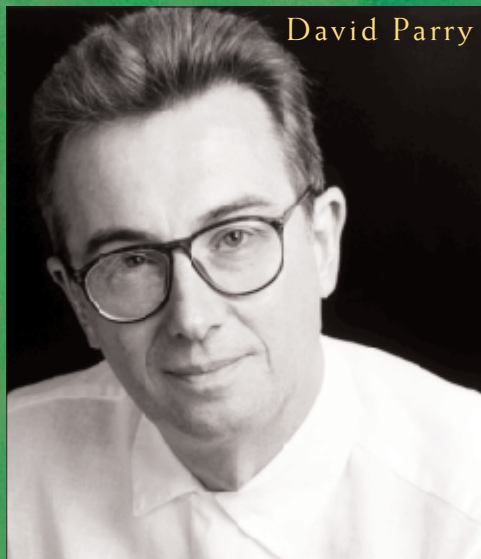
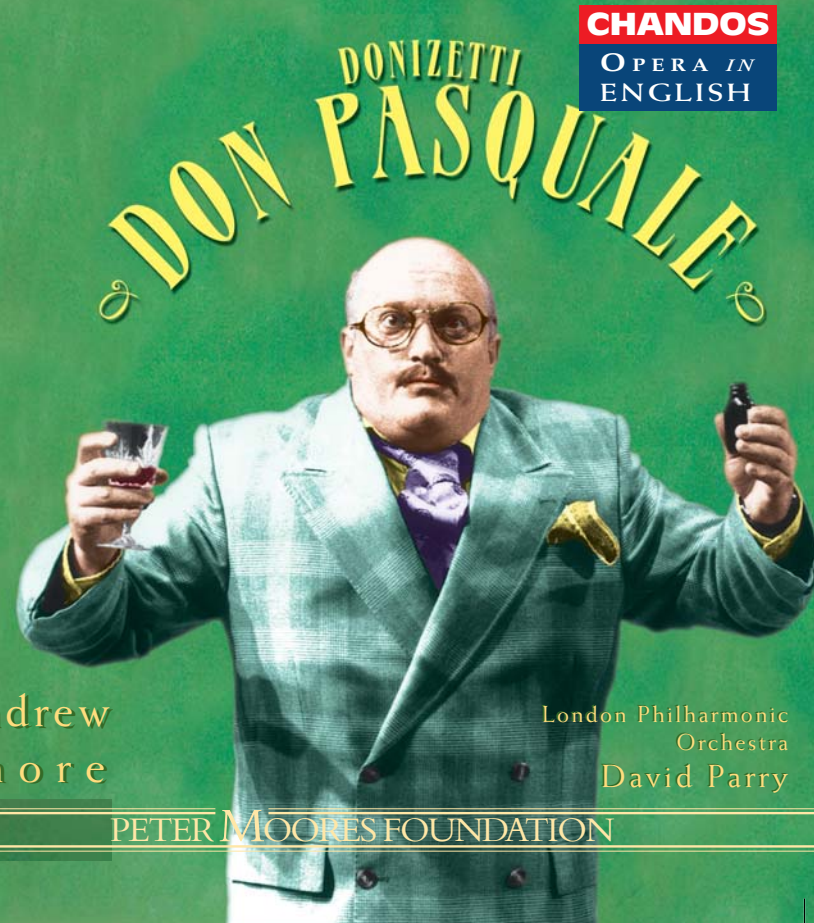


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David Parry



CHANDOS
OPERA *IN*
ENGLISH

Andrew
Shore

London Philharmonic
Orchestra
David Parry

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



AKG

Gaetano Donizetti

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

Don Pasquale

Opera buffa in three acts, text by Giovanni Ruffini and the composer, after A. Anelli

English translation by David Parry

Don Pasquale, an elderly bachelorAndrew Shore *baritone*
Dr Malatesta, friend of Don Pasquale,
and good friend of ErnestoJason Howard *baritone*
Ernesto, Don Pasquale's nephewBarry Banks *tenor*
Norina, a young widow.....Lynne Dawson *soprano*
A NotaryClive Bayley *bass*

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir
London Philharmonic Orchestra
Nicholas Kok • Brad Cohen assistant conductors
David Parry conductor

COMPACT DISC ONE

TT 54:49

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|---|---|
| <p>[1] Overture</p> <p>Act I</p> <p>No. 1: Introduction</p> <p>[2] 'Nine already'
<i>Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>[3] 'May I join you'
<i>Malatesta, Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>[4] 'Down from among the angelic host'
<i>Malatesta, Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>[5] 'She is my sister!'
<i>Malatesta, Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>[6] 'Ah! Quite unexpectedly passions inflame me'
<i>Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>No. 2: Recitative and Duet</p> <p>[7] 'I'm a new man'
<i>Don Pasquale, Ernesto</i></p> <p>[8] 'Getting married?'
<i>Ernesto, Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>[9] 'Never again shall I find you'
<i>Ernesto, Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>[10] 'There's one thing I must say briefly'
<i>Ernesto, Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>[11] '...is his own sister'
<i>Don Pasquale, Ernesto</i></p> | <p>6:24 [p. 54]</p> <p>1:54 [p.54]</p> <p>1:14 [p. 54]</p> <p>3:12 [p. 54]</p> <p>1:16 [p. 55]</p> <p>2:09 [p. 56]</p> <p>2:43 [p. 56]</p> <p>1:47 [p. 57]</p> <p>2:40 [p.58]</p> <p>1:05 [p. 58]</p> <p>0:16 [p. 58]</p> |
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| <p>[12] 'Ah! The fates have conspired to thwart me'
<i>Ernesto, Don Pasquale</i></p> <p>No. 3: Cavatina</p> <p>[13] 'With just one glance she pierced him'
<i>Norina</i></p> <p>[14] 'I too have seen how magical'
<i>Norina</i></p> <p>No. 4: Recitative and Duet. Finale I</p> <p>[15] 'Still no sign of the doctor!'
<i>Norina, Malatesta</i></p> <p>[16] 'I'll find a way, on one condition'
<i>Norina, Malatesta</i></p> <p>[17] 'Am I to be haughty?'
<i>Norina, Malatesta</i></p> <p>[18] 'Onwards, upwards'
<i>Norina, Malatesta</i></p> <p>Act II</p> <p>No. 5: Prelude and Aria</p> <p>[19] 'Poor, lost Ernesto!'
<i>Ernesto</i></p> <p>[20] 'I shall go, no more returning'
<i>Ernesto</i></p> <p>[21] 'And if you ever encounter'
<i>Ernesto</i></p> | <p>2:45 [p. 59]</p> <p>2:14 [p. 59]</p> <p>4:03 [p. 59]</p> <p>2:39 [p. 60]</p> <p>3:09 [p. 61]</p> <p>1:50 [p. 61]</p> <p>3:30 [p. 62]</p> <p>4:04 [p. 63]</p> <p>2:24 [p. 63]</p> <p>3:21 [p. 63]</p> |
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COMPACT DISC TWO

TT 72:13

No. 6: Scene and Trio

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| [1] | ‘After you have shown in Doctor Malatesta’
<i>Don Pasquale</i> | 1:40 [p. 63] |
| [2] | ‘Don’t be frightened, just believe me’
<i>Malatesta, Norina, Don Pasquale</i> | 4:22 [p. 64] |

No. 7: Scene and Quartet. Finale II

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------|
| [3] | ‘There’s no need to be frightened’
<i>Malatesta, Norina, Don Pasquale</i> | 2:52 [p. 65] |
| [4] | ‘Heaven preserve me!’
<i>Don Pasquale, Malatesta, Norina</i> | 1:42 [p. 66] |
| [5] | ‘Agreement between the... etcetera’
<i>Malatesta, Notary, Don Pasquale</i> | 2:57 [p. 67] |
| [6] | ‘You idiots, let me through here’
<i>Ernesto, Norina, Malatesta, Don Pasquale</i> | 2:05 [p. 69] |
| [7] | ‘So let the marriage contract be finalized at once’
<i>Malatesta, Notary, Norina, Don Pasquale, Ernesto</i> | 1:32 [p. 70] |
| [8] | ‘A man of such decrepitude’
<i>Norina, Don Pasquale, Malatesta, Ernesto</i> | 1:31 [p. 71] |
| [9] | ‘I’ve used persuasion first’
<i>Norina, Malatesta, Don Pasquale, Ernesto</i> | 3:34 [p. 71] |
| [10] | ‘I wish to see the servants’
<i>Norina, Don Pasquale, Malatesta, Ernesto</i> | 2:46 [p. 72] |
| [11] | ‘I’ve been cheated and disparaged’
<i>Don Pasquale, Ernesto, Norina, Malatesta</i> | 2:28 [p. 74] |

Act III

No. 8: Introductory Chorus

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|------|---|--------------|
| [12] | ‘Bring the diamonds, quickly!’
<i>Servants, Don Pasquale</i> | 1:15 [p. 76] |
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No. 9: Recitative and Duet

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|------|---|--------------|
| [13] | ‘Let’s see now: to the dress shop’
<i>Don Pasquale</i> | 1:52 [p. 76] |
| [14] | ‘Well good evening! You’re in a hurry’
<i>Don Pasquale, Norina</i> | 2:56 [p. 77] |
| [15] | ‘It is over, Don Pasquale’
<i>Don Pasquale, Norina</i> | 3:30 [p. 77] |
| [16] | ‘My husband, my sweetest’
<i>Norina, Don Pasquale</i> | 2:43 [p. 78] |

No. 10: Recitative

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|------|--|--------------|
| [17] | ‘Another bill for bonnets or for ribbons’
<i>Don Pasquale</i> | 1:27 [p. 78] |
| [18] | ‘Everyone endlessly coming and going!’
<i>Servants</i> | 3:50 [p. 79] |

No. 11: Recitative and Duet

- | | | |
|------|---|--------------|
| [19] | ‘We’re agreed then’
<i>Malatesta, Ernesto</i> | 1:05 [p. 79] |
| [20] | ‘Don Pasquale...’
<i>Malatesta, Don Pasquale</i> | 3:32 [p. 80] |

- [21] 'No more words, not even whispers' 3:59 [p. 81]
Don Pasquale, Malatesta
- [22] 'What a disaster, my little schemer' 2:35 [p. 82]
Don Pasquale, Malatesta

No. 12: Serenade and Nocturne

- [23] 'The night is calm' 4:06 [p. 84]
Ernesto, Chorus
- [24] 'Come, say the words I long for' 3:29 [p. 84]
Norina, Ernesto

No. 13: Scene and Rondo. Finale III

- [25] 'Here they are! Ready to pounce?' 3:16 [p. 85]
Don Pasquale, Malatesta, Norina
- [26] 'Here I am' 1:21 [p. 87]
Ernesto, Malatesta, Norina, Don Pasquale
- [27] 'Let's forget everything' 3:41 [p. 87]
Don Pasquale, Malatesta, Norina, Ernesto, Servants

Gaetano Donizetti: Don Pasquale

Among my first operatic experiences, all of fifty years ago, were performances (I went twice) of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* at London's Cambridge Theatre. The great Mariano Stabile was Doctor Malatesta, the delightful Alda Noni was Norina, and a hitherto unknown British bass, Martin Lawrence, took the title part. Lawrence did his best in Italian, but even my youthful self felt Lawrence would be happier singing his role in English, and – much as I enjoyed the work (who could do otherwise?) – I would have preferred to be hearing the piece in the vernacular: that way, as a newcomer to opera, I would have enjoyed the detail of the comedy rather than being amused in a more generalized way. Later, the work was given by Sadler's Wells Opera and the minutiae of the plot at last became clear. But *Pasquale* was so popular at the Cambridge that Columbia issued a 78rpm disc of the Act III Malatesta/Pasquale duet, which in the theatre always had to be repeated – not surprising as it is one of the high points, not only of this score but also of all *opera buffa*, baritone and bass outdoing each other in speed and nimble articulation in the final

passage of patter singing. Even today I await in eager anticipation this inspired piece of duetting.

But then *Pasquale* is a wonderful work in absolute terms, a perfect marriage of comedy and sentiment from a musical master of both genres. In it Bergamo's most noted son delights the ear as one inspired number follows another. Solos, duets and ensembles carry forward the tale with irresistible energy and invention, fun and depth of feeling imperceptibly merged. The story of the gulling of old Pasquale to teach him a lesson certainly has its crueller side; indeed just as 'Sofronia', Norina in disguise, who has 'married' the old buffer, is at her most shrewish, she realizes the heartless teasing has gone too far, and all through Donizetti makes Pasquale, for all his foolish desire to be an elderly husband of a young woman, a fundamentally sympathetic character; so that while we laugh at him we also sympathise with his folly. In spite of their heartlessness we cannot but derive pleasure from the machinations of Malatesta and Norina because they are themselves such delightful characters. Then, in some of the

most plangent music Donizetti ever wrote for his tenors, he makes Ernesto, apparently abandoned by his beloved Norina, pour out his heart in two soulful arias.

How surprising then that this astonishing opera should be the work of a composer already exhausted and in a mood of melancholy. *Pasquale*, written in 1843, is among the last of the sixty-odd operas Donizetti composed. Two years after its completion he was paralysed; by 1848 he was dead. Yet, even in his already morbid state, he was able to conjure up this masterpiece, a town-cousin to the equally inspired country comedy of *L'elisir d'amore* (The Elixir of Love) of 1832. Even more remarkable is the fact that he partially fashioned his own libretto for the opera in collaboration with Giovanni Ruffini. It is derived from a forgotten work, called *Ser Marcantonio*, produced in Milan in 1810 for which Angelo Anelli wrote the libretto. Donizetti sensibly and drastically reduced and simplified the complex story he inherited from Anelli, allowing him, as the distinguished critic Ernest Newman once put it, to give the composer 'more opportunity to expand the simple musical forms and to extract the last ounce of humorous expression out of each situation'.

The task of composition is said to have

taken Donizetti not more than eleven days, but it is probably nearer the mark to say that it was written over a period of three months from October 1842. Even so, the composer later wrote that 'the opera cost the immense fatigue of eleven days', probably referring to the achievement of a ground-plan of composition. He was undoubtedly helped by the fact that he was adapting a deal of music that he had written for other contexts, but he had the wit and guile to incorporate them seamlessly into the new context, something of course Handel had also been adept at.

Donizetti was born, in 1797, in humble circumstances, his grandfather and father labourers in the textile industry. The young Gaetano showed musical talent and seemed destined to be a musician in the service of the Church, but the youth's mind was set on more secular matters, namely a career in the theatre. His teachers were Giovanni Simone Mayr, himself a prolific composer of opera, and Mattei with whom he worked at Bologna. Donizetti's first opera was written as early as 1818 when he was twenty-one. From then he worked swiftly and prolifically, composing between two and five operas a year, though he did not achieve real fame until 1830 with *Anna Bolena*.

Pasquale has been popular ever since its

premiere in Paris on 4 January 1843 (the Italian premiere followed, at La Scala, on 17 April). And what a cast that first performance enjoyed: Giulia Grisi as Norina, Matteo Mario as Ernesto, Antonio Tamburini as Malatesta and Luigi Lablache as Pasquale, all at the height of their fame. Mario and Grisi, man and wife, he handsome, she charming. Tamburini, by all reports, was as accomplished an actor as he was a singer. As for Lablache, he was probably the most noted *basso* of his century, one whom the British critic Chorley described as 'taking him all for all, the most remarkable man I have ever seen in opera'. In this role of Pasquale, the same writer referred to him as 'the dear silly hero of the farce-opera' and one who always avoided grossness or coarse imitation, reminding us that the role should never be clownish.

Donizetti wanted the work performed in contemporary costume, but the cast was against this; so was the supposed co-librettist Ruffini, who was convinced the action was far more suited to 'wigs and velvet breeches'. Donizetti, as was the case ten years later with Verdi and *La traviata*, was forced to give way. Donizetti, typically modest, later wrote to the publisher Ricordi: 'Don't imagine that the success was due to my music alone; they [the singers] all vied with each other in doing their

best for it.' Whatever the cause, the work was an immediate success in Italy, and very soon its popularity spread to all the opera houses of the world – Vienna in May 1843, for which the composer added that soon-to-be-famous 'Cheti, cheti immantinente' (No more words, not even whispers) duet, London the same month with the cast of the premiere, and New York in May 1846. In this century there have been a famous Metropolitan revival in 1904 featuring Caruso as Ernesto, 1904 performances at La Scala with Sobinov as Ernesto and Giuseppe De Luca as Malatesta, a 1905 revival at Covent Garden with Maurel (the first Falstaff) as Malatesta, and a notable Glyndebourne staging in 1938 with Stabile as Malatesta and Dino Borgioli as Ernesto. Since the war, besides the Cambridge Theatre revival, the work has been in the repertory everywhere.

In this late work Donizetti has added to his melodic and rhythmic gifts a new element of more advanced harmony in terms of subtle modulation; he had also learnt to extend his numbers and vary them with a new-minted inspiration that keeps the ear continually alert, nowhere more so at the point in the Pasquale/Norina duet in Act III when Norina suddenly realizes that she has gone too far with her new 'groom'. Having slapped him, she

repents of her action singing in the relative major to Pasquale's pathetic comments in A minor ('E' duretta la lezione' (I chastise him far from gladly)). This relieves the comedy of the slightly heartless mood created by Norina's antics in turning Pasquale's household upside down after earlier pretending that Sofronia was timid girl just out a convent. Indeed as one Donizetti scholar put it : it is 'Norina's capacity for tenderness that keeps her sense of humour within the bounds of good taste'.

Pasquale himself is a fairly typical *buffo* character, whose music is for the most part of the *parlando*-patter vein. Malatesta is more mercurial, changing character as the plot demands. Nowhere is his music more adaptable than in his Act I duet with Norina when he rehearses her for her part in fooling Pasquale, the writing following every nuance of the pair's thinking. Norina herself announces herself in a vivid two-part aria, which unerringly delineates her personality; so does Ernesto's 'Sogno soave e casto' (Never again shall I find you), where his sad dream of happiness seems to elude him as Pasquale prepares to marry, depriving him apparently of his inheritance. Then in his recitative, aria and cabaletta at the start of Act II ('Povero Ernesto!... Cercherò lontana terra... E se fia'

(Poor, lost Ernesto... I shall go, no more returning... And if you ever...)), he makes up his mind to seek fortune elsewhere. It is a splendidly varied scene for a lyric tenor calling for tonal nuance and vocal dexterity (as Tito Schipa provided in the pioneering 1930s recording of the opera).

Finally in Act III Ernesto finds happiness and sings the most delicate of Serenades 'Com'è gentil' (The night is calm), to the accompaniment of chords on a guitar and with an unseen chorus adding atmosphere to the tenor's seductive singing. This is followed by a nocturne-duet in intertwining thirds and sixths with his beloved Norina, 'Tornami a dir' (Come, say the words I long for), the loving pair duetting in the bosky shade of Pasquale's garden. These last numbers may be more conventional in compositional terms, but in the context of the opera as a whole, they form the perfect contrast to the comic antics of the patter duet, already referred to, 'Cheti, cheti, immanentente' (No more words, not even whispers) for Malatesta and Pasquale.

Donizetti avoids convention in not writing large-scale finales. Act I ends with the aforementioned duet for Norina and Malatesta, Act II closes with a well-varied quartet for the principals, Act III with a happy-ending sextet. Another novelty in this kind of

work concerns the recitative: nowhere is a keyboard used, the composer preferring fluctuating string chords. That makes for a much more fluent melding of dialogue with numbers. Indeed the work has the feeling of being written as a single flight of inspiration and imagination.

What else? The overture lets us hear in advance several of the delightful melodies distributed throughout the opera. It forms a nicely anticipatory feeling for the events to come. The chorus is used fastidiously, as observant servants, most tellingly in Act III first in a chorus where they attempt to cope with the mass of new goods that Norina has introduced into Pasquale's dwelling, then in a charming piece in which they comment on the strange goings-on in the house. Donizetti never writes a dull number as these choruses prove.

Don Pasquale is the summation of a genre that had lasted for more than a hundred years. Verdi's *Falstaff*, written fifty years later, obviously owes a debt to Donizetti but by that time, opera composition had moved on. Now we can see and hear that *Pasquale* is an end not a beginning, but a work above all to be enjoyed for its abundance of invention and character.

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Synopsis

Act I

Scene 1

Don Pasquale, a rich but ageing bachelor, has decided to marry. Pasquale had proposed to make his nephew Ernesto his heir, if he would only make a suitable marriage. However, Ernesto refuses as he is in love with the impoverished Norina.

Pasquale will beget his own son and heir, and he has asked his friend Dr Malatesta to supply a suitable bride. Malatesta arrives to announce his choice, an innocent and convent-bred young girl, beautiful as an angel, indeed his own sister. Pasquale demands an immediate meeting, and left alone expresses an irrepressible enthusiasm to father a large family.

Ernesto finds his uncle's ambition at first risible, then alarming for his own prospects, and is shocked to hear that Malatesta has betrayed him in suggesting his own sister as Pasquale's bride.

Scene 2

In another part of the city Norina is browsing through a romantic book, but she concludes that she hardly needs guidance in such matters. She learns by letter that Ernesto has been deprived of his inheritance and plans to leave

Rome. Malatesta arrives, reassuring Norina, and explains his plan for her to impersonate his own sister in a mock marriage with Pasquale. Pasquale knows that Malatesta's sister lives in a convent, but has never met her. Malatesta rehearses Norina in her new role.

Act II

Scene 1

Ernesto resolves to seek solace in a distant land. He swears that he would forgive Norina, were she to find happiness with a new lover.

Scene 2

Malatesta presents the disguised Norina to Pasquale as his sister Sofronia. She feigns fear at meeting a man, and meekly answers Pasquale's questions about her sheltered life. When Malatesta insists on her revealing her face, Pasquale is overwhelmed by her beauty.

The 'notary' is brought in at Malatesta's bidding, and they draw up a marriage contract. A second witness is needed, at which point the distraught Ernesto bursts in and is pressed into service. He recognizes Pasquale's bride as Norina, but at Malatesta's insistence signs the contract.

Now that the ceremony is accomplished, 'Sofronia' quickly changes her character. She

demands of her new husband that Ernesto be retained in the house; she will require new and better-paid servants; the house needs redecorating. Pasquale feels he has been betrayed, and is filled with confusion.

Act III

Scene 1

The newly hired servants and workmen are turning the house inside out. Pasquale is appalled at the bills. When 'Sofronia' enters dressed up to go out for the evening, he asks her where she is going. 'To the theatre' she replies. When he upbraids her, she slaps his face. Pasquale's world crumbles.

As she leaves she drops a letter of assignation from an anonymous lover seeking a meeting that evening in the garden. Pasquale summons help from his friend Malatesta. The servants comment on the strange goings-on in the house.

Malatesta arrives and advises Pasquale on an appropriately discreet course of action. Together they will steal into the garden, catch the lovers and exact revenge.

Scene 2

Ernesto serenades his Norina and the lovers are reunited. Pasquale and Malatesta surprise them. Ernesto escapes.

Pasquale decides to rid himself of his new wife, but she refuses to be so easily dismissed. Malatesta offers a solution, provided he has a free hand, to which Pasquale readily agrees. He summons Ernesto from the house, and tells him that his uncle has consented to him marrying Norina, and will give him a large allowance. Pasquale resignedly asks Ernesto to send for his bride. But she is already present. Pasquale awakens to the deception played upon him, and forgives the young couple. Marriage is a good thing, but not for an old man.

Andrew Shore is now acknowledged as Britain's premier *buffo* baritone. Since making his English National Opera debut in 1988 roles there have included Falstaff, Dieg (in Philip Glass's *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*), Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Monsieur Calcul (*La belle Vivette*), Don Pasquale and Gianni Schicchi. He has worked for all the major British opera companies, including the Royal Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Kent Opera and Welsh National Opera, as well as appearing abroad with New Israeli Opera, San Diego Opera, the Opéra comique, Paris, and in Lyon, Nantes, Montpellier, Amsterdam,

Vancouver and Hamburg. His recordings include *The Barber of Seville*, *Tosca* and *La bohème* (for Chandos / Peter Moores Foundation), and *The Makropulos Affair*.

Jason Howard is a graduate of Trinity College of Music and the Royal College of Music Opera School. An outstanding performer, his appearances with Scottish Opera and Opera North have generated unanimous critical acclaim. He has sung the title roles in *Don Giovanni* and *Le nozze di Figaro* (Scottish Opera), the title role in *Billy Budd* (Opera North), Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*) for English National Opera and the title role in *Eugene Onegin* for Welsh National Opera. He has also appeared in Seattle, Geneva, Nantes, and with Stuttgart Opera and the Opéra de la Bastille. Jason Howard's concert appearances include Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Elgar's *The Kingdom* and concert performances of Berlioz's *Les troyens*. His recordings include *The Student Prince*, *Song of Norway* and *A Little Night Music*.

A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music where he was a Peter Moores scholar, **Barry Banks** has established himself as one of the finest tenors of his generation. Appearances include Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) at the

Salzburg Festival, La Monnaie and for Leipzig Opera, Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) and Argirio (*Tancredi*) for Frankfurt Opera, Belmote (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) for Opera Zuid, Nemorino (*The Elixir of Love*) for English National Opera, Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) and the title role in *Le comte Ory* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, the title role in *Candide* for Chicago Lyric Opera and Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) for Welsh National Opera.

Considered to be one of Britain's most versatile and exciting sopranos, **Lynne Dawson** enjoys a busy career which encompasses opera, concerts, recitals and recordings at the highest international level. Her appearances have included roles in *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *The Fairy Queen*, Graun's *Cleopatra e Cesare*, *Orlando*, Gluck's *Orfeo*, and *Tancredi*. She has enjoyed many successful concert collaborations throughout her career, with some of the world's leading conductors including Mehta, Barenboim, Giulini, Ashkenazy, Gardiner, Mackerras, Andrew Davis, Harnoncourt and Marriner.

Lynne Dawson has made over sixty recordings which include Handel's *Jephtha* and *Saul*, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *Dido and Aeneas*, Mozart's Requiem,

Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Orff's *Carmina burana*.

Clive Bayley sang the role of Claggart (*Billy Budd*) whilst still a student at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he was a Peter Moores Scholar. He is already well established with the major opera companies throughout this country and he regularly sings in concert. He made his debut with the Royal Opera in 1991 in the premiere of Birtwistle's *Gawain*, and has also had notable successes with Opera North (Verdi's *Jérusalem*), English National Opera (*Billy Budd*, *Wozzeck* and *Dr Faust*) and Opera Factory (*Don Giovanni*). Recordings include Michael Berkeley's *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, Landi's *Il Sant'Alessio*, *Candide*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and Varlaam (*Boris Godunov* for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Geoffrey Mitchell's singing career encompassed a remarkably wide repertoire from early to contemporary music. This resulted in conducting invitations from the BBC and subsequently to a wider involvement with his own singers and this led to the establishment of the **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Early recordings resulted in the choir's long-term involvement with Opera Rara for whom they

have recorded fifteen operas, and it is currently enjoying a growing reputation with further work from the BBC and international recording companies.

The **London Philharmonic Orchestra** was formed in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham. Over the years it has attracted an unmatched series of Principal Conductors, including Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti and Klaus Tennstedt. Its current regular conductors include Music Director Franz Welser-Möst, and President Bernard Haitink.

Since 1964, it has been resident symphony orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera and, in 1992, the orchestra became resident symphony orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall. It also tours extensively, being the first British orchestra to visit the USSR and China, and its recordings have won many major awards.

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*.

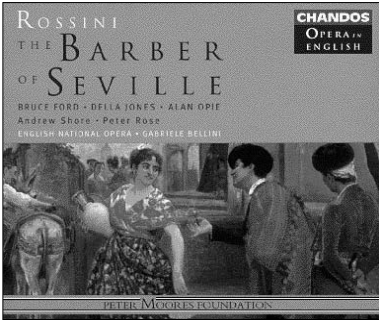
Outside Europe David Parry has appeared at the Hong Kong International Festival, with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra at Mexico City, with a tour of *Carmen* in Japan and, in 1996, conducting a new production of

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*, two recordings of operatic arias (with Bruce Ford and Diana Montague), *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*.

Opera in English on Chandos



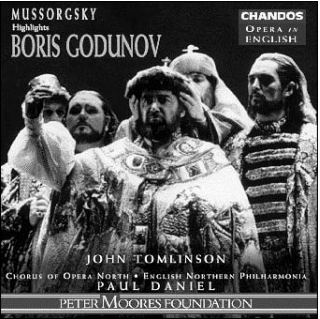
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PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

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 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



Christina Burton/PMF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL

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.

Gaetano Donizetti: Don Pasquale

Zu meinen ersten Opernerlebnissen, die nun inzwischen 50 Jahre zurückliegen, gehören zwei Vorstellungen von Donizettis *Don Pasquale* im Londoner Cambridge Theatre. Der großartige Mariano Stabile war Dr. Malatesta, die entzückende Alda Noni spielte Norina, und ein bis dahin unbekannter britischer Baß namens Martin Lawrence sang die Titelrolle. Lawrence gab sich mit dem Italienischen große Mühe, aber sogar ich, trotz meiner jungen Jahre, hatte den Eindruck, daß ihm die Partie auf englisch noch besser gelegen hätte. Das Werk hat mir großen Spaß gemacht – wem wäre es wohl anders ergangen? – aber trotzdem hätte ich es vorgezogen, die Oper in meiner eigenen Sprache zu hören. Gerade ich als Opernneuling hätte so ihren Witz mehr im Detail und nicht nur eher pauschal genießen können. Später wurde das Werk von der Sadler's Wells Opera aufgeführt, und diesmal gewannen die Einzelheiten der Handlung an Deutlichkeit. *Don Pasquale* fand aber am Cambridge Theatre so großen Anklang, daß Columbia eine 78er Schallplatte von dem Duett Malatesta/Pasquale im 3. Akt herausbrachte. Im Theater mußte diese

Nummer immer wiederholt werden, was auch nicht weiter verwundert, denn es handelt sich dabei um einen der Glanzpunkte nicht nur dieses Stückes sondern der *opera buffa* überhaupt: Baß und Bariton suchen sich gegenseitig in der *parlando*-Schlußpassage durch Schnelligkeit und flinke Artikulation zu überbieten. Auch heute noch eifre ich diesem so inspirierten Exemplar der Duettliteratur jedesmal erwartungsvoll entgegen.

Don Pasquale ist allerdings in jeder Hinsicht ein herrliches Stück, eine perfekte Verknüpfung von Komödie und Gefühl durch einen Meister beider Genres. Bergamos berühmtester Sohn bezaubert den Zuhörer, und eine inspirierte Szene jagt die andere. Mit unwiderstehlichem Elan und Einfallsreichtum sowie einer ausgesprochen subtilen Mischung von Spaß und Tiefgang wird die Handlung durch Soli, Duette und Ensembles vorangetrieben. Die Geschichte, in der es darum geht, den alten Pasquale zu überlisten, um ihm eine Lektion zu erteilen, hat sicherlich auch ihre grausamen Seiten, und gerade in einem ihrer giftigsten Momente wird "Sofronia", d.h. der verkleideten Norina, die

den Alten "geheiratet" hat, plötzlich klar, daß die herzlose Komödie zu weit gegangen ist. Donizetti sorgt außerdem dafür, daß Pasquale, so töricht sein Plan, als alter Mann eine junge Frau zu nehmen, auch sein mag, stets ein grundsätzlich sympathischer Charakter bleibt. Während wir über ihn lachen, bemitleiden wir seine Torheit. Und trotz der Herzlosigkeit von Malatesta und Norina können wir nicht umhin, ihre Machenschaften zu genießen, da ihre Persönlichkeiten so einnehmend gezeichnet sind. Dem scheinbar von seiner geliebten Norina verlassenem Ernesto erlaubt es Donizetti in zwei gefühlvollen Arien sein ganzes Herz auszuschütten, und zwar mit Hilfe der klagendsten Musik, die der Komponist je für Tenor geschrieben hat.

Um so überraschender ist es also, daß gerade diese bemerkenswerte Oper aus der Feder eines Komponisten stammt, der bereits ausgelaugt und von Melancholie durchdrungen war. *Don Pasquale* entstand im Jahre 1843 und gehört zu den letzten von Donizettis etwa 60 Opern. Zwei Jahre nach ihrer Vollendung war der Komponist gelähmt, und er starb 1848. Obwohl er bereits schwerkrank war, gelang es ihm dennoch, ein solches Meisterwerk entstehen zu lassen, ein städtisches Pendant zu der gleichermaßen inspirierten ländlichen Komödie *L'elisir d'amore* (Der Liebestrank) aus

dem Jahre 1832. Noch erstaunlicher ist die Tatsache, daß er das Textbuch zum Teil, in Zusammenarbeit mit Giovanni Ruffini, selbst schrieb. Als Quelle für die Oper diente ein in Vergessenheit geratenes Stück namens *Ser Marcantonio*, das 1810 in Mailand inszeniert wurde und dessen Textbuch von Angelo Anelli stammt. Donizetti reduzierte und vereinfachte vernünftigerweise die komplizierte Handlung, die ihm Anelli hinterlassen hatte, drastisch, und hatte dadurch, so der prominente Kritiker Ernest Newman, "mehr Möglichkeiten, die einfachen musikalischen Formen auszudehnen und aus jeder Situation auch noch das letzte Tröpfchen Humor herauszupressen".

Es wird behauptet, daß Donizetti nicht mehr als elf Tage brauchte, um das Stück zu komponieren; wahrscheinlicher ist es aber, daß die Arbeit eine Zeitspanne von drei Monaten, beginnend im Oktober 1842, in Anspruch nahm. Trotzdem schrieb der Komponist später: "Die Oper hat mich eine kolossale Bemühung von elf Tagen gekostet", eine Bemerkung, die sich vermutlich auf die Fertigstellung eines Grundrisses für das Werk bezog. Sicherlich war ihm auch dadurch sehr geholfen, daß er auf für andere Zwecke geschriebenes Material zurückgreifen konnte, welches er mit Verstand und Raffinesse nahtlos in den neuen Kontext

einzuflchten verstand – eine Fähigkeit, die übrigens Händel ebenso meisterhaft beherrschte.

Donizetti wurde 1797 in einfachen Verhältnissen geboren, und sowohl sein Großvater als auch sein Vater waren Textilarbeiter. Schon der junge Gaetano zeigte musikalische Begabung und schien für die Kirchenmusik prädestiniert zu sein. Der Junge hatte aber weltlichere Ideen im Kopf und träumte von einer Karriere am Theater. Seine Lehrer waren Giovanni Simone Mayr, der selbst viele Opern schrieb, und Mattei, bei dem er in Bologna studierte. Seine erste Oper schrieb Donizetti bereits 1818, als er 21 Jahre alt war. Von diesem Zeitpunkt an arbeitete er mit Schnelligkeit und Fleiß und schuf so zwischen zwei und fünf Opern pro Jahr. Doch erst im Jahre 1830 erlangte er mit *Anna Bolena* wirklichen Ruhm.

Seit der Premiere am 4. Januar 1843 in Paris (die italienische Premiere folgte am 17. April an der Mailänder Scala) hat sich *Don Pasquale* immer großer Beliebtheit erfreut. Und was für eine Besetzung damals zu hören war: Giulia Grisi als Norina, Matteo Mario als Ernesto, Antonio Tamburini als Malatesta und Luigi Lablache als Pasquale – alle auf dem Gipfel ihrer Berühmtheit. Mario und Grisi waren Mann und Frau, er gutaussehend, sie

charmant. Tamburini soll schauspielerisch genauso begabt gewesen sein wie sängerisch. Und Lablache war womöglich der bemerkenswerteste Baß seines Jahrhunderts. Laut dem britischen Kritiker Chorley war er „alles in allem der erstaunlichste Mann, den ich je in der Oper erlebt habe“. In der Rolle des Pasquale beschrieb ihn Chorley als „den liebenswerten, törichten Helden des Lustspiels“, der Grobheit und plumpe Nachahmung immer vermied, und so daran erinnerte, daß die Rolle nie zum Clown verkommen sollte.

Donizetti wollte das Stück in modernem Kostüm spielen lassen, die Sänger waren aber dagegen und ebenso der Mitverfasser des Textbuches Ruffini, der davon überzeugt war, daß die Handlung viel geeigneter für „Perücken und samtene Kniehosen“ wäre. Dem Komponisten blieb, wie auch zehn Jahre später Verdi anlässlich seiner *La traviata*, nichts anderes übrig als nachzugeben. Mit typischer Bescheidenheit schrieb Donizetti später an den Verleger Ricordi: „Bitte denken Sie nicht, daß der Erfolg nur auf meine Musik zurückzuführen ist; sie [die Sänger] haben miteinander gewetteifert, um das beste Resultat zu erringen.“ Wem auch immer es zu verdanken gewesen sein mag: Das Werk war in Italien sofort ein Triumph, und seine Beliebtheit trug es bald in alle Opernhäuser der

Welt. Im Mai 1843 kam es nach Wien, wo der Komponist das Duett „Cheti, cheti immantinente“ (No more words, not even whispers), das bald so berühmt werden sollte, hinzufügte; im gleichen Monat und mit der Premierenbesetzung nach London; und im Mai 1846 dann nach New York. In unserem Jahrhundert gab es 1904 eine berühmte Wiederaufnahme an der Metropolitan Opera, mit Caruso als Ernesto; ebenfalls 1904 Aufführungen an der Scala mit Sobinov als Ernesto und Giuseppe De Luca als Malatesta; 1905 eine Wiederaufnahme am Londoner Covent Garden mit Maurel (dem ersten Falstaff) als Malatesta; und 1938 eine bemerkenswerte Inszenierung in Glyndebourne mit Stabile als Malatesta und Dino Borgioli als Ernesto. Seit 1945 befindet sich das Stück, neben der Produktion des Cambridge Theater, auch sonst überall im Repertoire.

Bei diesem späten Werk kommt zu den melodischen und rhythmischen Gaben, die wir von Donizetti kennen, noch das neue Element eines weiterentwickelten Harmonieempfindens hinzu, insbesondere in Form subtiler Modulationen. Außerdem hatte der Komponist inzwischen gelernt, die einzelnen musikalischen Nummern auszuweiten und sie durch neue Ideen so zu variieren, daß der Zuhörer nie das Interesse verliert. Nirgendwo

in der Oper wird dies so deutlich, wie in dem Moment im Pasquale/Norina Duett des 3. Aktes, als Norina plötzlich klar wird, daß sie es mit ihrem neuen „Bräutigam“ zu weit getrieben hat. Nachdem sie ihn geohrfeigt hat, wird sie reuevoll und singt im parallelen Dur zu Pasquales jämmerlichen Klagen in a-Moll „E’ durenta la lezione“ (I chastise him far from gladly). Dadurch wird die zwar komische, aber auch etwas grausame Stimmung, die durch Norinas Possen entstanden war, wieder ein wenig abgemildert. (Sie hatte Pasquales Haushalt auf den Kopf gestellt, obwohl Sofronia angeblich ein ängstliches Mädchen direkt aus dem Kloster sein sollte.) Wie ein Donizetti-Forscher anmerkte: „Nur Norinas Fähigkeit zur Zärtlichkeit sorgt dafür, daß ihr Sinn für Humor die Grenzen des guten Geschmacks nicht übertritt.“

Pasquale selbst ist eine recht typische *buffo*-Figur, deren Musik zum größten Teil im *parlando*-Stil gehalten ist. Malatesta ist unbeständiger, und sein Charakter ändert sich, je nach den Anforderungen der Handlung. Nirgendwo ist seine Musik flexibler als im Duett mit Norina im 1. Akt. Hier bringt er ihr die beste Methode Pasquale aufs Kreuz zu legen bei, und die Musik zeichnet jede Nuance in den Gedanken der beiden nach. Norina selbst tut schon in ihrer besonders lebhaften,

zweiteiligen Auftrittsarie unverkennbar ihren Charakter kund. Ebenso Ernesto in “Sogno soave e casto” (Never again shall I find you) – sein trauriger Traum von Glück scheint ihm zu entgleiten, da Pasquales Heiratspläne ihn um sein Erbe zu bringen drohen. In einem Rezitativ mit anschließender Arie und Cabaletta zu Anfang des 2. Aktes (“Povero Ernesto!... Cercherò lontana terra... E se fia” (Poor, lost Ernesto... I shall go, no more returning... And if you ever...)) entschließt er sich dann, sein Glück anderswo zu suchen. Dies ist eine wunderbar abwechslungsreiche Szene für lyrischen Tenor und fordert sowohl ein nuanciertes Klangspektrum als auch stimmliches Geschick, wie es Tito Schipa in der bahnbrechenden Aufnahme der Oper aus den 30er Jahren unter Beweis stellte.

Im 3. Akt findet Ernesto schließlich sein Glück und singt, begleitet von Gitarrenakkorden und einem Chor hinter der Szene, der dem verführerischen Gesang des Tenors eine besondere Atmosphäre verleiht, eine ausgesprochen gefühlvolle Serenade “Com’è gentil” (The night is calm). Ihr folgt ein Nocturne-Duett voll ineinander verschlungener Terzen und Sexten zwischen Ernesto und seiner geliebten Norina “Tornami a dir” (Come, say the words I long for), als sich das Liebespaar im tiefen Schatten von

Pasquales Garten trifft. Vom Kompositorischen her sind diese letzten Szenen zwar eher konservativ, im Kontext der gesamten Oper bilden sie aber einen perfekten Kontrast zu den komischen Eskapaden des obenerwähnten *parlando*-Duetts zwischen Malatesta und Pasquale “Cheti, cheti, immantinente” (No more words, not even whispers).

Indem Donizetti keine großen Finale schreibt, scheut er die Konvention. Der 1. Akt endet mit dem obengenannten Duett Norina/Malatesta, der 2. Akt mit einem kurzweiligen Quartett für die Hauptdarsteller, und den dritten beschließt ein Sextett mit “Happy End”. Auch neu in diesem Genre ist der Verzicht auf jegliche Art von Tasteninstrument in den Rezitativen. Statt dessen bevorzugt der Komponist fließende Streicherakkorde, wodurch Dialoge und Arien bzw. Ensembles viel nahtloser ineinander übergehen. Überhaupt erzeugt das Werk den Eindruck, aus einem einzigen Eingebungs- und Phantasieguß entstanden zu sein.

Was bleibt noch hinzuzufügen? Die Ouvertüre gewährt uns einen Vorgeschmack auf viele der herrlichen Melodien, mit denen die Oper durchsetzt ist, und verbreitet so ein angenehmes Gefühl der Vorfreude auf die bevorstehenden Ereignisse. Die Behandlung des Chores ist ausgesprochen detailliert, und

besonders wirkungsvoll ist er im 3. Akt, wenn er in der Rolle der beobachtenden Dienerschaft versucht, mit den von Norina in Pasquales Domizil eingeführten Unmengen neuer Gegenstände fertig zu werden. Später folgt noch eine reizende Nummer, in der der Chor die komischen Vorkommnisse im Hause kommentiert. Diese Chöre sind ein Beweis dafür, daß Donizetti einfallslose Szenen fremd sind.

Don Pasquale stellt die Quintessenz eines Genres dar, das mehr als hundert Jahre fortbestanden hatte. Verdis *Falstaff*, der 50 Jahre später entstand, steht offensichtlich in Donizettis Schuld, aber zu diesem Zeitpunkt waren Opernkomponisten schon ein ganzes Stück weiter. Heute sieht und hört man deutlich, daß *Don Pasquale* ein Ende und nicht einen Anfang bedeutet. Es ist aber ein Werk, das man vor allem wegen seines Reichtums an Erfindung und Charakter genießen sollte.

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Übersetzung: Bettina Reinke-Welsh

Inhaltsangabe

I. Akt

Szene 1

Don Pasquale, ein reicher, aber älterer

Junggeselle, hat zu heiraten beschlossen. Außerdem beabsichtigt Pasquale, seinen Neffen Ernesto zum Alleinerben zu machen, aber nur, wenn dieser eine gute Partie macht. Ernesto weigert sich, denn er ist in die mittellose Norina verliebt.

Pasquale möchte seinen eigenen Sohn und Erben zeugen und hat seinen Freund Doktor Malatesta gebeten, eine geeignete Braut zu beschaffen. Malatesta erscheint, um seine Wahl bekanntzugeben: ein unschuldiges, im Kloster erzogenes junges Mädchen, schön wie ein Engel und im übrigen seine eigene Schwester. Pasquale verlangt sie augenblicklich zu sehen und bekundet, sobald er allein ist, unbändige Lust, Vater einer großen Familie zu werden.

Ernesto findet das Vorhaben seines Onkels zunächst lächerlich, dann beunruhigend im Hinblick auf seine eigenen Aussichten; er ist bestürzt, als er erfährt, daß Malatesta ihn verraten hat, indem er seine eigene Schwester als Pasquales Braut vorgeschlagen hat.

2. Szene

In einem anderen Teil der Stadt blättert Norina in einem Liebesroman, gelangt jedoch zu dem Schluß, daß sie in solchen Fragen kaum der Belehrung bedarf. Sie erfährt brieflich, daß Ernesto enterbt worden ist und Rom verlassen will. Malatesta trifft ein; er beruhigt Norina

und erläutert seinen Plan, demzufolge sie bei einer Scheinhochzeit mit Pasquale seine Schwester spielen soll. Pasquale weiß daß Malatesta eine Schwester, die im Kloster wohnt hat, aber die beide sind nie getroffen. Malatesta probt mit Norina ihre neue Rolle.

II. Akt

Szene 1

Ernesto beschließt, in fernen Landen Trost zu suchen. Er bekennt, daß er Norina verzeihen würde, sollte sie mit einem neuen Geliebten glücklich werden.

Szene 2

Malatesta stellt Pasquale die verkleidete Norina als seine Schwester Sofronia vor. Sie tut so, als fürchte sie sich vor der Begegnung mit einem Mann, und beantwortet schüchtern seine Fragen nach ihrem behüteten Leben. Als Malatesta darauf besteht, daß sie ihren Schleier abnimmt, ist Pasquale von ihrer Schönheit überwältigt.

Auf Malatestas Geheiß wird der "Notar" herbeigerufen und ein Ehevertrag aufgesetzt. Man benötigt einen zweiten Zeugen; da eilt der untröstliche Ernesto herein und wird zur Teilnahme genötigt. Er erkennt in Pasquales Braut Norina wieder, unterschreibt jedoch auf Malatestas Beharren den Vertrag.

Nachdem nun die Zeremonie vorüber ist, ändert "Sofronia" umgehend ihren Charakter. Sie verlangt von ihrem eben erst angetrauten Ehemann, Ernesto im Haus zu behalten, fordert neue, besser bezahlte Bedienstete und behauptet, das Haus müsse renoviert werden. Pasquale merkt, daß er getäuscht wurde, und ist verwirrt.

III. Akt

Szene 1

Die neuen Bediensteten und die Handwerker stellen das Haus auf den Kopf. Pasquale ist empört über die Höhe der Rechnungen. Als "Sofronia" zum Ausgehen fertig die Bühne betritt, fragt er sie, wo sie hinwolle. "Ins Theater", antwortet sie. Als er ihr Vorwürfe macht, schlägt sie ihn ins Gesicht. Für Pasquale bricht die Welt zusammen.

Im Gehen läßt sie den Brief eines ungenannten Liebhabers fallen, der sie um ein Treffen am selben Abend im Garten ersucht. Pasquale ruft seinen Freund Malatesta zu Hilfe. Die Bediensteten unterhalten sich über die merkwürdigen Vorgänge im Haus.

Malatesta kommt und rät Pasquale zu einem angemessen diskreten Vorgehen. Sie werden sich zusammen in den Garten schleichen, das Liebespaar ertappen und Rache üben.

Szene 2

Ernesto bringt seiner Norina ein Ständchen, und die Liebenden werden aufs neue vereint. Pasquale und Malatesta überraschen sie. Ernesto entkommt.

Pasquale beschließt, seine neue Gemahlin loszuwerden, doch die läßt sich nicht so leicht fortschicken. Malatesta weiß eine Lösung, aber nur, wenn er dafür freie Hand hat; Pasquale willigt nur zu gern ein. Malatesta ruft Ernesto aus dem Haus und unterrichtet ihn, daß sein Onkel seine Heirat mit Norina bewilligt hat und ihm eine beachtliche Apanage aussetzen wird. Resigniert fordert Pasquale Ernesto auf, seine Braut herzuholen. Die jedoch ist schon da. Pasquale geht auf, daß man ihm einen Streich gespielt hat, und er verzeiht dem jungen Paar. Heirat ist eine gute Sache, aber nicht für einen alten Mann.

Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller

Andrew Shore ist heute als der herausragende Buffobariton Großbritanniens anerkannt. Seit seinem Debüt an der English National Opera im Jahre 1988 hat er unter anderem Falstaff, Dieg (in Philip Glass' *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Monsieur Calcul (*La belle*

Vivette), Don Pasquale und Gianni Schicchi. Außerdem hat er an der Royal Opera, der Opera North, der Scottish Opera, der Glyndebourne Festival Opera, der Kent Opera und der Welsh National Opera gesungen, sowie im Ausland an der New Israeli Opera, San Diego Opera, die Opéra comique, Paris, und in Lyon, Nantes, Montpellier, Amsterdam, Vancouver und Hamburg. Zu seinen Aufzeichnungen auf Tonträger gehören *Der Barbier von Sevilla*, *Tosca*, *La bohème* (für Chandos und die Peter Moores Foundation) und *Die Sache Makropulos*.

Jason Howard ist Absolvent des Trinity College of Music und der Opernfakultät des Royal College of Music. Die Auftritte des herausragenden Interpreten an der Scottish Opera und Opera North haben bei Kritikern einstimmigen Beifall hervorgerufen. Howard hat die Titelrollen in *Don Giovanni* und *Le nozze di Figaro* (Scottish Opera) gesungen, die Titelrolle in *Billy Budd* (Opera North), außerdem Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*) an der English National Opera und die Titelrolle des *Eugen Onegin* an der Welsh National Opera. Davon abgesehen hat er in Seattle, Genf und Nantes gastiert, am Staatstheater Stuttgart und an der Opéra de Bastille. Jason Howards Konzertauftritte umfassen Mahlers Achte

Sinfonie, Elgars *The Kingdom* und konzertante Darbietungen von Berlioz' *Les troyens*. Er hat unter anderem *The Student Prince*, *Song of Norway* und *A Little Night Music* auf Tonträger aufgenommen.

Barry Banks, Absolvent des Royal Northern College of Music, wo er als Stipendiat der Peter Moores Foundation studiert hatte, hat sich als einer der besten Tenöre seiner Generation durchgesetzt. Er ist unter anderem als Tamino (*Zauberflöte*) bei den Salzburger Festspielen, am Théâtre La Monnaie in Brüssel und an der Leipziger Oper aufgetreten, als Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) und Argirio (*Tancredi*) an der Frankfurter Oper, als Belmonte (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) an der Opera Zuid, als Nemorino an der English National Opera, als Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) und in der Titelrolle des *Comte Ory* für die Glyndebourne Touring Opera, in der Titelrolle von *Candide* an der Chicago Lyric Opera und als Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) an der Welsh National Opera.

Lynne Dawson gilt als eine der vielseitigsten und interessantesten Sopranistinnen Großbritanniens und ist entsprechend vielbeschäftigt in Opern, Konzerten, Recitals und Einspielungen auf höchstem

internationalem Niveau. Sie hat unter anderem Partien in *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *The Fairy Queen*, Grauns *Cleopatra e Cesare*, *Orlando*, Glucks *Orfeo*, und *Tancredi* gesungen. Außerdem hat sie im Lauf ihrer Karriere mit einigen der führenden Dirigenten der Welt erfolgreich im Konzertsaal zusammengearbeitet, zum Beispiel mit Mehta, Barenboim, Giulini, Ashkenazy, Gardiner, Mackerras, Andrew Davis, Harnoncourt und Marriner.

Lynne Dawson hat über sechzig Tonaufnahmen vorgenommen, darunter Händels *Jephtha* und *Saul*, Monteverdis *Orfeo*, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *Dido and Aeneas*, Mozarts Requiem, Mendelssohns *Sommernachtsstraum* und Orffs *Carmina burana*.

Clive Bayley hat die Rolle des Claggart (*Billy Budd*) gegeben, als er noch als Peter-Moores-Stipendiat am Royal Northern College of Music studierte. Inzwischen ist er an allen wesentlichen Opernhäusern in Großbritannien bekannt und tritt außerdem regelmäßig in Konzerten auf. Er debütierte 1991 bei der Uraufführung von Birtwistles *Gawain* an der Royal Opera und hat außerdem beachtliche Erfolge an der Opera North (Verdis *Jerusalem*), der English National Opera (*Billy Budd*, *Wozzeck* und *Dr. Faust*) und der Opera Factory (*Don Giovanni*) verzeichnet. Zu seinen

Aufnahmen auf Tonträger gehören Michael Berkeleys *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, Landis *Il Sant' Alessio*, *Candide* und Waltons *Troilus and Cressida*.

Geoffrey Mitchell hat im Lauf seiner Gesangskarriere ein erstaunlich umfangreiches Repertoire erschlossen, von alter bis hin zu zeitgenössischer Musik. Daraus ergaben sich erst Dirigieraufträge von der BBC, dann eine ausgedehntere Zusammenarbeit mit seinen Sängern, die wiederum zur Gründung des **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir** führte. Frühe Schallplattenaufnahmen hatten zur Folge, daß der Chor langfristige Beziehungen zu Opera Rara einging, für die er 15 Opern aufgezeichnet hat. Derzeit genießt er dank weiterer Verpflichtungen für die BBC und internationale Schallplattenfirmen wachsendes Ansehen.

Seit seiner Gründung im Jahr 1932 durch Sir Thomas Beecham hat das **London Philharmonic Orchestra** unter der Leitung unzähliger prominenter Chefdirigenten gestanden, darunter Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti und Klaus Tennstedt. Im Augenblick zählen zu seinen regulären Dirigenten der Musikdirektor des Orchesters, Franz Welser-Möst und der Präsident, Bernard Haitink.

Seit 1964 ist das London Philharmonic Residenzorchester bei der Glyndebourne Festival Opera und seit 1992 an der Royal Festival Hall. Es unternimmt zahlreiche Konzertreisen und besuchte als erstes britisches Orchester die UdSSR und China. Seine Platteneinspielungen sind vielfach preisgekrönt worden.

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 Opern-Festivals 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* aufgenommen, zwei Aufnahmen operatischen Arien (mit Bruce Ford und Diana Montague), *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* und *Pagliacci*.

Gaetano Donizetti: Don Pasquale

Parmi mes premiers moments passés à l'opéra, il y a bien cinquante ans de cela, figurent des représentations (j'y allai deux fois) du *Don Pasquale* de Donizetti au Cambridge Theatre de Londres. Le grand Mariano Stabile y chantait le docteur Malatesta, la délicieuse Alda Noni, Norina, et une basse britannique jusqu'alors inconnue, Martin Lawrence, incarnait le rôle-titre. Lawrence se débrouilla de son mieux en italien, mais, malgré mon jeune âge, je sentis qu'il aurait été plus à l'aise s'il avait chanté le rôle en anglais, et – bien que l'œuvre me plût énormément (en aurait-il pu être autrement?) – j'aurais préféré l'entendre dans la langue vernaculaire: de cette façon, nouveau venu que j'étais à l'opéra, j'aurais pu apprécier la comédie dans ses détails plutôt que d'être divertie de façon plus générale. L'œuvre fut plus tard donnée par le Sadler's Wells Opera et les menus détails de l'intrigue m'apparurent enfin clairement. Toutefois, *Pasquale* était si populaire au Cambridge Theatre que la Columbia fit paraître un disque en 78 tours du duo chanté par Malatesta et Pasquale à l'acte III, duo qu'il fallait toujours bisser au théâtre – ce qui n'est pas surprenant

car c'est un des plus grands moments, non seulement de cette partition mais aussi de tout l'opéra buffa, baryton et basse rivalisant de vitesse et d'agilité dans l'articulation au passage final de style "parlé" rapide. Même maintenant c'est toujours avec une grande impatience que j'attends d'entendre ce duo inspiré.

Il faut dire que *Pasquale* est une œuvre merveilleuse dans l'absolu, l'union parfaite de la comédie et des sentiments réalisée par un compositeur passé maître dans les deux genres. L'enfant le plus célèbre de Bergame nous plonge l'oreille dans le ravissement tandis qu'un numéro inspiré en suit un autre. Solos, duos et ensembles font progresser l'histoire avec une énergie et une invention irrésistibles, le comique et la profondeur des sentiments étant imperceptiblement mêlés. La duperie de Don Pasquale dans le but de lui donner une leçon a certainement un côté cruel – d'ailleurs, au moment même où "Sofronia" (Norina déguisée), qui a "épousé" son vieux fossile, se montre des plus acariâtres, elle se rend compte que cette cruelle comédie est allée trop loin; et, pendant tout l'opéra, Donizetti rend le

personnage de Pasquale fondamentalement sympathique, malgré son ridicule désir de devenir le vieillissant époux d'une jeune femme, de sorte que tout en nous moquant de lui nous comprenons sa folie. En dépit de leur cruauté, nous ne pouvons nous empêcher de suivre les machinations de Malatesta et de Norina avec plaisir parce que ce sont eux-mêmes des personnages si enchanteurs. Puis, à l'aide de la musique la plus plaintive qu'il ait jamais écrite pour ses ténors, Donizetti laisse Ernesto, apparemment abandonné par sa Norina bien-aimée, s'épancher au cours de deux arias émouvantes.

Il paraît donc bien surprenant que cet opéra étonnant soit l'œuvre d'un compositeur déjà épuisé et d'humeur mélancolique. *Pasquale*, qui fut écrit en 1843, figure parmi les derniers de la soixantaine d'opéras composés par Donizetti. Deux ans après l'avoir achevé, il était paralysé, et, en 1848, il était mort. Pourtant, en dépit de cet état déjà morbide, il fut en mesure de créer ce chef d'œuvre, équivalent citadin de la comédie paysanne tout aussi inspirée qu'est *L'elisir d'amore* (L'elixir d'amour) de 1832. Fait encore plus remarquable, il élaborait lui-même en partie le livret de son opéra en collaboration avec Giovanni Ruffini. L'œuvre a pour origine un opéra oublié, intitulé *Ser Marcantonio*, qui fut mis en scène à Milan en 1810 et dont

Angelo Anelli avait écrit le livret. Donizetti eut le bon sens de simplifier et réduire de façon draconienne l'intrigue complexe lui venant d'Anelli, ce qui permit, comme le distingué critique Ernest Newman le dit un jour, de donner au compositeur "l'occasion accrue de développer les formes musicales simples et d'extraire jusqu'à la dernière goutte l'expression humoristique de chaque situation".

Donizetti n'aurait, dit-on, pas mis plus de onze jours à composer l'œuvre, mais il serait probablement plus juste de dire qu'elle fut écrite sur une période de trois mois, à dater d'octobre 1842. Pourtant, le compositeur écrivit plus tard: "l'opéra me coûta une immense fatigue de onze jours", faisant probablement allusion à la réalisation d'une esquisse de composition. Il fut sans aucun doute aidé par le fait qu'il adapta de la musique qu'il avait écrite pour d'autres contextes, mais il eut l'intelligence et la duplicité de les incorporer parfaitement à leur nouveau contexte, une chose à laquelle bien sûr Haendel s'était aussi montré expert.

Donizetti, né en 1797, était de condition modeste, son père et son grand-père travaillant comme ouvriers dans l'industrie textile. Le jeune Gaetano, qui montrait du talent pour la musique, semblait destiné à devenir musicien au service de l'église, mais le jeune garçon avait

des visées plus profanes, à savoir faire carrière au théâtre. Ses professeurs furent Giovanni Simone Mayr, lui-même compositeur prolifique d'opéras, et Mattei avec lequel il travailla à Bologne. Le premier opéra de Donizetti fut écrit en 1818 alors qu'il n'était âgé que de vingt-et-un ans. Dès lors, il travailla rapidement et de façon prolifique, composant de deux à cinq opéras par an, bien qu'il ne devînt vraiment célèbre qu'en 1830 avec *Anna Bolena*.

Pasquale s'avéra populaire dès sa première qui fut donnée à Paris le 4 janvier 1843 (la première italienne suivit à La Scala, le 17 avril). Et cette première représentation bénéficia d'une éblouissante distribution: Giulia Grisi en Norina, Matteo Mario en Ernesto, Antonio Tamburini en Malatesta et Luigi Lablache en Pasquale, tous au sommet de la notoriété. Mario et Grisi, mari et femme, lui beau et elle charmante. Tamburini, au dire de tous, jouait la comédie aussi parfaitement qu'il chantait. Quant à Lablache, c'était probablement la basse la plus célèbre de son siècle, un personnage que le critique britannique Chorley décrivit ainsi: "dans l'ensemble, l'homme le plus remarquable qu'il m'ait jamais été donné de voir à l'opéra". Dans le rôle de Pasquale, le même auteur le qualifia de "cher héros niais de l'opéra-farce"

ajoutant qu'il évitait toujours toute balourdise ou imitation grossière, nous rappelant que ce rôle ne devrait jamais être transformé en pitrerie.

Donizetti voulait que l'œuvre soit jouée en costume contemporain, mais les chanteurs s'y opposèrent, ainsi que le prétendu coauteur du livret, Ruffini, qui était convaincu que l'intrigue se prêtait davantage au port de "perruques et hauts-de-chausses en velours". Donizetti, comme ce fut le cas avec Verdi et *La traviata* dix années plus tard, fut forcé de s'incliner. Donizetti, avec une modestie caractéristique, écrivit ultérieurement à l'éditeur Ricordi: "N' imaginez pas que ce succès ait été seulement dû à ma musique; ils [les chanteurs] ont tous cherché à s'éclipser les uns les autres en faisant chacun de leur mieux..." Quelle qu'en fût la cause, l'œuvre remporta un succès immédiat en Italie et sa popularité s'étendit bientôt à tous les opéras du monde – Vienne en mai 1843, occasion pour laquelle le compositeur ajouta le duo "Cheti, cheti immantinente" (No more words, not even whispers) qui devait bientôt devenir célèbre, Londres au cours du même mois avec les chanteurs de la première, puis New York en mai 1846. Ce siècle en vit une célèbre reprise au Metropolitan en 1904 avec Caruso en Ernesto, des représentations à la Scala en 1904

avec Sobinov en Ernesto et Giuseppe De Luca en Malatesta, une reprise en 1905 à Covent Garden avec Maurel (le premier Falstaff) en Malatesta et une mise en scène notable à Glyndebourne en 1938 avec Stabile en Malatesta et Dino Borgioli en Ernesto. Depuis la guerre, en plus de la reprise du Cambridge Theatre, l'œuvre a figuré partout au répertoire.

Dans cette œuvre tardive, Donizetti a ajouté à ses dons mélodique et rythmique un nouvel élément, une harmonie plus avancée montrant plus de subtilité au niveau de la modulation; il a aussi appris à développer ses numéros et à les varier avec une inspiration toute neuve qui garde l'oreille continuellement en éveil, et nullepart davantage qu'au moment où, durant le duo entre Pasquale et Norina à l'acte III, celle-ci se rend soudain compte qu'elle est allée trop loin avec son nouvel "époux". L'ayant giflé, elle se repent de son action en chantant dans la relative majeure des commentaires pathétiques de Pasquale en la mineur ("... E' durezza la lezione" (I chastise him far from gladly)). Ceci dissipe l'atmosphère quelque peu cruelle créée par les pitreries de Norina lorsqu'elle met sens dessus dessous la maison de Don Pasquale, ayant auparavant prétendu que Sofronia était une timide jeune fille fraîchement sortie du couvent. D'ailleurs,

comme un spécialiste de Donizetti en a fait le commentaire, c'est "l'aptitude de Norina à la tendresse qui maintient son sens de l'humour dans les limites du bon goût".

Pasquale en soi est un personnage *buffo* assez typique, dont la musique est en majorité de style *parlando* à l'élocution rapide. Malatesta est plus versatile, changeant de caractère suivant les exigences de l'intrigue. Sa musique ne montre nullepart aussi adaptable qu'à l'acte I, lors de son duo avec Norina lorsqu'il lui fait répéter son rôle en vue de duper Pasquale, l'écriture suit alors chaque nuance de la pensée des deux protagonistes. Norina se présente elle-même dans une aria colorée en deux parties, qui délinée avec sûreté sa personnalité; il en est de même du "Sogno soave e casto" (Never again shall I find you) d'Ernesto, dans lequel son triste rêve de bonheur semble lui échapper tandis que Pasquale se prépare à prendre épouse, le privant apparemment de son héritage. Puis dans ses récitatifs, aria et cabalette au début de l'acte II ("Povero Ernesto!... Cercherò lontana terra... E se fia" (Poor, lost Ernesto... I shall go, no more returning... And if you ever...)), il décide d'aller chercher fortune ailleurs. C'est une scène d'une variété splendide pour le ténor lyrique, qui requiert nuance tonale et dextérité vocale (ce que Tito Schipa fournit dans son

enregistrement novateur de l'opéra effectué au cours des années 30).

Finalement, à l'acte III, Ernesto trouve le bonheur et chante la plus délicate des sérénades "Com'è gentil" (The night is calm), sur un accompagnement d'accords à la guitare et avec un chœur en coulisse ajoutant de l'atmosphère au chant plein de séduction du ténor. Vient ensuite un duo-nocturne en tierces et sixtes entrelacées, qu'il interprète avec sa Norina bien-aimée "Tornami a dir" (Come, say the words I long for), le couple d'amoureux chantant en duo à l'ombre des bosquets du jardin de Pasquale. Ces derniers numéros sont peut-être plus conventionnels sur le plan de la composition, mais, dans le contexte de l'opéra pris dans son entier, ils viennent former un contraste parfait par rapport aux pitreries du duo de style parlé rapide déjà mentionné, "Cheti, cheti, immantinente" (No more words, not even whispers) chanté par Malatesta et Pasquale.

Donizetti se tient à l'écart des conventions en n'écrivant pas de finales de grande envergure. L'acte I se termine par le duo déjà mentionné chanté par Norina et Malatesta, l'acte II finit avec un quatuor d'une grande variété réunissant les principaux protagonistes, et l'acte III sur un sextuor marquant le dénouement heureux de l'intrigue. On remarquera une autre nouveauté apportée à cette sorte d'œuvre au niveau du

récitatif: le clavier n'y est utilisé nullepart, le compositeur préférant avoir recours à des accords changeants aux cordes. Ce qui permet au dialogue d'être mêlé avec beaucoup plus d'aisance aux numéros. L'œuvre semble en effet avoir été écrite d'un seul élan d'inspiration et d'imagination.

Que reste-t-il à ajouter? L'ouverture nous fait entendre par avance un certain nombre des ravissantes mélodies réparties dans tout l'opéra, donnant naissance à un agréable sentiment d'anticipation à l'égard des événements à venir. Le chœur, revêtant la forme de serviteurs qui observent, y est méticuleusement utilisé avec grande efficacité à l'acte III, d'abord dans le chœur où ils tentent de faire face à la multitude de nouveautés que Norina a fait rentrer dans la demeure de Pasquale, puis dans un charmant morceau où ils commentent les étranges événements se déroulant dans la maison. Donizetti n'a jamais écrit de numéro ennuyeux comme le prouvent ces chœurs.

Don Pasquale est la récapitulation d'un genre qui avait duré plus de cent ans. Le *Falstaff* de Verdi, écrit cinquante ans plus tard, doit manifestement à Donizetti mais, à l'époque, la composition opératique avait évolué. Maintenant, nous voyons et entendons que *Pasquale* est un aboutissement et non un commencement, mais avant tout une œuvre

à savourer pour son abondance d'invention et de caractère.

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Traduction: Marianne Fernée

Argument

Acte I

Scène 1

Don Pasquale, un riche célibataire mais vieillissant, a décidé de se marier. Il a offert à son neveu Ernesto d'être son héritier à la condition que ce dernier épouse un bon parti. Cependant, Ernesto refuse car il est amoureux de Norina, une jeune veuve appauvrie.

Pasquale engendrera donc son propre fils et héritier. Il a demandé à son ami le Dr Malatesta de trouver une épouse qui lui convienne. Malatesta arrive pour annoncer son choix en la personne d'une jeune fille ingénue, qui a été élevée dans un couvent, belle comme un ange – en fait sa propre sœur. Pasquale demande à la rencontrer immédiatement. Laissé seul, il exprime son enthousiasme irrésistible à l'idée d'être le père d'une grande famille.

Ernesto trouve les ambitions de son oncle risibles au premier abord, puis inquiétantes pour ses propres projets. Il est choqué

d'apprendre que Malatesta l'a trahi en proposant à Pasquale d'épouser sa propre sœur.

Scène 2

Dans un autre lieu de la ville, Norina feuillette les pages d'un livre racontant un histoire d'amour, mais parvient à la conclusion qu'elle n'a besoin d'aucun conseil en ce domaine. Elle apprend dans une lettre qu'Ernesto a été déshérité, et qu'il projette de quitter Rome. Malatesta arrive. Il réassure Norina en lui expliquant son plan qui consiste à la faire passer pour sa propre sœur au cours d'un faux mariage avec Pasquale. Pasquale sait que Malatesta a une sœur qui habite dans un couvent, mais il n'a jamais fait sa connaissance. Malatesta fait répéter à Norina son nouveau rôle.

Acte II

Scène 1

Ernesto est déterminé à chercher la consolation dans un pays lointain. Il affirme qu'il pardonnerait à Norina si elle trouvait le bonheur auprès d'un nouvel amant.

Scène 2

Malatesta présente à Pasquale sa sœur "Sofronia" qui n'est autre que Norina déguisée. Elle fait semblant d'être intimidée de rencontrer un homme, et répond avec docilité

aux questions que lui pose Pasquale au sujet de son existence protégée. Quand Malatesta insiste pour qu'elle relève son voile, Pasquale est ébloui par sa beauté.

Mandé par Malatesta, le "notaire" arrive, et ils rédigent un contrat de mariage. On a besoin d'un second témoin. Au même moment, le pauvre Ernesto fait irruption. On le presse d'accepter. Il reconnaît la future épouse de Pasquale comme étant Norina, mais signe le contrat sur les signes insistants de Malatesta.

Maintenant que la cérémonie est terminée, "Sofronia" change rapidement de caractère. Elle exige de son nouvel époux qu'Ernesto puisse demeurer à la maison; elle veut de nouveaux serviteurs et mieux payés; la maison a besoin d'être redécouverte. Pasquale, qui a le sentiment d'avoir été trahi, est tout confus.

Acte III

Scène 1

Les nouveaux domestiques et les ouvriers transforment la maison en un grand désordre. Pasquale est horrifié devant les factures. Lorsque "Sofronia" entre en tenue de soirée, il lui demande où elle se rend. "Au théâtre", lui répond-elle. Quand il se met à lui faire des reproches, elle le giffle. Le monde de Pasquale s'écroule.

En quittant la pièce, elle laisse tomber la lettre

de rendez-vous d'un amant anonyme qui lui demande une entrevue ce soir-là dans le jardin. Pasquale cherche de l'aide auprès de son ami Malatesta. Les domestiques commentent les drôles de choses qui se passent dans la maison.

Malatesta arrive et recommande à Pasquale le moyen d'action discret approprié. Ensemble, ils se rendront dans le jardin, prendront les amants sur le fait et demanderont réparation.

Scène 2

Ernesto donne une sérénade à sa Norina, et les deux amants se trouvent réunis. Pasquale et Malatesta les surprennent. Ernesto s'enfuit.

Pasquale décide de se débarrasser de sa nouvelle épouse, mais elle refuse d'être aussi facilement renvoyée. Malatesta propose une solution, à la condition qu'il puisse faire comme il l'entend, que Pasquale accepte immédiatement. Il somme Ernesto de sortir de la maison et lui déclare que son oncle consent à ce qu'il épouse Norina, et qu'il lui accordera une large rente. Résigné, Pasquale demande à Ernesto de faire venir sa future épouse. Mais elle est déjà présente. Pasquale prend conscience de la duperie dont il a été l'objet, et pardonne au jeune couple. Le mariage est une bonne chose, mais pas pour un homme âgé.

Traduction: Francis Marchal

Andrew Shore est aujourd'hui considéré comme le premier bariton bouffe d'Angleterre. Depuis ses débuts à l'English National Opera de Londres en 1988 où il a chanté les rôles de Falstaff, Dieg (dans *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* de Philip Glass), Papageno (*La flûte enchantée*), Monsieur Calcul (*La belle Vivette*), Don Pasquale et Gianni Schicchi. Il a également chanté à Covent Garden, à l'Opera North, au Scottish Opera, au Glyndebourne Festival Opera, au Kent Opera et au Welsh National Opera, ainsi qu'à l'étranger au New Israeli Opera, au San Diego Opera, l'Opéra comique de Paris, et à Lyon, Montpellier, Amsterdam, Vancouver et Hambourg. Parmi ses enregistrements, on peut noter *Le barbier de Séville*, *Tosca*, *La bobème* (réalisé par Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation) et *L'affaire Makropoulos*.

Jason Howard est diplômé du Trinity College of Music de Cambridge et du Royal College of Music (Opera School) de Londres. Les prestations de cet artiste exceptionnel au Scottish Opera et à l'Opera North ont été unanimement saluées par la critique. Il a chanté les rôles titres de *Don Giovanni* et des *Noces de Figaro* (Scottish Opera), le rôle titre de *Billy Budd* (Opera North), Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*) à l'English National Opera et le rôle

titre de *Eugène Onéguine* au Welsh National Opera. Il s'est également produit à Seattle, Genève, Nantes, à l'Opéra de Stuttgart et à l'Opéra Bastille. Au concert, Jason Howard a chanté dans la Huitième symphonie de Mahler, *The Kingdom* d'Elgar, et *Les troyens* de Berlioz. Parmi ses enregistrements figurent *The Student Prince*, *Song of Norway* et *A Little Night Music*.

Diplômé du Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester (où il étudia grâce à une bourse de la Peter Moores Foundation), **Barry Banks** s'est imposé comme l'un des plus remarquables ténors de sa génération. Parmi les rôles qu'il a chantés figurent Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) au festival de Salzbourg, au Théâtre de la Monnaie de Bruxelles et à l'Opéra de Leipzig, Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) et Argirio (*Tancredi*) à l'Opéra de Franckfort, Belmonte (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) à l'Opera Zuid, Nemorino (*The Elixir of Love*) au National English Opera, Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), le rôle titre du *Comte Ory* avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera, le rôle titre de *Candide* au Chicago Lyric Opera et Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) au Welsh National Opera.

Considérée comme étant l'une des plus remarquables sopranos anglaises, **Lynne**

Dawson poursuit une importante carrière internationale à l'opéra, au concert, en récital et au disque. Elle s'est produite dans *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *The Fairy Queen*, *Cleopatra e Cesare* de Graun, *Orlando*, l'*Orfeo* de Gluck et *Tancredi*. Tout au long de sa carrière, elle a donné de nombreux concerts avec les plus grands chefs internationaux, notamment Mehta, Barenboim, Giulini, Ashkenazy, Gardiner, Mackerras, Andrew Davis, Harnoncourt et Marriner.

Lynne Dawson a enregistré plus de soixante disques parmi lesquels figurent *Jephtha* et *Saul* de Haendel, l'*Orfeo* de Monteverdi, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *Dido and Aeneas*, le Requiem de Mozart, *Le songe d'une nuit d'été* de Mendelssohn et *Carmina burana* de Orff.

Clive Bayley chanta le rôle de Claggart (*Billy Budd*) tandis qu'il était encore étudiant au Royal Northern College of Music où il avait obtenu une bourse (Peter Moores Scholar). Sa réputation est déjà fermement établie auprès des grandes compagnies d'opéra en Grande-Bretagne. Par ailleurs, il se produit régulièrement en concert. Il a fait ses débuts au Covent Garden de Londres en 1991 dans la création mondiale de *Gawain* de Harrison Birtwistle. Il a remporté d'importants succès avec l'Opera North (dans *Jérusalem* de Verdi),

l'English National Opera (dans *Billy Budd*, *Wozzeck* et *Doktor Faust*) et l'Opera Factory (dans *Don Giovanni*). Parmi ses enregistrements figurent *Baa Baa Black Sheep* de Michael Berkeley, *Il Sant'Alessio* de Landi, *Candide* de Leonard Bernstein, et *Troilus and Cressida* de William Walton.

La carrière de chanteur de Geoffrey Mitchell a couvert un répertoire d'une remarquable étendue allant de la musique ancienne à la musique contemporaine. Elle prit son essor à la suite de plusieurs invitations à diriger que lui offrit la BBC, et à une collaboration plus étroite avec ses propres chanteurs. C'est ainsi qu'il fut amené à fonder le **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir** avec lequel il a enregistré quinze opéras pour Opera Rara. Jouissant d'une réputation grandissante, ils ont d'autres projets avec la BBC et des maisons de disques internationales.

L'**Orchestre philharmonique de Londres** qui a été formé par Sir Thomas Beecham en 1932 a attiré au fil des années une série inégalable de premiers chefs, dont Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti et Klaus Tennstedt. Parmi les chefs qui le dirigent régulièrement à l'heure actuelle se trouvent son directeur musical, Franz Welser-Möst, et son président, Bernard Haitink.

L'orchestre qui est depuis 1964 l'orchestre symphonique en résidence au Glyndebourne Festival Opera est devenu en 1992 l'orchestre symphonique en résidence au Royal Festival Hall. Il effectue aussi de vastes tournées – il a été le premier orchestre à se rendre en URSS et en Chine – et ses enregistrements ont remporté maintes récompenses prestigieuses.

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 appointé 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 Zoraïde* 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 enregistrements primé de *Tosca*, deux disques d'aires operatiques, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* et *Pagliacci*.

Gaetano Donizetti: Don Pasquale

Fra le mie prime esperienze operistiche, ben cinquant'anni fa, furono le rappresentazioni del *Don Pasquale* di Donizetti (ci andai due volte) al Cambridge Theatre di Londra. Il grande Mariano Stabile era il Dottor Malatesta, la deliziosa Alda Noni era Norina, e un basso britannico, Martin Lawrence, fino ad allora sconosciuto, cantava la parte del protagonista. Lawrence fece del suo meglio in italiano, ma persino a me – giovane com'ero – parve che Lawrence sarebbe stato più a suo agio se avesse cantato in inglese e – per quanto l'opera mi piacque (e a chi non sarebbe piaciuta altrettanto?) – avrei preferito sentirla nella mia lingua, giacché, novizio della lirica, avrei potuto apprezzare la commedia nei suoi particolari anziché divertirmi in modo più generico. Più tardi l'opera venne allestita dalla compagnia del Sadler's Wells e le minuzie della trama finalmente vennero alla luce. Ma al Cambridge *Pasquale* fu così popolare che Columbia emise un disco a 78rpm del duetto Malatesta/Pasquale dell'Atto III, che in teatro era inevitabilmente bissato; ne c'è da stupirsi poichè è uno dei punti più salienti non solo di quest'opera, ma di tutta l'opera buffa, baritono

e basso facendo a gara nella velocità ed agile articolazione del passaggio finale del rapido semiparlato. Ancor oggi rimango in avida attesa di questo geniale esempio di duettare.

Ma *Pasquale* è un lavoro meraviglioso in assoluto, perfetta unione di commedia e sentimento, frutto di un compositore che era maestro in ambedue i generi. In quest'opera il più illustre dei bergamaschi delizia l'ascolto con numeri ispirati che si susseguono uno dopo l'altro. Arie, duetti e concertati trascinano il discorso con un'energia ed invenzione irresistibili, comicità e profondità di sentimento impercettibilmente fuse. La storia della beffa giocata al vecchio Pasquale per dargli una lezione ha certamente un lato più crudele; tant'è vero che proprio nel momento in cui Sofronia (Norina travestita), che ha 'sposato' il vecchio gonzo, mostra al massimo i suoi artigli, si accorge che l'impetosa commedia ha oltrepassato il segno; e tutto il tempo Donizetti presenta Pasquale come un personaggio fondamentalmente simpatico malgrado la sua sciocca voglia di far da marito vecchio ad una donna giovane – e così, mentre lo deridiamo, allo stesso tempo ci sentiamo in simpatia con la

sua dabbenaggine. Nonostante la loro insensibilità le macchinazioni di Malatesta e Norina ci divertono perché loro stessi sono personaggi così incantevoli. Poi, in alcune delle pagine più eloquenti che Donizetti abbia mai composto per tenore, Ernesto, apparentemente abbandonato dall'amata Norina, riversa i suoi sentimenti in due arie passionate.

E' quindi sorprendente che questa straordinaria opera sia stata scritta da un compositore già esausto e oppresso dalla malinconia. *Pasquale*, composta nel 1843, è fra le ultime di una sessantina di opere composte da Donizetti. Due anni dopo averla portata a compimento era paralizzato; nel 1848 era morto. Eppure, persino in questo suo già morbosamente stato egli riuscì a dar vita a questo capolavoro, cugino urbano dell'altrettanto geniale commedia rurale, *L'elisir d'amore*, del 1832. Ancora più straordinario è che Donizetti abbia parzialmente foggato il proprio libretto, in collaborazione con Giovanni Ruffini. Esso deriva da un lavoro dimenticato, chiamato *Ser Marcantonio*, prodotto a Milano nel 1810, e per il quale Angelo Anelli scrisse il libretto. Donizetti saggiamente e drasticamente ridusse e semplificò la complessa trama ereditata da Anelli, il che concesse – come già detto dal distinto critico Ernest Newman – al compositore “maggior possibilità di espandere

le semplici forme musicali e di estrarre fino all'ultima oncia di umorismo da ogni situazione”.

Si dice che la composizione dell'opera abbia richiesto a Donizetti non più di undici giorni di lavoro, ma è probabilmente più esatto affermare che fu scritta in un periodo di tre mesi, a partire dall'ottobre 1842. Comunque sia, il compositore scrisse più tardi che l'opera “mi è costata immensa fatica per undici giorni”, riferendosi probabilmente al lavoro d'impianto della composizione. Donizetti fu indubbiamente facilitato dall'aver adottato parte della musica già scritta per altri scopi, ma ebbe lo spirito e la scaltrezza d'incorporarla nel nuovo contesto senza evidenti slegature, cosa che Handel, naturalmente, era stato altrettanto capace di fare.

Donizetti nacque nel 1797 in umili circostanze, nonno e padre essendo operai tessili. Il giovane Gaetano mostrò talento musicale e parve essere destinato a diventare un musicista al servizio della Chiesa, ma le ambizioni del giovane erano volte ad obiettivi più secolari, più precisamente ad una carriera in campo teatrale. I suoi maestri furono Giovanni Simone Mayr, anch'egli prolifico compositore di opere liriche, e Mattei, con il quale studiò a Bologna. Donizetti scrisse la sua prima opera nel 1818, quando era ventunenne.

Da allora in poi lavorò rapidamente e prolificamente, componendo tra due e cinque opere all'anno, sebbene abbia acquistato vera fama solo nel 1830, con *Anna Bolena*.

Pasquale è stato popolare fino dalla sua prima rappresentazione a Parigi il 4 gennaio 1843 (la prima italiana fu alla Scala il 17 aprile). E che compagnia apparve in quella prima rappresentazione! Nientemeno che: Giulia Grisi, come Norina; Matteo Mario, come Ernesto; Antonio Tamburini, come Malatesta e Luigi Lablache, come Don Pasquale, tutti all'apice della loro carriera. Mario e Grisi, marito e moglie: lui avvenente, lei deliziosa. Tamburini, a detta di tutti, era altrettanto consumato come attore che cantante. E in quanto a Lablache, egli era probabilmente il basso più famoso del secolo, colui che il critico britannico Chorley descrisse come “preso in tutti i sensi, l'uomo più eccezionale che abbia mai visto sulla scena lirica”. Nella parte di Pasquale lo stesso scrittore lo definì come “il caro, sciocco eroe della farsa operistica”, ed uno che sempre evitava la *rozzezza* o la grossolana imitazione, ricordandoci che la parte di Pasquale non dovrebbe mai essere recitata da buffone.

Donizetti avrebbe voluto che l'opera fosse rappresentata in costume contemporaneo, ma gli interpreti vi si opposero, e così il presunto

colibrettista Ruffini, il quale era convinto che l'azione si prestasse piuttosto a “parrucche e brache di velluto”. Donizetti, come già Verdi dieci anni dopo con *La traviata*, fu costretto a cedere. Con tipica modestia Donizetti scrisse in seguito all'editore Ricordi: “Non crediate che il successo sia stato dovuto solamente alla mia musica: essi (i cantanti) hanno tutti fatto a gara per darle il loro massimo.” Qualunque sia stata la causa l'opera ebbe immediato successo in Italia, e la sua popolarità si estese assai rapidamente a tutti i teatri lirici del mondo: Vienna, nel maggio del 1843 (fu per questa rappresentazione che il compositore aggiunse il duetto “Cheti, cheti immantinente” (No more words, not even whispers) che sarebbe presto diventato famoso); Londra, nello stesso mese, con gli interpreti della premiere; New York, nel maggio del 1846. In questo secolo abbiamo avuto una famosa ripresa al Metropolitan nel 1904, con Caruso nel ruolo di Ernesto, nel 1904 ci sono state rappresentazioni alla Scala con Sobinov (Ernesto) e Giuseppe De Luca (Malatesta); nel 1905 una ripresa al Covent Garden con Maurel (il primo Falstaff) nel ruolo di Malatesta e un notevole allestimento a Glyndebourne nel 1938, con Stabile come Malatesta e Dino Borgioli come Ernesto. Nel dopoguerra, oltre alla ripresa al Cambridge Theatre, l'opera è stata ovunque in repertorio.

Nelle sue opere più tarde Donizetti ha aggiunto ai suoi doni melodici e ritmici un nuovo elemento di armonia più avanzata tramite sottili modulazioni, così come ha appreso ad estendere i suoi numeri vocali ed a variarli con un'ispirazione di nuovo conio che tiene l'ascolto continuamente all'erta; mai come al punto in cui, nel duetto Pasquale/Norina nell'Atto III, Norina di colpo si accorge di avere strafatto con il novello "sposo". Dopo averlo schiaffeggiato si pente della sua azione e risponde cantando nel relativo maggiore ai patetici commenti di Pasquale in la minore ("E' durezza la lezione" (I chastise him far from gladly)). Ciò solleva la commedia dall'aria di sottile cattiveria creata dai giochetti di Norina per mettere sossopra la casa di Pasquale poco dopo aver preteso che Sofronia è una fanciulla timida, uscita di fresco dal convento. In effetti, com'è stato commentato dagli studiosi donizettiani: "è la capacità di tenerezza di Norina che mantiene il suo senso dell'umorismo entro i limiti del buon gusto".

Lo stesso Pasquale è un personaggio buffo piuttosto tipico, la cui musica è per la maggior parte nella vena del rapido parlando. Malatesta è un tipo più mercuriale, cambiando carattere così come vuole la trama. In nessun momento è la sua musica così adattabile come nel suo

duetto con Norina nell'Atto I, allorché le fa provare la parte che dovrà recitare per abbindolare Pasquale, con la scrittura che segue ogni sfumatura di pensiero della coppia. La stessa Norina si annuncia in una vivida aria bipartita che delinea la sua personalità in modo infallibile. Altrettanto fa Ernesto in "Sogno soave e casto" (Never again shall I find you), in cui il suo melanconico sogno di felicità sembra sfuggirgli quando Pasquale si prepara a sposarsi, apparentemente spogliandolo della sua eredità. Poi, nel suo recitativo, aria e cabaletta all'inizio dell'Atto II ("Povero Ernesto!... Cercherò lontana terra... E se fia" (Poor, lost Ernesto... I shall go, no more returning... And if you ever...)) decide di andare a cercar fortuna altrove. E' questa una scena splendidamente variata per un tenore lirico, che richiede sfumature tonali e destrezza vocale (quali ci sono fornite da Tito Schipa nel disco pioniere dell'opera inciso negli anni '30).

Infine, nell'Atto III, Ernesto trova la felicità e canta la più delicata delle Serenate, "Com'è gentil" (The night is calm), con accompagnamento di accordi sulla chitarra e con un coro invisibile che aggiunge atmosfera alla seducente romanza del tenore. A questo numero fa seguito un notturno-duetto in terze e seste intrecciate con l'amata Norina, "Tornami a dir" (Come, say the words I long for), in cui la

coppia di amanti duetta all'ombra boscosa del giardino di Pasquale. Questi ultimi numeri possono apparire più convenzionali in termini compositivi, ma nel contesto dell'opera nel suo insieme formano il perfetto contrasto con le comiche buffonerie del duetto semiparlato, già menzionato, "Cheti, cheti, immantinente" (No more words, not even whispers) di Malatesta e Pasquale.

Donizetti evita schemi convenzionali tralasciando di scrivere finali su larga scala. L'Atto I termina con il già citato duetto per Norina e Malatesta; l'Atto II finisce con un quartetto ben variato per i personaggi principali; l'Atto III con un sestetto a lieto fine. Un'altra novità in questo genere di opera concerne il recitativo: il compositore non usa da nessuna parte uno strumento a tastiera, preferendo fluttuanti accordi degli archi. Ciò crea una maggiore scorrevolezza di dialogo fra i numeri solistici. In effetti l'opera dà l'impressione di essere stata scritta di getto in un unico slancio d'ispirazione e d'immaginazione.

Cos'altro? L'ouverture ci fa sentire in anticipo molte delle deliziose melodie distribuite per tutta l'opera, generando un piacevole senso d'anticipazione degli eventi futuri. Il coro è usato meticolosamente,

costituito da servi che osservano, nel modo più eloquente nell'Atto III, dapprima in coro mentre cercano di sbigarsela con la massa di oggetti nuovi che Norina ha cacciato nell'alloggio di Pasquale, poi in un pezzo squisito nel quale commentano gli strani traffici che avvengono nella casa. Donizetti non scrisse mai un solo passaggio tedioso, com'è provato da questi stralci corali.

Don Pasquale tira le somme di un genere che aveva durato per più di un secolo. Il *Falstaff* di Verdi, scritto cinquant'anni dopo, ovviamente ha un debito verso Donizetti, ma a questo punto la composizione dell'opera lirica aveva fatto molta strada. Adesso possiamo vedere e sentire che *Don Pasquale* è una fine e non un principio, ma che soprattutto è un'opera da godersi per la sua abbondanza d'invenzione e di carattere.

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La trama

Atto I

Scena 1

Don Pasquale, un ricco ma attempato scapolo, ha deciso di prender moglie. Pasquale ha proposto di nominare suo erede il nipote Ernesto, purché faccia un buon matrimonio.

Peraltro Ernesto rifiuta la proposta essendosi innamorato della squattrinata Norina.

Pasquale intende procrearsi un figlio ed erede e ha chiesto al suo amico, il Dottor Malatesta, di procurargli una moglie appropriata. Malatesta arriva annunciando la sua scelta: una giovane donna innocente, allevata in un convento, bella come un angelo e giustappunto sua sorella. Pasquale chiede d'incontrarla immediatamente e, rimasto solo, esprime un entusiasmo irrefrenabile all'idea di diventare padre di numerosi figli.

Ernesto trova le ambizioni dello zio dapprima risibili, poi allarmanti per il suo futuro, ed è sconvolto dalla notizia che Malatesta lo ha ingannato proponendo la sua stessa sorella come sposa di Pasquale.

Scena 2

In un'altra parte della città Norina sta sfogliando un romanzo rosa, ma conclude che lei non ha gran bisogno di essere istruita in certe cose. Apprende da una lettera che Ernesto è stato diseredato e che intende lasciare Roma. Malatesta arriva, la rassicura e le propone d'impersonare sua sorella avendo progettato di farla convolare a finte nozze con Pasquale. Pasquale sa che la sorella di Malatesta abita in un convento, e non ha fatto la conoscenza di lei.

Atto II

Scena 1

Ernesto decide di cercare consolazione in lontani paesi. Giura che perdonerà Norina qualora ella trovi la felicità con un nuovo amante.

Scena 2

Malatesta presenta a Pasquale Norina sotto le finte spoglie della sorella Sofronia. Norina finge d'intimorirsi all'incontro con un uomo e con aria dimessa risponde alle domande di Pasquale sulla vita ritirata da lei condotta. Quando Malatesta insiste perché Norina riveli il suo viso Pasquale è sopraffatto dalla sua bellezza.

Malatesta fa entrare il "notaio" e viene steso un contratto di nozze. E' necessario un secondo testimone, e a questo punto irrompe nella stanza il desolato Ernesto che viene costretto a prestarsi allo scopo. Egli riconosce Norina quale sposa di Pasquale, ma Malatesta insiste perché firmi il contratto.

Ora che la cerimonia è conclusa "Sofronia" di colpo cambia carattere. Impone al suo novello sposo di far restare Ernesto in casa; avrà bisogno di nuovi servi, meglio remunerati; la casa andrà rimessa a nuovo. Pasquale si sente ingannato ed è pieno di sgomento.

Atto III

Scena 1

I nuovi servitori e gli operai stanno mettendo a soqquadro la casa. Pasquale è atterrito dalle fatture. Quando entra "Sofronia", vestita per uscire, le chiede dove sta andando. "A teatro", ella risponde. Quando Pasquale la rimbrotta, lei lo schiaffeggia. Il mondo di Pasquale va in briciole.

Mentre esce, "Sofronia" lascia cadere una lettera d'appuntamento da parte di un amante anonimo che chiede d'incontrarsi con lei quella sera in giardino. Pasquale invoca aiuto dall'amico Malatesta. I servitori commentano gli strani traffici che avvengono nella casa.

Malatesta arriva e consiglia a Pasquale una via da seguire con la dovuta discrezione. Andranno insieme zitti zitti in giardino, sorprenderanno gli amanti e si vendicheranno.

Scena 2

Ernesto fa la serenata alla sua Norina e gli amanti sono di nuovo insieme. Pasquale e Malatesta li sorprendono e Ernesto fugge.

Pasquale decide di liberarsi dalla sua novella sposa, ma ella rifiuta di farsi mettere alla porta così sommariamente. Malatesta offre una soluzione, purché abbia mano libera, cosa a cui Pasquale acconsente alacremenente. Malatesta fa venire Ernesto e gli comunica che suo zio ha

acconsentito a che egli sposi Norina e gli assicurerà un generoso vitalizio. Rassegnato, Pasquale chiede a Ernesto di mandare a chiamare la promessa sposa: ma ella è già presente. Pasquale si rende infine conto del tranello in cui è caduto e perdona la giovane coppia. Il matrimonio è una bella cosa ma non per un uomo anziano.

Traduzione: Marcella Barzetti

Andrew Shore è ora riconosciuto quale il più insigne baritono-buffo britannico. Dal suo debutto nel 1988 con la English National Opera i suoi ruoli hanno incluso Falstaff, Dieg (in *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* di Philip Glass), Papageno (*Il flauto magico*), Monsieur Calcul (*La belle Vivette*), Don Pasquale e Gianni Schicchi. Ha anche cantato con la Royal Opera, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Kent Opera e Welsh National Opera, e all'estero con New Israeli Opera, San Diego Opera, l'Opéra comique a Parigi, e a Lione, Nantes, Montpellier, Amsterdam, Vancouver e Amburgo. I suoi dischi includono *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Tosca* e *La bohème* (per Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation) e *The Makropulos Affair*.

Jason Howard si è diplomato al Trinity College of Music e al Royal College of Music Opera School. Interprete eminente, le sue presenze nelle stagioni della Scottish Opera e Opera North hanno suscitato unanime consenso di critica. Ha cantato la parte di protagonista in *Don Giovanni* e *Le nozze di Figaro* (Scottish Opera), in *Billy Budd* (Opera North) e *Eugene Onegin* (Welsh National Opera), e quella di Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*) per la English National Opera. Ha cantato a Seattle, Ginevra, Nantes e con Stuttgart Opera e l'Opera de la Bastille. In campo sinfonico-vocale Jason Howard ha partecipato alle esecuzioni dell'Ottava Sinfonia di Mahler, *The Kingdom* di Elgar e *Les troyens* di Berlioz in forma d'oratorio. La sua discografia include *The Student Prince*, *Song of Norway* e *A Little Night Music*.

Diplomatosi al Royal Northern College of Music con una borsa di studio della Peter Moores Foundation, **Barry Banks** si è affermato come uno dei più valenti tenori della sua generazione. I suoi ruoli hanno incluso Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) al Festival di Salisburgo, la Monnaie e Leipzig Opera; Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) e Argirio (*Tancredi*) per la Frankfurt Opera; Belmonte (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) per Opera Zuid; Nemorino (*The Elixir of Love*) per l'English

National Opera; Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) e la parte del protagonista in *Le comte Ory* per la Glyndebourne Touring Company ed in *Candide* per la Chicago Lyric Opera e la parte di Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) per la Welsh National Opera.

Ritenuta una dei soprani britannici più versatili e interessanti, **Lynne Dawson** svolge un'intensa attività in campo lirico, oratoriale, concertistico e discografico al massimo livello internazionale. Le sue prestazioni hanno incluso ruoli in *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *The Fairy Queen*, *Cleopatra* e *Cesare* di Graun, *Orlando*, l'*Orfeo* di Gluck, e *Tancredi*. Nel corso della sua carriera concertistica ha spesso felicemente collaborato con alcuni dei principali direttori d'orchestra quali Mehta, Barenboim, Giulini, Ashkenazy, Gardiner, Mackerras, Andrew Davis, Harnoncourt e Marriner.

Lynne Dawson ha inciso più di sessanta dischi che includono *Jephtha* e *Saul* di Handel, l'*Orfeo* di Monteverdi, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *Dido and Aeneas*, il Requiem di Mozart, *Midsummer Night's Dream* di Mendelssohn e *Carmina burana* di Orff.

Clive Bayley ha cantato il ruolo di Claggart (*Billy Budd*) quando era ancora studente presso il Royal College of Music con una borsa di

studio della Peter Moores Foundation. Già ben affermato presso le principali compagnie liriche britanniche, svolge inoltre una regolare attività concertistica. Il suo debutto con la Royal Opera è stato nel 1991, nella prima rappresentazione dell'opera di Birtwistle, *Gawain*, ed ha inoltre riscosso notevole successo con Opera North (*Gerusalemme* di Verdi), English National Opera (*Billy Budd*, *Wozzeck* e *Dr. Faust*) e Opera Factory (*Don Giovanni*). I suoi dischi comprendono *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, di Michael Berkeley, *Il Sant'Alessio*, di Landi, *Candide* e *Troilus and Cressida*.

La carriera vocale di Geoffrey Mitchell si distingue per il repertorio eccezionalmente ampio, che va dalla musica antica a quella contemporanea. Tale fatto gli ha fruttato numerosi inviti della BBC ad esibirsi nel ruolo di direttore e, in seguito, un'attività più impegnativa in sintonia con propri cantanti nonché la conseguente formazione del **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Dopo le prime registrazioni su disco il complesso ha potuto stabilire regolari rapporti di lavoro con la compagnia Musica Rara, per la quale ha registrato ben 15 opere. Attualmente gode di crescente reputazione grazie agli ulteriori incarichi ricevuti dalla BBC e dalle case discografiche internazionali.

La **London Philharmonic Orchestra**, costituita nel 1932 da Sir Thomas Beecham, ha attratto nel corso degli anni una successione incomparabile di primi direttori, tra cui Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti e Klaus Tennstedt. Attualmente si alternano periodicamente sul podio il Direttore musicale Franz Weiser-Möst ed il Presidente Bernard Haitink.

Dal 1964 questo complesso è l'orchestra sinfonica stabile della Glyndebourne Festival Opera (Compagnia lirica del Festival omonimo) e dal 1992 del Royal Festival Hall. Inoltre, ha effettuato tournée in ogni parte del mondo ed è la prima orchestra britannica ad esibirsi nell'URSS e in Cina. Le sue registrazioni discografiche le hanno meritato numerosi importanti premi.

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.

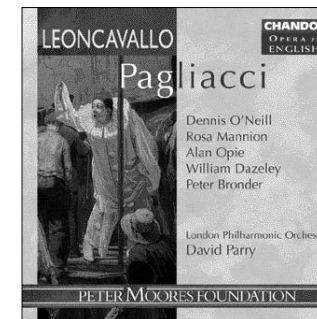
Fuori d'Europa David Parry si è esibito al festival internazionale di Hong Kong, con l'orchestra sinfonica UNAM a Città del Messico e in una serie di rappresentazioni della *Carmen* in Giappone. Nel 1996 ha diretto *Katya Kabanova* in un nuovo allestimento per il festival della Nuova Zelanda.

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*, due dischi di grandi arie operistiche, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* e *Pagliacci*.

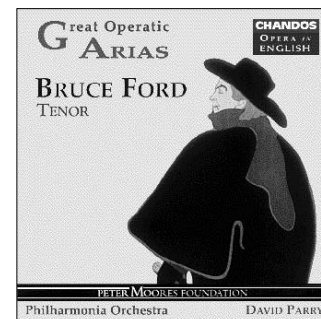
Opera in English on Chandos



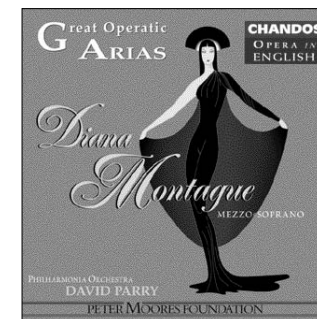
CHAN 3004



CHAN 3003



CHAN 3006



CHAN 3010

COMPACT DISC ONE

1 Overture

Act I

Scene 1

A room in Don Pasquale's house. In front, a large door; smaller ones at the sides leading to other rooms.

Pasquale (*walking up and down with his watch in his hand*)

2 Nine already;
in a moment the good doctor will be coming.
(*listening*)

Listen... Surely... I must be dreaming
just the whistling of the wind.
You've a bitter pill to swallow,
little nephew when I tell you!
I'm no donkey I assure you:
I'll outwit you or be damned.

Malatesta (*from outside*)

3 May I join you?

Pasquale

Pray enter, pray enter.
Well then?

Malatesta

Quiet now... Don't be anxious.

Pasquale

I am bursting with impatience.
Have you found her?

Malatesta

She's been found.

Pasquale

Heaven bless you! Oh heaven bless you!

Malatesta

He's a blockhead! He's a blockhead!

She's exactly what is wanted.

Let me try to describe her beauty:
my poor words must suffice, I fear.

Pasquale

Mouth tight shut and ears wide open,
I can hardly wait to hear.

Malatesta

Then listen.

4 Down from among the angelic host
this paragon came floating,
fresh as the golden lily
just when its bud is opening,
eyes that are full of laughter,
lips that make hearts beat faster,
hair darker yet than ebony,
a smile that is charm itself.

Pasquale

She is perfection! What happiness!
Be still, be still my beating heart.

Malatesta

Filled with a gentle innocence,
her soul is pure and simple,
unrivalled in humility,
in kindness an example.

Gentle to all who are wretched,
polite, sweet, unaffected,
it seems that God created her
to bring you joy at last.

Pasquale

What happiness! Ah!

Malatesta

It seems that God created her
to bring you joy at last.

Pasquale

Her family?

Malatesta

Is wealthy and decent.

Pasquale

The name is...?

Malatesta

Malatesta.

Pasquale

Then you must be related?

Malatesta (*intentionally*)

Distantly related, perhaps.

Pasquale

You are related?

Malatesta

5 She is my sister!

Pasquale

Oh, rapture!
And when will it be granted
that I may see this jewel?

Malatesta

This evening I shall bring her here.

Pasquale

This evening? This minute!
For pity's sake, I beg you!

Malatesta

You must contain your excitement.
Calm down, I say, it's dangerous.

Pasquale

Ah, for pity's sake, I beg you!

Malatesta

You must contain your excitement.

Pasquale

Ah, be kind, for pity's sake.

Malatesta (*with an air of mystery*)

She'll be here by midday.

Pasquale (*surprised*)

No, really?

Malatesta (*in confidence*)

You prepare yourself.
I'll fetch her straightaway.

Pasquale (*embracing him*)

Oh bless you!

Malatesta

Calm down, I say.

Pasquale

Oh bless you!

Malatesta

But listen...

Pasquale

Not a murmur...

Malatesta

Yes, but...

Pasquale

No more buts, no more buts...

Malatesta

If...

Pasquale

Just hurry, just hurry,
lest I should fall down dead.

[6] Ah!

Quite unexpectedly
passions inflame me;
if I give in to them
no one can blame me.
The pains of ageing
touch me no longer:
I feel as if I were
twenty or younger.
Hurry my darling one,
let me embrace you!
You shall have beautiful
children to grace you;
I can see six of them,
I can see twelve of them,
laughing and playing
for our delight.

[7] I'm a new man.

Now to speak to little nephew:
I'll make the hare-brained puppy
see that I can't be fooled with.
Why here he comes.
(*Ernesto enters.*)
A timely meeting.
I was just about to send for you.

Pray be seated.

I shan't give you a lecture,
but I need your attention for a minute.

Is it true or is it not true
that about two months ago
I offered you the hand of a young lady
of noble birth, wealthy and pretty?

Ernesto

It is true.

Pasquale

That I promised you in addition
a very good allowance and,
at my passing, all that is mine?

Ernesto

It is true.

Pasquale

But I threatened that,
if you should defy me,
I would disinherit you and,
to crush what hopes were left you,
I would marry if I had to.

Ernesto

It is true.

Pasquale

Very well.
The offer that I made you two months ago,
I make once more.

Ernesto

I cannot. I love Norina:
and my pledge has been given.

Pasquale

Yes, to a penniless hussy!

Ernesto

Show respect to a lady's misfortune:
she is honest and she is virtuous.

Pasquale

You have made your decision?

Ernesto

My decision is final.

Pasquale

Very well, prepare
to find yourself lodgings.

Ernesto

You'd chase me from the house, then?

Pasquale

Your obstinacy
frees me from any obligation.
You make your own arrangements.
I'm getting married.

Ernesto

[8] Getting married?

Pasquale

Yes indeed, sir.

Ernesto

You are?

Pasquale

I am, sir, myself, sir, in person.

Ernesto

You must pardon my amazement...

Pasquale

I'm getting married.

Ernesto (*aside*)

This is the limit.
(*to Don Pasquale*)
You're getting married?

Pasquale (*impatiently*)

I say it and I repeat it.
I, Pasquale of Corneto,
man of wealth and great distinction,
at this moment, here in person,
can announce with satisfaction,
I, Pasquale of Corneto,
my intention to be wed.

Ernesto

You are joking.

Pasquale

Joking... What nonsense!

Ernesto

No, no, you're joking!

Pasquale

You shall see tomorrow morning.
I am old but far from finished
and my powers are undiminished:
I am well enough preserved
to try my hand at a romance.
Meanwhile you, my little darling,
must prepare to leave at once.

Ernesto (*aside*)

All it needed was this madness
to destroy our only chance!

[9] Never again shall I find you,
dream chaste and simple, no never:
I longed to be united
with my beloved for ever.

Pasquale (*aside*)
He's just a silly dreamer!

Ernesto
Now all is in confusion:
my dream has become illusion,
rather than see you suffering,
dear one I bid you farewell.
Yes, rather than see your suffering,
I bid you, my dear one, farewell.

Pasquale
A stubborn little blockhead!
But there'll be no more nonsense:
the truth has really hit him.
It's clearly very painful:
his life has not been gainful,
and all this is his own fault,
he knows that very well.
The truth has really hit him:
no more nonsense!

Ernesto
[10] There's one thing I must say briefly.

Pasquale
I'm entirely at your disposal.

Ernesto
Unadvised one can be mistaken:
speak to someone of your proposal.

Malatesta, for example,
is both serious and helpful.

Pasquale
Absolutely.

Ernesto
His opinion...

Pasquale
Has been well and truly canvassed.

Ernesto
So, he warned you!

Pasquale
No, you're quite wrong there,
he's delighted and excited.

Ernesto (*greatly amazed*)
What has happened? I don't believe it...

Pasquale (*in confidence*)
You must keep the news a secret.
The... you know... the... young spinster...
Not a word though!

[11] ...is his own sister.

Ernesto (*greatly agitated*)
She's his sister! Did you say that?
She's his sister!

Pasquale
She's his sister.

Ernesto
He approves?

Pasquale
He approves.

Ernesto
He approves?
(*aside*)

[12] Ah! The fates have conspired to thwart me:
Lost is my own adored one;
by him who should support me.
Ah! I am cheated and betrayed.
Nothing is worth believing:
what is the point of living?
Can it be right to pay
the price that I have paid?

Pasquale (*aside*)
Our friend is quite astounded,
and worse than that, confounded!
He stands there like a statue,
his heart about to break.
It's right that he's so worried,
the lesson can't be hurried;
he'll learn, the feckless fellow,
life's bills must all be paid!
Ha, ha, ha, ha!

(*They both leave.*)

Scene 2

A room in Norina's house.

Norina (*reading*)
[13] With just one glance she pierced him,
right to his inmost being;
kneeling before her and weeping,
'I am your champion' he said.
That glance, so laden with promise,

so full of heav'nly sweetness,
conquered the brave Sir Richard
with such profound completeness,
he swore that he would never
think of another fair maid.
Ha, ha! Ha, ha!
(*She throws away the book.*)

[14] I too have seen how magical
a timely little glance is.
I too have seen how passionate
a smouldering romance is;
I know just how to please them,
exactly when to tease them,
to wipe away a furtive tear
or suddenly to sigh.
For men have no conception
of amorous deception;
you only need to smile at them:
they're yours until they die.
I know just how to please them,
exactly when to tease them,
or suddenly to sigh.
Yes, I have learnt the secret
of inspiring hopeless love.
Ah! Yes, the secret of inspiring love!
I'm full of adventure,
I'm clever and pretty,
I like to be witty,
to laugh and to play.
If I lose my temper
it's never long lasting:
you'll soon find me laughing
my troubles away.

I'm full of adventure,
but really kind-hearted.
[15] Still no sign of the doctor!
Oh what a nuisance!
He told me in such a hurry
of some scheme he's concocted
for tricking Don Pasquale
that I hardly understood him,
and now I'm waiting...
(*A servant enters, gives Norina a letter, and leaves.*)
Ernesto's writing... I'm trembling.
(*Malatesta enters.*)
Malatesta (*gaily*)
Very good news, Norina.
The first stage of our plan has...
Norina
Let's forget all about it.
Malatesta
What's that? How come?
Norina (*handing him the letter*)
Read this.
Malatesta (*reading*)
'My Norina, I write to you
with death in my heart.'
We can revive him.
'Don Pasquale, manipulated by that
two-faced scoundrel of a doctor,'
thank you!
'has decided to marry the doctor's own sister.
He has banished me from the house
and disinherited me.

Love commands me to renounce you.
I shall leave Rome this very day
and Europe as soon as possible.
Farewell: I pray only
for your happiness.
Your Ernesto.'
The customary nonsense.
Norina
But if he means it!
Malatesta
He shall not go, I assure you.
In just a moment I shall find him,
let him into the secret of what we're plotting:
he'll be delighted and stay with us to help.
Norina
But what exactly, pray tell me,
are we plotting?
Malatesta
To punish his nephew
for daring to oppose him
Don Pasquale has decided to get married.
Norina
That much I've gathered.
Malatesta
Well now, I, as his doctor,
seeing that he was absolutely determined,
changed my tactics and quickly,
to protect both you
and Ernesto,
pretended to take his side.
Don Pasquale knows

that I have a sister in a convent:
because he's never seen you,
you can pretend to be her and
I'll present you,
forestalling other suitors.
He'll see you and be done for.
Norina
How ingenious.
Malatesta
In a trice he'll be married:
Carlotto, my cousin,
will act as the lawyer.
What happens later... That's your affair entirely.
You turn into a witch,
drive him to distraction...
We have him at our mercy...
And then...
Norina
That's right. I can see it.
Malatesta
You're amazing.
Norina
[16] I'll find a way, on one condition:
that no harm befall my loved one;
I shall worry, nag and bicker,
that's the way to win the day.
Malatesta
You should know that for Ernesto
I have but one wish, to see him happy;
Our intention is to ensure
that Don Pasquale's made to pay.

Norina
We're agreed then; now for action.
Malatesta
Yes, let's plan the old man's destruction.
Norina
[17] Am I to be haughty?
Malatesta
No.
Norina
Am I to be gloomy?
Malatesta
No, no, that isn't what is wanted.
Norina
Should I cry a lot?
Malatesta
No, no, no, no.
Norina
Scream my head off?
Gloomy? Haughty?
No crying? I mustn't scream?
Malatesta
No, that isn't what is wanted.
Let me tell you what I mean.
You must play a simple maiden.
Norina
A simple maiden?
Malatesta
I shall teach you how to do it.

Norina

I could give you quite a lesson.

Malatesta

Put your head down, pout your lips out.

Norina

Let me give a demonstration.

Malatesta

Yes, let's see a demonstration.

Norina (*pretending*)

I'm a shy girl.

Malatesta

Brilliant! Brilliant! Brilliant!

Norina

I would never...

Malatesta

Brilliant! Brilliant! You're so clever.

That is absolutely right.

Brilliant! Brilliant! That's right!

Norina

Thank you... Bless you...

Bless you, sir... Good night.

Malatesta

Put your head on one side.

Norina

Like this...

Malatesta

Brilliant.

Let me see you pouting.

Norina

Like this...

Malatesta

Yes, brilliant.

Norina

[18] Onwards, upwards.

Yes, it's now or never.

Malatesta

Yes, onwards, upwards.

It's now or never.

Norina

My fate is calling me to bold endeavour.

Malatesta

Ah! Forward march, yes, forward march.

It's now or never:

fate is calling me to bold endeavour.

Soon we'll hear the bullets whistle

and the cannon shots resound.

Norina

Look, his aged skull is grinning,
spinning wildly round and round.

With revenge the day is crowned.

Though he's in his second childhood,

he is daring to oppose me:

I have spoken and when he knows me

he will do as I command.

Onwards, upwards,

it's now or never;

my fate is calling me to bold endeavour.

Malatesta

Look, his aged skull is grinning,

spinning wildly round and round.

Very soon we'll hear

the cannon shots resound.

Little does the poor old fellow

think he's heading for a battle:

soon we'll hear the bullets whistle

and the cannon shots resound.

Onwards, upwards,

it's now or never.

Forward march, yes, forward march,

it's now or never,

fate is calling me to bold endeavour.

Norina

Bless you, thank you, bless you sir, good night.

Yes, he will do as I command.

Malatesta

Brilliant, that is absolutely right.

Yes, very soon we'll hear the shots resound.

Act II

Scene 1

A room in Don Pasquale's house

Ernesto

[19] Poor, lost Ernesto!

Banished by my uncle,

with no one left to help me,

still I thought I had one friend:

and yet he, I discover,

consumed by hatred,

was plotting my destruction.

But my Norina... Oh heaven!

I did the right thing

to tell her in a letter

all that has happened.

To a wretched existence

destiny calls me, far from her lovely presence.

[20] I shall go, no more returning,

to some desert undiscovered,

there to spend my days in mourning

for the loss of my beloved.

But, though mountains and seas lie between us,

though cruel fortune tears us apart,

there's no power on earth, my sweetest,

can erase you from my heart.

[21] And if ever you encounter

one who awakens new emotion,

if you ever find the enchanter

who can replace your old devotion,

never fear that, in resentment,

I'd accuse you of breaking your faith:

if, at last, you find contentment,

full of gladness I'll wait for death.

I shall go, no more returning,

to some desert undiscovered etc.

(*He leaves.*)

COMPACT DISC TWO

Scene 2

Pasquale (*to the servant*)

[1] After you have shown in

Doctor Malatesta

and his companion,

don't forget what I told you:

admit no one at all.

Woe betide you if you
fail in your duty!
That's all now: leave me.
(*The servant leaves.*)
For a man in his seventies,
(hush though, my little bride must never know
that!)
one might say
that I'm sprightly and well preserved.
And now that I've prepared my toilette...
(*strutting about*)
Someone's coming...
Here they are.
In thee I place my trust, noble Venus.

Malatesta
(*leading Norina by the hand*)
[2] Don't be frightened, just believe me.

Norina
I don't like it...
Look, I'm shaking.

Malatesta
Just believe me.

Norina
Ah! Dear brother, please stay with me.
(*Malatesta motions to Don Pasquale to keep out of
sight.*)

Malatesta
Do come nearer.

Norina
I'm afraid!

Malatesta
Don't be frightened:
Do come nearer.
(*Norina advances slowly, and Malatesta runs to
Don Pasquale.*)
She was brought here without warning
from the convent just this morning;
it's her natural timidity,
but she's easy to persuade.

Pasquale and Malatesta
Modest, charming, unaffected.
Truly she's a simple girl.

Norina (*to herself*)
I will teach you a little lesson
that will set you in a whirl.

Pasquale
It's a marvel just to imagine
I might capture such a pearl.

Norina
Ah! Dear brother!

Malatesta
Don't be frightened.

Norina
I am feeling very lonely.

Malatesta
But my dearest, you're not alone here,
with your brother and Don Pasquale.

Norina
What's that? A man? Alas, I'm ruined!

Quickly, don't stand here: we must escape.
A man here! A man here! The scandal!

Malatesta
Be brave now, don't be frightened.

Pasquale (*seeing that Norina wants to leave*)
Oh Doctor! Oh Doctor!
She's so charming, so appealing:
a delightful, simple girl!

Norina (*aside*)
I will teach you a little lesson
that will set you in a whirl!

Malatesta (*aside*)
She's so cunning, so misleading!
All too soon he'll see her snarl!

Norina
Ah! Dear brother!
Look, I'm shaking!
(*aside*)

I will teach you a little lesson
that will set you in a whirl!

Malatesta
Modest, charming, unaffected:
she is truly a simple girl.

[3] There's no need to be frightened;
this is Don Pasquale,
my friend and protector,
a king among gentlemen.
(*Don Pasquale bows.*)
Now, reply to his kind greetings.

(*Norina curtsies, without looking at Don Pasquale.*)

Norina
Thank you, too kind.

Pasquale
Oh heavens, her hand's so pretty!

Malatesta (*aside*)
Look, he's done for already!

Norina (*aside*)
Oh, what a booby!

Malatesta
Do you like her?

Pasquale
She's enchanting; but, that veil is...

Malatesta
She wouldn't dare to address you
if her face were uncovered,
I'm sure of that.
First ask her some questions,
find out if you are comfortable together,
then we shall see.

Pasquale
All right then. Come on, take courage.
(*to Norina*)
Since you have been so gracious...
(*getting his words muddled up*)
Rather, since your good doctor...
brother Malatesta...
That is... I meant to say... I... Oh dear...

Malatesta (*aside*)
He's lost his head.

(to Norina)

You reply now.

Norina (*stepping forward and curtsying*)
Delighted. Thank you kindly.

Pasquale (*getting up and bowing*)
I'd imagine in the evening
you would like to have company to amuse you.

Norina
Not at all, sir.
In the convent we were alone all evening.

Pasquale
Do you go to the theatre?

Norina
I do not know what that is,
nor do I wish to.

Pasquale
My opinion entirely.
But the time has to be passed
in some way or other.

Norina
There's sewing, darning socks, doing embroidery
and tidying the kitchen:
the time passes quickly.

Malatesta (*aside*)
What an actress!

Pasquale (*aside*)
She really seems to suit me!
(to Malatesta)
That veil, for pity's sake!

Malatesta (*to Norina*)
Dear Sofronia,
would you take off your veil?

Norina (*looking shy*)
I dare not before a man.

Malatesta
That is an order.

Norina
I can only obey.
(*She takes off her veil.*)

Pasquale
(*He looks at her, jumps up and steps back, as if frightened.*)
[4] Heaven preserve me!

Malatesta
What now? Tell me...

Pasquale
An explosion inside my bosom.
For pity's sake, dear Doctor,
speak to her...speak to her... Does she want me?
I cannot get the words out,
sweating... and shivering... I'm dying!

Malatesta
Come, I'm certain
she's well disposed towards you:
I'll ask her plainly.
(to Norina)
Dearest sister, I beg you,
tell me... Would you like?... Well, briefly,

(*pointing to Don Pasquale*)
Does this gentleman please you?

Norina (*glancing at Don Pasquale, who returns the gaze*)
It's embarrassing to say it...

Malatesta
Don't worry.

Norina (*timidly*)
Yes.
(*aside*)
You silly old idiot!

Malatesta (*turning to Don Pasquale*)
She's yours now; she consents.

Pasquale (*ecstatically*)
Oh ecstasy!
I'm filled with joy!

Norina (*aside*)
Just wait until you realize!

Pasquale (*to Malatesta*)
Send quickly for the lawyer.

Malatesta
For this eventuality
I brought my lawyer with me;
he's in the anteroom:
I'll go to fetch him.
(*He exits.*)

Pasquale
Oh bless him!
He does everything for me.

Malatesta (*returning with the notary*)
Here is the lawyer.

(*Don Pasquale and Norina are seated. The servants set out in the middle of the stage a table with the necessary writing implements. On the table is a bell. The notary greets everyone, sits down and starts to write. The Doctor is standing to the right of the Notary and seems to be dictating to him.*)

Malatesta
[5] Agreement between the... etcetera,
Sofronia Malatesta,
a resident etcetera,
the usual information,
and on the other, etcetera,
Pasquale of Corneto, etcetera,

Notary
Etcetera.

Malatesta
... the titles
in the customary order...

Notary
Etcetera.

Malatesta
That both without condition,
of their own volition,
and with permission...

Notary
...ission.

Malatesta

Do undertake here most solemnly
to live as man and wife.

Pasquale (*to the Notary*)

Do you have that all down?

Notary

It's all down.

Pasquale

That's good.

(*He goes to the left of the Notary.*)

Below it write this down:

The above himself, etcetera,
of all his worldly possessions,
his property and his furniture,
hereby disposes in favour
of the forementioned, etcetera,
beloved wife and counsellor
this very day one half.

Notary

I have it.

Pasquale

And states explicitly...

Notary

... ly.

Pasquale

... that she should be acknowledged...

Notary

... owledged.

Pasquale

... both privately and in public...

Notary

... ublic.

Pasquale

... as sovereign mistress of the household,
and should be all and sundry there be held
in veneration...

Notary

... ation.

Pasquale

... without qualification...

Notary

... ation.

Pasquale

... henceforward and evermore.

Malatesta and Norina (*to Don Pasquale*)

Such generous behaviour
reveals how good you are.

Notary

The contract is written.

Please sign it.

Pasquale (*signing with alacrity*)

Ready and willing!

Malatesta (*leading Norina to the table with gentle command*)

My dearest sister, come on now,
you sign your name just here.

Notary

A witness must be missing:
we need one more I fear.

(*Whilst Norina is signing, Ernesto's voice is heard
at the door. Norina drops the pen.*)

Ernesto

⁶ You idiots, let me through here.

Norina

Ernesto!

Malatesta

Ernesto! And he knows nothing!

Norina

Now I shall really have cause to be afraid!

Malatesta

He might ruin all the plans we've made!

Ernesto

I must get in! I must get in!
Let me through here!

Pasquale

It's my nephew!

Norina and Malatesta

Unless we're very careful
he'll ruin the plans we've made!

Ernesto

(*He ignores the others and immediately confronts
Don Pasquale.*)

Duty and honour sent me

once more to take my leave, sir.

The servants would prevent me
like any common thief.

Pasquale (*to Ernesto*)

Some private business...

Though your arrival is quite timely.
The contract is completed,
two witnesses are needed:
Yes, your arrival is timely.
May I present the bride now.

Ernesto (*astounded*)

It can't be!

Malatesta (*aside to Ernesto*)

For goodness sake...

Ernesto

Oh heavens!...

Malatesta

Be quiet!

Ernesto

Norina!

Malatesta

Just do as I advise.

Ernesto

I can't believe my eyes!

Pasquale

My bride to be.

Ernesto

But this is past belief.

Malatesta (*taking Ernesto aside*)

Ah, there's no time for explaining;
if you don't stop complaining
you'll really lose Norina
now and everything you had.

Norina

A tricky situation!
The outcome could be bad!

Ernesto

Sofronia his sister!
I think I'm going mad!

Pasquale

It's better to be kind to him;
we need a name to add.

Malatesta

Just follow my instructions,
be a clever, clever lad.
(*turning to the others*)

[7] So let the marriage contract
be finalized at once.
(*He leads first Norina, then Ernesto to sign.*)

Notary (*joining the couple's hands*)

I pronounce you man and wife.

(*As soon as she has signed the contract, Norina
takes on a natural and bold demeanour.*)

Norina and Malatesta (*aside*)

The comedy begins.

Pasquale

New blood runs through my veins.
(*trying to embrace Norina*)
My darling!

Norina (*gently pushing him aside*)

Slow down a moment:
such ardour must be dampened.
One has to ask permission.

Pasquale (*with humility*)

And will you grant it?

Norina

No.

Ernesto (*laughing*)

Ha ha ha ha ha ha!

Pasquale (*angrily*)

What are you laughing at, impudent fellow?
Leave here immediately!
What did I tell you? Get out this minute!

Norina (*with disdain*)

How so?
Such vulgar, boorish behaviour
I really cannot bear.
(*to Ernesto*)

Stay with us.

(*to Don Pasquale*)

I'll have to teach you
what manners are, I fear.

Pasquale (*dismayed*)

But Doctor!...

Malatesta

Don Pasquale!

Pasquale

She's altered!

Malatesta

I'm astounded!

Pasquale

Completely changed!

Norina and Ernesto

My God, how can I stop myself
from laughing I don't know.

Malatesta

Don't worry, though,
I'll tell her it won't do.

Norina (*to Don Pasquale*)

[8] A man of such decrepitude,
so fat and so repulsive,
could never in all decency
escort a girl in public.
I need a young companion...
(*pointing to Ernesto*)
So he shall be my champion.

Pasquale

Oh! Such a thing, excuse me now,
just cannot be allowed.

Norina (*coldly*)

Not allowed?
And why?

Pasquale (*resolutely*)

That is an order!

Norina (*mockingly*)

That is an order?

Pasquale (*firmly*)

Yes.

Norina

Yes?
(*advancing towards Pasquale with affected kindness*)
Listen, my dear, I beg of you:

Forget that word entirely.
Order, let me inform you now,
order, that is what I do.

Pasquale

Oh Doctor!

Norina

Everyone must obey me now:
inside this house my word is law.

Malatesta (*aside*)

This is the crucial moment.

Pasquale

But... But this cannot be so.

Norina

No contradicting me!
Yes? What? Silence, you blockhead!
Silence, silence, quiet, silence!

Pasquale (*pointing to Ernesto*)

He mustn't... stay here...
I should?... You can?... He must!...
I should?... They are... Ah!

Ernesto and Malatesta (*aside*)

She's doing very well.

Norina (*threatening Don Pasquale*)

[9] I've used persuasion first,
and tried to treat you gently,
but soon, if you provoke me still,
I'll take my hand to you.

Malatesta

See his terrified reaction,
what a picture of petrification!

Show your mettle, Don Pasquale,
No, don't be frightened, or so dismayed.

Pasquale (*stepping back in fright*)
Would she?... Did I?... Am I dreaming?
Would she... really... hit me?
Well done! Charming!

Norina and Ernesto
Like a statue
he is waiting,
stunned with terror,
for a beating.

Ernesto
Now I'm certain that I'm starting
to decipher the plot they've laid.

Norina
Now I'm certain that my darling,
in the end, I can persuade.

Pasquale
I am glad I had a warning!
We shall see what happens next!
You be careful, Don Pasquale,
you take care, Don Pasquale, careful,
she's the sort that you must avoid.
(*A servant enters.*)

Norina
[10] I wish to see the servants,
all of them here together.
(*The servant goes out.*)

Pasquale (*aside*)
To see them for what purpose?

Malatesta (*aside*)
This won't be peaceful either.
(*Two servants and a major-domo enter. Norina laughs.*)

Norina
Three in total! Ha ha ha ha!
That is marvellous:
I shan't be losing count.
(*to the major-domo*)
Now you there, from your uniform
it seems that you're the butler.
(*The major-domo bows.*)
As from this very moment
I'll double what we pay.
(*The major-domo bows repeatedly.*)

Pasquale
What?!

Norina
Listen very carefully:
these are my orders today.
I have to have more servants:
go out and hire some new ones,
attentive and observant,
such as will grace our home.

Pasquale (*to Norina, angrily*)
And when you have quite finished...

Norina (*to Don Pasquale*)
I've only just begun yet.
(*to the major-domo*)
Two coaches in the stable
as soon as you are able,

with drivers and with horses
fitting to our resources.

Pasquale
And when you have quite finished...

Norina
I've only just begun yet.

Pasquale
That's fine!

Malatesta (*aside*)
Brilliant!

Norina
The house is simply filthy...

Pasquale
The house is?

Norina
Redecorate it quickly;
this antiquated furniture
will have to be replaced.
My personal requirements
include new clothes and diamonds;
it's urgent that my hair is dressed
and find a manicurist.

Pasquale
Will you ever finish?
I ask you... What next?
What? If... I... You...

Malatesta (*to Ernesto*)
Watch her! Listen! Brilliant!
Don't you agree?

Pasquale
When will you ever finish?

Norina
See that these matters are organized...

Ernesto and Malatesta (*aside*)
He'll have a heart attack.

Pasquale
Let me speak...

Norina
See that these matters are organized.

Pasquale
I feel as if I'll choke.

Norina
We are no longer a joke.

(*The major-domo and servants leave.*)

Pasquale
Who's paying?

Norina
How silly! You are.

Pasquale
I tell you now in private,
I'll pay for nothing.

Norina
No?

Pasquale (*getting into a temper*)
No! Am I in charge or not here?

Norina (*coldly*)
That makes me laugh a lot, dear.

(forcefully)

In charge where I'm the mistress?

Malatesta *(interrupting)*

Now, sister...

Norina *(to Don Pasquale, with mounting rage)*

I've had enough now...

Ernesto *(aside)*

Well done!

Norina

You are an idiot...

Malatesta

Now, sister...

Pasquale

I married you: I must be.

Norina

A lout, I say,
who's senile and demented.

Ernesto *(aside)*

Brilliant!

Pasquale

I am?

Malatesta *(to Don Pasquale, who is fuming with rage)*

I must implore you, brother...

Pasquale

It's you who are demented!

Norina

Yes, you old idiot,

I'll bring you to your senses by force,
if I've no choice!

Malatesta

Now sister, now sister, but brother, dear brother,
be careful, be careful!

Ernesto

If this goes on much longer
he will have a heart attack!

Pasquale

You'll see that I'm in charge here.

Norina

You idiot, you idiot!

Pasquale

Idiot? Idiot?

^[11] I've been cheated and disparaged:

I am furious, almost tearful;
such a torment of a marriage
I can never learn to bear.

Ernesto *(to Norina)*

Now I can see it, I'm delighted;
for a moment I was tearful,
but the love that we had plighted
drove you on to set a snare.

Norina *(to Ernesto)*

Now you see that I was slighted,
that you need never have been so tearful,
when the love that we had plighted
drove me onward to set a snare.

Malatesta *(to Don Pasquale)*

You seem a little too excited,

dearest brother, be more careful!
I'm offended and I'm slighted:
it's my sister you can't bear.

Pasquale

Such a torment of a marriage
I shall never learn to bear.
I've been cheated and disparaged:
I am furious past believing.

Norina and Ernesto

Don Pasquale, poor old fellow
is so angry he's past repair.

Malatesta

Yes Don Pasquale, poor old fellow,
must not see you two flirting there.
Do be careful.

Pasquale *(to Norina, ironically)*

The house is simply filthy...

Norina

Yes.

Pasquale

And antiquated furniture...

Norina

Yes.

Pasquale

We've fifty guests for dinner...

Norina

Yes.

Pasquale

New diamonds and new clothes,
decorations and dinners...

Norina

Yes, yes, yes, yes!

Ernesto and Malatesta

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Pasquale

Yes, yes, ah!
I've been cheated and disparaged.

Malatesta

I beg you, be more careful.

Norina and Ernesto

Oh Don Pasquale, poor old fellow.

Pasquale

I am furious past believing.

Malatesta

Dearest brother, be more careful.

Norina and Ernesto

He's so angry, he's past repair.

Pasquale

I'm so angry that I'm gasping:
I shall perish for lack of air,
I shall die for lack of air.

Norina *(to Ernesto)*

Now you see that I was slighted etc.

Ernesto *(to Norina)*

Now I see it I'm delighted etc.

Malatesta

Do be careful with your flirting etc.

Act III

Scene 1

A room in Don Pasquale's house. Women's clothing is scattered on the tables, chairs and the floor: dresses, hats, furs, scarves, laces, boxes etc. Don Pasquale is sitting in utter despair at a table groaning under bills and invoices. There are servants in attendance. From Norina's apartments comes a hairdresser with combs, creams, powders and curling tongs. He crosses the stage and exits.

Servants

- [12] Bring the diamonds, quickly!
Here's the bonnet! Quickly, quickly!
Let me take it.
(The milliner enters, carrying a mountain of boxes, and goes into Norina's rooms. A maid hands a fur coat and a large bouquet of flowers to a servant.)
Put all that inside the carriage.
There's a fan here.
A veil too.
And flowers. Quickly!
Give the order for the horses to be harnessed straightaway.
Quickly, quickly!

Pasquale

With the house in such an uproar
I'll go mad within the day.

Servants

Bring the carriage.

Pasquale

I'll go mad within the day.

Servants

Get the horses.
Bring the carriage.
Quickly, quickly!

Pasquale *(examining the bills)*

- [13] Let's see now: to the dress shop,
a hundred sovereigns. Thank you kindly!
The Carriage-builder's six hundred. What a bargain!
Nine hundred and fifty to the jeweller's.
For the horses... To the devil with the horses,
with this spending and with this marriage.
If she goes on much longer in this fashion
we'll see old Don Pasquale
choosing between the madhouse and the
poorhouse.
Whatever can it mean, all this nonsense?
(thoughtfully)
Going out late without me
on our first day of marriage!
(resolutely)
I must oppose her firmly
and stop her going.
But... It must be admitted,
the girl has a way of staring,
ways of playing the diva!
I'll try to do it, come what may:
At least then, if the attempt's a failure...
Here she is. Be ready!
(Norina runs in and, ignoring Don Pasquale, is

about to go out. She is dressed up, fan in hand.)

- [14] Well good evening! You're in a hurry;
tell me where: it's most confusing.

Norina

I am going to the theatre,
where I find it more amusing.

Pasquale

But your husband might be tempted
to interfere in such a matter.

Norina

He'd do better to be silent:
no one listens...

Pasquale *(imitating her)*

To his chatter?

Norina

He'd do better to be silent:
no one listens to his chatter.

Pasquale *(with mounting rage)*

I advise you to be careful,
not to push me to the limit.
To your bedroom now, this minute!
I insist that you shall stay.

Norina *(mockingly)*

When I tell you to be less heated
and be quiet, I mean it kindly.
It's your bedtime: you sleep soundly,
and we'll talk another day.
(She goes towards the door.)

Pasquale *(barring her way)*

I forbid you!

Norina *(ironically)*

Do you really?

Pasquale

This is tiring.

Norina *(about to leave)*

This is boring.

Pasquale

I forbid you!

Norina

I won't listen.

Pasquale

This is tiring.

Norina

This is boring.

Pasquale

Shameless hussy!

Norina *(angrily)*

Old man, I warned you...

Pasquale

Shameless hussy!

Norina *(slapping his face)*

Take this!

Pasquale

Ah!

Norina

That will teach you not to shout.

Pasquale *(aside)*

- [15] It is over, Don Pasquale:

you are absolutely broken!
There is nothing left to do now
but to crawl away and die.

Norina (*aside*)
I chastise him far from gladly,
but I have to treat him badly:
Now's the climax of our story,
now's the moment to do or die.
(*to Don Pasquale, with determination*)
So, I'm leaving...

Pasquale
Go, by all means,
but forget all thought of returning.

Norina
I shall see you in the morning.

Pasquale
Every entrance will be locked...

Norina
Till the morning, till the morning!

Pasquale
Every entrance will be locked.

Norina
(*She is about to go, but turns back.*)
Ah! Husband!

[16] My husband, my sweetest,
don't be such a tyrant,
be docile, be pliant:
remember that you're old.
Dear grandpa, to bed now,
sweet dreams fill your head now,

and I'll wake you up
if you do what you're told!

Pasquale
Divorce me, you terrible woman!
You never shall force me
to do what I'm told.
Oh what a disaster!
If I don't go under
it will be a wonder
sublime to behold.

Norina
To bed now, dear husband...

Pasquale
I shan't be your husband.

Norina
To bed now, dear grandpa...

Pasquale
I shan't be your grandpa.

Norina
To bed now, dear grandpa etc.

Pasquale
I shan't be your grandpa etc.
(*Norina leaves. As she goes out she drops a piece of paper which Don Pasquale picks up.*)

[17] Another bill for bonnets or for ribbons
which my dear wife has accidentally left here:
(*He reads the note.*)
'My beloved Sofronia...'
What! What's all this then?
'Between nine and ten o'clock tonight,

I shall wait outside the garden
behind the north-facing wall.
Making absolutely sure
that you have not been followed,
let me in through the secret gate.
We will be safe amongst the bushes.
I meant to tell you that I shall let you know
when I have arrived by singing a serenade.
I love you. Be mine for ever.
Farewell.'

(*furios*)
What an outrage!
She'd like to see me dying of anger!
Ah! I am going mad, I cannot bear it!
(*ringing the bell*)
I'll send for Malatesta.
(*to the servants who appear*)
Here! Go quickly to the Doctor's,
tell him that I am ill,
that I am dying!

(*aside*)
This anxiety could kill me,
there's no denying!
(*Pasquale exits.*)

Servants

[18] Everyone endlessly coming and going!
Ding ding from here, ding, ding, ding.
Dong dong from there, dong, dong, dong.
Never a peaceful moment anywhere.
But it's a nice house, all newly furnished.
I'm quite astonished they spend so much.
When lunch was over, there was a scene then.

They started quickly! Tell us it all.
'No!' said the husband, 'You'll stay at home now'
'Really?' his wife said, 'I'm going out!'
Oh! Though he resisted,
she just insisted,
she is the sort that no one can touch!
There is a nephew
she seems quite fond of...
whom his old uncle
wants to get rid of.
Our little mistress
is young and fiery.
But her poor husband
is old and weary.
Hush now, be careful.
Someone is coming.
We can do well here...
They spend so much!

(*The servants all leave.*)

Malatesta (*appearing at the door*)
[19] We're agreed then.

Ernesto
I've got it. I'll go to the garden
to prepare my performance.

Malatesta
While I am giving mine here.
Above all,
make sure the old man doesn't see you.

Ernesto
Don't worry.

Malatesta

The moment you hear us coming...

Ernesto

A swish of the cloak and exit!

Malatesta

That's it exactly.

Ernesto

I'll see you later.

(*He departs.*)

Malatesta

This unexpected summons
is sure sign that our note
about the 'nocturnal assignation'
has reached its target.
Here he is!
He's so pale and so pathetic,
a shadow of his former self...
It makes me feel quite guilty...
I must resume the doctor's bedside manner.
(*walking towards Don Pasquale*)

²⁰ Don Pasquale...

Pasquale (*solemnly and sadly*)

Ah, brother... a living corpse
is standing here before you.

Malatesta

Can you tell me exactly what's the matter?

Pasquale (*without taking any notice, almost speaking to himself*)

To think that, for the sake of being spiteful
I am reduced to this!
I'd give Ernesto a thousand Norinas!

Malatesta (*to himself*)

I'm delighted to hear it!

(*to Don Pasquale*)

But will you please explain...

Pasquale

At least half a year's income
has gone on bonnets and ribbons!
But that is nothing.

Malatesta

What else then?

Pasquale

My dear young wife wished to go to the theatre:
I attempted to dissuade her;
she won't listen to reason, she simply mocks me;
I forbade it... and with her hand she slapped my
face!

Malatesta (*amazed*)

What! She struck you?

Pasquale

Yes, she struck me, yes, indeed, sir!

Malatesta (*aside*)

Here we go!
(*to Don Pasquale*)

You are lying:
Sofronia is the sort of woman
who can see, who can hear, can do no evil:
This must be just a pretext to remove her,
some tale that you've invented.
My poor sister, unjustly accused
of being disrespectful!

Pasquale

My cheek can act as witness:
it shows you what happened.

Malatesta

It is not true.

Pasquale

It's completely true.

Malatesta

I beg you, it is not proper
to shout in that manner.

Pasquale

But it's you who have made me
lose my temper!

Malatesta (*calming himself*)

Very well, continue.
(*to himself*)

Keep it up, Malatesta!

Pasquale

The slap is nothing. Oh no!
There is worse to come yet;
pray read this.
(*He hands Malatesta the letter.*)

Malatesta (*reading, feigning first surprise and then horror*)

I can't believe it!

(*aside*)

Keep your face straight.

(*to Don Pasquale*)

How is it that my sister,
so well behaved and kindly...

Pasquale

You may think she is kindly:
I know she isn't.

Malatesta

I'm still not certain
that she is really guilty.

Pasquale

I'm so completely certain of her guilt now
that I called you here tonight expressly
that you might witness my act of vengeance.

Malatesta

All right... but on reflection...

Pasquale

I've thought of every detail... Just be patient.
Be seated.

Malatesta

I'll sit down then, but... speak quietly.

Pasquale

²¹ No more words, not even whispers:
straightaway now to the garden!
Taking all the servants with us
to surround the woods and guard them.
When we find the guilty couple,
they will know that they're in trouble:
at my signal they'll be handcuffed
and led off at once to jail.

Malatesta

I would say... let's not be foolish:
we two only should go down there;
we should hide amongst the bushes

and see everything we can there.
If we catch them in flagrante,
we can threaten them with jail,
but accept their solemn promise
to conclude the sordid tale.

Pasquale

If I were to be so lenient,
it would be much too convenient...

Malatesta

But remember, she's my sister.

Pasquale

She shall not come back to my house.
I won't compromise at all.

Malatesta

This affair is inauspicious:
your response must be judicious.

Pasquale

Be judicious, be expeditious, but...
I won't have her in my house, no, no.

Malatesta

But a scandal would annoy you...

Pasquale

That is nothing.

Malatesta

And the shame might yet destroy you.

Pasquale

That is nothing.

Malatesta

It's a wrong move, not a strong move.

Let's consider how we act.

(He reflects a moment.)

Pasquale *(imitating him)*

Not a strong move, it's a wrong move...

But she slapped me, that's a fact.

(Don Pasquale and Malatesta ponder.)

I would say that...

Malatesta *(with sudden inspiration)*

Now I have it!

Pasquale

Heaven bless you!

Tell me, tell me quickly.

Malatesta

We should both observe them
closely in the darkness
till we're absolutely certain:
if they're guilty of the crime,
then I will take my sister home.

Pasquale

You are brilliant, you are brilliant!

That's a good plan, now I'm happy.

Malatesta

Yes.

Pasquale

Now I'm happy.

^[22] What a disaster,

my little schemer:

I am the master,

you are the dreamer;

I'm catching up now,

I'm overtaking,
there's no mistaking:
you'll have to pay.
I will not tolerate
the way you cheated me,
your smiling tenderness,
beguiling tearfulness.
See the moment comes
when I'm revenged on you:
you're in the trap I laid
and there you'll stay.
I am the master,
I'm overtaking,
there's no mistaking,
you'll have to pay.

Malatesta *(aside)*

The poor thing's dreaming
that he's the master,
but all his scheming
leads to disaster:
blinded by anger,
old and unwary,
caught in our snare
he can't get away.
While he enumerates
the possibilities,
he cannot realize
that they are fantasies,
or see, the simpleton,
that he himself will fall
into the trap he laid
by break of day.

Blinded by anger,
old and unwary,
caught in our snare
he can't get away.
(to Don Pasquale)
If they're guilty of the crime,
I will take my sister home.

Pasquale

You are brilliant! Now I'm happy.

Malatesta

We'll observe them
in the darkness,
if they're guilty...

Pasquale

We'll observe them
in the darkness,
if they're guilty,
you'll take her back then.

Malatesta *(aside)*

While he enumerates
the possibilities,
he cannot realize
that they are fantasies,
or see, the simpleton,
that he himself will fall
into the trap he laid.

Pasquale *(aside)*

See if I tolerate
the way you cheated me,
your smiling tenderness,
beguiling tearfulness.

See the moment comes
when I'm revenged on you:
you're in the trap I laid
and there you'll stay.
What a disaster!

Malatesta and Pasquale
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Malatesta
Caught in our snare,
he can't get away!

Pasquale
There's no mistaking,
you'll have to pay.

Scene 2

A grove in Don Pasquale's garden. On the left, steps leading to the house; to the right a small gate in the background.

Ernesto (*from outside*)
[23] The night is calm,
the April air like balm;
the moon is high,
its radiance fills the sky.

Chorus
The moon is high,
its radiance fills the sky.

Ernesto
The heav'ns above
breathe the mystery of love;
my sweet, say how

you can deny me now!
The breeze's whispering voice
is love replying,
the river's murmuring play
my secret sighing.

Chorus
Ah! My sweet, say how
you can deny me now!

Ernesto
My sweet, say how
you can deny me now!
For when my life is over you will cry
to think that for your hard heart I did die.

Chorus
For when his life is over, then you will cry
to think that for your hard heart, yes, he did die.

Ernesto
Forever faithful, still burning with desire,
my heartless Nina, my heartless love.
forever true, still burning with desire,
my heartless love, for your sake I expire.
For when my life is over, then you will cry
to think that for your hard heart I did die.

(Norina enters cautiously from the from the summer house. She opens the gate for Ernesto, who drops his cloak as he enters.)

Norina and Ernesto
[24] Come, say the words I long for,
say you are mine forever;
never to part, no, never,

our lives shall henceforward be one.
Your tender voice shall quieten
the tempest that rages inside me:
Ah! With you, my love, beside me,
I shall not tremble alone,
I'll tremble no more alone.

(Don Pasquale and Malatesta creep through the gate, carrying lanterns. They disappear behind the trees.)

Pasquale
[25] Here they are! Ready to pounce?

Malatesta
Ready and willing.

Pasquale (*shining the lantern on Norina's face*)
Who goes there?

Norina
Robbers! God help me!

Pasquale
Quiet!

Norina
God help me, God help me, God help me!

Pasquale
Quiet!
Where's your sweetheart?

Norina
Who?

Pasquale
The shameless fellow you allowed
to make advances.

Norina (*resentfully*)
My dear husband, I'm most offended:
there was no one else here.

Malatesta (*aside*)
She's so brazen.

Pasquale
That's a barefaced lie!
He's hiding here, I know it.

(Don Pasquale and Malatesta search the grove, while Ernesto slips quietly into the house.)

Norina
I can only repeat that there was no one:
you must have dreamt it.

Pasquale
What are you doing so late out in the garden?

Norina
I came to take the air.

Pasquale (*angrily*)
Take the air! You worthless woman!
Out of my house this minute, or I shall...

Norina
Hey, hey, my noble husband,
did I hear you correctly?

Pasquale
Get out, and quickly.

Norina
Just wait a moment.
This house is my house: I like it.

Pasquale

Hellfire and damnation!

Malatesta (*softly to Don Pasquale*)

Don Pasquale, leave everything to me;
only you must not contradict me.
Have I carte blanche?...

Pasquale (*softly to Malatesta*)

You do, sir.

Norina (*aside*)

And now for some amusement.

Malatesta (*quietly to Norina*)

Amazed followed by furious –
as we rehearsed it.
(*aloud*)

Dear sister, please listen:
I have your welfare at heart.
I want you to be spared humiliation.

Norina (*angrily*)

What humiliation?

(*Don Pasquale follows the conversation with great interest.*)

Malatesta (*aside*)

That's excellent.

(*aloud*)

A newly married woman
comes to live here tomorrow...

Norina

Another woman!
Here to insult me?

Malatesta (*softly to Norina*)

This is the moment when you lose your temper.

Norina

Who can she be?

Malatesta

Ernesto's bride, Norina.

Norina (*scornfully*)

That crafty little flirt, that scheming hussy!

Pasquale (*aside*)

Well done there, Doctor!

Malatesta (*aside*)

We're getting somewhere.

Norina

That person here? It's past believing!
Norina and I under the very same roof!
No, never! I'd sooner leave.

Pasquale (*aside and forcefully*)

Heaven grant that she does!

Norina (*changing tone*)

But... Wait a moment...
If all this talk of marriage were just to trick me?
I need to have some proof first.

Malatesta

I see that.

(*to Don Pasquale*)

Don Pasquale, you have no choice:
we will have to perform a genuine marriage;
if not, she will not go.

Pasquale (*to Malatesta*)

Do you really think so?

Malatesta (*calling*)

Hey! Inside there.

Go quickly for Ernesto.

Ernesto

[26] Here I am.

Malatesta

Your uncle, the noble Don Pasquale,
will let you wed Norina,
with an allowance of
four thousand crowns per annum.

Ernesto

Ah, dearest uncle!
Is this true?

Malatesta (*to Don Pasquale*)

This is not the time to hesitate:
Just say yes.

Norina

I object.

Pasquale

And I consent.

(*to Ernesto*)

Run and get your Norina;
bring her here and I shall bless you both this
instant.

Malatesta

He needn't go far, his bride is waiting.

Pasquale

What's that? Explain yourself...

Malatesta

This is Norina.

Pasquale

This is Norina? I can't believe it!
That means Sofronia's...

Malatesta

...still in the convent.

Pasquale

But we were married!

Malatesta

That was all sham:
the part of the lawyer
was played by my cousin.

Pasquale

Outrageous perfidy!

Malatesta

We didn't want you
to do something foolish.

Norina

Try to forgive us!

Ernesto

Please don't be obstinate!

Pasquale

I can't believe it!
Outrageous perfidy!

Norina, Ernesto and Malatesta

Come now, be generous!

Pasquale

What a deliverance!
(*to Norina and Ernesto*)

[27] Let's forget everything; you shall be married.
Go with my blessing and heaven's too!

Malatesta

Well done, well done, Don Pasquale!
There's a moral in this story.

Norina (*smiling*)

There's a moral in this story
that is easy to discover.
Let me tell you for the glory
of the charming god of love.
When your old wits start to soften,
you might fall for someone younger:
but it happens all too often
that your troubles have just begun.

Ernesto and Malatesta

Yes, the moral was a lesson
Don Pasquale had to learn.
From this clever little person
who knows more than anyone.

Pasquale

Yes, the moral was a lesson

which I really had to learn.
So this clever little person
really did me a good turn.

Servants

Yes, this clever little person
knows far more than anyone.

Norina

There's a moral in this story
that is easy to discover.
Let me tell you for the glory
of the charming god of love.
When your old wits start to soften,
you might fall for someone younger:
but it happens all too often
that your troubles have just begun.

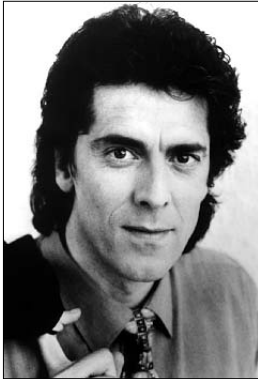
Servants

Yes, Don Pasquale had to learn.

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Andrew Shore



Jason Howard

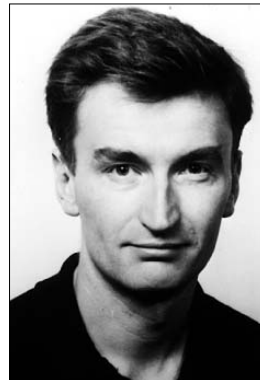
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Producer Brian Couzens

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Assistant engineers Peter Newble and Richard Smoker

Editor Peter Newble

Recording venue Blackheath Concert Halls; 15, 17, 18, 20 & 21 November 1997

Operas administrator Sue Shortridge

Repetiteur/Staging assistant Duncan Williams

Language adviser Charles Kilpatrick

Front cover Photo of Andrew Shore as Don Pasquale in Opera North's 1990 production of *Don Pasquale* (photographer: Donald Cooper)

Back cover Photo of David Parry

Design montage D.M. Cassidy

Booklet typeset by Dave Partridge

Booklet editor Kara Reed

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Printed in the EU

DONIZETTI: DON PASQUALE



CHANDOS DIGITAL

CHAN 3011(2)

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

Don Pasquale

Opera buffa in three acts, text by Giovanni Ruffini and the composer, after A. Anelli

English translation by David Parry

Don Pasquale, an elderly bachelorAndrew Shore *baritone*
Dr Malatesta, friend of Don Pasquale,
and good friend of ErnestoJason Howard *baritone*
Ernesto, Don Pasquale's nephewBarry Banks *tenor*
Norina, a young widowLynne Dawson *soprano*
A Notary.....Clive Bayley *bass*

COMPACT DISC ONE

TT 54:49

COMPACT DISC TWO

TT 72:13

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir
London Philharmonic Orchestra
David Parry conductor

(DDD)

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