ONDINE

VERDI



JUSTINA GRINGYTĖ

Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI

ROBERT TREVINO

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813–1901)

Mezzo-soprano Arias and Overtures

1	**Don Carlo** (1867): "**O don fatale**" (Eboli, Act IV)	4:38
2	**Don Carlo** (1867): "**Nel giardin del bello**" (Eboli, Act I)	4:35
3	**Un ballo in maschera** (1859): "**Re dell'abisso, affrettati**" (Ulrica, Act I)	6:12
4	**Il trovatore** (1853): "**Stride la vampa**" (Azucena, Act II)	2:54
5	**Il trovatore** (1853): "**Condotta ell'era in ceppi**" (Azucena, Act II)	4:50
6	**Nabucco** (1842): **Overture**	7:38
7	**Nabucco** (1842): "**O dischiuso è il firmamento**" (Fenena, Act IV)	2:15

8	**Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio** (1839): **"Riccardo…Oh chi torna l'ardente pensiero… Più che i vezzi e lo splendore"** (Cuniza, Act II)	9:45
9	**Un giorno di regno** (1840): **"Care fanciulle…Non san quant'io nel petto… Non vo' quel vecchio, non son sì sciocca"** (Giulietta, Act I)	7:39
10	**La forza del destino** (1862): **Overture**	7:51
11	**La forza del destino** (1862): **"Al suon del tamburo"** (Preziosilla, Act II)	3:45
12	**Aida** (1871): **"L'abborrita rivale… Già i sacerdoti adunansi… "** (Amneris and Radamès, Act IV) Tenor: Gaston Rivero	9:52
13	**I vespri siciliani** (1855): **Overture**	8:47

JUSTINA GRINGYTĖ, mezzo-soprano

ORCHESTRA SINFONICA NAZIONALE DELLA RAI
ROBERT TREVINO, conductor

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) was the leading Italian opera composer of the mid to late nineteenth century, a brilliant melodist who was also committed to dramatic realism. His early works, written in the years prior to Italian unification, were often nationalistic in subject-matter, but by the 1850s he was moving away from politics towards a focus on strong yet flawed individuals who are placed in challenging circumstances. As his career progressed, Verdi began to craft a distinctive musical 'tinta' (atmosphere) for each individual work, suitable to the subject matter being depicted.

Verdi was drawn to texts by some of the leading poets and authors of his era, and to the great works of Shakespeare, and as time went on his operas became more expressive in emotional range and more sophisticated in characterisation. He also began to take a particular interest in crafting dramatically interesting roles for mezzo-soprano and baritone, voices that had previously been overshadowed by the 'romantic' soprano and tenor.

As he moved away from writing according to the blueprints established by the earlier generation of Rossini and Donizetti and gained enough wealth to have the freedom to set his own agenda, the length of time Verdi spent crafting each individual opera increased. He was something of a perfectionist, and on several occasions returned to an earlier opera and rewrote it. Pragmatic considerations still had to be taken into account, however: some of his works were commissioned by opera houses abroad and in these circumstances Verdi was often obliged to tailor his works to specific local conventions.

The excerpts on this disc come from a diverse range of operas, from his very first, written in 1839, to mature works from the 1870s and 1880s. Among the numbers presented are some from core canonical works such as *Il trovatore* and *Aida*, but also others from operas that audiences only rarely have an opportunity to hear today.

We begin with late Verdi. *Don Carlos* was a vast five-act Grand Opera, based on a dramatic poem by Schiller about a sixteenth-century war between France and Spain, which Verdi wrote for the Opéra de Paris in 1867. Later he reworked the opera as a more concise four-act Italian version, *Don Carlo*, for La Scala in 1884, and a hybrid version, reinstating some elements of the original, was performed in Modena two years later. A hallmark of all three versions

is the emphasis given to the orchestra as an agent of storytelling. The numbers presented here, 'O don fatale' and 'Nel giardin del bello' feature the character Eboli, a noblewoman who harbours unrequited love for Don Carlo and, in revenge, reveals his love for the Queen, Élisabeth. The first aria requires both immense dramatic power and lyrical control; the second is inflected with characterful Moorish harmonies.

By the time he wrote *Un ballo in maschera*, in the late 1850s, Verdi was already a very famous and wealthy composer. However, he did not yet have a free hand to do whatever he wanted. The opera was originally planned for Naples but Verdi and his librettist Antonio Somma were presented with a barrage of demands from the Neapolitan censors to make changes to the proposed plotline, period setting and elements of characterisation, before the censors eventually demanded a total rewrite from a local librettist. Verdi's refusal to set the resulting dog's dinner resulted in a court case and eventually the opera was premiered in Rome, where it was very successful. Highly eerie in mood, the aria 'Re dell'abisso, affrettati', an incantation summoning the devil, is sung by the fortune-teller Ulrica.

Il trovatore is quintessential mid-period Verdi, written as he was riding the crest of a wave and producing one hit after another in quick succession in the early 1850s. It followed on from the popular *Rigoletto*, and Verdi worked on it at the same time as *La traviata*: the two operas were, astonishingly, premiered just two months apart in January and March of 1853. Unlike the other two operas, which were forward-looking and ground-breaking in their psychological realism, *Il trovatore* was more old-fashioned: an escapist melodrama with many twists and turns, strong themes of romance, punishment and revenge, and elements of superstition and supernaturalism. The two arias here, 'Condotta ell'era in ceppi' and 'Stride la vampa', are sung by the gypsy Azucena: in both she recounts the story of her mother's execution for suspected witchcraft.

La forza del destino (1862) was, unusually, commissioned for St Petersburg, where the Imperial Theatre gave Verdi a relatively free hand in terms of subject matter. By this time, he was decisively jettisoning the old-style building blocks of earlier nineteenth-century Italian opera and really writing music that ebbed and flowed according to the dictates of the drama. Thwarted love, honour and revenge are quintessential operatic themes, but Verdi treats them in an entirely new way here, creating a large, sprawling canvas of loosely related episodes as

the basis on which to explore the abstract idea of fate. The overture was added for a revised version of the opera that Verdi wrote for La Scala in 1869. It begins with the opera's agitated 'fate' theme, before segueing into a succession of memorable, lyrical melodies. The spirited aria with chorus 'Al suon del tamburo' is a military recruiting song, sung by the gypsy fortune-teller Preziosilla.

Un giorno di regno (1840) was Verdi's second opera, commissioned after the success of his debut, *Oberto*, and was a light-hearted work, complete with the romantic confusions typical of the old-fashioned *opera buffa* genre. The work was ill-suited to Verdi at this stage in his career, not least because he was grieving the death of his first wife, and he would not return to comedy again until *Falstaff*, over fifty years later. *Un giorno di regno* received a poorly performed premiere and a dismal reception. That said, it contains some melodic gems, including the aria 'Non san quant'io nel petto', which is sung by the character Giulietta, who is distressed at being forced to marry on old man.

Thankfully, Verdi's next opera, *Nabucco* (1842), marked a decisive transformation in his fortunes, propelling him on course to greatness. Indeed, Verdi himself remarked that 'with this opera it is fair to say my career began'. Drawn from stories in the Old Testament, *Nabucco* tells the story of the invasion of Jerusalem by the King Nabucco's Babylonians and the capture of the Israelites. Its subject matter, about a chosen nation dreaming of freedom from foreign bondage, reached the stage at an opportune moment. The opera became swept up in the mythology of the Risorgimento (the contemporary movement for Italian independence and unification). On this disc we hear the opera's overture (which includes a variation on the theme from the famous chorus 'Va pensiero sull'ali dorate', which was read as an allegory for the Italians' struggle against the Austrians and taken up as a popular anthem) and the aria 'O dischiuso e il firmamento'. This is sung in the final act by Fenena, daughter of Nabucco, the King of Babylon, as she prepares herself for death.

Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio was Verdi's first opera, which he began writing at the age of just 21 and which, after a complicated, drawn-out period of gestation involving changes of name and setting, eventually received its premiere (at La Scala, no less) shortly after his 26th birthday in 1839. The opera bears the influence of Verdi's predecessors, notably Bellini. It is pure Romantic melodrama, set in Medieval times with themes of seduction and revenge, and

the centring of the beautiful voice goes without question. 'Riccardo…Oh chi torna l'ardente pensiero…Più che i vezzi e lo splendore' is a rueful aria sung by the character Cuniza.

I vespri siciliani was an Italian revision of Verdi's French Grand Opera *Les vêpres siciliennes*, an opera written for the Opéra de Paris in 1855 for which Verdi took inspiration from Meyerbeer. In its original version it was a large-scale five-act work about political power-play in thirteenth-century Sicily, complete with lavish ballet scenes written to suit French taste. Back in Italy, Verdi was forced to rewrite the work, partly for censorship rules that would not permit the depiction of a massacre of French soldiers by Sicilian rebels, and partly because Italian theatres would not have been able to accommodate some of the visual spectacle. The resulting work, now set in Portugal, was originally called *Giovanna de Guzman*, but reverted to its translated Italian title, *I vespri siciliani*, in 1861, following Italian unification. Here we hear the overture, which begins in soulful manner before becoming, by turns, determined and militaristic, sweetly lyrical and ultimately exuberant.

Aida (1871) was commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt and given its first performance in Cairo. Verdi was enthused by the idea of an Egyptian opera and spent time researching aspects of Egyptian history, geography, religious ritual and music. *Aida* is an opera on a grand scale, with much spectacle and an impressive triumphal march. Verdi deals simultaneously with global themes like the fate of an oppressed nation (here Ethiopians enslaved in Egypt) and with the plight of individuals. 'L'abborrita rivale... Già i sacerdoti adunansi...' is an aria for the mezzo-soprano Amneris, followed by a duet between her and hero Radamès, in which she tries to persuade him to save himself from certain death. Here Verdi showcases the mezzo-soprano voice at its most determined and powerful.

Alexandra Wilson

Award-winning Lithuanian mezzo-soprano **Justina Gringytė** has received high praise for her "knockout technique" (*The Times*) and "thunderously powerful voice" (*Daily Telegraph*). Awarded Young Singer of the Year at the International Opera Awards, and a graduate of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden – where among other things she performed at the Olympic Committee's Opening Ceremony for the London Olympic Games alongside Renée Fleming, Bryn Terfel and Plácido Domingo – Justina is considered one of the foremost rising stars on the opera scene. An acclaimed Carmen, her hugely-praised performance with English National Opera was screened live into cinemas. Her remarkable range now stretches from French Opera – including the first-ever performances of Massanet's Therese in Scotland and Lithuania – to Mahler to the great Verdi mezzo roles, which she now sings around the world.

In 2025, her debut solo recording was released on Ondine Records, Bizet's "20 Songs" – the first time a single singer had recorded the complete cycle, a remarkable display of virtuosity and versatility ("A big, exciting voice…capable of encompassing fierce emotional and dramatic extremes" *Gramophone*). Other recordings have included Raminta Serksnyte's *Songs of Sunset and Dawn* for Deutsche Grammophon, and volumes of songs by Rachmaninoff and Medtner for Delphian – the Rachmaninoff was Gramophone Award-nominated.

She has collaborated with conductors including Sir Antonio Pappano, Gustavo Dudamel, Yannick Nezet-Seguin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Tugan Sokhiev, Mirga Grazinyte-Tyla, Ludovic Morlot, Susanna Malkki, Evelino Pidò, Kazushi Ono, Robert Trevino, Daniele Rustioni, Carlo Rizzi, Xian Zhang, Tarmo Peltokoski, Sesto Quatrini, Giacomo Sagripanti, Markus Poschner, Roberto Fores Veses and Edward Gardner.

She has appeared at L'Opéra National de Paris, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Madrid's Teatro Real, Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Teatro Massimo Palermo, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, English National Opera, Scottish Opera, the Bolshoi Opera, Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Israeli Opera, Latvian National Opera, Korean National Opera and Lithuanian National Opera. Concert engagements have brought her to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms, the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Philharmonia Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra,

Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, Orchestra della Svizzeria Italiana, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, Simón Bolívar Orchestra, George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra, Strasbourg Philharmonic, Danish Philharmonic, Basque National Orchestra, Extremadura Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Teatro Municipal Rio De Janeiro, Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra and Lithuanian National Philharmonic Orchestra, among others.

Justina's opera repertoire embraces Verdi's Eboli, Azucena, Maddalena, Meg Page and Preziosilla, Puccini's Suzuki and Tigrana (*Edgar*), Donizetti's Sara (*Roberto Devereux*) and Bellini's Romeo; Massanet's Therese, Dulcinee (*Don Quichotte*) and Kaled (*Le roi de Lahore*), Saint-Saens's Dalila, Bizet's Carmen and Berlioz's Marguerite; Humperdink's Hansel. On the concert stage, she sings all the great mezzo-soprano repertoire, from Mahler symphonies and *Das Lied von der Erde* to Berlioz's *Les nuits d'ete* and *Cleopatre*, Ravel's Sheherezade, and Verdi's *Requiem*. But she also devotes time to less frequently-heard works, such as Respighi's *Il Tramonto*, Boulanger's *Psalm 130* and Britten's *Phaedra*. She also champions new music by Lithuanian composers, such as Raminta Serksnyte and Zibuokle Martinaityte.

A keen student of the craft of voice production, she is regularly invited to give masterclasses, most recently at the Royal Academy of Music, Royal Welsh College of Music And Drama, Lithuanian National Opera And Ballet Theatre, and Conservatorio Musica Verdi Milano.

Upcoming highlights include her third major recording for Ondine (to be announced), debuts with the Orchestre National d'Ile-de-France, Czech National Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini and National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, and a role debut, Abuela in Falla's opera *La Vida Breve*.

Justina studied at Lithuania's Academy of Music and Theatre, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and the National Opera Studio in London and Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania.

"Her voice is steel-clad, hotly phrased, superbly controlled." *The Guardian*

"A voice that moves between fire and fragility. Versatility and magnificent artistry." *Interlude.hk*, 'Artist Of The Month'

"Justina Gringytė has a monumental voice and a magnificent timbre of black velvet." *ResMusica*



From the recording sessions

Robert Trevino
Conductor

Principal Conductor, George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra

"Frankly gorgeous conducting." *New York Times*

"Startlingly excellent...Trevino maintains irresistible momentum, absorbing each detail into the general crescendo...he doesn't skimp on the menace, but he and his musicians keep swinging to the end, dancing into darkness." *The New Yorker*

"Trevino forms one symphonic organism that, with its delicate lines, its piercing ninenote chord blocks, venomous scherzos and waltzing dances of death, turns the whole span into the turning of a musical wheel of fortune… Very enthusiastic applause." *Leipziger Volkszeitung*

Robert Trevino is regularly to be seen on the podiums of the world's leading orchestras, from the London Symphony Orchestra to the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig to the Baltimore Symphony. He has been named the incoming Principal Conductor of the George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra – after an enormously successful debut with them. He is the former Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI.

The 2025/26 season also sees Trevino with the London Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, Wiener Symphoniker, Bamberger Symphoniker, Sinfonieorchester Basel, Osaka Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, Orchestra della Svizzeria Italiana, La Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini and Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México.

Other regular collaborators include the Münchner Philharmoniker, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Dresdner Philharmonie, SWR Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, NDR Hannover, Gürzenich Orchester Köln, MDRSinfonieorchester Leipzig, Orchestre dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris,

Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Helsinki Philharmonic, São Paulo Symphony, NHK Symphony, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, China Philharmonic, Russian National Orchestra and St Petersburg Philharmonic. He has also conducted a wide variety of orchestras in North America – also among them the symphony orchestras of Cleveland, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Utah, Toronto and Detroit. He has conducted at many leading festivals, including the Mahler Festival Leipzig, Milan Mahler Festival, MITO Festival, Puccini Festival and Enescu Festival. Trevino's opera work has included productions at Opernhaus Zurich, La Fenice, Washington National Opera and the Bolshoi Theater.

He was for eight years Music Director of the Basque National Orchestra, a period hailed as transformational in the orchestra's history. He was also Chief Conductor of the Malmo Symphony Orchestra. He has taken many orchestras on prestigious international tours, including to Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Turkey, Romania, Azerbaijan and South America.

Robert Trevino has commissioned, premiered and worked closely with many leading composers, among them John Adams, Philip Glass, Sofia Gubaidulina, George Walker, Jennifer Higdon, Andre Previn, Augusta Read Thomas, Shulamit Ran, Ramon Lazkano and John Zorn.

Trevino's recording contract with Ondine has resulted in a widely-praised complete Beethoven symphonies cycle, two much-acclaimed Ravel albums, a Rautavaara album, Respighi's *Roman Trilogy* and *Sinfonia Drammatica*, and "Americascapes" – a survey of little-known American masterpieces, that won 'Best Recording of 2021' from Presto Music and was shortlisted for a Gramophone Award. "Americascapes 2 – American Opus" was released in late 2024 to similarly enthusiastic reviews. A cycle of Bruch symphonies with the Bamberger Symphoniker was released by CPO, now considered the modern reference recording. Between them, Robert Trevino's recordings have garnered more than 16 accolades from respected reviews outlets around the world. These include *Gramophone*, *BBC Radio 3*, *Phonoforum*, *Musica*, *Classica*, *France Musique*, *Classics Today*, *Limelight*, *Presto Music*, *Record Geijutsu* and many more. He was featured on the March 2026 cover of Italy's *Musica* Magazine.

www.robert-trevino.com

The **Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai** made its official debut in 1994 with Georges Prêtre and Giuseppe Sinopoli. Andrés Orozco-Estrada is currently Principal Conductor of OSN Rai; Fabio Luisi is its Conductor Emeritus, and Robert Trevino its Principal Guest Conductor.

Jeffrey Tate was Principal Guest Conductor from 1998 to 2002 and Honorary Conductor from 2002 to 2011. Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos was its Principal Conductor from 2001 to 2007. Gianandrea Noseda was Principal Guest Conductor from 2003 to 2006. From 1996 to 2001, Eliahu Inbal was Honorary Conductor of the Orchestra. From 2009 to 2016 Juraj Valčuha has been the Orchestra's Principal Conductor. James Conlon was the last Principal Conductor from 2016 to 2020.

Other important guest conductors have included Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Mstislav Rostropovich, Myung-Whun Chung, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Yuri Ahronovitch, Valery Gergiev, Marek Janowski, Semyon Bychkov, Kirill Petrenko, Vladimir Jurowski, Riccardo Chailly, Gerd Albrecht, Hartmud Hänchen, Mikko Franck, Christoph Eschenbach, Daniel Harding and Daniele Gatti.

The Orchestra had numerous prestigious engagements worldwide: besides its international tours (Japan, England, Ireland, France, Spain, Canary, South America, Greece), and an invitation in 2006 to the Salzburg Festival and to Berlin's Philharmonie, more recent years have seen the Orchestra performing at the Abu Dhabi Classics Festival in the United Arab Emirates in 2011, and in tours in Germany, Austria and Slovakia, including the debut at the Musikverein in Vienna. The Rai Orchestra also made its debuts at the RadiRO Festival in 2012 and at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest in 2013. It held concert tours in Germany and Switzerland in the Autumn of 2014, in Russia in October 2015 and in the south of Italy in April 2016. In December 2016 the Orchestra made its debut in Oman (Muscat) at the Royal Opera House with Beethoven 9th Symphony and in October 2017 at the Vienna Konzerthaus and in October 2021 held a prestigious concert tour in Germany with debuts at the Kölner Philharmonie, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and Alte Oper Frankfurt. In June 2022 the Orchestra returned to tour Southern Italy (Catania, Catanzaro, Salerno, Matera and Brindisi) end in September 2023 returned to the Royal Opera House in Muscat.

In November 2025 the orchestra toured Spain with Maestro Orozco-Estrada, making its debut at the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, the ADDA Auditorio in Alicante, and the Auditorio Nacional de Música in Madrid.

The Rai Orchestra was in residence at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro for the edition 2017 to 2024.

www.raicultura.it/orchestrarai



Tenor **Gaston Rivero** earned and was honored with an array of awards and joined the ensemble of the Baz Luhrmann's production of Puccini's La Boheme on Broadway in New York City in the year 2003.

Gaston Rivero performed the role of Radames in Aida at Opéra National de Paris Bastille, Teatro Regio Torino, Prag National Opera, Arena di Verona, Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie Bruxelles, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Lithuanian National Opera, The Royal Opera House Muscat and Latvian National Opera among other Opera houses.

Other Operatic venues include Staatsoper Berlin, Oper Leipzig, The Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux, Opera de Monte Carlo, Teatro Massimo di Palermo, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Opernhaus Zürich, the Hungarian State Opera Budapest, Oper Köln, Staatstheater Stuttgart, New National Theater Tokyo, Menuhin Festival Gstaad, Teatro Massimo Bellini di Catania, The Grand Theatre Warsaw and Opéra national du Rhin.

Mr. Rivero is also frequently a guest artist on domestic and international concert stages including the Carnegie Hall, The Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music Budapest, the Grande Auditório da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, the National Music Auditorium Madrid, the Karlowicz Philharmonic, the National Philharmonic in Warsaw, the Jerusalem Theater and the Heichal HaTarbut in Tel Aviv with The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

www.gastonrivero.com

SUNG TEXTS

1 **Don Carlo**: "**O don fatale**"

O don fatale o don crudel,
che in suo furor mi fece il cielo!
Tu che ci fai sì vane, altere –
ti maledico, o mia beltà!
Versar, versar sol posso il pianto,
speme non ho, soffrir dovrò!
Il mio delitto è orribil tanto
che cancellar mai nol potrò!
Ti maledico, ti maledico, o mia beltà!

O mia Regina, io t'immolai
al folle error di questo cor.
Solo in un chiostro al mondo omai
dovrò celar il mio dolor!

Oh ciel! E' Carlo!
a morte domani, gran Dio!
a morte andar vedrò!
Ah! un dì mi resta, la speme m'arride,
sia benedetto il ciel! Lo salverò!

(Libretto: Joseph Méry & Camille du Locle)

Oh beauty! thou fatal gift,
By fortune, in vindictive mood, conceded me.
Oh beauty! thou who mak'st
our sex so haughty and so vain –
Beauty, I curse thee!
Ye bitter tears flow on apace!
No hope is left, all joy hath flown!
My crime's so base, so horrible!
Naught can e'er my sin atone!

Oh, Queen beloved, I sacrificed thee
To the revolt of this wild heart,
In a lone cloister from earth secluded,
I may hide my sorrow apart!

Oh, heaven! and Carlos!
tomorrow he'll be dragged to execution!
One day alone is left me.
Ah, what bright thought flashes o'er me!
Thanks be to heaven! I yet may save him!

(English translation: Fred Rullman, 1920)

2 **Don Carlo: "Nel giardin del bello"**

Nei giardin del bello saracin ostello
All'olezzo, al rezzo degli allor, dei fior
Una bell'almea, tutta chiusa in vel,
Contemplar parea una stella in ciel.
Mohammed, Re moro, al giardin sen va;
Dice a lei: t'adoro, o gentil beltà ...
Vien, a sè t'invita per regnare il Re;
La Regina ambita non è più da me. Ah!

In the lovely garden of a moorish dwelling,
'Mid the shade and perfume,
Of the laurel blossoms,
Stood the fair Almea closely veiled, alone,
Lost in contemplation of a star unknown.
Mohammed, Moorish king, to the garden came.
Said to her, "I love thee, O charming lady,
Come, the king invites thee,
Realm and throne to share.
For the queen ambitious no more do I care.
Ah! Ah!

Ah! Tessete i veli,
Vaghe donzelle,
Mentre è nei cieli
L'astro maggior,
Chè sono i veli,
Al brillar delle stelle,
Più cari all'amor.

Weave then your veils,
O maidens coy,
Whilst in the heavens
The sun shines bright.
But dearer, far dearer to love is a veil,
When the pale stars do glimmer on high!

Ma discerno appena,
(Chiaro il ciel non è)
I capelli – belli,
La man breve, il piè.
Deh! solleva il velo
Che t'asconde a me;
Esser come il cielo
Senza vel tu de'".

I scarcely can discern you –
the sky is not yet clear –
your lovely hair,
your small hand, your foot.
Ah, lift the veil
that hides you from my sight;
you must be like the heavens,
unveiled before me.

Se il tuo cor vorrai
A me dar in don,
Il mio trono avrai,
Ché sovrano io son.
Tu lo vuoi? t'inchina,
Appagar ti vo'.
Allah! la regina!".
Mohammed sclamò.

Tessete i veli,
Vaghe donzelle,
Finch'è nei cieli
L'astro maggior.
Sono i veli, al brillar delle stelle,
Sono i veli più cari all'amor.

(Libretto: Joseph Méry & Camille du Locle)

If you wish to give
your heart to me as a gift,
you shall have my throne,
for I am sovereign.
Do you desire it? Then bow –
I will grant your wish.
"Allah! The queen!"
Mohammed cried.

Weave the veils,
graceful maidens,
while in the heavens
the greater star still shines.
For veils, in the shimmer of the night,
are the garments most cherished by love.

(English translation: Fred Rullman, 1920;
paragraphs 1 & 2; Ondine, paragraphs 3–5)

3 **Un ballo in maschera:**
"**Re dell'abisso, affrettati**"

Re dell'abisso, affrettati,
Precipita per l'etra,
Senza librar la folgore
Il tetto mio penètra.
Omai tre volte l'upupa
Dall'alto sospirò;
La salamandra ignivora

King of the shades,
I summon thee cleave through
the earth's dark centre,
veiling thy dazzling majesty,
this my dwelling to enter!
Thrice hath the owl's loud screeching voice
resounded from yoncaves, leaping, the

Tre volte sibilò …
E delle tombe il gemito
Tre volte a me parlò.

È lui, è lui! ne' palpiti
Come risento adesso
La voluttà riardere
Del suo tremendo amplesso!
La face del futuro
Nella sinistra egli ha.
M'arrise al mio scongiuro,
Rifolgorar la fa:
Nulla, più nulla ascondersi
Al guardo mio potrà!

Silenzio, silenzio!

(Libretto: Antonio Somma)

salamander thrice
hath hiss'd thro' fiery waves,
and thrice a moan that chill'd like ice,
hath sigh'd from new-dug graves!

'Tis he! 'tis he! my heart apace beats
with fierce glowing pleasure as of his dread,
yet lov'd embrace
I feel the mighty pressure!
A torch the future lighting,
he bears in his left hand,
his favour my pray'r requiting,
all things reveal'd now stand.
Naught now, no, naught now can befall,
but by my vision scann'd!

Now silence!

(English translation: Charles Lamb Kenney, 1871)

4 **Il trovatore**: "**Stride la vampa**"

Stride la vampa! – la folla indomita
Corre a quel fuoco – lieta in sembianza;
Urli di gioia – intorno echeggiano:
Cinta di sgherri – donna s'avanza!
Sinistra splende – sui volti orribili
La tetra fiamma – che s'alza al ciel!

Fierce flames are raging
Loud clamour fills the air
Mad crowds rush forward,
Eager for horrors there
Hark to their wild shouts
List to that piercing cry

Poor friendless Gipsy
ah! must she thus die then.
Flames close around her
while fiercely they rise
Writhing with torture
Her loud shrieks reach the skies.

Stride la vampa! – giunge la vittima
Nerovestita, – discinta e scalza!
Grido feroce – di morte levasi;
L'eco il ripete – di balza in balza!
Sinistra splende – sui volti orribili
La tetra fiamma – che s'alza al ciel!

(Libretto: Salvatore Cammarano)

There roars the burning pyre
There stands the doomed one;
Demons exulting
Laugh at each deep groan
Howling like wildbeasts
Yet in her agony
From hillside to hillside
Echoes her death cry
Flames close around her
While fiercely they rise
Writinth with torture
her loud shrieks reach the skies!

(English translation: Charles Jefferys, 1856)

5 **Il trovatore: "Condotta ell'era in ceppi"**

Condotta ell' era in ceppi al suo destin tremendo!
Col figlio sulle braccia, io la seguía piangendo.
Infino ad essa un varco tentai, ma invano, aprirmi...

In galling fetters they bound her
And to the dear stake they brought her
With my dear babe I follow'd
weeping vainly I sought her
with vile blows they onward drove her
Rude crowds did backward press me

Inven tentò la misera fremarsi e benedirmi!
Chè, fra bestemmie oscene, pungendola
coi ferri,
al rogo la cacciavano gli scellerati sgherri!
Allor, con tronco accento: Mi vendica!
esclamò.
Quel detto un' eco eterna in questo
cor lasciò.

Il figlio giunsi a rapir del Conte:
lo trascinai qui meco...
Le fiamme ardea già pronte.

Ei distruggeasi in pianto...
Io mi sentiva il core dilaniato, infranto!...
Quand' ecco agli egri spiriti, come in
sogno, apparve
la vision ferale di spaventose larve!
Gli sgherri ed il supplizio!...La madre
smorta in volto...
Scalza, discinta!...il grido, il noto grido ascolto...
Mi vendica!...La mano convulsa tendo...
stringo
la vittima...nel foco la traggo, la sospingo...
Cessa il fatal delirio... L' orrida scena fugge...
La fiamma sol divampa, e la sua preda
strugge!
Pur volgo intorno il guardo e innanzi a

And taunting her in her misery
In vain she strove to bless me!
Soldiers pierc'd her with their lances
Her cry for mercy spurning
They bound her to the fatal pile
They mock'd her while 'twas burning
At last in bitter anguish
Revenge, revenge, she cried,
That word's eternal echoes
Remind me still how she died.

Yes, I stole the child of Count di Luna
There to the fire I bore him
I stirr'd up the dying embers
He wept, my heart then relented
Sorrow mov'd me then to pity
And I sank down unconscious!
Dread visions rose up before me
Dreams of the past
Appall'd me
Phantom shrieks for vengeance
Back to that dread scene call'd me
I started ... there stood my mother
Where first in chains they bound her
shreaking ... she cried out
while fierce flames rose up around her
she cried out ... avenge me now!
I trembled my hand convulsive
grasp'd at its victim there
Where fierce flames wer raging

me vegg′ io
Dell′ empio Conte il figlio...
Il figlio mio,
mio figlio avea bruciato!
Sul capo mio le chiome
sento rizzarsi ancor!

(Libretto: Salvatore Cammarano)

There I cast him!
Soon my delirium vanish′d
then I beheld with horror
The raging fire consume him
And as I gaz′d I trembled!
Lo when I look′d around me
I saw to my amazement
The Count′s child still was living
Ha! What my son was murder′d
My own boy was the victim!

(English translation: Charles Jefferys, 1856)

7 **Nabucco: "O dischiuso è il firmamento"**

Oh, dischiuso è il firmamento
Al Signor lo spirto anela...
Ei m′arride, e cento e cento
Gaudi eterni a me disvela!
O spendor degl′astri, addio!
Me di luce irradio Iddio!
Già dal fral; che qui ne impiomba,
Fugge l′alma e vola al ciel!

(Libretto: Temistocle Solera)

O the heavens have opened wide,
and my spirit yearns for the Lord...
He smiles upon me, and a hundredfold
eternal joys unfold before my sight.
O shining stars, farewell –
for God now bathes me in His light.
Already from this fragile shell
that weighs me down on earth,
my soul breaks free and rises toward the sky.

(Translation: Ondine)

8 **Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio:**
"Riccardo…Oh chi torna l'ardente
pensiero…Più che i vezzi e lo splendore"

Riccardo! E che gli resta?
a proferire in sua discolpa? Un giorno
dolce nel core mi scendea quel nome,
qual rugiada che avviva
i lassi fior nella stagione estiva.
Oh, soavi memorie! Oh, caro affetto!
Chi vi toglie al mio petto.

Oh, chi torna l'ardente pensiero
Ei nel volto, nell'alma era bello ...
Qui m'apparve ... parlommi d'amor.
Un suo sguardo, un suo dolce sorriso
m'eran vita, gioir, paradiso!
Come preci su gelido, paradiso!
ora invano mi scendono al cor.

Più che i vezzi e lo splendore,
più che un plauso che delude,
della splendida virtude
può la voce sul mio cor.
Della misera il dolore
trovi asilo nel mio petto;
amistade è santo affetto
pari a quello dell'amor.

(Libretto: Temistocle Solera)

Riccardo – what remains for him to say
in his defense? Once,
that name fell softly into my heart,
like dew that wakens
the weary flowers in the summer heat.
O gentle memories, O cherished lovev
who can tear you from my breast.

Who can still summon that burning thought?
His face, his soul – both were fair...
Here he appeared to me... he spoke of love.
One glance of his, one tender smile
were my life, my joy, my paradise.
But now, like prayers upon frozen ground,
they fall in vain upon my heart.

More than charm or glittering splendor,
more than applause that fades and deceives,
the voice of noble virtue
has power over my heart.
Let the sorrow of the wretched
find refuge in my breast;
friendship is a sacred feeling,
akin to the grace of love.

(English translation: Ondine)

9 **Un giorno di regno: "Care fanciulle…**
Non san quant'io nel petto…
Non vo' quel vecchio, non son sì sciocca"

Care fanciulle, è grato
Al core il vostro affetto!
Non san quant'io nel petto
Soffra mortal dolor!
Vieni, Edoardo amato,
O morirò d'amor!

Stupite a tal mestizia?
Amiche, io v'apro il cor.
Non vo' quel vecchio, non son sì sciocca;
Ben altro palpito il cor mi tocca;
Un vago giovine io vo'sposar.
Oh, venga subito sì bel momento!
E ai primi gaudi ritorna amor.

(Libretto: Felice Romani)

Dear maidens, your sweetness
is a balm upon my heart!
You cannot know how deeply
mortal sorrow presses in my breast.
Come, beloved Edoardo –
or love itself will be my death.

You wonder at such sadness?
Friends, I bare my heart to you.
I will not wed that old man – I am not so foolish.
A different tremor stirs my soul;
it beats for a young and gentle lover.
Oh, let that radiant moment come at once,
and let love return to its first delights.

(English translation: Ondine)

11 **La forza del destino: "Al suon del tamburo"**

Al suon del tamburo,
Al brio del corsiero,
Al nugolo azzurro
Del bronzo guerrier;
Dei campi al sussurro
S'esalta il pensiero!
È bella la guerra, è bella la guerra!
Evviva la guerra, evviva!

To the roll of the drum,
To the charger's bright fervor,
To the blue-clouded thunder
Of bronze in war's air;
At the whisper of fields
The spirit grows braver.
War is a fine thing – long live war!
Hurrah for the battle, hurrah!

È solo obliato
Da vile chi muore;
Al bravo soldato,
Al vero valor
È premio serbato
Di gloria, d'onor!
È bella la guerra! Evviva la guerra!

Se vieni, fratello,
Sarai caporale;
E tu colonnello,
E tu generale;
Il dio furfantello
Dall'arco immortale
Farà di cappello
Al bravo uffiziale.
È bella la guerra, evviva la guerra!
Ah, tu miserrime vicende avrai.
Non mente il labbro mai.

Ma a te, carissimo,
Non presto fé.
Non sei studente,
Non dirò niente,
Ma, gnaffe, a me
Non se la fa,
Tra la la la!
È bella la guerra, evviva la guerra!

(Libretto: Francesco Maria Piave)

Forgotten is only
The coward who perishes;
But the valiant good soldier,
The true-hearted brave,
Is granted the prize
Of glory and honor.
War is a fine thing – long live war!

If you come, brother,
you shall be a corporal;
and you, a colonel;
and you, a general.
The little rogue of a god,
with his immortal bow,
will tip his hat
to the gallant officer.
War is a fine thing – long live war!
Ah, you will have your wretched trials.
The lips never lie.

But as for you, my dearest,
I place no faith in it.
You are no student,
I'll say nothing more –
but, heavens, with me
you won't get away with it.
Tra la la la!
War is a fine thing – long live war!

(English translation: Ondine)

12 **Aida: "L'abborrita rivale…**
Già i sacerdoti adunansi… "

Amneris
L'aborrita rivale a me sfuggia…
Dai Sacerdoti Radames attende
Dei traditor la pena. – Traditore
Egli non è… Pur rivelò di guerra
L'alto segreto… egli fuggir volea…
Con lei fuggire… Traditori tutti!
A morte! A morte!… Oh! che mai parlo?
Io l'amo sempre… Disperato, insano
è quest'amor che la mia vita strugge.
Oh! s'ei potesse amarmi!
Vorrei salvarlo. E come?
Si tenti! Guardie: Radames qui venga.
Già i Sacerdoti adunansi
Arbitri del tuo fato;
Pur dell'accusa orribile
Scolparti ancor t'è dato;
Ti scolpa e la tua grazia
Io pregherò dal trono,
E nunzia di perdono,
Di vita te sarò.

Amneris
She, my rival detested, has escap'd me
And from the priesthood Ramades
awaits the sentence on a traitor.
Yet a traitor he is not.
Tho' he disclos'd the weighty secrets of warfare,
flight was his true intention,
and flight with her, too.
They are traitors all, then! deserving to perish!
What am I saying?
I love him, still I love him:
Yes, insane and desp'rate
is the love my wretched life destroying.
Ah! could he only love me!
I fain would save him.
Yet can I? One effort! Soldiers: Ramades
bring hither.
Now to the hall the priests proceed.
Whose judgment thou art waiting,
Yet there is hope from this foul deed
Thyself of disculpatting;
Once clear to gain thy pardon
I at the throne's foot kneeling,
For me mercy dear appealing,
Life will I render thee.

Radames
Di mie discolpe i giudici
Mai non urdan l'accento;
Dinanzi ai Numi, agl'uomini,
N'e vi, n'e reo mi sento.
Profferse il labbro incauto
Fatal segreto, è vero,
Ma puro il mio pensiero
E l'onor mio restò.

Amneris
Salvati dunque e scolpati.

Radames
No.

Amneris
Tu morrai.

Radames
La vita
Aborro; d'ogni gaudio
La fante inaridita,
Svanita ogni speranza,
Sol bramo di morir.

Radames
From me my judges ne'er will hear
One word of exculpation;
In sight of heaven I am clear,
Nor fear its reprobation.
My lips I kept no guard on,
The secret I imparted,
But guiltless and purehearted
From stain my honor's free.

Amneris
Then save thy life, and clear thyself

Radames
No!

Amneris
Wouldst thou die?

Radames
My life is hateful!
Of all pleasure forever 'tis divested,
without hope's priceless treasure,
'tis better far to die.

Amneris
Morire! Ah, tu d'ei vivere!
Sì, all'amor mio vivrai;
Per te le angosce orribili
Di morte io già provai;
T'amai... soffersi tanto...
Vegliai le notti in pianto...
E patria, e trono, e vita
Tutto darei per te.

Radames
Per essa anch'io la patria
E l'onor mio tradia...

Amneris
Di lei non più!

Radames
L'infamia
M'attende e vuoi ch'io viva?
Misero appien mi festi,
Aida a me togliesti,
Spenta l'hai forse e in dono
Offri la vita a me?

Amneris
Io, di sua morte origine!
No! Vive Aida!

Amneris
Wouldst die, then?
Ah! thou for me shalt live!
Live, of all my love assured;
The keenest pangs that death can give,
For thee have I endured:
By love condemn'd to languish,
Long vigils I've spent in anguish,
my country, my power, my existence,
all I'd surrender, for thee.

Radames
For her I too my country,
for her I too my country, honor and life,
ay, life and and honor surrender'd!

Amneris
No more of her!

Radames
Dishonor awaits me,
Yet thou wilt save me?
Thou all my hope hast shaken,
Aida thou hast taken;
Haply thou hast slain her,
And yet offerest life to me?

Amneris
I, on her life lay guilty hands?
No! She is living!

Radames
Vive!

Amneris
Nei disperato anelito
Dell'orde fuggitive
Sol cadde il padre.

Radames
Ed ella?

Amneris
Sparve, nè più novella
S'ebbe...

Radames
Gli Dei l'adducano
Salva alle patrie mura,
E ignori la sventura
Di chi per lei morrà!

Amneris
Ma, s'io ti salvo, giurami
Che più non la vedrai.

Radames
Nol posso!

Radames
Living!

Amneris
When routed fled the savage bands,
To fate war's chances giving,
perish'd her father.

Radames
And she then?

Amneris
Vanish'd, nor aught heard we then further.

Radames
The gods her pathguide then,
Safe to her home returning,
guard her, too, e'er from learning
That I for her sake die!

Amneris
But if I save thee,
with thou swear her sight e'er to resign?

Radames
I cannot!

Amneris
A lei rinunzia
Per sempre... e tu vivrai!

Radames
Nol posso!

Amneris
Ancor una volta:
A lei rinunzia.

Radames
È vano.

Amneris
Morir vuoi dunque, insano?

Radames
Pronto a morir son già!

Amneris
Chi ti salva, sciagurato,
Dalla sorte che t'aspetta?
In furore hai tu cangiato
Un amor ch'egual non ha.
De' miei pianti la vendetta
Or dal ciel si compirà.

Amneris
Swear to renounce her for ever,
life shall the tine!

Radames
I cannot!

Amneris
Once more thy answer:
wilt though renounce her?

Radames
No, never!

Amneris
Life's thread wouldst thou then sever?

Radames
I am prepared to die.

Amneris
From the fate now hanging o'er thee,
Who will save thee, wretched being?
She whose heart could once adore thee,
Now is made thy mortal foe.
Heaven, all my anguish seeing,
Will avenge this cruel blow.

Radames
È la morte un ben supremo
Se per lei morir m'è dato;
Nel subir l'estremo fato
Gaudii immensi il cor avrà;
L'ira umana più non temo,
Temo sol la tua pietà.

Amneris
Ah! chi ti salva?
De' miei pianti la vendetta
Or dal ciel si compirà.

(Libretto: Antonio Ghislanzoni)

Radames
Void of terror death now appeareth,
Since I die for her I cherish
In the hour when I perish,
With delight my heart will glow
Wrath no more this bosom feareth,
Scorn for thee alone I know.

Amneris
Ah! who will save thee?
Heaven, all my anguish seeing,
Will avenge this mortal blow

(English translation: G. G. Laurence, 1897)

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