



National Symphony Orchestra
Gianandrea Nosedà

Samuel Barber

VANESSA

Nicole Heaston
J'Nai Bridges
Susan Graham

Matthew Polenzani
Thomas Hampson

National Symphony Orchestra

GIANANDREA NOSEDA, CONDUCTOR

Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* brings passion, secrets, and unforgettable music to life, while highlighting the eternal themes of waiting, loneliness, and the rejection of reality.

It is an extraordinary opera that follows the 20th-century lineage of Puccini and Strauss, with a musical language of great effectiveness and refinement that uniquely and profoundly combines the best of the European and American operatic traditions.





National Symphony Orchestra

GIANANDREA NOSEDA, CONDUCTOR

SAMUEL BARBER

(1910–1981)

Vanessa (1957/1964)

Vanessa, a lady of great beauty, in her late thirties Nicole Heaston
Erika, her niece, a young girl of twenty J’Nai Bridges
Anatol, a handsome young man in his early twenties Matthew Polenzani
The Old Baroness, Vanessa’s mother and Erika’s grandmother Susan Graham
The Old Doctor Thomas Hampson
Nicholas, The Major-Domo Jonathan Bryan
Footman Samuel Weiser
Servants, Guests, Peasants, their Children, Musicians

University of Maryland Concert Choir
Jason Max Ferdinand, director

DISC 1

The action takes place at Vanessa's country house in a northern country about 1905

Act 1 Scene 1—The drawing room. A night in early winter

1. Introduction	1:25
2. <i>Erika, Major-Domo & Vanessa</i> Potage crème aux perles	2:01
3. <i>Vanessa & Erika</i> No, I cannot understand	5:07
4. <i>Erika</i> Must the winter come so soon?	2:09
5. <i>Erika & Vanessa</i> Listen! ... They are here	1:55
6. <i>Vanessa</i> Do not utter a word, Anatol	4:32
7. <i>Anatol & Vanessa</i> Yes, I believe I shall love you	2:09
8. <i>Erika & Anatol</i> Who are you?	5:45

Scene 2—The same. Sunday morning, a month later

9. <i>Baroness & Erika</i> And then?	4:09
10. <i>Vanessa, Anatol, Erika, Doctor</i> No, you are not as good a skater as your father was	3:12
11. <i>Doctor, Anatol, Vanessa & Erika</i> Under the willow tree two doves cry	2:41
12. <i>Vanessa & Erika</i> Erika, I am so happy	3:42
13. <i>Erika & Baroness</i> Did you hear her?	1:34
14. <i>Anatol, Erika & Baroness</i> Help, help! Save me from their talk	3:06
15. <i>Anatol & Erika</i> Outside this house the world has changed	3:11
16. <i>Vanessa, Doctor, Erika & Anatol</i> Hurry, now!	2:16
17. <i>Chorus & Erika</i> In morning light let us rejoice	4:27

Total: 53:21

DISC 2

Act 2 *The entrance hall with the ballroom beyond. New Year's Eve*

1. *Footman, Major-Domo & Doctor* The Count and the Countess d'Albany 3:30
2. *Doctor* I should never have been a doctor, Nicholas 3:15
3. *Vanessa & Doctor* Here you are! 1:29
4. *Anatol & Vanessa* At last I've found you 1:31
5. *Anatol & Vanessa* Love has a bitter core, Vanessa 4:35
6. *Doctor, Vanessa, Anatol, Major-Domo, Erika, Baroness & chorus* Nothing to worry about .. 7:00

Act 3 *Scene 1—Erika's bedroom. A few hours later*

7. *Vanessa & Doctor* Why did no-one warn me? 4:51
8. *Vanessa* Why must the greatest sorrows come from those we most love? 2:23
9. *Doctor, Vanessa & Anatol* There, look! 3:16
10. *Anatol, Vanessa & Doctor* On the path to the lake 2:50
11. *Vanessa, Anatol, Doctor* Anatol, tell me the truth! 2:49
12. *Erika & Baroness* Grandmother! 2:45
13. *Intermezzo* 4:03

Scene 2—The drawing room. A late afternoon, a month later

14. *Anatol, Doctor & Vanessa* By the time we arrive in Paris the new house should be ready 1:07
15. *Doctor* For ev'ry love there is a last farewell 2:02
16. *Vanessa, Doctor & Erika* And you, my friend, what are you mumbling about? 2:40
17. *Vanessa, Erika & Anatol* Erika, before I leave you must tell me the truth about that night .. 4:08
18. *Vanessa, Anatol, Erika, Baroness & Doctor* To leave, to break, to find, to keep 3:43
19. *Erika, Vanessa, Anatol & Doctor* Goodbye, be happy, Aunt Vanessa 2:38
20. *Erika & Major-Domo* No, I must never say that name again 3:29

Total: 64:04

Samuel Barber

Vanessa, Opera in Three Acts

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Samuel Osmond Barber II was born March 9, 1910, in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and died on January 23, 1981, in New York City. The composer Gian Carlo Menotti offered to write a libretto as early as 1952 and had written part of it by summer 1954, when Barber began his first sketches. Menotti didn't complete the libretto until 1956. Barber composed most of the opera in winter 1956 and completed the orchestration the following year. *Vanessa* was premiered in its original 4-act form on January 15, 1958, at the Metropolitan Opera, New York City, with Dmitri Mitropoulos conducting and soprano Eleanor Steber in the title role and Nicolai Gedda as Anatol. Barber revised the score in 1964, combining the first two acts and shortening the work somewhat. This new version was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in March 1965, and it is this version that is most commonly performed today, including here.

The score for *Vanessa* calls for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bells, sleigh bells, triangle, cymbal, tam-tam, snare drum, tom-tom, bass drum), harp, and strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos, and double basses). When staged, the opera also features an onstage band of flute, oboe, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, two horns, trumpet, drum, piano, celesta, organ, accordion, and strings.

In 1956, even the whiff of a new American opera on the horizon amounted to big news: “Menotti Writes 4-Act Libretto,” a *New York Times* headline celebrated, “finishes book of *Vanessa* for which Samuel Barber will compose the score” (January 7, 1957). For most, this was the earliest notice of *Vanessa*, the first full-length opera composed by the already-famous Barber and the only evening-length American work that New York’s Metropolitan Opera had produced in over 20 years. The pressure on both composer and librettist was immense—could an American opera succeed at the Met? History was not on their side.

In the first half of the 20th century, opera production in the United States was dominated by European composers. While it was commonplace to hear beloved works by Verdi and Puccini, Wagner and Strauss, Gounod and Bizet at the Metropolitan and other major opera houses, there was little appetite for contemporary music, and even less so for a new opera by an American composer. The Metropolitan had attempted to mount only a handful before *Vanessa*, and none had achieved any lasting success. In the mid-1950s, however, change seemed to be afoot. Just days before the premiere

of *Vanessa*, music critic Howard Taubman colorfully described a growing taste for opera born in the United States with this: “Can it be that, despite the unquestioned bouquet and effervescence of imported champagne, there is something to be said for the taste and fizz of the domestic brands? It can be, and there is. American opera is growing up” (NYT Jan. 12, 1958).

Taubman’s optimism stemmed, in part, from his confidence in the creative team of Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007). A composer starting at the age of seven, Barber made his first mark with his Violin Sonata in 1928, followed by his orchestral Overture to *The School for Scandal* (1931). In 1935 he received the Rome Prize, enabling him to study at the American Academy in Rome, where he wrote several important works including his first *Essay for Orchestra* and the String Quartet (best known for its slow movement, which became the famous Adagio for Strings). What followed was a career studded with major commissions by famous performers and organizations, the Boston Symphony Orchestra prominent among them. The BSO and Serge Koussevitzky premiered his Second Symphony (1943) and his *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* (1947), the latter commissioned by soprano Eleanor Steber, who also sang the first performances. The conductors Arturo Toscanini, Artur Rodzinski, and Bruno Walter also championed his music. His Piano Sonata (1949) was commissioned by Irving Berlin and Richard Rodgers and was first performed by Vladimir Horowitz. The classical music world positively swooned for Barber, not only for his musical accomplishments and impressive commissions, but also for his personality and looks. An article published following the premiere of *Vanessa* described him as “almost unbelievably handsome,” as a young man, “and he remains one of the most photogenic of today’s composers. He is of medium stature, with deep brown eyes and brown hair. He talks rapidly in a low voice. He is fond of travel and is facile in all the operatic languages—French, German, and Italian” (*New York Times*, January 16, 1959).

Despite his considerable popularity, Barber remained a relative novice to the world of opera when he set out to write *Vanessa*. His only prior experience with the genre was at the age of ten when he composed *The Rose Tree*, an operetta whose libretto was penned by the family’s Irish cook. As inexperienced as he was, however, Barber was intimately familiar with the voice, having studied singing at the Curtis Institute and having pursued a brief career as a baritone after graduating. He applied his understanding of the voice directly to his compositions. As the biographer Barbara Heyman has observed, “first-hand experience as a singer and an intuitive empathy with the voice would find expression in the large legacy of songs that occupy some two-thirds of his output.”

Despite his facility with vocal writing, however, it took a huge leap of faith to make his operatic debut at one of the most important opera houses in the world, a leap he confidently attempted in part because of his partnership with Gian Carlo Menotti, *Vanessa's* librettist and its first stage director.

The Italian-born Menotti was uniquely equipped for these tasks: a composer, librettist, director, and playwright of considerable stature, he was also Barber's life partner and creative collaborator for over 40 years. Menotti himself wrote 25 operas, two of which had already been produced at the Met when *Vanessa* was premiered: *Amelia Goes to the Ball* in 1938 and *The Island God* in 1942. Menotti understood the ins and outs of operatic production better than almost anyone in the United States, and together, he and Barber made an unstoppable pair.

In a *New York Times* article published three days prior to *Vanessa's* premiere, Barber described his experience of working with Menotti: "As we were not bound by the conditions of a commission, we were utterly free in choice of time and place. This particular idea seemed to call for a European setting, so we allowed ourselves the same freedom that Mozart, Verdi and Puccini did. We picked an exotic scene." Later in the same article, Barber praised Menotti for his precise language, words that lent themselves easily to musical setting: "Menotti himself, perhaps with undue modesty, would say a libretto is no more than a pretext for music. But this is an over-simplification. Interested as I have always been in any poetic texture I have set to music (and I have set Joyce, Hopkins, Yeats, Agee), I could immediately understand and appreciate the economy of Menotti's use of words (so necessary for the singing stage), their utter simplicity (how wonderful to set!) and his sense of theatrical timing, which seems to me unique" (January 12, 1958).

Perhaps another reason that Barber was drawn to Menotti's libretto was for the ambiguity lurking beneath its surface. Erika is Vanessa's niece, but who is Erika's mother? The libretto is silent on her parentage, an omission one could easily chalk up to dramatic expediency, but what if there were more to the story? Could Vanessa be Erika's mother instead of her aunt? In this scenario, this exchange between the two women takes on new meaning: Erika: "You, too, were young when you came back here." Vanessa: "Oh, but that was different." One can't help but wonder, where did Vanessa go and why was it different? Did Vanessa run away to have the elder Anatol's daughter in secret? If Vanessa gave birth out of wedlock, we can begin to understand why her mother, the Old Baroness, refuses to speak to her, and why, later in the opera, after learning of Erika's pregnancy and miscarriage, the

Baroness declines to speak with her as well. The possibility that Vanessa and the elder Anatol are Erika's parents is deeply unsettling because it means that the relationship between Erika and the younger Anatol is incestuous. Perhaps for this reason, the libretto maintains its silence—some truths are too disturbing to name outright.

The weeks leading up to *Vanessa's* premiere were fraught with unambiguous anxiety due to unexpected changes in the casting of the title role. In early planning for the opera, there were hopes that Maria Callas would create the role of Vanessa, but negotiations broke down, mostly likely because Callas was loathe to sing in English and she was not fond of performing contemporary opera. In March 1957, it was announced that the Austrian soprano Sena Jurinac had been contracted to sing the role, but only six weeks prior to the premiere, she was forced to pull out due to illness. According to Barber, “there was consternation in the opera house and talk of a year’s postponement,” but another soprano with intimate knowledge of his music, Eleanor Steber, came to the rescue. To everyone’s enormous relief, the impressive cast was set. The other singers at the premiere were Nicolai Gedda as Anatol, Rosalind Elias as Erika, Regina Resnik as the Old Baroness, and Giorgio Tozzi as the Old Doctor. The opera was conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos.

Those listeners who know Barber exclusively via his *Adagio for Strings*, a piece rooted in lush romanticism, might be surprised by the considerable eclecticism and frequent dissonance woven into *Vanessa's* score. The drama opens with an Introduction that sounds as if it were plucked from a 1950s Alfred Hitchcock film, and throughout the opera, one can hear traces of Verdi, Puccini, and Tchaikovsky mixed in with Barber’s own individual style. Heyman describes the score as showcasing many of his “compositional strengths: metric flexibility that supports the natural rhythms of the text, a fluid use of harmonic color to underscore the bittersweet poetry, and an abundance of accessible melody.” Two arias have become famous in their own right: Erika’s “Must the winter come so soon?” and Vanessa’s “Do not utter a word,” both of which have gained popularity through recital performances and recordings by famous mezzos and sopranos including Leontyne Price, Renée Fleming, and Denyce Graves. Barber saved the biggest showstopper for the end of the opera, the final quintet, “To leave, to break,” which the *New York Times* described as “a full-blown set-piece that packs an emotional charge and that would be a credit to any composer anywhere today.”

By all accounts, *Vanessa* was an unqualified success at its premiere on January 15, 1958, and when Barber took his bows, *Newsweek* reported that he was greeted with a “full-throated roar usually reserved for

prima donnas.” Taubman was positively “giddy with pride,” celebrating what he described as “the best American opera ever presented at the stately theatre on Broadway and Thirty-ninth Street,” adding that “it is professional; it has atmosphere; it builds to a moving climax.” Later that year, *Vanessa* earned for the composer the first of his two Pulitzer Prizes and became the first American opera staged at the Salzburg Festival. The opera’s reception in Salzburg, however, was not as warm as it had been at the Met. Critics were dissatisfied with what they perceived as a European, “un-American” feel to the score. Disappointingly for Barber, Menotti, and all who were hoping for a kindling of interest in American opera, excitement for the work dampened quickly and revivals became few and far between. Hoping for more performances, Barber revised the score in 1964 from four acts to a more concise three-act version, but the effect was minimal.

Though *Vanessa* did not spark the American operatic revolution some had hoped for in the mid-1950s, time has been kind to Barber’s first opera. Recent revivals have revealed what early audiences at the Metropolitan Opera may have already sensed: that the work’s emotional depth, musical sophistication, and psychological complexity place it among the finest operas of the 20th century. *Vanessa* no longer needs to prove that American opera has “grown up.” It simply stands as evidence that it had.

Hilary Poriss

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Synopsis

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Act 1.

Scene 1. A drawing room in a country manor in an unnamed “northern country about 1905,” where the middle-aged Vanessa lives with her mother, the Baroness, and her niece Erika. The mirrors in the house are covered in order to suspend time. As a storm rages, the household servants bustle about, preparing for a visitor. Vanessa awaits the return of her beloved Anatol, who left her twenty years before. When the guest arrives, it is not Anatol but his son, also called Anatol. The young man makes himself confidently at home, asking Erika to join him at the dinner table. The young woman is fascinated.

Scene 2. About a month later. Erika reveals to the Baroness that Anatol seduced her the very day he arrived and proposed marriage, which she had not accepted. In high spirits, Vanessa and Anatol arrive from ice skating. Vanessa announces her plans to uncover the mirrors and host a great ball. A family friend, the Doctor, tries to teach Anatol a dance from his past. Vanessa thinks Anatol has fallen in love with her and confides her belief to an astounded Erika.

Anatol reiterates his proposal to Erika but refutes the possibility of eternal love. Left alone, Erika cries, “My answer is no. Let Vanessa have you.”

Act 2.

The manor house entrance. New Year’s festivities in the great ballroom in the background. The Doctor enters, tipsy, and tells the Major-Domo he’s about to announce Vanessa and Anatol’s engagement. Vanessa and Anatol enter; she is upset that neither her mother nor Erika is present at the party. Erika appears at the top of the stairs just as the Doctor announces the engagement. Erika faints, but upon recovering, runs out of the house. The Baroness appears, crying for help: she has seen Erika headed for the lake.

Act 3.

Scene 1. Erika's bedroom, a few hours later. Anatol has gone with others to seek Erika while Vanessa, the Doctor, and the Baroness wait anxiously. Anatol's party returns, carrying an unconscious Erika; Vanessa confronts Anatol about Erika's motivation. After the others leave, the Baroness asks Erika why she wished to kill herself. Erika reveals her pregnancy, and that she miscarried when she fell.

Scene 2. The manor house drawing room, a month later. Anatol and Vanessa, now married, are preparing to depart for their new home in Paris. The Doctor again reminisces about the past. Vanessa still has her doubts about Erika's relationship with Anatol, but Erika refuses to reveal the identity of her seducer. After Vanessa and Anatol leave, Erika orders the Major-Domo to cover the mirrors once more.





Libretto

by GIAN CARLO MENOTTI (1911–2007)

DISC 1

Act 1

Scene 1

- (A night in early winter in Vanessa's luxurious drawing room. A small table is laid for supper. All the mirrors in the room and one large painting over the mantelpiece are covered with cloth. There is a large French window at the back which leads into a darkened jardin d'hiver. Vanessa is sitting by the fire, stage left, her face shadowed by a veil. The Baroness is sitting in front of her and remains immobile throughout the scene until her exit. In the middle of the room a group of servants, headed by Nicholas, the Major-Domo, is standing in front of Erika; she is giving them orders, a notebook in her hand. There is a snowstorm outside.)*
- ERIKA** Potage crème aux perles.
MAJOR-DOMO *(repeats order to servants, speaking)*
Potage crème aux perles.
ERIKA Écrevisses à la bordelaise.
MAJOR-DOMO Écrevisses à la bordelaise.
VANESSA Find something better than that!
ERIKA Alors ... langoustines grillées sauce aux huîtres.
MAJOR-DOMO Langoustines grillées sauce aux huîtres.
ERIKA Faisan braisé au porto.
VANESSA Sick of pheasant ... Canard!

ERIKA Canard farci sauce Savoie.

VANESSA Too many sauces.

ERIKA Palombes rôties nature?

VANESSA Better.

(Erika nods to the Major-Domo to put it down. He does so, murmuring.)

ERIKA Gâteau d'amandes au miel.

MAJOR-DOMO Gâteau d'amandes au miel.

ERIKA One bottle of Montrachet; two bottles of Romanée-Conti. That's all.

VANESSA Don't forget the camellias.

ERIKA *(to servants)*

Oh yes,—from the greenhouse, one fresh camellia for his dressing table every morning.

MAJOR-DOMO Oui, Mademoiselle.

ERIKA A centerpiece of Christmas roses for lunch;
of green orchids for dinner.

MAJOR-DOMO Oui, Mademoiselle.

VANESSA Don't forget the bell.

ERIKA Oh yes, have the gatekeeper ring the bell all night should the sleigh be lost in the storm.
Thank you. You all may go.

(Servants exeunt.)

3. VANESSA *(rising and tearing off her veil; almost anguished in her intensity)*

No, I cannot understand why he has not arrived yet.
Has no message come?

ERIKA *(imperturbed)*

They left the village at dawn;
(picks up Vanessa's veil and puts it on a chair)
perhaps they stopped on their way to let the storm die down.

VANESSA My guest is not one to let a storm stand in his way
and Karl should know the road blindfolded.
I shall have him dismissed if they are lost.

ERIKA (*has picked up her needlework and sits on the couch calmly sewing*)
The snow is so deep it is hard on the horses.

VANESSA (*turns from the window and starts to go back to the sofa*)
Oh, I shall die if anything happens to him!
(*clasping her breast*)
My heart, my heart, I can wait no longer.

ERIKA (*goes to get a book*)
Have you eaten today?

VANESSA I shall not until he comes.
My heart, my heart, I can wait no longer.

ERIKA Shall I read to you?

VANESSA (*sinks exhausted on to the sofa*)
Yes, Erika, read to me.

(*Erika sits by the fire. Outside the tower bell begins to ring at regular intervals.*)

ERIKA Here it is—
(*reads, spoken*)
Oedipus: “Woe, woe is me,
Sorrowful that I am!
Where am I, where am I going?
Where am I cast away?”

(*Vanessa gets up and snatches the book away from Erika.*)

VANESSA You do not know how to read.

You have never known what love is!

(reading as she paces up and down the room)

“Woe, woe is me,

Sorrowful, sorrowful that I am!

Where am I?

Where am I going?

Where am I cast away?”

(The book falls from her hand.)

Why does he not come?

(The Baroness slowly gets up, as does Erika.)

ERIKA *(kissing her)*

Good night.

VANESSA *(turns toward her mother)*

Even now you will not speak to me!

(For a few seconds they look at each other in silence.)

VANESSA *(sits despondently on a chair near the table)*

Go, go; good night.

(Erika, in the meantime, has pulled a bell cord, then slowly leads the Baroness to the door; as they reach it a maid comes in and accompanies the Baroness out of the room. Erika goes and stands by the French window which looks out on the park. Vanessa rises and returns to her chair by the fire. The tower bell continues to sound in the courtyard.)

VANESSA Is it still snowing?

ERIKA Yes, Vanessa.

VANESSA Look, look well, deep into the woods;

don't you see the light of lanterns?

ERIKA No, Vanessa.

VANESSA Go to bed. I shall wait alone.

4. **ERIKA** (*has slowly turned from the window and stands by the table*)

Must the winter come so soon?

Night after night I hear the hungry deer wander weeping in the woods,
and from his house of brittle bark hoots the frozen owl.

Must the winter come so soon?

Here in this forest neither dawn nor sunset marks the passing of the days.

(puts out candles and sits by the table)

It is a long winter here.

Must the winter come so soon?

5. (*Far away the sound of a sleigh is heard.*)

Listen! ... They are here ... I can see the lights.

(The tower bell begins to ring faster and louder. Erika rises and goes to the window. Vanessa rises and runs across to the window, then enters the jardin d'hiver, peering out.)

VANESSA (*returning, almost hysterically*)

He has come, he has come!

Go and call all the servants.

Light up the courtyard.

I shall wait here. And Erika,

(grasping her)

let me be alone with him when he comes in.

(Erika exits. In great agitation Vanessa paces up and down the room. She goes to the mirror, as if to uncover it, but hesitates and turns away. Outside are heard the bustle and turmoil of arrival, servants rushing to and fro. She sits down by the fire with her back to the door. Suddenly, the door is thrown open. In the semi-darkness, the figure of Anatol is seen standing silhouetted in the lighted doorway.)

6. **VANESSA** (*with restrained emotion, and without looking or moving toward him*)

Do not utter a word, Anatol,

do not move;

you may not wish to stay.

For over twenty years

in stillness, in silence,

I have waited for you.
I have always been sure,
I have always known you would come back to me, Anatol;
I have scarcely breathed
so that Life would not leave its trace
and that nothing might change in me that you loved;
alone, apart, unseen, I have waited for you.

(Anatol slowly approaches her and takes her hand. She rises suddenly, always with her back to him.)

Oh, how dark, how desperate, how blind, to let the days go by unmarked, unheeded!
How endless, how lonely, how wrong
to rob a beating heart of Time and Space!
Beauty is the hardest gift to shelter,
harder than Death to stay.
All this I have done for you!

(She releases her hand.)

Now listen, listen, listen well:
(very tenderly)
Unless you still love me
I do not want you to see me, Anatol.
Without love do not dare look into my eyes
because all change, all change begins when Love has died.
Tell me Anatol, do you love me?
Do you still love me as once you did.
For if you do not, I shall ask you to leave my house this very night!

(Vanessa does not move.)

7. **ANATOL** *(simply)*

Yes, I believe I shall love you.

(Vanessa turns around and looks at him.)

VANESSA *(For a moment she is frozen in horror, then staggers back.)*

Ah no, ah no!

My God, who are you?

Impostor, cheat!

(screaming)

Help me, someone, help me!

(Erika runs in.)

It is not he, it is not he.

I do not know him.

I never have seen him.

Have him put out of the house.

Help me, help me upstairs;

I think I shall faint.

(Erika supports her as they exit. Left alone, Anatol, who has never moved during the previous scene, casually walks to the middle of the room, turns on several lights and looks curiously about him. Noticing Vanessa's handkerchief which she has dropped, he picks it up and puts it on a chair. He lifts the cover on the mirror. He approaches the supper-table, appraises the wine and table setting and is not displeased. Erika hurriedly enters. Anatol turns to her with an ironic bow.)

8. **ERIKA** Who are you? Why did you come here?

You must leave at once.

ANATOL But I did not lie. I am Anatol.

When my father died ...

ERIKA When your father died ... Oh no!

Poor Vanessa!

After so many dreams, after so long a waiting!

Oh, how unfair a game Life can be when Death can tally the score at will.

Why did you not let her know?

Why did you not write her?

ANATOL (*pensively picks up Vanessa's handkerchief*)

All through my youth I heard that name, Vanessa.
Like a burning flame it used to scorch my mother's lips
and light my father's eyes with longing.
Now that I am alone I am driven here
to meet at last the woman who haunted so my house: Vanessa.
But who are you?

ERIKA Sometimes I am her niece but mostly her shadow.
Now you must leave; you heard what she said.

ANATOL (*He goes to the table, breaks off a flower from the center-piece and puts it in his lapel.*)

You are not going to send me out into the storm again!
Tell her who I am and she will let me stay the night.

(*He approaches one of the covered mirrors and lifts the drape.*)

ERIKA Do not touch it; she cannot bear the sight of mirrors.

ANATOL (*He approaches the table laid for supper.*)

Was the supper laid for him?
(*picking up a bottle of wine*)
Ah, Romanée-Conti.
My father loved this wine.
May I light the candles?

(*While lighting them he reflects.*)

I, too, love good food and wine ...
but my father lost his fortune dreaming,
while my mother bought subtle poisons to destroy his dreams.
Now I can only drink the wine of others.
Will you join me for supper?

ERIKA That place was not set for me.

Besides it is not with me that you come from so far to drink your wines.

ANATOL Nor was I the one who was expected. *(laughing lightly)*

I am the false Dimitri, the Pretender;

(He kneels with comic exaggeration and offers her the flower from his lapel.)

be my Marina!

(throws over his shoulder the flower she has not taken)

You never smile.

(He rises and takes her hand, leading her slowly to the table. She follows, fascinated and reluctant.)

Sit down.

(Erika sits down. He turns down the lamp.)

This is a wild and solitary place to pass one's youth in.

It is as if we had been always alone!

(He pours two glasses of wine, offering her one.)

(lifting his glass)

What is your name?

ERIKA Erika.

(They touch glasses, looking at each other. He reaches for her hand across the table; she hesitates, then timidly gives it to him.)

Scene 2

9. *(The same. A month later on a sunny Sunday morning. A breakfast table is laid in the jardin d'hiver where, through the gleaming panes of glass, one sees the distant park covered with snow. The Baroness and Erika are sitting in the main room.)*

BARONESS And then?

ERIKA *(standing by the Baroness, but looking away from her)*

He made me drink too much wine ...

I showed him to his room ...

I stayed with him all night.

BARONESS The very night you met him?

ERIKA The only night.

BARONESS Erika, Erika, you so proud, so pure!

ERIKA I was neither proud nor pure that night;
once he kissed me it seemed so natural to obey.

BARONESS What could you have seen in such a man?

When *I* was young a man came into the house like a conqueror carrying his love with pride;
but this Anatol, oh, this cautious knight, who entered our house like a thief,
what kind of man is he?

ERIKA (*runs to the Baroness, kneels at her feet and puts her head in her lap*)

If I only knew I would also know why I both hate and love him.

BARONESS And now will he do the honorable thing?

ERIKA Yes, he will marry me if I so wish;
but I do not want his honor so that mine be saved.
I want his love so that my love stay aflame!

BARONESS Does he not love you?

ERIKA He says he does, but I feel he is incapable of love.
His words are as easy as his kisses.

BARONESS It is too late to measure or to weigh;
you must do what must be done.

ERIKA (*rises and steps away from the Baroness*)

Must I?

Has not each woman the right to wait for her true love to come?

The first and last, the only love?

Ah, if I were sure of him I should fly to him and leave behind the world to burn.

But no, he does not tremble as I do when our eyes meet;

nor has the memory of that night erased the mocking laughter from his lips.

BARONESS You do not love him, then?

ERIKA (*runs again to the Baroness, and, sobbing, puts her head in her grandmother's lap*)

Oh yes, oh yes, I love someone like him!

BARONESS My poor child, love never bears the image that we dream of;
when it seems to, beware of the disguise!

ERIKA But then, grandmother, to hold what I feel is of small worth,
have I the right to break another woman's heart?

BARONESS Whose heart?

(*One hears the laughter of Vanessa and Anatol in the jardin d'hiver.*)

ERIKA (*rises*)

Hers, of course.

Have you not noticed?

She loves him more than I do because she loves him blindly.

BARONESS The fool!

10. (*Vanessa and Anatol, in skating togs, appear in the jardin d'hiver carrying their skates.*)

VANESSA (*ringing a bell cord for the servants*)

No, you are not as good a skater as your father was.

ANATOL But I am a luckier man, perhaps.

(*They come into the main room. During the following dialogue they will be taking off their scarves, skating clothes, etc., which will then be collected by the Major-Domo.*)

ANATOL (*to Erika*)

Good morning, Erika, why didn't you join us?

ERIKA Because you forgot to ask me.

ANATOL Did I?

(*going up to the Baroness*)

Ah, good morning, Baroness.

VANESSA Save your breath.

She has become so old that she only understands the language of the young.

ANATOL Are we not young?

VANESSA (*teasingly*)

We lost our innocence long ago, my dear.

(*Ushered in by the Major-Domo, the Doctor comes into the room.*)

DOCTOR Good morning, good morning.

VANESSA Good morning, Doctor.

DOCTOR What a pretty pair you made skating on the lake!

(*with a twinkle*) I saw you, I saw you.

(*In the meantime, two butlers have appeared in the jardin d'hiver bringing in breakfast and coffee.*)

VANESSA You must breakfast in a hurry or we shall be late for chapel.

(*Anatol stands by the fireplace, leaning on the mantel. A butler has entered with a bunch of flowers which Erika places in various vases.*)

DOCTOR Ah, how good it is to see this house alive again!

VANESSA Yes, dear Doctor. Perhaps the day is near
when I shall unveil the mirrors and the portraits.

DOCTOR (*holding his pipe and reminiscing*)

(*to Anatol*) Ah, sir, this used to be a gay house once.

VANESSA (*returns from the jardin d'hiver with a cup of coffee*)

Ah, the day may be near to open up the rooms
and give the greatest ball this county has ever seen.

DOCTOR Do you remember, as a young girl, the garden parties and the games?

(*Erika stands behind the sofa. Anatol kneels on the sofa, gently caressing her.*)

VANESSA Oh yes, oh yes,

I shall light the lake with Chinese lanterns

DOCTOR and the hills with bonfires;

VANESSA I shall call the peasants with their accordions and fiddles.

DOCTOR Do you still remember our country dances, Milady?

VANESSA Are you too old to dance them, dear Doctor?

DOCTOR What impertinence!

(trying out a few steps and singing)

“Under the willow tree ...”

(turning to Vanessa)

Come, come, let us show them who is the best dancer here!

(He begins to dance with Vanessa while singing.)

11. “Under the willow tree
two doves cry, two doves cry.
Under the willow tree two doves cry, ah-oh!
Where shall we sleep, my love,
whither shall we fly?
The wood has swallowed the moon,
the fog has swallowed the shore,
the green toad has swallowed
the key to my door.”

ANATOL Ah, charming, charming; I wish I could compete with you, Doctor.

DOCTOR Nonsense, young man; give me your hand and I’ll show you the steps.

Right foot first.

Back, then left,

forward, slide.

One, two, three, reverse,

two, three, one.

Two, three, right,

two, three, left,

left foot, right foot.

Two, three, forward,

two, three, backward.

VANESSA *(seated)* **AND ERIKA** *sing:*

“Under the willow tree
two doves cry,” etc.

(They all laugh as they see Anatol completely confused.)

DOCTOR No, no! What do they teach you in school today?

VANESSA Stop this nonsense and hurry to your breakfast!

I must go up and change.

(The Doctor takes Anatol by the arm and they go out to the jardin d'hiver.)

DOCTOR *(on the way out)*

Do you play a good game of chess, sir?

ANATOL I'm afraid I don't play at all.

DOCTOR How the world has changed!

I can't imagine what young people do in the evenings nowadays.

(They go out and are seen outside by the breakfast table, serving themselves.)

12. VANESSA Erika, I am so happy. I know now ... it was *he* I was waiting for.

I kept my youth for him; he sent me his younger self.

Anatol, Anatol!

ERIKA Aunt Vanessa, don't be fooled by a name.

It is another man who has come.

VANESSA No, Erika.

He carries his father's destiny with him and he knows it, he knows it.

ERIKA What makes you say that?

VANESSA I must tell you what happened out skating.

ERIKA What happened?

VANESSA He stopped me ... and looked in my eyes; and then he said:

"Christmas is near and the winter will pass.

It is time for me to leave now but I cannot find the strength to go."

ERIKA Did he say that?

VANESSA Yes, those very words.

ERIKA And then?

VANESSA Then I asked: "What makes you so weak?"

ERIKA What did he say?

VANESSA He took my hand ...

ERIKA He took your hand?

VANESSA ... and he answered: "I came as a guest:
I am foolish enough to want to leave as the master."

ERIKA Did he say that?

VANESSA *(rising and going to Erika)*
Ah, yes, Erika.

ERIKA Then ...

VANESSA There was a long silence.

ERIKA And then ...

VANESSA *(she gets up, laughing)*
Ha, ha, what a curious niece I have!

(going toward the jardin d'hiver where the young Pastor has just arrived and is seen conversing with the Doctor and Anatol)

Dear me, here is the Pastor;
I must hurry.

Good morning, Pastor, we shall soon be ready.
Have some coffee with us.

(She re-enters the room and exits inside.)

Oh, how happy I feel this morning, how happy!

(Exit.)

13. ERIKA *(She has silently observed Vanessa's departure and now runs and embraces her grandmother, who has watched the preceding without visible emotion.)*

Did you hear her?

BARONESS You must speak out or you will lose him.

ERIKA It is his love I want and not his capture.

BARONESS Even for love one must fight.

ERIKA Should he not fight for mine?

Vanessa or I, it is the same to him.

BARONESS He saw your money before he met your eyes.

ERIKA And still, and still ...

the way he kissed that night ...

how can I forget those kisses!

BARONESS He is the man of today; he only sees what is offered him;

(with scorn)

he will choose what is easier.

ERIKA *(desperately)*

Why waste my time on him then when I am dying of love?

14. *(Anatol, a coffee cup in his hand, runs into the room from the jardin d'hiver where the Doctor and the Pastor are seen in a heated discussion.)*

ANATOL *(laughingly)*

Help, help! Save me from their talk.

Between a doctor and a minister a man will lose both body and soul!

ERIKA Anatol, I must speak to you.

ANATOL What is it, then?

ERIKA Is it true ... what you said to Vanessa this morning?

ANATOL I?—This morning?—

ERIKA For God's sake, stop lying!

ANATOL Aha, the little sphinx begins to clamor for her answers.

ERIKA I have the right to claim them!

ANATOL Have you not told me I am free?

BARONESS Listen to him, Erika;

ERIKA Of course, of course.

I shall not bind you
if you are not bound by memories.

BARONESS be patient with him!

ANATOL (*goes to Erika*)

How could I forget that night? The night
that made you since so dark and bitter?

BARONESS That night!

ERIKA What has become of *you* since then?

ANATOL I have not been silent.

BARONESS Careful, Erika, or he will leave you!

I asked you before and now,
(*takes Erika by the arm and leads her to the Baroness*)
with your grandmother as witness, I ask you again.
Will you marry me?

ERIKA What will you do if I should answer, no?

(*turning away*)

ANATOL What do you want me to say?

That I should slash my throat like this?
Or spend my days as a monk
(*mockingly*) chanting *Te Deum laudamus*?

ERIKA I hate your laughter!

ANATOL What a sentimental child you are!

You belong to another age.

ERIKA Has then the human heart so changed?

(*She sits on a chair.*)

15. **ANATOL** Outside this house the world has changed.
Life is swifter than before; there is no time for idle gestures.
I cannot offer you eternal love
for we have learned today such words are lies.
But the brief pleasure of passion, yes, (*approaching her*)
and sweet, long friendship.
Who can resist your gentle beauty, Erika?
(*caressing her from behind the chair*)
Oh, how happy we could be together! Erika!

(*Erika abandons herself to him, then rises and moves away, as if to escape him. He follows and embraces her.*)

Do you know Paris and Rome, Budapest and Vienna?
The velvet rooms for jeweled suppers,
the coast of Spain for solitude,
the gilded Grand Hotels for dancing,
the glass and marble stations for goodbyes?
This we could share together, if you accept my love
and, who knows, my love might last forever, Erika.
(*with unexpected irony*)
Life is so brief.

ERIKA (*suddenly wounded by his last phrase*)

Ah, what a meager offer yours is!
I wish I could be blinded by your love; instead, I see you only too well, too well.

ANATOL What is your answer, then?

(*Vanessa comes into the room dressed for chapel.*)

16. **VANESSA** Hurry, now! Let us not keep the dear Pastor waiting.

(She pulls a bell cord.)

(approaching the Baroness)

Here is your shawl, mother, and your prayer book.

Doctor, will you give her your arm?

(The Major-Domo comes in.)

DOCTOR Yes, Baroness.

VANESSA Call the servants for chapel.

Erika, aren't you ready yet?

ERIKA Do not wait for me, Aunt Vanessa;

I shall join you later.

(Meanwhile the Baroness slowly puts on her shawl. A maid enters with a shawl for Erika.)

VANESSA Are you ready?

(Chimes from the nearby chapel are heard.)

ERIKA No.

(The Baroness has gotten up from her chair, and one by one the servants follow the Major-Domo. The Baroness gives her arm to the Doctor.)

DOCTOR *(as they stop at the door of the jardin d'hiver)*

Even to your old Doctor you will no longer speak.

How will you call him when the time comes?

(The Baroness and Doctor exeunt.)

ANATOL *(offering his arm to Vanessa)*

May I take your arm, Baroness?

VANESSA You must call me Vanessa.

(The two couples walk out into the jardin d'hiver, and disappear in the direction of the chapel. The servants follow.)

17. *(Erika, left alone, walks around the room in hysterical anguish. As if to follow the others, she goes toward the jardin d'hiver but returns into the room and begins pacing nervously back and forth. She moves toward a covered mirror, approaching it fearfully, then uncovers it. She goes to the fireplace, pondering, and climbs up on a chair before the picture which hangs over the mantelpiece. With a quick motion, she uncovers a portrait of Vanessa in a ball dress, in all the pride of her youth. From outside one hears the strains of the first hymn coming from the chapel.)*

HYMN *(from the chapel)*

In morning light let us rejoice,
Thy love is our salvation;
In praise of Thee we raise our voice.

(Erika descends from the chair and backs away, her eyes always fixed on the portrait.)

Now let us sing in the Light,
Our smiles trembling in the heart:
Our fears lost in the night,
Joyously this day we start.
For joy created from Thy tears
Fills hearts with adoration

(Erika runs quickly over to the mirror and looks at her reflection, first with morbid fascination as she compares it with the figure in the portrait, then with sudden defiance as she unbuttons her blouse to imitate the extreme décolletage of Vanessa's dress in the portrait.)

And in Thy Light we shed all fears.
Amen.

(She puts on her shawl and starts out to chapel, then stops and turns as if suddenly struck by a cry of inner indignation.)

ERIKA No, Anatol, my answer is no.

(ablaze with scorn)

Let Vanessa have you,
she who for so little had to wait so long!

(Sobbing hysterically she falls on a sofa.)

Act 2

1. *(New Year's Eve. Entrance hall. Stage left, a stairway leading to the rooms upstairs. At the back, a very large archway through which one sees part of the ballroom. At the left, the main entrance. When the curtain goes up, the entrance hall is almost empty except for a few guests who are greeting each other on their way into the ballroom, Nicholas, the Major-Domo, who is arranging all the fur coats, cloaks, hats, etc., on the racks by the door, and a footman, who is standing at the entrance to the ballroom. In the ballroom one sees couples dancing to an off-stage orchestra. More guests descend the stairway and are greeted as they enter the ballroom. Nicholas opens the door and helps a couple of late comers to dispose of their wraps.)*

FOOTMAN *(ushering the couple into the ballroom)*

The Count and the Countess d'Albany.

MAJOR-DOMO *(to a footman and maid at the door)*

Almost everyone is here now.

Go and help inside. I'll watch the door.

(As the footman disappears inside, Nicholas approaches the rack where the women's fur coats are hanging and rubs his cheek against one of them with a deep sigh.)

Ah, these lovely furs ... so soft, so sweetly scented.

This is all I shall ever know of such women ...

(The Doctor, a little tipsy, comes in from the ballroom holding two glasses of champagne. He looks at Nicholas in great astonishment.)

DOCTOR You rascal, you! I never knew you had a soul.

What an evening! What women, what champagne!

But what am I doing with *two* glasses?

(A lackey enters, carrying a tray of empty glasses.)

I must have been carrying one to some charming lady;
who was she? Oh well ...

(He drinks both glasses himself, then follows the lackey and attempts to put the glasses on the tray. He misses it and the glasses crash to the floor. The lackey picks up the pieces disapprovingly and exits.)

Sorry.

2. I should never have been a doctor, Nicholas;
a gentleman, a poet, that's what I am.
A naked body, what is it to a doctor? We see them every day.
But under a chandelier, with the right music, the right perfume,
a naked arm, a shoulder—Oh God, I lose my mind!

(Two maids are seen on the stairway giggling at the Doctor.)

Did you see me dance with Mademoiselle Doriat?
She is not so young, I know that, a bit too plump, perhaps, a bit too small for me.
But, oh, so light on her feet, so soft, so blonde.
Tra la la la ...
“Doctor, dear Doctor, not quite so fast, dear Doctor!”
Her blue scarf floating over my head ...
“Doctor, dear Doctor, not quite so fast, dear Doctor!”
Her bosom heaving under my chin ...
“Doctor, dear Doctor, not quite so fast, dear Doctor ...”
(losing his balance) Oh la la! I must stop drinking.
I still have to announce the engagement.
Yes, Nicholas, yes, they chose the old family doctor to make the announcement.
A sweet idea ... very touching ... very touching.
(feeling in his coat pockets) Good heavens, where is my speech?
I should not have drunk so much; I'll muddle up everything.
Will you lend me your comb, Nicholas?
Very touching ... very touching ... touching.

(As he starts to comb his hair in front of a mirror, Vanessa comes in, resplendent in a ball dress, looking very nervous and agitated. The two maids leave hurriedly. The Major-Domo gives the Doctor his speech and exits.)

3. VANESSA *(to Doctor)*

Here you are!

DOCTOR Yes, yes, I am ready. Don't worry, I know it all by heart.

(beginning to declaim) Ladies and gentlemen ...

VANESSA *(interrupting him)*

Oh, be quiet, Doctor.

(She looks toward the room upstairs.)

Can't you see how upset I am?

(significantly) They will not come down.

DOCTOR Zut alors. We shall announce the engagement without them.

VANESSA I quite expected it of Mother, but Erika ... Why, why?

What will people think ... my own niece ...

DOCTOR A little shy, a little shy, that's all.

VANESSA Please, please Doctor, you go up.

She will not open the door for me, she will not answer.

DOCTOR I will see what I can do.

(going upstairs and talking to himself as he runs out of breath)

"Doctor, dear Doctor, not quite so fast, dear Doctor!"

(Enter Anatol, from the ballroom.)

4. ANATOL At last I've found you.

(Vanessa sits on the steps and covers her face with her hands as if she were about to cry.)

What is wrong, Vanessa?

VANESSA I feel so weak, Anatol, so afraid.

ANATOL Afraid of what, my darling?

VANESSA *(with sudden rage)*

Why will not those two come down?

They sit up there like brooding harpies, ready to feed on carrion.

ANATOL Do not be afraid. Erika will come, I know.
She promised me she would.

VANESSA Oh why, then, have they built this wall of silence all around my happiness?

ANATOL Forget, forget. I like you most when you forget and smile.

VANESSA What is there I do not know?
Could I have been wrong for twenty years?
Is there something you have not told me, Anatol?

(She buries her head on his shoulder.)

5. ANATOL Love has a bitter core, Vanessa.
Do not taste too deep, Vanessa.
Do not search into the past.
He who hungers for the past will be fed on lies.
Let your love be new as were we born today, Vanessa.
My love has only begun.

VANESSA Love has a bitter core, Anatol,
but let me taste this bitterness with you.
I shall never take too
much if you will offer all.
My love cannot begin
nor grow nor die
for it has always been.

ANATOL Do not search into the past
or you will feed on lies.
My love cannot begin ...

ANATOL For every question let my kiss be the answer.

VANESSA Ah, but is a kiss an answer?

ANATOL I did not ask for whom you were waiting that night when first we met.

VANESSA For you, Anatol, for you, my dearest.

ANATOL No, Vanessa, for I was only born that night.

VANESSA For you, Anatol, for you.
Like the burning phoenix you flew
out of the ashes of my shattered dreams.

ANATOL Then scatter the ashes to the wind, Vanessa.
Follow my flight, Vanessa!

VANESSA (*impulsively kisses his hand; he embraces her*)
I follow, I follow!

6. **DOCTOR** (*coming down the stairs*)
Nothing to worry about;

(*They turn to him. Guests begin to fill the ballroom which during the duet was almost empty.*)
a little frightened perhaps.
She will come down, she says, but later.

(*The Major-Domo enters.*)

VANESSA Ah, well, let us proceed then; we can wait no longer.

(*to the Major-Domo who is standing by the door*)

Call our people in; have them stand by the door.

They should begin their dancing right after the announcement.

(*She goes inside the ballroom. The Major-Domo exits by a small side door.*)

ANATOL (*to the Doctor, while following Vanessa*)

What did she really say?

DOCTOR She would not speak to me.

(*They go inside the ballroom. A group of peasants including a violinist, an accordionist and a group of children, is ushered in by a lackey. They cross the hall and stand by the door leading into the ballroom, making a solid wall with their backs to the audience. Music inside. Suddenly, Erika appears at the top of the staircase in a white ball dress; she seems weak and very pale, desperately battling to master herself. After a little hesitation she begins to descend the stairs. The music inside fades; only the hum of conversation is now heard.*)

VOICE OF DOCTOR (*inside*)

Silence, everybody, silence, please.

(*At the sound of the Doctor's voice, Erika stops short, halfway down the stairway, as if suddenly taken very ill. She clutches her stomach.*)

VOICE OF DOCTOR Ladies and gentlemen, I have the great honor, as an old friend of this noble and distinguished family, which for many years has been a shining example to all of us of what is finest in the traditions of our country, to announce the engagement of our dear Baroness Vanessa von ...

(Erika suddenly faints on the steps. A burst of music from the orchestra drowns out the last words of the Doctor. As the music dies down, applause is heard inside.)

VOICE OF DOCTOR Now let us drink to the happy couple.

(Vanessa and Anatol appear from the ballroom; Vanessa is carrying a tray of sweets for the peasant children.)

CHORUS *(inside)*

Now to your health! Prosit! Prosit!

(One of the peasant children does a dance and the violinist and accordionist play upstage right, so that in watching them everyone is facing away from the steps where Erika is lying. While the dance takes place, the Major-Domo enters the hall from the ballroom. The peasants, musicians, guests, Vanessa and Anatol drift back into the ballroom.)

“Under the willow tree ...”

MAJOR-DOMO *(On seeing Erika, Nicholas rushes up the stairs.)*

Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle Erika!

(He shakes her gently.)

Answer me! What can it be?

ERIKA *(returning to consciousness)*

It is nothing, nothing ... really.

MAJOR-DOMO Shall I fetch the Doctor?

ERIKA No, please, do not tell anyone.

I shall come down at once.

MAJOR-DOMO *(helping her to her feet)*

Shall I bring you something?

ERIKA No, thank you. Leave me now, I wish to be alone.

(The Major-Domo leaves her reluctantly.)

ERIKA *(always clutching her stomach)*

(spoken) His child! ... his child! ... it must not be born!

(She makes her way to the entrance door, opens it and goes out into the night. The door is left open. Inside the ballroom, the dances go on, an occasional couple of guests dancing briefly in and out of the hall. The Major-Domo enters with a glass of water for Erika. Not seeing her, he exits into the ballroom. After a while, the Baroness, disheveled and clad in an old dressing gown, appears at the top of the stairway.)

BARONESS Erika, Erika!

(She begins to descend the stairway.)

Where are you going, Erika? I saw her running to the lake! Please, someone, stop her!

(A chain of dancers, laughing loudly and wildly, runs in from the ballroom and invades the hall. After encircling the Baroness, they quickly exit, always laughing. The dances in the ballroom continue.)

Oh, if only I could call someone! Someone! Someone! Erika!

VANESSA *(suddenly entering)*

What are you doing here?

BARONESS Erika ... Erika!

VANESSA Are you out of your mind?

(The dancing and laughter inside have stopped and a few groups of dancers come into the hall in amazement. Anatol has followed Vanessa into the hall.)

ANATOL Erika ... what of Erika?

BARONESS She must be saved ... Someone go after her ... Toward the lake ... Hurry, please hurry!

(Anatol quickly snatches a cape from the rack, throws it over his shoulders and rushes out the open door, followed by several men from among the guests.)

VANESSA *(trying to stop him)*

Anatol, Anatol!

Act 3

Scene 1

7. (*Erika's bedroom. A few hours later. At the right side of the room, a small alcove in which part of the bed is seen. It is dawn. The Baroness is sitting by a small fireplace with her back to the audience. The Doctor is standing by a window, peering out anxiously through the panes. Vanessa, in a dressing gown, is pacing nervously up and down the room. Cries and calls and barking of dogs are heard outside.*)

VANESSA Why did no-one warn me?

Could everyone be as blind as I was
not to see the sorrow in her face?

(She listens to the howling of dogs in the distance.)

It is almost dawn and they have not found her yet.

Erika, Erika, what made you do this?

(to the Doctor)

You are her doctor and her lifelong friend.

Is it possible you suspected nothing?

DOCTOR I have always known I am a bad doctor.

Now I know I am a bad poet as well,
for I have never learned to read the human heart.

VANESSA *(suddenly turning to the Baroness)*

And you, you must surely know something.

But, oh no, you will not speak.

Whatever have I done to you to have to bear your awful silence?

Oh, I would hate you if you were not my mother.

(She goes to the window.)

DOCTOR Do not talk like that.

VANESSA Why can they not find her? The whole village is looking for her.

DOCTOR She cannot have wandered very far in this cutting cold.

VANESSA What if they do find her!
She will not be alive.

(She sinks on to a chair and bursts into tears.)

DOCTOR Come, come, you must not despair or jump to conclusions.
It may all be very innocent.
They found no trace of her steps near the lake and the ice was unbroken.

8. **VANESSA** Why must the greatest sorrows come from those we most love?
Erika, Erika, my sweet Erika, why have you done this, why?
You who are only as wild as the wild dove and no prouder than the rose?
I love you, Erika, I have always loved you as if you were my own child, my own daughter.
Why break my heart just now as it started to beat again?
Come back, come back, Erika!

(She goes to Erika's bed and sits down, weeping.)

9. **DOCTOR** *(excitedly)*
There, look! ... a group of men is coming towards the house.

VANESSA *(turns slowly, then runs to the window)*
Do you suppose ...

DOCTOR *(opens the window)*
Yes, they are carrying her; they have found her!

(He rushes out of the room.)

VANESSA *(opening the window and crying outside)*
Anatol, Anatol, is she alive?

(She listens for an answer and then closes the window slowly, leaning against it in order not to faint. The Baroness, who has gotten up out of her chair, stares at her imploringly.)

VANESSA Yes, oh yes, she is alive;
thank God, oh thank you, God!

(The door of the bedroom is thrown open and Erika is carried in by Anatol, a group of peasants and men from among the guests, followed by the Doctor. They place her, still wearing her ball dress, on the bed in the alcove.)

DOCTOR There, there, gently.

VANESSA Doctor, how is she?

DOCTOR She seems to be all right. *(to Anatol)* Send them all out.

ANATOL *(to the group of peasants)*

You had better go now. Thank you all.

You will find wine downstairs and a blazing fire in the kitchen.

(The Baroness slowly approaches the bed. The peasants tiptoe out of the room, followed a little later by the guests. The Doctor remains in the alcove with Vanessa. Two maids enter hurriedly and go into the alcove to help undress Erika and put her to bed. Care should be taken, however, that Erika, sheltered by the figures of the maid and the Doctor, remain unseen by the audience.)

VANESSA *(coming out of the alcove and leaning against Anatol who embraces her tenderly)*

Oh, in what terror I have been! Anatol, Anatol ...

(She bursts into tears.)

ANATOL Poor Vanessa, what an endless night!

Come into my arms, my dearest.

Yes, weep, weep in my arms.

VANESSA Where did you find her?

10. **ANATOL** On the path to the lake;
she was hidden in a small ravine like a wounded bird.
She must have fallen for her frost-white dress was torn and damp with blood.
There she lay in the snow like a Christmas rose;
the bitter cold had glazed her lovely face into deep and opaque sleep.
The faint beat of her heart was like an undeciphered signal from another world.
I lifted her into my arms, warmed her against my breast.
I called her name and kissed her eyelids;
only then she sighed a little.

VANESSA (*The Doctor comes out of the alcove*)

How is she?

DOCTOR Leave me alone with her; she is not ready to see you yet.

(*As the Doctor goes back into the alcove, Vanessa and Anatol move to the opposite side of the stage and stand by the fireplace.*)

VANESSA (*with a tormented expression*)

Anatol ...

ANATOL Yes, Vanessa.

11. VANESSA (*taking his hand*)

Anatol, tell me the truth!

ANATOL Yes, Vanessa.

VANESSA Do *you* know why she did this strange thing?

ANATOL Why should I?

VANESSA Anatol, you must not lie to me.

(*She takes his arm and stares into his eyes.*)

Look me in the eyes.

Does she love you?

ANATOL This much I know; she does not love me.

VANESSA Swear!

ANATOL I swear.

VANESSA How do you know?

ANATOL Did I not know that *you* loved me long before you spoke?

But Erika, she chose to judge me before she could learn to love.

VANESSA (*turning away from him*)

Can I believe you?

ANATOL Ask her yourself; she never lies.

VANESSA *(falls into his arms pleadingly)*

Take me, take me away from this house,
Anatol; we must quickly leave!
For the sorrows of others
raise dark walls between our hearts.
Oh, help me tear these bonds,
help me take flight!

ANATOL Yes, Vanessa, every day of waiting
roots you deeper in the past.
Hide in my love!
Brief is the day for blindness,
and brief the day for madness.
Hide in my love;
only the mad, only the blind can fly!

(The Baroness has reached a small chair near Erika's bed.)

DOCTOR *(coming out of the alcove)*

Nothing to worry over; she will be all right.
(stopping Vanessa and Anatol, who had started to walk over to the alcove)
No, no, not yet.
She wants to be alone with her grandmother.

VANESSA But why?

DOCTOR Come, come, we must not upset her now.

12. *(He gently accompanies them outside, closing the door softly behind them. There is a long silence in the room. The Baroness, seated by Erika, still has not moved.)*

ERIKA *(from inside the alcove)*

Grandmother!

BARONESS Yes, Erika.

ERIKA Do they know?

BARONESS How can I tell?
Why did you wish to die?

ERIKA I was with child ...

BARONESS ... with child!

ERIKA I never reached the lake;
by the ravine I fainted.

BARONESS And your child?

ERIKA It will not be born.

(With one violent rap of her cane on the floor, the Baroness suddenly gets up from her chair and slowly walks toward the door. She stops at the sound of Erika's voice, then continues.)

ERIKA Grandmother, why are you leaving me?

(Without answering, the Baroness leaves the room.)

(always from the alcove)

Grandmother, grandmother! Answer me!

13. **Intermezzo**

Scene 2

14. *(The drawing room as in Act 1, a month later. The Baroness is sitting in her usual place; Anatol, in traveling clothes, enters upstage and goes down to speak to the Doctor who is standing by the table. A maid is in the jardin d'hiver packing a small suitcase. The main door at the back of the room is open. Through it one sees servants carrying trunks and other luggage across the hall.)*

ANATOL By the time we arrive in Paris the new house should be ready.

DOCTOR Think of it, to live in Paris!

How I shall miss you both!

ANATOL We shall miss you, too, dear friend.

DOCTOR I know you will make a happy couple.

ANATOL Yes, we shall have the most beautiful house in Paris.

(Vanessa, in traveling costume, with hat and veil, comes into the room.)

VANESSA I am almost ready.

ANATOL *(kissing her)*

How lovely you look!

VANESSA Be sure that they put everything in the sleigh and tell them to be careful with the hat boxes.

(She goes out into the jardin d'hiver to help the maid pack a small suitcase. Anatol exits.)

15. **DOCTOR** *(musingly)*

For ev'ry love there is a last farewell;
for each remembered day an empty room.
Many are the children I bring into the world
but no-one takes the place of those that are lost.
You, too, were once a child, Vanessa.
Do you remember? ... The mumps, the chicken pox, the scarlatina?
How many times I kissed your burning cheek
and fought the grinning dwarfs leering at the foot of your bed!

(Vanessa gives the maid a small farewell present. The maid exits tearfully carrying the suitcase.)

Will you ever think of your old doctor now—
now that the pulse of your heart takes you so far away from him?

(Vanessa enters from the jardin d'hiver, followed shortly after by Erika from the hall; the latter is simply dressed and looks very pale and tense.)

16. **VANESSA** *(to Doctor)*

And you, my friend, what are you mumbling about?

DOCTOR *(with tears in his voice)*

Oh, my dear, I just wanted to tell you ...

VANESSA *(interrupting him)*

Yes, yes, dear Doctor ...

Come, you go and help Anatol.

(She leads him gently towards the door which she closes after him. Vanessa sits on the sofa.)

VANESSA Erika, sit down here next to me.

(Erika sits next to her, but all through the scene avoids looking at her.)

(trying desperately to keep her composure)

Now that I am married and going to Paris, who knows when we shall see each other again!
You can live here as long as you wish; as I have told you, I have willed the house to you;
but do not tell Anatol, please.

ERIKA No.

VANESSA We may not come back for years.

We may never come back.

ERIKA (*rises and steps away from the sofa*)

I choose to stay.

I am not afraid.

VANESSA But you are too young to stay here alone.

ERIKA You, too, were young when you came back here.

VANESSA Oh, but that was different.

ERIKA Someone must take your place now.

(*looking at the Baroness*)

She cannot be left alone.

VANESSA I shall think of you always.

Do take care of my azaleas and the parakeets and don't forget ...

ERIKA Do not worry, Aunt Vanessa.

It shall all be as if you were here.

(*Pause*)

17. VANESSA (*uncertainly*)

Erika, before I leave you must tell me the truth about that night.

ERIKA I have told you the truth, Aunt Vanessa.

VANESSA (*rising and going to Erika*)

No, no, you are hiding something from me and now I must know.

I cannot live with that thorn in my heart.

ERIKA There was no reason for it;

it was a foolish thing to do;

it was the end of my youth.

(*Pause*)

VANESSA (*suddenly approaching Erika, torn between mounting suspicion and the desire to avoid the truth*)

Tell me, Erika, was it because of Anatol?

ERIKA Anatol? Oh no, no!

VANESSA Swear!

ERIKA I swear.

VANESSA (*turning her around to face her*)

Then what was it?

Do not torment me, Erika.

ERIKA You would laugh if I were to tell you as I myself have laughed since then.

VANESSA Why then?

ERIKA I thought I loved someone who did not love me.

VANESSA But whom? The young Pastor, perhaps?

The gamekeeper?

ERIKA What does it matter? It was a foolish thing; it is all over now.

VANESSA Perhaps he was not the man for you!

ERIKA Yes, I know now; he is not the man for me.

(*Anatol enters with a lackey, who removes two pieces of luggage left in the room.*)

ANATOL You must hurry if we are to reach the station before dark.

(*Vanessa goes near the door where a group of servants has assembled to bid her goodbye.*)

VANESSA (*to a maid*)

Bring me down my things, Clara.

(*embracing her*) Oh, do not cry, silly thing.

(*She talks to each one of the servants who, in turn, kisses her hand.*)

ANATOL (*who has remained downstage next to Erika*)

There was a time, Erika, when I thought it would be with you that I should leave this house.

(Vanessa takes the Major-Domo in her arms affectionately. The Doctor comes back into the room and stops by Vanessa's side.)

ERIKA *(to Anatol)*

Please forget me.

Make her happy, Anatol.

Remember that she loves you the way I never could.

(Vanessa comes back into the middle of the room, followed by the Doctor.)

VANESSA Let me look around once more.

Who knows when I shall see this house again!

(She looks around her. There is a long silence.)

18. *(Quintet)*

(The Baroness has risen and they all stand quite motionless.)

ALL To leave, to break,
to find, to keep,
to stay, to wait,
to hope, to dream,
to weep and remember.
To love is all of this
and none of it is love.
The light is not the sun
nor the tide the moon.

ANATOL To leave, to break ...

THE OTHERS Ah, Anatol, how hard it will be, the backward road of regret!

VANESSA To find, to keep ...

THE OTHERS Ah, poor Vanessa, only to die empty-handed!

ERIKA To stay, to wait ...

THE OTHERS Erika, Erika, only to kiss the impostor!

DOCTOR AND BARONESS To weep, to hope ...

THE OTHERS And you old people, may Death release you before you too clearly remember
or cease to dream!

VANESSA Goodbye, Erika. *(kisses her)*

19. ERIKA Goodbye, be happy, Aunt Vanessa,
please be happy.

VANESSA Goodbye, Mother. *(She kisses the Baroness.)*

ANATOL Goodbye, Erika. When I see you again perhaps you will have learned to smile.

ERIKA I hope you will still be smiling when I see you again. Goodbye, Anatol. Goodbye.

DOCTOR Goodbye, goodbye, my dear ones! *(wiping his eyes)*

VANESSA *(gently to Doctor)*

Please, please, no tears!

Come in the sleigh with us, my friend, we shall drop you in the village.

(The Major-Domo and a maid enter with coats and wraps.)

ERIKA I shall wave goodbye from here.

(Vanessa turns back and embraces Erika, then, after a last look, quickly leaves the room with Anatol and the Doctor. The Major-Domo closes the door and Erika is left alone with the Baroness. She goes to the jardin d'hiver and looks out into the snow. One can see that she is making desperate efforts to control her inner agony. At the sound of the departing sleigh she weakly raises her hand to wave goodbye.)

(with a cry) Anatol, Anatol!

(She comes back into the room, leans against a chair as if she were about to collapse, but quickly straightens herself with a great determination and goes to the wall to pull a bell cord. The Baroness slowly moves toward her usual chair.)

20. No, I must never say that name again.
Lucky those people who are so anxious to believe!
(to the Baroness) Do you really think she believes what I said?

(The Baroness pauses.)

Grandmother? *(Pause)* Oh, I forgot that you will not speak to me either now.
I am truly alone!

(The Baroness sits by the fire.)

(The Major-Domo comes in.)

Will you please cover all the mirrors in this house again.

MAJOR-DOMO *(astounded)*

What, Mademoiselle?

ERIKA Yes, just as before.

Begin with these now.

(The Major-Domo bows and exits.)

(Erika fetches a veil similar to the one worn by Vanessa at the beginning of Act 1. The Major-Domo enters from the hall, followed by a servant with a stepladder and some drapes.)

From now on I shall receive no visitors.

Tell the gatekeeper that the gate to the park must remain locked at all times. Thank you.

(The Major-Domo leaves. Erika sits by the fire next to her grandmother.)

Ah, that is good.

(The Major-Domo and the lackey drape the mirror.)

Now it is my turn to wait!

(Erika slowly covers her head with the veil, hiding her face.)



GIANANDREA NOSEDA

Conductor

Gianandrea Nosedà is one of the world's most sought-after conductors, hailed for his artistry in both concert halls and opera houses around the globe. The National Symphony Orchestra's 2025–2026 season marks his ninth as Music Director.

Nosedà's leadership has inspired and reinvigorated the National Symphony Orchestra, which makes its home at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. The orchestra's renewed artistic recognition and critical acclaim have led to invitations to Carnegie Hall and international concert halls, digital streaming services, and a record label distributed by LSO Live—for which Nosedà records as Principal Guest Conductor. Nosedà's discography of more than 80 recordings includes dozens of celebrated albums with a wide range of orchestras and repertoire for various labels, including Deutsche Grammophon and Chandos.

Nosedà was named General Music Director of the Zurich Opera House in September 2021, conducting two highly praised complete *Ring* Cycles in 2024. He was recognized as “Best Conductor” by the jury of the German OPER! AWARDS, specifically for his Wagner interpretations.

From 2007–2018, Nosedà served as Music Director of the Teatro Regio Torino, where his leadership marked the opera house's golden era.

Nosedà has conducted the most renowned international orchestras in opera houses and festivals, with significant roles at the BBC Philharmonic (Chief Conductor), Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Principal Guest Conductor), Mariinsky Theatre (Principal Guest Conductor), Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale Della RAI (Principal Guest Conductor), Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (Victor De Sabata Chair), Rotterdam Philharmonic (Principal Guest Conductor), and Stresa Festival (Artistic Director).

Working with the next generation of musicians is one of Nosedà's greatest passions. In the summer of 2025, he led Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra of the USA in a tour of major concert halls in China, Korea, and Japan. In 2019, he was appointed the founding Music Director of the Tsinandali Festival and Pan-Caucasian Youth Orchestra in the village of Tsinandali, Georgia.

A native of Milan, Nosedà is Commendatore al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, a prestigious title marking his contribution to art in Italy. He has been honored as "Conductor of the Year" by both *Musical America* and the International Opera Awards. He is also a recipient of the Puccini Award whose past recipients include legendary opera stars Maria Callas, Birgit Nilsson, and Luciano Pavarotti.



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The NSO Music Director Chair is generously endowed by Roger Sant and Congresswoman Doris Matsui. Funding for NSO recordings is provided by generous Nosedà Era Fund supporters.

NICOLE HEASTON SOPRANO *Vanessa*

American soprano Nicole Heaston has enjoyed a major international career, appearing with many leading opera houses and orchestras.

Ms. Heaston made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, returning to the house as Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Echo (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). In the United States, she has performed multiple leading roles with Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Los Angeles Opera, also making debuts with Dallas Opera and Washington National Opera. Additional appearances include the title role in Massenet's *Thaïs*, Mary in William Grant Still's *Highway 1, USA*, and Handel's Armida (*Rinaldo*), Alcina, and Melissa (*Amadigi di Gaula*).



Internationally, past performances include Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Royal Danish Opera, Staatsoper Hamburg, and Semper Oper Dresden. Nicole Heaston created the role of Claire Devon in Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's *The Listeners*, which premiered at Den Norske Opera in Oslo, followed by performances at Opera Philadelphia and Lyric Opera of Chicago. For Houston Grand Opera, she created the title role in Michael Daugherty's *Jackie O*, subsequently recording the opera for the Argo label. She premiered Joel Thompson's song cycle *A Voice Within*, and performed Bach's B Minor Mass with Boston Baroque, which was recorded for the Teldec label and nominated for a Grammy® Award. She debuted at Carnegie Hall in recital at Weill Recital Hall, and she has previously given recitals at William Jewel College in Kansas City and for the Marilyn Horne Foundation.

Heaston completed her Master's Degree in Voice at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and received her undergraduate degree in music at the University of Akron. She is a distinguished graduate of Houston Grand Opera's Butler Studio.

J'NAI BRIDGES MEZZO-SOPRANO *Erika*

Three-time Grammy® Award-winning American mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges, known for her “plush-voiced mezzo-soprano” (*The New York Times*), and “calmly commanding stage presence” (*The New Yorker*) has been “marked out at an early stage as a singer headed for top flight” (*Financial Times*), gracing the world’s leading operatic and concert stages “with a voice both voluptuous and statuesque” (*The New York Times*).

Recently, Ms. Bridges made her house debut in the title role of *Carmen* at Teatro Real in Madrid alongside Michael Fabiano and Charles Castronovo, conducted by Eun Sun Kim, reprising the role later in the season at both Seattle Opera and Cincinnati Opera. She has sung Maddalena in *Rigoletto* in her debut at San Francisco Opera, conducted by Eun Sun Kim, and returned to Washington National Opera as Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*, directed by Francesca Zambello and conducted by Robert Spano. In concert, she has performed Maddalena in *Rigoletto* alongside Quinn Kelsey in the title role with Baltimore Symphony conducted by Jonathon Heyward, joined Nashville Symphony for Brian Field’s *Hymn for the Hurting*, with text by Amanda Gorman, and Julia Perry’s *Stabat Mater*, and joined the Gulbenkian Orchestra for their New Years Concerts, including repertoire by Berlioz, Rossini, Bizet, and Offenbach. In recital, she has presented an all-French program at Boston’s Celebrity Series, The Morgan Library in New York, and Wake Forest University. She also presented Damien Geter’s *COTTON* alongside Justin Austin and Laura Ward at La Jolla Music Society, and a program of Coleridge-Taylor, Libby Larsen, Elgar, and others with Terrence Wilson and the Catalyst Quartet at the Library of Congress and Emory University.



MATTHEW POLENZANI TENOR *Anatol*

American tenor Matthew Polenzani is one of the most gifted and distinguished lyric tenors of his generation. His elegant musicianship, innate sense of style, dramatic commitment, and timeless artistry have established his continued presence at leading operatic, concert, and recital venues worldwide.

Mr. Polenzani has recently seen a return to the Lyric Opera of Chicago, reprising his portrayal of Giasone in Sir David McVicar's lush production of Cherubini's *Medea*. He returned to The Metropolitan Opera for two productions, in the role of Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and bowing as Don José in Bizet's *Carmen*, a role has also sung at Teatro alla Scala. Mr. Polenzani has performed in Budapest, with performances of Verdi's Requiem at MUPA, followed by his role debut as Riccardo in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* at the Opéra Bastille. He brought his "spectacular" (*Houston Chronicle*) interpretation of Massenet's *Werther* to Barcelona's Gran Teatro del Liceu, before appearing as Florestan in Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Mr. Polenzani has also performed in recital at Philadelphia's Perelman Center, where he sang selections by Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, accompanied by pianist Ken Noda.

Matthew Polenzani was the recipient of the 2004 Richard Tucker Award, The Metropolitan Opera's 2008 Beverly Sills Artist Award, and a 2017 Opera News Award. An avid golfer, he makes his home in suburban New York with his wife, mezzo-soprano Rosa Maria Pascarella, and their three sons.



© Fay Fox

SUSAN GRAHAM MEZZO-SOPRANO *The Old Baroness*

Recently, Ms. Graham has reprised her celebrated portrayal of Mrs. Patrick De Rocher in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at San Francisco Opera, the company with which the work premiered in 2000 with Ms. Graham in the leading role of Sister Helen Prejean. She returned to the Metropolitan Opera reprising Marquise de Birkenfeld in Laurent Pelly's production of *La fille du Régiment* alongside Erin Morley, Lawrence Brownlee, and actress Sandra Oh. She also returned to Opéra national de Paris as Larina in Ralph Feinnes's new production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, before celebrating the Carlisle Floyd Centennial alongside Jake Heggie, Ryan McKinny, Gabriella Reyes, and others in a gala performance at Carnegie Hall.



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Ms. Graham began the 2024–2025 season as Desiree Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music* in concert at Lincoln Center with the Orchestra of St. Lukes and an all-star cast, including Ruthie Ann Miles, Marsha Mason, Ron Raines, and Cynthia Erivo. She later joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in concert for a gala honoring Andris Nelsons. She sang The Marquise of Berkenfield in *La fille du regiment* in her return to Opéra national de Paris, and returned to Carnegie Hall with Orchestra of St. Lukes for *A Standing Witness* by Richard Danielpour, which she premiered in the 2022–2023 season.

THOMAS HAMPSON BARITONE *The Old Doctor*

Long recognized as one of the most innovative musicians of our time, American baritone Thomas Hampson has received countless international honours for his singular artistry and cultural leadership. His operatic repertoire is comprised of more than 80 roles, and his discography includes more than 170 albums, with multiple nominations and winners of the Grammy Award®, Edison Award, and the Grand Prix du Disque.

Recent highlights have included performances of Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* with The Cleveland Orchestra and Klaus Mäkela, and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Stuttgarter Philharmoniker and Music Director Dan Ettinger. Highlights on the concert stage included performances with the Orchester Wiener Akademie, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, and Orchestre National de Lyon.



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He is an honorary professor of Philosophy at the University of Heidelberg and an honorary member of London's Royal Academy of Music. In addition to several Honorary Doctorates, he is a Kammersänger of the Wiener Staatsoper and Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of the Republic of France. In 2017 he received the Hugo Wolf Medal, together with Wolfram Rieger. He is the co-Founder and Artistic Director of the Lied Academy Heidelberg. In 2003 he founded the Hampsong Foundation, through which he uses the art of song to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding. His international masterclass schedule is a continuing online resource of medici.tv, the Manhattan School of Music, and The Hampsong Foundation livestream channel. Additionally, he serves as an Advisor for Opera for Peace.

JONATHAN BRYAN BARITONE *Nicholas, The Major-Domo*

Hailing from Dallas, Texas, Jonathan Bryan has been praised for his “beautifully resonant baritone” and “substantial sound.” He has performed leading roles on stages throughout the United States and abroad. He recently completed his residency with the Washington National Opera Cafritz Young Artist Program, where he made his Kennedy Center debut as Escamillo and Moralès in Francesca Zambello’s production of *Carmen*.

In recent seasons, Bryan has performed Silvio in *Pagliacci* with Opera Louisiane, Count Carl-Magnus in *A Little Night Music* with St. Petersburg Opera, and Robert in a concert version of *Iolanta* with the Russian Chamber Art Society.

Mr. Bryan developed the titular role of Egon Schiele, a new opera by composer Jared Schwartz. Passionate about developing new works, he also sang the role of Safety Observer in The Metropolitan Opera’s workshop for Jeanine Tesori’s new opera, *Grounded*. Recently, Mr. Bryan returned to Lyric Opera of Kansas City to finish out his season as Count Paris in Matthew Ozawa’s celebrated production of *Roméo et Juliette*. Highlights from past seasons include Baron Douphol in *La traviata* (Lyric Opera of Kansas City), Captain von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* (Arizona Opera), Wyatt in Joseph Illick’s *UnShakeable* (Charleston Opera Theatre), Ophémon in Joseph Bologne’s *The Anonymous Lover*, Erster Nazarener in *Salome*, Zaretsky/Captain and Eugene Onegin cover in *Eugene Onegin*, Anthony in *Sweeney Todd*, Le Baron de Pictordu in Viardot’s *Cendrillon* (Wolf Trap Opera), the Ranger in Amber Vistein and Rebecca Hart’s *the barren(s)* (Washington National Opera’s AOI), Beaumarchais in John Corigliano’s *The Ghosts of Versailles*, and Lieutenant Gordon in Kevin Puts’ *Silent Night*.



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SAMUEL WEISER BASS-BARITONE *Footman*

Bass-baritone Samuel Weiser is praised for his “stentorian bass” voice and ability to create “fully formed” characters due to an “acutely sensitive artistic compass” (*Washington Classical Review*, New Outpost). In the 2024–2025 season, Mr. Weiser performed Wurm in Verdi’s *Luisa Miller* with Washington Concert Opera, and returned to the Metropolitan Opera covering the role of Kill Chain: Safety Observer in *Grounded*, whose workshop he participated in with Washington National Opera. He also recently made a role debut as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Livermore Valley Opera, which he reprised this season with Annapolis Opera, and made his Gulfshore Opera debut as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



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Weiser has sung the Clerk, Doctor, and Con-Man in *The Nose* at Chicago Opera Theater and joined Opera Baltimore as Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*. With the Metropolitan Opera, he has portrayed Count Ribbing in *Un ballo in maschera*, and made his house debut as Flemish Deputy 4 in *Don Carlo*. Other roles include Dr. Dulcamara in *L’elisir d’amore* (Livermore Valley Opera); the title role in *Pepito*, Benoit/Alcindoro in *La bohème*, Sprecher/2nd Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*, Marquis d’Obigny in *La traviata*, Captain in *Eugene Onegin*, Jailer in *Tosca*, 2nd Philistine in *Samson et Dalilah*, and Ox/Innkeeper/Shepherd in Jeanine Tesori’s *The Lion, the Unicorn and Me* (Washington National Opera); Solomon Weil and George Gissing in Kevin Puts’ *Elizabeth Cree* (Opera Philadelphia and Chicago Opera Theater); Clumsy God in Jack Perla’s *Shalimar the Clown*, Sergeant in *La bohème*, Valet in *Macbeth*, Fred and Pump Guy #2 in Ricky Ian Gordon’s *The Grapes of Wrath* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis); Der Sprecher in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* (Central City Opera).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CONCERT CHOIR

Jason Max Ferdinand, director

The UMD Concert Choir is a vibrant 100-voice symphonic ensemble and a valued artistic partner of both the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO). Known for its expressive singing and musical versatility, the choir has collaborated with these distinguished orchestras in performances of major choral-orchestral works including Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Bernstein's *Kaddish Symphony*, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

The ensemble has appeared under the direction of renowned conductors including Marin Alsop, Helmuth Rilling, Donald Runnicles, Masaaki Suzuki, James Conlon, Markus Stenz, and Laurence Equilbey. In 2018 the choir joined the National Symphony Orchestra and Gianandrea Noseda for acclaimed performances of John Adams's *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, and in 2019 appeared at Carnegie Hall with the NSO in a program featuring Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Liszt's *Dante Symphony*.

At The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, the choir regularly presents major masterworks including Bach's *Magnificat*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, Verdi's *Requiem*, and Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri*.

Jason Max Ferdinand—Professor, Conductor, Composer, Speaker—is an inspirational musician, leader, and educator whose artistry is sought after by choirs and orchestras across the United States and internationally. Since 2022 he has served as Director of Choral Activities at the University of Maryland, College Park. Previously, he spent fourteen years as professor at Oakwood University, where he conducted the internationally acclaimed *Aeolians of Oakwood University*.

Ferdinand is the founding Artistic Director of The Jason Max Ferdinand Singers, a professional ensemble established in 2021 that made its debut at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in 2024.

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The 2025–2026 season is the National Symphony Orchestra’s 95th and Music Director Gianandrea Noseda’s ninth season. Noseda serves as the orchestra’s seventh Music Director, joining the NSO’s legacy of distinguished leaders: Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Slatkin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Antal Doráti, Howard Mitchell, and Hans Kindler. The NSO’s artistic leadership also includes Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Steven Reineke.

Since its founding in 1931, the NSO has been committed to performances that enrich the lives of its audience and community members. In 1986, the National Symphony became an artistic affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where it has performed since the Center opened in 1971. The 96-member orchestra participates in events of national and international importance, including the annual nationally televised concerts on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, live-streamed performances on medici.tv, and local radio broadcasts on WETA Classical 90.9 FM.

Following the launch of its eponymous recording label in 2020, the NSO has embarked on ambitious projects including its first complete Beethoven Symphony cycle and the release of the first-ever cycle of George Walker’s *Sinfonias*, both led by Noseda. Recent projects include *Four Symphonic Works* by Kennedy Center Composer-in-Residence Carlos Simon conducted by Noseda, and William Shatner’s *So Fragile, So Blue*, recorded live in the Concert Hall with the NSO under Steven Reineke.

The NSO’s community engagement and education projects are nationally recognized, and career development opportunities for young musicians include the NSO Youth Fellowship Program and its acclaimed, tuition-free Summer Music Institute.

For more information, visit nationalsymphony.org



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NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VIOLINS

Nurit Bar-Josef, *Concertmaster*
Ying Fu, *Associate Concertmaster*,
The Jeanne Weaver
Ruesch Chair
Ricardo Cyncynates,
Assistant Concertmaster
Jane Stewart
Heather Green
Joel Fuller
Lisa-Beth Lambert
Jing Qiao+
Ben Scott
Malorie Blake Shin
Marina Aikawa
Mae Lin* *
Sara Matayoshi*
Kei Sugiyama*
Joanna Owen*

Marissa Regni, *Principal*
Dayna Hepler, *Assistant Principal*
Cynthia R. Finks
Deanna Lee Bien
Glenn Donnellan
Natasha Bogachek
Carole Tafoya Evans
Jae-Yeon Kim
Hanna Lee
Derek Powell+
Peiming Lin
Malorie Blake Shin

Angelia Cho
Meredith Riley*

VIOLAS

Daniel Foster, *Principal*,
The Mrs. John Dimick Chair
Denise Wilkinson
Nancy Thomas
Jennifer Mondie
Tsunaka Sakamoto
Ruth Wicker
Mahoko Eguchi+
Abigail Evans Kreuzer
Rebecca Epperson
Chiara Kingsley Dieguez**
Andrew Eng* *

CELLO

David Hardy, *Principal*,
The Hans Kindler Chair,
The Strong Family and the
Hattie M. Strong Foundation
Glenn Garlick, *Assistant Principal*
David Teie+
James Lee
Rachel Young
Mark Evans
Eugena Chang Riley
Loewi Lin
Britton Riley
Romain Gray*
Susie Yun*

BASSES

Robert Oppelt, *Principal*
Richard Barber, *Assistant Principal*
Jeffrey Weisner
Ira Gold
Charles Nilles+
Paul DeNola
Alexander Jacobsen
Michael Marks

HARP

Adriana Horne, *Principal*

FLUTES

Aaron Goldman, *Principal*
Leah Arsenault Barrick,
Assistant Principal
Matthew Ross
Carole Bean, *Piccolo*
Grace Wang *+

OBOES

Jamie Roberts, *Acting Principal*
Harrison Linsey+,
Acting Assistant Principal
Trevor Mowrey*
Kathryn Meany Wilson,
English Horn

CLARINETS

Lin Ma, *Principal*
 Eugene Mondie+,
Assistant Principal
 Paul Cigan
 Peter Cain, *Bass Clarinet*
 Tyler Hsieh*+

BASSOONS

Sue Heineman, *Principal*
 David Young+, *Assistant Principal*
 Sean Gordon+, *Contrabassoon*

HORNS

Abel Pereira, *Principal*,
 The National Trustees' Chair
 James Nickel+,
Acting Associate Principal
 Markus Osterlund
 Robert Rearden
 Scott Fearing
 Wei-Ping Chou**+

TRUMPETS

William Gerlach, *Principal*,
 The Howard Mitchell Chair,
 The Strong Family and The
 Hattie M. Strong Foundation
 Michael Harper+,
Assistant Principal
 Tom Cupples
 Quentin Erickson **
 Michail Thompson*

TROMBONES

Craig Mulcahy, *Principal*
 David Murray
 Matthew Guilford,
Bass Trombone

TUBA

Seth Cook*

TIMPANI

Jauvon Gilliam, *Principal*,
 The Marion E. Glover Chair
 Scott Christian,
Assistant Principal

PERCUSSION

Eric Shin, *Principal*, The
 Hechinger Foundation Chair
 Erin Dowrey, *Assistant Principal*
 Scott Christian
 Jason Niehoff*

KEYBOARD

Lambert Orkis, *Principal*

ACCORDIAN

Iwo Jedynecki*

LIBRARIANS

Elizabeth Cusato Schnobrick,
Principal
 Zen Stokdyk, *Associate*
 Karen Lee, *Assistant*

PERSONNEL

Karyn Garvin, *Director*
 Sufyan Naaman,** *Coordinator*

STAGE MANAGERS

David Langrell, *Manager*
 N. Christian Bottorff,
Assistant Manager

The National Symphony Orchestra uses a system of revolving strings. In each string section, untitled members are listed in order of length of service.

- * Regularly engaged extra
- ** Temporary position
- *** Leave of Absence
- + Banda

Samuel Barber

VANESSA

Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* was recorded live in the Concert Hall of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, January 30 and February 1, 2025

Recording Producer: **Blanton Alspaugh, Soundmirror**

Recording Engineer: **Mark Donahue, Soundmirror**

Mastering Engineer: **Mark Donahue, Soundmirror**

Executive Producer: **Nigel Boon, National Symphony Orchestra**

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National Symphony Orchestra

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