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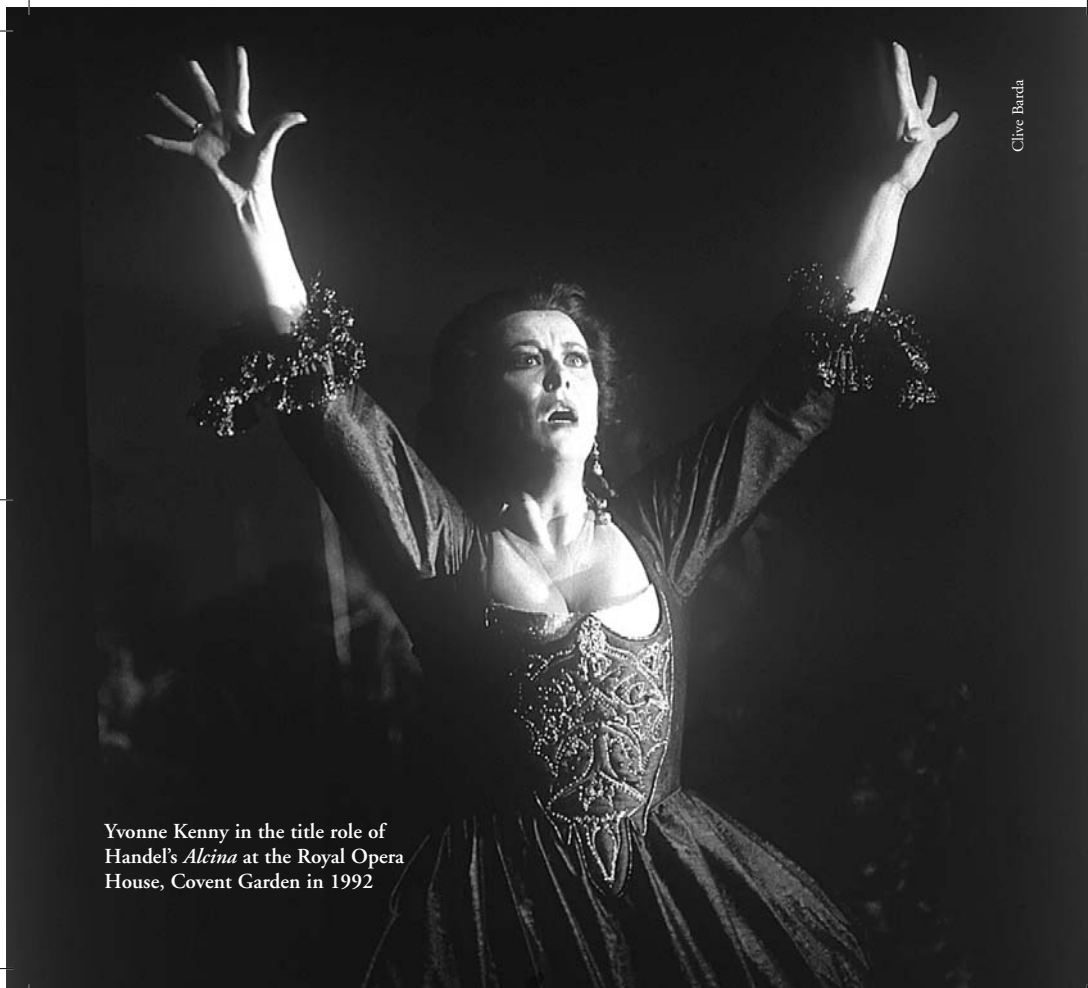
YVONNE KENNY

Great Operatic ARIAS

CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



Clive Barda

Yvonne Kenny in the title role of Handel's *Alcina* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1992

Great
Operatic
Arias
with
Yvonne Kenny

	Time	Page
Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)		
<i>from Gianni Schicchi</i>		
Lauretta's Solo		
1	2:40	56
		'Oh, my beloved father' (O mio babino caro)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)		
<i>from Idomeneo, Act III</i>		
Iliás's Aria		
2	5:27	56
		'Gentle zephyrs, soft caressing' (Zeffiretti lusinghieri)
Henry Purcell (1659–1695)		
<i>from The Indian Queen, Act I</i>		
Aerial Spirit's Solo		
3	1:33	56
		'I attempt from love's sickness'
George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)		
<i>from Rinaldo, Act II</i>		
Almirena's Aria		
4	4:18	56
		'Hear thou my weeping' (Lascia ch'io pianga)

	Time	Page
Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)		
<i>from Linda from Chamonix, Act I</i>		
Linda and Carlo's Love Duet		
5	6:42	56
		'Linda! Linda!' with Barry Banks tenor
Georges Bizet (1838–1875)		
<i>from The Pearl Fishers, Act II</i>		
Leïla's Recitative and Aria		
6	6:47	58
		'I'm all alone here in the night' (Me voilà seule dans la nuit) – 'As once before, with night to hide him' (Comme autrefois dans la nuit sombre)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart		
Concert Aria for Soprano and Orchestra		
7	3:29	59
		Thanks be to you, o gracious patrons! , KV 383 (Nehmt meinen Dank, ihr holden Gönner!)
Henry Purcell		
<i>from King Arthur, Act V</i>		
Venus' Song		
8	3:04	59
		'Fairest isle'

	Time	Page
George Frideric Handel <i>from Joshua</i> Achshah's Air		
9 'Oh! Had I Jubal's lyre'	2:40	59
Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868) <i>from Semiramide, Act II</i> Semiramis and Arsaces' Duet		
10 'Dark day of dread!' (Giorno d'orror!) cadenza: Patric Schmid with Della Jones mezzo-soprano	4:57	59
Alfredo Catalani (1854–1893) <i>from La Wally, Act I</i> Wally's Aria		
11 'I'll float into the distance' (Ebben? Ne andrò lontana)	4:20	60
Gioachino Rossini <i>from William Tell, Act II</i> Mathilde's Romance		
12 'Dark, sombre wood' (Sombre forêt)	4:59	60

	Time	Page
Georges Bizet <i>from The Pearl Fishers, Act II</i> Leïla and Nadir's Love Duet		
13 'Leïla! Leïla!' 'Lord Brahma! He is here!' ('Léïla! Léïla!' 'Dieu puissant le voilà!') – 'Your heart was never tuned to mine' (Ton cœur n'a pas compris le mien) with Barry Banks tenor	7:31	60
Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) <i>from The Rake's Progress, Act III</i> Anne's Lullaby		
14 'Gently, little boat' with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir	3:43	62
Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900) <i>from The Mikado, Act II</i> Yum-Yum's Song		
15 'The sun, whose rays'	3:01	63
Carl Zeller (1842–1898) <i>from The Bird Seller</i> 'When you're sent roses in this land' (Schenkt man sich Rosen in Tirol)		
16	3:02	63

Time Page

Cole Porter (1891–1964)

from Kiss Me, Kate, Act I

Lilli Vanessi's Song: So in love

17 'Strange, dear, but true, dear'

4:20 63

Rutland Boughton (1878–1960)

from The Immortal Hour, Act II

Midir's 'Faery Song'

18 'How beautiful they are'

2:08 64
TT 75:46

Yvonne Kenny soprano

Philharmonia Orchestra

Gareth Hancock, Stephen Clarke assistant conductors

David Parry



Sue Adler

Yvonne Kenny as Alice Ford, with Bryn Terfel in the title role, in the 1999 production of Verdi's *Falstaff* at Sydney Opera House

Great Operatic Arias

Only since the middle of the twentieth century has England produced composers of opera who can be reckoned the equals of their colleagues in other countries. So it may seem surprising that the 1680s, at the end of the very century that saw the birth of opera in Italy, produced two fledgling operas in English: John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. That they led nowhere was partly due to the taste of the times; but Purcell, composer of music for church and state, was very much a man of the theatre, writing incidental music to a large number of mostly forgotten plays.

King Arthur (1691) and *The Indian Queen* (1695) are 'semi-operas', where the main characters do not sing and the drama is not generally advanced by the music. The text of *King Arthur* is by John Dryden, who had changed sides just once too often and under William and Mary was now an ex-Poet Laureate. 'Fairest isle' [p. 59] is a patriotic song for Venus, set by Purcell as a courtly minuet. In *The Indian Queen*, the tale of an improbable conflict between the Mexicans and

the Incas, 'I attempt from love's sickness' [p. 56] is sung by an Aerial Spirit.

If Purcell had not died so young... As it was, the man who stepped into his shoes and dominated musical life in London for the first half of the eighteenth century was George Frideric Handel. Between 1711 and 1741 he wrote over thirty operas, mostly for the King's Theatre, Haymarket (the earliest precursor of the present-day Her Majesty's Theatre).

Rinaldo was the first: it is based on a subject dear to many composers of the baroque and classical eras, the obsessive love of the Saracen sorceress Armida for the crusader hero Rinaldo. In 'Hear thou my weeping' [p. 56] the captive Almirena, who is betrothed to Rinaldo, begs for her freedom in simple but moving accents. Her aria illustrates the *da capo* format of the time, where the third and final section is a repeat, embellished by the singer, of the first.

By the 1740s Handel, having abandoned opera, was engaged in producing a series of oratorios: dramas on sacred subjects, performed in theatres but unstaged. The principal differences from the operas lie in the use of English rather than Italian and in the

introduction of a substantial role for the chorus. *Joshua*, which like its successors was written for Covent Garden, was first heard in 1748. 'Oh! Had I Jubal's lyre' [p. 59] is a joyful song for Achsah, one half of the love interest that the librettist included to complement the victories of Joshua.

Only twenty-two years separate the death of Handel from the production of *Idomeneo*, the earliest of Mozart's great operas, in 1781. The setting, classical antiquity, would have been familiar to the older man, but the courtliness and brilliance of the baroque had given way to the less formal style of the classical era.

The opera is set in Crete, after the Trojan war. Idomeneus has returned to his kingdom from the siege of Troy, having sent Ilia, daughter of King Priam, ahead with the other Trojan prisoners. Idomeneus' son Idamantes and Ilia have fallen in love, though neither has confessed it. In 'Gentle zephyrs' [p. 56], which comes at the beginning of Act III, Ilia at last admits her love to herself, tenderly asking the breezes to tell Idamantes of her feelings for him.

Thanks be to you, o gracious patrons! [p. 59], dated 10 April 1782, is a concert aria that Mozart wrote for his sister-in-law, the soprano Aloysia Lange. In simple phrases the singer takes a temporary leave of her faithful

public. She shares the platform, so to speak, with three woodwind instruments, for which Mozart weaves a characteristically delectable pattern. 'Such ardent feelings stir my heart' is identical with a phrase in his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* which he completed the same month.

Operas set in ancient times were still being written well into the nineteenth century. *Semiramide*, first performed at the Teatro la Fenice in Venice in 1823, was the last of Rossini's operas for Italy. Semiramis, queen of Babylon, has murdered her husband and attempted to kill her son. Fifteen years later she proposes to marry one of her commanders, Arsaces, and to make him consort, dropping her lover and fellow murderer. Arsaces, however, is none other than her own son. Informed of this he confronts Semiramis: she offers him her life, but his affections as a son are too strong. In 'Dark day of dread!' [p. 59] Semiramis and Arsaces sing of their mixed emotions, their melting thirds and sixths suggesting their identity of feeling.

With *William Tell*, first seen at the Paris Opéra in 1829, Rossini took his leave of the stage. The opera's great length, and the taxing tenor role of Arnold, make performances today extremely rare. Arnold, a Swiss

mercenary, has served the Austrian enemy and fallen in love with Mathilde, a Habsburg princess. In 'Dark, sombre wood' [p. 60] Mathilde sings of the peace she has found in her love for him. In two strophes, the second an exact musical repeat, Rossini combines delicacy with passion in a most touching way.

In his short life, Rossini's younger contemporary Donizetti wrote over sixty operas. **Linda from Chamonix**, one of the last, was first performed in 1842 at the Kärntnertheater in Vienna, where Donizetti had been appointed musical director of the annual season of Italian opera. Set in the France of Louis XV and described as a 'melodramma semi-serio', it features the unimaginably innocent Linda and her would-be fiancé Carlo. He is a viscount, masquerading as a painter, and his hopes of marrying Linda are blighted by parental interference. In their Act I duet, 'Linda! Linda!' [p. 56], Carlo assures her of his love, while hinting at a secret. They look forward to their wedding in a phrase ('Come blessed day of highest joy') that, heard again at the end of the opera, restores the wits of the now demented heroine.

The Pearl Fishers, the second of Bizet's operas to be staged, was played eighteen times in 1863 before disappearing from the

repertory until after the composer's death. Best known for the duet for tenor and baritone, it contains many other numbers of freshness and originality. Nadir and Zurga have, some time before, abandoned the pursuit of a beautiful girl for the sake of their friendship (but have fallen out all the same). Now the girl, Leïla, is a priestess of Brahma sent to pray for the fishermen. She and Nadir have met again, and are still in love. In the second act, waiting for him, she keeps watch alone during the night in a ruined temple. The agitation in the orchestra that introduces 'I'm all alone here in the night' [p. 58] is of short duration: soft horn calls lead to the serenity of 'As once before, with night to hide him'.

Nadir evades the quicksands and the whirlpools to seek her out and declare his love. He is heard approaching, and the lovers greet each other ecstatically ('Leïla! Leïla! 'Lord Brahma! He is here!') [p. 60]. Leïla begs him to leave, for his own safety. Nadir reproaches her, but she soon relents and they join in a major-key transformation of Nadir's extended melody.

Bizet was one of the many composers who contributed to the musical make-up of Sir Arthur Sullivan. Of the string of comic operas that Gilbert and Sullivan produced, from *Trial by Jury* (1875) to *The Grand Duke* (1896), the

most popular is probably **The Mikado** (1885). Here Gilbert made use of a Japanese setting to aim, as was his wont, at targets considerably nearer home. In 'The sun, whose rays' [p. 63] Yum-Yum admires her reflection in the mirror as she prepares for her marriage to Nanki-Poo. Sustained chords on the strings accompany the voice's almost free declamation, with the second strophe enhanced by flute and clarinet arabesques derived from the introduction.

Carl Zeller, an exact contemporary of Sullivan, was a part-time composer, his day job being a position in the Austrian civil service. **The Bird Seller** (1891) is a light-hearted tale of impersonation and misunderstanding in a Rhineland village. One of the misinformed is the wife of the local ruler, who decides to flirt with Adam, the eponymous bird seller. This arrangement of 'When you're sent roses' [p. 63] is a typical example of the operetta's charm.

Catalani's **La Wally** was first performed in the following year at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan. Set in the Tyrol in 1800 it is a melodramatic story worlds away from the cosiness of *The Bird Seller*, with correspondingly heightened music. At the end of the opera the hero and heroine are killed by an avalanche after finally recognising their mutual love. They undergo many vicissitudes

before this, however. In Act I Wally is ordered to marry a husband of her father's choice. When she refuses, her father threatens to throw her out. In a dignified reply Wally says that she will go off into the snow ('I'll float into the distance') [p. 60]. In the central section she bids farewell to her mother's house, perhaps never to return.

Rutland Boughton was an eccentric figure who established a community festival at Glastonbury. **The Immortal Hour**, premiered at the beginning of the First World War, was enormously popular in the 1920s but has since faded from sight. Etain, a fairy princess who has forgotten her origins, is married to a mortal king. A year after their meeting, a stranger appears: it is Midir, who has come to take Etain back to the land of heart's desire. Accompanied on the harp he sings 'How beautiful they are' (originally written for tenor) [p. 64], the 'Faery Song' that distant voices had called to her earlier. It is a simple pentatonic melody, as beautiful as 'the lordly ones' that it praises.

'Oh, my beloved father' [p. 56] from Puccini's **Gianni Schicchi** (1918) sold over a million copies in the recording by Joan Hammond, and found an even larger audience when sung in Italian by Kiri Te Kanawa on the

soundtrack of the film of E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View*. In medieval Florence an old man has died, having disinherited his relations. These seek the assistance of Gianni Schicchi, who decides to impersonate the deceased and dictate a new will in their presence. His daughter Lauretta, who is in love with a member of this family, begs her father's agreement to her marriage. He does agree to it, duly impersonates the supposedly dying man, and leaves most of the estate to – himself. Thanks to his ingenuity, Lauretta's dowry has been assured.

Kiss Me, Kate, one of the last of Cole Porter's musicals, was produced in New York in 1948. Based in part on Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* it cleverly and wittily intercuts the Shakespearean characters with the lives of the actors. Thus, just as Petruchio tames Katharine, so does Fred Graham tame Lilli Vanessi (again, for they have been married before). 'So in love' [p. 63] comes early in Act I: Lilli has received a bouquet of flowers from Fred, not realising that they were intended for someone else. She expresses her feelings for him in this heartfelt song which, together with 'Wunderbar' and 'Brush up your Shakespeare', is one of the best loved numbers in the show.

The opera public must have been

astonished by Stravinsky's **The Rake's Progress** on its first appearance at the Teatro la Fenice, Venice, in 1951. Based on the paintings by William Hogarth in Sir John Soane's Museum in London (the engraved version of which Stravinsky first saw in Chicago in 1947), the opera is in the style of Mozart and others as seen from the mid-twentieth century. At the end Tom Rakewell is in Bedlam, mind and fortune both gone. He is visited by his sweetheart Anne, whom he had abandoned for the bright lights and murky pleasures of London. She sings him to sleep with a lullaby, 'Gently, little boat' [p. 62], which charms the other inmates in their cells. Its bitter-sweet tone is one that Henry Purcell, composer of 'I attempt from love's sickness', might have recognised.

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Yvonne Kenny – A personal memoir

I remember clearly the first time Yvonne Kenny worked with me. Yvonne had auditioned for me in the spring of 1975, demonstrating a ravishingly limpid, well schooled voice of superb quality and range. Not only did she sing well, she was wonderfully musical and had a strong stylistic

sense, especially for the Italian *bel canto* school. An impressive performance: the sort that gets a young singer a job.

But I did not give her a job. I had none to offer. Nevertheless, this was a performance of such vocal accomplishment, coupled with a confident determination, that it made me want to do something – anything – with Yvonne Kenny. The best I could come up with, however, was the offer to 'work through' a role from an opera I was preparing for a concert performance in the autumn, Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. It wasn't much, not as yet.

In the usual way of these things, this 'working-through' never happened. The business of musicology got in the way on my part and it was not until October that events brought Yvonne and me together again. Janet Price, the soprano scheduled to sing the role of Rosmonda, was ill. I rang Yvonne and asked if she could do some work with the rest of the company: it is very hard for a cast to rehearse an opera (particularly an unknown one) without the leading lady.

And still we did not do any work on her role! Then Janet Price rang me and said, 'Patric, I really don't feel any better and if Yvonne Kenny is going to take this on she's got to have the

orchestral rehearsals'. (Who says divas cannot be gracious when they want to?) I 'phoned Yvonne and eventually persuaded her to sing. At this point she had four days to learn a long, difficult role which included a lot of elaborate vocal ornaments I had written for the opera.

On 11 October 1975 the Queen Elizabeth Hall was filled with people awaiting the first performance of Donizetti's opera for 120 years. When they were told they would be hearing a substitute soprano in the title role there were groans all round. As Yvonne stood up for her first scene there was no way to tell what this determined, lovely girl would deliver. But as she came to the final bars of her aria, running up to a brilliant top C, the audience at once knew something special was happening and applauded loudly. By the end of the opera they realised a new singer had arrived.

The evening was a complete triumph for Yvonne Kenny. It was the beginning of a career that would take her to Covent Garden and from there to some of the most prestigious opera houses in the world. More than that, it was, for Yvonne and me, the beginning of a delightful working relationship that has continued across the entire span of her shining career.

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Born in Sydney, Australia, **Yvonne Kenny** is one of the most distinguished sopranos of her generation. She made her operatic debut in London in 1975 in the title role of Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. After winning the Kathleen Ferrier Competition she joined The Royal Opera, Covent Garden where her roles have included Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Oscar, Liù, Aspasia (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*), Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Susanna, Donna Anna, Pamina and Marzelline (*Fidelio*). Among other notable roles on British stages are Alice Ford (*Falstaff*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera and the title role in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* for Scottish Opera. She has won international renown for her Handel roles, including the title roles in *Semele* and *Alcina* at Covent Garden and Teatro la Fenice, Venice; Romilda (*Xerxes*) at English National Opera (both in London and on tour to the USSR) and Bavarian State Opera; Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) in Sydney and the title role in *Deborah* at the BBC Promenade Concerts.

She has taken many of these roles abroad to Teatro alla Scala, Milan, the Berlin, Vienna and Bavarian State Operas, Opéra de Paris, Washington Opera and opera houses in Hamburg and Zurich among others, where roles also have included Lucio Cinna (*Lucio*

Silla), Countess Almaviva, Donna Elvira and the Countess (*Capriccio*). She returns frequently to her native Australia where she has sung, among others, Armida (Handel's *Rinaldo*), Fiordiligi, Gilda and the title roles in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and Massenet's *Manon*. Recent engagements have included the Countess (*Capriccio*) at Opera Australia, the Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*) at English National Opera and The Minnesota Opera, a new production of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* at English National Opera and the title role in Cavalli's *La Didone* at German State Opera, Berlin.

Yvonne Kenny's recorded repertoire ranges from Handel to Stravinsky and has involved collaboration with such artists as Sir Georg Solti, Sir Charles Mackerras, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Leonard Slatkin and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Her appearances on Opera Rara include complete recordings of Donizetti's *Emilia di Liverpool* and *Ugo, conte di Parigi*, Mayr's *Medea in Corinto*, Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto* and Offenbach's *Robinson Crusoe*, as well as several recital discs. On Chandos she may be heard in Mozart's Requiem, *The Canterbury Pilgrims* by Sir George Dyson, *A Sea Symphony* (Symphony No. 1) and *A Pastoral Symphony* (Symphony

No. 3) by Vaughan Williams, the orchestral song cycle *In Green Ways* by Howells and, in association with the Peter Moores Foundation, highlights from *Der Rosenkavalier*.

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

He works extensively in both opera and concert, nationally and internationally. He has conducted several productions at English National Opera and appears regularly with the Philharmonia Orchestra. In 1996 he made his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival with *Così fan tutte*, where in 1998 he conducted the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Flight*.

He is a frequent visitor to Spain where he has given concerts with most of the major Spanish orchestras. He conducted the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid and in 1996 the first Spanish production of *The Rake's Progress*. He has appeared in Germany,

Sweden, The Netherlands, at the Pesaro Festival in Italy, the Hong Kong International Festival, in Japan with a tour of *Carmen* and in Mexico with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Recent new productions he has conducted include *Fidelio* at the New Zealand Festival, *Maria Stuarda* at Theater Basel and *Lucia di Lammermoor* at New Israeli Opera.

His work in the recording studio includes the BBC Television production of Marschner's *Der Vampyr* and twenty-one complete opera recordings under the sponsorship of the Peter Moores Foundation. Among these are numerous discs for the Opera Rara label which have won several awards, including the Belgian Prix Cecilia for Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. For Chandos he has conducted seven recordings of operatic arias (with Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson and Della Jones, the last two to be issued during 2000 and 2001), as well as *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Elixir of Love*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, the award-winning *Tosca* and highlights from *Der Rosenkavalier*, all in association with the Peter Moores Foundation.

PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire, the 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, however, which was his great love. He had worked at Glyndebourne Festival Opera before going up to university, and after Oxford he became a production student at the Vienna State Opera, combining this with a three-year course at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year at the Academy Moores had produced the Vienna premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and 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 being paramount, he returned to Liverpool.

From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985; from 1988 to 1992 he was a director of Scottish Opera. He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In May 1992 he became 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.

Whilst still in his early twenties, Peter Moores had started



Christina Buron/PMF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL

giving financial support to various young artists, several of whom – Joan Sutherland, Colin Davis and the late Geraint Evans amongst them – were to become world-famous. In 1964 he set aside a substantial part of his inheritance to establish 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 and to improve race relations.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

In the field of music, the main areas supported by the Peter Moores Foundation are:

the recording of operas from the core repertoire sung in English translation; the recording or staging of rare Italian opera from the *bel canto* era of the early nineteenth century (repertoire which would otherwise only be accessible to scholars); the nurturing of promising young opera singers; new operatic work.

The Foundation awards scholarships annually to students and post-graduates for furthering their vocal studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. In addition, project awards may be given to facilitate language tuition in the appropriate country, attendance at masterclasses or summer courses, specialised repertoire study with an acknowledged expert in the field, or post-graduate performance training.

The Foundation encourages new operatic work by contributing to recordings, the publication of scores and stage productions.

Since 1964 the Foundation has supported the recording of more than forty operas, many of these sung in English, in translation. It has always been Peter Moores's belief that to enjoy opera to the full, there must be no language barrier, particularly for newcomers and particularly in the popular repertoire – hence the *Opera in English* series launched with Chandos in 1995. This includes many of the English language recordings funded by the Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s and is now the largest recorded collection of operas sung in English.

Bill Rafferty



Yvonne Kenny as Romilda
in the 1992 English National
Opera production of
Handel's *Xerxes*

Clive Barca



Yvonne Kenny as Titania, with
Thomas Randle as Oberon, in
the 1995 English National
Opera revival of Purcell's
The Fairy Queen

Große Opernarien

Erst seit Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts hat England Opernkomponisten hervorgebracht, die für sich beanspruchen können, ihren Kollegen in anderen Ländern ebenbürtig zu sein. Es mag also überraschen, dass die Jahre nach 1680 (am Ende des gleichen Jahrhunderts, das in Italien die Geburt der Oper erlebte) zwei englische "Uoperen" hervorbrachten: John Blows *Venus and Adonis* und Henry Purcells *Dido and Aeneas*. Dass aus diesen Anfängen keine Tradition entstand, hatte zum Teil mit dem Zeitgeschmack zu tun; doch Purcell, der für Kirche und Staat komponierte, arbeitete viel für das Theater und schrieb Bühnenmusik für eine große Zahl von inzwischen vorwiegend in Vergessenheit geratenen Stücken.

King Arthur (1691) und *The Indian Queen* (1695) sind "Halboperen", bei denen die Hauptfiguren nicht singen und die dramatische Handlung im allgemeinen nicht von der Musik vorangetrieben wird. Der Text von *King Arthur* stammt von John Dryden, der einmal zu oft die Seiten gewechselt hatte und nun unter dem Oranier-Herrscherpaar Wilhelm und Maria nur noch Exhofdichter

war. "Fairest isle" [S. 59] ist ein patriotisches Lied für die Venus, von Purcell als höfisches Menuett vertont. In *The Indian Queen* geht es um einen weit hergeholteten Konflikt zwischen Mexikanern und Inkas; "I atempt from love's sickness" [S. 56] wird von einem Geist der Lüfte gesungen.

Wenn Purcell nur nicht so früh gestorben wäre... Doch so wollte es das Schicksal, und der Mann, der seinen Platz einnahm und das musikalische Leben in London während der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts beherrschte, war Georg Friedrich Händel. Zwischen 1711 und 1741 schrieb er mehr als dreißig Opern, die meisten für das King's Theatre, Haymarket (dem frühesten Vorläufer des heutigen Hauses an dieser Stelle, Her Majesty's Theatre). Den Anfang machte **Rinaldo**. Das Thema dieses Werkes lag vielen Komponisten des Barocks und der Klassik am Herzen: die maßlose Liebe der Zauberin Armida, einer Sarazenin, für den heldenhaften Kreuzritter Rinaldo. In "Hear thou my weeping" [S. 56] bittet die Gefangene Almirena, die Verlobte Rinaldos, in schlichten aber bewegenden Tönen um ihre Freiheit. Ihre Arie ist ein Beispiel für das Dakapo-Format

der damaligen Zeit: Der dritte und letzte Teil ist eine vom Interpreten ausgeschmückte Wiederholung des ersten Teils.

Gegen 1740 hatte Händel der Oper den Rücken gekehrt und war damit beschäftigt, eine Serie von Oratorien zu komponieren: Dramen mit geistlicher Thematik, die zwar im Theater aufgeführt, jedoch nicht in Szene gesetzt wurden. Der Hauptunterschied zur Oper lag darin, dass sie auf englisch statt auf italienisch gesungen wurden und dem Chor erstmals eine wichtige Rolle zufiel. **Joshua**, 1748 uraufgeführt, wurde wie auch die nachfolgenden Oratorien für das Theater Covent Garden geschrieben. Bei "Oh! Had I Jubal's lyre" [S. 59] handelt es sich um ein Freudenlied, das von Achsah gesungen wird, einem der beiden Partner in der Liebeshandlung, die der Librettist als Pendant zum Siegeszug des Josua einbezog.

Nur 22 Jahre liegen zwischen dem Tod Händels und der Inszenierung von **Idomeneo**, der ersten großen Mozart-Oper, im Jahre 1781. Der Schauplatz im klassischen Altertum wäre dem älteren Komponisten vertraut gewesen, aber die Vornehmheit und der Prunk des Barock waren inzwischen vom weniger formellen klassischen Stil abgelöst worden.

Die Handlung der Oper spielt nach Ende

des trojanischen Krieges auf Kreta. Idomeneo ist von der Belagerung Trojas in sein Königreich zurückgekehrt, nachdem er Ilia, die Tochter des Königs Priamos, zusammen mit den anderen trojanischen Gefangenen vorausgeschickt hatte. Ilia und Idamante, der Sohn des Idomeneo, haben sich verliebt, aber ihre Liebe nicht gestanden. In "Gentle zephyrs" [S. 56], am Anfang des III. Aktes, gesteht sich Ilia endlich ihre Liebe ein und bittet mit sanften Worten den milden Wind, Idamante von den Gefühlen zu erzählen, die sie für ihn hegt.

Die Konzertarie **Thanks be to you, o gracious patrons!** [S. 59] ist auf den 10. April 1782 datiert; Mozart schrieb sie für seine Schwägerin, die Sopranistin Aloysia Lange. Mit einfachen Melodiewendungen verabschiedet die Sängerin sich vorerst von ihrem treuen Publikum. Begleitet wird sie dabei von drei Holzbläsern, für die Mozart ein Muster von charakteristischem Reiz webt. "Such ardent feelings stir my heart" ist mit einer Phrase in seiner Oper *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* identisch, die er im gleichen Monat vollendete.

Opern, die im Altertum spielen, wurden noch bis weit ins 19. Jahrhundert hinein geschrieben. **Semiramide** wurde 1823 am

Teatro la Fenice in Venedig uraufgeführt und war die letzte Oper, die Rossini für ein italienisches Publikum schrieb. Semiramide, Königin von Babylon, hat ihren Gatten ermordet; der Versuch, auch ihren Sohn zu töten, ist fehlgeschlagen. Fünfzehn Jahre später will sie ihren Liebhaber, der des Mordes mitschuldig ist, verstoßen und einen ihrer Kommandanten, Arsace, zum Prinzgemahl machen. Doch Arsace ist kein anderer als ihr eigener Sohn. Als er das erfährt, stellt er Semiramide zur Rede. Sie ist bereit, ihr Leben zu opfern, aber die Liebe, die er als Sohn für sie empfindet, ist zu stark. In "Dark day of dread!" [S. 59] singen Semiramide und Arsace von ihren konfusem Emotionen: die weichen Terzen und Sexten vermitteln die Gleichheit ihrer Gefühle.

Mit **Guillaume Tell**, 1829 an der Pariser Opéra uraufgeführt, verabschiedete Rossini sich von der Opernbühne. Wegen seiner Überlänge und der strapaziösen Tenorrolle des Arnold wird das Werk heutzutage nur noch höchst selten aufgeführt. Arnold, ein Schweizer Söldner, hat im Heer des feindlichen Österreich gedient und sich in Mathilde, eine Prinzessin aus dem Hause Habsburg, verliebt. In "Dark, sombre wood" [S. 60] singt Mathilde vom Frieden, den sie in

ihrer Liebe zu ihm gefunden hat. In zwei Strophen, von denen die zweite eine genaue musikalische Wiederholung der ersten darstellt, verbindet Rossini auf sehr bewegende Weise Feinfühligkeit und Leidenschaft.

Donizetti, ein jüngerer Zeitgenosse Rossinis, schrieb in seinem kurzen Leben mehr als 60 Opern. **Linda di Chamounix**, eine der letzten, wurde 1842 im Kärntnertheater in Wien uraufgeführt, wo Donizetti für die alljährliche italienische Opernsaison zum Musikdirektor ernannt worden war. Das Werk spielt im Frankreich zur Zeit Ludwigs XV. und wird als "melodrama semi-serio" gekennzeichnet. Die Hauptfiguren sind Linda, die eine kaum vorstellbare Unschuld an den Tag legt, und Carlo, der sich gern mit ihr verloben möchte. Er ist ein Vicomte, der sich als Maler ausgibt, und seine Hoffnung auf eine Ehe mit Linda wird durch Einmischung seiner Eltern zunächst vereitelt. Im gemeinsamen Duett im I. Akt, "Linda! Linda!" [S. 56], versichert Carlo sie seiner Liebe und spielt dabei auf ein Geheimnis an. Die beiden äußern die Vorfreude auf ihre Hochzeit in einem Satz ("Come blessed day of highest joy"), der, als er am Ende der Oper noch einmal ertönt, der inzwischen wahnsinnig gewordenen Heldin zur Genesung verhilft.

Les Pêcheurs de perles wurde als zweite Oper Bizets, die auf die Bühne gebracht wurde, im Jahre 1863 achtzehnmal aufgeführt, bevor sie bis nach dem Tod des Komponisten wieder aus dem Repertoire verschwand. Sie ist vor allem wegen des Duetts für Tenor und Bariton bekannt, umfasst aber noch viele weitere Lieder, die sich durch Frische und Originalität auszeichnen. Nadir und Zurga haben bereits vor einiger Zeit um ihrer Freundschaft willen darauf verzichtet, um ein schönes Mädchen zu werben (sich aber trotzdem zerstritten). Das Mädchen, Leïla, inzwischen eine Priesterin des Brahma, ist herbeigeschickt worden, um für die Perlenfischer zu beten. Sie und Nadir sind einander wieder begegnet und lieben sich noch. Im II. Akt wacht sie während der Nacht allein in einem zerstörten Tempel und wartet auf ihn. Die im Orchester angedeutete Unruhe in der Einleitung zu "I'm all alone here in the night" [S. 58] ist nur von kurzer Dauer: Weiche Hornklänge leiten zur Gelassenheit von "As once before, with night to hide him" über.

Treibsand und Wasserstrudel können Nadir nicht hindern, sie zu finden und ihr seine Liebe zu erklären. Sie hört, wie er sich nähert, und die Liebenden begrüßen sich mit höchster

Freude ("Leïla! Leïla!" "Lord Brahma! He is here") [S. 60]. Leïla bittet ihn, um seiner eigenen Sicherheit willen wieder zu gehen. Nadir macht ihr Vorwürfe, aber sie gibt bald nach, und gemeinsam singen sie das nach Dur versetzte Lied Nadirs.

Bizet war einer von vielen Komponisten, die als musikalische Vorbilder von Sir Arthur Sullivan gelten dürfen. Gilbert und Sullivan schufen eine ganze Reihe komischer Opern, von *Trial by Jury* (1875) bis zu *The Grand Duke* (1896), doch am populärsten ist wohl **The Mikado** (1885). Hier nutzte Gilbert Japan als Handlungsort, um wie gewöhnlich weit weniger exotische Ziele in der Heimat aufs Korn zu nehmen. In "The sun, whose rays" [S. 63], bewundert Yum-Yum ihr eigenes Spiegelbild, während sie sich für ihre Hochzeit mit Nanki-Poo herausputzt. Gehaltene Streicherakkorde begleiten die nahezu frei deklamierende Stimme, während in der zweiten Strophe aus der Einleitung entliehene Flöten- und Klarinettenarabesken als Ausschmückung hinzukommen.

Carl Zeller, ein Zeitgenosse Sullivans, war nur nebenbei Komponist; hauptberuflich war er Beamter im österreichischen Staatsdienst. **Der Vogelhändler** (1891) ist ein heiteres Verwechslungs- und Verwirrungsspiel, das in

einem Dorf im Rheinland spielt. Zu den Getäuschten zählt die Gemahlin des Kurfürsten, die beschließt, mit dem Vogelhändler Adam zu flirten. Das Arrangement von “When you’re sent roses” [S. 63] vermittelt einen guten Eindruck vom Charme dieser Operette.

Catalanis *La Wally* wurde im Jahr darauf an der Mailänder Scala uraufgeführt. Zwischen der melodramatischen Handlung dieser Oper, die im Jahre 1800 in Tirol spielt, und der Gemütlichkeit von *Der Vogelhändler* klaffen Welten, und entsprechend ausdrucksstark ist auch die Musik. Am Ende der Oper kommen der Held und die Heldin bei einer Lawine ums Leben, nachdem sie sich ihre Liebe gestanden haben. Doch vorher müssen sie noch viele Launen des Schicksals über sich ergehen lassen. Im I. Akt soll Wally einen Mann heiraten, den ihr Vater für sie ausgesucht hat. Als sie sich weigert, droht der Vater, sie aus dem Haus zu jagen. Wally reagiert darauf mit Würde und sagt, dass sie in den Schnee hinausgehen werde (“I’ll float into the distance”) [S. 60]. Im Mittelteil verabschiedet sie sich – womöglich zum letzten Mal – vom Haus ihrer Mutter.

Rutland Boughton war ein Exzentriker, der im englischen Glastonbury ein städtisches

Festival gründete. *The Immortal Hour* wurde zu Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs uraufgeführt und war in den zwanziger Jahren überaus populär, verlor aber dann seine Anziehungskraft. Etain, eine Feenprinzessin, die ihre Herkunft vergessen hat, ist mit einem sterblichen König verheiratet. Ein Jahr nach dem Tag, an dem die zwei sich zum ersten Mal begegneten, erscheint der Fremde Midir, der gekommen ist, um Etain in das Land der Herzenswünsche zurückzuführen. Von einer Harfe begleitet, singt er (das ursprünglich für Tenor geschriebene) “How beautiful they are” [S. 64], das “Feenlied”, das ferne Stimmen ihr zuvor zugerufen hatten. Es handelt sich um eine schlichte, pentatonische Melodie, die so schön ist wie die “vom Herrengeschlecht”, denen sie verehrungsvoll gewidmet ist.

Von “Oh, my beloved father” [S. 56] aus Puccinis *Gianni Schicchi* (1918) wurden mehr als eine Million Exemplare in einer Aufnahme mit Joan Hammond verkauft, und die Arie erreichte ein noch größeres Publikum, als sie – in italienischer Sprache – von Kiri Te Kanawa für die Filmmusik von *A Room with a View* (Zimmer mit Aussicht) nach dem gleichnamigen Roman von E. M. Forster gesungen wurde. Im mittelalterlichen Florenz ist ein alter Mann gestorben, nachdem er seine

Verwandten enterbt hat. Diese bitten Gianni Schicchi um Hilfe, der beschließt, sich als der Verstorbene auszugeben und in ihrer Gegenwart ein neues Testament zu diktieren. Seine Tochter Lauretta ist in ein Mitglied der Familie verliebt; sie will heiraten und bittet ihren Vater um seine Zustimmung. Er gewährt sie, gibt sich wie geplant als angeblich Sterbender aus und vermachte einen Großteil des Erbes – sich selbst. Dank seines Einfallsreichtums ist die Mitgift Laurettas damit gesichert.

Kiss Me, Kate, eines der letzten Musicals von Cole Porter, wurde 1948 in New York uraufgeführt. Es basiert zum Teil auf der Shakespeare-Komödie *The Taming of the Shrew* (Der widerspenstigen Zähmung) und wechselt auf raffinierte und witzige Weise zwischen den Figuren Shakespeares und dem Leben der Schauspieler hin und her. Genau wie Petruchio Katharine zähmt, gelingt es auch Fred Graham, Lilli Vanessi zu zähmen (zum zweiten Mal, denn sie waren vorher schon einmal verheiratet). “So in love” [S. 63] wird am Anfang des I. Aktes gesungen: Lilli hat einen Blumenstrauß von Fred erhalten und weiß nicht, dass er für eine andere gedacht war. In diesem von Herzen empfundenen Lied bringt sie ihre Gefühle für ihn zum Ausdruck;

zusammen mit “Wunderbar” und “Brush up your Shakespeare” zählt es zu den beliebtesten Nummern aus diesem Musical.

Das Opernpublikum muss verblüfft gewesen sein, als Strawinskys *The Rake’s Progress* 1951 im Teatro la Fenice in Venedig uraufgeführt wurde. Es basiert auf den Gemälden von William Hogarth in Sir John Soane’s Museum in London (Strawinsky hatte Hogarths gleichnamige Kupferstichserie 1947 in Chicago entdeckt) und ist im Stil Mozarts und anderer, aber aus dem Blickwinkel des 20. Jahrhunderts geschrieben. Am Ende hat es Tom Rakewell, der nicht nur den Verstand, sondern auch sein Vermögen verloren hat, ins Irrenhaus Bedlam verschlagen. Dort wird er von seiner Geliebten Anne besucht, die er verstoßen hatte, um in London dem Glanz der Großstadt und zwielichtigen Vergnügungen nachzujagen. Sie singt ihn mit dem Wiegenlied “Gently, little boat” [S. 62] in den Schlaf und besänftigt damit auch die anderen Insassen in ihren Zellen. Der bittersüße Ton wäre Henry Purcell, der “I attempt from love’s sickness” schrieb, sicher nicht fremd gewesen.

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Übersetzung: Andreas Klatt

Yvonne Kenny – eine persönliche Erinnerung

Ich erinnere mich noch gut an das erste Mal, als Yvonne Kenny mit mir zusammenarbeitete. Yvonne hatte im Frühjahr 1975 bei mir vorgesungen und dabei eine herrlich klare, gut geschulte Stimme von hervorragender Qualität und außerordentlichem Umfang an den Tag gelegt. Nicht nur sang sie gut, sie war auch enorm musikalisch und hatte einen ausgeprägten Sinn für Stil, vor allem, was die italienische Belcanto-Schule anbetraf. Eine eindrucksvolle Leistung: Damit konnte eine junge Sängerin ohne weiteres Arbeit bekommen.

Aber ich gab ihr keine Arbeit. Ich hatte ihr nichts anzubieten. Dennoch war es eine stimmlich so vollendete und mit selbstsicherer Entschlossenheit gekoppelte Leistung gewesen, dass ich unbedingt mit Yvonne Kenny zusammenarbeiten wollte – woran, war mir gleich. Mir fiel nichts Besseres ein, als ihr vorzuschlagen, eine Rolle aus der Donizetti-Oper *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, die ich für eine Konzertaufführung im Herbst in Vorbereitung hatte, mit mir "durchzuarbeiten". Es war nicht viel. Noch nicht.

Wie so oft bei solchen Dingen fand dieses "Durcharbeiten" nie statt. Bei mir kamen musikologische Angelegenheiten dazwischen,

und erst im Oktober wurden Yvonne und ich von den Ereignissen wieder zusammengeführt. Die Sopranistin Janet Price, die die Rolle der Rosmonda singen sollte, war erkrankt. Ich rief Yvonne an und fragte, ob sie mit dem Ensemble ein paar Proben übernehmen könnte; es ist sehr schwierig für ein Ensemble, eine (noch dazu unbekannte) Oper einzuüben, wenn die Hauptakteurin fehlt.

An ihrer eigenen Rolle wurde aber nicht gearbeitet! Dann rief Janet Price mich an und sagte: "Patric, mir geht es wirklich nicht besser, und wenn Yvonne Kenny die Rolle übernehmen soll, dann muss sie die Orchesterproben machen." (Wer sagt, dass eine Diva nicht huldvoll sein kann, wenn sie will?) Ich rief Yvonne an und konnte sie schließlich dazu überreden, im letzten Moment einzuspringen. Es blieben ihr nur vier Tage, um eine lange, schwierige Rolle zu lernen, die überdies viel an aufwendiger, von mir für die Gesangspartien eigens geschriebener Ausschmückung umfasste.

Am 11. Oktober 1975 drängte sich in der Queen Elizabeth Hall in London das Publikum, um die erste Aufführung dieser Donizetti-Oper seit 120 Jahren zu erleben. Als bekanntgegeben wurde, dass die Titelrolle in Notbesetzung gesungen werden sollte, ging ein

Stöhnen durch den Saal. Yvonne erhob sich für ihre erste Szene, und man konnte unmöglich ahnen, was diese schöne, entschlossene Frau für eine Leistung erbringen würde. Doch dann kamen die letzten Takte ihrer Arie, sie schwang sich zu einem brillanten hohen C auf, und das Publikum wusste sofort, dass hier etwas Außergewöhnliches geschah. Entsprechend laut war der Applaus. Am Ende der Oper wusste jeder, dass eine neuer Stern am Sängerfirmament erschienen war.

Der Abend war ein absoluter Triumph für Yvonne Kenny, der Beginn einer Karriere, die sie nach Covent Garden und von dort in einige der berühmtesten Opernhäuser der Welt führen sollte. Mehr noch: Für Yvonne und mich war es der Anfang einer wunderbaren Arbeitsbeziehung, die sich über ihre gesamte, glänzende Karriere erstreckt hat.

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Übersetzung: Andreas Klatt

Die gebürtige Australierin **Yvonne Kenny** ist eine der namhaftesten Sopranistinnen ihrer Generation. Ihr Operndebüt gab sie 1975 in London in der Titelrolle von Donizettis *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. Nachdem sie den

Kathleen-Ferrier-Gesangswettbewerb gewonnen hatte, trat sie dem Ensemble der Royal Opera Covent Garden bei, wo sie unter anderem als Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Oscar, Liù, Aspasia (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*), Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Susanna, Donna Anna, Pamina und Marzelline (*Fidelio*) zu sehen war. Zu den anderen bedeutenden Partien, die sie auf britischen Bühnen gesungen hat, zählen Alice Ford (*Falstaff*) für die Glyndebourne Festival Opera und die Titelrolle in Donizettis *Maria Stuarda* für die Scottish Opera. Yvonne Kenny hat internationales Ansehen für ihre Händel-Rollen erworben, beispielsweise in den Titelpartien von *Semele* und *Alcina* in Covent Garden sowie am Teatro la Fenice in Venedig, als Romilda (*Serse*) an der English National Opera (sowohl in London als auch auf Rußland-Tournee) und an der Bayerischen Staatsoper, als Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) in Sydney und in der Titelrolle von *Deborah* bei den Londoner Promenadenkonzerten der BBC.

Sie hat viele dieser Rollen auch außerhalb Großbritanniens gesungen – am Teatro alla Scala in Mailand, an der Berliner, Wiener und Bayerischen Staatsoper, an der Opéra de Paris, der Washington Opera und den Opernhäusern von Städten wie Hamburg und Zürich, wo sie

außerdem als Lucio Cinna (*Lucio Silla*), die Gräfin Almaviva, Donna Elvira und die Gräfin (*Capriccio*) gastiert hat. Sie kehrt häufig in ihre australische Heimat zurück und hat dort unter anderem Armida (in Händels *Rinaldo*), Fiordiligi, Gilda und die Titelrollen von Monteverdis *L'incoronazione di Poppea* und Massenets *Manon* gegeben. Zu ihren jüngsten Verpflichtungen zählen Auftritte als die Gräfin (*Capriccio*) an der Opera Australia und als die Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*) an der English National Opera und der Minnesota Opera, in einer Neuinszenierung von Purcells *The Fairy Queen* an der English National Opera und in der Titelrolle von Cavallis *La Didone* an der Deutschen Staatsoper Berlin.

Yvonne Kennys Repertoire auf Tonträger reicht von Händel bis Strawinski und ist in Zusammenarbeit mit Künstlern wie Sir Georg Solti, Sir Charles Mackerras, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Leonard Slatkin und Esa-Pekka Salonen entstanden. In der Reihe Opera Rara war sie unter anderem an vollständigen Aufzeichnungen von Donizettis *Emilia di Liverpool* und *Ugo, conte di Parigi*, Mayrs *Medea in Corinto*, Meyerbeers *Il crociato in Egitto* und Offenbachs *Robinson Crusoe* beteiligt und hat mehrere Recitalprogramme aufgenommen. Bei Chandos ist sie in Mozarts

Requiem zu hören, in *The Canterbury Pilgrims* von Sir George Dyson, in *A Sea Symphony* (Sinfonie Nr. 1) und *A Pastoral Symphony* (Sinfonie Nr. 3) von Vaughan Williams, in dem Orchesterliedzyklus *In Green Ways* von Howells und in einer – in Zusammenarbeit mit der Peter Moores Foundation erschienenen – Sammlung musikalischer Highlights aus dem *Rosenkavalier*.

David Parry hat bei Sergiu Celibidache studiert und seine berufliche Laufbahn als Assistent von Sir John Pritchard begonnen. Er hat am English Music Theatre debütiert und wurde dann Dirigent mit Festvertrag an den Städtischen Bühnen Dortmund und an der Opera North. Von 1983 bis 1987 war er Musikdirektor der Opera 80 und seit 1992 Gründungsmitglied und Direktor der Almeida Opera.

Er übt in Großbritannien und international eine weitgespannte Tätigkeit in den Bereichen Oper und Konzert aus, hat mehrere Produktionen der English National Opera dirigiert und tritt regelmäßig mit dem Philharmonia Orchestra auf. 1996 gab er sein Debüt beim Glyndebourne Festival mit *Così fan tutte* und hat dort 1998 die Uraufführung von Jonathan Doves *Flight* geleitet.

Er ist häufig in Spanien zu Gast und hat mit den meisten bedeutenden spanischen Orchestern Konzerte gegeben. In Madrid hat er die spanische Erstaufführung von *Peter Grimes* dirigiert, und 1996 die erste spanische Inszenierung von *The Rake's Progress*. Er ist in Deutschland, Schweden und den Niederlanden aufgetreten, bei den Festspielen in Pesaro, beim Hong Kong International Festival, in Japan anlässlich einer *Carmen*-Tournée und in Mexiko mit dem UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Zu den Neuproduktionen, die er in letzter Zeit dirigiert hat, zählen *Fidelio* beim New Zealand Festival, *Maria Stuarda* am Stadttheater Basel und *Lucia di Lammermoor* an der New Israeli Opera.

Seine Tätigkeit im Aufnahmestudio umfaßt die Produktion von Marschners *Der Vampyr*

fürs BBC-Fernsehen und einundzwanzig vollständige Opernaufzeichnungen unter der Schirmherrschaft der Peter Moores Foundation. Darunter befinden sich zahlreiche Aufnahmen des Labels Opera Rara, die mehrere Preise gewonnen haben, beispielsweise den belgischen Prix Cecilia für Donizettis *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. Für Chandos hat er die Aufzeichnung von sieben Programmen mit Opernarien geleitet (mit Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson und Della Jones – die zwei letztgenannten kommen im Jahr 2000 und 2001 heraus), außerdem *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, die preisgekrönte *Tosca* und Highlights aus dem *Rosenkavalier*, jeweils in Zusammenarbeit mit der Peter Moores Foundation.

Bill Rafferty



Yvonne Kenny as the
Marschallin in the 1997 English
National Opera production of
Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*

Clive Barba



Yvonne Kenny in the title role
of Handel's *Alcina* at the Royal
Opera House, Covent Garden in
1992

Grands airs d'opéra

Ce n'est qu'à partir du milieu du vingtième siècle que l'Angleterre a donné naissance à des compositeurs d'opéra que l'on peut considérer comme les égaux de leurs collègues d'autres pays. L'existence de deux embryons d'opéras en anglais, composés dans les années 1680, à la fin du siècle qui vit éclore l'opéra en Italie, peut donc paraître surprenante: *Venus and Adonis* (Vénus et Adonis) de John Blow et *Dido and Aeneas* (Didon et Enée) de Henry Purcell. S'ils n'eurent aucune suite, c'est en partie à cause des goûts de l'époque; mais Purcell, compositeur de musique officielle et de musique d'église, était vraiment un homme de théâtre; il composa de la musique de scène pour un grand nombre de pièces de théâtre qui sont presque toutes tombées dans l'oubli.

King Arthur (Le Roi Arthur, 1691) et *The Indian Queen* (La Reine indienne, 1695) sont des semi-opéras, où les principaux personnages ne chantent pas et où la musique ne fait généralement pas avancer l'action. Le texte du *King Arthur* est de John Dryden, qui avait un peu trop souvent viré de bord et qui, sous William et Mary, était devenu un "ex-poète lauréat". "Fairest isle" (La plus belle des îles)

[p. 59] est un air patriotique confié à Vénus, mis en musique par Purcell sous forme de menuet courtois. Dans *The Indian Queen*, qui retrace un conflit improbable entre les Mexicains et les Incas, "I attempt from love's sickness" (Je tente de fuir la maladie d'amour) [p. 56] est chanté par un Esprit de l'air.

Si Purcell n'était pas mort si jeune... Les choses étant ce qu'elles sont, l'homme qui lui succéda et qui domina la vie musicale londonienne durant la première moitié du dix-huitième siècle fut Georg Friedrich Haendel. Entre 1711 et 1741, il composa plus de trente opéras, essentiellement pour le King's Theatre, à Haymarket (le plus ancien précurseur de ce qui est aujourd'hui Her Majesty's Theatre). *Rinaldo* fut le premier: il repose sur un sujet particulièrement prisé par de nombreux compositeurs de l'ère baroque et de l'ère classique, l'amour obsessionnel de la sorcière sarrasine Armida pour le héros croisé Rinaldo. Dans "Hear thou my weeping" (Laisse-moi pleurer) [p. 56], la captive Almirena, fiancée de Rinaldo, sollicite sa liberté avec des accents simples mais émouvants. Son air est un exemple de l'*aria da capo* de l'époque, où la troisième et

dernière section est une reprise de la première ornementée par la chanteuse.

Dès les années 1740, Haendel, qui avait délaissé l'opéra, s'engagea dans la composition d'une série d'oratorios: il s'agit de drames sur des sujets sacrés, représentés dans des théâtres mais sans mise en scène. Les principales différences avec les opéras sont l'emploi de la langue anglaise au lieu de l'italien et l'introduction d'un rôle important pour le chœur. *Joshua* (Josué), qui comme ses successeurs fut écrit pour Covent Garden, fut créé en 1748. "Oh! Had I Jubal's lyre" (Oh! Si j'avais la lyre de Jubal) [p. 59] est un chant joyeux confié à Achsah, personnage introduit par le librettiste pour créer une intrigue amoureuse complétant les victoires de Josué.

Vingt-deux ans seulement séparent la mort de Haendel du premier grand opéra de Mozart, *Idomeneo* (Idoménée), produit en 1781. Haendel n'aurait pas été dépaycé par le contexte de l'Antiquité classique, mais le côté courtois et le brillant de l'ère baroque ont fait place au style moins formel de l'ère classique.

L'action se déroule en Crète, après la Guerre de Troie. Idoménée, de retour dans son royaume de Crète après le siège de Troie, a envoyé la fille du roi Priam, Ilia, en avant avec les autres prisonniers troyens. Le fils

d'Idoménée, Idamante, et Ilia sont tombés amoureux l'un de l'autre, sans pour autant se l'être jamais avoué. Dans "Gentle zephyrs" (Doux Zéphirs) [p. 56], au début de l'acte III, Ilia, seule, s'avoue enfin son amour et demande avec tendresse aux brises de transmettre à Idamante les sentiments qu'elle a pour lui.

Thanks be to you, o gracious patrons! (Recevez mes remerciements, – gracieux protecteurs!) [p. 59], daté du 10 avril 1782, est un air de concert que Mozart écrivit pour sa belle-sœur, la soprano Aloysia Lange. Avec des phrases simples, la chanteuse prend temporairement congé de son fidèle public. Elle partage la scène, pour ainsi dire, avec trois instruments de la famille des bois, pour lesquels Mozart tisse un motif délicieux. On retrouve la phrase "Such ardent feelings stir my heart" (Des sentiments si ardents troublent mon cœur) dans *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (L'Enlèvement au Sérail) qu'il termina le même mois.

A une époque avancée du dix-neuvième siècle, certains compositeurs ont encore écrit des opéras dont l'action se déroule en des temps anciens. *Semiramide* (Sémiramis), créé au Teatro la Fenice de Venise en 1823, fut le dernier opéra de Rossini pour l'Italie. Sémiramis, reine de Babylone, a assassiné son

époux et tenté de tuer son fils. Quinze ans plus tard, elle se propose d'épouser un commandant de l'armée assyrienne, Arsaces, et d'en faire son prince consort, répudiant son amant, qui avait été son complice dans l'assassinat de son premier mari. Toutefois, Arsaces n'est autre que son propre fils. Lorsqu'il découvre la vérité, il affronte Sémiramis, qui lui offre sa vie; mais ses sentiments filiaux sont trop forts. Dans "Dark day of dread!" (Sombre jour de terreur!) [p. 59] Sémiramis et Arsaces chantent leurs émotions contradictoires, les mélanges de tierces et de sixtes évoquant l'identité de leurs sentiments.

Guillaume Tell, créé à l'Opéra de Paris en 1829, est le dernier ouvrage scénique de Rossini. Cet opéra est très rarement représenté de nos jours à cause de sa longueur et de la difficulté du rôle de ténor (Arnold). Arnold, mercenaire suisse, a servi l'ennemi autrichien et est tombé amoureux de Mathilde, princesse de Habsbourg. Dans "Dark, sombre wood" (Sombre forêt) [p. 60], Mathilde chante la paix qu'elle a trouvée dans l'amour qu'elle lui porte. En deux strophes, dont la seconde est l'exacte réplique musicale de la première, Rossini allie délicatesse et passion d'une manière très touchante.

Au cours de sa courte vie, Donizetti, qui était le cadet de Rossini, composa plus de soixante opéras. **Linda di Chamounix** (Linda de Chamounix), est l'un des derniers. Il fut créé en 1842 au Kärntnertortheater de Vienne, où Donizetti avait été nommé directeur musical de la saison annuelle d'opéra italien. L'opéra, qui se déroule en France, sous Louis XV, est qualifié de "melodramma semi-serio". Il met en scène Linda, dont l'innocence est difficile à imaginer, et son prétendu fiancé Carlo, vicomte déguisé en peintre, dont les espoirs d'épouser Linda sont ruinés par l'ingérence parentale. Dans leur duo de l'acte I, "Linda! Linda!" [p. 56], Carlo l'assure de son amour, en faisant allusion à un secret. Leur impatience à se marier se traduit dans une phrase ("Come blessed day of highest joy" [Viens, jour béni de très grande joie]) qui apparaît à nouveau à la fin de l'ouvrage et permet à l'héroïne devenue folle de retrouver ses esprits.

Les Pêcheurs de perles, deuxième opéra de Bizet porté à la scène, fut représenté dix-huit fois en 1863, avant de disparaître du répertoire jusqu'à une date postérieure à la mort du compositeur. Surtout connu pour son duo entre le ténor et le baryton, il recèle de nombreux autres numéros d'une grande fraîcheur et d'une grande originalité. Dans une

période antérieure au début de l'action, Nadir et Zurga ont renoncé à séduire une jolie fille pour sauver leur amitié (mais ils en sont quand même brouillés). La jeune fille, Léïla, est à présent une prêtresse de Brahma qui a été envoyée afin de prier pour les pêcheurs. Elle retrouve Nadir; ils s'aiment toujours. Au deuxième acte, en l'attendant, elle veille seule la nuit dans un temple en ruine. "I'm all alone here in the night" (Me voilà seule dans la nuit) [p. 58] est précédé par une agitation à l'orchestre qui ne dure pas: de douces sonneries de cors amènent à la sérénité de l'air "As once before, with night to hide him" (Comme autrefois dans la nuit sombre).

Nadir échappe aux sables mouvants et aux tourbillons pour aller à sa recherche et lui déclarer son amour. On l'entend s'approcher et les amants se retrouvent avec transport ("Leïla! Leïla" "Lord Brahma! He is here!" [Léïla! Léïla!/Dieu puissant le voilà!]) [p. 60]. Léïla l'implore de partir, pour sa propre sécurité. Nadir le lui reproche, mais elle se laisse bientôt attendrir et ils chantent ensemble la longue mélodie de Nadir transposée dans une tonalité majeure.

Bizet est l'un des nombreux compositeurs dont l'influence marqua l'œuvre de Sir Arthur Sullivan. De la multitude d'opéras-comiques

écrits par Gilbert et Sullivan, de *Trial by Jury* (1875) à *The Grand Duke* (Le Grand Duc, 1896), le plus populaire est sans doute **The Mikado** (Le Mikado, 1885). Gilbert situa ce dernier dans un contexte japonais pour s'attaquer, comme à son habitude, à des cibles beaucoup plus proches de lui. Dans "The sun, whose rays" (Le soleil dont les rayons) [p. 63], Yum-Yum admire son reflet dans le miroir en se préparant à épouser Nanki-Poo. Des accords soutenus aux cordes accompagnent la déclamation presque libre de la voix, la deuxième strophe étant réhaussée par des arabesques de flûte et de clarinette tirées de l'introduction.

Carl Zeller, contemporain exact de Sullivan, fut un compositeur du soir, travaillant le jour dans la fonction publique autrichienne. **Der Vogelhändler** (L'Oiseleur, 1891), est un conte léger dont l'argument repose sur une usurpation d'identité et sur l'incompréhension qui en résulte dans un village rhénan. L'une des victimes de ces problèmes d'identité est la femme du notable local, qui décide de flirter avec Adam, l'oiseleur éponyme. Cet arrangement de "When you're sent roses" (Lorsque l'on vous envoie des roses) [p. 63] est un exemple typique du charme de cette opérette.

La *Wally* de Catalani fut créée l'année suivante au Teatro alla Scala de Milan. L'action se déroule au Tyrol en 1800 et retrace une histoire mélodramatique dont l'univers se situe aux antipodes de l'atmosphère douillette du *Vogelhändler*. La musique se situe au niveau élevé qui lui correspond. A la fin de l'ouvrage, le héros et l'héroïne meurent dans une avalanche après s'être finalement déclaré leur amour mutuel. Auparavant, ils connaissent néanmoins de nombreuses vicissitudes. A l'acte I, Wally se voit imposer un mari choisi par son père. Comme elle refuse, celui-ci menace de la jeter dehors. Dans une réponse pleine de noblesse, Wally annonce qu'elle va partir se perdre dans la neige ("I'll float into the distance" [Eh bien? Je n'irai pas loin]) [p. 60]. Dans la section centrale, elle fait ses adieux à la maison de sa mère, où elle ne reviendra peut-être jamais.

Rutland Boughton est une figure excentrique qui fonda un festival communautaire à Glastonbury. *The Immortal Hour* (L'Heure immortelle), créé au début de la Première Guerre mondiale, a connu un immense succès dans les années vingt, mais est depuis lors tombé dans l'oubli. Etain, une princesse de conte de fées, qui a oublié ses origines, est mariée à un roi qui appartient au

monde des mortels. Un an après leur première rencontre, un étranger apparaît: c'est Midir, venu ramener Etain au pays du désir du cœur. Sur un accompagnement de harpe, il chante "How beautiful they are" (Qu'ils sont beaux) (air composé à l'origine pour ténor) [p. 64], le "Faery Song" (Chant féerique) par lequel des voix du lointain avaient appelé Etain auparavant. Cette mélodie pentatonique simple est aussi belle que "the lordly ones" (les grands seigneurs) dont elle fait la louange.

L'air "Oh, my beloved father" (O mon cher père) [p. 56] de Gianni Schicchi (1918) de Puccini se vendit à plus d'un million d'exemplaires dans l'enregistrement de Joan Hammond et trouva un auditoire encore plus vaste lorsqu'il fut chanté en italien par Kiri Te Kanawa sur la bande originale du film d'E. M. Forster *A Room with a View* (Chambre avec vue). Au Moyen Age, à Florence, un vieil homme est mort, après avoir déshérité ses proches. Ils demandent son aide à Gianni Schicchi, qui décide de se faire passer pour le défunt et de dicter un nouveau testament en leur présence. Sa fille Lauretta, qui est amoureuse d'un membre de cette famille, demande à son père de donner son consentement à ce mariage. Gianni Schicchi accepte. Il joue le rôle du supposé mourant et

laisse la majorité de ses biens à... lui-même. Grâce à son ingéniosité, la dot de Lauretta est assurée.

Kiss Me, Kate, l'une des dernières comédies musicales de Cole Porter, fut créée à New York en 1948. Elle repose en partie sur *The Taming of the Shrew* (La Mégère apprivoisée) de Shakespeare et crée avec intelligence et esprit un lien entre les personnages de Shakespeare et la vie des acteurs. Ainsi, tout comme Petruchio apprivoise Katharine, Fred Graham apprivoise Lilli Vanessi (ce n'est pas la première fois, car ils ont déjà été mariés). "So in love" (Si amoureux) [p. 63] vient assez tôt à l'acte I: Lilli a reçu de Fred un bouquet de fleurs, sans se rendre compte qu'elles étaient destinées à une autre. Elle exprime les sentiments qu'elle lui porte dans cette chanson sincère qui, avec "Wunderbar" et "Brush up your Shakespeare" (Rafraîchis ton Shakespeare), est l'un des numéros les plus appréciés du spectacle.

Le public d'opéra dut être surpris lors de la première représentation de *The Rake's Progress* (Le Libertin) de Stravinski, au Teatro la Fenice de Venise, en 1951. Composé d'après des tableaux de William Hogarth exposés au Musée de Sir John Soane à Londres (dont Stravinski vit tout d'abord la série de huit gravures à Chicago, en 1947), l'opéra est écrit

dans le style de Mozart et d'autres compositeurs vus du milieu du vingtième siècle. A la fin, Tom Rakewell est à Bedlam, ayant tout perdu, l'esprit comme la fortune. Il reçoit la visite de son amoureuse Anne, qu'il a abandonnée pour les lumières brillantes et les plaisirs obscurs de Londres. Elle l'endort en lui chantant une berceuse, "Gently, little boat" (Doucement, petite barque) [p. 62], qui charme les autres occupants dans leurs cellules. Henry Purcell, compositeur de "I attempt from love's sickness" aurait pu reconnaître son ton doux-amer.

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Traduction: Marie-Stella Pâris.

Yvonne Kenny – Souvenirs personnels

Je me souviens avec précision de la première fois où Yvonne Kenny a travaillé avec moi. Au cours d'une audition qu'elle passa devant moi au printemps 1975, Yvonne fit la démonstration d'une voix limpide et ravissante, bien travaillée, d'une qualité et d'une tessiture superbes. Non seulement elle chantait bien, mais c'était une merveilleuse musicienne qui possédait un très grand sens du style, surtout dans le *bel canto* italien. Une exécution impressionnante: le genre de

prestation qui permet à une jeune chanteuse de se faire engager.

Mais je ne l'engageai pas. Je n'avais rien à lui proposer. Néanmoins, son audition révéla un tel talent vocal, tant d'assurance et de détermination, qu'elle m'incita à faire quelque chose – n'importe quoi – avec Yvonne Kenny. Cependant, tout ce que je pouvais lui proposer c'était d'étudier d'un bout à l'autre un rôle d'un opéra que j'étais en train de préparer pour une exécution de concert à l'automne, *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti. Ce n'était pas grand-chose, pour le moment.

En temps normal, ce genre de travail ne se présentait jamais. A cette époque, mes travaux musicologiques m'occupèrent beaucoup et ce n'est qu'en octobre que les événements nous réunirent à nouveau, Yvonne et moi. Janet Price, la soprano qui devait chanter le rôle de Rosmonda, était malade. Je téléphonai à Yvonne pour lui demander si elle pourrait travailler avec le reste de la troupe, car il est très difficile pour une distribution de répéter un opéra (surtout un ouvrage inconnu) sans le premier rôle.

Pourtant, nous n'avions pas encore commencé à travailler sur son rôle! Ensuite, Janet Price m'a appelé et m'a dit: "Patric, je ne me sens vraiment pas mieux et, si Yvonne

Kenny doit prendre ce rôle, il faut qu'elle fasse les répétitions d'orchestre". (Qui a dit que les divas ne peuvent pas être charmantes lorsqu'elle le veulent?) J'ai téléphoné à Yvonne et l'ai finalement persuadée de chanter. Il lui restait alors quatre jours pour apprendre un rôle long et difficile, avec de nombreux ornements vocaux élaborés que j'avais écrits pour l'opéra.

Le 11 octobre 1975, le Queen Elizabeth Hall était rempli d'un auditoire qui attendait la première exécution de cet opéra de Donizetti depuis 120 ans. Lorsqu'on a annoncé une soprano de remplacement dans le rôle-titre, des grognements ont parcouru la salle. Et quand Yvonne s'est levée pour sa première scène, rien ne permettait de deviner ce que cette jolie fille déterminée allait faire passer. Mais lorsqu'elle est arrivée aux dernières mesures de son air, sa voix s'élevant à un brillant contre-ut, le public s'est immédiatement rendu compte qu'il était en train de vivre quelque chose d'exceptionnel et un tonnerre d'applaudissement a éclaté. A la fin de l'opéra, l'auditoire a compris qu'une nouvelle chanteuse était née.

Cette soirée fut un triomphe total pour Yvonne Kenny. Ce fut le début d'une carrière qui allait la conduire à Covent Garden et, de

là, aux plus prestigieux théâtres lyriques du monde. Plus encore, ce fut, pour Yvonne et pour moi, le début d'une délicieuse relation de travail qui s'est poursuivie tout au long de sa brillante carrière.

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Traduction: Marie-Stella Pâris

Née à Sydney en Australie, **Yvonne Kenny** est l'une des sopranos les plus remarquables de sa génération. Elle fit ses débuts à l'opéra à Londres en 1975 dans le rôle titre de *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti. Après avoir remporté le concours Kathleen Ferrier, elle devint membre du Royal Opera de Covent Garden où elle chanta les rôles d'Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Oscar, Liù, Aspasia (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*), Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Susanna, Donna Anna, Pamina et Marzelline (*Fidelio*). Parmi les autres rôles notables qu'elle a incarnés sur les scènes britanniques, on peut citer Alice Ford (*Falstaff*) au Festival de Glyndebourne et le rôle titre de *Maria Stuarda* de Donizetti au Scottish Opera. Elle s'est fait une réputation internationale avec ses interprétations des opéras de Haendel, notamment dans les rôles titres de *Semele* et d'*Alcina* à Covent Garden et au Théâtre de la Fenice de Venise; Romilda

(*Seise*) à l'English National Opera (à Londres et en tournée en URSS) et à l'Opéra d'Etat de Bavière; Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) à Sydney et dans le rôle titre de *Deborah* donné dans le cadre des BBC Promenade Concerts de Londres.

Yvonne Kenny a interprété un grand nombre de ces rôles à l'étranger, notamment au Teatro alla Scala de Milan, à l'Opéra d'Etat de Berlin, de Vienne et de Bavière, à l'Opéra de Paris, au Washington Opera, à l'Opéra de Hambourg et de Zurich; elle a également chanté les rôles de Lucio Cinna (*Lucio Silla*), la Comtesse Almaviva, Donna Elvira et la Comtesse (*Capriccio*). Elle retourne fréquemment en Australie où elle a notamment chanté Armida (*Rinaldo* de Haendel), Fiordiligi, Gilda et les rôles titres dans *L'incoronazione di Poppea* de Monteverdi et *Manon* de Massenet. Plus récemment, elle a interprété le rôle de la Comtesse (*Capriccio*) à l'Opera Australia, celui de la Maréchale (*Der Rosenkavalier*) à l'English National Opera de Londres et au Minnesota Opera; elle a également pris part à une nouvelle production de *The Fairy Queen* de Purcell à l'English National Opera et a chanté le rôle titre dans *La Didone* de Cavalli à l'Opéra d'Etat de Berlin.

Au disque, le répertoire d'Yvonne Kenny va

de Haendel jusqu'à Stravinski, et lui a permis de collaborer avec des artistes aussi éminents que Sir Georg Solti, Sir Charles Mackerras, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Leonard Slatkin et Esa-Pekka Salonen. Ses prestations pour la collection Opera Rara incluent les enregistrements intégraux d'*Emilia di Liverpool* et *Ugo, conte di Parigi* de Donizetti, *Medea in Corinto* de Mayr, *Il crociato in Egitto* de Meyerbeer et *Robinson Crusoe* d'Offenbach, ainsi que plusieurs récitals. Pour Chandos, on peut l'entendre dans le Requiem de Mozart, *The Canterbury Pilgrims* de Sir George Dyson, *A Sea Symphony* (Symphonie no 1) et *A Pastoral Symphony* (Symphonie no 3) de Vaughan Williams, le cycle de mélodies avec orchestre *In Green Ways* de Howells, et, en association avec la Peter Moores Foundation, des extraits du *Rosenkavalier*.

Après avoir étudié avec Sergiu Celibidache, **David Parry** commença sa carrière comme assistant de Sir John Pritchard. Il fit ses débuts avec l'English Music Theatre avant de devenir l'un des chefs d'orchestre au Städtische Bühnen à Dortmund et à Opera North. Directeur musical d'Opera 80 de 1983 à 1987, il est directeur musical d'Almeida Opera depuis sa fondation en 1992.

Sa carrière, nationale et internationale, est extrêmement remplie, aussi bien sur la scène lyrique qu'en concert. Il a dirigé plusieurs productions de l'English National Opera et collabore régulièrement avec le Philharmonia Orchestra. C'est avec *Così fan tutte* qu'il fit ses débuts au Festival de Glyndebourne en 1996, une scène qu'il retrouva en 1998 pour diriger la création mondiale de *Flight* de Jonathan Dove.

Il séjourne fréquemment en Espagne où il a dirigé en concert la plupart des grands orchestres espagnols. C'est lui qui dirigea la première espagnole de *Peter Grimes* à Madrid et en 1996 la première production espagnole de *The Rake's Progress*. Il a dirigé en Allemagne, en Suède, aux Pays-Bas, au Festival de Pesaro en Italie, au Festival international de Hong-Kong, au Japon pour une tournée de *Carmen* et au Mexique avec l'Orchestre symphonique d'UNAM. Il a récemment dirigé plusieurs nouvelles productions dont *Fidelio* au Festival de Nouvelle-Zélande, *Maria Stuarda* au Théâtre de Bâle et *Lucia di Lammermoor* avec le New Israeli Opera.

En studio, il a participé entre autres à la production de la BBC Television de *Der Vampyr* de Marschner, dirigeant aussi vingt et une intégrales d'opéras financées par la Peter Moores Foundation. Plusieurs de ces intégrales

furent enregistrées pour Opera Rara et primées, *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti recevant en Belgique le Prix Cecilia. Pour Chandos, Parry a dirigé sept enregistrements d'airs d'opéra (avec Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson et Della

Jones, les deux derniers devant paraître durant 2000 et 2001) de même que *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, l'enregistrement primé de *Tosca* et des extraits du *Rosenkavalier*, tous ces enregistrements étant réalisés en collaboration avec la Peter Moores Foundation.

Bill Rafferty



Yvonne Kenny as Romilda
in the 1992 English National
Opera production of
Handel's *Xerxes*

Bill Rafferty



Yvonne Kenny as Titania in
the 1995 English National
Opera revival of Purcell's
The Fairy Queen

Grandi arie operistiche

È stato necessario attendere fino alla metà del Novecento prima che l'Inghilterra potesse vantare compositori di opere all'altezza dei loro colleghi di altri paesi. Perciò può essere una sorpresa sapere che il decennio del 1680, alla fine del secolo che vide nascere il genere operistico in Italia, produsse due delle prime opere in inglese: *Venus and Adonis* di John Blow e *Dido and Aeneas* di Purcell. Il fatto che questo esordio non avesse poi seguito è da attribuire in parte ai gusti dell'epoca; ma Purcell, compositore di musica per le occasioni civili e religiose, fu pur sempre un uomo di teatro, e compose musica di accompagnamento per numerose rappresentazioni sceniche, oggi per lo più dimenticate.

King Arthur (1691) e *The Indian Queen* (1695) sono delle "opere per metà"; i protagonisti non cantano e la vicenda drammatica non viene guidata generalmente dalla musica. Il testo di *King Arthur* è di John Dryden, che aveva cambiato bandiera una volta di troppo e sotto il regno di Guglielmo e Maria era ormai un ex Poeta Laureato. "Fairest isle" [pag. 59] è un song patriottico per Venere, musicato da Purcell in forma di

raffinato minuetto. In *The Indian Queen*, storia di un improbabile conflitto tra Messicani e Inca, uno Spirito dell'aria canta "I attempt from love's sickness" [pag. 56].

Purcell morì giovane, ma il suo posto venne occupato da un compositore che dominò la vita musicale di Londra nella prima metà del Settecento: Georg Frideric Handel. Tra il 1711 e il 1741 egli compose oltre trenta opere, soprattutto per il King's Theatre di Haymarket (primo precursore dell'attuale Her Majesty's). *Rinaldo* fu la prima: si basa su un argomento caro a molti compositori dell'epoca barocca e classica, l'ossessione amorosa della maga saracena Armida per l'eroe crociato Rinaldo. "Hear thou my weeping" (Lascia ch'io pianga) [pag. 56] è la supplica di una prigioniera, Almirena, fidanzata di Rinaldo, che chiede la libertà con accenti semplici, ma commoventi. La sua aria illustra la formula del *da capo* utilizzata all'epoca: la terza e ultima sezione è una ripetizione della prima, con l'aggiunta di alcuni abbellimenti da parte dell'interprete.

Nel decennio del 1740, Handel abbandonò l'opera e si dedicò alla composizione di una serie di oratori, drammi di argomento sacro,

eseguiti in teatro, ma senza allestimento scenico. La differenza principale rispetto alle opere sta nell'uso dell'inglese al posto dell'italiano e nell'introduzione di un ruolo di rilievo per il coro. *Joshua*, composto per il Covent Garden, come i suoi successori, fu eseguito per la prima volta nel 1748. "Oh! Had I Jubal's lyre" [pag. 59] è un gioioso motivo interpretato da Achsa, romantico personaggio incluso dal librettista per completare le vittorie di Giosuè.

Solo ventidue anni separano la morte di Handel dalla rappresentazione di *Idomeneo*, la prima delle grandi opere di Mozart nel 1781. La sua ambientazione nell'antichità classica gli sarebbe risultata familiare, ma l'aspetto cortese e brillante del barocco aveva ormai lasciato il posto allo stile meno formale dell'era classica.

L'opera si svolge a Creta, dopo la guerra di Troia. Idomeneo ha fatto ritorno nel suo regno dopo l'assedio di Troia, preceduto da Ilia, figlia del re Priamo, e dagli altri prigionieri troiani. Idamante, figlio di Idomeneo, si è innamorato di Ilia, e ne è ricambiato, ma nessuno dei due lo ammette apertamente. In "Gentle zephyrs" (Zeffiretti lusinghieri) [pag. 56] all'inizio dell'Atto III, Ilia finalmente confessa a se stessa il suo amore e chiede teneramente ai venti di rivelare a Idamante i suoi sentimenti.

Thanks be to you, o gracious patrons! (Nehmt meinen Dank, ihr holden Gönner!) [pag. 59] del 10 aprile 1782, è un'aria da concerto che Mozart compose per sua cognata, il soprano Aloysia Lange. Con espressioni semplici, la cantante si congeda temporaneamente dal suo fedele pubblico. Sulla scena è accompagnata da tre legni, a cui Mozart assegna un delizioso motivo caratteristico. Il verso che descrive gli ardenti sentimenti nel cuore dell'interprete è identico a una frase dell'opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Il ratto dal serraglio), completata nello stesso mese.

Nell'Ottocento si componevano ancora opere ambientate nell'antichità. *Semiramide*, eseguita per la prima volta al Teatro la Fenice di Venezia nel 1823, fu l'ultima delle opere di Rossini per l'Italia. Semiramide, regina di Babilonia, ha assassinato il marito e tentato di uccidere suo figlio. Quindici anni dopo, intende fare di Arsace, uno dei suoi comandanti, il proprio consorte, abbandonando il proprio amante e complice. Ma Arsace non è altri che suo figlio. Informato di questo egli affronta Semiramide, che si offre alla sua spada, ma l'affetto filiale è troppo forte. In "Dark day of dread!" (Giorno d'orrore!) [pag. 59] Semiramide e Arsace

esprimono le loro contrastanti emozioni, con una fusione di terze e seste che tradisce il loro identico sentimento.

Con **Guillaume Tell** (Guglielmo Tell), rappresentato per la prima volta all'Opéra di Parigi nel 1829, Rossini diede l'addio al teatro. A causa della sua lunghezza e del difficile ruolo tenorile di Arnoldo, oggi le rappresentazioni sono estremamente rare. Arnoldo, un mercenario svizzero, ha servito il nemico austriaco e si è innamorato di Matilde, principessa asburgica. In "Dark, sombre wood" (Selva opaca) [pag. 60] Matilde descrive la pace che ha trovato nel suo amore per lui. In due strofe – la seconda, un'esatta ripetizione musicale – Rossini abbina delicatezza e passione in maniera efficacissima.

Nella sua breve vita, Donizetti, contemporaneo più giovane di Rossini, compose oltre sessanta opere. **Linda di Chamounix**, una delle ultime, venne eseguita per la prima volta nel 1842 al Kärntnertheater di Vienna, dove Donizetti era stato nominato direttore musicale della stagione annuale di opere italiane. Ambientata nella Francia di Luigi XV e definita "melodramma semiserio", ha come protagonista la credula Linda e il suo sedicente fidanzato Carlo, un visconte che finge di essere

pittore e spera di sposarla Linda; le sue mior però sono ostacolate dalle interferenze dei genitori. Nel duetto dell'Atto I "Linda! Linda!" [pag. 56], Carlo protesta il proprio amore e accenna a un segreto. I due pregustano il matrimonio in una frase ("Come blessed day of highest joy" [A consolarmi affrettisi]). Ripetuta ancora alla fine dell'opera, l'espressione fa ritornare in sé l'eroina che ha smarrito il senno.

Les Pêcheurs de perles (I pescatori di perle), seconda delle opere di Bizet a venire rappresentata, fu replicata diciotto volte nel 1863 prima di scomparire dal repertorio, per ricomparire solo dopo la morte del compositore. Famosa soprattutto per il duetto tra tenore e baritono, contiene molti altri brani freschi e originali. Nadir e Zurga hanno abbandonato il corteggiamento di una bella ragazza pur di proteggere la propria amicizia (ma hanno comunque finito per litigare). La ragazza, Leïla, diventata sacerdotessa di Brahma, viene inviata a pregare per i pescatori e rivede Nadir. I due sono ancora innamorati. Nel secondo atto, Leïla lo attende da sola, di notte, tra le rovine di un tempio. L'agitazione dell'orchestra che introduce "I'm all alone here in the night" (Me voilà seule dans la nuit) [pag. 58] è di breve durata: il dolce richiamo

dei corni porta alla serenità di "As once before, with night to hide him" (Comme autrefois dans la nuit sombre).

Nadir sfugge alle sabbie mobili e ai gorgi per cercare la fanciulla e dichiararle il suo amore. Al suo arrivo, gli innamorati si salutano estaticamente ("Leïla! Leïla!" "Lord Brahma! He is here!" [Léila! Léila!/Dieu puissant le violà!]) [pag. 60]. Leïla supplica Nadir di fuggire per salvarsi; lui la rimprovera e presto riesce a calmarla. Entrambi cantano una trasformazione in chiave maggiore della melodia di Nadir.

Bizet fu uno dei tanti compositori che contribuirono alla formazione musicale di Sir Arthur Sullivan. Gilbert e Sullivan produssero una serie di operette comiche, da *Trial by Jury* (1875) a *The Grand Duke* (1896), ma la più famosa probabilmente è **The Mikado** (1885). Gilbert ambientò la vicenda in Giappone, utilizzandola, come era sua abitudine, per colpire bersagli molto più vicini. In "The sun, whose rays" [pag. 63], Yum-Yum ammira il suo riflesso nello specchio mentre si prepara alle nozze con Nanki-Poo. Alcuni accordi sostenuti degli archi accompagnano la declamazione quasi libera della voce, e la seconda strofa è sottolineata degli arabeschi del flauto e del clarinetto derivati dall'introduzione.

Per l'austriaco Carl Zeller, contemporaneo di Sullivan, l'attività di compositore fu un secondo lavoro, che svolse contemporaneamente alla propria attività di funzionario pubblico. **Der Vogelhändler** (Il venditore di uccelli, 1891) è una storia leggera di travestimenti, ed equivoci in un villaggio della regione del Reno. Una vittima degli equivoci è la moglie dell'arciduca, che decide di amareggiare con Adam, il venditore di uccelli del titolo. L'arrangiamento di "When you're sent roses" (Quando ricevi delle rose) [pag. 63] è un esempio tipico del fascino dell'operetta.

La Wally di Catalani fu rappresentata per la prima volta l'anno successivo al Teatro alla Scala di Milano. Ambientata nel Tirolo nel 1800, è una storia melodrammatica completamente diversa dai toni intimi del *Vogelhändler*, con musica appropriata al suo argomento. Alla fine dell'opera, dopo una serie di vicissitudini, l'eroe e l'eroina vengono travolti da una valanga, dopo essersi finalmente confessati il loro amore reciproco. Nell'Atto I il padre di Wally le impone di sposare un uomo scelto da lui. Di fronte al rifiuto della figlia, minaccia di cacciarla via di casa. Wally risponde dignitosamente che se ne andrà tra la neve ("I'll float into the

distance” [Ebben? Ne andrò lontana]) [pag. 60]. Nella sezione centrale dà l’addio alla casa di sua madre, in cui forse non tornerà mai più.

Rutland Boughton, un personaggio eccentrico, creò un festival popolare a Glastonbury. **The Immortal Hour**, rappresentata per la prima volta all’inizio della prima Guerra mondiale, ebbe enorme successo negli anni Venti, ma da allora è stata dimenticata. Etain, principessa delle fate che ha dimenticato le proprie origini, è sposata con un re mortale. Un anno dopo il loro incontro, compare uno straniero: si tratta di Midir, venuto per riportare indietro Etain alla terra dei desideri. Accompagnato dall’arpa egli canta “How beautiful they are” (originariamente composta per tenore) [pag. 64], la “Faery Song” prima udita da Etain in un richiamo di voci lontane. Si tratta di una semplice melodia pentatonica, bella quanto quelle più nobili che esalta.

“Oh, my beloved father” (O mio babbino caro) [pag. 56], l’aria tratta da **Gianni Schicchi** di Puccini (1918), ha venduto più di un milione di copie nell’interpretazione in inglese registrata da Joan Hammond e ha trovato un pubblico ancora più vasto nella sua versione in lingua originale interpretata da Kiri Te Kanawa

per la colonna sonora del film *A Room with a View* (Camera con vista), tratto dal romanzo di E. M. Forster. Nella Firenze medievale, un ricco vecchio è morto, diseredando i propri parenti. Questi ultimi si rivolgono a Gianni Schicchi, che decide di impersonare il defunto e dettare un nuovo testamento in loro presenza. Sua figlia Lauretta, innamorata di un componente di questa famiglia, chiede il consenso del padre al matrimonio. Il padre acconsente, finge di essere l’uomo apparentemente in fin di vita, e lascia gran parte della fortuna a – se stesso. Grazie a questo stratagemma, la dote di Lauretta è assicurata.

Kiss Me, Kate, uno degli ultimi musical di Cole Porter, fu prodotto a New York nel 1948. Parzialmente ispirato a *The Taming of the Shrew* (La bisbetica domata) di Shakespeare, inframezza abilmente e ingegnosamente le vicende dei personaggi shakespeariani con quelle della vita degli attori. Come Petruccio doma Caterina, altrettanto fa Fred Graham con Lilli Vanessi (anche in questo caso, perché sono stati sposati prima). “So in love” [pag. 63] arriva all’inizio dell’Atto I: Lilli ha ricevuto un bouquet di fiori da Fred ed esprime i suoi sentimenti per lui, ma non si rende conto che i fiori erano destinati a un’altra. Questo brano,

insieme con “Wunderbar” e “Brush up your Shakespeare” è uno dei numeri preferiti dello spettacolo.

Il pubblico della Fenice di Venezia sarà rimasto certamente stupefatto in occasione della prima di **The Rake’s Progress** (La carriera del libertino) di Stravinskij, nel 1951. Ispirata alla serie di acqueforti di William Hogarth conservate nel museo di Sir John Soane di Londra (Stravinskij vide le incisioni per la prima volta a Chicago nel 1947), l’opera è nello stile di Mozart e altri compositori dell’epoca classica, visto dall’ottica del Ventesimo secolo. Verso la fine, dopo aver smarrito la ragione ed essersi completamente rovinato, Tom Rakewell si trova in manicomio. Gli fa visita la sua innamorata Anne, da lui abbandonata per le luci brillanti e i piaceri peccaminosi di Londra. Per farlo addormentare, Anne gli canta una ninna nanna, “Gently, little boat” [pag. 62], che incanta gli altri detenuti nelle loro celle. Il compositore di “I attempt from love’s sickness”, Henry Purcell, avrebbe forse riconosciuto il suo tono dolceamaro.

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Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Yvonne Kenny – un ricordo personale

Ricordo con chiarezza la prima occasione che ha visto Yvonne Kenny impegnata con me. Nella primavera del 1975 era venuta a trovarmi per un’audizione e aveva fatto sfoggio della sua voce splendidamente limpida, educata, di qualità e gamma superba. Oltre a saper cantare, dimostrava una straordinaria musicalità e un notevole senso dello stile, soprattutto per la scuola italiana del belcanto. Un’interpretazione che lascia il segno, di quelle che convincono ad ingaggiare subito una giovane cantante.

Ma io non lo feci. Non avevo lavoro da offrire. Tuttavia, l’evidente talento dell’interpretazione e la fiduciosa sicurezza della cantante mi fecero subito desiderare di fare qualcosa, qualunque cosa, con la voce di Yvonne Kenny. Il meglio che riuscii ad offrire, purtroppo, fu la proposta di “studiare” un ruolo da un’opera che stavo preparando per un concerto in autunno, la *Rosmonda d’Inghilterra* di Donizetti. Non era molto, a quel punto.

Come al solito in queste cose, lo “studio” non si fece. Io mi ritrovai impegnato nell’attività musicologica e solo in ottobre le circostanze mi portarono ancora una volta a contatto con Yvonne. Janet Price, il soprano che avrebbe dovuto interpretare il ruolo di

Rosmonda, si ammalò. Io telefonai a Yvonne e le chiesi se era disposta a lavorare con il resto della compagnia: le prove di un'opera, soprattutto se sconosciuta, sono molto difficili per il cast senza la protagonista.

Ma neanche questa volta riuscimmo a lavorare al suo ruolo! Poi Janet Price mi telefonò e disse: "Patric, io sto ancora male; se Yvonne Kenny è disposta a prendersi quest'impegno, deve partecipare alle prove orchestrali". (Chi l'ha detto che le dive non sanno essere generose quando vogliono?) Telefonai a Yvonne e alla fine la convinsi a cantare. A questo punto le erano rimasti quattro giorni per imparare un ruolo lungo e difficile che comprendeva molti abbellimenti vocali elaborati che io avevo preparato per l'opera.

L'11 ottobre del 1975, la sala del Queen Elizabeth Hall era piena di gente in attesa della prima esecuzione dell'opera di Donizetti in 120 anni. L'annuncio che il ruolo della protagonista sarebbe stato interpretato da una sostituta fu salutato da varie esclamazioni di disappunto. Quando Yvonne si alzò per la sua prima scena, sarebbe stato impossibile prevedere che cosa avrebbe offerto questa bella ragazza decisa. Ma già alle ultime battute della sua aria, che precedevano un brillante do di petto, il pubblico si era reso conto che stava

accadendo qualcosa di speciale e applaudiva fragorosamente. Alla fine dell'opera era chiaro che era nata una nuova cantante.

La serata fu un totale trionfo per Yvonne Kenny. Era l'inizio di una carriera che l'avrebbe portata al Covent Garden e da lì in alcuni dei più prestigiosi teatri lirici del mondo. Soprattutto, per me e Yvonne, si è trattato dell'inizio di un bel rapporto di lavoro che è proseguito per tutta la sua brillante carriera.

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Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Il soprano australiano **Yvonne Kenny**, di Sydney, è uno dei nomi più illustri della sua generazione. In occasione del suo esordio operistico, avvenuto a Londra nel 1975, ha indossato le vesti di protagonista in *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti. Dopo la vittoria al concorso Kathleen Ferrier, la cantante è entrata a far parte della Royal Opera, Covent Garden, dove è stata Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Oscar, Liù, Aspasia (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*), Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Susanna, Donna Anna, Pamina e Marcellina (*Fidelio*). Tra le sue altre interpretazioni di rilievo nei teatri lirici britannici vanno ricordate Alice Ford (*Falstaff*) per la Glyndebourne Festival Opera e Maria

Stuarda nell'opera omonima di Donizetti per la Scottish Opera. La fama internazionale dell'artista è legata al repertorio di Handel, con i ruoli di protagonista in *Semele* e *Alcina* al Covent Garden e al Teatro la Fenice di Venezia; Romilda (*Serse*) per l'English National Opera (a Londra e in tournée nell'URSS) e l'Opera di stato bavarese; Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) a Sydney e il ruolo di protagonista in *Deborah* per i concerti della serie Promenade BBC.

Yvonne Kenny ha proposto molte di queste interpretazioni in diversi teatri internazionali, tra cui La Scala di Milano e l'Opera di stato bavarese, di Berlino, di Vienna, l'Opéra di Parigi, l'Opera di Washington e i teatri lirici di Amburgo e Zurigo, dove ha interpretato anche altri ruoli, come Lucio Cinna (*Lucio Silla*), la contessa Almaviva, Donna Elvira e la Contessa (*Capriccio*). La cantante fa spesso ritorno in Australia, dove ha cantato Armida (*Rinaldo* di Handel), Fiordiligi, Gilda ed è stata protagonista de *L'incoronazione di Poppea* di Monteverdi e *Manon* di Massenet. Tra i suoi ultimi impegni vanno citati il ruolo della Contessa (*Capriccio*) per Opera Australia, quello della Marescialla (*Der Rosenkavalier*) per l'English National Opera e l'Opera del Minnesota, un nuovo allestimento di *The*

Fairy Queen di Purcell per l'English National Opera e *La Didone* di Cavalli, nelle vesti di protagonista, alla Deutsche Oper (Berlino).

La discografia di Yvonne Kenny rispecchia un repertorio che va da Handel a Stravinskij e include collaborazioni con artisti del calibro di Sir Georg Solti, Sir Charles Mackerras, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Leonard Slatkin ed Esa-Pekka Salonen. Per Opera Rara l'artista è stata impegnata, tra l'altro, nella registrazione delle versioni integrali di *Emilia di Liverpool* e *Ugo, conte di Parigi* di Donizetti, *Medea in Corinto* di Mayr, *Il crociato in Egitto* di Meyerbeer e *Robinson Crusoe* di Offenbach, oltre a registrare diversi recital. Per l'etichetta Chandos ha partecipato alle registrazioni del Requiem di Mozart, *The Canterbury Pilgrims* di Sir George Dyson, *A Sea Symphony* (Sinfonia N. 1) e *A Pastoral Symphony* (Sinfonia N. 3) di Vaughan Williams, *In Green Ways*, ciclo di brani orchestrali di Howells; in associazione con la Peter Moores Foundation, ha registrato alcuni brani scelti tratti da *Der Rosenkavalier*.

David Parry ha studiato con Sergiu Celibidache ed ha cominciato la sua carriera come assistente di Sir John Pritchard. Ha debuttato all'English Music Theatre, quindi è

diventato direttore d'orchestra presso la Städtische Bühnen Dortmund e l'Opera North. È stato Direttore Musicale di Opera 80 dal 1983 al 1987 e dal 1992 è stato Direttore Musicale fondatore dell'Opera di Almeida.

Lavora copiosamente in opere e concerti, a livello nazionale ed internazionale. Ha diretto diverse produzioni presso l'English National Opera e appare regolarmente con la Philharmonia Orchestra. Nel 1996 ha debuttato con *Così fan tutte* al Glyndebourne Festival, dove nel 1998 ha diretto la prima mondiale di *Flight* di Jonathan Dove.

È un frequente visitatore della Spagna dove si è esibito in concerto con la maggior parte delle maggiori orchestre spagnole. Ha diretto la prima spagnola di *Peter Grimes* a Madrid e nel 1996 la prima produzione spagnola di *The Rake's Progress*. È apparso in Germania, Svezia, Paesi Bassi, al Festival di Pesaro in Italia, al Festival Internazionale di Hong Kong, in Giappone con una tournée della *Carmen* e in Messico con la UNAM Symphony Orchestra.

Recenti nuove produzioni da lui dirette comprendono il *Fidelio* al Festival della Nuova Zelanda, *Maria Stuarda* al Teatro di Basilea e *Lucia di Lammermoor* alla New Israeli Opera.

Il suo lavoro in studio di registrazione comprende la produzione della BBC di *Der Vampyr* di Marschner nonché ventuno registrazioni operistiche complete con il patrocinio della Peter Moores Foundation. Tra questi vi sono numerosi dischi per l'etichetta Opera Rara che hanno vinti parecchi premi, tra cui il belga Prix Cecilia per la *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti. Per Chandos ha diretto sette registrazioni di arie d'opera (con Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson e Della Jones, le ultime due usciranno nel 2000 e nel 2001), nonché *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Tosca* (vincitrice di un premio) e brani scelti da *Der Rosenkavalier*, tutte in collaborazione con la Peter Moores Foundation.



Sue Adler

Yvonne Kenny as Titania, with Arthur Pita, in the 1995 English National Opera revival of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*

from Gianni Schicchi

Solo

Lauretta

- [1] Oh, my beloved father
I love him, yes, I love him;
I'll go to Porta Rossa
to buy a wedding ring.
Oh yes, I really love him,
but if you still say no,
I'll go to Ponte Vecchio,
and throw myself below.
If I am not to marry him,
alas, I can but die.
Father, be kind I pray.

G. Forzano, translated by Percy Pitt,
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from Idomeneo, Act III

Aria

Ilia

- [2] Gentle zephyrs, soft caressing,
lightly fly to my beloved,
go and tell him how I love him
and how faithful and true my heart.
Boundless ocean and azure heaven,
sharing all my bitter sorrow.
Tell, ah, tell him the love I bear him,
how ye marvel at love so deep.

Da capo

G. Varesco, after A. Danchet,
translated by the Misses Radford, Falmouth

from The Indian Queen, Act I

Solo

Aerial Spirit

- [3] I attempt from love's sickness to fly in vain,
since I am myself my own fever and pain.
No more now, fond heart, with pride no more
swell,
thou canst not raise forces enough to rebel.
I attempt from love's sickness *etc.*
For love has more pow'r and less mercy than fate,
to make us seek ruin and love those that hate.
I attempt from love's sickness *etc.*
John Dryden and R. Howard

from Rinaldo, Act II

Aria

Almirena

- [4] Hear thou my weeping as here I languish,
all vainly sighing to be free again!
I dwell in torment, in cruel anguish,
ah, hear my crying and end my pain.

Da capo

G. Rossi, translated by Andrew Porter

from Linda from Chamonix, Act I

Love Duet

Carlo

- [5] Linda! Linda!

Linda

Ah, Carlo!

Carlo

Are you alone here?

Linda

Yes...

I was grieving at the thought
that I'd not see you till tomorrow.

Carlo

A day without you
is a day of grief and torment.

Linda

Not to find you!

Carlo

Not to see you!

Linda and Carlo

... Was a torment hard to bear.

Carlo

From the day when first I saw you,
from the day I learned to love you,
to the pine grove where first I met you
ev'ry morning I return there;
love had led you to that meeting
when our hearts began to beat as one.
And to love you that was my destiny:
and my only joy is to be near you,
by your smile my life is guided,
life for me has just begun.
How I long to live beside you,
live beside you forever more!

Linda

What prevents it?

Carlo

I'd like to tell you, but for now...

Linda

Mysterious secret!

Carlo

For a while I must conceal it.

Linda

I have other cares as well:
Ah! From my mother I kept no secrets,
ev'ry joy and fear confiding;
but a secret I now am hiding
from the mother ever dearer,
now my heart's no longer hers alone,
now that you have won my heart.
Ah! And at evening when we are praying,
though I kneel down to pray beside her,
yet my thoughts are ever straying
to the man who's won my heart.
Ah! God bear witness, our God bear
witness
that my passion is chaste and pure.

Carlo

Ah! You're an angel pure and holy...
God will hear.

Linda

I hope He hears me.
I'll respect your hidden secret, but I suffer.

Carlo

I suffer too!
Oh, how I suffer too!

Linda and Carlo

Hard to burn with such devotion,
but be forced never to reveal it,
from all others to conceal it,
to conceal the love I feel,
ah, the cruel smart and the keenest woe
that a lover's heart can know.

Linda

Carlo!

Carlo

Linda!
Come blessed day of highest joy,
the day I long and sigh for!
When blessed in the sight of God and man
I claim you for my bride;
when we shall never part again:
when no one can divide us,
I shall live in ecstasy,
forever by your side.

Linda

Come blessed day *etc.*

Linda and Carlo

When we shall never *etc.*

G. Rossi, after D'Ennery and Lemoine,
translated by Andrew Porter

from The Pearl Fishers, Act II

Recitative

Leïla

- [6] I'm all alone here in the night.
Alone here by the sea and all around me silence.
I am trembling... afraid...
how can I hope to sleep...
Yet he is there, my heart can tell me he is near me.

Aria

Leïla

As once before, with night to hide him,
he's there in the dark of the trees.
He's guarding me now in the shadows
so I can sleep dreaming in peace!
He's there, so now I'm safe,
as once before, as once before.

He's there, from one glance I am sure!
He's there, my heart did not deceive me.
Oh, what joy! What rapturous joy.
He's come once more to find me here...
Oh, what joy... he has returned...
he is there close at hand.
Ah!

As once before *etc.*

M. Carré and E. Cormon,
translated by Nell and John Moody,
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United Music Publishers Ltd

Thanks be to you, o gracious patrons!, KV 383

- [7] Thanks be to you, o gracious patrons!
Such ardent feelings stir my heart,
a louder voice than mine should sing them,
I can but try, and try in vain.
But know, I never shall forget you.
Gladly I'd stay here ever striving
to earn your favour but I must go!
From olden days a life of wand'ring
has ever been the artist's fate:
the Muse commands and I must follow,
and leave my native land behind
to venture to a far-off country.
But know, wherever I may go,
at ev'ry moment I'll not forget.
I'll not forget, my loving heart remains with you.
Author unknown, translated by Andrew Porter

from King Arthur, Act V

Song

Venus

- [8] Fairest isle, all isles excelling,
seat of pleasure and of love,
Venus here will choose her dwelling,
and forsake her Cyprian grove.
Cupid from his fav'rite nation
care and envy will remove;
jealousy, that poisons passion,
and despair, that dies for love.
Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,
sighs that blow the fire of love,

soft repulses, kind disdainng,
shall be all the pains you prove.
Ev'ry swain shall pay his duty,
grateful ev'ry nymph shall prove;
and as these excel in beauty,
those shall be renown'd in love.
John Dryden

from Joshua

Air

Achsah

- [9] Oh! Had I Jubal's lyre,
or Miriam's tuneful voice,
to sounds like his I would aspire,
in songs like hers rejoice.
Oh! Had I Jubal's lyre, *etc.*
My humble strains but faintly show
how much to heav'n and thee I owe.
T. Morell [?]

from Semiramide, Act II

Duet

Semiramis and Arsaces

- [10] Dark day of dread!... yet of contentment!
When you embrace me, in that dear moment,
I feel no more terrible torment,
bravely I now defy terrible fate.
In time of misery, of desolation,
to share my grief with you is consolation,
your loving sympathy consoles my heart.
G. Rossi, after Voltaire,
translated by Andrew Porter

from La Wally, Act I

Aria

Wally

[11] I'll float into the distance
like the sad echo of a bell at nightfall,
there, 'mid the snowy vastness,
there, 'mid the clouds of gold,
where hope is lost forever,
only torment and regret.

Far from my mother's house of joy and gladness
poor Wally must pass her days,
so far away, so lonely.

The home I love!

You were mine to love and cherish,
shall I be banished from you?

My home! My home!

I go, alone, abandoned
like the echo of a bell at nightfall,
there, 'mid the snowy vastness...

I go, alone, abandoned
amid the clouds of gold.

L. Illica, after W. von Hillern,
translated by David Parry

from William Tell, Act II

Romance

Mathilde

[12] Dark, sombre wood, gloomy pines all around
me,
more dear to me than my court in its splendour,

here on these peaks, where the storm rages wildly,
here my heart can be at rest.
And I know that a lone echo can hear my cry.

Fair, shining star lighting the fields and the
pastures,
on my path shedding your light, modest ray,
ah, be my star, shine for me, gently guide me,
shine on, be my star, your beam will not betray.
And I know that a lone echo can hear my cry,
just an echo will hear me, will hear my sad cry.

E. de Jouy, H.-L.-F. Bis *et al.*, after Schiller,
translated by Andrew Porter

from The Pearl Fishers, Act II

Love Duet

Nadir

[13] Leïla! Leïla!

Leïla

Lord Brahma! He is here!

Nadir

I'm close to her at last!

Leïla

How did you find your way
with quicksands on the shore
and whirlpools in the sea?

Nadir

A God has lent me wings
and shown me where to go.
No danger ever hindered me!

Leïla

Why ever are you here, fly,
or else they will kill you!

Nadir

You needn't be afraid... forgive me!

Leïla

I have vowed... I may not even listen...
No, no! I may not even look!

Nadir

Oh, don't be cruel!

Leïla

They'll kill you if you stay...

Nadir

You can't send me away!

Leïla

Oh! Please go!

Nadir

But we've many hours till morning.
Up here they'll never find us.
Ah! Leïla, be kind and give me hope...

Leïla

No, you cannot stay...

Nadir

Do not send me away...

Leïla

Go quickly I implore you...

Nadir

Can't you see I adore you...

Leïla

Go! Please go!

Nadir

Leïla! Leïla!

Leïla

Ah! They'll kill you if you stay...
for both our sakes please go away!

Nadir

Ah, no!

Your heart was never tuned to mine.
That night in the deep scented garden...
I listened there, my soul in heaven, to your voice
hoping love would waken.

But your heart was not tuned to mine.

Leïla

For me that night will always shine.
With you in the deep scented garden...
My heart was free and in heaven,
for my vow had not yet been taken,
for in my heart that night will shine!

Nadir

I made a vow that I never would see you,
and to avoid you all thro' my life.
But love is strong... oh yes...
love is stronger than I am!
How could I leave while enslaved by your eyes?

Leïla

In spite of the dark, in spite of all your silence,
my heart read yours and I knew how you loved.

I waited too, hoping always to find you...
Your gentle voice brought such warmth to my
heart.

Nadir

Is it true? Is it true? What you say? Oh, what
joy!

Leïla

Ah! For me that night will always shine *etc.*

Nadir

Yes. Your heart I know was tuned to mine *etc.*

Leïla and Nadir

Those hours of love.

M. Carré and E. Cormon,
translated by Nell and John Moody,
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from The Rake's Progress, Act III

Lullaby

Anne

- ¹⁴ Gently, little boat,
across the ocean float,
the crystal waves dividing:
the sun in the west
is going to rest;
glide, glide, glide
toward the Islands of the Blest.

Chorus

What voice is this?
What heavenly strains
bring solace to tormented brains?

Anne

Orchards greenly grace
that undisturbed place,
the weary soul recalling
to slumber and dream,
while many a stream
falls, falls, falls,
descanting on a child-like theme.

Chorus

O sacred music of the spheres!
Where are our rages and our fears?

Anne

Lion, lamb and deer,
untouched by greed or fear
about the woods are straying:
and quietly now
the blossoming bough
sways, sways, sways
above the fair unclouded brow.

Chorus

Sing on!
For ever sing!
Release our frantic souls and bring us peace!
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from The Mikado, Act II

Song

Yum-Yum

- ¹⁵ The sun, whose rays
are all ablaze
with ever living glory,
does not deny His majesty,
he scorns to tell a story!
He don't exclaim
'I blush for shame,
so kindly be indulgent'.
But, fierce and bold,
in fiery gold,
he glories all effulgent!
I mean to rule the earth,
as he the sky,
we really know our worth,
the sun and I!
Observe his flame,
that placid dame,
the moon's celestial highness.
There's not a trace
upon her face
of diffidence or shyness.
She borrows light
that, through the night,
mankind may all acclaim her!
And, truth to tell,
she lights up well,
so I, for one, don't blame her!
Ah, pray make no mistake,

we are not shy,
we're very wide awake,
the moon and I!

W.S. Gilbert

from The Bird Seller

- ¹⁶ When you're sent roses in this land,
you are supposed to understand
a secret the roses shyly tell:
someone has sent his heart as well!
With ev'ry flow'r a word is spoken,
can I accept the fragrant token,
can I believe you send a sign:
roses that say your heart is mine!

Nightingales, we know, fly winter snow,
off to the south go winging,
charm other ears with their singing,
should I depart? Tell me, my heart.
Tell me what I should do,
have all my dreams come true?

When you're sent roses in this land, *etc.*

M. West and L. Held, translated by Andrew Porter

from Kiss Me, Kate, Act I

Song: So in love

Lilli Vanessi

- ¹⁷ Strange, dear, but true, dear,
when I'm close to you, dear,
the stars fill the sky.
So in love with you am I.

Even without you,
my arms fold about you,
you know, darling, why,
so in love with you am I.
In love with the night mysterious,
the night when you first were there.
In love with my joy delirious
when I knew that you could care.
So taunt me and hurt me,
deceive me, desert me,
I'm yours 'til I die,
so in love, so in love,
so in love with you, my love, am I.

Cole Porter

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from The Immortal Hour, Act II

'Faery Song'

Midir

- 18 How beautiful they are,
the lordly ones
who dwell in the hills,
in the hollow hills.
They have faces like flow'rs
and their breath is a wind
that blows over summer meadows
filled with dewy clover.

Their limbs are more white
than shafts of moonshine.
They are more fleet
than the March wind.
They laugh and are glad and are terrible.
When their lances shake and glitter
ev'ry green reed quivers.
How beautiful they are,
how beautiful,
the lordly ones
in the hollow hills.

F. Macleod,

© Stainer & Bell Ltd, London, England



Clive Barba

Yvonne Kenny as Titania in
the 1995 English National
Opera revival of Purcell's
The Fairy Queen

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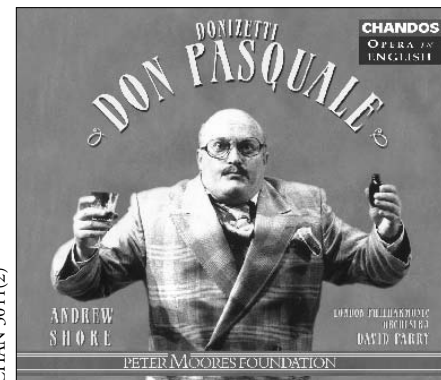
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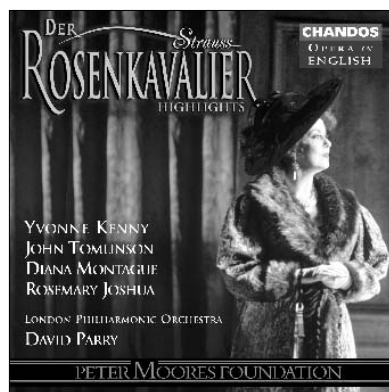


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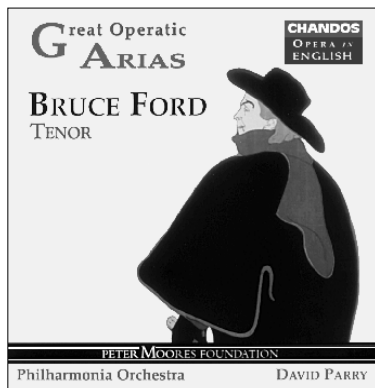
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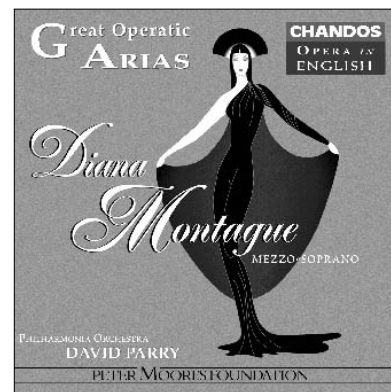


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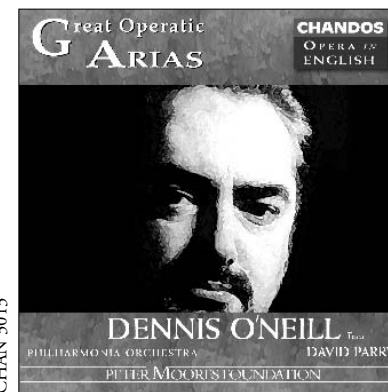


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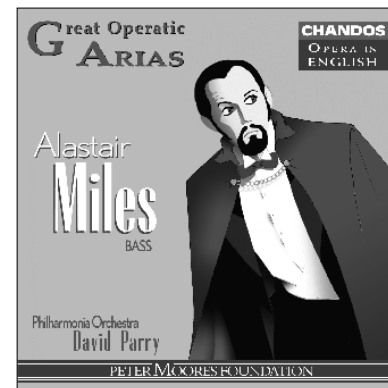
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Peter Moores and Yvonne Kenny at the recording sessions

GREAT OPERATIC ARIAS - Kenny/Philharmonia Orchestra/Parry

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|----|--|------|----|---|----------|
| 1 | <i>from</i> Puccini's <i>Gianni Schicchi</i>
'Oh, my beloved father' | 2:40 | 11 | <i>from</i> Catalani's <i>La Wally</i> , Act I
'I'll float into the distance' | 4:20 |
| 2 | <i>from</i> Mozart's <i>Idomeneo</i> , Act III
'Gentle zephyrs, soft caressing' | 5:27 | 12 | <i>from</i> Rossini's <i>William Tell</i> , Act II
'Dark, sombre wood' | 4:59 |
| 3 | <i>from</i> Purcell's <i>The Indian Queen</i> , Act I
'I attempt from love's sickness' | 1:33 | 13 | <i>from</i> Bizet's <i>The Pearl Fishers</i> , Act II
'Leïla! Leïla!' 'Lord Brahma! He is here!' –
'Your heart was never tuned to mine'
with Barry Banks tenor | 7:31 |
| 4 | <i>from</i> Handel's <i>Rinaldo</i> , Act II
'Hear thou my weeping' | 4:18 | 14 | <i>from</i> Stravinsky's <i>The Rake's Progress</i> , Act III
'Gently, little boat'
with Geoffrey Mitchell Choir | 3:43 |
| 5 | <i>from</i> Donizetti's <i>Linda from Chamonix</i> , Act I
'Linda! Linda!
with Barry Banks tenor | 6:42 | 15 | <i>from</i> Sullivan's <i>The Mikado</i> , Act II
'The sun, whose rays' | 3:01 |
| 6 | <i>from</i> Bizet's <i>The Pearl Fishers</i> , Act II
'I'm all alone here in the night' –
'As once before, with night to hide him' | 6:47 | 16 | <i>from</i> Zeller's <i>The Bird Seller</i>
'When you're sent roses in this land' | 3:02 |
| 7 | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Thanks be to you, o gracious patrons!, KV 383 | 3:29 | 17 | <i>from</i> Porter's <i>Kiss Me, Kate</i> , Act I
So in love | 4:20 |
| 8 | <i>from</i> Purcell's <i>King Arthur</i> , Act V
'Fairest isle' | 3:04 | 18 | <i>from</i> Boughton's <i>The Immortal Hour</i> , Act II
'How beautiful they are' | 2:08 |
| 9 | <i>from</i> Handel's <i>Joshua</i>
'Oh! Had I Jubal's lyre' | 2:40 | | | TT 75:46 |
| 10 | <i>from</i> Rossini's <i>Semiramide</i> , Act II
'Dark day of dread!
with Della Jones mezzo-soprano | 4:57 | | | |

Yvonne Kenny soprano
Philharmonia Orchestra
David Parry

DDD

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