorn aus auf die Suche nach ihrem geliebten Lindoro gemacht (er ist in Gefangenschaft geraten und dient als Sklave dem Bey von Algier). Begleitet wird sie von ihrem ältlichen Verehrer Taddeo. Vor der algerischen Küste werden sie schiffbrüchig und von Korsaren aufgegriffen. Taddeo soll als Sklave verkauft werden, Isabella den Harem des Beys bereichern – er verlangt seit einiger Zeit nach einer Italienerin. Isabella und Taddeo wollen sich untrennbar als Onkel und Nichte ausgeben. Die beiden streiten miteinander und versöhnen sich (Band 6).

1836 wurde *The Italian Girl in Algiers* zum erstenmal in englischer Sprache am *Princess's Theatre London* aufgeführt. Der Verfasser des ursprünglichen Textes ist unbekannt, die vorliegende Übersetzung von Arthur Jacobs wurde 1968 zum erstenmal von der *English National Opera* im *Coliseum* gesungen. Näheres zu Arthur Jacobs erfahren Sie unter *The Elixir of Love* weiter oben.

Mozart: Don Giovanni

Alle Arien auf dieser CD stammen wie gesagt aus komischen Opern. *Don Giovanni*? Nun, dieses Werk entzieht sich jedem Versuch einer Kategorisierung. Auf dem Theaterzettel für die Uraufführung, die am 29. Oktober 1787 im Prager Nationaltheater stattfand, erschien es als *dramma giocoso* oder "heiteres Drama". Winthrop Sargeant, mein Vorgänger beim *New Yorker*, nannte es "einen profunden Essay über das Thema der Sterblichkeit"; sein Protagonist sei "keine Figur, sondern ein Archetyp". Und er schließt mit den Worten: "Die Feier des Mythos ist ein Ritus, keine Darbietung, und wenn ich zu einer Aufführung des *Don Giovanni* gehe, habe ich das Gefühl, einem Ritus beizuwohnen." Gounod erklärte: "Die harmonischen Progressionen nach den Eröffnungsakkorden der Ouvertüre frieren einem die Seele mit Angst ein". Edward J. Dent, der darum bemüht war, die romantische Ehrfurcht des 19. Jahrhunderts abzubauen, hob in seiner einflussreichen Abhandlung *Mozart's Operas* die Buffo-Aspekte des Werkes hervor.

Die Szenen mit Donna Elvira – die burlleske Serenade, ihre plötzlichen Auftritte zu ungelegenen Zeiten, ihr flehender Appell beim Festmahl Don Giovannis – verbinden

Heiterkeit mit Leid. Ja, sie ist eine lächerliche Erscheinung. Sie ist aber auch ergreifend, tragisch. Leporellos Register-Arie, die hier enthalten ist (Band 7), entstammt einer weiteren Szene mit Elvira. Er singt eine Buffo-Arie, im Text eng angelehnt an Giovanni Bertatis *Don Giovanni* für Giuseppe Gazzaniga (der in Venedig acht Monate vor der Mozart-Oper erschienen war und da Pontes Hauptquelle darstellte). Elviras Rolle ist stumm, aber ihre Reaktionen auf das Gehörte leisten auf der Bühne einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Geschehen. Ist Leporello mit dieser Bilanz der "Errungenschaften" einfach nur amüsan und von brutaler Offenheit? Oder ist er auf raffinierte, sympathisierende Weise bewusst brutal, um die arme Elvira von ihren Illusionen zu befreien? In anderen Szenen bringt er *sotto voce* Mitgefühl für ihr Schicksal und offene Ablehnung von Giovannis Lebensart zum Ausdruck. Übertreibt er die Zahlen vielleicht absichtlich? Sollte in der Rückschau auf die Eroberungen mehr Ekel als Begeisterung durchklingen? Vielleicht auch etwas von beidem? Die Fragen zu *Don Giovanni* wollen nie enden.

Der erste englische Don Giovanni wurde 1817 in Covent Garden aufgeführt; die Übersetzung stammte von Isaac Pocock. Der hier

verwendete Text von Amanda Holden ist auch an vielen anderen Bühnen gesungen und für die Chandos-Aufnahme eigens überarbeitet worden. Näheres über Amanda Holden erfahren Sie unter Falstaff weiter unten.

Donizetti: Don Pasquale

Ich habe einen Bekannten etwa im Alter von Don Pasquale, der Donizettis *dramma buffo* – über einige junge Leute, die sich dazu verbünden, einen alten Knaben zum Narren zu machen – überhaupt nicht komisch findet. Nun ja, er übertreibt, und das weiß er auch; aber in *Don Pasquale* geht es bei weitem nicht nur um Schabernack. Die Oper wurde am 3. Januar 1843 am Théâtre-Italien in Paris uraufgeführt, in jenen letzten, hektischen Jahren, als Donizetti eine großartige Oper nach der anderen hervorbrachte. Man hat Donizetti als einen Shakespeare des Musiktheaters bezeichnet. Wie er sich mit seinen Protagonisten identifizieren, ihr Schicksal teilen, ihre Gefühle zum Ausdruck bringen konnte, das war schon beachtlich. Das Libretto von *Don Pasquale* stützte sich auf *Ser Marc'Antonio* von Angelo Anelli (dessen *Italiana* ja schon Rossini inspiriert hatte) – ein Stück, das dreißig Jahre vorher von Stefano Pavesi für die Scala vertont worden war. Der

Stoff ist ein beliebtes Thema (ein liebeshungriger Alter wird überlistet), u.a. im *Barbiere* und in der *Schweigsamen Frau* (nach Ben Jonson) von Strauss verarbeitet; Lorcass gern herangezogener *Don Perlimplin* ist eine tragikomische Variante.

Als Don Pasquale erfährt, dass sein Neffe Ernesto die verarmte Norina heiraten will, beschließt er, ihm die Erbschaft zu verderben, indem er selbst in den Ehestand eintritt und eine eigene Familie gründet. Sein Hausarzt, Malatesta, schlägt ihm seine schüchterne kleine Schwester, Sophronia, als gute Partie vor, und der alte Knabe ist begeistert (Band 8). Bei "Sophronia" handelt es sich in Wirklichkeit aber um Norina, die Angebete Ernestos, die vor der (gestellten) Vermählung kein Wässerchen trüben könnte, sich dann aber als Xanthippe erweist. Unaufhörlich laufen ihre Rechnungen ein, und am Hochzeitsabend entdeckt Don Pasquale (Band 9), dass sie sich für einen Theaterbesuch vorbereitet hat. Im ersten Teil eines dreisätzigen Duetts versucht er vergeblich, seine Autorität geltend zu machen. Er wird von ihr geohrfeigt. In dem rührenden Mittelteil glaubt Pasquale, das Ende der Welt sei gekommen, während die "wirkliche" Norina in Nebenbemerkungen ihr Mitleid

ausdrückt. Im dritten (hier ausgelassenen) Teil nimmt sie ihre Furienrolle wieder auf. Bei ihrem demonstrativen Abgang lässt sie geschickt einen von ihm zu findenden Brief fallen, in dem es um ein Stelldichein im Garten am selben Abend geht. Don Pasquale ist erschüttert und ruft Malatesta herbei (Band 10), um ihm die Ereignisse zu berichten. Malatesta regt an, die beiden könnten ja gemeinsam “Sophronia” mit ihrem Verehrer überraschen. Wenn sie sich tatsächlich schuldig machen sollte, werde er seine “Schwester” fortbringen.

Muss man erwähnen, dass alles ein glückliches Ende nimmt? In einer letzten Wendung des Komplotts erklärt “Sophronia”, sie werde das Haus unter Protest verlassen, falls je eine andere Frau, Norina, den Fuß über die Schwelle setzen sollte. Erleichtert weist Pasquale seinen Neffen an, sofort Norina zu heiraten. Als er die Wahrheit erfährt, hat er selber daraus gelernt, und er gibt dem jungen Paar seinen Segen.

Die erste englischsprachige Aufführung des Don Pasquale fand 1843 am Princess's Theatre London statt; die Übersetzung besorgte, wie schon bei The Elixir of Love vier Jahre zuvor, T.H. Reynoldson. Der hier verwendete Text stammt von David Parry.

Verdi: Falstaff

In seiner letzten Oper, die am 9. Februar 1893 an der Scala uraufgeführt wurde, verknüpfte der nunmehr achtzigjährige Verdi die Fäden, die sein langes Leben durchzogen hatten: seine Verehrung für Shakespeare, sein Misstrauen gegenüber dem wankelmütigen Publikum, seine selbstlose Menschlichkeit, seine Zärtlichkeit gegenüber der jungen Liebe, sein Respekt für das Handwerk, sein Instinkt für den Bühneneffekt. Hinzu kam seine abgeklärte Einsicht – nicht mehr bitter, sondern freudig – dass nun junge Nachwuchskomponisten das Rampenlicht beanspruchten, obwohl ihnen der Alte immer noch einiges beibringen konnte. Die Partitur ist ein Wunder an Eleganz, Schönheit, quecksilbriger Erfindungsgabe und herrlichem, jedoch nie aufdringlichem Detail. Gehobene Stimmung und poetische Raffinessen gehen Hand in Hand. Oft scheinen Rezitativ und Arie ineinander zu verfließen. Die Vokallinie bewegt sich frei zu Boitos geschliffenem Text. Doch hin und wieder machen sich alte, strengere Formen bemerkbar. Innerhalb weniger Takte erfasst er das Wesen einer Nummer, die sich in früheren Werken vielleicht über mehrere Seiten erstreckt hätte. Wenn Alice den Brief von Falstaff liest

(“Come una stella”), dann ist dies nicht nur eine Parodie auf die hochromantische Arie, sondern auch eine wunderschöne Melodie an sich. Eine zweite “Arie” für sie, komplett mit Cabaletta, ist in der 1. Szene von Akt 3 verwoben. Die mit “So che se andiam, la notte” beginnenden acht Takte Falstoffs sind eine Buffo-Arie in miniature. Der hier enthaltene Ehrenmonolog Falstoffs (Band ^[11]) weist mehrere “Sektionen” auf (Boito baute den Text aus drei verschiedenen Shakespeare-Szenen zusammen), fließt aber als Ganzes. Der Komponist Stanford, der sich zur Premiere des *Falstaff* nach Mailand begab und zwei aufschlussreiche Essays über das Werk schrieb, nannte diesen Monolog das lächelnde Gegenstück zu Iagos Credo in *Otello*. Er beginnt wie ein Rezitativ mit Begleitung, geht zu einem regelmäßigeren Rhythmus über, befreit sich erneut, doch diesmal auf subtile Weise motivisch untermauert. Eine “Quickly! Quickly!” beginnende Cabaletta dauert (einschließlich Orchesterabschluss) nur 22 Takte. Alles ist in herrlich feinen Farben orchestriert.

Falstaff erschien mit italienischen, englischen, deutschen und französischen Texten. Die erste englische Aufführung (von W. Beatty Kingston übersetzt und von Fritz Hart überarbeitet) gaben

Studenten des Royal College of Music im Londoner Lyceum. Stanford dirigierte. Amanda Holden, deren Text hier gesungen wird, hat mehr als fünfzig Opern übersetzt. Falstaff machte den Anfang. Die Erstaufführung erfolgte durch die City of Birmingham Touring Opera im Jahr 1987.

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Übersetzung: Andreas Klatt

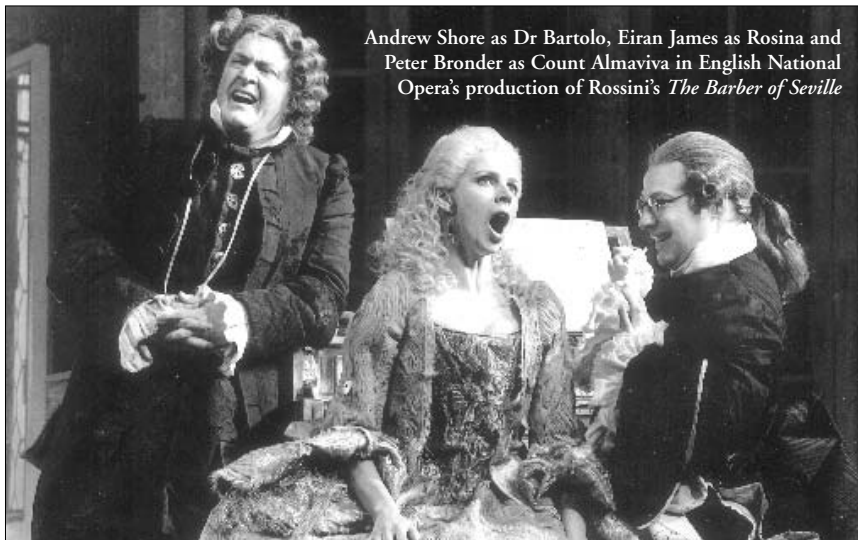
Andrew Shore gilt als führender britischer Baritonbuffo und als herausragender Sänger/Schauspieler. Er hat mit der English National Opera, The Royal Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Scottish Opera und Welsh National Opera zusammengearbeitet und ist im Ausland mit der San Diego Opera, New Israeli Opera, Opéra National de Paris-Bastille, Opéra Comique und dem Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona sowie in Lyon, Nantes, Santa Fe, Montpellier, Kopenhagen, Amsterdam, Vancouver und Ottawa aufgetreten.

Sein Repertoire umfasst u.a. die Titelrollen in *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff*, *King Priam*, *Gianni Schicchi* und *Don Pasquale* sowie *Dulcamara (L'elisir d'amore)*, *Don Alfonso (Così fan tutte)*, *Figaro (Le nozze di Figaro)*, *Papageno*

(*Die Zauberflöte*), King Dodon (*Le Coq d'or*),
Leandro (*Die Liebe zu den drei Orangen*),
Dikoy (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Dr. Kolenaty
(*Die Sache Makropulos*), Siskov (*Aus einem
Totenhaus*), Frank (*Die Fledermaus*), Baron
(*La Vie parisienne*), Baron Trombonok
(*Il viaggio a Reims*), George Wilson (*The Great
Gatsby*), Alberich in konzertanten
Aufführungen von *Das Rheingold*, Varlaam

(*Boris Godunow*) und Faninal (*Der
Rosenkavalier*).

Zu seinen Schallplattenaufnahmen gehören
die Titelrollen in *Falstaff* und *Don Pasquale*,
Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Dr. Bartolo (*The
Barber of Seville*), Dulcamara (*The Elixir of
Love*), Mesner (*Tosca*), Faninal in *Der
Rosenkavalier* (Auswahl) und *La Bohème*, alle
für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation.



Andrew Shore as Dr Bartolo, Eiran James as Rosina and
Peter Bronder as Count Almaviva in English National
Opera's production of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*

Grands airs d'opéra

Faut-il privilégier l'opéra dans l'original ou lui préférer une traduction dans la langue des auditeurs? Le débat continue de faire rage. Et c'est tant mieux: car les arguments abondent d'un côté comme de l'autre. Ce n'est pas l'opéra en général mais plus particulièrement l'opéra italien à Londres que Dr. Johnson qualifia de cette phrase célèbre, "un divertissement exotique dépourvu de raison". Et dans un numéro de 1711 du *Spectator*, Joseph Addison écrit:

Il est certain que nos arrières Petits-Enfants seront curieux de découvrir pourquoi leurs Ancêtres avaient l'habitude de se réunir comme un Public d'Etrangers dans leur propre Pays pour écouter des Drames entiers se dérouler devant eux dans une Langue qu'ils ne comprenaient pas.

Pourtant, près de trois siècles plus tard, rien n'a changé. Durant la seconde moitié du XXe siècle, l'opéra dans l'original – ce que le grand baryton américain David Bispham qualifia d'"engouement pour la langue étrangère" – prit un nouvel essor. Et dans les grands théâtres de Milan, Munich, Paris et Vienne, où l'on avait eu l'habitude de monter régulièrement les opéras étrangers dans la

langue du public, ainsi que dans bon nombre de petits théâtres, "l'original" devint la norme, même pour les opéras en russe ou en tchèque. Covent Garden – où, dans les années d'après-guerre, Kirsten Flagstad et Hans Hotter d'une part et Ljuba Welitsch d'autre part réapprirent respectivement *La Walkyrie* et *Salomé* en anglais, et où *Boris Godounov*, *La Dame de Pique* et *Jenůfa* étaient automatiquement traduits – Covent Garden lui-même est devenu un théâtre "exotique" adepte des langues étrangères, un théâtre qui se distancie de son public dans ses représentations. Pendant ce temps, l'English National Opera, basé au Coliseum à Londres, a maintenu les idéaux de ceux qui conçurent l'opéra: un drame qui se comprend immédiatement et auquel la musique donne une force nouvelle. Wagner et Verdi étaient tout à fait conscients que la traduction risquait de déformer un texte et ils le déploraient, mais ils accueillirent cet exercice à bras ouverts et recommandèrent son emploi, certains que les avantages dépassaient les inconvénients. Ils exigèrent cependant que les traductions soient de bonne qualité.

Mais j'en ai assez dit! Sur le disque que

voici, Andrew Shore chante des airs de l'opéra comique. (J'aborderai plus loin le cas assez particulier de *Don Giovanni*.) Les arguments pour et contre le texte original sont légèrement différents lorsqu'il s'agit de comédie.

Incominciate! – ou, comme nous le dirait une traduction française de *Pagliacci*, Que le rideau se lève! – sur quelques scènes tirées des plus grands opéras comiques!

Donizetti: The Elixir of Love

Nous lisons partout que *The Elixir of Love* fut composé à la hâte; le directeur du Théâtre Canobbiana à Milan, ne sachant plus à quel saint se vouer lorsqu'un compositeur manqua de livrer une œuvre dans les délais prévus, supplia Donizetti de rafraîchir un de ses anciens opéras pour combler ce vide. Donizetti lui répondit: "Vous voulez rire? Je n'ai pas l'habitude de retoucher à mes œuvres, ni à celles des autres, d'ailleurs. Je vais voir si je peux vous écrire un nouvel opéra. Faites venir Romani!" Et Donizetti annonça alors à Felice Romani: "On nous demande un nouvel opéra pour dans deux semaines; je vous donne une semaine pour préparer le livret."

Quoi qu'il en soit, cette perle de l'opéra comique fut créée au Théâtre Canobbiana le 12 mai 1832. Ce théâtre, construit à la même

époque que La Scala, par le même architecte, fut pendant la plus grande partie du XIXe siècle la "deuxième salle" de La Scala.

Spécialisé dans l'opéra comique, il était également réputé pour ses productions de nouveautés intéressantes venues de l'étranger, comme *Le Comte Ory*, *Robert le Diable*, *Martha*. *The Elixir of Love* y fut remonté durant les deux saisons suivantes – alors qu'il connaissait déjà un large succès sur la scène internationale.

Romani emprunta son intrigue à la dernière création en date de Scribe, son livret pour *Le Philtre*, un opéra d'Auber monté à l'Opéra de Paris en 1831. (Le fringant sergent fut créé dans les deux œuvres par le même chanteur, Henri-Bernard Dabadie.) L'œuvre de Romani en est en grande partie une traduction directe. (Comparez donc la cavatine initiale du héros: "Qu'elle est jolie!... Elle sait lire... Moi, je ne suis qu'un ignorant" et "Quanto è bella!... Essa legge... Io son sempre un idiota".) Mais Romani ajouta à la comédie de Scribe une touche de romance semi *seria*. Je pense que les parallèles avec *La Somnambule* de Bellini sont délibérés. (*La Somnambule*, dont le livret est aussi de Romani d'après Scribe, avait été créé à Milan en 1831.) Les tendres duos "Son geloso del zefiro errante... Son, mio bene, del zefiro

amante” (dans *La Somnambula*) et “Chiedi all’aura lusinghiera... Chiedi al rio perchè gemente” (dans *L’Elixir*) sont dans le même esprit et se situent à des moments identiques. *Le Philtre* ne comprenait pas une célèbre aria comme “Una furtiva lagrima”.

Les premiers mots de l’héroïne dans *L’Elixir* sont “È la storia del Tristano”. Adina lit l’histoire de Tristan aux jeunes filles et aux moissonneurs. (La version de Wagner ne viendrait que bien des années plus tard.) Lorsque le charlatan ambulante Dulcamara arrive au village, il débite son boniment enjoué – “Attention! Attention!” [1] – pour vendre son merveilleux “élixir” – un remède qui guérira tous les maux dont l’homme peut souffrir. Nemorino, qui languit d’amour pour Adina, s’approche de lui: a-t-il par hasard cette potion qui sut éveiller la passion de la reine Isolde? “Pensez-vous, je l’ai concoctée moi-même” lui répond Dulcamara (dans l’italien original) et il vend à Nemorino une bouteille de vin bon marché. Nemorino est ravi: la dédaigneuse Adina va sûrement le trouver irrésistible ([2]).

La potion n’agit pas assez vite. Nemorino en veut une autre bouteille, mais il n’a plus d’argent. Il s’enrôle dans l’armée et avec les vingt scudi de sa solde il achète un peu plus d’élixir. Bientôt toutes les filles du village

s’agglutinent autour de lui: elles ont appris qu’un riche oncle de Nemorino vient de mourir et que ce dernier est maintenant millionnaire. Mais Nemorino n’en sait rien et pense que c’est l’effet de la potion. Adina finit par être émue lorsqu’elle apprend que Nemorino a sacrifié sa liberté pour tenter de gagner son cœur ([3]). Dulcamara l’exhorte à acheter de sa potion pour séparer à jamais Nemorino de ses nombreuses admiratrices, mais Adina connaît un moyen plus sûr: “I need no magic potion... For my eyes will work the spell.”

Elle rachète la feuille d’enrôlement de Nemorino et tout est bien qui finit bien ([4]). Dulcamara s’en va, acclamé par tous – sauf par le sergent Belcore qui avait espéré garder Adina pour lui.

The Elixir of Love fut donné pour la première fois en anglais au Surrey Theatre puis à Drury Lane en 1839. Le traducteur était T.H. Reynoldson. La traduction d’Arthur Jacobs utilisée ici fut chantée pour la première fois par le Maidstone Opera Group en 1964. Arthur Jacobs (1922–1986) traduisit de nombreux opéras, entre autres des œuvres de Haendel, Tchaïkovski, Richard Strauss (The Silent Woman), Schoenberg (Erwartung) et Berg (Lulu). Il traduisit également Cenerentola et The Italian Girl in Algiers (cf. ([6]) de Rossini.

Rossini: The Barber of Seville

The Barber of Seville de Rossini fait partie de ces opéras qui firent un four – totalement inexplicable à nos yeux – lors de leur création (au Teatro Argentina à Rome, le 20 février 1816). Tout comme *Madama Butterfly*. Mais le *Barbier* fut un succès dès la deuxième représentation et le reste encore de nos jours. Rossini, qui adorait la musique de Mozart, releva le défi de mettre en musique la pièce de Beaumarchais qui avait précédé *Le nozze de Figaro*. Il existait déjà un opéra célèbre du *Barbier*, celui de Giovanni Paisiello (1782) et Paisiello était encore en vie. (Il mourut trois mois après la création de la version de Rossini). Rossini lui écrivit avant la première pour s'excuser et le compositeur vieillissant lui donna sa bénédiction; mais à sa création, par respect pour Paisiello, l'opéra fut intitulé *Almaviva, ou la Précaution inutile*; ce n'est que plus tard cette année-là, à Bologne, que le titre de Paisiello apparut sur l'affiche.

Le docteur Bartolo essaie de garder sous clef sa pupille Rosine, une jeune fille pétulante qu'il espère épouser. Mais elle s'est éprise d'un jeune homme qui dit s'appeler Lindoro (il s'agit en fait d'Almaviva) et qui lui a joué une sérénade; elle lui a écrit une lettre que le barbier Figaro doit lui faire passer. Le docteur

Bartolo remarque une tache d'encre sur le doigt de Rosine: "Je me suis brûlée, et je me suis servi d'encre pour faire passer la douleur." Il compte les feuilles de papier sur le bureau; il n'y en a que cinq, alors qu'il y en avait six: "J'en ai utilisé une pour envelopper des bonbons que j'ai envoyés à Barbarina." Alors pourquoi la plume est-elle couverte d'encre?: "J'étais en train de tracer un motif sur ma broderie." Le docteur Bartolo ne s'y laisse pas prendre et se lance dans une aria pompeuse d'un comique merveilleux (☐).

Les premiers interprètes trouvèrent cette aria difficile. Elle fut remplacée, après quelques représentations, par une mélodie plus simple, "Manca un foglio" (Il manque une feuille), composée par Pietro Romani. Ce changement fut adopté partout: dans l'édition Boosey du *Barbier* réalisée au XIXe siècle par Arthur Sullivan, les deux arias sont présentes, "pour convenir à ceux qui se servent de cette édition comme texte, puisque 'Manca un foglio' remplace aujourd'hui le plus souvent 'A un dottor'." De nos jours, c'est "Manca un foglio" qui est rarement interprétée.

La première représentation en anglais du Barber of Seville, dans une traduction de John Fawcett et Daniel Terry, eut lieu à Covent

Garden en 1818. La traduction utilisée ici est d'Amanda et Anthony Holden.

Rossini: The Italian Girl in Algiers

C'est en 1813, à Venise, que le jeune Rossini connut ses deux premiers grands succès: *Tancrède*, au Théâtre de la Fenice le 6 février, l'imposa comme le maître de l'*opera seria*; et *L'Italianne* à Alger, au Théâtre San Benedetto le 22 mai, comme celui de l'opéra comique. *L'Italianne à Alger*, tout comme *L'Elixir d'amour* de Donizetti, fut composé lorsqu'un autre compositeur manqua de livrer une œuvre. Pour gagner du temps, Rossini reprit un ancien livret d'Angelo Anelli que Luigi Mosca avait mis en musique pour La Scala en 1808. Il lui fit subir quelques révisions. Cet opéra n'a pas les belles proportions du *Barbier*, il ne renferme ni les intrigues secondaires à la Pirandello du *Turc en Italie*, ni les vérités morales qui font de *Cenerentola* un opéra aussi émouvant que divertissant. Et pourtant l'action quelque peu branlante revêt d'une aria à l'autre tant d'ingéniosité, de vivacité et de beauté que la partition transcende sa source, pour nous offrir ce que Stendhal qualifia d'enchantement majestueux, une sorte de frénésie musicale qui saisit l'orchestre comme le public et les entraîne sur des vagues de plaisir incontrôlable.

La pétillante Isabella, une jeune femme intrépide et ingénieuse, a quitté Livourne pour parcourir les mers à la recherche de son Lindoro bien-aimé. (Après avoir été capturé, ce dernier est devenu l'esclave du Bey d'Alger.) Elle voyage en compagnie de Taddeo, son soupirant vieillissant et chevalier servant. Rejetés sur les côtes d'Alger à la suite d'un naufrage, ils sont capturés par des pirates. Taddeo va être vendu comme esclave. Isabella sera une addition précieuse au sérail du Bey qui voulait depuis longtemps une Italienne. Ils se font passer pour un oncle et sa nièce, inséparables. Ils se querellent puis font la paix (□).

The Italian Girl in Algiers fut chanté pour la première fois en anglais au Princess's Theatre à Londres en 1836, dans une traduction anonyme. La traduction d'Arthur Jacobs que l'on entend ici fut chantée pour la première fois par l'English National Opera au Coliseum en 1968. Pour de plus amples détails sur Arthur Jacobs, se reporter à The Elixir of Love ci-dessus.

Mozart: Don Giovanni

Comme je l'ai dit plus tôt, tous les extraits figurant sur ce disque proviennent d'opéras comiques. Et *Don Giovanni*? Voilà bien un opéra qui défie toute classification. L'affiche de

la première qui eut lieu au Théâtre national de Prague le 29 octobre 1787 annonçant un *dramma giocoso*, un drame joyeux. Winthrop Sargeant, mon prédécesseur au *New Yorker*, y vit “un essai profond sur la mortalité”, avec un héros qui “n’est pas un personnage mais un archétype”. Il conclut son essai en déclarant: “La célébration d’un mythe est un rite, et non un spectacle; lorsque j’assiste à une représentation de *Don Giovanni*, j’ai l’impression d’être en présence d’un rite.”

Quant à Gounod, il trouva que les progressions harmoniques après les accords initiaux de l’ouverture étaient “à vous figer l’âme de terreur”. Edward J. Dent, de son côté, voulant rectifier cette crainte révérentielle ressentie par le XIXe siècle romantique, fit ressortir le côté *buffo* de l’œuvre dans son important volume intitulé *Mozarts Operas*.

Les scènes avec Donna Elvira – la sérénade burlesque, ses entrées subites aux moments les moins opportuns, son ultime supplication durant le souper de Don Giovanni – mêlent gaieté et douleur. Il est bien vrai qu’elle est assez ridicule. Mais elle est aussi poignante et tragique. C’est à Donna Elvira que Leporello débite la liste des conquêtes de son maître. Cette aria, reproduite sur ce disque (7), fait partie du répertoire *buffo*; son texte s’inspire de

près du *Don Giovanni* de Giovanni Bertati pour Giuseppe Gazzaniga (qui parut à Venise huit mois avant l’opéra de Mozart et fut la source principale de Da Ponte). Elvira ne dit pas un mot durant cette scène, mais ses réactions sur scène aux paroles de Leporello ont leur importance. En racontant les succès de son maître, Leporello fait-il preuve simplement d’une franchise à la fois drôle et brutale? Ou bien choisit-il d’être brutal par compassion, pour tenter de convaincre la pauvre Elvira qu’elle doit perdre ses illusions? Dans d’autres scènes, il compatit à voix basse aux misères d’Elvira et désapprouve ouvertement le comportement de Giovanni. Exagère-t-il délibérément le nombre des conquêtes? Devrait-il les évoquer avec dégoût plutôt que panache? Ou avec un peu des deux? *Don Giovanni* reste la source de questions infinies.

Don Giovanni fut chanté pour la première fois en anglais à Covent Garden en 1817; le traducteur était Isaac Pocock. La traduction d’Amanda Holden que l’on entend ici a servi à de nombreuses compagnies britanniques, et fut révisée tout spécialement pour l’enregistrement de l’œuvre pour Chandos. Se référer à Falstaff ci-dessous pour de plus amples détails sur Amanda Holden.

Donizetti: Don Pasquale

J'ai un ami à peu près de l'âge de Don Pasquale qui trouve que ce *dramma buffo* de Donizetti – dans lequel de jeunes gens s'associent pour tromper un vieux garçon – n'est pas du tout drôle. Certes, mon ami exagère, et il le sait bien; mais *Don Pasquale* est bien plus qu'une simple bouffonnerie. L'opéra fut créé au Théâtre Italien à Paris le 3 janvier 1843 durant les dernières années créatrices exaltées de Donizetti qui virent le compositeur enchaîner succès sur succès. On a dit de Donizetti qu'il était le Shakespeare de la scène lyrique. Le talent avec lequel il s'identifiait à ses personnages, partageait leurs ennuis, exprimait leurs sentiments, était sublime.

Le livret de *Don Pasquale* est basé sur *Ser Marc'Antonio* d'Angelo Anelli – son *Italiana* avait déjà inspiré Rossini – qui avait été mis en musique pour La Scala trente ans plus tôt par Stefano Pavesi. C'est une nouvelle version du thème classique du vieil homme amoureux qui se laisse duper; un thème abordé entre autres dans *Le Barbier* et dans *La Femme silencieuse* de Strauss, un opéra basé sur Ben Jonson); le populaire *Don Perlimplin* de Lorca en est une variante tragi-comique .

Don Pasquale a choisi pour héritier son neveu Ernesto mais lorsqu'il découvre que ce dernier a décidé d'épouser Norina, qui n'a pas un sou,

Pasquale décide de se marier et de fonder une famille. Son médecin, Malatesta, lui propose comme épouse sa petite sœur très sage, Sophronia; et le vieil homme est ravi (8). “Sophronia”, bien sûr, n'est autre que Norina, celle qu'Ernesto aime, qui se montre douce et timide avant la soi-disant cérémonie de mariage mais devient une vraie mégère une fois le contrat soi-disant signé. Elle s'endette de façon prodigieuse. Et la nuit de ses noces, Don Pasquale la trouve dans ses plus beaux atours prête à sortir au théâtre (9). Dans la première partie d'un duo en trois mouvements, il tente en vain d'affirmer son autorité. Elle le gifle. Dans une section centrale fort touchante, Pasquale a l'impression que son monde s'écroule, tandis que la “vraie” Norina, en aparté, le plaint. Dans la troisième section (omise sur ce disque), elle reprend son rôle de mégère. Durant sa sortie majestueuse, elle prend soin de faire tomber une lettre – que Pasquale doit trouver – arrangeant un rendez-vous ce soir-là dans le jardin. Bouleversé, Don Pasquale appelle Malatesta (10) et lui raconte ce qui vient de se passer. Malatesta suggère qu'ensemble ils surprennent “Sophronia” avec son amant. Si elle est vraiment coupable, il reprendra sa “sœur”.

Est-il besoin d'ajouter que tout se termine bien? Dans un dernier coup de théâtre,

“Sophronia” déclare qu’elle quittera la maison si une autre femme, Norina, ose y entrer. Et Pasquale ordonne donc à Ernesto d’épouser sur-le-champ Norina. Lorsqu’il découvre le pot aux roses, il a aussi appris sa leçon. Il bénit le jeune couple.

Don Pasquale fut chanté pour la première fois en anglais au Princess’s Theatre à Londres en 1843; le traducteur n’était autre que T.H. Reynoldson, qui avait traduit The Elixir of Love quatre ans plus tôt. La traduction utilisée ici est de David Parry.

Verdi: Falstaff

Dans son dernier opéra, monté à La Scala le 9 février 1893, alors qu’il avait quatre-vingts ans, Verdi réunit tous les fils conducteurs qui avaient dominé sa longue carrière: comme, entre autres, son profond attachement à Shakespeare, sa méfiance à l’égard d’un public inconstant, son amour sans bornes de l’humanité, son regard tendre sur les jeunes amoureux, son respect du métier bien fait, son appréciation instinctive des effets dramatiques. Il accepte maintenant avec sérénité – et avec une joie dont l’amertume passée est tout à fait absente – le fait qu’une nouvelle génération domine maintenant la scène, bien que lui le vieillard possède encore plus d’un tour dans son sac. Cette partition est

une merveille d’élégance, de beauté, d’invention et de vivacité, débordant de détails raffinés mais jamais importuns. L’entrain et le raffinement poétique y vont de pair. Le récitatif et l’aria ne semblent souvent faire qu’un. La ligne vocale évolue sans contrainte en réponse au texte accompli de Boito, bien que l’on entrevoie par moments les anciennes formes classiques. En l’espace de quelques mesures, le compositeur saisit l’essence même d’un air qui aurait pu durer plusieurs pages dans un opéra antérieur. La lecture par Alice de la lettre de Falstaff, “Come una stella”, est à la fois une parodie des arias ultra romantiques et une très belle mélodie à part entière. Une seconde aria, avec cabaletta, est confiée à Alice dans la première scène de l’Acte III. Les huit mesures de Falstaff commençant “So che se andiam, la notte” forment une aria *buffo* miniature. Le monologue sur l’honneur de Falstaff, que l’on entend ici (11), comprend plusieurs “sections” (Boito en emprunta le texte à trois différentes scènes shakespeariennes) et forme un tout extrêmement fluide. Le compositeur Stanford, qui se rendit à Milan pour assister à la création de Falstaff et écrivit deux essais éloquents sur cette œuvre, y vit l’homologue souriant du Credo de Iago dans *Otello*. Commençant comme un récitatif accompagné, il se développe en phases plus

régulières puis croît à nouveau librement tout en conservant cependant une subtile base motivique. La cabaletta qui commence sur “Quickly! Quickly!” ne dure pas plus de vingt-deux mesures, conclusion orchestrale y comprise. La palette orchestrale est merveilleusement subtile.

Falstaff fut publié avec un texte en italien, en anglais, en allemand et en français. La première en anglais (dans une traduction de W. Beatty Kingston, révisée par Fritz Hart) fut donnée par des étudiants du Royal College of Music au Lyceum, sous la direction de Stanford. Amanda Holden, dont on entend ici la traduction, a traduit plus de cinquante opéras. Falstaff fut le tout premier. Sa version fut donnée pour la première fois par le City of Birmingham Touring Opera en 1987.

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Traduction: Nicole Valencia

Andrew Shore est considéré comme étant le plus remarquable baryton bouffe de Grande-Bretagne, et comme un acteur/ chanteur exceptionnel. Il a travaillé à l’English National Opera, au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, à l’Opera North, au Glyndebourne Festival Opera, au Scottish Opera et au Welsh

National Opera. A l’étranger, il s’est produit à l’Opéra de San Diego, au Nouvel Opéra d’Israël, à l’Opéra National de Paris-Bastille, à l’Opéra Comique, au Gran Teatre del Liceu de Barcelone, ainsi qu’à Lyon, Nantes, Santa Fe, Montpellier, Copenhague, Amsterdam, Vancouver et Ottawa.

Parmi les nombreux engagements d’Andrew Shore figurent les rôles titres dans *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff*, *King Priam*, *Gianni Schicchi* et *Don Pasquale*, ainsi que *Dulcamara (L’elisir d’amore)*, *Don Alfonso (Cosi fan tutte)*, *Figaro (Le nozze di Figaro)*, *Papageno (Die Zauberflöte)*, le Roi Dodon (*Le Coq d’Or*), *Leandro (L’Amour des trois oranges)*, *Dikoy (Kát’a Kabanová)*, le Docteur Kolenat (*L’Affaire Makropoulos*), *Chichkov (La Maison des morts)*, *Franck (Die Fledermaus)*, le Baron (*La Vie parisienne*), le Baron Trombonok (*Il viaggio a Reims*), *Georges Wilson (The Great Gatsby)*, *Alberich* en versions de concert de *Das Rheingold*, *Varlaam (Boris Goudonov)* et *Faninal (Der Rosenkavalier)*.

Au disque, Andrew Shore a enregistré pour Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation le rôle titre dans *Don Pasquale*, *Leporello (Don Giovanni)*, le Docteur Bartolo (*The Barber of Seville*), *Dulcamara (The Elixir of Love)*, le Sacristain dans *Tosca*, *Faninal* dans *Der Rosenkavalier* (extraits), et *La Bohème*.



Andrew Shore as Don Alfonso in
New Israeli Opera's production of
Mozart's *Così fan tutte*

Grandi arie operistiche

L'annosa querelle che contrappone l'opera "in lingua originale" a quella "nella lingua degli ascoltatori" non finirà mai. Ed è giusto: troppe sono le argomentazioni pro e contro. La famosa definizione di "spettacolo esotico e irrazionale" del dottor Johnson non si riferiva all'opera come tale ma, appunto, all'opera italiana a Londra. E in un numero dello *Spectator* del 1711, Joseph Addison rilevava:

I nostri pronipoti saranno indubbiamente molto curiosi di sapere come mai i loro antenati amassero riunirsi in un pubblico di stranieri nel proprio paese, per assistere ad intere rappresentazioni in una lingua per loro incomprendibile.

A distanza di quasi trecento anni, si continua a fare lo stesso. Durante la seconda metà del Ventesimo secolo, l'opera in lingua originale – "la moda della lingua straniera", per usare la definizione del grande baritono americano David Bispham – si è diffusa sempre più. E nei grandi teatri lirici di Milano, Monaco, Parigi, Vienna, dove le opere straniere venivano regolarmente presentate nella lingua del pubblico e anche nei teatri più piccoli, la "lingua originale" è diventata la

norma, persino per le opere in russo o in ceco. Il Covent Garden – dove negli anni del dopoguerra Kirsten Flagstad e Hans Hotter avevano imparato da capo *La valchiria* e Ljuba Welitsch la *Salome* in inglese, e *Boris Godunov*, *La dama di picche*, *Jenifa* venivano normalmente tradotte – è diventato un teatro "esotico" della lingua straniera, in cui gli spettacoli prendono le distanze dal pubblico. Nel frattempo, al Coliseum, la English National Opera si fa paladina degli ideali dei creatori dell'opera: un intreccio immediatamente comprensibile e rafforzato ulteriormente dalla potenza della musica. Wagner e Verdi ne erano molto consapevoli e si lamentarono delle distorsioni introdotte dalla traduzione, ma l'accosero, l'accettarono, convinti che i pro superassero i contro. Le traduzioni, però, dovevano essere valide.

Premesso questo, passiamo ad altro. In questo disco Andrew Shore interpreta brani di opere comiche. (L'eccezione rappresentata dal *Don Giovanni* viene esaminata di seguito). I pro e i contro cambiano quando si parla di commedia. *Incominciate!* Con quest'ordine inizia l'opera *Pagliariacci*. Si alzi il sipario su

alcune scene tratte dalle più grandi opere comiche!

Donizetti: The Elixir of Love

L'elisir d'amore fu un'opera composta in fretta, come ribadiscono innumerevoli testi; il direttore del teatro della Canobbiana di Milano, disperato perché un compositore lo aveva abbandonato, supplicò Donizetti di riproporre una delle sue opere passate per tappare il buco. E Donizetti rispose: "Volete scherzare? Non è mia abitudine ritoccare le opere mie o altrui. Vediamo se ne posso comporre una nuova. Mandatemi Romani!" A Felice Romani, il compositore disse poi: "Dobbiamo preparare una nuova opera entro quindici giorni; avete una settimana di tempo per scrivere il libretto".

Comunque sia, il 12 maggio 1832 alla Canobbiana veniva consegnato un gioiello comico. Il Teatro della Canobbiana, costruito alla stessa epoca della Scala, dallo stesso architetto, fu per gran parte dell'Ottocento il "secondo teatro alla Scala". Era specializzato in opere comiche, ma aveva anche una reputazione perché proponeva opere interessanti dall'estero, come per esempio *Le Comte Ory*, *Robert le Diable*, *Martha*. *L'elisir d'amore* fu riproposto nelle due stagioni

successive, ma ormai era stato molto spesso rappresentato a livello internazionale.

Per l'intreccio, Romani si ispirò all' "ultimo Scribe", il libretto di *Le Philtre*, un'opera di Auber rappresentata all'Opéra di Parigi nel 1831. (Il focoso sergente di entrambe le opere fu creato dallo stesso cantante, Henri-Bernard Dabadie). In gran parte, l'opera di Romani fu una traduzione diretta. (Confrontare la cavatina d'esordio del protagonista: "Qu'elle est jolie!... Elle sait lire... Moi, je ne suis qu'un ignorant" e "Quanto è bella!... Essa legge... Io son sempre un idiota"). Ma alla commedia di Scribe, Romani aggiunse una vena romantica semiseria. I paralleli con la *Sonnambula* di Bellini sono intenzionali, secondo me. (*La sonnambula*, anch'essa su libretto di Romani ispirato a Scribe era stata rappresentata a Milano nel 1831). I teneri duetti "Son geloso del zefiro errante... Son, mio bene, del zefiro amante" (*La sonnambula*) e "Chiedi all'aura lusinghiera... Chiedi al rio perchè geme" (*L'elisir*) sono in una vena simile e hanno una collocazione simile. *Le Philtre* non aveva nulla di simile a "Una furtiva lagrima".

Le prime parole della protagonista dell'*Elisir* sono "È la storia del Tristano", mentre legge la storia alla compagnia. (La versione wagneriana era ancora di là da venire). Nel villaggio arriva

il ciarlatano Dulcamara, venditore ambulante, che pretende “Attention! Attention!” (brano [1]); questo è il suo vivace richiamo mentre decanta il suo straordinario elisir, una panacea contro tutti i mali. Nemorino, innamorato infelice, si rivolge a lui: avrebbe la pozione che accese la passione della regina Isotta? “L’ho creata io stesso” è la risposta di Dulcamara, che vende a Nemorino una bottiglia di vino dozzinale. Nemorino è felice: la sdegnosa Adina ben presto non potrà che trovarlo irresistibile (brano [2]).

La pozione non fa effetto. Nemorino ne vuole dell’altra, ma non ha più denaro. Si arruola e con i venti scudi dell’ingaggio così guadagnati compra dell’altro elisir. Ben presto si ritrova intorno tutte le ragazze del villaggio, le quali sono venute a sapere saputo che il ricco zio del giovane è morto, lasciandolo erede di un patrimonio. Nemorino non lo sa ed è convinto che sia tutto merito della pozione. Ma quando le rivelano che per cercare di conquistarla Nemorino ha sacrificato la propria libertà, Adina si intenerisce (brano [3]). Dulcamara la esorta a comprare la sua pozione per assicurarsi di staccare Nemorino dal codazzo delle sue nuove ammiratrici, ma Adina ha una soluzione più sicura: “I need no magic potion... For my eyes will work the spell”.

La donna riscatta i documenti di arruolamento di Nemorino e tutto finisce bene (brano [4]). Dulcamara riparte, acclamato da tutti, tranne che dal sergente Belcore, che aveva sperato di conquistare Adina.

The Elixir of Love *fu rappresentato in inglese per la prima volta presso il Surrey Theatre e poi nel teatro di Drury Lane, nel 1839, nella traduzione di T.H. Reynoldson. La versione di Arthur Jacobs qui utilizzata fu adottata per la prima volta dal Maidstone Opera Group, nel 1964. Arthur Jacobs (1922–1986) ha tradotto numerose opere di Handel, Tajkovskij, Richard Strauss (The Silent Woman), Schoenberg (Erwartung) e Berg (Lulu). Inoltre la Cenerentola di Rossini e (v. brano [5]) The Italian Girl in Algiers.*

Rossini: The Barber of Seville

Il barbiere di Siviglia di Rossini fu una delle opere che fecero inspiegabilmente fiasco alla prima (Teatro Argentina di Roma, 20 febbraio 1816). Un’altra fu *Madama Butterfly*. Ma il *Barbiere* ebbe successo alla seconda rappresentazione e lo ha mantenuto da allora. Rossini, che amava la musica di Mozart, decise di cimentarsi con la commedia di Beaumarchais che precede *Le nozze di Figaro*. Esisteva già un famoso *Barbiere*, di Giovanni

Paisiello (1782), all'epoca ancora in vita. (Morì tre mesi dopo la prima della versione di Rossini). Rossini gli scrisse in anticipo, per scusarsi, e ottenne la benedizione dell'anziano compositore; ma alla prima l'opera venne deferentemente intitolata *Almaviva o L'inutile precauzione*; solo più tardi nello stesso anno a Bologna l'opera fu ribattezzata con lo stesso titolo di quella di Paisiello.

Il dottor Bartolo cerca di tenere sotto chiave la sua vivace e giovane pupilla, Rosina, che intende sposare. Ma la ragazza, oggetto delle serenate di un giovane che si fa chiamare Lindoro (ed è in realtà il conte di Almaviva) si è innamorata di lui e gli ha scritto un biglietto che Figaro, il barbiere, deve consegnargli di nascosto. Il dottor Bartolo nota una macchia d'inchiostro sul dito di Rosina: "L'ho bruciato e ho usato l'inchiostro per calmare il bruciore." Il vecchio conta i fogli di carta da lettera sulla scrivania: sono cinque, ma prima erano sei. "Ne ho usato uno per incartare dei dolci che dovevo mandare a Barbarina." E allora come mai la penna è sporca d'inchiostro?: "Stavo copiando un disegno per il mio ricamo." Il dottor Bartolo rimane incredulo e si lancia in un'aria splendidamente, comicamente boriosa (brano [5]).

L'aria si rivelò difficile per i primi interpreti. Dopo alcune rappresentazioni, fu sostituita da un brano più semplice, "Manca un foglio", appositamente composto da Pietro Romani, che venne adottato spesso. Nella partitura ottocentesca di Boosey, a cura di Arthur Sullivan, compaiono entrambe le arie, "per comodità di coloro che utilizzano quest'edizione come manuale, dal momento che 'Manca un foglio' oggi molto spesso viene eseguita al posto di 'A un dottor'." Ma oggi la situazione si è ribaltata.

La prima rappresentazione inglese di The Barber of Seville, in una traduzione di John Fawcett e Daniel Terry, fu rappresentata al Covent Garden nel 1818. La traduzione utilizzata qui è di Amanda e Anthony Holden.

Rossini: The Italian Girl in Algiers

I primi due grandi trionfi del giovane Rossini furono rappresentati nel 1813, a Venezia. *Tancredi*, presentato alla Fenice il 6 febbraio, suggellò il suo successo di maestro dell'opera seria; *Litaliana in Algeri*, al Teatro San Benedetto il 22 maggio, consacrò il suo successo di maestro dell'opera buffa. *Litaliana in Algeri*, come *L'elisir d'amore* di Donizetti, fu composta per rimediare alla mancata promessa di un altro compositore. Per risparmiare

tempo, fu riutilizzato un vecchio libretto, quello di Angelo Anelli, musicato da Luigi Mosca per La Scala nel 1808, che fu alquanto riveduto. Mancano la proporzione del *Barbiere*, il commento secondario del *Turco in Italia*, le verità morali che rendono *Cenerentola* commovente oltre che divertente. Eppure l'intreccio leggermente traballante si ammanta di una successione di brani di tale inventiva, vivacità e bellezza che la partitura trascende la propria fonte, producendo, per dirla con le famose parole di Stendhal, “un incanto travolgente, una sorta di frenesia musicale che si impossessa dell’orchestra e del pubblico insieme, trascinando tutti con ondate di incontrollabile delizia”.

Isabella, brillante, piena di risorse, intrepida, si è imbarcata da Livorno in cerca dell’amato Lindoro, che in realtà è stato catturato e adesso si trova in schiavitù presso il bey di Algeri. Con lei viaggia un cicisbeo attempato, il suo corteggiatore Taddeo. Dopo un naufragio sulle coste di Algeri, entrambi vengono catturati dai pirati. Taddeo è destinato ad essere venduto come schiavo, Isabella diventerà una preziosa aggiunta all’harem del bey, che da molto tempo desidera una sposa italiana. I due fingono di essere zio e nipote, inseparabili. Dopo un battibecco, fanno pace (brano [6]).

The Italian Girl in Algiers *fu rappresentata in inglese per la prima volta al Princess’s Theatre di Londra nel 1836, in una traduzione di anonimo. La versione di Arthur Jacobs registrata qui fu eseguita per la prima volta da English National Opera al Coliseum nel 1968. Una nota su Arthur Jacobs è riportata sopra (v. The Elixir of Love).*

Mozart: Don Giovanni

Ho detto che tutti i brani di questo disco sono tratti da opere comiche. E il *Don Giovanni*? Impossibile catalogarlo. Nel programma della prima esecuzione, al Teatro Nazionale di Praga il 29 ottobre 1787, fu definito *dramma giocoso*. Secondo Winthrop Sargeant, che mi ha preceduto al *New Yorker*, si tratta di “un profondo saggio sulla mortalità” e il protagonista “non è un personaggio, ma un archetipo”. Il suo saggio conclude: “la celebrazione di un mito è un rito, non uno spettacolo e quando io vado a uno spettacolo del *Don Giovanni* ho la sensazione di assistere a un rito”. Gounod dichiarò che “le progressioni armoniche dopo gli accordi di inizio dell’ouverture riempiono l’animo di terrore agghiacciante”. Edward J. Dent, nel tentativo di alleggerire la soggezione romantica dell’Ottocento, sottolineò gli aspetti

di *buffo* nel suo autorevole scritto *Mozart's Operas*.

Le scene in cui compare Donna Elvira – la burlesca serenata, i suoi ingressi improvvisi in momenti inopportuni, la sua estrema supplica alla cena di Don Giovanni – sono caratterizzate da un insieme di allegria e strazio. Donna Elvira è piuttosto ridicola, bisogna ammetterlo. Ma è anche commovente, tragica. Il catalogo di Leporello, incluso in questa registrazione (brano [7]), è una delle scene in cui compare Elvira ed è un'aria da *buffo*; il testo si ispira a quello del *Convitato di pietra* di Giovanni Bertati per Giuseppe Gazzaniga (rappresentato a Venezia otto mesi prima dell'opera di Mozart e principale fonte per Da Ponte). Elvira qui non parla, ma le sue reazioni a quello che sente sono, in teatro, un importante elemento della scena. Con la sua narrazione delle conquiste del padrone, Leporello è semplicemente divertente e brutalmente franco? O è brutale perché sta tentando in maniera sollecita, ma confusa, di convincere la povera Elvira a non illudersi più? In altre scene l'uomo esprime sotto voce solidarietà per la situazione della donna, e aperta disapprovazione delle abitudini di don Giovanni. Forse esagera intenzionalmente le cifre totali? La sua rievocazione delle

innumerevoli conquiste provoca in lui disgusto, anziché piacere? O tutt'e due le cose? Le domande sul *Don Giovanni* non finiscono mai.

Don Giovanni *fu eseguito in inglese per la prima volta al Covent Garden nel 1817; la traduzione è di Isaac Pocock. La versione di Amanda Holden, utilizzata qui, è stata adottata da numerose compagnie britanniche ed è stata appositamente riveduta per la registrazione di Chandos. Altri particolari su Amanda Holden in Falstaff, di seguito.*

Donizetti: Don Pasquale

Per un mio amico, all'incirca dell'età di Don Pasquale, quest'opera comica di Donizetti che vede due giovani unire le proprie forze per ingannare un vecchio, non è affatto divertente. È un'esagerazione di cui è consapevole, ma *Don Pasquale* non è affatto un'opera buffa. Fu rappresentato per la prima volta al Théâtre des Italiens di Parigi il 3 gennaio 1843, durante gli ultimi, febbrili anni di attività del compositore, che produsse un capolavoro dopo l'altro. Donizetti è stato definito uno Shakespeare del teatro lirico; aveva una straordinaria capacità di immedesimarsi totalmente con i propri personaggi, mettersi nei loro panni, esprimere

i loro sentimenti. Il libretto di *Don Pasquale* era ispirato a *Ser Marc'Antonio* di Angelo Anelli – lo stesso autore a cui Rossini si era rivolto per l'*Italiana in Algeri* – musicato per La Scala trent'anni prima da Stefano Pavesi. È un'altra versione della trama del vecchio innamorato ingannato, come *Il barbiere e La donna silenziosa* di Strauss (ispirato a un'opera di Ben Jonson); una variante tragicomica è il *Don Perlimplin*, spesso musicato, di Lorca.

Don Pasquale ha dichiarato proprio erede il nipote Ernesto, ma quando viene a sapere che Ernesto desidera sposare Norina, una donna povera, decide di sposarsi e avere figli propri. Il suo medico, Malatesta, gli propone di prendere in moglie una sua sorella minore, una donna modesta, Sofronia; e il vecchio è felice (brano [8]). Sofronia, che in realtà è Norina, l'innamorata di Ernesto, inizialmente appare timidissima e dolcissima, ma dopo aver firmato un contratto durante una finta cerimonia di matrimonio si trasforma in despota; presto arrivano fatture enormi. E la sera delle nozze, Don Pasquale (brano [9]) la trova vestita di tutto punto per andare a teatro. Inutilmente, nella prima parte di un duetto in tre movimenti, cerca di imporre la propria autorità. La donna lo schiaffeggia. In una

commovente sezione centrale, don Pasquale sente che il suo mondo è finito, mentre la “vera” Norina, a parte, lo commiserà. Nella terza parte (che non compare in questo disco) la donna riprende il ruolo di prepotente. Uscendo, lascia cadere intenzionalmente una lettera dà convegno a un amante quella notte stessa, nel giardino. Don Pasquale, ormai sconfitto, chiama Malatesta (brano [10]) e gli racconta l'accaduto. Malatesta gli suggerisce di cogliere sul fatto “Sofronia” e il suo amante. Se la sorella è veramente colpevole, la porterà via.

Naturalmente tutto si conclude nel migliore dei modi. In un colpo di scena finale, Sofronia dichiara che lascerà la casa se un'altra donna, Norina, oserà mettervi piede. Così Don Pasquale ordina a Ernesto di sposare immediatamente Norina. La verità viene infine a galla: Don Pasquale ha imparato la lezione e concede la propria benedizione alla giovane coppia.

Don Pasquale *fu rappresentato per la prima volta in inglese al Princess's Theatre di Londra, nel 1843, su traduzione di T.H. Reynoldson, come The Elixir of Love, rappresentato quattro anni prima. Qui è stata seguita la traduzione di David Parry.*

Verdi: Falstaff

L'ultima opera dell'ottantenne Verdi, allestita alla Scala il 9 febbraio 1893, riunisce temi che avevano caratterizzato la lunga carriera del compositore: la sua lunga devozione a Shakespeare, la sua diffidenza per l'incostanza del pubblico, il suo amore generoso per l'umanità, il suo affetto per l'amore tra i giovani, il suo rispetto per l'arte, il suo istinto per l'effetto teatrale. E a tutto questo si aggiunge una matura accettazione, non più amara, ma gioiosa, del fatto che altri giovani si sono impadroniti della scena, anche se il vecchio ha ancora qualcosa insegnare. La partitura è un miracolo di grazia, bellezza, invenzione brillante e dettagli delicati, ma mai invadenti. Vivacità e raffinatezza poetica vanno di pari passo. Spesso recitativo e aria sembrano divenire una cosa sola. La linea vocale si sposta liberamente, in obbedienza al raffinato testo di Boito, con saltuari ritorni alle vecchie forme regolari. In poche battute il compositore coglie l'essenza di un brano che avrebbe potuto occupare pagine intere in una delle sue opere precedenti. Il momento in cui Alice legge la lettera di Falstaff, "Come una stella", è allo stesso tempo una parodia dell'aria romantica e una bellissima melodia a sé stante. Una seconda "aria", completa di cabaletta,

viene intessuta nella prima scena dell'Atto III. Le otto battute di Falstaff che iniziano con "So che se andiam, la notte" è un'aria per buffo in miniatura. Il monologo dell'Onore di Falstaff, registrato qui (brano [11](#)), è composto da diverse "sezioni" (Boito adattò il testo attingendo a tre scene diverse dell'opera di Shakespeare) che scorrono con fluidità. Il compositore Stanford, che si recò a Milano per assistere alla prima del *Falstaff* e scrisse due eloquenti saggi sull'opera, lo definì la controparte comica del Credo di Iago nell'*Otello*. Inizia come un recitativo accompagnato, si sposta in periodi più regolari, diventa libero ancora una volta, ma con una sottile base di melodia. Una cabaletta che inizia con "Quickly! Quickly!", dura (se si conta la conclusione orchestrale) appena ventidue battute ed è orchestrata in colori meravigliosamente delicati.

Falstaff fu pubblicato in italiano, inglese, tedesco e francese. La prima rappresentazione in inglese (traduzione di W. Beatty Kingston, riveduta da Fritz Hart), interpretata dagli studenti del Royal College of Music al Lyceum, fu diretta da Stanford. La versione utilizzata in questa registrazione è di Amanda Holden, che ha tradotto più di cinquanta opere dopo Falstaff,

rappresentata dalla *City of Birmingham Touring Opera* nel 1987.

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Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Andrew Shore è ritenuto il miglior *buffo* in Gran Bretagna ed è uno straordinario cantante/attore. Ha lavorato con la English National Opera, la Royal Opera House, Opera North, la Glyndebourne Festival Opera, la Scottish Opera e la Welsh National Opera e si è esibito all'estero con l'Opera di San Diego, la New Israeli Opera, l'Opéra National de Paris-Bastille, l'Opéra Comique, il Gran Teatre del Liceu di Barcellona, a Lione, Nantes, Santa Fe, Montpellier, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Vancouver e Ottawa.

I suoi numerosi impegni lo hanno visto interpretare il ruolo di protagonista in *Wozzeck*, *Falstaff*, *King Priam*, *Gianni Schicchi*

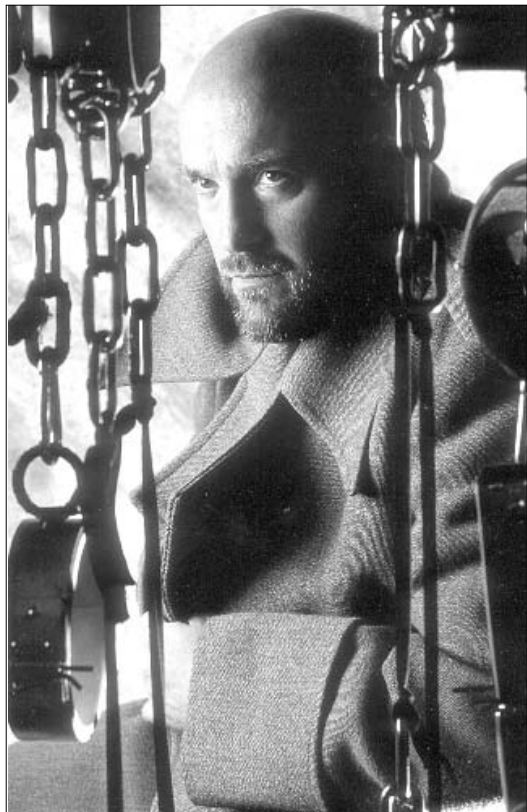
e *Don Pasquale*, oltre a *Dulcamara* (*L'elisir d'amore*), *Don Alfonso* (*Così fan tutte*), *Figaro* (*Le nozze di Figaro*), *Papageno* (*Il flauto magico*), *re Dodon* (*Le Coq d'or*), *Leandro* (*L'amore delle tre melarance*), *Dikoy* (*Kát'a Kabanová*), *Dr Kolenaty* (*L'affare Makropulos*), *Shishkov* (*Da una casa di morti*), *Frank* (*Die Fledermaus*), il barone (*La Vie parisienne*), il barone Trombonok (*Il viaggio a Reims*), *George Wilson* (*The Great Gatsby*), *Alberich* in alcune interpretazioni di *Das Rheingold* in concerto, *Varlaam* (*Boris Godunov*) e *Faninal* (*Der Rosenkavalier*).

La discografia include il ruolo di protagonista nel *Falstaff* e *Don Pasquale*, *Leporello* (*Don Giovanni*), *don Bartolo* (*The Barber of Seville*), *Dulcamara* (*The Elixir of Love*), il sagrestano in *Tosca*, *Faninal* in *Der Rosenkavalier* (momenti salienti), e *La Bohème*, tutti per Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation.



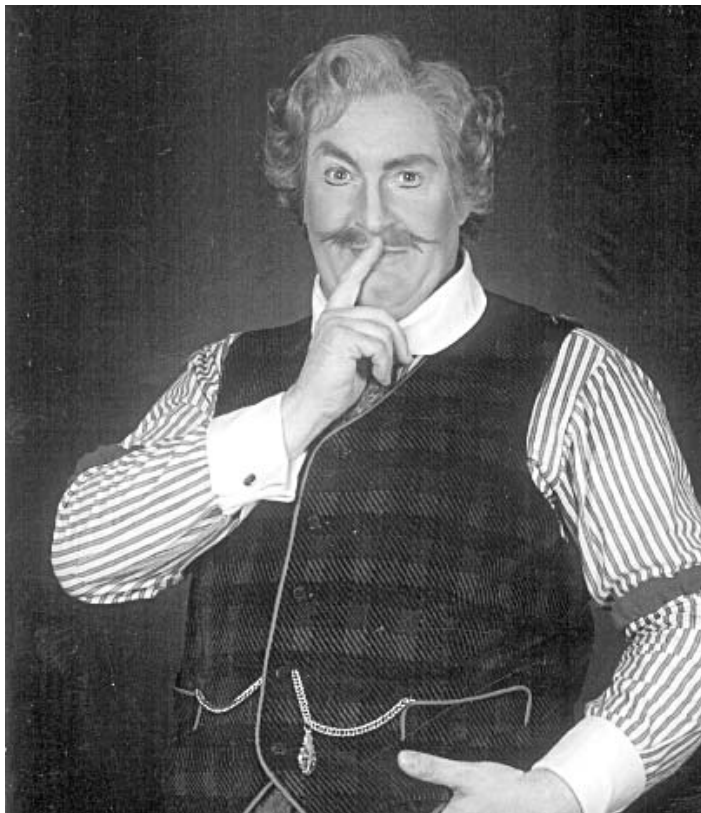
Richard Mildenhall

Andrew Shore in the title role of
English National Opera's
production of Puccini's
Gianni Schicchi



Sue Adler

Andrew Shore as Shishkov in
English National Opera's
production of Janáček's
From the House of the Dead



Andrew Shore as
Dulcamara in San
Diego Opera's
production of
Donizetti's *The Elixir
of Love*

from The Elixir of Love

Dulcamara's Cavatina

Dulcamara

1 Attention! Attention! You country folk!

Be silent! Pay attention!
I'm sure I need not inform you all
of whom you see before you.
A doctor anatomical,
physician astronomical.
From here to the Sahara
renowned is Dulcamara.
For my skill with my cases
is known in all the universe
and... and... in other places.
I clear out all the hospitals
by curing all diseases.
No malady can baffle me
from broken legs to sneezes.
The cure for all and sundry
is the medicine I have got.
Come buy of me, come buy of me.
It will not cost a lot.
Come buy of me, come buy of me.
Don't wait until you rot. *etc.*

It cures all kinds of toothache
or a painful irritation.
It drives away pneumonia,
relieves your constipation.
It's all authenticated.
I've letters signed and dated
from grateful former sufferers,

who swear I speak the truth.
My learning academical,
both physical and chemical,
enabled me to brew it,
as only I can do it.
Even a man of seventy
by this regains his youth.
A man of over seventy
regains his lusty youth.
'Twould hardly be surprising
to see a dead man rising
if but one drop of this were poured
between his tongue and tooth.

Villagers

Oh!

Dulcamara

You ladies growing elderly,
with foreheads that are wrinkling,
shampoo with what I sell to you.
be pretty in a twinkling!
You girls around my carriage,
d'you wish for happy marriage?
Young men, whate'er your trade is,
d'you want to please the ladies?
Then buy the sovereign remedy,
which I alone have got.
It will not cost a lot, *etc.*
Come all you lads and lasses,
come sirs and pretty ladies,
come buy my sovereign remedy,
it will not cost a lot.

For all complaints choleral,
dyspeptical, arthritical,
asthmatical, hysterical,
bronchitical, paralytical,
rheumatical, scorbutical,
of pellicle or cuticle,
and all the smartest illnesses,
which folk in town have got.
For pellicle or cuticle,
rheumatical, scorbutical,
asthmatical, hysterical,
dyspeptical, choleral,
come all you gallant gentlemen,
come all you pretty ladies,
the medicine that I'm selling,
will cure you like a shot.
Come young and old and buy of me,
come all of high and low degree,
come buy the sovereign remedy,
which I alone have got.
Come on, it will not cost a lot, *etc.*

The ingredients are rarer,
than the costliest of spices.
You will ask me, tell us quickly,
tell us quickly what the price is.
Eighty florins? No! Forty? No! Twenty?
At that I could sell plenty.
but since you have been so pleasant,
I shall make you all a present,
and to all who buy a bottle,
seven florins I'll donate.

Villagers

Seven florins! Oh, how generous!
We've no need to hesitate.

Dulcamara

Then observe! This mighty potion,
which renews a man or beast,
I could sell the whole world over
for ten florins at the least.
But if you would like to savour
its electrifying flavour,
then I'll only ask three florins.
Yes, for you I do a favour.

For 'tis clear as stars in heaven,
three from ten will leave you seven.
Seven florins are your profit,
as you all have understood. *etc.*

Villagers

Yes, that's true. Indeed, I'll take it. *etc.*
Oh, what learning went to make it. *etc.*

Dulcamara

Take it,
three florins.
Step forward,
three florins.

Villagers

Oh, how generously he treats us,
as no other doctor would. *etc.*

Dulcamara

Ah, because I love my neighbours,
I delight to do them good.

Villagers

Oh, how generous, how very generous...

Dulcamara

Ah, because I love my neighbours,
I delight to do them good.

Villagers

Yes, he treats us
as no other doctor would.

Dulcamara

I delight... yes, I delight...

Villagers

...as no other doctor would.

Dulcamara

...I delight to do them good.

Villagers

... as no other doctor would.

Dulcamara

Ah, I love my suffering neighbours,
and delight to do them good.

Villagers

No other would.

Dulcamara

Ah, I love my suffering neighbours,
and delight to do them good.
To do them good, *etc.*

Villagers

I'm sure no other doctor would, *etc.*

Felice Romani after Eugène Scribe's *Le Philtre*,
English version by Arthur Jacobs

from The Elixir of Love

Nemorino and Dulcamara's Recitative and Duet

Recitative

Nemorino

- [2] Good doctor, beg your pardon, but am I right in
thinking
you understand the passions?

Dulcamara

Quite correct, sir.
Medical science plumbs to the depth of nature.

Nemorino

Then can you let me have
the potion that aroused the passions of Queen
Isolda?

Dulcamara

What? Who? Speak plainly!

Duet

Nemorino

It was Tristan who employed it
to awaken love's desiring.

Dulcamara

Ah, why yes! I follow exactly.
I have just what you're requiring,

Nemorino

Have you really?

Dulcamara

Yes, yes indeed.
It's a thing which many people seem to need.

Nemorino

Oh, how lucky! And you supply it?

Dulcamara

Why, of course. I sell it daily.

Nemorino

At what price do people buy it?

Dulcamara

Very cheaply.

Nemorino

Cheaply?

Dulcamara

That is, according...

Nemorino

For a florin? I have no more.

Dulcamara

Just the sum I sell it for.

Nemorino

Here's the money, you are welcome. *etc.*

Dulcamara

Go, Sir Tristan, drink your liquor.

Nemorino

Thank you kindly. Oh, thank you kindly.

You have made me so contented.

With a potion, the best invented,

I can say goodbye to care.

Thank you kindly. Thank you kindly. *etc.*

Dulcamara

On my travels here and yonder,

There's a fool where'er I wander. *etc.*

With that little laddie there,

I've seen nothing to compare.

I've seen nothing, truly nothing,

truly nothing to compare... *etc.*

Nemorino

Just a moment, if you please, sir.

Just a moment, if you please, sir.

What's the proper way to take it?

Dulcamara

Hold the bottle very firmly
and remember first to shake it.

Then uncork it, but be careful
to prevent evaporation
of the magic distillation.

Nemorino

Right.

Dulcamara

When you're ready, you may taste it.

Nemorino

Right.

Dulcamara

But be careful you do not waste it.

Nemorino

Right.

Dulcamara

And the benefits I promised,
will arrive without delay. *etc.*
They will certainly arrive without delay.

Nemorino

Will they really?

Dulcamara

One day of waiting,
then you'll find it's operating.
(By that time I shall be out of here
and fifty miles away.)

Nemorino

And the flavour?

Dulcamara

You will love it.

Nemorino

I will love it?

Dulcamara

You will love it.
(Beaujolais, bought yesterday!)

Nemorino

Thank you kindly. Oh, thank you kindly.
You have made me so contented.
With a potion, the best invented,
I can say goodbye to care.
Thank you kindly. Thank you kindly. *etc.*

Dulcamara

But with that little laddie there,
I've seen nothing to compare.

I've seen nothing, truly nothing,
truly nothing to compare. *etc.*
(as *Nemorino makes to leave*)
Just a moment! Come! Listen!

Nemorino

Yes, doctor?

Dulcamara

Mum's the word. Keep quiet, quiet.
Tell no one, Keep quiet.
This is such a powerful liquor,
it's illegal to supply it.

Nemorino

Oh!

Dulcamara

Yes, I'm afraid it isn't legal to supply it.
If it came to public knowledge,
then we both should be in jail.
Therefore, tell no one.

Nemorino

Take my solemn word of honour,
not a soul shall hear the tale.

Dulcamara

Remember!

Nemorino

Take my solemn word of honour.
Rest assured, I shall not fail.

Dulcamara

Drink it up and you'll be mellow.

You're a fortunate young fellow,
for tomorrow every woman
could be deep in love with you.
Drink it up and you'll be mellow. *etc.*

Nemorino

Ah! Good doctor, by heavens above me,
one alone I wish to love me.
And no other, despite her beauty,
could persuade me to be untrue.
(Smiling fortune my plan has aided.
Hopes that faded now rise anew.) *etc.*

Dulcamara

(By tomorrow, never doubt it,
I'll have disappeared from view.) *etc.*
Go and drink my distillation.
You'll enjoy a new sensation.
From tomorrow every woman
will be deep in love with you.
(By tomorrow, never doubt it,
I'll have disappeared from view.) *etc.*
But be sure to keep it quiet.

Nemorino

Never fear, sir.

Dulcamara

It's illegal to supply it.

Nemorino

All is clear, sir.

Dulcamara

(By tomorrow, never doubt it,
I'll have disappeared from view.) *etc.*

Nemorino

(Smiling fortune my plan has aided.
Hopes that faded now shall rise anew.) *etc.*

Felice Romani after Eugène Scribe's *Le Philtre*,
English version by Arthur Jacobs

from The Elixir of Love

Adina and Dulcamara's Duet

Adina

3 (How he loved me! And I so cruel,
I denied a love so true!)

Dulcamara

(She is quite infatuated.)

Adina

(So cruel.)

Dulcamara

(She should have my potion too.)

Adina

(So cruel.)

(*to Dulcamara*)

What's become, then, of Nemorino?
Is his love at last required?

Dulcamara

Girls in dozens come to court him,
flocking round him all excited.
It's a happy situation.
I've no doubt that he's delighted.

Adina

(Ah! Which among them may hope to gain him?
Which of them may now detain him?)

Dulcamara

With a choice of ten or twenty
he's delighted there are plenty.
Like a cock you might have found him
when the hens are all around him.

Adina

(Oh, how foolishly I acted...

Dulcamara

(She is quite infatuated.) *etc.*

Adina

(... I denied a heart so true.)

Dulcamara

(She should have my potion, too.) *etc.*

Adina

(Oh, disaster! Oh, disaster! I denied a heart so
true.) *etc.*

Dulcamara

With a choice of ten or twenty,
he's delighted there are plenty.
Like a cock you might have found him,
when the hens are all around him.
(She's quite infatuated. She's quite infatuated. *etc.*
She should have my potion, too.)

Fair Adina! Just a moment!
There is hope still! Come, be cheerful!

You are caught now, I can deduce it,
from your manner so sad and tearful.
I can help you.

Adina

You help? How so, sir?

Dulcamara

I will tell you if you come a little closer.
If you want to find the answer,
there's a remedy I know. *etc.*
It is very scientific
and the price is very low.

Adina

Though its power may be terrific,
it is not for me, I know.

Dulcamara

Do you wish a thousand suitors
at your feet with love expiring?

Adina

No, I only wish for one, sir,
and a thousand would be tiring.

Dulcamara

You can make all women jealous
of your fortunate position.

Adina

Making enemies of others
is no part of my ambition.

Dulcamara

Do you want to wed a title?

Adina

I would hardly call it vital.

Dulcamara

Noble suitors ten or twenty?

Adina

Nemorino will be plenty.

Dulcamara

What I sell is scientific.

Adina

Yes, I'm sure it's quite terrific.

Dulcamara

The result I guarantee.

Adina

I'm afraid it's not for me.

No, not for me. *etc.*

Your remedy is really not for me.

Dulcamara

What I sell, what I sell,

what I sell is scientific. *etc.*

The result I guarantee. *etc.*

Naughty creature, are you daring,
all my science to disparage?

Adina

There's an even better way, sir,
when a woman hopes for marriage.

Just you wait and Nemorino
will be mine, you need not fear.

Dulcamara (*aside*)

She is really far too clever.

There's no need of doctors here.

No, there's no need of doctors here. *etc.*

Adina

With a look of love and laughter,
with a smile and a suggestion

I lead the man I'm after

to be bold and put the question.

Though at first he be defiant,
he is mine once I have picked him.

Very soon he'll be compliant
and a more than willing victim.

So I need no magic potion,
for my eyes will work the spell.

With a look of love and laughter,
with a smile and a suggestion, *etc.*

Dulcamara

Ah, I see it. I have nothing
in reply to your female intuition.

Pretty rascal! Pretty rascal!

Oh, my learning! I have nothing
in reply to all your female intuition.

It will help you more than I will
in achieving your ambition.

Yes, more than I will in achieving your ambition.
I have nothing in reply to all your female
intuition.

Adina

Spare me, doctor!

Dulcamara

It will help you more than I will
in achieving your ambition.

Adina

Spare me, doctor!

Dulcamara

By your beauty so abundant
all my skill is now redundant...

Adina

He is mine once I have picked him...

Dulcamara

... For you practise all the chemistry
of Cupid, I can tell...

Adina

... Such a willing, willing victim.

Dulcamara

... I can very quickly tell.
If I had the skill that you have,
that's the medicine I would sell.

Adina

So I need no magic potion...

Dulcamara

Ah, you sly one!

Adina

... For my eyes will work the spell.
With a look of love and laughter,
with a smile and a suggestion, *etc.*

Dulcamara

Ah! I see it! I have nothing
in reply to your female intuition. *etc.*

Adina

For if I love I can compel,
for in my eyes I own a spell, *etc.*

Dulcamara

If I had the skill that you have,
that's the medicine I would sell. *etc.*

Felice Romani after Eugène Scribe's *Le Philtre*,
English version by Arthur Jacobs

from **The Elixir of Love****Act II Finale****Dulcamara**

- 4 It will give you cheeks like peaches
to conform with good aesthetics.
It improves a woman's features
better far than her cosmetics,
cures your warts and your carbuncles
and dispatches wealthy uncles,
makes your bees produce more honey
and from worry keeps you free.

Villagers

Oh, good doctor, here's my money.
Give me one or two or three.

Dulcamara

It will soften the suspicions
of a husband who is jealous,
or relax the prohibitions

of a guardian over-zealous.
It will bring you bonny babies
and protect your dog from rabies
and awaken love and passion
better far than China tea.

Villagers

Oh, I'd like a double ration.
Make it two or even three.

Dulcamara (*His carriage having reappeared on stage, he prepares to depart.*)

Now, good people, I must leave you.
But I warn you as a brother,
let no charlatan deceive you
with some substitute or other.
For my potion serves the nation.
All the rest is imitation.
So remember Dulcamara,
who can banish every pain.

Villagers

We'll remember Dulcamara.
May he soon come back again!

Adina and Nemorino

He alone has made me happy,
for his wonder-working potion
has been quick to ease my pain,
to ease my pain, *etc.*

Belcore

Why, you old pretentious humbug!
Go to hell and there remain,
to hell and there remain. *etc.*

Dulcamara

Good people! God bless you! *etc.*

Villagers

May he soon come back again! *etc.*

Belcore

Go to hell and there remain!

Adina, Nemorino, Dulcamara and Villagers

God bless you!

Belcore

Go to hell and there remain.
Go to hell!

Adina, Nemorino, Dulcamara and Villagers

God bless you!

Felice Romani after Eugène Scribe's *Le Philtre*,
English version by Arthur Jacobs

from **The Barber of Seville**

Bartolo's Aria

Bartolo

⁵ Dare you offer such excuses
to an eminent physician?
From a girl in your position
I expected better lies,
I expected something better.
Sending sweets to Marcellina?
Sketching flowers to embroider?
Burnt your finger? What nonsense!

You must find a taller story
or I'll cut you down to size.
You must find me something taller.
Where's that missing sheet of paper?
Don't deny you wrote a letter,
you should really know me better,
don't you think that you can charm
me...
hold your tongue, you can't placate me.
No, my dear girl, don't underrate me
or you're in for a big surprise!
Come, Rosina, don't be stubborn,
and I promise I won't be vexed.
Pretty villain, still so sullen?
Then I know what I'll do next.
In the future when I leave you
I will see that you are guarded,
tell the servants you're regarded
now as under house arrest.
Do not try to win me over
with your crying and your sighing.
Now the penalty for lying
could be more than you had guessed.
For my innocent Rosina,
now it's solitary confinement...
Yes, yes, 'til you show me some
refinement,
I will teach you who knows best.
If you offer such excuses
then you're in for a big surprise.

Cesare Sterbini after Beaumarchais,
translation by Amanda and Anthony Holden

from The Italian Girl in Algiers

Isabella and Taddeo's Duet

Isabella

6 All the changes in my fortune
I could bear with some assurance.
But I'm angry past endurance
when a jealous word I hear.
Yes, I'm angry, such jealous words to hear.

Taddeo

To be slandered, and by a woman,
what a damnable position.
But whatever our condition
it's the future that I fear.
Yes, I fear it, it's the future that I fear.

Isabella

Stupid suitors, they don't amuse me.

Taddeo

Cunning women, how they confuse me.

Isabella

Turk or booby, Turk is better.

Taddeo

She'll deceive me if I let her.

Isabella

Devil take you sir, and good riddance.
You're the rudest man I know.

Taddeo

Well goodbye then. Thank you kindly.
I'll be happy when you go.

Isabella

But if I'm left alone 'mid all these strangers,
how shall I carry on, how face the dangers?
How can I find my way? What shall I do?

Taddeo

What if I'm put to work, work most unpleasant?
How shall I soften them, if she's not present?

Isabella and Taddeo

How can I find my way? What shall I do?

Taddeo

Lady Isabella...

Isabella

Mr Taddeo...

Taddeo (*aside*)

Ah! The gorgon's calm again!

Isabella (*aside*)

Smiling? What a donkey!

Taddeo

Are we still quarreling?

Isabella

Or are we friends?

Isabella and Taddeo

Ah, yes, as friends united
our faith once more is plighted.
We act just as we should do,
as niece and uncle would do.
And that is what they're going to see.

Taddeo

But, oh, that Turk, my lady,
oh, how he frightens me.

Isabella

No use anticipating,
what is to be must be.

Taddeo and Isabella

Ah, yes, in friendship we'll be united,
out faith unending once more is plighted.
Just as the niece and uncle would do.
And that is what they're going to see.

Taddeo

But, oh, that Turk, my lady...
But that...

Isabella

No use anticipating,
what is to be must be.
So have no fear, no, no, no!

Taddeo

But, oh, that Turk, my lady...
B... b... b... b...

Isabella

What is to be must be!

Taddeo

Oh, how he frightens me.

A. Anelli, translated by Robert David MacDonald

from Don Giovanni

Leporello's Catalogue Aria

Leporello

- [7] Look here: this not-so-little volume overflows with the names of all his conquests: every village, every city and every nation tells its own tale of his amorous aspiration.

(He takes a list from his pocket and reads...)

Aria

Pretty lady, I have something to show you, the account of my master's seductions; it's a list that's been long in production, pay attention and read it with me! First Italians, six hundred and forty; then the Germans, two hundred and thirty; a hundred in France, only ninety in Turkey; but, here in Spain one thousand and three, thousand and three.

There are chambermaids a plenty, country girls and city gentry, baronesses and countesses, marchionesses and princesses, there are girls of every class and every shape and every age.

With the blonde ones, passion grows stronger every hour he spends beside her; with a dark one, he'll stay longer, if she's fair-skinned, woe betide her. In the winter, plump and tender,

in the summer, tall and slender; if she's buxom, he won't fail her, like a mountain he will scale her! If she's tiny, teeny tiny, he'll overwhelm her; he'll take pleasure with old ladies, just to have them here on these pages; but the highest common factor is a virgin who's intacta; rich or poor, or wife or whore, behind the door or on the floor, he'll seize his chance if hidden by a curtain; any creature with a skirt on, you already know his way.

Lorenzo da Ponte, translation by Amanda Holden

from Don Pasquale

Malatesta and Pasquale's Duet

Malatesta (with an air of mystery)

- [8] She'll be here by midday.

Pasquale (surprised)

No, really?

Malatesta (in confidence)

You prepare yourself.
I'll fetch her straightaway.

Pasquale (embracing him)

Oh bless you!

Malatesta

Calm down, I say.

Pasquale

Oh bless you!

Malatesta

But listen...

Pasquale

Not a murmur...

Malatesta

Yes, but...

Pasquale

No more buts, no more buts...

Malatesta

If...

Pasquale

Just hurry, just hurry,

lest I should fall down dead.

Ah! Quite unexpectedly passions inflame me;

if I give in to them

no one can blame me.

The pains of ageing

touch me no longer:

I feel as if I were

twenty or younger.

Hurry my darling one,

let me embrace you!

You shall have beautiful

children to grace you;

I can see six of them,

I can see twelve of them,

laughing and playing

for our delight.

Giovanni Ruffini and Gaetano Donizetti,
after A Anelli, translation by David Parry

from Don Pasquale

Pasquale and Norina's Duet

Pasquale

- 9 Well good evening! You're in a hurry;
tell me where: it's most confusing.

Norina

I am going to the theatre,

where I find it more amusing.

Pasquale

But your husband might be tempted

to interfere in such a matter.

Norina

He'd do better to be silent:

no one listens to his chatter...

Pasquale (*imitating her*)

To his chatter?

Norina

He'd do better to be silent:

no one listens...

Pasquale (*with mounting rage*)

I advise you to be careful,
not to push me to the limit.
To your bedroom now, this minute!
I insist that you shall stay.

Norina (*mockingly*)

When I tell you to be less heated
and be quiet, I mean it kindly.
It's your bedtime: you sleep soundly,
and we'll talk another day.

(*She goes towards the door.*)

Pasquale (*barring her way*)

I forbid you!

Norina (*ironically*)

Do you really?

Pasquale

This is tiring.

Norina (*about to leave*)

This is boring.

Pasquale

I forbid you!

Norina

I won't listen.

Pasquale

This is tiring.

Norina

This is boring.

Pasquale

Shameless hussy!

Norina (*angrily*)

Old man, I warned you...

Pasquale

Shameless hussy!

Norina (*slapping his face*)

Take this!

Pasquale

Ah!

Norina

That will teach you not to shout.

Pasquale (*aside*)

It is over, Don Pasquale:
you are absolutely broken!
There is nothing left to do now
but to crawl away and die.

Norina (*aside*)

I chastise him far from gladly,
but I have to treat him badly:
now's the climax of our story,
now's the moment to do or die.

Giovanni Ruffini and Gaetano Donizetti,
after A Anelli, translation by David Parry

from Don Pasquale

Malatesta and Pasquale's Duet

Malatesta

10 Don Pasquale...

Pasquale (*solemnly and sadly*)
Ah, brother... a living corpse
is standing here before you.

Malatesta

Can you tell me exactly what's the matter?

Pasquale (*without taking any notice, almost speaking to himself*)

To think that, for the sake of being spiteful
I am reduced to this!
I'd give Ernesto a thousand Norinas!

Malatesta (*to himself*)

I'm delighted to hear it!
(*to Don Pasquale*)

But will you please explain...

Pasquale

At least half a year's income
has gone on bonnets and ribbons!
But that is nothing.

Malatesta

What else then?

Pasquale

My dear young wife wished to go to the theatre:
I attempted to dissuade her;
she won't listen to reason, she simply mocks me;

I forbade it... and with her hand she slapped my
face!

Malatesta (*amazed*)

What! She struck you?

Pasquale

Yes, she struck me, yes, indeed, sir!

Malatesta (*aside*)

Here we go!

(*to Don Pasquale*)

You are lying: Sofronia is the sort of woman
who can see, who can hear, can do no evil:
this must be just a pretext to remove her,
some tale that you've invented.
My poor sister, unjustly accused of being
disrespectful!

Pasquale

My cheek can act as witness:
it shows you what happened.

Malatesta

It is not true.

Pasquale

It's completely true.

Malatesta

I beg you, it is not proper
to shout in that manner.

Pasquale

But it's you who have made me
lose my temper!

Malatesta (*calming himself*)

Very well, continue.

(*to himself*)

Keep it up, Malatesta!

Pasquale

The slap is nothing, Oh no!

There is worse to come yet;

pray read this.

(*He hands Malatesta the letter.*)

Malatesta (*reading, feigning first surprise and then horror*)

I can't believe it!

(*aside*)

Keep your face straight.

(*to Don Pasquale*)

How is it that my sister,
so well behaved and kindly...

Pasquale

You may think she is kindly:

I know she isn't.

Malatesta

I'm still not certain
that she is really guilty.

Pasquale

I'm so completely certain of her guilt now
that I called you here tonight expressly
that you might witness my act of vengeance.

Malatesta

All right... but on reflection...

Pasquale

I've thought of every detail... Just be patient.

Be seated.

Malatesta

I'll sit down then, but... speak quietly.

Pasquale

No more words, not even whispers:

straightaway now to the garden!

Taking all the servants with us
to surround the woods and guard them.

When we find the guilty couple,
they will know that they're in trouble:
at my signal they'll be handcuffed
and led off at once to jail.

Malatesta

I would say... let's not be foolish:
we two only should go down there;
we should hide amongst the bushes
and see everything we can there.

If we catch them *in flagrante*,
we can threaten them with jail,
but accept their solemn promise
to conclude the sordid tale.

Pasquale

If I were to be so lenient,
it would be much too convenient...

Malatesta

But remember, she's my sister.

Pasquale

She shall not come back to my house.
I won't compromise at all.

Malatesta.

This affair is inauspicious:
your response must be judicious.

Pasquale

Be judicious, be expeditious, but...
I won't have her in my house, no, no.

Malatesta

But a scandal would annoy you...

Pasquale

That is nothing.

Malatesta

And the shame might yet destroy you.

Pasquale

That is nothing.

Malatesta

It's a wrong move, not a strong move.
Let's consider how we act.

(He reflects a moment.)

Pasquale *(imitating him)*

Not a strong move, it's a wrong move...
But she slapped me, that's a fact.
(Don Pasquale and Malatesta ponder.)
I would say that...

Malatesta *(with sudden inspiration)*

Now I have it!

Pasquale

Heaven bless you!
Tell me, tell me quickly.

Malatesta

We should both observe them
closely in the darkness
till we're absolutely certain:
if they're guilty of the crime,
then I will take my sister home.

Pasquale

You are brilliant, you are brilliant!
That's a good plan, now I'm happy.

Malatesta

Yes.

Pasquale

Now I'm happy.
What a disaster,
my little schemer:
I am the master,
you are the dreamer;
I'm catching up now,
I'm overtaking,
there's no mistaking:
you'll have to pay.
I will not tolerate
the way you cheated me,
your smiling tenderness,
beguiling tearfulness.
See the moment comes
when I'm revenged on you:
you're in the trap I laid

and there you'll stay.
I am the master,
I'm overtaking,
there's no mistaking,
you'll have to pay.

Malatesta (*aside*)

The poor things dreaming
that he's the master,
but all his scheming
leads to disaster:
blinded by anger,
old and unwary,
caught in our snare
he can't get away.
While he enumerates
the possibilities,
he cannot realise
that they are fantasies,
or see, the simpleton,
that he himself will fall
into the trap he laid
by break of day.
Blinded by anger,
old and unwary,
caught in our snare
he can't get away.
(*to Don Pasquale*)
If they're guilty of the crime,
I will take my sister home.

Pasquale

You are brilliant! Now I'm happy.

Malatesta

We'll observe them
in the darkness,
if they're guilty...

Pasquale

We'll observe them
in the darkness,
if they're guilty,
you'll take her back then.

Malatesta (*aside*)

While he enumerates
the possibilities,
he cannot realise
that they are fantasies,
or see, the simpleton,
that he himself will fall
into the trap he laid.

Pasquale (*aside*)

See if I tolerate
the way you cheated me,
your smiling tenderness,
beguiling tearfulness.
See the moment comes
when I'm revenged on you:
you're in the trap I laid
and there you'll stay.
What a disaster!

Malatesta and Pasquale

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Malatesta

Caught in our snare
he can't get away!

Pasquale

There's no mistaking,
you'll have to pay.

Giovanni Ruffini and Gaetano Donizetti,
after A Anelli, translation by David Parry

from Falstaff

Honour Monologue

Falstaff

(calling his page)

¹¹ Hey, Page boy!

(to Bardolph and Pistol)

You two, go hang yourselves, but not on me.

(to Robin)

Two letters, take them to these two ladies.

Run off like lightning.

Hurry, run quickly, go, quickly, go, go, go!

Your honour? Vermin!

You are forbidden by your honour, you?

You stink of pure hypocrisy,

When you both know full well,

we all have human failings.

We all do, yes, I do, I do.

Sometimes I choose to wander,

risking the wrath of heaven,

and find myself astray without my honour.

My stratagem is being equivocal, enigmatic and
elusive.

But you, you tattered scroungers,
with your offensive, twisted and catlike
glances,
and ghastly sneering laughter, can boast of
honour.

Honour indeed! What honour?

What nonsense! What humbug!

Can this honour put a meal in your belly?

No.

Can it mend an arm or a leg that is broken?

Not so.

An ankle? No. A finger? No. Or a whisker? No.

Then honour's not a surgeon.

What is it? It's an expression.

And what is in this expression? Just a passing
impression. Most ingenious.

Does honour help him who died last
Wednesday? No.

Lives it with the living? That neither,
because it's falsely puffed up by human flattery.

It is pride that corrupts it, and calumny
pollutes it.

As for me, I don't want it. No!

But getting back to you, you villains,

I've had enough now, I'll do without you.

Get out! Quickly, at the double, at the double!

It's the rope that will suit you the best.

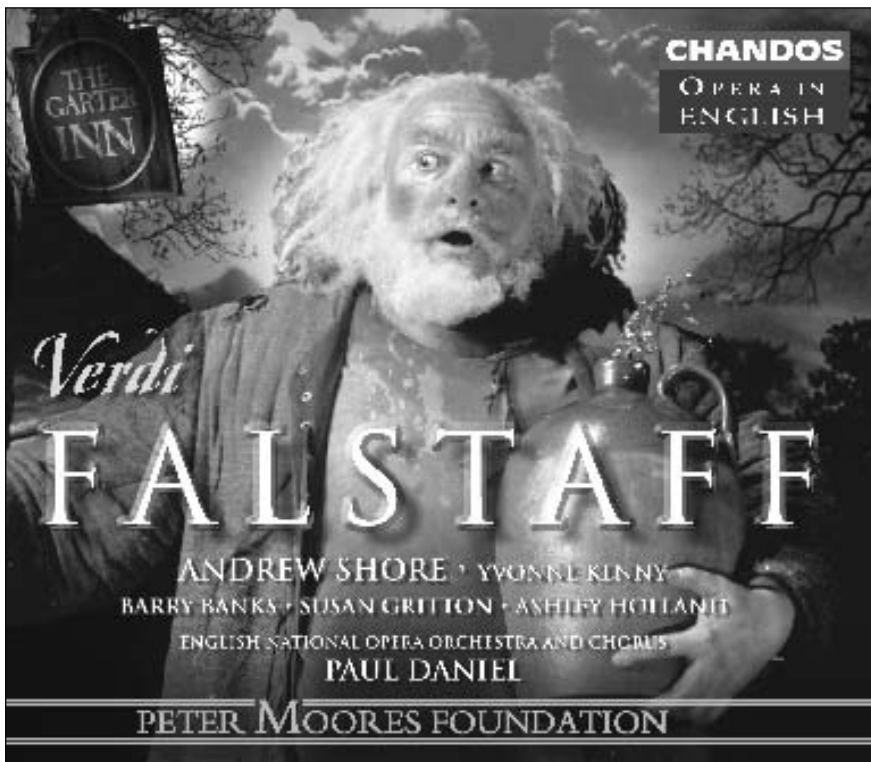
Quickly, quickly, at the double, at the double!

Villains! Villains! Villains! Villains!

Out you go! Out you go!

Arrigo Boito after Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV*, translation by Amanda Holden

Opera in English on Chandos



CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH

Verdi
FALSTAFF

ANDREW SHORE • YVONNE KENNY
BARRY BANKS • SUSAN GRITTON • ASHLEY HOLLAND
ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS
PAUL DANIEL

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

CHAN 3079(2)

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3011(2)



CHAN 3017(2)

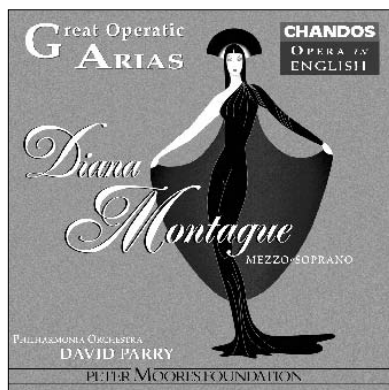


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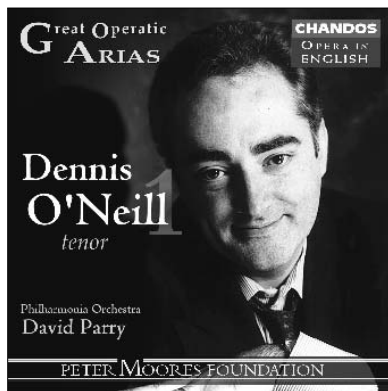
Opera in English on Chandos



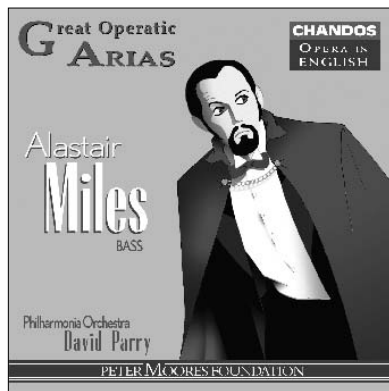
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CHAN 3010

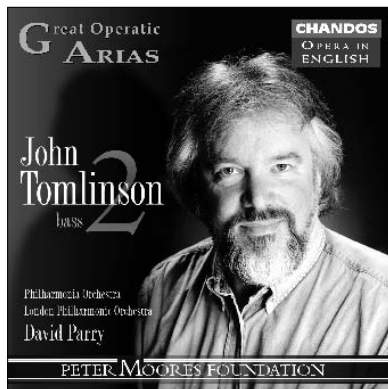
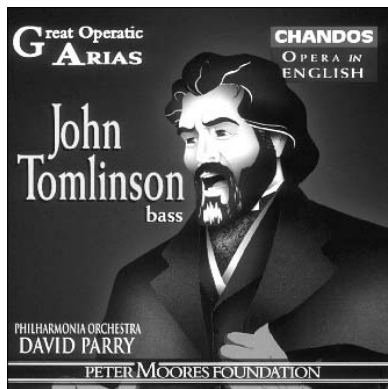


CHAN 3013



CHAN 3032

Opera in English on Chandos



Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3052(2)



CHAN 3036(2)



CHAN 3068(2)

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CHAN 3030(2)



CHAN 3023(2)

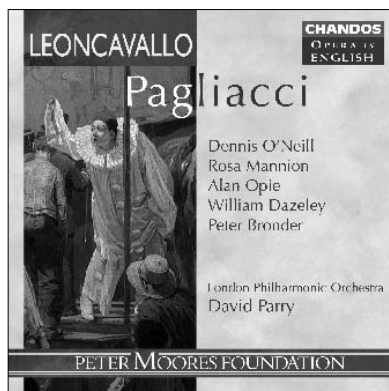


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Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3004



CHAN 3003



CHAN 3005(2)

Opera in English on Chandos



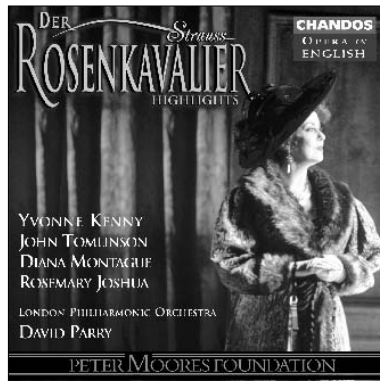
CHAN 3007

CHAN 3014(6)



CHAN 3057(3)

CHAN 3022



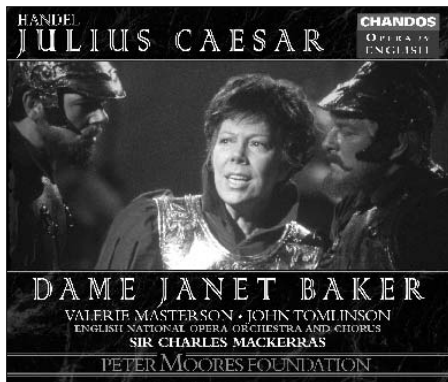
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CHAN 3042(2)



CHAN 3033(2)



CHAN 3019(3)



CHAN 3029

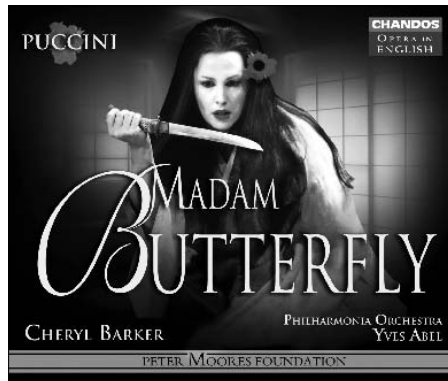
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CHAN 3008(2)



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CHAN 3066

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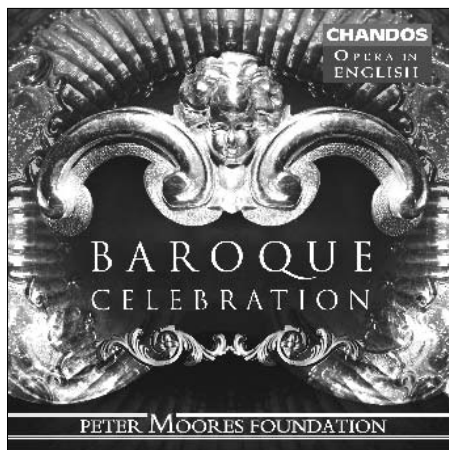


Opera in English on Chandos



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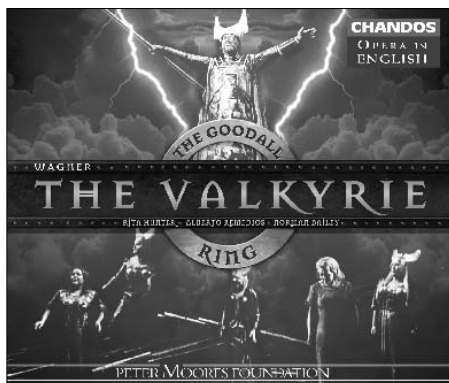
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Opera in English on Chandos



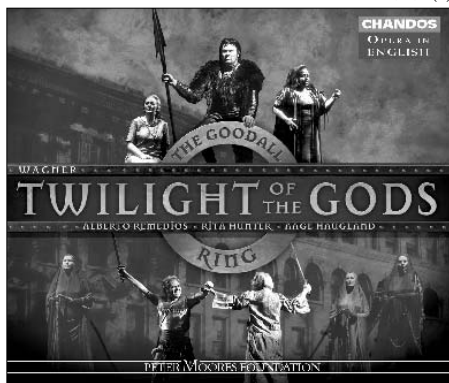
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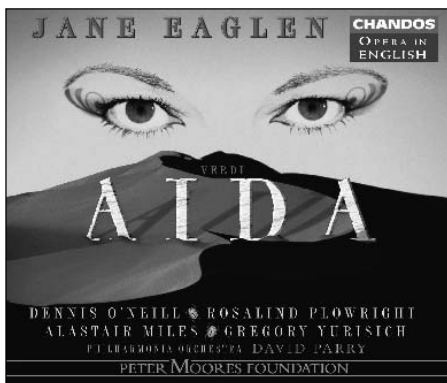
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Opera in English on Chandos



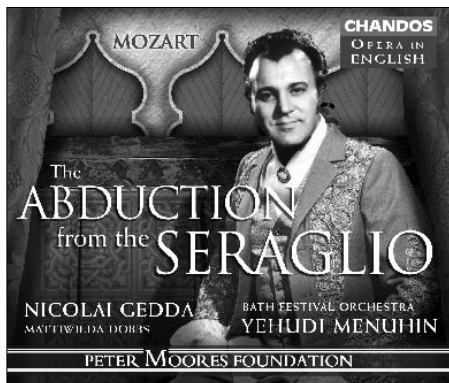
CHAN 3065(16)

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3074(2)

CHAN 3081(2)



Staging director: Charles Kilpatrick
Vocal and language consultant: Ludmilla Andrew

Recording producer Brian Couzens

Sound engineers Ralph Couzens & Jonathan Cooper (*Falstaff*)

Mastering engineer Michael Common

Operas administrator Sue Shortridge

Recording venues Blackheath Halls, London; 7–11 February 1999 (tracks 1–4), 12–16 March 2000 (track 6), 22–27 August 2000 (track 7), 15, 17, 18, 20 & 21 November 1997 (tracks 8–10), & 27 May–3 June (track 11); Goldsmiths College, London; 9–14 August 1994 (track 5)

Front cover Main photograph of Andrew Shore as Don Esteban in Paris Opéra's production of Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* (photograph by Eric Mahoudeau.) Background photographs of Andrew Shore as Dulcamara (photograph by Paul Ferris), and as Gianni Schicchi (photograph by Richard Mildenhall)

Back cover Photograph of David Parry by Bill Cooper

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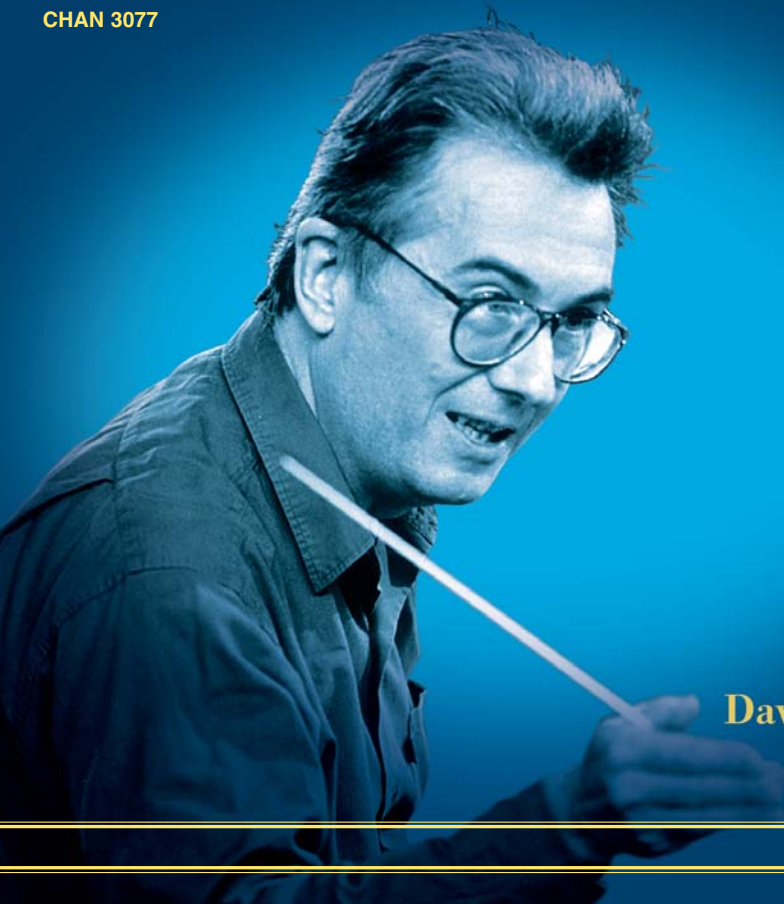
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CHAN 3077



David Parry

1 *from Donizetti's The Elixir of Love*
 'Attention! Attention! You country folk!' 7:56
 with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

2 'Good doctor, beg your pardon' –
 'It was Tristan who employed it' 8:04
 with Barry Banks (Nemorino)

3 'How he loved me!' —
 'With a look of love and laughter' 7:09
 with Mary Plazas (Adina)

Act II finale
4 'It will give you cheeks like peaches' 2:35
 with Mary Plazas (Adina), Barry Banks (Nemorino)
 Ashley Holland (Belcore) and Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

from Rossini's The Barber of Seville
5 'Dare you offer such excuses' 6:39

from Rossini's The Italian Girl in Algiers
6 'All the changes in my fortune' –
 'Ah, yes, as friends united' 8:00
 with Della Jones (Isabella)

from Mozart's Don Giovanni
7 Leporello's Catalogue Aria 5:54

from Donizetti's Don Pasquale
8 'She'll be here by midday' –
 'Quite unexpectedly passions inflame me' 2:52
 with Jason Howard (Malatesta)

9 'Well good evening! You're in a hurry' 5:50
 with Lynne Dawson (Norina)

10 'Ah brother... a living corpse is
 standing here before you' 10:05
 with Jason Howard (Malatesta)

from Verdi's Falstaff
11 Honour Monologue 4:55

TT 70:40

Andrew Shore baritone

with Mary Plazas, Lynne Dawson,
 Barry Banks, Jason Howard
 and Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

Philharmonia Orchestra (tracks 1–4 & 7)

London Philharmonic Orchestra (tracks 6 & 8–10)

David Parry (tracks 1–4 & 6–10)

English National Opera Orchestra (tracks 5 & 11)

Gabriele Bellini (track 5)

Paul Daniel (track 11)

DDD