

# The Three Queens

## Donizetti



## THE THREE QUEENS

### Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)

#### Disc 1

#### Anna Bolena (1830)

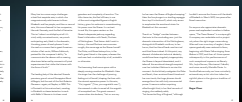
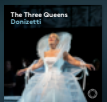
Libretto by Felice Romani

- |                                    |   |       |
|------------------------------------|---|-------|
| 1                                  | Sinfonia (Overture)   | 8. 05 |
| <b>Act Two, Scene Two - Finale</b> |   |       |
| 2                                  | Chi può vederla (Ladies)  | 5. 57 |
| 3                                  | Piangete voi? (Anna, Ladies)  | 5. 09 |
| 4                                  | Al dolce guidami castel natio (Anna)  | 5. 23 |
| 5                                  | Qual mesto suon?<br>(Anna, Hervey, Percy, Rochefort, Smeton, Ladies, and Courtiers) | 4. 05 |
| 6                                  | Cielo, a' miei lungi spasimi (Anna, Smeton, Percy, Rochefort)                       | 2. 24 |
| 7                                  | Chi mi sveglia? (Anna, Smeton, Percy, Rochefort, Ladies, and Courtiers)             | 2. 12 |
| 8                                  | Coppia iniqua (Anna, Ladies, Courtiers)   | 4. 16 |

Total playing time: 37. 21

Anna Bolena  
Sir Hervey  
Lord Rochefort  
Riccardo Percy  
Smeton

**Sondra Radvanovsky**, soprano  
**Eric Ferring**, tenor  
**Anthony Reed**, bass  
**Mario Rojas**, tenor  
**Lauren Decker**, contralto









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Throughout its history, Lyric Opera of Chicago has offered an artistic home to the world's greatest opera singers. We are both a truly international company and proudly Chicagoan. We and our audiences take particular pride and excitement in the international success of artists who are from here.

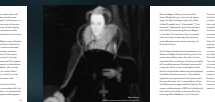
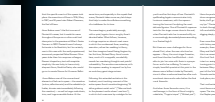
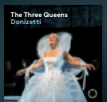
Sondra Radvanovsky has been one of the world's reigning prima donnas for two decades, acclaimed globally for her thrilling performances in wide-ranging repertoire. She was born and grew up in Berwyn, Illinois, a vibrant suburban city on the edge of Chicago. Lyric audiences have happily had many opportunities to welcome Sondra back home to our opera house, often in role debuts that have included, most recently, Tchaikovsky's *Lisa* and Verdi's *Lady Macbeth*. Her definitive performances of the great bel canto heroines have been acclaimed in many of the world's great opera houses.

Sondra's *Three Queens* had its first performances at Lyric, a remarkable celebration of this great soprano at the height of her vocal and dramatic powers, also featuring conductor Riccardo Frizza, the Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus, and soloists from Lyric's Patrick G and Shirley W Ryan Opera Center, our world-renowned artist development program. It was directed by Matthew Ozawa.

This album was recorded live at Lyric Opera of Chicago at those performances, capturing for posterity this great occasion. All of us at Lyric are delighted to share this recording with you and look forward to the opportunity to welcome you to a live performance at the Lyric Opera House.

**Anthony Freud**

*General Director, President & CEO  
Lyric Opera of Chicago*







The *Three Queens* project has been a very special highlight of my career. It is very rare when something comes together so quickly and easily.

I sang all three Donizetti “Tudor Queens” operas in one season at The Metropolitan Opera during 2015/2016: a first for the Met, and a feat only ever attempted anywhere by a handful of other sopranos.

When Maestro Riccardo Frizza came up with the idea over a gin and tonic of doing the final scenes from each of the Donizetti “Tudor Queens” operas in a single performance, I could have kissed him...what a GREAT idea and one that no one had attempted before. Being a person who LOVES challenges, I talked about the idea with Anthony Freud and he immediately fell in love with it.

The challenge of doing the last scenes from each of the operas was twofold: how do you make it exciting for the audience

and, quite frankly, could I manage to sing that much technically difficult music in one evening?! The project involved an incredible team of people, including renowned couturier Rubin Singer, whose extraordinary gowns represented a modern take on Tudor fashion.

My relationship with Lyric Opera of Chicago goes back to 2002 when I made my debut there in the title role of Carlisle Floyd’s *Susannah*. Having been born and raised in the Chicago area, I have always had a special connection with the city and its vibrancy.

**Sondra Radvanovsky**



## Long may they reign: Donizetti's glorious "Three Queens"

The Tudor era has attracted opera composers for nearly two centuries. While the great man himself does get the title role in Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII*, it's the women who have the lion's share of operatic glory, especially in the works of Gaetano Donizetti. At least four of his more than 60 operas focus on women who left an indelible mark on English and Scottish history: *Elisabetta al castello di Kenilworth*, *Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuarda*, and *Roberto Devereux* (although that last opera does have the male lead as its title, but Queen Elizabeth I is certainly the true protagonist).

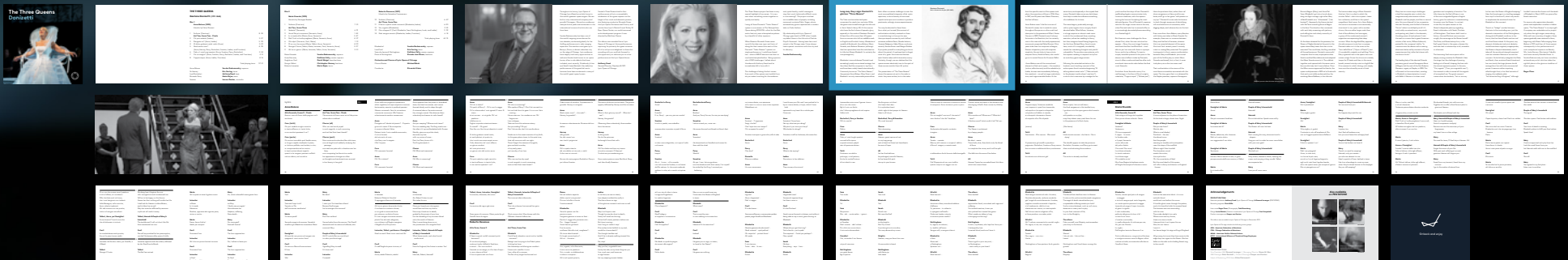
*Elisabetta* is second-drawer Donizetti and exceedingly rarely encountered onstage, but the others find the composer in top form and have been widely heard internationally. Commonly known as "The Tudor Queens," they present Anne Boleyn, Mary Stuart, and Elizabeth I as truly memorable personalities.

Each offers a massive challenge to even the most accomplished interpreter of bel canto repertoire, in which beauty of voice and superb technique must combine to produce passionate, aching sincere expressiveness.

You may be devoted to these three from what you've read (the amount of authoritative scholarly material on them is overwhelming) or how you've seen them portrayed onscreen by such brilliant actresses as Bette Davis, Glenda Jackson, Vanessa Redgrave, Helen Mirren, and more recently Saoirse Ronan and Margot Robbie. If you pride yourself on everything you know about the period, it's perhaps best to forget most of it, given the enormous liberties each libretto takes with historical accuracy. Certainly, though, we can declare that the operas remain absolutely true to the spirit of these women and do them full justice.

This presentation of "The Three Queens" places the operas not just in the order in which they were written, but in the order

Gaetano Donizetti  
Marie-Alexandre Alophe (1811-1883)





that the specific events of the operas took place: the executions of Anne in 1536, Mary in 1587, and 14 years later Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex.

*Anna Bolena* wasn't the first success of Donizetti's career, but it made his name throughout Europe as no other work had done prior to the premiere at Milan's Teatro Carcano in 1830. Donizetti wasn't always fortunate in his librettists, but he certainly was in this case with the vastly experienced, enormously respected Felice Romani. Nine years older than his composer colleague, Romani shaped any text with exquisite simplicity. He was lucky to have a truly eloquent Anna, Giuditta Pasta, who would go on to create *Norma* for Vincenzo Bellini.

*Anna Bolena* uses all the conventional elements of bel canto opera — the cavatina (a slow, reflective aria) and the cabaletta (a livelier, showier aria immediately following the cavatina) — as well as large-scale duets, trios, and huge ensemble finales. At the

same time, and especially in the superb final scene, Donizetti takes some very bold steps that help to make *Anna Bolena* something of a trailblazer for its time.

The scene begins, predictably enough, with a quiet, legato chorus sung by Anne's devoted ladies. What follows, however, is a huge surprise: an almost-mad scene in which the condemned Anne, awaiting execution, relives her wedding to Henry, but then imagines herself being forgiven by her first love, Richard Percy. Anne's music here, much of it *a cappella*, wonderfully reveals her wandering thoughts and painful vulnerability. The emotions are extreme, with the soprano needing to respond line by line as would any great stage actress.

Following this extended recitative is the loveliest, most touching moment of the entire opera: Anne's cavatina beginning "Al dolce guidami castel natio" ("Take me back to the pleasant castle where I was born"), in which she's overcome by nostalgia for her

youth and her first days of love. Donizetti's spellbinding legato communicates truly luminous sweetness, with the soprano tracing the lines as if sculpting the most delicate figurine. One of Donizetti's supreme tests for the singer comes close to the end, when Donizetti asks her to ascend softly on a coruscatingly decorated phrase ascending to a floated high A.

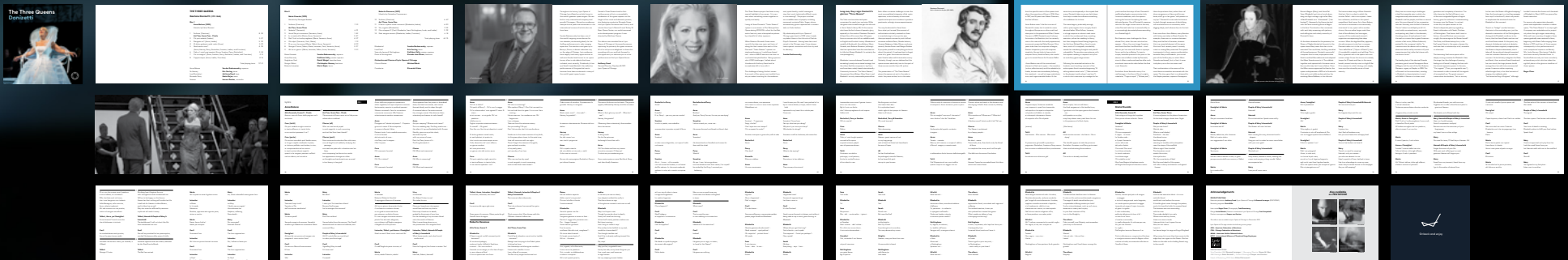
But there are more challenges for Anne ahead. First, when the men who love her appear — Percy, the court singer Smeaton, and Anne's brother Lord Rochford — she's able to join her voice with theirs in a prayer for an end to her suffering. To insert a simple, heartfelt quartet at this point in the drama was a brilliant stroke by Donizetti, since it offers a welcome breather after such emotional stress and a calm before the final vocal fireworks.

And when those fireworks come, it's a real barrage, in the form of Anne's mighty cabaletta, "Coppia iniqua" ("Wicked pair").

Here she proclaims that, rather than call down vengeance on Henry and his new bride, she'll go to her grave "with pardon on my lips." Donizetti's music asks his heroine to slash through sequences of electrifying trills and wild bursts of coloratura, while digging deeply and vehemently into the text.

Even more than *Anna Bolena*, many liberties with history are taken in *Maria Stuarda*. For example, there was no romance between Mary and the Earl of Leicester, whereas this is an essential element of the opera. Also Lord Cecil certainly wasn't viciously intent on seeing Mary executed. The opera's turning point is the in-person confrontation between Mary and Elizabeth (also a vital part of the Schiller play on which *Maria Stuarda* was based), but, in fact, it never took place, since the two never met!

That confrontation is the source of the most famous anecdote associated with this opera. The story goes that, in a rehearsal for the Naples premiere, sopranos Giuseppina





Ronzi di Begnis (Mary) and Anna Del Serre (Elizabeth) got into a knock-down, drag-out fight onstage, right after Mary vilified Elizabeth as a “vil bastarda” (“vile bastard”). Apparently the fracas started with Del Serre smacking Ronzi di Begnis in the face. The situation then worsened, with each lady screaming with jealousy and calling her rival utterly unworthy of Donizetti’s favor.

At the dress rehearsal for the premiere, the Queen of Naples fainted at the point in the opera where Mary hears that she is to be executed. Then and there, the King cancelled all the performances. Donizetti, resourceful composer that he was, employed another libretto entitled *Buondelmonte* and adapted the *Maria Stuarda* score to it. The cobbled-together work opened with the same cast a few months later, but it was a failure. Once the Milan censors approved the libretto, the opera could premiere in 1835 at La Scala with that era’s most wildly acclaimed diva, the ravishing Maria Malibran, in the title role.

The heroine takes wing in *Maria Stuarda*’s third act: first, in a duet in which the courtier Talbot – who’s also a priest – hears her confession, and then in the opera’s magnificent final scene. As in *Anna Bolena*, this scene is somewhat unconventionally structured. It, too, opens with a somber chorus, this one rather larger-scale than that of *Anna Bolena*, but here again, a group of the condemned woman’s supporters are expressing their deep concern. When the dignified Mary appears, she asks everyone to join her in a prayer. Donizetti refers to it in the score as the “Inno della Morte” (“Hymn of Death”), but it’s wonderfully majestic and uplifting. This is Mary’s greatest test in the opera: she must sustain a high G over the chorus at a stately tempo for 21 beats and then, in the same breath, ascend note by note to a high B-flat. It’s a moment in which shining, rock-steady tone must be colored by an air of total serenity.





Mary has two more major challenges: a brief but exquisite aria, in which she magnanimously asks heaven to bless Elizabeth and her people; and then a second aria, this one a farewell to her companion, Hannah Kennedy, and the Earl of Leicester. This isn't about vocal display at all: it's vivid, nobly conceived music, very much anticipating early Verdi in the dramatic, thrusting power of each phrase. It sets the seal on a scene that a great American scholar of bel canto, William Ashbrook, praised for the composer's ability "to communicate the drama with a soaring directness balanced by moments of lyrical expansiveness that strike the listener with the force of truth."

The leading lady of the aborted *Stuarda* premiere, grand-voiced Giuseppina Ronzi di Begnis, led the cast of the first *Roberto Devereux*—again, at Naples, in 1838. This is Donizetti at his mature best, creating in Elizabeth a characterization to rank with Bellini's *Norma* in its sheer vocal

grandeur and complexity of emotion. The title character, the Earl of Essex, is one of the most misguided figures in English history, given his rashness in overestimating his power over the Queen. In contrast to real life, the opera centers on the Queen's desperate jealousy regarding Essex's infatuation with Sarah, Duchess of Nottingham. That liaison didn't exist in history—the real Duchess was a woman roughly the same age as the Queen herself! The Duke, until Essex betrays him, is the Earl's great friend in the opera, whereas the real men had no relationship at all, amicable or otherwise.

The harrowing final scene opens with a deeply moving cavatina for Elizabeth. Here the singer has the challenge of pouring feeling out of herself, shaping the lines with the utmost expressive power. In this aria, "Vivi, ingrato" ("Live, you ungrateful man"), the monarch is able to reveal all the anguish of unrequited love. The great moment comes when she declares, "Let no one say

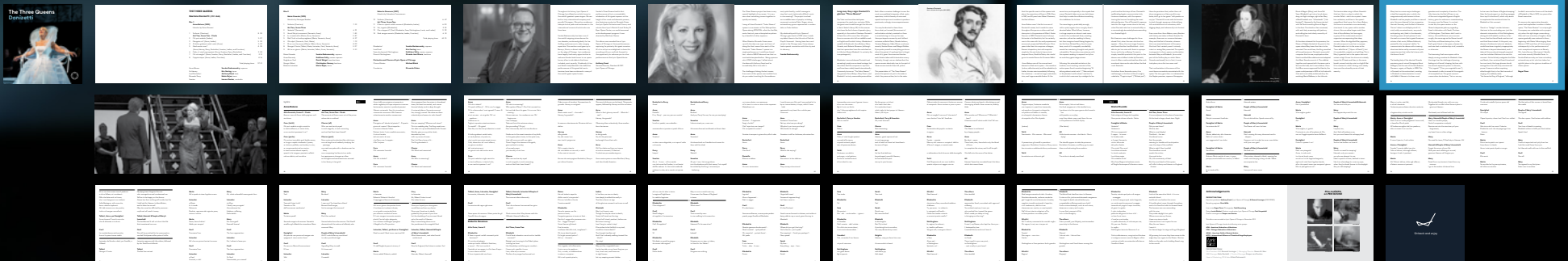
he has seen the Queen of England weeping." Here the line plunges in a startling arpeggio from top A to bottom D, which only serves to emphasize the emotional strain for Elizabeth at this moment.

There's no "bridge" number between that aria to the concluding one—just the dramatic intervention of the Nottinghams, during which Elizabeth confirms, to her horror, that her friend Sarah was her rival and that Essex is dead. At this point, any element of elaborate technical dexterity would have been singularly inappropriate; the Queen is beyond devastated, and it takes all the emotional strength acquired over her turbulent lifetime to survive this moment. As she bitterly castigates the Duke and Sarah, then envisions Essex's head and her own tomb, the huge phrases should emerge from her with truly monumental power. It seems a rather surprising afterthought that, in her final seconds of singing, she suddenly adds, "Let James be King of England," although

he didn't assume the throne until the death of Elizabeth in March 1603, two years after Essex's execution.

For anyone who appreciates dramatic power and resplendent vocalism in Italian opera, "The Three Queens" is a unique gift. A company can undertake such a project only when the right singer comes along. After well over a century of neglect, these operas gradually were restored to favor, beginning with Maria Callas singing *Anna Bolena* in 1957, and then all three operas subsequently in the performances of such exceptional sopranos as Beverly Sills, Leyla Gencer, Montserrat Caballé, and more recently Mariella Devia. In Sondra Radvanovsky we have a similarly extraordinary artist who has taken her rightful place in the glorious tradition of these operas.

**Roger Pines**







## Lyrics

## Anna Bolena

## Atto Secondo, Scena II - Finale

*Escono i servi di Anna dalla prigione ov'è rinchiusa.*

## Coro (tutti)

Chi può vederla a ciglio asciutto  
in tanto affanno, in tanto lutto,  
e non sentirsi spezzare il cor?

## Coro (parte)

Or muta e immobile qual freddo sasso;  
or lungo e rapido studiando il passo;  
or trista or pallida, com'ombra, in viso;  
or componendosi ad un sorriso:  
in tanti mutasi diversi aspetti,  
quanti in lei sorgono pensieri e affetti  
nel suo delirio, nel suo dolor.

2

## Act Two, Scene Two - Finale

*The servants of Anne come out of the prison where she is confined.*

## Chorus (all)

Who can see her dry eyed  
in such anguish, in such mourning  
and not feel their heart break?

## Chorus (part)

Now mute and motionless like cold stone;  
now at length and suddenly studying the  
passage;  
now sad now pale with a shadow over her  
face;  
now composing her face into a smile:  
her appearance changes as often  
as thoughts and sentiments are aroused  
in her frenzy, in her grief.

CD I

3

*Anna dalla sua prigione si presenta in  
abito negletto, col capo scoperto si avvanza  
lentamente, assorta in profondi pensieri.  
Silenzio universale. Servi la circondano  
vivamente commossi. Ella l'osserva  
attentamente sembra rasserenarsi.*

## Anna

Piangete voi? donde tal pianto?... È questo  
giorno di nozze. Il Re mi aspetta...  
è acceso infiorato l'altar.  
Datemi tosto il mio candido ammanto;  
il crin m'ornate  
del mio serto di rose...  
che Percy non lo sappia...  
il Re l'impose.

## Coro

Oh! memoria funesta!

## Anna

Oh! Chi si duole?

## Coro

Oh! memoria funesta!

*Anne appears from her prison in disordered  
dress, her head uncovered, and moves  
forward slowly, sunk in deep thought.  
A universal silence. Servants surround  
her, strongly moved. She observes them  
attentively and seems to calm herself.*

## Anne

Are you weeping? Whence such tears?  
This is a wedding day. The King awaits me...  
the altar is lit up and bedecked with flowers.  
Quickly, give me my white cloak;  
decorate my hair  
with my crown of roses...  
Don't let Percy know of it...  
The King demands it.

## Chorus

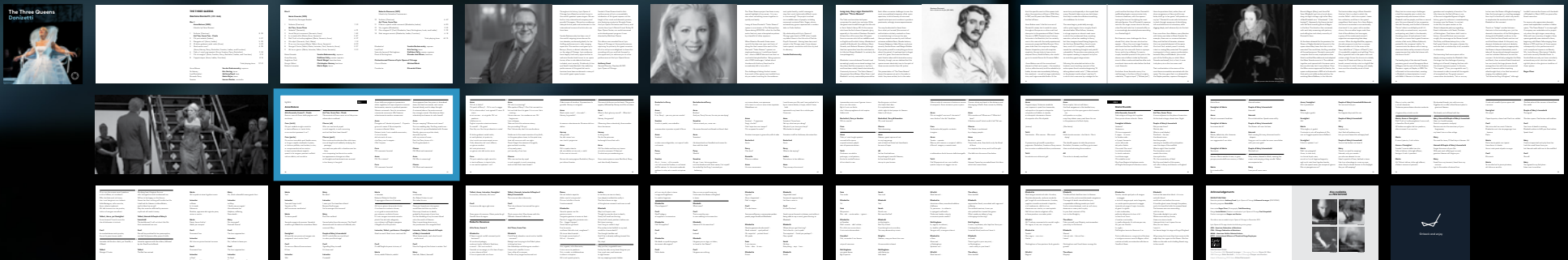
Oh! What sad memories!

## Anne

Oh! Who is mourning?

## Chorus

Oh! What sad memories!



**Anna**

Oh! chi si duole?  
Chi parlò di Percy?... Ch'io non lo vegga.  
Ch'io m'asconda a' suoi sguardi. È vano. Ei  
viene...  
ei mi accusa... ei mi grida. Oh! mi  
perdona...  
Infelice son io.  
Togliam a questa miseria estrema...  
Tu sorridi?... Oh gioia!  
Non fia, non fia che qui deserta io moia!

Al dolce guidami castel natio,  
ai verdi platani, al queto rio,  
che i nostri mormora sospiri ancor.  
Colà, dimentico de' corsi affanni,  
un giorno rendimi  
de' miei primi anni,  
un giorno solo del nostro amor.

**Coro**

Chi può vederla a ciglio asciutto  
in tanto affanno, in tanto lutto,  
e non sentirsi spezzar il cor?

4

**Anne**

Oh! who is mourning?  
Who spoke of Percy?... Don't let me see him.  
Let me hide from his gaze. It is no use. He is  
coming...  
He accuses me... he condemns me. Oh!  
forgive me...  
I am unhappy.  
Take me from this extreme misery.  
Are you smiling? Oh joy!  
Don't let me die, don't let me die alone.

Guide me to the sweet mansion of my birth,  
to the green plane-trees, to the quiet river,  
that still murmurs with our sighs.  
There I forget the streams of anguish,  
give me back one day  
of my early years,  
just one day of our love.

**Chorus**

Who can see her dry-eyed  
in such anguish, in such mourning,  
and not feel their heart break?

5

*Odesi suono di tamburi. Si presentano le  
guardie. Hervey e cortigiani.*

**Anna**

Qual mesto suon?... che vedo?...  
Hervey, le guardie?...

*le osserva attentamente. Rinviene dal suo  
delirio.*

**Hervey**

*alle guardie*  
Ite, dal carcer loro  
sian tratti i prigionieri.

**Anna**

Oh! in quale istante  
del mio delirio mi riscuoti, o cielo!  
A che mai mi riscuoti...

*Escono da varie prigioni Rochefort, Percy e  
poi ultimo Smeton.*

*The sound of drums can be heard. The guards  
appear, followed by Hervey and the courtiers.*

**Anne**

What is that gloomy sound?... What do I  
see?...  
Hervey, the guards?

*Observing them attentively, Anne awakes  
from her trance.*

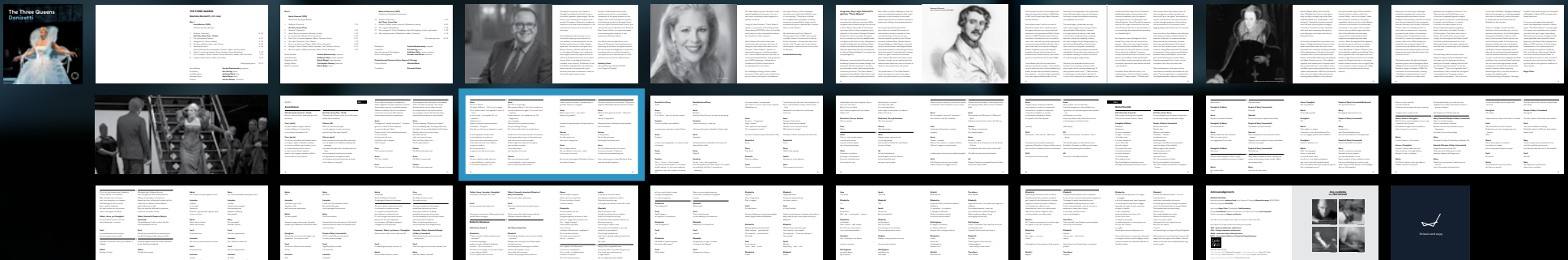
**Hervey**

*to the guards*  
Go, let the prisoners  
be brought from their cells.

**Anne**

Oh! You shake me from my trance  
at such a moment, O Heaven!  
To what are you awakening me...

*From various prisons come Rochford, Percy,  
and then finally Smeaton.*





**Rochefort e Percy**

Anna!

**Anna**

Fratello!

E tu, Percy!... per me, per me morite!

**Smeton**

Io solo vi perdei, me maledite...

*avanzandosi si prostra ai piedi d'Anna*

**Anna**

Smeton!

*si ritira come sbigottita, e si copre il volto col manto*

**Percy**

Iniquo!

**Smeton**

Ah, sì... lo son... ch'io scenda  
con tal nome fra l'ombra, io mi lasciai  
dal Re sedurre. Io v'accusai credendo  
serbarvi in vita; ed a mentir mi spinse

24

**Rocheford and Percy**

Anne!

**Anne**

Brother!

And you, Percy! for me, for me you are dying!

**Smeton**

I alone ruined you, curse me...

*He comes forward and kneels at Anne's feet*

**Anne**

Smeton!

*He draws back as if terrified and covers his face with his cloak*

**Percy**

Wretch!

**Smeton**

Ah yes... I am... let me go down  
into the shadows with that name, I let myself  
be misled by the King. I accused you  
believing

un insano desire, una speranza  
ch'io tenni in core un anno intier repressa.  
Maleditemi voi.

**Anna**

Smeton!... Ti appressa.

Sorgi, che fai?

Ché l'arpa tua non tempi?

Chi ne spezzò le corde?

*Smeton è sempre in ginocchio; ella lo alza*

**Rochefort**

Anna.

**Percy**

Che dice?

**Donzelle**

Ritorna a delirar.

**Anna**

Un suon sommesso

I would save your life, and I was pushed to lie  
by an insane desire, a hope, which I have  
held  
repressed in my heart for a whole year.  
Curse me.

**Anne**

Smeton! Come here.

Get up, what are you doing?

Why don't you tune your harp?

Who broke its strings?

*Smeton is still on his knees; she raises him*

**Rocheford**

Anne.

**Percy**

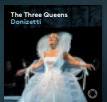
What is she saying?

**Ladies**

She returns to her delirium.

**Anne**

They convey a low sound



tramandan esse come il gemer tronco  
di un cor che mora...  
Egli è il mio cor ferito  
che l'ultima preghiera al ciel sospira.  
Udite tutti.

**Rochefort, Percy e Smeton**

Oh! rio martir!

**Coro**

Delira.

**Anna**

Cielo, a' miei lunghi spasimi  
concedi alfin riposo  
e questi estremi palpiti  
sian di speranza almen.

**Tutti**

L'estremo suo delirio  
prolunga, o ciel pietoso;  
fa che la sua bell'anima  
di te si desti in sen.

like the groan cut short  
of a heart that dies...  
It is my broken heart  
which sighs its last prayer to Heaven.  
Hear it, all of you.

**Rocheford, Percy & Smeaton**

Oh, cruel torment!

**Chorus**

She's dreaming.

**Anne**

Heaven, grant repose at last  
to my long pangs  
and at least let these last heartbeats  
be ones of hope.

**All**

Let her final delirium  
be prolonged, merciful Heaven;  
let her beautiful spirit  
rise up to your bosom.

*Odonsi colpi di cannone in lontano e suonar  
di campane. Anna rinviene a poco a poco*

**Anna**

Chi mi sveglia? ove sono? che sento?  
suon festivo? che fia? favellate.

**Coro**

Acclamata dal popolo contento  
è regina...

**Anna**

Tacete... cessate.  
Manca, ah! manca a compire il delitto  
d'Anna il sangue, e versato sarà.

*si abbandona fra le braccia delle damigelle*

**Tutti**

Ciel! Risparmia al suo core trafitto  
questo colpo a cui regger non sa.

*Cannon shots are heard in the distance and  
the ringing of bells. Anne comes to, little by  
little.*

**Anne**

Who awoke me? Where am I? What do I  
hear?  
A festive sound? what could it be? Tell me...

**Chorus**

The Queen is acclaimed  
by a happy people...

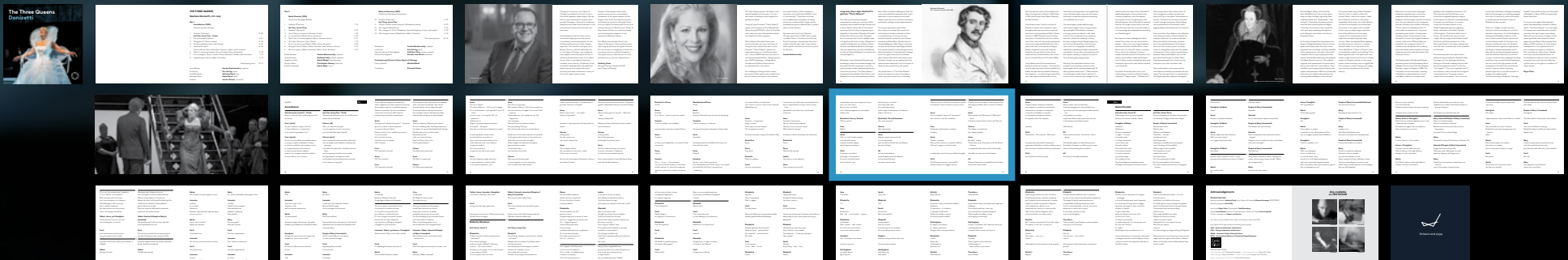
**Anne**

Be silent...cease.  
There lacks, alas, there lacks only the blood  
of Anne  
to complete the crime, and it will be spilt.

*She falls into the arms of her ladies.*

**All**

Heaven! Spare her wounded heart this blow  
which she cannot bear.





**Anna**

Coppia iniqua, l'estrema vendetta  
non impreco in quest'ora tremenda;  
nel sepolcro che aperto m'aspetta  
col perdon sul labbro si scenda,  
ei m'acquisti clemenza e favore  
al cospetto d'un Dio di pietà.

(sviene)

**Tutti**

Sventurata... Ella manca... Ella more!

*Si presentano gli sceriffi a prendere i  
prigionieri. Rochefort, Smeton e Percy vanno  
loro incontro e additando Anna, esclamano:*

**Tutti**

Immolata una vittima è già!

8

**Anne**

False couple, I do not call down  
the final vengeance in this terrible hour;  
I go down into the open grave which awaits  
me  
with pardon on my lips,  
may they obtain mercy and favor for me  
in the presence of a God of pity.

(She faints)

**All**

Unfortunate woman...she faints...She is  
dying!

*The sheriffs appear to take the prisoners.  
Rochefort, Smeaton, and Percy go to meet  
them and indicating Anne exclaim:*

**All**

The victim is already sacrificed.

## CD II

**Maria Stuarda**

2

**Atto Secondo, Scena III**

*Sala attigua al luogo del supplizio.  
Gran porta chiusa infondo. Notte*

**Famigliari di Maria**

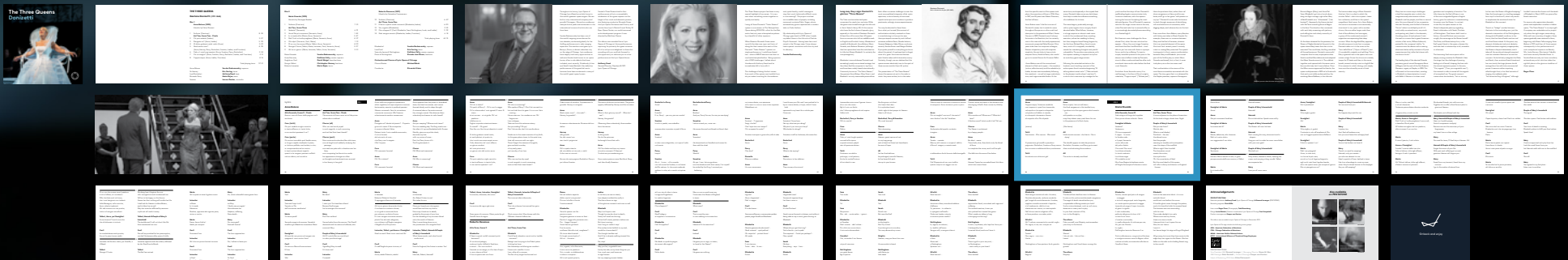
Vedeste?  
Vedemmo.  
Oh truce apparato!  
Il ceppo... la scure...  
la funebre sala...  
e il popol fremente  
vicino alla scala  
del palco fatale.  
Che vista! Che orror!  
La vittima attende  
lo stuolo malnato.  
La vittima regia.  
Oh instabile sorte!  
Ma d'una Regina la barbara morte  
all'Anglia fia sempre d'infamia e rossor.

**Act Two, Scene Three**

*A room adjacent to the place of execution.  
At the back a large, closed door. Night*

**People of Mary's household**

Did you see them?  
We did, alas.  
What a cruel display!  
The block... the axe...  
the dismal room.  
And the people,  
seeming to tremble with anticipation  
near the steps of the scaffold.  
What a sight! How horrible!  
The shameless crowd  
awaits the victim,  
the royal victim.  
Oh, the uncertainty of fate!  
But the cruel death of this queen  
will inflict infamy and shame on England  
forever.



*Entra Anna*

### Famigliari di Maria

Anna!

### Anna

Qui più sommessi favellate.

### Famigliari di Maria

La misera dov'è?

### Anna

Mesta, abbatuta, ella s'avanza.  
Deh! col vostro duolo  
non aggravate il suo dolor.

### Famigliari di Maria

Tacciamo.

*Entrano Maria vestita di nero, in gran  
pompa, ornata della sua corona; e Talbot  
accompanies her.*

### Maria

Io vi rivedo alfin.  
30

3

*Hannah enters*

### People of Mary's household

Hannah!

### Hannah

Do not disturb her. Speak more softly.

### People of Mary's household

The Queen will soon be here.

### Hannah

She's coming this way, downcast and in  
despair.  
I beg you not to make her even more bitter  
with your own grief.

### People of Mary's household

We shall not.

4

*Mary enters, dressed in black, wearing her  
crown and carrying a long candle. Talbot  
accompanies her.*

### Mary

I see you all once more.

### Anna, Famigliari

Noi ti perdiamo!

### Maria

Vita miglior godrò.

### Famigliari

Ah!

### Maria

Vita miglior, sì, godrò.  
Contenta io volo all'amplesso di Dio,  
ma voi fuggite questa terra d'affanni.

### Famigliari

Il duol ci spezza il cor!

### Maria

Deh! non piangete!  
Anna, tu sola resti,  
tu che sei la più cara,  
eccoti un lino di lagrime bagnato;  
agli occhi miei farai lugubre benda,  
allor che spenti saran per sempre al giorno.  
Ma voi piangete ancor?

### People of Mary's household & Hannah

Yet we must lose you.

### Mary

Far happier days wait for me.

### People of Mary's household

Ah!

### Mary

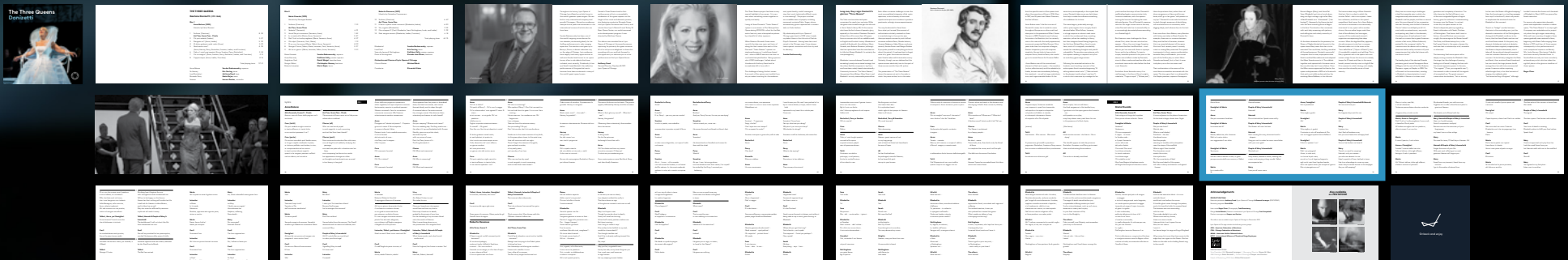
I rejoice, too,  
that God will embrace me,  
but you must leave this unhappy land.

### People of Mary's household

Sorrow has broken our hearts!

### Mary

There's no need for weeping!  
Hannah, only you remain –  
you who are dearest to me.  
Here's a patch of linen, bathed in tears.  
Use it as a bandage to cover my eyes,  
when they're closed forever to the daylight.  
Are you still weeping?





Meco vi unite, miei fidi,  
e al ciel clemente  
l'estrema prece alziam devota e ardente.

*s'inginocchia, e tutti con lei*

#### Maria, Anna e i Familiari

Deh! Tu di un'umile preghiera il suono odi,  
o benefico Dio di pietà.  
All'ombra accogliami del tuo perdono,  
altro ricovero il cor non ha.

#### Maria

E vano il pianto, il ciel m'aita.

#### Anna e i Familiari

Scorda l'incauto della tua vita.  
Tolta al dolore, tolta agli affanni,  
benigno il cielo ti perdonò.

#### Maria

Ah! Tolta al dolore, tolta agli affanni,  
d'eterno amore mi pascereò.

My devoted friends, join with me now.  
Together let us offer a final fervent plea to  
gracious Heaven.

*She kneels, and all kneel with her.*

#### Mary, Hannah & People of Mary's household

Hear our humble prayer,  
God of compassion and pity!  
Receive me into the sanctuary of your  
forgiveness,  
my heart has no other refuge.

#### Mary

No need for tears, I'll find help in Heaven. Ah!

#### Hannah & People of Mary's household

Forget the errors of your life.  
With pain and suffering at an end,  
gracious Heaven will forgive you.

#### Mary

Freed from my torment, freed from my  
sorrows  
I go to the realms of eternal love.

*Si ode nel castello il primo sparo del  
cannone*

#### Famigliari

Oh colpo!

*S'apre la porta, n'esce Lord Cecil con soldati*

#### Cecil

Già vicino del tuo morir l'istante.  
Elisabetta vuol che sia paga ogni tua  
brama.  
Parla.

#### Maria

Da lei tanta pietà non isperai.  
Lieve favor ti chiedo.  
Anna i miei passi al palco scorga.

#### Cecil

Ella verrà.

#### Maria

Se accolta hai la prece primiera,  
ah! altra ne ascolta.

6

*The first salvo of the cannon is heard from  
the castle.*

#### People of Mary's household

The signal!

*The door opens. Cecil enters with soldiers.*

#### Cecil

Your hour of death is nearing.  
Elisabeth wishes to fulfil your final wishes.  
Speak then!

#### Mary

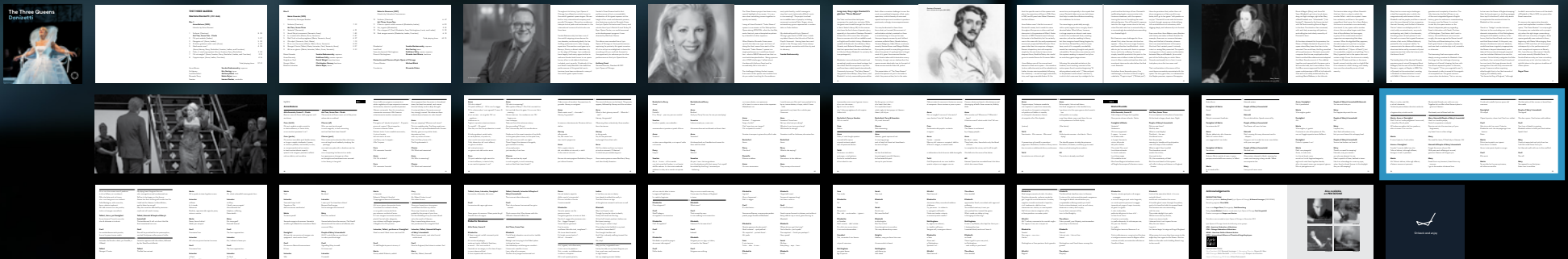
I had not expected such pity from her.  
I ask this small favor from you.  
Let Hannah walk with me to the scaffold.

#### Cecil

She will.

#### Mary

You agreed to my first plea –  
listen now to another.



Di un cor che muore reca il perdono  
a chi m'offese, mi condannò.  
Dille che lieta resti sul trono,  
che i suoi bei giorni non turberò.  
Sulla Bretagna, sulla sua vita,  
favor celeste implorerò.  
Ah! dal rimorso non sia punita;  
tutto col sangue cancellerò.

**Talbot, Anna, poi Familiari**  
Scur tiranna! Tronchi una vita  
che di dolcezze ci ricolmò.

**Cecil**  
La sua baldanza restò punita;  
fra noi la pace tornar vedrò.

**Talbot**  
Giunge il Conte.

7  
My dying heart forgives the one  
who wronged me and condemned me.  
Tell her to be happy on the throne.  
Assure her that nothing will trouble her life.  
I shall ask for Heaven to bless Britain,  
and to bless her as well.  
May she never be afflicted by remorse—  
my blood will wash it away.

**Talbot, Hannah & People of Mary's household**  
The terrible axe! It will cut short this life  
that sweetened our own.

**Cecil**  
She will be punished for her presumption,  
we shall find peace after years of strife.

8  
*Leicester appears with the others, followed  
by the Sheriff and officials*

**Talbot**  
The Earl has arrived.

**Maria**  
Ah! a quale ei viene lugubre scena.

**Leicester**  
*a Maria*  
Io ti rivedo.  
*l'abbraccia*  
Perduta, oppressa da ingiuste pene,  
vicina a morte...

**Maria**  
Frena, frena il dolor!  
Addio per sempre!

**Cecil**  
Si avanza l'ora.

**Leicester**  
Ah! che non posso lasciarti ancora.

**Cecil**  
Si avanza l'ora.

**Leicester**  
*a Cecil*  
Scostati, o vile!

**Mary**  
Ah, what a dreadful scene greets him.

**Leicester**  
*to Mary*  
I finally see you again!  
*He embraces her.*  
Helpless, suffering,  
Near death...

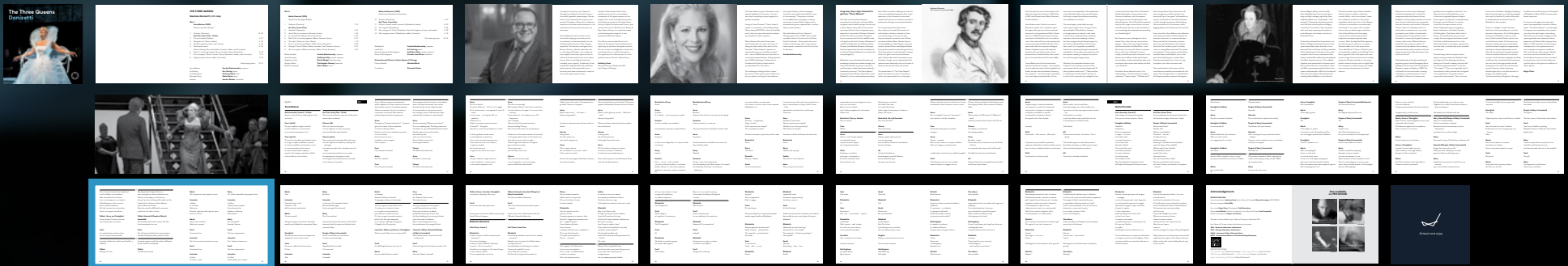
**Mary**  
No more grief!  
Farewell forever!

**Cecil**  
The hour approaches.

**Leicester**  
No, I refuse to leave you.

**Cecil**  
The hour approaches.

**Leicester**  
*To Cecil*  
Stand aside, you coward!





**Maria**

Taci!

**Leicester**

Tremate! Iniqui tutti!  
Temete un Dio  
dell'innocenza vendicator!

**Maria**

Te stesso perdi!

*Secondo scoppio di cannone. Scende lo  
sceriffo e gli ufficiali che circondano Maria*

**Famigliari**

Ah! perché non posso nel sangue mio  
spegnere il cieco vostro furor!

**Cecil**

*Fa cenno a Maria d'incamminarsi*  
E l'ora.

**Leicester**

Vile!

**Mary**

Be silent!

**Leicester**

I warn you! You heartless villains!  
Beware God's anger,  
for he avenges the innocent!

**Mary**

Don't be reckless!

*Second salvo from the cannon. The Sheriff  
descends with his retinue of officials, who  
surround Mary.*

**People of Mary's household**

Ah! If I could offer my own blood  
to calm your blind rage!

**Cecil**

*Signalling Mary to walk*  
It's time now!

**Leicester**

Cowards!

**Maria**

*a Leicester*

Roberto! Roberto! Ascolta!  
*Si appoggia al braccio di Leicester*

Ah! se un giorno da queste ritorte  
il tuo braccio involarmi dovea,  
or mi guidi a morire da forte  
per estremo conforto d'amor.  
E il mio sangue innocente versato  
plachi l'ira del cielo sdegnato,  
non richiami sull'Anglia spargiura  
il flagello d'un Dio punitor.

**Leicester, Talbot, poi Anna e i Famigliari**

Quali accenti! Qual truce sventura! Ah!

**Cecil**

Or dell'Anglia la pace è sicura, sì!

**Maria**

Anna, addio! Roberto, addio!

**Mary**

*to Leicester*

Ah, Robert! Listen to me!  
*She takes his arm.*

Once you hoped your strong arm  
would free me from my chains.  
Now may it lead me to death,  
guided by the power of your love.  
Let the shedding of my innocent blood  
calm the wrath of Heaven.  
May it never bring down on us  
the punishment of a vengeful God.

**Leicester, Talbot, Hannah & People  
of Mary's household**

What brave words, and what horrid  
misfortune!

**Cecil**

Now for England, the future is certain. Yes!

**Mary**

Hannah, Robert, farewell!



**Talbot, Anna, Leicester, Famigliari**

Innocente, infamata, ella muor.

**Cecil**

La nemica del regno già muor.

*Terzo sparo di cannone. Maria parte fra gli  
Sceriffi. Anna la segue.*

**Roberto Devereux****Atto Terzo, Scena II****Elisabetta**

E Sara in questi orribili momenti poté  
lasciarmi?

Al suo ducal palagio,  
onde qui trarla s'affrettò Gualtiero,  
e ancor!... De' suoi conforti  
l'amistà mi sovvenga, io n'ho ben d'uopo...  
io sono donna al fine!  
Il foco è spento del mio furor.

**Talbot, Hannah, Leicester & People of  
Mary's household**

The innocent dies infamously.

**Cecil**

That vile schemer has earned her grim  
reward.

*Third cannon shot. Mary leaves with the  
Officials. Hannah follows her.*

**Act Three, Scene Two****Elizabeth**

Could Sarah abandon me at such a terrible  
moment?

Raleigh was hurrying to the Duke's place  
to bring her here.

Her friendship could bring me comfort –  
I have such need for it now.

I am, after all, a woman.

The fire of my anger has burned out.

**Dame**

Ha nel turbato aspetto  
d'alto martir le impronte!...  
Più non le brilla in fronte  
l'usata maestà!

**Elisabetta**

Vana la speme non fia...  
presso a morir,  
l'augusta gemma ei recar mi farà...  
Pentito il veggio alla presenza mia...  
Pur... fugge il tempo!...  
Vorrei fermar gl'istanti.  
E se la morte,  
ond'esser fido alla rival, scegliesse?...  
Oh truce idea funesta!...  
E s'ei già move al palco?...  
Ah! no... t'arresta...

**Ladies**

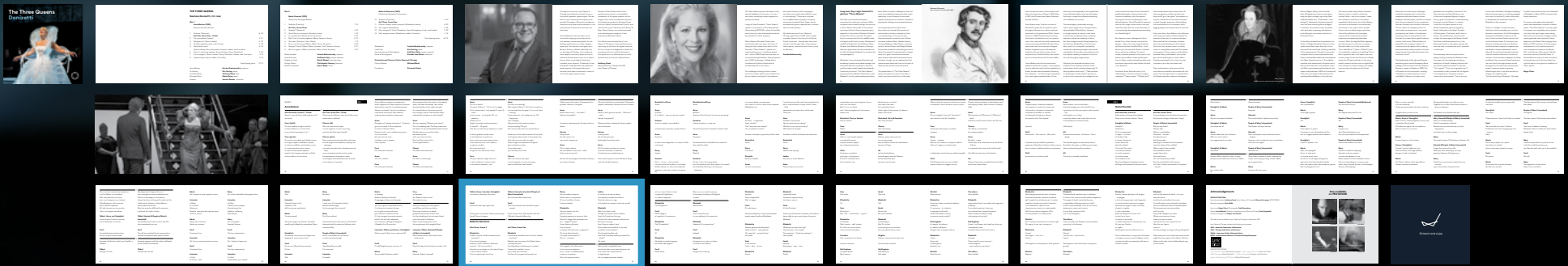
In her face, we see so clearly  
how deeply troubled she really is.  
That face shows no sign  
of the glorious monarch we know so well.

**Elizabeth**

May I not hope in vain.  
Though he may be close to death,  
Surely he'll send me the ring.  
At last he'll stand, penitent, before me.  
But time is racing –  
how I long to make it stop!  
If he wishes to be faithful to my rival,  
would he choose death?  
The thought terrifies me!  
And if he is already walking toward the  
block?  
No, stop!

Vivi, ingrato, a lei d'accanto;  
il mio core a te perdona...  
Vivi, o crudo, e m'abbandona  
in eterno a sospirar...  
Ah! si celi questo pianto,

May you live, ungrateful man –  
live by her side, as my heart forgives you.  
Live, cruel man, and leave me  
to sigh forever.  
Let my weeping remain hidden.





ah! non sia chi dica in terra:  
la regina d'Inghilterra  
ho veduto lagrimar.

**Elisabetta**

Che m'apporti?

**Cecil**

Quell'indegno  
al supplizio s'incammina.

**Elisabetta**

Ciel! Al supplizio?

**Cecil**

Si!

**Elisabetta**

Né diede un qualche pegno  
da recarsi alla regina?

**Cecil**

Nulla diede.

May no one on earth ever say,  
I have seen the Queen of England  
in tears.

**Elizabeth**

What news?

**Cecil**

That unworthy man  
is now walking to his execution.

**Elizabeth**

Heavens! To his execution?

**Cecil**

Indeed!

**Elizabeth**

He gave you no sign, no token,  
to hand to the Queen?

**Cecil**

He gave me nothing.

**Elisabetta**

Ingrato!  
Alcun s'appressa!...  
Deh! si veggia.

**Cecil**

È la duchessa...

*Sara esce affanosa, e senza poter proferir  
parola porge l'anello ad Elisabetta*

**Elisabetta**

Questa gemma donde avesti!...  
Quali smanie!... qual pallore!...  
Oh sospetto!... potesti forse!...  
Ah! parla.

**Sara**

Il mio terrore...  
Tutto... dice... lo son...

**Elisabetta**

Finisci.

**Elizabeth**

Ungrateful man!  
Someone's approaching!  
Let them come in.

**Cecil**

It's the Duchess!

*Sarah comes forward in distress, and without  
being able to say a word, gives the ring to  
Elizabeth.*

**Elizabeth**

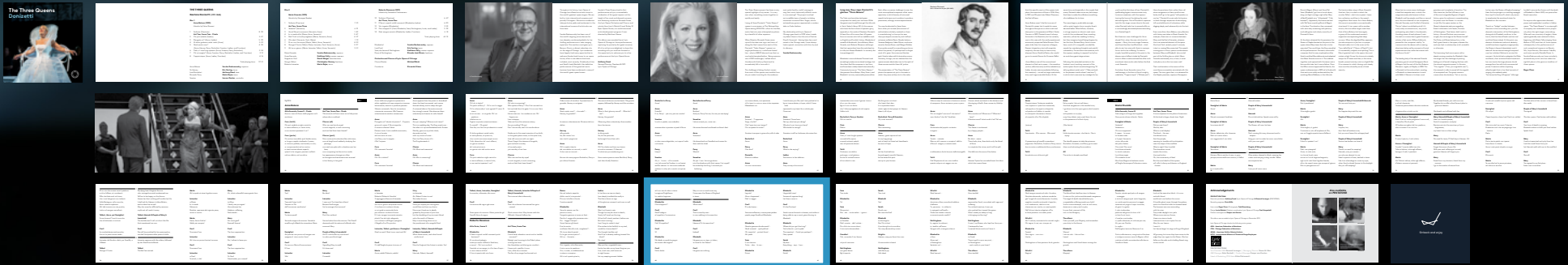
Where did you get that ring?  
You're frantic – you're pale!  
The suspicion!... Could you perhaps?...  
Now, speak!

**Sarah**

My fear...  
Everything... says... I am...

**Elizabeth**

Finish!



**Sara**

Tua rivale.

**Elisabetta**

Tu!

**Sara**

Me punisci...

Ma... del... conte serba... i giorni...

**Elisabetta**

*ai Cavalieri*

Deh! correte... deh! volate...

Pur ch'ei vivo a me ritorni,  
il mio serto domandate...

**Cavalieri**

Ciel, ne arrida il tuo favore.

colpo di cannone

**Nottingham**

*con gioia feroce*

Egli è spento.

**Sarah**

Your rival.

**Elizabeth**

You!

**Sarah**

Punish me...

But save the Earl!

**Elizabeth**

*to the knights*

Run! Fly to him!

if you bring him to me alive,  
You may demand my crown.

**Knights**

Heaven, may you favor him now.

*A cannonshot is heard.*

**Nottingham**

*with fierce joy*

He's dead.

**Gli altri**

Qual terrore!...

**Elisabetta**

*s'avvicina a Sara, convulsa di rabbia e d'affanno*

Tu, perversa... tu soltanto

lo spingesti nell'avello...

Onde mai tardar cotanto  
a recarmi questo anello?

**Nottingham**

Io, regina, la rattenni;

io, tradito nell'amor.

Sangue volli, e sangue ottenni.

**Elisabetta**

*a Sara*

Alma rea!...

*a Nottingham*

Spietato cor!...

**Gli altri**

Qual terrore!...

**The others**

How terrible!

**Elizabeth**

*approaches Sarah, convulsed with rage and suffering.*

You wicked creature, it was you  
who pushed him toward the grave.

What made you delay so long  
in bringing me the ring?

**Nottingham**

It was I, my Queen, who kept her from you –  
I, betrayed by love.

I wanted blood, and now I have it.

**Elizabeth**

*to Sarah*

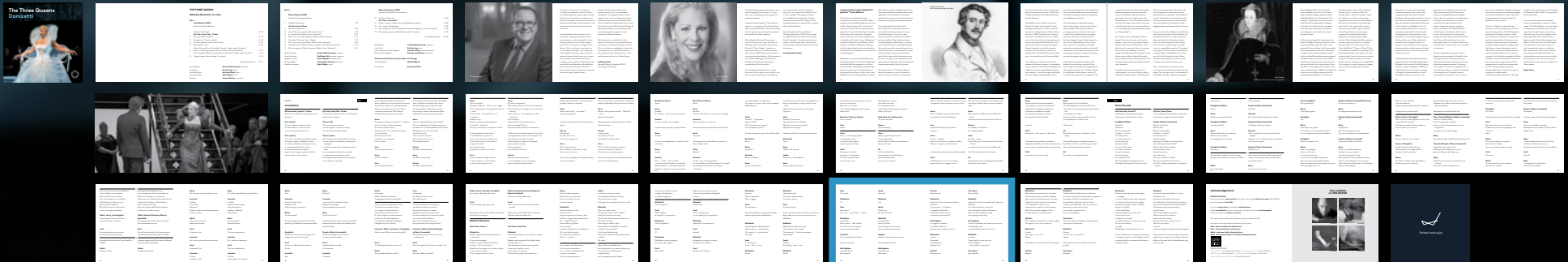
There is guilt in your very soul,...

*to Nottingham*

...and cruelty in your heart!

**The others**

How terrible!



**Elisabetta**

Quel sangue versato al cielo s'innalza,  
Giustizia domanda, reclama vendetta:  
già l'angiol di morte fremente v'incalza,  
supplizio inaudito entrambi v'aspetta ;  
si vil tradimento, delitto sì reo  
clemenza non merta, no merta pietà.  
Nell'ultimo istante volgetevi a Dio,  
ei forse perdono conceder potrà.

**Gli altri**

Ah! Ti calma, rammenta le cure del soglio :  
Chi regna, lo sai, non vive per sè

**Elisabetta**

Tacet!  
Non regno... non vivo...  
Uscite...

*Nottingham e Sara partono fra le guardie*

**Gli altri**

Regina!

**Elizabeth**

The blood that shed has risen to Heaven.  
It cries out for justice and demands vengeance.  
The angel of death stands before you,  
unspeakable suffering awaits you both!  
Such a vicious betrayal, such an evil crime,  
deserves no mercy and no pity.  
In your final moment of life,  
turn to the Almighty.

**The others**

Calm yourself, your Majesty, and remember  
your duty to the throne.

**Elizabeth**

Silence!  
I do not rule... I do not live...  
Leave!

*Nottingham and Sarah leave among the guards.*

**The others**

Majesty!

**Elisabetta**

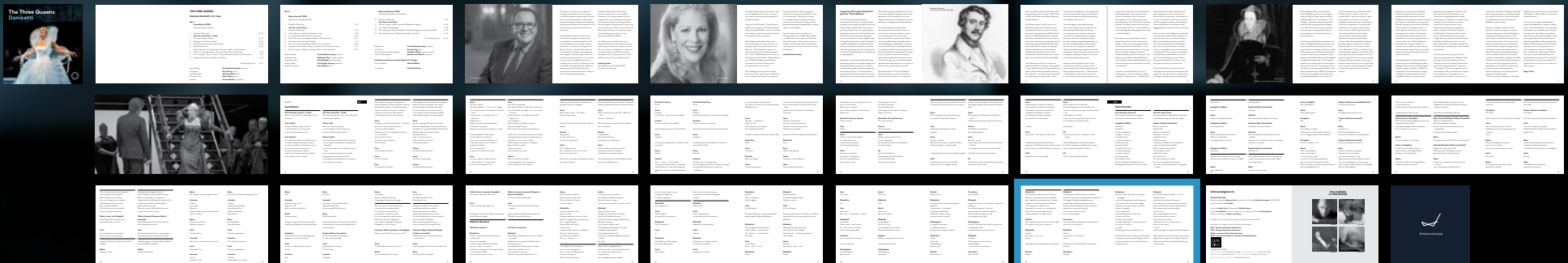
Tacete, mirate quel palco di sangue  
rosseggia  
e tutto di sangue quel serto bagnato,  
un orrido spettro percorre la reggia  
tenendo nel pugno il capo troncato,  
di gemi ti e grida  
il cielo rimbomba,  
pallente del giorno la luce si fe'...  
ov'era il moi trono  
s'innalza una tomba,  
in quella discendo, fu schiusa per me,  
Ah, per me. Partite...  
Io voglio...  
Dell'anglica terra sia Giacomo il re.

*Tutti si allontanano; ma giunti sul limitare  
si rivolgono ancora verso la Regina: ella è  
caduta sul sofà, accostandosi alla bocca  
l'anello di Essex.*

**Elizabeth**

Look at the execution block – it is now  
red with blood  
and blood now bathes the crown.  
A horrible ghost races through the palace,  
and in his hand he holds his severed head.  
The heavens are now resounding  
with his cries.  
They make daylight turn pale.  
Where once was my throne,  
there now rises a tomb.  
I descend into it as it opens for me.  
Alas, for me. Leave...  
I want it.  
Let James begin his reign as King of England.

*All go away, but once they have come to the  
edge they turn again to the Queen. She has  
fallen on the sofa and is holding Essex's ring  
to her mouth.*





## Acknowledgements

### PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive producers **Anthony Freud** (Lyric Opera of Chicago) & **Renaud Loranger** (PENTATONE)

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Product management **Kasper van Kooten**

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**AGMA - American Guild of Musical Artists**

**IATSE - International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees**



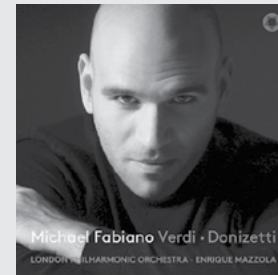
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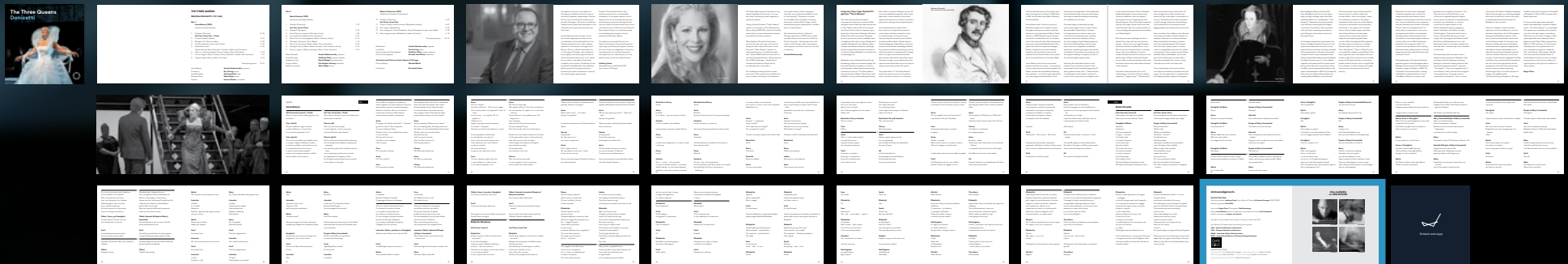
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