

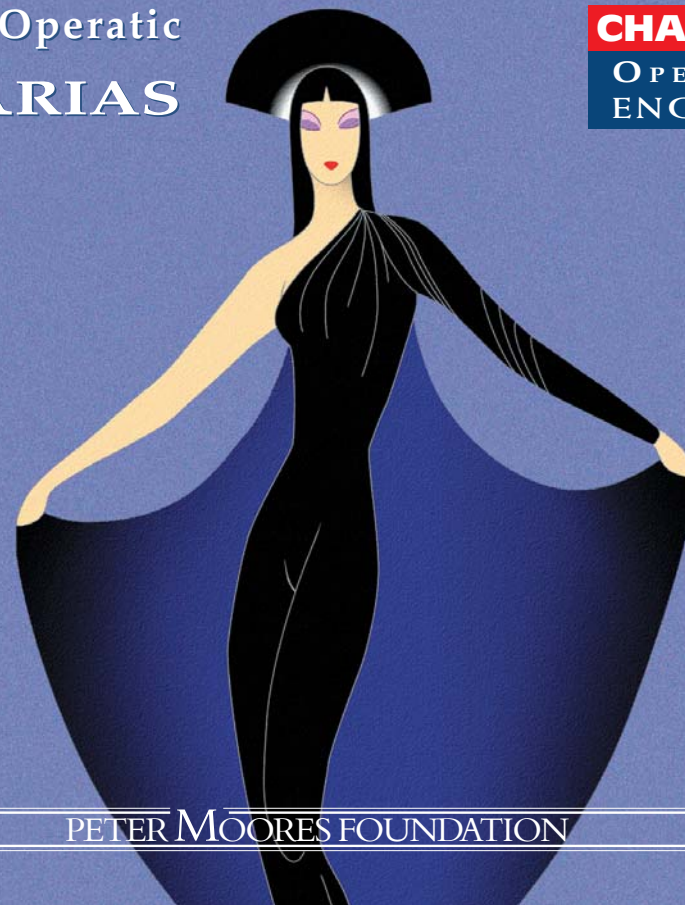
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*Diana  
Montague*

Great Operatic  
ARIAS

**CHANDOS**  
OPERA IN  
ENGLISH



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



Diana Montague as  
Andromaca in the  
Glyndebourne Festival  
production of  
Rossini's *Ermione*

**Great  
Operatic  
Arias**  
with  
**Diana Montague**

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

from **Samson and Delilah**

- [1] Delilah's and Samson's Duet – 'Softly awakes my heart...' 6:00  
(Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix)  
with **Bruce Ford** tenor

Charles Gounod (1818–1893)

from **Faust**

- [2] Siebel's Flower Song – 'Summer flowers so fair...' 2:59  
(Faites lui mes vœux)

Léo Delibes (1836–1891)

from **Lakmé**

- [3] Lakmé's and Mallika's duet – 'Come, Mallika! See the vines all  
in flow'r...' 6:45  
(Viens, Mallika)  
with **Mary Plazas** soprano

Camille Saint-Saëns

from **Samson and Delilah**

Delilah's Recitative and Aria

- [4] 'Tonight, seeking hither my presence...' –  
'O love! From thy pow'r let me borrow!...' 4:46  
(Amour! Viens aider ma faiblesse)
- [5] Delilah's Aria – 'Fair spring is returning...' 6:06  
(Printemps qui commence)

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

from **La favorite**

- Leonora's Recitative, Aria and Cabaletta 8:54  
(O mon Fernand)
- [6] 'Can I believe it?...' –  
'O my beloved...' – 5:34
- [7] 'I submit to heav'nly powers...' 3:20

Hector Berlioz (1803–1868)

from **The Damnation of Faust**

- [8] Marguérite's Romance – 'The fire of love inside me...' 9:12  
(D'amour l'ardente flamme)

Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787)

from **Orpheus and Eurydice**

- [9] Orpheus's Aria – 'What is life to me without thee...' 4:09  
(Che farò senza Euridice?)

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

from **Count Ory**

- Trio: Count, Isolier and Countess – 'Night lends her aid...' 9:23  
(A la faveur)
- [10] 'Night lends her aid...' – 2:54
- [11] 'With love and tender yearning...' 6:29  
with **Mary Plazas** soprano · **Bruce Ford** tenor

Ambroise Thomas (1811–1896)

from **Mignon**

- 12 Frédéric's Rondo-Gavotte – 'Here am I in her boudoir...'  
(Me voici dans son boudoir) 2:23

Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880)

from **La Périochole**

- 13 Périochole's Griserie – 'I've dined so well, I feel divine...'  
1:56
- 14 Périochole's Letter Song – 'Oh my dearest, from my heart  
I swear it...' 3:01
- 15 Périochole's Aria – 'You don't have looks, you don't have cash...'  
(Couplet des aveux) 2:54

Ambroise Thomas

from **Mignon**

- 16 Mignon's Romance – 'Have you heard of the land...'  
(Connais-tu le pays?) 6:19

TT 75:30

**Diana Montague** mezzo-soprano

**Philharmonia Orchestra**

**David Parry**



Richard H. Smith

Diana Montague as  
Iphigénie in Welsh  
National Opera's  
production of Gluck's  
*Iphigénie en Tauride*

## Great Operatic Arias

Diana Montague's recital is as good evidence as one could want for the virtues of singing opera in the vernacular. She deploys a trim, flexible voice in projecting the English text with a full understanding of how to inflect words with maximum effect. She allies that virtue to a truly kaleidoscopic choice of pieces from the French repertory, still not as popular as it should be in this country. This may partly be blamed on the fact that singers all too often tackle French opera as though it were Italian, missing the subtlety and lightness of touch it requires. It is something that Diana Montague has realized and thereby mastered.

Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (*Orfeo ed Euridice* or *Orphée*) was written in Italian for Vienna, rewritten in French for Paris. In Orpheus's closing aria he eloquently laments the loss of his

beloved Eurydice. The role of Orpheus was created in the middle of the eighteenth century for a castrato, but Gluck had to re-compose it for a tenor to cater for Parisian taste, which would not tolerate castratos. It has been a favourite with mezzos ever since Pauline Viardot adopted the role in the middle of the nineteenth century in an edition by Berlioz, specially arranged for her, which, until recently was the one regularly performed on stage and record.

The aria itself became even more popular in Britain when Kathleen Ferrier made a best-selling 78rpm disc, in English, back in the 1940s. It is a tribute to the power of singing the aria in the vernacular that this record became an immediate favourite with the public, repeated again and again on the wireless and loved by a new generation today. But Ferrier's voice, for all its

beauty, is rather too oratorio-orientated, too heavy for the music's good. Montague's more boy-like timbre and her urgent yet never effusive manner ideally fulfils Gluck's intentions.

Next in the chronology of mezzo roles undertaken there comes the page Isolier's wooing of Countess Adèle in Rossini's late comedy *Count Ory* (1828). The role was taken in 1997 and 1998 at Glyndebourne by Montague with the agility and quick wit it calls for. Isolier is in love with the Countess only to find his master Ory also has his eye – and not only his eye – on her. This naughty trio has the libidinous Count (here amusingly characterized by Bruce Ford), hilariously disguised as a nun, attempting to get into bed with the lovely Countess while his own page is also wooing her. The mellifluous, nocturnal mood of Rossini's sensuous writing in this delicious trio is among the glories of Rossinian – and French – opera.

All composers at this period sought success in Paris, and twelve years after

Rossini's triumph, Donizetti wrote, in a very different vein, for the French capital with his romantic tragedy *La favorite* (1840). Although most often heard throughout its history in Italian translation with powerful Amneris-like voices as the unhappy heroine Leonora, the role really calls for the kind of more contained, less voluminous voice that Montague possesses. She brings to 'O mon Fernand' (Oh my beloved) just the right touch of longing as Leonora sings of her love for the ill-fated Fernand, then goes on to the determined cabaletta often omitted in separate recordings of the aria.

Six years on, in 1846, Paris was the scene of the first performance of yet another, and again very different work, this was Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*. At its very centre lies Marguérite's great lament with its long-breathed, sad main section, where the grieving girl expresses all the sorrow in her soul, followed by a middle section where Berlioz so graphically catches Marguérite's urgent musings on Faust's

touch and kiss before the original melody with its sinuous cor anglais solo returns, its sense of loss even further enhanced. The music, as so often with Berlioz, extends the boundaries of musical expression. This is a piece needing a voice, such as Montague's, hovering between mezzo and soprano, which the French call a 'Falcon', after a singer of that name.

With Gounod's very different rendition of the same Goethe-inspired plot, we reach the high noon of French opera in Paris during the Second Empire and the period that immediately succeeded it, encompassing the remainder of the works represented here. Opera in those days was at the centre of popular entertainment in France. Following the success of such composers as Meyerbeer, Auber and Halévy came a new generation headed by Gounod and Thomas.

Gounod's *Faust* (1859) was probably the most popular work in all French opera at least until *Carmen* came along, its heady outpouring of melody and

innate theatricality making it a surefire success from its inception. The boy Siebel, Marguérite's lover until Faust appears, is characterized in his delightfully insouciant Flower Song. It is typical of the sort of piece Gounod dropped into his serious operas to lighten the mood – and they're usually assigned to mezzos in trousers as was the tradition then, and it is a genre in which Montague is particularly adept.

*Mignon* (1866), though seldom encountered now in the opera house, was almost as popular as *Faust* in its day and shared with its predecessor as inspiration a work by Goethe, in this case the novel *Wilhelm Meister*. Diana Montague here essays two roles, in the first place yet another boy's part, that of Frédéric, a youth in love with the flighty Philine. He has this charming Rondo-Gavotte to sing, but of course the waif Mignon of the title is at the centre of the work. Her great Romance, 'Connais-tu le pays?' (Have you heard of the land), the original text of which many German composers set in Lieder

form, is an outburst of longing for the South where Mignon is said to have come from. Thomas wrote a headily sensuous song for his much-loved character, calling for suave, velvet tone. Not as complex as its German counterparts, it catches as well, if not better than they, Mignon's mysterious nature.

Saint-Saëns's bible-based, hieratical opera *Samson and Delilah* (1877) is another work that achieved immense and well-deserved popularity in and outside France. It is notable both for its clever characterization, sense of stagecraft and, above all, memorable melodies. These gifts are all evinced in the three grand-scale, carefully crafted arias the composer lavished on his heroine. Her first solo (track 5), more neutral in feeling than the other two, has the merit of creating the seductress's character as she proclaims the glory of spring. In the next (track 4), she calls on Love to aid her in her nefarious, treacherous aim of seducing, then betraying the infatuated Samson. Then, in the most famous of the three, known

in English-speaking opera circles as 'Softly awakes my heart', (track 1), we hear Delilah actually carrying out her plan as at night she lures Samson (Bruce Ford) into her lair against his better judgment. It owns surely one of the most glorious and memorable melodies in all French opera, fully justifying its renown, but the other two also exhibit the composer's gift for creating the most grateful line for his heroine to sing.

In *Lakmé* (1883), Delibes proved no slouch in writing catchy tunes. It is common knowledge that the duet recorded here has become a hot favourite with the public after it was used as a backing to a BA commercial. If a piece can survive that treatment it obviously deserves its popularity. It is sung by Lakmé (Mary Plazas), the daughter of a Brahmin priest, with her servant Mallika in Act I. Its artless yet bewitching quality is obviously the thing to capture the ear of Gérald, an Englishman who becomes fatally infatuated with the lovely girl.

**La Périchole** (1868) actually appeared before the previous two works, but as it derives from a different genre, that of *opéra-bouffe*, it demands to be dealt with separately. It came at the height of Offenbach's popularity and, after its Paris premiere, was soon heard in New York, then in London. The street-singer of the title is one of the composer's most delightful creations. In love with her professional partner Piquillo, she goes through various tribulations before true love triumphs.

All three of *Périchole's* solos are sung here (with tremendous gusto) by Montague. In the first (track 15) the heroine sings, in amorous mode, of the charms of her impecunious lover, whom she dotes on, 'Je t'adore, brigand' in the original ('I adore you, you wretch', as it's rendered here). But she needs money to stave off hunger. Offered a place as Lady-in-Waiting at a Viceroy's palace, she cannot refuse and writes a tender letter of farewell (track 14) to Piquillo in waltz time, which reveals just how seriously affecting

Offenbach could be. Piquillo, by chance, is also recruited into the Viceroy's service – expressly to marry his latest 'favourite', none other than Piquillo's own beloved. When they get married, *Périchole* gets drunk and sings her delightful tipsy song (track 13). All these aspects of the role are easily encompassed by Montague.

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**Diana Montague** was born in Winchester and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. Since her debut as Zerlina with Glyndebourne Touring Opera she has appeared in the world's leading opera houses and concert halls including: the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; the Metropolitan Opera, New York; the Monnaie, Brussels; the Paris Bastille; Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires; and the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals.

Her repertoire includes the major mezzo-soprano roles by Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini and Berlioz.

Her frequent concert engagements have included many performances with leading conductors including Georg Solti, James Levine, Riccardo Muti, John Eliot Gardiner, Seiji Ozawa, Jeffrey Tate and Andrew Davis. Recent engagements have included Junon (*Platée* with The Royal Opera), Marguérite (*La damnation de Faust* in Geneva), *Benvenuto Cellini* with Rome Opera, *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Buenos Aires, Madrid and with Welsh National Opera, *Ermione* (Glyndebourne), *Le comte Ory* (in Lausanne, Rome and Glyndebourne) and *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Lisbon.

Diana Montague's many recordings include *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Il crociato in Egitto* (for Opera Rara) and *Cavalleria rusticana* (for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

**David Parry** studied with Sergiu Celibidache and began his career as Sir John Pritchard's assistant. He made his debut with English Music Theatre and

went on to become a staff conductor at Städtische Bühnen Dortmund and at Opera North. He was Music Director of Opera 80 from 1983 to 1987, and since 1992 has been the founding Music Director of the contemporary opera festival Almeida Opera.

He pursues a busy career both in opera and in concert. His repertoire extends from Mozart and early nineteenth-century Italian opera to Janáček, Britten and contemporary music. In England he has appeared regularly at English National Opera and in concert with the Philharmonia. In 1996 he made his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival with *Così fan tutte*.

He is a frequent visitor to Spain where he has appeared with most of the opera companies and symphony orchestras. He gave the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid, and in 1996 he conducted the first Spanish production of *The Rake's Progress*, inaugurated two new concert halls with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and a

new opera house with *Carmen*. He has also appeared in Italy, where he conducted *Ricciardo e Zoraide* in the Rossini Opera Festival at Pesaro, in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, and in Sweden where he conducted an acclaimed production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Outside Europe David Parry has appeared at the Hong Kong International Festival, with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra at Mexico City, with a tour of

*Carmen* in Japan and, in 1996, conducting a new production of *Katya Kabanova* for the New Zealand Festival.

He has recorded extensively for the Opera Rara label, the most recent issue being Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, which won the Prix Cecilia in Belgium and for Chandos he conducted the award-winning recording of *Tosca*, a recording of operatic arias with Bruce Ford, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*.



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Diana Montague as Junon in the Royal Opera production of Rameau's *Platée*

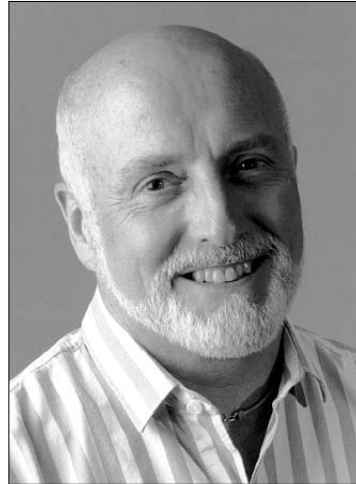


**PETER MOORES, CBE, DL**

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire in 1932, son of Sir John Moores, founder of the giant Littlewoods mail order, chain store and football pools group. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, where he read Modern Languages. He was already fluent in German and Italian. It was opera which was his great love, however. He had worked at Glyndebourne before going up to university, and at the end of his second year he left Oxford to become a production student at the Vienna State Opera. He was required to attend morning rehearsals and evening performances, but the afternoons were free, so he enrolled as well for a four-year course at the Viennese Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year Moores had produced the Viennese premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and the Rome Opera, and seemed set for a successful operatic career. At this point he received a letter from his father asking him to come home as he was needed in the firm. Family loyalty was paramount and he returned to Liverpool immediately.

By 1977 he was Chairman of Littlewoods. Three years later he stepped down from the post, although still remaining on the Board, and was director of a merchant bank. From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985. In May 1992 he became a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire. And in the New Year's



Christina Burroni/PMF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL.

Honours List for 1991 he was made a CBE for his charitable services to the Arts.

He had started his early twenties giving financial support to various young artists, several of whom – such as Geraint Evans, Joan Sutherland and Colin Davis – have since become world-famous. Moores has always been astute in his recognition of potential quality. In 1964 he set aside a large slice of his inheritance to found the Peter Moores Foundation, a charity designed to support those causes dear to his heart: to make music and the arts more accessible to more people; to give encouragement to the young; to fight discrimination and to improve race relations. 99% of the Foundation's money has come from Peter Moores's own pocket – so far about £33 million in today's money.

**PETER MOORES FOUNDATION**

In the field of music, the Peter Moores Foundation awards scholarships to promising young opera singers through the Royal Northern College of Music. Financial help may be given also to enable a singer to study abroad, or to work on a new role with an acknowledged expert in the repertoire.

In the last twenty years the Foundation has supported the recording of thirty-nine operas. Many are sung in English, in translation, because Moores believes that in the popular repertoire, 'what people want is to be able to follow the plot of an opera and understand what is going on'. Others are of interesting but unperformed Italian operas from the early nineteenth century (the age of *bel canto*), which are otherwise only accessible to scholars. Accessibility is the key word.

The same criterion holds where live opera is concerned. So the Foundation may sponsor Welsh National Opera, performing for a week at the Liverpool Empire and charging only £2.50 per ticket – the provision being that each ticket holder must be a first-time opera visitor – or it may fund the production at Glyndebourne of *Ermione*, a *bel canto* opera never before performed in England.

The aim is always the same: availability. 'Share and enjoy' is his philosophy.

## Große Opernarien

Diana Montagues Recital demonstriert in überzeugender Weise, welche Vorteile es hat, Oper in der Landessprache zu singen. Sie entfaltet zur Darstellung des englischen Textes eine präzise und zugleich flexible Stimme, mit großem Verständnis für die Inflektion der Worte mit maximalem Effekt. Diese Tugenden verbindet sie mit einer wirklich kaleidoskopischen Auswahl von Stücken aus dem französischen Repertoire, die in England bei weitem noch nicht so bekannt sind, wie es ihnen zustände. Dies mag zum Teil daran liegen, daß Sänger allzu oft französische Oper wie das italienische Repertoire behandeln und auf diese Weise die gebotene Finesse und Leichtigkeit missen lassen.

Glucks **Orpheus und Eurydice** (*Orphée*, oder *Orfeo ed Euridice*), wurde in Italien für Wien geschrieben und für Paris ins Französische übertragen. In seiner abschließenden Arie beklagt

Orpheus eloquent den Verlust seiner geliebten Eurydice. Die Rolle des Orpheus wurde Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts für einen Kastraten geschaffen, doch Gluck mußte sie für einen Tenor umarbeiten, um dem Pariser Geschmack gerecht zu werden, der Kastraten nicht duldete. Seit Pauline Viardot Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts die Partie in einer von Berlioz speziell für sie arrangierten Ausgabe für sich adoptierte, gehört sie zu den Repertoire-Favoriten für Mezzosoprane; diese Fassung wurde bis vor kurzem regelmäßig für die Bühne wie auch für Schallplattenaufnahmen bevorzugt.

In England wurde diese Arie noch populärer, als Kathleen Ferrier sie in den 1940er Jahren auf Englisch auf eine 78er-Platte einspielte, die zum Bestseller wurde. Die Tatsache, daß diese Schallplatte sofort zum Publikumsliebbling wurde, der wieder

und wieder im Radio erklang und heute von einer neuen Generation entdeckt wird, ist ein Tribut an die Wirkung, die diese Arie hat, wenn man sie in der Landessprache singt. Doch die Stimme der Ferrier ist trotz all ihrer Schönheit etwas zu sehr am Oratorium orientiert, für diese Art von Musik zu schwer. Das eher knabenhafte Timbre der Montague und ihr drängender, doch nie überschwenglicher Vortrag hingegen erfüllen Glucks Intentionen in idealer Weise.

Als nächstes in der Chronologie der hier vorgestellten Mezzo-Rollen kommt die Arie des Pagen Isolier, der in Rossinis später Komödie **Graf Ory** (1828) die Gräfin Adäle umwirbt. Die Montague sang diese Rolle 1997 und 1998 in Glyndebourne mit gebotener Leichtigkeit und Esprit. Isolier ist in die Gräfin verliebt, muß jedoch herausfinden, daß auch sein Herr, Ory, ein Auge auf sie geworfen hat. In diesem gewagten Trio versucht der lüsterne Graf (hier amüsant von Bruce Ford dargestellt), als Nonne verkleidet,

im Bett der Gräfin zu landen, die gleichzeitig von seinem eigenen Pagen bedrängt wird. Die in diesem zauberhaften Trio entfaltete melodiose Nachtstimmung von Rossinis sinnlichem Stil gehört zu den Höhepunkten Rossinischer – und französischer – Oper.

Alle Komponisten dieser Zeit suchten ihren Erfolg in Paris, und zwölf Jahre nach Rossinis Triumph schrieb Donizetti – in sehr anderer Manier – für die französische Hauptstadt seine romantische Tragödie **La favorite** (1840). Obwohl die Rolle der unglücklichen Heldin Leonora in ihrer Aufführungsgeschichte meist in italienischer Übersetzung mit kraftvollen Stimmen von der Art der Amneris gehört wurde, verlangt sie eigentlich eher nach einer beherrschteren, weniger voluminösen Stimme, wie die Montague sie besitzt. Sie verleiht der Arie “O mon Fernand” (Oh my beloved) gerade das richtige Maß an Sehnsucht, mit der Leonora von ihrer Liebe für den unglückseligen

Fernand singt, und fährt fort mit der entschlossenen Cabaletta, die in Einzelaufnahmen der Arie häufig ausgelassen wird.

Sechs Jahre später, 1846, war Paris Schauplatz der Erstaufführung eines weiteren, ganz anders gearteten Werks, **Die Verdammung des Faust** von Berlioz. Im Zentrum dieser Komposition steht Marguérites großes Lamento mit seinem elegischen, traurigen Hauptteil, in dem das untröstliche Mädchen sich ihren Schmerz von der Seele singt, gefolgt von dem Mittelteil, in dem Berlioz Marguérites drängende Gedanken an Fausts Berührung und Kuß überaus anschaulich einfängt, bevor die Anfangsmelodie mit ihrem geschmeidigen Englischhorn-Solo wiederkehrt, die in ihr ausgedrückte Empfindung des Verlusts noch verstärkend. Wie so oft bei Berlioz gelingt es der Musik, die Grenzen musikalischer Ausdrucksfähigkeit zu überschreiten. Dieses Stück verlangt nach einer Stimme – wie die Montague

sie hat –, die zwischen Mezzo und Sopran schwebt; die Franzosen nennen das eine “Falcon”, nach der gleichnamigen Sängerin.

Mit Gounods sehr anders gearteter Vertonung desselben von Goethe entlehnten Stoffs kommen wir zur Blütezeit der französischen Oper in Paris im Zeitalter des zweiten Empire und dem unmittelbar darauffolgenden Zeitraum, dem die verbleidenden hier vorgestellten Werke entstammen. In Frankreich stand die Oper in dieser Epoche im Zentrum populärer Unterhaltung. Nach dem Erfolg solcher Komponisten wie Meyerbeer, Auber und Halévy erschien eine neue Generation, mit Gounod und Thomas an der Spitze.

Gounods **Faust** (1859) war vermutlich von allen französischen Opern die populärste – zumindest bis *Carmen* auftauchte; die betörende Vielzahl von Melodien und dem Stück eigene Theatralik machten die Oper von Anfang an zu einem sicheren Erfolg. Das hier vorgestellte entzückend

unbekümmerte Blumenlied charakterisiert den Jungen Siebel, Marguérites Liebhaber bevor Faust auftaucht. Das Stück ist typisch für die Einlagen, die Gounod in seine ersten Opern einzubauen pflegte, um die Stimmung aufzuheitern; solche Partien waren gewöhnlich Mezzos in Hosenrollen zugeordnet – ein Genre, für das die Montague sich besonders eignet.

Obwohl **Mignon** (1866) heute auf den Spielplänen der Opernhäuser selten anzutreffen ist, war das Werk seinerzeit fast so populär wie *Faust*; mit seinem Vorgänger teilt es die Inspiration durch Goethe (hier dessen Roman *Wilhelm Meister*). Diana Montague bietet hier zwei Rollen aus der Oper, zunächst eine weitere Knabenrolle, die des Frédéric, der die flatterhafte Philine liebt. Frédéric fällt es zu, die charmante Rondo-Gavotte zu singen, doch im Zentrum des Werks steht natürlich die Waise Mignon. Ihre große Romance, “Connais-tu le pays?” (Have you heard of the land), deren Originaltext zahlreiche deutsche Komponisten als

Lied vertonten, ist ein Ausbruch der Sehnsucht nach dem Süden, aus dem Mignon angeblich her stammt. Auch Thomas schrieb für diese beliebte Figur ein betörend-sinnliches Lied, das nach einem geschmeidig-samtigen Ton verlangt. Seine Komposition mag vielleicht nicht so komplex sein wie die deutschen Parallelvertonungen, doch sie fängt Mignons mysteriöses Wesen mindestens ebenso gut ein wie diese.

Ein weiteres Werk, das innerhalb und außerhalb Frankreichs immense und wohlverdiente Popularität erreichte, ist die auf der Bibel basierende hieratische Oper **Samson und Delilah** (1877) von Camille Saint-Saëns. Das Werk ist vor allem für seine intelligente Charakterzeichnung, seinen Sinn für Dramatik und besonders seine einprägsamen Melodien berühmt. Diese Qualitäten zeigen sich sämtlich in den drei großangelegten, sorgfältig ausgearbeiteten Arien, mit denen der Komponist seine Heldin bedachte. Das erste Solo (Spur 5), in seinen Gefühlen noch verhaltener als die anderen beiden,

entwickelt den Charakter der Verführerin, während sie die Herrlichkeit des Frühlings verkündet. In der zweiten Arie (Spur 4) beschwört sie die Liebe, sie in ihrer ruchlosen betrügerischen Absicht zu unterstützen, den verliebten Samson zu verführen und sodann zu verraten. In der dritten und berühmtesten Arie (Spur 1) schließlich, in englischsprechenden Opernkreisen als “Softly awakes my heart” bekannt, hören wir wie Delilah ihren Plan tatsächlich ausführt, indem sie Samson (Bruce Ford) in der Nacht gegen sein besseres Wissen in ihre Falle lockt. Dieser Arie eignet sicherlich zu Recht eine der glorreichsten und einprägsamsten Melodien des gesamten französischen Opernrepertoires, doch auch die anderen beiden demonstrieren die Fähigkeit des Komponisten, seiner Heldin die dankbarsten Partien zu schaffen.

Delibes’ *Lakmé* (1883) enthält eine Reihe unvergeßlicher Melodien. Es ist allgemein bekannt, daß das hier eingespielte Duett nach seiner

Verwendung als Hintergrundmusik für einen Werbespot der British Airways ein großer Publikumsrenner wurde. Wenn ein Stück eine solche Behandlung übersteht, hat es seine Popularität offensichtlich verdient. Das Duett wird im ersten Akt der Oper von *Lakmé* (Mary Plazas), der Tochter eines Brahmanen, und ihrer Dienerin Mallika gesungen. Die einfache und doch verzaubernde Melodie betört das Ohr des Engländers Gérald, der sich in das liebeliche Mädchen unsterblich verliebt.

*La Périchole* (1868) erschien eigentlich vor den beiden zuletzt vorgestellten Werken, da es aber zu einem anderen Genre, dem der *Opéra-bouffe* gehört, wird es hier separat behandelt. Die Oper entstand auf der Höhe von Offenbachs Ruhm und erklang bald nach seiner Pariser Premiere auch in New York und schließlich in London. Die Straßensängerin des Titels ist eine der entzückendsten Schöpfungen des Komponisten. In ihren Kumpanen Piquillo verliebt, muß sie verschiedene

Komplikationen durchstehen, bevor die wahre Liebe triumphiert.

Alle drei Soli von Périchole werden hier – mit großem Elan – von der Montague gesungen. Im ersten (Spur 15) singt die Heldin in verliebter Stimmung von den Reizen ihres bettelarmen Geliebten, von dem sie betört ist, “Je t’adore, brigand” im Original (hier “I adore you, you wretch”). Doch ihr fehlt das nötige Geld, ihren Hunger zu stillen. Als ihr eine Stellung als Hofdame im Palast des Vizekönigs angeboten wird, kann sie diese nicht ausschlagen und schreibt Piquillo einen zärtlichen Brief im Walzerrhythmus (Spur 14); die Arie zeigt, wie wirkungsvoll Offenbach zu komponieren vermochte. Das Glück will es, daß auch Piquillo in die Dienste des Vizekönigs tritt – ausdrücklich, um dessen jüngste “Favoritin” zu heiraten, die niemand anders ist als Piquillos eigene Geliebte. Auf ihrer Hochzeit betrinkt sich Périchole und singt ihr köstliches beschwipstes Lied (Spur 13). Die verschiedenen Facetten dieser Rolle

werden von der Montague mit Leichtigkeit bewältigt.

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

**Diana Montague** wurde im britischen Winchester geboren und hat am Royal Northern College of Music studiert. Seit ihrem Debüt als Zerlina mit der Glyndebourne Touring Opera ist sie in den führenden Opernhäusern und Konzertsälen der Welt aufgetreten, so auch am Royal Opera House Covent Garden, an der New Yorker Metropolitan Opera, am Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brüssel, an der Opéra de Bastille in Paris, am Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires und bei den Festspielen von Bayreuth und Salzburg.

Ihr Repertoire umfaßt die großen Mezzosopranrollen von Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini und Berlioz. Unter ihren häufigen Konzertengagements befinden sich zahlreiche Auftritte mit führenden Dirigenten wie Georg Solti, James

Levine, Riccardo Muti, John Eliot Gardiner, Seiji Ozawa, Jeffrey Tate und Andrew Davis. In letzter Zeit war sie unter anderem als Junon (*Platée* an der Royal Opera) und Marguerite (*La damnation de Faust* in Genf) verpflichtet, für *Benvenuto Cellini* am Opernhaus Rom, für *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Buenos Aires, Madrid und an der Welsh National Opera, für *Hermione* in Glyndebourne, *Le comte Ory* in Lausanne, Rome und Glyndebourne sowie *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Lissabon.

Zu Diana Montagues zahlreichen Aufnahmen auf Tonträger zählen *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Il crociato in Egitto* (für die Reihe Opera Rara) und *Cavalleria rusticana* (für Chandos und die Peter-Moores-Stiftung).

David Parry studierte bei Sergiu Celibidache und begann seine Laufbahn als Sir John Pritchards musikalischer Assistent. Er debütierte mit dem English

Music Theatre und wurde Kapellmeister an den Städtischen Bühnen Dortmund sowie an Opera North in Leeds. Von 1983 bis 1987 fungierte er als Musikdirektor für Opera 80 und seit 1992 ist er der Musikdirektor (und Gründer) des zeitgenössischen Opernfestivals Almeida Opera.

Parrys Tätigkeitsbereich ist nicht nur das Opernhaus, sondern auch der Konzertsaal. Sein Repertoire erstreckt sich von Mozart und der italienischen Oper des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts bis zu Janáček, Britten und zeitgenössischer Musik. In England dirigiert er regelmäßig an der English National Opera und konzertiert mit dem Philharmonia Orchestra, 1996 machte er mit *Così fan tutte* sein Debüt bei dem Glyndebourne Festival.

David Parry gastiert häufig in Spanien, wo er bereits mit den meisten Opernkompanien und Sinfonieorchestern aufgetreten ist. Die spanische Premiere von *Peter Grimes* fand unter seiner Leitung in Madrid statt; 1996 dirigierte er die erste

spanische Inszenierung von *The Rake's Progress* (Strawinsky) und weihte zwei neue Konzertsäle mit der Neunten Sinfonie von Beethoven sowie ein neues Opernhaus mit *Carmen* ein. In Italien leitete er *Ricciardo e Zoraide* bei dem Rossini-Festival in Pesaro. Er tritt in Frankreich, Deutschland, Belgien, den Niederlanden und Schweden auf, wo er eine gefeierte Inszenierung von Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream* dirigierte.

Außerhalb Europas ist David Parry bei dem Hongkong International Festival und mit dem UNAM

Symphony Orchestra in Mexico City aufgetreten, war mit *Carmen* in Japan auf Tournee und leitete eine Neuinszenierung von *Katja Kabanova* für das Festival in Neuseeland.

Parry hat zahlreiche Werke für das Label Opera Rara eingespielt, zuletzt *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* von Donizetti, das in Belgien mit dem Prix Cecilia ausgezeichnet wurde; für Chandos hat er eine preisgekrönte *Tosca*, eine Aufnahme operatischen Arien, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* und *Pagliacci* aufgenommen.

## Grands airs d'opéra

Le récital que nous propose Diane Montague est la preuve que rien ne vaut un opéra chanté dans la langue du pays où il est entendu. Elle déploie une voix élégante et flexible en projetant le texte anglais avec une maîtrise parfaite dans la manière de moduler les mots. Elle allie ce talent avec un choix extrêmement varié et coloré de pièces issues du répertoire français, pourtant beaucoup moins connues qu'elles ne devraient l'être dans ce pays. Il faut peut-être en chercher la raison dans le fait que les chanteurs abordent l'opéra français comme s'il s'agissait de répertoire italien, omettant ainsi la subtilité et la légèreté que requiert cette langue. C'est ce que Diane Montague a réalisé avec brio.

**Orfeo ed Euridice** ou *Orphée de Gluck* fut écrit en italien pour Vienne, puis réécrit en français pour Paris. Dans l'aria finale de l'Orpheus, celui-ci pleure avec beaucoup d'éloquence la perte

d'Eurydice sa bien-aimée. Le rôle d'Orphée fut créé au milieu du XVIIIe siècle pour un castrat mais Gluck fut forcé de le réécrire pour un ténor afin de se conformer au goût parisien, qui ne supportait pas les castrats. Ce rôle n'a cessé d'être le favori des mezzos depuis que Pauline Viardot l'eut adopté au milieu du XIXe siècle dans une version que Berlioz avait spécialement arrangée pour elle et qui, jusqu'à très récemment, était régulièrement enregistrée et jouée sur scène.

L'aria elle-même devint encore plus populaire en Grande-Bretagne lorsque Kathleen Ferrier enregistra un soixante-dix-huit tours, en anglais, qui fit un best-seller dans les années quarante. Le succès immédiat de ce disque, joué et rejoué sur les ondes et aimé aujourd'hui par une nouvelle génération, représente un hommage au pouvoir du chant dans

la langue vernaculaire. Cependant, la voix de Ferrier, malgré toute sa beauté, est trop lourde pour cette musique. Le timbre de jeune garçon de Montague et l'urgence de son expression dépourvue néanmoins d'effusion excessive satisfont de façon idéale les intentions de Gluck.

Très proche dans la chronologie des rôles de mezzo se trouve la sérénade d'Isolier à la Comtesse Adèle dans l'une des dernières comédies de Rossini, **Le comte Ory** (1828). Le rôle fut interprété à deux reprises par Montague lors des éditions de 1997 et de 1998 du Festival de Glyndebourne avec l'agilité et la légèreté qu'il requiert. Isolier est amoureux de la Comtesse jusqu'au moment où il découvre que son maître Ory a jeté son dévolu sur elle. Le trio s'organise alors: le Comte libidineux (incarné ici avec beaucoup de drôlerie par Bruce Ford) se déguise en nonne et tente de mettre la jolie Comtesse dans son lit tandis que son propre page lui fait aussi la cour. Le caractère doucereux et nocturne de l'écriture voluptueuse de Rossini dans ce délicieux trio compte

parmi les gloires de l'opéra rossinien, et français.

Tous les compositeurs de cette période ont cherché le succès à Paris, et douze ans après le succès de Rossini, Donizetti écrivit, dans une veine bien différente, sa tragédie romantique **La favorite** (1840) pour la capitale française. Bien que tout au long de son histoire, on ait souvent entendu le rôle de Léonore, l'héroïne malheureuse, dans une traduction italienne par des voix puissantes rappelant Amneris, il exige vraiment le type de voix plus contenue et moins volumineuse que possède Montague. Elle apporte à l'air "O mon Fernand" (Oh my beloved) cette touche de mélancolie si juste dans le passage où Léonore chante son amour pour l'infortuné Fernand, puis enchaîne avec la cabaletta pleine de détermination, souvent omise dans les différents enregistrements de l'aria.

Six ans plus tard, Paris fut le théâtre de la première représentation d'une autre oeuvre, bien différente, qui était **La damnation de Faust**. Le cœur de

cette œuvre est bien sûr la grande plainte de Marguérite et sa section principale longue et triste où la jeune fille affligée exprime toute la souffrance de son âme, suivie d'une section centrale dans laquelle Berlioz parvient à saisir d'une manière très pittoresque la rêverie de Marguérite se rappelant les caresses et les baisers de Faust avant que la mélodie d'origine avec son solo de cor anglais ne réapparaisse, renforçant encore chez elle le sentiment de sa perte. La musique, comme souvent chez Berlioz, repousse les limites de l'expression musicale. C'est une pièce qui exige une voix, comme celle de Montague, s'étendant entre le registre de mezzo et celui de soprano, que les Français appellent un "Falcon", d'après le nom d'un chanteur.

Avec l'adaptation très personnelle de l'intrigue de Goethe par Gounod, nous atteignons le sommet de l'opéra français pendant le Second empire ainsi que la période qui suit, comprenant le reste des œuvres proposées ici. A cette époque, l'opéra était le plus important des

divertissements populaires en France. Entraînée par le succès des Meyerbeer, Auber et Halévy, une nouvelle génération fit son apparition avec à sa tête Gounod et Thomas.

Le *Faust* (1859) de Gounod fut probablement l'œuvre la plus populaire de l'opéra français, du moins jusqu'à la création de *Carmen*, sa profusion mélodique et sa théâtralité naturelle en faisant un succès garanti dès le début. Le personnage de Siebel, l'amoureux de Marguérite, jusqu'à l'apparition de Faust, est caractérisé par le Chant de la fleur, d'une délicieuse insouciance. C'est absolument typique du genre de passage dont Gounod pouvait parsemer ses opéras sérieux afin d'en alléger l'atmosphère – et ils sont souvent attribués à des mezzos en pantalon, comme le voulait la tradition en ce temps, et c'est un genre qu'affectionne tout particulièrement Montague.

*Mignon* (1866), bien que très peu joué de nos jours, fut presque aussi populaire que *Faust* en son temps et partageait avec son prédécesseur sa

source d'inspiration, tirée de l'œuvre de Goethe, ici le roman *Wilhelm Meister*. Diane Montague aborde deux rôles, le premier étant encore un rôle de jeune garçon, celui de Frédéric, un jeune homme amoureux de l'inconstante Philine. Elle interprète le charmant Rondo-Gavotte, mais bien entendu Mignon, l'enfant abandonné, est au centre de l'œuvre. Sa grande Romance, "Connais-tu le pays?" (Have you heard of the land), texte original qui inspira des Lieder à de nombreux compositeurs allemands, est un épanchement de la nostalgie de Mignon pour le Sud, censé être son pays d'origine. Thomas écrivit une mélodie très voluptueuse pour son personnage tant aimé, requérant un timbre aussi doux que du velours. Avec peut-être moins de complexité que ses pendants allemand, il parvient à saisir aussi bien, si ce n'est mieux, la mystérieuse nature de Mignon.

Le hiératique opéra de Saint-Saëns basé sur la Bible, *Samson et Dalila* (1877), jouit d'une immense popularité bien méritée, en France comme à

l'étranger. Il est remarquable, à la fois par ses personnages si bien plantés, son sens de la technique scénique et, par dessus tout, ses mélodies inoubliables. Ces qualités se voient toutes évincées par les trois grandes arias dont le compositeur a doté son héroïne. Son premier solo (page 5), dont l'expression est plus neutre que les deux autres, a le mérite de planter le personnage de séductrice tandis qu'elle proclame la gloire du printemps. Dans le suivant (page 4), elle appelle l'Amour et lui demande son aide dans sa perfide tentative de séduction, puis de trahison du pauvre Samson amoureux. Ensuite, dans le plus célèbre des trois (page 1), connu dans l'opéra en langue anglaise sous le nom de "Softly awakes my heart" (Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix), nous entendons Dalila mettre son plan à exécution lorsque, à la nuit tombée, elle attire dans son repère Samson (Bruce Ford) qui a perdu tout son bon sens. C'est sûrement l'une des mélodies les plus glorieuses et mémorables de l'opéra français, justifiant pleinement sa

réputation, mais les deux autres démontrent tout aussi bien le talent du compositeur lorsqu'il écrit pour ses héroïnes des airs aussi parfaitement seyants.

Dans *Lakmé* (1883), Delibes prouve également son aptitude à composer des airs entraînants. Tout le monde sait que le duo enregistré ici est devenu célèbre auprès du public après avoir été utilisé dans la publicité pour British Airways. Si une pièce peut survivre à un tel traitement, c'est qu'elle mérite largement sa popularité. Le duo est chanté par Lakmé (Mary Plazas), la fille du prêtre Brahmine, et sa servante Mallika au cours de l'acte I. Son caractère enchanteur et cependant dépourvu d'artifices, est visiblement apte à séduire l'oreille de Gérard, un Anglais qui tombe éperdument amoureux de l'adorable jeune fille.

*La Périhole* (1868) est en fait antérieure aux deux œuvres précédentes, mais elle dérive d'un genre différent, celui de l'*opéra-bouffe*. Elle exige donc d'être traitée séparément. Offenbach la

composa au sommet de sa gloire et, après sa première parisienne, elle fut rapidement jouée à New York puis Londres. La chanteuse des rues du titre est l'une des plus délicieuses créations du compositeur. Amoureuse de son partenaire professionnel Piquillo, elle traverse de nombreuses tribulations avant que ne triomphe l'amour.

Les trois solos de Périhole sont ici chantés (avec un immense plaisir) par Montague. Dans le premier (page 15), l'héroïne chante, amoureuxment, les charmes de son amant démuné, auquel elle adresse des "Je t'adore, brigand". Mais elle a besoin d'argent pour apaiser sa faim. Elle se voit proposé une place de dame d'honneur dans un palais du Vice-Roi, elle ne peut refuser et écrit une tendre lettre (page 14) d'adieu sur un rythme de valse à Piquillo, qui démontre à quel point Offenbach pouvait feindre le sérieux. Piquillo, par hasard, se voit lui aussi recruté au service du Vice-Roi – chargé expressément d'épouser la dernière "favorite" de son maître, qui n'est autre que la propre bien-aimée de

Piquillo. Lorsqu'ils se marrient, Périhole boit un peu trop et entame son délicieux air d'ivrogne (page 13). Montague parvient aisément à rendre tous ces aspects du rôle.

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Traduction: Karin Py

Née à Winchester, **Diana Montague** a fait ses études au Royal Northern College of Music. Depuis ses débuts dans le rôle de Zerline avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera, elle s'est produite dans les plus grandes salles d'opéra et de concert du monde, notamment au Covent Garden de Londres, au Metropolitan Opera de New York, au Théâtre de la Monnaie de Bruxelles, à l'Opéra Bastille, au Teatro Colon de Buenos Aires, et dans les festivals de Bayreuth et de Salzbourg.

Son répertoire comprend les grands rôles de mezzo-soprano de Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini et Berlioz. Elle donne de nombreux concerts, et s'est produite sous la

direction de chefs aussi éminents que Georg Solti, James Levine, Riccardo Mutti, John Eliot Gardiner, Seiji Ozawa, Jeffrey Tate et Andrew Davis. Parmi ses récentes prestations, on peut noter le rôle de Junon (*Platée* avec le Royal Opera), Marguerite (*La damnation de Faust* à Genève), *Benvenuto Cellini* à l'Opéra de Rome, *Iphigénie en Tauride* à Buenos Aires, Madrid et au Welsh National Opera, *Ermione* de Rossini à Glyndebourne, *Le comte Ory* à Lausanne, Rome et Glyndebourne, et *Ariadne auf Naxos* à Lisbonne.

Parmi les nombreux enregistrements de Diana Montague, on peut citer *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Il crociato in Egitto* (pour Opera Rara) et *Cavalleria rusticana* (enregistré par Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation).

**David Parry** étudia avec Sergiu Celibidache et commença sa carrière comme assistant de Sir John Pritchard. Il fit ses débuts avec l'English Music Theatre et devint plus tard chef



appointed du Städtische Bühnen Dortmund et d'Opera North. Directeur musical d'Opera 80 de 1983 à 1987, il est depuis 1992 le directeur musical fondateur du festival d'opéra contemporain Almeida Opera.

Il poursuit une carrière très active à l'opéra et dans les salles de concert. Son répertoire va de Mozart et de l'opéra italien du début du XIXe siècle à Janáček, Britten et à la musique contemporaine. En Angleterre, il a fait des apparitions régulières à l'English National Opera et lors de concerts avec le Philharmonia. En 1997, il a fait ses débuts au Festival de Glyndebourne avec *Così fan tutte*.

Il se rend fréquemment en Espagne où il s'est produit avec la plupart des troupes d'opéra et des orchestres symphoniques. Il a donné la première espagnole de *Peter Grimes* à Madrid et, en 1996, a dirigé la première mise en scène espagnole de *The Rake's Progress*. Il a aussi inauguré deux nouvelles salles de concert avec une interprétation de la Neuvième symphonie de Beethoven et

un nouvel opéra avec *Carmen*. Il s'est également produit en Italie où il a dirigé *Ricciardo et Zoraide* au Festival d'opéra de Pesaro (consacré à Rossini), mais il s'est aussi rendu en France, en Allemagne, en Belgique, en Hollande, et en Suède où il a dirigé une mise en scène très applaudie du *Midsummer Night's Dream* de Britten.

Hors d'Europe, David Parry s'est produit au Festival international de Hong Kong, a dirigé l'UNAM Symphony Orchestra à Mexico, a fait une tournée consacrée à *Carmen* au Japon, et, en 1996, a dirigé une nouvelle mise en scène de *Katya Kabanova* au Festival de Nouvelle-Zélande.

Il a réalisé un grand nombre d'enregistrements pour le label Opera Rara, le plus récent étant *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti, qui a remporté le prix Cecilia en Belgique, et c'est chez Chandos qu'il a dirigé son enregistrement primé de *Tosca*, une disque d'aries operatiques avec Bruce Ford *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* et *Pagliacci*.

## Grandi arie operistiche

Il recital di Diana Montague è la miglior prova che si possa volere delle virtù di cantare l'opera in vernacolo. Essa dispiega una voce snella e flessibile, enunciando il testo inglese con una piena cognizione di come modulare le parole per ottenere il massimo effetto. Tale virtù si allea ad una scelta veramente caleidoscopica di pezzi tratti dal repertorio francese tuttora non così popolare in questo paese come meriterebbe di essere. In parte la colpa può essere ascritta ai cantanti che troppo spesso affrontano l'opera francese come se fosse italiana, lasciandosi sfuggire la finezza e leggerezza di tocco che richiede. È un fatto che Diana Montague ha avvertito e in conseguenza ha dominato.

L'*Orfeo ed Euridice* (*Orphée*) di Gluck fu scritta in italiano per Vienna, riscritta in francese per Parigi. Nella sua aria finale Orfeo eloquentemente piange

la perdita dell'amata Euridice. Il ruolo di Orfeo fu creato nella metà del Settecento per castrato, ma Gluck dovette riscriverlo per tenore, in osservanza al gusto parigino che non avrebbe tollerato castrati. È stato favorito dai mezzosoprani da quando Pauline Viardot adottò la parte nella metà dell'Ottocento in una versione di Berlioz, trascritta espressamente per lei, e che, fino a poco fa, è stata quella regolarmente eseguita in teatro e in dischi.

L'aria stessa divenne ancora più popolare in Gran Bretagna quando Kathleen Ferrier incise in inglese, negli anni 40, un disco a 78rpm di grande tiratura. Il fatto che questo disco sia diventato immediatamente un beniamino del pubblico, ripetuto innumerevoli volte per radio e tutt'oggi amato da una nuova generazione, è chiaro omaggio all'efficacia dell'opera

cantata in vernacolo. Ma la voce della Ferrier, nonostante tutta la sua bellezza, è un po' troppo orientata verso l'oratorio, troppo pesante per il bene della musica. Il timbro della Montague, che più si avvicina a quello di una voce bianca, e il suo stile, pressante ma mai effusivo, soddisfa in modo ideale le intenzioni di Gluck.

Segue, nella cronologia dei ruoli per mezzosoprano curati in questo disco, quello del paggio Isolier che corteggia la Contessa Adele nel **Comte Ory** (1828), tarda opera comica di Rossini: ruolo interpretato da Diana Montague a Glyndebourne nel 1997 e 1998 con quell'agilità e arguzia che la parte esige. Isolier, innamorato della bella Contessa, scopre che anche il suo padrone Ory ha posato gli occhi – e non solo gli occhi – su di lei. Questo procace terzetto mostra il libidinoso Conte (qui caratterizzato in modo ameno da Bruce Ford) che, comicamente travestito da suora, cerca d'intrufolarsi nel letto della Contessa, mentre il suo stesso paggio pure la corteggia. La soave atmosfera notturna

della sensuale scrittura in questo delizioso terzetto è fra le glorie dell'opera rossiniana – e francese.

Tutti i compositori di questo periodo cercarono il successo a Parigi e dodici anni dopo il trionfo di Rossini, Donizetti compose per la capitale francese – in vena del tutto diversa – la sua tragedia romantica **La favorite** (1840). Sebbene l'opera compaia per tutta la sua storia più frequentemente nella tradizione italiana, con l'infelice eroina Leonora affidata ad una voce potente di tipo Amneris, la parte in realtà richiede un timbro più contenuto, meno voluminoso, quale appunto è la voce posseduta da Diana Montague. La Montague porta all'aria "O mon Fernand" (Oh my beloved) il tocco proprio giusto a descrivere lo struggimento di Leonor mentre canta del suo amore per il disgraziato Fernand, procedendo poi alla risoluta cabaletta spesso omessa in separate registrazioni dell'aria.

Sei anni dopo, nel 1846, Parigi fu la scena della prima rappresentazione di

ancora un'altra opera, anch'essa del tutto diversa: **La damnation de Faust** di Berlioz. Esattamente al centro dell'opera è piazzato il grande lamento di Marguérite: all'affranta e distesa sezione principale, nella quale l'angosciata fanciulla esprime tutta la tristezza che ha nell'anima, segue una sezione centrale in cui Berlioz tanto graficamente afferra il cocente ricordo di Marguérite del contatto e del bacio di Faust, prima del ritorno della melodia originale con l'a solo del sinuoso corno inglese, che ancora di più intensifica il senso d'abbandono. La musica, come tanto spesso accade in Berlioz, estende i confini dell'espressione musicale. Questo è un pezzo che richiede una voce come quella della Montague, librata fra il mezzo e il soprano: quella che i francesi denominano "Falcon", da una cantante così chiamata.

Con la versione interamente diversa di Gounod della storia goethiana si giunge all'ora di punta dell'opera francese a Parigi durante il Secondo impero ed il periodo immediatamente

successivo che comprende il resto delle opere qui rappresentate. A quel tempo l'opera lirica era il fulcro dello spettacolo popolare in Francia. Al successo di compositori come Meyerbeer, Auber e Halévy fece seguito una generazione capeggiata da Gounod e Thomas.

Il **Faust** di Gounod (1859) fu probabilmente l'opera più popolare di tutto il repertorio francese – almeno fino all'arrivo della *Carmen* – la sua inebriante effusione melodica ed innata teatralità assicurandole un successo garantito sin dall'inizio. Il giovinetto Siebel, amante di Marguérite fin quando non appare Faust, è caratterizzato nella deliziosamente spensierata Romanza dei fiori. Essa è tipica dei pezzi che Gounod seminava nelle sue opere per alleggerire lo spirito – e sono generalmente pezzi affidati al mezzosoprano in pantaloni, come voleva allora la tradizione: genere che particolarmente si attaglia alla Montague.

**Mignon** (1866), sebbene raramente

presente oggi sulla scena lirica, fu a suo tempo quasi tanto popolare quanto il Faust, opera con cui condivide l'ispirazione goethiana, in questo caso il romanzo *Wilhelm Meister*. Diana Montague qui si cimenta in due parti: la prima è di nuovo un ruolo maschile, quello di Frédéric, un giovane innamorato della volubile Philine. Tocca a Frédéric cantare questa incantevole Rondo-Gavotte, ma naturalmente è la trovatella Mignon al centro dell'opera che a lei s'intitola. La sua grande Romanza, "Connais-tu le pays?" (Have you heard of the land), il cui testo originale è stato messo in musica in forma di Lied da molti compositori tedeschi, è uno sfogo di nostalgia per quel Meridione dal quale si ritiene provenga Mignon. Thomas compose una Romanza d'inebriata sensualità per questo personaggio molto amato, richiedente un timbro soave e vellutato. Non così complessa come le sue controparti tedesche, essa coglie altrettanto bene, se non addirittura meglio, la misteriosa natura di Mignon.

La jeratica opera di Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila* (1877), d'ispirazione biblica, è un altro lavoro che ha acquistato immensa e ben meritata popolarità in Francia e altrove. Essa si distingue tanto per la sua intelligente caratterizzazione quanto per il suo senso del teatro, e soprattutto per le sue memorabili melodie. Queste doti si manifestano tutte in tre arie, costruite su larga scala e con attenta maestria, che il compositore ha donato alla sua eroina: la prima (solco 5), più neutrale nel sentimento delle altre due, ha la virtù di creare il carattere della seduttrice nella sua affermazione della gloria della primavera; nella seconda, (solco 4), Dalila chiede aiuto ad Amore per portare a termine il suo iniquo e subdolo scopo di sedurre e poi tradire l'infatuato Sansone; quindi nella terza, (solco 1), e più famosa, nota nella versione inglese come "Softly awakes my heart" (Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix), si sente Dalila che di notte mette in atto il suo piano adescando nel suo covo lo sconsigliato Sansone (Bruce Ford). L'aria

possiede sicuramente una delle più splendide e memorabili melodie di tutto il repertorio lirico francese, che pienamente giustifica la sua fama; ma anche le altre due mostrano la capacità di Saint-Saëns di comporre per la sua eroina la più incantevole linea vocale.

In *Lakmé* (1883) Delibes dimostrò che neanche lui si faceva pregare per scrivere melodie orecchiabili. È un dato di fatto che il duetto qui inciso è diventato un gran favorito del pubblico dopo essere stato adoperato come musica di sfondo per uno spot pubblicitario della British Airways. Se un pezzo riesce a sopravvivere a un trattamento simile ovviamente si merita la sua popolarità. È cantato da Lakmé, (Mary Plazas), figlia di un sacerdote bramino, insieme al suo servo Mallika, nell'Atto I. La sua innocente ma seducente qualità è certamente atta a captare l'orecchio di Gérard, un inglese che finisce per invaghiarsi mortalmente della vezzosa fanciulla.

La *Périchole* (1868) in effetti apparve prima delle ultime due opere, ma

poiché deriva da un genere diverso, quello dell'*opéra-bouffé*, richiede di esser trattata separatamente. Venne all'apice della popolarità di Offenbach e dopo la sua *première* parigina apparve presto a New York e poi a Londra. La cantastorie del titolo è una della più deliziose creature del compositore. Innamorata del suo partner professionale Piquillo, essa attraversa varie tribolazioni prima del trionfo del vero amore.

Tutti e tre i pezzi solistici di Périchole sono qui eseguiti da Diana Montague con tremendo entusiasmo. Nel primo, (solco 15), l'eroina decanta con amoroso trasporto le attrattive del suo squattrinato amante di cui è invaghita: "Je t'adore, brigand", nell'originale ("I adore you, you wretch!" nella presente traduzione). Ma occorre denaro per tenere a bada la fame. Avendo avuto l'offerta di entrare come dama di compagnia nel palazzo del Viceré, non può rifiutarla. Scrive una tenera lettera d'addio a Piquillo, (solco 14), a tempo di valzer, che veramente rivela quanto seriamente romantico Offenbach sapeva

essere. Per combinazione, anche Piquillo viene reclutato al servizio del Viceré – il suo incarico essendo quello di sposare l'ultima sua "favorita" – ne' più ne meno che l'amante stessa di Piquillo. Quando si sposano Périchole prende una sbornia e canta la sua incantevole canzone inebriata, (solco 13). Tutti questi aspetti del ruolo rientrano con facilità nel raggio interpretativo di Diana Montague.

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Traduzione: Marcella Barzetti

**Diana Montague** è nata a Winchester e ha studiato al Royal Northern College of Music. Dal suo debutto nel ruolo di Zerlina con la Glyndebourne Touring Opera è apparsa nei principali teatri lirici e sale di concerti, quali: la Royal Opera House Covent Garden a Londra; la Metropolitan Opera a New York; il Teatro della Monnaie a Brusselle; il Teatro della Bastiglia a Parigi; il Teatro Colon a Buenos Aires e ai festival di Bayreuth e Salisburgo.

Il suo repertorio include i principali ruoli per mezzosoprano di Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini e Berlioz. Nella sua intensa attività concertistica ha cantato più volte con distinti direttori quali Georg Solti, James Levine, Riccardo Muti, John Eliot Gardiner, Seiji Ozawa, Jeffrey Tate e Andrew Davis. Recenti ingaggi hanno incluso Junon (*Platée* con la Royal Opera), Marguerite (*La damnation de Faust* a Ginevra), *Benvenuto Cellini* al Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, *Iphigénie en Tauride* a Buenos Aires, Madrid e con la Welsh National Opera, *Ermione* a Glyndebourne, *Le comte Ory* a Losanna, Roma e Glyndebourne e *Ariadne auf Naxos* a Lisbona.

La sua copiosa discografia include *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Il crociato in Egitto* (per Opera Rara) e *Cavalleria rusticana* (per Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

**David Parry** ha studiato con Sergiu Celibidache ed ha iniziato la sua carriera

come assistente di Sir John Pritchard. Ha fatto il suo debutto con l'English Music Theatre ed è poi diventato direttore stabile della Städtische Bühnen Dortmund e di Opera North. Dal 1983 al 1987 è stato direttore artistico di Opera 80 e dal 1992 Direttore Musicale fondatore del festival di opera contemporanea dell'Almeida Opera.

Svolge un'intensa attività sia nel teatro lirico sia in campo sinfonico. Il suo repertorio da va Mozart e l'opera italiana del Settecento a Janáček e Britten e la musica contemporanea. In Inghilterra ha diretto frequentemente alla English National Opera ed in concerti sinfonici con la Philharmonia. Nel 1996 ha debuttato al festival di Glyndebourne con *Così fan tutte*.

Dirige spesso in Spagna nella maggior parte dei teatri lirici e con orchestra sinfoniche. Ha diretto la prima spagnola di *Peter Grimes* a Madrid e nel 1996 il primo allestimento spagnolo della *Carriera di un libertino*, ha inaugurato

due nuove sale di concerti con la Nona sinfonia di Beethoven ed un nuovo teatro lirico con la *Carmen*. Altre tournées l'hanno portato in Italia, dove ha diretto *Ricciardo e Zoraide* al Festival Rossini di Pesaro, in Francia, Germania, Belgio, Olanda, e Svezia dove ha diretto con grande successo *Il sogno di una notte di mezza estate* di Britten.

Fuori d'Europa David Parry si è esibito al festival internazionale di Hong Kong, con l'orchestra sinfonica UNAM a Città del Messico e in una serie di rappresentazioni della *Carmen* in Giappone. Nel 1996 ha diretto *Katya Kabanova* in un nuovo allestimento per il festival della Nuova Zelanda.

Ha inciso numerosi dischi per Opera Rara, fra questi il più recente è quello di *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti, che ha vinto il Priz Cecilia in Belgio; per Chandos ha diretto l'acclamato disco della *Tosca*, un disco di grandi arie operistiche, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* e *Pagliacci*.



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Diana Montague as Dorabella in the Royal Opera production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*



© Ben Christopher/P.A.L.

Diana Montague as Andromaca in the Glyndebourne Festival production of Rossini's *Ermione*

from **Samson and Delilah**

**Delilah**

[1] Softly, awakes my heart as the flowers  
awaken  
to Aurora's tender zephyr.  
But say, O well-beloved, no more I'll be  
forsaken.  
Speak again, O speak forever!  
O say that from Delilah you never will  
part!  
Your burning vows repeat; vows so dear  
to my heart.

Ah! Once again then I implore thee!  
Ah! Once again then say you adore me!  
Ah! I here implore thee, see! I implore thee.  
Ah! Once again then say you adore me!

**Samson**

Delilah! Delilah! I adore thee!

**Delilah**

E'en as to whisp'ring winds sways the  
waving grain,  
to and fro, so gently moving;  
so sways my trembling heart consoling all  
its pain,  
to thy voice, so dear, so loving!  
The arrow in its flight is not swifter than I,  
when, leaving all behind, to your arms  
I fly!  
Ah! Once again then I implore thee!

Ah! Once again then say you adore me!  
Ah! I implore thee, see! I implore thee.  
Ah! Once again then say you adore me!

**Samson**

Yes, with my kisses I would dry thy tears,  
and from your heart I would banish thy  
fears!

Delilah, Delilah, I love thee!

*F. Lemaire, translation Eugène Oudin*

from **Faust**

**Siebel**

[2] Summer flowers so fair,  
Oh hear my pray'r.  
Will you say I adore her,  
for a kiss I implore her,  
I am so much in love I pine away!  
Summer flowers so fair,  
Oh hear my pray'r.  
Now you know what I'm feeling,  
let your fragrance be healing  
on the branches above be sweet, I pray.  
(*He plucks a flower.*)  
It's withered! Alas, so that conjuring devil  
charm'd my luck away!  
(*He throws the flower away and plucks  
another, which instantly sheds its petals.*)  
Can it be, when I pluck a flower, it  
wither away! I know about the pow'r of

holy water. Each evening she comes here  
to pray, Marguerite.  
Well now, try again... pluck another...  
(*gathering another flower*)  
Is it dying? No! Satan, I'll knock your  
power!  
(*addressing the flowers*)  
Summer flowers so fair, now tell her true.  
All you flowers before me,  
let her hear of my story,  
How I long for my care to turn to bliss!  
All my trust is in you, now tell her true.  
Say my love has the power:  
in the heart of each flower  
she'll discover a rare and tender kiss,  
yes a sweet and loving kiss.

*Barbier and Carré,  
English translation by Edmund Tracey,  
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from **Lakmé**

**Lakmé**

[3] Come, Mallika! See the vines all in flow'r  
already cast a shadow upon the sacred  
stream  
that makes a gentle music  
now attuned to the song of awakening  
birds!

**Mallika**

Dear mistress!

This hour when I behold you smiling  
is one of gladness,  
for I can read the secrets locked within  
the heart of Lakmé!

**Lakmé and Mallika**

Here is harmony,  
here is loveliness,  
all our senses enthralling,  
and the rivulet,  
gently murmuring,  
all contentment recalling;  
sweet and low hear it, hear it call to us,  
come then and fall before enchantment,  
lulled into surrender,  
while overhead  
birds are on the wing,  
birds make melody, singing gaily;  
here is harmony,  
here is loveliness,  
all our senses enthralling!

**Lakmé**

Yet in my heart a new fear has arisen,  
I know not why.  
If my father has gone where the faithless  
may seize him,  
I tremble, alas, for his life.

**Mallika**

Kindly Ganessa will surely protect him.  
Come to the stream where the swans are  
at play,  
and preen their snowy white wings.  
There will we gather lotus blooms.

**Lakmé**

Yes, near the swans with snowy white wings  
we'll gather lotus blooms in flow'r.

**Lakmé and Mallika**

Here is harmony,  
here is loveliness,  
all our senses enthralling,  
and the rivulet,  
gently murmuring,  
all contentment recalling;  
sweet and low hear it, hear it call to us,  
come then and fall before enchantment,  
lulled into surrender,  
while overhead  
birds are on the wing,  
birds make melody, singing gaily;  
here is harmony,  
here is loveliness,  
all our senses enthralling!

*Gondinet and Gille,  
translated Claude Aveling, © Bourne Music Ltd*

*from Samson and Delilah*

**Delilah**

[4] Tonight, seeking hither my presence  
Samson will come to my side.  
Thou art come, oh sweet hour of  
vengeance!  
At last will our Gods be satisfied.

O love! From thy pow'r let me borrow!  
Pour a poison in his heart!  
Grant that this Samson fall tomorrow,  
a slave, a captive to my art.  
'Tis in vain that he tries to banish  
my image, my name from his heart!  
Burning memories will not vanish!  
Of his soul I am now a part!  
Yes, he is mine; and naught can save  
him!

My brothers' fears he doth deride.  
I, yes, I alone, dare to brave him  
and keep him captive at my side!  
O love! From thy pow'r let me borrow!  
Pour a poison in his heart!  
Grant that this Samson fall tomorrow,  
a slave, a captive to my art!  
Against my love his strength is vain,  
and he, the bravest of the brave,  
who'd save his people, break their chain,  
will be my captive and my slave!

*F. Lemaire, translation Eugène Oudin*

*from Samson and Delilah*

**Delilah**

[5] Fair spring is returning  
fond hearts now are burning  
with hope and love.  
Soft zephyrs are blowing,  
the meadows are glowing,  
blue skies are above.  
Away with all sighing,  
our tears you are drying  
gone is all our grief.  
To earth now you render  
O mystery so tender,  
bud, and flower and leaf.  
In vain I am burning,  
my heart is bereft.  
I await his returning,  
alone I am left.  
Tho' hoping I languish  
My heart is forlorn;  
and lives in its anguish,  
on joys that are gone!  
When night's shadows hover  
I mourn him, my lover;  
I'll sit by the stream,  
I'll cherish my dream!  
Forgetting my sorrow,  
forgetting my pain,  
praying for the morrow

that my burning love  
I'll cherish for his return.  
Forgetting my sorrow  
and my bitter pain  
I will wait for the morrow  
and my love I'll cherish for his return.

*F. Lemaire,  
translation Eugène Oudin*

*from La favorite*

**Leonora**

[6] Can I believe it?  
Oh God... He... Fernando...  
To marry... Leonora! Ah!  
It must be true, but I am full of doubt  
still;  
this sudden joy makes me tremble...  
Fernando... my husband? How can I be  
so shameless?  
I bring a dowry of dishonour to his name...  
No, never! Though he must surely hate  
me I must flee:  
soon he will know what sort of woman  
he adores so blindly.  
Oh my beloved, my poor heart would  
surrender  
all earthly treasures to keep you in my  
care;

But soon the love I give you, so pure and tender,  
shall be poisoned by terror and despair.  
The truth will strike you, and as I watch you alter,  
I shall discover my own pain and dread.  
Then if your righteous anger, but once should falter,  
Oh God in heaven, vent all your fury on my head.

Come you monsters, what can delay you?  
For in heaven my fate is known.

- [7] I submit to heav'nly powers!  
Come, the wedding feast is waiting!  
See the altar deck'd with flowers  
and the tomb below me gaping!  
Veiled in black, I hide my face  
for the shame and degradation;  
I shall never know redemption,  
God will never grant me rest.  
I am evil, I am worthless,  
God will never grant me rest.  
You monsters, you monsters!

*Meilhac and Halévy,  
translation © 1998 David Parry*

*from The Damnation of Faust*

**Marguélite**

- [8] The fire of love inside me  
consumes my wounded heart.

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Peace of mind gone forever  
because we had to part.  
Left alone, sad and tearful,  
I am prey to despair.  
For the torment of his leaving  
I still cannot repair.  
And now my head is spinning  
reason loses its hold,  
my feeble heart surrenders  
and my blood runs cold.  
His fine eloquent bearing,  
his looks so keen and wise,  
he's charming, he's smiling,  
the kindness in his eyes.  
His voice overwhelmed me,  
carried me away on waves of bliss,  
the caress of his hand so inflamed me,  
Oh! Yes, and then his kiss!  
The fire of love inside me  
consumes my wounded heart.  
Peace of mind gone forever  
because we had to part.

I wait here at my window,  
ever hoping to see  
my lover in the shadows  
on his way back to me.  
My heart beats with palpitation  
thinking he might be near;  
I'd tremble with elation  
if I could see him here.

O caresses are burning,  
for his carress I will sigh.  
My one supreme desire is  
in his embrace to die.

*Berlioz, Gondolnière and de Nerval,  
translation Hugh MacDonald*

*from Orpheus and Eurydice*

**Orpheus**

- [9] What is life to me without thee,  
what is left if thou art dead?  
What is life; life without thee?  
What is life without my love?  
What is life if thou art dead?  
Eurydice! Eurydice!  
Ah, hear me! Make answer!  
Thy dear lord am I so faithful,  
thy faithful lord who loves thee,  
who doth love thee!

What is life to me without thee,  
what is left if thou art dead?  
What is life; life without thee?  
What is life without my love?  
What is life if thou art dead?  
Eurydice! Eurydice!  
In my dread anguish none can comfort,  
none can aid me,  
earth is cruel, heav'n is cold!

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What is life to me without thee,  
what is left if thou art dead?  
What is life; life without thee?  
What is life without my love?  
What is life if thou art dead?

*Calzabigi, translation Claude Aveling*

*from Count Ory*

**Count**

- [10] Night lends her aid, amid these shadows  
hidden  
I make my way, disturb not her repose;  
I must obey all this torment unbidden,  
for love enfolds me, yet no slumber  
bestows.  
[11] With love and tender yearning my heart  
beats fast tonight,  
The shadows and the silence all conspire  
to my delight.

**Isolier**

With fear and tender yearning my heart  
beats fast tonight.  
The shadows and the silence against him  
all unite.

**Countess**

With fear and yet with yearning my heart  
beats fast tonight.  
The shadows and the silence redouble all  
my fright.



**Isolier**

Now begin!

**Countess**

Who is there?

**Count**

'Tis I, 'tis sister Clara. Sleep would not bring me comfort, here in my lonely cell where the night fills my soul with terror. Alas! Alas! Oh hear my pray'r, let me stay here, by your side all is well. Oh hear my prayer.

**Isolier**

How can he be so daring?

**Countess**

How can he be so daring!

**Count**

Wond'rous moment of rapture!  
Here by your side terrors depart.

**Isolier**

When he is by your side?

**Count**

Ah! All my peace I recapture.

**Countess**

What does this mean?

**Count**

My fears no more return when this dear hand lies on my heart.

**Countess**

He presses my hand to his heart.

**Isolier**

Beauty so virtuous,  
to him be courteous,  
make him happy,  
'twill cost you naught.

**Count**

Kind heav'n, oh what joy unto me thou hast brought.

With love and tender yearning my heart beats fast tonight.

The shadows and the silence here all conspire to my delight.

**Isolier**

With fear and tender yearning my heart beats fast tonight.

The shadows and the silence here against him all unite.

**Countess**

With fear and yet with yearning my heart beats fast tonight.

The shadows and the silence redouble all my fright.

*E. Scribe and C.G. Delestre-Poirson,  
translation Tom Hammond,  
reproduced by permission of English National  
Opera Benevolent Fund*

*from Mignon*

**Frédéric**

<sup>[12]</sup> Here am I in her boudoir,  
and I feel my heart beat high with hope!  
Ah, I wait for the hour when we shall meet.

Yes, I feel my heart beat high with hope!  
Coquette, here I wait for the hour when we shall meet!

Ah, cruel fair, in the end I'll vanquish,  
she must be made to heed my anguish!  
I would have her love me, and I hope, ah

yes, I hope to enjoy as I woo!  
How sad 'twill be for all those who love her too!

Coquette, here I wait the hour when we shall meet!

For my heart, how dear the hope!  
'Tis now the hour when we shall meet!  
For my heart, how dear the hope!  
Yes, my heart beats high with hope!

*Carré and Barbier, translation Dr Thomas Baker*

*from La Périçhole*

**Périçhole**

<sup>[13]</sup> I've dined so well, I feel divine.  
Oh what an extraordinary wine!  
My head is in a lovely whirl,  
I am a very happy girl.

I might be a little tight,  
But oh! Not a soul must know! Sh!

A little vague my words may seem,  
Yes I am floating in a rosy dream.  
I feel a smile upon my face  
Which I'm unable to erase.

I might be a little tight,  
But oh! Not a soul must know! Sh!

*Meilhac and Halévy,  
translation Maurice Valency,  
printed by permission of Boosey and Hawkes  
Music Publishers Ltd*

*from La Périçhole*

**Périçhole**

<sup>[14]</sup> Oh my dearest, from my heart I swear it,  
I love you more than I can say.  
But this life, I can no longer bear it,  
and I can see no other way.

Oh do not think I reprove you.  
You must know it in your heart  
that it's best. Oh God, how I love you!  
That it's best that we two should part.

Can I always be true and tender  
while my body is starved for bread?  
Oh how hard it is not to surrender  
when love itself cries to be fed!  
It would be in vain to discover  
where I've gone or what I do.

I leave you now, oh my lover,  
 never to return to you.  
 It is hard for me to write this,  
 but I write it from my soul,  
 and I sign myself despite this,  
 ever yours, your Périhole.  
 I shall laugh with other laughter,  
 I shall weep with other pain,  
 but despite what comes hereafter,  
 I shall never love again!

*Meilhac and Halévy, translation Maurice Valency,  
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 Music Publishers Ltd*

*from La Périhole*

**Périhole**

15 You don't have looks, you don't have cash,  
 your conversation is absurd;  
 No one could say you cut a dash,  
 a laughing stock is more the word.  
 As for brains, that's another matter:  
 they're simply missing, I confess;  
 and what it takes to charm and flatter,  
 well, that's missing too... Nonetheless...  
 I adore you; you wretch, I'm ashamed,  
 but it's true.  
 I adore you and can't live without loving  
 you.  
 I didn't mind living so well

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and dining with my rich Monsieur,  
 whereas with you life will be hell:  
 I'll die of hunger now, I'm sure.  
 He was kind, did what he was told;  
 he made me happy, more or less;  
 I had silks and furs, pearls and gold,  
 everything I want... Nonetheless...  
 I adore you; you wretch, I'm ashamed,  
 but it's true.  
 I adore you and can't live without loving  
 you.

*Meilhac and Halévy,  
 translation © 1998 David Parry,*

*from Mignon*

**Mignon**

16 Have you heard of the land where the  
 orange-tree flowers,  
 where the fruits are of gold and the leaves  
 are of jade,  
 where upon balmy airs every bird proudly  
 soars,  
 where the bee's idle hum forever fills each  
 glade?  
 In that land seems to rule, under an azure  
 sky,  
 an everlasting spring like a gift from on  
 high!  
 Alas! Though as my spirit belongs there,

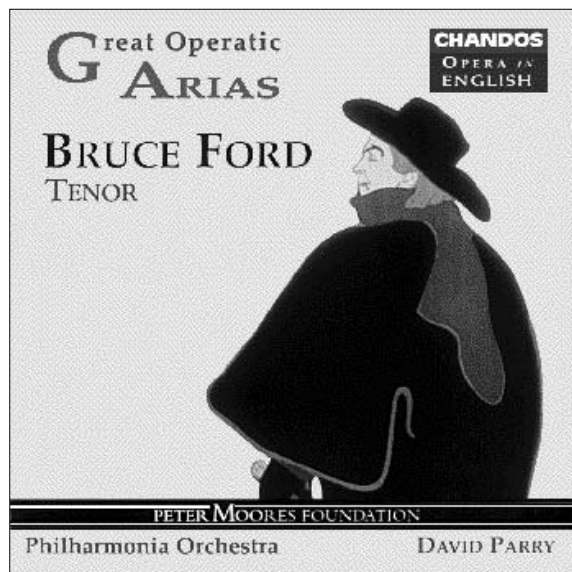
there in that happy land, I am banished  
 by fate!  
 My home! My home! I long to return there,  
 to love, to live and to die.  
 My home! I long to return there, yes my  
 home!  
 Have you heard of the house where they  
 wait for me still,  
 the room panelled with gold, full of  
 statues so white,  
 that, through the evening gloom seem to  
 beckon and call,  
 and the courtyard outside where we

dance all through the night,  
 and the waters of the lake where, glinting  
 in the sun,  
 glide countless little boats, each one just  
 like a swan?  
 Alas! Though my spirit belongs there,  
 there in that distant land I am banished  
 by fate!  
 My home! My home! I long to return  
 there,  
 to love, to live and to die.  
 My home! I long to return there, my  
 home! Yes, my home!

*Carré and Barbier,  
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Great Operatic Arias on Chandos



CHAN 3006

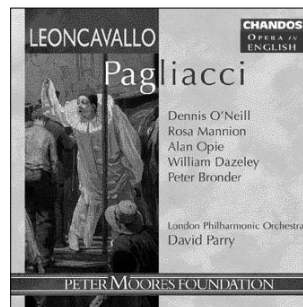
Opera in English on Chandos



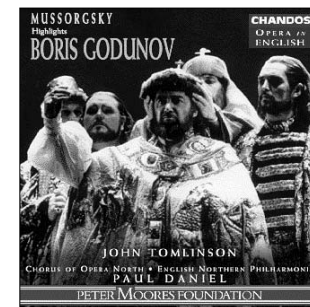
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**Producer** Brian Couzens

**Engineer** Ralph Couzens

**Assistant engineer & editor** Peter Newble

**Recording venue** Blackheath Concert Halls; 10–14 September 1997

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David Parry

GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS - Montague/Philharmonia Orchestra/Parry

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GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS - Montague/Philharmonia Orchestra/Parry

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1 from Saint-Saëns's <i>Samson and Delilah</i><br/>Delilah's and Samson's Duet –<br/>'Softly awakes my heart...'<br/>(Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix)<br/>with Bruce Ford tenor<br/>6:00</p> <p>2 from Gounod's <i>Faust</i><br/>Siebel's Flower Song – 'Summer flowers so fair...'<br/>(Faites lui mes aveux)<br/>2:59</p> <p>3 from Delibes's <i>Lakmé</i>*<br/>Lakmé's and Mallika's duet –<br/>'Come, Mallika! See the vines all in flow'r...'<br/>(Viens, Mallika)<br/>with Mary Plazas soprano<br/>6:45</p> <p>4 from Saint-Saëns's <i>Samson and Delilah</i><br/>Delilah's Recitative and Aria –<br/>'Tonight, seeking hither my presence...'<br/>'O love! From thy pow'r let me borrow...'<br/>(Amour! Viens aider ma faiblesse)<br/>4:46</p> <p>5 Delilah's Aria – 'Fair spring is returning...'<br/>(Printemps qui commence)<br/>6:06</p> <p>6 - 7 from Donizetti's <i>La favorite</i>*<br/>Leonora's Recitative, Aria and Cabaletta –<br/>'O my beloved...'<br/>(O mon Fernand)<br/>8:54</p> <p>8 from Berlioz's <i>The Damnation of Faust</i>*<br/>Marguërite's Romance –<br/>'The fire of love inside me...'<br/>(D'amour l'ardente flamme)<br/>9:12</p> | <p>9 from Gluck's <i>Orpheus and Eurydice</i><br/>Orpheus's Aria –<br/>'What is life to me without thee...'<br/>(Che farò senza Euridice?)<br/>4:09</p> <p>10 - 11 from Rossini's <i>Count Ory</i>*<br/>Trio: Count, Isolier and Countess –<br/>'Night lends her aid...'<br/>(A la faveur)<br/>with Mary Plazas soprano · Bruce Ford tenor<br/>9:23</p> <p>12 from Thomas's <i>Mignon</i><br/>Frédéric's Rondo-Gavotte –<br/>'Here am I in her boudoir...'<br/>(Me voici dans son boudoir)<br/>2:23</p> <p>13 from Offenbach's <i>La Périchole</i><br/>Périchole's Griserie – 'I've dined so well, I feel divine...'<br/>1:56</p> <p>14 Périchole's Letter Song – 'Oh my dearest, from my heart<br/>I swear it...'<br/>3:01</p> <p>15 Périchole's Aria – 'You don't have looks, you<br/>don't have cash...'<br/>(Couplet des aveux)<br/>2:54</p> <p>16 from Thomas's <i>Mignon</i><br/>Mignon's Romance – 'Have you heard of the land...'<br/>(Connais-tu le pays?)<br/>6:19</p> |
|--|--|

TT 75:30

Diana Montague mezzo-soprano  
Philharmonia Orchestra  
David Parry

(DDD)

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