

I Vespri Verdiani

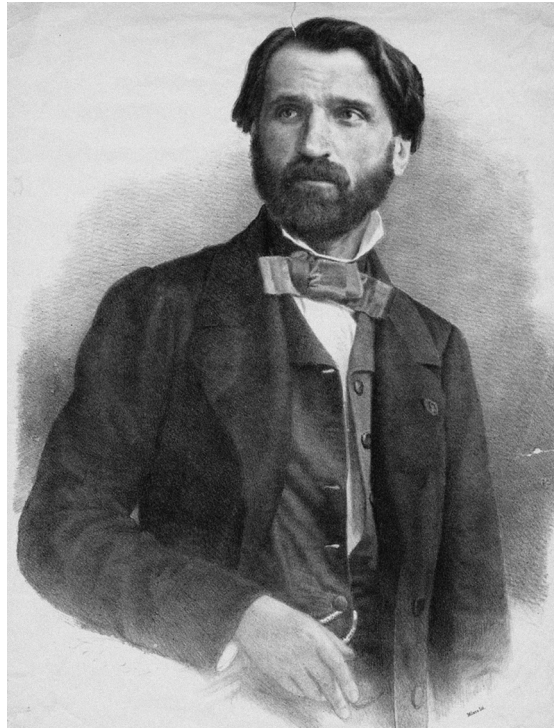
CHANDOS

VERDI ARIAS



Olga Mykytenko
soprano

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra Kirill Karabits



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Giuseppe Verdi, c. 1840

I vespri verdiani

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901)

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|---|--|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">1</div> | <p>From ‘I masnadieri’, Part II, Scene 1 (1847) 7:09</p> <p>Amalia: ‘Dall’infame banchetto’. Allegro moderato – Andante – Allegro –
‘Tu del mio Carlo al seno’. Adagio –
‘Carlo vive?’. Allegro brillante</p> |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">2</div> | <p>From ‘Un ballo in maschera’, Act III, Scene 1 (1859) 4:13</p> <p>Amelia: ‘Morrò, ma prima in grazia’. Andante</p> |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">3</div> | <p>From ‘Il trovatore’, Part I ‘Il duello’, Scene 2 (1853) 6:28</p> <p>Leonora: ‘Ne’ tornei! V’apparve’. Allegro – Andante –
‘Tacea la notte placida’. Andantino – Animando un poco –
Poco più animato –
‘Versi di prece, ed umile’. [] – Animando un poco –
Poco più animato –
‘Di tale amor’. Allegro giusto – Poco più mosso – Più mosso</p> |

4	From ‘I vespri siciliani’, Act IV (1855) Elena: ‘Arrigo! ah! parli a un core’. Andante	3:33
5	From ‘I vespri siciliani’, Act V Elena: ‘Mercé, dilette amiche’. Allegro	4:07
6	From ‘Il corsaro’, Act I, Scene 2 (1848) Medora: ‘Egli non riede ancora!’. Andante – ‘Non so le tetre immagini’. Andante	5:05
7	From ‘Attila’, Prologue, Scene 1 (1846) Odabella: ‘Santo di patria’. [] – ‘Allor che i forti corrono’. Andantino – Allegro – ‘Da te questo or m’è concesso’. Allegro moderato – Poco più mosso	4:52
8	From ‘Attila’, Act I, Scene 1 Odabella: ‘Liberamente or piangi...’. Andante – ‘Oh! Nel fuggente nuvolo’. Andantino mosso	5:11
9	From ‘Ernani’, Act I, Scene 2 (1844) Elvira: ‘Surta è la notte, e Silva non ritorna!...’. Andante sostenuto – ‘Ernani!... Ernani, involami’. Andantino – ‘(Tutto sprezzo, che d’Ernani...)’. Allegro con brio	7:10

10	From 'Macbeth', Act I, Scene 2 (1847) Lady Macbeth: "Nel dì della vittoria io le incontrai...". Allegro – 'Vieni! T'affretta! Accendere'. Andantino. Grandioso – Allegro – 'Or tutti sorgete ~ ministri infernali'. Allegro maestoso	7:33
11	From 'Macbeth', Act IV, Scene 2 Lady Macbeth: 'Una macchia è qui tuttora...'. Andante assai sostenuto	7:22
12	From 'Luisa Miller', Act II, Scene 1 (1849) Luisa: 'Tu puniscimi, o signore'. Andante agitato	2:56
13	From 'La traviata', Act I (1853) Violetta: 'È strano!... è strano!... in core'. Allegro – 'Ah, forse è lui'. Andantino – 'A quell'amor ch'è palpito'. [] – 'Follie!... follie!... delirio vano è questo!...'. Allegro – 'Sempre libera'. Allegro brillante	7:24
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Olga Mykytenko soprano
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
 Aryn Merchant leader
 Kirill Karabits

I vespri verdiani

Introduction

Is there such a thing as a ‘Verdian soprano’? Throughout his career Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901) devised roles for a wide variety of singers, from the dramatic coloratura of Abigail in his early triumph *Nabucco* (1842, Milan) to the soubrette part of Nannetta in his final work, *Falstaff* (1893, Milan). Mothers, daughters, warriors, queens, prostitutes, nuns, and virgins all populate Verdi’s operatic works, giving voice to the widest range of female experience across the nineteenth century as well as being shaped to the skills of specific female performers. His career also witnessed a broader evolution in the approach which Verdi took to operatic composition, as structures inherited from Rossini were succeeded by less decorative vocal lines, more sophisticated orchestral writing, and more open-ended forms. Yet certain qualities are constant across his soprano roles: the requirement to deliver a sustained *cantabile* line, especially in the middle register; a wide vocal range that extends from floated high notes to a well-supported chest voice; and sufficient warmth

of tone to animate characters through text, creating drama with the voice alone.

I masnadieri

The role of Amalia in *I masnadieri* (1847, London) offers one of Verdi’s lightest prima donna roles. Composed for the legendary soprano Jenny Lind, the part foreshadows Gilda in *Rigoletto* (1851, Venice) in its demands for high-lying vocal agility while still requiring the kind of long-breathed lyricism familiar from Verdi’s earliest works. The libretto of *I masnadieri* was based on Schiller’s *Die Räuber*, a play – previously set by Verdi’s older contemporary Saverio Mercadante, in 1836 – that explores a family rivalry centred upon Amalia, her outlawed lover, Carlo, and his jealous brother, Francesco. In the scene that opens Part II, Amalia believes both Carlo and his father, Massimiliano, to be dead, and she mourns at the tomb of the latter in an arching melody, accompanied by harp, that would surely have showcased Lind’s capacity for pathos (‘Dall’infame banchetto... Tu del mio Carlo al seno’). Informed by Arminio that both

men are in fact alive, Amalia bursts into a bouncing C major cabaletta ('Carlo vive?') characterised by trills and accents that convey her exhilaration – a happiness that will be sadly short lived as Francesco pursues his ignoble ends.

Un ballo in maschera

A very different vocal profile is on display in the character Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera* (1859, Rome), who laments her misfortune in 'Morrò, ma prima in grazia'. Married to Renato, Amelia is secretly in love with his best friend, Riccardo, who is the governor of colonial Boston (a location changed for censorship reasons from the original setting, the Swedish royal court). Renato has discovered Amelia's feelings for Riccardo by spying on the meeting between Amelia and the fortune-teller Ulrica, and he now threatens to kill her for her betrayal. In her Act III aria, she accepts her death but begs to see her child one last time, in a halting movement that demonstrates Verdi's skill at building up an aria from the development and intensification of small melodic motives. A cello solo adds further poignancy to the scene, underlying Amelia's maturity as well as the soprano's rich lower tones. One of Verdi's most challenging soprano roles, Amelia

finally reveals the extent of her torment in a notorious cadenza that takes her from a high C flat down to a low A in the alto register – the despair of a mother who will never see her children again.

Il trovatore

Il trovatore (1853, Rome) is often considered a return on Verdi's part to an earlier style of *bel canto* composition, after the experimentation in *Rigoletto* with looser dramatic structures within individual movements. Leonora's entrance aria certainly does largely conform to an older formal pattern in the style of *I masnadieri*: a recitative preceding a lyrical reflection, a moment of dramatic action, and then a faster movement (the so-called *solita forma*). Yet, exemplifying a feature found elsewhere in *Il trovatore*, Leonora's *scena* also reflects the compression and dramatic impetus that characterise many of Verdi's works. In an opera named after a singer, it is perhaps no surprise that the power of the voice is both the subject of and the vehicle for the soprano's aria. In the garden with her maid Ines, Leonora remembers how she rediscovered the man she loves by hearing him singing to his lute ('Tacea la notte placida'), a memory which she evokes in a melancholy two-stanza aria that twice opens up into the

major key as she recalls Manrico's music. The movement is partly based on Verdi's song 'In solitaria stanza' from the 1830s, the repeated octave leaps as well as the sustained rising vocal line suggesting Leonora's grandeur. In 'Di tale amor', however, Leonora dismisses Ines's concerns in a cabaletta filled with leaps, pauses, trills, and scales that evoke her breathless excitement at seeing her lover: the girlish passion inside the noble princess.

I vespri siciliani

His visits to Paris in the 1840s and 1850s exposed Verdi to the extravagance of French *grand opéra* – its visual opulence and lengthy historical plots – and brought about several French commissions, including *Les Vêpres siciliennes* (1855, Paris), a work more regularly encountered in its Italian translation, *I vespri siciliani*. A story of political conflict set during the French occupation of Palermo in the thirteenth century, it offers an especially challenging role for the main soprano, who must command an extraordinarily wide vocal range. A Sicilian whose brother has been executed, Elena has committed herself romantically to Arrigo, who is helping to lead the revolutionary forces against the French. Arrigo has discovered that he is actually the son of the occupying governor,

Montfort, and he defends his father against attack in a moment of moral crisis. In her Act IV aria, 'Arrigo! ah! parli a un core', Elena reassures Arrigo, after understanding his reasons for saving Montfort, that she will forgive him – expressing her grief to an accompaniment of woodwind. It is set in two stanzas and, surprisingly, the mood warms at the acceptance of tragedy halfway through each stanza, the G minor lament shifting to the major; for this revolutionary figure, perhaps, there is always a better resolution in the afterlife. By Act V, Montfort briefly appears to have achieved peace by wedding the two lovers, an event Elena celebrates in her showpiece *boléro*, 'Mercé, dilette amiche'. The opera's most frequently performed excerpt, it offers a superb coloratura display as Elena thanks the crowds for their support and delights in the peace brought to Palermo. The poignancy of Act IV is now forgotten; tragedy looms, however, as the Sicilian rebels soon launch their massacre.

Il corsaro

Il corsaro (1848, Trieste) has long been one of Verdi's least frequently performed works. Medora's entrance aria has nevertheless helped to keep the opera partly alive in the popular imagination. 'Non so le tetre

immagini' offers a haunting, haunted lament in triple time, as Medora ponders the fate of her pirate lover in a series of increasingly ornamented variations accompanied by harp.

Attila

Somewhat more successful from the point of view of repertoire is *Attila* (1846, Venice), the heroic female character of which anticipates the military writing for Elena (*I vespri siciliani*). With the dotted rhythms and aggressive vocal line of 'Santo di patria' Odabella declares her readiness to battle for her country's freedom. Her later *scena*, 'Liberamente or piangi', instead exposes her fragility; delicate woodwind writing again reveals the sadness in the heart of this warrior as she grieves for her dead father.

Ernani

Ernani (1844, Venice) was one of Verdi's most popular early works, one chosen to inaugurate many new opera houses during the 1850s, in Italy and abroad. As in the case of *Il trovatore*, the entrance of the soprano portrays her character's romantic passion in a two-part aria, the first half marked by wide leaps and roulades suggesting Elvira's latent strength. The succeeding cabaletta reinforces that impression by developing its melodic motifs,

adding *staccati* and other ornaments over a wide range to outline Elvira's confidence – and also that of the soprano.

Macbeth

Fearsome though Odabella is, few early Verdi heroines are so self-possessed nor so self-destructive as Lady Macbeth. A breakthrough work for the young Verdi, *Macbeth* (1847, Florence) pushed his psychological characterisations to a new level and reflected his growing interest in theatrical realism. Lady Macbeth, Verdi famously wrote, should be performed by a singer whose voice was 'harsh, stifled, and dark', a far cry from *bel canto* ideals of vocal beauty and smooth emission. In the Act I letter scene she receives news of the witches' prophecy and reveals her ambition in violent vocal writing rising in a fearsome series of sequences. The following cabaletta largely intensifies this mood, running scales and couplets painting a portrait of manic glee as the Lady hears that Duncan is on his way. By the Act IV sleepwalking scene, however, a wholly different voice emerges – one harking back to Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Haunted by her crimes and the bloodstained hands she cannot clean, Lady Macbeth now frequently sings melodic fragments

rather than a sustained vocal line, while the accompaniment echoes the rhythmic energy of her earlier scenes, its unsettling chromatic writing evoking her mental unsteadiness. As she finally gives in to the abyss, her voice rises to an optional D flat in the scene's final moments: an otherworldly, vocally terrifying effect that is perhaps also a plea for forgiveness (forty years later, Desdemona's Ave Maria in *Otello* would end with a similar effect).

Luisa Miller

Luisa Miller (1849, Naples), like *I masnadieri*, is an adaptation of Schiller and again features a heroine characterised by her innocence. Indeed, the musicologist Emanuele Senici has situated Luisa in a lineage of 'alpine virgins' that extends from Bellini's Amina, in *La sonnambula*, to Minnie, in Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*. In love with Carlo – really Rodolfo – Luisa has been trapped by the powerful Wurm, who is also in love with her and had her father imprisoned; Wurm will free her father if she agrees to commit to him. In 'Tu puniscimi, o signore' Luisa expresses her frustration at her fate, declaring that if anyone must be punished she would rather it were she. Her vocal line contrasts strongly with the delicate *staccati* of her entrance *scena*, offering dramatic writing

in the upper middle register and eventually rising to a high B followed by vocal roulades down to the soprano's lowest register on the climactic 'non lasciarmi in abbandono' (do not abandon me). Even at her most abused, her operatic voice remains strong: Luisa may be an alpine virgin, but she possesses extraordinary inner strength.

La traviata

Perhaps none of Verdi's soprano roles, however, is as multifaceted as that of Violetta, in *La traviata* (1853, Venice), nor have any been so widely prized by generations of singers. Building on the domestic drama of *Luisa Miller*, Verdi aspired to set his adaptation of Alexandre Dumas's *La Dame aux camélias* in the present day, before censorship forced him to relocate the action a century earlier. But even moving the drama into the eighteenth century can only partly mute the scandalous nature of the plot of *La traviata*, which frames the courtesan Violetta as a figure of moral purity, and the bourgeois Germont in the morally ambiguous position of both father and villain. In her great Act I *scena*, Violetta first reflects on Alfredo's declaration of love, considering whether she should abandon her life of pleasure – one already overshadowed by

illness – and pursue a dream of romantic love. ‘Ah, forse è lui’ has a harmonic structure apparently modelled on Isabelle’s aria ‘Robert, toi que j’aime’ from Meyerbeer’s *Robert le diable*, a work which Verdi would have encountered in Paris: a pathetic F minor lament that gradually opens up into the major as the vocal line rises higher, here also repeating the melody from Violetta and Alfredo’s duet. Dismissing this dream as sheer folly, Violetta then launches into a frenetic cabaletta in 6/8 time, ‘Sempre libera’, which functions almost as a mad scene. Producing no fewer than ten top Cs and D flats, and rapid scales that would tax many a lyric coloratura, Violetta here is literally willing herself to return to an earlier, more carefree vocal mode. Small wonder, then, that Violetta has attracted sopranos who have performed roles as varied as Gilda, Nannetta, Odabella, and Lady Macbeth. Lyric, dramatic, tragic, defiant, and exhilaratingly brilliant, the role offers a way in for every configuration of the ‘Verdian soprano’.

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A note by the performer

This debut CD, *I vespri verdiani*, is a very special project for me. It connects my soul to

very revealing moments in my life, when I am still a little girl, not long since born, and already singing the whole day, surprising everyone around me. Sometime later I found that certain pieces of music already seemed to exist in my head. Step by step I began to discover and recognise certain arias and, especially, very expressive musical moments which were somehow known to me, as if I had already sung them before.

I must say that my birth involved, for me, an almost mystic element, directly connected to music. It is a story I described in my book *Solo OM*, published in Ukraine in 2017. In the last scene of the book my protagonist, an opera singer who has journeyed to the mountains in order to find and re-establish herself, encounters her own voice, in person, and realises that she was born to serve that voice, experienced as a high, vibrating substance. It completely alters the view which the woman has of her own life, and determines her future decisions.

The opera *I vespri siciliani* is a revolutionary opera by Verdi, ‘vespro’ meaning a mass sung at evening, and I try to draw a parallel between the duty to the church and the duty to serve the voice – to one’s self-actualisation – that each real singer has inside.

On this CD you will find some of the best repertoire ever written for the soprano, music which perfectly suits my voice.

The young Verdi was a real idealist and his heroes were mostly young people who broke rules in the search for truth. It is the same goal as that of the protagonist in my book: upturning her whole life and discovering a totally new self, then following her real mission – to sing.

I selected Verdi's best arias, which I have been singing for over twenty years, since I started to learn music professionally. In the chosen sequence of these arias, one can trace my gradual development as an opera singer.

Please, enjoy this musical trip with me!

In conclusion, I want to express my cordial gratitude to Kinstellar, my sponsor, for making this project possible!

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Among several prestigious awards, the Ukrainian soprano **Olga Mykytenko** won the International Maria Callas Grand Prix in Athens in 1997, received the Second Prize and Special Award at the Francisco Viñas International Singing Competition in Barcelona in 1997, and won First Prize at the Queen Sonja International Music

Competition in Oslo in 2003. Recognised for her extraordinary musicality, solid vocal technique, easy coloratura, and powerful expression, she was a soloist at the National Opera of Ukraine in Kyiv from 1995 till 2003, a city in which she has also taken part in duo concerts with Renato Bruson and José Carreras. Since 2001 she has appeared on operatic stages across Europe, notably the Theater an der Wien, Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Großes Festspielhaus in Salzburg, Opéra royal de Wallonie in Liège, Staatsoper Hamburg, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Welsh National Opera, Staatsoper Berlin, and Den Norske Opera, in such roles as Iolanta, Violetta (*La traviata*), Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Musetta and Mimì (*La bohème*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Nedda (*Pagliacci*), Liù (*Turandot*), and Micaëla (*Carmen*). In 2007, she made her debut at The Metropolitan Opera in New York, singing Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), and also appeared at Opéra national de Lyon as Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*). She made her debut at Oper Frankfurt in 2008, as Amalia (*I masnadieri*), and sang Leïla (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*) and Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) for the first time respectively in 2010 and 2011, both at the Aalto-Musiktheater Essen. In 2012 she made her debut at Bayerische

Staatsoper as Fiordiligi, immediately returning to sing Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*). Her repertoire also includes the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Luisa Miller, and Francesca da Rimini. Olga Mykytenko appears frequently on the concert platform, where she has sung the soprano part in Shostakovich's Symphony No. 14 with the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France under Kirill Petrenko, Berliner Philharmoniker under Neeme Järvi, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre de chambre de Lausanne under Kirill Karabits, and The Israel Camerata Jerusalem under Konstantin Chudovsky.

Founded in 1893, the **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra** remains at the forefront of the orchestral scene in the UK, serving communities across the South and South West, and extending its influence across the whole of the UK and internationally with regular festival appearances, an extensive catalogue of recordings, and live broadcasts on BBC Radio 3. During the tenure of its founder, Sir Dan Godfrey, it worked with such illustrious figures as Bartók, Elgar, Holst, Sibelius, Stravinsky, and Vaughan Williams; it gave numerous premières and was the first orchestra in the UK

to perform all Tchaikovsky's symphonies. More recently, it has worked with Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, David Matthews, Rodion Shchedrin, Sir John Tavener, Sir Michael Tippett, Sir James MacMillan, and Mark-Anthony Turnage. Succeeding such esteemed chief conductors as Sir Charles Groves, Constantine Silvestri, Rudolf Schwarz, Paavo Berglund, Andrew Litton, Yakov Kreizberg, and Marin Alsop, Kirill Karabits continues to lead the Orchestra in a variety of exciting plans and events.

The Orchestra and its various smaller ensembles give more than 140 public performances annually, touring widely and making regular appearances at the BBC Proms. Abroad it has made notable appearances at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, New York, and at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Wiener Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Rudolfinum in Prague, and Berliner Philharmonie. The Orchestra's musicians take part in an extensive portfolio of learning and community projects, including initiatives involving people living with dementia and the creation of a groundbreaking disabled-led ensemble, BSO Resound. Since its pioneering beginnings in 1914, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra has amassed a discography of more than 300

recordings, recent acclaimed releases including works by Bartók, Bernstein, Dvořák, Finzi, Glazunov, Howells, Khachaturian, Mussorgsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky, Vaughan Williams, and Walton. www.bsolive.com

In his eleventh year as its Chief Conductor, **Kirill Karabits** enjoys an internationally celebrated relationship with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, with which he has made many critically acclaimed recordings and appeared regularly at the BBC Proms. He has worked with leading international ensembles such as the Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Münchner Philharmoniker, Orchestre national de France, Philharmonia Orchestra, Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Filarmonica del Teatro La Fenice, and BBC Symphony Orchestra. He enjoys a special relationship with the Russian National Orchestra with which he returned to the Edinburgh International Festival in the 2018 / 19 season and more recently embarked on an extensive North American tour with Mikhail Pletnev, which included his New York debut at the Lincoln Center. He also recently made his debuts with the symphony orchestras of Toronto,

Cincinnati, Seattle, and Melbourne, and with the Wiener Symphoniker at the Musikverein, as well as a return to Deutsche Oper Berlin.

The 2019 / 20 season will include a number of returns and debuts, in North America, on the European continent, in Australia, and South Korea. It will also see him embark on a European and South American tour with the Russian National Orchestra, which will include performances at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and the Tonhalle Düsseldorf. A prolific conductor of opera, Kirill Karabits has appeared at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Oper Stuttgart, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Staatsoper Hamburg, English National Opera, the Bolshoi Theatre, and Wagner Geneva Festival, in a repertoire ranging from Mozart to Britten. A champion of the next generation of bright musicians, he is Artistic Director of the I, CULTURE Orchestra which he conducted on a European tour in August 2015, with Lisa Batiashvili as soloist, and on a tour of summer festivals in 2018, which included concerts at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Montpellier Festival. Most recently, in the course of a UK tour, he conducted the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain for the first time. The Royal Philharmonic Society named Kirill Karabits Conductor of the Year in 2013.

I vespri verdiani

Einleitung

Gibt es das, den “Verdi-Sopran”? Während seiner gesamten Laufbahn ersann Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901) Partien für eine große Vielfalt von Sängerinnen, vom dramatischen Koloratursopran der Abigail in seinem frühen Triumph *Nabucco* (Mailand 1842) bis zur Soubrettenrolle der Nannetta in seiner letzten Oper *Falstaff* (Mailand 1893). Mütter, Töchter, Kriegerinnen, Königinnen, Prostituierte, Nonnen und Jungfrauen bevölkern alle Verdis Opernwerke und geben der größtmöglichen Vielfalt der weiblichen Erfahrungswelten des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts eine Stimme, sind aber auch auf die Fähigkeiten einzelner Sängerinnen zugeschnitten. Verdis Werdegang zeugt zudem von einer weitreichenderen Entwicklung seines Ansatzes in der Opernkomposition, wobei von Rossini übernommene Strukturen durch weniger dekorative Gesangslinien, komplexere Orchesterkomposition und offenere Formen abgelöst wurden. Einige Eigenschaften sind jedoch all seinen Sopranpartien durchgängig eigen: der Anspruch – besonders im mittleren

Register – eine getragene *cantabile* Linie bieten zu können; ein großer stimmlicher Umfang, der sowohl eine leicht-schwebende Höhe als auch eine gut gestützte Bruststimme umfasst; und ausreichende Wärme des Tons, um die Charaktere durch den Text mit Leben zu erfüllen, wobei allein die Stimme das Drama entstehen lässt.

I masnadieri

Die Rolle der Amalia in *I masnadieri* (London 1847) ist eine von Verdis am leichtesten angelegten Prima-Donna-Partien. Sie entstand für die legendäre Sopranistin Jenny Lind, und mit der für sie erforderlichen hoch liegenden stimmlichen Agilität – während gleichzeitig auch die aus Verdis frühesten Werken bekannte von langem Atem getragene Lyrik vonnöten ist – nimmt sie die Gilda in *Rigoletto* (Venedig 1851) vorweg. Das Libretto von *I masnadieri* basierte auf Schillers *Die Räuber*, einem Theaterstück (1836 bereits von Verdis älterem Zeitgenossen Saverio Mercadante vertont), in dem es um eine Familienrivalität zwischen Amalias geächtetem Liebhaber

Carlo und dessen eifersüchtigem Bruder Francesco geht, in deren Mittelpunkt Amalia steht. In der ersten Szene des zweiten Teils glaubt sie, dass sowohl Carlo als auch dessen Vater Massimiliano tot seien, und beweint sie an Massimilianos Grab in einer hoch geschwungenen, von der Harfe begleiteten Melodie, welche gewiss Linds Fähigkeit zum Pathos zur Geltung gebracht haben wird (“Dall’infame banchetto ... Tu del mio Carlo al seno”). Als Arminio ihr mitteilt, dass die beiden Männer in Wirklichkeit am Leben sind, bricht Amalia in eine lebhaft C-Dur-Cabaletta aus (“Carlo vive?”), welche durch Triller und Akzente, die ihrer Begeisterung Ausdruck verleihen, charakterisiert wird – ein leider nur kurzlebiges Glück, denn Francesco verfolgt weiter seine schändlichen Ziele.

Un ballo in maschera

Der Charakter der Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera* (Rom 1859), die in “Morrò, ma prima in grazia” ihr Unglück beklagt, weist ein völlig anderes stimmliches Profil auf. Sie ist mit Renato verheiratet, liebt aber heimlich dessen besten Freund, Riccardo, Gouverneur im kolonialen Boston (der Ort wurde aus Gründen der Zensur geändert, ursprünglich war der schwedische Hof vorgesehen). Renato

hat Amalias Gefühle für Riccardo entdeckt, da er ein Treffen zwischen ihr und der Wahrsagerin Ulrika ausspioniert hatte, und droht jetzt damit, sie für ihren Treuebruch zu töten. In ihrer Arie im dritten Akt akzeptiert sie ihren Tod, fleht jedoch ihr Kind noch ein letztes Mal sehen zu dürfen, und zwar mit einer stockenden Musik, die Verdis Fähigkeit demonstriert, aus der Entwicklung und Intensivierung kleiner melodischer Motive eine Arie aufzubauen. Ein Cello-Solo verleiht der Szene zusätzliche Schmerzlichkeit und unterstreicht sowohl Amalias Reife als auch die satten tieferen Töne des Soprans. In einer von Verdis anspruchsvollsten Sopranpartien offenbart Amelia schließlich das Ausmaß ihrer Qual in einer berühmten Kadenz, die sie von einem hohen Ces bis zu einem tiefen A in Altlage führt – die Verzweiflung einer Mutter, die ihre Kinder nie wiedersehen wird.

Il trovatore

Il trovatore (Rom 1853) wird oft als Rückkehr Verdis zu einem früheren Stil des Belcanto betrachtet, nachdem er im *Rigoletto* innerhalb individueller Abschnitte mit lockereren dramatischen Strukturen experimentiert hatte. Leonoras Auftrittsarie hält sich tatsächlich weitgehend an ein älteres formales Muster im Stil von *I masnadieri*: Einem Rezitativ

folgen eine lyrische Betrachtung, ein Moment dramatischer Aktion und dann ein schnellerer Abschnitt (die sogenannte *solita forma*). Doch beispielhaft für eine Besonderheit, die auch anderswo in *Il trovatore* zu finden ist, spiegelt Leonoras *scena* auch die Verdichtung und den dramatischen Impuls wider, die viele von Verdis Werken kennzeichnen. In einer Oper, die nach einem Sänger benannt ist, ist es vielleicht kein Wunder, dass die Macht der Stimme sowohl als Thema als auch als Vehikel der Sopranarie dient. Im Garten mit ihrer Gesellschafterin Ines erinnert sich Leonora daran, wie sie den Mann, den sie liebt, wiederfand, weil sie ihn zur Laute singen hörte ("Tacea la notte placida"), eine Erinnerung, die sie in einer melancholischen, zweistrophigen Arie heraufbeschwört, welche sich zweimal nach Dur öffnet, wenn sie an Manricos Musik denkt. Die Musik basiert teils auf Verdis Lied "In solitaria stanza" aus den 1830ern, wobei die wiederholten Oktavsprünge sowie die getragene, ansteigende Vokallinie Leonoras Grandezza andeuten. In "Di tale amor" weist Leonora jedoch Ines' Bedenken mit einer Cabaletta voller Sprünge, Pausen, Triller und Tonleitern, die ihre atemlose Aufregung beim Anblick ihres Liebhabers darstellen, zurück: die mädchenhafte Leidenschaft im Inneren der edlen Prinzessin.

I vespri siciliani

Bei seinen Reisen nach Paris in den 1840ern und 1850ern lernte Verdi die Extravaganz der französischen *grand opéra* mit ihrer visuellen Üppigkeit und ihren langatmigen historischen Handlungen kennen, und es folgten mehrere französische Kompositionsaufträge, unter ihnen *Les Vêpres siciliennes* (Paris 1855), ein Werk, welches man öfter in seiner italienischen Übersetzung, *I vespri siciliani*, antrifft. Diese Geschichte politischen Konflikts, die während der französischen Besatzung von Palermo im dreizehnten Jahrhundert spielt, bietet für die Sopran-Hauptpartie eine besondere Herausforderung, da sie über einen außerordentlich großen stimmlichen Umfang verfügen muss. Elena, eine Sizilianerin, deren Bruder hingerichtet wurde, ist Arrigo, der dabei hilft, die Revolutionstruppen gegen die Franzosen zu führen, romantisch verbunden. Arrigo hat entdeckt, dass er in Wirklichkeit der Sohn von Monfort, dem Gouverneur der Besatzungsmacht ist, und er verteidigt seinen Vater in einem Moment der moralischen Krise gegen einen Angriff. In ihrer Arie im vierten Akt, "Arrigo! ah! parli a un core", nachdem sie seine Gründe zur Rettung Montforts verstanden hat, versichert Elena Arrigo, dass sie ihm verzeihen wird –

dabei verleiht sie ihrer Trauer zu einer Holzbläserbegleitung Ausdruck. Die Arie hat zwei Strophen, und in der Akzeptanz der Tragödie erwärmt sich die Stimmung überraschend jeweils gegen Mitte der Strophe, wenn sich die g-Moll-Klage nach Dur wendet; womöglich gibt es für diese revolutionäre Figur im Jenseits immer eine bessere Lösung. Im fünften Akt scheint Montfort kurzzeitig Frieden erzielt zu haben, indem er die beiden Liebenden miteinander vermählt, und Elena feiert dieses Ereignis in ihrer Vorzeigearie, dem Bolero “Mercé, dilette amiche”. Dieser am häufigsten aufgeführte Ausschnitt der Oper bietet eine grandiose Koloratur-Darbietung, wenn Elena der Menge für ihre Unterstützung dankt und sich des Friedens freut, der nun nach Palermo kommt. Der Schmerz des vierten Akts scheint vergessen – doch die Tragödie bahnt sich bereits an, da die sizilianischen Rebellen nun bald mit ihrem Massaker beginnen werden.

Il corsaro

Il corsaro (Triest 1848) gehört schon lange zu Verdis am seltensten aufgeführten Werken. Medoras Auftrittsarie hat jedoch dazu beigetragen, die Oper im allgemeinen Bewusstsein wenigstens teilweise am Leben zu erhalten. “Non so le tette immagini”

ist eine eindringliche, ruhelose Klage im Dreiermetrum, in der Medora begleitet von der Harfe in einer Folge zunehmend ausgezierter Variationen über das Schicksal ihres Geliebten des Piraten nachsinnt.

Attila

Bezüglich ihres Platzes im Repertoire war die Oper *Attila* (Venedig 1846) um einiges erfolgreicher, und ihre heroische weibliche Hauptrolle nimmt die militärische Musik der Elena (*I vespri siciliani*) vorweg. Mit den punktierten Rhythmen und der aggressiven Gesangslinie der Arie “Santo di patria” erklärt Odabella ihre Bereitschaft, für die Freiheit ihres Landes zu kämpfen. Ihre spätere *scena*, “Liberamente or piangi” legt dagegen ihre Zerbrechlichkeit bloß – die Traurigkeit im Herzen dieser Kriegerin wird wieder einmal von zarten Holzbläsern offenbart, wenn sie um ihren toten Vater trauert.

Ernani

Bei *Ernani* (Venedig 1844) handelt es sich um eines von Verdis beliebtesten frühen Werken, das im Laufe der 1850er für die Eröffnung so manch neuen Opernhauses in Italien und anderswo ausgewählt wurde. Wie auch in *Il trovatore* bildet der Auftritt der Sopranistin die romantische Leidenschaft ihres

Charakters mit Hilfe einer zweiteiligen Arie ab, deren erster Teil von großen Sprüngen und Rouladen gekennzeichnet wird, welche auf Elviras versteckte Stärke hinweisen. Die sich anschließende Cabaletta verstärkt diesen Eindruck, indem die melodischen Motive ausgearbeitet und *staccati* sowie andere Verzierungen über einen großen Umfang hinweg hinzugefügt werden, um Elviras Selbstvertrauen darzustellen – ebenso wie jenes der Sängerin.

Macbeth

So furchterregend Odabella auch sein mag, so ist doch kaum eine von Verdis frühen Heldinnen weder so selbstbeherrscht noch so selbstzerstörerisch wie Lady Macbeth. Die Oper *Macbeth* (Florenz 1847) stellte für den jungen Verdi einen Durchbruch dar. In ihr erreicht seine psychologische Charakterisierung eine neue Ebene, und das Werk spiegelt sein wachsendes Interesse am Realismus im Theater wider. Wie Verdi bekanntermaßen schrieb, sollte Lady Macbeth von einer Sängerin dargestellt werden, deren Stimme „schroff, erstickt und dunkel“ klang, also weit entfernt von den Belcanto-Idealen stimmlicher Schönheit und geschmeidiger Darbietung. In der Briefszene im ersten Akt erhält sie die Nachricht von

der Prophezeiung der Hexen und offenbart ihre Ambitionen in heftigem Gesang, der in einer furchterregenden Reihe von Sequenzen ansteigt. Die folgende Cabaletta intensiviert weitgehend diese Stimmung, und laufende Tonleitern und Couplets zeichnen ein Bild manischer Freude angesichts der Neuigkeit, dass Duncan unterwegs ist. In der Schlafwandlerszene im vierten Akt kommt jedoch eine ganz andere Stimme zum Vorschein, und zwar eine, die an Donizettis *Lucia di Lammermoor* erinnert. Gequält von ihren Verbrechen und den blutigen Händen, die sie nicht reinigen kann, singt Lady Macbeth statt einer ausgehaltenen Gesangslinie nun oft melodische Fragmente, während in der Begleitung die rhythmische Energie ihrer früheren Szenen widerklingt, wobei die beunruhigende Chromatik ihre mentale Instabilität evoziert. Wenn sie schließlich dem Abgrund nachgibt, erhebt sich ihre Stimme im letzten Moment der Szene zu einem *Des ad libitum*: Ein überirdischer, stimmlich beängstigender Moment, der vielleicht auch ein Flehen um Gnade darstellt (vierzig Jahre später sollte Desdemonas Ave Maria im *Otello* mit einem ähnlichen Effekt enden).

Luisa Miller

Wie bereits bei *I masnadieri* handelt es sich

auch bei *Luisa Miller* (Neapel 1849) um die Adaption eines Schauspiels von Schiller, und auch hier wird die Heldin durch ihre Unschuld charakterisiert. Tatsächlich hat der Musikwissenschaftler Emanuele Senici Luisa in eine Ahnenlinie von „Alpenjungfrauen“ eingereiht, die sich von Bellinis Amina in *La sonnambula* bis hin zu Minnie in Puccinis *La fanciulla del West* erstreckt. Luisa ist in Carlo (in Wirklichkeit Rodolfo) verliebt, wird jedoch vom mächtigen Wurm in die Enge getrieben, der ebenfalls in sie verliebt ist und ihren Vater ins Gefängnis gebracht hat; Wurm wird ihren Vater befreien, wenn sie sich ihm zuwendet. In „Tu puniscimi, o signore“ verleiht sie ihrer Verzweiflung angesichts ihres Schicksals Ausdruck und erklärt, dass, wenn schon jemand bestraft werden müsse, sie es dann lieber selber wäre. Ihre Gesangslinie steht in großem Kontrast zu den zarten *staccati* ihrer Auftrittsszene, mit dramatischer Musik in der oberen Mittellage, die sich schließlich bis zu einem hohen H aufschwingt, gefolgt von Vokalrouladen bis in die tiefsten Sopranlagen für das höhepunktartige „non lasciarmi in abbandono“ (verlass mich nicht). Selbst in ihrer schwersten Stunde bleibt ihre Opernstimme stark: Luisa mag eine Alpenjungfrau sein, aber sie besitzt außerordentliche innere Stärke.

La traviata

Wohl keine von Verdis Sopranrollen weist jedoch so viele Facetten auf wie jene der Violetta in *La traviata* (Venedig 1853), und ebenso ist wohl keine von Generationen von Sängerinnen allgemein so geschätzt worden. Auf das häusliche Drama von *Luisa Miller* aufbauend, wollte Verdi seine Adaption von Alexandre Dumas' *La Dame aux camélias* in der Gegenwart ansiedeln, die Zensur zwang ihn jedoch dazu, die Handlung in das vorhergehende Jahrhundert zu verlegen. Doch selbst die Verlegung ins achtzehnte Jahrhundert kann nur teilweise die skandalöse Natur der Handlung von *La traviata* abdämpfen, welche die Kurtisane Violetta als Figur von moralischer Reinheit darstellt, den spießbürgerlichen Germont dagegen in der moralisch uneindeutigen Position sowohl des Vaters als auch des Schurken. In ihrer großen *scena* im ersten Akt denkt Violetta zunächst über Alfredos Liebeserklärung nach und darüber, ob sie ihr Leben des Genusses – das bereits von Krankheit überschattet wird – aufgeben und einem Traum von romantischer Liebe folgen soll. Die harmonische Struktur von „Ah, forse è lui“ hat offenbar Isabellas Arie „Robert, toi que j'aime“ aus Meyerbeers *Robert le diable* zum Vorbild, ein Werk das Verdi wohl in Paris kennengelernt haben

wird: eine ergreifende Klage in f-Moll, die sich nach und nach ins Dur öffnet, während die Gesangslinie höher steigt und hier auch die Melodie aus dem Duett Violettas und Alfredos wiederholt. Diesen Traum als reine Torheit verwerfend, setzt Violetta zu einer frenetischen Cabaletta in 6/8 an, "Sempre libera", die fast als Wahnsinnsszene fungiert. Mit nicht weniger als zehn hohen Cs und Des sowie rasanten Tonleitern, die so manchen lyrischen Koloratsopran auf die Probe stellen würden, zwingt sich Violetta

hier regelrecht, zu einer früheren, sorglosen Gesangsart zurückzukehren. Kein Wunder also, dass die Rolle der Violetta Soprane mit so verschiedenen Rollenerfahrungen wie Gilda, Nannetta, Odabella und Lady Macbeth angezogen hat. Lyrisch, dramatisch, tragisch, trotzig und beglückend brillant bietet die Rolle einen Zugang für jede Spielart des "Verdi-Soprans".

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Übersetzung: Bettina Reinke-Welsh

I vespri verdiani

Introduction

Y a-t-il une voix de “soprano verdien” ?

Tout au long de sa carrière, Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901) a conçu des rôles pour une grande diversité de chanteuses, de la colorature dramatique d’Abigaille dans *Nabucco*, son triomphe de jeunesse (1842, Milan), au rôle de soubrette de Nannetta dans *Falstaff*, sa dernière œuvre (1893, Milan). Des mères, des filles, des guerrières, des reines, des prostituées, des religieuses et des vierges peuplent toutes les œuvres lyriques de Verdi, incarnant une très large gamme d’expériences féminines au cours du dix-neuvième siècle, et modelées sur des qualités d’interprètes féminines spécifiques. Sa carrière connut aussi une très grande évolution dans son approche de la composition lyrique, lorsque les structures héritées de Rossini firent place à des lignes vocales moins décoratives, à une écriture pour orchestre plus sophistiquée et à des formes plus ouvertes. Pourtant certaines qualités sont constantes dans ses rôles de soprano: le besoin d’émettre une ligne *cantabile* soutenue, surtout dans le médium; un registre vocal étendu allant des notes

aiguës flottantes à une voix de poitrine bien soutenue; et une certaine chaleur de timbre pour animer les personnages au travers du texte, en créant le drame avec la voix seule.

I masnadieri

Le rôle d’Amalia dans *I masnadieri* (“Les Brigands”, 1847, Londres) constitue l’un des rôles de prima donna les plus légers de Verdi. Composé pour la légendaire soprano Jenny Lind, ce rôle annonce Gilda dans *Rigoletto* (1851, Venise) par la très grande agilité vocale qu’elle requiert tout en exigeant le genre de lyrisme ample déjà présent dans les premières œuvres de Verdi. Le livret d’*I masnadieri* repose sur *Die Räuber* de Schiller, une pièce – déjà mise en musique en 1836 par Saverio Mercadante, un contemporain et aîné de Verdi – qui explore une rivalité familiale centrée sur Amalia, son amant banni, Carlo, et son frère jaloux, Francesco. Dans la scène qui ouvre la deuxième partie, Amalia croit que Carlo et son père, Massimiliano, sont morts; elle pleure sur la tombe de ce dernier dans une mélodie en forme d’arche, accompagnée par la harpe, qui sert sûrement de tremplin

au sens du pathétique de Lind (“Dall’infame banchetto... Tu del mio Carlo al seno”). Informée par Arminio que les deux hommes sont en fait vivants, Amalia se met à chanter une cabaletta bondissante en ut majeur (“Carlo vive?”) caractérisée par des trilles et des accents qui traduisent sa joie intense – un bonheur qui sera malheureusement de courte durée car Francesco poursuit ses ignobles desseins.

Un ballo in maschera

Le personnage d’Amelia dans *Un ballo in maschera* (“Un bal masqué”, 1859, Rome) correspond à un profil vocal très différent. Elle pleure son malheur dans “Morrò, ma prima in grazia”. Mariée à Renato, Amelia est secrètement amoureuse de son meilleur ami, Riccardo, gouverneur de la Boston coloniale (lieu changé pour des raisons de censure; c’était, dans la version originale, la cour royale de Suède). Renato a découvert les sentiments d’Amelia pour Riccardo en épiant la rencontre entre Amelia et la discuse de bonne aventure Ulrica; il menace alors de la tuer pour l’avoir trahi. Dans son aria de l’acte III, elle accepte sa mort, mais supplie de voir son enfant une dernière fois, dans un mouvement saccadé qui montre le talent de Verdi pour créer une aria à partir du développement et de

l’intensification de petits motifs mélodiques. Un solo de violoncelle rend cette scène encore plus poignante, soulignant la maturité d’Amelia ainsi que les riches couleurs de la soprano dans le grave. Le rôle d’Amelia est l’un des rôles de soprano les plus difficiles de Verdi; elle révèle finalement l’étendue de son tourment dans une cadence célèbre qui la mène d’ut bémol aigu à un la grave dans le registre d’alto – le désespoir d’une mère qui ne reverra jamais ses enfants.

Il trovatore

Il trovatore (“Le Trouvère”, 1853, Rome) est souvent considéré comme un retour de la part de Verdi à un style antérieur d’écriture *bel canto*, après avoir expérimenté dans *Rigoletto* des structures dramatiques plus lâches au sein de mouvements isolés. Certes, l’air d’entrée de Leonora correspond en grande partie à un modèle formel plus ancien, dans le style d’*I masnadieri*: un récitatif précédant une réflexion lyrique, un moment d’action dramatique, puis un mouvement plus rapide (ce qu’on appelle la *solita forma*). Pourtant, dans la ligne d’une caractéristique que l’on retrouve ailleurs dans *Il trovatore*, la *scena* de Leonora reflète aussi la concision et l’élan dramatique qui caractérisent beaucoup d’œuvres de Verdi. Dans un opéra dont le titre

désigne un poète chanteur, il n'y a peut-être rien de surprenant à ce que la puissance de la voix soit à la fois le sujet et le véhicule de l'aria de la soprano. Dans le jardin, avec sa confidente Ines, Leonora se souvient comment elle a redécouvert l'homme qu'elle aime en l'entendant chanter accompagné de son luth ("Tacea la notte placida"), un souvenir qu'elle évoque dans une aria mélancolique de deux strophes qui vire à deux reprise dans la tonalité majeure lorsqu'elle se remémore la musique de Manrico. Le mouvement repose en partie sur "In solitaria stanza", une mélodie composée par Verdi dans les années 1830, les sauts d'octave répétés ainsi que la ligne vocale ascendante soutenue suggérant la grandeur de Leonora. Toutefois, dans "Di tale amor", Leonora écarte les inquiétudes d'Ines dans une cabaletta truffée de sauts, de points d'orgue, de trilles et de gammes qui évoquent son excitation extatique à l'idée de voir son amoureux: une passion de jeune fille chez une noble princesse.

I vespri siciliani

Au cours de ses séjours à Paris dans les années 1840 et 1850, Verdi fut confronté au luxe du "grand opéra" français – son opulence visuelle et ses longues intrigues historiques – ce qui donna lieu à plusieurs commandes

françaises, notamment *Les Vêpres siciliennes* (1855, Paris), ouvrage présenté plus souvent dans sa traduction italienne, *I vespri siciliani*. Sur un fond de conflit politique à l'époque de l'occupation française de Palerme au treizième siècle, cet opéra offre un rôle particulièrement difficile à la principale soprano, qui doit maîtriser une étendue vocale extrêmement large. Sicilienne dont le frère a été exécuté, Elena s'est engagée romantiquement envers Arrigo, qui aide à mener les forces révolutionnaires contre les Français. Arrigo a découvert qu'il est en réalité le fils du gouverneur occupant, Montfort, et il défend son père contre l'attaque à un moment de crise morale. Dans son aria de l'acte IV, "Arrigo! ah! parli a un core", Elena rassure Arrigo, une fois qu'elle a compris pour quelle raison il a sauvé Montfort: elle lui pardonnera – exprimant son chagrin sur un accompagnement des bois. C'est une aria en deux strophes et, chose étonnante, l'atmosphère se réchauffe à l'acceptation de la tragédie au milieu de chaque strophe, la plainte en sol mineur passant au majeur; pour ce personnage révolutionnaire, il y a peut-être toujours une meilleure résolution dans l'au-delà. À l'acte V, Montfort semble brièvement avoir instauré la paix en mariant les deux amoureux, événement qu'Elena

célèbre dans son “boléro”, “Mercé, dilette amiche”, un modèle du genre. C’est l’extrait le plus souvent exécuté de cet opéra et il offre une superbe démonstration de colorature lorsqu’Elena remercie les foules pour leur soutien et se réjouit de la paix apportée à Palerme. Le caractère poignant de l’acte IV est maintenant oublié; pourtant la tragédie menace car les rebelles siciliens lancent bientôt leur massacre.

Il corsaro

Il corsaro (“Le Corsaire”, 1848, Trieste) a été longtemps l’une des œuvres les plus rarement représentées de Verdi. L’aria d’entrée de Medora a néanmoins contribué à ce que cet opéra reste un peu en vie dans l’imagination populaire. “Non so le tette immagini” est une plainte lancinante, tourmentée, de rythme ternaire, où Medora réfléchit au destin de son amant pirate dans une série de variations de plus en plus ornementées accompagnées à la harpe.

Attila

Attila (1846, Venise) a connu un peu plus de succès sur le plan du répertoire; son personnage féminin héroïque y préfigure l’écriture militaire d’Elena (*I vespri siciliani*). Avec les rythmes pointés et la ligne vocale

agressive de “Santo di patria”, Odabella déclare être prête à se battre pour la liberté de son pays. Sa *scena* ultérieure, “Liberamente or piangi”, révèle plutôt sa fragilité; une écriture délicate pour les bois met en lumière à nouveau la tristesse de cœur de cette guerrière lorsqu’elle pleure la mort de son père.

Ernani

Ernani (1844, Venise) fut l’un des premiers ouvrages de Verdi qui connut le plus grand succès; il fut choisi pour l’inauguration de nombreux nouveaux théâtres lyriques dans les années 1850, en Italie et dans d’autres pays. Comme dans le cas du *Trovatore*, l’entrée de la soprano dépeint la passion romantique du personnage dans une aria en deux parties, la première moitié marquée par de larges sauts et roulades suggérant la force latente d’Elvira. La cabaletta suivante renforce cette impression en développant ses motifs mélodiques, ajoutant des staccatos et d’autres ornements sur une vaste tessiture pour souligner l’assurance d’Elvira – et aussi celle de la soprano.

Macbeth

Aussi effrayante soit-elle, rares sont les premières héroïnes de Verdi aussi maîtresses d’elles-mêmes ou autodestructrices que

Lady Macbeth. *Macbeth* (1847, Florence), qui représente une avancée chez le jeune Verdi, pousse la manière de camper les personnages sur le plan psychologique à un autre niveau et reflète son intérêt croissant pour le réalisme dramatique. Lady Macbeth, dont on sait ce que Verdi écrivit à son sujet, doit être interprétée par une chanteuse dont la voix est “dure, étouffée et sombre”, très éloignée des idéaux de beauté vocale et d’émission posée du *bel canto*. Dans la scène de la lettre de l’acte I, elle reçoit des nouvelles de la prophétie des sorcières et révèle son ambition dans une écriture vocale violente qui s’élève dans une redoutable série de séquences. La cabaletta suivante développe largement cette atmosphère, avec des gammes rapides et des couplets qui peignent un portrait de jubilation hystérique lorsque Lady Macbeth apprend l’arrivée imminente de Duncan. Mais, avec la scène de somnambulisme de l’acte IV, c’est une voix totalement différente qui apparaît – une voix qui évoque *Lucia di Lammermoor* de Donizetti. Hantée par ses crimes et ses mains tâchées de sang qu’elle ne peut nettoyer, Lady Macbeth chante alors souvent des fragments mélodiques au lieu d’une ligne vocale soutenue, tandis que l’accompagnement rappelle l’énergie rythmique de ses scènes antérieures, son

écriture chromatique troublante évoquant son instabilité mentale. Lorsqu’elle finit par s’abandonner à l’abîme, sa voix s’élève à un ré bémol optionnel dans les derniers moments de la scène: un effet d’outre-tombe terrifiant sur le plan vocal qui est peut-être aussi une demande de pardon (quarante ans plus tard, l’Ave Maria de Desdémone dans *Otello* se terminera sur un effet analogue).

Luisa Miller

Comme *I masnadieri*, *Luisa Miller* (1849, Naples) est une adaptation de Schiller et présente à nouveau une héroïne caractérisée par son innocence. En effet, le musicologue Emanuele Senici situe Luisa dans la lignée des “vierges alpines” qui s’étend d’Amina de Bellini dans *La sonnambula* à Minnie dans *La fanciulla del West* de Puccini. Amoureuse de Carlo – en réalité Rodolfo – Luisa est prise au piège par le puissant Wurm, qui est aussi amoureux d’elle et a fait emprisonner son père; Wurm libérera son père si elle accepte de s’engager envers lui. Dans “Tu puniscimi, o signore”, Luisa exprime sa frustration quant à son destin, déclarant que si quelqu’un doit être puni, elle préférerait que ce soit elle. Sa ligne vocale contraste fortement avec les délicats staccatos de sa *scena* d’entrée, offrant une écriture dramatique dans le registre aigu

médian pour monter finalement à un si aigu suivi de roulades vocales qui descendent jusqu'au registre le plus grave de soprano sur l'impressionnant "non lasciarmi in abbandono" (ne m'abandonne pas). Même lorsqu'elle est la plus maltraitée, sa voix lyrique reste forte: Luisa est peut-être une vierge alpine, mais elle possède une extraordinaire force intérieure.

La traviata

Cependant aucun rôle de soprano de Verdi n'a peut-être autant de facettes que celui de Violetta, dans *La traviata* (1853, Venise), ni n'a été aussi largement prisé par des générations de chanteuses. Tirant parti du drame familial de *Luisa Miller*, Verdi aspirait à mettre en musique son adaptation à sa propre époque de *La Dame aux camélias* d'Alexandre Dumas, avant que la censure ne l'oblige à resituer l'intrigue un siècle plus tôt. Mais même le fait de déplacer le drame au dix-huitième siècle ne peut qu'atténuer partiellement la nature scandaleuse de l'intrigue de *La traviata*, qui présente la courtisane Violetta comme un personnage de pureté morale et le bourgeois Germont dans la position moralement ambiguë de père et de méchant. Dans sa grande *scena* de l'acte I, Violetta commence par réfléchir à la déclaration d'amour d'Alfredo, se demandant

si elle devrait renoncer à sa vie de plaisir – déjà assombrie par la maladie – et poursuivre un rêve de passion romantique. "Ah, forse è lui" a une structure harmonique apparemment modelée sur l'aria d'Isabelle "Robert, toi que j'aime" de *Robert le diable* de Meyerbeer, ouvrage que Verdi avait dû découvrir à Paris: une complainte pathétique en fa mineur qui vire au majeur lorsque la ligne vocale monte dans l'aigu, reprenant ici aussi la mélodie du duo de Violetta et Alfredo. Violetta renonce à ce rêve comme pure folie et se lance alors dans une cabaletta frénétique à 6/8, "Sempre libera", qui fonctionne presque comme une scène de folie. Produisant au moins une dizaine d'ut et de ré bémol aigus ainsi que des gammes rapides qui mettraient à l'épreuve bien des coloratures lyriques, Violetta est littéralement disposée à retourner à un mode vocal antérieur, plus insouciant. Il n'est donc guère étonnant que ce rôle attire des sopranos qui ont incarné des personnages aussi divers que Gilda, Nannetta, Odabella et Lady Macbeth. Lyrique, dramatique, tragique, provocant et étonnamment brillant, ce rôle offre un point de départ pour toute configuration de la "soprano verdienne".

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Traduction: Marie-Stella Pâris



Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, with its Chief Conductor, Kirill Karabits

1 From 'I masnadieri', Part II, Scene 1

Amalia

Dall' infame banchetto io m' involai,
padre, e qui mi rifuggo, all' obliato
sepulcro tuo che sola
la furtiva mia lagrima consola.

Oh! ma la pace
che nella vita gli rapisti, in morte
funestar non gli puoi! No! non penetra
l' esecrata tua voce in quella pietra.

Tu del mio Carlo in seno
volasti, alma beata,
e il tuo soffrir terreno
or si fa gioia in ciel.
Sol io qui vivo in pianto
deserta sconsolata;
oh quanto invidia! oh quanto,
il tuo felice avel!

Carlo vive?... O caro accento,
melodia di paradiso!
Dio raccolse il mio lamento,
fu pietoso al mio dolor.
Carlo vive?... Or terra e cielo
si riveston d' un sorriso;
gli astri, il sol non han più velo,
l' universo è tutto amor.

(1847, London)

Andrea Maffei (1798 – 1885)

after *Die Räuber* (1781)

by Friedrich von Schiller (1759 – 1805)

From 'I masnadieri', Part II, Scene 1

Amalia

I fled the hateful banquet,
father, and here I take shelter, in your
forgotten sepulchre, comforted
only by my secret tears.

Oh! You cannot torment him
in death as you did
while he was alive! No! Your detested voice
cannot penetrate the stone.

Your blessed soul flew
towards Carlo's bosom,
and your earthly sorrows
are now heavenly pleasures.
Only I live here in tears,
abandoned and disconsolate;
oh, how, oh, how I envy
your happy tomb!

Carlo lives?... Sweet words,
heavenly melody!
God heard my lament,
had pity on my grief.
Carlo lives?... Heaven and Earth
are now smiling;
the stars, the Sun no longer hidden,
the whole universe is love.

2 From 'Un ballo in maschera', Act III,

Scene 1

Amelia

Morrò, ma prima in grazia
deh! mi consenti almeno
l'unico figlio mio
avvincere al mio seno.
E se alla moglie nieghi
quest'ultimo favor,
non rifiutarlo ai prieghi
del mio materno cor.
Morrò ma queste viscere
consolino i suoi baci,
or che l'estrema è giunta
dell'ore mie fugaci.
Spenta per man del padre,
la man ci stenderà
su gli occhi d'una madre
che mai più non vedrà!

(1859, Rome)

Antonio Somma (1809 – 1864)

after *Gustave III, ou Le Bal masqué* (1833)

by Augustin Eugène Scribe (1791 – 1861)

3 From 'Il trovatore', Part I 'Il duello',

Scene 2

Leonora

Ne' tornei! V'apparve
bruno le vesti ed il cimier, lo scudo
bruno e di stemma ignudo
sconosciuto guerrier, che dell'agone

From 'Un ballo in maschera', Act III,

Scene 1

Amelia

I shall die, but I beg you,
let me at least
clasp to my breast
my only son.
You may deny this last favour
to your wife,
but do not refuse the prayer
of a mother's heart.
I shall die but may his kisses
comfort me into the beyond,
now that the last of my
fleeting hours arrives.
He will reach out his hand
to close the eyes of his mother
struck down by his father,
and he will never again see her!

From 'Il trovatore', Part I 'The Duel',

Scene 2

Leonora

In tournaments appeared
an unknown warrior in dark robes, helmet,
a dark shield with no coat of arms.
He won the competition:

gli onori ottenne: al vincitor sul crine
il serto io posi! Civil guerra intanto
arse: no 'l vidi più, come d'aurato
sogno fuggente imago, ed era volta
lunga stagion... ma poi... Ascolta.

Tacea la notte placida
e bella in ciel sereno
la luna il viso argenteo
mostrava lieto e pieno;
quando suonar per l'aere,
infino allor sì muto...
dolci s'udiro e flebili
gli accordi d'un liuto,
e versi melanconici
un trovator cantò.

Versi di prece, ed umile
qual d'uom che prega iddio;
in quella ripeteasi
un nome... il nome mio...
Corsi al veron sollecita...
egli era, egli era desso!...
Gioia provai che agli angeli
solo è provar concesso!
Al core, al guardo estatico
la terra un ciel sembrò.

Di tale amor che dirsi
mal può dalla parola,
d'amor che intendo io sola,
il cor s'inebriò!

I myself put the laurels
on the victor's hair! Then came civil war:
I never saw him again, he was the picture
of a fleeting, golden dream, and many
seasons passed... but then... Listen.

The night was calm and silent
with a clear sky in which
a lovely full moon showed
its silvery face;
when, ringing through the air,
that had been so still...
a lute's chords were heard,
sweet and delicate,
and a troubadour sang
in mournful verse.

They were words of humble prayer
like a man praying to God;
and a name was
repeated... my name...
I quickly ran to the balcony...
he was there, it was he!...
I felt such joy as only angels
are allowed to feel!
To my heart, to my ecstatic eyes
Earth looked like heaven.

With such love that words
can ill express,
with that love I alone know about,
my heart was intoxicated!

Il mio destino compiersi
non può che a lui dappresso...
S'io non vivrò per esso,
per esso morirò!

(1853, Rome)
Salvadore Cammarano (1801 – 1852)
after *El trovador* (1836)
by Antonio García Gutiérrez
(1813 – 1884)

4 From 'I vespri siciliani', Act IV

Elena

Arrigo! ah! parli a un core
Già pronto a perdonare;
Il mio più gran dolore
Era doverti odiar!
Un'aura di contento
Or calma il mio martir
Io t'amo! e quest'accento
Fa lieto il mio morir!

Gli odi fur già fatali
Al cor che indarno spera:
Di sangue i tuoi natali
Poser tra noi barriera!
Addio! m'attende il cielo!
Addio! mi serba fê!
Io muoio! e il mortal velo
Spoglio, pensando a te.

My destiny can only be fulfilled
by being near him...
If I cannot live for it,
I'll die for it!

From 'I vespri siciliani', Act IV

Elena

Arrigo! ah! You speak to a heart
already willing to forgive;
my greatest sorrow
was having to hate you!
A breath of joy
now soothes my suffering.
I love you! And these words
bring rapture to my death!

Hatred has already been deadly
to a heart hoping in vain:
your birth set a barrier
of blood between us!
Farewell! Heaven awaits us!
Farewell! Be true to me!
I die! And my mortal veil
I shed, thinking of you.

5 From 'I vespri siciliani', Act V

Elena

Mercé, dilette amiche,
Di quei leggiadri fior;
Il caro dono è immagine
Del vostro bel candor!
Oh! fortunato il vincol
Che mi prepara amore,
Se voi recate pronube
Voti felici al core!
Mercè del don!
Ah, si! Ah, si!
O caro sogno, o dolce ebbrezza!
D'ignoto amor mi balza il cor!
Celeste un'aura già respiro
Che tutti i sensi inebbriò.

O piaggie di Sicilia,
Risplenda un dì seren;
Assai vendette orribili
Ti laceraro il sen!
Di speme colma e immemore
Di quanto il cor soffrì,
Il giorno del mio giubilo
Sia di tue glorie il dì.
Gradisco il don di questi fior,
Ah, si! Ah, si!

(1855, Paris, as *Les Vêpres siciliennes*)
Augustin Eugène Scribe (1791 – 1861)
and Charles Duveyrier (1803 – 1866)
after *Le Duc d'Albe* (1838)
by the same authors,
translated by Arnaldo Fusinato (1817 – 1888)

From 'I vespri siciliani', Act V

Elena

Thank you, dear friends,
for the delightful flowers;
this cherished gift is the image
of your lovely innocence!
Oh! Lucky is the bond
that love is preparing for me;
if you, my match-makers, bring
joyful wishes to my heart!
Thank you for your gift,
Oh yes! Oh yes!
Happy dream, beloved folly!
An unknown love makes my heart leap!
The heavenly air I breathe here
has already exhilarated my senses.

O shores of Sicily,
may a serene day shine;
many horrible feuds
tore your bosom apart!
I'm filled with hope and forgetful
of the ways in which my heart has suffered.
May my day of jubilation
be the day of your glory.
I accept your gift of flowers,
Oh yes! Oh yes!

6 From 'Il corsaro', Act I, Scene 2

Medora

Egli non riede ancora!
Oh come lunghe, eterne,
quando lungi è da me, l'ore mi sono!
(*Prende l'arpa.*)
Arpa che or muta giaci, vieni,
ed i miei sospiri seconda, sì,
che più veloce giunga il flebile lamento
al cor del mio fedel sull'ali al vento.

Non so le tetre immagini
fugar del mio pensiero,
sempre dannata a gemere
all'ombra d'un mistero:
e se di speme un pallido
raggio su me traluce,
è passeggiava luce
di lampo ingannator.

Meglio è morir! Se l'anima
sen voli in seno a Dio;
se il mio Corrado a piangere
verrà sul cener mio:
premio una cara lagrima
chiedo all'amor soltanto,
virtù non niega il pianto
per chi moria d'amor.

(1848, Trieste)

Francesco Maria Piave (1810 – 1876)

after *The Corsair* (1814)

by George Gordon Lord Byron (1788 – 1824)

From 'Il corsaro', Act I, Scene 2

Medora

He has not returned!
How long, eternal,
are the hours when he is away from me!
(*She takes her harp.*)
O harp now lying silent, come,
and accompany my sighs, so that,
on the wings of the wind, my feeble lament
can faster reach the heart of my beloved.

I cannot dismiss the baleful images
from my thoughts,
always condemned to groan
in the shadow of a mystery:
and if a pallid ray of hope
shines over me,
it's a traitorous flash
of fleeting light.

'Tis better to die! If my soul
goes flying to God;
if my Corrado will come
and weep over my ashes:
I only ask love
for a sweet tear,
virtue does not deny tears
to those who die of love.

7 From 'Attila', Prologue, Scene 1

Odabella

Santo di patria indefinito amor!

Allor che i forti corrono
Come leoni al brando
Stan le tue donne, o barbaro,
Sui carri lagrimando.
Ma noi, donne italiane,
Cinte di ferro il seno,
Sul fumido terreno
Sempre vedrai pugnar.

Fammi ridar la spada! Oh acciar!

Da te questo or m'è concesso,
O giustizia alta, divina!
L'odio armasti dell'oppresso
Coll'acciar dell'oppressor.
Empia lama, l'indovina
Per qual petto è tua punta?
Di vendetta l'ora è giunta...
Fu segnata dal Signor.

8 From 'Attila', Act I, Scene 1

Odabella

Liberamente or piangi...
Sfrenati, o cor. La queta ora, in che posa
Han pur le tigri, io sola
Scorro di loco in loco.
Eppur sempre quest'ora attendo e invoco.

From 'Attila', Prologue, Scene 1

Odabella

O sacred love of my motherland!

When the strong run
like lions to the sword
your women, O barbarian,
are crying on the carts.
But we, Italian women,
with swords tied to our breast,
shall always be seen fighting
on the smoky ground.

Return to me my sword! Ah steel!

By you, high, divine justice,
I now am granted this!
You armed the hatred of the oppressed
with the sword of the oppressor.
Wicked sword, can you tell
for which breast your point was made?
The hour of vengeance has come...
it was marked by the Lord.

From 'Attila', Act I, Scene 1

Odabella

Cry freely now...
have no inhibitions, my heart. In the quiet hour
when even tigers rest, I alone
wander from place to place.
Still I keep waiting and calling for this hour.

Oh! Nel fuggente nuvolo
 Non sei tu, padre, impresso?...
 Cielo! Ha mutato immagine!
 Il mio Foresto è desso.
 Sospendi, o rivo, il murmure,
 Aura, non più fremir,
 Ch'io degli amati spiriti
 Possa la voce udir.

(1846, Venice)

Temistocle Solera (1815 – 1878)

after *Attila, König der Hunnen* (1809)

by Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner

(1768 – 1823)

9 From 'Ernani', Act I, Scene 2

Elvira

Surta è la notte, e Silva non ritorna!...
 Ah, non tornasse ei più!...
 Questo odiato veglio,
 che quale immondo spettro ognor m'insegue
 col favellar d'amore,
 più sempre Ernani mi configge in core.

Ernani!... Ernani, involami
 all'aborrito amplesso.
 Fuggiam... se teco vivere
 mi sia d'amor concesso,
 per antri e lande inospite
 ti seguirà il mio piè.
 Un Eden di delizia
 saran quegli antri a me.

Oh! Father, are you not stamped
 in the running clouds?...
 Heavens! The image has changed!
 That is my own Foresto.
 Stop your murmuring, river,
 breeze, no longer blow,
 that I might hear the voice
 of my beloved ghosts.

From 'Ernani', Act I, Scene 2

Elvira

It is now night and Silva has not returned!...
 I wish he'd never come back!...
 The hateful old man,
 who keeps following me like a foul ghost
 prattling about love,
 puts Ernani more firmly in my heart.

Ernani!... Ernani, take me away
 from that abhorrent embrace.
 Let us flee... if Love allows me
 to live with you,
 my feet will follow you
 into caves and inhospitable lands.
 A paradise of pleasure
 shall those caves be for me.

(Tutto sprezzo, che d'Ernani
non favella a questo core,
non v'ha gemma che in amore
possa l'odio tramutar.
Ah! Vola, o tempo, e presto reca
di mia fuga il lieto istante,
vola, o tempo, al core amante
è supplizio l'indugiar.)

(1844, Venice)

Francesco Maria Piave (1810 – 1876)

after *Hernani* (1830)

by Victor Hugo (1801 – 1885)

(I despise all that does not speak of Ernani
to this heart of mine,
there is no gem that can
transform hatred into love.
Fly, time, and hasten
the happy moment of my escape,
fly, time, for to a loving heart
tarrying is torture.)

[10] From 'Macbeth', Act I, Scene 2

Lady Macbeth

"Nel dì della vittoria io le incontrai...
Stupito io n'era per le udite cose;
quando i nunzi del re mi salutaro
sir di Caudore vaticinio uscito
dalle veggenti stesse
che predissero un serto al capo mio.
Racchiudi in cor questo segreto. Addio."
Ambizioso spirto
tu sei, Macbetto... Alla grandezza aneli,
ma sarai tu malvagio?
Pien di misfatti è il calle
della potenza, e mal per lui che il piede
dubitoso vi pone e retrocede.

From 'Macbeth', Act I, Scene 2

Lady Macbeth

'I met them on the day of victory...
I was stunned at what I heard;
when the King's messengers hailed me
Thane of Cawdor, it fulfilled a prophecy
those seers had made,
predicting a crown for my head.
Keep this secret in your heart. Farewell.'
You are an ambitious soul,
Macbeth... You long for greatness,
but can you be wicked?
The road to power is filled
with crimes, and woe to him who sets on it
shakily and then retreats!

Vieni! T' affretta! Accendere
ti vo' quel freddo core!
L' audace impresa a compiere
io ti darò valore;
di Scozia, a te promettono
le profetesse il trono...
Che tardi? Accetta il dono,
ascendivi a regnar.

Duncan sarà qui?... Qui?... Qui la notte?

Or tutti sorgete ~ ministri infernali,
che al sangue incorate, ~ spingete i mortali!
Tu, notte, ne avvolgi ~ di tenebra immota;
qual petto percota ~ non vegga il pugnale.

[11] From 'Macbeth', Act IV, Scene 2

Lady Macbeth

Una macchia è qui tuttora...
via, ti dico, o maledetta!...
Una... duc... gli è questa l' ora!
Tremi tu!... Non osi entrar?
Un guerrier così codardo?
Oh vergogna!... Orsù t' affretta!...
Chi poteva in quel vegliardo
tanto sangue immaginar?

Di Fife il sire
sposo e padre or or non era?
Che n' avvenne?... E mai pulire
queste mani io non saprò?...

Come! Rouse yourself! I wish
to fire up that cold heart of yours!
I shall give you the courage
to carry out this bold undertaking;
the prophetesses promise you
the throne of Scotland...
Why delay? Accept the gift,
ascend the throne and reign.

Duncan will be here?... Here?... Here tonight?

Arise, all you agents of hell
who rouse mortals to bloody acts!
Night, wrap us in motionless darkness;
may the knife not see the breast it strikes.

From 'Macbeth', Act IV, Scene 2

Lady Macbeth

Here is still a spot...
out, I say, damned spot!...
One... two... it is time!
You tremble!... Dare you not enter?
A soldier and so cowardly?
For shame!... Come on, rouse yourself!...
Who would have thought that
the old man had so much blood in him?

Was not the lord of Fife
a husband and father a moment ago?
What happened to him?... And will I ever
be able to clean these hands?...

Di sangue umano
sa qui sempre... Arabia intera
rimondar sì piccol mano
co' suoi balsami non può.
Ohimè!...

I panni indossa
della notte... or via ti sbratta!...
Banco è spento, e dalla fossa
chi morì non surse ancor.

A letto, a letto...
Sfar non puoi la cosa fatta...
Batte alcuno!... Andiam, Macbetto,
non t' accusi il tuo pallor.

(1847, Florence)
Francesco Maria Piave (1810 – 1876)
and Andrea Maffei (1798 – 1885)
after *Macbeth* (1606)
by William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

¹² From 'Luisa Miller', Act II, Scene 1
Luisa
Tu puniscimi, o signore,
se t' offesi, e paga io sono,
ma de' barbari al furore
non lasciarmi in abbandono.

The scent of human blood
always lingers... the whole of Arabia
with her perfumes cannot sweeten
this little hand.
Alas!...

Wear your
sleep clothes... now get yourself cleaned!...
Banquo was killed and no dead man
has ever come back from his grave.

To bed, to bed...
What is done cannot be undone...
Someone is knocking!... Come, Macbeth,
do not let your pallor betray you.

From 'Luisa Miller', Act II, Scene 1
Luisa
Punish me, Lord,
if I offended you, and I will accept it,
but do not abandon me
to the wrath of the wicked.

A scampar da fato estremo
innocente genitor
chieggon essi... ~ a dirlo io fremo! ~
della figlia il disonor!

(1849, Naples)

Salvadore Cammarano (1801 – 1852)
after *Kabale und Liebe* (1784)
by Friedrich von Schiller (1759 – 1805)

In order to save from a dire fate
my innocent father
they demand... ~ I tremble to say this! ~
the dishonour of his daughter!

13 From 'La traviata', Act I
Violetta

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

Ah, forse è lui che l'anima
solinga ne' tumulti
godea sovente pingere
de' suoi colori occulti!...
Lui che modesto e vigile
all'egre soglie ascese,
e nuova febbre accese,
destandomi all'amor.

From 'La traviata', Act I
Violetta

How strange!... how strange!... his words
are carved into my heart!
Could true love be my undoing?...
What do you decide, oh my agitated soul?...
No man ever ignited my soul... A joy
which I have never known, loving, being loved!...
And can I refuse it in favour
of the arid folly of my present life?

Ah, perhaps he is the one whom my soul,
lonely at parties,
often loved to paint
in secret colours!...
Watchful and modest,
he came here,
awakening a new fever,
awakening me to love.

A quell' amor ch'è palpito
dell'universo intero,
misterioso, altero,
croce e delizia al cor.

(Resta concentrata un istante, poi dice.)

Follie!... follie!... delirio vano è questo!...
Povera donna, sola
abbandonata in questo
popoloso deserto
che appellano Parigi,
che spero or più?... che far degg'io?... Gioire,
di voluttà nei vortici perir.

Sempre libera degg'io
folleggiare di gioia in gioia,
vo' che scorra il viver mio
pei sentieri del piacer.
Nasca il giorno, il giorno muoia,
Sempre lieta ne' ritrovi;
a diletta sempre nuovi dee
volare il mio pensier.

(1853, Venice)

Francesco Maria Piave (1810 – 1876)
after *La Dame aux camélias* (novel 1848; play 1852)
by Alexandre Dumas *filis* (1824 – 1895)

That love which is the very breath
of the entire universe,
mysterious and noble,
both cross and ecstasy of the heart.

(She reflects for a second, then speaks.)

Madness!... All madness!... this vain delirium!...
A poor woman, alone,
lost in this
crowded desert
called Paris,
what can I hope for?... what should I do?... Revel,
drown in the whirlpool of earthly pleasures.

Forever free, I must
fly from joy to joy,
for my life's course must be
forever in the paths of pleasure.
Whether it be dawn or dusk,
I shall always be happy at gatherings;
may my thoughts always fly
to renewed pleasures.

Translation: Emanuela Guastella

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Chandos 24-bit / 96 kHz recording

The Chandos policy of being at the forefront of technology is now further advanced by the use of 24-bit / 96 kHz recording. In order to reproduce the original waveform as closely as possible we use 24-bit, as it has a dynamic range that is up to 48 dB greater and up to 256 times the resolution of standard 16-bit recordings. Recording at the 44.1 kHz sample rate, the highest frequencies generated will be around 22 kHz. That is 2 kHz higher than can be heard by the typical human with excellent hearing. However, we use the 96 kHz sample rate, which will translate into the potentially highest frequency of 48 kHz. The theory is that, even though we do not hear it, audio energy exists, and it has an effect on the lower frequencies which we do hear, the higher sample rate thereby reproducing a better sound.



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KINSTELLAR

Executive producer Ralph Couzens

Recording producer Adrian Peacock

Sound engineer Ben Connellan

Editor Ben Connellan

Chandos mastering Jonathan Cooper

A & R administrator Sue Shortridge

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CHANDOS DIGITAL

CHAN 20144

I VESPRI VERDIANI

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901)

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 1 | Dall'infame banchetto – Tu del mio Carlo al seno – Carlo vive? FROM 'I MASNADIERI' (1847) | 7:09 |
| 2 | Morrò, ma prima in grazia
FROM 'UN BALLO IN MASCHERA' (1859) | 4:13 |
| 3 | Ne' tornei! – Tacea la notte placida – Di tale amor
FROM 'IL TROVATORE' (1853) | 6:28 |
| 4 | Arrigo! ah! parli a un core
FROM 'I VESPRI SICILIANI' (1855) | 3:33 |
| 5 | Mercé, dilette amiche FROM 'I VESPRI SICILIANI' | 4:07 |
| 6 | Egli non riede ancora! – Non so le tetre immagini
FROM 'IL CORSARO' (1848) | 5:05 |
| 7 | Santo di patria FROM 'ATTILA' (1846) | 4:52 |
| 8 | Liberamente or piangi FROM 'ATTILA' | 5:11 |
| 9 | Surta è la notte – Tutto sprezzo, che d'Ernani
FROM 'ERNANI' (1844) | 7:10 |
| 10 | Nel dì della vittoria – Or tutti sorgete
FROM 'MACBETH' (1847) | 7:33 |
| 11 | Una macchia è qui tuttora FROM 'MACBETH' | 7:22 |
| 12 | Tu puniscimi, o signore FROM 'LUISA MILLER' (1849) | 2:56 |
| 13 | È strano! – Ah, forse è lui – Follie!... follie! – Sempre libera
FROM 'LA TRAVIATA' (1853) | 7:24 |
| | TT | 74:04 |

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