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How to Listen to and Understand Opera
Course Guidebook

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His work as a teacher and lecturer has been profiled in The Wall Street Journal, Inc. magazine, and the San Francisco Chronicle. He is an artistic co-director and board member of Composers, Inc. His music is published by Fallen Leaf Press and CPP/Belwin and is recorded on the Innova label.
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How to Listen to and Understand Opera

Scope:

This course is designed as a methodology, a guide to listening and understanding opera. For this reason it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the entire operatic repertory. Armed with the knowledge of opera gained from this course, however, the listener will be able to explore in greater depth the extraordinary and compelling world of opera for himself or herself. The listener will come to appreciate how music has the power to reveal truths beyond the spoken word; how opera is a unique marriage of words and music in which the whole is far greater than its parts.

He or she will learn the reasons for opera’s enduring popularity. The history of opera is traced from its beginning in the early seventeenth century to around 1924, with references to landmark operas, musical, cultural, and social developments, and historical events that influenced opera’s growth. We learn how operatic style and form have changed continuously throughout the history of European music, as they were influenced by political, social and cultural developments, and how different national languages and cultures have shaped their own types of opera and operatic style.

The course opens with one of the most powerful moments in opera: the dramatically loaded aria “Nessun dorma” (“No one shall sleep”) from Giacomo Puccini’s Turandot. We are exposed to opera’s unique incorporation of soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous music into an incredibly expressive and exciting whole that is far greater than the sum of its parts. This famous aria shows us the power of the composer in creating music that goes beyond the words of the libretto to evoke unspoken thoughts and feelings—that which cannot be said in words alone.

The study continues with a discussion of how music can flesh out a dramatic character and evoke the unconscious state. We are introduced to operatic archetypes such as Figaro and Carmen. We learn that the ancient Greeks revered music as a microcosm of all creation, believing music can change the
face of nature and alter souls. The monophonic and, later, polyphonic music of the Middle Ages is examined. We see how the end of the absolute authority of the Roman Church encouraged the rise of secular and instrumental music. We examine the Renaissance, its rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman culture and the evolution of the madrigal, ultimately rejected in favor of a more expressive vocal medium: early opera. The renaissance intermezzo is discussed as the precursor of modern opera. The reforms of the Florentine Camerata are examined as they relate to the earliest operas. Part I of the course concludes with an analysis of the first successful attempt to combine words and music into musical drama, Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* of 1607.

In Part II we see how recitative, the essence of Monteverdi’s style, made music subservient to words and how, because of its forward-driving nature, recitative cannot express personal reflection. We learn how the invention of aria gave opera composers a powerful tool to stop the dramatic action for moments of self-reflection. Gluck’s reforms and his *Orfeo ed Euridice* of 1762 are addressed as the starting point for the modern opera repertory. The explosion of operas in the Golden Age/Dark Age of opera is discussed, along with the formulaic reforms of Pietro Metastasio (including his da capo structure for arias) and the vocal abuses that those reforms provoked. We learn how different voice types are assigned different roles. The rise of opera seria and its characteristics are discussed, along with an analysis of the second act of Mozart’s *Idomeneo*—opera seria transcendent.

The second part of this study continues with the development of opera buffa, from its origins in the popular folklore of the commedia dell’arte to its eventual replacement of opera seria. The role of Enlightenment progressives in this development is addressed and Mozart’s brilliant *The Marriage of Figaro* is discussed as one of the greatest contributions to the opera buffa genre.

Part III opens with a discussion of the bel canto style of opera. We see how the nature of the Italian language and culture gave rise to this type of opera, with its comic, predictable plots, one-dimensional characters, appealing melodies, and florid melodic embellishments. The highly pressurized business of opera in the 18th century is revealed, and we are introduced to Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* of 1816 as the quintessential bel canto opera.
Giuseppe Verdi is the focus of Lectures 19 through 22 of Part III. His career is summarized, and his operatic inheritance is reviewed. We learn how Verdi broke the bel canto mold; how he dominated Italian opera for over half a century by virtue of his lyricism, his emphasis on human emotions and psychological insight, and his use of the orchestra and parlante to drive the dramatic action and maintain musical continuity. Verdi’s *Otello* is discussed as one of the greatest operas of all time.

Part III of this course concludes with an examination of French opera. We learn how it developed as a distinctly different genre from Italian opera, shaped as it was by the French language, culture and political history. We learn how Jean-Baptiste Lully set the foundation for a French language operatic tradition, and how his greatest contribution was the design of a recitative style suited to the French language. The reforms of Jean-Philippe Rameau are discussed, along with the influence of Enlightenment progressives such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who championed a more natural operatic style. Christoph Willibald von Gluck’s position as the model for the next generation of French composers is reviewed. Finally, the subject of 19th-century French opera is addressed. Grand opera, opéra comique and lyric opera are examined as distinctive French genres and Act Two of Bizet’s dramatically powerful *Carmen* is analyzed.

Part IV opens with an examination of the rise of German opera, with its roots in German folklore. We discover how German singspiel grew from humble origins as a lower class entertainment to high art with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *The Rescue from the Harem* (1782) and *The Magic Flute* of 1791. We learn how 19th-century German opera grew out of the tradition of singspiel and how Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz* established 19th-century German opera.

The discussion of German opera continues with an examination of Richard Wagner: the man, his personal beliefs, musical theories, and operatic innovations. We see how Wagner went back to the ancient Greek ideal for inspiration and how he conceived the idea of an all-encompassing art work, or music drama, in which the role of the orchestra is that of a purveyor of unspoken truths. We are introduced to Wagner’s concept of leitmotif and his revolutionary use of dissonance. Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* is discussed as
the most influential composition of the 19th century, aside from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

The subject of late romantic German opera is addressed and exemplified by Richard Strauss and his controversial opera *Salome*. We go on to an overview of Russian opera and the concept of nationalism. The late development of Russian opera is outlined from Mikhail Glinka’s *Ruslan and Lyudmila* to Modest Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*. We see how the Russian language shaped the syllabic vocal style of Russian opera and how Russian rhythms, with their asymmetrical groupings of accents, are distinct from Italian, German and French rhythms.

The course draws to its conclusion with an overview of opera verismo, a 19th/20th century genre that favors depictions of the darker side of the human condition. The pivotal second act of Giacomo Puccini’s *Tosca* is discussed as a transcendent example of opera verismo. Finally, we hear part of a scene from Richard Strauss’s *Capriccio* in which the essence of opera is debated. Is it words or is it music? It is neither. It is an indefinable combination of both, with the whole greater than the parts.
Introduction and Words and Music
Lectures 1 and 2

Lectures 1 through 4 [of this course] are conceived of as a large introductory set, consisting of three separate parts. ... Part I ... is a general introduction to and definition of opera. ... Part II ... is a presentation I call “Words and Music.” ... The third part ... is a brief but extremely intense history of expression in vocal music.

We will begin our consideration of opera by examining Giacomo Puccini’s Turandot (1924). The scene is set in the city of Beijing in ancient China. Turandot, the daughter of the Chinese emperor, has promised to marry the man who can solve three riddles. So far no one has succeeded in answering these riddles. Calaf, the young Tartar prince, falls in love at first sight with Turandot and promptly announces his challenge to the riddles. He solves the riddles and then volunteers that if Turandot can discover his name before dawn, she will be freed from her vow to marry him and he will die. Turandot commands that no one shall sleep until the stranger’s name and identity are discovered. Calaf sings a magnificent aria reflecting his love for Turandot and his confidence that his identity will remain a secret until morning. His aria, which begins with the phrase “Nessun dorma” (“No one shall sleep”), is one of opera’s most dramatic and emotionally powerful moments.

Puccini could have set Calaf’s aria in a variety of different ways. For dramatic reasons, he chose to set it as a love song. It is significant for its sense of joy and redemption not seen in the opera up until this point. Does this feeling come from the words or the music? This question forces us to examine the nature of opera.

First, we will look at some derivations and generalizations about opera. An opera is a drama that combines soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action and continuous music, the whole greater than the parts. Literally, opera means musical work or composition.
The repertory we call opera is a diverse one. In its four hundred-year history opera has run the gamut from aristocratic to popular entertainment. Throughout its history, operatic singing style has changed constantly, depending upon the language being sung, the size of the room being sung in, the ability and taste of the singers, and the expectation of the audience. For most of its history, opera was the single greatest spectacle available to its audiences. It is the oldest continuously active musical genre.

For most of its history, opera was the single greatest spectacle available to its audiences. It is the oldest continuously active musical genre.

To what might we attribute the popularity of opera? It is posited on the idea that music has the power to distill, crystallize, and intensify the meaning of words. Children at play, who sing-song their words to themselves and their toys, exemplify the operatic ideal.

The primary reason for opera’s lasting popularity is the expressive power of the musical experience. T.S. Eliot said that music “evokes the fringe of indefinite feeling which we can only detect out of the corner of the eye.” Music has the power to evoke the ineffable, moods and states of consciousness that other arts cannot.

In opera, the composer is a dramatist. He or she uses music to create the character. For example, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart chills us with Electra’s crazed fury as she sings “Of Orestes and Ajax” from *Idomeneo* (1780). Similarly, Gustav Mahler hits us off guard with the bittersweet feeling of lost love in “As I Walked through the Field this Morning” from his *Songs of a Wayfarer* (1884). Georges Bizet likewise intrigues us with his revelation of Carmen’s power of sexual manipulation in the “Seguidilla” from *Carmen* (1875), and Gioacchino Antonio Rossini warms our hearts with Figaro’s upbeat personality in the famous “Largo al factotum” from *The Barber of Seville* (1816).

These arias exemplify the reasons for the enduring popularity of opera. The sheer beauty of the vocal music, along with the excitement of the theater, is an irresistible force. Moreover, there is an incredible intensification
of feeling and meaning when words and music are combined, and this is the essence of opera. The music rounds out the character. It begins where words leave off. The combination of the self-reflective nature of words with the emotionally reflective nature of music packs a powerful appeal.

Married to words, music has the ability to evoke symbolic meaning and universally appealing character archetypes. Bizet’s Carmen is the archetypal, street-smart, seductress. Rossini’s Figaro is a comic, clever, fast-talking servant archetype, whose predecessors date back to Roman comedy.

This course has several goals. First, we will review an outline of the history of opera from 1600 to 1924 or so. Second, we will observe the development of national schools of opera. Third, we will develop a methodology for listening to and understanding opera. And ultimately, we will celebrate the power of words joined to music!
A Brief History of Vocal Expression in Music
Lectures 3 and 4

We are midway through our introductory set of ... four lectures, and for Lectures 3 and 4 we encounter the last part ... “A Brief History of Vocal Expression in Western”—meaning European-based—“Music.” Really, the real title, my friends, should be “An All-Too-Brief History of Vocal Expression in Western Music,” as we pave our way inevitably towards the invention of opera.

The phrase “music as a mirror” means that stylistic change in music and the arts reflects the greater realities of the society in which the composer, artist, and writer live and work. Musical style in the West (European sphere) has constantly adapted to ever-changing societal and cultural realities.

There are four tenets to the idea of music as a mirror. The first tenet is that Western music has exhibited ongoing stylistic change since the High Middle Ages. The second is that composers since the High Middle Ages have sought to express something of themselves or their world in their music. The third is that what is considered expressive changes from era to era, and the fourth is that the rate of change has increased exponentially as we move toward the present day.

We begin by considering the role of music in the ancient Greek world. The association of music with drama dates back to ancient times. The composers, poets, philosophers, and historians who invented opera believed they were recreating the environment and techniques of ancient Greek drama.

The ancient Greeks believed music to be a microcosm of all creation. Music was present everywhere in ancient Greece. It was played throughout sporting events. Probably most, if not all, ancient Greek drama was sung with accompaniment. Only about forty fragments of ancient (pre-Christian) music have survived.
As a musical example of music in ancient Greek drama, we consider the Stasimon Chorus from the drama Orestes, possibly composed by Euripides himself (408 B.C.E.). (A stasimon was the lip between the stage and the audience, where the chorus sat. This area today is called the “orchestra.”)

There are two essential elements in this style of music: A single voice is accompanied by a double reed instrument, and the setting is syllabic in that there is a single pitch for each syllable. This ensures clear articulation. The music is subservient to clarity of speech.

The Greek view of music was humanistic. Ancient Greeks believed that music represented the true heart of humankind and the order of the cosmos. They also believed that music could change the face of nature and alter the souls of people and animals. This view of music would last for about 1000 years.

In the developments in performance, words, and music that would culminate in opera, another key period was that of the Middle Ages (600–1400). During this period, an important nexus of musical—and cultural—development was the Church. Indeed, the Middle Ages were dominated by the church; thus the era is often called the Theocratic Age or the Age of Theocracy. By 600 C.E. or so, Roman municipal authority had collapsed, leaving the Rome-based Christian church as one of the few bastions against encroaching barbarity. The Rome-based Christian church was founded by Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. The survival of the Church provided a framework for the reemergence of European civilization around the years 900–1000.

During the first part of the Middle Ages—the Dark Ages (600–1000)—the great bulk of the music created was for use in worship. The predominant style was monophonic vocal music, as, for example, Gregorian chant. It has only one, unaccompanied melody. Instrumental music was discouraged, even outlawed by the church. Its earthy nature was not considered conducive to worship. A musical example is the Mass for Christmas Day, Introit, “Puer natus est nobis.”
The High Middle Ages (1000–1400) saw the rebirth of Europe. Populations and food production grew, cities developed, universities were founded, and Romanesque and Gothic architecture developed. Vernacular literature also developed. The power of secular rulers grew, and trade and alliances formed ever-larger political units.

The High Middle Ages also saw the creation of several musical innovations. Polyphony was a major development in the 12th through 14th centuries. Composers became named and known, in contrast to the anonymous, itinerant composers of previous eras, and a new class of professional performers began to grow. Musicians began to develop a system of musical notation. In tandem with these developments, a new, secular audience began to grow, and they started adopting a new ritual of respectful listening. In general, increasingly complex modes of musical expression mirrored an increasingly complex world.

A new type of organum was developed at the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, France. Organum is an early type of polyphony. The new type of organum is illustrated by Leonin’s “Alleluia pascha nostrum” and “Gaudeat devotio fidelium” (circa 1190). The poet/composer Leonin raised the art of polyphony to a new level. He combined different styles in one piece of music: the old form of plainchant is combined with a new florid organum in which a sustained plainchant in the lower voice is accompanied by faster-moving embellishments in the upper voice. He also added a very new type of dance-like rhythm. We will listen to an example of this in lecture.

Secular music grew by leaps and bounds as royal courts and the aristocratic classes grew. A school of troubadour composers of popular music sprung up. An example of this type of music is Bernart de Ventadorn’s “Can vei la lauzeta mover” (circa 1170).
The 14th century saw an end to the absolute authority of the Church as a result of a series of events. First, the Babylonian Captivity occurred. This was a period between 1305 and 1378 when the entire papal court settled in Avignon, France. The Babylonian Captivity led to the Great Schism between 1378 and 1417, when there were two, or even three, claimants to the papacy at any one time. People grew tired of this chaos. Over time, the behavior of some high clergy became increasingly corrupt and scandalous. Additionally, the Black Death of 1348–50 caused widespread devastation and soul-searching, and the Hundred Years’ War wreaked enormous havoc. Rulers became increasingly powerful. In general, the world was in transition from one dominated by the Church with its immutable rules to a new world of increasing secularism, humanistic pursuit, and doubt.

As a result of all of these changes and events, secular music became high art. Much of it exhibits a structural complexity not equaled again until the 1950s. As an example, we will consider Guillaume de Machaut’s “Rose, liz” (circa 1350), a spiky, complex, and beautiful piece by one of the great poet/composers of the 14th century. The essence of this music is the control of emotion and polyphonic structure.

Another important historical period in the development of music, language, and performance was the Renaissance (1400–1600). This period saw the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman culture. Artists, architects, poets, dramatists, philosophers, and composers turned increasingly to pre-Christian models for their inspiration and guidance.

Renaissance composers wanted their music to have the same impact on their listeners as that which the Greeks attributed to their music. By the mid-Renaissance an entirely new view of vocal articulation and system of harmony had come into place to accommodate the new, more humanistic, expressive aims of composers. This was homophony in which one melody predominates with all other musical material heard as accompaniment.

Josquin des Prez (circa 1440–1521), the preeminent composer of the mid-Renaissance, was a master of sacred and secular music. There are several musical examples of this. First, “El Grillo” (circa 1480) exemplifies Josquin’s use of homophony and word painting. Unlike the music of Machaut one
hundred years before, this music serves the words. Also, “Je me complains” (circa 1480) is a polyphonic piece in which five voices weave in and out of each other. The clarity of the words is not the issue here. Two or three words are being sung simultaneously. The essence of this music lies in its expressive power. It is focused on a depiction of romantic malaise.

In the late Renaissance, the most important genre of secular music was the madrigal, a work for four to six singers, based on high art poetry, that freely mixes homophony and polyphony and focuses on word painting. Madrigals were sung at aristocratic gatherings at European courts, especially in Italy.

Thomas Weelkes’ “As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending” (1601) is a lighthearted madrigal of the late Renaissance in which word painting is taken to extremes. Note that “maiden Queen” and Oriana refer to the “Virgin Queen” Elizabeth I. Diana was the Roman goddess of virginity and Vesta was a virgin goddess.
The Invention of Opera and Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*

**Lectures 5–8**

The intermedio was important—in fact, vital—as a forerunner of opera for two essential reasons: first, because it kept alive in the minds of Italian poets and musicians the idea of close collaboration between drama and music; and second, because in these works, in these intermezzi, the external form of opera is already clear: a drama with interludes of music, dancing, splendid scenery, and spectacular stage effects.

We begin this lecture by reviewing the material we have discussed up to this point. First, the Greek ideal of music posited that music is a force that can move nature and change the hearts and souls of people. Second, the Renaissance saw a growing awareness of the Greek ideal of music. And third, the madrigal is a late-Renaissance experimental genre in which “expression” is based on word painting. Carlo Gesualdo’s madrigal “Io parto e non piu dissi” (circa 1595) is expressive of a lovers’ quarrel. It is full of unbelievable harmonic complexity. Major amounts of unresolved dissonance (known as chromaticism) correspond to the dissonance felt by the lovers. We will listen to a musical example.

We now move on to a consideration of the intermezzo/intermedio. This performance component developed alongside the madrigal. It was presented between the acts of spoken plays. Many intermezzi/intermedi became more interesting than the plays in which they were inserted, and they were an important forerunner of opera.

Another important development in the progression towards opera was the pastorale. This style of dramatic poetry dominated Italian theater in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Pastorales feature sylvan settings and mild love adventures, usually ending happily.
From an intellectual and theoretical standpoint, another important event in the story of opera was the collaboration of the Florentine Camerata. The Florentine Camerata was a *ridotto*, or a private academy or intellectual club, that met in the home of Giovanni Bardi di Vernio from 1573 to 1592. Of special interest to this group was the nature of musical and dramatic expression. Among the members of the Florentine Camerata was Vincenzo Galilei, who wrote a scathing attack on the artificiality of expression in madrigals. Based largely on the ideas of scholar Girolamo Mei, the group decreed that true musical expression could only be achieved by a single singer employing an actor’s dramatic and oratorical skills.

The Florentine Camerata developed a new theory of music. Their theory was based on the Greek expressive ideal and involved several rules for music and musical performance:

- The text must be sung by one singer, accompanied as simply as possible so that the words are clearly understood.
- The words must be sung the way they are spoken (natural declamation). No dance rhythms can be imposed upon the words.
- The music must depict the feelings and emotions of the character singing.

The first works that we today call operas were created by members of the Florentine Camerata. *Daphne* was created by the poet Ottavio Rinuccini and the composer Jacopo Peri in 1598. The music is lost today. *Euridice* was created by Rinuccini and Peri in 1600, and in the same year a second version was produced by Rinuccini and Giulio Caccini.

*Euridice* was first performed on October 6, 1600 in Florence, Italy. A fully staged production with alternating choruses, rhyming pop-type songs, and early recitative (*stile rappresentativo*), Peri’s *Euridice* is a play set to music, not a play conceived musically. The character of Orfeo (Orpheus), with his ability to change souls and the very face of nature with his music, personifies both opera and the Greek view of music.
The first great composer of opera was Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643). He did not invent opera but was inspired to create a new operatic ideal. Born in Cremona, Italy, he rose to the pinnacle of the musical profession in the 17th century as choirmaster at St. Mark’s cathedral in Venice. Of his nineteen stage works only six have survived intact, including his first opera Orfeo, which represents the first completely successful attempt to apply the full resources of musical and dramatic art to the new genre of opera.

Orfeo (1607) is an extraordinary synthesis of the musical genres and compositional techniques available in the time when it was produced. The toccata (overture) demonstrates the large instrumental ensemble (around forty players) Monteverdi calls for in Orfeo. The character of Orpheus lies at the heart of the drama as the personification of dramatic musical art. He symbolizes the power of music. Yet while he can control external forces with his music, he cannot control his own emotions.

In Act 1 of Orfeo, there is happiness and joy in Arcadia. Eurydice has finally agreed to marry Orpheus. They celebrate with friends. Monteverdi’s style of recitative (half sung, half spoken music) is known as arioso, closer to actual song than Peri’s. As a musical example, consider “In questo lieto.” Another musical example is ballet/chorus, “Lasciate i monti.” This chorus is full of sexual symbolism. The excitement builds up to the entrance of the star couple. Orpheus, appropriately, sings a richer arioso, “Rosa del ciel,” than the other characters.

Act 1, like most first operatic first acts, is dramatically static. It represents an incredible synthesis of various musical forms: the toccata (opening music, or overture), ritornello (orchestral refrain), recitative (in Monteverdi’s inimitable style), symbolic chorus (“Vieni, Imeneo”), ballet, popular song (“Lasciate i monti”), religious-type music (“Ma se il nostro”), and final, celebratory music.
In the second act of Orfeo, grief comes to paradise. Orpheus sings his last bit of joy in “Vi ricorda,” but then the celebrations are cut short with the news of Eurydice’s death. The messenger’s story is a brilliant, masterful composition. She begins slowly, almost monotonically, and builds up to a powerful climax as she tells her tragic tale. Then, exhausted, she concludes on a bleak note. This is exemplified by “Ahi, caso acerbo.” Orpheus’s response, “Tu se’ morta,” is a profoundly moving and brilliantly written moment. It is followed by a madrigal-style chorus replete with word painting: “Ahi, caso acerbo.” Monteverdi employs a stunning stroke. He brings back the ritornello heard at the beginning of the opera. Now it takes on a whole new dimension as it reflects both the tragic events of the act as well as Orpheus’s determination to rescue Eurydice from death, armed with a single weapon—the power of music itself.

Act 3 involves the journey to Hades in search of Eurydice. The opening sinfonia is dominated by brass instruments, which were associated with the underworld. Charon, the boatman who takes souls to the underworld, is a deep bass, accompanied by a regal (reed organ). He sings “O tu, ch’innanzi morte.” Orpheus’s plea, “Possente spirito” is—as it should be—the crown jewel of the opera. While he does not succeed in softening Charon’s heart and gaining entry to Hades, his music does have a beneficial effect on the formidable boatman. It puts him to sleep! A firm comment on the nature of opera audiences everywhere! For a musical example, we will listen to Orpheus’s “Ei dorme.”

In Act 4, Pluto presents a challenge and Orpheus experiences a downfall. Pluto, king of the underworld, agrees to allow Eurydice to follow Orpheus back up to the world of mortals as long as he does not look back at her. Orpheus disobeys and Eurydice is forced back to Hades. Her “Ahi, vista troppe” is memorable for its extraordinarily dissonant harmonies. Act 5 is marked by Orpheus’s despair and Apollo’s divine intervention.
In conclusion, we note that in *Orfeo* Monteverdi succeeds on every level. His opera synthesizes all the different genres. It is a brilliant example of the power of recitative to embody and magnify the power of words. It also represents the marriage of drama and music. The whole is greater than the parts. Additionally, in *Orfeo* the Greek ideal of the power of music to “calm every troubled heart and ... kindle the most icy souls”, as described in the prologue, has been redefined and reinvented.
Turandot
(1924)
Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni

Calaf
Nessun dorma!
Nessun dorma!
Tu pure, o Principessa,
stella tua fredda stanza
guardi le stelle che tremano
d'amore e di speranza!
Ma il mio mistero è chiuso in me,
il nome mio nessun saprà!
No, no, sulla tua bocca
lo dirò,
quando la luce splenderà!
Ed il mio bacio scioglierà
il silenzio che ti fa mia!

Le donne
(interno; lontano)
Il nome suo nessun saprà . . .
E noi dovreim, ahimè! Morir! Morir!

Calaf
Dilegua, o notte! Tramontate, stelle!
Tramontate, stelle! All'alba vincerò!
Vincerò! Vincerò!

Calaf
No one shall sleep!
No one shall sleep!
You too, o Princess,
in your cold room
are watching the stars which
tremble with love and hope!
But my secret lies hidden within me,
no one will know my name!
No, no, I will reveal it
only on your lips,
when daylight breaks forth
and my kiss will break the silence
which makes you mine!

Womens
(off stage; distant)
Nobody will know his name . . .
And we will have to die, alas! Die!

Calaf
Depart, o night! Quickly set, stars!
Quickly set, stars! At dawn I will
win! I will win! I will win!
Idomeneo
(1780)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by G.B. Varesco

Elettra

A
D'Oreste, d'Ajax ho in seno
i tormenti,
d'Aletto la face già morte mi dà.

B
Squarciameli il core, ceraste,
serpenti, o un ferro il dolore
in me finirà.

A'
[A varied reprise of verso 1]
B'

"Songs of a Wayfarer"
(1884)
Gustav Mahler
Poem by the composer

Ging heute morgen übers Feld,

As I walked through the field this morning.

tau noch aus den Gräsern hing;
sprach zu mir der lustige Fink:
"Ei, du Gelb? Guten Morgen!

the dew still hung upon the grass;
the merry finch called out to me,
"Hey, you there! Good day to you!

Ei geht? Dut

Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?

Isn't this a splendid world?

Schöne Welt?

Tweet! Tweet! Fine and bright!

Zinkl Zinkl Schön und flink!

O how I love the world!

Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!"
Auch die Glockenblum am Feld
hat mit lustig, guter Ding
mit den Glückchen klinge, kling,
ihren Morgenruf geschellet:
"Wind's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Schöne Welt?
Kling! Kling! Schönes Ding!
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!
Hei-al!"

Und da fing im Sonnenschein
Gleich die Welt zu funkeln an;
Alles, alles, Ton und Farbe gewann
im Sonnenleuchtn.
Blum und Vogel, groß
und klein!
Guten Tag, guten Tag!
Ist's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Ei, du! Geh! Schön Welt!!

Nun fängt auch mein Glück wohlt
an! Nein! Nein! Das ist mein,
mir nimmer bluh'en kann!

And the bluebell in the field
told of good cheer
with its bell, ting-a-ling,
as it rang its morning greeting:
"Isn't this a splendid world,
splendid world?"
Ding, ding! Beautiful thing!
O how I love the world!
Hurrah!"

And all the world began to glow
in the sunshine; in the sunshine
all things took on color and sound!

Flower and bird, things great
and small!
Good day, good day!
Isn't this a splendid world?
Hey, you there! Lovely world?

Will my happiness now flower
too? No, no! I know that it can
never bloom for me!

---

Carmen
(1875)
Georges Bizet
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

NO. 10 SÉQUEDILLA AND DUET

Carmen

Près des remparts de Séville,
chez mon ami Lillas Pastia,
j'irai danser la séqueilla
et boire du Manzanilla.
Oui, mais toute seule on s'ennuie,
et les vrais plaisirs sont à deux;
donc, pour me tenir compagnie,

Carmen

By the ramparts of Sevilla,
at the place of Lillas Pastia,
I'll go dance the seguidilla
and take a glass of manzanilla.
Yes, but by myself I'm bored,
the only pleasure's one you share;
so I'll take along my man.
j’emmènerai mon amoureux!
Mon amoureux... il est au diable,
je l’ai mis à la porte hier!
Mon pauvre cœur très consolable,
mon cœur est libre comme l’air!
J’ai des galants à la douzaine,
mais ils ne sont pas à mon gré.
Voici la fin de la semaine:
Qui veut m’aîmer? Je l’aîmerai!
Qui veut mon âme?
Elle est à prendre!
Vous arrivez au bon moment!
Je n’ai guère le temps d’attendre,
car avec mon nouvel amour...

Don José
Tais-toi! Je t’avais dit de ne pas me parler!

Carmen
Je ne te parle pas,
je chante pour moi-même!
Et je pense!
Il n’est pas défendu de penser!
Je pense à certain officier
qui m’aime
et qu’à mon tour, je pourrai
bien aimer!

Don José
Carmen!

Carmen
Mon officier n’est pas un capitaine:
pas même un lieutenant,
il n’est que brigadier; mais
c’est assez pour une Bohémienne et je daigne m’en contenter!

and then we’ll make a cosy pair!
But my lover’s... gone to hell!
Last night he went out... on his ear!
My poor heart’s longing to forget,
my heart is ever free as air!
I count my beaux by dozens,
but I’ll have none of them.
Here it is the end of the week:
Who’ll love me? I’ll love him!
Who’ll take my soul?
It’s up for bids!
You’ve come at the right time!
I can’t wait a minute longer,
for once I’ve got a brand-new lover...

Don José
Be quiet! I told you not to speak!

Carmen
I’m not speaking,
I’m singing to myself!
And thinking!
There’s no law against thinking!
I’m thinking of a certain officer
who loves me
and whom I could maybe
love myself!

Don José
Carmen!

Carmen
My officer’s not a captain:
not even a lieutenant;
he is only a corporal; but
that’s good enough for a gypsy and
I’m ready to make do with that!
Lectures 5–8: The Invention of Opera and Monteverdi's Orfeo

Don José
Carmen, je suis comme un homme ivre, si je cède, si je me livre, ta promesse, tu la tiendras, Ah! si je t'aime, Carmen, Carmen, tu m'aimeras!

Carmen
Oui. (Don José unites the rope holding Carmen's hands.)

Don José
Carmen, I feel as if I'm drunk, if I give way, if I give in, your promise, you'll keep it, Ah! If I love you Carmen, Carmen, you'll love me!

Carmen
Yes. (Don José unites the rope holding Carmen's hands.)

Il barbiere di Siviglia
The Barber of Seville (1816)
Gioacchino Rossini
Libretto by Cesare Sterbini
CAVATINA “Largo al Factotum”

Figaro
La ran la le ra la ran la la.
Largo al factotum della città.
La ran la la, etc.
Presto a bottega
che l'alba è già
La ran la la, etc.
Ah, che bel vivere,
che bel piacere,
per un barbiere di qualità.

Figaro
La ran la le ra la ran la la.
Make way for the factotum of the city.
La ran la la, etc.
Rushing to his shop for dawn is here.
La ran la la, etc.
What a merry life, what gay pleasures for a barber of quality.

Ah, bravissimo Figaro.
Bravo, bravissimo, bravol
La ran la la, etc.

Fortunatissimo per verità. Bravo!

Ah, bravissimo Figaro.
Bravo, bravissimo, bravol
La ran la la, etc.

Most fortunate of men, indeed you are!
La ran la la, etc.

Pronto a far tutto
la notte, il giorno,
sempre d'intorno
in giro sta.
Miglior cuccagna
per un barbiere,
vita più nobile,
no, non sì dà
La la ran la la ran la, etc.

Rasori e forbici,
lancette e forbici.
Al mio comando
tutto qui sta.
V'è la risorsa
poi del mestiere,
colla donnetta,
col cavaliere . . .
La la ran la . . . la . . . la.
Ah, che bel vivere,
che bel piacere,
per un barbiere di qualità.

Tutti me chiedono,
tutti me vogliono,
donne ragazzi,
vecchi, fanciulle.
Qua la parrucca,
presto la barba,
quà la sanguigna,
presto il biglietto.
Tutti mi chiedono,
tutti mi vogliono.
Qua la parrucca
presto la barba,
presto il biglietto.
Ehi, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, etc.

La ran la la, etc.

Ready for everything
by night or by day,
always in bustle,
in constant motion.
A better lot
for a barber,
a nobler life
does not exist.
La la ran la la ran la, etc.

Razors and combs,
lancets and scissors,
at my command
everything’s ready.
Then there are “extras,”
part of my trade
business for ladies
and cavaliers . . .
La la ran la . . . la . . . la.
Ah what a merry life,
what gay pleasures,
for a barber of quality.

All call for me,
all want me.
Ladies and children.
Old men and maidens.
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
leeches to bleed me,
here, take this note.
All call for me,
all want me,
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
here, take this note.
Ho, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, etc.
Ahimè! A commotion! Ahimè! A crowd!
One at a time, For pity’s sake.
Ehi, Figaro! I am here!
Figaro here, Figaro there, Figaro up, Figaro down.
Quicker and quicker I go like greased lightning.
Make way for the factotum of the city.
Ah, bravo, Figaro, bravo, bravissimo,
on you good fortune will always smile.
La la ran la, etc.
I am the factotum of the city.

Orestes
(ca. 408 BCE)
Euripides

STASIMON CHORUS
You wild goddesses who dart across the skies seeking vengeance for murder, we beg you to free Agamemnon’s son from his raging fury. . . . We grieve for this boy. Happiness is brief among mortals. Sorrow and anguish sweep down on it like a swift gust of wind on a sail-ship, and it sinks under the tossing seas.
Mass for Christmas Day

INTROIT
"Puer natus est nobis"

Puer natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis: cujus imperium super humerum ejus: et vocabitur nomen ejus, magni consili Angelus. A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us; whose government is upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called the Angel of great counsel.

---

"Alleluia pascha nostrum" and "Gaudeat devotio fidelium"
(c. 1190)

Leonin

Alleluia pascha nostrum
Gaudeat devotio fidelium;
verbum patris incarnatur,
nova proles nobis datur
et nobis cum conversatur
salus gentium.
Vite pandit ostium,
dum mortis supplicium,
pie tolerat.

Hallelujah our Passover
Let the devotion of the faithful be raised in rejoicing;
the word of the father is made flesh,
and a new child is given to us, and He has bestowed Himself upon us.
The salvation of the people has opened the gateway of life,
for he in devotion has borne the punishment of death.
“Can vei la lauzeta mover”

“When I see the lark beating” (ca. 1175)

Bernard de Ventadorn

Poem by the composer

Can vei la lauzeta mover
de joia sas alas contra el rai,
que els oblid’ els laissa chazer
per la doussor c’al cor il vai,
Aix tan grans enveva m’en ve
de cui qu’eu veia jauzion,
meravillhas aix, car desse
lo cor de dezzer no’m fon.

When I see the lark beating its wings
joyfully against the sun’s rays,
which then swoons and swoops
down because of the joy in its heart,
Oh! I feel such jealousy
for all those who have the joy of love,
that I am astonished
that my heart does not
immediately melt with desire!

Ai, las! tan cuidava saber
d’amor, e tan petit en sai,
car eu d’amor no’m posc tener
ceilis don ja pro non surai.
Tout m’a mo cor, e tout m’a me,
e se mezeis e tot lo mon;

e can se’m tolç, no’m hasset re
mas dezzer e cor volon.

Alas! I thought I knew so much
of love, and I know so little; for
I cannot help loving a lady from
whom I shall never obtain any favor.
She has taken away my heart and,
myself and herself and the whole
world;
and when she left me, I had nothing
left but desire and a yearning heart.
“Rose, liz”
"Rose, Lily" (ca. 1350)
Guillaume de Machaut
Poem by the composer

Rose, liz, printemps, verdure,  
fleur, baume et tres douce  
odour, belle,  
passes en doucour,  
et tous les biens de Nature,  
avez dont je vous aour.  
Rose, liz, printemps, verdure,  
fleur, baume et tres douce  
odour.

Et quant toute creature  
seurmonte votre valour,  
bien puis dire et par honour:  
rose, liz, printemps, verdure,  
fleur, baume et tres douce  
odour, belle,  
passes en doucour.

———

“El Grillo”
"The Cricket" (ca. 1480)
Josquin des Prez

El grillo è buon cantore  
che tiene lungo verso.  
Dale, heve grillo, canta.  
Ma non fa come gli altri uccelli,  
come li han canto un poco,  
vau' de fatto in alto loco,  
sempre el grillo sta pur saldo.  
Quando la maggior el caldo  
ahor canto sol per amore.

———

The cricket is a good singer  
who holds a long note.  
Go ahead, drink and sing, cricket.  
But he is not like the other birds,  
who sing a little  
and then fly away,  
the cricket always stands firm.  
When it is hottest,  
he sings alone for love.
“Je me complains”
“I complain” (ca. 1480)
Josquin des Prez

Je me complains de mon amy,  
qui me vouloit tant venir voir  
la fresse matinée,  
or est il prine,  
et c'est midi,  
et si n'oy nouvelle de huy,  
s'approche le vespérie.  
La tricoton, la belle tricotée.

I complain about my friend,  
who usually comes to see me  
in the early morning,  
but now it's mid-morning,  
and now it's afternoon,  
and if I don't have news of him,  
Vespers will be approaching.  
The knitting, the lovely knitting girl.

“As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending”
(1601)
Thomas Weelkes

As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending  
she spied a maiden Queen the same ascending,  
attended on by all the shepherds' swain;  
to whom Diana's darlings came running down amain  
first two by two, then three by three together  
leaving their Goddess all alone, haste thither;  
and mingling with the shepherds of her train,  
with mirthful tunes her presence did entertain.  
Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana:  
long live fair Oriana!
"Io parto"

"I am leaving" (ca. 1595, pub. 1611)

**Carlo Gesualdo**

"Io parto" e non più dissi che il dolore privò di vita il core.

Allor prospese in pianto e dissi
Clori con interroti ansii: "dunque
a i dolori io resto. Ah, non fia mai
ch'io non languisca in dolorosi lai."

Morto fui, vivo son che i spiriti
spentii tornaro in vita a st piaceri
accenti.

"I am leaving" and said no more,
for grief had robbed my heart of
life.

Then Clori began to weep, and
said, with interrupted cries of
"Ah: therefore, with my agony
I remain. Ah, may I never cease to
languish in such pain."

I was dead, and now am I alive, for
my dear spirits return to life at the
sound of such pathetic accents.

---

**Euridice**

(1600)

**Jacopo Peri**

Libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini

**Dafne**

Per quel vago boschetto,
ove, regando i fiori, lento
trascorre il fonce degli allori,
prendea dolce dilettar con le
compagnie sue, la bella spera,
chi violesta o rosa
per far ghirland' al crine
togliese del prato o dall' acute
spine, e qual posando il fianco
su la fiorita sponda
dolce cantava al mormorar
dell' onda; ma la bella Euridice
movea danzando il piè sul
verde prato quand' ah ria sorte
acerba, angue crude e spietato
che celato giaceva tra fiori e l'erba

**Dafne**

In the beautiful thicket,
where, watering the flowers, slowly
courses the spring of the laurel,
she took sweet delight with her
companions—the beautiful bayle—
as some picked violets, others roses,
to make garlands for their hair,
in the meadow or among the sharp
thorns. Another, lying on her side
on the flowered bank,
sang sweetly to the murmur of the
waves. But the lovely Eurydice
dancingly moved her feet on the
green grass when—a bitter, angry
fate—a snake, cruel and merciless,
that lay hidden among flowers and
Lectures 5–8: The Invention of Opera and Monteverdi’s Orfeo

Grass bit her foot with such an evil tooth that she suddenly became pale like a ray of sunshine that a cloud darkens. And from the depths of her heart, a mortal sigh, so frightful, alas, flew forth, almost as if it had wings; every nymph rushed to the painful sound. And she, fainting, let herself fall in another’s arms. Then spread over her beautiful face and her golden tresses a sweat colder by far than ice.

And then was heard your name, sounding between her lips, cold and trembling, and her eyes turned to heaven, her beautiful face and mien discolored, this great beauty was transformed to motionless ice.

Aretro
What do you relate, alas, what do I hear? Wretched nymph, and more unhappy lover, spectacle of sorrow and of torment!

Orfeo
I do not weep, nor do I sigh, o my dear Euridice, for I am unable to sigh, to weep. Unhappy corpse, o my heart, o my hope, o peace, o life! Alas, who has taken you from me? Who has taken you away, alas? Where have you gone? Soon you will see that not in vain did you, dying, call your spouse. I am not far away, I come, o dear life, o dear death.
Orfeo
(1607)
Claudio Monteverdi
Libretto by Alessandro Striggio

PROLOGUE

Retornello

La musica
Dal mio Parnasso amato
a voi ne vegno, incliti eroi,
sangue gentil de' regi, di cui narra
la fama eccelsi pregi, né giunge al
ver, perch'è tropp'alto il segno.

Music
From my beloved Parnassus I
come to you, illustrious heroes of
noble royal blood, whose glorious
virtues are proclaimed by fame
only incompletely, for they are
too many to number.

Retornello
Io la Musica son, ch' ai dolci accenti
so far tranquillo ogni turbato core,
ed or di nobil ira ed or d'amore
posso inflamar le più gelate menti.

I am Music who, with sweet
sounds, knows how to calm every
troubled heart, and
now to noble anger, now to love,
can kindle the most icy souls.

Retornello
Io, su cetera d'or, cantando soglio
mortal eccehio lusingar talora,
e in questa guisa a l'armonia sonora
de la lira del ciel più l'alma invoglio.

Singing to the golden lyre I am
accustomed sometimes to delight
mortal ears and I thus inspire the
soul at the sonorous harmony of
the lyre of Heaven.

Retornello
Quinci a dirvi d'Orfeo desio mi
sprona, d'Orfeo che trasse al suo
cantar le fere e servo fe' l'inferno a
sue preghiere, gloria immortale
di Pindo a d'Elicona.

My desire now is to tell you of
Orpheus, of Orpheus who held
the wild beasts spellbound with his
song, who even subdued Hell with
his pleading, and won the immortal
fame of Pindos and Helicon.
Lectures 5–8: The Invention of Opera and Monteverdi’s Orfeo

**Act One**

**Ritornello**

Or mentre i canti altrerno, or lieti or mesti, non si move angellin gra queste piante, né s’oda in queste rive onda sonante, ed ogni arresta in suo cammin s’arresti.

Now during my songs, now gay, now sad, may the birds be silent on these trees, no waves be heard on these shores, and every breeze cease to blow.

**Pastore**

\[A\]

In questo lieto e fortunato giorno ch’ha posto fine a gli amorosi affanni del nostro semide, cantiamo, pastori, in urla accenti, che sian degni d’Orfeo nostri concetti.

\[B\]

Oggi fatta è pietosa l’alma già s’degnosa della bella Euridice. Oggi fatto è felice Orfeo nel sen di lei, per cui già tanto per queste selve ha sospirato e pianto.

\[A’\]

Dunque in queste lieto e fortunato giorno, ecc.

**Shepherd**

\[A\]

On this happy, auspicious day which has put an end to the lovesickness of our demi-god, let us sing, shepherds, in such gentle accents that our strains will be worthy of Orpheus.

\[B\]

Today pity has stirred the soul, till now so disdainful, of the lovely Eurydice. Today Orpheus has been made happy on her breast, for whose sake he has already sighed and wept so much in these woods.

\[A’\]

Therefore on such a happy, auspicious day, etc.

**Coro di ninfe e pastori**

Vieni, liameo, deh, vieni, e la tua face ardente sia quasi un sol nascente ch’apporti a questi amanti i di sereni e lunge onai digombre de gli affanni e del duol gli orrori e l’ombre.

**Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds**

Come, Hymen, o come, and let thy blazing torch be like a rising sun that brings days of serenity to these lovers; and drive far away the horrors and the shadows of anguish and grief.
Coro di ninfe e pastori

Part 1
Lasciate i monti, lasciate i fonti, ninfe vezzose a liete,
e in questi prati ai balli usati
vago il bel pié rendete.

Part 2
Qui miri il sole vostre carole
pìù vaghe assai di quelle
ond'a la luna la notte bruna
danzan in ciel le stelle.

Part 3

Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds

Part 1
Leave the mountains, leave the fountains, fair, happy nymphs,
and in these meadows, with your usual dances,
estir your beautiful feet.

Part 2
Here let the sun watch your dances that are much lovelier than those which the stars in the sky perform around the moon in the dark night.

Part 3

Ritornello

Part 1
Lasciate i monti, lasciate i fonti, etc.

Part 2
Po' di bei fiori per voi s'onorari
di questi amanti il crine,
ch'or dei mariti dei lor desiri
godon beni al fine.

Part 3

Ritornello

Pastore primo

Ma tu, gentil cantor, s'a tuoi
lamenti già festi lagrimar
queste campagne, Perch'ora
al suon de la famoza cetta
no fai teco gioir le valli e i poggi?
Sia testimon del core qualche
lieta canzon che detti Amore.

Orfeo

Rosa del ciel, vita del mondo e

First Shepherd

But you, gentle singer, whose
laments once made this
countryside weep why do you not now delight the valleys and hills with the sound of the famous lyre?
May the testimony of your heart be some happy song that speaks of love?

Orpheus

Rose of the day, life of the earth
degna prole di lui che
l'universo affrena.
Sol, che'1 tutto circondi e'1 tutto
miri, da gli stellanti giri,
di me più lieto e fortunato
amante? Fui ben felice il giorno,
ritrovarti, che piu ti vidi,
e piu felice l'ora
che per to sospirai,
poiché al mio sospirotto sospirasti;
felicissimo il punto
che la candida mano,
prego di pura febe, a me purgesti.
Se tanti cori avessi
quanti occhi ha il ciel eterno e
quante chioine han questi colli
ameni il verde maggio, tutti
colmi sariero e traboccanti di
quel piacer ch'oggi mi fa contento.

Euridice
Io non dirò qual sia nel tuo giori,
Orfeo, la gioia mia, che non ho
mecco il core, ma feco stassi in
compagnia d'amore; chiedi lo
dunque a lui s'intender brami
quanto lieto gioisca e quanto
t'ami.

Coro de ninfe e pastorì
Lasciate i monti, lasciate i
fonti, etc.

Vieni, Imeneo, deh, vieni,
e la tua face ardente
sia quasi un sol nascente
ch'apporti a questi amanti i
di sereni; etc.

and noble offspring of him who
guides the universe,
Sun, who surrounds and sees all
from your path among the stars,
tell me, did you ever see
a happier, more fortunate lover
than I? Blessed was the day,
my beloved, on which I first saw
you, and happier still the hour
when I sighed for you,
since you did return my sighs;
happy the moment when
you gave me your white hand
as a pledge of pure faithfulness.
Had I as many hearts as
the eternal heavens eyes and these
pleasant hills leaves in green May,
all would be full and overflowing
with the joy that has made me
happy today.

Euridice
I'll not say how great is my bliss,
Orpheus, at your bliss: I do not
bear my heart within me, it
remains with you together with
my love; ask it if you would hear
how it rejoices and how much it
loves you.

Balletto
Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds
Leave the mountains, leave the
fountains, etc.

Riornello
Come, Hymen, o come,
and let thy blazing torch
be like a rising sun
that brings days of serenity to
these lovers, etc.
Pastore secondo
Ma se il nostro gior dal ciel deriva,
com’è dal ciel ciò che quaggiù
s’incontra, giusto è ben che devoti
gli offriamo incensi e voti. Dunque
al tempio ciascun rivolga i passi a
pregar lui ne la cui destra è il
mondo, che lungamente il nostro
ben conservi.

Pastore secondo e terzo
Alcun non sia che disperso in
preda si doni al duol, benchè talor
n’saggia poscente si che
noscia vita inforsa.

Ritornello
Ninfà, pastore primo e quarto
Ch’è, poi che nembo rio, gravido
il seno d’altra tempesta, inorriddito
ha il mondo, dispega il sol più
chiaro i rai lucenti.

Ritornello
Pastore primo e secondo
E dopo l’aspro gel del verno ignudo
veste di fior la primaverì i campi

Coro di nife e pastorì
Ecco Orfeo, cui pur dianzi furon
ciò i sospiri, bevanda il pianto.
Oggi felice è tanto che nulla
è più che da bramar gli avanzi.

Second Shepherd
But if our rejoicing comes from
Heaven, like everything around us
here, it is proper that we reverently
offer it incense and sacrifices. Let
each therefore turn his steps to the
temple to pray to him in whose right
hand the world rests, that he may
long preserve for us this happiness.

Ritornello
Second and Third Shepherds
Let nobody fall prey to despair,
surrender to grief, even though it
assails us so powerfully that it
endangers our life.

Ritornello
Nymph, First and Fourth Shepherds
For after the terrible clouds, laden
with dark storms, have frightened
the world, the sun shines all the
more brightly.

Ritornello
First and Second Shepherds
And after the bitter frost of bare
winter the spring clothes the fields
with flowers.

Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds
Here is Orpheus, for whom sighs
were once food and weeping was
drink. Today he is so happy that
nothing more remains for him to
desire.
ACT TWO

Sinfonia

Orfeo

Ecco pur ch’a voi ritorno,
care selve e piagge amate,
da quel sol fatte beate
per cui sol mie notti han giorno.

Orpheus

Behold, I return to you,
dear woods and beloved hills,
made blessed by that sun
through which alone my nights
turn to day.

Pastore secondo

Mira ch’a sè n’alletra
l’ombra, Orfeo, di quel faggi,
or che infocati raggi
Febo dal ciel saetta.

Second Shepherd

See how the shade of these
beeches allurs thee, Orpheus,
now that Phoebus sends
fiery rays from the sky.

Pastore terzo

Su quell’erbose sponde
posiamci, e in vari modi
ciascun sua voce suoni
al mormorio de l’onde.

Third Shepherd

On these grassy banks let us rest
and in our various ways
let each join his voice
with the murmur of the waves.

Pastore secondo e terzo

In questo prato adorno
ogni selvaggio nume
sovente ha per costume
di far lieto suggiorno.

Second and Third Shepherds

On this adorned meadow
every god of the woods has
frequently been accustomed
to spend happy hours.

Qui Pan, dio dei pastori,
s’èfìl talor dolente
rimembrat dolcemente
suoi aventurati amori.

Ritornello

Here Pan, god of shepherds,
was sometimes heard sadly
and gently recalling
his unhappy loves.

Ritornello
Qui la Napae verzose,
schiera sempre fiorita,
con le candide dita
fur viste a coglier rose.

**Coro di ninfe e pastor**
Dunque fa' degni, Orfeo,
del suon della tua lira
questi campi ove spira
aura d'odor saveo.

**Riornello**
Vi ricorda, o buchi ombrosi,
de' miei lungi aspri tormenti,
quando i sassi ai miei lamenti
rispondean fari pietosi?

Dite, allor non vi sembrai
più d'ogni altro sconsolato?
Or fortuna ha stil cangiato
ed ha volto in festa i guai.

Vissi già mesto e dolente:
or gioioso e quelli affanni
che sofferti ho per tanto anni
fan più cado il ben presente.

**Riornello**
Sol per te, bella Euridice,
benedico il mio tormento:
dopo il suol sì è più contento,
dopo il mal sì è più felice.

**Orfeo**
Here the charming Napaeae,
a group always garlanded,
with their white fingers
were seen plucking roses.

**Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds**
Then, Orpheus, make worthy
with the sound of your lyre
these fields, over which wafts the
aura of oriental perfumes.

**Riornello**
Do you remember, o shady
woods, my long, bitter torments,
when the stones responded
to my laments compassionately?

**Riornello**
Say, did I not then appear to you
more disconsolate than any other?
Now fortune has smiled on me and
has turned my woes into a feast.

**Riornello**
I used to live sadly and woefully;
now I rejoice, and those sufferings
that I bore for so many years
make my present joy all the more
precious.

**Riornello**
Only for you, lovely Euridice,
do I bless my former torments;
after grief one is more content,
after pain one is happier.
Pastore secondo
Mira, deh mira, Orfeo,
che d’ogni intorno ride il bosco
e ride il prato; segue pur col
pietruo avaro d’addolcir l’aria
in al beato giorno.

La messaggera
Ah, caso acerbo, ah, fato
empio e crudele, ah, stelle
ingiuriose, ah, cielo avaro!

Pastore secondo
Qual suon dolente il
lieto di perturbarsi?

La messaggera
Lassa, dunque debb’io, mentre
Orfeo con sue note il ciel consola,
con le parole mia passagli il core?

Pastore primo
Questa è Silvia gentile, dolcissima
compagna de la bella Euridice;
oh, quanto è in vista dolorosa;
or che sia? Deh, sommi deì,
non torcete da noi benigno il
guardo.

La messaggera
Pastor, lasciate il canto,
ch’ogni nostra allegrezza in
doglia è volta.

Orfeo
Donde vieni?
Ove vai?
Ninfà, che porti?

Second Shepherd
Look, Orpheus, o look
how all around laughs the wood
and laughs the meadow; so continue
with thy golden plectrum to sweeten
the air on such a happy day.

The Messenger
Ah, bitter occurrence, ah, wicked
and cruel fate, ah,
unjust stars, ah miserly Heaven!

Second Shepherd
What sound of sorrow disturbs
this happy day?

The Messenger
I am wretched, for while Orpheus
soothes the heavens with his notes,
with my words I must pierce his
heart.

First Shepherd
This is the lovely Sylvia, sweetest
companion of the fair Eurydice;
how full of grief is her
appearance; what has happened?
O mighty gods, do not turn away
from us your benign glances.

The Messenger
Shepherd, cease your singing,
for all our joy has turned to
grief.

Orpheus
From where do you come?
Where are you going?
Nymph, what bring you?
La messaggera
A te ne vengo, Orfeo,
messaggera infelice
di caso più infelice e
più funesto.
La tua bella Eurydice...

Orfeo
Ohimè, che odo?

La messaggera
La tua dilettosa sposa è morta.

Orfeo
Ohimè!

La messaggera
In un fiorito prato
con l’altra sua compagne
giva cogliendo fiori
per farne una ghirlanda a le sue
chiome, quand’angue insidioso,
ch’era fra l’erba ascoso,
le punse un piè con velenoso dente.
Ed ecco immanitamente scolorirsi il
bel viso e ne’ suoi lumi sparir que’
lampi ond’ella al sol fea scorono.
Allor noi tutte sbigottite e meste
le fummo intorno, richiamar
tentando gli spiriti in lei amariti
con l’onda fresca e con possenti
carmi; ma nulla valse, ahí lassa,
ch’ella i languidi lumi alquanto
aprendo e te chiamando, Orfeo,
dopo un grave sospiro
spirò fra queste braccia; ed io rimasi

The Messenger
To you I come, Orpheus,
unhappy messenger
of the most unhappy and
most tragic happening.
Your beautiful Eurydice...

Orpheus
Woe is me, what do I hear?

The Messenger
Your beloved wife is dead.

Orpheus
Woe is me!

The Messenger
In a flowery meadow
with her other companions
she was collecting flowers
to make a wreath for her hair,
when a treacherous serpent,
hidden in the grass, bit her foot
with its poisonous fangs.
And behold, all at once
her beautiful face turned pale,
and her eyes lost that brilliance for
which the sun envied them. And
now we, all horrified and woeful,
stood around her and tried to re-
awaken the spirit that had fled
with fresh water and powerful spells;
but all in vain, ah, wretched am I,
for she briefly opened again her
dying eyes and calling you, Orpheus,
after a deep sigh expired
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piena il cor di pietade e di spavento.

Pastore secondo
Ali, caso acerbo, ah, fato empio e crudele, ah, stelle in ingiuriose, ah, cielo avaro.

Pastore terzo e secondo
A l’amata nuvella rassembrà l’infelice un muto sasso che per troppo dolor non può dolersi.

Ah, ben avrebbe un cor di tigre o d’orsa chi non sentisse del tuo mal pietade, privo d’ogni tuo ben, misero amante.

Orfeo
Tu se’ morta, mia vita, ed io respiro? Tu se’ da me partita per mai più non tornare, ed io rimango?
No, che se i versi alcuna cosa ponno, ’nandrà sicuro a più profondi abissi, e, intenerito il cor del re de ’l’ombre, meco trarrò a riveder le stelle; o, se ciò negheranmi empio destino, rimarrò teco in compagnia di morte.
Addio terra, addio cielo e sole, addio.

in these arms; and I remained with my heart full of anguish and fear.

Second Shepherd
Ah, bitter occurrence, ah wicked and cruel fate, ah, unjust stars, ah, miserly Heaven.

Third and Second Shepherds
At this bitter news the unhappy one resembles a lifeless boulder, so overcome by grief that he cannot lament.
Ah, he would have the heart of a tiger or a bear who did not feel pity for your pain, deprived of all thy happiness, wretched lover.

Orpheus
You are dead, my life, and I am breathing? You have left me, nevermore to return, and I remain?
No, no, if my verses have any power at all, I will surely go down to the deepest abysses, and, having softened the heart of the King of Shadows, lead you back with me to see the stars; or, if impious fate denies me this, I shall remain with you in the company of death.
Farewell earth, farewell sky and sun, farewell.
Coro di ninfe e pastori
Ah, caso acerbo, ah, fatto empio e crudele, ah, stelle ingiuriose, ah, cielo avaro.
Non si fidi um mortale
de ben caduce e frate,
che costo fugge, e spesso
a gran salta il precipizio è presso.

Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds
Ah, bitter occurrence, ah wicked and cruel fate, ah,
unjust stars, ah miserly Heaven.
Do not trust, oh mortal man,
the perishable and frail happiness
which soon vanishes, and often
in a great ascent the precipice is near.

Coro di ninfe e pastori
Ah, caso acerbo, ah,
fato empio e crudele, ah,
stelle ingiuriose, ah, cielo avaro.

Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds
Ah, bitter occurrence, ah wicked and cruel fate, ah,
unjust stars, ah miserly Heaven.

ACT THREE

La speranza
Ecco l’altra palude, ecco il nocchiero che tra gli ignudi
spiri a l’altra riva, dove ha
Pluton
de l’ombra il vasto impero.
Oltre quel nero stagno, oltre quel
fiume, in quei campi di pianto e
di dolore, desti crudeli ogni tuo
ben t’asconde.
Or d’uopo è d’un gran core e
’d un bel canto.
Lo sin qui t’ho condotto, or più
non lice teco veniri, ch’ammara
legge il vieta, legge iscritta col
ferro in duro sasso de l’ina reggia
in su l’orribil soglia, che in queste
note il fiero senso

Hope
Here is the dark swamp, here the
boatman who bears the naked
spirits to the other bank, where
Pluto
has his vast empire of the shadows.
Beyond this black bog, beyond this
river, in those fields of lamentation
and grief, cruel fate hides your
dearest possession.
Now you need a great heart and
a beautiful song.
I have conducted you as far as here,
in no further am I permitted to
accompany you, since a stern law
forbids it, a law inscribed with iron
in hard stone of the gateway to the
deepest kingdom of terror, express-
esprime: Lasciate ogni speranza
voi che entrate.

Dunque, se stabilito hai pur nel
core di porre il più nella città
dolente, da te men fuggo e torno
a l'usato soggiorno.

ing its fierce meaning in these
words: Abandon all hope, ye who
enter here.

Therefore, if your heart be truly
steadfast and your feet able to enter
the city of sorrow, I will flee from
you and return to my usual abode.

Caronte
O m, ch'inunghi morte a questa
rive temerario ten' vieni, arresta i
passi: sulcar quest'onde ad uom
mortal non darsi, nè può co'
morti all'ego aver chi vive.

Che vuoi forse, nemico al mio
signore, Cerbero trar de le tartaree
porte?
O rapir brami sua cara consorte,
d'impeccato desìre accesso il core?

Bon freno al folle ardir,
ch'ent'al mio legno non
accorbi più noi corpoream alma,
ai de gli antichi oltraggi ancor
ne l'Alma xerbo acerba memoria
e giusto selegno.

Will you, perhaps, hostile to
my lord, drag Cerberus from
Tartarus's gates?
Or do you, your heart aflame with
shameless desire, want to steal his
beloved wife?

Give up thy foolish intention,
into my boat will I never
admit a bodily being, for the
ancient outrages again awaken
in my soul bitter memories
and just anger.

Sinfonia

Orfeo
Possente spirto e formidabil
nune, senza cui far passaggio a
l'altra riva alma da corpo sciolta
in van presume.

Orpheus
Mighty spirit and awesome
divinity, without whom the souls
freed from their bodies hope in
vain to cross over to the other
bank.
Ritornello (2 violins)

Non viv’io, no, che poi di vita è
priva mia cara sposa, il cor non è
più meco, e senza cor com’esser
può ch’io viva!

I am not alive, no, since of life is
deprived my beloved wife, my
heart is no longer with me, and
without a heart how can it be that
I live?

Ritornello (2 cornets)

A lei volto ho il cammin per
l’acie co, a l’inferno non già,
chi’ovunque stassi tanta bellezza
il paradiso ha seco.

To her I have turned my steps
through the dark air, not towards
Hell, for whoever has so much
beauty has Paradise.

Ritornello (2 harps)

Orfeo son io, che d’Euridice i passi
segue per queste tenebrose arene,
ove giudica per uom mortal non
vasti.

O de le luci mie luci serene,
s’un vostro sguardo puo tornarmi
in vita, ah! chi nega il conforto a
le mie pene?

Sol tu, nobile dio, puoi darmi aita,
né tener dei, chè sopra un’autre
cetra sol di corde soavi armo le
dita contra cui rigida alma in van
s’impesta.

I am Orpheus, who follows the
steps of Eurydice through these
gloomy plains, to which mortal
man never has access.

O serene lights of my eyes,
if only one glance from you can
restore me to life, ah, who can
deny me comfort in my torment?
Only you, noble god, can aid me,
fear not, for it is only the sweet
strings of a golden lyre I use as a
weapon against which rigid souls
implore in vain.

Caronte

Ben mi lusinga alquanto
dilettandomi il core, sconsolato
cantore, il tuo pianto e’l tuo canto.
Ma lunga, ah, lunga sia da questo
petto pietà, di mio valor non
degno effetto.

Chiron

Much am I flattered by such
delight to my heart, disconsolate
singer, by thy lament and thy
song. But far, ah, far from my
breast be pity, which is beneath
my dignity.

Orfeo

Ah, sventurato amante! Sperar

Orpheus

Ah, unhappy lover! Am I then not
Lectures 5-8: The Invention of Opera and Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*

dunque non lice ch’odan
miei prieghi i cittadin d’Averno?

Onde, qual ombra errante
d’insenpolo cadavere e infelice,
privo sarò del ciclo e
de l’ inferno?

Così vuol empia sorte
che in quest’orrore di morte
da te, cor mio, lontano
chiami tuo nome in vano
e pregando e piangendo io mi
consumi?
Rendetemi il mio ben, tartarei
numi!

allowed to hope that
the citizens of Hades will hear my
pleas?

Must I therefore, like a wandering
shadow of an unburied and
unhappy corpse, be deprived of
Heaven and of Hell?

Does impious fate thus will it
that I, in this horror of death,
far from you, my beloved,
call your name in vain
and waste away in imploring
and weeping?
Give me back my love, gods of
Hell!

*Sinfonia*

Ei dorme, e la mia cetra,
se pietà non impetra
ne l’indurato core, almen il sonno
fuggir al mio cantar gli occhi non
ponno.
Su, dunque, a che più tardo?
Tempo è ben d’approdar su l’altra
sponda, s’alcm non è ch’il nieghi.
Vaglia l’ardir se foran
vani i prieghi.
E vago for del tempo
l’occasion, ch’esser de colta a
tempo.

Mentre versan quest’occhi amari
fiumi, rendetemi il mio ben,
tartarei numi!

He sleeps, and even if my lyre
stirs no compassion
in the heart of stone, at least his
eyes cannot escape sleep at the
sound of my singing.

Up, then, why do I delay?
The time is right to cross to the
other bank if nobody is there to
prevent me. Let boldness prevail
where entreaties were vain.
A short-lived flower of time is
opportunity, which must be
plucked at the right moment.

While these eyes shed floods of
tears, give me back my love, gods
of Hell!
ACT FOUR

Proserpina
Signor, quell’infelice
che per queste di morte ampie
campagne va chiamando Euridice,
ch’udito hai tu pur dianzi
cosi soverchientemente lamentarsi,
mossa ha tanta pietà dentro al
mio core ch’un’altra volta io
torno a profer prieghi perché il
tuo nume al suo pregar si pieghi.

Proserpine
My lord, this unhappy man
who over the wide fields of death
calls for Eurydice,
whom you have just now heard
lamenting so sweetly,
has awakened so much pity within
my heart that I return again
to entreat you
to yield to his imploring.

Plutone
Benché severo ed inmutabil fato
contrastati, amata sposa, i tuoi
desiri, pur nulla omai si nieghi
a tal bela congiunta a tanti
prieghi.
La sua cara Euridice contra l’ordin
fatale Orfeo ritrovi;
ma pria che tragga il piè da questi
abissi non mai volga ver lei gli
avidì fimini, ch’è di perdita eterna
gli fia certa cagion un solo
sguardo.

Pluto
Although stern and immutable
fate opposes your wishes, beloved
wife, nothing indeed shall now
refuse such beauty joined with
such entreaties.
His beloved Eurydice
Orpheus shall find again, contrary
to the decrees of fate;
but before his feet have borne
him from these abysses,
he may not turn round to look
at her, for eternal loss
will result from a single
glance.

Io così stabilisco. Or nel mio
trego fate, o ministri, il mio voler
palate, sì che l’intenda Orfeo
e l’intenda Euridice, né di
cangiarlo altrui sperar più lice.

Chorus of Spirits
Pity and love today
have triumphed in Hades.
Spirito primo
Ecco il gentil cantore che sua
trasporta conduce al ciel superno.

Orfeo
Quale onor di te fia degno, mia
cerchi omnipotente, s'hai nel
tartareo regno piegar potuto
ogni indurata mente?

Luogo avrai fra le più belle
immagini celesti, ogn'el tuo
suon le stelle danzeranno in giri
or tardi o presti.

Io per te felice appiana
vedrò l'amato volto,
e nel candido seno de la
mia donna oggi sarò raccolto.

Ma mentre io canto, ohimè, chi
m'assicura ch'ella mi seguia?
Ohimè, chi mi nasconde
de l'amate pupille il dolce lume?
Forse d'invidia punte
le deità d'Averno,
perché non sia quaggiù felice
appieno, mi tolgo il mirarvi,
luci beate e liete, che sol col
guardo altrui bean potete?

Ma che temi, mio core?
Gìb che vieta Pluton, comanda
Amore. A nume più possente
che vince uomini e dei,
ben ubbidir dovrai.

First Spirit
Here is the gentle singer, who
leads his wife to the skies above.

Reiornella
What honor is worthy of thee, my
omnipotent lyre, that you have,
in the infernal realm, been able to
overcome every hardened spirit?

Reiornella
You will find a place among the
most beautiful images of Heaven,
and to your sound the stars will
dance in circles, now slowly, now
quickly.

Reiornella
I, made perfectly happy through
you, will see the beloved brow
On the white breast
of my lady I shall rest today.

But while I am singing, alas, who
will assure me that she is
following? Who keeps the beloved
eyes hidden from me?
Perhaps pierced by envy
the gods of Avernus forbid me,
so that my happiness will not be
complete, to look at you, blessed
happy lights that can make others
blessed with one glance alone.

What do you fear, my heart?
What Pluto forbids, Cupid
commands. A more powerful
divinity, who conquers men and
gods, I must obey.
(There is a noise behind him.)
Ma che odo, ohimè lasso?
S'armi nare a’ miei danni
conta l'urto le furie infamorate
per rapirti il mio ben?
Ed io'l consento?
(He turns around.)
O dolcissimi lumi, io pur vi
veggio, io pur: ma quale eclissi,
ohimè, v'oscura?

Spirito terzo
Rott hai la legge e se'di
grazia indegno.

Euridice
Ahi, vista troppo dolce e troppo
amara; così per troppo amor
dunque mi perdi? Ed io, misera,
perdo il poter più godere
e di luce e di vita e perdo
insieme te, d'ogni ben più caro,
o mio consorte.

Spirito primo
Torna a l'ombre di morte,
infelice Euridice,
el più sperar di riveder le stelle,
ch'omai sia sordo a' preghi tuoi
l'inferno.

Orfeo
Dove ten' vai, mia vita?
Ecco, io ti seguo, ma chi me'
I ne gia, ahimè? Sogno o vaneggio?
Qual occulto poter di questi
orrori, da questi amati orrori
mal mio grado mi tragge e
mi conduce a l'odiosa luce?

(There is a noise behind him.)
But what do I hear, alas?
Do the Furies arm themselves to
hurt me, madly desiring with such
frenzy to rob me of my beloved?
And I allow it?
(He turns around.)
O sweetest lights, I can indeed
see you, I can, but what eclipse,
 alas, obscures you?

Third Spirit
You have broken the law and are
unworthy of mercy.

Eurydice
Ah, sight too sweet and too bitter;
so by too much love you thus
lose me? And I, poor one, lose
the happiness of returning
to light and life, and lose at the
same time you, dearest of all
possessions, my husband.

First Spirit
Return to the shades of death,
unhappy Eurydice,
bye no more to see the stars
again, for henceforth to thy pleas
Hell will be deaf.

Orpheus
Where are you going, my life?
Behold, I follow you, but who,
 alas, prevents me? Is it a dream?
What hidden power of these
horrors drags me from these
beloved horrors against my will,
and leads me to the hateful light?
Lectures 5-8: The Invention of Opera and Monteverdi's Orfeo

**Chorus of Spirits**

Virtue is a ray of heavenly beauty, prize of the soul, where alone it is valued.

The devastation of time it does not fear; in man the years make its splendor brighter.

Orpheus overcame Hell and was overcome by his passions. Eternal fame is deserved only by him who will have victory over himself.

**Sinfonia**

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**ACT FIVE**

**Orfeo**

Questi i campi di Tracia, e quest'è il loco dove passommi il core per l'amara novella il mio dolore. Poi che non ho più speme de ricovar pregando, piantando e sospirando il perduto mio bene, che poss'io più se non volgerni a voi, selve soavi, un tempo conforto a' miei martir, mentr'al ciel piacque per farvi per pietà meco languire al mio languire? Voi vi doleste, o monti, e lagrimaste, voi, sassi, al dipartir del nostro sole, ed io con voi lagrimerò mai sempre e mai sempre darommi, ah doglia, ahì pianto!

**Echo**

Hai pianto!

**Orfeo**

These are the fields of Thrace, and this is the spot where my heart was pierced by sorrow at the bitter news. Now that I have no longer any hope of recovering by praying, weeping or sighing, my lost happiness, what else remains for me but to turn to you, gentle woods, once comfort to my torments, as Heaven in pity for me let you languish at my languishing? You have mourned, o mountains, and wept, o stones, at the departure of our sun, and I will weep with you forever, forever make myself suffer and lament.

**Echo**

Lament!
Orfeo
Cortese Eco amorosa, che
sconsofata sei e consulare mi vuoi
ne' dolor miei,
benché queste mie luci sien già per
lagrime fatte due fonti,
in cosi grave mia fera sventura
non ho pianto però tanto che basti.

Orpheus
Kind, loving Echo, who are
disconsolate and wish to console me
in my grief, although these eyes of
mine through so much weeping are
made two fountains, in my serious
misfortune I have not yet
wept enough, not yet enough.

Apollo
Perché a la selva ed al dolor in
preda così ti doni, o figlio?
Non è, non è consiglio
di generoso petto servir al proprio
affetto; quinci biasiamo e perfidio
gia sovrastar ti veggio, onde merno
dal ciel per darti aita. Or tu
mascolta e n'arrai lode e vita.

Apollo
Why to rage and to grief do you
give yourself as prey like this, o son?
It is not the counsel of a great heart
to be servant to one's own passions;
by shame and peril I already see you
threatened wherefore I hasten from
Heaven to help you. Now listen to
me, and you will have fame and life.

Orfeo
Padre cortese, al maggior uopo
arrivì, ch'a disperato fine con
estrelo dolore m'avven condotto
gia sdegné ed amore. Eccomi
dunque attento a tue ragioni,
celeste padre: or ciò che vuoi
m'imponi.

Apollo
Too soon did you rejoice at your
happy lot; now you weep too
much at your hard and bitter fate.
Do you not yet know that no
delight is lasting here below?
Therefore if you desire to enjoy
immortal life, come with me to
Heaven, which beckons you.
**Orfeo**
Si non vedrò più mai
de l'amata Euridice i
dolci rai?

**Apollo**
Nel sole e ne le stelle
vagheggarai le sue sembianze
belle.

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**Orpheus**
So shall I never again see
the sweet eyes of my beloved
Eurydice?

**Apollo**
In the sun and the stars
you shall recognize her beautiful
likeness.

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**Apollo e Orfeo**
(ascendono al ciel cantando)
Saliam cantando al cielo,
dove ha virtù verace degno
premio di sé, dilettò e pace.

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**Apollo and Orpheus**
(*rise singing to Heaven*)
Let us rise, singing, to Heaven,
where true virtue
has its own reward: joy and peace.
The earliest operas were a synthesis. ... We tend to treat the word “synthetic” today as something bad; if something is synthetic, it’s not made out of real stuff. But in terms of music, the word “synthesis” is an important and a good word, because it indicates various different styles and types of music combined, where the whole hopefully is greater than the parts.

We will begin by reviewing the birth of opera and its early history, and then we will move on to discussion of the invention of the aria. The earliest operas were a synthesis of old and new musical and dramatic genres and compositional techniques. Four elements were inherited from the Renaissance: stage scenery and machinery, dance/ballet episodes, popular songs/ballads, and madrigal-style choruses. These early operas also included the recitative element, which was new. Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* was the first successful work to combine all these elements into a singularity greater than the parts.

Recitative was the essence of Monteverdi’s operatic art. It was used for everything: action, narrative, dialogue and description of feelings. Because of the non-reflective and ever forward-moving nature of recitative, time cannot stop for consideration and reflection. For example, Orpheus’ reaction to Euridice’s death is recitative, and in it, he does not stop to reflect. There was little emotional depth in this genre at this point in its development. The concept of aria, in which music is divorced from words and creates a whole expressive world of its own, had not yet been realized. Moreover, recitative focuses on words, not music, which further limits emotional depth. A musical example in *Orfeo* is Orpheus’ response.

In considering aria, we begin with the musical example of “Chiamo il mio ben cosi” from Christoph Willibald von Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762). In an aria, the words and music are on an equal footing. Additionally, real
time stops. Orpheus can experience and express in music a depth of feeling far beyond that of words alone. The use of music as an expressive vehicle, which began with the earliest arias, is revolutionary. Gluck’s operas mark the starting point for the modern opera repertory.

The period between Monteverdi (1567–1643) and Gluck (1714–1787) is sometimes called both the golden age of opera and the dark age of opera (a period which runs from 1640 through 1750). This period was very secular in terms of philosophy and science. It saw logical thought as transcendent. This development influenced music, resulting in a hugely expanded musical language. The harmonic system came into its own. Instrumental music became as popular as vocal music, and with the development of instrumental music there came a self-sufficient, pure, abstract musical language. This was Gluck’s inheritance: a musical language that could create what could not be expressed in words alone.

The first phase of this period ran from 1640 through 1700. During this phase, the first public opera houses were opened. Also, opera quickly became a ubiquitous public entertainment in Italy. Huge numbers of operas were created and produced. The popularity of opera during this era can be compared with the popularity of television for modern audiences. Singing style and stage design developed rapidly. Opera captured the exuberant, expressive spirit of the Baroque. The quality of libretti declined in order to meet the growing public demand for spectacle, situation, and virtuosic singing (a situation again comparable with much contemporary television programming). Opera pulled further away from the Greek ideal. Choruses were used less and less as the demand for virtuoso soloists grew. Despite their number and fame, however, Baroque operas are seldom produced, due to their dramatic stupidity and strange, often bizarre content; thus the dark age of opera.
By the late 17th and early 18th centuries, literary devotees of opera were determined to reform the medium and return to it a degree of literary and dramatic substance. These reforms characterized the second phase of the golden/dark age of opera, which ran from 1700 through 1760.

Chief among the reformers of this phase was Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782). He was the great librettist of the first half of the 18th century. He standardized his librettos into a formulaic dramatic procedure (comparable with today’s television sitcoms).

In opera developed during the second phase of the golden/dark age of opera, dry recitative (accompanied only by a harpsichord and, sometimes, a cello) alternated with arias. The principal characters had to sing one or two arias in each act. Subsidiary singers were only permitted one or two arias in the course of the entire opera. Every opera had three acts. No two successive arias could use the same singer, mood, or orchestration; and choruses, duets, and other ensembles were very rare, except for the final number, when all principal singers had to line up for an ensemble in block harmony.

Plots were based on mythological characters and ancient history. This is the formula for Italian opera seria. Metastasio formalized arias into a structure called the da capo aria: A-B-A form. As a musical example we consider “Mi rivedi” from Alessandro Scarlatti’s La Griselda (1721).

Arias became classified into standard types. There are many different types, including the five we will describe here. First, the aria cantabile showcases all of the singer’s lyrical ability. The aria di portamento is a dignified aria designed to show off the singer’s breath and tone control. The aria di mezzo caratere is a compromise between the aria cantabile and the aria di bravura. The aria parlante (patter aria) demonstrates the singer’s agility, and the aria di bravura (or aria d’agilità) is highly florid and designed to show off the singer’s agility and extraordinary vocal compass.

As a result of the predictability of the Metastasian operatic formula, singers and vocal virtuosity increasingly became the focal points of reform opera. Singers embellished the written notes and improvised solo passages at the ends of arias. These embellished and extended cadences became known
as cadenzas. The greatest vocal abuses were promulgated by the castrati. For a musical example, we will review “Siam navi all’onde” from Antonio Vivaldi’s L’Olimpiade of 1734.

We now turn to a discussion of voice types. Basic voice classifications include soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The soprano is the highest female voice, and the coloratura soprano is the highest of the soprano voices. The term coloratura refers to virtuosic singing, not vocal range. Coloratura sopranos are distinguished by their range, clarity, and agility as exemplified in the Queen of the Night’s aria, “Der Hölle Rache” from Mozart’s The Magic Flute of 1791 (musical example).

The lyric soprano is a fairly light, warm, and flexible voice. The dramatic soprano on the other hand is a heavier, darker, and larger voice than lyric. The spinto soprano is a voice lying between a lyric and a dramatic soprano, and the mezzo-soprano is heavier, darker, and lower than a true soprano, approaching the alto voice. The contralto (alto) is a female voice of exceptionally low focus.

The tenor is the highest male voice. The lyric tenor is a light, clear, and flexible voice, while the dramatic tenor is a more forceful, powerful voice, capable of greater volume and endurance. As a musical example, please consider Otello’s entrance from Act 1 of Verdi’s Otello (1886). The baritone is slightly lower in range, heavier, and fuller in sound than the tenor, and the bass is the lowest male voice. It is a rich, dark, heavy, and powerful voice that is not particularly agile. A good musical example is Charon’s song from Monteverdi’s Orfeo, Act 3 (1607).

We now return to Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714–1787) and a consideration of his reforms. Gluck was Bohemian by birth. He split his mature career between Vienna and Paris and was a brilliant composer of Italian-style operas.

Gluck’s operas were along the lines of traditional opera seria. They distinguished themselves, however, in their dramatic viability. Gluck believed strongly in telling a good story. To do so, he used his orchestra much more flexibly. He also simplified and streamlined his arias to reduce
singers’ abuses and to restore the dramatic integrity of his operas. His operas became models for the next generation of opera composers.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s (1756–1791) Idomeneo, Re di Creta (Idomeneo, King of Crete) is the greatest opera seria. The libretto is by G. B. Varesco. Mozart is one of the few great opera composers not to have been an opera specialist. He wrote operas in all the styles popular in his time: opera seria, Gluck’s reform-style opera, opera buffa, and Singspiel. His first opera was La finta semplice (The Pretended Simpleton) of 1768.

Idomeneo is the transcendent opera seria. In its story, Ilia (lyric soprano), the daughter of Priam, King of Troy, is in love with Idamante, who is also in love with her. He (soprano or tenor; the part was originally written for a castrato) is the prince and heir to the Cretan throne. Half-mad Greek princess Elektra is also in love with Idamante. Idomeneo is the King of Crete and father of Idamante. The action takes place on Crete, ten years after the end of the Trojan War. Idomeneo, in order to survive a shipwreck, promises to sacrifice to Neptune the first person he sees on landing in Crete. This turns out to be Idamante, his son and heir. Idomeneo desperately tries to find a way to avoid keeping his oath to Neptune.

In Act 2, the momentum builds to a tremendous degree as Mozart employs every device he can to avoid the formulaic and predictable dramatic action typical of opera seria. Each vocal number merges with the next. The use of a trio was rare in Mozart’s day. He uses one in this act to break the predictable pattern. He also uses recitative for Idomeneo’s monologue “Eccoti in me, barbaro Nume!” He knew that an aria at this point would have slowed the pace and killed the dramatic momentum. Musical examples abound and
include Elektra's recitative, “Parto, e l’unico” and no. 14 (march); Elektra’s recitative “Sidonie sponde”; the No. 15 (chorus), “Placido è il mar”; Elektra’s aria, “Soavi zeffiri” and Idomeneo’s recitative, “Tropp’ t’arresti”; the No. 16 (trio) from “Deh cessi il scompiglio”; the No. 17 (chorus), “Qual nuovo terrore!”; Idomeneo’s recitative, “Eccoti in me, barbaro nume!”; and the No. 18 (chorus), “Corriamo, fuggiamo.”

In conclusion, we note that the seamlessness of this music takes *Idomeneo* out of the category of traditional opera seria. The non-seria elements are as follows: The recitatives are accompanied, recitatives and arias do not automatically alternate, the use of a trio is unusual, flexible use is made of the chorus, and the orchestra transitions smoothly from one section to the next.
The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart’s
*The Marriage of Figaro*
Lectures 13–16

Comic opera—slapstick, satirical, often bawdy, and almost always irreverent—has had a very different history than that of serious opera or what we call opera seria. ... Comic opera has its roots in popular entertainment, and this is a huge and very enduring difference.

Comic opera developed quite separately from opera seria, which was an entertainment of the aristocracy. Comic opera had its roots in popular entertainment. It grew out of comic musical entertainment that traveling musicians had staged since the Middle Ages. In 16th-century Italy, these developed into a tradition of traveling companies called commedia dell’arte. During the second half of the 17th century, comic interludes, drawn from the situations and characters of commedia dell’arte, were inserted between the acts of serious operas. By the end of the 18th century, the once lowbrow comic intermezzi had developed into the dominant operatic genre of opera buffa.

Comic opera/opera buffa grew out of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on popular, nonelitist art and its spirit of dramatic and musical naturalism. The melodic content of the new opera buffa reflected the more natural, populist, melodic spirit of Classical-era Enlightenment music.

To understand opera buffa more fully, we will compare two musical examples: “Siam navi all’onde algenti” from Vivaldi’s *L’Olimpiade* (1734) and “Non più andrai” from Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786). Vivaldi’s music is highly artificial and extreme in its use of embellishments and in its sentiments. Mozart’s music is far more natural-sounding.

This new, Enlightenment-inspired music, with its focus on accessible melodies, is known as the Classical style. It is classical in the ancient Greek sense because of its clarity of line, balanced structures, emotional restraint, and elegance.
Opera buffa also was affected by the political conditions of its time. By the mid-18th century, Baroque opera seria came to represent the old, elite, aristocratic order. Its main elements were formulaic use of recitative and aria—they followed one another predictably; grandiose and expensive productions; libretti based on ancient history and mythology; stiff, overblown characters; and da capo arias, with very few ensembles and almost no choruses. The predictability of the arias led to abuses by the singers. Enlightenment philosophers and artists saw opera buffa—with its accessible melodies, small casts, and everyday dramatic situations—as the ideal opera for the new spirit of the Enlightenment. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) took the lead in this rejection of Baroque opera seria. He and his followers embraced Giovanni Pergolesi’s *La serva padrona* as the new ideal for opera.

*La serva padrona* (1733) is early opera buffa. It began as an intermezzo, although it was later performed as an opera. Typical of the early version of its genre, it features lively, catchy music in which no particular formulas are followed. It also features a cast of only three characters: Serpina (soprano), Uberto (bass) and Vespone (mute). The plot involves a simple ruse by which a servant (Serpina) tricks an old bachelor (Uberto) into marriage. A musical example is the recitative and aria, “Son imbrogliato io già.”

Even as it evolved, opera buffa continued to use commedia dell’arte character archetypes. The most significant character division in opera buffa is between savvy, street-smart servants and members of the lower class, on the one hand, and blundering, pompous aristocrats, merchants, doctors, and lawyers, on the other. Almost by their nature, then, opera buffa plots were politicized in an era when class distinctions underwent profound reexamination.

Mozart wrote many operas buffa. In his youth he wrote *La finta semplice* (1768) and *La finta giardiniera* (1775). He created his best known and most esteemed works with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, a brilliant and controversial figure. Da Ponte remains, along with Metastasio, Boito and Hofmannsthal,
one of the great librettists in opera history. The works that he and Mozart developed together include *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), and *Così fan tutte* (1789).

We will look at *The Marriage of Figaro* in greater detail. Its basic story line is adapted from two plays by the French dramatist Pierre de Beaumarchais (1732–1799): *The Barber of Seville* (1772) and *The Marriage of Figaro* (1784). In *The Barber of Seville* we meet a young Count Almaviva, who, with the help of his former valet Figaro, wins and weds the young and cunning Rosina. This play concludes with the count’s renunciation of his feudal right to deflour any maiden in his service on her wedding night. The *Marriage of Figaro* takes place three years later. The count has become a shameless philanderer. Rosina (the countess) is wise beyond her years. Figaro is to marry Susanna, whom the count intends to bed before her marriage. The action of the play (and opera) revolves around the count’s determination to seduce Susanna, and Figaro and Susanna’s determination to marry before he can force the issue.

Beaumarchais’ play was a clear attack on the French aristocracy. The play was initially banned in France and permanently banned in Austria. Da Ponte’s libretto removed much of what was politically offensive (although Mozart’s music puts much of it back in!).

Our game plan in discussing this play will involve two components. First, we will meet the main characters and observe Mozart’s incredible musical portraiture. Second, we will observe the quintessence of Mozart’s dramatic craft by examining the Act 2 finale.

We will begin our discussion of Act 1 of *The Marriage of Figaro* by considering some musical examples. First, the overture; this is a perfect combination of great musical substance and great musical beauty. Also, the opera opens with a duet for Figaro and Susanna, “Cinque, dieci, venti,” that is memorable for the way Mozart conveys perfect harmony between Susanna and Figaro by writing their music in thirds and sixths. Susanna tells her fiancé Figaro that Count Almaviva is planning to seduce her: no. 2 (duet), “Se a caso madama.” In his recitative, “Bravo, signor padrone!” and his cavatina, “Se vuol ballare,” Figaro shows his determination to outwit the count.
Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina are introduced. Dr. Bartolo is the former guardian of Rosina. He had planned to marry Rosina himself, but was thwarted by Figaro and Count Almaviva. (The role of Dr. Bartolo is sung by a bass, in the Italian tradition of assigning the bass voice to older men and villains.) Marcellina is Bartolo’s former maid. She once lent Figaro money and this loan has now come due. Figaro promised to marry Marcellina if he could not repay the loan. Figaro and Susanna are planning to repay the loan with the dowry to be given them by the count. For their own personal reasons, Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina want Figaro to fail to repay the loan. The relevant musical example here is no. 4 (aria) “La vendetta.”

We will now examine the ways in which the characters in *The Marriage of Figaro* are, and are not, archetypes of commedia dell’arte. First, the inspiration for Dr. Bartolo comes from Pantalone, a character who prides himself on being an expert on many subjects, but one who actually knows very little and is always being caught out. The character of Figaro on the other hand is based on harlequin, an athletic, graceful, cunning valet and ladies’ man, who claims noble birth. Rosina’s character comes from Colombina, a pretty, young girl with a sharp wit and an acid tongue. Marcellina is the only character not based on commedia dell’arte. She is an old, rapacious spinster, inspired by a character in classic Roman comedies.

Cherubino, an oversexed adolescent, is introduced. Mozart’s depicts his character in an aria brilliantly evocative of a breathless, love-sick adolescent: no. 6 (aria) “Non so più cosa son.” The predatory and unscrupulous Count Almaviva is also introduced with “Ah, no Susanna.”

The count decides that Cherubino is getting in his way and tries to pack him off to the army. Figaro sings a satirical farewell to Cherubino. He paints a dire picture of life in the army in the hope of dissuading Cherubino from leaving. He needs the boy as an ally in his plan to thwart the count’s designs on Susanna. Figaro’s aria, “Non più andrai,” (in rondo form) is what first made this opera a success.

In Act 2 of *The Marriage of Figaro*, the countess (Rosina) is introduced. Still very young, and wise beyond her years, she prays for the return of her philandering husband’s affections in one of Mozart’s most beautiful
and moving arias, “Porgi amor.” As a result of various intrigues, the count becomes convinced that the countess is having an affair. He is incensed and determined to learn the truth.

An opera buffa finale is itself conceived as a miniature comedy. Mozart’s Act 2 finale is in eight distinct parts, 20 minutes (or so) of continuous music. In Part 1, the count is convinced that Cherubino and the countess have been having an affair and that Cherubino is hiding in the countess’s closet. At this point there are two characters onstage: the count and countess. In Part 2, the count discovers, to his surprise, not Cherubino but Susanna in the closet. In Part 3, the mood completely changes as the count calms down and asks for his wife’s forgiveness, and in Parts 4 and 5, Figaro enters and there are now four characters onstage. The mood grows quieter as the count tries to figure out what is going on. He questions Figaro about an anonymous note he received, but Figaro refuses to answer. In Part 6, Antonio, the gardener, enters the scene. We now have a quintet. Antonio unwittingly stirs up more trouble when he complains that someone jumped out of a window and ruined his flowerbed. This is followed by Parts 7 and 8, in which the comic confusion increases and the dramatic and musical tension comes to a climax with the entrance of Don Basilio, Dr. Bartolo, and Marcellina, who has come to claim Figaro as her husband! We now have seven characters onstage singing their own lines simultaneously in a variety of ensembles and solos.

The Act 2 finale is a brilliant continuous sequence of ensembles of increasingly long, separate musical lines, all coming together. Only a great writer of symphonies or string quartets could have written this finale, which is equally remarkable for its dramatic power. Mozart’s music enhances dramatic momentum and creates a whole new drama of underlying subtleties and truths not revealed in the libretto.

Mozart’s operas are not “easy-listening.” They require our total involvement. Nor were they considered easy to listen to in Mozart’s own time. His characters live and breathe; his music imbibes them with an extraordinary range of moods, emotions, subtlety, unconscious motivation, and humanity.
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro

**Orfeo**

*(1607)*

**Claudio Monteverdi**

Libretto by Alessandro Striggio

**ACT TWO**

**Orfeo**

Tu se' morta, mia vita, ed io respira? Tu se' da me partita per mai più non tornare, ed io rimango? No, che se i versi alcuna cosa ponno, n'andrò sicuro a' più profondi abissi, e, intenerito il cor del re de l'ombre, meco trarrò a riveder le stelle; o, se ciò negherammi empio destino, rimarrò teco in compagnia de morte.

Addio terra, addio cielo e sole, addio.

**Orpheus**

You are dead, my life, and I am breathing? You have left me, nevemore to return, and I remain? No, no, if my verses have any power at all, I will surely go down to the deepest abysses, and, having softened the heart of the King of Shadows, lead you back with me to see the stars; or, if impious fate denies me this, I shall remain with you in the company of death.

Farewell earth, farewell sky and sun, farewell.

**Orfeo ed Eurydice**

*(1762)*

**Christoph Willibald von Gluck**

Libretto by Raniero da Calzabigi

**ACT ONE**

**Orfeo**

Chiamo il mio ben così quando si mostra il di, quando s'asconde.

Ma, oh vano mio dolor!

l'idolo del mio cor

**Orpheus**

Thus I call upon my love
at break of day
and at its fading.

But—alas, how vain my sorrow!—
my heart's idol
non mi risponde.
Euridice! Euridice! ombra cara,
ah, dove sei nascosta?
Affannato il tuo sposo fedele
invano sempre ti chiama,
agli dei ti ridomanda,
e sparge ai venti
con le lagrime sue invan
i suoi lamenti.
Cerco il mio ben così
in queste, ove mori,
funeste sponde.
Ma sola al mio dolor
perché conobbe amor,
l'eco risponde.
Euridice! Euridice!
Ah! questo nome sanno le spiagge,
e le selve l'appresero da me!
Per ogni valle risuona:
in ogni tronco scrisse il misero
Orfeo de mano
tremondante: Euridice non è più, ed
io vivo ancora!
Dii, datele nuova vita,
uccidetemi!
Piango il mio ben così
se il sole indora il
di, se va nell'onde.
Pietoso al pianto mio
va mormorando il rio,
e mi risponde.

Numil barbari numi,
d'Acheronte e d'Averno
pallido abitator,
la di cui mano
avida delle morti
mai disarmò mai trattenne non
seppe belà né gioventù,

answers me not.
Eurydice, Eurydice, beloved shade,
 alas, where are you hidden?
Your faithful spouse in anguish
calls you ceaselessly in vain,
 begs your return of the gods
and vainly scatters
to the winds his tears
and lamentations.
Thus I seek my love
 upon these sad shores
where, alas, she died!
But to my grief
 Echo alone replies,
for she knew love.
Eurydice! Eurydice!
Oh, our shores know that name
and the woods have learned it of
me! Through every valley it re-echoes:
on every treethunk the wretched
Orpheus has writ with trembling
hand: Eurydice is no more, whilst
I yet live!
Give her new life, you gods,
 kill me!
Thus do I weep for my love,
whether the sun makes golden the
day, whether it sinks into the sea.
Touched by my tears
the river murmurs
and answers me.

Gods, barbarous gods,
of Acheron and Avernus
wan inhabitant,
whose hand,
greedily for deaths,
nor youth nor beauty has ever
known how to subdue or restrain,
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro

you have carried off
my fair Eurydice from me—
oh cruel remembrance!—
in the flower of her youth!
I want her back from you,
tyrant gods!
I, too, have the courage,
following in the footsteps
of the bravest heroes,
to seek my wife, my sole delight,
in your horrid realm!

La Griselda

(1721)

Alessandro Scarlatti

Libretto by Apostolo Zeno

Griselda

A
Mi rivedi o selva ombrosa,
Ma non più Regina e sposa.
Sventurata, disprezzata
Pastorella.

B
E' pur quello il patrio monte,
Questa è pur l'amica fonte,
Quello è il prato e questo è il rio;
E sol io non son più quella.

A' (da capo)
Mi rivedi o selva ombrosa,
etc.

Griselda

A
You see me again, o shady forest,
but no longer queen and bride:
unfortunate, disdained,
a shepherdess.

B
Yet there is my homeland's
mountain and here is still the
friendly fountain; there is the
meadow and this is the river;
And only I am not the same.

A' (da capo)
You see me again, o shady forest,
etc.
L'Olimpiade
(1734)
Antonio Vivaldi
Libretto by Pietro Metastasio

Recitative
Tra le follie diverse de' quai ripieno
è il mondo chi può negar, che la
follia maggiore in ciascuno non sia
quelle d'amore.

A
Siam navi all'onde algenti
lasciate in impetuosi
vorti i nostri affetti sone,
ogni dileetto è scoglio,
tutta la vita un mar.

B
Ben qual nocchiero in noi
veglia ragion ma poi
pur dal'ondoso orgoglio
si lascia trasportar.

A' (da capo)
Siam navi all'onde algenti,
etc.

Of all the many follies of which
the world is full, who can deny
that the greatest folly in
anyone is that of love.

Aria
We are like ships on the silver
waves, drifting out of control;
like capricious winds are our
affections, every pleasure is a rock,
the whole of life a sea.

B
Like a steersman reason
keeps good watch over us, but then
on the swell of pride
we let ourselves be carried away.

A' (da capo)
We are like ships on the silver waves,
etc.
Die Zauberflöte
*The Magic Flute* (1791)

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

**NO. 14 ARIA “Der Hölle Rache”**

**Königin**
Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen, Tod und Verzweiflung flamm't um mich her! Fühlt nicht durch dich Sarastro Todesschmerzen, so bist du meine Tochter nimmermehr.

**Queen**
The wrath of hell within my breast I cherish; death, desperation prompt the oath I swore. If by your hand Sarastro does not perish, then as my child I shall know you nevermore.


(Exit.)

Abandoned be forever, forsaken be forever, and shattered be forever all the force of nature’s tic, if not through you Sarastro’s life be taken! Har! Gods of vengeance, hear a mother’s cry!

(Exit.)

---

**Otello**
*(1886)*

**Giuseppe Verdi**
Libretto by Arrigo Boito

**ACT ONE**

**Otello**
Esultate! L’orgoglio musulmano sepoltò in mar; nostra e del ciel è gloria! Dop’l’armi lo vinse l’uragano.

**Othello**
Rejoice! The Mussulman’s pride is buried in the sea; ours and heaven’s is the glory! After our arms the storm defeated him.
Idomeneo  
(1780)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by G.B. Varesco

ACT TWO

Recitative (accompagned)

**Elettra**

Parto, e l’unico oggetto ch’amo ed adoro, o Dei! meco s’en vien? 
Ah, troppo anustò è il mio cor a tanta gioja! 
Lunge della rivale farò ben io, con vezzi, e con lusinghe, che quel foco, che prò spegner non potei, a quei lumi s’estinguà, e avvampi ai miei. 
Scaccierà vicino ardore dal tuo sen l’ardor lontano; più la mano può d’amore s’è vicin l’amante cor.

**Electra**

I leave, but will the one object I love and adore, o gods, come with me? 
Ah, there is not room in my heart for such great joy! 
Away from my rival, I shall well succeed, with cunning and with flattery, so that the fire, which once I could not extinguish, will no longer burn for her, but instead will flame for me. 
Love that is close at hand will prove stronger than passion at a distance; love is more effective when one is near the beloved.

---

**NO. 14 MARCIA**

Odo da lunge armonioso suono, che mi chiama all’imbarco, orsù si vada. 
(She exits.)

---

**Recitative (secco)**

**Elettra**

Sidone spònde, o voi per me di pianto e duol, d’amor! 
Nemico crudo ricetto, or ch’aстро più clemente a voi me togli, io vi perdono, e in pace alieto partir mio alfin vi lascio e do l’estremo addio.

**Electra**

Shores of Sidon, you were the cause of my tears of sorrow and of love! 
Oh cruel, inimical place, now that a more compassionate star takes me from you, I forgive you, and, departing in peace and gladness, I leave you finally, and bid you my last farewell.
**Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro**

**NO. 15 CHORUS**

**Coro**

\( \text{a} \)

Placido è il mar;  
andiamo, tutto ci rassicura,  
felice avrem ventura,  
stu, stu, partiamo or' or'

**Elektra**

\( \text{b} \)

Soavi Zefiri, soli spirate,  
del freddo borea l'ira calmate,  
d'aura piacevole cortesi siate,  
se da voi spargesi per tutto amor.

**Coro**

\( \text{a}' \)

Chorus sings a varied repetition of 1st verse

**Chorus**

\( \text{a} \)

The sea is calm;  
Let us go, everything is reassuring,  
we shall have good fortune;  
now, let us leave quickly!

**Electra**

\( \text{b} \)

Sweet breezes, be the only ones to  
blow; calm the anger of the cold  
 north wind; be kind with your  
gentle breezes, spread love  
everywhere.

**Coro**

\( \text{a}' \)

Chorus sings a varied repetition of 1st verse

**Recitative (cocco)**

**Idomeneo**

Vatene prence.

**Idamante**

O ciel!

**Idomeneo**

Troppo t'arresti.  
Parti, e non dibbia fana,  
di mille eroiche  
imprese il tuo  
ritorno prevenga:  
di regnare se l'arte  
aprendi vuoi, ora  
incomincia a renderti  
de'miseri il sostegno,  
del padre, e di te stesso  
ognor più degno.

**Idomeneo**

Go, prince.

**Idamante**

O heaven's!

**Idomeneo**

You linger too long.  
Leave now, and let a  
thousand of your heroic  
exploits announce your  
return and your fame:  
If you wish to learn the art  
of ruling, begin  
by helping the  
unfortunate, and become more  
worthy of your father and  
of yourself.
Idamante
Prima di partire, o Dio, soffri,
che un bacio imprima sulla
paterna man.

Elettra
Soffri che un grato addio sul
labbro il cor esprima: addio,
degno sovrano.

Idomeneo
Vanne, sarai felice;
Figlio, tua sorte è questa.
Seconda i voti o ciel!

Idomeneo, Idamante, Electra
Seconda i voti o ciel!

Elettra
Quanto sperar mi lice!

Idamante
Vado, e il mio cor qui resta.

Idamante, Elettra, Idomeneo
Addio!

Idamante, Idomeneo
Destin crudel!

Idamante
(aside)
O Ila! O padre! O partenza!

Idomeneo, Idamante, Elettra
O dehi! Che sarà?
Deh cessi il scompiglio, del ciel
la clemenza sua man porgerà.

Idamante
Before leaving, allow me, o God,
to place a kiss on the
paternal hand.

Electra
Let my lips express in parting the
grateful ways with which my heart is
filled: farewell, noble king.

Idomeneo
Go, good luck be with you;
this is your destiny, my son.
Fulfill our wishes, o heavens!

Idomeneo, Idamante, Electra
Fulfill our wishes, o heavens!

Electra
How great are my hopes!

Idamante
I go, but my heart remains here.

Idamante, Idomeneo, Electra
Adieu!

Idomeneo, Idomeneo
Cruel destiny!

Idamante
(aside)
O Ila! O father! O departure!

Idomeneo, Idamante, Electra
O gods! What will happen?
Let this turbulence cease, Heaven’s
compassion will lend its hand.
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro

**Orchestral Introduction**

**No. 17 Chorus**

**Coro**
Qual nuovo terrore!
Qual raucò mugito!
De' Numi il fuore ha il
mar inferito. Nettuno, mercé!
Qual'odio, qual'ira nettuno ci
mostra, sc il cielo s'adira, qual
colpa è la nostra?
Il reo qual'è?

**Chorus**
What new terror is this!
What harsh roaring!
The anger of the gods has made
the sea violent. Neptune, have pity!
What hatred, what anger Neptune
shows us; what is our fault, that
the heavens become angry?
Who is the guilty one?

**Recitative (accompanied)**

**Idomeneo**
Eccoti in me, barbaro Nume!
Il reo Io solo errai,
me sol punisci,
E cada sopra di me il tuo sdegno.
La mia morte ti sai alfin;
Ma se altra aver pretendi
vittima al fallo mio.
Una innocente darti io non posso,
e se pur tu la vuoi... ih giusto sci,
pretenderla non puoi.

**Idomeneo**
You are after me, o cruel God!
The guilty one! I alone sinned,
punish me only,
and let your anger fall on me.
Let my death appease you;
but if you insist on having
a victim for my failing,
I cannot give you an innocent one;
you are unjust if you want him,...
you have no claim upon him.

**Coro**
Corriamo, fuggiamo quel mostro
spietato! Ah, preda gia siamo!
Chi, perduto fato,
piu crudo è di te?

**Chorus**
Let us run, let us flee from that
pitiless monster! Ah, we are
already prey! Who, treacherous
fate, is more cruel than you?
L'Olimpiade
(1734)
Antonio Vivaldi
Libretto by Pietro Metastasio

_Aria_
Siam navi all'onde algenti
lasciate in impetuosi venti
i nostri affetti sono,
ogni diletto è scoglio,
tutta la vita un mar.

We are like ships on the silver
waves, drifting out of control; like
capricious winds are our
affections, every pleasure is a rock,
the whole of life a sea.

Le nozze di Figaro
The Marriage of Figaro (1786)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

_NO. 9 ARIA_

**Figaro**

_A_
Non più andrai,
farfallone amoroso,
notte e giorno d'intorno girando,
delle belle turbando il riposo,
Narcisetto, Adoncino d'amor.

_B_
Non più avrai questi bei pennacchini,
quell cappello leggero e galante,
quella chioma, quell'aria brillante,
quell'ermiglio donnesco color!
Non più avrai, _etc._

_A_
Non più andrai, _etc._

**Figaro**

_A_
You'll go no more,
amorous butterfly,
flitting about, night and day,
disturbing ladies' rest,
little Narcissus, Adonis of love.

_B_
You'll wear no more these plumes,
that smart and jaunty cap,
those curls, that dashing air,
that pink, effeminate complexion!
You'll wear no more, _etc._

_A_
You'll go no more, _etc._
La serva padrona

The Maid Mariano (1733)

Giovanni Pergolesi

Libretto by Gennaro Antonio Federico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uberto</th>
<th>Uberto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Or indovino, chi sarà costui!  
Forse la penitenza farà così.  
Di quant'ella  
ha fatto al padrone;  
s'è ver, come mi dice,  
um tal marito la terà fra  
la terra ed il bastone.  
Ah, poveretta lei!  
Per altro io penserei . . .  
ma ella è serva . . .  
ma il primo non saresti . . .  
Dunque, la spersonisti?  
Basta . . . oh! no, no, non sia.  
Su, pensieri ribaldi, andate via!  
Piano, io me l'ho allevata:  
sì poi com'ella è nata . . .  
Eh! Che sei matto!  
Piano di grazia,  
ch non pensare affatto.  
Ma io ci ho passione, e pur . . .  
quella meschina . . .  
Eh torna . . .  
Oh Dio! . . . o stiam da capo . . .  
Oh . . . che confusion!  
Son imbrogliato io ghi,  
ho un certo chè nel core,  
che dir per me non so,  
s'è amore o 'tè pietà.  
Sent'un che poi mi dice:  
Uberto, pensa a te.  
Io sto fra il sì e 'l no,  
Now I can guess who it will be!  
Perhaps this will be her penance.  
He will do to her what  
she's done to me.  
If what she told me is true,  
a husband like him will keep her  
between the earth and a stick.  
Poor thing, she is!  
Otherwise I might think of . . .  
but she is a servant . . .  
but I would not be the first . . .  
Would you marry her, then?  
Enough . . . oh no, no it can't be.  
Irresponsible thoughts, get lost!  
Control yourself, I raised her myself.  
I know how she was born . . .  
How crazy you are!  
Easy now, please,  
think no more about it.  
Still, I feel a passion for her . . .  
that rotten creature . . .  
And yet . . .  
Oh God! . . . here I go again . . .  
Oh . . . what confusion!  
I am all mixed up.  
I have a certain ache in my heart.  
Honestly, I cannot tell  
whether it's love or pity.  
Common sense tells me:  
Uberto, think of yourself.  
I am between yes and no, between |
Le nozze di Figaro
The Marriage of Figaro (1786)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

ACT ONE

NO. 1 DUETTINO
A half-furnished room with a large armchair center. Figaro is measuring the floor; Susanna is trying on a hat in front of a mirror.

Figaro
Cinque . . . dieci . . . venti
venti . . . trentasei . . . quarantatre.

Susanna
Ora sì, ch’io son contenta,
sembra fatto inver per me.

Figaro
Cinque . . .

Susanna
Guarda un po’, mio caro Figaro . . .

Figaro
. . . dieci . . .

Susanna
. . . Guarda un po’, etc.

Figaro
Five . . . ten . . . twenty
thirty . . . thirty-six . . . forty-three.

Susanna
Now I’m pleased with it, yes,
it seems made just for me.

Figaro
Five . . .

Susanna
Take a look, my dear Figaro . . .

Figaro
. . . ten . . .

Susanna
. . . Take a look, etc.
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro

Figaro
... venti, etc.

Susanna
Guarda adesso il mio cappello, ...

Figaro
... quantantatre.

Susanna
Guarda un po’, mio caro Figaro, guarda adesso il mio cappello.

Figaro
Si, mio core, or è più bello, sembra fatto inver per te.

Susanna
Guarda un po’,...

Figaro
Si, mio core, etc.

Susanna
... Ora sì, ch’io son contenta, etc.

Figaro
Si, mio core, etc.

Susanna, Figaro
Ah! il mattino alle nozze vicino, quant’è dolce al mio/tuo tenero sposo questo bel cappellino vezzoso che Susanna ella stessa si fe’.

Figaro
... twenty, etc.

Susanna
Look at my hat now, ...

Figaro
... forty-three.

Susanna
Take a look, my dear Figaro, look at my hat, now.

Figaro
Yes, sweetheart, now it’s much prettier, it seems made just for you.

Susanna
Take a look, ...

Figaro
Yes, sweetheart, etc.

Susanna
... Now I’m pleased with it, yes, etc.

Figaro
Yes, sweetheart, etc.

Susanna, Figaro
Ah! The wedding morn is nigh, how dear to my/your tender bridegroom is this charming little hat which Susanna made herself.
Recitative

Susanna
Cosa stai misurando, caro il mio Figaretto?

Figaro
Io guardo se quel letto, che ci destina il Conte, farà buona figura in questo loco.

Susanna
In questa stanza?

Figaro
Certo, a noi la cede generoso il padrone.

Susanna
Io per me te la dono.

Figaro
E la ragione?

Susanna
La ragione l'ho qui.

Figaro
Perché non puoi far, che passi un po' qui!

Susanna
Perché non voglio. sei tu mio servo, o no?

Figaro
Ma non capisco perché tanto ti spiacia, la più comoda stanza del palazzo.

Susanna
What are you measuring, my darling Figaro?

Figaro
I'm seeing if that bed which the Count is giving us will look well in this corner.

Susanna
In this room?

Figaro
Of course, the master has generously given it to us.

Susanna
Then you may have it all to yourself.

Figaro
What's your objection?

Susanna
I have my reasons.

Figaro
Why won't you share them with me?

Susanna
Because I don't wish to. You are my humble servant, aren't you?

Figaro
But I don't understand why you turn up your nose at the most comfortable room in the castle.
Susanna
Perch’io son la Susanna,
e tu sei pazzo.

Figaro
Grazie, non tanti elogi;
guarda un poco, se potria
meglio stare in altro loco.

Susanna
Because I am Susanna
and you are an idiot!

Figaro
Thank you—you’re too kind;
tell me now, do you know of any
other room to suit us better?

---

NO. 2 DUETTO

Figaro
Se a caso madama
la notte ti chiama
din, din, din, din,
in due passi da quella puoi gir.
Vien poi l’occasione
che vuolmi il padrone,
don, don, don, don,
in tre salti lo vado a servir.

Susanna
Così se il mattino
il caro Contino
Din, din, din, din,
e ti mandai
tre miglia lontan
din, din, don, don,
a mia porta il diavol lo porta
ed ecco in tre salti...

Figaro
Susanna, pian, pian, ...

Susanna
Ed ecco.

Figaro
... pian, pian, ...

Susanna
Supposing one night
my lady should call you
ting, ting, ting, ting,
you can go to her in a trice.
Then it may happen
that the master wants me
dong, dong, dong, dong, and I’m
with him in a hop, skip and jump.

Figaro
Susanna
Suppose some morning
your precious Count
ting, ting, ting, ting,
should send you on an errand
three miles away
ting, ting, dong, dong,
the devil brings him to my door
and in a hop, skip and jump...

Figaro
Susanna, softly, I pray you, ...

Susanna
And in...

Figaro
... softly, softly, ...

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Susanna
... in tre salti...

Figaro
... pian, pian,...

Susanna
... din, din,...

Figaro
... pian, pian,...

Susanna
... don, don!

Figaro
... pian, pian.

Susanna
Ascolta!

Figaro
Fa presto!

Susanna
Se udir brami il resto,
discaccia i sospetti,
che torto mi fan.

Figaro
Udir bramo il resto,
I dubbi, i sospetti
gelare mi fan.

Susanna
Discaccia i sospetti, etc.

Figaro
I dubbi, i sospetti, etc.

Susanna
... a hop, skip and jump...

Figaro
... softly, softly,...

Susanna
... ting, ting,...

Figaro
... softly, softly,...

Susanna
... dong, dong!

Figaro
... softly, softly.

Susanna
Listen to me!

Figaro
Quickly, then!

Susanna
If you wish to hear the rest,
dismiss your suspicions
which do me wrong.

Figaro
I must hear the rest,
though I am chilled with
doubts and suspicion.

Susanna
Dismiss your suspicions, etc.

Figaro
Though I am chilled, etc.
Susanna
Or bene, ascolta e taci.

Figaro
Parla, che c'è di nuovo?

Susanna
Il signor Conte,
stanco d'andar cacciando
le straniere bellezze forestiere,
vuole ancor nel castello,
ritentar la sua sorte;
n'è già di sua Consorte,
bada bene, appetito gli viene.

Figaro
E di chi dunque?

Susanna
Della tua Susannetta.

Figaro
Di te?

Susanna
Di me medesma, ed ha speranza
ch'al nobil suo progetto
utilissima sia tal vicinanza.

Figaro
Bravo! Tiriamo avanti.

Susanna
Queste le grazie son,
questa la cura ch'egli prende di te,
della tua sposa.

Figaro
O guarda un po',

Susanna
Now listen quietly.

Figaro
Tell me what is happening.

Susanna
My lord,
weary of pursuing
beauties from far and near
wishes to try his luck
once again in the castle.
But his appetite is not whetted
by his wife, make no mistake.

Figaro
Who is it, then?

Susanna
Your little Susanna.

Figaro
You?

Susanna
Myself, and he hopes
to further his noble plan
by having us near him.

Figaro
Bravo! Tell me more.

Susanna
Hence the gracious concern
which he lavishes on you
and your bride-to-be.

Figaro
Well, well,
che carità pelosa.

Susanna
Chetati, oh viene il meglio;
don Basilio, mio maestro di canto
e suo factotum, nel darmi la lezione
mi ripete ogni di questa canzone.

Figaro
Che! Basilio? oh birbante!

Susanna
E tu credevi,
che fosse la mia dote
merto del tuo bel muso?

Figaro
Me n’era lusingato.

Susanna
Ei la destina per ottener da me
certe mezz’ore
che il diritto feudale . . .

Figaro
Come! ne’ i feudi suoi
non l’ha il Conte abolito?

Susanna
Ebben, ora è pentito,
e par che tenti riscattarlo
da me.

Figaro
Bravo! mi piace;
che caro signor Conte!
Ci vogliamo divertire,
trovato avete . . .
(A bell rings.)

a sprat to catch a mackerel!

Susanna
Hush, now comes the best part;
Don Basilio, my singing teacher and
his factotum, during lessons informs
me daily of the Count’s desire.

Figaro
Who! Basilio? The rogue!

Susanna
And did you believe
that my dowry was the
reward for your handsome face?

Figaro
I flattered myself I deserved it.

Susanna
His object is to claim from me
those half-hours of pleasure
which feudal privilege . . .

Figaro
What! Has not my lord
abolished such rights on his estates?

Susanna
He regrets it now, it seems,
and is trying to redeem his right
from me.

Figaro
Bravo! I like that!
How kind of my lord!
We’ll have some fun out of this!
You’ve found . . .
(A bell rings.)
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro

**Figaro**
Chi suona? la Contessa.

**Susanna**
Addio, addio, Figaro bello.

**Figaro**
Coraggio, mio tesoro.

**Susanna**
E tu, corcello.
(Susanna kisses him and goes off.)

**Figaro**
Bravo, signor padrone!
Ora incomincio a capire
il mistero, e a veder schietto
tutto il vostro progetto.
A Londra, è vero?
Voi ministro, io
corriero, e la Susanna,
secreta ambasciatrice.
Non sarà, Figaro il dice.

**Figaro**
Who rang? It’s the Countess.

**Susanna**
Goodbye, goodbye, sweet Figaro.

**Figaro**
Courage, my treasure.

**Susanna**
And you, use your brains.
(Susanna kisses him and goes off.)

---

**A**
Se vuol ballare, signor Contino,
Il chitarino le suonerà, sì.
Se vuol venire nella mia scuola,
La capriola le insegnarò, sì.
Sapò, ma piano piano
Meglio ogni arcano.
Dissimulando scoprir potrò.

**B**
L’arte schermendo,
L’arte adoprando,

**A**
If you wish to dance, my dear Count
I’ll play the guitar, oh yes!
If you’ll come to my school
I’ll teach you to scheme
I’ll deal with you . . . but softly . . .
by pretense I shall be better able
to discover every secret.

**B**
But parrying artfulness
with artfulness,
Di qua pungendo, di là scherzando,
Tutte le macchine, rovesciò.
A!
Se vuol ballare, etc.
(He goes off.)
now pricking, now feinting jokingly
I shall upset all his intrigues.
A!
If you wish to dance, etc.
(He goes off.)

(Bartolo and Marcellina enter.)

Recitative

Bartolo
Ed aspettaste il giorno
fissato per le nozze,
a parlarmi di questo?

Marcellina
Io non mi perdo, dottor mio,
di coraggio, per romper de’ sponsali
più avanzati di questo,
bastò spesso un pretesto; ed egli
ha meco, oltre questo contratto
certi impegni... so io... basta!
Conviene la Susanna atterrir,
convien con arte impuntigliarla
a rifiutare il Conte;
egli per vendicarsi
prenderà il mio partito,
e Figaro così fia mio marito.

Bartolo
Bene, lo tutto farò.
Senza riserve, tutto a me palesate.
(Aside)
Avrei pur gusto di dar in moglie
la mia serva antica,
a chi mi fece un di
rapir l’amica.

Bartolo
And you wait till the day
fixed for the marriage
to speak to me of this?

Marcellina
I’ll not lose heart, doctor.
To break up a planned marriage at
an even more advanced stage than
this a mere pretext has sufficed
before now.
And besides this contract
he has obligations to me, never fear!
But we must frighten Susanna
and artfully induce her
to refuse the Count;
he, out of spite,
will take my part
and so Figaro shall be my husband.

Bartolo
Very well. I’ll do all I can.
Tell me all without reserve.
(Aside)
I should relish marrying off
my former servant
to the man who, that time,
engineered my ward’s elopement.
No. 4 Aria

Vengeance, ah, vengeance
is a pleasure reserved for the wise;
to forget affronts and outrage
is ever baseness and cowardice.
With cunning and acumen,
with common sense and discretion,
it can be satisfied.
A difficult matter.
But believe me, it shall be done.
If I have to turn inside out
the legal code,
if I have to read
the whole index with some
ambiguity, some synonym,
I’ll find a way to confound him.
All Seville knows Bartolo.
That knave Figaro shall be outwitted.
(Bartolo goes off.)

(Cherubino enters.)

Cherubino
Susanna, sei tu?

Susanna
Son io, cosa volete?

Cherubino
Ah, cor mio,
che accidente!

Susanna
Cor vostro? Cosa avvenne?

Cherubino
Il Conte ieri, perchè

(Cherubino enters.)

Cherubino
Dear Susanna, is it you?

Susanna
'Tis I, What do you want?

Cherubino
Ah, my sweetheart,
what a misfortune!

Susanna
Your sweetheart? What's happened?

Cherubino
Yesterday, because the Count
trovommi sol con Barbarina,
il congedo mi diede;
e se la Contessa,
là mia bella comare,
grazia non m’intercede,
io vado via, io non ti vedo più,
Susanna mia.

Susanna
Non vedete più me? Bravo!
Ma dunque non più per la Contessa
secretemente il vostro cor sospira?

Cerubino
Ah, che troppo rispetto
ella m’ispira!
Felice te, che puoi
vederla quando vuoi,
che la vesti il mattino,
che la sera la spogli,
che le metti gli spilloni,
i merletti . . .
ahl se in tuo loco . . .

Non so più cosa son,
cosa faccio, o di foco,
orà sono di ghiaccio, ogni
donna cangi di colore,
e ogni donna mi fa palpitar.
Solo ai nomi d’amore di dilettato,
mi si turba, mi s’altera il petto,
e a parlare mi sforza d’amore
un desio ch’io non posso spiegare.
Non so più, etc.
Parlo d’amor vegliando,
parlo d’amore sognando, all’acqua,
all’ombra, ai monti,
a i fiori, all’erbe, ai fonti,
all’eco, all’aria, ai venti,
ofound me alone with Barbarina,
he decided to send me away;
and if my beautiful godmother
the Countess does not
intercede on my behalf
I shall go away and never
see you again, my Susanna.

Susanna
You won’t see me again. Bravo!
But does your heart sigh no more
in secret for the Countess?

Cerubino
Ah, she inspires me with
too much respect!
Happy you, who can
see her when you wish,
you dress her in the morning,
help her to undress at night,
busy yourself with her pins
and her lace . . .
ah! If I were in your place . . .

NO. 6 ARIA

I no longer know what I am,
what I’m doing, now I’m
feverish, now I’m chilled; every
woman makes me change color,
or makes me tremble with emotion.
The very words “love” and “delight”
excite me and make my heart race.
And I am forced to speak of love
by a desire that I cannot explain.
I no longer know, etc.
I speak of love walking,
I speak of love dreaming, to the
water, the shadow, the mountains, to
the flowers, the grass, the fountains,
to the echo, the air, the winds
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*

---

Recitative

Cherubino

Ah, son perduto... il Conte!

Susanna

Oh, me meschina!

(The Count comes in as Cherubino hides behind the chair.)

Count Almaviva

Susanna, come sembri agitata e confusa.

Susanna

Signor, io chiedo scusa, ma, se mai qui sorprestà... per carità partite.

Count

Un momento e ti lascio.

Odi.

Susanna

Non odo nulla.

Count

Due parole: tu sai che ambasciatore a Londre il Re mi dichiarò.

Di condur meco Figaro destinai.

---

which waft away with them
the sound of my fruitless words...
I speak of love, etc.
And if no one is there to listen,
I speak of love to myself.

C: **Cherubino**

Ah, I'm lost... the Count!

S: **Susanna**

Oh, poor me!

(The Count comes in as Cherubino hides behind the chair.)

C: **Count Almaviva**

Susanna, how agitated and confused you seem.

S: **Susanna**

My lord, I beg your pardon, but if we were to be surprised here...

Go, I beg you.

C: **Count**

A moment and I'll leave you.

Listen.

S: **Susanna**

I cannot.

C: **Count**

Two words. You know that the King has appointed me ambassador to London. I have decided to take Figaro with me.
Susanna
Signor, se osassi...

Count
Parla, mia cara, e con quel dritto
ch’oggi prendi su me, finché tu
vivi chiedi, imponi,
prescrivi.

Susanna
Lasciatemi, Signor,
dritti non prendo,
non ne vo’, non ne intendo.
Oh, me infelice!

Count
Ah, no, Susanna,
io ti vo’ far felice!
Tu ben sai quant’io t’amo;
a te Basilio tutto già disse.
Or senti, se per pochi
momenti meco in giardín,
sull’imbrunir del giorno...
Ah, per questo favore io pagherèi.

Susanna
My lord, if I dared...

Count
Speak, my dear, and with that right
which you have from me, while you
live, ask, command and dispose
of me.

Susanna
Leave me, my lord,
I claim no rights,
nor wish nor understand them.
How unhappy I am!

Count
Ah, non, Susanna,
I want to make you happy!
You know how much I love you,
Basilio has already told you.
If you would only, for a few
moments meet me in the garden
at dusk,
Oh, I would pay for such a favor.

Cherubino
Perdono, mio Signor!

Count
Non meritato.

Susanna
Egli è ancora fanciullo.

Count
Men di quel che tu credi.

Cherubino
Forgive me, my lord.

Count
You don’t deserve it.

Susanna
He’s only a child.

Count
Less so than you think.
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*

---

*Figaro*

**Count**

- Count, ma dai mio labbro affine...

**Susanna, Figaro**

- Ah, fin domani col

---

*Figaro*

**Cherubino**

- Ehi, capitano! A me pur la mana.

**Count**

- Oh, addio, pregherei tu per me.

---

*Figaro*

**Cherubino**

- Addio, gioioso Cherubino! Come ringiovanir in un panno?

**Count**

- Ah, si prepara a uscire.

**Cherubino**

- Addio, Figaro! Come ringiovanir in un panno?

---

*Figaro*

**Susanna**

- Ah, fin domani col

---

*Figaro*

**Cherubino**

- Oh, figaro, figaro...
NO. 9 ARIA

A
Non più andrai,
farfallone amoroso,
notte e giorno d'intorno girando,
delle belle turbando il riposo,
Narcisetto, Adoncino d'amor.

B
Non più avrai questi bei pennacchini,
quel cappello leggero e galante,
quella chioma, quell'aria brillante,
quell'ombra d'una resina color
Non più avrai, etc.

A
Non più andrai, etc.

C
Fra guerrieri, poffar Bacco!
Gran mustacchi, stretto sacco,
schioppo in spalla, sciabola al fianco,
collo dritto, muso franco,
o un gran casco o un gran turbante,
molto onor, poco contante.
Ed in vece del fandango,
una marcia per il fango,
per montagne, per valloni,
colle nevi e i sollioni,
ai concerti di tromboni,
di bombarder, di cannoni,
che le palle in tutti i tuoni,
all'orecchio fan fischiar.
Non più avrai, etc.

A
Non più andrai, etc.
C' (coda)
Cherubino alla vittoria,
All'eterno salvo!

A
You'll go no more,
amorous butterfly,
flitting about, night and day,
disturbing ladies' rest,
little Narcissus, Adonis of love.

B
You'll wear no more these plumes,
that smart and jaunty cap,
those curls, that dashing air,
those pink, effeminate complexion!
You'll wear no more, etc.

A
You'll go no more, etc.

C
Among warriors, by Jingo!
Bushy mustaches, tight tunic,
shoulder arms, saber at your side,
neck straight, serious-faced,
a big helmet or a big turban,
much honor, but little money.
And instead of the fandango,
a forced march through the mud,
over hill and dale,
in snow and scorching sun,
to the accompaniment of
trombones, mortars and cannons,
and cannonballs whistling
and whining in your ears.
You'll wear no more, etc.

A
You'll go no more, etc.
C' (coda)
Cherubino, march to victory
and military glory!

END OF ACT ONE

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ACT TWO

NO. 10 CAVATINA

Countess
Porgi amor, qualche ristoro,
al mio duolo, a' miei sospiri!
O mi rendi il mio tesoro,
o mi lascia almen morir!
Porgi amor, etc.

Countess
Grant, o Love, a cure
for my grief and sighing!
Bring my darling back to me,
or at least let me die.
Grant, o Love, etc.

Recitative

Countess
Vieni, cara Susanna,
finiscimi l'istoria.

Susanna
È già finita.

Countess
Dunque volle sedurri?

Susanna
Oh, il signor Conte non fa tali
complimenti colle
donne mie pari;
egli venne a contratto di danari.

Countess
Ah! il crudel
più non m'ama.

Susanna
E come poi è geloso di voi?

Countess
Come lo sono i moderni mariti,
per sistema infedeli,

Countess
Come, dear Susanna,
finish your story.

Susanna
It's already finished.

Countess
So he wanted to seduce you?

Susanna
Oh, my lord does not pay such
compliments to
women of my station;
he made a business proposition.

Countess
Ah! The cruel wretch
no longer loves me.

Susanna
Why, then, is he jealous of you?

Countess
He is like all modern husbands,
willfully unfaithful,
per genio capricciosi, e per orgoglio
poi tutti gelosi. Ma se
Figaro t’ama, ci sol potria . . .
(Enter Figaro singing)

Figaro
La la la la la la . . .

Susanna
Eccolo.

naturally capricious and yet
proudly jealous. But if Figaro
loves you, he alone could . . .
(Enter Figaro singing)

Figaro
La la la la la la . . .

Susanna
Here he is.

CHERUBINO
Voi che sapete
che cosa è amor,
Donne, vedete s’io l’ho nel cor.
Quello ch’io provo vi dirò,
é per me nuovo,
capir no! so.
Sento un affetto pien di desir,
ch’ora è diletto,
ch’ora è martir.
Gelo, e poi sento
l’alma avvampar
e in un momento torno a gelar;
ricerco un bene fuori di me,
non so ch’il tiene,
non so cos’è, sospiro
e genio senza voler,
palpito e tremo senza saper.
Non trovo pace notte ò di,
ma pur mi piace languir così.
Voi che sapete, etc.

CHERUBINO
You ladies who are acquainted
with love,
tell me if I have it in my heart.
What I experience, I repeat,
is something new to me which
I cannot understand.
I feel a strange desire
which in turn delights
and tortures me.
One moment I freeze,
the next I’m all aflame
then in a second I’m freezing again.
I seek a pleasure outside of me
I know not who can give it
or what it is, I sigh
and mourn for no good reason,
I shiver and shake, I know not why
I know no peace, night and day,
and yet I love my languishing.
You ladies who are acquainted, etc.
Countess
Bravo, che bella voce, io non sapea
che cantaste si bene.

Susanna
Oh, in verità, egli fa tutto ben
quello ch'ei fa. Presto a noi,
bel soldato; Figaro v'informò . . .

Cherubino
Tutto mi disse.

Susanna
(measuring herself by him)
Lasciatemi veder; andrà benissimo:
siam d'uguale statura—
già quel manto.

Countess
(to Susanna)
Che fai?

Susanna
Niente paura.

Countess
E se qualcuno entrasse . . .

Susanna
Entri, che mal facciamo?
La porta chiuderò,
ma come poi accocciargli i capelli?

Countess
Una mia cuffia prendi nel
gabinetto, presto!
(Susanna goes out.)
Che carta è quella?

Countess
Bravo, you've an attractive voice, I
never knew you could sing so well.

Susanna
Oh, truly, everything he attempts
he does well. Come, brave soldier,
I imagine Figaro told you . . .

Cherubino
He told me all.

Susanna
(measuring herself by him)
Let me see; it will be just right:
we're exactly the same height—
off with that coat.

Countess
(to Susanna)
What are you doing?

Susanna
No need to worry.

Countess
But if someone should come in . . .

Susanna
Let them, what harm are we doing?
I'll close the door.
But what can we do about his hair?

Countess
Fetch one of my bonnets from
my closet. Quickly!
(Susanna goes out.)
What is that document?
Cherubino
La parente.

Countess
Che sollecita gente!

Cherubino
L'ebbi or da Basilio.

Countess
Della fretta obliato hanno il sigillo!

Susanna
(reverting)
Il sigillo di che?

Countess
Della patente.

Susanna
Cospetto! Che premura!
Ecco la cuffia.

Countess
Spiccati; va bene;
miserabili non ce il Conte vieni!

Susanna
Venite inginocchiati,
restate fermo li.
Pian piano o via giratevi.
Bravo! va ben cosi.
La faccia ora volgetemi.
Oh, quegli occhi a me.

Cherubino
My commission.

Countess
They're in a great hurry!

Cherubino
I received it just now from Basilio.

Countess
In their hurry, they've forgotten the seal.

Susanna
(reverting)
What seal?

Countess
On the commission.

Susanna
Mercy! What haste!
Here is the bonnet.

Countess
Hurry; yes, that's right;
what a plight we should be in if my lord came in now!

Susanna
Come, kneel down
and keep quite still
Now turn slowly round.
Bravo! That's it.
Now turn your face towards me.
No, look at me.

etc.
Susanna, Cherubino
... Le porte, son serate,
Che mai sarà?

Cherubino
Qui perder si non giova.

Susanna
V'uccide, se vi trova.

Cherubino
Veggiamo un po' qui fuori:
Dà proprio nel giardino.

Susanna
Fermate Cherubino, fermate, per pietà!

Cherubino
Qui perder si non giova.

Susanna
Fermate, Cherubino!

Cherubino
M'uccide, se mi trova.

Susanna
Tropp'alto per un salto, ...

Cherubino
Lasciami, ...

Susanna
... fermate, per pietà!

Cherubino
... lasciammi!

Pri di nuocerle
nel foco volerei.

Susanna, Cherubino
... The doors are locked,
whatever is to be done?

Cherubino
I must find a way out.

Susanna
He'll kill you if he finds you.

Cherubino
What about the window?
It looks on to the garden.

Susanna
Stop, Cherubino, stop,
for pity's sake.

Cherubino
I must find a way out.

Susanna
Stop, Cherubino!

Cherubino
He'll kill me if he finds me.

Susanna
It's too high to jump, ...

Cherubino
Leave me alone, ...

Susanna
... stop, for pity's sake!

Cherubino
... leave me alone!

Before I'd harm her,
I'd leap into the fire.
Abbraccio te per lei.
Addio!
(He kisses Susanna.)
Così si fa.
(He jumps out of the window.)

Susanna
Ei va a petire, o Dei!
Fermate, per pietà!
Fermate, fermate!
(She runs to the window and looks out
after Cherubino)
Oh, guarda il demonietto
come fugge!
È già un miglio lontano; ma non
perdiamci invano;
entriam nel gabinetto;
venga poi lo smargiasso,
io qui l’aspetto.

Give her this kiss from me.
Goodbye!
(He kisses Susanna.)
This is how to do it.
(He jumps out of the window.)

Susanna
He'll kill himself, O heavens!
Stop for pity's sake!
Stop, stop!
(She runs to the window and looks out
after Cherubino)
O, look at the little rogue,
how he runs!
He's a mile off already; but there's
no time to lose;
into the closet;
then let the braggart come,
I'm waiting here for him.

ACT TWO

NO. 15 FINALE

Part I: Allegro, E-flat Major

Count
(screaming at the closet door)
Esci ormai, garzon malnato!
Sciafigurato, non tardar!

Countess
Ah! signore, quel furore
per lui fammi il cor tremar.

Count
E d'opporvi ancor ostate?

Count
(screaming at the closet door)
Out you come, you ill-bred brat,
quickly now, you little wretch!

Countess
Ah, my lord, your rage
makes my heart tremble for him.

Count
And do you still dare to oppose me?
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Countess
No, sentite.

Count
Via parlate.

Countess
Giuro al ciel ch’ogni
sospetto e lo stato
in che il trovate,
sciolti il collo, nudo il petto . . .

Count
Sciolti il collo! nudo il petto!
Seguitate.

Countess
Per vestir
commune spogli . . .

Count
Ah! comprendo, indegna moglie,
mi vo’ torno vendicar.

Countess
Mi fa torno quel trasporto.

Count
Ah! comprendo, indegna moglie, . . .

Countess
. . . M’oltraggiate
a dubitar; . . .

Count
. . . Mi vo’ torno vendicar; . . .

Countess
Mi fa torno quel trasporto, etc.

Countess
No, but hear me.

Count
Speak and quickly.

Countess
I swear before heaven that any
suspicion and the state
in which you find him, his
collar undone and his chest bare . . .

Count
Collar undone! Chest bare!
Go on.

Countess
To dress him up as a
young woman . . .

Count
Ah, I understand, unworthy wife,
I will soon be revenged.

Countess
This fury does me wrong.

Count
Ah! I understand, unworthy wife, . . .

Countess
. . . you outrage me
by your doubting.

Count
. . . I will soon be revenged.

Countess
This fury does me wrong, etc.
Count
Ah, comprendo
indegna moglie, etc.
. . . Qua la chiave.

Countess
Egli è innocente!

Count
Qua la chiave!

Countess
Egli è innocente!
Voi sapete.

Count
Non so niente!
Va lontan dagli occhi miei.
Un’infida, un’empia sei,
e mi cerchi d’infamar.

Countess
Vado, sì, ma . . .

Count
Non ascolto.

Countess
Ma . . .

Count
Non ascolto.

Countess
Non son rea!

Count
Vel leggo in volto!
Mora, mora!

Count
Ah! I understand,
unworthy wife, etc. . . .
. . . Give me the key.

Countess
He is innocent!

Count
Give me the key!

Countess
He is innocent!
You know he is.

Count
I know nothing of the sort!
Away out of my sight.
You are faithless and wicked,
and seek to disgrace me.

Countess
I’ll go, yes, but . . .

Count
I’ll not hear you.

Countess
But . . .

Count
I’ll not hear you.

Countess
I’m not guilty!

Count
I can read it in your face!
Die, die!
Countess
ah! la cieca gelosia . . .

Count
Mora, mora!

Countess
. . . qualche eccesso gli
fa far.

Count
Mora, mora e più non sia, . . .

Countess
Ah! la cieca gelosia, . . .

Count
. . . ria cagion, . . .

Countess
. . . qualche eccesso gli
fa far!

Count
. . . ria cagion del mio
pensier . . .
. . . Ah! comprendo! . . .

Countess
Mi fa torto . . .

Count
. . . Indegna moglie, . . .

Countess
. . . quel trasporto!

Count
. . . mora, etc.

Countess
Ah! Blind jealousy . . .

Count
Die, die!

Countess
. . . will goad him to some
desperate deed.

Count
Die, die and be no more, . . .

Countess
Oh, blind jealousy . . .

Count
. . . deceitful cause, . . .

Countess
. . . will goad him to some
desperate deed!

Count
. . . deceitful cause of my
suffering! . . .
. . . Ah! I understand! . . .

Countess
This fury, . . .

Count
. . . Unworthy wife, . . .

Countess
. . . wrongs me!

Count
. . . die, etc.
Countess
Ah! la cieca gelosia, etc.
(The Count draws his sword, opens
the door . . . and finds Susanna
standing there.)

Count
(astonished)
Susanna!

Countess
(equally astonished)
Susanna!

Count
(astonished)
Susanna!

Countess
(equally astonished)
Susanna!

---

Part II: Molto Andante, B-flat Major

Susanna
Signore!
Cos’è quel stupore?
Il brando prendete,
il paggio uccidete,
quell’inganno malnato,
vedetelo qua.

Count
(aside)
Che scola!

Countess
(aside)
Che storia è . . .
. . . mai questa, . . .

Count
La testa . . .

Susanna
My lord!
Why so dumbfounded?
Take your sword,
and put the page to death,
that ill-bred page,
you see him here before you.

Count
(aside)
What sly minxes!

Countess
(aside)
What fantasy . . .
. . . can this be, . . .

Count
My head . . .
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Part III: Allegro, B-flat Major

Susanna
(aside)  
Confusa han la testa,  
non san come va.

Countess
... Susanna v’è là...

Count
... girando mi va...
... Sei sola?

Susanna
Guardate! qui ascoso sarà.

Count
Guardiamo!

Count, Susanna
Guardate! Guardiamo!  
qui ascoso sarà.

Susanna
(aside)
They are so bewildered,  
they’re quite at a loss.

Countess
... Susanna is there...

Count
... is reeling...
... Are you alone?

Susanna
Look! Perhaps he’s hidden here.

Count
Let us see!

Count, Susanna
Look! Let us see!
Perhaps he’s hidden here.

Countess
(aside to Susanna)
Susanna, son morta,  
il fiato mi manca.

Susanna
(aside to Countess)
Più lieta, più franca,  
in salvo è di già.

Count
(to Countess)
Che sbaglio mai presi.  
Appena lo credo.

Countess
(aside to Susanna)
Susanna, I’m half dead,  
I can hardly breathe.

Susanna
(aside to Countess)
Put your mind at ease and be gay,  
he’s safe by now.

Count
(to Countess)
To think I made such a mistake,  
I can scarcely believe it.
Se a torto v'offesi,
perdone vi chiedo,
ma far burla simile
è poi crudeltà.

**Countess, Susanna**

Le vostre follie
non meritan pietà.

**Count**

Io v'amo!

**Countess**

Noi dite!

**Count**

Ve l'ero!

**Countess**

Mentite!
Son l'empia, l'infida
che ognora v'inganna.

**Count**

Quell'ira, Susanna,
m'aiuta a calmarmi.

**Susanna**

Così si condanna
chi può sospettar.

**Countess**

Adunque la fede
D’un anima amante
a fiera mercede
doveva sperar?

**Count**

Quell’ira, Susanna, etc.

If I wronged you,
I ask you pardon,
but to play such a trick
was cruel.

**Countess, Susanna**

Your follies
do not deserve forgiveness.

**Count**

I love you!

**Countess**

Do not say it!

**Count**

I swear it!

**Countess**

You are lying!
I am the faithless, wicked wife
who is always deceiving you.

**Count**

Susanna, help me
to calm her anger.

**Susanna**

Thus are punished
those who are suspicious.

**Countess**

Must the constancy
of a loving heart
such harsh reward
expect?

**Count**

Susanna, help me, etc.
100 Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro

Susanna

Cost si condanna, etc.
(to Countess)
Signora!

Count

Rosina!

Countess

Cruede!
Più quella non sono.
Ma il misero oggetto
del vostro abbandono
che avete dilecto
di far disperar.

Susanna, Count

Confuso, pentito, è/son
troppo punito, . . .

Countess

Cruede! cruede! soffrir sì
gran torto, . . .

Susanna, Count

. . . abbiate pietà, abbiate pietà!

Countess

. . . quest' alma non sa, ah, no,
quest’ alma non sa!

Count

Ma il paggio rinchiuso?

Countess

Fu sol per provarvi.

Count

Ma i tremiti, i palpiti!

Susanna

Thus are punished, etc.
(to Countess)
My lady!

Count

Rosina!

Countess

Cruel one!
I’m no longer your Rosina,
but the miserable object
of your abandon
whom you have been pleased
to make suffer.

Susanna, Count

Confused, repentent, I’ve/he’s
been punished enough, . . .

Countess

Cruel one, my heart
cannot bear . . .

Susanna, Count

. . . have pity, have pity!

Countess

. . . the great wrong you
do me!

Count

But you said the page was
shut in there?

Countess

It was only to test you.

Count

But your trembling, your anxiety?
Countess
Fu sol per burlarvi.

Count
Ma un foglio si barbaro?

Susanna, Countess
Di Figaro è il foglio,
e a voi per Basilio.

Count
Ah, perfidi. Io voglio . . .

Susanna, Countess
Perdono non merta
chi agli altri nol dà.

Count
Ebben se vi piace,
comune è la pace.
Rosina inflessibile
con me non sarà.

Countess
Ah, quanto Susanna,
son dolce di core!
Di donne al furore
chi può crederà?

Susanna
Cogli umin, signora,
girate, volgete,
vedrete che ognora
si cade poi là.

Count
Guardetemi!

Countess
Ingrato!

Countess
It was only a joke.

Count
But such a heartless note?

Susanna, Countess
The note was from Figaro,
and Basilio delivered it.

Count
Ah, the villains. I’ll . . .

Susanna, Countess
He deserves not forgiveness
who forgives not others.

Count
Well then, if you wish,
let us make peace all round.
Rosina will not be adamant
with me.

Countess
Ah, Susanna, how
soft-hearted I am!
How can a woman’s wrath
ever be taken seriously?

Susanna
With men, my lady,
whatever you do, and wherever you
turn, you will see that always
you end up like that.

Count
Look at me!

Countess
For shame, sir!
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro

Count
Guardatemi, ho torto,
e mi pento.

Susanna, Countess, Count
Da questo momento,
quest'alma a conoscerci/mi/vi
apprender potrò, etc.

Count
Look at me, I was wrong,
and I am sorry.

Susanna, Countess, Count
From this moment,
he/I will be able to learn
to appreciate her/me/you, etc.

Part IV: Allegro, G Major

(Figaro enters.)

Figaro
Signore, di fuori
son già i suonatori:
le trombe sentite,
i pifferi udite;
tra cani, tra balli
de' vostri vassalli,
corriamo, voliamo
le nozze a compir.

Count
Pian, piano, men fretta.

Figaro
La turba m'aspetta.

Count
Pian, piano, men fretta,
un dubbio toglicitemi
in pria di partir.

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
La cosa è scabrosa, . . .

(Figaro enters.)

Figaro
My lord, the musicians
are already outside:
hear the trumpets
and the pipes.
Mid the singing and dancing
of your retainers,
let us run, let us haste
to the wedding.

Count
Hush, hush, less hurry.

Figaro
The crowd awaits me.

Count
Hush, hush, less hurry;
relieve me of a doubt
before you go.

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
A delicate situation, . . .
Count
Con arte . . .

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
... Com'ha da finir? etc.

Count
... le carte convien qui scopir, etc.

Count
I must . . .

Susanna, Countess, Figaro
... how will it end? etc.

Count
... play my cards carefully, etc.

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Part V: Andante, C Major

Count
Conoscete, Signor Figaro, questo foglio chi vergò?

Figaro
No! conosco!

Susanna
No! conosci?

Figaro
No!

Countess
No! conosci?

Figaro
No!

Count
No! conosci?

Figaro
No!

Susanna, Countess, Count
No! conosci?
Lectures 13–16: The Rise of Opera Buffa and Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*

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**Figaro**
No! No! No!

**Susanna**
E nel desti a Don Basilio?

**Countess**
Per recarlo.

**Count**
Tu c’intendi?

**Figaro**
Oibò, oibò!

**Susanna**
E non sai del damerino . . .

**Countess**
. . . Che stasera nel giardino . . .?

**Count**
Già capisci?

**Figaro**
Lo non lo so.

**Count**
Cerchi invan difesa
e scusa,
il tuo ceffo già t’accusa,
vedo ben che vuoi mentir.

**Figaro**
Mente il ceffo, io già non mento.

**Susanna, Countess**
Il talento aguzzi invano, . . .
. . . Paleseato abbi am l’arcano, . . .

---

**Figaro**
No! No! No!

**Susanna**
Didn’t you give it to Don Basilio?

**Countess**
To deliver it.

**Count**
You remember?

**Figaro**
Oh dear, oh dear!

**Susanna**
And what about the page . . .

**Countess**
. . . Who tonight in the garden . . .?

**Count**
Do you understand now?

**Figaro**
No, I don’t.

**Count**
You look in vain for defense
and excuse,
your face is giving you away,
I can see you are lying.

**Figaro**
My face, then, is lying, I am not.

**Susanna, Countess**
In vain you sharpen your wits, . . .
. . . we’ve told everything, . . .
Figaro
Mente il ceffo, io già non mento.

Susanna, Countess
... Non v'è nulla da ridir.

Count
Che rispondi?

Figaro
Niente, niente!

Count
Dunque accordi?

Figaro
Non accordo!

Figaro
My face, then, is lying, I am not.

Susanna, Countess
... You've nothing left to repeat.

Count
What's your answer?

Figaro
Nothing, nothing!

Count
You confess, then?

Figaro
No, I don't!
Part VII: Andante, B-flat Major

Antonio
Vostre dunque saran queste carte che perdeste.

Count
Olà, porgile a me.

Figaro
Sono in trappola.

Susanna, Countess
Figaro, all'erta!

Count
Dite un po', questo foglio cos'è?

Figaro
Tosto, tosto, n'ho tante, aspettate.

Antonio
Sarà forse il sommario dei debiti?

Figaro
No, la lista degli osti.

Count
(to Figaro)
Parlate.
(to Antonio)
E tu lascialo.

Susanna, Countess
Lascialo e parti, etc.

Figaro
Lasciami e parti . . .

Antonio
These, then, will be your papers you lost.

Count
Here, give them to me.

Figaro
I'm trapped.

Susanna, Countess
Figaro, beware!

Count
Tell me, what is this paper?

Figaro
Just a moment, just a moment, I have so many, wait.

Antonio
Perhaps it's a list of your debts.

Figaro
No, a list of innkeepers, more likely.

Count
(to Figaro)
Speak up!
(to Antonio)
And you leave him alone.

Susanna
Leave him alone and go! etc.

Figaro
Leave me alone and go! . . .
Antonio
Parto sì, ma se torno a trovarli, etc.

Figaro
... Vanne,
non temo di te!, etc.
(Antonio goes off)

Count
(opening the papers)
Dunque?

Countess
(aside to Susanna)
Oh ciel, la patente del paggio!

Count
Dunque?

Susanna
(aside to Figaro)
Giusti Dei, la patente!

Count
Coraggio!

Figaro
O che resta!
Quest'è la patente
che poc'anzi il fanciullo
mi diè.

Count
Per che fare?

Figaro
Vi manca...

Count
Vi manca...

Antonio
I'll go, but if I catch you again, etc.

Figaro
... Be off with you,
I'm not afraid of you! etc.
(Antonio goes off)

Count
(opening the papers)
Well?

Countess
(aside to Susanna)
Heavens, the page's commission!

Count
Well?

Susanna
(aside to Figaro)
Heavens, the commission!

Count
Come now!

Figaro
Oh, what a head!
It's the commission
which the boy gave me a
little while ago.

Count
What for?

Figaro
It needs...

Count
It needs...
Countess
(aside to Susanna)
Il suggello.

Susanna
(aside to Figaro)
Il suggello.

Count
Rispondi!

Figaro
È l’usanza...

Count
Su via ti confondi?

Figaro
È l’usanza di porvi il suggello.

Count
Questo birbo mi toglie...

Susanna
Se mi salvo da...

Count
... il cervello....

Susanna
... questa tempesta,...

Countess
Se mi salvo da...

Figaro
Shuffa invano e...

Countess
... questa tempesta, può non havvi naufragio per me,...

Countess
(aside to Susanna)
The seal.

Susanna
(aside to Figaro)
The seal.

Count
Answer!

Figaro
It’s usual...

Count
Come... you’re confused?

Figaro
It’s usual to seal the document.

Count
This knave will turn...

Susanna
If I weather...

Count
... my head,...

Susanna
... this storm,...

Countess
If I weather...

Figaro
He blusters in vain and...

Countess
... this storm, there will be no more shipwreck for me,...
Count
... Tutto, tutto è un mistero per me, ...

Figaro
... la terro calpsta! Poverino, ne sa men di me, ...

Susanna, Countess
... Se mi salvo, etc.

Count
... questo birbo, etc.

Figaro
... Sbuffa invano, etc.
(Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo enter.)

Part VIII: Allegro Assai, E-flat Major

Marcellina, Basilio, Bartolo
Voi signor, che giusto siete, ci dovete ascoltar.

Countess, Susanna, Figaro
Son venuti a sconsolarmi, ...

Count
Son venuti a vendicarmi, ...

Countess, Susanna, Figaro
... qual remedio a ritrovare?

Count
... lo mi sento a consolar.

Figaro
(to Count)
Son tre stolidi,

Count
... It's all, all a mystery for me, ...

Figaro
... stamps his feet! Poor fellow, he knows less about it than me, ...

Susanna, Countess
... If I weather, etc.

Count
... This knave, etc.

Figaro
... He blusters in vain, etc.
(Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo enter.)

Marcellina, Basilio, Bartolo
You, my lord, who are just, must listen to us now.

Countess, Susanna, Figaro
They've come to thwart my plan, ...

Count
They've come to avenge me ...

Countess, Susanna, Figaro
... what solution is there to be found?

Count
... How relieved I feel.

Figaro
(to Count)
These are three blockheads,
tre pazzi,  
cosa mai vengono a far?  

Count  
Pian, pianin senza schiamazzi,  
dica ognun quel che gli par.  

Marcellina  
Un impegno nuziale  
(indicating Figaro)  
ha costui con me contratto,  
e pretendendo che il contratto  
deva meco effettuar.  

Susanna, Countess, Figaro  
Come? Come?  

Count  
Olà, silenzio, silenzio, silenzio!  
Io son qui per giudicar.  

Bartolo  
Io da lei scelto avvocato,  
vengo a far le sue difese,  
le legittime pretese,  
io vi vengo a palesar.  

Susanna, Countess, Figaro  
È un birbante!  

Count  
Olà, silenzio!  
Io son qui per giudicar.  

Basilio  
Io, com'uomo al mondo cognito,  
vengo qui per testimonio  
del promesso matrimonio  
con prestanza di danar.  

three fools,  
whatever have they come to do?  

Count  
Gently, gently, stop this fearful din!  
Let each state his case.  

Marcellina  
This man has promised  
(indicating Figaro)  
to marry me  
and I claim that he must  
honor the contract.  

Susanna, Countess, Figaro  
What? What?  

Count  
Ho, silence, silence, silence!  
I'm here to judge.  

Bartolo  
I, her chosen counsel,  
am here to defend her interests.  
Her legitimate claims  
I come to lay before you.  

Susanna, Countess, Figaro  
He's a scoundrel!  

Count  
Ho, silence!  
I'm here to judge.  

Basilio  
I, as a man known in society,  
come here to testify  
to the promise of marriage,  
made against a loan of money.
The Bel Canto Style and Rossini’s
*The Barber of Seville*
Lectures 17 and 18

I’m about to tell you how quickly these Italian opera composers wrote operas, and how many operas they were expected to turn out with great rapidity. It might seem stunning to us … and to a degree it is stunning. We’ve got to remember there were tried and true techniques. There were … compositional processes that [allow] … you [to] … turn out a lot really quickly, as long as you don’t seek to be original.

By the early 19th century, opera in Italy was widely popular, and its popularity led it to become a conventional, highly profitable commercial enterprise. Italian composers were not so susceptible to the romanticism sweeping the rest of Europe. Instead, they focused more attention on opera, often to the exclusion of other musical forms. They did not experiment to the extent that their French and German neighbors did. All of this led to a conservative type of opera. The type of opera in favor was the opera buffa, or comic opera.

The melodic style of these predominantly comic, early-19th-century Italian operas was direct, tuneful, and, in every sense of the word, popular. It is known as the bel canto style. This style also favored directness and simplicity of harmonic language and character development and a predictable comic and dramatic setup. The principal composers of bel canto operas were Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848), Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835), and Gioacchino Antonio Rossini (1792–1868).

In terms of the business conditions under which bel canto operas were created, it is important to know that composers and librettists traveled from city to city creating operas in as little as two weeks before moving on. In order to meet their deadlines, composers would often reuse in newly commissioned operas music written for earlier ones. Operas could be written quickly and in profusion thanks to widely accepted formulas for composing stock material.
One typical bel canto opera is Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, a favorite since its composition in 1816. Rossini’s contract for *The Barber* was typical for the time. The libretto was chosen by the local impresario, and Rossini had to agree to any and all modifications requested by the singers. He also had to room with the baritone so that the impresario could keep an eye on him. Additionally, he was required to be present for rehearsals and the first three performances. Dates were specified for completion of the first act and for opening night, and compensation was the equivalent of two hundred dollars plus a coat with gold buttons.

The libretto was written by Cesare Sterbini and based on a play by Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais. Though written by a French dramatist, *The Barber of Seville* is based on character archetypes drawn from the Italian commedia dell’arte.

*The Barber of Seville* was first turned into an opera by composer Giovanni Paisello and librettist Giuseppe Petrosellini in 1782. Paisello’s *Barber* was considered a classic, and there was considerable audience resistance to another opera based on the same story. Despite opening night problems with Paisello’s clique, Rossini’s *Barber* was almost immediately recognized as the superior work.

In considering this opera, we will begin by meeting the main characters and considering musical examples that convey their identities and goals to the audience. Then we will review the music lesson scene as an example of Rossini’s superb comedic craft. Lastly, we will address elements that make this a bel canto opera.

The cast of characters of *The Barber of Seville* is as follows:

- Rosina, a witty, vivacious sixteen-year-old, is the ward of Dr. Bartolo.

- Dr. Bartolo, Rosina’s guardian, is a ponderous, pompous, nasty old fogey who intends to marry Rosina for her inheritance.
• Count Almaviva, a young nobleman desperately in love with Rosina, is posing as a love-struck soldier named Lindoro.

• Figaro, Almaviva’s former valet, is now a jack-of-all-trades (factotum) living in Seville, where the opera takes place.

• Count Almaviva.

In terms of musical examples, we begin with the aria “Ecco, redente in cielo,” which acquaints us more thoroughly with the count. From his aria, we discover that he is a lovesick sap. The simple, direct, and sentimental nature of the music mirrors the count himself. His serenade elicits no response, and he is crestfallen.

On the other hand, we learn more about Figaro through his “patter-style” aria “Largo al factotum.” We discover that he is a man of irrepressible spirit and energy, he is clever and street-smart, and he is much more interesting and complex than the count. We also see that Figaro has genuine self-knowledge; he knows who and what he is, and he likes himself. The count hears this aria and recognizes his old employee. He hires Figaro on the spot to assist him in winning Rosina.

Rosina drops a note to Figaro and Count Almaviva. In it she says she wants to know who Almaviva is. The note makes it clear that she is a strong young woman with a mind of her own. Indeed, she will prove to be the brains of the plot. This is already hinted at in the instrumental introduction to her entrance aria, “Una voce poco fa.”

Rosina’s aria tells us that she is filled with youthful energy and optimism, she can be flirtatious and romantic, and that she cannot and will not be controlled by anyone—indeed, she is in control and the mistress of her own fate. Her aria is an entrance aria, serving to introduce her character, like the other two arias in this opera that we have considered thus far: Figaro’s “Largo al factotum” and Almaviva’s “Ecco, redente in cielo.”

Rosina begins with recitative and then goes into a cavatina. A cavatina is an aria that shows off a singer’s ability to hold line. This particular cavatina is
Lectures 17 and 18: The Bel Canto Style and Rossini's 
The Barber of Seville

an example of Rossini at his best. It is virtuosic and pure bel canto, full of
coloratura melismas. A melisma is an embellishment of the vocal line, when
an ornamental group of different pitches are assigned to a single syllable.
The bel canto style is characterized by highly embellished arias requiring an
unusual vocal flexibility and the ability to reach very high notes.

In fact, in bel canto opera, singers were expected to embellish their arias.
Female singers who could do this well became superstar divas. Because
they attracted large audiences, they won
immense control: they could demand autonomy, huge fees, and a freedom
not generally enjoyed by women at that time.

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In bel canto opera, singers were expected to embellish their arias. … Because
[superstar divas] attracted large audiences … they could demand autonomy,
huge fees, and a freedom not generally enjoyed by women at that time.

We now turn to Dr. Bartolo’s aria “A un dottor della mia sorte.” From this
aria we learn that Bartolo is a pompous, condescending blowhard who hasn’t a
chance against the combined forces of Almaviva, Figaro, and Rosina.

In another aria, “La calunnia è un venticello,” we learn about the character
of Don Basilio, who makes Bartolo look like a saint. Basilio’s brand of
intrigue is the lowest of the low and is bound to fail. His aria contains an
example of a “Rossini crescendo.”

We will now discuss the music lesson from Act 2 in The Barber of Seville.
In this part of the opera, the count, disguised as a music teacher, gains access
to Bartolo’s house. The music lesson commences with Rosina singing an
incredibly ornate aria in the bel canto style. Bartolo, true to form, falls
asleep in an armchair. Upon awaking, he regrets the passing of his musical
era and proceeds to sing a light, opera seria-type aria in the style of the
castrato Caffariello.
In conclusion, we note that the bel canto style is based on a deep-rooted Italian conviction that opera is essentially the highest manifestation of song and that its purpose is to delight and entertain its listeners with unsentimental, melodious, and spontaneous music. We know bel canto when we see and hear it because in this type of opera the melodic lines of arias are embellished, the melodies are tuneful and popular, there is no in-depth characterization (all of the characters are one-dimensional caricatures), dialogue is witty and sparkling, the opera overall is always comic, and the dramatic setup is predictable.

Very few composers have equaled Rossini for sheer tunefulness. He was advised by Beethoven to stick with opera buffa. Beethoven’s advice notwithstanding, Rossini increasingly composed grand and serious operas. By the 1840s opera buffa fell out of favor in Italy, to be replaced by serious, grand opera; however, Rossini’s buffa operas never lost their popularity.
Verdi and Otello
Lectures 19–22

At no point did Verdi purposely break with his past or experiment radically with new operatic theories. His evolution was toward refinement of dramatic content, toward refinement of technique, and in the end, of course, he brought Italian opera to a pinnacle that has never been surpassed. Verdi’s aim, then, was always toward refinement and intensification of dramatic line, singing technique, literary and emotional truth.

The career of Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) practically constitutes the history of Italian opera from 1850 to 1900. Verdi composed 26 operas. He was not an innovator or reformer. Rather, his operatic craft slowly evolved across the span of his long compositional career.

Verdi was born near Parma, Italy, to a middle-class family. His musical education was sponsored by a rich local merchant, Antonio Barelli of Busseto. At Barelli’s expense, Verdi moved at the age of eighteen to Milan to study music. He was not considered sufficiently accomplished to be accepted into the Milan conservatory, and so he studied privately. While in Milan, Verdi began his first opera, Oberto. Verdi eventually returned to Busseto and married Barelli’s daughter Margherita. Oberto was performed at La Scala, and Verdi was commissioned to write three more operas. While he was working on this commission, his wife and two children died within a span of 22 months. Distraught, Verdi completed the comic opera Un Giorno de Regno, which failed miserably at its premiere in 1840. His contempt for any sort of criticism, musical or personal, stems from these events. His third opera, Nabucco, was his first big hit. From the start he was more interested in human drama and emotions than in writing pretty, popular bel canto-style music. He reached a creative plateau between 1851 and 1853 with the composition of Rigoletto, La Traviata, and Il Trovatore.

Verdi’s inheritance consisted of an operatic world dominated by bel canto. Composers Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini were the great triumvirate of this world. The bel canto era was not unlike that which immediately preceded
the reforms of Metastasio, marked by a notable lack of dramatic integration of words and music. As we have discussed, the distinctive features of bel canto opera include compositional formulas that permit the rapid production of operas, as well as segmentation of the opera into the traditional divisions of recitative, aria, and ensemble.

By the time of the operas of 1851–1853, Verdi had gone a long way toward breaking the mold. Despite the fact that he was a brilliant tunesmith in the Italian tradition, Verdi’s operas are not formulaic, nor do they clearly reflect the divisions of recitative, aria, and ensemble. Arias and vocal ensembles are intermingled and move smoothly from one to the other in Verdi’s operas. The variety of vocal forms and singing techniques is extraordinary. An example is the opening of Act 1 from La Traviata.

Although we can identify individual sections, the overall effect in La Traviata is one of continuous forward motion in terms of both music and dramatic action. Verdi does not stop the action for dry recitative. The orchestra plays continuously, providing accompaniment here, background there, whatever is needed. The characters and chorus interact with each other with stunning flexibility. In this way La Traviata is much closer to what we now call music drama.

Verdi has not completely broken with the bel canto style, however. In terms of its vocal usage and the direct, popular nature of its melodies, La Traviata is still bel canto. By improving on bel canto, rather than completely discarding it, Verdi became the undisputed king of Italian opera.
Against the backdrop of the 19th century, a literary age, Verdi as a dramatist sought ever-greater dramatic continuity in his operas. To this end, he used the technique known as parlante, a technique in which the distinction between aria and recitative is eliminated. In parlante, recitative-like vocal parts are underlaid by a memorable and tuneful orchestral accompaniment. Verdi reduced the length of the traditional recitative and blended it into a more continuous texture with the use of the orchestra. This allowed for much greater musical (and dramatic) continuity. It situated musical interest in the orchestra and the dramatic interest in the voices. A good musical example is in *Rigoletto*, Act 1, scene 7.

Lyricism is the key to Verdi’s art. Verdi’s melodies never lost their direct and popular touch, and they are molded to the characters who sing them. An example of this is “La donna è mobile,” the Duke of Mantua’s aria from Act 4 of *Rigoletto*.

Verdi was an admirer of Beethoven’s use of motivic development, and he used the same technique in his operas. He also used what is known as a hinge theme. This is a theme that becomes associated with some element in the dramatic action and reappears in the course of the opera to connect large areas of the drama.

Verdi’s mature operas share several characteristics. First, human emotions and psychological insight provide the basis for the story lines. Second, the bel canto divisions of recitative and aria are increasingly deemphasized in favor of musical continuity. Third, the orchestra plays a key dramatic role, and fourth, the libretti used are of high quality and are based on high-quality literature.

*Othello* (1886) developed out of a lengthy period of creative gestation for Verdi. This period started with the premiere of *Aida* in 1871, upon which Verdi retired from the opera. Subsequently, four people close to him (his wife, his publisher, a conductor, and composer/librettist Arrigo Boito) conspired to bring him out of retirement. In July 1879, Verdi received a proposal to write an opera based on Shakespeare’s *Othello*, with Boito as librettist. He completed this new opera in 1886.
In thinking about the *Otello* libretto, it is helpful to know that people in the 19th century, including, of course, Verdi, were fascinated by the plays of Shakespeare, whose extraordinary insights into the human condition and relationships appealed tremendously to the emotional and literary spirit of the age. Boito’s libretto of *Otello* is a masterpiece of reduction and distillation. Ultimately, as in any opera, it was up to Verdi to flesh out the characters and dramatic situations that Boito, as librettist, had to abbreviate.

The libretto/opera is in four acts. Act 1 presents Otello as a hero, Act 2 presents Otello in doubt, Act 3 reveals Otello’s degradation, and Act 4 brings about Otello’s destruction. From the standpoint of characterization, it is notable that two of the three main characters are polar opposites. Desdemona, Otello’s wife, is good incarnate, while Iago, Otello’s sergeant, is evil incarnate. Otello is the man in the middle, whose journey from good to evil, from control to chaos, is the essential dramatic line of the play/opera.

In Act 1, the orchestra plays an extraordinary role in setting the stormy, symbolic opening scene. Otello’s entrance is one of the most magnificent in all of opera. Verdi manages a huge number of musical forces in this unique scene. We hear a wide variety of choruses along with solos, all interacting with each other.

Also in this act, Iago and Roderigo are introduced. Iago’s music, with its singsong, mocking character, is descriptive of his derision of women. Verdi’s music establishes the characters of Iago and Roderigo.

Iago soon begins to hatch part one of his plot, the downfall of Cassio. He makes sure Cassio has too much to drink. Cassio, as Iago plans, provokes a fight. Otello enters and strips Cassio of his rank. Otello has restored order
but has lost his friend in doing so. A good musical example of this part of the opera is “Va al porto …” through Iago’s explanation.

The transcendent love of Otello and Desdemona is revealed in a duet. This love duet establishes Desdemona’s character, and the “kiss” theme at its conclusion becomes a hinge theme that will return with a powerful impact at the end of the opera.

Act 2 of the opera truly belongs to Iago. The opening orchestral prelude begins with a violent, slimy figure that characterizes Iago, who persuades Cassio to ask Desdemona to intercede for him in obtaining Otello’s pardon.

Iago’s credo is the most amazing aria in the whole opera. The orchestral introduction in F minor sets the mood of evil. Orchestral “infernal” dances play between Iago’s verses. His credo is almost a huge recitative, rather than an aria, which would be out of character for him. He is the archetype of evil incarnate. We know now that Otello does not have a chance against him; Iago is in control.

Iago goes to work on Otello. He sows the seeds of jealous suspicion in Otello as they watch Cassio and Desdemona talking together. A musical example of this is “Ciò m’accerca” through “può affermate il sospetto.”

Iago’s poison spreads. Why is Otello reacting so quickly? Otello is an outsider, thirty years older than his bride and of a different race. As a result, it does not take much to unnerve him. Iago goads Otello to increased fury with lies about Cassio talking in his sleep about his love for Desdemona. The orchestra reflects Otello’s fury. Otello demands proof, and Iago tells him it exists in the form of the handkerchief that Otello once gave Desdemona. Iago assures Otello that Cassio now possesses this handkerchief. Otello is now completely blind with jealousy and rage. These events are conveyed from “Pace, signor” through “Ah! sangue! sangue! sangue!”

Iago and Otello join forces. Their duet of revenge ends Act 2. The orchestra plays a chilling passage, “Si, pel ciel,” evocative of a descent into hell.
Act 3 is about Iago’s careful machinations to convince Otello beyond a shadow of a doubt that Desdemona is unfaithful to him. Otello’s rage is murderous and uncontrollable.

Act 4 is about Desdemona, who is sixteen or seventeen years old and living in a land far from her home. Her husband has gone quite mad for reasons she does not understand. Her character is fleshed out in these moments before her death. She sings of lost love in The Willow Song.

Otello’s enters Desdemona’s bedroom. From this moment on, the opera moves very swiftly to the final catastrophe. Otello realizes too late that Desdemona was innocent, and, in reaction to this understanding, he kills himself. The kiss theme returns to heighten the pathos. A musical example is the conclusion of the opera from “Pria d’ucciderti.”

Verdi conceived Otello as an intimate drama, not as a spectacle. The premiere of this work was probably the greatest operatic triumph of all time.
French Opera
Lectures 23 and 24

The point of this survey [of French opera] is threefold: to give us an overview of the circumstances surrounding the evolution of a distinctly French operatic style ... to give us an idea of why and how French opera is different from Italian opera ... and ... to remind us that operatic content ... is most often a function of the language ... and the politics and economic class of its consumers.

French-language opera came into being in 1669, a late start compared to that of Italian opera. The comparatively late development of French opera has much to do with the nature of the French language and the French spirit. The French language is not as well suited to a melismatic operatic singing style as the Italian language. Also, the French preferred their drama pure, in the theater, and unsullied by music, and they regarded theatrical music as an accompaniment to their favorite stage spectacle, ballet.

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687) is almost singularly responsible for creating a French language operatic tradition. Italian by birth, Lully was a dancer and musician by training. He came to Paris at the age of fourteen. He quickly developed into a first-rate conductor and composer, and, through equal parts talent and scheming, he eventually became master of all music at the court of Louis XIV.

Lully’s operas incorporated elements from musical and dramatic genres already popular in France, including French classical dramatic literature; huge, dramatic stage sets and machinery; and ballet. Staged professional dance had been popular entertainment in France since the 16th century, and Louis XIV fancied himself a dancer and was a tremendous patron of dance. Lully realized from the start that if opera was to become popular in France, it must contain a great amount of dance.

Lully created a French national style of opera that encompassed magnificence, tragic drama, and dance. His operas are in five acts with a prologue devoted
to the glorification of Louis XIV. In these operas, the action unrolls with majestic indifference to realism and involves all kinds of improbable adventures. Characters engage in extended discourse on love and honor. Also, there are rarely any comic characters. Everything is stately, formal, and detached from reality.

Lully’s greatest operatic contribution was his design of a recitative style suited to the long vowels and soft consonants of the French language. He claimed that his model was spoken drama. His recitatives are syllabic, with one pitch per syllable. The flexibility of the French language is reflected in the continuous changes of meter in these recitatives, which also fall into melodic patterns. (Italian recitatives do not have melodic patterns. They just keep on developing; they are “through composed.”)

In contrast to Italian arias, Lully’s arias tend to be short and limited in vocal range, and they emphasize clear enunciation and textural clarity over vocal acrobatics. They generally do not stand alone as musical numbers, but tend to be merged with longer musical sequences. Also, they are not the essential events in the opera, and they do not use coloratura effects. Instead, they employ a vocal style that demanded less virtuosity from singers than the more florid style of Italian opera. A good musical example is the recitative/monologue from Lully’s Armide (1686).

Lully established opera as an institution of the state. The dignified, formal splendor of his operas embodied the glorious age of Louis XIV. Their disadvantage is that, once the age of Louis XIV passed, these operas sounded empty and pompous. Their advantage is that they provided the foundation for generations of French and French-based opera composers.

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) was the foremost French musician of the 18th century. He saw himself as the inheritor of a great and majestic tradition. We will begin by considering his opera Hippolyte et Aricie (1733).

This opera is Rameau’s first. Like the operas of Lully and other French composers, Rameau’s operas display much less contrast between aria and recitative than contemporary Italian operas. A musical example of this is “Ah! faut-il” from Act 4, scene 1 of Hippolyte et Aricie.
Rameau’s operas were also controversial. The operatic traditionalists, or Lullists, found Rameau’s operas too Italian and, as such, musically subversive. The operatic progressives on the other hand felt that Rameau was the savior of an operatic tradition that had grown tired and stale with age. French opera is, unfortunately, rarely heard outside France, because it is tailored to particular French tastes. Rameau’s music is, however, first rate and worth seeking out.

Within twenty years the controversy over Rameau’s music had shifted 180 degrees. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) and his followers rejected traditional French opera and embraced the new Italian comic genre as an example of opera appropriate to the Enlightenment. Rameau’s operas became the tradition against which the new Enlightenment progressives rebelled.

Rousseau, among his other talents, was a composer (of sorts). In 1752, inspired by Italian opera buffa, he wrote *Le Devin du village* (*The Village Soothsayer*). This work is very close to the popular French tradition of opéra comique.

Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787) was by nature a reformer; he effected a synthesis of elements of the new Italian opera and of traditional French opera. Though he worked across Europe, Gluck’s greatest fame was achieved in Paris under the patronage of the Austrian-born French queen Marie Antoinette. A musical example is from Act 2, scene 1 of *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

The two major influences on Gluck’s work were his growing familiarity with traditional French opera and the spirit of the Enlightenment. In operatic terms this translated into an artistic goal of a non-formulaic, simple, unaffected expression of human feelings. In practical terms this meant that Gluck had to reign in his singers!

In *Orfeo ed Euridice* …

**the arias are melodically simple and emotionally direct.**

**The recitatives have a very high melodic content, irregular phrase structures, and rhythmic flexibility.**

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In *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Gluck’s version of the story of Orpheus, the arias are melodically simple and emotionally direct. The recitatives have a very high melodic content, irregular phrase structures and rhythmic flexibility. Everything is accompanied. Dance, hitherto a secondary element, is now integral to the action. Also, Gluck relies heavily on a chorus. This is uniquely French. The high degree of integration of dance, chorus, and solos is noteworthy. As a musical example we will consider Act 2, scene 1 of *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

Gluck’s operas became a model for the next generation of French composers. They proved that it was possible to maintain the great tradition of French operatic pomp and magnificence while adhering to the spirit and new melodic naturalness of the Enlightenment.

In the first half of the 19th century, Paris became the operatic capital of Europe. In typical French operatic tradition, early-19th-century French opera celebrated heroic figures, heightened dramatic situations, and magnificence.

By the 1820s French grand opera had come into being. As royal patronage dwindled, opera increasingly became a middle-class entertainment to which the spectacular and dramatically obvious grand operas were designed to appeal. These operas indulged the French taste for grand spectacles and crowd scenes with lots of characters all singing at the same time.

Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864) almost singlehandedly established French grand opera. Born in Berlin as Jakob Liebmann Beer, he composed operas in both German and Italian before moving to France, where he earned fame and fortune. His operas have fallen into almost total obscurity. They were intended as popular entertainment and lack the musical and dramatic substance necessary to remain in the repertory. Nevertheless, Meyerbeer was particularly famous (and imitated widely) for his ability to manage large numbers of singers, dancers, and
choristers on stage. A good musical example is the conclusion of Act 2 from *Les Huguenots*.

A development in tandem with grand opera was opéra comique. This type of opera employed spoken dialogue rather than recitative, and it featured somewhat less pretentious productions than grand opera. Composers of opéra comique included Jacques Offenbach, whose operas are still performed today.

Lyric opera, another form that developed in France, represents a sort of halfway point between grand opera and opéra comique. Like opéra comique, lyric opera often uses spoken dialogue and directly appealing melodies. Like grand opera, lyric opera tends toward grandiosity. Included in this classification are Charles Gounod’s *Faust* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Camille Saint-Saens’ *Samson and Delilah*, and Georges Bizet’s (1838–1875) *Carmen* (1875).

*Carmen* is one of the best-known lyric operas, its form combining elements of grand opera and opéra comique.
Carmen remains one of the most beloved and frequently performed and adapted operas in the repertory. Its composer, Bizet, lived a short and unhappy life. He died nearly penniless three months after the premiere of Carmen.

Carmen is about two very different people and their mutual destruction. It is a frank and powerful look at the brutal and transformational power of sex and desire, violence and fate. The titular character Carmen is the embodiment of temptation and primal, destructive sexuality. Don Jose is destroyed by his own sexuality, unleashed and set aflame by Carmen.

The card scene in Act 2 of Carmen is an example of operatic drama at its most powerful. In this scene Carmen no longer finds Don Jose sexually appealing and tells him so. She makes it clear that she has no intention of being dominated by any man. Two of Carmen’s friends are telling each other’s fortunes with a deck of cards. Carmen joins them. She reads death in the cards. The musical motive associated with Carmen’s ultimate fate is heard as she turns over the cards. While her two friends sing their cheerful refrains, Carmen sings her fatalistic aria. Her acceptance of her fate imbues her with tragic beauty. As a musical example, we will consider the card trio from Act 2 of Carmen.
Il barbiere di Siviglia

The Barber of Seville (1816)

Gioacchino Rossini
Libretto by Cesare Sterbini

ACT ONE

Scene One
Just before sunrise. A small piazza in Seville with narrow streets running off in all directions. Dr. Bartolo’s house is center stage; it has a small balcony overlooking the piazza, above the front door.

INTRODUCTION
(Finnello, servant to Count Almaviva, enters slowly, surveying the scene, urging his hired musicians to follow him. The musicians tune their instruments, and the Count sings, accompanied by them)

CAVATINA: “Ecco, ridente in cielo”

**Conte**

Ecco, ridente in cielo
spunta la bella aurora,
e tu non sorgi ancora
e puoi dormir così?
Sorgi, mia dolce amante,
vieni, bell’idol mio,
rendi men cruel, oh Dio,
lo stral che mi feri.

**Count**

Lo, in the smiling sky,
the lovely dawn is breaking
and you are not awake,
and you are still asleep?
Aria, my sweetest love,
oh come, my treasured one,
soften the pain, oh God,
of the dart which pierces me.

**Conte**

Che a quest’ora io tutti giorni qui
vengo per lei dev’esser avveduta.
Oh, vedi, amore a un uomo del
mio rango come l’ha fatta bella!
Eppure, eppure! oh! dev’essere
mia sposa . . .

**Count**

She must have noticed that I come
here every day at this time to see her. Oh, just see what love has done
to a man of my rank!
Yet, yet . . . oh, she must be
my bride . . .
Figaro

(Figaro offstage)
La la la la la la la la la la.

Conte

Che è mai quest'importuno?
Lasciamolo passar;
sotto quegli archi non veduto
vedrà quanto bisona.
Già l'alba appare
e amor non si vergogna.
(He hides.)

(Figaro enters with a guitar around his neck.)

CAVATINA: “Largo al factotum”

Figaro

A
La ran la le ra la ran la la.
Largo al factotum
della città.
La ran la la, etc.
Presto a bottega
che l'alba è già
l' a ran la la, etc.
Ah, che bel vivere,
che bel piacere,
per un barbiere di qualità
A'
Ah, bravo Figaro.
Bravo, bravissimo, bravol
La ran la la, etc.
Fortunatissimo
per verità. Bravol
La ran la la, etc.
B
Pronto a far tutto
la notte, il giorno,

Figaro

A
La ran la le ra la ran la la.
Make way for the factotum
of the city.
La ran la la, etc.
Rushing to his shop
for dawn is here.
La ran la la, etc.
What a merry life,
what gay pleasures
for a barber of quality.
A'
Ah, bravo Figaro.
Bravo, bravissimo, bravol
La ran la la, etc.
Most fortunate of men,
indeed you are!
La ran la la, etc.
B
Ready for everything
by night or by day,
Lectures 23 and 24: French Opera

sempre d’intorno
in giro sta.
Miglior cuccagna
per un barbiere,
vita più nobile,
no, non si dh.
La la ran la la ran la, etc.

Rasori e pettini,
lancette e forbici.
Al mio comando
tutto qui sta.
V’è la risma
poi del mestiere,
colla donnetta,
col cavalier... 
La la ran la... la... la.
Ah, che bel vivere,
che bel piacere,
per un barbiere di qualità.

C
Tutti mi chiedono,
tutti mi vogliono,
donne ragazzi,
vecchi fanciulle.
Qua la parrucca,
presto la barba,
qua la sanguigna,
presto il biglietto.
Tutti mi chiedono,
tutti mi vogliono.
Qua la parrucca
presto la barba,
presto il biglietto.
Ehi, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, etc.

Ahime! che furia!
Ahime! che folla!
Uno alla volta, per carità.

always in bustle,
in constant motion.
A better lot
for a barber,
a nobler life
does not exist.
La la ran la la ran la, etc.

Razors and combs,
lancets and scissors,
at my command
everything’s ready.
"Then there are "extras."
part of my trade
business for ladies
and cavaliers...
La la ran la... la... la.
Ah what a merry life,
what gay pleasures,
for a barber of quality.

All call for me,
all want me,
ladies and children,
old men and maidens.
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
leeches to bleed me,
here, take this note.
All call for me,
all want me,
I need a wig,
I want a shave,
here, take this note.
Ho, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, etc.

Heavens! What a commotion!
Heavens! What a crowd!
One at a time, for pity’s sake.
Ehi, Figaro: son qua!
Figaro qua, Figaro là,
Figaro su, Figaro giù.
Pronto, prontissimo
son come il fulmine,
sono il factotum
della città.

Ah, bravo, Figaro,
bravo, bravissimo,
a te la fortuna
non mancherà.
La la ran la, etc.
Sono il factotum della città.

Ho, Figaro! I am here!
Figaro here, Figaro there,
Figaro up, Figaro down.
Quicker and quicker
I go like greased lightning,
make way for the factotum
of the city.

Ah, bravo, Figaro,
bravo, bravissimo,
on you good fortune
will always smile.
La la ran la, etc.
I am the factotum of the city.

---

(reading aloud the note from Rosina)
"Le vostre assidue premure hanno eccitata la mia curiosità. Il mio tutore è per uscir di casa: appena si sarà allontanato, procurate con qualche mezzo ingegnoso d'indicarmi il vostro nome, il vostro stato e le vostre intenzioni. Io non posso mai mai comparire al balcone, senza l'indissolubile compagnia del mio tiranno. Siate però certo, che tutto è disposta a fare, per rompere le sue catene, la sventurata Rosina . . ."

(reading aloud the note from Rosina)
"Your constant attentions have aroused my curiosity. My guardian is just leaving; as soon as he's gone, find some ingenious means to tell me your name, your rank and your intentions. I can never appear on the balcony except in the strict company of my tyrant. Rest assured however, that unfortunate Rosina is prepared to do anything to break her chains."

---
Conte
Il nome mio non le vo’dir
né il grado: assicurar mi
vo’ pri’ ch’ella am me,
me solo al mondo,
non le ricchezze e i titoli
del conte Almaviva.

Count
I don’t want to tell her my name
or my rank; I first
want to be sure that she loves me
and me alone in all the world,
not the wealth and titles
of Count Almaviva.

Scene Two
A courtyard in Bartolo’s house.
cavatina "Una voce poco fa"

Rosina
(a letter in her hand)
Una voce poco fa
qui nel cor mi risuonò.
Il mio cor ferito è già
e Lindoro fu che
il piagò.
Sì, Lindoro mio sarà,
lo giurai, la vincerò.
Il tutor ricuserà,
io l’ingegno aguzzerò,
alla fin s’accetterà,
e contenta io resterò.
Sì, Lindoro etc.

Resina
(a letter in her hand)
The voice I heard just now
has thrilled my very heart.
My heart already is pierced
and it was Lindoro who
hurled the dart.
Yes, Lindoro shall be mine,
I’ve sworn it, I’ll succeed.
My guardian won’t consent,
but I will sharpen my wits,
and at last, he will relent,
and I shall be content.
Yes, Lindoro, etc.

Io sono docile,
on rispettosa,
sono obbediente,
dolce, amorosa.
Mi lascio reggere,
mi fo guidar.
Ma se mi toccano
dov’è il mio debole,
sarà una via per, sarò,
e cento trappole
prima di cedere farò giocar.

Io sono docile, etc.

Io sono docile,
I am respectful,
I am obedient,
sweet and loving.
I can be ruled,
I can be guided.
But if crossed in love,
I can be a viper,
and a hundred tricks
I shall play
before they have their way.

I am docile, etc.
Figaro
E’ un vecchio indemoniato, avaro, sospettoso, brontolone, avrà cent’anni indosso e vuol fare il galante: indovinate? Per mangiare a Rosina tutta l’eredità s’è fitto in capo di volerla sposare. Aiuto!

Rosina
Qual biglietto?

Bartolo
Che servo!
L’arietta dell’Inutil Precauzione che ti cadde stamatt in del balcone. Vi fate rossa?
(Avessi indovinato!) Che vuol dir questo dito (He seizes Rosina’s finger) così sporco d’inchiostro?

Rosina
Sporco! Oh! Nulla.
Io me l’aveva scottato e coll’inchiostro or l’ho medicato.

Bartolo
(Diavolol!) (He counts the sheets of paper on the table.) E questi fogli... or son cinque, eran sei.

Rosina
Que’ fogli? E vero.

Figaro
He’s an old devil, miserly, suspicious, crabbed, he must be a hundred but wants to play the gallant: and just imagine, so as to enjoy Rosina’s entire legacy he’s taken it into his head to marry her. Help!

Rosina
What note?

Bartolo
Oh, what’s the use? The note which you dropped this morning from the balcony. You’re blushing, eh? (If only I’d guessed!) What is the meaning (He seizes Rosina’s finger) of your ink-stained finger?

Rosina
Stained? Oh! Nothing. I burned myself and I used the ink, as a medicine.

Bartolo
(The devil!) (He counts the sheets of paper on the table.) And these sheets of paper... there are five now, there were six.

Rosina
The note paper? You are right.
D'uno mi son servita a mandar
de confetti a Marcellina.

Bartolo
Bravissima!
(He picks up the pen)
E la penna,
perché fu temperata?

Rosina
(Maladetto!) La penna!
Per disegnare un fiore sul tamburo.

Bartolo
Un fiore!

Rosina
Un fiore.

Bartolo
Un fiore! Ah! Fraschetta!

Rosina
Daver.

Bartolo
Zitto.

Rosina
Credete . . .

Bartolo
Basta così.

Rosina
Signor . . .

Bartolo
Non più . . . tacete.

I used one to wrap the sweets
I sent to Marcellina.

Bartolo
Bravissima!
(He picks up the pen)
And the pen,
why was it sharpened?

Rosina
(Heavens!) The pen!
To draw a flower to embroider.

Bartolo
A flower!

Rosina
A flower.

Bartolo
A flower! Oh! You minx!

Rosina
It is the truth.

Bartolo
Silence.

Rosina
Believe me . . .

Bartolo
Enough of this.

Rosina
Sir . . .

Bartolo
No more . . . be quiet.
Bartolo
A un dottor della mia sorte
queste scuse, signorina,
vi consiglio, mia carina,
un po’ meglio a imposturar.
Meglio! Meglio! Meglio! Meglio!
I confetti alla ragazza
il ricamo sul tamburo!
Vi scottaste, eh via!
Ci vuol altro, figlia mia,
per potermi corbellar.
Altro! Altro! Altro! Altro!
Perché manca lì quel foglio?
V'aspettavo cotesto imbroglio.
Sono inutili le smorfie;
ferma lì, non mi tocatte.
Figlia mia, non lo sperate
chi'l mi lasci infinocchiat.
A un dottor della mia sorte
queste scuse, signorina,
vi consiglio, mia carina
un po’ meglio a imposturar.
Via carina, confessate.
Son disposto a perdonar.
Non parlate! Vi ostinate!
Se ben in quel che faccia far.

Signorina, un’altra volta
quando Bartolo andrà fuori
la consegna ai servitori
a suo modo far saprà.
Ahi! non servono le smorfie
faccia pur la gatta morta.
Cospeti! per quella porta,
nemmen l’aria entrà potrà.

E Rosina innocentina,
sconsolata, disperata,

Bartolo
For a doctor of my standing
these excuses, Signorina,
I advise you, my dear child,
to invent a little better.
Better! Better! Better! Better!
Sweets for Marcellina!
A design for your embroidery!
And the scolding of your finger!
It takes more than that, my girl,
to deceive me with success.
More! More! More! More!
Why is that sheet of paper missing?
I mean to find out what’s going on.
No, coaxing is useless.
Keep away, don’t touch me.
No my dear girl, give up all hope
that I’ll let myself be fooled.
For a doctor of my standing
these excuses, Signorina,
I advise you, my dear child,
to invent a little better.
Come, dear child, confess it all.
I am prepared to pardon you.
You don’t answer? You are stubborn?
Then I know well what I’ll do.

Signorina, another time
when Bartolo must leave the house
he’ll give orders to the servants
who will see you stay inside.
Now your pouting will not help you
nor your injured innocence.
I here assure you, through that door
the very air itself won’t enter.

And little innocent Rosina,
disconsolate and in despair,
Eh! non servono le smorfie,
faccia pur la gatta morta.
Cospettone! per quella porta
nessun l'aria entrerà potrà.
E Rosina innocente,
sconsolata, disperata,
in sua camera serrata;in ch'io voglio star dovrà.

Un dottor della mia sorte
non si lascia infinocchiar.
E Rosina innocente, etc.
(Exit)

For a doctor of my standing
does not let himself be fooled.
And little innocent Rosina, etc.
(Exit)

**Figaro**

È un solenne imbroglio
di matrimonii,
un collo torto, un vero disperato,
sempre senza un quattrino . . .
Già, è maestro di musica,
insegnà alla ragazza.

**Figaro**

A famous intriguing
matchmaker,
a hypocrite, a good-for-nothing,
with never a penny in his pocket . . .
He has lately turned music-maker,
and teaches this girl.

**Don Basilio**

Così, con buona grazia,
bisogna principiare
a inventar qualche favola che al
pubblico lo metta in mala vista,
che comparir lo faccia un
uomo infame, un’anima perduta . . .
io, io vi servirò;
fra quattro giorni, credete a me,
Basilio ve lo giura,
noi lo farem sloggiar
da queste mura.

**Don Basilio**

Just this, that plausibly,
we must begin
to invent a story which will
put him in a bad light with
the public, making him seem a
man of infamy, a doomed soul . . .
I shall attend to this;
within four days,
on the word of Basilio,
he’ll be thrown out
of this town.
**Don Basilio**

La calunnia è un venticello
un’auretta assai gentile
che insensibile, sottile,
leggermente, dolcemente,
incomincia a sussurrar.
Piano piano, terra terra,
sottovoce, sibilando,
va scorrendo, va ronzando.
Nell’orecchie della gente,
s’introduce destramente
e le teste ed i cervelli
fa stordire e fa gonfiar.
Dalla bocca fuoriuscendo
lo schiamazzo va crescendo,
prende forza a poco a poco,
vola già di loco in loco,
sembra il tuono, la tempesta
che nel sen della foresta
va fischiando, brontolando,
E ti fa d’orror gelat.
Alta fin trabocca e scoppia.
si propaga, si radoppia,
e produce un’esplosione
come un colpo di cannone,
un tremuto, un temporale,
un tumulto generale,
che fa l’aria rimbombar.
È il meschino calunniatore,
avvilito, calpestato,
sotto il pubblico flagello,
per gran sorte va a crepar.
ACT TWO

Music lesson

Rosina
Cara immagine rideante, 
dolce idea d’un lìeto amor, 
tu m’acendi in petto, il core. 
Tu mi porti a delirar! etc.
Caro, a te mi raccomando, 
tu mi salva, per pietà! 
tu mi porti a delirar!

Rosina
Dear smiling image, 
sweet thought of happy love, 
you burn in my breast, in my heart. 
I am delirious with joy! etc.
Dearest, in you I put my trust, 
please, come save me, for pity’s sake! 
I am delirious with joy!

Recitative

Conte
Bella voce! Bravissima!

Rosina
Oh! Mille grazie!

Bartolo
(waking up and crossing to harpsichord)
Certo, bella voce! 
Ma cospetto, quest’aria! 
è assai noiosa. 
La musica a miei tempi 
cra altra cosa. 
Ah! Quando, per esempio, cantava 
Caffarnello quell’aria portentosa 
La ra la la la . . . sentite, 
Don Alonso, eccola qua.

Rosina
A beautiful voice! Bravissima!

Rosina
Oh! A thousand thanks!

Bartolo
(waking up and crossing to harpsichord)
Truly, a beautiful voice! 
But this aria, damnation! 
It is rather tiresome. 
Music in my day, 
was quite another thing. 
Ah! When, for instance, 
Caffarnello sang that wonderful aria 
La ra la la la . . . listen, 
Don Alonso, here it is.

Arietta

"Quando mi sei vicina, 
amabile Rosina . . ."

Conte

"When you are near me, 
sweet Rosina . . ."

Count

The aria says "Giannina"

L’aria dicea “Giannina” 
(Figaro enters and hides behind Bartolo.)
Bartolo
L’aria dicea “Giannina,”
ma io dico “Rosina...”
“When you are near me,
my heart grows in my breast,
it dances a minuet...”

(he dances a courtly step; Figaro
imitates him behind his back.)

Bartolo
(catching sight of Figaro)
Bravo, signor barbiere, ma bravo!

Figaro
Eh, niente affatto, scusi,
son delolezze...

Bartolo
Ebbon, guidone,
che vieni a fare?

Figaro
Oh, bella! Vengo a tarvi la barba!
Oggi vi tocca.

Bartolo
Oggi non voglio.

Figaro
Oggi non vuol?
Domani non potrò io.

Bartolo
Perchè?

Recitative

Bartolo
The aria says “Giannina,”
but I say “Rosina...”

“When you are near me,
my heart grows in my breast,
it dances a minuet...”

(he dances a courtly step; Figaro
imitates him behind his back.)

Bartolo
(catching sight of Figaro)
Bravo, Signor Barber, bravo!

Figaro
Excuse me please,
it was a moment of weakness...

Bartolo
Well, you rascal,
what are you here for?

Figaro
Here lor! Here to shave you.
This is your day.

Bartolo
I don’t wish it today.

Figaro
Today you don’t wish it?
Tomorrow I can’t come.

Bartolo
Why not?
Figaro
(consulting his notebook)
Perchè ho da fare.
A tutti gli Uffiziali
del nuovo reggimento
barba e testa,
alla Marchesa Andronica
il biondo parruchin
coi maronè . . .
Al Contino Bombè
il cuito a campanile . . .
purgante all’avvocato
Bernardone che tesi
s’amalò d’indigestione.
E poi . . . e poi . . .
che serve?
Doman non posso.

Bartolo
Osrù, meno parole.
Oggi non vo’ far barba.

Figaro
(consulting his notebook)
Because I shall be busy.
For all the officers
of the new regiment,
shave and haircut,
for the Marquise Andronica
her blonde wig
tinted brown . . .
For the young Count Bombè
fotolock to curl . . .
A purge for the lawyer
Bernardone who yesterday
fell ill with indigestion.
And then . . . and then . . .
but why continue?
Tomorrow I cannot come.

Bartolo
Come, less chatter.
Today I do not want to be shaved.
La Traviata

(1853)

Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

ACT ONE

A salon in Violette's house.

(Violetta is conversing with her doctor and several friends. Other guests arrive, among them the Baron Douphol, and Flora Bervoix, who is escorted by the Marquis d'Obigny.)

Guests

Dell'invito trascorsa è già l'ora, voi tardaste.
Giocammo da Flora,
e giocando quell'ore volar.

Guests

It's already past invitation time,
you're late.
We were gambling at Flora's,
and when we gamble, time flies.

Violetta

(greeting the entering guests)
Flora, amici, la notte che resta
d'altre gioie qui fate brillar.
Fia le razze più viva è la festa.

Violetta

(greeting the entering guests)
Flora, dear friends, let's make joyful
and bright what is left of the night.
When wine flows, the party is gayer.

Flora and Marquis

E goder voi potrete?

Flora and Marquis

Are you well enough to have a good
time?

Violetta

Lo voglio;
al piacere m'affido,
cd io soglio con tal farmaco
i mali soprir.

Violetta

I want to.
I make a habit of pleasure.
It's the best medicine
for my illness.

Flora, Baron, Marquis, Doctor, Guests

Sì, la vita s'addoppia al gioir.
(Gaston, Viscount of Letorîtres, enters with Alfredo Germont and goes to
Violetta.)

Flora, Baron, Marquis, Doctor, Guests

Yes, life is made for pleasure.
(Gaston, Viscount of Letorîtres, enters with Alfredo Germont and goes to
Violetta.)
Gastone

In Alfredo Germont, o signora,
ecco un altro che molto v'onora;
pochi amici a lui simili sono.

Violetta

(giving her hand to Alfredo, who kisses it) Mio visconte, mercè di tal dono.

Marquis

Caro Alfredo.

Alfredo

Marchese.

Gastone

(to Alfredo)
T'ho detto. L'amistà qui s'intreccia al diletto.

Violetta

(to servants, busy at the dinner table)
Pronto è il tutto?
(as a servant gestures yes)
Mieli cari, sedete;
è al convito che s'apre ogni cor.

Guests

Ben diceste.
Le cure segrete fuga
sempre l'amico lico.
(They seat themselves at the table:
Violetta is with Alfredo and Gastone;
Flora is between the Marquis and the Baron.)

All

È al convito che s'apre ogni cor.

Gastone

Here is Alfredo Germont, dear lady;
he is another of your admirers;
few friends are like him.

Violetta

(giving her hand to Alfredo, who kisses it) I thank you, Viscount, for such a favor.

Marquis

Dear Alfredo.

Alfredo

Marquis.

Gastone

(to Alfredo)
You see, I told you so. Here friendship is entwined with pleasure.

Violetta

(to servants, busy at the dinner table)
Is everything ready?
(as a servant gestures yes)
My dear ones, be seated;
it's at feasting that hearts swell.

Guests

Well said.
Wine is ever a friend
who banishes secret cares.
(They seat themselves at the table:
Violetta is with Alfredo and Gastone;
Flora is between the Marquis and the Baron.)

All

And it's at feasting that all hearts swell.
Gastone

*(whispering to Violettta)*
Sempre Alfredo a voi pensa.

Violettta
Scherzate!

Gastone
Egra foste,
e ogni di con affanno qui volò,
di voi chiese.

Violettta
Cessate. Nulla son io per lui.

Gastone
Non v’inganno.

Violettta
*(to Alfredo)*
Vero è dunque? Onde ciò?
Nol comprendo.

Alfredo
*(sighing)*
Si, è ver.

Violettta
*(to Alfredo)*
Le mie grazie vi rendo.
*(to the Baron)*
Voi, barone, non feste altrettanto.

Baron
Vi conosco da un anno soltanto.

Violettta
Ed ei solo da qualche minuto.

Gastone

*(whispering to Violettta)*
Alfredo is always thinking about you.

Violettta
You must be joking!

Gastone
When you were ill,
he hurried here each day,
anxious to find out if you were better.

Violettta
Be still. I don’t mean a thing to him.

Gastone
I’m not fooling.

Violettta
*(to Alfredo)*
Then it’s true? But why?
I don’t understand.

Alfredo
*(sighing)*
Yes it’s true.

Violettta
*(to Alfredo)*
My thanks to you.
*(to the Baron)*
Baron, you weren’t so devoted a swain.

Baron
I’ve known you for only a year.

Violettta
And he for only a few moments.
Flora
(softly to the Baron)
Meglio fora se aveste tacuto.

Baron
(softly)
M’è increscioso quel giovine.

Flora
Perché?
A me invece simpatico egli è.

Gastone
(to Alfredo)
E tu dunque non aprì più bocca?

Marquis
(to Violetta)
È a madama che acutiarlo tocca.

Violetta
(pouring wine for Alfredo)
Sarà l’Ebe che versa.

Alfredo
E chi’è bionda mortal come quella.

All
Beviamo. Beviamo, beviamo!

Gastone
(to the Baron)
O barone, nè un verso, nè un viva
troverete in quest’ora giudiva?
(as the Baron declines, Gastone turns to Alfredo)
Dunque a te.

Flora
(softly to the Baron)
It would have been better to keep still.

Baron
(softly)
I’ve taken a dislike to that young man.

Flora
Why?
On the contrary, I find him attractive.

Gastone
(to Alfredo)
And aren’t you going to open your mouth?

Marquis
(to Violetta)
It’s up to the lady to prompt him.

Violetta
(pouring wine for Alfredo)
I’ll be Hebe, the Cupbearer.

Alfredo
And that I long for is that you,
like her, should be immortal.

All
Let’s drink. Let’s drink, drink!

Gastone
(to the Baron)
Eh, Baron, haven’t you a rhyme
or a toast for this merry hour?
(as the Baron declines, Gastone turns to Alfredo)
Now it’s up to you.
The Others
(except Alfredo and the Baron)
Sì, sì, un brindisi.

Alfredo
L'estratto non m'arride.

Gastone
E' non sei tu maestro?

Alfredo
(to Violetta)
Vi fia grato?

Violetta
Sì.

Alfredo
Sì? L'ho già in cor.

Marquis
Dunque attenti, attenti al cantor!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Sì, attenti al cantor!

Alfredo
Libiamo ne' liete calici,
che la bellezza infiora:
e la fuggevol ora
s'inebbrii a voluttà.
Libiam ne' dolci fremiti
che suscita l'amore.
(turning toward Violetta)

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Yes, yes, a toast.

Alfredo
I'm not in the right spirit.

Gastone
Can't you conquer your mood?

Alfredo
(to Violetta)
Would that please you?

Violetta
Yes.

Alfredo
Really? Then it's already in my heart.

Marquis
Now listen, listen to the singer!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Yes, listen to the singer!

Alfredo
Let us drink from festive cups
that with beauty are adorned,
and the fleeting hour
with sensuous pleasure will be replete.
Let us drink with sweet excitement
arising out of love.
(turning toward Violetta)
poichè quell'occhio al core
onnipotente va.
Libiamo, amore, amor fra i calici
più caldi baci aver.
—etc.—

because of a glance that reigns
supreme, after having pierced the
heart. Let us drink, love, for within
the cup lie the warmest kisses of love.
—etc.—

Violetta
Non gradireste ora le danze?

The Others
Oh, il gentil pensier!
Tutti accettiamo.

Violetta
Usciamo dunque?
(suddenly turning pale)
Ohimè!

The Others
Che avete?

Violetta
Nulla, nulla.

The Others
Che mai v’arresta?

Violetta
Usciamo—
(as she takes a few steps but is forced
to halt and sit down)
Oh, Dio!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Ancora!

Violetta
And now shall we dance?

The Others
Oh, what a happy idea!
We all accept.

Violetta
Then let’s go.
(suddenly turning pale)
Oh!

The Others
What ails you?

Violetta
Nothing, nothing.

The Others
But what stopped you?

Violetta
Let us go—
(as she takes a few steps but is forced to
halt and sit down)
Oh, my God!

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Again!
Alfredo
Voi soffrite.

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Oh, ciel, ch'è questo?

Violetta
Un tremito che provo.  
Or là passate;  
fra poco anch'io sarò.

The Others
(except Alfredo)
Come bramate.  
(All the guests except Alfredo go to the other room.)

Violetta
(studying herself in the mirror)
Oh, qual pallor!  
(turning and seeing Alfredo)
Voi qui!

Alfredo
Cessata è l'ansia che vi turbò?

Violetta
Sto meglio.

Alfredo
Ah, in cotal guisa v'ucciderete.  
Aver v'è d'uopo cura dell'esser vostro.

Violetta
E lo potrei?

Alfredo
Oh, se mia foste,
Violetta
Che dite?
Ha forsa alcuno cura di me?

Alfredo
Perché nessuno al mondo v'ama?

Violetta
Nessun!

Alfredo
Tranne sol io.

Violetta
Gli è vero!
Si grande amor dimenticato avea.

Alfredo
Ridete! E in voi v'ha un core?

Violetta
Un cor? Sì, forse—
e a che lo richiedete?

Alfredo
Ah, se ciò fosse,
non potreste allora celiar.

Violetta
Dite davvero?

Alfredo
Io non v'inganno.

Violetta
Da molto è che mi amate?

Violetta
I'd watch over your gentle existence.

Violetta
What did you say?
Is there one who cares about me?

Alfredo
Does no one in the world love you?

Violetta
No one!

Alfredo
Except me.

Violetta
That's true!
I'd forgotten about that great love.

Alfredo
Laugh, then! And have you a heart?

Violetta
A heart? Yes, perhaps—
why do you ask?

Alfredo
Ah, if that were true,
you wouldn't be able to make light of it.

Violetta
Are you sincere?

Alfredo
I'm not deceiving you.

Violetta
Have you loved me for long?
Alfredo
Ah, sì, da un anno!
Un di felice eterea
mi balenaste innante,
e da quel di tremante,
visi d’ignoto amor.
Di quell’amor ch’è palpito,
dell’universo intero,
croce e delizia al cor.

Alfredo
Ah, yes, for a year!
One happy, heavenly day
your beauty shone before me,
and since that day, so momentous,
I have adored you in secret.
Out of such a love so tremulous,
out of the universe so heavenly,
mysteriously, sorrow and gladness
come to the heart.

Rigoletto
(1851)
Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

ACT ONE
Scene Seven

Rigoletto
(Quel vecchio maledivami!)

Sparafucile
Signor?…

Rigoletto
Va, non ho niente.

Sparafucile
Né il chiesi…a voi presente
un uom di spada sta.

Rigoletto
Un ladro?

Sparafucile
Un uom che libera
per poco da un rivale.
E voi ne avete…

Rigoletto
(That old man cursed me!)

Sparafucile
Sir?

Rigoletto
I have no money.

Sparafucile
I asked for none. Before you
stands a man who lives by his sword.

Rigoletto
A robber?

Sparafucile
A man who for a modest fee
would rid you of a rival.
You must have one.
Rigoletto
Quale?

Sparafucile
La vostra donna è là.

Rigoletto
(Che sento!) E quanto spendere
per un signor dovrei?

Sparafucile
Prezzo maggior vorrei...

Rigoletto
Com’usasi pagar?

Sparafucile
Una meglì s’anticipa,
il resto si dà poi...

Rigoletto
(Demonioli!) E come puoi
tanto securor oprar?

Sparafucile
Soglio in città uccidere,
oppure nel mio tetto.
L'uomo di sera aspetto:
Una stocca e muor.

Rigoletto
(Demonioli!) E come in casa?

Sparafucile
È facile...
M’aiuta mia sorella...
Per le vie danza...è bella...
Chi voglio attira...e allor...

Rigoletto
Who?

Sparafucile
Your lady lives here.

Rigoletto
(What does he know?) How much
would you charge for a nobleman?

Sparafucile
That would be more expensive...

Rigoletto
How are you paid?

Sparafucile
Half in advance,
the rest afterwards.

Rigoletto
(The demon!) And how can you
work so securely?

Sparafucile
I kill my man in the town
or under my own roof;
I wait for him at night.
One thrust, and he's dead.

Rigoletto
And in your own house?

Sparafucile
That’s easy;
my sister helps me.
She dances by the roadside, she’s
lovely, she lures the man I want, and
then...
**Rigoletto**
Comprendo.

**Sparafucile**
Senza strepito…
È questo il mio strumento.
*(shows his sword)*
Vi serve?

**Rigoletto**
No… al momento.

**Sparafucile**
Peggio per voi…

**Rigoletto**
Chi sa’…

**Sparafucile**
Sparafucil mi nomino…

**Rigoletto**
Straniero?

**Sparafucile**
Borgognone…

**Rigoletto**
E dove all’occasione?…

**Sparafucile**
Qui sempre a sera.

**Rigoletto**
Va.

**Sparafucile**
Sparafucil.
*(Sparafucile exits.)*

**Rigoletto**
I understand.

**Sparafucile**
Not a sound.
And here’s my instrument.
*(shows his sword)*
Can I serve you?

**Rigoletto**
Not at the moment.

**Sparafucile**
So much the worse.

**Rigoletto**
Who knows when?

**Sparafucile**
Sparafucil’s my name.

**Rigoletto**
A foreigner?

**Sparafucile**
From Burgundy.

**Rigoletto**
And where, if I need you?

**Sparafucile**
Here, every evening.

**Rigoletto**
Go.

**Sparafucile**
Sparafucil.
*(Sparafucile exits.)*
ACT FOUR

Duca
La donna è mobile
qual piuia al vento,
muta d’accento
e di pensiero.
Sempre un amabile
leggiadro viso,
in pianto o in riso,
é mensognero.

Duke
Woman is wayward
as a feather in the breeze,
capricious in word
and in thought.
Always a lovable
pretty face,
but deceitful
whether weeping or smiling.

Otello
(1886)
Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Arrigo Boito

ACT ONE

A town in Cyprus. Outside the castle. An inn with a trellised arbor. In the background the quayside and sea. It is evening. A thunderstorm rages.

Cypriots
Una vela! Una vela! Un vessillo! Un
vessillo!

Montano
È l'alato Leon!

Cassio
Or la folgor lo svela.

Newcomers
Uno squillo! Uno squillo.

All
Ha tuonato il cannon!
Cassio
È la nave del Duce…

Montano
Or s'affonda, or s'inciela.

Cassio
Ere il rostro dall'onda.

Some Cypriots
Nelle nube si cela e nel mar,
e alla luce dei lampi ne appar.

All
Lampi! Tuoni! Gorghi!
Turb tempestosi e fulmini!
Treman l'onde, treman l'aure,
treman basi e culmini!
Fende l’etra un torvo e cieco
spirito di vertigine.
Idio scuote il ciel bieco,
come un tetto vel.
Tutto è fumo! Tutto è fuoco!
L’orrida caligine si fa incendio,
poi si spegne più funesta.
Spazia l’universo,
accorre a vechi l’aquilone fantasima,
i titanci oricalchi squillano nel ciel.

(Trumpets are heard. Women of the island come running in and look towards the quay with gestures of terror and supplication.)

Dio, fulgor della bufera!
Dio, rorriso della duna!
Salva l’arca e la bandiera della veneta
fortuna!
Tu, che reggi gli astri e il Fato!
Tu, che imperi al mondo e al ciel!
Fa che in fondo al mar placato
posi l’ancora fedel.

Cassio
'Tis the General’s ship!

Montano
Now she is engulfed, now tossed skywards.

Cassio
Her prow rises from out the waves.

Some Cypriots
She is shrouded in the clouds and the sea
and anon appears in the lightning flash.

All
Lightning! Thunder! Whirlpools!
Tempestuous storms and thunderbolts!
The waves quake, the winds quake,
the depths and the heights quake!
A grim and blind spirit, dizzily
plunging, cleaves the air.
God shakes the wild heaven,
dark as a pall. All is smoke!
All is fire! The horrid darkness
becomes a conflagration,
then dies out more baleful still.
The universe is emitted,
the spectral northern wind comes rushing,
titanic trumpets resound in the sky.

God, from the glare of the tempest!
God, from the lure of the sandbank!
Save the ship and the flag of Venetian fortune! Thou, who rulest the
stars and Fate!
Thou, who commandest earth and
heaven! In the depths of a calmed sea
bring the trusty anchor to rest.
Lectures 23 and 24: French Opera

Iago
È infranto l’artimon!

Roderigo
Il rostro piomba su quello scoglio!

Cypriots
Aita! aita!

Iago
(aside to Roderigo)
L’alvo frenetico del mar sia la sua tomba!

Cypriots
È salvo! È salvo!

Voices off-stage
Gittate i pali chermi!
Mano alle funi! Fermi!

Cypriots
Forza ai remi! Alla riva!

Voices off-stage
All’approdo! allo sbarco!

Cypriots
Evviva! Evviva! Evviva!
(Othello enters, ascending the steps from the shore to the quay, followed by Venetian soldiers and sailors.)

Othello
Esultate! L’orgoglio musulmano sepolt’è in mar; nostra e del ciel è gloria!
Dopo l’armi lo vinse l’uragano.

Iago
Her mainsail’s burst!

Roderigo
Her bow is rushing full on that rock!

Cypriots
Help! Help!

Iago
(aside to Roderigo)
May the raging belly of the sea be her tomb!

Cypriots
She is saved! She is saved!

Voices off-stage
Lower the boats!
All hands to the ropes! Make fast!

Cypriots
Pull together! To the shore!

Voices off-stage
To the landing! Disembark!

Cypriots
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!
(Othello enters, ascending the steps from the shore to the quay, followed by Venetian soldiers and sailors.)

Othello
Rejoice! The Mussulman’s pride is buried in the sea; ours and heaven’s is the glory!
After our arms the storm defeated him.
Cypriots
Evviva Othello! Evviva! Evviva! Evviva!
Vittoria, vittoria!
(Othello enters the castle, followed by Cassio, Montano and soldiers.)
Vittoria! Sterminio!
Dispersi, distrutti, sepolti nell’orrido tumulto pionbár.
Avranno per requie la sferza dei flutti,
là ridda dei turbini,
l’abisso del mar.
Vittoria! Vittoria! Vittoria! Vittoria!
Dispersi, distrutti, sepolti nell’orrido tumulto pionbár.
Vittoria! Evviva!
(The storm begins to die away.)
Si calma la bufera.

Cypriots
Long live Othello! Hurrah! Hurrah!
Hurrah!
Victory, victory!
(Othello enters the castle, followed by Cassio, Montano and soldiers.)
Victory! They are defeated!
Dispersed, destroyed, engulfed, buried in the terrible depths.
For requiem they will have the lash of the breakers, the brawl of the whirlwind, the abyss of the seas.
Victory! Victory! Victory! Victory!
Dispersed, destroyed, engulfed, buried in the terrible depths.
Victory! Victory!
(The storm begins to die away.)
The storm is subsiding.

Iago
(aside to Roderigo)
Roderigo, ebben, che pensi?

Roderigo
D’affogarmi.

Iago
Stolto è chi s’affoga per amor di donna.

Roderigo
Vincer no, so.
(Some of the people start to build a woodpile. The rest crowd ‘round, turbulent and curious.)

Iago
(aside to Roderigo)
Well, Roderigo, what are you thinking?

Roderigo
Of drowning myself.

Iago
Fool is he who drowns himself for love of woman.

Roderigo
How to win I know not.
(Some of the people start to build a woodpile. The rest crowd ‘round, turbulent and curious.)
Lago

Su via, fa senno, aspetta l'opra del tempo. A Desdemona bella, che nel segreto de' tuoi sogni adori,
presto in uggia verranno i fosci baci di quel selvaggio dalle gonfie labbra.
Buon Roderigo, amico tuo sincero mi ti professo, né in più forte ambascia soccorrerai potrei.
Se un fragil voto di femmina non è tropp'arduo nodo pel genio mio nè per l'inferno, giuro che quella donna sarà tua.
M'ascolta—bench'è finta d'amarlo, odio quel Moro.
(Cassio re-enters and joins the soldiers. 
Lago points to Cassio and continues speaking.)
E una cagion dell'ira, eccola, guardà.
Quell'azzimato capitano usurpa il grado mio, il grado mio che in cenno ben pugnate batagliie ho meritato.
Tal fu il voler d'Orcello, ed io rimango
di sua Morea Signoria... l'allicet! 
Ma, com'è ver che tu Roderigo sei, 
coi è pur vero che se il Moro io fossi veder mi non vorrei d'attorno un Lago.
Se tu m'ascolti...

Lago

(Caside to Roderigo)
Va al porto, con quanta più possa ti resta, gridando: sonmossa! sonmossa!

Lago

Come now, be sensible, await the working of time. To the lovely Desdemona, whom in your secret dreams you adore,
the dark kisses of that thick-lipped savage will soon turn loathsome.
Good Roderigo, your sincere friend
I do profess me, nor could I serve you with greater zeal.
If a woman’s weak vow prove not too difficult a knot for my talent nor yet for hell, I swear this lady shall be yours. Listen—although I feign to love him, I hate the Moor.
(Cassio re-enters and joins the soldiers. 
Lago points to Cassio and continues speaking.)
There is a reason for my hate, yonder—look.
That foppish captain usurps my rank, the rank that in a hundred well-fought battles I have earned.
Such was Othello’s will, and I remain of my Moorish Lord... his ensign! But, as true ’tis you are Roderigo, so, too, ’tis true that, were I the Moor, I would not wish to see an Lago about me.
If you but hear me...

Lago

(Caside to Roderigo)
Go to the harbor with all the speed you can muster, crying: Revolt! Revolt!
Val spargi il tumulto, l’orrore. Le campane risuonino a stormo.
(Roderigo runs off; Iago turns to the two fighting men.)
Fratelli! L’immane conflitto cessate!

Cypriot Women
Fuggiam!

Iago
Ciel! già gronda di sangue Montano! Tenzon furibonda!

Women
Fuggiam, fuggiam!

Iago
Trégua!

Men
Trégua!

Women
S’uccidono!

Men
Pace!

Iago
Nessun più raffrena quel nembo pugnae! Si gridi l’allarme! Satana gl’invade!

Cypriots
All’armi! All’armi! Soccorso! Soccorso! (Enter Othello, followed by people with torches.)

Go! Spread confusion and horror. Let the bells sound the alarm.
(Roderigo runs off; Iago turns to the two fighting men.)
Brothers, stop this cruel fight!

Cypriot Women
Let’s fly!

Iago
Heavens! Montano’s dripping with blood! What a furious fight!

Women
Let’s fly, let’s fly!

Iago
Truce!

Men
Truce!

Women
They are killing one another!

Men
Peace!

Iago
No one can longer restrain this fighting fury! Raise the alarm! Satan possesses them!

Cypriots
To arms! To arms! Help! Help! (Enter Othello, followed by people with torches.)
Othello
Abbasso le spade!
(The combatants stop.)
O! che avviene? Son io fra i Saraceni? O la turchesa rabbia è in voi trasfusa da sbiancarvi l’un l’altro?
Onesto Iago, per quell’amor che tu mi porti, parla.

Iago
Non so... qui tutti eran cortesi amici, dianzi, e giocondi... ma ad un tratto, come se un pianeta maligno avesse a quelli smagato il senno, sguainando l’arme, s’avventano furenti... Avessi io prima stroncati i pie’ che qui m’addutti!

Othello
Down with your swords!
(The combatants stop.)
How now! What is happening? Am I among Saraceni? Have you turned Turks so that you tear one another to pieces? Honest Iago, by that love which you bear me, speak.

Iago
I know not...E’en now all here were friends, civil and merry... but on a sudden, as if some malign star had bewitched their judgment, unshathing their swords, they fell upon one another... Would I had lost my legs ere they had borne me hither.

Love Duet

Othello
Ingentilia di lagrime la storia
il tuo bel viso e il labbro di sospir;
scendean sulle mie tenebre la gloria,
il paradiso e gli astri a bendir.

Desdemona
Ed io vedea fra le tue tempie oscure splendor del genio l’etera bellia.

Othello
E tu m’amavi per le mie sventure
ed io t’amavo per la tua pietà.

Desdemona
Ed io t’amavo per le tue sventure
e tu m’amavi per la mia pietà.

Othello
Your lovely face ennobled the story
with tears, and your lips with sighs;
on my darkness glory descended,
paradise and the stars to bless.

Desdemona
And from your dusky temples I saw
the eternal beauty of your spirit shine.

Othello
And you loved me for the dangers I had passed and I loved you that you did pity them.

Desdemona
And I loved you for the dangers you had passed and you loved me that I did pity them.
Othello
E tu m'amavi . . .

Desdemona
E tu m'amavi . . .

Othello
Ed io t'amavo . . .

Othello, Desdemona
. . . per la tua/mia pietà.

Othello
And you loved me . . .

Desdemona
And you loved me . . .

Othello
And I loved you . . .

Othello, Desdemona
. . . that you/I did pity them.

Othello
Un bacio . . .

Desdemona
Othello!

Othello
Un bacio . . . ancora un bacio.
Già la pleiade ardente in mar
discende.

Desdemona
Tarda è la notte.

Othello
Vien . . . Venere splende.

Desdemona
Othello!
(They go slowly towards the castle,
clasped in each other's arms.)

Othello
A kiss . . .

Desdemona
Othello!

Othello
A kiss . . . and yet another kiss.
The burning Pleiades already sink into
the sea.

Desdemona
Late is the night.

Othello
Come . . . Venus shines on high.

Desdemona
Othello!
(They go slowly towards the castle,
clasped in each other's arms.)
"Credo"

(alone, paying no further heed to Cassio) (alone, paying no further heed to Cassio)

Credo in un Dio crudele che m'ha
created me in his image and whom,
creato simile a sè e che nell'ira io
in hate, I name. From some vile
nomo. Dalla viltà d'un germ e
der vile germ or atom base am I born.
d'un atomo vile son nato.
in hate, I name. From some vile
germ or atom base am I born.
Son scellerato perché son uomo;
I am evil because I am a man;
e sento il fango originario in me.
and I feel the primeval slime in me.
Sì! questa è la mia fè!
Yes! This is my creed!
Credo con fermo cuor, siccome
I believe with a firm heart, as ever
crede la vedovella al tempio,
does the young widow praying before
che il mal ch’io penso e che da me
the altar, that whatever evil I think or
procede, per il mio destino adempio.
do was decreed for me by fate.
Credo che il giusto è un istrom
I believe that the honest man is but a
beffardo, e nel viso e nel cuor,
poor actor, both in face and heart,
che tutto è in lui bugiardo:
that everything in him is a lie:
lagrima, bacio, sguardo,
tears, kisses, looks,
sacrificio ed onor.
sacrifices and honor.
È credo l'uomo gioco d'iniqua sorte
And I believe man to be the sport of
dal germe della culla
an unjust fate from the germ of the
al verme dell'avel.
cradle to the worm of the grave.
Vien dopo tanta irrisone la Morte.
After all this mockery comes Death.
È poi? È poi? La Morte è il Nulla.
And then? And then? Death is
È vecchia fola il Ciel.
nothingness. Heaven is an old wives’
tale.
Iago
(pretending not to have seen Othello, who has drawn near; as if to himself)
Ciò m’accora.

Othello
Che parli?

Iago
Nulla... voi qui? una vana voce m’uscì dal labbro...

Othello
Colui che s’allontana
dalla mia sposa, è Cassio?

Iago
Cassio? No... quei si scosse come un reo nel vedervi.

Othello
Credo che Cassio ei fosse.

Iago
Mio signore...

Othello
Che brami?

Iago
Cassio, nei primi di del vostro amor,
Desdemona non conosceva?

Othello
Si.
Perché fai tale inchiesta?

Iago
Il mio pensiero è vago d’ubbie,
non di malizia.
Othello
Di' il tuo pensiero, Iago.

Iago
Vi confidaste a Cassio?

Othello
Spesso un mio dono o un cenno portava alla mia sposa.

Iago
Dassennó?

Othello
Si, dasseno.
Nol credi onesto?

Iago
(imitating Othello)
Onesto?

Othello
Che ascondi nel tuo core?

Iago
Che ascondo in cor, signore?

Othello
"Che ascondo in cor, signore?"
Pel cielo, tu sei l'eco die detti mici,
nel chiostro dell'anima ricetti qualche terribil mostro.
Sì, ben t'udii poc' anzi mormorar:
"Ciò m'acciòra."
Ma di che t'accoravi?
Nomini Cassio e allora tu corrughi la fronte. Suvvia, parla, se m'ami.

Iago
Voi sapete ch'io v'amo.

Othello
Tell me your thought, Iago.

Iago
Did you put your confidence in Cassio?

Othello
He would often carry some present or token from me to my bride.

Iago
Indeed?

Othello
Ay, indeed.
Do you not think him honest?

Iago
(imitating Othello)
Honest?

Othello
What are you hiding in your heart?

Iago
What am I hiding in my heart, my lord?

Othello
"What am I hiding in my heart, my lord?"
By heavens, you are the echo to my words In the cloister of your mind you house some fearful monster.
Yes, I heard you murmur but now: "I like not that" — But what did you not like? You mention Cassio and then you frown.
Come now, speak, if you do love me.

Iago
You know well I love you.
Othello
Dunque senza velami
t'esprimi, e senza ambagi.
T'esa fuor dalla gola il tuo più rio
pensiero colla più ria parola.

Iago
S'anco teneste in mano tutta l'anima
mia nel sapresti.

Othello
Ah!

Iago
Teneate, signor, la gelosia!
E un'idra fosca, livida, cieca, col suo
velo nera stessa attosca, vivida piaga le
squarcia il seno.

Othello
Miseria mia! No! il vano sospettar
nulla giova.
Pria del dubbio l'indagine, dopo
il dubbio la prova, dopo la prova
(Otello ha sue leggi supreme),
amore e gelosia vadano dispersi insieme!

Iago
Un tal proposito spezza di
mie labbra il suggello.

(Voices are heard offstage, singing.)
Non parlo ancor di prova,
pur, generoso Otello, vigilare . . .
soventi le oneste e ben create
coscie non vedono la frode:
vigilare, Scrutare le parole di
Desdemona, un detto può ricondur
la fede, può affermare il sospetto.

Othello
Then speak out without subterfuge,
hiding nothing.
Spew forth from your throat your
worst thoughts in your worst words!

Iago
Had you my very soul in your
hands, you should not know it.

Othello
Ah!

Iago
Beware, my lord, of jealousy!
'Tis a dark hydra, malignant, blind, it
poisons itself with its own venom,
it's breast is ripped by an open wound.

Othello
Oh, misery! No! Vain suspicion
profits nothing.
Before doubt the inquiry, after
doubt the proof. After proof (Othello
has his supreme laws), love and
jealousy together shall be resolved!

Iago
Such a proposition removes
the seal from my lips.

(Voices are heard offstage, singing.)
I speak not yet of proof, but,
genereus Otello, be on guard . . .
often honest and noble natures
do not suspect deceit: be on your
guard. Observe Desdemona's words,
a single one can restore faith,
can confirm suspicion.
Othello

Piu orrendo d’ogni orrenda ingiuria
dell’ingiuria è il sospetto.
Nell’ore arcane della sua lussuria
(e a me furate!) m’agitava il petto
forse un pressagio? Ero baldo, giudico.
Nulla sapevo ancor; io non sentivo
sul suo corpo divin che m’innamora
e sui labibri mendaci
gli ardent’baci
di Cassio! Ed ora! Ed ora . .
addio, sublimi incanti del pensier!
Addio, achiere fulgenti, addio vittorico,
dardi volanti e volanti corser!
Addio, vessillo trionfale e pio,
e diane squillanti in sul marten!
Clamori e canti di battaglia, addio!
Della gloria d’Othello è questo il fin.

Iago

Pace, signor.

Othello

Sciagurato! mi trova una prova scura
che Desdemona è impura . .
Non sfuggir nulla ti giova!
Vo’ una scura, una visibil prova!
O sulla tua testa
s’accenda e precipiti il fulmine
del mio spaventoso furoc che si desta!
(He seizes Iago by the throat and
throws him to the ground.)

Iago

(rising)
Divina grazia difendimi! Il cielo

Othello

More dreadful than the most dreadful
injury of injuries is suspicion.
In the secret hours of her lust
(stolen from me!) did a presentiment
ever stir in my breast? I was bold,
happy. As yet I knew nothing; I did
not feel on the divine body I adored
and on the lying lips
the burning kisses
of Cassio! And now! And now . .
farewell, sublime content of the mind!
Farewell, brave troops, farewell,
victories,
and the reveille ringing in the morn!
Othello’s glory is gone.

Iago

Peace, my lord.

Othello

Villain! Find me sure proof
that Desdemona is impure . .
Do not fly! ’Twill avail you nothing!
I want sure and ocular proof!
Or upon your head will fall
the fiery thunderbolt
of my wakened and fearful fury!
(He seizes Iago by the throat and throws
him to the ground.)

Iago

(rising)
Divine grace defend me! Heaven
Othello
No... rimani. Forse onesto tu sei.

Iago
Meglio varebbe chi'io fossi un ciurmandor.

Othello
Per l'universo!
Credo leale Desdemona e credo che non lo sia. Te credo onesto e credo disoleale... La prova io voglio!
Voglio la certezza!

Iago
Signor, frenate l'ansie.
E qual certezza v'abbisogna?
Avvinti verderli forse?

Othello
Ah, morte e dannazione!

Iago
Ardua impresa sarebbe; e qual certezza sognate voi se quell’immondo fatto sempre vi sfuggirà? Ma pur se quida è la ragione al vero, una sì forte congettura risorerba che per poco alla certezza vi condusse. Udite. Era la notte, Cassio dormia, gli stavo accanto. Con interrotte voci tradia l’intimo incanto. Le labbra lente, lente movea, nell’abbandono

protect you. I am no more your ensign. I want the world to be my witness that honesty is not safe.

Othello
No... stay. Perhaps you are honest.

Iago
'Twere better were I a swindler.

Othello
The world be witness!
I believe Desdemona true and I believe she is not. I believe you honest and I believe you disloyal... I want proof! I want certainty!

Iago
My lord, curb your agitation.
And what certainty would you have?
To see them perhaps embracing?

Othello
Death and damnation!

Iago
It would be a difficult task; and what certainty do you have if this monstrous deed forever eludes you? But if reason be guide to truth, I have a strong conjecture which soon should bring you certainty. Listen.
It was night, Cassio was sleeping, I lay beside him. In halting accents he betrayed his inmost rapture.
His lips moved slowly, slowly, in the abandon
del sogno ardente, e allor dicea,
con flebil suono:
"Desdemona soave! Il nostro amor
s’asconda. Cauti vegliamoi! L’estasi
del ciel tutto m’innonda."
Seguia più vago l’incubo blando;
con molle angoscia
l’interna image quasi baciando,
ei disse poscia:
"Il rio destino impreco
che al Moro ti donò."
E allora il sogno in cieco
letargo si mutò.

Othello
Oh! mostruosa colpa!

Iago
Io non narrai che un sogno.

Othello
Un sogno che rivela un fatto.

Iago
Un sogno che può dar forma di
prova ad altro indizio.

Othello
E qual?

Iago
Talor vedeste in mano di
Desdemona un tessuto
trapunto a fior e più sottil
d’un velo?

Othello
È il fazzoletto ch’io le diedi,
pegno primo d’amor.

of his burning dream, and then
he said, in mournful tone:
"Sweet Desdemona! We must hide
our love. Let us be wary! I am
drowning in heavenly ecstasy."
The nightmare grew ever more
passionate; with soft anguish
he seemed to kiss his fancy’s image,
then said:
"I curse the fate
that gave you to the Moor."
And then the dream subsided
into blind oblivion.

Othello
Oh, monstrous guilt!

Iago
I have but related a dream.

Othello
A dream reveals a fact.

Iago
A dream that can give proof
of other evidence.

Othello
Of what?

Iago
Have you sometimes seen in
Desdemona’s hand a tissue
embroidered with flowers and
finer than gauze?

Othello
’Tis the handkerchief I gave her,
first pledge of love.
lago
Que! fazzoletto ieri (certo ne son)
lo vidi in man di Cassio.

Othello
Ah! Mille vite gli donasse Iddio!
Una è povera preda al futur mio!
Jago, ho il cor di gelo.
Lungi da me le pietose larve!
Tutto il mio vano amor esalo al
cielo, guardami, ci sparve. Nelle sue
spire d’angue l’idra m’avvince!
Ah! sangue! sangue! sangue!

lago
That handkerchief (I am sure)
I saw yesterday in Cassio’s hand.

Othello
Hai! God grant him a thousand lives!
One is a poor prey to my fury.
Jago, I have a heart of ice.
Away from me piteous illusions!
All my fond love thus do I blow to
heaven, see, ’tis gone. The hydra
entwines me in its snaky coils.
Oh, blood! Blood! Blood!

Othello
(kneeling)
Sì, pel ciel marmoreo giuro!
Per le attorte folgori! Per la Morte
e per l’oscur mar sterminatore!
D’ira e d’impeò tremendo presto
fia che folgori
questa man ch’io levo e stendo!
(He lifts his hand to the sky and is
about to rise when Iago prevents him,
and kneels beside him.)

lago
Non v’altzate ancor!
Testimon è il Sol ch’io miro,
che m’irradia e innanza
l’ampia terra e il vasto spiro
del Creato inter,
che ad Othello io sacro ardenti,
core, braccio ed anima
s’anco ad opere cruenti
s’armi il suo voler!

Othello
(kneeling)
Yes, I swear by the marble heaven!
By the forked lightning! By death
and by the dark destroying sea!
Let this hand which I raise and
stretch forth
soon blaze in wild transport of rage!
(He lifts his hand to the sky and is about
to rise when Iago prevents him, and
kneels beside him.)

lago
Do not rise yet!
Witness is the sun that I behold,
that shines on me and animates
the broad earth and the vast soul
of all Creation,
witness that to Othello I solemnly
dedicate heart, hand and soul,
if he will also arm his will
for the bloody work!
Lago, Othello
(raising their hands to heaven as in a solemn oath)
Sì, pel ciel marmoreo giuro!  
Per le attorte folgori! Per la Morte  
e per l'oscuro mar sterminatore!  
D'Ira e d'impero tremendo presto  
fià che sfolgori  
questa man ch'io levo e stendo!  
Dio vendicatore!

Lago, Othello
Yes, I swear by the marble heaven!  
By the forked lightning! By death  
and by the dark destroying sea!  
Let this hand which I raise  
and stretch forth  
soon blaze in wild transport of rage!  
God of vengeance!

ACT FOUR

Desdemona's bedroom. A bed, a prayer desk, a table, a mirror, some chairs. A light burns before a picture of the Madonna which hangs above the prie-dieu. On the table a candle. It is night.

Emilia
Era più calmo?

Desdemona
Mi parea. M'ingiunse  
di coricarmi e d'attenderlo. Emilia,  
te ne prego, distendi sul mio letto  
la mia candela verde musuale.  
Sentì. Se pria di te morir dovessi  
mi sepellissi con un di quei veli.

Emilia
Scacciate queste idee.

Desdemona
Son mesta, tanto, tanto.  
(sitting down mechanically before the mirror)  
Mia madre aveva una povera ancella,  
innamorata e bella.

Emilia
Was he calmer?

Desdemona
So it seemed to me. He bade me  
go to bed and wait for him. Emilia,  
I pray you lay on my bed  
my white bridal robe.  
Hark. If I should die before you  
shroud me in its veils.

Emilia
Dismiss such fancies.

Desdemona
I am sad, so very sad.  
(sitting down mechanically before the mirror)  
My mother had a poor maid,  
she was pretty and in love.
Era il suo nome
Barbara. Amava
un uom che poi l'abbandonò; cantava
un canzone: la canzon del Salice.
(speaking to Emilia)
Mi disciogli le chiome . . .
Io questa sera ho la memoria piena
di quella cantilena.

Her name was Barbara.
She was in love with a man who then
forsook her; she used to sing a song:
The Willow Song.
(speaking to Emilia)
Undo my hair . . .
That song tonight will not go
from my mind . . .

"Willow Song"

Desdemona
Piangea cantando
nell'erma landa,
piangea la mesta . . .
O Salce! Salce! Salce!
Sedea chinando
sul sen la testa!
Salce! Salce! Salce!
Cantiamo! Cantiamo!
Il Salce funebre
sarà la mia ghirlanda.

Desdemona
Singing, she wept
on the lonely heath,
the poor soul wept . . .
Oh, willow, willow, willow!
She sat, her head
beat on her breast!
Willow, willow, willow!
Come sing! Come sing!
The weeping willow
shall be my garland.

(Othello enters by a secret door. He places a scimitar on the table. He stands
before the candle undecided whether to extinguish it or not. He looks at
Desdemona, then puts out the light. The room is now illuminated only by the
candle burning above the prié-dieu. He draws near to the bed and looks down on
the sleeping Desdemona. He kisses her three times. On the third kiss she awakens.)

Desdemona
Chi è là? Otello?

Desdemona
Who's there? Othello?

Othello
Sì!

Othello
Yes!
**Othello**

*Pria d'ucciderri... sposa...
ti baciasti.*
*Or morendo... nell'ombra...
in cui mi giacio...*
*Un bacio... un bacio ancora...
ahl... un altro bacio...*
*(He falls on the bed and dies.)*

---

**Othello**

*Ere I killed you... wife...*
*I kissed you.*
*Now dying... in the shadow...*
*where I lie...*
*A kiss... another kiss...*
*ah... and yet another kiss...*
*(He falls on the bed and dies.)*
Armide

(1686)

Jean-Baptiste Lully

Libretto by Philippe Quinault

Recitative/Monologue

Armide

Enfin il est en ma puissance,
ce fatal ennemi, ce superbe
vainqueur.
Le charme du sommeil livre à ma
vengeance;
Je vais percer son invincible cœur.
Par lui tous mes captifs sont sortis
d'esclavage;
Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage.
Quel trouble me saisit? qui me fait
hésiter?
Qu'est-ce qu'en sa faveur le pitié me
veut dire?
Frappons... Ciel! Qui peut
m'arrêter?
Achèveons... je frémis!
Vengeons-nous... je soupire!
Est-ce ainsi que je dois me venger
aujourd'hui?
Ma colère s'écrit quand j'approche
de lui.
Plus je le vois, plus ma vengeance est
vaine;
Mon bras tremblant se refuse à ma
haine.
Ah! quelle cruauté de lui ravir le jour!
A ce jeune héros tout cède sur la
terre.
Qui croirait qu'il fut né seulement
pour la guerre?
Il semble être fait pour l'Amour.

Armide

Finally he is in my power,
this fatal enemy, this superb warrior.
The charm of sleep delivers him to
my vengeance;
I will pierce his invincible heart.
Through him all my captives have
escaped from slavery.
Let him feel all my anger.
What fear grips me? what makes me
hesitate?
What in his favor does pity want to
tell me?
Let us strike... Heavens! Who can
stop me?
Let us get on with it... I tremble!
Let us avenge... I sigh!
Is it thus that I must avenge myself
today?
My rage is extinguished when I
approach him.
The more I see of him, the more my
vengeance is ineffectual.
My trembling arm denies my hate.
Ah! What cruelty, to rob him of the
light of day!
To this young hero everything on
earth surrenders.
Who would believe that he was born
only for war?
He seems to be made for love.
Could I not avenge myself unless he
Ne puis-je me venger à moins qu’il
die?
ne perisse?
Hé, ne suffit-il pas que l’amour le
Oh, is it not enough that Love should
punisse?
punish him?
Puisqu’il n’a pu trouver mes yeux
Since he could not find my eyes
assez charmants,
charming enough,
Qu’il m’aime au moins par mes
let him love me at least through my
enchanteurrens.
sorcery,
Que, s’il se peut, je le haïsse.
so that, if it’s possible, I may hate

Aria

Venez, venez, seconder mes désirs,
Come, come support my desires,
Démons, transformez-vous en
demons; transform yourselves into
d’aimables zéphirs,
friendly zephyrs.
Je cède à ce vainqueur, la pitié me
I give in to this conqueror; pity
surmonte.
overwhelms me.
Cachez ma faiblesse et ma honte
Conceal my weakness and my shame
Dans les plus reculés déserts.
in the most remote desert.
Volez, volez, conduisez-nous au bout
Fly, fly, lead us to the end of the
de l’univers.
universe.

Hippolyte et Aricie
(1733)

Jean-Philippe Rameau

Libretto by Simon-Joseph Pellegrin

ACT FOUR

Scene One

Hippolyte

Ah! faut-il, en un jour, perdre tout ce
Ah, must I, in a day lose all that I
que j’aime?
love?
Et les maux que je crains, et les biens
And the troubles I fear, and the riches
que je perds,
I lose,
Tout accable mon cœur d’une
All overwhelm my heart with extreme
douleur extrême.
pain.
Sous le nuage affreux dont mes jours
Under the terrible cloud that darkens
Le Devin du village
The Village Soothsayer (1752)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Libretto by the composer

Colette
J'ai perdu tout mon bonheur,
J'ai perdu mon serviteur.
Colin me délaisse.
Hélas! il a pu changer!
Je voudrais n'y plus songer.
J'y songe sans cesse.

Il m'aimait autrefois, et ce fut mon malheur . . .
Mais quelle est donc celle qu'il me préfère?
Elle est donc bien charmante!
Imprudente bergère,
Ne crains tu point les maux
Que j'éprouve en ce jour?
Colin a pu changer; tu peux avoir
ton tour . . .
que me sert d'y rêver sans cesse?

Colette
I have lost all my happiness,
I have lost my servant.
Colin forsakes me.
Alas, he could have changed.
I would rather stop dreaming about it.
Yet I dream about it incessantly.

Récit
He loved me once, and this was my
bad luck . . .
But who, then, is she whom he
prefers?
She must be very charming!
Imprudent shepherdess,
do you not fear at all the misfortunes
that I am experiencing today?
Colin could have changed; you may
have your turn . . .
What good does it do to dream
Rien ne peut guérir mon amour
Et tout augmente ma tristesse.
J'ai perdu mon serviteur... etc.
Je veux le haïr, je le dois...
Peut-être il m'aime encore...
Pourquoi me fuir sans cesse?
Il me cherchait tant autrefois.
Le devin du canton fait ici sa demeure:
Il sait tout, il saura le sort de mon amour.
Je le vois et je veux m'éclaircir en ce jour.

Nothing can cure my love
And everything increases my sorrow.
I have lost my servant... etc.
I want to hate him: I must do it...
Perhaps he loves me still...
Why does he shun me incessantly?
He used to look for me once.
The soothsayer of the canton makes his home here.
He knows all; he will know the fate of my love.
I see him, and I want this clarified today.

Orfeo ed Euridice
(1762)
Christoph Willibald von Gluck
Libretto by Raniero de' Calzabigi

ACT TWO
Scene One

Chorus
Chi mai dell'Erebo
Fralle caligini
Sull'orme d'Erocol
E di Piriteo
Conduce il piú?
D'orrore l'ingombrino
Le sere Eumenidi,
E lo spaventino
Gli urli di Cerbero,
Se un dio non è.

Orfeus
Deh, placatevi con me.

Chorus
Who from Erebo
through the dark mists,
in the footsteps of Hercules
and of Peirithous
would ever set forth?
He would be blocked with horror
by the fierce Eumenides
and frightened by
the shrieks of Cerberus,
unless he were a god.

Orpheus
Please, be gentle with me.
Furie, larve, ombre sdegnose!
Chorus
No! . . . No! . . .
Orpheus
Vi renda almen pietose
Il mio barbaro dolor!
Furies, specters, scornful phantoms!
Chorus
No! . . . No! . . .
Orpheus
Let it at least make you merciful,
my cruel pain!

Les Huguenots
(1836)
Giacomo Meyerbeer
Libretto by Eugène Scribe

Recitative

Marguerite
Et maintenant je dois offrir à votre
vue votre charmante prétendue,
qui rendra vos serments faciles à
tenir!
(St.-Bris reappears, leading Valentine
toward Raoul.)

Raoul
(with muffled voice)
Ah! grand Dieu! qu’ai-je vu?

Marguerite
Qu’avez-vous?

Raoul
(barely able to speak)
Quoi! . . . c’est elle!
Que m’offraient en ce jour . . .

Marguerite
And now I must offer to your sight
your charming fiancée,
who will make your oath easy to
keep.
(St.-Bris reappears, leading Valentine
forward toward Raoul.)

Raoul
(with muffled voice)
Ah! Great God! What do I see?

Marguerite
What’s wrong with you?

Raoul
(barely able to speak)
What! . . . It is she! She
whom they offer to me today.
Marguerite
Et l’hymen et l’amour!

Raoul
Trahison! Perfidie!
Moi, son époux? jamais! jamais!

All
Ciel!

*Marguerite, Urbain, Valentine, A Lady of Honor*
O transport! ô démence! et d’où vient cet outrage?
A briser de tels noeuds quel délire l’engage?

Raoul
A ce point l’on m’outrage!
Je repousse à jamais un honteux mariage!

*Nevers, St. Bris*
Ah! je tremble et frémis et de honte et de rage!
C’est à moi d’immoiter l’ennemi qui m’outrage!

*Marcel*
Oui, mon cœur applaudit, cher Raoul, ton courage!

Chorus
Et pourquoi rompre ainsi le serment qui l’engage?

*Marguerite, Urbain, Valentine, A Lady of Honor*
D’un penchant inconnu le pouvoir seducteur

*Marguerite*
Marriage and love, together!

Raoul
Treason! Treachery!
I, her spouse? Never! Never!

All
Heavens!

*Marguerite, Urbain, Valentine, A Lady of Honor*
O rapture! O madness! Whence comes this outrage?
To break these knots, what delirium inspires him?

Raoul
At this point I am outraged!
I reject forever this shameful marriage!

*Nevers, St. Bris*
Ah! I shake and shiver from shame and anger.
It is up to me to sacrifice the enemy who insults me!

*Marcel*
Yes, my heart applauds, dear Raoul, your courage!

Chorus
And why break thus the oath that he swore?

*Marguerite, Urbain, Valentine, A Lady of Honor*
Has an unknown impulse, its seductive power,
Viendrait-il tout à coup s'emparer de son cœur?

Raoul
Plus d'hymen, je l'ai dit; et, fidèle à l'honneur, je me ris désormais de leurs cris de fureur!

Nevers, St. Bris
C'est son sang qu'il me faut pour calmer ma fureur,
Pour punir cet affront, pour venger mon honneur!

Marcel
Chevalier et chrétien, écoutant seul l'honneur, il se rit désormais de leurs cris de fureur!

Chorus
Cet affront veut du sang; dans ce jours sa fureur
Doit punir l'offenseur et venger son honneur!

Valentino
(with pained expression)
Et comment ai-je donc mérité tant d'outrage? Dans mon cœur éperdu s'est glacié mon courage!

Raoul
O douleur! triste sort!
A ce point l'on m'outrage!

Nevers, St. Bris
Frémissant et tremblant,
Plein de honte et de rage, . . .

all of a sudden taken possession of his heart!

Raoul
No marriage, as I said. Loyal to my honor, I laugh now at their cries of fury.

Nevers, St. Bris
It is his blood that I need to calm my fury.
To punish this affront, to avenge my honor!

Marcel
Knight and Christian, listening only to his conscience, he laughs now at their cries of fury.

Chorus
This affront calls for blood. On this day his fury must punish the offender and avenge his honor.

Valentino
(with pained expression)
How did I deserve such an insult? In my desolate heart has frozen my courage.

Raoul
O misery! Sad destiny!
To such a point they insult me!

Nevers, St. Bris
Shuddering and trembling,
full of shame and anger, . . .
Lectures 23 and 24: French Opera

Marcel
(aside, in an outpouring of joy)
Seigneur, rempart et seul soutien du faible qui t’adore!

Marguerite
Un semblable refus . . .

Raoul
N’est que trop légitime!

Marguerite
Dites-m’en la raison.

Raoul
Je ne le puis sans crime,
mais cet hymen, jamais!

Marguerite
O transport! ô démérence! et pourquoi cet outrage?
A briser de tels noëuds quel défère l’engage?

Nevers, St. Bris
(to Raoul)
Sortons! Qu’il tombe sous nos coups!

Raoul
D’un tel honneur mon coeur est plus jaloux!

Marguerite
Arrêtez! Devant moi quelle insulte nouvelle!
(signaling an officer to disarm Raoul)
Vous, Raoul, votre épée!
(to St. Bris) Et vous, oublierez-vous

Marcel
(aside, in an outpouring of joy)
Lord, rampart and only support of the feeble who adore you!

Marguerite
Such a refusal . . .

Raoul
Is only right!

Marguerite
Give me a reason.

Raoul
I cannot without incriminating myself; but this marriage, never!

Marguerite
O rapture, o madness! And why this outrage?
To undo these knots what delirium inspires him?

Nevers, St. Bris
(to Raoul)
Let’s go. Let him fall beneath our blows.

Raoul
Of such an honor my heart is too eager.

Marguerite
Halt! In my presence, what new insult?
(signaling an officer to disarm Raoul)
You, Raoul, your sword.
(to St. Bris) And you, do you forget
Qu'à l’instant près de lui votre roi vous rappelle?

Raoul
Je les suivrai!

Marguerite
Non pas; près de moi dans ces lieux
Vous restez!

St. Bris
Le lâche est trop heureux
Que cette main royale ait un tel privilège!
C'est en vain qu'on pretend
enchaîner mon courage;

Raoul
(in a muffled voice, to St. Bris)
C'est vous qu'elle protège en
déarmant mon bras,
Et bientôt je serai près de vous!

Marguerite
Téméraires! Tous les deux redoutez
ma colère!

Nevers, St. Bris
Je saurai retrouver l'ennemi,
l'offenseur!

Marcel
Oui! mon cœur applaudit Raoul de
son noble courage!

Chorus
C'est en vain qu'on prétend
enchaîner son courage;
Il saura retrouver l'ennemi qui
l'outrage!

that at this moment your king
summons you to his side?

Raoul
I shall follow them.

Marguerite
No. Near me in this place
You will remain.

St. Bris
The coward is too happy
that this royal hand have such a
privilege.
It's in vain that they claim they can
enchain my courage.

Raoul
(in a muffled voice, to St. Bris)
It is you she protects in disarming
my hand,
and soon I shall be close to you.

Marguerite
Fools! Both of you better dread my
anger.

Nevers, St. Bris
I shall know how to find the enemy,
the offender.

Marcel
Yes, my heart applauds Raoul for his
noble courage.

Chorus
It's in vain that they claim they can
enchain his courage.
He will know how to find the enemy
that offends.
Ah! partons, éloignons-nous!
Allons, partons, éloignons-nous!
Rien ne pourra sauver Raoul!

Ah! let’s go, let’s get away.
Let’s go, let’s leave, let’s get away.
Nothing can save Raoul.

Marcel
(aside, joyfully)
Tu nous défends encore, mon Dieu!
(St. Bris and Nevers drag Valentine, half fainting, and exit, defying Raoul, who wants to follow but is restrained by the Queen’s soldiers.)

Carmen
(1875)
Georges Bizet
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

NO. 20 TRIO

Mercédès
Mélons!

Frasquita
Coupons!

Frasquita
Rien, c’est cela.

Mercédès
Trois cartes ici . . .

Frasquita
Quatre là.

Mercédès, Frasquita
Et maintenant, parlez, mes belles
De l’avenir, donnez-nous des nouvelles; dites-nous qui nous trahira,
Dites-nous qui aimera.
Parlez!

Mercédès
Shuffle!

Frasquita
Cut!

Frasquita
Right. that’s it.

Mercédès
Three cards here . . .

Frasquita
Four cards here . . .

Mercédès, Frasquita
And now my beauties tell us all
The future, tell us all that’s now;
Tell us who will play us false,
Tell us who will love us true —
Tell!
Frasquita
Moi, je vois un jeune amoureux qui m’aime on ne peut davantage.

Mercédès
Le mien est très riche et très vieux mais il parle de mariage.

Frasquita
Je me campe sur son cheval, et dans la montagne il m’entraîne.

Mercédès
Dans un château presque royal, le mien m’installe en souveraine.

Frasquita
De l’amour à n’en plus finir, tous les jours nouvelles folies.

Mercédès
De l’or tant que j’en puis tenir, des diamants . . . des pierrotés.

Frasquita
Le mien devient un chef fameux, cent hommes marchent à la suite.

Mercédès
Le mien, en croira-t-il mes yeux . . . Oui, Il meurt Ah! je suis veuve et héritière.

Frasquita, Mercédès
Parlez encore, parlez mes belles, de l’avenir donnez-nous des nouvelles; dites-nous qui nous trahira, dites-nous qui nous aimera.

Frasquita
What I see is a young man courting.
And he’s madly in love with me.

Mercédès
Mine’s very rich and very old,
But he wants to marry me.

Frasquita
He plumps me on his horse and carries me off into the mountains.

Mercédès
Mine sets me up like a queen
In a princely castle.

Frasquita
Love that goes on and on,
New madness every day.

Mercédès
More gold than I can hold,
Diamonds . . . all kinds of gems.

Frasquita
Mine becomes a famous leader,
With a hundred men at his back.

Mercédès
Mine, can I believe my eyes . . . Yes, he dies. Hah! I’m a rich widow.

Frasquita, Mercédès
Again, my beauties, tell us all
The future, tell us all that’s new;
Tell us who will play us false,
Tell us who will love us true,
Tell!
Frasquita
Fortune!

Mercédès
Amour!

Carmen
Voyons, que j’essaie à mon tour.
(Shes stars turning the cards over.)
Carreau, piqué! . . . la mort!
J’ai bien lu . . . moi d’abord,
(pointing to the sleeping Don José)
Ensuite lui . . . pour tous les deux, la mort!
(quietly to herself, as she continues turning cards)
En vain pour éviter les réponses amères, en vain tu mèleras,
Cela ne sert à rien, les cartes sont sincères et ne mentiront pas!
Dans le livre d’en haut, si ta page est est heureuse, mêlé et coupe sans peur,
La carte sous tes doigts se tournera joyeuse, t’annonçant le bonheur!
Mais si tu dois mourir, si le mot redoutable est écrit par le sort,
Recommence vingt fois, la carte impitoyable répétera: la mort!
Oui, si tu dois mourir, recommence vingt fois,
La carte impitoyable répétera: la mort!
Encore encore! toujours la mort!

Frasquita, Mercédès
Parlez encore, parlez mes belles,
De l’avenir donnez-nous des nouvelles, dites-nous qui nous trahira,
Dites-nous qui nous aimera . . .

Frasquita
Fortune!

Mercédès
Love!

Carmen
Now then, let me try my turn.
(Shes starts turning the cards over.)
Diamonds, spades! . . . death!
I saw it no doubt . . . first me,
(pointing to the sleeping Don José)
Then him . . . for both of us, death!
(quietly to herself, as she continues turning cards)
You may shuffle them over again and again to avoid an unwelcome reply;
The cards are too honest, you shuffle in vain, the cards will never lie!
If you’re destined for joy in the book up on high, then shuffle and cut without fear;
As the card you hold turns, then you will despy that happiness it will declare. But if you must die, if that terrible word is inscribed in the book as your fate, twenty-fold though you do it, the pitiless card nought but “Death!” will ever repeat. Yes, if you must die, though you turn twenty times, the card nought but “Death!” will repeat! “Death!” again and again will repeat!

Frasquita, Mercédès
Again, my beauties, tell us all
The future, tell us all that’s new;
Tell us who will play us false,
Tell us who will love us true . . .
German Opera Comes of Age
Lecture 25

German language opera, as an internationally-recognized genre of opera distinct then from the Italian and French operas we have studied, came into being in 1791 with ... Mozart’s The Magic Flute. By comparison, Italian opera came into being in 1600 ... perhaps even earlier. ... A distinctly French opera came into being in 1669. ... Why did it take so long for a distinctly German operatic school to evolve?

The late development of German opera had much to do with the nature both of the German artistic/intellectual class and of the German language. True German opera—in terms of singing style and the type of stories set to music—evolved from native German roots.

To understand the development of opera in different nations, it is useful to think about how language defines operatic style. For example, the Italian language lends itself to song. It is full of long, round vowels evenly interspersed with clean consonants that perfectly suit the melismatic/coloratura character of traditional Italian opera. In contrast, the French language does not have the clean consonants of Italian. Much less suited to coloratura, French lends itself better to the declamatory style developed by Lully. German on the other hand is a language dominated by consonants. The melismatic, vowel-dominated Italian singing style is not suited to German. Rather, German lends itself to syllabic style: one syllable per pitch.

One type of musical performance from which German opera arose is singspiel. Singspiel literally means “sing-play” or “play with singing.” It is understood today is a partly sung, partly spoken German theatrical genre that had its roots in popular culture. The equivalent type of genre is England is called a ballad opera or operetta; in France it is opéra comique; in the U.S.A. it is a musical; in Italy there is no equivalent since all opera is sung. Mozart’s singspiel The Rescue from the Harem (1782) elevated a popular genre to the level of high art at a single stroke.
The Magic Flute, both singspiel and opera, was the last major work Mozart completed before his death. It was commissioned by librettist/director/actor Emanuel Schikeneder for performance at a burgtheater, a type of music hall offering lower-middle-class entertainment. Mozart was working within a German tradition, but the tradition becomes operatic in his hands. The Magic Flute is half fairy-tale, filled with strange exotic people, beings, events, and locales, and half morality play about Masonic initiation ritual and Enlightenment ideals. Its music is brilliant and popular, highly memorable, and imbued with a folklike directness. A musical example is “Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja.”

It is easy to see German opera’s roots in singspiel. German operatic melodies are well suited to the features of the German language, and spoken dialogue replaces dry recitative. Arias are simple in form; melodies are repeated and non-melismatic. Plots and story lines draw on German folktales with their supernatural characters and situations. Lacking a long, commercially profitable tradition, 19th-century German opera became an experimental genre.

Carl Maria von Weber’s Der Freischütz (1821) is the definitive work that established 19th-century German opera. It exemplifies many of the characteristics of German operas from this century: Plots are drawn from medieval history, legend, or fairy-tale; stories typically include supernatural beings and happenings and stress wild, mysterious, and uncontrolled nature; supernatural incidents are essential plot elements; human characters often become the agents of supernatural forces; and the triumph of good over evil is often interpreted in terms of salvation or redemption.
Der Freischütz is one of the most influential operas of the 19th century. The famous Wolf’s Glen Scene is a brilliant depiction of supernatural horror, completely different from contemporary Italian bel canto opera and French grand and lyric opera in terms of the pervasive use of spoken dialogue, expressive content, and compositional technique. The content of background music is very strong and essential to the drama.
Richard Wagner and *Tristan und Isolde*
Lectures 26 and 27

Richard Wagner was ... the single most influential, controversial, and talked-about composer of his time. ... Ordinarily we associate this sort of artistic originality and power with ... someone whose humanity and spirit reflect the high artistic goals for which they strive. Not Wagner. He was, frankly, one of the most repellent human beings who ever lived. This troubles and disappoints us.

Wagner (1813–1883) was megalomaniacal, ruthless, hedonistic, arrogant, and racist. His anti-Semitism and cries for racial purity approached madness. Many writers have speculated that his meanness sprang from an extraordinary insecurity based, in part, on his own unclear paternity. He demanded from society an unprecedented level of attention and luxury, to the point that one modern critic, Harold Schonberg, states that Wagner actually thought himself a god.

Wagner was born in Leipzig in 1813. His legal father was Carl Friedrich Wagner, although his biological father may have been Ludwig Geyer, an actor and painter with whom his mother was having an affair and who was rumored to have been Jewish. Wagner was obsessed with the question of his paternity. Carl Wagner died when Richard was seven months old. Within a year his mother married Ludwig Geyer, who himself died seven years later. At fourteen Richard stopped calling himself Geyer and began using the name Wagner. At fifteen he decided to become a composer, despite the fact that he could hardly play an instrument and knew next to nothing about the mechanics of music.

In terms of musical training, Wagner was an extraordinarily late bloomer. His two great musical influences were Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and Weber’s *Der Freischütz*. Almost from the beginning, he wanted to write operas. He wrote his own libretti and controlled every aspect of his operas from stage design to direction. He wrote/composed thirteen complete operas. His early works were based on Italian, French, and German models.
Wagner’s revolutionary political activism in Germany in 1848 and 1849 drove him into Swiss exile for nearly 10 years. While in Switzerland, he took a six-year break from composing, during which he reevaluated his career and the nature of the music he wanted to write. He had already concluded that both Italian and French opera were degenerate art forms. He wrote a series of treatises and essays that laid out his beliefs and new aesthetic doctrines.

Like the Florentine Camerata, Wagner went back to ancient Greek drama for inspiration. He believed that Greek drama was superior for five reasons:

- It represented a successful combination of the arts.
- It took its subject matter from myth that illuminates human experience to the depths and in universal terms.
- Both the content and the occasion of the performance had religious significance.
- It was a religion of the purely human.
- The entire community took part.

Wagner was convinced that an artistic revolution was called for, in which all the resources of drama, poetry, instrumental music, song, acting, gesture, costume, and scenery would be combined in the theatrical presentation of myth. He called his projected, all-encompassing music dramas Gesamtkunstwerk, the all-inclusive art form. A key to the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk was the orchestra, which had to perform for Wagner the same function as the chorus in a Greek drama. To achieve this orchestral/instrumental independence, Wagner invented the concept of leitmotif.

A leitmotif is a musical motive associated with a particular person, thing, or dramatic idea. Musical examples include drink/death and desire leitmotifs from Tristan und Isolde. Leitmotifs are repeated, altered, fragmented, and developed, often in the voices, but more often in the orchestra. Each permutation offers some new and subtle twist on its meaning; it serves to underpin the truth. In Wagner’s music dramas the orchestra is no longer
just an accompaniment to the voices. It becomes a full partner with everything onstage.

Wagner would not have formulated many of his theories about music drama if he had not studied Arthur Schopenhauer’s book *The World as Will and Representation* (1818). Schopenhauer (1788–1860) was a German philosopher. Wagner discovered Schopenhauer and his book around 1854. It was the most important intellectual event of Wagner’s life. Schopenhauer wrote that instrumental music alone was capable of expressing the deepest, most primal human thoughts and emotions. This inspired Wagner to develop the concept of leitmotif. A Wagnerian music drama unfolds on two different levels. The singers onstage present the world of human emotions, replete with the half-truths, delusions, and dishonesty that characterize conscious interaction. The orchestra reveals the unspoken truth. Wagner was also deeply affected by Schopenhauer’s view that only through total negation and death could salvation and transcendence be achieved.

*Tristan und Isolde* (1859) exemplifies the quintessence of Wagner’s mature style. Aside from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, *Tristan und Isolde* is the most influential composition (not just opera) of the 19th century. It is a musical expression of Schopenhauer’s doctrine that existence is an inherently insatiable web of longings, willings, and strivings from which the only permanent liberation is the cessation of being.

The opera’s prelude (overture) predicts the action to come. It is based on the drink/death and desire leitmotifs. The drink/death leitmotif is composed of an upward motive representing the physical action of raising the goblet of wine and a descending motive symbolic of death. It is performed together with a rising motive that does not resolve, symbolic of unfulfilled desire. The two leitmotifs are mirror images of each other: love/death and death/love, the underlying meaning being that, for Tristan and Isolde, love and death are connected.
The prelude is slow. It has no tonal center. It consists of one deceptive (unresolved) cadence after another, interspersed with long, pregnant pauses. All of this creates tension, and in doing so it prepares us for a story of unfulfilled emotional and sexual passion. The whole opera is, in many ways, one gigantic deceptive cadence after another!

_Tristan und Isolde_ is in three acts. Act 1 centers on the drinking of the love potion, Act 2 on the mortal wounding of Tristan, and Act 3 on the deaths of Tristan and Isolde. In Act 3, Isolde holds the dying Tristan in her arms and sings her transcendent liebestod (love/death) aria. It represents the moment at which Tristan and Isolde’s unconsummated passion transcends to realization at a higher plane. With the liebestod aria Wagner’s music must be, and is, as transcendent as the new reality that Isolde is already seeing as she approaches her death.

Wagner was a paradox, representing the best and worst of human attributes. His music provoked huge controversy and created pro- and anti-Wagnerian cults. He changed music forever.
In his time, Richard Strauss was hailed as Wagner’s successor. … Unlike Wagner, though, Strauss came to opera … relatively late in his compositional career. Strauss spent the first part of his career writing a series of extraordinary tone poems, purely orchestral works, which in reality functioned like instrumental operas in that each one of these tone poems tells a specific story and invokes explicit visual imagery. We should think of these tone poems as operas without words.

Richard Strauss’s (1864–1949) three greatest operas are Salome (1905), Elektra (1909), and Der Rosenkavalier (1911). Strauss was born in Munich in 1864. His father, Franz Strauss, was the most famous French horn player in Germany. Franz Strauss was a musical archconservative and anti-Wagnerian who gave his son the best and most conservative musical education his money and connections could buy. Franz saw to it that Richard received training as a pianist, violinist, conductor, and composer. Richard’s classically oriented compositional technique disintegrated with his eventual (and inevitable) exposure to the music of Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, and Richard Wagner.

Fame came rapidly to Strauss. For a fascinated and star-hungry public, he inherited the mantle of Liszt and Wagner as a shocking modern composer and performer. The Strauss craze reached its peak in 1905 with the premiere of Salome, one of the most controversial operas of all time.

The story of Salome comes from Matthew 14:6–11, which tells of the execution of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas at the request of Herod’s stepdaughter, the princess Salome. Oscar Wilde was fascinated by the story of Salome and wrote a play based on it that appeared in 1892. Wilde’s Salome is filled with a degree of eroticism, intrigue, and sexuality that is light years beyond the biblical account. Strauss sliced and diced a German translation of Wilde’s play to his own specifications, completing his opera in 1905.
Strauss's *Salome* takes place on a terrace next to the banquet hall in the palace of Herod, circa 30–31 C.E. In his opera, Salome is a beautiful, sexually aware vixen of sixteen. Her character is depicted in her music. Salome is intrigued by the voice of John the Baptist, who is being held prisoner in a cistern next to the terrace. She has John brought out. His music is almost heroic and lacks the harmonic complexities that fill Salome’s music. An example of this is John’s entrance, “Wo ist er …” Salome is both repelled by and profoundly attracted to John. Her attempts to ingratiate herself to him are met with scorn. A drunken Herod, dangerously enamored of his stepdaughter, asks Salome to dance for him, and he promises her anything if she does. Her price for the dance is the head of John the Baptist. Terrified, Herod finally agrees to her demand. Salome embraces and kisses the severed head of John the Baptist. In horror Herod orders Salome killed. A musical example is the conclusion of the opera from “Sie ist ein Ungeheuer, deine Tochter” (“She is a monster, your daughter”).

*Salome* is a veritable textbook of psychopathology. Within two years of its premiere, it had been performed in over fifty cities. Though many considered it pornographic, *Salome* is first and foremost a representative, from the world of opera, of the experimental, post-Victorian turn of the century.
Their lack of schooling in traditional music theory forced The Five to
discover their own way of doing things, and in the process, they called
on the materials closest at hand, which were, my friends, folk songs.
Their frequent use of actual or imitated folk material for generating
themes in a work has literary parallels in the borrowings by Pushkin
and Gogol.

The rise of cultivated Russian music had much to do with the rise
of nationalism in the 19th century. The French Revolution of 1789
was a highly exportable model in an increasingly enlightened,
middle-class Europe. In 1848 insurrections broke out across Europe, all
of them eventually quelled by the ruling powers. Art replaced outlawed
political activism as a mode of nationalistic self-expression. An example
is the rise of musical nationalism, which characteristically incorporated
actual folk music or folk-like music into the concert works and operas of
Italian/non-German composers.

Russian musical nationalism was a reaction less to the events of 1848 than
to Russia's fear of foreign influences. The development of concert music in
Russia was dependent on the tastes of the aristocracy living in St. Petersburg.
Until the 19th century, cultivated music in St. Petersburg consisted of Italian
opera, light Viennese and Italian instrumental music, and aristocratic
amateur concerts.

Russia “emerged” and became part of the greater European community as a
result of Napoleon’s defeat in 1812 and the Decembrist Revolt of 1825. The
spirit of individual freedom and nationalism that powered the Decembrist
Revolt was felt throughout the intellectual and artistic classes.

In and around 1825 certain Russian writers, poets, and musicians tried to
cultivate a uniquely Russian artistic tradition. Preeminent among these
Russian nationalists was the poet and author Alexander Pushkin (1799–
1837). Pushkin was a Lord Byron-inspired individualistic/nationalistic
rabble-rouser. He elevated the literary perception of the Russian language through the model of his own works. Among his works that were turned into operas are *Eugene Onegin* (Tchaikovsky), *Queen of Spades* (Tchaikovsky), *Boris Godunov* (Mussorgsky), and *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (Glinka).

The history of Russian musical nationalism and opera began with Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857). Glinka was born into a wealthy family and received the piano and violin lessons typical for someone of his class. At age 20 he became a civil servant, working in the Ministry of Ways and Communication in St. Petersburg. In 1834, inspired by Pushkin and Gogol, Glinka decided to compose an opera in the Russian language on a Russian subject—*A Life for the Czar*. After his death in 1857 Glinka was canonized and deified as the father of Russian music.

*Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842) is generally considered Glinka’s masterpiece. Glinka’s score is filled with the sort of folk-inspired melodies, orientalisms, rhythmic irregularities, and orchestral effects that we have since come to associate with Russian music. A musical example is the overture to *Ruslan and Lyudmila*.

The story of the opera is a fairy-tale about Ruslan and Lyudmila, two young aristocrats who are in love, and the sinister forces that separate them. Near the beginning of the opera, a chorus predicts the dramatic action. This choral music exemplifies the Russian style. Its main features are as follows:

- Melodies are clearly folk-like and Slavic-sounding.
- Dance rhythms are asymmetrical. The accents are not grouped in twos or threes as they are in Western music. They fall into unequal groupings, with accents falling all over the place. In this chorus we have groupings of five (so-called additive meter, where groupings of two and three beats are played in succession to add up to five).
- The chorus sings in unison harmonies.
- The word setting is syllabic. A musical example is Act 1, chorus.
Among Lyudmila’s three suitors is the evil Farlaf, a sort of opera buffa bad guy. This is communicated through his patter aria (in rondo form). Ruslan, typical of Russian heroes, is a low voice, in this case a bass/baritone. His grief at finding his beloved Lyudmila in a coma-like sleep is expressed in the aria “O love of my life.”

Following the death of Glinka in 1857, composer and teacher Mili Balakirev (1837–1910) quickly became the czar of Russian music. He gathered around him four young amateur composers (they all had other quite different professions). They came to be known, along with Balakirev, as The Five. This group included Cesar Cui, an army engineer (1835–1918); Modest Mussorgsky, an army officer (1839–1881); Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, a naval officer (1844–1908); and Aleksander Borodin, a scientist (1833–1887).

To a great degree The Five were self-taught. Essential to their musical development was the belief that their duty was to create a Russian national music based on the characteristics of Russian folk music and the Russian language.

A characteristically Russian music emerged from The Five. The pieces that they created share the following features:

- They utilize Russian folk melodies or folk-like melodies as the essential thematic material.

- They are essentially thematic, with minimal development in the German sense.

- They are expressively powerful, lyric music that is often, to the Western ears, emotionally unrefined.

Mussorgsky was the first of The Five to mature compositionally. Depression and alcohol led to his early death. He was known for only a handful of works, including his masterwork, the opera *Boris Godunov*.
There are six different versions of [Boris Godunov]. The most commonly heard version is one prepared by Mussorgsky’s friend Rimsky-Korsakov after Mussorgsky’s death. Boris Godunov consists of a prologue plus four acts. It is actually a series of set pieces, or tableaus, and it is based on a dramatic chronicle by Pushkin. Mussorgsky himself wrote the libretto, central to which are two issues: the relationship between ruler and ruled and the corrupting influence of power.

No composer ever portrayed the peasant class as sympathetically as Mussorgsky does in Boris Godunov. Critical to this sympathetic portrayal is Mussorgsky’s extraordinary reproduction of Russian speech patterns in music. A musical example is the prologue, scene 2, Boris’ ascension to the throne.

We are introduced to Varlaam, a drunken priest, whose language and manner is only a step removed from the peasant class. A musical example of this introduction is Varlaam’s song.

The death of Boris is as profound and moving as any moment in opera. The old divisions of recitative and aria are virtually nonexistent. Recitative-like music is always accompanied by the orchestra. A musical example is the death of Boris in Act 4, scene 2.

Boris Godunov is the pinnacle of 19th-century Russian opera, a tradition only 38 years before Boris with Glinka’s A Life for the Czar. The latter opera is what Otello, Tristan und Isolde, and Carmen are to 19th-century Italian, German, and French opera respectively: the culmination of what had come before and a difficult, if not impossible, act to follow.
Lectures 31 and 32: Verismo, Puccini, and Tosca

The great operatic exponent of Italian verismo opera was Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini. According to Robert Donington, “Puccini is much the best of verismo and Tosca may well be the best of Puccini.” … Not long before he died, Puccini wrote to a friend, “Almighty God touched me with his little finger and said, ‘Write for the theater, mind, only for the theater,’ and I have obeyed that supreme command.”

Verismo (truth) opera grew out of the 19th-century philosophical movements of positivism and naturalism. Positivism posits that the only reality that humankind should concern itself with is observable fact; there are no mysteries left in the world that science cannot explain. An offshoot of positivism is naturalism: the study of human relations. Realist/verismo authors and composers tend to depict the worlds of the criminal, the dispossessed, and the demoralized for their emotional extremes and for their absence of pose and artifice.

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was the greatest composer of verismo operas. Primarily a man of the theater, he wrote 12 operas, 3 of which remain among the most popular in the repertory: Tosca, La Bohème, and Madame Butterfly.

Puccini was born in Lucca in 1858, the last in a five-generation line of respected musicians. He studied at the Milan Conservatory with Amilcare Ponchielli. His first huge success was La Bohème of 1896.
Puccini was not an innovator. As a composer he was not controversial. Unlike Verdi, Puccini did not constantly evolve, seeking ever-greater drama and movement in his operas. He was, however, a superb and sympathetic melodist, whose other compositional skills were brought to bear directly on the dramatic materials before him: stage action, impulsive feeling, and truth in expression—often exaggerated expression.

Many important critics, composers, and music historians of today have dismissed Puccini as an artless hack. They have backed up their criticisms with sound arguments regarding Puccini’s compositional technique and the content and nature of his libretti. However, opera in Italy has almost always been a popular entertainment, and Puccini’s operas are very much part of this tradition.

We will now examine Puccini’s Tosca (1900). The large outline of the story is based on historical events surrounding the “liberation” of Rome by Napoleonic forces around 1800.

Act 1 introduces us to the characters. Mario Cavaradossi (tenor) is the hero and lover of Floria Tosca, a hot-blooded, beautiful opera singer. Cesare Angelotti is a nationalist and freedom-fighter who has just escaped from prison. Vitellio Scarpia is the evil and sadistic chief of the secret police.

Act 2 is one of the greatest of all Puccini’s operatic acts and the focal point in this opera. Scarpia desires Tosca and will use her to find Angelotti. Scarpia’s aria (“Ella verrà …”) demonstrates effortless vocal lyricism at the expense of dramatic reality. Scarpia could sound more evil than he does. This is the kind of thing that has put Tosca under fire from critics. Also noteworthy is Puccini’s melding of parlante, arias, etc. into a continuous flow of music. A musical example is Act 2 from Scarpia’s “Tosca è un buon falco!” to the end of Scarpia’s aria, “Ella verrà …”

Scarpia tries to discover where Angelotti is hiding by questioning Cavaradossi, who resists him. A musical example is “Ov’è Angelotti?” The questioning turns ugly, and then Tosca enters. In her presence, Scarpia has Cavaradossi tortured in an adjoining room. This scene of brutal torture is
unique in opera. Puccini piles on the agony to a climax of unbearable tension. Its depiction of the worst of human behavior is typical of verismo.

Tosca cannot bear her psychological torture any longer. She tells Scarpia where Angelotti is hiding. Scarpia orders the end of Cavaradossi’s torture. A musical example is the torture scene from Scarpia’s “Orsù, Tosca, parlate” to his “Portatelo qui.”

Cavaradossi learns of Napoleon’s victory at Marengo. He revives and sings a victory song. Scarpia orders him to the gallows and forbids Tosca to accompany him. Puccini continues to pile one climactic moment upon the next; please refer to the part of the opera from Cavaradossi’s “Vittorìa!” to Scarpia’s “Voi noi.”

Tosca tries to negotiate for Cavaradossi’s life. Scarpia reveals that the price is Tosca herself. A musical example is the part of the opera from Tosca’s “Quanto?” through Scarpia’s “Già. Mi dicon venal.” Tosca is repelled and feels that God has abandoned her. She sings one of Puccini’s most beloved and famous arias, “Vissi d’arte.”

Tosca agrees to yield to Scarpia in exchange for Cavaradossi’s life and a safe-conduct pass. Scarpia appears to agree to her request. He writes the pass, but when he tries to embrace her, she plunges a knife into him and kills him. Please refer to the segment of the opera from Scarpia’s “Io tenni la promessa” to the end of the scene.

Puccini’s operas exhibit a wonderful combination of words and music. His stories are dramatically compelling, and his balance of words and music heightens and deepens the dramatic meaning and expressive content.
We conclude the course with an examination of Richard Strauss’s last opera, *Capriccio* (1941). *Capriccio* takes place outside Paris around 1775, at a time when Gluck’s operatic reforms were raising a storm of discussion and controversy. It is an opera about opera, particularly about the relationship between words and music. In one scene a poet, composer, and a stage director argue the relative merits of their respective crafts. A musical example is scene 9 from *Capriccio*.

Is opera words or music? It is neither one exclusively, but rather an indefinable combination of both. The whole is always greater than its constituent parts.
Die Zauberflöte
*The Magic Flute (1791)*

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
Libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder

**Tamino**
(regains consciousness, looks around, frightened)
Wo bin ich?
Ist's Phantasie, dass ich noch lebe?
(rises and looks around)
Die Schlange tot?
(He sound of a panpipe is heard.)
Was hör ich?
(Withdraws, observing, Papageno, dressed in a suit of feathers, hurries by, carrying a large birdcage on his back and a panpipe in his hands.)

**Tamino**
Where am I?
Is it fantasy that I am still alive?
(rises and looks around)
That awful snake dead at my feet?
(He sound of a panpipe is heard.)
What do I hear?

**Papageno**

\textit{A}

Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja,
stets lustig, heiss, hoppsasa!
Ich Vogelfänger bin bekannt
bei alt und jung im ganzen Land.
Weiss mit dem Locken umzugehn
und mich auf Fließen zu verloren.
Drum kann ich froh und lustig sein,
denn alle Vögel sind ja mein.
(He whistles and then removes the cage from his back.)

\textit{A'}

Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja,
stets lustig, heiss, hoppsasa!
Ich Vogelfänger bin bekannt
bei alt und jung im ganzen Land.
Ein Netz für Mädchen möchte ich,
ich fing sie durzendweis für mich;
dann sperre ich sie bei mir ein,
und alle Mädchen wären mein.

**Papageno**

\textit{A}

I am a man of widespread fame,
and Papageno is my name.
To tell you all in simple words:
I make my living catching birds.
The moment they attract my eye
I spread my net and in they fly.
I whistle on my pipe of Pan.
In short, I am a happy man.
(He whistles and then removes the cage from his back.)

\textit{A'}

Although I am a happy man,
I also have a future plan.
I dearly love my feathered friends,
but that's not where my int'rest ends.
To tell the truth, I'd like to find
a pretty girl of my own kind.
In fact, I'd like to fill my net
with all the pretty girls I met.
Wenn alle Mädchen wären mein,
so tauschte ich brav Zucker ein;
Die, welche mir am liebsten wär,
der gab ich gleich den Zucker her,
und küßte sie mich zärtlich dann,
wär sie mein Weib und ich ihr Mann.
Sie schlief an meiner Seite ein,
ich wiegte wie ein Kind sie ein.
(He whistles and turns to leave.)

Once all the girls were in my net
I'd keep the fairest for my pet,
my sweetheart and my bride-to-be,
to love and cherish tenderly,
I'd bring her cake and sugar plums,
and be content to eat the crumbs.
She'd share my little nest with me —
a happier pair could never be!
(He whistles and turns to leave.)

Tamino
(steps in his way)
He da!

Papageno
Was da?

Tamino
Sag' mir, du lustiger Freund, wer bist
du?

Papageno
Wer ich bin?
(to himself)
Dumme Frage!
(to Tamino)
Ein Mensch wie du!

Tamino
Who's there?

Papageno
Tell me who you are, my jolly friend.

Papageno
Who I am?
(to himself)
Silly question!
(to Tamino)
A man, like you.
**Der Freischütz**

*The Magic Bullets (1821)*

**Carl Maria von Weber**

Libretto by Johann Friedrich Kind

**Wolf's Glen Scene**

A frightful glen with a waterfall. A pallid full moon. A storm is brewing. In the foreground a withered tree shattered by lightning seems to glow. In other trees, owls, ravens, and other wild birds. Caspar, without a hat or coat, but with hunting pouch and knife, is laying out a circle of black fieldstones, in the center of which lies a skull. A few steps away a hacked-off eagle wing, a fadle, and bullet moulds.

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**Chorus of Invisible Spirits**

Milch des Mondes fiel auf's Kraut
Uhu! Uhu!
Spinnweb’ ist mit Blut bezahmt!
Eh’ noch wieder Abend graut,
Uhu! Uhu!
Ist sie tod, die zarte Braut!
Eh’ noch wieder sinkt die Nacht,
ist das Opfer dargebracht!

*(A clock in the distance strikes twelve. The circle of stones is completed.)*

---

**Caspar**

Samiel! Samiel! erscheint!
Bei des Zauber’ers Hingerbein!
Samiel! Samiel! erscheint!

---

**Samiel**

*(steps out of a rock)*

Was ruft du mich?

---

**Caspar**

*(throws himself at Samiel’s feet)*

Du weist, dass meine Frist
Schier abgelaufen ist.

---

**Caspar**

The milk of the moon fell on the herbs. Uhu! Uhu!
Spiderwebs dabbed with blood.
Before another evening darkens, Uhu! Uhu!
will she die, the lovely bride.
Before another night falls,
will the sacrifice be offered.

*(A clock in the distance strikes twelve. The circle of stones is completed.)*

---

**Caspar**

Samiel! Samiel! appear!
By the wizard’s skull-bone,
Samiel! Samiel! appear!

---

**Samiel**

*(steps out of a rock)*

Why do you call me?

---

**Caspar**

*(throws himself at Samiel’s feet)*

You know that my days of grace are coming to an end.
Samiel
Morgen!

Caspar
Verläng're sie noch einmal mit!

Samiel
No!

Caspar
Ich bringe neue Opfer dir.

Samiel
Welche?

Caspar
Mein Jagdgesell,
er naht, er, der
noch nie dein dunkles Reich betrat.

Samiel
Was sein Begehrt?

Caspar
Freikugeln sind's, auf die er
Hoffnung baut.

Samiel
Sechse treffen, seiben äffen!

Caspar
Die siebente sei dein!
Aus seinem Rohr lenk' sie nach
seiner Braut!
Dies wird ihn der Verzweiflung
weh'n, ihn, und den Vater.

Samiel
Noch hab' ich keinen Teil an ihr.

Samiel
Tomorrow!

Caspar
Will you extend them once more?

Samiel
No!

Caspar
I bring you new sacrifices.

Samiel
Which ones?

Caspar
My hunting companion,
he approaches, who has never before
set foot in your dark kingdom.

Samiel
What does he want?

Caspar
Magic bullets, in which he puts his
hope.

Samiel
Six strike, seven deceive!

Caspar
The seventh is yours!
From his own gun it will aim at his
bride.
That will drive him to despair,
both he and his father.

Samiel
I side with neither party.
Lectures 31 and 32: Verismo, Puccini, and Tosca

Caspar

(afraid)
Genügt er dir allein?

Samuel
Das findet sich!

Caspar
Doch schenkt du Frist,
und wieder auf drei Jahr,
bringt ich ihn dir zu Beute das!

Samuel
Es sei! Bei den Pforten der Hölle!
Morgen, Er oder Du!
(He disappears amidst thunder. Also the skull and knife disappear. In their place
a small stone with glowing coals is seen.)

Caspar
(He takes the ingredients from his
pouch and throws them in one by one.)
Hier erst das Blei. Etwas gestossenes
Glas von zerbrochenen
Kirchenfenstern,
das findet sich. Etwas Quecksilber.
Drei Kugeln, die schon einmal
getroffen. Das rechte Auge eines
Wiedehopfs, das linke eines Luchses.
Probatum est! Und nun den
Kugelschützen!

Caspar
(He takes the ingredients from his
pouch and throws them in one by one.)
First, then, the lead. Then this
piece of glass from a
broken church
window, some mercury,
three balls that have already hit the
mark. The right eye of a
lapwing, and the left of a lynx.
Probatum est! Now to bless the
bullets.
Melodrama

Caspar
(pausing three times, bowing to the earth)
Schütze, der im Dunkel wacht.
Samiel! Samiel! Hab’ acht!
Steht mir bei in dieser Nacht,
Bis der Zauber ist vollbracht!
Salbe mir so Kraut als Blei,
Segn’ es sieben, neun und drei,
Dass die Kugel tüchtig seil
Samiel! Samiel! Herbe!

(Caspar is still in the same pose, holding the bullet. The material in the crucible begins to hiss and bubble, sending forth a greenish flame. A cloud passes over the moon, obscuring the light. He cuts the first bullet, which drops in the pan.)

EINS!
(The echo repeats: EINS! Nightbirds crowd around the fire.)

ZWEI!
(The echo repeats: ZWEI! A black boar passes. Startled, he counts.)

DREI!
(Echo: DREI! A storm starts to rage. He continues to count anxiously.)

VIER!
(Echo: VIER! Cracking of whips and the sound of galloping horses is heard. Caspar is more and more alarmed.)

FÜNF!
(Echo: FÜNF! Dogs barking and horses neighing are heard: the devil’s hunt.)

Wehe! Das wilde Heer!

Chorus
Durch Berg und Thal,
durch Schlucht und Schacht,
durch Thau und Wolken,
Sturm und Nacht!
Durch Höhle, Sumpf und Erdenluft,

Woe is me! The wild chase!

Chorus
‘Through hill and dale,
through glen and mire,
through dew and night!
storm and night!
Through marsh, swamp and chasm,
durch Feuer, Erde, See und Luft, through fire, earth, sea and air,

Caspar
SECHS!

(Echo: SECHS! Deepest darkness. The storm lashes with terrific force.)
Samiel Samiel! Samiel! Hilf! Samiel! Samiel! Samiel! Help!
(Samiel appears.)
(Samiel appears.)

Samiel
Hier bin ich! Here I am.
(Caspar is hurled to the ground)
(Caspar is hurled to the ground)

Max
(nearly losing his balance from the impact of the storm; he jumps out of the magic
circle and grips a dead branch, shouting)
Samiel! Samiel!
(The storm suddenly dies down. Instead of the dead tree, the black hunter appears
before Max, grabbing his hand.)

Samiel
Hier bin ich! Here I am.
(Max makes the sign of the cross as he is thrown to the ground. The clock strikes
one. Dead silence. Samiel has disappeared. Caspar remains motionless, face to the
ground. Max rises convulsively.)
Tristan und Isolde

(1859)

Richard Wagner

Libretto by the composer

ACT ONE

Scene Five

Sailors

(outside)

Auf das Tau!
Anker ab!

Tristan

(starting wildly)

Los den Anker!
Das Steuer dem Strom!
Den Winden Segel und Mast!
(He takes the cup from Isolde)
Wohl kenn' ich Irland's Königin,
und ihrer Künste Wunderkraft:
den Balsam nürtzt' ich, den sie bot:
den Becher nehm' ich nun,
dass ganz ich heut' genese.
Und achte auch des Sünne eid's,
den ich zum Dank dir sage.
Tristans Ehre, höchste Treu!
Tristans Elend, käünster Trotz!
Trug des Herzens!
Traum der Ahnung:
ew'get Trauer einz'ger Trost:
Vergessens gü't'ger Trank,
dich trink' ich sonder Wank.
(He sits and drinks)

Isolde

Betrag auch hier?
Mein die Hälfte!

Sailors

(outside)

Haul the line.
Drop the anchor.

Tristan

(starting wildly)

Drop the anchor!
Stern to the current!
Sail and mast to the wind!
(He takes the cup from Isolde)
Well know I Ireland's Queen,
and her art's magic.
The balsam I used that she brought.
The goblet I now take so that
I might altogether today recover.
And heed also the oath of atonement,
which I thankfully made to you.
Tristan's honor, highest truth!
Tristan's anguish, brave defiance!
Betrayal of the heart!
Dream of presentiment,
external sorrow, unique solace,
forgetting's kindly draught,
I drink without wavering.
(He sits and drinks)

Isolde

Betrayed even in this?
The half is mine!
(She wrests the cup from his hand)

Verräter! Ich trink' sie dir!

(She drinks, and then throws away the cup. Both, seized with shuddering, gaze at each other with deepest agitation, still with stiff demeanor, as the expression of defiance of death fades into a glow of passion. Trembling grips them. They convulsively clutch their hearts and pass their hands over their brows. Then they seek each other with their eyes, sink into confusion, and once more turn with renewed longing inward each other.)

**Isolde**

(with waver ing voice)

Tristan!

**Tristan**

(overwhelmed)

Isolde!

**Isolde**

(sinking on his chest)

Treacheros lover!

**Isolde**

(sinking on his chest)

Treiboser Holder!

**Tristan**

Seligste Frau!

(He embraces her with ardor. They remain in silent embrace.)

**All the Men**

(outside)

Hail! Hail!

König Mark!

König Mark, Heil!

**Brangäne**

(aeoh, with averted face, full of confusion and horror, had leaned over the side, turns to see the pair sunk into a love embrace, and burhs herself, wringe her hands, into the foreground)

Woe's me! Woe's me!

Unevitable, endless distress,

instead of quick death!
Törger Treue trugvolles Werk
Blüht nun jammerns empö!
(They break from their embrace.)
Tristan
(bewildered)
Was träumte mir
von Tristans Ehre?
Isolde
Was träumte mir
von Isoldes Schmach?
Tristan
Du mir verloren?
Isolde
Du mich verstossen?
Tristan
Trügenden Zaubers Tückische List!
Isolde
Törigen Zürnes Eitles Dräu’n!
Tristan
Isolde! Süsste Maid!
Isolde
Tristan! Trautester Mann!
Both
Wie sich die Herzen wogend
erheben,
wie alle Sinne wonnig ergeben!
Sehnder Minne
schwellendes Blühen,
schmachtender Liebe seliges Glühen!
Jach in der Brust
jauchzende Lust!
Misleading truth, deceitful work
now blossoms pitifully upward.
(They break from their embrace.)
Tristan
(bewildered)
What did I dream
of Tristan’s honor?
Isolde
What did I dream
of Isolde’s disgrace?
Tristan
Are you lost to me?
Isolde
Have you repulsed me?
Tristan
False magic’s nasty trick!
Isolde
Foolish wrath’s vain menace!
Tristan
Isolde, Sweetest maiden!
Isolde
Tristan; most beloved man!
Both
How, heaving, our hearts are
uplifted!
How all our senses blissfully quiver!
Longing, passion,
swelling blooms,
languishing love, blessed glow!
Precipitate in the breast
exulting desire!
Lectures 31 and 32: Verismo, Puccini, and Tosca

Isolde! Tristan!
Tristan! Isolde!
Weltentronnen
du mir gewonnen!
Du mir einzig bewusst,
höchste Liebeslust!

(The curtains are now drawn wide apart. The entire ship is filled with knights and sailors, who joyfully signal the shore from aboard. Nearby is seen a cliff crowned by a castle. Tristan and Isolde remain lost in mutual contemplation, unaware of what is taking place.)

Brangäne

(to the women, who as her bidding ascend from below)
Schnell den Mantel,
den Königsschmuck!
(rushing between Tristan and Isolde)
Unsel'ge! Auf!
Hört, wo wir sind.
(She puts the royal cloak on Isolde, who does not notice anything.)

All the Men

Heil! Heil!
König Marke!
König Marke, Heil!

Kurwenal

(advancing cheerfully)
Heil Tristan!
glücklicher Held!
Mit reichem Hofgesinde
dort auf Nachen Naht Herr Marke.
Heil! wie die Fahrt ihn freut,
dass er die Braut sich freit!

Tristan

(looking up, bewildered)
Wer naht?
Kurwenal
Der König!

Tristan
Welcher König?  
(Kurwenal points over the side.  
Tristan stares stupefied at the shore.)

All the Men
(waving their hats)  
Heil! König Marke!

Isolde
(confused)  
Marke! Was will er?  
Was ist, Brangäne?  
Welcher Ruf?

Brangäne
Isolde! Herrin! Fassung nur heut!

Isolde
Wo bin ich? Leb' ich?  
Ha! Welcher Trank?

Brangäne
(despairingly)  
Der Liebestrank!

Isolde
(stares, frightened, at Tristan)  
Tristan!

Tristan
Isolde!

Isolde
(She falls, fainting, upon his chest.)  
Muss ich leben?
Brangäne
(to the women)
Helft der Herrin!

Tristan
O Wonne voller Tücke!
O Truggewehrtes Glücke!

All the Men
(in a general acclamation)
Heil dem König Kornwall, Heil!
(All have climbed over the ship's side, others have extended a bridge, and the atmosphere is one of expectation of the arrival of those that have been awaited, as the curtain falls.)

ACT THREE
Scene Three

Isolde
(unconscious of all around her, turning her eyes on Tristan's body with rising inspiration)
Mild und leise wie er lächelt,
wie das Auge hölt er offnet—
seht ihr's, Freunde? Seht ihr's nicht?
Immer lichter wie er leuchtet,
ist umstrahlet hoch sich hebt?
Seht ihr's nicht?
Wie das Herz ihm mutig schwillt,
voll und hebr im Busen ihm quillt?
Wie den Lippen, wonig mild,
süßer Atem sanft entwehrt—
Freunde! Seht!
Fühlt und seht ihr's nicht?
Hör' ich nur diese Weise,
die so wundervoll und leise,
Wonne klagend, alles sagend,

Isolde
(unconscious of all around her, turning her eyes on Tristan's body with rising inspiration)
See him smiling, softly, gently,
see the eyes that open fondly.
O my friends here, don't you see?
Ever lighter how he's shining,
borne on high amid the stars?
Don't you see?
How his heart so bravely swells,
full and calm it throbbs in his breast!
How from lips so joyful-mild
sweet the breath that softly stirs—
Friends! See!
Don't you feel and see?
Is it only I who hear these
gente, wondrous strains of music,
joyously sounding, telling all things,
mild versöhndend aus ihm töncnd,
in mich dringt, auf sich schwinget,
hold erhallend um mich klinget?
Heller schallend, mich umwallend,
sind es Wellen sanfter Lüfte?
Sind es Wogen
wonniger Düfte?
Wie sie schwellen, mich umrauhen,
soll ich atmen, soll ich lauschen?
Soll ich schlürfen, untertauchen?
Süß in Düften mich verhauen?
In dem wogenden Schwall,
in dem tönden Schall,
in des Welt-Atems wehendem All,
ertrinken, versinken—
unbewußt—höchste Lust!

reconciling, sounding from him,
piercing through me, rising upward,
echoes fondly round me ringing?
Ever clearer, wafting round me,
are they waves or gentle breezes?
Are they clouds of
gladdening perfumes?
As they swell and murmur round me,
shall I breathe them, shall I listen?
Shall I sip them, plunge beneath them,
breathe my last amid their fragrance?
In the billowy surge,
in the ocean of sound,
in the World Spirit’s infinite All,
to drown now, descending,
void of thought—highest bliss!

(Isolede sinks, as if transfigured, in Brangäne’s arms upon Tristan’s body. Profound emotion and grief of the bystanders. Mark invokes a blessing on the dead.)
Salome
(1905)
Richard Strauss
Libretto by Hedwig Lachmann

Narraboth
Die Prinzessin erhebt sich! Sie verlässt die Tafel. Sie ist sehr erregt. Sie kommt hierher.

Page der Herodias
Sieh sie nicht an!

Narraboth
Ja, sie kommt auf uns zu.

Page der Herodias
Ich bitte dich, sieh sie nicht an!

Narraboth
Sie ist wie eine verirrte Taube.

Narraboth
The Princess rises! She is leaving the table! She looks very troubled. She is coming this way.

Page of Herodias
Do not look at her.

Narraboth
Yes, she is coming towards us.

Page of Herodias
I pray you not to look at her.

Narraboth
She is like a dove that has strayed.

(Salome enters, very excited.)

Salome

(Salome enters, very excited.)

Salome
I will not stay. I cannot stay. Why does the Tetrarch look at me all the while with his mole’s eyes under his shaking eyelids? It is strange that the husband of my mother looks at me like that.

How sweet the air is here. I can breathe here. Within there are Jews from Jerusalem who are tearing each other in pieces over their foolish ceremonies.
Schweigst du, listige Ägypter und brutale, ungeschlachte Römer mit ihrer plumpen Sprache. O, wie ich diese Römer hasse!

**Page der Herodias**
Schreckliches wird geschehn. Warum siehst du sie so an?

**Salome**
Wie gut ist’s, in den Mond zu seh’n. Er ist wie eine silberne Blume, kühn und keusch. Ja, wie die Schönheit einer Jungfrau, die rein geblichen ist.

**Stimme des Jokanaan**
Siehe, der Herr ist gekommen, des Menschen Sohn ist nahe.

**Salome**
Wer war das, der hier gerufen hat?

**Zweiter Soldat**
Der Prophet, Prinzessin.

**Salome**
Ach, der Prophet. Der, vor dem der Tetrarch Angst hat?

**Zweiter Soldat**
Wir wissen davon nichts, Prinzessin. Es war der Prophet Jokanaan der hier rief.

**Narraboth**

Silent subtle Egyptians and brutal, coarse Romans with their uncouth jargon. Ah, how I loathe the Romans!

**Page of Herodias**
Something terrible will happen. Why do you look at her?

**Salome**
How good to see the moon! She is like a silver flower, cold and chaste. Yes, I am sure she is a virgin, she has a virgin’s beauty.

**Voice of John**
The lord hath come. The son of man hath come.

**Salome**
Who was that who cried out?

**Second Soldier**
The prophet, Princess.

**Salome**
Ah, the prophet! He of whom the Tetrarch is afraid?

**Second Soldier**
We know nothing of that, Princess. It was the prophet Jokanaan who cried out.

**Narraboth**
Is it your pleasure that I bid them bring your litter, Princess? The night is fair in the garden.
Salome
Er sagt schreckliche Dinge über meine Mutter, nicht wahr?

Salome
He says terrible things about my mother, does he not?

---

(The prophet comes out of the cistern. Salome looks at him and steps slowly back.)

Jokanaan
Wo ist er, dessen Stündenbecher jeder
voll ist? Wo ist er, der eines Tages im
Angesicht alles Volkes in einem
Silbermantel sterben wird?
Heisst ihn herkommen, auf dass er
die Stimme Dessen höre, der in der
Wüste und in den Häusern der
Könige gekündert hat.

John
Where is he whose cup of abomina-
tions is now full? Where is he, who in
a robe of silver shall one day die in the
face of all the people? Bid him come
forth, that he may hear the voice of
him who hath cried in the waste
places and in the houses of kings.

---

Salome
(Rising)
Willst du mir wirklich alles geben, was
ich von dir begehre, Tetrarch?

Herodias
Tanz nicht, meine Tochter.

Herodes
Alles, alles, was du von mir begehren
wirst; und wär die Hälfte meines
Königreichs.

Salome
Du schwörst es, Tetrarch?

Herodes
Ich schwör' es, Salome.

Salome
Wobei willst du das beschwören,
Tetrarch?

Salome
(Rising)
Will you indeed give me whatsoever
I shall ask, Tetrarch?

Herodias
Do not dance, my daughter.

Herod
Everything, whatsoever you desire I
will give it you, even to the half of
my kingdom.

Salome
You swear it, Tetrarch?

Herod
I swear it, Salome.

Salome
By what will you swear, Tetrarch?
Herodes
Bei meinem Leben, bei meiner
Krone, bei meinen Göttren.

Herodias
Tanz nicht, meine Tochter!

Herodes
O Salome, Salome, tanz für mich!

Salome
Du hast einen Eid geschworen,
Tetrarch.

Herodes
Ich habe einen Eid geschworen.

Herodias
Meine Tochter, tanze nicht.

Herodes
Und wär's die Hälfte meines
Königreichs. Du wirst schön sein als
Königin, unermesslich schön. Ah! es
ist kalt hier. Es weht ein eisiger Wind,
und ich höre ... warum höre ich in
der Luft dieses Rauschen von
Flügeln? Ah! Es ist doch so, als ob ein
ungeheuer schwarz-vogel über
der Terrasse schwebte? Warum kann ich
ihn nicht sehen, diesen Vogel? Dieses
Rauschen ist schrecklich. Es ist ein
schneidend Wind. Aber nein, er ist
nicht kalt, er ist heiss. Gießt mir
Wasser über die Hände, gebt mir
Schnee zu essen, macht mir den
Mantel los. Schnell, schnell, macht
mir den Mantel los! Doch nein! Lass
ihr! Dieser Kranz drückt mich. Diese
Rosen sind wie Feuer.

Herod
By my life, by my crown, by my
gods.

Herodias
Do not dance, my daughter.

Herod
O Salome, Salome, dance for me!

Salome
You have sworn, Tetrarch.

Herod
I have sworn, Salome.

Herodias
My daughter, do not dance.

Herod
Even to the half of my kingdom.
Thou wilt be passing fair as a queen.
Ah! it is cold here. There is an icy
wind, and I hear ... wherefore do I
hear in the air this beating of wings?
Ah! one might fancy a huge black
bird hovers over the terrace.

Why can I not see it, this bird? The
beat of its wings is terrible. It is a
chill wind. Nay, but it is not cold, it
is hot. Pour water on my hands.
Give me snow to eat. Loosen my
mantle.

Quick, quick, loosen my mantle.
Nay, but leave it. It is my garland of
roses that hurts me. The flowers are
like fire.
(He tears the wreath from his head and throws it on the table.)

Ah! Jetzt kann ich atmen.
Jetzt bin ich glücklich.
Willst du für mich tanzen, Salome?

**Herodias**

Ich will nicht haben, dass sie tanze!

**Salome**

Ich will für dich tanzen.

*(Slaves bring perfumes and the seven veils and take off the sandals of Salome.)*

**Stimme des Jokanaan**

Wer ist Der, der von Edom kommt, wer ist Der, der von Bosra kommt, dessen Kleid mit Purpur gefärbt ist, der in der Schönheit seiner Gewänder leuchet, der mächtig in seiner Größe wandelt, warum ist dein Kleid mit Scharlach gefleckt?

**Herodias**

Wir wollen hineingehn. Die Stimme dieses Menschen macht mich wahnsinnig. Ich will nicht haben, dass meine Tochter tanzt, während er immer dazwischen schreit. Ich will nicht haben, dass sie tanzt, während du sie auf solche Art ansiehst. Mit einem Wort: ich will nicht haben, dass sie tanzt.

**Herodes**

Steh nicht auf, mein Weib, meine Königin. Es wird dir nichts helfen, ich gehe nicht hinein, bevor sie getanzt hat. Tanze Salome, Tanz für mich!

**Voice of John**

Who is this cometh from Edom, who is this who cometh from Bozra, whose raiment is dyed with purple, who shineth in the beauty of his garments, who walketh mighty in his greatness? Wherefore is thy raiment stained with scarlet?

**Herodias**

Let us go within. The voice of that man maddens me. I will not have my daughter dance while he is continually crying out. I will not have her dance while you look at her in this fashion. In a word, I will not have her dance.

**Herod**

Do not rise, my wife, my queen. It will avail thee nothing. I will not go within till she hath danced. Dance, Salome, dance for me!
Herodias
Tanze nicht, meine Tochter!

Herodías
Do not dance, my daughter!

Salome
Ich bin bereit, Tetrarch.

Salome
I am ready, Tetrarch.

(Salome dances the dance of the seven veils.)

Herodes
Sie ist ein Ungeheuer, deine Tochter. Ich sage dir, sie ist ein Ungeheuer!

Herod
She is a monster, your daughter. I tell you, she is a monster!
Lectures 31 and 32: Verismo, Puccini, and Tosca

**Herodias**
Meine Tochter hat recht getan. Ich möchte jetzt hier bleiben.

**Herodes**
(Rising)

(The slaves put out the torches. The stars disappear. A great black cloud crosses the moon and conceals it completely. The stage becomes very dark. The Tierarch begins to climb the staircase.)

**Salome**

(A moonbeam falls on Salome, covering her with light.)

**Herodes**
(Turning round and seeing Salome.)
Man töte dieses Weib!

(The soldiers rush forward and crush beneath their shields Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judaea.)

**Herodias**
I approve of what my daughter has done. And I will stay here now.

**Herod**
(Rising)
Ah! There speaks the incestuous wife! Come! I will not stay here. Come! I tell thee. Surely some terrible thing will befall. Let us hide ourselves in our palace, Herodias, I begin to be afraid. Mannessah, Issachar, Ozias, put out the torches. Hide the moon! Hide the stars! Some terrible thing will befall.
Ruslan and Lyudmilla

(1842)

Mikhail Glinka

Libretto by Valerian Shirkov and the composer

ACT ONE

Chor

Le' tainstvennyj! Upoitel'nyj!
Ty vostorgi l'es v serdce nam.
Slavim vlast' svoju i mogucestvo,
Nezbezymy na zemle'
Oj Dido Lado! Le'!
Ty pescal nyj mir prevrascas' nam
V nebo
Radojst i utech.
V noc' glubokuju,
Crez bedy i strach,
K lozu roskosi nas vedes.
I volnues grad' sladostrastiem,
I uylbku sles' na usla.
Oj Dido Lado! Le'!
No, cudesnyj Le'!
Ty bog tevnosti:
Ty vlivaes v nas mscen'ja zar.
I prestupnika ty na loze neg
Predaes vragu bez meca.
Tak ravnaes' ty skorb' i radosti,
Ctoby neba nam ne zabyt'.
Dido Lado! Le'!
Vse velikoe, vse prestupnoe
Smertnyj vedaet crez tebja;
Ty za rodinu
V bitву strasnuju,
Kak na svetyj pir nas vedes;
Ucelesemu ty venko klasses'
Lavra vecnogo na glavu.
A kto pal v boju zu otechestvo,
Triznoj slavnoy usladis'!

Chorus

O, mysterious wonderful god of love!
You pour ecstasy into our hearts;
We glorify your power and strength,
which cannot be avoided on earth!
O, god of love, god of love!
You transform our sad world
into a heaven
of happiness and pleasure.
In the depths of night,
through disasters and fear,
you lead us to a bed of luxury.
You fill our souls with passion
and send a smile to our lips.
O, god of love, god of love!
But miraculous god of love,
you are also the god of jealousy,
who pours the fever of revenge into us.
And on his bed of languor
you betray the unarmed criminal to his
enemy. Thus you even out sorrow and
joy, so that we do not forget the gods.
O, god of love!
All that is great, all that is criminal
mortals learn from you.
You lead us into the terrible battle
to protect our land,
as if leading us to a wonderful feast.
You place a garland of laurels
on the brows of the survivors,
and you prepare a wake for those
who fell in the battle for the fatherland
Le' rainsvvenyj, usladiteln'yj,
Ty vostorzi! I’es’ v serdce nam!
(A short but loud thunderslap is heard. The stage darkens.)

O, mysterious wonderful god of love!
You pour ecstasy into our hearts!
(A short but loud thunderslap is heard. The stage darkens.)

Rondo

Farlafl
Blizok už cas torcetva moego:
Nenavistnýj soperník ujed dałeko
ot nas!
Vitaja’, naprasno
Ty isces’ knjaznu,
Do nee ne dopusit volshbniy vlast’
tebja.

Ljudmila, naprasno ty places’ i
stones’, i milogo serdlcu naprasno ty
zdes’; Ni vopli, ni slezy, nicto ne
pomozet! Smiri’sja pred vlast’ju
Nainy, knjazna!

Blizok už cas torczetva moego, etc.

Farlafl
The hour of my triumph approaches.
My hated rival will go far away
from us.
O, knight, you are wasting your time
in search of the princess.
The witch’s power will not let you get
to her!

Lyudmila, your tears and groans are a
waste of time, and you wait for your
dear one in vain! Neither howls nor
tears will do any good! Submit to
Naina’s power, princess!

Ruslan, zabud’ ty o Ljudmile!
Ljudmila, zenicha zabud’!
Pri myslı obladat’ knjaznoj
Serdce radost’ ocuscacet
I zarane vkusac
Sladost’ mesti i ljubvi.

Blizok už cas torczetva moego, etc.

V zaborach, v trevože, dosade i
grusti

The hour of my triumph approaches,
etc.

In travail, in anguish, annoyance, and
sadness
Skitajsja po svetu, moj chrabryj
sopernik! Bejsja z vragami, vladaj na
tverdyni!

Ne trudjas’ i ne zabojas,
Ja na namerenij dostignu,
V zamke dedov ozidaja povelenija
Nainy. Ne dalek zelannyj den’,
Den’ vosorga i ljubvi!

Ljudmila, napravno, etc.

Blizok uz cas torezstva moego, etc.

V zaborach, v trevoge, etc.

Blizok uz cas torezstva moego, etc.

wander the world, my brave rival!
Fight enemies, storm fortresses!

Without working or worrying,
sitting in the castle of my forefathers,
awaiting the commands of Naina
the desired day approaches.
The day of ecstasy and love!

Lyudmila, your tears, etc.
The hour of my triumph approaches,

e tc.

In travail, in anguish, etc.
The hour of my triumph approaches,

Aria

Ruslan
O, zizni otrada mladaja supruga!
Uzel’ ty nc slyisi
Stenannja druga?
No serdce ee trepecet i b’etsja,
Ulybka porchaet
Na milykh ustach.
Nerezomyj strach
Mne dusu terzaet!
O drugil kot znaet,
Ko mne li ulybka letiti,
I serdce po mne li drozit?

Ruslan
O love of my life, young wife!
Can you really not hear
the groans of your beloved?
But her heart beats and flutters,
and a smile plays
on her beautiful lips.
An unknown fear
torments my soul!
O, friends! Who knows
whether her smile is for me,
whether the heart beats for me?
Boris Godunov
(1874)
Modest Mussorgsky
Libretto by the composer

Bojare
Da zdravstvuet car' Boris
Feodorovich!

Narod
Da zdravstvuet!
Uz kak na nebe tol'ko krasnomu
Slava, slava!
Uz kak na Rusi carju Borisu
Slava, Slava, Carju Slava!
Slava! Slava! Slava! Slava!

Boris
(from the porch)
Skorbit dusa.
Kakoj-to strach nevol'nyj
Zlovescim preduvstviem
Skoval mne serdce.
O, pravednik, o, moj
otec derzavnyj!
Vozzi s nebes na slezy
Vernych slug
I nisposli ty mne sviaschennoe
Na vlast' blagosloven'ce:
Da budu blag i praveden,
kak ty;
Da v slave praviju svoj narod . . .
Teper' poklonimsja
Pociusim vlastiteljam Rossii.

(majestically)
A tam syvat' narod na pir,
Vsekh, oto bojar,
Do nisego slepca,
Vsem v'lniy vchod,
Vse, gosti dorogie!

to blind beggar,
let everyone enter,
you are all welcome!

---

Vaalam's Song

Vaalam

Kak vo gorode bylo,
vo Kazani,
Groznyj car' piirval,
Da veselitsja.
On tatar' bil
nescadno,
Ctob im bylo da ne povadno
Vdol' po Russi guljat'.
Car' podchodom podchodil
Da pod Kazan' gorodok;
On podkopy podkopal,
Da, pod Kazanku reku.
Kak tataro-to po gorodu pochazivajut,
Na car' Ivana-to pogljadyvajut,
Zli tatarove,
Groznyj car' ot zakrucinilsja,
On povesiil golovu iku
Na pravo pleco.
Uz kak stal car' puskar'jzyvat',
Puskar'vse zazigal'scikov,
Zazigal'scikov!
Zadymilasja svecka vosku jarova,
Podchodil molodoj puskar'
Ot k bocecke.
A i s porochom-to bocka
Zakruzilasja.
Oj! Po podkopam pokatilasja,
Da i chlopotu.
Zavopili, zagaldei zli tatarove,

Vaalam

Here's what happened at the
town of Kazan,
Ivan the Terrible was feasting
and making merry.
He had given the Tatars
a ruthless beating
to teach them a lesson not to
go wandering over Russia again.
The Tsar came close,
to the little town of Kazan.
He dug some trenches
under the river of Kazan.
As the Tatars strolled about town
they stole glances at Tsar Ivan,
those evil Tatars!
Ivan the Terrible became sad,
he hung his head
on his right shoulder.
The Tsar sent for the gunners,
the gunners with all their guns,
the gunners with all their guns!
A bright wax taper started smoking,
a young gunner
went up to the barrel.
And the barrel of gunpowder
started rolling.
Help! It rolled along the trenches
until it exploded.
The evil Tatars shrieked and
Lectures 31 and 32: Verismo, Puccini, and Tosca

ACT FOUR

Scene Two

Boris

Proscaj, moj syn, umiraju . . .
Sejcas ty carstvoval’ na ces’. 
Ne sprasivaj, kakim putem
Ja carstvo priobrel . . .
Tebe ne nuzno znat’.
Ty carstvoval’ po pravu budes’.
Kak moj naslednik,
Kak syn moj poverodnyj . . .
Syn moj! Ditja meo rodnoe!
Ne veverjajja navetam
Bojar kramol’nych,
Zerklo sledi za ich snosen’jamis
Tajnymi s Litvoju,
Izmenu karaj bez poscady,
Brez milosti karaj;
Strogo vnikaj v sud narodnyj,
Sud nelicemernyj;
Stoj na straze borcom
Za vrut pravuju,
Svjato cti svyatych ugodnikov
boz’ ich.
Sestru svoju, carevnu,
Sberegi, moj syn,
Ty ej odin chranitel’ ostaes’ja . . .
Nasej Ksenii, golubke cistoj.
(Almost spoken)

Boris

Farewell, my son, I am dying . . .
Now you will begin your reign.
Do not ask me by what means
I obtained the crown . . .
You need not to know.
You will be a lawful ruler,
as my successor,
as my firstborn son . . .
My son! My dear child!
Don’t believe the slander
of the seditious boyars,
keep a sharp watch on their secret
dealings with Lithuania.
Punish treason harshly,
punish without mercy;
closely follow the judgment of
the people, they are impartial;
defend and guard
the righteous faith,
honour and respect the holy saints
of the Lord.
Look after your sister,
the Tsarevna, my son,
you are now her only guardian . . .
Our Xenia, the innocent dove
(Almost spoken)
Gospodin! Gospodin!
Vozzi, molju,
Na sneze gnegnogo otca;
Ne za seba molju,
Ne za seba, moj Boze!
S gorenej nepristupnoj vysoty proplej
Ty blagodatnyj svet na cad moich,
Nevinnych ... kratkich, cistych ...

Sily nebesnye!
Strazi trona predvecnogo ...
(be embraces his son)
Krylni svetlnyi vv ochnanite
Moe dixja rodnoe ot bed
i zol ... ot idkusenij ...
(He hugs his son and kisses him. Long-
sustained chime of a bell and death
knell.)

Boris
Zvon! Pogrebal'nyj zvon!

Pevcie (Monachi)
(offstage)
Plac' te, plac' te ljudie,
Nes' bo zznii v nem
I nemy etwa ego
I ne dat oveta.
Plac' te. Allilujaj!
(The bayars and the chorus come onto
the stage.)

Boris
Nadgroboj vopl', schima ... 
Svjata schima ... 
V monachi car' idet.

Feodor
Gosudar', uspokojsja!
Gospod' pomozet ... 

Oh Lord! Oh Lord!
Look down, I pray,
upon the tears of a sinful father,
I am not praying for myself,
not for myself, my Lord!
From your inaccessible height
pour down your blessed light
upon my children, my innocent ...
sweet ... pure children ...
Oh, heavenly powers!
Guardians of the eternal throne ...
(with his son)
With your bright wings protect
my dear child from all evils and
calamity ... from temptation ...
(He hugs his son and kisses him. Long-
sustained chime of a bell and death
knell.)

Boris
A bell! A knell!

Chorus (Monks)
(offstage)
Weep, weep, oh people,
there is no life in him any more,
his lips are silent
and he will never give an answer.
Weep. Alleluia!
(The bayars and the chorus come onto
the stage.)

Boris
Funeral wails, the monastic order ...
The holy monastic order ...
The Tsar is joining the monks.

Feodor
Your Majesty, calm down!
The Lord will help ...
Boris
Net! Net, syn moj,
Cas moj probil . . .

Pevce
Vizu mladenca umirajuca
I rydaju, placu,
Mjatetija, trepescet on i k
pomosi vzyvaet
I net emu spaseni ja . . .
they stop

Rave
Boze! Boze! Tjazko mnie!
Uze l' grecha
Ne zamolju!
O, zalja smert'!
Kak mucis' ty zestoko!
he jumps up
Povremenite . . . ja car' esce!
he seizes his heart and falls into a chair
Ja car' esce . . . Boze! Smert'!
spoken
Prosti menja!
to the boyars, pointing to his son
Vot, vot car' vas . . .
car' . . .
Prostite . . .
in a whisper
Prostite . . .

Bojare
(in a whisper)
Uspnje!
Tosca
(1900)
Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

ACT TWO

In the Farnese Palace, Scarpia’s room on the upper floor. The table is laid for supper. A large window gives onto the courtyard of the Palace. It is night.

Scarpia

(He is sitting at the table, having supper. From time to time he interrupts his meal to reflect. He takes a watch from his pocket, and in his restless demeanor he betrays a feverish anxiety.)

Tosca è un buon falco!  
Certo a quest’ora  
i miei segugi le  
due prede azzannano!  
Domen sul palco vedrà l’aurora  
Angelotti e il bel Mario  
al laccio pendere.  
(He rings a handbell; Sciarrone appears.)  
Tosca è a palazzo?

Scarpia

Tosca is a good decoy!  
By now my bloodhounds must have sunk their teeth into their two quarry's!  
Tomorrow's dawn will see Angelotti and the handsome Mario hanging on the gallows.  
(He rings a handbell; Sciarrone appears.)  
Is Tosca in the Palace?

Sciarrone

Un ciambellane uscì pur ora in traccia.

Sciarrone

A footman has just gone to fetch her.

Scarpia

(pointing to the window)  
Apri. Tarda è la notte.  
(From the lower floor, where the Queen of Naples, Maria Carolina, is giving a great entertainment in honor of General Melas, is heard the sound of an orchestra.)  
Alla cantata ancor manca  
la Diva,  
e strimpellan gavotte.

Scarpia

(pointing to the window)  
Open it. The hour is late.  
The diva is not here yet for the cantata,  
and they're filling in with gavottes.
Lectures 31 and 32: Verismo, Puccini, and Tosca

(to Sciarone)
Tu attendrai la Tosca in
sull’entrata;
le dirai ch’è l’aspetto
finita la canta...
o meglio...

(He rises and hurriedly writes a note.)
le darai questo biglietto.

(Sciarone goes out. Scarpia returns to the table and pours himself a drink.)
Ella verrà...
per amor del suo Mario!
Per amor del suo Mario
al piacer mio s’arronderà.

Tal dei profondi amori è la
profonda miseria. Ha più forte
sapore la conquista violenta
che il melodìo consenso.

Io di sospiri e di lattiginose
alte lunari poco m’appago.

Non so trarre accordi
di chitarra, né orbiscopio di
dió, né far l’occhio di pesce,
ou tubar come tartaruga!

Bramo. La cosa bramata
perseguito, me ne sazio e via la
getto volo a nuova
esca.

Dio creò diverse beltà,
vini diversi. Io vo’ gustar
quanto più posso dell’opra divina!

(He drinks.)

(to Sciarone)
You will wait for Tosca at
the entrance
and tell her that I expect her
when the cantata is over...
or still better...

(He rises and hurriedly writes a note.)
you will give her this note.

(Sciarone goes out. Scarpia returns to
the table and pours himself a drink.)
She will come...

for love of her Mario!

For love of her Mario
she will submit to my pleasure.

The depth of her misery
will match the depth of her love.

A forcible conquest has a keener
relish than a willing surrender.

I find no delight in sighs and
sentimental moonlight serenades.

I cannot thrum chords on a
guitar, nor tell fortunes from
flower petals, nor make sheep’s-
opas or see like a tuberdov!

I have strong desires. I pursue
what I desire, glut myself with it
and discard it, turning to a new
diversion.

God created different beauties
and different wines. I wish to savor
all I can of what heaven produces!

(He drinks.)
Scarpia
Ov’è Angelotti?

Cavaradossi
Non lo so.

Scarpia
Negate d’avergli date cibo?

Cavaradossi
Nego!

Scarpia
E vesti?

Cavaradossi
Nego!

Scarpia
E asilo nella villa?
E che là sia nascosto?

Cavaradossi
Nego! nego!

Scarpia
Via, Cavaliere, riflettete:
saggia non è cotsa
ostinarezza vostra. Angoscia
grande, pronta confessione
evitarla! Io vi consiglio, dite:
dov’è dunque Angelotti?

Cavaradossi
Non lo so.

Scarpia
Ancor l’ultima volta.
Dov’è?
Cavaradossi
Non lo so!

Spoletta
(aside)
O bei tratti di corda!
(Enter Tosca, anxiously)

Scarpia
Eccola!

Tosca
(seeing Cavaradossi, runs to embrace him)
Mario, tu qui?!

Cavaradossi
(under his breath to Tosca, who gives a sign that she has understood)
Di quanto là vedesti, tacì, o m'uccidi!

Scarpia
Mario Cavaradossi, qual testimone il Giudice v'aspetta.
(to Roberts)
Pria le forme ordinarie. Indì... ai miei cenni.
(The judge goes into the torture chamber; the others follow, leaving Tosca and Scarpia alone. Spoletta withdraws to the door at the back of the room.)
Scarpia
Orsì, Tosca, parlate.

Tosca
Non so nulla!

Scarpia
Non vale quella prova?
Roberti, ripigliamo . . .

Tosca
No! Fermate! . . .

Scarpia
Voi parlerete?

Tosca
No . . . mostro!
lo strazi . . . l’uccidi!

Scarpia
Lo strazia quel vostro
silenzio assai più.

Scarpia
And now, Tosca, speak out.

Tosca
I know nothing!

Scarpia
That test was not enough?
Roberti, repeat the treatment . . .

Tosca
No! Stop!

Scarpia
Will you speak?

Tosca
No . . . you monster.
You are torturing him, killing him!

Scarpia
That silence of yours
is harming him far more.
Tosca
Tu ridi... tu ridi all'orrida pena?

Scarpia
Ma! Tosca alla scena più tragica fu. Aprite le porte che n'oda i lamenti.
(Spoletta opens the door, placing himself directly before it.)

La voce di Cavaradossi
Vi sfido!

Scarpia
Più forte, più forte!

La voce di Cavaradossi
Vi sfido!

Scarpia
Parlate!

Tosca
Che dire?

Scarpia
Su, via!

Tosca
Ah! non so nulla! Ah! dovrei mentir?

Scarpia
Dite dov'è Angelotti? Parlate, su, via dove celato sta?

Tosca
Ah! più non posso! Ah!

Tosca
You laugh... at this terrible suffering?

Scarpia
Tosca was never more tragic on the stage! Open the doors so that she can hear his cries!
(Spoletta opens the door, placing himself directly before it.)

Cavaradossi's voice
I defy you!

Scarpia
Harder, harder!

Cavaradossi's voice
I defy you!

Scarpia
Speak!

Tosca
What can I say?

Scarpia
Come, quickly!

Tosca
Ah! I know nothing! Must I tell lies?

Scarpia
Say where Angelotti is! Speak out now! Where is he hidden?

Tosca
Ah! I cannot bear it!
cessate il martir!  
È troppo soffir!
Ah! non posso più!

La voce di Cavaradossi
Ahimè!
(Tosca again turns imploringly to Scarpia, who signs to Spoletta to let her approach. She goes to the open door and, terrified at the sight of the dreadful scene, addresses Cavaradossi.)

Tosca
Mario, consenti ch’io parli! . . .

La voce di Cavaradossi
No, no!

Tosca
Ascolta, non posso più . . .

La voce di Cavaradossi
Stolta, che sai? che puoi dir?

Scarpia
(in infuriated by Cavaradossi’s words, shouts at Spoletta)
Ma fateo tacere!
(Spoletta enters the torture-chamber and comes out again shortly after, while Tosca, overcome by fearful agitation, falls prostrate on a settee and, her voice broken by sobs, appeals to Scarpia, who stands impassively in silence.)

Tosca
Che’ho fatto in vita mia?
Son io che così torturate! . . . Torturate l’anima . . . Sì, mi torturate l’anima!

Cease this torment!
It is too much to suffer!
Ah! I cannot bear it!

Cavaradossi’s voice
Ah!

Tosca
Mario, will you let me speak?

Cavaradossi’s voice
No, no!

Tosca
Listen: I can bear no more . . .

Cavaradossi’s voice
Don’t be silly! What do you know? What can you say?

Scarpia
(in infuriated by Cavaradossi’s words, shouts at Spoletta)
Make him be quiet!

Tosca
What harm have I ever done you?
It is I whom you are torturing so!
You are torturing my soul . . .
Yes, it is my soul you are torturing!
Lectures 31 and 32: Verismo, Puccini, and Tosca

**Spoletta**

*(muttering a prayer)*

Judex ergo cum sedebit
Quidquid latet apparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit.

*(Scarpia, profiting by Tosca's prostration, goes to the torture-chamber and signals for the torture to recommence.)*

**La voce di Cavaradossi**

Ah!

**Tosca**

*(At Cavaradossi's cry she leaps up and in a stifled voice hurriedly says to Scarpia.)*

Nel pozzo... nel giardino...

**Scarpia**

Là è l'Angelotti?

**Tosca**

Sì...

**Scarpia**

Basta, Roberti.

**Sciarrone**

*(appearing at the door)*

È svenuto!

**Tosca**

*(to Scarpia)*

Assassinio!... Voglio vederlo...

**Scarpia**

Portatelo qui.

**Cavaradossi's voice**

Ah!

**Tosca**

*(At Cavaradossi's cry she leaps up and in a stifled voice hurriedly says to Scarpia.)*

In the well... in the garden...

**Scarpia**

Angelotti is there?

**Tosca**

Yes...

**Scarpia**

That will do, Roberti.

**Sciarrone**

*(appearing at the door)*

He has fainted!

**Tosca**

*(to Scarpia)*

Murderer!... I want to see him...

**Scarpia**

Carry him in.
(Cavaradossi, who has been listening with growing anxiety to Sciarrone's words, in his enthusiasm finds the strength to rise and confront Scarpia menacingly.)

**Cavaradossi**

Vittoria! Vittoria!
L'alba vindice appar
che fa gli empi tremar!
Libertà sorge, crollan
tirannidi!

**Tosca**

(in despair, holding Cavaradossi close, trying to calm him)
Mario, taci, pietà di me!

**Cavaradossi**

Del sofferto martir
me vedrai qui gioir . . .
il tuo cuor trema, o Scarpia,
carnificc!

**Scarpia**

Braveggia, urla! T'affretta
a palesarmi il fondo
dell'alma ria!
Va! Moribondo,
il cepo treto t'aspetta!
(shouts to the police)
Portatemelo vi!

*(Sciarrone and the police-agents seize Cavaradossi and drag him towards the door. Tosca tries to oppose them with all her strength, clinging to Mario.)*

**Tosca**

Ah . . . Mario, Mario . . .
con te . . .

**Scarpia**

(pushing her back and closing the door)
Voi no!

**Tosca**

Ah . . . Mario, Mario . . .
I will go with you . . .

**Scarpia**

(pushing her back and closing the door)
Not you!
Tosca  
(sits facing Scarpia, looking him straight in the eye)  
Quanto?  

Scarpia  
Quanto?  

Tosca  
Il prezzo!  

Scarpia  
Già. Mi dicon venal,  
ma a donna bella non mi vendo  
aprezzo di moneta.  
Se la giurata fede devo  
tradir, ne voglio  
altra mercede.  
Questa io l'attendeva.  
Già mi strugga  
l'amor della diva! . . .  
Ma poc'anzi ti mirai  
quindi non ti vidi mai!  
Quel tuo pianto era lava ai sensi  
meli e il tuo sguardo  
che ondò in me dardeggiava,  
mie brame inferociva!  
Agil qual leopardo t'avvevghiasti  
all'amante, ah, in quell'istante  
t'ho giurata mia!  

(He advances upon Tosca with open arms; she, who had been listening motionless, petrified, to his lascivious words, suddenly rises and takes refuge behind the settee.)  

Tosca  
Ah!  

Tosca  
(especially looking him straight in the eye)  
How much?  

Scarpia  
How much?  

Tosca  
What's your price?  

Scarpia  
Ah! They call me venal,  
but I don't sell myself  
to lovely ladies for mere money.  
If I have to betray my sworn  
loyalty, I choose  
a different payment.  
I've been waiting for this moment.  
Love of the diva  
has long consumed me! . . .  
But a while ago I saw you  
as I had never seen you before!  
Your tears flowed like lava  
on my senses, and your eyes,  
which darted hatred at me,  
made my desire all the fiercer!  
When, supple as a leopard, you  
cling to your lover, ah, in that mo-  
moment I swore you should be mine!
“Vissi d’Arte”

**Tosca**

*(Overcome by grief, she falls onto the settee. Scarpia coldly continues to gaze at her.)*

Vissi d’arte,
viso d’amore,
non feci mai male ad anima viva!
Con man furtiva quante
merite conobbi, aiutai.
Sempre con fede sincera
la mia preghiera
ai santi tabernacoli sali,
sempre con fede sincera
diedi fiori agli altari.
Nell’ora del dolore
perché, perché, Signore,
perché me ne rimuneri così?
Diedi gioielli della Madonna
al manto, e diedi il canto agli
astri, al ciel, che ne ridean
più belli.
Nell’ora del dolor
perché, perché, Signore,
perché me ne rimuneri così?

**Tosca**

I have lived for art,
I have lived for love,
and never harmed a living soul!
In secret I have given aid to as
many unfortunates as I have
known. Always a true believer,
I have offered up my prayers
at the holy shrines;
always a true believer,
I have laid flowers on the altar.
In my hour of tribulation
why, O Lord, why
hasst Thou repaid me thus?

**Scarpia**

Io tenni la promessa . . .

**Tosca**

Non ancora.
Voglio un salvacondotto, onde
fuggir dallo Stato con lui.

**Scarpia**

Partir dunque volete?

**Scarpia**

I have kept my promise . . .

**Tosca**

Not yet.
I want a safe-conduct so
that I can flee the State with him.

**Scarpia**

Then you want to leave?
Tosca
Si, per sempre!

Scarpia
Si adempia il volet vostro.
(He goes to a desk and begins to write, breaking off to ask Tosca)
E qual via scegliete?

Tosca
La più breve!

Scarpia
Civitavecchia?

Tosca
Si.

(While Scarpia is writing, Tosca approaches the table and with a trembling hand takes the glass of Spanish wine poured out by Scarpia; but as she raises it to her lips she perceives on the table a sharp-pointed knife. She casts a rapid glance at Scarpia who at that moment is busy writing, and with infinite caution succeeds in taking possession of the knife. She hides it behind her, leaning on the table and watching Scarpia. Having finished writing the safe-conduct and put his seal to it, he folds the paper; then opening his arms, he advances on Tosca to embrace her.)

Scarpia
Tosca, finalmente mia! . . .
(But his tone of rapture changes to a terrible cry; Tosca has stabbed him to the heart.)
Maledetta!!!

Tosca
Questo è il bacio di Tosca!
(Scarpia, staggering, tries to clutch at Tosca, who recoils in terror.)

Scarpia
Aiuto . . . muoio . . .

Tosca
You shall have your way.
(He goes to a desk and begins to write, breaking off to ask Tosca)
Which road will you take?

Tosca
The shortest!

Scarpia
Civitavecchia!

Tosca
Yes.

Scarpia
Tosca, at last you are mine!
(But his tone of rapture changes to a terrible cry; Tosca has stabbed him to the heart.)
A curse on you!

Tosca
That was Tosca’s kiss!
(Scarpia, staggering, tries to clutch at Tosca, who recoils in terror.)

Scarpia
Help! . . . I’m dying! . . .
soscorso . . . muoio . . .

Tosca
It soffoca il sangue? Ah!
È ucciso da una donna . . .
M’hai assai
torturato! Odi to ancora? Parla!
Guardami!
Son Tosca, o Scarpia!

Scarpia
Soccorso! . . . aiuto!

Tosca
Ti soffoca il
sangue? . . .
Muori, dannato! muori!! muori!!!
È morto . . .
Or gli perdona! . . .

(Without taking her eyes off Scarpia’s body, she goes to the table, takes a bottle of water and, dipping a napkin in it, washes her fingers: then she rearranges her hair in front of the mirror. Remembering the safe-conduct, she looks for it on the desk but cannot find it: she searches elsewhere and finally sees it clutched in Scarpia’s stiffening hand. She lifts his arm, then lets it fall inert after having taken the safe-conduct, which she hides in her bosom.)

E avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma! And all Rome used to tremble before him!

(On the point of leaving, she changes her mind: she goes and takes the two candles from the wall-bracket on the left and lights them from the candlesticks on the table, which she then extinguishes. She places one candle to the right of Scarpia’s head, the other to the left. She looks round again and, seeing a crucifix, takes it from the wall and, carrying it reverently, kneels down and places it on Scarpia’s breast. She rises and very cautiously goes out, closing the door behind her.)
Capriccio

(1941)

Richard Strauss
Libretto by Clemens Krauss and the composer

Olivier
Tanz und Musik stehen im Bann des Rhythmus, ihm unterworfen seit ewiger Zeit.

Flamand
Deiner Verse Mass ist ein weit stärkerer Zwang.

Olivier
Frei schaltet in ihm der Dichters Gedanken. Wer zieht da die Grenze zwischen Form und Gehalt?

Flamand
In irischer Form ein Unfaßbar-Höheres: Musik! Sie erhebt sich in Sphären, in die der Gedanke nicht dringt.

Olivier
Nicht in unfassbaren Klängen, in klarer Sprache formte ich meine Gedanken. Dies is der Musik für immer verwehrt.

Flamand
Mein Gedanke ist die Melodie. Sie kündet Tiefere, ein Unaussprechliches! In einem Akkord erlebst du eine Welt.

Direktor
Sie streiten um eine Rangordnung

Olivier (Poet)
Music and dance are the slaves of rhythm, they have served it since the beginning of time.

Flamand (Composer)
There is more constraint in the restrictions of verse.

Olivier
Freedom of ideas is given to poets. Who sees any boundary between content and form?

Flamand
Music is in every respect more full of meaning, it ascends in spheres which you cannot invade with the mind.

Olivier
Not in musical abstraction but in the clearest language can I express what I’m thinking. This is what your music can never achieve.

Flamand
My ideas exist as melodies, and what they mean to me is inexpressible. In one single chord you feel all the world.

La Roche (Director)
They are fighting; each one claims

**Graf**
Schon sind wir im Mitten der Diskussion über das Streit-Thema unserer Tage.

**Flamand**
Musik ist eine erhobene Kunst! Nur unwillig dient sie dem Trug des Theaters.

**Gräfin**

**Direktor**

**Clairon**
Jawohl, ganz recht!

**Direktor**
Ihr überschätzt euren Schreibtisch!

**Count**
Again we arrive at the argument, always a topic for wide discussion.

**Flamand**
I find in music exalted art, reluctant to serve the domain of the theatre.

**Countess**
My friend! The theatre unveils for us the secrets of reality. Ever in its magic mirror we discover ourselves. The theatre moves us because it is reality's symbol.

**La Roche**
It is ruled by the goddess of invention. All the arts are her servants: be it poetry, be it painting, sculpture or music. What would become of your language, and what of your music if no actors were there to perform? Lacking the art of the actor, his magic personality, lacking all these where would you be? El? Or without his costume?

**Clairon (Actress)**
Indeed!

**La Roche**
You overvalue your labors.
Lectures 31 and 32: Verismo, Puccini, and Tosca

Olivier

Der dichtende Geist ist der Spiegel der Welt. Poesie ist die Mutter aller Künste!

Flamand

Musik ist die Wurzel, der alles entquellt. Die Klänge der Natur singen das Wiegenlied allen Künsten!

Olivier

Die sprache des Menschen allein ist der Boden, dem sie entsprießen.

Flamand

Der Schmerzensschrei ging der Sprache voraus!

Olivier

Doch das Leid zu deuten vermag sie allein. Der wirklichen Tiefes des Tragischen kann nur die Dichtkunst Ausdruck verleihen. Nie kann sie sich in Tönen offenbaren!

Gräfin

Das sagt Ihr jetzt, in dem Augenblick, wo ein Genie uns lehrt, daß es eine musikalische Tragödie gibt?

Graf

Halt! Noch einen Schritt und wir stehen vor dem Abgrund! Schon stehen wir der "Oper" Aug in Aug gegenüber.

Gräfin

Ein schöner Anblick, ich wag’ es zu sagen.

Olivier

The poet’s idea is the mirror of life. All the arts must call poetry their mother!

Flamand

But music is the root from which everything springs. And Nature’s voices sing all other arts to sleep in their cradles.

Olivier

The language of mankind alone is the soil where art can be nourished.

Flamand

The cry of pain preceded all speech!

Olivier

But in language only can pain be defined. Tragedy finds its expression only when a poet puts it into words. Music has not the power to reveal it.

Countess

How can you say such a thing today just when a genius proves it is possible to write a musical tragedy?

Count

Stop! One more step and we stand before the abyss. I fear that we are standing face to face with an opera.

Countess

A charming vision, I venture to say.
Clairon
Etwas absonderlich, dieses Geschöpf aus Tönen und Worten.

Graf
(interrupting her)
Und Rezitativen! Und Rezitativen!

Olivier
Komponist und Dichter, einer vom andern schrecklich behindert vorschwendend unügliche Mühen, um es zur Welt zu bringen.

Graf
Eine Oper is ein absurdes Ding. Befehle werden singend erteilt, über Politik im Duett verhandelt. Man tanzt um ein Grab, und Dolchstiche werden melodisch verabreicht.

Clairon
Somewhat peculiar, this combination of music and language.

Count
(interrupting her)
And recitatives! And recitatives!

Olivier
The composer and poet, dreadfully hampered each by the other, are wasting unspeakable labor in giving birth to opera and acting as its midwives.

Count
Every opera is in itself absurd: a murder plot is hatched in a song; all affairs of state are discussed in chorus; they dance round a grave and suicide takes place to music.
Timeline

c. 1440 ............................................. Josquin des Prez born (d. 1521).

c. 1546 ............................................. Giulio Caccini born (d. 1618).

1561 ............................................. Jacopo Peri born (d. c.1633).

1562 ............................................. Ottavio Rinuccini born (d. 1621).

1567 ............................................. Claudio Monteverdi born (d. 1643).

1573–1592................................. Florentine Camerata.

1588 ............................................. English defeat Spanish Armada.

1598 ............................................. Daphne, considered first opera, by Peri and Corsi.

1600 ............................................. Peri’s Euridice.

1604 ............................................. Shakespeare’s Othello.

1607 ............................................. Monteverdi’s Orfeo.

1618 ............................................. Beginning of Thirty Years’ War.

1630 ............................................. Boston founded by Puritans.

1632 ............................................. Jean-Baptiste Lully born (d. 1687).

1649 ............................................. King Charles I of England beheaded.

1660 ............................................. Alessandro Scarlatti born (d. 1725).
1661................................................. Louis XIV becomes King of France.
1675................................................. Antonio Vivaldi born (d. 1741).
1683................................................. Jean-Philippe Rameau born (d. 1764).
1685................................................. Revocation of Edict of Nantes in France.
1687................................................. Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica*.
1688................................................. England’s Glorious Revolution.
1698................................................. Pietro Metastasio born (d. 1782).
1710................................................. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi born (d. 1736).
1712................................................. Jean-Jacques Rousseau born (d. 1778).
1714................................................. Christoph Willibald von Gluck born (d. 1787).
1715................................................. Scarlatti’s *Tigrane*.
1719................................................. Rediscovery of Pompeii.
1733................................................. Pergolesi’s *La serva padrona*.
1751................................................. First volumes of French Encyclopedia.
1756................................................. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart born (d. 1791).
1776................................................. Declaration of Independence.
1781................................................. Mozart’s *Idomeneo*.
1786................................................. Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro*; Carl Maria von Weber born (d. 1826).

1788................................................. Arthur Schopenhauer born (d. 1860).

1789................................................. French Revolution begins.

1791................................................. Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*; Giacomo Meyerbeer born (d. 1864).

1792................................................. Gioacchino Antonio Rossini born (d. 1868).

1797................................................. Gaetano Donizetti born (d. 1848).

1801................................................. Vincenzo Bellini born (d. 1835).

1804................................................. Mikhail Glinka born (d. 1835).

1808................................................. Goethe’s *Faust*.

1813................................................. Giuseppe Verdi born (d. 1901); Richard Wagner born (d. 1883).

1815................................................. Battle of Waterloo.

1833................................................. Aleksandr Borodin born (d. 1887).

1835................................................. Cesar Cui born (d. 1918).

1837................................................. Mili Balakirev born (d. 1910).

1838................................................. Queen Victoria crowned; George Bizet born (d. 1875).

1839................................................. Modest Mussorgsky born (d. 1881).
1841................................. Saxophone invented.
1842................................. Glinka’s *Russlan and Lyudmila*.
1844................................. Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov born (d. 1908).
1848................................. *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels.
1853................................. Crimean War begins.
1858................................. Giacomo Puccini born (d. 1924).
1859................................. Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.
1861................................. Russian serfs emancipated.
1863................................. Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address.
1864................................. Richard Strauss born (d. 1949).
1868–1869........................... Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*.
1869................................. Opening of Suez Canal.
1870................................. Franco-Prussian War.
1877................................. Invention of phonograph.
1900................................. Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*; Puccini’s *Tosca*.
1901................................. Boer War.
1905................................. Einstein’s special theory of relativity.
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<td>1918</td>
<td>Armistice ending the First World War.</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>League of Nations formed.</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>Beginning of World War II.</td>
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<td>1941</td>
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Glossary

**aria**: The general term for an extended solo in opera—the equivalent of a soliloquy—which brings the action and “real time” to a temporary halt, and in which the character expresses his or her feelings about the action and events just described. Arias generally have a high melodic profile and are typically accompanied by the full orchestra.

**aria da capo**: A baroque aria form schematized as A-B-A’. An initial musical phrase (A) is followed by a contrasting passage (B). The initial phrase is then recapitulated but now embellished and ornamented by the singer.

**arioso**: A sung passage with enough melodic contour to sound aria-like, but which has a syllabic sort of setting and the narrative quality of a recitative.

**baritone**: The middle category of male voice, higher in range and lighter in timbre than bass, but lower and heavier than tenor.

**bass**: The lowest category male voice—rich, dark, heavy, and powerful.

**basso profundo**: An unusually deep bass voice.

**bel canto opera**: A style of early-19th-century Italian opera that stresses simple, songlike melodies and harmonic accompaniment and that cultivates a highly decorous style of singing.

**cadenza**: A florid, improvised passage to be performed by singers before the final bars of an aria or movement.

**castrato**: A male soprano whose soprano voice has been preserved by castration prior to puberty.

**cavatina**: A slow and lyric aria meant to display the singer’s breath control, line, and beauty of tone.
**coloratura**: Literally, “coloration” or “coloring.” As used in music, the term refers to brilliantly ornamented writing for the voice, or to the type of voice agile enough to specialize in such music.

**coloratura soprano**: The highest of the soprano voices, characterized by broad range, clear quality, and exceptional agility.

**comic opera**: An expression sometimes used in English either as a translation of the French opéra comique or the Italian opera buffa.

**commedia dell’arte**: Traveling musical companies that originated in 16th-century Italy. Their performances led eventually to comic opera.

**contralto**: The lowest category of female voice.

**countertenor**: An exceptionally high male voice, comparable to the female contralto.

**dramatic voice**: A heavier, darker, and more forceful voice than a lyric voice; used in reference to soprano, tenor, and baritone voices.

**ensemble**: Continuously sung passages in which any number of singers may participate. Ensembles were typically used to end acts. They reached their highest state of development in opera buffa.

**Gesamtkunstwerk**: “The all-inclusive art form,” Richard Wagner’s term for his all-encompassing music dramas.

**grand opera**: A spectacular and dramatic genre of opera, developed in early-19th-century France and designed to appeal especially to the middle class. This term is often used to refer to 19th-century opera in general.

**homophony**: A melodic texture in which one melody line predominates with all other musical material heard as secondary or as accompaniment.
intermezzo: A comic interlude inserted between the acts of Italian opera seria during the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century.

intermezzo/Intermedio: Musical prologues and interludes inserted into the spoken Italian dramas of the late 16th century.

leitmotif: A theme or motive associated with a particular person, thing, or dramatic idea.

libretto: Literally “little book.” The verbal text of an opera, written for the composer to set to music.

lyric opera: An operatic genre that combines opéra comique’s use of spoken dialogue and direct, appealing melodies with grand opera’s tendency toward numerous performers and grandiose singing.

lyric voice: A fairly light, warm, clear, and flexible voice; used in reference to soprano, tenor, and baritone voices.

madrigal: A work for four to six voices that freely mixes polyphonic and homophonic textures and uses word-painting.

melodrama: A genre of musical theater that combines spoken dialogue with background music.

mezzo-soprano: The middle category of female voice, between contralto and soprano.

monophony: A melodic texture consisting of a single unaccompanied melody line.

music drama: An operatic form created by Richard Wagner. Refers to a through-composed operatic work which stresses dramatic and psychological content and in which voices and orchestra are completely intertwined and of equal importance.
opera: A drama which combines soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous (or nearly continuous) music, the whole greater than the parts.

opera buffa: A general designation for Italian operas of the middle and late 18th century that do not come under the heading of opera seria. These productions were melodically simpler and more “popular” than Baroque opera seria.

opéra comique: A popular French operatic genre that developed concurrently with grand opera in the early 19th century but employed spoken dialogue rather than recitative and featured somewhat less pretentious productions than grand opera.

opera seria: “Serious” opera of the Baroque era—elaborate and grandiose productions typically based on subjects from ancient history and/or mythology.

operetta: Literally, “little opera.” During the 19th century, the term came to mean a lighter type of opera, usually with spoken dialogue separating the musical numbers.

overture: An instrumental prelude to an opera.

parlante: Literally, “talking”; a compositional technique used by Giuseppe Verdi and other late-19th-century operatic composers in which recitative-like vocal lines were underlaid with continuous thematic music played by the orchestra.

pastorale: The style of dramatic poetry that dominated Italian theater in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, featuring sylvan settings and mild love adventures and usually ending happily.

polyphony: A melodic texture consisting of two or more simultaneous melody lines of equal importance.
**recitative**: A style of writing for the voice in which the rhythms and inflections of speech are retained. In opera, it is used for action, dialogue, and narrative. Recitatives are most typically *secco* or “dry” (i.e., accompanied only by *basso continuo*).

**ritornello**: An instrumental refrain.

**sinfonia**: An independent musical piece that acts as an introduction or a postlude.

**singspiel**: German for “sing-play.” Refers to a partly sung, partly spoken German theatrical genre with its roots in popular culture.

**soprano**: The highest category of female voice.

**spinto soprano**: The soprano voice lying between the lyric and dramatic soprano voices and having qualities of both.

**tenor**: The highest category of male voice.

**tone poem**: A purely instrumental work that tells a specific story and invokes explicit imagery; a term created by Richard Strauss.

**verismo opera**: A genre of opera characterized by dramatic and expressive realism and naturalism, especially in the portrayal of people, events, and emotions. This genre was popular among Italian and French opera composers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**voci bianchi**: Literally, “white voices,” referring to those of the *castrati*.

**word-painting**: A compositional technique that seeks to form an expressive syntax by matching literary descriptions with corresponding musical events; this technique is characteristic of madrigals.
Biographical Notes

Bernard de Ventadorn (c. 1150–1180): Important French troubadour poet and composer of the second half of the 12th century.

Bizet, Georges (1838–1875): French opera composer famous for Carmen, his greatest work and the most popular opera of all time. A master dramatist, Bizet deftly establishes character and mood through his music.

Boito, Arrigo (1842–1918): Italian librettist and composer. Boito’s libretti for Verdi’s Otello and Falstaff are considered among the greatest in all Italian opera.

Da Ponte, Lorenzo (1749–1838): Italian librettist and poet. Da Ponte rose to the peak of his achievement with his libretti for Mozart’s operas The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni and Così fan tutte.

Caccini, Giulio (1551–1618): One of the earliest Italian opera composers and a member of the Florentine Camerata.

Gesualdo, Carlo, Prince of Venosa (c. 1560–1613): Italian lutenist and composer, famous for his innovations of harmonic progressions and dissonance.

Gluck, Christoph Willibald (1714–1787): Major composer who effected a synthesis of elements of Italian opera and traditional French opera. Essential features of his operatic style include melodically simple and emotionally direct arias; recitatives that demonstrate a high melodic content; the use of dance as integral to the dramatic action; strong reliance on choruses, and a high degree of integration of dance, chorus and solos.
Hofmannsthal, Hugo von (1874–1929): Great Austrian librettist who wrote the libretti for many of Richard Strauss’s operas.

Josquin des Prez (c. 1440–1521): Preeminent composer of the Renaissance who used both polyphonic and homophonic styles. His madrigals represent the Renaissance ideal of emotional and character expressivity.

Leonin (Magister Leoninus) (c. 1135–c. 1201): Composer and poet of the Notre Dame school and greatest exponent of florid organum.

Lully, Jean-Baptiste (1632–1687): Major French composer, who laid the foundation for the French operatic tradition. Lully created a national style that focused on magnificence, tragic drama and dance. He designed a type of recitative that was modeled on spoken drama, using one pitch per syllable and reflecting the flexibility of the French language, with its continuous changes of meter. His arias tend to be short and limited in vocal range, with an emphasis on clear enunciation.

Machaut, Guillaume de (c. 1300–1377): Important composer of sacred and secular music; master of polyphonic technique and musical eloquence.

Mahler, Gustav (1860–1911): Great Austrian composer and opera conductor of the late romantic era. Although he never wrote an opera, Mahler was a master of smaller-scale vocal music and his orchestral music has deep affinities with vocal music in its expressive content.

Metastasio, Pietro (1698–1782): Greatest librettist of the first half of the 18th century. Metastasio standardized his libretti into a formulaic dramatic procedure and formalized arias into a structure known as the “da capo” aria. His reforms influenced the development of opera seria.

Meyerbeer, Giacomo (1791–1864): German-born composer who almost single-handedly established French grand opera. Meyerbeer was famous for his ability to manage enormous forces on stage. His most famous opera is Les Huguenots of 1836. His operas have fallen into obscurity because they lack musical and dramatic substance.
Monteverdi, Claudio (1567–1643): Italian composer credited with the creation of the first opera, *Orfeo* of 1607. Monteverdi did not invent opera, but elevated it to a level of artistic viability and substance it had not previously enjoyed. His most important contribution to the genre was an elevated form of recitative: *arioso*. He was the first composer to use purely instrumental passages in ensemble numbers in opera. He was in advance of his time in his use of dissonance and chromatic harmonies and in his ability to express fundamental emotions through music. Many of his operas are still performed today.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus (1756–1791): Great Austrian composer of the classical era. His operas are widely regarded as his greatest contribution to musical history. A major aspect of Mozart’s significance as an opera composer is his unprecedented genius for musical characterization and dramatic momentum. He is a consummate master of complex and subtle vocal and orchestral manipulation. Mozart’s music does not just decorate the libretto. It creates a whole new drama, revealing subtleties and truths that go beyond the libretto. It energizes the dramatic action and fleshes out his characters, imbuing them with an extraordinary range of moods, emotions, subtlety, unconscious motivation and humanity.

Mussorgsky, Modest (1839–1881): Great Russian composer and member of the so-called Russian Five, a group of composers who established the Russian national style of the mid to late 19th century. His opera *Boris Godunov* is the pinnacle of Russian opera.

Pergolesi, Giovanni (1710–1736): Italian composer of *La serva padrona* (1733), the first important opera buffa that laid the foundation for subsequent contributions to the genre.

Peri, Jacopo (1561–1633): One of the earliest Italian opera composers and member of the Florentine Camerata. Peri is known for his operas *Daphne* and *Euridice*.

Puccini, Giacomo (1858–1924): Great Italian composer of universally popular operas. Puccini was the greatest exponent of the opera verismo style, which found inspiration in the dark side of human nature. He was a superb
lyricist and consummate dramatist. Among his best-loved and renowned operas are *Madam Butterfly*, *Tosca* and *La Bohème*.

**Rameau, Jean-Philippe** (1683–1764): Foremost French composer of the 18th century. Rameau’s operas display much less contrast between aria and recitative than contemporary Italian operas. Although Rameau’s operas are rarely heard outside France because they are tailored to particular French tastes, they are worth seeking out for their musical value.

**Rinuccini, Ottavio** (1562–1621): Italian poet/librettist and member of the Florentine Camerata. Rinuccini wrote the libretti for the earliest operas: Caccini’s *Euridice* and Peri’s *Daphne*.

**Rossini, Gioacchino** (1792–1868): Greatest Italian composer of the bel canto style. Rossini had a great gift for wit, comedy and compositional innovation. He pioneered the use of strings instead of harpsichord or piano to accompany recitative. He invented the long, orchestral type of crescendo known as the “Rossini crescendo.” He was a master of orchestral color and musical characterization. His opera, *The Barber of Seville* remains one of the best-loved and greatest comic operas of all time. Its most famous aria, “Largo al factotum,” introduces the character of Figaro and is a brilliant example of musical characterization.

**Rousseau, Jean-Jacques** (1712–1778): Swiss-born French philosopher and composer who embraced the Italian opera buffa genre as an example of opera appropriate to the Enlightenment. His *Le Devin du village* (1752) is very close to the popular French tradition of opéra comique.

**Scarlatti, Alessandro** (1660–1725): Founder of the Neapolitan school of opera, Scarlatti’s operas exerted substantial influence on other opera composers.

**Strauss, Richard** (1864–1949): Brilliant German composer, whose music stretches Wagnerian concepts to further limits. Strauss’s psychopathological and erotic masterpiece *Salome* represents experimental, post-Victorian trends at the turn of the 20th century.
**Verdi, Giuseppe** (1813–1901): Greatest Italian opera composer of the second half of the 19th century. Verdi’s operas endure because of their use of well-written libretti, their melodic beauty, their focus on human emotions, their psychological insight, and their unsurpassed dramatic power. Among Verdi’s greatest operas are *Rigoletto, La Traviata* and *Otello*.

**Wagner, Richard** (1813–1883): Great German composer whose operas revolutionized music and whose opera, *Tristan and Isolde* is considered, along with Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, the most influential composition of the 19th century. Wagner developed the concept of the music drama (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) as an artistic genre that encompasses all types of art: drama, music, poetry, dance, etc. He created the leitmotif whereby musical motives are assigned to characters, things or concepts and he gave the orchestra unprecedented power as the purveyor of inner meanings and unspoken truths.

**Weber, Carl Maria von** (1786–1826): German composer whose opera *Der Freischütz* became the definitive work that established 19th-century German opera, characterized by the use of spoken dialogue, and plots that hinge on the supernatural as found in German medieval legend.

**Weelkes, Thomas** (c. 1575–1623): One of the great English madrigal composers. Weelkes was a master of word painting.
Bibliography

General Sources


**Italian Opera**

Mozart


Puccini


Strauss


Verdi


Wagner
