

Dinara Alieva

Pace mio Dio...



Marcello Rota, conductor
Czech National Symphony Orchestra

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DINARA ALIEVA

Pace, mio Dio....

"She is a wonder!" *Montserrat Caballé*

"Beautiful voice, temperament and artistry." *Teresa Berganza*

VERDI: *Sempre libera • Addio del passato • Tacea la notte • D'amor sull' ali rosee • Pace, pace mio Dio*

PUCCINI: *Vissi d'arte • O mio babbino caro • Un bel di vedremo • Chi il bel sogno di Doretta • Tu che di gel sei cinta*

CILEA: *Io son l'umile ancella* • **CATALANI:** *Ebben? Ne andró*

LEONCAVALLO: *Qual fiamma avea nel guardo!*

Total Playing Time: 62:11

Czech National Symphony Orchestra

Marcello Rota, conductor



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DINARA ALIEVA

Pace, mio Dio....

1. VERDI: "E strano!...Sempre libera" (*La Traviata*) (7:26)
2. VERDI: "Addio del passato" (*La Traviata*) (7:10)
3. PUCCINI: "Vissi d'arte" (*La Tosca*) (3:25)
4. PUCCINI: "O mio babbino caro" (*Gianni Schicchi*) (2:30)
5. PUCCINI: "Un bel di vedremo" (*Madama Butterfly*) (4:46)
6. PUCCINI: "Chi il bel sogno di Doretta" (*La Rondine*) (2:56)
7. PUCCINI: "Tu che di gel sei cinta" (*Turandot*) (2:56)
8. CATALANI: "Ebben? Ne andrò lontana" (*La Wally*) (3:54)
9. CILEA: "Io son l'umile ancella" (*Adriana Lecouvreur*) (3:36)
10. LEONCAVALLO: "Qual fiamma avea nel guardo!" (*I Pagliacci*) (5:03)
11. VERDI: "Tacea la notte placida" (*Il Trovatore*) (5:47)
12. VERDI: "D'amor sull' ali rosee" (*Il Trovatore*) (6:08)
13. VERDI: "Pace, pace mio Dio" (*La Forza del Destino*) (6:06)

Total Playing Time: 62:11

Marcello Rota, conductor
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Svyatoslav Igorevich Belza (b. 1942) is one of Russia's most prominent all-around arts scholars, active from the Soviet era forward as a highly respected literary and music critic and journalist. Since the late 1980s, he has been a leading television producer, writer and presenter of special projects and programs designed to popularize classical music, opera, ballet and theatre. Belza can claim the distinction of being a People's Artist of Russia, and he is an honorary member of the Russian Academy of Arts. His comments about the rising star soprano **Dinara Alieva** are immediately below, followed by this author's notes plus texts and translations.

ASCENDING TO OPERA'S MOUNT OLYMPUS

"There is just as much diversity in human voices as there is in human faces. This diversity ... is a hundred times more noticeable when it comes to song." This was the assertion made by Stendhal, a true lover of music. What we treasure above all, in any artist, is striking individuality and a facial expression that is out of the ordinary, while in a vocalist we also value the uniqueness and richness of the voice's timbre.

It is these qualities – prerequisites in this day and age for those wishing to become successful opera singers – that Dinara Alieva has in abundance. As is the fashion nowadays, she combines an irresistible, model-like appearance with a talent that has been described by the discerning Montserrat Caballé as “a gift from Heaven.”

All God-given talents, much like jewels, require exquisite faceting. Dinara Alieva was blessed with good training. Born in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, she graduated from the Hajibeyov Baku Academy of Music and embarked on a career at the Akhundov Azerbaijan State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet, where she performed some of the lead roles in operatic masterpieces by Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini and Ruggero Leoncavallo. She honed her skills at master classes led by such illustrious opera singers as Caballé and Elena Obraztsova. Dinara Alieva's natural gifts, coupled with her relentless hard work and determination, enabled her to garner awards at prestigious international contests held in Baku, Saint Petersburg, Athens, Barcelona and Milan. She was later awarded the honorary title Distinguished Artist of Azerbaijan.

Her soprano – of rare beauty and strength – could not go unnoticed by the famous opera houses. In 2009, Dinara Alieva joined Russia's Bolshoi Theatre as a soloist, making her debut as Liù in Puccini's *Turandot*. Her repertoire steadily grew, as she took on roles such as Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Marfa in *The Tsar's Bride*, Nedda in *Pagliacci*, and many others. Dinara Alieva was invited to perform at the Vienna State Opera, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Alte Oper in Frankfurt am Main, the Latvian National Opera in Riga, the Opera Stuttgart of the Stuttgart State Theater, and the Mikhaylovsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg.

With her diverse chamber programs, Dinara Alieva has performed at opera houses and concert halls in Russia, Italy, France, Greece, the Czech Republic, Monte Carlo, the United States, and Japan, and has taken part in a host of festivals. In 2010, Baku hosted a concert which featured her performing alongside the world-famous tenor Plácido Domingo. Another renowned operatic tenor – José Cura – has taken to

the stage as her conductor. Many other distinguished maestros, including Yuri Temirkanov, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Vladimir Spivakov, Yuri Bashmet, Giuseppe Sabbatini and Marcello Rota are only too happy to work alongside her.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart once said: “I love it when an aria suits a singer like a beautifully tailored dress.” Owing to her magnificent voice and artistry, Dinara Alieva is able to switch easily between her various on-stage “dresses.” In addition to the heroines of classical opera, she has also played Rosalinde in a production by the Bolshoi Theater of Johann Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat), while her concert programs include works in a variety of genres, ranging from Russian and Azerbaijani folk songs and operatic arias to romantic ballads and jazz numbers.

Dinara Alieva’s success thus far has been impressive, but I think her greatest achievements are still to come. She is slowly but surely ascending to the Mount Olympus of the opera world.

— Svyatoslav Belza



As Liu in “Turandot”
Bolshoi Theater
Photo: Damir Yousupov

As Leonora in "Il
Trovatore" Stadtheater.
Klagenfurt, Austria



Biographic Addendum:

Dinara's already impressive repertoire encompasses a wide range of concert, chamber music and recital programs that include larger non-operatic works with orchestra – as well as more intimate programs of Lieder and vocal miniatures including the cycles of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, Wolf, Villa-Lobos and Fauré. Her penchant for the jazz idiom extends to Gershwin's operatic arias and songs. A tireless champion of her home province's musical culture, her programs often include the works of Azerbaijani composers and regional folksongs.

Her lifelong immersion in music included teenage years as a pianist before she turned her full attention to vocal studies.

Readers who wish to peruse more exhaustively detailed coverage of Dinara's career and accomplishments are invited to consult the comprehensive biography to be found at her website:
<http://dinaraalieva.com>.

In the early 1850s, with most of Italy (and much of the rest of Europe) still ruled by royalty, **Giuseppe Verdi** sought an opera subject that would avoid the kinds of censorship problems that *Rigoletto* (about a womanizing nobleman) had suffered – and that would provoke his audience without pushing the political envelope too far. He settled on a story based upon Alexandre Dumas' novel, *La Dame aux Camellias*, weaving in then-contemporary elements like festive waltzes and a graphically tragic bout with tuberculosis to modernize the genre. Whatever its formula, ***La Traviata*** immediately struck the public's fancy, and has remained one of Verdi's top favorites ever since. Its tragic heroine, the courtesan Violetta – having encountered Alfredo's unwavering passion for her early on – at first shrugs it off despite her reciprocal love for him. In “**E strano!...Sempre libera,**” perhaps in denial of her worsening illness, she sings of her troubling attraction to him, then gives in to the more bacchanalian pleasures of life, valuing freedom over love. This is the last time she'll claim such an attitude.

E strano! E strano!
In core scolpiti ho quegli accenti!
Saria per me sventura un serio amore?
Che risolvi, o turbata anima mia?
Null'uomo ancora t'accendeva...
Oh, gioia
Ch'io non conobbi,
Esser amata amando!
E sdegnarla poss'io
Per l'aride follie del viver mio?

Ah, forse lui che l'anima
Solvinga ne'tumulti
Godea sovente pingere
De'suoi colom occulti
Lui, che modesto e vigile.
All'egre soglie ascese,
E nuova febbre accese
Destandomi all'amor!

A quell'amor ch'è palpito
Dell'universo intero,
Misterioso, altero
Croce e delizia al cor.
Follie! Delirio vano e questo!
Povera donna, sola, abbandonata
In quest popoloso deserto
Che appellano parigi
Che spero or piu? Che far degg'io?
Gioire!

Di volutta ne'vortici perir!
Gioir!

Sempre libera degg'io
Folleggiare di gioia in gioia,
Vo'che scorra il viver mio
Pei sentieri del piacer.
Nasca il giorno, o il giorno muoia,
Sempre lieta ne'ritrovi,
A dilette sempre nuovi
Dee volare il mio pensier

Oh! Oh! Amore!
Follie!
Gioir!

How strange it is... how strange!
Those words are carved upon my heart!
Would true love bring me misfortune?
What do you think, o my troubled spirit?
No man before ignited this kind of flame.
Oh, joy... I never knew...
To love and be loved!
Can I scorn this
For a life of sterile pleasure?

Was this the man my heart,
Alone in a crowd,
Often delighted to paint
In vague, mysterious colors?

This man so watchful, yet modest,
Who haunted my sickbed
And turned my fever
Into a burning flame of love!

That love,
The pulse of the whole world,
Mysterious, unattainable,
The torment and delight of my heart.
It's madness. It's empty delirium!

A poor, lonely woman
Abandoned in this teeming desert
They call Paris!
What can I hope?
What should I do?
Enjoy myself?
Drown myself in pleasure's whirlpool!
Enjoy myself!
Free and aimless
I must flutter
From pleasure to pleasure,
Skimming the surface Of life's primrose
path.

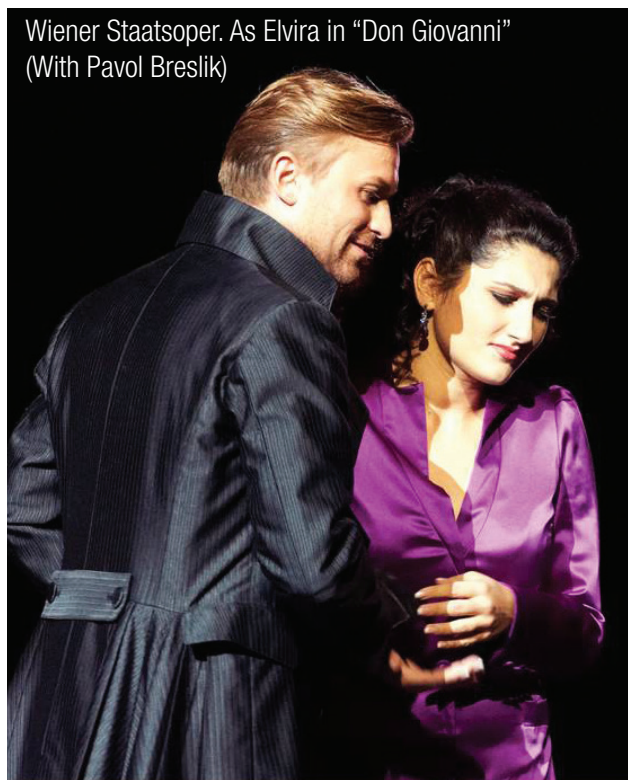
As each day dawns,
As each day dies,
Gaily I turn to new delights
That make my spirit soar.

Violetta – after a joyful country idyll with Alfredo – is persuaded by Germont, his father, to separate from him for his family's sake. Finally, as Violetta is dying of tuberculosis at home, she receives a letter from Germont, explaining that Alfredo had learned of her sacrifice for him – earlier misunderstood as betrayal – and that he is on his way to reunite with her. Violetta realizes that she is too far gone to rise to Alfredo's reinstated love. Expressing sage if frank sentiments about mortality in **"Addio del passato,"** she bids nostalgic farewell to her former joy and happiness, her voice dripping forlorn heartbreak; she now hopes only for a comfortable passing into God's arms – and, after a brief reunion with Alfredo, her wish is granted as she falls lifeless.

"Teneste la promessa... la disfida
Ebbe luogo! il barone fu ferito,
Però migliora Alfredo
È in stranio suolo; il vostro sacrificio
Io stesso gli ho svelato;
Egli a voi tornerà pel suo perdono;
Io pur verrò. Curatevi... meritate
Un avvenir migliore.
- Giorgio Germont".



Wiener Staatsoper. As Elvira in "Don Giovanni"
(With Pavol Breslik)



È tardi!
Attendo, attendo né a me giungon mai! . . .
Oh, come son mutata!
Ma il dottore a sperar pure m'esorta!
Ah, con tal morbo ogni speranza è morta.

Addio, del passato bei sogni ridenti,
Le rose del volto già son pallenti;
L'amore d'Alfredo pur esso mi manca,
Conforto, sostegno dell'anima stanca
Ah, della traviata sorridi al desio;

A lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglila, o Dio,
Or tutto finì.

Le gioie, i dolori tra poco avran fine,
La tomba ai mortali di tutto è confine!
Non lagrima o fiore avrà la mia fossa,
Non croce col nome che copra quest'ossa!
Ah, della traviata sorridi al desio;
A lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglila, o Dio.
Or tutto finì!

"You have kept your promise... the duel
Took place! The baron was wounded,
But he is improving. Alfredo
Is on foreign soil; your sacrifice
I myself have revealed to him;
He is returning to request your pardon;
I will also come. Take care of yourself...
You deserve
A better future.

- Giorgio Germont".

It is too late!
I wait, but they never come! Oh, how I've
changed!
But the doctor encourages me to hope as
well!

Ah, with this disease, all hope is dead.
Farewell, happy dreams of the past,
The roses in my cheeks have faded;
I also miss Alfredo's love

Comfort, support for my tired soul
 Ah, smile at the desire of the forsaken
 woman;
 To her, oh, grant forgiveness; welcome
 her, O God,
 Now it is all over.
 Joys and sorrows alike will soon end,
 The tomb ends everything for mortals!
 My grave will have no tear or flower,
 No cross with a name to cover these
 bones!
 Ah, smile at the desire of the forsaken
 woman;
 Grant forgiveness, oh God, and welcome
 her;
 It is all over now.

If you are at all moved by the character of
Tosca, it's not because of the way Victo-
 rien Sardou originally characterized her
 in *La Tosca*, the play on which **Giacomo**
Puccini based his famous opera of the
 same title. After another composer had
 turned his nose up at the project, Puc-
 cini took it on, putting his librettists to
 work on revising it while he completed
La Bohème. In addition to the flowing
 lyrical beauty for which the composer
 is treasured, he added signature themes,
 or leitmotifs, to lend increased substance

to the otherwise unlikely characters.
 In Puccini's hands, the character of the
 singer Floria Tosca – despite her initial
 sweetly serene nature – becomes cred-
 ible; not just as a vehicle for stunningly
 dramatic vocal virtuosity, but in her fu-
 rious outrage at the injustice of her situa-
 tion, with her lover Caravadossi awaiting
 execution and the lecherous Scarpia (his
 captor) pursuing her relentlessly. In her
 Act 2 aria, “**Vissi d'arte**,” she miserably
 bemoans her bitter circumstances, ask-
 ing God what she has done to deserve
 the misfortune of arch-villain Scarpia's
 manipulative advances – whom she soon
 murders, hoping she can now escape to
 a better life with Caravadossi. But after
 finding that he has been executed any-
 way, she – in one of opera's most spectac-
 ular suicides – flings herself off the par-
 apet of Castel Sant'Angelo to her death.

Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore,
 Non feci mai male ad anima viva!
 Con man furtiva
 Quante miserie conobbi, aiutai...
 Sempre con fè sincera
 La mia preghiera
 Ai santi tabernacoli sali.
 Sempre con fè sincera,

Diedi fiori agl'altar.
Nell'ora del dolore
Perchè, perchè Signore,
Perchè me ne rimunerì così?
Diedi gioielli della Madonna al manto,
E diedi il canto agli astri, al ciel,
Che ne ridean più belli.
Nell'ora del dolor
Perchè, perchè Signor,
Ah, perchè me ne rimunerì così?

I live for art, I live for love,
Thus was my art truly inspired!
I brought sweet consolation
To the poor, the unhappy ...
Always with deep emotion
Did I pour out my true devotion
To the glory of God.
With deepest devotion,
I brought flowers to adorn his altar.
But now, in my hour of despair...
Why, why, O Lord,
Why is this my reward?
I laid on your altar my worldly gifts;
I never hesitated to sing
Of Your boundless greatness.
So now, in my time of despair
Why, why, O Lord,
Why is this my reward?

Gianni Schicchi – Puccini's single-act comic opera – presents the hilarious story of the shenanigans surrounding an aristocratic family, which – upon learning that their just-deceased patriarch has bequeathed his entire estate to a monastery – sets out to change his will to their benefit before anyone in town realizes he's dead. To pull off the fraudulent will, the family beseeches local con man Gianni Schicchi to impersonate the deceased. Schicchi, initially disgusted by the family's greed, agrees to do it only after his daughter, Lauretta, delivers "**O mio babbino caro**," one of the opera world's best-loved soprano arias. In this meltingly beautiful and heartfelt outpouring of a woman in love (but who still loves her "dear Daddy," too), she announces her intention to marry Rinuccio, one of the family members, telling her father that she'll throw herself into the Arno river below the Ponte Vecchio if Schicchi won't allow the marriage. The disguised Schicchi then proceeds to verbally alter the will from his "deathbed" before public witnesses, but – to the family's helpless consternation – he bequeaths everything to "my dear friend, Gianni Schicchi," thereby insuring his daughter's (and his own) prosperous future!

O mio babbino caro,
 Mi piace, è bello, bello;
 Vo'andare in Porta Rossa
 A comperar l'anello!
 Sì, sì, ci voglio andare!
 E se l'amassi indarno
 Andrei sul Ponte Vecchio,
 Ma per buttarmi in Arno!
 Mi struggo e mi tormento.
 O Dio, vorrei morir!
 Babbo, pietà pietà!

Oh, my dearest papa,
 I love him, he is so handsome;
 I want to go to Porta Rosa
 To buy the wedding ring!
 Yes, yes, I want to go!
 If my love is not returned,
 I'll go to the Ponte Vecchio
 And throw myself into the Arno!
 I am so distressed and in such pain.
 Oh God, I could die!
 Papa, take pity on me, please!

Puccini immediately began working on *Madama Butterfly* after seeing David Belasco's play by the same name in 1900, though he didn't receive the rights for more than a year. Perhaps he was attracted to Butterfly's unwavering and hopeful



(yet ultimately tragic) love, as expressed in one of Puccini's most famous and moving arias, "**Un bel di vedremo.**" She waits faithfully for Pinkerton, her American naval officer husband, three years after he has married, then abandoned her in Japan and her family has disowned her for embracing his religion. Butterfly (AKA Cio-cio-san), who has borne his child, sings ecstatically of an imaginary scene in which Pinkerton returns as he had promised. After looking to the ocean to see his

As Musetta in "La Bohème"



ship arrive, she patiently waits for him to ascend the mountain to her dwelling, where he will call her "dear little wife, bouquet of verbena" like he did before. Note how the aria shifts between gentle reverie and staggering dramatic power. She later discovers Pinkerton has returned, but with his American wife – who wishes to take Butterfly's child – whereupon she shuts herself away in her room and commits suicide with her father's dagger just as Pinkerton arrives, calling her name.

Un bel di vedremo
Levarsi un fil di fumo

Sull'estremo confin del mare.
E poi la nave appare-
Poi la nave bianca
Entra nel porto, romba
Il suo saluto. Vedi?
E venuto!
Io non gli scendo incontro.
Io no. Mi metto là
Sul ciglio del colle e aspetto,
E aspetto gran tempo
E non mi pesa
La lunga attesa.
E ... uscito dalla folia cittadina
Un uom, un picciol punto
S'avvia per la collina.
Chi sarà? chi sarà?
E come sarà giunto
Che dirà? che dirà?
Chiamera "Butterfly!"
Dalla lontana.
Io senza dar risposta
Me ne starò nascosta,
Un po' per celia
E un po' per non morir
Al primo incontro,
Ed egli alquanto in pena
Chiamerà, chiamerà:
"Piccina mogliettina,
Olezzo di verbena!"
I nomi che mi dava

Al suo venire.
Tutto quesro avverrà,
Te lo prometto.
Tienti la tua paura,
Io con sicura fede l'aspetto.

One fine day we will see
A wisp of smoke arising
On the sea's far horizon,
And then the ship will appear.
Then the white ship
Will sail into the harbor,
Thundering a salute.
Don't you see it?
He has returned!
I'll not go down to meet him,
No, I'll stand there
At the hill's crest and wait;
I'll wait for a long time,
But the wait
Won't seem long.
And emerging from the crowd
A man - a tiny figure -
Will begin to climb the hill.
Who could it be?
And when he gets here,
What will he say?
"Butterfly!" - he'll call
From the distance.
I, not answering,

Will stay hidden,
Partly to tease him,
And partly so I won't die
When we meet.
And, now a little worried,
He'll call,
"Dear little wife,
Bouquet of verbena,"
The names he called me before
When he was here.
And this will all happen,
I promise you.
Don't be afraid,
With absolute faith I'll wait for him.

In 1913, the directors of Vienna's Carltheater asked Puccini to write an operetta; he agreed, but stipulated that the project be a through-composed comic opera, something "like *Rosenkavalier*, only more entertaining." Puccini revised it extensively, eventually leaving us three different versions, of which the third is most often performed today. Long ignored, many opera buffs now consider *La Rondine* to be a neglected masterpiece that's at last getting the attention it deserves. The first act opens with Prunier - a poet at an elegant party in mid-19th-century Paris - expounding

on sentimental love. As almost everyone mocks his ideas, the courtesan Magda (the party's hostess) listens as the poet illustrates his point with a story about Doretta, who chooses the man she loves over a king who loves her. In "**Chi il bel sogno di Doretta**," Magda sings a fantasy-ridden and spontaneous second verse to his story, about a woman who falls in love with her student: "Who cares for wealth if at last happiness flourishes?" And, as the opera unfolds, she indeed has a romantic fling with a younger man: one that ends unhappily for him, when she abandons him in the end.

Chi il bel sogno di Doretta
Potè indovinar?
Il suo mister come mai
Come mai finì?
Ahimè! un giorno uno studente
In bocca la baciò
E fu quel bacio
Rivelazione:
Fu la passione!
Folle amore!
Folle ebbrezza!
Chi la sottil carezza
D'un bacio così ardente
Mai ridir potrà?
Ah! mio sogno!

Ah! mia vita!
Che importa la ricchezza
Se alfine è rifiorita
La felicità!
O sogno d'or,
Poter amar così!

Who could ever imagine
Doretta's beautiful dream?
How did her mystery end?
Alas! One day a student
Kissed her lips
And this kiss
Was a revelation:
It was passion!
Full of love!
Intoxicating!
Who could resist
The subtle caress
Of such an ardent kiss?
Ah! My dream!
Ah! My life!
What do I care about wealth
If happiness finally blooms!
Ah, golden dream,
To be able to love like that!

In Puccini's tale of the beautiful, but cold and imperious Chinese princess *Turan-dot*, her noble suitors are being behead-

ed one by one for their failure to answer three riddles that she poses to them. “The unknown Prince” (Calaf) is enamored by her beauty, and finally wins her hand in marriage by answering all three riddles. But he gives the reluctant princess a way out, telling her that he, too, will go willingly to his death if she can guess his name before dawn. Liu – a slave girl in love with Calaf – knows his name, but won’t reveal it even under torture, or to forestall her own imminent death. In her aria, “**Tu che di gel sei cinta,**” she sings to Turandot – in resigned but resolute tones – that she, too, will fall in love with Calaf, though she resists him now: “You, who are sheathed in ice – when such a flame overcomes it, You will love him, even you!” Liu then grabs a guard’s dagger, and kills herself. Note the whiffs of Asian pentatonic tonalities here: Puccini’s not-entirely-convincing, yet still attractive attempt to emulate Chinese sound according to the stereotypical notions of the day.

Tu, che di gel sei cinta,
Da tanta fiamma vinta
I’amerai anche tu!
Prima di questa aurora,
Io chiudo stanca gli occhi,

Perchè egli vinca ancora...
Per non vederlo più!
You, who are sheathed in ice,
When such a flame overcomes it,
You will love him, even you!
By tomorrow morning,
My weary eyes will close,
So that he’ll again be victorious ...
And I’ll never see him again!

Debuting at La Scala in 1892 – a year before Puccini’s *Manon Lescaut* – **La Wally**, by **Alfredo Catalani**, is rarely performed nowadays, though this aria – “**Ebben? Ne andrò lontana**” – remains popular on its



As Rosalinda in "Die Fledermaus" at the Bolshoi Theatre



own. This so-called “peasant romance,” set in the Tyrolean Alps, tells the tragic tale of Wally, who loves her father’s enemy, Hagenbach. A jealous suitor, Gellner, observes her obvious affection for his rival and tells her father, who angrily insists that she marry Gellner, or leave home. Choosing the latter, she heads to an isolated mountain life, after singing this stirring and justly famous aria: a bleak and heartbroken farewell to her mother’s cheerful house, perhaps never to return. In the end, the lovers – reconciled at last in a mountain wilderness – die spectacular (and nearly impossible to stage) deaths when Hagenbach is swept away in an avalanche, and Wally throws herself into the thundering snow after him!

Ebben! Ne andrò lontana
Come va l’eco della pia campana là,
Fra la neve bianca! Là, fra le nubi d’ôr,
Laddove fa speranza, è rimpianto, è dolor.

O della madre mia casa gioconda.
La Wally ne andrà da te lontana assai,
E forse a te non farà mai più ritorno
Nè più la rivedrai! Mai più. Mai più.

Ne andrò sola e lantana
Come l’eco della pia campana là,

Fra la neve bianca:
N’ andrò, n’ andrò sola e lontana ..
E fra le nubi d’ôr!

Well? I’ll go far away,
As far as the church bell’s echo.
There in the midst of the white snow!
There in the midst of the golden clouds,
Where hope becomes regret and sorrow.

Ah, my mother’s cheerful house, Wally is
going far
Away from you, perhaps never to return.
You will see her no more, no more!

I will go alone, as far
As the church bell’s echo,
There in the midst of the white snow.
I will go alone, far away,
In the midst of the golden clouds!

When **Francesco Cilea**’s successful *L’arlesiana* prompted the commissioning of another opera, the result was **Adriana Lecouvreur**: a story so popular for its comic/tragic mixture and moving (if far-fetched) final act that three other composers set the same story – though their efforts have long since been forgot-

ten. The opera begins with a classic play within a play, with actors and actresses whose own curtain is about to rise, featuring the actress Adriana and her rival, Duclos. The Prince of Bouillon arrives to wish them luck, to which the dedicated artist Adriana replies – in **“Io son l’umile ancella”** – that she is only a vessel for the creative spirit: “I’m the echo of human drama ... Tender, joyful, savage, my name is Faithful. Despite the complex and confusing plot that follows – and the heroine’s unlikely “death by poisoned violets” in the end – the opera has retained its foothold in the modern repertoire. The stunning appeal of this aria will only begin to tell you why.

Ecco: respiro appena.
Io son l’umile ancella
Del Genio creator
Ei m’offre la favella, [io] la diffondo al cor.
Del verso io son l’accento,
L’eco del dramma uman,
Il fragile strumento vassallo della man.
Mite gioconda, atroce. mi chiamo, Fedeltà,
Un saffio è la mia voce, che al novo dì
morrà.
See, I’m hardly breathing...

I am the humble servant of the creative
genius
Who gives me the words inflame the soul.
I am only the accent of his verse,
The echo of human drama,
The fragile instrument on which he plays,
Tender, joyful, savage, my name is Faith-
ful.
My voice is a sigh that will die tomorrow.

The theme of acting continues with a choice aria from *I Pagliacci*: perhaps the most famous example of an operatic play within a play. **Ruggero Leoncavallo**’s only lasting contribution to the repertoire, the opera’s clever plot never fails to beguile audiences with its stage parallels and double meanings. After an acting troupe arrives at the location for their show one night, villagers tease Canio – the troupe’s leader – about the not-so-secret intention of Silvio (another troupe member) to have an affair with his wife, Nedda. Canio explains that, though the character he is playing is a foolish and clueless husband, he himself would not tolerate such behavior. When Canio retires to the tavern, the unfaithful Nedda – in her aria, **“Qual fiamma avea nel guardo!”** – expresses her alarm and fore-

boding at the look in her husband's eyes when he says such things. But she pushes her fear aside as she watches birds soaring above, wishing for freedom – which she gets at the opera's conclusion, when Canio – still “in character” – kills her in a jealous rage, and then announces to the shocked crowd: “The comedy is finished!”

Qual fiamma avea nel guardo!
Gli occhi abbassai per tema ch'ei leggesse
Il mio pensier segreto!
Oh! s'ei mi sorprendesse...
Bruttale come egli è!
Ma basti, or via.
Son questi sogni paurosi e fole!
O che bel sole di mezz'agosto!
Io son piena di vita,
E, tutta illanguidita per arcano desio,
Non so che bramo!
(Guardando in cielo)
Oh! che volo d'augelli,
E quante strida!
Che chiedono? dove van? chissà!
La mamma mia,
Che la buona ventura annunciava,
Comprendeva il lor canto
E a me bambina così cantava:
Hui! Hui!



With Jose Cura. Kremlin Palace June 2012

As Musetta in "La Bohème" at the Bolshoi Theatre



Stridono lassù, liberamente
Lanciati a vol, a vol come frecce, gli
augel.
Disfidano le nubi e il sol cocente,
E vanno, e vanno per le vie del ciel.
Lasciateli vagar per l'atmosfera,
Questi assetati d'azzurro e di splendor:
Seguono anch'essi un sogno, una chi-
mera,
E vanno, e vanno fra le nubi d'or!
Che incalzi il vento e latri la tempesta,
Con l'ali aperte san tutto sfidar;
La pioggia i lampi, nulla mai li arresta,
E vanno, e vanno sugli abissi e i mar.
Vanno laggiù verso un paese strano
Che sognan forse e che cercano in van.
Ma i boèmi del ciel, seguon l'arcano
poter
Che li sospinge... e van! e van! e van! e
van!

Such fire in his gaze!
I looked away, lest
He read my deepest thoughts.
Oh! If he caught me off guard,
As brutal as he is! But enough of that,
These are just bad dreams and silliness.
Oh, how lovely is the Midsummer sun!
I'm full of life, dreamy with desire,
But I don't know what I'm yearning for!

Oh! What a flight of birds, what a din!
What are they looking for?
Where are they going? Who knows?
My mother could see the future,
And understood their songs; she sang
Songs like these to me when I was a little
girl.
Hui! How wild their cries up there,
As they fly freely, like arrows!
They defy storm clouds and sun alike!
As they fly through the sky,
Seeking light, air and splendor,
Let them go their way, for they
Also follow a dream and a vision,
Flying ever onward through golden
clouds.
Let winds shake them and storms toss
them,
They confront everything with open
wings;
Neither rain nor lightning deters them,
Neither sea nor gorge dismays them.
As they fly on, they seek a mysterious
land.
A land they have dreamed of,
But that they may never find...
Wanderers of the sky, answering only
To the inner power that drives them
onward.

Begun as a sequel to *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* turned out to be one of Verdi's most exotic (and complex) operatic stories – also one of his all-time smash hits! It opens outside Spain's royal gates with a group of soldiers keeping watch for Count di Luna's foe, a mysterious knight-troubadour who is leading a rebellion against him. To keep the drowsy soldiers awake, the captain of the guard tells a story about a gypsy woman who supposedly burned the Count's brother to death in retribution for her own mother's execution; though the Count is not convinced and continues to search for the woman. Within the gates, Leonora – Lady-in-waiting to the Princess – awaits the return of Manrico, the troubadour, telling her friend she is in love with him. In “**Tacea la notte placida**,” she sings ecstatically about the first time she heard him sing what she thought was a prayer, becoming jubilant once she realized the song was in praise of her rather than God. When Manrico appears, The Count – who also loves Leonora – confronts him and challenges him to a duel.

Tacea la notte placida
E bella in ciel sereno

La luna il viso argenteo
Mostrava lieto e pieno...
Quando suonar per l' aere,
Infino allor sì muto,
Dolci s' udiro e flebili
Gli accordi di un liuto,
E versi melanconici
Un Trovator cantò.
Versi di prece ed umile
Qual d' uom che prega Iddio
In quella ripeteasi
Un nome...il nome mio!
Corsi al veron sollecita...
Egli era! Egli era desso!...
Gioia provai che agli angeli
Solo è provar concesso!...
Al core, al guardo estatico
La terra un ciel sembrò.

Di tale amor che dirsi
Mal può dalla parola
D'amor che intendo io sola,
Il cor s'inebriò!
Il nio destino compiersi
Non può che a lui dapresso...
S'io non vivrò per esso
Per esso io morirò
The night was calm and quiet
And the silvery moon –
Beautiful in the peaceful sky

Showed her full and happy face...
Suddenly, the stillness of the night
Was broken by
Soft, sweet harmony.
To the notes of a lute,
A troubador sang
A melancholy song.
Those humble verses
Were like a man praying to God.
And in that song,
A name was repeated...my own!
So I rushed to the balcony...
There he was! It was him!
I felt a joy that only angels
Are allowed to feel!
To my heart, to my joyful eyes,
The earth seemed like Paradise.

A love that can
Hardly be put into words,
A love that only I can understand,
Such a love intoxicates my heart!
My destiny will be fulfilled
Only at his side
I will live only for him,
Or, for his sake, I will die!

The Count – whose life was spared when
Manrico (actually his long-lost brother)
could not bring himself to kill him in

their duel – has captured both the troubadour and Azucena, the gypsy woman thought to have killed his brother; he throws them in prison. Leonora comes to the prison in disguise and, knowing her beloved has been condemned to death, sings “*D’amor sull’ ali rosee*” – an exquisite prayer for his salvation, hoping the wind will carry her pained sighs to him and give him strength. In the end, Leono-



With Teresa Berganza

“Dinara Alieva is a unique phenomenon: the brilliant alloy of a beautiful voice, temperament and artistry. She has a brilliant future.” *Teresa Berganza*

With Montserrat Caballé

"She is a wonder! Dinara Alieva is a natural talent and I haven't got anything to teach her. The singer who possesses the gift of Heaven!" *Montserrat Caballé*



ra finally thwarts the Count's unwelcome advances by taking poison ... and Manrico is executed as Azucena cries, in vengeful triumph, that the Count has killed his own brother! Both of these glorious *Trovatore* arias are supreme examples of the Verdi soprano's art.

Vanne, Lasciami,
Né timor di me ti prenda...
Salvarlo io potrò forse.

Timor di me?...Sicura,
Presta è la mia difesa.
In quest' oscura
Notte ravvolta, presso a te io son,
E tu nol sai...Gemente
Aura che intorno spiri,
Deh, pietosa gli arreca
I miei sospiri...

D' amor sull' ali rosee
Vanne, sospir dolente:
Del prigioniero misero
Conforta l' egra mente...
Com' aura di speranza
Aleggia in quella stanza:
Lo desta alle memorie,
Ai sogni dell'amor!
Ma deh! non dirgli improvvido, le pene
del mio cor!Go ...
Leave me, and don't fear for me.
Perhaps I can save him.
Afraid of me?...for sure,
My defense is ready!
Wrapped in the dark night,
I am near you,
But you don't know it...

Wailing wind, in your mercy,
Carry my sighs to him...

On the rosy wings of love,
Fly, pained sighs:
Go to comfort the troubled mind
Like a breeze of hope.
Linger in that room:
Waken him to remembrance
Of love's dreams!
Yet do not rashly
Reveal my heart's anguish!

Yet another Leonora comes to the fore in ***La Forza Del Destino***: a somewhat odd conglomeration of ideas uncommon to Verdi's stage works, making it something of an operatic mosaic. The episodic plot encompasses a wide geography and time-span, and the musical traditions in the opera itself derive from a diverse pool of conventions. The plot is driven by fate, an uncharacteristically abstract concept for Verdi. Caught up in a love-hate triangle involving her brother and her lover, Leonora appears in the final act after five years of living in a cave as a hermit, having been separated from her family and lover. In "**Pace, pace mio dio**," she pleads for the peace that has eluded her all these years; she prays fervently for death. Abruptly introduced by the orchestra's "fate" theme, the exquisite melodic flow

unfolds over a bed of harp-tones, before rising – in desperate supplication – to its spine-tingling climax. God is then quick to grant her wish as she dies violently by her mortally wounded brother's hand.

Pace, pace, mio Dio!
Cruda sventura
M'astringe, ahimè a languir;
Come il di primo
Da tant'anni dura
Profondo il mio soffrir.
L'amai, gil è ver!



With Elena Obratzsova

"Her voice is beautiful, rich in nuances and amazingly diverse in timbres. An instrument worthy of the highest appreciation." *Elena Obratzsova*

Ma di beltà e valore
Cotanto Iddio l'ornò,
Che l'amo ancor,
Nè togliermi dal core
L'immagin sua saprò.
Fatalità! Fatalità! Fatalità!
Un delitto disgiunti n'ha quaggiù!
Alvaro, io t'amo,
E su nel cielo è scritto:
Non ti vedrò mai più!
Oh Dio, Dio, fa ch'io muoia;
Che la calma può darmi morte sol.
Invan la pace qui sperò quest'alma
In preda a tanto duol,
Misero pane, a prolungarmi vieni
La sconsolata vita ... Ma chi giunge?
Chi profanare ardisce il sacro loco?
Maledizione! Maledizione! Maledizione!
Peace, peace, O God!
Cruel misfortune has driven me to
despair.
Right from the start of these hard years
I have suffered wretchedly.
Truly, I loved him! But God blessed him
with
Such grace and virtue that I still love
him,
And cannot keep him out of my
thoughts.
Oh fate! Oh cruel fate!

Past sins have kept us apart!
Alvaro, I love you, but heaven has
decreed
That we shall never meet again!
Oh God, God, let me die;
For only then will I know peace.
My soul, In vain, seeks peace
In the midst of such misery.
Oh cursed bread, which only prolongs
This miserable existence ...
But ... who goes there?
Who dares to desecrate this sacred
place?
A curse upon him!

— Leah Harrison and Lindsay Koob

Marcello Rota's opera repertoire includes more than thirty works with particular emphasis on Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi and Puccini. Marcello Rota has been principal guest conductor of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra since 2004. He has recently appeared with this orchestra on the recordings for JVC Victor Entertainment, in the Prague Proms Festival, and accompanying Andrea Bocelli in concerts in over forty cultural centers throughout the world. Following studies in Alessandria with Giacomo Zoppi in French horn, and with Felice Quaranta in composition, Rota continued conducting studies with Igor Markevitch and Franco Ferrara at the Chigiana Academy of Siena.

Conducting all of the greatest Italian orchestras, he has been a frequent guest on the world's most prestigious stages including the Concertgebouw, La Scala, Musikhalle Hamburg, Filharmoniehalle (Munich, Berlin, Mannheim), Royal Albert Hall, Festival Opera Hall (Wexford), and Palais des Beaux Arts (Brussels). He has conducted many foreign orchestras in major concert halls throughout Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand,



Russia and China. He has collaborated with such remarkable artists as Rostropovich, Geringas, Bocelli and Rampal.



Considered one of the Czech Republic's great orchestras, The **Czech National Symphony Orchestra** is respected today also as one of busiest symphonic ensembles in Europe. In its new era, The Czech National Symphony Orchestra is also organizing the summer Prague Proms Festival which annually attracts the audience for presenting greatest international performers (Ennio Morricone, Lalo Schifrin, James Morrison). At the beginning of the year 2007, Maestro Libor Pešek was named the Chief Conductor. The CNSO concerts are held in the beautiful Smetana Hall of Prague's Municipal House. Besides

concerts in auditoriums and concert halls, the CNSO has accompanied some of the most important pop/crossover artists of our time, among them Andrea Bocelli, Vanessa Mae, Ute Lemper, Sting, Serj Tankian and George Michael. Successful tours have taken place in the British Isles, France, Spain, Germany, Dubai, Russia, Japan, South Korea, China, Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand.

Recorded in the orchestra's studio and Prague's famous music halls, The Czech National Symphony Orchestra's recordings are available in the United

States and Japan, and the orchestra takes pride in several Gold CDs (over 30 000 copies sold) which it has produced. Other accolades include the Gustav Mahler Prize, awarded for the interpretation of Mahler's works, and the prestigious agreement that the orchestra signed with IMG Artists London for worldwide representation. The achievements also include a long-standing recording project in association with Tokyo media company Victor Entertainment.

The Czech National Symphony Orchestra was established in 1993 by trumpet player Jan Hasenöhrl. A spiritual father at the birth of the CNSO was the legendary conductor Zdeněk Košler. In the year 1996, the American Paul Freeman took over as Chief Conductor, and remained in this position for ten years. He was also Honorary Music Director of CNSO, which position he still holds today.

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