



TEATRO
MAGGIO
MUSICALE
FIORENTINO

LUIGI GORDIGIANI (1806-1860)
Romantic Florence

Songs for Voice and Piano

MARINA COMPARATO GIANNI FABBRINI

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

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Luigi Gordigiani (Modena, 1806 – Florence, 1860)

Romantic Florence

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01	Il sogno di Cenerentola (from <i>Canti d'Italia</i>) Words by Anonymous	05:42
02	L'aretta (from <i>Villa Palmieri</i>) Words by Anonymous	02:32
03	La tempesta (from <i>Gli amici</i>) Words by A. Lorini	02:52
04	Dal labbro tuo purpureo (from <i>La rosa d'Inghilterra</i>) Words by Leopoldo Micciarelli	05:07
05	La povera madre (from <i>La rosa d'Inghilterra</i>) Words by Leontina Gordigiani	04:46
06	Il fior della speranza (from <i>I tre gigli di Firenze</i>) Words by Leopoldo Micciarelli	02:55
07	Ohimè (from <i>Canti d'Italia</i>) Words by Anonymous	03:28
08	Chi ami (from <i>Canti d'Italia</i>) Words by Giovanni Prati	04:19
09	L'araba (from <i>Sei pezzi da camera</i>) Words by Giovan Battista Canovari	02:50
10	Piangerai (from <i>Iris fiorentina</i>) Words by Anonymous	03:53
11	È mezzodi (from <i>Ispirazioni fiorentine</i>) Words by G. Giacomelli	03:40
12	Ah non lasciarmi (from <i>Ispirazioni fiorentine</i>) Words by Anonymous	02:35
13	Rilla (from <i>Ispirazioni fiorentine</i>) Words by Giovanni Prati	03:33
14	Il lago e il fanciullo (from <i>San Donato</i>) Poem by Schiller, translated by Andrea Maffei	04:39
15	Quando verrà quel dì (from <i>Rimembranze di Londra</i>) Words by Anonymous	03:38
16	Neera (from <i>Rimembranze di Londra</i>) Poem by Luigi Carrer	02:09
17	Glicera (from <i>Rimembranze di Londra</i>) Poem by Luigi Carrer	03:16
18	Rococò (from <i>Rimembranze di Londra</i>) Poem by Leontina Gordigiani	02:28
19	Delusa (from <i>Rimembranze di Parigi</i>) Words by Anonymous	02:53

20	Desiderio (from <i>Firenze</i>) Words by Leontina Gordigiani	02:40
21	Ognuno tira l'acqua al suo mulino (from <i>Canti popolari toscani</i>) Words by Anonymous	02:08
22	Lascia stare il can che dorme (from <i>Canti popolari toscani</i>) Words by Anonymous	01:52
23	Desiderio di ballare (from <i>In riva all'Arno</i>) Words by Anonymous	02:59

Running Time

78:04

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Except for tracks Nos. 21 and 22

Marina Comparato, mezzo-soprano
Gianni Fabbrini, piano

The press would call him the “Italian Schubert” because, like the Schubert from Vienna, his creativity found its best expression in the song for voice and piano, which was what earned him international renown at an age when music in Italy mainly produced operatic works. A prominent figure in the Florence of the Risorgimento, Luigi Gordigiani (1806-1860) came from a family of musicians: his father Antonio and brother Giovanni Battista both sang as baritones; Giovanni Battista would later teach at the Conservatory of Prague and had as his best pupil that Teresa Stolz who was the favourite soprano of the mature Verdi. His wife Anna, moreover, was the daughter of Mauro Giuliani, the guitar virtuoso. Of the couple’s eight children, Michele became a renowned painter, and his daughter Giulietta, a pianist, would marry the German banker Robert von Mendelssohn (of the dynasty of the composer Felix), at whose death she would consort in life and art with the Catalan cellist Gaspar Cassadó. Gordigiani – who in Florence, from the very beginning, was backed, also financially, by the Demidovs, aristocrats of Russian origin, and whose works were divulged in European drawing rooms by Prince Giuseppe Poniatowski, a distant relative of the last King of Poland – actually wanted to become an operatic composer, and endeavoured to do so with several works, among them *Fausto*, from Goethe, which in 1836 met with a resounding fiasco at the Teatro della Pergola. But, as the critic Luigi Ferdinando Casamorato underlines

while remembering his figure in the “Gazzetta musicale di Milano” a few weeks after the composer’s death, “Gordigiani was not born for the theatre, his natural destination being drawing-room music”; despite that, “the theatre was his goal, and he stubbornly insisted in writing for the stage, discouraged neither by flops nor by the lesser evil: the indifference of the public; whereas those delightful drawing-room vocal compositions of his, which alone ultimately earned him the renown he achieved during his lifetime, [...] those compositions, although he pursued them with fatherly love, were considered less important than his theatrical works, as if the time he dedicated to them were almost a waste.”

At the heart of Gordigiani’s output, which captivated Rossini, Meyerbeer, Chopin, are the eight collections of *Popular Tuscan Songs*, published from the mid ‘40s to his death. The title derives from a volume of poems the composer had chanced upon while going through the goods of a used books seller. The verses come from popular tradition, mostly “stornelli” (a generally improvised poem of amorous or satirical subject *TN*) and “rispetti” (a 15th-century verse form expressing respect *TN*), to which Gordigiani gives a popular musical attire without making use of authentic folk melodies, contrary to what was often thought at the time. He developed, therefore, his own idiomatic style, which would then flow into so much Italian art song rooted in regional poetic heritage. He found a balance between brilliant, drawing-room writing – the interna-

tional language of the time – sometimes close to the vocal style of opera, and a vernacular hue, deliberately localised, which gives these pieces an honest, innocent look. That also applies to the times when Gordigiani crosses the popular ‘boundary’ to get into “more elevated, more finely crafted” songs (again Casamirata) and even into works, such as *Sogno di Cenerentola* (*Cinderella’s Dream*, here recorded), where he hints at operatic successes – in this case Rossini’s *Cenerentola*. “In cities and towns, in farms and castles, all are familiar with these light and original melodies, cheerful or mournful, coquettish or naïve,” recites Gustave Langlade’s ‘biographical sketch’, printed a few years after Gordigiani’s death. The composer, indeed, is the exponent of a suburban area (mid-19th-century Florence, provincial but ambitious) that goes to the conquest of the major European art centres (Paris, Vienna, London, St. Petersburg). A small world, capable, however, to express universal feelings and situations. The titles alone of many of his albums circumscribe his poetic programme within a sketch approach also meant to encourage sales: *Firenze, I tre gigli di Firenze, In riva all’Arno, Ispirazioni fiorentine, Le farfalle di Firenze, Campanile di Giotto, Mosaico etrusco, Gli stornelli d’Arezzo, Le belle toscane, Toscana, Villa Palmieri* (an old Florence house that might have suggested to Boccaccio the narrative framework of his *Decameron*), *San Donato* (the Florentine villa of the Demidovs, who received the title of Princes of San Donato from the Grand Duke of Tuscany), *Pratolino* (a

place just outside Florence, towards the Mugello, seat of a Medici estate bought, after the Unification of Italy, by the Demidovs), *Il sasso di Dante* (*Dante’s rock*, named after the place where, according to tradition, the poet would sit and watch the construction of the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral).

Outside of Italy Gordigiani was also known as a pianist, who would often perform his pieces with famous singers, wanting sometimes to get away from too local a dimension. The collections entitled *Rimembranze di Londra* and *Rimembranze di Parigi* testify to that. And, above all, *La rosa d’Inghilterra*, dedicated to Queen Victoria, whose lyrics were judged graceful and delightful by the British press: adjectives apt to describe the character of all Gordigiani’s songs.

Gregorio Moppi

(Translated by Daniela Pilarz)

Marina Comparato was born in Perugia but is Florentine by adoption.

After a university degree in Political Science in Florence, in 1996 she graduated in Singing from the Conservatory of the same city. Right after her diploma, she debuted in London as Rosina in *Barbiere di Siviglia*; the same year she won first prize at Rome’s “V. Bucchi” competition dedicated to 20th-century music. Nel 1997 she won the competition of Spoleto’s Teatro Lirico Sperimentale “A. Belli”, debuting in the venue’s season as Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito*.

Since then, her international career has led her

to perform in the most important Italian and European theatres. Among the roles that have mostly shaped the beginnings of her career are those of Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, interpreted at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, San Carlo of Naples, Fenice of Venice, Carlo Felice of Genoa, Comune of Bologna, Teatro Real of Madrid, in Amsterdam, Antwerp, Leipzig and at the Glyndebourne Festival; and Rosina in *Barbiere di Siviglia*, which saw her as protagonist at such theatres as the Opera in Rome, Regio in Turin, Massimo in Palermo, in Venice, Florence, Trieste, at the Opéra of Paris, Colon of Buenos Aires, Teatro de la Maestranza of Seville. A specialist of the great Mozart roles, she is equally devoted to the baroque repertoire (Monteverdi, Haendel, Pergolesi, Vivaldi), the bel canto and romantic ones (Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Gounod, Berlioz, Weber and the first Verdi), as well as to 20th-century music (Ravel, Poulenc, Berg, De Falla).

In 2017 she expanded her repertoire, debuting as *Carmen* at Venice's La Fenice under the baton of Myung-Whun Chung – a role she also interpreted at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Tokyo Opera City Hall and Suntory Hall –, and as Charlotte in *Werther* at Palermo's Teatro Massimo. An active concert performer, she has appeared at numerous venues, among them: Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Royal Albert Hall and Barbican Center (London), NHK Concert Hall (Tokyo), Théâtre des Champs Élysées and Salle Pleyel (Paris), Theater an der Wien (Vienna).

Comparato has worked with renowned conductors: Claudio Abbado, Roberto Abbado, Rinaldo

Alessandrini, Riccardo Chailly, James Conlon, Myung-Whun Chung, Sir Andrew Davis, Ottavio Dantone, Renè Jacobs, Jesus Lopez Cobos, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Zubin Mehta, Kent Nagano, Daniel Oren, Christophe Rousset, Jeffrey Tate.

She has, moreover, recorded several CDs: Verdi's *Aroldo* (Philips), Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans*, *Orlando finto pazzo* and *Armida* (Opus 111), Vivaldi's *Giustino* (Virgin Classics), Weber's *Oberon* (Decca), Terradellas's *Artaserse* (Harmonia Mundi-RCOC), *Fedora* and *La Finta semplice* in DVD (Deutsche Grammophon), *Le Nozze di Figaro* in DVD (TDK), Rossini's *Zelmira* (Naxos). She has also recorded some solo albums: "Cantate" by Crescentini (Tactus), "Melodie" by P. Viardot (Brilliant), "Hommage à Garcia Lorca – Preludios y canciones – (Musica Novantiqua). A curious and eclectic person, her research in archives have led her to rediscover unexplored musical treasures, leading to some of her solo albums and many more in the making.

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Gianni Fabbrini was born in Florence and graduated in piano from the Conservatory of his city, then furthering his studies in harpsichord and enrolling in the faculty of Musicology at the University of Florence while, at the same time, earning diplomas in Singing and Vocal Chamber Music. He worked for prestigious international concert and operatic venues: Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Opéra National de Paris, Theatre Royale de La Monnaie (Brussels), Palau de Les Arts (Valencia), the Glyndebourne and Wexford Festivals, the Salzburg Osterfestspiele, Theater an der Wien, Festival Rossini (Wildbad), Wiener Konzerthaus, the Bremen Festival, the Dresden Semper Oper, the Seul National Opera Theatre, the Tokyo Bunkamura Orchid Hall, the Kyoto Biwako Hall, the Shanghai Symphony, the Baxter Theatre di Capetown; and, in Italy: the Rossini Opera Festival, Società Aquilana dei Concerti, Orchestra da Camera di Padova e del Veneto, Festival Pergolesi of Iesi, Estate Fiesolana, Orchestra Regionale della Toscana, Maggio Musicale and Amici della Musica of Florence, working as a performer or assisting such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Donato Renzetti, Carlo Rizzi, Claudio Scimone, Alberto Zedda, Renè Jacobs, Marc Minkowski, Jeffrey Tate, Lu Ja, Emanuelle Haim. In the operatic field, he has worked with internationally renowned directors, among them Peter Brook, Peter Stein, Jean Louis Martinoty, Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier, and with the Italians Pierluigi Pizzi, Mario Martone, Damiano Michieletto, Davide Livermore.

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Dynamic Srl

Via Mura Chiappe 39, 16136 Genova - Italy
tel.+39 010.27.22.884 fax +39 010.21.39.37

dynamic@dynamic.it

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